

March 5–28, 2021

UPENDED



ON THE COVER:

Jim Banks, *Carnifex*, mixed media on paper
mounted on board, 40 x 31 inches

[FOUNTAIN STREET]

CORE MEMBER EXHIBITION AT



PIANO
CRAFT
GALLERY

93 Tremont St, Boston, MA 02118

March 5–28, 2021

MELISSA SHAAK, CURATOR
VIRGINIA MAHONEY, ASSISTANT CURATOR

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Director's Statement

"Never let a good crisis go to waste" was first attributed to Winston Churchill. Rahm Emmanuel popularized the saying, adding, "It's an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before." The artists of Fountain Street have taken this axiom to heart.

The events of the past year have left no one unchanged, and these artists responded in remarkable ways. Some exploded with creativity, using newly found downtime to work with a fevered intensity. Some, unable to access their usual workspaces or materials, made do with what they had and made smaller, more intimate work. Others explored different media and charted new directions. Sometimes left raw by their experiences, they responded as artists do—by making work that is powerful and evocative of this time and our place in it.

I was struck by the deeply and unabashedly personal statements the artists wrote about their work for this show. Virginia Mahoney found a "makeshift path forward." Patty deGrandpre experienced a "pandemic epiphany." Mary Marley created art "to push back against the chaos." As Steve Sangapore so aptly put it, "I have witnessed creativity, solidarity, empathy, and an admirable level of risk-taking, which may have been realized only *through* experiencing a crisis."

Many thanks to the Piano Craft Gallery for extending this opportunity to us. I am grateful to Melissa Shaak, who took the lead in the quest to find an exhibition venue and curate this show, and to Virginia Mahoney, Rebecca Skinner and Tatiana Flis, whose perseverance and vision were what brought "Upended" together. I feel fortunate to work with all the artists of Fountain Street, whose work transcends the uncertainty, tragedy, and sometimes even joy and bliss of the year that was like no other in living memory.

Marie Craig

Curator's Statement

"The exquisite corpse shall drink the new wine."

French Surrealists of a century ago invented a playful method of collaborative drawing, adapted from a writing game in which each participant's contribution was concealed before being passed along to the next. We don't know who wrote "exquisite" and who wrote "corpse," but in all likelihood they were seated next to each other as they played this parlor game.

As I write, seven Fountain Street artists are concocting an exquisite-corpse-like installation. Their multi-media collaboration will be the centerpiece of the exhibition. I have not seen it assembled; no one has, as the pieces will not be brought together until we open the show. I eagerly await the big reveal and fully expect their amalgam of individual and collective creativity to be as vivid, provocative, and puzzling as the single sentence which first gave name to the technique.

As with this art, our lives are being juxtaposed and joined together in wholly unanticipated ways due to the novel coronavirus. The exhibition pays tribute to all whose lives and livelihoods have been "upended" by the pandemic. It offers an in-the-moment glimpse of artists' experiences of being turned upside down. Fountain Street's exhibition schedule was itself upended by the coronavirus, as well as by last April's water main break in Boston's SoWa District. We are indeed grateful to Piano Craft Gallery for taking us in.

One of my heart's deepest desires is to help awaken and cultivate creativity—others' as well as my own. The privilege of curating this exhibition allowed me to see my fellow artists tapping their multitudinous creativity, sometimes despite, and other times inspired by, the chaos and constrictions of the time. The twenty-two participating artists have drawn, painted, photographed, printed, sculpted and woven together threads of connection amidst the disconnection. They also have discovered new ways of looking, new ways of working, and new sources of inspiration. One of my favorite phrases from the artists' statements is Georgina Lewis' "post-upending trajectories." Where will they lead? I can't wait to see.

On the catalogue cover is Jim Banks' disturbingly beautiful *Carnifex*. With a skeleton struggling toward the sunlight, the image captures the duality of the show's theme—a life upended on the one hand, and an artist's act of upending expectations on the other. While artists have been among those disrupted by the pandemic, they are also disruptors by trade. Artists consciously and conspicuously upend familiar patterns and change the way we look at things. They challenge conventions. Unorthodoxies abound. We need art in real time, now as much as ever, to give us new frames of reference, to illuminate deeper truths and starker realities, and to help us cultivate humor, beauty and grace.

Melissa Shaak

UPENDED

EXHIBITING ARTISTS

Sarah Alexander

Jim Banks

Kathline Carr

Marie Craig

Patty deGrandpre

Denise Driscoll

Sara Fine-Wilson

Tatiana Flis

Kay Hartung

Georgina Lewis

Virginia Mahoney

Mary Marley

Vicki McKenna

Joel Moskowitz

Chris Plunkett

Ponnapa Prakkamakul

Allison Maria Rodriguez

Alexandra Rozenman

Steve Sangapore

Melissa Shaak

Rebecca Skinner

Sylvia Vander Sluis

Sarah Alexander

"Haywire" was created as a reaction to chaotic events and emotions of the past four years. It was the first steel piece where I allowed myself to really let loose and make the equivalent of a frenzied drawing. Everything seemed to be happening at once, great joy, anger, sadness, and frustration were exploding all around me. "If You Remember Me, Then I Don't Care if Everyone Else Forgets" came from somewhere deep in my subconscious. I don't know why the Madonna figure appeared, but she did. The drawing is about loss, isolation, and honoring the suffering that the whole world is experiencing.



