

HEIGHTSARTS

EKPHRASTACY
artists talk +
poets respond

Members Show
SPOTLIGHT: WAYNE NIEMI

July 21, 2022

2175 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
WWW.HEIGHTSARTS.ORG | 216.371.3457



*BEARER
CALHOUN
ECKLES
EDBERG
HALL
JONES
LUKEN
MINTZ
NIEMI
PRINDLE
RICHARDS
SCHWEIGERT
SMALL
WILSON
MCNIECE
NEWBY
ONDRUS
SMITH*

ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

Members Show

Heights Arts takes pride, not only in the arts programs they offer, but in the exceptional community comprised of their volunteers, staff, board, patrons and members. During Members Show, opening on June 17th and running until August 14th, artist and non-artist members alike join forces in an exhibition proudly representing a community who cares. 38 members submitted work and all 38 works will be displayed, offering a diverse exhibition that embodies a rich and persevering collective identity.

Since the onset of the pandemic, revenue for Ohio arts organizations has decreased by 65% according to SMU DataArts, and organizations that can stay in business aren't expected to begin recovering from budget deficits for another two fiscal years based on a January report from Ohio Citizens for the Arts. In times like these, nonprofit organizations are forced to prioritize which programs are most vital to offer and stretch what means are available. Heights Arts' top priority continues to be the people living out a mission to cultivate a strong collaborative arts community – their members.

Spotlight: Wayne Niemi

Wayne is a sculptor, painter and mixed media artist trained and educated in Ohio. His artistic expression represents a journey from the mind to the finished composition. Each journey represents a unique and separate experience and emotional relationship that is put on display for all to see and consider. The use of materials and techniques are the keys to his unique artwork. Materials may be new, distressed or hand made. It would not be unusual to find rusted metal, stones and lace combined with a sculpted item in a single work. His work focuses on emotion and expression in both realistic and abstract forms. Thus, it would not be unusual to find the mixing of materials, techniques and forms all in a single piece. After viewers have had a chance to experience his work, Wayne would like the viewers to walk away with this visual experience deeply embedded into their memories so that they are able to frequently recall and revisit for any reason.

PROGRAM

Rachel Bernstein
and Ray McNiece

Wayne Niemi
Ray McNiece

Bill Newby

Leoma Eckles
Michelle Smith

Ray McNiece

Jane Small
Susanne Ondrus

Introduction

Artist Remarks

"Went down to Wildwood Jetty"

After Wayne Niemi's

Collective Grief

"Here Now"

After Wayne Niemi's

New Perspective

Artist Remarks

"water lily"

After Leoma Eckles's

Water Lily

"Reflection"

After Leoma Eckles's

Water Lily

Artist Remarks

"Waiting for Her"

After Jane Small's

Tulips

PROGRAM

Julianne Edberg

Bill Newby

Will Wilson

Michelle Smith

Ray McNiece

Elizabeth Prindle

Suzanne Ondrus

Bill Newby

Artist Remarks

"Rubixcon"

After Julianne Edberg's

Ever Given

Artist Remarks

"Blue Birches"

After Will Wilson's

Birch Trees

"The Way of the Green Wave"

After Charles Mintz's

The Way

Artist Remarks

"Boxed and Shelved Survival"

After Elizabeth Prindle's

Desperate Measures

"Ready"

After Betz Richards's

What are you lookin' at?

