

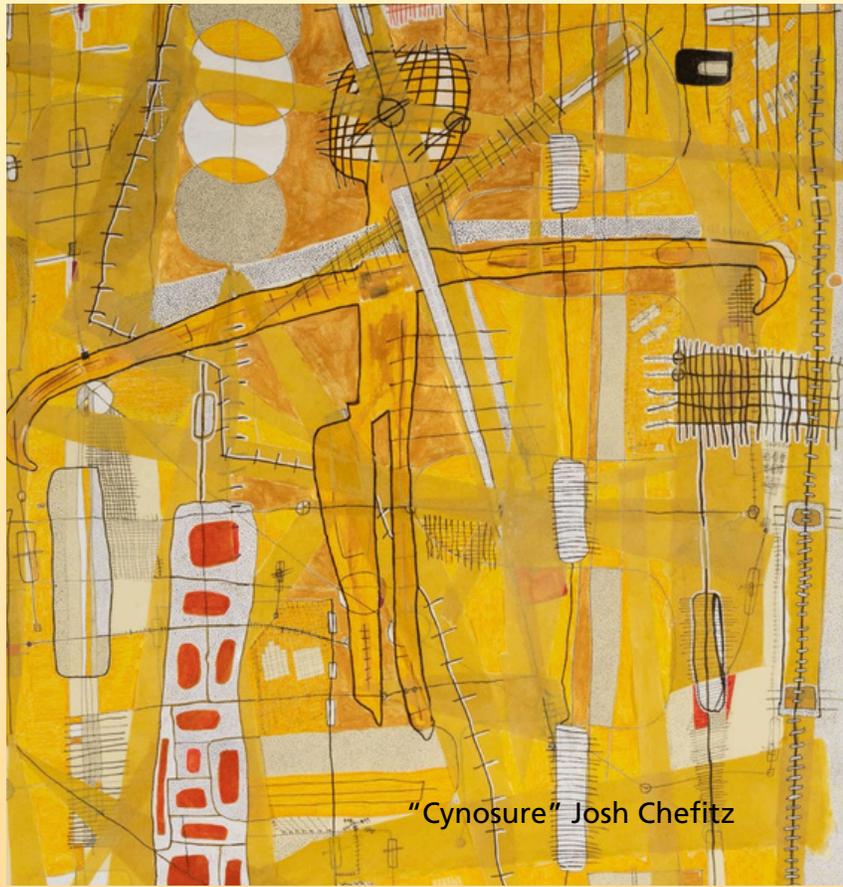
25
HEIGHTS ARTS

Ekphrastacy

artists talk + poets respond

Consider Fires &
Spotlight: Josh Chefitz

February 19, 2026



"Cynosure" Josh Chefitz

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE

HEIGHTS WRITES COMMUNITY TEAM

Team Members: John Burroughs, Ray McNiece,

Amy Rosenbluth, Catherine Wing

POETS:

Michelle R. Smith

Jennifer Hallaman

Jeweled Justice

Sujata Lakhe



"Cleveland Delicious" McKinley Wiley



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

2175 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio



ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

Consider Fires

“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?”

