

Philadelphia Sculptors and
Da Vinci Art Alliance present:

VERSION SUB

FEBRUARY 26 – MARCH 22, 2020



Da Vinci Art Alliance
704 Catharine St. Philadelphia, PA

OPENING RECEPTION: Wednesday, February 26, 6-8 pm
EXHIBITION HOURS: Thursdays-Sundays, 12-5 pm



Subversion is the second collaborative exhibition between Da Vinci Art Alliance and Philadelphia Sculptors, following *Shelter* in 2018. For *Subversion*, artists were encouraged to submit artwork that pushes back. This exhibition highlights artwork that undermines or challenges social structures, morals, traditions, authority, perceptions and even human nature. *Subversion* confronts and questions everything from politics, gun rights and violence, to art history and the art world, gender norms, social problems and environmental threats.

Juror Alice Oh selected 27 works from 18 artists that address, in ways both humorous and dire, the political landscape of our present day. Through formal references such as a pistol, the human form, nature, and President Trump, the work in *Subversion* confronts our corrupt reality and proposes possibilities for a just future.

Selected Artists: Theo A. Artz, David Beker, Natasha Cheung, William Cromar, David Detrich, Travis Donovan, Deirdre Doyle, Harold Kalmus, Monica Kane, Eleanor Levie, Nicholli Matheny, Constance McBride, Collin Mura-smith, Jeremy Sims, Holly Smith, Helge Speth, Simone Spicer, and Nina Valdera.



About the Juror: Alice Oh works with a unique artistic method that engages in only sparse planning, but instead focuses on allowing her paintings to develop naturally as a “dialogue” between the artist and their artwork. She often works in a series of works at a time in order to see her evolving dialogues to their logical conclusion. Greatly influenced by nature and biology, Oh is interested in the concurrence of microscopic and macroscopic life. Her

work is included in the collections of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Leeway Foundation, Temple University, Yale University, and SAP America, Inc.

Oh has exhibited at the University of Pennsylvania, West Chester University, Rosemont College, Franklin and Marshall College, Millersville University, the Philadelphia Arts Alliance, and the University of the Arts. Oh’s work has been included in the Painting Center, Southwest Minnesota State University Art Museum, Towson University, the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, the International Fine Print Center, the Dupont Center for Contemporary Art, the University of Hawaii and the Yoshibishu Art Center, Japan. Throughout her career as an artist, she has received a Pew Fellowship Grant, a W.O.A. and Seedling Grant from the Leeway Foundation, and a Pennsylvania Council on the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship Award in Painting. She was an artist in residence at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Art and the Vermont Studio Center. Oh earned her MFA from Yale University and her BFA from Tyler School of Art at Temple University and from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Currently, she is a Professor at Moore College of Art and Design. She lives and works in Philadelphia, PA and Seoul, South Korea.

About Philadelphia Sculptors: Philadelphia Sculptors is the only professional organization of sculptors in the Philadelphia region. Incorporated in 1997, its mission is to promote contemporary sculpture and serve as an advocate for sculptors by expanding public awareness of the role and value of sculpture within our culture. Since its inception, it has organized numerous indoor and outdoor group exhibitions at both traditional and non-traditional venues and has sponsored programs, conferences, workshops and performances. Membership is open to all. Visit philasculptors.org for more information.

A Note From the Juror

I would like to thank Leslie Kaufman, the President of Philadelphia Sculptors who invited me to jury *SUBVERSION*, the second collaborative exhibition of the Da Vinci Art Alliance and Philadelphia Sculptors. Some 70 works, each of which qualified to be admitted into the show, were reviewed. I spent hours deciding on the final pieces, and after a month into the process, 27 works by 18 artists were selected for the exhibition. All the works submitted were of high quality, respectable efforts of artists who have been deeply engaged in the studio practice. It was difficult for me to narrow it down to 27 works for the exhibition. I revisited a number of artworks several times by reviewing the materials, dimensions, statements (intentions) and reflected on the exhibition space which I had visited several times before selecting the final works. I wanted to create an intimate space where the artworks could speak to each other, interact, support the playfulness, generate tensions, and yet hold a place of their own, which I think, is the difficult challenge of any group exhibition.

