

GALLERY GUIDE

HUDSON
VALLEY
ARTISTS
2020

New Folk



September 12 – October 25, 2020

Alice and Horace Chandler and North Galleries

SAMUEL DORSKY MUSEUM OF ART

State University of New York at New Paltz

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New Folk

Folk is where old cultural traditions meet contemporary conditions. Folk art affords insight both into our collective cultural heritage, and into the unique expressions of individual makers. *New Folk* showcases artwork that distinctively captures the spirit of contemporary folk practice in the Hudson Valley today. It offers a vision of what folk art can be—highly skilled, locally-sourced, idiosyncratic, and resourceful. *New Folk* is also a catch-all for the long history of visitors and immigrants to the Hudson Valley, from early European colonizers, enslaved people, and settlers, to agricultural migrants, Catskill tourists, city weekenders, and many other kinds of “new folk” who have journeyed to this area. With them comes creative and sometimes contentious shifts in our cultural landscape.

Folk art encompasses the artistic and cultural practices of a defined social group, often demonstrating skilled craft techniques and styles passed down through generations. It implies a shared culture, community, and experience. The New York Hudson Valley has deep histories of folk traditions. Indigenous peoples such as the Lenape and Mohicans practiced their own traditions here before being largely displaced westward by colonizers. French Huguenots settled here during the seventeenth century, followed by immigrant groups who gravitated to upstate New York in the late eighteenth century seeking opportunities for commerce or for freedom.

Some of the works in this exhibition invoke these histories and their crafts, such as Kate Hamilton's *Humble Monument*, which magnifies a modest bonnet to giantess proportions, and Win Zibeon's supernatural *Chair 1920* painting, both of which reference local Shaker folk traditions, for whom dedication to handwork was part of their faith.

The Hudson Valley story is one of people traveling from afar and settling here either permanently or intermittently. Such is the experience of many artists in this show. In the works of artists like Natalie Wargin and Julia Whitney Barnes, we see how recent new folk engage with the heritage of our region, such as the diminutive 1876 Gothic Revival Clove Free Chapel in High Falls and the major brick-making

ON THE COVER:

Annie Raife, Untitled, 2019, wool yarn, monks cloth, wood, courtesy the artist

industry that operated along the Hudson River during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Other artworks, such as Philip Nerestan's *Boutey Lwa*, inspired by the spiritual vèvè ancestor symbols of Haitian Vodou ceremonies, or Irja Bodén's *Story Vessels* that recall her Swedish childhood in a Laplandic town north of the Arctic Circle, speak to the inherited traditions and memories from homelands that new folk carry with them.

As people migrate and communities shift, old routes of folk techniques being passed down through families or systems of apprenticeships are disrupted. The mass-commodification of folk crafts also plays a part in the breakdown of local customs; Tony Thompson's painterly hand-made gestures strikingly clash with the machine precision of synthetic carpet fibres arranged in patterns appropriated from indigenous traditions. Some artists, drawn to repair this rift, have trained themselves and others in the rigorous methods of traditional crafts. In the applied-dye weaving of Michelle Batho, the basketry of Katie Grove, or Doug Navara's earthenware sugar jars, traditional methods are freshly interpreted whilst retaining attention to the techniques and skills of each medium.

For others, different strategies are used to tackle the disruption of displacement. Sharon Bates' *Tall Yarn* borrows the crocheted handwork of a now anonymous woman to stand in for the craftwork of Bates' own Syrian matrilineage, thus invoking global traditions of women's utilitarian creativity. Another ready-made is offered by Roberta Ziemba with her piece *Meds*, which features her grandmother's craft supplies just as she preserved them and Ziemba inherited them, stored in old medical prescription canisters, neatly signalling the cathartic, healing effect that repetitive handcraft can have across generations.

The gendered conventions of folk traditions are addressed in several of the artworks. For example, Ben Pinder's *Star Party* and *Beer-Pong Tailgate* tackle the myths of rural masculinities by destabilizing their associated rituals and pageantry. Caitlin Rose Sweet engages gendered histories of craft-making by reimagining relationships between bodies and labor, inviting queer magic into conversation with the mundane through her assemblage, *The Weaver*.

