

## **REMEMBRANCE: A RETROSPECTIVE**

Works By Carol Crawford

# REMEMBRANCE: A RETROSPECTIVE

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Cover artwork: Remembrance by Carol Crawford

Artwork and text: Carol Crawford

This catalog is in conjunction with the first showing of the solo exhibition of  
Remembrance: Retrospective by Carol Crawford at Atlantic Gallery in 2022.



A friend once asked me, **“Why did you become an artist?”** After some thought, I replied, “To invent and to communicate.” I need to explore the psychic as well as the tangible boundaries between reality and illusion, and use whatever technology and materials I can to bridge the difference. This means that the inherent properties of mediums and materials must be investigated to distil their symbolic values and associations.

I also feel strongly that we, as a society, should revere artists and all artistic effort wherever found, if we value life. Perhaps it is a truism that the degree to which a society values its children, its women, its elderly, its environment, and the quality of life for all on this planet is indicative of how much that society is truly able to understand and value the creative process.

“Ultimately, communication through metaphor is my goal; it is sharing on the deepest level with others. For me, the creative process is akin to giving birth, with all the effort, hope, struggle and joy. You shape and love what results; you give it to the world.

I consider materials as powerfully evocative as color and imagery because of their associative powers. I select and combine them according to the message I wish to convey. Likewise, the medium I choose to work with, whether photography, painting, graphics, three-dimensional construction, lighting, etc., has both an aesthetic and evocative purpose. Exploring new media and materials is one of the joys of my creative work.”

ARTIST STATEMENT

Reviewing my creative work for a retrospective has been far more difficult than I ever imagined. Nothing is disconnected from living a life. Each work has called up many memories and stories. As a consequence, I have included my recollection of the visual inspiration for each piece to share; In fact, the narrative has evolved into a brief autobiography

The catalog for this Retrospective is organized chronologically, according to the dates in which the art pieces were produced over eight decades. A friend once asked me, “Why did you become an artist?” After some thought, I replied, “To invent and to communicate.” I need to explore the psychic as well as the tangible boundaries between reality and illusion, and use whatever technology and materials I can to bridge the difference. This has inspired me to use a wide variety of mediums and materials to distill their symbolic values and associations for the theme or subject I am pursuing.

BACKGROUND OF ARTIST: DIVERSITY

**My strong interest in creating pictures began** when I was about six years old, while watching my father as he worked at his standing drafting table. He was a gifted artist and calligrapher. who took on commercial sign work after his regular hours designing schedules for the local transit company in Buffalo, New York. He designed and created everything from huge outdoor billboards and storefront

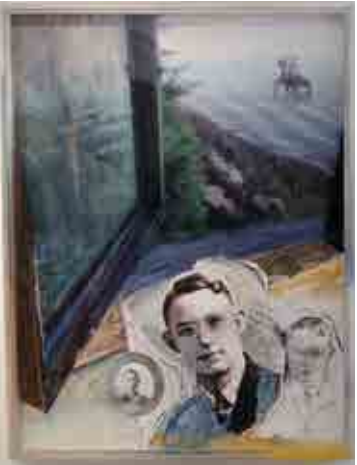
window signs to hand-lettered directory lists for apartment house lobbies. I was fascinated with the beautiful calligraphy he produced with pen and ink.

**I remember the very moment I began to try my own hand at picture-making:** on this particular occasion, as I stood on tip-toe to watch my father work, my eyes were inches away from his hands, and fixated on the beautiful lines he was making with the tip of his pen. I said, “I wish I could do that!”

My father stopped working, looked down at me, and answered, “Here. Try it!”...and handed me a bottle of India ink and a beautiful sable brush, neither of which I had ever touched before. I immediately found some paper, sat down on the basement floor, and began to draw.

**My father was also a great story-teller,** and it was his vivid stories of his “young life” growing up in Canada, and his summers spent on a relative’s dairy farm, which enchanted my imagination and undoubtedly led to my love of the spoken word and history.

**Along with his love of drawing, he was an avid photographer,** and owned a beautiful Kodak bellows camera. He loved photographing people, using special lighting that he set up. It seems that my love of documenting with a camera, rather than a sketch pad, was inspired this way. I



THE ARTIST, 2014



Fran at 40.



Frances at about 18



Rosa, my maternal grandmother, left; Antoinette, center; Mary, right.



The triplets at age 65

observed early on, however, that strangers are uncomfortable with someone looking at them through a camera, but are quite accepting of an artist who is drawing. Whenever I documented artists at work in their studios, I sat quietly merely watching them until they became comfortable and ignored me, before I began to take photographs. My Nikon became a constant companion.

My father’s name was Frederick Llewelyn Crawford. He was born in 1908 in Port Dalhousie, Canada, on the northern shore of Lake Ontario, and grew up in Toronto. His mother was Welsh; his father a Scotsman from New York and Michigan where the Crawford family also has roots. (The Crawfords are a huge clan). He loved fishing and canoeing in the wilderness area adjacent to Lake Superior and along the rivers of southern Ontario.

In 1929, when he became twenty-one, Fred decided to emigrate to Buffalo, New York, and assume his American citizenship. There he met and married the girl next door, Frances Martha Hereth, my mother. She was born in Buffalo into a German family.

My maternal grandmother, Rosa Demske, emigrated to Buffalo in 1881 from the Baltic Sea region near Gdansk, Poland, an area then known as Prussia, near the Russian border. Germany as a political entity did not yet exist. Rosa arrived as part of a family of eight on the steamship Anchoria from Belfast to New York; Rosa was an identical twin in a set of three-year old triplet sisters.





Demske-Hereth wedding, 1905; The delicate white gowns shown in the wedding photograph were most likely made by the Hereths.



Adam and Rosa

During the long journey, the triplets became ill with Scarlet Fever, and Rosa's identical twin in the triplet birth became deaf. It was this sister, Mary, who became a farm wife in Lockport New York, and raised a large family; she was also a skilled watercolor artist.



REMEMBRANCE, 2014, The two people in this work are Adam Hereth's parents, my great-grandparents

Everyone learned sign language to help Mary communicate; and my grandmother taught it to me before I started elementary school.

In the church parish in which the Demske family settled, Rosa met and married Adam Hereth, who had emigrated from Alsace-Lorraine, an area of Prussia bordering France.

A great many Alsatians immigrated to the United States from 1820 to 1850, and a large number of them settled in Buffalo. Adam's father, a hardy man with red hair, arrived in Buffalo in the mid-19th century and began working as a carpenter with his brothers. Adam eventually joined his uncles to work as a carpenter, also, and he became a gifted woodworker.



The oak rocker, shown above, was made by Adam Hereth as a wedding gift for his bride, Rosa Demske



Saengerfest Parade in Buffalo 1883: celebration of the many singing societies in the Buffalo German community.

