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Brickbottom

# SALLY

An Interdisciplinary Exhibition

Project Curators:

Sasha Chavchavadze & JoAnne McFarland

Brickbottom Gallery  
Somerville, Massachusetts  
September 2022

DNA evidence confirms that Sarah 'Sally' Hemings and Thomas Jefferson had six children together. While a teenager in France with Jefferson's family, Hemings had a chance at full freedom, but returned to America with Jefferson in 1791 when he was 47 years old. Many historians believe Hemings was already pregnant with her first child by Jefferson when she returned. She lived out most of her life as a slave on Jefferson's Monticello plantation, in quarters adjacent to his that have recently been restored.

SALLY, a collaborative interdisciplinary project, brings together artists, writers, performers, and historians intrigued by women, like Sally Hemings, whose destinies are inextricably interwoven with those they knew, and whose lives have often been erased or forgotten.

First presented in the fall of 2019 in three Brooklyn venues: The Old Stone House & Washington Park, Artpoetica Project Space, and the Gowanus Dredgers Boathouse, SALLY galvanizes communities around forgotten history at this critical juncture when women's autonomy is once again under attack. Another meaning of sally seems particularly relevant: *a sudden charge out of a besieged place*. SALLY explores how artists confront myriad issues of agency, and use community and collaboration to undercut the status quo, and construct lives of integrity and purpose.

SALLY is presented in distinctly different exhibition spaces that serve a variety of communities, ensuring that the exhibition reaches both art and non-art audiences. Each exhibition is reflective of the place that it is in.

During the month of September 2022, SALLY will be at the Brickbottom Gallery in Somerville, MA, founded by the Brickbottom Artists Association,

one of the oldest living and working artists communities in the United States. Year-round, the Brickbottom Gallery presents exhibitions as Somerville's premiere not-for-profit contemporary art gallery, showcasing both established and emerging artists. For SALLY, in the main gallery, sixteen artists from diverse backgrounds with varied aesthetic concerns respond to this complex contemporary moment.

In the smaller gallery, Sasha Chavchavadze, one of SALLY's curators, presents a multimedia installation centered on the life and work of Margaret Fuller (1810 – 1850), journalist, editor, critic, and translator, who wrote the first American book on women's rights. Presented for the first time near the place of her birth and early life, the installation reactivates the pathos and power of Fuller's erased voice, silenced by a shipwreck off Fire Island in 1850, and by her male colleagues.

Participants



## BELOVED TAPESTRIES PROJECT

My work is based on current and historical events surrounding the African–American experience. The African tradition of storytelling is a common thread throughout my work. I honor my immediate ancestors and those of the African Diaspora. I create sacred spaces in which the ancestors' spirits may rest. I make it my business to take the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade and Jim Crow America and transform them into fully living, breathing human Black life.

**Desmond Beach** is an artist and educator living in New York City. He earned his MFA from the Rinehart School of Sculpture at the Maryland Institute College of Art (MiCA) and his BFA from MiCA. He has been a visiting lecturer/artist at Coppin State University in Maryland, and Emerson College in Boston, MA. Beach is currently the 2021–2022 Bayard Rustin Residency Fellow in New York. He has been a fellow at the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown and Skidmore College as well as an artist-in-residence at the Women's Housing Coalition in Baltimore, and Pyramid Atlantic Art Center in Silver Spring, Maryland. [desmondbeach](http://desmondbeach.com)

# Phyllis Ewen



## DARK SHIP

I have long been interested in the ways that our imagination interacts with the natural world, a world that is never far from the effects of human intervention. In these pieces, I explore the cultural and social history of water; its role in land disputes, the development of agriculture, and the building of empire.

