

A black and white photograph of a woman in a kitchen. She is wearing a dark short-sleeved top and a white lace apron over a dark skirt. She is looking towards the camera. In the background, a young child is visible, wearing a dark vest over a light shirt. The kitchen has a tiled wall with a floral pattern, a window with curtains, and a stove with a pot on it. The text "Artistically Speaking" is overlaid in a large, blue, serif font across the middle of the image.

Artistically Speaking

Women's Roles in Contemporary Art & Society

John D. MacArthur Campus Library

Florida Atlantic University

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Intro INFLU

This exhibition began as a film project intended to explore the many roles women play in society and the struggles women may have maintaining an artistic career and lifestyle. The project then morphed into an exhibition. The first installment, *Artistically Speaking: Women's Roles in Contemporary Art*, was in partnership with The Cornell Museum of Art located in Delray Beach, Florida. The exhibition ran October 29, 2015–Jan 3, 2016. It included one piece from each of the thirteen chosen artists and was part of the Cornell's larger museum show *Expectations*. The film was shown in the exhibition space on a continuous loop. Additionally, two of the artists participated as panelists for an art talk at the museum in conjunction with the exhibition. The event was held December 7, 2015, with over 70 community members in attendance. The film had a second screening in the Bronx, New York, as part of the show *I am Woman* held at Bronx-Breeze (Apartment Gallery) between Nov 15, 2015 and Jan 8, 2016.

After further reflection upon the artists and their work during a curatorial lab, and having recruited two PhD writers for critical essays, the curators agreed to explore the topic of ritual within society. We asked the writers to consider how the work of each artist might fit into this theme and to expand upon any consequences ritual might have on their work as women in our society. The second installment of the project, *Artistically Speaking: Women Ritual and Society* is a larger exhibition. It is scheduled to be shown at the Kendall campus of Miami-Dade College, Miami Florida in 2017. Each artist will have the opportunity to show a series of larger works. We are exploring venues for a possible third installment in 2016 (preceding the Miami edition) at the time of this publication. The following brief explanation of ritual will give some insight as to how the curators perceived the overall themes present in the participating artists' work and reached these conclusions regarding ritual.

Rituals are a feature of all known human societies and can be most simply defined as a tradition of a community. The term ritual conjures images of primitive societies performing sacred or mystical ceremonies. However, in contemporary society, there are both secular and sacred rituals in practice. Ritual is an inescapable part of our culture (past and present) that extends into social and political process—down to our most familiar facets of personal experience. Ritual in today's society builds, refines and creates order in an otherwise fragmented world. It helps society build unity and feel whole. When focusing on a feminine view of ritual and consequence, one must add to the discussion issues facing women today. Some of those issues include division of domestic labor, media scrutiny, social inequality, and violence against women. All of these practices interlace the discussion of ritual with contemporary women's studies. Ritualism and contemporary art can broach many themes, from the practice of object making itself to iconoclasm. These issues will be discussed in detail by the writers who have joined the project. The curators see each artist loosely fitting in this theme—ranging from strictly practice based art making ritual to greater universal rituals practiced in societies around the world. Some of those rituals are found in religion, school, domestic family practices, music and media.

The John D. MacArthur Campus library would like to thank all of its partners (Cornell Museum, Bronx Breeze and MDC Kendall), and especially the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation which provided the funding for this publication. We would like to thank the essay writer Dr. Mary Jo Aagerstoun for her insight and contribution. Thanks to all the artists for their hard work and the sharing of their talents. Thanks also to ArtTable Miami for agreeing to organize events for the Miami exhibition.

Essay

Essay

Is Art Ritual/Is Ritual Art?

By Mary Jo Aagerstoun, Ph. D.

Artistically Speaking: Women Ritual and Society brings together a group of women artists practicing in South Florida in 2015-2016 whose work has been seen as having a relationship to ritual. Interest in the possible relationship between art and ritual is not new. Researchers and artists have long been fascinated by how processes of imagination interact with the means and media of art's execution, and whether this interaction could be seen as, or related to, deeply human involvement in ritual over the ages. ⁱ

This essay will take a close look at some aspects of ritual that have emerged from studies in anthropology, ethnology and scientific research on the mental processes of creative and inventive thinking and consider if the process of artistic creation for these artists, and the *Artistically Speaking* art works themselves, can be seen to demonstrate some similarities to characteristics of ritual processes. The processes characteristic of ritual that will be considered include: the accessing of altered states of consciousness, the acquisition of special significance by acts and objects through "extraordinary" use, or deployment in particular locations, and how syncretism in the emergence of ritual's objects and performances have come to be seen as achieving apotropaic or homeopathic effects, for individuals and/or whole communities.

Each *Artistically Speaking* artist was interviewed regarding how, and to what degree, phenomena, history or process of ritual was consciously engaged in the work selected for inclusion, including the question: "Which women artists come immediately to mind when thinking about who has engaged ritual in her work?" and which of these had influenced them to engage aspects of ritual themselves. While a diverse group was suggested as "coming to mind," most of the artists denied that any of them had directly influenced the work included in *Artistically Speaking*.ⁱⁱ The one artist who was both frequently mentioned, and cited as influential on the work discussed here, was Ana Mendieta, but these identifications of Mendieta were not accompanied by detailed descriptions of how she had influenced them. ⁱⁱⁱ

Most of the artists indicated that the personal, the internal process, the expression of their identity were the primary ways in which ritual most related to their work overall, and to the pieces selected specifically for *Artistically Speaking*. The artists used phrases like these to describe a "ritual-like" personal process when they are working: "It's like automatic writing," "I get into a kind of feedback loop ... a collaboration between my sleeping and waking," "I start working spontaneously without the intent of an idea," "I dig deep into the crevice of my subconscious," "I work from my own personal experience layering recycled imagery... the process is very labor intensive, detailed... therapeutic," "working in this way requires my extreme concentration paired with listening to much loved music ...it is personally satisfying and meditative as well as healing," "there is a ritual in my working process ...it is very methodical in execution," "[my work process] requires long periods of solitude and meditation and fastidiousness with intricate designs...similar to Buddhist mandala creation," "[my work is] my intimate visual journal, a tool to explore my subconscious and journey within."

At the same time, the artists reported attraction or references to community traditions and realities as holding a strong place both in their creative processes and final products. Nearly half see their work engaging ritual through referencing and resisting specific limitations on women's roles in both US society, and in more traditional societies in which they had been born and raised. One had a strong orientation in her work to engaging the symbolic ritual language of her (lapsed) religious tradition to educate about the negative effects of the Anthropocene, known as the "Sixth Extinction." ^{iv}

Some of the comments expressing how these artists see their work engaging with society and community included: "I actively use memory to perform acts that perpetuate and celebrate the very fabric of the traditional society where I was raised," "ritual in my work is mostly on the level of execution...I am strongly influenced by [the traditions of] crafts and woman's work – sewing, knitting, decorating, cutting, gluing, and weaving," "the tradition of a communal table, of preparing and sharing of food...alludes to women as the ultimate providers of nourishment since we can carry and nourish a child within our own bodies, and after birth, we can continue to use our body to provide all the need nutrients for a child to grow in infancy by breastfeeding." "[prominence of animals in my work speaks to the fact that] animals survive and live within communities, travel in herds, take care of one another, alert each other to dangers, and some stay with their young in nursery herds. This is a parallel to women: women are caregivers, protectors, and social and community leaders," "My work is very much about traditional community and specifically deals with how women encourage each other to conform to a male dominated culture," "enjoyment in our Western culture, of the mostly female ritual of self-expression that is inherent in our attention to fashion, jewelry and applying make-up." "[community tradition references in my work include to the] genre of rock and roll and jazz at a time in US political and cultural history characterized by personal experimentation of all kinds, and political action on many fronts," "[my] work has a very personal implication and at the same time it suggests a strong current in our society. Just as women artists have been neglected by history, people with mental illness have been swept under the carpet."

Given these artists' reports on the importance of ritual to their personal creative processes, and what they hope to achieve through them, as well as their intentions to engage specific societal traditions and characteristics, it seems appropriate to see if a parallel can be drawn between both process and intention as described by them, and how a shaman utilizes or deploys ritual both to enter an altered state, and to activate ritual's effects of communication and social signaling. The artists' responses to our query reported a process that echoes what seems to happen both to enter, and to utilize, an altered state of consciousness, that can heighten the ability to communicate to the community more broadly; and seems similar to what ethnologist Michael Winkelman theorizes about the shaman: that the shaman's expert use of altered states of consciousness (ASCs) involves "activation of the reptilian and the paleo-mammalian levels of the brain, stimulating these aspects of the person to incorporate nonverbal processes into experience and consciousness" (Winkelman 2014, 209).^v

This ethnological description of how the shaman enters and uses altered states of consciousness is resonant with how scientists are beginning to characterize the "state of mind" which is most advantageous to processes of creativity and invention. How advantageous this is seen to be is demonstrated by a recent gathering sponsored by the US National Endowment for the Arts. In the 2015 report on this gathering, it is asserted that, beyond its importance in artistic process, it is vitally important to society generally to determine how creativity emerges in the individual brain: "Research on how creativity works in the brain has strong potential value for U.S. health and education, the workforce and the economy" (National Endowment for the Arts 2015, 9).

As the NEA report notes, there is a (welcome) strong contemporary research emphasis in various branches of science on how the brain works, and specifically how the brain works during the creation of various kinds of art. Recent brain and behavioral research, especially the use of Magnetic Resonance Imaging, has allowed for the identification of brain networks in action, confirming that the brain is truly "never at rest" (National Endowment for the Arts 2015, 9). Advances in research, especially investigation of the creative process among jazz musicians and other artists, where improvisation is central, has led to inquiries across a wide spectrum of interest on what happens in the brain when artists and inventors are in full creation mode.

Central to accessing "full creation mode" is achievement of a particular kind of consciousness state. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) identified this state in his famous line about art coming into being through accessing a previous state of high emotion at a later time ("poetry...takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquility").^{vi} Wordsworth's assertion was later echoed by Carl Jung in his theories on the operations of the unconscious, and elaborated when he described what happens in the particularly inventive or creative mind: "The work of genius ... fetches of ... distant fragments [from the unconscious] ... and build[s] them into a new and meaningful structure" (Berk 2012, 7).^{vii}

How the creative person "fetches" and "builds" is beginning to be seen as possible at a high level during the mental state Mihaly Csikszentmihaly has dubbed "flow." In this diagram expressing Csikszentmihaly's flow theory, the point at which flow happens is identified as occurring when both skill and challenge are at a high level. Csikszentmihaly: "Studies suggest that what is happening in 'flow' is 'transient hypo-frontality' – the frontal part of the brain is not interfering with the rest of the brain. The frontal part is ... the one you use to make choices, evaluate options, think about consequences and so forth.... the executive part of the brain. [In "flow"] What you are using... are the older parts of the brain, which store patterns of behavior, for instance if you're a skier, the whole set of notions involved in going down the slope, the movements and sequences, they're all stored in the lower part of the brain."^{viii}

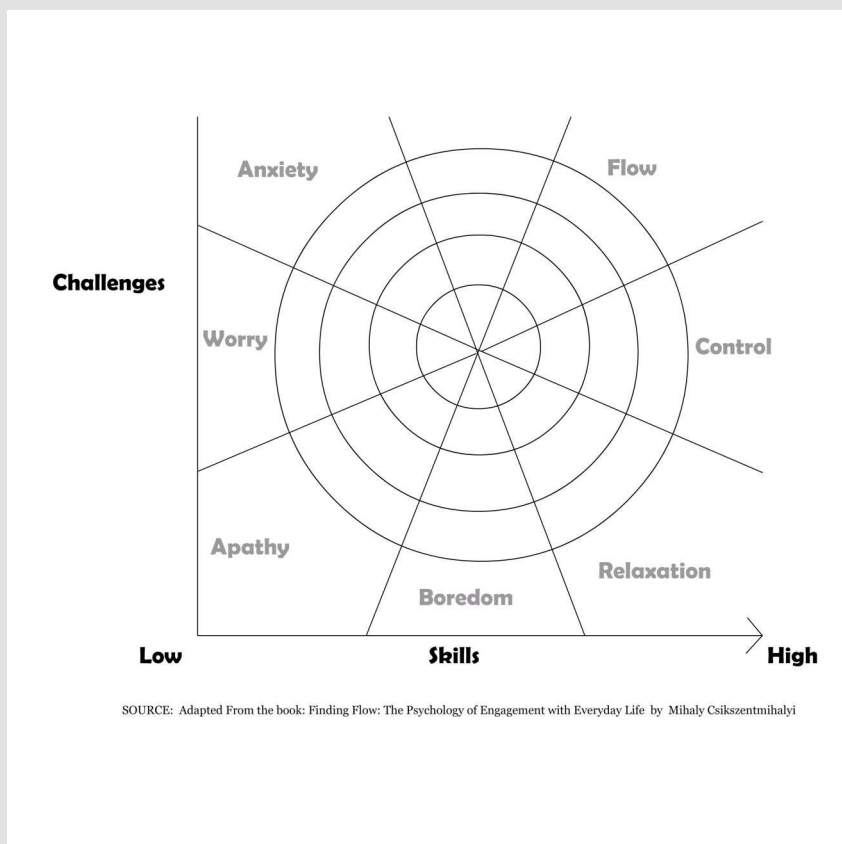


Figure 1: Csikszentmihaly's Flow Diagram (Csikszentmihaly, Finding Flow: the Psychology of Engagement with Everyday Life 1998)

This emphasis on achievement of “flow” through both high levels of skill, and of challenge, is commonly characteristic of access to altered states of consciousness by shamans. And, the shaman achieves this mental state through enactment of various forms of ritual. Winkelman notes that the shaman utilizes ritual—“formalized behavior that has communication and social signaling functions...” both to activate alternate states of consciousness as well as to “activate information exchanges from neurological through conceptual levels...[synchronizing] the individual with the group...” This becomes possible because “the human nervous system evolved within a context that required a social interdependency.” Winkelman theorizes that there are both internal and external-social effects of ritualized behaviors consciously engaged in by shamans that intensify “the human capacity for emotional self-moderation based on the symbiotic caregiver-child relation that derives from the mammalian attachment dynamic that provide the basis for emotional life” (Winkelman, 2006).

Anthropologist Ellen Dissanayake’s research pushes Winkelman’s observation further when she suggests that the commonplace caretaking and care-receiving interaction between mother and infant, which involves imitating and “play acting,” is the source of aesthetic imagination, and that strong similarities can be drawn between art and ritual that are based on the human developmental stage “in infants of imitation and pretense [pretending].” Dissanayake asserts that this childish “imitation and pretense” is later reenacted by adults in the deployment of ritual, and is also frequently characteristic of the ways “the arts present imaginative representations...” Dissanayake’s proposal that the presence of imitation and pretense in art has a ritualized basis, originating in early stages of human development, and emerging much later, in adulthood, through manifestation in rituals of all kinds (Dissanayake 2015, 78).



