



FANTASTICAL,
POLITICAL
FANTASTICAL,





EANTASTICAL, POLITICAL, I ANIASTICAL,

Fitchburg Art Museum
February 11, 2018 - June 3, 2018

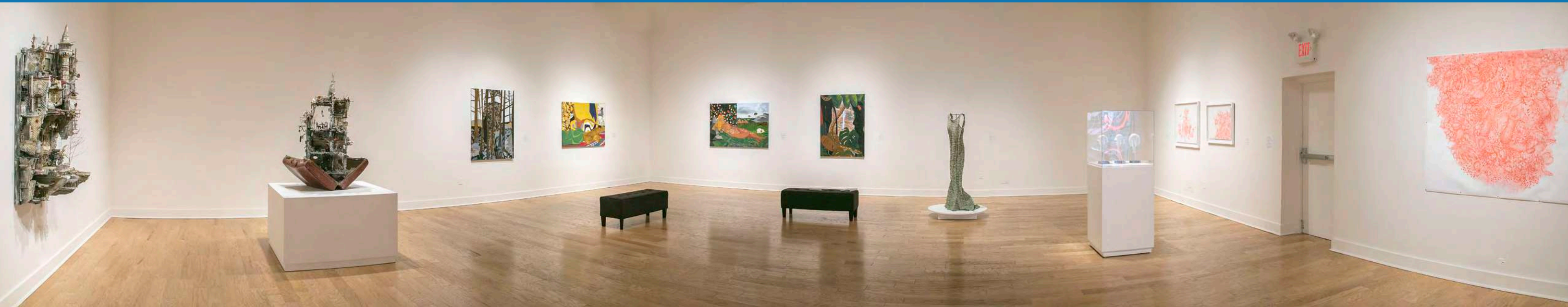


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THE EXHIBITION



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ABOUT THE EXHIBITION





Detail from Joo Lee Kang
Secret Garden #1, 2017
(on previous page)

DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD

The history of Western art, until relatively recently, is almost entirely articulated through political art—colossal statues of pharaohs and emperors, frescoes and altarpieces commissioned by princes and popes, portraits of important personages, and war memorials galore. Art was a tool for expressions of raw power.

Over the last 150 years or so, the content of art has broadly expanded to our current situation in which art can be, and indeed is, about everything within the realm of human imagination and creativity. But considerations of politics remain. The powerful still have portraits painted and monuments erected, but those less mighty—in a democratic society—make use of the arts to stimulate dialogue by raising questions about topical political issues.

Since the early days of the 2016 Presidential Election season, political discourse in this country has been raised to a fever pitch that rivals in intensity the urgent debates of the 1960s or the 1930s. It seems like everyone is talking politics, all day every day. To be mum feels disengaged, irresponsible, and irrelevant. Therefore, we present the exhibition **Fantastical, Political** at the Fitchburg Art Museum.

Curator Lisa Crossman and Koch Curatorial Fellow Lauren Szumita have thoughtfully crafted a visually stunning group exhibition that includes five contemporary New England artists who have a lot to say about a great many pressing matters: gun violence, expressions of patriotism, the oppression of women, civil wars, immigration, and environmental concerns. But their work is not propaganda. These artists use fantastical aesthetics—filled with wonder, humor, excess, beauty, and remarkable technique—to speak eloquently about politics. Their ideas are complex, nuanced, subtle, and sometimes paradoxical. Their artworks encourage interpretation, and thus stimulate conversation and connection among visitors in our galleries.

The Fitchburg Art Museum is proud to share this excellent curatorial work with our partners at Fitchburg State University. Students in their Communications/Media Department have designed this exhibition catalogue under the direction of FAM's Curators and Professor Rob Carr. These students are thus engaging in political expression, are participating in the zeitgeist, and are helping to uphold our democratic principle of Freedom of Speech. They are learning how to be Americans.

Nick Capasso
Director



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Fantastical, Political is a notable show for me in that it's the first exhibition at FAM based on my own concept. Many thanks to Director Nick Capasso for accepting my pitch, and for trusting me to bring a show packed with potential hazards (such as a 5-7000 pound sculpture) to the Fitchburg Art Museum. The show was an incredible learning process for me, and I am immensely grateful for the talent and generosity of the artists and the support of FAM's staff. Not only did the show challenge me as a curator, but I also learned more about a number of important topics: Korea's DMZ, Syria in general and the ongoing Civil War there, wigs, marbling, and more. I hope that the show will spark in viewers a desire to question, to learn, and to discuss the complex issues that we face today through art.

The artists went above and beyond to help make this show possible. Three of the artists gave us their time, in some cases multiple days, for the transport and installation of terrific work. Joo Lee Kang battled jet-lag and New England winter weather to commute multiple days to Fitchburg for the creation of **Camouflage**. Cynthia Consentino installed her **Madonna** series with the assistance of the ever-helpful and diligent Mary Knipe. Dave Cole brought his crew—Curtis Aric, John MacArthur, and Elbert 'Joe' Perez—for two days filled with sheer physical labor to reconstruct **The Music Box**, with no shortage of friendly

banter and ardent perseverance. In addition, Peter Reynolds of McKenzie Engineering kindly confirmed FAM's weight-bearing capacity and Fitchburg State University made its Guest House available for Dave and his crew during installation. Meg White and Andrea Dabrila at Gallery NAGA also deserve a round of thanks for all of their support, and an invitation to participate in a marbling demo with Dinorá Justice.

FAM is extremely grateful for the recognition and support of our mission by the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation. Their Artist's Resource Trust was an indispensable resource and allowed us to bring **The Music Box** to Fitchburg. I would like to also thank the Clementi Family Charitable Trust for their continued support of the Learning Lounge, which greatly aids the public's understanding of our artists and their processes.

The extremely capable team at FAM makes the full workload just a bit lighter while providing support and camaraderie along the way. **Fantastical, Political** is a stronger show thanks to Lauren Szumita's expert organizational skills, critical feedback, and keen eye. She is a talented emerging curator, and I immensely enjoyed working on this show with her. Lauren's position is supported by Mary Levin Koch's generous sponsorship of the Curatorial Fellowship at FAM. The marketing and promotional



Details from Dinorá Justice
Portrait 5 - after Delacroix, Reclining Odalisque, 2017
(on previous page)



Details from Dinorá Justice
Portrait 5 - after Delacroix, Reclining Odalisque, 2017

responsibilities of **Fantastical, Political** fall into the wheelhouse of Marketing Manager Kledia Spiro. She is an enthusiastic force to be reckoned with and is essential to branding and advocating for the exhibition. She also adeptly oversees the work of Fitchburg State interns who help with various types of collateral associated with the show. Intern Jillian MacNamara developed the perfect logo and was a pleasure to work with. She will go far in her career! And FSU Intern Tyler Jacques (a talented member of the **Plastic Imagination** catalogue team), created a time-lapse video of **The Music Box** being installed.

The Learning Lounge is, as always, an excellent companion to the exhibition where visitors can explore the artists' concepts and techniques. Thanks to Director of Education Laura Howick and Education Fellow Barbara Callahan for creating this engaging and informative space. Collection Manager Charlie Cruz and preparator Matt Oates were once again an invaluable asset to the preparation and installation of the exhibition. They are patient, capable, and efficient workers that help smooth any bumps along the way. A special thanks to Tom Keaney for coming in at the last minute to install Kang's wallpaper, and for interns Kelsey Peterson and Sasha Pacek for patiently helping the install crew. Finally, a big thank you to Building Supervisor Steve Backholm for his skilled craftsmanship of

new exhibition furniture, for calmly keeping a watchful eye over Dave's crew during installation, and diligence in helping me with such things as finding a timer for **The Music Box**.

This beautifully produced catalogue has been made possible by FAM's ongoing collaboration with Professor Robert Carr and his talented students at Fitchburg State University. This marks the tenth semester of the partnership! Thank you to the catalogue students in the Document Design class: Alexa Barnes, Evan DesSimone, Rebecca Gardner, Rayna Graham, Monique Guthrie, Chantal Nadeau, and Clarice Theriault. You have greatly impressed us with your acute design skills, teamwork-building capacity, and professionalism, and we look forward to watching your professional growth. The marketing team continued to work closely with FAM's Marketing Manager Kledia Spiro this spring to develop podcasts and videos that showcase FAM's programming. Thank you Emily Boudreau, Walton Hall, Elliot Hernandez, John Hayes, Samantha Hayes, Sam Lucca, Quinn Staley and Katerina Zacharopoulos for your work and commitment to FAM. These efforts serve as an important document of FAM's development.

