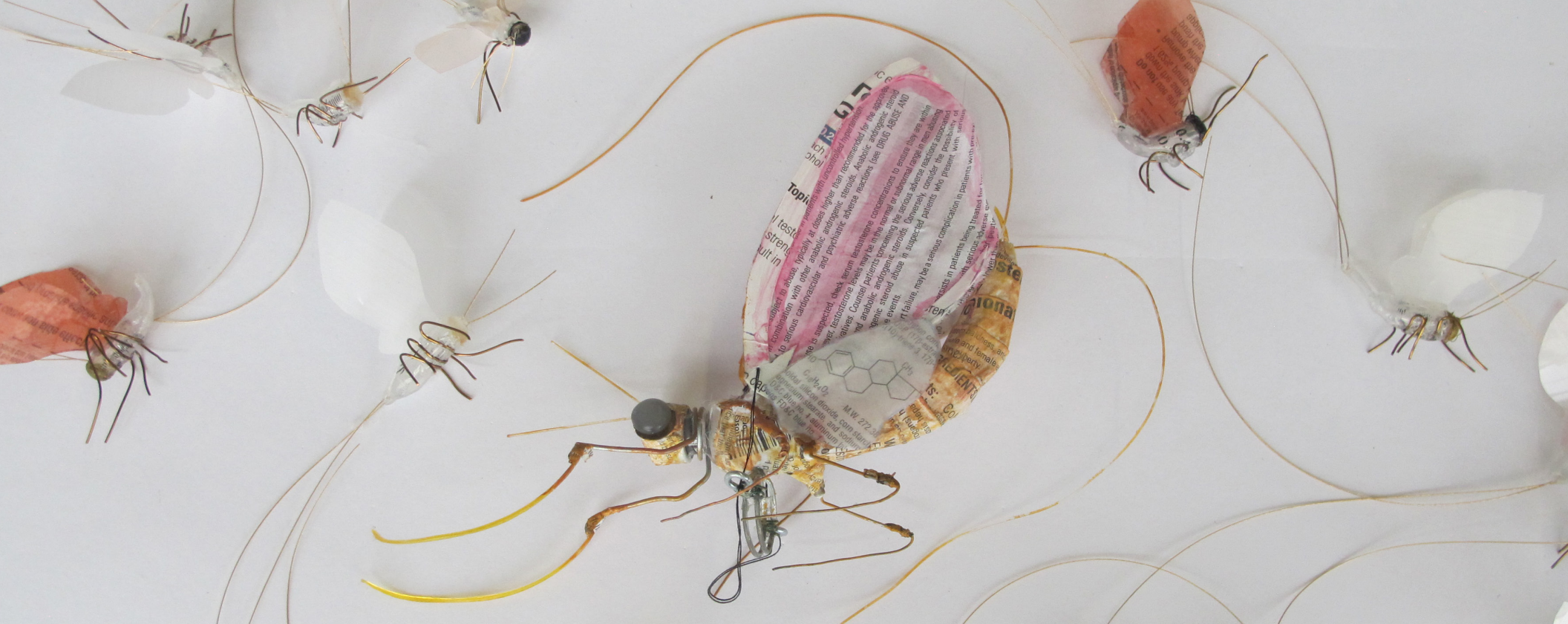




WAVE HILL SUNROOMPROJECTSPACE

August 29–October 11, 2026 **CAMILLE COOPER** *SHOWPIECE*

CAMILLE COOPER

Born in Taos, NM
Lives in Brooklyn, NY

Detail from *SHOWPIECE*, 2026,
lighting gels, medical syringes,
prescription packaging, florist wire,
cheesecloth. Courtesy of the artist.

From pinned moths to a praying mantis encased in glass, Camille Cooper's *SHOWPIECE* presents a robust entomological showroom complete with display tables and scientific labels. A puppeteer, multidisciplinary artist, and self-identified transsexual, Cooper has meticulously crafted each insect out of "transgender ephemera," including Hormone Replacement Therapy packaging and prescription papers collected from his community. Through this use of material, Cooper celebrates gender variance while drawing a comparison between society's treatment of trans people and the way we regard bugs, challenging notions of disgust and visibility. Trans individuals have been historically surveilled, scrutinized, and fetishized, experiences that have only heightened in recent years as debates around trans issues have become a staple of political discourse. Similarly, trans bodies in media are often portrayed as disgusting and undesirable, much like bugs. Unraveling these forms of oppression, Cooper deconstructs the semiotics of entomology departments at natural history museums, sharply critiquing their methods of display; being pinned and kept under glass becomes a metaphor for the ways in which trans people are rendered hyper-visible, and he crafts his creatures with such attention to detail that one delights in their beauty rather than succumbing to disgust or fear. Moreover, Cooper finds resonances between the metamorphic cycles of these insects and the lived experiences of trans people. Take the 156 dead mayflies littered across the space, whose bodies are constructed from a year's worth of sterilized plastic syringes used by the artist to administer testosterone. Mayflies live for several years underwater before hatching into their mature stage and emerging. As adults, mayflies survive for only a few hours. Similarly, some trans people may feel they live large portions of their life "underwater" before transitioning, and the community experiences higher mortality rates than their cisgender peers. Conversely, Cooper finds affinity in the cockroach's proclivity for community, noting that they band together and exhibit collective decision-making. Their sociality represents the trans community's care for and kinship with one another as the otherwise treacherous roaches transform into affectionate, social beings.

Camille Cooper is a 2026 Van Lier Fellow at Wave Hill. He has performed as a puppeteer with Meow Wolf and The New Mexico Museum of Art in New Mexico; and with Snake in The Boot Collective, Pinc Lounds, Foreshadow Co., and Concrete Temple Theatre in New York. Recent performances include *Song of The North* at New Victory Theatre and *Cumulo* at Theatre Mitu, both in New York. He has toured internationally in France, Mexico, and Poland with *PACKRAT*, a Concrete Temple Theatre production. Cooper earned a BA from Sarah Lawrence College.

PUBLIC PROGRAM: SUN, OCT 4, 3PM, Meet the Artist: Join the artist for a conversation about his exhibition and puppetry practice.

Organized by Curator of Visual Arts Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger, the Sunroom Project Space provides an opportunity for emerging [or early career] artists in the New York City area to develop and present a site-specific project as a solo exhibition. The 2026 season features Sujin Lim, Hyunjin Park, Etienne Gisto Cipriani, Tarik Jeremiah Brown, Camille Cooper, and Melanie Brewster, consecutively.

THE EDWARD AND SALLY VAN LIER ARTIST FELLOWSHIP IS SUPPORTED BY THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE ARTS PROGRAM IS PROVIDED BY BRONX DELEGATION OF THE NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL AND COUNCIL MEMBER ERIC DINOWITZ; MILTON AND SALLY AVERY ARTS FOUNDATION; NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS; NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS; NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST EDWARD AND SALLY VAN LIER FUND; NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR AND THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE; POLLOCK-KRASNER FOUNDATION; RUTH FOUNDATION FOR THE ARTS; WILLIAM TALBOTT HILLMAN FOUNDATION; AND THE CATHY AND STEPHEN WEINROTH COMMISSIONING FUND FOR THE ARTS.



4900 Independence Avenue
(public entrance)
Bronx, NY 10471
718.549.3200
wavehill.org

Curator of Visual Arts:
Rachel Raphaela Gugelberger
Text: Afriti Bankwalla
Design: Melanie Roberts
Printing: Prestone Printing