COLA 24

COLA IMAP 2024
City of Los Angeles
Independent Master Artist Project

City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

COLA IMAP 2024 Catalog

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Formed in 1925, DCA promotes arts and culture as a way to ignite a powerful dialogue, engage LA's residents and visitors, and ensure LA's varied cultures are recognized, acknowledged, and experienced. DCA's mission is to strengthen the quality of life in Los Angeles by stimulating and supporting arts and cultural activities, ensuring public access to the arts for residents and visitors alike.

DCA advances the social and economic impact of arts and culture through grant-making; public art; community arts; performing arts; and strategic marketing, development, design, and digital research. DCA creates and supports arts programming, maximizing relationships with other city agencies, artists, and arts and cultural nonprofit organizations to provide excellent service in neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles.

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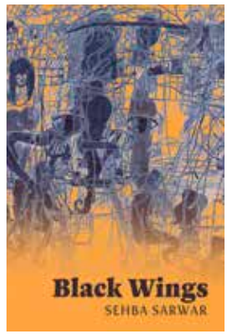

2024 COLA PANELISTS

SHARON BARNES
SHONDA BUCHANAN
JAMIE COSTA
RAÉLLE DORFAN
DANNY JAUREGUI
ROCHELE GOMEZ
RAFAEL GONZÁLEZ
ALEX SLOANE

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Imagine Forward

Around the world people are dressing and hiking, sewing or knitting, gardening and pruning, slicing and baking, doodling or diagramming, singing, posing, and journaling. They do this not only for the primary functions of these activities, but because costuming, wandering, patterning, tending, cooking, drawing, humming, dancing, and writing give us neural empowerment.

The human brain is a meaning making bio-machine that synthesizes all these kinds of creative activities for personal wellness. Hiking and dancing involve the cerebellum and motor cortex to boost mood and self-esteem. Environmental colors and smells change our body temperature and respiration. Designing meals expresses your personal and cultural preferences. Drawing releases serotonin and endorphins, which are "pathway opening" chemicals. Expressive writing improves immune function by decreasing blood pressure, hence alleviating depression. Music releases nitric oxide to boost your mood. And musical patterns mixed with verbal imagery excite a double consciousness because our favorite song lyrics are stored and recalled in the hippocampus where memories and nostalgia are upcycled. Even when your senses are subconscious, they are cross-talking betwixt electro-chemical arousals. Which is why we often fail to respect that creative endeavors release neurochemicals, hormones, and endorphins that generate waves of emotions, leaving the shorelines of our brains incrementally changed.

The human mind also craves social expressions, which prepares us for harmonizing with others. All kinds of human theater and media arts allow the basal ganglia to fluctuate between embodiment and disembodiment as our minds inhabit the roles of different characters to search for correlations. Hence, we get triple or quadruple empowerment when we perform and enjoy any of the crafts mentioned above as a cluster or crowd. Whenever we practice rituals with passion our bodies emit pheromones telling others we are ready for participation.

Unfortunately, our bodies also process strong chemical interactions from disappointment, anxiety, stress, embarrassment, and grief. How and why we remain productive, happy, and generous is no secret—we repeat expressive and artistic activities to fight "fear chemicals" with "love chemicals." For the average person, it is a psychological imperative to balance our wellness. A continually contextualized set of human experiences benefits us by buttressing our creative aptitude. This is why the arts are especially critical for adolescents and teens. Social-emotional learning should not merely be arts integrated—it should be arts driven. Many people increasingly understand that arts teachers, arts therapists, and applied and independent artists deserve much, much more support. Even though police and medical personnel intervene, it is actually the arts community that prevents many future crimes and illnesses.

Aristotle suggested the word *catharsis* to designate how these vital experiences of human emotion leaves us feeling more connected to ourselves and others. Amidst historical experiences, our brains are consistently re-knitting self-affirmed feelings into shared beliefs, values, and cultural narratives.

And what is the difference between amateur and professional exposure? Between creative hobbyists and Artists with a capital A? Everyday creative practices among us (amateurs) develops salience or above-average readiness. So when we experience a truly neoteric and profound poetic experience by some professional(s), our brains reach a tipping moment to get seriously reformed. This is why we must be a society that supports and honors designers and artists. Creative professionals bear the tricky financial burden of "spirit guiding" us to upcycle our minds. And a very special class among such professionals are the independent master artists documented in this catalog, who are self-driven (without ongoing patrons or salaries), representing the riskiest kind of art making. They are pure reformists, who generate cultural metaphors for future-time contemplation. The artists honored in this catalog were selected for 2023–24 City of LA (COLA) career achievement and new project support because each has consistently performed advanced reasoning and methodological experimentation. Their proposals, submitted in October 2022, deeply impressed the set of expert peer reviewers who ranked them as distinguished auteurs of the LA region.

Remembering that forty-five minutes per day of creative action can combat some of the toxic stresses that bombard us through modern living, please enjoy the profiles in this catalog. Reading and contemplating something novel will release those "happy" neurochemicals. And one final recommendation—a key co-factor that researchers have also identified as being crucial to balance is humor. Laughter releases as much dopamine as food, exercise, or sex. Cachinnation is significantly restorative for our "urge to play on" in this game of life.

I have often thought of Cultural Affairs as the "mental health" department of Los Angeles and regretted that budget-makers don't more concertedly believe in investing tenfold in the obviously beneficial prevention of the free arts. In the end, I offer joyful respect for all those who *imagine forward* with their investments and habits, especially our city's avant-garde artists.

Joe Smoke
Grants Administration Division Director
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

Introduction

I am proud to congratulate the 2024 City of Los Angeles Independent Master Artist Project (COLA IMAP) fellows. They are joining a distinguished cohort that has, since 1997, had a profound impact on a wide array of cultural and creative sectors of Los Angeles. As a fierce advocate for the importance and value of arts and culture, I believe COLA IMAP has thrived as a result of strong public support: nurturing creativity, fostering cultural exchange, and advancing the careers of emerging, mid-career, and established artists alike.

Los Angeles has a history of serving as a vibrant hub of cultural exchange, bringing together artists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines. Residents and visitors of Los Angeles are provided with endless opportunities to engage with a diversity of creative forces, share perspectives, and forge meaningful connections across geographic, cultural, political, and artistic boundaries. This not only encourages connection within these smaller communities, it also promotes cross-cultural understanding and dialogue.

The new members of this cohort join the esteemed group of contemporary visual artists, graphic designers, literary artists, musicians, and performing artists who have also received this award. The transformative experience of this program often results in the development of innovative work that enriches the cultural landscape of Southern California.

COLA IMAP provides artists with resources that allow them to focus dedicated time to grow their creative practice, to create a new body of work(s), and an opportunity to deliver their vision to a public audience of constituents, advocates, and art supporters within the creative capital of Los Angeles. The immersion allows artists to explore new ideas, experiment with different techniques, and push the boundaries of their artistic expression.

The program's literary and performing artists are presented each summer by Grand Performances, downtown Los Angeles's premier outdoor free performing arts venue. Additionally, the program's visual artists participate in an annual group exhibition at the Department of Cultural Affairs' Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery. This catalog, designed by Michael Worthington, presents works from COLA IMAP with essays detailing their importance and impact.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the Mayor of the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles City Council for their ongoing leadership and support of COLA IMAP. COLA IMAP is led by a dedicated team of public servants who are committed to ensuring accessibility and opportunity to all individuals from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and experiences.

The investment in this program empowers artists to realize their full potential and enriches our communities with invaluable contributions to the cultural life of Los Angeles.

Daniel Tarica
General Manager
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs

2024 CITY OF LOS ANGELES

JANE BRUCKER

JAY CARLON

MARIAH GARNETT

JANNA IRELAND

GINA LORING

SEIBA SARWAR

DEBRA SCACCO

CIRS WABCI

DORIAN WOOD

BARTH PERSTEIN

INDEPENDENT MASTER ARTIST PROJECT

Jane Brucker

HOW TO LOOK IN THE MIRROR: REFLECTIONS ON JANE BRUCKER

"... when the heartstrings, which contentment has silenced, like a harp laid by, yearn to be plucked and sounded again by some hand, however rough, even if it should break them."
—Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*

Jane Brucker's delicate installations require a cautious and tender approach. One critic compared the experience of looking at her art to sitting in a glass chair—a seat that might shatter under the weight of its own symbolic significance. Fashioned from hand cast metals, carved wood, and glass combined with personal belongings and objects others have left behind—clothes, furniture, tools, and jewelry—Brucker's artworks are quiet mementos to lost time, reconceived for intimate contemplation in the here and now. They invoke the shadows of things past, reminding us that lives and identities are built on shifting ground in a constantly changing world.

Brucker is often drawn to objects and stories from her family, her own personal history, or past events, and feels responsible for the fleeting narratives and emotions they contain. She says, "I feel they talk and plead with me to be recognized and remembered. In a kind of reverse pull, the past ultimately moves me to create a work that wholly occupies the present. Portraying them does not make me feel nostalgic towards a way of life or a time that no longer exists. It helps me to make a deep connection that is also contemplative."

In her COLA installation, Brucker introduces us to family loss with a particular focus on her sister-in-law, the environmental activist and homesteader Meca Wawona. In a 1975 photograph, we see the determined young woman encircled by nature, her slender frame outlined against an illegally logged, old-growth redwood tree. Her rightful indignation at the loss is palpable. Today, Wawona suffers from Alzheimer's disease, the most common form of dementia, and no longer remembers her lifelong efforts as a founder of the California Conservation Corps.

To honor her legacy, Brucker created *Hand Mirror for Meca*. It is set in an ornamental cast metal frame and placed near the trunk of a fallen redwood tree from Wawona's Northern California ranch. Woodpeckers perforated the tree's bark with holes, signaling life after death.

In lieu of a mirror, Brucker uses stained-glass panes with delicate paintings of redwood leaves, defying our expectation to see our own likeness. Instead, the feathery foliage evokes a pristine space beyond, a Garden of Eden or paradise lost, stand-ins for the gentle reflection of a woman, now vanishing, who spent her life in ancient forests.

Nearby, *Bed (rest)*, made from Brucker's grandmother's maple bed, inset with vintage linens and hand-painted glass panels, offers a temporary respite from the ravages of ill-health. A third work, *Family Tree*, blends a small lemon tree lost to construction in Brucker's backyard with family heirlooms and clusters of glass or porcelain flowers and leaves. These carefully crafted objects offer comfort in the presence of loss and struggle, spiritual backbones in times of great vulnerability.

