PORTRAITS IN REFUGE

July 22 - September 8, 2020

Sheltering in Place II
Anita Helen Cohen
Watercolor on yupo
32 x 21”

Virtual 360 Degree Exhibition
Curated by Karen Smigliani
Unbound Visual Arts
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EXHIBITION ARTISTS

Nancer Ballard
Linda Clave
Anita Helen Cohen
Robin Dawkins
Gary Deuhr
Sara Gately
Bob Greene
April Jakubec
Madeline Lee
Niki Li
Pauline Lim
Elisandra Lopes
Ruth Rieffanaugh
Cesar Rodrigues
Diane Sheridan

* Founding Member, October 3, 2012

Unbound Visual Arts (UVA) is a 7-year-old local 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of artists and art enthusiasts based in Allston-Brighton. UVA enriches the community with educational and inspiring art exhibitions and programs. UVA has completed over 70 curated educational art exhibitions in 11 locations across 8 communities and has over 200 members and supporters. To learn more, visit www.UnboundVisualArts.org or call 617.657.4278. This is UVA’s 3rd 360 degree virtual exhibition.

Unbound Visual Arts, Inc.
320 Washington Street • Suite 200 • Brighton, MA 02135
Curatorial Statement

Unbound Visual Arts (UVA) is pleased to present a virtual 360 degree exhibition Portraits in Refuge from July 22 – September 8, 2020. This curated exhibit can be seen and experienced in the Unbound Visual Arts Virtual Exhibition Gallery 24 hours a day at https://www.unbound-visualarts.org/portraits-in-refuge-virtual-exhibit.

This exhibition showcases 34 works by 15 UVA member artists. Curator Karen Smigliani states that the “…artists share expressions of isolation, anxiety, peace, beauty and optimism during our pandemic.” Here is a sampling of statements from six of the artists:

Nancer Ballard: “Most of all, this time has reaffirmed my conviction that there is no room for “othering” in “us;” we are all in this together.” Anita Helen Cohen: “Even though [my] paintings represent ‘shelter and calm’, there is also movement and chaos in the water.”

April Jakubec: “[My] portraits with hidden eyes take on extra meaning during this time of isolation and fighting for equality, representing feelings of being ‘unseen’. Madeline Lee: “With the inability to go many places aside from where I live, I’ve found myself paying more attention to the spaces I inhabit, noticing my surroundings.” Cesar Rodrigues: “[My] paintings may seem chaotic at first glance, like the times we are in, but when you really sit back and look you begin to see the beauty.”

The 15 artists include Nancer Ballard, Linda Clave, Anita Helen Cohen, Robin Dawkins, Gary Deuhr, Sara Gately, Bob Greene, April Jakubec, Madeline Lee, Niki Li, Pauline Lim, Elisandra Lopes, Ruth Rieffanaugh, Cesar Rodrigues, and Diane Sheridan. The exhibition coordinator is John Quatrale, Executive Director of Unbound Visual Arts and exhibition assistance from Sofija Chronos, Rachel Hargraves, Julia Marcantoni, Sequoya Molzan, and Cynthia Bryndis Schilling.

Karen Smigliani, of Newton, Massachusetts, is a Founding Member of Unbound Visual Arts (UVA) and member of the Council of Advisors. She has curated several group and solo exhibits with UVA. Karen has worked in Graphic Design and Advertising with recent experience as an Account Executive. She holds a BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design. She is an experienced business and sales manager for major corporations, including Bloomingdales, Office Depot and Staples. Unbound Visual Arts (UVA) is a 7-year-old local 501c(3) non-profit organization of artists and art enthusiasts based in Allston-Brighton. UVA enriches the community with educational and inspiring art exhibitions and programs. UVA has completed over 70 curated educational art exhibitions in 11 locations across 8 communities and has over 200 members and supporters. To learn more, visit www.UnboundVisualArts.org or call 617.657.4278. This is UVA’s 3rd 360 degree virtual exhibition.
Nancer Ballard

