

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

**SHIFTING LANDSCAPES**

OPEN UNTIL JANUARY 25, 2026 JULY 10, 2015

OTHER ARTISTS FEATURED  
IN THE MAGAZINE

LISA MOLEY

URSULA ALTBENBACH

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# FOREWORD

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Shifting Landscapes makes a persuasive case for why the landscape is no longer a passive backdrop but one of contemporary art's most charged protagonists. Drawn from the Whitney's collection and spanning more than six decades, the exhibition resists nostalgia for the picturesque in favor of something messier, sharper, and far more urgent. Here, land is political terrain, ecological witness, and speculative stage all at once.

What distinguishes the show is its clarity of structure without rigidity of meaning. The thematic sections—ranging from materially driven sculptural assemblages to ecofeminist land art and the afterlives of documentary photography—feel less like academic categories than like overlapping conversations. Works made from locally sourced materials quietly insist on accountability to place, while documentary modes are stretched to reveal how even “neutral” visions of land are shaped by power, access, and history.

Geography becomes another curatorial tool. The frenetic density of modern New York contrasts effectively with the looser, more experimental filmmaking scene of 1970s Los Angeles, underscoring how artistic responses to landscape are inseparable from the conditions of their making. Elsewhere, artists invent fantastical worlds in which humans, animals, and terrain collapse into one another—visions that feel less escapist than diagnostic, destabilizing the idea of nature as something fixed or separate from us.

Rather than moralizing, Shifting Landscapes trusts its artists to think rigorously and visually about industrialization, borders, and ecological precarity. The cumulative effect is bracing: an exhibition that foregrounds how thoroughly we shape the land, and how insistently it shapes us in return. Thoughtfully organized by Jennie Goldstein, Marcela Guerrero, and their team, the show feels both grounded and expansive—a reminder that landscape, far from exhausted as a genre, may be one of the most capacious lenses through which to view the present.

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## ALTERED TOPOGRAPHIES

- The term “New Topographics” describes a stark style of landscape photography that debuted in the 1975 exhibition *New Topographics: Photographs of a Man-Altered Landscape* at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York. Rather than presenting idealized or transcendent depictions of nature, the artists in the show focused on the mundane and the banal, documenting the effects of industrialization and suburbanization on the American terrain. Robert Adams’s photographic series, for example, recorded the residential spread along the Rocky Mountains in Colorado in a straight-on and detached style.
- More recent images of the North American landscape by artists such as Christina Fernandez and An-My Lê carry on this aesthetic tradition but with more pointedly political undertones. Centering the impact of the human-made encroachments of colonization, war, and pollution, these works invoke the lived consequences of such intrusions on both the body and the land, serving as ethical acts of resistance through documentation.

## ABANDONMENT SERIES

In the Abandonment series, Nicole Soto Rodríguez documents herself enacting site-specific choreographic exercises in neglected sites, including the historic Temple Del Maestro building, once the headquarters of the teachers' union in San Juan, Puerto Rico, and the now-defunct Continental Motors factory in Detroit, the closure of which in the 1990s caused the loss of thousands of jobs.

Soto Rodríguez's performance, which is accompanied by the ambient sounds of birds, the city, and debris crackling underfoot, is a dialogue with the built environment and the now-broken promises of progress these spaces once carried.

## ALTERED TOPOGRAPHIES

## ALTERED TOPOGRAPHIES



NICOLE SOTO RODRÍGUEZ, ACTO #1 HOTEL NORMANDIE, 2015,  
FROM SERIE SOBRE ABANDONO. VIDEO, COLOR, SILENT, 5:48 MIN.  
WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK; GIFT OF THE  
ARTIST 2021.13. © NICOLE SOTO RODRÍGUEZ

## NEW YORK CITYSCAPES

From the unruly energy of a single city block to the grandeur of its towering skyline, New York has long inspired artists. The works gathered here, ranging in date from the early 1970s to 2020, document the many ways the city has changed—whether gradually or abruptly—in the aftermath of significant economic, political, and catastrophic events. The early 1970s saw New York in a state of economic decay and social turmoil, yet artistic experimentation flourished, driving new developments in feminist art, neo-expressionism, and street photography. By the 1980s and early 1990s New York had come to be known as a global city; nonetheless many artists living here remained decidedly local in their focus, depicting their neighbors or the theater of daily life.