**Phyllis Ewen's** studio is in the Brickbottom Artist Building, Somerville, MA, where she was a founding member of the collective. Her work has been exhibited extensively and is in many public collections, including the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, The Boston Public Library, Harvard and MIT, the Decordova Museum and Sculpture Park, and in numerous corporate and private collections. [phyllisewen](http://phyllisewen)

# Kathryn Geismar



## SOLO\_SOLO

Over the past 18 months I have been drawing and painting young adults who are identity fluid and genderqueer. One of these subjects is my child; others are their friends. I use a combination of the traditional (paint, graphite, canvas) and the non-traditional (Tyvek, Duralar, grommets). Figures move in and out of focus; layers of Duralar promote looking through to substrata; grommets pierce through layers at times like jewelry, and at other times like windows into what lies below. These young adults have been dressing, painting, and piercing themselves into being. I have been painting, drawing, and layering my way into seeing.

**Kathryn Geismar** is an artist and psychologist who lives and works in Somerville, Massachusetts. Her work explores identity and difference via portraiture. Kathryn graduated with a degree in Studio Art from Brown University. She has won numerous awards for her work including a fellowship through the Somerville Arts Council, the Baldwin Prize for drawing, and a residency at the Vermont Studio Center. She is represented by the Bromfield Gallery in Boston. Her work has been shown throughout New England, Los Angeles, and NYC. [kathryngeismar](http://kathryngeismar.com)



# Jee Hwang

## FLOWER PORTRAIT (Markia)

Portraying metaphoric narratives of a female body in a specific scene, I question how the presence of others influences perspective and generates the form of desire.

Understanding the tragic lives of historical women such as Sally, I relate to many women who lived in silence due to societal constraints. From stories told by my mother and grandmothers, I understood that keeping silent was a virtue for a woman, and the safest option for her and her family. Yet, silence doesn't have to mean surrender or ignorance.



**Jee Hwang's** paintings explore figurative images and objects from everyday life. Inspired by individual and people's desire and their relationships, Hwang's representational works focus on beauty and violence that coexist in the human condition. Hwang received her MFA in Painting from Pratt Institute and her BFA from Salisbury University in Salisbury, Maryland. She has been awarded residencies from the Studios at MASS MoCa, chaNorth Artist Residency, Wassaic Project, Vermont Studio Center, and the Emma Bee Bernstein Fellowship Award from A.I.R. Gallery. Hwang has actively participated in solo and group exhibitions at diverse venues in New York, New Jersey, Los Angeles and Seoul, Korea. Hwang has recently relocated to Hays, Kansas to teach painting as an Assistant Professor at Fort Hays State University.

[jeehwang](http://jeehwang.com)

# Sheryl Jaffe

## GATHERING HOPE



Delilah Gibbs—gatherer, reaper, sower and alchemist, was the “last of her tribe”, of the Native Peoples of Billingsgate, of what we now call Wellfleet. Her knowledge of the local native medicinal plants enabled her to cure her neighbor of breast cancer. I walk her land and wonder about her life. Do you lose your culture when you have no one to share it with? I see her as a skilled, learned woman, although illiterate, a student of nature who gathered and reaped, created and healed. As a ‘free woman of color’ she lived among white folks and black folks, among women and men. How did they see her?

**Sheryl Jaffe** has been exhibiting her artwork throughout New York and New England for over 30 years. She works with organic materials: handmade paper from local and exotic plant fibers, beach stones, and found objects to create two and three dimensional works that are reminiscent of the human body, and the strength and fragility of skin. She studied traditional hand paper-making in Japan and China and taught paper-making in Haiti. She teaches art, ceramics, printmaking and paper-making at museums, public schools and art centers; including the Cape Cod Photo Workshops, Worcester Center for Crafts, University of Massachusetts, Porter Phelps Huntington Museum, and Matenwa Community School in Haiti. Jaffe was a resident artist at The Barn: Edward Albee Foundation, and at Yellowstone National Park. The themes of her paper scrolls, prints, sculptures and installations include loss, forgiveness, erosion, transformation, vulnerability and strength. Her installations offer viewers ways to make discoveries, and be drawn into contemplation.

[sheryljaffe](http://sheryljaffe.com)

# Elise Kaufman



(title to come)

All that remains of a place that either no longer exists or, over time, has become transformed into something else, is our memory of it. My drawings strive to evoke time passing by depicting architecture and landscape devolving and evolving. Working from an assembly of images from a wide range of collected sources—experiential and found—my work explores the relationship between memory and dream, and the experience of reality and the past.

