

SCULPTURE @Sylvester Manor

[R]evolution

Curated by Tom Cugliani

June 13 – Oct. 4, 2026

Catherine Bringham
and students of the
Shelter Island Union
Free School District
John Cino
Oksana Danzinger
Matthew Thomas Dutton
Francine Fleischer
Jessamyn Go
Maren Hassinger
Justin Kenney

Gioia Kuss
Karine Laval
Pia Leighton
Curtis Mitchell
J. Oscar Molina
Lindsay Morris
Jill Musnicki
Nicole Rosenthal
Bonnie Rychlak
Tonito Valderrama
John Wittenberg



Sylvester Manor is pleased to announce **[R]evolution**, the third annual exhibition of **Sculpture@Sylvester Manor**. Featuring a curated array of outdoor sculptures and site-specific installations, this seasonal exhibition will provide a resonant, dynamic dialogue around art, history, and landscape on the grounds of Sylvester Manor, where recorded history dates to 1637. As reported in the **New York Times**, “*Sculpture@Sylvester Manor is a surprising and whimsical exhibit, which was created by the curator Tom Cugliani and features a new group of East End artists whose works inhabit and reference the land.*”

The 2026 theme of **[R]evolution** commemorates the 250th signing of the Declaration of Independence, pairing Thomas Paine’s 18th century clarion call for revolution with Charles Darwin’s groundbreaking theories of evolution in the 19th century. The exhibition is loosely organized around their mutually radical texts: *On the Origin of Species*, by Darwin in 1859 and *Common Sense* by Paine, published in 1776. Nineteen artists, all with ties to the East End of Long Island, were invited to interpret the themes of revolution and evolution with works created for the exhibition, either pre-existing or created with organic materials harvested on site, which will biodegrade back into the environment.

[R]evolution has been awarded a \$20,000 grant from **Discover Long Island** showing “a strong investment in Long Island’s cultural economy and demonstrated a clear commitment to preserving and enhancing the historic, artistic and cultural assets that contribute to the regions’s unique sense of place and visitor appeal.”



80 NORTH FERRY ROAD
SHELTER ISLAND, NY
www.sylvestermanor.org

[R]evolution

“The more men have to lose, the less willing are they to venture.”

—Thomas Paine, *Common Sense*, 1775-1776

“Man selects only for his own good: Nature only for that of the being which she tends.”

—Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, 1859

Why should we care about art?

Because art frees us to see the world in ways that we could never see ourselves.

Art is a transformational experience.

This year, America is celebrating the 250th anniversary of national independence, allowing us to look back on all that has brought us to now. There are, naturally, conflicting accounts of historic events and of how events are understood, interpreted, taught, and sometimes suppressed.

Sylvester Manor holds three significant strands of early American history: the predated story of *Manhansack-aha-quash-awamock*, the Manhanset people’s “Island Surrounded by Islands”; the 17th-century colonial settlement that established the first global economy between Europe, the Caribbean and North America; and the history of the West African captives sold into slavery who provided the labor to fuel that economy.

[R]evolution, our current exhibition at Sculpture @ Sylvester Manor, looks at how the confluence of Shelter Island’s historical past, its uniquely preserved lands and our present moment in time converge to reveal different aspects of revolution and evolution through the eyes of the artist.

The exhibition is loosely organized around two monumental texts: *Common Sense* by Thomas Paine, published in 1776, and *On the Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin, published in 1859.

Paine and Darwin, writing at a distance of almost a hundred years from one another, understood that change, however disruptive, is essential for survival—without it, we are left with death by tyranny, according to Paine, or death by extinction, according to Darwin.

Although one was the product of an enlightened age and the other of an Industrialized one, both were supremely skeptical of human reasoning, with little faith that we would select beyond our own interest for the greater good. However, across very different disciplines, Paine advocated for political revolution, and Darwin revealed transformation as a natural principle in evolution. They both believed transformation was the key to the future, to a better understanding of human nature and of the world.

Art can be an agent of unforeseen transitions that impact the individual or society. As illuminated by the artist, the turning over of a new chapter or the audacity to look beyond the frontier into the unexplored, art allows us to be guided by language that is not spoken but imagined.

—Tom Cugliani, Shelter Island, June 13, 2026

Maren Hassinger



Monument (Sylvester Manor)
2026
Materials: Rebar, chicken wire
armature with wood and brush
Dimensions variable



Curator's notes



Joseph Beuys, *La rivoluzione siamo noi* (We Are the Revolution), 1972.

The Social Sculpture is a practice first introduced by the German artist Joseph Beuys in the 1970s. At the forefront of the post-war generation of artists, Beuys' thinking departed from the romantic notion that the artist is a solitary figure producing signature works of art through the touch of unique divine inspiration. Beuys proposed the radical concept that an artistically engaged social discourse could result in an artwork reflective of the societal values of its makers.

Maren Hassinger has, for most of her career, created artworks collaboratively—notably with Senga Nengudi, with whom she recently mounted a major outdoor exhibition at Institut Valencià d'Art Modern, IVAM in Valencia, Spain. Sculpture @ Sylvester Manor is fortunate to present the work *Monument (Sylvester Manor)*, 2026, a continuation of Hassinger's well-known series. This work has been fabricated in collaboration with students from the Shelter Island Union Free School and volunteers.

Consistent with many artists of the Minimalist movement, such as Sol Lewitt, Hassinger's work can be understood from a set of instructions:

1. Gather and process locally sourced brush
2. Construct an armature from rebar and chicken wire
3. Affix the brush to the structure with zip ties

These directives simplify the creative process, framing it as a group activity stripped of the elitist connotations of the artist's studio. It also aligns Hassinger's practice with the artists of the 1970s engaged in "Process" Art, where work is made through a repetitive, highly organized manner, such as threading material through a matrix, as in the case of Eva Hesse, or knotting ropes, as in the case of Jackie Windsor.

Hassinger's *Monument (Sylvester Manor)* has been sited specifically within the landscape at Sculpture @ Sylvester Manor. Just beyond the sculpture is the land bridge where, for centuries, Europeans, Africans, and Caribbeans first set foot on Shelter Island, disembarking into new lives in a New World. The significance of this historic snapshot is captured in the sculpture itself. As it winds its way over the rise, it appears to gather and release volume, like a lung expanding and contracting. Hassinger's work has somehow reanimated aspects of history that elude language; they can only be understood without words.

Sculpture @ Sylvester Manor is grateful to Marcello Masonary for their generous donation in the fabrication of this piece.



Maren Hassinger, *Monuments (Installation View)* at Marcus Garvey Park, 2018. Presented by The Studio Museum in Harlem. Photo: Steve Brown.

Jill Musnicki



Witness Tree
2026
Materials: Mixed media (Trees, moss, various plants, and found figurines)
Dimensions: d. 5 ft.

"Moss grows where nothing else can grow. It grows on bricks. It grows on tree bark and on roofing slate. It grows in the Arctic Circle and in the balmiest tropics; it also grows on the fur of sloths, on the backs of snails, on decaying human bones. Moss, Alma learned, is the first sign of botanic life to reappear on land that has been burned or otherwise stripped down to barrenness. Moss has the temerity to begin luring the forest back to life. It is a resurrection engine. A single clump of moss can lie dormant and dry for forty years at a stretch, and then vault back again into life with a mere soaking of water."

—Elizabeth Gilbert, *The Signature of All Things*

Jill Musnicki, who has a background in all things arboreal, has created a dream-like diorama evoking imagery from the American Revolution.

Installed in the hollowed trunk of a century-old Copper Beech tree, we find a landscape reminiscent of those miraculously enclosed in glass bottles, in a terrarium, or miniaturized in a model train set. Positioned on a tableau of living mosses and pine are the iconic symbols of 1776. A colonial flag, a pair of miniature cannons, a porcelain figurine of Betsy Ross. Here, too, are embedded effigies of native American heads. Out of proportion with the mindfully scaled-down setting, they serve to remind us that the land is a non-transactional gift from the creator, and our role is that of custodian.