SUBVERSION represented lively expressions, imagination, and the autonomous views of visual artists in the Philadelphia region and beyond. The exhibition offered the artists a time and place to reexamine our current state of the world. Artists used traditional and non-traditional art materials such as a shopping cart, floss, felt, fake food replicas, optical acrylic sheets, and motorized pumps. Some works were presented with exceptional craftsmanship, and others with ready-made objects, recycled materials, and the growing technology of LED illuminations. I also noted thoughtful humor embedded in many of the works, including symbolic use of nine-inch nails/screws in the soft body of clay, and a large bust of a man, dowsed with thick purple ceramic glaze. The artist used “color purple” glaze as a metaphor as it is the outcome of integration of red and blue hues. Another artist conceptualized the “act of drawing” as a subverting of one’s attention, exploiting the space as a drawing paper. All of these artists have ventured beyond the boundaries of the art-making process of the Surrealists; transforming human experience with art. With their work, each artist made attempts to deliver and reflect on the complexities of our time through a thorough investigation of the materials and their distinctive creative processes.

Lastly, I would like to thank all the artists who submitted their work and DVAA for its tireless assistance with *SUBVERSION*.

DVAA

Da Vinci Art Alliance

Da Vinci Art Alliance would like to thank Leslie Kaufman, Philadelphia Sculptors and Alice Oh for their vision, collaboration and commitment to bringing people together through challenging, engaging and high-quality artistic experiences. DVAA is honored to partner on this exhibition and present the work of these fantastic artists.

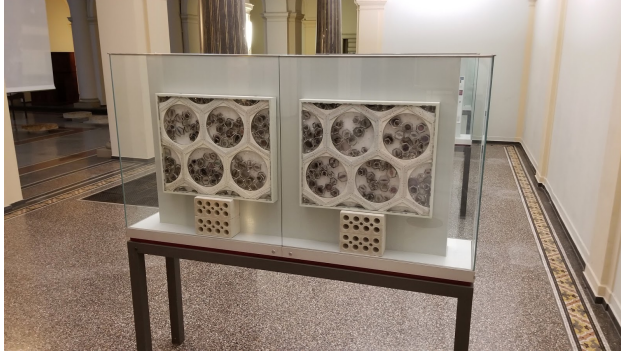
Da Vinci Art Alliance (DVAA) is a non-profit art organization based in South Philadelphia that provides resources, exhibition space, and community for our artist members and surrounding neighborhoods. Presenter of the annual Da Vinci Fest, DVAA inspires all who walk through our doors to explore their inner genius.

Sincerely,

Executive Director, Jarrod Markman
Exhibitions and Programming Director, Bryant Girsch
Marketing and Outreach Coordinator, Danielle Degon
DVAA Board of Directors

Support for DVAA's annual exhibition program comes from DVAA Membership Dues, Individual Contributions, Artist & Craftsman Supply, the Joseph Robert Foundation, PA Council on The Arts, and the Philadelphia Cultural Fund.

Theo A. Artz



"diatomicDials[Diptych]: module_05e + module28b", 2018

wood, plexiglass, lenticular lens, inkjet, acrylics

~23.5"H x 28.875"L x 2.625"D (per each module)

\$15,000/module

"diatomicDials[Diptych]: module_05e + module28b subversively foists scalar inconsistencies upon the viewer, undermining perceptual coherencies between real/actual and imagined spaces. Macro-scale models of microscopic life forms are presented in a diptych arrangement, a numbered subset isolated from a larger fullest assemblage of components. While viewers reconcile mental representations of the immense completed set expanded beyond the specific selection of tangible objects presently in front of them, gentle antagonisms of cognitive dissonance vibrate between self-challenging percepts and precepts emergent contradictions between components' intrinsic scalar relativities. Satisfaction emerges for the viewer who nimbly acclimates to the sensory flux between the piece's perceptual and conceptual scales.

The piece was created for Berlin Science Week and *Eco-connectivity Series*, Art/Science Exhibitions' invitational show. Its construction plays with conceptual distinctions between exhibition formats - art showings (gallery) and academic informational displays (science museum) - to affect morphological associations between signifiers and meanings.