The Demskes were a family of tailors. The Hereths were carpenters.

Adam also excelled as a singer. As the story was told to me many times by my grandmother Rosa Demske Hereth, Adam died very young of an apparent heart attack at age 35 in 1915. It happened without warning while he was rehearsing for an operetta that was to be performed at Easter. His sudden death left his wife of 10 years and four children, ages 1-8 years old, destitute. My mother Francesca (Frances) was then six years old. She adored her father and was profoundly affected by losing him, mourning him at Easter every year of her life afterward. She particularly remembered his creative skill, and always encouraged education and art in her own family.



SISTER 1952:  
Drawing for application portfolio



SEDER, 1956: one in series of oil paintings for my BFA thesis

This tragedy had long-ranging consequences: when Frances turned fourteen, she was taken out of school, which she loved, and required to get her working papers so she could work full-time to help support her family of five: her mother and four siblings. Despite her lack of formal education, she was gifted in math. She eventually headed the Payroll Department of the Curtiss-Wright Aircraft Corporation in Buffalo. She worked full-time until her retirement in her Sixties in 1974.

Music has also been a powerful inspiration in our family: my mother's youngest sister, Catherine, was a jazz pianist, and my youngest daughter, Caitlin, studied opera and became a professional singer. For me, music provides a deep source of enjoyment that is equal to visual creation.

**My entrance portfolio for the Albright Art School at the University of Buffalo (now integrated into SUNY /Buffalo)** was composed almost entirely of line drawings. Although I became a painting and art history major in college, painting was never my first choice of art form. I loved color intensely, but didn't quite know what to do with it: form was more important, and uniting color with form became my biggest challenge. I stubbornly avoided critiques of my painting thesis from my adviser, Seymour Drumlevitch, until the month before graduation. Struggling alone, I found my way at last: lines became color and form.

Theater and set design had also been a passion of mine through high school and university. To me, plays were stories in 3-D; creating stage environments for actors was like

illustrating stories. I learned photography on my own and soon turned exclusively to color photography to document and study nature. Eventually, I experimented with three-dimensional constructions and design, all of which helped



me to create the layered art forms I now use.

After earning a B.F.A. in painting from

the University of Buffalo, I was awarded a Woodrow Wilson Fellowship that enabled me to undertake a Master's degree in art history at Columbia University Graduate School, and pursue my interest in symbolism and culture through a



Water Chevrotain

study of the art of traditional native societies and small, regional cultures around the world, especially in Africa. My Master's thesis, The Mask Complex of Northeast Liberia, dealt with the role of masks in the transmission of

tradition, style, and symbolic meaning.

It was the form of the tribal art I studied that changed

my thinking: the sculpture was primarily wood and monochromatic. Shape, and therefore outline, gave character to individual tribal styles; color... if at all... was secondary. Likewise, the faces and bodies of the people who created the art, affected by their often unusual and difficult environments and lives, fascinated me. There was great beauty in their otherness. Many native peoples used feathers, animal skins, beads and shells as part of their clothing. They commonly employed body-painting. The very physical nature of their activities...on the water, in the forest, during the ceremonial punctuation of their daily lives...was reflective of their material existence and of their particular environment. daily lives...was reflective of their material existence and of their particular environment.



Probably the most satisfying discovery I made was my identification of the tiny carved horn crowns on some of the masks. I visited the zoo and studied the tiny gazelles

and other hoofed mammals inhabiting the rainforest. My somewhat unorthodox methodology paid off: I got evidence of the tiny, shy Water Chevrotain, which submerges and swims underwater when frightened, and is considered magical. Stories about it exist among the tribes in Liberia and Ivory Coast; these carvings lent power and mystery to the mask and to the dancer who wore it.

Studying work created by artists whose language I did not know, and of which little was written, drove me to understand art without words or explanations, and ultimately became the backbone of my teaching. The topic of my thesis centered on the symbolism of the masks made by tribal artists of Northeast Liberia, in West Africa.

I found that these richly diverse, regional societies are perfect laboratories for gaining insight into why and how artists develop a purely visual language. No written explanation of their symbols existed; instead, art forms were passed down by an oral and hands-on tradition, closely bound to the earth and spiritual life, a tradition of art training quite different from my own. It was necessary to rely on field studies in collateral disciplines such as anthropology, geography and zoology to understand their symbolic meaning and the development of regional styles. Each society developed art forms that were unique and visually powerful as communication. The role of the artist was shamanic, revered, and necessary for the community's well-being.

All these studies left a lasting impression on my thinking as a studio artist, and fueled my desire to become an educator.

They have shaped my approach to teaching about the creative process as, "the Art of Seeing".

Teaching for me has been a labor of love. Perhaps it truly began by my teaching my younger sister to read; she is eight and a half years



Shown above: children's class, Jamaica Art Center, Queens, NYC

my junior. I designed a rebus for her when I was still in elementary school. A rebus is a storybook in which the nouns and verbs are tiny pictures.

Most of my teaching, however, has been at the college level; but I also worked within the New York City Public Schools as a guest artist-educator from 1968-69 in a program called L.E.A.P., created to address the strengths of both gifted and learning-disabled children from kindergarten through grade nine. In each school where I was resident from three to six weeks, I designed projects that could teach a variety of subjects, from social studies and history to science and math, in a way that combined linear learning with visual learning.

From 1970-1972 I did documentary photography and curatorial work as a staff member of The Creative Artists Public Service Program/ CAPS, which was a grant organization





in New York State from 1970-1981. The program offered fellowships to individual creative artists in New York State to create new works of art or to complete works in progress designed to provide artistic services of direct benefit to New York State communities. Many, like Faith Ringgold, went on to become very well-known.

In 1974 I was awarded a **CAPS grant**, which I used to create a visual learning experience through continuous slide projections I called "The Art of Seeing". It was designed specifically for the newly-opened **Jamaica Center for Arts and Culture in Jamaica, Queens**.

From 1978-86, I revived the concept as The Visiting Artists Creative Project for my children's local elementary school, P.S. 144 in Forest Hills, Queens. The artists, who worked and performed with children every month, were selected from all creative fields and were paid through grants I was able to obtain from the Queens Council on the Arts and New York State.

**The day after I filed my Master's thesis in 1961, I registered for a course offered at Columbia University Teachers College in lithography...**a printmaking method entirely new to me which afforded me an exciting new way back to studio work, which I craved, and which changed my life.

