

HEIGHTSARTS

Emergent 2024

June 14 – August 11, 2024

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO THE
EXHIBITION COMMUNITY TEAM

Team leader: Greg Donley

Team Members: Kate Snow, Jack Stinedurf,
Antonia Casucci, Juliet Duffy, Heather
Patterson, and Aja Grant

CONTRIBUTORS

Jules Ahern
Erjon Hajnaj
Kasey Kania
Sylvia Munodawafa

Grace Nestor-Louie
DeAnne Smith
Mar'Cess Stubbs

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2175 Lee Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio



ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

First presented in 2015, *Emergent* celebrates the dynamic and diverse artistic talents cultivated within Northeast Ohio, highlighting the region's role as a training ground for creative excellence and the next generation of influential artists. This exhibition offers a glimpse into the promising future of the arts through works of emerging local talent.

Emerging artists include Jules Ahern who uses found objects to reckon with home memories, oil painter Erjon Hajnaj who invokes dramatic tones with Renaissance painting styles, mixed-media artist Kasey Kania whose work is centered on the natural world, Sylvia Munodawafa who draws inspiration from the rich cultural heritage of Zimbabwe to explore identity and spirituality through her paintings and sculptures, self-taught oil painter Grace Nestor-Louie who creates playful scenes of nature in vivid colors, visual artist DeAnne Smith who explores micro-patterns with acrylic paintings, and painter Mar'Cess Stubbs who explores family histories and identity through traditional techniques and the human figure.

UPCOMING PROGRAMMING AT HEIGHTS ARTS

Ekphrastacy: Artists Talk and Poets Respond to *Emergent 2024*

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Heights Poet Laureate Siaara Freeman and poets Dayshawnda Ash, Tiara Johnson, Michelle R. Smith perform original works inspired by *Emergent 2024* and *Destiny Moore Spotlight*. This literary program brings together spoken word and visual arts to meditate on the themes of beauty, community, and identity explored in *Emergent*. Artists will also discuss their work. | **Thursday July 18, 7:00 p.m.**

ARTbar: Jeremey Poparad Trio

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ARTbar creates an atmosphere like no other by mixing curated cocktails, music, and art in Heights Arts' gallery. The space is transformed into a cocktail lounge setting where audience members experience intimate performances in tandem with current exhibitions. Headlining this last **ARTbar** of the current music season is Jeremey Poparad, a guitarist, bassist, composer, and educator. As a performer, he regularly appears with jazz and rock groups as well as classical ensembles. Poparad, guitar, is joined by Aidan Plank, bass, and Anthony Taddeo, percussion, for this performance. | **Thursday July 25, 7:00 p.m.**

TKO-The Klezmer Orchestra at Heights Arts

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After the success of last summer's concert, TKO-The Klezmer Orchestra returns to Heights Arts! Featuring Moss Stanley, David Budin, Henry Samuels, Mark Hoffman, Aaron Perles, Jessica Horvat, Johnny Reinhart, and more.

The Tischler Klezmer Orchestra (TKO) is a Northeast Ohio community band open to musicians who want to discover and perform the traditional music was brought to America predominately by Eastern European Jews. Founded as the Workman's Circle Klezmer Orchestra more than 20 years ago, the group renamed itself in 2019 to honor its late and beloved music director (and saxophonist extraordinaire) Norman Tischler.

Today, TKO performs in venues and festivals across the area under the direction of Moss Stanley. TKO plays tangos, ballads, show tunes, wedding music, folk, Ladino, and Israeli tunes. | **Friday August 2, 7:00 p.m.**

