

# GALLERY **AT** 14 MAPLE

Presents

# Vanishing Worlds



# Vanishing Worlds

*Everything is transient; nothing remains the same. If anything looks solid and permanent, it is only an illusion since everything in the universe is in a constant state of flux – growing and shrinking, living and dying, breathing in and breathing out.*

\_\_\_\_\_ Ilchi Lee, *on the second realization of Tao*

This exhibit explores the ways that we experience transition and change, loss and growth through memories, mistakes, achievements, and time. By viewing these worlds that the exhibiting artists have revealed, we may be witnesses to those places or moments that have been lost or will be lost in future times. Change is inevitable but how we respond to it is a choice.

Some of our worlds are vanishing with the aid of human development of technology and industry. The environments that we inhabit have been greatly affected by our continued use and over consumption as portrayed in Susan Ahlstrom's memorial to extinct species of birds in "Tower of Extinction." Lisa G. Westheimer's "Sponge Lamp" glows in an eerie light, like a lighthouse, warning us away from impending ecological disaster. Robert F Lach's installation, "Dwell," is made up of nests left empty by their inhabitants. "The Last of the Hawks", a photo essay by Onnie Strother, laments the end of an era where newspapers support the livelihood of the people, who sell them on street corners. Those who are rapidly being replaced by cell phones and other electronic media.

The gift of memory gives us access to significant moments in our lives and transport us to our previous selves no longer defining but informing who we are now. In Kate Dodd's "Scrapbooking" piece, images are cut into commercial scrapbook papers to reveal "unspoken truths that are disguised by the glossy "good time" veneer." She reveals the memories which we hide when sharing our past. In Janet Boltax's series, "Aging in America," we encounter people who have lived over 90+ years. Through these portraits and narratives, we are invited to visit the days that enriched and shaped their lives. Philemona Williamson's paintings of children on the brink of adolescence is both enchanting and slightly unnerving as we see children transitioning into beings that are self-aware of their growing bodies in her painting "Dusty Afternoon." In Diane Savona's "Tablet" series, she studies the history of communication on a global scale. From ancient civilizations to the present moment, Diane wants the viewer to know that "knowledge can be lost" as some of her tablets portray the destruction of ancient centers of knowledge throughout time.

When I view all these artworks there is a recurring thought that we too are vanishing and centuries from now all will be replaced. Bill Westheimer, in his series "Anthropocene" (the time period of humankind's existence on the earth), gives us a vision of a future world without us. He has created fossils that are "imaginary records of flora and fauna that might be found in a future geologic era. They are evidence of what was and hints of how it might have been extinguished" after we too are gone.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yvette Lucas, Curator

# Susan Ahlstrom

Environmental issues became important to me in the 1990's while traveling in the Pacific Northwest. I remember one day, in particular, my first day of a two-week trip there. On a hike up to Clear Peak West, the panorama was one of massive clear-cuts with Mt. Rainier looming in the distance. Along roads going north, there were wide borders of tall pines, camouflaging a treeless landscape beyond. It was devastating to see this degradation and impossible to forget.

I traveled to the Caribbean and to South India last year. I asked the local nature guides what the current environmental issues were. The problems in the Caribbean and in South India were the same as ours; the issues were habitat loss, over-development and abusive land practices. When I arrived home, I learned that a 9000 square foot house was being built adjacent to mine and that a local pond was polluted with deck stain that had been dumped into a drainage outlet more than five miles away.

Is there hope for the land? In the remote areas of the wilderness that I have explored, there are often signs of trouble. In my work as an artist, I continue to bring attention to the environment, sometimes to a sense of well-being that the natural world offers, but more often, to conflicts that have evolved between man and nature.

