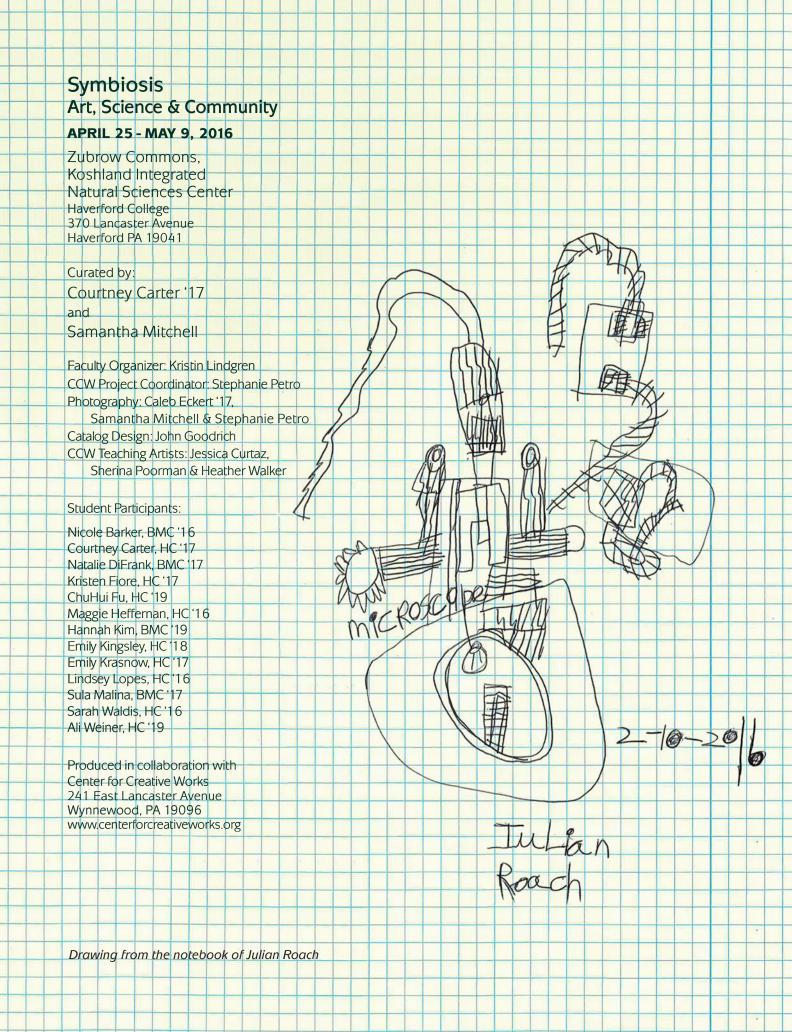


### Symbiosis

Art, Science & Community

APRIL 25 - MAY 9, 2016

ZUBROW COMMONS, KOSHLAND INTEGRATED NATURAL SCIENCES CENTER HAVERFORD COLLEGE



# Symbiosis Art, Science & Community

A collaboration between Center for Creative Works & Haverford College

**APRIL 25 - MAY 9, 2016** 



Center for Creative Works









#### ABOVE:

Students in Critical Disability Studies discuss a recently assigned text

#### FAR LEFT:

Emily Kingsley and Paige Donovan apply bacteria to agar in petri dishes

#### LEFT:

Participants photograph their cultured BioArt creation

### A Collaboration Evolves

SYMBIOSIS documents a semester-long collaboration between students in the course Critical Disability Studies: Theory and Practice and artists at the Center for Creative Works. The exhibition and catalog feature five collaborative projects that emerged from this lively partnership. The course developed organically out of conversations with students interested in combining advanced work in disability studies with community-based learning. The partnership grew out of discussions with staff and artists at the Center for Creative Works and visits to their studio space. All of us were enthusiastic about creating a reciprocal partnership grounded in the principle that everyone involved has something to teach and something to learn. None of us knew exactly what the partnership would look like. The process has been experimental, inventive, and full of surprises.