Lisa Crossman, PhD
 Curator



A NOTE FROM THE CURATOR

Fantastical, Political...

In 2018, the words “fantastical” and “political” could conjure innumerable associations, including the ridiculousness of political performance in a hyper-mediated, spectacle-crazed world. In relation to art, these terms have morphed, and sometimes merged, over time, based on political circumstances and aesthetic explorations. The “fantastical” is employed here as an ample adjective to describe selected artists’ strategic application of decorative traditions in a way that ranges from the extravagant to the kooky to address complex politicized issues. **Fantastical, Political**’s framework is not an invitation for superficial looking, but rather bends the artists’ tactic: use the decorative to lure the viewer into thinking about gender, ecology, national identity and history, or military conflict. The “political” then emerges from the modification of objects and techniques to challenge the cultural values embedded in familiar forms. The effect is eye-catching, sometimes humorous first, and disquieting second.

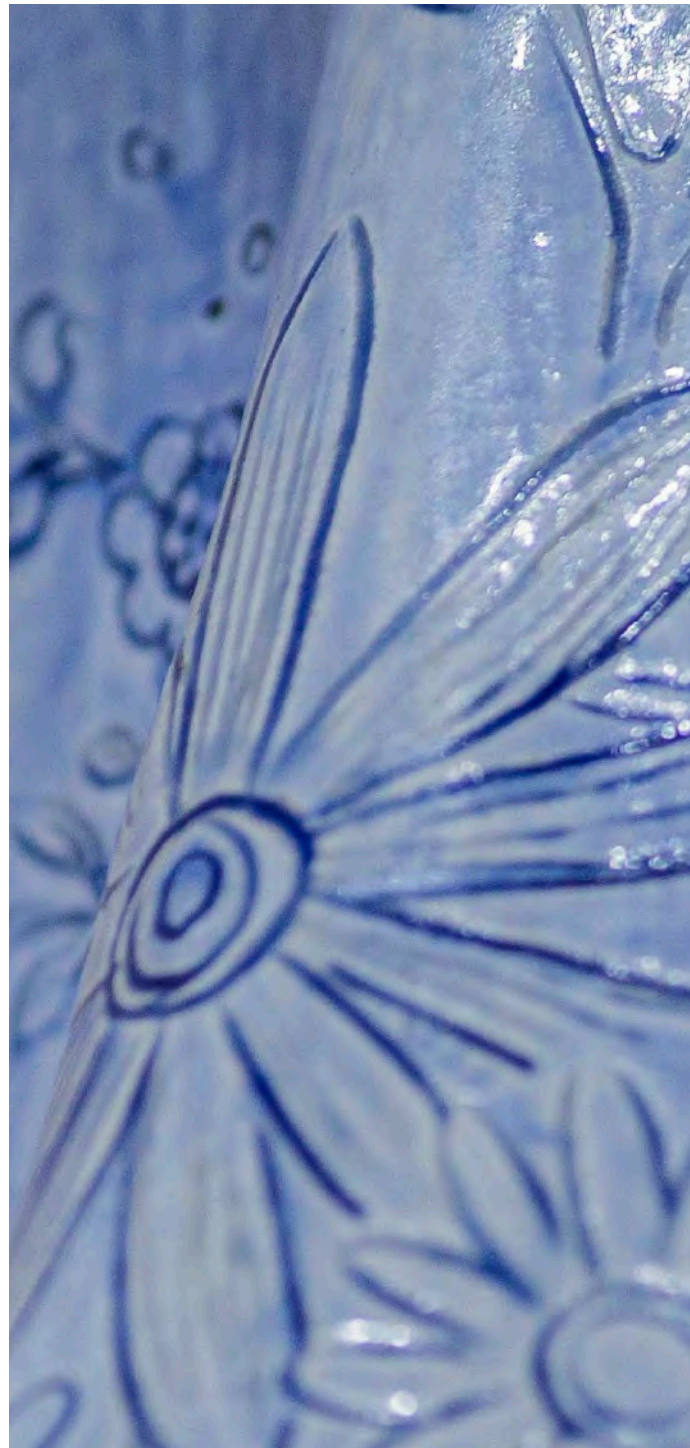
In each artwork, the political surfaces from the fantastical in layers. Dave Cole, Cynthia Consentino, Mohamad Hafez, Dinorá Justice, and Joo Lee Kang opt for highly different modes of making to explore specific histories and current realities. To understand the power of the artworks and processes that the artists employ, it’s worth briefly considering art historical touchstones related to two aspects of the fantastical: the absurd and the decorative (splendid or ornamental). A notable precedent for

the absurd in art can be found in Dada and Surrealism. These early twentieth-century movements understood the power of joining unexpected but familiar things, and absurdity itself, as valuable strategies. Dada emerged in the wake of World War I - a reaction against the brutality of war with other leftist machinations. Surrealism too was revolutionary in its thinking, questioning the logic of the rational as progressive. The five artists represented in **Fantastical, Political**, while neither Dadaist nor Surrealist, likewise pivot from the familiar to the unexpected to invite speculation on societal norms.

The artists in **Fantastical, Political** push us to move from decorative surface to recognizable form to political content. Craft and art deemed decorative were often denigrated by a modern art establishment that sought to solidify art’s distinction from the banal objects of everyday life. The Pattern and Decoration Movement of the 1970s and 1980s, as seen in the work of such artists as Joyce Kozloff, offered an alternative to this mode of thinking. It mixed high and low, art and design, and non-Western cultural references with a feminist sensibility. The political aspect of the movement took shape from the act of mixing forms and materials itself. The work was made at a time when “decorative” was lingering as a pejorative term when used to speak of “fine art.”¹ In 1976, artist and arts writer Jeff Perrone, in support of the Pattern and Decoration Movement, stated that “...work which is called ‘decorative’



Detail from Cynthia Consentino
Twirling Girl, 2012 (on previous page)



can cease to be only about itself and begin to explore other kinds of experience..."ⁱⁱ Similar statements have been made by writers and academics sorting through the blurring of craft and art in the work of numerous contemporary artists. Functional objects are not innocuous. They are designed, speak to cultural values, and while seemingly ordinary, can carry symbolic power.ⁱⁱⁱ

The artists in **Fantastical, Political** exploit the power of decorative objects and techniques—be it a religious figurine or knickknack, a music box or lovingly carved baby rattle, wallpaper, architectural miniature or diorama of found objects, or marbling—to see certain societal practices, values, and beliefs with fresh eyes. Cynthia Consentino creates humorous figurative sculptures to upend ideas of femininity that are reinforced by popular culture and religion. **Topsy-Turvy Mother** and **Topsy-Turvy Daughter**, her newest sculptures in the exhibition, are figurines that balance on their heads, their skirts filled with nature. Their presentation literally inverts our perspective, playfully positioning us to look down the figures' skirts. Like all of Consentino's work, the question posed is an open-ended, "why"? Why does this presentation conform to or defy our expectations?