**Elise Kaufman** received her BFA from Pratt Institute, and her MFA from Queens College (CUNY). Her work is in numerous public and private collections in the United States and Europe. She is currently an Adjunct Associate Professor of Drawing at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY. She is a former professor of drawing at Parsons School of Design, in New York City. [elisekaufman](http://elisekaufman.com)

# Kelly Knight



## HOLY ORDINARY

These are garments for female ancestors which I've cast in iron and placed on linens on the floor below, suspended above the hands of my niece. Paper vessels above the garments are lined with gold leaf and hold tea leaves. Filled with water during installation, the tea seeps through the paper vessels and drips onto the cupped iron hands, which bleed iron stains onto the fabric below. This work represents familial lineage—women who will never know each other, but who may carry each others' stories in their veins.

**Kelly Knight** completed her MFA in 3D Fine Arts at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 2018, and her BA in Creative Writing from Lesley University in 2015. [kellyknight](http://kellyknight.com)

# Carole Kunstadt

## PRESSING ON: Homage to Hannah More



I cut, scorch and layer pages of More's writings. Antique "sad" (solid) irons convey the stories, the experiential memory of a domestic labor force. The sad irons represent the 'herstories' of those laboring under the demands for pressed garments and linens to suit class distinctions and societal expectations.

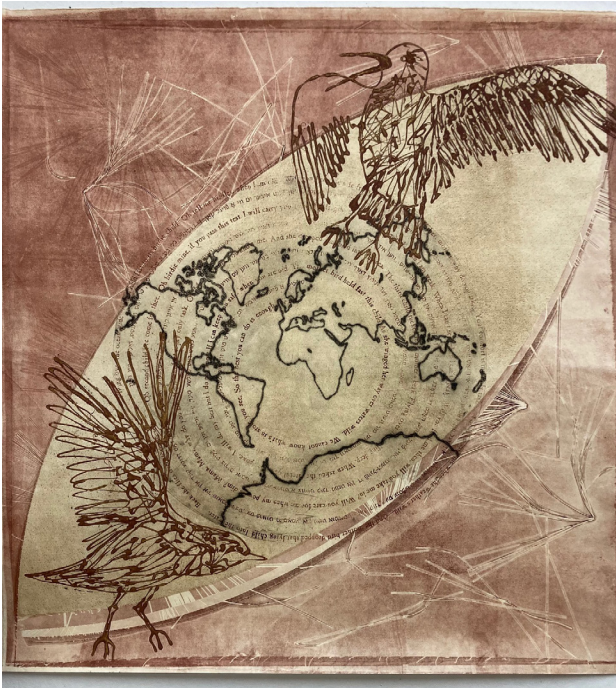
Hannah More (1745–1833) was an abolitionist, social reformer, philanthropist, feminist, writer. Her writings strongly influenced the public mind and social character of her day. More's life-long cause was galvanizing women to act not as domestic ornaments, but as thinking, responsible beings.

**Carole Kunstadt** often invokes a metaphysical quality of contemplation and timelessness. Her works on/of paper reference artifacts and antique books—deconstructing paper and text and using it in metaphorical ways. Through the manipulation and the exploration of the materials, history, memory and time merge in a hybrid form. Born in Boston, with a childhood in Sharon, MA, Kunstadt received a BFA from Hartford Art School and continued with postgraduate studies at the Akademie der Bildenen Künste, Munich, Germany. Seven years ago she moved to the Hudson Valley, after living in NYC for 35 years. Her works can be found in numerous private and public collections including: George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives, Bowdoin College Library, Brunswick, ME; The Book Arts Collection, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, DC; The Permanent Collection of The Center for Book Arts, NY, NY; and Baylor Book Arts Collection, Baylor University, Waco, Texas.

[carolekunstadt](http://carolekunstadt.com)

# Debra Olin

## BIRD



Birds have captivated our imagination since the beginning of time. Depicted in petroglyphs, on ancient coins, and in hieroglyphics, they have woven their magic into the folklore and superstitions of every culture. The birds in "Glikl 1 & 2" refer to a Yiddish poem found in the writings of Glikl of Hamlen. This poem was translated by Michael Wex and written into a song by Adrienne Cooper. "Crane Dance" and "Stork and Crane" connects to our story telling/ nursery rhyming relationship with birds.