# Susan Ahlstrom



*Tower of Extinction*

Mixed media

63" x 12" x 13"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$1,500



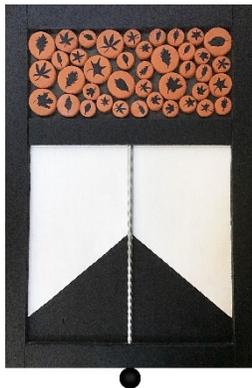
*Study for Land Use*

Mixed media with Sawblades

12 3/8" x 42 1/2"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$700



*Our Town*

Mixed media

21" x 15"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$400

# Susan Ahlstrom



*Other Forest Service  
Routes*

Mixed media

42" x 31"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$500



*Goodbye Lot 6402*

Mixed media

22" x 26" x 25"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$1,500

# Janet Boltax

## About *Aging in America*: Portraits and Commentary

This series depicts people who are between 90 and 104 years old. For as long as I can remember, I have had an affinity for older people. As a portrait painter, I find that they often have the most interesting faces to paint. Their faces reflect much more character than those of young people, and the aging process results in elaborate planes and surfaces that are fascinating to observe and record. Similarly, older people often have remarkable and surprising stories to tell, and while some elderly are unable to enjoy their later years due to illness, poverty, isolation, or for other reasons, many still take great pleasure in their lives well into their 90s. In addition to painting their portraits, I have interviewed all of these individuals about their lives and how they are coping with aging. I have included excerpts from each interview next to the corresponding portrait. I was very moved to discover the tenacity with which many people continue to strive for fulfilling lives, and how engaged some of these individuals—90, 96, 100 years old—are mentally, physically, and creatively, in savoring each moment.

# Janet Boltax



*Mamie W.*

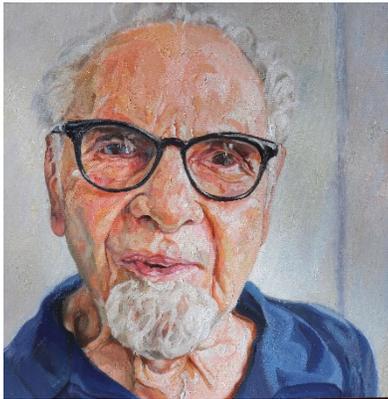
2014

Oil on canvas

36" x 36"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,500



*Herman B.*

2016

Oil on canvas

36" x 36"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,500



*Padma S.*

2016

Oil on canvas

36" x 36"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,500

# Janet Boltax



*Julius B.*

2015

Oil on canvas

36" x 36"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,500



*Chow Soon*

2016

Oil on canvas

36" x 36"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,500

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# Kate Dodd

## Scrapbooking

Commercially sold in crafts stores, “scrapbook” paper provides a format for memories that doesn’t tell the full story behind the imagery, using preprinted materials to dictate how we preserve and brand our past. In “Scrapbooking”, thematic scrapbook paper sheets, overlaid with subversive images that are cut directly into the marketed imagery assert the unspoken truths that are disguised by the glossy “good time” veneer that our memories are supposed to have when mounted in this manner. What is “missing” (cut) from the image is what we are told to omit, or forget, about our “fond recollections”. Excised scraps are sorted into small specimen bags as “evidence”; like artifacts, they reveal the unacknowledged undercurrents of these memories.

# Kate Dodd



*Scrapbooking*

2009

Mixed media

48" x 60"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 8,000 (including evidence bags)



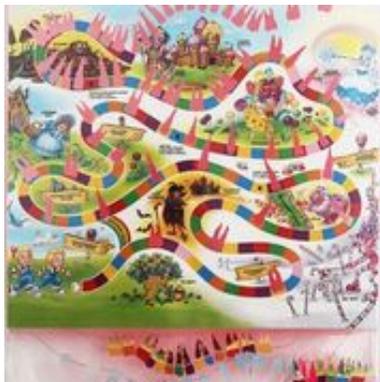
*Scrapbooking Evidence Bags*

2009

Mixed media

24" x 30"

Courtesy of the Artist



*Candyland*

2010

Mixed media

12" x 14"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 350

# Kate Dodd



*Gone*

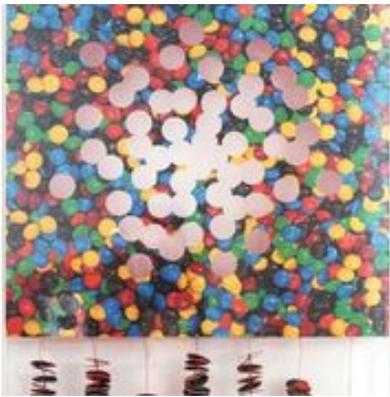
2010

Mixed media

12" x 14"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 350



*Fair Share*

2010

Mixed media

12" x 14"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 350

# Robert F. Lach

## Artist Statement:

My work is materials and process driven. The focus is on the labor of craft by experimenting and manipulating everyday objects into art material. I usually build in units or multiples mimicking the biology and structure of living organisms. It is the beauty, organization and simplicity of nature I try to replicate. I create green habitats based on the architecture and anatomy of nature that reference the design, form and structure patterns of the natural world.

