



Consider Fires

January 16 - March 15, 2026

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE
EXHIBITION COMMUNITY TEAM

Team leader: Greg Donley

Team Members: Rita Betts, Boni Gelfand, Stephanie Murray, Evelyn Marinelli, Amia Frazier, Heather Patterson, Kate Snow, Grace Robin



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2175 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio



About The Show

“Fire consumes. Fire cleanses. Fire transforms.

It is destruction and renewal, warmth and warning, a flickering ember, and an unstoppable blaze. It is the flame of revolution, the heat of creation, the smoldering tension before ignition. It is both the light that guides and the force that devours.

In this exhibition, we do not fear fire—we invoke it. We trace its edges, feed its hunger, and question its aftermath. We gather to reflect on the fires that shape us: the ones we tend, the ones we extinguish, the ones we cannot control.

Artists, visionaries, storytellers—consider fire. Consider fires.
What will you set ablaze?”

- Curated by Gina Washington

List of Artists and Works:

Leah Aki Wood

Biography

Leah was born in Oberlin, Ohio and grew up surrounded by the arts. In 2016, she graduated from Oberlin College with majors in East Asian Studies and Cinema Studies and proceeded to freelance as an artist and filmmaker before receiving an Oberlin Shansi Fellowship to teach English in Tokyo, Japan. After returning to Ohio, she taught stop-motion animation at The Rainey Institute in Cleveland. Inspired by her experiences in the arts and volunteering for a mental health lifeline abroad, Leah pursued graduate studies in clinical mental health counseling and is now working as a licensed professional counselor in the Cleveland area.

Artist Statement

Over the last ten years, my creative focus has been mixed media collage. I consider this medium a helpful way to explore my love of nature and to practice bringing things together which do not seem to belong. My interest in the natural world began as a little girl, awestruck by our backyard garden. Later, as a teenager, my family took a three month backpacking trip up the Appalachian Trail. I learned to pay careful attention to the seasons, the impact of storms, and the subtle beauty that can be found everywhere all the time.

Though I grew up in Ohio, I spent chunks of time visiting my mother's family in Japan and feeling a pull between these two places. What was normal to me as a child, feeling divided, became something I actively grappled with as I shifted into adulthood and absorbed increasingly divisive rhetoric from the world—how do I embody these two parts of my identity as one person? Through my work as a therapist, I have found it to be a very common human experience. We all have parts of ourselves that feel out of place, rejected, or mismatched. Mixed media collage has been a healing way to explore and accept that we can be many things at once—we can be strong and soft, fluid and fiery.

For Consider Fires, I thought of a piece I created while living in Japan at the start of the pandemic. It was spring, and the cherry blossom petals were like snow along the curbs of the street. Fire is full of polarities—it can be destructive and it can also create, it is love and rage, fear and beauty.

Included work(s)

Untitled, 2020, 15.5" x 18.75", Paper, flower petals, ink, NFS

Jeanetta Ho

Biography

Jeanetta Ho is a graduate of the Cleveland Institute of Art with a BFA degree in Sculpture; her training and the influences on her work are myriad and worldwide, involving traveling to Europe, South America, Asia and parts of Polynesia, as well as interning at both the Cleveland Museum of Art (textiles) and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History (cultural anthropology). She has exhibited throughout the US as well as internationally, and often uses local botanical materials in her work, many of which were grown in her yard. She maintains a website at www.jhos.net

Artist Statement

Fire is a catalyst for transformation.

We can use it to facilitate change, if only we could know what we want to become. Should we just walk into the fire and hope for the best? Use it to burn away what we no longer have use for, what is holding us back from what we want to achieve? What are our hopes, our hates? What does the fire of our soul's desire look like and how should we make it manifest? Ultimately, can we use our inner fire to find peace?

Included work(s)

Transform, 2025, 10.75" x 7.875", Laser prints with graphite drawing on homegrown handmade milkweed paper, \$105

Chester Hopkins-Bey

Biography

Chester Hopkins-Bey is a versatile multi-medium artist specializing in drawing, painting, installation, and poetry. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, at Forest City Hospital in the Glenville area, Chester's passion for art ignited at an early age. He pursued his artistic dreams at Central State University, an esteemed Historically Black College and University (HBCU), where he honed his skills and developed a deeper connection to his ancestry. Chester's work is characterized by its profound emotional depth and innovative use of various mediums, seamlessly blending visual and literary art forms. His installations often challenge conventional perspectives, inviting viewers to engage with his creations on a deeper level. Through his diverse artistic expressions, Chester Hopkins-Bey continues to inspire and captivate audiences, leaving an indelible mark on the contemporary art scene.

