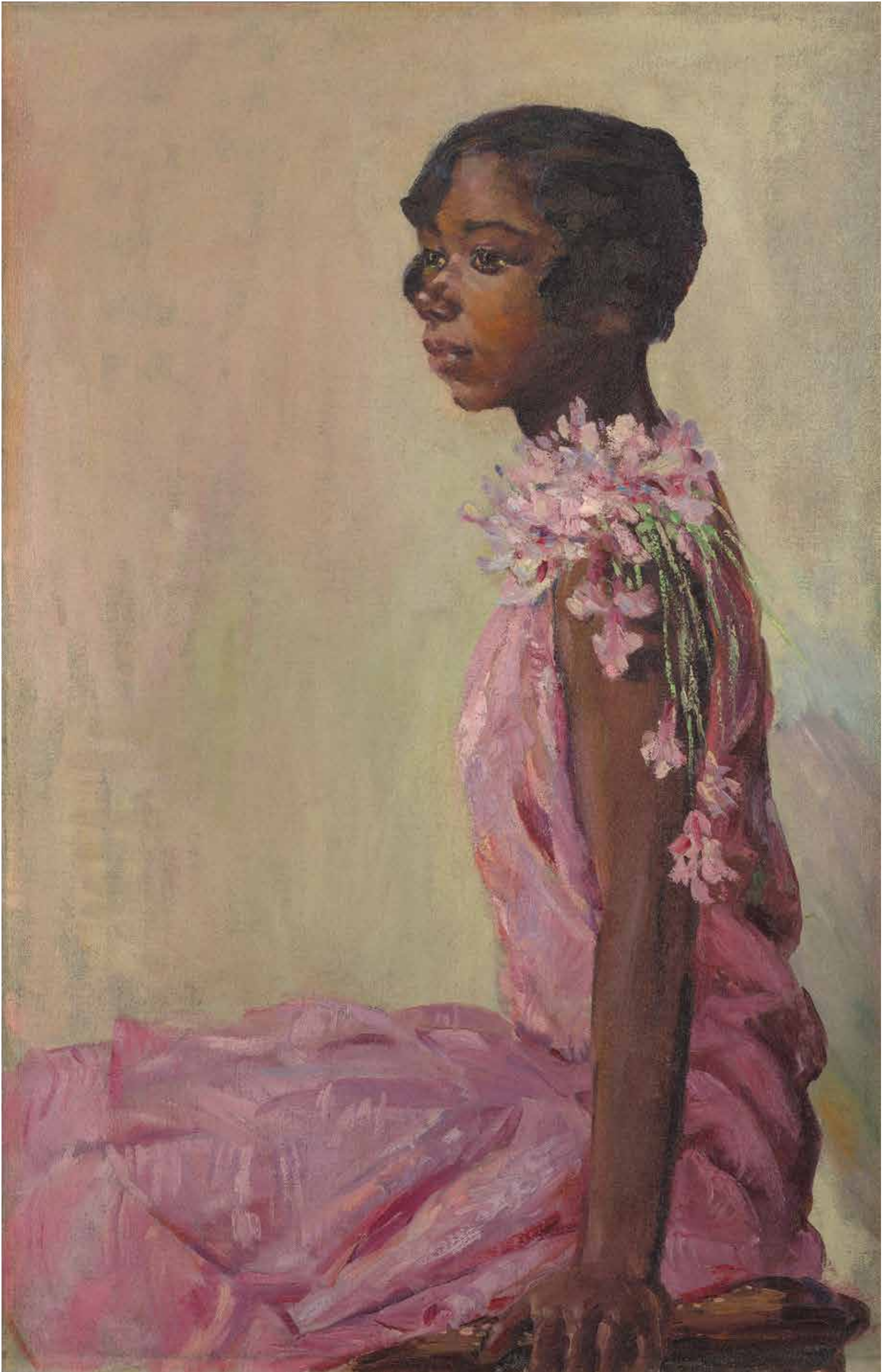
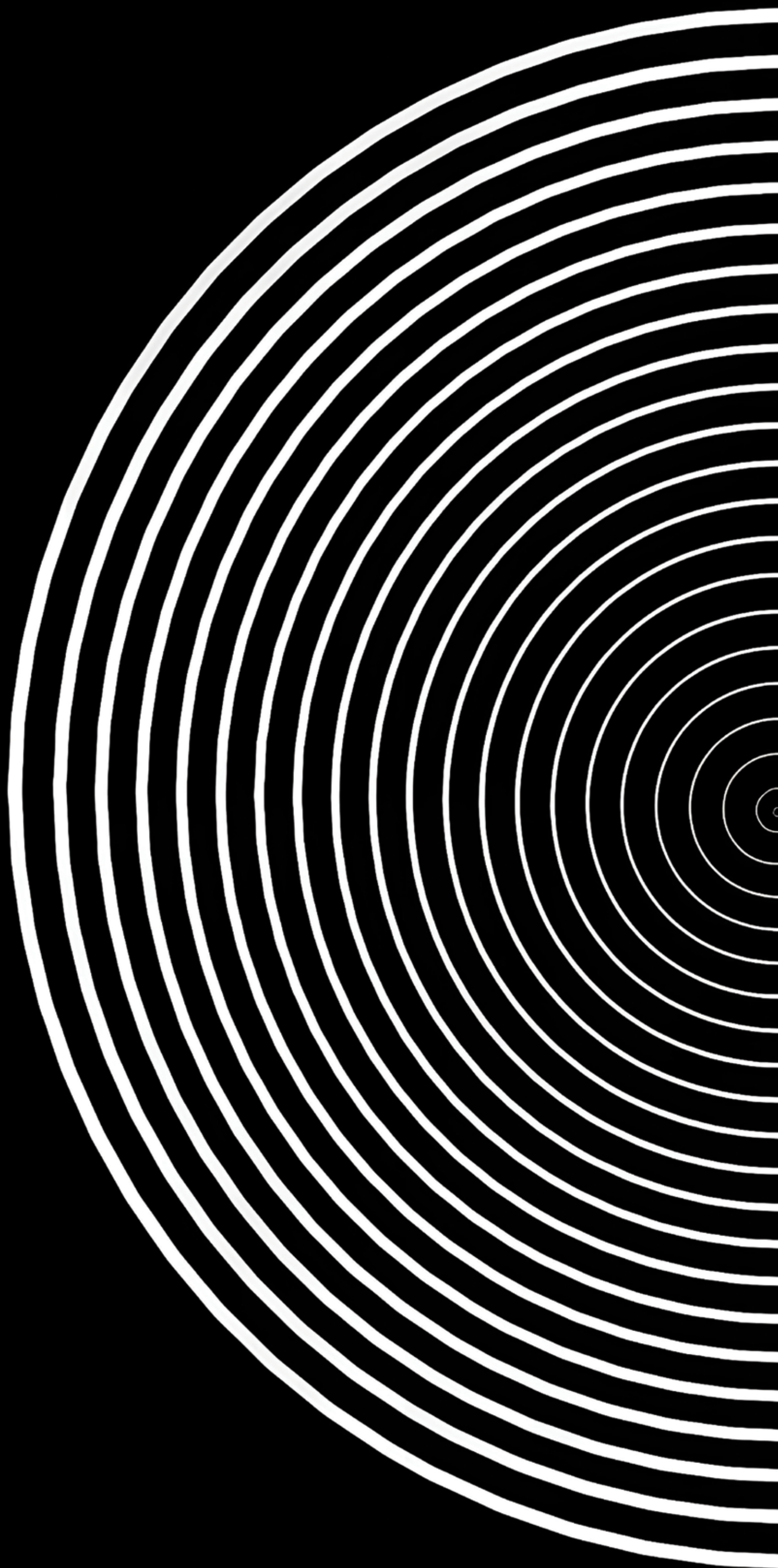


ARTDESK

CONTEMPORARY ARTS, PERFORMANCE, AND THOUGHT | SPRING 2024



Girl in a Pink Dress by Laura Wheeler Waring





ASTRID RIECKEN

A memorial for Owasso, Oklahoma, teenager Nex Benedict at the As You Are Bar in Washington, D.C.

From ArtDesk

ON KINDNESS

WE HAVEN'T SLEPT well since the news of Nex Benedict's death on February 8, 2024. We continue to find ourselves awake at night, the sound of traffic orienting us to the fact that this is not a dream. This is real life, and it's happened again. Into the darkness, the pulverized pieces of broken hearts disperse and drift into the universe, scattered by forces made of hatred, cultural inertia, and religious dogma. We try to make sense of the senseless and ask the question: Why?

The full story of Nex's death hasn't been reported and may never be. We know the sixteen-year-old from Owasso, Oklahoma, went into the girls' restroom at their high school on February 7, 2024, where Nex encountered three girls. An altercation ensued, and Nex was beaten. After seeking medical treatment and being released, Nex died a day later. On March 13, a medical examiner's report ruled Nex's death a suicide. According to Nex's family and friends, Nex and other students at Owasso High School had experienced bullying due to their gender identities.

What's clear is that Nex may have died as a direct result of living in a world where it's encouraged for people to act unkindly toward others. In response to questions regarding the child's death posed during a February 23 public forum, a newly elected Oklahoma state senator named Tom Woods said, "We are a Religious State, and we are going to fight it to keep that filth out of the state of Oklahoma."

So, too, the state's superintendent of public instruction, a religious zealot named Ryan Walters, widely betrayed the child's most private traumas to get the monkey of hateful rhetoric off his back. He has also been notoriously outspoken in his efforts to scrub the "demented ideologies" of children and modern society from educators, books, and ideas in our public schools. Mostly, but not entirely, these ideologies involve gender identity, but also racial history and religious preference, and, sometimes, even basic American history.

We believe kindness matters, and the people who reject it fail young people like Nex Benedict. In the life and death of this child, the difference may have rested on a simple personal preference: how to be considered as a person in the world—grappling with identity—and how to be true to oneself.

A generation ago, gay people were pressured to stay in the shadows and conform to societal norms. They married (or didn't), had children (or didn't), and tried to blend in (or moved away). Those who didn't were ostracized or even beaten, arrested, and sometimes murdered. Not long before the Stonewall riots launched the gay liberation movement in Greenwich Village in 1969, riots at the Black Cat Tavern and Cooper's Donuts in Los Angeles were episodes of stark police brutality.

Today in the United States, gay and lesbian,

homosexual, bi-, trans, queer, non-binary, twin spirit—or however one embraces the right to choose how to describe, or not describe, themselves—face less pressure to conform.

In places like Oklahoma, however, where *ArtDesk* is published and where kids just like Nex Benedict are hounded for being different, certain radicals refuse to accept this fundamental freedom. Conversion therapy seeks to "pray the gay away," and state legislatures pass anti-LGBTQ+ laws while using rhetoric and dog-whistle terms to couch hate speech.

One thing is for certain. When hate is normalized, the results are devastating. One to one, many to many. For society to progress, we must find our common humanity. We must reject hate and intolerance in all of its forms. We must embrace kindness, which we define as the goodwill and benevolence that supports the wellbeing of others.

