

Process



Process

Exhibiting Artists:

Wendy Ackrell, Pilar Agüero-Esparza, Roberta Ahrens,
Tessie Barrera-Scharaga, Lorraine Bonner, Marie Cameron,
Valerie Constantino, Bushra Gill, Rinat Goren,
Rozanne Hermelyn di Silvestro, Dianne Hoffman, Quinn Keck,
Kristine Mays, Michelle Mansour, Geralyn Montano,
Priscilla Otani, Lucky Rapp, Sawyer Rose, ZaHaVa Sherez,
Na Omi Judy Shintani, Christine So, Demetra Theofanous

February 2–March 23 2024

February 9, March 8: Receptions and Art Walks

March 6: Art Talk with curator and artists via zoom

Art Works Downtown

1337 4th Street, San Rafael, CA 94901

www.artworksdowntown.org

Production Staff

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Front Cover: Christine So, *Blue Valley 2* detail (2023), cyanotype, 30 "x 24" (framed)

Back Cover: Bushra Gill, *Carmel Shore*, (2021), image transfer, collage, modeling paste on collagraph
print on paper, mounted on wood, 9.75" x 9.75"



Art Works Downtown Mission

To provide an environment where visual arts thrive for the well-being of the community.

Art Works Downtown, Inc, a 501(c)3 corporation, is Marin's premier non-profit art center. Located on Fourth Street, our 40,000 square-foot building houses four galleries, 33 art studios, a jewelers guild, frame shop, a ceramic center, a restaurant, 17 affordable apartments and more. We feature new exhibits and events every month including the popular 2nd Friday Art Walk.

Exhibit Statement

Process, curated by Karen M. Gutfreund, showcases artwork created meticulously by hand with alternative mediums by 22 Bay Area self-identified women, non-binary and BIPOC artists. Process is a testament to the skill, and passion of each artist—every mark carries the artist's emotions, thoughts, and energy, becoming a tangible representation of the artist's journey. This exhibition is a celebration of human creativity and craftspersonship and embodies the artist's dedication, uniqueness, and connection to their art. Pushing back against the patriarchal canons, for what can be considered "women's work," these timeless forms of expression inspire and captivate audiences, reminding us of the profound impact of the human touch.



Wendy Ackrell, *In Bloom* (2021), sticks wrapped with yarn, installation in container, 50" x 24"



Wendy Ackrell

I began creating woolen sculptures in 2009 after a tumultuous period in my life. Out in the peaceful woods of Sonoma, I began gathering large, gnarled branches that had dropped onto the forest floor. A week of total quiet and a huge skein of yarn led to the creation of my first wool wrapped branches. Eventually, my thoughts turned to exploring other elements, and I became drawn to the idea of softening traditionally male-oriented objects with beautiful, colorful yarn.

Yarn, historically used in women's work, tempers items which have prototypically masculine or violent connotations. For me, the material and the wrapping motion become both the act of accessing memory and the creation of hope. As I wind and unwind, spool and unspool, I am reliving moments in life and thinking of possibility, of the future. Working with fiber lets my hands bear burdens for me, permits me to fumble around in search of new insight, and guides me in searching for answers I might otherwise never find.

Gentling these pieces with plush, richly colored wool while pushing them into new sculptural forms allows me to establish an extremely different, almost familial, relationship with them. The repetitive, meditative, and transformative nature of fiber art is one of the most healing and hopeful acts of renewal I know.

Pilar Agüero-Esparza

The process of weaving huarache sandals relies on the warp being three-dimensional and formed on a last. The weft is not a straight line but an ever-changing curve, woven around the last that eventually forms the shoe. I adopt this and similar leather working processes in making my works.

In *lace/her*, I capture the undulations of the weave three-dimensionally to mimic the contours of a female belly. Acrylic, leather and nails materialy create the work; color suggesting flesh provides the painting its content.



