



CREATORS CATALOG

A powerful, week-long multimedia exhibition that dives into the raw tension, heartbreak, and hope shaping today's cultural and political landscape.

Exhibition

August 22 – 28, 2025

Gallery 440 + Immergent

www.gallery440.com/good-morning-mourning

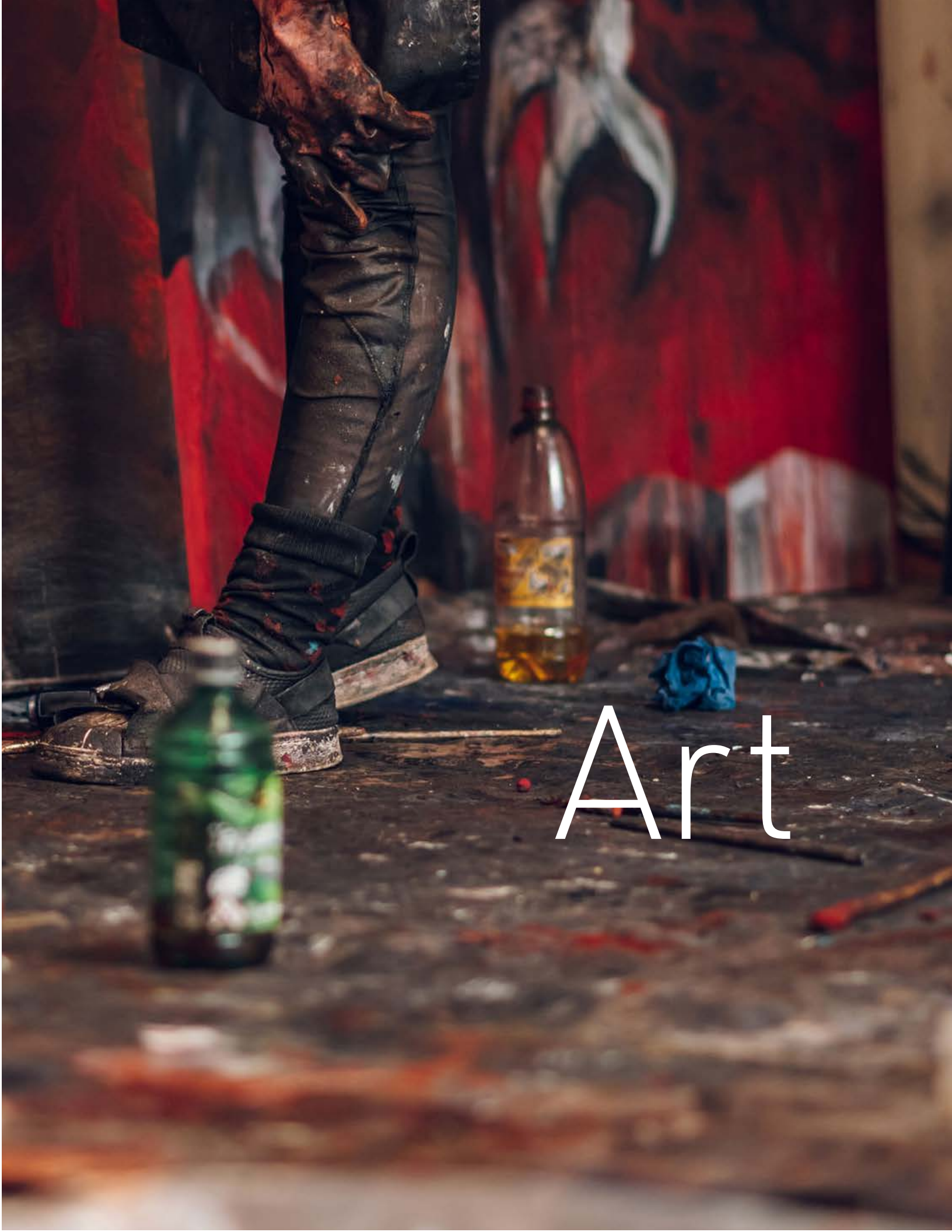
www.immergent.us/good-morning-mourning-america/

DISCLAIMER

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IMMERGENT



Art



Vicky Cardwell Balcou

Fort Worth native, Vicky Cardwell Balcou, was fortunate to have been born into an artistic family. Both of her parents, Norman Douglas and Marguerite Knight Cardwell, were artists/designers/teachers. She grew up in the Reeder Children's School of Theater and Design, where her mother, a classmate of Dickson Reeder, taught art. In this context, she enjoyed the creative influences of the artists of the Fort Worth Circle, including Flora Reeder, Dickson's wife and creative partner, Olive Pemberton, Cynthia Brants, Bill Bomar, McKie Trotter, Reilly Nail, Jean Banks, Gwen Tandy and Earnest Chilton.

At the Fort Worth Art Center, Vicky studied with Bror Utter, Dickson Reeder, and David Brownlow. Well-known watercolorist and teacher, Beatrice Dunning, guided Vicky and her fellow Paschal High School students, Hal Normand, Sally Morris, Jane Doneghe and many others, to strive for excellence in their skills.

Vicky earned her B.A. of Fine Arts at U.T. in Austin. She studied with Everett Spruce, Loren Mozley, William Lester, Charles Umlauf and Ralph White. While pursuing her successful career in commercial art, advertising, illustration and product design, she studied painting with Bill Komodore and drawing with Ellen Soderquist. Her work has been shown at several Dallas galleries.

Vicky is now living in Bastrop, Texas, painting, showing and teaching art.

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Statement

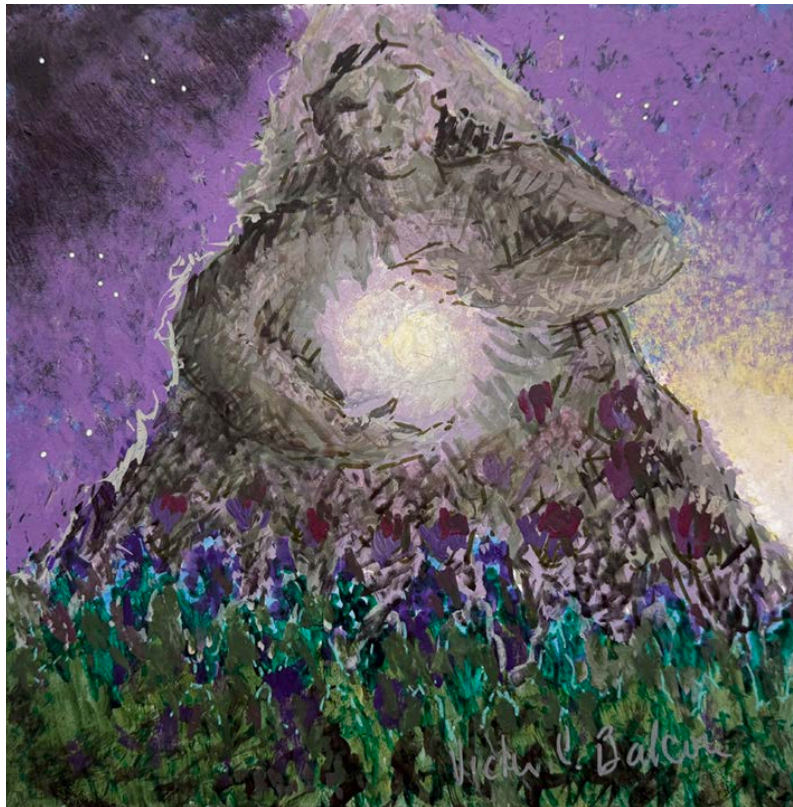
Mountain, Metaphor for Woman, was inspired by a drive through the Chama River Canyon Wilderness in Santa Fe National Forest, seeing the grandeur and majesty of the landscape. As my stepsister and her husband drove, I drew in the backseat, making color notes and trying to capture the amazing images that so intrigued me.

So many different formations, dramatic structures, changing as the afternoon's light slowly lowered. They seemed to be female spirits, dressed in piercing light that revealed their harsh beauty, and mysterious shadows that hid their complex faces.

Night's darkness made me stop drawing – all my thumbnail sketches were complete with color notes, detail insets and titles.

And now I have the opportunity to add one more iconic mountain spirit to my series. The working title of this is "She Holds Tomorrow in Her Hands."

Throughout American history, despite societal challenges, women in their various roles, have continued to influence our culture in countless positive ways. My *Mountain, Metaphor for Woman* series expresses my confidence in female innate strengths and characteristics to withstand the complexities of America's constantly changing societal environment and continue to influence it in many beneficial ways.



Vicky Cardwell Balcou

She Holds Tomorrow in Her Hands

Pastel on Board

12"x12"

\$700



WEBSITE

www.kimberleabass.com

INSTAGRAM

www.instagram.com/kimberleabassstudio

Kimberlea Bass

Kimberlea Bass is a multidisciplinary artist based in Fort Worth, Texas, exploring time, memory, home, and family history through 2D and 3D mixed media. She earned her MFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design in 2022 and her BFA in Studio Art from Southern Methodist University in 1995. Her work has been featured in juried exhibitions across the U.S., including New Orleans Photo Alliance (LA) Fotofoto Gallery (NY), Cedar House Gallery (GA), Fort Works Arts (TX), Fort Worth Community Art Center (TX), and Laguna Art Gallery (CA). Her work is held in public and private collections nationwide, including Drake Field Airport in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Create! Magazine, Art of the Hearts Project, The Visionary Arts Collective, and Shout Out DFW have all featured Bass in print. She has also been recognized multiple times by LensCulture as an Editor's Pick. Bass has attended international residencies, including Studio Faire, Château Orquevaux in France, and Photo Trouvée. In 2024, she was invited by The Photographer's Gallery in London to present her portfolio and engage with local artists. That same year, she joined the Flusser Club's summer session in Rubion, France, where scholars from around the world studied and debated Towards a Philosophy of Photography by Vilém Flusser. Beyond her studio practice, Bass teaches foundational art courses at the University of North Texas, where she also trains fellow educators. She additionally teaches middle and high school students through Crimson Global Academy and American Straight A Academy.

Statement

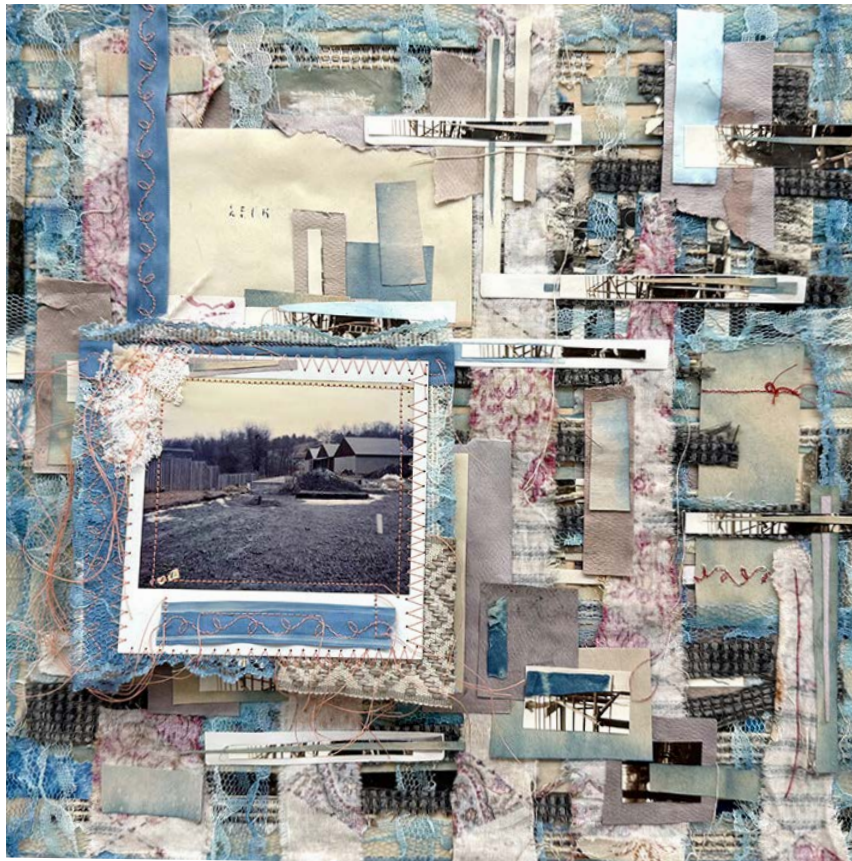
My work is rooted in memory, nostalgia, and the fragmented nature of personal history. With a foundation in photography, I incorporate historic photo practices, found objects, aged materials, and stitching to explore remnants of family, home, and time. The dismantling of personal connections compels me to collect discarded heirlooms, vintage images, and organic materials that once held significance. By repurposing items I restore their significance—transforming them into something precious again, but in a different context. These once-treasured objects find new life, their histories woven into the present.

I acknowledge both the beauty and scars left by grief and change. How does nostalgia function—is it longing, healing, or transformation? How do objects hold memory? How do aged photographs, textiles,

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and found objects shape the emotional weight of what we create? What is a woman's role in today's society, and how do we reconcile tradition with self-determination?

At its core, my work honors people, places, and histories that might otherwise be forgotten. By reassembling what has been discarded, I seek to create meaning from loss and offer space for reflection. Viewers engage with textures, layers, and symbols, drawing connections to their own histories. Ultimately, my work evokes the feeling of coming home—not to a physical place, but to an understanding of how the past endures in shaping who we are and how we move forward.



Kimberlea Bass

Jenny

Mixed Media Collate (lace, cotton fabric, hand-dyed paper, vintage photographs)

12"x12"

\$450



HONORABLE MENTION

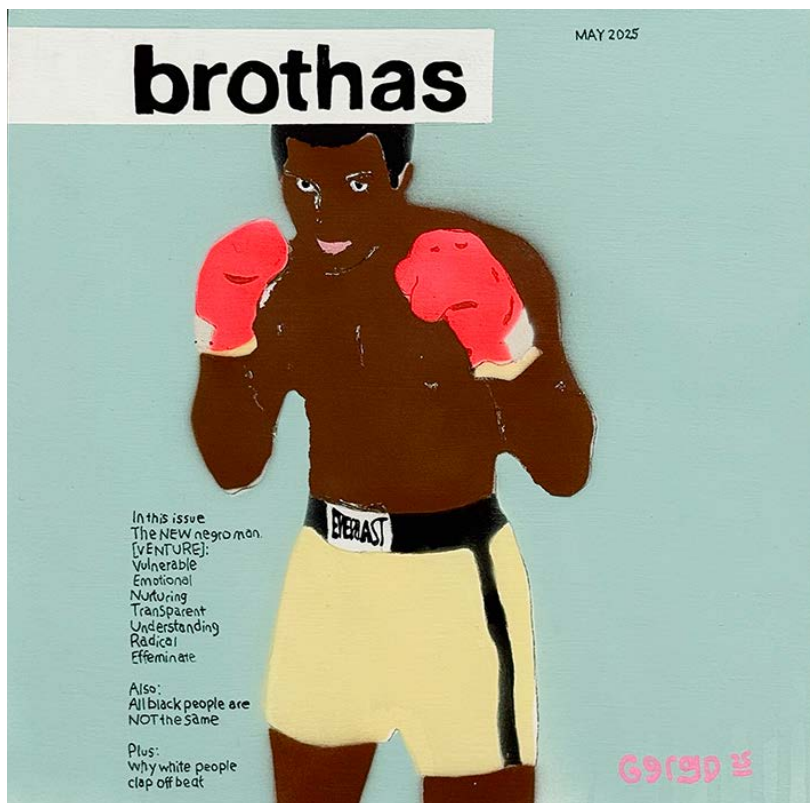
WEBSITE www.geraldbellart.com
 INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/kgbell21

Gerald Bell

Gerald is a self-taught artist from Fort Worth who has exhibited both locally and beyond. His work is collected by people nationwide.

Statement

His current pop art and outsider art features humor, to add to the experience, make light of the situation, shed light on the outcome or the situation, and eventually act as a catalyst to the viewer's thought process and realization of the outcome as it pertains to each viewer. This painting is a reflection on a topic that has deeply influenced my life and the lives of many others—our understanding of vulnerability and strength within the Black male community. It is my hope that through this painting and dialogue, we can begin to break down these barriers and foster a culture where vulnerability is seen as a strength, not a weakness.



Gerald Bell
 Brothas
 Mixed Media on Board
 12"x12"
 \$300



INSTAGRAM W

Sarah Coffman

Sarah Coffman is an emerging artist based in Fort Worth, Texas specializing in illustration through digital painting and traditional pencil drawing. Her artistic journey began during a period of chronic illness when art became a profound and necessary refuge, as well as a gateway to possibility. Sarah's primary focus lies in creating narrative illustrations, though she has also explored various other creative avenues, including animation, portraiture, and crafting greeting cards. Her influences span from the dynamic work of Disney animators, who master the art of bringing characters to life, to the intimate and tender paintings of impressionist Mary Cassatt. Her visual language combines animated expression with the realism of everyday life to emphasize emotional depth.

Statement:

I began creating when I was young as a form of adventure and escape from my chronic illness. I learned I could enter fantastical realms with limitless potential. With my work, I aim to create illustrations that feel both dreamlike and grounded in subtle realism, as if through the lens of a familiar memory. Ultimately, my objective is to make art that transcends the mundane, offering a sanctuary for myself and the viewer within a wondrous space where the spectrum of human emotion can be explored without constraint. Through these ongoing explorations, I hope to continue fostering connections by sharing artworks that speaks to the universal human experience and encourages hope.

