

Trees are the wisest and most compassionate creatures in the woods. They will do all in their power to take care of everyone and everything beneath them, when they have the power to do it."

Andrew Krivak, *The Bear*



PARTICIPATING ARTISTS


- Ravi Agarwal
- Rebecca Clark
- Tamara Dimitry
- Phoebe Godfrey
- David Holzman
- Rani Jha
- Joyce Kozloff
- Tim Kussow
- Dan Mosher Long
- Maggie Nowinski
- Maura O'Connor
- Priti Samyukta
- Mechthild Schmidt Feist
- Brian Keith Stephens
- Peter Waite

WHEN THERE
WERE NO
BORDERS AND
MAPS: THE
GRANDEUR
OF NATURE

February 13 –
March 13, 2025



COVER IMAGE David Holzman, *Title, description*.



"... the surface of the earth looked and felt and acted like when there were no maps or borders, no rifles or artillery, no men or wars to claim possession of land, and snow and rock alone parried in a match of millennial slowness so that time meant nothing, and death meant nothing, for what life there was gave in to the forces of nature surrounding and accepted its fate to play what role was handed down in the sidereal march of seasons ..."

Andrew Krivak, *The Sojourn*

"And yet no matter how long winter lasted, spring followed, its arrival soft and somehow surprising, like the notes of birdsong upon waking, or the tap of water slipping in a droplet from a branch to the ground."

Andrew Krivak, *The Bear*

When There Were No Maps and No Borders:
The Grandeur of Nature | March 13, 2025

The exhibit “When There Were No Maps and No Borders: The Grandeur of Nature” presents 14 artists concerned with our planet’s future. Climate change, pandemics, involuntary migration, racial discrimination, conflicts, wars — the crises our Anthropocene era has inflicted on our Earth — are the focus of their artworks. They warn us of the dramatic escalation of these events: that so-called “natural” disasters are not random events, but rather a consequence of humanity’s actions towards the planet. It is a planetary form of revenge, for which we are responsible.

Ten Connecticut-based and four international artists, hailing from such diverse parts of the globe as India and Germany, have created paintings, installations, photographs and videos documenting the deterioration of our most basic natural resources without regard to geography or national borders.

The artists chronicle “what if” scenarios. Will our technology, which we so deeply believe in, turn on us? Will we fall victim to our greed for natural resources? They evoke a sense of remorse that prompts us to confront our role in the degradation of the natural environment. They point out the timeless endurance of nature, which will abide long after the climate and resources necessary to sustain human life have vanished. They forcefully articulate the urgency of the task that lies before us.

This exhibition is a critical component of Eastern’s fourth consecutive National Endowment of the Arts, Big Read Award — Andrew Krivak’s novel, “The Bear” (2019). The title of this exhibition originates from Krivak’s earlier novel, The Sojourn (2012), which describes a primordial place — a land “of no maps or borders, no rifles or artillery, no men or wars to claim possession of land, and snow and rock alone parried in a match of millennial slowness ...” The land, in its ancient grandeur before human greed descended upon it, weaves a vivid thread through Krivak’s writing.

The participating artists echo this lament when they bemoan our human depredations of a once virgin globe. Whether through a series of deep blue cyanotypes of leaf silhouettes and burst-like shadows — a nod to the early pioneers of botanical illustration by **Rebecca Clark**; a family of organic, cloud-like forms growing upwards to the top of a 10 foot wall and out onto the gallery floor by **Maggie Nowinski**; or stylized mushrooms assembled into a grove of alien flora by **Tamara Dimitri**; untamed nature fills the gallery. **Peter Waite**’s stark, desolate painting is dominated by two mountainous formations of salt left after the winter near East Hartford, Connecticut; **Phoebe Godfrey**’s The Womb of Creation — a stylized female reproductive system (a uterus rendered in a rusty brown metal) conveys both strength and vulnerability; **Dan Long**’s

photographs of antique maps and exotic relics indulge in the lure of the marvelous and wondrous. **David Holzman**’s wood sculpture resembles Noah’s Ark, densely populated with numerous figures and motifs, heading out to safety of primordial land; **Brian Keith Stephens**’ depictions of animals in their natural habitats suggests the interconnectedness of all living beings; **Joyce Kozloff** portrays the power of a malicious molecular to swipe the entire planet only three years ago; **Rani Jha** moans the brutality of Nepal’s earthquake in her contemporary revision of Madhubani painting’s centuries-long tradition; **Ravi Agrawal** forces us to see the hostile power of the Ganges River, when angered by human pollution; **Priti Samyukta**’s self-portraits, on pieces of worn denim quilted in the style of Gee’s Bend quilters, reflects our wide ranging cultural interconnectedness; and **Mechthild Schmidt Feist**’s maps of the journeys of displaced persons refer to the plight of human migrations. We find consolation in **Tim Kussow**’s two wooden houses. One is filled with party balloons, the other is empty, blurring boundaries between work and play. The evocative encaustics by **Maura O’Connor** that exhumes solitude. Like Krivak’s narration, all of the artists in this exhibition suggest that, although humans have harmed the land and urgently need to reverse course, Mother Nature is compassionate. We need only to ask forgiveness.

