

John B. Aird Gallery



GAY GARDENS

Curated by Patrick DeCoste

June 2020

Victorian Ladies on Book Cover (Image Credit): Louis de Carmontelle, *Ladies Morning Dress*, 1771, Colour Engraving.

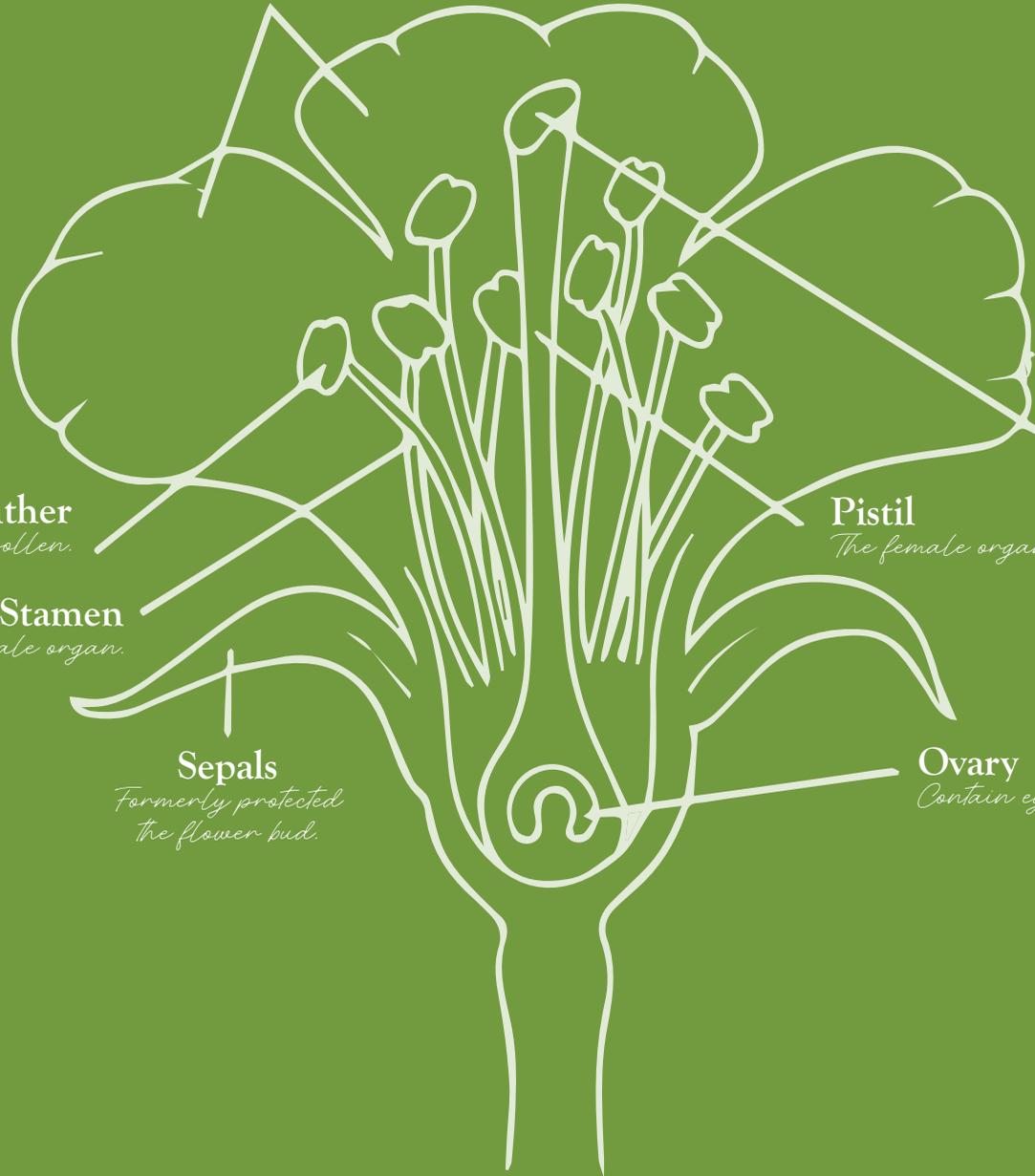
GAY GARDENS

John B. Aird Gallery



Petal

Attracts insects and other pollinators.



Anther

Makes pollen.

Stamen

The male organ.

Sepals

Formerly protected the flower bud.

Pistil

The female organ.

Stigma

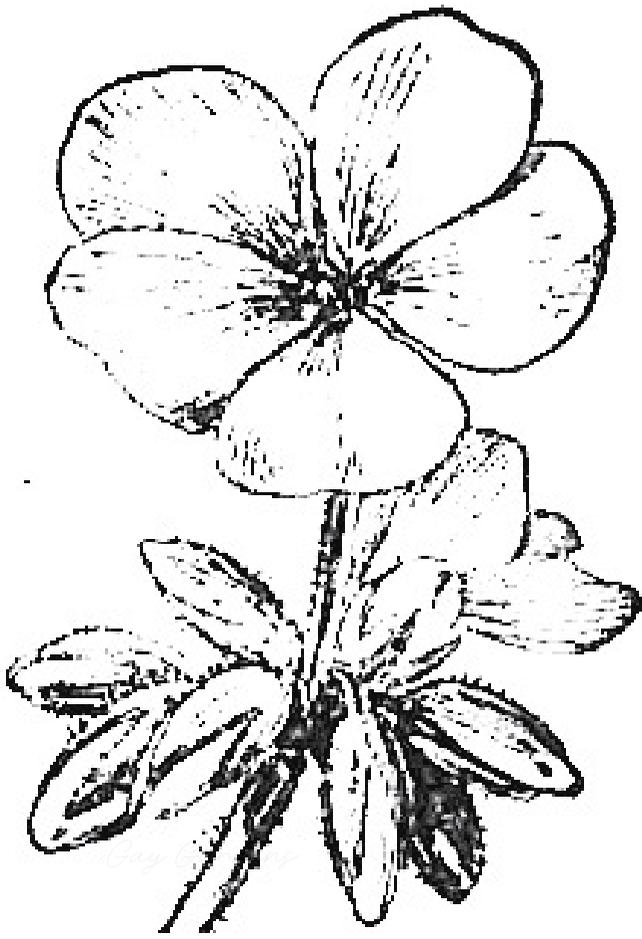
Traps pollen.

Ovary

Contain egg cells.

*Botany, Sexuality,
Wilderness, Gender,
Flowers, Orientation,
Landscapes, Transitions,
Gardening, the Birds
and the Bees, and
Other Representations.*

Fig. 200. —
dialypétale;
Géranium.



John B. Aird Gallery

Originally opened in 1975 and formerly called the Macdonald Block Gallery in the heart of Queen's Park, the seat of the Government of Ontario in Toronto, Canada. Due to fiscal restraints, the gallery was directed to close, but due to the efforts of Canada's legacy art societies – Ontario Society of Artists (OSA), Sculptors Society of Canada (SSC), the Canadian Society of Painters in Watercolour (CSPWC), the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts (RCA), and the Ontario Crafts Council, the gallery re-opened as an independent not for profit organization in 1985. The gallery was named the **John B. Aird Gallery** in honour of the 23rd Lieutenant Governor of Ontario (1980-1985) and his support for arts and culture.

Commonly known as the “Aird”, we are one of the few remaining public art galleries in Toronto. For over 30 years we have been connecting people and ideas – offering a space for contemporary art to be displayed, discussed and enjoyed.

The Aird is a non profit, registered charity supporting artistic expression, public dialogue and lifelong learning. We believe visual culture inspires, engages and amplifies communities. Toronto's arts and culture industry contributes over \$11B to the city's economy. We do our part to stimulate and support artists from a diverse range of backgrounds and disciplines. We provide the canvas for visual culture to be realized, explored and appreciated amongst those that love it most. We leave no one behind.

John B. Aird Gallery

Mission

The Aird is a generous, safe contemporary art exhibition space where visual culture can be shared and explored by an audience as diverse as its makers.

Mandate

The Aird Gallery Board strives to encourage excellence in visual art; to provide an accessible exhibition space in downtown Toronto with professional curatorial standards for the presentation of work; to focus on the works of contemporary artists; to present a variety of media, disciplines and styles; and to provide opportunities for study and education in conjunction with the exhibitions. The John B. Aird Gallery is a not for profit charitable organization that serves the public and the art community. As a charity, all of our events and activities go toward charitable causes.

Director / Curator

Carla Garnet is the Director and Curator of the John B. Aird Gallery and the **JOUEZ** curator for the annual **BIG on Bloor Festival of Arts and Culture** in Toronto. She has worked as the curator at the **Art Gallery of Peterborough** (2010-2013), as a guest curator at **Gallery Stratford** (2009-2010), as an independent curator (1997-2010), and was the founder and director of **Garnet Press Gallery** (1984-97).

Curator's Statement



I joined the Board at the Aird Gallery in the fall of 2019. Our previous Pride partners were unavailable and we needed something for the Pride 2020 exhibition, so I volunteered my services as curator. The gallery is attached to a community garden at Artscape on Queen Street West, so I began dreaming of a big glamorous gay garden party to accompany the exhibition.

We solicited submissions from artists with the questions: **Can a garden be gay? Can a flower be lesbian? Can a tree be LGBTQ2+?** We asked for content such as: *botany, sexuality, wilderness, gender, flowers, orientation, landscapes, transitions, gardening, the birds and the bees, and other representations.* We encouraged mediums such as: *drawing, quilting, painting, pyrography, needlepoint, photography, ceramic, weaving, printmaking, beading, sculpture, video, and performance.*

At the time, I was reading **Andrea Wulf's** *The Brother Gardeners, Botany, Empire, and the Birth of an Obsession* which featured **Carl Linnaeus**, a Swedish scientist who published *Systema Naturae* in 1735. The book describes his method of naming and classifying plants based on their sexual organs and sexual activities. Society was shocked and embarrassed by the botanical orgies happening in their back yards. In the lily flower's arrangement of pistils and stamens, a woman has sex with six different men. The virtuous canna is monogamous with one husband and

one wife. In Linnaeus's plant hierarchy, monogamous heterosexuals were placed at the top, while male homosexuals were relegated to the bottom, especially the syngenesists who use pollen to unite their genitals.

Scientists have also grouped humans using similar techniques: monogamous heterosexuals at the top and deviant homosexuals on the bottom. The heterosexual group, for the most part, accepts and performs its classification, while the homosexuals have sub-divided into lesbian, gay, bi, trans, queer, two-spirited, asexual, pansexual, etc. The LGBTQ2+ initialism strives to be inclusive of a variety of sexualities and genders; transforming binary into fluidity.

We received approximately 150 submissions from artists who responded to our call for *Gay Gardens*.

Deep in the Woods, by **Avril Lopez**, shows a colourfully costumed figure in the woods. The costume's name is Yaba (sky in the Zapotec language) and is made from a large blanket covered with teddy bears, bunnies, and assorted plush toys. The furry mask and headpiece are topped with dark feathers. The feathers and blanket reference the artist's Mexican heritage and folkloric costumes representing pre-Hispanic gods and animals. The work is therapeutic for the artist, healing old wounds and celebrating movement, wild and free, deep in the woods.

Elizabeth Elkin's *A Hint of Frangrance* is a flower painting. We received many submissions of flower paintings but could not include all of them in *Gay Gardens*. Elkin's flower painting is filled with big, bold, translucent strokes of colour. The image of the flower almost dissolving into abstraction. The balance of angular pale geometries in the background with bright organic petals in the foreground, gives a lusciousness to the painting, looking like lickable licorice and popsicles.

Venus by **Ashlee Marcus** is a textile piece made with cotton fabric, threads, and counted cross-stitch embroidery. I was happy that we received many amazing textile pieces. *Venus* looks like a go-go dancer from the sixties, bare-breasted with a crown of roses, looking down at us with sultry smoldering sexuality.

Gay Gardens blossomed with the generous support of *Director/curator* **Carla Garnet**, her *executive assistant* **Jennifer Vong**, our *book designer and co-jurist* **Jowenne Carpo Herrera**, and my *partner* **Jamie Whitney**.