Throughout Jane Brucker's forty-year oeuvre, mirrors recur as opportunities for self-seeing, showing us who we are, how we think about ourselves, our presence and inevitable absence.

Brucker notes of her process, "In the internal world where my art begins—I consider an object. The object has physical properties: small wood-handled tools, photographs, colored threads and embroidered linens, domestic or personal objects, lipstick tubes, old letters, chairs, beds, and books. Inherited and used items are all very symbolic and powerful for me."

In *Hand Mirror for Meca*, we encounter ourselves obliquely, refracted in "that translucent alabaster of our memories," as Marcel Proust has called it. Under Brucker's soft and ephemeral touch, Meca's mirror is transformed from an object of vanity into a spiritual tool, offering the subject glimpses of her essential self, enveloped by nature's gentle veil. As viewers we are invited to witness the slow disappearance of someone who now lives in a realm where dreams and imaginings provide new anchors for her existence. The experience reminds us of our own transience within a surreally calm flux of time and space.

—**Claudia Bohn-Spector**

Unravel, 2009–ongoing. Hand-knit garments, dimensions variable. Performance with Brenda Reyes-Chavez and Jeremy Hahn, Baik Art, Los Angeles, 2019. Photo: Lorenzo Sisti

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1.
Ironing Things Out, 1999. Antique wooden ironing board and bronze teeth, 48 x 48 x 12 in. Photo: Brian Forrest
2.
Ironing Things Out, 1999 (detail). Antique wooden ironing board and bronze teeth, 48 x 48 x 12 in. Photo: Brian Forrest
3.
Memorial Project (detail, *Memorial Stories*), 2001–ongoing. Donated garment on panel. Installation of over 300+ panels, 9 x 7 x 1 1/2 in. each. Photo: Gene Ogami
4.
Through a Glass Darkly (detail, *Fragile Thoughts*), 2018. Hand-painted glass, and antique wooden chairs. Installation of seven chairs, approximately 16 x 37 1/2 x 17 in. each. Photo: Kyle J. Mickelson
5.
Memory Mirrors (Mother's Mirrors), 2005. Rare woods and antique silver hand mirrors, 1/2 x 14 x 14 in. each. Photo: Brian Forrest

Jane Brucker

Born 1960, San Diego, CA
Lives and works in Los Angeles

Education
BA, Drawing, San Diego State University, 1982
MFA, Painting/Performance, Claremont Graduate University, 1985
MA, Religion and the Arts, Claremont School of Theology, 1992

Selected Exhibitions and Performances
2024
Crossing Over: Art and Science at Caltech, 1920–2020, Pacific Standard Time at Caltech, Pasadena, CA (group)
This is not a chair., Claremont Lewis Museum of Art, Claremont, CA (group)
2023
de/cipher, Unravel, Arti et Amicitiae, Amsterdam, Netherlands, and gkg Gesellschaft für Kunst und Gestaltung, Bonn, Germany (performances)
2022
Jane Brucker in the Pyramid Room, Sam and Alfreda Maloof Foundation for Arts and Crafts, Alta Loma, CA (solo)
2018
Fragile Thoughts (25-year survey), Long Beach Museum of Art, Long Beach, CA (solo)

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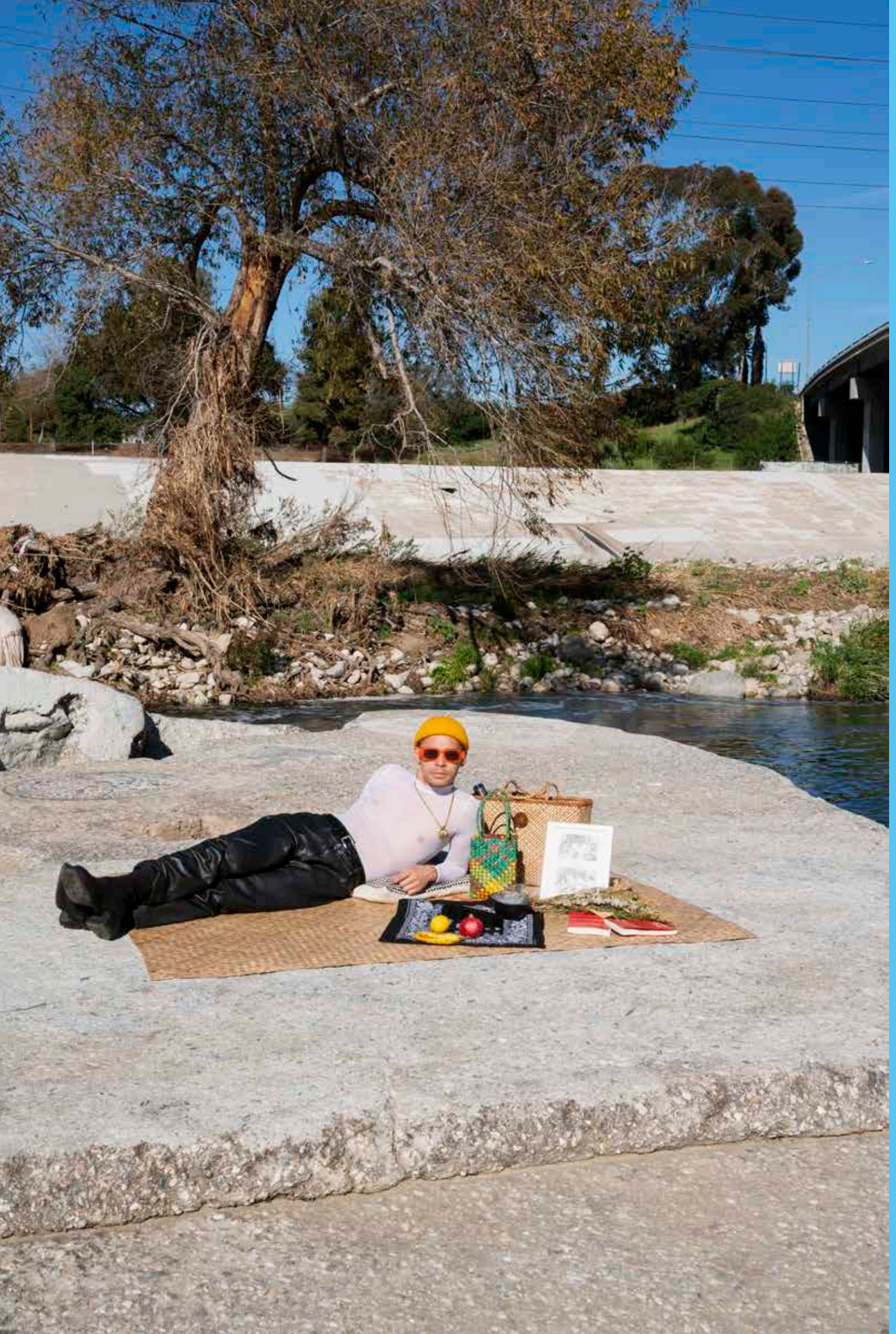

Jay Carlon

STEP AND REPEAT: LABOR, RITUAL, AND COLLECTIVE LIBERATION

"—Because it is so hard to keep the world going there is always the temptation to abandon the effort altogether. For there is always the sowing and the harvesting, the building and the repairing, the falling down and rising up again. Everyday, everything has to be done all over again. In our world it is always Monday morning.
—But is the world worth the effort? Why must people strive so hard to keep on suffering? Why can't it always be Saturday night and carnival time?"
—Nick Joaquin

Repetition, regeneration, repair: these are some of the themes I reflect on in the work of choreographer and artist Jay Carlon. Since 2018, Carlon has embarked on a project to decolonize dance, using archival research to tell new stories from the vantage point of his queer Filipino American subjectivity. At the heart of his intricate dance constructions is the belief in the revolutionary potential of the quotidian: the daily rituals we enact to survive. Drawing from ancestral memory, collective history, and radical pedagogy, his work aims to honor the complexities of the past while proposing alternative futures beyond the struggles of our dystopian present.

Take *APOLAKI*, an opera presented last year by Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE). A collaboration with noise artist Micaela Tobin, the work collaged elements of pre-colonial myth; Filipino resistance against Spain, the U.S., and the brutal regime of Ferdinand Marcos; and the collective joy found in folk traditions and pop culture. Carlon, playing the role of Apolaki, a pre-colonial god of war and the sun, wore a striped Ifugao patterned track suit, a conical salakot hat, and a collar stitched together from several tiger grass brooms designed by Caroline Mangosing of Vinta Gallery. Against Tobin's score, Carlon performed feats of physical endurance, moving large pieces of carpet to reveal a labyrinth that spelled Apolaki's name in pre-colonial Baybayin script, designed by installation artist Carlo Maghirang. He swaggered, tumbled, and thrashed about, kicking up dust as he fought an invisible enemy. It's an exemplary piece in Carlon's oeuvre, weaving together strands inherent throughout his practice: the generativity of collaboration, the foregrounding of laboring bodies, the excavation of history, the sensitivity to place.

Jay Carlon grew up the youngest of twelve children in a Catholic Filipino American family. His father was among the manong generation of bachelors who toiled on the farms of California's Central Valley in the early twentieth century. By day, the elder Carlon performed the back-breaking labor necessary to keep the machinery of society fed and by night found respite in bars and dancehalls. He found meaning in organizing with fellow Filipino and Chicano farmworkers against the racism and exploitation they experienced. These politics of solidarity and refusal gleaned from his father extend into Carlon's practice, which is deepened by learnings from Filipino artist Carlos Villa and the writings of queer Black feminists Audre Lorde and bell hooks.

There's a certain anxiety shared by many diasporic artists, especially when tasked with presenting work in mainstream venues.

"Are they going to get it?" they seem to ask, aware of the expectations of serving as reluctant ambassadors to entire cultures. Carlon's work is generous in its offering of multiple entry points, but this accessibility doesn't come at the expense of intellectual rigor. They are unapologetically queer, brown, and Filipino in their enmeshed form and content. While his pieces take inspiration from specific episodes of Filipino American life—say, the Japanese occupation of WWII, the first landing of Filipinos at Morro Bay, or his mother's immigration experience—they unfold to create spectacular tableaux that hover between theatricality and abstraction.

