

Tamara Johnson  
*How to fold a fitted sheet*

September 12 — November 1, 2020, by appointment  
Extended open hours Saturday, September 12, 1 - 8PM



Tamara Johnson, *Port Aransas, 1986*

ex ovo is pleased to present *How to fold a fitted sheet*, a solo exhibition by the Dallas-based artist, curator, and educator, Tamara Johnson (b. 1984, Waco, TX), opening Saturday, September 12, 2020. In lieu of an opening reception, the gallery will hold extended hours from 1 - 8 pm on September 12 to accommodate socially distanced viewing. Following the opening, *How to fold a fitted sheet* will be open by appointment through November 1. Contact Allison Klion at [allison@exovoprojects.com](mailto:allison@exovoprojects.com), or 214.695.3753 for additional information.

Johnson will present four new sculptures including *Deviled Egg and Okra Column* (2020)—which debuted as the first Nasher Windows installation at the Nasher Sculpture Center this May—as well as a new video work, *The Philosophy of Goo* (2020) produced in collaboration with Trey Burns.

Goo, both literally and figuratively, is Johnson's primary subject, which she articulates in a 13-minute hybrid video of found and documentary footage along with narrative that mixes personal anecdotes with idiosyncratic research. *The Philosophy of Goo* (2020) serves as a guiding thesis for Johnson's larger body of work. *How to fold a fitted sheet* expands upon and adds to Johnson's established sculptural vocabulary of familiar suburban forms, honing in on a personal iconography drawn from her childhood in Waco warped and frozen to carry the psychological and emotional weight of memory. Returning to

Texas in 2018, Johnson's focus shifted to explore her relationship to the South as she navigated formerly familiar territory as a changed person. Johnson's sculptures may speak in a full Texas drawl, but those monophthongs (the linguistic hallmark of the accent) hang sticky and uncomfortable on the tongue. Family specialties like okra, deviled eggs, queso dip, and dump cake (all notably squishy, gooey, Texas-inflected foods) get caught up in chain-link gates and land in the medicine cabinet next to the facial wax. The recognizability of the objects Johnson renders in resin, epoxy and pewter (to name a few materials) belies both the meticulous process of their making and the suggestion of potential energy they contain, we never see them sweat. Each sculpture, masterfully rendered to appear more real than real, captures a split second, the moment before or after. Each hangs on the precarious edge of the imagined action that produced them. It's possible to imagine stepping gingerly back from *Deviled Egg and Okra Column* (2020) breath held tightly in the chest, watching the stack of mushy foods teeter on its gelatinous base. Across the room, the sound of the dump cake splatting against the wall nearly echoes throughout the gallery, frozen in its moment of impact, congealed but threatening to slip off the wall. Near the front of the gallery, a can of Rotel comes to a stop after a slow creep under the garage door, leaving a shiny trail of its wrapper behind it. Each sculpture holds a latent tension within it, a sense of its becoming and its disintegration all at once. Materials and meaning slip in and out of each other, permanently held in an instant of impermanence, grasping onto a feeling or memory only for it to slip out of focus again.

Tamara Johnson (b. Waco, TX, 1984) received her BFA From the University of Texas at Austin in 2007 and her MFA in Sculpture from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2012. Her recent projects have been exhibited at Nasher Sculpture Center (Dallas, TX), The Blanton Museum of Art (Austin, TX), Utah Museum of Contemporary Art (Salt Lake City, UT) the Modern Museum (Ft. Worth, TX), and various spaces in New York including Socrates Sculpture Park, The CUE Art Foundation, Wave Hill, SPRING BREAK Art Show and others. In 2018, Johnson was awarded a grant from the Brooklyn Arts Council to complete the first public art piece in Maria Hernandez Park in Brooklyn, NY. She has been awarded grants from The Foundation for Contemporary Arts, the Santo Foundation, and a Faculty Development Grant from Southern Methodist University where she is a Visiting Lecturer in Sculpture. Johnson was recently featured on the Modern Art Notes (MAN) Podcast hosted by Tyler Green. Johnson also runs Sweet Pass Sculpture Park with her partner, Trey Burns, an art space featuring contemporary outdoor projects on a rotating basis. Sweet Pass Sculpture Park has received grants from the Nasher Sculpture Center and the National Endowment for the Arts.