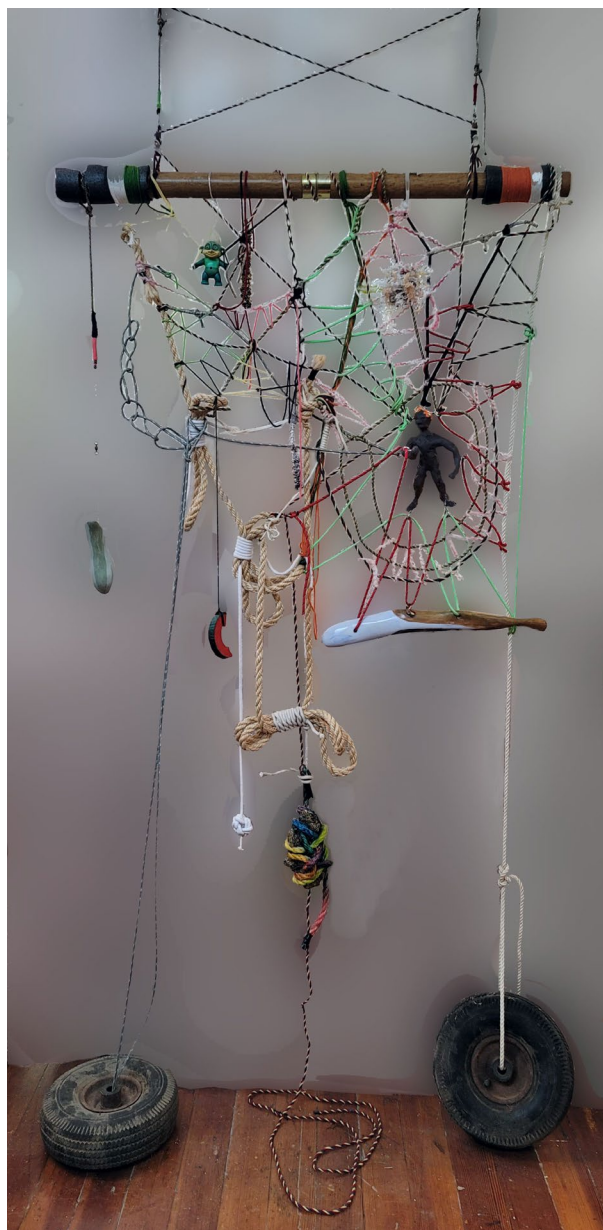
If You Remember Me, Then I Don't Care if Everyone Else Forgets, pen and ink and watercolor, 15 x 12 inches



Haywire, steel, 13 x 32 x 13 inches

Jim Banks

For several years, I drew, painted, and sculpted a series entitled "Squiggles, Tangles, & Knots." That led to learning to tie knots. I learned about various types of rope and even made my own. I combined rope and knots and hung them from crossbars. I added objects, some made, some found. "Seize" is one such. To be seized is to be held, caught, entrapped, as reflected by the human figure in the web. In "Carnifex," the figure, sculpted in relief, is dead and buried, yet struggling for the sunlight.



