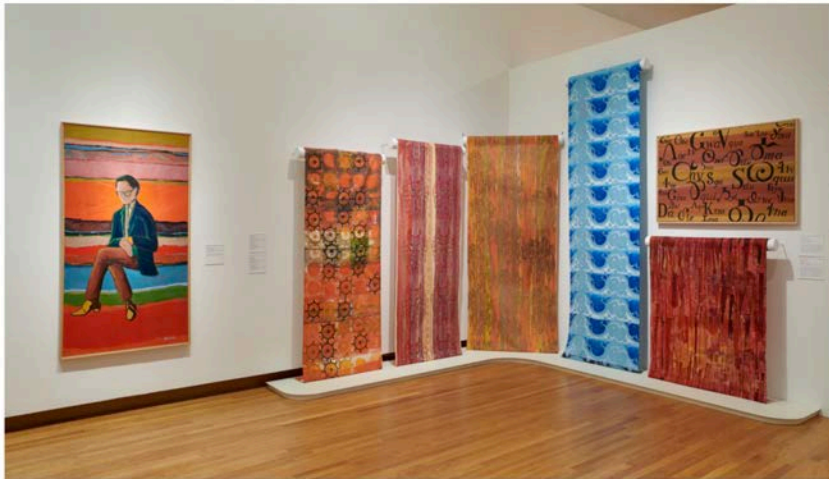


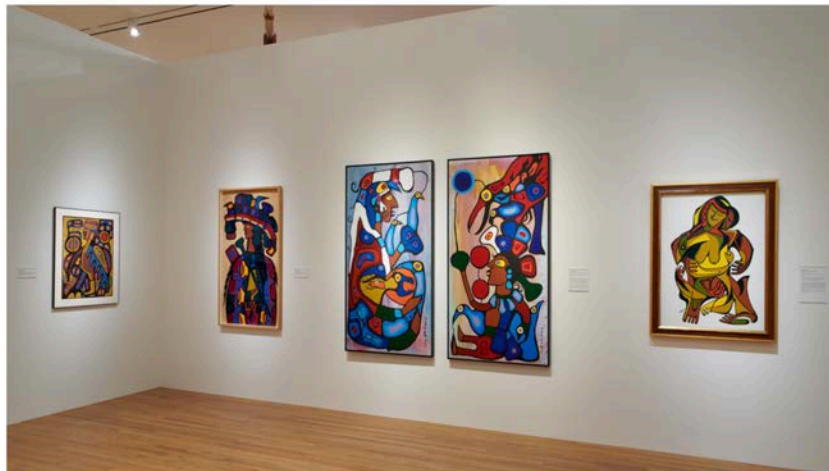
BURNAWAY CLOSE LOOK >> CLOSE LOOK: "NATIVE VOICES, 1950S TO NOW" AT THE NASHER MUSEUM

Close Look: "Native Voices, 1950s to Now" at the Nasher Museum

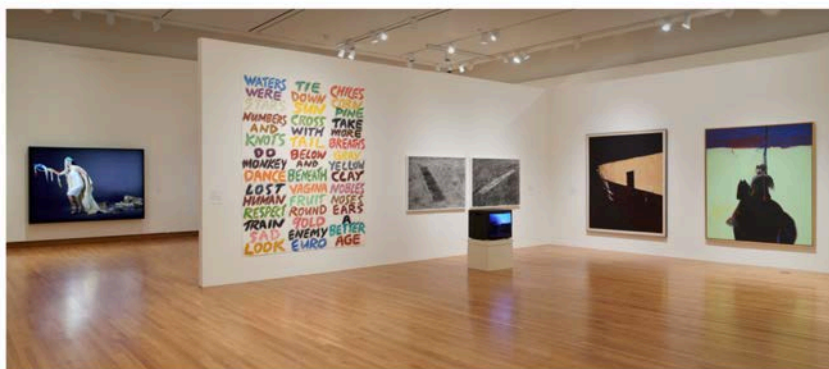
Burnaway Staff - Jan 4, 2020 in [Close Look](#)



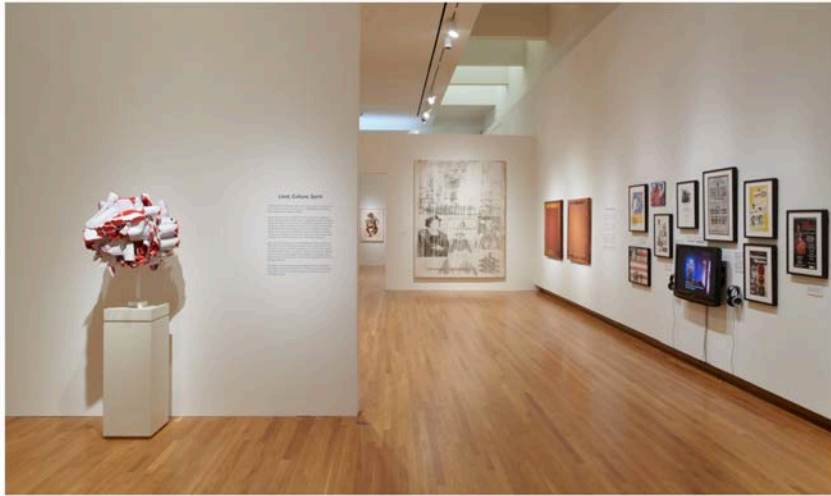
Installation views of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*, August 29, 2019–January 12, 2020 at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. All photos by Peter Paul Geoffrion and courtesy the Nasher.



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.

“ There is a stirring within our nation, our nations within nations. Indigenous communities who have long felt ignored, cast aside, and silenced are pushing, clawing, demanding to be seen as part of us—and the crisis we are in. Those at Standing Rock and at hundreds of other places are not only working to save our water, our land, our earth, and our sky, but to take their rightful place in our myths and histories. We owe it to them, our past, and our future, to push their art, culture, and ideas to the forefront of our own current thoughts.

