

**Utah Statewide Annual Exhibition  
Rio Gallery, Salt Lake City Utah  
November 20, 2015 – January 8, 2016**

In the video *Far from the Tree* artist Amy Jorgensen situates us so that we look up at about a dozen red apples floating on water; we are lying on our backs, submerged beneath them. Unexpectedly a young woman's face plunges towards us, she opens her mouth and repeatedly attempts to bite one of the apples, then disappears to a place somewhere above the water's surface. She does this again and again and with increasing desperation, remaining under water a bit longer each time. Her blond hair comes with her and becomes more prominent the longer she is submerged. She struggles to grab hold but never succeeds. We are helpless voyeurs who feel her frustration, endure it with her. In the end, all of the apples are left floating, passive but victorious, like goals we never reach, desires left unfulfilled.

Apples are symbolic. Though the forbidden fruit in the Book of Genesis is unidentified, popular Christian tradition holds that Adam and Eve ate an apple that led to the fall of man, thus establishing it as a symbol of temptation and sin. Conversely, in nondenominational vernacular culture, apples remind us of perseverance and good health. A one to six acre apple orchard was a common feature in the British American colonies: Two famous growers were Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. The first pioneers entering the Salt Lake valley also carried apple trees, transported over the Rockies in handcarts and wagons. Eventually they helped early settlers of Utah to survive the harsh winters. *Far from the Tree* capitalizes on all of these as well as other references. Because of this, and because of its formal beauty and its unresolved and unforgettable tension, *Far from the Tree* earned Best of Show in 2015 Utah Arts and Museums Statewide Annual Exhibition.

-Kate Bonansinga, Juror