Pilar Agüero-Esparza, *lace/her* (2023), acrylic, stretched leather, nails, on wood panel, 14" x 11"





Roberta Ahrens, *Black Water* (2015), acrylic on cracked linen sculpture, 60" x 48"



Roberta Ahrens

I create most all of my artwork on a special canvas called *Cracked Linen*. I have perfected this process through many years of creative experimentation and permutation. I begin with a piece of linen (or similar light fabric) and I apply two to four layers of "my mud," a clay based mixture that I've developed over the last 30+ years and that I understand completely. I know how it will dry and I know how it will crack when I roll and manipulate the cut piece. Depending on the piece I am working on, I unroll and crack the material vertically and/or horizontally to form a fractal base of textured material upon which I create each piece.

My *Water* series is only broken horizontally, and it really was by accident one day that I discovered the very special wave-like patterns that are created by this process. I enhance the wave shapes of the sculpture by lifting and supporting parts of the cracked linen and allowing them to dry in ways that resemble incoming surf and wind rippling on a lake or stream. I then paint the surface, or gild each piece in copper, silver or gold leaf. I occasionally paint on the gilded surface to add additional touches of colors, flowers, leaves, or branches adding a botanical element to the work.

The pieces in this exhibition are the very first two in my water series created in 2015, now numbering fifteen and counting. Many of these pieces are very large and viscerally reveal the awesome power and force of this primordial element. All of my work serves to express my reaction to the critical problem of climate change that is threatening the seas that are literally the life blood of our planet and the life force for everything that exists on this big blue ball of water drifting along in the vacuum of space.

Tessie Barrera-Scharaga

My passion for poetry started in childhood. In South America, poetry is consumed on a daily basis, and poets are venerated, their work recited and quoted from memory, in every type of occasion. Both my parents were poetry enthusiasts, each with their own favorite poets. Their books could be found on shelves and tables all over our house. In social gatherings, in addition to food, music and dance, my parents and their friends recited their favorite works to each other. This early imprint has remained with me throughout my life, and it has inspired and informed a lot of my work.

The great Chilean poet Pablo Neruda wrote about how ordinary things become precious to us because of who made them, who gave them, or who touched them. My assemblage is composed of many ordinary things that have memories attached to them. In addition to providing structure, the frames give a reference point to images from the past, much like a photograph. All the objects are covered and connected by a poem, that simultaneously preserves but also absorbs them. These objects that were precious to me and the memories they carried are now protected, but they are also impossible to touch, they have been rendered out of reach.

In the words of Neruda:
 "these buttons and wheels and little forgotten treasures...glasses, knives and scissors, all bear the trace of someone's fingers on their handle or surface, the trace of a distant hand lost in the depths of forgetfulness."



Tessie Barrera-Scharaga, *Ode to the Bygone* (2023), mixed media assemblage, 72" x 24" x 24"





Lorraine Bonner, *Wounded World Healer* (2017), clay, 19" x 12" x 16"



Lorraine Bonner

"Hurt people hurt people," that is the standard phrase that people use to explain everything from a kid who bullies their classmate to the loyalists of the Third Reich. Hurt people hurt people, something bad must have happened to those people.

I was a true believer myself, in those days of the mid-eighties and early nineties, when the consciousness raising power of the women's movement allowed so many of us to recognize the trauma we lived through. Many yearned to help the perpetrators. If we could only shine enough love on them, their wounds, which we were sure they had, would be healed and they would stop hurting us and our world.

This was my understanding when I began practicing art, learning sculpture on the fly. I was a medical doctor and an artist, working with other health care workers and other artists, many of whom also had traumatic histories. We were hurt people but we were not hurting anyone, and the clay, whose voice I was beginning to trust, had nothing to say about the wounds of my perpetrators, but revealed only their relentless violence, my own innocence and powerlessness.

As I thought about wounded healers I also wondered if the converse were true. Are there people who had not been hurt themselves but who choose to hurt other people? Who are willing to set fire to the world which gives them life? Who are these people? How can we stop them? Could any amount of love change them? Was there any hope for healing them, when they don't see themselves as being in need of healing?

