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**VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP ANNOUNCES
FALL PROGRAMMING**



Improvisation No. 12 by Margaret LeJeune and *The barrier has not been breached by the fire* (2022) by Meredith Davenport.

Rochester, NY (August 6, 2026) – Visual Studies Workshop in Rochester, NY announces its Fall 2026 programming, including a four month exhibition exploring climate change; artist talks with acclaimed local and national photographers, filmmakers and multimedia artists; interactive workshops; a Game Jam series; and surprises from the VSW Archives.

VSW programs feature experimental and boundary pushing artist installations, exhibitions, creative workshops, film screenings, talks, Community Curator™ events, performances, photo presentations and conversations showcasing the work of local and national artists working in photography, film, and media arts. Events take place at VSW's fully accessible facility featuring a gallery, archives, workrooms, analog darkroom, and 100 seat theater at 36 King Street. Tickets are available online, or at the door for all in-person events.

A centerpiece of VSW's Fall programming is the exhibition ***Explorations in the Ecotone: Works by Meredith Davenport and Margaret LeJeune***, on view September 4 through December 19, 2026. Davenport and LeJeune are both Rochester-based visual artists; this new exhibition explores issues of climate change and the shifting boundaries between human and more-than-human worlds, through the mediums of photography, sculpture and moving images.

FALL 2026 PROGRAMMING, VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP

[Explorations in the Ecotone: Works by Meredith Davenport and Margaret LeJeune](#)

September 4 – December 19, 2026

Gallery Hours: Wednesday – Friday 11am-6pm and Saturdays Noon-4pm

FREE

The ***Explorations in the Ecotone*** exhibition examines warming and rising oceans, extraction technologies, and the ecological histories embedded within place. These works reveal the interconnectedness of environmental change, material processes, and social histories while inviting reflection on our relationships with the living world. Together, the exhibition and its public events encourage visitors to imagine more reciprocal futures grounded in ecological care, wonder, and responsibility. *Explorations in the Ecotone* is an artist-curated installation with programming developed by Rochester-based artists Meredith Davenport and Margaret LeJeune in collaboration with Jessica Johnston, VSW's Executive Director.

First Friday, Friday, September 4, 6–9pm

Opening of *Explorations in the Ecotone: Works by Margaret LeJeune and Meredith Davenport*

Join VSW and the exhibition artists for an opening reception.

FREE

Saturday, September 5, 2–4pm

[Explorations in the Ecotone: The Botanical Lens: from contact prints to contemporary environmental investigations, researching the in-between, presented by Liz Wells](#)

\$10 suggested donation, free for VSW Members

VSW welcomes renowned British photography scholar and theorist, Liz Wells to present a talk on her recent research on Botanical photography. Wells's research on photographic culture focuses on land, landscape, place, and environment, as well as on photographic theory and practices. She is the author of *Land Matters* (Routledge, 2011) and is the editor of numerous textbooks on the history and criticism of photography.

Little has been written about histories of botanical photography aside from in terms of art and aesthetics. This talk centers on historical uses of photography within botanical explorations and documentation. When, why and under what circumstances did the camera come to supplement or substitute for botanical drawing?

Saturday, September 12, 12:30–4:30pm

[Explorations in the Ecotone Field Study: Foraging for Photo Botanicals along the Genesee River](#)

\$10 suggested donation, limited to 12 people, wear walking shoes.

Sunday, September 13, 12:30–4:30pm

[Explorations in the Ecotone Workshop: making anthotypes with foraged botanicals](#)

\$10 suggested donation, limited to 12 people, bring a picture frame.

In this two-day workshop, participants will explore the banks of the Genesee River, a waterway whose history reflects the evolving relationship between Rochester's communities, industries, and ecosystems. Once heavily impacted by agricultural runoff, toxic discharges, and industrial pollution, the Genesee has become the focus of decades of ambitious cleanup, restoration, and revitalization efforts. As we walk the river's edge, we will consider this complex environmental history and the ongoing work of reclaiming the river as a shared ecological and cultural resource. The walk will be led by exhibition artists and environmental historian Dr. Jeffrey Kosiorek.

