

2024

EXPLORING

NEW  
JERSEY

OUR

ARTS  
ANNUAL

CONNECTIONS

**2024 New Jersey Arts Annual:  
Exploring Our Connections  
September 28, 2024 - January 5, 2025**

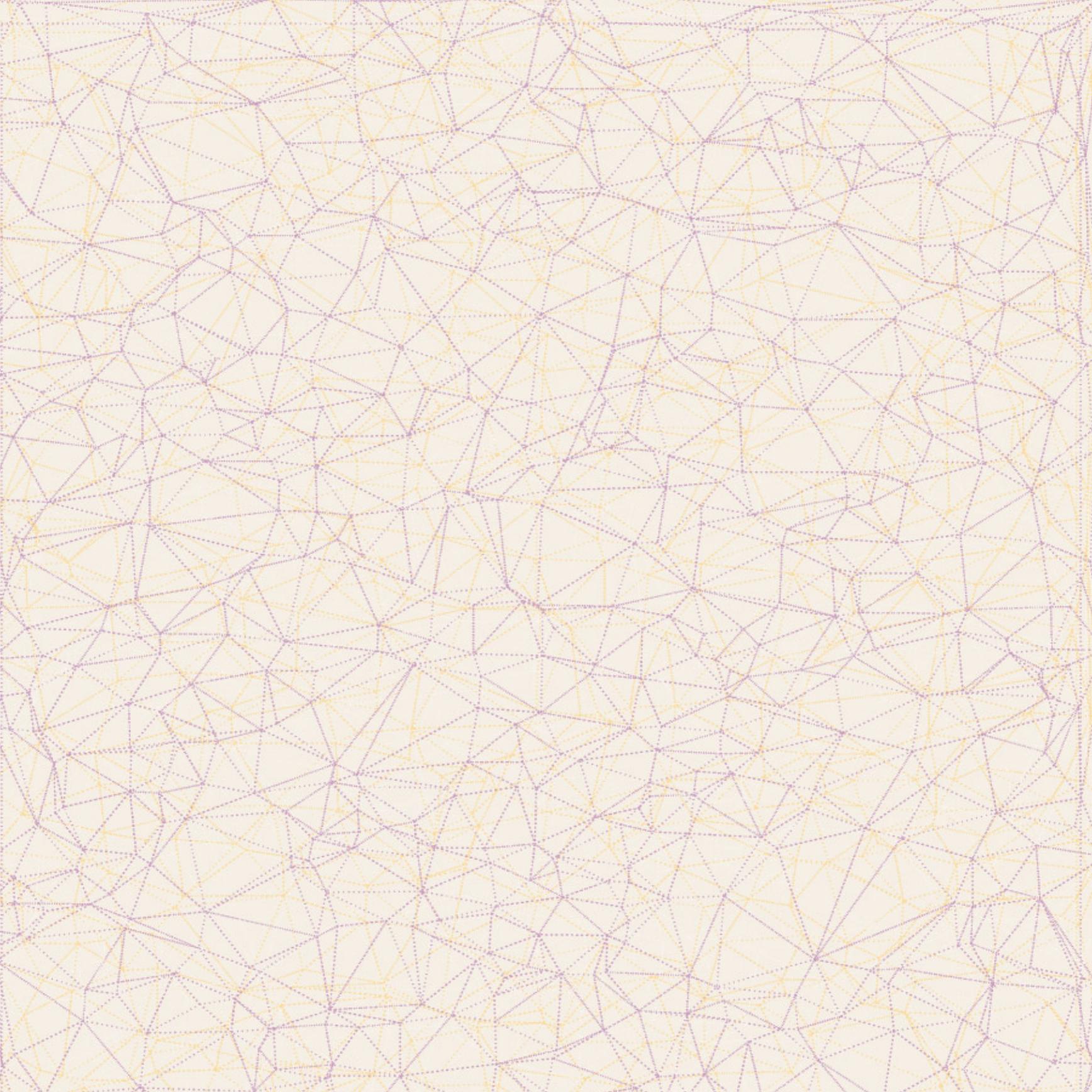
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**MAM**

MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM

*Exploring Our Connections* is a project of the Montclair Art Museum and New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.



2024

# EXPLORING NEW JERSEY OUR ARTS ANNUAL CONNECTIONS

**JURIED BY:**

Todd Caissie  
Kimberly Callas  
Philemona Williamson

**STATEMENTS BY:**

Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State  
New Jersey State Council on the Arts  
Gail Stavitsky and Ira Wagner, Montclair Art Museum

PRESENTED BY



**MAM**  
MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM

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This catalogue has been published in conjunction with the exhibition  
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All MAM programs are made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and Museum members.

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## Foreword and Acknowledgements

By Ira Wagner, Executive Director, and Gail Stavitsky, Chief Curator

**T**HE MONTCLAIR ART MUSEUM (MAM) is delighted to feature the innovative, multi-media work of 61 artists in the 2024 New Jersey Arts Annual. This unique series of exhibitions highlights the State's visual and performing artists. In partnership with major institutions around the state, one exhibition takes place each year, alternating between host organizations. These exhibitions are open to any artist currently living or working in New Jersey. The Arts Annual series is sponsored by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. Since 1984, the New Jersey State Arts Council has co-sponsored the prestigious Annual in keeping with its mission to encourage and foster public interest in the arts, promote freedom of expression in the arts, and to facilitate the inclusion of art in every building in New Jersey.

We are truly honored to partner on this series with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, created in 1966 as a division of the NJ Department of State. For this richly varied exhibition, the jury selected recent works created since 2022, that embody exceptional artistry, inspire creativity, and entice the viewer to take a closer look. The artists were invited to explore the themes of family, community, and belonging, in relation to diversity and inclusion. Featured in the Weston, Elevator Lobby, and Rand Galleries, this exhibition is the largest of its kind in many years at MAM, affording the opportunity to present more artworks that showcase the rich variety of creativity from all over the Garden State.

This exhibition complements a concurrent exhibition of historic, modern, and contemporary artworks from MAM's collection, *Family, Community, Belonging: Works from the Collection*. Conceptually and stylistically diverse, both exhibitions prompt a variety of questions. How do we define who our families are in an increasingly polarized society? Do we choose our communities, or do they choose us? How do we understand different ways of experiencing and navigating the world around us? How can various individuals and families—under dramatically changing conditions and disruptions—knit themselves together to form and maintain a more just and equitable society? Through representation and imagination, artists supply a variety of vividly expressed clues as to possible answers.

Many people have helped make *2024 New Jersey Arts Annual: Exploring Our Connections* possible. We would like to extend our warmest thanks to the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, particularly Felicia Grant, Council Chair, Allison Tratner, Executive Director, and Danielle Bursk, Director of Community Partnerships & Artist Services for their extraordinary and ongoing support. We would like to extend a special thank you to Stephanie Nerbak, Artist Services Manager, for so expertly guiding us through all aspects of the selection process.

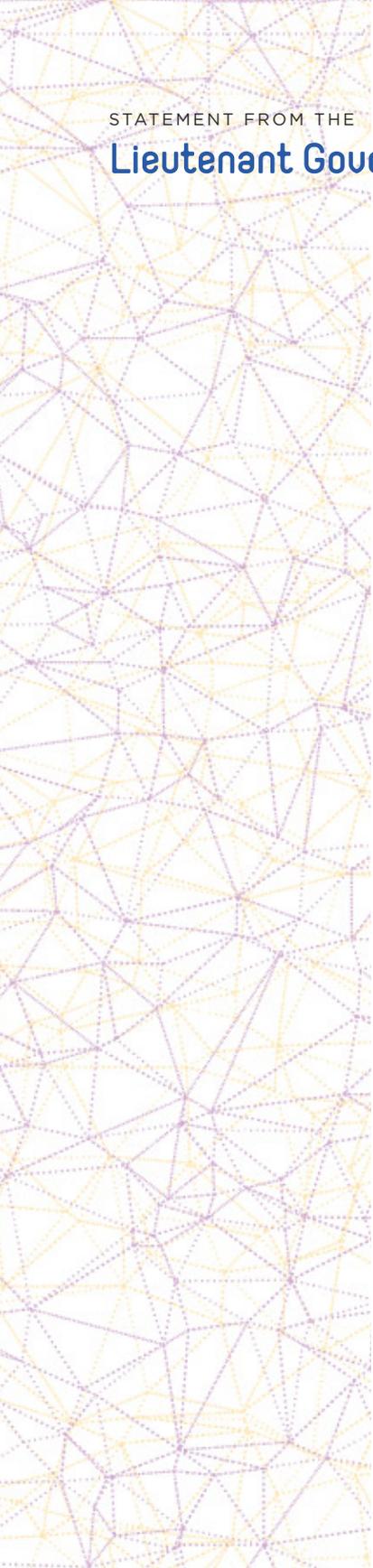
Special thanks are due to our esteemed jurors, Todd Caissie, Kimberly Callas, and Philemona Williamson, for their thoughtful selections of the artists and for their compelling statements in this catalogue. They carefully reviewed over 1,000 submissions to select artists and artworks that are wonderfully diverse in medium, theme, style, and representation.

*2024 New Jersey Arts Annual: Exploring Our Connections* is also made possible by generous support provided by the Lyn and Glenn Reiter Endowed Special Exhibition Fund and the Judith Targan Fund for Museum Publications.

All MAM programs are made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, and Museum members.

We would also like to thank MAM's wonderful staff, especially Alexandra Lebovitz, former Curatorial Assistant for her diligent work on coordinating all aspects of this project; Osanna Urbay, Chief Registrar and Exhibition Designer, Bruce Rainier, Preparator, Katherine Woodward, Assistant Registrar, Emily Nso, Director of Development, Michele Shea, Associate Director of Institutional Relations, Ellen Sander, Assistant Director, Museum Administration, Kristine Bowen, Associate Director of Education, Bryn Heathman, Graphic Designer, Dennis Dawson and Steve Langehough, Freelance Preparators, and all our other colleagues who worked so hard on this and all our exhibitions. Many thanks to Rich Sheinaus/Gotham Design for his beautiful design of this catalogue and the exhibition graphics.

Finally, we would like to especially thank all the artists whose great artworks and creativity we are so proud to celebrate on this special occasion. New Jersey can truly be proud of our vast pool of extremely talented artists.



STATEMENT FROM THE

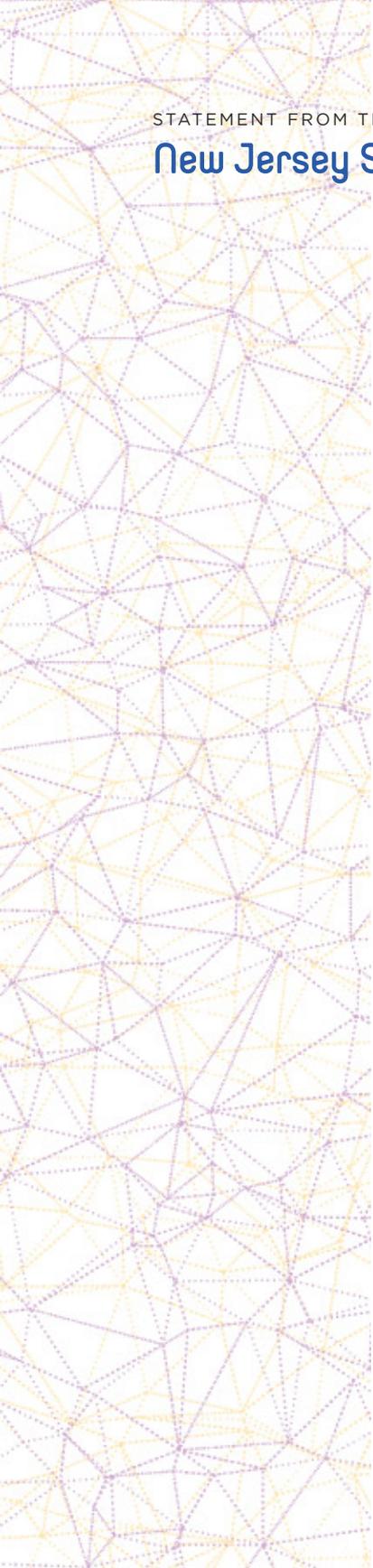
## Lieutenant Governor

**A S THE THIRD LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**, and the 34th Secretary of State, I have the honor and privilege of working closely with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts to ensure our state's many talented artists have opportunities to share their work with the world. I thank Montclair Art Museum for partnering with us, curating such a thought-provoking and culturally relevant exhibition, and for being such a gracious host for the arts.

This year's *New Jersey Arts Annual* exhibition - *Exploring Our Connections* - is all about family, community, and belonging, in relation to diversity and inclusion. As you will see, the New Jersey artists selected for this exhibition have responded to these themes with vision and passion, tackling many of today's challenges on both local and global scales, reminding us of the value and indispensability of artistic perspectives. I would like to congratulate every artist who contributed their energy and skill to this special exhibition, and I applaud Montclair Art Museum for giving this beautiful collection of work a home.

New Jersey's artists never cease to amaze me with their raw creativity and inventiveness. I am so proud of our state's arts community, as well as the hard work being done by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and its museum partners to keep the great tradition of the *New Jersey Arts Annual* alive, giving the people of New Jersey a place to come together to be inspired.

— Lieutenant Governor Tahesha Way, Secretary of State



STATEMENT FROM THE

## New Jersey State Council on the Arts

**O**N BEHALF OF THE BOARD AND STAFF of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, we'd like to congratulate every artist selected for this year's *New Jersey Arts Annual* exhibition. We are so proud to continue this tradition – which started in 1985 – of co-creating an exhibition specifically for artists living and working in New Jersey, providing the people of our state with a window into our arts community.

