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# ARTFORUM

SPOTLIGHT

Mildred Howard

*The House That Will Not Pass for Any Color Than Its Own*

Battery Park City



On view in downtown Manhattan in Battery Park City, *The House That Will Not Pass for Any Color Than Its Own* by Mildred Howard. The notion of home has been an ongoing investigation and interest for decades in the artist's sculptural installations. Image courtesy Abigail Ehrlich, BPCA.

The Battery Park City Authority is pleased to present “The House That Will Not Pass For Any Color Than Its Own,” an installation by Mildred Howard through 2021.

The notion of home and its meanings has been an ongoing investigation in Mildred Howard's art for decades. The California-based artist's prints, sculpture and mixed media

assemblages explore themes of migration, displacement, gentrification, family history, the construct of race, and inequities between race and resources.

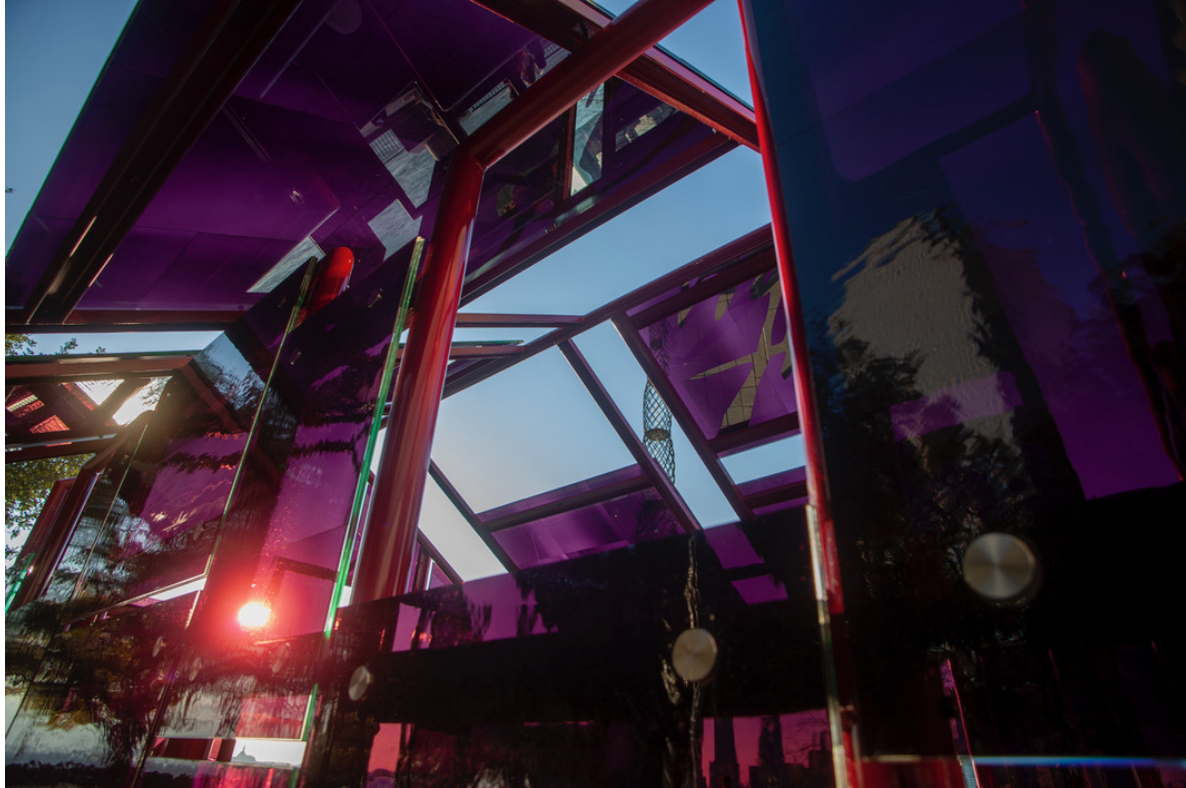
In the artist's words, "Inside 'The House' viewers see reflections of themselves and other visitors on mirrored fragments and consider reasons that people arrive in America; some come for freedom and opportunity, and some, historically and today, by force and violence. It is exciting and deeply moving to be able to frame the Statue of Liberty through the doorway of my installation in New York. As Americans experience ongoing racial reckoning and mistreatment of immigrants, does the refuge and safe haven symbolized by Lady Liberty seem more of a dream than a reality?"

"The House That Will Not Pass For Any Color Than Its Own" is a place conjured up from the artist's deep reservoir of memories, historical research and imagination. The glass and steel house was created with everyday materials in combination with Howard's mastery of physics that she used to infuse the work with almost regal beauty. It's a simple, elegant house where viewers feel invited in through two open doorways. As if to throw doubt at what is usual and expected, the roof and walls have large, open spaces. Unexpected voids exemplify alternative definitions to our assumptions, and spur viewers to question the status quo.