Jules Ahern

ARTIST STATEMENT

What happens to us as children, our formative years, our core memories, our freudian stages of development significantly impact who we are. In my work, I come to terms with my home and sensitive memories. I turn shit into cake and fucking eat it; I take the abandoned, ruined, discarded, the used and abused and care and love and adorn them. Viewers are confronted with unpleasantness softened by aesthetic delicacy. I stain, I scrub, I pick, I pull, I cling, I hold, I melt, I pour over and bubble up. My work is my truthful attempt at honesty. This is my physical representation of the horrific and precious feelings there are no words for. It's the personification of objects and conversely the objectification of people. Beauty always had to seduce and pretty always had to be clean, to be flawless, perfect, pure, innocent and untouched. Pretty things are cherished never abandoned, they're held tight to your chest, they're valued, they're loved. But you can't just paint things pink and put lace on them and call them pretty when they're really a dark thick abyss, a pit of anger, hurt, distrust, and disappointment. But maybe, actually, you can — maybe it will help... I use myself as a conduit to talk about how my personal experience is not exclusive to me, how the white capitalistic, pedophilic patriarchy unjustly attempts to control our view on beauty, age and value. My work redefines what it means to be beautiful and to serve purpose.

BIOGRAPHY

Jules Ahern is a painter from Rochester, NY currently living and working in Cleveland, Ohio. Her work uses found objects and focuses on the family and the home.

Sheet I, Shuen paper, embroidery floss, wood frame, 16" x 22", \$250, 2024

Sheet II, Shuen paper, embroidery floss, wood frame, 16" x 22", \$250, 2024

Screw You, Rusty screws, wood frame, spray paint, 8" x 10", 300, \$2024

Worms & Weights, Silkworms, fishing weights, wooden frame, spray paint, 8" x 10", \$350, 2024

Carefree, Found objects, wood frame, spray paint, 8" x 10", \$300, 2024

Put Me in a Box and Tell Me I'm Pretty, Found objects, wood frame, spray paint, 13" x 18", \$500, 2024

Erjon Hajnaj

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work serves as a fountain of questions about human nature and the limitations of it. Through my work, I am confronted with the mysteries of human behavior and the complexities of our emotions and thoughts. It forces me to question why we act the way we do, what drives us, and what holds us back. Through my paintings, I aim to depict subjects and absurdities that encourage reflection and discussion. My paintings employ symbols that point to limits, created with realistic and made-up visual elements chosen and created from observation or imagination. My art journey is an exploration of myself as an interpreter, a witness, but also as a prisoner of my own perception. I employ darkness as a stage for theatrical scenes and using heavy light to access uncomfortable truths. Applying the chiaroscuro technique and the Renaissance painting styles I aim to invoke dramatic tones. These scenes also serve as allegorical reflections of my emotional response to life experiences. I consider the dark to be the best stage for my work, symbolizing the world where humans play in shadows roles as mere actors in the drama of existence. Light is used to create visual interest and represent the illumination of some truths, but they're subjective ones. The light brought onto the dark stage is a desperate effort of a limited mind, aware of the false nature of a presumed truth.

BIOGRAPHY

Erjon Hajnaj, born in 1977 in Fier, Albania, has been passionate about art since his early years. His uncle, Kujtim Komprencka, a renowned sculptor with a classical approach, played a significant role in shaping his artistic interests. In 1992, Hajnaj enrolled at Jakov Xoxa Art High School, where he focused on classical sculpture to continue his family's artistic legacy. After completing his education in 1996, he decided to immigrate to the United States due to Albania's political and economic crisis in 1997. Despite facing numerous challenges such as learning a new language, adapting to a different culture, and working in low-paying jobs, Hajnaj never lost his passion for art. He eventually rediscovered his love for art, this time concentrating on painting. Hajnaj has achieved success as a painter, receiving multiple awards for his exceptional work. He also holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from The Cleveland Institute of Art. Hajnaj is currently engaged in expanding his portfolio, showcasing his artwork both locally and internationally, and imparting his knowledge through teaching traditional painting classes.

Now What?, Oil on canvas, 48" x 36", \$15000, 2024

I Am, Am I?, Oil on canvas, 46.75" x 34.5", \$9000, 2023

Kasey Kania

ARTIST STATEMENT

My work is centered on the natural environment and the emotional resonances we can come to have with it. This takes form in the traditional style of landscape painting; many of my pieces physically begin en plein air and are finished in the studio, resulting in works that evoke the immediacy of lived experience and the reminiscence of it once it has passed. These landscapes are about the escapism, wonder, and extravagance that can be found in the natural world if we could only slow down and take the time to see it. We create stories through our connections with the land; our culture is defined by the natural environment in which it exists. My goal is to give the viewer new kinds of experiences of these locations, experiences that evoke familiarity, connection, and a deeper sense of understanding to the environment.

