

GRIZZLY GRIZZLY

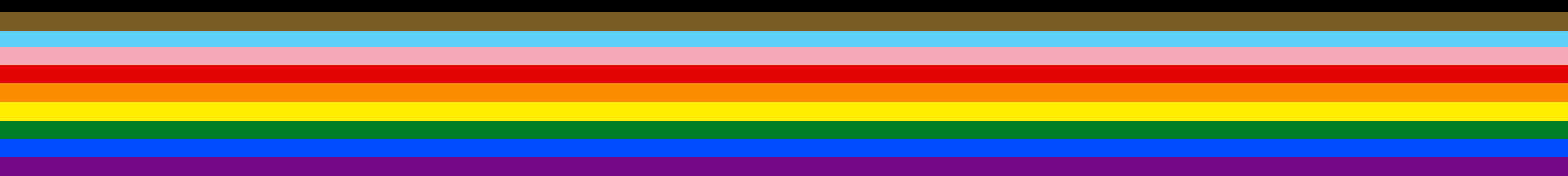
AUGUST-SEPTEMBER, 2020

IN DIALOGUE

- >A.M. AGUILLARD
- >DWAYNE BOONE
- >AMY COUSINS
- >CHARLES HALL
- >CLIFF HENGST
- >BRANDAN HENRY
- >SCOTT HEWICKER
- >LEROY JOHNSON
- >COLLEEN KEEFE
- >LEAH MODIGLIANI
- >KSENIA NOURIL
- >KENNETH WHITE
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>LETTER FROM GRIZZLY GRIZZLY

Grizzly Grizzly received a 2020 Added Velocity Grant for our project *Speak, Speak, Walk, Walk,... Listen*. Our intent was to use our grant to expand our audience, to begin a dialogue with Philadelphians whose voices we have not heard before and to deepen the dialogue with Philadelphians whose voices we have not heard enough. In all of our discussions on how to do this, we returned to a frequent topic in our group and a specter that looms large over every arts organization, the lack of diversity.

There is no precedent for 2020 and no reference point for this particular confluence of events. The injustices and inequalities that afflict some of us have been magnified by toxic politics, a crumbling public health infrastructure, economic collapse, and racism that has been nurtured and protected by the institutions that make the United States what it is. As a collective, we have watched in horror as institutions from the police to the academy have further brutalized and marginalized the people who righteously expose the racism endemic to their structure.

It is difficult to know how to correct the systemic racism and identity group discrimination that has shaped every facet of the discipline we love, including how we are educated, what constitutes aesthetics, who gets to show work, and who gets invited to the show. We are accountable for a paradigm that tokenizes, delegitimizes, devalues and makes a monolith of artists in all of their brilliant complexity. We are responsible for challenging the system which limits our own understanding and appreciation of art in the diversity of its execution and inspiration. As both individuals and organizations, we must examine our own assertions of what is on the inside and what is on the outside of the institution of art itself.

This issue of *In Dialogue* is a response to some of the largest protests against racial injustice in our country's history as well as to the broader injustices that have long been part of the class system in the United States. We have invited artists who address social justice in their work or who are responding to this moment in history. We will do what we set out to do when we applied for the Added Velocity Grant, which is to *listen*.

GRIZZLY
GRIZZLY



Protest - A Call For Change I, Kenny White



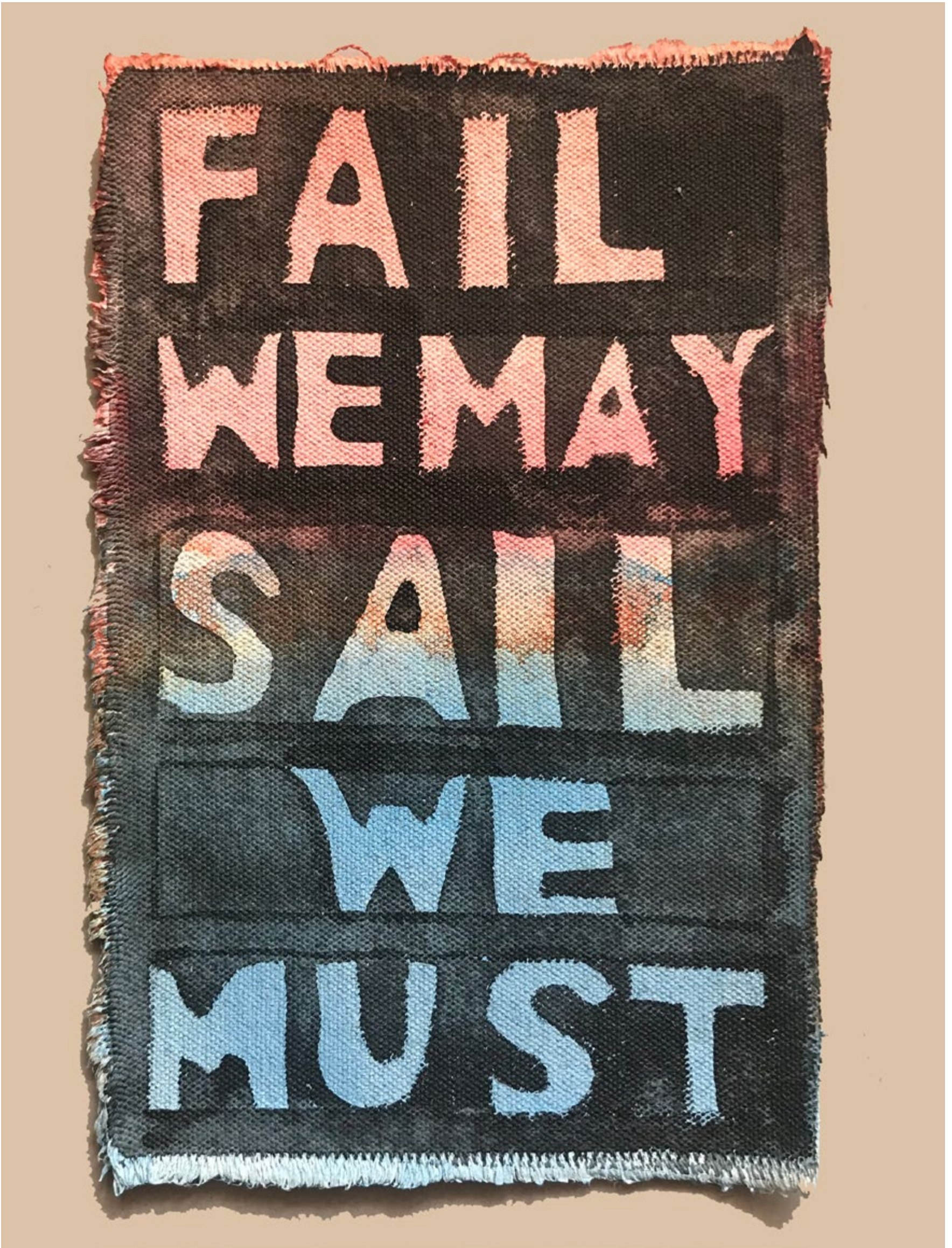
Don't Shoot, Kenny White



Protest - A Call For Change II - Kenny White

“As the struggle for justice and equal rights continues it is incumbent on us all to join the fight and to realize that **Black Lives Matter Period.**”

— Kenneth White



Fail We May, Sail We Must, Scott Hewicker, Fabric Dye, Acrylic on Raw Canvas, 2020, 7" x 5"

>IN IT TOGETHER

BY LEROY JOHNSON



Ridge, Leroy Johnson, 2020, 6' L x 4' H, Mixed Media/Collage

Frantz Fanon, a black psychiatrist in his book *Black Skin, White Masks*, attacks Carl Jung's concept of the "collective unconscious" by saying that it is the sum of our prejudices and is therefore culturally constructed and acquired.

The idea that art can be redemptive as well as giving voice and visibility is described by Ralph Ellison's classic depiction of the black experience. "I'm an invisible man...I am invisible, understand simply because people refuse to see me. Like the bodiless heads you see sometimes in circus sideshows, it is as though I have been surrounded by mirrors of hard, distorting glass. When they approach me they see only my surroundings, themselves, or figments of their imagination — indeed everything and anything except me."¹