“When There Were No Maps and No Borders” invites us to step into dreamlike realms where nature’s grandeur is both awe-inspiring and humbling. It will not harm us, but we must learn to protect it. Krivak’s story teaches us we must seek unity with nature, and our artists emphatically echo his sentiments.

Julia Wintner, Coordinator of Art Gallery and
Museum Services, 2025

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We are grateful to the artist for entrusting their works for this exhibition and to create moment of education, revelation and transformation.

A big cheer for Art Midwest, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts, for providing us with resources and support for weaving together literature and the visual arts.

The novel “Into the Beautiful North”, the graphic memoir The Best We could Do”, “Interior Chinatown” served as prompts for Eastern Art Gallery exhibitions in the past. “When There Were No Maps and No Borders” is our fourth visual arts interpretation of a literary text.

Thank you, Eastern community, for your ongoing support of our daring program and the administration for enabling us to do our work smoothly.

Special thank you to the Art Gallery staff: Mark McKee and the fantastic crew of our student workers for the most professional display of this exhibition.

Ravi Agarwal



"The river.

The city bears witness to itself. The river is in the margins. It is very dirty, filthy. The city does not need it any more. Its future is pre-configured, the river is dead. It will now be cleaned. Not like a life-giving artery, but a sparkling necklace, adorning a new globality. The city is turning its back on the river even as it reconfigures its topology. There was a time when the river was its ecology. The city and the river shaped each other. Now the relationship is only with land, which the river holds in its belly. Violent. Thousands of poor thrown out, for the new stadiums, temples, bridges and pathways. Uncertain futures. Death, the predominant Hindu relationship to life in the cycle of rebirth, has a timeless resonance as ashes are immersed in the waters. But what will the rebirth be?

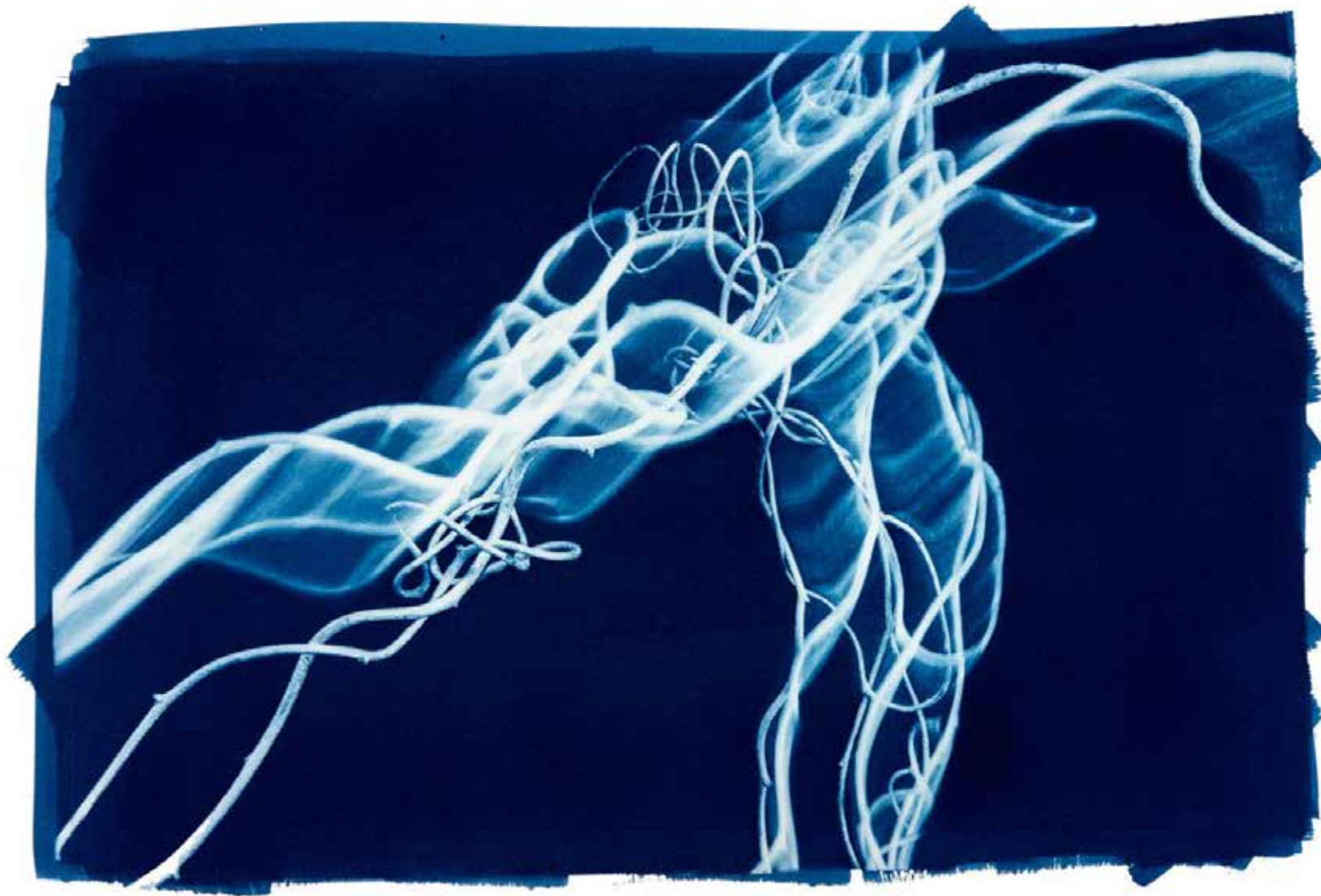
The self.