**Debra Olin** is a printmaker living and working in Somerville, MA. She received her MFA from Massachusetts College of Art in 1980. Olin has shown in exhibitions across the U.S., Canada, France, Poland, Serbia, South Africa, and Cuba. Her work is in the permanent collections of the Boston Public Library; Temple Israel, Brookline, MA; YIVO Institute, NYC; The DeCordova Museum, Lincoln, MA; and the Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University. In 2004 Olin was awarded the Rappaport Prize, the largest public annual award to an individual artist in New England. In 2018 Olin received a Massachusetts Cultural Council Finalist Award and a grant from the Berkshire Taconic Artist Resource Trust. [debraolin](http://debraolin.com)

# Jason Patterson

## ROSA PARKS, DETROITER

This portrait of Rosa Parks was drawn after a cropping of a photograph taken of Mrs. Parks with Rep. Shirley Chisholm in 1968. That year, Chisholm became the first African American congresswoman. Parks was an open supporter of Chisholm's congressional run as well as Chisholm's presidential campaign in 1972. This is just one of Rosa Park's overlooked social and political actions beyond her 1955 bus arrest in Montgomery, Alabama.



**Jason Patterson's** work focuses on African American history and highlights the role the past has in cultivating our current political and social conditions in the United States. Patterson's practice is heavily research-based, with the majority of his studio time dedicated to that research to ensure that the historical and social narratives presented are well represented. Patterson's figurative work is based on archived images. The work emphasizes the original medium, making it clear to the viewer that these drawings were modeled after daguerreotypes, film, newspaper clippings, and digital images. The intent is to show that the way these images were originally created is just as important as the subject matter they represent. This work investigates the different ways images, in varying forms, structure the way we visually comprehend our history and define our present. Patterson is a fellow at the Starr Center for the Study of the American Experience at Washington College where he also teaches drawing. [jasonpatterson](http://jasonpatterson.com)

# Ellen Shattuck Pierce

## WHITES



**Ellen Shattuck Pierce** is an artist, teacher, and long-time resident of Boston, MA. She grew up in Rutland, VT and moved to Boston to pursue her art career. She attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, graduated from UMass Boston, and received her Ed.M in Arts Education from Harvard University. Part Canadian, Pierce longed to spend time in Canada and moved to Toronto to complete her MFA at York University. During this time, Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit, Nunavut invited her to teach a month-long printmaking course. The stark landscape and the rich stories told in the Inuit artists' work has had a lasting impact on Pierce's art. After returning to Iqaluit a second time, Pierce settled in Boston where she teaches art to elementary students in Cambridge and works in her studio. [ellenshattuckpierce](http://ellenshattuckpierce.com)



# Janice Redman



## SPOON

My work is rooted in my everyday experience and my personal history. My mother was a seamstress and a lace maker. My father restored antique clocks, working in a small shed at the bottom of the garden. The rest of my family has worked in the wool mills or steel industry, making tools. So I come from a family of “makers,” and that is what I do: I make things.

Using domestic objects I have an intimate connection to, I work intuitively and, in many cases, repetitively. The act of making becomes a personal ritual, a process of revealing that which lies beneath the surface of the everyday.

**Janice Redman**, sculptor, was born in Huddersfield, England and received her BFA from Kingston University, Surrey, and her MFA from the University of Ulster in Belfast, Northern Ireland. She is a former Fellow of the Fine Arts Work Center In Provincetown, Massachusetts, and has been the recipient of many awards, including The Hassam, Speicher, Betts and Symons Purchase Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a Massachusetts Cultural Council award in sculpture. Her residency programs include Yaddo in Saratoga Springs, New York, and the Core Program at the Museum of Fine Arts In Houston, Texas. Redman’s work has been shown nationally and is represented by Clark Gallery in Lincoln, Massachusetts. Her work can be found in the permanent collections of the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park in Lincoln, NE and the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum in East Lansing, Michigan. [janice redman](#)

# Sarah Riley



## CAMILLE UNDER PRESSURE

The clash of personalities in the art world has often been fraught with tension. Women artists such as Séraphine Louis (1864–1942), and Camille Claudel (1864–1943), remind us that, particularly in our persistently patriarchal society, the battle for value and worth, acknowledgement and meaning, is ongoing, empowering, essential. My prints are based on my musings about the struggles of these two women artists: Camille Claudel, unheralded contemporary of Rodin; and Seraphine Louis, self-taught French artist with an idiosyncratic style. Both died in asylums.