Patrick DeCoste, *June 21, 2020.*





Chapter 1

Rooting

Kristy Boyce



“Mary” Antoinette

Digital photography and C-print on watercolour paper

16 x 20

\$350



Nancy L Moore

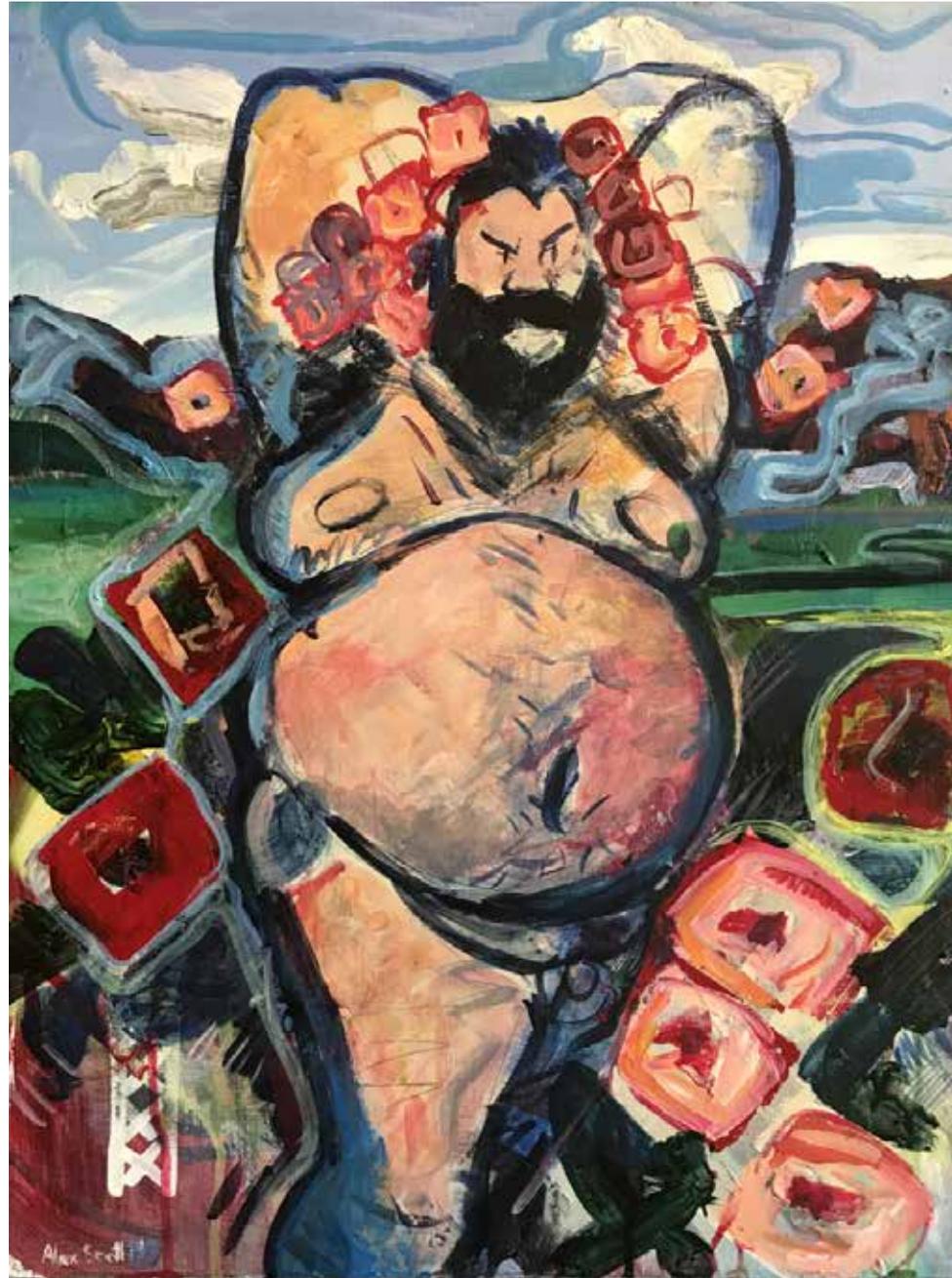
Handsome and Tall

Acrylic on gallery canvas

48 x 60

\$5000

Alex Scott



Bodyshop

Acrylic on panel

24 x 18

\$800



Elizabeth Elkin

A Hint of Fragrance

Acrylic on canvas

24 x 24

\$2000

Pearl Van Geest



Possible Symptoms

Oil on canvas

72 x 108

\$7000



Alexia Parker

The Dandelion

Paper collage

8.5 x 11

\$450

Mango Wild

Raspberry Canes struggle

Acrylic on stretched canvas

36 x 36

\$800





Marina May Raike

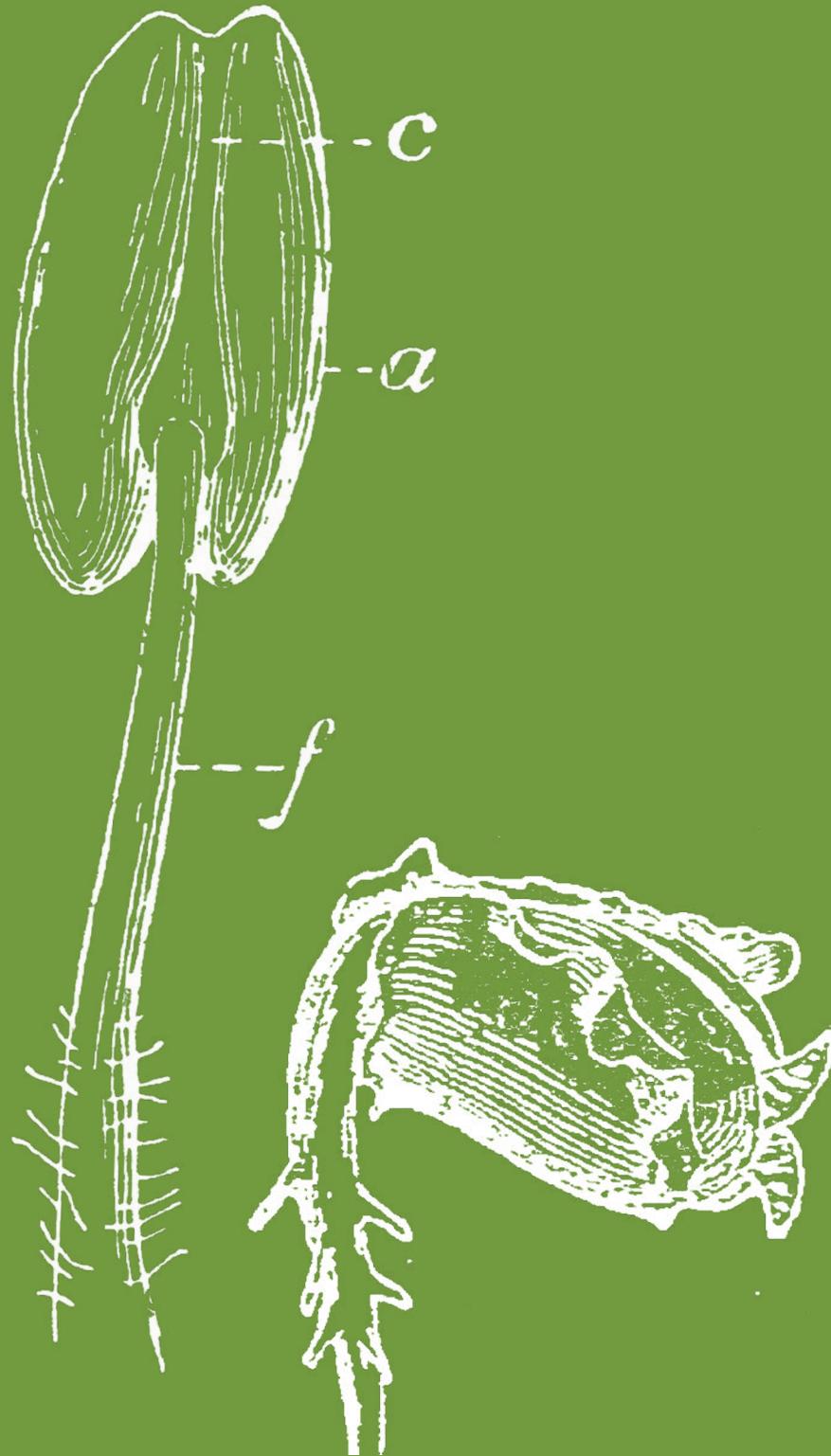
There She Blows

Acrylic on canvas

20 x 24

\$700





Chapter 2

Seeding

Brad McDermott



Sun

Watercolour Giclee print

17 x 11

\$150



Holly Winters

Tulip Polyamorous

Acrylic on canvas

10 x 8

\$100

Brad McDermott



Moon

Watercolour Giclee print

17 x 11

\$150



Aurora Pagano

Temptation Garden

Acrylic and oil on canvas

36 x 36

\$2000

Jackie Rancourt

Obelisk

Infrared photography

8 x 10

\$100





Robert Quance

Pleasure Garden

Toner on paper

8 x 11

\$100

22 Smolkin

Summer in Provence

Acrylic, gouache, and dye on canvas

48 x 36

\$300





Roshannia Mir-Mehran

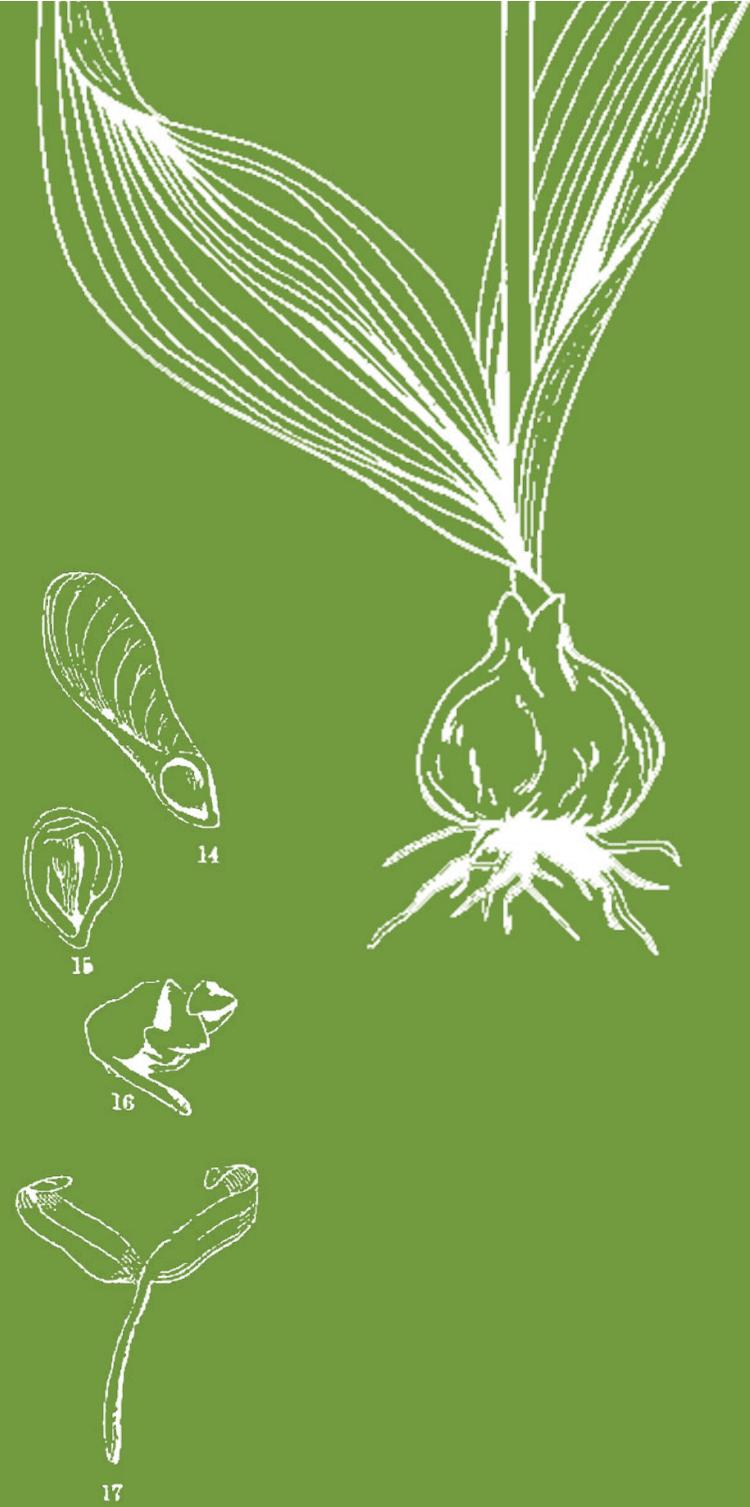
Les Garden

Pencil

15 x 11

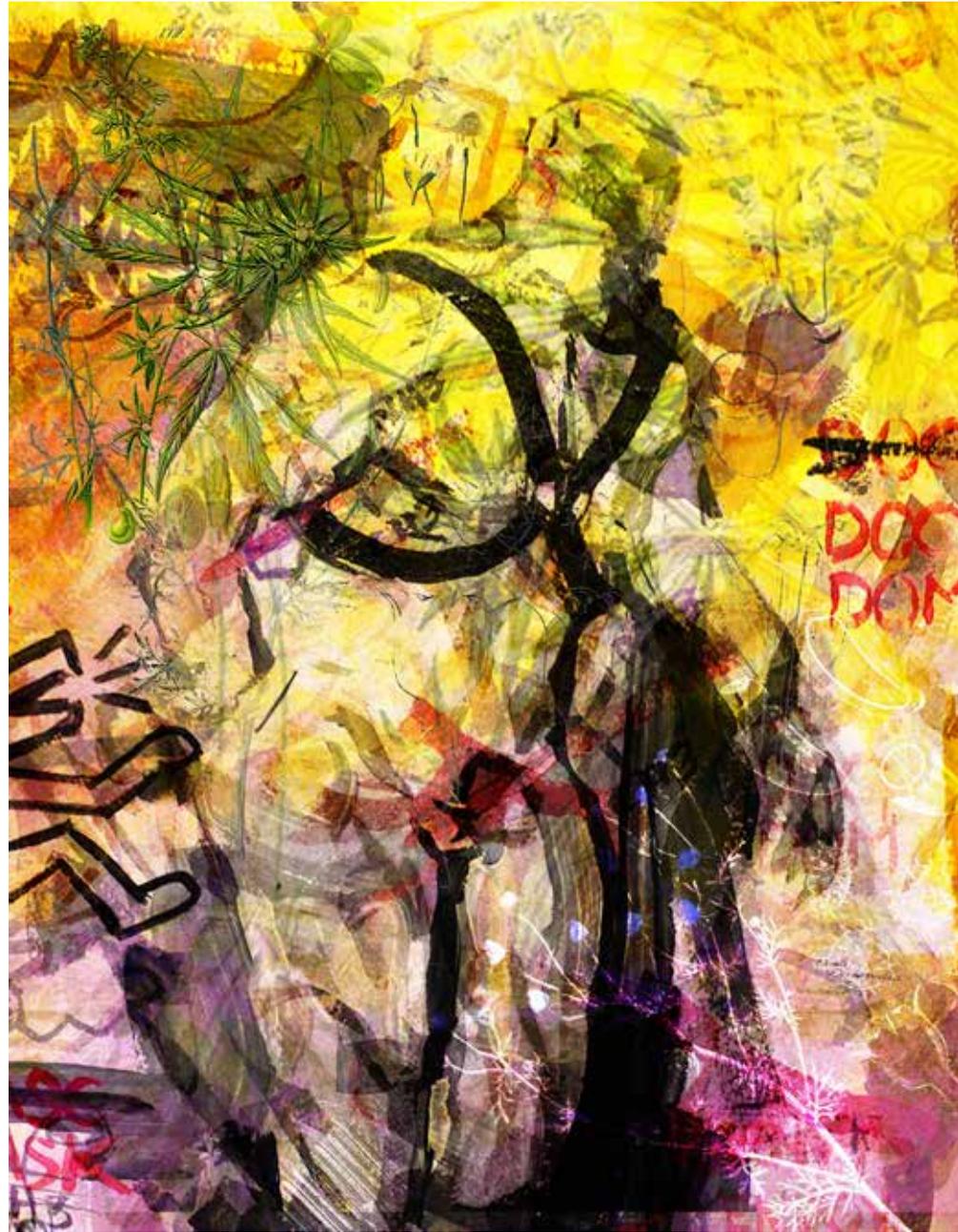
\$200





Chapter 3 Germinating

Matthew Moloney



Marijuana and Chamomile

Acrylic paint, paper, digital, and found images

11 x 8.5

\$140



Elizabeth Elkin

Serenity

Acrylic on canvas

30 x 30

\$2000

Alexia Parker

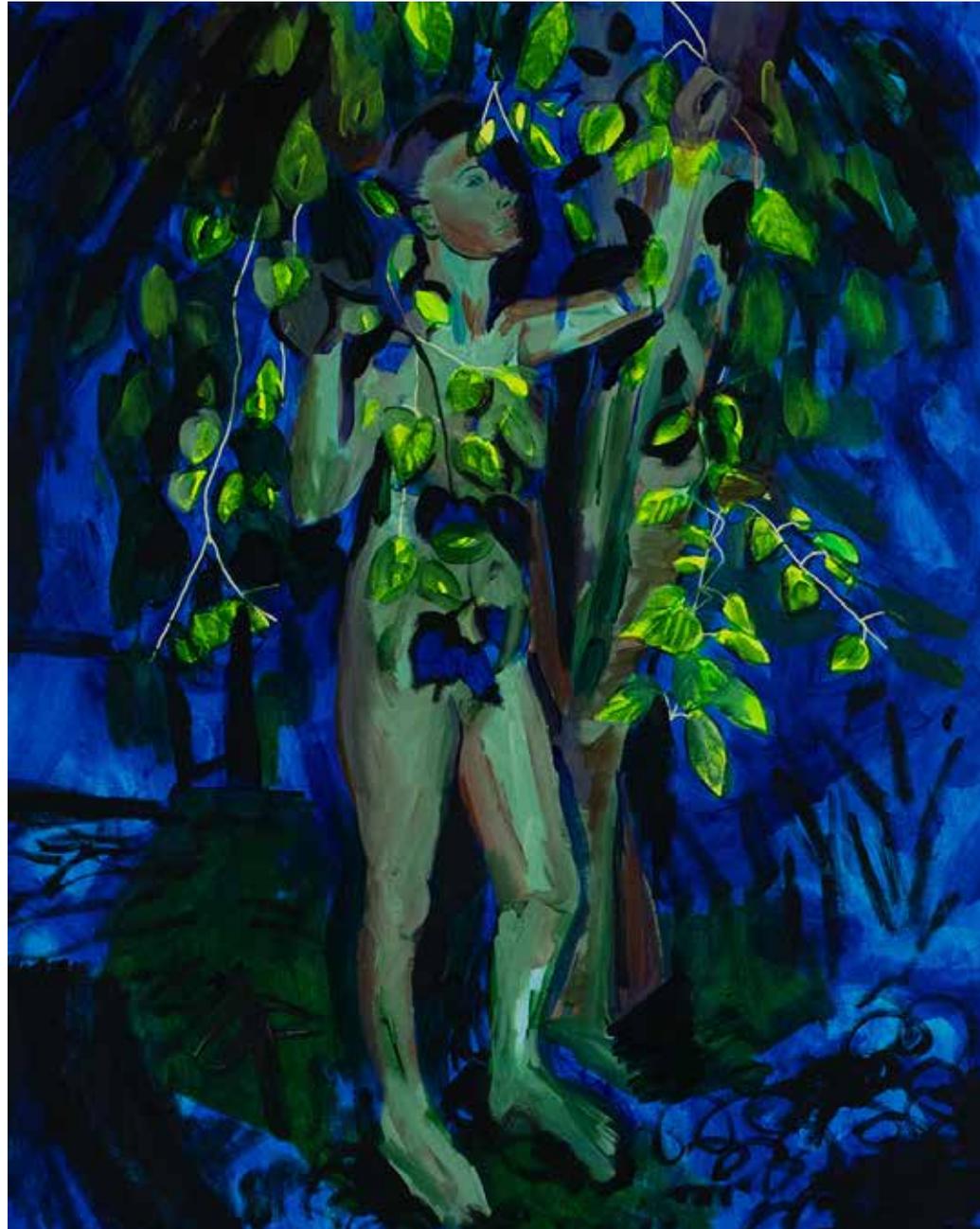
Fragility

Paper collage

8.5 x 11

\$500





Theresa Slater

Diecast Peace as Timber

Acrylic on canvas

30 x 24

\$780

Lynn Christine Kelly

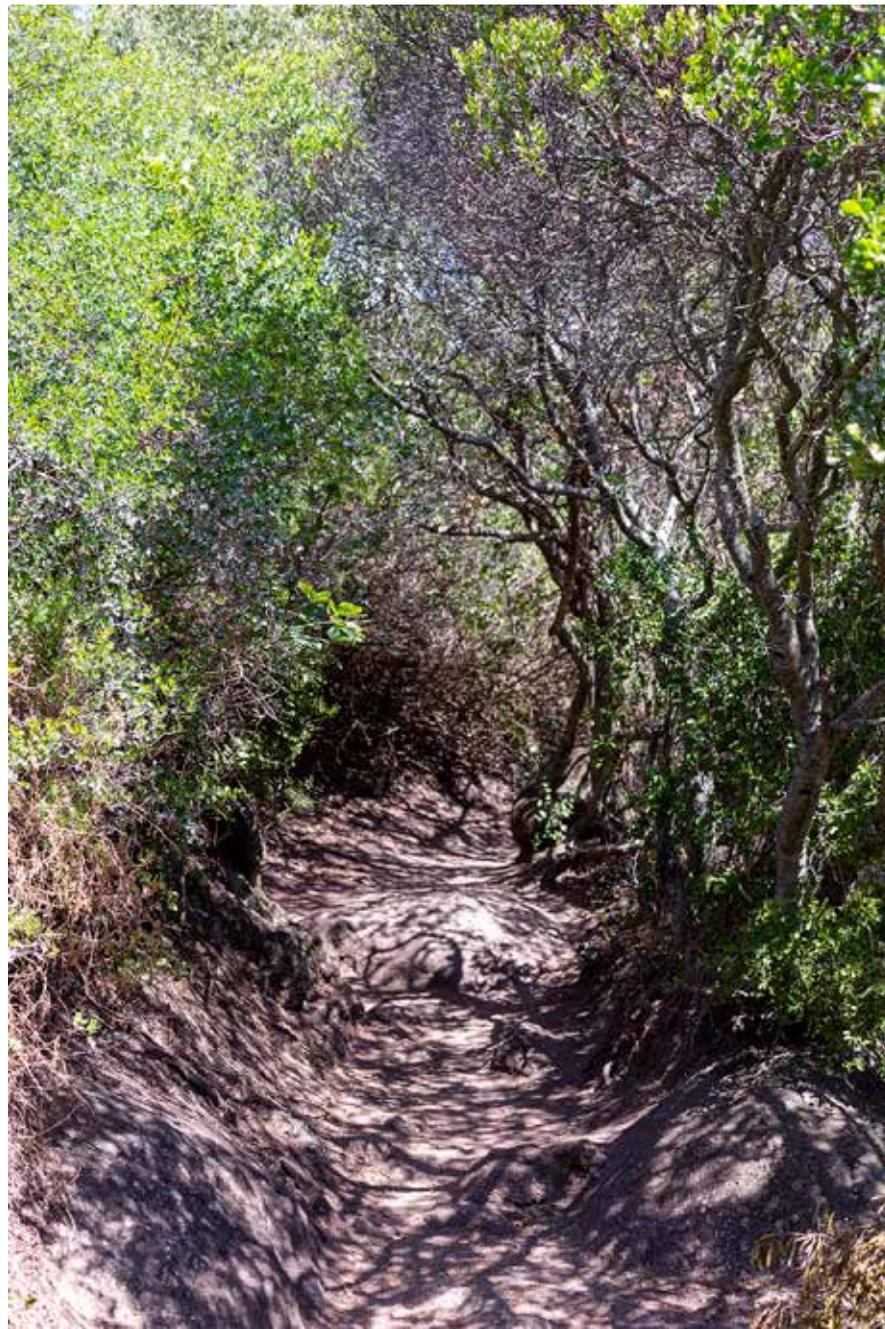
