

Fresh Squeezed 7: Emerging Artists in Florida

Welcome to Fresh Squeezed 7, our annual amplification of emerging artists in the Sunshine State. We are celebrating seven years of amazing artwork by equally amazing creators, and this year does not disappoint!

As always, our selection panel culled over 120 applications from across the state, narrowing the exhibition down to the six artists featured here. It's always a joyful and heartbreaking process, seeing so much inspiring good work and only having a limited amount of space in which to show it all. We were looking for diversity in medium, in ideas, and in geographical location, all of which somehow comes together to form a delightful, cohesive whole.

While we don't necessarily plan it that way, themes and commonalities do emerge among the artists selected for the exhibition. We're happy to announce this is the first year that we have an ALL FEMALE line up. And due to the inclusive interpretation we use to define an emerging artist (no previous solo shows in Florida), you'll find artists here who are still pursuing their MFAs (KJ Skidmore and Leeann Rae) AND artists who are returning to their first love of art after finding fulfillment in decades of other related careers (Latonya Hicks and Deborah W. Perlman).

Other themes you may notice as you peruse the galleries are the inventive (and exuberant!) use of materials. Denise Treizman and Latonya Hicks both incorporate cast off, recycled and vintage materials in their dimensional wall work. While Denise's process is more spontaneous and Latonya's is deliberate and measured, they both create joyful

works of art that invite contemplation and perhaps a spark of recognition from the viewer.

KJ Skidmore and Laura De Valencia both deal with contemporary issues and pop culture in their work, though to wildly different effect. KJ's humorous mixed media paintings address the notion of the male gaze, and the women who must endure it. Laura's installations use fashion culture as a jumping off point to raise questions about international stereotypes and the borders (both visible and not) that immigrants have to experience on a daily basis.

Both Leeann Rae and Deborah W. Perlman create work that challenge the viewer to look longer, and to think deeper. With their disparate materials (Leeann with soft pastel and Deborah with cut paper), they raise notions of space, whether physical or mental, real or imagined, in the present or a memory from the past.

It takes many, many hands to pull off this exhibition. Thank you to Chris Andrews, Tom Kaltenbaugh, and Betsy Orbe Lester who make our galleries look fabulous at all times. Thanks to Allison Battaglia who gamely and enthusiastically documented our studio visits with each artist. Thank you to our generous sponsors without whose support a project of this size simply could not happen. And mostly, thank you to these six extraordinary artists who trusted us with their work. We can't wait to see what the future holds for you all!

Amanda Cooper
Chief Curator



Fresh Squeezed 7 Opening Reception

Saturday, April 8, 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

Ate' Porter + Israel Harris April 8-19

Nicholle Miller + Dan Christopher April 21-May 5

Lillian Stanley + Leah Linkogle May 5-27

On view in the Morean Pop Up Gallery:

Richard Seidel: Daily Drawings April 1-22

SPMOP Photo Laureate 2023 May 1-20

Mike Cannata: Liquid Stillness May 27-June 30

Upcoming Exhibitions at the Morean Arts Center:

PSYCHEDELIC: Members Show July 8-August 24

Donna M. Richardson: Spiritual Influences

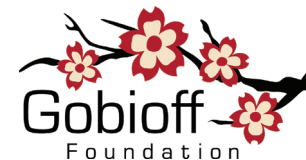
Gregory Matthews: A Landscape Revisited

Steph Hargrove: CauseFlowers: Pride

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

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EMERGING ARTISTS IN FLORIDA

April 8-June 22, 2023





Laura De Valencia

Tallahassee

Laura De Valencia was born and raised in Barranquilla, Colombia, and initially pursued a degree in law. In 2007, she emigrated to the US, earning a BFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design. After four years working as an art director in New York City, Laura returned to Florida to start a family and pursue an MFA at Florida State University. She graduated in 2021 and has since exhibited her work in both national and international contemporary art spaces.

De Valencia's work explores the ongoing experience of crossing borders that immigrants face in their daily lives in the US. The artist recognizes that the journey of an immigrant does not end once they cross the physical border into the country, as they continue to encounter a series of invisible yet significant borders such as language, legal, and social barriers.

Through her artistic exploration, De Valencia studies how clothing serves as a vital form of survival for immigrants that goes beyond mere displays of wealth, class, or taste. "Fashion" for the immigrant is a borderless space that offers a means to both reveal and conceal aspects of a fragmented identity; a tool for asserting humanity or hiding vulnerabilities that threaten their physical permanence in the country. By enabling immigrants to maneuver through spaces that may be off-limits and subvert both visible and invisible thresholds, the artist reveals how a borderless system such as fashion challenges established notions of nationality and geographical borders.

By highlighting the challenges and complexities of navigating multiple borders, De Valencia aims to bring attention to the immigrant's lived experiences in a way that is both meaningful and compassionate. Her ultimate objective is to heighten awareness of the social and political circumstances that define our time and foster a space for deeper conversation and understanding.



Latonya Hicks

Clearwater

Latonya Hicks holds an MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts/Tufts University, Boston, MA; and a BFA from FSU.

"Drawing on an obsession with objects as an accumulation of human experience and personal references, I create densely layered, figurative compositions from my 'dragon's hoard'. My eye is most often drawn to cultural symbols, shiny objects and artifacts that evoke the comfort of resting in my grandmother's kitchen with her draped in brightly patterned dresses indicative of the 60s and 70s. During my formative years I struggled to feel 'enough' around my extended family. My grandmother's house in Macon was always a safe place where my 'blackness' was never called into question; where my existence, femininity, beauty and speech patterns were always enough.

