

A Guide to the New Jersey Arts Annual

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Statement from the New Jersey Department of State

As the 4th Lieutenant Governor, and the 35th Secretary of State, I congratulate the artists represented in this year's New Jersey Arts Annual exhibition and welcome the Zimmerli Art Museum as a new partner. This year's exhibition brings together creations by 16 artists across generations and disciplines without a prescribed theme, inviting us to encounter art with curiosity and openness. We are thrilled to welcome world-renowned artist and New Jersey native, Hank Willis Thomas as our juror.

This year's exhibition was curated with intention and exhibits a group of artists who have been underrecognized. At the New Jersey Department of State and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, we bridge people with the arts in profound and inspiring ways and remain committed to doing so alongside our museum co-sponsors and the creative pulse of visionary artists like those celebrated today.

— **Lt. Governor Dr. Dale G. Caldwell, Secretary of State**

Statement from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts

On behalf of the board and staff of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, we would like to commend the artists selected for this Annual. Together with our partners at the Zimmerli, we are proud to showcase the work of some of the most talented artists living or working in our state. We are especially honored to have Hank Willis Thomas serving as the juror. His work invites us to look more closely and discover the connections that emerge across individual identities, perspectives, and approaches to artmaking.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Zimmerli Art Museum board and staff for helping bring this exhibition to life. At this moment, our collective spirit calls for art that can bring us together, spark conversation, and nurture curiosity.

Zimmerli Introduction

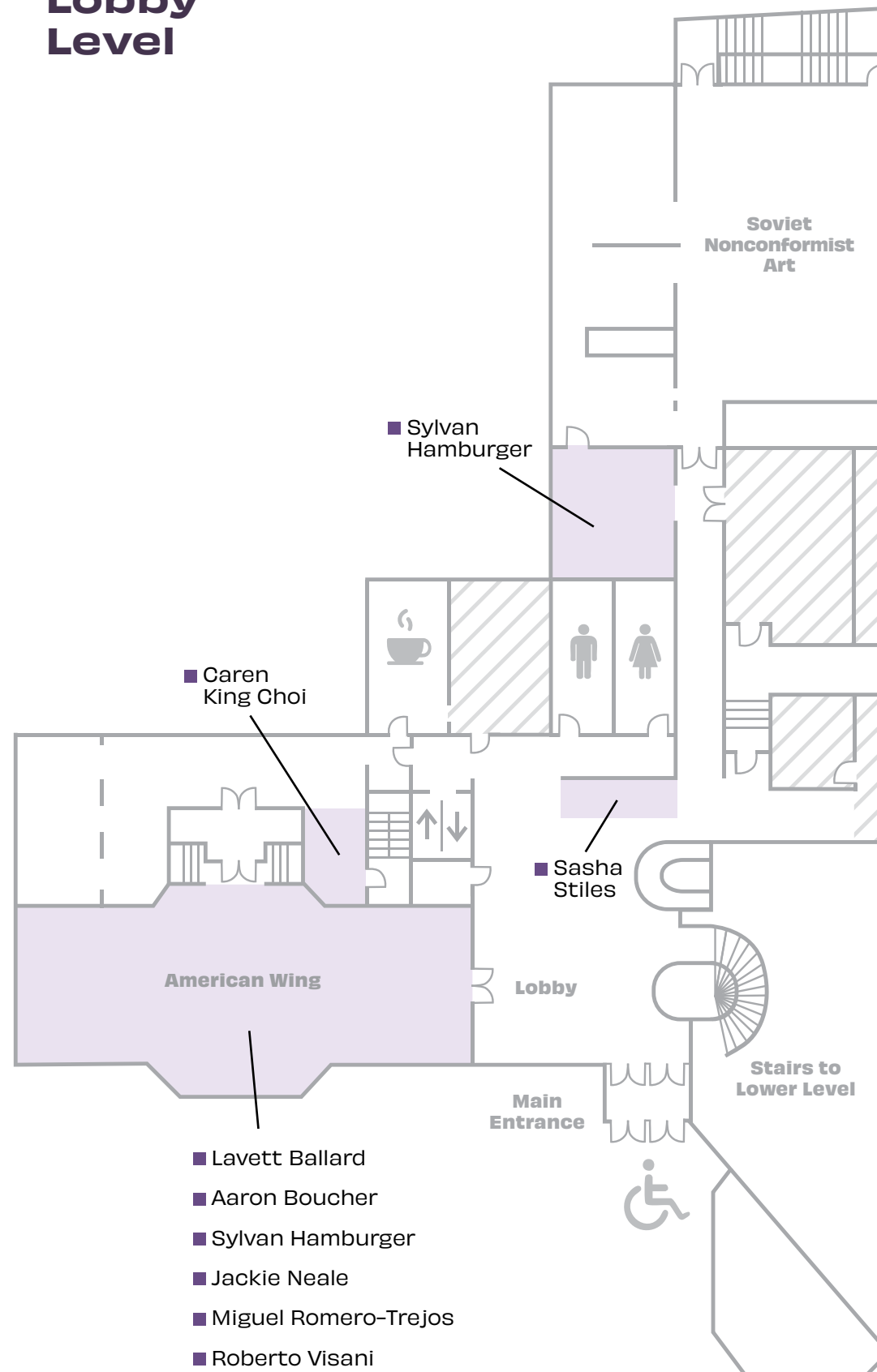
The New Jersey Arts Annual has long offered a view of the art being made across the state. This year's edition at the Zimmerli, rather than including as many artworks as possible, brings together sixteen artists, each represented by a significant installation or multiple works.