**Sarah Riley** is a painter/printmaker based on Cape Cod. She is Professor Emeritus and former Head of Printmaking at Southeast Missouri State University. Her book on mixed-media printmaking, *Practical Mixed-Media Printmaking Techniques*, was published in the United States in January 2012 by A & C Black, London. [sarahriley](http://sarahriley.com)

# Susan Schmidt

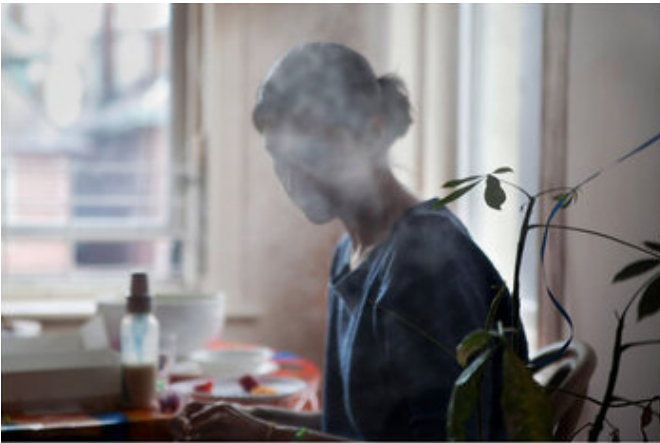


HC BASKET

Susan Schmidt [susanschmidt](http://susanschmidt.com)

# Amani Willett

## DISQUIET



**Amani Willett** is a Brooklyn and Boston-based photographer whose practice is driven by conceptual ideas surrounding family, history, memory, and the social environment. Working primarily with the book form, his two monographs include: *Disquiet* (Damiani, 2013) and *The Disappearance of Joseph Plummer* (Overlap, 2017). Amani's photographs are also featured in the books: *Bystander: A History of Street Photography* (2017 edition, Laurence King Publishing), *Street Photography Now* (Thames and Hudson), New York: *In Color* (Abrams). His work resides in the collections of the Tate Modern; The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Oxford University; and Harvard University, among others. Amani completed an MFA in Photography, Video and Related Media from the School of Visual Arts, NY in 2012, and a BA from Wesleyan University in 1997. In addition to his artistic practice, Amani currently teaches photography at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in Boston, MA. [amaniwillett](http://amaniwillett.com)

Project Curators

# Sasha Chavchavadze

## THE SCROLLS OF THE PAST BURN MY FINGERS

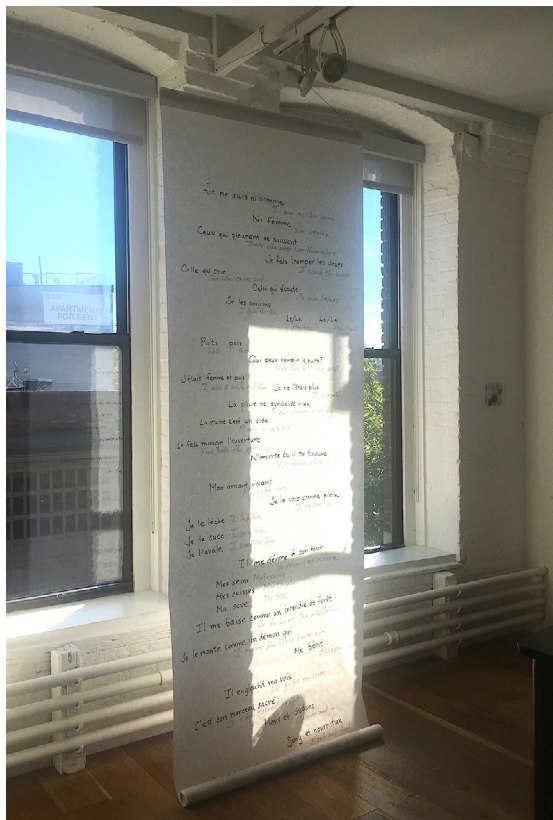
My mixed media paintings and assemblages reactivate erased history as a catalyst for change. My multi-year research-based projects unfold over time as I excavate forgotten lives, expressing the pathos and power of forgotten narratives.

