

# MATTEAWAN GALLERY

Winter Residency 2017

Zachary Skinner: Geo-Co-Lab

January 1 – 22, 2017

Matteawan Gallery is pleased to announce our 2017 Winter Residency with Zachary Skinner. For the fourth installment of the Winter Residency, Beacon artist Zachary Skinner will present *Geo-Co-Lab*, a collaborative installation that explores whether art can spark effective social and ecological change. The project features sculpture and drawing and will engage visitors by inviting them to draw on handmade chalkboards hung on the gallery walls. Starting January 1, Skinner will be working in the gallery most days of the week, with regular hours on Saturday and Sunday from 12-5 pm. There will be a closing reception on Sunday, January 22 with a talk by the artist at 3:00 pm.

Each year Matteawan Gallery takes a break from its regular programming for the month of January and invites an artist to work on a specific project in the gallery. The goal of the Winter Residency is to give artists the space to create a new body of work or to continue working on an ongoing project in a new environment. The Residency focuses on work that has a social, performative, or participatory component. The past three Winter Residency projects were Jean-Marc Superville Sovak's *I Draw & You Talk* in 2016, Mollie McKinley's *Cabin Fever* in 2015, and Angelika Rhinnhofer's *a priori* in 2014.

Zachary Skinner's *Geo-Co-Lab* project will include previously made sculptures as well as work made exclusively during the residency. An important feature of *Geo-Co-Lab* is an invitation for the viewer to participate and collaborate by drawing on handmade chalkboards hung on the gallery walls. Skinner suggests a theme for the drawings, usually something with an ecological or scientific focus. Radiating outward from the chalkboards there will be wall-drawings archiving the content provided by visitors. The more content added, the more drawings take over the space of the gallery, like a kind of collaborative mind. Skinner is interested in chalkboards because they represent the transmission of knowledge globally and throughout generations, and they function as a constantly evolving democratic space.

It is important for Skinner that among the chalkboards are interspersed additional 2D artworks, sculptures, and prompts (short sentences, directives, or words of wisdom) meant to encourage and inspire visitors, and to help guide the drawing process. Additionally, Skinner will create a tent structure (*Wisdom Tent*), a contemplative and reflective space designed to be a nomadic shelter and rainwater collection device.

The images and forms in Skinner's work reference the earth, humanity, animals, plants, waste, and interconnectedness. He confronts serious ecological issues with playfulness and a sense of humor. His structures often evoke outdoorsy activities like camping, a nomadic lifestyle, and survivalism. Skinner's recent "Geo-Robots" series of sculptures, drawings, videos, and photographs look somewhat like medieval machines and blur the line between artist and geo-engineer. They are sculptures that do something useful for survival, like reflecting sunlight, capturing solar energy, harnessing the energy of the wind, and collecting rain water. The precariousness of their construction is analogous to the fragile relationship between humanity and nature.

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Zachary Skinner is an interdisciplinary artist who works with themes of geo-engineering and humanitarian activism, and who explores the nexus of inner strength and creativity. He has exhibited nationally, with a solo exhibition at the Ann Felton Multicultural Center, Onondaga Community College, Syracuse, NY in 2015. His work has also been included in shows at Betty Rymer Gallery, Chicago, IL; Morean Arts Center, St Petersburg, FL; Ethan Cohen Fine Arts KUBE, Beacon, NY; The Great Room, New York University, and Tibet House US Gallery (with performance artist Jayoung Yoon), New York, NY; and Shore Institute of the Contemporary Arts, Long Branch, NJ. Skinner was awarded residencies at Jentel Artist Residency Program, Banner, WY; I-Park Artist Residency, East Haddam, CT, and Saltonstall Foundation for the Arts, Ithaca, NY. Skinner received a BFA from SUNY New Paltz College and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. He currently lives and works in Beacon, NY.

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