We'd like to thank the board and staff of Montclair Art Museum for their hard work and for their generosity with their creativity and expertise. Chief Curator Gail Stavitsky, along with Curatorial Assistant Alexandra Lebovitz and the dedicated curatorial team, have done an incredible job of carrying the *New Jersey Arts Annual* torch, and making the 2024 exhibition – *Exploring Our Connections* – meaningful and memorable.

Of the 401 New Jersey artists who applied, 61 were selected for their work responding to the themes of family, community, belonging, diversity, and inclusion. *Exploring Our Connections* taps into the collective imagination of New Jersey's visual artists, giving us something we all need at this moment – a time and space for reflecting upon some of the deepest aspects of our lives, with the help of these artists' unique individual perspectives. This exhibition is a perfect example of the power of community, and the power of engaging diverse points of view.

Again, congratulations to all of the artists represented in the 2024 *New Jersey Arts Annual*, and to every person who contributed to making this special exhibition a reality.

- Felicia Grant, Chair
- Allison Tratner, Executive Director
- Danielle Bursk, Director of Community Partnerships & Artist Services
- Stephanie Nerbak, Artist Services Manager

# NJ State Council on the Arts

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Stephanie Nerbak, Artist Services Manager

# Juror's Statement

By Todd Caissie



**As a juror** for the 2024 *NJ Arts Annual Exploring Our Connections* hosted by Montclair Art Museum, I was delighted to see the breadth of incredibly talented and diverse artists who are honing their craft in New Jersey. Artists had innovative ideas on ways to present the various themes of family, community, and belonging, that moved

me in deep and meaningful ways. Often provoked by deeply personal observations, these works produce nuanced meanings far beyond initial inspection. Past and present collide. Viewers may feel off-kilter at times, yet other times grounded by what they see. For example, Terrance Cummings' print *Family* breaks down stereotypes of marginalized groups, while others tether us to collective memories of loss and injustice. There is heartbreak, yet also belonging, nostalgia, family, and community in these paint strokes, wires, screens, and collages. From Kate Dodd's large installation titled *Parental Poncho*, to Joanna Madloch's photograph *All Together Now*, the selected 63 contemporary works showcase an expansive range of mediums, styles, and techniques.

This exhibition represents a blend of New Jersey's acclaimed as well as up and coming artists, which, to the great fortune of visitors—and to my personal pleasure—reveal the very high standards set in our community. Artists are the state's cultural lifeblood, and this show demonstrates that our state's creative heartbeat is as strong and diverse as ever.

Upon reviewing over 1,000 images submitted, I realized there were so many powerful and impressive works, in terms of technique and creativity, that selecting only a few for display would be a difficult process. Space restrictions were the only barrier for many impressive artworks that did not make the cut. The large number of diverse artists who submitted incredible pieces was astounding. In addition, as a Native American (Osage), I was entranced with local indigenous artist Renelle White Buffalo's painting *Sky Shawl*.

I would like to thank every single artist who made the effort to apply to *Exploring Our Connections*. I was delighted to have co-juried with two outstandingly talented artists: Philemona Williamson and Kimberly Callas. I also thank the Montclair Art Museum for hosting this year's New Jersey Arts Annual, especially Gail Stavitsky, Alexandra Lebovitz, and Stephanie Nerbak for their expertise, support, and feedback during the selection process. It has been a true joy to contribute to this fine New Jersey Arts Annual exhibition. This wonderful exhibition will be celebrated long after the hanging fixtures and lights come down.

# Juror's Statement

By Kimberly Callas



**What an honor** it is to be part of the New Jersey Arts Annual, especially in one of the most diverse states in the U.S. This call for submissions allows us to explore and discover the varied experiences and expressions of New Jersey artists. It prompts us to consider whether the diversity of our state is reflected

in the art community and if there is sufficient access to inclusive arts education.

In this exhibition, we see a multitude of people, families, cultures, and values represented. Many artists spoke in their statements about navigating their identity through race, gender, and other personal dimensions. Their experiences shape the art we see today, grappling with questions of belonging, identity, and connection.

Art and culture are powerful tools that help us understand the world's complexities, move beyond binary thinking, and foster conversations about our shared humanity and evolving perspectives. This year's theme, "Exploring our Connections," invites us to consider what it means to belong and how we can find belonging across differences. The natural world teaches us that diversity is crucial for resilience and beauty. Just as ecosystems thrive on diversity, our communities flourish when we embrace and celebrate our differences.

The range of mediums used in this exhibition—photography, video, digital art, pen and ink, oil, mixed media—demonstrates the varied ways artists express their ideas. Fabric, "the cloth we are cut from," stands out as a medium rich with metaphor. Several artists explore themes of weaving and stitching, creating works that speak to the interconnectedness of our lives and communities. Rachel Kanter's artwork draws from traditional women's handwork and her Jewish heritage. She enlarges the concept of the wimple, a long sash used to bind Torah scrolls, to become a binder of community, maker, and land. Kirk Maynard's *Periphery Series* speaks to how clothing is bound with identity and how a simple hoodie has become loaded with meaning.

Collage is another prominent medium in this exhibition. Artists use it to piece together images, objects, and texts that reflect their communities and histories. This method offers a metaphor for understanding family, community, and migration, as seen in the work of Danielle Scott. Inspired by a trip to Cuba, her ancestral homeland, Scott began incorporating mixed media into her painting practice, stating "No single medium alone would ever again be enough..."

Ian King's question, "Am I getting better?" resonates deeply with the struggle of 'selfhood' in relationship to identity and the body. Inspired by outsider art, King, a transgender male, challenges us to consider how we view ourselves and how we are perceived by others, highlighting the tension between community and self. Through his work and this exhibition, we are reminded that art is not just a reflection of our world but a tool for shaping a more inclusive and understanding society.

# Juror's Statement

By Philemona Williamson



**As a painter and educator**, I know the process of sharing one's work with strangers can be daunting. "What will they say? What will they think?" I applaud all of the talented artists who took the risk and let themselves be vulnerable. There are so many wonderfully talented artists who made that brave step to submit

work to the New Jersey Arts Annual at the Montclair Art Museum—thank you for sharing your work with me and my fellow jurors.

It was a very difficult task to choose works from such a deep pool of talent in sculpture, painting, photography, assemblage, and ceramics. Ultimately, it came down to which works represented the theme of the show with clarity and a distinct personal vision.

Exploring family, community, and belonging is the heart of the practice of a wide variety of artists. I looked for work where I could find multiple layers of interpretation on the theme of family and community.

In *CITYSCAPE-UPHEAVAL* by Grace Graupe-Pillard, I am immersed in the energy and chaos that one feels in an urban environment, but also aware of the small moments of beauty found in that chaos. The painting alternates between a carnival, protest rally, and block party...or maybe this is a singular moment as an individual walks down a street in their neighborhood, engulfed by the surrounding life.

The photo *Family Unit*, by Parvathi Kumar, speaks to me about isolation and otherness, yet she finds humor in this family, dressed in costumes, waiting. What are they waiting for? Where are they going? Her photo witnesses a very specific time and place and moment.

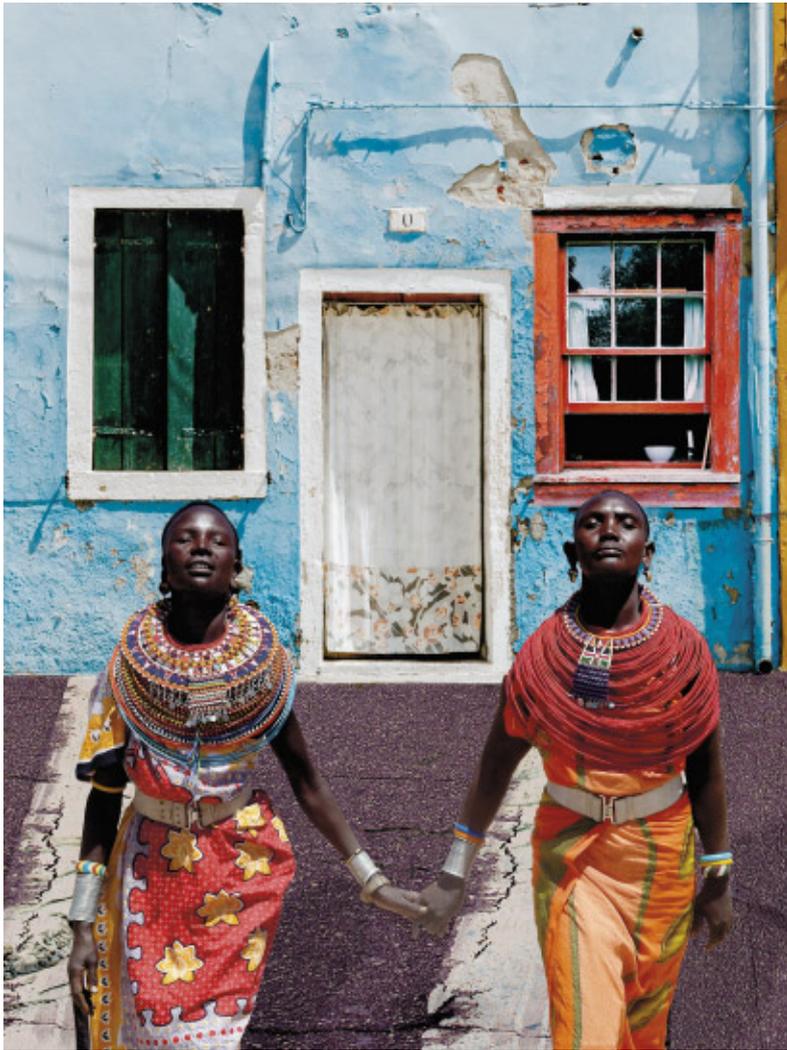
Kate Dodd's *Parental Poncho* brings past and present together in a poetic fusion. Overlooked and discarded materials are gathered and given new purpose. Family is history, forever embedded in memory. The poncho cannot be worn and yet one can imagine the embrace of family much like a poncho wrapping around and activating a cascade of remembrance.

What a rewarding experience to see so many wonderful art works and to help curate what I hope will be a thought-provoking exhibit of work for the NJ Arts Annual at MAM.

Thank you all for this opportunity.

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## Amber Koko Allen (b. 1987)

Howell, NJ

*Heritage*, 2023

Digital art, 24 x 18 in.

Collection of the artist

Raised as a first-generation American in New Jersey, I am a multidisciplinary artist, wearable art designer, educator, and visionary, seamlessly integrating my life experiences and cultural heritage into my creative process. Celebrating my African American and Caribbean roots, my work resonates with a rich tapestry of diverse cultural influences.

My connections to my Caribbean family in Brooklyn and immersive experiences during extended stays in Barbados, including cherished moments in my grandmother's chattel house, deeply informed this work of art. In *Heritage*, I celebrate the various cultural backgrounds of my family, juxtaposing these elements to create a harmonious scene that highlights elements that resonate with my Caribbean American ancestry. Two elegantly dressed African women lead the way to the future, with layers of history and cultural richness beautifully depicted behind them.

A symbolic curtain of history looms in the background, while the foreground embodies the legacy that ancestors aspire to leave for future generations. Inspired by my fearless grandmother's journey to the United States, in pursuit of a better life, my artwork embodies the celebration of culture, history, and legacy spanning three generations.



## Christine Back (b.1965)

Montclair, NJ

*Jared and James, 2005 & 2023, 2023*

Two gelatin silver prints, each 10 x 10 in.

Collection of the artist

I have been teaching high school photography for 27 years. Jared walked in after 18 years, looked left to where the bookshelf used to be and reminded me of my huge mistake. In *February* [2005], I foolishly told him it was numerically impossible for him to fail the course for the year. He immediately turned in his camera and took to his perch 'til June. True blue "D" students can be such a marvel. Kids like Jared often end up contributing more to the photography classroom than most "A" students.

Despite his identically high grade in February, James kept on making good work. But I'll bet that day, he just sat beside Jared taking in his commentary. He'd alternate between hiding his face in his hands as he cracked up laughing and kicking back smiling. James drove all the way from Philly to meet his friend for the reshoot. It was good to see his smiling face. He admitted that seeing peoples' faces was often the main reason he even showed up to school. We shook our heads at kids these days, never looking up from their screens. They both have wives they love and small children they clothe, feed, and adore. I've made about thirty of these alumni diptychs, some including spouses and children.



## Donna Bassin (b. 1950)

Montclair, NJ

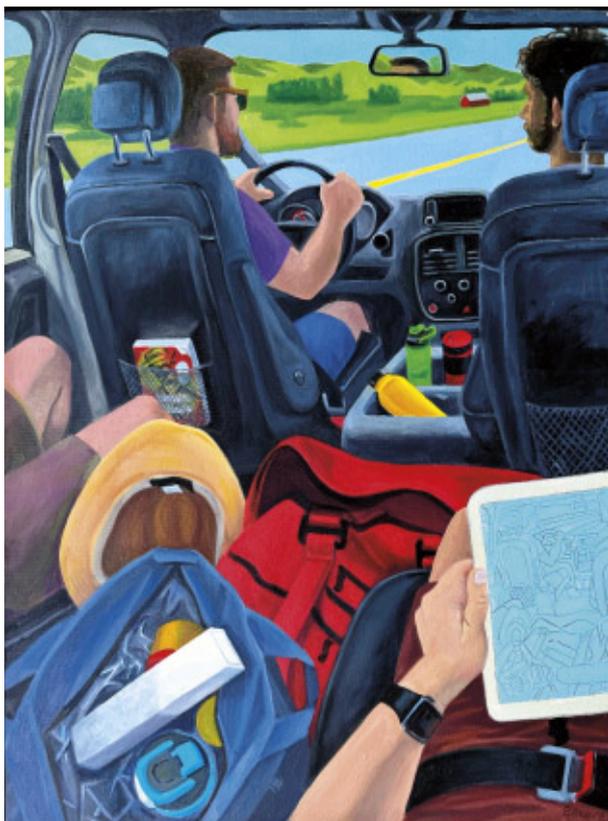
*We (All) the People, 2023*

Video: 12:37 minutes

Collection of the artist

This film features photographic portraits from my series, *My Own Witness* and *My Own Witness: Rupture and Repair*, showcasing 15 individuals responding to the crises of democracy, equality, and justice during the Trump era. Each portrait is narrated in the sitter's voice as they grapple with personal and societal injuries related to race, sexuality, gender identity, age, ethnicity, or disability.

