

# FANTASTICAL POLITICAL, FANTASTICAL,



## Teacher Resources





## About Fitchburg Art Museum

Founded in 1929, the Fitchburg Art Museum is a privately-supported art museum located in north central Massachusetts.

### Art and artifacts on view (partial list):

- *Discover Ancient Egypt*
- *GLOBAL AFRICA: Creativity, Continuity, and Change*
- *Evoking Eleanor* (about Fitchburg native, painter Eleanor Norcross)
- Nineteenth-twenty-first-century photography from the permanent collection (usually);
- Temporary exhibitions of contemporary art

### Museum Hours

Wednesdays-Fridays, 12 – 4 p.m.

Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Closed Mondays and Tuesdays,

### Admission

Free to all Museum members and children ages 12 and under.

\$9.00 Adult non-members, \$5.00 Seniors, youth ages 13-17, and full-time students ages 18-21



The Museum is wheelchair accessible.

### Directions

Directions to the Museum are on our website.

### Address and Phone Number

185 Elm St, Fitchburg, MA 01420      978-345-4207

**Visit our website for more information:**

**[www.fitchburgartmuseum.org](http://www.fitchburgartmuseum.org)**



## To Schedule a Tour

**All groups**, whether requesting a guided tour or planning to visit as self-guided, need to contact the Director of Docents to schedule their visit.

Guided tours need to be scheduled at least three weeks in advance.

Please contact the Director of Docents for information on fees, available tour times, and additional art projects available or youth groups.

## Museum Contacts

**Main Number: 978-345-4207**

Director of Docents: Ann Descoteaux, ext. 302  
[adescoteaux@fitchburgartmuseum.org](mailto:adescoteaux@fitchburgartmuseum.org)

Director of Education: Laura Howick, ext. 305



## Preparing for Your Visit

### Teacher or Leader Preparation

- If you wish to preview any of our exhibitions before your class visits, please call the Museum's Director of Docents (ext. 302) or Director of Education (ext. 305) for a free pass to use for that purpose;
- Call the Museum before your visit if anyone in your group needs a wheel chair, and one can be reserved for you;
- Prepare pre- and post-visit activities to strengthen what students learn at the Museum

### Preparing the Students

- Shortly before the visit, discuss what students already know about the exhibition topic, if anything, and tell them about some of the exciting things they will be seeing;
- Share any goals you have for the visit, if appropriate;
- Try to give the students some choice and control over the visit by asking their input on the visit's agenda. Ask students what they want to see, learn about, or experience on the visit, and in what order they want to do things. Include time for bathroom and snack breaks, going to the gift shop, and time for students to explore on their own.
- **If visiting as a self-guided tour of *Discover Ancient Egypt*, *GLOBAL AFRICA*, or the *contemporary art exhibition in the upstairs galleries*, **decide when students will be allowed to do the interactive activities** – while they're in each section of the exhibition, or after the entire tour? – and make sure all students understand this before the tour. Guided tours usually allow 10 minutes for this purpose at the end of the tour.**
- Review **museum etiquette**:
  - Please do not run in the museum (the student or the artwork could be hurt);
  - Please do not touch the artworks (oils and salts in our skin damage art);
  - Listen respectfully to others' responses to the art (because you may hear something that surprises you, a new way of looking at the artwork.)

*continued*



## Preparing for Your Visit, *continued*

### **Tell students they may want to bring:**

- A camera or camera-equipped cell phone;
- Paper and pencil to record their favorite objects or experiences

**PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY:**  
**Photography without a flash is allowed in**  
**the Museum.**

### **The Day of the Visit**

- Review the agenda for the day (explaining **when** they'll be taking the tour, playing the interactive games and taking pictures, eating a snack, etc.) Research has shown this step allows students to focus on learning once they are at the museum.
- Please remind them, again, of museum etiquette and the Museum's photography policy
- Students will be asked to leave backpacks and coats in the lobby

## Fantastical, Political

Decorative traditions are not neutral. The shimmer of gold leaf or the appeal of a marbled pattern can provide the impetus to look a bit closer. Beneath the shiny surface of an attractive object, political content can lurk. **Fantastical, Political** will feature the work of five contemporary New England artists in order to examine the use of “fantastical” aesthetics—conceived here as extravagant, ornamental, or, in certain instances, surreal—to address multidimensional political themes.