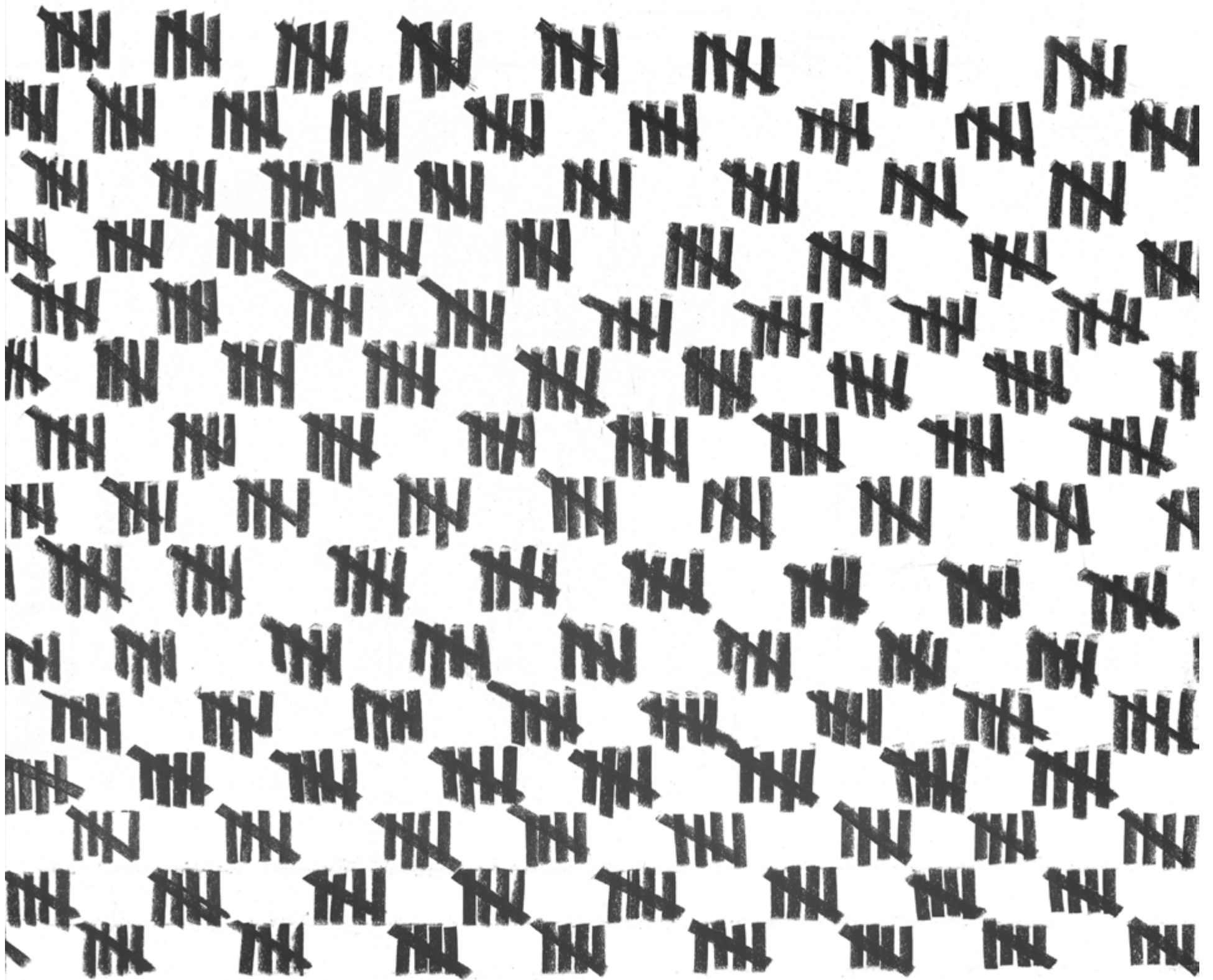
My art is concerned with life and existence in the inner city. In the inner city, one endures and is fascinated by the amount, variety and ubiquity of urban debris. Its pervasive presence is a source of form, texture and palette in my work. Improvisation is at the heart of my process, influenced by my appreciation of jazz. In my art I attempt to express not only aesthetic values, but social, moral and spiritual ones as well.

Americans are competitive, and in that competition there is frequently a confusion in how our creative interests coincide. The common human aspects of direction, vision, and style/technique become obscured in terms of, is the artist black, white, or their gender identification? In the competitive environment of the art world, the themes and issues of the minority artist

become clouded; the problem being one of power or powerlessness. It is easier for a relatively powerless people to create an artistic platform to break through the barriers that one encounters by unyielding organizations, institutions, and political affiliations. The arts provide an important means for expressing identity for many in these groups. This can frequently cause an adverse response, which is evidence of America's larger problems. The expressions these artists produce, create for some a crisis of cultural authority vested in Western European culture and its institutions; revealing that America is not a homogeneous monolith as people would like to believe. Andre Malraux held that art, in its broader connotations, is an assault upon logic. Perhaps it is also an assault upon ideology, and thus able, once in a great while, to communicate a vision of human experience across the division of politics.

A model that showed great promise (pre-Covid 19) was Art in City Hall, headed by Public Arts Director, Margot Berg, and City Hall Exhibits Manager, Tu Huynh, who combined roles of curator, researcher, historian, and installer, and whose exhibitions allowed many Philadelphia artists and craftspeople to gain public notice, by bringing in large, diverse audiences. It is clear that the role that art can play in the current climate, how and who curates it, who views it and how, needs to be examined. It is also clear that the digital age is upon us and a new paradigm is required. Personally, I am currently developing online curricula that cover art and art history from the perspective of intersectionality and inclusion.

1. Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1947); reprint, New York, Random House (1980), 3.



But Who's Counting, Brandon Henry

SOME
DAY
SOON

Some Day Soon, Cliff Hengst

>LEAH MODIGLIANI: ART AS PALIMPSEST

AN ESSAY BY KSENIA NOURIL ON LEAH MODIGLIANI'S MARCH EXHIBITION AT GRIZZLY GRIZZLY
PHOTOS BY AMY HICKS



Installation view of *Rome, 1947*

Let me begin rather unconventionally by stating that I've written this essay thrice due to the rapidly changing circumstances of everyday life in 2020. What began as a standard prompt to write about an artist's work developed into a much deeper and more emotional consideration of how that work mirrors society. By admitting the intimate details of my circuitous journey, I am following the advice of the artist Leah Modigliani herself, who writes, "THE TRUE CRITIC knows that the most effective criticism is grounded in the confidence of self-exposure and self-criticism, not in the seemingly objective mastery of facts."¹

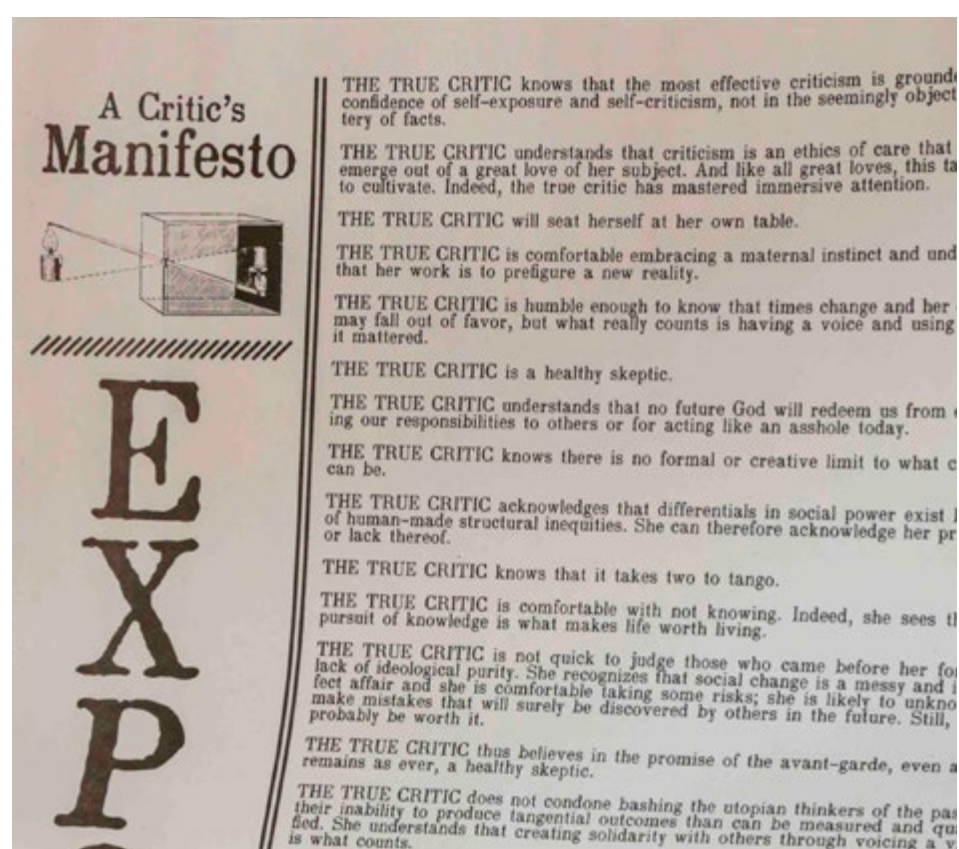
This dictum begins Modigliani's manifesto enumerating thirty-one qualities of a "true" critic. Printed as a one-sided broadsheet on newsprint and released in March 2020 at the opening of her Grizzly Grizzly solo exhibition, *A Critic's Manifesto: Exposure* gestures to precedents in the historical avant-garde, namely Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's *Manifesto of Futurism*, which was published on the front page of the French newspaper *Le Figaro* in 1909. Whereas Marinetti projects the errant machismo of interwar fascism, Modigliani promotes self-reflexive non-aggression through concerted acts of thoughtfulness: "The true critic understands that criticism is an ethics of care that can only emerge out of a great love of her subject." Written from the perspective of a woman, it joins a rich tradition of feminist manifestos, like Mierle Laderman Ukeles' *Manifesto for Maintenance Art 1969*.

While contextualized within and as art, *A Critic's Manifesto* is directed toward more than just art critics. It is a blueprint for everyday life. Modigliani's personal commitment to politics, which she weaves into her work, signals that this manifesto is a tool for managing the effects of right-wing nationalism and neo-liberal capitalism. "The true critic knows there is no formal or creative limit to what criticism can be," she states.