Critical Disability Studies is inherently an interdisciplinary field. The diverse disciplinary backgrounds that students bring to the course enable us to ask how a disability studies perspective reframes questions we are asking across the divisions. Disability studies opens up new ways of approaching everything from neuroscience to ethnography to criticism. Our evolving syllabus explores, among other

things, the historical and theoretical development of the ideas of normalcy and disability; questions about ethical engagement and representation; the neurodiversity paradigm; and the growth of disability culture. Our partnership with CCW added an experiential and artistic component that became the heart of the course and generated discussions about creativity and accessibility, identity and community, storytelling and listening.

During a class conversation about disability arts and culture, we played with the word culture, using it as a noun (a culture), a verb (to culture), and a past participle (cultured). Culture resonates in the domains of both art and science. In the early weeks of our course partnership, students and CCW participants completed a BioArt project in which they cultured bacteria in petri dishes and waited to see what forms and patterns emerged. The stunning results made clear—even before the vibrantly colored bacteria became the basis for projects across a range of artistic media—that both art and science were happening here. Whether poking through agar plates, measuring trees on Haverford's arboretum campus, or learning to use embroidery hoops and woodworking tools in CCW's studio space, the participants were also building relationships. In the words of one student, they were "culturing a community." The partnership represented in SYMBIOSIS has engendered conversations between art and science, disability theory and engaged practice, Haverford/Bryn Mawr students and CCW artists. It embodies values of disability culture such as interdependence, creative collaboration, and multiple modes of communication. Working and playing together, we have indeed cultured a community.

-Kristin Lindgren

Artists and students gather around a microscope to study bacterial growth in a petri dish

From left to right: Ken McNelis, Jessica Curtaz, Sarah Waldis, John Serrano, ChuHui Fu, Tim Ouinn, Mary T. Bevlock, Andy Schmitt



As students who have chosen a liberal arts education, we understand the value of interdisciplinary approaches to learning, with the ambition that learning in one discipline can inform our other academic and non-academic endeavors. There are few courses I've taken, though, that intentionally build into the curriculum the opportunity to engage with multiple disciplines, perspectives, and lifestyles in the local community, fostering mutually informative and beneficial connections outside of the Bi-Co community. In



Critical Disability Studies, we have been given such an opportunity.

It began with simple and ethically-guided intentions: a collaboration in which knowledge and expertise are shared, whether in the biology labs at Haverford or in the art studios at CCW. We have come to realize, though, that the distinction between 'teacher' and 'student' is a tricky one when we each have the ability to be both at the same time. With the evolution of our collaborative and individual art

projects this semester came the equally organic understanding that amazing things can happen when we genuinely believe that we each have something valuable to contribute. I am grateful that this collaboration grew in its own unforeseen ways because it gave us as students conscientious, authentic, and deeply interpersonal ways of contributing to and learning from the community around us.

Such collaborative evolution seems appropriate in retrospect, for the very disciplines we've





### CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM:

John Serrano, Jessica Curtaz, Sarah Waldis, and Mary T. Bevlock observe bacterial growth under the microscopes; a colorful BioArt petri dish under the microscope; Hannah Kim's petri dish



brought to this class and have been working in depend upon a certain level of unpredictability. Science, with all its protocol and proper technique, has historically relied on deviations from the control and from hypothesized results in order make new discoveries. Art, a more recognizably creative endeavor, similarly transforms in surprising ways when the medium misbehaves, deviating from original artistic intent. As a class we found that in our scientific and artistic endeavors, deviation produced opportunities for surprise. Whether we pierced the agar in the petri dishes, added clovers to the Mod Podge, or repurposed the urban graffiti practice of knit bombing, we found that our creative projects were most beautiful when we couldn't anticipate the results.

The disruption of artistic and scientific conventions empowered each of us to push beyond our expectations and our comfort zones to cultivate not just bacteria or artistic designs, but another kind of "creative work"—genuine connection and collaboration. This semester, art and science have become sites for culturing a community that values difference and cultivates connection. We all feel lucky to have been a part of such a symbiosis.





John Serrano, Jessica Curtaz, and Mary T. Bevlock look into the microscope

#### RIGHT:

A detail of Mary T. Bevlock's lab notebook, with a portrait of Ali Weiner and two petri dish compositions







### CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

"Arsenio Hall Vase," by Brandon Spicer-Crawley; "Parrots and Elephants," by Eric Stewart; hand-turned candle holders from the CCW woodshop; Mary T. Bevlock working in the studio; "The Family Show," by Mary T. Bevlock







### **About CCW**

The Center for Creative Works is an art studio for adults with developmental disabilities, with a focus on providing creative vocational opportunities. Our artists work in an open studio, equipped with facilities for ceramics, woodworking, music, painting, printmaking, textiles, and mixed media techniques. Our staff is composed of local artists who mentor our participant artists through daily classes in materials and techniques, as well as professional development. Outside of the studio, we offer creative supported employment opportunities and programming in the community.

