

Morris Museum



2020 New Jersey Arts Annual

*Dissonance – Art / Craft / Design /
Performance / New Media*

DISSO



The conversation began with the Latin prefix, dis, or the Greek, dys.

The conversation began with the Latin prefix, dis, or the Greek, dys.

As a word-forming element, often reversing or negating the word it precedes, dis/dys is thriving today, linguistically, as never before. This 2020 edition of the New Jersey *Arts Annual* explores the inexpressible feelings and meanings at the core of such language.

Employing the term dissonance as a point of departure, the Morris Museum invited submissions that encompass qualities of “discord, tension, instability, and conflict,” thought to “aptly fit the moment in which we find ourselves, as individuals, as institutions, as a nation, as a culture.” The tensions of diversity, geography, and history indicate that our collective future—of our world, our nation, our state, and its citizens—remains tantalizingly malleable. The chosen works for this exhibition amply indicate how creative thinking grows from uncertainty, challenges the status quo, and aspires toward artistic revelation.

While dissonance is most fundamentally understood as a musical quality, the tension and restlessness it implies can be expressed visually, verbally, or performatively. The submissions did not disappoint. Parallels to musical dissonance in other creative expression can be seen in the treatment of color, the choice of materials, the construction of texture, the juxtaposition of words, the choreography of movement, the topic of reference, etc.

The concept of dissonance must not be cast in too negative a light. It adds spice to a bland meal. It contributes new perspective to conventional thought. Rather than infecting with despair, it can inoculate with hope. Rather than elevating our stress, it can motivate and channel our action toward a distant ideal.

The 2020 New Jersey Arts Annual: Dissonance – Art / Craft / Design / Performance / New Media is a project of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the Morris Museum.

Project jurors: Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims, Independent Curator and Art Historian, and Dr. Cleveland Johnson, Executive Director of the Morris Museum.

Exhibition catalog designed by Sonya Maizell.

The Morris Museum gratefully acknowledges generous operating support from the following funders:



New Jersey
Cultural Trust



From the New Jersey State Council on the Arts

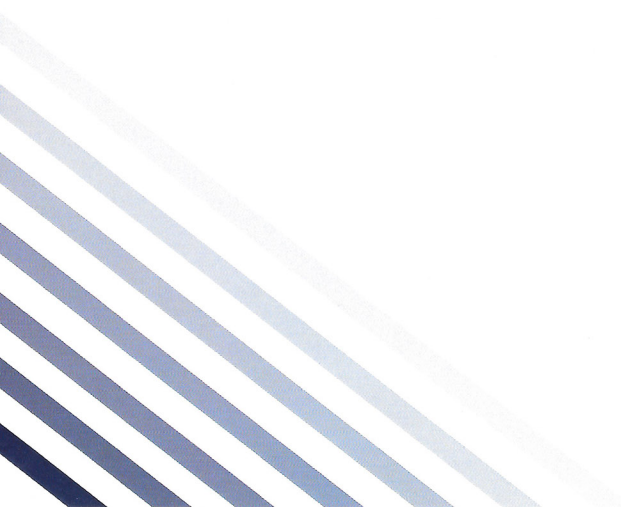
Now more than ever we rely on the work of artists and art itself to bring comfort and joy, build bridges, and illuminate our shared connections. The State Arts Council is proud to support the many exceptional artists who call New Jersey home. On behalf of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, we congratulate the artists represented in the 2020 New Jersey *Arts Annual* exhibition *Dissonance - Art | Craft | Design | Performance | New Media*. Together with our partners at the Morris Museum, we celebrate works by some of New Jersey's finest artists.

The *Arts Annual* exhibition series is just one way we work to elevate New Jersey's artistic community. In addition to exhibitions and showcases, the Council provides direct opportunities to artists through fellowships and grants, professional development, and networking and training programs. The Council also facilitates the Public Arts Inclusion Program, through which—for the past 41 years—hundreds of works of art have been and continue to be commissioned for buildings and public spaces across the state.

The *Arts Annual* exhibition series is carried out each year in collaboration with a major New Jersey museum or gallery. Special thanks this year to the Morris Museum board and staff for their commitment to this exhibition, especially Cleveland Johnson, Ronald T. Labaco, and the curatorial team. Your dedication helps us ensure that the people of this state and region can benefit from the thought-provoking and beautiful work of New Jersey artists.

Congratulations to the artists featured in this year's *Arts Annual*.

Elizabeth Mattson, Chair
Allison Tratner, Executive Director
Danielle Bursk, Director of Artist Services





From the Secretary of State

As the 34th Secretary of State, I have the honor and privilege of working closely with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts to ensure our state's many talented artists have opportunities to share their work. I would like to congratulate the artists represented in this year's *New Jersey Arts Annual* exhibition, and applaud the Morris Museum, whose collaboration contributed to the success of this outstanding event.

At the New Jersey Department of State and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, we connect people with the arts in rich and varied ways. The arts bring together communities, provoking emotion and thought, and this stunning exhibition will certainly leave an impression on all those who experience it. I thank the Morris Museum for partnering with us, curating such a powerful and diverse exhibit, and being such a gracious host for the arts.

Through the determined efforts of the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, its museum partners, and the creative hand of outstanding artists like those celebrated today, we will enjoy many more years of artistic excellence in the *New Jersey Arts Annual* series. During this difficult time, when so many people are looking to the arts as a source of comfort and peace, I am especially proud of our state's arts community and the continued creativity of our inspiring artists.

The Honorable Tahesha Way, Secretary of State

Dissonance - Art / Craft / Design / Performance / New Media
The 2020 New Jersey Arts Annual

The birth of this exhibition was a difficult one. Having very recently recalibrated its mission, the Morris Museum confronted the challenge of aligning this opportunity to celebrate New Jersey artists with its newly-defined focus on “art, sound, and motion.” As a music historian, I proposed the musical concept of “dissonance” as an organizing principle, curious how that concept might manifest itself through the visual arts. Who could have predicted, however, that by the time this exhibit would be ready to open, a virologic dissonance would have shaken our world. Indeed, the Morris Museum closed to the public just two weeks before the originally planned opening of this exhibition.

At that point, with the exhibition already adjudicated—resulting in a selection of works from 36 artists—and with wall texts and didactics already drafted, the eerily-clairvoyant relevance of the topic took on an added layer of meaning. Provocatively, this exhibition now exists in dialogue with two versions of itself.

Originally, in the exhibition prospectus, I shared my own perspectives on dissonance, interpreted through a musical lens, asking New Jersey artists to examine and search their work for parallels in their own artistic mediums, styles, and techniques. How might dissonance be expressed through the treatment of color, through the choice of materials, through the construction of texture, through the juxtaposition of words, through the choreography of movement, through the topic of reference?

If you believe, as I do, that artists are often on the cutting edge of history, anticipating seismic cultural forces well before the general public, then this exhibition is an opportunity to examine that premise. Visitors will experience an exhibition—on the “other side” of the initial COVID-19 onslaught—that was conceived, innocently enough, during the months prior. Some artists may have originally considered the “dissonance” theme in the context of our fractured political climate, or rising concerns about global warming, but this exhibition opens now to be viewed through new lenses that today’s generation will never fully be able to remove.

Of course, Art has the power to transcend time, place, and circumstance. Should you be perusing this catalog some decade in the future, imagine the great gash in history on both sides of which this exhibition unfolded. Hoping, however, that today’s dissonance finds resolution—or at least understanding—in the future, I welcome you to the 2020 *New Jersey Arts Annual*.

April 15, 2020

Cleveland Johnson, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Morris Museum

Acknowledgements

As you enjoy this volume, please join me in thinking gratefully of the many individuals who made this exhibition and catalog possible. Most notably, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts provided the generous financial support undergirding this project. Among NJSCA's illustrious staff, Danielle Bursk, Director of Artist Services, stands out for her direct contributions to this project. Enormous thanks go to my co-juror, Lowery Stokes Sims, for the artistic interpretation of "dissonance" that she brought to our deliberations. Ronald T. Labaco, Chief Curator and Director of Exhibitions at the Morris Museum, inherited this project from former curator, Alexandra Willis, and spent many solitary days during the Museum's "lockdown," reimagining the exhibition's design for visitors who would first experience it after their own solitary months of confinement. He was ably assisted by curatorial staff members Kayla Leiton and Sara O'Connor, and registrar Gillian Suss. This catalog's design, also reconceived to appear first online during the Museum's closure, is thanks to the dedicated efforts of Brett Messenger and Sonya Maizell.