Included work(s)

The Remarkable Greezi Haze, 2025, 25.5" x 28.5", Paper and acrylic on reclaimed wood, NFS
A Morse Code of Red, 2025, Paper and acrylic on canvas, 20" x 24", NFS

Aja Joi Grant

Biography

Aja Joi Grant is a photographer, printmaker and fiber artist documenting black American stories and visions on afro-surrealism, spirituality, liberation and healing. She has shown work at Cleveland Print Room, Rooms to Let, Akron University, Worthington Yards & Cuyahoga Valley National Park Conservancy. Grant has been awarded 2025 Cleveland Arts Prize Verge Fellow, 2023 Karamu Room in the House Fellow, and 2022 Cleveland Foundation Equity in the Arts Fellow. She is an art educator with 7 years of experience teaching photography and alternative process.

Artist Statement

I have been working professionally in fine art photography since 2017, and I have always incorporated African diasporic spirituality and themes of vulnerability and identity, in my work. Along with the complexity of confronting these and reclaiming power within our narratives. Photography informs how I view and make sense of the world, while imprinting my own ideas of reframing identity and cementing existence. The theme of fire, highlights passion, purification, and clearing the way for the new. This work explores the power of internal fire, and the ways of keeping a pure heart in pursuit of the higher self.

Included work(s)

Untitled, 2023, 40" x 26.5", Jacquard Weaving, \$1700

Untitled, 2023, 26.5" x 23", Jacquard Weaving, \$1500

Tanya Kaiser

Biography

Tanya Kaiser is a Cleveland-based interdisciplinary artist, curator, and arts advocate whose practice blends ceramics, sculpture, and installation with conceptual investigations of language, memory, and cultural identity. Her work examines the fragility of communication and the intersections between personal narrative and political discourse, creating immersive environments that invite both reflection and dialogue.

Kaiser holds an MFA in Studio Art from Stony Brook University, where she concentrated on ceramic sculpture, and has exhibited nationally in traditional gallery settings as well as public art platforms. Recent exhibitions include Crafted Couture at Valley Art Center and the Ohio Artist Registry 2025 Juried Exhibition at the Columbus Metropolitan Library. She has also presented work at large-scale cultural events such as Ingenuity Fest, extending her practice into community-centered, interactive installations.

In addition to her studio work, Kaiser is the Founder of Kaiser Studios, a nonprofit arts organization dedicated to fostering collaboration between artists and STEM professionals. Through its flagship program, Renaissance Box, she curates artist talks and interdisciplinary residencies that encourage participants to cross disciplinary boundaries and engage with complex social and cultural issues.

Her curatorial and leadership experience includes serving as Director & Curator of Kaiser Gallery, Assistant Director of Summer on the Cuyahoga, and her current position on the board of the Collect Art Network Journal. Committed to amplifying underrepresented voices, she creates platforms that connect local and global creative communities.

Recognized for her conceptual rigor, tactile sensibility, and ability to catalyze conversation, Kaiser continues to pursue projects that blur the lines between art and activism, offering thought-provoking and immersive experiences to diverse audiences.

Tanya Kaiser

Artist Statement

As an interdisciplinary practice, this work explores the tension between vulnerability and resilience through sculpture and installation. The focus often centers on themes of childhood, memory, and the body, using materials that embody processes of preservation, transformation, and decay. Sugar, textiles, and ceramics are chosen for their ability to shift over time and for their deep associations with care, domesticity, and consumption.

Through sculptural installations, tenderness and trauma are examined as coexisting forces within familiar objects. In the body of work *Crystallized Innocence*, baby clothes and comfort items are encased in sugar crystals, transforming soft, intimate forms into fragile, glittering relics. This material shift serves as a metaphor for how external forces, neglect, systemic failure, or cultural expectations can harden or distort the experience of childhood. The work functions as a form of quiet disruption, where beauty draws viewers in and deeper truths linger beneath the surface.

Included work(s)

Music Toy Bunny (*Crystallized Innocence*), 2025, 20" x 18" x 2", Found object, sugar, and resin, \$500

Untitled 9 (*Crystallized Innocence*), 2025, 20" x 18" x 1.5", Found object, sugar, and resin, NFS

Yasmeen Kwan

Biography

Yasmeen Kwan is a '26 undergraduate at the Cleveland Institute of Art studying for her BFA in Painting. Her work utilizes painting and ceramic sculpture to critique orientalism and appropriation of Black and East Asian culture in the Western world, cross-referencing history, racial hierarchy, art and aesthetics that have shaped harmful perceptions about the people. Her work has been exhibited in the Student Independent Exhibition 78 and 79 at the Reinberger Gallery, the Black Scholars & Artists club exhibitions at the Cleveland Institute of Art in Cleveland Ohio and at The Valley Art Center in Chagrin Falls, Ohio. She has also been awarded the Eastman (1912)-Bolton Memorial Prize in recognition of a promising Junior majoring in Painting.