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WEBSITE www.janaecorrado.com

INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/kimberleabassstudio

Janae Corrado

Award-winning artist Janae Corrado serves as a professor of Art at the Trinity River Campus of Tarrant County College in Fort Worth, Texas. When she is not inspiring her students with her passion for the works of Mucha, Vermeer, Klimt, and van Eyck, Janae can be found in her studio creating dreamlike and surreal paintings. Born on the west coast of Florida, she was profoundly inspired by the simultaneous beauty and cruelty of the great outdoors during her childhood passion that continues to influence her work today.

Statement

This piece, "The Weight of the Olive Branch", presents a bald eagle, America's national symbol, struck mid-flight by an arrow adorned with the American flag. Despite its mortal wound, the eagle clutches an olive branch, the traditional emblem of peace. This tension between national identity, self-inflicted harm, and the persistence of hope reflects the dual nature of the exhibition's title: Good Morning/Mourning America.

The work confronts the cultural and political fracture of our current era, suggesting that the injuries we suffer as a nation are not from foreign forces, but from within. The image aims to evoke grief and resilience simultaneously, a country that both aspires to peace and is pierced by its divisions.

In line with the show's purpose, this piece is not a prescription but an invitation to sit with discomfort, reflect on our shared symbols, and question whether they still unite us.

The eagle's fall is not just a mourning - it is a call for reckoning, and repair.

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Janae Corrado

The Weight of the Olive Branch

Mixed Media on Board

12"x12"

\$800 (Prints \$75)



WEBSITE www.dossantosfineart.com
 INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/dossantosfineart

Vanessa Daly

Vanessa Daly, the self-taught Venezuelan-American abstract artist behind Dos Santos Fine Art, creates evocative works that weave her deep connection to nature with her background in psychology. Born in Caracas, Venezuela, she has called Fort Worth home for the past eight years. Her art reflects a rich, multicultural perspective, shaped by years of living and exhibiting in Colombia, Belgium, Italy, and across the United States. Influenced by the patterns of the natural world and the depths of the human psyche, Vanessa creates pieces that transcend borders and speak to the shared human experience. Her art invites viewers to embrace life's journey, find beauty in adversity, and uncover meaning within chaos.

Statement:

Vinyl records hold the grooves of our past; usually marked by pain, growth, and resilience. But within those experiences lies freedom: the freedom to transform, to create, to choose. This artwork invites us to use our history not as a weight, but as a foundation; inviting us to shape the most beautiful version of ourselves. Every revolution is a chance to begin again.



Vanessa Daly

"Transforming Memories"- Sounds of Freedom
 Resin and Ink on Vinyl Record
 12"x12"
 \$880



WEBSITE www.hcedwardsart.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/hollspaghetts

Holly C. Edwards

Holly C. Edwards is an artist and art educator based in Round Rock, Texas, specializing in illustration and painting. With over 15 years of creative practice and classroom experience, her work bridges whimsical storytelling and strong design elements. She has exhibited throughout Central Texas, illustrated children's books, and completed large-scale public commissions. In addition to her studio practice, she teaches at Anderson High School and The Contemporary Austin's Laguna Gloria campus.

Statement:

Painted using the patriotic colors of red, white, and blue, I have interpreted the feeling of what it is like to teach in a state/country that not only seems to not care, but seems to actively encourage violence against our children. When hunters find easy prey, they capitalize on it, and as far as we are concerned- it is "Open Season" already.



Holly Edwards

Open Season 2025

Acrylic on Wood Panel

12"x12"

\$500



WEBSITE www.challart.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/challarttx

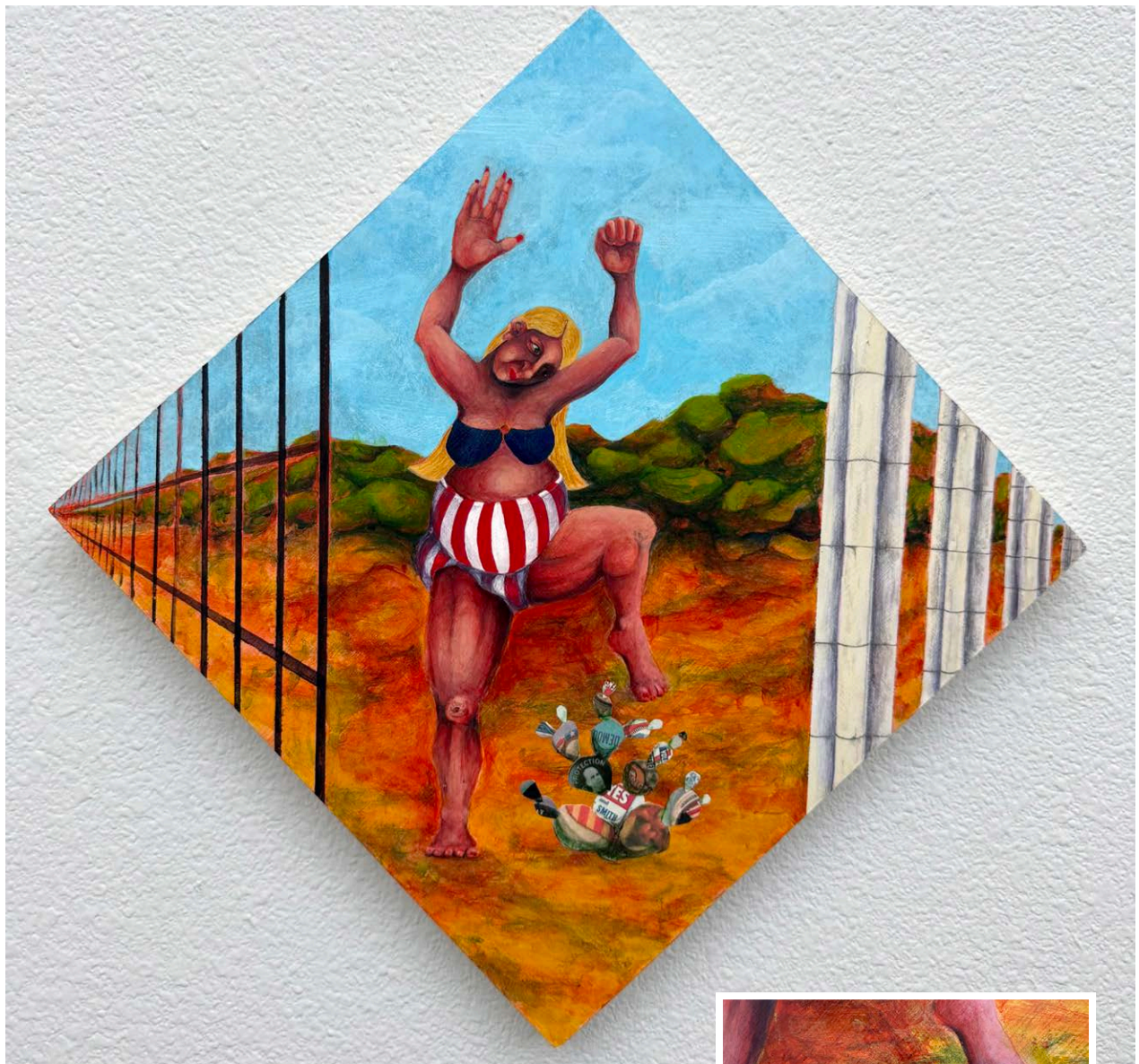
Constance "Connie" Hall

Born in the Midwest, Constance Hall arrived in Texas in 2005. Originally planning on staying for a short while en route to Arizona, Constance fell in love with Texas (and a Texan). She now lives in Arlington with her patient partner, Lance, their dog, Shiner Bark. She splits her time between creating art and practicing law. In her downtime, she keeps trying to get tomatoes to grow in Texas.

Statement:

Connie's work is largely narrative, and frequently biographical. Her work references her experiences, family, current and historical events, books she's read, and/or places she's been (or those she's made up in her head). Her work manipulates those references to make social, political, or moral comments, often with humor or irony.

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Connie Hall

Don't Step In It; Or Maybe Do

Mixed Media (acrylic, collage & graphite)

12"x12"

\$300





HONORABLE MENTION

WEBSITE www.artfinchers.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/artfinchers

Sadie Harrison-Fincher

As a contemporary artist based in Fort Worth, Texas, I create paintings, drawings, and prints that explore the colorful beauty of life moments. My work is driven by a desire to give visual form to themes of memory, identity, sense of place, community, family, connection, and resilience – those experiences that shape who we are.

Statement:

A Mockingbird, the state bird of Texas, flies away from her nest of eggs. Patriotic ribbon and bits of paper with excerpts from the Supreme Court ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* tangle around her legs and trail after her. In overruling *Roe v. Wade*, the court in *Dobbs* held that the right to abortion is not "deeply rooted in this Nation's history and tradition" or "implicit in the concept of ordered liberty." Conversely, government control over a woman's body must then be part of what our nation, and Texas in particular, consider ordered liberty. This new status quo makes me fear for women's autonomy and signals a regression of women's rights.



Sadie Harrison-Fincher
Ordered Liberty
Oil on Wood
12"x12"
\$500



WEBSITE www.arthuredwardsstudio.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/grottography

Adam Grotton

A photographer and visual artist originally from Bangor, Maine, now based in Fort Worth, Texas, Adam Grotton has cultivated a passion shaped by years of travel across the United States. These journeys fostered a deep appreciation for regional identities, overlooked spaces, and the emotional textures of everyday life.

Statement:

HOPE is a digital composite exploring the fragile tension between resilience and despair in the American landscape. At its center stands a rusted sign that reads "HOPE," flanked by two utility poles, each crowned with a vulture—one in distress, the other in tentative flight. Below, a bouquet of flowers rests like a quiet vigil, mourning what's been lost while still reaching toward belief. The altered colors and fractured light evoke a sense of unease, echoing the anxious anticipation many feel amid today's political and social instability. The manipulated environment becomes a metaphor for the distortion of truth and the erosion of civic trust. Yet, despite decay and dissonance, the word remains: HOPE. Not as blind optimism, but as a practice—something sustained in the face of doubt. This image speaks to the emotional complexities of living in a it was, fearing what's ahead, and still choosing to hope. It is a meditation on belief, vulnerability, and the endurance of spirit when clarity feels out of reach.

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Adam Grotton

Hope

Digital Composite Print

12"x12"

\$250



WEBSITE www.saachiart/fineartamerica.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/duke.horn

Duke M. Horn

Duke Horn has been practicing art and design for more than 65 years, building a career that spans painting, murals, custom design, and fine art. Early in his career, he exhibited in numerous prestigious shows, including an international exhibition in Tel Aviv, Israel, through gallery representation. In 1991, he co-founded a site-specific, high-end murals business, which he and his partner successfully ran for a decade. By 1999, he turned to a new discipline—designing and hand-painting custom rugs for two well-known Dallas companies. In 2005, he retired from commercial work to focus full time on easel painting for commissions, exhibitions, and galleries.

Throughout his career, Duke Horn has explored the complex interplay between perception, culture, and meaning in art, noting that the boundaries between “good” and “bad” art are often arbitrary and market-driven. His fascination with the Texas State Fair and its carnivals has been a recurring influence since his earliest years, when the sights and sounds of the Midway first inspired him. While working at Peter Wolf’s studio at Fair Park, he designed numerous State Fair projects and became captivated by the fair’s theatricality. By the early 1980s, he began weaving carnival imagery into his work, recognizing its metaphorical power to reflect life’s ups and downs, relationships, politics and joy.

His art spans oil, acrylic, Prismacolor pencil, markers, gouache, ink, and airbrush, and his imagery often celebrates both the humor and gravity of life’s “ride.”

Career Highlights

- President, Texas Visual Arts Association (1985–86)
- Board Member, Arts District Friends (1997–98)
- Member, Friends of Fair Park (1987)
- Calligraphy commission for the Highland Park Library
- Painter of the largest automotive mural in the Southwest (5,200 sq. ft.) at AER Manufacturing in Carrollton, TX (1996)
- Group Exhibitions: Daniel Padilla Gallery (2010); Craighead Green’s New Texas Talent Show (2011); Kettle Art Gallery (2011)

Statement:

After practicing art and design for more than 65 years, it occurs to me that there are only arguable parameters of value separating “good” art from “bad.” These two terms often seem interchangeable.

(CONTINUED)

The marketers, who wield almost magical political powers, ultimately determine which is which.

A discipline without canonical parameters becomes chaotic—much like today's art world, which appears as a cacophonous collection of educated and uneducated opinions, none of which will ever reach consensus. For example, 2D, non-digital, gestural cartoon art now passes as “woke” representationalism. This, I suppose, signals current cultural trends, even though active cartoons are rarely seen today except in the few daily newspapers still in print.

Twenty years ago, my painting began drawing inspiration from the Carnivale pantheon, and it continues to be influenced by it today. That fascination was first sparked during countless visits to the Texas State Fair with my parents in my pre-teen years. Over time, I hope my work has progressed, seeking new solutions to figurative painting, which remains central to my practice. My goal is to create compelling, mysterious, and unpredictable juxtapositions of unrepeatable linework, tonalities, abstraction, and symbolism—together forming a kind of Magical Realism for the viewer.

Ultimately, my work seeks to celebrate the complexities of humanity, embracing joy, sadness, and hope in our shared search for happiness.



In the future, will any body autonomy still exist if Congress and the Supreme Court was so easily persuaded to overturn Roe vs. Wade after 69 years of body sovereignty over our personal healthcare?

Sometimes, there is no choice in what the outcome of a pregnancy needs to be. But all is normal, would it best be served to terminate for manifold reasons as opposed to welcoming a newborn to the world? In earlier days, one legislator actually suggested beheading an abortion violator.

Duke Horn

Your Choice
Print (on Board)
12"x12"
\$288

Duke Horn

Your Choice (Original)
Oil and Acrylic on Canvas
48"x36"x2"
\$3400



WEBSITE www.claytonhurt.com

Clayton Hurt

Dallas based artist Clayton Hurt works mostly as a sculptor, his animal forms often ride the line between struggle and humor. Clayton currently teaches at Tarrant County College in Fort Worth, TX and online for Mesalands Community College in Tucumcari, NM as an Adjunct Professor. Hurt also works at The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth as on-call Installation and Design. He has shown his work at various DFW galleries and has been included in numerous regionally juried exhibitions. Many of his past works sit in private and a few public collections. He received his MFA at TCU in 2007 and his BFA at UNT in 2005. Clayton also studied art at Brookhaven College until 2002 and graduated from BTWHSPVA/Arts Magnet High school in 1999. As a 2nd generation artist Clayton grew up being surrounded by art and local DFW artists/family.

Statement:

Hurt's art spans many media, and though it appears eclectic, there are strong motifs running throughout. The dog sculptures have a gritty nature, as they often come from used leather scraps. The leather that forms them links to the glove "paintings," which have become higher-end objects, made from colored manufactured leather used for fashion and furniture design. The tension between the abstract compositions and the connotations of real-world material and daily actions of the animal forms ultimately comes back to the notions of struggle and humor present in Hurt's work.

The sculpture Transient Dog, represents the urge to escape and not enter. Poised on a section of border wall with resemblance (in number of bars) to the American flag, the dog is making a move. A sadness of departure and content to begin anew. A humorous gesture at the invalid attempt to stop transient nature.

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Clayton Hurt
Transient Dog
3D - Mixed Media
\$700



WEBSITE tccstories.wordpress.com/2013/04/12/aaron-hutchinson/
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/aaronrhutchinson

Aaron Hutchinson

Aaron Hutchinson became interested in photography as an art around the year of 2006 at the age of 22. Thoughts of what could be done if this tool would print one's imagination out. He set out to discover and experiment with Photography at local county college of Tarrant. After learning the rules, concepts and techniques. Breaking those rules seemed to be so much more entertaining. A few years later, these visual perceptions and ideas found a way to be presented before an audience. He continued to sign up for a photography class almost every semester to date at TCC NE in the state of Texas. Published works from using a variety of cameras were included in 3 of TCC's art magazines in 2008-2011. After Aaron became bored of photographing reality, the world. He began to create his own collages and mixed media to digitally scan onto a computer screen. His photographs and mixed media have been shown in Art Galleries through-out the DFW area for over a decade.

Regardless if Aaron is making art or not. He is usually listening to a variety of electronic music that has also helped shape the direction his art is moving in a way. He enjoys concerts, paying for the music he likes and forcing others to hear and develop an opinion to share. Musicians include The Aphex Twin, Trent Reznor and Kieran Hebden. Visual Artists that have laid an impact sometimes create the album art for the same musicians like Chris Cunningham or Michel Gondry.

Statement:

Around the year of 2005, Aaron started playing with a cheap digital camera. Thoughts of what could be done if this tool would print one's imagination out. He set out to discover and experiment with Photography at local county college of Tarrant in Texas. After learning the fundamental rules, concepts and techniques. Breaking those rules seemed to be so much more entertaining. A few years later, these visual perceptions and ideas found a way to be presented before an audience. Through using several homemade pinhole cameras with large format B&W or 35mm in color. He continued to sign up for or continue his education in another photography class almost every semester to date at TCC NE. After Aaron became bored of photographing reality, the world. He began to create his own collages and mixed media to digitally scan onto a computer screen. As a collection of documented images recreated from inside the Artist's mind. Published works from using a variety of cameras were included in 3 of TCC's art magazines from 2008-11. His photographs and mixed media have been shown in Art Galleries through-out the DFW area for over a decade.

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Aaron Hutchinson

Trump Time 4-25-18 (2018)

Print

9.125"x7.125"

\$187



Aaron Hutchinson

Trump Time 6-25-18 (2018)

Print

9.125"x7.125"

\$167

(CONTINUED)



Aaron Hutchinson
Trump Time 007 (2018)
Mixed Media
9.125"x7.125"
\$167

entrepreneur navigating the American landscape with strength, integrity, resilient fairness, and intelligent compassion. The completed gown will be offered for sale, with proceeds supporting a nonprofit benefiting young artists.