“Fantastical” encapsulates a breadth of meanings that range from incredible to absurd, to the romantic, marvelous, implausible, or unreal. The “political” in art stretches far beyond themes related to governmental affairs. In art, it has long delved into questions tied to the role of individuals acting in relation to policy, institutionally defined norms, established power structures, and identity. The artists featured in **Fantastical, Political** use the lure of material culture and the extravagant to drive dialogues on gender, ecology, national identity, and war.

Some artists borrow design from decorative heritage. The references weight the object in the past or ground them in the everyday. Mohamad Hafez, for example, uses a wide range of materials, including found ones, to create impressions of the ruins that define the look of a new urban environment in Syria. He crafts structures that are an overwhelming mix of rubble with glimpses of the ornamentation of traditional architectural and interior design. Dinorá Justice integrates marbled strips of canvas into her paintings of female nudes—appropriated from historical paintings—to link and critique conventional musings on femininity and nature. Marbling, a decorative technique in itself, plays against other traditions that Justice cites, some even connecting to her native Brazil. Ecological realities like genetic mutation and the demilitarized zone in Korea inspire Joo Lee Kang’s extravagant pen and ink drawings. The elaborate drawings visually recall Baroque aesthetics—layered and lavish. Others take inspiration from material culture to show the absurdity of lived circumstances. For instance, Dave Cole makes baby clothes from Kevlar, linking the economy of war to childhood experience and consumer products. Cynthia Consentino modifies knickknacks to respond to how religion and fairy tales shape ideals of femininity. In **Fantastical, Political** the “fantastical” is leveraged as political commentary.

**Fantastical, Political**, organized by FAM’s Curator Lisa Crossman and Koch Curatorial Fellow Lauren Szumita, will be on view through June 3, 2018. This exhibition has been supported by a grant from the Artist’s Resource Trust.



## About Fantastical, Political

**Dates:** February 11 – June 3, 2018

### Exhibition Components

- Contemporary paintings, drawings, installations, and sculptures by five artists
  - Styles range from realistic to abstract to surrealistic;
  - Artists: Dave Cole, Cynthia Consentino, Mohamad Hafez, Dinorá Justice, Joo Lee Kang

### Themes

- How do artists represent concerns about social and political issues? What is the relationship between the artwork's message and its technique and style?
- Gender roles, nationalism, war, gun violence, forced migration, ecology, power

### Of Interest to Art Classes

- These artworks are great examples of:
  - Using “everyday” materials for making art (ball point pens, dollar bills, etc.);
  - How the material can affect the content/message;
  - Pattern and collage;
  - Use of molds;
  - Appropriation of historical artworks;
  - Metaphor;
  - Artworks that raise questions more than they provide answers

### Of Interest to Other Subjects

These artworks are great starting points for discussing:

- War and forced migration; how the Syrian war is represented in our news media
- How gender roles are enforced by everyday objects, money, experiences, and who had power in history; How do oppressed people reclaim power?
- Ecological degradation caused by disease and pollution
- Gun violence in society

### Learning Lounge Components

Didactic Labels:

- Examples of Western Political Art
- Artists' Strategy: Appropriation
- Artists' Strategy: Juxtaposition

*continued*

## Learning Lounge Components, continued

### Artists' Process Profiles

In addition to the labels in this packet, artists' sections include items and information specific to his or her process or artworks:

- Dave Cole - Touchable sample of Kevlar, small-scale model of *The Music Box* and *The Knitting Machine*, pictures of wigs he used for inspiration, sample of knitted dollar bill, WWII hand grenade, museum booklet about Dave Cole
- Cynthia Consentino – One-half of the mold she used for *Girls with Guns*, pictures of her casting and handbuilding processes, inspirational objects, book titled Confrontational Ceramics in which she is profiled
- Mohamad Hafez – Pictures of his storage area with art materials, statistics about the Syrian civil war, photograph from Boston Globe newspaper showing a bombed out building in Syria
- Dinorá Justice – Touchable marbled canvases and flower pot, label showing the paintings she appropriated, case with her tools and samples of marbled fabrics
- Joo Lee Kang – Label about one of her works titled *Camouflage*, label about deforming factors affecting frogs, label showing wallpaper samples, book titled Ball Point Pen in which she is profiled

