

For Immediate Release

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Des Moines Art Center to feature Iowa City photographer Rachel Cox for *Iowa Artists: 2020* exhibition



DES MOINES, IA (September 2020) The Des Moines Art Center is proud to continue their almost 70 year tradition of hosting an Iowa Artists exhibition. This year the Blank One gallery will feature the work of Iowa City-based photographer Rachel Cox. *Iowa Artists 2020: Rachel Cox* will open October 16, 2020 and close January 3, 2021.

Iowa Artists 2020: Rachel Cox will contain selections from Cox's "Mors Scena" series. After participating in funeral arrangements for family members, the artist became interested in the décor of funeral homes, and how the colors, lighting, and formal elements of these staged environments manifest within the grieving process. Cox conducted research at small, independently owned funeral homes to not only capture their unique, uncanny spaces, but also delve into how notions of class, culture, and social expectation all play a role in how such places come to look and feel. The resulting photos capture the uncertainty and sense of loss often present after a death in contemporary America. Says the artist "Working on this project during a time of unrivaled global and national tragedies has given me more confidence to trust that this kind of representation can reveal the beautiful, yet complex, ways we process grief."

Rachel Cox lives and works in Iowa City as the Assistant Professor of Photography at the University of Iowa. Her work has been shown at the Houston Center for Photography, the Atlanta Contemporary Arts Center, the Belfast International Photography Festival, and the Museo de los Artes in Mexico City, among many other national and international venues. Her images have been published in TIME, the Huffington Post, VICE, the British Journal of Photography, and The Guardian and is included in the collections of The Museum of Contemporary Photography, The Musée de l'Elysee, The University of North Texas Special Collections Library, and in the libraries of the Amon Carter Museum of Art, Maryland Institute of Art, Pier 24, and School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. This exhibition is curated by Laura Burkhalter, who says "I reached out to Rachel about an exhibition about a year ago because I was so compelled by how intense her images were despite how minimal they are in what they show. Now, when



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so many families have lost loved ones due to COVID, the photographs are timelier than I could have ever anticipated.”

The Art Center’s official exhibition website, <https://www.desmoinesartcenter.org/exhibitions/iowa-artists-2020>, will offer links to a downloadable gallery guide and schedule for related programming, including a virtual gallery talk with artist Rachel Cox and curator Laura Burkhalter still to be scheduled.

Stay tuned to **desmoinesartcenter.org** and the Art Center’s **Facebook**, **Instagram**, and **Twitter** channels for additional updates.

Images from left: Rachel Cox (American, born 1984). *Untitled 22* and *Untitled 29* from the “Mors Scena” series. Archival pigment prints. Both 20 ¼ x 25 ¼ inches. Courtesy of the artist.

Des Moines Art Center

Recognized by international art critics as a world-class museum in the heart of the Midwest, the Des Moines Art Center, an AAM-accredited institution, has amassed an important collection of art from the 19th century to the present, with a major emphasis on contemporary art. Focused on quality and global in scope, it includes major works by Henry Ossawa Tanner, Edward Hopper, Georgia O’Keeffe, Francis Bacon, Andy Goldsworthy, Henri Matisse, Wangechi Mutu, Ai Wei Wei, and Kara Walker, among hundreds of others. The collection is housed in three major buildings, each designed by a renowned architect—Eliel Saarinen, I. M. Pei, and Richard Meier. With the exception of special events, admission to the museum is free.

In September 2009, the John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park opened in Des Moines’ Western Gateway Park. Philanthropists John and Mary Pappajohn provided funding for and donated 31 sculptures by internationally acclaimed contemporary artists to the Des Moines Art Center. The collection of sculptures by such artists as Martin Puryear, Louise Bourgeois, Deborah Butterfield, Willem de Kooning, Mark di Suvero, Olafur Eliasson, Keith Haring, Robert Indiana, Ellsworth Kelly, Yayoi Kusama, Jaume Plensa, and Richard Serra, and Joel Shapiro is the most significant donation of artwork to the Art Center in a single gift in the museum’s history. The Pappajohn Sculpture Park is a collaboration of the Pappajohns, the City of Des Moines, the Des Moines Art Center, and numerous corporate and private donors.

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