I am rooted yet I flow

Oil on linen

60 x 40

\$4400





Walter Segers

Sandy Bay, Cape Town from the series Cruising

Archival Inkjet Print on Velvet Fine Art Paper (Giclée)

19 x 13

\$450

Mariah Hoekstra

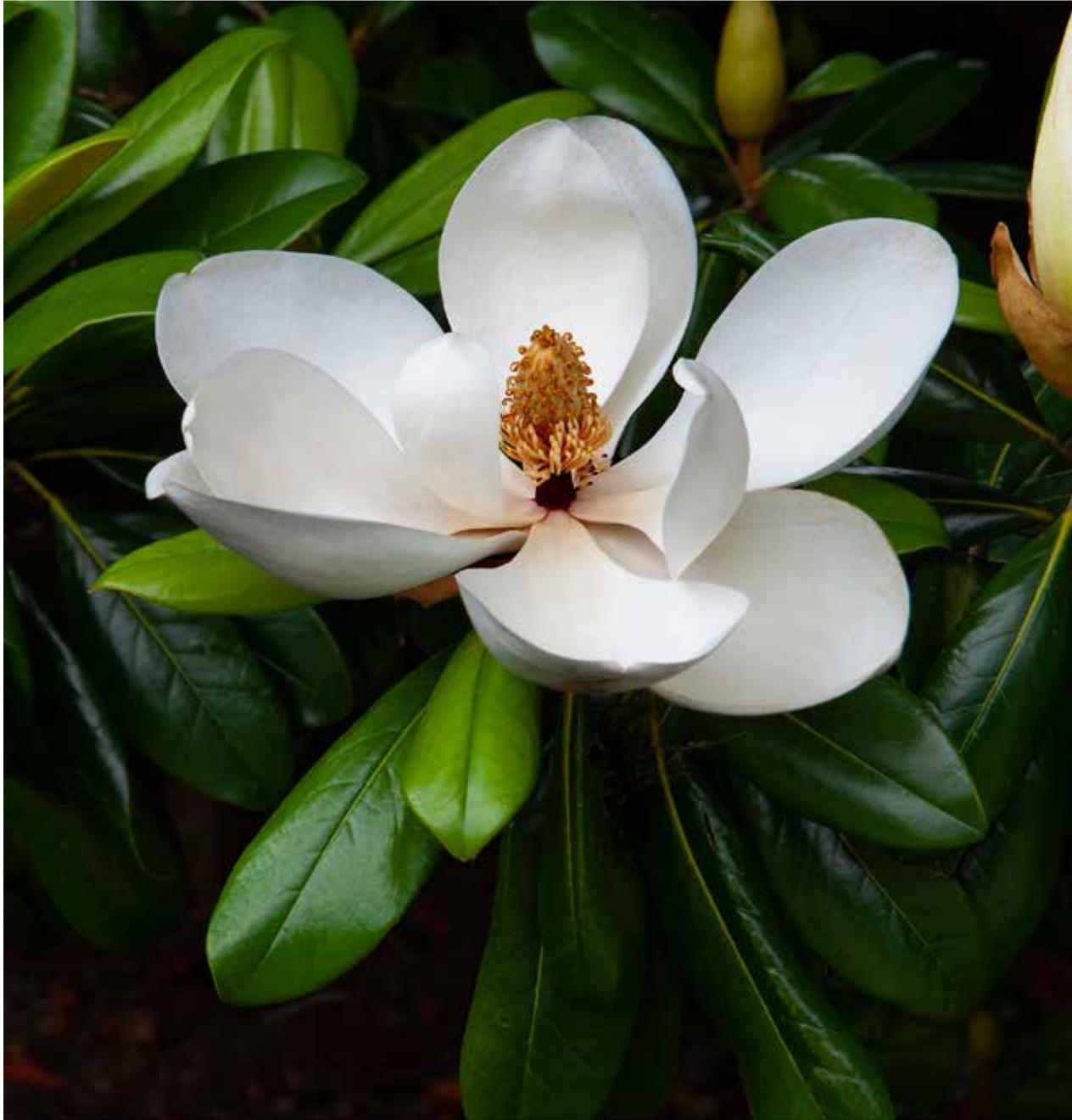


Pining & Petals

Digital drawing/painting

8 x 8

\$280



Diana Harding-Tucker

Magnolia Grandiflora

Chromogenic Print

25 x 24

\$1500



Chapter 4

Pollinating

Allan O'Marra



Self Love

Acrylic on canvas

22 x 32

\$1500



Holly Winters

Polyamorous Tulip

Acrylic on canvas

9 x 12

\$150

Ashlee Marcus



Aloha

Textile, cotton fabric and threads,
and counted crossstitch embroidery

9.5 x 12.5

\$715



Mango Wild

Resurrection Spring

Acrylic on stretched canvas

60 x 48

\$1200

Allan O' Marra



Ornamental Purple Poppy Tribute to Sadie

Oil on canvas

27 x 27

\$1500



Robert Quance

Enchanted Garden

Mixed media on paper

8 x 11

\$100

Gwendolyn Grey

Persephone's Garden

Giclee print

8 x 9

\$500



Heather Saunders



Untitled Cocoon

Baby dress, garter and negligee,
thread, polyester fibrefill, and fabric
12 x 6.25 x 4





Chapter 5 Transitioning

John Abrams

Strangers on a Train-Gardinia

Oil on panel

36 x 48

\$8000



Kathleen Dawson



Spring #4, In Her Nature Series

Mixed media on Mylar

24 x 36

\$800

Joanna Turle

“Happy Hour”

Paper collage

12 x 12

\$375



Kevin Cherry



Being in relation to light

Photography

Dimensions may vary

Rosalie Lam

I heard a daisy

Mixed media

36 x 20



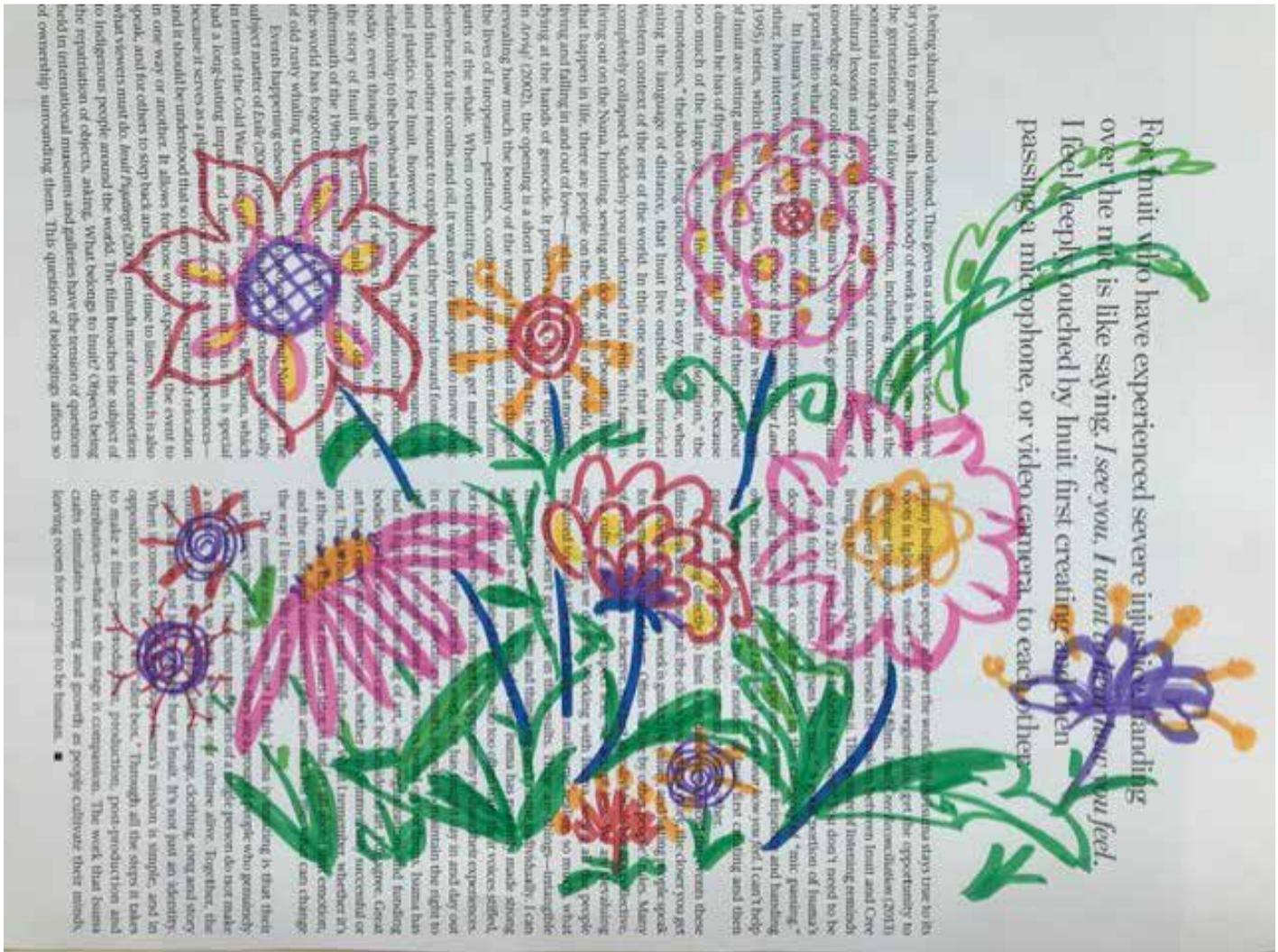
Ken Moffatt



Gay Gardens

Video still

Rosalie Lam



For fruit who have experienced severe injustice of standing
over the nut is like saying *I see you, I want to hear from you feel.*
I feel deeply touched by Inuit first creating and then
passing a microphone, or video camera to each other