### Interactive Components

- What's Your Reaction? -- Writing activity
- Pattern Play with Paintings – Trace patterns onto outlines of portraits of women (based on Dinorá Justice's works)
- Dice and Splice – Words on dice tell participants what to draw
- Thimbles to Symbols – On a magnet board, pair words with objects and pictures
- Videos
  - Marbling demonstration (partial)
  - Mohamad Hafez in his studio
  - Aerial footage of the city of Homs, Syria





## Fantastical, Political

### During Your Visit: Suggestions for Writing Activities

(In accordance with MA State English Language Arts Writing Standards)

Artworks and exhibitions are natural catalysts for writing of all forms:

**Opinion Writing** – Supporting a point of view with reasons and information

- Would you recommend visiting this exhibition to a friend, why or why not?
- Which artwork do you think is the most effective in conveying a message about a political or social issue, and why?
- Compare two artworks and persuade the reader why one tells you more about the subject than the other.

**Informational/explanatory Writing** – Examining a topic and conveying ideas and information clearly

- Explain the purpose of political art, what topics have been promoted or protested, and how words or slogans relate to the images;
- Compare artworks by two of the artists in the exhibition;
- Imagine you are talking to someone who cannot see this exhibition and describe one artwork in great detail.

**Narrative Writing**

- Write quick notes about part of your visit to the Fitchburg Art Museum in the order that events occur, including conversations, new ideas you learn, and things you see. Develop your notes into a narrative description back in the classroom.
- Find two artworks near each other and write an imaginary dialogue between them.
- Write a story describing how one of the artworks inspired a law to be changed.

**Stories, Poems, and Scripts using Similes and Metaphors**

- Look at several artworks and generate a list of similes and metaphors for each. Use these lists to write a poem about one artwork or the exhibition as a whole.
- Think of the exhibition like a zoo. Pick one artwork; what kind of animal would it be? Write a paragraph or poem that describes the artwork in terms of that animal's characteristics using similes and metaphors.



## Fantastical, Political

### Vocabulary

**Abstract** – Non-representational.

**Appropriation** – See label in this packet

**Contemporary** – Belonging to, occurring in, or living in the present

**Casting** – Reproducing an object by using a mold of it.

**DMZ** – De-militarized Zone between North and South Korea

**Juxtaposition** – See label in this packet

**Kevlar** – Strong, plastic fiber woven tightly together and layered for added strength. Heat and bullet resistant.

**Marbling** – A method of aqueous surface design, which can produce patterns similar to smooth marble or other kinds of stone. The patterns are the result of color floated on either plain water or a viscous solution known as size, and then carefully transferred to an absorbent surface, such as paper or fabric.

**Mixed Media** – A combination of two or more art materials.

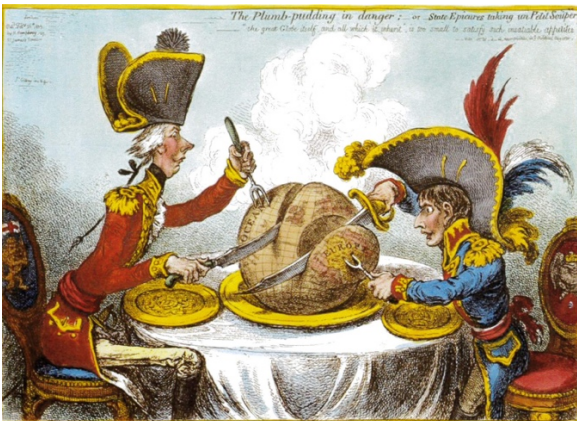
# Examples of Western Political Art Through Time

## Ejemplos del arte político occidental a lo largo del tiempo

**Political art** --art that criticized, protested, or brought awareness to government actions or social issues— wasn't common until the 1700s, when it took the form of engraved illustrations similar to cartoons.