My interest in forgotten women mentors led me to a 5-year study of the life and words of the American writer Margaret Fuller (1810–1850) whose radical voice speaks volumes to the present. This creative collaboration across time has led to a multimedia body of paintings, installations and digital work.



**Sasha Chavchavadze** is the founder of Footnote, a project space in Brooklyn, NY that uses art to focus on forgotten history, and Proteus Gowanus, an interdisciplinary exhibition/event space that was a cultural hub in Brooklyn for ten years. Her other public projects, including SALLY, Museum of Matches, and Carnival of Connectivity, reconnect art to other disciplines and to the community. Her mixed media paintings, drawings and installations have been exhibited internationally, including: Katonah Museum of Art; Luise Ross Gallery, Cooper Union Gallery; Rotunda Gallery; Kentler International Drawing Space; Arkansas Art Center; Museum of Literature, Tbilisi, Georgia. Her work has been presented in MoMA workshops, TedxGowanus and on BRIC TV. She has published in Cabinet, Bomb and NYFA Current magazines, and as a book (Museum of Matches, Proteotypes, 2011). Her Margaret Fuller Project was initiated as a Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome. [sashachavchavadze](http://sashachavchavadze.com)

# JoAnne McFarland



## MY BROKEN FRENCH (poetry scroll)

In 1789, Sally Hemings, half-sister of Thomas Jefferson's deceased wife Martha, traveled to France with Jefferson as a companion for his daughter. Hemings was sixteen and free in France after the revolution there. By the time she traveled back to America, she was already pregnant with her first child by Jefferson who was then forty-seven years old. Hemings agreed to return to America only if Jefferson promised that he would free any children they had, once they reached their majority. Those four children are the only slaves Jefferson ever freed. My scroll speaks to the intimate bargains women make with themselves and others in order to survive.

**JoAnne McFarland** is the Artistic Director of Artpoetica Project Space in Gowanus, Brooklyn which exhibits work that focuses on the intersection of language and visual representation. McFarland has artwork in the permanent collections of The Library of Congress, The Columbus Museum of Art, and The Department of State, among many others. Recent shows include: *Best & Brightest* and *The Indivisible Spectrum*, both at The Painting Center in NYC. A graduate of Princeton University, McFarland's poetry collections include: *Acid Rain*, *13 Ways of Looking at a Black Girl*, and *Identifying the Body*. Her latest multimedia collection, *Pullman*, will be published by Grid Books in 2023. McFarland has had fellowships at The BARD Graduate Center Library, KALA Art Institute, and The National Arts Club. She is the former Exhibitions Director of A.I.R. Gallery in Brooklyn, NY. [joannemcfarland](http://joannemcfarland.com)

# SALLY

Project Curators: Sasha Chavchavadze & JoAnne McFarland  
Brickbottom Gallery, Somerville, MA September 2022

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## Participating Artists:

Desmond Beach  
Sasha Chavchavadze  
Phyllis Ewen  
Kathryn Geismar  
Jee Hwang  
Sheryl Jaffe  
Elise Kaufman  
Kelly Knight  
Carole Kunstadt  
JoAnne McFarland  
Debra Olin  
Jason Patterson  
Ellen Shattuck Pierce  
Janice Redman  
Sarah Riley  
Susan Schmidt  
Amani Willett

Brochure design: Artpoetica Editions © 2022

Cover image: Desmond Beach, *Introducing the Bird, A Revolutionary Perspective Series: Canary*, digital watercolor, 2021