Elisa Jimenez & The Hunger World™

Spontaneous Couture® design to be performed

Aug. 22, 2025 at 7p.m., Gallery 440.

The model assisting will be Amaris Werner.

"InBodying G.M.M.A.-The Best Of Us"

\$1280 (\$1600 value)



WEBSITE

www.sandeighkennedy.com

INSTAGRAM

www.instagram.com/sandeighkennedy

Sandeigh Kennedy

Sandeigh Kennedy is an artist, designer, and musician based in New Braunfels, TX. In August 2019, Kennedy first mounted a memorial installation dedicated to the victims of gun violence featuring 258 pairs of shoes to represent 258 shootings in 8 months in the US. The installation took place in downtown New Braunfels in partnership with River City Advocacy and Moms Demand Action as a way to humanize the statistics around gun violence.

Statement:

This installation will consist of over 600 pairs of shoes. They're meant to represent the 600+ mass shootings that have occurred in the United States in 2023 (and counting). Each pair of shoes will have a marker denoting the location, date, number of injuries and number of lives lost at each event. I wanted to create this installation to process my own grief surrounding these tragedies and felt called to share it with my community and beyond. I chose shoes because they're so personal - they remind us of our own humanity. This installation is intended to be an invitation to overcome how desensitized we've become to these types of tragedies. My hope is to start a conversation and help navigate a path forward.

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Sandeigh Kennedy

Echoes

Mixed Media Installation

[Inquire About Purchase](#)





WEBSITE

www.lizkingartstudio.com

INSTAGRAM

www.instagram.com/Lizkingartstudio

Liz King

Liz King is a mixed-media narrative artist and educator raised in Central Texas. She holds a BFA in Ceramic Sculpture from East Texas State University and an MFA in Mixed Media from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). After graduate school, she completed a studio residency at the Banff School of Fine Arts in Alberta, Canada, before returning to Chicago, where she worked as a Regional Portfolio Advisor and Admissions Counselor for SAIC. She later taught with SAIC's Gallery 37 program and served as an adjunct instructor at the University of Texas at Arlington and Weatherford College, teaching foundation art, advanced drawing, ceramic sculpture and humanities.

For 23 years, she taught high school art in Fort Worth ISD, retiring in 2021 to devote herself full-time to her studio practice. Her 2D and 3D works draw on a wide range of cultural influences and personal experiences shaped by living, studying, and traveling in Mexico, Southeast Asia, Europe, Canada, and the United States. Influenced by the Chicago Imagist Movement, The Hairy Who, the West Coast 1970s Movement, and German Expressionism, she approaches her art as a visual diary. Through it, she reflects on daily life, health, personal experiences, and memories, interpreting and expressing them in her own distinctive narrative voice.

Statement:

"Sentinels of Dawn" encapsulates a reflection on American identity and resilience. At its center, a boy wrapped in the American flag expresses a blend of sorrow and hope for the future. The rooster perched above him symbolizes renewal and awakening amidst struggle.

Flanking the boy, the solemn figures of the Statue of Liberty and Mount Rushmore shedding tears, expressions of grief and reflection on the nation's history, details highlight the pain and hope intertwined in America's story. The colorful Sentinels represent the strength and diversity of communities standing guard. Their presence is a reminder of the ongoing struggles for justice, equality in society. The ribbons symbolize various causes of the continued fight for awareness and justice.

Together, these elements tell a story of both "Good Morning" and "Mourning America", encouraging contemplation of the complex emotions and shared journey toward peace and solidarity.

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Liz King
Sentinels of Dawn
Mixed Media
12"X12"
\$450



EMAIL

www.pamelalancaster.com

WEBSITE

[Instagram.com/pamela_lancaster_art_](https://www.instagram.com/pamela_lancaster_art_)

Pamela Peterson Lancaster

Pamela Lancaster was born and raised in Fort Worth, Texas. She attended the University of Oklahoma, where she majored in Elementary Education. After completing her student teaching, she began a post-baccalaureate program in Art Education at Texas Woman's University.

When Pamela is not creating art, she teaches elementary art and enjoys being a mother to two children. She has exhibited her work in various galleries and participated in numerous juried exhibitions. Recently, Pamela was honored with a nomination by the William Campbell Gallery to be one of 12 artists featured in the prestigious Rising Star exhibition.

Pamela's abstract work is inspired by images she finds visually compelling. These images may originate from her own photographs, personal sketches, or found materials that resonate with her. While they serve as the initial reference point, the finished paintings often bear little to no resemblance to the original source. Instead, Pamela focuses on the beauty found within the relationships of organic forms that emerge during the creative process.

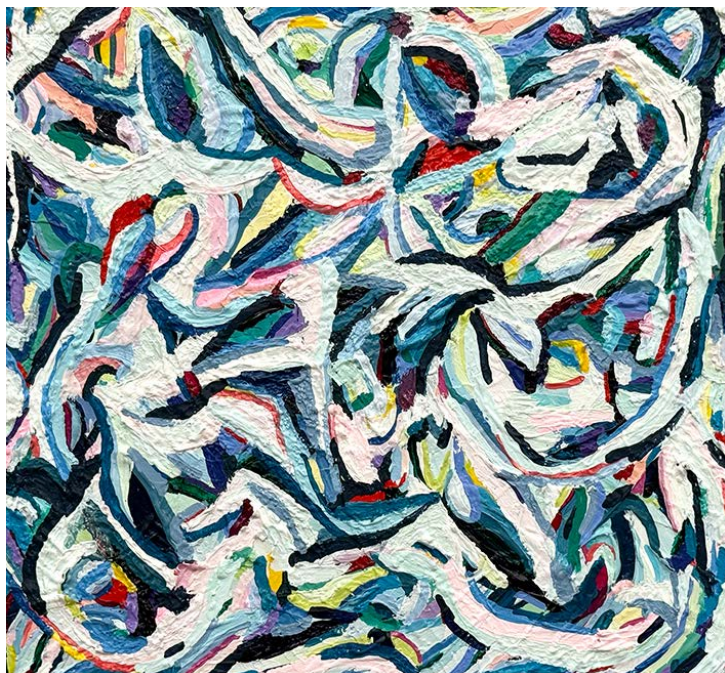
Though she is inspired by representational imagery, Pamela finds her voice in the abstraction and reinterpretation of those visuals. Her work reflects a balance between inspiration and transformation, allowing her to explore the emotional and formal qualities of each composition.

Statement:

Sacred Space was created for Good Morning/Mourning America as a colorful reminder that even in troubling times, there is beauty in the spaces where we meet, connect, and move forward together. My use of arches, bridges, and circles symbolizes union and collective movement.

In Thread of Morning, light colors and layered textures weave together in this abstract work, inspired by the joy and creativity that fill my mornings as both a mother and an early childhood art educator. It's a tribute to the bright, persistent threads of hope my own children and students bring to every new day—reminding us that the future of America depends on the imagination, resilience, and spirit of children.

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Pamela Lancaster
Thread of Morning (2025)
Acrylic
12"x12"
\$200



Pamela Lancaster
Sacred Space (2025)
Acrylic
12"x12"
\$250



WEBSITE www.langkop.com

Samuel Langkop

Samuel Norbert Langkop is an avid traveler who enjoys being on the water. Problem solving, satirisation and observing absence are key elements of his creative life.

Statement:

I make many different kinds of things. What I love is abstracting iconic built works in a way that illustrates a condition or sickness in politics or just to make a joke. It's like a political cartoon meets an architectural model.

'Politectones' is my term for these objects.

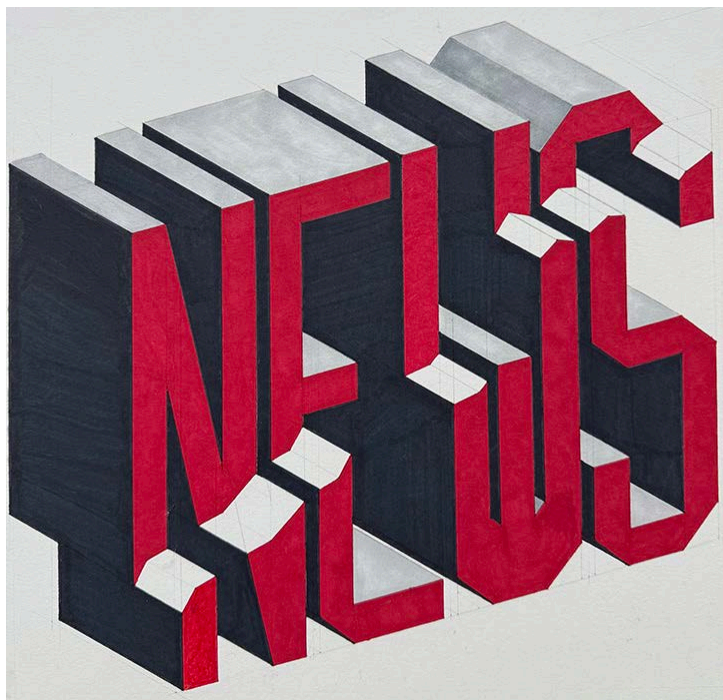
My work is at its best when people from both sides of the political spectrum can point and say, "that's what I'm talking about!"

I've been making objects on and off all my life. This isn't my vocation, it's just for fun.

(CONTINUED)



Samuel Langkop
The New Republic
Sculpture
4"x4"x30"
\$800



Samuel Langkop
Breaking News
Ink on Panel
26"x20"
\$720

(CONTINUED)



Samuel Langkop
 Depreciating Effigy
 Wax
 4"x4"x6"
 \$200



Samuel Langkop
 "So, We'll See"- Martini Glass Set
 Glass
 4"x4"x6"
 \$200 set



WEBSITE www.ivetteramoslevy.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/artbylevy

Ivette Ramos Levy

Ivette Ramos Levy is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores invisibility, marginalization, and the human need to be seen. As the youngest in her family and an immigrant, her experiences of being overlooked inform series like *New People*, which examines how identity fades through external perceptions.

She has exhibited in Mexico and the United States and is currently developing an installation on the paradox of being present yet unseen, blending 2D and 3D forms. Her ADHD heightens her awareness of fragmented identities and drives her commitment to representing overlooked voices.

A former docent at The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, she helped launch Spanish-language tours to broaden access to art. Known for unconventional elements like three-eyed figures, her work challenges perceptions and invites deeper reflection through both fascination and discomfort.

Statement:

Nation Prescription is a visual and conceptual critique of the fentanyl crisis in the United States—an epidemic devastating an entire generation. This ceramic sculpture, is designed to interact with the surrounding space and provoke collective reflection on the nation's current state.

At the center of the piece, a broken capsule spills a thick, overwhelming substance filled with eyes, pills, dollar coins, and fragmented human limbs—hands, feet, and a partially submerged face. One half of the capsule bears the stars of the American flag, while below, the red and white stripes lie on the ground, consumed by the toxic flow. This division reflects the fragmentation of national identity and how systemic failure and addiction have stained the country's foundations.

The presence of coins among the pills suggests the corrosive ties between capitalism, healthcare, and the devaluation of human life. Scattered eyes evoke both hyper-surveillance and the loss of individuality in the face of crisis. More than a public health emergency, this work reflects a collapse of values and humanity. *Nation Prescription* invites viewers to confront the painful truth of a nation caught between denial and decay.

(CONTINUED)



Ivette Ramos Levy
Nation Prescription
Ceramic
12"x12"x6"
\$500



Sonny Martinez

WEBSITE www.claudiamaysen.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/claudiamaysen.art

Claudia Maysen

Claudia Maysen is a multidisciplinary artist based in North Texas, whose work merges abstraction and representation to explore pressing social issues from the perspective of a Mexican immigrant and American citizen. Her two- and three-dimensional pieces challenge dominant narratives, drawing on personal experiences to provoke reflection and dialogue around justice, identity, and community.

Maysen is a recipient of the prestigious 2025 Nasher Artist Grant, a significant recognition of her artistic impact. She is also the current Artist in Residence for the Big 12 Conference's *Beyond Borders Program*. Recent exhibitions include solo shows at 5 Points Gallery (Milwaukee) and Artes de la Rosa (Fort Worth), as well as juried group shows such as the Marfa Invitational, Texas Vignette, and Absurdity at Woman Made Gallery (Chicago).

Her work is held in private and public collections, including the Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort Educational Fund, ADLR Cultural Center, and the Art4Water Sacred Springs Collection. In 2022, she was awarded the People's Choice Award at the Fort Worth Biennial, juried by Lilia Kudelia, and received both First Place and the Community Favorite Award at Tarrant County's World AIDS Day Art Competition at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth.

Nationwide, her work has been featured on CanvasRebel and the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design platform. Regionally, it has been included in articles in *Arts and Culture Texas*, *D Magazine*, *FWR*, *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, *Glasstire*, *KERA*, *Patron Magazine*, *The Dallas Morning News*, and other media. In addition to her studio practice, Maysen creates public art and remains deeply committed to fostering community engagement through the arts.

Statement:

For this exhibition, I selected three sculptures from my US DOLLS series: *Three B's II (After Malinda Lo)*, *Doll Can't Access Hill*, and *Beyond Papers, People (Is This The Land of The Free?)*.

Three B's II (After Malinda Lo) is inspired by my poem's opening line, "Books Banned by the Blind: they don't want to see, they don't want others to see." It explores *Last Night at the Telegraph Club*, a censored novel by an LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC author.

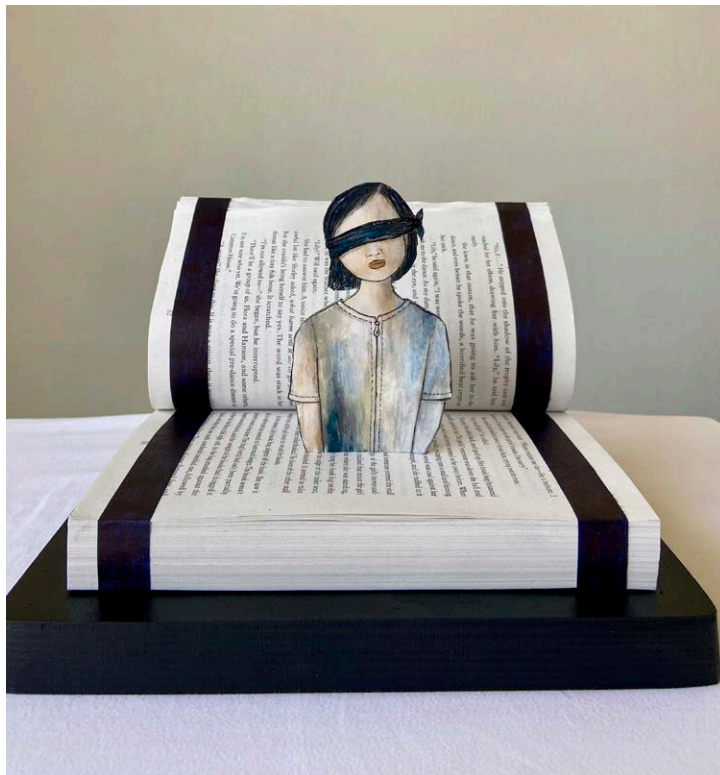
(CONTINUED)

Doll Can't Access Hill is a study for a life-sized installation debuting this October. It examines reproductive freedom, depicting a paper doll stranded atop an inaccessible pile of women's rights signs and Roe v. Wade documents.

Beyond Papers, People (Is This The Land of The Free?) investigates the dual meaning of *papeles*—legal documents and paper. It features a fence symbolizing ICE detention centers, immigrants of all ages, and a backdrop representing institutions that enable arrests without due process. It questions how rights are stripped under legal pretenses.

To emphasize dehumanization, all figures resemble paper dolls—flat, simplified, and easily discarded. This lack of depth becomes a metaphor for denied humanity: the mourning of our stories, emotions, and civil liberties.

(CONTINUED)



Claudia Maysen

Three B's (After Malinda Lo)

Sculpture (Mixed Media on paper
board, book, wood base)

7.2"x9.75"x7"

\$295



HONORABLE MENTION

Claudia Maysen

Doll Can't Access Hill

Sculpture (Mixed Media on paper board,
prints on Roe v. Wade and women's rights
signs, metal chain)

10"x10"x8"

\$495



Claudia Maysen

Beyond Papers, People (Is this the
Land of Free)

Sculpture (Mixed Media)

16"x12"x9"

\$695



INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/mrmichaelmelton

Michael Melton

Michael Melton is a multidisciplinary artist exploring the intersections of technology, language, and collective behavior. His work often blurs the line between participation and surveillance, drawing on themes of media saturation, identity, and social systems. With a background spanning digital media, sound, and interactive environments, Melton creates projects that double as both commentary and experiment – artworks that don't just speak to audiences, but blur the boundary between observer and subject..