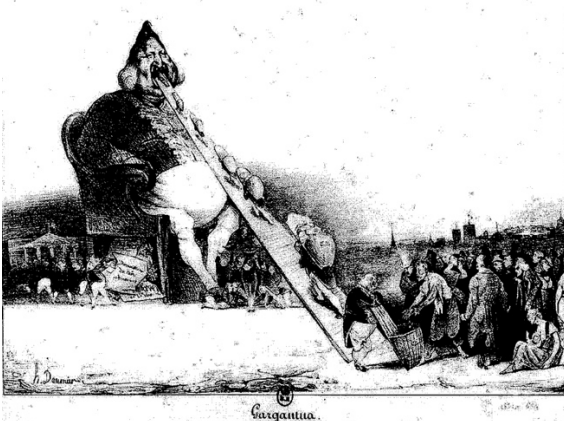


**El arte político** —un arte que criticaba, protestaba o creaba conciencia sobre actos del gobierno o problemas sociales— no fue común hasta la década de 1700, cuando tomó la forma de ilustraciones hechas en grabado, parecidas a caricaturas o historietas.



William Hogarth  
*The Plum Pudding in Danger*, 1805

*El pudín de ciruelas en peligro*



Honoré Daumier  
*Gargantua*, 1831

*Gargantúa*

In the twentieth century, art was used as propaganda to both support and protest wars.



En el siglo XX, el arte se usó como propaganda tanto para apoyar como para protestar contra la guerra.



Charles R. Macauley,  
*You! Buy a Liberty Bond  
Lest I Perish*, 1917  
*Tú, compra un bono de la  
libertad para que yo no muera*



J. Howard Miller  
*We Can Do It!*, 1943  
*¡Podemos hacerlo!*



Kathe Kollwitz  
*The Survivors*, 1923  
*Los sobrevivientes*



,Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937



Lorraine Schneider,  
*War is not healthy for  
children and other living  
things*, 1966

*La guerra no es saludable  
para los niños ni los  
demás seres vivientes*



James Rosenquist  
*F-111*, 1964-65



Edward Kienholz,  
*The Portable War  
Memorial*, 1968

*Monumento de  
guerra portátil*

Political art often comments on social issues of the times.

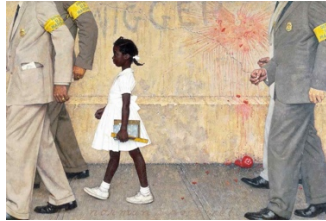


El arte político a menudo hace comentarios sobre los problemas sociales de la época.



William Sanger, *Vote American Labor Party Roosevelt and Lehman*, 1936

*Vote por el Partido Laboral Estadounidense Roosevelt y Lehman*



Norman Rockwell, *The Problem We All Live With*, 1964

*El problema con el que todos vivimos*



Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground)*, 1989

*Sin título (Tu cuerpo es un de campo de batalla)*



Keith Haring, *Ignorance=Fear*, 1989

*Ignorancia=Miedo*



Shepard Fairey, *Love Unites*, 2008

*El amor une*



Kara Walker, *Pretty Sure I've Made This Work Before, But It Warrants Retelling*, 2016

*Seguro que ya hice esta obra antes, pero merece volver a contarse*



# Artists' Strategy: Juxtaposition

## Estrategia del Artista: Yuxtaposición



Dave Cole, *Three Generations*, 2013  
functional hand-turned hardwood and sterling silver baby rattles  
Dave Cole, *Tres generaciones*, 2013  
sonajas de bebé funcionales, en madera noble torneada y plata esterlina

### Juxtaposition

Two or more things or ideas that are placed close together for comparison or contrast to stimulate thinking or create new meanings.

In visual art, the contrast can be between the way two subjects are combined, or between the subject and the style or material with which it is represented.

In *Three Generations*, Dave Cole combines historical hand grenades, baby rattles, and luxury materials (silver and a fancy presentation box).



### Yuxtaposición

A menudo se colocan juntas dos o más cosas o ideas para compararlas o contrastarlas con el fin de estimular reflexiones o crear significados nuevos.

En las artes visuales, el contraste puede estar en la manera en que se combinan dos temas o entre el tema y el estilo o material que se usa para representarlo.

En *Tres generaciones*, Dave Cole combina granadas de mano según modelos históricos, sonajas de bebé y materiales de lujo (plata y un elegante estuche.)

