



## 2020: EASTERN'S PAINTING AND DRAWING FACULTY EXHIBITION

*Dedicated to the memory of our distinguished colleague, the late Andy Jones, professor of painting*

August 4 — October 1, 2020 | Opening Reception, Thursday, September 10, 4 - 6 p.m.

# “2020:

EASTERN’S PAINTING AND DRAWING FACULTY EXHIBITION” celebrates recent creative works by our full-time and adjunct faculty, whose scholarship and teaching are grounded in their art-making practice. Although their mediums are interconnected and often supplement each other, the subject of their work varies considerably and narrates their varied multi-cultural journeys, reflections on the surrounding landscape and its destruction, and representations of a voracious consumer culture.

These artists scrutinize the properties of media to express their emotions and subjectivity. They constantly challenge themselves to portray the significance of an impression, expression and the essence of life as they feel it. Achieving the most eloquent and elegant relationship of form and content has been fundamental to untold generations of artists. Eastern’s faculty are no less engaged in reworking their compositions, adjusting scale, rhythm and balance to achieve the drama (or calm) of their predecessors of the Ab-Ex or Pop-Art eras.

Art historians and curators only need to add the biographical details, a set of circumstances under which the artwork was made. We cite the inspiration of other artists, literature, myth and popular culture that situate the work in the world at large. The artwork is then mounted on the gallery wall and the authentic masterpiece is born. The art world has moved a step further, the viewers are moved by the emotions and feelings of the artist, the world around us is seen with greater lucidity.

This exhibition affords visitors with a unique opportunity to view the latest efforts by a group of this region’s most dynamic artists and educators and represents the longstanding strengths of the Eastern Art Department’s focus on painting and drawing. This exhibition arrives in unprecedented times. The country convulsed with protests and activism in response to police brutality, while the world slowly emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic against an economy in deep recession. We are woken and look for art that offers a new window onto social justice, racial equity, civic engagement and economic rights. We are eager to embrace the artistic energies and explorations of our art faculty. This exhibition is a biennial installment and we are looking forward to sharing the work of our sculpture faculty in 2022. ■

—*Yulia Tikhonova*

*Coordinator of Gallery and Museum Services, 2020*

**ANDY JONES** (d. 2020) was born near Raleigh, N.C., and spent 20 years teaching painting and drawing at Eastern Connecticut State University. Beloved for his kindness and generosity, Jones exhibited his artworks across the United States. His art can also be found in private collections in the United States, England and France. Jones was an elected member of the Connecticut Academy of Fine Arts and the Connecticut Plein Air Society. In 1998, his pen and ink drawing of an oak tree, derived from one of his Connecticut landscape paintings, was selected as the winning design for the U.S. Mint Quarter Competition for the State of Connecticut.

Jones began making art in 1988 in response to the landscape and was especially attracted to working farms in New England. In 2007, he began to explore subjects in the southern United States when he painted landscapes at Providence Canyon in Georgia. This gave him the opportunity to respond to a colorful landscape dramatically different from his New England scenes.

**AFARIN RAHMANIFAR** is an Iranian American artist and associate professor of art and art history at Eastern Connecticut State University. She specializes in painting, mixed media, installation, printmaking, animated motion picture film and Persian miniature. Rahmanifar depicts the female body in relation to politics, culture, religion and sexuality within repressed societies. Her ongoing research from recent decades depicts women’s participation in art, poetry and warfare throughout history.

Her most recent project “Women of Shahnameh — The Memories Between,” is a mixed media installation that recalls Shahnameh, the Persian “Book of Kings,” an epic poem written in the 10th century by the poet Ferdowsi.

Rahmanifar has been a recipient of an Artist Residency Fellowship from the Skopelos Foundation for the Arts in Greece; an Artist Residency Fellowship from the School of Design & The Arts, Nantucket, MA; and an Artist Residency Fellowship from the Vermont Studio Center. Her work has been exhibited and privately collected nationally and internationally.

Nature dominates the picture plane in the series of paintings titled, “Pondering,” by artist **KAREN BARTONE**. “Fractured elements of colors and shapes are stitched together with each mark to create woven tapestries of precious paint. These blankets of quilted, knitted, and knotted color bring harmony to twisting turning nature and serenity to change, offering each viewer a compassionate embrace.”



