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## **Seasonal Press Release – Summer/Fall 2022**

***Romare Bearden: Abstraction***

June 25–September 18, 2022

***Jeremy Shaw: Liminals***

June 25–October 9, 2022

***Recent Acquisitions: Georgina Reskala***

August 3–December 31, 2022

***Srijon Chowdhury: Same Old Song***

October 8, 2022–January 15, 2023

***THE THIRD, MEANING:***

***ESTAR(SER) Installs the Frye Collection***

October 15, 2022–October 15, 2023

***Boren Banner Series: Molly Jae Vaughan***

October 22, 2022–April 16, 2023

***Door to the Atmosphere***

October 29, 2022–January 22, 2023

Please note that the following information is subject to change. Please confirm all dates, titles, and other details with the Frye Art Museum Communications Department prior to publication.



### **Romare Bearden: Abstraction**

June 25–September 18, 2022

Comprising approximately 55 works by the ground-breaking African American artist, *Romare Bearden: Abstraction* presents the first in-depth examination of Bearden's engagement with abstraction. Through paintings, collages, watercolors and photostats ranging from the 1940s to the late 1960s, the exhibition explores and contextualizes Bearden's important, but relatively unknown, body of abstract work alongside his early figural abstractions and more well-known figurative collages. Central to the exhibition are a group of Bearden's rarely exhibited stain paintings created between 1952–1963 that reveal a masterfully distinctive experimentation with color and form unlike anything the artist had created before. Organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, SUNY, the exhibition reveals how this important yet underrecognized period in Bearden's career laid the framework for the celebrated figurative collages that the artist began producing in 1964.

According to the exhibition curator, Dr. Tracy Fitzpatrick, "Prior to this exhibition, very little substantive scholarly attention had been paid to the body of work that directly precedes the works for which Bearden is best known. *Romare Bearden: Abstraction* corrects that omission by providing the first substantive and scholarly examination of this extraordinary non-representational, large-scale stain paintings and mixed media collages important body of work. The project contributes to the development of alternate storylines around the dominant narrative of post-war abstraction while at the same time revealing, for the first time, the roots of the body of work for which Bearden is best known."

## Romare Bearden and the Road to Abstraction

Romare Bearden was born in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1911. In 1914 his parents relocated the family to Harlem as part of the “Great Migration,” during which many southern-born African Americans fled north to escape the Jim Crow South. Bearden began his training in the 1930s, studying art alternately at New York University, Boston University, and at the Art Students League under the tutelage of George Grosz. This diversity of influences contributed to a rich artistic education, and by 1940, Bearden secured his first solo show in New York. Assembled chronologically and according to medium, this exhibition emphasizes the importance of Bearden’s abstract paintings and collages to the course of his formal development, including examples of the abstracted figural compositions from the mid-1940s and the mature collages for which he is widely regarded today.

Though initially rooted in the figurative tradition, Bearden progressively moved towards abstraction in the 1940s. A breakthrough came in 1945 when Bearden’s work was included in a group exhibition at the Maeght Gallery in Paris. Shown alongside works by William Baziotis, Adolph Gottlieb, and Robert Motherwell, Bearden was rightly associated with the leading contemporary artists of the American vanguard. Following the positive reception of an exhibition in Washington, DC, Bearden was offered representation by the influential New York gallerist and proponent of abstraction, Samuel M. Kootz. Works from this period illustrate both the artist’s affinity for abstracted forms as well as his remarkable facility with watercolor and ink.

Following the closure of the Kootz gallery in 1948 and a brief sojourn in Paris, Bearden began fully engaging with non-representational subjects in the 1950s. The abstract works from this period are striking for their exceptional quality, variety, and scale. Easel size watercolors and oil paintings such as *Blue Ridge* (ca. 1952) and *Mountains of the Moon* (1955) show Bearden’s singular interpretations of landscape through abstraction.

Though initially reluctant to work in oil, Bearden’s skill in the medium reached its apex in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when he was introduced to Chinese ink wash painting by a local bookseller. Inspired by this technique, Bearden began thinning oil paint with turpentine to achieve a more fluid facture, closer to the watercolor that he was most comfortable with. Applying thinned pigment to unsized canvas—what is now commonly referred to as stain painting—was a method employed by several other artists during this period, including Helen Frankenthaler, Morris Louis, and Kenneth Noland. Bearden’s work ranks among the best examples of this innovative application; realized in both luminous tones and somber hues, these paintings are exemplary of the artist’s remarkable sensitivity to color. Works such as *Green Torches Welcome New Ghosts* (1961) show Bearden enthusiastically brushing, pouring, and spraying diluted oil, while the curving lines of *Eastern Gate* (1961) reveal the inspiration of Chinese calligraphy.

