

We See Heaven Upside Down

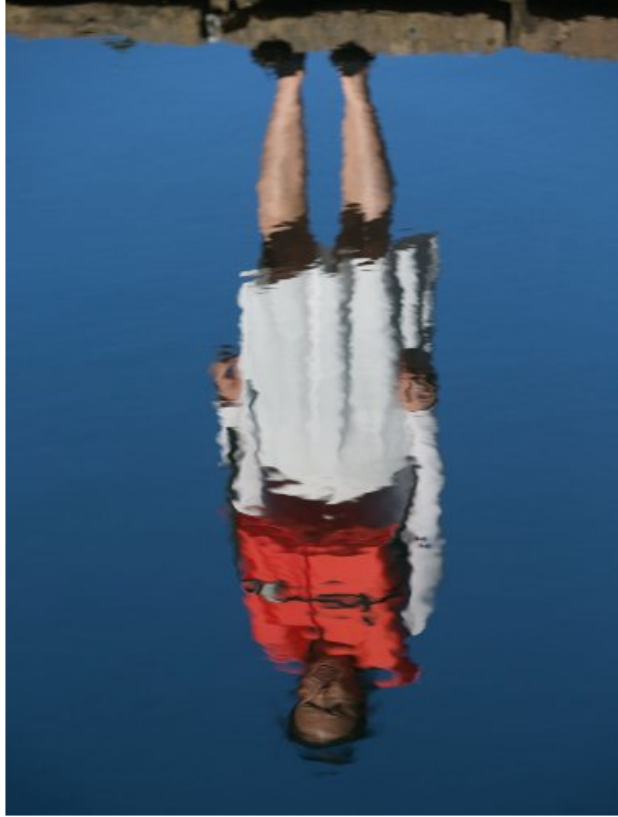


FOTO BY JEFF CRAVOTTA

'We See Heaven Upside Down'

Paradoxically, to internalize the discovery that another person is a stranger, with their own inner-life and uniquely "other" perspective, is a rare but real contact with another subjectivity; Our differences define both our individualism as well as our inseparable connection. This dichotomy between how we strive to shape our own lives individually towards our own goals and how we interact with strangers in a common space lies at the heart of the human condition, and it becomes particularly pronounced in times of mass migration, when cultures of apparent contrast are forced to interlace with one another.

'We See Heaven Upside Down' is a dialog responding to the contemporary yet also, in fundamental ways, reoccurring challenges of migration and displacement related to the unique human experience. Based on a concept that began in 2015 by the artist MyLoan Dinh and the artist & educator Lee Baumgarten, it is developing as an international collaboration between creative minds to stimulate conversation and understanding, with the intent to draw a supportive, connecting line between displacement, individuals and their journey. Essentially, the project strives to spur moments of genuine and raw empathy in our often hectic and confusing times.

What we see, depends on where we stand. The project includes artists perspectives from non migratory, immigrant and refugee backgrounds and has several objectives:

- shifting one's perspective brings us closer towards understanding others with different circumstances and life experiences
- breaking down barriers surrounded by fears, misconceptions/stereotypes and prejudices.
- offering opportunities for artists who have experienced the emotional disorientation and trauma of flight to employ their creative abilities/strength and share their individual stories with the community.

"Migration is – and always has been - a fundamental part of human life. People move to escape conflict and brutality but also to improve their opportunities and in search of a better life; historically such mobility has contributed to development, growth and more broadly to economic and social change for individuals and societies. Yet managing global migration is not without its challenges, as recent events in Europe and beyond demonstrate." The Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

Displacement: the situation in which people are forced to leave the place where they normally live.

Refugee: A person seeking refuge who, by reason of real or imagined danger, has left their home or country of nationality & is unwilling or unable to return.

Heaven: A condition or place of joy and happiness.

Upside Down: in such a way that the upper and the lower parts are reversed in position; in or into great disorder.

Our vision is to create an evolving body of expressive work through drawings, paintings, photography, sculptural installations, movement, music, poetry, film and other art forms that open/stimulate the dialog between identity, displacement, journey and hope. The goal is to construct a mental, physical and emotional navigational experience.

Project Artists:

MyLoan Dinh (USA/Vietnam)

Lee Baumgarten (USA)

Project Movement Developments, Partnerships & Collaborations:

Migration 1: Exhibition, June 4 - 19, 2016 - NOVILLA Center for Arts, Berlin, Germany
Migration 2: Exhibition, Developing installation, Creative Workshops, Performance- July 8 -17, 2016 - Kunst am SpreeKnie Arts Festival, Berlin, Germany
Migration 3: Moving installation in/through public places, September thru November 2016, North Carolina & South Carolina, USA
Migration 4: Exhibition & Dance Theatre Performance (performed by Moving Poets Charlotte) Sept - Nov, 2017 - Central Piedmont Community College, Ross Gallery, Pease Gallery & Pease Auditorium, Charlotte, NC - USA
Migration 5 and beyond - dates and locations to be announced.

Collaborating Guest Artists/Organizations:

Since the inception of the project, immense interest and support for international collaboration among artists, educators and creative organizations have developed. Participation of collaborators are site specific as the project migrates to different locations.

Collaborating Guest Artists:

Rula Ali (Syria)
Till Schmidt-Rimpler (Germany)
Hannes Hoelzl (Italy)
Susanne Roewer (Germany)
Chuck Sullivan (USA)
Liz Crossley (South Africa)
Dellair Youseef (Syria)
Moving Poets (Berlin/Charlotte)
(more artists to be announced)

Special thanks to:

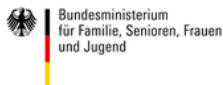
Moving Poets
Central Piedmont Community College
Kunst am SpreeKnie Arts Festival, Berlin
Jeff Cravotta Photography
Heather Speer Harper
Arts & Science Council Regional Artist Project Grant in conjunction with arts councils in Cabarrus, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Rowan, Rutherford, Stanley, Union and York (S.C.) counties, and with the support of the North Carolina Arts Council (NCAC) and Blumenthal Emerging Artists Endowment

Funding for the project is made possible in part by:

German Federal Ministry for Families, Seniors, Women and Youth
German Federal Program for Democracy Lives
The Partnership for Democracy, SchöneWeide



Gefördert vom



im Rahmen des Bundesprogramms

Demokratie *leben!*

Please Visit: *We See Heaven Upside Down!* on Facebook, for more information to come.