

Celebrating Visual Arts at Clark (Part III)

**February 23 – April 17, 2022
Schiltkamp Gallery, Clark University**



Featured Artists

Katie Commodore

Elli Crocker

Johnathan Derry

Jon Krasner

Hugh S. Manon

Suzanne Révy

Frances Tanzer

Amanda Theinert

Curator's Statement

Throughout the 2021/22 academic year (in three consecutive exhibitions), the Schiltkamp Gallery / Traina Center for the Arts will showcase the work of the many innovative visual arts faculty at Clark, while also introducing and welcoming those faculty joining us from the Becker School of Design and Technology – now part of Clark University. We celebrate the creative intertwining of teaching, research, and artistic practice at Clark University!

Professor Elli Crocker, Gallery Director

Sky Deitch '22, Dimitri Koufis '22 Anna Svensen '22, Julianne Dillon '24, Lilah Feitner '23, Katie Rich '24, Gallery Interns

Katie Commodore

Statement

Over the past few years, my artwork has concentrated on creating intimate portraits of my friends, often focusing on how they express their sexuality. Not whether they prefer men or women, but sexuality in the broader sense- what is it that makes them feel sexy, how do they express that physically, and how has it changed over the years?

We change our clothes every season, our physical appearance through body modification, losing weight, gaining weight, tattoos, etc; we change our kinks and sexual preferences partner to partner, year to year. Our sexuality, and how we feel about it, is in constant flux; the same way that we redecorate our homes, change the wallpaper and curtains, change the sheets.

I try to liken this subtle change in how my friends express themselves to the way society also expresses its collective self through decorative patterns. In a round-about way, it can be looked at as a meter of a population's "sexuality"- the public expression of the private. Bright colors, vibrant patterns, clean lines, and minimal decoration all provide a window into the personalities that chose or created them. Historians and anthropologists often use the decorative remnants (pots, jewelry, frescos, etc.) of past cultures to gain valuable insight into the lives of the people that created them, the same sort of cultural portrait can be drawn from our design choices today.

It is very important to me that I not come across as judgmental about my subject matter or imagery, but that they stand on their own as portraits of real people, expressing themselves how they choose.

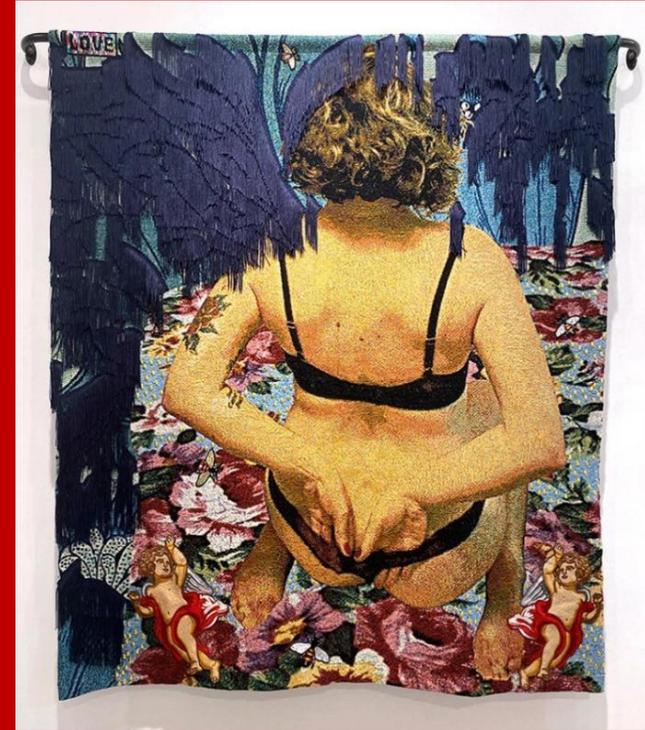


Greg In His Catsuit. 2018. Mixed media.

Katie Commodore



E.D. 2018. Mixed media.



Carly. 2020. Mixed media.