His works often involve the performance of simple tasks that explode into constellations of color, line, and form. In Carlon's vernacular, dancers perform extreme athletic movements—leaping, sprinting, grappling, and supporting each other's weight. Whereas ballet dancers are expected to project effortlessness, Carlon wants to make you feel the exhaustion of physical labor as dancers navigate their relationships to the performance environment and to each other. In his sonic collaborations with Tobin, Alex Wand, and Tyler Holmes, drones give way to strategically timed silences revealing performers' strained panting.

In Carlon's work, dance is a form of collective healing and liberation. While colonial histories are weighted with violence, Carlon's work foregrounds the joy of solidarity and the queer pleasures of resistance. In *WAKE*, which will premiere in Los Angeles in October 2024, he follows his bouts of self-shadowboxing with a lip-synched performance of Eartha Kitt's rendition of "Waray Waray," a folk song about the strength of women from the Visayas region. This juxtaposition undercuts the masculine seriousness, using humor and high camp to find a way forward through grief. In *APOLAKI* and *VECTORS*, the focus on controlled vulnerability and physical taxation erupts into ecstasy before spectators are invited to join the party on the dance floor.

Carlon insists on the worth of such effort and the queering of time towards better horizons. To borrow from theorist Jose Esteban Muñoz, he uses the radical presence of bodies in the here and now to imagine a multiplicity of futures—a there and then that accounts for the shared humanity of our differences.

—Daniel Soto

Out of Bounds, Annenberg Community Beach House, Santa Monica, CA, October 2017. Photo: Andrew Mandinach

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1.
NOVENA, REDCAT New Original Works Festival, September 2022. Photo: Angel Origgi
2.
Jay Carlon performing in *APOLAKI: Opera of the Scorched Earth* (opera director Micaela Tobin; choreographer Jay Carlon; costume designer Caroline Mangosing), Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions (LACE), July 2023. Photo: Angel Origgi
3.
TETHERED, Filipino American National Historical Society, Central Coast Chapter, Morro Bay, CA, October 2022. Photo: Stephen Heraldo
4.
NOVENA, REDCAT New Original Works Festival, September 2022. Photo: Angel Origgi
5.
BAGGAGE, Metro Arts and Pieter Performance Space at Union Station, April 2021. Photo: Farrah Sosa

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Jay Carlon

Born 1986, Santa Maria, CA
Lives and works in Los Angeles

Education
BFA, Dance/Choreography, University of California, Irvine, 2009

Selected Exhibitions and Performances
2023
APOLAKI: Opera of the Scorched Earth, Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles (opera by Micaela Tobin, choreography by Jay Carlon)
VECTORS, National Center for the Preservation of Democracy at the Japanese American National Museum, Los Angeles
2022
NOVENA, REDCAT New Original Works Festival, Los Angeles
2021
BAGGAGE, a dance film commissioned by Metro Arts in collaboration with Pieter Performance Space, Los Angeles
2019
FLEX, Los Angeles Dance Project, Los Angeles
2017
Out of Bounds, Annenberg Community Beach House, Santa Monica, CA

Website
www.jaycarlon.com

Mariah Garnett

COUNTER EPIC

The first time I saw her work, she was flickering in hundreds of small frames projected against the narrow walls of an artist-run space. A 16mm film projector aimed at a fixed disco ball refracted her miniaturized figure, costumed in burlesque to impersonate iconic porn star Peter Berlin. Her body, twisted humorously, posing somewhat seductively, was splattered against the architecture (and occasionally on passersby). Irregular white and red burn marks began to creep up the edges of the frame—indicating the end of a roll of film—until they consumed the image.

Mariah Garnett's oeuvre is primarily moving images, though each story or endeavor she embarks on leads her to iterations of prints, texts, films, and installations encircling her subject. The installation I first saw in 2010, *Encounters I May or May Not Have Had with Peter Berlin*, later became a single-channel work in which she splices her poses with the narrated experience of interviewing the gay icon. "I'm very much a performer as well as a documenter or a director," she once told an interviewer, and in all her works, many of which are arguably portraits, Garnett features as a character one way or another, often impersonating her subjects. "Most of my work reveals the frame as much as its subject," she notes. To achieve this, Garnett commits her own body to serving as a device that breaks the fourth wall and collides film-making modes: documentary-like footage butting up against experimental film, and dramatizations. There she is on screen, asking the questions the audience might have, conducting a Google search, lip-syncing characters' lines and miming their gestures. To the viewer, she feels like a stand-in, like a wayward audience member who found their way on screen and is trying to crack the story with as little control as a fictional character—and yet with the open understanding that this is all a construct by her, for us.

In *Trouble* (2019), Garnett deftly conveys the layered and nonlinear story of a family, a personal life, and a large political movement—confounding the definition of documentary. By conducting her own research on screen, she offers a primer on the Troubles—a thirty-year conflict between religious and political factions in Northern Ireland in response to British colonization—through interviews with activists, politicians, participants, and her own father, who fled Ireland after the BBC broadcast a segment about his interfaith relationship. The story that emerges is one of a place and time (then as well as now), but also one of a daughter confronting her father, her root cause. Blurring fact and fiction, *Trouble* questions "the way conflict is represented in media" (Garnett) as well as the very subjective (agenda driven) nature of documentation, always. In this work, she unfurls the relationship between the filmmaker and her subject as well as the essential components of film: celluloid, videotape, light, sound, character, context, audience, and assumptions.

Family, in an expanded sense, is a recurring subject for Garnett, be it, the queer or political lineage in which she drafts herself through the stories of Peter Berlin or her father. Each subject, like a faction, both foreign and familiar, represent people who "carved out space for themselves in an otherwise uninhabitable system." Most recently, Garnett turned to Ruth Lynda Deyo, Garnett's great grandaunt, a composer, concert pianist, and spiritualist who lived in the first half of the twentieth century and moved to Cairo when she was forty years old. Garnett, the same age when she began her research on Ruth—and similarly distraught by the unsustainability of an artist's life—found in Ruth's diaries pages filled with lists, affirmations, and conversations and letters exchanged with a spirit-realm lover called TAA.

"It read like a warped version of today's self-care culture tinged with the delusions of grandeur typical of colonial thinking."

In retracing Ruth's footsteps, Garnett decided to focus on her magnum opus —an unperformed opera—and, alongside highly skilled collaborators, she developed a series of her own operatic works melding the various texts, scores, and ideas she excavated alongside her own conversations, medium readings, and notes.

Garnett's unease with—and distrust of—Ruth's impulses are palpable in her interviews. "Opera emerges as an art form in an age of imperialism, when European nations were colonizing the world." The grand theatrics, the historical exclusions, the power structures, and values opera traffics are an awkward fit for her. But each of her collaborators seems to connect with a novel component: the channeling of spirits to create new compositions, the exhaustion Ruth articulated at an art career, the synesthesia described in her journals. Opera is, after all, also the erotic and sensorial interlocking of words and music, two opposing symbolic systems of communication that Garnett senses more in her collaborations as she documents their rehearsals and performances than in her aunt's record, of which Garnett is an ambivalent keeper.

—Lauren Mackler

Mariah Garnett with Holland Andrews, *Dreamed This Gateway*, 2022. 16mm film transferred to HD video, 25 min. 5-channel installation at Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 2022. Photo: Sean Fleming. Courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth + Council, Los Angeles, Mexico City

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1.
The Pow'r Of Life Is Love, 2021. HD video, 13 min. 2-channel installation at Commonwealth + Council. Photo: Paul Salveson. Courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth + Council, Los Angeles, Mexico City
2.
Other & Father, 2016. 16mm transferred to HD video, 11 min. 2-channel installation at the Metropolitan Arts Centre (Tate Network), Belfast, UK, 2016. Photo: Simon Mills. Courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth + Council, Los Angeles, Mexico City
3.
Encounters I May Or May Not Have Had With Peter Berlin, 2012. Still from 16mm film, 14 min. Courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth + Council, Los Angeles, Mexico City
4.
Trouble, 2019. Still from HD video, 82 min. Courtesy of the artist and Commonwealth + Council, Los Angeles, Mexico City

Mariah Garnett
Born 1980, Portland, ME
Lives and works in Los Angeles

Education
BA, Brown University, 2003
MFA, CalArts, 2011

Selected Exhibitions
2022
Dreamed This Gateway, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston (solo)
2021
A Heart of Opal Fire, Commonwealth + Council, Los Angeles (solo)
2019
Trouble, 10-year survey, LA Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles (solo)
2017
Trigger, New Museum, New York (group)
2014
Made in L.A., Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (group)

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Janna Ireland

WHERE CURIOSITY REIGNS

Those boys. Two boys, both existing in that grass-stained, skinned-knee expanse of years between toddler and tween. Dark curls, light brown skin, boundless energy. You can feel it through the photos. They are the artist's children, and the artist, Janna Ireland, trains her eye and lens on them with reverence, with a respect for where she ends and they begin, and also with playfulness. In *Mask* (2023) the two boys communicate wonder and mystery using nothing but their own hands. With one pair atop another, the top pair covering the younger one's face, they also transmit the long day, short year stuck-togetherness of siblings, the particular intimacy of children reared under the same roof. The boys do not, however, convey preciousness, though they are clearly precious to the artist. They never come off as twee. This is the magic undergirding all of Ireland's photographs: a wisdom about balance, a keen sense of perspective, and an abiding interest in—a reverence of, I'd say—the personal.

I first became familiar with Ireland's work via her series, *Regarding Paul R. Williams*, on the legendary African American architect and the projects he designed throughout Southern California and Nevada (2016–2022). Ireland's choice to make the Williams photos monochromatic was immediately compelling. What is revealed when color is removed? A heightened appreciation for the geometry of a space, certainly, and a better understanding of how light shifts through a room. Ireland makes even these photos of buildings—churches and homes and banks—feel imbued with her signature sense of intimacy by taking us inside of them and allowing the viewer to feel as if they are walking up the stairs themselves, just about to reach for the bannister.