Bearden continually reimagined his approach to artmaking. By mixing thinned oil pigment together with casein and then painting it on sized canvas or paper, he relied on the immiscibility of oil and water to create a marbled effect. *With Blue* (1962) and *Strange Land* (1959) epitomize the marbled patterns; these compositions are suggestive of natural substances, as though seeing the speckled and veined qualities of rocks and plants in magnified detail. Bearden combined oil and collage in another group of works he was producing at this time, which he began by cutting up his paintings and then collaging them onto painted boards. *River Mist* (1962) is a work of washed and splattered blues reminiscent of moving water, with areas of painted oranges and white stained canvas. The painted elements are cut, then fitted together and finally adhered to a brown painted board. Such works are clear precursors to the figurative collages produced after 1964.

Bearden premiered a new body of work in October 1964. Collectively titled “Projections”, these works represent yet another innovative development in the artist’s body of work. Perpetually intrigued by collage, Bearden began utilizing cut paper to form representational images rather than abstract arrangements. First created at small scale and then enlarged via photostatic reproduction, this process would eventually culminate in the large-scale figurative collages that Bearden created for the rest of his career.

Although his abstract work was well-received contemporaneously in galleries and by the press, Bearden chose to adopt figuration as his primary artistic mode after 1964. While several of the abstract compositions are included in public and private collections, many have remained in storage since they were first exhibited, while others have never been shown outside of this exhibition. *Romare Bearden: Abstraction* serves as a rare opportunity for public view of these important abstract works and an invitation to reassess the career of this seminal American artist.

The exhibition originated at the Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase College, SUNY, in 2017. The Frye is the final stop in a national tour that included the Gibbes Museum of Art, Charleston, SC (October 15, 2021–January 9, 2022) and the University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor (February 5–May 15, 2022).

## **PUBLICATION**

*Romare Bearden: Abstraction* is accompanied by a fully illustrated book that includes an introduction by Lowery Sims and in-depth essay by the exhibition’s curator, Dr. Tracy Fitzpatrick, as well as a chronology and bibliography.

## **ABOUT THE CURATOR**

**Tracy Fitzpatrick**, Ph.D. is Director of the Neuberger Museum of Art and Associate Professor of Art History at Purchase College, SUNY. She has written and taught widely on American art of the twentieth century. Her exhibitions include *When Modern Was Contemporary: The Roy R. Neuberger Collection* (2014); *American People, Black Light: Faith Ringgold’s Paintings of the 1960s* (2010); *Hannah Wilke: Gestures* (2008) and *Facing Abstraction: Refiguring the Body in the Twentieth Century* (2006).

## **ABOUT THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF ARTS**

The American Federation of Arts is the leader in traveling exhibitions internationally. A nonprofit organization founded in 1909, the AFA is dedicated to enriching the public’s experience and understanding of the visual arts through organizing and touring art exhibitions for presentation in museums around the world, publishing exhibition catalogues featuring important scholarly research, and developing educational programs.

## ABOUT THE NEUBERGER MUSEUM OF ART

The Neuberger Museum of Art opened on the campus of Purchase College, State University of New York, in 1974 with a core collection donated by Roy R. Neuberger, one of the greatest private collectors, philanthropists, and arts advocates of the twentieth century. Today, critically acclaimed exhibitions, tours, lectures, and interactive programs for patrons of all ages make the Neuberger a center of teaching and learning for all stages of life.

*Romare Bearden: Abstraction* is organized by the American Federation of Arts and the Neuberger Museum of Art of Purchase College, State University of New York. The exhibition is curated by Tracy Fitzpatrick, Director, Neuberger Museum of Art.



Major support for *Romare Bearden: Abstraction* is provided by Morgan Stanley.

## Morgan Stanley

The presentation at the Frye Art Museum is organized by Georgia Erger, Associate Curator. Generous support for the installation at the Frye is provided by the City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, the Frye Foundation, and Frye Members. Media sponsorship is provided by The Seattle Times.



## RELATED PROGRAMS

### **Romare Bearden (1911-1988) | Virtual Lecture with Rebecca Albani**

Thursday, June 9, 2022

11:00 am–12:30 pm

Informed by his early cartooning and social work, Bearden's (1911-1988) art explores ordinary African Americans in New York, Pittsburgh, and the rural South. Bearden is best known for his dense figurative collages, as seen and recontextualized in conversation with the artist's lesser-known abstractions in the [Romare Bearden: Abstraction](#) exhibition opening at the Frye in June.