PROGRAM

Michelle Smith

"jade song"

After Janet Luken's

Happy Opus

Stephen Calhoun

Artist Remarks

Ray McNiece

"Diatom"

After Stephen Calhoun's

Dringiwa Chorus

Suzanne Ondrus

"Needling up, Winter Speaks its End"

After Cynthia Bearer's

Grand River

Charles Schweigert

Artist Remarks

Bill Newby

"Hidden"

After Charles Schweigert's

Fire and Ice

Joyce Morrow Jones

Artist Remarks

Suzanne Ondrus

"Inside this Woman"

and "Buying and Selling Love"

After Joyce Morrow Jones's

Willow

Cherie Spencer Lesnik

Artist Remarks

Ray McNiece

"Poppies"

After Cherie Spencer Lesnik's

Poppies

PROGRAM

J. Allon Hall

Michelle Smith

Artist Remarks

"joybird"

After J. Allon Hall's

Joybird

EKPHRASTACY:

Ekphrastic poetry is a time-honored form in which the writer is inspired by and responds to a work of art in another discipline such as the visual arts, sculpture, dance and music. The word ekphrastic comes from the Greek word ekphrasis, which means (freely translated) an ecstatic utterance.

HEIGHTS ARTS UPCOMING EVENTS

THE KATY

Saturday July 23rd, 7pm

FREE GALLERY CONCERT

PRESENTED BY THE ASHLY WHITMER CORREA FOUNDATION

The Katy, founded by Cathalyn, a Cleveland based Songwriter, bassist & vocalist. The spirit of The Katy has been shown. From the energetic melodies and pulsing, driven tempos to the purposeful lyrics addressing inequality, loneliness, adoration and struggle. Cathalyn's songs have been featured in "Master" which is an Amazon Prime horror film also featured in the 2022 Sundance Film Festival, has opened for Thievery Corporation at Newport Music Hall & also toured with Grammy Award winning artist, Van Hunt.

ARTbar

Thursday September 29th, 7pm

\$20 MEMBERS

\$25 NONMEMBERS

ARTbar was developed as a result of our reimagination survey, which clearly indicated that our supporters and the community are hungry for live activities and events. Our survey results were proved correct when we held our first ARTbar with a sold-out and stunning performance by Nancy Redd, Reggie Redd, Leo Coach, and our Cleveland Heights Poet Laureat, Ray McNiece!

Mark your calendar for our next ARTbar event on September 29th, featuring renowned local Jazz pianist Jackie Warren and ensemble. We will again mix cocktails, music, and art in our beautiful space on Lee Road.

POETS

Ray McNiece

Ray McNiece is the Poet-Laureate chosen by Heights Arts through 2022. McNiece is the author of 11 books of poems and monologues, two solo theatre works, two music/poetry collaboration and one collaborative theatre work. He started his own educational company, Page to Stage Productions in 1994. He has worked as a consultant for WordForward in Singapore and for the nationally touring, Poetry Alive. He is also an adjunct professor at John Carroll University. He was recently certified into Young Audiences National Teaching Artist Roster, one of only twenty such teaching artists nationally. Ray McNiece is the Cleveland Arts Prize Lifetime Achievement Award winner for 2021.

