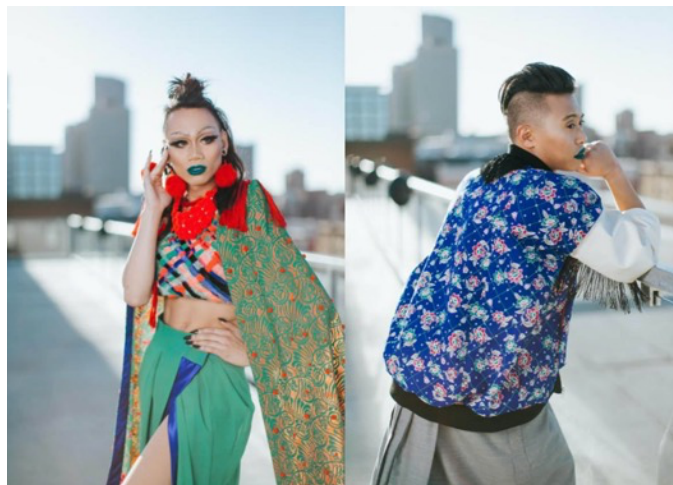
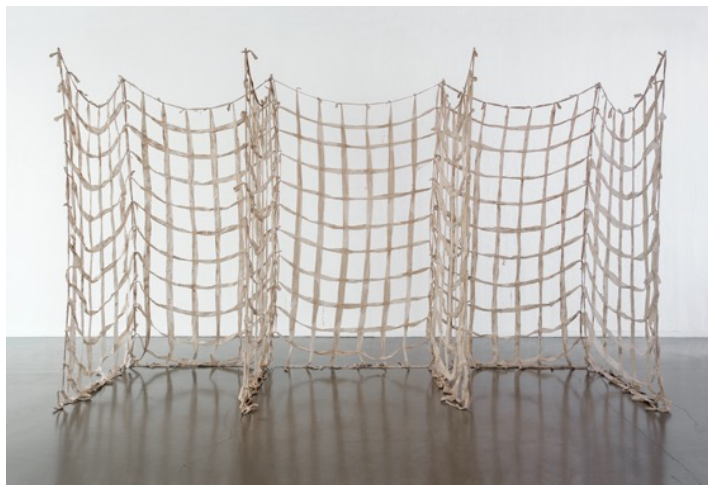


PRESS RELEASE

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Textile Center Announces 2021 McKnight Fiber Artist Fellows



From left: *Chambers* by Sarah Kusa, *Majestic Ensemble and Ntsuab (green)* – *XO Collection* by Ka Oskar Ly

(Minneapolis, MN – January 21, 2021) — Textile Center is proud to announce the two recipients of the 2021 McKnight Fellowships for Fiber Artists: Sarah Kusa and Ka Oskar Ly.

Designed to identify and support outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists, the McKnight Fellowships for Fiber Artists provide recipients with a \$25,000 unrestricted cash award. In addition, the fellows receive public recognition, studio visits with critics from the field, an exhibition in the Joan Mondale Gallery at Textile Center, professional development support, participation in public discussions featuring fellows and critics, the opportunity to apply for an artist residency in partnership with the McKnight Foundation and the Alliance of Artist Communities, and access to Textile Center's resources, including a library of more than 32,000 books and periodicals and a state-of-the-art dye lab. The fellowships are funded by the McKnight Foundation and administered by Textile Center.

"In this second year of our program, we had a pool of 44 applications from mid-career Minnesota artists. Their portfolio submissions encompassed the broad realm of fiber art, from materials to technique, sculpture to installation, and from 2-D textile-based and mixed media works to fashion and couture. Source material and concept were innovative and extremely varied," says Tracy Krumm, Textile Center Director for Artistic Advancement.

Krumm continues, "These fellowships are instrumental in raising the bar for the discipline of fiber arts within our community. We congratulate Sarah Kusa and Ka Oskar Ly for being selected to receive the 2021 McKnight Fiber Artist Fellowships, and are grateful to the McKnight Foundation for its extraordinary support of working fiber artists in Minnesota."

ABOUT THE FELLOWS



Sarah Kusa creates sculpture and installations dealing with themes of human vulnerability and interconnection, with forms ranging from abstract bodies to three-dimensional drawings in space. She has exhibited her work throughout the United States at venues including the Plains Art Museum (ND), DeVos Art Museum (MI), Welch School of Art and Design Gallery at Georgia State University in Atlanta (GA), Hutchinson Center for the Arts (MN), and the Phipps Center for the Arts (WI). Kusa has received the Jerome Foundation Fellowship for Emerging Artists, a Jerome Foundation Fiber Artist Project Grant, and a Next Step Fund grant from the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council. She has participated in residencies at MASS MoCA, the University of Minnesota's Institute for Advanced Study, and Ragdale. She lives and works in Saint Paul. sarahkusa.com