In the wake of the attacks on September 11, 2001, unsettling images of the tragedy and an overwhelming sense of alienation impacted the way some artists portrayed the city. Two decades later, works made during the COVID-19 pandemic similarly bear signs of the loneliness, disruption, and uncertainty experienced by so many. Through all these profound shifts, the city has remained an important collaborator for artists seeking to understand how the built environment can embody the complexities of urban existence and offer new ways of seeing and understanding one's place in it.

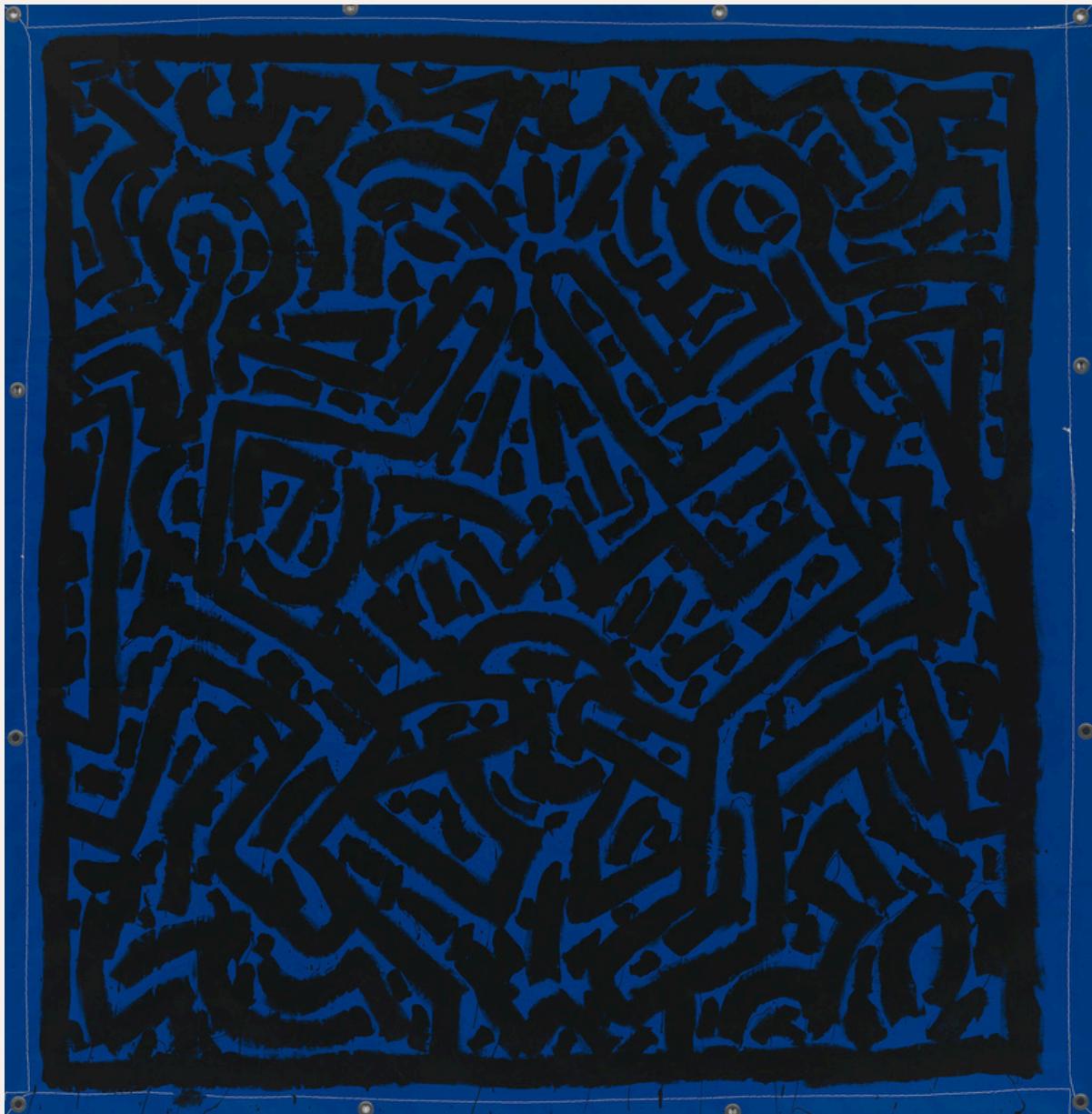
## NEW YORK CITYSCAPES



HEADING IN – LINCOLN TUNNEL 3, 2003

JANE DICKSON

## NEW YORK CITYSCAPES



UNTITLED, 1981

KEITH HARING

## EARTHWORKS

Earth art and ecofeminism—artistic and philosophical movements of the 1960s and 1970s—proposed new frameworks for how we view and experience our shared planet. While Earth art marked a conceptual turn toward engaging directly with the forms of nature and the land, ecofeminism put forward ideas about appreciating and protecting the environment within anticolonial and feminist perspectives. The works in this gallery represent the roots and legacies of these movements, exploring the interconnectivity of the natural world and humanity's place within it.

Here artists celebrate nature's vastness and ephemerality in works that stand as artistic counterpoints to human-centered thinking. Some, including Carlos Villa, Gordon Matta-Clark, and Michelle Stuart, deal directly with natural forms and use organic materials or else the landscape itself in diverse ways. Others, such as Nancy Holt, offer more embodied ways of experiencing the world, while still others, including Carolina Caycedo and Maya Lin, draw attention to regionally specific environmental concerns.

## EARTHWORKS



LOCATOR (STUDIO CORNER), 1971

NANCY HOLT

ART NEW YORK

# EARTHWORKS



RIO RIBEIRA, 2016

600 FIFTH AVE

CAROLINA CAYCEDO

ART NEW YORK MAGAZINE  
600 Fifth Ave, Floor 2, New York, NY 10020

## BORDERLANDS

● Rather than accepting the border between the US and Mexico as a fixed and immutable geopolitical line, artists working in the region propose that this part of the American landscape is an *herida abierta* or open wound—as the Chicana scholar Gloria Anzaldúa described it in her 1987 book *Borderlands/La Frontera* — where loss and regeneration coexist. Enrique Chagoya, for example, employs a satirical approach in his codices, made in the tradition of ancient Mesoamerican manuscripts, that tell the history of Western civilization from the perspective of the colonized, while Leslie Martinez draws inspiration from the rugged geography of their native south Texas by sewing rags and other recycled materials to their canvases to evoke a landscape marked by pain but also healing.