The juror, Hank Willis Thomas (born in Plainfield, NJ, in 1976), selected a wide-ranging, intergenerational group of artists. Some were born in New Jersey; others came here from elsewhere in the United States or around the world. Some have deep roots in the state; others are more recent arrivals.

The time we are living in is complicated, often difficult to understand or even describe. These artists do not offer a united response. Some look to the past; others turn toward family, tradition, imagination, new technologies, or their immediate environment. Exhibiting their works together gives these inquiries room to unfold; ideas can inform or resonate with others.

This Annual offers a different way to think about a statewide survey in a rapidly changing present: not as an attempt to encompass everything, but as an invitation to experience art more fully.

Lobby Level



Sasha Stiles

Born 1980, Pasadena, CA | Works in Milford, NJ



Still from *COMPLETION: ARE YOU READY FOR THE FUTURE?*, 2019/2022

Sasha Stiles engages with language as both art and technology, blending poetry with digital culture to explore authorship, memory, and consciousness. A Kalmyk-American of Mongol and British descent, Stiles traces how language evolves—from voice to code—and how such shifts reshape human connection. Through objects, environments, and AI systems, such as her poetry collaborator and alter ego *Technegy*, she shapes language into new forms of expression, using words to slow perception and to encourage more humane technologies.

Sylvan Hamburger

Born 1994, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada
Works in Highland Park, NJ



EXIT Jersey Shore, 2026

Sylvan Hamburger's work blends public intervention with personal memory, informed by a childhood spent in a family theater troupe that staged community plays about local history. Continuing that tradition of working in situ, Hamburger salvages discarded materials—debris from private life, industry, and public space—to investigate contemporary culture and his place within it. Since moving to New Jersey, he has been working with the spectacle, kitsch, and poetic possibilities of discarded airplane advertisement banners that once flew along the Shore.

Lavett Ballard

Born 1970, East Orange, NJ | Works in Willingboro, NJ



Promises, Promises, 2025

Lavett Ballard creates layered collages celebrating American history and Black resilience, using photographs, paint, oil pastels, and metallic foils on paper, wood, and reclaimed fences. By cutting, weathering, and rebuilding these materials, she blends past and present into new visual stories. Drawing from memory, mythology, and Afrofuturism, her work portrays Black women as sacred and complex figures, restoring their visibility and honoring their legacy.

