



PEMBROKE HILL GALLERY  
EXHIBITION | APRIL 2022

# **YOUR CHARGE WE CARRY FORWARD:**

**FOSTERING ART BEYOND PEMBROKE HILL**

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# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

01



When I was hired to create this new gallery program, I saw it as a space for our students to see all the artistic avenues beyond Pembroke Hill. Curating a show with art created by alumni felt like the perfect way to honor our past while stepping into the future of arts at PHS.

Eight months after its original opening date, that show is finally here, and I am thrilled to share it with you. Although each of us has a unique relationship with this school, I think it is important to remember that every alum makes up the fabric of what Pembroke Hill has been, and we each have the power to advocate for what it can be.

May we continue to inspire Pembroke Hill students to pursue art beyond these halls.

*Caro Thomas*

Caro Thomas '13  
she/they  
Gallery Director



# EXPANSION OF PORTRAITURE

how Mike Lyon '69 uses mark-making and technology to communicate personhood

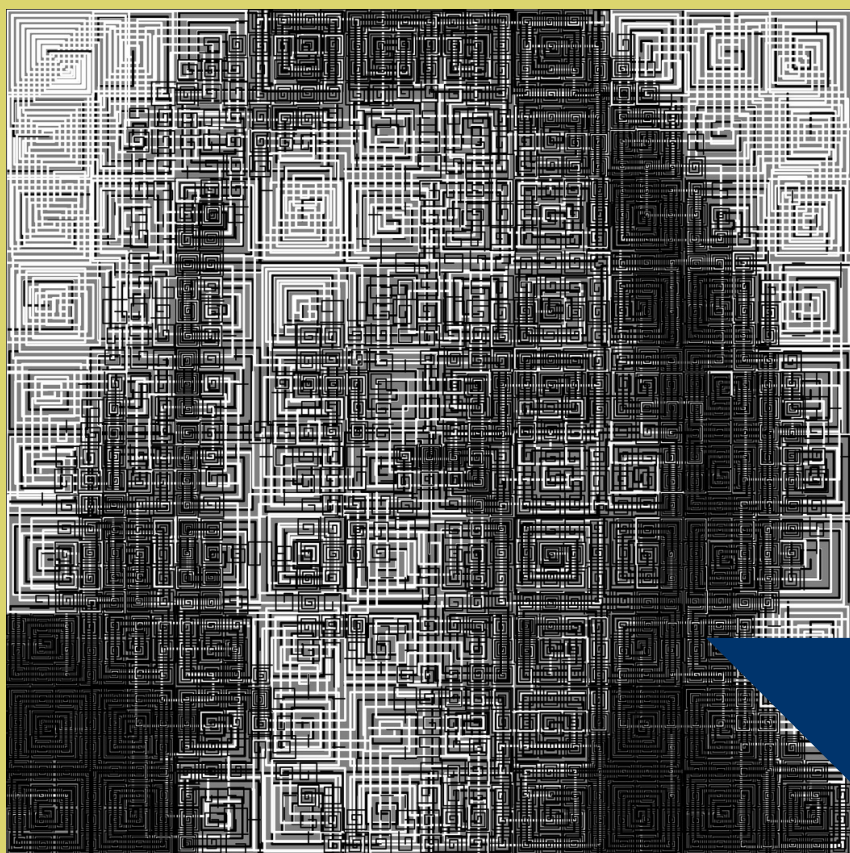
Mike Lyon '69 is a local painter whose work explores the use of a CNC (computer numeric control) router and how the building of repetitive, spiraling patterns of acrylic paint can create figures. When you get close to the work, the squares appear almost like a quilt, but as one steps back, you begin to see images of faces and figures.

Mike says of his work :

"My own work is a long series of experiments in ways to communicate image through an unusual kind of mark-making. My process is complex and analytical and involves programming computers and building machinery to manipulate traditional art-making tools, materials, and imagery using non-traditional methods. I'm looking to the old while inventing (sometimes re-inventing) the new. I typically portray the face, figure, or botanicals like grass or leaves. The creative work is almost entirely conceptual, occurring inside my head. Because every mark, line, brush stroke, etc. is calculated in advance, I don't get to see the results until the work is complete. The computer programs I write will, at run-time, gather numerous parameters from me which control how the image will be produced; the size of the image, line width, spacing, whether I'm painting light on dark or dark on light, and especially a reference image. The reference image is usually my digital photograph of a family member, artist, or another friend. My programs use my parameters to riff off the reference image and then output additional programs which instruct the machinery how and where to move. I attach a pen or drypoint needle or paintbrush or airbrush (whatever) to the machinery, and they leave tracks that gradually accumulate, layer by layer, and become my artwork. For a portrait, I'll usually shoot hundreds of photos of my subject while we chat, and then hope to find one or two which both call out to become art and have qualities which are compatible with whatever process I'm exploring. My process and approach evolve with each completed work. Each provides clues that lead me to some new approach. I haven't lost interest after more than 25 years working this way."

