

## Upcoming Events

7 Sep - *Apropos* - Opening Reception

10 Sep - Family Day

3 Oct - UMLAUF After Dark

8 Oct - Family Day

18 Oct - Insights: *Apropos*

29 Oct - Straw Fest

12 Nov - Family Day



The UMLAUF is grateful to Russell Martin and Mo and Richard Anderson of Keller Williams Realty for providing additional grant support for many of the artists in the *Apropos* exhibition.



umlauf

605 Azie Morton Road,  
Austin, TX 78704

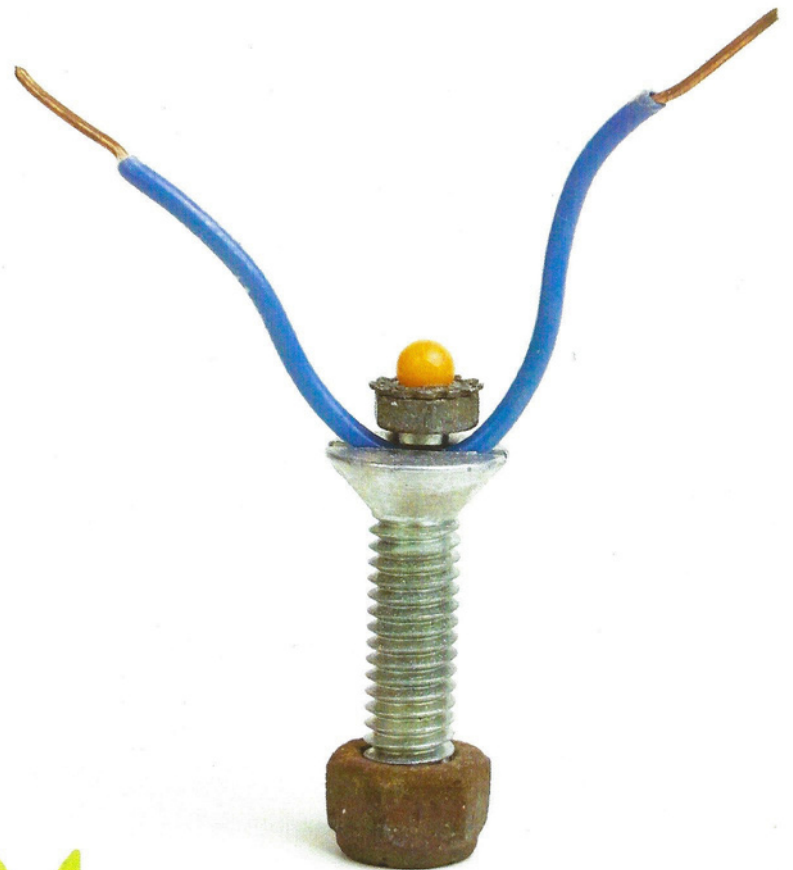
Tues-Fri 10-4; Sat & Sun 11-4  
[umlaufsculpture.org](http://umlaufsculpture.org)

Cover: Sarah Fagan, *Spirit of Flight*, 2023, mixed media  
Back: Janet Brooks, *Eve in the Garden*, 2023, acrylic on panel

# APROPOS

18 artists interpret  
Charles Umlauf

Sept 7 - Nov 26



# APROPOS

**apropos** | ,aprə'pō |

(preposition): with reference to; concerning

(adjective) [predicative]: very appropriate to a particular situation

*Apropos of Umlauf.* Curious as to how current artists might respond to Charles Umlauf's figurative twentieth century sculptures, last spring the UMLAUF Sculpture Garden + Museum launched an open call for artists to propose work in any media that is apropos of Umlauf. The results are displayed here in a wide-ranging exhibition of art made by eighteen local artists. The variety of art and artists in *Apropos* is striking, featuring work from both well-established and newly emerging artists—and even some enthusiastic hobbyists. Some artists studied with Charles Umlauf himself at the University of Texas at Austin, while others were born many years after Umlauf's time. In the gallery and garden one can find sculptures in clay, bronze, and found materials in large and tiny sizes. *Apropos* also includes multi-media works that complement the show's traditional paintings and drawings.