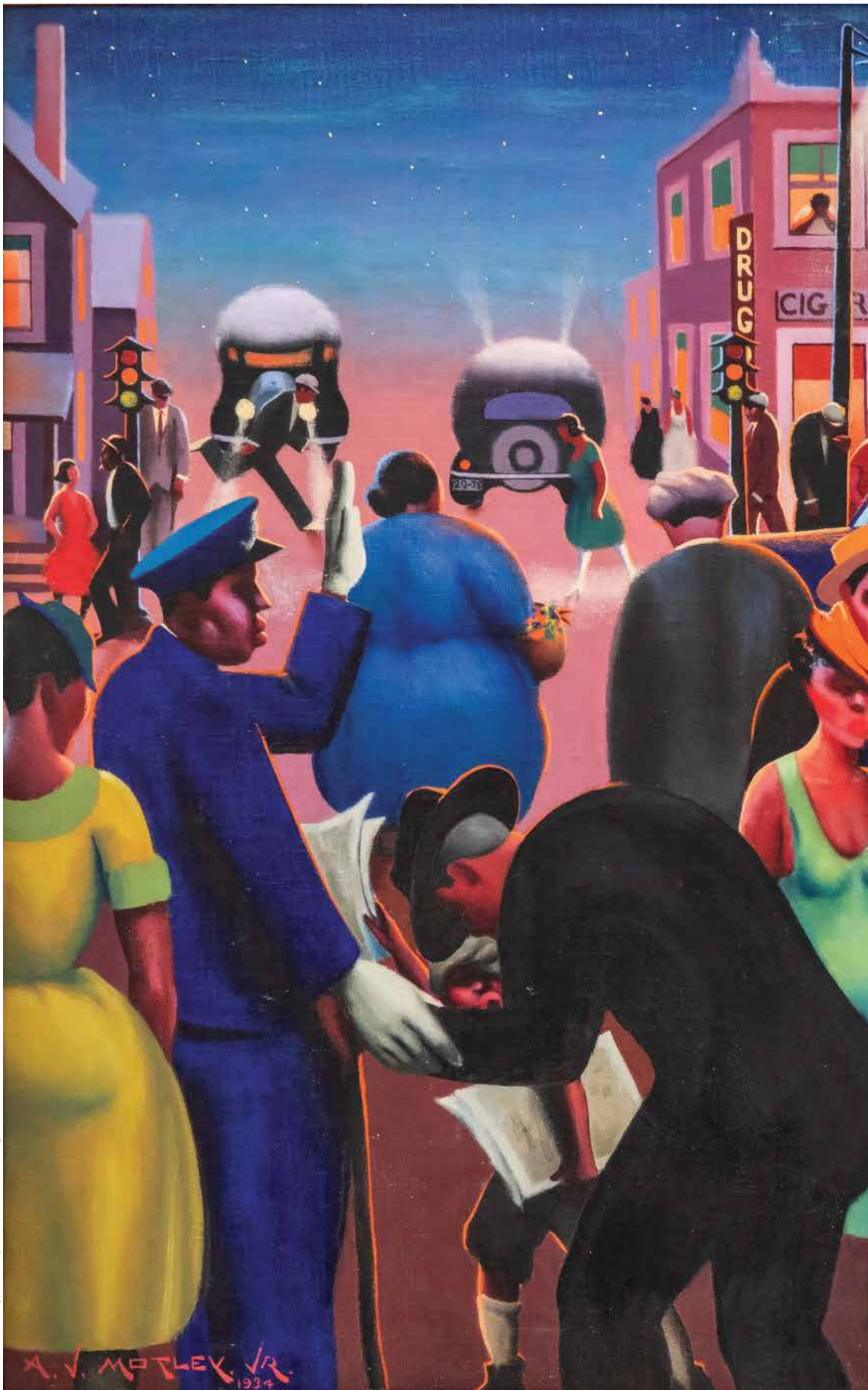
In Luke 6:27–28, Jesus says, "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you." How radical to be kind to even those who don't reciprocate. In John 8, regarding the adulteress, Jesus said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her;" and, in Matthew 5, from the Sermon on the Mount: "Judge not, lest ye be judged." With love, kindness, and forgiveness, we remind unseemly outspoken leaders what it really means to live as Christians. After all, Jesus famously fraternized with society's outcasts. He did what most revolutionaries do: He submitted, surrendered, and made himself a servant unto humanity. So did Buddha, Krishna, and Muhammad.

Kindness is not the exclusive domain of religion. It's a common garden born and cultivated in the hearts of people—animals, too—that divides cellularly, one act of kindness begetting another and another, until a culture of generosity prevails. That's the revolution now upon us—decency toward others. There's room for everyone in this movement. And to do what? To evolve their thinking, smile at a stranger, embrace the fallen, forgive the unforgiven, hug an opponent. Generosity of spirit is not in vogue, but it should be.

As the bedroom window slowly transitions from midnight blue to a pre-dawn haze, we are reminded of those who die by cultures of bigotry. We think about Nex and the countless others who suffered for merely being *who they were*—and who we all are: imperfect human beings seeking the freedom to find out, and be, who we are. A waking thought rises to the surface of our foggy consciousness. We breathe it into existence, the whispered words filling the dark space around us before we fall back asleep. The words resonate, a hopeful balm that allows us to sleep until morning: *We are all the same*.

We are all the same, indeed, and we remind any young person and anyone reading this who may feel abandoned by a particularly loud segment of people, you are not alone.

Necessities



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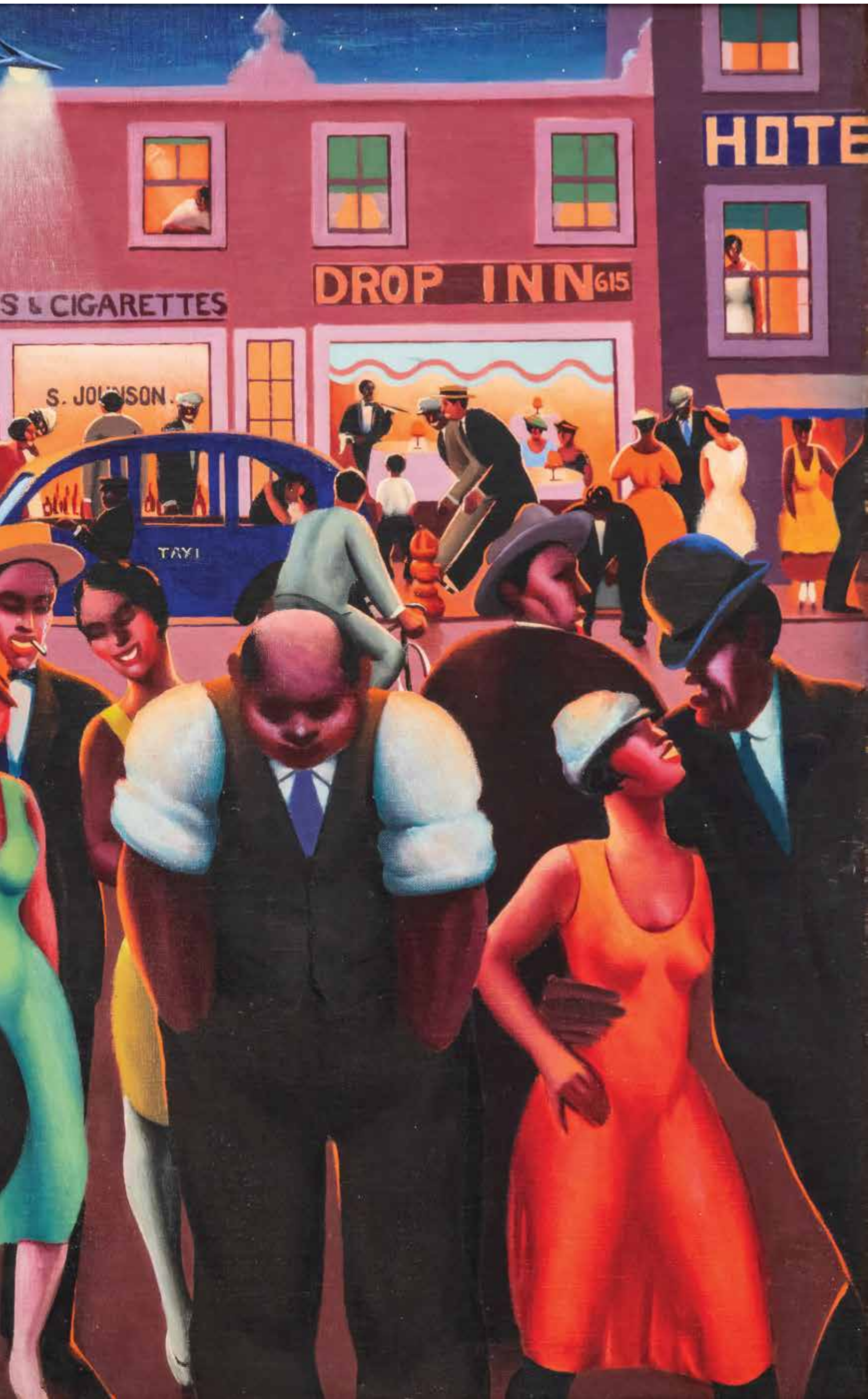
Back to Modern

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE and *Transatlantic Modernism*, a sweeping exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, presents 160 historic Black artworks from the 1920s–1940s—specifically Black life in Harlem and during the Great Migration.

The exhibition contrasts the works of Black artists such as Aaron Douglas, Meta Warrick Fuller, William H. Johnson,

Winold Reiss, and James Van Der Zee with European artists like Henri Matisse and Pablo Picasso, showing how Harlem artists influenced modern art. Denise Murrell, curator of *Harlem Renaissance*, says, “In the same way that we talk about Edward Hopper or Georgia O’Keefe, we should be talking about at least some of the artists of the Harlem Renaissance.”

After years of research, Murrell borrowed much of the art



Archibald J. Motley, Jr.
Black Belt (1934)
 Courtesy of Hampton University

for the exhibit from the collections of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and other private collections—sources often considered off the radar of a major institution like The Met. Although the exhibit does much to show the breadth and importance of Black art from this period, Murrell says, “There’s definitely so much depth here. I do hope we will have an ongoing collaboration with the HBCUs to do more shows and additional research.”

To supplement the exhibition, The Met has produced a podcast *Harlem Is Everywhere* hosted by writer and critic Jessica Lynne, discussing the cultural legacy of Harlem’s music, fashion, literature, and art, which has shaped Black identity. —MANDA OVERTURF SHANK

The Harlem Renaissance and Transatlantic Modernism is on view at *The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York* through July 28, 2024. ▶ metmuseum.org



IN FOCUS

ON VIEW AT the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art in Norman, Oklahoma, is *Artists X Artists: Photographing the Creative Spirit*. This lively exhibition compiles photographs of artists who, in turn, are photographed by other artists. Curated by Hadley Jerman and pulled from the museum's collection, the

exhibition explores how collaboration can yield delightful and unexpected results.

Artists X Artists: Photographing the Creative Spirit is on view at the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art in Norman, Oklahoma through July 7, 2024. [▶ ou.edu/fjma](https://ou.edu/fjma)

BARBARA MORGAN
Martha Graham, Letter to the World, 1935
(from the *Ten Photographers Portfolio*, 1954)

The BOOK REPORT

BY ALANA RUIZ DE LA PEÑA & MANDA OVERTURF SHANK

BANNED BOOKS

Since the invention of the printing press, authorities have sought to control written work. In 1637, the Puritan government led the first instance of book censorship in the United States when Thomas Morton published the *New English Canaan*—a critique on Puritan customs in New England. Today, the American Library Association recorded 4,240 unique titles targeted for removal from libraries in the 2022–2023 school year—a record-breaking 65 percent increase from the year before. According to research from PEN America, the vast majority of challenged books are written by or about people of color and LGBTQ+ populations. Here are a few of the most banned and challenged books in libraries across the country today. They are available for purchase at most bookstores and online.

Speak

Laurie Halse Anderson
Speak, a 1999 National Book Award finalist, has been banned and challenged by censors for more than twenty years. Based on the author’s own experiences, *Speak* tackles sexual assault and post-traumatic stress using diary entries to drive the narrative. One group, Moms For Liberty, believes the book contains a bias against male students. “I think a lot of teenagers find in the book a little bit of a roadmap for how they can find the courage to speak up when a bad thing happens,” says the author.