I heard a rose
Mixed media
8.5 x 11



Auril Lopez

Deep in the woods

Digital photography

Photographer: Terrance Houle

Model: Neko Houle

24 x 36

\$550

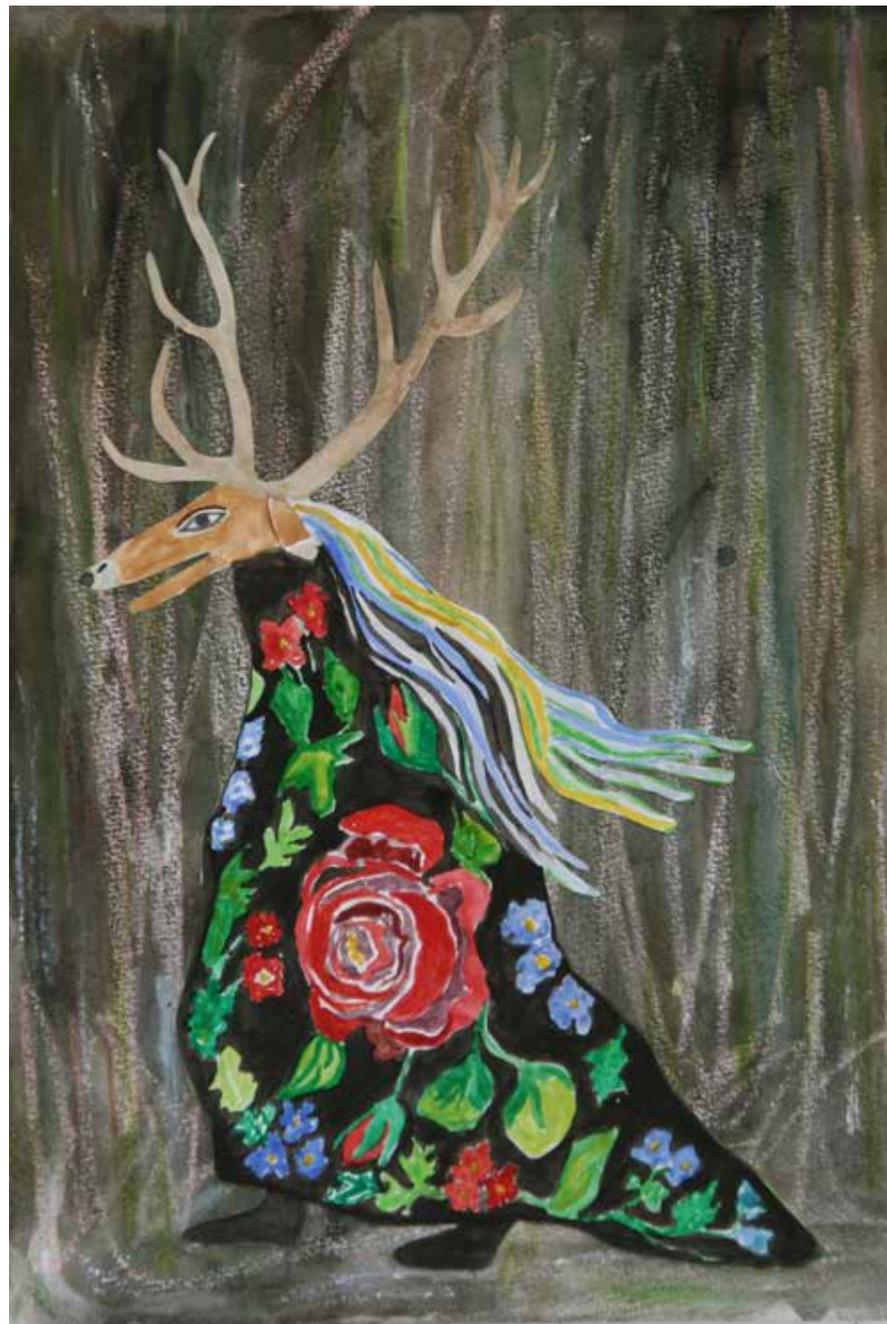




Chapter 6

Budding

Sarah Hunter



Reindeer in the Forest

Mixed media on paper

14 x 9.5

\$425



Pearl Van Geest

Lily In The Garden

Oil on canvas

72 x 72

\$6000

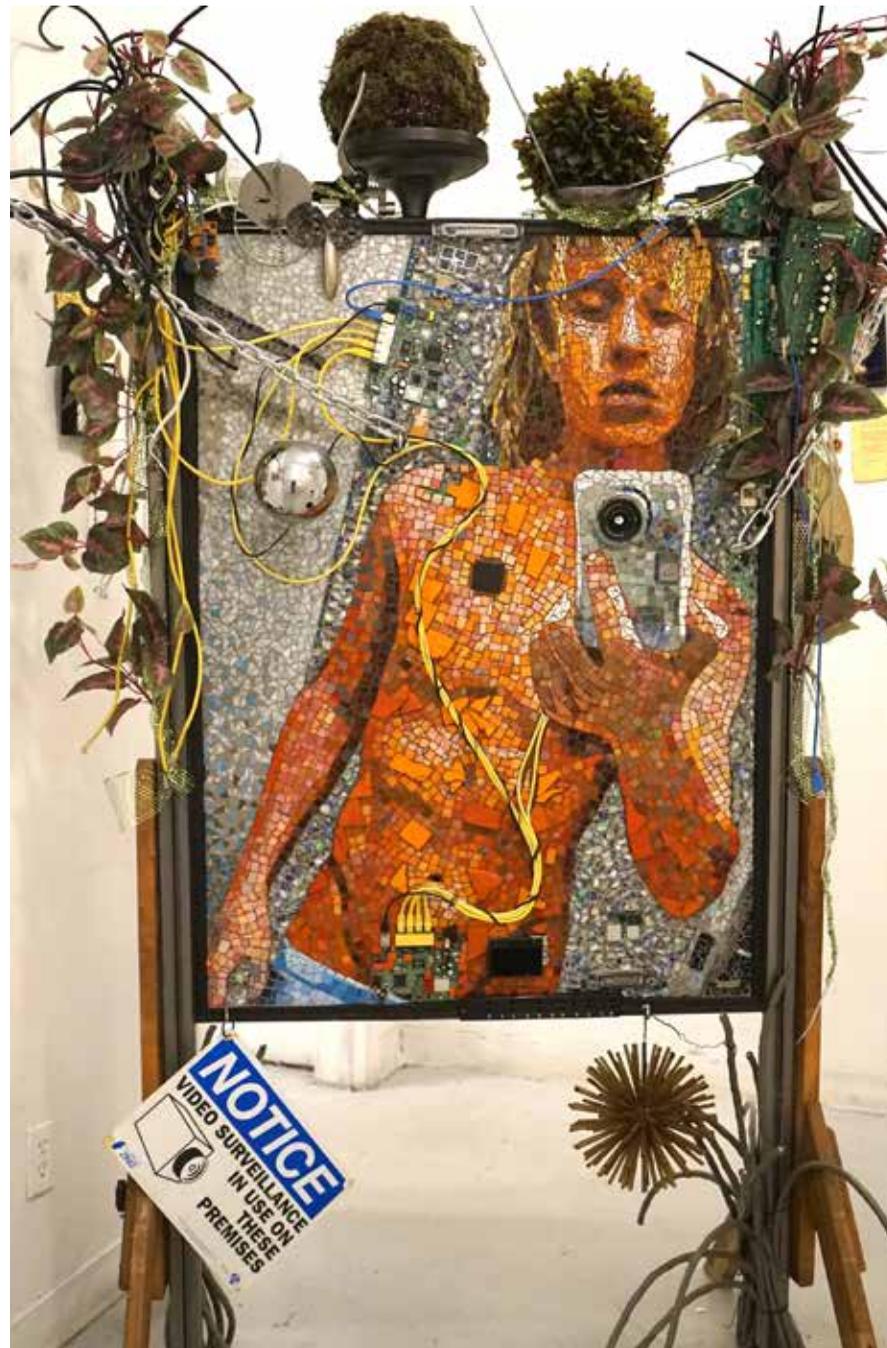
Shawn Postoff

Pink Narcissus

Glass, shells, faux greens, computer
sguts, and findings on wood

84 x 48

\$25,000





Raymond Helkio

We're Still Standing

Digital print

11 x 11

\$130

Keith Cole



Untitled

Collage

8.5 x 11

\$500

Michael Stecky



Salt Marsh Moth, *Estigmene Acraea*

Paint, found objects, and jigsaw puzzle pieces

16.5 x 22.5

\$2500

Diana Bennett

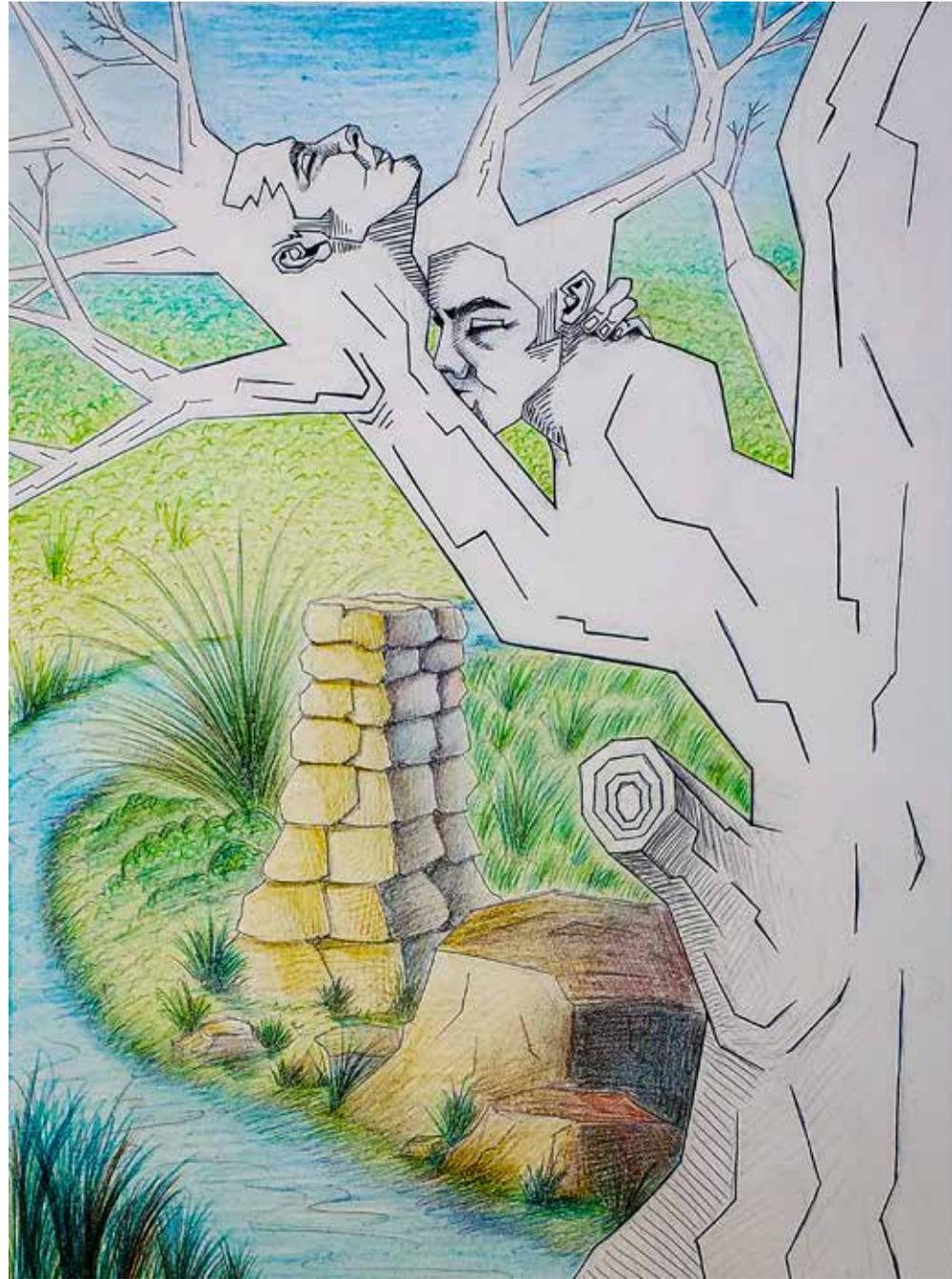
Garden Venus #2

Mixed media

40 x 30

\$950





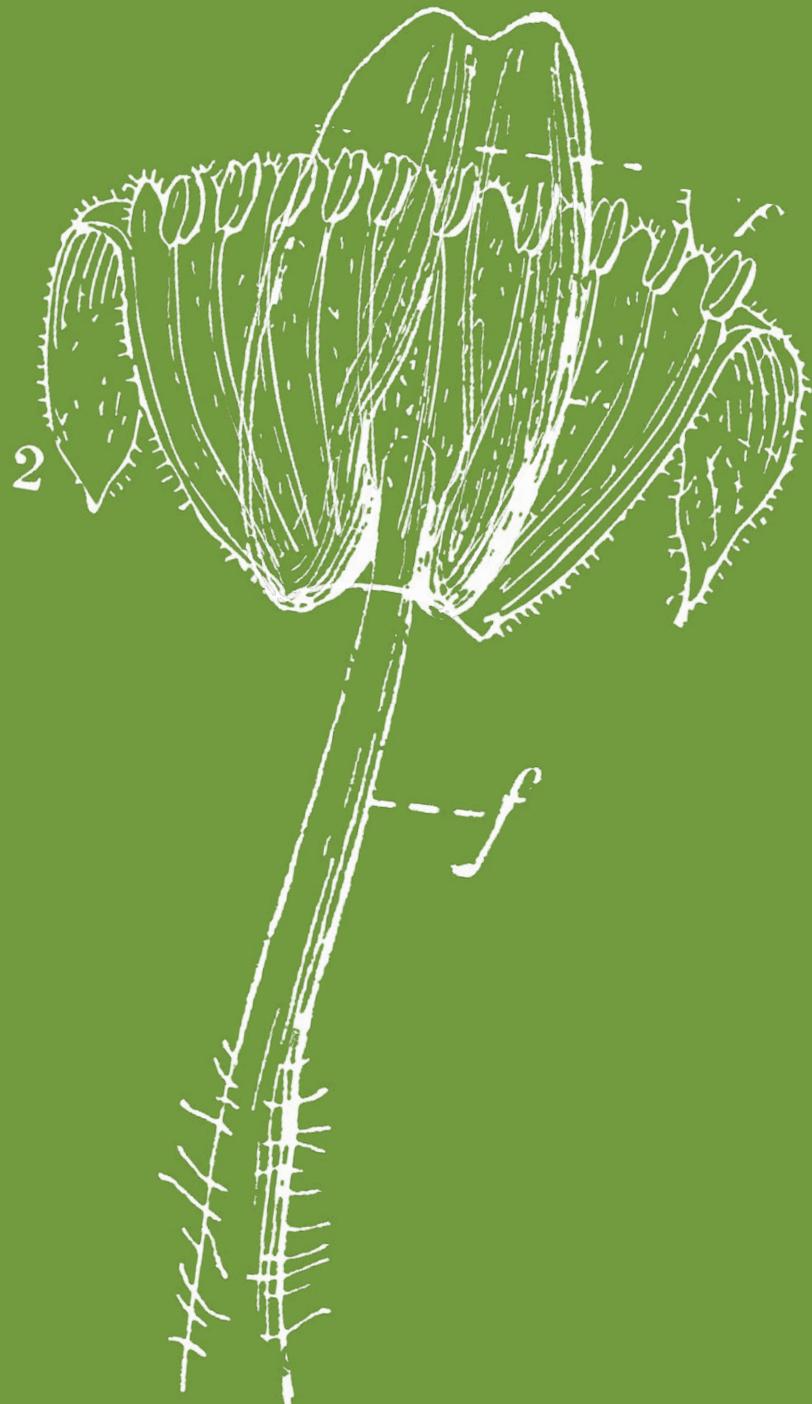
Roshannia Mir-Mehran

Gay Garden

Pencil

15 x 11

\$200



Chapter 7

Sprouting

John Abrams

Strangers on a Train - Leaving

Oil on panel

36 x 48

NSF (in private US collection)