Wounded World Healer started out as a simple figure mending a broken world. I was experimenting with the use of cloth dipped in slip for her robe, and she told me her head was to be shaved, like a monk. She is a spiritual being. She has our world in her hands, and she has marks on her wrists. I'm not sure if the scars are from restraints when she was being tortured, or if they are scars of her own self injuries from times of overwhelming pain and despair. Her scars give me a feeling of safety. She is a hurt person, like me. She is a healer, a wounded healer attempting to heal a wounded world.

I don't know if she will succeed.

Marie Cameron

During the dark days of the pandemic I was desperate to find my lost connection to hope, awe and even joy... and it came in the form of a rainbow! I realized in that moment that I needed to see the rainbow in myself, in others, and in the world again. I sought to do this by embroidering silk rainbows onto found, vintage photographs and postcards. I choose subjects that inspired me with happiness and gratitude.

As I began each new day, I would begin a new piece. I would decide how best to use the rainbow to highlight joy. I would softly trace my plan in pencil on the front or the back of the photograph, using my window as a light box, making gentle indentations with a dull embroidery needle to plot my stitches and lightly pierce guide holes. Then, stitch by careful stitch and row by row, using the finest of beading needles, I would pull the floss through the fragile paper, carefully so as not to tear it or tangle and knot the threads. The subtle sheen of the hand dyed, pastel silk against the ephemeral images in tones of sepia or black looked truly magical. The entire, focused process was very calming, meditative and healing and it was something I could do in a small space, next to my radio and air purifier! At the end of the day I would take a picture of the finished piece and share it on social media under the hashtag #morerainbows! in an attempt to share the joy with others.

By the time we opened up in California I had some 200 pieces and hosted a Wall of Rainbows Pop-up in my studio which was a moving time to reconnect with community and share our stories. I find I'm still making these, because we still need rainbows!



Marie Cameron, *Zigzag Rainbow Balloon Scape* (2021), All found photographs, silk thread, 4" x 6"





Valerie Constantino, *Works of Love* (2020), handmade paper, textile and thread, with writing and words, 8" x 8" each



Valerie Constantino

To love is to give what one does not have and to receive that over which one has no power.
— Simon Critchley. I love thee with a love I seemed to lose with my lost saints.
— Elizabeth Barrett Browning

With these two quotes, I began this series of fifteen handmade papers. Each 8 x 8 inch framed work offers a definition for love; love as a verb or love as an adjective. Words were stitched onto the white papers with white cotton thread, and the lower edges of the papers were stained with an infusion of rose hips and beet powder. Each one was pressed between two acrylic squares, fastened with stainless steel book corners and silver pins.

This series evolved in conjunction with my exploratory integrations of tangible yet flexible materials such as paper, textile and thread, with writing and words. The overlay of these creative forms refers to their analogous structures, where writing is a network of linear and poetic elements relative to the reticulated underpinnings of matter.

For these works, I was also interested in referencing the subtlety of whitework, an embroidery technique of white stitching on white cloth, often used for christening, bridal and ecclesiastic textiles. Simultaneously, these projects evolved within an atmosphere of catastrophic political, social and environmental shifts. And each one notes an attempt to supersede my susceptibility to these conditions, to locate and foster the best determinations within the human heart and mind.

Bushra Gill

Inspired by Islamic geometric patterns, I tessellate images from everyday life to create rich and complex surface structures in/with paint, print, and wood collage. In the process, dimensions of my subjects are simultaneously revealed and concealed, enabling me to explore ideas of that which is present, but veiled—much like my hair, which I cover with a scarf in public. Using repeated geometric shapes that fit closely together creates a sense of order through which I understand the natural world and my personal experience. Rather than constraining my freedom, this approach provides a scaffold for experimenting with color, texture, and spatial possibilities.

A few years ago, I began using laser cutting as part of my process, in the actual pieces, as stencils, and as printmaking plates. *Carmel Shore* and *Mendocino Sunset* are from a series combining the geometric lasercut patterns with floral lasercuts framing the images. While attachments between people in the pandemic years when physical contact was limited, I found the additional lasercut elements in the work lent the visual remove we were experiencing in our relationships.