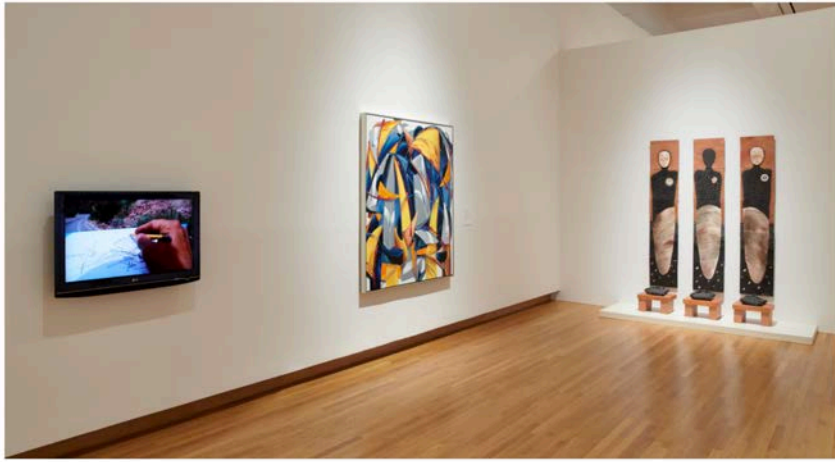
Jasmine Amussen



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.



Installation view of *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*.

Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now remains on view at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, until January 12.



Burnaway Staff

Burnaway is an Atlanta-based digital magazine of contemporary art and criticism from the American South.

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The Nasher Museum's Sculpture Garden includes work by Radcliffe Bailey and Coosje van Bruggen.

The new sculpture garden at the Nasher Museum in Durham, North Carolina will welcome a brand-new guest this coming fall: a sculpture commissioned especially for the garden, created by groundbreaking Kenyan-born artist Wangechi Mutu. Walk among the rich, green grass and tall trees to explore the rest of the garden and its sculptural gems.

NASHER.DUKE.EDU

Artist Ebony G. Patterson’s Lush and Provocative Garden Installation in North Carolina Is a Delight for the Eyes—See It Here

While museums are closed to the public, we are spotlighting an inspiring exhibition somewhere around the globe each day.

Caroline Goldstein, March 18, 2020



Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses...". © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion.

While museums around the globe are closed to the public, we are spotlighting each day an inspiring exhibition that was previously on view. Even if you can't see it in person, allow us to give you a virtual look.

"Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses..."

Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, North Carolina

What the museum says: Jamaican-born artist Ebony G. Patterson's "neo-baroque" works "address violence, masculinity, 'bling,' visibility, and invisibility within the post-colonial context of her native Kingston and within black youth culture globally. This exhibition focuses on the role that gardens have played in her practice, referenced as spaces of both beauty and burial, environments filled with fleeting aesthetics and mourning."



Still from Ebony G. Patterson's ... *three kings weep...* (2018). © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago.

Why it's worth a look: A lush floral landscape takes over the galleries, with tendrils and vines, papered over in deep purple wallpaper, snaking across the walls. In the center of the gallery, huge red and orange blossoms hold court, surrounded by Patterson's textile and mixed-media assemblages.

Patterson doesn't skimp on glitz and sparkles, which are used to transcend gender boundaries. A pair of heels with intricately carved wooden platforms lay on a bed of colorfully beaded petals. And nearby, a pair of metallic blue lace-up combat boots are festooned with epaulette tassels.

The artist has spoken about using color and pattern as a way to assert dignity—especially through dress and in performance. In a video titled ... *three kings weep...* , three black men sit ramrod straight against a Fragonard-esque backdrop of butterflies and climbing roses. The men are clad in mixed patterns of African wax prints and other vibrant textures. In the video, they slowly undress themselves, peeling off layers as tears stream down their faces.

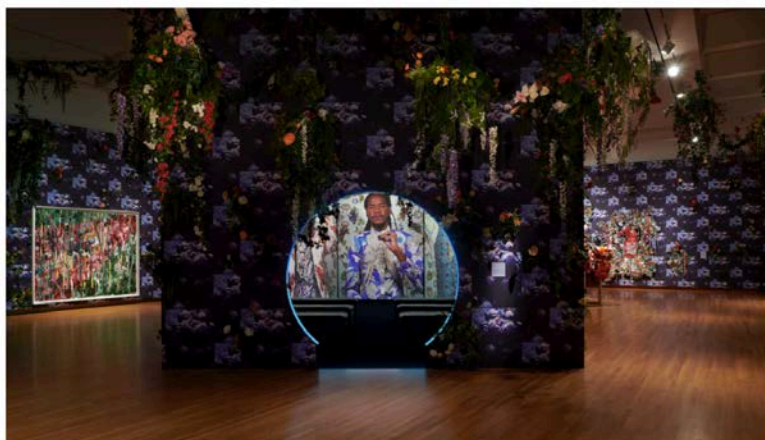
What it looks like:



Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses... ". © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Sarah Lyon.



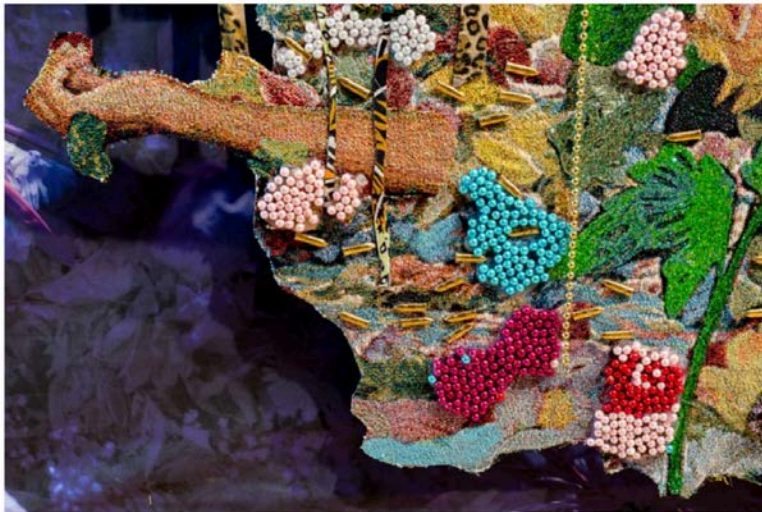
Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses... ". © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Sarah Lyon.