Figure 2: Dana Donaty. *Saturday Night*, 2015 Acrylic on Canvas. 48” x 80”



Figure 3: Photo of canvas on floor and palette liners next to finished painting

This dynamic of accessing remote, more primitive areas of the brain, and the reemergence into both ritual and art, of earlier stages of human development, is especially perceivable in the creative process and finished art works of Dana Donaty. Donaty reports that her process is both unconscious and conscious. It is “like automatic writing,” but it also involves consciously engaging the human characteristic of *pareidolia* (seeing patterns in randomness) described by Renaissance master Leonardo da Vinci. Leonardo famously noted that “if you look at any walls spotted with various stains ... you may be able to see in it a resemblance ... to various different landscapes...figures in quick movement, and strange expressions of faces, and outlandish costumes” (Vinci 2014).^{ix}

Donaty’s *pareidolia*-induced works also exhibit a high level of play. Play is often described as “the work of children,” which resonates with Dissanayake’s identification of infants’ uses of imitation and pretense in self-development, and the emergence of these activities as adult processes of imagination later in life...play as the root basis of both ritual and art. Donaty’s works in *Artistically Speaking* emerge consciously from detritus-blotches spattered randomly while creating paintings. Donaty characterizes the resulting paintings as the “children” “born” from materials (paint droplets, smears on palette liners, water used to clean brushes, etc.), randomly and unconsciously discarded while creating the “parent” work.

In the finished “child” paintings, colorful, high-spirited creatures emerge from random paint splotches, cavorting around photo-realistic depictions of human hands and feet in action doing, the artist asserts, “things that adults do, or tell us to do.” Donaty’s “children” (the exuberant creatures) dance around grown up hands holding cocktails, or grown up feet dressed “to go out” (the adult images are, of course, portrayed as engaged in forms of “adult play”). Donaty says about this work that it allows her to consciously explore *pareidolia*, while materializing and honoring pleasurable memory, as well as her family’s values of “waste not want not” taught by her Depression era father. She explains: “My process by design allows me to interact with the unexpected. There are at least two protagonists in the works: randomness and planned execution. The coexistence is how they challenge each other. The human elements are the planned execution, and the creatures are what emerges from randomness” through conscious mining of *pareidolia*.

Ellen Dissanayake has also asserted that ritual makes what would otherwise be commonplace, “special” by its use or display in situations where one would not normally find them. Ritual “...is characterized...by unusual behavior that sets it off from the ordinary or everyday. Time, space, activity, dress, paraphernalia are all made special or extraordinary, and so we can speak of ritual time, ritual space, ritual activity, ritual dress, ritual paraphernalia” (Dissanayake 2005, 68-69).



Figure 4: AdrienneRose Gionta. ARG, 2015. Custom Mylar helium balloons, ribbon. Dimensions variable

AdrienneRose Gionta’s contribution to *Artistically Speaking* is an example of Dissanayake’s point that a common object can become “special or extraordinary” by its unconventional use. In the case of Gionta’s ARG, the common objects—helium-inflated balloons—are made special by the critical issue they are used to address. Gionta explains: “I am the last Gionta, and I am a female, which puts a lot of pressure on me to figure out how to carry on the family name... since I do not know that I want children, who would then traditionally take their father’s name...I attempt to resolve these concerns through my series of ‘name’ works.” An important aspect of Gionta’s work has centered on how to recuperate what she sees as her lost identity, which she sees as, in turn, due to the fact that tradition does not allow females to pass on their family names, a tradition known as “coverture” that persists down to the present.

Coverture is an ancient social requirement dating to English common law of the middle ages, and perhaps back even further into Roman law and beyond, in which a woman taking her husband’s name at marriage is symbolic of her legal status. Coverture holds that marriage essentially removes the rights a woman had as a single woman (to own property, sign contracts, etc.). These rights were given over to her husband. ^x

This realization has led Gionta to focus for the better part of a decade on expressing her own name vigorously, and with much drama and panache. The current manifestation, included in *Artistically Speaking*, is a large bouquet of helium filled, shocking pink balloon versions of the three initials of her name: A R G: “This work is part of an ongoing series to perpetuate my name through different media. The first iteration was a hot pink neon sign duplicating my signature at a specific moment in time along with an audio recording of me repeating my name ‘AdrienneRose Gionta’ over & over in a hypnotic slightly echoing voice along with periodic emission of the smell of roses, activating the senses within a 10’x10’ empty storage unit.” Since 2015, these “self-branding” efforts at avoiding social erasure have focused not on her surname per se, but the three letters of her first, middle and last name: “over the years we have become a society that communicates more frequently in acronyms... I am exploring my monogram as an acronym with hot pink 3-foot alphabet Mylar balloons, as many of the people close to me were already calling me ARG.”



Figure 5: Giannina Coppiano Dwin. Camisole I, 2015. Life size garment image. Sugar. 68” x 34”

Giannina Dwin’s delicate, ephemeral creations in salt, sugar and spices provide a particularly apt example of how a common material becomes infused with meaning through the ritual process of creation and the purpose for its use. While the materials Dwin has selected are purposefully common comestibles used in culinary activity, there is nothing ordinary about what emerges from the detailed process engaged by the artist.

Dwin’s creative process demonstrates characteristics of ritual we have considered so far, including entering a meditative “flow” state, through repetitive, detailed labor requiring intense concentration, and the notion from Dissanayake, that “commonplace” materials and the time-consuming manipulation of them, combine to make the result special in a very particular way. Dwin calls her process “shamanistic:” “From beginning to end my work is ritual-infused. It not only relates to rituals of food sharing, gatherings, the communal table, preparation...but the process of creating the work and later destroying it are in [themselves] forms of ritual.” They are also integral performative aspects of the work. Dwin’s seductive, mesmerizing, fragile constructions, their labor intensive, ritualistic creation, and their deliberate, solemn destruction, which take their commonplace materials to a high level of metaphor and symbol similar to what is seen to happen to materials used in traditional ritual.

The *Artistically Speaking* artists not only deploy ritualistic approaches in making their art; the locations where they are shown can also be seen as ritualistic. In A 2009 recorded conversation between Museum of Modern Art director Glenn Lowry, and the performance artists Lee MingWei and Tino Seghal, during the MoMA exhibition *Eat, Sleep Pray: Everyday Rituals and Contemporary Art*, Tino Seghal proposes that the location for displaying art--museum or gallery--is in itself a “civilizing” ritual which serves to: construct the individual, apart from the mass; emphasize the notion of linear time, moving forward toward “Progress;” and assert the material object as a protagonist in that

process (Museum of Modern Art 2009).

Whether one agrees or disagrees with Seghal’s proposal, his idea of the museum as a kind of ritual space that constructs experience does ring true. Such spaces are created, and people go to them, for specific purposes, which can include viewing (and sometimes contemplating intensively) the works of art (as Seghal describes them: “transfigured earth/nature”) on display, to view those who are viewing the works on display, and to be convinced of the objects’ economic (as well as social or community/traditional) value. Regularized celebrations and ceremonies staged within these spaces (accompanied by group eating and drinking, and sometimes a process ritualizing the value and “unusualness” of the objects on display by public judging of their “excellence”), accentuate the “specialness” of such occasions and the locations where they are held. In these display spaces, and through these group activities, repeated at particular intervals, the value of such gatherings, of the locations where they occur, and of the objects on display are reinforced. Applying Dissanayake’s point of view again, they become “special,” ritualistic.

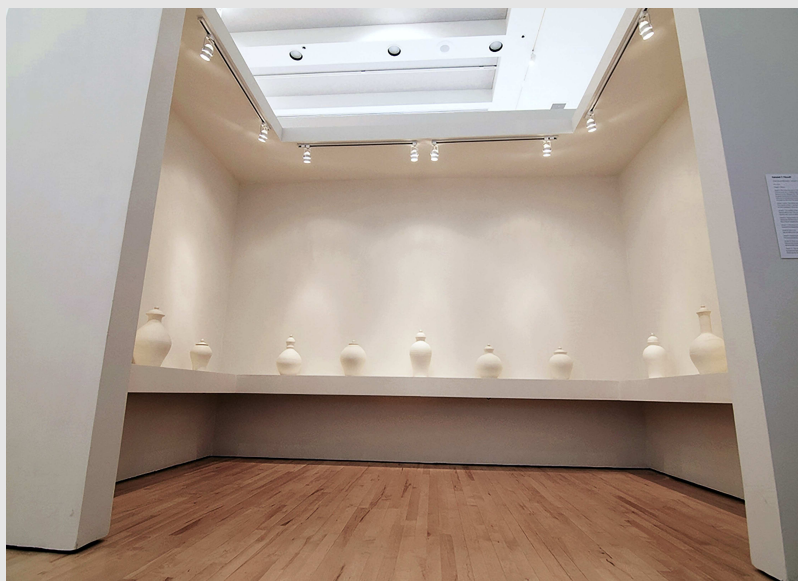


Figure 6: Raheleh Filsoofi. *Only the Sound Remains*, 2014. Video and sound installation, ceramics. 14' x 14' x 8'

In this group of artists, Filsoofi's work most specifically expresses the idea of ritual space. In some installations, her meticulously fashioned, sleek, matte-white ceramic urns are gathered on raised altar-like shelves within an all white set apart space within the main gallery. Filsoofi, in effect, reinforces the idea of the gallery space as special by making a space within it that is even more definitely set off, a location where visitors, immersed in virtually shadowless white, are less distracted by crowd bustle, more able to focus on the muffled sounds that emerge each time an urn's top is removed. Filsoofi asserts that, for her "Ritual is an act of memory." This idea of accessing memory as a ritual itself, resonates with Jung's description of the process of creativity as "fetch[ing]...distant fragments [from the unconscious]...and build[ing] them into a new and meaningful structure." (Berk 2012) Filsoofi's "meaningful structure" is not simply a memento for herself alone. Through these emotionally affective sculptural/aural pieces located in a pristine white space, Filsoofi seeks to communicate both the stories told and the sounds of a world and tradition that is both far away in space and time, and as close as her own mental processes and the perceptions of viewers: "We each experience the world through the prism of our upbringing, our traditions, and the familiar sights and sounds embedded deep within the soul. I explore and share those experiences through specific objects, sounds and video." For Filsoofi, "Memory itself is a re-evocation or a ritual re-creation of information and experience."

Alette Simmons-Jimenez's installations recall ritual space without needing their own enclosures within the gallery. This is because, as Simmons-Jimenez notes, in her work: "everything tends to group together, which represents the outcome of our need to belong, and the inherent irony" that this need to group together can also become confining, "a 'cage or an enclosure.'" Simmons-Jimenez consciously mines her anthropologic interest in the common human ritualistic need, across cultures, to "...decorate homes, temples, and bodies." Her installations can be seen as honorific rituals giving homage to her own female forebears, in which she acknowledges and bows to "generations of the women in my family who excelled in crafts and woman's work – sewing, knitting, decorating, cutting, gluing, and weaving. Mostly skills and talents that can be realized with one's two hands without outside help."

We have seen above examples from both Dwin and Filsoofi of how gestures and the sequestered place share characteristics with the "ritualistic." There are excellent examples in the works of the *Artistically Speaking* artists of how they can be seen to be similar to ritual objects. No discussion of ritual, in relation to art or anything else is complete without at least some reference to the great theoretician of ritual, anthropologist Victor Turner, whose observations are useful in addressing the nature and uses of the ritual object. Whether the works (or aspects of them) by the artists under consideration here can or cannot be seen as true "ritual objects," Turner's thinking is illuminative; Turner defines ritual as "a stereotyped sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, [my emphasis] performed in a sequestered place [my emphasis] and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and interests" (Turner 1977).^{xii}

Turner sees the ritual object as one of a constellation constituting and enacting ritual, and the only material element in the grouping whose overall purpose is to act together, in a harmonious fashion to change or transform a state of being. Aside from their use, "in constellation" with other aspects of ritual, size, form, and material are the most distinctive features that can label something as a "ritual object." For example, unusual object sizes (very small or extra-large) are considered identifiers for assigning a "ritual" or "special" status to an object (Patera 2012).^{xii}

The creation and deployment of ritualized objects with an intent to contribute to changing an existing state of affairs is particularly characteristic of Patron Saints (of animals), an installation of six wall hung paintings with their companion three dimensional sculptures by Birds Are Nice (Diane Arrieta).^{xiii}



Figure 7: Birds Are Nice. *Saint Ketakwitha*, 2016. One of group of six. Acrylic and hand cut vinyl on wood, mixed media animal sculpture. Total size, all 6 groupings, 40 running feet

In Patron Saints (of animals). Arrieta (Birds Are Nice) refers to the tradition of devotional object, while turning that tradition around and upside down. The tradition of saintly intercession through contemplation of portraits of saints with their attributes (in this case, animals) is what is referenced in this work. The six images in the series are named for women who have been beatified by the Roman Catholic Church over an extended period from early medieval times to the late 19th century, and whose personal closeness or service to wilderness and animals was an aspect of their biography, or of the oral tradition or mythology that has grown up around them. But Arrieta's imagery does not take the traditional form of most Catholic devotional objects related to a patron saint.

The six saint portraits fuse aesthetic reference to sacred icons (as in the Eastern Orthodox tradition, the images are painted on wood and are flat, not modeled), with an insouciant use of the stripped down schematic characteristic of 21st century cartoons and animation. This purposeful joining together of two strongly contrasting aesthetic approaches, separated by more than time and context, together with the application to the paintings' surfaces of ambiguous symbolic phrases and shapes (e.g. repetitive circles or triangles), invite closer attention, serving to intensify the curiosity of the viewer regarding the density of meaning implied in the term syncretism.^{xiv}

The reference to the number six is significant. The grouping is of six paintings, most accompanied by a circular floor piece inhabited by one or more three-dimensional, life-sized sculpted animals with which the saint is associated, either in myth, or in recorded biography. Six is a significant reference both to Christianity, and to other spiritual or religious practices such as Wicca or Satanism. In Judeo-Christian tradition, six is important because in the Old Testament Book of Genesis, it is asserted that the deity created the universe in six days. Six is also a multiple of three, which is a sacred number in Christian theology, as it refers to the Trinity. In numerology, the number signifies connection between above and below, intellectual creativity, ability to use the imagination and intellect combined, relatedness and taking responsibility for choices, all of which ties in nicely with the artist's overall intent for this series: to instigate heightened resolve in viewers to be educated about, and able to respond to onrushing environmental disaster.