The self. Seeking to recover a relationship in the new alienation. The river becomes a muse and metaphor for a search, within and without. Yearnings. Integral to an imagination of the self and the outside. The first bird seen on the riverbank 30 years ago came back and changed my life. Regaining personal ecologies as a photographer/activist. My organic body now extended by the inorganic body of the city. Water on a filtered tap. The river is alive, throbbing in my veins. The unresolved questions of spirit and sense. Wherein lies my reality? The engagement with the triad of the self, the city and the river, becomes a reclamation of the self. I photograph even as I experience other human abandonment. I go back, again and again, endlessly, searching."

Ravi Agarwal has an inter-disciplinary practice as a photographer/artist, environmental campaigner, writer and curator. Bridging the divide between art and activism he addresses the entangled questions of nature and its futures using photography, video, text and installation. His work ranges from the long documentary to the conceptual and performative. He has regularly published photo books and diaries ("Ambient Seas," 2016; "Extinct?," 2009; "Have you seen the flowers on the river," 2007; "Immersion. Emergence," 2006). The book "Down and Out, - OUP" 2002, was a first major photographic work on migrant labour in India. His latest book "Multispecies Speculations and Growing Lexicon," is part of his multispecies art project Samtal Jameen, Samtal Jameer supported by the Prince Claus Foundation.

Alongside, Agarwal is the founder director of the environmental NGO Toxics Link and founder of The Shyama Foundation set up to support art and ecology practices in India. He is the recipient of the UN-IFCS Award for Chemical Safety, as well as the Ashoka Fellowship. His formal education is in Engineering and Business Management.

Rebecca Clark



Most people have experienced moments in their lives that were transformative. When in an instant everything you knew and understood went out of control as your world turned upside down. Sometimes these moments are very personal the result of an accident, health condition, or the end of a relationship. Or they may be experienced more universally — like a natural disaster or global pandemic. "Limbo," an ongoing series of cyanotype prints, is inspired by the terror and beauty of sudden and irreversible change. The humble plants and leaves I photograph are in a state of suspended animation, floating in ambiguous time and space, responding to forces beyond their control. Within each composition are juxtapositions intended to represent the precarious balance between opposing states of being and the pursuit of equilibrium.

Cyanotype is an antique photographic process, that was originally used for scientific documentation of plants. The technique requires hand application of light sensitive chemicals to paper, exposing with a large-scale negative to UV light and development in water to achieve the characteristic blue color and brush strokes unique to each print. Inspired by Anna Atkins' botanical prints from 1843, my cyanotypes diverge from traditional use of the media in significant ways. I choose the imperfect over the ideal specimen, and use photographic processes such as motion blur, selective focus and digital compositing to continue the transformation started by time, weather, and insects. I create these images to reckon with transience and loss, recognizing and accepting the fear and allure of transformation.



Tamara Dimitri

Tamara Dimitri is a visual artist with a background in sculpture, woodworking, and architectural drafting. She received her BFA from Arizona State University and her MFA from Cornell University and her work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions across the east and west coasts. Since 2005, she has worked as a program specialist for the Connecticut Office of the Arts where she has manages the state public art program, artist grants, accessibility programing and creative economy studies among many other activities.

"The landscape and the environment are central to my work. I have lived in three distinct regions and attributes of each region filter into my work. These regions include the mid-west farmland, the desert southwest and currently coastal New England.

Throughout my work I aim to balance the beauty of our natural world while simultaneously maintaining an awareness of the human footprint on our land, water systems and atmosphere. Process and structure are integral to my work. Repetition and crafted components often come together to form a larger human-scale installation. At times I utilize traditional sculptural materials, but I am also drawn to inferior materials that are recycled and repurposed into finely crafted objects. Each piece recreates landscapes familiar to me and my work continues to grow based upon my ongoing exploration of the life sciences and the natural world. "

Involuntary Journeys: Mapping the History of the vanishing Shanghai Jewish Refugee Quarter

Intersecting Horizons: Chino Valley, 48 x 40 x 12 in, galvanized steel wire, paper, cardboard. Image courtesy of the artist.