Lyon's work asks the viewer to consider not only the power of technology but the possibilities of recognition and how one might convey faces and bodies through shape, color, and shading. As Shoshi Rosen said in her review of his 2019 Weinberger exhibition, "the result is both highly conceptual and strikingly visceral: it poses an optical anomaly and encourages contemplation of the technological landscape that has drastically influenced the production and consumption of art."

We are lucky to have Mike back on campus to share his wonderful work with our community.



*Linda, acrylic on canvas, 35"x35".*

# DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR BLACK ENUF\*

Written by the film's creator Carrie Hawks

## DISCUSSION GUIDE

This guide is designed for classes, community groups, and private screenings of *black enuf*\*. The guide helps foster discussions around perception, race, sexuality, and identity. Attendees should be encouraged to reflect on how the film resonates with their own experiences and perceptions.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Race:** Socially defined category for individuals who have certain common physical traits. Ideas about defining race have changed over time.

**Ethnicity:** The idea that one is a member of a particular cultural, national, or racial group that may share some of the following elements: culture, religion, race, language, or place of origin. Two people can share the same race but have different ethnicities, for example Afro-Latino and African-American.

**Racial and Ethnic identity:** Sense of belonging to a particular race or ethnicity and feelings of identifying with one's group, sharing commitment and common values.

**Sexual orientation:** Physical, emotional and/or romantic attractions to others. Like gender identity, sexual orientation is internally held knowledge.

**Gender identity:** An individual's deeply held sense of being male, female, or another gender. **Gender Presentation:** How the world sees and understands your gender.

**Pronouns:** Words that replace someone's name while sharing their gender (like she, her, him, his, they, theirs, ze). Some people use different pronouns in different situations

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**Queer:** An umbrella term that describes people who are not straight and/or cisgender. In the past, this word was used to put-down LGBTQ people. Today the word can be used in a positive way within the LGBTQ community.

**Cisgender:** A person who identifies with the sex they were assigned at birth. For example, if you were told you were “female” at birth and still identify that way, you would be cisgender.

Definitions from “Adolescent Ethnic and Racial Identity Development” by Alana Butler for ACT for Youth (Cornell University), Trevor Project Organization, Teaching Tolerance.org

## PRE-SCREENING ACTIVITY (10-15 MINUTES)

Tools needed: paper, pens or pencils, microphone if large space. Each audience member gets a printed sheet with activity prompts and questions, and a pen/pencil.

**Assumptions:** The audience member writes down three assumptions that people have about them.

**Realities:** The audience member writes three things that are true about their identity. They may be related to the assumptions or be different.

### For example:

Once everyone has written on their answers, ask them to pair up with someone they don't know. Encourage them to share names and their gender pronouns (if they feel comfortable).

After a few minutes of discussion, ask for volunteers to share their own answers with the group.

### Assumptions:

1. People assume that I have a white parent
2. People assume I love Erykah Badu.
3. People often think I'm great at sports

### Realities:

1. Both my parents identify as Black and there's a large variation in skin tone between my brothers and me. Folks assume we're not related because we're different shades.
2. I'm more of a Janelle Monae fan and for a time really loved heavy metal music.
3. I'm horrible at sports, and much better at dancing

### POETRY EXERCISE (10-15 MINUTES)

Ask participants to write a poem that describes them. Use 6-10 sentences and the last line will be their name. For example, I am deep like oceans, I am kind, I am Carrie. Ask for volunteers to share their poems with the group.

### VISUAL ART ACTIVITY (10-15 MINUTES)

TOOLS NEEDED: PENS, MARKER, OR PENCILS

Ask participants to draw three objects or symbols that represent parts of their identity. After allotting time for drawing, divide into groups of 3-4 people and ask them explain at least one drawing.