The artist, who also holds a master's degree in wildlife health, notes that this series, like earlier works of hers, has the specific job "to inspire, teach, question, [promote] environmental literacy, [inform about] loss of species and how that relates to human health and social justice." Despite this avowed purpose, the overall effect is in no way directly didactic. The imagery is purposefully oblique. Each portrait, with its three dimensional "animal familiars," is a small puzzle: Who are these women? What is their connection to the animals, the odd symbols and texts? The viewer is drawn in to this kind of examination by the vibrant color palette, as well as the fact that each of the six portraits has the same stark white face and jet black hair. The portraits actually seem to be all one person, and that person recalls imagery depicting the Disney version of Snow White (and, of course, her physical attributes, as the Grimm Brothers' fairy tale describes her: "as white as snow, as red as blood, and as black as ebony wood"). Snow White iconography has, of course, become firmly imprinted on popular consciousness worldwide as the first Disney leading lady of the 1937 animated film classic, surrounded by singing and dancing animals.^{xv}

This kind of layered syncretism is characteristic of ritual objects, which are given particular form from specific kinds of materials, often collected from widely varying sources, and from various time periods. They have acquired extraordinary significance to the community in which the ritual arose through this layering, as well as through the additional inscription and incising and their ritual use within ritually significant sequestered spaces, through which they have become infused with meaning.



Figure 8: Jackie Kern. *Looking for Signals*, 2015

Mixed Media on Canvas, 6' x 4.5' x 1" (attached canvas is 24" x 24" x 1")



Figure 9: Leah Brown. Installation of life sized sculptures of hybrid animal-humans, 2015.

Plaster, fabric, hair, CNC carved foam. Dimensions variable

Works by Jackie Kern in *Artistically Speaking* echo both the syncretic layering, and the use of animal familiars found in the *Birds Are Nice* installation, but with a very different purpose. Kern seeks to make a direct connection through these works to both the positive and negative effects on women of stubbornly persistent gender determinism. For Kern, the animals that take a leading role in her paintings "act as spirit guides and vehicles of expression reminding women locally and globally to own their power. Animals are psychic, confident creatures that are able to change direction for self-preservation, give and receive signals, and most importantly trust their instincts. The plant shapes create an environment for animal survival while the brushstrokes and shapes are active and telling rather than pretty and decorative. The horns serve as psychic tools giving and receiving signals—a departure from prehistoric works where animal horns were symbolic of male power."

In Leah Brown's work syncretism and relation to ritual objects are expressed in the fusion of human and animal in highly realistic sculptures that bring the dream uncanny directly and concretely into the space of the gallery, sometimes staged literally within a plaster proscenium—as in Filsoofi and Dwin's work, a ritual space within a ritual space. The artist describes her process that strongly recalls Winkelman on the shaman's use of dreams which helps activate "the reptilian and the paleo-mammalian levels of the brain" (Winkelman 2014), and an alternate state of consciousness which gives the shaman and the ritual s/he enacts authority in the eyes of the community. Brown: "The dreams of sleep are a physiological ritual, independent of conscious confines, and beyond the limits of human understanding. My work attempts to gain insight into this facet of human experience that is so elusive to scientific study because of its inaccessibility to instruments of modern technology. The human brain is not designed for remembering dreams, which is why it is so difficult to keep hold of the experiences that only a moment before waking were being lived as vividly as waking life. The ritual of my work begins in the act of consciously remembering my dreams upon waking so that I don't forget them, then analyzing the narrative between the dreams that take place in the same location with the same characters."



Figure 10: Francie Bishop Good. *Comus Series*, 2015 Digital collage-pigment print. 30"x20" each image, group of 20. Courtesy of David Castillo Gallery

A particularly apt example of work in *Artistically Speaking* deploying syncretism in much the same way as ritual objects do, is Francie Bishop Good's *Comus Series*, an installation of photo collaged copies of vintage photographs from the yearbooks of her own, and her mother's, graduating classes from the same high school, a generation apart.

In Good's *Comus Series*, the power and meaning emerge through a kind of alchemical, fused layering of images. The layers are borrowed from different times and situations during the artist's life, all related to her absorption throughout her career in observing and recording "family rituals, family holidays...through my personal lens and experience." In each exhibition of the series, the installation always includes a large number of the individual pieces (so far, the artist has created 100) hung together in a grid. Each individual piece in the installation is extensively layered, starting with scanned copies of stereotypical vintage yearbook photographs of late adolescents at the moment they are preparing for a ritual transition—graduation from high school—and the marking of that moment in the collecting together of images of initiates, garbed and groomed in similar fashion in a "book of memories" of this iconic transition from childhood to adulthood.

Good explains her fascination with these images of her mother's and her own contemporaries: "My mother died recently. In going through her things, I found her high school yearbook in which she had carefully inscribed next to the photographs the dates and causes of their deaths. This was very affecting for me." As she compared the portraits of her mother's classmates with those of her own classmates in her own yearbook, she was struck by the "dressing up, the styles ... how they presented themselves, how their photographs express their identity and how that community has changed and not changed. Changed in the demographic of the school population" and gave a strong sense of "...how women were treated" during those very different times. With each vintage yearbook photograph selected, Good then created the final individual objects: "...the *Comus* pictures are archival pigment prints on canvas. I use a large format digital printer with canvas as the base receptive material. The canvas is stretched over wood stretchers." Her process delves into her "own history, selecting and photographing from my older work, importing these files of past work into Photoshop" and digitally collaging them over the vintage images. "This process of bringing past work into present work allows me to compress time."

Several characteristics of Good's *Comus Series* can be seen as analogous to both the creation and uses of ritual objects. They are syncretic in that they combine elements from different time periods that refer to commonly experienced and understood community traditions, compressing time while not eliminating the characteristics of the time referenced. The physical process creates a final object in which all the syncretic layers are transparent, allowing the images below to be seen. With enough study and inquiry, these layers can be separately identified, but are quite firmly fused in such a way that they cannot be pulled apart. Many ritual objects have these characteristics as well. The manner of display also is ritualistic. The artist prescribes that individual objects in the series, which can be selected randomly, must always be exhibited in a large group, separated from each other by similar spacing, and in a particular pattern. Each individual image is the same size, and has a similar quality of layering. The overall effect of the installation is of a hypnotic repetition of slightly varying but extremely similar images, a kind of visual chanting. And, of course, like most art, Good's *Comus Series* is designed to be viewed in a gallery setting, as we have seen, a very specific location, a "sequestered space" that in itself is ritualistic, in that it gives special status to objects displayed there.



Figure 11: TJ Ahearn *Into The Mystic (Van Morrison)*, 2015. Hand cut collage on Vintage LP jacket with original vinyl 12 1/4 x 12 1/4" framed 24 x 24" Courtesy lemon sky: projects + editions, Miami

TJ Ahearn's (Jane Hart) ongoing series of collaged LP albums also syncretically accesses very different periods of time, and deploys collage over objects redolent of the times referred to. Her works, collaged vintage LP album covers with the records still inside, become laden with meaning, like Good's, through layering not only of collage but of the references both the collage and the base object retain. The resulting objects are extremely personal, made her own through a labor intensive, almost obsessive approach to collecting and applying the collaged imagery: "...the process is quite painstaking, involving amassing large numbers of images while listening to the music" on the LP belonging to the album she has selected for an individual work. Applying the selected imagery is extremely slow and methodical, "requiring close attention, as the surface is malleable, and the effect desired requires that the finished pieces be seamless, as much as possible without the visual presence of the artist's hand."

The relationship of these objects with ritual can be seen in Hart's intention to recapture, through memory, the years she finds most important in her life: the 1960s through the 1990s. The objects she creates by adding her artist's mark to albums she has collected over the years, have that syncretic quality characteristic of ritual objects. Her adorned vintage albums commemorate the music of this period, the musicians who were creating and recording it, as well as what the "community" of fans that has appreciated (and continues to appreciate) about the music as it was experienced at the time. The decades represented by the albums, were a period Hart treasures both because it was a period of her youth, and because it was "a time in US political and cultural history characterized by personal experimentation of all kinds, and political action on many fronts." The finished objects, like objects in community-engaging rituals, encourage the artist and other viewers to savor both the original tradition of community to which they refer, as well as to the artist's visual manifestation of the experience of the music, and its original context, in a more recent moment. Another key aspect of Hart's collaged-album objects that is ritualistic is the manner of display preferred by the artist. Hart notes: "As often as possible, I love to have the objects mounted in a grid pattern on the wall, together with vintage clear plastic LP holders, formerly used in record stores." In this mode of installation, as in Filsoofi's mini-temple inside the gallery, Hart's preferred approach helps to create an intensified sense of being in a separate (ritualistic) "sequestered space" dedicated to the intention of her work, within the overall (ritualistic) "sequestered space" that is the gallery. This preferred mode of installation adds to the meaning of the work as a whole by providing viewers with even more visual clues to facilitate a re-experiencing, in the mind and imagination, for both viewers of a certain age, and younger people as well, of "being there" at a moment and in a place of extreme pleasure in a faraway youth.

A very important characteristic of both ceremonial aspects of ritual, and the objects utilized in them, that can be perceived in some of the *Artistically Speaking* works is the invoking of the apotropaic and the homeopathic. The apotropaic and the homeopathic are, in intent, at once nearly identical and constitutionally different. In traditional settings, both are frequently deployed in a ritualistic fashion, within specific kinds of rituals aimed at vanquishing, or reducing the power of something negative.

Examples of apotropaic objects and processes can be found from ancient Egyptian all the way up through 18th century European traditions and beyond. In a recent dissertation, a scholar defines the *apotropaic* as: "...prevention, protection and defense, against a wide variety of menaces [including] evil spirits, enemies, sorcery and witchcraft, disease, drought, floods, hailstorms, snakes, wolfs, the evil eye, death and so on" (Tataran 2010, 7).^{xvi}

The homeopathic is also deployed ritually to prevent, protect and defend, but it differs from the apotropaic in that it is normally called on to cure, heal or somehow lessen the effect of a negative occurrence or physical malady *after* it is in operation. The primary way homeopathic intervention works is to provide remedies in very dilute/diffuse states that in large amounts would produce symptoms similar to the negative state or illness being experienced by an individual or group. The literature on contemporary uses of homeopathy (in, for example, naturopathic medicine) is full of references to the importance of the patient's state of mind to the effectiveness of homeopathic intervention. The homeopathic process can be seen as ritualistic in that it involves intensive study of the community malady or the individual's general health and emotional state. The prescription is a kind of "hair of the dog" approach to healing.^{xvii}



Figure 12: Tina La Porta. *The Edge of Darkness (I Lost Myself)*, 2013. Micaceous iron oxide, pills, resin on board. 72" x 24" x 2"

Tina La Porta's series of "pill" works, began at approximately the same time as her schizophrenia diagnosis in 2009, and can be seen as ritually deploying both the apotropaic and the homeopathic. She points out that the works selected for *Artistically Speaking*, many utilizing hundreds of capsules and pills like the ones she has been prescribed over the years for her core mental illness, as well as ancillary maladies such as sleeplessness, are not only a way for her to acknowledge her disease publicly, but are also intended to directly challenge "a strong current in our society... [that] people with mental illness have been swept under the carpet."

In La Porta's *The Edge of Darkness (I Lost Myself)*, 2013, hundreds of richly colored capsules and pills are strewn across three 24"x24" squares hung together horizontally, surfaces coated in shimmering black micaceous iron oxide, the effect being of a shower of bright drops in a darkly

sparkling void—a kind of visually overwhelming firmament of medicine. The presentation of the drugs in this way underscores the artist's stated intention to bring her own mental illness to public visibility, thereby becoming a kind of homeopathic gesture saying this is what she must do to keep her mind healthy. La Porta turns the necessity of drug consumption back on itself as a way to remind both herself and her viewers of her commitment to staying mentally healthy, thereby reinforcing her own resolve to do so. And, the work can also be seen as seeking an apotropaic effect on society—e.g. warding off the negative effects on people with mental illness of widespread ignorance about the disease through encouraging the public to engage and self-educate.



Figure 13: Carol Jazzar. *In the house of Love and Death*, 2015. Artforum magazine cut out on archival paper, 23 x 30"

The works by Carol Jazzar in *Artistically Speaking* do not make such a direct visual connection to mental distress as does Tina La Porta's front and center display of the drugs she takes to maintain her mental health. In fact, the imagery is cool and calm. Carol Jazzar describes the aesthetic as "easy to look at... images...sparsely placed... each component keeping its integrity within the composition." Nevertheless, this series of collages was a direct response to a "crisis of consciousness" Jazzar experienced a few years ago, "in which I felt my soul deeply imprisoned. It was such an intense revelation that I broke down on all levels, physical, emotional, mental and spiritual." Spontaneously, she began to make collages from *Art Forum* magazines that "were lying around," something she had never done previously. Since that time, Jazzar reports that this process of selecting imagery from a journal she consults frequently in her professional work as a gallerist, has become an "intimate visual journal, a tool to explore my subconscious and journey within," a process she sees as not unlike the one Louise Bourgeois has reported--that helps to resolve "inner conflicts, whether revisiting childhood and its trauma, or exploring...sexuality."

It is not clear if the crisis Jazzar experienced may have been somehow related to her work as an art professional. *Art Forum* is a key resource for the art professions, so, it could be that it represents one aspect leading to her "crisis of consciousness." But, it also seems clear that the choice of *Art Forum* as her image source has provided solace, as she has continued to use it over the years. Both the process, and contemplating the finished objects later has been therapeutic. Jazzar reports the works "...help me see part of myself I was not aware of. I discover who I am down below...transform something, an old habit, or a way to realign myself [and] visualize that which I want to achieve." This choice of source for the imagery in her collages could be both a symbol of what has caused stress in Jazzar's professional life, and a source of relaxation and stimulation at the same time. Clearly, *Art Forum* has great significance for her, as the collages utilizing images from it have become an "artist book, combining collages, texts, and astrology graphs retracing the different stages and aspects of the 'breaking down and rebirth' period," but her self-described gravitation to *Art Forum*, and her continual mining of this authoritative source of contemporary art orthodoxy, could also be seen as gathering and activating its contents in a kind of ritual homeopathic ("hair of the dog") approach as well as an apotropaic gesture warding off any art-profession-induced crises in the future.