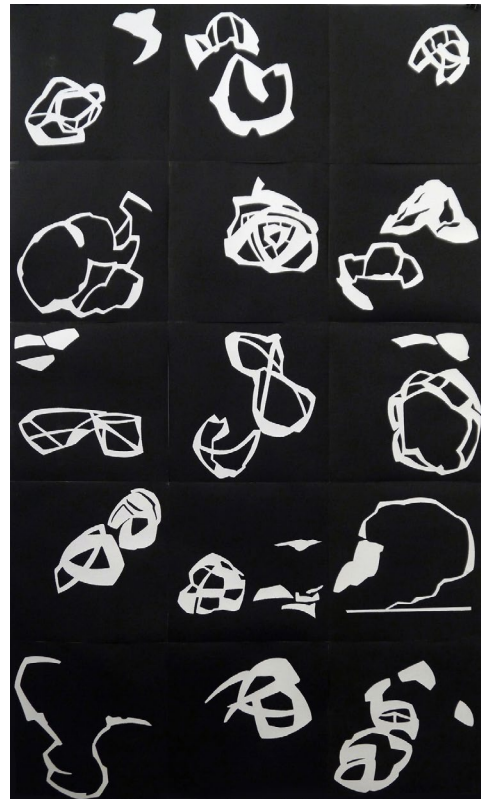
Seize, mixed media, 96 x 48 x 10 inches



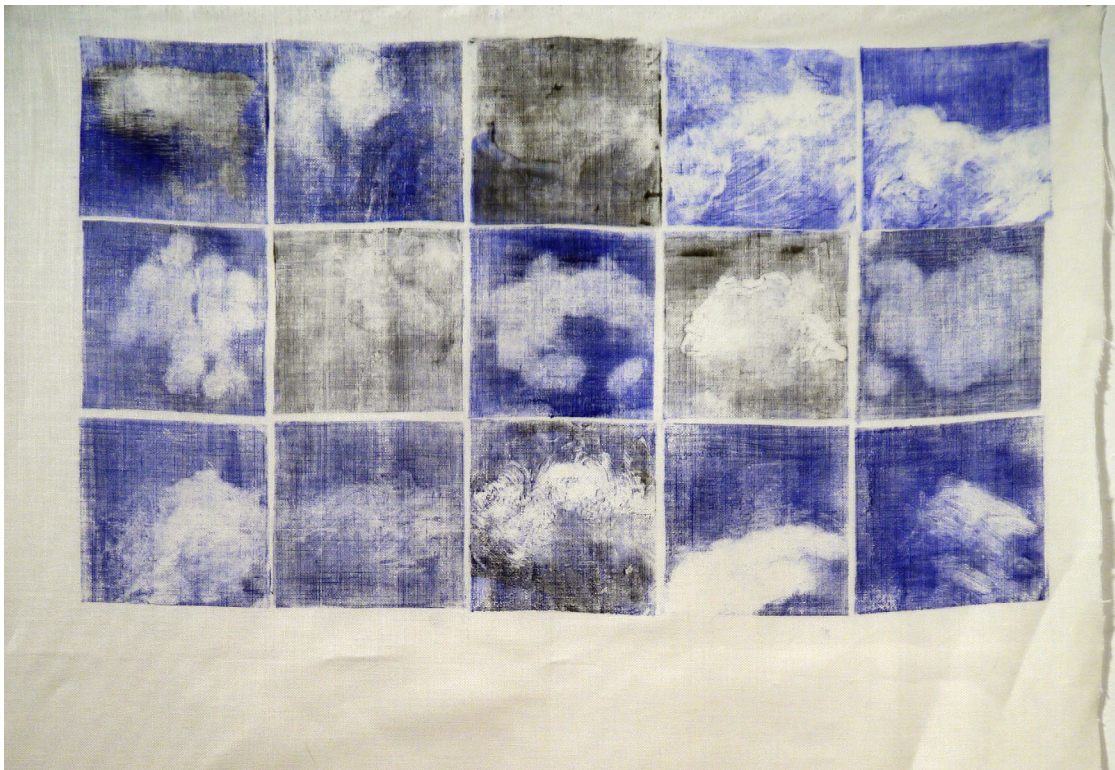
Carnifex, mixed media on paper mounted on board, 40 x 31 inches

Kathline Carr

My sources for abstracted landforms come from all over. I am an avid hiker, and walker, and am fascinated by rock structures and the way light plays, is absorbed or repelled, on irregular surfaces. Especially now, when we've been so constricted, these wanderings seep into my work and dreams more and more often. The imagery for "Upended" is derived from solitary rambles, or looking at the sky from a window, or simply following a process to its conclusion.



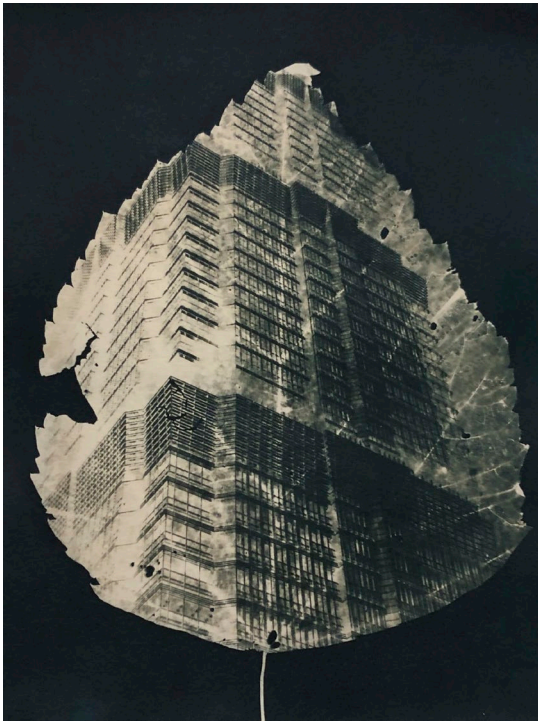
Constellate, pieced stencil monotype
49 x 28 inches



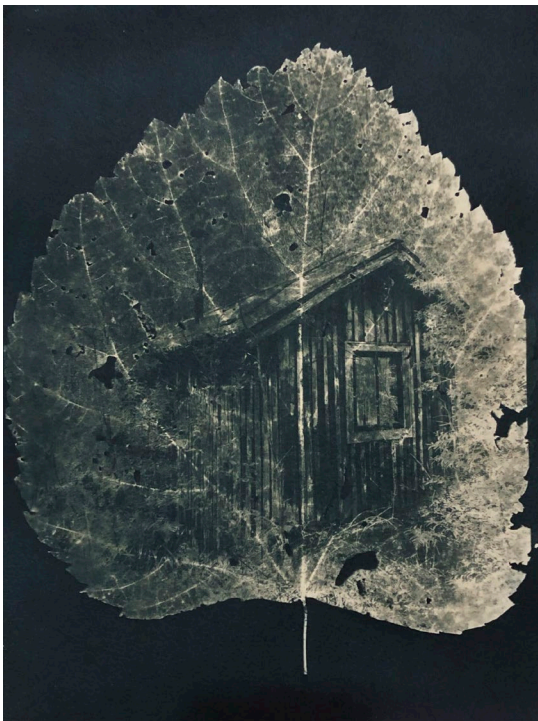
Cloudspotting, monotype grid on linen, 18 x 24 inches

Marie Craig

2020 brought challenges beyond 'just' the pandemic, and for a time, my "art-brain" was effectively dead; I had no desire or ambition to create. A fellow artist challenged me to explore toning cyanotypes with botanical materials. I collected leaves from different plants in my garden, steeped them into a tea and toned prints I'd made in happier days. This encouraged me to make the "Forest for the Trees" series, which represents human impact on forests that are shrinking due to agriculture, industrialization and urbanization. While COVID rages, the plight of our planet is less in focus, but the crisis remains.