(Photo by Rebecca Slater)



Ka Oskar Ly is a queer Hmoob (Hmong) French American artist and cultural producer using fashion, art, and culture to journey into identity and community to redefine Hmoob aesthetics, cultural innovation, and community futures rooted in social change. Operating under their label *Os.Couture*, they are an artrepreneur who has showcased their work along with alternative, underrepresented works from their communities, through SOY New Year, Fresh Traditions Fashion Shows, Twin Cities Pride, and Hmong MN Day at the MN State Fair. A Minnesota State Arts Board grantee, a Pfund Scholarship recipient, and Twin Cities Pride Art Gallery Chairman award recipient, their work has been recognized at the *Next Generation of LGBT Leaders*, hosted by President Joe Biden and Dr. Jill Biden. *Little Black Shhh – Part Un and Part Deux*, a garment/photography collaboration with photographers Cam Xiong and Karen Nou Yang, respectively, were featured in *We Are Hmong Minnesota* at the Minnesota History Center. oskarlyart.com/oscouture

(Photo by Teeko.co)

ABOUT THE JURORS

The 2021 McKnight Fiber Artist Fellows were selected by a panel of three arts professionals of varying backgrounds, whose careers reflect the field of fiber art in numerous ways. This year's jurors were:

- **Gabriel Dawe** is a studio artist whose *Plexus* installations have been exhibited all over the world, including the Toledo Museum of Art, the Amon Carter Museum of American Art, and the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. His work has been collected by public and private institutions, and featured in numerous publications including *100 Sculptors of Tomorrow*, *Sculpture* magazine, and the cover of *Arts Fundamentals*. In 2020, he was the State Three-Dimensional Artist for the state of Texas, and received a Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters & Sculptors Grant.
- **T'ai Smith** is associate professor of modern and contemporary art history and media studies at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Author of *Bauhaus Weaving Theory: From Feminine Craft to Mode of Design* (University of Minnesota Press, 2014), her writings have appeared in *Art Journal*, and *Texte zur Kunst*, and in catalogues for the Museum of Modern Art, ICA Boston, and Tate

Modern. She contributed to *Anni Albers, On Weaving: New Expanded Edition* (Princeton University Press, 2017). She is currently working on two book manuscripts: *Fashion After Capital* and *Textile Media: Tangents from Modern to Contemporary Art*.

- **Lena Vigna** is currently the curator of exhibitions at the Racine Art Museum in Racine, Wisconsin. With particular interest in the contemporary fields of adornment, sculpture, fiber, and installation, she has curated numerous exhibitions and written several essays that explore issues relevant to contemporary art and society. Named one of the top craft curators under 50 in a non-published museum survey, she has received a Craft Research Fund Project Grant from the Center for Craft, Creativity, and Design and an Art Jewelry Forum grant.

ABOUT THE MCKNIGHT ARTIST FELLOWSHIPS

Founded on the belief that Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive, the McKnight Foundation's arts program is one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the country. Support for individual working Minnesota artists has been a cornerstone of the program since it began in 1982. The McKnight Artist Fellowships Program provides annual, unrestricted cash awards to outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists in 14 different creative disciplines. Program partner organizations administer the fellowships and structure them to respond to the unique challenges of different disciplines. Currently the foundation contributes about \$2.8 million per year to its statewide fellowships. For more information, visit mcknight.org/artistfellowships.



ABOUT THE MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION

The McKnight Foundation, a Minnesota-based family foundation, advances a more just, creative, and abundant future where people and planet thrive. Established in 1953, the McKnight Foundation is deeply committed to advancing climate solutions in the Midwest; building an equitable and inclusive Minnesota; and supporting the arts in Minnesota, neuroscience, and international crop research. mcknight.org

The McKnight Foundation logo, which consists of a solid red square. Inside the square, the words "MCKNIGHT" and "FOUNDATION" are stacked vertically in a white, sans-serif font.

MCKNIGHT
FOUNDATION

TEXTILE CENTER – A NATIONAL CENTER FOR FIBER ART

Textile Center is unparalleled as America's national center for fiber art. A nonprofit arts center, Textile Center's mission is to honor textile traditions, promote excellence and innovation, and inspire widespread participation in fiber art. The Center's facility includes exceptional fiber art exhibitions in four galleries, an artisan shop, the region's only accessible professional-grade dye lab, and one of the nation's largest circulating textile libraries open to the public. Textile Center partners with nearly 30 textile guilds, runs the Youth Fiber Art Guild™, and facilitates more than 400 classes a year for all ages and skill levels. A dynamic hub of fiber activity, celebrating our 25th Anniversary in 2019, Textile Center brings people together in community to learn, create, share, and be inspired by fiber art. textilecentermn.org

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