Statement:

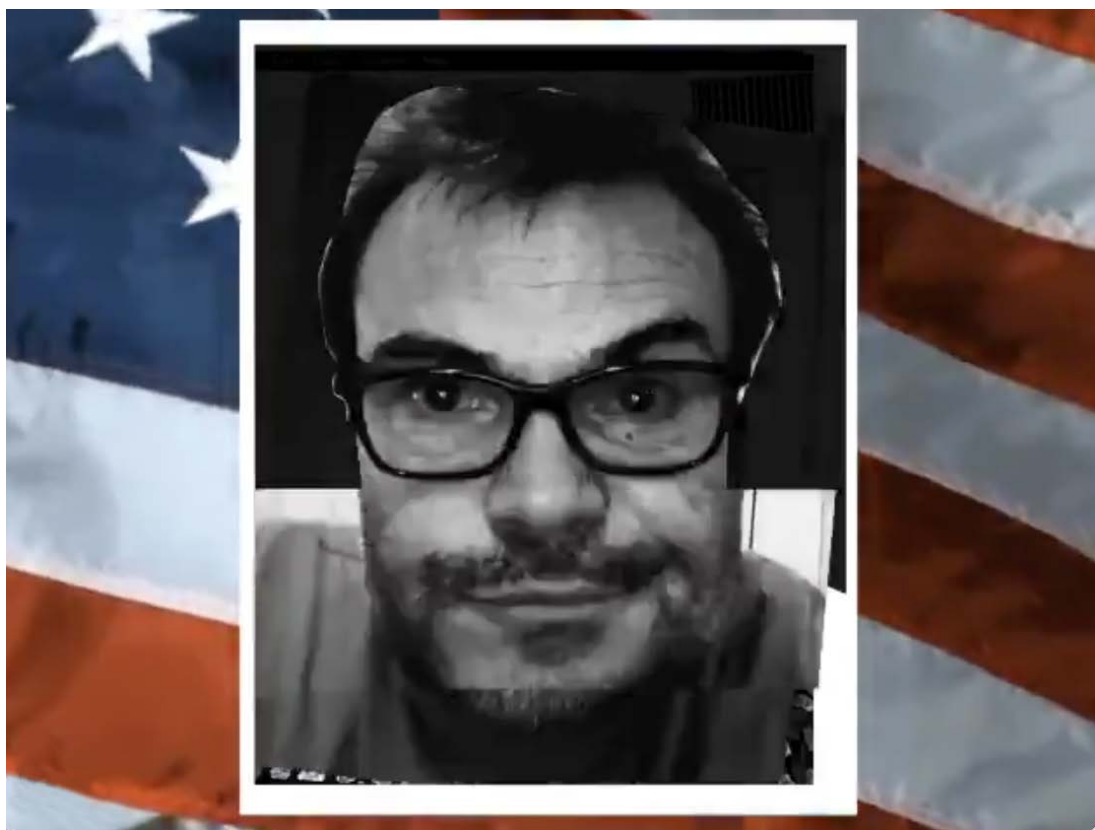
2020 "I Can't Breathe Independence" juxtaposed the ideals of American freedom with the stark realities of systemic injustice, serving as both a tribute to George Floyd and a critique of national narratives. This early work laid the groundwork for Melton's ongoing exploration of how technology and collective behavior shape our understanding of freedom and identity.

Jack Black Mirror™ was born during the turbulence of recent years – lockdowns, political chaos, and collective unrest. What began as a private outlet for expression and reflection has evolved into a larger social experiment: a participatory platform where voices, faces, and stories are reassembled into dystopian fragments of our own making.

At its core, Jack Black Mirror asks whether we are complicit in building the very systems we fear, and whether the tools we carry every day are both the stage and the accelerant for that process. "Language is a virus," as Burroughs wrote, and here it spreads in ways that reflect, distort, and magnify our collective behavior.

This work was only the beginning of a larger unfolding narrative. For those curious to follow where Jack Black Mirror leads next, a portal has been opened: www.jackblackmirror.com.

(CONTINUED)



Michael Melton

I Can't Breathe Independence

Interactive Video

43"x56"

[Inquire About Purchase](#)



WEBSITE www.mauricepacius.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/mauricepacius

Maurice Pacius, Jr.

Maurice Pacius (b.1986) is a Haitian American photographer born in Virginia. He took up photography at an early age while traveling in the United States Navy. As a self-taught photographer, Pacius intertwines storytelling with artistic expression through a wide range of photographic genres. He is currently based in Fort Worth, Texas.

Statement:

Photography is my predominant voice and preferred medium. I create artistic recipes by using lighting, shadows, emotion, and the modern camera, which allow me to immerse viewers in my art. Constantly, going back and forth between reality and my extensive imagination to create bodies of work to become a visual problem solver for both commissioned and personal work, whether it be from an organic or rehearsed event. Ultimately, I strive to create an artistic representation of the human condition.



Maurice Pacius, Jr.
Untitled
Photograph
8"x12"
\$250



Bob Pratt

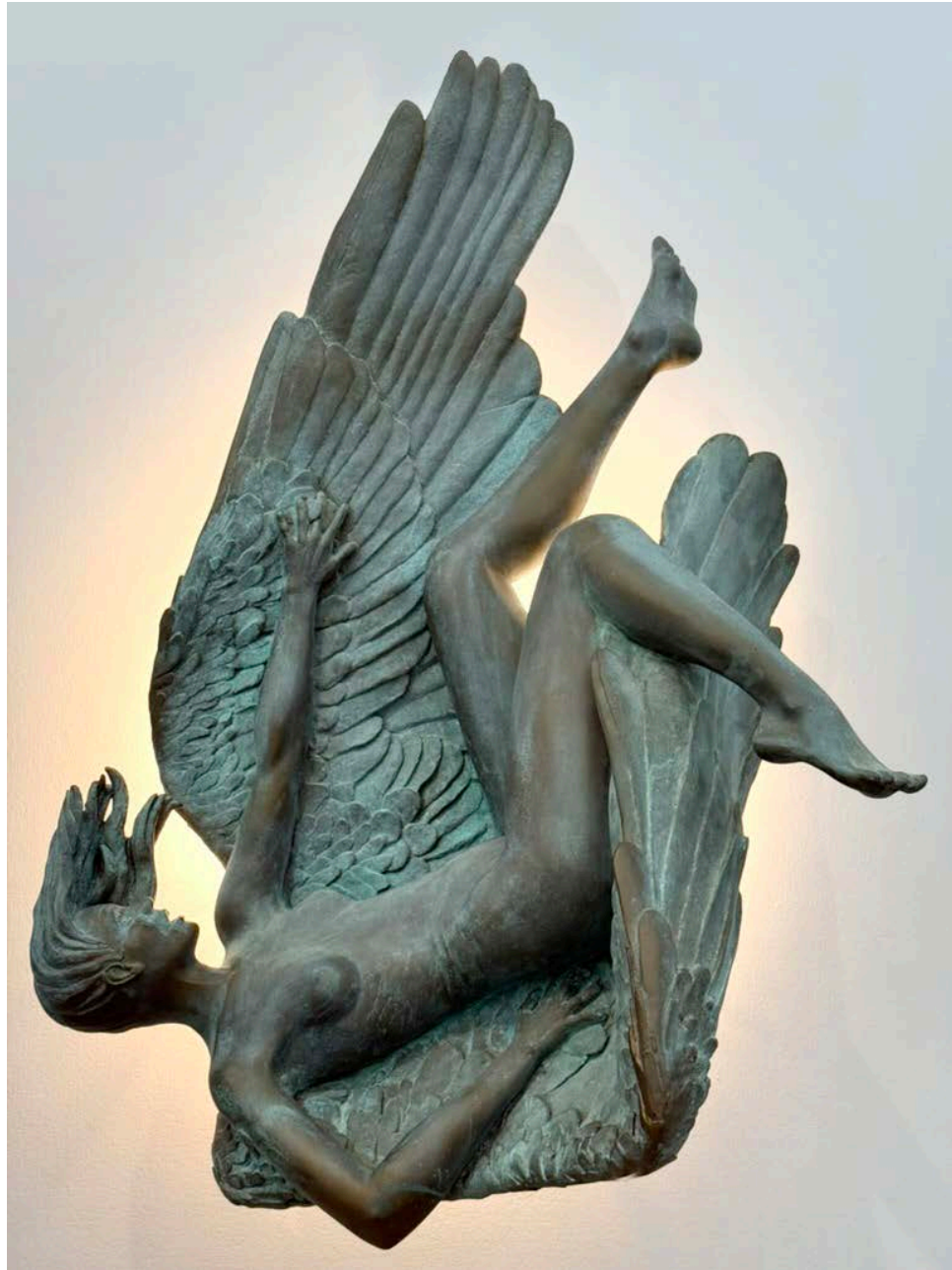
Bob Pratt grew up in Fort Worth believing he was destined for a career in STEM. College in the East, however, shifted his trajectory toward philosophy, literature, film, law, family, and even horses. Along the way, he discovered clay – and got hooked. Looking back, beyond the joy of raising his children, it is his sculptures that bring him the greatest satisfaction.

With a background in art history, he embraced experimentation before returning to Texas, where he served as a docent at both the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth and the Amon Carter Museum of American Art. Studying their remarkable collections sharpened his eye and shaped his evolving style, which has grown looser and simpler while remaining firmly narrative. For him, sculpture is not just an art form – it's pure fun.

Statement:

I create compositions that combine painting with the use of found objects, printmaking, and drawing. Seeing the visual possibilities in objects and art fragments allows the process to determine a significant part of the outcome. The spontaneous nature of this process allows a narrative to develop organically.

(CONTINUED)



Bob Pratt
Fallen Angel
Glass Fiber Reinforced Gypsum
40"x28"x20"
NFS



WEBSITE www.aloversalchemistry.com

Myriah Racquel

Statement:

My art is a prayer, a protest, and a process—a vessel for memory, healing, and becoming. Every brushstroke, every word I write, is a conversation between the parts of myself that have survived and the parts still learning how to bloom.

Rooted in the stillness and emotional upheaval of our current political climate, “The Sound of Silence” is a visual and poetic expression that explores themes of identity, isolation, collective grief, inner revolution, and ancestral remembering.

Through my work, I explore the tension between vulnerability and expectation—particularly around femininity, silence, and survival. Through surreal symbolism, delicate figures, organic textures, and emotional abstraction, I expose internal landscapes often left unspoken. This piece reflects the quiet power of being undone and remade. Art is our Rebellion.

Recurring themes throughout my work include emotional resilience, social justice and the unseen Power that lives within all of Us. My paintings are often dreamlike—sometimes whimsical, sometimes raw—and are meant to feel like memory and myth at once.

I believe that to create is to remember—and to remember is to heal.

Each piece is a sacred offering. A whispered invitation to ask: “Tell me why you woke up sad today?”

And perhaps more importantly, “How do we hold one another in that sadness... and still Rise?”

(CONTINUED)



Myriah Racquel

The Sound of Silence

Mixed Media (watercolor, coffee staining, ink
& pencil)

8.5"x5.5"

NFS

(Prints \$10)



WEBSITE www.artworksricksteinburg.com

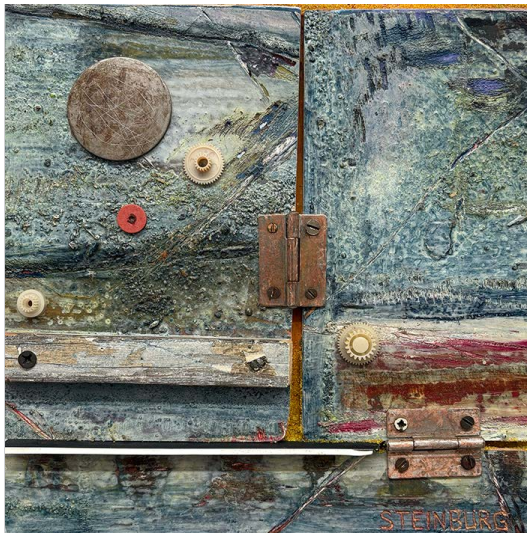
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/ricksteinburgartworks

Rick Steinburg

Rick Steinburg is a Chicago-born artist and musician who has been active in the Texas art scene since the 1980s, exhibiting widely while also teaching art and performing as a singer-songwriter. His recent work spans multiple ongoing series exploring life, music, and culture, with exhibitions across Texas and nationally, including solo shows at Ao5 Gallery and juried exhibitions in New York and Illinois.

Statement:

I am a San Marcos, Texas based visual artist who creates compositions that combine painting with the use of found objects, printmaking, and drawing. Seeing the visual possibilities in objects and art fragments allows the process to determine a significant part of the outcome. The spontaneous nature of this process allows a narrative to develop organically.



Rick Steinburg

When the Wheels Fall Off

Mixed Media

12"x12"

\$800



WEBSITE www.magickpictures.com
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/thegabrielhorn

Gabe Van Horn

Gabe Van Horn is a multidisciplinary artist and filmmaker whose creative work blends visual storytelling with a deep connection to community and culture. A graduate of KD College of Film and Dramatic Arts (1998), Horn's artistic journey has been shaped by his background in film and his passion for expressive, thought-provoking imagery. His work has been featured in group exhibitions, including Together We Make Art Happen (Arts Fort Worth, 2024), and is held in private collections.

Statement:

Art, for me, is more than just sculpture or applying pigment to canvas; it's a vital form of therapy, a way to navigate the often-disorienting currents of our world. In the act of creation, I find a space to process the complexities, anxieties, and fleeting moments that define our contemporary existence. Through color, texture, and form, I externalize the internal landscape, giving tangible shape to the intangible. Each brushstroke becomes a step in understanding, a way to find clarity amidst the confusion and to ultimately, make sense of my place within it.

The feel of the brush in my hand, the smell of the paint, the focused concentration required – these ground me in the present moment, pulling me away from the mental chatter and external noise. It's a tactile conversation, a direct interaction with materials that allows for a different kind of understanding, one that bypasses the limitations of language.

Ultimately, my art is not just representations of the world, but rather a record of my personal journey through it, a visual diary of navigating its inherent complexities.

(CONTINUED)



Gabe Van Horn

The ~~United~~ States of America

Ink on US Currency in Epoxy Resin

3"x2"

\$150



WEBSITE www.Bernardovallarino.art
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/bernardovallarinoart

Bernardo Vallarino

Bernardo Vallarino is a Colombian-American mixed-media sculptor and installation artist interested in geopolitical issues of violence and human suffering. His works reflect his observations on the hypocrisy he perceives existing between the rhetoric of human life and the violent behavior of humanity. With his artworks, Vallarino strives to engage his audience visually but also morally and philosophically, finding inspiration in history, the media, his personal experiences, and his lifelong interest in insects and entomology. Vallarino, a NALAC (National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures) fellow, graduated with a BFA in sculpture from Texas Christian University and an MFA in the same field from Texas Woman's University.

Statement:

Human suffering, violence, abuse of power, politics, control, and hypocrisy are themes I explore in my work. These topics are all part of a larger social commentary regarding the disposable way human life is treated. Around the world, individuals are seen and treated as disposable, expendable, or undesirable especially in times of social unrest. I describe this disregard for human lives by overlaying concepts regarding the perceived worth of "the others" with metaphors related to vermin a common analogy used throughout history to strip others of their humanity. In addition to this metaphorical association, insects and entomology also inspire elements of anonymity, plurality, scale, presentation, and identification. I design the installations and sculptures to be emotionally immersive and morally engaging with the intent to pay tribute to the victims, bring awareness to their suffering, the issues that affect them, and ultimately inspire action or activism.

It is part of the human experience to avoid pain and humanity prefers to ignore painful truths rather than to confront them. As an artist addressing social issues, I feel a responsibility to create artworks that evoke questions with respect to our own behaviors towards others.

(CONTINUED)



Bernardo Vallarino
 Cataloging hérôs, 2012
 Wax, Steel Pins and Helping Hand
 7"x5"x4"
 \$850



Bernardo Vallarino
 I Couldn't Help Myself
 Mixed Media
 5"x8"x8"
 \$1000

(CONTINUED)



Bernardo Vallarino

Putting Your Money Where Your Mouth Is
10"x10"x5"

Mixed Media
\$1000



Bernardo Vallarino

Empty Tithes and Offerings - Taco Casa 2
Useless money request cups and other
mixed media

6"x12"x6"
\$1200

(CONTINUED)



Bernardo Vallarino

¡No Mas!

Mixed Media (Cloth, Consecrated
wine, Pins)

12"x12"

\$500



Bernardo Vallarino

La Verdad

Mixed Media (Cloth, Consecrated
wine, Pins)

12"x12"

\$500



Music



YOUTUBE

www.youtube.com/watch?v=qe6jg1sPAfc

INSTAGRAM

www.instagram.com/jbetts548

Jake Betts

Jake Betts is a percussionist and interdisciplinary artist based in Fort Worth, Texas. His work draws from contemporary music, the marching arts, and performance art to explore sound as both a personal language and a political voice. He studied Percussion Performance at the University of North Texas and has worked extensively across concert, marching, and experimental spaces.

Betts' current practice centers on themes of queerness, identity, silence, and resonance, often incorporating found objects into sculpture-based performance.

Statement:

My work explores sound as both art and poetry. Influenced by the philosophies of John Cage, I treat everyday actions as compositional tools. I use symbolic materials such as bells, shoes, coins, and radios to examine themes of identity, ritual, and erasure. These objects carry meaning beyond their function, serving as instruments and metaphors within performances that unfold in real time.

Rooted in both experimental music and sculptural performance, my practice often blurs the line between composed music and indeterminate sound. Each work invites reflection on what we hear, what we overlook, and how sound can hold personal and political resonance.



PRESENTATION:

Bett's recorded performance "Good Mourning America" will be played on a monitor at the Gallery August 22-23 during exhibition events.





YOUTUBE www.youtube.com/@dehondrums
INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/dehon.drums

Aiden De Hon

Aiden De Hon is a Dallas-based percussionist and composer, currently pursuing a Music Performance degree at East Texas A&M University School of Music. He began his studies in percussion at age 12. In high school, he was a multiple time TMEA All-Region Percussionist and earned Superior Division One ratings at the Texas State Solo and Ensemble Contest for multiple years.

Statement:

"Susumu" is a verb in Japanese that translates as "to advance" or "to move on." I wanted to compose a musical storyline using the marimba that conveys these emotions of letting go and moving forward from a painful experience in one's life. "Susumu" is the second chapter of a musical storyline I have created. The first piece in the saga is called "Lone Purple Jasmine." That piece is about losing a loved one or someone very close. "Susumu" takes the warm darkness from Lone Purple Jasmine and ends in a bright, resolute light symbolizing the first steps of healing and the strength it takes to move forward.