Although Umlauf (1910–1994) lived throughout many art movements, his *oeuvre* displays virtually no influence from the radical styles of the 1960s–1980s like Pop Art, Minimalism, and Postmodernism. Umlauf knew his training and capabilities were best used to make bronze figurative sculptures cast in the ancient lost-wax method at American and European foundries. By contrast, the *Apropos* artists explore all types of media. Some have taken a relatively neutral approach to interpreting Umlauf's art, while others take an inquisitive approach to his perspective as a 20th century white male artist with a passion for the female form. The results range from sincere homages to highly humorous reinterpretations. We hope visitors will spend time considering how each object relates to Umlauf's sculptures. Feel free to respond verbally or with pictures in our *Apropos* Guestbook at the front desk.



Paul Stankiewicz, *Muse I*, 2023, oil on panel



## Reynaldo Alaniz



*Mother & Child*, 2006, bronze

Reynaldo Alaniz graduated from the University of Texas with a degree in pharmacy in 1968. Once retired, he started his artistic journey as a sculptor carving from stone and wood. His work has been shown in local and national shows in New York City, South Carolina, Texas, and Chicago.

For Alaniz, these stone, wood, and bronze sculptures reflect Umlauf's themes of family and nature. Alaniz is responding to Umlauf's 1958 *Cat* and his *Mother and Child* series.

## Rachel Aquino

Rachel Aquino (BA UT Austin) is a new media artist whose work explores themes of existential choice, identity, being, liberation, authenticity, dream magic, absurdity, and mortality—challenging viewers to question mainstream culture.



*Godmother of Outcast, Madonna of the Unloved*, 2023, mixed media

*Godmother of Outcast, Madonna of the Unloved* is an immersive installation that serves as a bold response to Umlauf's rejected bronze statue commission, *Maria Regina* (1985). Aquino encourages individuals who identify with or have experienced womanhood to engage with the artwork by inscribing personal experiences, thoughts, and feelings about femininity on blank ribbons and tying them around the Madonna's figure.

## Darcie Book

Multidisciplinary artist Darcie Book (BFA Maryland Institute College of Art) is an educator and arts organizer whose work explores paint as object and architecture through innovative processes using acrylic paint and metal leaf.



*Icarus*, 2023, metal leaf, acrylic paint, skin, watercolor, XPS foam, and Arches watercolor paper

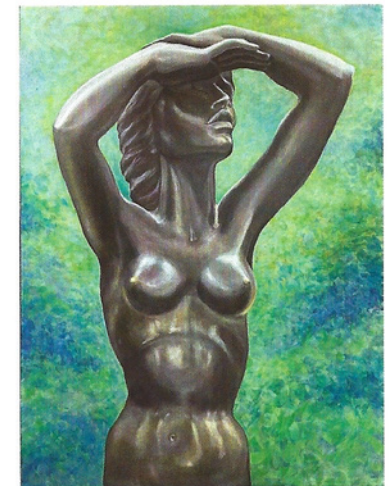


*Icarus* is a multimedia installation inspired by Umlauf's bronze *Icarus* (1965). By engaging viewers through rich black ink and reflective gold leaf, this installation aims to transform them into active participants.

## Janet Brooks

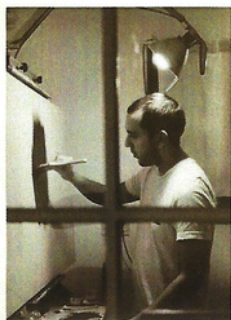


Janet Brooks (BFA and MFA UT Austin) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores the objective and symbolic representation of the natural world.



