

Confirmed title: *the mud at our feet*

Exhibition statement: *the mud at our feet* is a two person exhibition featuring the work of Atlanta-based artist Sarah Nathaniel and New York-based artist Komikka Patton. This exhibition explores themes of interconnectedness, the symbiotic relationship between the individual and the collective, and honoring the intangible spaces that define the friction of relating. Patton's use of collage, printmaking and illustrating attempts to remind each of us of our connections to and potential origins within the immaterial world. Nathaniel takes a measured approach using various materials, such as rope and tape, to direct our attention to the sinews of what grounds us.

Curator statement: As conversations around climate change and its symbiotic relationship with economic and social decay and transformation increase in presence and intensity, we find ourselves and others motivated by new fears and hopes. So much about the daily operations of our lives are outlined by the burden we feel to always be achieving, moving--even if that movement is only circular and not forward; in this way, living can easily become synonymous with a laser-focused vision of ourselves and only ourselves. If survival of the individual depends on the welfare of the collective, but survival instincts would encourage us to hold onto ourselves, our resources, our space, and our possessions with a white-knuckled grip, how do we find peace in the necessary compromise of letting go?

Throughout *Upstream: Selected Essays*, Mary Oliver writes about a relationship with the world around her that is heavy with a luscious, pulpy reverence, in part due to Oliver's intimate understanding of herself as something that is apart and of the world, not beside or cursed to trudge through it. In "Winter Hours" she writes, "The farthest star and the mud at our feet are a family. There's no sense in honoring one thing or a few things, and then closing the list. ...we are at risk together or we are on our way to a sustainable world together."

In this frame of mind, I wonder, how can we learn to see ourselves as only so many airport lighting aids, each emitting our own luminosity yet connected to and delineating something we are all a part of, in a way that fuels us to imagine, then manifest, new ways of living?

In the face of global anxieties and devastation, how can we overcome the instinct to isolate and detach in favor of building community and increasing the chance of not only survival but a sustainably joyful life for ourselves and future generations? If we truly are "each other's destiny", "the pine tree, the leopard, the Platte River and ourselves," looking upon the care of each other and the Earth around us as integral is synonymous with caring for ourselves.