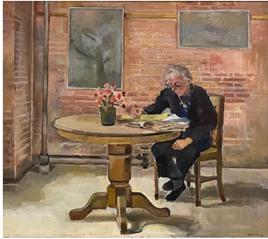


ART THERAPY PROGRAM

COLUMBIAN COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES





Bernie Levy

Edith Kramer's Portrait of Elinor Ulman

Faculty through the Years

Exhibition Catalog 2025 June – August

For the Summer 2025 exhibition, The George Washington University Graduate Art Therapy Program invited faculty – who have taught at any time or continue to teach in the program – to share their artist identities. We are fortunate to have a diverse range of artistic backgrounds among our faculty and we are excited to showcase that richness.

A curatorial vision emerges...

Faculty sent art that they wanted to share. No required theme or guidance. But as we assembled this exhibit, a story emerged—as so often does, as we make meaning of our images.



The show begins with calls for peace, liberation, and "no more violence." A reflection of the current moment in the U.S. and globally, expressions refracted from religious and cultural backgrounds, remind us of our professional responsibilities—to bring our whole selves and see how suffering initiates our call to action.

From there, the tools of art therapy are available. Witnessing and art materials, acceptance of how the past informs the present, bold expression in color and voice. All deployed intentionally and sensitively in the embrace of a compassionate, professional relationship.



And a pause. To not only consider the current moment but a chance to regain footing in our common ancestry. Two founders of the GW Art Therapy Program, both Bernie Levy's and Edith Kramer's invitations to open space, offer a stability that what was set in motion, can endure through adaptation, through innovation.

As we turn the corner, literally and metaphorically, muted colors, invitations for careful attention, and swirling images honor the quiet moments of art therapy. Times to consider, try on, and experiment with various personas. Times for glimmers of images to emerge. Times to recognize patterns—and perhaps to shift them.

And all for what? To harness the natural healing and growth that all are capable of but require the balance of nutrients, fertile ground, and careful tending. From the darkness of the ground and the depths, seeds and life emerge and light abounds. Bold colors, new blooms, renewed self, determined purpose to be in the world more fully.

Rachel Albert

Rough Days



Dimensions
Mixed Media, Series

For sale: \$150.00 each

As a school-based practitioner for 26 years, my role has varied over time from art teacher to crisis intervention support. A recent school year when I had time to make art with and about my student clients, I often found myself sitting quietly next to the students- just allowing space to breathe and regulate, away from the stressors of the classroom. I was inspired by the quiet they were seeking. I was bothered by the manner in which they all used their clothes to create a protective shell around themselves.

During Covid-era school of social distancing, I had started painting students. I was never particularly good at drawing portraits, but the masks helped me and I enjoyed the connection with the children from a distance. They responded well to it. The whole series can be viewed here.

https://responsive-art.my.canva.site/

Jennifer Baldwin

Expecting the Unexpected



10" x 10"each, 4 pieces

Ceramic clay, high freeze glaze, wax resist

Not for Sale

Striving for balance is a constant in my life. Struggling with how to achieve that balance is a perpetual lesson in humility and patience. Do I need to be more flexible? Do I need to accept what I can not change? How do I keep all of the proverbial balls in the air between career, mother, wife, daughter, volunteer and not let anyone, including myself, down? I often look to the glazing and firing process as a useful practice in reminding myself that sometimes I need to embrace an outcome that I did not necessarily expect or want, but can accept. The glazing process is an exercise in balancing what I know about the glazes that I am using, the design that I am creating, and then giving it all up to the firing process—how will the glazes interact, how will the integrity of the design hold up, and most importantly, will I accept the final product? I looked to the almighty Mandala for that sense of balance. The individual designs feel balanced, continuous, fluid, yet contained. The glazing added a sense of whimsy, as I am never sure how the glazes will interact with one another as I layer them throughout the design. Expect the unexpected. Then accept.

Heidi Bardot

The Past Twenty Years



4" x 4"each, 24 pieces

Watercolor, pen & ink

Not for Sale

This summer marks my 20th year as director of the GW Art Therapy Program. Throughout the years I have continually returned to this small square format to document and explore what I am experiencing in the moment. This small scale and transportable media, has allowed me to express my emotions while working and traveling on faculty retreats, conferences, personal experiences, and taking students on study abroad (France, India, South Africa, United Arab Emirates, and Croatia).

Each moment caught in time—expressing joy, pain, sorrow, connection, isolation, fear, overwhelmed, inspiration, and hope.