Forest for the Trees-1, cyanotype toned with passionflower, 12 x 9 inches



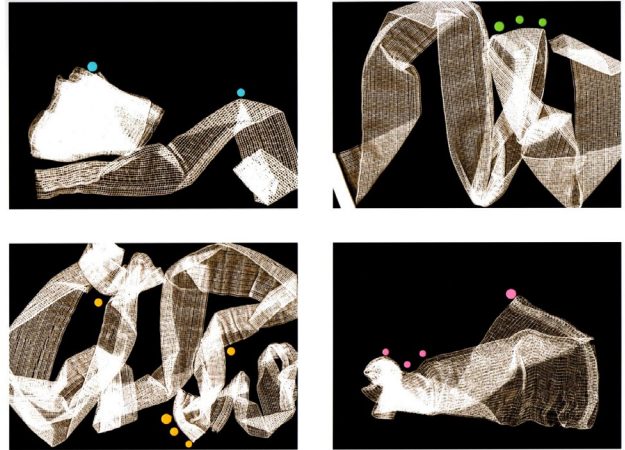
Forest for the Trees-3, cyanotype toned with passionflower, 12 x 9 inches



Forest for the Trees-1 (detail)

Patty deGrandpre

I have been a nurse for 28 years, but an artist for as long as I can remember. There are plenty of people who know I am both a nurse and artist, but I always thought it best to keep the two worlds separate. As the pandemic unfolded, and as my role as a nurse became more intense and draining, I found I had nothing to draw creativity from. In an unexpected shift of mindset, I started to notice the artistic potential in things at work. Suddenly gauze bandages, blades, syringes and sutures had creative potential. What I once kept separate from my artwork has now become a catalyst for it. This is my pandemic epiphany.



Seeing Things (bandage becomes landscapes), 4 unique digital inkjet prints on Red River photo paper with hole punch and paper, 16 x 20 inches



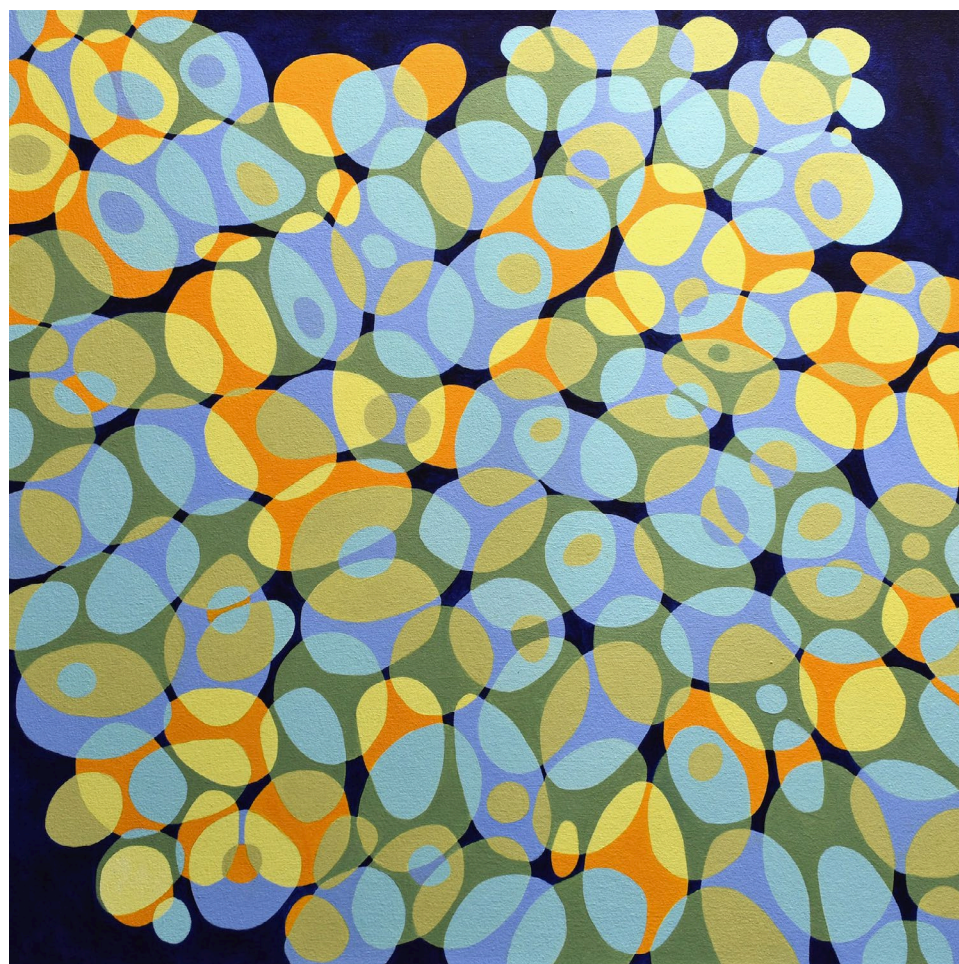
Delicate Situations (green & pink), set of 2 unique digital inkjet prints on Awagami Washi Japanese paper, each 16 x 20 inches

Denise Driscoll



An exercise program I follow stresses the value of being able to get up from the floor after sitting, falling, or even being knocked down. Like exercise, painting is also a practice that I rely upon to develop patience, resilience, and comprehension. As I fill shapes with color in these Kinship paintings, the emerging patterns contain the energy of interaction and connection between us even in isolation. Focusing on this energy has allowed a joyful optimism to grow in this year of upheaval.

