



## **THIS LAND IS....**

Curated by Arlene Bujese

October 24 – November 8, 2020

### **Opening Reception:**

Saturday, October 24, 6 to 8 PM

### **MM FINE ART**

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Southampton, NY

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Sheila **BATISTE**, Deborah **BLACK**, Priscilla **BOWDEN**  
Stephanie **BRODY LEDERMAN**, Darlene **CHARNECO**, Jennifer **CROSS**  
Janet **CULBERTSON**, Jeremy **DENNIS**, William **KING**  
David **SLATER**, Burton **VAN DEUSEN**

Curated by Arlene Bujese, *THIS LAND IS....* takes its theme from the Woody Guthrie song *This Land Is Your Land*. Each artist presents a theme based on experience, perception, or interpretation of what the 'Land', namely the USA, evokes for a particular work of art at a particular time in the American journey. Motifs address historic events, nostalgia, nature, philosophical considerations, and possibility, expressed through the individual artist's signature way of making art.

The late Priscilla Bowden's bucolic landscape might suggest morning in America where anything is possible. Burton Van Deusen's complex landscape with light and dark contrasts, titled *Scrabble*, employs a mixed "narrative of clouds", of beginnings, not to be forgotten memories, possibilities, and hopes. Deborah Black often painted trees, and in an imagined dialogue, used abstract means to show their essence which she felt compelled to discover in terms of her personal relationship to nature.

Janet Culbertson's focus, for over 40 years, has been on the threatened extinction of planet earth. A bird in her painting/collage *Memorial* references thousands of birds which mysteriously fell from the sky over Carolina a few years ago. This is just one aspect of the crisis facing humanity, wildlife, and the planet present and future.



**Jeremy Dennis's** photography explores indigenous identity, cultural assimilation, and the ancestral traditional practices of his tribe, the Shinnecock Indian Nation, examining his identity with and experience of living on a sovereign Indian reservation and the problems it presents to him and his community. His goal is to preserve and create awareness of sacred, culturally significant, and historical Native American landscapes on Long Island, NY.

The landscape motif grows more abstract with Stephanie Brody-Lederman and Jennifer Cross. **Brody-Lederman** presents a duality in remembrance of 9/11; the iconic tower shapes and a devastated tree represent great loss while in the center of the painting is a cluster of cherries as a symbol of regeneration and future joy.

**Jennifer Cross** dedicates her painting to the current crises of COVID-19 and the Black Lives Matter movement. In her painting, *Present Tense*, tally marks indicate the eternal present, while active figurative elements reference protest marches as other ghostlike figures floating in space represent lives lost to the virus; dancing figures signify that celebration of the human spirit is also a form of resistance in despairing times.

Historic connections to the American journey also rise in the works of **Sheila Batiste** and **David Slater**. Batiste explores the effects of growing up in the South in the 50's and 60's. The sculptural portrait of a nuclear Klan family posing proudly in front of the 'southern pride' flag takes its title from the phrase, 'The Family that Prays together Stays together' and addresses the contradiction between family values and religion, as in the burning of crosses, which she witnessed.

**David Slater** has focused on the conditions and aspirations of Native Americans; the Indian journey. His painting is a narrative montage involving historical events, and symbolism; the Sacred Pipe is featured as a major icon through struggle and celebration of heritage within the context of encounters with early settlers and events past and present.

**Darlene Charneco** works with nails and enamel on wood. Her work, *Evolving Mutualism*, part of her Future Nurture series, is offered as a practice of 'feeling forward' in challenging times, with each nail representing hope for humanity, healing and evolution.

A carved, painted wood sculpture by the late **William King** is titled *Pioneers* and harkens back to an aspect of the early American journey West.



**Images from top:**

**Jeremy Dennis**, *Fort Corchaug*, 2016, Archival Giclee Print, 3/10 21 x 43 inches

**Jennifer Cross**, *Present Tense*, 2020, oil on wood, 40 x 48 inches

**Sheila Batiste**, *The Family that Hangs Together Stays Together*, 1999, Wire, cloth, thread, acrylic, canvas

**Janet Culbertson**, *Memorial*, 2009, oil iridescent pigments, collage on rag paper, 29 x 41 inches

**Fall Gallery Hours:** Friday & Saturday, 11am – 5 pm; Sunday, 12 pm – 4 pm; Monday, 11am – 5 pm