Figure 14: Sibel Kocabasi. *Helen*, 2015. Archival Digital print. Dimensions Variable,



Fig. 15: Sibel Kocabasi Transmutation Series, 2015. Archival Digital Print. Dimensions Variable

In Sibel Kocabasi's staged photographs, the impulse toward both the apotropaic and the homeopathic is palpable. An immigrant to the US from her native Turkey, Kocabasi comments dramatically in these photographs on violence against women, across culture. In Figure 14, a figure is shown, completely covered in *abaya* and *niqab*, garments worn by the most devout Muslim women, primarily in Saudi Arabia and several other countries on the Arabian peninsula and in North Africa.^{xviii} Because of the type of veiling, in which the face is completely covered, and the fact that such garments are worn only by women, the assumption is that the wearer is a woman. The figure in the photograph is shown suspended in mid-air, only her bare feet showing, hanging free below the hem of her black *abaya*. No other part of the body can be seen. In Figure 15 a woman's body, clad in a Western style dress, skirt hiked, lies on her back, her head and face completely covered with pots and pans and other kitchen implements. Effectively, this image is also veiled...by signs of domesticity.

Both figures suggest death has occurred, probably as the direct result of some kind of violence. But who is responsible? Since no sign of a perpetrator is visible, one could imagine that the *abaya/niqab*-clad hanging figure was the object of an "honor killing"^{xix} by a male family member; or did she, overcome with despair, hang herself? Likewise with the supine female figure in Figure 15, head and face "veiled" in domesticity...who or what killed her? Was it the rage of a partner, or did she herself stage her death, carefully placing the kitchen implements around and over her head before taking her own life, as a clue to the source of her suicidal mental state?

Kocabasi's staged photographs can be interpreted to perform a kind of veiled *anasyrma*, an apotropaic gesture involving the "flashing" of (primarily female) sexual identifiers, a form of expression of female agency and activism used throughout human history to avert violent encounters, or protest injustice. In many traditions, it was believed that the sight of a woman's breast, buttocks or vulva could frighten away many menaces, from pests in grain fields to advancing armies.^{xx} An example of performative *anasyrma* in modern times was the stripping to the waist by hundreds of women in Nigeria to protest the poisoning of Nigerian land and water by petroleum corporations.^{xxi} The deploying of the apotropaic *anasyrma* could also be via an image or symbol. For example, the ancient Greek Gorgon or Medusa head inscribed on a shield, mouth agape, eyes widened, a head full of snake hair, is widely analyzed by historians and archeologists as a sign of the vulva.

In these staged photographs, Kocabasi does not employ directly a signifier of female sex, aside from the kind of garb each figure wears. The nakedness of the blatant *anasyrma* is replaced with signs that violence has occurred. They act as reminders that women in all cultures continue to die in violent domestic, and public, encounters, and the placement of the images in the sequestered, ritual space of the art gallery, elevates both their dramatic content, and deeper meaning. The images can also be seen as homeopathic, providing healing opportunities for visitors through the visceral reaction these images can stimulate. The juxtaposition of these images encourages viewers to consider the most violent means employed in every culture to suppress female identity, while also providing hope that bringing this odious reality to shocking visibility may encourage, for female viewers, as the artist says: "the awakening of feminine power and the confidence to create one's identity."

In this discussion, the works of the artists in *Artistically Speaking: Women Art and Ritual* have been examined within anthropologic and ethnographic discourse on ritual, to determine if seeing specific art works in this context can help to answer the question: Is Art Ritual/Is Ritual Art? Regarding whether Ritual is Art, it can be safely said that any aspect of ritual from ancient tradition, or contemporary indigenous sources, can be seen as "artistic" in the sense that Western cultural commentators use that term. But, in ancient as well as contemporary traditional societies, ritual in all of its component parts is not separated from the "everyday" life of the community into a separate category seen as "art." To the eye of the contemporary Western viewer, traditional ritual objects, ancient or contemporary, can fit the description of "art," because they can be "typed" according to current Western classifications (sculpture, painting, installation, performance), the Western-devised aesthetics of their use --line, tone, color, texture, form and shape -- and the Western interpretation of the manner in which they were created.

It has been argued here that elements of the traditionally ritualistic resonate within the *Artistically Speaking* artists' creative processes, and are apparent also in their finished works. These include accessing the deepest (most primitive) areas of the brain in a state of "flow," through both lucid and unconscious dreaming, and the achievement of other alternate mental states, through repetitive, meditative actions involving extreme concentration and time-consuming, meticulous attention to detail. The finished works themselves were seen to incorporate many characteristics of traditional ritual objects such as: **syncretism**--layering of elements from the artists' personal experiences with community traditions from a wide variety of sources; utilizing **common objects or materials** and making them "**special or extraordinary**" by their **unconventional use**, or presence in a ritualistic space (in this case the art gallery), and activating the **apotropaic** and/or the **homeopathic** to encourage personal or group healing.

So, while it is possible to say that (traditional) Ritual is (or can be) Art to the contemporary Western viewer, there are still knotty problems regarding whether contemporary Art has achieved the status of Ritual. Beyond the arguments made here encouraging the viewing of aspects of the creation and distribution of contemporary art as having parallels with some of the ways in which ritual and its component parts operate, it seems important to address what effect the custom of exhibiting contemporary art within the gallery or museum context has both on artists' creation of works for that location, and the effect it has on contemporary art's potentially wider social or political impact.

For example, artist Tino Seghal, whose point of view was cited earlier (Museum of Modern Art 2009), put forward a provocative interpretation of the function of the place where art is predominantly shown, namely that the museum and gallery have been, and continue to be, inextricably key operations of the social and political machinery that promotes the Western ideology of individualism, presumably to the detriment of the commons. This view of art galleries and museums as the handmaiden of the status quo, and guardian of conservative traditions of long standing, echoes Winkelman's assessment that traditional ritual "provides models for self-development and re-socialization... and social internalization" which reinforces "belonging, comfort and bonding with others" (Winkelman, 204, 207). Facilitating radical (or even evolutionary) change, according to these perspectives, it would seem, is neither characteristic of traditional ritual, nor of contemporary art exhibited within the gallery/museum context.

As we have seen in this discussion, most of the artists of *Artistically Speaking* do say they intend to illuminate in their work, societal issues regarding the status of women in US and other societies, or ecological crises about which greater public understanding is needed. In nearly every case in *Artistically Speaking*, however "standing against" is "artistically spoken" in oblique and metaphorical visual language. Proponent and opponent arguments could be made concerning the efficacy of standing against those aspects of the status quo artists (and others) find offensive or detrimental, within either the commercial or the nonprofit/academic gallery setting. One could say, for example, that the strong market purpose of the commercial gallery means that truly oppositional work is not selected for exhibition because aggressively oppositional, politically-inflected work is not as likely to sell. Similar problems could, and sometimes, do, occur in non-commercial (academic or nonprofit) gallery situations, but for different reasons. While the purpose of the nonprofit, or university gallery is not to receive money in exchange for the work, other exchanges are typical, including selecting work to show that will enhance the reputation and prestige of the sponsoring organization, and not offend potential financial supporters.

These dynamics could have a dampening effect on creating directly oppositional work, because most artists would like to make at least part of their income from sales of their art works or enhance their reputations in the art world by being selected to show in non-commercial settings that have a strong, positive reputation. This, combined with a generalized sense that the art world tends to dismiss art that has an overtly political agenda, means that many artists wishing to make a strong statement about an issue that either affects them personally (such as the women's issues addressed by many of the artists in *Artistically Speaking*), or to educate about or mobilize opinion toward a particular point of view on a societal ill, may opt for oblique, masked and metaphorical visual language, open to a myriad of interpretations.

A proponent argument for the efficacy of exhibiting art in a gallery setting (commercial or not) would hold that these spaces indeed have been given special significance, and in many ways can be seen as "ritual spaces." Art galleries, commercial or not, are in themselves the product of several centuries of Western societal tradition, that through the resulting social meaning assigned them, like "sequestered ritual spaces" in traditional or indigenous societies, give all art shown in them a sense of importance. Visitors, like ritual observer/participants gathering to experience a ceremony, come to these places made special through repeated ritual uses, with the expectation that something very special will happen there. So, the argument goes, then it does not matter if the space also functions as a cog in the machinery of larger forces that may be directly or indirectly responsible for the ills the artists exhibiting in the space are seeking to illuminate. That the work exhibited in the commercial or nonprofit gallery, when addressing social ills, does so in an oblique, metaphorical fashion also does not matter, since the visitors entering the spaces expect them to be so. They come, perhaps not in small part because the work they know they will find there will not be didactic or directly political, but diffuse visual puzzles awaiting deciphering by initiates who are in the know.

In closing out this discussion, it is not inappropriate to mention what has been happening over the four decades since the end of the 1960s around the globe--the emergence of an oppositional art practice that is not intended for the market, and that seeks the freedom to address societal ills directly, outside the gallery or museum setting. For the most part, artists working in this arena are operating parallel to the gallery/museum system. These outside-the-gallery-system practices include performance art addressing queer, racial, ethnic and feminist identity in non-art settings, ecological art that seeks to directly affect environmental degradation *in situ*, social sculpture following Joseph Beuys, that directly engages social and political institutional structures as its media, electronic art over the internet, web art, and a burgeoning community-engaging "social practice" ^{xxii} that has developed its own nonprofits, annual conferences and funding sources. (See, for example, A Blade of Grass and the Open Engagement Conferences, both of which have a lively online and social media presence.) ^{xxiii}

Whether these newer forms of art practice "in an expanded field" ^{xxiv} resonate with ritual processes or intentions will not be addressed here, but it does seem appropriate to end this discussion by at least mentioning them along with recalling the plea to artists, nearly 30 years ago, by Suzy Gablik. In her 1984 diatribe against the 1980s art world as "a suburb of hell," Suzy Gablik seems to invoke ritual as she calls for a return to a time when "Art was a form of mediation, a means of establishing contact with the spirit world and participating in its creative energies" (Gablik 1984, 94). Gablik's prescription encourages contemporary artists to immerse themselves in a sea of surging spiritual power, to commit to "something other than oneself" instead of worshipping "immortality through the individual's own acts and works..." that something being: "A new paradigm based on the notion of participation, in which art will begin to define itself in terms of social relatedness and ecological healing" (Gablik 1991, 27). A quarter of a century after Gablik's appeal, ritual and ritualistic practices are being studied and recognized, often using scientific language and relating its processes to longstanding characteristics of the human brain and the intricacies of human social interaction. Fascination with these processes are the basic stuff of art and always will be, whether for their continuing mystery, or to plumb their significance, and/or to bring them into active alignment with what Gablik calls for: a deeper "social relatedness and ecological healing."

Notes:

- i There is a growing body of writing theorizing ritual. *Theorizing Rituals* (Jens Kreinath 2007) is a recent annotated bibliography of more than 400 items covering books, edited volumes and essays published between 1966 and 2005, that are considered most relevant for the field of ritual theory.
- ii Ana Mendieta, Marina Abramovic, Shirin Nezhad, Tracey Emin, Frida Kahlo, Faith Ringgold, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, Louise Bourgeois, Diane Arbus, Sally Mann, Peggy Nolan, Pipillotti Rist, Cindy Sherman, Marnie Weber. Christian Van Minnen was the only male artist mentioned.
- iii Mendieta was mentioned by these artists multiple times. This quotation from her, referred to by one of the *Artistically Speaking* artists, resonates with the perspectives of many of the artists included here: “My art is grounded in the belief of one universal energy which runs through everything: from insect to man, from man to spectre, from spectre to plant, from plant to galaxy. My works are the irrigation veins of this universal fluid. Through them ascend the ancestral sap, the original beliefs, the primordial accumulations, the unconscious thoughts that animate the world.” Widely reproduced, original publication information not found. <http://nuartreview.com/?p=1525> (Accessed Jan 31, 2016)
- iv Kolbert (2014). See also a bibliography of the five big extinctions on Oxford Bibliographies’ site: <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199830060/obo-9780199830060-0108.xml>.
- v Michael Winkelman, “Shamanism as the Original Neurotheology,” *Zygon* 39, no. 1 (2004), accessed January 25, 2016, <http://olinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1467-9744.2004.00566.x/pdf>.
- vi The full quotation, is: “...poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction, the tranquillity gradually disappears, and an emotion, kindred to that which was before the subject of contemplation, is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind. “In this mood successful composition generally begins, and in a mood similar to this it is carried on...” William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, 1800. <http://www.bartleby.com/39/36.html> (Accessed Jan. 31, 2016)
- vii <http://tandfbis.s3.amazonaws.com/rt-media/pp/common/sample-chapters/9780415610285.pdf> (Accessed Jan 20, 2016)
- viii (Csikszentmihaly 2014) <http://www.philosophyforlife.org/mihaly-csikszentmihalyi-on-flow-ecstasy-and-the-spirituality-of-positive-psychology/#sthash.BMmzVTfu.dpuf> (Accessed Jan. 25, 2016).
- ix https://books.google.com/books?id=QiqcCgAAQBAJ&dq=LEonardo+notebooks+stains+on+walls&source=gbs_navlinks_s (Accessed Jan 27, 2016)
- x <http://www.britannica.com/topic/coverture> (Accessed February 1, 2016) The loss of power to act legally on one’s own under Coverture is no longer a legal requirement in most Western societies, including the United States, but remnants of it remain in traditions like the abandonment of a woman’s “maiden” (unmarried name) in favor of her husband’s at marriage.
- xi <http://deflem.blogspot.com/1988/10/processual-symbolic-analysis-in.html> (Accessed January 20, 2016)
- xii <http://www.chs-fellows.org/2012/11/30/ritual-practice-and-material-support-objects-in-ritual-theories/> (Accessed February 1, 2016)
- xiii Birds Are Nice is the pseudonym of Diane Arrieta.
- xiv See Oxford dictionaries’ definition: The amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/syncretism
- xv For a nice feminist treatment of the evolution of Disney princesses, from the 1937 Snow White to the present, see: Jaquelyn Guizerix. “From Snow White To Brave: The Evolution of the Disney Princess A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of The Wilkes Honors College In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Arts and Sciences With a Concentration in History.” Wilkes Honors College of Florida Atlantic University Jupiter, FL May 2013. http://fau.digital.flvc.org/islandora/object/fau%3A31027/datastream/OBJ/view/From_snow_white_to_brave_the_evolution_of_the_Disney_princess.pdf (Accessed Jan. 23, 2016)
- xvi This dissertation has an interesting bibliography on the apotropaic.

xvii For a comprehensive contemporary study of homeopathic treatment in Western medicine, see Lyn W. Freeman, *Mosby's Complementary & Alternative Medicine*. Elsevier Health Sciences, 2008

xviii In Kocabasi's native Turkey, veiling was discouraged by custom and then prohibited by law for the better part of a century, the ban only lifted very recently. For a summary of the issues on veiling in Turkey and other locations, see: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2013/10/131011-hijab-ban-turkey-islamic-headscarf-aturk/> (Accessed Feb 4, 2016).