But it is the mini landscape in which the scene is set that emerges as the true subject of the installation. The landscape is reconstructed from plant life that is native to the East End of Long Island, some of which is now under threat from radical transformation. The destruction of the pine beetle has rendered hundreds

of thousands of acres of Pine Barrens unrecognizable, as if imagined in a post-apocalyptic event. The run-off from chemicals for the greening of our lawns, the economically driven development of lands in flood zones, the melting ice, the rising tides, the bloom of algae, all wedge a deeper divide between the natural cycle of growth, death, decay, and renewal, and the one designed for short-term investment.

Like the incremental progress of moss in Gilbert's writing, we are hoping that there is a course for self-correction. We pray for the miracles of re-animation of "resurrection" to allay fears of permanent extinction. What is certain, however, is that nothing short of a disruption of the status quo will be needed before nature takes matters into her own hands and orders the Revolution.



Model train landscape.



The artist's daughter, age 6, Sylvester Manor in 2013

Bonnie Rychlak



Green Drain
2019

Materials: Cast glass
Dimensions:
d. 24 x 2 in.,
30 x 22.5 x 30 in.
34 x 24 x 26 in.
37 x 27 x 48.5 in.



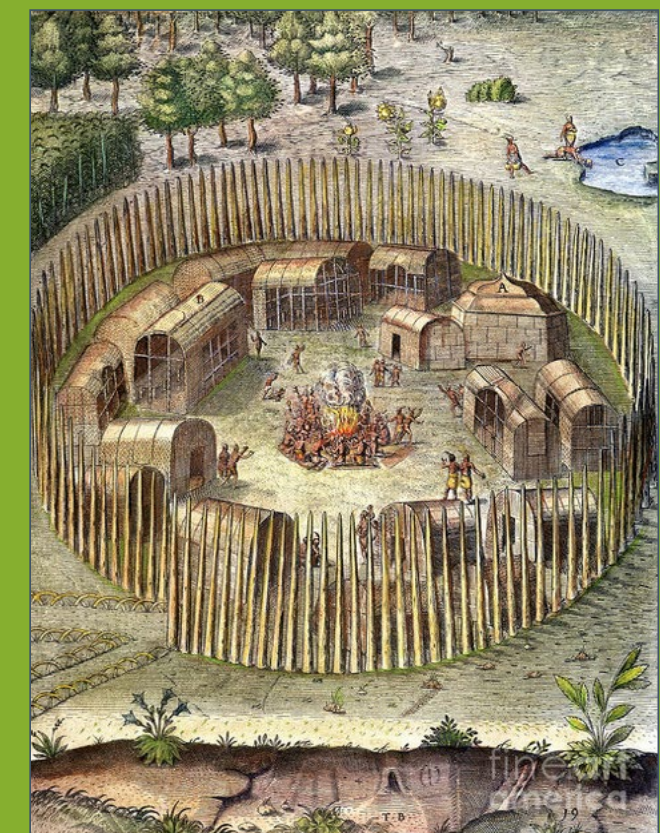
Before the Europeans delivered North America from her culture of heathen savages, the Native peoples here practiced a highly evolved system of Democratic governance. This decentralized organization was predicated on exhaustive consensus among tribal leaders, who were identified by clan and who governed themselves autonomously from a single authority. The clan chiefs were chosen based on merit, and in the interest of the whole community, rather than by hereditary lineage. Any decision was made only with the universally persuaded agreement of the clan members, never dictated.

Bonnie Rychlack has recreated a scaled-down version of three Algonquin Long Houses. The structures, which approximate a settlement, have mirrors for entrances, creating an ambiguity between the borders of internal and external. These mirrored entrances reflect the ground back at us instead of implying interior depth. Positioned centrally among the three longhouses is a standard-sized “drain” cast in glass.

Without too much effort, it is easy to extrapolate a disturbing meaning from the organization of Rychlack's installation. The harmonized and sophisticated culture of the people, who were for millennia the custodians of this land, has been reduced physically and intellectually into something the size of a doll house. The indigenous culture is perceived not as something valuable worthy of holistic adoption, but as something managed superficially as a reflection that legitimizes our version of a democratic society. The truth, as much as we would like to deny it, is that we have strayed from these noble values and allowed them to go down the drain.

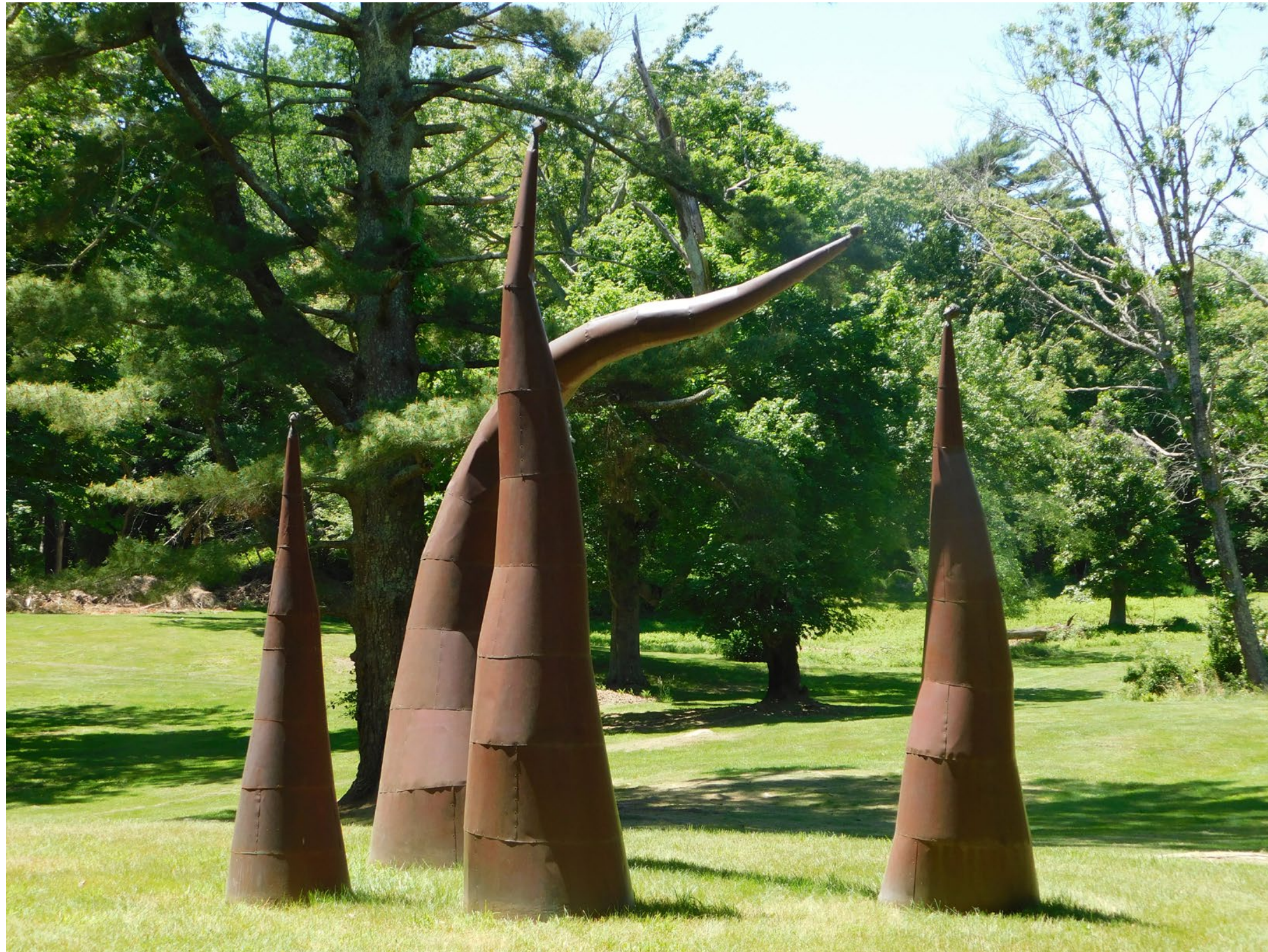


Thomas Crawford,
Statue of Freedom, a bronze sculpture that has crowned the U.S. Capitol dome since 1863.



