

Sonja Thomsen

born 1978 in Chicago, IL

Currently: Professor, Adj., Photography Department of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago IL

Awards and Residencies

- 2024 *The Open Fund*
Visual Studies Workshop Project Space Residency, Rochester NY
- 2023 *Ruth Arts Mary Nohl Alumni Award*
- 2018 *Cow House Studios Residency, Wexford County IRELAND*
- 2017 *FLOATSINK, experimental publication residency, Florida State University, Tallahassee FL*
- 2016 *Exhibition Artist in Residence (ExAIR), John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan WI*
- 2015 *Artist in Residence Latitude, Chicago IL*
Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Mary L. Nohl Suitcase Export Fund for Visual Art
- 2013 *Digital Artist in Residence, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago IL*
Milwaukee WI
MKE Arts Board, New Work Commission for public art project, Listening to Mitchell
- 2012 *City of Milwaukee NIDC CIP Grant*
- 2011 *Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund Fellowship for Established Artists*
- 2009 *Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Suitcase Export Fund for Visual Art*
shortlisted for Santa Fe Prize, CENTER, Santa Fe NM
- 2008 *Hermitage Artist Fellow, Hermitage Artist Retreat, Englewood FL*
- 2007 *Photocentric 2007, MNCP Board of Directors Purchase Award*

Solo Exhibitions (Selection)

- 2022 *by her own movement, Fonderia 20.9, Verona ITALY*
by her own movement, Gallery 062, Chicago IL

- 2021 *Marginal Notes, The Suburban, Milwaukee WI*

- 2017 *In the Space of Elsewhere, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison WI*

- 2016 *In the Space of Elsewhere, Marian Gallery, Mt. Mary University, Milwaukee WI*
In Orbit, John Michael Kohler Art Center Glass Gallery, Sheboygan WI

- 2015 *Your White Light, SPE National Gallery, Cleveland OH*
You'll find it where it is, RayKo Photo Center, San Francisco CA
Glowing Wavelengths In Between, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago IL

- 2014 *Glowing Wavelengths In Between, Dean Jensen Gallery, Milwaukee WI*

2013 *Glowing Wavelengths In Between, The Coat Check*, Chicago IL

2012 *lacuna*, Ctrl+P Catherine Edelman Gallery, Chicago IL
efface, University of Missouri, Columbia MO

2010 *RE: CURRENT*, Dean Jensen Gallery, Milwaukee WI

Group Exhibitions (Selection)

2023 *Pause/Connect*, Warehouse Art Museum, Milwaukee WI, curated by Lisa Hostetler

Collection Rotation, Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago IL

2022 *Refracting Histories*, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago IL

On Repeat: Serial Photography, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee WI

2020 *Keeper of the Hearth, Picturing Roland Barthes' Unseen Photograph*, HCP, Houston TX

Pool ii, screened for Balconnection Festival, Alsancak-Izmir, TURKEY (collaboration with Thom Bridge)

Pool ii, screened at Without You My Life Would Be Boring, Staffordshire Street Studios, London ENGLAND (collaboration with Thom Bridge)

Pool, installed in Photography & _____, Catherine Edelman Gallery, Chicago IL (collaboration with Thom Bridge)

Our Reflecting, installed in Photography & _____, Catherine Edelman Gallery, Chicago IL (collaboration with Linda Connor)

2019 *Penumbra Iteration #19 a public installation*, Terrain Biennial, Evanston IL

Listening to Mitchell Archive at MPL Gathering Art Stories and Place, Mitchell Street Branch of the Milwaukee Public Library, Milwaukee WI (public art collaboration with Adam Carr)

2018 *Good News*, Ralph Arnold Gallery, Loyola University, Chicago IL

Mary Nohl and the Walrus Club, John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan WI

Dymaxion Trajectories, Soccer Club Club, Chicago, IL

2017 *New Bauhaus Chicago: Experiment Photography*, Bauhaus Archiv, Berlin GERMANY

Tangible Space, a dance performance in the space of elsewhere, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison WI (collaboration with choreographer Maria Gillespie)

Jesse Chehak, Will Pergl and Sonja Thomsen, Fine Arts Gallery, UW Parkside, Kenosha WI

