

## Juror Statement Suzanne Deal Booth

It's been a pleasure for me to be involved with the Umlauf Sculpture Garden & Museum. It is a small gem of interconnectivity between the city that I love and its unique natural environment. It speaks to my passion for art in unexpected places, and for art in an environment that is part of the everyday experience of being in the world. Ever since discovering the notion that art can be freed from the restrictions of the traditional gallery I have been excited by the power of art that defines its own reality, in and by, its situation.

Similarly, to be a juror for the work of the talented pool of graduate students in Studio Art at the University of Texas in Austin for the UMLAUF Prize is an honor. It is somewhat removed from my everyday connection with the art world, from the Conservation group that I run, the Friends of Heritage Preservation and the world of art fairs, galleries, auctions, artist studios, and site visits. It gives me the wonderful opportunity to whet my appetite on the cutting edge of talented young artists work and to be excited by their passion, their vision, their understanding of the world, as well as their desire to explore and reshape the dialogue.

Being a juror this year was sensational. It was a rare treat to be confronted by a flood of ideas realized in ways both provocative and enlightening and I am grateful to each of the graduate students for the opportunity to experience their work.

For the first time, this year, both Ryan Hawk and Gracelee Lawrence were awarded the UMLAUF Prize. Their work seemed to me to be removed from the one trick pony of a good idea hastily executed, but is instead deeply invested in the life of an artist interacting in the world. Gracelee evokes the issues of gender identity, food and sexuality, nourishment and ritual through a playful use of color and material that belies the quiet seriousness of her intentions. The work is strong, yet delicate, and her ability to use form in innovative ways to suggest a new way of viewing an ancient topic, is both refreshing and challenging. Ryan's work leads with deep historical and social perspective and yet is extremely personal and powerful. The simplicity in his work is both bold and incisive. I was struck by the very different and compelling ways these two artists explored "identity issues" and at that point it seemed self evident that they should both be awarded the UMLAUF Prize this year.

## About Suzanne Deal Booth

Suzanne Deal Booth is an art and preservation advocate. She co-founded The Friends of Heritage Preservation (FOHP, [www.fohpinfo.org](http://www.fohpinfo.org)), a non-profit organization dedicated to critical preservation causes worldwide. She currently serves as a Trustee of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Centre Pompidou Foundation, the Menil Collection in Houston, the Contemporary Austin, the Blanton Museum of Art, and Marfa Ballroom. Suzanne Deal Booth also serves on the Art Committee of the Booth School of Business at the University of Chicago. She served as a gubernatorial appointee on the Board of the California Cultural and Historical Endowment for the State of California where she was responsible for the disbursement of \$125 million. In 2001, she and her family established the Booth Family Rome Prize Fellowship for Historic Preservation and Conservation at the American Academy in Rome. She was the patron of the James Turrell Skyspace, *Twilight Epiphany*, on the Rice University Campus and in turn it was named the Suzanne Deal Booth Centennial Pavilion. She is a noteworthy collector and supporter of contemporary art.

## The Prize and its History Katie Robinson Edwards, Curator

The UMLAUF Prize symbolizes the best of Austin in microcosm: founded on the City's history of philanthropy, a supportive artists' community comes together under an open sky. The Prize was born when artist and longtime UMLAUF Board member Damian Priour and his wife Paula sought to support the careers of emerging artists at UT Austin. To do so, they established a cash award and a juried solo exhibition. Its namesake, Charles Umlauf, was an avid competitor who dedicated his career to mentoring young artists. The first four Prize exhibitions were held from 2004-2007. Then, after a long dormant period, the Museum reinstated the Prize in 2014. This year's Prize is especially noteworthy because Juror Suzanne Deal Booth selected not one but two young artists, Ryan Hawk and Gracelee Lawrence, both of whom were impelled to create site-specific work in direct response to themes in Umlauf's bronzes.

Indeed, past artists installed compelling work that directly engaged the UMLAUF's terrain: Mark Schatz's 4000 irrigation flags (2005), Katalin Hausel's stenciled words winding throughout the Garden (2006), or Adam Crosson's Cessna wing eerily suspended over the terrace (2014). Yet what interested Hawk and Lawrence most was the traditional masculine ideology that undergirds Umlauf's sculpture. Umlauf's art is heroic, even when its subjects are in agony. His penchant for the female form, heterosexual lovemaking, and the family is well-evidenced in the Garden. He excelled at connecting viewers with a human story, whether through the three figures in his *Pietà* or the curve of *Eve's* breast. But Umlauf's stories, Lawrence and Hawk indicate, were bound to their time. With *murmurs*, both artists unwind assumptions behind Umlauf's art in implicit and explicit ways, from two very different points of departure. Born over a century ago, Umlauf was a man fully engaged with his era. Born a few decades ago, Lawrence and Hawk are fully engaged with theirs.

**UMLAUF** sculpture  
garden  
& museum

605 Robert E. Lee Road, Austin, Texas 78704  
Tues-Fri 10-4; Sat & Sun 12-4  
[umlaufsculpture.org](http://umlaufsculpture.org)

The UMLAUF Sculpture Garden & Museum is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded around a vast collection of work by American sculptor Charles Umlauf. The Umlauf exhibits the work of Charles Umlauf and other contemporary sculptors in a natural setting and provides educational experiences that encourage the understanding and appreciation of sculpture.

Thank you to Suzanne Deal Booth, Deborah Dupré, and the Priour Family.