It has been a journey—building a business plan to move the program from the downtown campus to Alexandria; creating a Clinic, Gallery, and trauma track; initiating an international program; envisioning different directions and foci; and connecting with so many students, faculty, and alumni. It has been an inspirational, thought-provoking, constant learning, and exciting adventure—unraveling the onion.

Deni Brancheau

The Awakening



14" x 17" Multimedia with collage, paint and pastel triptych

Not for Sale

I created these pieces in 2012. When I look at them as a triptych today, I see them as an unfoldment of a spiritual journey. Each piece can stand alone, yet together they tell a story about remembering who I am.

Each of us has 'everything' we need already, alive and well inside of us...

'Everything' has always been there...all that there is, all that is needed. It has been that way...it will be that way. Sometimes this understanding can slip away as we forget who we really are and get caught up in thinking the patterns of daily life are all there is.

Life's challenges can cloud this process as we get stuck thinking nothing will ever change or that the marks we have endured will always hurt us. Instead, we can honor our struggles and then release them, let them go! As one spiritual author said, "Our key to transforming anything lies in our ability to reframe it."

This shift changes everything, we can choose to start over at this very moment...there is no need to wait for a new year, a new month or a new week. (DailyOm)

A beautiful meditation mantra from one of my favorite meditation teachers goes in part like this...

All is well in the stillness, "I am" and that is enough. Right here, all is complete. In gratitude,

Deni Brancheau

Deborah Bunkley

Out of the Darkness



15" x15"

Quilted, embroidered and beaded square

Not for Sale

I created this quilted fabric square while I was going through a challenging time in my life. I found the words of the quote inspiring, motivating and soothing. While making it, I was able to connect to my spiritual truth which encouraged me to shift my thoughts, tap into my inner strength, find beauty in the midst of challenges and keep moving forward. As it is displayed in my home where I can see it everyday, it continues to keep me grounded, allowing me to radiate positive energy in my life and in my work as an art therapist.

Sone-Seeré Burrell

Breaking Point



24" x 30" Acrylic on canvas

Not for Sale

I have come to greatly appreciate the range and skill of Uzo Aduba's acting prowess. She has emerged as an actor with a commitment to highlighting the beautiful and complex identity features Black women embody. She manages to explore intersectionality with intention, poise, transparency and creativity. I chose to depict her through the lens of her gripping role in the Netflix original series Orange Is The New Black (OITNB). I watched her throughout the series and was captivated as she brought attention to the complex and challenging intersecting worlds of incarcerated women of color who also have mental health struggles. I created this piece back in early 2020 for my solo show "Black Butterfly II." If you recall, the beginning of 2020 marked the calm before a proverbial storm that would propel the human race into a world wind of change and challenge. I named this piece "Breaking Point" without even knowing the significance of the title and what it would mean for the next few years. Whether we believe we can readily relate to the subject matter of this painting or not, we can ALL empathize and recall moments when we've felt that we've reached our own personal breaking points in life. What were your breaking points? How have they shaped your experiences? In what ways have you learned about yourself through these moments? How have themes of growth and resilience accompanied your journey?

Gioia Chilton

Untitled



11" x 14" Mixed media drawing

Not for Sale



Barry Cohen



Sleeping with the Fishes Waterfront Idyll

36" x 48" House paint on canvas

For sale: \$2,000

36" x 48" House paint on canvas For sale: \$2,000

After four decades immersed in promoting the healing power of art through clinical work, teaching, writing, research, and community-building, I have returned to the studio—not to resume where I left off, but to begin again.

My last professional painting exhibition was held in 1984, not long after I developed the Diagnostic Drawing Series (DDS), an art-based assessment tool that continues to be used by art therapists and clinicians around the world. Over the decades that followed, I directed hospitalbased trauma treatment programs, founded national training conferences and antiques fairs, published professional books and chapters, and led a film-focused arts therapies nonprofit. While I continued making art alongside clients in clinical settings for some years, and even wrote about ways to understand abstraction in fine art, studio painting quietly receded in my creative life.

In 2023, contemplating eventual retirement, I felt called to reenter the studio—not with an agenda or outcome in mind, but with curiosity. My intention was simple: to engage with paint as meditation—to explore process painting as a way of listening inward and honoring the act of creation without judgment or analysis. Working with discarded house paint samples—a deliberate choice to steer clear of any temptation toward preciousness or preciosity—I sought to experience painting as presence, not product.