# Artist's Strategy: Appropriation

## Estrategia del Artista: Apropiación

“To appropriate” means to take something for one’s own use.

In art, **appropriation** is the practice of creating new artworks by taking preexisting images from another source—art history books, advertisements, the media—and transforming or combining them with other images to make a new artwork.

Artists have appropriated images from other artists for hundreds of years, for many purposes.



“Apropiar” significa tomar algo para uso propio.

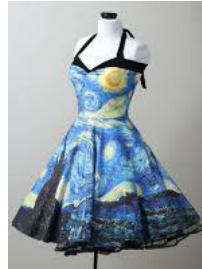
En el arte, **la apropiación** es la práctica de la creación de nuevas obras de arte mediante la adopción de imágenes o referencias existentes de otras fuentes – libros de arte, de historia, anuncios, medios de comunicación-- y su transformación o su combinación con otras imágenes para hacer una nueva obra de arte.

Los artistas se han apropiado de las imágenes de otros artistas por cientos de años, para diversos propósitos

*Continued*

**As source material for a  
new creation**

**Como material de origen  
para una nueva creación**



*Starry, Starry Night* by Van Gogh, 1889,  
and contemporary dress printed with  
similar image

*La Noche Estrellada* por Van Gogh, 1889,  
y un vestido pintado con una imagen  
similar

**To comment on  
society and art**

**Para opinar sobre la  
sociedad y el arte**



*The Charging Chasseur*, by Théodore  
Géricault, 1812 on the left,

*Officer of the Hussars*, Kehinde Wiley,  
2007 on the right

*La Ataque del Cazador*, por Théodore  
Géricault, 1812 a la izquierda  
*Oficial de los Húsares*, por Kehinde  
Wiley, 2007 a la derecho



# Dave Cole



## **Music Box, 2012**

Caterpillar CS-553 Vibratory Roller-Compactor  
with cherry wood, spring steel, and United States  
National Anthem (arranged for steamroller)

## **Caja de música, 2012**

compactadora de rodillo vibratorio Caterpillar  
CS-553 con madera de cerezo, acero elástico e  
himno de Estados Unidos (en arreglo para  
aplanadora)

Creative, unlikely, and even humorous combinations of materials and objects come together to symbolize political/social commentary in Dave Cole's artworks. Their meanings can be ambiguous: Is the steamroller a symbol of American industrial productivity or American bullying in global affairs? Is an empty evening dress made of dollars just a beautiful gown, or an allusion to the price of beauty in dollars and emotional shallowness? You decide.



En sus obras, Dave Cole hace combinaciones de materiales y objetos, que pueden ser creativas, extrañas e incluso divertidas, para representar comentarios políticos y sociales. Su significado puede ser ambiguo: ¿Será que la aplanadora es un símbolo de la productividad industrial de Estados Unidos, o del acoso que practica este país en los asuntos internacionales? ¿Un vestido de noche vacío, hecho de dólares, es sólo un traje hermoso, o es una alusión al precio de la belleza en dólares y frivolidad? Tú decides.

# Cynthia Consentino



**Girls with Guns, 2010-14**  
polyester resin, auto paint

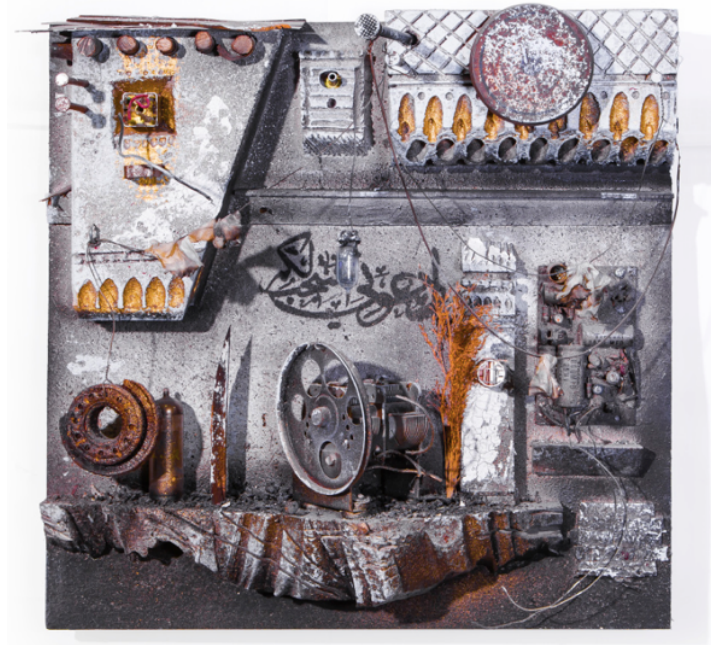
**Niñas con pistolas, 2010-14**  
resina de poliéster, pintura de automóvil