● The works gathered here consider political, cultural, and spiritual borderlands as manifestations of a landscape straddling two realities at once, revealing the creative forces that can grow from the grief of historical trauma, erasure, and omission.

## LUISEÑO PEOPLE

The Luiseño (or Payómkawichum), meaning "People of the West," are an Indigenous people of Southern California, historically living between modern Los Angeles and San Diego, known for their rich culture, Uto-Aztec language, and unique Toloache religion; they are now represented by several federally recognized tribes, including Pala, Rincon, and La Jolla, actively preserving their heritage while thriving in modern society through cultural revitalization and economic ventures like gaming.

## BORDERLANDS

## EARTHWORKS



THE HISTORY OF THE LUISEÑO PEOPLE, 1993

JAMES LUNA

# EARTHWORKS



YO SOY UN PUENTE TENDIDO / THIS IS MY HOME, 2019

TROY MICHIE

## SOUTHERN ASSEMBLAGE

Working with materials sourced from their local environments, self- and community-taught Black artists in the southeastern US have produced hybrid collage-paintings, complex sculptures, and abstractly patterned textiles that derive from their lived experiences. Martha Jane Pettway, one of a group of quiltmakers from Gee's Bend, Alabama, makes her art from functional remnants—her quilt tops are pieced together from scraps of relatives' clothes and used sugar sacks. Similarly, Joe Minter's assembled sculptures share a visual vocabulary with the African Village in America, the immersive sculptural environment that he began working on in his Birmingham, Alabama, backyard in 1989.

Purvis Young often portrayed the occupants of his historically segregated neighborhood in Miami on pieces of locally scavenged wood. Alabama artist and musician Lonnie Holley, who since the late 1970s has practiced what he calls “improvisational creativity,” makes sculptures and installations out of salvaged objects, while Bessie Harvey credits her sculptures, made from found wood and branches, to divine inspiration. Through these artists’ vision, everyday materials are transformed into something enduring, carrying the stories of their origins forward.