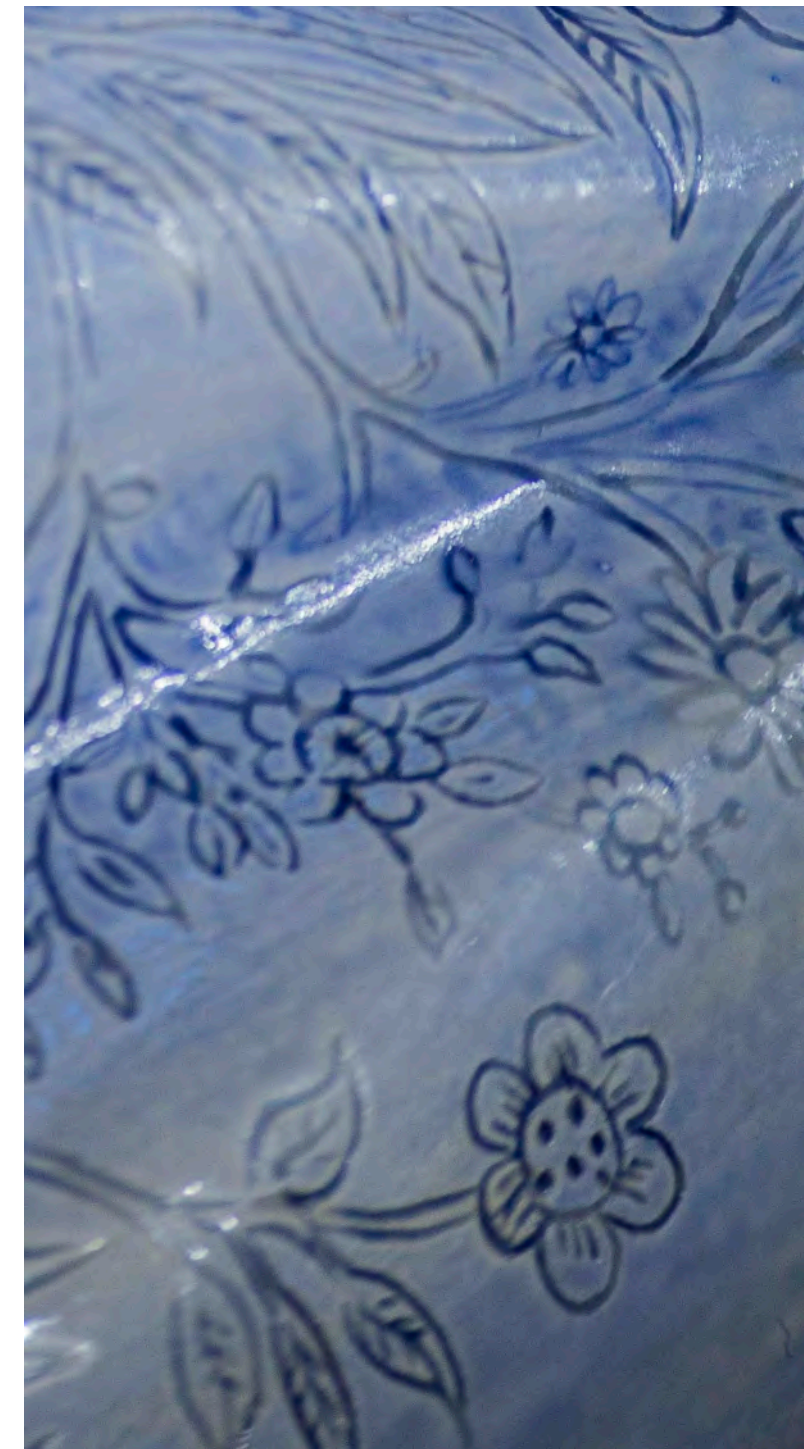
Mohamad Hafez's architectural miniatures are magical in their scale and the artist-architect's ability to transform foam and found materials into convincing scenes. His work evokes an emotional

response to the destruction caused by the ongoing Civil War in Syria. Works like **Hiraeth** reveal the layers of history that are reflected in building traditions. Other pieces like **Baggage Series #4** show the destruction that has and continues to change the urban landscape of his native country. His works do not tell us what to think, but they certainly make us feel.

Dinorá Justice's integration of marbling—a centuries old technique—play off of other painted decorations on her canvases. Either through biblical or art historically inspired depictions of women, Justice fuses feminism and environmentalism. The decorative, the marbling, adds to the exploration of how female body and nature have themselves been made decorative.

Fantastical, Political does not offer a snappy retort to the current political moment. Rather, it highlights the way that artists use surface, material, and recognizable objects to work through the complexity of themes like femininity, immigration, or military conflict. The show hopes to propel us to look closer, to think for a bit longer, and to start to see a series of threads that weave from one body of work to another. The title is a list of two words. I invite you to add your own.

Lisa Crossman, PhD
Curator



Details from Cynthia Consentino
Twirling Girl, 2012

- i Elissa Auther, "Wallpaper, the Decorative, and Contemporary Installation Art," **Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art**, ed. Maria Elena Buszek (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 118.
- ii Glenn Adamson, **thinking through craft** (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2007), 30.
- iii For more reflection on this topic see, Louise Mazanti, "Super-Objects: Crafts as an Aesthetic Position," **Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art**.





Detail from Dave Cole
Three Generations, 2013 (on previous page)

A NOTE FROM THE CURATORIAL FELLOW

Something Old, Something New: Decorative Traditions in **Fantastical, Political**

The “fantastical” by the artists in **Fantastical, Political** is declared in part through the decorative or ornamental aspects of their work. At times, the decorative traditions in use allude to hundreds of years of social, cultural, and political significance. The five artists in this exhibition carefully work from established practices, bolstering their own political commentary with a familiar vocabulary of objects embedded with social and political values. Wigs, figurines, architectural ruins, odalisques, and wallpaper impart gravity, historical allusions, or cultural discourse to the artworks in **Fantastical, Political**.

Joo Lee Kang's **Pattern of Life #7** is wallpaper that features her preoccupation with nature's disfigured and mutated forms as a byproduct of human processes. Wallpaper has long been symbolically associated with domesticity, the interior, and the female realm in cultural references. This association is evident in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's 1892 short story **The Yellow Wallpaper**, in which wallpaper represents the stifling social structures in place for women at the story's time of publishing. It is the decorative, commercial, and feminist aspects of

wallpaper that many contemporary artists, including Carrie Mae Weems, Takahashi Murakami, and Jenny Holzer have engaged with. Take, for example, Andy Warhol's 1960s and 1970s installations **Cow Wallpaper, Mao Wallpaper**, and **Self-Portrait Wallpaper**, in which he challenged and embraced wallpaper's feminine associations.¹

Kang's use of wallpaper builds on its associations with domesticity and the interior without further exploring gender. By using wallpaper to refer to human society, Kang instills elegance while challenging the decorative as trivial. References to the interior pervade her other works as allusions to Dutch still lifes and chandeliers, objects which are testaments to the comforts of living in a highly developed society. Kang brings natural references inside by carefully arranging plant and animal abnormalities into sweet, decorative patterns, though her subject matter pulls from concerns with new ecological realities and human interference with biological processes. The displacement of flora and fauna from their natural habitat to the indoors also speaks to the broader practices of the ways that humans control animals, or that nature is tamed by culture.

Cynthia Consentino's ceramic sculptures also suggest associations with domesticity and the interior. Ceramics, with their functionality as tableware and household goods, and strong associations with the "decorative," have been ascribed historical associations with domesticity, a realm that has been conventionally conceived as feminine.ⁱⁱ In addition to her ceramic work, Consentino's art incorporates found objects. Collectible figurines often visually embody the cultural values and social traits of a society.

The figurine dates back to the Stone Age. The **Venus of Willendorf** (28,000-25,000 BCE) is an early example, an idealized figure of a woman with exaggerated sexual features. While the function of these early figurines remains unclear, they appear to have been looked upon as objects of reflection or devotion. As religious figurines, statuettes were prominently displayed in Ancient Rome as a sign of wealth or distinction of taste in the home.ⁱⁱⁱ The practice of domestic exhibition continued through the years, with certain ceramics acquiring status as collectibles.^{iv} The proliferation of these objects as collectibles in society both reflect and inform societal values of gender, beauty, worth, and its representation in artistic objects. Contemporary artists embrace ceramic affiliations with the tchotchke or knickknack to make cutting and satirical remarks about popular culture and

consumerism. By disassembling found knickknacks, Consentino deconstructs associated conventions of gender expectations and reassembles them into unexpected configurations. She draws upon ceramics' associations of domesticity and the female in her work in order to supplement her own message of female power and independence.

Symbols of power are also a key theme in Dave Cole's work. Like many other accessories of dress, wigs became intimately entwined with class, even in ancient times, as servants and slaves were forbidden from wearing wigs. Cole's interest in wigs dates to their European revival in the eighteenth century. The resurgence of wig-wearing began with English and French nobility, which quickly elevated wigs' status to aristocratic distinction.

This prevailing European fashion rapidly made its transatlantic debut in the American colonies, thus associating itself with images of American government officials donning wigs for such acts of signing the Declaration of Independence. Cole's interest remains with the wigs worn by eighteenth-century "gentlemen"—dandies, fops, aristocrats, and noblemen alike—and those who wished to imitate them. Like many of Cole's chosen subjects, the wigs are a symbol of power. His subjects—money, fashion, war, industry—are emblematic of control, dominance, and class. And they pertain

to the forefathers of the United States, and the celebrated but complicated history of this nation's founding, a backbone of all of Cole's works.

Yet Cole's wigs are not simply approximations or replications of these headcoverings. His **Untitled (3 wigs)** are nonsensical in their material: neither hair, human or animal, nor synthetic fiber, but cast iron. As is typical with Cole's works, meaning is imbued in his choice of materials. Deliberately complicating the meaning of the wigs, Cole's use of cast iron solidifies and memorializes his subject. By choosing a material often used for its longevity, the commemoration of the wigs aggrandizes their status as symbol.

Tradition in the arts, whether conceived as the appropriation of historical poses or the re-investigation of social or cultural themes throughout the years, is the foundation for creating cultural heritage. Often, artists can take long-standing traditions and repurpose them in a fresh, invigorating way to serve their own purposes.