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UMLAUF Prize 2015:

*murmurs*  
Ryan Hawk Gracelee Lawrence





# murmurs

Ryan Hawk Gracelee Lawrence

## Ryan Hawk

The goop continuously falls, melts, and fills in curves; it takes the shape of the subject underneath while simultaneously forming its own abstraction. Within this work, the goop (GAK Polymer) serves as a material-fabric between the physical and representational layers, binding one to the other all the while blurring their edges. This oscillation from representing the subject to dominating it reveals lapses in the disbursement of power, ultimately allowing for a multitude of subjective experiences.

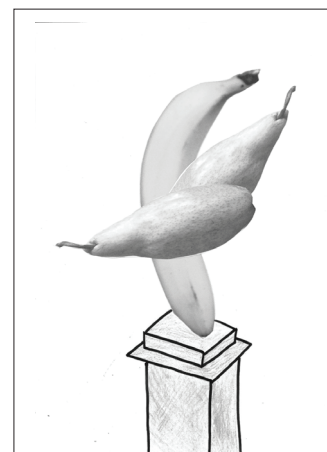
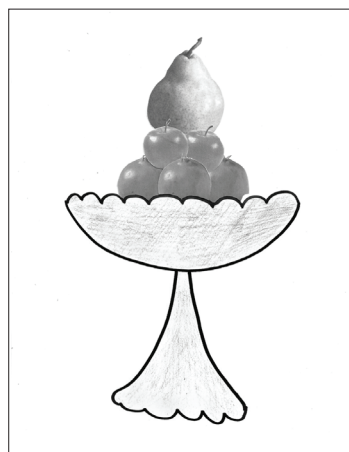
This site-responsive body of work engages Charles Umlauf's figurative sculptures by closely considering the physical and ethical contours that define and uphold their representations. Using specific sculpture from the Museum's Garden as a point of reference, I recreated poses for the camera by utilizing self-identifying submissive men under the guidelines of 'bondage', 'exhibitionism', and 'humiliation'. The resulting images demonstrate a multi-directional performance of artist-subject-viewer and animate a more fluid possibility for exchange: homogeneous depictions of gender, desire, and sexuality fold onto one another as performances of power become complicated and rearranged.

Through re-representing Umlauf sculptures, my work is intended to extrude normative binaric logic and promote possibilities that transcend prevailing power structures. The camera serves as a framing device for the subject of investigation while simultaneously suggesting a contiguity of excretion and waste. In this strategy, passivity becomes the active force, exposing for a brief moment the way in which history, language, and culture perform upon the body.



## About Ryan Hawk:

Ryan Hawk holds a BFA in Studio Art from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA) in Boston, in conjunction with Tufts University. Hawk has exhibited work in several venues throughout New York, Chicago, Boston, and Houston. Most recently he had a solo show at The Art League Houston and was included in a group show at the Nagoya Museum of Fine Arts in Japan. In 2012 he attended the AICAD New York Studio Residency Program in New York, NY and in 2015 was awarded the prestigious SMFA Traveling Fellowship. Ryan Hawk is currently a Master of Fine Arts candidate in Studio Art at the University of Texas, Austin.



## About Gracelee Lawrence:

Gracelee Lawrence received her BFA in Sculpture from Guilford College in Greensboro, NC and is pursuing her Masters in Fine Art in Sculpture + Extended Media at the University of Texas at Austin. She is a contributing writer for the International Sculpture Center Blog and Catapult Magazine. Lawrence has exhibited at grayDUCK Gallery in Austin, TX; BLUEorange Contemporary in Houston, TX; Saint Cloud University in Saint Cloud, MN; Cape Fear Community College in Wilmington, NC; The Carrack Modern Art in Durham, NC; Rancho Paradiso in Joshua Tree, CA; and the Visual Art Exchange in Raleigh, NC. She received the David Womack Memorial Fiber Arts Scholarship (2014), *Eyes Got It!* Grand Prize Winner (2013), and the Ella Fountain Pratt Emerging Artist Grant (2011-12). She has also held several national residencies.

## Fruit & Fountains

Gracelee Lawrence

Fruit has long symbolized an idealized form of sustenance, nourishing the body through optical and sensual satisfaction. Fountains can be replications of nature, borrowed from the waterfall, the flowing stream, or the oasis. These are often depicted with human bodies at leisure. The fountain has become a cliché for youth and beauty, unattainable regeneration. Both fountains and fruit are linked with notions of pleasure and abundance.

Botanically speaking, a fruit is a seed-bearing organism that develops from the ovary of a flowering plant. Throughout history fruit has symbolized fecundity and fertility. For example, the phrase "to bear fruit" is used as an idiom for success. We also associate fruit with eroticism and humor, at the core of which exists the body. More specifically: women's bodies have long been associated with the sweetness, softness, and shape of fruits. Torsos are sorted into apple or pear shapes. Fruit is used as a metaphor for the size of a tumor. Bananas are consistently invoked in phallic jokes. Pregnant women take weekly pictures of their bellies with pieces of produce equivalent in size to their growing fetus. There is a reciprocation of language around bodies and plants: to some extent they are both pruned, grafted, sculpted. They both ripen and decay.

The language around food has seamlessly transferred into how we speak about social exchanges, emotions, and the human form. The connection between body and food goes well beyond mere sustenance. These fountains rearrange and dispute gender specific sexualities by replacing otherwise sexualized bodies with large-scale representations of bananas and pears, or a stack of the forbidden fruits made famous by Eve. This work is a combination of imitation and invention. By employing parody and substituting fruit for the body, I hope to bring forth the humorous, erotic, and problematic aspects of the sculptural tradition and the patriarchal system.