Bushra Gill, *Mendocino Sunset* (2021), Image transfer, collage, modeling paste on collagraph print on paper, mounted on wood, 9.75" x 9.75"





Rinat Goren, *The Main Idea* (2021), encaustic (beeswax and pigment) collage on wood panel, 24" x 24" x 1.5"



Rinat Goren

Encaustic is the use of beeswax and pigment as a medium. The medium has to first be melted and then applied in layers to a surface; most often wood panel. Heat source is used to fuse the layers together into a cohesive piece. Paper cuttings are embedded in between wax layers in different depths.

This piece *The Main Idea* is an attempt to process the flood of information and ideas we encounter relentlessly. I find it necessary to sort out core ideas and essential pieces of information to make our world possible to digest and cope with. This work is made with multiple layers that create depth and represent the wealth of information and ideas we face daily. Paper cuts are added to symbolize louder pieces of data that grabs our attention. This piece invites the observer to clear their mind up and sort out the main ideas.

Rozanne Hermelyn di Silvestro

While oil painting is my first love, I have a special romance with the monotype printmaking technique. The spontaneous act of drawing and painting onto a smooth plate surface is a constant study of life and light. My first step is to add oil ink with brushes and rollers and then I remove the ink with my fingers, rags, sticks... anything really, depending on the type of mark I want to create. The final step is to transfer my image from the printing plate to paper through an etching press, creating an one-of-a-kind artwork.

Going backwards, now moving forward. What has been silenced, has become a stubborn hope that moves us forward. Her tears are my tears, my step is her step.



Rozanne Hermelyn di Silvestro, *Moving Forward* (2023), oil on paper mounted to panel, 52" x 36"





Dianne Hoffman, *There Are Faeries Among Us* (2023), mixed media assemblage, 19" x 10" x 4"



Dianne Hoffman

The medium of assemblage allows me to repurpose discarded objects and salvaged materials to construct dimensional worlds of allegory where tall tales are told, jokes are cracked, emotions stirred, and ideas imparted. Each piece inherently conveys a narrative facet derived from a lyric, phrase or sentiment that beckons for visual context. I recently developed a small series inspired by pagan customs and practices celebrating the gathering of crops during harvest season by depicting fruit and vegetables that carry symbolic meanings associated with fertility, abundance, and vitality.

In this piece I referenced folklore that describes Faeries of agricultural rural areas living beneath ground and serving as soil spirits to help the healthy growth of plant life. These mythical sprites attentively pinch the roots, vines and flower buds to aid their bloom and make them ripen. Mother Nature's nutrients are where we all meet to experience a shared life force. They are not only a mirror of ourselves, but a focusing lens on the gifts we have to provide each other.

Quinn Keck

Integral to modern life is navigating existence on the grid—people, algorithms, corporations want everyone labeled and put in boxes to play the role capitalism assigned us. The machine learning algorithms that run modern life in their essence are built on data with single labels as absolutes. It can be easy to be lost in the power these societal grids hold—but we are not defined by them. My work explores the destruction and reconstruction of the grid, and the fight for self in late stage capitalism. I utilize a taxonomy of icons and layers of projections, paint, print and code to discuss layers of perception, memory and grief. My process is one of constantly iterating on new and old images, just as we all are a series of imperfect versions of ourselves improving each iteration but never fully finished.



Quinn Keck, *Nexus Individual Response 001* (2021), algorithmic digital art, 12" x 12"





Kristine Mays, *Reveling in Her Assets* (2019), wire, 60" x 21" x 11"