Lauren Szumita
Koch Curatorial Fellow



Detail from Dave Cole
Three Generations, 2013

i For more on this, see Elisa Auther's essay "Wallpaper, the Decorative, and Contemporary Installation Art," **Extra/Ordinary: Craft and Contemporary Art**, ed. Maria Elena Buszek (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 115-134.

ii For an in-depth exploration of this phenomenon, see Chapter 5, "The Decorative Woman," in Moira Vincentelli, **Women and Ceramics: Gendered Vessels** (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 77-105.

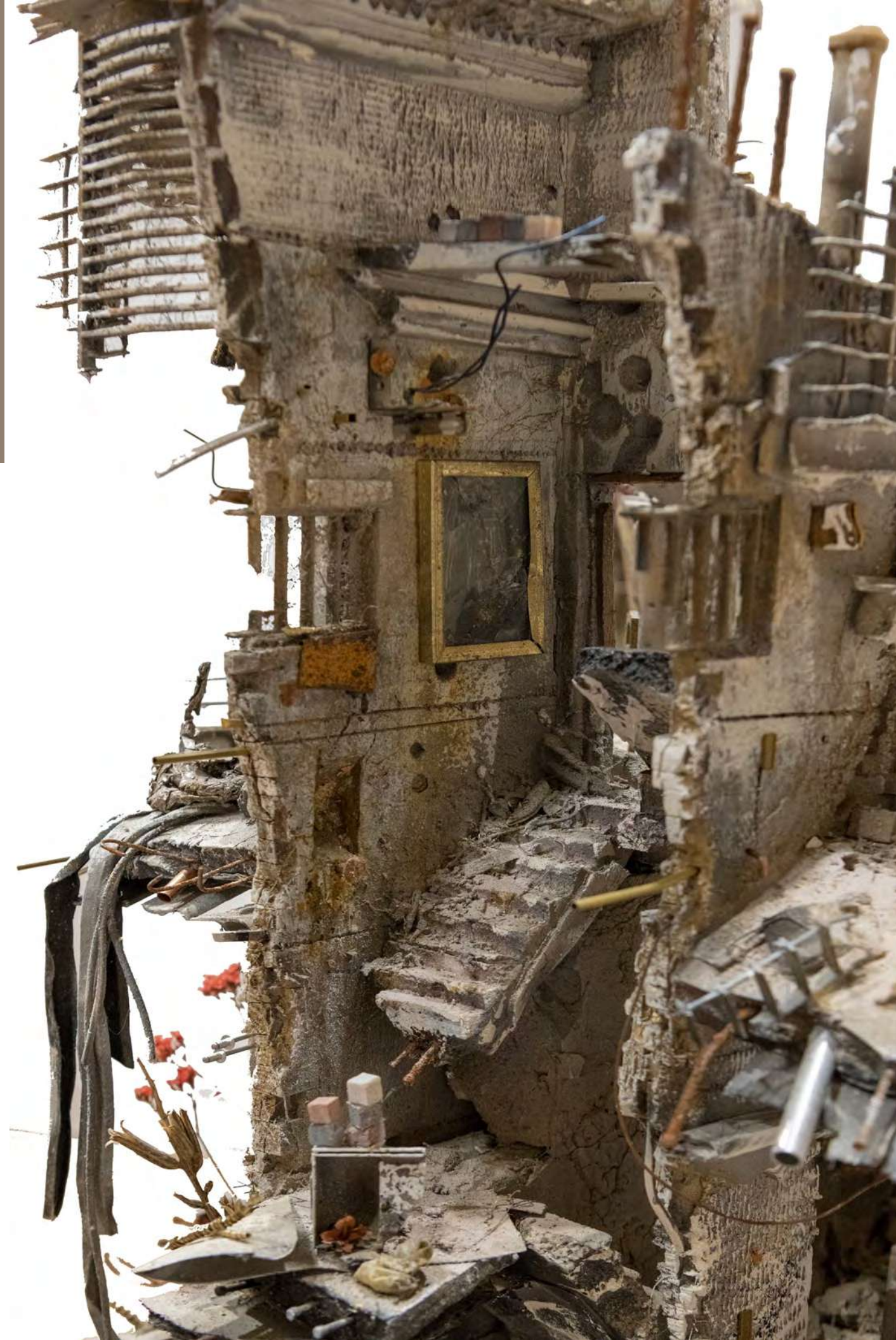
iii Julia C. Fischer, ed., **More than Mere Playthings: The Minor Arts of Italy** (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016), 127.

iv Though collectible objects are acquired because of perceived value, the oversaturation of the production of certain items, as well as their over-sentimental themes and excessive decorative detail, tends to devalue the individual item to the realm of "kitsch" or "tchotchke." For popular examples, see Hummel or Dresden figurines.



Mohamad Hafez
Baggage Series #4, 2016

INTRODUCTION



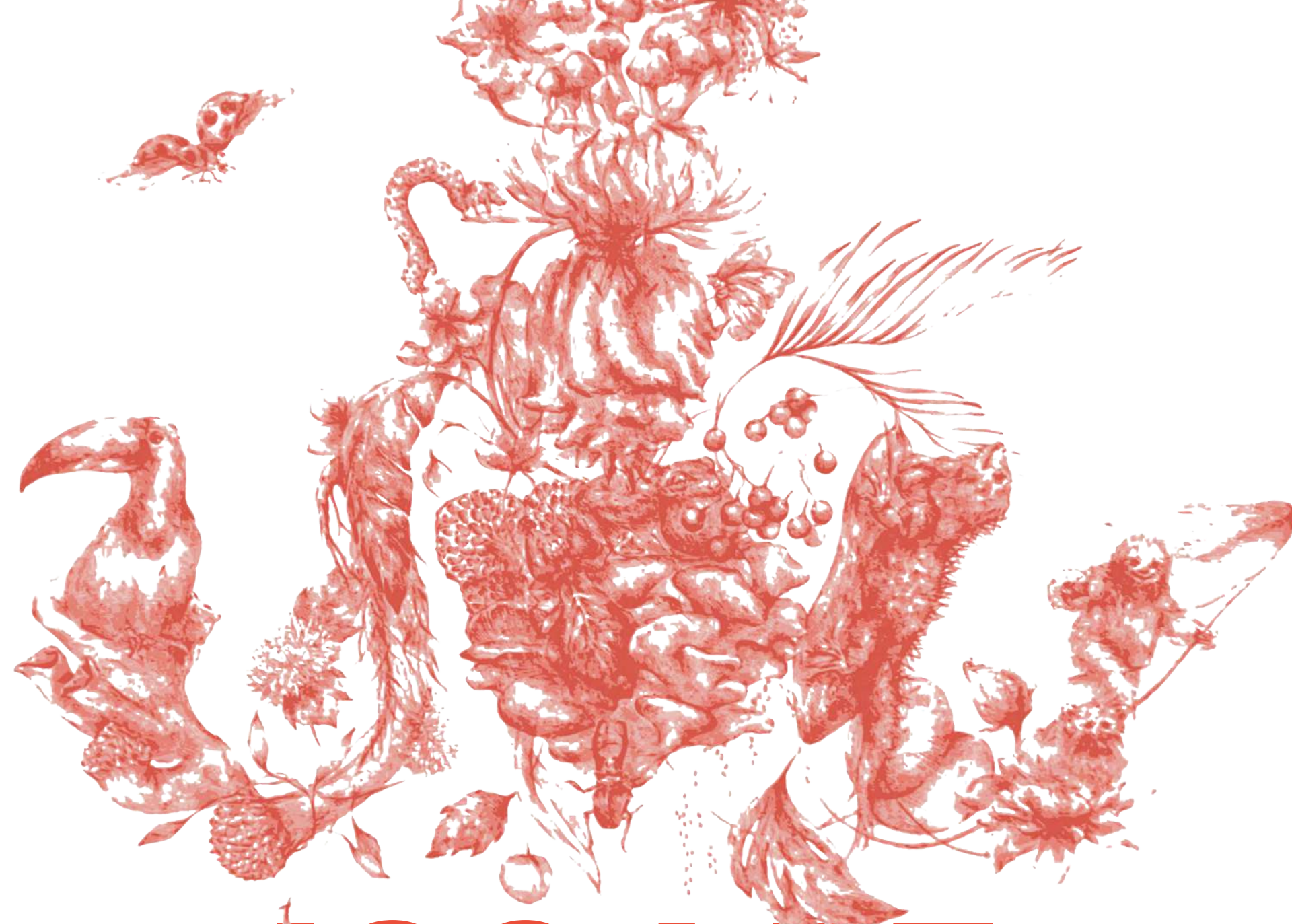
Detail from Mohamad Hafez
Baggage Series #4, 2016

Decorative traditions are not neutral. The shimmer of gold leaf or the appeal of a marbled pattern can provide the impetus to look a bit closer. Beneath the shiny surface of an attractive object, political content can lurk. **Fantastical, Political** will feature the work of five contemporary New England artists in order to examine the use of “fantastical” aesthetics—conceived here as extravagant, ornamental, or, in certain instances, surreal—to address multidimensional political themes.

