

WHAT'S YOUR ELEPHANT PRESENTS

What We Carry



A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue

Exploring what we inherit,
what sustains us, and what we
are learning to carry differently.

Curated by Niki Lopez



August 21- September 10, 2026

1310 Gallery | Sailboat Bend Artists Lofts

What We Carry

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Activation Dates

Friday, August 21, 2026 / 6–10 PM

Opening Reception

Artists, community, music + light bites

Sunday, August 30, 2026 / 2–4 PM

Community Drum Workshop with FeminAfrika

Suggested donation: \$10–\$20

Saturday, September 5, 2026 / 12–3 PM

WYE Collage-Making Workshop + Community Chat

Thursday, September 10, 2026 / 7–9 PM

Closing Reflection: Art, Movement & Community

Featuring a performance by movement artist Damaris Ferrer at 8 PM

Opening night features drumming by FeminAfrika, DJ Dawny Gemini, open mic, light bites by Health Rush, and refreshments available.

Presented by What's Your Elephant™

Curated and produced by Niki Lopez

Presenting Community Partner: AIDS Healthcare Foundation

Additional support from Sue Wilder, community donors through Givebutter, and in-kind support from Niki Lopez Creative.

THANK YOU to everyone who helped make this work possible!

Details, RSVPs + program information:
whatsyourelephant.org/whatwecarry



whatsyourelephant.org/whatwecarry

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue

What We Carry: A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue is an artist-led exhibition and community activation presented by What's Your Elephant™, a 501(c)(3) arts and education nonprofit that uses art and facilitated dialogue to address what often goes unspoken.

Bringing together 35 exhibiting artists selected from nearly 200 works submitted for consideration, What We Carry explores what we inherit, what sustains us, what we survive, what we release, and what we are learning to carry differently.

Across painting, photography, mixed media, fiber, sculpture, assemblage, installation, performance, digital art, and experimental forms, the exhibition moves through memory, identity, grief, ancestry, belonging, resistance, care, survival, healing, joy, and transformation.

Curated and produced by Niki Lopez, What We Carry approaches the exhibition as both a visual art experience and a space for reflection, dialogue, and community connection. The works speak from different lived experiences, histories, identities, and points of view, allowing complexity to remain present rather than asking every story to resolve in the same way.

Exhibiting Artists:

AJ Grossman	DJ-Laoshi	Melanie Oliva	Norha Tamayo
Carla Golembe	Elijah Gabriel Ramos	Micheal Anthony	Rosa Henriquez
Carlisa McNee	Felicia Brooks	Clark	Sheila Alexander
Carlos Eduardo Plaza	Joanne Hampstead	Michel Perez Sosa	Sophie Wong
Cathleen Dean	Kay Manin!	Mila Hajjar	Stephanie McMillan
Christina Marie Reddick	Kristina Tokár	Moisés Acebedo	Tina Wright
Courtney Einhorn	Lorna Lesperance	Natalya Kochak	Tony Brown
Crystal Galindo	Louis Davis	Nicole Gómez	Vita Litvak
Damaris Ferrer	Macarena Zilveti	Niki Lopez	Zeb



Artist Perspectives

The works presented reflect the lived experiences and perspectives of the individual artists. Making space for a work does not mean endorsing every viewpoint it expresses. It means making room for art, reflection, dialogue, and the complexity of what people carry.

Artist bios, artwork details + full exhibition information:

Scan the QR code or visit whatsyourelephant.org/whatwecarry



What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Black Birds

Louis Davis

2026

Photography, digital art,

triptych print

40 x 17" each

NFS

Black Birds grows from Louis Davis's long-standing commitment to art as social activism. Drawing from photography and digital construction, the work reflects his focus on power, injustice, and the experiences of people whose voices are often overlooked. Davis uses image-making to confront difficult realities, raise awareness, and bring social and political concerns into public view.



A Delicate Balance

Carla Golembe

2025

acrylic on canvas with

collage

30" x 24"

\$1,500

This caregiver is a multi-armed goddess. She needs six arms to do all she must do, as well as what she loves. Her painting implements represent joy; cooking utensils, household responsibility. She embraces a heart and lotus for peace and strength, while pills and a phone reflect caregiving demands. Although overwhelmed, she is still a warrior goddess carrying it all.



Twilight wisdom

Joanne Hampstead

2023

Collage, acrylic

4 ft x 36

\$2,400

Twilight Wisdom centers women in conversation, reflecting the ways memory, identity, resilience, and cultural experience are carried and shared between people. Through layered collage, acrylic, and symbolism, Joanne Hampstead creates a space for reflection and connection, honoring the emotional landscapes of women of color and the wisdom that can emerge through dialogue, lived experience, and collective memory.



Isolation

Tina Wright

2026

Mixed-media assemblage,

monoprint, paper clay,

driftwood

25 x 16 x 3

\$300

Isolation (2026) is a mixed media sculpture and assemblage exploring personal pain becoming identity, when grief makes each step drudgery, sorrow becomes precious and anguish performative.

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Femme Arlequín

Macarena Zilveti

2024

Recycled paper, acrylic paint, handwoven yarn

28" W x 17" H x 11" D

\$1,200

Femme Arlequin explores what we carry across generations: memory, identity, resilience, and the quiet strength inherited through women's creative traditions. Constructed from recycled paper, paint, and woven wool, the work transforms fragility into endurance and connection. Inspired by Andean weaving practices and my cultural heritage, it honors my grandfather and his book *El traje de Arlequín*, reflecting identity as fragments woven into a resilient whole.



Mother's Love

Nicole Gómez

2026

Appliqué quilt

16.5 x 19"

NFS

Mother's Love is inspired by an old photo I found of my mom holding my brother as a baby. I felt like that moment represented an intimate, nurturing moment between a mother and her first child. Using the photo as a reference, I sewed an appliqué quilt to show the softness of the moment.



Father and Son

Felicia Brooks

2025

Acrylic and mica on canvas

40 x 40"

NFS

This larger-than-life "Father and Son" portrait captures the overwhelming feeling of quiet comfort and safety as a son rests in the arms of a loving father upon an abstract background of contrasting colors: cracked, orange fire and cold, blue ice. Working through the grief of an absent father, the artist finds healing from observations of her husband caring for their son. This intimate painting is a powerful visualization of the love and protection of a father juxtaposed upon the weight of the fatherless.



Fearless Beauty: Eartha Kitt

Sophie Wong

Acrylic on canvas

24 x 18"

\$400

Sophie Wong is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores the journey of womanhood and reflects on her Caribbean heritage, forging intimate connections between identity, ancestry, and motherhood. Through emotionally centered portraits and narrative scenes in earthy tones, Sophie explores themes of inner strength and the emotional resonance of personal and collective experiences.

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Sarakole Woman
Sophie Wong

Acrylic on canvas
18 x 24"
NFS

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Utero Sagrado
Mila Hajjar

2023
Hand embroidery with
cotton thread,
photograph, and plastic
objects on fabric
75 x 25 (25 in diameter)
\$1,800

In Sacred Womb, I explore the continuity of lineage across generations. Within the woven womb, I placed photographs of my parents, grandparents, and great-grandmother, honoring those whose lives made mine possible. The ovaries contain the children yet to be born, symbolizing the future descendants of my family line. Through this work, I reflect on the sacredness of ancestry. Lineage is not merely a biological transmission of DNA, but an inheritance of emotions, memories, beliefs, customs, fears, traumas, and achievements that travel silently from one generation to the next. We inherit not only faces and bodies, but also invisible narratives that shape who we are and influence those who will come after us. The descending threads evoke this uninterrupted flow between past and future, reminding us that we are both heirs and ancestors, woven into a living continuum of memory and becoming.



All The Feels

Niki Lopez
2023
Mixed-media relief
painting: acrylic paint,
plaster, papier-mâché on
canvas
48 x 60"
\$15,000

This piece, with its mask elements and textured reds, browns, and shimmering gold, features blue light radiating from the bronze face at its center. It represents the inward journey of healing, revealing that even in our darkest moments, glimmers of light have always been present. As we heal, those lights grow brighter, emanating outward. All The Feels captures the full spectrum of emotions—embracing both the darkness and light, and the silent meditation of all that we are.



MEMORIAS I

Carlos Eduardo Plaza
2021
Art book, mixed-media
collage assemblage
6 x 5 x 2"
\$750

This artist book is an intimate reconstruction of my past through Polaroid photographs, family memorabilia, handwritten notes, and personal fragments preserved across time. Rather than telling a complete story, it reflects how memory functions: selectively, imperfectly, and emotionally. Through collage, repetition, concealment, and juxtaposition, the work becomes an intimate archive shaped by family, migration, identity, loss, and the emotional traces we continue to carry.

