**LAUREN KASMER/MOMENTA**

**STUDY GUIDE and QUESTIONS**

**MOMENTA**

**An online exhibition by LAUREN KASMER**

**January 4, 2021 – March 9, 2021**

**Curated by Susanna Meiers/ECC Art Gallery Curator/Director**

Due to the technological limitations of the ECC website the exhibition, ***Momenta*** is available to be viewed on the artist’s website [www.laurenkasmersmomenta.com](http://www.laurenkasmersmomenta.com) Please watch this site for upcoming details regarding opening event and talk by the artist.

El Camino College Art Gallery is pleased to present the work of Lauren Kasmer in an online solo exhibition, *Momenta*. Lauren Kasmer is a multi disciplinary artist who has worked extensively in photography, clothing and fabric design, installation and video. Her background includes a degree in photography from UCLA and an early introduction to clothing design as the daughter of American fashion designer, Irene Kasmer. Early on, Lauren decided not to follow in the commercial footsteps of her mother but rather to approach clothing from a totally personal standpoint. She incorporates her photographs into digitally printed sensuous wearable art that acts as an element of each of her installation/performance projects and video works over the last ten years.

*Momenta* is comprised of five segments: *Mount*, a video; *Wardrobe*, photographically printed garments; *Equipoise*, an installation with intended activation; *Collaboration at a Distance*, photography; and *Flourish from Fire*, stills of the Blind Courier exhibition installation project (presented at the Brand Library in 2019).

**Please click on still images presented in grids throughout the Momenta exhibition to view the fully expanded images.**

**Mount**

*In this context the title refers specifically to the surmounting or overcoming an obstacle and to the geologic formation, mountain.*

*Mount* is a poetically charged, non-narrative video originally intended for exhibition in the context of a multi-media gallery installation. It is a visually layered piece that reflects on a devastating fire that engulfed Kasmer’s home, destroying not only much of her artwork but literally altered her past and present. Additionally *Mount* addresses the wildfires that have recently ravaged California and Oregon andtackles the overall climatic impact of man upon nature along with the imperative that humans must develop an essential respect for the natural world or perish.

Through the exclusive use of female actors and models in natural settings throughout *Momenta*, one senses an inference by the artist that the feminine or receptive mode of existence is potentially a route to a global healing.

*As our collective and personal lives are impacted by external elements I find that the connection to nature becomes the grounding vehicle for healing and new growth. What grows from ash is an inspiration for personal recovery, creativity and seeds new ideas, stories, and explorations. A force majeure causes one to reach for beauty, contemplation and a return to an internal Eden. -* Lauren Kasmer

Film composer Jennifer Ricciardi has worked in tandem with visuals by Kasmer to create liquid arrangements of electronically synthesized sounds pooled with sounds captured in nature to underscore both the *Mount* video and the *Activation* cycle of *Equipoise.*

*Mount;* video

Run time: 13:25

Mount Film Credits

Concept/Director/Producer: Lauren Kasmer

Director of Photography: Syouhei Fukushima

Director of Photography: Alicia Robbins

Editor: William Allen

Soundtrack: Jennifer Ricciardi

Performers:

Misato Daryl Rose Iida

Monthira Soonthorsarathool

Satoe Fukushima

Yuko Nakata

Yuki Ishihara

Cilka Mark

**Wardrobe**

On view is a collection of the garments made of the artist’s digitally printed photographs on silk, sewn into wearable clothing. These wearable art pieces have been shown with Kasmer’s installation projects spanning the last ten years. The garments contain imagery pertaining to the individual installations- i.e. bee/hive imaged clothing was a component in a project that dealt with honeybees. Frequently the artist’s imagery contains native plant life and forces of nature.

The hand-painted hangers and small tufted rugs were made in 2020, partially stimulated by the urgency and isolation generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Her up-cycled *Sitting Rugs* are produced from the shredded remnants of her digital fabrics.

**Equipoise**

*Equipoise: 1: a state of equilibrium. 2: counterbalance.*

Housed in an apartment bedroom, *Equipoise* is Kasmer’s current installation, presented in an alternative context. Her original intent was to open this thoughtful environment to an invited public, however, the global pandemic intervened. As the Covid time period of necessary self-isolation extended, this space morphed into a meditative chamber with sacred objects, ritual instruments and rugs, intended for the practice of meditative sitting. The artist has a serious practice of meditation and deep interest in the therapeutic properties of specific minerals as well as the potential healing influence of sound. This installation intentionally combines the artist’s history, through use of clothing hanging in the closet and projected images from her videos with her meditation practice. The *Activation* segment of *Momenta* is intended to demonstrate not only her own artistic sensibilities but also to suggest a possibility of what individuals can privately create as a contemplative space within their own environment.

**Collaboration at a Distance**

Lauren Kasmer

Digital photographs on textiles; 2010-2020

The photographers are: Chandler Kennedy, Chris Kennedy, Monthira Soonthorsarathool

Photos models are: Gabriella Ortega, Leilah Franklin, Natasha Nunez, Cody Kennedy, Emily Rosenstein, Satoe Fukushima, Cilka Mark

Due to private circumstances, Lauren Kasmer moved out of Los Angeles mid-Spring, 2020. She continued her work on the *Momenta* exhibition via Zoom, Skype and email to create an impressive collaboration with ten women friends who intermingled to model and photograph each other, wearing and interpreting ten years of an archive of Kasmer’s photographically printed wearables.

**Flourish From Fire**

*Firebird;* Video

Run time: 16:08

Concept/Direction: Lauren Kasmer

Director of Photography: Alicia Robbins

Sound Composition: Jennifer Ricciardi

Choreography/actor: Michelle Lai

Actor: Sharon Doyle

Wilcox bespoke side table

Douglas Wilcox custom commission

Carved ash wood stump

Wilcox bespoke coffee table

Douglas Wilcox custom commission

Walnut slab, carved wood base

Lauren Kasmer's *Flourish From Fire*, is an installation composed of two poetic non-narrative videos surrounded by domestic furnishings and photographically based wall works whose photographic imagery is sourced from a devastating home fire. The arrangement is an inviting space, a reinterpretation of shelter, one that proposes that what can be seen as personal tragedy could instead welcome contemplation and reflection of universal themes.

 ***The barn's burned down:***

 ***now***

 ***I can see the moon.***

 **Mizuta Masahide**

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**QUESTIONS**

1. Lauren Kasmer is an extremely versatile artist who works in a multiplicity of mediums. After looking carefully at her website for Momenta exhibition, select the medium that interests you most. Select a piece within this area of work and state the title and media. Discuss what it is about the particular medium and piece that attracts you.
2. The video by Kasmer exquisitely combines filmic images of figures in landscape and a complex score that includes sounds taken from nature.

Describe what you observe in the video and discuss what you believe it is about. I include the use of the soundtrack in your discussion.

1. Take a look at the selection titled Equipoise and discuss what you believe to be taking place.
2. Throughout the exhibition Kasmer utilizes fabrics, clothing, and objects that she designs. Discuss your reaction to the clothing and fabric overall. Include the use of color and texture in your discussion, explaining how the color and texture affects your reactions.
3. Examine the close up photographs of fabrics and clothing submerged in water. Discuss your reaction to these images including use of elements of color, design and repetition in your answer.
4. The exhibition and each section within have unusual titles. Look up each of the words that you don’t know and write the word and the definition here. Discuss how your understanding of the titles affects your understanding of the work overall.