### **Curator Tours: Romare Bearden**

Saturday, June 25, 1:30–2:30 pm

Saturday, July 30, 1:30–2:30 pm

Saturday, August 20, 1:30–2:30 pm

Join Frye Associate Curator Georgia Erger for a free, informal tour exploring the themes within *Romare Bearden: Abstraction*. Program and registration details will be shared on the Frye website in May 2022.

### **here:now Artwork Discussion**

*In partnership with Northwest African American Museum (NAAM)*

Wednesday, July 27, 1:00–2:00pm

Wednesday, August 23, 1:00–2:00 pm

A Creative Aging program presented in conjunction with the exhibition *Romare Bearden: Abstraction* at the Frye Art Museum. Join Teaching Artist Valencia Carroll for a virtual guided artwork discussion designed for older adults, including those living with dementia.

### **Experimenting Like Bearden | Educator Workshop**

Wednesday, August 10, 2022

10:30 am–1:30 pm

Educators are invited to a workshop inspired by the exhibition *Romare Bearden: Abstraction*. Associate Curator Georgia Erger will offer a tour of the exhibition, which is the first to fully explore the artist's significant body of abstract work created between 1952 and 1964. In addition, Seattle-based artist Barry Johnson will engage participants in a hands-on exercise to experiment with abstraction.

**Image:** Romare Bearden. *River Mist*, ca. 1962. Oil on unprimed linen, and oil, casein, and colored pencil on canvas, cut, torn, and mounted on painted board. 54 ¼ x 40 7/8 in. Romare Bearden Foundation, Courtesy of DC Moore Gallery, New York. © Romare Bearden Foundation / VAGA at Artists Rights Society (ARS), NY Courtesy American Federation of Arts



**Jeremy Shaw: *Liminals***

June 25–October 9, 2022

Born in Vancouver and now based in Berlin, Jeremy Shaw explores altered states and the cultural and scientific practices that attempt to capture transcendental experience. The artist draws on and often combines the strategies of documentary filmmaking, music video, conceptual art, and scientific research to create a space of ambiguity in which disparate belief systems and histories are thrown into interpretive limbo.

This exhibition—Shaw’s first in the United States in over ten years—brings together prismatic lens-refracted photographs from the artist’s ongoing series *Towards Universal Pattern Recognition* with the video *Liminals* (2017), part of his *Quantification Trilogy*. The *Trilogy* films purport to have been made at different moments in the future and, in ethnographic style, to explore life in marginalized societies following a technological advancement that has mapped all parameters of spiritual experience. This is known as “The Quantification.” In this future’s “reality,” humans are meant to feel a certainty of purpose and belonging in the world without traditional means like ritual and myth.

Staged as an episode from a documentary television series, *Liminals* is set three generations from the present but shot in a 1970s cinema vérité style, with narrator voice-over. The subject is a radical sect called “The Liminals,” who have discovered that the loss of capacity for faith poses an existential threat to the human species. They believe that by augmenting their brains with machine DNA and practicing abandoned disciplines like Kundalini yoga, whirling, and dance, they can access a space between the physical and virtual, where humanity can reach a new stage of evolution. The video achieves a cathartic audiovisual climax as the group succeeds, opening questions about what it means to be human in a technological future.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Jeremy Shaw** (Canadian; born 1977, North Vancouver, BC) has been the subject of solo exhibitions at Kumu Art Museum, Tallinn, Estonia (2021); Centre Pompidou, Paris (2020); Frankfurter Kunstverein, Germany (2020); Musee des beaux arts de Montreal, Canada (2018); Kunstverein, Hamburg, Germany (2018); Contemporary Art Gallery, Vancouver (2015); Schinkel Pavillon, Berlin (2013); and MoMA PS1, New York (2011); and featured in major international surveys such as the 57th Venice Biennale (2017) and Manifesta 11, Zurich (2016). Shaw's work is held in public collections worldwide including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Tate Modern, London; and the National Gallery of Canada.

*Jeremy Shaw: Liminals* is organized by Amanda Donnan, Chief Curator. Generous support is provided by ArtsFund, the Frye Foundation, and Frye Members. Media sponsorship is provided by Encore Media Group.