How the García Girls Lost Their Accents

Julia Alvarez
An essential book in the canon of modern Latino literature, *How the García Girls* follows a family displaced by political unrest in the Dominican Republic to Brooklyn, New York. Censors claimed sexual content, but nationwide book defenders equated the argument to banning Shakespeare, The Bible, and several of the world’s greatest authors.

Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic

Alison Bechdel
Since its publication in 2006, this widely acclaimed memoir-turned-Tony-winning Broadway show, *Fun Home* has been challenged repeatedly. About the author coming to terms with her sexuality in a homophobic environment, Bechdel said in 2013, “It’s sad and absurd...a book which is, after all, about the toll that this sort of small-mindedness takes on people’s lives.”

The Handmaid’s Tale

Margaret Atwood
In Atwood’s imagined dystopia, Gilead, women are entirely subjugated. They are not allowed to own property or read, and many are forced into reproductive slavery (known as handmaidens). First published in 1985, censors from European dictatorships to groups like Focus on the Family, have attempted to ban the book for its anti-religious viewpoints and rape scenes. The book’s real message is about totalitarianism in a future former United States.

Lawn Boy

Jonathan Evison
A novel about a Mexican–American kid who endeavors to write the “Great American Landscaping Novel,” protagonist Mike Muñoz combines his love of lawn mowing and yard work with creative writing. A passage taken completely out-of-context was deemed “vulgar and pornographic” by censors. Evison says in an essay for *Poets & Writers*, “[Book banners] would rather keep Mike just where he is: disillusioned, disenfranchised, impoverished, and preferably in the closet. And the best way to do that is to not let him tell his story.”

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Maus

Art Spiegelman
Maus, the first graphic novel series to win a Pulitzer Prize (in 1992), recounts the horrors of the Holocaust by using anthropomorphism, dark humor, and first-hand accounts. Nazis are depicted as cats and Jews as mice. Based on interviews with Spiegelman’s father Vladek, a Polish Jew who was liberated from Auschwitz in 1945, *Maus* remains one of the most important books about a dark time in world history. *Maus* was banned for obscenity, nudity, and depictions of violence. At a post-ban event in 2022, Spiegelman says, “Censors want a kinder, gentler Holocaust they can stand.”

Monday’s Not Coming

Tiffany D. Jackson
Poverty, child abuse, grief, and friendship intersect in this young adult novel published in 2019. The story centers on the unexplained disappearance of a Black teenager, Monday Charles, and her best friend’s attempts to find her. Banned or challenged due to claims of “sexually explicit” passages, the book’s prevailing themes of systemic racism and poverty as factors that contribute to poor mental-health outcomes are lessons some censors don’t want students to learn.

The Bluest Eye

Toni Morrison
Winner of the Nobel Prize, Presidential Medal of Freedom, and Pulitzer Prize, Toni Morrison, author of routinely challenged *The Bluest Eye*, said, “The thought that leads me to contemplate with dread the erasure of other voices, of unwritten novels, poems whispered or swallowed for fear of being overheard by the wrong people, outlawed languages flourishing underground, essayists’ questions challenging authority never being posed, unstaged plays, canceled films—that thought is a nightmare. As though a whole universe is being described in invisible ink.”

The Glass Castle

Jeannette Walls
The Glass Castle is currently at the center of a legal battle between Edmond Public Schools in Edmond, Oklahoma, and the state’s board of education. The state superintendent of public instruction alleges the book contains pornographic content. However, it is well-documented that *The Glass Castle* does not contain visual images or content intended to cause sexual excitement.

The Kite Runner

Khaled Hosseini
A bestseller about two childhood friends from Afghanistan, *The Kite Runner* is one of two books the Oklahoma State Department of Education has ordered removed from school libraries. “This is the twenty-first century; I thought this happened in Europe in the 1930s,” Hosseini says about the censorship of his book. Representatives from several Oklahoma school districts have written letters in support of Edmond Public Schools’ efforts to keep this and other books on library shelves.



DOSSIER @CHRISTIAN.KEESEE



BIG SURPRISE ▶
The efforts by Senator James Lankford to take on the border crisis were gutsy. The senator from Oklahoma received opposition from all sides—but mostly within his own Republican party—after reaching across the aisle while attempting to negotiate a bipartisan immigration bill.



NEW FOLLOW ◀
Tristan Hayes, a pilot for Southwest Airlines, is heating up Instagram with his industry insights and exercise tips.
▶ [@tristan.j.hayes](#)

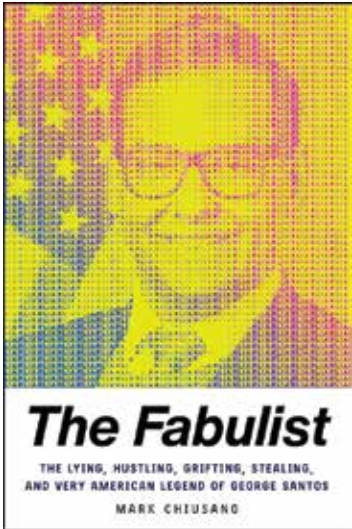
SLOW GOING ▲
With the #1 rail fan in the White House, I found this to be surprising. Amtrak's new Acela train is still delayed. What is taking so long? It is now scheduled to pull into New York's new art-filled Moynihan station in 2025. A \$2.45 billion investment in ground transportation (with 95 percent of the train components made in America), the twenty-eight new Acelas will have generated more than 1,300 new jobs across the United States.



SPRING FLING ▲
Mark your calendars for American Ballet Theatre's 2024 season opening June 18, with *Onegin* at the Metropolitan Opera. I had a chance to catch a preview of *Swan Lake* (pictured above, opening July 1) at the Kennedy Center in Washington DC. ABT's spring season runs through July 20.



CLOUD CITY ▲
The Nichols Hills Garden Tour is happening June 1, 2024. A highlight of the tour includes a stop at Park House, offering a journey into *Cloud City* by Tomás Saraceno (above) and up-close views of Ferdinand Botero's oversize bronze, *Reclining Venus*. Proceeds will support the thirty-one parks in Nichols Hills.



NO SURPRISE ▲
I'm currently reading *The Fabulist: The Lying, Hustling, Grifting, Stealing, and Very American Legend of George Santos*. More *Tiger King*-levels of con artistry are available in Mark Chiusano's book of the New York grifter who made it all the way to the United States House of Representatives.



SMALL BUT MIGHTY ◀
To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Kimbell Art Museum's Renzo Piano Pavilion, the museum acquired an ancient Mesoamerican statuette, *Standing Figure Holding a Were-Jaguar Baby*. The jadeite carving, dated to 900–300 B.C., has been the subject of Olmec studies since the late 1940s. The Kimbell is selective about their acquisitions, so you know this deserves a visit to Fort Worth.



CENTURY CITY ▶
A show of hands for the Morgan Library & Museum which this year celebrate its first 100 years as a public institution. The Morgan houses hundreds of thousands of rare and noteworthy items in its collection, making it a major cultural destination.

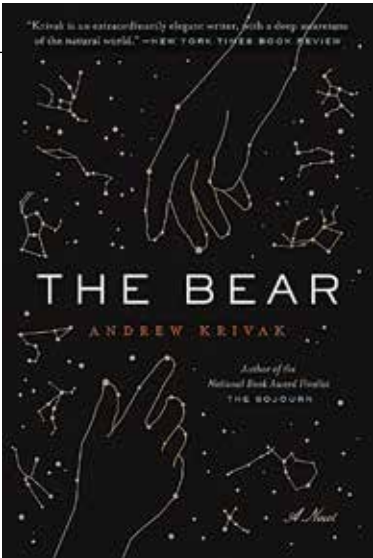
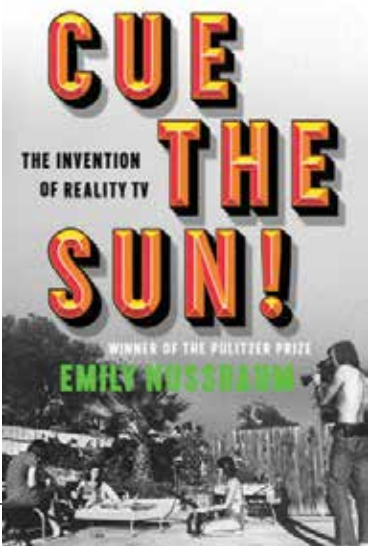


DALLAS ART FAIR ◀
The Dallas Art Fair and the Dallas Museum of Art announced the acquisition of three artworks from this year's fair. Funded by the Dallas Art Fair Foundation Acquisition Program, this is an annual gift from the Dallas Art Fair Foundation, placing works from the fair into the DMA's permanent collection.

Questions? Comments?
DM me [@christian.keese](#)

IN PERSON AT GREEN BOX

ARTDESK CONVERSATIONS RETURN this year to the Green Box Arts Festival in Green Mountain Falls, Colorado. The festival, now in its sixteenth year, runs from July 1–July 14, 2024. As a part of the Green Box Book Club, on July 12, Andrew Krivak will discuss his novel *The Bear*, a story of Earth's last human inhabitants. On July 13, Emily Nussbaum, a Pulitzer Prize-winning critic for *The New Yorker* will discuss her newest book, *Cue the Sun!: The Invention of Reality TV*, which will be published by Penguin Random House on June 25.
For tickets: ▶ [greenboxarts.org](#)



COLORADO

Time to Create



GAEYA



Kristina Barker



Neena Pathak

KRISTINA BARKER
Call Me Home (2022)

NEENA PATHAK APPLIED to the 2024 Green Box Artists-in-Residence Program with a certain project in mind, but life had other plans. As an extension of what she playfully calls her “rumspringa,” the Pulitzer Prize-winning producer and editor behind *The Daily* podcast from *The New York Times* and NPR’s *Invisibilia* wanted to embrace “a period of exploration” by diving into playwriting and audio fiction. “But then my dad died about a month ago—and I don’t want to work on those projects I pitched initially, because I’m no longer there creatively and spiritually,” she says. “I’m curious about how I might carry these new feelings I’m grappling with, as I make whatever I’ll make.”

That creative freedom is a major draw for the hundreds who apply each year to the Green Box residency. The program offers

space and time and a financial stipend for artists of all disciplines to sink into projects and engage with the local Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, community without the pressure of producing work by the end of the residency. Pathak was the first among this year’s spring cohort to call the idyllic Rocky Mountain campus home in March, followed by Swedish recording artist **GAEYA** in April, and photojournalist **Kristina Barker** in May.

“It’s the first time for me to experience something like this, and I’m so grateful because usually the work of an artist is going all the time. You have to fill your life with things to keep on surviving,” GAEYA says, whose plans for the residency included a performance of her self-described “earth music” in James Turrell’s *Green Mountain Falls Skyspace*. “To be in a space and only

focusing on this, it’s magnificent. It’s beautiful.”

Barker is also anticipating a deepening of her practice at the picturesque foothills arts hub in the shadow of Pikes Peak, where the May resident will celebrate her fortieth birthday. Like her fellow spring honorees, she says she is leaving herself open to the creative possibilities of the program.

“Once I get there, the people I talk to and what the land is doing will guide me to where the story ends up,” the Portland-based photographer says. “I will be focusing my time on creating visuals around a sense of belonging and bringing physical and non-physical spaces together in the landscape.”

Now in its fifth year, the 2024 Green Box Artists-in-Residence Program received

more than 250 applications from twenty-six countries and nearly every US state. Barker, GAEYA, and Pathak were three of eight artists selected. Rounding out this year’s residents will be **Thu Kim Vu, Janani Balasubramanian, Sultana Isham, Lynn Tomlinson, and Mk Smith Despres**.