Additionally, rotation of individual sub-modules' internal lenticular elements allows for variegated (randomized) compositions within assembled arrays of parented modules. This manual mutability of the artwork subverts traditional expectations of sculpture's perpetual stasis, displaying unique visual compositions per each exhibition venue."

David Beker



(Dis)Array, 2020

Cabinets are made of poplar and plywood, finished in enamel paint. The frame is poplar wood, finished in Danish oil.

44" x 22" x 19"

\$2,200

“This project challenges the viewer to see the invisible in our everyday lives. It begins with a simple Shaker-style cabinet. This object is so common, in a style that is so ordinary, we do not notice it when it is encountered in the world. It essentially becomes invisible: a blank spot in our minds. The sculpture brings this form into resolution by shifting scale, rotating and twisting orientations and intersecting solid forms in a way that implies organic growth. This jarring and unexpected composition creates a dissonance that brings the common cabinet forms into full focus. It asks the viewer what else are they ignoring in the world?”

David Beker is a contemporary designer, craftsperson and artist. Drawing from his experience as an architect and digital artist, his three-dimensional projects exist in a space between the functional furniture and abstract sculpture. David maintains a true, one-person studio, and each piece is designed and executed by him using traditional hand and power tools.”

Natasha Cheung

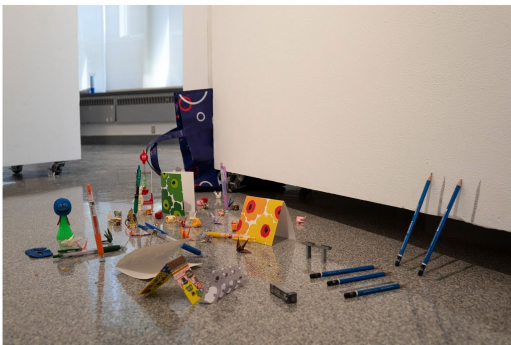


Homage, 2019

Stationery, floss, carabiner, felt, washi tape, graphite, ink, mixed media

Dimensions variable

\$444



“Homage is a tribute to a specific category of my pre-existing possessions: stationery and collectibles. I attempted to orchestrate a mundane yet foreign place in which the viewer moving through the installation, depending on where they directed their attention, would discover a rupture in reality, such as the fake shadows of the pencils and of the tape, in which the viewer is invited to Draw elaborate meaning out of choices that were devoid of meaning, such as the felt numbers and the direction of the pens laid on the floor.

Drawing is an act of subverting attention and thus a dialogue between what one expects to see and what one encounters. I see drawing not just as a technical practice but also as a philosophical action that acts as a conceptual device. I find this approach of making and thus “drawing” to be the embodiment of making meaning in the face of futility. “I draw from lines. You draw from me. They draw from us. I draw through them. I use drawing. Drawing uses me. I use line. Line uses me. I is a line.” Drawing is not a solo act. Drawing is a relational act.”

williamCromar



continuous_profile_head_of_drumpf,
2016

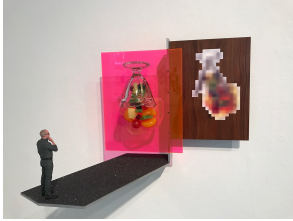
Orange-gold leaf on hydrocal cast from
a laser sintered 3d print

13-1/2" x 11"

\$8,000

"continuous_profile spoofs Bertelli's *Profilo Continuo (Testa di Mussolini)*, 1933, replacing a stoic profile with one with mouth agape, and material from burnished black to polished orange-gold. Produced not by a potter's wheel but rather rotating bezier curves, these changes subvert the original from an absorbing, all-knowing, all-seeing god-man-machine to a spewing, idiocentric, solipsistic nihilist."

David Detrich



Will the real fruit cup please step forward, 2019

3-D printed figure, optical acrylic sheet, fake food replica, inkjet print on vinyl, wood, aluminum, non-skid adhesive
12" x 14" x 12"
\$10,000



Me, myself and I think, 2019

3-D printed figure, optical acrylic sheet, optical film, inkjet print on vinyl
7" x 14" x 11"
\$5,000



Complex Matter of Balance, 2019

3-D printed figure, brass, HO scale landscape tree, optical acrylic sheet, aluminum, inkjet print on vinyl
18" x 12" x 21"
\$10,000

“David Detrich is a conceptual artist who works in a variety of media. He creates situations in which objects are altered, detached and reordered from their initial intended manufacture and context. By applying specific combinations and manipulations, different functions and/or contexts are created. By focusing on techniques and materials, he creates work using creative game tactics.