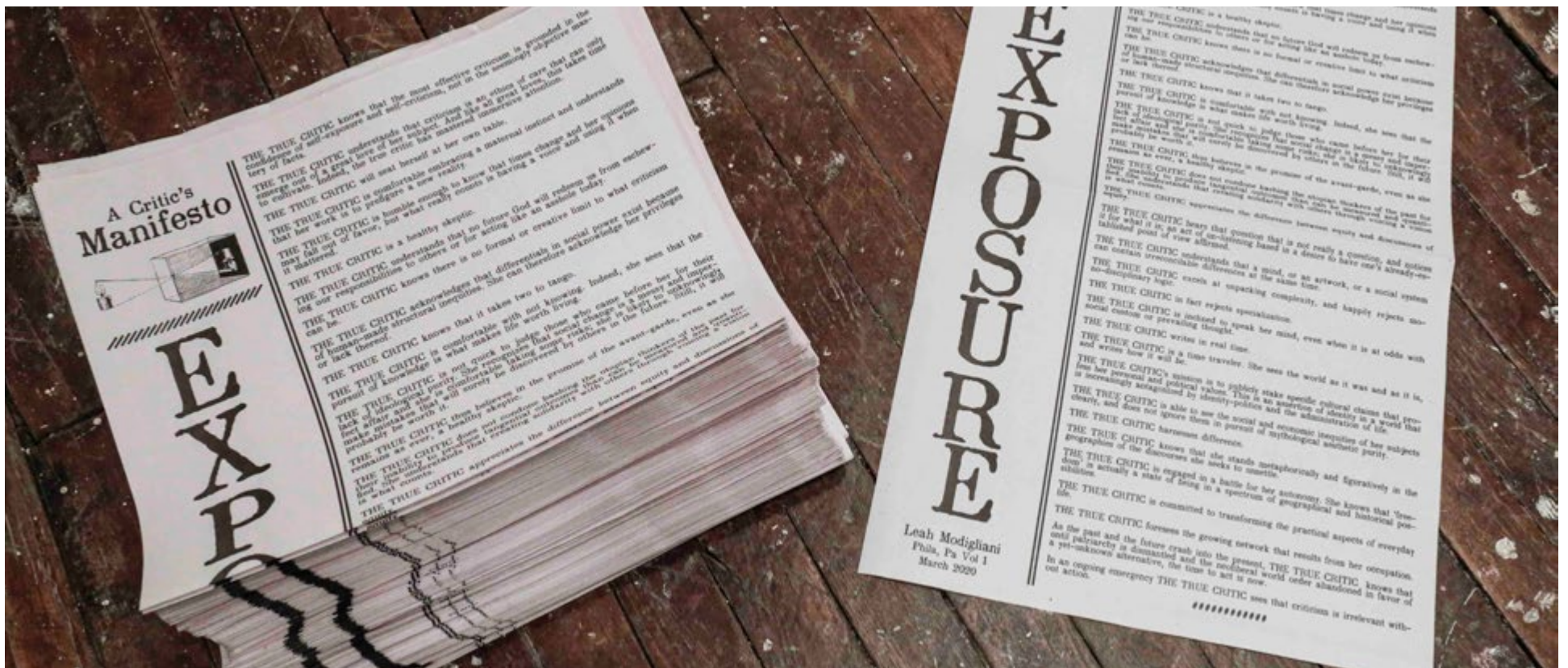
Yet, the manifesto directly references photography, one of Modigliani's primary media, in its subtitle *Exposure*—the act of revealing an image

on a light-sensitive substrate. A diagram of a camera obscura, the first photographic apparatus, also known as a pinhole camera, reinforces the reference. This didactic illustrates how an image of an object is formed by light passing through an aperture into a black box. The correspondence between the object and the image is 1:1, except that the image is inverted.² Historically, photography is revered for its documentary abilities, but it is also subject to manipulation. The mutability of the medium is important to Modigliani as it is the space in which she does her work. As she writes, "the true critic is a healthy skeptic." Skepticism prompts engagement, the crux of the manifesto, which concludes with the observation that, "In an ongoing emergency, the true critic sees that criticism is irrelevant without action."

The first time I wrote this essay—in mid-March—it was in the vacuum that is the fraught, therefore, often inert discipline of art history. While parsing the work of Modigliani through a given theoretical lens has its merits and is, in fact, what I am trained to do, it did not do justice to the ethos of her practice, which is, as evinced in her manifesto, holistically committed to the intersection of art and politics. Art is action for Modigliani. It is a viable form of resistance. Constricting a contextualization of her work within a historical art movement like conceptualism—whether the 1970s, macho, esoteric West Coast version into which she was born or the later, more diverse, socially-minded East Coast version within she was formed—is only one way to tell her story. Modigliani calls out the myopia of art history within her own practice, which eschews a single identity. Holding degrees in fine arts and art history, she is recognized widely as both an artist and an art historian actively working "between 'forms, authorities, politics, and genres'".³ The result is "simultaneously a political manifesto, a biography, an auto-biography, a fact and a fiction, and [that] cannot easily be characterized as art or scholarship."⁴ Modigliani is shamelessly fluid in a field that is traditionally, and despite all disavowal still, hierarchical (not to mention, misogynist and racist). Her shape shifting allows her to remain a "true critic" who "in fact rejects specialization."



A Critic's Manifesto: Exposure (detail), Newsprint, 2020



A Critic's Manifesto: Exposure, Newsprint, 2020

Since 2014, Modigliani has been making of series of sculptures based on objects visible in press photographs of public protests during the twentieth century. She lifts the barricades, signs, and symbols from these pictures, remaking them to varying scale. Installed in the gallery space, they are out of place and out of time; yet they are not devoid of their socio-political efficacy. This work in three dimensions parallels Modigliani's performances of re-articulated speeches. Like her sculptures, they creatively reshape history for the contemporary moment. "By adapting [these speeches], I am placing myself in conversation with a number of historical figures."⁵ Encountering her work whether as a sculpture, performance, or video, viewers are faced with history, albeit rewritten. Modigliani calls her strategy of recasting the past "critical plagiarism."⁶ It goes beyond the reverent intertextuality of feminist theorist Julia Kristeva, who considers a text to be "constructed of a mosaic of quotations... the absorption and transformation of another."⁷ Critical plagiarism helps to fulfill Modigliani's role as a "true critic" who "recognizes that social change is a messy and imperfect affair." Given that people are "likely to unknowingly make mistakes that will surely be discovered by others in the future," she can right the wrongs of others from the past in the present through her work.

Thus, Modigliani's work is palimpsest. She amalgamates different fragments into a whole not only to represent greater diversity than the original but also to critically examine its parts. Defined by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary as "writing material (such as a parchment or tablet) used one or more times after earlier writing has been erased," palimpsest is an apt metaphor because it embodies its prior iterations, whether literally or figuratively. It affords Modigliani the ability to crisscross and collapse time.

Photography is Modigliani's primary mode of time travel. She rejects the static understanding of a photograph as capturing the past—as something once seen to never be seen again. Like her speeches, her work revives a photograph by pulling out and altering elements within it. In her scholarship, Modigliani reads photography through performance, a framework formulated by scholar Rebecca Schneider, who considers a photograph "not as an artifact of non-returning time, but as situated in a live moment."⁸ Photography is unto itself a kind of performance of light reflecting off objects onto either a light-sensitive substrate or a digital silicon sensor comprising pixels.



Rome, 1947, Archival pigment print, 2020



Installation view of *Rome, 1947*



April 27, 1972, University of Pennsylvania (view from front), Wood, brass, drywall, furniture, lights, paint, 2015. Photo: Jessica Earnshaw

The impact of Modigliani capturing the performance of photography in her sculpture is felt within the *mise-en-scène* she creates in the gallery space. Her translation from photograph through performance to sculpture enlists the viewer, inviting them into the image. Like any good translator, Modigliani is not literal. She is interpretive. For *Rome, 1947* (2020), Modigliani's most recent installation, which premiered in March at Grizzly Grizzly along with *A Critic's Manifesto*, she draws parallels between fascist post-war Italy and the United States today by recasting Alcide de Gasperi, Italian Prime Minister from 1945 to 1953 and founder of the Christian Democracy Party (*Democrazia Cristiana*), as Donald Trump. Modigliani replaces one icon with another: the receding hairline and hooked nose of de Gasperi with the orange mop and gaping mouth of Trump. Her protest sign-cum-sculpture switches de Gasperi's monkey torso and limbs for that of a scaly alligator.⁹

Rome, 1947 literalizes palimpsest as Modigliani layers Trump onto De Gasperi. While this serves to equally demonize both men, it also points to the long-standing geo-political machinations of the United States, as De Gasperi's leadership was marked by significant American interference. Weakened by World War II, Italy faced a great economic depression, marked by high inflation and severe shortages of food (wheat) and natural resources (coal).¹⁰ De Gasperi, described as a pragmatic yet manipulative leader, responded with drastic monetary stabilization in fall 1947.¹¹ This came on the heels of the 20 September 1947 "hunger march," a peaceful protest across Italy organized by Communists and Left-Wing Socialists. A scene from this non-violent march in Rome was documented in a press photograph that became the foundation of Modigliani's exhibition.¹² It hangs alongside the sculptures in the gallery space, compelling the viewer to circumnavigate among the installation's interdependent parts.