During the Covid19 Pandemic, I felt both more isolated and hemmed-in, and more connected and bound to other human beings. Like many other artists, as stores, galleries, and libraries shut down, I sought inspiration, solace, and materials from nature, whatever I had on hand at home, and whatever could be salvaged or repurposed. The inability to go out in public led me to explore new forms, such as creating poems and visual poetry based on the titles and spines of books in my house, and to revisit previous digital images through the lens of a more palpable, sense of empathy with friends and strangers across the globe. During this period my creative efforts have sought expression for grief, confusion, fear, and aggravation, but gratitude, love and playfulness have also emerged from seeing and experiencing the world differently. Most of all, this time has reaffirmed my conviction that is no room for “othering” in “us,” we are all in this together.
Nancer Ballard is a writer, book artist, photographer, lawyer, and founder of The Heroine’s Journey Project blog and website, https://heroinejourneys.com. She has an MFA from the Bennington College Writing Seminars, has studied book arts and paper engineering at Haystack Mountain School of Crafts, and has worked as a photojournalist for newspapers in Ithaca New York and Boston. She received The Juror’s Choice Award, The Librarian’s Choice Award and a Judge’s Merit of Distinction Award in 2013 and 2016 for her artist books in Beyond the Book, Exhibitions of Book as Art. Her photography and artist books have been exhibited at the Zullo Gallery Center for the Arts, Brandeis University, the Attleboro Art Museum, Boston City Hall, and Boston Public Libraries among other places.
Linda Clave

My recent work while sheltering in a small space, is taking small steps with small works on pads of yupo with lacquer inks. I love the bright intensity of these brilliant colors. My rear window has streams of light sparking on the tiny jars and crystals. Today the magical afternoon light lifted my spirits and I danced over the yupo pad with blues, fuchsias, reds and gold. They fused and interacted creating new colors. I felt my inside came out.

Linda Clave lives and works in Brighton, where she has been in numerous Allston Arts District Open Studios as well as group and solo exhibits. She is a graduate of Boston University College of Arts with both a BFA and MFA in painting. Her interest in metaphysics and archaeology is interwoven in her work throughout the years in symbolic abstract and energy in her art expressions and performances.
Anita Helen Cohen

I winter on Sanibel (Florida) and am still here. I consider my self lucky to be able to be in a beautiful and calming place during the pandemic, very close to water. I don’t take any of it for granted! I tried to reflect this in my work at this time: calm and peace with the rocks holding, ‘protecting and sheltering’ the water. Even though the paintings represent ‘shelter and calm’, there is also movement and chaos in the water. An undercurrent of tension. Much like our lives, as we currently live with so much unknown.

Sheltering in Place
Watercolor on yupo
23 x 20″
Anita Helen Cohen is a member of Unbound Visual Arts. She lives and maintains her art studio in Newton, MA. With over thirty years of watercolor painting experience and a never-tiring passion for the floral world, Anita Helen Cohen captures nature's beauty “up close” with “portraits” of rich colors and delicate forms. Her work has been exhibited in many group and solo exhibitions in Massachusetts including shows at: Milton Art Museum; Arsenal Center for the Arts; UFoge Gallery; The Brush Art Gallery, Lowell; Newton Open Studios; Marblehead Arts Association Galleries; Cary Memorial Library, Lexington; Mayor’s Art Gallery, Boston City Hall.


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Sheltering in Place II
Watercolor on yupo
32 x 21"
Robin Dawkins

My paintings have been described as “delightful refracted worlds,” derived from visual information of nature and surrounding man-made structures of the urban landscape. Through memory and the imagination, I seek to transcend what I have seen, and what I have experienced through a world of geometric. All the elements of art, including color, line, shape, form, movement and texture are very exciting for me and ultimately, establish a place in my creative expression. My paintings explore vibrant color combinations with the goal of transforming my observations and emotional response into simplified lively tapestries.

View From A Window
Acrylic base
Oil on stretched canvas
24 x 18"
In 1997 I received my BFA from Mass College of Art where I studied painting and drawing with accomplished abstract expressionists, including Kofi Kayiga, Peter Wayne Lewis, Martin Ball and Sandra Dunn. In 2012, I participated in the Millay Colony for the Arts, Artist Winter Shaker Program in Austerlitz, NY. I have completed several commissions including Boston Children’s Hospital. My work is included in several private and public collections including Joseph Smith Community Health Center in Brighton, MA, 2015. I reside and maintain my studio in the Brighton area of Massachusetts.
Gary Deuhr

In these infrared street portraits, citizens in face masks are caught in empty public spaces. Flesh and tree leaves glow as if irradiated. The COVID-19 crisis is viewed as a scene out of a dystopian sci-fi film. https://www.garyduehr.com/people#/the-great-empty/
Gary Duehr has been chosen as a Best Emerging Artist in New England by the International Association of Art Critics, and he has received an Artist Grant in photography from the Massachusetts Cultural Council. His work has been featured in museums and galleries including the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, MA; MOMA PS 1, New York, NY; Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; and Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana, Cuba, as well as exhibitions in Tokyo, Venice, Stockholm, London and Barcelona. Past awards include grants from the LEF Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation. Duehr has written about the arts for journals including ArtScope, Art New England, Art on Paper, Communication Arts, Frieze, and Public Culture. Currently he manages Bromfield Gallery in Boston’s South End.
Sara Gately

Sara T. Gately, based in Hyde Park, received her M.Ed. in Art Education from Lesley University in Cambridge MA. She is a Licensed Art Educator. She also received her B.A in Comparative Religion and Visual Art form Hampshire College, Amherst, MA where is majored in theater with a minor in creative writing. She is currently an art teacher at the Holy Name Parish School in West Roxbury. She has exhibited widely in solo and group shows and has been published as well.

