

NEWS RELEASE
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Contemporary Art Museum



Press Contacts:

USF Contemporary Art Museum - Sarah Howard
showard@usf.edu or (813) 974-3503
Or Noel Smith, nsmith@usf.edu or (813) 974-5866
Images: Don Fuller, fuller@usf.edu or (813) 974-4329

USF Contemporary Art Museum to Receive \$35,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to Support the Exhibition *Sponge Exchange* with Artist Hope Ginsburg

(TAMPA, FL – May 15, 2019) National Endowment for the Arts Acting Chairman Mary Anne Carter has approved more than \$80 million in grants as part of the Arts Endowment’s second major funding announcement for fiscal year 2019. Included in this announcement is an Art Works grant of \$35,000 to the University of South Florida’s Contemporary Art Museum, part of the USF College of The Arts, to support the exhibition *Sponge Exchange* with artist Hope Ginsburg. Art Works is the Arts Endowment’s principal grantmaking program. The agency received 1,592 Art Works applications for this round of grantmaking, and will award 977 grants in this category.

“These awards, reaching every corner of the United States, are a testament to the artistic richness and diversity in our country,” said Mary Anne Carter, acting chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. “Organizations such as USF Contemporary Art Museum are giving people in their community the opportunity to learn, create, and be inspired.”

With funding from the NEA Art Works grant, the USF Contemporary Art Museum will present *Sponge Exchange*, an exhibition of collaboratively produced work led by visiting artist Hope Ginsburg, who uses sea sponges and hard corals as a metaphor for exchange and the ecology of learning to stimulate social transformation. The exhibition will feature a new video installation, *Swirling*, and a series of collectively produced three-dimensional dioramas to address how the health of marine invertebrates is deeply tied to the environment and economic life of Florida. The four-channel video installation, *Swirling*, created in collaboration with diver/videographer Matt Flowers, and composer Joshua Quarles, submerges viewers in the underwater coral nurseries and outplant sites of St. Croix, capturing the often unseen coral farming and reef restoration work that occurs beneath the surface. Inspired by the idiosyncratic and educational dioramas of the Spongeorama Museum, which depict the rich history and culture of sponge-diving in Tarpon Springs, Florida, Ginsburg and USF Associate Professor John Byrd will engage university students in the collective reimagining of a series of dioramas. These will explore the issues surrounding climate change, rising sea levels, and water quality; their impact on the health, sustainability and resiliency of Florida’s environment; and the social and economic life of South Florida and the Gulf Coast.



Hope Ginsburg, Matt Flowers, Joshua Quarles; Video still from *Swirling*, 2019

Sponge Exchange, curated by Sarah Howard and organized by USF Contemporary Art Museum, will be on view January 13 through March 7, 2020 and will include free educational programs.

For more information on this National Endowment for the Arts grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).

ABOUT USF CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM

USF Contemporary Art Museum (USFCAM) organizes and presents significant and investigative exhibitions of contemporary art from Florida, the United States and around the world. Serving as a teaching laboratory, USFCAM's curatorial and socially engaged initiatives and educational programs are designed to present the students, faculty, and community with current issues of contemporary art practice, and to explore the role of the arts in society. USFCAM publishes relevant catalogues, presents critically recognized traveling exhibitions and commissions new projects by national and international artists. USFCAM maintains the university's art collection, comprising more than 5000 contemporary art works.

ABOUT HOPE GINSBURG

Hope Ginsburg is an artist and Associate Professor at Virginia Commonwealth University. Ginsburg received her BFA from Tyler School of Art and MS in Visual Studies from MIT. Her interdisciplinary projects are invested in the socially transformative potential of knowledge exchange and build community around learning. Driven by a curiosity of the natural world, its materials and the species with which we share the planet, Ginsburg's work and on-going projects are collaborative, cooperative and participatory, often organized around live experiences for those directly involved, resulting in visual representations, objects, photography and videos. Ginsburg has exhibited at museums nationally and internationally at venues including MoMA PS1, MASS MoCA, Institute for Contemporary Art at VCU, Wexner Center for the Arts, Kunst-Werke Berlin, Contemporary Art Center Vilnius, Baltimore Museum of Art, SculptureCenter, and the Mercosul Biennial in Brazil. She is the recipient of an Art Matters Foundation Grant and a Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Fellowship and has attended residencies such as the Robert Rauschenberg Residency, the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, the Wexner Film/Video Studio, and The Harbor at Beta Local. Her work has appeared in the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Hyperallergic, and Artforum.

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