Theodor de Bry,
The Town of Pomeiooc, 1585.

J. Oscar Molina



**Children of the World – In Copper:
Family of Four Composition, #4**
2025

Materials: Steel and Copper Plating and
Galvanized Wire Frame
Dimensions: 162 x 165 x 107 in.

Migration has been a fact of the human story since the beginning of time. People have continuously sought better conditions to hunt and fish, to farm, and to generate success. With the exception of unfree peoples who were unwillingly transported to places beyond their control, people have been willing to brave uncertain or even perilous risks for a better life for themselves and their families.

The primary subject of **J. Oscar Molinas'** work has long been the global displacement of populations. In much of his work, he has focused on the plight of refugee children. The formal qualities of the figures in Molina's sculpture are always similar. Assembled into "family" groupings, the elements are composed of conical "bodies" with extended necks surmounted by delicate little heads with abbreviated faces. When assembled into the landscape, they command a dramatic effect, and here in this copper version, one may be tempted to interpret them as shades wandering the underworld.

Molina is equally known for the white version of the composition (currently on exhibition at the Venice Biennale), in which the children's characteristics are far more evident. When cast in white plaster, the compositions take on a more ethereal interpretation. Suggesting apparitions of the young souls who could not survive the harsh conditions of their displacement. Their spirits seem to be adrift, yearning to find a home.

Molinas' moving tableaux align with the Polish artist Magdalena Abakanowicz (1930-2017), whose works are dedicated to the memories of people displaced by political, economic, or racial persecution. Both

artists summon the figure as a generalized being. They create not portraits, but instead depict the loss of the individual identity in the catastrophic events of diaspora. This aspect of anonymity simultaneously erases human identity while instead confirming the dehumanizing circumstances that reduce human lives to statistics.

Abakanowicz, an artist born into an aristocratic family, survived the Nazi occupation of Poland and its annexation by the Soviet Union during the Cold War. She was pressured to conform to state-sanctioned "Social Realism" as the only acceptable form of artistic expression. A dictate she resisted.

Molina, a child refugee, emigrated to this country from his native El Salvador. His powerful works tell us through stylized universal representation. The alternate narrative of his biography—and by extension, of our own.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
J. Oscar Molina, *Children of the World Composition #85*, 2025, Italian Composite and Galvanized Wire, 115 x 120 x 120 in.
Magdalena Abakanowicz, *Alone*, 2008.

John Wittenberg



Invasive Beauty, Old Growth
2026
Materials: Powder-coated aluminum rods
Dimensions: 63 x 17 ft., variable height

By the early 1970s, the flat, planar paintings of the American Minimalist wunderkind Frank Stella were undergoing an unlikely transition. His series *Polish Village* (1971-74), intended to commemorate the desecration of the Jewish Synagogues of Minsk by the Nazis, was beginning to project off the canvas into three dimensions. In a series of authoritative essays and lectures, the artist maintained that Minimalism and the Baroque were two sides of one coin. The paintings, sculptures, and constructions that followed the *Polish Villages* were increasingly flamboyant in their execution of space and color as compared to the strict rectilinear compositions of his earlier paintings and the Protractor series.

In his present work, *Invasive Beauty*, we sense that John Wittenberg is perched on a similar edge of Minimalism and Maximalism. The components and value of his elements are registered strictly according to size, shape, and color, but when in collaboration with the landscape, they start to misbehave.

Wittenberg is clearly mindful of the dimensionality of the space and even of the spaces external to the installation. The implication is that the elements of the piece could well occupy an indefinite amount of space in an invasive manner.

The natural world provides a field day of energetic profusions for the unexpected and the unreliable. Wittenberg's controlled work, sited in the boggy fern-invaded clearing, is coordinated with the woodland to reveal how these two opposites can, while not in harmony but in duality, co-exist, like a split personality. One aspect of the artful persona is minimalist; classically restrained by palette, size, and physical profile. The other aspect of the persona is Baroque; organic, asymmetrical, and adaptable.

The planted clusters of rigid cadmium red rods deployed in groups draw attention to the waves of native fern, to the swampy miscanthus, and the wandering vines. There is something decidedly Jurassic about fern—a plant that feels primeval with antecedents from the dawn of time, bringing it into greater relief with the artists' intervention.

In a world of algorithms and artificial intelligence, where our desires are pre-curated and predetermined by intent and design, the grafting of artificial and intelligent seems a clumsy misnomer.

(Is intelligence not something native, an inherent thing not acquired? Is artifice not something designed, a thing not natural? Explain to me then how an unnatural system of analysis is a good thing for people.)

John Wittenberg, whose surname carries the weight of history and diaspora, is demonstrating the dichotomy of the natural world with our synthetic present and future far more effectively than the clutter of flotsam and jetsam that washes up in a cyber tide from a world that has lost its bearings.



Frank Stella, Record for an Exotic Bird: Jungli-Kowwa, 1978.

John Cino



Woodland Warp
2026
Materials: Yellow
mason twine
Dimensions variable



Sir Edward Burne-Jones, *Love in a Tangle*, 1 of 38 illustrations from the Flower Book series.

Poseidon. Daedalus created a maze of such confusion and complexity that no living person could escape it. In retribution for the death of his son, Minos had demanded a blood thirsty sacrifice from the city of Athens—the lives of fourteen youths who were sent to their deaths in the labyrinth to be killed by the minotaur. This sabbatical loss of innocent lives brought despair to the people who obliged the monster to placate him from wreaking total chaos on the city. However, Minos’ daughter Ariadne fell in love with the captive Athenian Theseus and devised a way to save

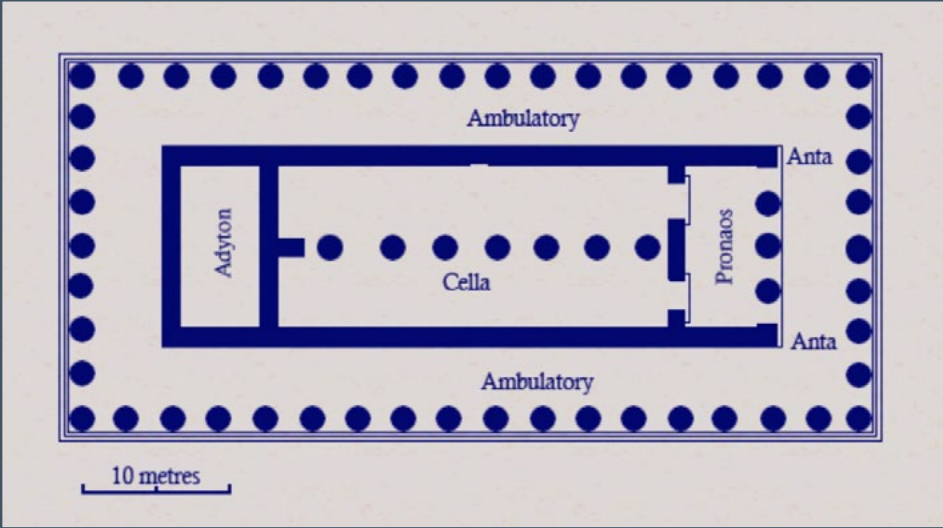
Daedalus, the most celebrated architect of his time, was commanded by King Minos to build a labyrinth to imprison the Minotaur. Half man/ half bull, the monster was the result of the king’s mother, Queen Pasiphae’s scandalous and unnatural adultery with a white bull sent by

his life. She gave him a long, unwinding thread, which helped him to find his way out of the labyrinth after killing the minotaur. Theseus then abducted Minos’ daughter to the island of Dia, where he promptly abandoned her—but that’s another story.