I eagerly turned from the cerebral intensity of academic research to the physical involvement of a year of lithography workshops at the Pratt Graphics Art Center and the Bob Blackburn Studios in Manhattan. I fell in love with the process of printing from limestone block; it is a beautiful surface on which to draw and paint. The process of stone lithography also ultimately provided a way for me to meld form and color: each color requires the integration of a new layer and image. Stone lithography is strenuous; it involves meticulous grinding and preparing a series of limestone surfaces on which each image is created. Final color is achieved by printing in layers, mixing inks in various transparencies, then learning how to achieve the desired hue and image by aligning and layering each printing run. It is "anticipatory" color-mixing, and quite different from what I learned as a painter.

In the 1960's, when I began lithography, very few artists outside major university art departments were hand-printing their own lithographs, and it was difficult to get equipment, let alone non-commercial artist-quality color inks. I located and purchased an old Senefelder lithographic proof press and limestone printing blocks in Boston and Buffalo, and had them shipped to my new home in the San Francisco Bay Area. I set up a printmaking studio, taught lithography at Stanford University, art history and design at



Working at my litho press, in my California studio, 1963-7



First stone lithograph, 1961



The Red Window. Ca. 1964

Foothill College, and joined a gallery.

By this time, color lithography and life-sized figurative drawings had become the central focus of my studio work; my photography, inspired by the visual magnificence of western landscape and light, became the conduit through which I could explore abstract form and color.

After returning to New York City, I continued my teaching at Queens College, then at Queensborough Community College, where I also became Acting Director of the QCC Gallery.

Eventually, I joined Viridian Gallery in Manhattan and extended my arts advocacy beyond the classroom and lecture hall, helping to establish the first artist-run gallery in Queens, The Exhibitionists, and participating in the establishment and growth of the then-newly-opened Jamaica Center for Art and Culture. I joined a non-profit artist's organization, The Jamaica Art Mobilization/ J.A.M., the brain-child of a dear friend and colleague, Florence Siegel.



community of Queens, where I have now lived most of my life. In 1987, I joined another artists' non-profit, the Long Island City Artists, Inc, eventually becoming a Board Member and then

Between 1972 and 1978 my husband and I began growing our family of four children, two of whom were born in New York City and two of whom were adopted from Korea. Creating a family opened my eyes to the

President. From 1987 to 2008 my studio was part of LICArtlofts, Inc, one of the earliest factory-loft gallery complexes located in Long Island City.



**Painting, drawing and photography merged into what became mixed media constructions in a sudden visual "epiphany" during one cross-country flight; and all the skills and methods I had acquired came together, leading me into a new direction as an artist:**

*"It was a brilliant, sunny day at 40,000 feet over Colorado, when I looked down, out of the airplane's window, and saw, with new insight, the transparent layers of cloud formations, each scudding in its own direction and pattern across the undulating earth below.*



*I began to make tiny sketches on a cocktail napkin...how could I capture what I saw and communicate its depth and complexity in a work of art? Layers. Depth. It had to be in three dimensions, not two.*





PEBBLE BEACH, 1967



SAN GREGORIO CREEK, 1967



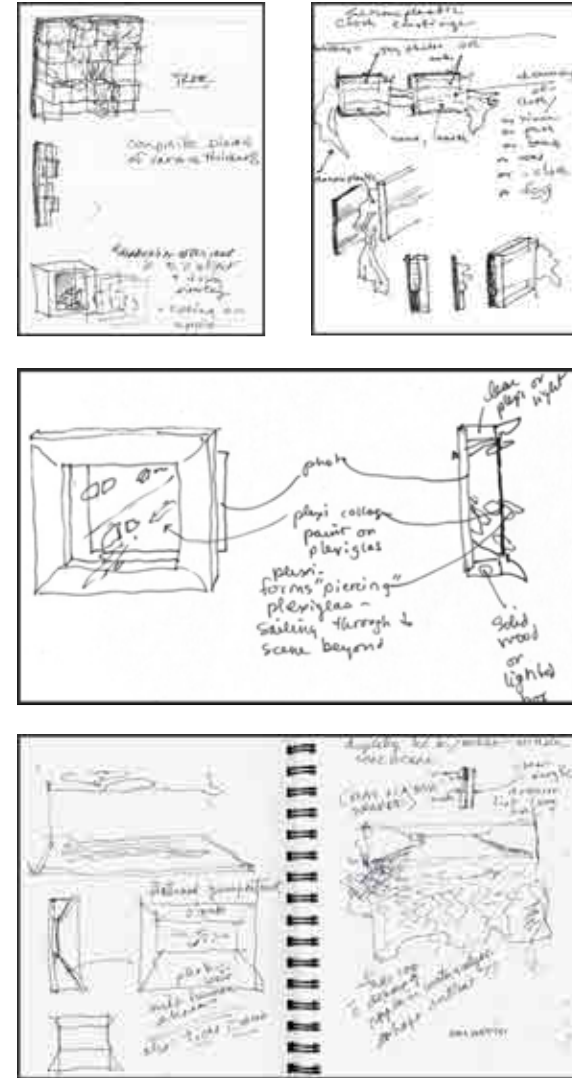
PEBBLE BEACH (detail)



Pebble Beach is a small state preserve on the Pacific coast in Pescadero, CA



San Gregorio Creek pours into the Pacific Ocean south of San Francisco, California



FLIGHT, 1978, photographs on paper, monoprints on cut Plexiglass glued to a dark mirror in which they cast reflections simulating great height.

This was the first work I created after that cross-country flight, and the beginning of developing my mixed media constructions.





**The life-sized figurative drawings** I had been doing became ripped out of frame and context and, encased in Plexiglas forms, were partly free-standing or two-sided. They shared in the same environmental space as their viewers, casting their own shadows. They often appeared to move as the viewer passed by. Now, instead of trapping a moment in past time, the works shared the moment in real time with the viewer.

In both of these drawings, line and shadow imply a ground within the work, the last vestige of a traditional approach in my drawings of the human figure. The lack of a traditional frame frees the figures, however, instead of creating a boundary between the work and its surrounding environment



Shown left: RED HEAD, 1970



Shown right: DANCER AT REST, 1970



SEATED FIGURES, 1970; compressed charcoal on paper, 39" x 55"



MUSINGS, 32"H x 25"W x 11"D, mixed media construction



**Frames now became containers**, painted on all surfaces, extending the photo image within into artist-controlled space; small constructions grew into entire sets and installations in which dancers and actors moved.