Kristine Mays

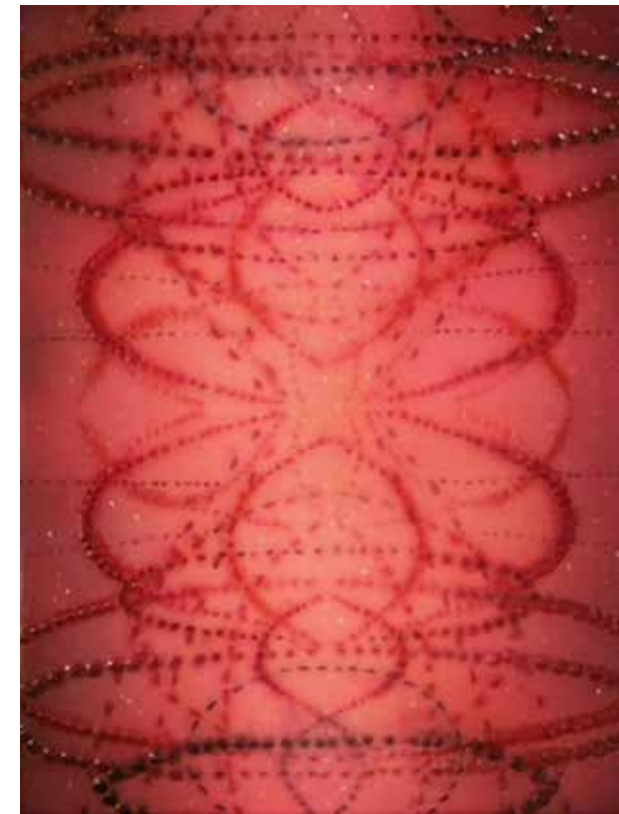
Formed from hundreds of individual pieces of wire, Kristine Mays has developed a way of expressing the human form through wire. "As an artist I am very aware of the impermanence of life. With metal wire I have timelessly captured a fleeting moment that I hope will last for decades. My artwork points to the soul and spirit, transporting the viewer into another place. It's about reconnecting to a deeper purpose—the soul and spirit of our lives. I transform hard rigid wire into soft flowing movement. I create the outer shell, the exterior of a human being, but provoke you to see what's within. Memories and the way we have loved one another far outweigh our status or possessions—and yet sometimes a simple dress or a body in motion may trigger a memory from the past, allowing us to visit that which has imprinted our lives."

My work consists of sculpting heavy steel wire. By looping, hooking and overlapping thousands of pieces of wire, I create the essence of a human form. Sometimes it emerges from a garment and other times it resides as a body, always in some form of movement as a testament to life, liveliness and vibrancy. While my work addresses a number of things, spanning many topics, I have found myself continually seeking to leave a mark of my existence. As an African American woman, I have witnessed numerous ways my people have been excluded and erased from history. In my own way, I am mending. I am pulling the pieces back together. Rebuilding. Reclaiming. I am pulling the threads back together in a way that is restorative. The work I make feels purposeful and life affirming and give honor to humanity.

Michelle Mansour

My work is a meditation on the space between science and spirituality. Through the lens of perception, fluctuating between the miniscule and the grandiose, we find fear and wonder of the unknown, the invisible, and the uncontrollable. Based initially on investigating the microscopic world of the body's interior where beauty and illness mingle in the same fluids and membranes, my work has become a broader ontological reflection of where the physical and the metaphysical intersect. Growing up in a family of scientists, this focus intensified when my mother—both a nurse and devout Catholic—was diagnosed with and lost to cancer.

Forging a connection between the microcosmic and macrocosmic, the paintings push an imaginative space, exploring tensions and relationships between corporeal and mystical, body and mind. My process includes layering translucent color and building up a symmetrical system of intersecting strands of cells. In applying thousands of tiny dots, I create an ethereal space where constellations gather and disperse in an endless cycle. Particles accumulate, and I layer globules of silicone to emerge from the surface as tissue-like prayer beads. The result is the juxtaposition of jewel-like fields and manipulated surfaces, creating a tactile element for counting countless meditations. While the initial impetus for these compositions is a controlled symmetry, the mutability of the materials often disrupts a perfect equilibrium. This exponentially cyclical process of repeating marks becomes a devotional practice in contemplating the exquisite balance between matter and spirit, certainty and faith, presence and loss.



