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SUNY Adirondack

SALLY

An Interdisciplinary Exhibition

Project Curators:
Sasha Chavchavadze & JoAnne McFarland

SUNY Adirondack

Visual Arts Gallery

November 4, 2021 – January 28, 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 that Hemings was already pregnant with her first child 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. Exhibitions grow out of community outreach as participants are invited to re-animate the histories of overshadowed or forgotten women.

First presented in FALL 2019 in three Brooklyn venues, SALLY has traveled to several community-based and academic settings, and will be at SUNY Adirondack November 4, 2021–January 28, 2022, presented in the Visual Arts Gallery.

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 collaboration to 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.

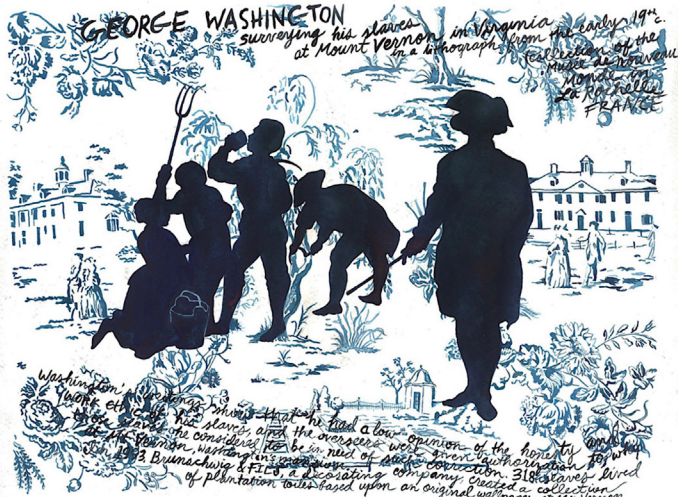
At SUNY Adirondack in the fall of 2021, the pieces selected for the exhibition are rich with texts related to loss, the struggle for intimacy, and the quest to have one's life matter. Three decks are central to the exhibition: one that details the growing archive of rediscovered women (BIO Cards Deck), a second that alludes to the continuing challenges women face in choosing and maintaining dominion over their own bodies and fates (The Battleground Deck), and a third that focuses on the life of Margaret Fuller—journalist, editor, critic, translator, and women's rights advocate associated with the American Transcendentalist movement, who wrote the first American book on women's rights in 1840.

The Participants

Lauren Frances Adams

DECORUM

My work frequently engages the visual culture of American colonial history and cultural identity. I draw upon the historical decorative arts as indicative of the aspirations of class and social status, exploring the relationship between ornament and oppression. My sources are frequently found in museum collections where the archive acts as both witness and author. For the past few years, I have centered my work around commemorative sites—monuments, memorials, major museum collections and historic house museums—researching these sites as archives of public memory and cultural storytelling.



Lauren Frances Adams is a painter and installation artist who lives in Baltimore. Her work engages political and social histories through iconic images and domestic ornament. She has exhibited at Nymans House in England; The Walters Museum in Baltimore; The Mattress Factory in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Contemporary Art Museum in St. Louis, Missouri. She attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and is the recipient of a 2016 Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award. Her work has been reviewed in Frieze Magazine, The Washington Post, The Baltimore Sun, Artslant, and Hyperallergic. <https://www.lfadams.com/>

Jee Hwang



FLOWER PORTRAIT (Valeria)

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 have 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 collective desire and 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, MD. 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 recently relocated to Hays, Kansas to teach painting as an Assistant Professor at Fort Hays State University.

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

Nancy Lunsford

AN AMERICAN FAMILY ALBUM



An American Family Album pays homage to women who have been largely neglected in American history. They are members of the mixed-race Grimké family, including Nancy Weston Grimké—“The Madonna of the South,” and her granddaughter, the Harlem Renaissance poet Angelina Grimké. The matriarch’s white abolitionist sisters-in-law were Angelina Emily and Sarah Grimké, with whom she shared a strong, supportive familial bond.