Bio

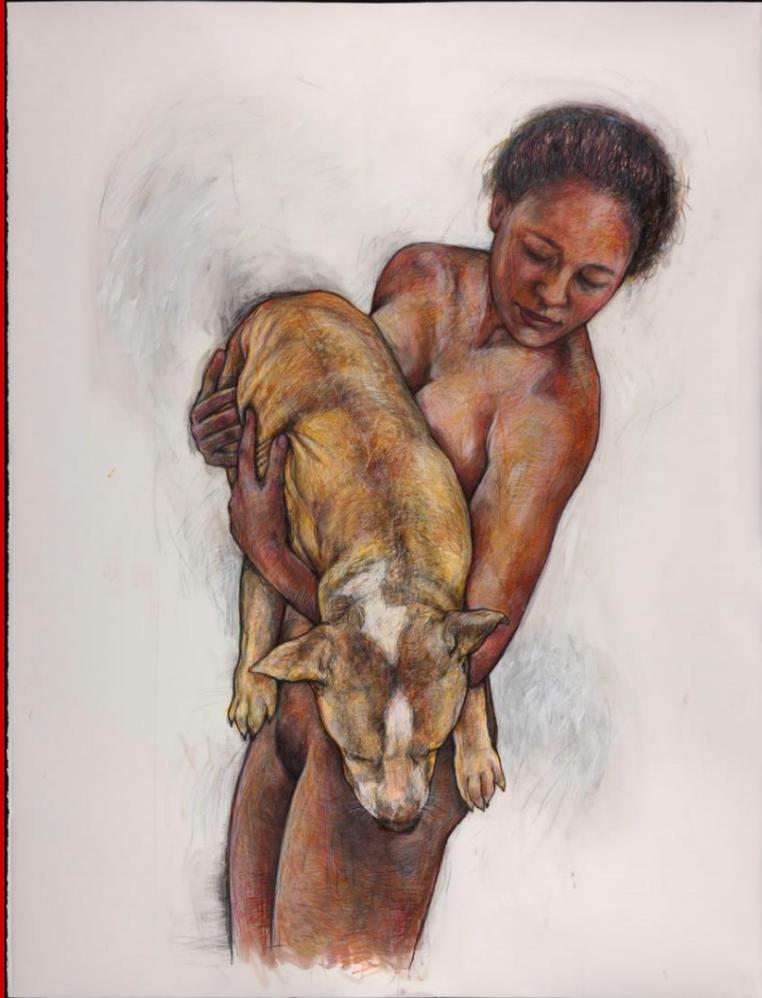
Katie's parents could have told you when she was a toddler that she would grow up to be an artist, despite years of her insisting that she was going to be an astronaut and them sending her to Space Camp twice. Never giving up her dreams of painting Martian landscapes and testing low gravity pastels, she went to art school, which surprisingly lacked the rigorous science background NASA required, although she did buy a car once from someone who worked for NASA. However, what art school lacks in science and math they make up in spades when it comes to teaching art, which is what she was good at anyway. Commodore now resides in Providence, RI, with all the artists that ran away from Brooklyn but didn't head up to Hudson, where she spends her days painting incredibly detailed pattern-based erotic portraits of her exhibitionist friends and longing for the day when the space program starts an artist's residency.

Elli Crocker



Mortal Coil. 2018. Mixed media / drafting film.

Elli Crocker



Portage: Woman with Dog. 2014. Mixed media / drafting film.

STATEMENT

The duality of mind/body and the human place in the natural world are central motifs of my art work. The drawings and paintings in this exhibit evoke elemental connections to other living things, the earth, the cosmos, and to each other.

Our living bodies are supported by the spirit and matter of all that came before us. We stand on layers of life accumulated over millennia, knowing that we too will become part of these strata of spirit, flesh, sand, soil, stone, and stardust. We stand on the shoulders of those who stood and crawled and crept before us, as one day we will hold the generations that will succeed us. We stand in gratitude and awe, fear and hope.