Roberto Visani

Born 1970, Faenza, Italy | Works in North Bergen, NJ

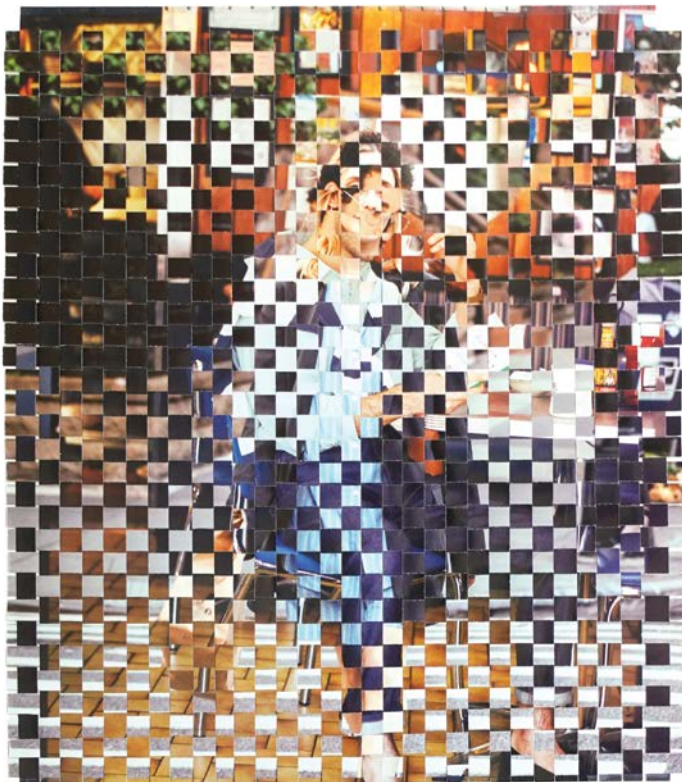


hands cuffed, 2021

Exploring the human form through sculpture, drawing, photography, and community engagement, Roberto Visani moves between representation and abstraction to examine past, present, and speculative futures. Central to his practice is a reexamination of African diaspora artifacts and the historical imaging of Black bodies, questioning how they have been positioned as both subjects and objects. In the *cardboard slave kit* series, Visani reimagines images of enslaved people, transforming archival representations into spaces for reflection on the enduring legacies of slavery.

Aaron Boucher

Born 1979, Dallas | Works in Jersey City, NJ



Quarter I, 2025

Influenced by his background in architecture and design, Aaron Boucher uses materials such as glass and paper to create works that probe and distill human experience. Through various formal strategies, such as weaving strips of magazine paper, he creates textured, labor-intensive works. Approaching found materials as if they were a site to be excavated, Boucher gives form to personal and communal experiences such as loss, endurance, and belonging, inviting viewers to reflect on the emotions that connect us all.

Caren King Choi

Born 1984, Hackensack, NJ | Works in Fair Lawn, NJ



Family Portrait, 2025

Building images from thousands of hand-cut paper fragments, Caren King Choi creates work that shifts between abstraction and clarity as viewers move closer or step back, reflecting how perception and belief change over time. *Family Portrait* depicts the history of the artist's maternal family—separated by political crisis and martial law between China and Taiwan—by representing an absent relative with radiating circles over her mother's shoulder.

Jackie Neale

Born 1972, Philadelphia | Works in Collingswood, NJ



Crossing Over: Immigration Stories Anonymous 15, 2018

Jackie Neale blends historical photographic techniques with contemporary storytelling to foster empathy and dialogue. As founder of Big Day Film Collective, she champions community-driven projects that amplify underrepresented voices and shared histories. Bridging the poetic and the political, Neale's practice reimagines documentary photography as a powerful tool for social change.