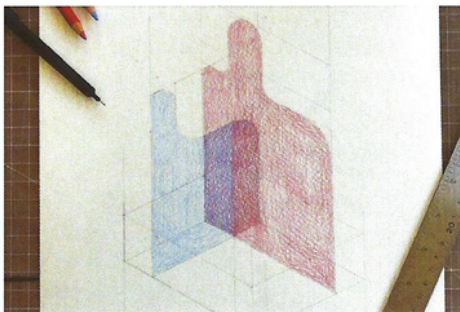
*Eve in the Garden*, 2023, acrylic on panel

Based on Umlauf's sculpture *Eve* (1972), *Eve in the Garden* takes inspiration from Umlauf, using Brooks' experience as his student—focusing on the art and craft of figure and portrait.



## Nathan Burgess

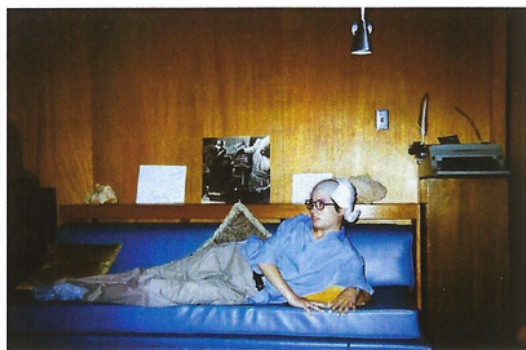
Austin-based, far West Texas-raised artist and graphic designer Nathan Burgess (BA UT Austin) has a background in old master style portraiture. He now takes inspiration from color field expressionism to create his minimalist oil paintings.



Study (*Father and Son*), 2023, pencil and colored pencil on paper

In juxtaposition to Umlauf's *Father and Son* (1962), Burgess' sculpture portrays a dysfunctional and unstable father-son relationship. The father, represented by a bright red, is enormous and overbearing in both love and anger. The son, represented in blue, is much smaller—overshadowed by the pride and belittled by the expectations of the father.

## Bella Cheng



Charles Umlauf, *21st Century Girl*, detail, 2023, performance documented in photographs, video, and written texts

Bella Cheng (BFA UT Austin) is an artist working primarily in drawing and performance. She loves chance, small things, sincerity, and the sea. Cheng also oversees volunteers and visitor services as the Museum Manager of the UMLAUF.

*Charles Umlauf, 21st Century Girl* is a project about legacy, mythmaking, artist as identity, and process. With a playful attitude, Cheng subverts Umlauf's stoic, traditional, and rigid artistic point of view to expand the category of who and what can be included in the Museum's collection.

## Avery Connett

Multimedia artist and writer, Avery Connett (Austin Community College) works primarily with clay and poetry. Her ceramic work is organic, playful, and reminiscent of her childhood as she experiments with scale, form, shape, and movement.



(Post) *Supplication To Self*, 2023, ceramic

Umlauf repeatedly explores the motif of supplication: an intense prayer of request and a humble resignation. To Connett, his female forms feel passive and sexualized, especially when compared to his more dramatic, supplicating male figure. Exploring received notions of gender and patriarchy, Connett chose to open and claim space through her ceramic figure. While paying homage to Umlauf's elongated forms and organic movement, Connett uses 2-D and 3-D planes to show joy and tenacity, paralleling her experience of making her way in the world: nimble but cautious.



## Matt Donner

Matt Donner (BFA University of Georgia) is an award winning figurative, portrait, and animal sculptor creating representational art in ceramics and limited-edition bronzes. His work focuses on expressing an empathetic understanding of his subjects that reflects an emotional and personal journey.

This ceramic sculpture pays homage to Umlauf's bronze *Rhino* (1979). Just as Umlauf was inspired by the rhinos in captivity at the Chicago Zoo, Donner drew inspiration by visiting a local conservation ranch to model his sculpture from life.



*Rhino*, 2023, ceramic



## Sarah Fagan

Sarah Fagan (BA Stonehill College, MA Oregon College of Art and Craft, MFA UT Austin) works to reveal the secret lives of everyday objects through assemblage, drawing, painting, and stop-motion animation.



*Found While Walking: UMLAUF Sculpture Garden* is an installation of 60 miniature assemblage sculptures made from tiny, broken objects found on the side of the road in Austin and other cities. Each piece is a small, imperfect simulacrum of an Umlauf sculpture in the Garden—a playful homage as well as an exploration of replication through limitation.