During the first day, participants will learn to identify and ethically collect displaced plant species found along the river corridor. These collected botanicals will serve as the raw materials for a range of experimental photographic processes. On the second day, participants will transform their collected materials into light-sensitive photographic emulsions. Through hands-on demonstrations and experimentation, we will explore how plants can be used to create photographic images while considering the ways artistic practice can engage with ecological stewardship, remediation, and place-based histories

Participants may register for the full two-day workshop or attend only the first day, which includes the guided river walk, plant identification, and botanical collection.

Friday September 18, 6–9pm

[Open Studio + Arcade with Jenna Caravello](#)

FREE

VSW hosts open studios with Project Space resident Jenna Caravello (Los Angeles, CA). Caravello's interactive games *KronoDonum* and *Amber Row* will also be installed and playable. Jenna Caravello is an artist and storyteller working with animation and video game software to explore deeply personal narratives. In addition to her visual art practice, Jenna is also a trained musician. During her residency, she will develop a mixed-reality performance piece that integrates a new music composition. Jenna plans to hold a live performance of this audiovisual piece throughout Rochester.

Saturday, September 19, 1–4pm

[Game Jam #1 Flatgames \(Plano\)](#)

\$20; free for VSW Members and City of Rochester Residents

A game jam is an event in which artists, makers, poets, and storytellers make a video game entirely from scratch in one sitting. This Fall, VSW will host a series of game jams and demonstrations that encourage collaboration and experimentation in a low-stakes, supportive environment. Each game jam will begin with a short demo of a free and accessible game-making tool led by games artist Nilson Carroll. Participants will then be given time and space to explore the tool however they like.

On Saturday September 19, Nilson will lead a game jam on Plano, an easy-to-use, click-and-drag game engine for making short, exploratory collage games. Plano was designed by the renowned experimental games artist and tool builder bagenzo and is the perfect introduction to making interactive games and digital art.

This series promotes game-making as an inclusive artistic practice, open to diverse makers and anyone who is curious about games, interactive new media, or digital storytelling. Game jam events empower makers to create and share expressive digital art outside of the boundaries of large, algorithm-driven, corporate-owned online platforms. Makers, artists, indie developers, and poets of all experience levels and ages are invited to participate. The game jam series will culminate in an in-person pop-up arcade of games made during the series, which will take place at VSW in December.

Saturday, September 26, 2–4pm

[Explorations in the Ecotone: Conversation in the Gallery](#)

FREE

Join exhibition artists Margaret LeJeune and Meredith Davenport, and Dr. Solon Morse, conservation ecologist, for a tour of the exhibition followed by a conversation. Together, they will examine the vital role that creativity and exploration play in both science and the arts and discuss strategies for incorporating ecological care and wonder in our daily lives.

Friday, October 2, 6–9pm

First Friday Gallery Open

FREE

Visit and enjoy *Explorations in the Ecotone: Works by Margaret LeJeune and Meredith Davenport*.

Saturday, October 3, 6–9pm

[VSW Gala Celebrating Dawoud Bey](#)

Sponsorships start at \$250, Individual tickets \$100

VSW will honor visionary photographer, educator, and MacArthur Genius Fellow Dawoud Bey (New York, NY/Chicago, IL) during their gala, a special evening of celebration.

Sunday, October 4, 2–4pm

In Conversation with Dawoud Bey

\$10 suggested donation; free for VSW Members

Join Hernease Davis, VSW Curator, for an in person conversation with visionary photographer, educator, and MacArthur Genius Fellow Dawoud Bey. The conversation will focus on the artist's current projects as well as his experiences making Street Portraits.

Thursday, October 8, 6–9pm

[Monster in Me: Video Works by Cecelia Condit + Open Studios with Project Space Resident Sabine Gruffat](#)

\$10 suggested donation; free for VSW Members

VSW will present a screening of works from across the career of video artist Cecilia Condit (Minnesota). Her experimental videos are deeply personal, dense with texture, and threaded with wry humor as they explore themes of feminist horror. These videos connect surreal dream spaces to the real, waking world, commenting on everyday cycles of violence. Condit's 1983 video *Possibly in Michigan* recently received a wide recirculation on social media, inspiring new audiences to engage with her unique blend of visceral terror and resilient humor. Condit will be present for conversation after the screening, which will include her most recent video, *Monster in Me*.