“We are thrilled with the diversity of artists, disciplines, and projects that comprise our exciting cohort,” says executive director Scott Levy. “We can’t wait to witness the creative practices of these outstanding artists as they become embedded in Green Mountain Falls and connect to the community throughout the year.” —JEZY J. GRAY

The Green Box Artists in Residence program applications will open in fall 2024. For more information or to apply: ► greenbox.org



LISA KARRER
Station #6 Somali Round Tents (2020)

HOME WORK

SHELTER opens at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center

SHELTER, CREATED WITH artist Lisa Karrer’s native Buffalo, New York, in mind, has been localized to highlight displacement among different communities in Oklahoma. The new exhibit features eight different stations and uses miniature ceramic structures that draw inspiration from refugee dwellings. Audio and video narratives nestle inside of the structures, inviting viewers to engage with the pieces in a multidimensional format.

“Diaspora is in our DNA in many ways,” says Karrer, “and *SHELTER* invites you to trust your instincts, to follow what compels you among an ocean of voices, to knit these stories together, and to see both the beauty and the trauma.”

SHELTER draws from fourteen different narratives, each one from a different person who has faced some sort of displacement from their community and found themselves starting over again in Oklahoma. Embracing what Karrer calls “warm technology,” an approach she has cultivated over the years which seeks to reinforce the relationship between technology and the human condition, the artist hopes viewers of *SHELTER* will become “emancipated spectators” of the exhibition.

Finding commonalities in globally and locally displaced communities, *SHELTER* invites audiences to ask themselves: What is home? —KAYCEE CHANCE

SHELTER will be on display through January 6, 2025, in the Mary LeFlore Clements Oklahoma Gallery at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center. ► oklahomacontemporary.org

Seán Curran’s East Village

New York’s East Village is one of the oldest neighborhoods in lower Manhattan. Well-known as the nexus for avant-garde art and the experimental theater movement in the 1950s, the neighborhood also proudly can claim to be the birthplace of punk rock in the late 1970s. Curran has strolled the streets of St. Mark’s Place, Alphabet City, and the Bowery since the 1980s.



“My favorite upscale East Village spot is the bistro **Lucien** (14 1st Ave). I like to go on Sunday mornings with a hard copy of *The New York Times* and order an omelette.”



“**D.L. Cerney** (324 East 9th St). All of the clothing is based on patterns from the 1940s and 1950s. It’s run by a man and a woman who make everything. I love to shop, but here, I window shop.”



“I really love the **Russian and Turkish Baths** (268 East 10th St). I go in there and stretch and sweat in the sauna and steam rooms. I call it “the heat cure” for when I’m sore from teaching or rehearsing or yoga (or back in the day, from performing).”



“I’ve eaten at **Veselka** (144 2nd Ave) hundreds of times. My favorite is arugula and cheese pierogi, boiled, with extra onions. My soup order is off-menu—half chicken and half vegetable—after all these years, why don’t they just have Chicken Vegetable?”



TRAVIS MAGEE



LOIS GREENFIELD



LIZ SCHNEIDER



Making Opera Modern

SEÁN CURRAN IS CHANGING THE WAY OPERA MOVES

OVER THE LAST two decades, movement and physical expression have become more prominent as the vehicle for advancing narrative in opera, thanks in no small part to Seán Curran. His specialty act is coaching artists in human behavior for the stage. “I love working with non-dancers,” Curran says. “I teach them how to inhabit their bodies.” Formerly of Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane Company and an original cast member of *STOMP*, Curran is largely responsible for enlivening the role of movement in the opera industry. A tenured professor at NYU and choreographer and director of his own eponymous concert dance company, Curran excels in coaching artists in dance routines and human behavior for the stage, or what James Robinson of Opera Theatre of St. Louis calls “Curranography.” “It’s no longer park and bark!” says Robert Ainsley, artistic and general director of the Glimmerglass Festival, an annual summer-long celebration of opera and musical theater based in Cooperstown, New York. In 2024, Curran’s work will include directing

remounts of his widely lauded production of *The Pirates of Penzance* at Opera San Antonio and the Glimmerglass Festival, and choreographing *La Bohème*, *Julius Caesar*, and *Galileo Galilei* at Opera Theatre of St. Louis, where he’s worked for twenty-four years as resident choreographer. Curran’s success lies in listening not only to the music but to the artists in the room, and just as crucially, to himself. “I’d sing the phone book for that guy,” says Lise Lindstrom, a soprano who sang the titular role in *Salome*, which Curran directed at San Diego Opera in 2012. “Seán isn’t a dictator to a conceptual vision. He’s a builder of a vision. He arrives with an idea, crafts it generously and joyfully with the people in the room, and waits for the evolution. This collaborative sense is uncommon in opera leadership.” —MEREDITH FAGES

The *Pirates of Penzance*, directed by Seán Curran will kick off the 2024 Glimmerglass Festival in Cooperstown, New York, on July 22. The Glimmerglass Festival will run through August 20. ▶ glimmerglass.org



JESSICA LEA

FARM HEAVEN

The Mollie Spencer Farm was founded in 1894 as the Spencer Homestead in Yukon, Oklahoma. These thirty-three acres were purchased by Mollie Spencer, whose husband L. M. Spencer along with his brother A. N. Spencer, founded the town of Yukon, Oklahoma, in 1891. The land, located along the Chisholm Trail, is among the oldest continually owned family real estate in Oklahoma. Today, the Mollie Spencer Farm hosts year-round events and is home to donkeys, rescued horses and cows, hives of Italian bees, sheep, and chickens. In the fall, Monarch butterflies use the farm as a rest-stop during their journey south for the winter.

The Mollie Spencer Farm is located at 1001 Garth Brooks Boulevard in Yukon, Oklahoma. Visit molliespencerfarm.org for a listing of upcoming events.

YOUTH JOURNALISM ON THE BEAT

THE JOURNALISM LANDSCAPE has changed, but the need for fact-based news and intelligent media has always been a hallmark of a free society. In fall 2024, the new Multimedia Journalism program will debut at Metro Technology Centers’ Springlake campus in Oklahoma City. The program offers fundamentals for high schoolers and adults pursuing a career in journalism and media and developed out of a \$150,000 grant from Kirkpatrick Foundation to Metro Tech Foundation.

Ashley Strehl, media relations coordinator for Metro Tech, says the program offers an excellent approach for both college- and apprentice-bound students.

“For those looking for a more affordable approach to kick-starting their media career, our program will offer students practical, real-world experience in journalism and media from day one,” Strehl says.

The curricular goal is to help strengthen media literacy and the press with a new generation of

trained journalists. With the right community and administrative support, the program could be scaled to twenty-eight other CareerTech centers around Oklahoma, which is considered a model state for career education (the state’s system operates on sixty campuses and in 397 PK-12 school districts).

Students will be trained in ethics and storytelling and can expect hands-on training with photography, video production and design, and even a drone certification from the Federal Aviation Administration. In the future, the curriculum could expand to engage local media outlets or other organizations to provide students with more resources and experience contributing their skills to the local community.—ANN MAGNER

Forty students will comprise the inaugural class. The program is free for high school juniors and seniors in the Metro Tech area with financial aid options for adults. ▶ metrotech.edu







LUNA LUNA: *Forgotten Fantasy* ◀

Ace Mission Studios / Los Angeles, California

In the summer of 1987, a German carnival offered rides decorated by Salvador Dalí, Jean-Michel Basquiat, Keith Haring, David Hockney, Roy Lichtenstein, Kenny Scharf, and Sonia Delaunay. The event was obscure art history lore until the rides’ reemergence from decades in storage in 2022. This Boyle Heights spectacle revives the visual magic, from a carousel painted by Haring to a Ferris wheel adorned with Basquiat’s art, though visitors can now only view rather than ride the kaleidoscopic pieces. *Through May 12, 2024.*

▶ [lunaluna.com](#)

THE OUTSIDERS

Bernard B. Jacobs Theatre / New York, New York

After famously being adapted by Francis Ford Coppola in a 1983 film, S. E. Hinton’s coming-of-age novel *The Outsiders* (1967), set against a simmering Tulsa gang rivalry, has arrived on Broadway as a musical. Will the brotherhood bonds of Ponyboy, Sodapop, and Darrel stay gold on a new stage? A Tony nomination for Best New Musical promise an engaging rumble of teenage growth and strife. *Through September 1, 2024.*

▶ [outsidersmusical.com](#)

MAGNIFICENT BEAUTY: Georgia O’Keeffe and the Art of the Flower ▼

Oklahoma City Museum of Art / Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Georgia O’Keeffe’s flowers are icons of American modern art, and this show contextualizes them in a broader artistic fascination with flora. O’Keeffe’s sensual paintings are brought into conversation with work by photographers like Imogen



Cunningham, who similarly found inspiration in the natural world. Both O’Keeffe and Cunningham borrowed from the still-life painting tradition while reframing it with abstract looks at the intricate details of a flower, such as the radiant angles of a bird of paradise or the soft lines of a calla lily. *Through July 7, 2024.*

▶ [okcmoa.com](#)

LEE MINGWEI: *Rituals of Care*

de Young Museum / San Francisco, California

Taiwanese American artist Lee Mingwei believes in art’s power to heal through simple interactions, whether it’s mending a well-

loved garment or offering space for people to write letters they always meant to send. This inaugural major show for the artist in the US brings together seven of his highly participatory projects, from walking across a Picasso traced in sand to receiving the gift of a song, all bringing together strangers in everyday moments of care. *Through July 7, 2024.* ▶ [famsf.org](#)

PUBLIC WORKS: *Art by Elizabeth Olds*

Harry Ransom Center / Austin, Texas

In prints, paintings, and drawings, Elizabeth Olds uplifted the American laborer and also created art intended to be accessible and affordable to everyone. Despite her prolific work and the honor of being the first woman to receive a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1926, she has yet to be the subject of a significant retrospective until now. Through more than 100 pieces dating from the 1920s to the 1960s, this exhibition spans the diverse aspects of her expansive career, from her work with the WPA to her children’s books. *Through July 14, 2024.*

▶ [hrc.utexas.edu](#)

THE AWAKE VOLCANOES: *Sandra Vásquez de la Horra*

Denver Art Museum / Denver, Colorado

Growing up during the repression of the Pinochet regime in Chile, Sandra Vásquez de la Horra nurtured a vividly imagined world populated with fantastic creatures. Her practice has continued to evolve since she moved to Germany in the 1990s, inspired by sources like strange monsters on medieval maps and the mythology of the Americas. *The Awake Volcanoes* is her first American museum solo show, focusing on her drawings where bodies and landscapes appear as if they have emerged from haunted dreams. *Through July 21, 2024.*

▶ [denverartmuseum.org](#)

HUONG NGÔ: *Ungrafting*

Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center at Colorado College / Colorado Springs, Colorado

Huong Ngô frequently uses her art to illuminate how the history of colonialism shapes the present, with this exhibition concentrating on trees and tree grafts that were planted by the French in Vietnam. Drawing on archival resources like early twentieth-century

photographs and a 1919 herbarium, she investigates this botanical legacy as another form of control, with the grafting of trees together further representing the violence of colonialism, its scars visible long after life continues to grow. *Through July 27, 2024.* ▶ [fac.coloradocollege.edu](#)

SURREALISM AND US: *Caribbean and African Diasporic Artists since 1940* ◀

Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth / Fort Worth, Texas

André Breton published his first *Surrealist Manifesto* in 1924, a watershed moment for the artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that would develop through World War II. A century later, *Surrealism and Us* is examining how artists of the African diaspora have used dreamlike and fantastic imagery in their work since the 1940s. Although surrealism is regularly considered in relation to European art, the show sheds light on its relationship to Afrofuturism and fresh takes on modernism by Black artists in the Caribbean and the United States. *Through July 28, 2024.* ▶ [themodern.org](#)