Installation view of Ebony G. Patterson . . . while the dew is still on the roses . . . , Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University, February – July 2020. © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion.



Ebony G. Patterson, *Dead Tree in a Forest...* (2013). © Ebony G. Patterson. Courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Oriol Tarridas.



Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses... ". © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Sarah Lyon.



Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses... ". © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Sarah Lyon.



Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses... ". © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Sarah Lyon.



Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses... ". © Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery, Chicago. Photo by Sarah Lyon.



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Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery,
Chicago. Photo by Peter Paul Geoffrion.



Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses... ". ©
Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery,
Chicago. Photo by Sarah Lyon.



Installation view of "Ebony G. Patterson: ... while the dew is still on the roses... ". ©
Ebony G. Patterson. All work courtesy of the artist and Monique Meloche Gallery,
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HYPERALLERGIC

Best of 2019: Our Top 20 United States Art Shows

Our favorite US shows of 2019, brought to you by the writers and editors of Hyperallergic.

 Hyperallergic December 12, 2019



Empress Dowager Chongqing at the Age of Eighty by artists Ignatius Sichelbarth (Ai Qimeng; Bohemia, 1708-1780), Yi Lantai (active about 1748-86) and Wang Ruxue (active 18th century), Qianlong period, 1777, hanging scroll, ink and color on silk in the *Empresses of China's Forbidden City, 1644-1912* exhibition at the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

This year, our contributors and staff found exhibitions across the country that excited, amazed, and enlightened us. The majority of the shows we selected for this list break down into two main categories: exhibitions that impelled us to think deeply and differently about an

historical epoch by using innovative curatorial approaches and penetrating scholarship, and those shows that gathered together a comprehensive selection of an artist's work to convey a fuller sense of the breadth and depth of their practice than was previously known. This list also contains a few shows of artists who are now coming into the apex of their powers. And all these exhibitions remind us of how critically important our public institutions are for making these experiences possible.

1. *Artists Respond: American Art and the Vietnam War 1965 – 1975* at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC



Courtesy the Smithsonian American Art Museum (photo by Libby Weiler)

March 15–August 18

Organized by Melissa Ho

The first exhibition mounted by any Smithsonian institution on the topic of the Vietnam War and the most far-reaching exhibition devoted to the war's impact on American artists, *Artists Respond* was challenging and expansive, an example of

the kind of ambitious and groundbreaking work our national museums should be doing. —*Blair Murphy*

2. *Caravans of Gold, Fragments in Time* at the Block Museum, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL



Tent poles, Wood, H 136.8 cm W 16.5 cm D 2.8 cm, (©The Field Museum, photograph by John Weinstein/Image No. A115335d_004A, Cat. No. 279194.1-2)

January 26–July 21

Curated by Kathleen Bickford Berzock

The exhibition was carefully well researched, collaborative, and timely in making the ambitious claim that the medieval epoch should not primarily be envisioned through a European lens, but instead can be more fully understood by seeing the African continent as the fulcrum of worldwide development by it impelling cultural advance, and socioeconomic change. Through an exhaustive

assembly of fragments and artifacts, supported by reams of scholarship (including the story of the richest man who ever lived) one sees that the 14th-century trade routes that crossed the Sahara Desert drove the movement of people, goods, and culture in that epoch. Museums should take on these kinds of insightful historical correctives more often. —*Seph Rodney*

3. *Abstract Climates: Helen Frankenthaler in Provincetown at the Parrish Art Museum, Water Mill, NY*

August 4–October 27

Curated by Lise Motherwell and Elizabeth Smith



Helen Frankenthaler, "Flood" (1967), acrylic on canvas, 124 1/4 X 140 1/2 inches (Whitney Museum of American Art, New York)

The exhibition compiles works created in or inspired by Provincetown, along with old photographs, postcards, letters, and other ephemera. It's a crucial show because it demonstrates how Frankenthaler's ability to capture the light there became a defining achievement during

her time in the Cape Cod art colony, where she found new ways to translate her experience into an aesthetic. It was here that Frankenthaler learned to strip down the content of her paintings, pushing more non-objective forms to the center of otherwise unpainted canvases, and then later on in her process release her abstractions from these spatial restraints. —*Billy Anania*

4. *Art and Race Matters: The Career of Robert Colescott at the Contemporary Arts Center (CAC), Cincinnati, OH*

September 20, 2019–January 12, 2020

Curated by Lowery Stokes Sims and Matthew Weseley



Robert Colescott, "Susanna and the Elders (Novelty Hotel)" (1980) (photo by Seph Rodney for Hyperallergic)

Robert Colescott is an unwieldy character to build an exhibition around. His work plays with the motifs of sexism verging on complete objectification, all manner of racist Black stereotypes, and generalized prejudice. What makes him deserving of the first comprehensive

opportunity to delve into the worldview of a complicated man whose paintings make the hypocrisies of the United States visible in a way only someone who lived them could. —*Sevh Rodney*

5. *In a Cloud, in a Wall, in a Chair: Six Modernists in Mexico at Midcentury* at the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL

Sep 6, 2019–Jan 12, 2020

Curated by Zoë Ryan



Installation view of a butaque chair designed by Clara Porset and a Scarlatti rug designed by Cynthia Sargent (photo by Ksenya Gurshtein)