# Robert F. Lach



*Hook*

2014

Found wood, cardboard, tape, paint

35" x 12" x 12"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$800



*Nest Colony II*

2014

Wire mesh, wire, tape, reeds, paint, glue

44" x 26" x 7"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$1,200



*Dwell Rookery*

2020

Medium varies with installation

Dimensions, vary with installation

Courtesy of the Artist

\$35 small nest, \$60 medium nest,  
\$95 large nest

# Diane Savona

## Artist Statement:

Ancient clay tablets give us information about our history. My embroidered tablets focus on communication history - on the ways we tell our story. The images are researched, designed, printed on cloth as line drawings, dyed and stitched. Just as clay tablet can be destroyed, knowledge can be lost, and some of the tablets deal with the loss of information. It seems fitting that this is conveyed in (what is viewed as) the much less durable medium of textiles.

As this series progressed, I changed my presentation. The earlier tablets are stretched over rigid composite materials. Later, I used many layers of wool, sewn tightly together, to create a firm backing for the images. This seems to be a more authentic material usage.

## Biography:

Diane Savona is an artist, teacher and collector of domestic artifacts. She is a graduate of Montclair State University, with a BA in art. After many years of teaching art, she is now well into her second life as a full time studio artist. Her work has been shown in many group shows (including Art Quilt Elements, several NJ Arts Annuals, and the Fuller Craft Museum in Brockton, MA), invitational shows (including the Perkins Gallery, Collingswood, NJ, the Pierro Gallery of South Orange, NJ; Rahway Arts Guild, NJ; Edna Carlsten Gallery, University of Wisconsin, and Bloomfield College, NJ), and in one woman shows (including Closet Archaeology, at the Hermitage Museum, Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ; Lambert Castle Museum in Paterson, NJ; St Peters Church in NYC; and at ETS, Princeton, NJ). Her art has been featured in Fiber Arts Magazine, Quilting Arts Magazine, Fiber Art Now and in 500 Art Quilts, by Lark Books. She won a Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation scholarship and residency at Peters Valley Art Center in Layton, NJ. As a committee member of Fiber Philadelphia 2012, she helped organize city-wide exhibits and curated Mending=Art. She has run workshops, presented digital shows of her work and helped people see the stories contained in ordinary objects.

# Diane Savona

## **The Tablets**

Ancient writing was preserved on durable clay tablets. These tablets are constructed in relatively fragile textiles to illustrate the precarious state of knowledge in our world. The tablet is designed in Photoshop and printed as outline images on cotton. Thickened dye colors are hand painted onto the cotton. The resulting image is hand embroidered. Imprint MT Shadow typeface is the basis of the lettering. Letters were condensed in the style of the mosaic wording of the Palatine Chapel in Palermo. The resulting illegibility is intentional, giving the viewer a sense of translating the tablet.

**Scribes Tablet:** Before the age of printing, scribes copied texts by hand. The design of this tablet is based on the scriptorium of the San Salvador de Tábara Monastery. The scriptorium is where the texts were copied, and you can see 2 monks, sitting in their chairs, writing. Another (with arms up) is ringing the bells, and 3 helpers, barely visible, are climbing ladders. On the right side is Hugo Pictor (the red letters above his head translate as: "the image of the painter and illuminator of this work.") While he was illuminating medieval manuscripts, he decided he didn't want to be totally anonymous, and drew this wonderful self-portrait along the edges.

**The Library of Louvain Tablet :** In *Library: An Unquiet History*, Matthew Battles tells the story of Louvain, in Belgium. There was a university library, built in 1730, with a wonderful collection of ancient manuscripts, some of them 500 years old. For centuries, the library held a wealth of rare and beautiful texts, a treasure of knowledge. It was completely destroyed by the Germans in World War I. After the war, the library was rebuilt, and stocked with manuscripts donated by other libraries, other countries. Again, it held a vast store of the rare and the beautiful, the ancient knowledge and new information. It was completely destroyed by the Germans in World War II. Afterwards, some books were donated to restock Belgian library shelves.....and some were confiscated from the libraries of defeated Germany. Although the planned jingoist inscription (Destroyed by German fury, rebuilt by American generosity) was never chiseled into the stone of the new building, the plan was commonly known and, if you look closely in the rubble under the arches on the left side, you can see the letters FURORE TEUTONICO DIRUTA - Latin for "destroyed by German fury."