## SOUTHERN ASSEMBLAGE



UNTITLED, (1995)

LONNIE HOLLEY

## SOUTHERN ASSEMBLAGE



OVERTOWN, 1988

PURVIS YOUNG

## LOS ANGELES IN FILM AND VIDEO

Los Angeles has been a major center of the movie industry since the first decades of the twentieth century. Artists marginalized from mainstream cinema production or otherwise engaged in experimental practices have also found community and inspiration there. In the late 1960s, a critical gathering of African and African American students formed at the UCLA School of Theater, Film, and Television. Loosely grouped together under the moniker L.A. Rebellion, these filmmakers—including Melvonna Ballenger, whose 1978 narrative short *Rain* (*Nyesha*) is screening here—centered Black stories and experiences in their moving-image works.

Made five years later, Ulysses Jenkins's *Without Your Interpretation* (1983) documents a performance staged along the Los Angeles River that used movement to critique American obliviousness to global societal ills. In these works, Ballenger and Jenkins aim to depict complex representations of Black life in counterpoint to the film industry's ongoing, detrimental stereotypes.

# LOS ANGELES IN FILM AND VIDEO



RAIN (NYESHA), 1978

FIRELEI BÁEZ

# LOS ANGELES IN FILM AND VIDEO



WITHOUT YOUR INTERPRETATION, 1983

ULYSSES JENKINS

## ANOTHER WORLD

While the landscape genre has long been associated with picturesque vistas, *Shifting Landscapes* considers a more expansive interpretation of the category, exploring how evolving political, ecological, and social issues motivate artists as they attempt to represent the world around them. Drawn from the Whitney's collection, the exhibition features works from the 1960s to the present and is organized according to distinct thematic sections.

Some of these coalesce around material and conceptual affinities: sculptural assemblages formed from locally sourced objects, ecofeminist approaches to land art, and the legacies of documentary landscape photography. Others are tied to specific geographies, such as the frenzied cityscape of modern New York or the experimental filmmaking scene of 1970s Los Angeles. Still others show how artists invent fantastic new worlds where humans, animals, and the land become one.

Whether depicting the effects of industrialization on the environment, grappling with the impact of geopolitical borders, or proposing imagined spaces as a way of destabilizing the concept of a "natural" world, the works gathered here bring ideas of land and place into focus, foregrounding how we shape and are shaped by the spaces around us.

## ANOTHER WORLD



RAIN (NYESHA), 1978

FIRELEI BÁEZ

## ANOTHER WORLD



DON'T NEED YOU TO BE WARM, 2021

DALTON GATAL

## ALAN MICHELSON WITH STEVEN FRAGALE

● Sapponkanikan (Tobacco Field) is a site-specific augmented reality installation that places viewers in a circle of tobacco plants. Four hundred years ago, when the Dutch arrived in what is now Manhattan, there was a Lenape fishing and planting site called Sapponkanikan (tobacco field), near what is currently the foot of Gansevoort Street close to the Museum.

● Tobacco was, and remains, a sacred herb used ceremonially by Native peoples across Turtle Island, a name for North America used by many Indigenous peoples. Sapponkanikan (Tobacco Field) recalls and honors the Lenape and their tobacco field.

# ALAN MICHELSON WITH STEVEN FRAGALE



INSTALLATION VIEW OF SHIFTING LANDSCAPES (WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 1, 2024–JANUARY 2026).

ALAN MICHELSON WITH STEVEN FRAGALE, SAPPONCKANIKAN (TOBACCO FIELD), 2019, SAPPONCKANIKAN (TOBACCO FIELD), 2019.

PHOTOGRAPH BY AUDREY WANG



## OTHER ARTISTS FEATURED IN THE MAGAZINE



ART  
NEW YORK

LISA MOLEY



# LISA MOLEY

I grew up just outside Philadelphia, with my summers spent along the sun-drenched shores of New Jersey. Those early days were filled with sand, salt air, and a budding love for creativity. From a young age, I was drawn to art, travel, and the thrill of discovering small treasures - each seashell, trinket, or found object felt like a story waiting to be told. Music played in the background of my life, often setting the rhythm for my creative energy and fueling my desire to spread joy and positivity through whatever I made.

These passions laid the foundation for my artistic journey, shaping not only how I see the world but how I express myself within it. I earned my Bachelor of Fine Arts from Moore College of Art, where I specialized in Fashion Illustration, Advertising, and Fashion Photography. Immersed in a world of color, texture, and visual storytelling, I discovered the power of design to evoke emotion and inspire connection.