“Fantastical” encapsulates a breadth of meanings that range from incredible to absurd, to the romantic, marvelous, implausible, or unreal. The “political” in art stretches far beyond themes related to governmental affairs. In art, it has long delved into questions tied to the role of individuals acting in relation to policy, institutionally defined norms, established power structures, and identity. The artists featured in **Fantastical, Political** use the lure of material culture and the extravagant to drive dialogues on gender, ecology, national identity, and war.

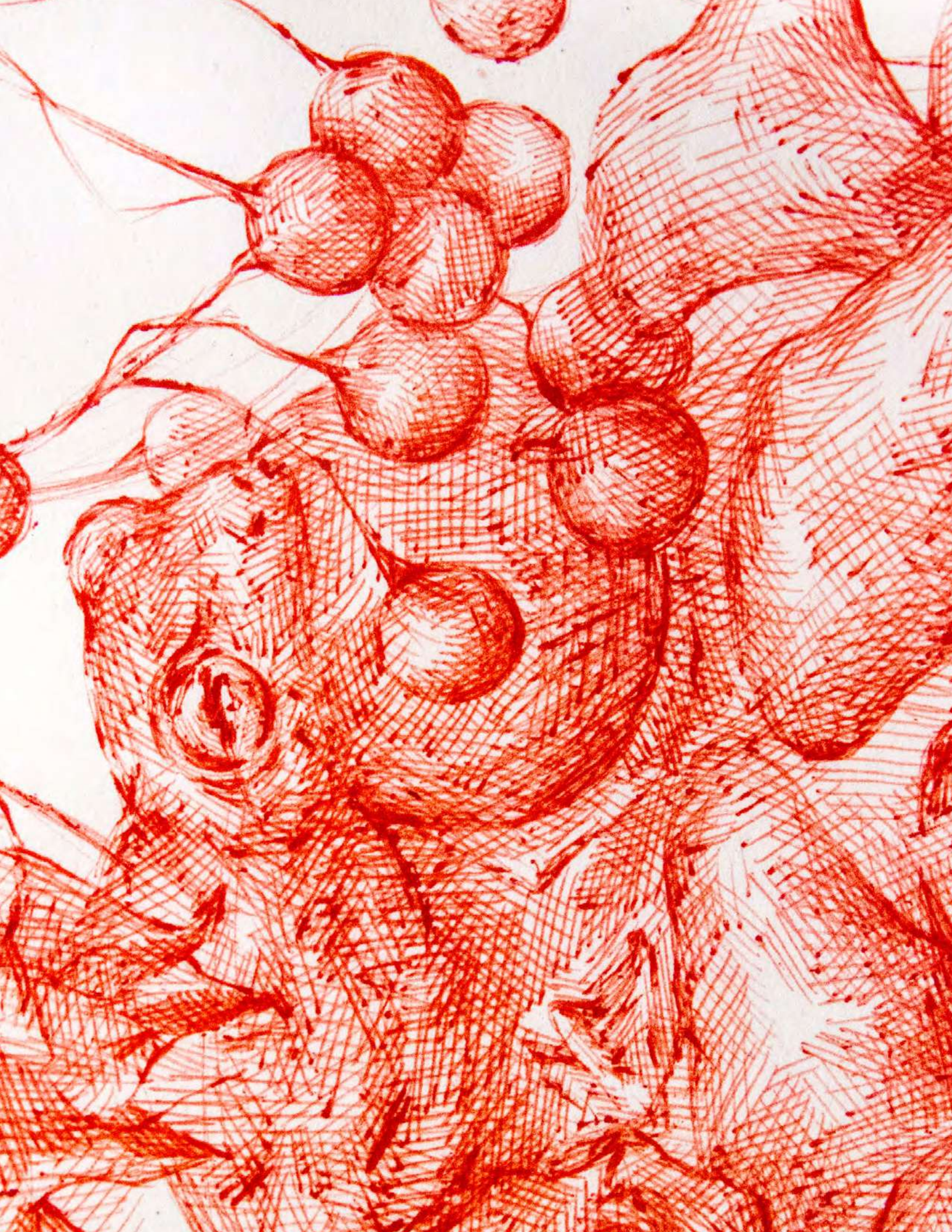
Some artists borrow design from decorative heritage. The references weight the object in the past or ground them in the everyday. Mohamad Hafez, for example, uses a wide range of materials, including found ones, to create impressions of the ruins that define the look of a new urban environment in Syria. He crafts structures that are an overwhelming mix of rubble with glimpses of the ornamentation of traditional architectural and interior design. Dinorá Justice integrates marbled strips of canvas into her paintings of female nudes—appropriated from historical paintings—to link and critique conventional musings on femininity and nature. Marbling, a decorative technique in itself, plays against other traditions that Justice cites, some even connecting to her native Brazil. Ecological realities like genetic mutation and the demilitarized zone in Korea inspire Joo Lee Kang’s extravagant pen and ink drawings. The elaborate drawings visually recall Baroque aesthetics – layered and lavish. Others take inspiration from material culture to show the absurdity of lived circumstances. For instance, Dave Cole makes baby clothes from Kevlar, linking the economy of war to childhood experience and consumer products. Cynthia Consentino modifies knickknacks to respond to how religion and fairy tales shape ideals of femininity.

In **Fantastical, Political** the “fantastical” is leveraged as political commentary. **Fantastical, Political** was organized by FAM’s Curator Lisa Crossman and Koch Curatorial Fellow Lauren Szumita. This exhibition has been supported by a grant from the Artist’s Resource Trust.



JOO LEE

K A N G



JOO LEE KANG

Joo Lee Kang creates extravagant and eloquent drawings with ballpoint pen and ink. Her sumptuous still lifes, inspired in part by seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, feature flowing garlands of fruit and flora, populated with sprightly insects and soft, cuddly animals. Yet close inspection reveals garish mutations—extra limbs, hybrid appendages, and genetic deviations. Kang's creatures, drawn from images of actual animals, are terrifying warnings of the effects of technology and science on our modern world. She reflects on the human disruption of natural processes, with practices like crossbreeding and genetic engineering.

The Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), a 2.5 by 160-mile strip of land that divides North and South Korea, is the inspiration for **Camouflage**. While heavily fortified at the borders, it is a neutral zone void of habitation and military action. This isolation, coupled with diverse geographical landforms, provides a safe haven for endangered species and creates rich biological diversity. The paradox of safety in this perilous area directly contributes to the idea of **Camouflage**, which is echoed in the installation's neutral forms.



Detail from Joo Lee Kang
Twisted Nature #3, 2017







“ By drawing mutated animals and plants, I question nature’s place in the modern context. What is nature? What is natural? The subjects that I portray in my drawings reflect the ambiguity of such definitions. ”

Joo Lee Kang

DINORÁ

J U S T I C E





DINORÁ JUSTICE

Interior and exterior spaces blur through Justice's integration of swirling, marbled patterns and painted canvas. Marbling is a technique invented centuries ago in which ink or paint is suspended on the surface of water and then transferred to a material, like paper. Justice adapts this technique by mixing her own colors, developing her own patterns, and using canvas. Her unique designs add another decorative dimension to paintings that examine a historical conflation of the feminine with nature and the representation of each as a subject to be conquered. Landscape and the odalisque (a harem woman) form the basis of her subject matter. Justice's series **Odalisque** appropriates the reclining female nudes, as imagined by historical painters to express Western desire of the other, and suggests the opulent interiors in which they were staged. Justice includes references to the design and cultural traditions of her native Brazil. For example, a typical pattern by Burle Marx—a twentieth-century landscape architect—forms the shape of the nude in **Portrait Five—after Delacroix, Reclining Odalisque**. The body, subjected to the male gaze by artists such as Delacroix, is then covered with a reference to Marx's control of the landscape.