These two works are early steps in that return. Interestingly, they echo components of the DDS particularly the free(unstructured) and feeling pictures—that I formulated decades ago. That alignment wasn't intentional; it emerged, like the paintings themselves, through a dialogue with the materials and the unconscious.

In sharing these paintings—and the process behind them—I offer them not as polished outcomes, but as artifacts. Just as art making in therapy provides a "souvenir" of the therapeutic experience, these canvases offer reflections of my journey back to the wellspring of creativity and its healing power.



Rick Conway



Pipe Dreams

Reaching for Safety

15" x 30" Acrylic on canvas

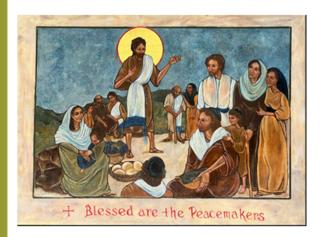
For sale: \$1000.00

24" x 9" Ceramic, cold finish, dried plants

For sale: \$750.00

Tracy Councill

Blessed are the Peacemakers



16x12 inches
Egg tempera on prepared board
For sale: \$1,000

This icon is centered on Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes, "blessed are the peacemakers." Wanting to imagine the possibility of peace in the world, I considered depicting famous peacemakers. In the end, I decided to show Jesus preaching to a crowd of regular folks. Though each of us is limited in what we can accomplish, it is how we speak, act, and treat other people that allows us to bring peace into the world.

Saint Dorothy

Saint Dorothy is among other things a patron saint of gardeners, which is why I chose to paint her. She lived in Cappadocia (Turkey) during the rule of Diocletian, and was martyred because she refused to marry a pagan. She saw herself as being married to Christ, and had a vision of being with him in a beautiful garden. She is shown holding a basket of roses and apples. There is a legend that as she was being led to her execution a lawyer named Theophilus saw her and was overcome by her piety. She then had a boy take Theophilus a basket of apples and roses, and he was converted on the spot--and was also martyred!



16x12 inches
Egg tempera on
prepared board
For sale: \$1,000

Alex Courtin

Skyscape

6" x 6" Oil on Wood panel

Not for Sale



Alex is a board certified art therapist, credentialed supervisor, licensed professional counselor, certified mindfulness and yoga teacher, and adjunct professor with over 12 years of experience.

She specializes in trauma, anxiety, chronic illness, loss, and working with folks with non-normative identities. Her art therapy work is rooted in somatic practices, relational cultural theory, IFS, and radical self compassion. She provides trauma-informed, liberation centered, queer and gender affirming care. Her creative practice mirrors her clinical one in that it is process oriented, honoring story and experience while focusing on the here-and-now.

Chandra Davis

Bridging the Moon, Birthing Suns



11" x 14" Goache on Archival paper

Not for Sale

Laurie Dombroff

Held Together by a Thread



24x32 inches Acrylic on canvas

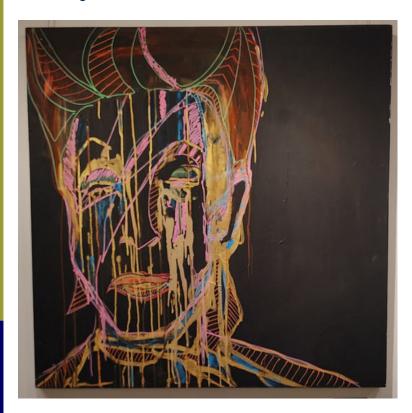
Not for Sale

I am an art therapist working with adults affected by physical, cognitive and emotional changes due to aging and chronic illnesses. In my work, I see "the threads that hold" my clients together; friends and family support, their life story, creative endeavors and the capacity to learn and grow. There are many threads, some strong and resilient, others stretched, weakened and fragile. There are many challenges to aging and the threads sometimes break, but through art making, my clients often find new meaning and acceptance about their lives and experiences.

I completed this piece in the fall of 2024. I printed on torn pieces of canvas and sewed each piece onto a canvas ground. The piece addresses my personal story, my client work and the threads that are holding all of us together through the recent national and global events.

Juliet King

Lady Stardust



24x32 inches Acrylic on canvas

Not for Sale

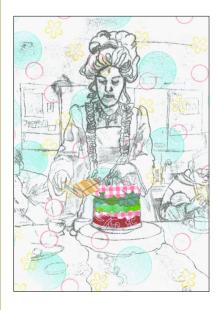
Art has always been a space where I can express parts of myself that are otherwise carefully guarded. I draw inspiration from those who came before me and those in the present—especially the rebels who blast through this world with innovation, authenticity, kindness, and connection.

