



THRIVE

Alumni Artists Exhibition

OCTOBER 3-5, 2019



ARTIST STATEMENTS

Submitted by the artists and edited for space.

Tia Blassingame '93

Alicia Christy '77

Imani Noelle Ford '18

JoAnne McFarland '77

Rhinold Lamar Ponder '81

Barbara C. Wallace '80

Debbie Scott Williams '84

TIA BLASSINGAME '93

CLAREMONT, CALIF

Book Arts, Printmaking, Creative Writing

primrosepress.com

I utilize printmaking in the book form to address issues of race and racism in the United States. Employing a mixture of poetry, typography, printmaking and book arts techniques, I examine African American architectural, spatial and cultural history, racial prejudices and perception. As many of my pieces deal with historical racism, I employ period typefaces to create a look and ambiance that transports the viewer to the appropriate era.

Disturbing images and histories rendered using wooden or metal letters or an etching plate can be atmospheric and intriguing. Because of its tactile nature and impression on the page, letterpress printing invites the viewer to connect immediately and then dissect the text and images slowly. Artists' books can allow for a nuanced discussion on issues of race to unfold with each page turn. The reader/viewer can locate themselves within the book as they create their own path to view and connect deeply with the book, its text and prints, history itself.

ALICIA CHRISTY '77

KENSINGTON, MD.

Watercolor Painting

etsy.com/shop/MDArtistryOnline

A physician for more than 30 years who retired from the U.S. Army after 22 years of service, Christy began sketching brightly colored Caribbean scenes which became her “art therapy” during a difficult time in her life. She then turned her focus to portraits, including a tribute to a fallen colleague, now displayed at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, and a portrait of retired Army General Colin Powell, which hangs in his library. She also has studied watercolor under Firouzeh Sadeghi.

Her work has been featured in juried art shows and galleries, and in medical publications including Seminars in Reproductive Medicine and Obstetrics and Gynecology Clinics of North America. A photo from the civil rights movement inspired a work that became cover art published in Academic Medicine. This work stems from great angst and sadness for a country she loves and swore to defend as a member of the military. Proceeds of her art sales support organizations that fight for social justice.

IMANI NOELLE FORD '18

NEWYORK, N.Y.

Drawing and Painting

fordimaninoelle.wixsite.com/held

Imani Noelle Ford is a New York-based multimedia artist, writer and art critic. Their work is concerned with affect, touch, trace, temporality, space, and the potentiality of Black queer and trans life worlds and relationalities. Memory, dreams and fantasy, and intimacy are key aspects Ford explores. Black queer quotidian life are the main sources for their art, with added inspiration culled from artists and scholars such as Wangechi Mutu and Jean-Michel Basquiat.

Recently, they exhibited work in a solo show entitled “Wound,” taking up the category of “wounds,” most often thought of as negation. Drawn figurative, abstracted forms materialize a world of moments, fantasies, dreams and memories. Ford wounded material with several tools to explore what “healed” and what never did. By replacing hope with a process of healing that involves re-woundings, they invited viewers to think of healing as other than overcoming and recuperation of the body.

JOANNE MCFARLAND '77

BROOKLYN, N.Y.

Paper Collage

joannemcfarland.com

When I am creating, I am totally unafraid. The creative process is a grace state for me. My faith in creativity has allowed me to surmount early challenges in my family life, and see how making things can be a path to joy and agency for others.

I believe words are the most powerful things in human societies. Anything, and anyone, can be built or destroyed with words. This tenet is the foundation of my work in poetry, in art, as a curator and arts administrator.

I've been making dress collages for more than 20 years now, intrigued by how such a simple shape can embody so many different spirits.

The hub of my practice is Artpoetica Project Space in Gowanus, Brooklyn.

RHINOLD LAMAR PONDER '81

PRINCETON, N.J.

Acrylic and Mixed Media

ponderart.com

A viewer's pained sighs; joyful pauses; thought-provoked headaches; reflexive reconsideration and double-takes. Your tears. My tears. These things define my creative practice.

I cry a lot when I paint. Sometimes joylessly. Sometimes painfully. My emotional connection informs me whether the subject is a multicolored painting that combines the athletic form with drip and splatter technique, or an abstract capturing the pain of dark bodies drifting into the ocean during the Atlantic slave trade. My objective is to capture the emotion of my present and ancestral experience in a beautiful form which requires attention and consideration.

Another strain of my work, currently revealed in my ongoing project, "The Rise and Fall of the N-Word," seeks to use art as an overt means of breaking communication barriers regarding race and justice. This work is both a communication with art and literary history and a prompt to meaningful discussions about how we view and treat one another and how we can do better.

BARBARA C. WALLACE '80

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

Oil Painting

DrBarbaraWallaceARTIST.com

Barbara C. Wallace is an African American visual artist, following her father in oil and acrylic painting — and in having teaching as a primary career.

Her "wearable art" at Princeton included jean jackets with elaborately embroidered back panels; one later became the center piece of a large textile wall mural. Needing to make up for a course dropped the semester she joined mass protests for Princeton to divest from South Africa, Barbara took a summer drawing course at Philadelphia's Moore College of Art and Design. Her best drawing from that course inspired her move to oil painting.

Her work includes a series of 13 oil paintings of abstract versions of trees in Central Park. She has combined acrylic and sparkle paints to convey spiritual metaphysics on both canvas and wall murals. She also has worked with ceramics.

Inspired by Princeton's former sculptor-in-residence Joe Brown, from whom she took a course as an undergraduate, her future plans for retirement are to focus on sculpture.

DEBBIE SCOTT WILLIAMS '84

FAIRWAY, KANSAS

Digital Photography

interurbanarthouse.org/debbie-scott-williams

I am a photographer, using close-to-unretouched digital images and cropping to get the final image, rather than substantially manipulating the image itself. I primarily photograph botanicals in domestic or neighborhood settings, along with vacation sites with my family and friends. As the quintessential “memory keeper,” I take photographs to preserve the bounty I have the opportunity to observe both in my daily round and during any travels.

Over the last few years, I have discovered that my photographs allow others to journey with me to botanical gardens, my alma mater Princeton, international tourist sites, and to my backyard — even if they cannot join me to these places in person. Embedded within my photos are themes of personal privilege, blackness, invisibility, hypervisibility, disability, faith, family, hope, loneliness, despair, joy, celebration, peace, life, death and triumph.