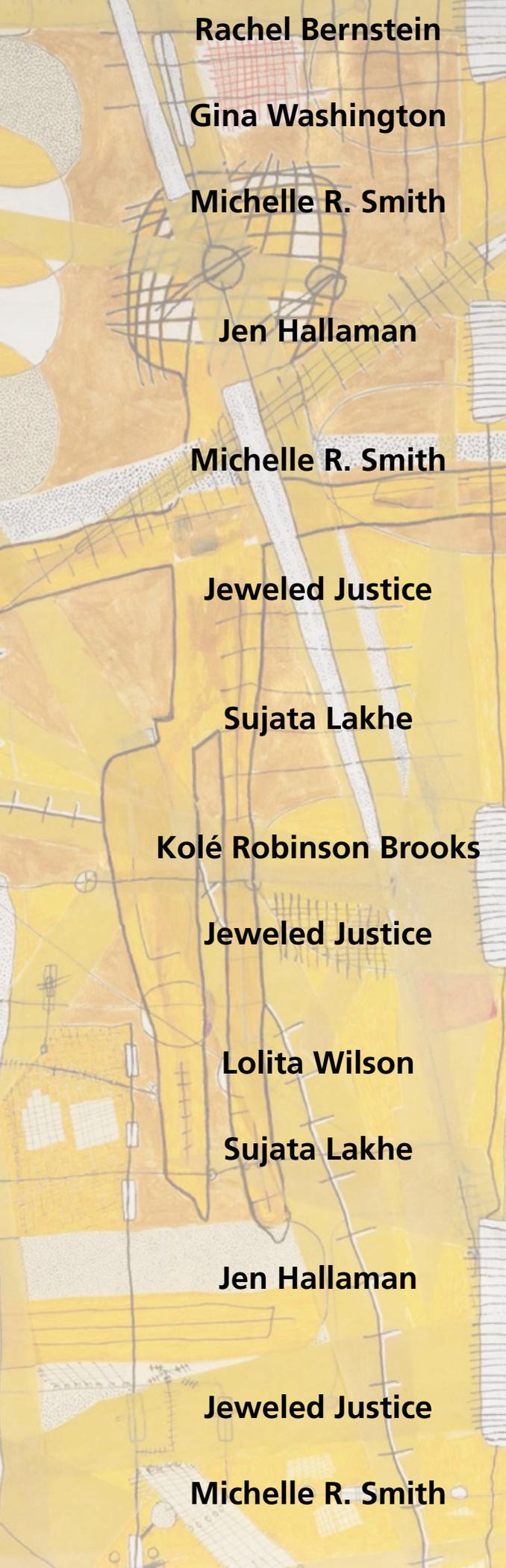
- Curated by Gina Washington

ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

Spotlight: Josh Chefitz

I've come to realize that my work is all about memory. It's inspired by my childhood doodles: quadrants, ordered pairs, and skulls that filled my middle school notebooks. But maybe it's just how I remember those doodles and it's not really like them at all...

So I explore memory as both a personal and collective process of reconstruction. I reframe these early designs as a commentary on how we reshape memories to move forward from pain. What I create is not a direct reflection of past experiences but a reimagining—an exploration of how we craft new narratives to heal and grow. Through layers of ink, paint, and mixed media, I invite viewers to uncover the complexity of memory, authenticity, and transformation.



Rachel Bernstein

Opening Remarks

Gina Washington

Opening Remarks

Michelle R. Smith

Opening Remarks + "Spellwork" after Gina Washington's Primordial

Jen Hallaman

"Language Acquisition" after Tanya Kaiser's Untitled 9 (Crystalized Innocence)

Michelle R. Smith

"i do not feat tearing the fabric." after James Negron's Tearing the Fabric

Jeweled Justice

"Inspired by: The Fallen Anthem" after Yasmeen Kwan's The Fallen Anthem

Sujata Lakhe

"Flowerworks (Tanka)" after Leah Aki Wood's Untitled

Kolé Robinson Brooks

Artist Remarks

Jeweled Justice

"Inspired by: Fire On The Water" after Kolé Robinson Brooks Fire on the Water

Lolita Wilson

Artist Remarks

Sujata Lakhe

"Votive Offerings" after Lolita Wilson's Sacrifice

Jen Hallaman

"I Want to Be A Citizen of An Imaginary Country" after Lolita Wilson's Sacrifice

Jeweled Justice

"Inspired by: Held" after Ellis Walker's Held

Michelle R. Smith

"american gothic 250 (360)" after Falon Walker's Black Goth



Jeweled Justice

“Inspired by: Infernal Rage” after Falon Walker’s Infernal Rage

Sujata Lakhe

“The Tipping” after Jeanetta Ho’s Transform

Chester Hopkins-Bey

Artist Remarks

Michelle R. Smith

“The Remarkable Grezi Haze” after Chester Hopkins-Bey’s The Remarkable Grezi Haze

Sujata Lakhe

“Army Nurse” after Chester Hopkins-Bey’s A Morse Code of Red

Aja Joi Grant

Artist Remarks

Jeweled Justice

“Untitled” after Aja Joi Grant’s Untitled

Mckinley Wiley

Artist Remarks

Michelle R. Smith

“cleveland delicious” after Mckinley Wiley’s CLE Delicious

Josh Chefitz

Artist Remarks

Jen Hallaman

“Something Inside My Television Set” after Josh Chefitz’ Lifetime Channel

Sujata Lakhe

“The Electric Apostle” after Josh Chefitz’ Tecmo Joel

Jen Hallaman

“Where We Are Going, We Have Been Before” after Josh Chefitz’ Where We’ve Been We’ve Been Before

Michelle R. Smith

Closing Remarks

HEIGHTS ARTS UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 7 | 7:00 p.m.