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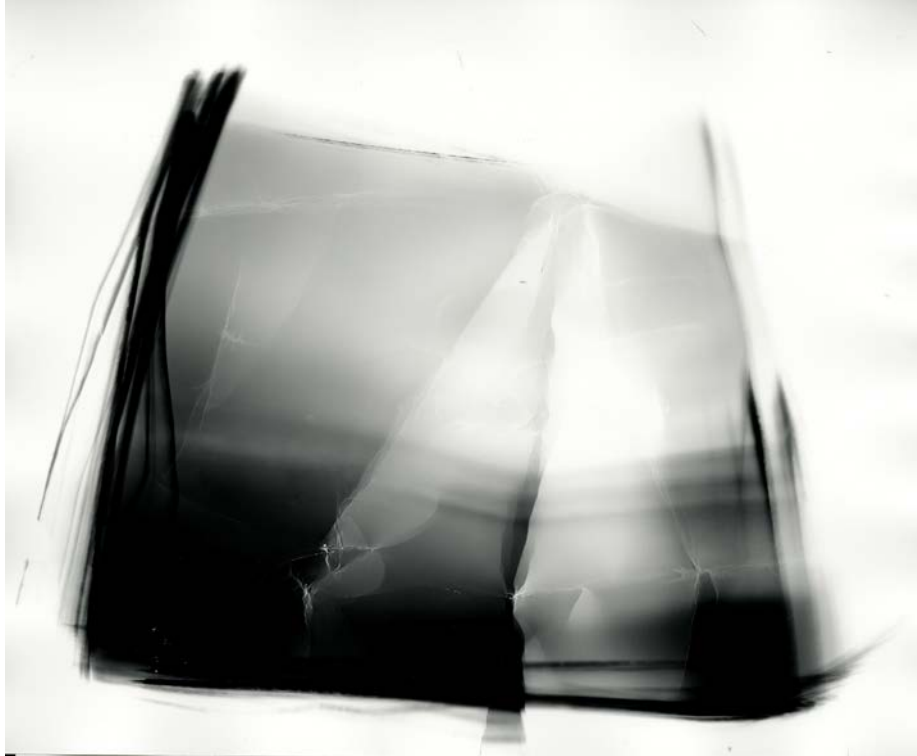


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**Image:** Jeremy Shaw. *Liminals* (still) 2017. HD video installation with 5.1 sound (19:42 min.).  
Courtesy of Jeremy Shaw and KÖNIG GALERIE Berlin, London, Seoul





**Recent Acquisitions: Georgina Reskala**

August 3–December 31, 2022

Georgina Reskala (born 1967, Mexico City; lives and works in Santa Monica) creates abstracted landscapes that explore the uncertainty of memory by combining mechanical and manual photographic techniques. In her *Fragments* series, which includes *Untitled #041220*, Reskala engages in a repetitive process of photographing and rephotographing, folding and creasing the print between each exposure in the darkroom. The original images—conventional seascapes and landscapes—are rendered nearly unrecognizable, redefined by their crushed dimensionality and unsettling disintegration.

Reskala troubles our understanding of photography as a medium that offers a transparent view of reality. Through her interventions, the artist exposes her role in constructing a landscape. *Untitled #041220* does not simply describe its subject, the sea; it embodies the emotional experience of disjointed and dissolving memories. Reskala's persistent interruptions of the picturesque reflect on both the power and the mutability of collective memories and shared histories.

*Recent Acquisitions* is a biannual series highlighting works that have been gifted to or purchased for the Frye Art Museum's permanent collection.

**Image:** Georgina Reskala. *Untitled #041220*, 2017. Gelatin silver print. 16 x 20 in. Frye Art Museum, Gift of PDX Contemporary Art, 2019.009



**Srijon Chowdhury: *Same Old Song***

October 8, 2022–January 15, 2023

Portland-based artist Srijon Chowdhury creates dreamlike oil paintings that consider the present moment as part of a larger mythology. Vacillating between a highly stylized approach and startling realism, he brings an uncanny contemporary twist to traditional genres like family portraiture, biblical scenes, and the *vanitas* still life. As in historical *vanitas* paintings, which were meant to serve as reminders of death and the fleetingness of worldly pleasures, Chowdhury's work is deeply concerned with existential themes. His paintings vividly convey the beauty and magic of everyday life, tinged with apocalyptic angst and depravity.

The artist's first museum solo exhibition, *Same Old Song* stages a dramatic climax of Chowdhury's practice to date. At the exhibition's core is an installation of six enormous new paintings, each of which centers on one sensory organ of the human face: eyes, ears, nose, and a mouth that is 30 feet long. The central facial feature in each piece frames or incorporates smaller images, which are sampled from Chowdhury's previous paintings to create an alternative "retrospective" of his work. Conjuring up a mixture of cultural associations—from Christian church art to nineteenth-century panoramas and carnival attractions—the installation is the latest and largest in a succession of Chowdhury's projects to assume architectural dimensions.

The exhibition also includes a selection of the artist's more intimately scaled recent paintings, along with the mural-sized canvas *Pale Rider* (2019) and a sculptural wrought-iron fence composed of script. Chowdhury's design for the fence integrates William Blake's poem *A Divine Image* (1804) and a short text of his own, using a monogram-like style drawn from Medieval occult practices. Bringing this mystical intent to bear alongside paintings of epic proportion, Chowdhury tests the power of age-old symbols and art forms to compel in the modern world.