Kinship 3, acrylic on canvas, 36 x 36 inches



Kinship 4
acrylic on canvas
36 x 36 inches

Sara Fine-Wilson

I have recently been focused on the idea of repeating a gesture like folding, twisting, stretching and dropping. In the pieces I selected for "Upended," the directionality of the work is often twisted, torqued and inverted in ways that explore the idea of being disrupted and pulled apart. My work has both mechanical and organic qualities that reference the body, archeology, and architectural structures such as arches or bridges. Cracks, rupture, ooze, and the way that material splits visually articulate the idea of shifting history.



Shift, ceramic, 14 x 12 x 12 inches



Swerve, ceramic
12 x 8 x 8 inches



“Under the Surface” explores how my relationship with my family evolved during 2020. We danced, painted, drew and told stories during a weekly zoom call, and I realized I was spending more time with them than I had in years. This revelation led me to dive deeper into exploring how the chaos around us births our own confinements of solitude, while highlighting the excess and absence in our lives. In a year of seclusion, I was gifted with creating deeper connections. The work manifested itself as this portfolio of intimate family portraits.

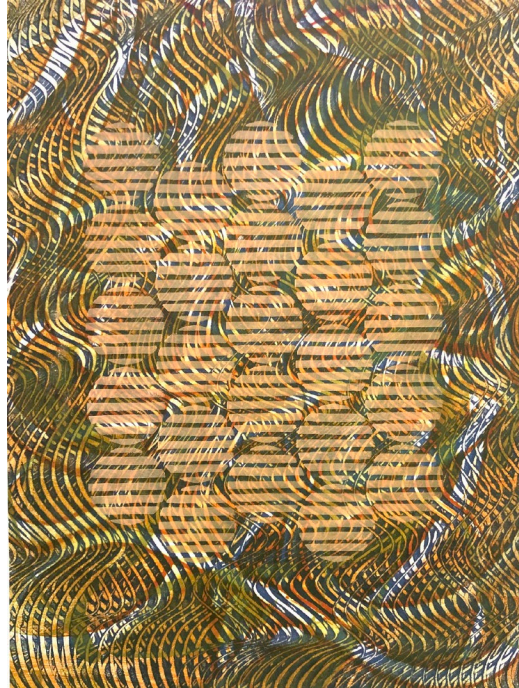
Under the Surface: The Beginnings - John (detail)



Under the Surface: The Beginnings, acrylic monotype, each 11 x 8.5 inches

Kay Hartung

I have used the time during the pandemic to experiment with new ideas and techniques as well as reconnect with my background in textiles and fiber. The tangled forms and overlays of interference patterns in the "Optical Impressions" monotypes relate to all the conflict that has been going on, but also show that contrasting elements can come together to form new relationships. The links in my "Connections" series are a reminder of how important connections are, especially in these chaotic times. Each time these are exhibited they will take a different form, reconfigured but still connected.



Optical Impressions 2, encaustic monotype pastel on paper mounted on wood panel
16 x 12 inches

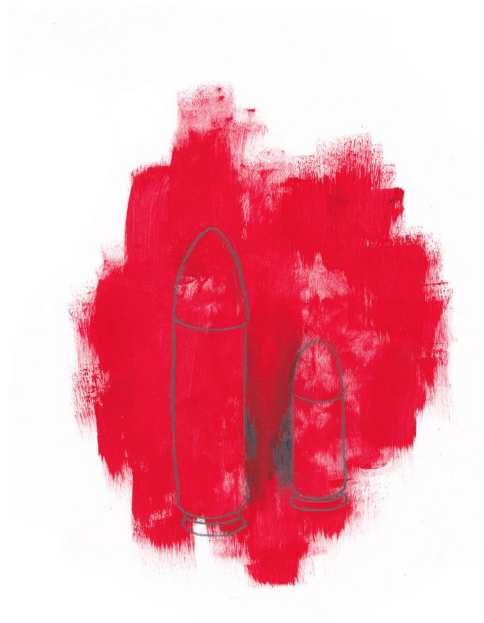


Connections 4, encaustic monotypes
dimensions variable

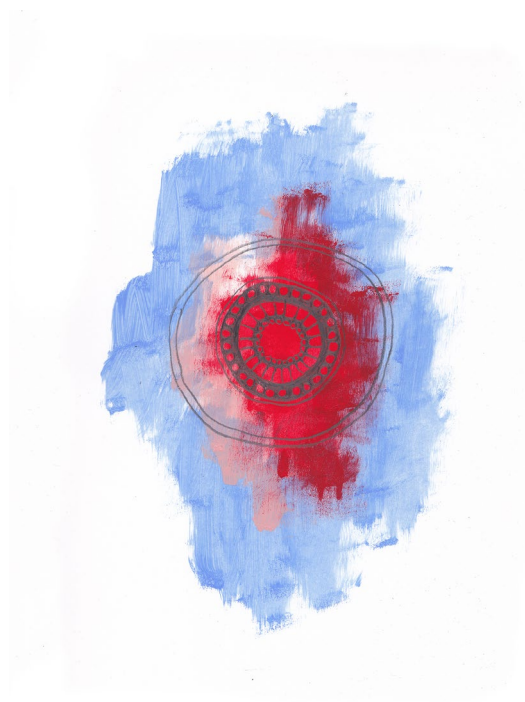


Connections 4 (detail)