CCW grew from the Lower Merion Vocational Training Center, which was founded in 1972. LMVTC followed a sheltered workshop model, in which participants do traditional vocational contract work, like stuffing





CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE:
Karlee Salamone working in the studio; "A Man and A Sword,"
by Joyce Moseley; "Man on Fire," by Ron Thompson

envelopes and shredding paper. Transforming into an arts program in 2012, CCW became a place for participants to explore creative ways to earn money. Through exhibiting and selling artwork, working on contract design jobs, and developing products, artists are able to feel a sense of ownership over the work that they engage in, while developing their sophisticated aesthetic sensibilities. The artwork has been embraced by the greater Philadelphia arts community, and our artists have exhibited work at the Woodmere Museum, Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, FJORD Gallery, Weird Days gallery in NYC, and the Free Library of Philadelphia.

CCW is devoted to providing individualized support for artistic development as our artists realize their creative potential. We believe that fostering personal and professional growth in the arts can enable meaningful experiences and full lives for our participant artists.



### Participating in SYMBIOSIS

The intellectual disability community (ID) rarely has opportunities to engage and collaborate with the community at large in a meaningful way. One of CCW's central goals is pursuing integrative opportunities for our artists. In the past this has manifested in inclusive art exhibitions, featuring our artists and local artists side-by-side, and visiting artist sessions, with our artists creating work in a public space in the community. Still, it continues to be a challenge to find avenues for real connection and access for our artists.

The SYMBIOSIS project came from a desire to see our participants engage in our local community, and to bring some of their creative knowledge into a new arena. We worked with the Disability Studies course at Haverford College to build something together in the interest of inclusive, experiential reciprocity, and to serve shared goals of providing experience for two specific populations. What came out of this collaboration was a constantly evolving series of explorations in art and science, laying the groundwork for a truly original experience between college students and adults with developmental disabilities.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT:
"Hop," by Brandon Spicer-Crawley;
"Lots of Dots," by Sarah Lane; John
Serrano in the studio; "A Lady with
Leaves," by Olin Johnson







CLOCKWISE, FROM LEFT:

David Schmuckler in the studio;
"A Lion," by Tara Johnson;
"Untitled," by Carl Trunk

Eleven CCW artists, thirteen Haverford and Bryn Mawr College students, and three teaching artists from CCW spent a semester working together to create SYMBIOSIS, an exhibition of work inspired by science, individual aesthetics, and the spirit of collaboration. Based loosely around three specific realms of art-making—woodworking, mixed-media sculpture, and fiber arts—and the shared experience of observing bacterial growth under microscopes, the team embarked on a fifteen-week journey of exploration, innovation, and surprise.

With science students at Haverford offering their knowledge in the laboratory and artists at CCW offering their skills in the studio, both groups were invited into new spaces and experiences. Both groups were able to teach each other new processes and ideas, from looking through a microscope and taking notes to finger-knitting with yarn. Through this shared experience of looking closely and sharing knowledge, Haverford students and CCW artists create common ground for communication. While sometimes intimidated and tentative at first, all involved engaged in both creating artwork and working with scientific tools in the peerbased environment.





Haverford College is a ten-minute drive from CCW, yet none of our participants—some of whom have worked at this location for over 30 years—have ever set foot on the campus before beginning the project. Having the opportunity not only to visit a college campus but to belong there, to have a purpose and place within the community, is invaluable for us. Equally as meaningful is the experience that the Haverford students are invited to have with our artists. Engaging with the ID community in a prolonged way allows the opportunity for barriers and stigma to dissolve, and working together on a creative project heightens the possibility for real connection. With a project like SYMBIOSIS, we hope to make lasting changes in the way people view the ID community: as peers, potential collaborators, and uniquely creative people.