After hearing friends express rage, fear, despair, and anxiety during this difficult period in our history, I invited them, their friends, and their friends' friends to my studio to collaboratively explore and make known their emotional truths using pose, gesture, gaze, props, costume, and storytelling. As a photographer who is also a trauma psychologist, I encouraged them to bear witness to themselves and assert their agency, despite their experience of



## Janice Belove (b.1954)

Montclair, NJ

*Road Trip, 2022*

Oil on canvas, 24 x 18 in.

Collection of the artist

A few years ago, our family took a three-week cross-country road trip, the one we didn't take when the kids were young. Our sons were now young adults and were capable drivers, so I had plenty of opportunities during the drive to enjoy the landscapes and to sketch. I brought an iPad, which has become my sketch pad of choice. The car interior provided a great juxtaposition to the epic landscapes. The mega-mess in the minivan created a record of the family on the go, in the confined space.

We created a scene occupied by portraits, with paths around and through the haphazard landing of items in the interior and exterior spaces of the painting. I look for the randomness of who is or has been in a particular space. I notice the scattering of things...bags, books, bottles, etc....that are evidence of how people have inhabited a space. They leave behind vivid shapes, vivid colors, and delightful compositional pathways through my completed work. The original iPad sketch-in-process...a window into my observational method...is an element of the completed painting.

being marginalized and discriminated against. I photographed all my portrait sitters against the same black velvet backdrop. I used chiaroscuro lighting for aesthetic unification and to express their collective commitment to be seen and heard as part of one human family. After all, what is a portrait, if not an acknowledgment of our human need for face-to-face encounters? In despair and needing to make invisible inner wounds visible, I tore but did not destroy the printed portraits. Then, inspired by the Japanese practice of Kintsugi—which mends broken pottery with gold lacquer to highlight the fractures—I mended the torn portraits with golden rice paper and embroidery thread. The resulting scars acknowledge our painful history as we aspire to heal our fractured relationships with each other.

## Mesma Belsaré (b. 1982)

Guttenberg, NJ

*The Global Village Series #1*, 2022

Pen and ink on paper, 17 x 14 in.

Collection of the artist

Myth, metaphor and migration are running themes in my art. It anchors me in a turbulent world, alerts me to the transience of physical forms, and lays bare the fragility of human establishments. I have lived and worked on two separate continents. Traversing geographical boundaries inspires me to explore diverse artistic techniques and modes of expression. Childhood memories of rituals honoring nature, studies of Indigenous temple sculptures and architecture, cave paintings, the grand narratives of my ancestors, all come to roost in my studio while I work.

I consider the world a village where families and communities are perpetually in flux. *The Global Village Series #1* is a continuation of that idea in pen and ink. The pen dreams



in ink. The line is a memory of that dream. This work is an attempt to return to the fundamental LINE as the gestural truth in making of an image. Like a dancer's body creating forms in space, the line on the paper intertwines figures, warps perspective, and flirts with time. It animates the inanimate, and offers a bouquet of unexpected permutations. *The Global Village #1* is inspired by the Warli

paintings of the women from the agrarian tribes inhabiting the Sahyadri mountain range in Maharashtra, India. Their ritual of drawing stylized images of animals, rivers, birds and people on clay walls is a call to return to nature in the most effortless way. This work pays tribute to the power of line demonstrated in this magnificent tradition.



## Virginia Schaffer Block (b.1946)

West Orange, NJ

*Unveiling and Discovering*, 2024

Collage, mixed mediums, and photo transfer with acrylic paint on Arches 300 lb. cold-pressed w/c paper, 16½ x 26¼ in.

*Unveiling and Discovering* explores the importance of having a childhood home and lasting connections that develop within a neighborhood. During my content-gathering process, I realized that I never had a childhood home in the true sense of the phrase. While viewing old family materials, I began to tally the

## Bette Blank (b. 1940)

Madison, NJ

*Living Room*, 2022

Oil on linen, 30 x 40 in.

Collection of the artist

While the theme of this exhibition is “Family, Community, Belonging,” this room appears to be empty. In reality, it is full! Full of memories and future potential. Parents, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews celebrated holidays here and honored the dead. Cousins were helped with chemistry, friends shared secrets, neighbors’ children created their first paintings, grandchildren were taught to be adventurous chiefs. Their presence is here, though no longer visible.



The room reveals the painter: My love of color and prized objects, from garage sales and flea markets. The walls are hung with my paintings: still lifes and a self-portrait, as well as a painting of my husband of 63 years. Books of paintings by my favorite artists are on the shelves, a papier-maché unicorn that my daughter made in Junior High School hangs on the wall, as well as masks from Africa and New Guinea. A hooked rug I made is placed on the big chair. There is the porcelain head of a doll placed in the bird cage (now what could that imply?). The patterned wallpaper is just imagined. As for the future??? The room awaits!

number of towns in which I had lived from the time of my birth until I graduated college—ten in all. The composition developed into a chronological and pictorial accounting of places on a map as the content drifted toward biographical images from my childhood.

In time, my parents revealed that moving was their means of escaping what they felt were oppressive religious and traditional cultural restrictions of immigrant families in post WWII society. The spiral-patterned rice paper is placed over two eyes to partially conceal each face, soft yet strong, conveying a sense of secrecy about their past. The subtle nuanced colors hint at murkiness and enforce further hidden tensions.

The dress-pattern tissue and pieces of paper doily give a nod to my mother’s remarkable baking and dressmaking skills. Overlaying the images is a hand-painted map of rural roads in northern New Jersey, with the towns where I lived indicated by a square marker and their names in the bottom margin. The stylized plant forms reflect my love of nature while adding an overall connecting pattern emphasizing the threads binding parents and children and thus defining a home.



## Brandon Bravo (b.1998)

Metuchen, NJ

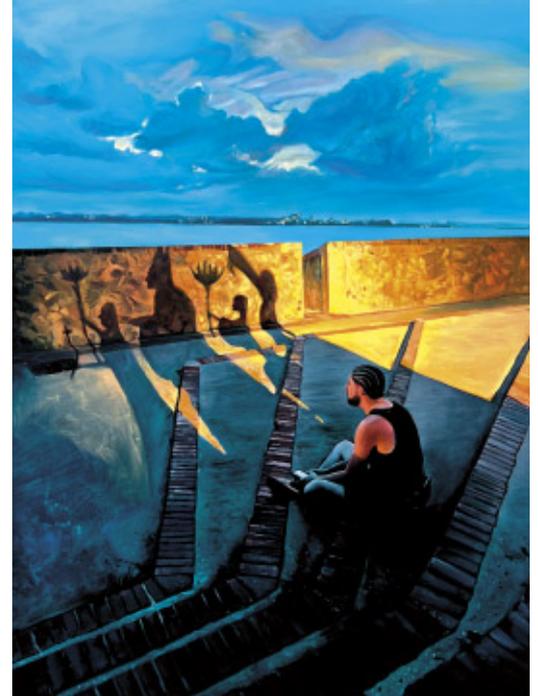
*La Rogativa*, 2024

Oil on wood panel, 40 x 30 in.

Collection of the artist

*La Rogativa* captures a profound moment from my trip to Puerto Rico last fall. The island's rich history and vibrant culture are awe-inspiring, yet they are also intertwined with the scars of colonization and war. The imposing figures casting shadows over my cousin symbolize the iconic statue *La Rogativa*, located in Old San Juan, which commemorates a women-led religious procession in 1797. Legend has it that the British Armada, planning to invade San Juan, were spooked by torches on land, mistaking them for reinforcements, and halted their advance. This statue stands as a testament to our resilience.

Today, however, we continue to face challenges under U.S. occupation, evident in the industrialization shown in the background. *La Rogativa* not only commemorates a historical event but also prompts us to reflect on our current reality. Ultimately, *La Rogativa* is a tribute to Puerto Rico's enduring spirit and a reflection of our collective journey. It is a visual narrative of our history, our struggles, and our hopes, encapsulated in the interplay of light and shadow.



## Janet Boltax (b.1955)

Montclair, NJ

*Madame Vivien V.*, 2022

Oil on canvas, 36 x 36 in.

Collection of the artist

I have been obsessed with portraying the human figure for as long as I can remember, particularly using the medium of oil paints. During the past several years I have focused on portrait “projects” to create cohesive bodies of work. I have painted portrait series of creative people (dancers, artists, writers, etc.), people over 90 years of age, as well as two transgender individuals as they transitioned. *Madame Vivien V* is part of my current series of portraits of people in drag entitled *Long Live the Drag Queen*. The series has been rewarding to paint because there is a stimulating, dramatic, and sometimes poignant element to my sitters. I have enjoyed painting them in theatrical poses as well as capturing them seemingly unaware as they dress for a performance.

I have been creating artwork for nearly my entire life and working as a professional artist for about 40 years. I have also been teaching painting for approximately 20 years at the Montclair Art Museum, as well as teaching art to people with disabilities at the Metrowest Center for the Developmentally Disabled, among other teaching posts.



## Beth Burstein (b. 1961)

Montclair, NJ  
*Postcard From My Grandfather: Yours Very Truly Max Burstein*, 2024  
 Archival pigment photograph, 14 x 11 in.  
 Collection of the artist

8 2598 is an ongoing photo series I began in 1997 when I first started to explore the experience of being the daughter of a

Holocaust survivor, or “Second Generation.” For me, the experience of being “2G” is something that has evolved and changed as I have gotten older. What began in my 20s and 30s with feelings of extreme grief and longing now quietly sits with me, though with a sense of urgency to tell my family’s story to ensure this part of our history is neither silenced nor denied.

Recently, I have created three images using the few family photographs my grandfather saved and kept hidden soon after he and my father entered the concentration camp, until their liberation. After the war my grandfather had them made into photo-postcards to send to relatives in the United States, and I now have them. I have looked at these images of my father’s family, and my grandfather’s handwritten, heartbreaking messages on their backs hundreds of times since I was a little girl. These, too, serve as my connection to people and a place that feel like a dream to me. I have placed my grandfather’s written message on each postcard image as if it is bleeding through from the back side of the card, making it necessary for the viewer to carefully read what is on each photograph and uncover the jarring, tragic message each one reveals.



## Jennifer Cabral (b. 1974, São Paulo, Brazil)

Lawrenceville, NJ  
*Depression, Possession, Repression*, 2024  
 Pigment print on archival paper, 13 x 19 in.  
 Collection of the artist

represent the protection and resilience mechanisms that women in my family used for their survival when dealing with physical imbalances and mental disorders that gradually affected their bodies. Exposing their weaknesses and dependencies through layers of meanings, I reveal emotional, hormonal, social, or cultural gaps that prevented these women from maturing in an environment of understanding, care, and support.

Through interventions I insert a constant tension into my family’s photographic archive to represent the gap in emotional references in my matrilineal heritage. The absence of references in my own maturation and the natural emotional and hormonal fluctuations that culminate in becoming a mature female being, mixes with the abstraction of the political reality in which I co-existed. To the cover-up of feminine issues, and the taboos linked to their mental disorders, is added the geopolitical context in which these bodies were inserted. The multiple family migrations between the United States and Brazil were not translatable experiences, leaving the ancestral female bodies permeable to political ideologies, social rhetoric, and religious beliefs.

I demarcate moments in which international policies, social strategies, and cultural indoctrination permeate women in my lineage, causing them to lose possession of their own bodies. The family archive becomes evidence of the eventual and inevitable loss of autonomy suffered by territories and bodies where silencing and repression prevails.

## José Camacho (b.1968)

Montclair, NJ

*Sin dinga no hay mandinga*,  
2022

Graphite, mixed media on  
paper mounted on canvas,  
60 x 84 in.

Collection of the artist



In my artistic practice, I am interested in visual fiction, exploring notions of

beauty, memory, time, and nostalgia. My work also addresses my strong concern about the cultural problems and the colonial challenges that the island of Puerto Rico must endure.

In this particular work the phrase “*el que no tiene dinga tiene mandinga*” (he who isn’t of Inca descent is Malinke descent), is repeatedly stenciled all over the picture plane. The artwork has neither a set orientation nor direction. I’m concerned with the formal and abstract possibilities of the written characters as well as the relation between image and text. The expression “*El que no tiene dinga tiene mandinga*” refers to the miscegenation of different ethnic groups in the Americas from the XVI to the XX century. This cross-breeding among the Indigenous, African, European, and Asian populations has been a crucial element in the formation of Latin American societies. The expression has become a cynical remark used by mulattos to mock the aristocracy by reminding them of their possible African ancestry.

Since my youth, graphite has been an important material in my artistic development. For this work, I first mounted paper on canvas, after that the text was rendered. I then used graphite to darken and finish the surface. As the work develops, I remove the canvas from the stretcher bars and, while I’m still working on it, I leave it on the floor to collect and document random evidence of my creative process and studio activity. The work should maintain a flow, creating a kind of a spider web composition, so the viewer can reflect on its visual mantra and the plasticity of the characters. For me, painting comes first, art is an afterthought.