Collective Thinking, For Freedoms, Aperture, New York NY

2016 *Photography is Magic*, Aperture Summer Open, Aperture, New York NY

- 2015 *Femme Papel*, RayKo Photo Center, San Francisco CA
The Annual, an exhibition of new Chicago art, Chicago Artists Coalition, Chicago IL
Moonlight Sleeping on a Midnight Lake, ADDS DONNA at Mana Contemporary, Chicago IL
Photography Sees the Surface, Higher Pictures New York NY
Pacific Midwest, INOVA, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, Milwaukee WI
The Moments Between, A+D Gallery, Chicago IL
- 2014 *Konstellationen*, Gallery 5.6, Munich GERMANY
Tabula Rasa, Center for Photography at Woodstock, Woodstock NY
Collaborative Design, UWM Union Gallery, Milwaukee WI
Chicago Style, David Weinberg Gallery, Chicago IL
- 2013 *Orders of Possibility*, *Form and Content Gallery*, Minneapolis MN
Pacific Midwest, *Newspace Center for Photography*, Portland OR
Nexus, *Hoffmaster Gallery*, Lawrence University, Appleton WI
- 2012 *Shift*, *Parkland Art Gallery*, Parkland College, Champaign IL
Mary L. Nohl Fellowship Exhibition, INOVA Gallery, Milwaukee WI
Bergmal/Echo: SonjaThomsen/Charlotta Hausksdottir, Reykjavik Museum of Photography, Reykjavik ICELAND
- 2011 *Out of the Suitcase IV*, Layton Gallery, Milwaukee WI
AGROUND, Photographic Center Northwest, Seattle WA
Earth Now: American Photographers and the Environment, New Mexico Museum of Art, Santa Fe, NM
- 2010 *Artifacts*, Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis IN
Faculty Exhibition, Layton Gallery MIAD, Milwaukee WI
Wisconsin Triennial, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison WI
Vestige, 58 Gallery, Jersey City NJ
Eight Counties Exhibition, John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan WI
Art from the Heartland, Indianapolis Art Center, Indianapolis IN
- 2009 *H2O: Film on Water*, Spheris Gallery, Hanover NH
RSVP Arbor, Michael Mazzeo Gallery, online exhibition
Oil, Houston Center for Photography, Houston TX
Night Work, The Armoury Gallery, Milwaukee WI
Current Tendencies 1, Haggerty Museum of Art, Marquette University, Milwaukee WI
Pause to Begin, Gallery Kunstler, Rochester NY
- 2008 *From the Collection*, Photography Rotation, Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee WI
Big Bang, *Small Bucks*, Dean Jensen Gallery, Milwaukee WI
Water, New Works Gallery Silver Eye Center for Photography,

Pittsburgh PA

The Sky is Falling, SPUR Projects, Portola Valley CA

Who Gets What; a political show, David Weinberg Gallery, Chicago IL

Faculty Show, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, Milwaukee WI

Oil, Griffin Museum of Photography, Winchester MA

2007 *Bridge Art Fair Miami*, represented by SPUR Projects, Miami FL

Silverstein Photography Annual, Silverstein Photography, New York, NY

Oil and Water, Dean Jensen Gallery, Milwaukee WI

High Tide, SPUR Projects, Portola Valley CA

Wisconsin Triennial, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Madison WI

Photocentric, Minnesota Center for Photography, Minneapolis MN

2006 *Calling Forth Certain Experiences*, Layton Gallery, MIAD, Milwaukee

Water, The Summer Gallery, Sag Harbor NY

Resonance, Photographic Center Northwest, Seattle WA

2005 *Forward: Wisconsin Art now*, Charles Allis Art Museum, Milwaukee WI

Water Series, Dean Jensen Gallery, Milwaukee WI

2004 *Cream-from the top*, Arts Benicia, Benicia CA

Faculty Show, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, Milwaukee WI

SFAI MFA Exhibition, Herbst Pavilion, San Francisco CA

Memory/loss, The Lacunae Gallery, San Francisco CA

2003 *Gene Carnival*, Swell Gallery, San Francisco CA

Book Show, Walter McBean Gallery, SFAI, San Francisco CA

2002 *Crowd Pleasers*, Swell Gallery, San Francisco CA

Evanescence, Diego Rivera Gallery, SFAI, San Francisco CA

Public Collections

Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago IL

Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Yale University, New Haven CT

Bowes Art & Architecture Library, Stanford University, Stanford CA

Cleveland Museum of Art, Ingalls Library, Cleveland OH

DePaul University Art Museum, Chicago IL

Fleet Library at Rhode Island School of Design, Providence RI

Hirsch Library, Museum of Fine Arts Houston TX

Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago IL

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles CA

Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee WI

Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago IL

Museum of Modern Art, New York NY

National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.

