

MEMBER NEWS

Events that are likely to be available after publication will be marked with a ■.



Chris Corson, *Plinth*, pit-fired ceramic, 8 x 18 x 23 inches

Solo and Feature Shows (2 or 3 artists), Commissions, Honors

Elizabeth Ashe, *SoloLab Micro Residency*, curated by Heloisa Escudero, VisArts, 155 Gibbs Street, Rockville, MD, January 2–9.

■ **Chris Corson**, *Visible*, curated by Corey Frey, Exhibitions Manager, Frederick, MD, January 2–February 28. Virtual tour on <https://delaplaine.org/exhibitions/current-exhibits/>.

■ **nic galloro**, *Microplastics Solo Exhibition*, Invitation by Mary Leavens, Director, Havre de Grace Maritime Museum and Environmental Center, Havre de Grace, MD, March 15–June 15.

Mahy Dimitriou Polymeropoulos, *Solo Exhibition*, Big White Gallery, Mykonos, Greece, June - September, 2019.
– *Art Thessaloniki*; Gallery Art Forum, Thessaloniki, Greece, November 21–24, 2019.
– *NJV Athens Plaza, Explorer's Club*, curated by rini Vantiraki Syntagma Square, Athens, Greece, April–November 2019.

Mahy Dimitriou Polymeropoulos, *Flowering Pair*, oil on canvas, 30 x 60 inches



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WSG Exhibitions & Programs

Upcoming Dates can be Viewed LIVE by going to our Facebook page: facebook.com/WSGsculptors/

Fleeting, Fled (WSG Exhibition)

March 27–May 2, 2021

(rescheduled from 2020)

Glen Echo Park, MD

Opening reception: Saturday, March 27, 4 to 6 pm (details to follow)

Juror and Artist Talks: TBD

Juror: Laura Roulet

Fleeting, Fled is an exhibition about the temporal that is open to many possibilities. The cycle of life, death and rebirth is the underlying theme. Occurring during the spring season in Washington, artwork could be inspired by the ephemeral beauty of the cherry blossoms and daffodils that will be in bloom. Environmental themes might also relate to climate change or the climate crisis. The opportunity to halt rising global temperatures is fleeting, or has the window for evoking remediation already closed? The setting of Glen Echo Park, one of our National Parks might also be inspirational. The indoor and outdoor setting allows for a wide range of media, including ephemeral outdoor works. The juror welcomes a broad interpretation of this theme, personal or political.

Becoming a Professional in the Art World: Creating Your Legacy
Monday, March 8, 7 pm

Zoom presentation and conversation
Panelists: Cheryl Edwards and Helen Frederick
Hosts: Annie Farrar and Joan Weber

Becoming a Professional in the Art World: Pricing Your Work
Monday, March 22, 7 pm

Zoom presentation and conversation
Hosts: Eric Celarier and Joan Weber

WSG Image Show: International Sculpture Day
Saturday, April 24, 7 pm

Zoom presentation of members' work.
Details to come.

WSG Information

2021 WSG Board Members

Chairperson: Annie Farrar
Vice-Chairperson & Social Media: Asma Chaudhary
Interim President & Secretary: Lisa Battle
Treasurer: Zoie Lafis
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Volunteer Coordinator & Call Center: Laura Jamroz
Youth and Diversity Initiatives: Eric Celarier
Advisory Board Liaison: Joan Weber
Exhibitions Chair: Steve Wanna
Museum and Special Projects Liaison: Mahy Polymeropoulos

The Washington Sculptor Publication

Editor: Lynda Smith-Bügge
Feature Writers: Eric Celarier, Annie Farrar, Judith Pratt*,
Lynda Smith-Bügge, Steve Wanna
Design and Image Management: Stephanie H. Firestone*
Proofreaders: Jessica Beels*, Judith Pratt*

*non-board member volunteers

WSG Advisory Board 2021

Philip Barlow, Collector
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Gloria Chapa, Sculptor
Helen Chason, Director, Kreeger Museum
Chas Colburn, Sculptor, Owner 3D Metal Parts, Inc.
Joan Danziger, Sculptor
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Judith Pratt, Sculptor
Jack Rasmussen, Director and Curator,
American University Museum at the Katzen Arts Center
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Laura Roulet, Curator
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Vesela Sretenovic, Curator, Modern and
Contemporary Art, Phillips Collection
Sarah Tanguy, Independent Curator
Duncan Tebow, Founding Member and former
President WSG
Wilfredo Valladares, Sculptor, Professor, Anne Arundel
Community College
WSG Joan Weber, Collector

The Washington Sculptors Group, founded in 1984, promotes an awareness and an understanding of sculpture and fosters the exchange of ideas among sculptors, collectors, and the general public through: sponsorship of frequent events, including artists' panels, presentations, workshops, and social gatherings; co-sponsorship of programs with museums and other art groups; and organization of professionally-curated exhibitions in museums and alternative spaces in the Washington, DC area and beyond. The work of WSG is carried out by its Board of Directors, along with its nearly 400 members—sculptors, collectors, curators, and others interested in sculpture—in its working committees. WSG received the Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in Service to the Arts in 2004.