This compact show is an exemplar of how to relate new narratives of 20th century modernism in engaging and inventive ways. It manages to depart from familiar framings in three different ways: it deliberately blurs the lines between design and “fine” art, showcasing Ruth Asawa’s sculptures, which were inspired by utilitarian Mexican wire baskets, alongside chair design by Clara Porset and fiber works by Cynthia Sargent and Sheila Hicks; it focuses on work by women, several of them migrants, expatriates, or members of minorities whose identity crossed borders as much as their work defied

disciplines; and it treats Mexico as a vibrant cultural center rather than the periphery. The resulting show offers genuinely new knowledge and insight, spectacular work on view, and an inspired exhibition design that does justice to the brilliant artists/designers who are the subjects of the show. —*Ksenya Gurshtein*

6. *Wendy Red Star: A Scratch on the Earth* at the Newark Museum of Art, Newark, NJ

February 23–June 16

Curated by Nadiyah Rivera Fellah and Tricia Laughlin Bloom



Installation view, *Wendy Red Star: A Scratch on the Earth*, the Newark Museum of Art (photo by Richard Goodbody)

The mid-career survey of the Apsáalooke (Crow) artist, whose contributions to the New York scene this year included authoring a series of scrutinizing interpretative labels for a selection of work

representing Indigenous peoples in the Met's American Wing, demonstrated that Indigenous photographers and multi-media artists have no trouble moving past the legacy of Edward Curtis to inscribe and recast the photograph as a site of intimate cultural and familial knowledge. —*Chris Green*

7. *The Body Electric* at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN

Mar 30–Jul 21

Curated by Pavel Pys with Jadine Collingwood



Sidsel Meineche Hansen, "SECOND SEX WAR ZONE" (2016) Dickgirl 3D(x) in VR format, gaming PC, Oculus Rift headset, headphones, vegan leather beanbag (courtesy the artist and Rodeo Gallery, London/Piraeus)

The Body Electric mined 50 years of computer and digital transformation, and explored ways that the human body and its gestures approach and in some ways commingle with scientific advances,

mechanical engineering, and the world's trajectory toward a cyborg world. Works by Shigeko Kubota, Sondra Perry, Sidsel Meineche Hansen, and others illustrated the connection between artists creating work in the latter half of the 20th century to those shaping artistic innovation in our current digital landscape. Pavel Pys's curation revealed the charged tension between artists and their technological tools, especially as they thrust the delicate human body — often their own — into the experiment. —*Sheila Regan*

8. *Empresses of China's Forbidden City, 1644-1912* at the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Washington, DC

March 30–June 23

Curated by Daisy Yiyong Wang and Jan Stuart

This exhibition will be referenced in Chinese art history for generations. Despite being an abundantly researched dynasty, little was known or published about the women of the Qing court. The collections of five empresses left Beijing for the first time to tell the stories of women who shaped China for 268 years. —*Kealey Boyd*

9. *Suzanne Lacy: We Are Here* at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and the Yerba Buena Center For the Arts, San Francisco, CA

April 20–August 4

Curated by Rudolf Frieling,
Lucía Sanromán, and Dominic
Willsdon



Suzanne Lacy, "Three Weeks in May" (1977) (detail);
Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (© Suzanne Lacy; photo by
Grant Mumford)

A sprawling retrospective
across two venues, *Suzanne
Lacy: We Are Here* showcased
the work of a pioneering artist
whose socially engaged work
has never been more timely.

Consistent in quality, protean

in practice, SFMOMA and Yerba Buena Center for the Arts showcased five decades of productivity that included photographs, video, installation, texts, maps, recordings, sculpture, actions, and more, much of it done in collaboration with others. Such abundance might have proved overwhelming, but the show more than demonstrated how over all those years and collaborations, Lacy's art always has an essential, recognizable core. From mapping rapes in Los Angeles in the 1970s to engaging marginalized teenagers in the Oakland Projects in the 1990s and onward, Lacy confronts gender, violence, race, aging, capitalism and more in work that is socially vital and visually striking.

—Bridget Quinn

10. *Copies, Fakes, and Reproductions: Printmaking in the Renaissance* at the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX

March 23–June 16

Curated by Holly Borham

Copies, Fakes, and Reproductions: Printmaking in the Renaissance examines the relationship between various Renaissance artists and their copyists, as well as emphasizing that each print on display has a unique, material life all of its own: some of the prints are copies, some are forgeries, but nothing is a duplicate. The exhibition tackles tricky questions of authenticity, fakery, and how history and context shape our thinking about the moral judgments we make about



Albrecht Dürer, "Madonna with the Pear" (1511), engraving,
6 1/4 x 4 3/16 in. (Blanton Museum of Art, The University of
Texas at Austin, Archer M. Huntington Museum Fund,
1080)

between originals and their
copies. —Lydia Pine

11. Tara Donovan: Fieldwork at the Smart Museum, University of Chicago, Chicago, IL

June 14–September 22

Curated by Nora Burnett
Abrams



Tara Donovan, "Transplanted" (2001/2018), tar paper.
(image courtesy the artist and Pace Gallery)

Hyperobjects are invisible to humans, despite the fact we are surrounded by them (such as plastic straws, rubber bands, paper). If making is a form of thinking then building monumental art with materials from our social environment

means art is becoming its own hyperobject. —KB

12. Mapping Memory: Space and History in 16th-Century Mexico at the Blanton Museum of Art, Austin, TX

June 29–August 25

Organized by Rosario I.
Granados



Unknown Artist, Atengo and Misquiahuala Mexico (1580)
30.3 x 22 inches, tempera on deerskin Benson Latin
American collection, LILAAS Benson Latin American
Studies and Collections, the University of Texas at Austin)

Europeans living in the 16th century were not the only people to create representations of geographies and map spaces of the Americas — and their mathematically based cartography was not the only way 16th-century landscapes were recorded. *Mapping Memory: Space and History in 16th-Century Mexico* features 19 maps drawn by Indigenous artists at the behest of the Spanish between 1579 and 1581. These maps illustrate the amalgamation of visual,

aesthetic traditions during the early years of contact between Indigenous groups and colonizers. —LP

13. Mind of the Mound: Critical Mass at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA), North Adams, MA

March 9–November 3

Curated by Denise Markonish



Installation view, Trenton Doyle Hancock, *Mind of the Mound: Critical Mass* (photo by Tony Luong)