The central content of the work takes on current social and environmental issues. Albeit serious, this content quickly becomes a subtext yielding to a quirky and humorous façade. The work questions the coerciveness that is derived from the more profound meaning by using artificial fake replicas which support superficial aesthetic appearance.

The politics of nature, industry, food source, and self are all at stake in an otherworldly small-scale playing field.”

Travis Donovan



Pistol (Tatiana), 2015
Cast White Ceramic, Decals
10" x 5" x 1"
\$800



Lite Beer, 2016
Beer Can, Magnet, Electronics
8" x 12" x 12"
\$1,000

“This body of work investigates masculinity, class, and the complex emotions and tensions linked with the shifting manifestations of each in the American South where traditions are melding with the contemporary. I interrogate tropes and stereotypes associated with economic class distinctions and masculinity typically encountered as a male growing up in the southern Appalachian Mountains. Juxtaposing criticism and pride, I utilize humor and an acerbic look at materials, objects, and actions to challenge notions of social standards and to complicate and generate new discussions around masculinity, privilege, status, and identity.”

Dierdre Doyle



Women's Army Corps, 2020

Assemblage

36" x 48" x 24"

\$4,800

“At turns neoclassical and post-apocalyptic, my assemblages pair everyday objects with art drawn from antiquity. In this piece, as in many of my works, the juxtaposition of the classical female form with industry changes the figures from passive to dominant. No longer the mythical maiden, these women are active and empowered. In each assemblage, toys, figurines and discarded industrial materials are pieced together to become a cohesive sculpture and fantastical landscape. While creating each assemblage, a story takes shape, drawn from mythological or allegorical themes. Each object is altered to fit the new narrative, either by refashioning the item or altering the context. Archetypal imagery such as snakes, is a reoccurring presence in each piece. The Jungian concept of anima (the female in male) and animus (the male in female) strongly influences my work, which invariably strives to balance elements of dark and light, male and female, and death and rebirth. Assemblages lend themselves to this balance as they contain their own dual nature, encapsulating both physical and conceptual art.”

Harold Kalmus



Monument Proposal - The Victory of the Right, 2018
Imitation gold leaf, tarnished on cast resin and wood
30" x 12" x 12"
\$3,000



American Reliquary, 2017
Metal leaf on cast resin and wood
15" x 27" x 15"
\$3,000

“My two submitted works reflect my feelings about the current state of our nation (and increasingly the world), particularly the pride of ignorance so often displayed. These works are somewhat mean spirited and cynical - having a bit of fun at the expense of those with whom I disagree.”

Monica Kane



Long Boat, 2019
Gilded seed pod, wood
20" x 17" x 3-1/2"
\$375



Not Before Long, 2008
Marsh reeds, twigs, reclaimed wood, hardware cloth, paint
47" x 23" x 9"
\$675

“My work speaks through elements of the natural and manmade world. Sensual and visually tactile, the work contains references to internal and external, psychological and sociological experience. *Long Boat* began with a catalpa tree seedpod gilded and pierced with branches. *Not Before Long* is constructed of marsh reeds found along local river ways as well as salvaged wood as platforms elevated by the reeds.

We journey in our minds and in our experience with stories of migration. Such moves are often necessary, for safety and refuge, for one person or entire populations. Combined with the tragedy of loss of home and foundation, moves are also aspirational, revelatory and filled with hope for the future. In these pieces, I suggest something beyond the physical realm. Alluding to what is out of reach and hidden, fragile and dreamlike, the work weaves together fact and mythology in an attempt to reflect our consciousness, experience and history.”

Eleanor Levie



Grounds For Removal, 2020

Quilting

80" x 40" x 5"

\$760



Trumpasaurus Rex, 2018

Quilting

57" x 32" x 1-1/2"

\$1,103.20

“Trumpasaurus Rex: Tea Partyers and climate change deniers brought a clueless monster to the gala. He tromps on the Constitution while indulging his every appetite. Meanwhile volcanoes, fires, floods and tsunamis rage, and resources dwindle for those lower on the food chain. Even aliens may witness a world of impending extinction.

