Unpolished Echoes

Curated by Becci Davis & Holly Ewald

Artists
Brenda Hill
Leah Hopkins
Julia Marden
Brittney Peauwe Wunnepog Walley
Jonathan Perry
Lucine Reinbold
Kiki Sciullo
Daniel Shears
Robin Spears Jr.
Tina Tryforos
Acknowledgements

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Becci Davis
Artist and Curator

Becci Davis was born on a military installation in Georgia named after General Henry L. Benning of the Confederate States Army. Her birth initiated her family’s first generation after the Civil Rights Act and its fifth-generation post-Emancipation.

As a Rhode Island-based visual artist who works across disciplines, Becci finds inspiration in exploring natural and cultural landscapes, studying the past, documenting her family’s stories, and recording her present experiences as a daughter, mother, American, and Southern-born and raised, Black woman.

After earning her MFA from Lesley University College of Art and Design, Becci was the recipient of the St. Botolph Club Foundation Emerging Artist Award in Visual Art, the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts Fellowship in New Genres, the Providence Public Library Creative Fellowship, and the RISD Museum Artist Fellowship. Her work has been exhibited nationally, at venues including the Newport Art Museum, TILA Studios, the Photographic Museum of Humanity, Franklin Street Works, Burlington City Arts Center, AS220, and the University of Maryland. Becci lives with her family in Wakefield, Rhode Island. She is a member of the WARP Collective, as well as the AS220 and Dirt Palace Public Projects communities.
Holly Ewald  
Artist and Curator  

Holly Ewald is a visual artist who blends studio work and community engagement, bringing interdisciplinary partners and the public together to explore, research, and celebrate less recognized places. In 2018 the Providence Public Library accepted her 10-year project UPP Arts into the RI Special Collections and Ewald has returned to studio work inspired by that project’s focus - Mashapaug Pond, in Providence. She served as a Community Fellow at Brown’s Public Humanities Program from 2014 – 2021 after co-teaching an oral history for three semesters at Brown with Anne Valk. Twenty-five years of teaching in public, private, and community settings has given her a strong foundation in using the arts to enable less heard voices to be heard. She has received numerous awards in recognition of her art and community work, including the Tom Roberts Prize for Creative Achievement in the Humanities from the Rhode Island Council on the Humanities, an Honor Award from the Tomaquag Museum, the Environmental Achievement Award from Save the Bay and the Education Award from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.
Brenda Hill
Artist Contributor

Brenda Hill is a First Nations Tuscarora/Mississippi Chocktaw potter who practices traditional techniques in order to create clay forms influenced by the past and the present. Inspired by her late mother and grandfather respectively; Diosia Summers and Stan Hill Sr., she uses pottery to continue the legacy and to teach others the traditions of her Native culture. Her current work incorporates aspects from historic Haudenosaunee wampum, beadwork, and pottery.
Leah Hopkins
Artist Contributor

Leah Hopkins, mother, educator, culture bearer, subsistence practitioner and museum professional, is an enrolled member of the Narragansett Indian Tribe of Rhode Island. Leah works to develop and implement programs, curricula and digital content for Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences about Native history, culture, values, lifeways and practices. She also works to ensure cultural continuity of the area’s Indigenous peoples through programs, workshops, and advocacy. She is a professional speaker, consultant, traditional dancer, and singer grounded in Narragansett land and sea-based practices. Leah works collaboratively with Indigenous and Tribal communities, museums, and other institutions to ensure best practices in programming and education initiatives that promote the visibility and ensure the perspectives of Indigenous populations in New England. Leah holds a BA in Anthropology from the University of Rhode Island and has a background in museum and tribal education that spans over 10 years, working at both the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and with other regional institutions, organizations, and tribal communities. Leah is currently the Community Engagement Specialist at the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology at Brown University. In her personal time, Leah enjoys playing with her son and taking him out on the land and the water to teach him about the traditional subsistence lifestyle and ensure that the next generation maintains cultural continuity.

Leah collaborates with Jonathan Perry, to see more of their art, visit www.jonathanjamesperry.com like @artistjonathanperry on Facebook, and follow @we.face.east on Instagram
Julia Marden
Artist Contributor

Julia Marden is an Aquinnah Wampanoag artist who lives in Vermont and specializes in Eastern Woodland Art.