John Cino has unwound a thread of mythic stature in the woodland of Sylvester Manor. A work that transcends place and time, evoking associations with weaving, music, and classical architecture.

The approach to the installation begins from a Pronaos-like rise that departs from the path. The initial space is a large one. Cella-like, it is relatively open and architecturally grand despite the webs of thread that conduct us deeper into what is finally the Opisthodomos—the smaller chamber of sacred offerings.

Cino’s work perfectly complements the grandeur and natural majesty of the space. It articulates the arboreal structure of the site as much as it inspires the mind to wander along a skein of thread to be lost in thought and find a way out again.



Floor plan of a peripteral Greek temple.



Hieronymus Cock, *The Cretan Labyrinth*, 1558.

Curtis Mitchell



Wizend 5
2024
Materials: Plaster, dye
Dimensions: 27 x 25 x 20 in., 80 lbs

Wizend 6
2025
Materials; Plaster, dye
Dimensions: 27 x 25 x 20 in., 80 lbs

Wizend 7
2026
Materials: Plaster, dye
Dimensions: 27 x 25 x 20 in., 80 lbs

Wizened 5, Wizened 6, and Wizened 7 are three self-portraits by the artist **Curtis Mitchell**. The installation of three heads mounted atop the sectioned and charred trunks of a felled pine tree appears as if out of nowhere—an effigy that dramatically shifts the tone of a sylvan woodland walk into something unexpectedly confrontational.

Mitchell’s brilliant reimagining of himself decapitates his head from his body and grafts it onto an imposter trunk. We accept this ersatz torso, both visually and intellectually, through the surgical inference. The anthropomorphism of the inverted tree extends further to its “limbs” as arms and, ahem, its “member”.

Rendered in near-monumental scale, these striking sculptures recall representations of Roman god-emperors, fascist dictators, czars, and the 20th-century autocrats who followed, whose state-sanctioned public sculptures were toppled across Poland, Romania, and Czechoslovakia at the end of the Cold War. We are reminded of the statues of Saddam Hussein, the Shah of Iran, and Muammar Gaddafi.

Of King George III in Bowling Green.

The many Strong Men of history who forced themselves onto the world.

Conversely, Mitchell’s sculptures also recall the heads of traitors mounted onto spikes for public display. Whether these heads were once attached to the citizens who betrayed their king, or to the king who betrayed his citizens, the punishment for treason is the same.

The three heads bear the signs of bodily decay, or perhaps of violence, or even of the ancient Incan surgical procedure of trepanation, practiced to release pressure, blood accumulation, or subversive humors from the cranium. The cratered sections of the skulls may also refer to cognitive decline, or they could simply be a metaphor for problems we need, like a “hole in the head”.

“Wizened 5, 6, 7” implies something desiccated, wrinkled, obsolete even. Coupled with the ambiguous interpretations of madness and violence, Mitchell’s work depicts a frightening equation: it is the formula for dictatorship in the wrong hands. Malice + ignorance = corrupting power.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Trepanations Neolithiques.
Fall of Saddam Hussein, April 2003.
Oliver Cromwell's Head, late 1700s.

Francine Fleischer



The Architecture of Flight (in this Anthropocene)

2026

Materials: Dye Sublimation prints on polyester

Dimensions: 5 prints, 30 x 30 in. each

Wait... a title that deserves some unpacking.

The second half of the title delivers a ten-dollar word from antiquity: *Anthropocene*.

In the first part, we are given architecture and flight, two words not normally associated with each other. Architecture is a discipline concerned with design, construction, and engineering, and the outcome is fixed. Flight is normally construed as a biological attribute of the natural world, enjoyed by birds, bats, insects, and squirrels before aerodynamic scientists made it possible for humans to fly alongside them in the skies, the opposite of fixed.

Anthropos is from the Greek meaning "human," and *kainos* meaning "new." Stitched together as Anthropocene, they imply a composite Renaissance man, a new and improved model to replace an outdated one.

The deliberately curated language of the title leaves us with the kind of confusion that arises when a thing or things are out of joint—they are dislocated like the bones of the body under sudden impact or in the human condition as a result of catastrophic and unnatural events.

Drawing on the imagery of her five bird nests, we infer from the title that the artist, **Francine Fleischer**, is evaluating how human domination has negatively impacted the natural world. As scavengers, birds normally draw from whatever material they deem suitable for nesting and to defend themselves from predation. The architecture, design, construction, and all-important location of a nest vary from bird to bird. Many are typically off the ground, and indeed, here on the East End, platforms are supplied by well-intended humans for ospreys to build upon. Other large birds, like swans, nest in the reedy embankments of the shoreline, while others, like sandpipers, nest in coastal sand dunes. These days, they also may avail themselves of the synthetics, plastics, or metals they increasingly come into contact with in their sadly degrading eco-systems - like the flotsam and jetsam that washes ashore after the weekend flotillas of mega-yachts have powered away.

Fleischer's title is elegant and refined even in the context of classicism, but it presages a post-natural world in which the construct of flight, like a deadly drone, replaces a species that flies, like a bird.

Karine Laval



Dream Catcher
2026
Material: Mixed media
Dimensions variable

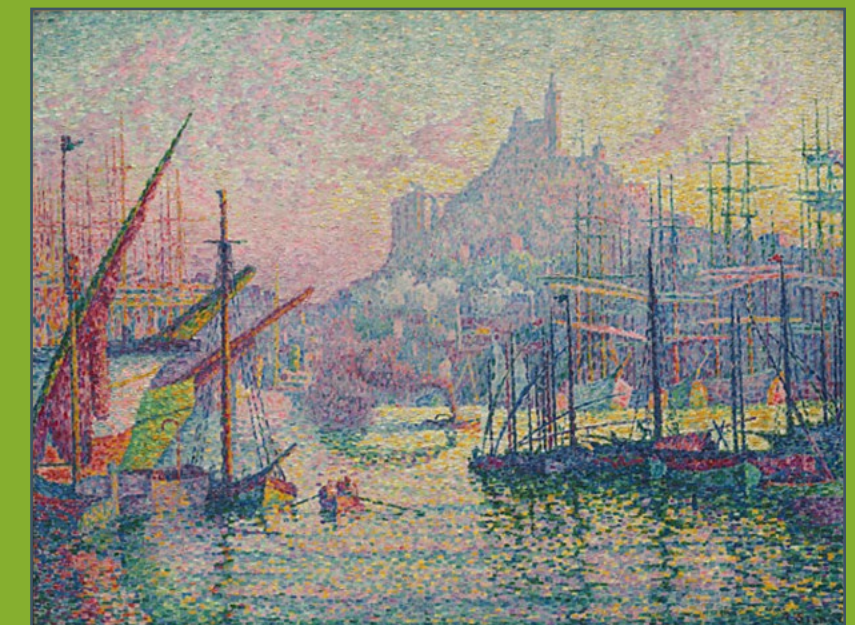
In **Karine Laval**'s installations, which are of submersion or hydrographic printed color photographs, the mood is East End, but the culture is distinctly Mediterranean.

The images of the tree canopy, photographed between the winter and spring seasons, are superimposed and rendered expressionistically in a palette of colors that evoke the Fauvist palette of André Derain, Henri Matisse, and Paul Signac—compatriots all of Karine Laval—and the dreamy qualities of John Singer Sargent watercolors. These effortlessly stylish compositions impregnate the fabric of ten hammocks suspended in a circular formation in a clearing off the old drive. The artists' invitation to the visitor to stop, clamber in, rest, and gaze up into the trees could not be any more irresistibly extended.

