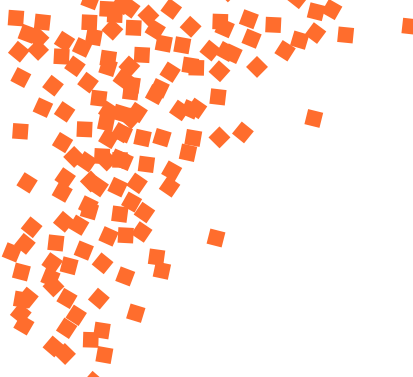


FOOTNOTES ALLISON MINTO  
AND OTHER  
EMBEDDED  
STORIES



JOSEPH SMOULSON  
AND  
ROSEMARY

LEONARD CALVO  
AND  
LUCY  
ROONEY  
AND  
JULIA  
ROONEY  
AND  
RUBY GONZALEZ HERNANDEZ

Artspace

FOOTNOTES  
AND OTHER  
EMBEDDED STORIES

April 30 -  
June 25

Artspace 

Cover Design: William Hodgson

This printed catalog is published on the occasion of the group exhibition, *Footnotes and other embedded stories* at Artspace New Haven, April 30–June 25, 2022, featuring the work of Happy and Bob Doran Connecticut Artists in Residence Leonard Galmon, Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, Allison Minto, Julia Rooney, and Joseph Smolinski and curated by Director of Curatorial Affairs Laurel V. McLaughlin. The residency was guided by Artspace Executive Director Lisa Dent in collaboration with the Yale University Art Gallery Seymour H. Knox, Jr., Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Keely Orgeman.

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**Plate 1.** Julia Rooney, *Scrollscape*, 2022. Installation with hand-cast paper, mounted on enamel-painted wood and plexi-dowels, with twine, 18 x 64 in. each. Courtesy of the artist. Installation view, *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, April 30–June 25, 2022, Artspace New Haven, CT.

# Foreword

Lisa Dent

Throughout history, artists have engaged in numerous forms of research, ranging from color theory and testing print pigments, to the archival and cultural. The 2021–2022 Yale University Art Gallery (YUAG) and Artspace New Haven (Artspace) Happy and Bob Doran Artists in Residence, Leonard Galmon, Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, Allison Minto, Julia Rooney, and Joseph Smolinski, each demonstrate how artistic research expands, changes over time, and proliferates. Art institutions such as YUAG, led by Henry J. Heinz II Director Stephanie Wiles, and Artspace can provide support structures to ensure that artists have the time and resources they need to engage such research. It has been an honor for YUAG Seymour H. Knox, Jr., Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art Keely Orgeman and I to work with these artists through the course of the residency year hosting sessions focused on artistic process, practice, and professional development, and also for Artspace Director of Curatorial Affairs, Laurel V. McLaughlin to work with them to organize the culminating exhibition of new works.

The exhibition and publication features a curatorial essay, “*Footnotes and other embedded stories*” by Laurel V. McLaughlin, and interviews by participating artists in dialogue with writers Camille Bacon, Jamillah Hinson, Filippo Lorenzin, Danni Shen, and Laurel. All contributions are indebted to these artists and their work over the course of the past year. We at Artspace are grateful to have had the opportunity to work with them. Thank you to the Artspace interns and staff, including Vicky Blume, Annissa Carter, Simon Ghebreyesus, Becca Flores-Vitti, Imani Jackson, Isaac Jean-Francois, Iman Iftikhar, Desmond Ntseh, Tyler Mitchell, Laurel V. McLaughlin, Steve Roberts, and Paul Theriault for your dedication in bringing this exhibition to fruition. Thank you to the numerous artists, scholars, cultural producers who participated in lectures, workshops, and conversations. And finally, I would also like to thank the Artspace Board of Directors for their continued leadership, and Happy and Bob Doran, Yale University Art Gallery, the Andy Warhol Foundation, CT Humanities, Mellon Foundation, and VIA Art Fund for their financial support of this exhibition, catalog, and programming.



Plate 2. Allison Minto, *Structures of Identity*, 2022. Video installation with rayon jersey uniform, designed in collaboration with Dwayne Moore of Neville Wisdom Fashion Design Studio, 9:00 min. Courtesy of the artist. Installation view, *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, April 30–June 25, 2022, Artspace New Haven, CT.







**Plate 4.** Installation view, *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, April 30–June 25, 2022, Artspace New Haven, CT.

# Footnotes and other embedded stories

Laurel V. McLaughlin

The footnote.<sup>1</sup> Functionally, the footnote is a small number within a sentence or at its end that corresponds to the same number at the end of the page—the foot, so to speak, of the anthropomorphized page.<sup>2</sup> From a research perspective, the footnote links a reference to its source. It acts as a hypertext, or a non-linear trajectory that webs outwards in a network of expanding thoughts. It can also operate discursively to explain the connections, refusals, expansions, witty asides, or opinions that authors aim to emphasize to their readers. In all of its meanings, the footnote, then, has many well-trodden histories as an annotative device but also potential histories, perhaps unknown, as an imaginary space.

*Footnotes and other embedded stories* takes its point of departure from this curious marker that imputes the research process and its potentiality. Over the course of the 2020–2021 year, Yale University Art Gallery and Artspace New Haven Happy and Bob Doran Artists in Residence Leonard Galmon, Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, Allison Minto, Julia Rooney, and Joseph Smolinski have delved into environmental, technological, relational, archival, and personal research, amongst a variety of other forms.<sup>3</sup>

Their interdisciplinary and creative-based approaches run parallel to what theorist Natalie S. Loveless understands as “research-creation,” including the making process, history, and theory in tentacular ways of thinking.<sup>4</sup>

Numerous scholars have outlined histories of the footnote from contemporary usage to precedents from its European 17th-century origins, in which it initially served philologists and historians as a tool for citational truth-telling and discourse adjacent to but outside of the main text, to contemporary usage.<sup>5</sup> Throughout the twentieth century, as a popular 1996 op-ed from *The New York Times* detailed, footnotes were critiqued for the density, obstruction of flow, and extraneous information that they imposed upon the text. In fact, at the end of the twentieth-century, it was conservative historians and scholars defending them. But in our contemporary moment, curiously enough, it is the radicals who see the potential for the truth-telling functionality of the footnote, or the errant thought linking one idea to another. Ideally, and in contemporary usage, footnotes bolster the validity of the text, and transfer the conversation beyond author(s), connecting it with tentacular discussions and research.

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1 Noun. 1: a note of reference, explanation, or comment usually placed below the text on a printed page, 2: one that is a relatively subordinate or minor part (as of an event, work, or field); Verb. 1: to furnish with a footnote. *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “footnote,” accessed March 2, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/footnote>.

2 As a *Stanford Magazine* article from 1997 articulates concerning a turn away from the footnote as an antiquated model of non-speculative research, only in English does the footnote have the connection to “foot” at the bottom of the page. Notes have other iterations, such as endnotes, at the end of a publication. See Bruce Anderson, “The Decline and Fall of Footnotes,” *Stanford Magazine* (January/February 1997), <https://stanfordmag.org/contents/the-decline-and-fall-of-footnotes>. Prior to the *Stanford* article there was a famous op-ed William H. Honan that outlined the purportedly out-of-vogue citation, “Footnotes Offering Fewer Insights (1): (1) Scholars Desert an Old Tradition in a Search for Wider Appeal,” *The New York Times*, 14 August 1996.

3 I am immensely grateful to Julia, Allison, Joseph, Ruby, and Leonard for their intellectual, affective, and embodied labor throughout this residency, exhibition collaboration, and catalog production. Our discussions and collaborative editing contributed to the labels in the exhibition and this catalog essay.

4 See Natalie S. Loveless, ed., *Knowings and Knots: Methodologies and Ecologies in Research-Creation* (Alberta, CA: University of Alberta Press, 2019) and Natalie S. Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2019).

5 See Anthony Grafton, *The Footnote: A Curious History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

At their worst—even today—footnotes recoil against this expansive gesture, miring the text in fustian asides to the eye-rolls of readers. The artists and I hope, in this exhibition, that they offer possibilities, unfolding collective and research-based knowledge.

To this end, we turn to curator and writer Legacy Russell, who offered a 2021 keynote lecture “On Footnotes” proposing a provocative overture: what if footnotes *became* the text? Russell’s free-flowing usurpation of the citation speculated about a centrifugal textual model, in which research flees the center as a deliberate strategy. In its flight from the center, it relishes the corner, the foot, taking refuge, curiosity, and even love in the space of the margins.<sup>6</sup> The centrifugal motion expanding outwards that Russell evokes is the animating force of truly curious research. It creeps outside of disciplinary silos and trespasses across medium-specific boundaries, to return to Loveless’s “research-creation,” moving beyond academic circles, into the entangled stuff of life. Footnotes, as Russell recognizes, drive conversational tangents, occupy embodied behaviors, accent visual representations, and make meaning within personal archives. As a result, they offer authors and artists, readers and viewers opportunities to delve deeper, to *embed* themselves—whether through writing, reading, or making—into, with, and towards multiple lines of inquiry together. In *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, artists Leonard Galmon, Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, Allison Minto, Julia Rooney, and Joseph Smolinski exhibit expansive research and embeddedness in collective curiosity. They have approached this prospect of exhibition-making not as an productive end to their residency, but through various media, processes, life experiences, and positionalities, during cohort meetings, conversations, *as* “footnoting” processes.

From the windows of Artspace New Haven’s site at the corner of Orange and Crown Streets, we, the viewers, already encounter a footnote even before stepping into the building.<sup>7</sup> The frame of designer William Hodgson’s graphics offers a window to the world—a historical perspective of painting that Julia Rooney’s installation *Scrollscape* and sculptural works *Text Box (after April 10, 2018 Hearing before the U.S. Senate Committees on the Judiciary and Commerce, Science, and Transportation)* and *Hearing*

*before the U.S. Senate Committees on the Judiciary and Commerce, Science, and Transportation*, in addition to her painting installation *Greenscreen*, challenge and deconstruct.<sup>8</sup> Through the frame, we see multiple hanging hand-cast denim and cotton pulp blue, white, and gray-colored scrolls, cubed MDF seats, and an edition of newsprint placed unceremoniously on the ground. The frame immediately instructs us to see the work through its visual cue. But in *Scrollscape*, Rooney invites us to embody the commonplace virtual zones of our handheld screens and monitors, which operate via the casual (and often unnoticed) motion of our fingers. From these soft-edged rectangles, we view the world beyond our immediate sites—much like the act of reading a footnote. But do we realize how such devices (and companies designing them) shape our picturing of the world? The translation of textured painting to the pixelated space of Instagram inspired Rooney’s research on virtual translation and framing devices that animate her painting and its processes. The seat sculptures and newsprint works too demystify the structures of technological framing.