Included work(s)

The Fallen Anthem, 2025, 8.5" x 5" x 9" Porcelain clay, \$400

James Negron

Biography

James Negron (he/him) is a Latinx mixed media artist based in Cleveland, Ohio where he obtained his BFA in Sculpture and Expanded Media from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2024. Throughout his time in undergraduate school, he developed a prominent interest in working with fiber and textiles, alongside other media, to communicate themes of memory, mental health, and queer identity. Negron embraces DIY aesthetics within his work to exemplify the affordability and achievability of the techniques he implements in his practice. This has led the artist on a passionate path to art education, where he can facilitate support in making fabrication processes more accessible to children. Negron's work has been exhibited at Praxis Fiber Workshop in Cleveland (OH) in 2025, Summit ArtSpace in Akron (OH) in 2025, and The Morgan Conservatory in Cleveland (OH) in 2024, among others.

Included work(s)

The Bird, The Cage, 2025, 12" x 12" x 48.5", Wool, beads, and yarn, NFS

Tearing the Fabric, 2025, 12" x 12.5", Found frame, cotton, silk, thread, \$80

Kolé Robinson Brooks

Biography

I completed my BFA at The Cleveland Institute of Art in 2002 after being an Art Maker without the Degree for a Decade. My life has always been filled with Art making since childhood. I come from an Art Making Family. While I was at The Cleveland Institute of Art I learned and got to experiment with many art making techniques. It gave me so many ways to better express myself. In order to exercise all that I've learned and acquired over my decades of life I make art by any means possible. To experiment with light and form together like building a lamp from the inside out. I work in ceramics, fiber and photography. I love mixing it up like multimedia collage and conceptual installation art. Where I get to use lots of different techniques and materials together to create. It is nice to share these experiments in expression with other people. That's Why I Do What I Do.

Artist Statement

This piece came from a poem that came to Mind after learning of the Theme of the show it self. The poem of this piece is embellished in Braille on PPE Visor material hanging from the bottom of the piece.

Included work(s)

Fire on the Water, 2025, 22" x 19", Cardboard, tissue, paper towel, fabric, PPE visor, Dynamite fire chips, plastic bags, chip bag, yarn, and LED lighting, NFS

Ellis Walker

Biography

Ellis Walker, 33, is a Cleveland-based artist whose work is rooted in imagination, emotion, and vivid storytelling. A loving father, devoted husband, and unwavering provider, Ellis has been drawing characters and crafting worlds since his grade school days. Deeply inspired by comics, anime, and bold, colorful technical art, he brings each piece to life with a sense of narrative and atmosphere. Whether it's a quiet moment or an epic scene, Ellis sets the tone with purpose, inviting viewers into a unique visual journey. Every character he draws carries a story, a spark, and a world of its own. With his signature blend of vibrant energy and emotional depth, to grit and minimalism, Ellis continues to grow as both an artist and storyteller—one illustration at a time.

Artist Statement

The feeling I was trying to convey with these pictures are the feelings I get doom scrolling on social media. The feeling of being judged and held back by people.

Included work(s)

Held, 2025, 16" x 20", Digital drawing, \$200

Back, 2025, 16" x 20", Digital drawing, \$200

Falon Walker

Biography

Falon Walker is a 32-year-old artist, wife, and devoted mother whose journey with art began the moment she could hold a crayon. Rooted in a lifelong love for creative expression, her work radiates energy, emotion, and intention. Falon's mission is simple yet powerful: to spark joy through vibrant color. Her art celebrates life's vivid spectrum—each piece a visual love letter to happiness, resilience, and personal freedom of expression. Whether painting, drawing, or experimenting with mixed media, Falon uses bold palettes and playful compositions to uplift and inspire. As a mother and artist, she balances the beautiful chaos of everyday life with a deep commitment to making the world smile.

Artist Statement

Through painting, drawing, and mixed media, I aim to craft moments of brightness—visual love letters to the happiness we often overlook. My intention is simple: to inspire, to energize, and to leave a trace of color that lingers long after the viewer has walked away. One brushstroke at a time, I hope to make the world feel just a little lighter.

I create to celebrate the full spectrum of being human: the resilience, the tenderness, the play, and the persistent beauty found in everyday chaos. My days are filled with movement and emotion, and my studio becomes a place where that energy transforms into something visual. Each piece is a small act of freedom, an affirmation that joy is worth seeking and worth sharing. I aim to craft moments of brightness—visual love letters to the happiness we often overlook.