- CJ



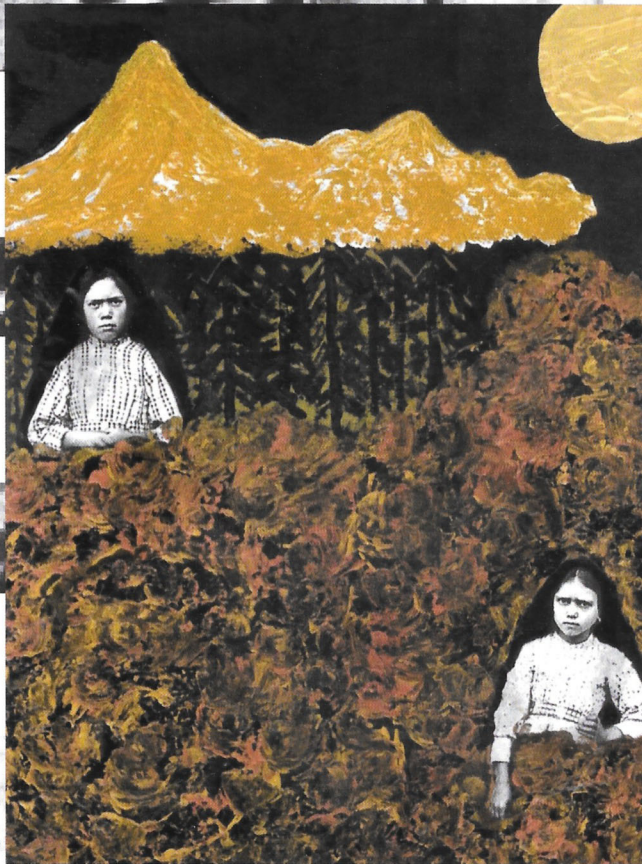
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dystopia dysfunction
disunity distrust
discredit display
disagree disrespect
dishonor disgrace
discomfort disapproval
dissonance dissonance
disintegrate disintegrate
disease disfavor
displace disagree disrespect
disorder dispossess dispossess
discolor discolored discolored



Marina Carreira



Waiting on the Sun/ All We Need is a Miracle

2018

acrylic, oil, photo collage

12" x 16"

I Have a Fire In My Chest...

2018

acrylic, oil, photo collage

9" x 12"

...But It Doesn't Burn Me

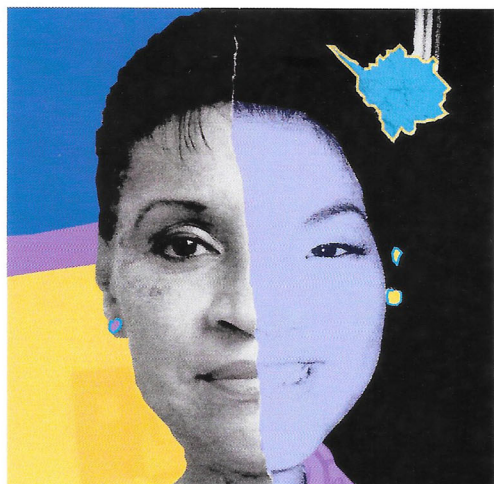
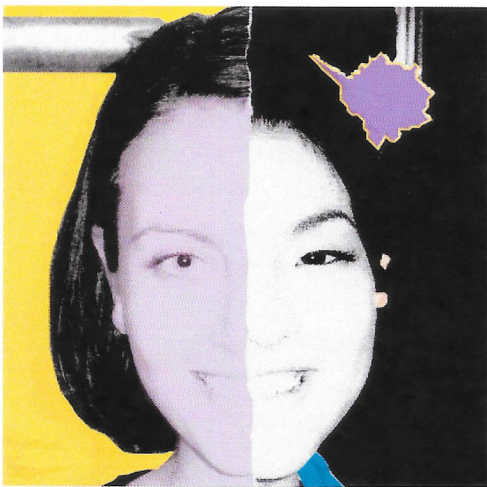
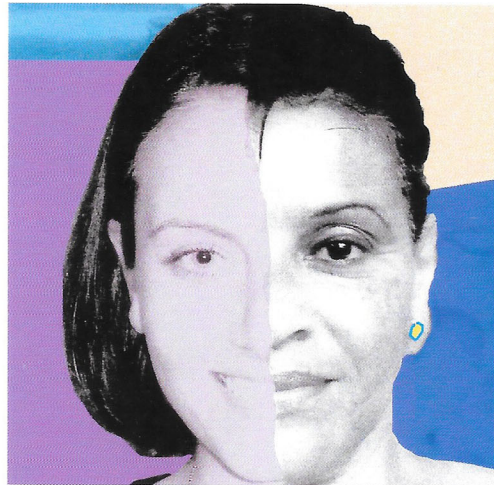
2018

acrylic, oil, photo collage

9" x 12"



Irmari Nacht

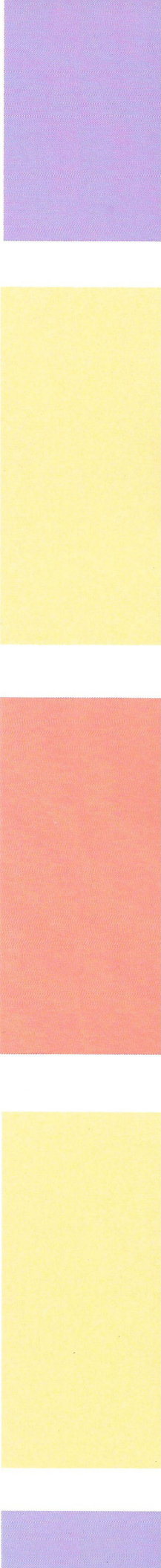


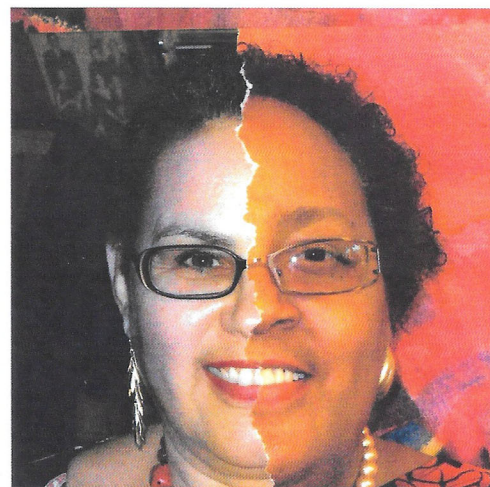
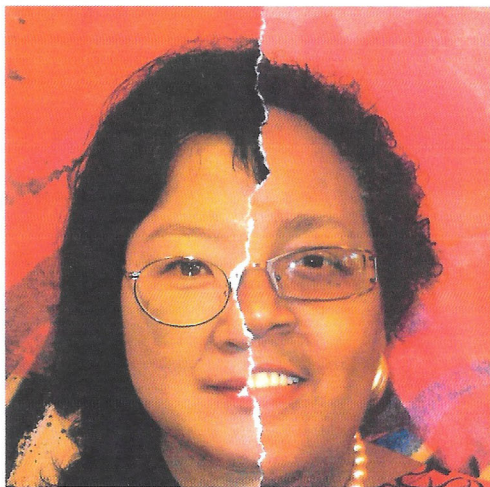
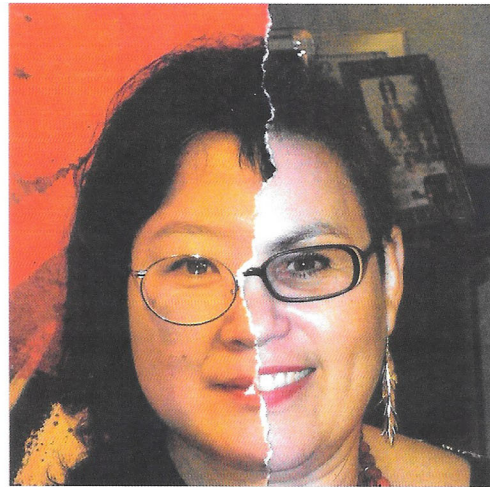
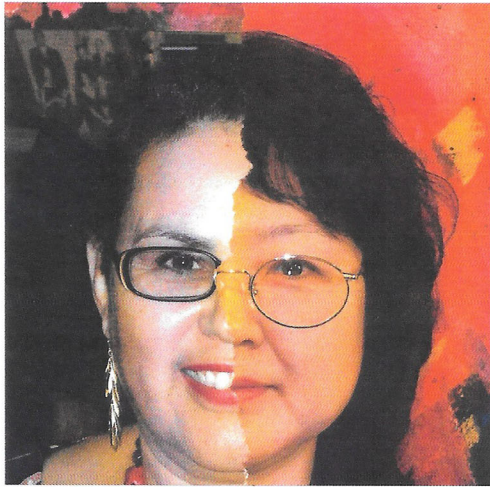
Recycled Identity 5