Kelly Brown in the studio

-Samantha Mitchell



"Dog," by Tara Johnson

### Five Collaborative Projects

### **BioArt**

The BioArt project, designed and led by Lindsey Lopes and Sarah Waldis, aimed to connect students studying at Haverford College with local artists from the Center for Creative Works through biological art (BioArt). Broadly, BioArt uses live tissues, organisms and life processes to both create and inspire artistic pieces. Over the course of three weeks, students and artists met in one of the teaching biology laboratory spaces at Haverford College to work with the colorful natural products produced by the harmless soil bacteria Streptomyces. Many scientists, including Haverford College chemistry professor Lou Charkoudian, study Streptomyces bacteria due to its antibiotic properties, but the bacteria also represents an awesome and untapped source of artistic biopigments. Each Streptomyces strain leaches a combination of pigments that determine its characteristic hue. Our first week, we spent time getting familiar with the laboratory at Haverford: we explored using microscopes to enlarge different objects, we discussed lab safety, and we sketched ideas for our bacterial BioArt. The following week was when the magic happened! Together, we used paintbrushes and Q-tips to streak a variety of colored Streptomyces strains onto petri dishes filled with a nutrient-rich semisolid medium. At



Nicole Barker's petri dish

first each strain appeared completely colorless in the petri dishes, but over the following week the cultured bacteria grew to produce a breath-taking array of colors, textures and patterns that we observed by eye and under a microscope during the last week in the lab. Both drawing from and disrupting conventional microbiological techniques, the BioArt project helped us discover new and beautiful ways to experience and communicate science through art.



### CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE:

A collection of all the BioArt petri dishes; BioArt petri dish created collaboratively by Timothy O'Donovan, Emily Krasnow, and Heather Younger; Olubunmi Ojo sits behind stacks of petri dishes; Jacob Berger and Lindsey Lopes sketch in their lab notebooks









Left to right: Natalie DiFrank, Olubunmi Ojo, Clyde Henry, Maggie Heffernan, Sarah Waldis, Nicole Barker, Julian Roach, Sula Malina; Center: Sherina Poorman

### Tree / Body Sculpture: Woodshop Project

Largely inspired by the awesome arboretum at the Haverford campus, woodworking teacher Sherina Poorman sought to find a way to engage this incredible local resource with the building processes in the wood shop. Discussion of trees on the campus gave way to thoughts about trees as individuals, and how their bodies relate to our own. SYMBIOSIS participants embarked on the creation of four boxes, crafted from white oak, that operate as celebratory tributes to the growth and development of both individual trees and the artists themselves.

CCW artists have been working with Poorman in the woodshop for over

three years, and they embraced the opportunity to share their knowledge of box building and patina creation with Haverford students. Using a multi-step process to create design on the box surfaces, artists engaged in both freehand and indirect mark-making techniques. Inspired by the human form, some artists drew with India ink directly onto the surface of the box, while others used a wax resist and a vinegar-based ebonizing stain to create dynamic patterning. At installation, each box will be filled with a collection of tree parts and pieces, bringing the character of the tree to life in a direct, tangible way.





### CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE:

Sarah Waldis, Julian Roach, and Nicole Barker measure a tree; Maggie Heffernan and Olubunmi Ojo work in the woodshop; artist and student collaborate on box decoration; Nicole Barker and Julian Roach use the drill press together







Jacob Berger's petri dish project

#### TOP:

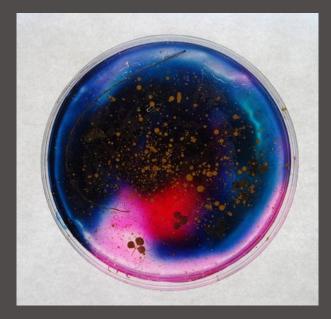
John Pat McEvoy's petri dish composition

#### Воттом:

Lindsey Lopes' petri dish composition

### Entropy: Mixed Media Project

Taking direct inspiration from the BioArt project in Haverford's lab, artists developed a series of sculptural compositions using large petri dishes as their canvas. Facilitated by mixed-media artist Heather Walker, SYMBIOSIS participants explored the limits and freedoms within the restrictive space of a ten-inch circle, using translucent Mod Podge paste as a carrying medium. Within this scientific structure, participants developed new techniques for material application without boundaries. Using beads, buttons, ink, crushed glass, and watercolor within the free-form, malleable environment of thick paste (Mod Podge). Some compositions are based on notes and observations from the lab, others explore the unique properties of the material. Together they create a unique assortment of impressions and reactions, luminous snippets of the SYMBIOSIS experience.