So, take a load off, bring a book, bring a friend, have a flop; but please leave it as you found it—a work of art that is only complete once you partake in it.



John Singer Sargent, *White Ships*, 1908.



Paul Signac, *Notre-Dame de la Garde (La Bonne Mère)*, Marseille, 1905-1906.



Photo courtesy of Sylvester Manor

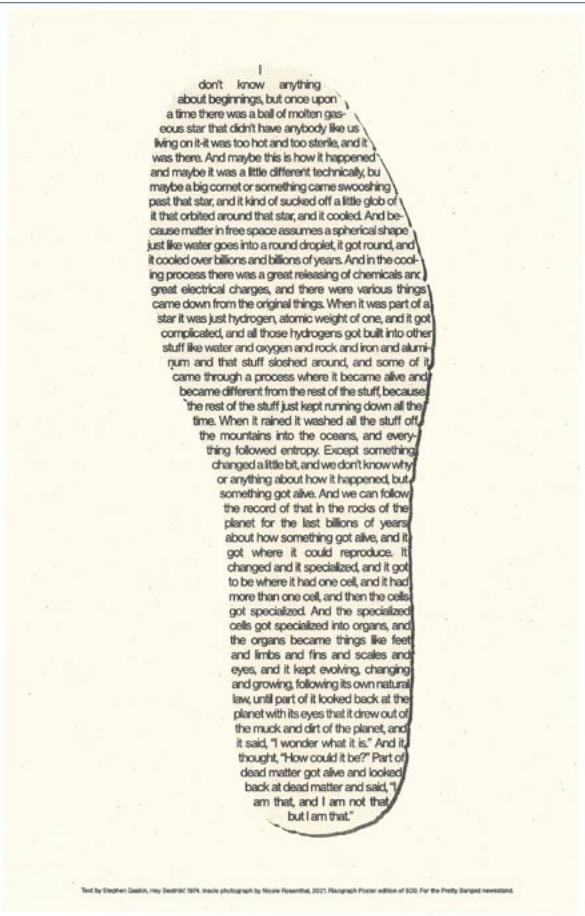
Nicole Rosenthal



Pretty Banged Newsstand
2026
Materials: Plastic newsstand, Stickers,
Risograph-printed posters
Dimensions: 16 x 14 x 44 in.



Pretty Banged Newsstand by Nicole Rosenthal, Sylvester Manor, Shelter Island, New York, June 13, October 4th 2026. Curated by Tom Cullinan, Your Ruffled Feathers, 2026. A color risograph printed by Nicole Rosenthal at Secret Risk Club. Edition of 500.



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:
Your Ruffled Feathers,
2026, four-color Risograph,
Pretty Banged Newsstand,
edition of 500.
Insole Photograph featuring Hey Beatnik (1974), 2021, Risograph,
Pretty Banged Newsstand,
edition of 500.

“Who controls the past controls the future.
Who controls the present controls the past.”
—George Orwell, 1984

The artwork here is the kind of newspaper dispenser that has been a common sight on the corners of New York City forever. It used to be that a person could buy a newspaper with a coin. Now that most people no longer access the news in print, this beat-up relic of city furniture is as obsolete as the rotary phone in the corner phone booth.

The one that never worked...

Nicole Rosenthal’s *Pretty Banged Newsstand* contains alternate sheets of printed photography and text. The Image sheet is an arrangement of nautical objects—the carapace of a hermit crab, the linked necklaces of extruded conch eggs, the tail of the Horseshoe crab—all examples of sea life that are common to the East End. The other sheet—a text entitled *Hey Beatnik* written by Stephen Gaskin in 1974, is a kind of hippy trippy induced stream of consciousness meditation on the origins of everything—from the big bang to the protoplasmic ooze from which humankind emerged.

The public is invited to help themselves to a poster. This suggestion puts the “public” into “public art”: instead of asking the visitor to complete the work, the artist offers something for the public to take

away. Felix Gonzalez-Torres’ *Stacks* immediately come to mind as a breakthrough way of engaging with the public through the artist’s gift. The object that the artist is offering is a token of a shared aspiration. Only when the public takes from the artwork is the work truly activated. The value is not in the thing itself, but in a confirmed understanding between the artist and the public, represented by the act of sharing the piece.



1984 by George Orwell,
First Edition, 1949

Rosenthal’s Newsstand is decorated with decouped images of Jimi Hendrix, the Salvador Dali Lobster Telephone, the Great American Bald Eagle, and Giorgio Morandi, just to name a few. This is a mixed salad of 20th-century high and low-brow cultural icons that get re-shuffled in the great fin de siècle post-war Y2K global warming jumble of cultural anxiety and the dread of a dystopic system anticipated by Orwell in 1984.

Media today is pre-curated for our consumption according to preferences and often tracked without our awareness, let alone our consent. Information is tailored to suit an opinion that reflects the tailoring itself. We are adrift in a meta-verse of existence, connected through disconnections. Rosenthal reminds us that we are composite beings capable of widely varying interests and points of view. Our humanism is founded in part through the imperfections, deviations, and accidents that make up the creative imagination, for as long as Big Brother allows.

Lindsay Morris



Adrift

2026

Materials: Photograph printed on polyester fabric, cable and hardware

Dimensions: 4 pieces, 8 x 10 ft.

"Some say the world will end in fire,
Some say in ice.
From what I've tasted of desire
I hold with those who favor fire.
But if I had to perish twice,
I think I know enough of hate
To know that for destruction ice
Is also great
And would suffice."

—Robert Frost, *Fire and Ice*

In Dante's *Divina Commedia*, the deepest part of Hell, Inferno, is a frozen lake. This lake, Cocytus is kept icy cold by Satan who is trapped in the middle to his waist, his flapping wings creating the winds that freeze the ice. It is to this still and noiseless circle; the coldest remove from divine love, that the most sinful are eternally condemned. An infinity captured in the stasis of freeze, Dante's Hell has none of the purification and cyclic re-birth associated with fire.

In the poetry of Dante's Inferno, Hell is already frozen over.

Western Art has for centuries embraced the idiom of the panorama as a style of interior décor. The "triclinia" (the dining rooms) of patrician roman dwellings were often decorated with walls painted in fresco or inlaid with mosaics that represented a variety of pleasant subjects such as fantasy architectural motifs or subjects taken from wild life or flora.

Never icebergs or volcanos.

Lindsay Morris has photographed the formations of ice floes in the Great Lakes and installed them end-

to-end on a line of trees that once shaded a former drive of the Manor. The incongruity of the image of ice in a forest redolent of pine and fern provokes not only a strong visual disjoint, but an emotional one as well. We are instantly aware of a warming climate in which polar ice caps are melting at an alarming rate. We are equally aware of the geological origin of this very place created millennia ago as a shelf of glacial ice descended from the north, carving cliffs in New England and depositing erratics in the Hamptons.

In her present work, Lindsay Morris is perhaps asking us to consider the circularity of these two consequential events. An historic potential to bookend the reshaping of a landscape, first though planetary evolution followed by human devolution. It is likely that the ground under our feet will, in a geologically swift matter of time, be underwater. A "Hamptons" version of a Venetian lagoon as it were.

Shelter Island, until recently the overlooked and under-valued rock situated in a waterway where the Peconic meets Gardiners Bay, has now become a gated community surrounded by a moat. A bridge between the North and South Forks, between Heaven and Hell, freezing Ice and combustible Fire.



Pompeii
Blue Room

Justin A. Kenney



Capacious Weather

2026

Materials: Steel and concrete

Dimensions: 7 x 4 x 5 ft., 1,800 lbs

Looking like a Constructivist design rendered in three dimensions, *Capacious Weather* is situated on the edge of the lawn by Gardiners Creek. **Justin A. Kenney's** sculpture is fabricated from cast concrete slabs notched together to form an upright structure reminiscent of a throne or a ship under sail, or perhaps a throne under sail. The inference here is an object of authority and magnitude of the kind of heft that, through volume and materiality, asserts a dominion over the landscape.

