



Northern Illinois  
University

*NIU Art Museum*

## Press Release

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For Immediate Release

***Embarrassment of Riches***  
**explores the intersection of visual art and the environment**  
**on exhibition at the Northern Illinois University Art Museum**

DeKalb, IL – Northern Illinois University Art Museum presents *Embarrassment of Riches*, a group exhibition of six Midwest artists curated by Peter Olson, exploring themes of sustainability **opening August 25 and running through October 24, 2015** at the Art Museum's galleries in Altgeld Hall on Northern Illinois University's DeKalb campus. Join us for the opening and **public reception September 10 from 4:30 – 6 p.m.** with a **panel discussion** with artists from the exhibition moderated by Melissa Lenczewski, Director of NIU's Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability and Energy, and curator and Museum Assistant Director Peter Olson. The panel will explore the artists' personal art practices and the intersection of visual art and environmental science following the reception in **Altgeld Hall 315 from 6 – 7:30 p.m.**

This exhibition is part of the Art Museum's fall series examining contemporary artists' exploration of relevant social issues in today's world through the methods of visual arts media. The work on display represents the various artists' perspectives on sustainability and humanity's complicated relationship with the earth and environment. Curator Peter Olson comments, "Many artists view the situation through a lens of creativity, playfulness, wit and irony." The exhibition *Embarrassment of Riches* presents the output of six contemporary artists including **Melissa Jay Craig, Mary Ellen Croteau, Doug DeWitt, Barbara Hashimoto, Jacqueline Moses and John Sabraw.**

Chicagoans Mary Ellen Croteau and Barbara Hashimoto "recycle" societal waste products, like junk mail, plastic bags, and pill bottles, into thought-provoking artworks. NIU alum Jacqueline Moses paints the disjointed human-scapes she finds around the world, and Doug DeWitt has turned habitat restoration into a type of performance art. Ohioan John Sabraw paints with the chemically neutralized toxic waste he finds in Appalachian streams while Melissa Jay Craig uses natural pigments and fibers to create colorful and intricate enlargements of microscopic cells.

Olson continues, "In the 21st century, we find ourselves amidst the fallout of our own past - policies and practices that have left us with a high standard of living, but also a planet ravaged with pollution and tons upon tons of garbage—an "embarrassment of riches", so to speak. Can we modify our forward progress to include practices that are more sustainable?"

The exhibition remains on display at the NIU Art Museum through October 24, 2015.

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## Images



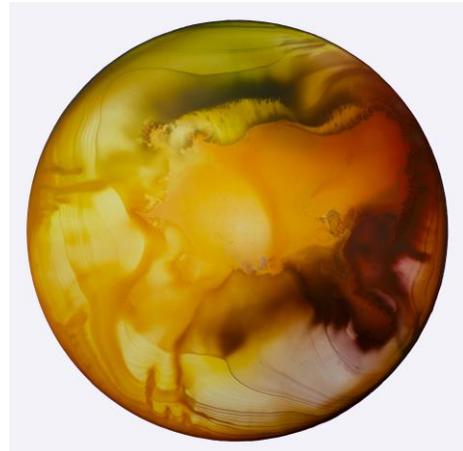
Melissa Jay Craig. *Blood Root Shoot*. 2015. Cast Abaca Pulp and Procion dyes (22 in. diam.). Courtesy of the artist.



Doug DeWitt. Detail from *This is Not a Garden IV Prairie Restoration*, 2015. Photograph (7 in. x 10 in.). Courtesy of the artist.



Barbara Hashimoto. *Doll with a Ball* [Installation and Performance.], 2013. Courtesy of the artist.



John Sabraw. *Chroma SI 17*, 2014. Mixed media on aluminum composite panel (36 in. diam.). Courtesy of the artist.

High-resolution images will be sent as a separate attachment upon request.

## Associated Events and Educational Programs

Many of the Art Museum's events and educational programs associated with the exhibition are free and open to the public. More information about the exhibitions, events, and educational programming at the NIU Art Museum may be found online by visiting [www.niu.edu/artmuseum](http://www.niu.edu/artmuseum). To register for events please contact the Education Coordinator at 815-753-1936 or email [shenn1@niu.edu](mailto:shenn1@niu.edu).

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Thursday, September 10

**Public Reception**

NIU Art Museum, Altgeld Hall—first floor, west end,  
4:30 – 6 p.m.

Thursday, September 10

**Embarrassment of Riches Artist and Curator  
Panel Discussion on Sustainability**

Melissa Lenczewski, Director of NIU's Institute for the Study of the Environment, Sustainability and Energy will moderate a panel discussion with exhibition curator Peter Olson and several artists from *Embarrassment of Riches*, exploring their perspectives and inspirations in regard to the intersection of visual art and environmental science.  
Altgeld Hall 315, 6 – 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, August 29

**STEM Breakfast Café, Lorado Taft Campus Get-on-the-Bus Excursion**

Pre-registration required, RSVP by August 26. Lecture on the Nachusa Grasslands' vegetation and bison herd given by NIU professors Holly Jones and Nick Barber, followed by a hike and tour of the prairie. Afterwards, view the historic Eagle's Nest Arts Colony painting collection. Closed toe shoes with long pants are recommended for the prairie hike.  
Departure: 8:00 a.m. Expected Return: 3:00 p.m.  
Price: Museum Members \$12; Non-Member Adult \$18; Non-Member Student/Senior \$15. Ticket price includes transportation expenses. Lorado Taft famous breakfast buffet \$10. Meals and incidentals not included.