## Emily Carrasco Perez (b. 2004)

Prospect Park, NJ

*Infertile Venus*, 2023

Paper cutout, 14 x 11 in.

Collection of the artist

I draw my artistic inspiration from the world around me, either from the past or the present, capturing moments that resonate with significant

themes close to me. For example, I believe in the importance of our shared human history and environment. Art history particularly influences and inspires me to seek more in the future as my fundament. Likewise, I am guided by my commitment to helping preserve our planet which is being hurt in many ways.

Thus, I call this piece *Infernus Venus*. The issue of deforestation worries me deeply. It is disheartening to witness the destruction of animal habitats and the degradation of our environment for commercial profit. This disrespect towards nature affects us all. It is a violation against the very planet we call home, our family. As a member of this global family, I advocate against deforestation and recognize that our collective well-being depends on protecting our shared environment.





### Lawrence Ciarallo (b.1985)

Hoboken, NJ

*Just Tell the Truth (LOOK!), 2023*

Mixed media, 41 x 83 in.

Collection of the artist

On June 3, 2020, Run The Jewels released RTJ4, their fourth studio album, which includes the song “Ju\$t” featuring Zach De La Rocha and Pharell Williams. The chorus of the song is “Look at all these slave masters (Ayy) posin’ on yo’ dollar (Get it? Yeah).” Upon its release I listened to this track, as well as the entire album, on repeat. I began by collaging the skate decks then stenciling LOOK over and over.

For two and half years it was put aside. I didn’t know what I wanted to say by referencing this infectious song. Ultimately, I wanted to create a graphic that would address the long and sordid yet passionately determined history of the United States. The multicolored background and flowers are intended to convey that beauty. It has always existed and persevered despite many obstacles.



### Daniel Cosentino (b. 1974)

Morristown, NJ

*1091, 2024*

Photography, printmaking, ink, and graphite on paper  
14 x 11 in.

Collection of the artist

This artwork, *1091*, began as a contemplation on silence as a prompt from an artist mentor and friend. The journey brought me into text, symbols, and artifacts of communication and value that connect us across culture(s). I use my own hands as an object form to counterbalance the limitless possibilities of the characters.

Silence, I’ve learned, is paradoxical as it makes up half of music (sounds and silences) and is present visually in its own contemplation. The symbols used are translations of texts to fonts that are readily available on most computers but lack any direct meaning to me other than the forms. I’ve used pure elements in the making of the work—Palladium Salts for the photograph, carbon black and organic pigmented etching inks, oil-based grounds, and 24 karat gold foil for accents.



## John Craig (b.1954)

Collingswood, NJ

*Eclipsing in Cooper River Park, 2024*

Photograph, 10 x 15 in.

Collection of the artist

My photographic exploration of Cooper River Park is inclusive of the landscape, events, and people who use the park and the impact on community identity. The park represents to me a community adhesive; a place where people play, protect and create their relationship with the park and others as they share their favorite activities and events. The Cooper River events, whether formal, planned, or casual get-togethers include concerts, regattas, running and walking, fairs, picnics and people watching, just to name a few.

My project is to document this narrative. I have chosen to photograph the people who enjoy and develop a common empathy for this specific place. By capturing the many aspects of the park and the people who use it, I hope to not only increase appreciation of the park but, by highlighting these people and activities, I hope to show the things we share in common. *Eclipsing In Cooper River Park* was taken during the short minutes of 95% totality of the total eclipse of the sun on April 8, 2024. During those brief moments, strangers stopped, congregated, and shared a rare occurrence of the planetary order. Those connected moments of light and dark, sun and moon, male and female captured in this image embodies the almost universal wonder experienced during that cosmic event.

## Terrance Cummings (b.1963)

Plainsboro, NJ

*Family, 2024*

Fine art archival giclee print, 16 x 20 in.

Collection of the artist

This image, entitled *Family*, depicts a community of adults coming together to provide support and care for one another, particularly for children in need. The central element is the unifying gesture of three adult figures, each with an arm around a child, symbolizing their collective commitment to raising the next generation.

The scene evokes memories of traditional communities where people banded together to uplift families, much like the civil rights demonstrators of the 1960s when diverse groups united for a common cause. The composition is further enhanced by textures, colors, and patterns that draw the viewer's eye throughout the image. The adults' locked arms serve as a powerful visual representation of unity and solidarity within the community.





### Karen Cunningham (b. 1969)

Princeton, NJ

*The Invisibles: Sanctuary City*, 2024

RisographZine — 32 pages with push pins, 40½ x 59½ in.

Collection of the artist

**T**he *Invisibles* portrays recent migrant arrivals to New York City, bused in from New Jersey, mixing in the urban landscape with the city's longstanding homeless population. Presented as a zine, both groups are rendered in comic book color halftones, set against a grey metropolis, and largely ignored by passersby. New York City's mandate to provide shelter to anyone in need is overwhelmed, spending billions of dollars, and on the brink of "destroying New York City" according to the city's mayor.

Comic book serials often reflect a culture's desire for superhero solutions to complex social problems reducing injustices to a battle between 'good and evil' while illuminating society's fears and prejudices. This zine is not a comic book but a graphic commentary that asks the viewer to contemplate if living in a city amid the disenfranchised represents an acceptable inconvenience of urban life. Vulnerable populations are at risk of becoming invisible as much as "privilege is invisible to those that have it." *The Invisibles* zine is a 28-page two color risograph printed in orange and blue, edition 100 + 25Aps presented here as the entire 32-page spread including front and back covers. The original zine format is highly reproducible and available to anyone, like a daily newsletter.

### Patricia Dahlman (b. 1952)

Lyndhurst, NJ

*First Vaccine*, 2023

Thread on canvas, 12 x 8 in.

Collection of the artist

**W**hile "sheltering in place" during the Covid 19 pandemic, I made drawings, embroideries, fabric works and photographs about the challenges we were all facing. Even after the vaccine was developed, it was not all that easy to get one. When my husband finally got his vaccine the bandage on his arm became a symbol of an achievement. We felt like we might be on our way to being safe from Covid and getting back to a more normal life.



## Kirstin Demer (b.1976)

Milford, NJ

*The World We Live In*, 2024 (below left)

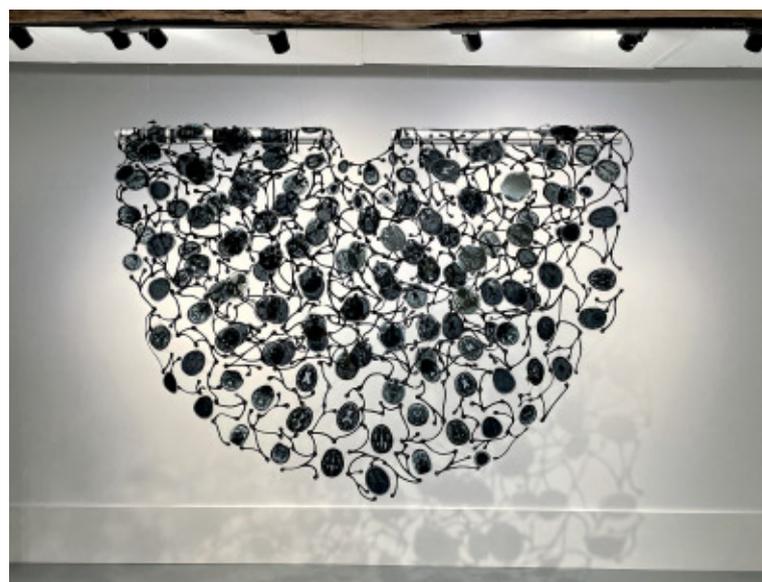
Upcycled vintage book, linen thread, 1½ x 60 x 1½ in.

Collection of the artist

*The World We Live In* is a hand-made artist's book exploring themes of community and connection in relation to one another and the world that we inhabit. This work is created from a large vintage 1955 *Life* book filled with colorful images and text about the beauty and mystique of the world. Understanding our world is not a simple matter. Understanding how we can all live together in our world is even more complex. Our days are often congested with unrelenting schedules filled with family and work commitments consuming our minutes and hours until the next day arrives.

Our household and local communities become our focal points and priorities. Often, we can overlook that there is a larger and grander world out there. We are each bound and connected in this life and in this world. The small pages of this book allow the viewer to cradle pieces and

parts of the book in their hands. The interaction creates an understanding that only parts of this book can be handled at one time, creating a sense of the overwhelming vastness of the entire piece. The inner text and images are now all pieces and parts of a larger whole. The same way our lives are pieces and parts of one another. The images create a colorful and vivid spine. The book is hand sewn, creating a physical presence of being linked together and to one another. The book reflects our lives in that there is a beginning and an end connected by many stories and experiences held within. The title *Life* is reused from the original book cover to emphasize the individual experience of each person living in this world. Life itself is a great achievement. Understanding that we are all connected to each other may be an even greater achievement.



## Nicholas D'Ornellas (b.1997)

Jersey City, NJ

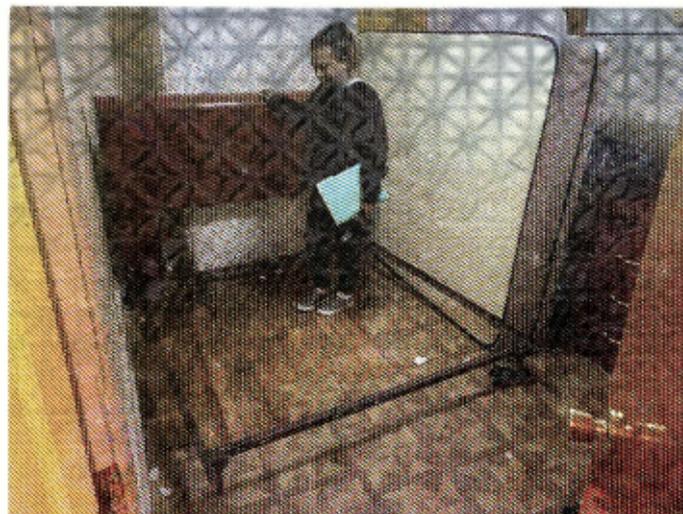
*A Last Look—Bedroom No. 2*, 2023

Stretched screenprint on spray painted poly-cotton fabric, 9 x 12 in.

Collection of the artist

My photographs serve as a vital archive, capturing fleeting moments of everyday life with my Guyanese family in our Jersey City home. These intimate images are then transformed into screenprints on fabric. Through this process, I separate each image into color channels and reconstruct them by printing with inks of various colors and opacities. This slows the image down and each pull in the printing process feels like a genetic build-up of the people being depicted in the images.

This piece is part of a larger series titled *A Last Look*, which consists of 40 stretched screenprints on fabric of the last photographs taken of my childhood home before I moved out. *A Last Look—Bedroom No. 2* portrays my older sister standing inside an empty bed frame, symbolizing the void of a once-inhabited space. Prior to screen printing, a white gradient was spray-painted through a metal radiator



sheet onto the fabric. Four linear bitmap patterns that oscillate at different CMYK angles were then screen printed on top of the spray-painted fabric. The resulting image forms a moiré pattern that captures the essence of that moment in time, referencing textiles and weaving, which are significant inspirations for my practice. Set far from the wall, the room becomes a portal that is merely a memory. I aim to simulate a true visual recollection that mirrors real life, yet this image is only a remembrance, with the mark of my hand tracing my attempts to reconstruct a moment.

## Kate Dodd (b.1960)

Orange, NJ

*Parental Poncho*, 2023 (opposite left)

Cat scan films, brads, repurposed plastic, 48 x 60 x 4 in.

Collection of the artist

This piece is from my *Outer Wear* series, which consists of clothing-like sculptures that express a longing for protection from both the mistakes of the past and the revenge of the future. Each “garment” is composed of many small images, culled from collections of scientific printed reference material. These materials, static and fixed in time, feel nostalgic to me because of their tactile existence and assumed objectivity, when so much of what we take for granted has become virtual and/or tenuous.

*Parental Poncho* is composed of both of my parents' CAT scans. Obviously nonfunctional as protection, it is made up of images that are the most intimate and most anonymous visual representations possible—I am looking at the inside of my parents' brains, yet who they were is nowhere to be found. And while this garment can surround me with my parents, I am exposed nevertheless. When I think of all the ways my parents tried to keep me safe, I become aware of the ways they could not protect me as well, just as I cannot protect my children from much of the world.

## Eugenio Espinosa (b.1950, Havana, Cuba)

Jersey City, NJ

*Tío con Gente*, 2022

Stoneware and silkscreened porcelain with glaze,  
20 x 12½ x 3½ in.

Collection of the artist

**T***ío Con Gente* is a part of a series of works with family photos on shelves. The idea probably came from growing up in and around households with *repisas*, stage-like shelves with three-dimensional representations of Catholic/Yoruba saints, situated above eye-level for a child. The rocky sculptural escarpments of this shelf suggest a mountain, a high point of view, an elevation, an ascension for these ordinary people, a small-scale monument. The images are like visual whispers, flat black-and-white cutouts contrasting with the solid mass

of the base. They are all images dating from my childhood in Cuba, presented frontally, in modest veneration, as a sort of pantheon of multiple protagonists. The largest is the eponymous *Tío*, who would not have claimed such prominence in his life.



## Dan Fenelon (b.1960)

Morristown, NJ

*Tempest-Tost*, 2024

Wood, stone, drawing, collage, 79 x 48 x 48 in.