2019

collage/photography

12.5" x 19"





Recycled Identity 7
2019
collage/photography
12.5" x 19"

Olga Alexander Olga Alexander Olga Alexander

Feminine Transcriptions
2018
collage on paper
40" x 30"



Urban Flesh
2018
collage on paper
40" x 30"

Crossing the Boundary

2018

photography

17" x 22"



Joanna Madloch

Palimpsest
2020
photography
13" x 19"





Pink Smoke

2019

acrylic paint on wood panel

13" x 16"

Nighttime Fire

2019

acrylic paint on wood panel

12" x 14"



Jane Biron



Blue Smoke

2019

acrylic paint on wood panel

13" x 16"



Isaac Stackell



Groom Snare

1988

photography

10" x 8"

Hammersmash

1998

photography

24" x 20"

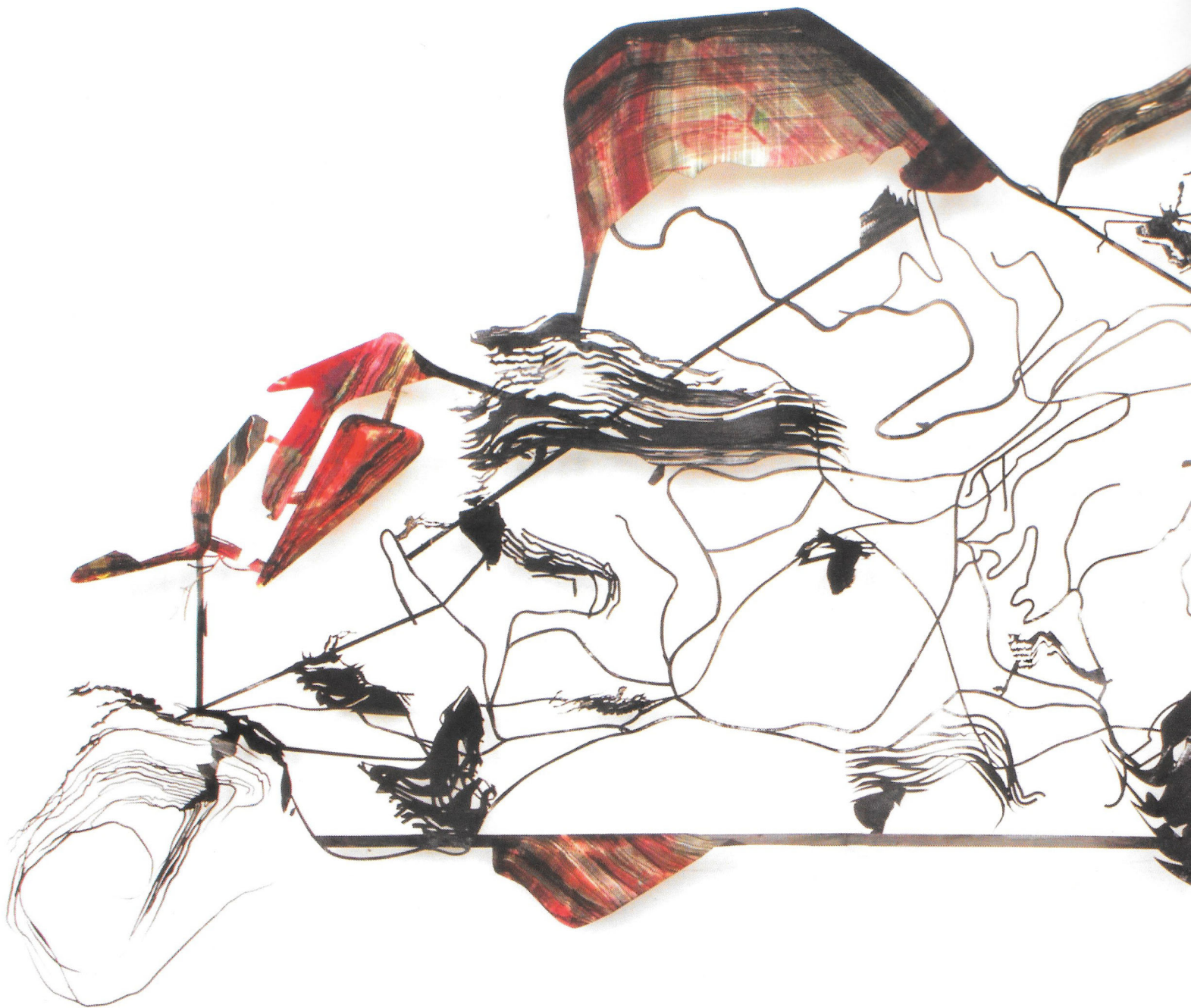
Adriane Colburn

Morenci Mine

2018

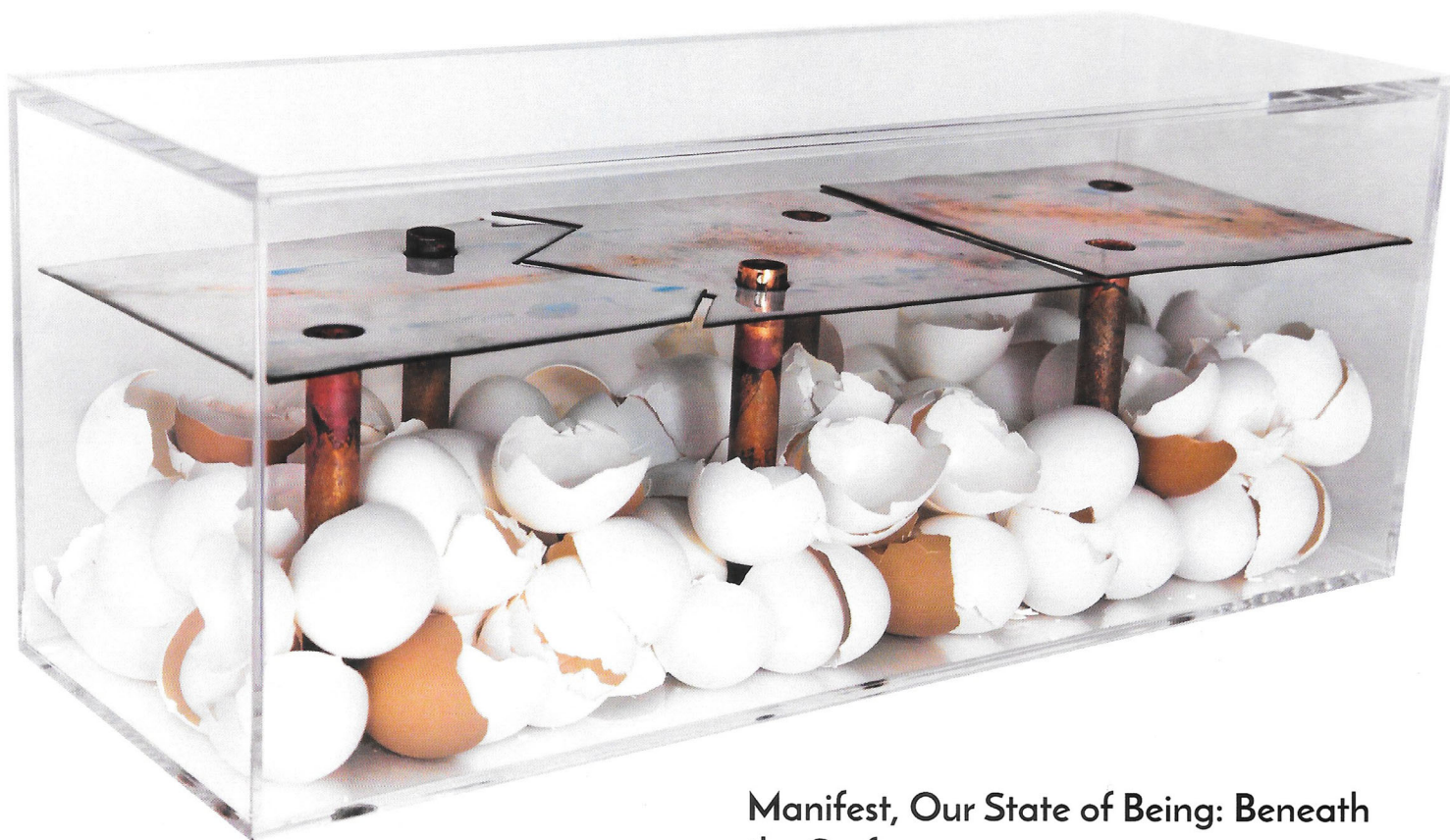
paper, ink, prints

36" x 72"