Courtney Carter's petri dish composition







Tim Quinn works on his needlepoint piece

### Needlepoint Project

For the past two years, Jessica Curtaz has been working with CCW artists to develop and expand their range of skill in fiber arts. For our collaboration with Haverford, Curtaz called on her background as a biologist to develop a prompt based around the properties of bacterial growth. With a canvas of tulle, silk, and other translucent fabrics pulled taut on an embroidery hoop, each artist developed imagery based on their bacterial paintings on agar, made at Haverford's biology lab. Using both experimental and traditional embroidery techniques—needlepoint and Amish tufted embroidery, among others—artists engaged with the process to develop their own aesthetic motifs.

Curtaz describes an interesting (if unintended) element of the process, in which many of the Haverford students with little artistic experience struggled with the creative making process, pre-judging their images before they were completed in a "fear of the ugly." Working among artists with developed individual aesthetics, multi step, process-based making techniques—like tufted embroidery—provided a kind of distance between creating and result that allowed for more organic development and less self-consciousness. In many ways, this process resembled the emergence of bacterial patterning in the BioArt project: an organic slow reveal.







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Work by Sarah Waldis,

ChuHui Fu, and Mary T. Bevlock



Tim Quinn and Ali Weiner sketch on wood

### Knit Bomb / Trees ID Project

Beyond the gallery installation, part of SYM-BIOSIS exists in the trees around Haverford campus, in the form of colorful knit-bomb installations and tree tags. This dynamic element of the collaboration was not planned ahead of time, and developed from a desire by both organizations for more inclusive experimentation. CCW is home to over 60 artists, and many of those not officially a part of the SYMBIOSIS collaborative team were interested in the projects taking place. Stemming from conversations within the groups about crafting techniques, the history of craft, and feminist theory, groups of artists came together to explore the possibility of knit-bombing. Making materials for this project allowed an excellent

opportunity for CCW artists to share their knowledge of method and technique. Avid textile artist Wendy Moreno taught several Haverford students how to finger knit.

The accompanying tree ID project emerged from the woodshop and a desire to learn more about the trees as individuals. SYMBIOSIS participants used ancient measuring methods for dating trees and estimating their height, and crafted ID tags for each one measured. Spending time on Haverford's campus measuring trees and installing the artwork gave CCW artists a chance to explore and investigate the grounds of the college, inviting them to relate to their environment in an exciting new way.



### CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE:

Students and artists smile (from left to right: Natalie DiFrank, Olubunmi Ojo, Clyde Henry, Sherina Poorman, Maggie Heffernan, Sarah Waldis, Sula Malina, Nicole Barker, and Julian Roach); artists and students sketch beside a knit-bombed tree; close-up of a knit-bombed and labeled tree







Clockwise, from top left: Vinetta Miller, Olubunmi Ojo, Clyde Henry, Timothy O'Donovan, Ken McNelis, Julian Roach, Paige Donovan, Jacob Berger, Mary T. Bevlock; not shown: Tim Quinn and John Serrano

## Symbiosis Art, Science & Community

Jacob Berger

Mary T. Bevlock

Paige Donovan

Clyde Henry

Ken McNelis

Vinetta Miller

Timothy O'Donovan

Olubunmi Ojo

Tim Quinn

Julian Roach

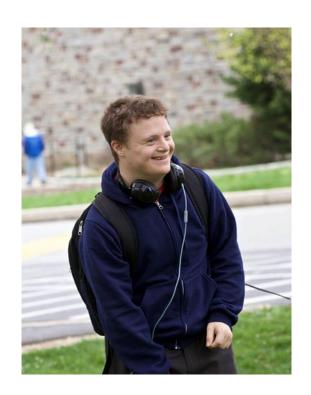
John Serrano



**Shapes** marker on paper, 2015

### Jacob Berger

(b. 1994, Plymouth Meeting, PA)

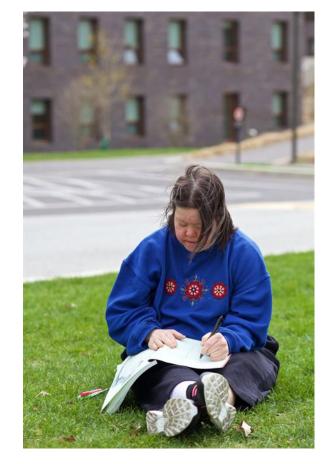


I don't really have an idea of something I'm drawing, I just make things up in my mind. I think they're cool – red and black and blue, squares and circles. I want people to see things flying, to feel like they are outside, to say how they like my drawings, to feel happy.