**Baghdad, House of Wisdom Tablet:** The House of Wisdom was a major intellectual center in Baghdad during the Islamic Golden Age founded by Caliph Harun al-Rashid. From the 9th to 13th centuries, Muslim, Jewish and Christian scholars studied there. Astronomical observatories were established, and the House was an unrivalled center for the study of humanities and for science, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, alchemy and chemistry, zoology, geography and cartography. The scholars accumulated a great collection of world knowledge and built on it through their own discoveries. By the middle of the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the House of Wisdom had the largest selection of books in the world. It was destroyed in the sack of the city following the Mongol Siege of Baghdad.

**Ethiopian Magic Scrolls Tablet:** Ethiopian scrolls are used to heal. The preparation of the scroll is part of the magic, in which an animal substitutes for the sick person and the scroll substitutes for their skin. This symbolic relationship engenders a close connection between the scroll and its owner. The patron is first rubbed with a live animal, and later bathed in its blood and stomach contents. Only then is the skin soaked, dried, and scraped, after which the finished parchment is cut and sewn into a scroll. Portable scrolls made to the length of the customer offer head-to-toe spiritual protection, while longer scrolls protect a household.

# Diane Savona

**Telephone Tablet:** The first public phone booth was installed in 1880 in New Haven, Connecticut, just 4 years after it was invented. These first public telephones were supervised by attendants, while those operated by coin came 9 years later. This tablet shows a variety of early phones, and my newest iPhone.

**Bibliomania Tablet:** In 1809, the Rev. Thomas Frognall Dibdin published his book *Bibliomania; or Book Madness*. The black & white central image is from the frontpage of that book. But both the book fool image and the poem (around the edges) are taken from 1509 *The Ship of Fools*. The man is wearing a nightcap (to hide his ass's ears) while a fool's hood with bells hangs behind him, and he holds in his right hand a duster with which he swats at the flies that come to settle on his books. Some of the images in this tablet come from illustrations in the 1809 book.

**Timbuktu Tablet:** Timbuktu was an African center of learning during the European Dark Ages, a real city of libraries and books. When I was a child, 'Timbuktu' was a name used to evoke the farthest, most obscure and unknowable outpost possible. Now I understand that it was once a proud university city, a center of learning attracting scholars and manuscripts while Europe was still enmeshed in the Dark Ages. However, my online research of this tangible literary stronghold shows that mystery still surrounds the place. Different websites list a variety of dates for Timbuktu's golden age and decline. Even the spelling (Timbu'ktu, Tenbuch, Tombouctou) is unsettled. Timbuktu suffered centuries of decline and many invasions. While many precious manuscripts were destroyed, many others were preserved by hiding and burying the books. I've read that librarians would each bury a chest of books. And if a librarian was killed, those books might never be found.

**Climate Data Tablet:** The Timbuktu Tablet is meant to be paired with this one. Scientists today are doing what the ancient librarians did - securing information so it isn't destroyed by barbarians. In Timbuktu, I couldn't just show men digging holes and burying crates. Here, I couldn't just show people sitting at computers, tearing their hair out. I put together images of scientists gathering climate data, climate/weather symbols and people sitting in front of computer screens into a composition that echoes the ancient T and O maps.