Collection of the artist

**M**y ancestors, the Fenelons from County Carlow in Ireland, worked at a stone quarry in Parish, Barony. The stone base of the sculpture is a reference to the history of my family's tradition as stone workers. The sculpture speaks to the plight of Irish immigrants who came to this country in the 19th and early 20th century. I collaged stereotyped illustrations, anti-Irish posters, and signs to the rock base depicting the heaviness of their labor working as tunnel diggers and miners. The piece also pays homage to the cairns created in ancient times by Celtic tribes in Ireland. The Celtic dragon which I illustrated, printed, and collaged to both sides of an oval piece of wood symbolizes their rise to assimilate into an integral part of American culture and is a tribute to my ancestors' sacred artform.



## Johanna Foster (b.1969)

Montclair, NJ  
*The Handshake*,  
2024

Oil on canvas,  
60 in x 48 in.  
Collection of the  
artist

I am a cisgender white woman, a sociologist, and a longtime resident of Montclair — a town with a reputation for

welcoming multiracial families like mine. In this painting, I render a gesture of deep connection between my husband and our infant daughter, an image taken from a nearly 25-year-old photograph that frames the private moment in its intimacy and wonder, balancing a strength and a vulnerability that both subjects possess and that binds us together.

The work, which features the pair larger than life, also asks the viewer to consider the paucity of representations of men engaging in the ordinary and also profoundly extraordinary relational work of caring for their children. The painting urges us to confront the interlocking legacies of sexism and racism, in particular, that have contributed to a history of limited and, at times, distorted cultural representations of men of color as central subjects in scenes of affectionate devotion.

More broadly, I encourage the viewer to confront our initial interpretations of the tender moment, including our assumptions of the subjects and the artist alike, and with an attention to how, within a nexus of racialized and gendered values, beliefs and ideologies around intimacy, parenting and family, there exists our shared human connections in joy and awe.

## Linda Friedman Schmidt (b. 1949, Germany)

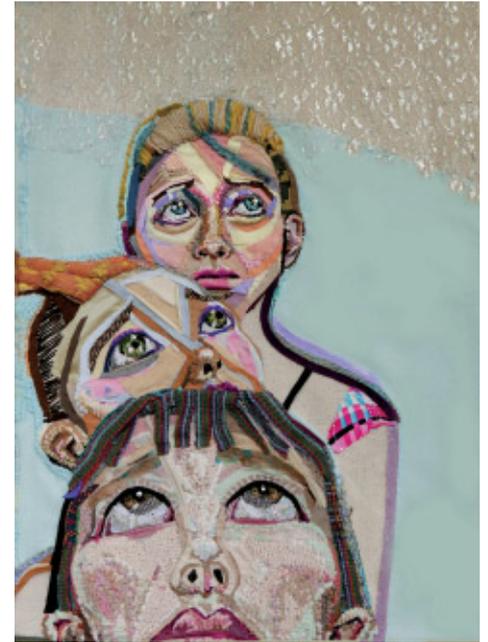
Franklin Lakes, NJ  
*Look Up*, 2023

Discarded clothing, yarn, thread, sequins on cotton warp cloth,  
28 x 20 x 2 in.  
Collection of the  
artist

I grew up disconnected from family and yearning to connect with others on an authentic level. Now I connect with countless others through my medium, discarded clothing.

Worn, used clothing is the second skin; it is also the social skin with the ability to create physical connections between strangers. A donated shirt may end up in my artwork or worn in a foreign country. I hand cut, hand stitch, hook, embroider, and intermingle pieces in all colors, patterns, and textures to form a unified, harmonious new whole, a metaphor for we are one, all of us members of the human family. Woven together we are stronger, more colorful, more creative, and more resilient.

*Look Up* expresses a desire to connect with the cosmos at large, with the stars in the sky, with higher dimensional beings. This narrative group portrait is a merging, an imaginative reintegration of a multitude of pieces and a multiplicity of faces of diverse people I have met or observed. Their faces reflect me, my thoughts, my emotions, and our collective feelings, hopes, and dreams. This work was created lovingly, laboriously, and thoughtfully through a slow, meditative process. It raises awareness of the significance of human creativity and human interconnection in a time when artificial intelligence is gradually replacing work by humans. The power of the human touch and the human heart can never be replaced by a machine.





### Ben Goldman (b.1960)

Weehawken, NJ  
*Smidoo*, 2022 (above left)  
 Oil on canvas, 72 x 58 in.  
 Collection of the artist

*Nido*, 2022 (above right)  
 Oil on canvas, 72 x 58 in.  
 Collection of the artist

The best way to sum up my adventures as an artist, author, and entrepreneur is that I am an expert of change: societal, organizational, and personal. These two portraits provide a snippet of the great diversity in my northern Hudson County community. One is of my friend and neighbor Arnold “Smidoo” Smith, who is often called the “mayor” of our block. The other is of my friend Nido Gula who lives in the neighboring town and cleans my home. I’ve known both men for the quarter century that I’ve lived in New Jersey. The paintings provide a sense of each man’s unique character and of where we live together, bridging the wealth of different personal histories and cultural backgrounds we share in space and time.



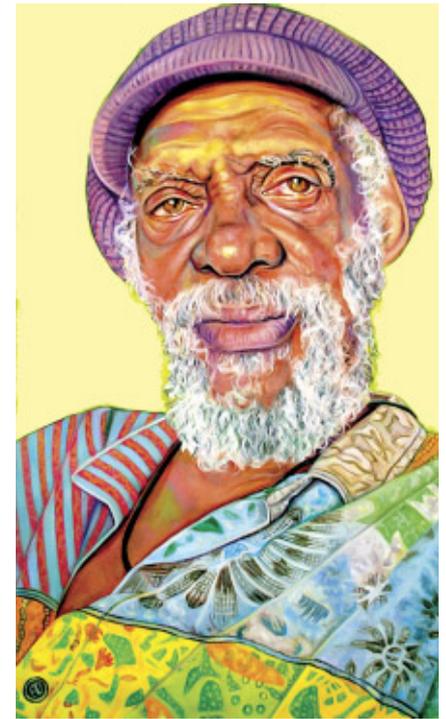
### Grace Graupe-Pillard (b.1941)

Keyport, NJ  
*JAMES OLIVER JONES, JR.*, 2022 (above right)  
 Oil, alkyd on canvas, 70 x 40 in.  
 Collection of the artist

*CITYSCAPE-UPHEAVAL*, 2022 (opposite right)  
 Oil, alkyd on canvas, 65 x 84 in.  
 Collection of the artist

I have spent a lifetime making art that reconciles the personal with the political through portraiture and “history” paintings. *CITYSCAPE-UPHEAVAL* communicates my visceral response to a world where black lives are “obliterated,” fighting for the very rights that the Constitution bestows upon all Americans. I break apart forms to create a camouflage abstraction that echoes and makes visibly evident the chaotic disarray and dislocation in an unceasing historical struggle for racial justice.

I met JAMES OLIVER JONES JR. on the streets of the East Village in 1985 and asked to draw him. Forty years later we reconnected on social media, and I found him as powerful and beautiful a presence now as he was then. I love the not-knowing-ness that my mind forges when I





paint a portrait; all that I observe is a void and I attempt to be the magician that awakens the landscape of a particular face where there are hills, valleys, crevices, sunlight peeking through, shadows the color of midnight blue darkening areas and when I am finished I hope to have captured a spark of breath that can be both bitter and sweet.

## Cheryl Gross (b.1953)

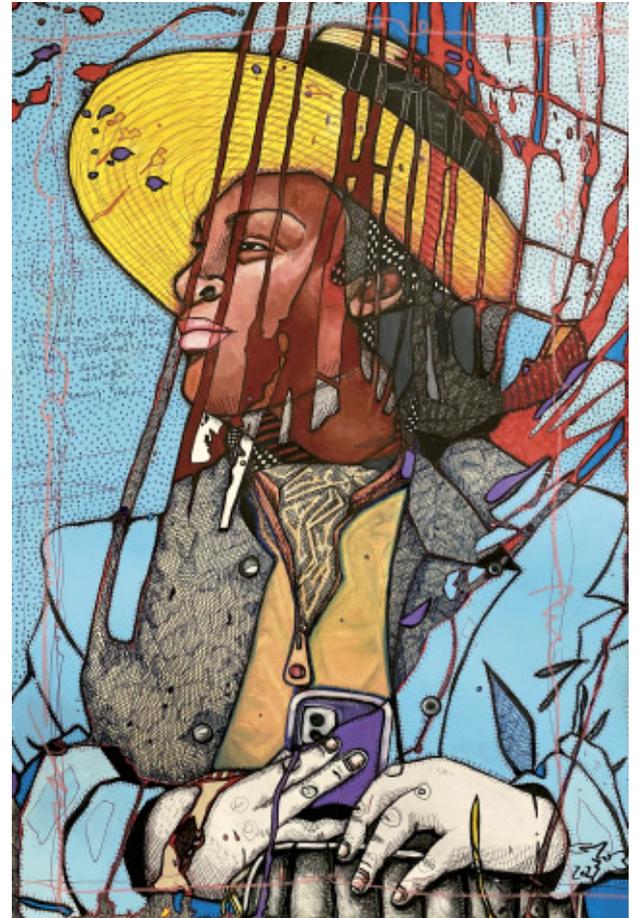
Jersey City, NJ

*BasicBabe 2*, 2024 (at right)

India ink, archival ballpoint, crayon, coffee, watercolor  
30 x 22 in.

Collection of the artist

I was traveling to Manhattan on the Path train when I noticed an incredible looking woman sitting across from me. Her style intrigued me so, I snapped a photo, which later became a painting. For the last several years, I have been working on a woman empowerment series (*Boxing-Babes & Cowgirls, BikingBabes*) and her image fit right in. Although she is not a cowgirl or boxer (at least that I know of), her style and presence evoked confidence and pride. This led to yet another aspect to the women empowerment series, *BasicBabes*.



*BasicBabes* embraces who we are in everyday life. It catches a moment in time when we are totally within ourselves, deep in thought and just trying to get from point A to point B. *BasicBabe 2* is every woman, man, and child unassuming and unposed. In creating the work, I combine abstract and realism, traveling through two very different forms of expression, but completely related to one another. I splash coffee on the blank page primarily because I love the immediacy of the action. The splash often gets hidden by the subject, color, and composition but it animates movement on the page and gives every character kinetic energy.

## Qingling Guo (b.1973)

Livingston, NJ

*Background\_III\_080*, 2022

Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 24 in.

Collection of the artist

I have been tracing the footsteps of women, and the women in the artwork are all different identities, races, cultures, and ages. Because of painting “them,” I found a way to communicate with “them” and realized the distance between me and them, and the distance between the body and the soul. For a long time, I painted their backs to express this sense of distance, this estrangement caused by social and interpersonal alienation.

These back figures form a lonely and separated society, like a scroll painting, a slowly unfolding expression, I have never had any connection with the “they” in the painting. I don’t know who they are, but they feel very familiar. I communicate with them in my presence, but I have no

intention of removing this polite and discreet distance. I express their states in my artwork, freezing various postures, various tones, various clothing patterns, various gestures, without details. There is no class or age here, just daily life, just a back view. Some vague, some strange, some ambiguous, and some indifferent, but the distance always exists.



## Ellen Hanauer (b.1957)

Livingston, NJ

*Upcycle*, 2023

Cloth, antique spindles, thread,  
84 x 60 x 4 in.

Collection of the artist

We each have a convergent point from which we emanate, and mine was at Ellis

Island in 1904. Both of my grandfathers came to America as unaccompanied children that year, crossing the threshold into the new land with hundreds of others escaping persecution, poverty, or simply seeking a better life. A cloth of shared experience was woven that day, and despite the diversity of their fellow immigrants, this was a unifying moment that defined their emergence into the new world.

*Upcycle* connects recent immigrants to America with those who have lived here for a generation or more. This piece depicts the resourcefulness of deconstructing and reconstructing found or donated clothing during the lean years of building a life in a new country. Antique bobbins and their threads unite the newly sewn clothing to the fabric’s roots of origin. The harmonious relationship between the original clothing and reimagined clothing highlights the resourcefulness and creativity of immigrants working with what has already been imagined and produced. Each new generation of immigrants brings fresh perspectives and richness to our country.

I tap into this common ground when faced with ideological fissures in my community, among my friends or within my family, reminding myself to look for what connects us at our roots. When I focus on this rather than on what divides us, I realize that all of our truths can peacefully coexist, even when they contradict one another, making our differences tolerable.





## Marion Held (b. 1939)

Montclair, NJ

*Fragile Armor*, 2024

Cotton, silk, ceramic, hanger, lace, drawing, 61 x 26 x 8 in.

Collection of the artist

This dress evokes the body of a person, whether a ghostly spirit or a strong corporeal presence. *Fragile Armor* expresses the fragility and strength of women in this country whose rights and bodily autonomy are under threat. Silk is armor, a sign of strength and determination, as it is a lustrous and strong material.

The images on the “armor” are related to the body and were created, printed, and sewn onto the larger background. They were conceived as a symbolic protective skin for the garment.

My hope is that the majority of women and their allies are joined together as a community and will be successful in our fight for women’s rights and gender equality.

## robin holder (b. 1952)

West Milford, NJ

*Code Switching: Mask*, 2023

Monoprint, archival inkjet print, drawing, digital

imaging, 50 x 30 in.

Collection of the artist

We shift our behavior and appearance to be more acceptable. We reveal specific aspects of our identity depending on the situation and with whom we are interacting: parents, children, friends, mentors, heroes, colleagues, siblings, etc. We refer to this as *contextual identity*.

When our contextual identities do not reflect our authentic selves, we know or sense that our natural essential personas are undesirable or unacceptable in the dominant culture.