xix For a history of the tradition of 'honor killing' in a variety of ethnic groups, see <http://hbv-awareness.com/history/>

xx See <http://www.suppressedhistories.net/sacravulva/wardingoff.html>

xxi Stripping to the waist in protest has a long history. See: <http://mic.com/articles/119294/the-86-year-old-story-of-topless-protests-you-haven-t-heard-yet#.cisDteyNL> (Accessed Feb.3, 2016)

xxii "Social practice is going mainstream as more artists focus their work on making an impact on problems like homelessness and pollution." (Miranda 2014) See <http://www.artnews.com/2014/04/07/art-of-social-practice-is-changing-the-world-one-row-house-at-a-time/>

xxiii See <http://www.abladeofgrass.org/> and <http://openengagement.info/>

xxiv The "expanded field" quotation is a reference to the authoritative and iconic essay by art historian and critic Rosalind Krauss. A 2014 book (Spyros Papapetros, Julian Rose, eds. *Retracing the Expanded Field: Encounters between Art and Architecture*. 2014. Cambridge, MIT Press) collects essays from practitioners in all the fields referred to by Krauss in her original 1979 essay that has had deep effect on the whole range of art and design practices, and commentary on them. The original essay: Rosalind Krauss. *October* Vol. 8 (Spring, 1979), pp. 30-44 See more about the 2014 book and a summary of its contents at <https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/retracing-expanded-field>

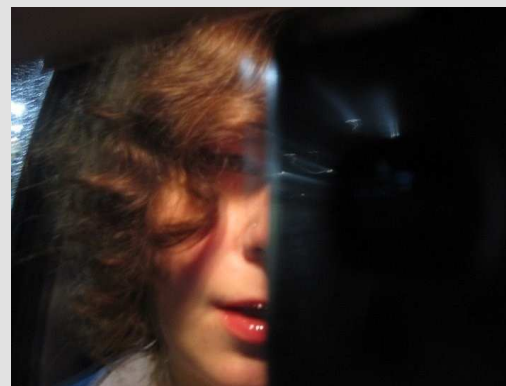
xxiv Despite her clear emphasis on encouraging artists to move beyond living in one's own head, toward activating "participation," Gablik's call for artists to return to accessing spiritual power has sometimes been seen as encouraging offensive appropriation of the spiritual practices and traditions of both ancient and current indigenous societies, and as abandoning collective action in the present to address contemporary societal ills in favor of a delusional escapism. (Miles 2014, 95)

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Artist profiles

Artist profiles



The biographies and artist statements were written by each participating artist

T J Ahearn



Biography

In the 80s Hart was co-founder of Artifacts. Concurrently, Hart commenced working in galleries. In the early 80s Hart moved to NYC, working at Piezo Electric and Marlborough with a stint in London at Flowers Gallery. A move to Los Angeles in 1990 began at L.A. Louver and liaison with their New York location. Hart spent 3 years at Gemini G.E.L, leaving to co-found publishing house Muse [X] Editions.

Hart has owned galleries in L.A. and Miami. In 1996 Hart established an alternative space in her Hollywood Hills home, lemon sky: a project space. In 2001, lemon sky: projects + editions opened in a storefront gallery on Wilshire Boulevard, mounting exhibitions and publishing fine art prints. In 2003, Hart moved back to Miami and re-established lemon sky, exhibiting and/or publishing work of internationally known and emerging artists. From 2006 until 2015 Hart was Curator at Art and Culture Center of Hollywood. During 8 1/2 years Hart curated over 100 exhibitions and special projects. Hart is curator of 2015 exhibition 100+ Degrees in The Shade: A Survey of South Art, featuring work in all media. A book by [NAME] Publications accompanies the show.

Artist statement

The work of T J Ahearn redefines social constructs and media driven social landscapes by presenting a fabricated reality. The work questions our existence and roles in society through examining topics of spirituality and family structure—all a part of ritual studies. Her work is made through the process of ritual. Collage is based on the repeated ritual of searching for and archiving hundreds of images over and over again.

What differentiates Ahearn's work is that the ritual of music help shapes its outcome. Music conveys motion and is shaped by fluctuations that occur in response to music. Ahearn uses these feelings and allows the music to instinctively guide her hand in the collage process. She both consciously and unconsciously allows the images to form meaning while listening to song. The repetition of placing visual shapes and forming patterns becomes Ahearn's personal ritual, but speaks to a universal truth of human sound and emotion. By reinterpreting the sound and reshaping the visual of the music, Ahearn is reinventing cultural history.



TJ Ahearn *Into The Mystic (Van Morrison)*, 2015

Hand cut collage on Vintage LP jacket with original vinyl 12 1/4 x 12 1/4" framed 24 x 24"
Courtesy Lemon Sky: Projects + editions, Miami



TJ Ahearn Houses of the Holy (Led Zeppelin), 2015
Hand cut collage on Vintage LP jacket with original vinyl
12 1/4 x 12 1/4" framed 24 x 24"

Courtesy Lemon Sky: Projects + editions, Miami



TJ Ahearn Carrie Ann (The Hollies), 2015
Hand cut collage on Vintage LP jacket with original vinyl
12 1/4 x 12 1/4" framed 24 x 24"

Courtesy Lemon Sky: Projects + editions, Miami

Birds are Nice



Biography

Birds are nice is an American artist, born in Clearfield, Pennsylvania. She now works as a biologist and art/science outreach coordinator for the Jupiter library at Florida Atlantic University. She holds a BFA in ceramic sculpture from Florida Atlantic University, and an MSc in Biodiversity, Wildlife and Ecosystems Health from the School of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine at the University of Edinburgh, U.K. Arrieta is a 2008 winner of the South Florida Cultural Consortium and The 2010 winner of the Hector Ubertalli Award for Visual Artists. She exhibits her work throughout the United States and the United Kingdom. Her latest body of work deals with the relationships humans have with the environment and species loss; additionally much of her work deals with environmental justice and the social issues relating to women and children.

www.birdsarenice.com

Artist statement

Having Native American roots [as a Susquehanna Indian], and working for 10+ years directly with wildlife, the work of Birds are Nice is embedded with animal symbolism. Natives communicate their history, ideas and dreams between generations through Symbols and Signs. Animals are healers and teachers. Each animal serves as a social commentary on humanity. With rapid depletion of species, and rise in technology and the unnatural world; animal symbolism gives us a link to the past, our sense of place, and helps fulfill the need to nourish ourselves with nature.

The work is a voice for relaying an awareness and establishing a dialogue to the links between the environment and human health; as well as Environmental Justice and the fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens. Typically the encumbrance is placed on the underprivileged and minority communities. Women are more vulnerable than men to many ecological hazards because of gender associations that determine social, financial and political structures. Women are also more susceptible to adverse effects from environmental hazards, especially when pregnant. Moreover, children endure the highest cost from exposure to biologically contaminated food, water, air, poor sanitation and disease vectors (e.g. mosquito borne illness) and develop lifelong health complications.

What happens in one part of the world affects us all. Mitigating the damage to the planet can no longer be seen merely as an academic discussion.



Birds are Nice *Oh Deer*, 2015. 48 x 48 x 6.5 " Acrylic, marker and cut adhesive vinyl on recycled wood panel; wire trees



Birds are Nice *Til the Cows Come Home*, 2015 Acrylic and hand cut adhesive vinyl on recycled wood panel, cow manure. Dimensions Variable (wall piece is 48 x 48 x



Birds are Nice *Little Deer*, 2015 Moss flocked deer decoy, plastic toy deer, ribbon, key, cut adhesive vinyl. Dimensions variable upon installation (deer figure 45 x 42 x 22"; adhesive vinyl circles 48")

Francie Bishop Good



Biography

Francie Bishop Good was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and raised in nearby Allentown. She currently lives and works in South Florida and New York City. Her work has been exhibited throughout the United States, Europe and Latin America. It is included in many public and private collections and has been featured in publications including “Art in America,” “Art News,” and the “Miami Herald.” Ms. Bishop Good is twice recipient of the South Florida Cultural Consortium Fellowship, and the State of Florida Individual Artist Fellowship. Her list of solo museum shows include the Allentown Art Museum, Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, Florida. Her work is the featured exhibit in 2013 at the Art and Culture Center in Hollywood Florida. Ms. Bishop Good is represented in Miami, by David Castillo Gallery where she has recently completed her second solo exhibit. Recent museum acquisitions include the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Wadsworth Atheneum, The Patricia & Philip Frost Art Museum at Florida International University, and the Museum of Art, Fort Lauderdale.

Artist statement

My mother and I graduated from the same high school in Allentown, Pennsylvania. I am obsessed with both of our high school yearbooks, and engrossed with the similarities and differences in the general and specifics. Allentown has gone through transformations and in some ways is a microcosm for much of the United States. My mother wrote comments on many of the photographs, for example.... “Killed in a mission fighting over Germany” or “Died in 1980” giving the photographs a heightened sense and an endless source for my imagination. The hair, styles, self-centered innocence from my class of 1967 is a limitless source of material for this series. Combined with past paintings and photographs, I transform the high school photographs to a new strange reality. “Comus” was and still might be title of the yearbooks from Allentown High School. These portraits are a jumping off point for my encounters between digital imagining, older painted and printed works. I am compressing time and reconstructing. My influences are varied; feminism, Andy Warhol, Chantel Joffe and Cheryl Von Heyl to my roots in Allentown, and imaging first visits to the art museum, and to Hess' department store.



Francie Bishop Good *Comus Series*, 2015. Collage-Pigment print, 30 x 20" ea



Francie Bishop Good *Comus Series*, 2015. Collage-Pigment print, 30 x 20" ea

Leah Brown



Biography

Leah Brown (b. Washington DC, 1982) is a Ft Lauderdale-based sculptor and installation artist. She received her BFA with honors from the Rhode Island School of Design, and an MFA in Sculpture from the University of Miami. In addition to her studio practice, Leah is exhibitions director and co-curator of the FATVillage Arts District 501c3 in Ft Lauderdale, FL, where she oversees the execution of art exhibitions in the Projects, an 8,000 sq ft gallery space that is a receiver of the 2015-2016 Knight Arts Challenge Grant. Brown is a grantee of the South Florida Cultural Consortium Fellowship (2013) and of the Broward County CIP grant for the 2014 exhibition, “Beep Bop Boop”. Residencies include the HUB-BUB year-long artist residency in Spartanburg, SC and the Accessibility: Sustainability artist residency in Sumpter, SC.

Artist statement

Brown’s studio practice is an attempt at understanding of the nature of reality through a questioning and observation of dream continuity. By performing repetitive and meditative actions of art making, including mold making, hair work, and stiffened fabric processes, she uses the dreamt version of these actions as a way to trigger dream lucidity. She uses this phenomenon to explore a continuing dream narrative through creating meticulous tableaux of prominent repeated dream characters in order to invoke them back into the night's dream. Part personal mythology and part pseudo-scientific exploration, the resulting artworks begin as illustrations, but become artifacts of invocations.



Leah Brown *Transformation of Echo: World of Dreams* (Installation View at Young at Art Museum, 2013. Mixed Media Sculpture.



Leah Brown *Weird Sisters*
(Installation view at Ft. Lauderdale Museum),
2013. Mixed Media Sculpture



Leah Brown *Wolfie*
(Installation view of These Wood at 18 Rabbit
Gallery, Ft. Lauderdale), 2013.
Mixed Media Sculpture

Gianinna Coppiano Dwin



Biography

Giannina Coppiano Dwin lives and works in South Florida. She has been the recipient of grants and awards such as the prestigious South Florida Cultural Consortium Fellowship for Visual and Media Artists funded in part by the National Endowment for the Art, the Women in the Visual Arts Award; as well as, several sponsorships and grants including research in Spain and Brazil. Her work has been included in national and International exhibitions as part of solo and group shows. Some of her more notable exhibitions include solo installations at the Project Space in The Art and Culture Center in Hollywood, the contemporary wing of the Museo Municipal de Guayaquil, Ecuador; Ornare, Miami, as a collateral event during Art Basel; the Coral Springs Museum of Art, Coral Springs; Illegal Gallery, Florence, Italy. Selected group shows include venues such as the University Galleries, Boca Raton; Whitespace at the Mordes Collection, 18 Rabbit Gallery, Ft. Lauderdale, Duncan Gallery, St. Petersburg, Armory Art Center, Palm Beach; Cornell Museum, Delray Beach; Casa De Espanha, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She was invited by the government of Ecuador to jury the prominent *Salon de Julio* along with Gerardo Mosquera, Curator for the New Museum in New York. Coppiano Dwin has also curated exhibitions such as *Contemporary Ceramics and Textiles* at the Coral Springs Museum, *Corporal* at the Schmidt Galleries, *Fabricated*, at FC Gallery. Giannina works on installations, sculpture, ceramics, photography, and drawing. Through her work she considers ideas of identity, genetics, gender, nourishment, fragility and impermanence

Artist statement

Like the Vanitas paintings of the seventeenth century, which reflect upon the transient nature of all material things, my work presents attractive, sensuous images and forms which may evoke youth, sexuality, pleasure, finery and beauty. They are mostly made of non-durable materials such as sugar, flour, spices and other non-traditional materials. Upon first look, the forms are easily understood; however, it is only when the simple, inexpensive materials that make up the work and the apparent intensive labor put into them, begin to disclose themselves to the viewer that the process of the work and its ephemeral nature become apparent revealing the concept implicit in the pieces. Many of the forms address the female body alluding to sexuality and the dichotomy of aging but living to media standards of eternal youth. The ordinary materials are elevated into “preciousness” by the complexity of the design, which very often resemble very fine lace or delicate, expensive cloth. It is also a nod to women’s craftwork through the ages and to the history of lace. The food materials are symbolic of nourishment. The daily meals served and shared, the food/meal as a bond making ritual and a social connector, the communal table. When spices, are used, they engage more than the visual sense. Certain scents oblige the viewer to connect with the work through the sense of smell. Weather working with sugar, flour or spices, all the work is imbued with an inviting tactile quality to create a desire to touch and to feel the work. The implication of sight, smell, touch, trigger in the viewer the sensorial memory.

To reinforce the impermanence of the pieces and their fragility, a performance to destroy or transform the work is implemented at the end of each exhibition. The performative intervention is made to accelerate the inevitability of change, decay, and transformation. The performances take a variety of modes, from sweeping, to using water, or burying the design. My work is not in any way morally related in purpose to the concerns of the after-life or judgment. It merely hopes to elicit analysis of the transient nature of the human condition and comments on gender issues and the fragility of life in general. It is a sort of contemporary Memento Mori.