To see more of Julia’s art, follow Bluejays Visions on Facebook. If you are interested in purchasing Julia’s work, please email her at bluejaysvisions@icloud.com
Jonathan Perry
Artist Contributor

Jonathan Perry is an Aquinnah Wampanoag culture bearer, leader, historian, artist and professional speaker. He is grounded in the traditions of his ocean-going ancestors. His material work embodies the refined quality of that of his ancestors, while still drawing upon his experience in a contemporary society. Jonathan’s pieces reflect balance within the Natural World, incorporating stories, effigies, and symbology of Wampanoag traditions. He is currently serving his fifth, three-year term as Councilman for the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah). Jonathan works diligently to enforce and uphold the sovereignty of his tribal nation as well as to maintain cultural continuance among his tribal citizens. He has over fifteen years of experience working within the Tribal Historic Preservation Office, with the responsibility of protecting and preserving cultural sites of significance throughout southern New England. He currently works for the Elders Council at the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation to ensure cultural continuity and preservation within the community. Jonathan has over twenty years of experience in the research and historical interpretation of Eastern Woodlands Native culture and art. He has worked with various non-profit and tribal organizations in exhibit design and cultural consultation based on traditional Wampanoag knowledge, symbolism, and values. Jonathan was most recently awarded the 2017 First People’s Fund Jennifer Easton Community Spirit Award for his work in reviving Wampanoag maritime traditions.

Jonathan collaborates with Leah Hopkins, to see more of their art, visit www.jonathanjamesperry.com like @artistjonathanperry on Facebook, and follow @we.face.east on Instagram
Daniel Shears is a Nulhegan Abenaki artist who lives in Massachusetts. “I’ve come to have a very deep love for my culture even though I was not raised in it. Along with birchbark items, I’m also a bead / quillworker and traditional hide tanner. I’ve also been appointed the position of Material Culture Advisor for our tribal Cultural and Historic Preservation Department. Together with our Tribal Historian, I help educate the younger generations as well as the community as a whole.

These are maple sugaring items. A gash is made in the bark of a tree and a wooden spile is driven in to direct the sap into a collector. The sap collector sits at the base of the tree to catch the dripping sap. When full, it is transferred to a larger watertight basket which is then poured into a clay pot or iron / brass kettle and placed into or hung over a fire until all the water is boiled out. When the sap has become very thick, it is either poured into the cones and hung for storage or poured into a wooden trough and mixed with a wooden paddle or large wooden spoon. As it cools, it crystallizes, and forms granulated sugar. It is then put into birchbark baskets with a lid for storage.”

If you are interested in purchasing Daniel’s work, please email him at historicaldept@yahoo.com
Robin Spears Jr.
Artist Contributor

Robin Spears Jr. is a Narragansett Tribal Nation artist who lives in Charlestown, Rhode Island. He uses various resources from the eastern woodland coastal landscape including bark, roots, shells, antler, bone, furs, and other harvested materials.

Robin has been a mason for over 30 years in his family’s business showcasing the Narragansett art of stone masonry. He is the Lieutenant of the Narragansett Indian Tribe’s Environmental Police Department. The care of the natural world is important to him culturally, artistically and professionally. He also served in the US Army as a Sergeant and also serves on the Native American Board on Veteran Affairs for USET (United South & Eastern Tribes). He also served on the Charlestown Parks and Rec and ran the teen and men’s basketball league. He was a volunteer fire fighter for the Cross’ Mills Fire Department. He is also involved in the Chariho Tri-Town Task Force for prevention education.

He has hunted, fished, gathered and harvested the gifts of the land and waters his whole life. Through his art he uses those resources to express his culture, lifeways of his people, respect for the earth, and his individual expression.

To see more of Robin’s art, visit Tomaquagmuseumshop.org
If you are interested in purchasing Robin’s work, please email him at robinspears62@gmail.com
Brittney Peauwe Wunnepog Walley
Artist Contributor

Brittney Peauwe Wunnepog Walley is a Nipmuc artisan who lives in Massachusetts. “All three pieces were created with weaving methods that have been used for hundreds of years by Northeastern Woodland Peoples. I am grateful and honored to have learned this skill from Kerri Helme. Additionally, I am honored and grateful to be supported and encouraged to continue textile weaving by my community.”