KOSCIUSKO BRIDGE, 15" wide x 11.5" high x 6" depth, mixed media construction



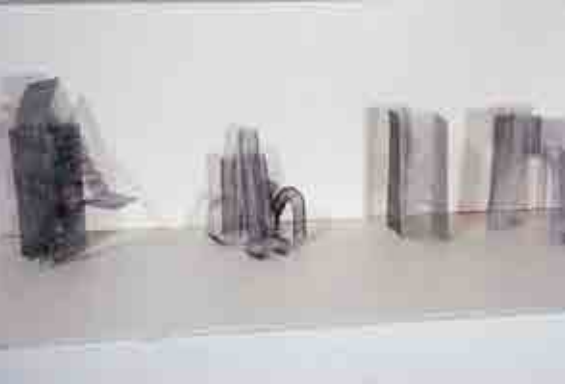
SATANIC MILLS [Closed And Opened]. 20"W x 30"H x 4"D, mixed media construction



HIDE AND SEEK, 32"H x 25"W x 11"D, mixed media construction

**"MEMORY GHOSTS"** a multimedia dance performance setting with Sheila Kaminsky Dancers, partly funded by a grant from the Queens Council on the Arts, shown in Queens Museum, University of Buffalo, in New York City at various venues and at and at the Edinburgh Festival, Scotland

**CITY VISIONS** was a multi-media exhibition at the QCC GALLERY, Queensborough Community College in Queens, NYC. A special dark room was provided for visitors to enter and become literally surrounded by architectural shapes and colors. The projections were of my documentary photographs taken of neighborhoods throughout the borough of Queens, NYC.



Maquette for full-scale pieces which became the interchangeable set pieces for both productions.



Sculptural Setting



Memory Ghosts 1988-9



City Visions

**I began to use a wider variety of materials**, whatever best conveyed the metaphor I wanted to develop: thermoplastic, metal mesh, aircraft aluminum, wood, acrylics. Every medium became an option: photography, paint, monoprint, engraving, projections, sound, movement. With the support of numerous grants, I collaborated with actors, musicians and dancers to create original theater pieces; my sculptural work grew into life-size installations and performance pieces.



(left to right above) installation and sculptural setting for "INSIDE/OUTSIDES" at the Jamaica arts Center, November-December, 1987; wood, thermoplastic fabric, metal, cotton padding, acrylic paint

**From there, it was just another step into the world of interior design and architecture:** the creation of functional, evocative, interior spaces in which real people could live and work.

After earning a second Master’s degree, this time in Interior Design from Pratt Institute in 1995, I established my own design firm, CAROL CRAWFORD ENVIRONMENTS, inc., and became a Licensed New York State Interior Designer as well as a LEED Accredited Professional, specializing in sustainable interior design, planning and murals. Since then, I have combined environmental design with teaching, writing and studio work.

In 1999 I joined the faculty of the Interior Design Department at Pratt Institute, teaching both graduate and undergraduate courses in color, materials, and sustainable design until 2014.

The range of interior design projects I have undertaken include designs and murals for hospitals, office complexes, residences, and schools. In the ensuing years I also designed two collaborative art galleries in Manhattan: Viridian on West 57th Street in 1980, and Atlantic on West 28th Street in 2012.

I have also curated and assembled art exhibitions of the work of hundreds of Queens artists under the auspices of the Long Island City Artists, inc./LIC-A, inc., as an active member since 1987 and as President from 2011to the present.

**REMEMBRANCE: A RETROSPECTIVE** is my seventh solo exhibition at Atlantic Gallery since I became a member in 2010.

[www.carol-crawford.com](http://www.carol-crawford.com)



Viridian Gallery



Atlantic Gallery

## COMMENTARIES

“Unlike windows that painters were once advised to emulate with their own frames, these constructions are more like doors through which one can pass to enter the landscapes they contain.”

*[Arnold Berleant, catalog essay, City Visions, solo exhibition & performances, QCC Gallery, Queensborough Community college, C.U.N.Y., 1988.]*

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“... Her blending of photographs, line, color, wood, Plexiglas, earth, sand, stone, and any new materials or techniques which will enrich her story, has made her artistic evolution a symphony of evocative events in which I, as a viewer, am fully engaged: with my own fantasy, with my own questions, as well as hers. Crawford dares to invent and risk today as she did decades ago when her figurative work, now shown once again, first truly came to life.”

*[Ragnar Naess is a professional potter and sculptor who is also deeply engaged in diverse blending of art, music and writing.]*

“From childhood to maturity our aesthetics are determined by an emotional and intellectual connection with our surroundings, formed by our childhood encounters in places where we experienced both wonder and fear. Spaces (and objects) have associative value. Carol Crawford recaptures the allusive undertones of her habitat, layering photographs with drawing to create a more genuine experience, fusing past and present. This intellectual process is arduous but seemingly simple when her results are so effective. Matisse, in a letter of 1948, spoke of the apparent ease of his own art. He said, “this slow and painful work is indispensable.” Crawford explores this tough psychological terrain and creates environments which evoke pages of a personal journal.”

*Introduction To Time Frames*  
*Faustino Quintanilla, Director Of The Qcc Gallery, City University Of New York*

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“Carol Crawford is a force, a force that is essentially physical or organic and, while a suggestion, an excitation; also operates in a territory of those who are involved in it and have to share and witness her work. But it has, at the same time, a purpose,



a merely communication, as long as we assume, of course, that this communicative dimension will be irreparably stained a power of suggestion and drive passes through both conscious and unconscious determinations, which makes reaching areas of expressiveness and visual precision unsuspected, while define power relations or recruitment, monitoring and authority for which the same phenomenon of transmission capacity, repetition and registration is of crucial importance. The artist's vision reaffirms the process of creation became volumetric, exploring passion, freedom, hope, but also fear, vulnerability, the states of pain are difficult to explain. "Her figures offer no place with which to bind them in time or story. Her personal expression jumps into the universal; the emergence of her strong woman defined sensuality freely celebrates, delights and even terrorize". On the other hand, the artwork can be open to spontaneity, as casual, and extraordinary, as unquantified, interaction with others, to highlight the ability of storytelling and transformation.

Crawford responded to a developed skill and craft to the handling of material which enters the essence of it, offering unusual aspects in conjunction with the heterodox ideas and objects, defining relational art as having a theoretical horizon for the area of human interactions and social context, as opposed to the assertion by the symbolic and private space. Understands the artwork not as a place to go, but as "lasting for experience, as an opening to exchange unlimited. So, after a twentieth century of questions about what constitutes art of our time, it is urgent that we stop thinking about mechanisms that allow us to live, coexist and interact in the

spaces and objects recreated. "The inspiration and impetus to create these particular mixed media constructions came from a concern with the political events and unrest that has affected so many people throughout the world". Most recent in the series of works, "Dreamscapes", a body of work she had been exploring and researching since 2015, representing a fraction of the displaced people from around the world seeking safety and fleeing persecution. The images impose a kind of clarifying axiological, a necessary precondition to fully and fairly evaluate the proposals by the artist. I am referring to the character's heavy sensory or aesthetic impact that prevails in most of her works. We are not dealing with a conceptual artist; rather she is a creator of motion, all the time concerned by the suggestion in terms of visual reference and the final outcome of pictures, very interested in the plasticity or beauty of the result. In her works can be seen an impressive study of the composition, structural lines, the relationship appears/found. Any ethical position entails a pose," among others, we talk about issues and concerns that transcend the will of the image, composition or concept representing its ontological vocation.