Membership

WSG. Dues for a calendar year (Jan–Dec) \$45/year, \$15/year to students with ID (scholarships available). Dues for renewing members are payable in Oct., Nov. and Dec. for the following year. Dues paid by new members Jan. through Sept. will be applied to the current year. Current paid-up members have "Member through 2021" above their names on their mailing labels.

To join or renew by mail, print the membership form from the WSG website, fill it out and send it with a check to: Washington Sculptors Group, PO Box 42534, Washington DC 20015. *You may also use the online form. Fill out the form, and when you click the "Submit" button at the bottom of the page, a message will come up with a link to let you return to the Main Membership page and pay using PayPal.* To change your membership address of record and for receiving this WSG periodical, send your name and address by email to membership@washingtonsculptors.org or by regular mail to WSG at the address above.

Receive Reduced Membership Fees

These partnering arts organizations give the following membership discounts to current WSG members:

International Sculpture Center (ISC)—15%

Washington Project for the Arts (WPA/DC)—10%

International Arts & Artists (IA&A)—10%

Sculptors Inc of Baltimore/Baltimore Sculptors—\$10 off the membership fee

Philadelphia Sculptors Group, New England Sculptors Group, and Tri-State Sculptors Group—upon request.

Resources

WSG Website www.washingtonsculptors.org

The WSG website contains information about the organization and its events and activities in the following areas: Programs, Exhibitions, Exhibition Opportunities, Publications, History, Mission, Governance, Membership and Contact Addresses. In the Members Gallery, any visitor to the site can find names, images and biographical information about current members who have entered material into the data base. Current members can sign into the database and upload information about their work by using the Gallery Update Form.

The Washington Sculptor Publication

Issued three times a year. Deadlines January, April, and August. Send information to membernews@washingtonsculptors.org. See the website for information on submitting visual materials.

Yahoo Group

A forum for members, collectors and all those interested in three-dimensional media to share information, get technical advice, and discuss exhibitions at area museums and galleries (including your own). Go to www.yahoo.com, click on 'groups'; search: [washingtonsculptors](http://www.washingtonsculptors.org) (one word) which brings you to: 'Washington Sculptors Group, Washington, DC' where you sign in.

Contact

Washington Sculptors Group
PO Box 42534, Washington DC 20015
email: info@washingtonsculptors.org tel: (202) 686-8696
website: www.washingtonsculptors.org



■ **Judith Pratt**, *Point of Origin: Piedmont Stations*, curated by Erica Harrison, Tephra Institute of Contemporary Art (formerly GRACE), Reston, VA, May 6–August 31. Reception/Artist talk: TBD.



Judith Pratt, *Point of Origin: Station #1* (installation), acrylic paint, acrylic ink on Lenox 100 paper, foamcore board, 8 x 15 x 5 feet (dimensions variable)

■ **Davide Prete**, *The Soundwave Art Park*, intersection of Minnesota Ave and 34th St, SE, Washington, DC, commissioned by the DC Commission on Arts and Humanities in partnership with the District of Columbia Office of Planning, August 2020. *Soundwave Art Park* was created for the *Playable Art Project*, a creative play and placemaking project.



Davide Prete, *The Soundwave Art Park*

– *Vote*, commissioned by Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County for *Promote the Vote* project encouraging residents to vote in the 2020 election. The prints were installed at various locations in Germantown, MD, October 2020.



Davide Prete, *Vote*, print installation

– 3D printed reinterpretation of Senate Corncob Capitals designed by the British architect Benjamin Latrobe, commissioned by Robert A. Facchina Italian American Museum of Washington, DC, January 2021.

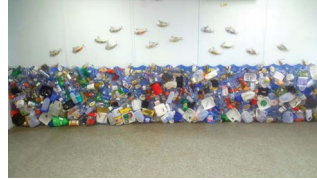
■ **Ira Tattelman**, awarded an Associate Artist residency at Atlantic Center for the Arts, mentoring artist Charlie Hailey, New Smyrna Beach, FL, February 21–March 13. Artist presentation: March 11, 7 pm.



Ira Tattelman, Atlantic Center for the Arts, New Smyrna Beach, Florida

■ **Jenny Wu**, Sherry Trachtman, *Material Reality*, curated by David Carlson, Fred Schnider Gallery of Art, Arlington, VA, January 9–February 27. Opening reception: by appointment only, Saturday, January 16, 5–7 pm. Jenny Wu will be at the gallery on Sunday, February 21, 3–5 pm.

