

PEMBROKE HILL
SCHOOL



CENTENNIAL GALLERY AND ARTS
CONNECTOR PRESENTS
AN INAUGURAL EXHIBITION

The Past Two Years

A REFLECTION ON GRIEF, SOLITUDE,
AND THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN CONNECTION

a note from our director

Over the past two years, we have watched our world change. We've learned how to properly wash our hands; how to stockpile toilet paper; how to binge inordinate amounts of television; how to get rid of the things that 'didn't spark joy'; and even how to make sourdough. We also learned how to be alone. And sometimes that time has been starkly melancholic. We have lost loved ones, lost jobs, and we have lost time. And yet there is hope. Maybe we have learned to slow down, to cherish the small moments, to appreciate one another. We have picked up new hobbies, learned new skills. Most importantly, we've discovered how compelling our connection can be with one another — how impactful our voices are in tandem. No matter what the past two years have meant for each of us individually, we know we are more powerful together. And, as a community, we must take the time to grieve together, to nurture one another, to grow and foster our community as one. Most importantly, we must take the time to understand each other. We hope this exhibition gives you the space to reflect and move forward with us.

Together, cultivating the best in each, for the benefit of all.

Thanks for visiting,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "caro thomas". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style with a prominent initial 'C'.

Pembroke Hill Centennial Art Gallery Director,
Caro Thomas '13



“Anxiety” — Ava Sweeney ‘22

COVID Reliquary Vessel:

March 1, 2020–

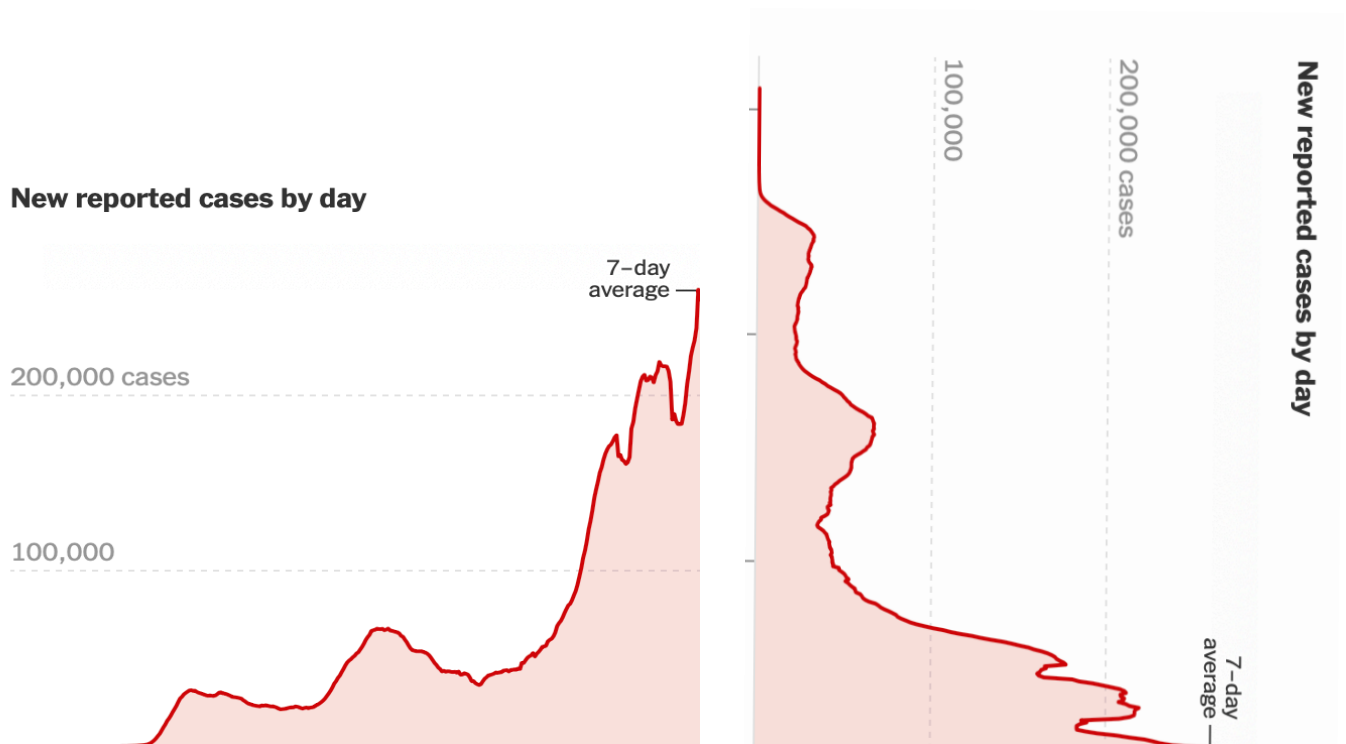


January 20, 2021,

JASON LIPS

During the early stage of the pandemic as I, like so many of us, diligently monitored the daily peaks and valleys of the U.S. COVID deaths graph. One day, I realized that if the graph line were to be revolved it would produce the silhouette of a vase-like form, almost that of a trophy cup, a Greek krater (which were sometimes used as gravemarkers) or, fittingly, an urn. I shared this idea with my Ceramics students, discussing how pottery forms could be, not just decorative, but actually contain information. Needing to demonstrate to my students how to build a coil pot, I chose the graph timeframe of March 1, 2020 to January 20, 2021 and cut

it into a template which I then used to create this pot. Dates are engraved into the surface, corresponding to that particular contour of the graph. When I flipped the completed pot upside down to sand it, I was struck by the way it then resembled both a Buddhist stupa (itself a kind of reliquary and object of meditation) as well as a bell. Many apt metaphors were converging. I began to think about how this form could be used to play a song for the dead. This new line of thinking led to the production of the interior form, an inverted and smaller, but more detailed capturing of the graph's data, utilizing 3D printing and slip casting technologies.