I burn the portraits into wood panels, a process that symbolizes control over the destructive terror of fire.

Nancy Lunsford, co-founder of 440 Gallery in Brooklyn, NY, works in a variety of media including painting, drawing, collage, printmaking and multimedia. Her work is based primarily on memoir and generally structured on the aesthetic of traditional folk genres: Appalachian quilts, folk patterns and religious iconography. Her most recent exhibition “Slate and Bone” at 440 Gallery featured elegiac portraits honoring the survivors of the middle passage and selections from her fifty portrait installation “Extended Family” first exhibited in Zhujiajiao, China. Her work is in private collections in the U.S., Europe, and Asia.

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

Jennifer Mack–Watkins



NO PATTERN NECESSARY

This work is the first component of my ongoing body of work dealing with how society defines what femininity is based on a predefined pattern. The common everyday dress is assumed to fit anyone who wears it, but adjustments are made when the person is not truly satisfied.

I use photographic images from vintage magazine advertisements to document how media and popular culture flood society with stereotypical, or idealistic perceptions. In my work, I focus on color and pattern in order to give attention to the structure of a dress as it defines what it means to be a woman.

Jennifer Mack–Watkins is a printmaker, art educator, and one of the founding members of the collective Black Women of Print. Jennifer Mack–Watkins received her BA in studio arts from Morris Brown College, MAT in Secondary Art Education from Tufts University, and MFA in Printmaking from Pratt Institute. Mack–Watkin's work investigates societal conformities that isolate individuals and confine them to rigidly defined spaces related to femininity, beauty, relationships, body image, power, and gender roles. <https://www.mackjennifer.com/>

Ann Shostrom



HIPPOLYTA

Hippolyta had a magical girdle, given to her by the god of war Ares. This belt signified her authority as Queen of the Amazons, a tribe of women warriors related to Scythians and Sarmatians who dwelt in the region of modern-day Ukraine.

Hippolyta's lover Heracles, fulfilling his Twelve Labors, killed her and took the girdle.

Ann Shostrom is represented by Elizabeth Harris Gallery where her recent "The Rising" conjured personages from history and mythology constructed out of remnants, a stitched together society. She exhibits internationally. Her public art projects include murals in Crete; sculpture from decommissioned weapons in Albania; and Mir2, a collaborative space station that won Dance Theater Workshop's Bessie award for Performance, Installation, and New Media. Awards include: a Mid Atlantic Foundation for the Arts Fellowship, a New York State Foundation for the Arts Grant, and Partnership for Parks Grants. Her work has been reviewed in Art in America, Art News, and other publications. She received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and her MFA from Syracuse University. Shostrom is an Associate Professor at Penn State University who lives and works in PA and New York, where she is co-founder and director of First Street Green Art Park in the East Village. <http://www.annshostrom.com/>

Marisa Williamson

THE GHOST OF THOMAS JEFFERSON

My projects explore and interpret through performance, video, objects and images, the ways that soft technologies in conjunction with hard technologies, facilitate the rendering and surrendering of the body over time. The work is rooted in questions of authority, parafiction, freedom and its opposite(s), race, gender, labor, and love through an historical lens. It addresses these interests as they pertain to my life: a modern life existing as it does as a consequence of known and unknown literal and figurative ancestors.



Photo: Liza Pittard

Marisa Williamson is a multimedia artist based in Newark, NJ. She has created site-specific works at and in collaboration with the University of Virginia, Mural Arts Philadelphia, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello, Storm King Art Center, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Her videos, performances, and installations have been exhibited internationally. She received her BA from Harvard University and her MFA from CalArts. She was a participant in the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture in 2012 and the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program in 2014–2015. She has taught at Pratt Institute, the Brooklyn Museum, and Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts. She is currently on the faculty at the Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford, CT.

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

The Curators

Sasha Chavchavadze

SURVIVED THE WRECK

My mixed media paintings and assemblages reactivate disappeared history as a catalyst for the present.