I make art for all of my friends, and my girlfriend.



Jordan as Jesus acrylic on paper, 2013



### Mary T. Bevlock

(b. 1968, Bryn Mawr, PA)

Make a picture in your mind of who you want to come to your house and to your dining room. It's like Thanksgiving, you're sitting at a table, and you can imagine who you want to come to your house and have dinner. A few of my family, Maurice Benard, my cousin Sally Jeffries, Carmine on Laverne and Shirley. Picasso. Van Gogh.

My inspiration comes from books, shapes, my religion, and celebrities. My favorite material is colored pencils because none of the colors are alike, it feels like butter, with brighter colors. I like to blend because I get more colors that way. It feels great, wonderful, to make artwork, warm and happy feelings. So... magic. Magical. I like response to my paintings, from anybody, that feels really good.



Pink Desert acrylic on paper, 2014



### Paige Donovan

(b. 1991, Audubon, PA)

Dots and circles. Details. Straight lines. I like them because they're different, they pop into my brain and then I know everything about the painting.

I like painting landscapes. It reminds me of going outside in the summertime, and all the different leaves. There's deer behind our house, they came out of nowhere. There were two or three of them.



Mom Dad C Whitney mixed media on paper, 2013



### Clyde Henry

(b. 1986, Yeadon, PA)

1986. Yeadon. Red cars. Mom dad C Whitney. Trees skies birds blue sky trees
Mom dad C Whitney. Trish and Theresa.
Howard Francis and Cheryl
Elephants dogs elephant dogs lion sun clouds
Work. Easy Work. Hammer spray on wood.
Shandra. Simone.
Elephant.
Clyde.



*Three Headed Dragon* colored pencil and watercolor on paper, 2014

## Ken McNelis

(b. 1974, Plymouth Meeting, PA)



I've been making artwork for a long time. I like to do everything—wood and sculpting, painting and drawing, and I just started working on sewing. Right now fabric is my favorite thing to work with. I am sewing a family of owls.

I like drawing dragons because they're fun, you can make up stories about them when you go along. Is it happy or sad? Is it angry? This one is in the mountains in Colorado.



*That's a Man and a Woman* oil pastel on paper, 2014

#### Vinetta Miller

(b. 1973, Philadelphia, PA)



I like to paint portraits the most. People model for me, and they're all different. I want them to have different smiles, different backgrounds, different dresses that they're wearing.

I make art because it's fun, because I can concentrate, and because I like working with my hands. First I put down a drawing in pencil, then in pen, and then watercolor paint. When I do all of the lines it's finished. I want people to know that I made this, that this is the work I made.



*Venice Gondola* ink and watercolor on paper, 2015

# Timothy O'Donovan

(b. 1964, Cardiff, Wales)



I like the idea of seeing nature by itself in its own form. I feel very comfortable with nature when I take hikes and walks wherever I am visiting or residing. I've been to a place that's very similar to Venice, Italy, when I went on vacation with my mom in Las Vegas. Cardiff is where I was born, and I visited that place in the late 70's, when my family was leaving South Africa.

I feel more in control of my life and my emotions when I make a piece of artwork. If there is too much tension, I paint and draw while listening to natural music, sounds of the ocean, and Enya.

I am a learning disabled individual and have been since birth. I've been independent since age 14, and have been a self advocate for 15 years. I have been coming to the Center for Creative Works for five years.