Trenton Doyle Hancock's *Mind of the Mound* at Mass MoCA up here in North Adams. I thought the show was a breakthrough for an artist working in a huge range of media — painting, comics, installation, video — to really

expand and explore the unique universe he's created (the ever-evolving "Moundverse") and its mythology and ontology. It was one of my favorite things in years. —*Christopher Marcisz*

14. Maia Cruz Palileo at the Katzen Arts Center, American University Museum, Washington, DC

September 3–October 20

Curated by Isabel Manalo



Maia Cruz Palileo, "The Visitors" (2014), oil on canvas, 48 x 36 inches (courtesy the artist and Tuymour Grahne)

Maia Cruz Palileo untethers Filipino history from American exceptionalism in her vivid paintings, inspired by colonial-era public archives and family photographs from their immigration. Eschewing Western narratives, she recontextualizes the diaspora on its own terms, pulling customs from imperial clutches and realigning them in robust color palettes. Broad brushstrokes and thickly applied paints result in expressive scenes that exist

somewhere between representation and abstraction, as if drawn from memory. In highlighting a history widely omitted from US textbooks, Palileo's work challenges a collective ignorance, instead honoring the resilience of ordinary people and setting the stage for greater discussions of postcolonial heritage. —*BA*

16. *Ebony G. Patterson . . . while the dew is still on the roses . . . at the Perez Museum, Miami, FL*

Nov. 9, 2018–May 5, 2019

Curated by Tobias Ostrander



Image of the Ebony Patterson installation at the Perez Art Museum Miami (photo Hrag Vartanian/Hyperallergic)

Ebony G. Patterson ... while the dew is still on the roses ... was an immersive experience that continues to stay with me. The three-part video presentation was incredible as footage of three men in floral garments undressing is played slowly backward. Accompanied by

large floral arrangements and black patterned wallpaper, as well as drawings and other art, the gallery appeared solemn but magical, like everything had grown in place, akin to a midnight garden of the imagination. Some of the objects appeared to be somewhat weathered, and flowers appear frozen for eternity. Patterson's art tills curious notions of time and passage without the usual pretensions that accompany this sort of subject matter. I still remember the experience today, even as the details of the art has slowly faded away. It was brilliant. —*Hrag Vartanian*

17. *Glenn Ligon: To be a Negro in this country is really never to be looked at at the Maria & Alberto de la Cruz Art Gallery, Georgetown University, Washington, DC*

January 24–April 7

Curated by Al Miner



Glenn Ligon, "Grey Hands #a, #3, #4, #5, #6," (1996) silkscreen on canvas, courtesy of the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles; facsimile of Washington Monument Wallpaper created by Andy Warhol in 1974, refabricated by the Andy Warhol Museum. (photo by Kuna Malik Hamad for Georgetown University Art Galleries)

For this collaboration at Georgetown University, artist Glenn Ligon presented a selection of works from his Hands series focused on images from The Million Man March. The works were installed on top of a reproduction of Andy Warhol's rarely seen Washington Monument Wallpaper. The

exhibition was a strong presentation of the artist's work, strengthened by its smart engagement with Washington, DC as a site. —*BM*

18. *Kiss the Hand You Cannot Bite* at Kadist, San Francisco, CA

June 5–August 10

Curated by Kadist



Pio Abad (made in collaboration with Frances Wadsworth Jones), “Kiss the Hand You Cannot Bite” (2019), cast concrete, dimensions variable (photo by Jeff Warrin and courtesy Kadist San Francisco)

Artist Pio Abad grew up under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, which lasted from 1965–1986. In his show *Kiss the Hand You Cannot Bite* at Kadist in San Francisco, there’s a letter from Nancy Reagan to Imelda Marcos, engraved on marble,

which assures the first lady of the Philippines she can access the benefits of the legal system. In another piece, Abad and his wife, jewelry designer Frances Wadsworth Jones, made a 10-foot concrete reproduction of a pearl, ruby and diamond bracelet, like one Marcos tried to smuggle into Hawaii after she and her husband were given exile there by the Reagans. When the truth seems fluid and changing, Abad has tried to monumentalize it using concrete and marble. —*Emily Wilson*

19. *Early Rubens* at the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA

April 6–September 8

Curated by Kirk Nickel and Alexandra “Sasha” Suda



Peter Paul Rubens “The Massacre of the Innocents” (ca. 1610) oil on panel, 55 7/8 × 72 1/16 inches, the Thomson Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario (photograph by Sean Weaver, Art Gallery of Ontario image provided courtesy the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco)

A rare chance to witness monumental Baroque painting in the Bay Area, *Early Rubens* was an opportunity to see important work of the past, as well as to appreciate how strikingly current Rubens feels right now, unflinching in holding our gaze on brutality, sex, and sorrow. His “The

Massacre of the Innocents” (ca. 1611–1612), for example, is as scary as a horror movie, with graphic depictions of dead and dying children, and their mothers under assault, a scene that feels all too familiar. You want to look away, but palpable human anguish draws you in. Rubens’s riveting details of unthinkable violence — blue skin, a bloody pool, hair-tearing grief — feel less like dramatic indulgence than a sincere willingness to witness the terrible. —*Bridget Quinn*

20. *Where the Oceans Meet* at the Museum of Art and Design, Miami Dade College, Miami, FL

May 26, 2019–January 12, 2020

Curated by Hans Ulrich Obrist, Asad Raza, Gabriela Rangel, and Rina Carvajal



Installation view of *Where the Oceans Meet* at the Museum of Art and Design, from left to right: works by Kader Attia, Jack Whitten, Glenn Ligon and Theaster Gates (photo by Oriol Tarridas)