The result is an echo chamber that reverberates across both space and time. Modigliani's Trump faces off with her second sculpture: *Liberty*, a near faithful recreation of a protest sign from the photograph. Tethered to a cross against a white shield, Liberty is held hostage. This grievance is evergreen, as relevant to the plight of the people under De Gasperi as it is in the United States today. Liberty's pained expression is reflected in a mirror that hangs above Trump's head—held by the hands of another Trump, wearing a Make American Great Again hat. The reflection of Liberty and doubling of Trump are yet again Modigliani's subtle nods to the medium of photography. In her historical crisscross between De Gasperi and Trump, Modigliani captures the cynicism of capitalism. Like in the original protest signs from 1947 they reference, her contemporary sculptures are visual markers of speech, standing in for what can—or, sometimes, cannot—be said.

Layering seemingly disparate yet interconnected histories is characteristic of Modigliani's practice. While an Artist-in-Residence at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 2017, she investigated the disparate fates of two nineteenth century sculptures—William Wetmore Story's *Jerusalem in Her Desolation* (1873) and G. B. Lombardi's *Deborah* (1873)—both commissioned for the institution. Over the course of time, one was destroyed while the other survived but was repurposed. Modigliani's project, entitled *The City in Her Desolation*, manifested palimpsest in revisiting the histories of these sculptures. Her project culminated in an accordion-style photo-book that extrapolated the circumstances by which each original sculpture was destroyed. It did so by stitching together a number of destroyed urban landscapes from Richmond, Virginia after the Civil War to Aleppo, Syria in the midst of the ongoing Syrian Civil War.

In late April, a few weeks after I first wrote this essay, I rewrote it, meditating on how the installation *Rome, 1947* opened in the United States on Friday, March 6, 2020 while, halfway around the globe, Italy was on the eve of lockdown in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. While this virus was surely in our midst at the time, its virulent effects were not as visible, as we gathered in celebration throughout the narrow hallways and one-room galleries of the 319 Building in Philadelphia's Callowhill neighborhood. The exhibition was open for a little over a week before it was closed. The context for the exhibition was radically changed.

The effects of COVID-19 on *Rome, 1947* were personal for Modigliani. Her father was born and raised in Italy, and his entire family lives in Rome's historic city center. The artist received news of their quarantine, just as this exhibition opened. *Rome, 1947* was prequel to a new project Modigliani was scheduled to begin in Rome this summer. These plans, much like this essay, changed drastically. As we continue to live in our quarantine bubbles, the future of everyday life with COVID-19 remains uncertain.

The third time—yet a few more weeks later—I came back to the essay after the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent nationwide protests against police brutality and the systemic racism that reached communities across the globe. These protests stand in stark contrast to the vehemently self-centered anti-lockdown protests of mid-April 2020, which erupted in Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Carolina and Utah. Even in the face of a pandemic, the effects of the protests for Black lives outweigh the risks.¹³ They continue as I finally finish this essay in the heat of what will be a difficult and most unforgettable summer.

In closing, I would like to reiterate that Modigliani's sculptures are viable. *Rome, 1947* harnesses the socialist spirit of collective action—beyond its textbook theories—in its use of materiality. It invites us to brazenly reject the sacredness of art and short circuit its inertia. If the gallery were open, the sculptures could be taken out into the streets. For now, Modigliani's work remains steadfast as a truly socially-distanced protest.

1. This and the following quotations citing the qualities of a "true critic" are from Leah Modigliani, *A Critic's Manifesto: Exposure*, Vol. 1 (March 2020).
2. My interpretation of the camera obscura joins legions, including that of Jonathan Crary, who, in *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1990), argues that it was used for determining objective truth and Kaja Silverman, who, in *The Miracle of Analogy or The History of Photography*, Part 1 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), argues the opposite, understanding the photographer and viewer as one in the same. The latter gives the photographer/viewer greater agency and also implicates her across disparate spaces and times encapsulated by the process and product of photography. In my conversations with Modigliani throughout spring 2020, she repeatedly cited the importance of Silverman on her work.
3. Unpublished interview between Laurel V. McLaughlin and Leah Modigliani
4. Leah Modigliani, "Critical Plagiarism and the Politics of Creative Labor: Photographs, History, and Reenactment," *Mapping Meaning: The Journal*, Issue 3 (Fall 2019): 88.
5. McLaughlin and Modigliani.
6. Modigliani, 88.
7. Julia Kristeva. "Word, Dialogue and Novel," in Leon Roudiez, ed., *Desire in Language: A Semi-otic Approach to Literature and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 66.
8. Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains* (New York: Routledge, 2011) as cited in Modigliani, 91.
9. The original sign's use of a monkey's body reads as a racist reference—the exact motivation of which I do not know.
10. "Memorandum of Conversation, by the Appointed Ambassador to Italy" (January 6, 1947), Document 543, "Foreign Relations of the United States, 1947, The British Commonwealth; Europe, Volume III," *Office of the Historian*, accessed 1 April 2020, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v03/d543>.
11. For descriptions of de Gasperi, see John Lamberton Harper, *America and the Reconstruction of Italy, 1945-1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 59. For a play-by-play account of the economic changes in Italy between 1946-1947, see Martinez Oliva and Juan Carlos, "The Italian Stabilization of 1947: Domestic and International Factors" (2007), *Institute of European Studies - University of California, Berkeley*, accessed 3 April 2020, <https://mpr.ub.uni-muenchen.de/16396/1/stabilization1947.pdf>
12. Italian Leftist Rally Peacefully," *The New York Times* (September 21, 1947), accessed 20 April 2020, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1947/09/21/issue.html>
13. See Michael Powell, "Are Protests Dangerous? What Experts Say May Depend on Who's Protesting What," *The New York Times*, 6 July 2020, accessed 13 July 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/06/us/Epidemiologists-coronavirus-protests-quarantine.html>



Rome, 1947 (detail), Archival pigment print

Pretty Comfortable

Amy Cousins

I've always been preoccupied
With ideas of comfort;
Faux fur is both soft and icky.
I tired of my sandpaper legs
And let the hairs grow long.
Who gets to be comfortable?
What is it about me, about us
That makes them uncomfortable?

*you will never have the
comfort of our silence again*



When is someone's comfort valued
Over someone else's life?
I dreamt of my life at thirty
Not having to pretend at parties
I thought I should be wilder, but
A small jade became 92 houseplants
Harder to move each time,
so rooted in their pots

We found clawfooted, craigslisted furniture
Everything somehow two hundred dollars
Our magic number.
Our neighbor asks,
Is that Korean lady your husband?
Another tells me
How pretty my leg hairs are
We don't belong here, but
I'm not sure where we would.

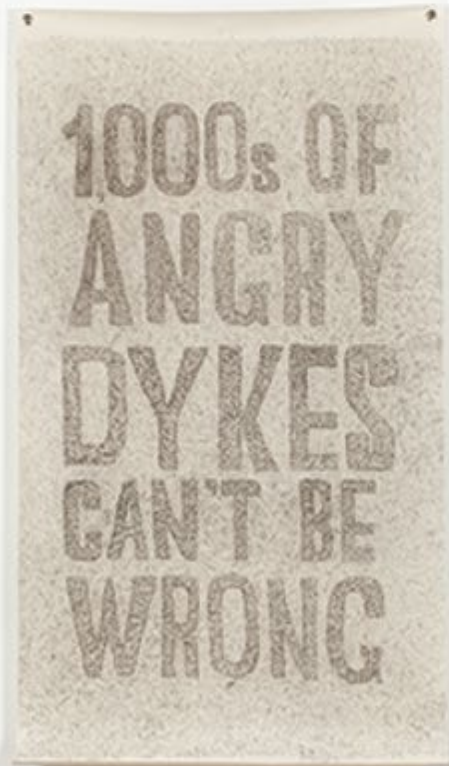


I don't know if domesticity can be transgressive
If it can mean something, to someone, somewhere.
We married in the back of a dive bar
For health insurance,
and the bartender didn't want any cake.
City hall visitor badges
With our faces stretched and black,
names perfectly misspelled

Were the only portraits we needed.
You promised to never call me your wife
But it slipped out, once.
A butch dyke I invited to my show
Told me I'd been socialized to make things pretty
So people would like me.
I've always liked pretty things
But has anyone ever liked me, for them?