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A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



How I Dress Shorts

Melanie Oliva

2018

Acrylic on denim shorts
dimensions variable

\$100

Positioned for the male gaze, the messaging on these shorts addresses rape culture and drives home the point that how women dress has no bearing on how men behave.



sacred Tree

Mila Hajjar

2023

Hand embroidered with
thread and padding on
wood

15 x 24

\$1,800

This work continues the story begun in Sacred Womb. The babies once nestled within the ovaries now descend to form an inverted family tree, representing the generations yet to come.

They carry within them the lineage of their ancestors: traditions, beliefs, memories, fears, and dreams passed from one generation to the next. Throughout their lives, they will embrace, question, reinforce, or transform this inheritance, eventually transmitting to future generations a lineage that may be strengthened, reimagined, or profoundly changed from the one they received.



SURVIVOR

Norha Tamayo

2025

Mixed media with found
materials, fabric, mirror,
acrylic, and resin on re-
used hardboard

36 x 36 x 7 in

\$4,800

Survivor is not about overcoming adversity, but who we become because of it. Built with found materials, fabric, mirror, acrylic, and resin on re-used hardboard, the work preserves the traces of time instead of concealing them. At its center, a mirror invites the viewer to pause, reflect, and meet themselves with honesty and compassion. For me, surviving is not returning to who we once were, but welcoming the person we have become.



Waiting for Home while Wishing for the Sun

Kristina Tokár

2026

ceramic, multimedia

32 x 12 x 7

\$10,000

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A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Prayer

Moisés Acebedo

Digital transfer and
acrylic on canvas

30 x 40

\$1,800

When life becomes heavier than expected, prayer can become the only place where the mind finds rest. Prayer is meant to hold anxiety and despair, yet there are seasons when these inner states become so entangled that prayer itself feels impossible.

This artwork is made by drawing with my non-dominant left hand. The physical difficulty slows my thinking and gives my mind something concrete to hold onto.

As the lines overlap and tangle on the paper, I listen to Scripture being read aloud. The combination of bodily effort and attentive listening opens brief moments of clarity. In those moments, prayer is no longer something I strain to accomplish, but a place where I feel close to God.



Tikkun Ha'Lev

AJ Grossman

2025

Cotton

90 x 60

NFS

Takkun Ha'Lev means "to heal the heart." What I carry is the horror and grief of October 7th — lives lost that day to pure hatred, and a fear I never imagined I'd carry again: that the horrors of the Holocaust could repeat in my lifetime. I began stitching while the hostages were still in captivity, each star a way to hold on to hope while waiting, praying, and refusing to look away.

The quilt holds 240 stars: the smallest for the children taken hostage, the larger for the adults. The children's stars are appliquéd onto fabric printed with beloved Disney characters — innocence held against horror. As the quilt grew, the stars had to overlap; 240 is not just a number, but a loss too vast for the mind to hold. Fabric and thread tell this story in a way words cannot.

At the quilt's center, red thread marks a target, fading outward to gray, then black — hope rippling into darkness. The back is a bold, splattered red, a wound that may never close.

This quilt is how I carried my grief, my fear, and my hope toward healing — my way of bearing witness, of remembering, of honoring what we carry.



Green Giant

Elijah Gabriel Ramos

2024

Colored pencil, ballpoint
pen, graphite pencil

11 x 9 inches

\$200

"Green Giant" explores the journey of reclaiming self-worth and shedding the need for external male validation. Reflecting on a period when I sought outside approval to feel accepted, this piece marks a pivotal realization: true beauty and identity are defined from within through patience, agency, and self-belief.

Drawing inspiration from childhood perceptions of the Green Giant—a figure seen as strong, handsome, yet subtly humorous—I blend my own gender expression with classic tropes of hyper-masculinity to redefine what strength looks like. Creating the figure's powerful, muscular back became a physical translation of tension onto paper, using playfulness and bold form to take ownership of my own narrative.



The Snake Who Sat Across From Me

Elijah Gabriel Ramos

2024

Colored pencil, ballpoint
pen, graphite pencil

11 x 9 inches

\$200

"The Snake Who Sat Across From Me" examines interpersonal tension and negative influences within artistic spaces, contrasting hostility with symbols of spiritual healing and persistence.

The composition pairs motifs of distress with elements of revitalization. Water flowing from fountains represents an uninterrupted source of life, while a fragile butterfly perched above a troubled figure symbolizes faith in times of uncertainty. Together, these elements transform a moment of anxiety into a statement of quiet strength and impermanence.

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Capitalism is a Death Machine

Stephanie McMillan
2018

Acrylic & latex on canvas
24 x 48"
\$2,300

The political economic structure of the United States -- founded on genocide and slavery; expanded on exploitation, extraction, and imperialist conquest; now rotting into omniscient fascist disaster capitalism -- is an intolerable weight carried by the people of the world. How long are we going to carry it, before we finally throw it off?



Family Portrait

Carlisa McNee
2022
Photography Print
-
NFS

The work I have submitted has been inspired by the journey of the weight we possess through our evolution: inner-child centered joy/wonder, grief, ancestral knowledge, bloodlines, and sense of self.



Kissii Mas Mask

Carlisa McNee
2026
Clay, seashells, sequins, cowrie shells, straw, copper pennies, wooden beads, rhinestones, amethyst, red jasper, lapis lazuli, wood, acrylic paint
8 x 11
NFS

The work I have submitted has been inspired by the journey of the weight we possess through our evolution: inner-child centered joy/wonder, grief, ancestral knowledge, bloodlines, and sense of self.



still afloat

Zeb
2026
acrylic on canvas
40 x 65 x 1 1/2 inches
\$2,600

Still Afloat explores resilience, vulnerability, and the emotional weight we carry through moments of uncertainty and transformation. Water becomes a metaphor for memory, healing, and emotional movement, while the floating figure exists between surrender and control. The act of expelling water suggests a release of internal weight, creating space for restoration, care, and possibility as we learn what to hold onto and what to let go.

What We Carry

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Silence

Michael Anthony Clark

2026

AI-generated image,
archival pigment print

16 x 20 or 20 x 30

\$450

“Some inherit stories. Others inherit silence.”

The first thing we carry is often what was never allowed to be spoken. Generations of fear, expectation, protection, and survival become woven into identity until silence itself begins to feel inherited. The crimson ribbon binds the voice, yet the eyes remain unhidden. They refuse disappearance. Even when language is taken away, witness remains.



Raining Watermelons

Lorna Lesperance

2016

Textile, paper, acrylics

2' x 1'

\$400

I was gazing at a little boy who was dark complexion with hazel eyes and I was inspired. I enjoy collecting different fabrics so after I completed the drawing and the watermelon fabric came out. My imagination went wild and this little boy started running in a field filled with watermelon. Of course he had a dream that it was raining watermelons. I have a poem!



Sea of Love

Sophie Wong

Oil and Fiber

236" 36"

\$1,800

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The Foundation - Jim Crow 4.0 Series

Tony Brown

2026

Mixed media on canvas

16 x 20"

\$1.8 Million Souls

Before the Constitution. Before the Declaration. Before the dream was ever spoken aloud — there was the labor. Uncompensated. Unacknowledged. Foundational.

The Foundation confronts what America has never fully confessed: that the wealth of the most powerful nation in human history was not built by ambition alone, but by the systematic exploitation of Black bodies across generations. The \$100 bills that carpet this canvas are not symbols of aspiration — they are receipts. Documentation of a transaction that was never balanced, a debt that was never paid.

The cotton comes for your comfort. Arranged like a garland, like decoration, like something beautiful — until you see the blood. Then you remember what cotton actually cost. Who picked it. What happened to those who couldn't pick enough.

"Whites Only." Painted in red. Because some signs were never truly taken down — they were simply reworded, restricted, restructured into systems that achieve the same result with cleaner hands.

The Foundation does not ask whether racism built America. The receipts are right there on the canvas.

It asks instead: knowing what you know, what are you willing to do about it?
Tony Brown, Royal Brown Photography

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JOKES ON ME

Kay Manin!

2025

Digital photograph with
disposable camera lens

16 x 20

\$150

Stated in theme; This specific photograph shows myself as a clown, thinking I'll be okay- but in the end the JOKES ON ME because there is no cure for IBD.



NO FLOWERS IN THE ICU

Kay Manin!

2025

Digital photograph with
disposable camera lens

16 x 20

\$150

Stated in theme; This specific photograph shows myself holding flowers with an IV in my arm. Trying to "find the beauty" in myself even while being in a constant fragile state.



Ancestral Spirit

Sheila Alexander

2024

Acrylic on canvas and
mixed media

34 L x 24 W

\$1,600

Colorful and electrifying. Ancestor walking among us offering wisdom and guidance. Cosmic and spiritual energy radiating from her vessel. Look to them for examples of strength and courage. We must rest and be still in order to receive their guidance and wisdom. A reminder of the importance of reverence for the ancestors.



