



Nina Ghanbarzadeh *This is written from right to left* MOWA Prize





WISCONSIN
ARTISTS
BIENNIAL 2020

On View
January 25 — March 29 2020
Museum of Wisconsin Art, West Bend, WI

2020 Wisconsin Biennial

ARTISTS

Jordan Acker Anderson
Wauwatosa

Krista V. Allesnstein
Elm Grove

Benjamin R. Balcom
Milwaukee

Trenton Baylor
Caledonia

Siara Berry
Milwaukee

Martha J. Coaty
Racine

Scott Espeseth
Madison

Daniel A. Fleming
Milwaukee

Nina Ghanbarzadeh
New Berlin

Madeline Glaspey
Milwaukee

Janelle M. Gramling
Milwaukee

Alexander Hopkins
Green Bay

Niki L. Johnson
Milwaukee

Frank Juarez
Sheboygan

Yevgeniya Kaganovich
Milwaukee

David Najib Kasir
Whitefish Bay

Daniel Klewer
Green Bay

Michael F. Knapstein
Middleton

Pat Kroth
Verona

Debbie Kupinsky
Appleton

Diane Levesque
Kenosha

Lisa Mathewson
Wauwatosa

Rob Neilson
Appleton

Angela Piehl
Milwaukee

Brian J. Pirman
De Pere

Denise Presnell
Eau Claire

Pete Railand / Jenna Valoe
Milwaukee

Christian A. Ricco
Milwaukee

Susan I. Rice
Mequon

Patrick Robison
Elkhart Lake

Laura Schneider
Mount Calvary

Jill Sebastian
Milwaukee

Shelley Smith
Milwaukee

Christine Style
Green Bay

Victoria L. Tasch
Hartland

Amanda Urmanski
Green Bay

John Whitney
Baileys Harbor

Xiaohong Zhang
Fort Atkinson



About Wisconsin Visual Artists

Wisconsin Visual Artists (WVA) is a not-for-profit juried membership-based organization made up of visual artists working in a wide variety of media and supporters of Wisconsin art since the year 1900.

The purpose of the WVA is to promote, develop and encourage the creative visual arts in Wisconsin. WVA produces a quarterly magazine that features two Wisconsin artists in each issue. WVA sponsors the Wisconsin Artist Biennial, an exhibit open to all artist over 18 living in Wisconsin. This is a showcase of some of the best contemporary art in Wisconsin. WVA manages a website, where artist members and gallery/museum members may post their exhibits and events. WVA is one of the co-sponsors for the Wisconsin Visual Art Achievement Award. WVA has a growing endowment that will help to preserve our future.

www.wisconsinvisualartists.org



About MOWA

Museum of Wisconsin Art (MOWA) explores the art and culture of Wisconsin. Founded in 1961, MOWA is a top museum of regional art in the United States, with over 5,000 works of contemporary and historic art by more than 350 artists. The museum houses five permanent collection galleries and four temporary exhibition spaces, as well as classrooms, visible art storage, a shop, and a large atrium for public events. Through rotating exhibitions and educational programs, MOWA fosters an innovative forum for the culturally engaged and provides access to the visual arts of Wisconsin for all. www.wisconsinart.org

www.wisconsinart.org



Every two years the Museum of Wisconsin Art showcases some of the most compelling art from a state rich in creative capital. The *2020 Wisconsin Artists Biennial* recognizes emerging and established Wisconsin artists who are pushing the boundaries of the ideas that shape society. The biennial not only exhibits the art, it awards a total of \$10,000 in cash; the first-place prize winner receives \$5,000 and a solo exhibition at MOWA in tandem with the following biennial.

This year's biennial features 42 works by 39 artists hailing from throughout Wisconsin. The selections represent a wide spectrum of media and diverse perspectives. The exhibition fills the Hyde and Horicon Bank Galleries of the Museum. Nina Ghanbarzadeh's complex use of words and language, together with David Najib Kasir and Niki Johnson's trenchant political commentaries reveal heartfelt responses to current events, while Alex Hopkins similarly comments on the cynical and exploitative marketing of addictive products through social media. This year, perhaps more than in prior years, artists have responded in subtle and thoughtful ways to the heightened social and political issues of the presentday.

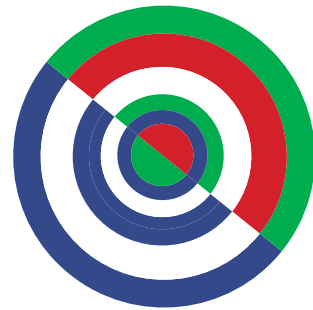
On behalf of MOWA, I would like to add a special note of thanks to biennial jurors Amy Baur and Brian Boldon from In Plain Sight Art Studios in Minneapolis, a dynamic duo who specialize in architectural and sculptural commissions and mixed-media public art, and Tylonn J. Sawyer, a figurative artist and freelance curator in Detroit whose work addresses themes of identity, politics, race, and pop culture.

The *Wisconsin Artists Biennial* is co-sponsored and organized by the Wisconsin Visual Artists and the Museum of Wisconsin Art, an ongoing partnership that reflects our respective institutions' mutual support of Wisconsin artists.

Graeme Reid

MOWA's Director of Exhibitions and Collections

WVA



WISCONSIN
ARTISTS
BIENNIAL 2020

WVA Biennial Statement by Jenie Gao, Biennial 2020 Chair

Artists have always been influencers, visionaries, and leaders, who capture the spirit of a region and its people. While MOWA and WVA work with high caliber Wisconsin-based artists year-round, the Biennial represents a unique opportunity to showcase artwork that is at the vanguard of today's cultural conversations. It is a chance to recognize new and established Wisconsin artists alike, who beyond the quality of their work push the boundaries of the ideas that define society.

Our 2020 Biennial Committee included several artists, who understand the challenges of the art world well. There is the issue of diversity. Only 11% of artists represented in US galleries in museums are women, 11% are men of color, and less than half of one percent are women of color. There are no stats on trans/nonbinary artists. Then there is the issue of pay equity. In a field that requires a great deal of volunteerism and privilege, it will continue to be difficult to diversify artists across all measures of race, gender, education, and socioeconomic status.