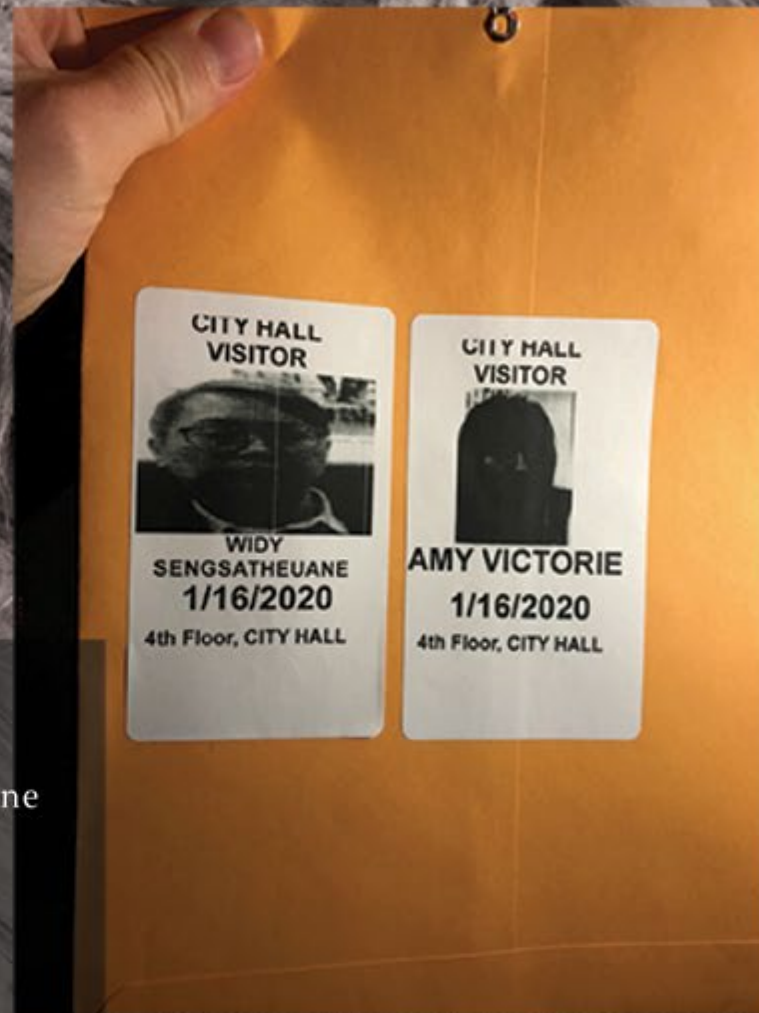
It's been many years
Since I've felt pretty without feeling scared.
Misogyny always hurts more
When it comes from my own community
But maybe she was right.
Softness is something I work to cultivate
Not so people will like me
But because I like it in others.
I must have been sick that day of socialization



My mother always told me to change my tone
But I couldn't figure out how
And I wish I could smile
Without it seeming like an invitation.
You tell me I have to stop yelling at cars
Banging them from my bicycle
It's true I've been followed, run off the road

Stick that finger up again I'll break it off,
he said
Another just licked his lips
I got lost losing him.
If you change your mind about taking T
Will you still be my soft boy?
Will I learn to love a new texture
Like sandstone against my cheek
And will you still smell
Like waffle cone when I bury my nose
In your new chest

Some of my favorite artists
Depict interiors
I never have, but lately in quarantine
All day in the house with you
I've wanted to make a record.
Kelly once drew our living room
A secret snapshot from the stairs
And called it a true home
The droopy plant in the window
Is much happier now outside



My family joked after seeing my art
That my house would one day be filled
With chairs they couldn't sit in
But I'm still figuring out what it means
To want to sit
In chairs that weren't designed for us
With buttons tufted in neat rows



Top Left: *Shirley Chisolm*

Top Right: *Rosa Parks*

Bottom: *MLK*

By Dwayne Boone



Hood, Brandon Henry



From Mamie & Weaver's Ultra "Freedumb" Exhibition 2018

Behind the Seams with Elizabeth Keckley
2014

Charles Hall

<https://vimeo.com/132461898>

>WHAT THE WIND BLOWS

BY A. M. AGUILLARD

The Southern **B**reeze
that rust**L**e strange fruit from
Southern trees is g**A**ining strength
in the Westerly wind.

Carrying with it,
the spores of hate,
that impregnate
the land with poison.
And just li**K**e ivy, it spreads its rot,
saturating the soi**L**,
taking up root **I**n
orchards, gro**V**es, and nurseries.

It spr**E**ads,
and **S**preads
and spreads
until

it
strangles
and
suffocates
All of U.S.

We have been a people who yearn to be free
since we read the words,
“We hold these truths to be self-evident...”
But truth is **M**alleable and c**A**n be twisted
To fi**T** the narrative that suits wha**T**ever direction
a fickle wind blows.

Truth is the en**E**my of fact.

Facts a**R**e facts,
Lies are lies,
and **S**omewhere
in-between.
the truth dies.

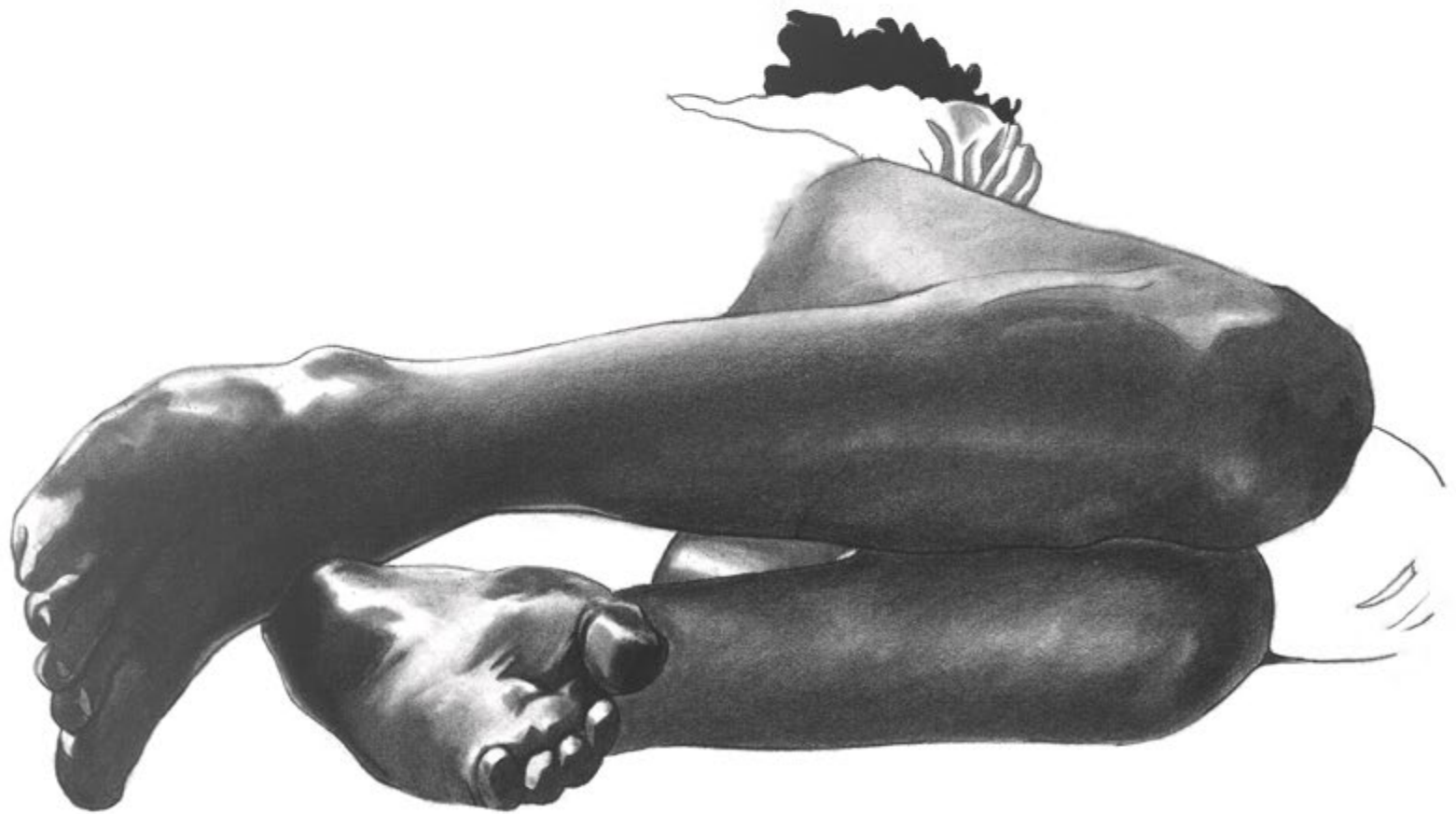
Fact is...
not al**L** men
are created
Equal.

And I’m no man...
Therefore yo**U**r truth i**S**
inherently flawed.
And that is fact.

