

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**The Montclair State University Galleries Announces
The Garden by Justin Cloud
On View January 31 – July 31, 2023**

Sculptures of machine-like flora and fauna reflect changes taking place across American industries.



corpera, 2020, steel, suede, ornamental grass
Courtesy of the artist.

Montclair, NJ — The Montclair State University Galleries will present *Case Studies 2: Justin Cloud – The Garden* from January 31 through July 31, 2023, which is the latest in the new series of solo exhibitions in the Alexander Kasser Theater Cases initiated by Director Megan C. Austin and Curator Jesse Bandler Firestone.

Case Studies 2: Justin Cloud – The Garden brings together new and recent sculptures of machine-like flora and fauna that employ impeccable craftwork and finishing techniques to reflect changes taking place across American industries including biotechnology, agriculture, and large-scale manufacturing.

The plants and animals depicted throughout the exhibition reference orchids, mammals, and birds, many of which loosely resemble those endemic to the Americas. Cloud is purposeful to avoid realistic representation and instead relies on a heavily stylized way of rendering the species he sculpts. Industrial and decorative materials, such as steel or fiber, and a range of techniques associated with automobile production, such as welding and flocking, push his artworks further away from realism towards science-fiction hybridity where flora and fauna appear machine-like. Through these imagined ecologies, Cloud gestures towards a speculative future where familiar plants and animals become less recognizable and changed, in part due to human intervention through technology.

The blurring relationship between nature and technology is central to the exhibition; however, Cloud also looks at related changes within American industries. The majority of materials, techniques, and themes in Cloud's work can be traced back to his experiences working in Ford factories as a technician and his family's longstanding history as farmers and engineers. This sentimental perspective also harkens back to a previous age of American industry, where goods made in the United States were lauded for superior craftsmanship. With great reverence, Cloud calls upon the act of making something handmade as an expression of care and a source of pride for his family. Part homage to the past and lamentation for the present, these works reflect the loss of artisanal skills and an intense reliance on automated or digital production.

The exhibition is curated by Jesse Bandler Firestone, Curator and Exhibition Coordinator.

“With astounding skill, Cloud creates sculptures that echo both the utopian potential and the dystopian possibilities of a heavily technologized world,” Firestone says. “Alluding to recent developments in bioengineering and highly automated agriculture, Cloud calls into question the impacts of technology on human and non-human environs alike.”

Among the highlights of the exhibition are:

- *Fatty*, 2022, a seven-foot snake made of steel and suede.
- A series of futuristic-looking flowers made of steel and suede.

On view

Please visit the Kasser Theater website for up to date information regarding hours.

<https://www.peakperfs.org/box-office/>

Opening Celebration

Thursday, February 2, 5 – 7 p.m.

Celebrate the opening of *Case Studies 2: Justin Cloud - The Garden* in the Alexander Kasser Theater and Caroline Garcia's *Dancing on Axes and Spears* with a live performance of martial arts inspired choreography in the George Segal Gallery.

[Register on Eventbrite](#)

About The Montclair State University Galleries

The Montclair State University Galleries brings together ideas, perspectives and dialogues to foster curiosity and shared understandings through art. The University Galleries presents diverse and inclusive exhibitions and programs creating connections that unite the campus experience with local and global communities. www.montclair.edu/galleries

All exhibitions and programs are free and open to the public.

Social Media

Join the conversation on social media by tagging @montclairstategalleries @cloudwerk and using the hashtags #CaseStudiesJustinCloud and #MontclairStateGalleries when posting.

Support

This exhibition is made possible, in part, by funds from the McMullen Family Foundation, the College of the Arts and private contributions.

Media Contact

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