CALDER: *In Motion*

Seattle Art Museum / Seattle, Washington

Showcasing the Shirley Family Calder Collection that was gifted to the Seattle Art Museum in the spring of 2023, this exhibition features more than fifty of Alexander Calder’s sculptures, prints, paintings, and kinetic mobiles that cover the breadth of the artist’s practice from the 1920s until his death in 1976. It kicks off a planned multi-year celebration of Calder and his artistic impact that will include workshops, performances, and more

HAPPENINGS

NEW AND NOW IN ART & PERFORMANCE | BY ALLISON C. MEIER



programming, offering insight into how he was captivated by movement and endlessly played with balance and motion. *Through August 4, 2024.* ▶ [seattleartmuseum.org](#)

DELCEY MORELOS: *Interwoven*

Pulitzer Arts Foundation / St. Louis, Missouri

Colombian artist Delcy Morelos has described herself as a sorceress who channels the beauty and power of the Earth into her art, which most strikingly includes large-scale immersive environments shaped from natural materials like soil and clay. After presenting a labyrinthine installation at the 2022 Venice Biennale and her first American solo show at Dia Art Foundation in New York in 2023, she debuts another monumental work in St. Louis as part of an exhibition that explores an innovative career that has also involved painting and sculpture. *Through August 4, 2024.* ▶ [pulitzerarts.org](#)

CHRISTINA RAMBERG: *A Retrospective* ▶

Art Institute of Chicago / Chicago, Illinois

Women’s bodies are bound, fragmented, and obscured in Christina Ramberg’s paintings, which she began exhibiting in the late 1960s. There is a sense of some external force constantly pushing them into frames and forms. Although these are her best-known works, this overdue major exhibition on the late Chicago-based artist—billed as the first

in three decades—has around 100 pieces, which also display her interest in textiles and abstraction. *Through August 11, 2024.* ▶ [artice.edu](#)

FIRELEI BÁEZ ▼

Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston / Boston, Massachusetts

From a mosaic tile mural in a New York subway station that bursts with tropical flora to a colossal installation at ICA Boston that draped a replica of Haitian palace ruins in indigo, Firelei Báez has emerged as one of the most ambitious and inventive contemporary artists, using lush painting and sculpture to engage with issues of borders, myth, and history. Now she returns to the ICA for a sprawling survey that delves into her influences, from her birth in the Dominican Republic to her upbringing in Florida, and all the vibrant complexities of a diaspora. *Through September 2, 2024.* ▶ [icaboston.org](#)

ZILIA SÁNCHEZ: *Topologías / Topologies*

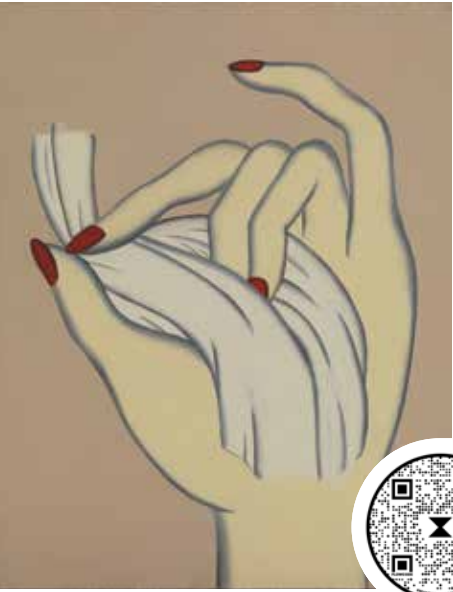
Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami / Miami, Florida

In her late 90s, Zilia Sánchez is finally getting museum recognition for her undulating canvases with biomorphic topographies evoking the female body and the landscape of the moon. This survey of around 30 works dating between 1950 and 1996 chronicles how the artist expanded her practice, from using abstraction to resist conformity in Cuba to being inspired by the avant-garde community of 1960s New York. Now based in Puerto Rico, she is still experimenting with her distinctive art, which rises and falls from the walls like waves. *Through October 13, 2024.* ▶ [icamiami.org](#)

THE IMPRESSIONIST REVOLUTION FROM MONET TO MATISSE

Dallas Museum of Art / Dallas, Texas

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Impressionism, commemorating when, in





BY PABLO BARRERA

JEFFREY GIBSON AT THE VENICE BIENNALE



CARA ROMERO

LA BIENNALE DI Venezia began in 1895 and is one of the most prestigious contemporary art events in the world, introducing thousands of global visitors to exciting new work. This year, a long overdue and powerful critique on what the art world has held to be culturally important will mark the United States Pavilion: an Indigenous artist.

Artist **Jeffrey Gibson** (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians/Cherokee descent)—with his bold, colorful, geometric, and inclusive installations—is triumphantly representing the United States at this year’s Venice Biennale. The US Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the government body responsible for organizing the US Pavilion alongside Oregon’s Portland Art Museum and New Mexico’s SITE Santa Fe, confirms Gibson as the first Indigenous artist to have a solo exhibition in the United States Pavilion since its construction in 1930.

Adding to the momentous firsts, **Kathleen Ash-Milby** (Navajo Nation), curator of Native American

Art, Portland Art Museum and co-commissioner of Gibson’s work, is the first Native American co-curator at the prestigious international arts event. The occasion underscores to the global art world what supporters of Indigenous art already knew: Native American artwork has been a vital part of the greater context of modern, postwar, Pop, and contemporary art.

Indigenous artists have shown more broadly in Venice over the years, including the 2007 public art installations of **Edgar Heap of Birds** (Cheyenne and Arapaho Nation) and the 2015 and 2017 special exhibitions of **Keli Mashburn** (Osage Nation) and **Marcella Ernest** (Ojibwe), respectively.

However, the last time Indigenous artists had a presence at the biennale’s US Pavilion was as part of a 1932 group exhibition featuring ten Native American artists and organized by painter John Sloan.

The 2024 Venice Biennale provides audiences with their first opportunity to experience Gibson’s work outside the United States. Celebrated for his multi-media practice



An installation view of *the space in which to place me* at the US Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. From left to right: *The Enforcer* (2024), *WE WANT TO BE FREE* (2024), and the mural: *WE ARE MADE BY HISTORY* (2024).

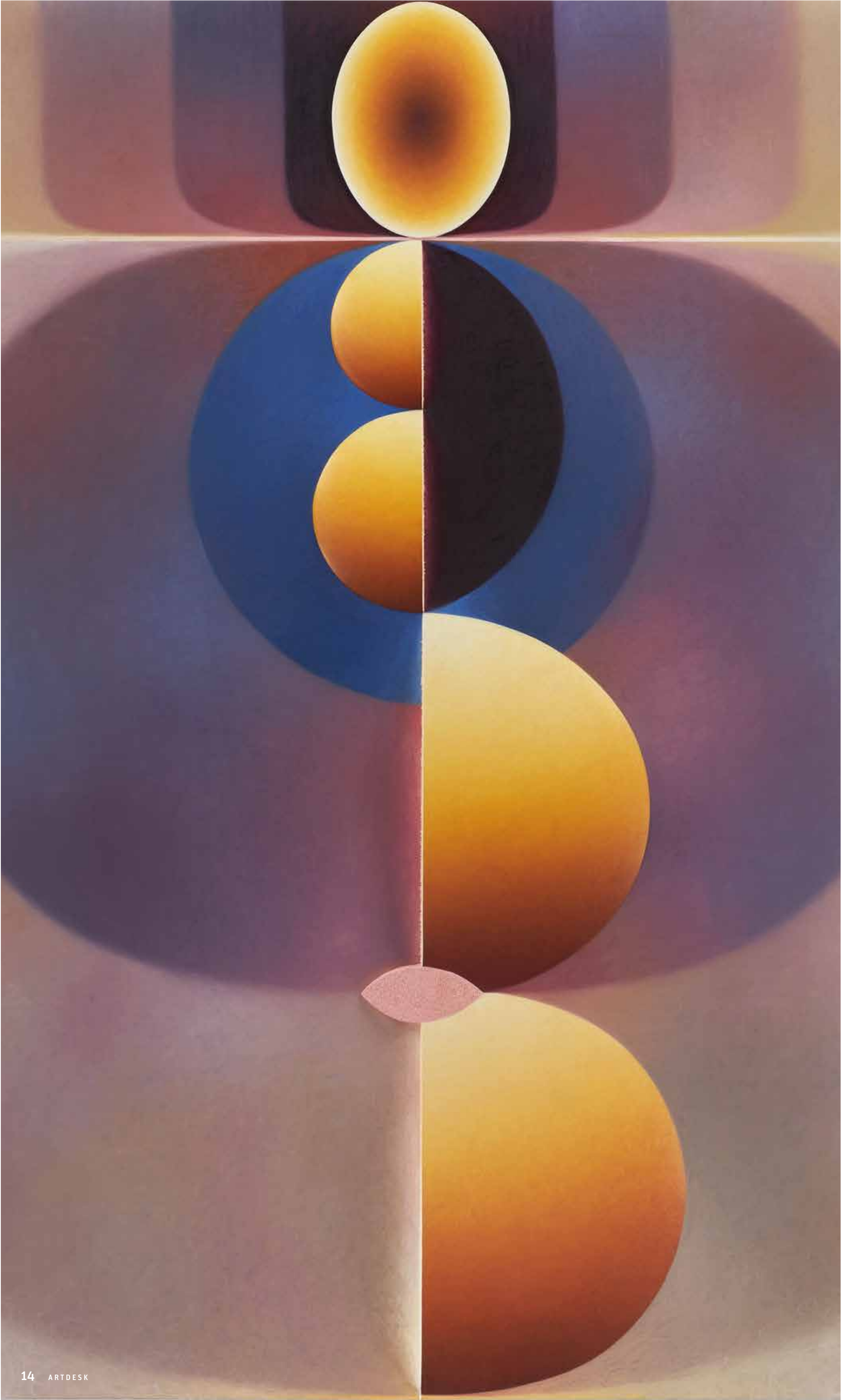
combining American, Indigenous, and LGBTQ histories, Gibson’s work uses vibrant color, complex patterns, and text to create dynamic commentaries on individual and collective identities. On view through November 24, 2024, *Jeffrey Gibson: the space in which to place me* will activate the US Pavilion with a series of new, recent, and site-specific works. The title references Oglala Lakota poet **Layli Long Soldier**’s poem *He Sápa*, adding nuance to how we give and share space.