To see more of Brittney’s art, follow @b7.Nipmuc.Artisan on Instagram. If you are interested in purchasing Brittney’s work, please email her at brittney.w117@gmail.com
Katie Coggins  
Label Writer

Katie Coggins is a current Master’s student at Brown University’s John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities & Cultural Heritage. In 2020, she graduated summa cum laude from Skidmore College with a B.A. in History and Political Science. Katie has continued her interest in public history and cultural heritage through her work with the Newport Preservation Society, the New Bedford Whaling Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, and the Little Compton Historical Society. Katie is a lifelong Rhode Islander who has greatly enjoyed the opportunity to look at history a little closer to home.

Working on Unpolished Echoes has introduced Katie to the compelling stories of Mashapaug Pond, a site she has lived within 15 minutes of her whole life without knowing it. It seems now may be the time for a walk in the park!
Hope Leeson
Botany Scholar Advisor

As a botanist with nearly 30 years of field experience in southern New England, Hope Leeson’s feet and eyes have traveled over most of the state of Rhode Island. Her many years of determining where the edge of a wetland lies, and searching forests for rare and unusual plants, have contributed to her intimate knowledge of Rhode Island’s natural areas and plant communities. Her work experience has included employment for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, United States Fish and Wildlife Service RI Refuge Complex, and several environmental engineering firms. Additionally, she has consulted for the state’s non-profit organizations (Rhode Island Wild Plant Society, New England Wildflower Society, The Nature Conservancy-RI, Save the Bay, and the Rhode Island Natural History Survey), documenting Rhode Island’s rare plant populations, native plant communities, and invasive species, as well as providing public education on these topics.

Since 2008, as the botanist at the Rhode Island Natural History Survey, Leeson has applied her understanding of native plant communities and plant growth habits to the sustainable procurement of wild collected seed, native plant propagation, and consultation with land managers for successful habitat restoration through the Rhody Native initiative.

She has been an adjunct faculty member at RISD since 2012, teaching on various botanical topics in the History, Philosophy and Social Sciences, and Landscape Architecture departments. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking and growing food and soil in her permaculture-based garden.
Steve Lubar
Exhibition Studies and Label Writing Scholar Advisor

Steve Lubar has been a professor of American Studies, History, and History of Art and Architecture at Brown since 2004. He was director of the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage, 2004-2014 and director of the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology, 2010-2012. Before that, he was Chair of the Division of the History of Technology at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. In 2016 he was the Guggenheim Fellow.

Steve is the author or co-author of Inside the Lost Museum: Curating, Past and Present; Legacies: Collecting America’s History at the Smithsonian; InfoCulture: the Smithsonian Book of Information Age Inventions; History from Things and Engines of Change: The American Industrial Revolution, and many articles on museums and on the history of technology. His exhibits at the Smithsonian include "America on the Move," "Smithsonian's America," and "Engines of Change." Steve’s Exhibits at Brown include oversight of student exhibitions at the public humanities center, the Haffenreffer Museum, and the John Hay Library. His present interests include the history of museums and memorials, material culture studies, and public and digital humanities.
Laura Maxwell  
Botany Scholar Advisor  

Laura Maxwell has taught high school English for over 20 years. She has also been a citizen scientist who, for several years along with a team of other enthusiasts, monitors the waters of Mashapaug Pond for dissolved oxygen, chlorophyll, and bacteria through URI’s Watershed Watch program. Participation in this project has been rewarding beyond her wildest imagination and she recommends it highly to anyone looking for a sociable way to care about the environment (https://web.uri.edu/watershedwatch/getting-involved/). You meet the nicest people! In her trash collection rounds on the pond, she has turned up such fascinating items as a 1950s juicer made from uranium glass (it glows!), a horseshoe, and several artifacts of the Gorham Factory era.
From the first time Lucine set out a bird feeder in her backyard and a single black capped chickadee came to visit, it flew away with a piece of her heart. Since that day, she has become a passionate bird enthusiast and photographer who loves to share the beauty of these feathered marvels of the natural world. When she is not at her daytime job as a Materials Engineer, she is actively birding at one of the many serene and picturesque nature locations throughout Rhode Island. Mashapaug Park provides one of these fantastic birding locations as it surrounds a large freshwater pond that attracts both songbirds and wetland birds alike. At any given time of year, one can see species such as woodpeckers, mockingbirds, red-tailed hawks, and killdeer, to name a few.