After graduating, I felt pulled westward by the vast beauty and open spirit of Colorado. It was there that I found my place in the wedding industry, styling non-traditional brides who, like me, sought something uniquely their own. Their boldness and individuality inspired me to launch a bridal line of gowns, jewelry, and headpieces—each one infused with natural elements like seashells, coral, and gemstones. These pieces became wearable art, crafted with intention for those who celebrate love in unconventional ways.

My passion for the visual arts continued to evolve through photography, which became both a creative outlet and a daily ritual. I captured spontaneous “slices of life”— fleeting, beautiful moments that might otherwise go unnoticed. Whether it was a shadow cast on a sidewalk or the quiet poetry of a stranger’s smile, photography taught me to slow down and appreciate the artistry in everyday life.

## CONTINUED

In recent years, I began experimenting with assemblage and ‘found object’ art - transforming forgotten items and discarded “junk” into decorative frames that tell layered, tactile stories. These frames aren’t just borders; they are worlds of their own, built from textures and fragments that draw the viewer in.

Over time, they evolved into full-fledged art pieces - narratives inspired by love, travel, memory, and the act of collecting. Each creation is both an homage to the past and a celebration of transformation.

What began as a playful reuse of materials has become a deeper artistic practice rooted in sustainability, symbolism, and beauty. Every frame speaks to the idea that even the most overlooked items can find new life and purpose—that one person’s trash can truly become another’s treasure. Through this work, I aim to capture the joy of renewal and the quiet magic of reinvention.

Today, my art continues to bridge my love for photography, assemblage, and design. Whether I’m styling a space, capturing a candid moment, or crafting a piece from forgotten materials, my goal remains the same: to celebrate individuality, honor the beauty in everyday moments, and remind others that inspiration is always within reach—even in the most unexpected places.



VIBRANT WILD SUNFLOWER  
PHOTOGRAPH  
2020

LISA MOLEY



UNDER THE SEA  
PHOTOGRAPH  
2014

LISA MOLEY

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DESERT LIFE  
PHOTOGRAPH  
2006

LISA MOLEY

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WHITE ORCHID  
PHOTOGRAPH  
2023