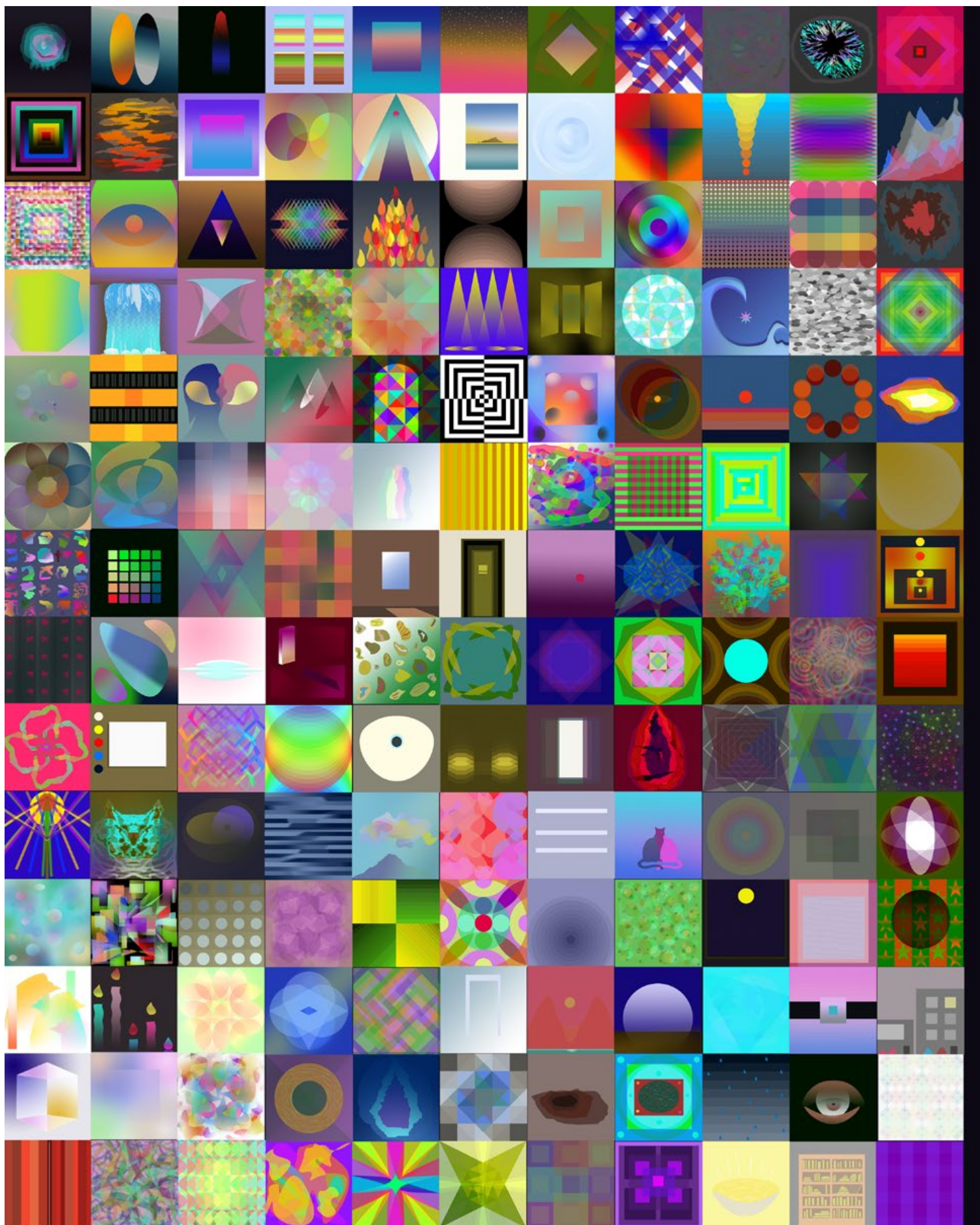
Yet your lies of equa**L**ity
spread
and spread
and spread...

So when the pol**S**on from
the i**V**y of injustice
spreads from
se**E**d,

to
root,
stem,
leaf,
branch,
to tree,
the only remedy left
is to strike the match
and watch
this mothafucka burn



A Child's Dream, Brandan Henry



mood_ring: 154 days of hue clairvoyance, 2020, Scott Hewicker

>LEARNING TO SWIM

BY COLLEEN KEEFE

There's a moment, sometimes, when you reach for your coffee cup, distracted, and miss.

You pause, confused. You subconsciously made predictions based on memory, proprioception, current sensory input and myriad other factors... and suddenly you're confronted with the wrongness of it all. The usual seamless stitching together of self and world frays just a little, stutters. You're momentarily rubbing up against the boundaries of a world in which you're accustomed to swimming freely.

This is what being transgender can feel like, but instead of missing the coffee cup, you're missing your *self*. Gears slip, you can't get your footing.

Publicly identifying as trans is a recent thing for me, recent enough that if you know me, you may not have learned that I changed my name from Colin to Colleen over the winter. Immediately after I came out on social media, we were thrust into what is now an ongoing pandemic with no signs of slowing, so there's been no real opportunity to share my experience in person, over coffee, or at openings. I'm going to take the opportunity to share now, and since this In Dialogue issue's theme is social justice, I'll largely write within that context, and try to tease out some of the subtleties of cis privilege and the challenges trans people face.

I started coming out as trans 2 ½ years ago, first to family, then to close friends, then neighbors, and outward in expanding circles. It's not an all at once event - there's too much self-work for there to be a big-bang epiphany that resolves everything. As is true for all self-reckonings, trans or otherwise, coming to terms with my own identity meant coming to terms with my history, the baggage and traumas I carry. That process takes time; for me it has been a slow and, at times, uncertain walk into self-acceptance.

It's also a journey that has made clearer to me the many layers and nuances of privilege that govern everything about our lives. I come to identifying as trans with a fair amount of "banked" advantage. Even though the space I'm moving into - trans/non-binary self-identification - is inherently less privileged in this society, the fact that I'm doing this later in life means that I still carry the fruits borne from fifty years of not having extra cards stacked against me. That includes a stable job with a good income, a close supportive family, a house, a car, and reasonable savings.

That does not mean I haven't worried. When the Supreme Court ruled in favor of LGBTQ workplace protections (*BOSTOCK v. CLAYTON COUNTY*, 6/15/20), I felt incredible relief. All winter and spring I had been working through the implications of coming out at work, and while I felt reasonably safe doing so, I knew that up until that point, I could be fired for being trans in Pennsylvania.

That is a thing I sometimes have had to explain to people: that up until the recent Supreme Court ruling, it had been perfectly legal in Pennsylvania and many other states to fire someone because of sexual orientation or gender identity. This is surprising information only to classes of people for whom the prospect of job loss is tied to job performance - what they do - rather than identity - who they are. In other words, straight White cisgender men.

The advantages that age, perspective and accumulated conditional cis privilege confer have shielded me from some of the difficulties that younger trans folk often struggle with. We may now be protected from job dismissal on the basis of gender identity, but that doesn't mean there aren't a million

subtle and unsubtle non-reasons an employer may give for not hiring a trans person, or for firing them. Younger trans folk struggle with obtaining and keeping entry level jobs while trying to manage the financial burden of their own transition, much of which isn't covered by many healthcare plans (assuming they even have health insurance) and can be considerably expensive.

Legal protections and rights still loom as a huge challenge for trans folk. At the Federal level, the current White House Administration has done its level best to erase trans rights and even existence entirely.¹ At the State level, threats include bills under consideration in many states making it a crime for health professionals to provide gender-affirming care, and of course the fun bathroom and sports bills, of which there are many.

So coming out as transgender in the current climate feels a bit like walking into a combat zone with a target on your back. Why, then do we trans folk do it?

To be perfectly frank, it's already a matter of life or death for many of us. Suicide and suicide attempt rates among trans folk (especially the young) are phenomenally high. Here's a statistic: 50.8% of trans boys under 18 in a 2018 study reported attempting suicide.² (The rate is much lower when you drill down to the subset of kids who have supportive families). In other cases where dysphoria doesn't rise to the level of life-or-death crisis, it still presents a deep emotional burden, and most of us have to reckon with it in some way during the course of our lives.

So we confront ourselves, walk into acceptance. In the course of doing this healing work, this knitting back together of our fundamental gender identities, we then find ourselves in an impossible situation: we discover there's no place for those identities in this world. We rub up against its surface instead of swimming through.

We trans folk suffer a deep incongruence between our core selves and the skin we were born into. And when we try to resolve this incongruence by pushing our core selves out into the world, the world pushes back, hard. That we come out at all says volumes about the fundamental need we are trying to address.

This process is work. It's not for the faint of heart.

The first two years of working through my gender identity involved processing my own complicated feelings and crippling fears. These included shame, self-hatred, denial, fear of hurting people I loved, and fear of what external threats life as a visibly trans person would bring.

I've known since childhood that I was transgender, though I was missing the language for it then. For much of my adult life, my interior knowledge, my understanding that the skin I lived in was ill-fitting, was something I buried deep down to the point of denial. I had erected firewalls. So long as everything stayed on one side and nothing leaked out, I could cope. Acknowledging my gender meant rethinking who I am, why I feel such incongruence between who I am and how I am in the world, confronting my fears, and finally doing something about it.

Everyone's journey is different. Mine included struggles with alcohol that led to a crisis point by mid-February 2017. I stopped drinking February 18 of that year, and about 10 months later started coming out. I can't blame drinking on my being trans; alcoholism runs in my family and I had done

a dangerous dance with alcohol for most of my adult life. But being sober allowed me to really reckon with who I was, who I always had been, and eventually realize I had to integrate that buried trans truth with the rest of me.

It wasn't until March 9 of this year that I performed the ritualistic social media "coming out" update, and it was pretty brief. I posted something on my blog, said a few brief words on Instagram, and left it at that. Four days later, Philadelphia went into lockdown. Then the accumulated deaths of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd and Ahmaud Arbery and so many other Black Americans began to give rise to international protests. I began to more seriously think about my own odd position in the ladder of privilege - at the top, stepping down a rung or two, observing the loss of advantage and protection as I go, and seeing all the rungs below more clearly.

Last week, for the first time in I think 30 years, I was called a faggot, in front of my spouse and 14 year old son. It's the first time I have felt threatened in my adult life for who I am perceived to be. That it was only my first time - that is privilege. Up until this point I've been able to coast through the game of life on Default Mode (cisgender-presenting White male), and now, as a trans person, it's been switched to Hard Mode.

There are layers of privilege that overlap, accumulate. It's not just visible facts of race, or gender, it's the small advantages that build over a life and over generations. Catholic school 6th through 12th grade instead of public school. A family that could back me up if I was struggling in early adulthood. Landing work with ease without ever thinking about whether the color of my skin or my gender would be a strike against me.