Phoebe Godfrey

This piece came out of my desire to illustrate the idea of creation. All human cultures have creation stories, and in our culture, for the most part, we look to the Book of Genesis as representing the only true version of creation done by God the Father. However, I took inspiration from chapter one in Genesis where God states, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness", indicating sex/gender plurality, as in there being a male and female deity, as opposed to in chapter two. Therefore, I wanted to focus on this first chapter and the role of the goddess, imagining that it was in fact she who gave birth to the Earth, and from there, clay and soil, all life, including our own, was born.

The clay in this piece is not fired and so it is cracking, illustrating our fragility and our mortality. In addition, the birch branches are seen in many cultures to represent 'new beginnings.' Finally, the typewriter represents the need all humans have to invent and tell and re-tell their creation stories.

May 1,000 new creation stories continue to bloom.

The Womb of Creation, 2024, 40 x 60 in., mixed media. Image courtesy of the artist.



David Holzman

David Holzman explores themes of imagination and memory through diverse mediums. Working primarily with watercolor, acrylic wash, and, more recently, gold flash in his paintings, Holzman's techniques often begin with automatic drawing — a surrealist approach that allows for the generation of images free from conscious control. For his sculptures, he utilizes basswood, valuing its versatility and workability.

Holzman's artistic journey began with woodcut, evolving into a passion for narrative bookmaking inspired by Belgian expressionist Franz Mazereel, who did not use words, but only images, creating visual narratives, a precursor of graphic novels. This early influence led to the creation of several wordless visual narratives. Holzman has returned to bookmaking, now using a small press in his unheated studio for printing. The first one called "The Fish Lady Variations," and then there was "The Dolphin Boy." Then there was "The Man with the Big Head," followed by "Daphne Returned," and "The Amphora." The book "On The Fence" was about the Middle East. Holzman spent 12 years illustrating the Five Books of Moses in woodcut, and there were over 500 woodcuts in that project under the title "Torah for the Eye." He then stopped making books for quite a while.

He returned to book printing in 2023, with a book "A Slice of Pizza in Kramatorsk," which was his response to the war in Ukraine. "Vitaly, (The Scream)" was his next book, which is going to be dedicated to the children of Ukraine. It starts with Edvard Munch and his famous "Scream," which Holzman turned into a character. "Expressionism spoke to me, the Brucke, whole expressionist aesthetic and that really set me on my path," said the artist.

Holzman's daily practice deserves mentioning: "My day is broken up into different sections because of the various areas of work: painting, sculpture and printing, there needs to be a way to deal with all of these interests without sacrificing any of them to the other. It's never totally equal. For instance, this morning, I woke very early. I was up at about 3 a.m. and I got to work. My day's work always begins with paintings for "The Book of Umm," a project that goes back 13 years and has evolved into painting days and alternating drawing days. Today was an odd drawing day as opposed to an even drawing day. Drawing days alternate with painting days. So in other words, today, since it was a drawing day, I worked on a new image. On odd drawing days I begin with an old image from years past, photocopy it and alter it. On even drawing days I begin from scratch with automatic drawing," said the artist.

Holzman draws upon this wealth of experiences to shape his career with the obelisk sculpture and collaboration with the Canton Artist Guild. He offers advice to aspiring artists to develop understanding through exploring internship opportunities and trying various things. "You've got to know yourself. The only way to know yourself is to try stuff out and experiment a little bit with careers. Get internships. Get experience. And try things. That's the best advice I could give anybody."

David Holzman in conversation with the curator, February 2024.

Structure 5, 2021, carved and painted basswood, ceramic and mixed media, variable. Image courtesy of the artist.

Rani Jha



Rani Jha, a distinguished Madhubani artist and scholar, holds a Ph.D. on the Contribution of Women in Mithila Painting and Literature from LNMU Darbhanga (2010). Rooted in ancient ritual and tradition, Rani Jha's artistic strength lies in her ability to express profound social issues with depth, particularly those close to her heart, focusing on women's themes. Rani Jha teaches at the Mithila Chitrakala Sansthan, Saurath in Madhubani, Bihar.

"The history of Madhubani Painting begins in ancient times. The paintings discovered on mud walls after the 1934 earthquake were merely a glimpse of a centuries-old painting tradition ingrained in the ethos of Mithila. It was a coincidence that the devastating earthquake brought this tradition to the world's attention, and during the famine of the 1970s, this 'art' gradually found its way into the art market.

From 1960 to 2000 AD, Madhubani Painting largely retained its traditional form. However, within these 40 years, some artists introduced slight changes in their themes using the 'Kachni' style. Prominent among them were Padma Shri Ganga Devi, Padma Shri Godavari Dutt and Smt. Lalita Devi. Ganga Devi, for instance, depicted scenes from her travels to Japan in her art.