Second World

Michel Perez Sosa

2025

Acrylic on canvas
50 x 42 inches

\$2,500

This work represents the emotional weight of Latin American migration. The fragmented face, the names of countries, and the alligator symbolize fear, displacement, and resistance, within an urban, spontaneous, and expressive language.

What We Carry

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INSIDE THE MONSTER

Michel Perez Sosa

2025

Acrylic and oil on canvas

53 x 46 inches

\$1,500

In this painting, the human figure appears trapped inside the crocodile, suggesting vulnerability within a system that consumes, controls, and threatens. The names of Latin American countries expand the work into a collective reflection on migration, fear, and survival.



They Sell Sea Shells...

DJ-Laoshi

2026

Shells, stones, epoxy, jute

rope, plastic, ink, wood,

screws, carving,

pyrography

11.5 x 17 x 1.5

\$800

A cover encased in jute rope with a block of wood in the middle. The design is carved and burned into the woodblock. There are many shells and stones that surround the hands.



History in Plain Sight - The Weight we Carry to Rebuild

DJ-Laoshi

2026

Acrylics, paper, hand

embroidery, burned

wood, burned fabric,

wood shingles

13 x 23 x 1.5

\$1,500

Pieces of doll shingles hanging from canvas, torn pages stitched on each side with burnt fabric and wood glued on to the canvas. The main image is an embroidered scene from Black Wall Street in Tulsa Oklahoma.



Round The Bend, Mom Disappearing

Vita Litvak

2024

Photography, archival C-

print

16 x 20

\$300

This print originated on a 4x5" negative, taken with a view camera. When I attempted to develop the negative, it turned out very underexposed, and the film being expired also created a dense, textured effect on the negative. At first I thought the shot was ruined, a portrait that I took of my mother. But then I decided to print it to see how the effect would turn out. Seeing the print in positive, I was struck by the intensity of the effect, the presence and absence being communicated in the same frame.

What We Carry

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Breaking & Mending

Sophie Wong

Oil on canvas

38 x 47"

\$2,500

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Hyman

Christina Marie Reddick
2026

Photography, archival
pigment print

\$800

As women, we are responsible for our own pleasures. We are also made to carry the shame placed on us for experiencing that pleasure intentionally and unapologetically. Hyman confronts that tension, centering female pleasure, agency, and the right to experience desire without apology.

Collaboration Credits

Concept, Story & Creative Direction: Christina Marie Reddick

Photography & Photo Direction: Ned Chandler, N3D Studios

Wardrobe: OneLace, designer CL

Hand-painted garment: Ara Rayleigh



Mothering

Christina Marie Reddick
2026

Photography, archival
pigment print

\$800

Mothering - motherhood bonds us to a sense of safety or delusion, the bond is invisible and forever.

Collaboration Credits

Concept, Story & Creative Direction: Christina Marie Reddick

Photography & Photo Direction: Ned Chandler, N3D Studios

Wardrobe: OneLace, designer CL

Hand-painted garment: Ara Rayleigh



Isolation

Tina Wright
2026

Mixed-media assemblage,
monoprint, paper clay,
driftwood

25 x 16 x 3

\$300

Isolation (2026) is a mixed media sculpture and assemblage exploring personal pain becoming identity, when grief makes each step drudgery, sorrow becomes precious and anguish performative.

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Phenomenal Woman

Sophie Wong

Oil and acrylic on canvas
24" diameter
\$1,200

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Affirmative Action- Jim Crow 4.0 Series

Tony Brown

2026

Mixed-media sculpture
15" L x 8" W x 7" H
\$ FREEDOM.00

Before the Constitution. Before the Declaration. Before the dream was ever spoken aloud — there was the labor. Uncompensated. Unacknowledged. Foundational.

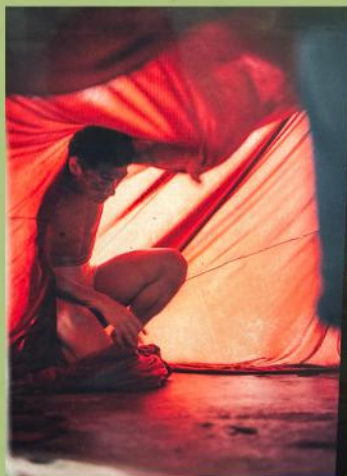
The Foundation confronts what America has never fully confessed: that the wealth of the most powerful nation in human history was not built by ambition alone, but by the systematic exploitation of Black bodies across generations. The \$100 bills that carpet this canvas are not symbols of aspiration — they are receipts. Documentation of a transaction that was never balanced, a debt that was never paid.

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Tony Brown, Royal Brown Photography



Hong Kong

Damaris Ferrer

2023

Photograph
16 x 20
NFS

In an undisclosed location a group from Hong Kong moved in protest beneath the large skirt.



Brownsville Texas

Damaris Ferrer

2024

Photograph
16 x 28
NFS

A Crossing along the boarder fence on the US side. The group pauses at the border patrol building for a silent protest.

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



My Backyard Quilt

Rosa Henriquez

2025

Repurposed fabric, fat quarters, quilt batting, threads, beads, and sequins

43" H x 31½" W

\$1,250

Inspired by my backyard in South Florida, a place where my family gathers, share stories, and enjoy quiet moments together, the quilt shows how everyday places can hold comfort, healing, and a sense of belonging. This piece was stitched and sewn by hand, making the process slow and thoughtful. The layers of fabric represent time, family, heritage, and the simple traditions that connect us. The quilt celebrates what stays with us: the beauty of nature, the warmth of home, and the joy of spending time with the people we love. As my first hand-quilted piece, this work also reflects my own journey of learning a new skill with patience and care.



Good Mourning

Felicia Brooks

2025

Acrylic on canvas

2' x 4'

\$1,200

"Good Mourning" started with a memory of a grieving daughter watching as her father is being prayed over in his last days. The simplified color scheme of organic shapes are a grasping for control in the face of tragedy and loss. A collage of faces painted from photos taken moments before the loss of a loved one are compassionately rendered in detail throughout the scene. This is the weight of sorrow displayed as the broken take to heart the end of all men.



Myles

Joanne Hampstead

2023

Collage, acrylic

24 x 36

\$1,800

My work explores the invisible things we carry—memory, ancestry, identity, resilience, and the emotional stories that shape who we become. Through layered mixed-media painting and collage, I examine the experiences of women of color and the ways personal and collective histories are held in our bodies and spirits. The figure in my work carries both burden and beauty, reflecting the tension between inherited expectations and self-discovery. Each layer represents memories, relationships, loss, strength, and hope, inviting viewers to consider what they themselves carry, what they choose to release, and what ultimately becomes a source of transformation.



You Already Know

Stephanie McMillan

2018

Acrylic & latex on canvas

30 x 36"

NFS

The political economic structure of the United States -- founded on genocide and slavery; expanded on exploitation, extraction, and imperialist conquest; now rotting into omniscient fascist disaster capitalism -- is an intolerable weight carried by the people of the world. How long are we going to carry it, before we finally throw it off?

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Hope in the midst of chaos

Courtney Einhorn
2020
mixed media
30 x 40"
\$4,000

Hope in the Midst of Chaos reflects the emotional weight we all carry and the resilience that emerges alongside it. Through energetic movement, and the repeated presence of the word hope, the work embraces the idea that healing is not the absence of chaos, but the choice to find beauty and strength within it.



Plastered

Natalya Kochak
2026
Mixed media on canvas
18 x 24"
\$3,200

Torn pages, textured plaster, and worn passages of text emerge through layers of lime paint and gold leaf, creating a surface that feels both excavated and rebuilt. By transforming books associated with power and ideology into abstract paintings, I explore how we carry history with us and how it can be reimagined rather than repeated.



Meteorite

Natalya Kochak
2026
Mixed media on canvas
18 x 24"
\$3,200

Torn pages, textured plaster, and worn passages of text emerge through layers of lime paint and gold leaf, creating a surface that feels both excavated and rebuilt. By transforming books associated with power and ideology into abstract paintings, I explore how we carry history with us and how it can be reimagined rather than repeated.



She Carries The Water

Cathleen Dean
2026
Acrylic on canvas;
installation
24 x 36
\$500

She Carries the Water is an original acrylic painting depicting a Black mermaid adorned with gold jewelry and a radiant crown. Symbolizing resilience, ancestral memory, healing, and hope, the painting is the centerpiece of Buckets of Joy: What We Carry, an immersive installation featuring 13 hand-painted recycled 5-gallon chlorine buckets.

Each bucket represents an emotion, memory, or experience we carry through life. Visitors are invited to write one word on a tag and place it in a collective bucket, transforming the installation into a living archive of shared stories, reflection, and community connection.

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Ancestral Memory

Crystal Galindo

2022

Acrylic on wood

12 x 12 inches

NFS

This is an intuitive calling to reach in to the sentiments I have just under the surface, missing my abuelitas, the feeling of home as a child, and the wounds of my ancestors I carry with me daily.



