

25
HEIGHTS ARTS

Ekphrastacy

artists talk + poets respond

UNGALLERY
and

Spotlight: Jeneen Hobby

April 23, 2026

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE
HEIGHTS WRITES COMMUNITY TEAM
John Burroughs, Ray McNiece, Amy
Rosenbluth, Catherine Wing



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

2175 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio



Talya Ideozu

Michelle R. Smith

Jim Szudy

Melissa Vincel



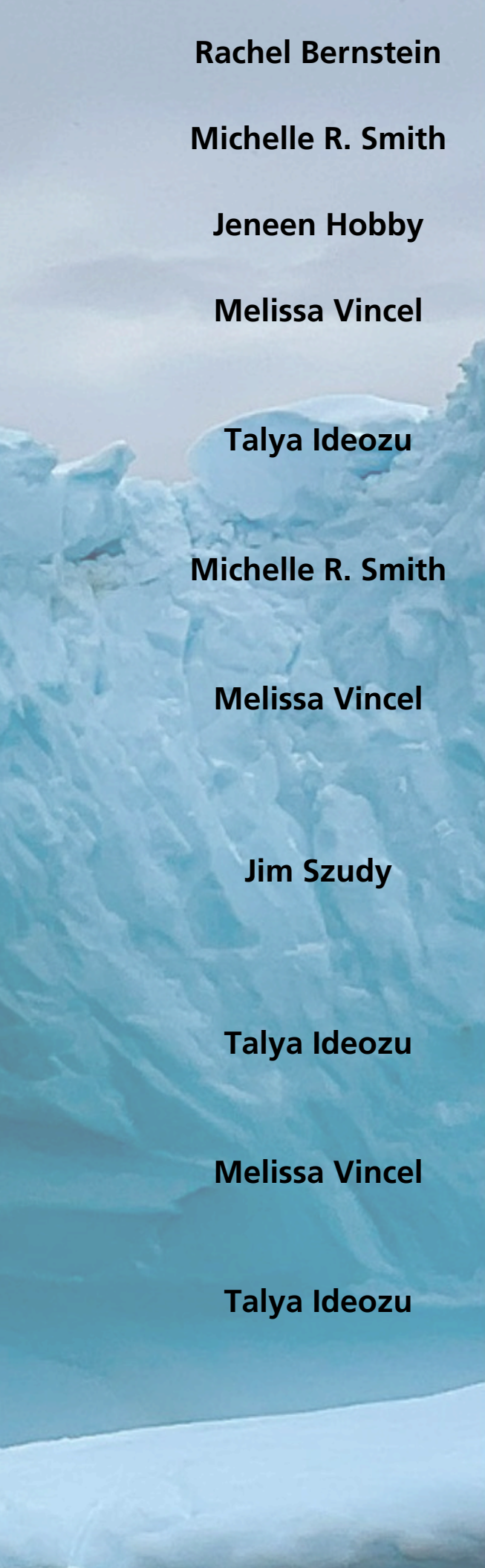
Ohio Arts
COUNCIL



ABOUT THE EXHIBITIONS

Ungallery brings together a group of artists whose practices expand beyond the conventions of traditional gallery presentation, not as a rejection of the gallery, but as an invitation to stretch its boundaries. Bringing together artists working across puppetry, experimental photography, comics, zines, and design, the exhibition foregrounds modes of making that often exist outside of traditional exhibition framework. These are practices rooted in material exploration, storytelling, and process.

In the Spotlight Gallery, photographer **Jeneen Hobby** presents a collection of works from her travels to both polar regions: Antarctica and Greenland. “I wanted to witness the ice. The ice appeared to me in books and dreams and visual images that had entered my world as extreme beauty found in a fragile state and as the best indicator of the fate of life going forward.” Hobby says. She captures the diversity of blue hues, and the permanence and impermanence of the vast ice formations in her photographs.



Rachel Bernstein

Opening Remarks

Michelle R. Smith

Opening Remarks

Jeneen Hobby

Artist Remarks

Melissa Vincel

“Antarctica” After Jeneen Hobby’s
Paradise

Talya Ideozu

“Ice but no Land, Monolithic it Stands”
After Jeneen Hobby’s Monolith

Michelle R. Smith

“waiting” After Jeneen Hobby’s Waiting

Melissa Vincel

“Installation of Grenades at Objects”
After Leigh Brooklyn’s No Justice No
Peace Grenade

Jim Szudy

“Another Story That Grew in the Dark”
After Jake Kelly’s Page from “Doomsday
Maps”

Talya Ideozu

“Lowell, Day, 2026” After Leo Covault’s
Lowell, Night, 1837

Melissa Vincel

“Three Little Foxes” After Leo Covault’s
FOX DANCERS

Talya Ideozu

“Tired Tiger” After Nate Puppets’ Day-
Glo Cheshire Tide Kitty



Mary Defer

Artist Remarks

Melissa Vincel

“Branches” After Mary Defer’s Secret Family 20

Michelle R. Smith

“dear jack’ After Mary Defer’s don’t think i have forgotten you

Jim Szudy

“Bars Speak Easy, Men and Women Do Too” After Jake Kelly’s Page from “Doomsday Map”