Reykjavik Museum of Photography, Reykjavik ICELAND

Texas State University, Alkek Library, San Marcos TX

University of Arkansas - Fayetteville AR

Walker Art Center Library, Minneapolis, MN

Education

MFA 2004 Photography, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco CA
Post Bac 2002 Photography, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco CA
BA 2000 Biology & Studio Art, Kenyon College, Gambier OH

Publications

- 2020 You Will Find it Where it is, a reader, Sonja Thomsen, Edited by
Christina Labey, Poor Farm Press, Wisconsin
Keeper of the Hearth: Picturing Roland Barthes Unseen Photograph,
Edited by Odette England, Schlit Publishing, Amsterdam NETHERLANDS
- 2017 New Bauhaus Chicago Experiment Photography, Edited by
Bauhaus-Archiv, Museum fur Gestaltung, Hirmer Publishers, GERMANY
In the space of elsewhere, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, The
Fox Company, WI
Un' apparizione di superfici, author Luca Panaro, APM edition, ITALY
GR-09022017, Fotogalleriet, Oslo, SKREID Publishing, NORWAY
The fold, Service Bureau at the School of The Art Institute of
Chicago, Chicago IL
You'll find it where it is, artist book, Floatsink Tallassee FL
- 2015 Pacific Midwest 2.0, Exhibition Catalog published by INOVA at UWM,
Milwaukee WI
Glowing Wavelengths In Between Catalog, DePaul University Art
Museum, Chicago IL
- 2014 at work, vol. 1-4, artist zines, DAiR Columbia College Chicago IL
- 2013 Glowing Wavelengths In Between, Coak Check Gallery, essay by
Allison Grant, Chicago IL
- 2012 Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fellowship Exhibition
Catalog, essay by Britt Salvesen, Milwaukee WI
Bergmal / Echo, Exhibition Catalog, essay by Sigrun Siguroardottir,
Isafold Printing House, Reykjavik ICELAND
- 2011 Earth Now: American Photographers and the Environment, Katherine
Ware, Museum of New Mexico Press, Santa Fe, New Mexico
collect.give, the book, Edited by Kevin Miyazaki, Designed by Heidi
Romano, Magcloud
- 2010 Pause to Begin Exhibition Catalog, Booksmart Studio, Rochester NY
- 2007 Photocentric, Exhibition Catalog, George Slade, Minneapolis MN
Silverstein Photography Annual 2007, Exhibition Catalogue essay by
Lisa Hostetler, New York NY

TALKS & PANELS

- 2024 Artist Talk, Photography Department, UIC Chicago IL
Artist Talk, CUNY Staten Island, New York NY
- 2023 Workshop and Artist Talk, FLAD Visual Arts Course, Loule PORTUGAL
Artist Talk, Warehouse Art Museum, Milwaukee WI
Guest Lecture, Publish your Photography Book, La Luz Workshops

- 2022 Gallery talk, Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago IL
In Conversation with curator Ariel Pate, Milwaukee Art Museum,
Milwaukee WI
Workshop, FLAD Visual Arts Course, Arquipelago Centro de Artes
Contemporaneas, Azores PORTUGAL
Artist Talk, Filter Photo Festival, Chicago IL
Artist Talk, Photographic Center NorthWest, Seattle WA
Artist Talk, Emily Carr University, Vancouver CANADA
In Conversation with artist Jen Delos Reyes, Gallery 062, Chicago
IL
- 2021 Discussion with contemporary photographers, hosted by J. Sybylla
Smith, zoom webinar
You will find it where it is: a reader, in conversation with editor
Christina Labey and designer Elana Schlenker, The Suburban,
Milwaukee WI
Musings from the Margins of a Polychrome Future, in conversation
with Lafayette Cruise, The Suburban, Milwaukee WI
In Conversation with Aaron Turner, The Suburban, Milwaukee WI
In Conversation with Michelle Grabner & Lisa Sutcliffe, The
Suburban, Milwaukee WI
- 2020 In Conversation with artist Thom Bridge, Zoom talk for
Balconnection Festival, Alsancak Izmir TURKEY
In Conversation with Aimee Beaubien & Marzena Abrahamik, Zoom talk
for SAIC Photography Department, Chicago IL
- 2019 Artist Talk, Keene State College Art Department, Keene NH
Artist Talk, St. Cloud University Art Department, St. Cloud MN
- 2018 Artist Talk, Photo Alliance Keynote, San Francisco Art Institute,
San Francisco CA
Moderator, Inside/Out Columbia College Chicago Photography MFA
Candidate Panel, Chicago IL
- 2017 Conversation with Choreographer Maria Gillespie, Madison Museum of
Contemporary Art, Madison WI
Panelist, Will Pergl, Jesse Chehak & Sonja Thomsen, University of
Wisconsin-Parkside, Kenosha WI
Art+Mass, Conversation with Physicist Wesley Smith, Madison Museum
of Contemporary Art, Madison WI
Conversation with Professor John Mann, Florida State University,
Tallahassee FL
- 2016 Artist Talk, In the space of Elsewhere, Mt. Mary University,
Milwaukee WI
Panelist, Community of Madrid Forum, Piece of Cake Panel,
PhotoEspaña, SPAIN
Artist Talk, Artery at John Michael Kohler Art Center, Sheboygan WI
- 2015 Artist Talk for Cultural Reproducers, DePaul University Art Museum,