*The Kiss, 2023, mixed media*



## Leslie Kell

Austin-based artist and designer, Leslie Kell (BS Texas A&M - Commerce), works in photography and digital art. Her work combines her own photos and drawings with layers of video to create her magical “cinemagraphs.”



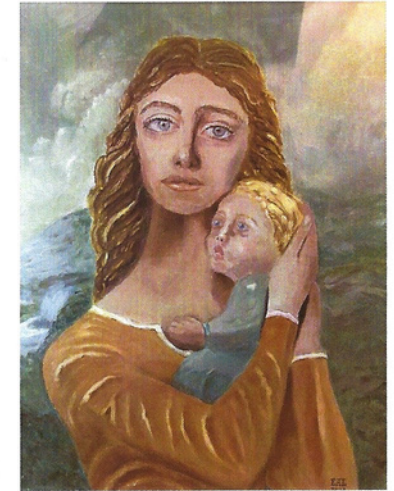
*Essence, 2023, video installation*

This “cinemagraph” celebrates Umlauf’s figurative sculptures while embracing the tranquil surroundings of the Sculpture Garden + Museum. By intertwining the essence of Umlauf’s timeless and classical work with her artistic expression, Kell bridges the gap between past and present.

## Ellen LeBlanc



Ellen LeBlanc (BS UT Austin) divides her time between Austin, Texas, and Santa Fe, New Mexico. She is currently a Tower Fellow at the University of Texas at Austin and an active tribal member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma.



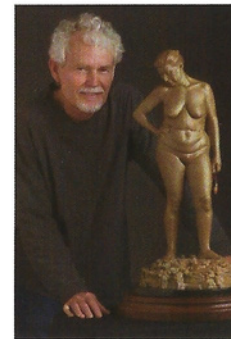
Drawing upon Umlauf’s *Mother and Child* (1962) and his favored theme of familial love, this painting expresses new beginnings, new challenges, and hope for the future.

*Mother & Son, 2023, oil on panel*

## Gary McElhaney

Gary McElhaney is a figurative sculptor known for casting bronze, larger-than-life figures. He studied under Umlauf during his time at UT Austin, building a strong

knowledge and foundation to create quality sculptures.



*Every Woman, bronze, 2012*

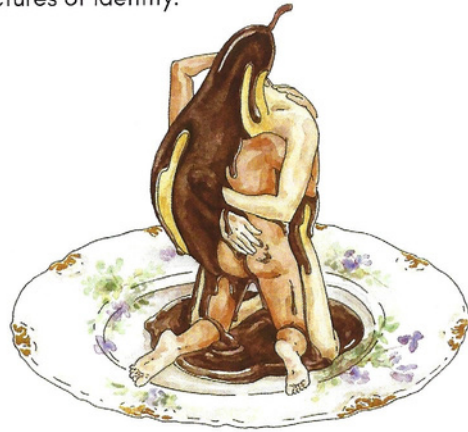
McElhaney describes his own work as “High Realism.” Although he departs from Umlauf’s own style, the artist recalls Umlauf stating, “If you’re going to do something, then do it right!” That inspired him to enroll in physical zoology classes to learn anatomy using human cadavers. Umlauf taught fundamental skills that were foundational for McElhaney in creating his own scrupulously detailed sculptures.

## Jennifer Pate

Jennifer Pate (BFA UT Austin) creates whimsical yet thought provoking figurative illustrations that tap into the uncanny and imaginative spaces of mundane life. By reflecting on her own experience as a Hispanic Queer female artist, Pate produces surreal depictions to expand on limiting structures of identity.



Each of these four watercolor paintings fuse together to create a creative food and drink series, reimagined from Umlauf's sculptures in the Garden (*Seated Bather* 1958; *Lovers V* 1975; *Muse III* 1962; *The Kiss* 1970). Pate's series aims to celebrate the human form through her unique creative vision.