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Details from Dinorá Justice
Portrait Nine - after Titian and Giorgione, Venus of Urbino, 2017



Detail from Dinorá Justice
Madonna of the Woods, 2017





“The realm of the domestic—the pretty, the cheerful—are considered the realm of the female—for many, a world of irrelevance and alienation. The things that matter are serious, somber, strong, masculine. The expression Mother Nature, by feminizing the environment, gives permission for a patriarchal system to extend its logic of subjugation and exploitation to nature.”

Dinorá Justice

CYNTHIA

C O N S E N T I N O





CYNTHIA CONSENTINO

Consentino's figurative ceramic sculptures fancifully consider societal perceptions of femininity. Her practice alters figures and symbols found in religious texts and imagery, fairy tales, and mythology to expose underlying ideas of gender. **Girls with Guns** are larger than your average toy soldier. Rather than producing armed, camouflaged men, Consentino creates cute, gun-toting girls. The unexpected twist challenges the idea of girls as passive and sweet. It also reveals the absurdity of including a gun with any doll made for children. Her **Madonna** series is expressed as an installation of hybrid figurines. Animal heads or other natural forms adorn the bodies of Madonnas. The playful transformation invites a critique of feminine ideals of piety, beauty, and motherhood that have been traditionally embodied by the Madonna. Consentino uses clay's decorative associations to her advantage. She embraces its popular function as material for figurines and tiles, while showing that these seemingly benign objects reinforce social roles.



Details from Cynthia Consentino
Topsy-Turvy Mother (bottom), **Topsy-Turvy Daughter** (top), 2017





Detail from Cynthia Consentino
Virgin II (2011) from **Madonna Installation**, 2012-2018



Detail from Cynthia Consentino
Winged Madonna from **Madonna Installation**, 2012-2018



Details from Cynthia Consentino
Dog Mary and **Flower Mary** from **Madonna**
Installation, 2012-2018



Cynthia Consentino
Vessel Madonna from **Madonna Installation**, 2012-2018





Detail from Cynthia Consentino
Girls with Guns, 2010-2014 (on previous page)

“ My work started with exploring my own family’s ideas of gender and role, and expanded to look at common fairy tales and mythology. More recently I have focused on the knickknack and religious figurine and searched for and incorporated visual symbols and ideas that illustrate western values of not only gender but art. At times our ideas and language regarding beauty, function, and worth directly parallel ideas we have on gender. ”

Cynthia Consentino

DAVE

C O L E



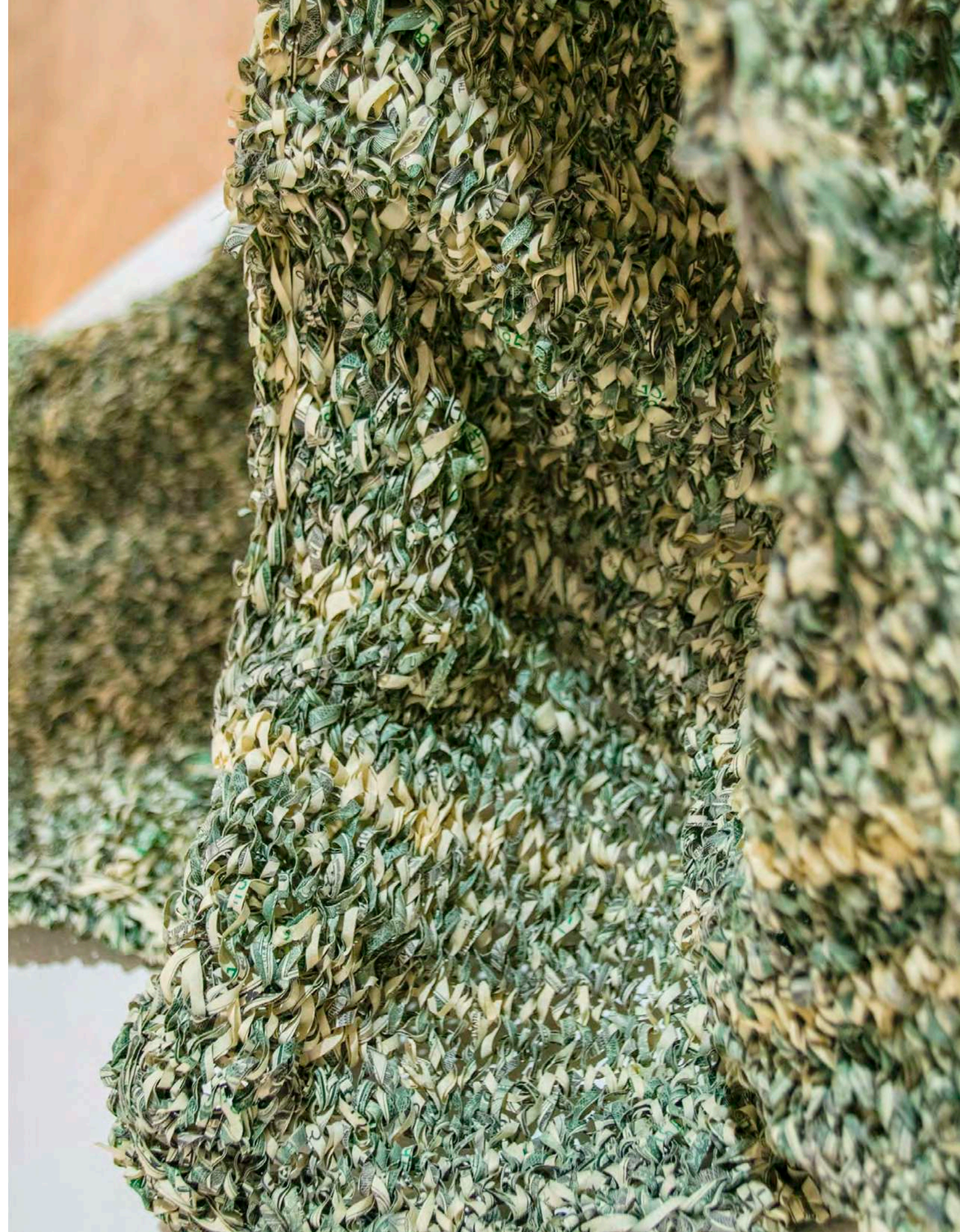


DAVE COLE

National identity and American values lie at the heart of Dave Cole's work, which challenges the tidy history of progress. Working with familiar symbols of American power and conflict, Cole infuses his work with wit and controversy.

Cole's ironic combinations—of materials, processes, and concepts—form the basis of his production. In **Three Generations**, the body of each baby rattle is modeled after a hand grenade from a specific conflict in American history: the “pineapple grenade” principally used in WWII, the “lemon grenade” in service during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, and the baseball-shaped grenade which has been used in more recent conflicts such as the Gulf War. Their functions as weapons of destruction are subverted in the form of a child's toy for amusement and distraction.

In **The Music Box**, Cole references American labor and industry, and how national growth sometimes comes at the cost of destruction. The massive soil compactor is repurposed into a music box that plays “The Star Spangled Banner.” This conversion disturbs our conventional associations with industrial machinery of utility, masculinity, and power.