Judy Wukitsch



**Manifest, Our State of Being: Beneath
the Surface**

2019

copper, vitreous enamel, egg shells, and plexi box

7" x 6" x 18"



**Manifest Our State of
Being: Protecting**

2019
sterling silver, egg shell, and rubber cord
3.5" x 3.5" x 3.5

**Manifest Our State of
Being: Flourish**

2019
sterling silver, enamel, egg shell, and copper
5" x 3" x 4"



Skeff Thomas

Container with Target

2017

stoneware

26" x 14" x 14"



Sarah Canfield



Eyes Wide Open

2019

mixed media on canvas

36" x 50"

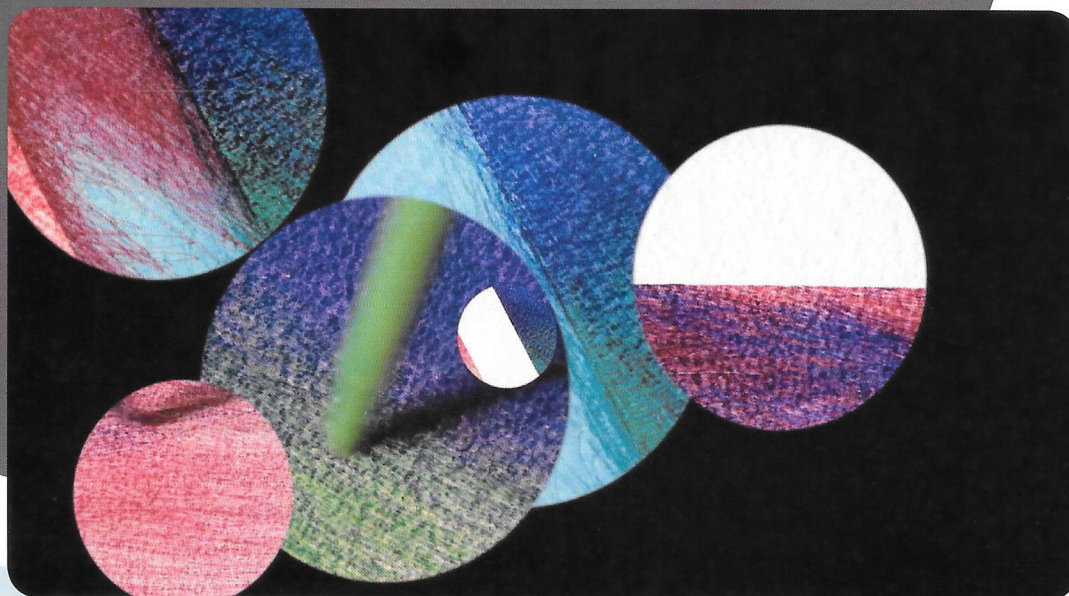
Chung-Fan Chang

Circle Noise

2020

video

5 minutes, 19 seconds



Drawing Noise

2018

video

5 minutes, 8 seconds

Emanuele Cacciatore



Approaching Perpendicular

2019
oil on canvas
50" x 50"

Eitan Barokas



Up One

2017

acrylic and spray paint on canvas

48" x 60"



Checkmate

2017

acrylic and spray paint on canvas

48" x 48"

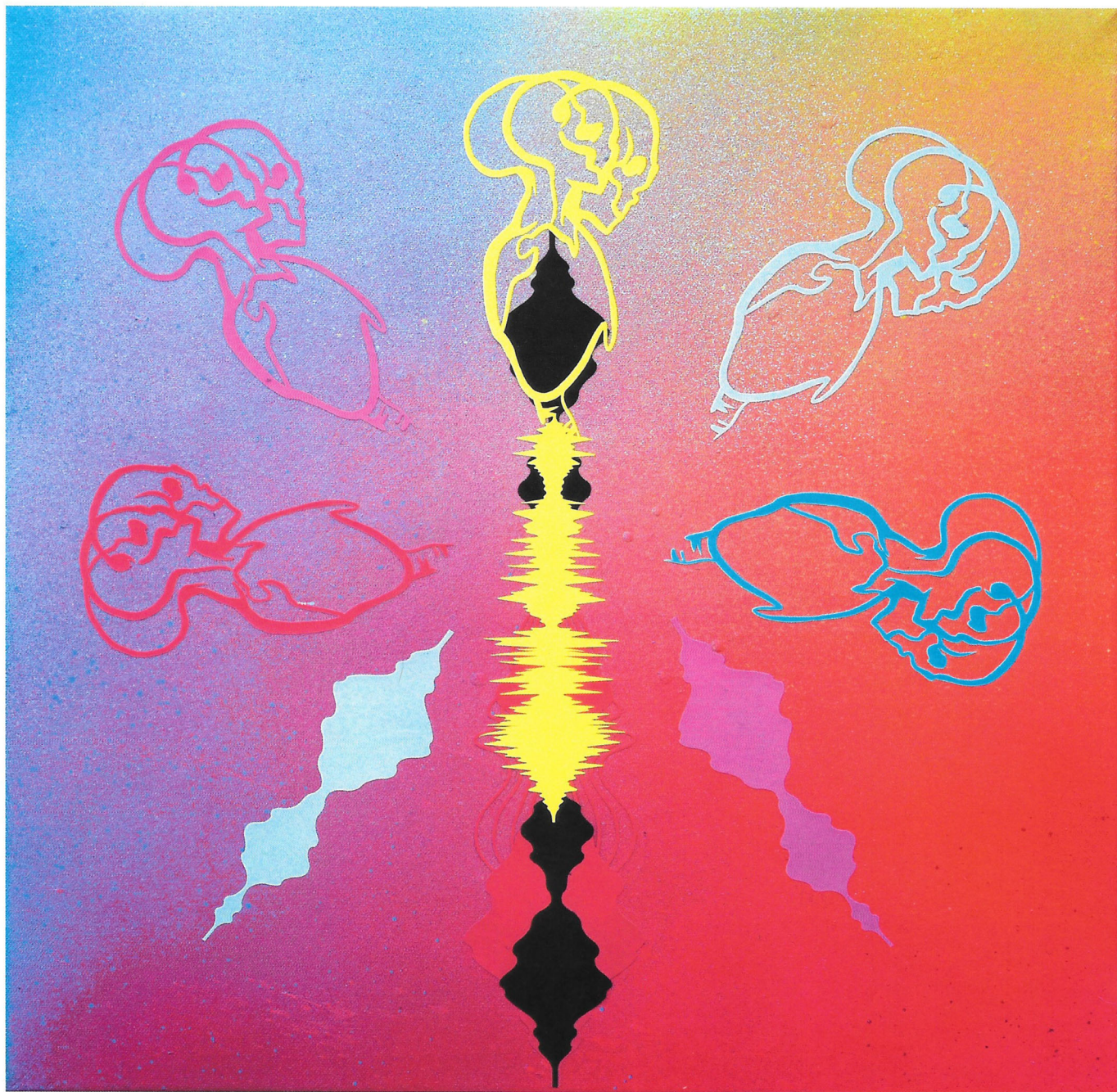
Erin Kuhn

Organized Cacophony

2020

paper/paint on canvas

20" x 16"



Death Knell

2020

paper/paint on canvas

20" x 20"



Jean-Paul Picard



Glass Block #3

2020
photography
30" x 24"