Grounds for Removal: Recycled bags that held ground coffee, plus a Constant Comment tea bag envelope: these form the lettering that spell out Abuse of Power, the number one reason to dump Trump. Hoping the senate majority has the conscience to rake this immoral rake over the coals before he burns down our constitutional rights.

For both pieces, I’m working green: besides recycled, single-serve tea bag packaging and coffee bags and citrus mesh bags, no new materials were purchased for these artworks.”

Nicholli Matheny

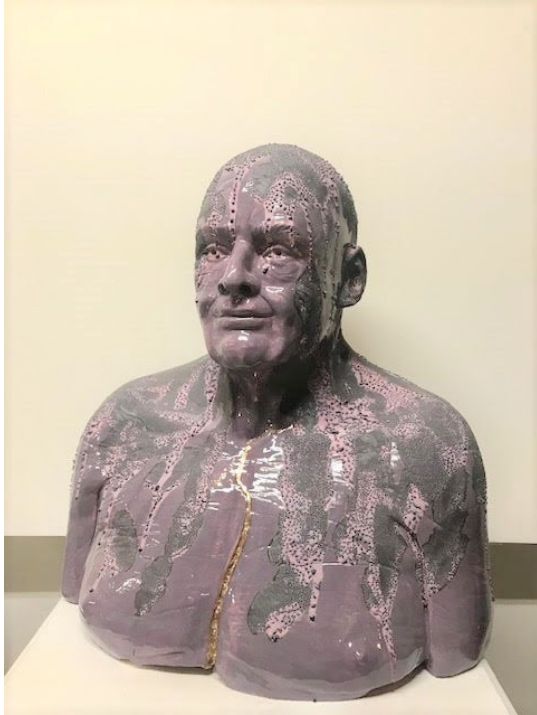


Breathe, 2020

Brass, copper, bituminous coal
about 10" high, 10" long, 2" deep
respirators
NFS

“Pneumoconiosis, or Miner’s lung, is on the rise once again. In 1969 The Federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act was created to protect miners from work-related injuries, but unfortunately the most dangerous casualty in the mines isn’t one so visibly preventable. The black lung is preventable; therefore the rise in cases is inexcusable after safety acts were passed to keep mining procedures safe and workers free of silica and coal dust. As an artist from Southern West Virginia, coal as a medium and conversation is very present in my work. I came across a lot of readings and legal articles regarding recalls on defective respirator masks and their correlation to the rise in pneumoconiosis. *Breathe* is my response to the miners who trusted their lungs were protected, only to discover they were quietly being poisoned by the invisible killer lingering in coal dust.”

Constance McBride



Purple Rain, 2017
Ceramic, Glazes
20" x 15" x 8"
\$1,200

“This work was first created as part of a series about aging in a youth obsessed culture; I altered it when invited to a show on Surrealism. Inspiration came from Max Ernst’s *Europe After the Rain II* and Prince’s song *Purple Rain*, after he died in 2016. *Europe After the Rain II*, created during World War II, reflects among other things, fears of the destructive power of total warfare. The historian Greil Marcus characterized Surrealism as, “one chapter in a series of revolutionary attempts to liberate thought...Surrealism can be understood as the progenitor of the art movement Situationism, 1960’s countercultural protests, and even punk: a project of breaking down the rational order that society imposes on individuals.” According to Wikipedia, “Prince explained the meaning of *Purple Rain* as follows: ‘When there’s blood in the sky - red and blue = purple... purple rain pertains to the end of the world and being with the one you love and letting your faith/god guide you through the purple rain.’ In this age of anxiety, Trump and never-ending wars, politicians seem incapable of learning from past mistakes. Something’s got to give. I keep holding onto the ones I love.”

