

Burnaway

Laws of Salvage, 2020 Burnaway Reader

Curators Picks: Meg Turner

By Dr. Jordan Amirkhani, December 25, 2020

Burnaway

We are living in dangerous times. The dense network of challenges that have interrupted and displaced our lives this year will remain in our bodies and habits for some time. I've spent much of my quarantine experience thinking about the value and utility of art and its institutions amid a complete social collapse, watching as record-breaking numbers of Americans suffer from food precarity, homelessness, unemployment, and lack of



healthcare in the middle of a pandemic. The erosion of social services and support networks in the United States since the Reagan administration has now delivered a full-blown hellscape where collective relief efforts

for our country's most vulnerable continue to be threatened. With the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg and subsequent confirmation of Justice Amy Coney Barrett, the legal future of access to safe abortions across the country has been called into question.

In light of all of this, I have kept the work of New Orleans-based multidisciplinary artist Meg Turner close to mind. I first saw her work at her solo presentation *Here and Now* at the Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans, which included over a hundred tintype portraits of artists, activists, and loved ones within Turner's queer community alongside large-scale architectural installations reminiscent of roadside service stations and structures found in New Orleans's Seventh Ward. While Turner's tintypes celebrate the beauty of queer communities and portray a brand of utopian politics, the installations point to a possible future where everyone has the right to a life of dignity. What would our communities look like if they were built on a foundation of care, socioeconomic justice, and sex positivity? What would access to free birth control and Narcan look like? Why is it so hard to imagine a world where the most vulnerable are the most protected?

Turner's recent installation for *Art in a Time of Empathy* at Arthur Roger Gallery in New Orleans offered an absurd and tragic reflection of structures of support during the COVID-19 pandemic. A small red-and-white ice cream cart carrying essential services and goods reimaged the nationalized crisis responses of the postwar era for our current pandemic nightmare, while a postcard stand filled with notes to mark the thousands of American lives lost to COVID sat nearby. Through her installations and environments, Turner opens up space for us to imagine and build a counterworld that holds all that capitalism has stolen from our hearts, bodies, and psyches.

ANALOG FOREVER

25 LGBTQIA+ Film Photographers You Need To Know Right Now!

Curated by Mark Fenning, November 6, 2021



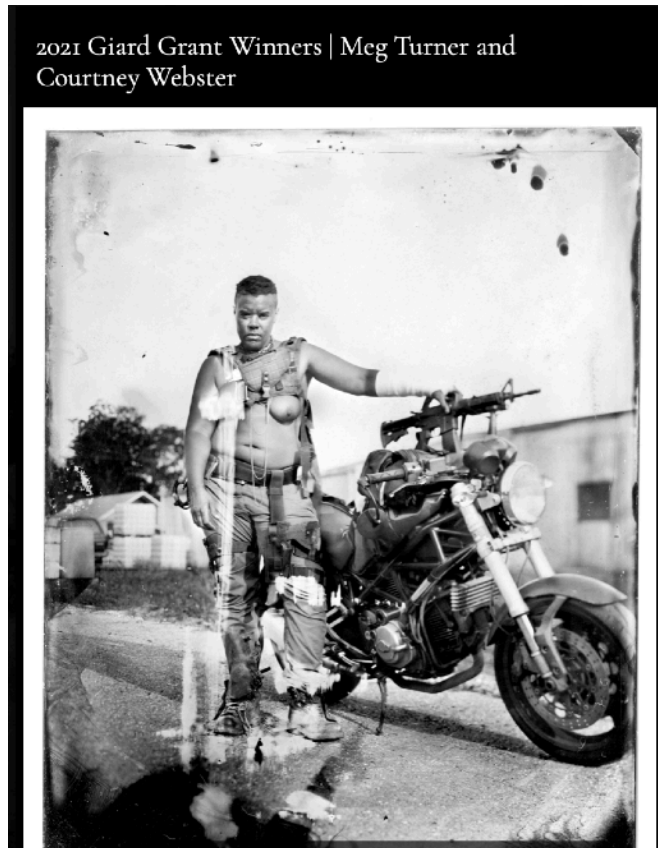
Meg Turner is a printmaker, photographer, and installation artist specializing in portraiture showing the world through a queer maximalist lens. I love Turner's combination of storytelling with technical historical processes. Creating a narrative thread running through their work, Turner's methodical alchemy unveils a queer cinematic experience they have curated and we, the viewer, get to unearth.