The piece is set against a backdrop suggesting the illusion of a proscenium, which offers myriad possibilities for interpreting the empty space before it as the audience in a theater, the nave of a cathedral, or the throne room in a palace.

Considering its less-than-monumental size, *Capacious Weather* has a far greater visual impact than one would expect. On closer inspection, details of surface irregularities and the addition of a steel element bring additional design interest to a form that adheres to reductivist principles. The way the numerous elements are slotted together in a manner similar to Donald Judd's famous design projects makes the sculpture feel decidedly Minimalist.

Ironically, Kenney's imposing sculpture, however severe in its aspect, could also present an invitation for a certain kind of childlike engagement. Reminiscent of playground structures for climbing and clambering, *Capacious Weather* is built to withstand all manner of abuse. According to the artist, it is guaranteed to be standing in the next century.



Donald Judd *Chair 84*

Catherine Brigham and the students of the Shelter Island Free School K-12



After the Chime: Wind Chandelier
2026
Materials: Woven branches, hand-built clay pinch pots, recycled yarn, and beads
Dimensions: 3 × 3 ft.

The sculpture conceptualized in collaboration with students from the Shelter Island School, takes its inspiration from the Swedish Candle Chime—a traditional heat propelled chime where heat from the candles set in motion a spinning carousel of chrome bells that ring out. In this sculpture, the heat is instead replaced by breezes that activate the ceramic pinch pots to create sound.

The wind chime is strung up from a tree like a chandelier. The beautifully wrought glazed clay elements freely dangle from circular hoops of vine and birch, together with strands of plastic beads and twisted pipe cleaners; recycled materials from another sculpture. The melodies that issue cannot be transcribed into notation, and are not in measured time or in the signature of a key. They are never in tune.

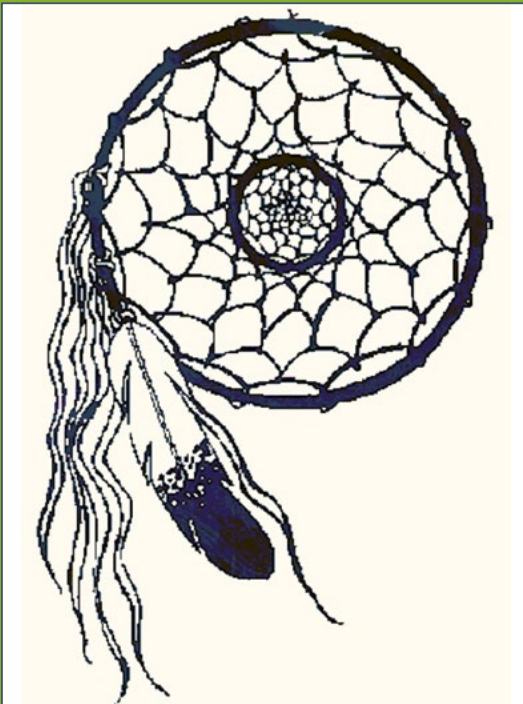
The musician is not visible. It is the breeze swelling off the creek. It is the rain-driven wind and wind-driven rain. A thing of circularity, this chime never repeats a refrain. It is forever turning the air currents into a new song.

Perhaps a lullaby—like the Dream Catcher talisman of the Ojibwe Spider Woman, whose web snared bad thoughts and kept them from infecting the unconscious of sleeping children. Influencing them to realize the coming dreams of their maturity.

Thus, the wind chime captures the bad flow and turns it into a dream song of slumber.



Traditional Swedish angel chime.



Traditional Native American dream catcher.

Pia Leighton



Tree Field, Sylvester Lines
2026
Material: Neon pink twine
Dimensions variable



The artist who has an extensive background in literature and language has cited the Latin radical “volvere” from “revolution,” to roll, to turn again, from which the word Evolution is rolling out.

Pia Leighton’s work, *Tree Field*, elegantly embodies the tension transposed on the two words that are in contradiction with each other. Evolution and Revolution. The infinite and the finite are both implied through the interdependent action of winding thread around and around to create one structure, while simultaneously unwinding it further and further out to deplete another.

The activity of making ties Leighton to the Process Artists of the 1970s who emerged with the Post Minimalist movement, artists such as Eva Hesse exemplified a practice of repetitive operations in the development of an artwork. For Pat Steir or Lynda Benglis, the Medium, paint or latex, is the subject of the work. The aesthetic that results from the process is defined in the nature of the material itself. The subject, the properties, and the overall look of the artwork are inherent in the medium and the process of its making.

The repetitive process of Leighton’s construction cannot be captured in time and movement alone. Time, that which is linear, is measured in the length of unwinding thread. Movement that is confined to spatial coordinates is also finite. However, a third dimension emerges, as one grid of thread is optically superimposed onto another, creating a dimension that is neither linear nor circular.

It is triangular.

In classical antiquity, the triangular Greek letter Delta is a symbol of change. Facing upwards, it is a symbol of the masculine principle and the fire element. Facing downward, it is the feminine principle and water. When

overlapping, it is the symbol of fertility, growth, and the agent of change that is neither round nor linear. (It is the Star of David.)

In Mayan mythology, the points of the triangle align during the Spring and Autumn equinoxes, allowing the feathered serpent god Kukulcan to descend the Pyramid at Chichèn Itza and fertilize the ground for the coming year.

Male and Female, Fire and Water, Eternal life and Eternal afterlife—It is all imprinted here.

Among its many associations, the three-cornered (tricorn) hat may be the most iconic fashion accessory of the American and the French Revolutions.

As in Leighton’s piece, pink—the triangle becomes transmuted; once the historic branding of degeneracy and deviance, the pink triangle now represents a badge of defiance and determination. A resistance of a sort, the overturning of a dissipated patrimony in favor of new ideologies that depend not on the repetition of spherical modalities or the mapping out of pedigree but the pink dimension of triangular time.



Lynda Benglis, Contraband, 1969

Oksana Danzinger



Apiary
2026
Materials: Wet felting, wool
Dimensions: 68 x 11 in.

Oksana Danzinger is a fiber artist and educator on Long Island whose work primarily draws on a technique known as wet wool felting. This process converts loose wool strands into solid fabric by first extracting greasy lanolin before washing through with soapy water, which requires extensive labor and time. If left in the wool, the lanolin would repel the sudsy water, preventing the wool from coming together.

It's sort of like dreadlocks, but made from sheep.

Danzinger's work is suspended here close by Gioia Kuss' *Heart*, another work composed of fibers. The two pieces represent fiber as an organic material with antecedents that date back before the social construct of community.

Danzinger's sculpture is hung from the apex of the little pavilion and registers like the viscera of an animal whose intestines and membranes have been disemboweled and strung up to dry. The conjuration of this unsettling image, as unpleasant as it is, is coincidentally aligned with the history of Sylvester Manor, a 17th-century provisioning plantation that supplied oakwood, produce, and livestock products to the Constant Plantation on Barbados. Archaeological excavations have revealed that the area that is now occupied by this symmetrically laid-out formal garden to have been a slaughter pit for the disposal of animal carcasses in colonial times.