Archetypes and myths, both ancient and cross-cultural, abound in the work of several artists, such as the painted collages of Elin Menzies, or Jonah Meyer's whittled wood series *Horcruxes and Hippocamps*. Taking her cue from a 15th-century Italian manuscript, Loren Eiferman's wood sculptures reinterpret premodern esoteric symbols for healing using natural materials from our region.

Several artists use established folk mediums but subvert the aesthetic to create a contemporary take on traditional forms, such as Katie Ford's "Corsicana" series of quilt collages, Kathy Greenwood's braided rug work, or Annie Raife's graphic latch-hook abstractions. In many of these works the high-art vernacular of abstraction is combined with traditional craftsmanship as in, for example, Donise English's woven hemp *Choker* or Harry Leigh's minimalist wall pieces. Some artists, whilst referencing traditional folk vocabulary, radically reinterpret it. Vivien Collens' *Binary Sampler* sculptures replace the embroidery floss of a tapestry sampler with welded aluminum; Charlie Smith's geometric wood and mirror relief, *Carapace*, references quilt-making as much as fine woodsmanship.

Many of the artworks exhibited in *New Folk* challenge old-fashioned high-low hierarchies that posit fine art as superior to folkcraft. Here those terms are being broken apart and all their assumptions of privilege or primitivism are laid bare. Not every exhibit can be considered folk art in the strictest sense, but of course, today's Hudson Valley is not a homogenous culture. It never has been. What we do see here is a small and brilliant sampling of vibrant creativity from artists and makers in our region; art that captures something special from expanding dialogues between old and new cultural identities. Collectively these artworks allow a glimpse into the rich and diverse heritages that underpin the communities we are creating together.

—Anna Conlan, Curator

The Dorsky Museum's annual Hudson Valley Artists exhibition is open to all emerging and mid-career artists with an active art practice in Columbia, Dutchess, Greene, Orange, Putnam, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and Westchester Counties. Exhibited works will be eligible for acquisition into the museum's permanent collection, thanks to the Hudson Valley Artists Annual Purchase Award, which is supported by the Alice and Horace Chandler Art Acquisition Fund.

Curated by Anna Conlan, Curator and Exhibitions Manager
with Amy Fredrickson, Curatorial and Collections Assistant
The Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art



Katie Ford, *No Words for Circles* (from "Corsicana" series), 2017, fabric, fiber reactive dye, natural dyes, acrylic paint, thread, courtesy the artist



Douglas Navarra, *Yellow Sugar*, 2018, earthenware, courtesy the artist



Caitlin Rose Sweet, *The Weaver*, 2020, ceramic, braided textiles, found milking stool, courtesy the artist



Ben Pinder, *Star Party*, 2020, handmade milk paint on burnt wood, courtesy the artist

Exhibition Checklist

All works courtesy the artists

Jenna Annunziato

(b. 1996 lives/works Beacon, NY)

Beacon, New York, 2020

Oil on wood

18 x 24 in.

Sharon Bates

(b. 1955 lives/works Millbrook, NY)

Tall Yam, 2018

Found crocheted acrylic rugs on
painted wood

81 x 28 x 3 in.

Michelle Batho

(b. 1993 lives/works Newburgh, NY)

Some, 2019

Hand dyed and woven 10/2 cotton
13 x 13 ft.

Irja Bodén

(b. 1960, lives/works Ghent, NY)

Story Vessel I, 2018

Ceramics, glaze, luster

10 x 11 x 7 in.

Story Vessel XI, 2018

Ceramics, glaze, luster

7 ¼ x 7 ½ x 5 ¾ in.

Story Vessel IV, 2018

Ceramics, glaze, luster

8 x 11 x 6 ½ in.

Vivien Abrams Collins

(b. 1946 lives/works
Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY)

Binary Sampler, 2020

Welded aluminum and enamel paint

22 7/8 x 12 7/8 x 4 5/8 in.

Tall Sampler, 2020

Welded aluminum and enamel paint

26 ¼ x 9 ¼ x 4 ¾ in.

Ryan Cronin

(b. 1972 lives/works New Paltz, NY)

Tulips, 2020

Oil based enamel on wood

36 x 60 in.