Sabine Gruffat (Marseille, France) works in digital art, media installation, and cinema. During her residency, Sabine will be working on an ongoing series of videos that challenge emerging technologies and their effect on a viewer's body and perception. Sabine will be using VSW's film and video archive as research material and her work will include a conversation with a practitioner of healing touch

Friday, October 16, 6–9pm

[Between Pulse and Stasis: Fragments of Experimental Cinema by Toshio Matsumoto and Takashi Ito](#)

\$10 suggested donation; free for VSW Members and University of Rochester students

How can word and image redefine the limits of film form? OnFilm, in collaboration with Visual Studies Workshop, hosts a showcasing of works by Toshio Matsumoto and Takashi Ito. This selection of nine films presents a comprehensive – but by no means exhaustive – series of formal meditations on the material and psychic boundaries of the moving image.

Saturday, October 24, 1–4pm

[Game Jam #2 Hypercard \(Decker\)](#)

\$20; free for VSW Members and City of Rochester Residents

A game jam is an event in which artists, makers, poets, and storytellers make a video game entirely from scratch in one sitting. This Fall, VSW will host a series of game jams and demonstrations that encourage collaboration and experimentation in a low-stakes, supportive environment. Each game jam will begin with a short demo of a free and accessible game-making tool led by games artist Nilson Carroll. Participants will then be given time and space to explore the tool however they like.

On Saturday October 24, Nilson will lead a game jam on Decker, an accessible, no-code necessary, multimedia game engine heavily inspired by HyperCard. Perfect for making e-zines, point-and-click games, and experimental, intermedia projects, Decker gives makers the tools to easily create and share interactive narratives.

This series promotes game-making as an inclusive artistic practice, open to diverse makers and anyone who is curious about games, interactive new media, or digital storytelling. Game jam

events empower makers to create and share expressive digital art outside of the boundaries of large, algorithm-driven, corporate-owned online platforms. Makers, artists, indie developers, and poets of all experience levels and ages are invited to participate.

The game jam series will culminate in an in-person pop-up arcade of games made during the series, which will take place at VSW in December.

Thursday, October 29, 6–8pm

[Explorations in the Ecotone: Birding with a Camera while Female: A Researcher's Dilemma. Presented by Karla McManus, PhD.](#)

\$10 suggested donation; free for VSW Members

VSW welcomes Karla McManus, Associate Professor at the University of Regina, to present her work on the history of bird photography and its impact on the conservation movement.

McManus is an art historian and visual theorist who specializes in the study of photography and environmental imagery. Following her talk, McManus will be joined by exhibition artists Margaret LeJeune and Meredith Davenport for a conversation about the broader role of photography in environmental activism.

Friday, November 6, 6–9pm

First Friday Gallery Open

FREE

Visit and enjoy *Explorations in the Ecotone: Works by Margaret LeJeune and Meredith Davenport*.

Saturday, November 7, 1–4pm

[Game Jam #3: 3D Worlds \(WareWare\)](#)

\$20; free for VSW Members and City of Rochester Residents

A game jam is an event in which artists, makers, poets, and storytellers make a video game entirely from scratch in one sitting. This Fall, VSW will host a series of game jams and demonstrations that encourage collaboration and experimentation in a low-stakes, supportive environment. Each game jam will begin with a short demo of a free and accessible game-making tool led by games artist Nilson Carroll. Participants will then be given time and space to explore the tool however they like.

On Saturday November 7, Nilson will lead a game jam on the block-based, 3D game engine WareWare. In development by the artist collective RipRip, WareWare is a powerful, experimental tool for creating dreamscapes, strange narratives, and poetic spaces right in your browser. This series promotes game-making as an inclusive artistic practice, open to diverse makers and anyone who is curious about games, interactive new media, or digital storytelling. Game jam events empower makers to create and share expressive digital art outside of the

boundaries of large, algorithm-driven, corporate-owned online platforms. Makers, artists, indie developers, and poets of all experience levels and ages are invited to participate.