"Photography is a way of seeing the world, becoming comfortable with the world and making myself part of it,"

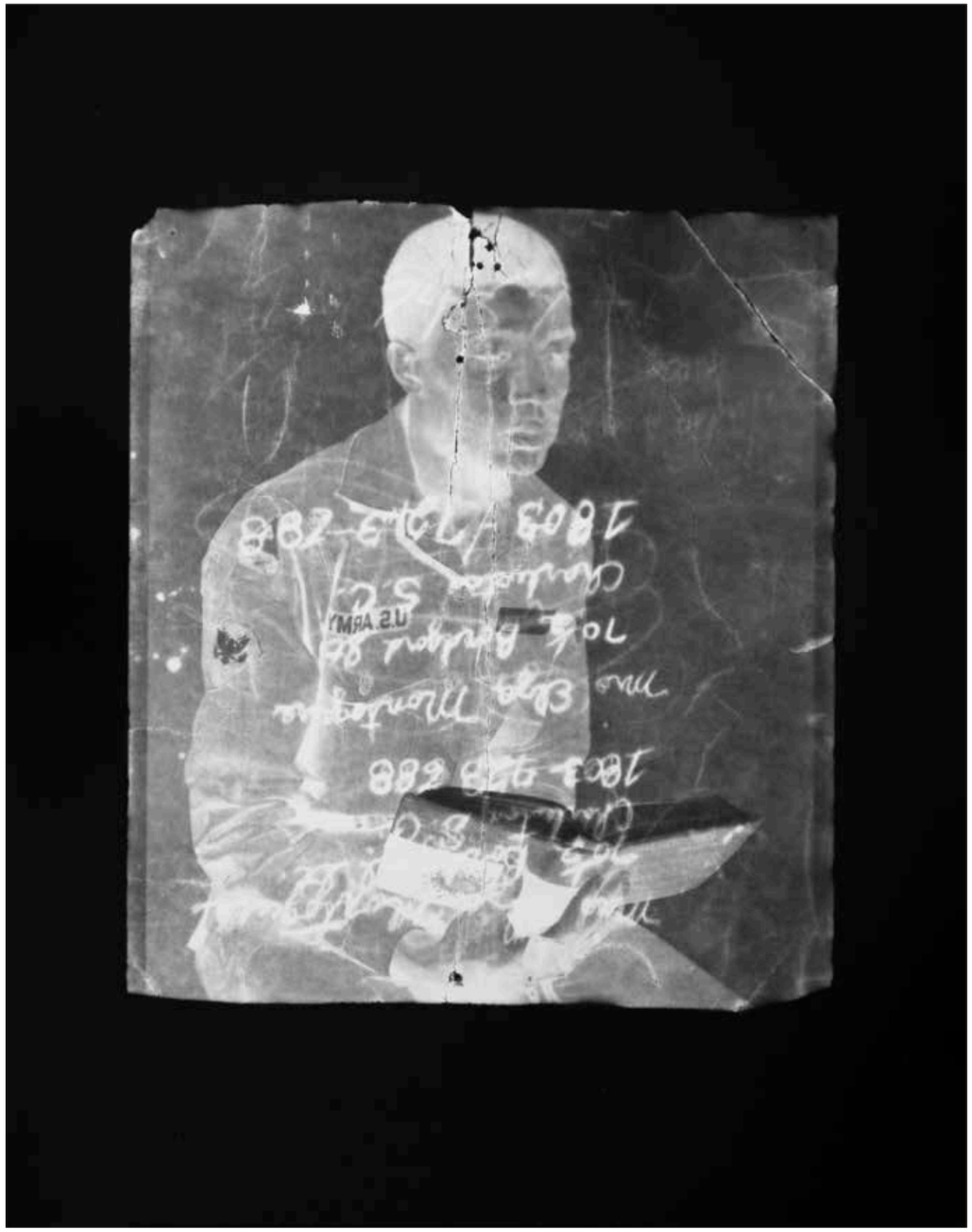
Ireland told the *Los Angeles Times' Image* magazine in 2022. The way that Ireland's photographs translate her sense of comfort is through openness, a feeling that, just as in life, a given set of experiences might have the ability to impact us differently given untold variables. In this way her photos of domesticity become as much about what we bring to them as they are about the people, the objects featured in them.

In the photo *RBG (After Marstrand)* (2023), Ireland wears a kelly-green dress and stands between her sons, her arms crossed at the wrists, each hand covering the arm of one of her offspring. The difference in skin tones—their beige next to her deeper brown—recalls Wilhelm Marstrand's *Portrait of Otto Marstrand's Two Daughters and their West Indian Nanny, Justina, in Frederiksberg Garden* (1857). Ireland decontextualizes and pushes against the "Justina" role through a seemingly simple choice: a change in arm placement. In Marstrand's portrait, the young white girls grab onto their nanny, their hands on top of her forearms (though, notably, grabbing her red shawl instead of touching her brown skin). It is as if she is their possession, an item they mean to keep fixed between them, or to propel in whichever direction they see fit. In Ireland's photo, she is the one doing the holding, the intimate, skin-on-skin protector of her children. Ireland simultaneously probes how her identity as the mother of biracial children complicates viewer perception and allows us to be drawn in by something far simpler: the quotidian strangeness of domesticity, the peculiarity of motherhood writ large.

In her newer works centering on her recently deceased grandmother Pauline, the themes of home, of memory, of love appear even in the process by which these works are assembled. Ireland begins with making photograms of objects, like flowers and jewelry, then makes contact prints of her grandmother's archival photos. Next, she produces traditional silver gelatin prints of negatives made by rephotographing prints from her grandmother's albums. These images are combined to make a new, paper negative. Finally, she makes contact prints to reorient the photos and achieve the desired collage effect. It is a process steeped in repetition, thereby contingent upon Ireland's own commitment to sustained engagement with her family's archive. "The picture degrades a bit each time," she told me. "So part of the process is being ok with the way the images begin to fall apart."

What is lost in the process in terms of one type of clarity is gained in another: the layers of imagery begin to mirror the way our impressions of our loved ones fold in on themselves, become more complex as times goes on. Across approaches and regardless of subject matter, Ireland brings this ethos of complexity, of seeing beyond one thing to the layers underneath, to her work. Bolstering it all is a sense of calm knowing. Of tender probing, where curiosity reigns over cynicism. Of reverence for the oddness of the every day.

—Angela Flournoy



1967/2023 (Dad at 20), 2023. Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 in.

Pauline, 2023 (detail). Gelatin silver print. 11 x 14 in.

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1.
Recession, 2023. Inkjet prints, metal frames, glass, and mahogany table, 24 x 24 x 48 in. Photo: Josh Schaedel
2.
1998/2024 (Before and After), 2024. Gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 in.
3.
RGB (After Marstrand), 2023. Pigment print, 36 x 48 in.
4.
Eye/Teeth, 2024. Gelatin silver print, 14 x 11 in.
5.
Pauline, 2023 (detail). Gelatin silver print, 11 x 14 in.

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Janna Ireland

Born 1985, Philadelphia
Lives and works in Los Angeles

Education

BFA, New York University, Tisch School of the Arts, 2007
MFA, University of California, Los Angeles, School of the Arts and Architecture, 2013

Selected Exhibitions

2024
True Story Index, Santa Barbara Museum of Art/ Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA (solo)
2023
Janna Ireland on the Architectural Legacy of Paul Revere Williams, AIA Center for Architecture, New York (solo)
Black American Portraits, Memphis Brooks Museum of Art, Memphis, TN (group)
2021
Family Album: Dannielle Bowman, Janna Ireland, and Contemporary Works from LACMA, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Charles White Elementary School Gallery, Los Angeles (group)

Selected Bibliography

McGee, Celia. "A Photographer Follows Paul Revere Williams Into the West." *The New York Times*, July 14, 2022.
Miranda, Carolina. "A new way of seeing the architecture of Paul R. Williams, through the lens of artist Janna Ireland." *Los Angeles Times*, January 14, 2021.
Roux, Caroline. "Paul Revere Williams, the pioneering African American architect who shaped LA glamour." *Financial Times*, August 12, 2022.

Website

www.jannaireland.com

Gina Loring

POETRY AS ALCHEMY

It was Nina Simone who said, "An artist's duty is to reflect the times." With her bold and dynamic poetry, Gina Loring does just that. Add to that her gorgeous singing voice, and she can lift and shift the energy of an entire room. I've seen it happen. Like her predecessors from the Black Arts Movement, Gina does the near impossible; she spins complex, multilayered social justice issues into poems, giving voice to what so many feel. Her poetry is passionate, unflinching, and heartfelt. She evokes grace, fire, sorrow, and joy. She transmutes pain into holy beauty and power.

I first met Gina backstage at HBO's Def Poetry, where we were both performing. As she took the stage, I watched her with awe. I felt wrapped in a mysterious, sensual shawl of sacred energy as she delivered provocative radical words that shook my being. That is her gift—to envelope her audience in a kind of loving container while delivering difficult and potent political notions. Her work is of the body and compels one to reimagine their engagement in the body politic. Her poems are calls to go inside and outside all at once.

As a result of that first meeting, I wanted to know Gina, and I wanted to support her. I had the privilege and honor of producing and directing her with two other visionary poets, Jaha Zainabu and Aja Monet, in an extraordinary performance called *Dancing On Hurt Feet* at the Culture Project at the Lynn Redgrave Theater in New York City. It was during this experience that I discovered Gina's love of community and her amazing organizing skills. She is a stunning collaborator, surrendering ego for the greater good, creating the deepest solidarity with her sisters in the mission of transforming human consciousness.

In this time of unprecedented turmoil and despair—when the intractable nature of systems and institutions continue to keep the marginalized down, and everything feels so polarized and divided—artists like Gina are life-saving medicine.

They keep open our pathway to feeling, to dissolving binaries and catalyzing our empathy and passion, individually and collectively. Gina gives us the language to name things, a new set of eyes to actually see what is right in front of us. She makes us brave. She makes us whole.

In her role as Poet Laureate of the African American Policy Forum, where she tells the stories of women murdered by police brutality in America for the Say Her Name initiative, Gina invites people to grieve and mothers to feel seen by recognizing their reality and pain. Her poems are the antidote to loss and heartbreak, the balm of healing.

Her body of work is extensive—from writing commissioned poetry for Greenpeace to her catalyzing work with incarcerated teens and youth transitioning out of trafficking. Gina's is a unique story. Poetry and activism are all traits ever present in her family tree, though she wasn't raised with any of her paternal relatives. That her great-aunt Thyra J. Edwards was a highly sought after speaker, writer, and international activist who worked with Langston Hughes, Mary McLeod Bethune, and Paul Robeson nearly a century ago speaks to a profound inherited purpose deep within Gina's soul and work. Hers is a powerful voice, and one I expect will carry weight in the world for generations to come.