## PUBLICATION

*Same Old Song* will be accompanied by a richly illustrated catalogue with essays by Monica Belevan, SJ Cowan, and Amanda Donnan that will be available for purchase through the Frye Art Museum [Store](#) upon its release in fall 2022. The volume is the second in the FAM/books series, established in 2021 and distributed by D.A.P.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Srijon Chowdhury** (born Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1987) lives and works in Portland, Oregon. He holds an MFA from the Otis College of Art and Design, and a BFA from the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Solo exhibitions of his work have been held at Ciaccia Levi, Paris, France (2021, 2018); Foxy Production, New York, NY (2021, 2020); Anat Ebgi, Los Angeles, CA (2019); Upfor, Portland, OR (2018, 2016); The Art Gym, Marylhurst, OR (2018); and Kloddenn Mann, Los Angeles, CA (2016, 2014). In 2016 Chowdhury and his wife, Anna Margaret, established a gallery on their property called Chicken Coop Contemporary where they have hosted numerous artist projects, guest-curated exhibitions, and performances. Chowdhury has extended this facet of his practice to co-curate with Frye Art Museum's Amanda Donnan the group exhibition *Door to the Atmosphere*, on view October 29, 2022—January 22, 2023.

*Srijon Chowdhury: Same Old Song* is organized by Amanda Donnan, Chief Curator. Generous support is provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members. Media sponsorship is provided by *The Stranger*.

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**Image:** Srijon Chowdhury. *Eye (Morning Glory)*, 2022. Oil on linen. 72 x 126 in. Courtesy of the artist, Ciaccia Levi, Paris-Milan and Foxy Production, New York. Photo: Mario Gallucci



**THE THIRD, MEANING:  
ESTAR(SER) Installs the Frye Collection**

October 15, 2022–October 15, 2023

For this artist-curated installation of the Frye Art Museum’s collection, the research collective ESTAR(SER) reaches into an archive of dreams to assemble an exhibition that asks fundamental questions about museums and the works of art they hold: What do artworks want from us? And what do we want from them?

An ancient tale tells of an artist who once painted a child carrying a bunch of grapes. So lifelike was the image that birds came and pecked at the tasty-looking fruit. But the painter wasn’t satisfied. If the child had been more realistic, he reasoned, the birds would have been too frightened to approach. Determined, he reworked the painting, and, setting it outside, watched as three birds approached: the first glimpsed the child and fled, just as he had hoped; the second went ahead as before, and tried to eat the illusory fruit. But the third bird just landed in front of the painting and looked at it, in perfect stillness, for a very long time.

Embarking from this story of appetite, fear, and fascination, *THE THIRD, MEANING* stages much-loved works from the Frye Art Museum’s Founding Collection—along with some rarely seen treasures—in a series of *triads*, groupings of three that invite viewers to ponder the “Birdish” problem: Should we draw near? Turn away? Keep looking? Each triad aims to set up a small conversation (about form, about content, about history). Visitors are invited to eavesdrop on these quiet exchanges, occasionally with the aid of playful tools for focusing, diffracting, or remaking their perceptions. What is it like to look with avian eyes? And if the paintings were themselves birds, which is hungriest? Which would fly away? Which, gazing back, would stay?

No mere allegory, the “third bird” can be thought of as an avatar of *attention*. Through the attentive senses, every museumgoer participates in the making of a work of art. *THE THIRD, MEANING* circles the power and complexity of this remarkable human faculty: our ability to give attention, and to receive what it gives; the power to land in front of anything, and wait upon everything. In conjunction with the exhibition, a series of gallery interventions and activations configured by ESTAR(SER) will offer opportunities to test the creative possibilities of every act of sustained attention.

## ABOUT THE CURATORS

**ESTAR(SER)** is an international research collective concerned with the history—and the mythology—of *attention*. Recent work includes: “All Senses on the *Qui Vive*,” 33<sup>rd</sup> São Paulo Biennial (2018); “El Halo del Cuidar,” Reina Sofia, Madrid (2019); “The Dance of Attention,” Glasgow International (2020/21); and “The Milcom Memorial Reading Room and Attention Library,” Mana Contemporary and the Monira Foundation, Jersey City (2022). Associates of ESTAR(SER) collaborate on various publications, for instance: The ESTAR(SER) Working Group on Exhibitions, “Presenting and Representing the ‘W-Cache,’” *Proceedings of the Esthetical Society*, New Series, Part VII, Supplement (2016): 1-81; and, most recently, the edited volume *In Search of the Third Bird* (London: Strange Attractor, 2021). [estarser.net](http://estarser.net)