-Mark Francis Fenning

Artist: Meg Turner | Location: New Orleans, Louisiana

The Robert Giard Foundation

Courtney Webster and Meg Turner
2021 Giard Grant Winners



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The Robert Giard Foundation, in partnership with QueerlArt, is proud to announce the winners of the Robert Giard Grant for Emerging LGBTQ+ Photographers, Courtney Webster and Meg Turner (\$10,000), and runners-up Bianca Sturchio and riel Sturchio (\$5,000). We also recognize the excellent work of eight finalists: Michael DeCristo, Lee Laa Ray Guillory, a. r. havel, Ian Lewandowski, Schaël Marcéus, Sarah Panzer, Coyote Park, and Zhidong Zhang.

Courtney Webster and **Meg Turner** began their collaborative photo practice in New Orleans in 2015.

Meg Turner employs printmaking, photography, sign making, and installation to focus on queer fantasy and contemporary critique. Her first solo museum show *Here & Now* opened at The Contemporary Art Center in New Orleans in 2019.

Courtney Webster is an independent film Director, Producer, and media accessibility activist. She most recently produced the *Thank God For Abortion* anthem video with the artist Viva

Their series PATRICIDE has been shown in part at the New York gallery Wild Project and has been featured in the UK Magazine Heroine. Individual works from the series have been shown in New York at the Leslie Lohman Museum of Gay and Lesbian Art, the Bureau of General Services Queer Division, BRIC Arts, and the Wallach Gallery; and in New Orleans at the University of New Orleans Gallery in the exhibition '*Wildfire*'.



“PATRICIDE has always been about questioning dominant narratives in the media and understanding them as the mechanism that deliberately manufacture who is legitimate and entitled to dignity and power. These narratives impact the ways we live, develop our identities, and ultimately figure out how to exist in communities. This photographic collaboration has always been something that we saw evolving as the conversations around white supremacy, patriarchy, and gender grow more and more urgent and harder for even mainstream institutions to ignore.”

–Meg Turner and Courtney Webster

AUGUST 20, 2021

In the Studio: Meg Turner



Meg Turner is a New Orleans-based artist and Spring/Summer 2021 Artist-in-Residence at the Joan Mitchell Center. This interview was filmed at the Joan Mitchell Center in New Orleans, May 2021. Learn more about her work at megturnerprints.com.

Contemporary Arts Center New Orleans

MEG TURNER: HERE AND NOW

Curated by Andrea Andersson

November 2019- June 2020



Meg Turner: Here and Now is the artist's first solo museum exhibition. The installation, including over 100 portrait tintype of artists, activists, teachers, school mates, friends, lovers, and near-strangers, documents a self-selected community who over the past five years have elected to participate in Turner's photographic project to advance and approach utopia. Photographed with backdrops of fantastic(al) landscapes and fabricated sets, participants and collaborators are invited to embody the politics of gender, sexuality and economic autonomy they desire. The images serve to capture both histories and imaginary worlds that expand the reach of support systems commonly and traditionally provided by immediate communities linked by school, church, family, and neighborhood.

Photographing and processing every tintypes and subsequent print by hand, Turner approaches her practice as a series of deliberate actions in the service of an alternative and ever-expanding community of care. The installation includes a hand-constructed building bearing likeness to the Smith Tire building on St. Claude Avenue and Frenchmen street in New Orleans' Seventh Ward. Echoing the architecture of early roadside service stations and the oft-mythologized American highway, the neon lights and hand dyed wooden archway advertise its offerings for both sustenance and pleasure, free of charge. Over the course of the exhibition, the artist will use the installation as backdrop for more photographs that will, in turn, be incorporated into the installation. *Meg Turner: Here and Now* is an invitation to experience and to join the photographic record of a fragile and potential utopia. - Andrea Andersson

This exhibition is organized by the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC), New Orleans, and curated by Andrea Andersson, PhD, The Helis Foundation Chief Curator of Visual Arts at the CAC. The exhibition is supported by The Helis Foundation and Sydney & Walda Besthoff. Additional funding is provided by the Visual Arts Exhibition Fund with generous contributions from The Azby Fund, Bryan Bailey, Valerie Besthoff, Walda & Sydney Besthoff, The Domain Companies, Anna & Scott Dunbar, Kendall Winingder and Patrick Schindler, Aimée & Mike Siegel, and anonymous donors. This exhibition is also supported in part by a Community Arts Grant made possible by the City of New Orleans as well as by a grant from the Louisiana Division of the Arts, Office of Cultural Development, Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism, in cooperation with the Louisiana State Arts Council, and the National Endowment for the Arts, a Federal agency.