As a visual artist she strives to create a narrative in her work that is both personal and universal. Crawford tells the story of the human condition by presenting pieces of a story, fragments of the whole, fill in the blank faces and characters. Body forms imply the human understanding that would be within and the story which that body of work tells. Mixed media, drawings, paintings, that symbolize creativity, community and our natural ability to actualize that which we need. Her work represents choice and free

will –being both strong and fragile as the heart must be–. She explores gender, emotion and our connections to human expression. Intellectualization and symbiosis of such a level have appeared in contemporary art. What this works offer is rather a wise combination of elements originating in history, fine art, which results in a suggestive synthesis coupled with eagerness to narrate that is strongly connected with the artist's social and ethical concerns, which are identical. It is there that we must seek a geographical root, besides such easy-to-find characteristics of storytellers as baroque exuberance and brilliant execution. In this playful irony, this inclination toward the search for narratives in an immediate reality to censure it in the calmest irreverence, joking is present. And it is this conduct, this form of taking up his surroundings and in these psychosocial traits that we discover the way of storytelling in a two-dimensional approach."

Alexis Mendoza is a multidisciplinary artist, writer, and independent curator, born in Havana City, Cuba, and moved to the United States in 1995. His past education includes the National School of Fine Art San Alejandro (1988) and graduated in Art History from Havana University (1994). Alexis Mendoza has exhibited his artworks in museums and galleries throughout Europe and Latin America. Co-founder and co-creator of The New York Latin American Art Triennial and founding member of BxArts Factory. Director of Alexis Mendoza Curatorial Projects and Editor of Arteration Blogazine. Alexis lives and works in The Bronx, New York.



“Carol,

Up until now, you have been producing art for more than 60 years as your life’s work. To say the least, your career has been unconventional.

For openers, it is typical - although not without exception - for artists to ultimately become associated with and settle into a particular style in a particular medium. To the contrary, the body of your work, establishes you as a tenacious exemplar of that exception. Your output embraces many media - including drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, carpentry, and combinations of media - executed in a variety of materials - including paper, canvas, wood, metal, cement, wire mesh, plastics, and light-projection - and embracing multiple styles - including gallery pieces of diverse forms and sizes, pieces designed for theatre and dance presentations, for indoor or exterior display, works that include two, three, and multi-dimensional pieces.

In my opinion, through all of your bursting energy, there is a unity, an underlying aesthetic essence to your existing production.

You were about 20 years old when you had your first retrospective exhibition, so to speak. Then you were a student at the Albright Art School in Buffalo, it was a requirement for graduation that students had to present their artworks for review by the Albright faculty. One of your works in that review and in the present retrospective, more than 60 years later, is “The Seder”.

“The Seder” is an abstract depiction of a Jewish Passover seder. Personally, I love the work. It is utterly beautiful.

In the particular is contained the universal. What “The Seder” shows me is your joyous experience with the vivaciousness of color and light, with sensation itself, with the joy of being alive, being turned-on by experiencing the world.

Your love affair with life shines through in all of your work, much of which is not as happy as the joyous event depicted in “The Seder”. Even in your works at the other extreme, despair - as in the “Dreamscape” series of works, such as “The Endless March” and “A Boy on the Beach” - unhappy as the refugee experiences shown may be, the humanity of the sufferers shines through, as does yours. The pallet of humanity has its bright, gay, light colors, and its blues. To feel is to be truly alive.

Works, like “Kalaloch” and “Tide In, Tide Out”, illustrate other aspects of your aesthetic worldview.



Kalaloch Sunrise, mixed media construction



TIDE IN, TIDE OUT, mixed media construction

Not only do they show your respect for the planet, the outdoors, for nature itself, but also your love of materials.

At a deeper level they disclose that art, for you, goes beyond being a painting, a sculpture, a photograph - that the medium is part of your - and the world’s - available artistic vocabulary so vast, that artistic statements can be produced in one part of that vocabulary, that could not find expression in another part.

You have also produced work resulting from your looking so closely at something, that the final work looks different from the scene observed in its original context. Thus, we have your dystopian works. They teach us that what we actually see, is something that we have spun into something else.

Then there is “Greenbelly”:

Your playfulness runs through other of your works. If you had not told me that “Greenbelly” is your revenge for the endless liberties that male artists have long taken with their depiction of the female body, I doubt that I would have figured that out. Actually, I sympathize with “Greenbelly”.

I have no credential as an art maven, but at 85, I have known many artists - one, in particular, very well - and, when it comes to worthy art, as the guy said, “I know it when I see it.” And I see it.

Xo”  
Bill Erlbaum  
[Husband of Artist]



“WANT NOT, WEEP NOT”. 1974. pastel drawing and watercolor monoprnt collage on paper encased in shaped Plexiglas; 75". high x 37" wide. first shown in 1975 as a solo exhibition at the Jamaica Center for Arts & Learning and subsequently at the Queens Museum, in Queens, NY.