Giannina Coppiano Dwin *Camisole*, 2015. Sugar, life size (size 8)



Giannina Coppiano Dwin, *Strapless*, 2015.
Sugar, Lifesize (cup C)



Giannina Coppiano Dwin, *Special Occasion*, 2015.
Sugar, Lifesize (M)

Dana Donaty



Biography

Dana Donaty (b. 1966, Columbus, Ohio) is a contemporary American painter, an innovative conceptual artist widely recognized for provocative canvases with unusual narratives. Her colorful works are full of artistic ingenuity and an engaging use of materials. One of the greatest influences on her life, her father Dr. Donaty encouraged her to become a doctor; but the artistic matrilineal force was too strong. Raised in New Jersey, Dana received a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree from Moore College of Art and Design in Philadelphia, PA in 1988. In the early 1990's Dana moved to London, where she began her career. Twelve years later, Dana relocated to South Florida where she currently lives and works.

Achievements include exhibiting in highly regarded fine art shows, designer showhouses and award-winning public art projects. Dana has garnered multiple awards within the design industry and for high profile residential and commercial projects. She relishes each collaboration with remarkable creative expertise. Dana has been featured in national and international publications, is very active in the arts community, collaborating with artists, ASID Industry Partner, Chairman of the Delray Public Art Advisory Board, July 2008 - July 2012 & Delray Pineapple Grove Arts Board Member 2007-2010. She is currently an artist-in-residence at the Bakehouse Art Complex, Miami, FL.

Artist statement

Memories of being raised by a strict father in a waste not environment have set the means to each new creation, beginning each piece simultaneously as the previous is completed. Using a virgin canvas as a cleaning surface for brushes and palettes, the random smears of color dictate the content of each new painting. Through analyzing these Rorschach like blots, figurative characters are formed and emerge from the abstract primordial ooze. This form of process-based figuration is used to compose, while the larger than life human figures are dictated by the amount of negative space remaining. This mash up of classical portraiture and process based exploration is derived through a conversation between right and left brain. The left is rooted in "classic" painting while the right needs to explore and allows chance and happenstance space to prevail. A surreal twist of fate exists as human and fictitious beings, sometimes represented by recognizable characters operate together in an expanse of colorful dialogue. To experience each piece is an act of allowing ones mind to run wild, granting room to create through pareidolia what may have never been noticed before. Moments that can be found in our everyday lives are transposed upon the canvas, elevating them from existing as just a face in the clouds to being in colloquy with the history of painting. Randomness can coexist with planned execution as we see each day, but only if we allow it the breadth to do so.



Dana Donaty *Psychadelic Rodeo*, 2015. Acrylic on Canvas, 62 x 110"



Dana Donaty *Top Dog*, 2015. Acrylic on Canvas, 48 x 60"



Dana Donaty *Glurppee*, 2015 . Mixed Media, Dimensions variable

Raheleh Filsoofi



Biography

Raheleh T. Filsoofi received her MFA in ceramics from Florida Atlantic University in 2014. She has moved to United States in 2003 and worked with several renowned American Ceramic artists on public art projects in Coral Springs and Miami. Raheleh's work is steeped in the sense of cultural memory and displacement with regard to her native country and the way in which people construct identity through sight and sound. Her art extends to variety of media, including photography and printmaking. Through the use of sounds, music, physical objects and video she narrates stories of individual and collective experience. She also engages in field research that documents the state of traditional and contemporary ceramic art in Iran today and in particular, the role that women play in them. She has participated in juried art exhibitions in Iran and the United States, including The National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts in Tampa, Florida (2011), Continuum Exhibition, The Cultural Council of Palm Beach, Lake Worth, FL, 2012 and, "Confluence" Exhibition, Boca Raton, FL 2014. She has received several awards including a Presidential Fellowship. Her research on clay by women in Iran was supported by a Chastain-Johnston Middle East Grant from the FAU Peace Studies program.

Artist statement I was born in Iran, somewhere between the softness of Persian silk rugs and units of intense colors and intricate forms of clay tiles. However, the reality within that space was very different. It was all at once unknown, unfamiliar, pleasant/unpleasant, intriguing, provocative, and complex. Thus my work has become the exploration of certain personal experiences and cultural memories. I intend to bring the present out of the past by embracing my heritage and investigate and celebrate it through the catalysts of my medium, clay.

In my early art I attempted to explore the notion of femininity, sensuality and beauty of a female body. My view of this has evolved through a decade of further exploration into an articulated set of projects that treat the body and the being from a variety of perspectives and through variety of visual and aural media. I have taken my art from the realm of object making to that of multimedia installations. Sound constitutes the focus of the art that I am making today. It gives a fourth dimension to visual aspects of my work and it brings the elements of time into my work both in terms of memory and actual perception. It gives meaning to physical forms of an installation by engaging their substance and the space that they inhabit. The presence of sound constitutes a commentary on the visual forms that are associated with it. Likewise the absence of sound where it is expected or called for by visual cues gives further meaning to the installation overall. I find these notions of art making an engaging source of creativity.

Through my new exploration in multimedia and large-scale installation I practice traditional artistic techniques in order to speak with great agency and use a voice that goes beyond immediate media stereotypes of ceramic and other crafts to talk about my culture on a higher level. It engages audiences from different cultural backgrounds by the way in which it shares the untold and hidden events that I experienced with a large group of Iranians away from home, and it also functions as the cultural bridge that I have always strived to build between my culture of origin and the culture that I am a part of now.



Raheleh Filsoofi *Only Sound Remains*, 2014. MultiMedia Installation, Ceramic Vessels, Sound, Video, 14 x 14 x 8'

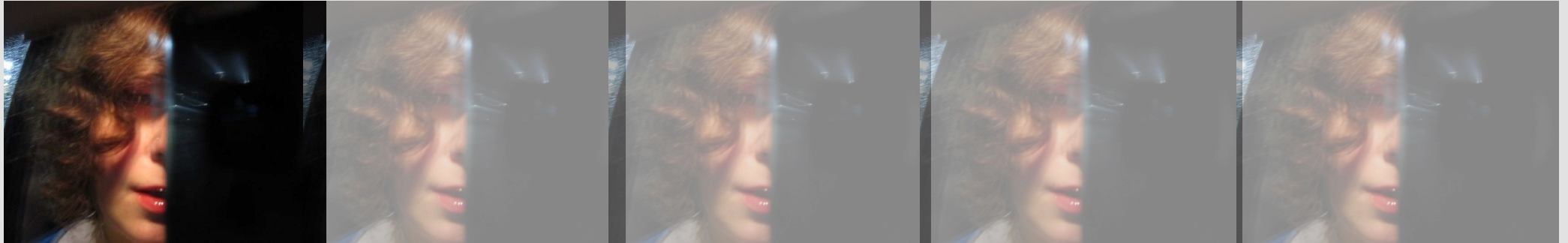


Raheleh Filsoofi *Only Sound Remains (Detail)*, 2014. MultiMedia Installation, Ceramic Vessels, Sound, Video, 14 x 14 x 8'



Raheleh Filsoofi , *Only the Sound Remains the Same (Detail of smaller installation)* , 2016 MultiMedia Installation, Ceramic Vessels, Sound, Video, 14 x 14 x 8'

AdrienneRose Gionta



Biography

AdrienneRose Gionta is an interdisciplinary artist, curator & visual arts educator from Brooklyn, NY residing in South Florida. Currently she has been teaching courses in Multimedia & Web-design, Digital Art, Digital Photography, Drawing & Color Theory at both FAU & NSU. Recently Gionta served as the Gallery Coordinator at the Miami Beach Urban Studios Gallery while attending Florida International University pursuing her Master of Fine Arts in Time-Based Media & Photography [on full scholarship with a teaching assistantship—teaching courses in Digital Media, Video & Electronic Art at FIU]. She has earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture along with a minor in Psychology from Florida Atlantic University and has worked as the Assistant Director at the University Galleries at FAU. In addition, she has been the recipient of several awards such as the *Art & Architecture Fellow*, *Department of Architecture at FIU*, *Women in the Visual Arts Scholarship*, The Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties *Art Educators Fellowship*, the Dorothy F. Schmidt College of Arts and Letters *Friedland Project Grant*, & The National League of American Pen Women *Marion Kofman Scholarship*. AdrienneRose's work has been exhibited at *Art Basel Miami, FL*; *Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL*; *David Castillo Gallery, Miami, FL*; *6th Street Container, Miami, FL*; *Locust Projects, Miami, FL*; *Girls' Club, Ft. Lauderdale, FL*; *18 Rabbit, Ft. Lauderdale, FL*; *Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, Hollywood, FL*; *Armory Art Center, West Palm Beach*; *Showtel, West Palm Beach* & *10x10, Lake Worth, FL*. Her work is also included in the private collection of Francie Bishop Good and David Horvitz as well as other private collections.

Artist statement

Within gaming, the avatar is a player's representation through which they explore new places and perform roles they cannot in their daily lives: warrior, architect, zombie hunter, and so on. In those spaces, the rules of life are bent or suspended, and the players decide who they are in this realm. Like the gamer, the artist has the ability to suspend rules to explore new realities. AdrienneRose's works are avatars much like characters in a game. They represent an idealized form of their author, not in their appearance, but in the worlds they inhabit. Rather than crafting a false presentation in a virtual world, Gionta creates places where she can manifest the life she wants; freed from the burden of preconceived roles that have been assigned to her. Her avatars do not change to meet conventional standards; she bends the world. She creates parallel universes in which her deceased aunt is brought back to life to attend art school [as she had always wanted to do] and her own desires play in the form of alternate versions of herself. The "big girl" can be the star and spring is perpetual. Gionta invites the viewer in as a guest in both her physical and mental space, offering a moment to pause and to consider the world from her vantage. By creating these parallel universes, she suggests that a world in which a person can be judged by their character rather than by negative preconceptions about body shape or gender is the same one in which trapping poltergeists can be a day job. The message is bittersweet but the sweet is magnified to excess. AdrienneRose Gionta does not mourn the loss of an idealized world, but basks joyfully in defiance of cynicism.

Written by Andrew C. Horton with edits by AdrienneRose Gionta



AdrienneRose Gionta

ARG/rīziNG/ II, 2015

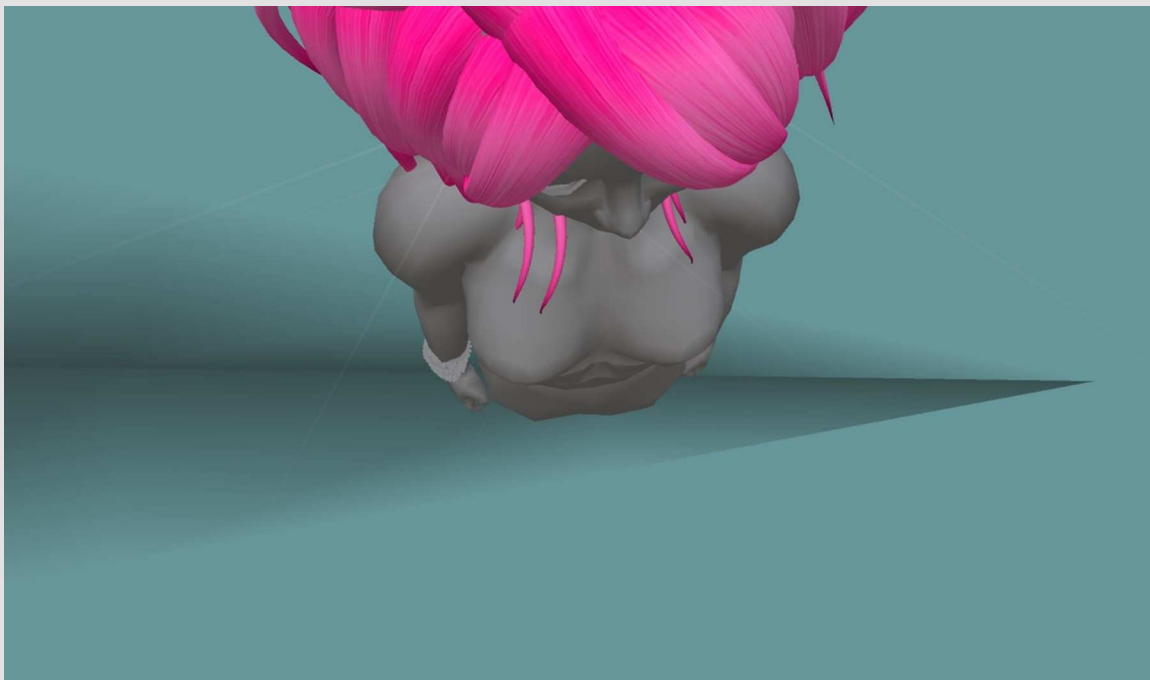
Medium: Hot pink mylar balloons & ribbon . Site specific installation



AdrienneRose Gionta

3Me 's in the Bathroom , 2014
(From the Three Times a Lady Project)

Two-channel video installation



AdrienneRose Gionta

The Making of ARG, 2014

16 x 20 digital archival print on metallic paper

Carol Jazzar



Biography/Artist statement

Without creativity, life would be a mistake..... and a burden!. I am miss-quoting Nietzsche here but I feel that he could have written this exact phrase, and he almost did -- he who wrote so well and so extensively about the creative life. The creative life is a journey that reveals itself step by step. Mine started in our backyard when as a little girl, in Brittany, France, I would spend afternoons making elaborated dresses and headpieces with the garden leaves and flowers. At the time, this was simply called “play”. But that first creative impulse redefined itself over the years, as when I started an “alternative wear” clothing line called “Chains Addiction”. I designed and hand-made unique items using metal supplies, mesh, ring, hook; that I sold to individuals and selected stores. At the same time, I started curating art exhibits with the artists I had met over the years. This was Miami pre-Art Basel, the art scene was not what it is today; venues were unorthodox -- bars, restaurants, office buildings, furnishing stores. But this constant moving around allowed me to attract a little following for my shows. This gave me the idea to convert the freestanding, two-car garage in the back of my property into an exhibition space and I opened my home-gallery. For seven years the space offered a unique artistic perspective among the Miami galleries. With a tight stable of local artists, including Jen Stark who is now enjoying international recognition, Jorge Pantoja, David Rohn, Kuhl & Leyton, the program gave others (like Farley Aguilar, another Miami luminary) the opportunity to show their work for the first time; the gallery also invited national and international artists—sometimes introducing their work for the first time in Miami.