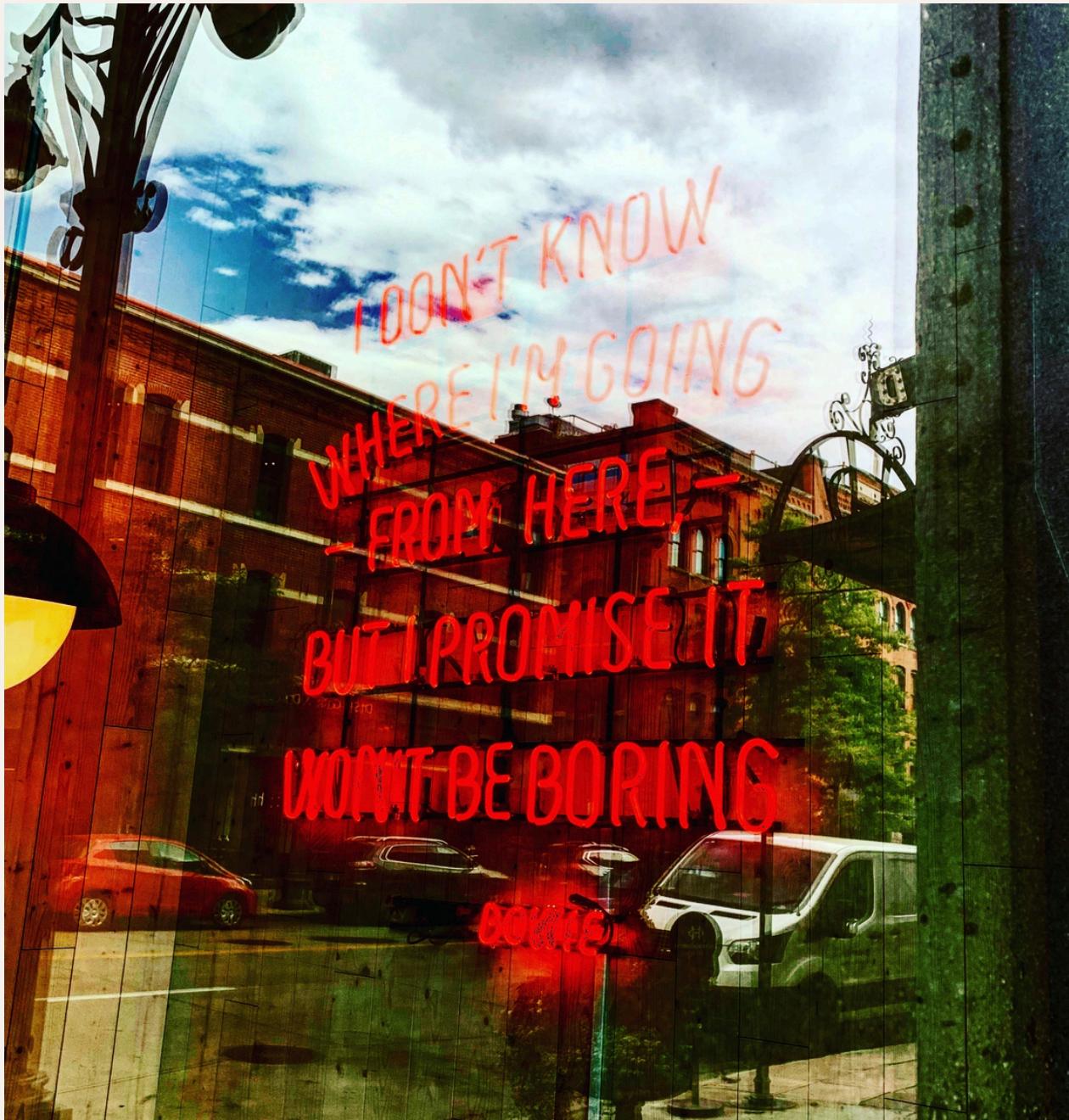
LISA MOLEY



BRANCHING OUT  
PHOTOGRAPH  
2021

LISA MOLEY

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IT WILL NEVER BE BORING  
PHOTOGRAPH  
2019

LISA MOLEY



GILDED SAWBLADE  
16"  
MIXED MEDIA ON METAL SAWBLADE.  
2020

LISA MOLEY



ROYAL ROMANCE  
MIXED MEDIA ON WOOD.  
12" X 13"  
2019

LISA MOLEY

URSULA ALTENBACH

ART NEW YORK - ROCKEFELLER  
CENTER



# URSULA ALTENBACH

Here is a short part of the history of this adventurous artist, who, armed with high sensitivity, makes this global art a connection and bridges between continents. Using the influence of Japanese culture, Ursula presents another creative facet: she produces paintings on canvas and paper in which she settles her taste for the oriental, remarkable characteristics. The works focus on presenting the artist's thinking, which, equipped with sufficient resources to achieve an aesthetic balance, takes shape and gains soul in its breath, bringing another color traits and shapes. Biko (her Japanese art name) was the curator for 7 years and participating artist of the exhibition Art in the Park of Gersau, a traditional art event that takes place every three years in summer and can be visited at any time.

Since 2018, the outdoor exhibition has been cultivated as a joint project by artists from Gersau of which Ursula is a part.

With exhibitions in Denmark, Switzerland, Brazil, India, Spain and Italy, Ursula has easily dabbled in many forms of art. Currently she produces sculptures, paintings and installations with the aesthetic principles of her Japanese education. Having as her motto connection of art between countries, e.g. her exhibition held at the gallery Art and Soul in Mumbai (formerly Bombay) India. She had the opportunity to hold this exhibition sponsored by the Foreign Ministry of Switzerland (EDA) and Hyatt Hotels. She wanted a story about her feelings in Mumbai. Thousands of gods, the colors of the clothes, the beauty of the saris, the perfume of the flower and the strong smell of the spices that contrasted with the great social difference. The smells of the monsoon are also impressive. It is unbelievable to see the cows everywhere in the streets as well as the many festivals that the masses celebrated with great joy. This is how she got inspired for the themes of her art works which the resulted into a very successful exhibition.

