

# HEIGHTS ARTS

EKPHRASTACY

**artists talk +  
poets respond**



## **SPOTLIGHT: Gregory Johnson**

SEPTEMBER 21, 2023

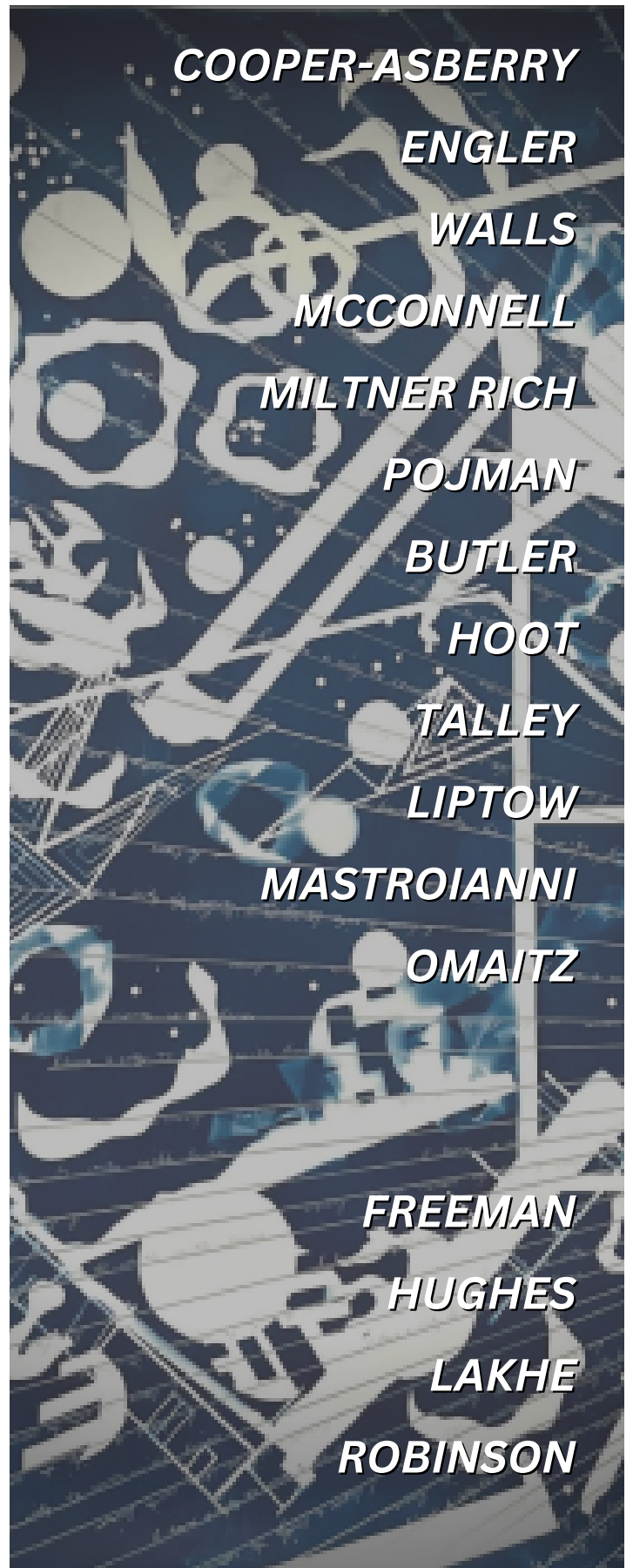
WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:

Heights Writes Community Team  
Cathy Barber, John Burroughs, Annie Holden,  
Ray McNiece, Amy Rosenbluth, Catherine Wing.



Use the QR code to download  
the program to your device.

2175 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio



# ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

## Collaborage

In celebration of Surrealism, Heights Arts partners with No Exit New Music Ensemble to bring together groups of artists to create collaborative works that embrace chance and the inexplicable. Inspired by games and thought exercises the Surrealists used to access the unconscious mind and move beyond the ‘rational’ world, the featured art was created using techniques favored by the Surrealists.

In order to facilitate this project, the Heights Arts Exhibition Community Team created four “teams” of artists, each of which include a random grouping of three visual artists. Heights Arts then provided copies of *A Book of Surrealist Games* to each team, instructing them to work with 12 words or phrases provided by the Heights Writes Community Team. (These words could be anything from lines of original poetry to historical quotes, phrases lifted from the news, or conglomerations thereof.) Finally, the Heights Arts Music Community Team selected 12 pieces of music from Northeast Ohio, again randomly assigning them to the artists for their use.