"For years my style of dress was a private documentation of my desire to pay homage to the safety she provided. I'd scour thrift shops and flea markets for trinkets and clothing that made me feel connected to that time and place. Her house was lost in a gang fire and with it everything I built my early visual language on. In much the same way that I used to 'collect' and fill my hoard using my body as the canvas now my WORK is about time, relationships and memories in order to invent a visual language that represents MY experience - which feels paradoxically fractured and whole. My sense of self was and is a hybrid structure; a multiplicity of experiences equivalent to my work."



Deborah W. Perlman

Hollywood

Originally from Baltimore, Deborah Perlman is a graduate of Boston University (BFA, sculpture) and Cranbrook Academy of Art (MFA, sculpture).

"Depicting an 'almost-but-not-quite-real' world somewhere between authentic and imagined, my art celebrates ambiguity, sliding in and out of reality, and compelling me to challenge previous ideas and established thoughts.

"I find excitement and mystery in three-dimensional forms and spaces. Creating wall-mounted sculpture draws me in, challenging me to go beyond what I know and uncover what I don't. It's thrilling yet at times unsettling, continually bringing me to new awareness and understanding. Simply put, the work frees my spirit.

"My goal is to create spaces that challenge the senses, evoke emotion, and ask you to consider:

What is it? Where is it? What do you see and feel? Do you find yourself in it, or not?

"Inspiration has come from many personal experiences throughout the years. Recently, global issues such as climate change, prejudice and divisiveness are finding their way into my work.

"I'm currently working with paper, photographs, wire mesh, flat aluminum wire, wood, plastic, and adhesives, and continually looking for new materials to integrate into each piece. Building three-dimensional forms, I adhere each element to the base, then juxtapose them to highlight their points of contact and the shadows they cast.

"I invite you to glimpse into my interpreted world and find your place within it."



Leeann Rae

Orlando

Based in Central Florida, Leeann Rae's work is an exploration of memory through drawing. Using charcoal, soft pastel, and ink, Leeann makes large-scale drawings to encourage the viewer to question their understanding of memory. Leeann is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Central Florida. During her time in this program, she has received several accolades such as the College of Arts and Humanities scholarship and a graduate assistantship which has given her the opportunity to teach fundamental drawing classes at UCF.

"My work is an investigation of how we understand episodic memory, the act of recalling specific events or episodes from one's past. I utilize photographic references, imagination, recounted stories, and my own lived experience as vessels of recollected memories. I develop drawn images with charcoal and soft pastel because they can be layered and difficult to erase. The inherent qualities of my materials leave a ghost or remnant of the original thought or mark placement. I hope viewers are encouraged to navigate the narrative I present in the drawings, as well as reflect on the ways in which their memories are constructed."



KJ Skidmore

Tampa

KJ's current work is based in painting/drawing that extends into 3-D space through multimedia installation. Her immersive spaces are chaotic and aggressive, but at the same time alluring. She works within her own bizarre and disjointed narratives and themes containing warped textual elements, strange cartoon characters, and color palettes that are both grimy and fluorescent. Her material use is variable and may include masses of hair clumped together with canned beets, pink stained carpet, fabrics, wood, plaster, teeth, rain jackets, and Smurf-themed objects.

KJ's painted series *Burger Time* caricatures leering male clientele as flat, monster-like cartoons that interact with a staring waitress to explore gendered tropes and forms of voyeurism. This series reconstructs reality in relation to being female by presenting experiences like getting stared at or groped within a hokey themed attraction called "Burger Time" restaurant. Her series is meant to revolt the viewer through acknowledging the male gaze, while also celebrating its trashiness and the culture surrounding it. She uses humor to poke fun at this harmful and uneven power dynamic. The series presents this sickening concept through more palatable presentation such as expressive cartoon figures and bright colors.

KJ is from Gainesville, FL, but was living on the West Coast until recently. She is back in Florida pursuing an MFA at USF in Tampa.



Denise Treizman

Miami

A Chilean-Israeli artist, Denise Treizman earned an MFA from the School of Visual Arts, New York, and is currently a studio resident at Laundromat Art Space in Miami. Her work has been exhibited across the US and internationally. She has completed numerous artist residencies including those at Mass MOCA, North Adams, MA; NARS Foundation International Artists Residency, Brooklyn, NY; and the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts Studio Program in New York City, where she developed her work until 2019.

Denise creates sculptures and installation-based works combining found objects and ready-made materials with brightly colored, textural, and sometimes luminescent weavings. Through a practice of gleaning and repurposing, she accumulates materials with no specific purpose in mind, except having them at hand and available to subtly shape the creation of her works. Her process is at once an act of artistic ownership over her materials as well as a playful exploration of the infinite possibilities that they afford her. Denise critically examines hyper-consumerism, but at the same time, she paradoxically participates in it, relying on commercial goods and throwaway culture to make her work. She exposes her own way of dealing with excess: on one hand, she questions the real need for vibrantly patterned single-use materials, like pink flamingo-printed duct tape, or violet bubble wrap, to exist. On the other one, she finds these playful materials to be absolutely irresistible. By incorporating them into her found object installations and unconventional weavings, she prompts the viewer to reflect on the mass-produced society in which we live.