Michelle Mansour, *Little Warriors of Courage, Clarity, Renewal, Light, and Devotion (Red Amethyst)* (2022), acrylic, ink, and silicone on muslin on panel, 12" x 9"





Geralyn Montano, *Fishing in the Underworld* (2011), graphite, acrylic, ink, collage on paper to mounted board, 16" diameter



Geralyn Montano

I am a woman artist of Native, Latinx mixed heritage. My lived experience inspires me to prominently feature women and themes of my cultural heritage. I was raised apart from the Dine' side of my father's family. Like tens of thousands of Native Americans, my paternal grandfather was forced to attend a boarding school where he endured government-mandated pressures intended to stamp out that culture and language. The trauma of this was intergenerational, passed on in my family. I was raised in estrangement from Native culture and encouraged to embrace and emulate mainstream "American" culture. This left me questioning who I was and where I fit in—an all-too-common experience for many Natives I've met. As an adult, I later became fascinated with my ancestry and began to read widely about Native cultures and contemporary women's issues.

In 2011-12 I was researching human trafficking and sex trafficking. Human trafficking is a global epidemic. I discovered it was occurring with women and girls in Native American communities. The media rarely gives voice to the Native community. I was compelled to create a series I titled, *Traded Moons*. The artworks shine a light on this violent underworld occurring in Native American communities.

Fishing in the Underworld is a work from this series. I chose to be bold and honest with this work depicting the danger of a precarious life, with a girl walking a tightrope. I carefully drew a young Dineh (Navajo) girl in a traditional velvet blouse and squash blossom necklace. She is both vulnerable and strong. She is seen within a red and pink, feminine circle of acrylic ink, and collaged dark fish in an explosive arrangement. She is defiant, using her hair as a rope she is determined to save her sisters caught in the downward spiral of sex trafficking.

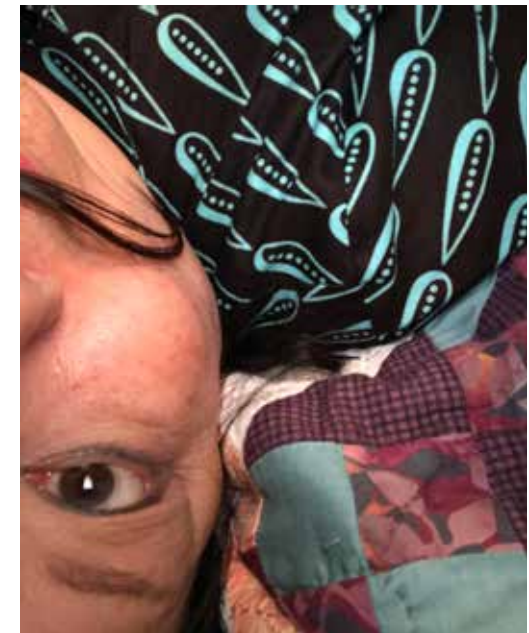
While researching, I often came across stories of resilient sex trafficking survivors who escaped to heal and become advocates for survivors and victims in their campaign to put an end to this form of violence against women.

Priscilla Otani

The *Pleasure Quarters* installation consists of a cluster of paper-covered structures surrounded by waxed paper shoes. The structures represent mizushobai or the water trade, named as such because houses of prostitution, theaters and drinking establishments were built along the shores of rivers. Although life in the pleasure quarters was depicted romantically by ukiyo-e artists such as Utamaro, Sharaku and Harunobu, in reality, the women who worked in these houses were sold by destitute farming families and had to work off onerous debts for much of their lives. The shoes symbolize the unspoken world of burakumin, historically living in segregated villages within cities because of their livelihood in tanning, curing, disposing of the dead and other defiling occupations. It is my desire to draw the viewer into discussion of class, race and gender through this visually pleasing installation.



Priscilla Otani, *Pleasure Quarters* (2010-2013), mixed media installation, size variable





Lucky Rapp, *Smile* (2018), gesso, paint, plastic, mixol, resin on canvas, 8" x 8" x 2.25"



Lucky Rapp

The 'Braille' works were created for the group exhibition *Cracking Nutshells* at DZINE Gallery in San Francisco. Conceptually, 'Braille' is about deconstruction and reconstruction. Each piece in the 12 part series reflects the deconstruction and the reconstruction of the written text word, its conversion to braille, and how we as the viewer interpret this form of communication. As an extension of my current body of text based works utilizing a variety of font forms and languages to articulate the power of the word, 'Braille' was created as a means to encourage individuals to reconsider how we experience art and language through touch, instead of sight. By encouraging individuals to interact with the works by touching them, 'Braille' also acts as a deconstruction of traditional art world 'rules'.