Glass Block #2

2020
photography
30" x 24"



Bus Dots #11

2020

photography

25" x 29"

Amanda Austin

La Ville Qui Dormait, toi

2019

music

1 minute, 32 seconds



The Poet's Echo

2020

performance

2 minutes



Tsai Hsi Hung



Brushstrokex2

2020

performance

7 minutes, 56 seconds



Asia Popinska



Dying Memory

2018

photography

19" x 27"

Cleo Mack

Nobody Puts Baby in a Corner

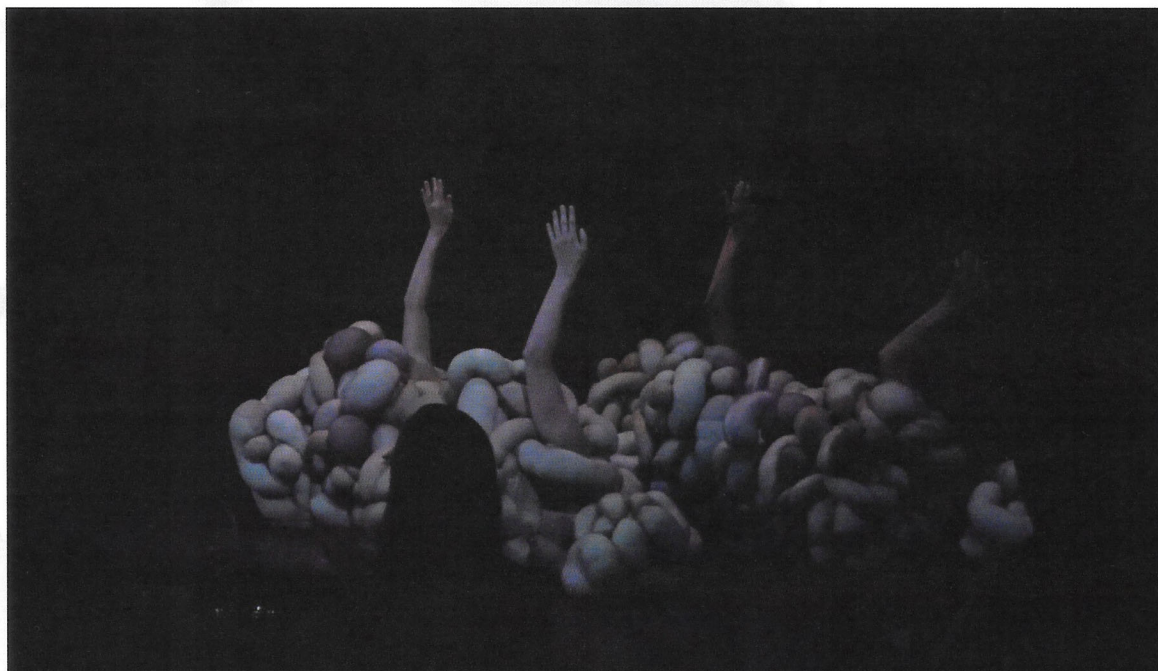
2019
photography
16" x 9"



Pile
2019
photography
16" x 9"

Arrangements

2019
performance
4 minutes



Liz Menzie



Say It With Your Chest

2019
photography
11" x 14"



Expression
2019
photography
11" x 14"



Rear Window
2019
diorama photograph
30" x 16"



Cathedral
2019
diorama photograph
30" x 30"



Reservoir
2019
diorama photograph
30" x 30"

Tracy DiTolla

ТРАСЯ ДИТОЛЛА



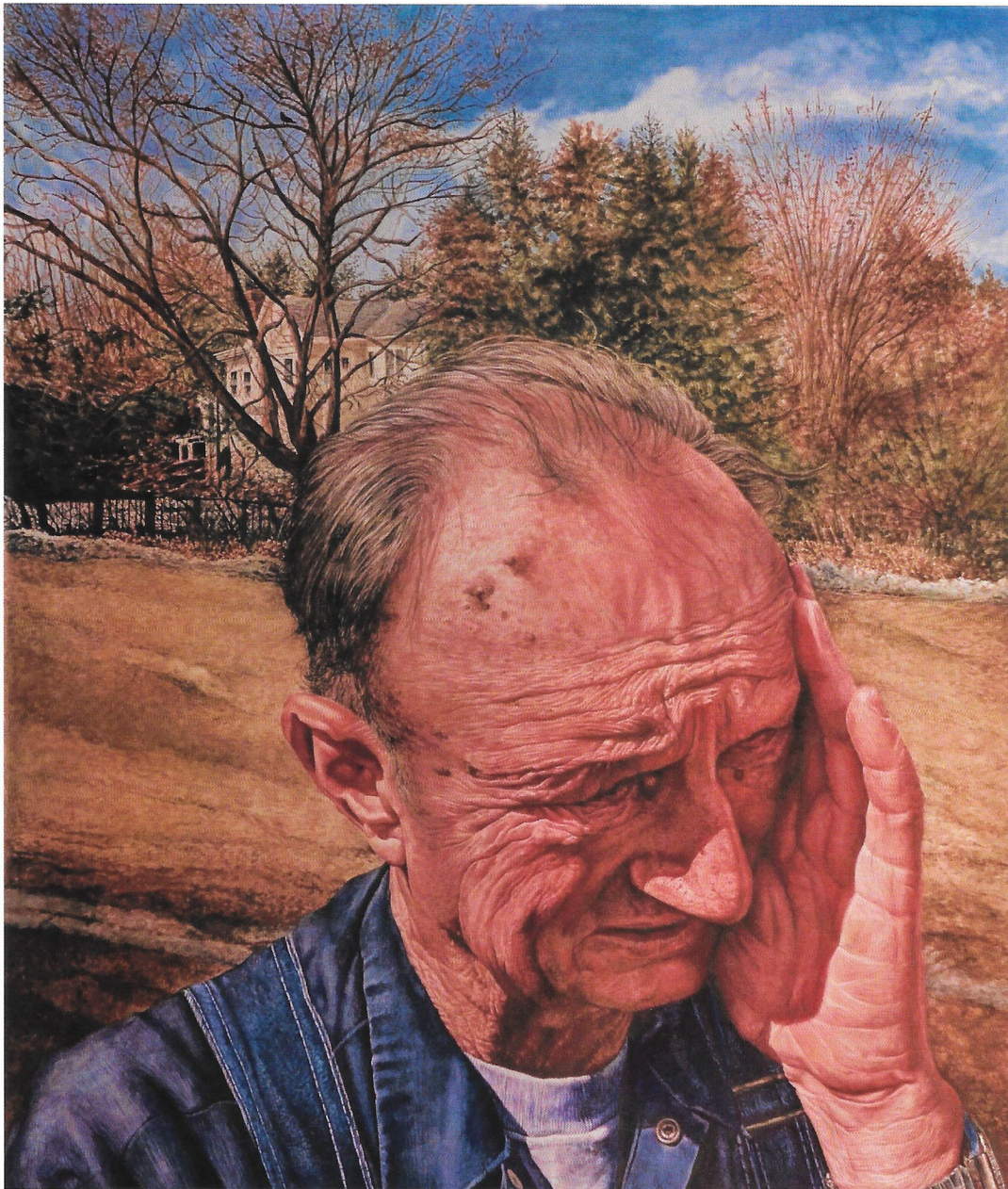
The Joy of Cooking

2018

oil on canvas

30" x 30"

Jonathan Collins



American Scream

2018

watercolor on paper

24" x 17"