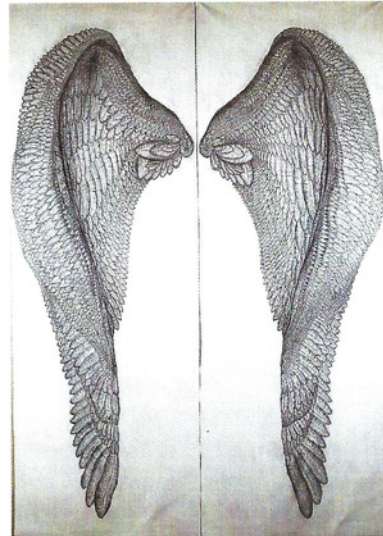


*Poached Lovers*, 2023, watercolor and ink on paper with gold embellishments



## Stanton Pittman

Stanton Pittman explores art as a form of expression through drawing, sculpting, music production, fashion, and design. While also attending Austin Community College, Pittman uses his work to inspire empathy and action.



*Icarus Has Fallen* captures the dramatic motion of Umlauf's *Icarus* (1965) using pencil and charcoal on paper. Similarly, *Angel's Wings* shows the beauty and detail represented in Umlauf's *Angel's Wing* (1981).

*Angel's Wings*, 2019, graphite on canvas

## Susan Scafati

Susan Scafati (BA University of Colorado) is a conceptual artist who works with a variety of mediums and materials, using light metaphors to reflect on the poetics and politics of cultures in flux.



*Honey + The Hive*, detail, 2023, mixed media (lucite, rocks, shells, bee hives, honey, shells, branches, palo santo, thorns)



*Honey + The Hive* is comprised of abstract photographs taken of Umlauf's nude figures collaged together with lucite and paints made from honey, algae, and healing herbs. These artworks center around the female form to explore the relationship between architecture and archetypes—the external bodies that shape our internal psychologies.



## Laura Sturtz

Laura Sturtz (MAIS - Interdisciplinary Studies, Texas State University) is a multidisciplinary artist, working primarily in ceramic, metal, and wood. Her art focuses on geometric and organic forms, sculptural challenges, and current global issues.

*Rhino* draws inspiration from Umlauf's *Rhino* (1979) in the Garden. In this artistic comparison to Umlauf, Sturtz hopes to draw attention to the endangered species and inspire the viewer to contemplate their existence.



*Rhino*, 2020, bronze

## Paul Stankiewicz

Paul Stankiewicz (Columbus College of Art and Design) is an Austin-based painter known for his iconic Austin scenes and colorful designs. Stankiewicz draws inspiration from childhood memories, songs, and photography.



*Spirit of Flight*,  
2023, oil on panel



Stankiewicz's painting celebrates man's ongoing reach for new heights. Stankiewicz started this as a plein air painting, capturing the uplifting sensation of Umlauf's sculpture.

## Bryan Trainor



Bryan Trainor (BS University of Delaware) is a self-taught oil painter of two years. His artwork aspires to inspire others to discover their creative capabilities and embrace art as a powerful form of self-expression.

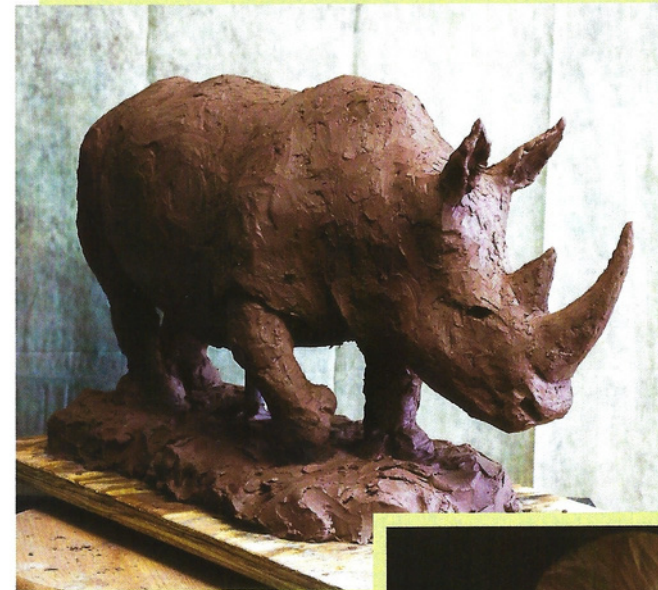
Drawing inspiration from Umlauf's sculpture of *St. Michael & Lucifer* (1985), *Light-Bringer* explores the concept of darkness that can reside in all individuals. The connection between the art and the observer is a mirror for self-reflection—encouraging the audience to question the capacity of humans to embody both the divine and the infernal.