What's Your Elephant?

Interactive Community

Reflection Installation

What's Your Elephant? Interactive Community Reflection Installation

Visitors are invited to write or draw their “elephant in the room,” something unspoken, unresolved, or simply something they are carrying, and leave it in the space. Over the course of the exhibition, the wall becomes a collective reflection of what is being held, named, released, witnessed, and shared within the community.

SUPPORT THE ARTS & CONSIDER COLLECTING.

Works are available for sale unless marked NFS (Not for Sale).

30% of each artwork sale supports What's Your Elephant™ and future community arts programming.

The power of art lives in its ability
to hold what we inherit,
what we survive,
what we release,
and what we are still learning
to carry differently.

Here, memory, identity, grief, joy,
ancestry, care, resistance,
and transformation
move alongside one another.

As you move through
What We Carry,
we invite you to notice
what feels familiar,
what unsettles you,
what softens you,
and what asks to be seen.

Take your time.

Listen.

Reflect.

And consider what you carry,
what has carried you,
and what you may be ready
to hold differently.

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



AJ Grossman

Bio

AJ Grossman is a painter and quilter whose work explores the dynamic interplay of lines, movement, and rhythm. A graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City with an AAS in Design, AJ began her creative journey in fashion illustration and design. This early career shaped her attention to detail and her fascination with pattern and structure, which continue to define her artistic practice.

Work in What We Carry

Takkun Ha'Lev means "to heal the heart." What I carry is the horror and grief of October 7th — lives lost that day to pure hatred, and a fear I never imagined I'd carry again: that the horrors of the Holocaust could repeat in my lifetime. I began stitching while the hostages were still in captivity, each star a way to hold on to hope.

The quilt holds 240 stars: the smallest for the children and the larger for the adults. The children's stars are appliquéd onto fabric printed with beloved Disney characters, innocence held against horror. As the stars grew, they had to overlap; 240 is a loss too vast to comprehend.

At the quilt's center, red thread marks a target, fading outward to gray, then black — hope rippling into darkness. The back is splattered red, a wound that may never close.

This quilt is how I carry my grief, my fear, and my hope toward healing.

🌐 ajgrossman.com

📷 @AJ_Grossman

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Carla Golembe

Bio

Carla Golembe is an award-winning painter. She was an artist in residence at Hambidge Center, Altos de Chavon and Kalani Honua. Collections include Hyatt, Marriott, Pan Pacific Hotels, Fuller Art Museum, Boston Public Library, Academy Art Museum, University of Maryland, Shepherd Pratt Hospital, Medical College of Virginia, Worcester Art Museum, The JFK Library, Montgomery County Art in Public Places, Chico's and other corporate and private collections. Her paintings reflect her life, travels and imagination.

Work in What We Carry

My work expresses the joys and sorrows I carry in my life. I'm inspired by art and travel and lately angels have come into my work to symbolize spirit, beauty, hope and, perhaps, mortality. It has been a difficult and stressful time in my life as well as the world in general. Painting transforms my feelings and emotions. My default is beauty. I want my work to be universal, not to describe a particular situation but rather to express feelings and to be open to interpretation by the viewer. We can carry specific objects that may be symbolic. We carry an array of feelings and they may be heavy or light or a complex combination of emotions. In the pieces I'm submitting a woman carries the world, nurturing our planet. A caregiver carries so much, but she has become a six armed goddess. An angel carries a heart shaped lute to heal the soul and fill the world with music. We all carry our dreams and thoughts and they are mystical and magical and transcendent.

🌐 carlagolembe.com

📷 [@carlagolembe](https://www.instagram.com/carlagolembe)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Carlisa McNee

Bio

Carlisa McNee is a modern-day archivist; her work is centered on documenting and celebrating freedom birthed from cultural expression. Their creative practice spans poetry, photography, spoken word, and community-centered collaboration, often under their performance alias, Lyrikal Love.

Work in What We Carry

The work I have submitted has been inspired by the journey of the weight we possess through our evolution: inner-child centered joy/wonder, grief, ancestral knowledge, bloodlines, and sense of self.

📍 @carlisa_07

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Carlos Eduardo Plaza

Bio

Carlos Eduardo Plaza is a Venezuelan-born photographer, graphic designer, and conceptual artist based in South Florida. Raised between Caracas, Florence, and Vienna, his practice explores beauty, waste, consumption, memory, and cultural value. Working across photography, assemblage, installation, and sculpture, he transforms discarded materials into provocative works that challenge ideas of permanence, ownership, and worth. He is the founder and director of The Trashy Art Museum, an evolving platform devoted to reclassifying what society throws away.

Work in What We Carry

This artist book is an intimate reconstruction of my past life through Polaroid photographs, family memorabilia, handwritten notes, and personal fragments preserved across time. The work does not tell a complete or chronological story. Instead, it reflects the way memory functions: selectively, imperfectly, and emotionally. Certain moments remain vivid, while others fade, return unexpectedly, or survive through an image, a gesture, a face, or a small object.

The Polaroids are central because they are more than photographs. They are physical witnesses, unique and fragile, marked by age and carrying time within them. Placed alongside memorabilia, they create an archive where memory and imagination overlap. Through collage, repetition, concealment, and juxtaposition, the images become fragments of an emotional landscape shaped by family, distance, migration, identity, and loss. Each turn of the page becomes an act of return to the version of the past that continues to live within me.

🌐 cplaza.myportfolio.com

📷 @cplaza @thetrashyartmuseum

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Cathleen Dean

Bio

Cathleen Dean is an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker, interdisciplinary artist, and co-founder of Buckets of Joy. Through painting, film, and community-based art, she explores water, cultural memory, sustainability, and Black history using reclaimed materials. ROL, a lifelong waterman and former Ocean Rescue lifeguard, brings decades of experience in environmental stewardship. Together, they transform recycled 5-gallon buckets into participatory artworks that foster storytelling, healing, and community connection.

Work in What We Carry

My work asks what we carry through water, memory, and time. I create paintings, films, and community-centered projects exploring how history, identity, ancestry, and place shape who we become. Whether transforming discarded buckets into vessels through Buckets of Joy or researching hidden stories of Black communities connected to Florida's waterways, I am interested in what survives despite erasure.

The work I am submitting reflects the visible and invisible inheritances we carry: the stories of our ancestors, the landscapes that formed us, our grief, joy, resilience, and hopes for those who come after us. I am equally interested in what sustains us: community, creativity, nature, humor, and making something beautiful together.

For me, a vessel can be a body, a bucket, a boat, a garden, or a work of art, something that holds memory while creating space for healing and transformation. My practice invites viewers to remember the past while imagining a more connected future.

🌐 catleendean.com

📷 @catleendeanbcm @letsgrowtogetherfl

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Christina Marie Reddick

Bio

Christina Marie Reddick is an artist using mixed approaches to transmute trauma and strife into art that heals her soul. Her art is sensual and striking, and sometimes violent. All of it pulls from her childhood growing up in Miami in the 80s.

Work in What We Carry

These pieces from the womanhood collection represent the curses and joys women carry as we move through life from a biblical and biological perspective.

🌐 frommiamiwithlove.com

📷 [@frommiamiwitluv](https://www.instagram.com/frommiamiwitluv)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Courtney Einhorn

Bio

Courtney Einhorn is a Miami-based mixed-media artist whose vibrant work celebrates color, texture, and storytelling. Using acrylic paint, collage, gold leaf, or rhinestones, she creates layered pieces inspired by South Florida, whether it be abstract or figurative work. Courtney has collaborated with brands including Birkenstock, Dyson, Heineken, the Miami Heat, the Florida Panthers, and the Miami Marathon. Her work invites viewers to discover something new with every look.

Work in What We Carry

Hope in the Midst of Chaos reflects the emotional weight we all carry and the resilience that emerges alongside it. Through energetic movement and the repeated presence of the word hope, the work embraces the idea that healing is not the absence of chaos, but the choice to find beauty and strength within it.

📍 @courtneyeinhorn

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Crystal Galindo

Bio

Crystal Galindo is a California Xicana femme of Mexican/Yaqui descent. Her ideas and creativity mix a love of cosmic imagery and portraits intermingled with a longing for ancestral memories. Over the years, she has created new and evolving works centering Indigenous, Brown and Black Women of all sizes and body types. Her social media presence has furthered her reach and raised awareness of inclusivity and representation among the fine arts community.

Work in What We Carry

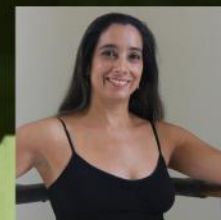
My artwork not only addresses identity, but searches for the missing pieces of what colonization and assimilation have taken from us. I feel a yearning that translates into my work, that is in juxtaposition with the colorful backgrounds and soft bodies I paint, including my own. Swirls of imagery in a surreal dreamspace adorn the piece with details that are a mix of futurism and the past.