Elli Crocker

BIO

A Professor of Studio Art at Clark University, Elli Crocker currently maintains a studio in Waltham, MA. She served as Program Director of Studio Art from 2002 – 2015 and Gallery Director for many years. After teaching for forty years, Prof. Crocker will retire at the close of this academic year. She received her B.A. from Smith College and M.F.A. from Tufts University / School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Prof. Crocker's work and much of her teaching has been focused on the human figure.

With a forty-year exhibition record, Prof. Crocker's work has been shown extensively including at the Boston Center for the Arts, the Worcester Art Museum, the Anchorage Museum of History and Art (AK), Corvallis Art Center (OR), Weir Gallery (CA), and La Laterie Gallerie (Strasbourg, France) among many other venues. Rice/Polak Gallery in Provincetown, MA represents her work. Significant public commissions have been the 2000 Millennial Mural for Newton North High School and Windows on Allston for the Allston Village Main Streets Association (City of Boston) and Jack Young Company in 2002. She has received grants/funding from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, the St. Botolph Foundation, the New England Foundation for the Arts/Visible Republic Program, the Higgins School of Humanities at Clark University, and a Boston Sister City Travel Grant. Artist residencies include the Burren College of Art in Ireland, the Vermont Studio Center, and the Nantucket School of Art & Design. Prof. Crocker's work has been published in three books, several literary journals, and was included in Volume #50 (2004) of *New American Paintings*.



Knotted Earth: The Burren. 2014. Mixed media / panel.

Johnathan Derry



Transference. 2018. MDF Plywood, Rigid insulation, Plaster, Paint.

Statement

My sculpture explores the notion that opposing forces can in fact be complementary and interconnected.

The work is inspired by the search to connect the polarities that exist within the self and, by extension, society. This manifests physically in the orchestration of visual motifs such as black and white, heavy and light, over and under, where two disparate ideas must co-exist as one.

These sculptural structures embody dualism through the oppositional play of material and form. Remnants of the creation of topographical surfaces are beautiful evidence of what was formerly above and become artifacts resting below the surface. This implies erosion and temporality as well as creation and regeneration.