Tea Service

Alison McHugh

11.5" x 14.5" Printmaking with collage on paper

For sale: \$400



Tea Service is a multimedia collage—what the kids might call a "crossover episode" of all my favorite things: my favorite media (printmaking and papercraft), my favorite lunch bunch (I know we're not supposed to play favorites, but here we are...), and my dream job.

The image is from a student-organized high tea, where I'm serving slices of Earl Grey and lavender cake. One student baked and frosted the cake and made finger sandwiches, others created custom invitations, and many dressed in their Sunday best. It was one of the most joyful, collaborative moments of my career—thanks to my incredible interns, Abby Oster and Sky Simmons, and our students' total commitment.

But this piece is also a reframe. Shortly after that moment, another student ran up behind me and violently pulled off my wig—along with some of my hair—in an attempt to humiliate me. That incident could've overshadowed the sweetness of the day. Instead, this artwork holds both truths: the beauty of connection and the challenge of rupture.

I've been an art therapist for 25 years—13 of them in Fairfax County, and the last decade at Cedar Lane Center. I wear two hats: art teacher and art therapist. It's not always easy, but it gives me a unique roadmap to support students, especially those who struggle to access other kinds of help. The question is always: How can I be of service? Not just to those I connect with easily, but especially to those I don't. I live by the mantra that 'it's the student who seems unlovable, who needs the most love.'

Even back when I was a grad student in the basement at GW almost thirty years ago, this is the work I dreamed of doing at the EXACT school where I wanted to be. And while it's challenging, it's also deeply sweet—and sometimes, that sweetness looks like a beautifully frosted (and delicious) cake.

Leslie Milofsky





10" x 12"

Acrylic , magazine images, cardboard and burlap

Not for Sale

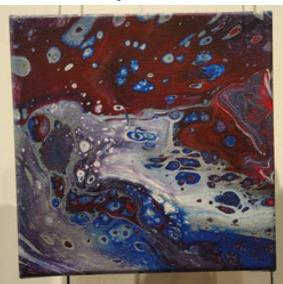


11 " x 14" Acrylic Not for Sale

My earliest memory of making art was using uncooked spaghetti to create a little log cabin with furniture. I was three or four. I've had a lifetime of being creative but never relegating my time exclusively to making art. I am retiring from my primary job in a couple of weeks and plan to make everything out of anything. Or anything out of everything. The two pieces of art in this show were made in an acrylic class called "Creative Aging: Acrylic Painting." That is my next chapter: Creative Aging.

Stacey Nelson





Strive/Struggle

6" x 6" each Acrylic paint

For sale: \$50 each

In late 2019, I took a class on fluid painting with the intention of using the technique in my work with students who have developmental disabilities. With great ambition, I bought 100 canvases. Almost immediately afterwards, the 2020 shutdown happened. I found myself making fluid paintings at home, alone instead of in the art therapy room with my students who I missed desperately. These paintings represent the memory of my excitement to learn a physical art process to share with others, and then a radical shift in my own professional practice. Virtual art therapy sessions, teaching through Zoom, keeping connections alive online. Forcing me towards letting go, revising expectations, integrating new experiences. Looking back, all were just practice in now sustaining flexibility, creativity, meaning, connection and community in a post COVID, post 2024 election world.

But you're now like the water, and the water will find its way-Pearl Jam "Wreckage"

Sangeeta Prasad

Letting Go



30" x14", 3 pieces
Acrylic and fabric
on canvas

Not for Sale

I began incorporating old Indian sarees into my art when my mother gave me a piece of her beautiful wedding saree, woven with gold and silver threads. Since the saree was torn, she felt she could no longer use it. Since I love Indian silk and its intricate weaving, I began artistically using these precious vintage sarees collected from dear family and friends. Using the saree fabric reminds me of my rich Indian heritage and all those who contributed to my new creations.

Like my personal journey, a saree has its voyage-- beginning with the weaver, then the wearer adding her memories, and now, with my art, another new narrative. This triptych is the story of a person's transition from feeling trapped to letting go and feeling free. I began with the center painting that came to my mind during meditation. Creating this piece helped me let go of things I was holding on to. After almost a year, I made the first and last pieces, which depict my rich and meaningful personal journey, when joined with the middle painting.