🌐 Crystalgalindo.com

📷 [@crystalgalindoart](https://www.instagram.com/crystalgalindoart)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Damaris Ferrer

Bio

I am a movement artist who works with the movement of ideas without boundaries or limitations as to how they manifest. My somatic practice informs direction and exploration that can result in words, images, objects, or shared experiences. Currently I am preparing a solo work that premieres in late September that will combine elements such as movement, objects and sound.

I am passionate about teaching, guiding and creating.

Work in What We Carry

The work I am submitting comes from a cumulative archive of a shared movement experience I titled The Crossings. The photographs capture bodies in an action of sharing and reflection, movement and reciprocity as groups of humans enter a 20-foot skirt and begin to travel as one for as long as it takes. What We Carry connects deeply to this work that asks participants to think about what is a “Crossing “ to them. With this question, left open to interpretation, the action is informed by deep intentions shared and carried via tethered bodies and a responsibility to the whole. Along with images of the experience, I also offer a movement activation in the gallery for all who are in the space. The Crossings was set out into the world in 2020 and continues till this day and as long as it is needed.

🌐 dfmovementworks.com

📷 @damarismoverferrer @thecrossings2021

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



DJ-Laoshi

Bio

Danielle Jadusingh also DJ-Laoshi [dee-jay lao-sih] is a multidisciplinary artist based in South Florida. Her academic pursuits, adventures and multicultural upbringing between Jamaica, the United States, and the United Kingdom play a great influence in her enthusiasm in sharing stories through her art pursuits. She has had exhibitions and publications in no particular order – Iraq (Kurdistan), USA, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Germany, Japan, Grenada, Jamaica, France and Australia.

Work in What We Carry

“What We Carry?” resonates because we are all walking remnants of timelines and memories. Time and space are not separate, and my pieces reflect these connections.

“History in Plain Sight: The Weight We Carry to Rebuild” considers communities told to build for themselves while still carrying the weight of this country’s legacy. Historically, self-sustaining Black communities were destroyed by people whose entitlement was stronger than their willingness to let others succeed.

“They Sell Seashells...” traces connections between the ocean and the African diaspora. Cowrie shells, brought from the Maldives and used as currency in West Africa, also became entangled with the trading of bodies. Water and shells hold memory, reflected in Yoruba traditions that honor our connection to the ocean.

“It All Started with the Drums” celebrates collective memory through movement, joy, and rhythm. Even when histories are softened, many Western diasporic dance and music traditions still carry rhythms rooted in the African continent.

🌐 dj-laoshi.com/wp

📷 @djlaoshi

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Elijah Gabriel Ramos

Bio

Elijah Ramos (b. 2002) is a Palm Beach County, Florida, multimedia artist and educator whose work mirrors their identity. By weaving personal history, environmentalism, and politics into their practice, Ramos navigates relationships, visions, and complex questions. Uniquely skilled at adapting and reimagining key aspects of an environment, Ramos creates functional, interconnected stories that transcend conventional visual language—using art as a fluid process to explore open-ended questions and reveal hidden meaning over time.

Work in What We Carry

My art connects directly to the theme of "What We Carry." Most of these works were created between 2022 and 2024, during a period in college that promised support yet often delivered mystery, confusion, and ridicule. Yet, amidst those challenges came profound moments of self-discovery through trial and error. I realized that when I paused to listen in silence, beauty manifested infinitely.

This realization shifted my process from working quickly to intentionally questioning every choice—why a specific mark was made, why a color was chosen, or why a figure or text was incorporated. Executed in pen, pastel, colored pencil, and coffee, these mixed-media drawings capture non-binary figures and unconventional color interactions. Each piece represents an unrepeatable moment in time, born from a longing for companionship, artistic support, and my Florida home while living in Maryland for five years.

🌐 <https://sites.google.com/view/artslessonsduelijah/home>

📷 @lovecrushcosmiclali

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Felicia Brooks

Bio

Felicia Brooks' artwork is a culmination of realism drawn from a deep well of compassion and pedagogy set upon abstract movement. Brooks holds a Bachelors of Arts in Studio Art from Florida State University. She has exhibited at F.A.T. Village and has a decade of experience with Sunday Service live painting at The Cross Church.

Felicia Brooks is the Visual Arts Teacher at Parkway Middle School of the Arts where she inspires students to develop their artistic voices.

Work in What We Carry

I believe the two artworks I am submitting for "What We Carry" connectnces by way of healing identity and care in grief. In the larger-than-life "Father and Son" painting, I draw a healing line from growing up without a father to vicariously living and healing in the observations of my son resting in the arms of his loving father. The painting is a powerful visual of the love and protection of a father and child set upon an abstract background of contrasting colors as I, the artist, grieve the absence of my own father. Secondly, "Good Mourning" deals with a collage of expressions of grief from family, friends, and community members in the last moments of a person's life. The realistic portraits are painted from photos taken of people before they passed away and those surrounding them in the moments before. This is laid upon brightly colored, organic shapes, representing the simplified memories and an attempt to feel a sense of control and understanding in the presence of death.

🌐 handsandeyes.wixsite.com/works

📷 @handsandeyes



Art bridges
across **differences**
among people
and **helps** us
address what
often goes
unspoken.

— WYE Exhibition Attendee

whatsyourelephant.org
f @/whatsyourelephant

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Joanne Hampstead

Bio

Joanne Hampstead is a mixed-media artist whose work explores identity, memory, resilience, and the emotional landscapes of women of color. Through layered collage, painting, and symbolism, she creates visually rich narratives that invite reflection and connection. Her work has been exhibited nationally and recognized for its powerful storytelling, celebrating personal history, cultural heritage, and transformation.

Work in What We Carry

My work explores the invisible things we carry—memory, ancestry, identity, resilience, and the emotional stories that shape who we become. Through layered mixed-media painting and collage, I examine the experiences of women of color and the ways personal and collective histories are held in our bodies and spirits. The figure in my work carries both burden and beauty, reflecting the tension between inherited expectations and self-discovery. Each layer represents memories, relationships, loss, strength, and hope, inviting viewers to consider what they themselves carry, what they choose to release, and what ultimately becomes a source of transformation.

📍 @xanartgallery

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Kay Manin!

Bio

I'm a mother and a photographer. After losing my mother to cancer - I lost my will to create. Two years after, I was diagnosed with a severe illness. This has turned into a newly acquired disability that has changed my life and paused my practice. As I step back into photography, I aim to share my vision with a new reclaimed sense of self.

Work in What We Carry

THE ART OF BEING SICK (image 1 & 2 submitted) is about spending many nights in the hospital every month, which broke me. My life spiraled- failing multiple medications, trying to navigate a new every day life, and keeping my head held high to show my children strength and courage. It's about the emotional toll that I carry, the mental strength it takes to understand and come to acceptance of being chronically ill. The quiet burden it feels to carry. Being poked, scanned and examined constantly takes courage, and of course, that I/you are more than your invisible disability.

WE'RE CARING FOR THEM (images 3 and 4) are portraits of my kids; our kids; coparenting kids. BIRD BOY and HER MOTHERS HANDS connect with the theme "What We Carry" through celebration of coparenting, anxiety of raising children who have a different family life, and trying to maintain the softness of childhood in today's world.

🌐 kaymanin.portfoliobox.net

📷 @kaymanindesign

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Kristina Tokár

Bio

Kristina Tokar is a Russian American interdisciplinary visual artist based in South Florida with a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC). Her art practice investigates the ritual of meaning making through the lens of absurdity. Experimentation, feeling and colors are prioritized to recreate a reality as vivid as the imagination.

Work in What We Carry

Waiting for Home while Wishing for the Sun is about hope. Hoping for more, hoping for better. We look up at the stars or pray to Gods for something to change. Always looking outside of ourselves when the key is inside. Connecting the active action of kissing to the passive action of wishing, how big can you dream in an apartment? This piece explores how simple actions from kissing to dreaming can transcend the everyday to create magic.

🌐 kristinatokar.com

📷 [@ktokar_ceramics](https://www.instagram.com/ktokar_ceramics)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Lorna Lesperance

Bio

I was born in Jamaica WI and came to the United States when I was seven. I attended the High School of Music and Art and New York University. I received a Bachelor's and a Masters degree from NYU while working at Lincoln Center playing ancient recordings for researchers. I taught in NY and then came to Florida where I worked with as a teacher. I taught at Parkway Middle School and I'm now retired.

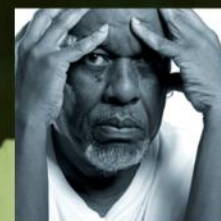
Work in What We Carry

My Art pieces are emotional with memories from childhood and life experiences that inspire. As a young child I loved to watch my father make bottles. They would be many different shapes and colors. My mother would sew, crochet making handkerchiefs for everyone. Creativity was always around.