Eris: Greek Goddess of Chaos
Oil based paint marker on canvas
20 x 16"
I am an individual who possesses chronic inflammatory arthritis. In order to remain physically functional, I take a monthly injection that lowers my immune system. I also care for and live with my elderly Mother who possesses several underlying health conditions. Finally, although I do not live with my Father, he also suffers from many health issues related to his immune system. My entire immediate family is immensely threatened by the Coronavirus. When Massachusetts shut down, my response was to create a series of spiritual protectors to get us through this time. As I created each portrait of a Goddess, I prayed for our lives and meditated upon protecting my small family, so that we would survive this pandemic. I came upon the conclusion that my entire life would change, my career as an educator, my ability to see my partner of six years at any given time and the ability to go to public places. Each Goddess portrait is intended to exhibit my emotional reaction to quarantine, the fear of the unknown future and the need to visually and spiritually shield myself and my family from this pandemic. Each Goddess is a totem, a watchful witness and my soul’s need to preserve my family’s lives.
Bob Greene

Photography offers the opportunity to look at length at a moment in time or, alternatively, to look more fully at what stands still, where we typically breeze by. I enjoy finding unexpected beauty or seeing the commonplace in a new light. And the Covid-19 pandemic crisis has led me to see my own works in a different light.

A row of silver metal chairs and tables stacked humorously (unintentionally so, I expect) against a brown concrete wall became an "Unintended Sculpture"; now it brings up for me "Waiting" — waiting for when these items can be set up again and we can have a cup of coffee and chat on a pleasant day without worry.

Roaming the Maine coast, I was drawn to a large boulder, impressed by the complexity of its surface — it was a landscape all by itself. So I made a closely cropped image to emphasize the boulder’s textures and tones. Now I’m thinking about how our lives are so closely cropped these days within narrow borders — yet are still rich landscapes.

An image made in a grand old home (now a museum) in Zhouzhuang, China, has a meditative quality for me. Now with the progress of the pandemic in mind, I wonder, are we on the inside looking out or the outside looking in?

I was amused by the distorted reflection from a stainless steel soup pot. Now this opportunistic self-portrait with its near-abstract collage of forms and colors somehow reflects my inner and outer world while in refuge from the pandemic.
Bob is a (partially) self-taught photographer and digital artist participating in his first UVA show. He tries to look deeply at the world, admiring beauty in, at times, surprising places. His degrees are in psychology and human services, and he works as a coach, trainer/facilitator, and organizational consultant. Having been a member for a few years and providing a small amount of pro bono consulting support, he recently joined the UVA Council of Advisors. His photography website is: http://www.bobgreene-photography.net.
April Jakubec

April Jakubec is a mental health artist-advocate. She creates acrylic, mixed-media portraits of diverse ‘flowerful women’ whose eyes are covered by botanicals. The eyes are hidden, representing the unseen nature of living with mental health struggles. The sparkling blooms represent the strength and resilience that can stem from living and coping with mental health issues. These bright and positive portraits aim to reduce stigma and promote mental health positivity, reminding us that it is okay not to be okay.

Sunny Side Up
Acrylic, mixed media on canvas with resin
24 x 18"
April Jakubec

Memoria
Acrylic, mixed media on canvas
48 x 36"
Madeline Lee

I’ve been contemplating the meaning of home. With the inability to go many places aside from where I live, I’ve found myself paying more attention to the spaces I inhabit. Noticing my surroundings. There are constant subtle shifts around us; there is immense change for us to notice in the spaces we are inhabiting alone. I’ve been painting scenes directly outside where I live since the week before the stay at home order. Each of these scenes reflect what the outside world looks like momentarily, in the much longer endeavor to become home.
Madeline Lee is a visual artist with deep curiosity for understanding systems and places. She asks questions about processes of knowledge-making and community-building in her work to explore the intersections of identity, storytelling, and place.