Godavari Dutt took a chance from traditional paintings and made extraordinary experiments, such as drawing an innovative design of a single trident in the 'Kachni' style. Traditionally, artists depicted Shiva with a trident (Ek Trishul), but no one had presented just a trident as a standalone subject before. Godavari Dutt's experiments included depictions of Sudarshan, Dhanush, and Basuki Nag, all of which can be seen in the Mithila Museum in Japan.

In 2003, American anthropologist and art's research scholar Raymond Owens' colleague, David Szanton of the Ethnic Art Foundation in New Jersey, founded the Mithila Art Institute on Mahila College Road in Madhubani. This institute, established by Parmeshwar Narayan Jha and his wife Mrs. Vibha Jha, prepared a new generation of artists. Here, traditional paintings were created alongside those addressing contemporary subjects. A new style of Mithila painting emerged, which was well-received in the international art market. While efforts were made to maintain the basic style of these paintings, the subjects were updated, balancing traditional gestures and postures with new themes.

It's important to note that if the early history of Madhubani painting reflects its spiritual essence, the modern history is intertwined with its commercialization. Originally, women made these paintings for spiritual fulfillment and self-satisfaction. With commercialization, financial aspects have become intertwined with the art, which is a positive development. Change is eternal, and I agree that paintings must evolve. However, I am aware that this evolution sometimes leads the art towards fine art, diverging from its traditional roots."

Brian Keith Stephens



My work speaks to this in two mediums: oil paintings and collage/installation. With the first medium, I do this primarily through mystical imagery juxtaposed with figurative technique. I am using oil paints to create this mystical alter-reality where the human is the animal and the animal is the human.

Growing up in Connecticut, I have always found animals as a vessel for depicting human emotion. I believe in many ways animals are capable of expressing human emotions in a way that is both understandable and mysterious and alluring. Like animals, we are all wild and fearful, but unlike animals, we have to live in this world of rules and normativity. My desires, my emotions, are not always able to fit in the place and society I live, but in my art, I can find a place for those outliers to join forces.

The other side of my work involves mixed media and collage. For me, collage is a way to breakdown the space in my life between the emotions of love and hate and between the objects that symbolize these polar emotions. Often my collage works carry motifs of feminine, romantic objects, belong perhaps to figures in my life that have held the role of lover, wife, mother, friend. Together, these notes, clothes, fabrics and photos create a kind of alter of admiration for the women in my life who I have loved, have lost and also have gained. The female identity is central in these works; central because so much of that identity is defined by objects. Objects and their associations create myths, and these myths in turn create these identities. Now in the world, the feminine identity is a source of chaos and socio-political unrest. Her manner of clothing herself, her manner of living, her manner of using her body — all these things have become nationally and globally contested issues. With these collages, I use motifs of nostalgia and history, mixed with personal history to create stories, identities with collaged pasts of the mysterious, eternally captivating feminine sex. I believe that as humans, no matter the epoch, have always held this mysterious and wondrous fascination with women. While I play a lot with nostalgia, these collages also speak to the irrelevance of time, and the universality of the female sex. Through installation and collage there is a breaking down and rebuilding of this love of the complex and mysterious human relationships that surround me around me.

At the center of my work and life are these fascinations with myth, the spectrum of human passion, our kinship to the spirit of the wild animal, and challenge of balancing the real with the fanciful. We must balance all of this while also navigating the spectrum of time, the web of past, present and future. My art has been and continues to be my outlet for exploring these themes and conjuring up new ones.” Brian Keith Stephens.

“The key to Stephens’s paintings is not so much their composition or their subject matter as their surfaces. Those surfaces are where these paintings truly live, where their allure inheres. Painters and critics have a great word for the kind of surfaces “scumbled.” A surface that is scumbled has been scratched, abraded, mixed, smeared.”

Michael Lindgren, from the essay *Almost True Tales: on Brian Keith Stephens and The Sublime*.

Joyce Kozloff



Joyce Kozloff charts physical and diplomatic terrain, creating places, real and imagined, to dramatize the intersections of culture and politics. "Joyce Kozloff: Uncivil Wars" incorporates U.S. Civil War battle maps — created by officers and soldiers from both the Confederate and Union armies — to depict a history that is currently still contested. Viruses erupt throughout the battle maps, reflecting the pandemic that locked down state, national and international borders, symbolizing the viral racism and xenophobia that permeates our country. Barbara Pollack, in her conversation with the artist, notes that Kozloff has "a knack for picking maps that are historical but coincide with contemporary issues." Pollack then points out that "about 620,000 soldiers died in the U.S. Civil war over five years, almost the same as U.S. deaths from COVID-19 in the last year."

Meticulously copying the information held in each map, Kozloff turns them into expressive works by building up painterly surfaces with rich, saturated colors, as in "Battle of Appomattox Court House" (2021), where the armistice was signed. Pinks, oranges, and greens explode across the canvas, and while the viruses abound, Kozloff's treatment evokes fireworks, suggesting both the horrors and sadness of war, and the relief and jubilation of its ending. "Battle of Shiloh" (2021) is a swirling mass of viral infection in gorgeous, iridescent putrescence, reflecting the bloodiness of that battle. And the viruses in "Battle of Fredericksburg" (2021), a classically gridded painting, look strangely like the mines and grenades employed during the war.