All of us who work in the arts and nonprofit sector are faced with the questions: who is art for, and whom does it benefit? We will not answer these long-term questions overnight, but rather in the impact of our actions over time.

For the 2020 Wisconsin Artists Biennial, we are proud of many things. We are honored to host our jurors, figurative painter Tylonn J. Sawyer from Detroit, Michigan, and public artists Amy Baur and Brian Boldon from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Our jurors represented the shared questions about what it means for artists to reinvigorate a Greater Midwestern region searching for its identity post-industrialism.

We are thrilled by the outcome of the Biennial. First, it is simply a strong show. It features an impressive breadth of skill sets. In Long Divisions and Reminders, David Najib Kasir thoughtfully renders the presence of Syrian patterns against the absence within the outlines of human figures. In This Bag Contains Shredded Paper, Scott Espeseth's

adroit use of watercolor lends presence and emotional life to an otherwise overlooked remnant of the modern office. Jill Sebastian's My Garden, a collection of papers made from the refuse of the artist's garden, is a poetic expression that connects nature and the handmade.

And perhaps most notably, in its twentieth year, the Wisconsin Artists Biennial celebrates its most diverse cohort of winners yet. Nina Ghanbarzadeh, the winner of best in show with her artwork This Reads Right to Left, is the first woman of color to win the prize in the history of the Biennial. She shares the stage with second place winner Xiaohong Zhang, and prize winners Siara Berry, Pat Kroth, Niki Johnson, Martha Coaty, and Ben Balcom.

Different stories emerge as we look at each artist's work. Ghanbarzadeh's drawing, which reads in both Farsi and English, is a push and pull against the paradigms of language and identity. Zhang's Spring Water reflects on the tensions in US-China relations since 1949, whereas Johnson's American Tapestry: Border State focuses on the border between the US and Mexico. Kroth's Gray Matter beckons us into a tactile experience of the world.

More stories emerge as we view the show collectively. Coaty's photographs are almost lithographic, and VIP Lounge could be the human reflection of Zhang's open spaces. Balcom's Garden City Beautiful and Berry's Sub Division ask questions about ownership and space, belonging and place. Balcom and Zhang observe the world through the lens of technology, whereas Ghanbarzadeh, Johnson, and Kroth investigate the world through deliberation of the hand. There are stories about dual identities here, about ancestral nations versus new American ideals. There is tension in the converging identities, and also expansion and belonging.

Finally, beyond what we as the public gain from the artwork, the presence of these artists enriches us more than we can measure. The Biennial is a chance for WVA and MOWA to exercise our role as nonprofits that serve artists. As organizers, we understand the responsibility we have with the platform of an art museum. Biennials and the limits of gallery displays are inherently selective. This show represents thousands of artists' labor hours. It is our duty to play a role in artists' career sustainability, which is why we fundraised \$10,000 in prize money, with \$5,000 and a solo show for best in show, as an act of recognition. While there is always more to be done, we see it as our privilege to be at the vanguard of how a showcase like this operates. Together, thanks to all of you and especially the artists, the Wisconsin Artists Biennial Committee of 2020 has created a show that elevates the spirit and identity of Wisconsin

2020 Wisconsin Artists Biennial Committee:

Jenie Gao (chair), Terry Stanley, Rosie Hartmann, Tori Tasch, Christine Style, Gary Gresl and with MOWA, Laurie Winters and Graeme Reid

JURORS

2020 Biennial Jurors' Statements



2020 Biennial Jurors: Brian Boldon, Tylonn J. Sawyer and Amy Baur

2020 Wisconsin Artists Biennial Specs:

341 Wisconsin artists entered 850 works and the jurors selected 42 works by 39 artists.

Amy Baur and Brian Boldon Juror Statement

As jurors of a statewide visual arts exhibition, we were excited about seeing what kind of visual perspective and range of medium artists would submit. We feel the works selected for this exhibition offer personal experiences that are transformational, compelling, vulnerable and accessible. Wide ranges of representation, abstraction and materiality that reveal larger cultural issues of identity, politics, and sustainability have a voice in the show. Subject is explored traditionally, autobiographically and experimentally. This exhibition reflects current issues, diverse in medium and approach, a poetic compendium of self-expression and personal and cultural identity. The works that we were most moved by tended to be more conceptual, where idea and medium are employed with purpose. Wisconsin artists bring it this year. We really enjoyed jurying the 2020 Wisconsin Biennial exhibition.

Thank-you Amy Baur and Brian Boldon

Amy Bauer and Brian Boldon, In Plain Sight Art Studios, architectural and sculptural commissions, mixed media public art, Minneapolis, MN, <https://www.inplainsightart.com>

Tylonn J. Sawyer Juror Statement

Diversity is always a priority for me, as a juror of a group exhibition. I am interested in the ranges of culture, craft, design, aesthetic in the work. My selections for the Wisconsin Biennial are pieces that resonates, in a strong voice, with me. I found myself revisiting the same works again and again, oftentimes selecting all of the pieces a single artist included. I chose formal figuration, abstraction works that were more conceptual in nature, as well as anything else that rested in my soul after viewing.

Tylonn J. Sawyer, figurative artist, large scale public art, educator and curator, Detroit, MI, <http://tylonn-sawyer.squarespace.com/projects>

AWARDS

Awards for the 2020 Wisconsin Artists Biennial

MOWA 1st Place Award – \$5000 + Solo exhibition at MOWA

Nina Ghanbarzadeh

This is Written from Right to Left

WVA SE Chapter 2nd Place Award – \$2000

Xiaohong Zhang

Spring Water I, II, III

WVA SC Chapter 3rd Place Award – \$1250

Ben Balcom

Garden City Beautiful

WVA NE Chapter 4th Place Award – \$750

Martha Coaty

VIP Lounge

Lee Weiss Award for first time Biennial exhibitor – \$500

Niki Johnson

American Tapestry: Border State

Merit Awards – \$250 each

Siara Berry

Sub Division

Pat Kroth

Gray Matter

THE EXHIBITION

The 2020 Wisconsin Artists Biennial

The 2020 Wisconsin Artists Biennial features 42 works by 39 artists from throughout the state, representing a wide spectrum of media and creative perspectives that both remain and go beyond our borders. Nina Ghanbarzadeh's complex use of words and language, together with David Najib Kasir and Madeline Glaspey's trenchant political commentaries reveal heartfelt responses to current events, while Alex Hopkins comments on the cynical and exploitative marketing of addictive products to the social media generation.