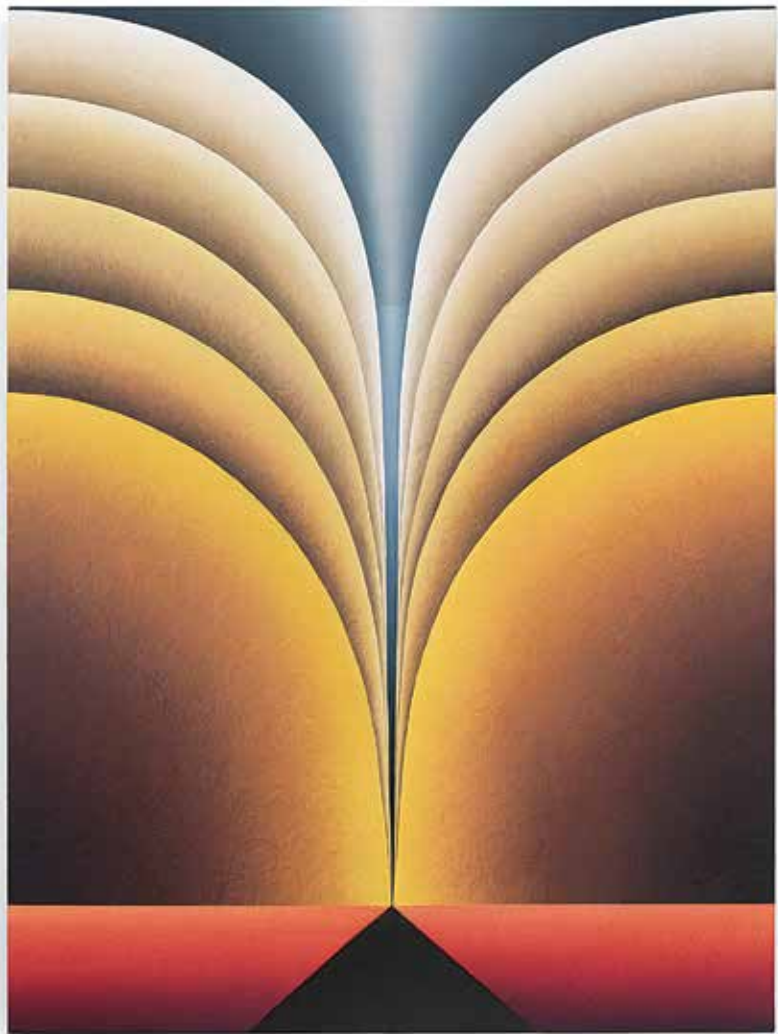
The Central Pavilion also debuts Native American artists like **Kay WalkingStick** (Cherokee Nation), further acknowledging Indigenous art as a living culture that continuously impacts our constantly evolving present with its intergenerational visual language.

The sixtieth Venice Biennale, curated by Brazilian **Adriano Pedrosa** of the São Paulo Museum of Art, is titled *Stranieri Ovunque – Foreigners Everywhere*, a celebratory theme with 331 artists that embraces “outsiders,” including the “Indigenous artist, frequently treated as a foreigner in his or her own land.”



OPPOSITE PAGE: From left, **Louis Grachos**, executive director of SITE Santa Fe and US Pavilion commissioner; artist **Jeffrey Gibson**; **Kathleen Ash-Milby**, curator of Native American Art at the Portland Art Museum, US Pavilion commissioner and co-curator; and independent curator and US Pavilion co-curator and commissioner, **Abigail Winograd**. Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center in Oklahoma City exhibited Gibson’s work in a solo exhibition titled *Speak to Me* in 2017. **ABOVE LEFT:** The forecourt sculpture: *the space in which to place me* (2024) **ABOVE RIGHT:** Birds from left to right: *we are the witnesses* (2024); *if there is no struggle there is no progress* (2024), wall work: *BIRDS FLYING HIGH YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL* (2024). Installation photography by Timothy Schenck.





▲ CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:
Overview Effect (2023); *Yellow Mountains* (2016); *Emerald Mountain* (2013); *Split Orbs in teal and mauve* (2021)

LOIE HOLLOWELL

Bodily Light

by Allison C. Meier

OLD-SCHOOL MODERNISM MEETS the moment in the work of mid-career artist **Loie Hollowell**. The curving forms and luminous colors of the native Californian evoke the abstraction of artists who emerged in the twentieth century, whether **Agnes Pelton**’s energy-imbuéd biomorphic compositions or **Hilma af Klint**’s geometric interpretations of the astral plane. Yet the New York City-based artist, who has experienced a steady, mid-career rise to international acclaim over the past decade, approaches this tradition of American modernism with a contemporary perspective.

Born in 1983 in Woodland, California, Hollowell received her BFA at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and her MFA in painting at Virginia Commonwealth University. The work on view in her first museum survey, *Space Between, A Survey of Ten Years*, turns women’s bodies into divine entities, including through the

use of life casts of pregnant breasts and bellies.

“With the fall of Roe v. Wade and the persistent attack on women’s bodily autonomy, Hollowell’s work is necessary and urgent because it is so personal and generous, bringing communities of women together to commemorate their agency and strength,” says curator **Amy Smith-Stewart**.

The exhibition explores how Hollowell’s practice has evolved in response to her own experiences with motherhood and reproductive freedom, featuring paintings, works on paper, and pieces from her personal archive. Early works provocatively use elements of the human body based on Hollowell and her husband as abstract landscapes; later pieces evoke how she engaged with her body before and after childbirth by incorporating sculpted elements.

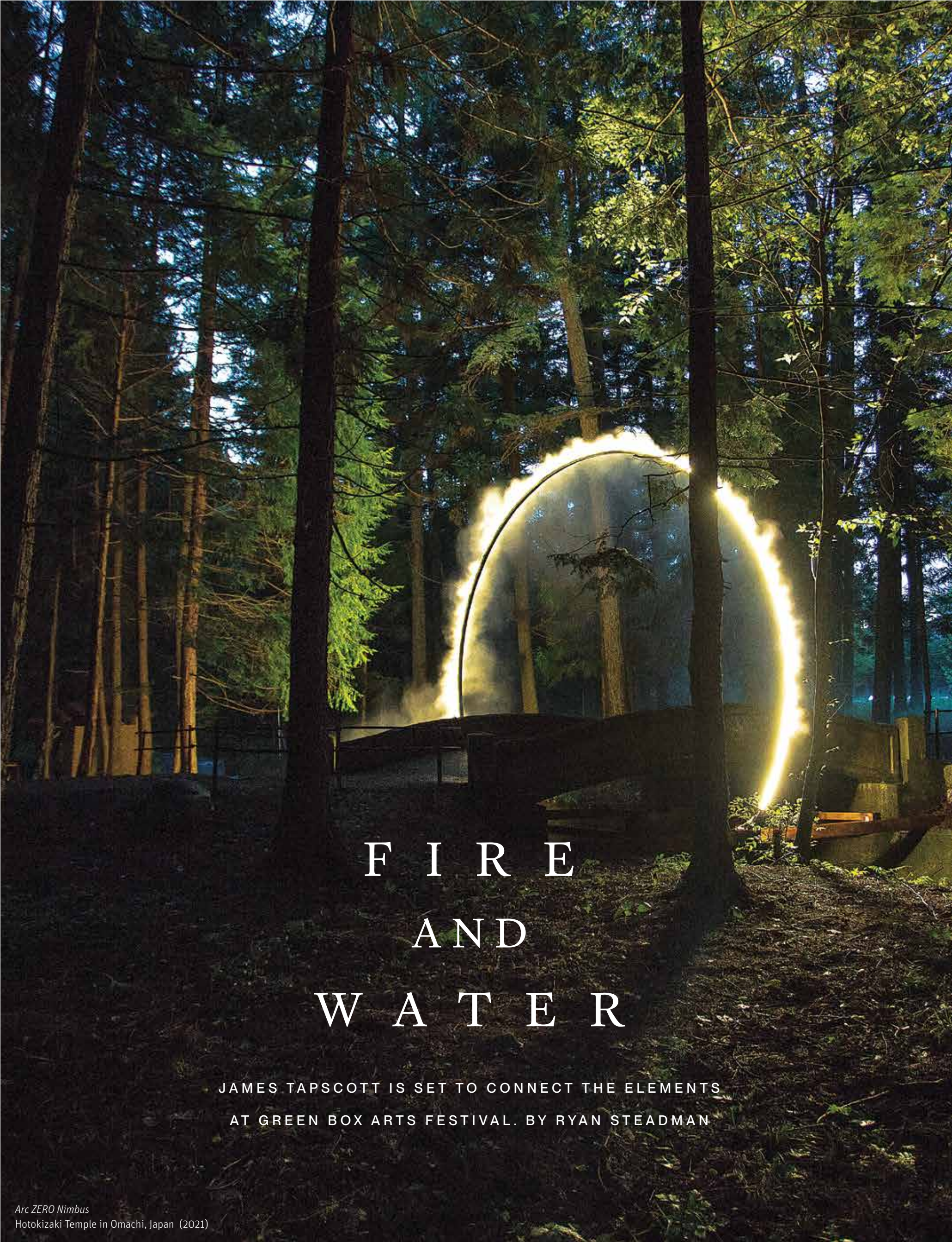
“When I was pregnant with my first child, my husband and I took a lifecast of my third-trimester belly just as a document, not with the

intention of incorporating the form into my work,” Hollowell says. When she had her second child at home during the pandemic, she found the experience so “visceral and transformative” that she decided to create a mold from this cast to make her pregnant body part of her paintings.

Although Hollowell has experimented with a diversity of media, from subtle pastels to monumental paintings on high-density foam, there is an ongoing consideration of how time changes and shapes a body and how this transformation lends itself to the transcendent.

“I’ve found that bringing pieces of the physical body into my work—so literally—has allowed me to more deeply investigate the intensity of pregnancy, birth, and postpartum.” ❖

Space Between, A Survey of Ten Years will be on view at The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut, through August 11, 2024.



FIRE AND WATER

JAMES TAPSCOTT IS SET TO CONNECT THE ELEMENTS
AT GREEN BOX ARTS FESTIVAL. BY RYAN STEADMAN

Arc ZERO Nimbus
Hotokizaki Temple in Omachi, Japan (2021)

LESS IS MORE in the case of artist James Tapscott, who uses simple materials to create breathtaking portals of glowing mist. Since 2007, the Perth-born Australian has mastered the art of integrating natural or man-made phenomena into a landscape to create highly polished yet ephemeral artworks. Now, one of his artworks—an ongoing site-responsive project he began in 2009 called *Arc ZERO*—will be installed in the mountain valley of Green Mountain Falls, Colorado, for the 2024 iteration of the Green Box Arts Festival.

“I try to create bodily experiences that stimulate all senses,” says Tapscott, who uses an architectural sensibility to invent his artworks.

While in Colorado for a public art conference in 2022, the artist happened to travel through the town of Green Mountain Falls, where he met executive director of the Green Box Arts Festival, Scott Levy. Levy was intrigued by Tapscott’s work and jumped at the chance to bring *Arc ZERO* to the annual arts event.

“The juxtaposition of art in nature is one of the key elements of Green Box’s mission,” says Levy, “and James Tapscott’s work fits this idea beautifully.”

Green Box—which has a collection of permanent works across town (including a new James Turrell skyspace)—also has a sixteen-year history of showing temporal, site-specific artworks like Tapscott’s. His upcoming piece fits nicely into a

timeline of artists, which includes Jason Hackenwerth, Janet Echelman, Daily tous les jours, and Patrick Dougherty.

Tapscott’s *Arc ZERO*, which the artist calls his “man-made attempt at a perfect curved form,” has been mounted several times in various global locations, from an old Buddhist temple in Japan to the Hans Christian Anderson Museum in Denmark. The piece evolves uniquely within each site.

“The main materials for the *Arc ZERO* work are water and light,” Tapscott says. “I’ve been working with them for around fifteen years, and I still learn something new each time. They are so chaotic but have such a beautiful synergy.”

The results of his experiments speak for themselves,



Arc ZERO Eclipse
Lake Tyrrell in Victoria, Australia (2021)



Arc ZERO Nimbus
Odense, Denmark (2021)

and audiences cannot seem to get enough of his mesmerizing artworks.

“James is that unusual artist who harnesses the power of ephemeral elements to create impactful but fleeting images,” says Toni Sikes, CEO of CODAworx, a company that helps artists bring large-scale, commissioned artworks to fruition. “His artwork is haunting and beautiful at the same time.”

Tapscott worked with top-notch engineers in Japan while developing the first version of *Arc ZERO* and, over the years, has learned how his chosen materials behave across different environments. Mirror, steel, pumps, filters, and rigging combine for an evolving

work completely dependent on the site itself.

The 2024 Green Box Arts Festival will offer a new outlet for Tapscott, who says he’s excited to see *Arc ZERO* engage with the Green Mountain Falls and Rocky Mountain ecosystem.