After Kozloff's 2021 "Uncivil Wars" exhibition at DC Moore Gallery, she created a series of six smaller paintings, a coda to the earlier ones, also based on period maps of other Civil War battles. But this time, she overlaid them with masks that we were all wearing during the COVID-19 epidemic. They had become a battleground between red and blue America, often divided across the Mason-Dixon Line. Judith Solodkin, Solo Impression Inc., utilizing a digital sewing machine, attached the masks and embroidered the paintings' surfaces with a wide range of programmed stitches (from sharp, aggressive lines of battle to meandering patterned borders). The sutured masks evoke, for the artist, faded sepia photographs of bandaged Rebel and Union soldiers in American history textbooks. "Battle of Richmond" (2023) is a target, indicating the encircling and strangling of the southern capital, signaling the failure of the Confederate insurrection.

Uncivil Wars: Uncivil Wars: Battle of Chattanooga, 2020, 49.75 x 66 in., signed, titled and dated on verso acrylic on canvas. Image courtesy of the artist and DC More Gallery, New York City.

Tim Kussow



“Work/Play ft FD” explores the duality between labor and leisure, revealing their deep interconnection. Work provides structure, sustenance, and purpose, forming the foundation of human survival and progress. It challenges us, fosters growth and connects us to a larger community. Play, in contrast, fuels creativity, relieves stress and brings joy yet it is no less essential. It sharpens problem-solving, strengthens resilience and enriches our lives. This piece examines the tension and harmony between these forces, questioning where one ends and the other begins. Is work merely survival, or can it be play? Can play be purposeful? “Work/Play ft FD” blurs these boundaries, inviting reflection on balance, fulfillment and the meaning we create in both.”

Timothy Andrew Kussow is a professor, sculptor and firefighter based in Connecticut. He has been a professor of Sculpture at Connecticut State Colleges & Universities-Manchester since 1998 and currently serves as the chair of the Visual Fine Arts department. With a Master of Fine Arts in Sculpture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, his artistic practice explores the relationship between work and play. Beyond academia and the arts, Kussow is a dedicated firefighter and EMT with the Mansfield fire department. Since 2004, he has served as a full-time firefighter, bringing over two decades of experience in fire service, including roles as a volunteer and part-time firefighter. Kussow’s multidisciplinary career reflects his passion for both creative expression and public service, embodying a unique balance between artistic exploration and emergency response.



Dan Mosher Long

I recently told someone (with a straight face) that I make photographs to ward off evil. Perhaps I am a practitioner of a makeshift form of genteel voodoo. Each fresh photograph is a spell or incantation. This is harmless Juju. It's sanitized, pseudo-Santeria that employs things from life (once living) and objects rich with association. With these images I am photographically petitioning and attempting to placate the Gods. I pray for good fortune, boons and blessings. Giving in to my inner hypochondriac, I beg to avoid specific maladies and misfortune. In so many ways, photography is magical. It's easy to get carried away by the process. I have been photographing cultural artifacts and natural objects, often in juxtaposition, since 2010. The subject matter was largely collected first and photographed later. On various shelves and cases in my home, I have the stuff of a workingman's Wunderkammer. Bugs and bones are wondrous things. I'm working as part of a long tradition, drawing inspiration from nature and man's association with the natural world. Nature may be my muse, but I'm also fascinated by old stuff in general. Patina, cracks in the veneer and signs of decay make most everything more visually interesting to me. I'm drawn to the flotsam and jetsam of yesteryear and anything that references a specific age, place or memory. I like the way these artifacts are transformed by time and take on and shed significance. These photographs pay homage to the European Cabinet of Curiosities. Naturalia and artificialia are key elements of Cabinet of Curiosities: naturalia, which are animal specimens and artificialia, which are man-made objects including antiquities and artworks, books, works on canvas or paper, maps, diagrams etc.

I have also drawn inspiration from what little I know about the Japanese wabi-sabi aesthetic (which embraces the imperfect, impermanent and incomplete) and modern mixed-media, found art assemblage. Surrealist and hyper-realist painters have also influenced my approach. Like the surrealists, I love odd juxtapositions. The hyper-realist painters used photography as reference, exaggerating detail. But instead of paintings that look photographic, these still lifes are painterly photographs. I begin by arranging objects on a horizontal surface with the camera above pointing down. These images are not collage — they are fully constructed before the camera and I rarely crop in post-processing. I shoot with a macro lens and use a process that is unique to digital photography: focus stacking. Focus stacking software was developed for science and research and allows a macro photographer to shoot multiple frames each focused on a different plane in space and then merge the exposures to create an image with extended depth of field. After the objects are arranged and lit, I make up to 30 exposures each focused on an incrementally different spot in front of the lens. While focus stacking is tedious, it provides exceptional clarity from the top (objects closest to the lens) to the bottom (objects farthest from the lens). The resulting images are strikingly detailed and intriguingly unphotographic.