# Diane Savona



*Climate Data*

2017-18

Wool, thread

16" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$2,000



*Ethiopian Magic Scrolls*

2017-18

Wool, thread

16" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$2,000



*Baghdad House of Wisdom*

2017-18

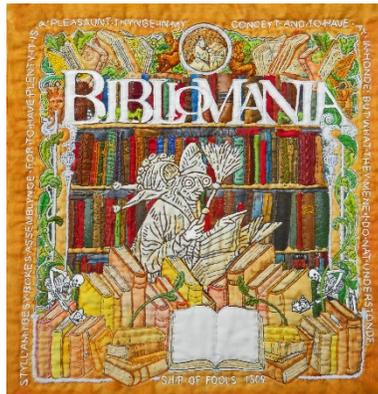
Wool, thread

16" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$2,000

# Diane Savona



*Bibliomania*

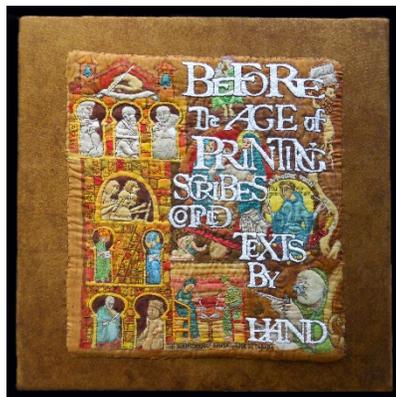
2017-18

Wool, thread

16" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$2,000



*Scribes*

2017-18

Wool, thread

16" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$2,000



*The Library of Louvain*

2017-18

Wool, thread

16" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$2,000

# Diane Savona



*Telephone*

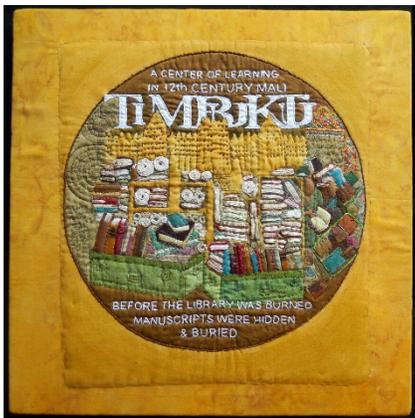
2017-18

Wool, thread

16" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$2,000



*Timbuktu*

2017-18

Wool, thread

16" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$2,000

# Onnie Strother



## The Last of the Hawks

A Photo Essay by Onnie Strother

*“These are hardworking people, good people. They are out here working to get the news out. Their story needs to be told” ... Jim the manager of Pro Sales, a Star Ledger Newspaper distributor.*

They call themselves Hawkers or Hawks like the sharp wind that blows down Central Ave. Once they could sell enough papers to live for a week, now it’s hard to make enough for a day. Many have other jobs and sell papers to supplement their income. Some have been laid off without benefits, others work for extra money to pay for medication or for transportation. Most have families that they help to support. The men and women who “Hawk” newspapers on the street corners may be the the last of a dying bread but as Raheem of South Orange Ave says, “As long as they keep printing them we will be here to sell them”. They all believe that is better to earn a dollar than to ask for one.

Onnie Strother is a multimedia artist who was born and raised in Newark, New Jersey. He likes to work in series that often tell a story. He believes that everyone has a story and that the best ones are the ones least told.

Additional remarks by the artist: *Each photo has a title that refers to the vendor’s location or the headline on the newspaper that they are selling.*

*I have titled some of the pictures with the location of the vendor so that people familiar with the city of Newark can connect with the person selling the newspaper. I hope that the viewer will understand the difficulties of selling papers in areas that may be isolated or infrequently traveled by pedestrians. The Hawkers are community members so viewers may recognize someone who they know. Commuters may recognize streets that they pass every day. The headlines on the papers may call to mind moments in the lives of the viewers. The titles are all about making connections. The individuals in each portrait has a story but I feel that their reasons for working on Sunday, (a traditional rest day for most American workers) are their own. The world of the daily newspaper is a vanishing one but the need to earn our daily bread is not. I hope that when we see people cleaning windshields, selling newspapers, cold water, flowers or any other low cost items by the side road, we consider that these are people who would rather work for a dollar than ask for one.*

# Onnie Strother



*Sister Gloria, Shoprite Center*

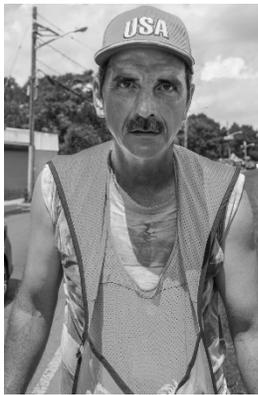
2015-16

Archival Pigment Print

22" x 17" framed, image size 10.5" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$450



*Steve, South Orange Avenue & Oraton*

2015-16

Archival Pigment Print

22" x 17" framed, image size 10.5" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$450



*Mary, South Orange Avenue*

2015-16

Archival Pigment Print

22" x 17" framed, image size 10.5" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$450

# Onnie Strother



*Shakur Stevenson Wins*

2015-16

Archival Pigment Print

22" x 17" framed, image size 10.5" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$450



*Loss & Remembrance*

2015-16

Archival Pigment Print

22" x 17" framed, image size 10.5" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$450



*Springfield & Belmont*

2015-16

Archival Pigment Print

22" x 17" framed, image size 10.5" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$450

# Onnie Strother



*Deante, Clinton & Bergan*

2015-16

Archival Pigment Print

22" x 17" framed, image size 10.5" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$450



*The Legal Backlog, Sacred Heart*

2015-16

Archival Pigment Print

22" x 17" framed, image size 10.5" x 16"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$450

# Bill Westheimer

## ANTHROPOCENE

Man's brief existence on the planet Earth is known as the Anthropocene era. However the impact of our species on the environment has been dramatic and problematic. The history of the earth includes earlier geologic eras that experienced mass extinctions and calamities, but our Anthropocene era has been one of very large and probably catastrophic changes in a very brief time.