Trees
Oil on canvas
16 x 20"
As Schopenhauer said, ‘For what a man is in himself, what accompanies him when he is alone, is obviously more essential to him than everything he has in the way of possessions, or even what he may be in the eyes of the world.’ Living in New York City where life had always been active and vibrant, many New Yorkers found themselves tortured by the loneliness, boredom and social isolation of this unprecedented quarantine time. However, I tried to embrace the solitude and take advantage of the precious tranquility to reconnect with myself, explore my inner world, find out what is worth pursuing in life, and what my calling is.

I realized it is only when you are alone can you be truly free. I blended the New York City architectures with my own quarantine emotions and sentiments into the graphics of this series of artworks. The fragmented geometrical shapes and the psychedelic colors symbolize the turbulences of this time of change. By immersing myself in art making and contemplation, I managed to find the light and power within myself. This piece illustrated my thought process, my reflection on the ups and downs of my life trajectory, how I reconciled with my struggles through self-healing, as well as the process of how I sought solace through art making in quarantine.
Niki Li is a Chinese artist and designer who works primarily in graphic arts. Li’s work is based on the reflection of globalization on people’s mindsets and contemporary ideologies. Li mainly uses the language of graphics to create an open dialogue on cultural appropriation, cross-cultural misinterpretation and consumerism. Her artwork initiates a conversation with the audience and arouses their contemplation on the social issues that permeate our daily life.

Working passionately as a graphic designer in New York City, Niki holds an MFA degree from The School of The Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University. Immersing myself in art making and contemplation, I managed to find the light and power within myself. This piece illustrated my thought process, my reflection on the ups and downs of my life trajectory, how I reconciled with my struggles through self-healing, as well as the process of how I sought solace through art making in quarantine.
Pauline Lim

I am a fear-driven person. I am always freaking out about the fact that we all have to die, so a lot of my paintings have to do with the frustration of being trapped in a mortal existence. The increasing aches and pains of aging underscore this dilemma to me every day, and make me seek out color and beauty, as well as the relief of laughter alongside the recognition of despair.

The Venus of Poland
Mixed media on canvas panel
28 x 22"
Pauline Lim was born in Clarinda, Iowa and graduated cum laude 1984 from Phillips Academy, Andover, MA. She was graduated A.B. magna cum laude from Harvard College, 1988. She now lives and works at the Brickbottom Artists Building in Somerville, MA. Pauline participated in the UVA Healthful and Song Cycles exhibitions at the Honan-Allston Library Art Gallery in 2014 and 2015, the Olympic SPIRIT exhibition at Boston City Hall’s Scoley Square Gallery in 2015 and Temptation of the Mind and Body at the Harvard Ed Portal in 2016. Her UVA solo exhibition: “Why Can’t it Last Forever?” was at the Athen’s Café Art Gallery in Brighton.
Elisandra Lopes

This artwork represents when the quarantine started, for me time felt like it had stopped and everything was going slowly. I couldn’t believe that after years working in the same job I couldn’t work there anymore because the place had to be closed due to the Covid-19 virus pandemic. The snail represents how during this difficult and stressful time, everything around me felt it was going at a very small pace like the snail. The girl laying on top of the snail represents me trying to move along and thinking about how the future will look. I was feeling nervous and anxious about the uncertainty the future holds. Even though it feels like a dark time in my life, I always look towards the positivity, that is why I chose those bright and warm and cold colors to represent how I still have hope for a bright future after this pandemic is over.

I am a Cape Verdean artist whose work draws influence from everyday life, environment, and nature. I work mostly with colored pencils, watercolor, gouache, acrylic while having the heart for making collages. I also have a passion for creating digital artwork. I immigrated from Cabo Verde in 2007 to United States of America to pursue a better education and health services. After a rough journey facing financial issues, inequality and abuse of power from a dominant group, I continued and finished my education. In 2016, I earned my BFA in Illustration from Lesley University College of Art & Design. I am currently a graduate student at Lesley College of Arts & Social Sciences pursuing my master’s in Counseling Mental Health with specialization in Art Therapy. I plan to have more of my work displayed online and in gallery exhibitions. I already have had some of my art pieces displayed in galleries such as the artwork related to immigration that were displayed in the Crossing/Borders Exhibition at Parker’s Gallery in University Hall, Cambridge, MA. I am the graphic designer for the Office of Community Service at Lesley University. I also do freelance artwork for the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) team and volunteer with Lesley Community Service.
Ruth Reifffanaugh

