

Fresh Squeezed 6: Emerging Artists in Florida

Another spring here in the Sunshine State, and we're pleased to present a bumper crop of new emerging artists for Fresh Squeezed 6. This region in which we live, work and play continues to be a breeding ground for exciting new talent.

For those who are new to the Fresh Squeezed model: this exhibition is open to any artist over the age of 18 living in Florida. Our only definition of an emerging artist is one who has never had a solo show in this state (BFA/MFA exhibitions don't count). We received nearly 150 entries, with only 6 slots to fill. The jurying process is always exciting and our staff looks forward to it every year. The process is not without its trials, though; it's hard to say "no, for now" to so many excellent artists due to space constraints.

The artists who make up this year's exhibition present artwork that is bright, unique and innovative. Eugene Ofori Agyei, Lauren Mann and Sheherezade Thenard create work based on notions of identity, emphasizing our individual differences while acknowledging our shared humanity. Morgan Janssen and Sam McCoy simultaneously celebrate and skewer the Florida landscape and what it means to live in "paradise." Macy Higgins created an immersive experience for our visitors using vintage objects inherited from

her family members. You'll notice that color plays a starring role in the work: witness Thenard's jewel-toned skin treatment, Agyei's joyfully patterned fabric, Higgins' afghans and "iced" confections, Mann's meticulous colored pencil motifs, Janssen's faux tropical greenery and McCoy's fiery Florida skies. This is contemporary Florida artwork in all its unapologetic boldness.

Heartfelt thanks to our friends and sponsors whose support allows us to travel throughout the state to visit each artist, provide shipping for their artwork and the exhibition brochure that we (and their mothers) like to keep for posterity in this increasingly digital world. These include founding sponsors the Gobioff Foundation and Lisa and Perry Everett, as well as The Bank of Tampa and First Citrus Bank. Thank you to the education and exhibitions staff of the Morean who help us whittle down the application list, and to Beth Reynolds for her stellar artist photographs and videos. Thank you also to Betsy Orbe Lester, Tom Kaltenbaugh and Matthew Jurecic, who make our galleries sing with beauty. Last but certainly not least, thank you to the six artists who were brave enough to make this work and to allow us to share it with our community.

Amanda Cooper
Curator of Exhibitions

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Fresh Squeezed 6 Opening Reception

Saturday, April 9, 5 to 8pm
FREE and open to the public

Please visit our website for more Fresh Squeezed events, including artist talks!

Also on view at the Morean Arts Center:

PCCA Senior Thesis Exhibitions

See works from seniors in the Pinellas County Center for the Arts at Gibbs High School

Lauren Martin: Therianthropic Arcana April 8-20

Anderson Bray: Mother April 22-May 4

Jayda Emerson: Revelations + Rapture May 6-28

Tony Rosa: American Pickers April 2-May 14

Central Florida artist Tony Rosa conveys the working spirit of the Florida orange grove through portraits of the people who keep it running.

Florida Shines On May 21-June 25

This travelling exhibition by the Inspired Artist Studios at PARC celebrates triumphs, promotes creation without limitations, and highlights Florida's beautiful natural resources by creating art with recycled material.

Upcoming Exhibitions at the Morean Arts Center:

July 9-August 25, 2022

BOOKISH: Members Show

Jeanine Newcomb

Johanna Falzone: Read with Me

Morean Arts Center • 719 Central Avenue, St. Petersburg, Florida

Thank you to our generous sponsors!



April 9–June 23, 2022

 **morean** artscenter



Eugene Ofori Agyei

Gainesville

Eugene Ofori Agyei (1993) is a ceramic sculptural artist and educator originally from Ghana. He graduated from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana with a BA in Industrial Art, majoring in Ceramics in 2018. Eugene is the 2020/2021 recipient of the University of Florida Grinter Fellowship award and 2022 Artaxis Fellowship. He has exhibited his work internationally and nationally in Turkey, the Eastern US, and throughout Florida, and is also the recipient of the 2022 NCECA Graduate Student Fellowship and the 2022 NCECA Multicultural Fellowship award.

"My hybrid memories are without voice yet want to be heard. In my sculptural work, I reveal unspoken stories of beauty, migration and my cultural history. These stories encompass the architectural, geographical, cultural, and social spaces encountered as people of the diaspora. Through my studio practice, I explore my hybrid psychological experience of spaces between Ghana and the US, using clay, colorful yarns, and African fabric. Intrinsic to my work is the love of materials which are utilized to create complex visual and tactile layers as well as layered associations and meanings. I grew up in a society where braids and ways of dressing connote beauty and status identification.

"I want the viewer to see my work, question the intricacies of decision making, and start reflecting on their own story of hybridity."



Macy Higgins

Tampa

A born-and-raised Floridian, 27-year-old Macy Higgins enjoys capturing the sweeter side of life through her art. Once identifying primarily as a painter, Macy has recently developed her style into three-dimensional practices in order to create a more immersive sensory experience. Her installations have appeared in St. Petersburg since 2019, including an installation titled *Homecoming* at Mize Gallery in 2020 and most recently the Strawberry Room featured at Fairgrounds St. Pete. Despite never being much of a baker, she taught herself traditional cake decorating techniques and learned how to imitate real desserts using materials such as spackle, resin and foam to create art objects that look good enough to eat. *Sugar Trinkets* is a culmination of the saccharinity and bittersweetness that life presents us with and the ability seemingly insignificant items have to turn into something of significance when irrevocably tied to special people and memories. With the recent loss of several maternal figures in her life, Macy has subsequently spent a lot of time with these types of objects. For her, they provide a sense of comfortable nostalgia. They serve as reminders of the past, as relics of lost aesthetics, and as remnants of almost-forgotten memories. The viewer is invited to indulge in this sense of familial comfort and delight themselves with their own sweet recollections.