■ *Devil Is in the Details*, curated by Erika Diamond, Chautauqua Visual Arts Galleries, online exhibition (<https://art.chq.org/exhibitions/devil-is-in-the-details/>), January 1–March 31.



nic galloro, *Fish School*, reclaimed materials, mostly plastic from the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay, 45 x 234 x 6 inches



Jenny Wu, *Bad Reporting*, latex paint, resin on wood panel, 10 x 10 x 2.5 inches



Liz Ashe, *Helix @ 39*, cotton rope, upcycled cotton fabric



Jenny Wu, *Keyboard Warriors*, latex paint, resin on wood panel, 6 x 6 x 2.5 inches

Group Shows

A New Era Begins! Democracy has Survived!, curated by Margery Goldberg, Zenith Gallery, 1429 Iris Street, NW, Washington, DC, January 23–February 20, including **Rachael Bohlander**, **Margery Goldberg**, **Paula Stern**.



Paula Stern, *Nelson Mandela*, cast resin ed.1/50, 16 x 10 x 10 inches

■ *A Show of Hands, Don't Take Pictures Publication*, November 25, 2020–February 23, 2021, including **Helen Glazer**.

■ *Adequate Earth: Artists and Writers in Antarctica* (online exhibition), curated by Ulrike Heine, aawcollective.com, January 28–May 22, including **Helen Glazer**.

■ *Black History is American History*, curated by Margery Goldberg. Reception: Wednesday, February 24, 5–8 pm (45-minute timed slots through Eventbrite tickets), Zenith Gallery, 1111 Pennsylvania Ave, NW, Washington, DC, February 1–April 17, including **Chris Malone**.



Margery Goldberg, *United We Stand*, mahogany, walnut, many exotic woods, 50 x 20 x 20 inches

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■ *Fleeting, /Fled* (WSG Exhibition), juried by Laura Roulete, Glen Echo Park, MD, March 27–May 2, 2021 (rescheduled from 2020). Opening reception: Saturday, March 27, 4 to 6pm (details to follow) including **Pat Alexander, Teri Bailey, Michaela Borghese, Carol Brown Goldberg, Jeffery Cooper, Katie Dell Kaufman, Annie Farrar, Mimi Frank, Adam Hager, Artemis Herber, Susan Hostetler, Emily Hoxworth Hager, Jackie Hoysted, Alyssa Imes, Alex Kasten, Wanjin Kim, P D Klein, Ruth Lozner, gil narro Garcia, Louisa Neill, Jonathan Ottke, Jane Pettit, Sharon Pierce McCullough, Iris Posner, Marc Robarge, Lisa Rosenstein, Kanika Sircar, Lynda Smith-Bügge, Paul Steinkoenig, Ira Tattelman, Amelia Voos, Steve Wanna, Janet Wittenberg.**

■ *Frederick County Art Association Member Exhibition*, Delaplaine Art Center, Frederick, MD, January 2–31, including **Esperanza Alzona.**

■ *IDENTITY – Online Winter Exhibition*, juried by Maryland State Arts Council panelists, featuring self-reflective art that expresses and explores how the artist perceives themselves, virtual exhibition at www.kunstmatrix.com/en/maryland-state-arts-council, February 1–March 5, including **Esperanza Alzona.**

■ *Contemporary Athens*, Kolonaki, Athens, Greece, August 2020–present, including **Mahy Dimitriou Polymeropoulos.**

MFA Winter Members Show 2021, juried by Erin Lehman, Director of The Holtzman & Center for the Arts at Towson University, Maryland Federation of Arts, Annapolis, MD, January 6–30, including **Mary Opasik**, who received a juror’s honorable mention for “Scorched Fish.”

■ *Mnemosyne/Memory*, Harvard’s Center for Hellenic Studies, Washington, DC, Virtual Exhibition and Presentation, November 1, 2020–April 22, 2021, including William Adair/USA; Zachery Bonay/Spain; Iris Brosch/France; Albert Dietrich/Greece; Anna Gillespie/UK; **Artemis Herber**, curator/USA; Perla Krauze/Mexico; Eunsook Lee/South Korea; **Judith Pratt**/USA; **Marc Robarge**/USA.

Open Exhibition, juried by Raymond Patron, Art League Gallery, Alexandria, VA, October 4 – November 4, 2020, including **Carol Morgan.**



Esperanza Alzona, *Opposing Views*, cast iron, 7.5 x 7.25 x 4.75 inches



Esperanza Alzona, *Rise Up*, cast iron, 6.25 x 7.5 x 7.75 inches

Open Exhibition, juried by Mark Bischel, Art League Gallery, Alexandria, VA, December 4, 2020–January 4, 2021, including **Carol Morgan.**

■ *Pattern, and Materiality: Antarctic Landscape(s) and Sculptural Practices*, Zoom panel discussion with **Helen Glazer**, Michelle Schwengel-Regala, and Oona Stern, moderated by Jann Rosen-Queralt, Thursday, March 4, 6 pm. Register at linktr.ee/AntarcticCollective.



