

GCC: Belief in the Power of Believe

Jan 25–Mar 10, 2018

Exhibition and Programs

Feb 1 GCC

Feb 7 GCC
Katherine Carl

Feb 15 Mandana Limbert

Mar 1 Miriam Lowi

Mar 8 Amin Moghadam

**Belief in the Power of Believe
GCC**

**The James Gallery
The Graduate Center, CUNY
365 Fifth Avenue at 35th Street**

centerforthehumanities.org/james-gallery

**Hours:
Tue-Thu, 12-7pm
Fri-Sat, 12-6pm**

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Exhibition and Programs



Belief in the Power of Believe

*A great wind he appointed, the north wind,
the whirlwind, the storm and the icy wind, the
tempest and the scorching wind,*

*Like vipers, like dragons, like a scorching fire,
like a serpent that freezes the heart.*

A destroying flood and the lightning's fork,

*So the Goddess conceived an image in her
mind, and it was the stuff of the firmament,*

*She dipped her hands in water and pinched
off clay, she let it fall in the wilderness.*

Look at it still today!

*The outer wall, where the cornice runs,
it shines with the brilliance of copper! And
the inner wall, it has no equal. Touch the
threshold! It is ancient.*

*This is the shepherd of the city, wise, comely,
and resolute.*

*I'll first speak of the person who was
constantly negative. I met many such
individuals but I had to substitute them with
others who are positive.*

*I advise you, dear brothers, as you represent
the future of this country, to surround your-
selves with positive energy in everything
you do. I want you to be the best as you are
our future leaders. Thank you.*

*Gilgamesh spoke to them in the market
place, "I will conquer him in his cedar wood,
and show the strength of the sons of Uruk,
all the world shall know of it.*

*I am committed to this enterprise, to climb
the mountain, to cut down the cedar, and
leave behind me an enduring name "*

Text from the sound piece 'Belief in the
Power of Believe'

Forward, there is nothing to fear.

*I would first like to introduce myself. I am
Salem Al-Hadeed, a consultant to the
Ministry of Defense. Your highness, during
your reception of the national team, you used
the words positive energy and it caught my
attention. My question, what is the difference
between positive and negative energy?
Furthermore I would like to know what does
this hand signal mean? What is the secret
behind it?*

*I use this hand signal and many, many
brothers use this symbol when they win!*

*This signal refers to three things. It's Victory
and Triumph, both words have the same
letter count. What does the third one mean?
Who knows it? If you took it as a habit it
will become a dangerous gesture. The third
meaning is...I Love You.*