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (10-15 MINUTES):

Continue in the same groups of 3-4 people. Ask for one person to keep notes of the discussion, and one to share with the group. Encourage those who have not shared to contribute. If someone has shared often, encourage them to listen.

1. How has race affected your family's history?
  - What would you like to know more about your family?
  - Have you had any interesting discoveries when talking with relatives or learning about your cultural background?
2. Have you witnessed someone being racially discriminated against and not spoken up? What response do you think would have worked?
3. In what ways do you struggle with being enough?
4. How do you cope with feeling sad or isolated?
5. Are there habits you rely on to get through a difficult time?



Notes:

# HOW REPURPOSING MATERIALS INSPIRED A BUSINESS

**A CONVERSATION WITH  
NATHAN KENT '14**

Nathan Kent '14 studied industrial design at Virginia Tech. However, when he learned how much waste there is in design, he decided to dedicate his life to using repurposed and recycled materials in his design. All this has led him to open up a gear exchange and repair shop in the West Bottoms with business partner Gina Olson.

**Caro:** What inspired your thesis work that the chair in the show is from?

**Nathan:** Probably sometime in my sophomore or junior year when we were starting to look at what the design industry actually does, I started to feel kind of a pull towards more sustainable design because I have always been an environmentalist and outdoors enthusiast, and it seemed like everything was focusing on tech...and more plastic and I really didn't vibe with that sort of design. I wanted to make objects and work with my hands and do something that was actually beneficial to the planet, not just making more stuff. So I started focusing on craft and using readily available materials, which at the time was trash, you know there was tons of waste in the studio program. I would hunt through the trash like a racoon.

I would scour the wood shop and pull plastic bottles out of the recycling. That's kind of where it stemmed from.

**C:** During your first couple years out of college, what did sustainable design look like for you?

**N:** When I initially graduated, I waivered between doing a masters program and working in the industry. I chose to work at a design firm where the focus wasn't on sustainability, but they gave me some freedom to play around in the shop and iterate on some of my ideas...I ended up moving back to Kansas City about a year and a half after graduation and reconnected with you. After



discussing what work we had been up to, we decided to start making custom bags and jumpsuits from repurposed fabrics and leathers. We ended up being a part of Scraps KC's inaugural fashion show and gifting three bags in a raffle for them. We had plans of getting an actual shop set up but then of course the pandemic hit so we ended up taking a hiatus.

C: Pandemic hits, what did the road to opening your own gear shop look like?

N: I decided to revamp a project I had been working on. The idea of designing sustainable outdoor gear was really appealing to me. I had a bunch of old fabric and decided to revisit the idea of making chalk bags. After taking some pictures of them and sharing them, people really seemed to like them so I started playing with making some different things. Gina and I had met at REI when we were both working there. I had been playing around with the idea of opening a shop for gear exchange and repairs for awhile. Then one day, we got to talking, and it turned out we both had similar ideas so we ended up finding a space, and here we are.

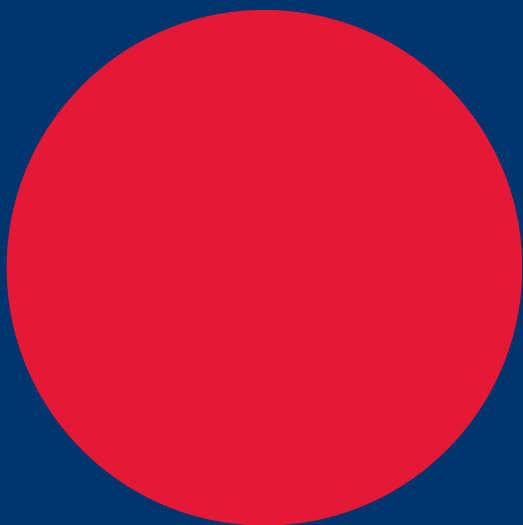
If you would like to visit their shop, it is called Big Muddy Gear.

They are located down in the West Bottoms at 1715 W 9th St, KCMO, 64101

Follow their journey on social media: @bigmuddygear



Nathan working in the shop on some tote bags



# PEMBROKE HILL ARTS GALLERY AND CONNECTOR

Gallery Exhibition | April 2022  
Curated by Caro Thomas '13  
Exhibition Program written, designed,  
and edited by Caro Thomas '13

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