Collin Mura-smith



*I love America and
America Loves Me, 2019*
Extruded polystyrene
foam, bass wood,
plaster, lacquer
16" x 96" x 48"
\$17,000

“This sculpture is about America’s relationship with guns. It’s based on a Colt 45 revolver, the archetypal weapon of American Mythology. The iconic image conjures national values of self-reliance and individual liberty, while romanticizing the violence that enabled the settling of the American West. Such violence is perpetuated in the present day by a small, remarkably powerful corporate gun lobby that conflates rational gun regulation with tyranny. This is a profound misinterpretation of the 2nd Amendment: A falsehood swallowed all too easily by a culture that values gun rights more than human life.”

Jeremy Sims



How much do you have in common with yourself, Adi?, 2018

Multifired Ceramic, Acrylic, Rubber feet
8.2" x 7" x 6.4"
\$360

“Based on intimate domestic objects like cups, speakers, video game controllers (Things you interact with using your body) I chose to use industrial methods (often the exact same methods used to produce these objects) to heavily abstract the works. While working I usually think about things like waste, identity, relationships, etc. Mass production of simple objects exploits disposable materials, human labor and a deeply ingrained desire for instant gratification. I usually title the works with a name, both as a nod to a style of design where things like furniture or other objects are personified with a name (if we personify objects, how often do we objectify people?). The name titles are specifically chosen to fall outside of the gender binary. Gender, like design trends, is a social construct.”

Holly Smith



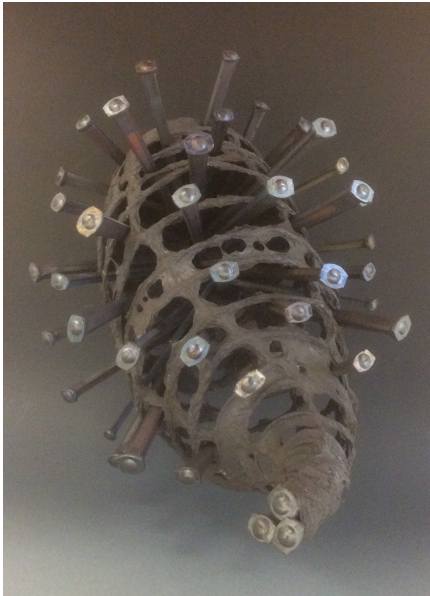
The Milk of Human Kindness, 2019
Painted wood, mixed media
15" x 18" x 17"
NFS

“With each passing year of hanging out on planet Earth I’m left more & more perplexed by Homo sapiens, the one in the mirror included. Human Nature is a tricky thing as it allows us to have a wildly excellent opinion of ourselves while also letting us off the hook when we screw up. After all, we’re only human...and we kind of admire that about us.

Like fish in water, we seem to swim around in an atmosphere of our own self-importance and the delusion of our supposed wisdom and benevolence, all the while being one of the most destructive species Mother Nature has come up with. The human brain may be the most complex object in the universe (so we say) but it sure has caused one helluva lot of trouble for all of Earth’s creatures. I’d take a good elephant brain any day of the week.

The Milk of Human Kindness is intended to subvert the belief that “most people are good” and to point out that evil is not something outside of ourselves, but rather an intrinsic part of every human being.”

Helge Speth



Pierced Norm, 2019

Metal wire form, dipped into paper pulp, spray painted, and iron spikes, mounted on metal base
16" x 10" x 13"

\$375



Divided, 2017

Raku-fired clay and rusty iron assemblage on
Lucite base

12-1/2" x 7-1/2" x 10"

\$395



Binary Vision, 2017

Raku-fired clay and rusty iron
12-1/2" x 11" x 8-1/2"

\$395

“Everyday life has been punctured by the overwhelming presence of corrupt friction, selfish immorality and unethical conduct within society up to its highest echelons. These negatives seem to have become the new norm and, sadly, appear to be widely accepted by many. And so, there is breakdown of respect and responsibility towards mankind and our planet.

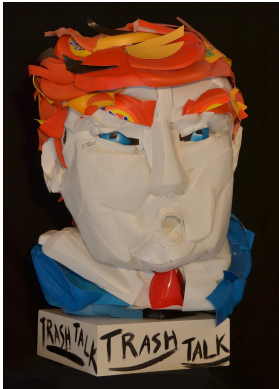
In *Pierced Norm*, I have created an innocent organic shape, a seed pod maybe, or a chrysalis containing the wondrous life of an unborn butterfly. This form has been brutally stabbed and punctured by violent forces that ruthlessly destroy the destiny of this creation. The round softness of the woven wire “cage” contrasts the angular intrusion of the metal spikes, creating a sense of disconcerting violence, a powerless victim left behind.