In Place of Memory (Anoplophora Zonatrix), 14 x 21 in., Archival pigmented ink on Hahnemuhle photo rag. Image courtesy of the artist.



Maggie Nowinski

Maggie Nowinski, MFA, is a multi-modal artist, teaching-artist and curator based in Western Massachusetts. She received a BFA in painting from State University of New York and an MFA in Visual Art Vermont College of Fine Arts. Nowinski is the full-time Instructor of Drawing and Gallery Director at Connecticut State Community College Manchester and was recently visiting lecturer in drawing at Smith College. Nowinski's art practice encompasses various mediums, including drawing, sculpture, printmaking, found objects, sound, and performance. Her installations explore the connections between the body, grief and environment, pulling from intersections of the human, botanical and geological. Nowinski is interested in expressions of translations through various mediums, mining memory and representation in relation to the natural world as it both adapts and struggles to survive. Her practice is informed by an awareness of the conceptual and political inevitability of art making, as well as a love for repetition, daily mark-making, collaboration and frequent wanderings in the woods. All of her works are an extension of her drawing practice.

Most recently Maggie Nowinski (2024) exhibited an interactive solo exhibition at the University Museum of Contemporary Art at the University of Massachusetts entitled *Abundant in Drift* which combined elements of Nowinski's own artistic practice with new works created for the UMCA exhibition. "*Abundant in Drift*" responds to the UMass Natural History Collections, most significantly the UMass Herbarium. She was also a part of group exhibition on contemporary drawing entitled "*Desire Lines*" at the Brattleboro Museum of Art in Vermont (2025). In 2023 Nowinski was an artist in residence along with a large scale solo exhibition "*Cicatrix | in Bloom*" at the Tremaine Gallery at the Hotchkiss School where she worked with students to create an experiential drawing project. You can hear Nowinski speak about recent works, including the "*wHoles*" exhibited at the Eastern Connecticut State University Gallery, via this interview which accompanied a solo exhibition in 2021-22 called "*a wHole Recollection*." Maggie Nowinski's work is held by private and public collections including the Deerfield Academy, University Museum of Contemporary Art UMass and by Robert Hurst, Whitney Museum of American Art Chairman. Nowinski is the recipient of numerous grants in support of her projects including the Berkshire Taconic A.R.T grant and LCC grants through the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

More information can be found on her site at maggienowinski.com and on Instagram @maggienow.

Untitled Cairn: 41.72167-N, 72.21715-W, Art Gallery GPS coordinates, acrylic and India ink on canvas, double sided, site-specific installation, variable dimensions.

Maura O'Connor

From a young age, a love of the outdoors, natural landscapes and the rhythms of day turning into night have been a preoccupation of mine. Whether at home or traveling: digging in the garden soil, planting trees or walking barefoot on sand and stone brings a deep sense of connection to the inner workings of nature and often finds its way into the encaustic, oil and mixed media paintings that make up a large part of my art practice.

The story of the “The Bear,” a different kind of cautionary tale where human-kind has survived but is in its last years of existence, dependent upon the natural world and the creatures within it to carry life forward, deeply resonates. Bears are remarkable creatures in Andrew Krivak’s novel. They and the trees of the forest contain the histories of life. They are both witness and helpers. This haunting story brings to mind Native American cosmology stories and other myths.

“Winter Calendar” is a two-panel oil encaustic painting that contains a timeline of events from my life, embedded in layers of wax, oil, paper and sand. The shape of a bearskin is split down the middle with a spiral map of numbers that refer to the years of my life, so far: 1965-2024. The work originated in concept from Pekka Hämäläinen’s, Lakota America and an image of Lone Dog winter count. The caption for the image explains, “Winter counts were originally drawn on buffalo hides and later on cloth, muslin and paper. Using ink and various pigments, the keepers of winter counts drew pictographs sequentially in spirals or rows, often covering more than a century in a single hide. Several times a year the keepers unrolled the calendars and retold the events, reinforcing the people’s historical memory; the winter counts were essentially mnemonic devices for collective remembering.”

The imagery and purpose of the Native American winter counts is very appealing to me as I enter the sixth decade of my life. Realizing that I’ve begun to forget some details of prior events and missed opportunities for passing along stories or information to next generations of my family, there is some nostalgia but also melancholy associated with the work. My aim was to review but also bring forward into my own consciousness the hidden aspects of my past — as far as I could perceive them. I chose the shape of a bearskin to contain the spiral of years of my life because of an unforgettable sighting of a mother Grizzly with her cubs during a trip to Glacier National Park, Montana, in my twenties. Mother and cubs were no more than several hundred yards away, but down a steep ravine. When she caught scent of us up on the ledge, she stood up on her hind legs to her full height and swayed her whole body back and forth in the breeze. She looked directly at us. It was a magnificent sight of the power of such an animal albeit from a safe distance — and one I’ve never forgotten.