📷 @gene_lovestar

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Louis Davis

Bio

I was 13 years old when I smelled teargas for the first time... and my life became directed towards social activism. Show me the abuse of power, the exploited and ill-treated, the hungry, the homeless, the powerless, the downtrodden. Show me people with little or no voice in our society, and those who need the general public to have greater awareness of the world we all inhabit... and I have the need to put their collective thoughts into images.

I started my art activism in Jamaica and my major show was "Incongruity and Decomposition".

My medium began in photography but has now developed into 'digital constructions'... and that's where the bulk of my work now lies. In 2006, I was one of the winners in the South Florida Cultural Consortium Fellowship representing Broward County, and in 2007 I became a founding resident of the Sailboat Bend Artists Lofts. I have been active in exhibition circles with my favorite exhibition being "Art as Activist", which I produced at the Lofts. That show featured the voices of several South Florida activist artists.

Work in What We Carry

For this show, I want to focus on the "crime" of homelessness in America. "Crime," because much of society treats the homeless like criminals, and "crime," because this society creates and criminalize homelessness.

One of the things many people in this society lack is empathy. Certainly many show empathy and care for relatives and friends... perhaps. But how do we treat strangers, especially those who have fallen on hard times? We avoid them. If a stranger has a hand out and really needs help, we suddenly have an important conversation on the phone, drive past, or dismiss them with an almost imperceptible shake of the head.

The homeless aren't always who you think. Many of us do not realize how easy it is to become "them." A bad economy, illness, job loss, eviction, trauma, or simply one cough can change a life.

The words I want us to focus on for this exhibition are knowledge and empathy.

@blacheartman

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Macarena Zilveti

Bio

Macarena Zilveti (b. 1961, Santiago, Chile) is a multidisciplinary artist and poet based in South Florida. Working with painting, writing, and fiber art, she uses recycled and textile materials to explore identity, memory, and the feminine experience through her Chilean, Bolivian, and American heritage. She holds a BFA from Syracuse University, has exhibited internationally, including the XI World Textile Art Biennial, and is the author of two poetry collections.

Work in What We Carry

Femme Arlequin reflects what I carry across generations: memory, cultural identity, and my family's creative legacy. The title pays homage to my grandfather and his book *El traje de Arlequín*, while the woven construction honors the textile traditions that have shaped my artistic voice. By transforming fragile recycled paper through weaving, the work explores resilience and asks how creativity can preserve memory, strengthen identity, and connect us to those who came before us.

🌐 macarenazilveti.com

📷 [@macarena_zilveti](https://www.instagram.com/macarena_zilveti)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Melanie Oliva

Bio

Melanie Oliva is an artist activist, art instructor and creative director who founded collectives Inspiration Pollination and the Artful Activist. Her work was featured in a solo exhibition at The Frank Gallery, in group exhibitions at TAG Gallery and Art Share in L.A. and was accepted into HistoryMiami Museum's archived collection. In 2023 she was awarded an Individual Artist Grant by Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and in 2025 an Ellie by Oolite Arts.

Work in What We Carry

My upcycled protest clothing addresses societal issues in a way where the viewer can't escape from their message. I created them after attending numerous protests during Trump's first term, wishing that more people would care about others and the environment. I see them as mini billboards for social and environmental justice – whoever is near the person wearing them is confronted in a non-confrontational way, hopefully leading them to think.

🌐 melanieoliva.com

📷 [@melanieolivaartist](https://www.instagram.com/melanieolivaartist)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Micheal Anthony Clark

Bio

Micheal Anthony Clark is a Fort Lauderdale-based fine-art photographer, creative director, and educator. His work explores identity, memory, resilience, and human connection through contemporary conceptual portraiture. Blending classical photographic craftsmanship with symbolic visual storytelling, Clark creates images that invite contemplation and personal interpretation, encouraging viewers to discover meaning through their own experiences rather than predetermined narratives.

Work in What We Carry

My work connects to What We Carry by exploring the invisible things that shape who we become. We all inherit something: stories, silence, expectations, resilience, grief, love, and hope, and those experiences stay with us long after they can no longer be seen.

The recurring crimson ribbon symbolizes bloodline, memory, and the emotional weight we carry. Sometimes it restrains us, sometimes it protects us, and sometimes it becomes part of our identity. The gold leaf represents healing and the strength that can emerge when we acknowledge our experiences instead of hiding them.

I chose an androgynous subject so the work would not belong to one gender, culture, or personal story. The direct gaze invites viewers into a quiet conversation, encouraging them to bring their memories and experiences to the work.

My hope is that each person leaves asking: What am I carrying, and how has it shaped the person I have become?

📸 @macphotoimage

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Michel Pérez Sosa

Bio

Michel Pérez Sosa is a contemporary painter based in the United States. His work explores emotions, personal experience, and social realities through a symbolic and expressive visual language. Working with acrylic and oil on canvas, he combines human figures, symbolic animals, handwritten words, and gestural marks. His paintings address themes of migration, identity, freedom, resilience, and the human condition, inviting viewers to reflect on conflict, hope, survival, and transformation.

Work in What We Carry

My art connects to the theme What We Carry through the emotional weight of migration, memory, survival, and identity. In my work, I carry experiences of displacement, fear, resistance, and hope — feelings that are personal, but also connected to many people who face borders, uncertainty, and social pressure.

The figures, animals, words, and expressive lines in my paintings represent what human beings carry inside: memories, wounds, questions, strength, and the desire to keep moving forward. I do not try to paint these experiences in a realistic way. Instead, I transform them into symbols, gestures, color, and raw emotion.

The works I am submitting speak about power, vulnerability, freedom, and survival. They reflect what remains inside us after difficult experiences, and how we continue carrying hope even in moments of fear or struggle.

🌐 **facebook - MichelPerez**

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Mila Hajjar

Bio

Mila Hajjar is an Italian-Venezuelan-American architect, writer, and multidisciplinary artist based in Miami. Born in Rome and raised in Venezuela, she works across painting, mixed media, and textile art. Her practice explores themes of identity, memory, migration, ancestry, women's voices, and social justice. Through threads, weaving, and embroidery, she transforms personal and collective stories into contemporary visual narratives.

Work in What We Carry

These two works explore the continuity of lineage across generations. In *Sacred Womb*, I placed photographs of my parents, grandparents, and great-grandmother within a woven womb, honoring those whose lives made mine possible. The ovaries hold the children yet to be born, symbolizing future descendants and the uninterrupted flow between past and future.

The second work continues that story. The babies once nestled within the ovaries now descend to form an inverted family tree, representing generations yet to come. They carry the lineage of their ancestors: traditions, beliefs, memories, fears, dreams, traumas, and achievements passed from one generation to the next. Throughout their lives, they may embrace, question, reinforce, or transform that inheritance before passing it forward.

Together, the works reflect lineage as more than biological inheritance. We receive invisible narratives that shape who we are, reminding us that we are both heirs and ancestors, woven into a living continuum of memory and becoming.

🌐 milahajjar.com

📷 [@mila_tapperi_hajjar](https://www.instagram.com/mila_tapperi_hajjar)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Moisés Acebedo

Bio

Moisés David Acebedo (1989) is a visual artist from Bogotá, Colombia, based in Central Florida. Alongside a career in education, he uses photography, film, alternative photographic processes, and experimental image-making to explore memory and introspection. He holds an M.A. in Humanities from Universitat Oberta de Catalunya and a B.F.A. in Film Direction and Production from Politécnico Grancolombiano. As an artist on the autism spectrum, his work centers memory, mental health, healing, masking, and inner stillness.

Work in What We Carry

As someone on the spectrum, there are two battles I am constantly fighting. The first is masking: adjusting my expressions, tone of voice, and body language to signal empathy and engagement to others. The second is the rigidity of my thought patterns, which can become obsessive.

Through abstract painting and drawing, I tap into a space in my mind that is locked away, where my spirit and body align and I can enjoy the randomness of shapes, lines, and forms without controlling them. The process lets me step away from monitoring myself and making sense of everything around me.

Making art releases me from my self-imposed standards. It gives me permission to sit with myself without having to perform or explain who I am. What I carry into the work is not only masking and rigid thought patterns, but the desire to find a place where those burdens become lighter.

🌐 moisesdavid.myportfolio.com

📷 @moisesdavidacebedo

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Natalya Kochak

Bio

Natalya Kochak is a multidisciplinary visual artist based in Miami. She received her BFA and MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her practice examines language, history, and material process through painting, installation, and architectural surfaces. She also operates a decorative painting company specializing in Venetian plaster and historic finishes. Recent honors include the Mosaic Art Fund Grant and the DNA Artist Residency in Provincetown with Readymade Gallery and Freight + Volume.

Work in What We Carry

The work I am submitting is about transformation: taking something that can feel heavy, difficult, or divisive and giving it a new life. I use books written by political leaders and influential historical figures from different points of view, then dismantle, layer, and bury the pages beneath Venetian plaster, lime paint, and paint.