Divided depicts a vulnerable plant form made of Raku-fired clay, forcefully split apart by intruding rusty iron. This forceful division of form, once whole, points to the dividing forces at work in our present society.

Binary Vision, two Raku-fired clay tubes of similar diameters pierced by iron spikes, depicts the conflicting struggle of two visions. I hold my breath and ask --- which will prevail?

My Raku-fired clay pieces are hand-built and often inspired by organic forms from nature. I never cease to be fascinated by the magic of the Raku method, where fire and smoke play an unpredictable game on the clay surface, with truly wondrous results. Found, rusty, pieces of iron, with an unknown past, often complement my clay work, giving it meaning as matching partners. This marriage of materials leads to a new, closely intertwined, hopefully purposeful, destiny for both, clay and iron.”

Simone Spicer



Trash Talk, Head of Trump, 2017

plastic milk jugs, detergent containers on wood base

26" x 20" x 18"

\$4,500



Life Support for a Collapsed Economy, 2019

shopping cart, plastic containers, motorized pump, water

50" x 52" x 36"

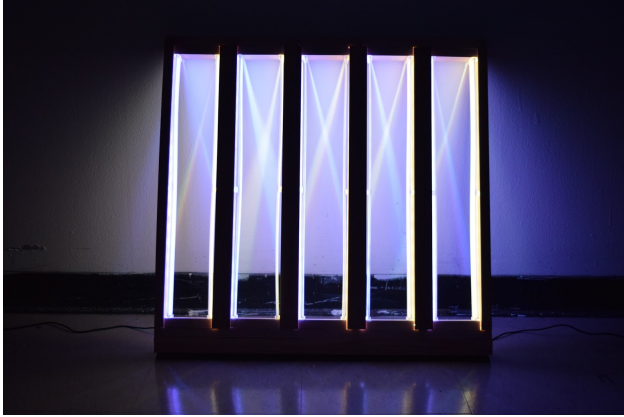
\$150

"I have been working with materials from the waste stream since before the term was commonly known. In the 90's, I built sculptures from found materials out of necessity. That was what I could afford. I was also really obsessed with Rauschenberg and his ideas about what he called, 'gifts from the street', and I was moved by the tradition of the Arte Povera movement. I chose to work with trash to connect directly with our culture and capitalize on the metaphors inherent in artwork made from objects with a past life. This has always been and continues to be important in my work. Trash takes on a much deeper meaning today as we are now in dire need of stemming the flow of pollutants in our environment.

We must look carefully at over consumption and what results from this 'petro economy' we are living in today.

Working in refuse from the street, I am tied in personally to what is happening in the collective. My connection to the world around me has deepened through this work as I ponder societal notions of value and beauty, ugliness and waste. I surround myself in a garden of trash-objects of everyday living made better and worse by technology. I acknowledge and confront the chaos and attempt to order it. My work is not an attempt to make proclamations or suggest answers to how we tackle the societal and environmental problems around our waste and over consumption that is creating change in our natural world in so many ways. I am more interested in making art that raises questions in a forceful way, and reflects back to the viewer our collective responsibility for change."

Nina Valdera



Staggered, 2019

Light Sculpture

24" x 27" x 2"

\$600

“I want to use light that evokes a calming environment for the viewer to experience; my work is related to spirituality, and how light represents life. My sculptures are abstract and are made with wood, LED lights, and acrylic sheets. In my current practice I have been exploring different materials for their reflective qualities and ability to diffuse light. My work is about presence and being in the moment, creating a tranquil and meditative space for the viewer. In the past three years, I have felt the world shift into a dark place. This darkness we have experienced comes from our leaders, our environment and the divide amongst our society. In the darkest of our days I want to believe that we will once again see better days, Dr. King said that "darkness cannot drive out darkness: only light can do that." Light is a symbol of life and hope; I want to give comfort to all who need that inspiration of hope.”