Mike Richison



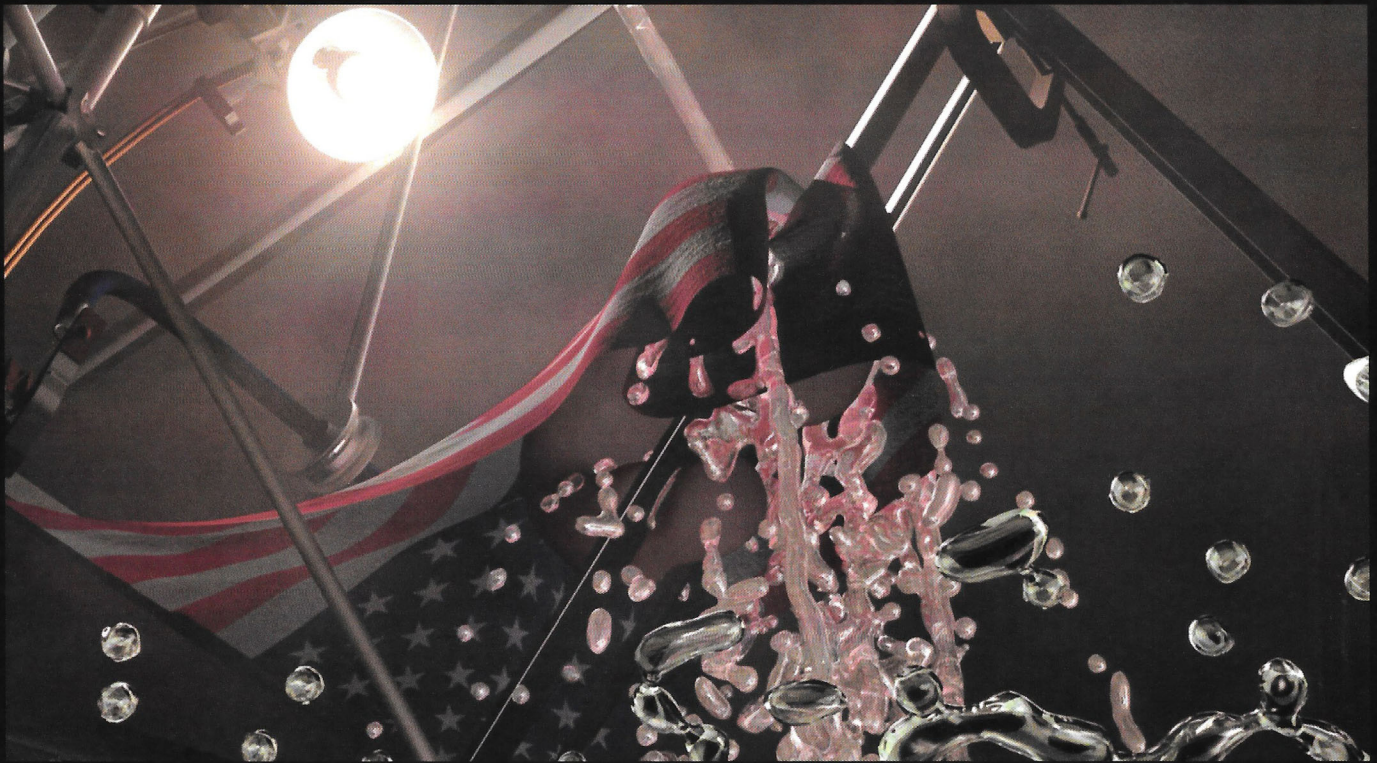
Electo Electro 2020

2020

accuvote TS voting booth, iMac, iPad, wood, and custom software

30" x 25" x 25"

Matthew Feuer



Guantanamo Loops 1-5

2018

video

7 minutes, 52 seconds

Judy Lipman Shechter

Boots on the Ground

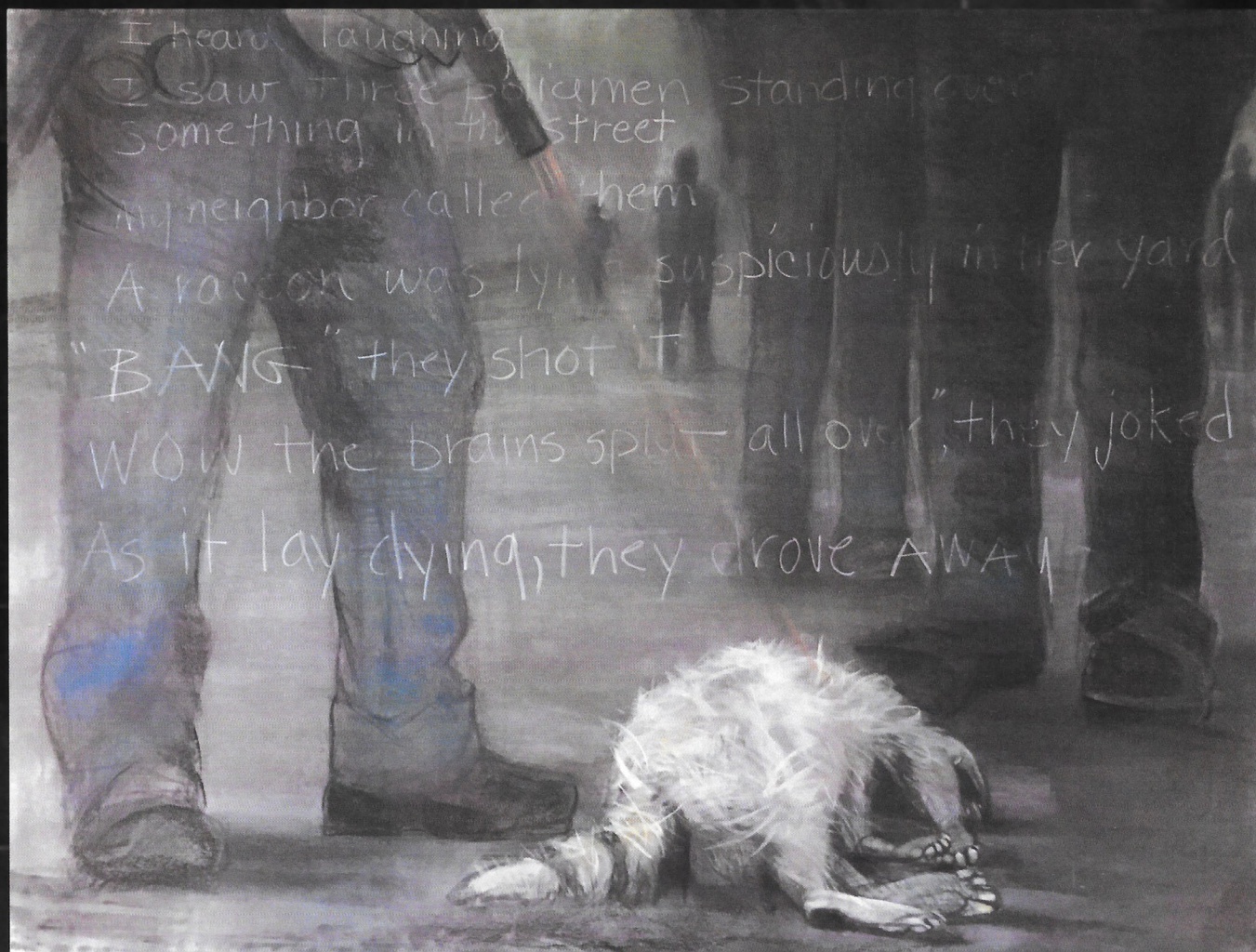
2018

bronze, copper, metal, plaster, soil, paper, and ink

8" x 84" x 84"