Chris Malone, *Anika*, ceramic, tile, stones, and crystals, 18 x 9 x 8 inches



Judith Pratt, *Point of Origin: Hides* (installation), acrylic paint, acrylic ink on Lenox 100 paper, foamcore board, 8 x 15 x 3 feet (dimensions variable)

Celebrating Our Annual Dinner at Home and Studio

We all know that 2020 has proven to be something else! Nonetheless, on Saturday, November 14, it was nice to get together among artist friends and celebrate our annual dinner tradition. This year, there were many noticeable differences—no delicious potluck full of fabulous homemade and seasonal dishes and desserts and, more importantly, there was no opportunity for a large, in-person gathering to hug each other. But we did our best!

We held a wonderful “virtual” edition of our dinner and, although we are all in different physical locations, it was a great way to catch up, reflect on the past year, and think about the exciting opportunities ahead for 2021 and 2022. We are grateful for those of you who could join us live from your homes and artist studios and share what sculptural artworks and installations you have worked on this year despite the pandemic.

WSG Annual Dinner continues on page 5



WSG Board of Directors prior to pandemic

It was uplifting to see our amazing WSG community, including our incredible returning and new members, as well as our esteemed Advisory Board members. Because of your compassion, resilience, and creativity, we continue to grow and embrace more artists and sculptors throughout the region. Please continue making and sharing about your work. Thank you!

The WSG Board – Alex, Annie, Asma, Eric, Jeff, Joan, Laura, Lisa, Lynda, Mahy, Mary, Steve, and Zoie

– Asma Chaudhary

WSG Exhibition Updates by WSG’s Exhibitions Chair

Back in March of 2020, in the early days of the pandemic, we were in the final stages of preparation for our first show of the year, *Fleeting, Fled*, juried by Laura Roulet and to be held at Glen Echo Park. Things were changing rapidly at the time, and it was uncertain from one day to the next how we were going to proceed. Finally, and only days before installation was set to begin, the venue made the decision to shut down. We were able to negotiate a postponement of the exhibition and, as of early January, it’s scheduled to open on March 27, barring any new developments that might force another closure. The remaining two exhibitions in 2020 had been slotted for later in the year (summer and fall), which gave us time to navigate them. We were able to mount them, and both opened physically for visitors. *Artina 2020: LIGHT: A Sculptural Solar Dance* (Sandy

Spring Museum, juried by Gaby Mizes) and *Sculpture NOW 2020* (McLean Project for the Arts, juried by Nancy Sausser) were well received by the public and reviewed in the *Washington Post*, among other publications.

As many of us fully appreciate, the pandemic’s impact is not limited to 2020. Many organizations and arts venues have had their 2020 calendars completely upended, causing ripple effects that likely will be felt for years to come. As of now, many still don’t know exactly what 2021 holds for them and are hesitant or unable to schedule events this year. COVID-19 vaccines offer hope, but even with a quick and successful distribution, it will take time for venues to return to pre-pandemic operational levels. This has had a profound impact on WSG, as our model is one of partnership with venues to host our exhibitions. We are currently working with several

local venues to organize as many of our typical annual exhibits as we can. In all likelihood, we will have another *Artina* exhibit with Sandy Spring Museum in the summer, especially since the previous one was such a resounding success. We are exploring venue options for *Sculpture NOW 2021* and have a couple of potentially promising leads, though nothing is confirmed yet.

Also, in March of last year, I contracted the virus and suffered symptoms for a few months. The situation looked so extremely dire at the time, on a global level, that I was resigned to the possibility of having 2020 be a total loss as far as WSG exhibitions were concerned. Let’s face it: virtual exhibitions, in their current iteration at least, simply do not work for 3D art. I regard the fact that we were able to mount two physical exhibitions during a pandemic and a summer of intense social and political unrest as nothing short of a miracle. It was immensely rewarding to be able to provide this outlet to our artists. Realistically speaking, 2021 may prove more difficult in many ways, but we remain cautiously optimistic. We will continue to work tirelessly and make every possible effort to organize as many of our annual exhibitions as we can.

– Steve Wanna
January 11, 2021

Thirty-six Years of WSG Records Join the District of Columbia Public Library People's Archive

It is with great pleasure that WSG announces that our archives have become a part of the DC Public Library's People's Archive. <https://www.dclibrary.org/thepeoplesarchive>

This is an exciting development that will ensure the safety and accessibility of our records both from the past and moving forward.