—V (formerly Eve Ensler)

Stills from poetry short *And the Stars Say Amen*, 2024

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1.
Wanderlust Festival Guest Poet, Whistler, Canada, 2019
2.
Still from poetry short *And the Stars Say Amen*, 2024
3.
Poetry feature, The Theatre at ACE Hotel, Los Angeles, 2018
4.
Featured poetry performance, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2019
5.
Selected performance, IndieSoul Concert Series, Los Angeles, 2021

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Gina Loring

Born Los Angeles
Lives and works in Los Angeles and abroad

Education
BA, Spelman College, Atlanta
MFA, Antioch University, Los Angeles
Doctorate in Education, Clark Atlanta University, Atlanta

Selected Performances
2024
Cultural Affairs Programming, Belgium
Sundance Film Festival, Park City, Utah
2023
African American Policy Forum Social Justice events, New York; Martha's Vineyard, MA; Washington, DC; Houston
Juneteenth Poetry Reading, University of California, Berkeley, School of Law
2022
Thirst Project Legacy Summit, Newport Beach, CA
2021
Practical Activism Conference, University of California, Santa Cruz
2019
Wanderlust Festival, Whistler, Canada
2018
Visionary Women Gala, Beverly Hills, CA

Selected Poetry Commissions
2023
Entity Academy for Susan and David Rockefeller
2022
The African American Policy Forum for Freedom to Learn/Social Justice Activations
2021
Jane Fonda and Greenpeace for FireDrill Fridays
2020
Mickalene Thomas for Lévy Gorvy and *AS IF Magazine*
Gucci for Chime for Change
2019
In A Perfect World, for the Ambassador of Change Award Gala Posthumously Honoring Prince
2018
In A Perfect World for the Ambassador of Change Award Gala Honoring Quincy Jones

Website
www.ginaloring.com

Sehba Sarwar

IMAGINE A MAP

Walking is the gush of blood through my veins
The sensation of my legs flying
Walking is freedom from myself
The journey to myself
—Sehba Sarwar

Whether Sehba Sarwar finds herself walking along the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena, the bayous in Houston, the naala or the black sand beach in Karachi, the water beckons and demands action: "Wherever I am there is the need to be near water, to walk along the water." Embodied in Sarwar's literary work and activism are shifting transnational landscapes, water, and movement. An example of this is her five-year, multidisciplinary publication and installation project *Borderlines* (2013–18), which involved over ninety South Asian, Indigenous, Mexican, and Chicanx artists and examined rivers, forced borders, and how nature can be used to divide people. Sarwar's work is keen to how waters sometimes connect and sometimes create geo-political divisions—the breathtaking mangroves of the transboundary Indus River that empties into the Arabian Sea, or the Rio Grande as bloody border partition. Water also holds all the muddy and broken promises of human "development." The naala, a diverted-water project that the city of Karachi claimed would eventually feed into the mangroves—it never did—is a great example of unsettled (disturbed) water. Water is the essence of life and from where many of Sarwar's creative ideas germinate. Be they internal, like the intimate autobiographical writing Sarwar does about the body and "the rivers running through the brain," or external and imagined, like the violently lush rains in *Black Wings* that snatch away a beloved brother's life, water gives and water takes.

How do we come to the work of author, artist, activist, and educator, Sehba Sarwar? Imagine a map, borders drawn across continents—straight and squiggling lines that demarcate nations, their names printed in bold so we know visually where Pakistan ends and India begins, where the United States touches Mexico, despite all efforts at separation. The map seems fixed, but when we intersect with the writing, art installation, and performance of Sarwar, it unfolds multidimensionally. Through Sarwar's deeply personal and richly embroidered work, we come to understand the turbulence of borders on a human scale—how what might seem fixed can shift and change, causing upheaval, injustice, and unnatural separation—all while reaffirming what it means to be a citizen of the world.

Imagine prose that can bring to life a house in the fictional mountain village of Hawagali—a dreamy, mystical place full of ghosts and stories, where much of Sarwar's haunting novel, *Black Wings* (Veliz Books, 2019), is set—"large and rambling, with verandah wooden lattices so old that they looked as if they would dissolve if we touched them." *Black Wings* gives full range to Sarwar's narrative gifts as she moves across time and place to reveal how a divided family comes to terms with tragic loss.

Imagine a household of artists, activists, and educators, where Sarwar grew up, a product of displacement—her parents were born in India, she was born in Pakistan. Just as she describes herself as a "transnational citizen" (someone who slips between borders), Sarwar does the same with her writing—essays, poetry, novel, memoir—and art installations that combine writing, performance, and visuals.

Her site-specific *On Belonging* transforms with community participation in each place it is installed. Inspired by the Sufi tradition of using beads, fabric, paper, and thread to transform trees into shrines and spaces for meditation, Sarwar wraps stories and voices of community on tree branches. She distributes comment cards stamped with a world map and asks community members questions about their journeys, homes, or what comforted them during the pandemic lockdown. People from all walks of life and ages respond in multiple languages. Sometimes they return cards with drawings. Sarwar wraps selected trees with gorgeous ajrak fabric from her home city, Karachi in Sindh, Pakistan. The cards are adhered to strips of fabric and hang from the branches. Spellbound visitors walk, reading their neighbors' responses on cards and fabric that sway as people pass through.

In *Black Wings*, a mysterious old woman "reminded us how poets and artists express truth without fear." Every step of the way, Sarwar's work exemplifies this courageousness, from her past work directing the social justice organization, Voices Breaking Boundaries—through which she published *Borderlines*, a series of anthologies showcasing writing about borders—to her current leadership empowerment work with Pasadena high school students. And finally to her COLA project, a second novel, which explores the influence of Pakistan's black diaspora and has led her to create a public, multidisciplinary, hybrid piece that collapses borders. And whether restrained, disturbed, or free-flowing, water shows up in Sarwar's work and activism, and Sarwar shows up at water's edge again and again to listen, to move with the waters, and to create.

salt air laces
my hair
licks my lips
and binds me
to oceans
i will walk
to reach home.

—Sehba Sarwar

—Olga García Echeverría, Jamie Asaye FitzGerald, and Alicia Vogl Saenz

Rotation

She heats oil
Rolls puri
Drops flat flour into bubbling oil

You conquer
enforce rules
ban travel

In another pan
She pops coriander seeds
Tosses sliced potatoes

You build walls
deport passengers
obstruct asylum-seekers

She serves flaky puri
With crisp potatoes
—we devour together

You demand documents
collect fingerprints
require face-identification

Our choice: eat, speak, wear
Practice as we please
Where we wish

You cannot hinder climbs
prevent tide
stop earth rotation

Like waves we cross
We fly
We roar
We stay or leave
—our movement permanent.

Sehba Sarwar, *Papercuts*, *Nomad* issue, edited by Sorayya Khan. Desi Writers Lounge, 2019. Video stills of Ammi's hands by Beena Sarwar, 2024

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1.
On Belonging—community responses to home & the pandemic. Solo performance and site-specific installation, Victory Park, Pasadena, California, October 2021. Photo: Millie Correa Hernandez

2.
Los Angeles book launch, Sehba Sarwar, *Black Wings*, Skylight Books, Los Angeles, April 2019. Photo: Jamie Asaye Fitzgerald

3.
Why There Are Words. Group reading, Los Angeles, August 2019. Photo: Rachael Warecki

4.
What Is Home?. Solo performance and site-specific installation, DeBakey Community Center, Houston, May 2015. Photo: Michelle Garcia

5.
Cover, Sehba Sarwar, *Black Wings* (Veliz Books, 2019). Cover design: Oskar Sonnen; images by Minal Saldivar

6.
On Belonging. Solo performance and site-specific installation, The Menil Collection, Houston, February 2018. Photo: Paul Hester

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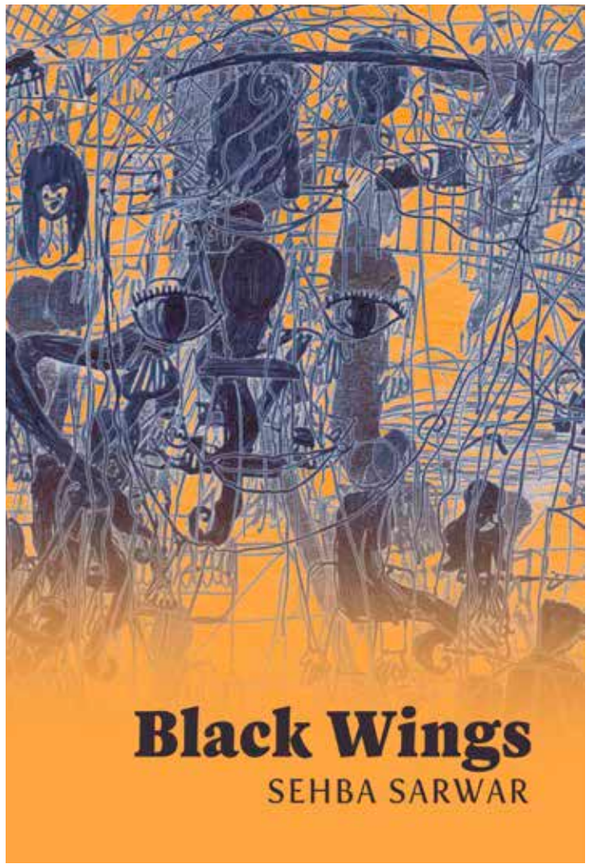

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SEHBA SARWAR
Born 1964, Karachi, Pakistan
Lives and works in Los Angeles

Education
BA, Mount Holyoke College, 1986
MA, University of Texas at Austin, 1992

Selected Exhibitions and Performances
2023
Languages of Belonging: Transcending Borders in Life and on the Page, Seattle Convention Center, AWP Conference, Seattle (group reading)
2021
Site-specific installation, *On Belonging—community responses to home and the pandemic*. Pasadena Artnight, Memorial and Victory Parks, Pasadena, California (solo)
2020
Writer-in-Residence, Pasadena City College, Pasadena, California (solo)

Selected Bibliography
Cheby, Lisa. "Review: Black Wings by Sehba Sarwar." *Entropy Magazine*, April 2021.
Mirza, Maryam. "'I ground myself in multiple spaces;' Sehba Sarwar in Conversation with Maryam Mirza." In *Creative Lives: Interviews with Contemporary South Asian Diaspora Writers*. Columbia University Press and Ibidem, 2021, 221–234.
Sikandar, Sarah. "Borders Like People Are Temporary." *The News on Sunday*, December 2021.