# **REMEMBRANCE: A RETROSPECTIVE**

Works by Carol Crawford

Selection of Artwork featured in exhibition at  
Atlantic Gallery





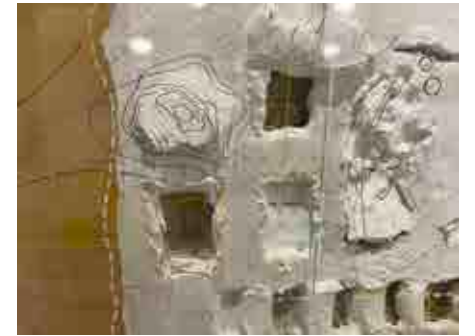
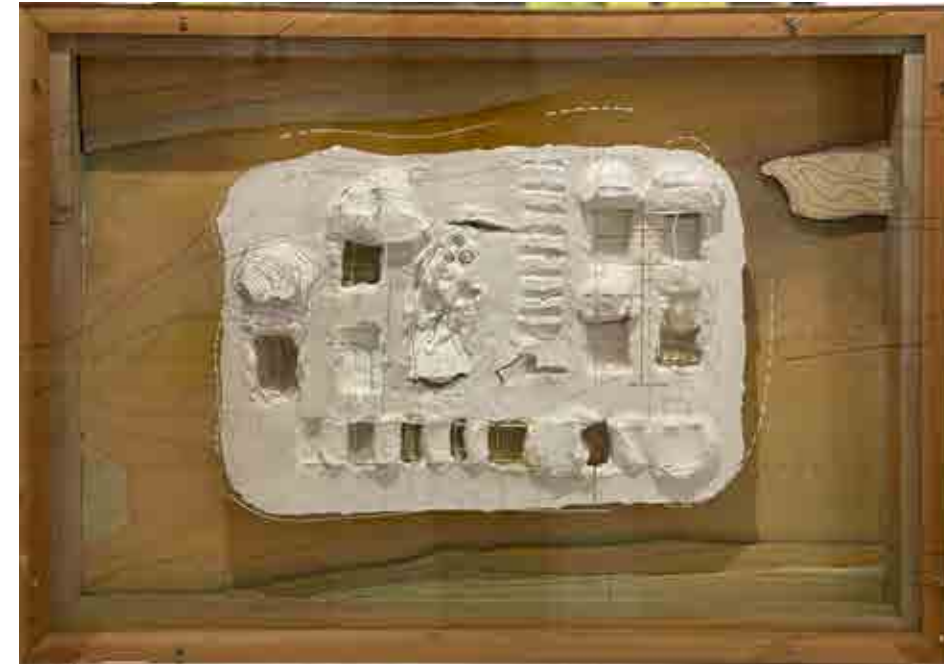
**REMEMBRANCE, 2014;** 17.5"x 25" x3" My maternal Alsatian great-grandparents, depicted as a transparent overlay in a landmark Octagon House in New Bedford, Massachusetts. The landmark house was built in 1848 by a ship's captain and restored in 1980 as a bed-and-breakfast inn. Such houses are rare. My great-grandparents settled in Buffalo, NY about the same time as this Octagon House was built in New England. My depiction of them is part of Time Frames, a body of work created in 2014.



**NICKEL-DIME STUFF 1963-4;** 18 " diam x 2" thick; Embossed lithograph. Early mixed media construction. A single experiment combining my color lithograph with an impression made using a textured plate I created for a final press run; The dampened dried lithograph was laid face-down on the inked plate and the "sandwich" run through the press under gentle pressure. The framer was tasked with scoring the periphery of the piece to look like a coin, and also adding a protective layer of Plexiglass



OASIS, 2009; 17" w x 12" h x 3" deep From Archologica series. Cast in plaster and sand on wood, acrylic paint



WHERE THE TREASURE WAS, 1998; 21" wide x 16" high x 3" deep, From Archologica series. Cast in plaster and sand on wood with metallic paint



**CLOUD HIGHWAY, 1974;** 9" x 12" From first set of composite photographs; made with film overlays; precursors of layered constructions. This was originally exhibited in a solo show at Viridian Gallery in 1980

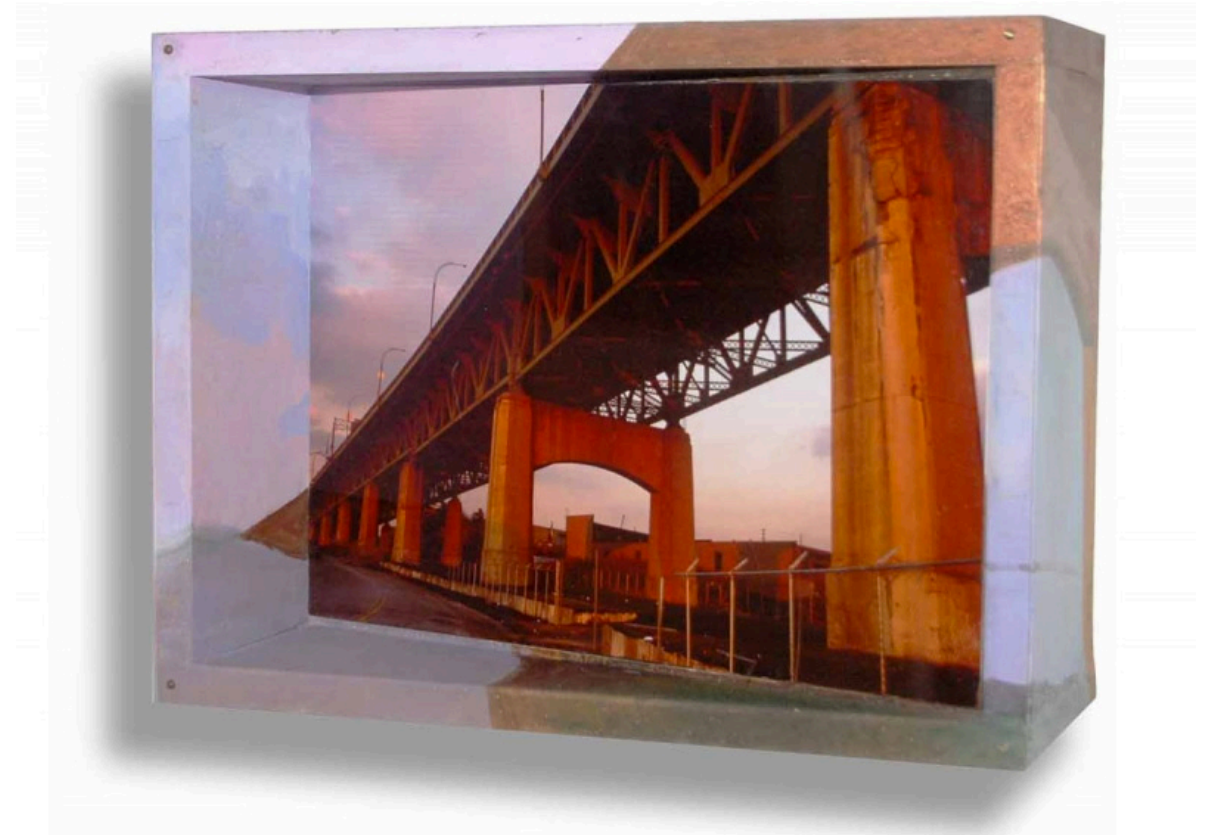


**LOBSTER BOAT, 1974;** 9" x 12" From first set of composite photographs; made with film overlays; precursors of layered constructions. This was originally exhibited in a solo show at Viridian Gallery in 1980





SEDER, 1956; 30 ½ " wide x 40 ½" high From college thesis for BFA from SUNY/BUFFALO. A romantic expression of a table laden with food to celebrate Passover



KOSKIUSZCO BRIDGE, 1992; 15" wide x 11.5" high x 6" depth From the first group of mixed-media photographic construction boxes; a series based upon my documentary photographs of Queens landmarks; photograph was "extended" into boxed enclosure with painted image. I have not framed my work, wanting to have the viewer's eye extend the image as though it was a glimpse of a passing scene. A frame presents the work and makes it a final statement.