Finding a permanent location for the records has been a priority for the board as we ramp up planning celebrations for our 40th anniversary in 2024. These records have spent years being moved around from one board member's home to another as leadership has changed. Last February, a team of volunteers gathered the collection of about twenty boxes from former president Elsabé Dixon's home to store them in a space generously donated in kind by Self Storage Plus (now SecureSpace Self Storage) in Greenbelt, MD. This move was intended to be the last before a permanent location was secured, and I'm thrilled that this was the case. This past fall, Advisory Board Member Allison Nance helped put us in touch with DC Public Library (DCPL) and I was eventually connected to archivist Ray Barker. After several conversations, it was decided by both organizations that the fit was correct for our collection to become part of DCPL. On December 18, Ray and I packed up both our cars with the records and drove them to their new home in the newly renovated Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library.

WSG could not have asked for a better home for our collection. The mission of the People's Archive is "to connect you to unique resources that illustrate the District of Columbia's local history and culture. We are a home of discovery, where diverse stories—past and present—are preserved and amplified." As Ray shared, "With the new renovations completed of the MLK Memorial Library in downtown DC came a renaming of the Special Collections/Washingtoniana department to People's Archive. While operations at the Library and within the department are limited, [due to COVID-19] reference services, and donor relations—in addition to other services, continue. As an Archivist at the DC Public Library, I am pleased to welcome the organizational records of the Washington Sculptors Group (WSG), to add to our existing holdings of area artists' groups. This collection will be cataloged and ultimately available to researchers both within the city and elsewhere."

The WSG archives consist of carefully collected records from the 36 years since the WSG was incorporated as a non-profit organization in

1984, and founding paperwork from the original group, which started meeting in 1982. Exhibition records include catalogs, postcards, artist lists, and images. Organizational records include lists of board members, volunteers, meeting minutes, and agendas. There are the past issues of the Washington Sculptor, and other great materials. I personally can't wait to see what gems will be unearthed during processing and wait in anticipation make a research appointment to study our collections. I'm always learning from the members, board members, and volunteers who have made WSG the amazing organization that it is. I can't wait to learn even more about our history.

— Annie Farrar

WSG's Annual Advisory Board Meeting: A Virtual Success!

Goodbye traditional, in-person advisory board meetings. Hello teleconferencing! Due to the current global health restrictions, on Monday, November 23, 2020, at 7 pm, under the leadership of Advisory Board Liaison Joan Weber, the Washington Sculptors Group held its first Annual Advisory Board Meeting via Zoom video teleconferencing with outstanding results. A record 34 combined Board of Trustees and Advisory Board members were in attendance.

Liaison Joan Weber comes to the WSG Advisory Board as a twice-tenured Board of Trustees member, a longstanding businesswoman in the Washington, DC, area, and an avid collector of artwork by Baltimore/Washington-area artists for over 30 years. She is also an enthusiastic supporter and educator of emerging area artists. While few understand the extent of a liaison's responsibilities, even fewer are better qualified to serve as WSG's Advisory Board Liaison than Joan.

WSG's current advisory board consists of 33 artists and art representatives who are invited to contribute not only because of their professional expertise and knowledge, but also because of the depth and value of their personal experience in the arts. Further, the advisors enrich the trustees' efforts and also help to expand the reach and growth of the organization.

The value of a strong advisory board is to offer advice and support to a board of trustees and at the same time remain separate from the governing and financial functions of the board. That having been said, an advisory board may contribute to the organization in many valuable ways, such as making recommendations and providing information

WSG Board Meeting continues on page 7



Advisory Board Meeting, Saturday, November 23, 2020

that brings expertise from other nonprofit arts organizations, galleries, collectors, artists, etc. For a current list of Washington Sculptors Group Board of Trustees and Advisory Board members plus their affiliations, please see page 2 of the newsletter.

During the November 23 meeting, the vital connection between the WSG Board of Trustees and the Advisory Board was abundantly clear. Introductions and reports from current members of the Board of Trustees allowed Advisory Board members to understand distinct board roles including chair, secretary, treasurer, membership chair, exhibitions chair, etc. The introduction also served as striking testament to how much work the WSG Board of Trustees achieved during 2020.

The main discussions on which we were seeking advice from the group addressed how to grow the membership of WSG and provide programming with the clear commitment to take actions that will lead the membership and leadership of WSG to more closely reflect the diversity of the greater Washington community. Advisory Board members were generous with their experiences from their own organizations and practices, offering suggestions and ideas for consistent and meaningful outreach, juror selection, and appealing (and possibly new) venues for exhibitions. The conversation was lively, creative, and very useful to the board.

As it turns out, despite the ongoing challenges during COVID-19, the WSG Board of Trustees and WSG Advisory Board continue to do an outstanding job of providing members with substantive information, online exhibitions, and professionally engaging events—truly a virtual success.

— Judith Pratt
WSG Advisory Board Member

Teaching Art Online During the Pandemic

The pandemic has, no doubt, changed many of us forever. Artists, and the teachers who teach them, have not been spared. Where no one wants to hear about silver linings in an epidemic, we should acknowledge that this can be a moment for all of us to reflect.