The resulting twelve works of art, each the product of three visual artists, three sets of words, and three pieces of music, will be on view at Heights Arts in the *Collaborage* exhibition, from August 18 to October 15, 2023. Adding another layer of chance, every work in the show will be auctioned off – allowing guests to fully embrace the strangeness.

## Spotlight: Gregory Johnson

Gregory Alan Johnson was born in 1954 and grew up in Brook Park, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland. He began doodling as a child, a practice that his father encouraged by bringing unused forms home from work, the blank backs of which he would use for his random drawings.

His art is all about the exploration of the inner and touching people in a way that transcends words. He aims to connect on a deeper level with people of like minds because he believes art is love.

# PROGRAM

Cameron Gorman  
Siaara Freeman

Gregory Johnson

Siaara Freeman

Vince Robinson

Amy Hughes

Sujata Lakhe

Siaara Freeman

Group 1: Deborah  
Cooper-Asberry, Meryl  
Engler, Bob Walls

Sujata Lakhe

Opening Remarks

Opening Remarks

Artist Remarks

“Self Portrait as an Anatomy Lesson”  
After Gregory Johnson's  
*Anatomy for the Artist*

“LET THERE BE LIGHT”  
After Gregory Johnson's  
*Samson's Dilemma*

“Invisible Labor”  
After Gregory Johnson's  
*Samson's Dilemma*

“Mushroom cloud”  
After Gregory Johnson's  
*Mushroom Cloud*

“Black Alice”  
After Gregory Johnson's  
*Mushroom Cloud*

Artist Remarks

“Flowery Ring of Fire”  
After Group 1's  
*Nature is Constructive in Spite of All*

# PROGRAM

Vince Robinson

“The Gender War”

After Group 1's

*Fire and Ice Fought Over the Crumbs of  
One Man's Year but there was No  
Construction Parking*

Siaara Freeman

“Getting To The Top”

After Group 1's

*Surrealist Wreath of the Highest  
Heights*

Group 2: Jordan  
McConnell, Alison  
Miltner Rich, Jim  
Pojman

Artist Remarks

Amy Hughes

“The Eyes of the Storm are Upon Us”

After Group 2's

*Surreal Reverie Composition #1*

Siaara Freeman

“Surreal Reverie Composition 2”

After Group 2's

*Surreal Reverie Composition #2*

Vince Robinson

“Back to Earth”

After Group 2's

*Surreal Reverie Composition #3*

Group 3: Catherine  
Butler, Christopher  
Hoot, Lacy Talley

Artist Remarks

# PROGRAM

Vince Robinson

“Out of Darkness”  
After Group 3's  
*Orbital Future*

Sujata Lakhe

“After Cosmic Interlude”  
After Group 3's  
*Cosmic Interlude*

Amy Hughes

“Light Year”  
After Group 3's  
*Preceptor*

Group 4: Jacob Liptow,  
Steven Mastroianni,  
Jenniffer Omaitz

Artist Remarks

Amy Hughes

“Postpartum Poem”  
After Group 4's  
*I Have A City To Cover In  
Lines (# 1 & 2)*

Siaara Freeman

“Balloonfest 86”  
After Group 4's  
*Busy City; Quiet Lights*

Sujata Lakhe

“Tethered to Echoes”  
After Group 4's  
*Voices in the City*



Random  
Collaborative  
Collage

## Bid on the art of Collaborage



<https://www.heightsarts.org/blog/collaborage/>

### HEIGHTS ARTS UPCOMING EVENTS

No Exit's Year of Surreality Performance

October 13

No Exit's Year of Surreality Performance Friday October 13, 7:00 pm at Heights Arts No Exit New Music Ensemble will perform a reality-bending concert at Heights Arts! As part of the group's Year of Surreality, the event features poets Ray McNiece and Raja Freeman performing works to complement an evening of musical Surrealism.

2023 Holiday Store

November 3-December 30

Give back when you buy gifts this Holiday season! The Heights Arts Holiday Store offers art and craft gifts from over a hundred local artists, with something for everyone – and every kind of celebration. Each unique gift you give will delight the recipient, and supports our creative community.

#### 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.



## POETS

Siaara Freeman

Siaara Freeman is from Cleveland Ohio, where she is the current Lake Erie Siren. She is a 2023 Room in the House fellow with Karamu House Theatre and a 2022 Catapult fellow with Cleveland Public Theater. In 2021 Siaara filmed a commercial for the Cleveland Museum of Art and participated with #TeamYellowBrickRoad for the Black Joy Experience. She is a 2021 Premier Playwright fellow recipient with Cleveland Public Theatre. Her work appears in *The Journal*, *Josephine Quarterly*, *Cleveland Magazine* and elsewhere. She has had multiple poems go viral and has toured both nationally and internationally. Siaara is the Curriculum Development Manager at the Center for Arts-Inspired Learning, and the artistic director for *Artworks*. She is the current Poet Laureate of Cleveland Heights and University Heights. When she is not working she is likely by a lake, thinking of Toni Morrison and talking to ghosts. Her first full length manuscript *Urbanshee* is available with Button Poetry.