Rooney read and hand-copied the proceedings from the Senate’s hearings with Facebook and CEO Mark Zuckerberg concerning data privacy and disinformation and situates it as architecture in the room, and an informational tool that we can take away with the newsprint. This public document provides insight into how companies such as Facebook operate on user data and consequently configure the ways in which we see. And finally, Rooney’s *Greenscreen* embodies just how painting as a technology offers this age-old frame. The opposite green and magenta oil-painted sides of the painting, denoting the cinematic space of possibility, and the skin tones of various users of the painting, cast a shadow against the wall, revealing the many possible “footnotes” that could take place within its limitless boundaries. Illuminated by punctures in the canvas and mirrored sides implicating us in the process of picturing, the painting radiates outwards with smaller 2 x 2-inch paintings referencing landscape excerpts in works from the Yale University Art Gallery and citing the potential of painting as a technology to (de)limit worlds.

Leonard Galmon also considers the potentiality of

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6 Legacy Russell, “On Footnotes,” AICA-USA and Vera List Center Distinguished Critic Lecture, November 29, 2021.

7 I use the collective “we” not to flatten multiple perspectives into a monolith, but to gesture towards this discursive space of learning together.

8 All works are from 2022 and created during the 2021–2022 Happy and Bob Doran Artist Residency unless otherwise noted.



**Plate 5.** Installation view, *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, April 30–June 25, 2022, Artspace New Haven, CT.



**Plate 6.** Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez at MakeHaven

picturing and how conventions of color and space collide with racial expectations. Historically, such formal aspects rely upon rational thought. But these conventions are constructs emerging from a pointedly Western understanding of space and optics bound by structures such as the grid. In his series “Parallel Subversions,” Galmon rigorously collects source materials from embodied, photographic, and drawing-based research with his Black community—the people of which he considers kin.<sup>9</sup> In collaged painting compositions, comprising of figures from the photographic sources, color fields, and the overgrowth of plants in urban spaces, the works speculate about the convergence of figuration and abstraction. Centered in these works are Black family, friends, and acquaintances in positions of repose, a difficult position—some might say impossible—within the systemic structures of racialized societal “grids.” For instance, in the 48 x 60-inch painting *Grace*, Galmon’s centralized figure—his friend—appears in interior and exterior spaces, engaging interiority both disclosed and closed off from viewers. Her environment and the vertical lines breaking up the space allude to the tension between revelation and obfuscation, figuration and abstraction, interiority and racialized expectations. In *Lil and Lorenzo*, 2020, the first work from this series, Galmon’s younger brothers sit atop a roof, bare feet dangling down over the ledge in a carefree way, while their intense gazes meet the viewers’. Their legs seem to entangle with the vertical structure of the grid and yet neither the figures nor the abstraction is subsumed by the other. What if, as Galmon asks in such portraits of Black subjects, urban spaces acknowledged their boundedness through the grid *and* undermined it? And what if the affective residue of Galmon’s everyday surroundings had the power to render this tension palpable in abstract color planes, combined with an gridded urban environment, punctured by environmental growth and Black kinship?

Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez also creates portraits, deconstructing religious expectations in her series “Subseven,” which allude to a resistance to intersecting cultural expectations. The artist’s self-portraits involve a processual sequence of translations across materials, time, and space. Staging cell phone images of the woods of East Rock, New Haven alongside mirrors, reflective spaces, and pivotal moments from her past in works such as

*Freedom Had A Bitter Taste*, *Atonement*, and *Waiting For A Sealed Fate*, Gonzalez Hernandez etches the source images into the grain of birchwood. Using the mediation of coding in Photoshop, VCarve, and LinuxCNC, the translations become degraded across the wooden surface, exacerbated by variations in ink impressions in the shallow and deep cuts when printed on Masa paper. Another critical image is *Mi Hermosa Princesa II (My Pretty Princess II)*, which pictures the artist’s great aunt and mother holding up a dress Gonzalez Hernandez wore when she was sixteen. What might be seen at first as a coming-of-age moment, was also the moment that Gonzalez Hernandez recalls making the decision to leave Pentecostalism. As the first work in the series, it informs the path of becoming a distinct and new person. This print series renders, in part, the experience of leaving an intentional community, also called a cult, and the aftermath of deconstructing one’s identity while simultaneously reconstructing a material language of self-determination.

Referencing personal photographs and footage in her new installation *Structures of Identity*, Allison Minto delves into the many past, present, future, and unrealized layers of selfhood. Her experimental video and designed uniform, made in collaboration with designer Dwayne Moore of Neville Wisdom Fashion Design Studio, reference a speculative relationship to Historically Black Universities and Colleges (HBCUs). Examining her familial archive of photographs and footage caused Minto to question her knowledge of HBCUs, institutions which offered higher education to African Americans in the United States prior to the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which she herself did not attend. These institutions ensured that Black excellence flourished despite discriminatory legislation. Minto recalled learning that alumni of the hallowed institutions articulated that HBCUs shaped formations of Blackness in their lives. Minto illuminates such perspectives through her own experiences outside of HBCUs in her experimental video. She films semblances of HBCU pride, such as color guard and marching band—featuring the New Haven James Hillhouse High School rehearsals—and found footage, photos, and her sister Diana’s recreated color guard uniform. These joyous glimpses or perhaps surrogates of HBCUs, contrast with those of an elegiac tone in her footage of the intersection of New Haven’s I-95 and I-91 highways—the site of what would have been the United States’

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9 Galmon began this series in 2020 and has continued to innovate within it throughout the 2021–2022 residency.

first HBCU, proposed at the 1831 First Annual Convention of the Free People of Color in Philadelphia. That same year, white property owners put pressure on the city of New Haven, which eventually voted against the college's existence. These spaces lament the future conditional "what if" And finally, Minto's video tracks her performance walking through Yale University's campus, as an embodiment of what structures of identity Minto could have known through the intellectual and communal kinships forged at an HBCU if she had attended one.

Just as Allison Minto references a personal archive that extends outwards to larger collective understandings of selfhood, so Joseph Smolinski's practice exhibits material intricacies—whether 3D-printed, found, or meticulously drawn—that unveil personal and expanded human interventions on and alongside the planet. In works such as *Climate Repository*, Smolinski cites the 16th-century "Wunderkammer," literally meaning "wonder chamber" in German, but undermines its historically limited access solely for elites and exoticized collection of rare objects. The artist renders the design of the structure open as shelving instead of closed as a cabinet, gesturing towards open access and democratic viewership. He also exhibits 3D-scanned and 3D-printed melting snow piles, a broken rear-view mirror left on the road, and laser-etched acrylic sheets bearing images of breaking sea ice. These commonplace objects—found and created—register the human impact on the environment throughout time. Alongside *Climate Repository*, mosaics *Mourning Sun* and *Hurricane* made from sea coal compose an illuminating sunset and aerial image of a tropical storm, glistening variably in their hard and soft textures, but also haunting viewers through their direct link to radical weather and planetary warming. Importantly, Smolinski does not merely critique the myriad detrimental anthropogenic effects; instead, he acknowledges that humans have had varying levels of impact upon the planet, even at times working *with* it. *Currency* embodies this precarious balance between the extractive and sustainable. The 3D-printed PLA scans of archaeological tools used by the first humans connect how hunting practices were once sustainable, measured by closer ties to the systems of nature, as opposed to massive corporations such as Walmart, whose sunny logo the sculpture resembles. While imperfect, the practices of early humans guided communities how to work *with* rather than *from* natural environments and offer a way forward for contemporary people.

Together these artists access religious, familial, racial, technological, and scientific research. And yet, this is not the end of that process for Rooney, Gonzalez Hernandez, Galmon, Minto, and Smolinski. Rather, they examine how this research tells *embedded* stories, stories that are enfolded into matrices, that are put into contemporary cultural resting places—to return to the etymology of the word. This space of dreaming at the foot of the page, in a fleeting conversation, or shared among kin, is, as Russell might say, the crux of our potential.



**Plate 7.** Installation view, *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, April 30–June 25, 2022, Artspace New Haven, CT.





**Plate 8.** Leonard Galmon, *Grandma Pat (Climbing #3)*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist.

# Growth as a subversion of power

Leonard Galmon  
with Camille Bacon

**Camille Bacon (CB):** I would like to start by asking how you're doing today and how you're feeling. The knee-jerk reaction is to say, "I'm good," but take a second to think about it.

**Leonard Galmon (LG):** [Pause] Umm, I think I am good.

[Laughter from both]

**LG:** I think the work is coming and I'm always in a good mood when the work is going well.

**CB:** I'm happy to hear it; it's a fortuitous time to have this conversation then. Why don't we jump in and talk about the residency? I wonder how it's been like for you?

**LG:** I think I've been nervous. And this past year has been particularly difficult. There's been a lot of loss.

**CB:** Mhhhmhhh.

**LG:** So, I've been asking myself, what do I need? And it's opened up this space for me to work in ways where I feel I have more control. Because there's been so much I can't control. I use grids "in part" because they're manageable. And serene.

**CB:** Does faith play a role in your work? Because I feel like there's shame or something that's implied by this desire for control in the studio. Does faith allow you to experiment and play, or does it work in the opposite way and causes you to need to feel that control?

**LG:** I think the opposite way. Yes, there's definitely shame, because control can be restrictive to growth. But I think of faith as requiring work against all forms of doubt. Like, you need to feel like you might be wrong.

**CB:** Mhmm.

**LG:** And it's ongoing. Most of the time I'm full of doubt about how I'm going about things, but I just try to get paintings made.

**CB:** Absolutely.

**LG:** I feel like I find control with some aspects like the grid. But then the act of painting is a fight. It's trial and error, trying different things. And it takes me a while sometimes to appreciate how I did.

**CB:** As long as you get back in the studio, you'll win the fight. I think it takes a little bit of internal peril to get to that point.

**Let's talk about "Parallel Subversions," an ongoing series that you started in 2020 after you graduated from Yale University. I'm wondering if you can describe how you're melding bodies and landscapes? Then we can address the grid in a more conceptual capacity.**

**LG:** I got you. I started by painting these portraits—of friends, family, and acquaintances—all Black people. Then I would cover parts of the portrait with another painting of plants growing over these man-made structures.

I started to complicate how I laid the plants over the portraits. For a lot of the smaller ones, I'm covering half of the face, and then for the larger ones they get more complicated.

On walks I would take pictures of plants growing over fences and buildings, but I wasn't thinking too deeply about it, just snap, snap. Later, I realized this whole subconscious connection to home and the post-Katrina New Orleans landscape, where you see a lot of dilapidated buildings and empty lots overgrown with plants.

Then at some point I started to see squares and rectangles everywhere. For a good few months that was all I could see. Every door and every piece of furniture, the tables, the chairs, the windows—they were the squares and rectangles everywhere.