My vision for the gallery was also to bridge two worlds I deeply love, culture and nature. This would become a singular space where people could connect to a work of art on a deep level while socializing under the stars in a lush backyard. Sometimes we had music to assist further both connections. A few years ago my own creative impulse started begging for expression so much that I became really unsatisfied with the way I was allocating my time; absorbed by and for others only. At night, I started making collages, a medium that reconnected me to the joy of working with my hands. After some deep soul searching, I decided to close the gallery in the model that it had been opened, hosting only occasional exhibits. My purpose changed and my priority transitioned to art making; but I remain involved in the business of art as well as curating projects. When I look back, I see a natural progression [moves, diverse exposures, chance encounters led me to where I am today]. The creative life worked itself out in its own way. This creative journey brought me to this precise moment, with so much to draw upon that I know now that I am ready to create a substantial body of work.

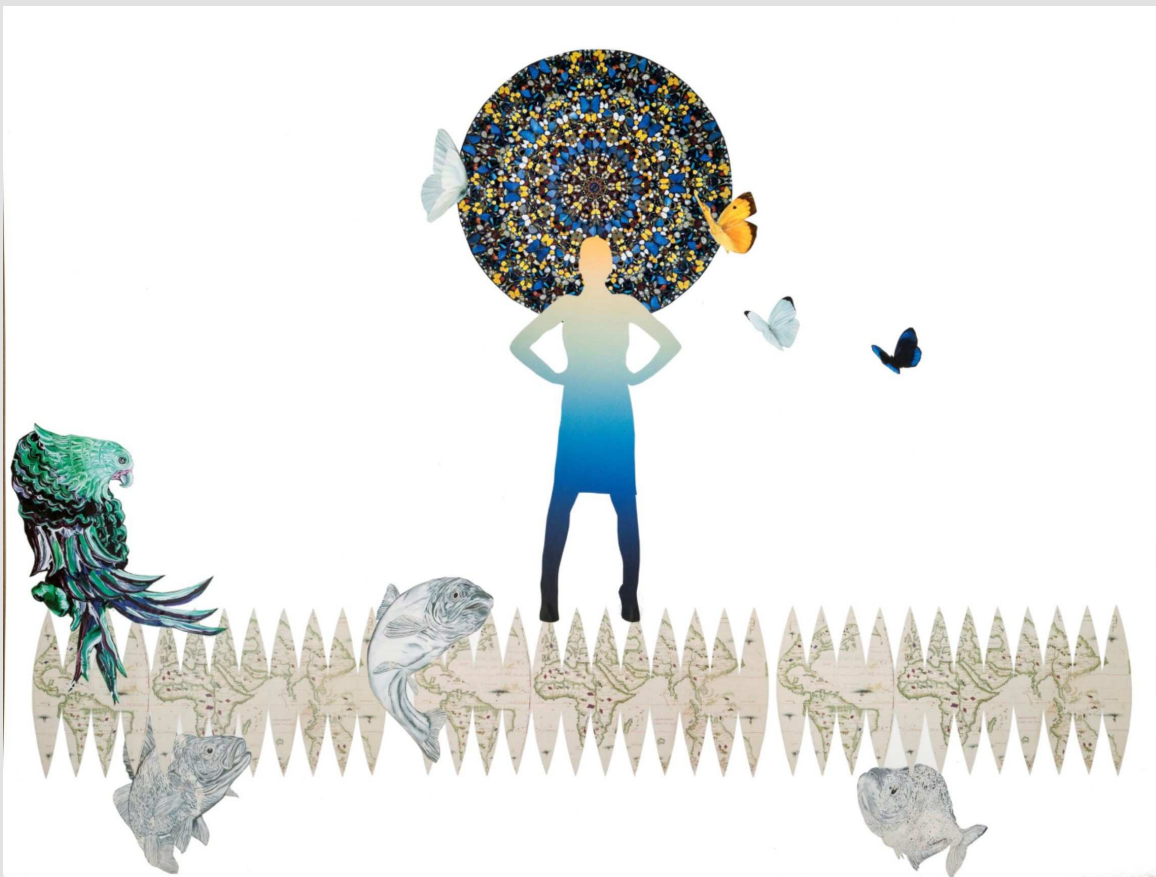
The collages in this current series offer a clear reading. They are easy to look at. Cut out images are sparsely placed on a white sheet of paper. Each component keeps its integrity within the composition while contributing to a central idea. These cut outs could be seen as thoughts appearing on the screen of our consciousness, or music notes floating through the infinite ether symbolized by the empty space. Made almost entirely with Artforum magazines, “the bible of contemporary art” [according to writer Sarah Thornton], these cut outs are for the most part pictures of works belonging to other artists which have been shown or are about to be exhibited in galleries and institutions all over the world. Through the use of these images, I am appropriating other people’s works and ideas and reinterpreting them into new context and perspective.



Carol Jazzar *In the house of Love and Death* , 2015. Artforum magazine cut out on archival paper , 23 x 30"



Carol Jazzar *Come together* , 2015 . Artforum magazine
cut out on archival paper, 23 x 30"



Carol Jazzar *Venus Rising* , 2015 . Artforum magazine
cut out on archival paper, 23 x 30"

Jacqueline Kern



Bio

Dr. Jacqueline Kern is an artist, educator, and author in South Florida. Currently, Kern is an Adjunct Instructor in the Visual Arts Department at Palm Beach State College. Along with 52 hours of Graduate Credits in Studio Visual Arts, Kern earned a Ph.D. in Teaching and Learning with a minor in Visual Arts and a Master of Science in Education: General Studies with a minor in Visual Arts from the University of North Dakota and a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Arts: Painting and Drawing from Purchase College State University of New York. Her areas of research have been focused on Native American visual arts, women artists throughout history and postmodern times, diverse artists and their artworks, and STEAM—STEM with Art added for deeper creative critical thinking and problem solving skill development. Kern has held university administrative positions in Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Continuing Education, but her love has always been teaching visual arts. Kern has taught visual arts at the college level and Grades K–8 as well as university education courses. Along with being a published author, Kern is also a professional artist who explores mixed media in two-dimensional and three-dimensional artworks utilizing an array of materials and techniques from drawing and painting to collage and assemblage. Kern has exhibited artwork in the United States, and her artwork is held in many private collections.

Artist Statement

By using animal forms, plants, organic and abstracted shapes, lines, and colors in these recent artworks, Jacqueline Kern is analyzing the roles of women, the loss of identity of women in today's society, and the desire to regain the power of the authentic self. The animals act as spirit guides and vehicles of expression reminding women locally and globally to own their power. Animals are psychic, confident creatures that are able to change direction for self-preservation, give and receive signals, and most importantly trust their instincts.

Kern's code-like markings such as the spiral shapes, eyes, leaves, and vines seek to give clues to women about seeking independence and inner strength. The horns serve as psychic tools giving and receiving signals—a departure from prehistoric works where animal horns were symbolic of male power. The plants and leaves create an environment for animal and communal survival. The spirals speak of pathways to strength, individuality, and eternity. The knowing eyes observe and urge women to trust in themselves.



Jacqueline Kern *Dreaming of Daddy*, 2015. Oil Paint on Canvas 24 x 24 x 1".



Jacqueline Kern *Looking for Signals*, 2015.
Oil paint on Canvas, 30 x 40 x 1.5"



Jacqueline Kern *Getting the Horns*, 2015 .
Oil paint and acrylic on Canvas, 36 x 36 x 1.5"

Sibel Kocabasi



Biography

Sibel Kocabasi was born in Turkey and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Turkish Traditional Arts (rug-kilim design, natural dyes, conservation and restoration of textiles, and illumination of manuscripts) from Marmara University of Fine Arts in Istanbul. She holds an MFA from Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton Florida in painting. Kocabasi's work is distinctive for its combination of Turkish traditional art technique with a contemporary willingness to experiment, constantly testing new ideas and techniques. Her work uses decorative patterns and social/cultural references to achieve a balance of contrasting elements, emphasizing simultaneously the beauty and misfortune of humanity's impact on nature. Her recent work focuses on relevant contemporary social issues. Heavily inspired by the suppression of female identity and the later awakening of feminine power and the confidence to create ones identity. Kocabasi has also curated several group exhibitions, domestically and abroad, including "Undertow" which featured the work of 29 artists from Miami and Palm Beach County at Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul Turkey. This exhibition celebrated the contemporary artwork of south Florida in the dramatic and contrasting surroundings of the oldest fine arts university in Turkey. "Outside The Box" two day outdoor installation exhibition at the Whitespace Mordes Collection in WPB, FL. Kocabasi is the recipient of the 2010 South Florida Cultural Consortium's Visual and Media Artists Fellowship and the 2006 Hector Ubertalli Visual Arts Award. Her work is in numerous private collections as well as The Patricia & Phillip Frost Art Museum in Miami, Florida. She is represented by JF Gallery in West Palm Beach FL and Bethesda Fine Art in Maryland. Kocabasi, lives and works in Palm Beach county Florida.

Artist statement

Kocabasi's work is distinctive for its combination of Turkish traditional art technique with a contemporary willingness to experiment; constantly testing new ideas and techniques. The past, present and future exist together in her work. Moreover, mixing the narrative style of manuscript illumination with vivid abstractions, her paintings are filled with historical references and commentary on the conflicts of our era—religion, control of natural resources and our regard for the planet. Kocabasi, uses decorative patterns and social/cultural references to achieve a balance of contrasting elements, emphasizing the beauty and misfortune of humanity's impact on nature in a single statement. Her latest series focuses on the co-existence between humans and animals which shows us humor & beauty, as well as the frustrations in this relationship. "I still believe in the ability of art to be a beautiful thing. In fact, beauty and hope are the strongest means to protest injustice," she explained. "Not just political injustice but also the ugliness of environmental degradation. In the age of globalism, everything becomes transparent. It has also become cluttered. With all the communication available, people are starving for beauty and hope." The internet, digital technology and digital media have become a vast playing field in terms of areas for artists to explore. As an artist I have an interest in these developments but I have my reservations. There is an issue concerning how one might collect and archive digital art. I have created my own strategies in order to deal with new media works. I am using found photography and found objects for my own mixed media with a very simple camera as recording device. This is not an attempt to define new artistic medium only to explore new avenues for me as an artist. This approach, which is new to me, allows directness, with relatively short time from concept to a viewable image; in contrast with my oil paintings. The subject matter are the recurring themes that interest or trouble me in my daily life: human impact on the environment including wild animals; patriotism; nationalism; war; women issues; contemporary farming methods and more.



Sibel Kocabasi, 2015. *Helen*. Archival Digital print. Dimensions Variable



Sibel Kocabasi *Transmutation Series* Archival
Digital Print. Dimensions Variable



Sibel Kocabasi *Untitled Series* Archival Digital
Print. Dimensions Variable

Tina La Porta

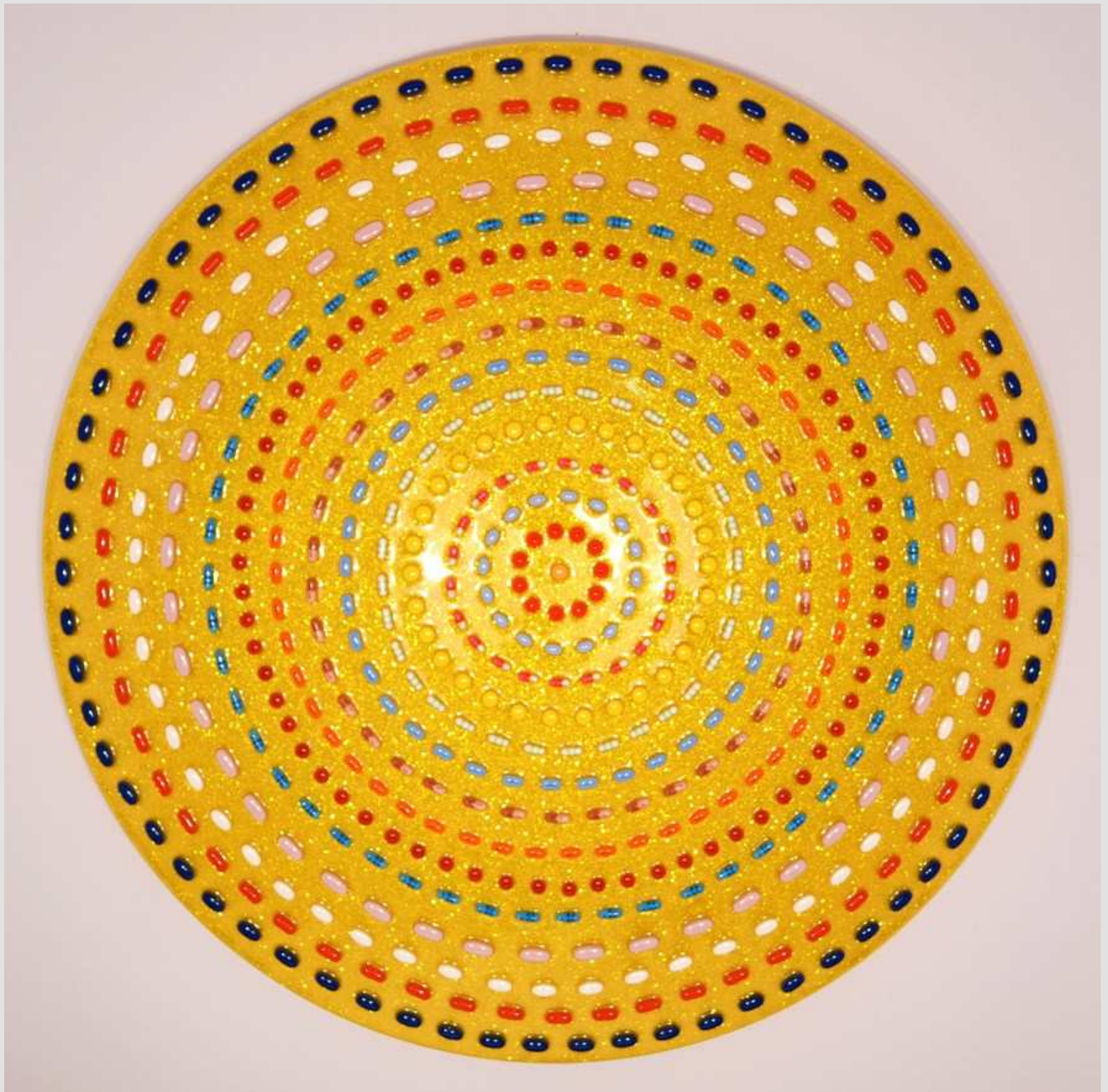


Biography

Since 1991 I have exhibited work in numerous group shows including this years' Annual Interest at The Young At Art Museum, Davie, Florida, ReImagined at The Cornell Museum of Art, Delray Beach, Florida, The International Streaming Festival 6th Edition in The Hague, Netherlands and Sound of IT, Compositions In the Spirit of John Cage touring to Garage 4141, San Diego, Ca.; Northend Studios, Detroit MI.; and Sazmanab Project, Tehran, Iran. Other venues I have exhibited include, The New Museum, NY; Museo Nacional Centro de Art Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain; Museu do Essencial e do Alem Disso, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, England; San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA; Centre Cultural de la Fundació "la Caixa," Barcelona, Spain; The Kitchen, New York, NY; The Art and Culture Center, Hollywood, FL. I have lectured and presented my work widely at The Florida Art Museum Directors Association Conference, Fort Lauderdale, FL; 5 Minutes of Fame, Museum of Contemporary Art, Miami, FL; El Museo del Barrio, New York, NY; Liceo Artistico Statale Caravaggio, Milan, Italy; The Whitney Museum, New York, NY; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN; College Art Association/Women's Caucus for Art. I have received commissions to create new work from The Whitney Museum, New York, NY; The Alternative Museum, New York, NY; and Turbulence.org, New York, NY . My work is included in Public Collections such as The Whitney Museum, New York, NY; The New Museum, New York, NY; The Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art at Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY; Sound Art Museum, Rome, Italy. My work has been published in many periodicals including Digital Art: World of Art Series (Thames and Hudson); The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader (Routledge); From Technological to Virtual Art (MIT Press); as well as The New York Times, Miami New Times (Featured Cover Artist), LA Weekly, Sun Sentinel, Leonardo and Ms. Magazine.