**AFARIN RAHMANIFAR**, *Arnavaz and Shahrnaz, Women of Shahnameh*, 36 x 84", mixed media on vellum paper, 2017



**KAREN BARTONE**, *Pondering Series #5, Phenomenal Nature*, 36" round, oil on panel, 2019

Bartone earned a Master of Fine Arts degree in painting from Western Connecticut State University, a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in painting from Lyme Academy College of Fine Arts and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Northern Vermont University. She is the recipient of several formative art awards and honors, including a 2016 Professional Development Research Grant from the American Association of University Professors. Bartone teaches studio art courses at Eastern Connecticut State University and art history courses at Three Rivers Community College.



**BLAKE SHIRLEY**, *Collection of Days*, 48x48", oil on canvas, 2018

**BLAKE SHIRLEY** lives and works in Connecticut. His works had been exhibited nationally and internationally, most recently at CICA Museum of Contemporary Art in South Korea, Art Space in Hartford, CT, and Eli Center for contemporary art in New Haven, CT. He has been awarded grants from the Artist Trust Fund, The Connecticut Culture Foundation and the Working Artist Grant.

“The primary motive for my work is a meditation on the passage of time. The work bears traces of the slippage and displacement of fading minutes, hours, and days. Like a memory, or a lingering thought stuck on the tip of the tongue, images appear to be on the verge of dissipating or morphing, teetering between recognizability and being forever lost. Ghostlike forms reference ephemeral subject matter such as clouds or shadows, held in place through the act of painting. Images are revealed as fragments in the midst of change, destruction, redefinition and/or restoration.”

**JIM GABIANELLI** is a Connecticut-based artist who has been focused on motorcycles, cars, trucks and heavy equipment his entire life. He enrolled at Eastern Connecticut State University as an Environmental Earth Science major before changing to Studio Art. He purchased a motorcycle after graduating and it became the hub for his machine-based art. He earned a graduate degree in illustration at Western Connecticut State University and now teaches at Eastern in the Department of Art and Art History. In recent years, his art has been exhibited throughout New England. His works can be found in private collections all over the United States. "When I encounter my subjects, there is a child-like attraction beyond the aesthetics. I can get lost in the mechanics and craftsmanship of them for hours. I will ask myself questions like... 'How did this come to be?' 'What was the thought behind its design?' My art is a response to an appreciation for each of the pieces of machinery."



**JAMES GABIANELLI**, 1963 *Lincoln Continental*, 13 x 16", acrylic on Masonite board, 2017

**CYNTHIA GUILD** creates works that embody the poetry within our everyday existence as actors in the larger landscape. She asks "What role does the earth play in our lives today? Technology and politics continue to blur the line between reality and an image of reality. I use the physically scratched-in 'video interference patterns and blank label' to remind the viewer of the distance between reality and an image of reality. Underpainting, thick layers of white, scratching back, destroying parts of the painting, glazing with transparent layers of color, and painting 'wet into wet' all play a role in making this work."

Guild grew up in western Massachusetts and received her MFA from the University of Massachusetts–Amherst in Printmaking. Guild has exhibited widely in the



**CYNTHIA GUILD**, *Kandersteg #5*, 12 x 24", oil on panel, 2019

United States and Cuba and was recently featured in an exhibition at New Bedford Art Museum. Her teaching career includes Rhode Island School of Design, Bennington College, Mt. Holyoke College, and now Eastern Connecticut State University.

**TOM HÉBERT** earned his BFA from the University of Connecticut's School of Fine Arts and his M.S. in Art Education from Central Connecticut State University. He has exhibited in New England and New York City, as well as in group exhibitions in the United States and Germany. He received an Individual Artist Grant in Painting from the Pollock-Krasner Foundation (NYC), and three Fellowship Awards from the Connecticut Commission on the Arts. Hébert is an adjunct professor



**TOM HÉBERT**, *Orange Jack*, 57 x 44.5", acrylic on canvas, inset to masonite and wood construction with wood strip and metal ruler inlay to wood floor, 2018-19

of visual arts at Eastern Connecticut State University. "From the time I began making art, one body of work has continually led me to the next. I work in series, and the number of pieces in that series varies, from five to 30 or more. When I feel that the series is complete, or when I tire of working on it, I...make a change."