*Code Switching: Mask* highlights that almost all successful people of color practice code switching. It is an innovative, often obligatory, strategy of successfully navigating the workplace, society, and social platforms that are predominantly white, privileged, and empowered. We shift our vocal tonality, grammar, to not intimidate or be stereotyped as “less than.” We self-edit our speech patterns and tone, modify our vocabulary, lessen our exuberance, pare down our body language, and change our hair styles. We do this to be non-threatening, to avoid being stereotyped or appearing ignorant. Code switching requires a tremendous amount of energy, psychological deciphering, and vigilance. There are instances when code switching is not only an issue of social acceptance but a matter of self-preservation and survival. *Code Switching: Mask* was created by digitally collaging colored pencil drawings, a stencil monotype, and a tin roof pattern, printing it as large format archival inkjet print and drawing on top.





### Frank Ippolito (b.1959)

Jersey City, NJ

*Passage 739*, 2022

Photography, internally illuminated digital print, 24 x 24 in.  
Collection of the artist

Born from a childhood fascination with light's scattered passage through translucent surfaces, my recent series entitled *Trans-lucid*, uses each to create tension between revelation and *that which cannot be known*. I use mixed-media constructs that combine photography, found objects, and internal illumination to carve windows onto spaces that are close enough to touch, yet entirely unreachable. Here, I explore themes of separation and connection; the otherness—as well as the humanity—of communities that thrive along the margins. *Passage 739* speaks directly to this dichotomy: the archetypal family stares into the museum gallery, connected and yet entirely separated from those who return their gaze from inches away.

### Troy Jones (b. 1974)

Jersey City, NJ

*Leisure Time*, 2023

Oil on canvas, 48 x 36 in.

Collection of Justin and Lauran Tuck

The aim of my art is to shine a bright light on the lasting impact of the African diaspora on the African American experience. In my latest body of work, I employ a motif of African tribal masks donned by contemporary African Americans because I have been called to further narrate the story of African Americans in today's society. While my subjects tend to carry a distinctly urban style and aesthetic, drawing viewers to their aura of modernity and confidence, their masks function as a direct link to their African past. These masks symbolize protection, guidance, vitality, and the spirit. They are also an allegory to hidden histories and cultural preservation. As a result, my subjects embody various aspects of what it means to be African American.

This piece was inspired by a feeling of rest. We work so hard to achieve our goals, at times we forget to rest. Rest is so important for reset and to get ready for what is to come.





## Rachel Kanter (b.1970)

Montclair, NJ  
*Community Wimple-Maker, Community, Land*, 2022

Vintage textiles, cotton, silk, floss, 77 x 42 x 12 in.  
Collection of the artist

In Judaism, a traditional wimple is a ritual object that binds the Torah and holds it closed. It is made from the swaddling

cloth of a newborn baby and is decorated with the names and dates of life events for generations of the family. It also includes a prayer of hope for the baby's life. The wimple becomes a historical record. *Community Wimple-Maker, Community, Land* is a reinvention of a traditional Jewish wimple. It differs in size, scale, and usage but its meaning remains the same. It is used to bind a specific community together—physically and spiritually.

*Community Wimple-Maker, Community, Land* is made from many vintage and personal items: vintage linens and doilies, hand drawn sewing patterns taken from patterns that my mother used to make clothing for me and my siblings, vintage tallit (prayer shawls) from my childhood synagogue, hand embroidered names from my childhood synagogue's yahrzeit list (memorial list), vintage denim, vintage feed sacks from New York State, and hand drawn images of Central New York taken from my photographs. *Community Wimple-Maker, Community, Land* highlights communities that are important to me in my life.

## Ian King (b.2000)

Newark, NJ

*Mass of neck IV (mint, BETTER)*, 2023

Gouache, ink, image transfer and collage on watercolor paper, 30 x 22 in.

Collection of the artist

I am a transgender multimedia artist and designer, who was diagnosed with and promptly treated for papillary thyroid cancer in early 2023, a cancer which had been present in the body for over 5 years before a primary care doctor finally examined it properly. A subsequent series of my paintings confronts the unique traumas of medical negligence amongst LGBTQ+ patients, living with a slow-moving disease, and as seen in the selected work, relearning how to take care of others and the self. Scrapbooked by souvenirs from some of my final hospital visits and marked with words from personal journals, *Mass of neck IV (mint, BETTER)* represents the ambiguity of recovering from such a rapid succession of events without space to breathe. A side profile of the artist in pale green, the color of newness,

displays the shape of the scar on its neck, closed in by black ink and collaged images in the negative space. It asks a loaded question to the viewer, one not even the supporters surrounding the image—doctors, charts, how-to guides, a beloved partner—can map a linear answer to, but they still provide some more comfort than what was there before.





### Megan Klim (b.1960)

Jersey City, NJ

*Woven #6*, 2022

Plaster cloth, wire, encaustics, tints, oil, wood, 24 x 24 in.

Collection of the artist

I revel in the art of layering and juxtaposition, allowing the elements of mixed media to create a visual dialogue. Through the fusion of diverse materials, there is a sense of complexity allowing each material to co-exist and interact within the picture plane, frequently occupying a space between painting and sculpture.

Process itself has also been a central focus, allowing the action of creating to be just as important as the final product.

In *Woven #6*, I use weaving both as a technique and as a metaphor for interconnectedness. As I physically and painstakingly weave, I reflect upon human individuality while also considering each element as a part of something bigger. This piece was slowly built and appears fragile but becomes quite strong as each row is created and connected. These elements become a collective with the materials working together and each unique row contributing to its overall strength.



### Parvathi Kumar (b.1972)

Bridgewater, NJ

*Family Unit*, 2023

Photograph printed on Moab Entrada Fine Art archival paper, 12x16 in.

Collection of the artist

About an hour's drive south of the city of Oaxaca, Mexico, the small town of San Martin Tilcajete is famous for its gorgeous, intricate, and colorful *Alebrije* wood sculptures and carvings. It is also equally famous for its annual "Dance of the Devils" celebrations on Shrove Tuesday (Fat Tuesday), the day before Ash Wednesday, during the period of Lent. While there are mainly boys and men dressed up as devils and who parade through the streets of the village, other residents and families also dress up in colorful costumes to partake in the carnival's festive atmosphere and mood. It's a truly joyous occasion, and unique to this part of Mexico!

This was my first trip ever to Mexico in February 2023, and was part of a week-long Street Photography Workshop in Oaxaca, especially planned around attending this event for the cultural and photographic experience. The entire week was one of joy. I hope to make more trips to Mexico, where every day feels like life is all about family, community, and belonging, not only at special festivals such as this. I believe in biodiversity, not just within nature and biology, but between humans as well—the more we learn about and interact with those from other cultures and in other countries, the more we see how connected we are and that we all belong as ONE family and community.



### Kristin Künc (b.1978)

Atlantic Highlands, NJ  
*Black Mirror*, 2023  
 Oil on linen, 16 x 11 in.  
 Collection of the artist

Formally I am interested in oil painting—the legacy, the tradition, the connection with history as well as ‘the craft.’ I prefer to work from life to give myself time to think and observe.

*Black Mirror* is inspired by the news, media, and complacency. It is a painting of my son, though it could be any child or oneself, and what is colloquially known as the television, aka the black mirror. Rather than go outside and enjoy a beautiful day we are trapped by our own reflections, our own insecurities, and our own black void of overbearing information and entertainment that we sit silently waiting and watching. Meanwhile, the world outside continues, the light is beautiful. The trees bud then grow and turn into spring. The birds chirp and the spring light shines.

This painting is also of the interior in a house built in 1664 prior to the Revolution; it is a time capsule of stillness and a portal into different eras and other families.

People have preserved this space and changed it. We are changing the space with technology.

Is this expansion or contraction? We can only wait and see.

### Steven Kushner (b.1950)

Jersey City, NJ  
*Home for the Holidays*, 2022  
 Photograph, 19 x 19 in.  
 Collection of the artist



I am the Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Ner Tamid of Bloomfield and I have been practicing photography as an art form since 2017. There once was a time when train stations were the vertex of American life. I have always loved train stations. The smells and sounds of the waiting room were as much a part of the experience as were the rocking motions of the trains awaiting the soon-to-be passengers. The shoe-shine stand. The wooden benches reminiscent of church pews. The echoey waiting rooms beneath the vaulted ceilings. Something akin to public palaces, train stations are sacred space. At least to me.

This image was taken at a favorite haunt of mine, the historic Erie-Lackawanna Railroad Terminal in Hoboken, New Jersey (built 1907). The family is a Hasidic family of the Satmar sect. Taken during the intermediate days of the eight-day Jewish autumnal festival of Sukkot (Tabernacles), this is a time when many Hasidic families choose to take short trips, for sightseeing and visiting relatives. As I spoke with the father (here wearing the traditional Shtreimel, a dress-up hat made of sable fur), he shared that they had been visiting family in Jersey City and were now returning home to Rockland County, New York. Watching the kids run around the station, creating entertainment where none was to be found, they reminded me of my own childhood and what it was like to be in such a grandiose communal sanctuary. In some ways, watching them made me feel as if I were coming home.

## Kwesi Kwarteng (b.1988)

Newark, NJ

*Blocks of Friends*, 2022

Textile, 54 x 44 in.

Collection of the artist

I am a multidisciplinary artist who works with textiles and explores the identities formed by the intersectionality of different cultures. These textile assemblages draw from my Ghanaian heritage and the cultural significance of fabrics and color that identify various life events or state of being of the makers and users. In my work, there is an exploration of traditional weavers in Ghana, influenced by [Ghanian sculptor] El Anatsui's extraordinary sculptures, twentieth-century African American quilting artistry, and abstract, color field works by Sam Gilliam.

*Blocks of Friends* repurposes traditional fabrics from a group of friends I consider instrumental in making my initial experience as an immigrant somewhat pleasant. As friends and immigrants, we share similar experiences of navigating a new world. This bond was the building blocks of our friendship. Coupled with yellow and red hand-dyed

canvas, I stitch together these memories and experiences into abstract-like pieces to investigate migration trajectories and share histories while unearthing the intricacies and beauty of multiculturalism.



## Kenneth MacBain (b.1963)

Morristown, NJ

*Tied*, 2024

14K gold, readymade extension, 1 x 1 x 5 in.

Collection of the artist

My recent work explores human relations and their inherent complexities. I believe that absurd extremes can make us see complex issues in a different context and, on occasion, be amusing. I frequently use humor to address issues that I see as odd, uncomfortable, or extreme. The symbolic nature of an object is important to me—what we hold as precious and why. I frequently use wedding rings as a theme due to their symbolism and significance within our society. It is important to me that the work challenges conventional perspectives and assumptions that people typically have.

The materials I use are significant to the meaning of the work. Preciousness, or lack thereof, speaks to social class, wealth, and our assumptions about them. I work with both rare and inexpensive materials such as 14K gold, brass, copper, cubic zirconia, and diamonds. I encourage the viewer to look deeper at some basic issues all around us and see them from a different perspective and even consider inherent contradictions.



### Joanna Madloch (b.1969)

Montclair, NJ

*All Together Now*, 2024

Photograph, 13 x 19 in.

Collection of the artist

Street photography offers a unique window into the connections and relationships between people. Unlike studio photography, it captures unplanned, genuine moments that reveal the depth and beauty of human interaction. Through the lens of a street photographer, everyday encounters are transformed into compelling narratives that reflect the true essence of urban life.

The camera captures the small gestures and expressions we can't stage. It also places people within their environment and captures their interactions with the space around them. It shows moments of solitude and togetherness, highlighting the complex interplay between individuals and their surroundings.

Street photography tells the story of human connection in a way that is both authentic and nuanced. It displays the everyday moments that define our relationships, providing a rich, visual exploration of the bonds that connect us all in an ever-changing landscape. Through its lens, we see the intricate and often overlooked interactions that shape our social world, revealing the profound complexity of our shared human experience.



### Kirk Maynard (b.1993)

Orange, NJ

*Periphery Series #22*, 2023

Oil pastel on paper, 36 x 24 in.

Collection of the artist

I am an artist and educator who, as a second-generation Guyanese-American, explores the political undercurrents of culture and identity in America through portraiture and composition. Often referencing American social history, my work explores the intersection between identity and politics through juxtaposition and the use of the profile.

This oil pastel series seeks to address the marginalization of Black people in contemporary society. The presentations of the subjects wearing hoodies are a commentary on negative connotations in certain spaces that ignore full Black humanity in the presence of stereotypes. The body language that is seen in the poses symbolizes an introspective look at existing in unwelcome spaces, where emotions can range from nervousness to resignation. The hoodies in the drawings serve as a social marker for dress as a point of reference for stereotypes that are placed upon the Black body.



## Winifred McNeill (b.1950)

Jersey City, NJ

*Hero Worship (The Gathering)*, 2024

Stoneware and porcelain, with blue oxide and lava meld glaze, 13 x 24 x 12 in.

Collection of the artist

The Hero is a complex figure integral to many cultures throughout the world.

Among artworks created as monuments to victory, the Hero-on-a-Pedestal type specifically celebrates one person. Their image, elevated to the apex of a column, is supported by the architectural integrity of the pillar. The dichotomy inherent to bravery is grief. Emanating from deep within, this force threatens the stability of the public testimonial.

The series, *Hero Worship*, explores this duality of the human condition. Each individual work consists of a sectional column supporting the head of a protagonist and inscribed with their tale of heroism. This text, however, is indecipherable. The hero's story cannot be understood. The columns lean, twist, and begin to topple, overcoming their geometry. Such unheroic gestures express the personal tragedies buried within the pose of the hero. Coming together as a group, the gestures here suggest conversations, whispered intimacies, and longing for the "other." While this series recognizes the overwhelming sadness at the core of the hero's journey, *The Gathering* describes the restorative power of the human heart.