Artist statement

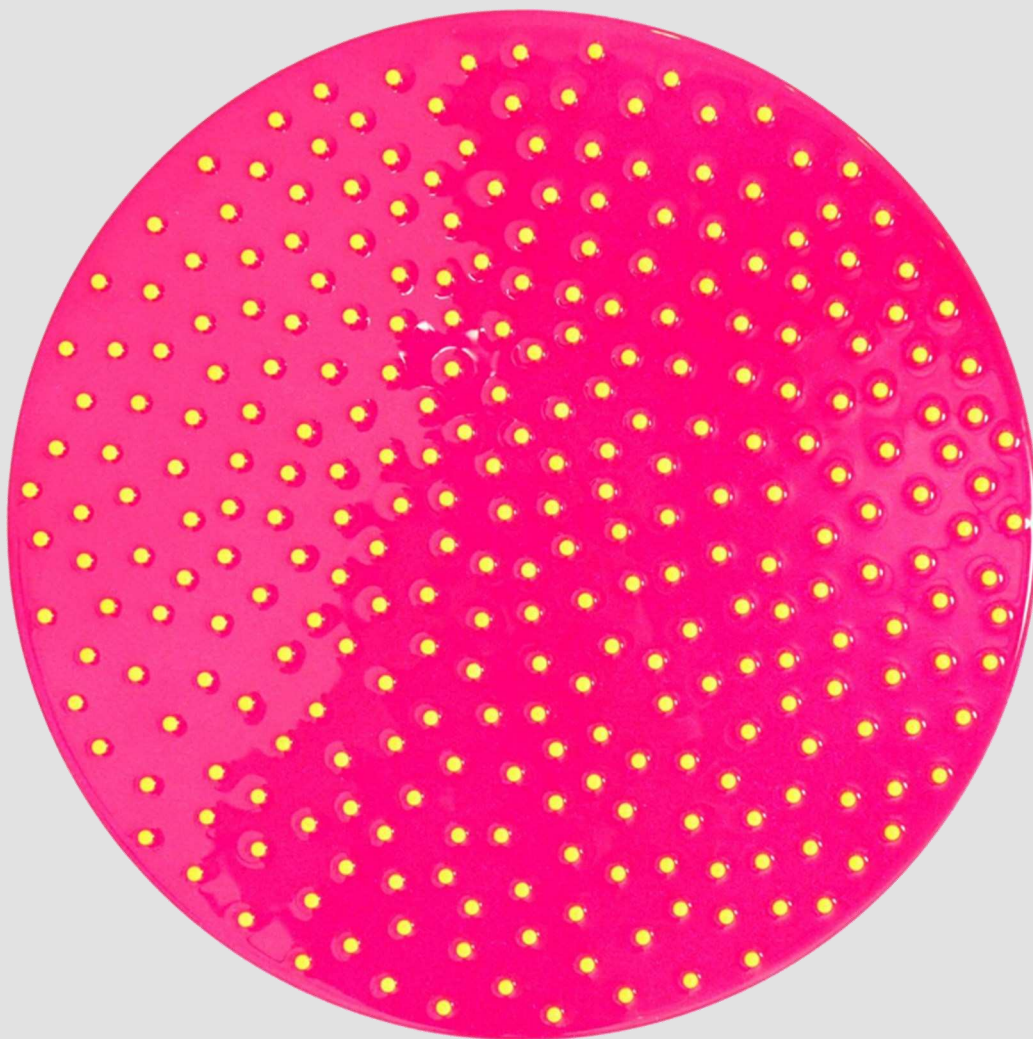
Mental illness is a moving target. There are good days and bad; periods of stability, and phases when life seems totally out of whack. Schizophrenia, the mental illness with which I was diagnosed in 2009, is an example of one such battle waged on fungible lines. It took several months -- of perceiving voices that weren't my own, thinking the wires in my eyeglasses were bugged, believing that my apartment's fire alarm was a surveillance camera as the voices 'told' me what I should and shouldn't do ("Go to the hospital now")—before doctors arrived at an accurate diagnosis. Along the way, I went through a trial-and-error period of literally hundreds of prescriptions; from anti-depressants to anti-anxiety medications— to sleep aids. Prior to my illness, I had an artistic practice of photography, installation, and new media, and often made work that centered around commonly held misperceptions of the body; which challenged social taboos ("Documenting CHOICE," photographic documents of protests at abortion clinics of Roe v. Wade; "Total Screen," examining the image of hajibs and burkas worn by both men and women as seen thorough Western media in the weeks post 9-11). Hence this work, though its material practice has changed, is part of a continuous thread of inquiry into struggles (mostly waged on the body) that are hiding in plain view. The difference here is that I am, at great personal risk, putting myself on the line: in many ways, my current 'body' of work is inseparable from my own.



Tina La Porta *Circles of Obsession I*, 2014. Pills, Mixed Media, Resin on Board, 30"



Tina La Porta *From The Edge of Darkness (I
Lost Myself)*, 2013
Micaceous Iron Oxide, Pills, Resin on Board,
72 x 24 x 2"



Tina La Porta *Indian Summer*, 2013
Birth control Pills, Resin on Board, 16"

Alette Simmons-Jimenez



Biography

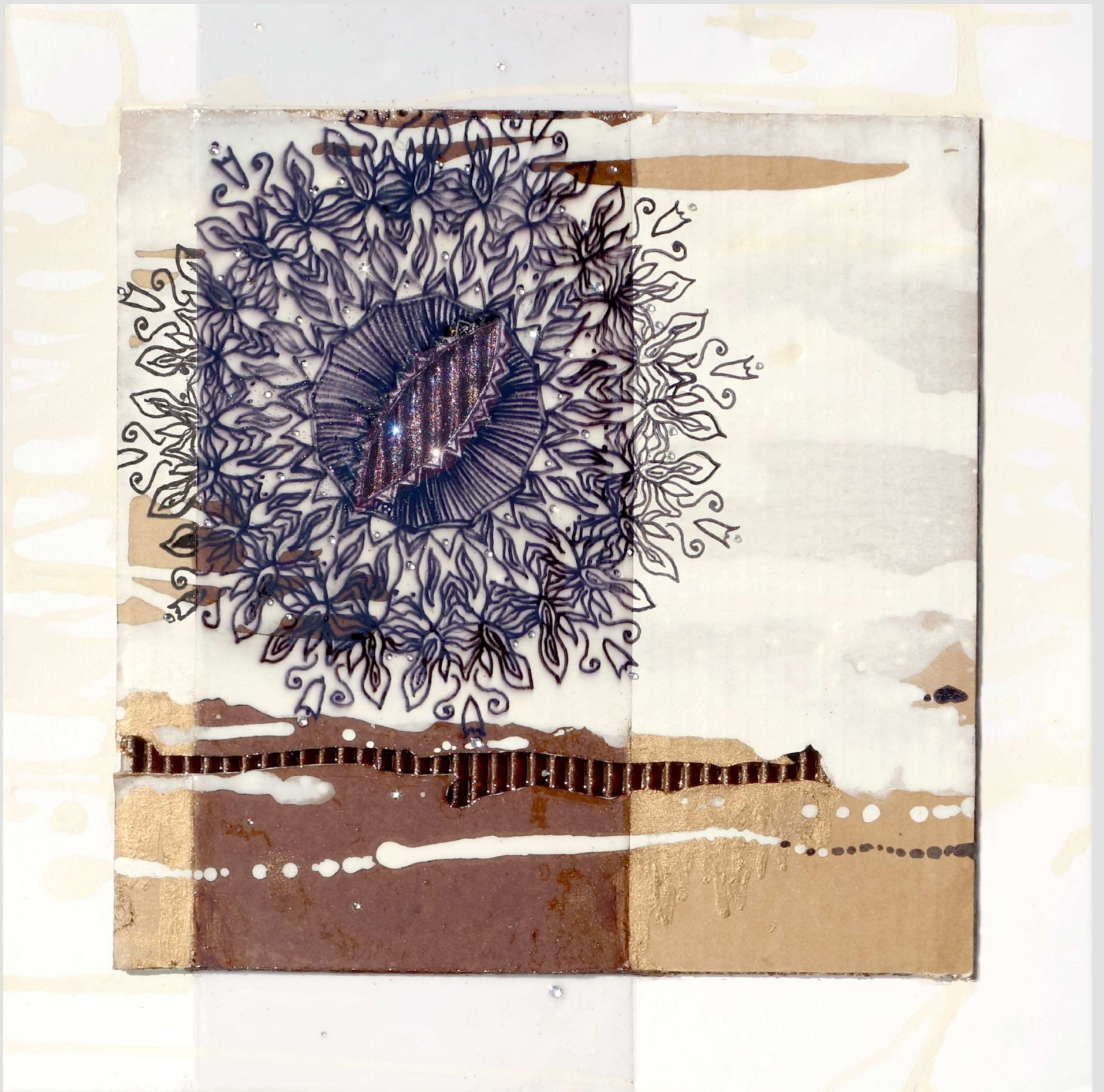
I am a multidisciplinary artist working in mixed-media drawing and assemblage, installation, and video. My first exploration into installation and video art was awarded the 1st Prize in Video, at the XVIII National Biennial, of the Museo De Arte Moderno, in the Dominican Republic, where I had been residing for several years. I have been recognized as the first woman artist to exhibit video art in that country. My work has won numerous grants and fellowships including: a Mastermind Genius Award, a Knight Arts Grant, a Tourism Development Grant from Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs, a Community Grant, also from Miami-Dade Cultural Affairs, a Xurau Mozu Prize from Optica International Video Festival in Spain; Artist Enhancement Grant from FL Dept. of State, the April Z. Newhouse Award from NAWA in New York; a Merit Award from the Renaissance Center for Visual Arts; a Painting Fellowship in 1998, and an Honorable Mention in 1995, from the FL Dept. of State; and a Liquitex Artist Grant. I have exhibited internationally in museums, festivals, and galleries, and have works held in permanent collections at the Mobile Museum of Art, Alabama; Santo Domingo's Museo de Arte Moderno; Mastercard International, the Jaffe Center for Book Arts, Louisville's 21c Museum, and numerous private collections. My work has also been selected for exhibitions with the US State Department's Art in Embassies Program (AIE), in 1999 in Honduras, and currently in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

I am an active member of the Miami arts community. In 2004 I founded Artformz Alternative. I directed the artist run space, first in the Miami Design District and later in the Wynwood Arts District for 7 years, leading collaborations, exhibits, and projects with over 150 international artists. I am currently based in Miami, and although I am primarily focused on my own studio practice, I continue to develop selected curatorial projects. In 2013, I was elected to the National Board of ArtTable, Inc. and locally serve as the Florida Chapter Chair. This renowned nonprofit was founded in the 1980's in NY, and maintains a mission to foster leadership amongst women of extraordinary promise in the visual art's professions.

Artist statement

I create work in multiple media driven by what I have experienced and felt, externalizing and focusing on the integrity of the moment. I see the landscape of Earth and the Heavens as a platform for humanity, a base from where we can understand the infinite and the infinitesimal, and our place within it. Imagery and form is abstracted and manipulated from small moving discoveries of shape and structure found in my surroundings, occasionally my back yard, but sometimes as far away as the next galaxy. My work refers to an intricate system of points interconnected by a common thread, and the physical handiwork of mesh-like spaces enveloping exposed light. These works require a unique degree of labor intensity through which the latent is often discovered. They require the engagement of the spectator drawn into a universal, yet also, a personal conversation.

I combine traditional media with other less obvious materials and resources. I find a personal magic in transforming construction rebar, doilies, paint-dripped cardboard, or a fallen bird's nest, creating work that engages participants. The outcome hopes that technique and material conjoin with a personal event of the intellect, each understood and revealed, by way of the other, making a public work of art.



Alette Simmons-Jimenez *Blush*- m/m on incised cardboard and foam-core,
ink marker, acrylic, encrusted crystals, glitter, resin, 18 x 18"



Alette Simmons-Jimenez *Babylon 3* (installation group of 3 suspended m/m wire objects), Plexiglas painted floor mirrors, electric light components, found objects, rubber, pipe cleaners, metallic laminates, styrofoam. Ceiling Height to Floor x 48 x 48"



Alette Simmons-Jimenez *Carousel*, Mixed Media assemblage, wire, plastic sheet, paint, beads, pipe cleaners. 89 x 29 x 29"

Mission Statement

The Exhibition Committee of the John D. MacArthur Campus Library at Florida Atlantic University was formed to bring museum quality contemporary art into the library, to educate and inspire the University community, and to go beyond the norm by stimulating intellectual curiosity, creativity and public debate. We hope to build a reputation for quality exhibitions with artists who seek to experiment using new and exciting mediums and topics. By giving contemporary art a home among our academic collections, it will serve to inspire research, stimulate the imagination, and encourage other artistic endeavors.



Cornell Museum of Art

51 N Swinton Ave
Delray Beach, FL 33444

Curator: Melanie Johanson

Bronx-Breeze

Apartment Gallery and Studio
Bronx, N.Y.

Director: Anna Pasztor

Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation

One Wind NW
Albuquerque, NM 87120

President: Ray A. Graham, III

ArtTable Miami

Chair: Alette Simmons-Jimenez

Communication Chair : Rochi Llaneza



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