**CB: Lines, and straight lines.**

**LG:** Exactly, and it all started to make its way into the work. I feel like it is saying something about power—

**CB: —go there Leonard, go there.**

**LG:** [Laughter] They were so unnatural, harsh, and jetting into things. It's like separating and containing all at the same time. Then it started to move into the work. The plants came from missing home, but I also recognized this kinship when thinking about these lines and boxes and their implications.

**CB: What I'm sensing is that when the grid is showing up in your work, it's referencing these ways we've been trained to understand space like city planning through Cartesian maps and Euclidean geometry. And then, starting to think about the historical context of this post-Katrina moment as you've mentioned: the only way that the foliage can grow in this unbridled way is because of disinvestment from the city, which, of course, is racialized. But because of that disinvestment, the streets are neither being monitored nor manicured in the same way. So, there's a certain joy in observing plants obliterate any sense of order that comes from the grids and the straight lines. The grid in your work then is simultaneously containing the scene and concealing the interiority of the subjects. That's really powerful because it's saying, "Hey, we're**

**allowed to be inscrutable and refuse the ways that we, as Black people, are expected to be legible within all of the systems that are responsible for the ubiquity of straight lines in the first place." Because it's not natural for us, which leads back to how Chanda Prescod-Weinstein says that Black people have an intuition for curves.'**

**LG:** Word, word. So, when thinking about using the grid and plants to obscure parts of the portrait, right, we have to talk about opacity. That was a direct response to noticing how politically charged Black figures are and how people be throwing narratives at these paintings and these people. I was like, "how do I stop this? How do I get them to understand that they don't understand, and they're not meant to?"

**CB: Exactly!**

**LG:** [Laughter] How do I do that? It's hard for me to be coherent about this work because the ideas just tangle together. I'm using a mechanism for understanding and control to stop people from feeling like they understood something—that was the grid. We still use it to say and dictate where things are—to give things a place and draw our borders—it's longitude, latitude. I've been wrestling with trying to use that.

Thinking about New Orleans, we live in the 9th Ward and so much of it is still like 2005. We're now in 2022. That's a lot of years for nothing to have been invested in the area or managed or taken care of. And it's difficult for me because, on the one hand, I'm drawn to the plants; like yeah, you can grow wherever the fuck you want. But on the other hand, we live in a city, and I want my community to be clean and have access to opportunities. We're still part of this human world and society. Like, I need the lines to still be there.

Or do I? That's a question I think about often... I'm not sure if I'm answering your question; but on the one hand, yes, the way the system slash grid looks and sees us, the plants, whatever—we don't want that. They can't see, they can't contain. They don't know, and we don't want them to. There's power in denying that. But it needs the system/grid embedded somehow.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chanda Prescod-Weinstein, *The Disordered Cosmos: A Journey into Dark Matter, Spacetime, & Dreams Deferred* (New York: Bold Type Books, 2021).



**Plate 9.** Leonard Galmon, Lil and Lorenzo (Posted #1), 2020. Oil on canvas, 54 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist.

**CB: And the grid, as it operates according to the tenets of traditional Minimalism, feels like a very similar mechanism, in that we're encouraged to think about formal purity at the expense of personal narratives being woven into the work. But, the grid in your work operates in a way that is much more fascinating to me because it's challenging the constricting forces that assume they know what Blackness is, and therefore assume they know what's happening in the inner crevices of whomever you're painting. So, the grid operates as constriction, but what's being constricted is anti-Blackness, which reminds me of what you said recently about growth as a subversion of power.**

**LG:** That self-actualization is enough to fight for—that you take care of yourself and seek out what you need from the world and your work. It's like taking jabs at the system that doesn't want these things to happen.

**CB: A system that's *predicated* on these things not happening...**

**LG:** You mentioned earlier that Black people have an intuition for curves, and it really got me thinking about these color swirls. I mean, you said a lot of things—

**CB: As per usual!**

**LG:** [Laughter] But it was all good things! The first paintings in this series had swirls of color on top, and they were the only element to break the straight collage line. But I struggled with them compositionally and eventually removed them from the work. But now, I'm like, maybe it's time to return to them, because I think I'm coming up against this wall. Like, I'm craving more disruption. [Laughter]. I don't know.

**CB: Exactly, because I love what you said about how the grid still has to be in the composition because it's not necessarily about this toppling the current order to put Black people on top. It's not this reductive sense of what it means to move forward. Instead, it's understanding that if we're going to find a way out of this, we must alchemize the aesthetic and political meanings that the grid assumes. When you put all of this in a composition together and get them to relate, it forces us then to pick apart that relationship, or what Édouard Glissant calls "the rhizome" and that's the space where that alchemy can happen. And that doesn't happen when you**

take the grid out of it, even though we can start to understand the ways it's been used against us. It has to be there. Your capacity to hold the rhizomatic nature of these ideas is one of the many things that I admire about your work.



**Plate 10.** Leonard Galmon at Artspace New Haven.



**Plate 11.** Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, *Atonement*, 2022. Woodcut on Masa paper, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

# Freedom had a bitter taste

Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez  
with Danni Shen

This interview takes place after an initial conversation with the artist Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez (b. 1998, New Haven) about her current body of work in-progress, “Subseven,” as a 2021–2022 Yale University Art Gallery and Artspace New Haven Happy and Bob Doran Artist in Residence. The series is composed of large-scale, black and white, digitally-engraved, woodcut prints that serve as self-portraits and portals into simultaneously destructive and transformative moments in the artist’s life. The obliteration of a series of original images becomes a central methodology by which she represents past and present versions of herself. The mirror embedded in the natural landscape—for example, atop the winding trunk of a tree—is also a recurring motif that at once reflects and fragments different parts of the body that then seem to re-emerge from this journey through the wilderness, though it is one that isn’t too far from home. In her process, Gonzalez Hernandez takes digital photographs near her home in New Haven, Connecticut in sites of personal and spiritual significance. After further digital deconstruction of these images into linework, the artist translates them into code that is engraved onto by CNC router. Following these multiple layers of manipulation, the machine, via a programmed bit extension, engraves large birchwood panels (a 48 x 36 in. work requires up to eleven hours per panel), from which the artist then creates the final woodcut prints.

This interview, *Freedom had a bitter taste*, delves further into her personal and family religious life. These histories have deeply informed her practice, which navigates cult collectivity and individual choice, obsession and happiness, as well as beliefs around autonomy, identity, God, perfection, trauma, vulnerability, and freedom that coalesce in this new series.

–Danni Shen

**Danni Shen (DS):** You mention that the piece entitled *Mi Hermosa Princesa II (My Pretty Princess II)* is representative of a door or threshold in your life. This photograph of your mother (right) and great aunt (left) holding up your dress from your sweet sixteen celebration documents a pivotal day in terms of a decision you made for yourself as well as relationship decisions with your family. Could you elaborate on this image and its personal history in relation to your work here?

**Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez (RGH):** This cell phone photo turned woodcut is the first in this series. I call this image the door to “Subseven,” because I wore this dress to my sweet sixteen birthday party to mark the decision to leave Pentecostalism. This faith is an evangelical Christian religion, whose rules vary slightly by church, but often can include forbidding alcohol/tobacco, any kind of dancing, and most all music, radio, and television in order to gain favor with God. Additionally, for women, this often includes the forbidding of makeup, cutting hair, leadership positions, and immodest dress (wearing pants). At sixteen, I had dedicated ten years as a member of the church with my family, and we (being my mother, brother, and previously, father) held pretty high positions within that community. As much as I wanted to leave quietly, it wasn’t going to happen. When I began creating these photographs, years after my departure from this faith, it solidified that though I was undoubtedly relying on intuition—inexplicable at times—I was yearning to speak to someone I once was. In a way, trying to work through finding answers to questions I hadn’t completely understood yet.

**DS:** After leaving behind your past circumstances where asking questions was prohibited and your identity was preconstructed and given, you said you were left with a sense of freedom, but one that felt bitter. When the opportunity came to decide



**your own beliefs, you mentioned there came a realization that what had been presented to you as beautiful and docile, was actually violent and destructive in light of your newfound autonomy. This feeling/memory is also encompassed in the piece entitled *Freedom had a bitter taste*, which depicts what looks to be a small enclosure or dead-end surrounded by brick walls and backgrounded by forest. Could you speak to how your relationship to “freedom” has changed since that time and how making art might be a kind of recollection/catharsis of the past, but also a transformation of the present into the future?**

**RGH:** Yes! Holding my own autonomy in my hands, absolutely was the end of an entire life I lived. This realization of destruction sprouted years before I left the church, and slowly built into a full understanding. I knew what true freedom meant in my mind, but I was so engulfed in the flame of Pentecostalism it took time to feel in my chest. Following this intuition, leaving was still bewildering. To put it in perspective, I had to learn how to feel comfortable wearing a t-shirt in public. So, I am speaking to my fourteen-year-old self in *Freedom Had A Bitter Taste*, articulating the illusion that freedom was implanted as: a dead end, as well as the reality of life on the other side of those stone walls. It is definitely a recollection, viewers are both looking at this past self in that mirror, and viewing the present and future as this past self looks in the mirror, in the way they understand. I’m definitely referencing the past, because this is what the world looked like when I left eight years ago. This “outside world” was described as this God-forsaken, desolate, spiritually-empty wilderness. Originally, these images created at East Rock last summer looked so lush, and green, but I chose to translate them into these black and white deteriorating lines because I’m speaking to someone I once was, in the language she understood. This visual language that needed to exist equally needed to be brought through the method of working, and follows the same painful dialogue to physically imitate what it took to get here: cell phone image programmed and translated a few ways into what eventually ends up becoming G-Code computer commands, engraved on wood via a CNC router, and imprinted on paper.

**DS: Can you tell me more about the overarching title of this series “Subseven”?**

**RGH:** Oh gosh! Yes, Subseven means submitted to God; and, in making this work, I chose this title

to center the idea I used to leave the church, to submit literally to God and use their interpretation of biblical truths against them. I literally used their own words against them, because they were not following them. This work is not about the cult I grew up in, but the acknowledgement of a small choice from someone I once was to become who I am now. I am eternally grateful that I submitted to God.

**DS: In your bio you identify as an Indigenous Zapotec artist who creates visual language for “religious exploitation, spiritual salvation, redemption, oppression affecting BIPOC, and more.” I’d love to hear more about your current ideas around your own identity/positionality and relationship to collectivity.**

**RGH:** My identity, surprisingly enough, is still very much found in Christ, this time constructed differently. I inspect each and every thread of my life to ensure it’s mine, and it feels beautiful. Accessibility has become an important value in my life. Much of what I create visual language for comes from not always having the ability to speak accurately on the weight and depth of the subject—on the spot. What’s given me the opportunity to leave a church, is now an avenue I invest in. In relation to collectivity, I am still very vigilant about what I invest my time in. It is very easy for people who have this similar experience to fall back into an obsession of some sort. Keeping this in mind, there is a beauty I have been waiting for all of my life in the community I have now. It is very important to me that I have the support of my community, and that I can, in turn, also provide support to them. My family and the city of New Haven give me so much joy. And I have chosen to spend my artistic practice investing back into soil that’s granted me the respect and dignity to grow.