**D. Graham Burnett** works at the intersection of historical inquiry and artistic practice. He makes texts (and occasions) using experiential approaches to archival material, pedagogical modes, and hermeneutic activities traditionally associated with the research humanities. Based in New York, Burnett trained in the History and Philosophy of Science at Cambridge University and teaches at Princeton. He edits a series in speculative historiography, “Conjectures,” for *The Public Domain Review* (UK), and is the author of a number of books, including *Masters of All They Surveyed* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); *Trying Leviathan* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); *The Sounding of the Whale* (2012); and *Twelve Theses on Attention* (New York: FoA/PUP, 2022), co-authored and co-edited with Stevie Knauss and the Friends of Attention, with whom he often collaborates. Burnett’s essays, pseudonymities, and metafictional pieces have appeared in: *Cabinet* (where he is an editor), *October*, *Parkett*, *Texte zur Kunst*, *TANK*, *Geist*, and elsewhere, including the catalogue of the 55<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennial. [dgrahamburnett.net](http://dgrahamburnett.net)

**Joanna Fiduccia** is an art historian, art critic, and assistant professor in the Department of the History of Art at Yale University. She is the author of *Figures of Crisis: Alberto Giacometti and the Myths of Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, forthcoming), as well as scholarship and criticism published in *October*, *Art History*, *Parkett*, *Spike Art Quarterly*, *East of Borneo*, and *Artforum*. A founding co-editor of the journal *apricota* and a collaborator with the Friends of Attention, her writing has also appeared in catalogues and essay collections including *Maria Martins: Tropical Fictions* (Sao Paulo: Museu de Arte de São Paulo, 2021), *In Search of the Third Bird* (London: Strange Attractor, 2021), and *Alberto Giacometti: In Search of Lost Works* (Paris: Editions Fage, 2020). [joannafiduccia.net](http://joannafiduccia.net)

*THE THIRD, MEANING: ESTAR(SER) Installs the Frye Collection* is guest curated by the research-based artist collective ESTAR(SER), with D. Graham Burnett, Professor of History and History of Science at Princeton University, and Joanna Fiduccia, Assistant Professor of the History of Art at Yale University, as project leads. Generous support is provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members. Media sponsorship is provided by KCTS 9.

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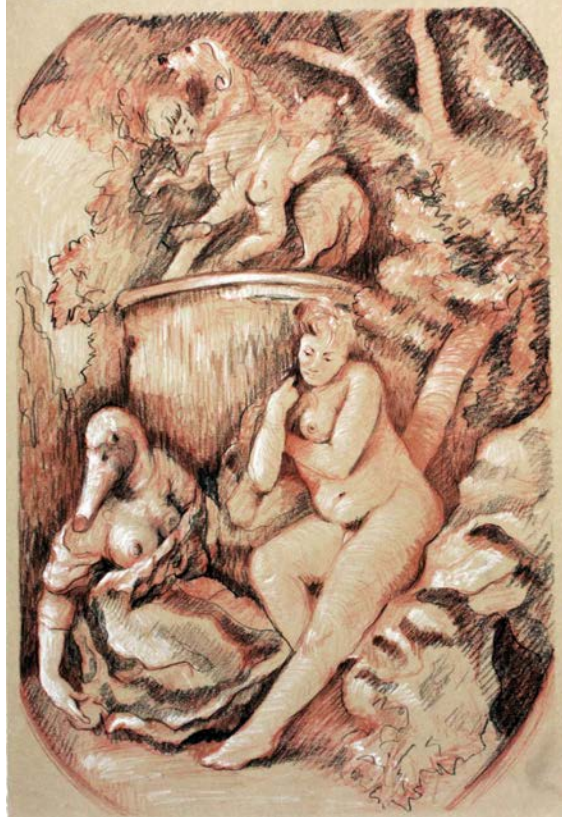


## RELATED PROGRAM

***Experiment Like ESTAR(SER)*** [Working Title]  
September 2022–October 2023

In this dynamic interactive space, visitors are invited to participate in the process of creating their own triads of artworks to expand upon or redefine the conversations they encountered in *THE THIRD, MEANING: ESTAR(SER) Installs the Frye Collection*. Magnetic reproductions of select Frye collection artworks will be made available for visitors to sort and rearrange into groupings that explore the elements of art (such as line, shape, or color), tell a story, or even make one laugh. While the experience is designed for families with young children, visitors of all ages are encouraged to participate in this activity.