- Chicago IL
Conversation with Nicholas Frank, DePaul University Art Museum,
Chicago IL
- 2014 Panelist, Piece of Cake Collective, Photographic Center Northwest,
Seattle WA
Artist Talk, Dean Jensen Gallery, Milwaukee WI
Artist Talk, Listening to Mitchell, UWM Art Department, Milwaukee
- 2014 Walking tours, Listening to Mitchell, Historical Mitchell Street,
Milwaukee WI
- 2013 Panelist, Pacific Midwest, Newspace Center for Photography,
Portland OR
Artist Talk, Digital Artist in Residence, Columbia College Chicago,
Chicago IL
Artist talk, Lawrence University, Appleton WI
Artist talk, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque NM
Image maker presentation SPE National Conference, Chicago, IL
- 2012 Artist Talk, Mary Nohl Fellowship, INOVA, Milwaukee WI
Gallery talk, Reykjavik Museum of Photography, Reykjavik Iceland
- 2010 Artist Talk, Lawrence University, Art Department, Appleton WI
- 2009 Artist Talk, Current Tendencies, Marquette University, Haggerty
Museum of Art, Milwaukee WI
- 2007 Artist Workshop, Scholastic Awards Day, Milwaukee Art Museum,
Milwaukee WI

Select BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2023 September Faculty and Staff Accomplishments, School of the Art
Institute of Chicago, Chicago IL
- 2022
Susan Aurinko, Remixing the Past: A review of "Refracting Histories" at
the Museum of Contemporary Photography, November 21, 2022
Lisangela Perigozzo, Espoarte Contemporary Art Magazine, by her own
movement Da Fonderia 20.9, June 27, 2022 ITALY
Kerry Cardoza, New City Art, Light and Space: The Magic of Sonja
Thomsen's Experiential Art, May 6 2022
- 2021
Kerry Cardoza, Art Top 5: March 2021, NewCity Art, February 24, 2021
- 2020 Lori Waxman, The Quarantine Times, "Covid Reviews," August 24, 2020
- 2019
Claire Voon, ARTnews, "A Chicago Biennial is Taking Art Beyond Museum

Walls and Into People's Yards," October 18, 2019

2018

Lori Waxman, Chicago Tribune, "10 visual art shows to see this fall," August 30, 2018

2017

Robyn Norton, Wisconsin State Journal, "On view 'in the space of elsewhere'" July 23

John McLaughlin, Isthmus Madison, "Space of wonder, MMoCA's lobby and staircase glimmer with an ethereal work," July 13, 2017

Saiyna Bashir, The Cap Times, "Artist Sonja Thomsen transforms the MMoCA lobby with light and shadow," June 16, 2017

Bonnie North, WUWM LakeEffect, "'Moises/Landscape' Exhibit: A tribute to a father lost," aired February 2, 2017

2016

Stacey Goldberg, Photo District News, "Beyond the 2D print: Sonja Thomsen's Deconstructed take on Photography," August 11, 2016

Emily Chapman, Arches Mount Mary University, "The magic of illusion: Sonja Thomsen plays with light in 'In the Space of Elsewhere'" 11/05/16

Rafael Soldi, Strange Fire Collective Q&A: Sonja Thomsen, 10/06/16

Aperture blog, "Photography is Magic: An inside look at the 2016 Aperture Summer Open," July 28, 2016