**DS: You are not only an artist but also a curator and connector. How do these multiple roles inform your work/approach or how you hope to continue working on upcoming/future projects?**

**RGH:** In everything that I do, across my artistic and curatorial practices, the center of it is for people, regardless of their education or experiences engaging with art, to have the ability to enjoy and digest art without feeling like it’s too far away and exclusive to understand. I’m not interested in anything that isn’t aligned with this vision. I used to think there wasn’t an argument to be had, that this wall the art world



**Plate 12.** Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, *Mi Hermosa Princesa II* (detail), 2020. Woodcut on Masa paper, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

tends to build could be attempted to be broken down. I was systematically pushed out of university, and just figured it was my own problem to fill in the gaps to get to the unreachable. And then I started really meeting the community here in New Haven—artists, art-lovers, activists, organizers, educators, students, connectors, and the list goes on—and I was thrilled to change my mind. I never expected to come across hundreds of New Haveners that held an inclined ear towards accessibility in the arts. I've learned so much from New Haven by listening, and I am going to continue to invest back in. I plan to expand an annual international print exchange I run called Lunch Money Print. It exists as a platform to provide well-made and thought-provoking contemporary art that is affordable to everyday people, while also supporting the artists who create it. Artists submit an edition of eleven prints, ten of which get traded with participating artists from around the world, and the eleventh print gets put up for sale. All profits made from sales go back to the artist. I'm expanding this by planning to host community-centered exhibitions, commissioning artists to create installations alongside this work.



**Plate 13.** Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez at MakeHaven



**Plate 14.** Allison Minto, Structures of Identity (still), 2022. Video installation with rayon jersey uniform, designed in collaboration with Dwayne Moore of Neville Wisdom Fashion Design Studio, 9:00 min. Courtesy of the artist.

# Structures of identity

Allison Minto with Jamillah Hinson

With the cultural and artistic importance of archives being examined and re-examined, Allison Minto's growing practice is notable in its layered adherence to and disruption of archival and storytelling traditions.

Recently, Allison shared *Structures of Identity*, a work in progress that depicts black and white footage of teenage band members performing throughout New Haven. This short film delves into an archive—visually presenting its disruption—which threads itself through much of Minto's practice. By implementing the imagery of young band members playing on sites that could have been, or photographs heavy with symbolism and identity, Minto uses fragments to create spaces in archives where questions should be asked; and, depending on who is responding, the most desired answers are given.

—Jamillah Hinson

**Jamillah Hinson (JH): Allison, your work is so layered, both in terms of visual and narrative elements, can you tell me about your practice and how you came to this method of storytelling?**

**Allison Minto (AM):** The ideas in my images illuminate a historical consciousness that oscillates among personal past, present, and future narratives. My work uses field research and photography to address themes around African American archives, family, history, memory, preservation, and maintenance. My method begins with a journey of speculation about my family history. I'm paying attention to what's left and how I respond to what's in front of me. I delve into the details of the objects, landscape, domestic interior spaces, and images, extracting elements that serve as sources of inspiration for the work. I find myself asking lots of questions such as, what happens to a community when traditional historical records render them invisible? How does violence operate inside the matrix of care? What does it mean to be resurrected in an image and the whitewashing of it? The archive is complicated. It's not neutral. Truth and fact are not one in the same. And therefore, my work reflects my interest in filling in these gaps and wondering how I fit within these spaces.

**Jamillah Hinson (JH): Thank you so much for sharing the video, *Structures of Identity*. It was so interesting to watch because it made me wonder how you go about storytelling. I know it's still in progress, but there are multiple intricate processes being told through building blocks that get those ideas and emotions across in an accessible way for audiences to grasp what you are relaying. It seems incredibly layered.**

**Allison Minto (AM):** Thank you for saying that. This is something really new for me. My background is in journalism, media production, and television. Photography has been the medium of storytelling for me for a long time; and, after graduating, I really wanted to do something different. Video felt right for this particular short film. Because of my background, I am used to thinking about the ways in which a story should be told, and I wanted to pull back those layers to think—what if I told the story without sound? Or, what if I told the story without color? So, I am kind of experimenting. Coming across this history of the first HBCU [Historically Black College and University]—the first Black college that would have been—was new for me. It was historically hidden but was always out there; and right now it's coming to light again. I was taken aback because I'm living in this town and I don't have family that have gone to HBCUs. I hadn't heard that much about them until maybe after college. It wasn't a part of my life. My father was always like "go to work and go to school." There wasn't time to think about anything else. But I wondered, because of being mixed race, what that would've meant. The fantasy of the HBCU is this Black mecca—all people are Black, and they look like you, and it's a place of pride. Going to Yale University for graduate school, it was the opposite. So, I was mourning something I never had. Does that make sense?

**JH: Absolutely.**

**AM:** As someone who is thinking about structures of identity and how they are deconstructed, I wanted to play with this missed opportunity—what if, I had known? That's the space that I was working within. It's definitely layered; but the more that I make edits and record more video, it's becoming less about the history of the HBCU and more about the personal missed connection. It's forcing me to dig deeper in myself—why am I so drawn to this history? How do the personal and official histories intertwine with identity and the need for HBCUs? How do these spaces construct identity and then how did I construct my idea of Blackness, or confront a perception of what Blackness is?

**JH: For this being a new experiment, I think you convey so much so well. You're an incredible storyteller.**

**AM:** Wow, no one's ever said that—you made a girl feel good!

**JH: Having come into your work without a lot of background, there were many stories that related to a larger conception of what being Black in the U.S. can look like for multiple people in different ways. The story is not linear; but it's happening, and it makes sense.**

**AM:** Yeah, because it's the way I think about HBCUs. For example, in the work, I went to work with local marching bands in New Haven and I really wanted to combine storytelling in my art practice and with the community. That's really essential and important to me. The students were there, and they were not necessarily learning a song, but instead learning scales. And I feel like that's symbolic to me as I construct myself. They are building to a performance, to a big thing. Sometimes you can get there and sometimes you don't. I mention this because when I tell someone I am researching HBCUs, they think about the colors and this and that, but I am going in the totally opposite direction. I am trying not to be literal. I'm thinking about adding my sister's voice into it and adding a conversation with her about Blackness and identity. The way I describe myself is different from the way she describes herself and her experiences. She's a doctor and one that sought to recruit Black students because we deserve to get medicine too. Thinking about that story and the need for these institutions spoke volumes to me.

**JH: I really appreciate you mentioning that when people think of HBCUs they think of the colors and the marching bands and that noise. And, I mean "noise" as in what is being put forth outwardly. What I see is you distilling down the culture to present it in a very vulnerable and raw way.**

**AM:** I think that's a great way of saying it. There are other elements to it as well. It comes back to my sister, right, Diana. She's the woman in the photograph. And I have idolized my big sister because she was the only representation of Blackness for me. I grew up in Long Island in the '90s and it was very white—not what it is today. She was my HBCU in a way. Part of me feels guilty for not knowing the Blackness that others do. But of course, Blackness is not a monolith; but then again, sometimes we treat it like that. There's a knowing that we share. But there's a lot that I didn't know. Sometimes, it's Black people who say you aren't "Black enough." But I'm a late bloomer and I wanted to tap into that. So, when you see Diana in the photograph with the color guard outfit, I'm working with a local designer



**Plates 15-16.** Allison Minto, *Structures of Identity* (still), 2022. Video installation with rayon jersey uniform, designed in collaboration with Dwayne Moore of Neville Wisdom Fashion Design Studio, 9:00 min. Courtesy of the artist.



to recreate that outfit as part of an installation with the video. I want to record myself putting on the outfit and thinking about embodying how I feel about myself. I'm looking for a way to put myself in the film.

**JH: Is this work exploring your own Blackness, or finding that “for the culture” Blackness, or a little of both?**

**AM:** Things are revealing themselves to me as I am making them. I don't have a fully-resolved answer, but I'm exploring what Blackness means to me. Maybe going against what the culture thinks I should be, or what it should look like, or mean. This might not have ever happened if I didn't go to Yale and have this experience. Then learning about this attempt to build an HBCU and the quick shut down, that was something intriguing. And I've always found myself in the space in-between.

**JH: That's really interesting about this space in-between. And this is important work because there are still people who have rigid lines about Black American identity—what it is, what it can be, and what it should be. So, I feel like today, even with all of these generations of weirdos that we have, there is multiplicity amongst ourselves—both in personality/interests and phenotype, which is usually centered so much. So, I'm very happy that you're doing this.**

**AM:** Thank you. Like I said, it's really new for me. Working with the archive is something I am always pulled to. I am seeing it everywhere and that's really great. No matter what I make, I want to pull that into it. It will always find a way into it.

**JH: I remember reading your artist statement—and there was something that reminded me of Saidiya Hartman immediately from her *Venus in Two Acts* (2008) text—you said that you were looking at the gaps in the archive. I think people understand that there are gaps in the archive, but I don't think that people necessarily understand what that means—all the erasure and violence and what might be stuck in the gaps that never make it out. So, a person's life might be birth, atrocities, and death, which is violent.**