My multi-year, research-based projects unfold over time as I excavate forgotten lives. I hold artifacts and archival documents in my hands as talismans of meaning, expressing their pathos and power through my work.

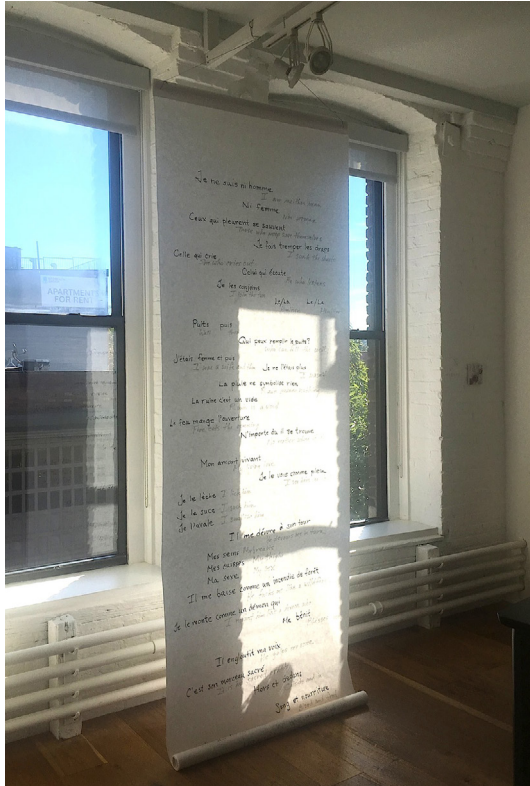
My interest in forgotten women mentors led me to a 4-year study of the life and words of the American writer Margaret Fuller (1810–1850), whose radical voice speaks volumes to the present.



Sasha Chavchavadze is the founder of Proteus Gowanus, an interdisciplinary exhibition/event space that was a cultural hub in Brooklyn for ten years. Her community-based projects include: Battle Pass Collective; D'Amico Gowanus Laboratory; Museum of Matches; Carnival of Connectivity. Her paintings, drawings, and installations have been exhibited widely, including: Luise Ross Gallery; Cooper Union Gallery; Rotunda Gallery; Kentler International Drawing Space; Arkansas Art Center, Little Rock; Museum of Literature, Tbilisi, Georgia. Her work has been presented in MoMA workshops, TED-Gowanus and on BRIC TV. Her public art installation Battle Pass: Revolution II was commissioned by NYC DOT Urban Art. She has published in Cabinet, Bomb, and NYFA Current magazines, and as a book (Museum of Matches, Proteotypes 2011). As a 2018 Visiting Artist at the American Academy in Rome, she initiated her Margaret Fuller Project.

[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 Artistic Director of Artpoetica Project Space in Gowanus, Brooklyn which focuses on work that explores the intersection of words, visual art, performance, and installation. She is the former Exhibitions Director of A.I.R. Gallery in Brooklyn, NY. Her solo and group exhibitions include: *Mending* at 440 Gallery in Brooklyn, *Both Directions at Once* at KALA Art Institute in Berkeley, CA, and *The Black Artist as Activist* at The Corridor Gallery in Brooklyn. McFarland's artwork is part of the public collections of the Library of Congress, the Columbus Museum of Art, and Dynegy Inc. among others. Her poetry books and digital bookworks include: *Tracks of MyTears*, *Said I Meant/Meant I Said*, a collaboration with poet Paul Epile, *Identifying the Body*, and *13 Ways of Looking at a Black Girl*.

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

SALLY SUNY Adirondack

Participating Artists:

Lauren Frances Adams

Sasha Chavchavadze

Jee Hwang

Nancy Lunsford

Jennifer Mack-Watkins

JoAnne McFarland

Ann Shostrom

Marisa Williamson

Special thanks to the following people for making SALLY/SUNY Adirondack possible:

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Visual Arts Gallery, November 4, 2021–January 28, 2022

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