“The Green Box site seems to have a nice balance of infrastructure and natural beauty,” he says. “The bridge at the gazebo offers a perfect opportunity for people to engage with the work physically, connecting our bodies back to nature and the experience of water.” ✕

Arc ZERO in Green Mountain Falls will debut at the Green Box Arts Festival on July 1, 2024.



Rendering of the *Arc ZERO* in Green Mountain Falls

Young At Art

By Jeanne Parkhurst | Photography by Cassandra Watson



WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL ARTS education curriculum in Oklahoma at risk, a trusted place for young and future artists becomes even more important. In addition to its Studio School, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center’s Teen Arts Council provides exactly that—a supportive, artistic community for young people to connect with like-minded peers and inspiring adults. This much-needed type of environment allows teens to explore their experiences and creatively problem solve. *Routines & Rituals* is the first exhibition of artwork from this group.

The accessible intimacy of this show is felt the moment one enters the space. The artworks from twelve artists hang on the walls, but many defy the parameters of traditional two-dimensional pieces. Some works have sculptural or collage-like elements overflowing from the canvases on which they originate, while others use found materials such as braided foil, pieces of broken mirror, Scrabble tiles, fake moss, yarn, and even an old math homework sheet. These personal touches, like one’s own unique handwriting, can be felt.

The Teen Arts Council is a diverse group of teens with varied backgrounds and experiences who are interested in exploring contemporary art, ideas, and the creative process through collaboration and engagement with artists, curators, educators, community partners, and the public. During their academic year on the council, they are compensated for their time (and well-fed with plenty of snacks at bimonthly meetings), and they also give advice to the art center’s education department on how to strengthen teen engagement within the organization.

“The artists did a deep dive into the Art21 video series,” says **Kau’i Kanahele**, senior coordinator of teen and youth programs at Oklahoma Contemporary, of the inaugural exhibition. “Everybody split off into groups to explore different sections. It seemed the artists related the

most to ideas surrounding patterns and routines, so that’s what the group decided to move forward with.”

The artworks are anything but banal. The commonplace is made artful with four paintings in a series of watercolors called *Microscopic Mornings* by Camille Garret. *Perfume*, *Lipstick*, *Toothpaste*, and *Coffee* represent the aspects of one’s own morning routine as though they are under a microscope in translucent colors and beautiful marbled forms.

The internal and external pressures of being an adolescent are also explored through specific life experiences, and these young artists offer their audience universal truths. Artist **Leila Glover**’s painting, *Late*, conveys the stress of time. **Eva Knight-James**’ piece, *Constant Reminders & Repetition*, shows never-ending to-do lists with responsibilities at school while tending to one’s own mental health.

Arielle Hines-Lunn says about her work, *What Are You Mixed With?*, “There are many techniques I had never tried before. It pushed me to expand my boundaries, go through trial-and-error, and it forced me to trust my instincts.” When asked about her first year on the Teen Arts Council, Hines-Lunn says, “I have become more comfortable connecting with other artists. Instead of comparing myself to them, I try to discover new things.”

As young artists like these are empowered to lead the exhibition process—from conception to installation—overall confidence in decision-making and social wellbeing take root with young creators, an essential element of contentment and life skills development. The Teen Arts Council is a dynamic and evolving organization, welcoming new members and helping to fulfill the mission of Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center: to encourage artistic expression in all its forms through education, exhibitions, and performance. ❌



Some of the student artists with artworks who participated in *Routines & Rituals* (from top row): **Matt Garrett**, *Arita Vert* (2023); **Maura Hutchison**, *Virgo Mater* (2023); **Ja’Nay Childress**, *Connection* (2023); **Donna Antonelli**, *Freedom?* (2023); **Monika Nolan**, *Apollo* (2023); **Arielle Hines-Lunn**, *What Are You Mixed With?* (2023); **Darcy Spivey**, *Metamorphic Apotheosis* (2023); **Camille Garrett**, *Microscopic Morning* (2023)



ArtSociety

Winter Swans

Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center was the beneficiary of this year's **Winter Ball** at the Oklahoma City Golf and Country Club on January 22, 2024. The fundraiser was helmed by committee chair **Susan McPherson** and co-chair **Leigh Bentley**, featuring music by **The Hunter Sullivan Band**. Founded in 1957, the biennial event was originally held for the benefit of the Oklahoma City Symphony and beginning in 1978 subsequent events supported Allied Arts Foundation. The Winter Ball beneficiary is determined by a committee vote two years in advance. ▶ **Oklahoma City**



TOP ROW: First Lady **Cathy** and Governor **Frank Keating**; **Jake** and **Callie Merritt**, and **Katty** and **Chris Gasbarra**; **Boone** and **Lara Ellis**; **Clint** and **Susan Lewis**. MIDDLE ROW: **Lindsay Graham**, **Aimee Harlow**, and **Katie Blaik James**; **Amy** and **Parker Douglass**; **Henry** and **Laura Hood**, and **Susan** and **Mike Turpen**; LAST ROW: Winter Ball committee chair **Susan McPherson** and co-chair **Leigh Bentley**; and the members of the Winter Ball committee.



Belongings

HOME1947: Sharmeen Obaid Chinoy opened at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center with a reception in the Eleanor Kirkpatrick Main Gallery on February 22, 2024. The opening included a conversation with **Noor Ahmed** and **Sameer Khan**, moderated by **Dr. Nyla Ali Khan**. Obaid Chinoy will direct the new Star Wars film, to be released in 2026. On display through July 22, 2024, her exhibition explores stories of the millions displaced in 1947 by the Indo-Pakistani War through films, virtual reality, photographs, oral histories, objects and archival documents, and sound. Originally commissioned for the Manchester International Festival in 2017, *HOME1947* has been described by *The Guardian* as “an uncompromising look at lives wrecked by the Partition [of India].” ▶ **Oklahoma City**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Using virtual reality technology, visitors to Obaid Chinoy’s *Home1974* can immerse themselves in an abandoned home in Pakistan; **Mat Miller** and **Tony Thunder**; **Noor Ahmed**, general manager for the Citizens Archive of Pakistan and **Sameer Khan**, *HOME1947* producer, during their discussion with author and professor, **Dr. Nyla Ali Khan**.



Local Legend

In January 11, 2024, Oklahoma filmmaker **Sterlin Harjo** was honored with the ArtNow 2023 Focus Award. The event included a conversation with Harjo moderated by guest curator **Lindsay Aveilhé** at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center. The award was presented in tandem with the biennial *ArtNow* exhibition of works by Oklahoma-connected artists, at the nonprofit arts center in downtown Oklahoma City. In addition to his groundbreaking Hulu series *Reservation Dogs*, Harjo’s Oklahoma-centered filmography includes documentary and narrative features like *This May Be the Last Time* (2014), *Mekko* (2015), and *Love and Fury* (2020), among others. ▶ **Oklahoma City**



On March 22, 2024, the Oklahoma City arts community convened at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center to celebrate this year's Founders Day 2024 honorees. **Robert and Sody Clements, Jabee Williams, Rand and Jeanette Elliott, and Laura Warriner** (above left) were all honored for their contributions to the arts center. Attendees included Sam Wargin Grimaldo (above), Melissa Scaramucci and Kim Bruno (above left), Kim and Suzette Hatfield (far left), and Kortlahn Ballard (left). ▶ **Oklahoma City**

A December to Remember

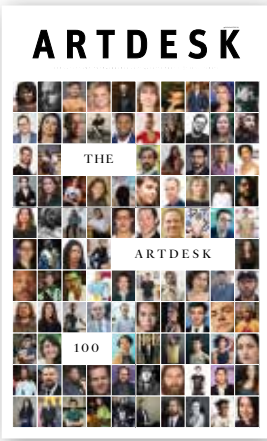
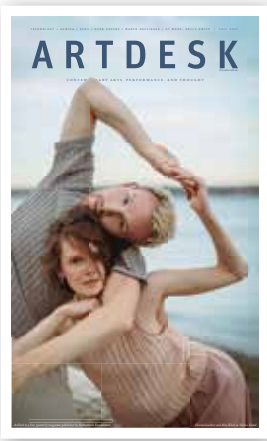
As it often is, December was a time to celebrate and gather. On December 6, 2023, *ArtDesk* hosted a celebratory dinner at The Lennox Hotel in Miami, Florida, for the magazine's tenth anniversary. Joining in on the festivities, Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center and Green Box Arts hosted donors and friends to take in Art Week Miami. All groups convened for dinner at Gianni's at the former Versace Mansion (below, right) on December 7, 2023. On December 15, Green Box Arts hosted their annual end-of-year party with more than 100 Green Box supporters and artists gathered in the beautiful Trianon Building on the campus of the Colorado Springs School (below, left).



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F A R E W E L L

Betty Price (1931–2023)



It’s not an exaggeration to say that **Betty Durham Price**, of Del City, Oklahoma, was the nation’s premier public-art advocate during her twenty-four years as executive director of the Oklahoma Arts Council. Always immaculately coiffed and ruling the Oklahoma State Capitol with elegance and a smile from 1983 to 2007, the lifelong Democrat was respected for her ability to recruit art advocates of all ages and from all walks of life. Moreover, she worked harmoniously with seven governors and the leaders of both political parties with a singular focus—to bring “beauty and arts and music,” in the words of her daughter, to Oklahoma communities everywhere.

Betty Price’s ceaseless efforts turned the Oklahoma State Capitol complex into one of the most respected statehouses in the country for art, a haven for Native American artists like Allan Houser, Mike Larsen, and Enoch Kelly Haney to showcase important commissions that eventually led the way for permanent galleries, rotating exhibitions, and a star-studded permanent collection. Mrs. Price, raised in Muskogee and a graduate of Northeastern Oklahoma State University, deeply embraced Oklahoma’s Indigenous art history and nurtured the rapport between Oklahoma collectors and artists and the Santa Fe and Taos art markets. Among her most important legacies are the First Americans Museum, Red Earth, the Oklahoma Arts Institute, and the Oklahoma Art in Public Places Act of 2004, “which requires that 1.5 percent of eligible state capitol improvement budgets be invested in public art.” Married to Norris Price for sixty-four years, the couple were parents to three children, two grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. She will remain an inspiration for generations of arts advocates to come.

Eldon Ames (1940–2024)



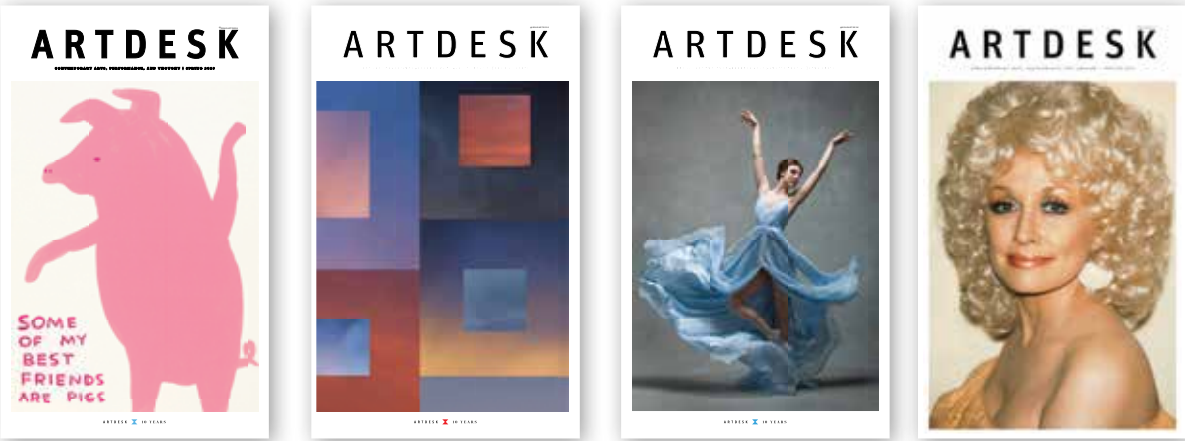
A high school art teacher who mentored generations of professional artists and Sunday painters, **Eldon Ames** was a distinguished arts educator with rural American roots. Born in Mooreland, Oklahoma, and raised on the family farm, he received his bachelor’s in art education in 1962 from Northern Oklahoma College and a master’s of art from the University of Northern Colorado. Mr. Ames taught at Enid High School in Enid, Oklahoma, for twenty-three years, was head of the Enid Public Schools Art Department curriculum for the city’s public schools, and served for decades on local community art boards. A prolific and talented artist in his own right, he was known for “leading with humility, and quiet, grounded knowledge and wisdom,” according to the Enid Arts Council. His encouraging nature and artistic impact will live on through the thousands of students he influenced and the town’s public art environment.

