

MARTY KOELSCH

American, b. 1995, Sandusky, OH
Lives and works in Baltimore, MD

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Over the course of several years, Marty Koelsch has contemplated the history of the Jones Falls, an eighteen-mile river that runs from rural Maryland through Baltimore and into the city's Inner Harbor. As early as the seventeenth-century, the Jones Falls was an important waterway for powering mills and transporting products and materials, enterprises that led its waters to become polluted and diverted off their natural course. Most dramatically, a section of the Jones Falls was channeled into an underground conduit in the early twentieth-century, eventually enabling the construction of Baltimore's Jones Falls Expressway in the 1960s.



Koelsch laments the damage done to the river over the rise and fall of Baltimore as a hub of industry and transportation. In its story, she finds a non-human expression of the Queer experience of perseverance within a cultural system that harms and suppresses people whose lives flow in ways other than those that serve “mainstream” priorities and conventions. With a background in landscape architecture, Koelsch at times collects plant matter at places where the Jones Falls surfaces and employs it in her sculptural tributes to the river’s resiliency. Here instead, she uses American sycamore wood, a native species found widely on Maryland stream banks, to create a meticulously scaled model derived from eighteenth-century maps and drawings. The speculative model invites us to envision what an uninhibited run of the Jones Falls might have looked like prior to European settlement.

Marty Koelsch is living, reading, thinking, learning, writing, teaching, making art, and studying landscapes in Baltimore, Maryland. Working in sculpture and place-based/time-based mediums, her practice engages the relationship between humans and the environment through ecological, object-oriented, and queer lenses.

Koelsch holds a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture from The Ohio State University and a Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture from the Maryland Institute College of Art. She is currently staff at the Maryland Institute College of Art and Adjunct Faculty at the Community College of Baltimore County.



Marty Koelsch, *Marshland Elegy*, 2024, American sycamore