Ruth Rieffanaugh, a founding member and a member of the Board of Directors and current President of Unbound Visual Arts, resides in Brighton and maintains her art studio in Brighton as well. She received a Masters in Art Education from Lesley University and a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Art Institute of Boston. She is also licensed in Massachusetts as a Teacher of the Visual Arts. Ruth is currently a Digital Teacher at TechBoston Academy in Dorchester, MA. She was previously the Director of the Dorchester Alternative Youth Academy and taught drawing at the Boston Architectural College. Ruth has exhibited in numerous local and regional galleries, including the Lesley University Gallery, the Copley Society Gallery, Boston City Hall’s Scollay Gallery, the Brighton-Allston Heritage Museum and the Cambridge Art Association Galleries. She is also a member of the Cambridge Art Association. Her public art experience includes creating designs for several utility boxes in Boston. She has participated in UVA’s Healthful and Freedom exhibitions at the Honan-Allston Library Art Gallery and The Context of Community at the Athan’s Café Art Gallery in Brookline and the Harvard Ed Portal in Allston both in 2015. She has also participated in UVA’s Olympic SPIRIT and Earned: Women in Business and Labor at the Scollay Square Gallery in Boston City Hall. Her personal artist website is http://ruthrieffanaugh.com.
Cesar Rodrigues

While other forms of art have a clearly-defined subject, abstract paintings invite viewers to interpret each piece and find their own meaning. Every piece evokes different sights, sounds, emotions, and memories for each person. As such, the paintings are untitled, and can be showcased at various angles. This allows you to showcase whatever images you find within the painting.

These paintings seem to take the point of view of a satellite, as if they were taking images above the earth. At times, the painting seems mysterious as if they depicted undiscovered lands or planets. I feel my artwork expresses freedom. It’s not a one-way street when it comes to these works. They take your mind in many directions, leaving the door open for many conversations. Though we are facing strange and dark times in our lives, there’s always a light at the end of the tunnel. These paintings seem chaotic at first glance, like the times we’re in but when you really sit back and look at it you begin to see the beauty.
Through the lens of the ever-interpretive abstract, Cesar Rodrigues’ work invites viewers to see from a different angle each time, evoking a variety of sights, sounds, emotions, and memories for each person. In taking on the viewpoint of a satellite, the paintings depict undiscovered lands or planets, underscoring the elements of freedom in choice and roads taken. The bold colors bleeding onto the canvas may invoke complexity, or simplicity and clarity through the explosion of breaking through. “They take your mind in many directions, leaving the door open for conversation,” said the artist. As a child, Rodrigues was diagnosed with Spinal Muscular Atrophy. In and out of hospitals, he found artistic passion in a sterile environment when he was given crayons. He painted with brushes and pencils at first, but after losing strength in one hand, the process changed to pouring paint and using gravity and tilting to spread it on canvas. Now unable to use either hand, Rodrigues created a painting box powered by Bluetooth technology, through which he pours paint from a cup attached to a linear actuator. His work has been seen at Dzian Gallery and Arts Worcester Gallery.
Diane Sheridan has been a resident of Brighton since 1985 and graduated from Framingham State University with a degree in Fine Art. She has been involved with art and photography in the community since high school and has been taking photographs for as long as she can remember. She took a picture of her family, which may be her first photograph, around the age of 5. She’s worked at many of Boston’s great institutions including Boston University Photo Services and the Museum of Fine Arts.
Diane Sheridan

2020 so far
Altered vintage photograph/collage
11 x 8 1/2"
Unbound Visual Arts (UVA), incorporated in 2012, is a 501(c)(3) contemporary visual arts non-profit organization. UVA, based in Allston-Brighton, creates curated exhibitions and provides opportunities for its member artists. UVA’s educational exhibitions and programs emphasize fair opportunity, accessibility, and understanding. As such, UVA’s programmatic, financial, and informational resources pro-actively encourage equity and inclusion. A major part of Unbound Visual Arts’ mission is to present curated educational art exhibitions on important cultural and social topics, such as wellness, non-violence, gender equality, and environmental sustainability. That mission is a unique means of presenting contemporary art exhibitions.

All of UVA’s exhibitions are created to be beneficial to all audiences. UVA has over 200 members and supporters, a combination of artists and art enthusiasts. It has organized over 70 curated exhibitions in nine communities. UVA has organizational memberships in the Americans for the Arts, New England Museum Association, Boston Preservation Alliance, and MASSCreative and has received competitive grants from the Boston Cultural Council the last five years. It also received three Massachusetts Cultural Council (MCC) Festival Grants to support its annual Mardi Gras & Carnival Celebration of the Arts and its Art Expo/City Heart Show at the Prudential Center. Other funders include Boston College, Harvard University and Berkshire Bank.