Dale M Reid

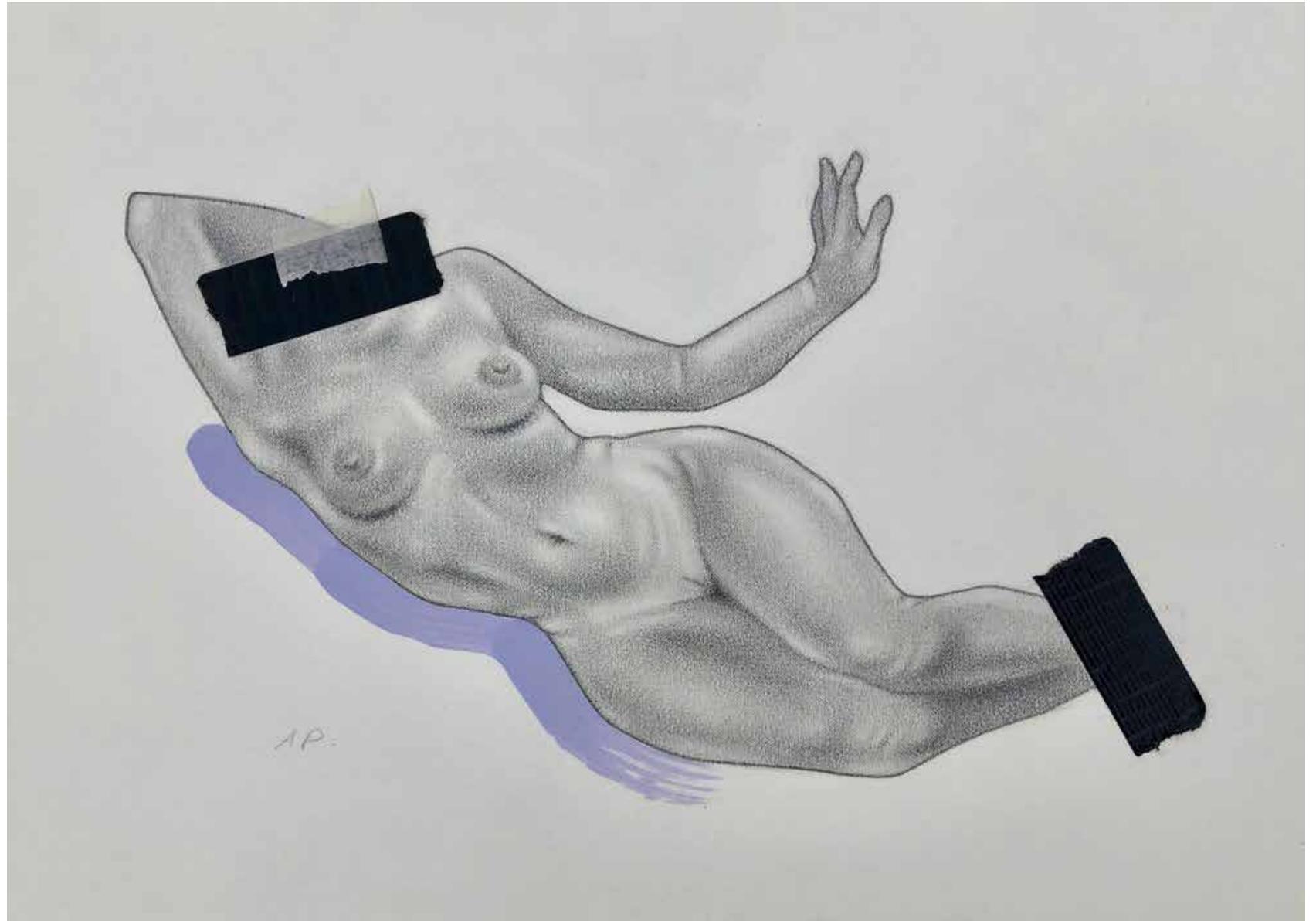
Casablanca 1

Silver Gelatin Print

32 x 28

\$2500

Adriana Polanic



Untitled

Graphite and mixed media on paper

9 x 12

\$450

Marina Zhekova



Iris (Daylight)