Website
www.sehbasarwar.com

Debra Scacco

THE WATERWAYS THAT CONNECT US

Born in New York, Debra Scacco moved to Los Angeles from London in 2012. She is alarmed by climate headlines here and elsewhere—businessmen ordering water pumped from aquifers in the Mojave that likely won't be replenished in our lifetimes, continuing water disputes in the Owens Valley that fail local Paiute tribes. And she hates how people talk about the desert as if there's nothing there. "It's a human-centered way to think," she says, then heralds the overlooked but resilient Anostraca, or fairy shrimp, of Clark Dry Lake that hatch when it rains and live on, in the mud.

Scacco's curatorial projects have included founding a climate-focused research program and co-directing, with Joel Garcia, *Procession*, a 2023 event in which participants were invited to join community leaders on walks retracing the previous paths of the Los Angeles River. Of critical importance to Scacco: if the LA River could flow the way it wants, it wouldn't look anything like it looks today. Back in the late 1930s, after a rainy season's fast-moving swells caused significant loss of human life and property, engineers manufactured a set course for the river. They confined it to what we know now as its concrete channel. If it could flow unregimented, its tracks would multiply. A map of its accumulated meanderings, expansions, floodplains, and associated wetlands would show layers of ever-changing bends, pools, and wriggled streams.

In the 1980s, Lewis MacAdams, the poet and founder of Friends of the Los Angeles River, invoked a vision of the city before hyper-river-control as a place with plenty of birds, fish, and water where someone might row a boat to school. Angelenos don't get water from the river, and not just because the river and the underground stores it feeds are now polluted. It comes in through aqueducts. It's imported.

When we met online in February, Scacco was in her studio in northeast LA considering preparatory works for a large-scale, process-based drawing to include in the COLA award exhibition. She described the final piece as a collection of similar and connected works created in stages in the landscape and installed like a waterfall in the Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery in Barnsdall Park. By combining and presenting evidence of experiences in various landscapes, Scacco wants us to face our mutual dependence on water sources and systems. "I want us to be more aware of where our water comes from. We are all connected by our waterways," she told me.

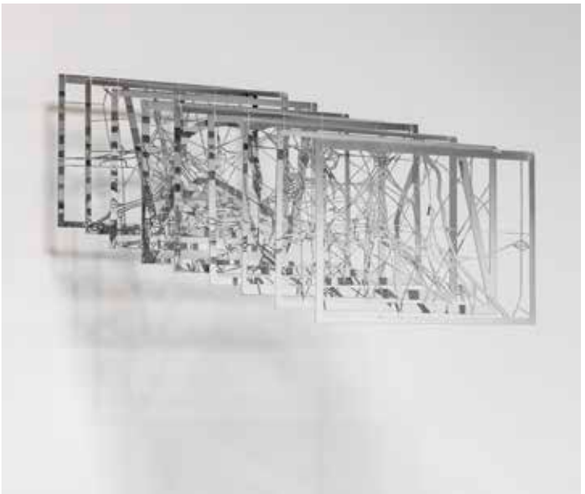
To draw, Scacco travels east to the termination point of the Colorado River Aqueduct in Riverside County and north to where the Los Angeles and California Aqueducts intersect in the Antelope Valley. She showed me drawings she worked on at the LA River and explained, "I went out with graphite and charcoal, rolled out paper, and took a rubbing of the earth." Her accumulated mark-making looked energetic, even brisk, suggesting a spirited and free-flowing encounter between artist, page, and earth, and also perhaps some of the anxiety around water scarcity. She pointed to rock imprints on the paper and her dog's paw prints, too. Later, journeying southeast to Clark Dry Lake, near the Salton Sea, Scacco took a piece of paper she had already used in LA, rubbed it with an oil stick, buried it in the sand, picked it up, shook it off, leaving some sand to adhere. As a later step in her studio, she covered the drawings in wax and then carved in subtle diagrams of contemporary water systems.

The process as a whole is responsive and symbolic, bringing to mind how we search for water and how we move it.

This new work by Scacco is a monument to water and human failures. It suggests we need new ways to think about and ground ourselves in where and how we live. Humans tend to think of bodies of water as fixed, and in doing so, they stymie and ignore their natural power. It may sound farcical, but if we don't become more aware of where our water is coming from—if we don't learn to be more adaptable—living in harmony with healthy ecosystems might actually require homes and schools that can either tolerate flooding or moving entirely, that is, unless we want to paddle towards them. Scacco adds, "Moving away from absolute ways of thinking to listening to land and water and learning from the ways in which everything is interconnected… This is how we will survive the climate crisis."

—Marcus Civin

Works-in-progress, 2024. Graphite, charcoal, oil stick, and sand on paper, dimensions variable.
Taken on site at Clark Dry Lake, Anza Borrego, CA, February 2024



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1.
Grade Separation, 2021. Mirror finish steel and monofilament, dimensions variable
2.
Melt, 2022–23. Soot, glue, water, wax, wind, aqueduct dirt, and gold leaf on paper, 25 x 48 in.
3.
Networks of Power, 2020. Copper, wood, and mirrored acrylic, 32 x 32 x 8 ft. Created in response to and in collaboration with *Platform* by Nathaniel Ancheta. Installed at Art in Residence, Western Mojave Desert, CA
4.
Lineage, 2022. Gold leaf, neon, acrylic, black sand, 21 ft. x 9 ft. 6 in. x 5 ft. Installation view, Lancaster Museum of Art and History (MOAH)
5.
A Place of Water: Streams, 2021. Mirror and copper, 11 x 17 x 2 in.
6.
Headwaters, 2022. Foam, liquid rubber, aqueduct dust, and museum vitrines (acrylic), 8 x 8 x 8 in. each. Installation view, Lancaster Museum of Art and History (MOAH)

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Debra Scacco

Born 1976, New York
Lives and works in Los Angeles

Education
BA, Studio Art, Richmond University, London, UK, 1998

Selected Exhibitions
2023
Procession, Los Angeles State Historic Park (public)
2022
Gold, Lancaster Museum of Art and History (MOAH) (solo)
2021
Song of the Cicada, Honor Fraser, Los Angeles (group)
2018
The Narrows, Klowden Mann, Los Angeles (solo)

Selected Residencies
2023–25
Artist-in-Residence, City of Santa Monica City Yards Resource, Recovery & Recycling & Water Division
2012
Artist-in-Residence, Ellis Island Museum and Statue of Liberty National Monument in conjunction with New Jersey City University

Selected Bibliography

Cheh, Carol. "Climate Change-Focused Artist Residency Maps Out a New Future in the Pandemic." KCET, May 2021.
D'Avignon, Angella. "Giving Los Angeles Back Its Lungs: PST Art Exhibitions Will Uncover the Links between Art, Water and Ecology." *The Art Newspaper*, February 26, 2024.
Knight, Christopher. "As drought deepens, nine L.A. artists think about water." *Los Angeles Times*, August 22, 2022.
Michno, Christopher. "Climate Conscious: Artists Advocate for Carbon Reductions." *Artillery* (September 5, 2023).
Nys Dambrot, Shana. "Debra Scacco at Klowden Mann." *Art and Cake* (February 2018).
Ollman, Leah. "Debra Scacco maps the psyche at Marine Contemporary." *Los Angeles Times*, May 2012.

Website
www.debrascacco.com

Chris Wabich

A LETTER TO CHRIS WABICH

Dear Chris,

I'm sure you know by now from our years of friendship and being touring bandmates that my favorite drink is Coke! But all kidding aside, congratulations on being selected as one of this year's COLA (City of Los Angeles) IMAP grantees and designated a "creative treasure" within LA's multifaceted art scene! You are an avant-garde artist of the finest degree. And you've earned the respect of your peers (like me) and continue to inspire past, present, and future generations every day. I am excited for this audience to experience a little piece of what I've come to understand about you over the years... let me attempt a little exposition in your honor.

Your artistry cannot be put in a box. But you're also that rare artist who embodies your work so completely that if an artistic entity could look the way it sounds the way it feels, YOU deliver the full experience of *synesthesia* (look that up!).

From your early days as a classical concert percussionist to becoming a Grammy-nominated musician, in-demand collaborator, world-touring professional, critically acclaimed composer and recording artist, the throughline and essence of your artistry is that you are a *storyteller*. The qualities and characteristics heard in your music reflect the rich cultural backdrop of your upbringing in Appalachia (North Carolina), where traditions stemming from the need for self-sufficiency and survival in the mountains became rooted in the arts, handmade instruments, and oral storytelling passed down through generations. Your passion for sharing stories has culminated in many cross-country treks and tours across the US and Canada, where you've managed to fit whole backlines and drum sets into your Prius!

Along with storytelling, your musical journey has also been fueled and driven by an innate desire to give back and give voice to various communities. From USO/Nato touring installations, to starting Southern California's first public school steel drum ensemble (Long Beach Polytechnic), to inspiring jazz students in Taiwan, and even advocating for a 103-year-old LA streetcar that once ran in front of your house, the sum of your body of work is: *Storytelling + Education + Preservation = Connection*.

I could list out your conventional accolades and accomplishments and name-drop galore, but I won't. Well maybe just a little ...Zappa, Sting, Leonard Cohen, Mark Murphy, Omar Faruk.... However, what I find truly interesting lies more in your being the unconventional leader, pioneer & innovator, and performer & educator that you are. You stand out from the crowd, and your work makes people think differently about music and all its possible applications, challenging preconceived notions about what defines "good music". And astoundingly, you do all of this while remaining incredibly humble and understated.

Your artistic mediumship is agnostic to any particular style. You float seamlessly between the realms of Classical, Middle Eastern, Balkan, Rock and Jazz genres and stylings but no matter what, your performances are always passionate, dynamic, innovative, non-linear, and singular.

Your mediumship carries the currents of stories, experiences, and collaborations across continents and cultures, blurring lines, and washing over your audiences with forces of wonder, hope, curiosity, and beauty.

Whether you're using sticks, mallets, your elbows, frame drums, steel drums, gongs, or plastic water bottles filled with rice grains (all of which you've made of course), we get to see and hear these unique and exquisite extensions and appendages of you that make up The Experience.

Through storytelling, education, preservation, and connection, you have successfully found a way to make a prolific imprint and profound impact on your students, collaborators, and audiences worldwide. On a personal note, you were an important bridge and mentor to me during my time coming up in a jazz band, which was an experience that was out of my wheelhouse and comfort zone. You helped expand my horizons and uplevel my performance and confidence, which have helped me in the corporate world as well to this day.

Thank you so much for your service, Chris! I hope audiences worldwide will continue to have the pleasure of witnessing your stories through your performances. Your presence is a gift.

