

November 3, 2024, through January 12, 2025

Portmanteau

a collaborative exchange
between two Kansas natives,
James Kinser of Chicago
and **Ruth Moritz** of Salina

Statement

port·man·teau (*noun*)

- a) a large trunk or suitcase, typically made of stiff leather and opening into two equal parts
- b) a word or morpheme whose form and meaning are derived from a blending of two or more distinct forms

Portmanteau is a collaborative exchange between two Kansas natives, James Kinser (Chicago) and Ruth Moritz (Salina). Mixed media assemblages explore threads of memory, lived experience, and connections to our ancestors as a means of celebrating the narratives which we choose to carry and hold dear or release and leave behind.

Biographies

James Kinser is an interdisciplinary artist who utilizes performance and costume design to explore idiosyncratic expressions of gender that challenge the traditional binary male/female construct. Previously, his work has addressed the relationship between the body, spirituality, and sexuality, all topics which continue to be incorporated in his work. Since 2009, he has collaborated with photographer Niki Grangruth in the production of *Muse*, a series of photographs that reinterpret iconic works from art history and address notions of gender, beauty, and the gaze.

His artwork has been exhibited at the Griffin Museum of Photography (Cambridge, MA), Center for Fine Art Photography (Fort Collins, CO), Grunwald Gallery at Indiana University (Bloomington, IN), and University of St. Francis Art Gallery (Joliet, IL). He received an alumni residency from Columbia College Chicago along with top honors from the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University, Cloyde Snook Gallery at Adams State University in Colorado, and the SohoPhoto Gallery in New York City. His work has been published in *Surface Design Journal*, *Windy City Times*, *Chicago Magazine*, Oregon State University alumni magazine, and is included in numerous public and private collections.

After 21 years in Chicago, James recently relocated 20 miles south to a small suburban town, where he can often be found tending flower beds surrounding his 100+ year-old bungalow. Here, he continues his artistic practice and deepens his reverence for his rural roots.
Website: jameskinser.art



Of Soul and Source by James Kinser, 2024, vintage suitcase, glass cloches, vintage rhinestone jewelry, cheesecloth, copper wire, leaves, 21 x 20 x 20 inches



Ghost Thread by Ruth Moritz, 2024, vintage suitcase, vinyl photograph by artist, glass vials, animal bone, dried grasses, wire, pipe clamps, plastic hand, antique magnifying glass, 20 x 21 x 3 inches

Ruth Moritz is an installation and graphic artist, writer, and former educator in Salina, Kansas. She combines assemblage, text, photography, painting, and textile in her installation work which has been featured around the state at the Salina Art Center, Stiefel Gallery (Salina), Rhatigan Gallery (Wichita State University), Fine Arts Gallery (Kansas Wesleyan University), Fiber Studio (Wichita), Lincoln Art Center (Lincoln), Sandzén Gallery (Lindsborg), Mingenback Gallery (Lindsborg), and Visual Voices Gallery (Salina). Ruth has conducted art and writing workshops for numerous arts agencies and educational institutions throughout Kansas.

Ruth has been involved as a visiting artist in the schools for Salina Arts and Humanities Commission, as a mentor in the Artist Exchange program at the Salina Arts Center, as a curator and designer for the Lincoln Art Center, and as an Exhibition Committee member and Interim Curator at the Salina Arts Center. She has permanent public art installations at both Meadowlark and Cottonwood Elementary Schools in Salina. She is a retired Professor of English from Kansas State University and Kansas Wesleyan University.



Birger Sandzén
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