

Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib,  
Still from *Field Companion*, 2021



## Nadia Hironaka & Matthew Suib

### *Field Companion*

locustprojects

Philadelphia-based artists Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib, known for their fantastical moving images and alternate realities, have created a new immersive film installation for Locust Projects' Main Gallery titled *Field Companion*. Set in a microcosmic forest, the video at the core of the installation is based loosely on the pine barrens that dot Southern New Jersey near their home. Like many, the duo found refuge and solace throughout the COVID-19 pandemic hiking and foraging in these remote, natural landscapes. As America's social fabric frayed deeply over recent years, they considered forest ecosystems in terms of symbiotic and collaborative relationships that sustain coexistence and community.

In *Field Companion*, the forest has been condensed and transplanted to a terrarium in the artists' studio. Twelve cubic feet of pines, shrubs, ferns, moss, fungus and carnivorous plants are reflected infinitely in the terrarium's mirrored walls and captured with a motion-controlled camera and specialized macro lens that dramatically shift the scale and perspective of this miniature landscape.

Living dwellers—snails, slugs, and insects inhabit the miniature ecosystem, accompanied by digitally rendered part-animal, part-human creatures. Through their conversations and interactions, they look forward, investigating progressive methods of sustainability. Shen Shellenberger, writing for the Jersey Arts reviewed the show at Rowan University Art Gallery where it was on view this past September, observed that, “The commentary, delivered throughout by an array of creatures, was written by Hironaka. Although the narrative is familiar and intense – one of concern for the Earth and its inhabitants – it is not somber or heavy-handed. And the music – ahhhhh, the music – was composed by Green-House, a project of Los-Angeles-based artist Olive Ardizoni, and its gentle pace and overall ambiance skillfully moves the story along. ... The film also touches upon the notion of forest-bathing, the Japanese practice of exploring the natural environment through our senses.”

*“We penned the bulk of the script, but a couple of lines are taken from “Entangled Life: How Fungi Make Our Worlds, Change Our Minds & Shape Our Futures” by Merlin Sheldrake and “The Mushroom at the End of the World” by Anna Tsing. These two books, along with a few others on our suggested reading list found in the Mobile Studio, really informed and inspired and thinking for the work.”*

– Nadia Hironaka and Matthew Suib

Bringing attention to questions surrounding social responsibility and community, Hironaka and Suib transform their microcosmic film set into the home of chimeric forest dwellers who consider themes of precarity, mutualism, and collaborative survival.

*Field Companion* is co-commissioned by Locust Projects and Rowan University Art Gallery. Music by Green-House, courtesy of Leaving Records.



#### ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Nadia Hironaka & Matthew Suib work collaboratively on films, videos, public artworks and immersive installations spanning over a decade, often extending their collaboration to include other artists, musicians and composers. Their practice embraces research and experimentation, encompassing historical fact, popular fiction and creative speculation. Working across moving-image culture and mass media idioms, they build counter-mythologies, alternate or parallel realities, and forward-looking visions of the world around us.

The Philadelphia-based artists have been collaborators since 2008. They are recipients of several honored awards including a 2015 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship, Pew Fellowships in the Arts and Fellowships from CFEVA and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Their work has been widely exhibited both domestically and abroad at venues including, Fondazione MAXXI (Rome), New Media Gallery (Vancouver), The Institute of Contemporary Art (Philadelphia), UCLA Hammer Museum, PS1/MoMA, Philadelphia Museum of Art and Arizona State University Art Museum. They have been artists-in-residence at the Headlands Center for the Arts, the Banff Centre, Marble House Project and the Millay Colony for Arts. Matthew Suib is co-founder of Greenhouse Media and Nadia Hironaka serves as a professor and department chair of film and video at the Maryland Institute College of Art. Hironaka & Suib are represented by Locks Gallery. The couple, along with their daughter and two kittens reside in South Philly.

## ABOUT LOCUST PROJECTS

Founded by artists for artists in 1998, Locust Projects is Miami's longest running nonprofit alternative art space. We produce, present, and nurture ambitious and experimental new art and the exchange of ideas through commissioned exhibitions and projects, artist residencies, summer art intensives for teens, and public programs on contemporary art and curatorial practice. As a leading incubator of new art and ideas, Locust Projects emphasizes boundary-pushing creative endeavors, risk-taking and experimentation by local, national and international artists. We invest in South Florida's arts community by providing artists with project grants and empower creative careers by supporting the administrative work of being an artist through an onsite artist resource hub and access to pro bono legal services.



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