Ink and watercolour

20 x 16

\$175

Hyla Levy

Future Tulip #2

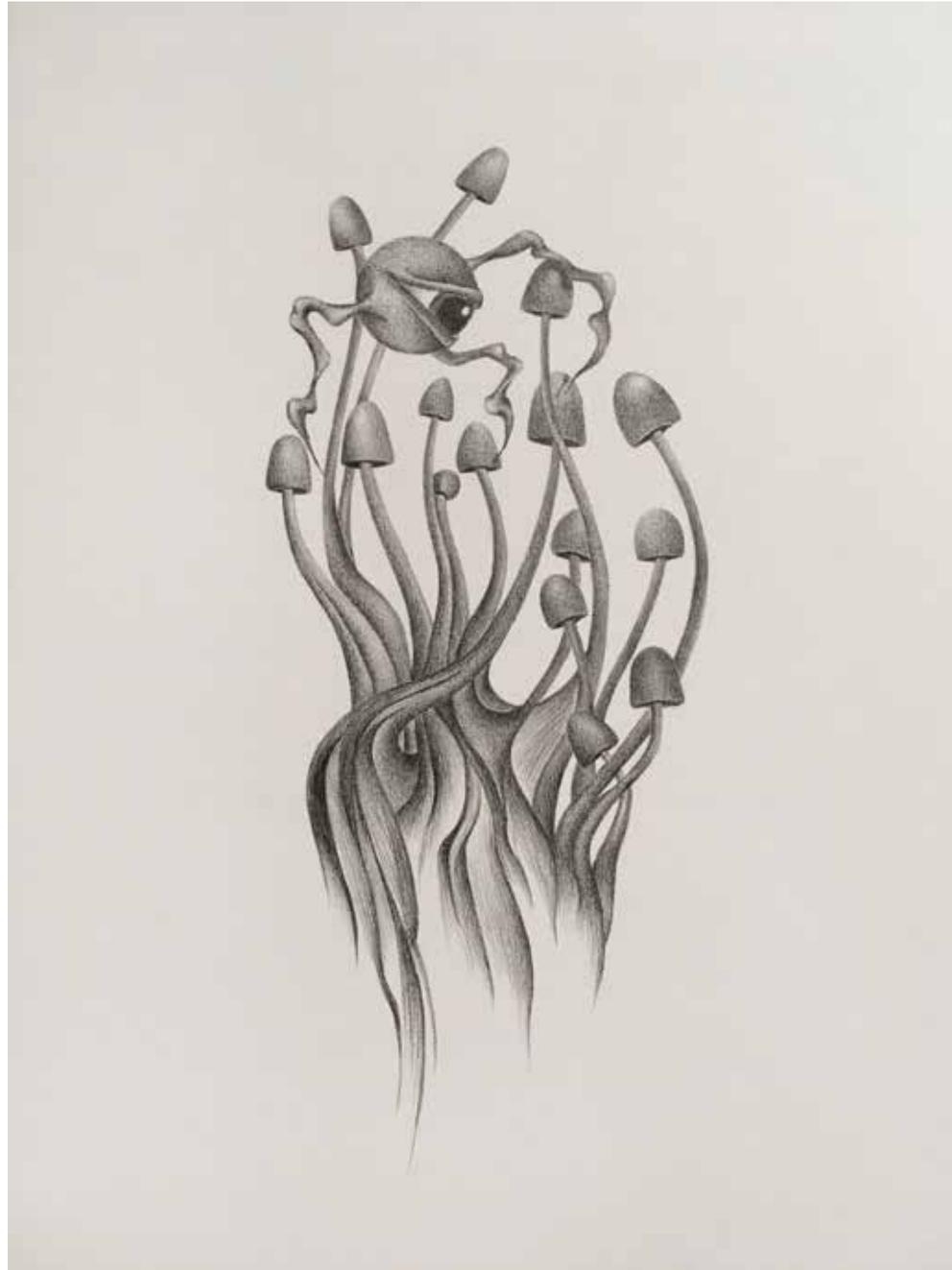
Photography

19 x 14

\$500



Katherine Wilson



Tending the Enoki III

Graphite on paper

12 x 9

\$275

Alex Murphy

The Smell of Hay

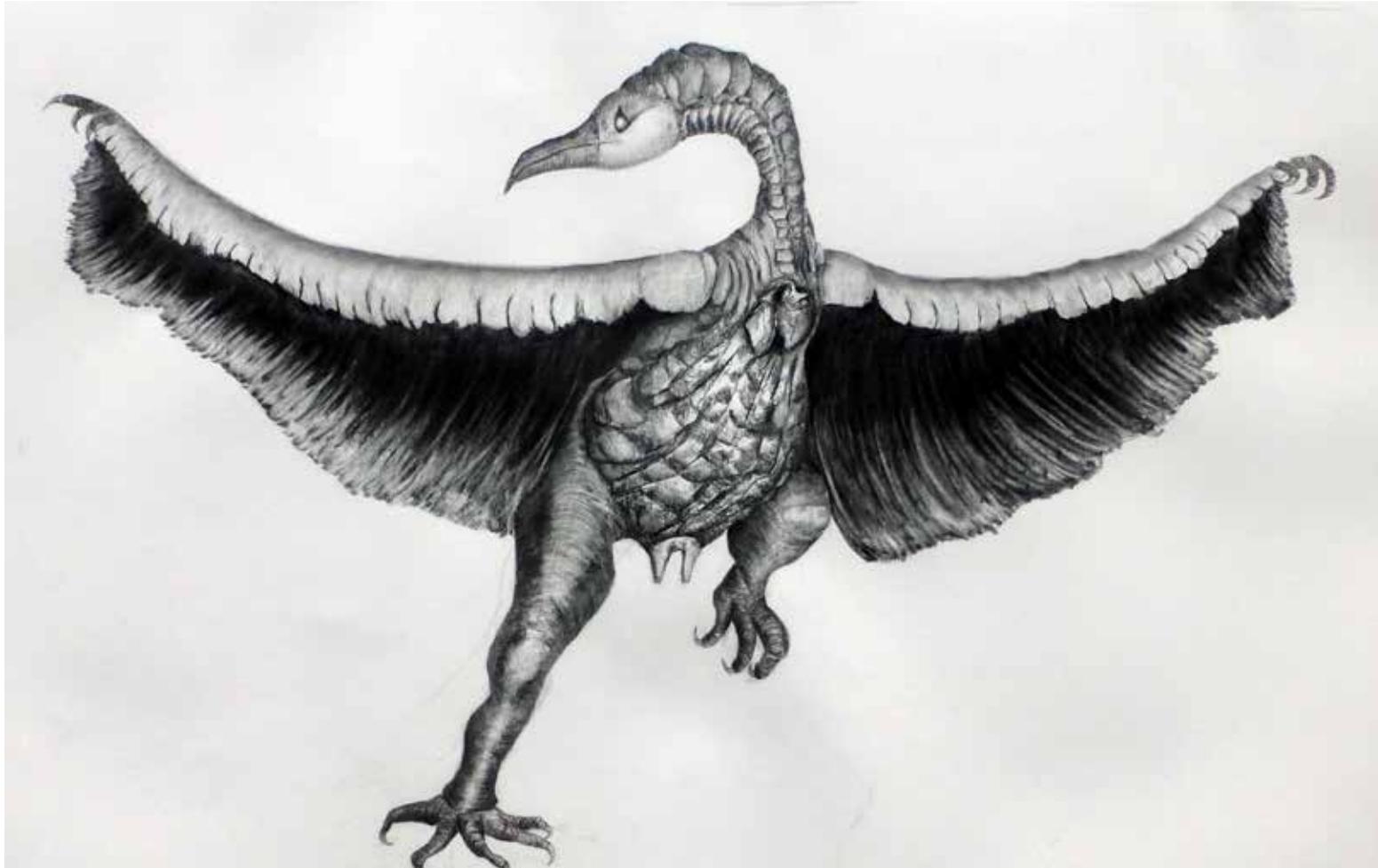
Graphite on film

20 x 20

\$1000



Ramune Luminaire



Untitled

Charcoal on paper

13.75 x 19.75

\$2000



Chapter 8

Flowering

Luis Cisneros

**Mexican Future!
The end of toxic masculinity**

Polymer clay, wire, fabric flowers,
stainless steel, and glass

5 x 10 x 5

\$600





Emilie Lowe

Stamen

Acrylic on canvas

40 x 30

\$450

Laura Tucker

Jacobean Fantastic

Goldwork embroidery

8.5 x 11

\$200





Matthew Moloney

Saffron and Coriander

Acrylic paint, paper, digital,
and found images

11 x 8.5

\$140

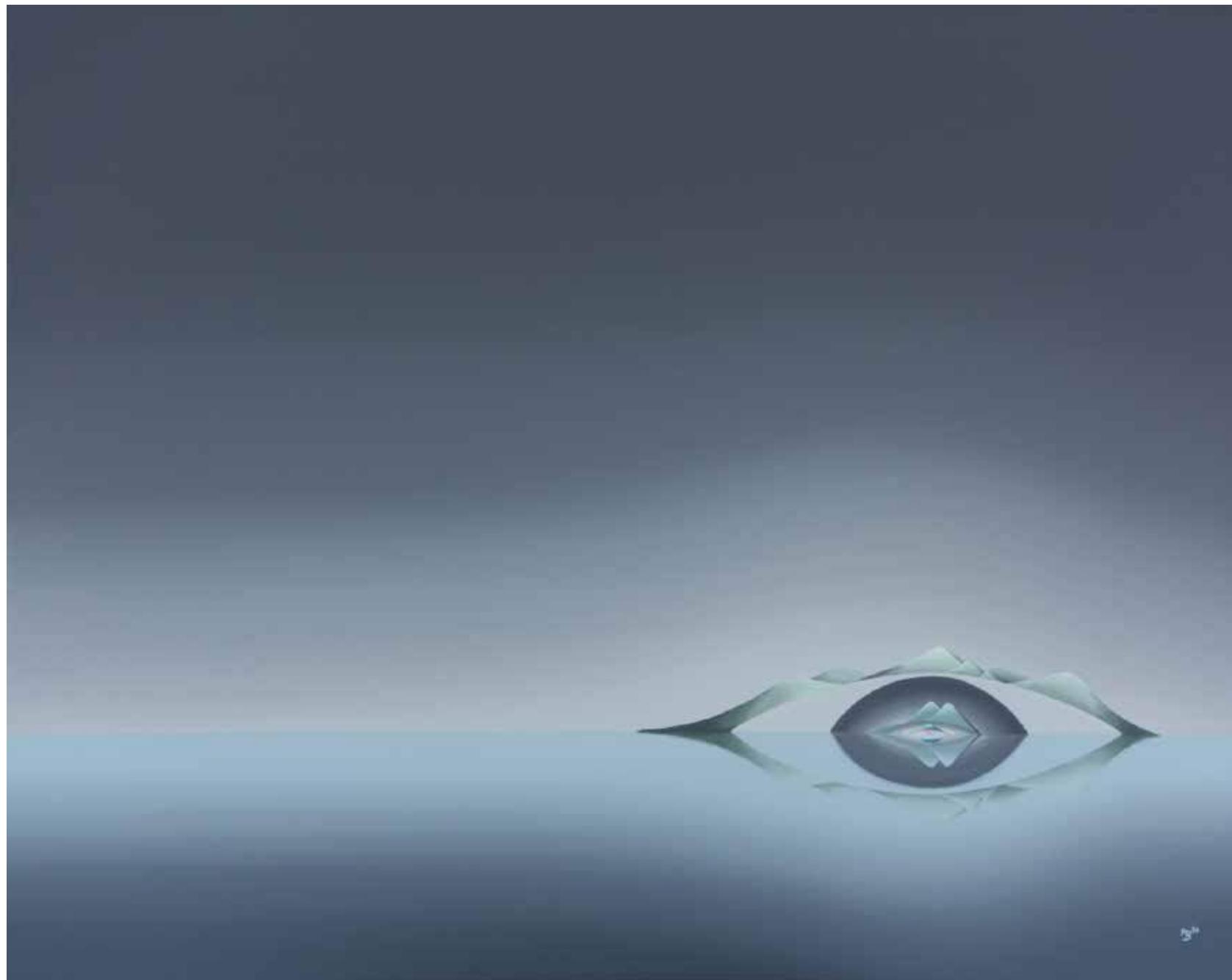
Matt Beasant

Birth of a Lantern

Acrylic on canvas

24 x 30

\$1600



Dimitri Papatheodorou



περιβόλι (perivóli)

Video

6:38

Alex Murphy

The Smell of Wild Grass

Pencil on film

20 x 25

\$1200





Marina May Raike

Victorian Grey

Arylic on wood panel

9 x 12

\$350





Chapter 9

Growing

Michel Dumont

Tiger Lily

Packing tape, cellophane, and led lights

4' x 2'

\$650





Beth Ross

Open

Digital photography

16 x 12

\$400

Samuel Bernier-Cormier

**Transparente, vivante, si vivante
qu'elle fait penser à la mort...**

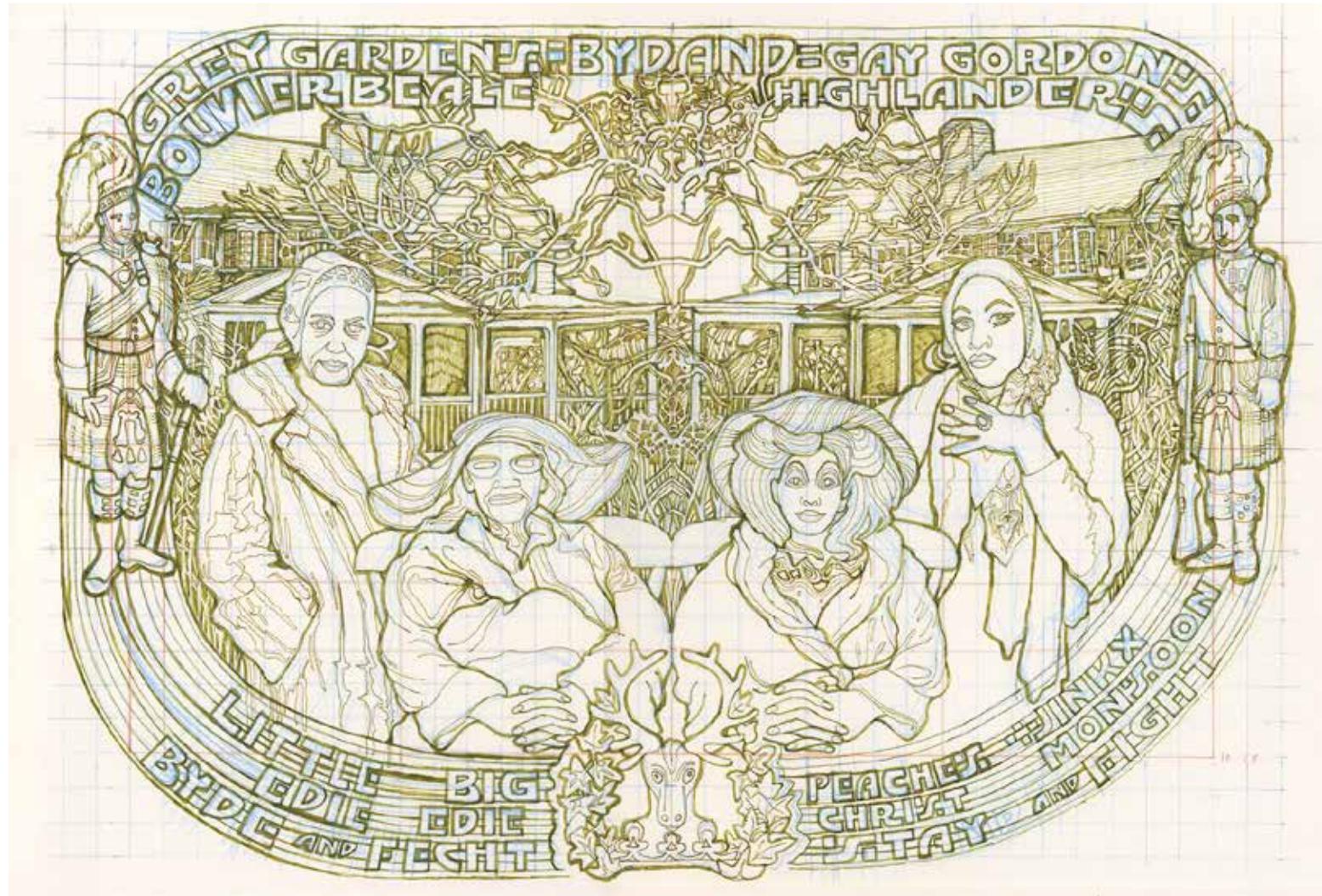
Digital chromogenic print

18 x 12

\$300



Sue Lloyd



Grey Gardens: The Edies

Ink and pencil on Arches paper

14 x 20

\$750

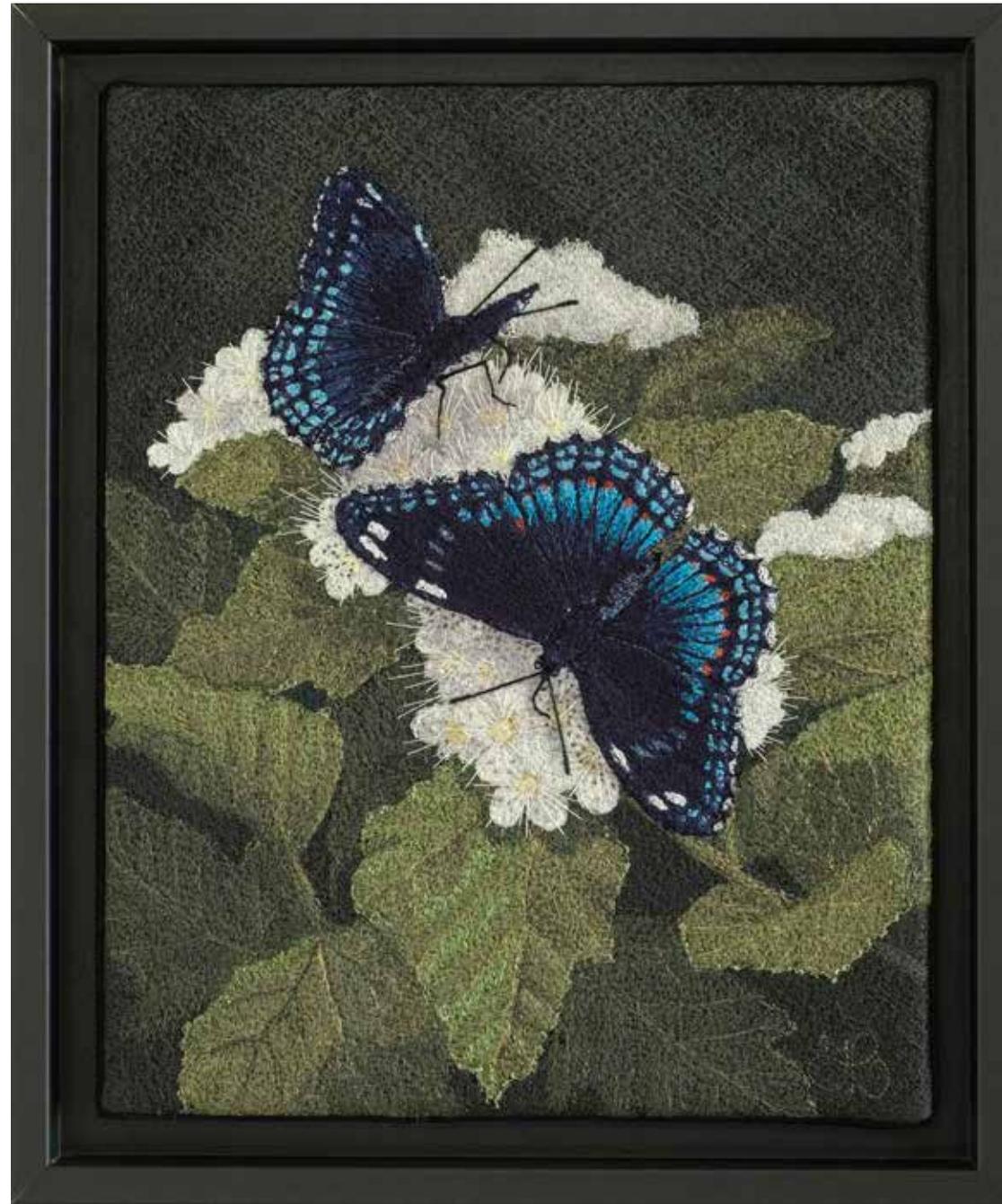
Tracey Lawko

Red Spotted Purples

Textile (hand embroidery and free motion machine stitching)