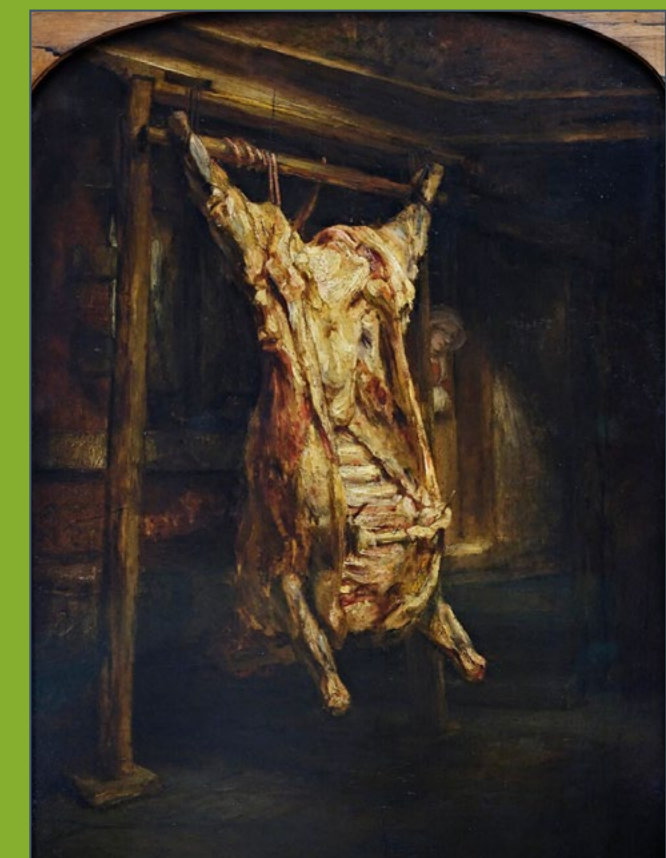
The artworks of Sculpture @ Sylvester Manor have an uncanny ability to reveal the stories that have been lost

here. The early recorded history of Shelter Island and America has been sanitized, rewritten, or simply buried beneath convenient mythologies. Sometimes when we take the effort to dig past the whitewashing and fantasies, the truth emerges. And sometimes, the truth will come out of its own accord—like in this gratifying instance, where this artist's imagination deployed the very same animal-derived fibers to evoke the slaughter pit that for centuries dominated this spot.

A closing of the circle.

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

—William Shakespeare, *Hamlet* I, v



Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Slaughtered Ox*, 1655

Gioia Kuss



Heart
2026
Materials: Grapevine (*Vitis riparia*)
Dimensions: 8 x 6 x 5 ft.

The architecture of the heart has four chambers.

The two upper are the atria, which receive blood returning to the heart.

The two lower are the ventricles, which pump blood away from the heart, returning it to the rest of the body.

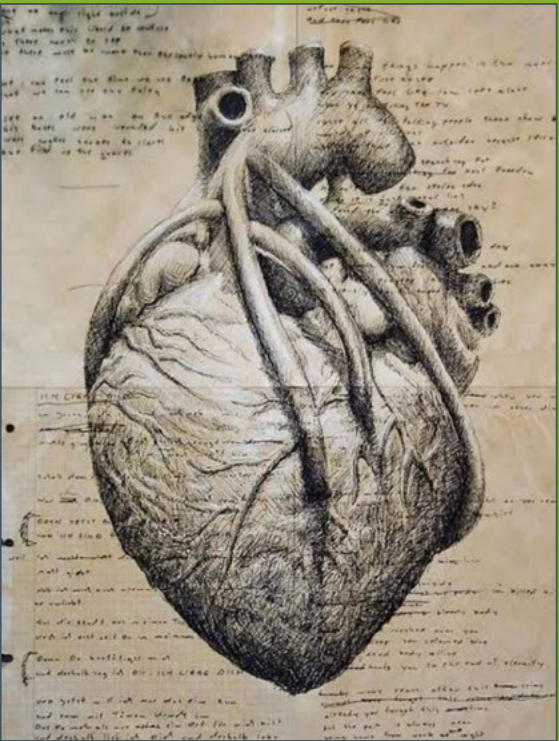
Thus, the heart can be seen as a kind of utility closet, a command central whose function is to redirect blood back along corridors to the other rooms of the body.

The components of the monumental *Heart* by **Gioia Kuss**, the veins, the capillaries, the arteries, the ventricles, are composed of wild grape vines that circulate throughout the structure.

This is a fibrous heart, woven and ravelled around and about, gathering in volume until it attains a size that feels physically unbearable.

The significance of fiber in this work is not incidental.

The processing of Fiber from plant material is integral to the social construct. Fiber tells the story of social evolution that originates in ancient practices such as the invention of weaving, wattle fencing, and counting. Fiber is at the heart of the social fabric that binds its members together. It is a measure of character, and a metaphor for reinforced strength and resilience. Socially, Fiber has been and is propelled by the evolution of hunting and gathering to farming, domestication, and community.



Anatomical Heart, inspired by the drawings of Leonardo Da Vinci

Here in Sculpture @ Sylvester Manor, Gioia Kuss' sculpture is framed in the parentheses of two towering beech trees where the tip floats just above a meadow of grasses. Visually, it creates an upwards-pointed triangle concentrically enclosed within the one created by the negative space between the trees.

The upwards-pointed triangle, an ancient symbol of fire and the male principle, is emblematic of fertility and regeneration. It provides the energy from which all new life is sown. The heart is the organ that makes that energy possible.

Matthew Thomas Dutton



Bloom

2026

Materials: Ceramic/clay flowers, metal supports

Dimensions: 100 individual elements; each 6–12 in. x ~2–6 in.

"In Flanders fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

—John McCrae, *In Flanders Fields*

The genre of Vanitas paintings has its roots in imagery symbolizing the transience of life. A meticulously curated vocabulary of images that catalog the pleasures of a life collected for status are rendered meaningless in the certainty of death.

In paintings, the Dutch still life tradition of the 16th and 17th centuries captured this best, the painters' overabundance of flora contrasted with images of temporality - the human skull, the time piece, or the worm-eaten fruit suggesting that death and decay are waiting for even the most elegant of nature's creations.

Flowers, of course, have been the subject of painting since antiquity, even adorning the walls of the Palace at Knossos and well into the Renaissance with International Gothic style depictions of carpets of stylized flora like those found in the intricate weavings imported from Persia and Turkey to the ports of the Venetian Republic.

Matthew Thomas Dutton has created an array of flowers in ceramic, clustered together on the lawn of the Formal Garden at Sylvester Manor. The installation is evocative of antecedents cited above and many other instances in the history of Western Art. *Poppies at Argenteuil* by Claude Monet comes readily to mind, especially in the Spring Season of Remembrance for those whose lives were sacrificed in conflict. The rondeau by John McCrae perfectly captures the unrest of the fallen despite the bird song above and the blooming poppies of the fields below. McCrae's poem appeals to the affirmation that the valiant should not have died in vain.

Dutton's installation is a snapshot of refined aesthetics organized through simplicity and repetition. The gentle slope of the ground and the overgrown borders still recall a time when this was a formal garden, with herbaceous perennials planted in beds that framed the space. Dutton's vision is suggestive of something even more pastoral, a tableau that might occur in nature. The true origin of this designed lawn is a Colonial-era slaughter pit, a depository of animal carcasses that occupied this site for centuries. History echoes up through the strata of the landscape, and as in McCrae's poem, the torch against tyranny, be it a flame or a flower, is held aloft by the righteous.



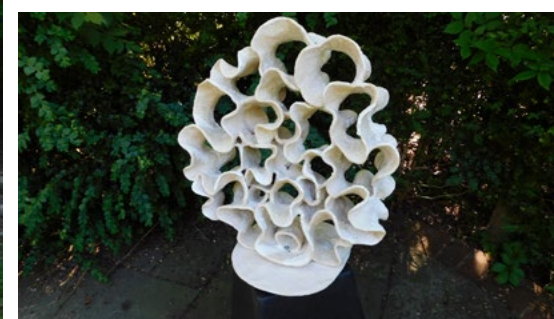
Claude Monet,
*The Poppy Field
near Argenteuil,*
1873

BACKGROUND:
detail,
*The Unicorn in
Captivity,*
15th century.