The game jam series will culminate in an in-person pop-up arcade of games made during the series, which will take place at VSW in December.

Saturday, November 14, 2–4pm

[Explorations in the Ecotone: Deep Listening Session](#)

Limited to 18 people.

\$10 suggested donation; free for VSW Members

Join VSW in the gallery for a meditative Saturday deep listening session led by Margaret LeJeune. Embedded within LeJeune's Sonorous Sea project, is the practice of deep listening. This practice asks one to move beyond the involuntary nature of hearing into the realm of conscious listening. We can envision our time together as a sonic meditation, one in which we strive to cultivate a heightened awareness of the soundscape. Deep listening is the opportunity to explore relationships among sounds – both the external and the internal. It challenges us to narrow our attention and deepen our understanding of how we hear, listen, interpret, and respond to the world around us

Thursday, November 19, 6–9pm

[SLUDGE au natural](#) + Open Studios with [Project Space Residents David Sherman and Rebecca Barten](#)

\$10 suggested donation; free for VSW Members

Open Studios at 6pm. Rebecca Barten and David Sherman (Bisbee, AZ) are founders of the Total Mobile Home microcinema (TMH), which has long been instrumental within experimental film culture. While in residency, Rebecca and David will create an expanded microcinema piece based on the myth of Persephone, where she is a goddess of the archives, searching for esoteric media fragments that may be seen as disposable like outtakes, film intros or parts of community access videos.

Then at 7:30pm, our most experimental and dynamic cinematic series, SLUDGE, combines multiple 16mm films from the VSW film archive and projects them simultaneously, bending meanings of historic media into critical, silly and thrilling new narratives. This season's eco-SLUDGE, *SLUDGE au natural*, mines our film collection for the environmental and ecological, creating a stirring stew of natural forces and biological figures, from creepy crawlies to the awesome sublime (with a few surprises spiced in). Come join our growing community of offbeat film appreciators and witness the sensational SLUDGE experiment for yourself! Curated and projected by Mary Lewandowski.

Friday, December 4, 6–9pm

First Friday Gallery Open

FREE

Visit and enjoy *Explorations in the Ecotone: Works by Margaret LeJeune and Meredith Davenport*.

Friday, December 18, 6–9pm

Spirit of the Archive / Game Jam Workshop Showcase + Explorations in the Ecotone Closing Party

FREE

You are invited to our annual solstice festivity! This evening includes four different visual arts experiences.

Spirit of the Archive is the cheerful annual celebration of our archival collections. Slumbering media objects are illuminated; mysterious shelves are opened to view! The archival space is transformed into a twinkling holiday wonderland on these darkest nights of the year.

Also, throughout the Fall, VSW hosted afternoon-long game jams where artists learned about various, accessible tools for making video games and interactive art. These events encouraged participants, regardless of skill level, to finish and share a game within a few hours. On December 18, there will be a live showcase of games made during these game jams for visitors to play.

Open Studio with Project Space Resident Lieh Sugai (NY), a visual artist working in photography and video. Sugai's practice explores the shared memories between people and places, and how these connections shift through time, events, and cultural change. During her residency, she will be using both analog and digital techniques to continue an ongoing series that focuses on a ritual from her homeland—the Izumo region of Japan—that symbolizes the death and rebirth of a god. Alongside photographs and videos, she will also develop an artist book that will reimagine the visual works in a narrative, intimately haptic framework

This evening also includes the *Explorations in the Ecotone* closing party.

About Visual Studies Workshop: Visual Studies Workshop nurtures experimental and expansive approaches to photography and media arts, and builds community among artists and the public through exhibitions, publications and residencies. We envision a society that values the human need to create and share ideas. VSW was founded in 1969 in Rochester, NY by photographer, educator and curator Nathan Lyons (1930–2016), and became one of the earliest independent, not-for-profit, artist-run spaces in the country. More than 50 years later, the organization's mission is reflected in its core programs: VSW public programs and exhibitions, Project Space artist residencies, and VSW publications and workshops. In support of VSW programs, the organization holds substantial photography and moving image research collections and an art library for artists, critics and the general public to explore, research and reuse. vsw.org

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