For me, What We Carry is about the stories, beliefs, and assumptions we inherit, often without realizing it. We carry pieces of history through family, education, politics, and culture. Some narratives stay visible, while others become buried, forgotten, or rewritten. That process is reflected in the materials, where fragments of text appear and disappear beneath layers of plaster and paint.

I hope the work encourages people to look closely and ask questions. Which voices shape how we see the world? Which are left out? Can difficult histories be carried differently, not erased, but transformed into something that invites reflection and conversation?

🌐 natalyakochak.com

📷 @natalyakochak

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Nicole Gómez

Bio

Nicole Gómez is a textile artist living in South Florida. She is a recent graduate from Nova Southeastern University, and received her bachelor's in Art + Design. She likes to explore themes of femininity, nostalgia, and family in her work by using fabric and thread.

Work in What We Carry

My body of work uses textiles to investigate themes of femininity, nostalgia, and family, while presenting an overall mood of comfort and calmness. I believe using this medium in my work not only helps establish the mood of comfort due to its soft and delicate material, but it also holds personal meaning to me. Fabric and thread have a strong connection to the prominent female figures in my life, who are my mom and grandma. Through my artwork, I hope to bring memories of my family and childhood to life and to have people relate and connect to the art that I am making and the stories that I am telling.

🌐 <https://nicolemgomez.com/work>

📷 @nicolemgomez.art

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Niki Lopez

Bio

Niki Lopez is an award-winning Afro-Latina, queer interdisciplinary visual artist, curator, cultural programmer, and social practitioner based in South Florida. Her work explores identity, memory, trauma, healing, cultural inheritance, social justice, and Afro-diasporic spirituality through mixed-media reliefs, mask-based forms, installation, and participatory art.

Since 2008, Lopez has curated and produced exhibitions and community-centered arts experiences throughout South Florida. She is the founder and executive director of What's Your Elephant™, a 501(c)(3) arts and education nonprofit that uses art and facilitated dialogue to address difficult and often unspoken issues. Through her creative and social practice, Lopez creates spaces where personal story, cultural memory, reflection, and difficult conversations meet through art.

Work in What We Carry

My work has long been concerned with what we carry in the body, in memory, through family, culture, trauma, ancestry, identity, and the things we sometimes don't yet have language for.

All The Feels holds that tension between darkness and light. The textured layers, mask elements, and light radiating from the face at its center speak to an inward journey of healing and the full range of emotions we move through. Even in darker places, small points of light can remain, grow, and eventually begin to move outward.

That idea extends beyond my own artwork into the curatorial vision for *What We Carry*. Part of my social practice is creating space for artists to name, question, reveal, and transform what they carry through their own lived experiences. I am interested in what happens when those individual stories are allowed to exist beside one another and become part of a larger community conversation.

🌐 nikilopez.art whatsyourelephant.org

📷 @nikilopez19 @nikilopezcreative_ @whatsyourelephant

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Norha Tamayo

Bio

Norha Tamayo is a Colombian-American visual artist who transforms materials returned by the ocean into sculptures, paintings, and installations about memory, resilience, and the traces we leave behind. Working with reclaimed objects, acrylic, and resin, she explores how beauty can emerge from what has been discarded. Her work invites viewers to reflect on what we choose to carry, what we learn to release, and what continues to sustain us.

Work in What We Carry

The materials I use have already carried stories before they reach my studio. Every piece of plastic, rope, toy, shell, or fragment returned by the ocean arrives marked by time, movement, and survival. Rather than hiding those histories, I allow them to remain visible and become part of the work.

Through sculpture and painting, I explore what we carry as human beings: memory, loss, tenderness, resilience, hope, and the quiet rituals that allow us to continue. My work is not centered on trauma itself, but on what survives beyond it. I am interested in the ways beauty can emerge from what has been discarded, forgotten, or broken.

The works I am submitting invite viewers to recognize that what we carry is not only pain. We also carry love, belonging, imagination, ancestry, care, humor, and the possibility of transformation. For me, creating is an act of holding these contradictions together, allowing discarded materials—and perhaps ourselves—to become something alive again.

📍 @norhatamayo

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Rosa Henriquez

Bio

Rosa Henriquez is a Dominican-American artist based in Miami who creates art exploring themes related to culture, place, and identity, in textiles, crochet, embroidery, watercolors, & acrylic paints. Her art has been featured in Brushes with Cancer, The Camp Gallery, Imperfecta Gallery-Oregon, Hispanic Cultural Center, BreastfeedMiami, FIU's Art Series, AfriKin, Museum of Sex, 'til Jan 2027, Red Filter-Gasper Art Center, and The Camp Gallery, Oct 15 – Dec 31, 2026. Memberships at FAMA and Sobra Collective.

Work in What We Carry

The work I am submitting explores the idea that what we carry is often invisible. It reflects the memories, relationships, and traditions, that are passed from one generation to the next and become part of who we are. Inspired by everyday moments, the work highlights the importance of being present with the people we love and honoring those who have passed. It invites viewers to reflect on family, shared stories, and the simple spaces where connection and belonging happens. Creating the work by hand also represents patience, care, and the healing that creating provides. Within the work I feel love, gratitude, hope, comfort, and remembrance. Instead of focusing on loss, it celebrates the things that help us keep going, the warmth of home, the beauty of nature, and family traditions that connect generations.

🌐 cocoartmiami.com

📷 [@cocoartmiami](https://www.instagram.com/cocoartmiami)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Sheila Alexander

Bio

Sheila Alexander is a visual artist/painter, musician and horticulturist. Born in Pa. Residing in Florida. Holds a B.A. degree from Cheyney University, studied Chinese Painting at Pa. Academy of Fine Arts and sculpture at Fleisher Art Memorial in Philadelphia, where she received the Fleisher Art Memorial Merit Award.

Work in What We Carry

By remembering my grandmother's smile as she fed me with her bare fingers the yummy cornbread and gravy she made. Feeling like I belonged and was loved.

Spirit Of The Ancestors consists of bold colors and rich textures and the use of feathers and African print fabric.

Spiritual realm rising from canvas with masks representing the ancestors and Adinkra Symbol of Sankofa suggesting we look back and learn from our past to better our future. Portraits of grandmother and father facing me offering me guidance and protection.

🌐 sheilasglimpsesofparadise.wordpress.com

📷 @winstonalexander9

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Sophie Wong

Bio

Sophie Wong is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores womanhood and her Caribbean heritage, creating connections between identity, ancestry, and motherhood. Born and raised in Miami, her practice is rooted in the multicultural landscape of South Florida. Through emotionally centered portraits and narrative scenes, she explores inner strength, resilience, growth, and the emotional resonance of personal and collective experiences. A graduate of New World School of the Arts and SUNY Purchase College, Sophie has worked as a professional artist, muralist, and educator since 2010.

Work in What We Carry

My work explores the experiences we carry through womanhood, identity, ancestry, and motherhood. I am interested in the ways personal and collective experiences shape us, and how inner strength, resilience, and growth can emerge through change.

The works in What We Carry reflect that emotional movement. Breaking & Mending speaks to the places where we can feel fractured while still holding the possibility of repair. Carrying Light reflects the strength and presence we continue to hold even through difficult experiences.

My practice is deeply connected to my Caribbean heritage and to the women and communities that have shaped me. Through portraiture and narrative imagery, I explore what remains with us: memory, identity, strength, connection, and the emotional traces of what we have lived through. These experiences become part of how we see ourselves, how we move forward, and what we carry into the next chapter.

🌐 sophiewongart.com

📷 @sophewong

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Stephanie McMillan

Bio

Stephanie McMillan's multi-media art practice focuses on social transformation, food sovereignty, and connecting with local plants and wildlife. Solo exhibitions include "Rewild Florida," Flamingo Gardens, Davie (2024); "We Are All Related," Art and Culture Center of Hollywood (2024); and "The Political Art of Stephanie McMillan," California State University at Northridge (2011). She is an Artist-in-Residence at the New River Inn History Museum, and her illustrations can be seen on utility boxes in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Work in What We Carry

The political economic structure of the United States -- founded on genocide and slavery; expanded on exploitation, extraction, and imperialist conquest; now rotting into omnicidal fascist disaster capitalism -- is an intolerable weight carried by the people of the world. How long are we going to carry it, before we finally throw it off?

🌐 stephaniemcmillan.org

📷 @steph.mcmillan @stephaniemcmillan.art

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Tina Wright

Bio

Tina Wright is a Broward County mixed-media assemblage artist who transforms reclaimed materials into participatory works exploring belonging, body image, mental health, and healing. A 2025 Broward County Artist Support Grant recipient, her practice combines sculpture, storytelling, and accessible creative experiences that invite reflection, dialogue, and connection. Drawing on a long history of community arts organizing and creative reuse, Wright creates welcoming spaces where art, sustainability, and shared human experience intersect.