The accompanying “Winter Squall I” and “II,” also oil encaustic works on panel, contain archival prints of two images shot within a few seconds of one another on the Garnet Trail in Connecticut. The photographic images were taken as a winter storm abruptly arose in the woods which were docile one moment, a swirl of leaves and snow the next, blurring the trail in front of the dogs and myself on our afternoon walk. The prints and encaustic oil panels convey a similar sense of the passage of time, change and movement across a landscape — a kind of remembrance.

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Winter Calendar, 2023, oil encaustic painting on panel. Image courtesy of the artist.



Priti Samyukta

Priti Samyuktha's self-depictions redefine femininity. Her works are autobiographical, lyrical and cling to the traditional roots, since the imagery, in the words of the artist "is derived from her household things such as old pillow covers."

Her nostalgic opus, inspired by the oriental zest, against a multi-layered background, sings the lullaby of the past and the celebration of the present as she affirms, "journey is more important than the destination."

Priti Samyuktha is the head of the painting faculty at Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University. Priti indoctrinates the importance of hard work and perseverance to become a successful artist and stands as an example. One of the only few prominent women artists of Telangana, Priti consciously renders her muffled spaces with flora and fauna as she believes that women are always strongly associated with design and decoration. Hence the self-portraits show dissimilar attires with fashionable hair dresses and with meticulously painted floral designs all over the canvas. Her works emerge as chronicles of her life, family, and neighboring world, echoing intransigent social norms and the multifaceted roles of women. In an unfussy engagement with her work, one can see a kind of disinterestedness in exercising profligacy of imagery other than the crawly, creepy floral motifs as apparent in her small-scale work, mostly done in ink using masses of lines and cross hatchings. By doing so, Priti gives the utmost attention to the expressions of the portraits which evoke a sort of narcissism occupying the entire surface. Narcissism, however, is a necessity while dealing with men around her in various contexts on and off the campus.

Self-portrait, 2024, denim, hand stitching, various dimensions. Image courtesy of the artist.

Mechthild Schmidt Feist

Mechthild Schmidt Feist is a media artist and professor of Digital Media at New York University. Her media art practice of the past decade, coined "Engaged Media," uses interactive mapping as an artistic means to communicate environmental and social crises. Her interdisciplinary media work ranges from multi-media collages to interactive installations and outdoor projections.

'Involuntary Journeys' traces the arduous paths of refugees I worked with on Lesbos. Part of an installation of dual projections of Google Earth paths and poetic overlays. Views of the enriched Google Earth story.

The second part of her 'Involuntary Journeys' mapping series is built on empathy and resilience — still relevant for today's refugee crises. She researches the little-known history of about 20,000 Jews escaping the Germany of her grandparents to Shanghai between 1934 to 1941— and their continued escape from that city in the late 1940s.

Involuntary Journeys, M the Syrian artist, 2019, composite paintings from storytelling on Google Earth.

Peter Waite



My often large scale representational paintings since 1987 have dealt with places that embody public sentiment or ideological concerns. Stadiums, monuments, cemeteries, formal gardens, museums, prisons, casinos, corporate board rooms as well as public schools and housing and industrial landscapes are some of the locations that provide my theme of 'Personal/Social Memory.' Simply put, I represent "real visits to real places" and by omitting the figure from these pictures I try and emphasize the viewer's participation as witness to the moment of either just arriving — a first impression that lasts, or just leaving — taking one last look. In 1992, when "Salt Pile" was painted, I had a studio in the old Fuller Brush Building in the North End of Hartford. The location of these piles of salt used by the Highway Department for winter use was nearby and I was struck by this other-worldly man-made desert like "landscape" in the midst of a highly populated urban New England city. These large mounds of salt were at least two stories high and partially covered in giant tarps with large tire tracks flowing around them left by dump trucks and bucket loaders. These tracks indicated past movements in an otherwise static scene, and also indicated that such movement would probably come again, so a kind of past/present/future is shown. What initially drew me in — the aesthetic weirdness of the scene — never left me as I started to paint it. But while I was painting, I also began to think about the subject: salt. The mineral salt comes from dried up oceans. It has both positive and negative effects. It can be used both as a preservative (of food) and a destroyer (think of how the Romans once salted and thereby destroyed the fields of their conquered). The salt used on highways to melt snow and ice will then leach into the environment and have a negative effect on plants and wildlife. Ironically while road salt's purpose is to ensure the safety of moving vehicles in winter, it corrodes them. There are numerous other connotations, some biblical, metaphorical, historical, gastronomical, scientific etc., that can be applied to salt. But aside from all of this, my main hope is that the painting stands as it is, and words are not important. The painting comes first.

Salt Pile, 1992, acrylic on panels. Image courtesy of the artist.