Gallery Concert: Mud Window Mud Mirror

Soprano Naomi Columna and percussionist Katalin La Favre, known as Mud Window Mud Mirror, blend early music, folk, pop, and contemporary music through bold experimentation. Their new project, Wanderings, reimagines Medieval and Renaissance works with modern percussion and voice, featuring marimba, drums, bells, and shifting vocal textures. Framed by the four seasons and multiple versions of Machaut's *Puis qu'en oubli*, the program explores time, texture, and unexpected sonic worlds.

Friday, March 20 | 5:00 p.m.

Opening Reception:

Ungallery

Not your typical gallery show, Ungallery presents work that defies the expected. Featuring art that's experimental, unconventional, and unapologetically bold, the exhibition celebrates creativity in forms often overlooked by traditional spaces. Leo Covault, Mary Defer, Jake Kelly, Nate Puppets, Marcus Schafer, and Jordan Alexander Wood.

Spotlight: Jeneen Hobby

Photographer Jeneen Hobby presents images from a 2025 expedition to Antarctica, capturing the stark beauty of ice, sea, and wildlife in a rapidly changing climate.

Both exhibitions run through May 17.

Thursday, April 9 | 7:00 p.m.

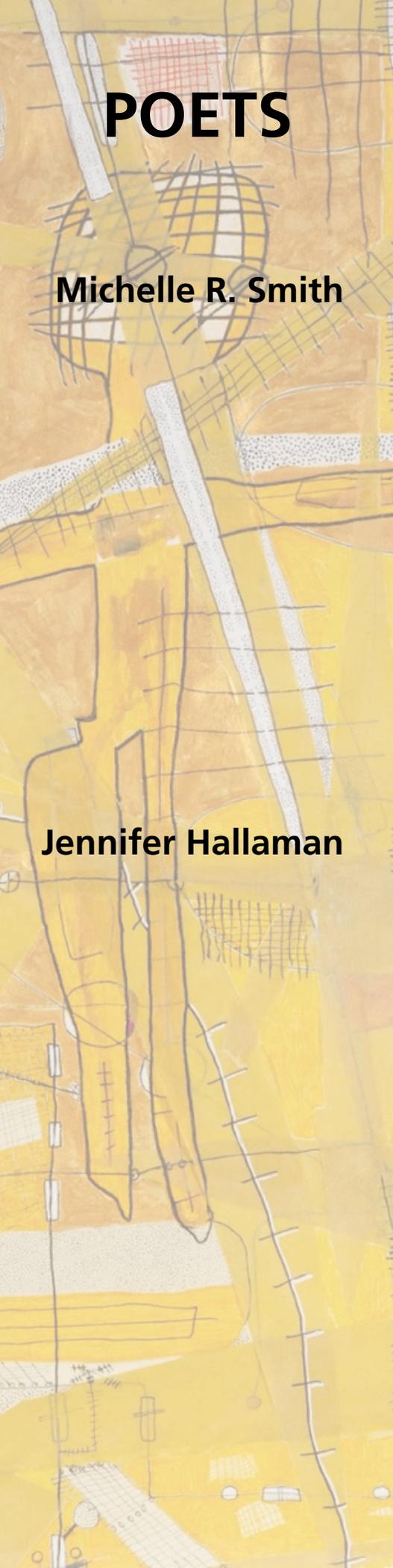
ARTbar: Tongue in Groove

Ray McNiece and his Tongue in Groove band feature a performance combining poems, songs and stories backed up by the multi-instrumental house band. This event blends jazz and spoken word into an unforgettable night of creativity and connection.

Thursday, April 23 | 7:00 p.m.