Upended infers an inverse (not necessarily a return to origin): where there is up there is not only down but the spaces in between. Things don't reset to the way they used to be. In March, I began working with the materials I had on hand, exploring new ways of mark-making to create drawings I would otherwise never have made, in response to a multitude of current events. Many of my over 100 drawings are angry and raw but a subset of pieces attempt optimism through color and form with an emphasis on alternate modes of sense making and mysticism. They propose new post-upending trajectories.



*bullets, graphite and acrylic paint on paper
12 x 9 inches*



*jan 9 - three days after, graphite and acrylic
paint on paper, 12 x 9 inches*



*not perfect is actually good pt 1, graphite and
acrylic paint on paper, 12 x 9 inches*

Virginia Mahoney

A microscopic entity threatens us at every turn. Political divisions tear at our nation. Fear, frustration, and loss permeate our lives. Some are holding on by a mere thread, but holding on nevertheless. Others eke out a makeshift path forward, improvising all along the way. This willingness to make something from nothing and the continued hope that surrounds this spirit is what I honor with my work, "Stay Safe."



Stay Safe, copper, vegetable net, thread, 30 x 18 x 8 inches



Stay Safe (detail)

Mary Marley

My current work plays with the tensions of balance and layers of images that portray a contrast between the unstable and the harmonious. For me, the act of creating visual art is what makes it possible to push back the chaos in our world. This work presents a combination of pattern and experimentation as we move forward beyond the current constraints on our lives.



Unraveled (detail)



Unraveled
mixed media
30 x 22 inches

Vicki McKenna

The past year has been confining, being unable to travel freely and explore new landscapes. This meant spending time walking in places close to home; places it was easy to ignore before. For the first time I've made an indoor studio to concentrate on a new series of works. This approach has meant that I had control over the process, when I had little control over many other parts of my life. Sometimes I was captivated by unexpected light. At other times I wanted to use selective focus and its interaction with texture to manifest the feeling of being unmoored and adrift.



In the Studio-Remains of the Summer, platinum/palladium print, 18 x 23 inches



Solitude, archival pigment print, 20 x 30 inches

Joel Moskowitz



This circle is made up of a thousand arcs, some so small they don't appear to be curved. But hidden inside is one long sinuous pine root. I surprised myself, because my plan was for a thin smooth circle with that one long root. But as I continued working, I covered it with my need to build, until it became something like a log cabin style space station that we could live in if we could get into it.

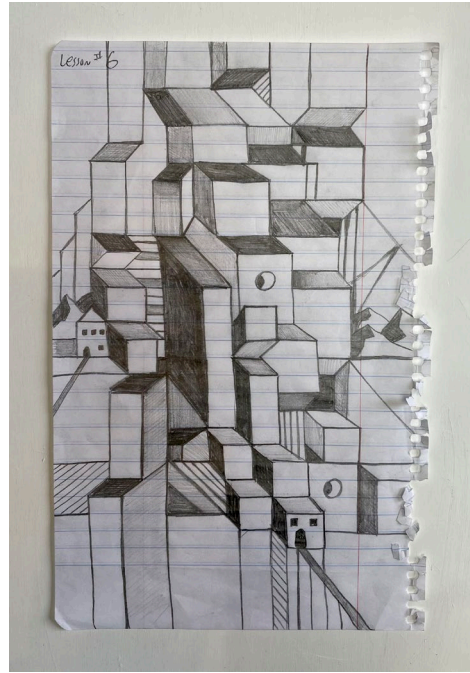
Wreath of a Thousand Arcs (detail)



Wreath of a Thousand Arcs, wood, hardware
44 x 44 x 5 inches

Chris Plunkett

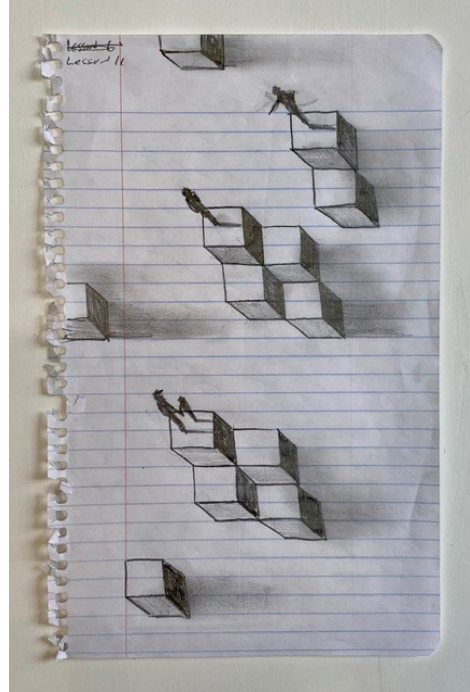
I teach art at Orchard Gardens Pilot School in Roxbury, grades 4-8. When Boston schools shut down because of COVID, our whole curriculum was upended. Lacking a proper art room, I turned to materials I knew students would have readily available in their homes—pencils and lined notebook paper. Each “lesson” incorporated the actual lines in the paper. We explored the visual art concepts of perspective, negative space, optical illusion, pattern, and tessellation. Some of my exemplars are on display, as well as a few pieces by students. We spend most of our class time on zoom simply drawing together.