"The more marks one makes,
the more real our existence becomes."
– Lucky Rapp

Sawyer Rose

Both sculptural and painterly, the botanical forms in my work are clad in layers of silver solder and copper, as if their delicate bodies are growing the armor they need to flourish in the environment humans are leaving for them. Using the texture of the metal as my primary mark-making medium, the liquefied silver morphs into bark, or feathers, or scales. There is eloquence and beauty in the act of self-protection.

The surfaces of my soldered metal pieces draw inspiration from unexpectedly diverse sources—typically a mash-up of California native flora and Medieval weaponry—though I've also tapped into the organic patterns of coral, fungus, and lava flows for fresh ideas.

When building these works, I begin by covering the areas I want to solder with thick copper foil. Next, I lay down the first layer of texture in silver solder—like painting with molten metal. I add dimension to the work by placing beads of solder to create depth and contrast. The pieces are covered with a rich black patina and burnished with steel wool to bring out shining highlights on the raised peaks, while leaving dark in the valleys.



Sawyer Rose, *Mandala* (2015), silver solder, copper, industrial polystyrene, 30" x 30" x 6"





ZaHaVa Sherez, *Being #9 & #2, InBodied Light Project* (2018-2021), resin polymer and mixed media, ~21" x 3" x 3"



ZaHaVa Sherez

By holding the possibility that the division of humanity into 'sub-races' is a man-made fabrication, we can look at ourselves with new eyes grasping the notion that we are one race. Based on my own life experiences, and being a citizen of four countries, I know for sure that our similarities as humans are far greater than our wonderful differences. The similarities are fundamental and belong to One People.

The complete *InBodied Light* project consists of 50 *Beings* made from resin, pigments, mixed media, bronze, and light, ranging from two to seven feet tall. Each *Being* is faceless and genderless becoming no one and everyone at the same time. Light is a core element of this work as it depicts the vibrational energy that runs through all and everything connecting us as one. I chose resin as it interacts well with light allowing it to flow through and bounce off the textured surface of each piece connecting the pieces to each other and to the viewer. This series continues to be produced, planned as an international traveling show beginning January 2023.

Na Omi Judy Shintani

Na Omi Judy Shintani creates assemblage and sculptural pieces that incorporate traditional Japanese arts and crafts. Her art expresses her love of cultural tradition, and her desire to overcome cultural loss experienced by descendants of Japanese Americans who were imprisoned in WWII incarceration camps.

Na Omi's *Wrapped Stones* are meant to be a talisman for clarity and peace, earthly touch stones and steppingstones for one's life journey. Through her work she continues the Japanese tradition of gift wrapping or "tsutsumu" that denotes respect for those who receive gift—it is like wrapping one's heart. Shintani's art is a mixture of ritual and innovation created as a meditative practice.



Na Omi Judy Shintani, *Wrapped Stones* (2023-24), rattan and stones, installation variable





Christine So, *Tidal Wave* (2022), original cyanotype on paper, 30" x 24" (framed)



Christine So

My technique is a form of experimental action photography, like the action painters Morris Louis or Jackson Pollock. My abstract cyanotypes appear luminous like watercolor paintings but are actually photographs. I start by coating paper in a dark room with the same photography chemicals used to print a cyanotype from a photo negative. But I use no photo negative, no stencil, and no solid objects to create my patterns. The abstract design is a multiple-exposure photograph made through my deliberate movements and covering and uncovering of the light-sensitive paper during its exposure to light. Different sections of the paper were exposed to light longer, which yields darker and lighter shades of blue. The areas left uncovered longer are darker blue. I have devised my own method of printing abstract cyanotypes using water's surface as a solid object to block light, letting the sun etch the lines where one shade ends and a new one begins. I work quickly with a design in mind beforehand. I form subtle gradations of darkening blue as I submerge the light-sensitive paper for carefully timed exposures under water, counting the seconds in my head, turning, bending and lifting the paper and holding it still as long as needed to shape the lines and then have them etched by the sun's light. I do not merely stand at the surf's edge and wait to see what the water does. I control the water's movement and my own. Through extensive practice, I am able to control much of the intended pattern, but when working with moving water under severe time constraints the number of variables cannot all be controlled. That is part of the adventure.