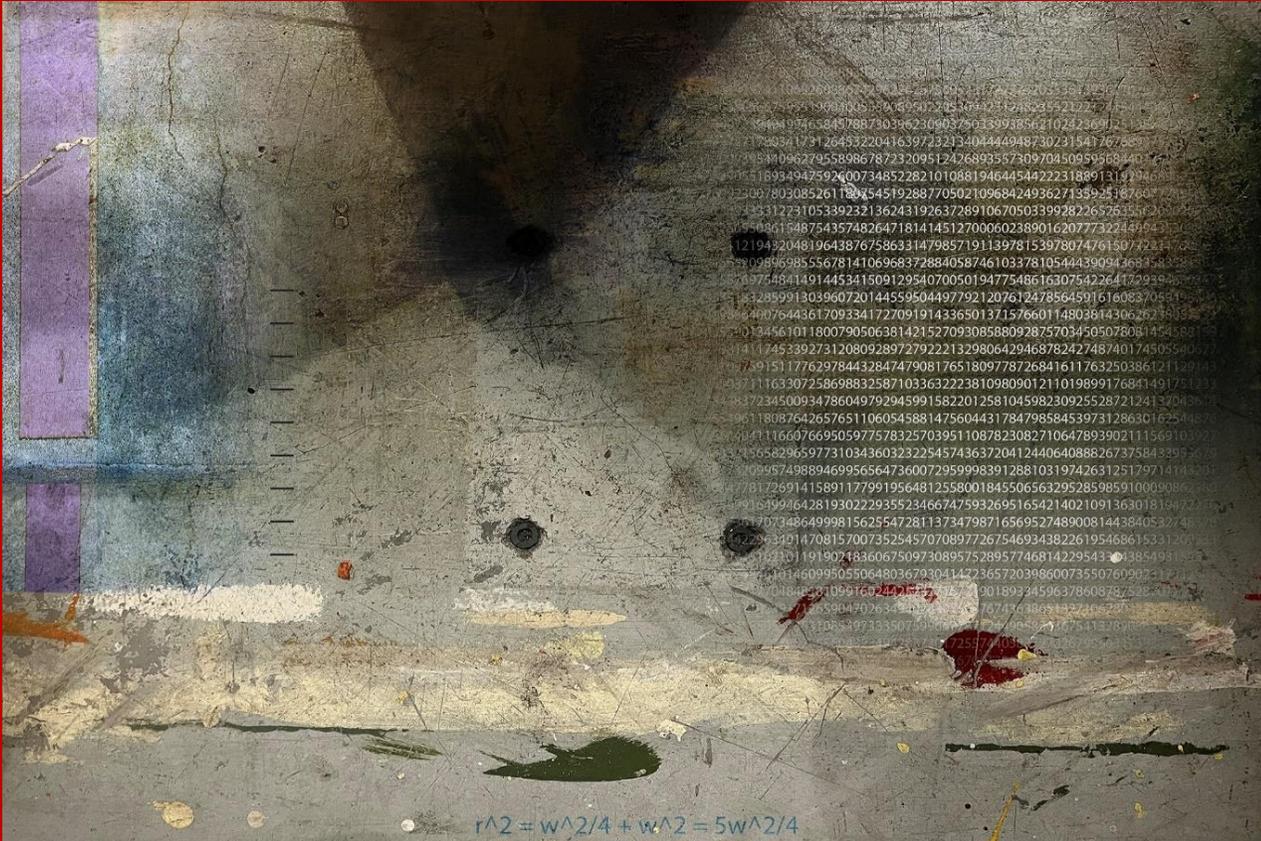
A tension rises from an attempt to relate physical polarities that mirror the aspects of the exposed and hidden self. The sculptures reconcile human dualities and through the connective process of making, help to alleviate the bedrock anxiety borne from human disconnect. They are remnants of my quest to find a deeper notion of self and a desire to connect with my world.

Johnathan Derry



Last Vestiges. 2018. Rigid insulation, Fiber Glass, Plaster, Paint.

Jon Krasner



Coastal Syncopations #5. 2022. Digital print.

Statement

Representational theories of perception explain how experiences justify learned judgements and beliefs about the world, embracing philosophical notions of truth and falsity. However, philosophers have sought to deny that perception is fundamentally representational, maintaining that we embrace primitive, non-representational connections to external objects, facts, and events. The notion of perception without representation (which I refer to as “pure design”) can lead to richer, more transformative aesthetic experiences.

As a practicing artist, my multi-disciplinary background in painting, music, and graphic design has permitted me the freedom to combine media and explore the device of abstraction as a means of expressing the beauty of the physical world. These are both hallmarks of my artistic practice. Incorporating natural materials into assemblages and compositing images, text, and video content into digital montages allows me to engage in a purely intuitive process.

“Venetian Relics,” completed during a graduate fellowship in Venice, Italy, are collages derived from layers of weathered posters that were plastered to the city's walls. The qualities of the worn material provided a means to express the authenticity of Venice's majestic color and light. More recently, “Makai Entities” incorporated earth and vegetation into assemblage to document the constantly changing properties of light and color in nature. “Coastal Syncopations” are a current series of digital montages that explore symbiotic relationships between mathematics and the natural world.

In addition to blending physical and digital media, the vehicles of motion and sound in animation and music composition enable me to choreograph more immersive, time-based experiences that create deeper meaning and sensitize audiences to better validate, interpret, and identify with my subjects.

Jon Krasner

Bio

I spent my childhood years in Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts and completed my undergraduate education at Muhlenberg College (Allentown, PA) as an art major within a liberal arts program. I received a Master of Fine Arts degree in 1990 from Pratt Institute (Brooklyn, NY) with a concentration in painting and a minor in art history. In 1994, I earned a second M.F.A. in graphic design from Boston University, where I focused on digital media and motion graphics.