**Image:** Carol Mothner. *The Wait*, 1998. Egg tempera on panel. 15 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> x 15 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in. Frye Art Museum, Museum Purchase, 1999.005. Photo: Jueqian Fang



***Boren Banner Series: Molly Jae Vaughan***

October 22, 2022–April 16, 2023

Seattle-based artist Molly Jae Vaughan’s work addresses representations of transgender people, including the erasure and violence they experience. For the next iteration of the *Boren Banner Series*, Vaughan will create a new work from her ongoing project *After Boucher*, in which she reimagines drawings by the French artist François Boucher (1703–70). Vaughan inserts transgender bodies and genderqueer mythological characters into the opulent and romantic world of Rococo—an eighteenth-century style of art and decoration characterized by its excessive ornamentation and pastel palette. In Vaughan’s hands, heroic queer protagonists fluidly inhabit Boucher’s pastoral scenes, creating visions of queer resplendence and pleasure.

Of her motivations for the project, Vaughan cites the exclusion of transgender people from the Western art historical canon. Boucher’s theatrical scenes of erotic and sentimental love reinvented the idyllic pastoral tradition, introducing an aesthetic of gender ambiguity. *After Boucher* creates yet a new visual history of transgender, non-binary, and gender nonconforming individuals within the context and imagery of the romantic and luxurious environments of the Rococo period. The monumental scale of the *Boren Banner*, a public artwork that occupies the eastern facade of the Frye Art Museum, asserts the visibility and agency of transgender people, not just within Boucher’s compositions but also into the institutional space of the museum and the collections housed within. Vaughan’s *Boren Banner* image dialogues critically—and playfully—with the nineteenth-century pastoral landscapes in the Frye’s Founding Collection.

**Molly Jae Vaughan** (British, born England, 1977) holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts in New York and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of South Florida in Tampa. Her work has been exhibited in solo exhibitions at the Seattle Art Museum and the Bainbridge Island Museum of Art and in group exhibitions at San Jose Museum of Quilts and Textiles, State of Fashion Biennale 2022 (Arnhem, Netherlands), the Block Museum of Art (Evanston, IL), the Henry Art Gallery (Seattle), and the Minnesota Museum of American Art (St. Paul). Vaughan was the 2017 recipient of the Betty Bowen Award and has received grants from Art Matters Foundation, Visual Artists Network, the Pollination Project, and the Hillsborough Arts Council. In 2018, Vaughan presented a talk at TEDXSEATTLE about her ongoing *Project 42*, which memorializes transgender murder victims. Vaughan is currently an Assistant Professor of Art at Bellevue College and lives and works in Seattle.

## ABOUT THE SERIES

The *Boren Banner Series* is a public art initiative by the Frye Art Museum that reflects the Museum's commitment to showcasing artists of the Pacific Northwest. Presented biannually, the series gives regional artists the opportunity to create new site-specific work or show a previously unexhibited piece at monumental scale in the form of a 16 x 20 ft. vinyl banner. The billboard-size work is prominently sited on the Museum's east facade, facing Boren Avenue: the Frye's most visible and accessible physical interface.

*Boren Banner Series: Molly Vaughan* is organized by Georgia Erger, Associate Curator, and David Strand, former Associate Curator. Generous support is provided by 4Culture/King County Lodging Tax, the Frye Foundation, and Frye Members.



**Image:** Molly Jae Vaughan. *Bathsheba*, or “*Les douceurs de l’été*,” from the series *After Boucher*, 2017. Lithocrayon, watercolor, and gouache on paper. 22 x 15 in. Courtesy of the artist





### ***Door to the Atmosphere***

October 29, 2022–January 22, 2023

Marking a tendency toward spirituality, myth, and the supernatural among artists working today in the United States, *Door to the Atmosphere* includes artworks in a range of mediums by Sedrick Chisom, Harry Gould Harvey IV, Cindy Ji Hye Kim, Mimi Lauter, Jill Mulleady, Naudline Pierre, Eden Seifu, and TARWUK. Apocalyptic visions, celestial visitations, and mysterious rituals and manifestations appear across these artists' works, reflecting the wonder and the dread of living in the present as well as specters of unsettled pasts. The exhibition title, borrowed from a drawing by Harry Gould Harvey IV, suggests a threshold one might cross from earth into ether, from the specific to the speculative, from surfaces to essences, sensations, and mood.

Artists have sought such figurative portals in previous periods of existential crisis; fin de siècle Europe, which peaked in the 1890s and culminated in World War I, for example, gave rise to the fraught mythic imagination of the Symbolists and the hallucinatory intensity of the Expressionists. Many of the artists included in *Door to the Atmosphere* cite the influence of these forebears—as well as that of earlier visionaries like Francisco de Goya and William Blake—while drawing on science fiction, adventure anime, and folk tales as much as Greek mythology, Christian iconography, and the occult. Often they incorporate an element of social critique, with references to legacies of exploitation and violence that haunt our present and can cloud future imaginings.