In several instances the exhibition moves off the traditional wall onto the less ceiling: Janelle Gramling's monochromatic Transmuted Vessels hangs quietly in contrast to Daniel Fleming's riotously colorful painting From Dusk to Dawn. Work and Swim. Yevgeniya Kaganovich's Tree Intuiting Chair: fractal lies on the floor like a toppled tree, its ever-smaller wooden chairs mimicking barren branches. And these are just a few examples of the breadth of forms and depth of thought exhibited in this year's Biennial.

This juried exhibition is co-sponsored by Wisconsin Visual Artists (WVA) and MOWA. Three artists served as jurors: Amy Baur and Brian Boldon from In Plain Sight Art Studios in Minneapolis, specialize in architectural and sculptural commissions and mixed media public art. They worked together with Tylonn J. Sawyer, an educator and curator in Detroit who creates large scale public art.



Jordan Acker Anderson

Wauwatosa www.jordanackeranderson.com

Tied with a Crimson Cord

acrylic on canvas 42 x 54 inches



Krista V Allesnstein

Elm Grove www.followthesignspaintings.com

Away

mixed media, oil paint on vintage map 14 x 11 inches



Benjamin R Balcom

Milwaukee www.benbalcom.com

Garden City Beautiful

Video / performance video



Trenton Baylor

Caledonia www.trentonbaylor.com

Synthetic Bloom

mixed mediums 9 x 20 x 20 inches

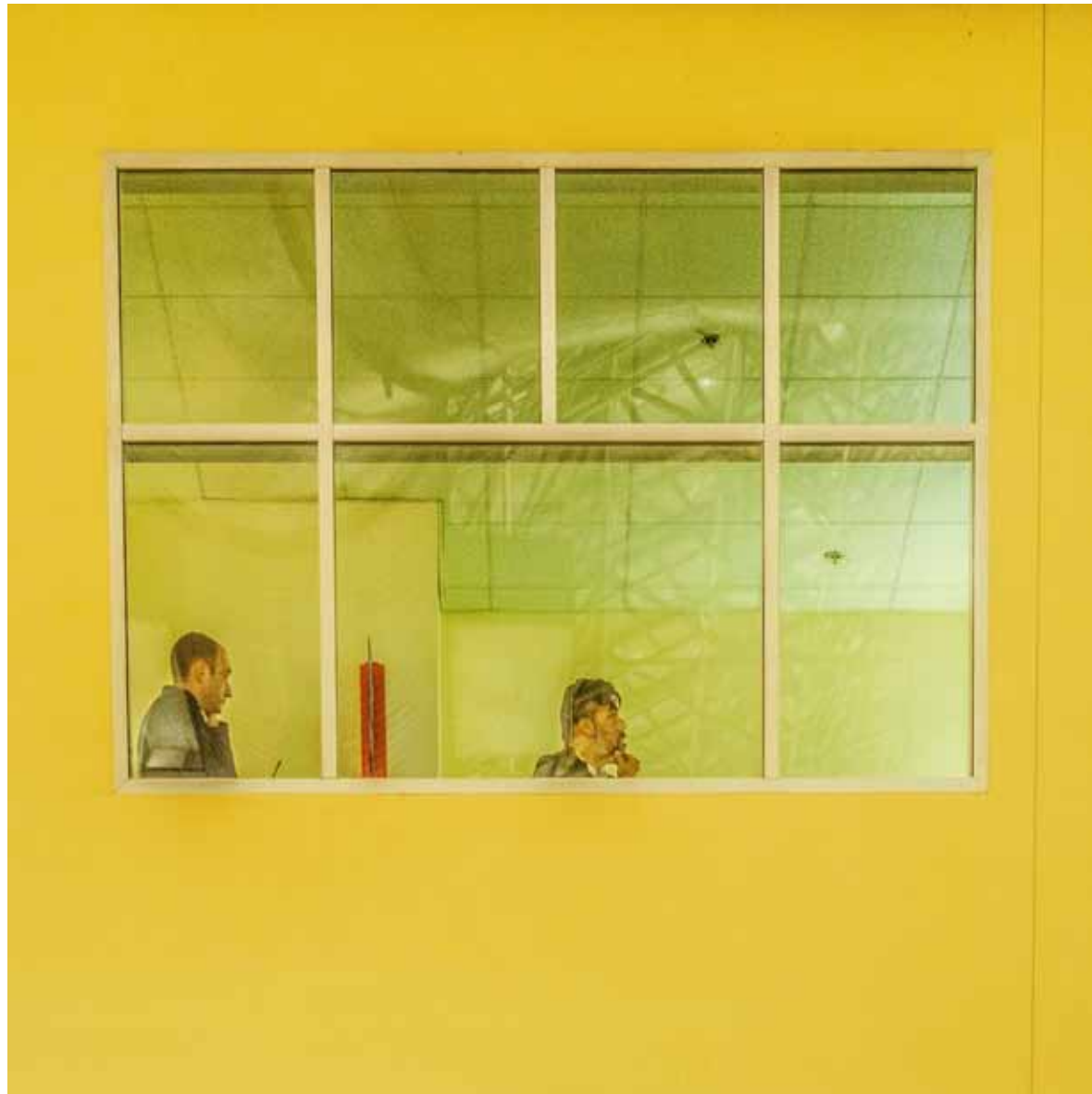


Siara Berry

Milwaukee www.siaraberry.com

Sub Division

steel, wood, aluminum 72 x 62 x 10 inches



Martha J Coaty

Racine www.marthacoaty.com

VIP Lounge

photograph 20 x 30 inches

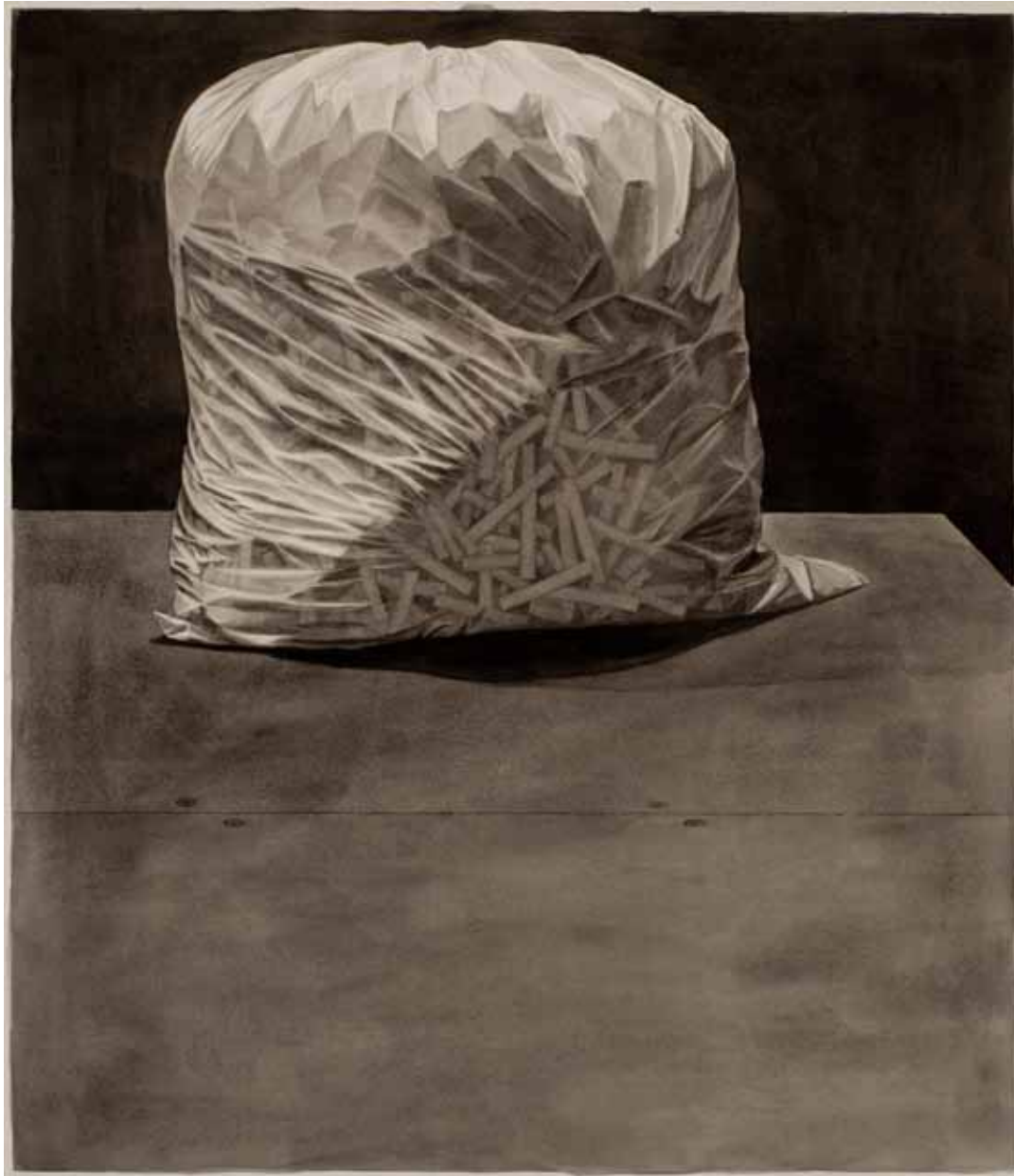


Martha J Coaty

Racine www.marthacoaty.com

Geometry

photograph 20 x 30 inches



Scott Espeseth

Madison www.scottespeseth.com

This Bag Contains Shredded Paper

watercolor on paper 33 x 28 inches

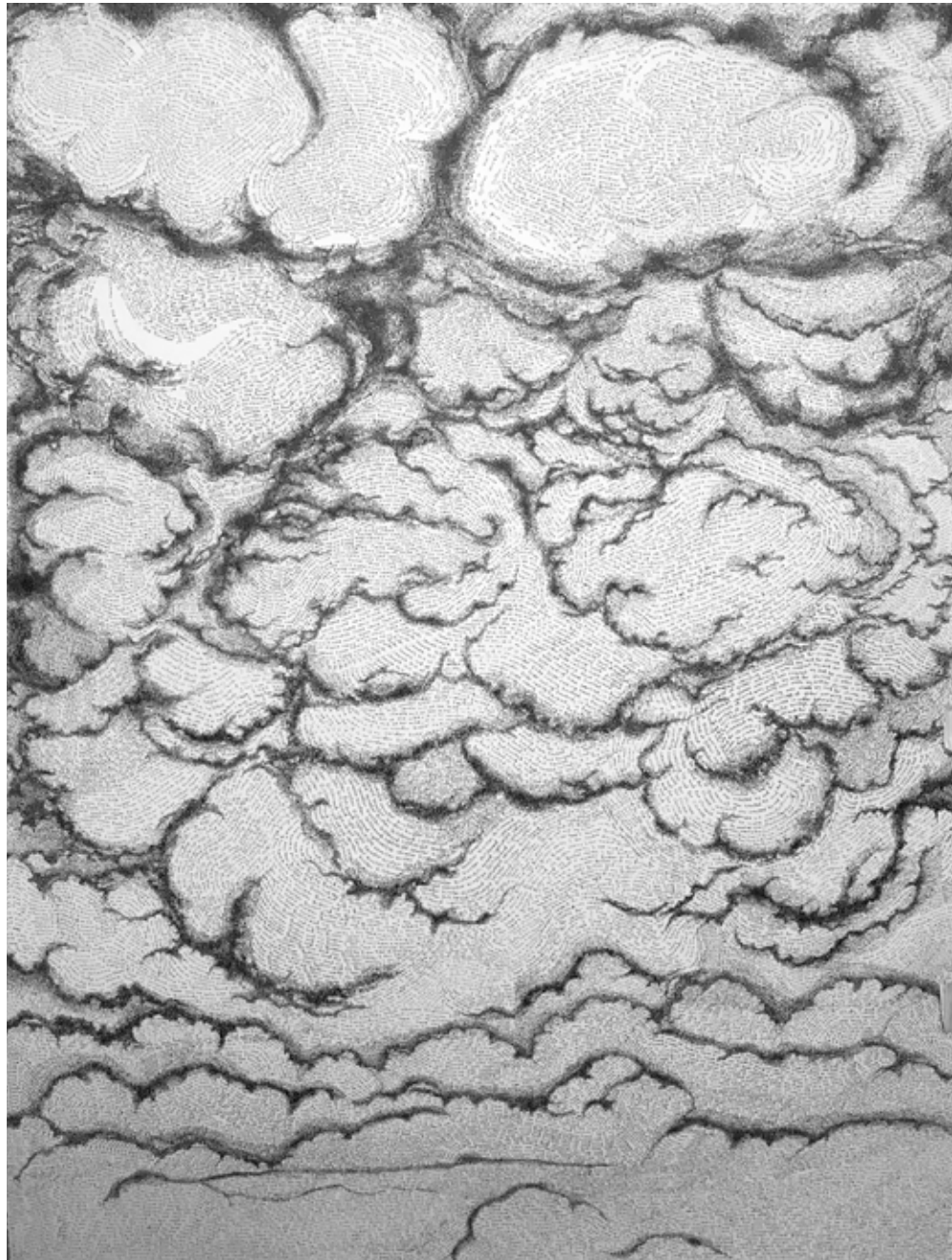


Daniel A Fleming