While "The House" passes for a sturdy, unobtrusive building among skyscrapers, observation reveals that it appears to float above the ground. It will not pass for any color than its own, but it's never a single hue. Dramatic color variations occur because of continuous changes in ambient natural light, weather, and especially in relation to viewers' positions. As it fluidly changes color from soft violet red to golden magenta to blackish purple, "The House" reveals a fascinating range of colors acquired from complex mixing. The result is color that is remarkably conditional and splendidly imprecise.

Exhibited widely with a celebrated career, Mildred Howard is represented by Anglim / Trimble and Parrasch Heijnen Gallery. Her public art commissions include "The House That Will Not Pass for Any Color Than its Own" which is on loan from the Sacramento County Department of Airports. She has received a National Endowment of the Arts grant, Lee Krasner Award for lifetime artistic achievement, the Nancy Graves Grant for Visual Artists, Joan Mitchell Foundation Award, a fellowship from California Arts Council, and the Douglas G. MacAgy Distinguished Achievement Award at San Francisco Art Institute, among others. Her work is in San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the de Young Museum, Berkeley Art Museum, Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, and San Jose Museum of Art.

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The House suggests a city that is sensitive to its diverse population and celebrates their complex history and multicolored beauty. Image courtesy Will Dintenfass Photography.

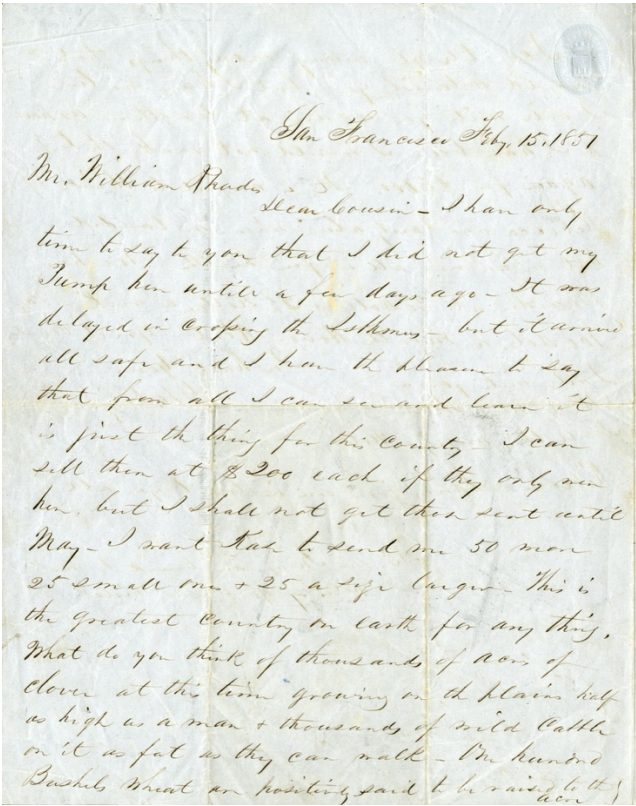


When standing inside the purple glass house, one can see the sky and fragments of one's reflection at the same time. Image courtesy Will Dintenfass Photography.

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Artist Mildred Howard with purple glass panels at Sacramento Airport. *The House That Will Not Pass For Any Color Than Its Own* is on loan from Sacramento County, Department of Airports. Image courtesy Abigail Ehrlich, BPCA.