Drawing Together 3, from installation of drawings on lined notebook paper 11 x 8.5 inches



Drawing Together 6, from installation of drawings on lined notebook paper 11 x 8.5 inches



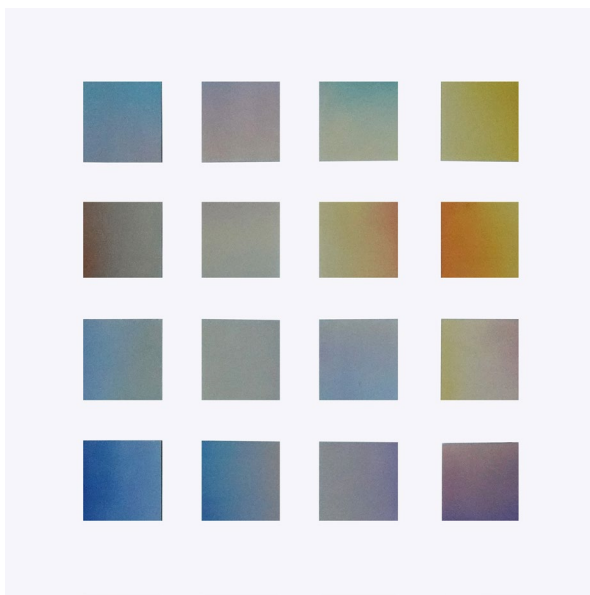
Drawing Together 7, from installation of drawings on lined notebook paper 11 x 8.5 inches

Ponnappa Prakkamakul

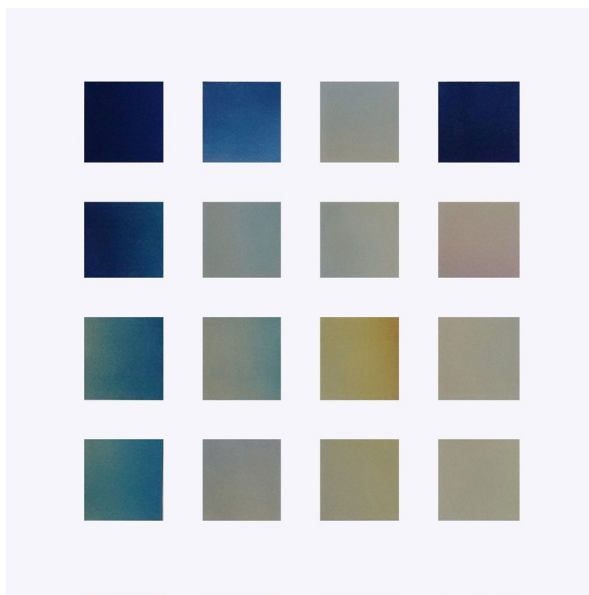


“Because It’s There” speaks of an unspeakable topic in Thailand through a metaphorical discussion on the existence of 112-year-old Crook Point Bridge in Providence, RI. The “Anatta” collection, meaning impermanent in Pali, was made out of work on exhibition that was damaged by water from an exploding air conditioner. The term is used commonly in Thai to remind ourselves to overcome misfortune when we face a situation that involves dramatic changes.

Because It’s There, mixed media on paper with soil and rust from found objects, 36 x 36 inches



Anatta 1, collage pastel on paper, 14 x 14 inches



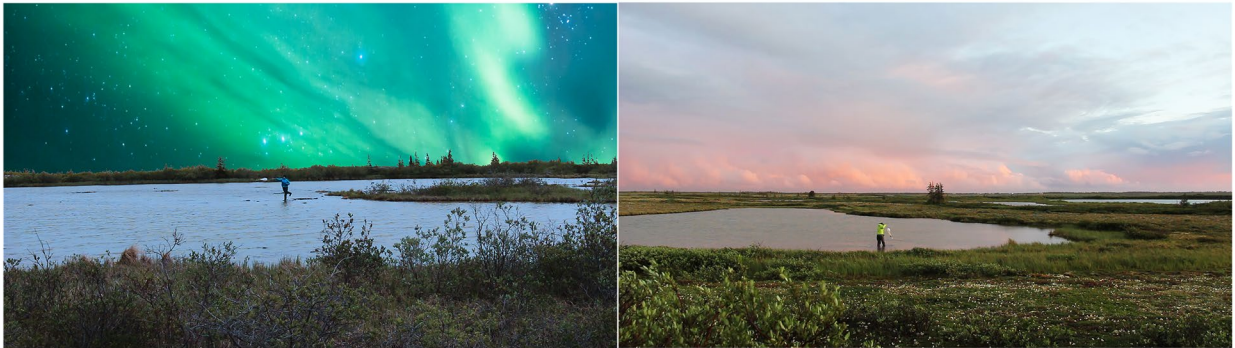
Anatta 2, collage pastel on paper, 14 x 14 inches

Allison Maria Rodriguez

“Sarah & Marie” is a two-channel video that is part of my larger installation entitled “The Strength of Very Small Things.” The work focuses on a sub-arctic landscape and two scientists searching through cold waters and rough wind for daphnia, also known as water fleas. These organisms are routinely studied as an indicator species – revealing the effects and impacts of climate change. Humans have upended the natural world, and this work highlights interconnection and our intertwined futures.