Performing: "Susumu", August 28, 5:30-6 p.m., The Modern Art Museum





WEBSITES

www.MakeEveryMedia.com
www.youtube.com/MakeEveryMedia
www.twitch.tv/MakeEveryMedia
www.instagram.com/ferstenfeld

INSTAGRAM

Michael Ferstenfeld

Michael Ferstenfeld is a multi-talented artist, producer, and performer based in Austin, Texas, known for his dynamic work across music, theatre, film, and digital media. He's led award-winning projects as a band leader, actor, and production manager, blending creative storytelling with technical innovation. With a background in improvisation, multimedia production, and instructional design, Ferstenfeld has helmed virtual festivals, podcasts, documentaries, and interactive experiences through his company, Make Every Media. His diverse skill set spans from stage acting and voiceover work to game and app development, reflecting a passion for crafting immersive narratives that connect audiences across platforms.

Statement:

It began as a reclaiming of that old camp/scout classic (which was probably actually a much older 19th century immigrant vaudeville favorite), to ask: can we still share the land? Are we welcome... anywhere?

My Jewish grandfathers (Adolph, who immigrated here from Poland – and Nathan, born in the Bronx to Lithuanian immigrants) both came to call Texas their home. I'm not so sure I'm wanted these days. But where would I go?

The third verse came to me fully-formed when Russia invaded Ukraine, flashing me back to learning about the programs of 1919, but this time, somehow, a Jew is fighting back.

It struck me that Zelenskyy started his political career as a comedian, and I couldn't help but think of Jon Stewart's response to 9/11 – more catalyzing for me than any politician could muster.

When I learned that Stewart's great-grandmother was from Ukraine, the second verse of this song came tumbling right out.

Then my dad died, a teacher/technologist/comedian descendant of vaudeville immigrants. The 4th verse is for him. I sang it at his funeral.

I pair my songs with novels, so this is "The Plot Against America," like the novel by Philip Roth, whose work invites reflection on what we hear, what we overlook, and how sound can hold personal and political resonance.



Performing: "The Plot Against America", August 23, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Gallery 440



Jon Fortman

Within its blueprint, the classical guitar represents that person pausing to reflect on our country – to search personal feelings towards our nation. In formal musical terms, one possible including instruments, melodies, and rhythms represent ideas, emotions, or cultural identities. The musical form of the piece with its simple repeated refrains invites the listener into contemplation; the absence of lyrics frees the listener from textual influence.

Statement:

Surrounding the individual (classical guitar), orchestra and choir provide support. This support symbolizes that, while individuality is vital to the freedom we enjoy in this country, collectively we find our greatest power. The fundamental will and perseverance of Americans is sound but our compass seems veered from “true north”. As a frighteningly bisected nation, we may lose our full undiluted ability to heal, influence, and progress ourselves and our neighbors.

Performing: “Vigil for a Lost Country,” August 23, 11 a.m.-12 p.m., Gallery 440 and
August 28, 5:30-6 p.m., The Modern Art Museum





WEBSITE
FACEBOOK
INSTAGRAM

www.leftarmtanband.com
www.facebook.com/leftarmtan
www.instagram.com/leftarmtanband

Daniel Hines Left Arm Tan

Left Arm Tan (LAT) is an Americana band from Fort Worth, Texas. The band's song, "Wish", won *Saving Country Music's Song of the Year* in 2010 and was later listed in SCM's "100 Greatest Country Songs." *No Depression* magazine described their music as "twangy, almost mystical romanticism." Left Arm Tan is currently inactive but there are rumors of a 2026 reunion album. In the meantime, LAT members continue to maintain excellent hygiene.

Statement:

Both songs are from Left Arm Tan. "Freedom Bus" is about crooked politicians on both sides of the aisle and features LAT, plus guest vocal from Walt Wilkins and guest guitar from Ken Bethea of Old 97's. Alpha Bravo addresses veterans mental health. Fun fact...the intro drum part, and the outro drum and guitar figure is Morse code for Alpha Bravo.

Submitted: "Freedom Bus" and "Alpha Bravo"

You can find their music on Spotify and Apple Music





WEBSITE

www.reverbnation.com/baylislaramore

Baylis Laramore

Baylis Laramore is a singer/songwriter who has performed at venues throughout North Texas and southeast Oklahoma. His songwriting draws inspiration from artists such as Jackson Browne, Bob Dylan, James Taylor, Rodney Crowell, and Guy Clark. He has been recognized as both a semi-finalist and finalist in the BW Stevenson Songwriting Contest at Poor David's Pub in Dallas and has once again been selected as a semi-finalist for this year's competition, scheduled for July 16.

Laramore began writing *This Train is Allegory* during the pandemic in 2020. The song uses the image of a train as a metaphor for the increasing polarization and dystopian rhetoric in today's political climate. It was conceived as a protest song in the tradition of those written in the 1950s and '60s by artists like Bob Dylan, Peter, Paul and Mary, and Pete Seeger. He hopes the piece will be seen as a timely and meaningful contribution to the Good Morning/Mourning America exhibit.

Submitted: "This Train is Allegory"

You can find Laramore's music at www.reverbnation.com/baylislaramore





WEBSITE www.vampvocals.com
 INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/vampvocals

Laura Mercado-Wright

Multi-genre vocalist and composer Laura Mercado-Wright makes her home in Austin, TX, where she is a founding member of the treble vocal quintet VAMP, Owner and Executive Director of the vocal jazz company Tinsel, and an active performer with a variety of ensembles around the country. She has been nominated twice as soloist for a Grammy® in the Best Choral Performance category with *Conspirare*, as well as for a Latin Grammy as a soloist for Gabriela Ortiz in the Best Classical Album category.

Statement:

"Anthem" grew out of the social combustion of the summer of 2020. Like many people, I was angry over the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and the continued police brutality, and felt conflicted about the intense displays of partisan political theater disguised as patriotism. I chose to create an erasure poem of our four stanza national anthem, highlighting and pointing to the words within the lyrics that harbored a deeper, more poignant meaning to me.

Performing: "Anthem", August 28, 5:30-6 p.m., The Modern Art Museum



VAMP



INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/justalice.music

Just Alice

Alice has been writing songs for as long as she can remember. In 2016 she was in the finals of the Great American Songwriting Contest for her song Pantsuit Nation. The following year she was recognized in the finals again for her song Fall in love with me Again. She also won second place in the Fort Worth Songwriters competition and has taken classes and done workshops for the last several years. She participates in a group call Writer's Nest hosted by Terri Hendrix through her OYOU program and attends "Life's a Song" regularly. In 2019 she got to open for the amazing Susan Gibson and Elizabeth Wills, which was an all time high. She plays piano, guitar, ukulele and bad mandolin! She has been in various bands throughout her lifetime and music has always been a guiding light. She stopped playing for a while due to some life changes, but she is looking forward to getting back out there. She prefers songwriting over performance and would be delighted if someone wanted to record one of her songs, but until then she is just happy writing them and hopes you are able to share the joy of music in unique and inspiring ways. Alice is a Fort Worth native, attended Texas Wesleyan and owns a local small business. She is married to her partner of 28 years, Terri Saad, and enjoys spending time with their dogs Millie and Lulu.

Performing: "Lost Cause", August 23, 11a.m.-12 p.m., Gallery 440



A close-up, artistic photograph of a fountain pen with a black barrel and gold-colored accents, resting on a piece of paper with handwritten cursive text. The word "Writing" is overlaid in large, white, sans-serif font across the center of the image.



INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/haile_yart

Hailey Ashcraft

Hailey Ashcraft is a 19-year-old Animal Science major at Lubbock Christian University whose lifelong passion for art has recently expanded into poetry. Over the past year, she has embraced sharing her work publicly, using her writing to explore the intersection of faith, technology, and modern life. Deeply grateful for the opportunity to share her voice, Hailey hopes her poetry in-spires reflection and offers a positive, eye-opening impact for her audience.

(CONTINUED)

America America

By Hailey Ashcraft

Love and hate
Sit across table staring
The devil, for me,
Not a second glance sparing
But the Light reaches out
His tender hand caring
While fists and voices raise
Somewhere else swearing
And the war of the spirits
Parallels this room in the distance
We wonder why
We are down the wrong path led
When our leader is
To mischief and mutiny wed
At each other we throw
Our words and curses
At the feet of corruption
We empty our purses
Taking no heed of
Our scriptures and verses and
Therefore into the depths of hell
Our country's soul immerses
I imagine for the Light
It's so bittersweet
To have millions and millions of
New little angels at His feet

Yet knowing no fruit of the Earth
Would they ever eat
I have to imagine around Satans ankles
Is where the blood pools
As he finds new angles
From which to sow division
Sinister smiles greet
The success of his derision
With minimal provisions
To feed our souls
Obese on rotten fruits
Our bodies grow old
We are left scattered
Hateful
Sneering
Against brother and sister leering
We are for our own downfall cheering
Maybe only from the
Other side of a grave
Will we with our own pride cave
Realize with meekness
Our own mortal weakness
And with heavy hearts
Pray for strong starts
For a new generation of war

(CONTINUED)

Hey Athlete

By Hailey Ashcraft

Hey athlete

Yeah you.

I see your movements

The waves in the D1 schools

The glory glows like a summer's morning

The devil's running from your warnings

Hey athlete

I see your dedication

The extra hours

The rain without flowers

Stand strong

The flood will come

Hey athlete

I see a revival churning

You keep calling others

To truth and rebirth

You're keeping holy fires burning

Hey athlete

You turned your platform

On its head

When you put truth down

And stood firm on it

Hey athlete

The media knows your name

And every rule to your game

And would love to hear

You party your nights away

And yet you still

Get up to spread light and truth

Hey athlete

God loves you

Thank you for letting

The world in

On the secret

(CONTINUED)

Silver Knights

By Hailey Ashcraft

I stumble through this world blind
But I wasn't always this way
I used to have such clear sight
Cities of color and light
Replaced the sun
And I must be crazy because
Everywhere I turn
Someone's skin is losing its pallor
And their eyes are sunken in backwards
I swear I'm surrounded by ghosts
Brainrot and doomscrolling and trends
Sucking the souls from these hosts
I stumble through this world deaf
But I wasn't always this way
I used to hear the truth
But there's this incessant buzzing
Electric crackles and cackles
No matter how far I run
Now every voice sounds the same
Broken records all selling ideas and words
That I bet they can't even define
They'd fall flat to conceptualize
I swear I'm surrounded by robots
Perfect soldiers marching
Made of sheet metal

Bending and breaking each other
To get the next dopamine high
I stumble through this world stiff
But I wasn't always this way
I used to walk the narrow path
Now I stub my toes
On the corners of screens
They are everywhere it seems
People on platforms
Look like senile buzzards to me
Feeding on the carcass of originality
Creativity died inside each brain
We are silver knights riding
For a cause that we can't name
I wish I could remember
The glare of the sun
The song of the birds
The feeling of walking upright
But the steel is rusting
And my spine is tired
I guess I'll fall in line
Welcome to the screen age.



INSTAGRAM

www.instagram.com/rodeo_bones

Katie Aurelio

Katie Aurelio (Rodeo Bones) is a Fort Worth artist inspired by fairy tales, ghost stories and theology from across the world. A painter, dollmaker and poet, Katie's "Southern Gothic Folk Art" utilizes childlike imagery and prose to evoke both wonder and dread. Her poem *Golden Hour*, submitted to this exhibition, is a slow, buzzy soundscape that takes the listener from peaceful sunrise through chattering sunset – a natural peace that is eventually disturbed by the ever-looming threat of state-sanctioned violence that has already been experienced by so many people living in and outside of the United States.

READING: "Golden Hour" on August 23, 10-11 a.m., Gallery 440

Golden Hour

By Katie Aurelio



<https://gallery440.com/katie-aurelio>



WEBSITE www.lyricalpoetry.org

William Scott Bayha

New Jersey-born William Scott Bayha holds a B.A. degree in Psychology from the University of Virginia, in 1991, and studied toward an M.F.A. in Directing at the University of Houston in the late 1990's under Program Director, Sidney Berger and alongside the legendary American playwright, and three-time Pulitzer Prize recipient, Edward Albee. Bayha's ten-minute short "Sarajevo City Limits" won a playwriting contest, and was featured in the renowned Ten by Ten Playwright's Festival at Stages Repertory Theatre in Houston at about this same time.

A Commercial Real Estate Loan Originator, and 3 A.M. Nighttime Poet Laureate, William Scott Bayha has written over 100 poems, many of which will soon be published and available at Barnes and Noble in his collection, *Anthologia*.

Bayha's most recent, *The River Isn't Sorry* – an elegy, and eulogy, is an Artist's response and eyewitness to the uncontrollability of Grief, as incorrigible as a River that kills. Written in response to the murderous July 4th, 2025 floods of Kerrville and Kerr County, Texas, where he currently resides.

A perfect amalegem of his Feral-Genius-and-Wordstruck-Mother, and his PH.D.-level, and many-times science-paper published, Nuclear Physicist Father, William Scott Bayha's left-right brain style of writing, his full-throttle emotional gear shifts, and his wicked sense of humor, combine to architect a unique liminal space in the reader's imagination reconciling the Metaphysical with a just-this-life temporality, all voiced by a Narrator often shape – shifting between the deeply Spiritual....and the profanely Sexual.

William Scott Bayha, describing his work, has said: "If Ram Dass and John Donne and Robert Mapplethorpe and Jack Kerouac ever had a baby, it would be one of my poems."

Bayha credits his Maternal Grandmother for his life-long Love of Words and blames it all on her. He says, "Nan bought me a Theasuarus for my birthday one year growing up, and right after I learned that one word could also mean 10, 000 *other* words, I was hooked!!"

READING: "Bikini Atoll" on August 23, 10-11 a.m., Gallery 440

(CONTINUED)

Bikini Atoll

By William Scott Bayha (3/01/23)

Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and
Bikini Atoll
Happy Birthday to the
Ungrateful
Cancer-given
Savage
Unbeliever
Brown Islander
and
Yorick's Coral Skull
The Origin Story: All Lies
That Death is Life, and War is All
We were so Evil, before we were Dull
What delivers you from death IS your Demise
Government brings Freedom
From Living
In Disguise
It's Christian "Progress"
Are Genocides
Another Population to Cull
On March's Ides
Vietnam, AIDS, 9/11, COVID, 2008, and Iraq
They release the Apocalypse
In measured Tides
A priori: "We" even murdered our own Caesar
To Rapture the Christ with his Catholic Bride
Fox (Mis-) Reports
You Decide
The Enemy is Not
Non-white, The "Other"
The Disquiet you Harbor is on the Inside
My Predatory
Voyeuristic
Avarice
Abides
I Drink the Contaminated Milk
Of an Adopted
Grievance
I Am

(CONTINUED)

The Prince of Chides
My Whole Life's Been
One Long Shopping Mall
A Nuclear Fall
A Western Sun Rise
High Rises that Fall
Metal in Our Skies and
A Deep Faith of Compromise.