Animals and plants are being destroyed and disappearing at an accelerating pace bringing on "The Sixth Extinction" that concerns many scientists, naturalists and citizens of the earth.

The "Anthropocene" fossils are imaginary records of flora and fauna that might be found in a future geologic era. They are evidence of what was and hints of how it might have been extinguished. Just as the real fossils found by humans fill in the story of what lived and how it died in earlier geologic era, these created fossils are evidence what what might be becoming extinct as a result of human activity.

The Anthropocene pieces are unique collodion wet-plate photograms on slate or flagstone. They range from 3×4" to 7×9" plus the welded steel stand and natural rock base.

# Bill Westheimer



*Anthropocene #9 (Crab Claw)*

2019

Collodion wet-plate photograph on slate

7.5" x 5" x 5"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,100



*Anthropocene #7 (Jawbone)*

2019

Collodion wet-plate photograph on slate

11.625" x 10.75" x 5.5"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,100



*Anthropocene #6 (Wilted Fern)*

2019

Collodion wet-plate photograph on slate

4.25" x 10.5" x .25" (with stand, 6.25" x 10" x 4")

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,100

# Bill Westheimer



*Anthropocene #8 (Coral 2)*

2019

Collodion wet-plate photogram on slate

With stand, 10"x 6" x .3125"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,100



*Anthropocene #10 (Rattlesnake Ribs)*

2019

Collodion wet-plate photogram on slate

8" x 5.25" x .25" (with stand, 10.5" x 6" x 4")

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 2,100

# Lisa G Westheimer

*On the Edge of the Broken City*, 2010: Ceramic, Raku fired stoneware

Statement: I created this piece after the earthquake in Haiti in 2010. Its name is a direct quote in a report of the devastation I heard on the radio. This disaster sparked my desire to address natural disaster in my work, and to express my distress at witnessing catastrophe and devastation that I am completely helpless in aiding, and my desire to help, even if it is only to chronicle it in my work.

*Sponge Lamp*, 2016: Multi-fired wheel thrown and altered porcelain with dichroic glass and luster additions. Copper LED lighting system.

Statement: A recurring theme in my work is aquatic life. Much of my forms are encrusted with textural patterns reminiscent of reefs. Currently reef all over the world are endangered and dying, mainly from toxicity caused by humans and global warming of oceans. I hope and pray that my forms do not become a record of a living wonder that becomes extinct because of human impact.

# Lisa G Westheimer



*On the Edge of the Broken City*

2010

Ceramic, Raku fired stoneware

11" x14.5" x 10.5"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 1,250



*Sponge Lamp*

2016

Porcelain, dichroic glass

12" x 7" x 7" (irregular)

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 750

# Philemona Williamson

## Philemona Williamson *Transitions*

My paintings explore the transition from childhood to adulthood, that tumultuous time we call adolescence. It is a stage of awkwardness, exploration and possibilities. My figures navigate this journey within a society which insists on describing individuals first by race, gender and class. Such groupings represent only a small part of one's essence, and far from the most significant.

I want to show the nuanced qualities in each of us at that most precious and transitory time of life. I feel as though the innocence, the awakening of a sensuality, the budding awareness of a place in a larger community, are all at the fingertips of an adolescent. How they maneuver through this world, reacting to our social, personal, and psychological landscape, represents the journey that I delve into in my painting.

# Philemona Williamson



*Dusty Afternoon*

2010

Oil on canvas

48" x 60"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 35,000



*Red Buckled Shoe*

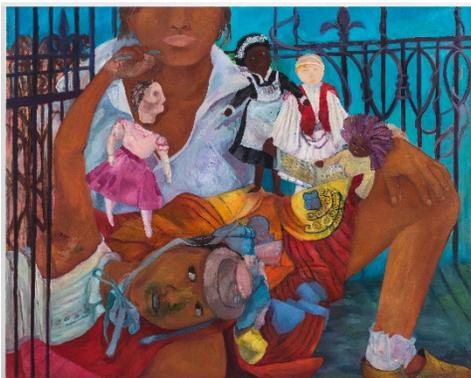
2014-15

Oil on canvas

48" x 60"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 35,000



*Lap of Day Dreams*

2019

Oil on canvas

48" x 60"

Courtesy of the Artist

\$ 35,000