W MAGAZINE

35 Queer Photographers Illustrate What "Pride" Really Means

June 25, 2019



"This Pride Month W asked 35 queer photographers to illustrate how they personally define pride and queer identity." - W staff

"'The Actual Truth' is a series of photographic plates celebrating the intimacy, pride, and mutual support of my queer community. Pairing 'americana' with a radical queer ethos, these images manifest other possible landscapes; they are a fleeting glimpse of a total re-envisioning of our economic and political reality." — Meg Turner



Artist Meg Turner uses vintage Methods for personal pieces.

Artist Meg Turner uses vintage methods for personal pieces. In photography, it seems, everything old is new again. Some of the oldest photography techniques are enjoying something of a Renaissance as artists rediscover processes from the 19th century. Objects produced by these techniques — like daguerreotypes and tintypes — have found their way into recent exhibitions at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art and several other venues around town. Artist [Meg Turner](#), however, isn't interested in resuscitating long-neglected ways of making photographs just for the sake of nostalgia. Instead, as evidenced in "Tuff Enuff," her new show of work at [Scott Edwards Gallery](#) on Decatur Street in the Faubourg Marigny, those techniques are tools she uses to create images that reflect a uniquely personal set of relationships and experiences. The images in "Tuff Enuff" were created via a process involving several different methods. Turner begins by using a medium format camera to create tintypes — photographs printed on a thin metallic sheet. Those tintypes are digitally scanned, and the resulting digital files are then used to create positives for the plates, which in turn are used to print the sumptuous photogravures that constitute the show. "The process uses every century of printing technology," Turner said.

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Turner said.

Both intensely collaborative and deeply intimate, Turner's photographic objects also are created with the close participation of her extended "friend family" in the New Orleans queer community. More specifically, and candidly, Turner describes the subjects in her current show as "people who have held me while I've cried."

That intimacy with her subjects extends to the process by which Turner creates her images. While Turner's background included making photogravures and architectural photography before her current body of work, the work in "Tuff Enough" was an opportunity to learn new processes and formats. "Making tintypes and making portraits are both super collaborative processes," Turner said. "My subjects are also the people through whom I've learned about making tintypes and making portraits. Focusing on the people closest to me has made it easier to learn about these processes and move forward." For Turner, the tintype process is integral to the effects she wants her photographs to convey.

"Tintypes are slow but immediate," Turner said. "You see the results right away. The process involves a lot of limitations — with the light, the chemistry, the length of time it takes to make an exposure — so you have to be extremely deliberate." Poses are held for up to 20 seconds, which Turner said gives her subjects the opportunity to "ground" themselves — and which gives her portraits a particularly formidable presence. "The portraits become images representing how people choose to inhabit their strength," she said. "They're transformative." Like many of Turner's subjects themselves, the photographs exist in an "in-between" space: somewhere between documentary and fantasy. They're images that look like they could have been produced two centuries ago and yet capture a particular slice of New Orleans life in the 21st century. A series of dreamlike photographs taken on a secluded stretch of the Lake Pontchartrain shorefront known as "Goth Beach" depicts figures who seem to float in an indeterminate space between ground and sky. Like ghostly visitors from a not-too-distant past, they're at once familiar and inscrutable.

Other highlights of the show include a pair of portraits depicting Turner's friend, an amateur boxer herself, in poses that recall iconic images of African-American boxing legends like Jack Johnson and Muhammad Ali. In other portraits, Turner's subjects pose with objects — a trumpet, a motorcycle, a gun — imbued with personal significance. But it's the close relationships between Turner and the people she photographs that ultimately define the images in the show. "I'm giving back to the people who have made me feel strong," Turner said. "That's the main story of this work."