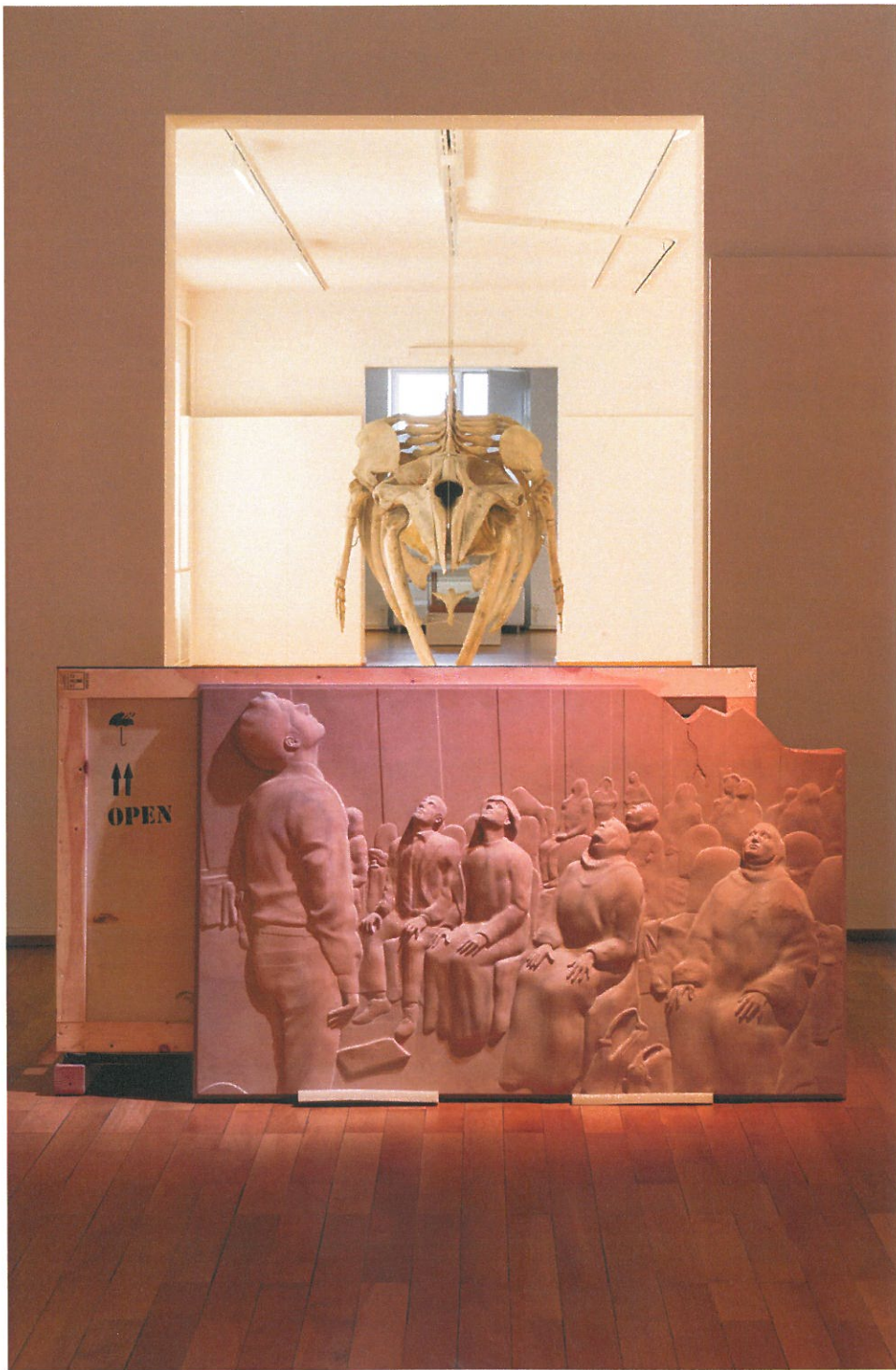
*Whenever something is new, a novel
idea, people either say this is sorcery or
they say this is nonsense. Back in the day
people couldn't tell the difference between
chemistry and witchcraft.*