FLIGHT, 1978; 16" high x 20" wide x 12" deep; color photograph, monoprints mounted on acrylic shapes, dark mirror, paint on plywood construction

The creation of "Flight" in 1978 marks the moment I left two-dimensional work and figurative drawing behind to pursue three dimensional mixed media constructions. This sudden aesthetic leap grew out of my experience during a cross-country flight, as I looked down over Colorado and saw the transparent layers of cloud formations, each scudding in its own direction and pattern high above the earth below. I began to make tiny thumbnail sketches to figure out how I could capture the depth and complexity I saw as a work of art. Mere illusion painting would not suffice.



THE ARTIST, 2012; 60 " high x 40 " wide x 4" deep. Composite portrait remembrance of Fred Crawford as artist, and fisherman. With his own self-portrait drawing overlaid







**THE RED WINDOW, 1961;** Lithograph, created on 3 limestone blocks and printed in California studio;  
A fleeting glimpse across a back yard of a lone figure standing in a window looking across toward me as I  
looked at him.



**TRAVELOGUE, 1986;** Wood construction, photograph divided into 3 sections [before, during, after].  
acrylic paint on birch plywood

This work was selected for a juried exhibition on The Art of the Book; the forms of clouds, people,  
automobile and trees pass through and break the limits of the "pages" to continue the story from  
beginning to end, leaving their empty shapes, like memories, behind.







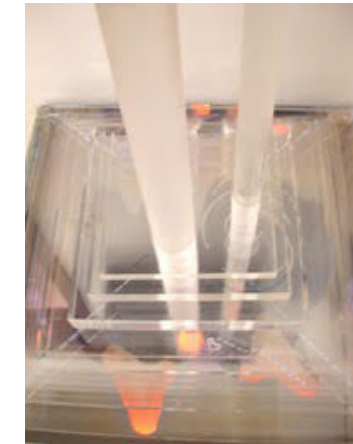
**SAFARI, 1990;** 49" wide x 40" high x 8" deep First shown in a solo exhibition at Viridian Gallery in Manhattan. Incorporating documentary photos taken of pedestrians while walking on the street in Manhattan

**RED HEAD, 1970;** 20" wide x 82" high  
From Transfigurations: Life Size Figurative Drawings  
compressed charcoal and sanguine pastel on paper, partially  
free-standing, in two parts encased in shaped Plexiglass

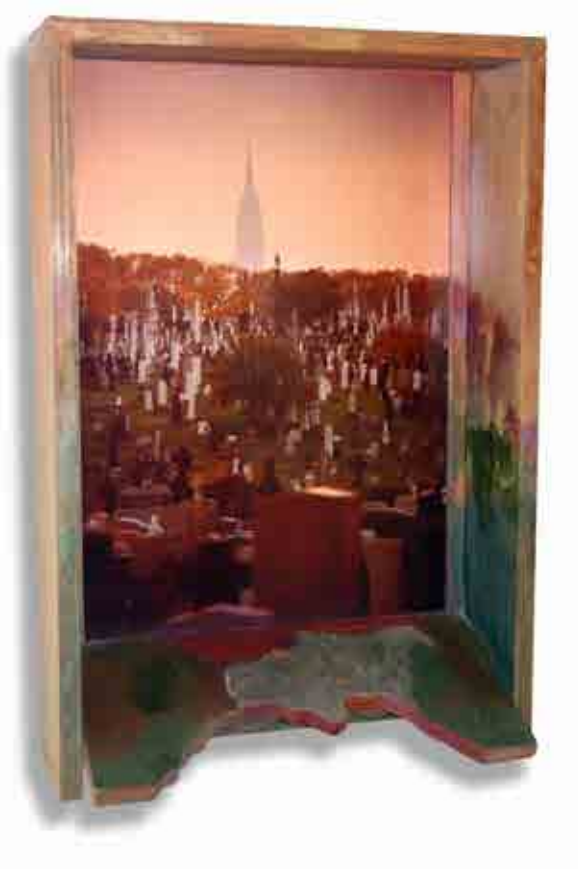




SUNNYSIDE YARDS, 1988; 15" high X 8" deep x 53" wide, mixed media construction with curved background panorama of 5 photographs, drawing on Plexiglass overlay on front face and top, painted interior. A view of the New York City Subway train yards from the Ed Koch Queensboro Bridge



ATLANTIS, 2010; 44 " high x 18.5" wide x 18.5" deep, Construction in plexiglass and wood with interior lighting. Part of Archeologica series of imagined structures



**SPIKE CITY, 1998;** 17" wide x 8". deep x 1 in. high, Acrylic-painted wood, photograph of a cemetery in Queens, NYC;  
**SPIKE CITY** is a metaphor for the drug scourge in Manhattan; a cemetery fills the foreground, while the view in the background of the Empire State Building rises above, like a hypodermic needle...in street talk, commonly called "a spike"



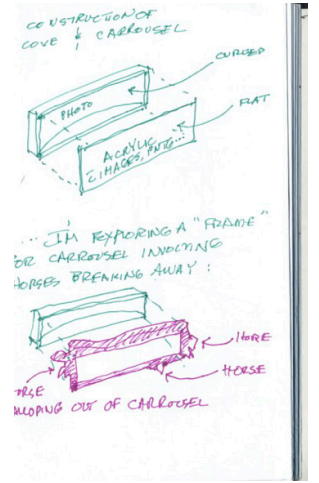
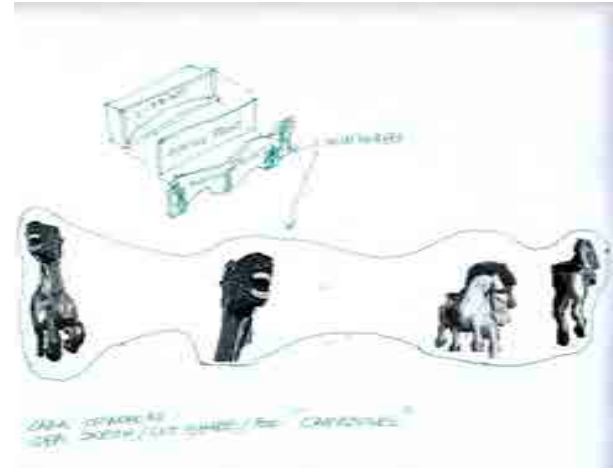
**MUSING, 1991;** 10.75" deep x 25" wide x 34" high, Photographic portrait in 3-D;made of thermoplastic, wood, acrylic paint, antique frame. 'Reminiscing' is represented by smaller photographic figures in background and 'future self- imaginings' are depicted by the model's photograph lying on the 3-D table







CARROUSEL, 2014; 31 in. high x 70 in. wide x 8 in. deep, Color photographs in a curved background, transparent acrylic layers of photographs, drawing, painting, painted wood encasement with LED lighting depicts the village carousel in Greenport, Long Island, NY



The figures, in this case unbound and wildly plunging Merry-Go-Round horses, leap out of the frame of the artwork., escaping the harmony and predictable order of the carousel to invade our present space. They break the frame of constraint as does the truly creative process.

