

For Immediate Release

## FAMILIES IN FOCUS AT SPECIAL FITCHBURG ART MUSEUM PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION



Left: David Hilliard, **Bubble**, 2017, C-print, 2 panels, each 24" x 20", total size 24" x 40", edition 1 of 12. Courtesy of the artist and Carroll and Sons, Boston.  
Right: Sage Sohier, **Mum in her bathtub**, Washington D.C., 2002, archival pigment print, 28" x 35" image on 35" x 42" paper, edition of 3. Courtesy of the artist.

Photographers David Hilliard and Sage Sohier have each explored gender, class, and interpersonal dynamics in their portraits throughout their career. Among these portraits are photographs that document their parents, and sometimes themselves. In the new exhibition **Sohier/Hilliard: Our Parents, Ourselves**, a selection of works from Sohier's series **Witness to Beauty** (1994, 2000–2014) and a selection of Hilliard's photographs of his father (taken intermittently since the 1990s) will share the same gallery. Together these images explore the physical and emotional transformations of the subjects and each artist's parental ties. Explore the special exhibition on view through September 7, 2019–January 5, 2020.

Sohier's **Witness to Beauty** documents her former-fashion model mother, Wendy Burden Morgan. The series examines changing, generational ideas of beauty as a defining aspect of a woman's identity, aging, and the artist's and her sister's bonds with their mother. While Sohier's "Mum" is the focus of the series, the environments in which she's staged alongside her daughters and partners enhance her multidimensional portrait. Sohier presents her "Mum" as both "an icon of feminine beauty" and "a force of nature."

Hilliard, like Sohier, employs the environment, common objects, and dramatic perspective to create a portrait of his father that, while about aging, masculinity, and father-son relationships, is also about the individual character of his dad. The artist's multi-panel photographs are cinematic, subtly bringing together slices of time to intensify a moment's emotional tone, such as disconnection or loneliness. Hilliard prompts viewers to look closely at the changing relationship between the photographer and his father as subject.

The sixteen photographs on view in **Sohier/Hilliard: Our Parents, Ourselves** provide intimate portraits of two individuals, while also presenting a dynamic snapshot of adult children and parents maturing in tandem.

This exhibition is organized by FAM Curator Lisa Crossman.

The Opening Reception will be held on Saturday, September 21, 3–5pm. The event is FREE with Museum admission.

A Conversation Café with the artists will be held on Wednesday, October 23 at 7pm to coincide with their exhibition **Sohier/Hilliard: Our Parents, Ourselves**. Beverages and snacks will be provided, as well as a cash bar. FAM Members FREE, non-members FREE with admission, and students FREE with ID.

### **Artists' Biographies**

[David Hilliard](#) creates large-scale multi-paneled color photographs, often based on his life or the lives of people around him. The images take cues from storytelling, theater/performance, and cinema. David received his BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art & Design and an MFA from the Yale University School of Art. He worked for many years as an assistant professor at Yale University where he also directed the undergraduate photo department. He is a regular visiting faculty member at Harvard University, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts, Massachusetts College of Art & Design, and Lesley University College of Art & Design. David also leads a variety of summer photography workshops throughout the country. Hilliard exhibits his photographs both nationally and internationally and has won numerous awards such as the Fulbright and Guggenheim Fellowship. His photographs can be found in many important collections including the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

[Sage Sohier](#) has been photographing people in their environments for more than 30 years, after receiving her BA from Harvard University. She has received fellowships from the No Strings Foundation, the John Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the National Endowment of the Arts, and the Massachusetts Artists Foundation, and has taught photography at Harvard University, Wellesley College, and the Massachusetts College of Art. Five monographs of her work have been published, and her photographs are included in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, the Portland Art Museum, and the Cleveland Museum of Art, among many others. Her work has been exhibited in such venues as the Museum of Contemporary Photography in Chicago, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the International Center of Photography in New York, the Addison Gallery of American Art in Massachusetts, and the Art Institute of Chicago.

### **About FAM**

FAM Mission: The Fitchburg Art Museum is a catalyst for learning, creativity, and community building. We accomplish this mission with art historical collections and exhibitions, special exhibitions of contemporary New England art, education programs, public art projects, community partnerships, and creative economy initiatives.

FAM Vision: All decisions, initiatives, projects, and programs at the Fitchburg Art Museum reflect our commitment to education and the greater community.

The Fitchburg Art Museum serves the cities of Fitchburg and Leominster and the surrounding communities in North Central Massachusetts and Southern New Hampshire. Founded in 1925, FAM plays a vital role in the cultural life of the region and has recently repositioned itself to focus on community access and service. FAM uses its artistic and educational resources to aid in the economic revitalization of Fitchburg, and the Museum maintains active educational partnerships with the local school systems, as well as Fitchburg State University. FAM is an engine for creativity, education, community building and fun!

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