(CONTINUED)

Tyre

By William Scott Bayha (2/24/23)

In the latter part of this century's second decade after the Long Reign of Error
Of the IQ-doesn't-matter George-the-Even-Lesser
The cultural-circular firing squad Franco'd two humorists who never got the joke
Our native acronym KGB-style mis-information appropriators Putin-ized their fall
Without using poison
Or asking either to politely suicide themselves
Except just professionally of course
Modern-day Lorca'd
Me-Too'd
They were both excommunicated and Nazi-Yellow-Star-of-David-Shame tattoo'd
Each of Minnesota's Contemporary Twains
Garrison Keillor and Al Franken
So they'd have an appropriate alibi
These Anti-Roe (i.e. Woman)/Federalist Society/ Culture-war/ Slow-moving / 40 year
Overnight American coup plotters
To Forever Scarlet Letter wit and wordplay from ever touching your Wives
Or Daughters
1984 was never not a thing going on over here
But in 2017 and 2018 is when laughter was cattled-car'd to slaughter
Saturday afternoons will NEVER be the same
Without NPR's Prairie Home Companion
Guy Noir and Lake Wobegon and The Guys All Star Shoe Band
Once upon a time, SNL's Stuart Smalley had taught us how to believe in ourselves again
Albeit ironically, and at 1 AM.
Yet the Senate hostaged him for nothing in return
That August body of Lobby-Donor-Deeptoat-Chastity-Cucks
And seed-of-Chucky sperm
Public service is a euphemism for these intellectual gimps
These Gerrymandered-selected "bottom girls" to their corporate-handler pimps
On Fox and Fucks
I'm sorry I cannot hear what Ainsley is saying
Over the message in braille her thinly-veiled-cottoned-clitoris is conveying
Bill Buckley! Bill Buckley! these are your post-literate progeny
Life-after-cheerleading and debate-impoverished heirs
Our Stepford-Wives legions of vacuous Sarah Palin's to your Proust
Our President-Murderer Van Gogh-in dotage to your Voltaires
The political sins of John McCain have now come home to roost
Selling Sharon Stone-style reenactment pussy at 6 AM
Ainsley crosses her Southern heart and her legs
Before we drink the menstrual blood of that day's next regularly scheduled high school shooting
(CONTINUED)

Tyre (Continued)
By William Scott Bayha

In her "Violence-As-Reporting"
Remember guns don't kill children
Only pregnant Mother-breeders do
My Basic Instinct is to want to cry
And back up the Hearse
Tyre Nichols just got it worse...
He was violence-nursed on video
For our convenient viewing revulsion
Punch-Doll Judy'd, and
Microwave oven'd
as Art
Ironically, this time
The ONLY thing an unvolunteered black man wasn't
Was shot
Tyre slipped off his axis
And forever fell away
From his Mother's Orbit and
Her Live-the-Words
God-as-a-Verb Un-Google-Ad Word REAL Christian Practice
Without Compulsion
Her Buy Direct and
No-Purchase-Required
Jail break free
from your thought prison and just look around
End the romance you've had with the words written in Red
Cancel your season ticket patronage of the Positivity Performance Art at the Christ-a-billy Stadium
on Sunday
in the 713
Break up with the co-dependence on the Government as your friend
A Black Woman is THE Mother of Our Lord
She continues to re-Sacrifice
When the War starts up again on Monday
Her boys are bleeding and it's not ink
We don't have to read a 2000-year-old book
About this one anomalous supposedly-erroneously lilly-white dude who didn't play nice
Wake up NOW! to George Floyd and Brianna Taylor, and to
Tyre, the Christ
Problems are not solved because there is a financial incentive for them not to be
The status quo is a Trillion-dollar industry
To protect our Charles Manson vanity
And Pharma helps our lobotomized One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest electric-shock information

(CONTINUED)

Tyre (Continued)
By William Scott Bayha

ingestion
To sedate us on behalf of the United States of Inc.
So we can scapegoat the "Other"
To find Acceptance
Our political pontiffs cannot solve the problems that they themselves create
(Why would they?)
They JoePa'd us in the sanctuary
While their assistant coach
changes boys in the sacristy
Whose saviors wait
In the complicit Silence of the nave
Listening to the Man-date
of a Rear-View Mirror Providence
And bending to the lay organs of the violence
of The State
To save them from the grave
Our secular Church conditions parents to Abraham their own children
To proselytize An Old Testicular Hate
We're even taught to deny our own Mother
for her behavior
Because she taught us Compassion and Charity and Love
And now they're the new Vice
So Mom had to be condemned because
She violated the copyright of "Our Lord and Savior"
These tone-deaf destabilization Ditto-cunts of-the House of Limbaugh
(Let me pause to wish that you roast where you are now sir!)
These Pravda Saboteurs
These cravenly Overpaid and under-laid faux Fox journalists in bubble-gum earnest
Almost the very next day
Hosted the author of a kiddie-pool-depth provocative Mr. Rogers-style expose
A Book about how hard it is to be a policeman
(I think it might be harder to find a bagel in Texas to be honest)
The they-don't-do-subtlety-subtext, the unapologetic Proud Boy premise
Of this badge-and-gun fanboy fiction and literature-as-glock:
Real American Patriotism is the new Treason
And the Truth can go suck cock!
True Story: When I first moved to Texas 30 years ago in 1993
80 year-old convenience store-owner Opal
Told me I could find my way
if I'd just make a right at "the Hangin' Tree"
Being a kid from New Jersey I didn't know there was such a thing

(CONTINUED)

Tyre (Continued)
By William Scott Bayha

Or that saying the quiet part out loud was still in season
I thought to myself: "In her better years, what could this woman have seen?"
To reference it now so un-ironically/un-obliquely
and with a conscience so clean
That's why the R word is such a shock to the ear
Because the racism is just muscle memory here
Love is a plant you forgot to water in summer or that freezes in winter
Hate Is Evergreen
Tyre got Saddam'd and Gaddafi'd
Over and over and over again
Over the stale self-righteous waft of American white privilege
and morning coffee
His image is being non-chalantly and repeatedly re-murdered for our blood-lust consumption
Who owns the syndication rights to this bleak Waiting for Godot post-Authoritarian production?
Isn't watching a crime, and even just the images of one, and doing nothing
Your tacit Agreement and self-vindication?
Native Americans
Felt taking their picture also took their Soul
Then what does our new genre of murder-selfie mean
For the long-term implications of our being whole?
They're feeding us snuff films now
Honestly, can you really even believe it?
They have us so desensitized to loving one another
To not even be able to see it
We're all culpable
Self-betrayers, Soylen Green's
Judas Iscariots
The Truth got me-too'd too
Not just Garrison and Franken
That was the whole plan
from before the beginning
Trojan Hosed as Sensitivity training
The real Assault came when Helen
invited me to sit inside her window-less van
(not to hold hands because of course touching is illegal)
Just so we could listen to her standard high school classics banned audiobooks-on-demand
Aural Companions ne'ver were better than either of these two
This Midwesterner, and this Clown of the Jews
Both had their Voices beheaded and shot
Because one grabbed a woman's ass 20 years ago
And the other fake shadow-grabbed another's tits
for a laugh, and forgot

(CONTINUED)

Tyre (Continued)
By William Scott Bayha

I mean it's not like killing a million Iraqi's for Lent
Just Don't ask what it means
or what it meant
Colin Powell has a PowerPoint in Hell he'd be glad to let you rent
Evil resides in the heart of every Government
With their False Flags who took your sons
And their False Equivalence
And speech-for-guns
Art and education are the enemy of All Authority
Bullying is now leadership with your electoral-college consent
The rule in our North American Apartheid white minority
The Governor here is a cripple
AND even he lacks compassion
Don't expect him to stand up
For your kid not to be Uvalde'd at school
Because he can't and won't
The Gun Lobby's cum
Dripping from his stool
Projecting your own personal self-hate on your constituents
Is the new way to serve ironically
The very people that you blame
In this government-by-date-rape
Mutually agreed-upon cognitive dissonance game
If, and it is, Government **IS** the problem, then why are they trying to destroy it from within
and replace it with something far worse in your name?

These Macbeths and Lady Macbeths
(did you know a woman could be a Narcissist too?)
with Duncan's bloody head at their feet
They want to Nuremburg you for war crimes over a simple Tweet

Tyre just got a Billion views
In the Maw of our information avarice and apathy
that passes for "the News"
Tyre was Jonah-swallowed whole
Another beautiful young black man was just gallowed
And, after He left
I got the notification on my phone:
God unfollowed

The news is entertainment
And entertainment is now the news

(CONTINUED)

Tyre (Continued)
By William Scott Bayha

Remember what they taught us that Christ taught us
In Econ 101 from our University pews:

"The only way for me to win
is for you to lose."



Patrick Grewe

Patrick Grewe lives in Fort Worth with his beloved wife and two cats. He favors brevity.

Good Morning/Mourning America is his debut poetry publication.

Statement:

Poet Lariat is a satirical speech inspired by a certain formidable communicator. It's not intended to be read as an impression, but rather as a piece inspired by the unique style that has so captivated much of America. Heavy on emotion and rhetoric, light on details and coherence.

It's Hard to Be Hopeful is a personal reflection on how my typically optimistic worldview is being challenged in the present moment.

Morality – I would assume cognitive dissonance among religious-based moralists during this current political climate, but that implies a level of discomfort I'm not sure is being felt. This is my critical attempt at reframing Biblical morality.

POET LARIAT (recording by Patrick Grewe):



Poet Lariat

By Patrick Grewe

Some people aren't gonna like this. Not gonna like it.

[some laughs; a few "woo's!"]

They want me to do a poem about morning.

That's what they said - they said: mourning.

Is that what you want?

[more "woo's!"]

You want a poem?

[applause; shouts of "yeah!"]

You don't want a poem... do you really?

["free verse" - "free verse" - "freeverse"]

Ok but they're not gonna like it... they don't like anything I do. Even when what I do is the greatest poem in the history. And that's what it is. Nobody's done poems like this.

Nobody. You think Gorman could do poems like this? Little girl Gorman. You think little girl

Gorman can do this? She doesn't have the... well you don't want me to say what she

doesn't have... but I think you know... I think you know...

[laughter; applause]

You think she's heard that word - "no"? No isn't a word she's heard but maybe it should be... I don't know... but maybe it should be.

Isn't it? Isn't it funny how some people

don't hear no? What's that like? What's that like to not know? These people who don't

know... you have lots of people who don't know Rhymers. You think

somebody's a poet...turns out they're just a rhymers.

[unenthusiastic "boo's"; scant laughter; din of crowd noise and shuffling]

Rhy-mer My uncle... have I told you about my uncle? My uncle wrote a poem. It was a beautiful poem. It's true... no it is... It was a beautiful... people came from all over... from England and all over... millions... millions and millions and they would know a thing or two about poems... they said sir sir! This is a

beautiful... and it really is a beautiful... believe

me... tears in their eyes and nobody but not everybody can do it. And when you do it...

sometimes they don't want you to... but when you're a poet...they let you.

When you're a poet... you do what you want.

[applause; whooping]

They said to me:

stream of continents. That's what they said- I don't know but that's

what they said... they said stream of

continents. It's true. And they said nobody

does it better.... They said it has never been better... these words... in history... in all of history... never. That's what they said. And we're going to make them even better.

[applause gains enthusiasm]

We are... we are. Did you know these other continents use English?

[some shouts of "yeah!"; some shouts of "no!"; one loud staccato "ha!"]

It's the best...it is... what can I say? It's the best...Isn't it the best?

[noises of affirmation]

(CONTINUED)

I'm not supposed to say it's the best. They don't want me to say that.
[laughter; cheers of encouragement]
They say sir sir, you can't say that. But if these... for too long they've been using... and they haven't been paying... it's criminal... it really is... it's criminal.
["boos!"]
That's not poems. They say oh here's some... let's get out of the way... and for free... that's what they do... shameful.
[mostly boos; a few cheers that die quickly]
Not anymore... no... not on my watch.
[cheers]
Not on my whhhatCH.
[wild cheering]
It's going to be like... well I won't say... but we WERE and we will again...
[applause]
With words...
[slightly louder applause]
record-setting words...
[applause builds]
American words...
[sustained cheering]
It's a new morning for English in America.
["U-S-A" - "U-S-A" - "U-S-A". The chants drown out the poet]
It's gonna be... you won't believe what it's gonna be like... you just won't believe it.
You won't.

(CONTINUED)

It's Hard to Be Hopeful

By Patrick Grewe

What I sense, is hate.
I hear it on podcasts.
I see it on TV.
I feel it in the pit of my stomach.

There *are* people who don't hate-
the apathetic ones,
who can't be bothered
to worry over someone they don't see.

There are people who care-
about themselves.
Lavish with anxiety
frugal with empathy.

There are people-
who care about other people.
I even know a few

but they are not our leaders.
Kindness is weakness
Punished is meekness
We're only capable of thinking in groups.
We don't accept our lessons
hard learned.
We want fame, quick riches
not earned.

Protect the vulnerable.
Protect the vulnerable.
But the tide cannot be stopped,
it's coming.

It'll go out again someday,
reverse, head back the other way.
But that's only happened every other time,
it's hard to be hopeful.

(CONTINUED)

Morality

By Patrick Grewe

You are born with sin, it's original
so be on your guard against the angel that can
activate it.

There is a God.

All knowing
all powerful
ever present.
And He does not intervene.
Except maybe sometimes
but usually not.

The angel that can activate sin does intervene.
Constantly
he flips the switch - *up down, up down, up down*
Temptation, temptation, temptation.
Be
ever
vigilant.

You will fail.
You will fall.
Like the angel.
It's inevitable.
Pre-ordained.
No one is all good
and He would know.

Free will.
Usually.

You must ask forgiveness – press your palms and
plea for it.
You gave in – You are weak
but He is strong.
Strong enough to have stopped it
but He didn't
so that You could feel grace
so that You could repent
so that You could reaffirm your faith.
Those who suffered at your hand did so
righteously.

You can't help but be evil
up down, up down, up down
sometimes. It's the work of an angel
up down, up down, up down
always.

But do not lament!
Souls can be clean rinsed.
Only repent, repent, repent
for the prize
not the person
that's morality.



Jeff Innmon

Jeff Innmon worked multiple jobs, none of which had any lasting value for his wallet or his overall happiness. His professional status has no significance compared to those he grew up with. Now, he has a dream of writing that seems to have some sort of future. But it doesn't pay the bills. So he works on a farm until it does. If you were to ask him what he plans on doing next he would shrug his shoulders.

"No clue," he would say in childish fashion, "I've gotten this far without a plan. Don't see a point in one now."

Blind

By Jeff Innmon

I watched my presumed passenger move to the back seat of my car with great assistance. A friendly looking nurse held his right arm, while his left held the leash of a dog. The German Shepard climbed in quickly before his owner cautiously waddled in. He thanked his kind nurse then let her close the door.

We exchanged pleasantries after the door calmly closed. He had a voice shaped by a lifetime of mild barbecue with a figure that matched. A plumb belly supported a torso and neck that fell into a round shape. His face had a grateful disposition even with a pair of dark sunglasses over his eyes.

When he spoke I felt honored to listen. As if he was a mentor from a life from a distant past. Yet we only would be together for twenty minutes or so, depending on the traffic, and the unreliable navigation of my drivers app.

★

"I'll always support them," his voice rattled through the cheap fabric seat supporting my back. "I have my whole life, I will for the rest."

"You don't feel betrayed?" I asked with a whole heart, "by the owners, the general manager?"

"Of course I do," he rebuttaled quickly, "but what's loyalty without heartbreak. You remember we lost a few tough games over the last years. I don't stop supporting them. So why should I now? They are my team."

"You're team just sold you out," I said, "for practically nothing. They don't care about you. To them you are just a dollar sign, nothing more."

"I am a fan of sports. I am a fan of what lessons they bring to those who play, those who love, and those who religiously watch them. I don't care about the business aspect of the game. And yeah the business side sucks, it ruins the game most of the time. But what do you want me to do?"

"Take a stand," I say, "boycott the organization."

"So they can move to Las Vegas, no thanks."

I had no rebuttal for that.

"We have no choice," he said, "they are our team. Win or lose, for better or for worse."

I had a lot to say about that last statement, but I valued my five star rating and possibility for a measly tip far more than being "right".

★

"I used to be a masseuse," he said as the conversation shifted, "worked in a couple hotels for a couple years, some high-rises, some penthouses. I liked it, I had a passion for it. Maybe because I knew I was making people happy, maybe for other reasons I am not aware of."

"You are a people pleaser?" I asked.

"Sometimes."

The conversation entered this fragile state where if neither I, or he, said anything in the next few moments, the rest of the ride would be spent in silence as we listened to the

(CONTINUED)

Blind (Continued)
By Innmon

highway hum below us as we sped along.

"Some view you got up in those penthouses." I said trying to make it clear that I valued the conversation.

"I am blind," he said, "you didn't know I was blind?"

"I did sir," I shamefully said, "sorry I just

"I thought you did," he said, "you don't see to be dumb. Often I'll get a driver who's dumb. We'll go through a whole ride talking just like you and I are, then I'll tell them I am blind and they'll be dumbfounded. Meanwhile I got a seventy five pound dog next to me while I wear dark sunglasses at night. That's dumb ain't it?"

"It's a little dumb," I say, "but in defense of us drivers, the process of this driving for this corporation can be a bit soul sucking. At some points it can be hard to remember there's a person in your backseat, and not just an amount of money. It kind of kills the humanity in you."

He seemed to agree but probably had a lot to say about it. Instead he stayed quiet because he valued his rider ranking more than being "right".

★

His destination came quicker than I hoped. We parted ways with a civil goodbye. I had another rider waiting on me, so I had no time sit and reminisce for too long. But when the next rider chose silence, and the rider after that, I found requiem then. My mind drifted into a place of day dreaming. There I juggled with a question I wondered about myself.

★

"What's it like to see?" His barbecue voice asked.

"I don't know how to answer that sir," I said, "I don't know what its like to not see."

He thought for a second.

"What do you see?"

I thought for a second.

"Do you want fantasy, or reality?"

"Fantasy first."

I obliged without any worry for my rating, or tip.

★

I am lucky in many ways. The land of the free, home of the brave has instilled the ability to dream within me. In that I am able to envision a future for myself that's prosperous. Those that I see who call this land home share this belief in not only themselves, but also in the country that they are so proud to be associated with.

I drive through the streets of the city while I try to stop my jaw from dropping as the beauty of the architecture continuously stuns me. The consideration taken to ensure integrity in design while not sacrificing efficiency is something to celebrate. There's a real history when you open your eyes and examine the city as a whole.

Small businesses can be found on every street corner, near every highway. In them you'll see the heart of this country. Good people who are hoping to capitalize on the beautiful opportunities allotted to them.

Their hearts pump kindness through their veins. They look out for the common man

(CONTINUED)

Blind (Continued)
By Innmon

who's in need before they think of their selfish desires. They prioritize their workers before profit. They prioritize their families before their business.

The roads have been planned to perfection. The city has thought of all that could go wrong before it happens. Never do I see continue construction, or endless jams on major roadways.

There's great food options where ever you may be. Whatever your gut desires can be fed within twenty minutes. We use this convenience so moderately as we are all healthy able bodied individuals that take great pride in the way we look. Our style matches our exquisite physical fitness.

Those who ride in my backseat are no exception to this. Often I'll get riders who keep their head up with eyes of curiosity as we move through this efficiently designed maze. They will respect not only me, but my vehicle. They look for solutions not problems if there ever are any.

And when any of us see someone who lives on the street, we stop and give them what we can to help, as we know they have fallen onto hard times and are doing their best to make it out. And if we don't have any change to give them, or any food or water, we send a prayer their way.

We do all this because we believe in the future of this nation. We believe in prosperity we will find through good will, honesty, and hard work.

★

"Now," he said, "give me the reality."

★

Today I saw a man pushing a shopping cart full of his life's possessions. They ranged from unkempt clothes to packages of water bottles. Pressing down on top of them laid an additional shopping cart.

I watched his face closely as he pushed with all of his strength. A patchy beard covered rough skin that showed memories of tough times. His eyes sunk into his dirty skin while heavy bags formed under them. Blemishes could be seen through the holes in his clothes and shoes.