Miguel Romero-Trejos

Born 1987, Cali, Colombia | Works in New Brunswick, NJ



Panopticon vs. Disco, 2026

Miguel Romero-Trejos explores the tension between opposites—life and death, light and dark, joy and sorrow—finding meaning in that unresolved space. *Panopticon vs. Disco* is a sculptural installation comprising a painted monolith and projections that critique surveillance culture. A pentagonal obelisk supports an orb that alternates between projections of watchful eyes, evoking coercive visibility, and a shimmering disco ball, symbolizing collective joy and release.

Lower Level

Soviet
Nonconformist
Art

■ Donté K.
Hayes

■ Christina
Freeman

■ Ana Benaroya

■ Storm Cuff

■ jc lenochan

■ Chelsea Odufu

■ Jesse Satterfield

■ Kimisha Turner

HANK WILLIS THOMAS
LOVERULES

From the Collections of
Jordan D. Schnitzer
and His Family Foundation

Christina Freeman

Born 1983, Wilmington, DE | Works in Lawrence Township, NJ



UltraViolet Archive as shown in Queens International 2018: Volumes

UltraViolet Archive is a traveling collection of endangered creative works that have been challenged, banned, or destroyed. Adapted to each venue, it typically features a screening room, bookshelves, and interactive stations, inviting visitors to explore censored works and to suggest additions to the collection. The Zimmerli's installation highlights the most challenged books of the last decade, as recorded by the American Library Association.

Storm Cuff

Born 2000, New York City | Works in East Orange, NJ



VEHICLE: The Chosen Ones as shown at Rosa, New York City, in 2026

Storm Cuff works across photography, painting, film, and dance to tell layered stories of Black experience. Rejecting narrow or expected portrayals, her practice embraces experimentation: dance shapes visuals, paint conveys emotion, and film captures what words sometimes cannot express. Cuff's multidimensional work honors the richness of Black life, revealing quiet strength and the beauty of stories too often unseen.

Ana Benaroya

Born 1986, New York City | Works in Jersey City, NJ



A Thousand Kisses Deep, 2024

With her figures inspired by fantasy imagery, Ana Benaroya reimagines how women's bodies are portrayed, breaking gender-binary stereotypes and creating images that are healing, humorous, and empowering, yet also unsettling and provocative. Her work expands our concepts of women's representation while confronting the invisibility of lesbian desire in a culture saturated with hyper-sexualized imagery made mainly for men.

Jesse Satterfield

Born 1991, Point Pleasant, NJ | Works in Point Pleasant, NJ



Celestial Body, 2024

Jesse Satterfield examines queer identity and experience through weaving, sewing, and dye-painted tapestries. Satterfield's work meditates on gay loneliness in the age of digital dating apps, transforming sourced imagery, such as the sunrise and sunset photos used as profile placeholders, into vibrant, abstracted textiles. By amplifying color and altering composition, these "queered" objects create otherworldly spaces shimmering with quiet longing and bold visibility.

Chelsea Odufu

Born 1993, Newark, NJ | Works in Newark, NJ, and Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire



Souls of Gold_001, 2023

Shaped by a first-generation Nigerian-Guyanese American upbringing, Chelsea Odufu lets memory, ancestry, and imagination guide her work. Blending research with intuition and drawing on oral histories and travel accounts, she creates immersive film, video, photography, and sculpture rooted in myth, spirituality, and Afrofuturism. At its heart, her practice is an act of reclamation, envisioning Black identity as expansive, ancestral, and future-facing.

Kimisha Turner

Born 1981, Olympia, WA | Works in Turnersville, NJ



Pieces of Me, 2020

Kimisha Turner blends abstraction and symbolism to hold both personal and collective stories within a single image. With vibrant color, shifting forms, and textured materials, the work transforms lived experience into layered compositions that explore identity, resilience, and cultural memory. Rather than offering fixed meanings, these pieces invite curiosity and mindful looking, open space for reflection and dialogue, and allow different experiences and interpretations to coexist within the same image.