Milwaukee www.dflemingart.com

From Dusk Till Dawn. Work & Swim

mixed media on moving blanket 96 x 80 inches



Nina Ghanbarzadeh

New Berlin www.ninaghanbarzadeh.com

It is always darkest before the Dawn

archival pen on Stonehenge paper 50 x 38 inches



Nina Ghanbarzadeh

New Berlin www.ninaghanbarzadeh.com

This is written from right to left

archival pen on paper 52 x 52 inches



Madeline Glaspey

Milwaukee www.madelineglaspey.com

Pledge Allegiance

oil on wood panel 33 x 33 inches

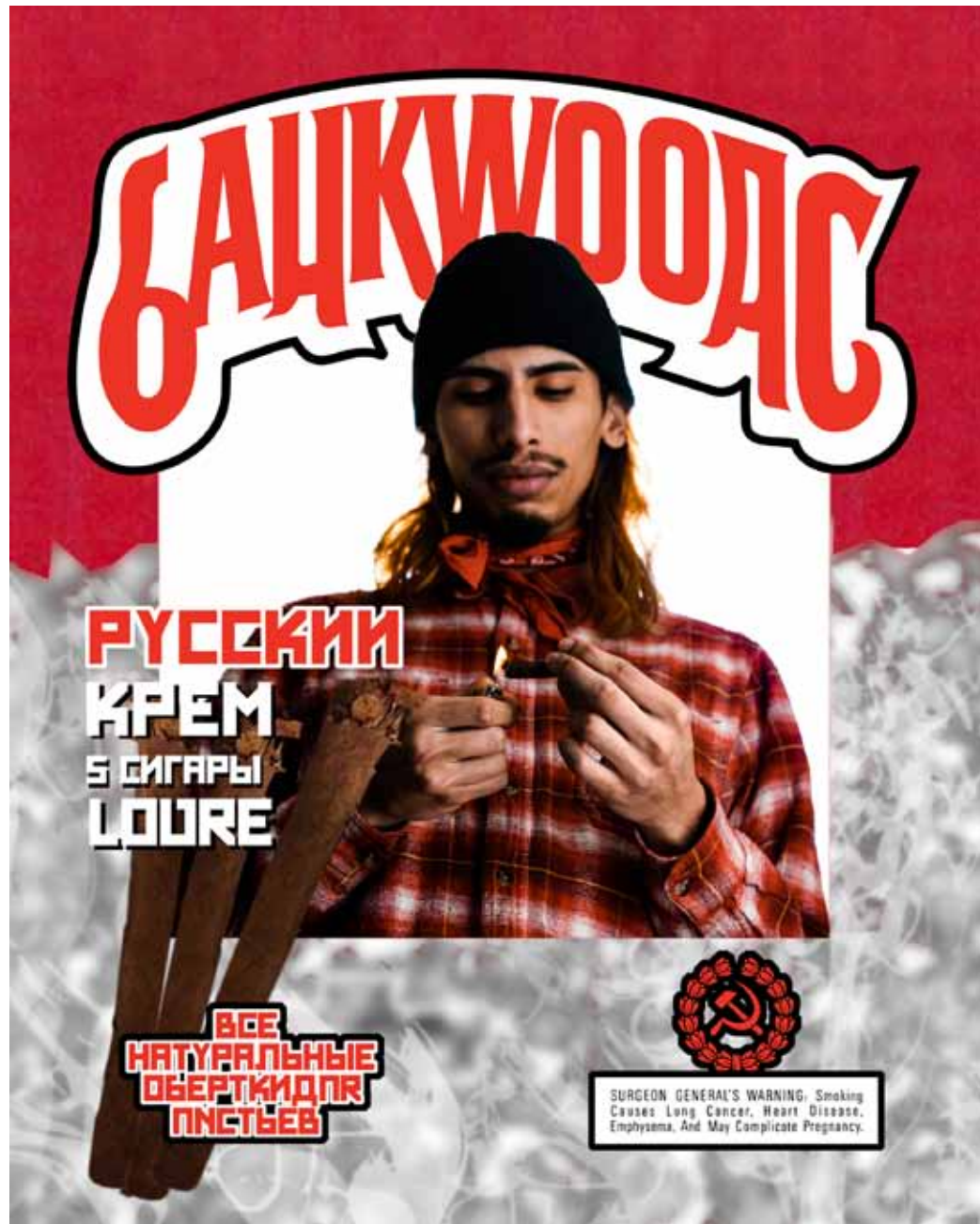


Janelle M Gramling

Milwaukee www.janellegramling.com

Transmuted Vessels

porcelain, glaze, cotton string, wood, steel 107 x 30 x 30 inches



Alexander Hopkins

Green Bay www.loure-group.com

Russian Cream Ad

archival pigment print 15 x 12 inches

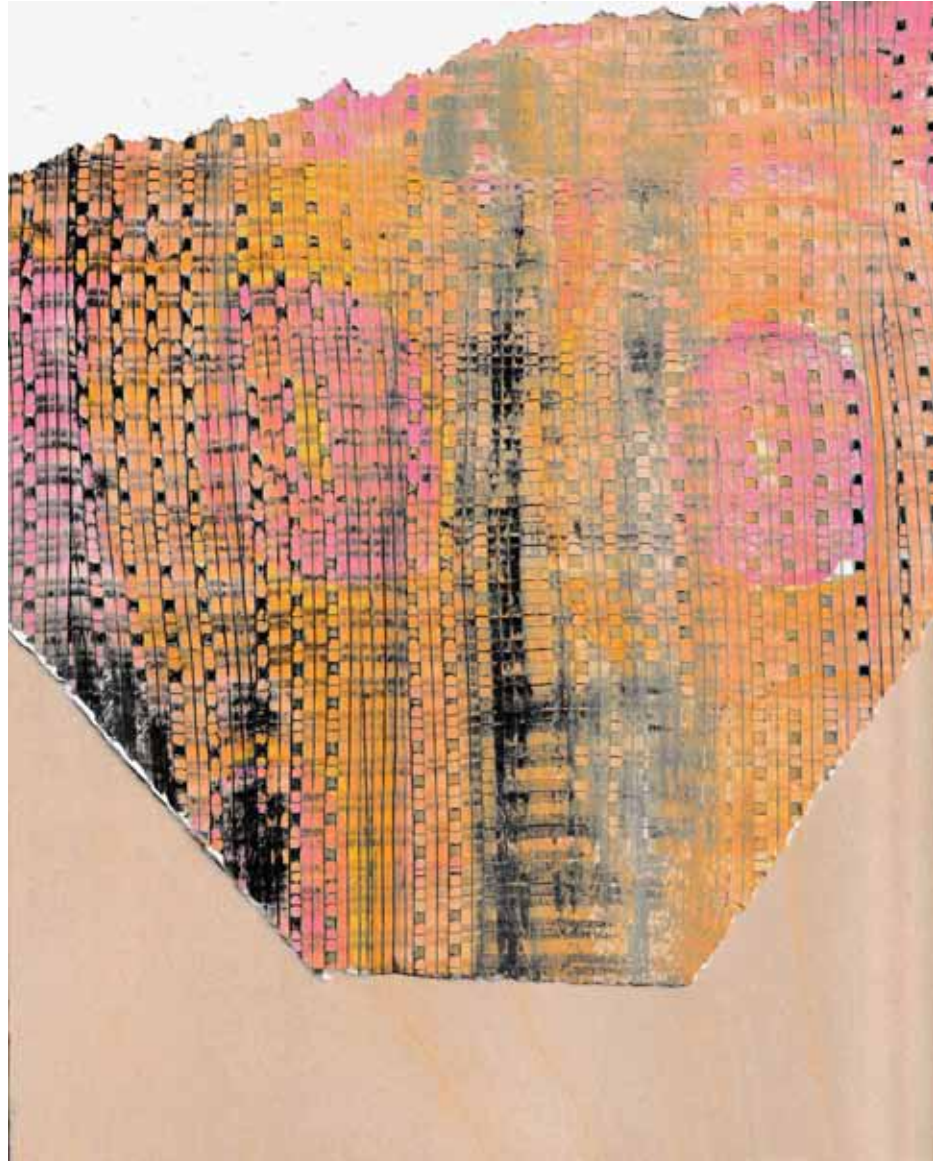


Niki L Johnson

Milwaukee www.nikijohnson.com

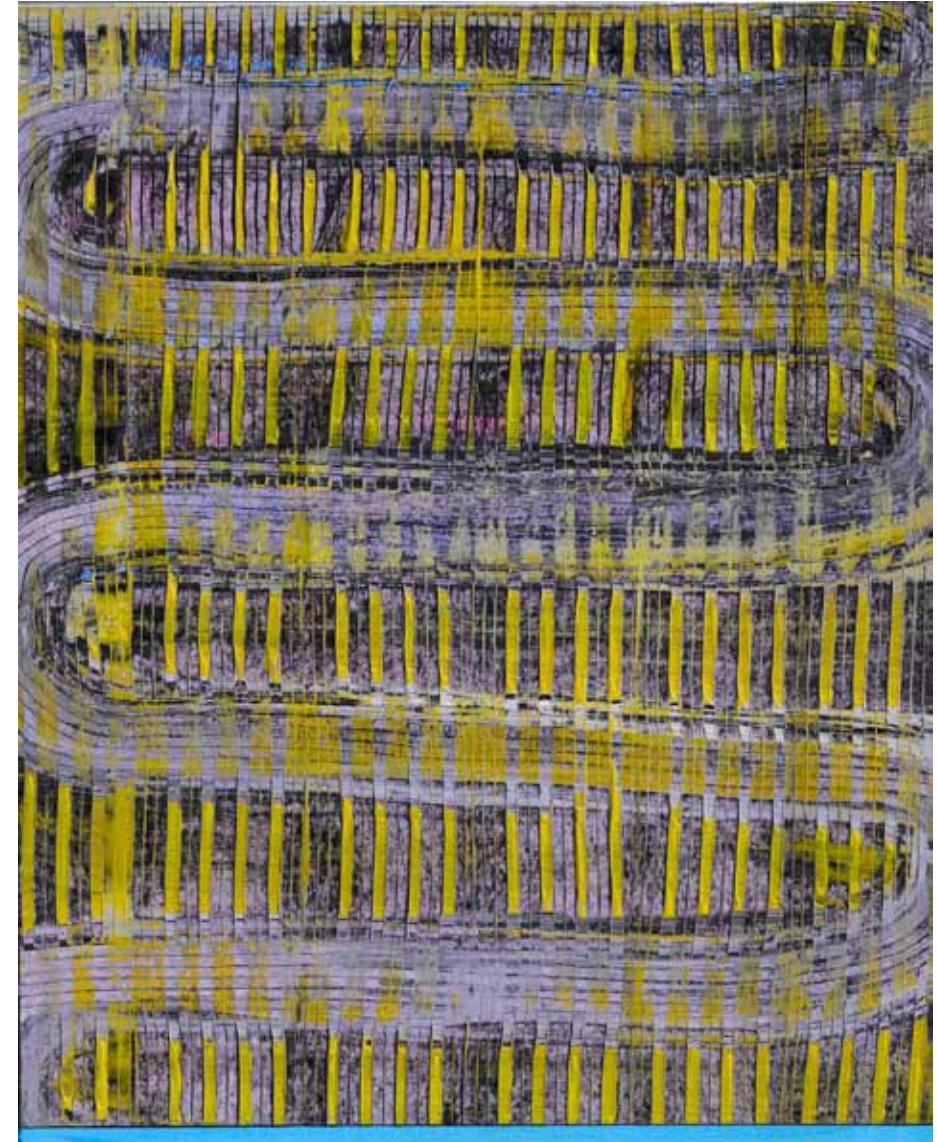
American Tapestry: Border State

fencing, hair 48x 58 inches



Frank Juarez
Sheboygan www.frankjuarezpaintings.com

Cotton Candy Sky
acrylic on cradled panel 10 x 8 inches



Frank Juarez
Sheboygan www.frankjuarezpaintings.com

Soundcraft
acrylic on cradled panel 10 x 8 inches



Yevgeniya Kaganovich

Milwaukee yevgeniyakaganovich.com

Tree Intuiting Chair: fractal

scrap wood 66 x 45 x 45 inches



David Najib Kasir

Whitefish Bay www.davidnajibkasir.com

Long Divisions and Remainders

acrylic on canvas 48 x 48 inches



Daniel Klewer

Green Bay danielklewer.com

Mint Macaroon

acrylic on canvas 48 x 36 inches



Michael F Knapstein

Middleton www.knapsteinphotography.com

Hay Bale

photographic archival pigment print 30 x 30 inches



Pat Kroth

Verona www.krothfibertart.com

Gray Matter

fiber 62 x 62 inches



Debbie Kupinsky

Appleton www.debbiekupinsky.com

Koan/ Unknowable

wood, found materials, cast wax, porcelain 7 x 4 x 4 feet (part 1) 4 x 2 x 2 feet (part 2)