10 x 8

\$4000





Pamela Dodds

Spring Garden

Oil on canvas

72 x 84

Krista Schleicher

Practice Makes Perfect

Digital illustration/Print

14 x 14

\$300



Michael Stecky



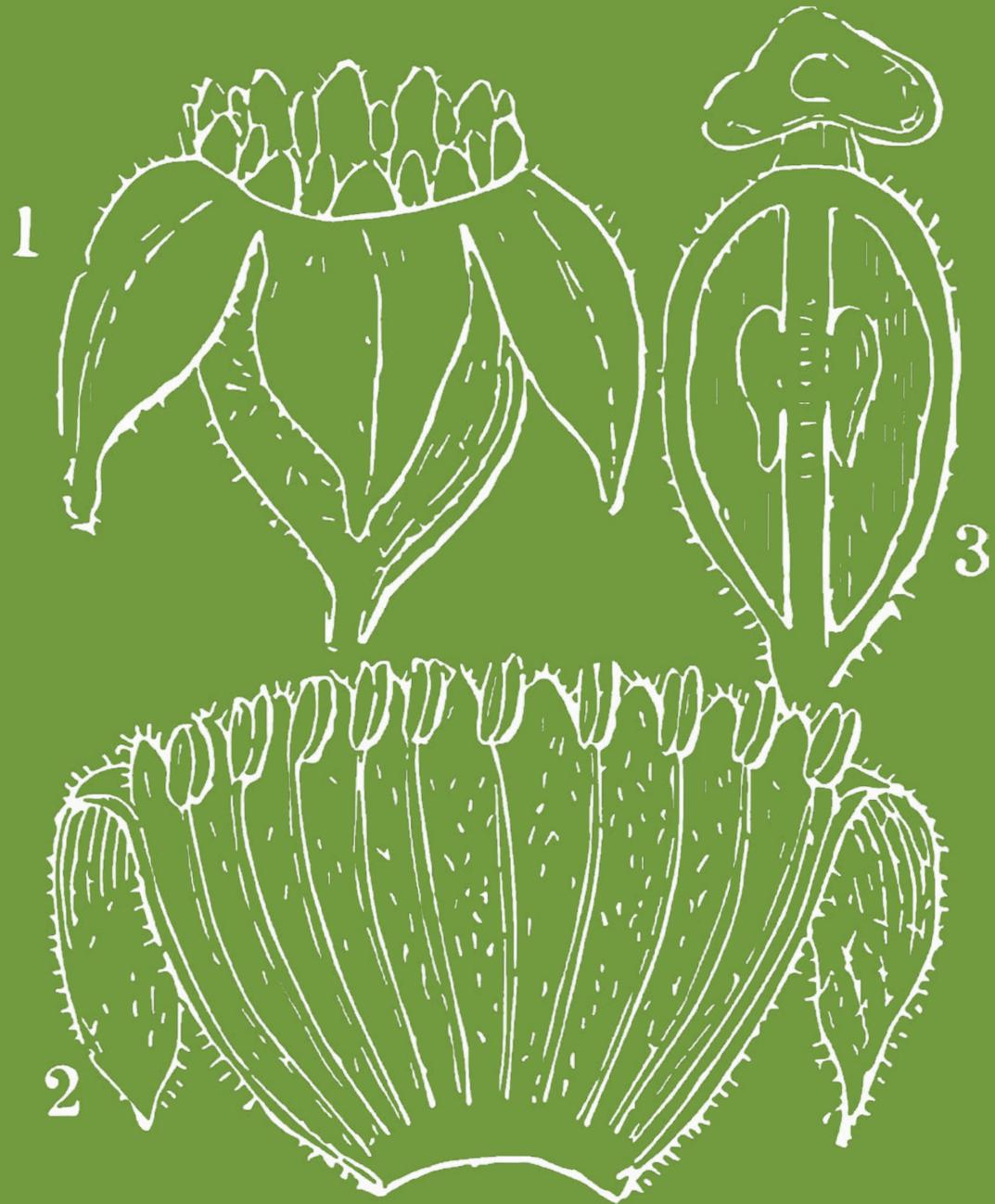
Salt Marsh Moth, *Estigmene Acraea*

Paint, found objects, and jigsaw puzzle pieces

16.5 x 22.5

\$2500





Chapter 10

Fruiting

Michel Dumont

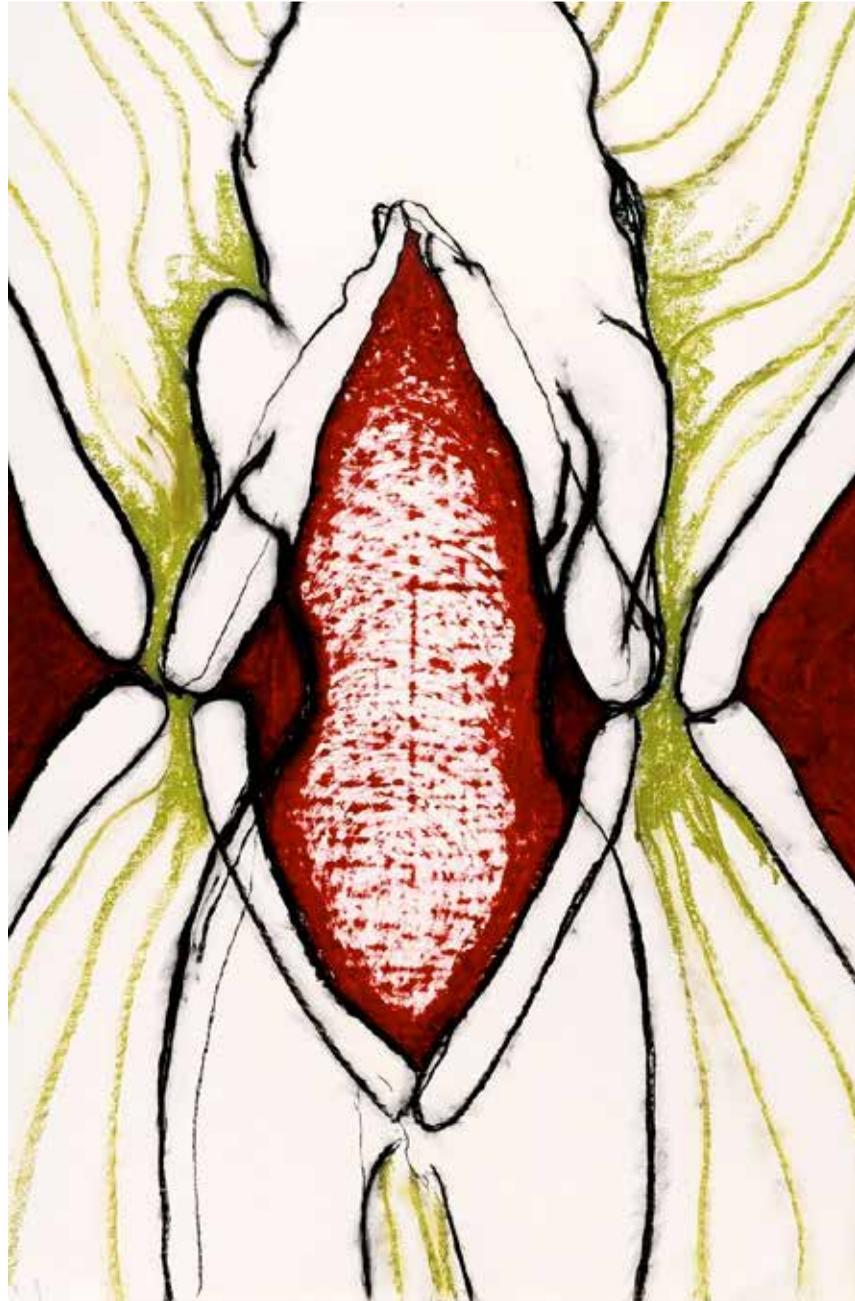


Star Gazer Lily

Packing tape, cellophane, and led lights

3' x 3'