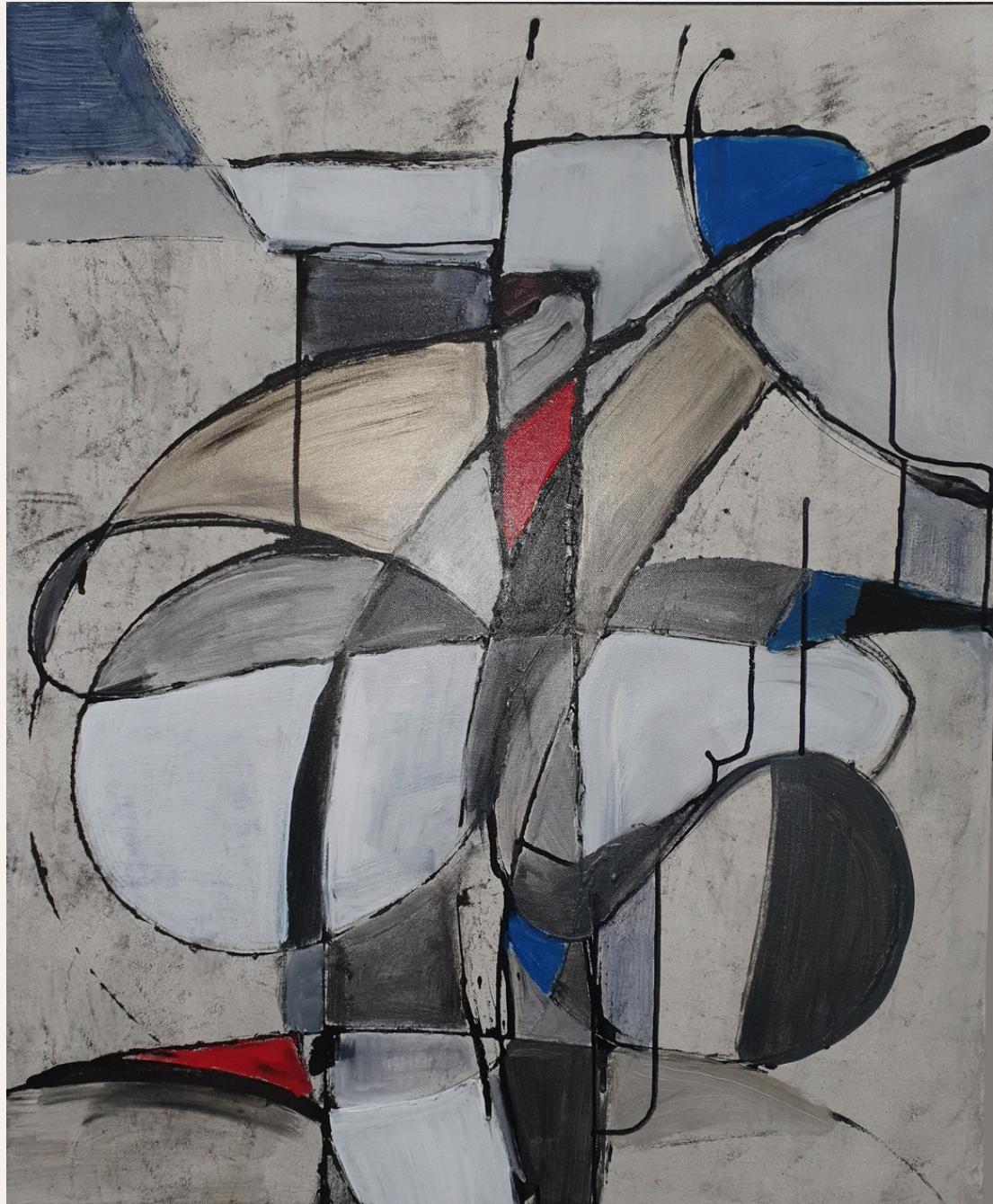
Recently she was awarded with the Pitturiamo International European Art award 2024 in Florence Italy. Each year she creates a new collection of art.

So, in all her exhibitions with her passion to understand and see the places and people through her eyes she opens a unique journey in the beholder's eyes



BLUE ELEPHANT  
80X80 CM  
MIXED MEDIUM  
2024

URSULA ALTENBACH



BORN TO BE WILD  
72X60 CM  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
2021

URSULA ALTENBACH



MYSTERIOUS ENCOUNTER

100X70 CM

ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

URSULA ALTENBACH

ART NEW YORK MAGAZINE

600 Fifth Ave, Floor 2, New York, NY 10020



BEAKS  
100X120 CM  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS  
2023