*Light-Bringer*, 2023, oil on canvas



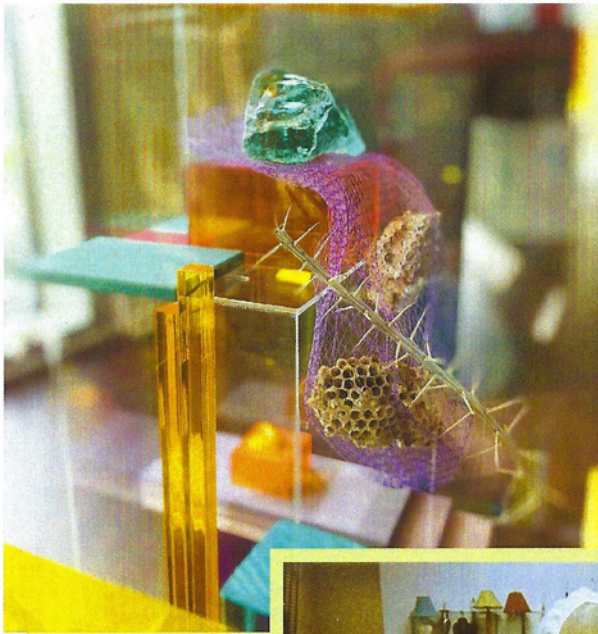
Sarah Fagan,  
*Found While Walking:*  
*UMLAUF Sculpture Garden*, 2023,  
mixed media



Matt Donner,  
*Rhino*, 2023,  
ceramic

Gary McElhaney,  
*Every Woman*, detail,  
2012, bronze

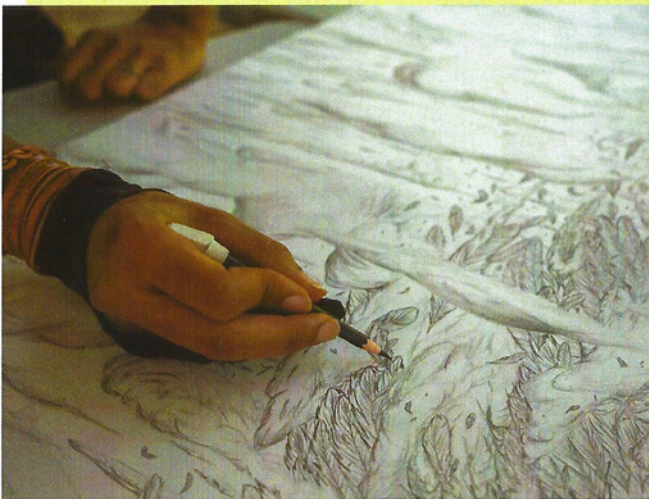




Susan Scafati,  
*Honey + The Hive*,  
detail, 2023,  
mixed media



Bella Cheng, *Charles Umlauf, 21st Century Girl*, detail, 2023, photographs, video, and written texts



Stanton Pittman,  
*Icarus Has Fallen*,  
detail, 2023,  
graphite, charcoal,  
colored pencil, and  
pastels on paper



## OUR MISSION

The UMLAUF Sculpture Garden + Museum exhibits the work of Charles Umlauf and other visual and performing artists in a museum and a garden setting. The UMLAUF provides educational and cultural experiences that encourage the understanding and appreciation of the intersection of nature, sculpture, and the arts.

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