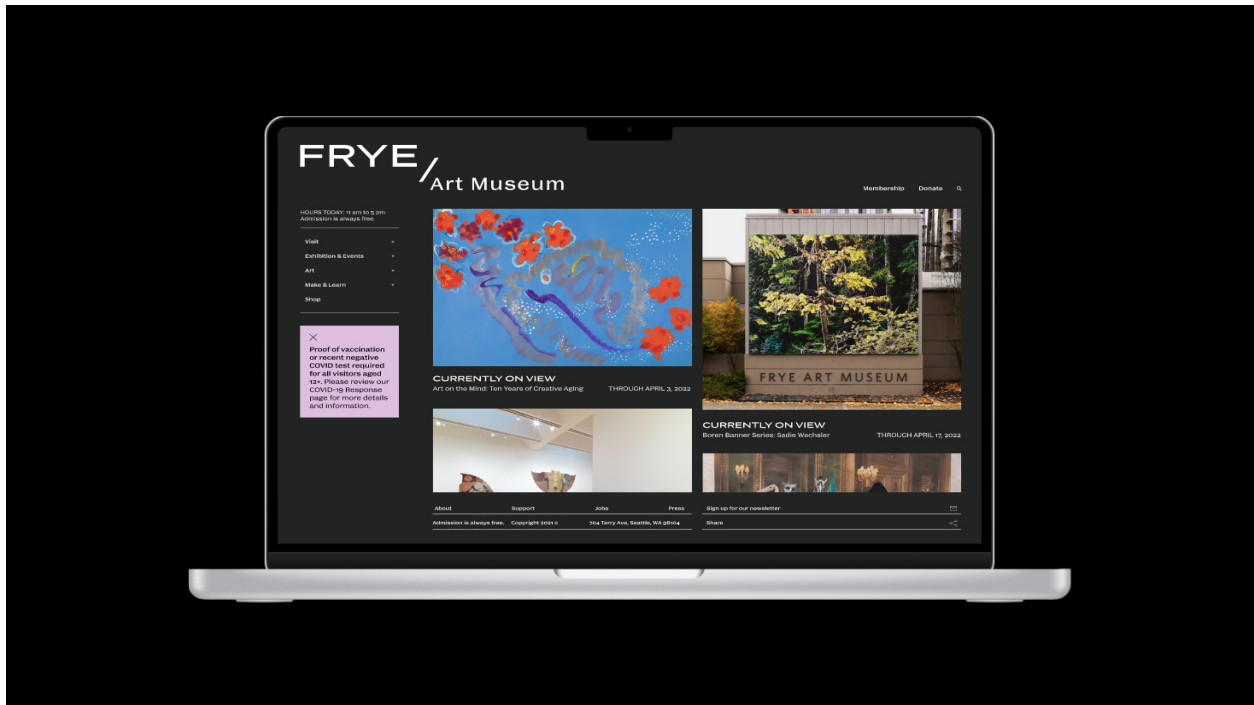
Ranging from visceral assemblages of scavenged “relics” to ecstatic landscapes and uncanny dream tableaux, the works in the exhibition chart multiple routes into the liminal space between what is and what might be. Whether seeking transcendence or, in the words of TARWUK, “the emotionally charged undertow,” they open doors to alternate realities.

*Door to the Atmosphere* is co-curated by Chief Curator Amanda Donnan and artist Srijon Chowdhury. Generous support is provided by the Frye Foundation and Frye Members. Media sponsorship is provided by *The Stranger*.

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**theStranger**

**Image:** Harry Gould Harvey IV. *A Monument To The Families That Have Nothing To Offer The State But Their Children*, 2021. Partially stripped and charred church doors from Providence, casting wax, candles, lead organ pipes, job-site heaters from Fall River, scrap metal from Whole Foods, steel angel from New Bedford, cast white bronze and colored pencil on Xerox. Dimensions variable. Courtesy of the artist and Bureau, New York. Photo: Dario Lasagni



## IDENTITY REFRESH & WEBSITE REDESIGN

The Frye Art Museum is proud to introduce a new look created in conjunction with a full website redesign, to launch in late spring 2022. This exciting identity refresh was designed by Polymode, a bi-coastal, LGBTQ+, and Minority-owned studio with offices in Inglewood, California, and Raleigh, North Carolina, that leads the edge of contemporary graphic design through poetic research. The dynamic new website is built by the Seattle-based firm Bear Group.