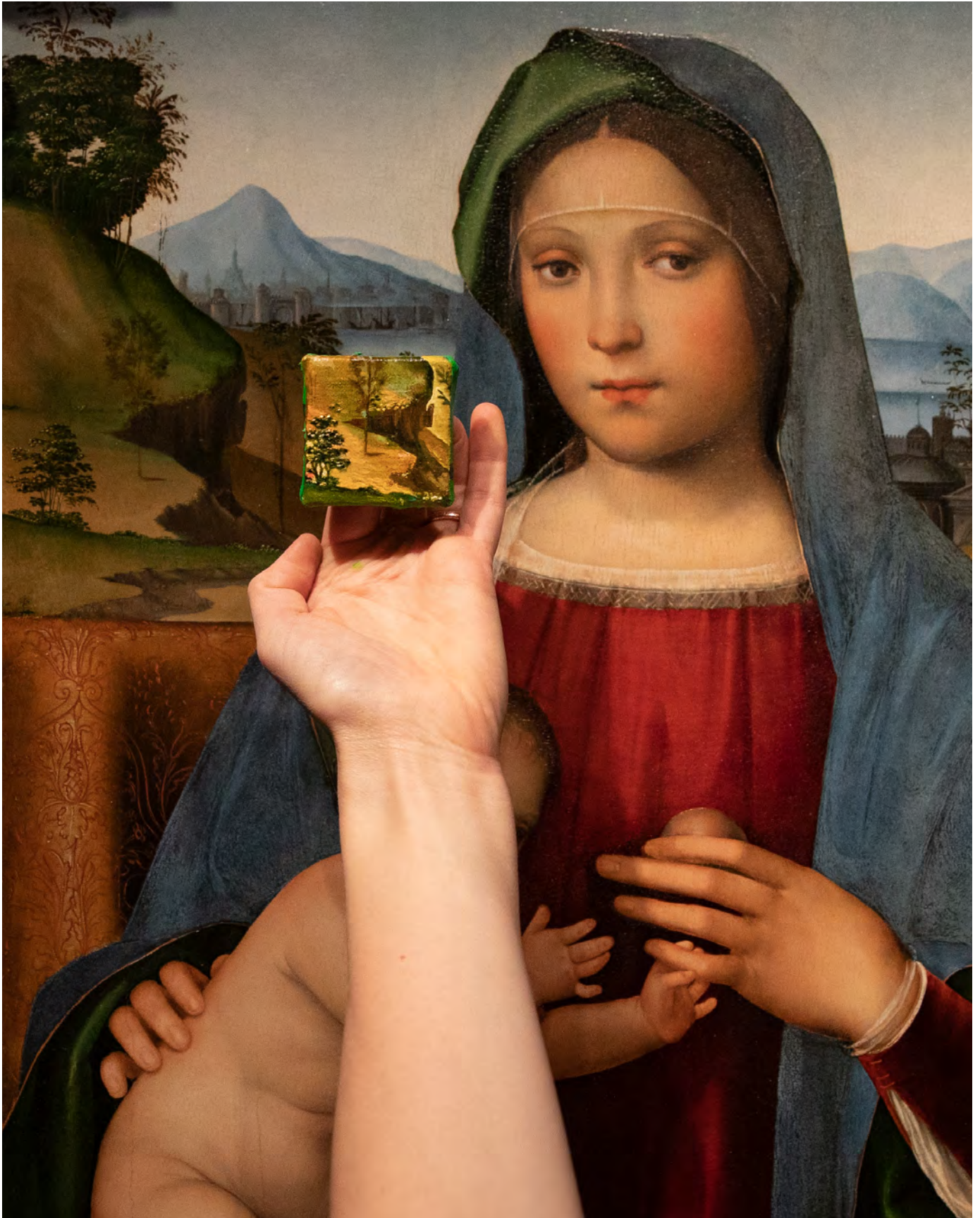
**AM:** I think a lot about the words ruptures and fragments. But it's within these cracks that we find imagination. It's not necessarily about putting things together for something whole, but it's within these

ruptures that we find space to move. I think a lot about my grandmother's archive, and not having days or names, with things ripped up, and wondering what I could do with it all. But I realized it is such a wealth of material to move backwards and forwards within.

**JH: I love this idea of disrupting the archive. I appreciate the way you're talking about gaps and humanity in allowing imagination into the archive. It lets people for whom the archive is violent see that there is humanity within it.**



**Plate 17.** Allison Minto with Dwayne Moore of Neville Wisdom Fashion Design Studio.



**Plate 18.** Julia Rooney at the Yale University Art Gallery.

# Inhabiting an out-of-scale world

Julia Rooney with Filippo Lorenzin

Julia Rooney's works remind us that our current world is not designed on a human scale. The electronic devices that are perpetually in front of our eyes are created by companies in order to make us think about them as extension of our limbs. If, in the past, digital technology occupied a specific space in people's homes and offices, requiring waiting times to access it, in the last fifteen years it has become increasingly normal to consider the screen of tablets and smartphones as windows to the online world, always wide open and available to the user. Julia Rooney explores the problems and possibilities offered by this dynamic with a coherent and informed approach to the history of art. Her installations and paintings belong to a tradition of artistic creations aimed at making the public conscious of their scale, of the weight of their presence in an environment. The experience of enjoying most of Rooney's works feels close to entering a big cave or a very small room by yourself, when the environment makes you self-aware of scales that don't follow your body measurements.

Perception and translation of scales are two central aspects in *Greenscreen*, *Scrollscape*, and *Text Box*, works that Rooney created for this exhibition and which exemplify her pictorial practice. Referring to the history of art and the addictive relationship between our bodies and our electronic devices, Rooney suggests an oblique approach to the creation of works of art in the age of social media and new technologies.

—Filippo Lorenzin

**Filippo Lorenzin (FL): It seems to me that before discussing your practice we must address your cultural background. When and why did you start painting?**

**Julia Rooney (JR):** Around 1999, I was leafing through an art book and came across a Janet Fish painting, *Stack of Plates*—a luminous, photorealistic still-life of clear glass. I was shocked it was a painting. The paradox of an opaque material (oil paint) being used to render a clear material (glass) was magical to me as a young person. A few years later when I saw her paintings in-person, I remember being even more shocked by what the painting consisted of up-close: an abstraction of wild brushstrokes. The experience of first seeing the small-scale document of this painting printed in a book—a legible image—and then seeing the real life-size reality of the painting—a plane of abstract mark-making—has stuck with me all these years.

**FL: The size of your paintings plays a crucial role in the understanding of the scope of your work. By being very small, some paintings demand the viewer to get closer and engage in an intimate art experience. Can you tell me more about when you started experimenting with scale?**

**JR:** In 2011–12, I made a series of oil paintings on 9 x 13-inch plaster tablets whose imagery was sourced from screenshots. The idea of images being made by a computer, of that computer's screen, has always intrigued me—the machine's solution to making that perfect selfie. When I started using the screenshots

as source material for paintings, it felt important to stay true to their original size (a laptop screen), as though this were their DNA, their essential structure.

Ten years later, I've again turned to a specific scale within my paintings: 6 x 6-feet and 2 x 2-inches. The specificity and severity of these two scales came about during the pandemic, as I became incredibly aware of what it meant to occupy social space—both physically (with regard to the required distance between bodies) and digitally (with regard to our further entrenchment into online space via handheld devices). *@SomeHighTide* was a show I mounted in 2021 consisting entirely of the 2 x 2-inch paintings—a response to Instagram and the way it warps our sense of scale, literally and metaphorically. When viewers saw the paintings on the app, they “fit right in”—but when they visited the exhibition in-person, their scale was startling in relation to the room's architecture, and to their own bodies.

The 2 x 2-inch paintings in *Footnotes and other embedded stories* function in a similar way, but their source imagery is more defined: they are 2-inch “excerpts” of green spaces within historical paintings from the Yale University Art Gallery, which I photographed when the galleries reopened in spring 2022. By installing them beside my 6-foot *Greenscreen* painting, I am riffing on the Renaissance notion of paintings being a window into another world. This is the same function a green screen serves in contemporary video and photo-editing: it can be replaced by any backdrop/landscape in post production. The ancient technology of painting engages the same idea.

**FL: It's interesting that you are exploring the cultural and physical effects of living in a media-scape saturated by electronic screens and digital devices through one, if not the oldest, art practice. Let me get this straight: do you feel that painting as a technique can still be used to offer interesting perspectives on our perception of the world in 2022?**

**JR:** I think painting is one of the last means possible! As surveillance technology has become increasingly more precise and pervasive, I think there's an inclination to believe that these modes offer us “truer,” or at least more accurate, representations of our world and ourselves than ever before. But paintings are not true or false—they offer another, less binary proposition.

The last part of your question includes the important word, “perception,” which I think relates to this notion of accuracy. Paintings do not depict the world, but they do depict perceptions of the world. They are one of the most direct manifestations of *how someone sees*—where the act of seeing is not just an optical experience that the eyes perform, but rather an embodied one involving emotions and full-body physical sensations as well.

**FL: Relatedly, *Greenscreen* and *Scrollscape* both involve the public interacting in a physical way. In the first case, viewers move around the painting and experience it from multiple sides, while in the second their presence activates and shapes the positions of the scrolls, as with Alexander Calder's mobiles. Could you tell me more about the role played by interactivity in your practice? How do you envision the presence of the viewer when producing a new work?**

**JR:** One of the most troubling aspects of Meta platforms such as Instagram is their purported interactivity through actions such as “Liking” or “Sharing,” even though in reality “Liking” something has become a near-automatic reflex while scrolling. It's an easy way to acknowledge you saw and affirm someone's post, without really engaging in any consequential way. I made *Greenscreen* and *Scrollscape* reflecting on the nature of interactivity in the space of social media—the way users toggle between passive and active conditions, between seeing and being seen. With *Scrollscape* in particular, I considered not only the people experiencing the piece from within the gallery, but also those seeing it from the street, behind glass, where there was always a layer of remove from the texture of the work and one's influence over its movement. With *Greenscreen*, I've designed a workshop in which participants actually use the painting as a green screen—photographing themselves in front of it and then replacing it with a backdrop of their choosing, imagining themselves in another space. What's important to me is not that viewers change or touch the work, but rather that the work activates a greater awareness of their own bodies in a place, and what effect (if any) that has.

**FL: This seems related to your interest in scale and its effect on the experience of art, which also seems to be informed by a certain fascination for architecture, for artificial environments conceived with the goal of making those who inhabit/use them more or less comfortable. Am I correct?**



**Plates 20–21.** Julia Rooney, *Greenscreen*, 2022. Painting installation: oil, acrylic and house paint on canvas, scrim, mirrored plexiglass, and twine, mounted on found cast-iron legs, 72 in x 99 in.