Work in What We Carry

The work explores what we carry within us; grief, identity, prejudice, and the ongoing work of transformation. They examine the invisible experiences that shape our inner lives, revealing how pain, perception, and healing become woven into who we are. These works invite viewers to reflect on the unseen emotional landscapes we all carry and the possibility of self-acceptance, empathy, and growth.

🌐 tinawrightart.com

📷 [@tmwright.art](https://www.instagram.com/tmwright.art)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Tony Brown

Bio

Tony Brown sees beauty and art in the shapes, colors, textures, and architecture that surround him. For nearly 30 years, his photography has documented life in New York and his travels throughout Europe, Mexico, and cities across the United States. Working from his South Florida studio, Tony is inspired when his images evoke emotions, spark memories, and encourage others to explore the world. One of his greatest compliments is knowing his photography inspires people to travel.

Work in What We Carry

Some weight is visible. You can see it in the cotton — bloodied, beautiful, and brutal — that borders a canvas layered with the currency of a nation built on unpaid labor. You can see it in the screws, black and disconnected, unable to find purchase in a foundation that was never designed to hold them. You can see it in the words painted in red, words that should belong to history but insist, stubbornly, on belonging to now.

Some weight is invisible. It lives in the body, in the bloodline, in the daily negotiation of existing in a society that has always known your value and consistently refused to honor it. It travels without a passport. It arrives before you do. It is the inheritance no one asked for and no one has been allowed to return.

What We Carry is a reckoning with that inheritance.

These works — part of the ongoing series Jim Crow 4.0 — do not ask for sympathy. They demand recognition. They insist that the architecture of oppression is not a relic of another century but an operating system, continuously updated, running silently beneath the surface of modern American life. Version 1.0 wore chains. Version 2.0 wore signs. Version 3.0 wore policy. Version 4.0 wears a smile and calls itself progress.

The materials are deliberate. Money. Cotton. Screws. Blood. These are not symbols invented by the artist — they are the actual instruments of a history that was never fully dismantled, only rebranded.

What we carry is not a burden of our making. But it is ours to name, to hold up to the light, and to refuse to set down quietly.

This exhibition is that refusal.

— Tony Brown, Royal Brown Photography

🌐 royalbrownphoto.com

📷 [@royalbrownphotography](https://www.instagram.com/royalbrownphotography)

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Vita Litvak

Bio

South Florida based artist Vita Litvak grew up in Tiraspol, the capital of the self-declared post-Soviet nation of Transnistria. Her work continues to be informed by her experiences of immigration and investigates its effects on perception, identity, and subjectivity. Her practice is rooted in the photographic medium and extends into video and community-based projects. Litvak holds a BA from Haverford College and an MFA from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Work in What We Carry

Round the Bend is a deeply personal and experimental body of work created during a period of recovery from illness. The images move fluidly between abstraction and representation, weaving together still lifes, landscapes, and portraits of those who supported me through this journey. Each photograph carries an emotional resonance, capturing moments of vulnerability, care, and quiet reflection. The work explores the unpredictable rhythms of healing, all the bends, twists, and unexpected turns that shape both body and mind. In its form and content, the series mirrors this process: experimental, intimate, and attentive to the subtle gestures, textures, and atmospheres that mark the passage from fragility to strength. Round the Bend is at once a record of recovery and a meditation on connection, memory, and the delicate interplay between self and others in times of transformation.

🌐 cargocollective.com/Vitalitvak

📷 @vitalitvak

What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue



Zeb

Bio

Sebastian “zeb” Restrepo, known as liloddboyzeb, is an interdisciplinary artist exploring memory, identity, technology, and the absurdities of contemporary life. Through painting, drawing, and video, zeb creates playful yet critical narratives that examine connection, isolation, and the emotional architecture of everyday experiences. Their work blends humor, vulnerability, and cultural critique to transform personal observations into surreal reflections of our rapidly changing world.

Work in What We Carry

My submitted works, *Between Signals* and *Still Afloat*, explore the emotional and psychological weight we carry through everyday experiences. Both paintings reflect memory, identity, connection, and transformation, shaping how we understand ourselves and our place in the world.

Between Signals examines the desire for connection within an increasingly digital and fragmented society. The figure’s interaction with his phone reflects the relationships, expectations, and search for belonging we carry through technology, including moments of waiting and wondering whether we are truly seen.

Still Afloat reflects resilience, vulnerability, and the process of releasing what no longer serves us. The floating figure navigates uncertainty while learning to adapt, heal, and remain present. Water becomes a symbol of memory, change, and movement.

Together, these works explore what we hold onto, what we release, and what we learn to carry differently, while finding moments of humor, softness, and beauty within the complexities of being human.

🌐 sebastians-arts.com

📷 @liloddboyzeb



WHAT'S YOUR ELEPHANT™

Art + dialogue for what often goes unspoken.

What's Your Elephant™ is a 501(c)(3) arts and education nonprofit using art and facilitated dialogue to spark reflection, promote emotional wellness, and address difficult and often unspoken issues.

Through exhibitions, workshops, interactive experiences, and community conversations, WYE creates accessible, culturally responsive spaces for storytelling, connection, and community care. The work engages mental health, identity, trauma, social justice, LGBTQ+ experiences, cultural memory, and healing.

Experience the work: WYE Collage-Making Workshop + Community Chat, Saturday, September 5 | 12–3 PM.

About the Curator: Niki Lopez

Niki Lopez is an award-winning Afro-Latina, queer interdisciplinary artist, curator, cultural producer, and social practitioner based in South Florida. Since 2008, she has curated and produced exhibitions and community-centered arts experiences throughout the region.

Her work explores identity, memory, trauma, healing, cultural inheritance, social justice, and Afro-diasporic spirituality through mixed-media reliefs, mask-based forms, installation, and participatory art.

As founder of What's Your Elephant™, Lopez extends her creative practice into social practice, using art as a bridge for reflection, difficult conversations, connection, and transformation.



Photo courtesy of Carina Mask

*Art creates space—
for truth, reflection,
and the possibility of
change.*

- Niki Lopez



Community Drum Workshop with FeminAfrika

Sunday, August 30 | 2–4 PM

An all-ages drumming experience using rhythm, movement, and traditional West African percussion for grounding, connection, and expression.

Suggested donation: \$10–\$20

RSVP + details:

whatsyourelephant.org/whatwecarry



The Crossings Closing Reflection: Art, Movement & Community

Thursday, September 10 | 7–9 PM

**Featuring a performance by
movement artist Damaris Ferrer
at 8 PM**

A movement activation exploring connection, care, and the paths we carry forward. Audiences may observe, follow, or move as they feel inspired.

WHAT'S YOUR ELEPHANT™

Uses the arts to create safe spaces to address the unspoken

Through exhibitions, workshops, interactive art experiences, and community conversations, What's Your Elephant creates culturally responsive spaces for reflection, emotional wellness, storytelling, connection, and community care.

The work you are experiencing is made possible through community support. Your contribution helps What's Your Elephant continue creating accessible artist-led exhibitions and programs that make room for difficult conversations, creativity, and connection.

If What We Carry resonates with you, please help carry the work forward.



Scan the QR code or visit:
givebutter.com/wye_whatwecarry

whatsyourelephant.org/whatwecarry

WHAT'S YOUR ELEPHANT PRESENTS



What We Carry

A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue

Exploring what we inherit, what sustains us,
and what we are learning to carry differently.

August 21- September 10, 2026

Curated by Niki Lopez

Opening Night Vibes



Drumming by Blue Sea Lotus
Studio 33 in collaboration
with FeminAfrika



Spoken Word by Gary Francis
- Hints of Healing



Musical soundscape by
Dawny Gemini

Friday, August 21, 6-10 PM - Live performance + light bites & refreshments



1310 Gallery | Sailboat Bend Artists Lofts
whatsyourelephant.org/whatwecarry



  @whatsyourelephant

WHAT'S YOUR ELEPHANT PRESENTS

Community Drum Workshop with FeminAfrika

 [wye_feminafrika_drums.eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/wye_feminafrika_drums)



Sunday, August 30

2-4 PM

Donation: \$10-\$20



What We Carry

*A Community Art Exhibition & Dialogue
August 21- September 10, 2026*

Exploring what we inherit, what sustains us,
and what we are learning to carry differently.

Curated by Niki Lopez

August 21- September 10, 2026

whatsyourelephant.org/whatwecarry

FeminAfrika

@feminafrika_ & @bluesealotusstudio33



1310 Gallery | Sailboat Bend Artists Lofts



  @whatsyourelephant



Scan the QR code above to complete the What We Carry Questionnaire,
or visit: form.jotform.com/262290666440155

Presenting Community Partner: AIDS Healthcare Foundation



Let's Stay Connected!

#whatsyourelephant #whatwecarry #1310gallery

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