BIOGRAPHY

Kasey Kania (b. 1998, he/him) is a mixed-media artist living and working in Cleveland, OH. He received a BFA in Painting and a BA in Art History from Kent State University in the Spring of 2021. He currently works at Cle. Hts.-Univ. Hts. Public Library and is a former intern of Heights Arts. Kania's studio is located in Medina, Ohio, perfectly located to explore the natural splendor that Northeast Ohio has to offer.

Findley Lake Sunlight, Watercolor, soft pastel, and oil pastel on paper, 22" x 30", \$650, 2023

Cleveland Heights Construction Site / Luxury Apts., Marker, watercolor, pastels, and pencil on paper, 22" x 30", \$700, 2023

Trees, Roots, Rocks, Oil pastel on paper, 16" x 20", \$400, 2023

Forest of Mud, Watercolor and oil pastel on paper, 18" x 24", \$400, 2022

Old Snow, Acrylic, soft pastel, oil pastel, pencil on panel, 12" x 12", \$250, 2024

Spring Leaves, Acrylic, soft pastel, and oil pastel on panel, 46" x 46", \$1200, 2024

Sylvia Munodawafa

ARTIST STATEMENT

As a contemporary Cleveland artist born in Zimbabwe, my work embodies a fusion of tradition and innovation. Drawing inspiration from the rich cultural heritage of my homeland, I explore themes of identity, spirituality, and connection to the land through my paintings and sculptures. Through experimentation with materials, I aim to push the boundaries of artistic expression, constantly seeking new ways to convey my ideas and emotions. Whether it's mixing traditional techniques with modern materials or incorporating found objects into my sculptures, I strive to create work that challenges the viewer's perceptions and sparks dialogue. My artistic practice is deeply influenced by the vibrant energy of African culture, as well as my own personal experiences growing up in Cleveland, so vibrant colors are a constant in my work. Each piece I create is a reflection of my journey, both as an artist and as an individual navigating the complexities of contemporary life. My art has traditional African motifs, creating a unique visual language that reflects the richness of an ancient culture while pushing the boundaries of contemporary artistic expression. There is truly something magical about being able to turn paint and a surface into thought provoking art all from my hand, heart and imagination. My joy comes from this process and I strive to translate and spread that joy to others through all my work. Ultimately, my goal is to create art that resonates on a universal level, transcending borders and cultures to evoke a sense of shared humanity. Through my exploration of materials and dedication to innovation, I hope to inspire others to see the world in new exciting ways.

BIOGRAPHY

My name is Sylvia Munodawafa, and my last name is from Zimbabwe in Africa. I was born there and partially raised there. I am an abstract painter, a designer, photographer and a sculptor. I mostly use acrylic paint on canvas but am always very willing to experiment with different paints and surfaces. Over the years my style has evolved with experience. My African heritage and growing up in Cleveland, Ohio and learning at the Cleveland Institute of Art most certainly influenced my work, and I love each layer of my craft. Every country I've been to and experiences I've had add a new flavor to it. There are more mediums I would love to explore and experiment with to make new exciting work. I'm cannot wait to see where I take my art and where my art takes me.

Traverse The Crevice, Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 36", \$400, 2024

Womb, Mixed Media, 24" x 24", \$500, 2023

Mask 5 (b&w), Spray paint & acrylic on plaster, 52" x 15" x 11", \$1000, 2024

Sunset Mask, Acrylic on Canvas, 24" x 36", \$200, 2024

Grace Nestor-Louie

ARTIST STATEMENT

As an oil painter and muralist of Kent, Ohio, Grace Nestor-Louie welcomes viewers to her world of approachable and wholesome artwork. Through playful scenes of nature in bright and vivid colors, she uses painting as an avenue to admire and document all the beautiful things that God has created. This search for beauty has given her a zest for the outdoors taking her on kayak trips, hikes, and trips to her mom's flower farm in search of new things to paint.