Donté Hayes

Born 1975, Baltimore | Works in Cliffwood, NJ



Motherland, 2025

Donté K. Hayes creates ceramic “future artifacts” that merge ancestral tradition with visions of resilience, drawing on African sculpture, Hip Hop culture, and science fiction. He builds hollow forms etched with thousands of hand-inscribed lines using black clay that is fired yet unglazed, challenging ceramic traditions and assumptions tied to color. These intricate surface textures evoke hair, raffia, scars, and ritual, recording time and repetition in material form while affirming the beauty and continuity of Blackness across the African diaspora.

jc lenochan

born in the united states of america
works in new york city and new jersey



new landscapes #7, 2022

jc lenochan deconstructs and reconfigures familiar objects and institutional symbols, visually rethinking their possibilities in critical discourse. using drawing, sculpture, and performance, their work questions and reassembles existing images and text, often blending personal and historical stories with humor. by subverting memory and meaning, lenochan asks viewers to reconsider what seems familiar, revealing how everyday objects can become powerful statements about identity, fairness, and social justice.

Checklist

All works are courtesy of the artist, unless otherwise noted.

An asterisk * denotes works reproduced in the catalogue.

Lavett Ballard

Precious Beings, 2022
Collage on reclaimed wood
69 x 29 in.

**Promises, Promises*, 2025
Collage on reclaimed wood
32 x 46 in.

And I Can Arrange It, 2026
Monoprint with collage
30 x 22 in.

Ana Benaroya

**A Thousand Kisses Deep*
2024
Oil on canvas
50 x 100 in.

*Your Good Girl's
Gonna Go Bad*, 2024
Oil on canvas
88 x 72 in.

Bella Note, 2025
Marker and India ink on
bristol board
14 ½ x 11 ½ in.

Aaron Boucher

Interwoven I, 2023
Interwoven II, 2023
Interwoven III, 2023
Charcoal and chalk on
artist's board
16 x 20 in. each

Evening I, 2024
Acrylic on canvas
40 x 30 in.

Half VI, 2025
Half VII, 2025
**Quarter I*, 2025
Quarter VIII, 2025
Whole I, 2025
Whole VIII, 2025
Woven gloss paper on
watercolor paper
12 x 9 in. each

Storm Cuff

**VEHICLE: The Chosen Ones*
2025
Installation of digital video
(color, sound, 2:27 min.),
paintings, vinyl and archival
prints, cyanotypes, tires,
garment rack, and steamer
trunk
Dimensions variable

Christina Freeman

**UltraViolet Archive*
2018/2026
Nomadic collection of
endangered creative
works—including films,
graphic novels, music,
literature, visual and
performing arts—that were
banned, challenged, and
destroyed; with neon sign,
film screening space, and
study area
Dimensions variable

Sylvan Hamburger

Afterparty, 2026
Decommissioned aerial
advertisement
Dimensions variable

**EXIT Jersey Shore*, 2026
Archival pigment print on
Kozo paper with chine collé,
wood, enamel paint, and
sandbagss
9 ½ x 12 x 3 ft.

Donté K. Hayes

Caterpillar, 2024
Ceramic, black clay body
9 ¼ x 9 ½ x 10 in.

Bell, 2025
Ceramic, black clay body
14 ½ x 13 ½ x 13 ½ in.

Cornrows, 2025
Ceramic, black clay body
with stain wash
9 x 10 x 6 in.

Grip, 2025
Ceramic, black clay body
7 ¼ x 8 x 8 in.

**Motherland*, 2025
Ceramic, black clay body
with stain wash
8 x 12 ½ x 12 in.

Caren King Choi

*Jie-Puo-Di (Older Sister-
Grandma-Younger Brother)*
2006
China marker and graphite
on vellum
78 x 36 in.

Ma-Jie (Mom-Older Sister)
2006
China marker and graphite
on vellum
79 ½ x 36 in.

**Family Portrait*, 2025
Colored pencil, graphite
pencil, and collaged paper
on paper
30 x 40 in.

Family Portrait Story, 2025
Digital video (color, sound,
3:36 min.)