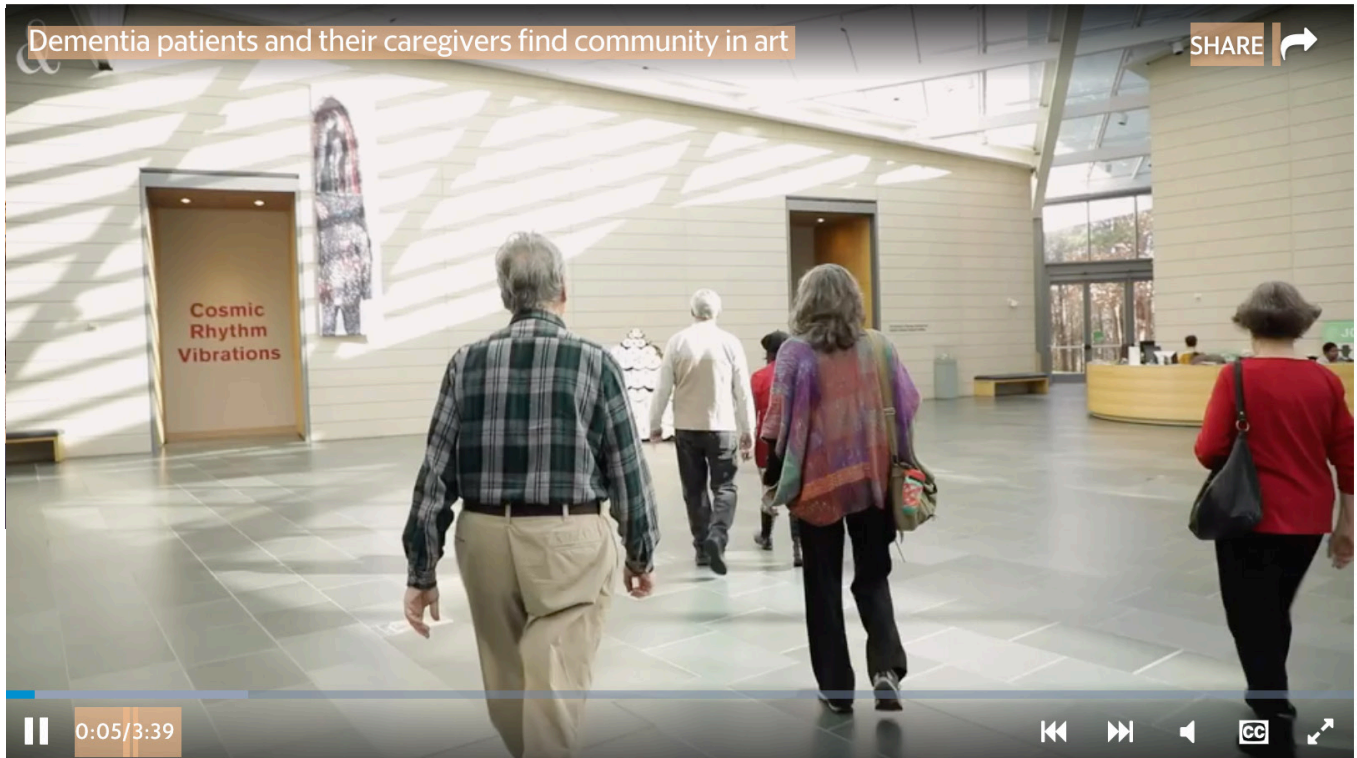
Variants of this group exhibition took place in New York City and Europe, but it reached its full maturity in Miami. Conceived in dialogue with the writings of lesbian Cuban anthropologist Lydia Cabrera and the Martinican

philosopher Édouard Glissant, it illustrates the relationality of different cultures without reducing artworks to categories of nationality. The exhibition balances theory with artistic practice as well — a tricky thing to do. —*Alpesh Patel*

How one NC museum is using art and music to unlock memories in people with dementia

BY TRENT BROWN

JANUARY 23, 2020 12:01 PM, UPDATED JANUARY 23, 2020 03:34 PM



At the Nasher Museum of Art, the Duke Dementia Family Support Program meets monthly for a program called 'Reflections' for both patients and caregivers to engage with works of art together while building a sense of community. BY [CASEY TOTH](#) ✉

DURHAM

The visitors sit in folding chairs in front of a huge, ornately framed portrait of a [man holding a gold staff against a blue and floral background](#).

Maggie Griffin stands beside the artwork, “St. John the Baptist II” by Kehinde Wiley — the artist best known for painting [President Barack Obama’s official portrait](#).

“So I’m going to let you make some comments on what you’re noticing,” she says. “What stands out when you see this particular piece?”

“He’s suspended in the air,” says one man.

“His face is so pensive, not sad, but watchful,” says a woman in the back.



Maggie Griffin leads a group discussion about a piece of artwork on display at the Nasher Museum of Art with a monthly support group called 'Reflections' organized by the Duke Dementia Family Support Program, designed for both patients and caregivers to engage with works of art together while building a sense of community, on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, in Durham, N.C. Casey Toth CTOTH@NEWSOBSERVER.COM

Griffin smiles and encourages each response with a genuine excitement.

The program that has brought these 14 people — and another 12 that split off earlier — into the [Nasher Museum of Art](#) at Duke University this chilly January day is called “Reflections.”

Eleven of the 26 people in the two groups have Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia-related illness. The others are their caretakers.

INTERACTIVE COMMUNITY PROGRAM

“Reflections” adds interactive sensory components to an art gallery tour to help stimulate the brains of people with Alzheimer’s, a specific disease that causes the loss of thinking skills and memory, and other forms of dementia. Nearly [6 million Americans have been diagnosed](#) with Alzheimer’s disease — or 1 in 10 people ages 65 or older.

Jessica Rhule, the Nasher’s education director, learned of the idea at a [Museum of Modern Art](#) conference in New York eight or nine years ago. Her grandfather was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s.

“The stars aligned” in July 2014, Rhule said, when the museum hired a new director, Sarah Schroth, and Rhule found donors Stephanie Kahn and husband, Doug, both of whose fathers had Alzheimer’s. Soon afterward, the Duke Dementia Family Support Program jumped on board, bringing patients and caregivers to “Reflections” on the second Wednesday of every month.