BIOGRAPHY

Grace Nestor-Louie is a self-taught artist who has been painting since childhood. In 2021, she opened Nestor-Louie Studio where she became an oil painter and muralist full time. Nestor-Louie spends her days painting uplifting nature artwork in her home studio with her tuxedo cat.

Sunflower Rain, Oil on canvas, 30" x 30", \$1800, 2020

Summer's Salutation, Oil on canvas, 18" x 24", \$648, 2024

Midnight's Playground, Oil on canvas, 12" x 36", \$380, 2024

Come play with Me, Oil on canvas, 24" x 24", \$954, 2024

Bouquet for Her, Oil on canvas, 18" x 18", \$580, 2023

Yellow Tulips, Oil on canvas, 14" x 18", \$380, 2023

DeAnne Smith

ARTIST STATEMENT

I create paintings that are evocative of beauty found in the world around us. The micro collective of patterns, colors, and multitude of layers not seen with the naked eye is now encapsulated in a macro, abstract lens that is displayed for a face-to-face experience. This encapsulation shrinks you down into a position where you can take in and experience the “larger than life” moments in nature. I am focusing on and appreciating natural structures by translating them to canvas. The color intensification grabs attention and interplays along the canvas. The abstracted patterns range from the infinite rings of tree trunks, to the multitude of air bubbles within a single droplet, to the separation of elements like oil and water, and the small instances of motion. The waves of warm and cool colors contrast one another and create new hues as layers evolve. The complexity of the patterns come together in harmony, connecting to the natural world and creates an alternative atmosphere. The works have different tones of beauty and balance each other out by coexisting amongst each other. These works immerse you into collaged snippets of time in nature and highlight the beauty of the unseen spaces of our world.

BIOGRAPHY

I, DeAnne Smith, am a visual artist who loves to paint with acrylic and utilize vibrant colors, create flow in my art with organic shapes and patterns, and expand in multiple ranges of sizes for my pieces such as medium-large scales. I create abstract paintings deeply influenced with my surroundings such as music and nature. Various forms, layered patterns, lyrical and rhythmic lines, bright, saturated colors, and infinite flow of movement is highlighted in my work alongside with natural references such as biomimicry, woodgrain, and water droplets.

Constant Heat, Acrylic on canvas, 30" x 50", \$2000, 2024

Beyond Me, Acrylic on Canvas, approximately 20" x 107", \$1500, 2024

Sweet, Acrylic on canvas, 10" x 72", \$1800, 2023

Mar'Cess Stubbs

ARTIST STATEMENT

As a painter inspired by traditional techniques and the human figure, I explore the relationship between the figure and the subtlety of its movements. With these aspects in mind, my current work takes a step into the real world, inspired by current events in both mine and my family's lives. I work primarily with oil on canvas and use various techniques that make me feel like I'm implementing pieces of history into my paintings. Through my work, I hope to draw attention to the feelings of crisis and imposter syndrome that many people are experiencing in their own lives. So many of us struggle with feeling like we are in a predicament we never thought we would be in, comparing where we are in life to where we thought we would or should be.

BIOGRAPHY

Mar'Cess Zy-Shonne Stubbs, native of Trumbull County, Ohio, first was interested in animation at a young age due to the overconsumption of cartoons. After dabbling in architecture in high school, he realized fine art was what he wanted to study in college. He first studied at the Art Academy of Cincinnati for Illustration and Animation for a short period then transferred to Kent State University and graduated with a Bachelor in Fine Arts. His focus is to experiment with the figure in a way that combines both traditional techniques and processes, and the act of movement in paintings that involve the figure.

The subtlety of movement, Oil paint on canvas, 36" x 50", \$5000, 2023

Motionless Dance, Oil pant on canvas, 36 1/2" x 50", \$4000, 2023

Movement, Oil on canvas, 30" x 54", \$1500, 2022

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 into 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](#)

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