Basil Kincaid

ILLUSTRATIONS



Known for his textile work, this selection of Basil Kincaid work is rather unique. This series was made right before and during the pandemic. Kincaid says of this work “Many of these drawings deal with a sense of radical self acceptance. They are reflective of a transitioning period for me in St. Louis—a crossroads—where I was personally and artistically in a time of self examination; I was looking

back at my behaviors over the years, looking at where I had been and how I was feeling. You’ll observe a lot of my unfiltered thoughts woven into the drawings’ compositions. They’re always raw and vulnerable, and when the pandemic rolled around, drawing just felt like the medium to offer in hopes of generating some funds for a handful of single moms in St. Louis.” Both through and beyond his artistic

work, Kincaid is an activist. He sold these drawings out of the studio and gave 50% of the proceeds directly to these women in my community. In the end he was able to contribute \$2500 to a total of five families.

"Drawing was an influential part of my childhood and has been critical to my development. It was my first playground and then my first truly safe space for me to explore myself. It's revealing to me. It functions as a mirror which in turn helps me orient myself on my path. The drawings confront love and loss; some directly reflect how I navigate my practice, showing fragments of various notes on concepts, memories, and/or financial and administrative considerations that come into play as an artist. Through drawing, I also end up investigating my relationship to my body. I don't like defining and confining my identity to norms or boxes, but I do enjoy considering how I relate to myself and

to environments and people in the world around me—family, friends, lovers. I'm interested in how these relationships and interactions change me and impact my growth as a person and an artist.

With this particular selection of drawings I again had the opportunity to practice self acceptance and self examination, critically looking at my relationship to myself, my art, and my community in the context of the pandemic. When considering how I want to relate to the world around me, I want to be generative and bring ease—I want to parent my inner child so I may nurture others in need, such that we're all cared for, thriving. I want people to feel that they're allowed to play and feel things that others might not relate to, and enjoy and value all iterations of the selves they'll experience."

"Drawing is my first love. I feel like drawing is is a mirror, you cant hide at all when you draw. My drawings are intuitive, the process is an important part of how I develop trust with myself."
—Basil Kincaid

“February” — Devan Shimoyama



“The first iteration of the hoodie that I made and showed was in 2017. It was all black using sequins, beads, feathers and velvet. I initially leaned towards making it because I wanted to find new ways of paying homage to the many black lives taken through police brutality while still reminding people that this persists, and action must be taken. I didn’t want to make paintings illustrating any of the related violence, as images of black men in pain were so triggering and already heavily present in the news and media. I then shifted from making the black hoodie to using more DIY craft traditions, such as the spontaneous memorial, as an inspiration for how to approach the next iteration, which now incorporates much more vibrant colors, silk flowers, rhinestones, embroideries, etc.

The hoodie initially stemmed from a combination of sources—

Trayvon Martin (I now title the works February and number them in honor of his life), a “no hoodie” rule/sign present at many public schools in Philadelphia, and the ways in which black men were often reduced in the media (the first hoodies I made were titled Shroud).

People have ranges of reactions to the hoodies I’ve made. Many people have desires for them to be wearable: focusing on the fashion element. I’ve since adjusted the scale and the way in which the work is installed to deter from the idea of the piece being wearable. Others have had moments of realizing the real dangers presented towards black lives and immediately recognize the materiality as a reference to a memorial. Oddly enough, I’ve been approached and asked to do floral installations or centerpieces for events as well since making these hoodies.”

“Transfer”

Grace Weaver



2020

BODIES IN
PUBLIC SPACES

“Emphasizing the weight and gravity of a figure makes visible the invisible: psychological states like anxiety, sadness, or self-consciousness. I’ve always been interested in very, very subtle emotional territory, like a painting of someone being passive aggressive or subtly self-conscious—these tiny, non-grand emotions. In these paintings, I want to push that type of discomfort into a feeling of failure. Or the feeling of watching yourself being watched failing.”