Diane Levesque

Kenosha www.dianelevesque.net

The Chariot

acrylic on canvas 40 x 48 inches



Lisa Mathewson

Wauwatosa www.lisamathewsonfineart.com

Spring Green

acrylic, oil stick and graphite on canvas 40 x 30 inches



Rob Neilson

Appleton www.robneilson.com

Abandoned in the Vernacular

bronze 8.5 x 7.25 x 4.5 inches



Brian J Pirman

De Pere www.brianpirman.com

Vintage Matchbook Collage.jpg

digital collage 40 x 60 inches



Angela Piehl

Milwaukee www.angelapiehl.com

Coronation

archival pigment print from collage 38 x 32 inches



Angela Piehl

Milwaukee www.angelapiehl.com

Bouquet

archival pigment print from collage 38 ix 32 inches



Denise Presnell

Eau Claire www.denisepresnell.com

Less Than Perfect

acrylic on canvas 44 x 39 inches



Pete Railand / Jenna Valoe

Milwaukee www.justseeds.org/artist/peterailand www.jennavaloe.bigcartel.com

Commonwealth

printmaking and textile 4 x 7 feet

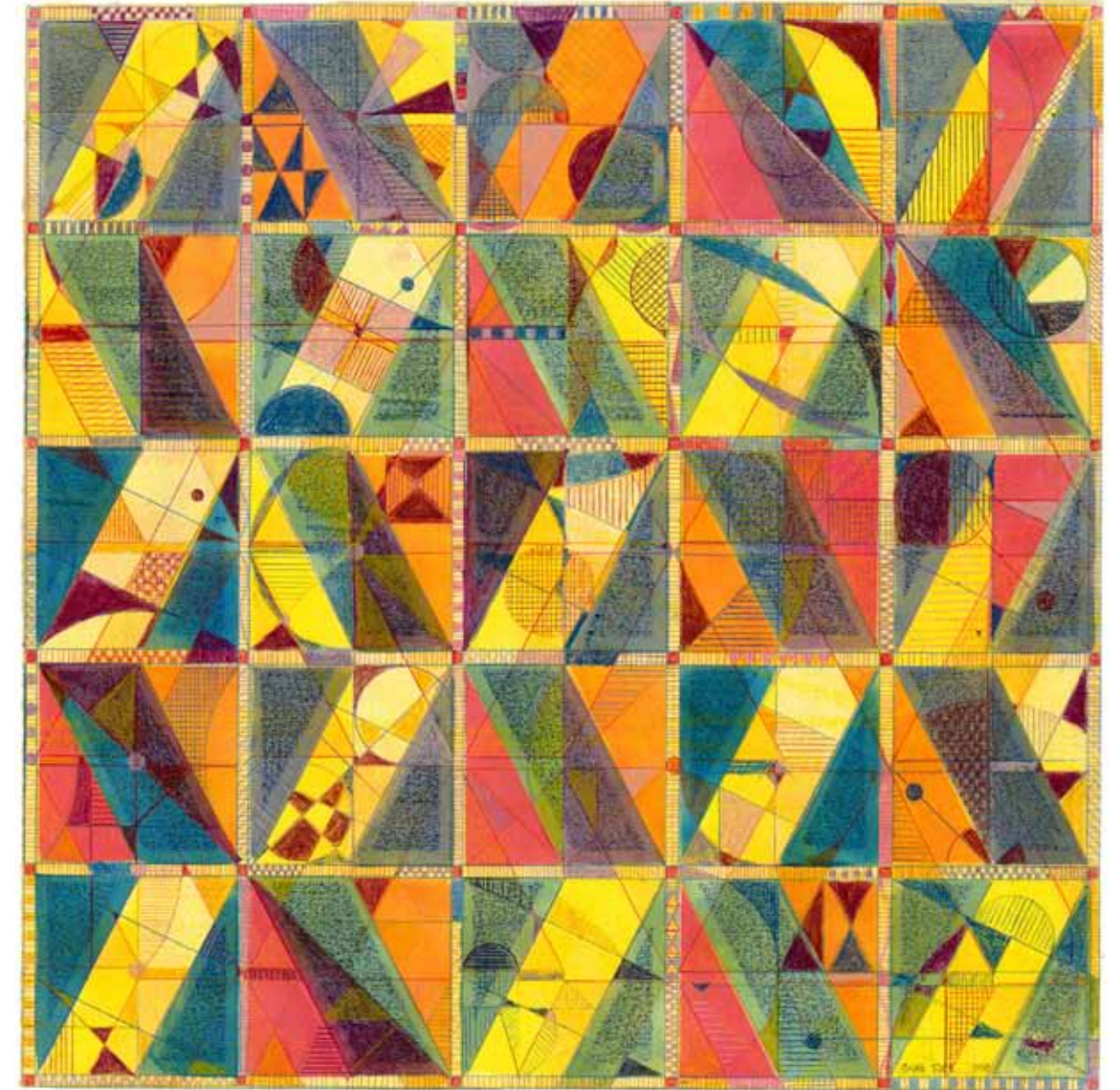


Christian A Ricco

Milwaukee

Century City Site

oil and beeswax on panel 6 x 45 inches



Susan I Rice

Mequon

Squared Geometric

ink on paper 21 x 21 inches



Patrick Robison

Elkhart Lake www.twofishgallery.net

Tethered Self

mixed media assemblage 24 x 6 x 16 inches



Laura Schneider

Mount Calvary www.photographybystudiol.com

Reflecting

giclée 24 x 36 inches



details



Hydrangia



Liatris



Purple Loosestrife



Quaking Aspen

Jill Sebastian

Milwaukee jillsebastian.com