Your friend and fan,
—**Charlene Huang**

Chris Wabich with Kirsten Edkins at The Baked Potato, Studio City, CA, 2018. Photo: Jay Matsueda

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1.
Chris Wabich, Taipei Jazz Orchestra Jazz Camp, Taipei, Taiwan, 2023. Courtesy of Taipei Jazz Orchestra
2.
Chris Wabich, Bunker Sessions, Asheville, NC, 2020. Photo: Chris Wabich
3.
Photo: Jay Matsueda, 2019
4.
Xiamen Drum Competition (guest clinician/judge), Xiamen, China, 2019
5.
Chris Wabich with poster from solo drum show at Fuzhou Jazz Drum School, Fuzhou, China. Courtesy of Cadeson Drums
6.
Chris Wabich, blue whale, Los Angeles, 2015. Photo: Chris Wabich

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Chris Wabich
Born 1968, Asheville, NC
Lives and works in Angeleno Heights (Echo Park), Los Angeles

Education
Performance Certificate, North Carolina School of the Arts, 1987
BA, Music Performance, Appalachian State University, 1990
MM, Classical Percussion Performance, California State University, Long Beach, 1992

Selected Solo Drum Shows
2022
Private recital at Hoson House, Tustin, CA
2017
Alva's Showroom, San Pedro, CA
2015
blue whale, Los Angeles
2009
Clemson University, Clemson, SC
2007
Percussive Arts Society, Day of Percussion, NC
2006
California State University, Long Beach

Recent Original Compositions
2023
The Notes, https://monkeydrummer1.bandcamp.com/album/the-notes
2020
Optirhythm, https://monkeydrummer1.bandcamp.com/album/chris-wabich-optirhythm

Website
www.nocheeto.wixsite.com/monkeydrummer

Dorian Wood

CANTO DE TODES: ON THE SEDUCTIVENESS OF DORIAN WOOD'S PERFORMANCES FOR AND OF EVERYONE

"Otre, otre, otre, otre..." the crowd in Mexico City's official main stage theater, Teatro de La Ciudad Esperanza Iris, clamored after Los Angeles multimedia artist, singer, and composer Dorian Wood's vowing gesture, which signaled the finale of her performance *XAVELA LUX AETERNA* on June 15, 2019. On our feet, we in the audience were incessant in imploring her return to the stage. Fortunately, she offered up at least two more songs, ethereally rendered through her vocal prowess, which simultaneously lifts and releases the listeners to net-less depths. I begin at the end, as it were, because I want to linger on Wood's ability as a performer that doubles as a high-priestess to catalyze a spontaneous "*otre*" (a gender-neutral form of the encore request) from her audience that night. Wood's concert pays homage to the queer iconic Costa Rican-born, naturalized as Mexican Chavela Vargas, and the songs that she gifted us that evening were nothing short of exquisite. In the spirit of Vargas's raw vocalizations, Michael Corwin accompanied Wood on the guitar with only sparse instrumentalizations.

But what is important to mention is that Wood had prepared the space that evening for all of us, queers and allies, to request such an encore because she had been weaving gender-inclusive language into the lyrics and the monologues between the songs.

I give myself permission to enact a maneuver that retrofits the title of Wood's *Canto de Todes* (Everyone's Song) from 2023, a twelve-hour composition and immersive installation that borrows a lyric from the late Chilean folksinger Violeta Parra—"*canto de todos*"—to think back to that evening in Mexico City when the songs became *of everyone*. In large part, this is due to what Wood is able to do musically and vocally, all the while being expansive and open to experimenting with the possibilities of defying genres. That is, part of Wood's seductive allure is the seamless integration of experimental techniques into her vocal palette. But I would argue that her powerful performance of seduction is because the materiality of Wood's voice is conjoined by the materiality of the body (brown, corpulent, sweaty, and exhilarating all at once). This engenders a singular vessel of sorts who transports the audience—the majority of whom are nonbinary queer racialized folks—to a sonic landscape where there is no doubt that they have the right to be the keeper of all the songs.

—Laura G. Gutiérrez

1./ The program that evening, which was double billed alongside La Bruja de Texcoco and produced by Tareke Ortiz, was part of the series of performances that were taking place at Teatro de la Ciudad, *Entre Lenchas, Trasvestis y Musculosas* during "pride season" that summer in June and July.

2./ *Canto de Todes*, a twelve-hour multimedia immersive installation, consists of three movements. The first and third ones are live and each lasts about an hour, while the second movement is prerecorded video and audio material that welcomes the audience to enter and meander throughout in varied ways. *Canto de Todes* premiered at Los Angeles's REDCAT on February 3, 2023, and, as of this writing, has been performed/installed on two additional occasions.

3./ As a point of clarification, Wood is consistent in her use of inclusive language, regardless of where she performs. But given that I experienced this performance in Mexico City, fully in gender-inclusive Spanish, to a mostly exclusive Spanish-speaking audience, which was a reason why the clamor "*otre*" took place.

Dorian Wood composing *Mares Ocultos*, Loghaven Artist's Residency, Knoxville, TN. Photo: Shawn Poynter

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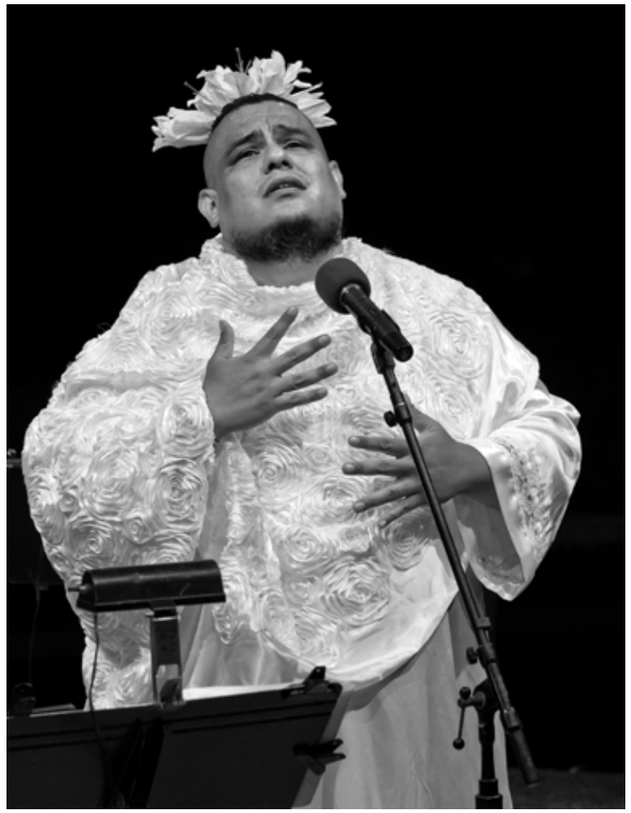

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Dorian Wood

Born 1975, Los Angeles

Education

High school diploma, Conservatorio de Castella, Heredia, Costa Rica, 1992

Selected Works

2023

Canto de Todes, REDCAT, Los Angeles

2022

Mares Ocultos, Institute of Contemporary Art, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond

2019

XAVELA LUX AETERNA, Teatros del Canal/Festival Internacional de Arte Sacro, Madrid, Spain

Nodrissx/Narcissx, Los Angeles Convention Center/LA Art Show, Los Angeles

2018

Infestación: pisos I, II, III, En Cuatro Patas series, The Broad, Los Angeles

Website

www.dorianwood.com

1.
Dorian Wood, *Martillos*, 2018. Short film/music composition

2.
Dorian Wood, *Entre Les Etoiles*, Grand Performances, Los Angeles, August 5, 2017. Photo: Eduardo Infante

3.
Dorian Wood, *Infestación: pisos I, II, III*, The Broad, Los Angeles, November 15, 2018. Photo: Timothy Norris; courtesy of The Broad

4.
Dorian Wood, *XAVELA LUX AETERNA*, Union Station, Los Angeles, May 20, 2022. Photo: Farah Sosa

5.
Dorian Wood, *Nodrissx/Narcissx*, Los Angeles Convention Center/LA Art Show, January 23, 2019. Photo: Marisa Caichiolo

Bari Ziperstein

THE EXUBERANCE OF MORE IS MORE

You've never seen a chandelier quite like this. If a typical Victorian chandelier resembles an overflowing bouquet in its morphology, this form is more like a tensed hand or claw, with white flowers budding from the tips. And instead of metal, the material is ceramic, glazed with a rich black-and-cobalt floral pattern and a competing leafy pattern set in the center. This "Flowering Chandelier" is in fact not a lighting fixture at all but a fantastic, unruly sculpture by Los Angeles artist Bari Ziperstein riffing on a functional design by Austrian designer Dagobert Peche, one of the leaders of the influential and also impossibly idealistic Wiener Werkstätte enterprise.

Ziperstein's artwork often does double duty this way. She makes brilliantly (sometimes garishly) colored, ridiculously gorgeous, formally inventive sculptures rooted in her research of a particular historical period.

While conceptual artists at one extreme tend to make artworks that are anemic—rich on ideas but deliberately thin from a material or sensorial standpoint, Ziperstein's research interests and archival work yield visually seductive, defiantly colorful objects.

While best known for her ceramics today, the artist was mainly doing abstract painting before she entered graduate school at CalArts. By the time she earned her MFA in 2004, having studied under the likes of Michael Asher, she identified more as a conceptual and installation artist. It took a few more years before she rediscovered a love of working with clay, which could, with its pigmented glazes and experimental structures, fuse many of her interests.

Recently, the artist has drawn on the history of Soviet propaganda posters, textiles, and architecture to make ceramic sculptures exploring issues of political censorship and oppression. But in 2022, when she became a scholar in residence at the Wolfsonian museum and library in Miami and began to dig deeper into those archives, she found herself drawn instead to the impeccably crafted objects, textiles, and furnishings of Wiener Werkstätte.

An art and design studio founded in Vienna in 1903, Wiener Werkstätte is now recognized as an important bridge between the nineteenth-century Arts and Crafts movement, with its fetishization of the organic and handmade in the face of mass industrialization, and twentieth-century groups like the Bauhaus, which celebrated unadorned geometrical structure. It's also known for being led by several Jewish artists and serving a supposedly integrated, prosperous Jewish clientele in Vienna, a community soon to be destroyed by World War II.