Jan Dolan

(b. 1950 lives/works Beacon, NY)

Foreboding, 2020

Acrylic paint, oil paint, oil pastel, and
paper on canvas

40 x 40 in.

Loren Eiferman

(b. 1957 lives/works Somers, NY)

7R, 2017

Wood, graphite, earth, ash

42 x 25 x 10 in.

Specimens, 2018

Wood, linseed oil, graphite; wood,
graphite, earth, ash

Dimensions variable (approx. 15 in. ea.)

Donise English

(b. 1955 lives/works Poughkeepsie, NY)

Choker, 2018-2020

Hemp

Approx 75 in.

Katie Ford

(b. 1988 lives/works Catskill, NY)

Wearing Softness in a Hard Place

(from "Corsicana" series), 2017

Fabric, acrylic paint, silkscreen, toner,
floor wax, natural dye, thread

64 x 65 in.

No Words for Circles

(from "Corsicana" series), 2017

Fabric, fiber reactive dye, natural dyes,
acrylic paint, thread

57 ¼ x 67 in.

The Tools for Grounding
(from "Corsicana" series), 2017
Fabric, fiber reactive dye, natural dyes,
acrylic paint, oil stick, thread
39 x 54 ¾ in.

Kathy Greenwood

(b. 1970 lives/works Glenmont, NY)
Waste Not 6, 2019
Discarded clothing, thread, felt, polyfill
41 x 48 x 3 in.

Katie Grove

(b. 1989 lives/works Stone Ridge, NY)
Standing Form/Becoming, 2020
Black ash log and splints
4 x 21 in.

Kate Hamilton

(b. 1955 lives/works New Paltz, NY)
Humble Monument, 2019
Nylon sailcloth, bubble wrap, aluminum
wire, thread
16 x 6 x 6 ft.

Aaron Hauck

(b. 1978 lives/works Rifton, NY)
Marshall Portrait, 2020
Oil on panel
36 x 48 in.

Harry Leigh

(b. 1931 lives/works Suffern, NY)
Untitled, 2017
Bricks, wood
48 x 48 x 10 in.

Untitled, 2019
Wood
96 x 74 x 10 in.

Elin Menzies

(b. 1941 lives/works Saugerties, NY)
Beaver Boy Returns for the Eclipse
(from "Alignments" series), 2020
Paper, gold foil, watercolor paint, printers
ink, brown velvet on board
8 x 10 in.

Beneath the Blue Moth Moon
(from "Alignments" series), 2020
Paper, gold foil, acrylic paint, black velvet
on board
22 x 22 in.

Baby Gazers at Black Rock Lake
(from "Baby Gazer" series), 2019
Paper, watercolor paint, printers ink
8 ½ x 11 ½ in.

Leap of Faith
(from "Alignments" series), 2019
Paper, watercolor paint, printers ink,
metallic leaves, black velvet on board
25 x 18 in.

Jonah Meyer

(b. 1969 lives/works Kingston, NY)
All works Untitled (from "Horcruxes and
Hippocamps" series), 2020
Wood
Dimensions variable (approx. 25 in. ea.)

Douglas Navarra

(b. 1954 lives/works St. Remy, NY)
Green Sugar, 2018
Earthenware
13 ½ x 9 ½ in.

Yellow Sugar, 2018
Earthenware
14 x 10 in.

Divination Vessel, 2019
Earthenware
16 x 11 x 11 in.

Phillip Nerestan

(b. 1965, lives/works Beacon, NY)
Boutey Lwa (Spirit Bottles): Erzulie Triptych:
Dantor, Freda, Gran
Kalfou
Ogu
Ogu(2)
Azaka
2018–2020
Glass bottles, gesso, Indian ink
Dimensions variable (approx. 10 in. ea.)

Ben Pinder

(b. 1981 lives/works Rhinebeck, NY)
Star Party, 2020
Handmade milk paint on burnt wood
18 x 18 x 3 in.

Beer Pong Tailgate, 2019–2020
Mixed media installation and videod
performance
90 x 80 x 30 in.