Demetra Theofanous

Inspired by the storytelling tradition of woven basketry, I weave with glass to form an emotional connection with the viewer. Patterns in the natural world are abstracted, to explore contradictions inherent in our transformative journey—fragility/strength, precariousness/stability, vulnerability/resilience. In utilizing a process imbued with repetition, action gives way to form, transforming an often simple pattern into a complex whole. Abstraction serves as a vehicle to express metaphors for the human experience, as identity and the push/pull with our environment are explored. Glass, with its inherent contradictions, is a material well suited to express these tensions that exist.



Demetra Theofanous, *Tangled Landscape* (2023), flameworked glass on stone, 12" x 10.25" x 8"



Demetra Theofanous, *Tangled Landscape* (2023), flameworked glass on stone, 12" x 10.25" x 8"





Curator Bio: Karen M. Gutfreund

Karen M. Gutfreund is an independent curator and artist with a focus on feminist and social justice art. She has worked in the Painting & Sculpture Department for MoMA, the Andre Emmerick Gallery, The Knoll Group, the John Berggruen Gallery and the Pacific Art League, and is an art consultant to both corporations and individuals. She served on the board of the Women's Caucus for Art, the Pacific Art League and the Petaluma Arts Council. She was the National Exhibitions Director for the Women's Caucus for Art for six years, is a member of ArtTable, the Northern California Representative for The Feminist Art Project, and Curator for UniteWomen.org.

To date Gutfreund has created over forty national exhibitions—recent exhibitions include: *Agency: Feminist Art and Power*, *Deadlocked and Loaded: Disarming America*, *Not Normal: Art in the Age of Trump*, and *Embedded Message, Debating the Dream: Truth, Justice and the American Way*. She co-curated *F213, F*ck U! In the Most Loving Way*, and *Man as Object: Reversing the Gaze*.

Karen is partner in Gutfreund Cornett Art, with curator Sherri Cornett, a curatorial partnership that creates art as activism exhibitions, with the motto “changing the world through art” with national touring exhibitions. GCA exhibitions included: *Beyond Borders: Stories of im/Migration*, *Social Justice: It Happens to One, Happens to All*, *Rise: Empower, Change and Action*, *Vision: An Artist's Perspective*, *What's Right, What's Left: Democracy in America*, *Visural: Sight, Sound and Action*.

Gutfreund has juried and advised on numerous exhibitions and is a mentor/advisor to emerging artists. She creates exhibition catalogs for artists, art groups and galleries around the country. Lastly, Gutfreund is an artist and exhibits extensively around the country. She has a BFA in Photographic Design and a BA in Art History, and a MA (pending) from New York University. Gutfreund has lived in all four corners of the United States and currently splits her time between Sonoma and her ranch in the Sierra foothills outside of Yosemite.

To view previous exhibitions, please visit: KarenGutfreund.com, GutfreundCornettArt.com and to see online catalogs at <https://issuu.com/karengutfreund> and [@karengutfreundart](https://twitter.com/karengutfreundart)

Art Works Downtown

Art Works Downtown champions the idea that visual art is a universal language, a bridge between different cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. Art speaks to the core of our humanity, revealing the depths of our emotions, our dreams, and our shared experiences that often can't be expressed in words alone. Art is a path to understanding and truth. It inspires questions and challenges us to seek answers, engage, experience, and to grow as individuals and as a society.

Your donor support enables us to continue our mission: to provide an environment where visual arts thrive for the well-being of the community. Art Works Downtown is not just a place; it's a movement that works for our downtown, for our community, and for the countless voices that find expression through art. Together, we can ensure that art continues to work its magic in our lives.



Art Works Downtown is a 501(c)(3) public benefit organization and is community supported. Your donation is tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.