Jessamyn Go



Chronoform
2026
Materials: White stoneware, white and metallic glazes
Dimensions variable



The subject of time and space is of eternal interest to the creative imagination.

And to the scientist who measures distances in light-years.

In **[R]evolution**, time has been interpreted in a number of ways that do not conform to the convention of metrics. Neither the strictly cyclic, as present in nature, nor the linear, as present in the calendar, suffices to gauge passing time.

Jessamyn Go has abstracted time into ceramic deformities of the clock face. As in the paintings of the surrealist Salvador Dalí, Go's representations seem to collapse under the weight of the real. Each sculpture is constructed from the same model and is based on the number twelve—for the hours of the day and the months of the year. Arranged like the comb of a honeybee, the forms do not stand up to pressure; they melt like wax.

The artist's sculpture also seems to refer to the human skeleton—a distribution of bones that demonstrably

changes, at first microscopically, then progressively, then in compression; a distortion that takes place over a lifetime. Curiously, the arc of cognitive evolution bends to a circle, starting and circling back to a state of infancy.

The time expressed across life here holds a dimensionality that cannot be captured in snapshots of birthdays and New Year's. It exists in surreal spaces without contours. Some of Jessamyn Go's pieces are completed when reflected like an image in the mirror, or on the surface of the water. Other shapes gain substantiation when struck by refracted light, but dematerialize with the passing of a cloud. Time in the artistic imagination can be abstracted from the continuum of space once it is freed from the moorings of the conventional.

Whether floating or fleeting, the time of art here is an elegant projection of what is elevated beyond the physical, and for which there is no calculus.



Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931.



Egyptian Tomb Painting.



Sugawara Mitsushige, *Lotus Sutra*, circa 1257.

Tonito Valderrama



The Great Nest of Life
2026
Materials: Local branches,
carved wood
Dimensions: d.10 x 6 ft.

The Great Bald Eagle nesting on a lawn of Cornelia Horsford’s Europeanized formal garden is the work of educator and environmental artist **Tonito Valderrama**. A member of the Taino peoples of the Caribbean, Tony is a native of Long Island and has worked extensively with its communities to embrace the natural world in ways that are meaningful and generate new growth.

Valderrama’s installation is composed of materials sourced from nature: pine from beetle-affected trees and branches of Cornelia Horsford’s legendary but neglected boxwood, all simply woven or screwed together.

The eagle is seen either about to take flight from her nest or to alight on her two eggs nestled in the straw. The diorama has something of a crèche feeling about it—the cradle of a soon-to-be-born life, fiercely protected by the mother.

We can comprehend behavior observed in nature as a blueprint for humanity. The natural world is the origin of a broad spectrum of human behavior—defensiveness, aggression, predation, passivity, playfulness, collaboration, cross-dressing, loyalty, promiscuity—all of which exist as instincts in the wild. What differentiates humans within the natural world is conscience, the ability to know right from wrong. When we act out of instinct, it is to survive. When we act out of conscience, we do so to thrive.



1987 U.S. 22-cent postage stamp
featuring a Bald Eagle

06.01.2026 FEATURED STORY

Sculpture@Sylvester Manor returns: Exhibits appear throughout the landscape

By Charity Robey



A sculpture, created by Maren Hassinger and Shelter Island School students, led by art teacher Catherine Brigham, is one of the highlights of Sculpture@Sylvester Manor, which opens on June 13. (Credit: Charity Robey)

A striking object is taking shape on the lawn that slopes down to the creek behind the old yellow house at Sylvester Manor. It seems that a long, sinuous sea beast has heaved itself out of the creek onto the shore to rest.

Closer inspection reveals that the beast is a cunning weave of brush and tree limbs enclosing a form of rebar and chicken wire. It's the work of Maren Hassinger, an artist known for public art projects, who worked with Shelter Island School students led by art teacher Catherine Brigham. The community project (the metalwork frame was donated by Marcello Masonry owner, Robert Marcello) is one of 19 beautiful and surprising works of art in the third annual Sculpture@Sylvester Manor. The show is open to the public at no charge starting June 13 on the green lawns and deep woods of Sylvester Manor.

This year's show features sculptures and installations by artists with ties to the East End, working with a title developed by Curator Tom Cugliani, "[R]evolution," which puts the themes of revolution and evolution expressed in Tom Paine's "Common Sense" and Charles Darwin's "On the Origin of Species" in the context of the 250th

Read more [LINK](#)

JUN 19 SCULPTURE @ SYLVESTER MANOR: [R]EVOLUTION

ART OUT



Karine Laval Studio ©

June 14 - October 4, 2026

Sculptures @ Sylvester Manor: [R]evolution
Sylvester Manor, Shelter Island, New York

"Sculpture @ Sylvester Manor: [R]evolution," curated by Tom Cugliani, marks the third edition of the annual outdoor exhibition at Sylvester Manor, bringing together a range of contemporary artists, including Karine Laval. Conceived around the notion of transformation, the exhibition draws inspiration from both political and scientific histories, inviting reflections on change, adaptation, and the ways in which ideas evolve over time. Set within the estate's historic grounds, the works establish a dialogue between sculpture, landscape, and the layered narratives embedded in the site.

Karine Laval, Sylvester Manor

Read more [LINK](#)

Art reveals the evolution of revolution at Sylvester Manor

by CHARITY ROBEY on JUNE 16th, 2026



J. OSCAR MOLINAY'S "CHILDREN OF THE WORLD: FAMILY OF FOUR COMPOSITION," 84". ONE OF 19 STRIKING WORKS AT THIS YEAR'S SCULPTURE@SYLVESTER MANOR EXHIBIT. (PHOTO CREDIT: AMY ZAVATTO)

A striking object is taking shape on the lawn that slopes down to the creek behind the old yellow house at Sylvester Manor. It seems that a long, sinuous sea beast has heaved itself out of the creek onto the shore to rest.

Closer inspection reveals that the beast is a cunning weave of brush and tree limbs enclosing a form of rebar and chicken wire. It's the work of Maren Hassinger, an artist known for public art projects, who worked with Shelter Island School students led by art teacher Catherine Brigham, who has a piece in the exhibit as well in collaboration with her students.



"MONUMENT" (LEFT) BY MARIN HASSINGER AND "AFTER THE CHIME" BY SHELTER ISLAND ARTIST AND ART TEACHER CATHERINE BRIGHAM WERE BOTH MADE IN COLLABORATION WITH STUDENTS FROM SHELTER ISLAND SCHOOL. (PHOTO CREDIT: AMY ZAVATTO)

Read more [LINK](#)

About the Curator - Tom Cugliani



PHOTO CREDIT ADAM FÜSS

A resident of Shelter Island and a visual arts professional for more than forty years, curator Tom Cugliani brings deep art world expertise and genuine community connection to this third exhibition of Sculpture @ Sylvester Manor. Known for his ability to spot and develop emerging artists, his New York City gallery was the first to exhibit established artists such as Christian Marclay, Jack Pierson, and Charles LeDray. Cugliani was also a director of Marlborough Gallery, serving as liaison for the great American painter Alex Katz, and he has worked with numerous private, corporate and public collections of contemporary art.

About Sylvester Manor



The lands of Shelter Island's Sylvester Manor were home for millennia to indigenous Manhasset People. The 236-acre site is the most intact remnant of a former slaveholding plantation north of Virginia. The site was home to eleven generations of Sylvester descendants, from 1652 until 2014, when it was gifted to the nonprofit organization Sylvester Manor. Over the past 370 years, Sylvester Manor has been a provisioning plantation, an Enlightenment-era farm, and a pioneering food industrialist's summer estate. Today, the site includes a 1737 Manor House, a restored 19th-century windmill, an Afro-Indigenous Burial Ground, and a working farm along with educational, history & heritage and cultural arts programs open to all. Sylvester Manor was designated a Historic District of national significance on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015.