*after Haarlem School (artist unknown), Top*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Haarlem School (artist unknown), Bottom*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Master of the Osservanza*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Francesco Francia*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Kay Sage*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Edward Hopper*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

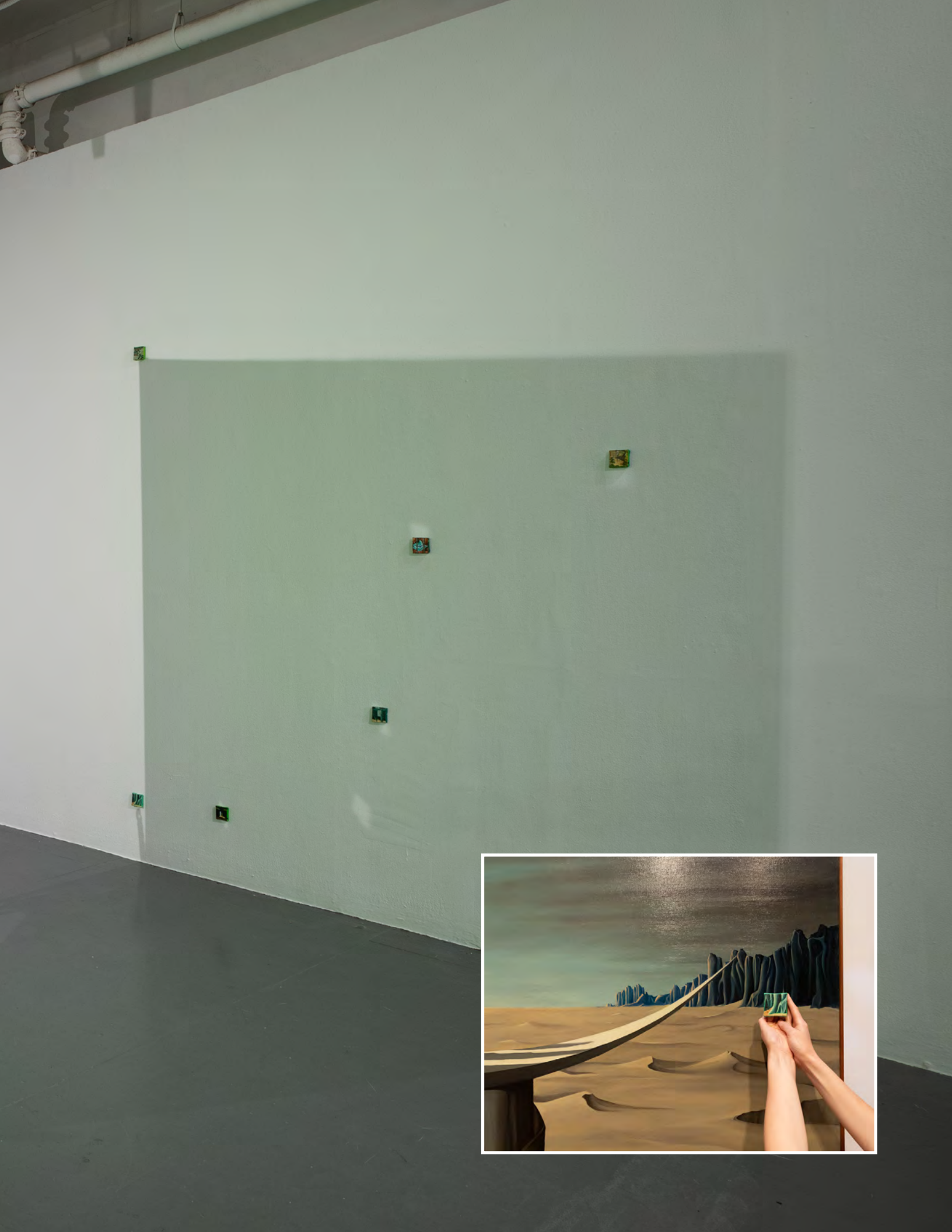
*after Horace Pippin*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Georgia O’Keeffe*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Martin Wong*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

Courtesy of the artist. Installation view, *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, April 30–June 25, 2022, Artspace New Haven, CT.







**JR:** Yes, absolutely. I grew up in a small apartment, where there was never enough space and too much stuff. My mother developed inventive ways to create more space, like freestanding lofts to store things, as well as bookshelves and screens to subdivide the apartment. Somehow this maze-like furniture arrangement made the apartment feel bigger because there were many types of space that had the potential to change—unlike built walls, which remain fixed. So, I experienced architecture as both a constraint and a site of possibility. I've taken this philosophy to heart when making installations. I like working in spaces that have idiosyncrasies with which the artwork has to contend. Nowadays, this applies not only to physical architecture but also digital architecture, since so much work is experienced through the prescribed dimensions of a phone or a computer screen. It's a productive challenge to think about how work does (or does not) translate across these different architectures.

**FL:** **On the note of architecture, you've installed *Text Box* as seating within the installation of *Scrollscape*. But *Text Box* also explores language—how words stop being a means of communication and rather become key-words and buzz-generating terms. What led you to make this work?**

**JR:** During my research this year, I read several primary sources, including the transcript of Mark Zuckerberg testifying before the U.S. Senate in 2018. I'd been thinking a lot about how Instagram's algorithms organize the user's feed to control what they see, when they see it and how often. Its addictive force comes not only from the content it feeds users, but the way it delivers that content—timing, context, order. I began thinking about performing this "algorithmic" action on the words of Mark Zuckerberg, wanting to analyze the text in a way that remained faithful to his words, but reordered them to create new meaning. So, I produced two transcripts from the recording—one of Zuckerberg, one of the Senate—and then ran a macro on each text, reorganizing the words according to their frequency. I hand-wrote every word uttered by the Senators in one column, and typed every word uttered by Zuckerberg in another column, using my hand or a computer to distinguish the speakers from each other.

As I wrote out these thousands of words, I was quickly overcome by the futility of the task. I expected that no one would read it, but instead see it, like a visual pattern. It began looking like

computer code to me. I didn't want it to command viewers' attention, but rather function as a kind of backdrop or substructure, akin to the room's architecture: something you don't necessarily acknowledge yet dictates how you experience and behave in a space. I integrated the text into seating, seeing it as both a literal support for someone to sit on, but also a more symbolic one—the language underlying the way our digital space is constructed.



**Plate 22.** Julia Rooney, *Scrollscape*, 2022. Installation with hand-cast paper, mounted on enamel-painted wood and plexi-dowels, with twine, 18 x 64 in. each. Courtesy of the artist.



**Plate 23.** Joseph Smolinski, *River Cairn*, 2022. Watercolor, ink, colored pencil, and graphite on paper, 54 x 42 in. Courtesy of the artist.

# Underneath our feet

Joseph Smolinski  
with Laurel V. McLaughlin

On my way back from New Haven, Connecticut to Portland, Oregon in LaGuardia Airport, I felt a craggy and hard object in my coat pocket and remembered the sea coal from the shore. Strangely enough, I was headed to the opposite coast—to a formerly-industrial town—which benefited from and bore the environmental impact of that particular energy source. Just the day before, on an unusually sunny day in mid-February—indicative of the environmental conversation to come—artist Joseph Smolinski and I took a walk down Sandy Point Beach & Bird Sanctuary in New Haven. We gleaned the sand for sea coal, the petrified form of once-living material (I learned), carved out of the earth, shipped on boats, and eventually burned for fuel throughout compounded global industrial revolutions. As Joseph and I would discuss, the material lies quietly beneath our feet. But it wended its way into his multidisciplinary practice and current works in progress in his Yale University Art Gallery and Artspace New Haven 2021–2022 *Happy and Bob* Doran Connecticut Residency, soon to be exhibited in *Footnotes and other embedded stories* at Artspace. The conversation that follows speculates upon layers of intervention, acknowledging the historical proclivity to extract, while also carefully sifting through the sedimented human collaborations with the landscape.

–Laurel V. McLaughlin

**Joseph Smolinski (JS):** On any given day you can see ships from all over the world coming through here [the New Haven Harbor]. It's historic—the British landed right over there. It's a repository of history.

**Laurel V. McLaughlin (LVM):** And this is where you collect the sea coal for *Mourning Sun and Hurricane*, both 2022?

**JS:** This isn't where I get the majority of the coal, but it definitely has some. In the 1800s, they were shipping coal from everywhere to New Haven after the rise of the Industrial Revolution.

This site is a borderland between the natural and the manufactured. For instance, the water treatment plant is over that way, the city over there, the oil terminal is there, and we are here in a bird sanctuary. But the tides are always changing.

**LVM:** Could you describe the works *Mourning Sun and Hurricane*, and how you're using the coal?

**JS:** They are mosaics made from pieces of coal I find washed ashore on Connecticut Beaches. The image is of the setting sun over the Long Island sound as a black monochrome...

There's a piece of coal. See, it's lighter than most of the stones around. Some have a brittle quality that means it's younger, but this one is hard, with a more glass-like or pearlescent quality to it through oxidation. This coal was probably mined in West Virginia or Pennsylvania and came on a barge from somewhere. But before that it could have been peat moss on the bottom of a bog that turned into coal

over millions of years.

At first, the project began with coming to the beach with my family and finding these black stones. I wondered what it was, and what I could do with it. It's now taken off with these mosaic projects, and it seems to fit with the language of images I have been developing, because it brings the cycle back to its original source and the object has its own meaning and value.

My practice mostly comes out of drawing, where there's always the blank page to face. I like the idea of working with materials that have a history to them—they have this embedded meaning that you don't need to be responsible for all the time. This coal speaks for itself.

**LVM: It seems even the found materiality incorporates itself into the drawing and 2D works, such as the watercolor, *River Cairn*, 2022, of a trash cairn in a river. I was struck immediately by the sculptural quality of the cairn and the details such as the Dunkin' Donuts cups that litter the foreground.**

**JS:** Yeah, exactly. That started as a video project called *Downstream*, 2016 about the riverways that converge in Middletown, CT. I paddled the rivers in a kayak and collected footage and objects along the way. The rivers in New England were industrialized—the towns were built with the rivers to their backs because they were the sewers for the city. They were also power sources for mills on the rivers that were channeled and reverted for energy. They are fascinating hidden landscapes that, in a town like Middletown, you don't see. So, that manifested in the watercolor painting.

**LVM: That reminds me of the various timescales in your work. In your contemporary curio cabinet, *Climate Repository*, for instance, the found and sculpted objects retain temporalities in their materiality and also their multiple uses within the world. What other objects will you include?**

**JS:** I've been making a collection of small drawings and laser-etched acrylic pieces, and casts from parts of cars. I've collected nameplate emblems for cars that have names taken from national parks like Denali, Acadia, and Tahoe. There's a relevance to the marketing and how they're geared towards petro-masculinity and powerful trucks dominating the landscape...*this* piece is good.

**LVM: Oh, more sea coal.**

**JS:** This is older because of the density. It's been compressed over time; perhaps it's on its way to becoming a diamond. It could also be jet stone, which is another step in the carbon cycle. In the Victorian era, if someone died—or rather if the wealthy died—they would sculpt jetstone to re-create pieces of jewelry from the family collection as mourning jewelry to remember the dead.