*Gallery Visitor Guide: NJAA
"Artist Edition"*, 2026
Graphite pencil on paper
10 x 6 in.
(reproduced back cover)

jc lenochan

**new landscapes #7*, 2022
 chalk and charcoal on
 canvas
 75 x 95 in.
 courtesy of jcl studios

*love to no more innocent
 bystanders*, 2023
 ink on paper
 30 x 22 ½ in., one
 26 x 20 in., each of thirteen
 courtesy of jcl studios

Jackie Neale

**Crossing Over: Immigration
 Stories Anonymous 15*, 2018
 Cyanotype on cotton
 84 x 60 in.

*Crossing Over: Immigration
 Stories Anonymous 16*, 2018
 Cyanotype on cotton
 84 x 60 in.

Chelsea Odufu

Souls of Gold_000, 2023
 Digital archival print
 40 x 60 in.

**Souls of Gold_001*, 2023
 Digital archival print
 40 x 68 in.

Souls of Gold_3, 2023
 Digital archival print
 60 x 40 in.

Spirit of Gold_1, 2023
 Digital archival print
 60 x 40 in.

Miguel Romero-Trejos

**Panopticon vs. Disco*, 2026
 Polyurethane-coated foam,
 CNC router-cut wood, paint,
 and digital projections (color
 and sound)
 11 x 3 x 3 ft.
 Courtesy of Digital Pulse
 Productions

Jesse Satterfield

**Celestial Body*, 2024
 Dye-painted cotton, wool,
 and Lurex
 48 x 114 in.

*No One's Sun: A Total Eclipse
 of the Hole*, 2024
 Dye-painted cotton, wool,
 and Lurex
 60 x 48 in.

*TRANS RIGHTS ARE
 HUMAN RIGHTS*, 2025
 Resist-dyed cotton, wool,
 and Lurex
 48 x 48 in.

Sasha Stiles

**COMPLETION: ARE YOU
 READY FOR THE FUTURE?*
 2019/2022
 Two-channel video poem
 with Technelegy (color,
 sound, 10:23 min.)
 Music by Kris Bones

Kimisha Turner

I AM: The Procession
 2016/2026
 Performance at Zimmerli Art
 Museum, December 3, 2026

Black Enough?, 2020
 Neon mounted on acrylic
 9 x 42 x 1 in.

**Pieces of Me*, 2020
 Human skull, beads, tile,
 gold, amethyst, citrine,
 quartz, cowrie shells, carbon
 crystals, ancestral ashes,
 and hair
 10 x 16 x 13 in.

Ancestral Reclamation, 2021
 Resin, gold and rose gold,
 copper, carbon crystals,
 ancestral ashes, and hair
 10 x 28 x 1 in.

You Will Survive, 2021
 Grandmother's book, gold,
 glass vial, and collected
 tears
 12 x 7 ½ x 2 in.

Roberto Visani

*cardboard slave kit, h
 powers blend*, 2021
 Cardboard and hot glue
 98 x 30 x 28 in.

a vacant turn, 2021
 Lasercut on paper in
 antique frame
 28 x 19 in.

**hands cuffed*, 2021
 Lasercut on paper in
 antique frame
 17 x 23 in.

sideways glance, 2021
 Lasercut on paper in
 antique frame
 23 x 17 in.

This guide is published on the occasion of the New Jersey Arts Annual, hosted by the Zimmerli Art Museum, September 2 through December 20, 2026. Hank Willis Thomas served as the juror. The exhibition and accompanying publication are organized by Jeremiah William McCarthy, Chief Curator and Curator of American Art, with Stacy Smith, Publications Specialist.