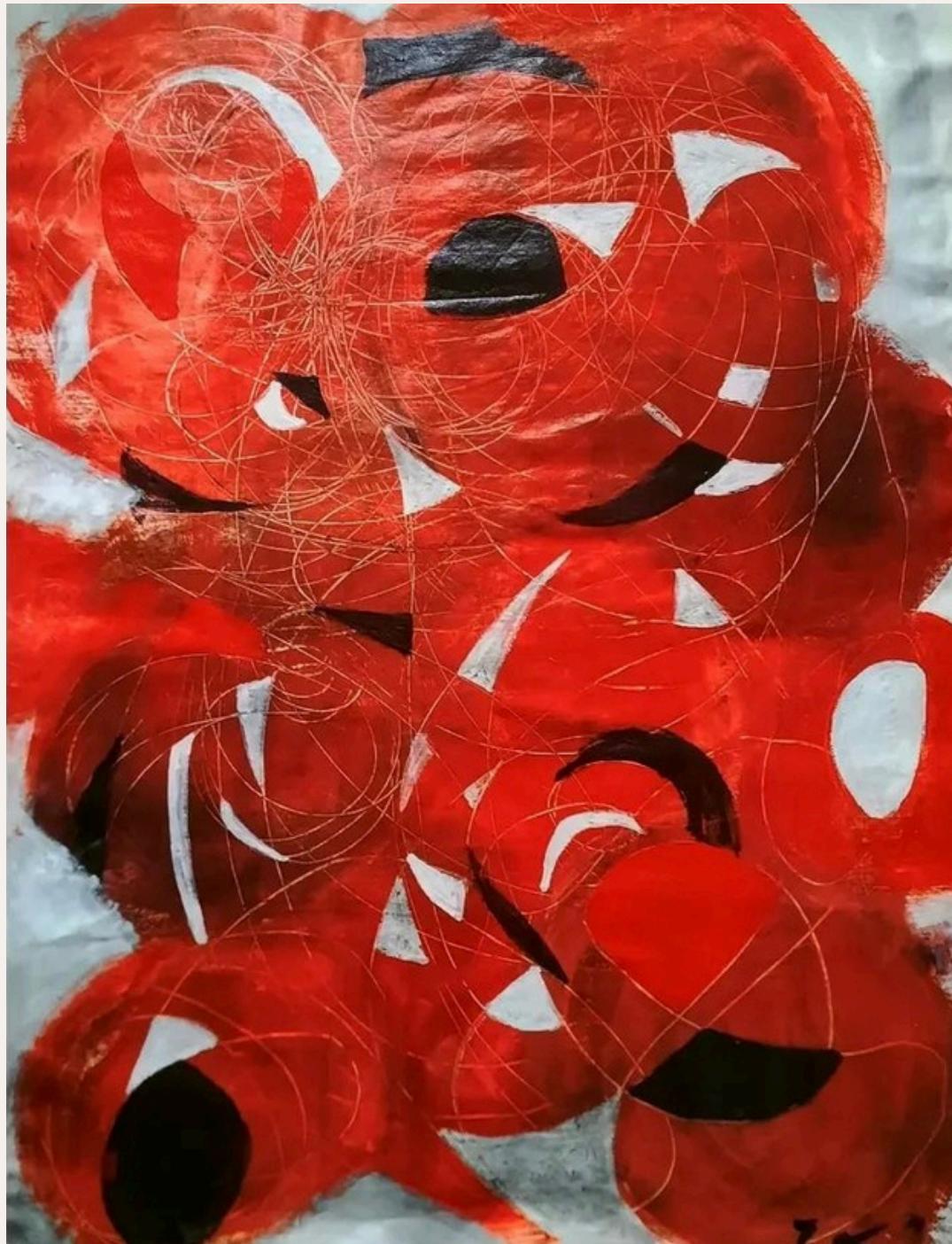


STECKENPFED  
120X100 CM  
ACRYLIC ON CANVAS

2023

WINNER OF INTERNATIONAL EUROPEAN ART AWARD

URSULA ALTENBACH



GANPATI  
160X110 CM  
MIXED MEDIA  
2024

URSULA ALTENBACH



FEELINGS  
30X25 CM  
MIXED MEDIA  
2024

URSULA ALTENBACH



THE BEAUTY WITHIN  
60X50 CM  
MIXED MEDIA  
2024

URSULA ALTENBACH

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART

SHIFTING LANDSCAPES



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