81 Dave Cole
The Money Dress, 2006



Dave Cole
Kevlar Romper (3-Piece Suit), 2008

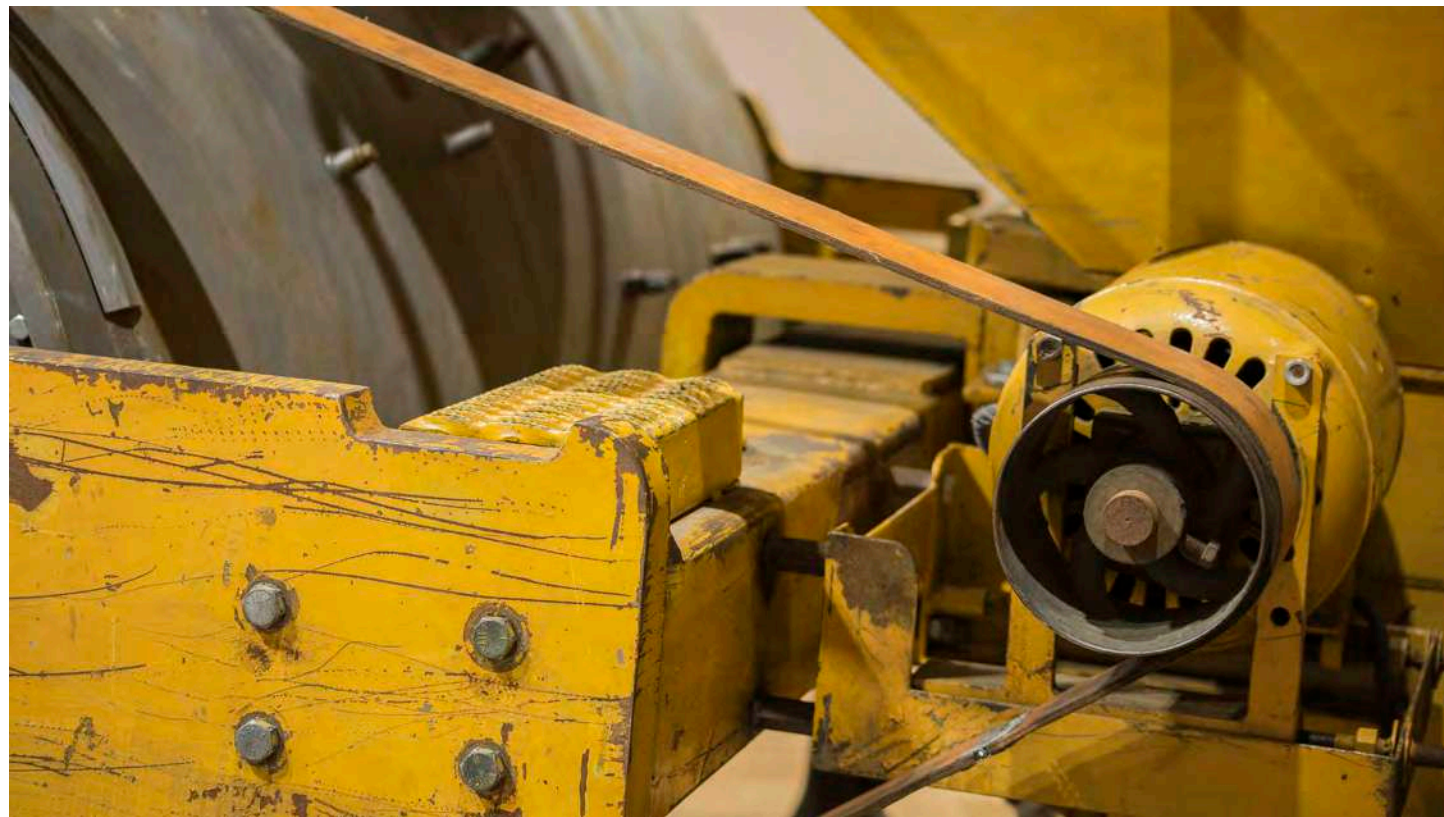






Details from Dave Cole
The Music Box, 2012 (on previous page)





Details from Dave Cole
The Music Box, 2012

“ About The Music Box: On one hand, it is this solid piece of Manifest Destiny, road-building, Caterpillar, steel, American iron, rolling proudly forward into the future playing the national anthem. It’s also something that’s designed to crush things. ”

Dave Cole



MOHAMAMAD

H A F E Z



MOHAMAD HAFEZ

Hafez's sculptures are architectural models of spaces reminiscent of his native Syria. As a practicing architect, the artist uses his expert knowledge to create works that narrate his perception of home and displacement. Found materials read as architectural features and household items to give shape to the experiences of war and migration. For example, a tiny decorative tree ornament substitutes for an actual lightbulb, with wires exposed, in **Baggage Series #4**.

Hafez's work began from the ache of nostalgia—represented in **Hiraeth**. The title is a Welsh word that refers to the complexity of this emotion which is rooted in memory, but also imagined and romanticized. In this piece, the beauty of the minaret, gilded facades, and Arabic calligraphy are reminders of a home that was once a place of solace. According to Hafez, “...graffiti is the best way to allow these ‘walls’ to speak.” The crumbling walls in **Baggage Series #4** tell another story about the impact of Civil War in Syria. The building rises from an actual suitcase, reinforcing the literal and metaphorical baggage of forced migration or exile.

Detail from Mohamad Hafez
Baggage Series #4, 2016



Phong Bui, *The World We Live In*, 2008. Mixed media, metal, wood, paper, fabric, and found objects. Installation view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.



Phong Bui, *The World We Live In*, 2008. Mixed media, metal, wood, paper, fabric, and found objects. Installation view at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago.



Details from Mohamad Hafez
Baggage Series #4, 2016





كُلُّ مَنْ عَلَيْهَا فَانٍ

*All that is on earth will perish, But will abide (forever) the
Face of thy Lord,- full of Majesty, Bounty and Honour.*



Mohamad Hafez
Reflections, 2016

نور على نور

(24:35) God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. God guides to His light whom He wills. And God presents examples for the people, and God is Knowing of all things.



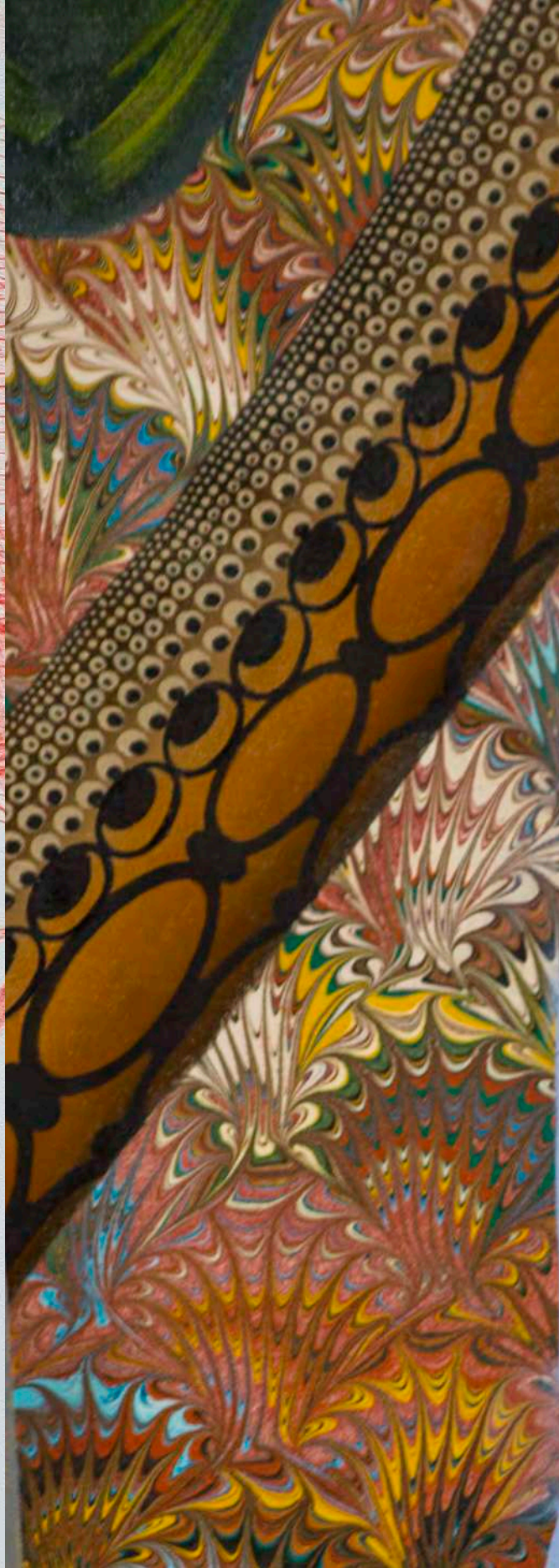
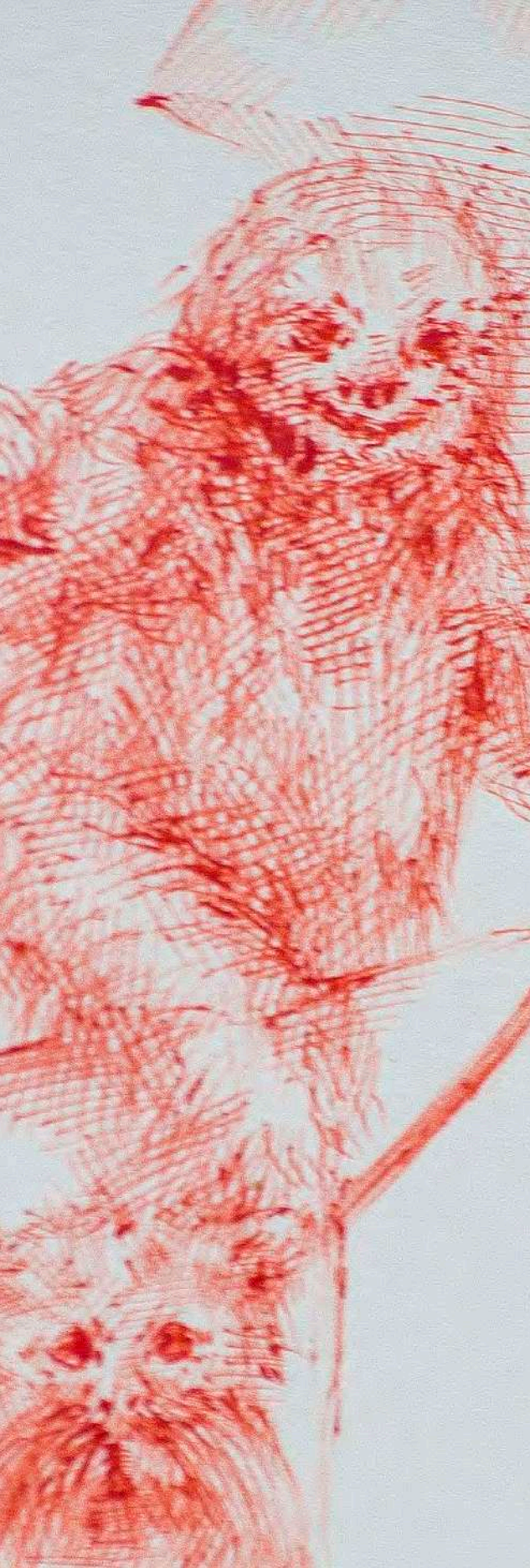
Mohamad Hafez
Reflections, 2016

