

## ART TALK

### N. La. Virtual Residency program starts second year Two Ruston organizations virtually hosting international artists

The North Louisiana Virtual Residency program began Tuesday online.

In partnership with the Ross Lynn Charitable Foundation (RLCF) and the North Central Louisiana Arts Council (NCLAC), this is the second year of the virtual program which supports and nurtures artists as they create new works of art. This year's residency program lasts eight weeks and focuses on artists from all over the globe coming together as pairs to collaborate on a new piece of artwork. RLCF and NCLAC began the program in May of 2020 as a way to offer virtual space and support for artists to come together as a community during the early stages of the pandemic.

The residency organizers believe that "art has always allowed humanity to understand and explain both our inner and outer worlds, bringing to life realities in a tangible substance that can be shared, retold, and reinterpreted in unending ways."

Artists in every stage of their career seek out residency opportunities to constructively work through challenges, give voice to their own experience, and awaken themselves to the creative calling. RLCF and NCLAC desire to foster a communal and collaborative environment — a sharing of

experiences between artists as they process this period of life in their art and in turn give voice and vision to all who experience the collective work. To do this they will facilitate video calls, artist talks, and online discussions.

The program will culminate with an online exhibition in 2022 for the public.

The 2021 North Louisiana Virtual Residency accepted artists bring a unique set of experiences and backgrounds to the program and to north Louisiana. With 50% of the artists residing in the US and 50% residing outside, the 16 artists are all very excited to begin the eight-week program. From painting, wearable sculpture, dance, and public performance art, to paper arts, photography, sculpture, ceramics, digital art, and more, each artist brings something unique to the table.

Resident artist Ally Zlatar is a Scotland-based artist originally from Canada that uses curation and art-making to explore topics of body image, eating disorders, cultural norms, social pressures, and dissatisfaction. April Fitzpatrick is a visual artist with an Art Therapy background based in Tallahassee, Florida. Robyn Gibson is a visual artist based in Brooklyn, New York, that centers her practice



Submitted photo

**Pictured is a painting by North Louisiana Virtual Residency artist April Fitzpatrick. This year's residency program lasts eight weeks and focuses on artists from all over the globe coming together as pairs to collaborate on a new piece of artwork.**

around personal experiences. Both are working together to explore black identity, emotional trauma, symbolism, collective memory, and mental health.

Resident artist Ayesha Ali is a visual artist, fashion designer, and creative director based out of Pakistan who explores self-identification and aesthetic conventions associated with identity through body jewelry and wearable sculpture. Beenish Ahmen is a painter that focuses on everyday, domestic objects that quietly represent a meaningful part of Pakistani culture. She will be working with painter Eman Fatima

based in Pakistan who's paintings on wasli paper explore the line between public and private spaces.

Resident artist Chris King is a multimedia artist and educator based in Natchitoches and is originally from Los Angeles. His work explores themes of displacement, injustice, immigration, and social ailments through painting, sculpture, installation, and drawing. Christina Koutsolioutsou is a graphic artist living in Athens, Greece. She hopes to use popular imagery and satire to examine people's behaviors during the pandemic to better understand the

necessity of normality. Emily Tironi is a disabled mixed media collage artist based in Cambridge, NY. She is interested in the mental and physical impact of Corona virus on the disabled community and other marginalized communities.

Resident artist Kinari Saraiya is a visual artist based in San Francisco, CA who's practice is inspired by her grandfather's stories of India's imperial past. Her works engage the viewer to participate in a re-telling of history from a post-colonial standpoint. Mami Takahashi is a visual artist from Tokyo, currently based in Portland, Oregon, who uses photography, performance, installation, and urban intervention to explore the visible and invisible complexities of being a Japanese woman living in the US. Oluwakayode Moyosade is a photographer and creative director based in Nigeria. He plans to explore the nuances of everyday culture surrounding corona virus such as air fives and mask-wearing to look at the habits of

human nature.

Resident artist Sangram Mukhopadhyay is a performer and dancer from India using movement and choreography to explore contemporary life, storytelling, identity, sensorial experiences, dance as fine art, and more. Sarah Nguyen is a visual artist based in Columbia, Missouri. She uses cut paper forms as her medium to evoke memory, play, ritual, folklore, history, and nature. Eden Radfarr is a visual artist and ceramicist based in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She uses found materials to work intuitively, allowing the process to guide her towards new connections and juxtapositions. Shannon Moriarty is a mixed-media artist based in Philadelphia. She creates installations out of clay and found materials that reveal a relationship between form and surface to connect personal memories to community, material, and space.

*This article was provided by the North Central Louisiana Arts Council.*

## CELEBRATIONS

### BIRTHDAYS

<i>Today</i>	Maurielle Murphy	<i>Feb. 20</i>	Makenna Pollard Regan Skains Pyle Alexander Monsour
<i>Sunday</i>	Lorie Burks Mary Richard	<i>Feb. 28</i>	Suewona Skains Greg Medlin
<i>Wednesday</i>	R.J. (Lowe) Boston, 10 Linda Lewis Chekelah Weaver	<b>ANNIVERSARY</b>	
<i>Feb. 19</i>	Keisha J. Gant Dr. Richard Ballard	<i>Sunday</i>	Brandon and Kimberly Crew James L. and Patricia Brooks Dunn, 50 years

To have a celebration published call 255-4353.

## SENSE & SENSITIVITY

### Reader excited by prospect of Tubman \$20 bill

**DEAR HARRIETTE:** Now that Biden is in office, he is busting out so many new things already. One that I found interesting was his movement to put Harriet Tubman on the \$20 bill. This was originally put into motion by President Obama, and now that Biden is President, I think it is noble that he is continuing this goal despite the effort being slowed down by President Trump. I think it's a great plan that will be a daily reminder for Americans, but what can we really expect this to change for our futures? Have you given any thought to what this really means to people here on the ground? What difference, if any, do you see it making?

**Hero Tubman**

**DEAR HERO TUBMAN:** Whenever a person is being considered to be put on the face of money, it's a big deal because it happens so rarely. It is a symbolic gesture designed to highlight the contributions of the person to American culture.

What might that mean, particularly about Harriet Tubman? Known as the Conductor, Tubman was a pivotal figure in American history. Born an enslaved woman, not only did she escape, but she returned countless times to lead others to freedom. Her courage, resilience and tenacity are inspiring for anyone. Seeing her face on American currency may inspire someone to look her up and learn about a part of American history that is rarely discussed openly. The more people learn about the fullness of our culture, the better off we all will be.

That said, many people do not pay attention to the faces on our currency or to the monuments in our parks. Imagine if we all did a little research to learn whose images we are honoring and what they say about who we are as a people!

*Harriette Cole is a lifestyle and founder of DREAMLEAPERS. You can send questions to askharriette@harriettecole.com*



By Harriette Cole

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