

For immediate release:

### *Empirical Evidence*

Selin Balci | Billy Friebele | Rachel Guardiola | Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann | Jing (Ellen) Xu  
Saturday, September 18 — Saturday, November 13, 2021



Selin Balci, *The World*, 2010

Washington, DC: Hamiltonian is pleased to present the exhibition *Empirical Evidence*, which presents the work of five renowned Hamiltonian Artists Fellowship alumni—Selin Balci (2012), Billy Friebele (2014), Rachel Guardiola (2018), Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann (2011), and Jing (Ellen) Xu (2019)—who investigate complex human relationships with living systems, the known versus the unknown. As we find our way facing a new normal living with a global pandemic, it seems appropriate to reflect on our history and let our imaginations run wild in predicting the future. Please join us for the opening of the exhibition on September 18, from 4 to 7pm. There will be an Artist Talk on October 17<sup>th</sup> at 7pm.

Landscapes of mystery and science fiction support creative processes as artists discover new instruments, technologies, and archival methods to capture organic material. Mann’s abstract mixed media installations portray a chaotic natural environment that evokes existential wonder. Friebele’s and Balci’s experimental approaches capture transformation. While Friebele uses technology to substantiate honest interactions between human and nature, Balci’s collections of microorganisms become macro- and microscopic metaphors for the proliferation of lifeforms. Xu animates the cellular relationships of the human body—“bubbles”—that reflect her private inner thoughts. Guardiola unifies the group with her utopian and dystopian landscapes that convey the importance of archiving science.

The science-inspired artwork on view, created from 2012 to now, demonstrates how we make predictions about the world around us and within us to explore phenomenological experiences. The thread connecting microbiology, cellular relationships, geographic landscapes, and climate change, is that growth is assured. The sculptural installations in this show speak to our environmental realities, a macro- and micro-study, as we are faced with the complex truths of our organic world.

The everyday human connection to science is not simply empirical; it is mysterious and vast. Information spreads as rapidly as living organisms—it is abundant, aggressive, dire, hopeful, and overwhelming.

“Empirical evidence” is a scientific construct waiting to be challenged. As time moves forward, new data and variables challenge our beliefs and systems of knowledge. Organic forms and the various perspectives of our ever-changing natural world pose questions about the future of our internal and external living systems.

### About the Artists

**Selin Balci** (b. 1980, Istanbul, Turkey; lives and works in Annapolis, MD) is an interdisciplinary artist and researcher. She is the 2019 Mary Sawyers Baker Prize recipient in the Inter-Disciplinary category by the Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance. Balci has been the recipient of the College Art Association (CAA) 2012 Professional-Development Fellowship, 2010-2012 Hamiltonian Gallery Fellowship in Washington, DC, and Smack Mellon’s Hot Picks Artist Award. She has had solo and group exhibitions at Hamiltonian Gallery, DCAC (District of Columbia Arts Center), WPA (Washington Project for the Arts), ConnerSmith Gallery, Honfleur Gallery in Washington, D.C; Rush Arts Gallery, and Smack Mellon in NY. She holds a Master of Fine Arts from the University of Maryland, a Bachelor of Fine Arts from West Virginia University, and a Bachelor of Science from Istanbul University.

**Billy Friebele** (b. 1977, Washington, DC; lives and works in Washington, DC) explores the space between technology, humans, and nature through hybrid combinations of physical forms and digital processes. His artwork spans kinetic sculpture, video, drawing, installation and sculpture. Friebele has exhibited at the Baltimore Museum of Art, the Orlando Museum of Art, the Art Museum of the Americas, the Katzen Center for the Arts, and the Kreeger Museum among other venues nationally and internationally. Central to his research and teaching are a concern for the tension between our mediated digital experience and the materiality of the environment. He earned an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Billy Friebele is an Assistant Professor of Art at Loyola University Maryland.

**Rachel Guardiola** (b. 1985, Bethpage, NY; lives and works in Colorado Springs, CO) is an interdisciplinary artist and naturalist. She has been a recipient of the Hamiltonian Gallery Artist Fellowship and Studio Residency at School 33 Art Center. Guardiola has exhibited internationally with List í Ljósi Festival, The Wassaic Project, The Halide Project, Rhizome DC, Analog Cookbook, Ortega y Gasset Projects, Light City Baltimore, Artscape, Sydney College of the Arts, Dakar Biennale de l’Art Contemporain, Studio Vortex, Rhode Island School of Design, Arlington Arts Center, and Washington Project for the Arts amongst others. She has been an artist in residence at The Studios Residency MASS MoCA, A.I.R. Gallery Governors Island, Arctic Circle Art & Science Expedition, HEIMA, Vermont Studio Center, and Atelier de Visu. Guardiola is currently Faculty of Photography and Digital Media at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs. She received an MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art and BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design.

**Katherine Tzu-Lan Mann** (b. 1983, Madison, WI; lives and works in Washington, DC) creates large scale paintings and paper installations that examine mythology, identity, and land scape. She is the recipient of the Sustainable Arts Foundation grant, a Fulbright grant, the AIR Gallery and Lower East Side Printshop Keyholder Fellowships, and the Mayor’s Award and Hamiltonian Fellowship in Washington, DC. Some of the venues where Mann has shown her work include the Kreeger Museum, Academy Art Museum, Walters Art Museum, American University Museum, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Rawls Museum, the US consulate in Dubai, UAE, and the US embassy in Yaounde, Cameroon.

**Jing (Ellen) Xu** (b. 1987, Inner Mongolia, China; lives and works in New York) works in drawing, sculpture, installation, video and performance. Xu has exhibited nationally at Hamiltonian Artists (2018-

2019); *Governors Island Art Fair*, Governors Island (2017); *NY Making boring*, Interstitial, Seattle, WA (2017). She has been a recipient of the Hamiltonian Gallery Artist Fellowship and The BRIC Media Arts Fellowship-BRIC Program, NY. She holds a BA in Sculpture and Law from Xiamen University in Xiamen, China, and an MFA in Photomedia from the University of Washington in Seattle.

### About Hamiltonian Artists

Hamiltonian Artists' mission is to build a dynamic community of innovative artists and effective visual art leaders by providing professional development opportunities to innovative new artists and by advancing their entrepreneurial success. Through its unique investment into the next generation of cutting-edge artists, Hamiltonian helps artists to develop important business skills, professional experiences, and visibility to support and sustain their art career. Through artist talks, public events and its membership program, the organization contributes to the vitality of DC's burgeoning arts scene by deepening the appreciation for contemporary art and culture throughout Washington, DC, and beyond.

### GALLERY HOURS/HOW TO VISIT

This exhibition is on view at Hamiltonian Artists, 1353 U St NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday 11am – 6pm. Walk-ins welcome. Admission to the gallery is always free.

For the safety of our community and staff, all visitors will be required to wear a mask and are expected to adhere to social distancing guidelines. The number of visitors is limited to allow for social distancing. Public restrooms are not available at this time.

For more information visit [www.hamiltonianartists.org](http://www.hamiltonianartists.org).

For press inquiries and additional info contact:

Tomora Wright  
Fellowship Director  
[tomora@hamiltonianartists.org](mailto:tomora@hamiltonianartists.org)