**QIMIN LIU** was born in Heilongjiang Province, China, and earned a teaching certificate from Haerbin Normal University; a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Institute of Chinese Traditional Drama; A Master of Arts from Iowa State University; and a Master of Fine Arts from Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts. He started teaching painting and drawing at Eastern Connecticut State University in fall 2000. "My artistic mind is dancing between line, shape, color and texture with a content. I often find myself reflecting upon my painting and drawing projects in the context of historical references and contemporary elements, and am especially interested in researching different techniques, skills and materials. For the past 30 years I have been on a journey to find my own visual identity. Recently I was most influenced by the philosophical aspect of Chinese traditional calligraphy with inner meditation and the manner of free spirit of American Abstract Expressionism."



**QIMIN LIU**, *Calligraphy Impression #1\_Qishi Underneath*, 50 x 73", Oil on canvas, 2020



**MARK GERARD MCKEE**, *A Matter of a Few Degrees*, 24 x 36" (variable), triptych, mixed mediums on panels, 2019

**MARK GERARD MCKEE** is a native of Pittsburgh, PA. His works focus upon perception as well as those experiences that define us as thinking, feeling entities. He has exhibited extensively on the national and international levels and his works are in national, corporate and university collections. McKee has served on the board of directors of several arts institutions, including the San Diego Art Institute and the Griffis Arts Center. He earned his Master's in Fine Art from Lesley University College of Art and Design. He teaches studio art at Eastern Connecticut State University, Rhode Island School of Design and Mitchell College. "Each painting is an evolving and expanding process, and is a means of negotiating and engaging with the world. Seeing and memory are elements of that means and fit into the structure of a greater realm of inquiry – one that explores and marvels at those capacities, perceptions, conditions and events that identify us as thinking and experiencing entities."



**REBECCA MORAN**, *Poison Wood*, 18 x 24", charcoal on paper, 2019

**REBECCA MORAN** is a professor of digital art and design and fine art at Eastern Connecticut State University and the University of Connecticut, respectively. She exhibits and sells paintings and is owner of Spring Hill Studio, LLC, a small progressive design studio located halfway between Boston and New York.

When not working with clients in graphic design, Moran explores painting and the border between abstraction and representation. "In the breakdown of form, visual recognition subsides and abstraction emerges. Abstract images furnish us with direct experience, a direct line to emotion and ties to the landscape." Moran's paintings show emotion and feeling and evoke human form. She

considers the landscape as our macro body, it is us and we are it. Painting landscapes is a metaphor for our physical, emotional and spiritual selves, "an attempt to awaken feelings of reverence and awe for the landscape and bring attention to what we may be losing."

**NEAL PARKS** is an artist, designer and teacher. He specializes in client collaborations creating site-specific work, both as an artist and design/build carpenter. Born in Michigan and raised in Woodstock, CT, Parks graduated from Woodstock Academy before receiving a BFA in Painting from Pratt Institute and an MFA in Painting from Cranbrook Academy of Art. Residing in western Massachusetts since 1999, Parks has been a visual arts teacher at the Pomfret School in Pomfret, CT, at Parsons School of Design in New York, and at Becker College in Massachusetts. He has taught as an adjunct instructor at Eastern Connecticut State University since 2011. "The thing that drives my craft is the desire to create visual experiences that capture concepts of universal connectivity and self-awareness. The art I make tells abstract stories of time. I am also interested in design and architecture — understanding how we can experience space."



**NEAL PARKS**, *Redshift 2019*, 12 x 36", oil paint stick on canvas  
**NEAL PARKS**, *Blueshift 2019*, 12 x 36", oil paint stick on canvas

Image on Cover: **ANDY JONES**, *Craggy Garden*, 12 x 16", from the series of Blue Ridge Plein Air Studies, oil on masonite, 2018



Tuesday & Wednesday 11 a.m.-5 p.m.  
 Thursday 1-7 p.m. | Saturday & Sunday 2-5 p.m.  
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