Teaching online has been difficult at best, turning much of what many teachers do in the classroom on its head. In art, the virtual limitations are obvious, but I need to point out where standard aesthetics might suffer, this can be, and has been in my class of elementary school students, an opportunity to focus on what is may be the most important characteristic in the field, conceptual understandings of what art can be.

Stripped of much of the media we use to express ourselves, like paint and clay, the strongest aspect of my students' works are the thoughts that are going into them. This might be uncomfortable for those who identify closely with beauty in art, but in a field where the top artists are celebrated for showing us new perspectives, wouldn't the ideas behind pieces be the most important thing we could encourage?

Considering that few critically acclaimed, contemporary works are appreciated solely for their good looks, why is it that beauty should still be the central goal of so much instruction for younger people? The truth is that, where I like handsome objects, we have trouble defining, in certain terms, what beauty is and so, in a world in which we must admit that there may be no normative criteria for taste, the best any of us can do is become good at describing what we are doing.



Bird With Background Assemblage: Teacher Demonstration, mixed media, 18 x 24 x 2 inches

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Suzanne Firstenberg

Suzanne Firstenberg's piece, "In America: How could this happen...," captured the imagination of the nation in mid-October when she initiated the planting of over 200,000 white engineering flags, each embodying a life lost to the pandemic. Very few of us could miss the widespread appeal of this



Suzanne Firstenberg

homegrown piece as it took aim at the political indifference taking place a little more than a mile down the road from the DC Armory, where the piece was assembled. Shocked by the callousness of a government official who could negate 170,000 lives as a mere "statistic," Firstenberg originally conceived the project as just a demonstration of the mounting casualties, but she would soon find that the art touched people in ways she hadn't fully anticipated.

are not in full control of how their work is perceived, saying, "Artists do not get to choose how their art is interpreted." Though she had originally wanted to create a space for mourning, she did not originally mean to create a memorial. "It is hard to create a memorial for an event that is still in progress." However, Firstenberg notes, "From the very beginning, 'In America' was viewed as a memorial. People came from all over the country to write the names of loved ones on flags." Her viewers expressed their appreciation and she accepted it as the sanctuary it had become. One can only hope that our art touches our audience so much that it emerges as venue for healing.

Firstenberg affirms that such projects can only be realized if one has the determination to follow through.



Suzanne Firstenberg, walking across flag field

Being there to witness viewers walk the length of the four-acre field allowed Firstenberg to understand the true impact of her piece on those who sought public acknowledgement of deaths that had happened in silence, often in isolation. She surmised that "they needed to tell someone that the art had meaning to them, that these deaths mattered, that they were hurting. To honor that, I was on site every day from late morning until sunset. I planted flags and changed the numbers even in the pouring rain." Being present allowed that human connection, a point not lost on her going forward.

What often gets lost in an installation of this size are the logistical and conceptual difficulties inherent in translating a casual proposal into a living entity.

There is no doubt that the human mind struggles with high figures, which is probably why news reports of this epidemic draw comparisons with more familiar things, like plane crashes and stadium capacities. Firstenberg outlines her motivation in urgent terms, "Alarm bells went off in my head: the death toll had become so large, so incomprehensible, it became easy to dismiss." She could not dismiss it, so she illustrated it.

Firstenberg affirms that such projects can only be realized if one has the determination to follow through. Challenged by other large public installations, she knew that the scale of her idea substantially changed the work into something she could call her own, allowing her to brave any criticism. This belief in her work permitted her to take some chances by ordering a quarter of a million marking pennants on October 2, even though she did not gain permission to use the DC Armory Parade Grounds until October 15. Firmness of vision and determination to make things work often outweigh risks.

The best artwork should confront us with realities we otherwise might miss so we can evolve not only as artists, but also as people. Because of this project, Firstenberg was able to fully appreciate that artists

Like the Aids Quilt or the Tower of London poppies, artistic displays

'Firstenberg' continues on page 9

of magnitude may be the only way to reach the nation’s conscious when numbers are this high and the realities are too brutal to acknowledge. In this case, the meaning of the flags, like the quilt and the poppies, was completed by the victims. It is no wonder that this



Suzanne Firstenberg, flags memorializing Covid deaths



The artist in front of flags

“memorial by popular consent” was granted three extra weeks on display, until November 30. I can only imagine that this piece’s extension was guaranteed by being the right message (one of empathy), in the right place (the city where

the response was organized), at the right time (when we were first seeing how horrific these casualties were really going to be). Firstenberg states, “This intense interest taught me that the art was no longer mine, it was ours. I had succeeded. That was profoundly gratifying.”