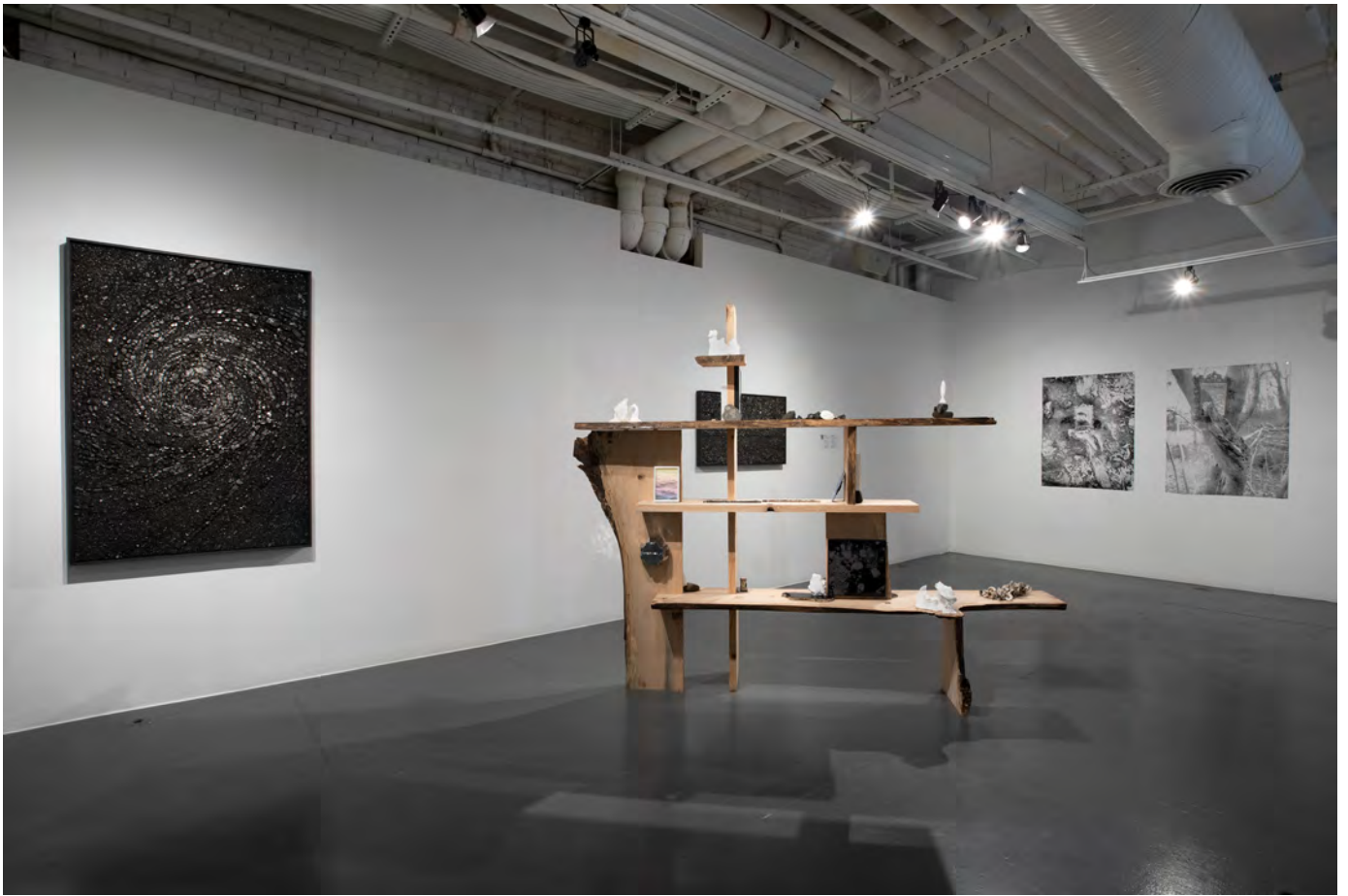
**LVM: I had no idea. And, to be honest, I didn't realize that this material progressed to a diamond form.**

**JS:** Well, the diamonds we know are far older than coal, and could even be from outer space, but it's carbon and that's the basis of a diamond. With time and under pressure, it changes its composition. And the jet stone from the Victorian era in England was from Whitby (eastern shore), found on the beaches there. In the Americas, many Native American tribes would carve it into figurines. So, it's long had this ceremonial quality to it. If you feel it, it's warm to the touch as opposed to a stone that is cold. It has different thermodynamics, and that's how you can identify it. All of this lies underneath our feet. The moving tides and time bury it all in the strata. There are ways to embed this idea of time into the work—to go back to your question—and I'm interested in how to do that. The coal, of course, was once living.

**LVM: Yes, there seems to also be a temporal contrast with the technology you use, for instance with the early tools in *Currency*, 2022.**

**JS:** The stone hand axes, from all around the world that I 3D-print in the work, are from early homo sapien or pre homo sapien societies. They're beautiful forms, pod-like, and fit perfectly in your hand, but they had a purpose for early humans because they were scavengers. After large beasts would kill their prey, these beings would claim the remaining carcass and flay it or split open bones for cartilage—and that single technology was part of the shift from a scavenger society to one of hunting and farming. And that led to a major transformation of the landscape. The stone axes are a kind of point of origin in that way. And they are also universal across multiple societies and the world at large.

**LVM: They embody that moment of intervention. And then, to return to the curio cabinet, it suggests a multi-temporality. The structure of the curio**



**Plate 24.** Installation view, *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, April 30–June 25, 2022, Artspace New Haven, CT.

**cabinet reflects that, from its wooden materiality to its irregular and organic shape—could you talk more about that?**

**JS:** At first, I was going to really try and mimic gilded Victorian cases, but the more I thought about it, I wanted to make the curio cabinet out of something significant. I started looking for wood that had a resonant history and I came across the organization City Bench. It's a sawmill that culls trees from urban areas. So, I asked if they had any storm-damaged trees, and they said, "Well, we have the famous Lincoln Oak that fell during Hurricane Sandy on the New Haven Green; and, in doing so, uprooted many unknown human remains."

It is interesting to think that the Lincoln Oak was commemorated in 1909 after the headstones had been removed from the New Haven Green. This act of erasing history and deliberately changing the meaning of a landscape is very colonial practice. There are actually several other Lincoln Oaks throughout the country some of which were grown from acorns found on Lincoln's birthplace in Central Kentucky. It raises all of these questions about invasive species, colonialism, and globalization. The landscape that we see is actually not "natural." It's had multiple compounded interventions. But of course, even before it was colonized, these lands were constructed in different ways too. Native American tribes would cultivate certain forests to attract deer and game, which proved to alter things over time as well.

**LVM:** This is something I appreciate about your work. Of course, I value the criticality that many artists foreground when considering the massive and often devastating impact of human extractivism upon the planet. But you are, firstly, expanding what "impact" means to consider the other ways in which interventions have functioned—because many are nuanced. And secondly, you do not claim that such interventions are new. There is a problem, in my opinion, with an immediate jump to the language of crisis, that somehow disregards the various steps in time that created our current situation. It casts a certain inescapable and somehow irresponsible hopelessness. Your work instead highlights the increments that build upon one another to get us to this place, and also acknowledges useful practices. Such as the Indigenous tribes that created strategies of working *with* the land, rather than stripping it.

**JS:** Right. I think there is definitely "climate change exhaustion." But, can we recognize that there is something innately inside of us that wants to alter the landscape? And then ask, why do we hold the preciousness of "bringing a landscape back to its original state?" Is that original state even possible because it's constantly changing? Instead, can we cultivate a way in which the environment can function sustainably? In a way, it's like curating, right?

**LVM:** It seems like a lot more responsibility when curating the earth! But yes, it is akin to curating in my mind because curating is a form of care.

**As we're talking about these kinds of research questions, I'm curious if, over the course of making these news works in the residency, processes changed for you?**

**JS:** I think the exhibition is a chance to bring my research and studies into realization. I think you saw the smaller works for the curio cabinet in my studio and they've been there for years. Oh, look, land art.

[At this point, Joseph and I stopped to look at a spiral shape traced in the sand out of which a large wooden stick curved upwards from the beach to the sky. It reminded us of artists such as Nancy Holt and Robert Smithson who consciously use the land as a medium, considering the multiple meanings of site and the framing of the landscape. This work, by an unknown artist, was situated at the center of a peninsula-like form, and the wind picked up, transforming my audio recording into white noise. I remember Joseph talking about the inclination in places such as these, to consider the depth and layered quality of history. In such settings, he recalled, many people feel inclined to create, regardless of their artistic professionalization. I agreed, remembering the times I'd traced markings on the opposite coast. Then we walked back, across the hidden sea coal.]



**Plate 25.** Joseph Smolinski (right) and assistant Sean Powers (left) in the artist's studio.





**Plate 26.** Installation view, *Footnotes and other embedded stories*, April 30–June 25, 2022, Artspace New Haven, CT.

# Exhibition checklist

## Leonard Galmon

Leonard Galmon, *Lil and Lorenzo (Posted #1)*, 2020. Oil on canvas, 54 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Leonard Galmon, *Lauryn (Screening #3)*, 2020. Oil on canvas, 20 x 26 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Leonard Galmon, *Jess (Climbing #2)*, 2020–2021. Oil on canvas, 28 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Leonard Galmon, *Grandma Pat (Climbing #3)*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Leonard Galmon, *Uncle Fred (Breaking Ground #5)*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Leonard Galmon, *Grace*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Leonard Galmon, *Rocky (Posted #3)*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 60 x 60 in. Courtesy of the artist.

## Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez

Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, *Freedom Had A Bitter Taste*, 2022. Woodcut on Masa paper, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, *Atonement*, 2022. Woodcut on Masa paper, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, *Waiting For A Sealed Fate*, 2022. Woodcut on Masa paper, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, *A Myth In My Heart, A Stake In Your Hand*, 2021. Woodcut on Masa paper, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, *Risen From The Grave II*, 2022. Woodcut on Masa paper, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez, *Mi Hermosa Princesca II (My Pretty Princess II)*, 2020. Woodcut on Masa paper, 48 x 36 in. Courtesy of the artist.

## Allison Minto

Allison Minto, *Structures of Identity*, 2022. Video installation with rayon jersey uniform, designed in collaboration with Dwayne Moore of Neville Wisdom Fashion Design Studio, 9:00 min. Courtesy of the artist.

## Julia Rooney

Julia Rooney, *Greenscreen*, 2022. Painting installation: oil, acrylic and house paint on canvas, scrim, mirrored plexiglass, and twine, mounted on found cast-iron legs, 72 x 99 in.

*after Haarlem School (artist unknown)*, Top, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Haarlem School (artist unknown)*, Bottom, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Master of the Osservanza*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Francesco Francia*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Kay Sage*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Edward Hopper*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Horace Pippin*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Georgia O'Keeffe*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

*after Martin Wong*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 2 x 2 in.

Courtesy of the artist.

Julia Rooney, *Hearing before the U.S. Senate Committees on the Judiciary and Commerce, Science, and Transportation*, 2022. Edition of 500, newsprint and ink (stacked), 12 x 12 in. (each). Courtesy of the artist.

Julia Rooney, *Scrollscape*, 2022. Installation with hand-cast paper, mounted on enamel-painted wood and plexi-dowels, with string, 18 x 64 in. (each). Courtesy of the artist.

Julia Rooney, *Text Box (after April 10, 2018 Hearing before the U.S. Senate Committees on the Judiciary and Commerce, Science, and Transportation)*, 2022. Set of 2, hand-constructed MDF boxes, paper, wheatpaste, printed and hand-written text, plexiglass, 16 x 16 x 16 in. (each). Courtesy of the artist.