Annie Raife

(b. 1989 lives/works Mountain Dale, NY)
Untitled, 2019
Wool yarn, monks cloth, wood
48 x 60 in.

Nancy Sadler

(b. 1957 lives/works Rock Hill, NY)
All works watercolor on wood
Blue Arches, Orange Light, 2018
Watercolor on wood
2 1/2 x 4 1/2 in.

High Falls, 2019
4 1/2 x 5 in.

Kevonga Lake, 2019
4 3/4 x 6 in.

Cedar House Night, 2018
4 1/2 x 4 3/4 in.

Lone Cottage in the Clouds, 2020
4 3/4 x 7 1/2 in.

Leaning Toward Bethel, 2018
4 3/4 x 6 in.

Charlie Smith

(b. 1988 lives/works Hudson, NY)
Carapace, 2020
Acrylic paint, acrylic mirrors, particle board
18 x 24 x 4 in.

Caitlin Rose Sweet

(b. 1978 lives/works Cairo, NY)
The Weaver, 2020
Ceramic, braided textiles, and
found milking stool
26 x 23 x 14 in.

Tony Thompson

(b. 1938 lives/works Hudson, NY)
Untitled Blue, 2019
Acrylic, carpet
23 x 60 in.

Untitled Orange Grey, 2018
Acrylic, carpet
36 x 70 in.

Natalie Wargin

(b. 1951 lives/works Cottekill, NY)
Fox Chapel, 2020
Acrylic on board
27 1/2 x 21 1/2 in.

Julia Whitney Barnes

(b. 1979 lives/works Poughkeepsie, NY)
Hudson River of Bricks, 2020
Glazed historic bricks
Dimensions variable

Win Zibeon

(b. 1945 lives/works Blauvelt, NY)
Chair 1920, 1980–2020
Acrylic on linen
72 x 30 in.

Roberta Ziemba

(b. 1975 lives/works Stone Ridge, NY)
Meds, 2020
Vintage medicine bottles, wooden box,
craft materials
12 x 12 in.

Programs

Events will take place virtually. For information on participating, visit www.newpaltz.edu/museum/programs/public_programs.html

SEPTEMBER

Saturday, September 19, 2 pm

Curator Talk: with *Hudson Valley Artists 2020*:
New Folk curator, Anna Conlan.

Sunday, September 27, 2pm

Family Day: *The Mailiad: A Mythic American Adventure (Part 1)*

Join artist Ben Pinder for an interactive, 'Choose Your Own Adventure' style Zoom adventure across a mythic American landscape. Participants will engage and help make decisions that affect the narrative while learning about performance, collaboration, myth making, and the importance of the US Postal system. Ben will help prepare for your adventure by providing templates and instructions for making masks, and drawing animals that will be used in the video meetup and performance.

Family Day registration at www.newpaltz.edu/museum/learn/familydays

OCTOBER

Saturday, October 3, 2 pm

Discussion: Join *New Folk* curator, Anna Conlan, SUNY New Paltz Art History Professor, Kerry Carso, and renowned local artist exhibiting in *New Folk*, Ryan Cronin, for a talk about the history of the Hudson Valley as a place which draws artists and makers, why it has been such a beacon, and how it plays out today.

Sunday, October 11, 2 pm

Family Day: *The Mailiad: A Mythic American Adventure (Part 2)*

Saturday, October 24, 6 pm

Artists Talk: "Poking Holes and Piercing Through" A talk with Caitlin Rose Sweet and Ben Pinder, artists featured in the exhibition *New Folk*

Both hailing from small towns in America, Caitlin Rose Sweet and Ben Pinder make work which simultaneously embraces Americana and folk traditions while exposing the social constructs (and constraints) surrounding them. We will explore the fascinating work they produce and join them in a discussion on how they are poking holes and piercing through American myths of masculinity, gender and labor, and craft and art, in an attempt to level hierarchies and detoxify beliefs.

School and Group Tours

Please call 845.257.3604 for details and reservations.

Ongoing support for the museum exhibitions and programs is provided by generous donors and friends of the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art and the State University of New York at New Paltz. Additional major funding is provided by the Dorsky Museum Contemporary Art Program Fund.



SAMUEL DORSKY MUSEUM OF ART

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