All photos for this article, credit: Jonathan Thorpe

I believe that artists must make the most of ourselves by challenging the field with as many provocative works as we can muster. These refreshing confrontations cannot come from repeating conservative patterns of aesthetic object making, no matter how skillful or beautiful the results, so art lessons that singularly conform to commonly understood standards of beauty probably don’t challenge the status quo and, thereby, don’t reveal much about our current context. They simply reiterate and reestablish old ones. This is in direct conflict with what the art world seems to value at this point in time. In other words, making work that does not express fresh and interesting points of view probably won’t help children, or adults, critically think, which seems to be the point of art as it is practiced today.



Tower Assemblage: Teacher Demonstration, mixed media, 24 x 14 x 10 inches

The National Core Standards recognize these perspectives and have looked towards promoting critique and self-explanation of personal objects, yet much of what is taught may only give lip service to these ideals. This year, I was forced to let go of almost all aesthetic control and I have been rewarded by the free thinking that only children could concoct, from bizarre new creatures assembled from commonplace objects to drawings for industrial products

that I did not know the world needed. There is a level of absurdity that young people can bring to our problems that is refreshing.

It is a fragile genius that respects ambiguity in the world, yet these child-like connections, which are true creativity, are often corrected and, thereby, strangled. Letting go of expectations that artwork must look a certain way should be a goal we all have, whether we are young or old and describing what our work means may be where the best part of any art resides. Beauty and skills do have a place in art, but there is also a place for thinking about the world through art that is often neglected, stripping instruction of the democratizing and inspiring aspects of our craft. I am fully invested in the curriculum that is addressing a growing shortage of creative thinking that is showing up across the educational landscape from grade school to college. This crisis seems directly tied to the constriction of explorative reasoning and can only be remedied by the free play of ideas.

— Eric Celarier

ArtWorks for Freedom Artists Alliance featuring Theresa McFadden

ArtWorks for Freedom is a global initiative that conducts multifaceted, arts-based awareness campaigns in cities and communities across the globe to give a voice to the under-reported and rapidly growing problem of human trafficking and modern-day slavery.

January was Human Trafficking Awareness Month, so each week, the ArtWorks for Freedom Artists Alliance featured a member of our growing group with whom we have collaborated in the past. By highlighting their art, practice, and inspiration, we hope to broaden our audience and enlighten more hearts and minds about the millions of invisible, marginalized people who are trafficking victims or are at risk of being trafficked. Today, we present the work of artist Theresa Knight McFadden.

Among a plethora of titles, including professor, wife, mother, and friend, McFadden is a creator. Her work has toured the world as part of exhibits throughout the U.S., China, and South Korea. Formally trained as a painter, she works in oils on large canvases. She also works in clay and mixed media and it is this combination with which she created “Caged” to portray the atrocity of human trafficking.

McFadden grew up in the Washington, DC, area and in 2011 moved to Cambridge, Maryland, with her husband. This is where they purchased a home, established roots, and formed a community. It is where McFadden’s creativity flows without interruption. Her studio being on the same property as the house itself is beyond a convenience—it calls to her.

“It is a special, sacred place for me and when I enter it, I feel an almost immediate shift away from all my day-to-day tasks and concerns to a more introspective state that allows me to focus on my art. I try to go to my studio every day (no excuses for bad weather!) even if it is just to clean up or sit and think, read or work in my sketchbook,” says McFadden.

The studio is where the magic happens; a place where the creative mode transcends body and time.

“The process of channeling my ideas, feelings, and emotions through the medium I have chosen becomes almost meditative. I know many artists would tell you they have created a work that later they can hardly remember making and that experience is often true for me too. On my most productive and magical days, the creative process takes

over and everything else falls away, even the sensations of hunger or fatigue,” McFadden explains.

Prior to the ArtWorks for Freedom Easton, MD, campaign, McFadden was unaware of the gravity and pervasiveness of human trafficking, locally and globally. Before the inception of “Caged,” she set out to educate herself and was struck and overwhelmed by the reality that came to light through in-depth exploration of the subject to which she sought an artistic response.



Theresa Knight McFadden, *Caged*, clay, wax, wood, barbed wire, 17 x 20 x 16 inches

“I had no idea of the many types of human trafficking and was astounded to learn that it was so widespread and actually going on close to my home,” says McFadden. “What struck me deeply was the sense of being physically, and arbitrarily trapped at the hands of other humans. In a society where I and most other people move about freely and can advocate for ourselves there was this horrific underworld of human trafficking I was becoming aware of. ‘Caged’ was my response to this awareness.”

*What struck me deeply was the sense of
being physically, and arbitrarily trapped at
the hands of other humans.*

Theresa McFadden continues on page 11

McFadden's illustrative description of "Caged" gives us a glimpse of the strength and fortitude of the people who have bravely lived through this experience.