The word carousel, meaning "little battle", was used by 12th century Crusaders to describe a battle exercise and game they saw being played by Turkish and Arabian horsemen to prepare and strengthen themselves for actual combat as they wielded their swords at mock enemies.

The first steam-powered carousel appeared at the Aylsham Fair in Norfolk, England, about 1861. It was described as "a roundabout of huge proportions, driven by a steam engine which whirled around with such impetuosity, that the wonder is the daring riders are not shot off like cannon- ball...";





A WALK IN THE WOODS, 2014; 31" high x 61" wide, Fantasy combining my photographs of my Pratt students walking unaware into a mythological scene, imaginarily sited at the Gideon Putnam Resort Spa in Saratoga Springs, NY, whose Neoclassical Style buildings first inspired my concept of this work.



HOLOCAUST 1944, 2021 segment: 4 ft. wide x 7 ft. high (No frame ). entire work is 12 feet long x 7 ft. high

Archival photographs and drawings on paper; part of DREAMSCAPES, a project about refugees; Supported in part by a New Work grant from the Queens Council on the Arts, 2019 Hungarian Jewish mothers and children awaiting transport to Theresienstadt and then to the Auschwitz extermination camp complex in occupied Poland, which had more concentration and death camps than any other European country under Nazi domination. 1944-1945 was the height of the Nazi's "Final Solution" to eliminate Jews during World War





**THE STRANGER 1990;** 7' high x 4' wide, A standard wooden door and frame with a series of eight photographs of a woman walking down a long hall toward door. A hand is reaching out toward her, opening door; inside is a wooden silhouetted figure with a dark mirrored surface in which the viewer is reflected when the door is opened. Gallery viewers often jump back after opening the door, startled. This response to the work is one I recognized as a common reaction by New York City apartment dwellers when they open their doors to an unknown, unannounced caller.



**EMBARCATION, 2014, Mixed media construction 17" x 25.75" wide**

A married couple, followed through in series of works, and in several settings indoors and outdoors, metaphorically moving through their life together: SEE RIGHT, companion pieces. All originals were photographed in New Bedford, Massachusetts and combined on computer using Photoshop. The ship was photographed in the New Bedford Whaling Museum, where it is built inside as a nearly full-scale model that visitors can board.



Detail of EMBARCATION



THE STAIRCASE



JOURNEY





**FALLEN ANGELS, 1974 (Above)**

[photograph of entire work] 10 ft. high x 12 ft. wide

FALLEN ANGELS is a composite mixed-media drawing and construction of pastel and monoprint collage on paper encased in shaped Plexiglass

The entire work includes four male figures beneath a two-piece broken sky. The angel on the right has a grinning Death's Head; he directs two winged figures, center, who leap blindly upward at his command. A fourth figure, on the left, whose body is created out of monoprint collage and mirror, remains earthbound, weeping and gazing upward at the goal he cannot reach... Heaven, a puzzle that does not quite come together.

**LUCIFER, 73 in. high x 50 in. wide (Left)**

The aggressive sexuality and frightening aspect of this angel belie the very name he bears: Lucifer, or "light". The reference

is to the myth of the Fallen Angel, once beautiful, who in 4th century A.D. Christianity became likened to Satan and linked to Hell. Here Lucifer represents those who misuse their power and control over others; the remains of his beauty, seen in his wings, have carried him far, but his grinning skull mocks the very concept of the "heavenly" perfection toward which he drives others.

**MIRROR MAN, 1974 (Right)**

FALLEN ANGELS is an allegory of Corporate Man, and a reference to the Biblical myth of Lucifer, once the most beautiful angel, who was cast out of heaven for his arrogance. It is a metaphor of our own follies and self-centered, earthly strivings. As a reminder, the viewer is reflected in the image of Mirror Man, on the left.





Detail of Trilogy

TRILOGY, 2012; 3 related pieces, ca. 8 ft. long when hung together; each piece is 24.25" long x 8.5" high  
Moonrise to Moonset; the moon is depicted as a watery, heavenly phenomenon; original photographs were taken of a glass of water. On its surface, the moon is desert; as we gaze, and spin romances and poems about its luminous beauty, its true nature, and its role in our human lives, is transformed.



KALALOECH SUNRISE 1976-8, 18.5" wide x 38" long x 21" high  
Two- sided piece representing East and West views of this rocky beach preserve on the Pacific coast

Mixed media construction of wood, 2 photographs, acrylic paint  
Part of a series of early constructions based on my photographs of the Western United States;  
Kalaloch is a rain forest preserve on the coast of Washington State, just south of the Canadian border.  
Hiking there is breathtaking. The blue color is true to the early morning and the damp climate.

I have driven with family at least eight times across our beautiful country, and the photographs from the many hikes and explorations in National Parks and National Forests have enabled me to expand my visual vocabulary.  
This piece was first shown in Viridian Gallery in Manhattan





DREAM HOUSE, 2018; 13" high x 50" wide x 3.5" deep, mixed media construction; separate central panel depicts lit interior. This is my portrait of a timelessly memorable family vacation home on the Damariscotta River, Maine, enjoyed for forty years. DREAMHOUSE is a revisiting of a beloved place; imagining those who spent many happy summer days and nights within, now as shadows of the past. I photographed a reflection of the interior through a window in late evening: the photograph is printed on sheet of Plexiglass and mounted in front of the exterior view of the cottage; intensely warm interior colors and forms on this floating central panel suggest the private, intimate life inside a house; they enhance the deep hues in the split view of the cottage exterior photograph as if the interior of the work itself is lighted.



Detail



CHURCH LADIES, 2014; 20 in. high x 37.5" long x 4.675" deep, Mixed media construction

The streets of New Bedford in which this is set are quiet and largely without traffic; it is hushed like a museum. The row of Protestant churchwomen and the figure in the doorway were not really there; they lived in the mid-west united states in the late 19th century, about the time this house was built. The Three Graces by Canova were a rather humorously hypocritical male ideal of a female, and quite different from the appearance of the average Victorian woman. From my series TIME FRAMES, created in 2014. First shown in solo exhibition at Atlantic Gallery in 2014.



The Three Graces by Antonio Canova, 1815





TRANSIT, 2018, 24 " high x 36" wide x 4" deep mixed media construction. This work combines a view of NYC subway tunnel with construction workers, plus archival photographs of refugees from the Holocaust huddled with their belongings, on platform (top right), and refugees from Syria, escaping from war by crossing a bombed railroad bridge, (bottom right). In this work, I show the desperate transit of refugees from an earlier time and another place beneath the reconstruction of a NYC subway tunnel today. Human freight, from different places and times, in a transitional moment.