Morgan Janssen

Sarasota

Morgan Janssen received her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art and is a graduate of Ringling College of Art and Design. She has exhibited work in Art Basel Miami Beach, the Museum of Fine Art, St. Petersburg, Mercedes Benz Financial Services, and with group shows throughout the state of Florida. Currently, Morgan remains connected within the Sarasota community as an artist and an instructor with Ringling and State College of Florida.

"My work examines tropical imagery and packaged paradises through analysis of artificial objects and commercially-sold color palettes. Exotic plants, animal busts, and bright color palettes are common sources of inspiration. By creating faux tropical imagery, I examine the nuance of the concept of paradise through remnants of natural elements. The plastics and rubber used discuss outlasting the original along with looking at the construction of the 'natural other'. Dissecting paradise as a location or better place and reconstructing it elsewhere is what the average individual thinks of as tropical—something that is *not here*. I challenge the concept and core meaning of what it means to 'exoticize' a paradise to achieve that better sense of well-being.

"My work is a social commentary on controlling nature and reducing it into manageable units. By using natural imagery and transposing it into plastic, I vacate its reality and redefine it through a shell of its existence. The work protects the viewer from the dangers, perceived or romanticized, of nature; safety is thereby insured for the viewer through an artificial sense of control through its aesthetic expression."

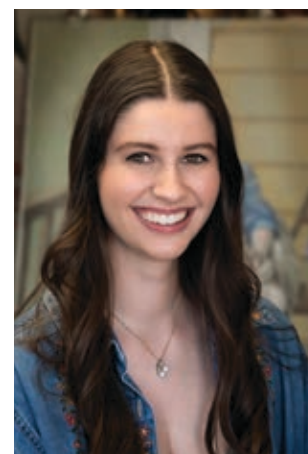


Lauren Mann

Clearwater

Lauren Mann is a portrait artist based in Clearwater who specializes in colored pencil drawings inspired by pattern, color, and the personalities that surround her. In 2021 she received a BFA in Drawing from the University of Florida. Mann has exhibited in shows including *Intimate Interiors: Figures in Space* at the Gainesville Fine Arts Association Gallery, as well as *The Nonseniors* and *Realize* at the 4Most Gallery in Gainesville. Vibrant and detailed, Mann's drawings seek to express familiar emotions through unique and intimate portraits.

"This work strives to illustrate the beauty of the ordinary characteristics found in everyday life. In a time and space full of chaos and disappointment, it feels comforting to be able to stop and appreciate the innate beauty of the human figure going about simple and familiar tasks. The illustrated narratives reveal aspects of individuals' personalities and lives that add vibrancy to the common thoughts and experiences of the everyday. By inserting small idiosyncrasies that require a careful examination of the image, it challenges the viewer to look deeper and find even more similarities between the feelings and moments conveyed through the works and the viewer's own lived experiences."



Sam McCoy

Tallahassee

Sam McCoy was born and raised in Orlando, Florida in the 90s. She received her BFA from the University of Central Florida and her MFA from Florida State University. She is a contemporary painter who focuses on the boundaries between natural and hyperreal landscapes of Florida. She pulls her inspirations from a world she grew up in where spectacles and roadside attractions dominate America's tourism capital. Between eco-tourism destinations and constructed gardens, McCoy explores the contradictions of her experiences in these places. By pulling back the metaphorical curtain on a carefully crafted image of Florida, McCoy's ideas of disenchantment and re-enchantment are enacted in each painting. The viewer can still find meaning in the shadier discordant corners of the State. She is currently working in Tallahassee as an artist, instructor, and art programs manager.

"The Sunshine State is a sinking peninsula and constructed utopia, a swampland that teeters between the sacred and the profane. Florida is seemingly pieced together by an assemblage of ideals, myths, morals, histories, and systems while also being chewed up by hurricanes, wildfires, political riffs, diseases, and false realities."



Sheherazade Thenard

Orlando

Sheherazade Thenard (b. 1995 in New York) graduated in 2018 with their BFA and later in 2022 with their MFA from the University of Central Florida. They are currently participating as an Artist in Action with American Landmark during a yearlong artist residency in Downtown Orlando.

"How does one navigate the constant uncovering of selfhood?"

"As a Black woman scholar and a second-generation child of immigrants from Martinique, growing up in the Florida suburbs, I am constantly negotiating my space in the southern American landscape. My work addresses autobiographical discoveries regarding the intersections of womanhood, sexuality, class, and how gender roles influence the spaces I inhabit. My painting, printmaking, and drawing include a variety of media, heightened color, and texture. I use portraiture and still lifes as narrative tools to uncover the emotive states of the figure depicted. By using visual elements such as jewel toned skin, I address inherent politicization surrounding Black skin. Hot Florida sunsets elicit the appearance of fire, and chromatically lush foliage fights for dominance and acts dually as a concealing element.