Michelle R. Smith

“go-round” After Leo Covault’s FAIRY HORSES

Marcus Schafer

Artist Remarks

Jim Szudy

“Operational Scar Lessons” After Marcus Schafer’s Gatsby’s Delirium I

Talya Ideozu

“Jim’s Beaming” After Nate Puppet’s Liquor Buddy

Michelle R. Smith

“& be friends” After Leo Covault’s I WANT TO BE

Jim Szudy

“Undefeated” After Marcus Schafer’s Gatsby’s Delirium I

Michelle R. Smith

Closing Remarks

HEIGHTS ARTS UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, May 2 | 7:00 p.m.

Gallery Concert: Klezmer Guy Trio

Bert Stratton, Cleveland's beloved "Klezmer Guy" and longtime leader of Yiddishe Cup, leads his trio, featuring pianist/vocalist Alan Douglass and soul singer Tamar Gray in a playful mash-up of "matzo-meets-Motown" with storytelling, music and humor. **FREE, registration required**

Monday, May 11 | 6:00 p.m.

Close Encounters Open Rehearsal: Taplin Quartet

Open Rehearsals provide the rare opportunity for students and adults to glimpse the process of preparing a Close Encounters performance prior to some of the concerts. This one-of-a-kind experience is not only educational but provides a deeper understanding of how performance is put together by some of the world's best musicians. **FREE, registration required**

Thursday, May 14 | 6:00 p.m.

Brave New Voices: A Heights Poet Laureate Community Engagement Project

Heights Library - University Heights Branch.

Hosted by Heights Poet Laureate, Michelle R. Smith, this poetry showcase is an open, engaged, and inspired space for emerging adult, youth, and community poets to share their original work. Featuring performances by Courtney L. Black, Deborah Taddeo, and Rosie Warda before attendees are invited to participate in an open mic open for all ages. **FREE, registration required**

Sunday, May 17 | 3:00 p.m.

Close Encounters: Bach and Beyond

The final concert in this year's series, Bach and Beyond, celebrates J.S. Bach's profound and expressive chorales, arranged for string quartet, alongside Haydn's inventive String Quartet Op. 76 No. 5 and Beethoven's String Quartet No. 10, nicknamed the "Harp" Quartet. **Ticketed**

POETS

Talya Ideozu

Talya Ideozu is a Black, nonbinary, Muslim, interdisciplinary artist based in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Their work consists of poetry, paintings, and illustrations centered around mental health, Islamic spirituality, intersectionality, and gender identity. Talya featured poetry in 'Our Response', a local pandemic response zine in 2021. They hope to be in gallery shows highlighting queer and black artists across Cleveland and beyond in the future.

Michelle R. Smith

Michelle R. Smith is a writer, poet, educator, cultural facilitator, and native Clevelander. She is the 2025-2027 Heights Poet Laureate, Programming Director for Literary Cleveland, and author of the poetry collections *Ariel in Black* (2015) and *The Vagina Analogues* (2020). Her work has appeared in *The Normal School*, *The Gasconade Review*, *New Note Poetry*, *Merge Magazine*, and *io Literary Magazine*, among other publications. She is also the creator, co-producer, and director of *BLAX MUSEUM*, an annual February performance showcase for Northeast Ohio artists open to all forms and dedicated to honoring notable Black figures in American history and culture.

POETS

Jim Szudy

Jim Szudy is a graduate of Baldwin Wallace University and has been deeply rooted in the Cleveland arts and culture community for over 30 years. Jim is the Founder and President of Photo Cleveland, freelance photographer, writer, poet, musician, noiseician, music producer, multimedia artist, and former Director/Marketing Manager of the Cleveland Photo Fest.

Melissa Vincel

Melissa Vincel is a writer who resides in Lakewood, Ohio. She has published poetry, travel essays, and flash fiction over the last twenty-five years (Gordon Square Review, Southern Voices, Cumberland Poetry Review, Number One), and runs her own creative consultancy supporting other writers with editing and development services. A Southern writer by birth and roaming traveler by choice, in 2006, she made a stop-over in NE Ohio and fell in love — with her current partner, as well as with the hidden gems she discovered in this area. She continues to be enriched by the wealth of green space, the literary community, and the people she meets in both of those areas. You can find her reading poetry in the sewers with the NEO Regional Sewer District, supporting the Cuyahoga County Public Library as one of 30 Ohioan poets during National Poetry Month, and hiking through the Cuyahoga Valley National Park at one of the writing retreats she hosts there. Please come say hello at melissavincel.com.

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 Ekphrastacy and other programs. Sign up by email on the guest list at our door or [scroll to the bottom of our home page.](#)

INVESTING IN CREATIVITY



Ingenuity, CAC-funded since 2008 - Photo by Matthew Tyler Media

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