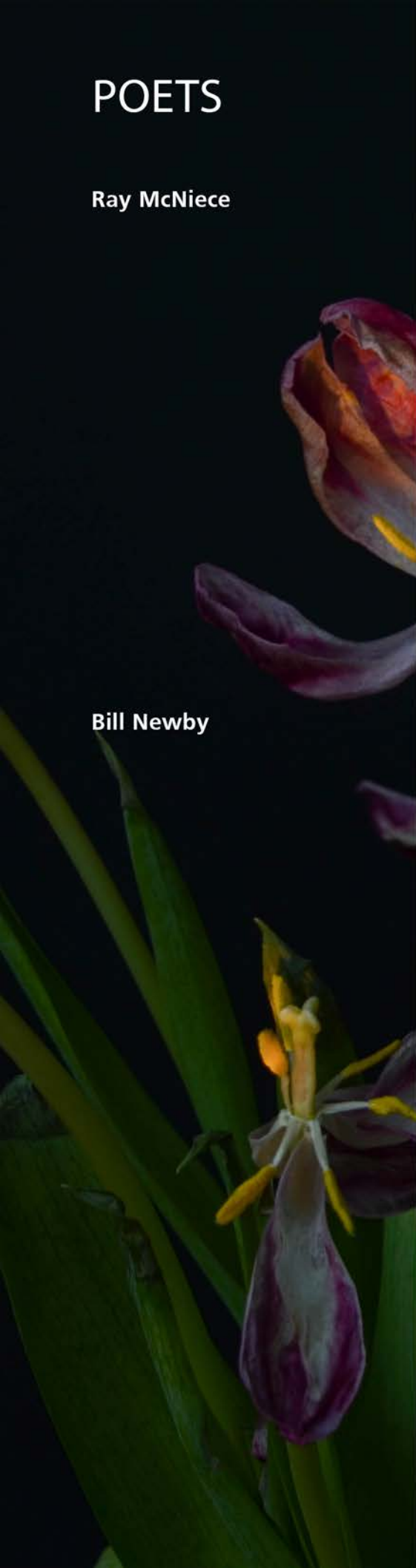
Bill Newby

Bill Newby was born and raised in Cleveland Heights, a teacher and administrator at Shaker Heights High School, and an academic advisor and lecturer at Cleveland State University. He wrote his first short story, "Private Eyeballs – the Detective," in Mrs. Hahn's 4th grade class at Noble Elementary.

Though he continues to write an occasional story, he mostly uses poetry to record and explore moments of celebration, complaint, concern, and comedy, and has published two poetry collections: *Sea Chests or a Carry-On* (2018) and *Passing Through* (2020).

His work has appeared in *Whiskey Island*, *Ohio Teachers Write*, *The Breeze*, *Time & Tide*, *Sixfold*, *Blue Mountain Review*, *Local Life*, *Panoplyzine*, *The Blue Windmill*, *Penumbra*, and other places. He was a 2018 Pushcart Poetry Prize nominee, one of Carolina Poets online poets, and recently featured on Ohio Poetry Association's Poetry Spotlight podcast.

Reviewing *Passing Through*, Phil Terman, former director of the Chautauqua Writers Festival, wrote that Bill's poetry "delights, surprises, teaches, and sings poems with knowledge and wisdom."



POETS

Michelle Smith

Michelle Smith is a passionate appreciator of fine art, and loves experimenting with form in her poetry. She typically writes pieces as she is "inspired" and enjoys the challenge of having to invent new work within a set of creative parameters. Her style is elegantly plainspoken but emotionally and intellectually complex.

In 2019, Michelle was a featured poet for MIX at the Cleveland Museum of Art; she produced, directed, and read a poem as part of a Black History Month celebration called BLAX MUSEUM at the East Cleveland Public Library; she was a featured storyteller for Mental Illness & Friends and Story Club East; she was a featured poet for The Persisters; she was a featured performer in the Sitcom Live Read Comedy Fundraiser for the Mass Hysteria Comedy Fest; she was a featured poet for reads at Mac's Backs, Twelve Literary Arts, and Poetry+; I taught a Colson Whitehead readers' course for Literary Cleveland; I was a judge for the America SCORES Youth Poetry Slam; and I was a panelist for "Black Women Writing Cleveland" at the South Euclid/Lyndhurst Branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library.

Suzanne Ondrus

Suzanne Ondrus's first book, *Passion Seeds*, won the 2013 Vernice Quebodeaux Prize. She was Gordon Square Review's 2022 runner up winner for prose, the 2013 Reed Magazine Markham Poetry Prize winner, a 2017 featured UNESCO World Book Capital poet in Guinea, Conakry, and a 2018-2020 Fulbright Scholar to Burkina Faso. She next heads to Abuja, Nigeria as an English Language Fellow where she will train teachers in gender equity. Her work delves into love, desire, different cultures, history, racism, body image, African fashion, and women's sexuality. Her forthcoming poetry book, *Death of an Unvirtuous Woman* (Finishing Line Press) examines domestic violence and homicide in an 1881 Ohio German immigrant couple from Wood County. Hear her read on her YouTube channel Suzanne Ondrus and find her updates on suzanneondrus.com.



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