**Of the Place**

Danielle Abrams, artist + Mary Ellen Strom, artist

When: October 28, 6:00 p.m.
Where: Katzen Arts Center, Room 246

The **MFA Studio Art program at American University** is pleased to present **Of the Place**, a series of conversations that center the artists, art organizations, art activators, and culture producers who have deep connections to locale.

The theme reflects the times that we are living in – many of us have had to stay in place over the last year. The global pandemic, politics, and the cultural circumstances of our contemporary world have necessitated a change in our social and work patterns. We are looking within our own communities to share resources and support. Join us as we talk with Danielle Abrams + Mary Ellen Strom about their respective practices and their collaboration Lincoln Gave Us A Beach.

**LINCOLN GAVE US A BEACH** is a performance work written and performed by **Danielle Abrams** with direction and video by **Mary Ellen Strom**. This project marks Abrams and Strom’s first collaboration. LINCOLN GAVE US A BEACH examines the complex history of the once segregated Lincoln Beach and its former patrons in New Orleans, Louisiana. The beach was an aquatic respite from the summer heat, and is fondly recalled as an exuberant site for black entertainment such as Fats Domino and Irma Thomas. Lincoln Beach was also a segregated recreation area from 1954-1964. Despite its sparkling appearance, the park was built almost 15 miles from the center of town. It was inaccessible by public transportation, and one needed to cross active railroad tracks to enter. Additionally, the nearby upscale “whites only” amusement park, Pontchartrain Beach, was an ever-present reminder of the message of segregation and black inferiority.

This conversation is co-moderated by Katie Hartley (MFA Studio Art, ‘22) and Joshua Tetzlaff (MFA Studio Art, ‘23).

**Participant Bios:**
Danielle Abrams https://www.danielleabrams.com
Danielle Abrams’ performances arise from the social tides that shape her mixed race and queer identities. She adopts personae that animate the dualistic relationships between racial and ethnic groups. Her work stages interactive encounters, and by using plays, puppetry, and monologues, she reimagines the narratives of art history, civil rights, segregation, and popular culture. By rearranging time periods and juxtaposing clans, Abrams’ performances build a radical social vision. Intimate dialogues, homespun lore, and sass are Abrams’ syntax, which liberate the scripts of the past. Abrams has performed and exhibited at the ICA Boston; Detroit Institute of the Arts; Bronx Museum of the Arts; The Jewish Museum, NY; Queens Museum; Grand Central Art Center; and at other performance spaces and galleries. She has received support from The New York Foundation of the Arts, Urban Arts Initiative, the Franklin Furnace Performance Art Fund, and was recipient of the Distinguished Artist Award from the St. Botolph Club Foundation. Abrams is a Professor of Practice at SMFA at Tufts University.

Mary Ellen Strom https://www.maryellenstrom.com
Mary Ellen Strom, from Butte, Montana, U.S. is an artist, curator, and writer. She is the Projects Director for the Center for Arts, Design + Social Research. Strom’s field research primarily takes place in the Rocky Mountain West. Strom’s project-based artworks are produced with ranchers, farmers, scientist, environmentalists, cultural theorists and Indigenous scholars. Her artworks have been exhibited in museums and galleries, and on farms, cattle ranches, on rivers, on trains and horse arenas. Exhibitions include: MoCA, LA; MoMA, NYC; ICA, Philadelphia; Contemporary Art Museum, Houston; MFA, Boston; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Wexner Center, Columbus, OH; Pompidou Centre-Metz, Paris; Satouchi Trienniale, Japan; Hayward Gallery, London; Nagoya Museum of Fine Arts, Japan; and Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne. Awards include: International Fulbright Scholar Fellowship, Bogliasco Fellowship, Creative Capital, Artadia, the MAP Fund, Warhol Foundation and National Endowment for the Arts. Strom is a Professor, Media Arts at Tufts University, Boston, Massachusetts. She is a co-founder of the public art organization Mountain Time Arts (MTA) in Southwestern Montana, U.S. MTA’s upcoming project “Yellowstone Revealed” features five public artworks by Indigenous artists and scholars in Yellowstone National Park in 2022.

This artist talk will be both in-person and available for viewing live. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, in-person seating is at reduced capacity. Please register for this event here.

Or copy/paste the following URL in your web browser to register in advance: https://american.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJIpdeugpzMsE9J3aM3rdLDzBEGw_XuUYinM
After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.