"It is a sculpture made of clay, wood, and barbed wire, in the shape of a square box. The frame of the box is made of wood and painted white, while the sides are white vertical bars made of unglazed clay and pitted as bones might be. The top of the box has barbed wire strung across it. Inside this box are the clay busts of a man and woman, waxed to a soft glow. They are side by side and looking out at the viewer. While most of my work involves high-key color, I chose white for this somber piece. White is a symbol of innocence in some cultures and mourning in others—both being represented in this piece—the innocence and mourning of those being trafficked and the mourning of the world that has lost them." She further explains that "[t]he figures are white to ennoble them and give them dignity in the way of classical busts from antiquity. The barbed wire top lifts off the box. While this was a practical choice since I needed a way to get the busts into their space it is also symbolic of hope that there will be an end to this entrapment through increased awareness of its existence."

McFadden and seven other local artists were asked by ArtWorks for Freedom to participate in the Easton, MD, campaign, which was presented in partnership with the Artistic Insights Fund of the Mid-Shore Community Foundation. In addition to local artists, the exhibit featured Kay Chernush's "Bought & Sold" installation, drawings by trafficking survivor Prum Vannak, and murals by aspiring teenage artists in an afterschool program.

Regarding her work with the organization, McFadden says, "Collaborating with ArtWorks has been extremely meaningful to me. Their mission to use art as a tool to educate and enlighten the public and stir them to action against the injustice of human trafficking, and eventually to eradicate it, really resonated with me. I was honored to be asked to use my artistic voice to help raise awareness on the subject. I felt like I was following in the tradition of artists throughout history who have used their art to provoke social change. Art speaks to the soul in ways other messages often don't. My hope is that the power of my art and that of other artists can reach people and touch their hearts. ArtWorks for Freedom is doing wonderful work. I am grateful that they exist and that I have been able to play a small part in helping them carry out their mission of eradicating human trafficking."

— Kacie LeCompte Renfro

ZCAF Seeks Woodworking Instructors for its New Mobile Woodshop Program

Zenith Community Arts Foundation (ZCAF) recently received funding from the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and Events DC to develop two woodworking programs for residents of the District of Columbia. The first is creative woodworking instruction for artistic and DIY residents in all wards of the city. The second is a Pre-Apprenticeship Training program primarily for young adults (ages 18–24) to enter into the carpentry trades. Both programs will utilize a novel Mobile Woodshop housed in a 20-ft box truck. In addition, a fully equipped conventional woodshop next to Zenith Gallery will host artistic woodworking classes serving primarily residents of DC's Ward 4.

The Mobile Woodshop is a long-term dream of WSG Advisory Board member Margery Goldberg, who is a sculptor, furniture maker, owner of Zenith Gallery, and Founder and Executive Director of ZCAF. Zenith Gallery has been established in Washington, DC, for 42 years and Zenith Community Arts Foundation was created in 2000. In recent years, Goldberg has become increasingly concerned about declining opportunities for learning woodworking in high school shops and community facilities.

Several other members of the Washington Sculptors Group have also been involved with the Mobile Woodshop endeavor. Liz Ashe, as former Administrator Director of ZCAF, wrote the successful grant proposals. Wood sculptor and WSG Board member Lynda Smith-Bügge is currently Project Coordinator for the Mobile Woodshop (MWS). She selected the MWS vehicle, a 20-ft Isuzu truck, after many weeks of research and brought together an architect and cabinetmaker to design and build a functional shop on wheels. Other WSG members



Mobile Woodshop for Zenith Community Arts Foundation

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will be involved as the program develops.

The Community Enrichment Program, one of ZCAF's MWS programs, is currently seeking instructors proficient in one or more specialties such as: sculpture, carving, display cases, cutting boards, and other accessories. A notable feature of these courses will be a low student-teacher ratio, established to foster close interaction and efficient use of limited space. Course stipends will be \$40-50 per teaching hour, depending on experience. Classes will typically run two to three hours per week for four to eight weeks. Because of the pandemic, both programs will not begin for several months.

Sustainability is an important component to the Mobile Woodshop. Much of the lumber used in will come from locally harvested trees through a partnership with DC's Urban Forestry Division. Our motto will be Made in DC, Grown in DC.

If interested in teaching, please send resume and image of your work to Project Coordinator Lynda Smith-Bügge (email –lynda@zcaf.org; cell – (703) 201-4443).

– Lynda Smith-Bügge

Consider Making a Donation to WSG

Consider making a contribution of \$35 in addition to your membership dues of \$45 (\$15 for students). Your generous donations help maintain the dues level at this reasonable amount for all the member benefits. Your contribution beyond your annual dues to WSG (as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization) is fully tax-deductible. Consider contributing to the *Mariah Josephy Memorial Fund*, inaugurated in 2015, to honor longtime member and supporter Mariah Josephy (1933–2014). Seeded with funds generated through sales of Mariah's sculptures, and generously gifted by Mariah's family, the fund commemorates her work and lifetime commitment to WSG.

See *The Washington Sculptor* in color at www.washingtonsculptors.org



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