Pat Brentano



Execution

2016

charcoal and pastel

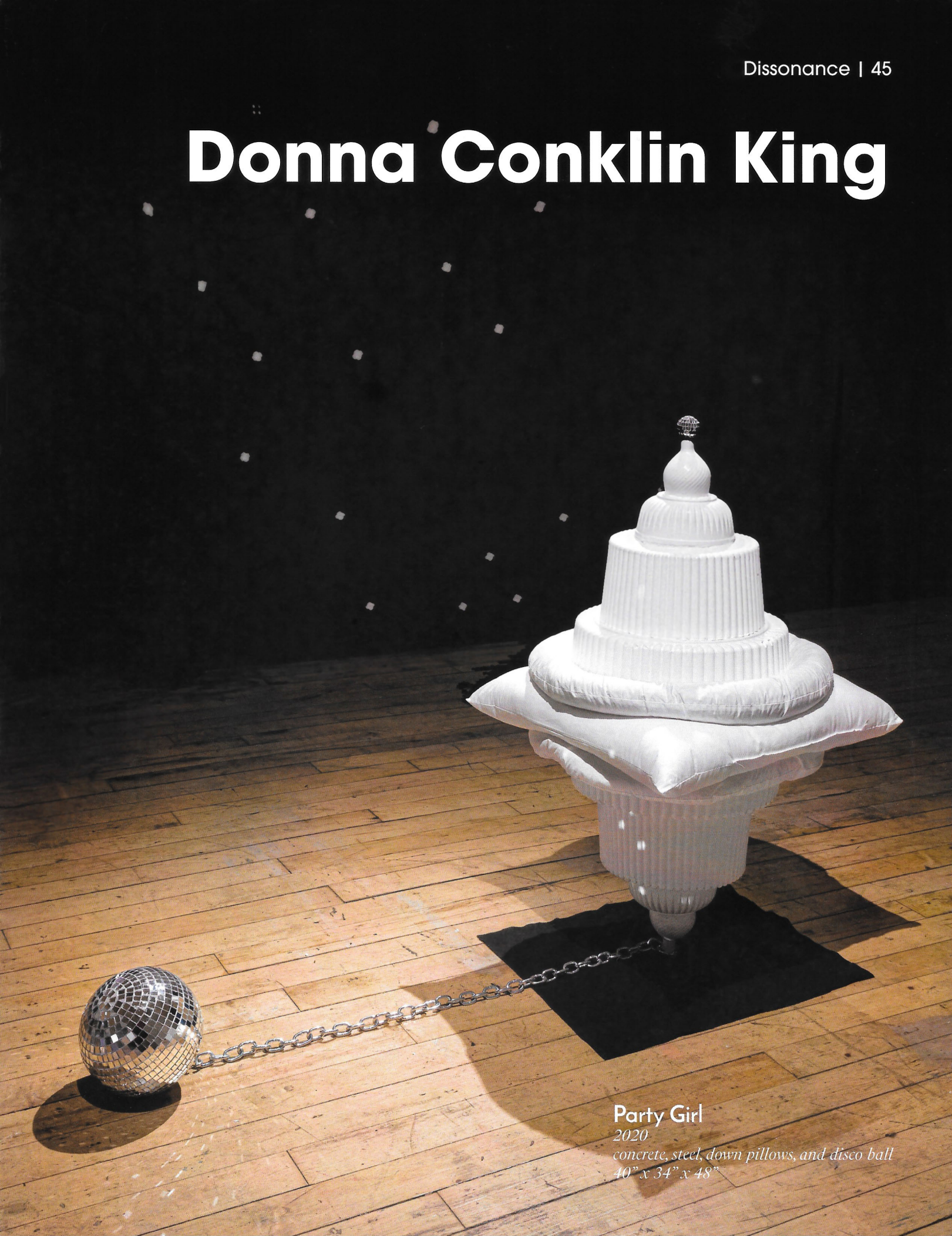
37" x 50"

Maya Just Maya



Hunger & Waste
2019
oil on canvas
36" x 36"

Donna Conklin King



Party Girl

2020

concrete, steel, down pillows, and disco ball
40" x 34" x 48"

Kimberly Witham

Morning Light

2017
photography
36" x 24"



Meditation

2017
photography
24" x 36"





Inside Looking Out

2019

photography

10" x 8"

Amy Benfer

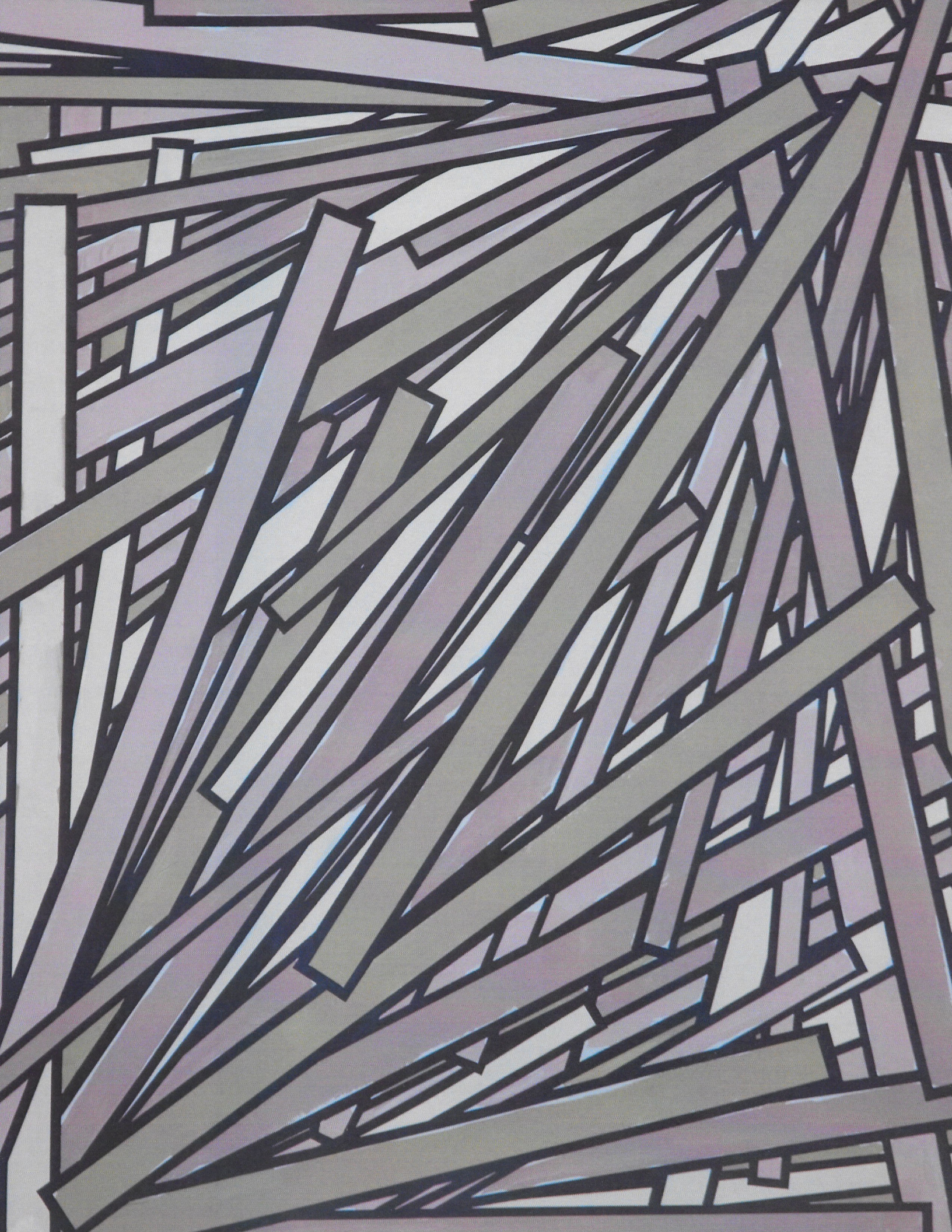


Reflected Forms

2018

photography

10" x 8"