Included work(s)

Black Goth, 2025, 16" x 20", Digital drawing, \$200

Infernal Rage, 2025, 16" x 20", Digital drawing, \$200

Gina Washington (Curator)

Biography

I was born and raised in Cleveland, Ohio, and graduated with an MFA in Photography from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. I consider myself “a child of the Universe” and have traveled to many places collecting images and connecting artists. I have won awards for portraiture and I create art “by any means necessary” combining many different mediums. As a master collaborator, I co-created an exhibition at the Ingenuity Fest Cleveland in 2010 that showcased poetry, storytelling, music, and visual arts with a group we now call The Visit Arts Collective. My goal is to make art accessible to everyone. I teach, I create and I hope to inspire future students as they discover their passions and soar.

Artist Statement

In the beginning, there was...

At 1800 degrees and above, I remain...

Not invisible, not erased, but stronger because of it.

Silence, willingness to ignore, and utter disdain make me stronger...

What I hold is love. Who I am is love. What I bear is love...

Inextinguishable...

In the end, there will be...

Included work(s)

Primordial, 2025, Stoneware and eggs, \$400

McKinley Wiley

Biography

McKinley Wiley is a self-taught portrait artist based in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio primarily working in the medium of photography. In 2019 he was the recipient of the Cleveland Arts Prize Verge Fellowship. His work has been shown in galleries such as Assembly Arts Cleveland, Bostwick Design Partnership and The Western Reserve Historical Society.

Artist Statement

McKinley feels that his portraiture has always been a love offering in that it is his unique way of connecting with people beyond conversation or text. More so he intends to empower people to see the beauty within themselves even if it's only for a fraction of a second. McKinley documents and archives moments of joy, vulnerability, and community. In a world filled with greed, fleeting moments and ever-changing landscapes, his art stands as a timeless reminder of the beauty that exists within each of us, waiting to be discovered and celebrated.

Included work(s)

CLE Delicious, 2023, 16" x 20", Black + White medium format film, NFS

Lolita Wilson

Biography

Lolita Wilson is a Cleveland-based multidisciplinary artist dedicated to community healing and storytelling through public art. Her creative practice blends mural-making, mixed media, and social engagement, focusing on themes of memory, loss, and empowerment. Lolita is known for her role in transformative art projects that uplift underserved neighborhoods, especially through her work honoring the lives of children lost to gun violence. A passionate advocate for accessible art, she often collaborates with local youth, families, and organizations to create spaces of reflection and resilience. She was selected as a participating artist in the 216:Breathe-Cohort, a project supported by the City of Cleveland's Transformative Art Fund, where she worked alongside mentor artist Darius Steward and lead artist Robin Robinson. Lolita believes that art has the power to restore, connect, and speak truth—and she uses her creative voice to honor stories that deserve to be seen and remembered.

Artist Statement

My goal as an artist is to grow and evolve as a woman of color by bringing the elements of today's personal experiences and connecting them with the collectiveness of my ancestors. Utilizing the visual arts as a backdrop will tell a story of struggles and victories in full color.

Included work(s)

Sacrifice, 2013, 24" x 26", acrylic on canvas, \$325

COMING SOON

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 | 6:00 P.M.

Close Encounters Open Rehearsals: From East to West

A rare opportunity for students and adults to observe the Taplin Quartet as they prepare for their Close Encounters performance on February 8th.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8 | 3:00 P.M.

Close Encounters: From East to West

Dunham Tavern Witness the debut of the Taplin Quartet as they bring listeners on a journey from East To West with a varied program including familiar favorites like Clair de Lune alongside Debussy's masterful String Quartet in G Minor, Lei Liang's dramatic piece, Gobi Gloria, inspired by Mongolian music, and more.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12 | 7:00 P.M.

ARTbar: Burning River Swing

Burning River Swing is a swinging and singing jazz group from the Cleveland/Akron area. The band honors French jazz, hot jazz and swing music by musicians like Django Reinhardt, Stefan Grappelli, and Ella Fitzgerald, bringing this music back to life in the modern day.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13 | 7:00 P.M.

No Exit: METROPOLIS Reimagined

An event featuring the remarkable talents of internationally renowned pianist Jenny Lin and electronic artist Drake Andersen.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19 | 7:00 P.M.

Ekphrastacy: Artists Talk and Poets Respond

Poets Jennifer Hallaman, Jeweled Justice, and Sujata Lakhe join Heights Poet Laureate Michelle R. Smith to perform original works inspired by the exhibitions on view: Consider Fires and Spotlight: Josh Chefitz. Artists also discuss their work.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING TO
expand
your palette.

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