My multi-disciplinary work as a practicing artist and designer allows me to synthesize the disciplines of painting, digital imaging, animation, and music composition. This convergence is a hallmark of my teaching and artistic practice, and my paintings, assemblages, and films have been exhibited and screened nationally and internationally.

As a Professor, I bring a unique perspective to teaching by emphasizing experimentation, aesthetic sensitivity, and critical thinking. Since 1999, I have taught in the graphic design concentration at Fitchburg State University (FSU) and developed coursework in Motion Graphics, Interface Design, and History of Graphic Design. Additionally, I teach Drawing, Water-Based Media, and Early Twentieth Century Art for the Humanities Department. Over the years, I have also taught at Clark University and delivered lectures at Ringling College of Art + Design, University of Notre Dame, Trinity College (Ireland), European University (Cyprus), and the Arts in Society conference in Lisbon, Portugal. In 2008, my Harrod lecture at FSU, "Critical Pedagogy: Cultivating Mindful, Creative, and Critical Thinking," addressed how formative assessment strategies can liberate students from complacency and advocate self-reflection. In 2021, my Harrod lecture, "Pure Perception: Raising Aesthetic Awareness," addressed how art without representation can develop a heightened understanding of visual and musical language and lead to richer, more transformative aesthetic experiences in teaching and learning.

As an author, my textbooks provide an historical and critical overview of motion design, offering insight into how designers formulate ideas, solve problems, and search for artistic expression. They feature the work of undergraduate and graduate students, independent animators, and design studios throughout the U.S., Canada, The Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Croatia, and Iceland. My books have been adopted nationally and internationally by schools such as New York University, University of Massachusetts (Amherst), Pratt Institute, American University, California Institute of the Arts, Ringling College of Art + Design, Chinese University of Hong Kong, Nan Yang Technical University (Singapore), University of Hawaii at Minoa, University of Alaska, and Yeditepe University (Istanbul, Turkey).

I recently moved Providence, RI after raising three children in Franklin, MA. I am currently preparing for two solo exhibitions entitled "Symbiosis" at Muhlenberg College (Allentown, PA) and the PopUp Gallery and Brick Box Theater (Worcester, MA) in 2022. Both exhibitions will feature recent digital prints and animations, the latter being accompanied by a live, musical performance. The exhibitions will also showcase work from current students and alumni from FSU.

Hugh S. Manon



glitchghosts. 2012-14. Digital images.

Statement

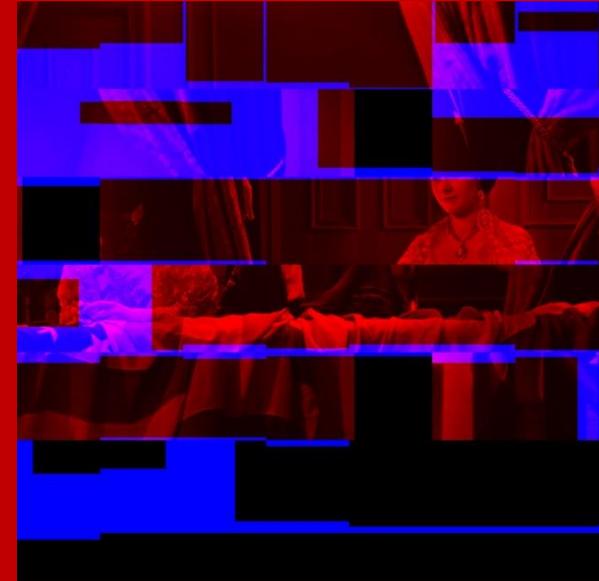
This loop of glitched images comprises works created via the “cachemash” method, which exploits a problem with early versions of Photoshop. When a truncated file is manipulated by the user, Photoshop attempts to “fill in” the missing data with parts of images from the software’s cache, leading to explosively colorful results that are difficult and at times impossible to predict. What makes this technique especially compelling is that, through practice, one may develop and refine a personal approach, even if the final cause of the glitching remains opaque—a mystery taking place behind the scenes of Photoshop’s interface.