A descendant of Jewish immigrants, Ziperstein is interested in the workshop's politics and aesthetics both—a "more is more" ethos prizing stylized floral motifs and a gilded elegance in furniture and furnishings. By sampling these patterns and forms in her work, she tests how they survive a contemporary lens and, often, radical shifts in scale. For one sculpture, she takes a tiny silver-gridwork basket by Wiener Werkstätte co-founder Josef Hoffmann and expands and extends the grid so it resembles a miniature skyscraper, highlighting an interesting slippage between household container and architecture.

Her COLA show, *Variations on a Sample*, also explores the idea of the *gesamtkunstwerk* or "total work of art," which Wiener Werkstätte helped to popularize. The German composer Richard Wagner used the term early on in a pair of 1849 essays ("Art and Revolution" and "The Artwork of the Future") to describe an ideal art form that, like the best of Greek theater, reunites music, drama, and dance. The artists of the Wiener Werkstätte appropriated the concept to refer to a thoroughly considered visual or spatial experience. A leading example is the exquisitely appointed Palais Stoclet in Brussels, where Hoffmann and team designed every element of the house—from lavish marble and wood-inlaid floors to handsome silver tea sets to the odd, column-shaped hedges outside—to contribute to the larger aesthetic.

Though Ziperstein did not remake everything from floor to ceiling for her COLA show, she hints at that potential. The artist positions her sculptures on geometric pedestals dressed with sage and mint-hued skirts, offset by walls painted in a harvest color. And, pointing to the way that sculpture can transcend the pedestal and help define a space, she has installed tiny, knoblike ceramics on the gallery walls just above eye level. Ziperstein knows that the utopian promise underlying the Wiener Werkstätte project—the idea that obsessively well-made design could keep anti-Semitism and war at bay—has been shattered by two World Wars and the rise of fascism. She is sifting through the debris to salvage and reimagine the shards.

— Jori Finkel

Installation view, *Bari Ziperstein: Set Patterns*, Charles Moffett Gallery, February 24–April 1, 2023. Courtesy of the artist and Charles Moffett Gallery, NY. Photo: Jeff McLane

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Bari Ziperstein
Born 1978, Chicago
Lives and works in Los Angeles

Education
BFA, Painting/Women's Studies, Ohio University, Athens, OH, 2000
MFA, Studio Art, CalArts, 2004

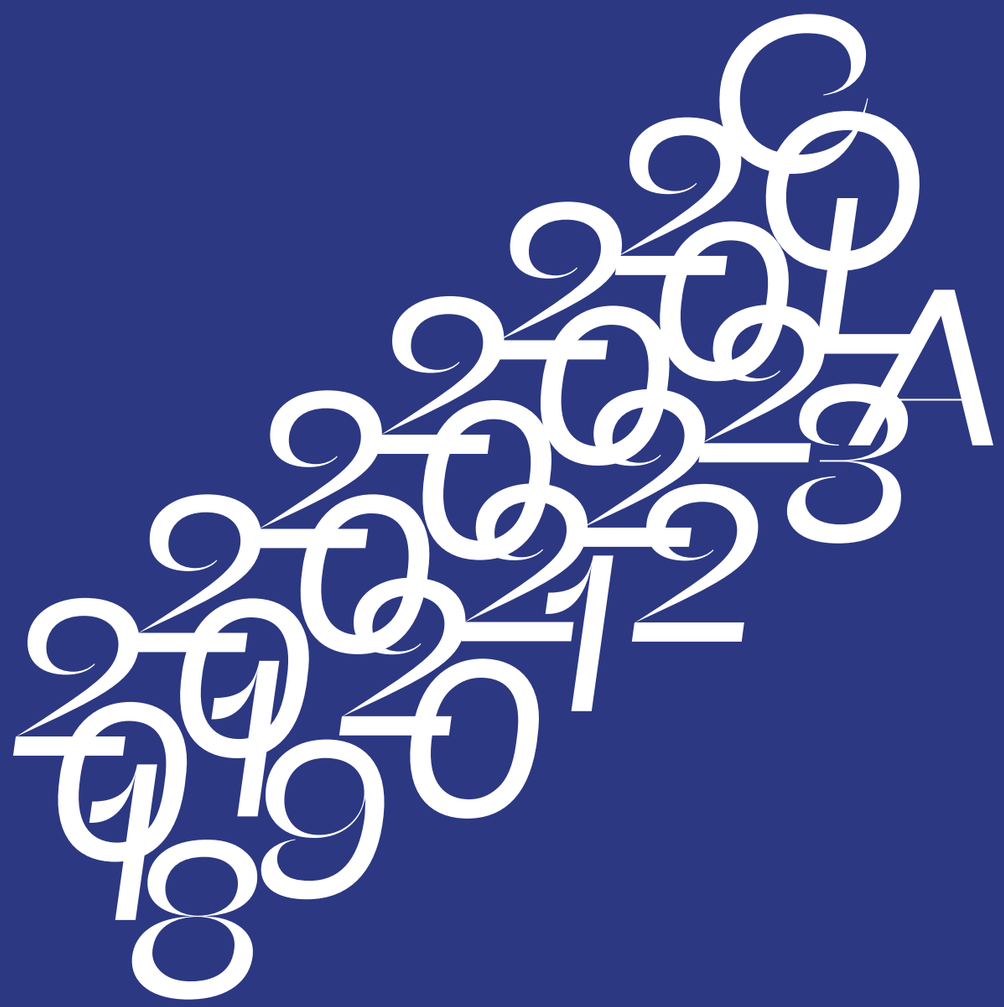
Selected Exhibitions
2024
Officine Saffi Award 5, Fondazione Officine Saffi, Milan, Italy (group)
2023
Clay Pop, Deitch Projects, Los Angeles (group)
Set Patterns, Charles Moffett Gallery, New York (solo)
2022
Breaking Ground: Women in California Clay, American Museum of Ceramic Art, Pomona, CA (group)
Patterns for Models, Vielmetter Los Angeles, Los Angeles (solo)
2020
Ceramic Biennial, Craft Contemporary Museum, Los Angeles (group)

Selected Bibliography

Dahl, Alia. *Clay Pop*. New York: Rizzoli Electa, 2023.
Elliot, Moyra. "Full Circle: Bari Ziperstein so far…." *Ceramics: Art + Perception* 112 (April 2019).
"*Set Patterns* at Charles Moffett Gallery." *Artforum* (May 2023).
"*State of Clay*: Six Los Angeles artists add new energy to California's celebrated ceramics tradition." *Surface Magazine* (Fall 2019).

Website
www.bariziperstein.com

1.
Chicago Transit, 2023. Stoneware, underglaze, and glaze, 19 3/4 x 15 x 8 1/4 in. Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Jeff McLane
2.
Heart Bricks, 2024. Stoneware and glaze, 11 x 11 x 19 1/2 in.
3.
Installation view, *Bari Ziperstein: Patterns of Propaganda*, Charles Moffett Gallery, February 1–March 23, 2019. Courtesy of the artist and Charles Moffett Gallery, NY
4.
Framed Plant Stand, 2023. Stoneware, underglaze, and glaze, 76 x 16 x 16 in. Courtesy of the artist and Nina Johnson Gallery, Miami
5.
Twisted Arms, 2024. Stoneware and glaze, 17 x 10 1/2 x 32 in.
6.
Corporate Abandonment, 2022. Stoneware, underglaze, and glaze on walnut base, 55 1/2 x 23 x 24 in. Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles. Photo: Jeff McLane



COLA History
2018–2023

2023 COLA Artists

Daniel Corral
Patricia Fernández
Wakana Kimura
Michael Massenburg
Alia Mohamed
Jasmine Orpilla
Duane Paul
Elyse Pignolet
Kyungmi Shin
David L. Ulin

2022 COLA Artists

Najite Agindotan
Nancy Baker Cahill
Sharon Louise Barnes
Suchi Branfman
Shonda Buchanan
Jibz Cameron
York Chang
Danny Jauregui
Yoshie Sakai

2021 COLA Artists

Neel Agrawal
Noel Alumit
Edgar Arceneaux
Maura Brewer
Nao Bustamante
Jedediah Caesar
Neha Choksi
Michael Datcher
Sarah Elgart
Lia Halloran
Phung Huynh
Farrah Karapetian
Ruben Ochoa
Umar Rashid

2020 COLA Artists

Tanya Aguiñiga
Amir H. Fallah
YoungEun Kim
Elana Mann
Hillary Mushkin
Alison O'Daniel
Vincent Ramos
Steven Reigns
Shizu Saldamando
Roxanne Steinberg
Holly J. Tempo
Mia Doi Todd
Jeffrey Vallance
Lis Diane Wedgeworth

2019 COLA Artists

Juan Capistrán
Enrique Castrejon
Kim Fisher
Katie Grinnan
Sabrina Gschwandtner
Alice Könitz
Olga Koumoundouros
Suzanne Lummis
Aleida Rodríguez
Sandy Rodriguez
Stephanie Taylor
Dwight Trible
Peter Wu
Jenny Yurshansky

2018 COLA Artists

Dave Hullfish Bailey
Guillermo Bert
Terry Braunstein
Cassils
Sandra de la Loza
Michelle Dizon
Tim Durfee
June Edmonds
d. Sabela grimes
Peter J. Harris
Michele O'Marah
Julie Shafer
Doris Sung
Kristina Wong

2023 COLA Panelists

Neel Agrawal
Michael Datcher
Michele Jaffe
Camille Jenkins
Anna Katz
Marvella Muro
Umar Rashid
Holly J. Tempo

2022 COLA Panelists

Taylor Renee Aldridge
Amanda Fletcher
Ana Iwataki
Alec Mapa
Vincent Ramos
Aandrea Stang
Mia Doi Todd
Lisa Diane Wedgeworth

2021 COLA Panelists

Betty Avila
Leanna Bremond
Cassandra Coblentz
Sabrina Gschwandtner
Suzanne Lummis
Diana Nawi
Kamran V

2020 COLA Panelists

Sandra de la Loza
Daniela Lieja
Edgar Miramontes
Kelsey Nolan
Doris Sung
Kristina Wong
Steven Wong

2019 COLA Panelists

Bryan Barcena
Meryl Friedman
Joel Garcia
Mar Hollingsworth
Ciara Moloney
Jesus A. Reyes
Andreen Soley
Whitney Weston

2018 COLA Panelists

Gloria Enedina Alvarez
Edward Hayes
Marcella Guerrero
Ben Johnson
Isabelle Lutterodt
Paul Outlaw
Sally Shore
Emily Zaiden

2024 COLA IMAP Acknowledgments

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