By molding and sculpting figures, modifying knickknacks, and making references to toys, Cynthia Consentino criticizes the roles children, especially girls, are taught through religion, fairy tales, and toys.



Cynthia Consentino esculpe y modela figuras, modifica chucherías y hace alusión a juguetes para criticar los roles que se enseñan a los niños, sobre todo a las niñas, a través de la religión, los cuentos de hadas y los juguetes.

# Mohamad Hafez



## **from Reflections, 2016**

plaster, paint, found objects, rigid foam,  
brass, antique radio bulbs

## **de Reflexiones, 2016**

yeso, pintura, objetos encontrados,  
espuma rígida, latón, bombillas antiguos  
del radios

Trained as an architect, Mohamad Hafez carefully builds his miniature dioramas using art supplies and found materials. The details give us a glimpse into the beauty of his Syrian culture, but the complete images express tragedy: destruction, loss, forced migration, and homesickness.



Mohamad Hafez, quien es arquitecto, construye cuidadosamente sus dioramas en miniatura con materiales de arte u objetos encontrados. Los detalles nos dan una idea de la belleza de su cultura siria, pero en conjunto las imágenes expresan una tragedia: destrucción, pérdida, migración forzada, y nostalgia.

# Dinorá Justice



**Portrait Five – after Delacroix  
Reclining Odalisque, 2017**  
oil and acrylic on canvas

**Retrato cinco – según la odalisca  
reclinada de Delacroix, 2017**  
óleo y acrílico sobre lienzo

Dinorá Justice combines sensuous female forms borrowed from famous paintings with bright, bold patterns and natural settings. The swirling forms of marbled canvas, created by Justice, add to the works' decorative qualities.

The original female forms were usually semi-nude, captured in paintings for the enjoyment of men. Justice considers this tradition a way of dominating women, and connects the domination of women with men's domination of nature. By recreating women and nature in her abstract, decorative style, Justice is reclaiming them from men's control.