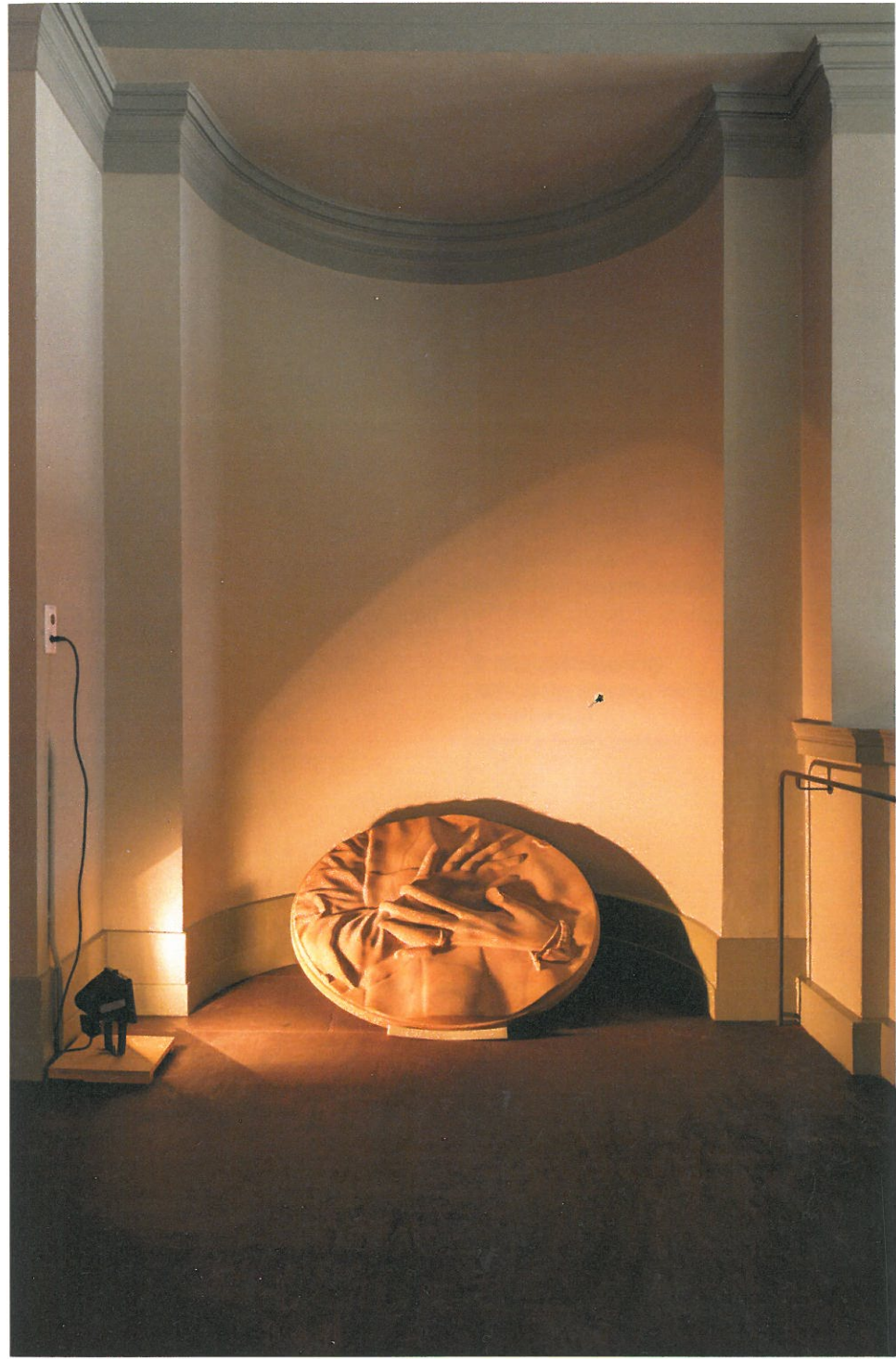
*She said: "For years I've been trying to apply
for government-subsidized housing, but
they never got back to me until one day, after
sending out positive energy, I got a phone
call. A woman in our culture has limited
choices, but her chances in life can improve
with the help of positive energy.*

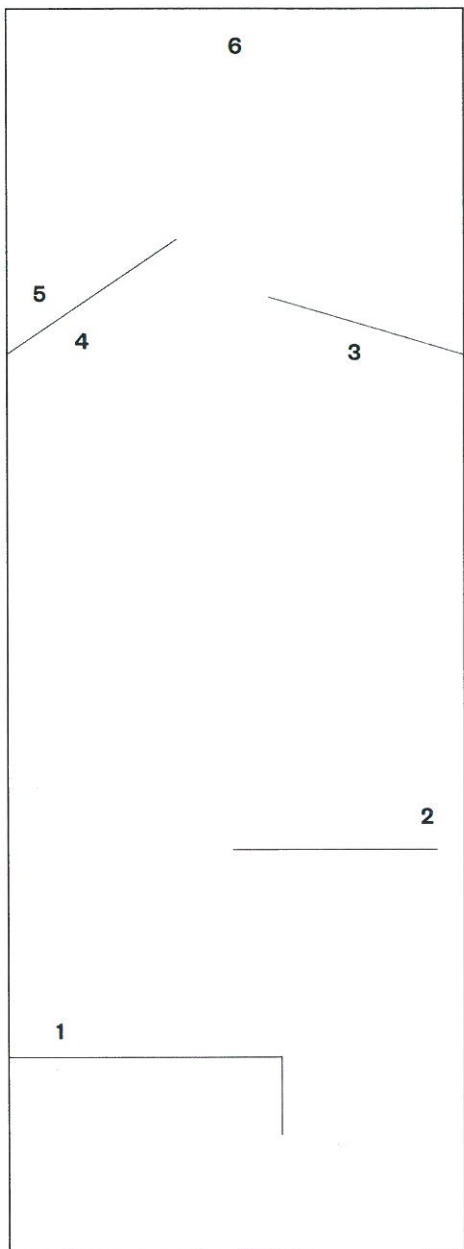
*Sometimes we send out peace energy,
sometimes love, and marriage for some
people, sometimes money energy, and a job.*