He shook his head as he struggled to move forward. He had come to the end of the sidewalk on a busy road. The cart's wheels wouldn't move on the untamed grass in front. Even with his dire state, even with his horrible gaze, I had no sympathy for him.

Maybe because my humanity has been killed as I have seen far worse cases on many occasions. Under almost every bridge lives a beggar or two. At almost every intersection a cardboard sign held by a face like his. I have seen parents with children, children with dogs, who have less than him. And each time I turned away.

I see those faces more than flowers, more than games of pickup basketball, more than kids playing on the street, more than a loving smile.

I see those face less than fast food restaurants and their new menu items. Options for triple decker supersized meal deals. Ones with tons of harsh chemicals, ones with added salt and sugar. Ones with lines wrapped around the block, ones who've been empty for months.

(CONTINUED)

Blind (Continued)

By Jeff Innmon

I see those faces less than unexplained construction on the roadways. Four lane roads squeeze down to two with little warning as the city tries to expand on the heavy flow of traffic. Sadly they are years behind, and it will only get worse.

I see those faces less than I see obesity. I see those faces less than I see greedy corporations take advantage of the people.

Yet I am told to be proud of what I see. I am told that this country has always been the best and always will be. I've even heard that this state beats all the others. And I'm supposed to believe that wholeheartedly. I am supposed to be proud of what I see.

But I can't when I see what we have produced. All I can see is a land fooled by their own greed. A land of good people who are lead by those hungry for more in every aspect of the word. Who have never seemed to care for us, instead just for their own pocketbooks and agendas.

★

But I never said this, because he never asked.

Instead I got a five star rating, and some meaningless cash.



Tom Mason

Tom Mason was born and raised in Pasadena, Texas, and has lived in Austin for over 50 years. He is a retired attorney with over 30 years experience in water, energy and environmental law. His poetry most recently appeared in the *Texas Observer*.

(CONTINUED)

Stand for It

By Tom Mason

all for justice and liberty?
not here, not now,
with indivisible god
scattered into pieces
under nation number
one.
who *stands* up to those
who tear *it* down?
which path to choose
for this *republic*
with *the* daring claim
to make
and keep
an *america*
of states
united,
not *the* scattered
lands *of*
an untied *flag,*
not *the* mirror
to our constant fears.
allegiance
is my *pledge:*
I swear
the flag is tattered,
it always was,
the dream is not



Rebekah Miles

Rebekah Miles, the Susanna Wesley Professor of Ethics and Practical Theology at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, is the author or co-editor of eight books and many articles in ethics and theology, including a book on grief. Miles, an ordained pastor in the United Methodist Church, is currently working on a book on catalysts for ecstatic religious experiences and co-editing one of the volumes in The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley.

Her research areas include Christian ethics and theology, Methodist studies, spirituality, political ethics, Christian realism, and feminist and women's studies. Miles, an ordained pastor in the United Methodist Church, is currently working on a book on catalysts for ecstatic religious experiences and co-editing one of the volumes in The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley.

READING: "Grieving for Good" on August 23, 10-11 a.m., Gallery 440

(CONTINUED)

Grieving for Good: Turning our Grief into Collective Action in a World Humming with Pain

By Rebekah Miles

"We are a part of the worldwide community of loss. If sequestered pain made a sound, the atmosphere would be humming all the time." Steven Levine, *Unattended Sorrow*

If sequestered pain supplies the pervasive hum of a world in grief, what is the sound of grief shared? In this essay, I maintain that grief, especially over systemic injustices, is a collective matter, not a private one, and that shared grief can become a potent catalyst for transformation, not the murmur of solitary humming but a collective anthem for social change.

The day after the 2024 presidential election, I reached out to a trans activist. Having worked closely with homeless LGBTQ youth, many of whom are transgender, the young activist had been frustrated with the previous administration's failures to support trans rights. Now they were grieving the further suffering that lay ahead. They texted, "The road ahead for trans-Americans and trans-people across the globe is going to be full of detransition and death. All we can do is keep fighting and building community, which is what I have done and will continue to do. This is not a new fight, just another day in hell."

Many of us find ourselves, if not in hell, then in a place of deep mourning. As is often the case with grief, it has come to us unbidden. We did not choose the grief, but we do choose our response. How do we grieve for good? We grieve for good when we grieve together and with purpose.

The field of grief studies has shifted in recent years to focus more on collective grief and its role as a catalyst in collective action. I offer here a few central lessons from the field that are critical for those called to grieve for good.

Inequity and Collective Grief

Suffering and loss may be universal, but they are not evenly shared, and that inequity matters. The suffering distribution curve leaves more pain and loss on the heads of the poor, the ill, the disabled, and the marginalized. That extra portion of suffering matters both for the experience of grief and the response. For example, there is now substantial research to back up a claim that, in retrospect, should have been obvious; in Black communities in the U.S., grief is complicated by the social realities of racism. "Grief for Black Americans is both different in sheer quantity (because mortality rates are disparate) and qualitatively different (because collective grief is an unstudied but defining feature)." The long-standing focus on grief as individual loss does not consider these larger realities. Researchers call, then, for the expansion of definitions to include collective grief, taking into account, "the pain that occurs within the Black community after the loss of a loved one, the loss of land, the loss of a sense of safety, and the loss of members of the community due to direct and indirect acts of racist violence." Grieving for good requires acknowledging the multi-layered experiences of social injustice that shape the losses of many groups, including the Black community in the U.S., as well as LGBTQ+ people living with discrimination and violence; women experiencing a higher incidence of sexual assault; and immigrants subject to rising rates of discrimination and even sudden arrest and deportation.

Collective Grief as a Catalyst for Collective Action

The call for greater awareness of collective grief is accompanied by a call for attention to collective

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action as an appropriate response, one that can be healing, cathartic, and transformative, both for the individuals and communities facing loss. Collective grief, when combined with anger at injustice, creates a potent alchemy from which political action and change can emerge. The 1963 bombing murder of four Black girls attending Sunday School at Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church fueled protests that ultimately led to the 1964 passage of the Civil Rights Act. The killing of a Black teenager, Trayvon Martin, in a Florida neighborhood, along with the acquittal of his killer, prompted national outrage and protest, shaping U.S. opinion on racial violence and ultimately generating the Black Lives Matter movement. Martin's mother gave moving words to the place of grief and anger in social change. "What was I to do with all my anger and hurt? I turned my pain into purpose." Grief as a catalyst for social change is nothing new; it is evident throughout human history. As classicist and poet Gail Holst-Warhaft observes, "Revolutions and riots often begin with a funeral."

Collective Action as Healing and Transforming

Why would collective action provide solace and transformation for the grieving? Activism is linked with increased flourishing and a sense of vitality. Moreover, many studies have shown that individuals who are grieving can find healing as they "make meaning" of their loss. This includes taking moral action as a way to honor their deceased loved ones. More recent data suggests that collective – and not just individual – action can be therapeutic in the face of grief. A 2017 survey of 125 AIDS activists revealed that their collective activism was healing and empowering. The activists had all been members of the group ACT UP (the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power) between 1987 and 1992. Study participants – mostly gay men, but also some lesbian and straight women – had experienced massive trauma. Some had lived with HIV for years, many had experienced the stigma and social trauma that was linked with HIV infection, especially in the early years of the epidemic, and all had lost many friends to AIDS. Twenty-five years later, 93% of the participants reported that their activism had an overwhelming positive impact on their lives, bringing "an enhanced sense of self, confidence, belief in change, and their ability to influence events (agency)." Many insisted that their work with ACT UP was "the peak experience of their lives." One activist reflected, "ACT UP was the most important thing I've ever done in my life. Those years were the least selfish, the most community-motivated. . . . It gave me a sense of purpose, of community, of hope – that something could be done." Activists in other groups offer similar reports of the transformative impact of activism in the face of overwhelming grief and loss.

Collective Action and the Continuing Pain of Grief and Trauma

Collective activism, however empowering and transformative, does not eliminate the pain or the long-term effects of grief and trauma. Researchers in the ACT UP study found that although the activism was healing, the participants still reported higher rates of depression, addiction, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) than the general population. These high rates are not surprising for a group that had experienced massive trauma during the AIDS crisis, in addition to the social injustices that come with being a part of the LGBTQ community. The ACT UP researchers insist that extraordinary healing and extraordinary pain and suffering are not opposites but often occur – and continue to abide – together. PTSD and post-traumatic growth are not seen as opposite "poles of one continuum, but as two independent constructs that can coexist."

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Collective Action as a Source of Social Cohesion

How does collective action provide a therapy for grief and trauma? One standard theory is that collective action gives people a sense of belonging and social cohesion. Strong group cohesion can be a protective factor, moderating PTSD in the wake of trauma. When AIDS activists listed the “best things” about their work with ACT UP, they most often mentioned the “sense of community.” One activist wrote of the “incredible sense of camaraderie, being part of an army trying to change the world.” For those who wish to grieve for good, grief must be shared to be a source of transformation for themselves and others. As Steven Levine has written of the epidemic of unspoken trauma and grief, “If sequestered pain made a sound, the atmosphere would be humming all the time.”

Collective Grief, Collective Action, and Truthful Remembering

If we imagine sequestered, isolated pain as a constant, pervasive hum, what is the sound of pain shared? Collective movements emerging from grief and leading to activism often give primary place to remembering and telling the truth, sometimes brutal truths that the wider culture does not wish to hear. This truth-telling has been at the heart of many movements. For example, the #MeToo movement began in 2006 as a way for people to tell their stories about surviving sexual violence. The movement took off in 2017 when the #MeToo Twitter hashtag went viral as millions of survivors posted their truth. In some contexts, truth-telling is more dangerous than in others. The Argentine mothers who came many years to the Plaza de Mayo in Buenos Aires to protest the disappearance of their children were risking their lives by speaking a truth that government leaders did not want to hear. As poet Eduardo Galeano put it, the mothers of the Plaza de Mayo “refused to forget in a time of obligatory amnesia.”

The Place of Anger, Love, and Imagination in Collective Grief and Action

How does collective grief become a catalyst for collective activism? Some activists and scholars highlight the central role of anger in the alchemical process of collective mourning and action. Researchers on the complex role of collective grief in black U.S. communities note that “the catalyzing nature of anger in grief is most readily observed within modern social justice movements.” This includes the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving), ACT UP, and many others. As feminist queer philosopher Judith Butler puts it, “Open grieving is bound up with outrage, and outrage in the face of injustice or indeed of unbearable loss has enormous political potential.”

Scholars and activists have at times paired anger and love. Love not only tempers anger but also propels movements away from a hyperfocus on the past and its pain and into a newly imagined future. Notably, Martin Luther King, Jr. returned often to the primacy of love in political change. “Love is mankind’s most potent weapon for personal and social transformation.” For King, this love was not simply a human emotion but an active participation in a divine reality. “Love is the greatest force in the universe. It is the heartbeat of the moral cosmos. He who loves is a participant in the being of God.” Love also has the power to temper the rough edges of social justice movements, reminding activists to tend lovingly to the needs of those in grief, including themselves, by resting, providing multiple ways for griever to participate, offering counseling and support, and seeking solace through liturgy and art.

If the alchemical mixture of grief, anger, and love can ignite a movement, imagination and hope can propel it forward. Social transformation requires the capacity to see a future that does not yet exist

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and to believe that it is possible. Imagination allows us to begin to live into that new future before it arrives and to maintain hope and resilience in the face of overwhelming challenges. The arts are one of the most powerful avenues to shape the collective imagination and foster hope.

The Place of the Arts in Collective Grief and Action

This exhibition is held together by an underlying melodic theme: art in the face of loss transforms not only our minds and hearts but even the very structures of the world. The arts – including the visual arts, storytelling, music, and liturgy – play a pivotal role in collective movements for social change. Think of the place of liturgies of lament in the Black Lives Matter movement, of singing in the Civil Rights campaign, and of the AIDS Memorial Quilt in the AIDS activism movement. The arts serve many roles – containing and magnifying the deep emotions of grief, anger, and love that accompany collective mourning and action; offering tangible expressions of the imagination that drives collective action to a better future and offers hope in the face of defeat; and providing emotionally evocative avenues for truth-telling. Many theorists, including Carl Jung, have noted the place of art in side-stepping ordinary rational processes and evoking deep emotion, especially through symbols, images, and metaphors. Brain studies suggest that exposure to art activates two parts of the brain in ways that may help explain its power in collective transformation. Exposure to art, as well as its creation, activates what researchers have called the low road and the high road in the brain – the amygdala, which processes deep, primal emotion, and the prefrontal cortex, which helps us make meaning from and reinterpret/reimagine the world around us.

Whatever the current neurological theories, we know that artists are often on the front lines in times of political crisis. Novelist Toni Morrison writes of the dangers of giving in to despair in the face of tyranny and issues a call to her readers, especially the artists. “This is *precisely* the time when artists go to work. There is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal.”

Conclusion: Grieving for Good in a World Humming with Pain

We grieve for good when, together, we put our grief to work for a better future, for the healing of civilization. We grieve for good when we grieve out loud, telling the brutal truths, transforming our anger into passion for change, and embracing imagination and the arts as avenues to convey our grief and envision a new future. We grieve for good as we listen to the humming of a world in pain and create new songs, anthems for a more just world.

¹ My 2012 book on grief is an example of the common focus on individual grief and loss. It does however examine the place of moral responses to grief to help shape a better world. Rebekah Miles, *When the One You Love is Gone* (Abingdon Press, 2012).

¹ Da'Mere Wilson and Mary Francis O'Connor, “From Grief to Grievance: Combined Axes of Personal and Collective Grief Among Black Americans,” *Frontiers in Psychiatry* 13:850994 (28 April 2022): 2.

¹ Ibid., 1-2. See also N. Dieujuste, Y. Mekawi, Y., & J.R. Doom, “Examination of race-based traumatic stress symptom networks in Black adults in the United States,” *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 37, no. 3 (June 2024): 397-409.

¹ Activist began to use the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter and formed the initial movement after George Zimmerman was found not guilty in the death of Trayvon Martin in 2013. The Movement grew nationally in 2014 after the death of George Floyd in police custody.

¹ Sybrina Fulton, *Trayvon: Ten Years Later – A Mother's Essay* (Amazon Original Stories, 2022).

¹ Gail Holst-Warhaft, *The Cue for Passion: Grief and Its Political Uses* (Harvard University Press, 2000), 2.

¹ Matthe Klar and Tim Kasser, “Some Benefits of Being an Activist: Measuring Activism and its Role in Psychological Well-being,” *Political Psychology* 30, no. 5 (October 2009): 755-777.

¹ Robert Neimeyer et al., “Mourning and Meaning,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 46 (2002): 235-251 and Robert Neimeyer, “Searching

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Grieving for Good (Continued)

By Rebekah Miles

for the Meaning of Meaning: Grief therapy and the Process of Reconstruction," *Death Studies* 24 (2000): 541–558.

¹Tim Horn, Mark Harrington, Martin C McElhiney, Judith G Rabkin, and Glenda Gray, "Trauma and Growth: Impact of AIDS Activism," *AIDS Research and Treatment* (May 2018): 8–9.

¹Ibid., 2.

¹Horn, et al. *Trauma and Growth*, 2 and 9. See also, L. M. McAndrew, S. Markowitz, S.-E. Lu, A. Borders, D. Rothman, and K. S. Quigley, "Resilience during war: better unit cohesion and reductions in avoidant coping are associated with better mental health function after combat deployment," *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy* 9, no. 1 (2017): 52–61.

¹Steven Levine, *Unattended Sorrow*, 6.

¹Eduardo Galeano, "The Right to Dream," *Upside Down: A Primer for the Looking-Glass World* (Nation Books, 2000).

¹Wilson and O'Connor, "From Grief to Grievance," 6.

Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?* (Verso Books, 2009), 39. Decades prior, poet and activist Audre Lorde insisted that "anger expressed and translated into action in the service of our vision and our future is a liberating and strengthening act of clarification. Audre Lorde, "Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism," *Sister Outsider: Essays & Speeches by Audre Lorde* (Crossing, 1984), 127.

¹Martin Luther King, Jr., *Strength to Love* (Fortress Pres, 1963), 23.

¹Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter to Coretta King," 1957.

¹Hana Hawlina, Oliver Pedersen, and Tania Zittoun, "Imagination and Social Movements," *Current Opinion in Psychology* 35 (October 2020): 31–35.

¹Tjeu van den Berk, *Jung on Art: The Autonomy of the Creative Drive* (Routledge, 2012). See also Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno.

¹Kelly Barnett and Fabian Vasii, "How the Arts Heal: A Review of the Neural Mechanisms Behind the Therapeutic Effects of Creative Arts on Mental and Physical Health," *Frontiers in Behavioral Neuroscience* 18 (October 2024): 1–15.

¹Toni Morrison, "No Place for Self-Pity, No Room for Fear: In Times of Dread, Artists Must Never Choose to Remain Silent," *The Nation*, April 6, 2015.



Ron Minschew

Ron Minschew began his collection of poetry in the early 1970s during his rebellious college years. When he started a family, his writing paused, resuming in the late 1990s and continuing through the 2000s to the present. In 2007, he received a recognition award as Poet Fellow at Nobel House in London, England, honoring his creative work. Much of his poetry is inspired by his wide-ranging life interests and experiences.

Ron studied art under Roger Winter and Chapman Kelly at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts and had walk-on parts in the Dallas Civic Opera. He also studied pottery in Chicago and enjoys working with both clay and wood. Years of camping, hiking, and outdoor activities have shaped much of his recent poetry.

