



For Immediate Release

GROUND PLAY

A collaborative installation by the Nexus/foundation and
The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

On View at The Schuylkill Center
September 19 - November 28

Opening Reception at The Schuylkill Center's Second Site (Brolo Hill Farm)
Sunday, September 19
4pm – 8pm

About the Exhibit

In *Ground Play*, The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education asks six artists from Nexus, a co-operative comprised of Philadelphia-based multi-disciplinary artists based in Kensington, Philadelphia, to respond to the history and physical space of its Second Site (Brolo Hill Farm). Exhibiting artists include Susan **Abrams**, **Nick Cassway**, **Jebney Lewis**, **Michael McDermott**, **Leah Reynolds**, and **Jennie Thwing**.

The Schuylkill Center's Second Site is one of the most unique and picturesque settings for public art in Philadelphia. Known historically as Brolo Hill Farm, Second Site was at one time an active farmstead. It includes an 18th-century farm house and barn and the remnants of a plowed field once used to grow feed hay for livestock. In *Ground Play*, Nexus artists are considering both the agricultural and cultural conditions that might have existed on the site when the farm was active, and will examine through their installations the implications of those dynamics in today's environmental climate.

By using found objects, photographing discoveries, researching the area's history, or by weaving stories into their own work's narrative, the artists consider the relationship of play to their work within this context. The work in *Ground Play* is an expression of the insightful ways these six artists use color, scale, sound, texture, humor, fear, storytelling and performance as their own artistic playground, coming up with new modes of expression and creating experiences meant to delight and provoke visitors.

Opening Receptions and Ground Play Day

Work from *Ground Play* will be on view at the Nexus Group Show at Nexus Gallery, on Thursday, September 9.

The **opening reception** for *Ground Play* will be at The Schuylkill Center's Second Site (Brolo Hill Farm) on Sunday, September 19, from 4pm – 8pm. Dubbed *Ground Play Day*, the opening will include a series of family friendly activities and two performances led by Nexus artists and Schuylkill Center educators. Activities include paper making, scavenger hunts, mobile making and other environmentally themed art activities.

Visitors are invited to take a **free shuttle bus** running from NEXUS / Crane Arts Building - 1400 N. American St. to the Schuylkill Center *Ground Play* exhibit and *Ground Play Day* activities. The Shuttle bus will pickup at 4pm at NEXUS, returning to NEXUS at 8:30 after the opening festivities are over. **The shuttle is free but seating is limited.** To reserve a seat, Email NEXUS (info@nexusphiladelphia.org) or call 267.312.2821.

About the Artists

Susan Abrams uses natural materials found at Second Site as subjects in her photographs and as ingredients in her handmade paper. She approaches this singular environment by examining many of the small details, often unnoticed, yet essential to the landscape. Some of these elements may be remnants of the Second Site's agricultural past while others represent its return to nature. The results will be mounted on panels and installed in the Second Site's farm house windows. Abrams will also lead a papermaking workshop during the opening.

Nick Cassway responds to the uniqueness of Second Site with a group portrait series created by computer cut reflective vinyl. This project implies a narrative about a gathering in the woods. As an extension to this installation, Cassway invites members of the Philadelphia Ghost Hunting Society to come to the installation for a campfire/lecture about ghost hunting in the Roxborough region of Philadelphia on or near Halloween.

Jebney Lewis conducts a youthful exploration by repurposing readily found objects in the natural landscape and creating new types of landscapes and structures. Gathering materials from the Schuylkill Center's grounds, Lewis will literally build a landscape over time. This work focuses on the ways environments can rapidly change without prior warning and our inability to anticipate how much longer it may take them to change back.

Michael McDermott creates instruments played by the wind. These instruments represent the four primary ways instrumental sounds are made -- plucking, striking, blowing and bowing. A quartet for violin, flute, guitar and percussion will perform McDermott's 20-minute original composition at the opening reception.

Leah Reynolds will cover the face of the Second Site barn with acrylic-coated fabric, giving the impression that it has been inundated with a large and virulent fungus. Reacting to research about the helpful and harmful interactions of humans and their natural world, Reynolds playfully tackles this topic with bright colors, transforming the barn into a giant art object.

Jennie Thwing presents a performance, an installation, and a corresponding film. Thwing will examine the daily lives of the Lenape tribe and early pioneers that lived in today's Upper Roxborough. The film will be shot on location at Second Site and then screened at the Nexus Gallery. Tents will be lit from

the inside for the opening event performance. The films are created through the act of play. The work combines historical re-enactment and personal experiences to create a response to the physicality and history of the land.

About NEXUS/foundation for today's art

NEXUS/foundation for today's art is a member co-operative comprised of Philadelphia-based multi-disciplinary artists who support the exploration, presentation, and consideration of experimental artwork produced by emerging artists. NEXUS challenges artistic traditions, investigates new mediums, repurposes older concepts, and facilitates public conversation regarding the meanings and methods behind today's art.

<http://www.nexusphiladelphia.org/>

About the Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education

The Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education is the nation's first urban Environmental Education Center. Its mission of environmental education is achieved through educational programs for children and adults, land preservation and restoration, wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, and environmental arts. The Environmental Art Program was created in the year 2000, and offers an alternative both to traditional art venues, and to formal methods of presenting environmental education to the public. The program challenges established and emerging artists to reflect on environmental issues, to consider the natural context in which the artwork is being created, and to explore working with new and non-traditional materials.

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**For more information about Ground Play, visit www.schuylkillcenter.org
Ground Play Images are available upon request.**