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PRESENTED BY



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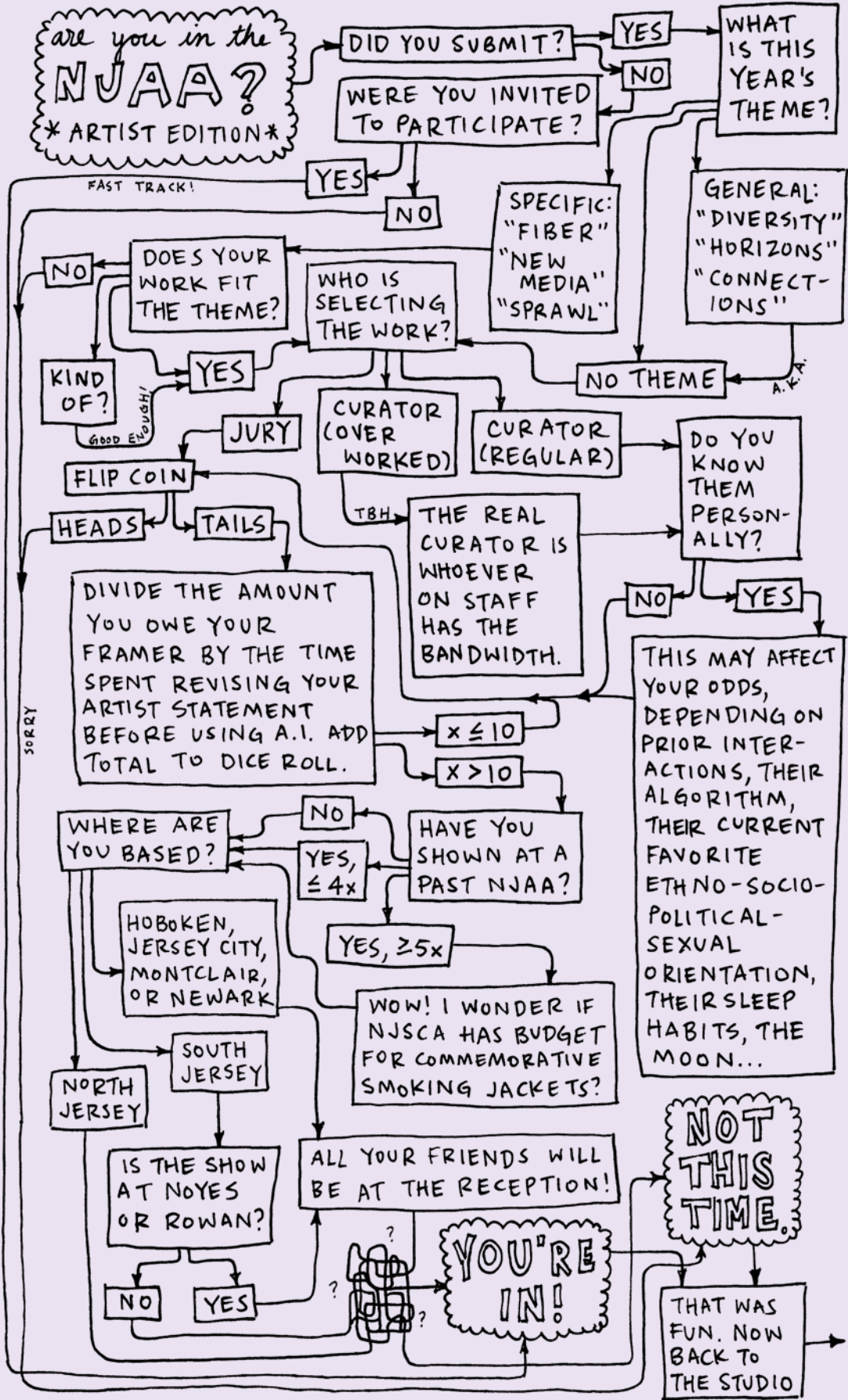
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Back cover: Caren King Choi, *Gallery Visitor Guide: NJAA "Artist Edition," 2026*

are you in the
NJAA?
* ARTIST EDITION *



SORRY

$x \leq 10$
 $x > 10$

NOT THIS TIME.

YOU'RE IN!

THAT WAS FUN. NOW BACK TO THE STUDIO