## Marge Miccio (b.1957)

Trenton, NJ

*Homesick*, 2022

Mixed media, 3 x 13 x 13 in.

Collection of the artist

This mixed media assemblage addresses issues of homesickness, displacement, and fear of the unknown as well as xenophobia, demonization, and dehumanization of the "other." It uses vintage maps to provide a geographical context and the sense of a journey. Razor blades and old wire represent the dangerous barriers between us, both physical and emotional. The miniature, symbolic items refer to traditions, spirituality, superstitions, the passage of time. Vintage black and white photos evoke nostalgia, loss, family connections severed by distance and estrangement. These elements combined suggest a narrative of the emotions, fears and dreams of refugees, immigrants, and sanctuary seekers around the world.



### Maria Mijares (b. 1951)

Plainfield, NJ

*4 Fashion Girls*, 2024

Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 36 in.

Collection of the artist

My work as a contemporary realist began with an unconscious intent to understand personal experience. Born in NYC, I grew up back and forth between urban New Jersey and Santander, Spain. Compelled to narrate, I paint a balanced world I can live in—full of color and harmony. ‘Family,’ for this only child, would always be a community of colleagues, friends, and neighbors. *4 Fashion Girls* depicts my friends Yvette and Deanna in a fitting room next to framed wall decor—a 50s looking photograph of two models. The style of the past contrasts the fashion of our day. Ethnicity is an unintended juxtaposition, ultimately irrelevant, and easily overlooked in the large picture. “Girls” applies to women of all ages and especially in the sisterhood of the fitting room. Casually dressed sales associates are there to assist; they stand confident. They know what looks good.



### paulA neves (b.1968)

Kearny, NJ

*Regina*, 2023

Video: 1:57 minutes

Collection of the artist

**R***egina* is a video essay/poem/meditation on what it means to be part of a community that is transforming. Regina Perkins worked for 27 years as a custodian in Newark, NJ. What she liked most about her job was the fellowship she experienced with others, a sentiment that informs her aspirations for retirement and her views of changes happening in her home city. As she says, “I want everybody to have someplace to stay.” *Regina* expands on some of the peripheral themes from an earlier work I co-produced, the feature length documentary, *The Remedy*, even using several of the same clips, but to localize these themes on a smaller, human scale—and emphasize, if briefly, those points of connection that are often forgotten in our quests for “revitalization.”

## Meira Pomerantz (b.1950)

Fort Lee, NJ

*Before Leaving*, 2024

Linocut print,

22 x 18 in.

Collection of the artist

In making art I feel a strong pull to express my belief that grace, dignity, and humor are all around us. I develop images from a blend of looking at live scenes or models, photographs, and my imagination. Working largely with a black and white palette brings power to the work yet poses challenges. When carving a linoleum block, considering what to cut out that will present as white and what will remain black can be tricky. This process demands taking time for reflection, going back to the piece after a period, and rethinking the mistakes.

This linoleum cut print, *Before Leaving*, presents a familiar image of a mother enfolding and being embraced by her children. It is a statement of human emotion and caring between the individuals. Here is a suggestion that family encompasses many things; problems may surface that cause quarrels or upset. Yet families also express love, kindness, compassion, hope, strength, as well as a need to guard each other so everyone is safe.

Throughout the work, surrounding the three figures is an assortment of patterning and texture expressed through carving out lines and markings to bring energy and movement as a suggestion of the frenetic pace of so many things happening in the world we inhabit. Including the blossoms in the top right is meant to boost encouragement for the times ahead.



## Copie Rodriguez (b. 1962)

Garfield, NJ

*Mom*, 2024

Mixed media, acrylic,

spray paint, collage,

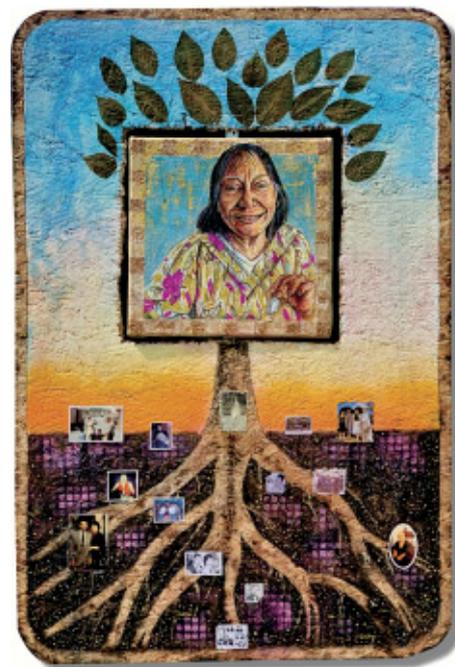
39½ x 26 in.

Collection of the artist

**M**om started off as a small acrylic portrait painting I did of my mother, Candida Alt-gracia Urrutia Portes Rodríguez, when she passed away in the winter of 2022. When I

found out about the potential exhibition at the Montclair Art Museum, I decided to make it larger and more substantial, using a family tree motif in the background and incorporate family photos in the pressed wood panel. One of my cousins once told me, after her mother and another aunt, my mother's two older sisters passed away within weeks of each other, that when we die we become photos, but in this case, we become a mixed media painting instead. I wanted to preserve my mother's memory and our connection to our roots and humble beginnings, first in the Dominican Republic, then Washington Heights, NYC. In the bottom photo of the painting, the top two rows are Tío Joe, Tía Eloisa, Tía Celeste, Abuelo Rodolfo, and my mom, Candida. The bottom row are the remaining sisters, including my Godmother, Pituka, photographed by my Abuelita Nereida, circa late 1940s, Hato Mayor del Rey, Dominican Republic.

Candida Rodriguez (b. 1938 San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic, d. 2022, Teaneck, NJ) raised 5 boys with my father Freddy, worked as a seamstress in the Garment District, and high-end fashion boutiques.





## Joseph Gerard Sabatino (b.1977)

Paterson, NJ

*Things to Love*, 2023

Mixed media on Asphaltum paper, 36 x 72 in.

Collection of the artist

As demonstrated in earlier word drawings from the series, *Things to Love* makes use of multi-mediums that appear to be traditional in form, while remaining unique in its conception and combination of non-traditional, industrial materials.

Commonly found in many urban environments, asphalt roofing paper (*a.k.a. asphaltum*) is unrolled, flattened, and sliced into any desired format. Graphite, silver/white welder's pencils as well as standard white drawing pencils are vigorously pressed on the heavyweight black paper—signifying loosely raw marks similarly used by the hand and mind of a young child. The raw white lines can also reference the thoughts and passing time of an individual who has been isolated and/or incarcerated. The duality continues with the toxic and acidic properties of the manufactured material, ironically emulating the soft, visual elements of natural rice paper.

However, in time, the works will continue to physically evolve by forming a slight yellowish, sepia tint as the chemically infused asphalt paper seeps its way into the text's chalkboard-like surface. The interplay of distinct fonts, geometric forms, and trails of thought reference passing time on life's playfulness, daily challenges, and decisions. Part flow chart and part journal, the word drawings display a meditative order to the visual disorder. The formation of tally marks, which seem to count off a list giving order, alters a brief moment into an extension of time. But, rather than relying on environmental and/or external experiences, the works are dependent on personal and internal expansion.

## Gary Saretzky (b.1946)

Lawrenceville, NJ

*Three Angels with Chitarra*, 2023

Photograph, 20 x 16 in.

Collection of the artist

By 2000, digital photography began replacing analog and its steady improvement facilitated technically perfect images. Simultaneously, some photographers began to go back to 19th century methods, especially collodion, or sought new ways to manipulate the technology to make it look imperfect. More recently, software has been introduced to emulate historic processes.

During the pandemic, while spending much time at home, I began photographing how morning light illuminated interior spaces, using a tintype app on my iPhone. The photo on exhibit, an archival pigment print, is from a series of more than one hundred (samples on my website [saretzky.com](http://saretzky.com)). This one depicts a greeting card that I made more than thirty years ago of my three children with a chitarra [pasta-making tool] from the Abruzzo region of Italy, where my wife's maternal grandparents were born. The boy holding the chitarra now has three children of his own. The original chitarra seen in the card is also in the photo, which reminds me that with the passage of time, my story is becoming history but also that life holds the potential for renewal.





## Danielle Scott (b.1978)

Jersey City, NJ

*Tomas*, 2023

Mixed media and found objects, 60 x 72 in.

Artemizia Foundation, Bisbee, Arizona

**T**omas is the visual interpretation of the beautiful relationship between Angola and Cuba—the spiritual connection I felt as I researched the Atlantic Slave trade for four months in Angola as an Afro-Cuban and felt My Ancestors guiding me through my emotions. Tomas is one of the fishermen who said to me in Portuguese as he touched my head and prayed in his village home, “voce ja esteve aqui antes” which means “You have been here before.” Tomas is my Cuban great grandfather’s name whom I share my birthday with. Tomas is me feeling my great grandfather place his hands on my head as the fisherman and caused me to cry in joy of familiarity Tomas is a depiction of joy, pain, and courage. Tomas is our history. The images behind Tomas are old slave markets in downtown Luanda, Fortaleza de Sao Miguel (where slaves were rolled from the top of the Fort to the bottom landing on Flores Street) The chain in Tomas’ hands is from the slave jail cell located at the bottom of the fort before the ships were loaded. The boats in the background are the fisherman. The wood and metal assembled on Tomas are from Mussulo and Mossangonao, which served as a base for the capture and enslavement of people.

Cuba’s relationship with Angola started in the 1960s as part of the “Second Revolution” movement announced by



## Susan Sinek (b.1949)

Fort Lee, NJ

*My sister and brother-in-law...together apart!*, 2022

Acrylic, gold leaf, gold paint, graphite, encaustic on wood, 8 x 16 in.

Collection of the artist

work to capture feeling and expression with the use of line, this is the essence of all my work. For the figures in this work, I used beautiful and sensitive lines with blocks of bold shades to allow the work to emerge from the space. One can look beyond the figures to find your own story behind the work. In this small work I used mixed media...charcoal, acrylic, graphite, gold leaf paint on gessoed wood, then finished with encaustic which melts the gold and gives the work a hazy glow. *My sister and brother-in-law...together apart!* are posing on a bench in Morocco...very staid and serious...they are both very successful. They are very much together and, in their work, they are very much apart.

Fidel Castro. The movement intended to bring Marxism-Leninism to Africa starting primarily in Zaire (today known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo). The failed attempt to make a foothold in Zaire presented various lessons to Cuba which were used in identifying better candidate nations, leaders, and better opportunities for success.

The relationship is the meaning of the words “Tamos Bem or Tudo bom,” which in Portuguese means “All good.”



### Jay Seldin (b.1948)

Montclair, NJ

*Coffee Pot Quilters, Bedford, PA, 2023*

Digital pigment print, 20 x 14 7/12 in.

Collection of the artist

Whether I am traveling in America or in a foreign country, many of my black and white photographs reveal countless ways people experience and navigate the world around them, particularly in terms of community and belonging. The photograph, *Coffee Pot Quilters, Bedford, PA* is taken from a series of American images that I have photographed while traveling across this country for the past two decades. You learn a lot about a place when you are free to travel wherever the road takes you. My road trips across America do have a beginning and an end, but the middle is unpredictable. I go where the road leads me.

This photograph of five octogenarian women quilting inside of a “roadside attraction,” known as the Bedford Coffee Pot, was one of hundreds of “roadside giants” that once stood alongside the Lincoln Highway, America’s first coast-to-coast highway. The women that I photographed inside are known as the “Coffee Pot Quilters.” They use this location to meet, talk, and share memories while they make quilts as a community activity to auction off the finished quilt for a family in need.



### Judi Tavill (b.1968)

Rumson, NJ

*ENMESH, 2022*

Fired ceramic clay, paint, graphite, varnish, 17½ x 11 x 7½ in.

Collection of the artist

This sculpture, *ENMESH*, is a piece from my *ENTANGLEMENTS* series and references our interconnectedness in the face of division.

It is visually and conceptually inspired by the strong, tangible tree systems, mycelium networks, and biologic structures I see in the world that find ways to connect and survive despite difficult conditions. This work also references the complicated, less tangible, interpersonal relationships and sociopolitical tensions we face within the systems and structures in which we live.

I built this abstract, biomorphic ceramic sculpture through an intuitive process of hand building with clay. After firing the form, I created a smooth painted surface upon which I drew intertwined graphite lines. The lines develop an energy that seems to emanate from within and radiate outward resulting in a piece that feels both alien and organic. The improvisational nature of my process of building coil upon coil, line upon line, twisting and tangling, demonstrates how individual parts connect to become a whole.

This physical expression illustrates how the continuum of connection can grow and lead to entanglement. This work suggests the elaborate networks that define our complex world and invites contemplation and reflection upon the part we play in it.

## JP Terlizzi (b.1962)

Somerset, NJ

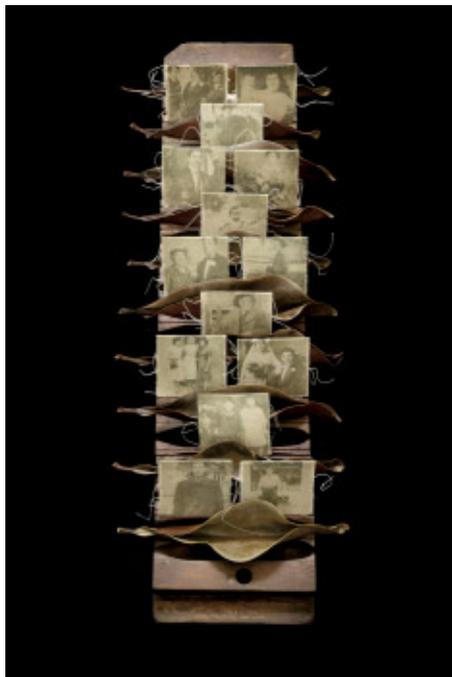
*The Legacy*, from the series *Remembering Papa*, 2024  
Assemblage: family photographs on muslin with magnolia leaves and found objects, 22 x 5 x 1½ in.  
Collection of the artist

My practice explores themes of memory, relationship, and identity, with images rooted in the personal and heavily influenced by the notion of home, legacy, and family. I am curious about how the past relates to and intersects with the present and how the present enlivens the past, shaping one's identity.