*I want you to close your eyes and accept
the healing.*









Exhibition Checklist

GCC, Belief in the Power of Believe, 2017.

1. Mahd (Gesture I)

MDF, baby powder, foam, sound
17 3/4" x 37 1/4"

2. Mahd (Gesture III)

MDF, baby powder, sound, foam, white wood (crate)
37 3/4" x 60"

3. Mahd (Gesture VI)

MDF, baby powder, sound, foam, white wood (crate)
41 1/4" x 65" x 3"

4. Mahd (Gesture IV)

MDF, baby powder, sound, foam, white wood (crate)
47" x 62"

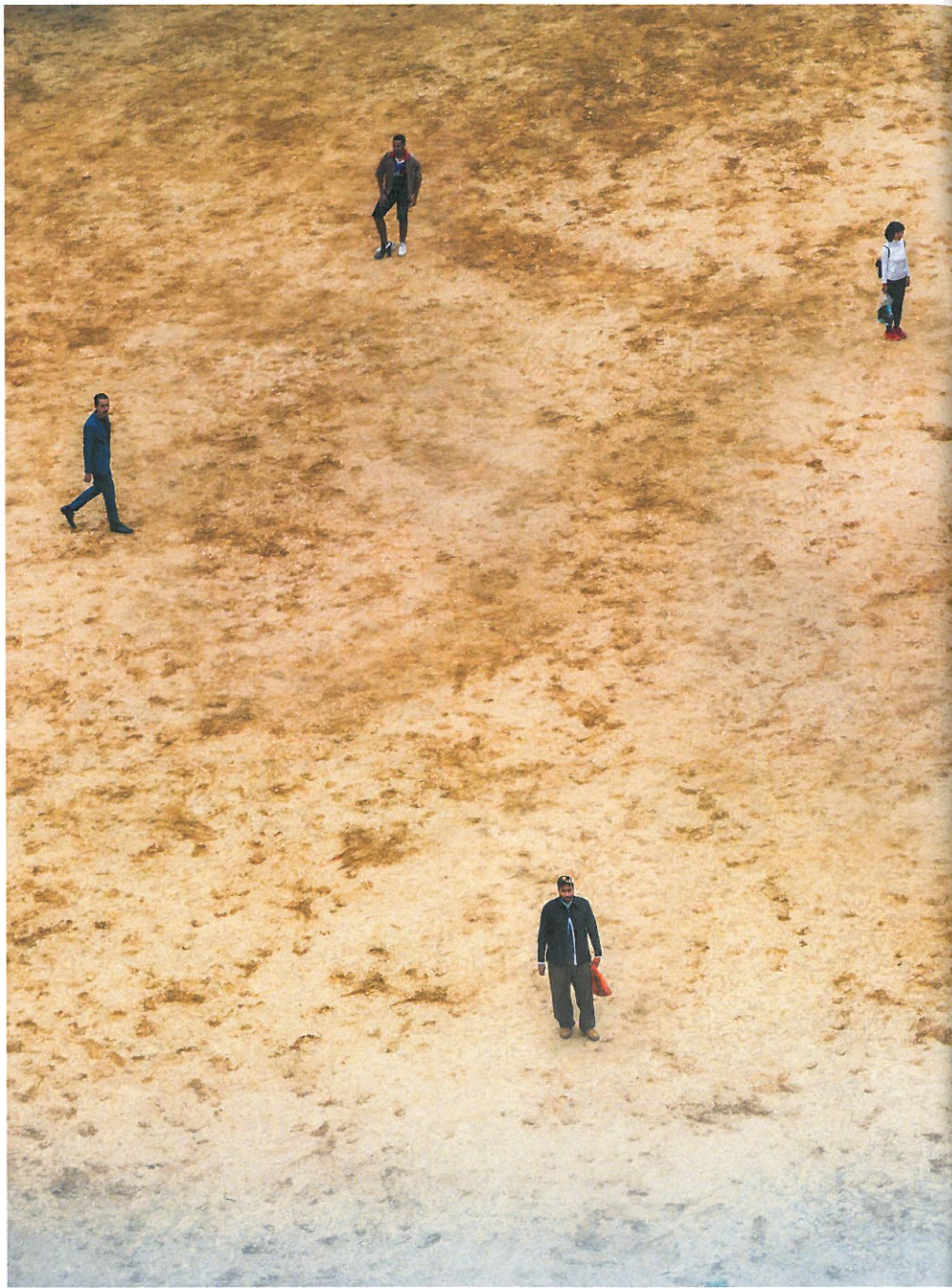
5. Mahd (Gesture II)