The particular images selected for this exhibit seek to illuminate the relation between Glitch aesthetics and the narrative and aesthetic hallmarks of the Gothic genre of literature and film. Glitch, one might argue, is a form of digital Gothic.

Hugh S. Manon



glitchghosts. 2012-14. Digital images.



Bio

Hugh S. Manon (Ph.D., University of Pittsburgh) is an Associate Professor in the Department of Visual & Performing Arts at Clark University, where he directs the Screen Studies program. His research specializes in Lacanian cultural theory, film noir, and transitions from analog to digital aesthetics. Prof. Manon has published in *Cinema Journal*; *Film Criticism*; *Framework*; *Psychoanalysis, Culture & Society*, and in numerous anthologies, including recent articles on ASMR subculture, glitch art, and CGI in contemporary cinema. His article "Notes on Glitch" (with Daniel Temkin, 2011) remains among the most widely-cited theorizations of the art form.

Suzanne Révy

Statement

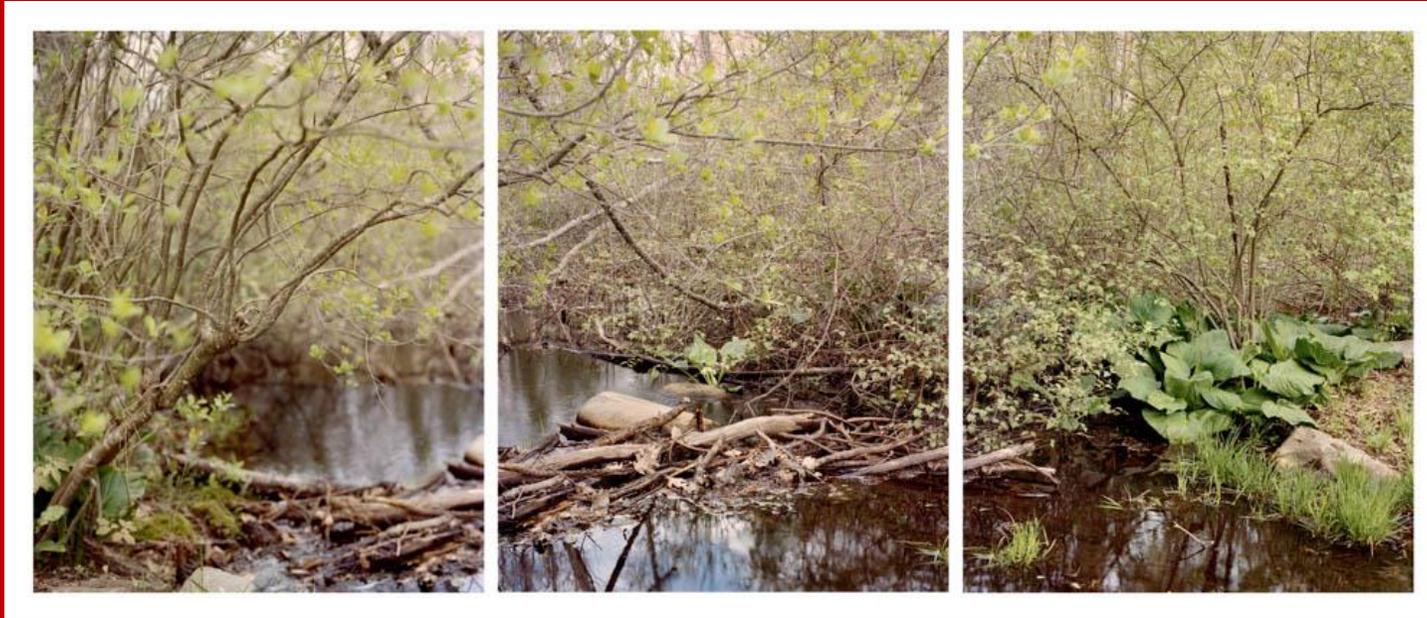
A Murmur in the Trees

The forest flutters between life, death and rebirth; it bears witness, as it has for centuries, to the earth's delights and traumas. Trees feed each other through vast networks of roots that resemble the airways of human lungs. Their canopy protects saplings who yearn for sunlight as the soil underfoot breeds microscopic nutrients. Sources of water rise and fall like the pulse in circulatory systems, yet the eternal rhythms of the forest and the span of our lifetimes are eons apart. With this work, I seek to explore the distinctive cadences between our brief existence and the vast geological scope of the natural world.

Since 2018, I have been experimenting with diptychs, triptychs and polyptychs in my work. I find that multiple-panel presentations create dialogs between space and form, and imply passages of time. I scrutinize the fields and rivers once home to the indigenous peoples who lived and toiled on these lands, examine the former battlefields of the American Revolution, and wander in the footsteps of the 19th century Transcendentalists in and around Concord, Massachusetts. I have discovered surprising patterns and details in the overlapping frames of my pictures where leaves or rocks can echo with lore, myth and memory.