The influence of my maternal family has not just shaped but profoundly contributed to forming our family's identity. As a memory custodian and artist, I feel an unspoken obligation to help preserve our family's visual history. The contrast between the different generations serves as a poignant reminder that, just as individual lives are trans-

sient, the legacy of family endures—a continuum of love, lessons, and shared experiences.

The assemblage speaks to the interconnectedness of family history, with each image serving as a snapshot of everyday moments that have shaped our familial journey. It reflects the transience of individual lives and aging memories, ultimately contributing to the family's enduring legacy.



## Renelle White Buffalo (b. 1987, SičąŋAŋ Lakota, an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe)

Jersey City, NJ

*Sky Shawl*, 2024

Acrylic and collage on canvas, 40 x 30 in.  
Collection of the artist



I grew up in the open plains of South Dakota, and now I am surrounded by the vertical landscape of the city. Although my environment has changed, the subject of my paintings remains deeply rooted in the multi-toned layers of the sacred Lakota culture. I aim to tell fresh stories of the contemporary Native

and contribute to the preservation of Lakota culture and language through abstracting the symbolism, stories, and memories.

My painting, inspired by the Fancy Shawl dance, reflects the vibrant tapestry of my heritage and the rich traditions that have shaped my identity.

One of my earliest memories is attending a pow wow with my grandma. Though I did not have my own regalia, I proudly wore her shawl. I never recall seeing my grandma dance, making her shawl even more intriguing and captivating in my memory of that day. In this piece, I seek to capture the dynamic energy and grace of the Fancy Shawl dance, the enveloping comfort my grandma brought to me, and the community of pow wow dancing.



### Ann Winston Brown (b.1940)

Edgewater, NJ

*Family Portrait, 2023*

Original monoprint on fabric with lettering and sewing,  
24 x 18 in.

Collection of the artist

The women in this portrait living together united by marriage and blood forms a single household interacting with each other in their respective social positions, usually parents, children, and siblings. At its most basic, this family consists of only women and their children. The family performs various valuable functions for its members. Perhaps and most important of all, it provides for emotional and psychological security, particularly through the warmth, love, and companionship of living together for generations.



### Jonathan Yubi Gomez (b.1993)

Bergenfield, NJ

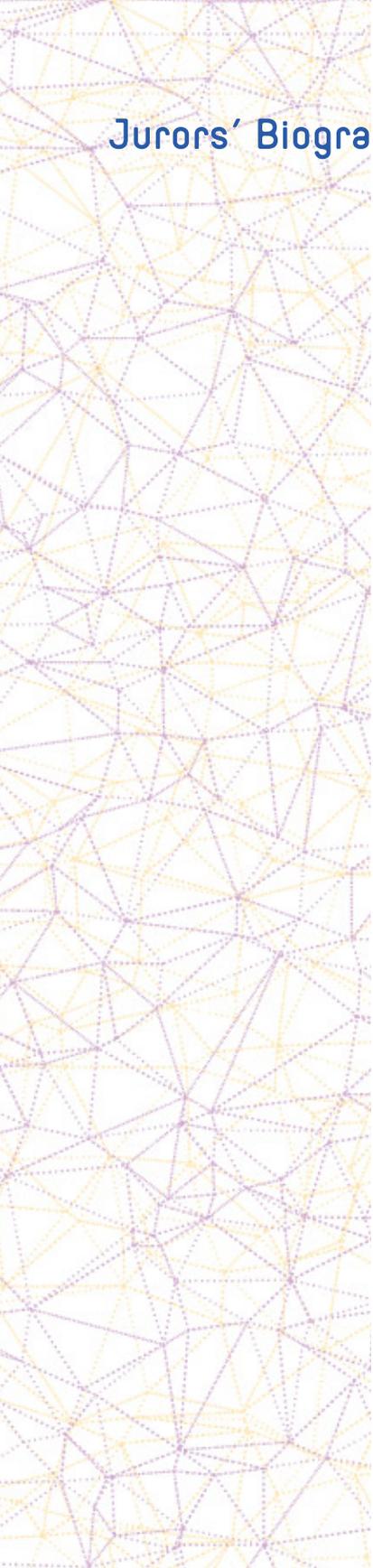
*Una historia gringa, 2023*

Oil on canvas, 60 x 44 in.

Collection of the artist

I am a painter inspired by the structure of literature. I paint laborers—a multitude of workers—documented and undocumented alike. These laborers are central to themes of identity, labor, and social unrest in my work. *Una historia gringa* depicts a construction crew on the tracks of 86th Street Station in Manhattan's Upper West Side. Two workers gore a klansman, a third holds his hood, and others brandish pikes. Two flags wave gallantly—one representing my motherland, the other my fatherland.

This scene of triumph also serves as a biographical work, presenting four stories of immigration from my family history. The 86th Street station symbolizes my emigration from Ecuador in 1986. My stepfather's immigration to Brooklyn from Puerto Rico is represented by 1901, the start of a series of Supreme Court cases on America's unincorporated territories, a date tattooed on the knuckles of the gored klansman. My own story coming of age in the Florida Panhandle and constructing an identity against the backdrop of a region with a deep history of racial and class division, is illustrated by the machinery surrounding the workers and the cross in the background.



## Jurors' Biographies

### Todd Caissie

Todd Caissie is an enrolled member of the Osage Nation and lives in Freehold, NJ. He is currently the Director of the New Brunswick Internment Camp Museum (Canada), and former member of the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers Board of Advisors. Todd received a PhD in Art History and Cultural Heritage and Preservation Studies (CHAPS), and an M.A. in Art History from Rutgers University. He earned a B.A. in Classical Archaeology from Hunter College and B.A. in Psychology from Stony Brook University. His recent curatorial credits include the exhibition *ESCAPE: Art from the New Brunswick Internment Camp* at the Beaverbrook Art Gallery (Fredericton, Canada); collaborator for the forthcoming Native American art reinstallation at Montclair Art Museum [opening in September 2024]; organizing a display tentatively titled *The Creator's Game: Tewaaronon*, and *The Artists of Black Mountain: Woven and Intertwined, Josef Albers, Anni Albers, Ruth Asawa* at the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University. Dr. Caissie has taught a variety of Art History courses at Rutgers University and Middlesex County Community College, is a Commissioner on the Freehold Township Historic Preservation Commission, and a grant evaluator for several non-profits including the NJ Council for the Humanities.

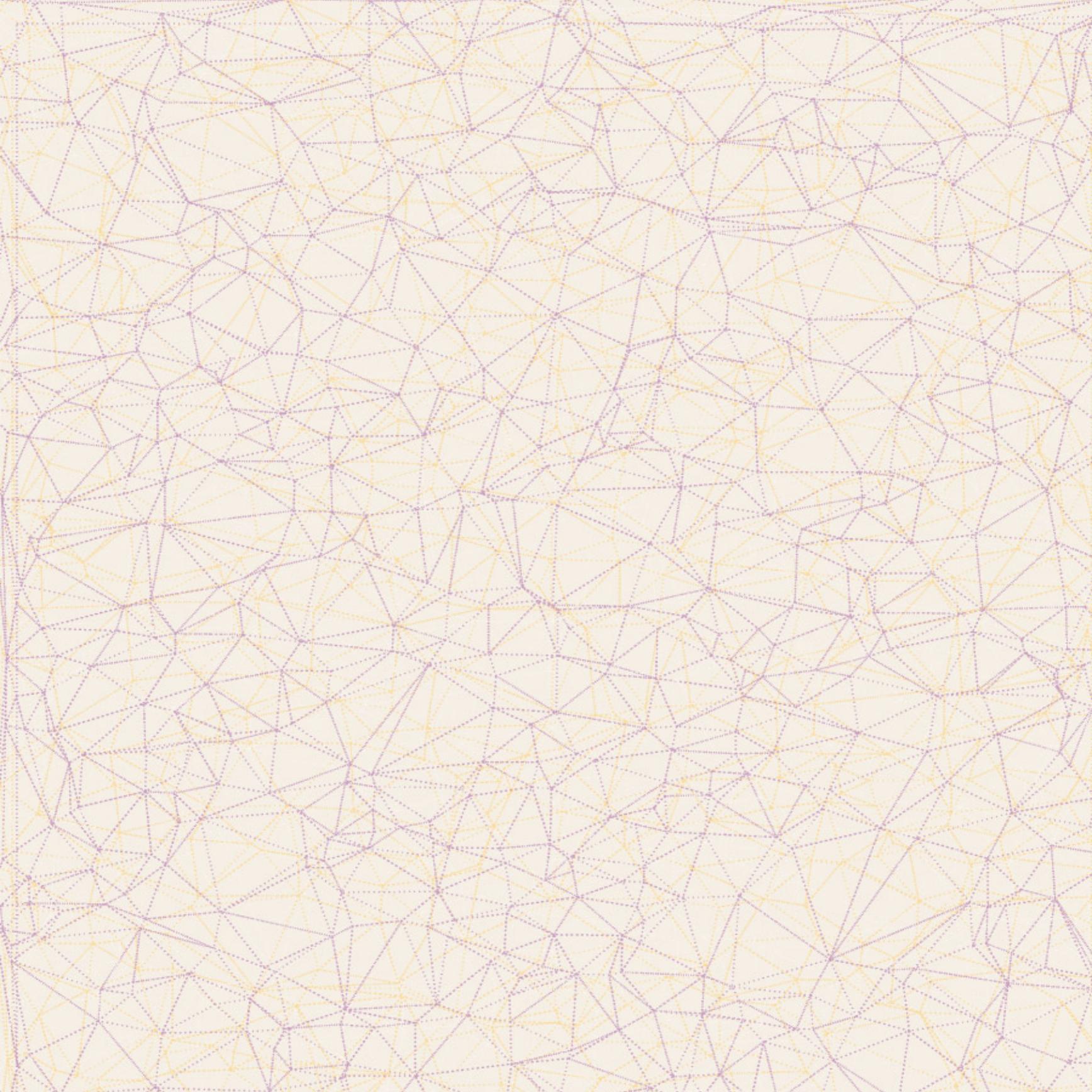
## Kimberly Callas

Kimberly Callas is a multi-media artist, sculptor, and the lead artist of the Social Practice project *Discovering the Ecological Self*. Her work has been exhibited internationally in galleries and museums and has received national and international grants and awards. Recent awards include a Pollination Project Grant and a Puffin Foundation Grant. In 2020, she received 1st Place Award in Sculpture at the Catharine Lorillard Wolfe Art Club's Annual Exhibit in New York City. Recent exhibits include the *International New Media Exhibit* at the CICA Museum in South Korea, *Summer Exhibition* at Flowers Gallery in New York City, and *Crossing Boundaries: Art and the Future of Energy* at The Pensacola Museum of Art, Florida. In 2019, Callas was selected to attend JOYA: Arte + Ecología Residency, in Vélez-Blanco, Spain. Passaic County commissioned Callas to complete a Life-Size Portrait with an elaborate 6 foot Cartouche Relief for the Lambert Castle Renovation in Paterson, NJ, which opened in May 2024. Her work has been published in *Post Human, New Media Art 2020* by CICA Press and has appeared in the *Huffington Post* and *Art New England*. Callas offers DEcoSelf workshops internationally, with recent workshops held at the Museum of Art and Design in New York City. In March 2024, she will be an artist-in-residence at the Arts Quarter Budapest, in Hungary. Callas received her MFA from the New York Academy of Art and her BFA from Stamps School of Art at the University of Michigan. She is currently an Associate Professor of Art at Monmouth University, in West Long Branch, NJ and maintains a studio in both Maine and New Jersey.

## Philemona Williamson

Philemona Williamson's narrative paintings explore the tenuous bridge between adolescence and adulthood, encapsulating the intersection of innocence and experience at its most piercing and poignant moment. She has shown widely, with solo shows at June Kelly Gallery in New York, Jenkins-Johnson Gallery in San Francisco, a mid-career retrospective at the Montclair Art Museum in New Jersey in 2017, and a recent solo show at Galerie Semiose in Paris. She is the recipient of numerous awards and residencies including The Joan Mitchell Foundation, The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, National Endowment for The Arts, New York Foundation for The Arts, and The Millay Colony. In 2022, she received a Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and was awarded the Anonymous Was A Woman grant. She is represented in numerous private and public collections, including the Montclair Art Museum, the Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, The Mint Museum, Smith College Museum of Art, Hampton University Museum, Sheldon Art Museum, Mott-Warsh Art Collection, The AT&T Corporate Art Collection, and The Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection. Her public works include fused-glass murals created for the MTA Arts in Transit Program at the Livonia Avenue Subway Station in Brooklyn, a painting used by the MTA's Poetry In Motion and, for the NYC School Authority, a mosaic mural in Queens. She also created a series of paintings for the children's book "Lubaya's Quiet Roar" from Penguin Random House. Ms. Williamson has taught Painting & Drawing at Hunter College, Pratt Institute, SVA, Bard College, RISD, Cooper Union, and Parsons as well as serving on the advisory board of the Getty Center for Education and is currently on the board of directors of The Visual Arts Center of New Jersey.





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