“In order to see birds, it is necessary to become part of the silence.” - Robert Lynd
Kiki Sciullo  
Installation Designer

Kiki Sciullo is an artist and designer living in Rhode Island. She is an enthusiastic collaborator and grateful for the opportunity to work with Holly, Becci, and the natural history Museum on an installation that celebrates the flora and fauna and cultural history of our local environment.
The urban surroundings of Tina’s childhood in Queens, NY continually inform her work. There, nature seemed mediated and compromised by human intervention – including her own. The botany walk through Mashapaug Park took place in a similar environment, compromised and changed by industry and development. Nature is actively reclaiming the land there, but there are still many signs of human intervention all around.

As a photographer, she explores the complicated relationships people have with the natural world. Tina makes quiet comments on the disquieting evidence of how humans are playing with our planet.

Tina is an artist, maker of books, teacher, and gardener living in Rumford, RI.
Thompson Webb
Research Contributor

Thompson Webb received a botany degree from Swarthmore and a Ph.D. in atmospheric sciences from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. In 1972, he joined John Imbrie and R.K. Matthews to study Quaternary climates, as CLIMAP was starting. Webb added a terrestrial paleoclimate and paleovegetation focus to their paleoceanographic perspective on earth system history. Once COHMAP (Cooperative Holocene Mapping Project) began in 1977, he worked with colleagues at Wisconsin, Minnesota, Oxford, Durham, Lamont, Brown, and Oregon to compile large data sets, to interpret them in climate terms, and to compare the results with climate-model simulations of the past 21,000 years. Key results appeared in Science in 1988, in a joint edited book in 1993 and in an issue of Quaternary Science Reviews in 1998. In 1996, Webb and Jeff Donnelly began studying the sedimentary record of land-falling hurricanes. He retired in 2005 and has continued teaching in Summer and Continuing Studies at Brown.
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The Rhode Island Council for the Humanities seeds, supports, and strengthens public history, cultural heritage, civic education, and community engagement by and for all Rhode Islanders. As the only dedicated source of funding for public humanities in Rhode Island, we are proud to support museums, libraries, historic sites, schools, preservation and historical societies, community and cultural organizations, individual researchers and documentary filmmakers to bring Rhode Island’s stories to life and to amplify the state’s many diverse voices.
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Honoring, interpreting, and sharing Rhode Island’s past to enrich the present and inspire the future.
Roger Williams Park Museum of Natural History and Planetarium

With special acknowledgments to…

- Renee Gamba, Museum Director
- Mat Becker, Collections Curator
- Martin Sluk, Museum Educator
- Sarah Matthews, Education Curator

Our mission is to steward and interpret natural and cultural collections through exhibits, education and research to inspire people of all ages and cultures to enjoy the natural world, in order to better understand themselves and the world. The Museum of Natural History is Rhode Island’s only natural history museum and is home to the state’s only public planetarium. For more than a century the museum has served as a unique educational, scientific and cultural resource by offering exciting exhibits and programming that provide ways for children and families to learn about our world and its people.
John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities & Cultural Heritage
With special acknowledgments to…
  ● Sabina Griffin, Center Manager

The John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage’s ground-breaking MA program, engaged research, and innovative conferences help students, practitioners and communities make the humanities meaningful and accessible. The Center, founded as the John Nicholas Brown Center for the Study of American Civilization in 1979 and part of Brown University since 1995, offers the leading graduate program in public humanities featuring a range of interdisciplinary courses. We collaborate on cutting edge, scholarly and research projects developed with other departments and centers at Brown and with local, national, and international cultural, arts, and educational institutions. The Center for Public Humanities at Brown defines public humanities through our teaching, our collaborative projects, and our analog and digital publications.
The City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism

With special acknowledgments to...
  ● Micah Salkind, Special Projects Manager

The City of Providence Department of Art, Culture + Tourism (ACT) ensures the continued development of a vibrant and creative city by integrating arts and culture into community life while showcasing Providence as an international cultural destination.
Tomaquag Museum
With special acknowledgments to...
  ● Silvermoon LaRose, Assistant Director
  ● Lorén Spears, Director
  ● Anthony Belz, Collections/Archive Manager

Our mission at Tomaquag Museum is to educate the public and promote thoughtful dialogue regarding Indigenous history, culture, arts, and Mother Earth and connect to Native issues of today. Tomaquag Museum envisions its future as an Indigenous Cultural Education destination that engages visitors in thoughtful dialogue that promotes understanding and strives to create experiences that transform people's lives by broadening their perspectives, attitudes, and knowledge of Indigenous Cultures and the interrelationship with the wider world.