*Crow Woman* colored pencil on paper, 2015

## Olubunmi Ojo

(b. 1991, Philadelphia, PA)



Olubunmi Ojo's here Olubunmi Ojo in your house Olubunmi Ojo will take a seat sit down And no more scare

And say goodbye for all of being scare Say goodbye Olulakima Say goodbye for not safe for him Olubunmi Ojo in your house

Say goodbye for Olu, au revoir dark Olu keep practicing Olu keep on practicing Olubunmi Ojo's in your house



**Untitled** marker on paper, 2013

## Tim Quinn

(b. 1989, Narberth, PA)



On the wall of the warehouse. In my father's office. Inside my house. I have no clue where. I start with a line that goes all around.



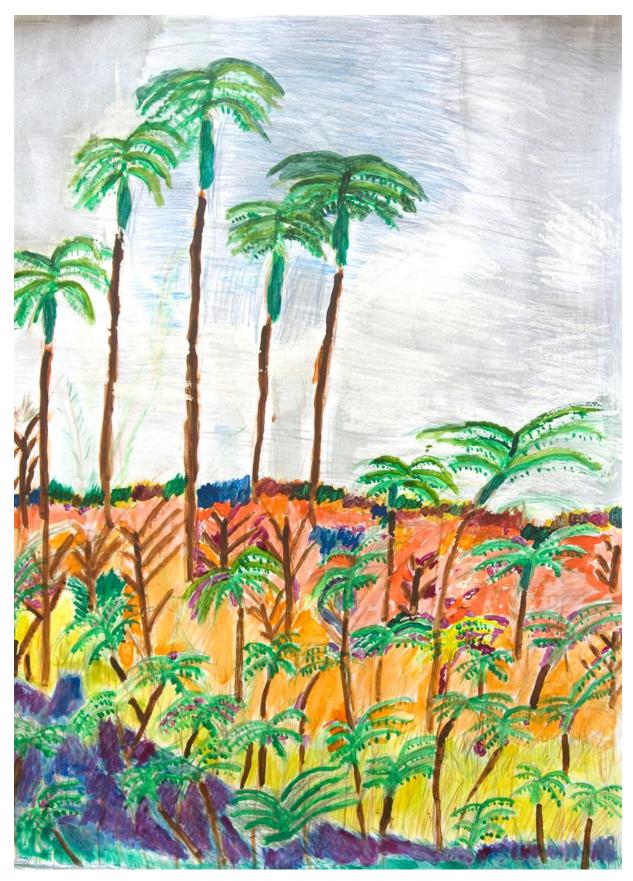
Mary Beth Guitar pen and ink on paper, 2015

## Julian Roach

(b. 1989, Philadelphia, PA)



It's doing great. I like to do some paintings and drawings. I look at a book and take a picture from it. Pictures of trees, cars, clouds. And a sun. Draw a rainbow. I draw the water. I draw the family.



Palms watercolor on paper, 2014

### John Serrano

(b. 1948, New York, NY)



I've lived in Florida most of my life, and started making bracelets and headbands to sell on the beach there 20 years ago.

I like to draw good looking girls. I've been to Hawaii a couple of times, looking at palm trees, mixed drinks. I worked in a bar a long time ago and I think about it a lot. I watched the door, put ice in the trays, put beer on the counter. Dancing too.

In my art I use colored pencil and pen to draw, and I draw everything —everything with lots of details. People talking, people sitting in trees, woods, laying down on the ground, eating lunch in the grass. Summer is better than winter.

I try to tell people about my mind, my life, to do my job, and that's it.

Special thanks to the many individuals and organizations who helped to make this partnership and exhibition possible.

Center for Creative Works Program Director Lori Bartol, Center for Creative Works Arts and Education Supervisor Stephanie Petro, and Center for Creative Works staff Bill Baxendale, Jessica Curtaz, Katie Knoeringer, Sherina Poorman, James Robinson, Andy Schmitt, Heather Walker.

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Haverford's Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility Council, Janice Lion.

Haverford's Health Studies Program, Kaye Edwards, and Christopher Roebuck.

The John B. Hurford '60 Center for the Arts and Humanities: Matthew Seamus Callinan, Emily Cronin, Christine Dickerson, Kerry Nelson, Deborah Roberts, and James Weissinger.

RAIR Design, Billy Dufala and Lucia Thomé.

Guest Artists: Agatha Biddle, Rachel Goldberg, Keith Jones, John Pat McEvoy, Nick Newman, Wendy Moreno, Mark Opielski, Brandon Spicer-Crawley, Karen Toff.

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