—Grace Weaver

Zoya Taylor

INTERCONNECTIVITY, WE ARE ALL CONNECTED,
LIKE IT, OR NOT



Zoya Taylor is a Canadian artist, raised in Jamaica and currently based in Norway. She received her Masters degree in International Social Work from the University of British Columbia, Canada. Taylor began painting full-time in 2000, after years of teaching at universities, developing community programs and outreach facilities in Jamaica, Canada, Latvia, Bosnia, and Norway. Much of her work considers the “misfit.” She says her subjects are “immigrants found between cultures, continents, languages and disciplines.” Taylor’s work can be seen

as an exploration of diaspora identity and the idea that identity is something that is predetermined by someone else. . “My art falls somewhat outside but I guess that is only fitting. I paint the cast of characters which fill the spaces in between. We all have a cast of characters that define our lives. My cast is the cast of the misfit. They are immigrants found between cultures, continents, languages and disciplines. There is a lot of noise in the silence.” There is strangeness in the familiar and familiarity in difference

“My cast is the cast of the misfit. They are immigrants found between cultures, continents, languages and disciplines. There is a lot of noise in the silence.”

–Zoya Taylor

“Exploring the Uncanny”

Five Years Later



“Blank | Shudder”

CARO
THOMAS '13

Hal Foster defines the uncanny as “the return of the familiar made strange by repression.” This definition was integral to my process of self-exploration and self-fragmentation. However, looking back on this work now, Foster’s description of the uncanny resonates even deeper. This image is a part of a series taken in 2016 – a time in my life where everything felt incredibly unstable. I was finishing my undergrad degree and had no idea where I would go. I fell into a pretty deep depression. Creating art was my way to grieve a life I felt I was losing. Looking back on this work, five years and a global pandemic later, the uncanny theme feels ever more potent. Art can be such a beautiful space for us to grieve and express our deepest selves.

Leyna Jurco '22





"This collection of works explores the many sides to a person and how views of oneself can differ from that of someone else. I have always loved hearing other people's opinions and stories on the world around them, themselves, others, and even simply just their varying ideas.

I begin with the idea of using

written words from others to help explore personal identity. I interviewed friends and used their words to reveal said identity. I recorded each interview, then paired their words with film photography. Through these works, I wanted to really hone in on personality and self and how that can greatly differ from person to person."

Zanele Muholi

SOMNYAMA NGONYAMA
HAIL THE DARK LIONESS




“I have photographed so many people...have documented painful experiences of other people without dealing with my own pain. I needed to remember me.”

—Zanele Muholi

Antonius Tın Bui





Through hand-cut paper, community engagement, performance and soft sculpture, Antonius Bui seeks to visualize hybrid identities and histories that confront the unsettling present. In this self portrait with their partner, Bui depicts their home life through delicate cut paper, where each detail allows the viewer further access into their private lives. Bui's identity as a queer, genderfluid, Vietnamese-American informs the way they employ beauty as a refuge for fellow marginalized communities. In this particular piece, Bui uses text to help the viewer question the world. Bold in the top left corner is the question "Who is worth my love, my strength, my rage?" Perhaps

this is a conversation between the subjects, perhaps this is a question for the viewer to consider. In small text below, Bui references a poem from Zoe Leonard, an activist from the 90s. Leonard's poem was inspired by Eileen Myles' presidential campaign in 1992. Myles's identity stood in contrast to their opponents; they identified at the time as a gay woman, and come from a community directly affected by both poverty and AIDS. This poem has been referenced over the years by activists to discuss the disenfranchisement of American people. In the context of this piece, the poem emphasizes the mundane normalcy of this couple's love and life at home as an act of rebellion itself.

Our Mission Statement

The Centennial Gallery and Arts Connector is a dynamic exhibition and teaching space that celebrates the arts through showcasing the work of professional and student artists. Classes from Pembroke Hill, groups from other schools and organizations, and visitors of all ages can experience and learn about the arts in a welcoming setting. We view art as a vehicle for self expression, creative freedom, and as serving the purpose of reflecting the full spectrum of diversity that exists both within and outside our PHS community. We see the arts as a place to expand our worldview and facilitate thought provoking opportunities for robust discussion.

The Gallery will make every effort to notify patrons of artistic expressions that reflect aspects of our world whose aesthetics may push us to places of new learning and discovery. When and where possible, signage will be available for patrons to learn more about the artists, their vision for the work, and ways to further engage after leaving the gallery. All are welcome to explore, question, and critique the art presented in the gallery. We invite people to come in the spirit of wonderment and appreciation for the time, effort, and sacrifice artists and curators have given to expand our collective worldview.

Some questions to consider:

How can art be used to explore the inner workings of our minds?

Who is worth your love, your strength, your rage?

What feelings do you notice when you are in public spaces, particularly over the past two years?

How can art be a place for grief, celebration, and activism?

How do we prioritize focusing inwards and discovering ourselves? How can self-reflection allow us to better help others?

When have you experienced feelings of being the “misfit”

Sources:

Artist Statements and interviews with artists

Tate Modern Exhibition Page

<https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/zanele-muholi>

Press Release from James Cohan Gallery

<https://www.jamescohan.com/exhibitions/grace-weaver2>

Bio information on Basil Kincaid website

<https://basilkincaid.art>

Artist Profile from Kavi Gupta Gallery website

<https://kavigupta.com/artists/30-devan-shimoyama/>

Bio from Suzie Wong Presents for Artsy

<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/zoya-taylor-interconnectivity-we-are-all-connected-like-it-or-not>

New York Times Covid-19 Graph

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/us/covid-cases.html>