By Louisa McCune



Whitney Biennial 2024: Even Better Than the Real Thing is on view through August 11, 2024. ▶ whitney.org

INSIDE FRONT COVERS: The image for the inside covers is a still from the video installation *Pahá kin lená wakhán* (*These hills are sacred*, 2017) by the artist **Kite**. The work debuted at the eighty-first edition of the *Whitney Biennial*, the longest-running survey of contemporary art in the United States. A member of Oglala Lakota tribe, Kite performed her work, *Thanmáhel*, at Oklahoma Contemporary Arts Center in 2023 as part of *ArtNow: The Soul Is a Wanderer*.



Contributors



PABLO BARRERA is an adjunct curator for Oklahoma Contemporary. He works to amplify the invaluable role Indigenous artistic perspectives contribute toward globalizing the arts. Barrera holds master’s degrees from Yale University and Harvard University and is a Fulbright scholar. He has independently curated shows in London, Seoul, and New York.



RICK BASS is the author of more than thirty books, winner of numerous book awards for fiction, and a recipient of a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship. He has served as contributing editor to *Tricycle: The Buddhist Review*, *Big Sky Journal*, *Amicus Journal*, *Outside*, *Field & Stream*, and many other publications. He also contributed to *Love Can Be: A Literary Collection About Our Animals* (Kirkpatrick Foundation, 2018).



JEANNE PARKHURST is a visual art teacher at Classen School of Advanced Studies in Oklahoma City. She received a graduate degree in museum and childhood education from Bank Street College of Education. Parkhurst has worked with the Oklahoma City Arts Council, the Chinati Foundation, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, and the Dia Foundation.

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Congratulations!

Ford and Katelyn Branan (February 3, 2024)

Tyler and Olivia Kirkpatrick (March 23, 2024)

on their recent marriages.

Alison Demorotski on the birth of her son, Jack.

ON THE COVER: LAURA WHEELER WARING, *Girl in a Pink Dress* (ca. 1927) © The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photograph by Juan Trujillo. The painting is from *The Harlem Renaissance and Transatlantic Modernism* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The exhibition will be on view through July 28, 2024.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

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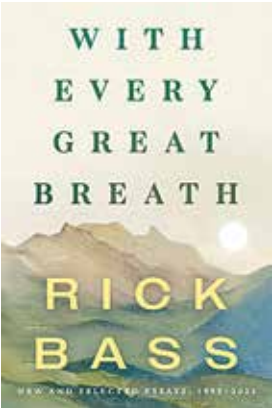
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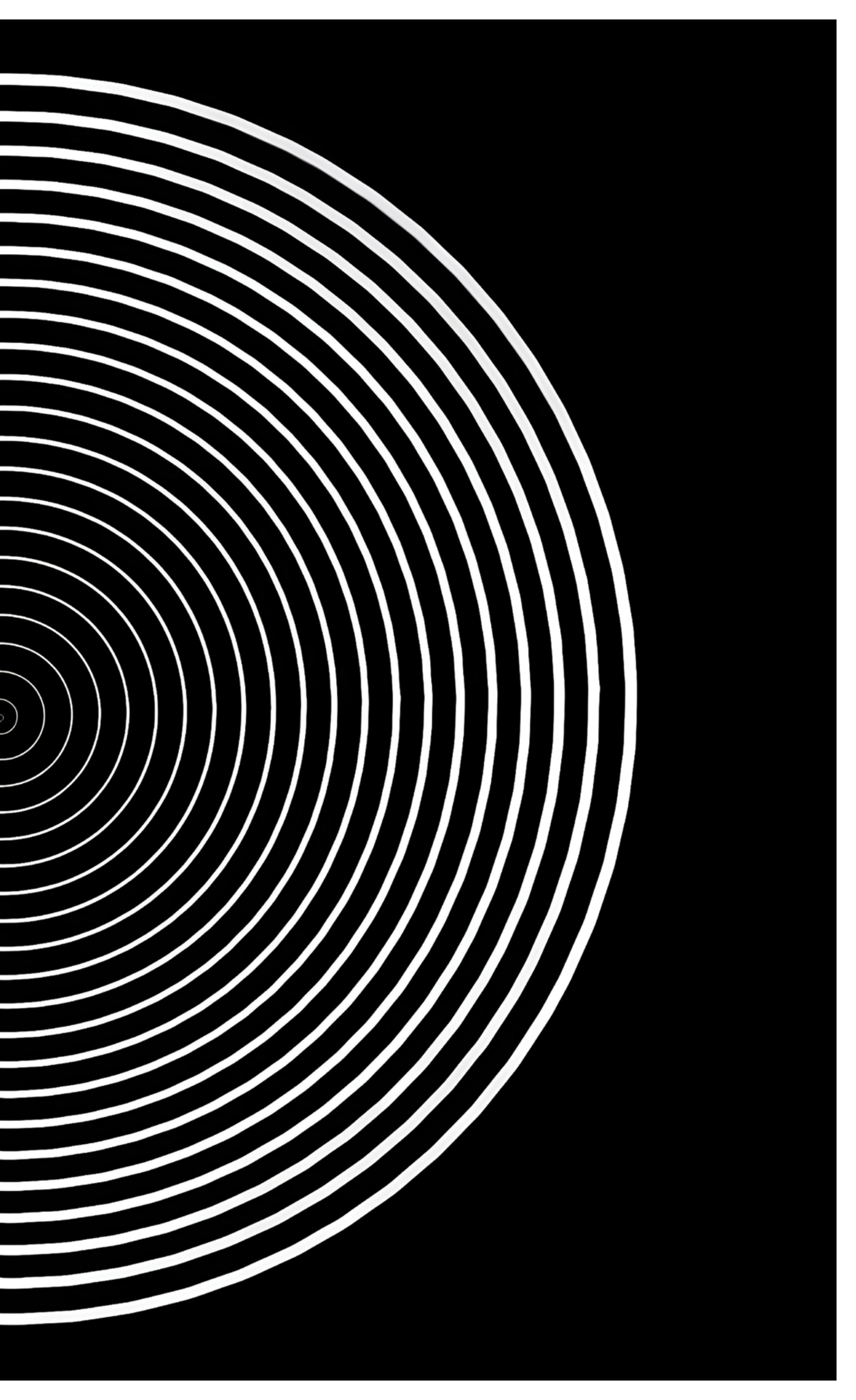
ARTDESK 23

IN NATURE

THIS NEW DESK, in a cabin we restored, was built for me by my partner Carter, who lives out on the prairie, while my home in the Yaak is deep forest. The desk replicates my work desk in the Yaak. I write by hand, so that muscle memory—cant of wrist and elbow, familiar position of forearm and shoulder, everything—is a comfort in entering the dream each day. —RICK BASS



Rick Bass’s new book, *With Every Great Breath* (2024) “offers a portrait of our planet that is always alert to its wonders.” The author was born and raised in Texas and has lived in Montana’s Yaak Valley for almost forty years.



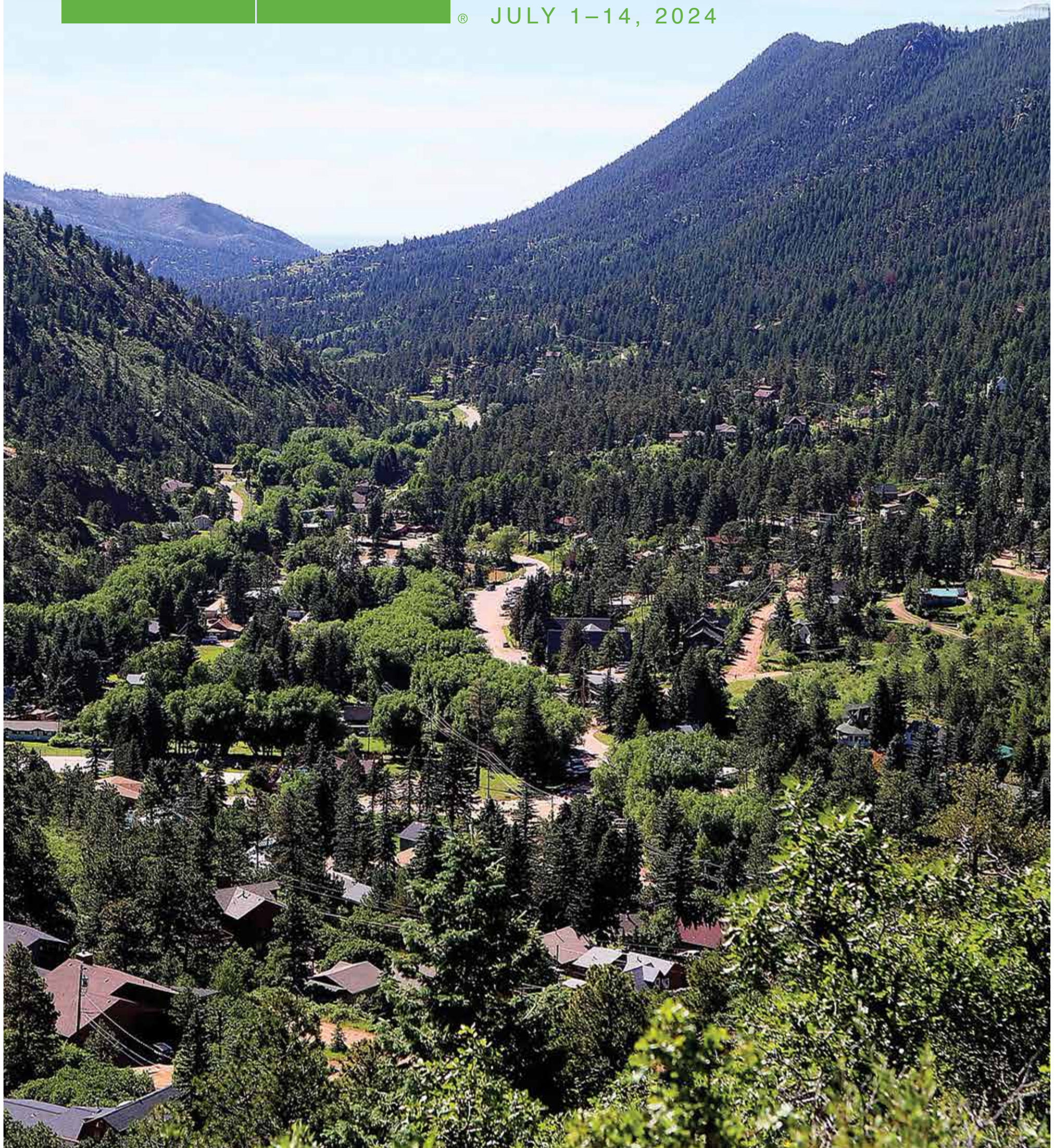
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