Saturday, September 12

**Lessons from Modernism: Environmental Design Strategies in Architecture, 1925-1970 at Elmhurst Art Museum Get-on-the-Bus Excursion**

Pre-registration required, RSVP by September 4. Join curator Kevin Bone, Director of the Institute of Sustainable Design at The Cooper Union, for a tour of *Lessons from Modernism: Environmental Design Strategies in Architecture, 1925-1970*. Departure: 10 a.m. Expected Return: 5 p.m. Price: Museum Members \$30; Non-Member Adult \$40; Non-Member Student/Senior \$35. Ticket price includes museum admissions and transportation expenses. Meals and incidentals not included. Limit: 15 participants.

Tuesday, September 22

**Koyaanisqatsi Film Screening**

A film screening of the celebrated director Godfrey Reggio's 1982 documentary montage with musical score by Golden Globe winning composer, Philip

Glass. *Koyaanisqatsi*, a Hopi word for life out of balance, examines the encroachment of urban life and technology on the environment.

86 minutes, Not Rated

Music Building Recital Hall, 5 – 6:30 p.m.

Saturday, October 3

**Chicago Urban Agriculture Initiatives Get-on-the-Bus Excursions**

Pre-registration required, RSVP by September 30. Explore Chicago's green urban agriculture scene! Tour the Plant, a sustainable food production business, and City Farm a part of the non-profit Resource Center, and enjoy lunch at the Farmhouse, one of the local area restaurants that sources fresh produce from the City Farm. Departure: 8:30 a.m. Expected Return: 3:30 p.m. Price: Museum Members \$35; Non-Member Adult \$45; Non-Member Student/Senior \$40. Ticket price includes tour admissions and transportation expenses. Meals and incidentals not included.

Friday, October 9

**Nicholas Conservatory Tour and Phyllis Bramson: A Thirty Year Retrospective exhibition at RAM Get-on-the-Bus Excursion**

Pre-registration required, RSVP by October 6. Tour LEED certified Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens and attend Rockford Art Museum's reception for Chicago artist Phyllis Bramson. Departure: 2:00 p.m. Expected Return: 10:00 p.m. Price: Museum Members \$35; Non-Member Adult \$45; Non-Member Student/Senior \$40. Ticket price includes conservatory and museum admissions and transportation expenses. Meals and incidentals not included.

Monday, October 19

**Activism and Beauty**

Artist and Principal at Bauer Latoza Studio in Chicago Barbara Hashimoto discusses the evolution for her private studio practice to include community development and collaboration with activists in the US and Europe through her environmental art project, *The Junk Mail Experiment*.  
Jack Arends Hall-Visual Arts Building 111, 5 – 6 p.m.

Wednesday, October 21

**No Impact Man Film Screening**

Film screening of the 2009 documentary following Colin Beavan and his family's year-long experiment in being impact free on the environment.  
93 minutes, Not Rated  
Montgomery Hall Terwilliger Auditorium, 7:15 – 9:30 p.m.

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### ***About the NIU Art Museum***

The NIU Art Museum contributes to the University's educational curriculum and provides opportunities for art education and cultural enrichment throughout the community. The Museum serves to educate, preserve, exhibit, and enlighten by balancing the challenges of contemporary art with the riches of traditional media for a comprehensive examination of visual culture.

The exhibitions and programs of the NIU Art Museum are sponsored in part by the Illinois Arts Council Agency; the Friends of the NIU Art Museum; and the Dean's Circle of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, NIU Foundation.

### ***Also on display***

August 25 through October 24, 2015

***Unloaded***, examines the historical and social issues surrounding the availability, use and impact of guns in our lives from a number of perspectives, though none endorse them as a means to an end. Over twenty contemporary artists shed light on a divisive topic—taking part in the national debate on gun rights through the visual arts. They deploy art as a device to continue a critical dialog with the challenging social and political issues surrounding firearms in America today.

### ***Gallery Hours***

Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Saturday 12 – 4 p.m.; by appointment for group tours. Exhibitions are open to the public and admission is **FREE**, but donations are always appreciated.

The NIU Art Museum is located on the first floor, west end of Altgeld Hall, located on the corner of College Avenue and Castle Drives on the campus of Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL. Parking is available in the Carroll Avenue Visitor's Pay Lot; handicapped and metered spots in front of Altgeld Hall; and during public receptions and programs in Lot 3 northeast of Gilbert Drive and College Avenue. Campus parking is free on weekends and after 7 p.m. weeknights.

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### **NIU Art Museum**

Altgeld Hall 116, First Floor, West End

1425 W. Lincoln Hwy., Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115, 815-753-1936

[www.niu.edu/artmuseum](http://www.niu.edu/artmuseum)