As a portrait photographer, focusing my camera on the landscape has been an unexpected and fruitful turn. The visual threads in my pictures reflect on physical, psychological and spiritual meanings of familiar environments. I find myself looking for figurative gestures in the trees or streams and in the man-made imprints upon the land. I wish to impart a tenor of solitude, to convey a reverence for the enduring ecosystems that surround us and to draw parallels between the cycles of nature and human history.

Suzanne Révy



Fairyland, Concord, MA. 2021. Archival pigment print from scanned color negative film

Bio

Suzanne Révy (American, b. 1962) is a photographer, writer and educator who earned a BFA from the Pratt Institute in 1984. She worked in editorial and magazine publishing as a photography editor for fifteen years before the arrival of two sons. She created a long-term photographic diary of their lives, and earned an MFA from the New Hampshire Institute of Art in 2016. She teaches at Clark University in Worcester, MA, is the Associate Editor at the online photography magazine “What Will You Remember” and serves on the board of the Photographic Resource Center in Cambridge, MA.

Frances Tanzer



The World. 2021. acrylic, pen, and graphite on paper



Actually, you're right – this must have happened years before we met. 2022, Acrylic on panel

Statement

Frances Tanzer is a historian and painter. Using satire, parody, and a wink, her work turns everyday life on its head to reveal its underlying assumptions and contradictions. Her current work explores nostalgia, melancholy, and the practice of painting itself as ways to reorder—and even slow down—time.

Frances Tanzer



The Edge of the Knife, 2021, acrylic on wood panel



The Big Party, 2021, acrylic and graphite on paper

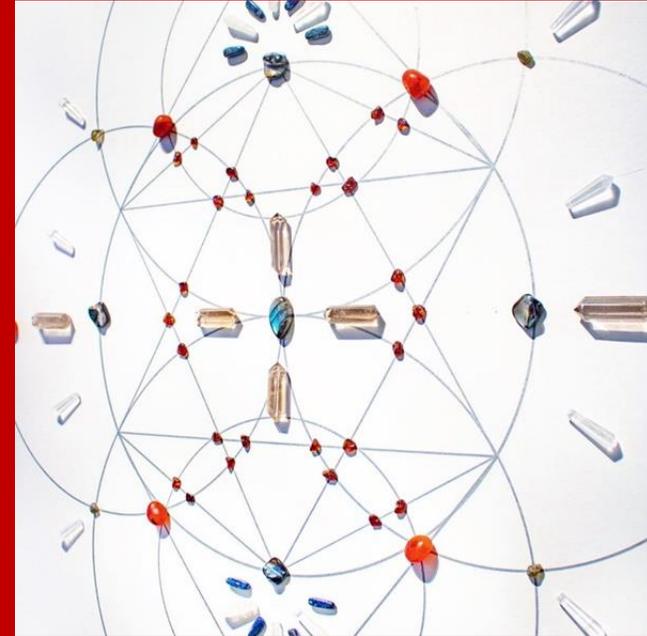
Bio

Frances Tanzer is the Rose Professor of Holocaust Studies and Jewish Culture at Clark University. She completed her degree in visual arts at University of Toronto in 2010. Her work is in private collections in Berlin, Vienna, London, New York, and Toronto.