\$650



Jennifer Clark

Scared Space

Charcoal and gouache

40 x 26

\$800

Matt Beasant

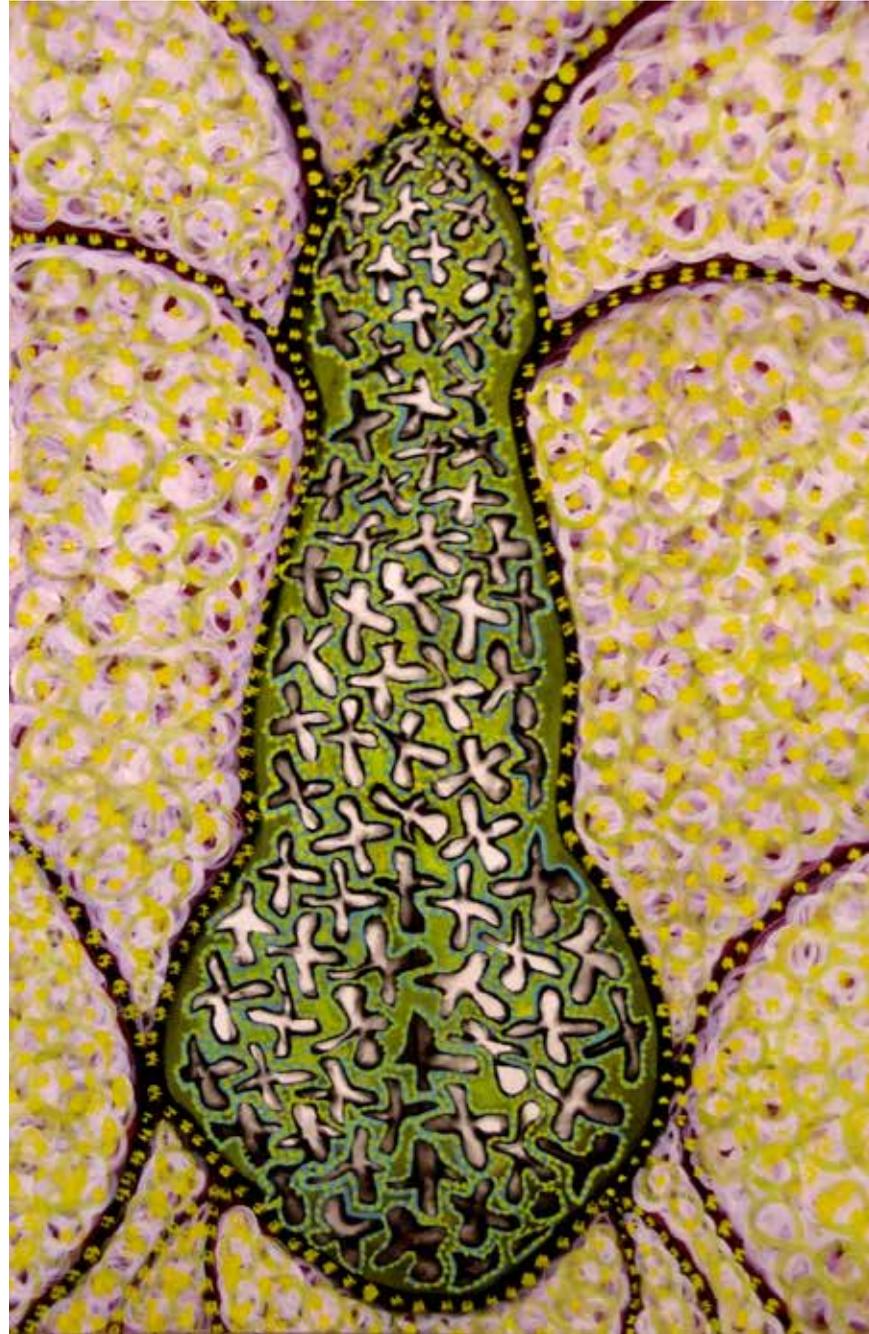
Vesica of a Lonely Island

Acrylic on canvas

30 x 40

\$2700





Jennifer Clark

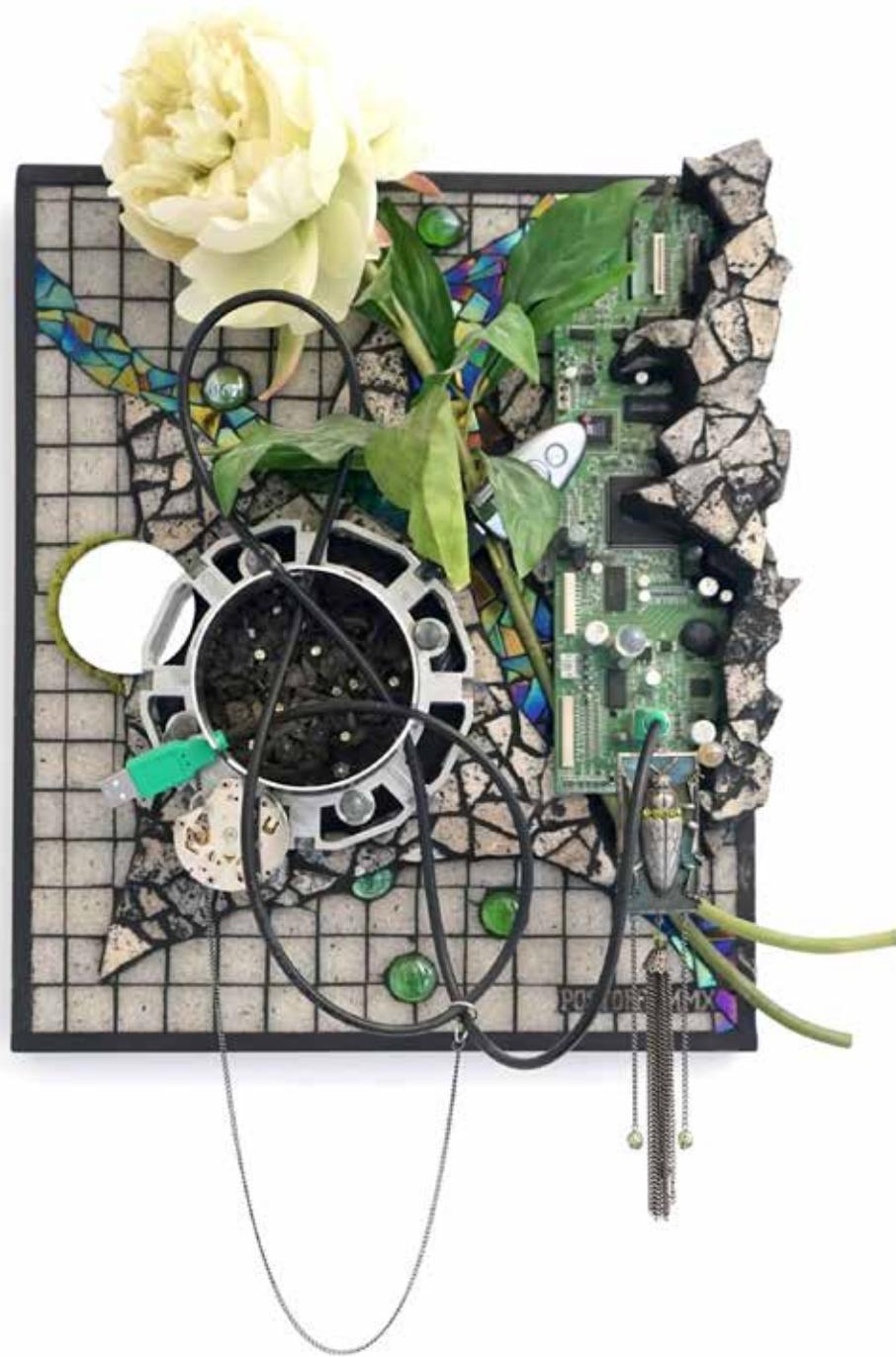
Wholeness

Charcoal and gouache

40 x 26

\$800

Shawn Postoff



A Bug in the System

Glass, stone, tile, faux greens, computer guts, and findings on wood

21 x 14

\$3000



Steve Khan

Gay Zoo - Peacock

Drawing

30 x 22

\$500

Felipe Corral



Jardim do Gaymado

Digital collage

18 x 12

\$500

Steve Khan



Gay Zoo - Pig

Drawing

11 x 9

\$300



Chapter 11

Ripening

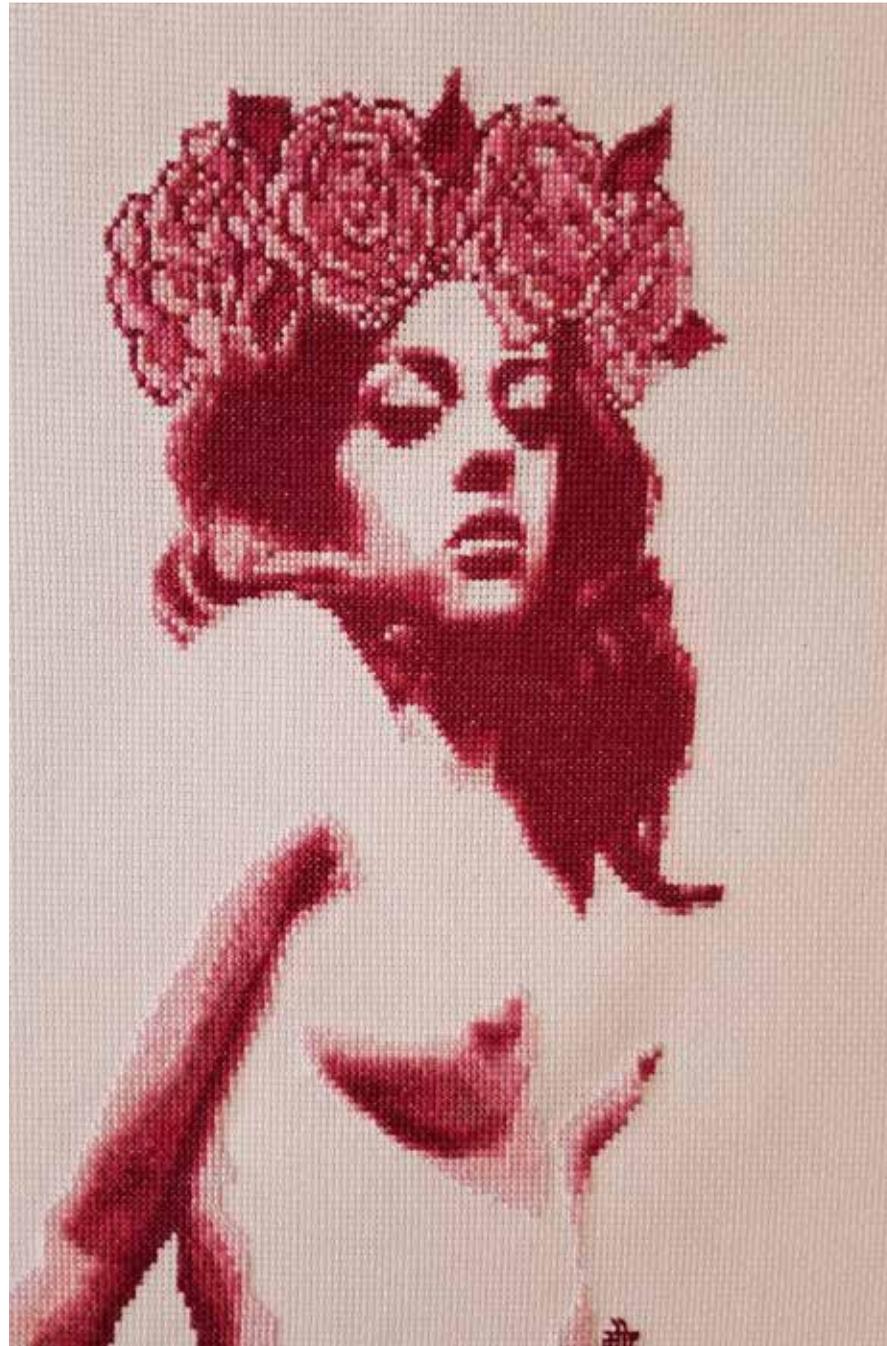
Ashlee Marcus

Venus

Textile, cotton fabric and threads,
and counted crossstitch embroidery

12.5 x 8.5

\$425





Julia Hacker

On the wild side. 2

Acrylic

60 x 30

\$3400

Hyla Levy

Future Tulip #1

Photography

19 x 14

\$500





Arleen McCallum

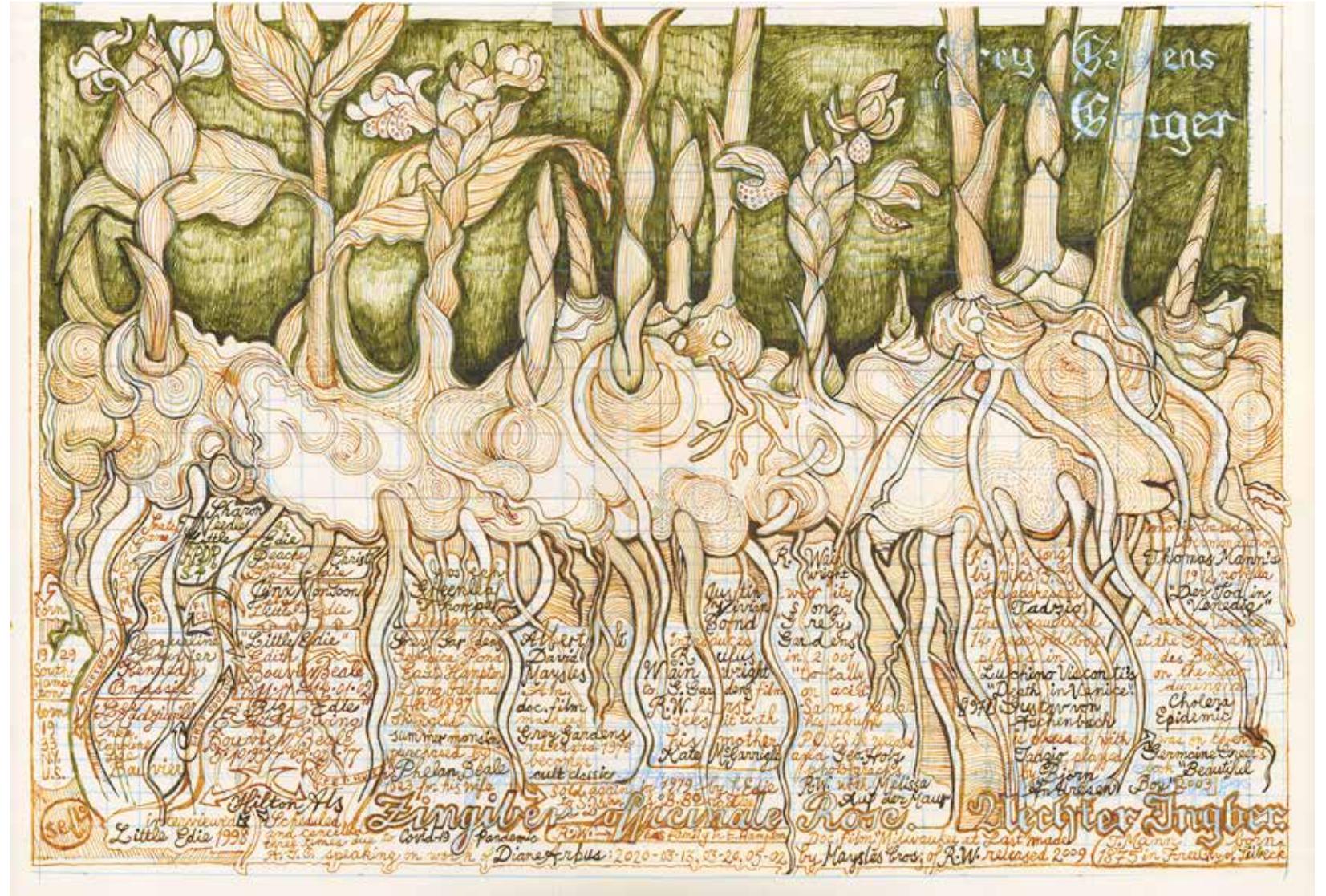
BeesKnees

Monoprint acrylic on mylar

12 x 10

\$200

Sue Lloyd



Grey Gardens: Ginger

Ink and pencil on Arches Paper

14 x 20

\$750



Gwendolyn Grey

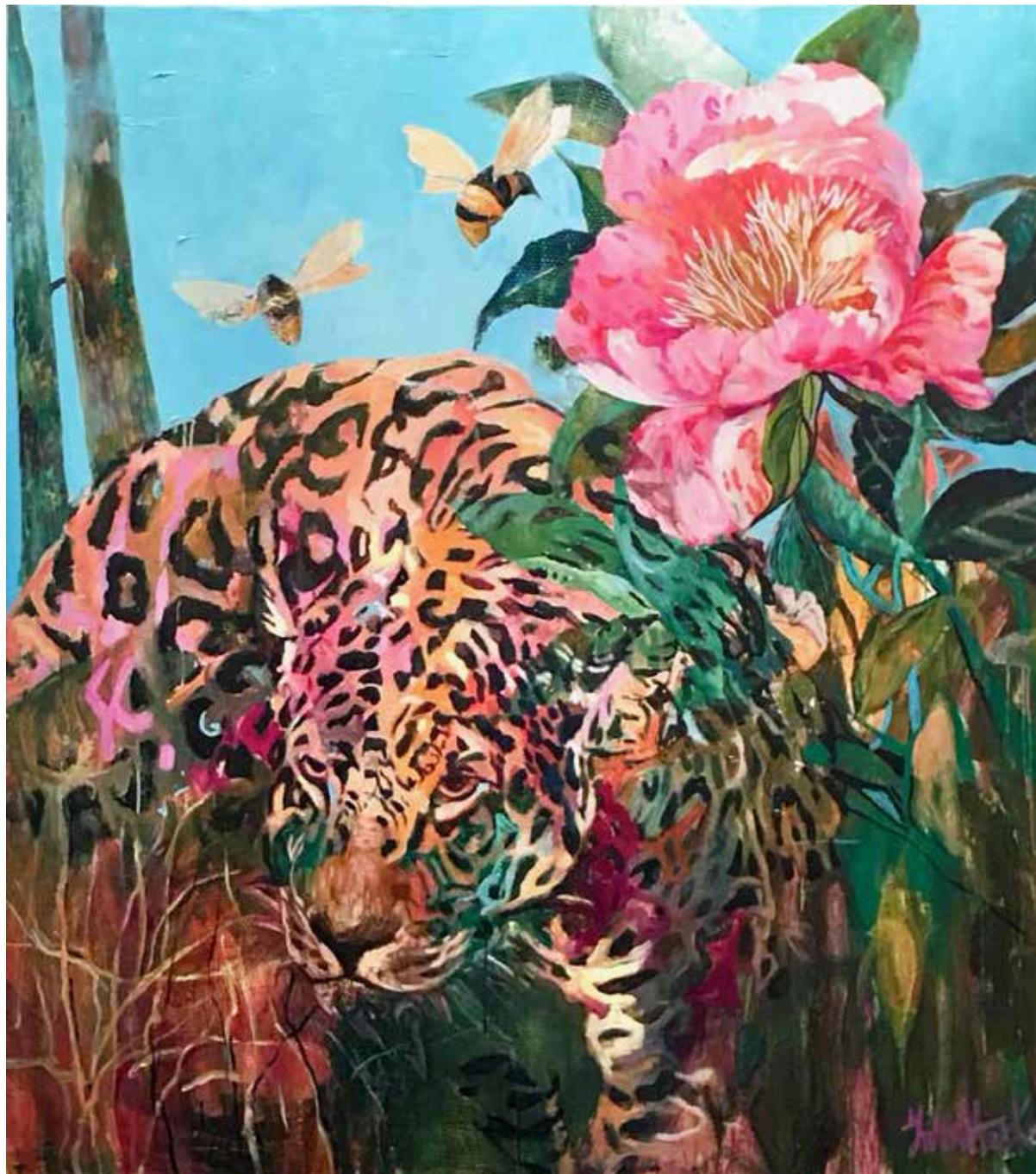
Meadowmorphosis

Hand made collage

5.5 x 6

\$500

Julia Hacker



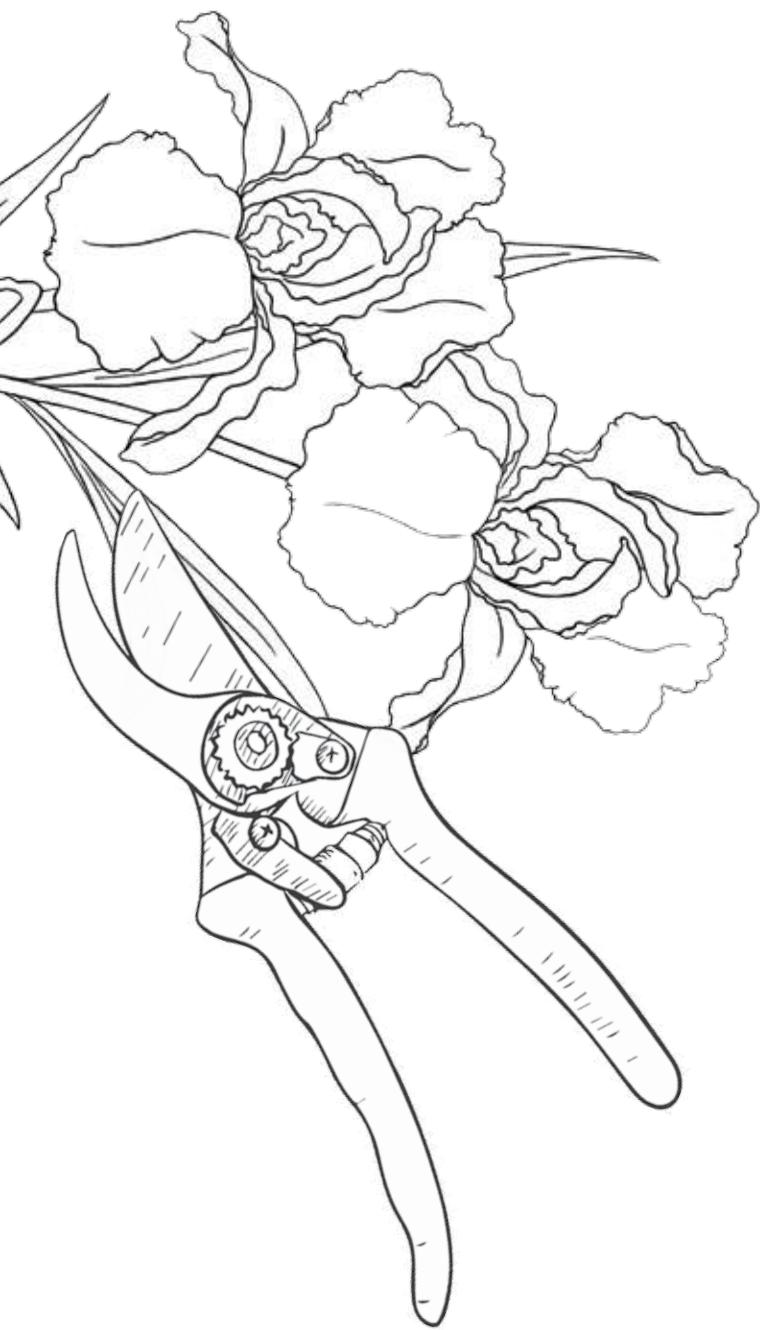
On the wild side.

Acrylic

65 x 60

\$6300





Gay Gardeners – Our Jurors

Patrick DeCoste is an award-winning Toronto-based visual artist who studied fine arts at Mount Allison University. He has exhibited extensively in Toronto, as well as New York City and beyond. The Globe and Mail calls him ‘a young old master’ and Los Angeles writer Chris Kraus in *C-Magazine* describes his painting as ‘heroic and musty, strange and disturbing’. He was awarded a Chalmers Arts Fellowship in 2011. Through his art he explores Indigenous histories and his Nova Scotia Métis roots. In 2014, he received the President’s Award for Outstanding Achievement in Graduate Studies from OCADU, where he completed an Interdisciplinary MFA. His recent exhibitions include solo exhibitions at Galerie Youn, Montreal 2014; Station Gallery, Whitby 2015. This past year DeCoste was awarded grants from The Canada Council for the Arts for the production of new works, from The Ontario Arts Council’s Aboriginal Artists in Schools program and from the Toronto Arts Council for his *13 Moons* and *A Canoe* exhibit. When not in the city, Patrick spends time at his studio on Georgian Bay, near Lafontaine, canoeing with his dog Luca, and making art in the forest.

Jowenne Carpo Herrera graduated from OCADU in 2000 from the Faculty of Design where he received numerous scholarships year-over-year. Upon the advice of the OCADU President, he jump-started his career in the Government of Ontario to deliver communication and design solutions. He is visual artist and designer who works with various media integrating painting, drawing, illustration, photography and typography. Many of his works depict subjects drawn from nature and daily urban landscapes – experimenting with the dualities and tensions between identities, societies and idealisms. He is a Registered Graphic Designer of Ontario (RGD) and Certification Portfolio Evaluator for the association. He owns ABAKADA design + communication, and for over 20 years has been delivering creative design solutions across public, private and not for profit sectors – specializing in brand development, editorial design and graphic illustration. He served as the John B. Aird Gallery Chair/President and Director in Toronto for over 10 years. In his spare time, he abandons the digital world and gardens, cooks and runs a lot.



Book Design & Illustrations by:
ABAKADA design + communication
abakadadesign.tumblr.com

John B. Aird Gallery



airdgallery.org