I have had the simple advantage that I didn't live with the underlying day-to-day external stressors that come from being under constant scrutiny from others - and from self-policing - for the color of my skin, or my dress, or my gender. I carried the internal burden of being trans but not the external burden. Julia Serano calls this "conditional cis privilege"³ - in other words, cis privilege I received because I "passed" as cis. This form of cis privilege, conferred by others, is external, tied to how one is seen as cisgender.

There's an internal form of cis privilege, too, which is feeling complete congruence with one's gender. This is an internal, visceral feeling that one's gender fits exactly, to the point where with cis people it's not even recognized as feeling. For cis people, there's no ongoing recalibration of gender; one's gender just is. I'm hypothesizing, of course, because I've never had that feeling of the hand fitting exactly inside the glove, but that's my best guess.

In *Theorizing Transgender Identity for Clinical Practice*,⁴ S.J. Langer provides useful metaphors for the exteroceptive, proprioceptive and interoceptive dissonance trans folk feel in their bodies. There's a dissonance between expected inputs and actual received information for how one experiences one's presentation in the world, feels their body move through it, and even the senses of pulse, heartbeat, breath, and visceral organs sliding under skin. This dissonance between expectation and actual experience creates interference, a noise, a constant hum that sits underneath their day-to-day experience, impacting everything - their relationships to their bodies, to their identities, and to their interactions with others.

Having a body that is exteroceptively, proprioceptively and interoceptively consonant is an internally experienced cis privilege. It's privilege because cis people don't have this extra bit of friction between their identities and their bodies.

It's very difficult to explain this privilege to cis people, because it's invisible to the naked eye. But this kind of privilege is very well understood by folks with neurodivergency, dysmorphia, auto-immune diseases, eating disorders, mental health issues, or myriad other invisible differences from the norm. People living in these modalities carry similar burdens, similar dissonances as they experience the world in a different way than neurotypical, baseline healthy, and otherwise privileged people. Because these differences are invisible, we assume that their experiences are like ours, but the reality is we are all working through life at various difficulty level settings.

Any one person's intuitive understanding of privilege is necessarily incomplete. With respect to the elephant in the room, at first we each only grasp what is within reach, what our own personal experiences tell us. This is why assembling the full picture is a communal project. I can't intuitively understand Black experience; I have to listen to Black voices. I can't fully grasp the challenges of homelessness without listening to homeless voices. But I can work through my own story and see what that tells me about privilege as a phenomenon, and that does help me understand how it operates elsewhere. It's an ongoing process of learning.

I'm still working through what all of this means for me creatively. My studio practice is now an inconsistent, incoherent mess. I have come to recognize that for years I've been touching on transition and transformation without being fully aware. My drawings have increasingly investigated the dynamic boundary between the built and the organic, cities evolving into multicellular organisms with motility, capable of radical change. I'm honestly not sure what to do with this next. I know there's something gestating there, but I'm not ready yet to push it out into the world.

I have started a daily writing practice, tapping into a side of me that I set aside in my twenties, when I used to write and make things in equal measure. Writing seems to be easier for me to get at the wellspring, to get to the things I need right now. At some point drawing and sculpture will return, but for now I'm diving back deep into words, swimming in language.

- Colleen Keefe

Thanks to my spouse Andrea Keefe for encouraging me to write, to Chelsea Nepenthe for her editorial feedback, and to the members of the Evolutions Trans Support Group at the Mazzoni Center for their shared wisdom and just being awesome folk.

1. <https://transequality.org/the-discrimination-administration>

2. "Female to male adolescents reported the highest rate of attempted suicide (50.8%), followed by adolescents who identified as not exclusively male or female (41.8%), male to female adolescents (29.9%), questioning adolescents (27.9%), female adolescents (17.6%), and male adolescents (9.8%)."

- Transgender Adolescent Suicide Behavior

- Russell B. Toomey, Amy K. Syvertsen and Maura Shramko

- Pediatrics October 2018, 142 (4) e20174218; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2017-4218>

3. <https://www.juliaserano.com/terminology.html#conditionalcisprivilege> "a more accurate term for what trans communities have historically called 'passing privilege.' The logic is simple: if people read me as cisgender, they will extend cis privilege to me, but it is conditional in that they are likely to revoke that privilege as soon as they find out that I am actually transgender."

4. *Theorizing Transgender Identity for Clinical Practice*, S.J. Langer, 2019

<https://www.amazon.com/Theorizing-Transgender-Identity-Clinical-Practice/dp/1785927655/>

PETER WILLIAMS

FROM THE "BLACK EXODUS" SERIES

If you're on a planet beaten and tortured over and over, there's an inner world we get transported to. Little by little you realize you are building a new world.

– Peter Williams



Peter Williams, *Black People's Oil*, 2019
Oil on canvas, 72 x 96 in, Courtesy of the artist and Luis De Jesus Los Angeles



Peter Williams, *Astronaut I*, 2019
Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in, Courtesy of the artist and Luis De Jesus Los Angeles



Peter Williams, *Astronaut II*, 2019
Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 in, Courtesy of the artist and Luis De Jesus Los Angeles



Peter Williams, *How To Make A Great Picture*, 2020
Oil on canvas, 72 x 48 in, Courtesy of the artist and Luis De Jesus Los Angeles

>CONTRIBUTORS

A. M. Aguillard is a self-professed pop culture nerd and unapologetic Philly girl. She uses her writing to make sense of the world around her, be it through poetry, prose, or script.

Dwayne Boone is an emerging Philadelphia-based artist and entrepreneur. Born and raised in Germantown, Dwayne began to draw comic-book characters at an early age. As a child he would have a pencil in his hand as soon as he got home from school, and his mother would nag him to finish his homework before drawing. His passion for making art has been a common thread throughout his life. His work has been exhibited throughout the mid-Atlantic region in galleries including Space 1026, Fleisher/Ollman, apexart, and John Lucas Gallery.

<https://dwayneboone.wordpress.com>

Amy Cousins is an artist from Houston, Texas who currently lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She holds an MFA in Printmaking from the Tyler School of Art and a BFA in Printmaking from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Her work has been exhibited nationally at venues including Vox Populi and Moore College of Art in Philadelphia, Lawrence Arts Center in Lawrence, KS, Visual Arts Center at Boise State University, University Galleries at Illinois State University, Peephole Cinema in San Francisco; and IS Projects in Fort Lauderdale. Cousins was a long term visiting artist at Illinois State University in 2018 and a resident at ACRE Residency in 2019.

<https://www.amycousins.com>

Charles Hall was born in West Philadelphia, raised in Washington, D.C. and graduated from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Prior to obtaining his MFA from The University of Pennsylvania, he worked in advertising as a writer and creative director, making Super Bowl commercials and influencing culture for brands like Nike, Jordan, Adidas & Reebok. An athlete at heart, a writer by trade, an activist by conscience, his practice explores the architecture of syntax, the spectacle of masculinity and strategies for community empowerment, through drawing, performance, sculpture, video and installation. He currently resides in Philadelphia and Montreal.

<http://www.charleshallstudio.com>

Cliff Hengst is an artist and performer, with a BFA from SFAI and current teaching position in the SFAI grad program. Hengst's one-man play, "Mr. Akita" was recently performed at the Berkeley Art Museum as part of their Matrix program. He has exhibited his work at SFMOMA, Southern Exposure, The San Francisco Arts Commission and Gallery 16 in San Francisco. Hengst has performed and exhibited at Hauser & Wirth, Machine Project in Los Angeles and The Tang Museum at Skidmore College in New York, and most recently at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Philadelphia.

<https://gallery16.com/artists/cliff-hengst>

Brandan Henry (Wilmington, DE) explores notions of identity politics, solitude, and stillness in charcoal and graphite drawings. His creative influences include comic books and his mother's collection of black figurines. Immediately out of high school, Brandan enlisted in the United States Marine Corps where he served two tours overseas, one of which was a 7-month deployment in Iraq. When allotted down time he rendered portraits of his fellow troops to send home to their loved ones. After being honorably discharged Brandan used the Montgomery G.I. Bill and Post 9/11 bill to attend the University of Delaware, garnering his BFA in Fine Art in 2013. Currently an MFA candidate at UD, he has shown his work locally at the Chris White Gallery, Capitol One Private Gallery, UD's Taylor Hall Gallery,

as well as, VOX Populi in Philadelphia, PA and Current Space in Baltimore, MD. Journalist Edith Newhall of the Philadelphia Inquirer wrote, "Brandan Henry's charcoal drawings of black men in isolated, distressed situations were a standout" at the VOX XV: What Makes That Black?, summer of 2019.

Scott Hewicker is an artist and writer from San Francisco. He is represented by Gallery 16. He doesn't have a website, but he makes a daily digital color abstraction on an IG account called mood_ring. He is interested in color, psychology, and cats, as well as abolishing capitalism.