Amanda Theinert



Gravity. 2020. Ink and crystals.



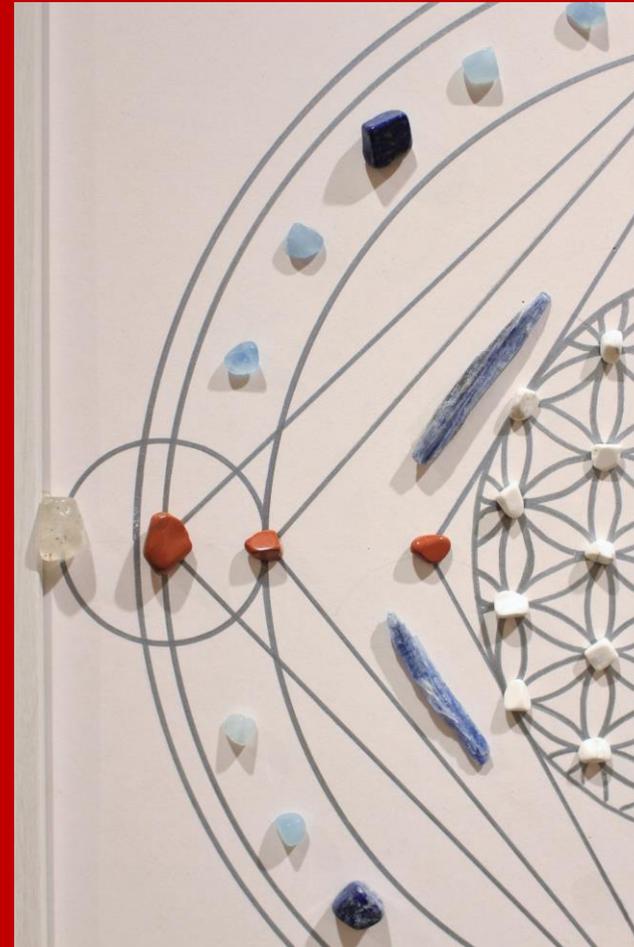
Statement

The process of creating crystal grids is as much therapeutic process as it is creative expression. Using principles of sacred geometry to intuitively create the glyphs allows the pieces to form in a spontaneous way without pre-planning or expectation. However, they can still be designed with intention, channeling emotion or meaning into the placement of the lines and the arrangement of the stones. Every crystal has a unique vibrational frequency, just like each cell in our bodies; These combine with the geometry to create varying energies that radiate from the piece. Each individual will resonate with the energy of the grids in a different way; stand before a grid with an open heart and allow your mind to drift without thought.

Amanda Theinert

Bio

Amanda Theinert is an Interactive Media Artist and Game Designer who has worked in the fields of digital art and higher education for 12 years. Theinert teaches in the areas of game design and development, the psychology of games, traditional and digital art, as well as production and team management. Her research interests center around how interactive experiences bring individuals and groups together for collective engagement and how emergent behavior facilitated from this engagement can alter the experience itself. Her artwork focuses on creating interactive installations and games that investigate new ways of combining digital and physical media, blurring the lines between the tangible and virtual. Theinert is currently the MFA Program Director and an Assistant Teaching Professor at Clark University's Becker School of Design and Technology. She holds a BA in Interactive Media from Becker College and an MFA in Computer Art from the School of Visual Arts.



Manifest [detail]. 2020. Ink and crystals.