TAYLOR PAINTER-WOLFE
OKLAHOMA VISUAL ARTS FELLOWSHIP
M. Ed, The University of Washington
BFA, Kansas City Art Institute
Tulsa

My work is made entirely of felted wool. I make and dye by hand. Making my own materials is an important part of my artistic process because it allows me to have a hand in every aspect of creating my art from start to finish. The unpredictability involved always yields unique and interesting results. Using traditional fiber art techniques such as felting, dyeing, applique, reverse applique, and stitching, I turn what was once just plain white wool into colorful and dynamic abstract landscapes.

My inspiration comes from aerial photography, satellite images, and textures and shapes found in natural environments. From high above, the details of a place are stripped away leaving only an elegant design of intersecting, shapes, colors, and lines. I look at thousands of miles of land and turn it into mere inches of stitched field, providing a unique overview of an expansive space. My work is made entirely of felted wool I make and dye by hand. Making my own materials is an important part of my artistic process because it allows me to have a hand in every aspect of creating my art from start to finish. The unpredictability involved always yields unique and interesting results. Using traditional fiber art techniques such as felting, dyeing, applique, reverse applique, and stitching, I turn what was once just plain white wool into colorful and dynamic abstract landscapes.

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CURATOR’S STATEMENT
Art is a way of thinking and knowing. It is a means through which artists and their audience may come to understand our complicated world. Art is sustaining. It is a means of contemplation, discovery, and expansion of mind and spirit. Art transforms our very way of being.

FELLOWSHIP AWARDS
Taylor Painter-Wolfe makes vibrant abstract landscapes influenced by aerial photography and satellite images and the artist is especially drawn to land formations where natural and man-made environments intersect. As evident in the work, when seen from such an expansive distance above the earth details recede and undulating shapes emerge. Painter-Wolfe has a deep and fundamental understanding of materials. Her works are made of felted wool and are dyed entirely by hand. Exploiting the inherent properties of the material, she celebrates wool’s imperfections and allows this to intuitively guide the art-making process. The artist’s intent is to subtly remind us of our relationship to the earth and simultaneously provide the possibility of pure aesthetic appreciation.

Native American artist Jason Wilson creates geometric, hard-edge abstract paintings using flat forms, dynamic patterns, and a full palette of contrasting luminous colors. His work is inspired by childhood memories of his grandmother’s quilts and his paintings share similar formal properties—rhythmic patterns and unmodulated areas of color. Wilson’s art therefore represents cultural continuity, and innovation too, since he has developed a new acrylic paint formula that allows for remarkable precision and flawless surfaces. Referring to his work as “Perceptual art,” the paintings delight the eye. And, while modest in scale they are profoundly monumental in feeling and convey a sense of exuberant joy.

STUDENT AWARDS
Courtney Segrest’s sculpture represents a philosophical investigation of order/chaos, and the known/unknown. Such works, particularly those with geometric patterns, make these forces visible, embody the interplay of their energy held in check, and thus serve as a kind of temporary resolution of binary oppositions. The artist believes we acquire knowledge incrementally and that this process involves stepping into the realm of uncertainty. The act of making art for Segrest brings order to the world and provides an element of certainty. Using ordinary thread, and wrapping it layer upon layer within and around steel structures, the metal form finally warps and is held taut under the pressure of the thread. Energy is bound and chaotic forces are controlled. Making sculpture with such a focus on structural integrity provides the artist with a measure of certainty in an otherwise chaotic world.

Sam Kennedy is fascinated with the tactility and visceral qualities of fabric and uses it to explore the fundamental reality of the body as the basis for being in the world. Her art is also influenced by a painful physical condition impacting daily life. Reminiscent of biomorphic Surrealism, Kennedy makes abstract collages of undulating shapes, menacing hybrid entities, and immersive installations composed of a myriad of elemental organic shapes hanging from ceiling to floor. These organic “body parts” imply metamorphosis and like the real body, are subject to the ongoing forces of gravity. Such room-size installations envelope the spectator’s body and engender an impactful participatory experience.

CONCLUSION
Fifty-five artists offered submissions representing broad subject matter—politics, gender, race, diversity, consumerism, social relations, environmental issues, appropriation, art-for-art’s sake, and, even the spiritual were present, as was a diversity of medium. Selecting only four artists was a difficult task. I am grateful to all of the artists who participated, and I wish them much success.

Leesa Fanning, Ph.D.
Independent Curator and former Curator of Contemporary Art, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art

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OKLAHOMA VISUAL ARTS FELLOWSHIP & STUDENT AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
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