Sangeeta Prasad, ATR, is a private practitioner in Virginia, USA. She also serves as the vice president of the Prasad Family Foundation. She is working to establish an art therapy program at the Maharashtra Institute of Technology, MIT, ADT, SOFA, in Pune, India. Sangeeta served on the American Art Therapy Association (AATA) Board of Directors from 2016 to 2018. She has authored two books, "Creative Expressions: Say it with Art" and "Using Art Therapy with Diverse Populations, Crossing Cultures, and Abilities." She has presented on her work in the US and India. Sangeeta provides mentorship and supervision while pursuing her passion for painting. In 2023, she received AATA's President's Award. https://sangeetaprasad.com/

Jordan Potash

Materials of Art Therapy

18" x 24" color pencil and oil pastel Not For Sale



When facilitating an open art therapy studio at a drop-in center for runaway and homeless young adults, I know that, at best, I am creating a brief respite from their ongoing stress that is exacerbated by systemic poverty and discrimination. To role model that art making – particularly with the art therapy focus on wellness and expression – is for everyone (and not just for designated people in need of care), I often join. But to keep my focus on the participants and this shared moment that we have together, I create art based on the here and now. Sometimes that takes the form of response art as a reflection of one or more of the participants. Other times, I opt to remain focused on the immediate present – portraits of participants (with their permission), views from the window, snapshots from the studio.

Still life drawings (sometimes paintings) of art materials have become one of my more regular themes. I can teach how to use various materials and demonstrate how focused observation can bring awareness to what might otherwise be missed. This process forces me to constantly look up at the object to avoid becoming too engrossed in my art making and I can easily put the images aside to ensure that I am attentive to the group and space.

I purposefully invoke the still life style of Wayne Thiebaud who prioritizes single objects (or groupings of the same object) recreated with bold color on a monochrome (often white) background. I find his style simultaneously vibrant and relaxing, which conveys the therapeutic presence I aim to offer – engaged but solid. Our time in the studio may not remedy homelessness – thoughtful social policy is needed for that – but it can stimulate expression, foster motivation, and promote relaxation. Through any one of these of some combination of them, art therapy contributes to the ways in which fully seeing our lives and worlds can bring about new perspectives and inspired actions.

Lisa Raye Garlock

My Two Dads



24" x 26" Textile Not for Sale

I began this piece in 2019, after the death of my stepfather, Robert, at age 96. My biological father, Raymond, died decades earlier, at 58. Working on this was slow and difficult—I struggled to find the right form, the right voice, and would put it away for months at a time.

As an art therapist, I understood that the challenge ran deeper: my complicated feelings about fathers—my fathers—and authority figures in general.

Both men served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Robert, an Army officer and later a personnel director, was authoritarian and distant. Our relationship remained tense throughout my childhood. Raymond, a lifelong infantryman and outdoorsman, was elusive, afraid of fatherhood, and yet I have fond memories of our trips together—camping in the back woods of Arkansas and the mountains of Colorado, visiting my grandmother (his mother) in Ohio. He was funny, adventurous, protective. I mostly know him through the stories others told about him. When my mother, in anger, would say, "You're just like your father," I took it as a compliment.

In making My Two Dads, I stitched our histories into cloth—Robert's pajamas, a shirt I embroidered for him, part of Raymond's Army ditty bag, other fabrics meaningful to me. I had only two photos of Raymond--one as a baby, one receiving a medal. I didn't find a childhood picture of Robert until after my mother died in 2024. Among her things were military pins that sparked further research. The red diamonds remain a mystery—symbols of the 5th Infantry Division, though I found no record either had ever served there.

I didn't have any dramatic revelations while making this piece. I did find room to reflect and soften—to recognize that both men, flawed and human, did the best they could. Relationships are layered. They shape us over time. And whether we welcome it or not, they live in the fabric of who we become.



Lisa Raye Garlock

Dimensions

Storycloth: fabric, found objects, embroidery 2025

For sale: \$800.00

Disparate Connections

This piece came together like a dream remembered—easily, instinctively. Fragments stitched on distant shores—San Francisco, Ecuador— and one born amidst quiet conversation at a May faculty gathering.

It's composed of treasures I hold dear: shells whispering of waves, a fossil cradling deep time, seeds—porcelain echoes of Ai Weiwei's vision, a felted "Frozen Charlotte"—mute witness, and scraps of silk, cotton, wool—fibers spun from memory.

The seeds, though never graced by the artist's hand, carry the resonance of a grander story—purchased online, yet rooted in global creation.

I gathered the scattered, the sacred, the overlooked— Each piece a symbol, each stitch a metaphor, and within it, the Great Round in full birth, becoming, decline, renewal. That fullness delights me.