Leroy Johnson (b. 1937) was born and grew up in the Eastwick community of Southwest Philadelphia. Much of his work takes the form of painting, collage and found objects, and is reflective of life in the inner city. He has participated consistently in solo or group shows in the arts and in crafts since the late-sixties. He has exhibited widely, some of the venues include: Philadelphia's Magic Gardens; Tirza Yalon Kolton Ceramic Gallery (Tel Aviv); Gloucester County College (Sewell, NJ); University of Pennsylvania; Museum of Contemporary Crafts (Pittsburgh, PA.); Tiger Strikes Asteroid (Brooklyn), and numerous other galleries and locations over the years. He has received grants from the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation, the Independence Foundation, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. Johnson earned an MHS from Lincoln University. He is a 2014 Pew Fellow, has been a fellow at The Clay Studio, and was recently chosen as the Directors Highlight in the Mural Arts Let's Connect Competition at the Barnes Museum. Johnson has been a participating or resident artist for many community-based art projects, including at Ile lfe, The Village of Arts and Humanities, Taller Puertoqueno, the Church of the Advocate, and St. Francis Academy. Additionally, he was the inaugural resident artist at the Art Barn in Amaranth, VA, is the current Peter Benoliel Fellow at The Center for Emerging Visual Artists, and was the recent Mural Arts Studio Artist-in-Residence at the Barnes Museum.

Leroy Johnson has been making art about the urban landscape of Philadelphia for over fifty years, working in mediums ranging from painting to collage to clay and assemblage sculpture. Chronicling the evolving landscape of Philadelphia, his work offers juxtapositions of social tensions, historical moments, and urban structures in conversation with the story of African Americans in the city. Informed by Johnson's long careers in social work and education and his Master's Degree studies at Lincoln University, his artwork highlights his knowledge of Philadelphia's streets, the interwoven accounts of generations, and pressing contemporary social conditions, including inadequate access to resources, violence, and gentrification. His unflinching depiction of our world brings awareness to the forces and lives that continue to shape the city.

<https://www.leroyjohnsonart.com/>

Colleen Keefe (they/them) received an MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art and a BFA from Washington University. Recent solo exhibitions include Speer Gallery, Bryn Mawr PA, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson / Design Center, Philadelphia PA, Robert Henry Contemporary, New York, NY, Abington Arts Center, Jenkintown, PA, and RHV Fine Art, Brooklyn, NY. Their work has been reviewed in the New York Times, Village Voice, Bushwick Daily, Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia City Paper, Toronto Globe and News, LA Times, Sculpture Magazine, theartblog.org and Title Magazine. In addition to their studio practice, Keefe has been curating since 1995 – first, as co-director of 57 Hope in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, NY (1995-2001), and currently as co-director of Mount Airy Contemporary (2009-present). <https://colleenkeefe.com>

Leah Modigliani Leah Modigliani is Associate Professor of Visual Studies at Tyler School of Art and Architecture. She is an artist and scholar who rejects specialization in favor of a rich intellectual and creative engagement with many disciplines including fine arts, art history, critical theory, cultural studies, geography, and anthropology. Her projects arise from a set of ongoing concerns that include the history of the avant-garde and its relationship to political critique, feminist art and writing, social dissent since 1968, the history of photography, performance and re-enactment as political strategy, and the pernicious effects of neoliberal capitalism.

Modigliani's visual work has been exhibited at many galleries and museums including Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum (Philadelphia), Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (San Francisco), Colby College Museum of Art (Waterville, ME), the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia (Halifax), the Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art (Toronto). Her critical writing can be found in academic journals and contemporary art magazines such as *Mapping Meaning the Journal*, *Anarchist Studies*, *Prefix Photo*, *Art Criticism* and *C Magazine*. Her book, *Engendering an avant-garde: the unsettled landscapes of Vancouver photo-conceptualism*, was published by Manchester University Press's *Rethinking Art's Histories* series in 2018.

<https://www.leahmodigliani.net>

Ksenia Nouril is the Jensen Bryan Curator at The Print Center in Philadelphia. From January 2015 to September 2017, she was the Contemporary and Modern Art Perspectives (C-MAP) Fellow for Central and Eastern European Art at The Museum of Modern Art, New York. She has organized exhibitions of global modern and contemporary art at the Bruce Museum, Lower East Side Printshop, MoMA, and Zimmerli Art Museum. Ksenia lectures widely and frequently writes for international exhibition catalogues, magazines, and academic journals, including *ARTMargins Online*, *The Calvert Journal*, *Institute of the Present*, *OSMOS*, and *Woman's Art Journal*. She has published two books: *Art and Theory of Post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe: A Critical Anthology* (co-editor and contributor, MoMA, 2018) and *Ilya Kabakov and Viktor Pivovarov: Stories About Ourselves* (editor and contributor, Rutgers University Press, 2019). Ksenia holds a BA in Art History and Slavic Studies from New York University and an MA and PhD in Art History from Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey.

<https://rutgers.academia.edu/KseniaNouril>

Peter Williams lives in Wilmington, DE and has just retired from his position as Senior Professor in the Fine Arts Department at the University of Delaware, where he taught for 15 years. Previously, he taught at Wayne State University for 17 years. He earned his MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Art and his BFA from Minneapolis College of Art and Design. His paintings are held in the permanent collections of the Smithsonian's American Art Museum, Washington DC; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Detroit Institute of Arts, MI; Delaware Art Museum, Wilmington; Howard University, Washington DC; Mead Art Museum at Amherst College, MA; Davis Museum at Wellesley College, MA; Pizzuti Collection, Columbus, OH; Mott-Warsh Collection in Flint, MI; The Bunker/Beth Rudin DeWoody Collection, Palm Beach, FL; and Espacio 23/Jorge M. Pérez Collection, Miami, FL, among others.

Exhibitions include *Incarceration* (2020), curated by Christopher Reitz, Cressman Center for the Arts/Hite Art Institute, University of Louisville, KY; *Men of Steel, Women of Wonder* (2019), curated by Assistant

Curator Alejo Benedetti, Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, AK; *River of Styx* (2018), Luis De Jesus Los Angeles; *With So Little To Be Sure Of* (2018), curated by Larry Ossei-Mensah, CUE Art Foundation, New York; *Soul Recordings* (2018), Luis De Jesus Los Angeles; *Prospect.4: The Lotus In Spite Of The Swamp* (2017-18),



If you are interested in giving a tour of your studio or other virtual artist presentation, please contact Angela McQuillan: mcquillan.angela@gmail.com.

>SPEAK SPEAK, WALK WALK...LISTEN

In 2020, Grizzly Grizzly expands its practice, exploring new ways to connect to audiences beyond our building and blog. Through special projects with Asian Arts Initiative and Space 1026, and speaking engagements at Venture Café in West Philadelphia, we bring our unique curatorial model to a set of ambitious initiatives throughout the city.

In conjunction with this year's programming, we are producing a quarterly publication, *In Dialogue*. This periodical provides an expanded venue for our gallery artists, brings our critical essays in *Speak Speak* to a wider audience, and makes connections between our in-house programming and offsite projects.

We are grateful for the generous grant from *Added Velocity* in support of these initiatives. *Added Velocity* is administered by *Temple Contemporary at Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University*, and funded by the *William Penn Foundation*.

>GRIZZLY GRIZZLY

Grizzly Grizzly is an artist collective in Philadelphia, PA. We are all practicing artists who also curate exhibitions, performances and alternative programming. Using the creative problem-solving skills needed in our daily studio practices, we create a meeting-ground for dialogue and a space for innovative work without the constraints of institutional agendas or commercial interests.

We are a collective of sharp edges, committed to frank discussion and unexpected pairings. We do not strive for consensus; we do not show our own work in the space. We are artists curating other artists, supporting a community of makers from within.

Grizzly Grizzly's ongoing mission is to blur organizational lines, promote community, and –above all–take risks. In our intimate exhibition space, we build new connections between artists, curators and our greater community, here in Philadelphia and beyond.

Grizzly Grizzly began in 2009 and is currently under the stewardship of Talia Greene, Amy Hicks, Angela McQuillan, Maggie Mills, Ephraim Russell, and Phillip Scarpone.

>CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

FOR THE NEXT ISSUE OF 'IN DIALOGUE'

We are seeking art and writing submissions for our next issue.

Specifications:

Page dimensions are 11.25" x 14" - all artwork must be sized to fit.

Screen resolution images for web.

For essays, please keep the word count under 1500

Please email all submissions to 2xgrizzly@gmail.com

The deadline to receive submissions is November 31, 2020.

>COLLABORATORS



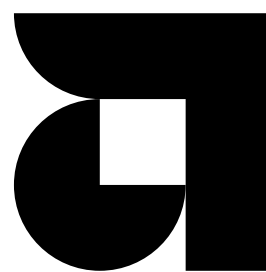
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ASIAN ARTS INITIATIVE

Connecting cultural expression and social change, Asian Arts Initiative uses art as a vehicle to explore the experiences of Asian Americans and the diverse communities of which we are a part. Located in Philadelphia's burgeoning Chinatown North neighborhood, Asian Arts Initiative is a multidisciplinary arts center offering

exhibitions, performances, artist residencies, youth workshops, and a community gathering space. Here, all people — across experience and skill levels, age, race, and class backgrounds — can view and create art that reflects our lives, as well as think critically and creatively about the future we want to build for our communities. 1219 Vine St, Philadelphia, PA 19107 asianartsinitiative.org

SPACE 1026



SPACE 1026

Space 1026 is a creative community that shares a common excitement for making, producing and creating. It is an ongoing 22-year experiment, a network of dozens of artists, and a studio/gallery space at 844 North Broad Street, formerly at 10th and Arch Street. space1026.com

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