MDF, baby powder, sound
47" x 47"

6. Mahd (Gesture V)

MDF, baby powder, sound, foam, white wood (crate)
46 3/4" x 74 1/2"; installation 48" x 78" x 59"

Images pages 2-9: GCC, Belief in the Power of Believe, 2017. Installation at Natural History Museum, Basel. ©GCC; Courtesy of the artists; Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin and Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York.



GCC Portrait, 2017



Thu, Feb 1, 6–8pm
Exhibition Reception

Belief in the Power of Believe

GCC, artists.

The exhibition “Belief in the Power of Believe” investigates the cultural heritage of the Gulf region of the Middle East through relief sculptures by the artist collective GCC. “Heritage engineering” is a prevalent practice in the Gulf region that is used to prioritize certain aspects of culture that create and maintain a prevailing narrative of positivity. To this end, “positive energy movements” have become co-opted by governments in the region; new ministerial positions like the United Arab Emirates’ Minister of Happiness have been created, and life coaches and Feng Shui consultants are now employed by hereditary leaders.

In “Belief in the Power of Believe,” the artists reference antiquity with a set of monumental sculptural reliefs based on 3D renderings of stills taken from YouTube videos and online images of regional practitioners promoting the positive energy movement as state policy. Referring to the erasure and creation of cultural myths, these reliefs become contemporary cultural artifacts; at the same time embodying narratives of the present and the politics of cultural extinction and creation.

Co-sponsored by Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) at the Graduate Center, CUNY. Thanks to Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York and Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin.

The James Gallery

Wed, Feb 7, 6:30pm
Conversation

Sourcing Belief: A conversation with GCC

GCC, artists; Katherine Carl, curator.

GCC’s art practice often utilizes widely circulating digital imagery, political theater, and contemporary life generated in the Middle East to create monumental objects and experiences. This may result in seemingly ancient bas-relief sculptures, immersive sculptural environments, and sound pieces, for example. In the evening’s conversation, the artists will address questions about ritual and belief systems in nation-building with particular attention to new practices of the governments in the Gulf region of the Middle East, and parallels in art-making.

GCC is an artist collective with strong ties to the Gulf Region of the Middle East, whose name, an acronym that does not necessarily stand for but alludes to the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Co-sponsored by Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) at the Graduate Center, CUNY.

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Thu, Feb 15, 6:30pm
Lecture

Oman, Zanzibar, and the Politics of Becoming Arab

Mandana Limbert, Anthropology, the Graduate Center, CUNY.