My Garden - A Portrait

451 sheets of hand-made paper from rooftop garden refuse - 30 plants, 7 x 7 inches each on soapstone and cherry table, Arugula, Asparagus Fern, Blazing Star Liatrus, Blue Fescue, Bridal wreath, Cayenne Pepper, Dahlia, Daylily, Elephant Ear, Green Bean, Honey Locust, Hydrangea, Korean Dwarf Lilac, Maidenhair Grass, Mother-in-law Tongue, Nasturtium, Peony, Prairie Dropseed, Purple Candle Astilbe, Quaking Aspen, Radish, Red Fountain Grass, Snow Pea, Sweet Potato Vine, Switchgrass, Tiger Eye Sumac, Tomato, Tulip, Umbrella Plant, Woodbine 34 x 96 x 30 inches



Shelley Smith

Milwaukee www.spunkybohemian.com

A is for Attention

oil on infrastructure canvas 34.5 x 28.5 inches



Christine Style

Green Bay www.christinestyle.com

The World Deserves A Hug

woodcut 60 x 32 inches



Victoria L. Tasch

Hartland www.toritasch.com

The Queen

printmaking 12 x 9 x 1.5 inches



Amanda Urmanski

Green Bay

Cut, Contour, Lengthen

latex gloves 12 x 48 x 1 inches

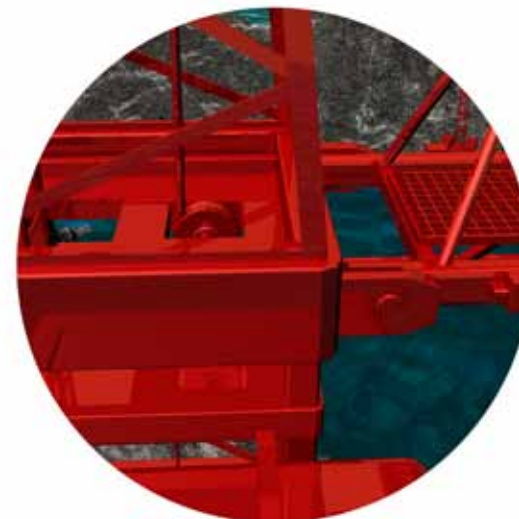
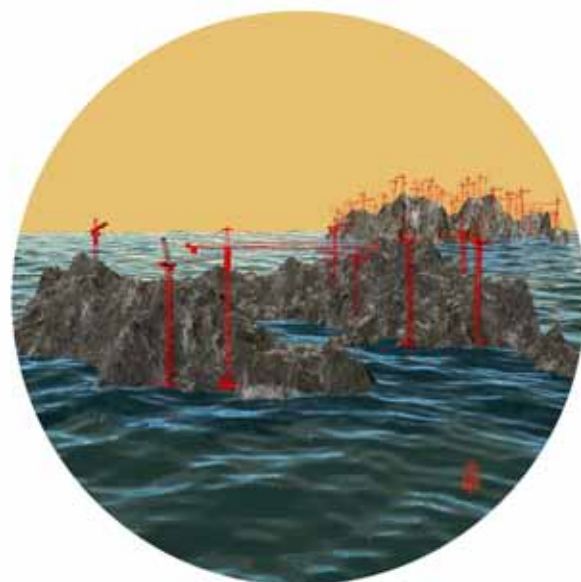
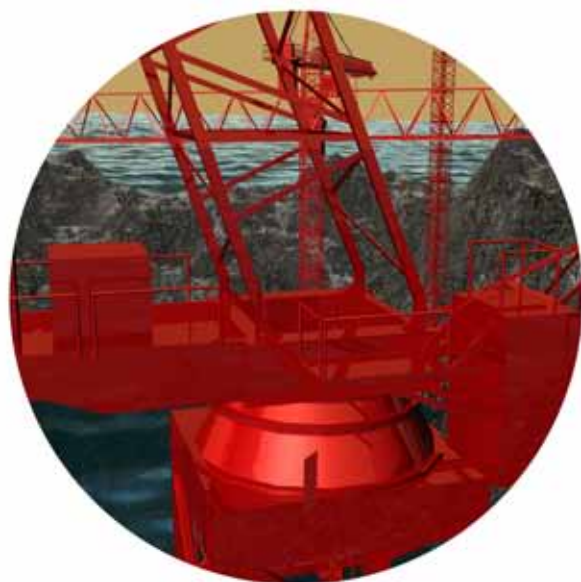


John Whitney

Baileys Harbor

Apollo 50

mixed metal 10.75 x 18 x 7.5 inches



Xiaohong Zhang

Fort Atkinson www.xiaohongzhang.com

Spring Water 1, 2, 3

3D modeling and 2D printing on canvas 60 x 60 inch each

Go to [BLURB.COM](https://blurb.com)

**then search for Wisconsin Biennial
to order a print-on-demand copy of
this 2020 catalog.**