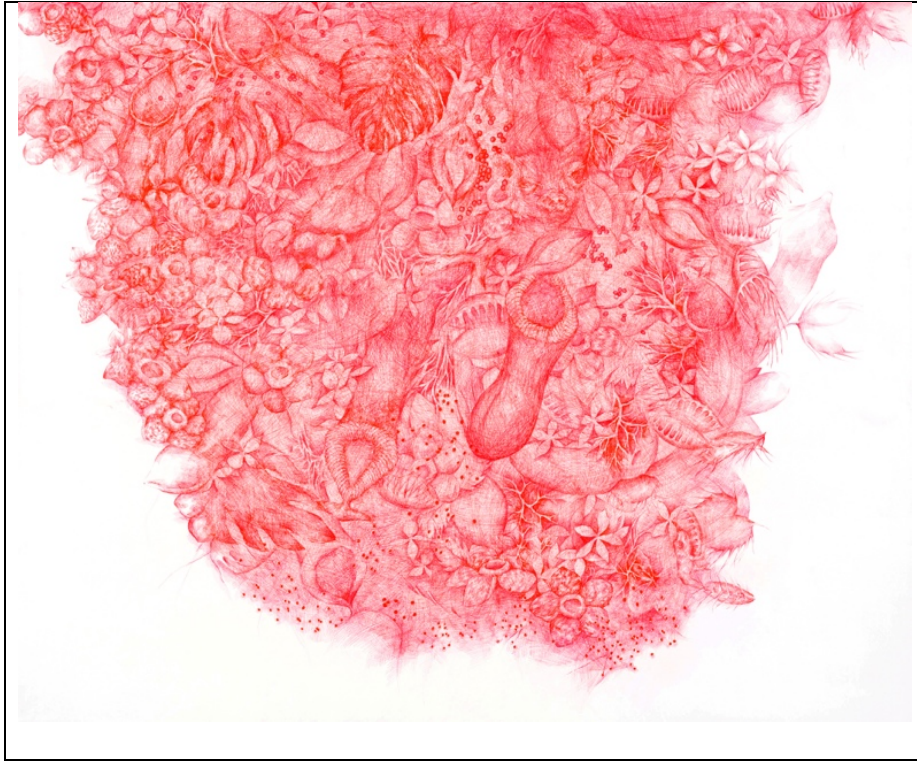


Dinorá Justice toma sensuales figuras femeninas de pinturas famosas y las combina con impactantes diseños de colores vivos y entornos naturales. Las ondulantes formas de los lienzos marmoleados que crea Justice realzan las cualidades decorativas de las obras.

Las figuras femeninas originales estaban por lo general semidesnudas, pintadas para el disfrute de los hombres. Justice considera que esta tradición era una manera de dominar a las mujeres, y asocia el dominio sobre las mujeres con el dominio de los hombres sobre la naturaleza. Al recrear a las mujeres y la naturaleza en su estilo abstracto decorativo, Justice las está rescatando del control masculino.



# Joo Lee Kang



**Twisted Nature #3**, 2017,  
ballpoint pen on canvas

**Naturaleza torcida #3**, 2017  
bolígrafo sobre lienzo

Joo Lee Kang expresses her fascination with nature in the modern era through detailed realistic drawings of plants and animals using a single-color pen. Unlike the 17th-century Dutch still life paintings that inspire her, the nature she depicts often shows the effects of modern industrialization: mutated and deformed creatures she finds pictured in scientific journals and nature.

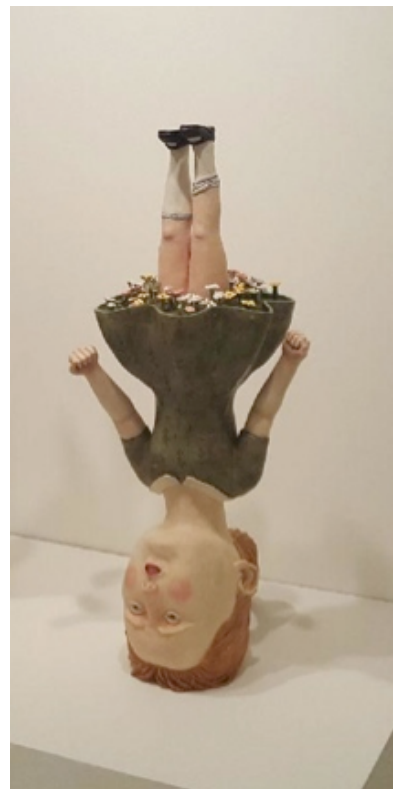


Joo Lee Kang expresa su fascinación por la naturaleza en la era actual a través de detallados dibujos realistas de plantas y animales hechos con bolígrafo de un solo color. A diferencia de las pinturas holandesas de naturalezas muertas del siglo XVII en las cuales se inspira, la naturaleza que ella representa suele mostrar los efectos de la industrialización moderna: criaturas mutantes y deformes que encuentra ilustradas en revistas científicas y en la propia naturaleza.

## More artworks from the exhibition



Dave Cole  
The Money Dress, 2006  
United States currency (\$1124), hand-cut  
and hand-knit, 61 x 13 x 31 inches



Cynthia Consentino  
Topsy-Turvy Daughter, 2017  
stoneware, underglaze, glaze,  
flocking, oils, 46" x 19" x 21"



Dinorá Justice  
Portrait Nine – after Titian and Giorgione Venus of Urbino, 2017, 40" x 60"



Mohamad Hafez  
Hiraeth  
plaster, paint, antique tricycle, found  
objects, rusted metal, antique wood  
veneer, rigid foam  
approx. 55 x 30 x 16 d in



Joo Lee Kang  
The Collection #51  
Ballpoint pen on paper