Ekphrastacy: Artists Talk and Poets Respond

Poets Talya Ideozu, Jim Szudy, and Melissa Vincel join Heights Poet Laureate Michelle R. Smith to perform original works inspired by the exhibitions on view: *Ungallery* and Jeneen Hobby in the spotlight gallery. Artists also discuss their work



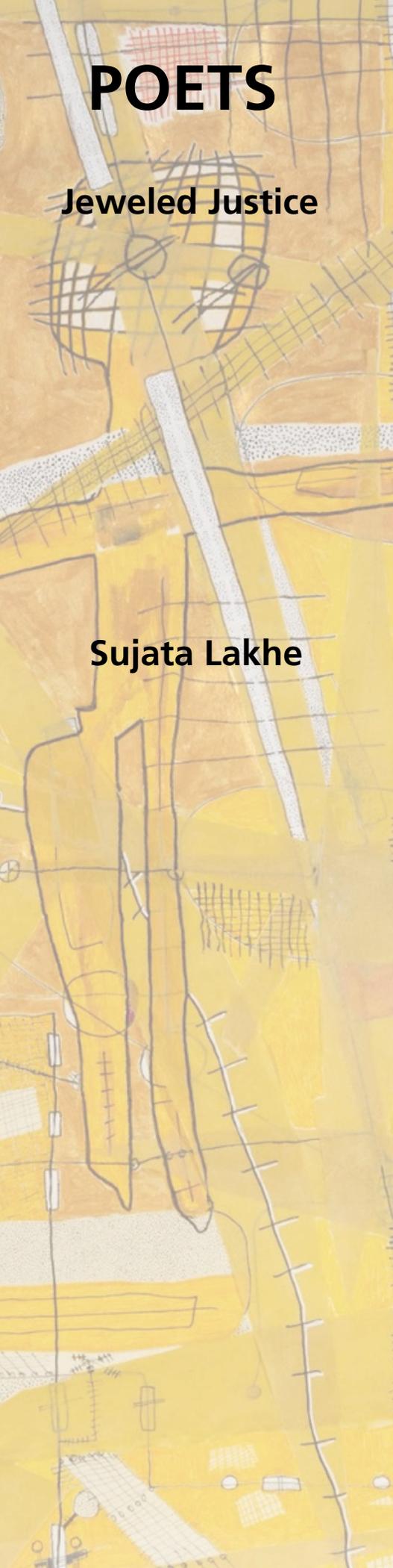
POETS

Michelle R. Smith

Michelle R. Smith is a writer, poet, educator, cultural facilitator, and native Clevelander. She is the Programming Director for Literary Cleveland and author of the poetry collections *Ariel in Black* (2015) and *The Vagina Analogues* (2020). She has been published in *The Normal School*, *The Gasconade Review*, *New Note Poetry*, *Merge Magazine*, and *io Literary Magazine*. She is also the creator, co-producer, and director of **BLAX MUSEUM**, an annual performance showcase for Northeast Ohio artists open to all forms and dedicated to honoring notable black figures in American history and culture.

Jennifer Hallaman

Jen Hallaman spends her time in Cleveland, Ohio, selling books, chasing her toddler around the block, and baking strawberry basil pie. Her writing appears in *Pithead Chapel*, *DIAGRAM*, *Sierra Nevada Review*, *Orange Blossom Review*, *Appalachian Review*, *Tinderbox Poetry Journal*, *The Shore*, and many other publications. Find her at www.jenhallaman.com



POETS

Jeweled Justice

Jeweled Justice is a poet and creative supporter. She believes that art, in its various forms, provokes critical thoughts and invites intellectual conversation. She uses art as a tool to shine a lens on society's triumphs and places for improvement, motivating actionable change.

Sujata Lakhe

Underlying my work is a curiosity about how we orient ourselves in the world: how we belong, how we adapt, and how we carry what came before us. I'm interested in thresholds, between inside and outside, presence and absence, control and surrender.

Satyajmjit Ray wrote, "It is the half-shades, the hardly audible notes that I want to capture and explore." This resonates deeply with my approach to poetry as a form of listening, attentive to what's withheld as much as what's offered. I often write in conversation with visual works, approaching ekphrastic not as description but as encounter, a way of inhabiting the space between seeing and understanding.

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](#)

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 on our website [HERE](#)

ROLLING CALL FOR POETS

If you are a poet in Northeast Ohio, we welcome your application to perform in the Heights Arts EKPHRASTACY Series.

The Ekphrastacy literary program is a series of artist talks + poetry readings held regularly in the Heights Arts gallery, in conjunction with our special exhibitions. Cleveland-area writers are invited by the current Poet Laureate to view the installed artworks and respond with a poem.

Click here to get started with your application. [HERE](#)

Join our mailing list for the latest updates about Close Encounters and other programs. Sign up by email on the guest list at our door or [scroll to the bottom of our home page.](#)

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