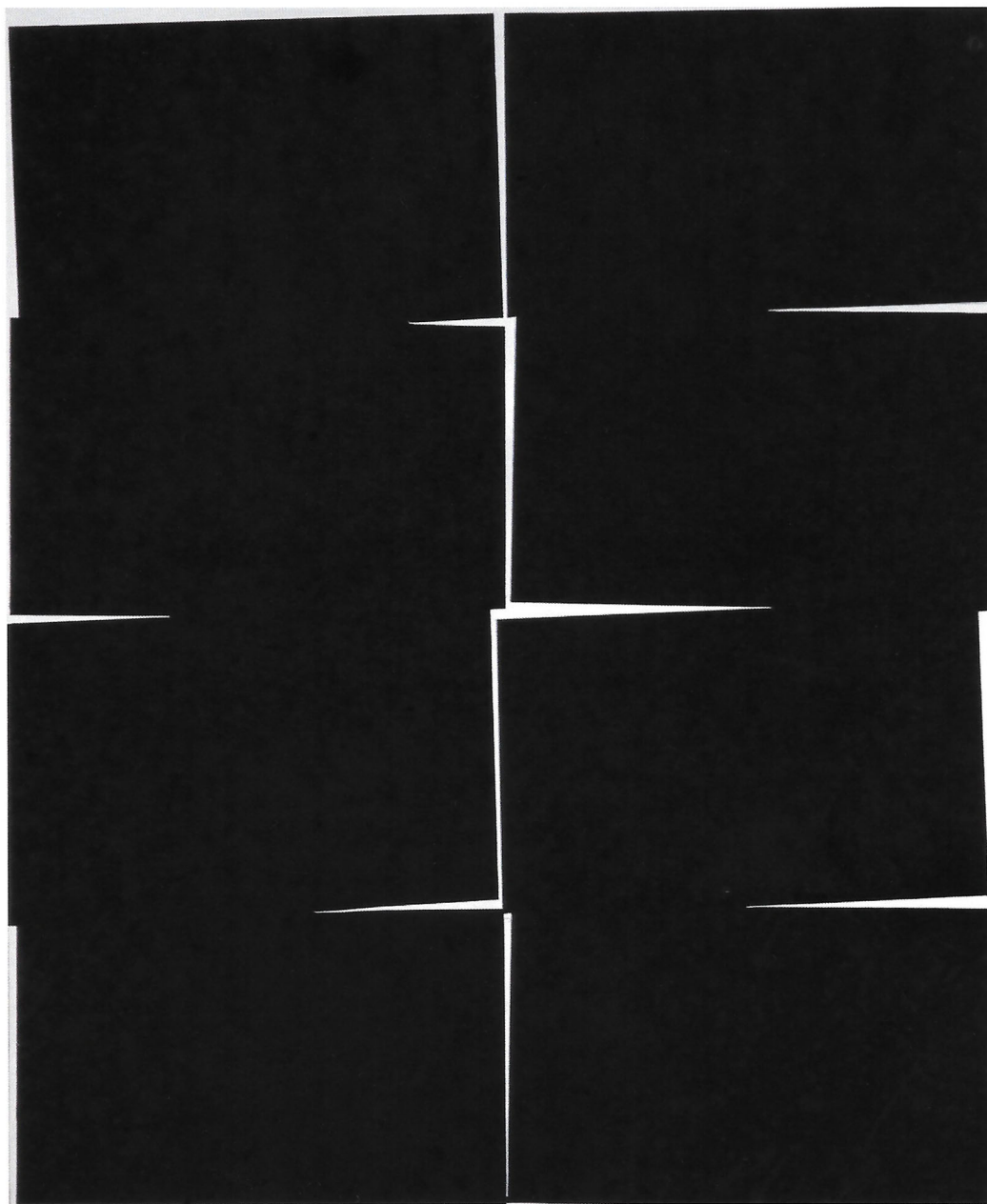
Jim Goss

P16.19

2019

flashe paint on birch panel

19" x 16"



P21.17

2017

flashe paint on birch panel

16" x 13"

Megan Klim



Soft Grid #4

2019

gauze, muslin, netting, encaustic, wire, rust
12" x 16"

Peter Delman



Standing Rock

2017
oil on canvas
48" x 38"



Kern Oil Field

2018

photography

20.25" x 27"

Mark Ludak



Evergreen
2018
photography
20.25" x 27"

This Exhibition and the Mission of the Morris Museum

While exploring the fifty-nine works in *Dissonance - Art | Craft | Design | Performance | New Media*, notice the intentional consonance of this exhibit with the Morris Museum's new mission, "interpreting the past, discovering the future, through Art, Sound, and Motion." Indeed, even as the Museum's institutional focus seems to have narrowed, this exhibition is a fitting introduction to the enormous diversity, depth, and breadth possible while looking through these new lenses. Although this mission is grounded in the Morris Museum's most important holdings—the Murtogh D. Guinness Collection of Mechanical Musical Instruments and Automata—which embody centuries-old technologies of entertainment, this trajectory lands squarely in the contemporary "now" and promises a future of unique possibilities.



Curatorial Summaries

Dr. Lowery Stokes Sims and Dr. Cleveland Johnson

Performance

Dissonance manifests itself in physical gesture and movement, in painterly choreography and song, and in technological manipulation of artistic action in these time-based works. The filmed performance of QBC Dance Company captures Tsai Hsi Hung's creative range as a dancer, painter, and designer. Her work demonstrates the influence of Chinese martial arts on the movements of modern dance, one example of strikingly hybrid expressions in this category of the exhibition. Amanda Austin explores the tension and colors of dissonance in twentieth-century art song as she gives material form to music through pigments, shapes, and motion. Chung-Fan Chang's two projected videos elevate the significance of sound and motion, as the moving pencil realigns our focus on the auditory and visual activity of drawing. Cleo Mack activates the photographs of her provocative sculptural arrangements of discordant anatomical elements in filmed excerpts from a performance of those sculptures at Joe's Pub at The Public Theater in New York City.

Abstraction

Dissonance finds a uniquely welcoming medium in abstract painting, capable of deploying color, spatial orientation, and gesture to convey instability and conflict. Olga Alexander creates puzzling amalgams of dress patterns with painterly episodes. Jane Biron evokes danger and disorientation through her images of fire and smoke. Emanuele Cacciatore and Sarah Canfield contrast geometric forms and spatial divisions with energetic splashes of paint. Eitan Barokas creates another kind of disorientation, using undulating linear elements moving through his paintings, while Jim Goss channels pick-up sticks or straws strewn in space for a similar effect.

Figural/Realism

Figural and realistic paintings lend themselves effectively to capture the effects of "discord, tension, instability, and conflict." This is exemplified in works as diverse as Maya Just Maya's kaleidoscopic visions, Tracy DiTolla's scene of a kitchen in disjointed disarray, and Erin Kuhn's static episodes rendered in neon colors that capture "organized cacophony." More literal depictions can be found in what Jonathan Collins describes as the "existential gloom" that pervades his portrait of an American farmer, and the seemingly senseless cruelty towards animals that is the subject of Pat Brentano's text-based work. Megan Klim utilizes a more material approach to create a poignant image of disorientation and dissonance with rusted wire impinging on the cross weave of muslin and gauze.

Points of View

Political commentary would seem to lend itself neatly to the concept of dissonance. Judy Lipman Shechter asks us to consider the dissonance between the glorification of armed service and the reality of youth sacrificed to that ideal. In front of the “commanding officer’s” boots, her formation of bronze shoes (for babies and youth) and upturned soles of feet reminds us that war deaths must not be ignored. Matthew Feuer’s five-channel video takes on the controversial subject of waterboarding, while Mike Richison’s interactive voting booth installation satirizes the increasingly politicized activity of voting. Luso-American artist Marina Carreira’s composites of paint and photography capture the suffering of three shepherd children drawn into the theological controversy over the “Miracle of Fátima.” The 2016-17 protests against the construction of oil pipelines through Standing Rock Indian Reservation is the subject of Peter Delman’s painting. Evoking the spatial organization of nineteenth-century Native American ledger paintings, he presents a warrior, a teepee, and a bulldozer superimposed over a map of the Dakota region, site of the protests. Adriane Colburn’s tour-de-force cut-paper work, based on NASA satellite imaging of America’s largest copper mine, may be an implicit commentary on the environmental impact of that industry.

Object-Based

Works by Judy Lipman Shechter and Matthew Feuer (see: POINTS OF VIEW) were among the few object-based works among the submissions, but what they lack in numbers, they make up for in impact. In Skeff Thomas’ stoneware vessel, the form and genteel associations of the genre contrast with the bullseye target as he blurs the distinction between functional craft and sculptural art. Donna Conklin King’s heraldic cake form finds its mirror image beneath a pillow form, enigmatically tethered to a disco ball and chain, collectively representing the bad habits we are loathe to lose. Judy Wukitsch’s assemblage and jewelry pieces reflect opposing strength vs fragility, durability vs vulnerability, suggesting a need to nurture and protect this interdependence.

Photography

Photography made an exceptionally strong showing in the submissions for this exhibit and explored dissonance in multiple ways. For Mark Ludak, dissonance can be found in the intrusions of industrial architecture and machine elements into otherwise pristine landscapes. Asia Popinska manipulates her image to create a ghostly—even ghostly—effect to capture a mirage on the edge of memory. Amy Benfer and Joanna Madloch explore the distortions and overlays of reflections on glass, or elements distorted by the character of the glass, while Jean-Paul Picard captures, also in single exposures, the isolation of the traveler, surrounded by hundreds, in a transportation terminal. Irmari Nacht uses disconcerting composites of different faces to explore notions of identity and interconnectedness, while the protagonists in Liz Menzie’s images challenge and confront us through their bodily poses. Isaac Stackell provokes our interpretation by staging intimations of harassment and violence, while Michael Endy photographs minutely furnished dioramas, using light to draw us into disquieting events that belie the calm of their ambiance. Kimberly Witham evokes the detailed character of Dutch still-life painting to intimate the fleeting beauty of reality.

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