## Joseph Smolinski

Joseph Smolinski, *Mourning Sun*, 2022. Found sea coal on panel, 41 x 24 3/4 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Joseph Smolinski, *Hurricane*, 2022. Found sea coal on panel, 41 x 61 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Joseph Smolinski, *River Cairn*, 2022. Watercolor, ink, colored pencil, and graphite on paper, 54 x 42 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Joseph Smolinski, *Currency*, 2022. 3D-printed PLA, 30 x 30 in. Courtesy of the artist.

Joseph Smolinski, *Climate Repository*, 2022. Felled Lincoln Oak from the New Haven Green, 3D-printed PLA, found auto parts, fossils, ceramic casts, laser etched acrylic, drawings, and

# Contributors

**Camille Bacon** is a Chicago-based writer and curator who is building a “sweet Black writing life” as informed by the words of poet Nikky Finney and the infinite wisdom of the Black feminist tradition.

**Danni Shen** is an independent curator and writer based in New York. Recent curatorial projects include *Beast*, *Chimera*, *Kin* at the Hessel Museum of Art (2022) and *Collaborative Survival* at 601Artspace (2021). Previous curatorial roles include at The Kitchen (NYC), SPRING/BREAK Art Show NY/LA, and Empty Gallery in Hong Kong. Shen was also Critic-in-Residence at MICA, Curatorial Fellow at Wave Hill, Curator-in-Residence at Residency Unlimited, and Guest Critic at NYU Tisch-ITP. She is a contributor to various publications including *BOMB Magazine*, *Art in America*, *Heichi Magazine*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *Hyperallergic*, *Rhizome*, and *onscreen-today* 介面. Shen is the recipient of the Art Writing Workshop and the Art Critic Mentoring Program in collaboration with CUE Art Foundation x the International Association of Art Critics (AICA-USA).

**Leonard Galmon** is a visual artist from New Orleans, LA, currently based in New Haven, CT. His work engages figuration and abstraction, wherein portraiture and landscape are intertwined; squares, rectangles, and grids are used as metaphors for control and confinement. His most recent series of paintings, entitled “Parallel Subversions,” explores growth as a subversion of power. This body of work collages portraits of Galmon’s friends and family with paintings of plants growing in urban spaces. Through this juxtaposition, Galmon constructs parallel narratives that explore what it means to thrive under imposed structures.

Galmon received his B.A. in Art from Yale University in 2019. Awards and recognition for his work include the 2019 Jonathan Edwards Art Prize for Creation, and the 2020 Christopher A. Pilaro Fellowship in the Arts Award from the Ron Brown Scholar Program. Galmon’s solo exhibition, *For the Sake of Order*, debuted at Arthur Ross Gallery, New Orleans in 2019. Galmon is currently a 2021–2022 Yale University Art Gallery and Artspace New Haven Happy and Bob Doran Connecticut Artist in Residence.

**Ruby Gonzalez Hernandez** is an Indigenous Zapotec artist, educator, and curator born on Quinnipiac land (New Haven, Connecticut). As a lens-based artist, she uses photography as a tool in printmaking, woodworking, and other media to dissect and create language for: religious exploitation, spiritual salvation, redemption, oppression affecting BIPOC, and more. She is passionate about work that serves the New Haven community, grassroots arts ecology, and currently runs an annual international print exchange to serve those aims called Lunch Money Print. Ruby’s work has been supported and recognized by the National Basketball Association, Facing History and Ourselves, United Way, and the Arts Council of Greater New Haven. In her curatorial practice, she organizes exhibitions concerning themes and ideas surrounding community solidarity. Ruby is currently working towards an exhibition for the Yale University Art Gallery and Artspace New Haven 2021–2022 Happy and Bob Doran Connecticut Artist in Residence program, opening at Artspace in April 2022.

**Jamillah Hinson** is an independent curator and arts programmer. With a focus on historical and contemporary Black cultural, spiritual, and artistic

traditions, her practice engages various methods of storytelling and centers artistic and community narratives.

Hinson has curated shows and developed programming with The Center for Afrofuturist Studies, LATITUDE Chicago, Intuit: The Center for Intuitive & Outsider Art, and Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts, along with other arts and cultural spaces. Hinson is a member of the Chicago-based collective, Concerned Black Image Makers. She is currently a Curatorial Fellow at NXTHVN in New Haven, CT.

**Filippo Lorenzin** is an art curator and writer. Currently the Artistic Director of the Museum of Contemporary Digital Art (MoCDA) and he holds over ten years of experience in the field of contemporary art and digital culture. He has collaborated as a curator, teacher, and writer with international cultural institutions. Parallel to this activity, he worked at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

Lorenzin has curated international IRL and online exhibitions, workshops and conferences to promote a critical approach to new media by suggesting an informed perspective on contemporary art. His most recent exhibitions include, *Liminal Territories* (pal project, Paris, 5 October–30 November 2021), *MEMENTO MINTI—If you stop contributing, you will be forgotten* (MoCDA, Decentraland, 8 January–27 March 2022), *The Foundry* (MoCDA, Arium, 1–15 April 2022). He regularly writes articles about the connection between contemporary digital culture and art history for international magazines and online platforms including *Flash Art*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Digicult*.

**Laurel V. McLaughlin** is a curator, art historian, writer, and educator from Philadelphia (on the unceded lands of the Lenni-Lenape), and the Director of Curatorial Affairs at Artspace New Haven. McLaughlin is currently a History of Art Ph.D. Candidate at Bryn Mawr, writing a dissertation concerning performative migratory aesthetics. She has shared her scholarly and curatorial work in conferences such as the Universities Art Association of Canada Conference, Université de Montréal; College Art Association, New York; Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present, Hong Kong; and Performance Studies International, Calgary. Her criticism, interviews, and essays have been published in *Art Papers*, *Art Practical*, *BOMB Magazine*, *Performa Magazine*, *Contact Quarterly*,

*Performance Research*, *PARtake: The Journal of Performance as Research*, and *Antennae: The Journal of Nature in Visual Culture*, among others; and she is co-editing an interdisciplinary volume with Carrie Robbins on the work of Tania El Khoury forthcoming with Amherst College/Lever Press in 2022. McLaughlin has organized exhibitions at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, the University of Pennsylvania in collaboration with the Arthur Ross Gallery and the ICA Philadelphia, the Center for Contemporary Art & Culture at the Pacific Northwest College of Art, Fuller Rosen Gallery, the Lafayette College Art Galleries, and has forthcoming exhibitions at Emerson Contemporary and Artspace New Haven.

**Allison Minto** is a Connecticut-based visual artist. Minto's practice is rooted in photography, community, and field research. Her photography centers African-American archives, memory, preservation, and maintenance, and her decision to use archival elements comes from personal experience. Whether digging through her family archives or recognizing the traditional position many Black women in the United States occupy as carriers of generational narratives, Allison attempts to render these experiences visible. Minto also explores ways to bridge her art practice and community. She has produced two collaborative projects in New Haven with emphasis on photography, youth, and education. The first initiative, *The Indispensable Project* (2018), was designed to mentor and work with Black female-identified high school students and provide them with disposable cameras as an allegory to the lack of visibility of Black female photographers. The second initiative, *Black New Haven Archive: A Collective Memory Project* (2021–ongoing), partners with New Haven Black diasporic families to teach them how to preserve their own images, set up new portrait sessions, and record the unique history of their heritage.

Minto holds an M.F.A. in Photography from the Yale School of Art and a B.A. in Journalism from SUNY Buffalo State College. She has participated in a UnionDocs CoLAB (2020), the Eddie Adams Workshop (2020), and *The New York Times* Portfolio Review (2019). Minto's work has been exhibited in galleries throughout the United States, and has contributed to publications such as *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Geographic*, *Travel + Leisure* magazine, *Bloomberg Businessweek* magazine, and Connecticut Public Radio (WNPR). Minto is currently a Yale University Art Gallery and Artspace New Haven 2021–2022 Happy and Bob

Doran Connecticut Artist in Residence, 2020–2021  
DocX Archive Lab Fellow at Duke University, and a  
member of Diversify Photo.

**Julia Rooney** is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores perception, sociality, and the increasing pressure of algorithmically-designed systems on human behavior. While rooted in painting, her practice often engages other analogue modes of production including postal correspondence and papermaking. Her recent solo show *@SomeHighTide* featured a series of phone-sized paintings (2 x 2-in.), installed both physically at Arts+Leisure Gallery (NYC, 2021) and digitally on her eponymous Instagram account, which she intermittently reacts for site-specific projects as an ongoing form of critique and inquiry. Her ongoing series “paper paper”—made entirely of pulpified and re-formed newspapers—was recently exhibited at The Weatherspoon Art Museum’s *Art on Paper* exhibition (Greensboro, NC, 2021), and has had solo exhibitions at Kopeikin Gallery (Los Angeles, CA, 2019) and Real Eyes Gallery (Adams, MA, 2021). Recent group exhibitions include *Affective Histories* (Hesse Flatow, NYC), *Out of Office* (Collar Works, Troy NY), *Painting Abstraction: 197X-Today* (Zeit Contemporary Art, NYC) and *Patterns of Influence: Artists Who Teach* (The Painting Center, NYC). Rooney has attended residencies at The Studios at MASS MoCA (Assets for Artists, North Adams MA), Engaging Artists (More Art, NYC), SU CASA (Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, NYC), and the Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT); and in 2022, will be an Artist in Residence at The Joan Mitchell Center (New Orleans, LA). Rooney received her B.A. in Visual & Environmental Studies from Harvard College in 2011, and her M.F.A. in Painting from Yale School of Art in 2018. She is currently a Yale University Art Gallery and Artspace New Haven 2021–2022 Happy and Bob Doran Connecticut Artist in Residence.

**Joseph Smolinski** is a multidisciplinary artist and educator that lives and works in New Haven, CT. His practice questions the shifting roles of technology within communication networks, energy and oil companies, and the industrial agricultural infrastructure, which indelibly shape the so-called natural environment. Smolinski received his B.F.A. from the University of Wisconsin (1999) and his M.F.A. from the University of Connecticut, Storrs (2001). Group exhibition venues include Diverse Works, Houston, TX; MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA; Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, Ridgefield, CT; McDonough Museum of Art, Youngstown, OH;

Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, CT. Solo exhibitions include Mixed Greens Gallery, NY; Swarm Gallery, Oakland, CA; Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT; and Artspace New Haven, CT. His work has been discussed in *Art in America*, *The Boston Globe*, *The New York Times*, and *Art Papers*. He is a recipient of the Connecticut Commission of the Arts 2012 Artist Fellowship, the 2014 Distinguished Visiting Scholar in the College of the Environment at Wesleyan University, and a 2012 Artist Resource Trust Grant from the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. He has been an artist in residence at Wassaic Projects and is currently a 2021–2022 Yale University Art Gallery and Artspace New Haven Happy and Bob Doran Connecticut Artist in Residence.