Sarah & Marie (from The Strength of Very Small Things), video still (detail)



Sarah & Marie (from The Strength of Very Small Things), video still

Alexandra Rozenman

After an unexpected and needed move out of my studio space, I began working on smaller pieces of paper, adding ink and watercolor to older drawings that I found around the house. Everything felt disconnected. I started out making shapes from old work. Dissecting and connecting different pieces gave me room for big new ideas in creating mixed media collages. I found my thoughts materializing into shapes, shapes into images, and images into stories.



Sitting on the Top of the Mountain (detail)



Sitting on the Top of the Mountain, collage on paper, 12 x 18 inches

Steve Sangapore

I have an insatiable curiosity for how the world works and for how we as humans are to conduct ourselves within it. For all the struggle, uncertainty and turmoil of the past year, it has also been a period of growth and resilience. I have witnessed creativity, solidarity, empathy, and an admirable level of risk-taking, which may have been realized only *through* experiencing a crisis. In these paintings I weave together my own personal story with the larger philosophical questions of these times. Whether generating tension or resolve, I try to create space in my work for them to communicate.



Collapse: Of Nature #2, oil, ink on oval canvas
10 x 8 inches



Collapse: Of the Environment #7, oil, ink on wood panel, 18 x 24 inches

Melissa Shaak



A Curator's Story, video still

Two real-life events inspired this work. First was the upending, by the pandemic, of the art exhibit I was curating. The idea of enacting the show's relocation, by physically traversing the distance it would travel, offered a narrative structure. Second was my discovery of a large cardboard bear that someone had put out in the trash. The bear stands on its hind legs, a mark of curiosity. In this mashup of mock-documentary, performance art, stop-motion animation and object puppetry, I offer a tongue-in-cheek take on what for me is a compelling theme—the awakening and cultivation of one's creativity.



A Curator's Story
video still

Rebecca Skinner

I am a modern-day urban explorer seeking unique neglected structures and desolate places. My subject matter focuses on that which has been upended and deserted, from large, cavernous spaces to minute details such as peeling paint and rust. Texture, color and light play an important part in my image making and I am attracted to the beauty of these places as well as their history.



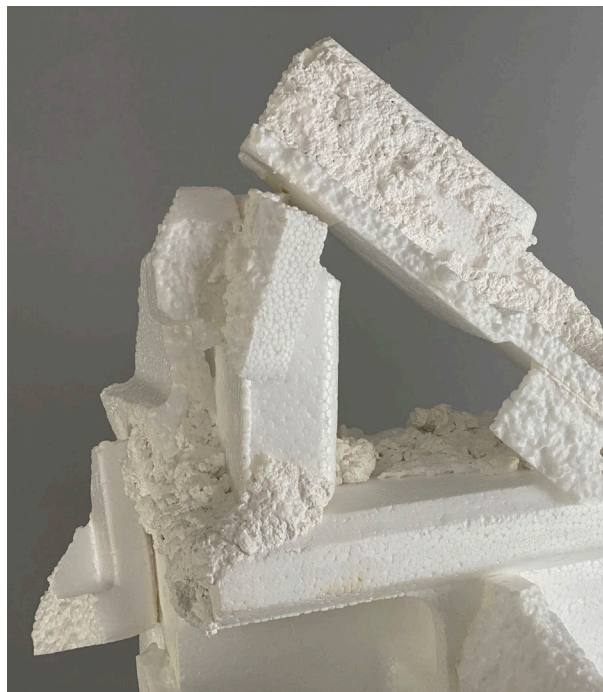
Disorder, photograph on aluminum
17 x 11 inches



Trapped
photograph
on
aluminum
20 x 30
inches

Sylvia Vander Sluis

Imagine trying to climb this structure. Its steps lead nowhere and its walls angle abruptly into space. To reach the top, you would need ingenuity, patience, and flexibility. Climbing this tower would be both scary and a creative challenge – not unlike living through 2020.



Journey I (detail)



Journey I (detail)



Journey I, styrofoam, sculptamold, wood
65 x 36 x 33 inches

An Upending Collaboration

PARTICIPATING ARTISTS

Sarah Alexander

Kathline Carr

Tatiana Flis

Georgina Lewis

Virginia Mahoney

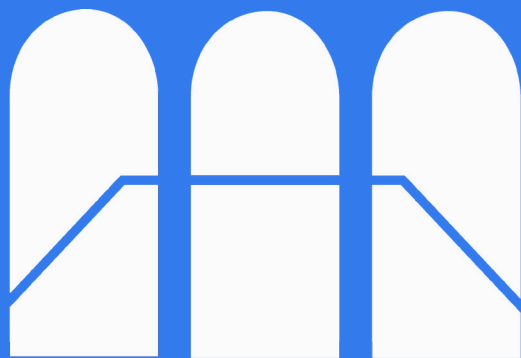
Alexandra Rozenman

Sylvia Vander Sluis

Like the drawing game *Exquisite Corpse*, the components of this collaborative work will be kept under wraps until it is installed. Who knows what surprises are in store—for the artists as well as the viewers. Go to www.fsfaboston.com/upended to see time-lapse photography of the installation and details of each artist's contribution.

[FOUNTAIN STREET]

AT



PIANO
CRAFT
GALLERY