In an era shadowed by cruelty and noise, this making became my medicine—Rather than succumb to the chaos, I reached for reminders: the beginning—seeds, fossil; the end—matchsticks, skulls. Symbols of time's endless arc. The earth, older than us. The earth, enduring after us.

And within this fragile now, I stitched joy and love—acts of resistance, disparate and connecting.

Mary Ellen Ruff

Gracefall



25.5"x31.5" Oil bar, handmade paper Not for Sale

This piece, *Gracefall*, is about the juxtaposition of the serenity of the state of grace and the downward motion of a fall. It captures the moment when something pure or beautiful descends. The fall could be tragic, or it could be a blessing. Gracefall is about transformation, awakening, and surrender. There is a quiet power in yielding to change. Sadness and peace come together in a place of reverence.

My work as an art therapist and artist has evolved over the past 30 years to include many different types of media with a variety of populations. So many clients approach therapy from places that feel disenfranchised, fearful, encumbered by emotions that are often not fully understood or explored. Creating opportunities for clients to explore these hidden places, allowing light into the spaces that feel unexplored, hidden, maybe even forgotten is the inspiration for my work as an art therapist. For myself, I enjoy doing mixed media work, combining materials in layers, and constantly exploring new ways of instinctively putting materials together. I love that in creating art, I don't have to follow conventional rules, I have the most cathartic experiences, I deepen my understanding of myself and others, and most of all, I have fun.

Missy Scherr-Phillips





Acrylic on Canvas

Not for Sale



As Above and Below

The summer of '95 I packed my turtle car filled with paints, color pencils, cats, dogs and partner and drove down through the mountains of West Virginia to Washington DC. Those were the days when you had to chose whether you wanted to sweat and hear what people in class were saying or enjoy a few minutes of air-conditioning on the second floor of The Art therapy building on the downtown campus. Regardless of how many trips around the block it took to finally find a parking space, I was bursting with enthusiasm with who I was becoming.

Thirty years later, under the guise of Heidi, a parking garage, magnificent classrooms filled with natural light and cabinets full of fresh high quality art supplies, computers, printers, copy machines and a kitchen, the Art therapy department has blossomed.

Although most of those oil paints were traded for acrylics, color pencils lost in the bottom of my car, pets, cars and partners no longer with me, there is ever studier rope that continues to connect and nourish me to GW art therapy.

I have become ever more grateful for the pull of GW, initially a student, a supervisor, and now a professor, the relationships formed in that first semester, Fall of 95 remain vibrant and a foothold during the personal challenges that presented themselves and the complexity of the work. So many hours spent in homes, classrooms, tiny cubicles wherever I could find space in schools to work with students, doing my best to reflect the light back to those broken souls who find their strengths in their art making and time spent with an adult whose full focus of attention is on what they create and the stories they tell.

Over the years my art making in whatever form it morphs has taken a peripheral seat. However, the relationships created in 1995 have become increasingly potent and essential to the person I have become.

Arika VanBrunt

Seeking Light



24" x 40" Mixed Media

Not for Sale

Art making has always been a meaningful personal release, a way to ground and find what emerges. Although classic training and realism are foundations, I've always pushed away from the literal and critiquing eyes. As I've moved through the journey of therapist and parent, there's been less time for this personal exploration. But as we all know in art therapy, it's about the process and not the product, so I've found everyday moments through photography to capture expression and be present. I've gravitated toward mixed media and often relied on journals to create space for self-reflection. This piece is an enlarged study of one of my entries, which deconstructed a piece made to focus in on ways to grow from experiences in that moment.

Lindsey Vance

Omni-Verse: Sahasāra



36" x 48"
Oil and Mixed Media on Canvas

For sale: \$15,400

This piece, from the Love's Army Collection is a mixed media on canvas depiction of two black queens. During a racial awakening in the United States, one thing became most apparent. Black women are queens. Women who care for, protect, uplift and defy all odds. Rarely are they given the credit or recognition they deserve, but they remain steadfastly delicate, yet fierce. Titled, Sahasāra, or the crown chakra, as a symbol of their royalty, divinity and thousands of petals. They make up the trunk, often forgotten but strong enough to withstand the elements and hold down the weight of the world.

Tribe Healer: Peace Meditation

A Tribe Healer is a community movement worker that supports and grounded in traditional ways of being that uplift, promote healing, and hold space. In this time of civil unrest it is important to tap into those who are feeding your spirit. This textured abstract portrait depicts the need to be grounded and well in order to cultivate that practice in the collective.



36" x 36" Acrylic on canvas For sale: \$8,700