In December, The Alzheimer’s Foundation of America gave the program a \$5,000 grant. It now hosts six to eight tours for organized groups and is open to the public one day a month.

LEARN, SUPPORT EACH OTHER

The tours usually involve a group focusing on a few works of art while a tour guide asks them about it. The questions often begin at a surface level and lead into deeper questions about what memories the art triggers.

“It’s really given me a new perspective on art,” said Doug Taylor. “I love it.”

Marion Jervay, who comes with her husband, Kenton Cobb, said they already had a membership at the Nasher but called “Reflections” “a wonderful immersion.”

The program also fosters community.

“People come to our programs, initially having never met somebody else with dementia,” says Bobbi Matchar, director of the family support program. “But here through our programs, they are able to be very open about their impairment and learn from each other and support each other.”



Jessica Rhule, Director of Education, leads a group discussion about a piece of artwork on display at the Nasher Museum of Art with a monthly support group called ‘Reflections’ organized by the Duke Dementia Family Support Program, designed for both patients and caregivers to engage with works of art together while building a sense of community, on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, in Durham, N.C. Casey Toth CTOTH@NEWSOBSERVER.COM

Harold Bost, who comes with his wife, Shirley, who has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, said it's one of the most important parts of coming every month.

"It gives us an outing," he explained. "And the more you can be with other people that have the same type of issues that you do, you find you're not alone."

MUSIC AS THERAPY

The recent tour's focus, after the Kehinde Wiley painting, turned to music.

First, the group was given song lyrics from popular tracks like Lizzo's "Truth Hurts" or The Beatles' "Yesterday" and was told to match the lyrics to a piece of art in the room.

Then the group looked at [a large piece called "Cats and Dogs" in which three vinyl records](#) circle each other — "Purple Rain" by Prince, "November Rain" by Guns N' Roses and "Rain" by The Beatles.

Rhule asked the visitors about their favorite albums and artists, and then if they could remember any specific memories about them.

"My sister gave me an album when I was 16," said one woman.

The final part of the tour was the most interactive, changing sometimes between live music from Duke orchestra performers to a DJ.

Joseph Giampino, known as DJ SPCLGST [Special Guest], stood behind his DJ table as the visitors came up to watch him perform to songs spanning the 1950s to the past decade — scrubbing a record back and forth to create a scratch sound.

Giampino asked for requests, and Stephanie Kahn yelled out, "We want to dance!"

And as soon as "Good Golly Miss Molly" by Little Richard started to play, folks started tapping their feet and playing invisible pianos.



A patient and a caregiver hold hands during a monthly support group that meets at the Nasher Museum of Art, called 'Reflections', organized by the Duke Dementia Family Support Program, designed for both patients and caregivers to engage with works of art together while building a sense of community, on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, in Durham, N.C. Casey Toth CTOTH@NEWSOBSERVER.COM

“It’s making you move, it’s making your feet stomp, it’s making your head bob and you feel it,” Giampino said. “That’s what music is and that’s what being a musician is. Making people enjoy and giving them something.”

DETAILS

“Reflections” tours at the Nasher are the fourth Tuesday of every month, with the next on Jan. 28 at 1:30 p.m. Admission is free, but reservations must be made at least a week in advance. Register at nasher.duke.edu, call Jennifer Armstron Hicks or email reflections@duke.edu.



Jessica Rhule, Director of Education, leads a group discussion about a piece of artwork on display at the Nasher Museum of Art with a monthly support group called ‘Reflections’ organized by the Duke Dementia Family Support Program, designed for both patients and caregivers to engage with works of art together while building a sense of community, on Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020, in Durham, N.C. CASEY TOTH CTOTH@NEWSOBSERVER.COM



TRENT BROWN

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Trent Brown graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 2019 and is a Collegiate Network fellow.

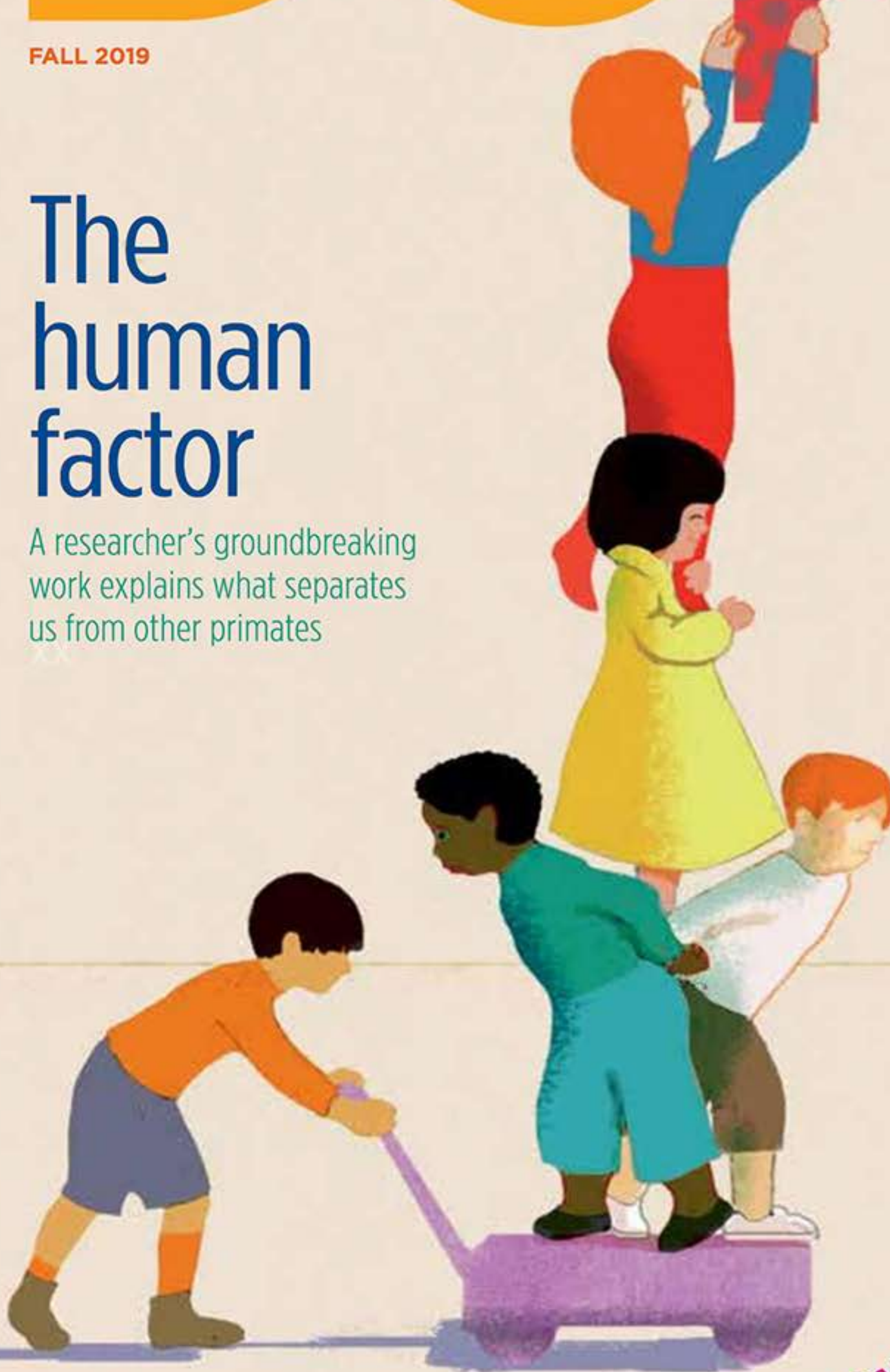
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Drone images by Rory Wakemup, Oceli Sakowin Camp, 2016