قال ربكم ادعوني استجب لكم

And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you."

“ What I'm trying to do through calligraphy and my love for graffiti, when I stencil verses from the Koran or Bible on my work: When you witness atrocities that are being committed in today's world, where a father is burying all kids in his lifetime, you get to a point where you cannot speak to that father. You get to a point where you cannot talk to him in a human language and make him feel better. You have to address him in the language of Heaven. ”

Mohamad Hafez



EXHIBITION CHECKLIST



Joo Lee Kang, Boston, MA
Camouflage, 2018
yupo, thread
Dimensions vary
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA



Joo Lee Kang, Boston, MA
Chandelier #1, 2017
ballpoint pen on paper
26" x 33"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA



Joo Lee Kang, Boston, MA
Secret Garden #1, 2017
ballpoint pen on paper
25" x 33"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA



Joo Lee Kang, Boston, MA
The Collection #38, 2010
ballpoint pen on paper
8" x 11"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA

Joo Lee Kang, Boston, MA
The Collection #46, 2012
ballpoint pen on paper
8" x 11"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA



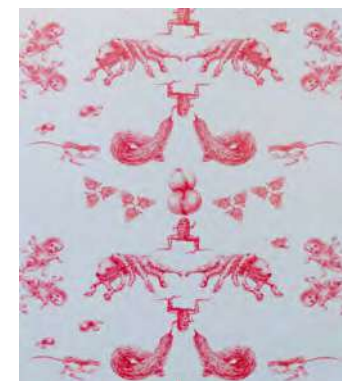
Joo Lee Kang, Boston, MA
The Collection #89, 2014
ballpoint pen on paper
8" x 11"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA



Joo Lee Kang, Boston, MA
Twisted Nature #3, 2017
ballpoint pen on canvas
52" x 64"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA



Joo Lee Kang, Boston, MA
Pattern of Life #7, 2017
ballpoint drawing inkjet print
dimensions vary
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA





Dinorá Justice, Newton, MA
Adam and Eve, 2016
oil and acrylic on canvas
52" x 38"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA

Dinorá Justice, Newton, MA
Portrait Seven - after Matisse, Pink Nude of 1935, 2017
oil and acrylic on canvas
38" x 52"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA



Dinorá Justice, Newton, MA
Madonna of the Woods, 2017
oil and acrylic on canvas
52" x 38"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA

Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Dog Mary, Squirrel Mary, Bird Mary, Flower Mary, Cartoon Mary from **Madonna Installation**, 2012-2018
porcelain, glaze, mixed media
5" – 15" height
Courtesy of the artist



Dinorá Justice, Newton, MA
Portrait Five - after Delacroix, Reclining Odalisque, 2017
oil and acrylic on canvas
38" x 52"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA

Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Framed: Kwan Yin from **Madonna Installation**, 2013
earthenware, glaze, ceramic decals
10.75" x 8.75" x 2"
Courtesy of the artist



Dinorá Justice, Newton, MA
Portrait Nine - after Titan and Giorgione, Venus of Urbino, 2017
oil and acrylic on canvas
40" x 60"
Courtesy of the artist and Gallery NAGA

Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Framed: Victorian Birdie from **Madonna Installation**, 2014
earthenware, glaze, ceramic decals
10.75" x 8.75" x 2"
Courtesy of the artist

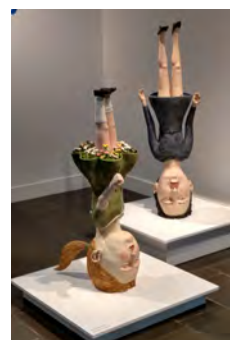




Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Girls with Guns, 2010-2014
 polyester resin, auto paint
 12.5" x 11" x 5"
 Courtesy of the artist



Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Sheela from **Madonna Installation**,
 2012-2018
 porcelain, glaze, mixed media
 5" – 15" height
 Courtesy of the artist



Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Topsy-Turvey Mother (right), Topsy-Turvey Daughter (left), 2017
 stoneware, glaze, flocking, oils
 57" x 17" x 17" (**Mother**)
 46" x 19" x 21" (**Daughter**)
 Courtesy of the artist



Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Twirling Girl, 2012
 earthenware, glaze, oils, wood, brass
 41.5" x 28" x 16"
 Courtesy of the artist



Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Vessel Madonna from **Madonna Installation**, 2012-2018
 porcelain, glaze, mixed media
 5" – 15" height
 Courtesy of the artist

Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Virgin II (2011) from **Madonna Installation**, 2012-2018
 porcelain, glaze, mixed media
 Courtesy of the artist



Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Winged Madonna from **Madonna Installation**, 2012-2018
 porcelain, glaze, mixed media
 5" – 15" height
 Courtesy of the artist



Cynthia Consentino, Shelburne Falls, MA
Wolf Madonna and **Rabbit Madonna** from **Madonna Installation**, 2012-2018
 porcelain, glaze, mixed media
 5" – 15" height
 Courtesy of the artist



Dave Cole, Hudson, NY
Kevlar Romper (3-Piece Suit), 2008
 repurposed Gulf War Kevlar body armor, cut and sewn
 29" x 12" x 10"
 Courtesy of the artist



Dave Cole, Hudson, NY
The Music Box, 2012
 caterpillar, CS-553 vibratory roller-compactator with cherry wood, spring steel and United States National Anthem (arranged for steamroller)
 8' x 19' x 11'
 Courtesy of the artist





Dave Cole, Hudson, NY
The Money Dress, 2006
 United States currency (\$1124),
 hand-cut and hand-knit
 61" x 13" x 31"
 Courtesy of the artist

Mohamad Hafez, New Haven, CT
Hiraeth, 2017
 plaster, paint, antique tricycle, found
 objects, rusted metal, antique wood
 veneer, rigid foam
 61" x 35" x 21"
 Courtesy of the artist



Dave Cole, Hudson, NY
Three Generations, 2013
 functional hand-turned hardwood and
 sterling silver baby rattles
 11.25" x 17.5" x 2.75"
 Courtesy of the artist

Mohamad Hafez, New Haven, CT
Reflections, 2016
 plaster, paint, found objects, rigid
 foam, brass, antique radio bulbs
 18" x 18"
 Courtesy of the artist



Dave Cole, Hudson, NY
Untitled (3 wigs), 2017
 enameled cast iron on pewter bases
 Created in Arts/Industry, a long-term residency
 program of the John Michael Kohler Arts Center,
 Inc. Arts/Industry takes place at Kohler Co.
 6" x 6" x 14 (each)
 Courtesy of the artist

Mohamad Hafez, New Haven, CT
Reflections, 2016
 plaster, paint, found objects, rigid
 foam, brass, antique radio bulbs
 18" x 18"
 Courtesy of the artist



Mohamad Hafez, New Haven, CT
Baggage Series #4, 2016
 plaster, paint, antique suitcase,
 found objects, rigid foam
 30" x 30" x 48"
 Courtesy of the artist

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This catalogue accompanies the exhibition **Fantastical, Political** presented at the Fitchburg Art Museum February 11, 2018 – June 3, 2018. The exhibition was organized by FAM Curator Lisa Crossman and Koch Curatorial Fellow Lauren Szumita.

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