Semi-retired from the landscape industry, he still consults, specializing in moving very large trees. Ron lives in Pottsboro, Texas, with his wife of 52 years and their dog, on a heavily wooded couple of acres where wildlife and adventure are just outside the windows.

READING: "Nature's Communication" on August 23, 10-11 a.m., Gallery 440

(CONTINUED)

Consequences and Truths

By Ron Minshew

The heat has been stifling for months now.
What seemed like a rainy spring went on longer than normal.
Now, everyone wishes for an early return.

Everything has suffered across the country.
Flooding, wildfires, drought, and illness continue to impact us all.
Who will be left?
Where will they live?
What will they eat?
How will they exist?
Why will they even want to exist?

Will Armageddon wipe out all mankind?
We, the people, know and are pleading with the ones appointed/elected to run this country to not continue to ruin it.

This is what is real.
This country, that country—does it matter which one?
It seems that all of those in power want more power and money.
All are greedy and self-serving.

The lies and misinformation continue to erode our society as we know it.

They tell you everything is fine, but don't believe everything you read and hear is true, like...
The oceans are not rising
The ice cap will refreeze
There's plenty of space in the ocean to dump trash
Reports of plastic particles found in fish is FAKE!
The plastic is at the bottom of the ocean, and not hurting anything
Why would you want to believe the socialists who want to control you, take your money and use it for themselves

Future generations will need to fix all of this.
What will it take to convince the others that "truth" is our right
Please stand up for the belief in our mission.

The nay-sayers don't want you to have your own life.
They are leading us toward misery and future strife.
Violent weather patterns are occurring more frequently throughout the country.

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Consequences and Truths (Continued)

By Ron Minschew

Any farmer who is still farming cannot successfully raise crops under so many difficult conditions. And what about the Farmers that were paid NOT to Farm

This is not funny.

Some of us will be here to see this catastrophe play out
and see the scared faces of children in so many different countries.

How many species of animals have we lost

How many more are going to be lost in the coming years?

The people in high places want to go to Mars and build.

How many will go

That's right, only a few

The wealthy

Some Doctors

Engineers

And of course, worker bees, slaves

And BOTS

Why don't we fix what we have instead of continuously polluting the air
and the most precious asset, water

Together we can make a difference, we always have. Together we can do the impossible.

We have before, and we must reunite stronger, unified, and bold.

Maybe past time.

This planet is ours, and we only have a short time left.

The plans are written, and we must fight for our planet.

Together, all humanity. We must stop the greed and hearts of granite.

Sign up for the fight of our lives, not against one another, but for one another.

It is not too late... yet.

Evolution Revolution

By Ron Minshew

Evolution

Revolution

What is the solution

A new Constitution

What about pollution

Green revolution

Political convolution

Debate of the solution

So much destitution

Restricting distributions

Water pollution

Lack of solid solution

Destitution, world nutrition

Too much attrition

Malnutrition

Continued confusion

Fighting for our restitution

Nature's Communication

By Ron Minshew

It has been given to me that plants and trees have feelings
and communicate with each other, even without having
mouths or ears

Birds sing to each other to find a mate, or sometimes
because they are just happy
Humans have dominion over the birds in the sky and fish of
the sea, but they don't communicate like the plants or sing
like the birds
The birds still sing, but it isn't a song of happiness anymore

The world is out of balance, and beautiful forests are burning
Genocide, hate, war, and greed are throwing us out of
balance

Our air is polluted, but humans in high places don't care
They want to go to Mars and build a new snare
Leave this world behind them because they just don't care

If we had learned to listen to nature many years ago, the
balance of 10,000 years ago would be as sweet now and, in
the future, as it was intended to be

Some day we will be gone, but perhaps we will return



Loughridge C. Murrell III

Loughridge C. Murrell III is a North Texas artist from Arlington, Texas. He earned his Master of Arts in Studio Art from Texas A&M University–Commerce, as well as his undergraduate degree where he studied under influential artists such as Lee Baxter Davis, known for his deeply symbolic and narrative-driven printmaking; Gerard Huber, whose meticulous realism and attention to form reinforced the value of technical mastery; and Michael Miller, who emphasized experimentation and material exploration as essential to artistic growth. Their influence instilled in Murrell both a respect for tradition and a fearless embrace of innovation.

While painting remains his primary focus, Murrell has also worked in sculpture and poetry, treating each medium as a means of discovery. With over 19 years of teaching high school art, he continues to pass down this philosophy of curiosity, craftsmanship, and openness to new forms of expression.

STATEMENT: I am a painter who grew up among makers—woodworkers, problem solvers, people who believed that creativity was a practical way of engaging with the world. That foundation has shaped my approach to art: I create not to produce on demand, but to explore when inspiration strikes.

For me, making is about curiosity and discovery. Sometimes this manifests as paintings of shifting skies, reminders that nothing in life is fixed. Other times it takes the form of sculpture or writing that probes the cultural and political tensions of the present moment. Regardless of medium, my work seeks out the fleeting, subtle connections that reveal life's undercurrents.

Each piece begins as a spark and evolves into a search for clarity, balance, or resonance. I lean on technical skill, honed through years of practice, but I am equally drawn to the power of subtle imagery that carries weight beneath the surface. My art is not about easy answers—it is about asking sharper questions, slowing down to notice, and engaging with the world as it shifts around us.

READING: "Renaissance in Tatters" on August 23, 10-11 a.m., Gallery 440

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Renaissance in Tatters

By Loughridge C. Murrell III

Painters go to Venice to truly see color,
And fight in the streets of Paris to be real.
You must find a muse who becomes your lover
But that's just old shit - a romantic pill.

There's No silver lick soaking the tightened rag,
just stained burlap over the arm of the ratter,
No drips or slashed and dancing abstraction
No Hemingway now—just an old dirty bag.

A landscape painted of the renaissance in tatters.
A cast of empowered boot straps and dreams
So many scattered upon on these piles of ladders
A promise ever flowing from an opened vein

Masses of classes on these piles of ladders
Puppets panic, and your siblings witness
A grand parade of the wind-blown senate,
Dressed in felt coats of bubble gum and lent.

The people sang:
*A renaissance in tatters, made by mad hatters,
Disgrace and replace, distract and demean
You've the freedom to starve as the united scatter
Power to the people to collectively need*

So, Let our backers and patrons and Masters be full,
and let me shit in the milk they feed their sons,
Rely and buy into the golden Bull,
while the cello moans its final run

(CONTINUED)

No muse remains, but her shirt is wide open.
Prayers for our patrons passage through needle's eye,
From the garden weed my gal's torch on high
Sweet kisses to our Home's righteous goodbye.

So sing the hymn of corporate freedoms,
under the master's gaze, and hushed chatter.
Sing now, sing loud, all proud people
For those who allowed this renaissance of tatters.



LeeAnn Olivier

Raised in Louisiana on new-wave music, horror films, and Grimm fairy tales, LeeAnn Olivier is a neo-Southern-Gothic poet. She has an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Texas at El Paso, and her writing has appeared in dozens of literary journals, including most recently *The Missouri Review*, *Bloodletter*, and *Superpresent*. She teaches English and Humanities at Tarrant County College, and her full-length poetry collection *Chimera* is forthcoming from Steel Toe Books. As a survivor of breast cancer and an emergency liver transplant, Olivier hopes to help her students navigate their own challenges through creative expression.

READING: "The Girl Without Hands" on August 23, 10-11 a.m., Gallery 440

(CONTINUED)

2004

LeeAnn Olivier

I remember how much we watched
the stars in our pre-screen silence,
spotting sister sigils like Scorpius
and Taurean, bright bodies emerging
from the skyline. We whirled into spirals,
the songs from our lungs dark. Moon
after moon, we twisted ourselves
into eclipses, animal hearts shuttered,
our bones cages, on the hood of your old
Honda civic, candy-apple paint scraped
and blanched pink from years under
the Southern sun. Hundreds of miles
from any shoreline we needed to untangle
the sky's mosaics. We needed to come
undone in the spaces between the rain
hours, a dirge of dappled patterns reeling
above the roller rink. We'd blot out
our roots, Cajun and Caddo, a slew
of bad fathers, furred fists and flasks
inked with cheap whiskey, until their absence
was nothing. When George W. was the worst
villain we could fathom, we'd roadtrip
to D.C. with our slapdash signs like ragged
flags, your lion's mane growing longer
every year, shot through with red-gold
from your mother's Irish blood. I'm almost
glad you didn't live to see the green
world unbraided into pixels and monsters
big as quarries lumbering in broad light.

(CONTINUED)

The Girl Without Hands

LeeAnn Olivier

FIRST PLACE - WRITING

Morning, love, morning. The Keepers incant and ring
around my hospital bed, caroling glam craft,
offering tiger's eye, rose quartz. My nephew slips

a slim column of gypsum into my palm and reads
The Outsiders aloud, chanting the sacred Trinity:
Pony, Johnny, Cherry. In the space between sleeping

and waking, autumn ticks over to winter, a shiny dime
flipped tailside. These are the spells that bind.
On the news someone's been loosening animals

from the Dallas zoo, leopards slinking through
the metro, monkeys crouched in a makeshift cage,
a lion prowling the side of I-35, leviathan,

his fallow cowl a wheat-field surging under
the Texas sun, honeyed as a vial of cadmium lemon.
My body tethered to a devil's nest of tubes and wires,

I wait for my silver hands to grow like moon mirrors,
molding the whole of dreambeds in brain caves
from cobwebs and clay, mute words crowding

my mouth like minnows while the Keepers keep
watch. They speak for me when I've cut out
my tongue, and when I've lost my hands, they pray.

(CONTINUED)

How to Describe the Sky

LeeAnn Olivier

after James Baldwin, Jeff Buckley, and Gregory Alan Isakov, three kings of the blues

Say it blues like a child playing hide-
and-seek in the chiffarobe after a hush silken
the crawlspace, after a hush ices her blood

and she reckons no one is coming, her finger-
tips shivering along the furs. It blues
like morning glories, their white throats

opening in September. It blues
like a stillness that moves. It blues like a shining
honey-creeper, her birdsong a wet whip limning

the green. It blues like folds of Veronica's velvet
unfurling in the attic, food for grizzled skipper
moths, bluing their darting tongues. It blues

like moonstone, mystical, opalescent, a gleam so brutal
it breaks your heart and feasts on its ruby pieces.
It blues like a cobalt planet raining molten glass.

It blues like a sea anemone, tentacles lulling prey
to a rapture of lapis lazuli. It blues like the Mississippi
reclaiming her Orpheus, her kingdom for a kiss

upon his shoulder. It blues like broken bottles
glinting bright as stars. It blues like a triptych
in Rothko's Chapel, each canvas bleeding

darker as his oils saturate from sapphire to slate
and the artist recoils into madness. It blues
like a bruise. It blues like my father's eulogy, a daughter

and son expunged like a crime scene scrubbed clean. It blues
like the Gulf of Mexico cradling the Keys, the way my love
and I dove from the boat to swim through it, a roiling

remedy stripping our maladies bare. It blues like a disease
and then it quickens like the cure for it. It blues
like music, like the only hue we've got in all this darkness.



HONORABLE MENTION

WEBSITE

You can read his satirical blog
about classic rock at
www.medium.com/@rockandrollshitshow

Brian K. Pierce

Brian K. Pierce has been a full-time writer in Dallas–Fort Worth for decades. His entry in the show—“Lot 60”—falls squarely on the “Mourning” side of the exhibit theme. “I wanted to write something short and shocking that put a harsh light on some disturbing trends in American culture,” he said. As owner of Brian Pierce Marketing, he has developed award-winning campaigns for dozens of well-known businesses, cultural organizations, visitor attractions, and non-profits—work that earned him the Silver Medal Award from AAF Fort Worth.

Beyond marketing, he has written fiction, performed with live theaters and sketch comedy troupes, and brought the comedic tales of D. Dirk Davis, “America’s least-loved poet,” to the first-ever Lollapalooza Festival in Dallas. Pierce currently serves on the board of Hip Pocket Theatre and as a volunteer for CreativeMornings/Fort Worth. He holds a bachelor’s degree with honors in journalism from the University of Oklahoma, and lives in Arlington with his son Adam and cat Parker.

READING: “Lot 60” on August 23, 10–11 a.m., Gallery 440

(CONTINUED)

The room was small, white, and windowless, humming with fluorescent light. Veronica stood in black heels on the cracked gray tile. The last 24 hours had been a blur.

The morning before, she'd been pulled over for going seven miles over the speed limit. But instead of writing her a ticket, the officer took her to the county jail, no phone calls allowed.

Standard protocol, they told her.

She'd spent the night on a lumpy bed as a woman sobbed in the bunk above.

Now, the next morning, she found herself in this tiny, soundless room with nowhere to sit. They'd fed her a bland breakfast, brought her to this place, and asked her to change into a pale pink dress, something short and frilly she'd never choose for herself. The fabric itched and the heels pinched her feet.

What the hell was all this? Why wasn't she allowed to call her boyfriend or her parents or a lawyer?

The door opened, and a stone-faced police officer stepped in. "This way, please," he said, grabbing her above the elbow.

"Tell me what's going on," she demanded, walking beside him down a cramped hallway. "This is insane. I got a speeding ticket, that's all."

"You have to make an appearance."

"An appearance before a judge?"

"An appearance. That's all I can tell you," the officer said.

The hallway turned sharply into a much larger space, and suddenly she was standing behind a tall velvet curtain. A muffled voice echoed from the other side.

The officer parted the heavy curtain and nudged her forward. "Go!"

Veronica stepped into the light.

She was standing on a wooden stage in what looked like an old movie theater. Two spotlights burned down on her body. In front of her, a sea of men in high-backed chairs stared up, paddles in hand. More watched from the balcony above.

"Lot 60," the announcer said in a deep voice. "Age 29. Successful architect. Attractiveness rating, eight. Fertility index, 92. Psychological profile, independent. Domestic potential, outstanding."

The room buzzed with enthusiasm.

Veronica froze.

What. The. Actual. Fuck.

And then it hit her. The new law. The one that passed last month. An initiative from the incoming administration. Something about giving socially disadvantaged men, the ones who struggled to attract partners, a fair shot at family life. Positive pairing, they called it. It had been pitched as a public good, a bold solution to the epidemic of male loneliness.

She hadn't paid much attention. She'd been buried in blueprints and permitting issues for a new office complex. It was just political noise and she didn't have the time for it.

But here it was.

Panic rose and she lifted her arms, teetering on the ridiculously high heels. "What the hell is going on? Where am I?"

Laughter rippled through the crowd. Her cheeks flushed.

(CONTINUED)

"Let's begin the bidding at five thousand tokens," said the announcer.

Paddles lifted. Paddles with numbers on them.

"Number 66, five thousand! Number 102, six thousand!" he bellowed.

She backed up a step. There had to be some mistake. She wasn't a criminal. She had just gotten a speeding ticket, just made a little slip-up. This was totally crazy and wrong. How could they do this to her? Where were the police?

Oh, right. They were standing a few feet away.

"Now seven thousand!" the announcer said.

How was this even allowed? Why hadn't she paid more attention?

"Number 202, eight thousand!"

She scanned the crowd of eager, needy faces. She understood now. These were the men the law was made for, the ones who thought love was owed to them by the new government.

"Number 33, nine thousand!"

Veronica shook her head, her thoughts a swirl of confusion and astonishment. Her breath came faster.

"Can I get ten thousand? Ten? Ten?"

The crowd murmured.

"Come now, gentlemen," said the announcer, gesturing to Veronica. "Here is a woman in her prime. A refined woman who can follow a recipe and keep a clean home and raise healthy children. A woman any man would be proud to have on his arm."

"And in his bed!" someone shouted.

There was laughter again, and her entire body shivered.

A paddle rose in the second row.

"Number 12, ten thousand tokens!" the announcer called, his voice swelling with triumph as cheers erupted across the room.

She stared at the bidder and her stomach dropped.

She knew that face.

Row two. Number 12.

Howard.

She hadn't seen him in years, not since they were teenagers. He'd lived next door, a quiet, strange boy who was always staring at her from his porch or bedroom window. He never spoke, just watched. She used to tell people he made her skin crawl.

During senior year, he left a note on her porch swing, saying he knew he wasn't good enough for her yet, but one day he'd be rich enough and good-looking enough to have her. She would be his.

She ignored it, of course.

Now he was here, bidding.

Their eyes locked.

"No!" she screamed. "No way!"

The crowd rumbled.

"I know him," she said, her voice cracking. "I don't want him!"

The announcer raised a hand. "Lot 60, please calm yourself. This is the way it is now."

(CONTINUED)

Lot 60 (Continued)

By Brian K. Pierce

"But how is this even happening?" she cried. "How?"

"Do I hear eleven thousand? Eleven thousand, gentlemen?"

No paddle was raised.

"Going once, going twice...sold!" the announcer boomed. "To number 12! Congratulations, good sir!"

The crowd roared.

Howard stood and the men around him shook his hand and slapped him on the back, all of them grinning wildly.

Two officers approached her. Veronica's breath turned shallow and her new reality stabbed at her mind. "Please, not him!"

A hand touched her arm. She pulled away, eyes wide. Another reached for her, but she twisted, shoved, kicked. One officer fell to the ground.

She bolted for the curtain and two more officers appeared. They grabbed her arms and held her upright.

"This can't be real!" she shrieked. "This is America!"

She felt the jab in her neck and ice surged through her veins. Her limbs weakened, the stage tilted, and she went limp. But her eyes stayed open, locked on Howard's face as they carried her behind the curtain.

Howard smiled.

At the back of the room, a row of schoolchildren sat watching.

"Why was she so angry?" one whispered.

"Shh," a teacher said. "Observe. These are important lessons. This is what happens to women who break the law."

On the stage, Lot 61 stepped into the light.

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