Amy Hughes

Amy Hughes is a writer and teacher from Northeast Ohio. She holds a bachelor's in education from Kent State University and an MFA in poetry in from Florida International University, and she has taught writing to middle school, high school, and college students for more than ten years. Her work



Amy Hughes

has appeared at CAN Triennial 2022: You Are Here, in the Ekphrastasy Series of Heights Arts, and in two editions of Tigertail, A South Florida Annual. Today she is a freelance writer and editor, an active member of Literary Cleveland, and a teaching artist with Lake Erie Ink where she leads creative writing workshops for Northeast Ohio students.

Sujata Lakhe

Sujata Lakhe was born in India and grew up in steel-town Bhilai before immigrating to Cleveland in her early 20s. She has co-authored research papers in peer-reviewed scientific journals in the field of Molecular Biology. Looking beyond the surface, questioning dogma, observing, making a conclusion (but willing to change upon learning new information), and choosing the correct details to communicate accurately are some of the things she finds in common between the scientific process and creative writing. Her personal essays and poems can be read in Neighborhood Voices, an anthology published by Cleveland Public Library, Scene, The Blue Windmill chapbook, and Literary Cleveland Blogs. She has performed her stories and poems at the Photocentric, the Story Club Cleveland, and Gilly's Music Room. She presently lives in Chagrin Falls, OH, with her husband William G Barnard IV and her daughter Samira Reddy.





## Vince Robinson

Vince Robinson has been a published poet since 1978, when his first poem was published in the Kent Quarterly. He's been a performance poet since then, having performed an original in a Mwatabu Okantah written play called *To Sing A Dark Song*. His Cleveland performance history began in 1997 when he founded a poetry series called *Soul Poetry*. The series continues at Larchmere Arts in the present. Vince's other series, *The Nia Coffeehouse*, began at the Cleveland Museum of Art before nesting at the Coventry Library in Cleveland Heights, as well as St. Alban's Episcopal Church. He was a member of the Cleveland Poetry Slam Team that competed in National Poetry Slam competitions in 2014 and 2015. He Published his first book of poetry, *Got Words?*, in 2015.

## **VOLUNTEER FOR A HEIGHTS ARTS COMMUNITY TEAM**

Heights Arts has a long history of inviting the community to share their passion and expertise to help the Organization develop and present its public programming. Three ongoing Volunteer Community Teams are charged with facilitating the strategies and action plans for Heights Arts core programming in the literary, musical, and visual arts disciplines. The purpose of Heights Arts' community teams is to expand community engagement in developing and presenting the programs of the organization and to tap the significant expertise that resides in our community. We invite poets, musicians, artists, and other members of the community to work with us to select and showcase the region's visual artists, poets, and musicians in our literary, musical, and exhibition programming.

To read more about our community teams and submit an application, visit us [HERE](https://www.heightsarts.org/volunteer-community-teams/)  
<https://www.heightsarts.org/volunteer-community-teams/>

## **BECOME A HEIGHTS ARTS MEMBER**

Now more than ever, we appreciate your consideration to give to Heights Arts by becoming a member. As a member of Heights Arts, you receive discounts, special invitations, members-only events, and perks from our community partners. Your membership is tax-deductible and you have the opportunity to say you are helping to support local artists, musicians, creative writers, and public art in the community. You'll have your finger on the pulse of all things Heights Arts. What are you waiting for?

Join us today! Membership information can be found [HERE](https://www.heightsarts.org/membership/)  
<https://www.heightsarts.org/membership/>

## **Les Délices 2023-24 Season Heavens Above, Earth Below**

The SalonEra series of concerts offered by Les Délices will return for its fourth season and two of the episodes will be filmed for later streaming in front of a live audience. The first of those special concerts will take place on September 23rd and will explore Songs for Social Justice, with Renaissance lute songs, African American Spirituals, and traditional Lebanese melodies. The regular season for Les Délices begins September 29th and 30th with performances of The Pow'r of Musick, a collaboration between Les Délices and Kaleidoscope Vocal Ensemble, an all-star assembly of vocalists from across North America. Tickets and season subscriptions are on sale now!

Visit their website for more information [HERE](https://lesdelices.org/)  
<https://lesdelices.org/>

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