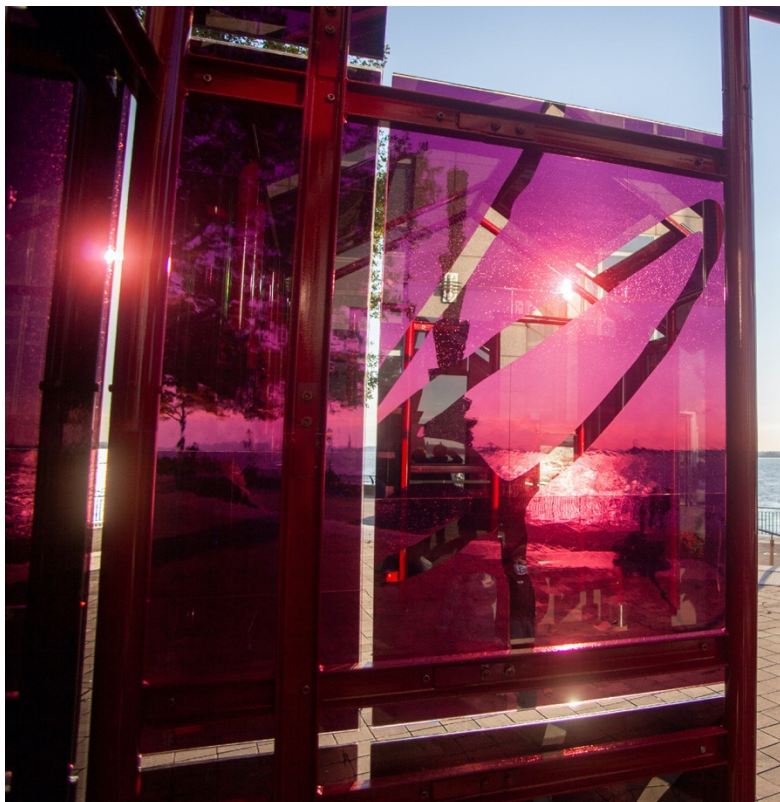


The abstract mirrored shapes are magnified fragments of cursive handwriting from historical letters. These letters were sent to family members on the East Coast during the California Gold Rush. When walking through the house, one's own reflection moves through space both in the present and the past.

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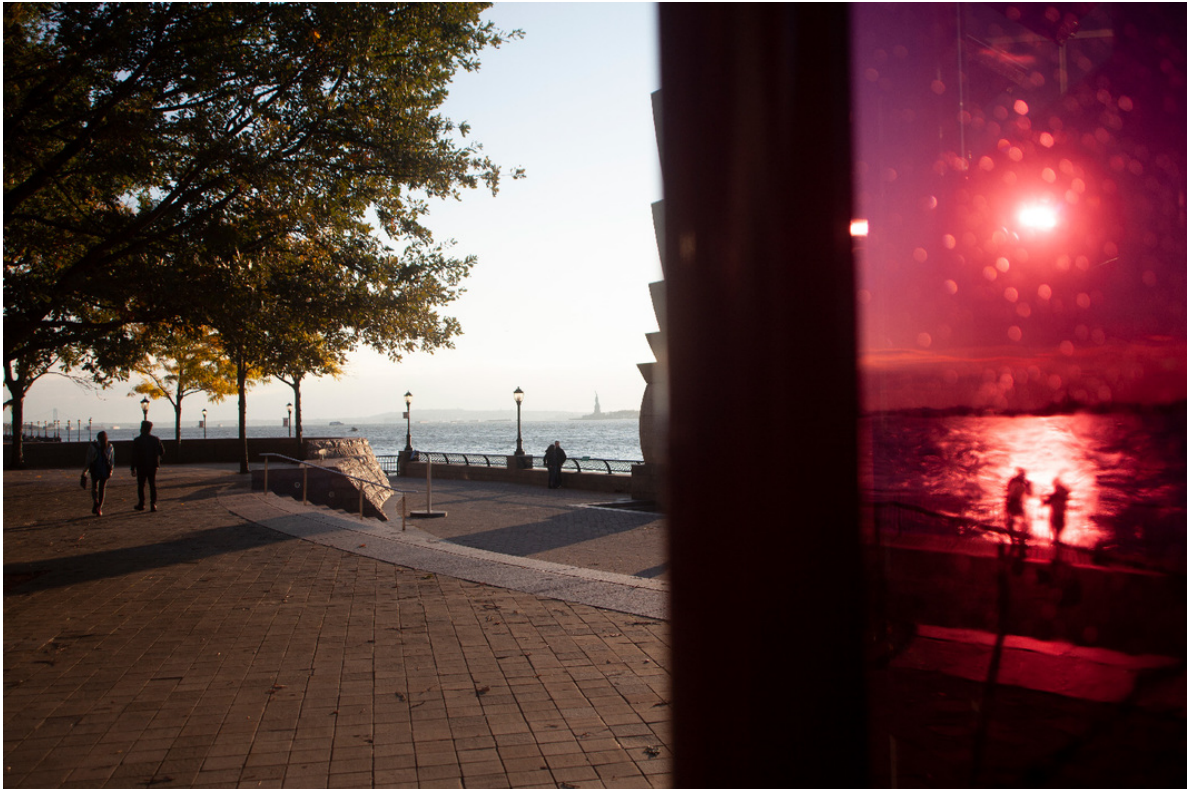
*The House's* red steel frame is reflected in the mirrored surfaces of the the glass panels. One can see the sky, park, and Hudson River through openings on the roof and walls. Image courtesy Will Dintenfass Photography.



Reflective surfaces are used to create mirror displacement. Mirrored surfaces are placed strategically, playing with perceptions of time and space to create an illusion that the artwork, the outside world, are individual visitors are inseparably connected. Image courtesy Will Dintenfass Photography.

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The outside world is toned in a surprising range of colors in the purple family through the glass. Visitors, too, are cast with a variety of hues when they enter and explore The House. Courtesy Will Dintenfass Photography.

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When standing inside the house, look for Mildred Howard's signature, written in mirrored surface. Image courtesy Will Dintenfass Photography.