FINALLY SEEN: Above, *Mirror Shield Project*, conceived by artist Cannupa Hanska Luger

Revising the nation's origin story

By featuring contemporary works created by indigenous artists, the Nasher's latest show suggests a broader narrative.

Did you see the pink boots?" It's opening night of the Nasher Museum's latest exhibition, *Art for a New Understanding: Native Voices, 1950s to Now*, and two Duke students are debating the meaning of colorful, thigh-high boots in the middle of a nineteenth-century landscape. In the painting, mountains rise majestically in the background, suggesting limitless land. It feels quite traditional. But something is different in this scene; there are nude men scattered about—soldiers who have tossed their weapons and uniforms—and a painter standing at his easel capturing their reverie is also nude except for those boots.

The piece is Kent Monkman's *History is Painted by the Victors*, a tongue-in-cheek take on Albert Bierstadt's classic American West artwork, *Mount Corcoran*.

"Bierstadt painted the scene unpeopled, which would support the theme of Manifest Destiny: 'You can move out West; it's available for the taking,'" says visiting curator Mindy Besaw from Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Arkansas, where the exhibit was originally developed. Here, Monkman puts his drag queen alter ego,



"We are still here."

Miss Chief Eagle Testickle, in the foreground. "It's that new understanding when you realize things are not as they appear. It asks you to look twice at the work, think twice about the artists, and think twice about the context and our assumptions."

And that's the goal of the show. While Western art often puts history in a tidy package, excluding Native Americans from the narrative, the exhibition doesn't mind showing that history is messy. It aims to disrupt the tranquil, monolithic image of a forgotten indigenous people while blasting the nation's origin narrative.

Forty-one Indigenous contemporary artists are featured; they're addressing varied themes and using varied formats, including canvas paintings, videos, performance art, and textiles. Marie Watt's *Companion Species (Ferocious Mother and Canis Familiaris)* uses a patchwork of embroidered words on reclaimed wool blankets created by sewing circles of more than two hundred participants to explore the interconnectedness of humans and animals. Artist Brian Jungen's sculptures morph Nike Air Jordans and human hair into semblances of Pacific Northwest tribal masks, as a commentary on cultural appropriation and commodification. In *Fifty Shades of White*, Juane Quick-to-See

Smith created a map that renames each U.S. state with various shades of white paint—"White Peach" for Georgia, "Antique White" for Pennsylvania, North Carolina is "Breakwater White"—while neighboring countries are brightly colored to ask viewers to reflect upon Euro-American cultural and racial authority. "It upends the idea of representation," says Besaw of the exhibition's breadth. "Native American is not one pan-Indian identity. There's not one way of making art that is Native American." Besides the art and the calendar of events accompanying the show, which runs through January 12, the exhibition has special resonance for the Class of 2023, whose summer reading was the acclaimed novel *There There* by Cheyenne and Arapaho author Tommy Orange. That book, too, challenges notions of indigenous identity by featuring the voices of twelve urban Native American narrators as they make their way to a California powwow. Marshall Price, the Nancy A. Nasher and David J. Haemisegger curator of modern and contemporary art,



HERITAGE: Above, Jeffrey Gibson, *Radiant Tushka*, 2018; left, one panel of Norval Morrisseau's *The Story Teller: The Artist and his Grandfather*, 1978

served as an adviser of the design of the exhibition, determining how the works would be displayed and described. He consulted with members of North Carolina's indigenous tribes and brought in a member of a local Native tribe to help the Nasher staff in their use of language with visitors, when referencing Native peoples. He says the art represents the continued presence of Native peoples whose history has long been silenced. "One of the overarching statements of the exhibit is that Native American cultures are still very much alive, thriving and here."

"We are still here," says Louise Maynor, Ph.D. '83, a member and advocate of the Lumbee Tribe, who attended the exhibition's opening reception. "Through this

art exhibit, so many other people will know that we are here, and that we are proudly producing and generating these art forms as another way of telling our stories. It is a new understanding. It's not the printed word. It's so visual and engaging. That in itself should add to our understanding of indigenous people." —Melody Hunter-Pillion A.M. '12