Society of Photographic Education, SPE blog, "Glowing Wavelengths In Between and more," March 21, 2016

Kevin Miyazaki, Lenscratch, "Sonja Thomsen, the States Project" January 6, 2016

2015

Lori Waxman, Chicago Tribune, "The best of 2015 in Chicago Visual Art," December 11, 2015

Caleb Pershan, The SFist, "The SFist to do list," November 3, 2015

Sura Wood, The Bay Area Reporter, "Women Behind the Lens," October 8, 2015

Aline Smithson, Lenscratch, "Femme Papel at RayKo Photo Center," October 6, 2015

Loring Knoblauch, Collector Daily "Photography Sees the Surface at Higher Pictures," July 21, 2015

Chicago Tribune, "Museum Pick of the Week, Glowing Wavelengths In Between, at DePaul Art Museum" Arts & Entertainment Section 4, 05/14/15

Interview, Sonja Thomsen in Conversation with Gregory J. Harris, DePaul University Art Museum, April 13, 2015

2014

Emily Cartwright, 88.9 Radio Milwaukee, "listening to Mitchell: Audio art rediscovers a historic street," August 1, 2014

mondo*dr; the international publication for technology in entertainment, "Biamp Systems' Tesira Server -IO Powers Milwaukee Art Installation," August 2014

Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "'Listening to

Mitchell' captures sounds, images of a Milwaukee thoroughfare," July 18, 2014

Patrick Leary, Neighborhood News Service, "Public art installation explores sights and sounds of Mitchell Street," July 16, 2014

Bonnie North, WUWM Lake Effect, "Listening to Historic Mitchell Street on Milwaukee's South Side," aired July 11, 2014

Debra Brehmer, Milwaukee Magazine, "Art: A Dynamic Mural," July 1 2014

Lisa Bonvissuto, Urban Milwaukee, "Mitchell Street Tells its Story," June 25, 2014

Tyler Friedman, Shepherd Express, "Historic Mitchell Street Speaks! Artists Sonja Thomsen and Adam Carr honor the heritage," June 10, 2014

Molly Snyder, OnMilwaukee, "'Listening to Mitchell' installation launches in June," May 31, 2014

Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "Public art project listening to Mitchell' captures a neighborhood's layers," May 21, 2014

Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "Pitch Project gallery opens to the public March 29," March 21, 2014

Daily Freeman, "Art Beat: Two exhibits underway at the Center for Photography at Woodstock," February 14, 2014

2013

Sheila Regan, City Pages Art Minneapolis, "'Orders of Possibility' at Form + Content," December 27, 2013

Robin Dluzen & Pedro Velez, Art F City, "We went to... someplace else in Chicago," November 19, 2013

2012

Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "Review: Sonja Thomsen at Inova," November 23, 2012

Iceland Review, "Echo and Diary in new Photo Reykjavik Exhibitions," January 14, 2012

2010

Peggy Sue Dunigan, Shepherd Express, "Art at Dean Jensen worth another look," May 17, 2010

Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "Gallery Night Picks," April 15 2010

2009

Adam Carr, Interview, 88.9 Radio Milwaukee, Milwaukee WI, March 11, 2009

Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "A flow of visual ideas," April 23, 2009

2008

Francesca Cozzone, The Leader, "Making the intangible tangible," 04/23/08

New City Art, "Review: Who Gets What/ David Weinberg Gallery, 11/09/08

Nymphoto, Interview, collective of women photographers, 11/13/08

2007

Peggy Sue Dunigan, Shepherd Express, "Milwaukee's Rising Artists,"

December 27, 2007

Vince Alletti, New Yorker, "Silverstein Photography Annual," October 1, 2007 pg22

Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "Nature shines and splashes its way into artists' exhibit," July 12, 2007

Jacob Stockinger, Wisconsin State Journal, Rhythm 18, July 5, 2007

Peggy Sue Dunigan, Shepherd Express, "Blue Water, Black Gold," June 14, 2007

Kevin Lynch, The Capital Times, "Triennial Art," May 4, 2007

2005

Mary Louise Schumacher, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "Photographer captures subtlety of nature in spare images," Sunday July 31, page 2E

2004

Meredith Tromble, Art Contemporaries, "A Journey to the Bottom of the sea," Spring 2004

Dana Enfinger Benicia Herald, "Arts Benicia," Friday Nov. 12, page A2

James Auer Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "Thomsen's photographs on a different plane," February 25 2004