Join Mandana Limbert and the Middle East and Middle Eastern American Studies Center for an investigation of the changing notions of Arabness in Oman and Zanzibar over the course of the twentieth century. Limbert’s scholarship focuses on the intersection of oil wealth, national narratives and identity in Oma, and her recent book, *In the Time of Oil: Piety, Memory, and Social Life in an Omani Town*, was published by Stanford University Press in 2010.

Co-sponsored by Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) at the Graduate Center, CUNY.

The James Gallery

Thu, Mar 1, 6:30pm
Lecture

Justice, Charity and the 'Common Good:' In Search of Islam in the Gulf Oil Monarchies

Miriam Lowi, Social Science, The College of New Jersey.

Miriam has written extensively on conflict over scarce water in the Middle East and oil and instability in Algeria. Her current project continues her examination of natural resource dimensions of political life, now considering the impact of the oil-rich Gulf monarchies on the way Gulf Arabs live as Muslims today. Join Lowi as she discusses such practices as charitable giving, Islamic banking, and the employment of foreign labor in the Gulf region of the Middle East.

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Thu, Mar 8, 6:30pm
Lecture

Cultural Flows Between Tehran and Dubai: New Resources and Inequalities

Amin Moghadam, Geographer.

Independent Geographer Amin Moghadam's research has focused on migration policy and practices, diaspora studies, circulation and regional integration in the Middle East, with the particular focus on the Gulf region (especially Iran and the United Arab Emirates). Join Moghadam as he discusses his current research on spatial dynamics related to artistic practices and the circulation of artists and cultural entrepreneurs in several cities of the Middle East. He has collaborated with many museums and galleries in Dubai and during his time at Princeton last semester he organized an exhibition of work by Iranian French artist Mamali Shafahi. He consults for several organizations including the Louvre Abu Dhabi.

Co-sponsored by Middle East and Middle Eastern American Center (MEMEAC) at the Graduate Center, CUNY.

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GCC, an acronym that does not necessarily stand for but alludes to the Gulf Cooperation Council (the intergovernmental political and economic partnership that connects six countries in the region), is an artist "delegation" or collective composed of eight members, all of which have strong ties to the Arabian Gulf region of the Middle East. The group was formed in 2013 at Art Dubai and has since shown at Project Native Informant in London; The New Museum; Whitney Museum of Art; MoMA PS1; Musee d'Art Moderne in Paris; 9th Berlin Biennial; Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE; Fridericianum, Kassel; Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York. Since its debut at Sultan Gallery, Kuwait, the group has continued to address the shifting systems of power in the Gulf region and abroad. GCC live between Kuwait, New York, Amsterdam, London, and Berlin. Apart from several summits held in Switzerland, Kuwait, France and, most recently, New York, Whatsapp is the group's primary mode of communication.

Collective Members:
Nanu Al-Hamad
Khalid Al Gharaballi
Abdullah Al-Mutairi
Fatima Al Qadiri
Monira Al Qadiri
Aziz Alqatami
Barrak Alzaid
Amal Khalaf

James Gallery Curator: Katherine Carl
Design: Yve Ludwig

Special thanks to Chris Lowery, Ray Ring, Dean Schafer, Sampson Starkweather, The Center for the Humanities, Samuel Draxler, and to Mitchell-Innes & Nash, New York and Kraupa-Tuskany Zeidler, Berlin.

The Amie and Tony James Gallery, located in midtown Manhattan at the nexus of the academy, contemporary art, and the city, is dedicated to exhibition-making as a form of advanced research embedded in the scholarly work of the Graduate Center across multiple disciplines. The gallery creates and presents artwork in a public forum in a variety of formats. While some exhibitions remain on view for extended contemplation, other activities including performances, workshops, reading groups, roundtable discussions, salons, and screenings have a short duration. The gallery works with scholars, students, artists, and the public to explore working methods that may lie outside usual disciplinary boundaries.

The James Gallery

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