

art&culture



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WHEN PROCESS
MEETS INSPIRATION

BONNIE LAUTENBERG:
BEHIND THE LENS

BEYOND THE
SCRIPT WITH
PLAYWRIGHTS

ARTWORK BY JENNIFER KAPLAN

IN THE MOOD

The Armory Art Center's 2021-2022 artists in residence illuminate the process of inspiration via mood boards and more

By MARY MURRAY | PHOTOGRAPHY BY IAN JACOB



Earthly Delights

Ceramist Jennifer Kaplan is drawn to exploring the interconnectivity between humans and other living organisms. Whether she's creating functional pottery or a more sculptural item, she often seeks out different angles from which to study this relationship, "either working from the more fauna perspective or the human

perspective, just to equalize us," she says. "Sometimes even to bring humans down a little bit, to check the human ego."

For this wheel-thrown porcelain platter, Kaplan used a combination of sgraffito and Mishima inlay to create a fluid scene of human forms, small lizards, and vegetation. Her mood board reflects this

interplay, complete with insect reference points, paintings of nature, and figures that recall Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*. It also includes clippings from her garden that harken to the urban gardening class she's taught at the Armory during her residency and how she seeks to rethink consumption through that practice.

The piece itself, Kaplan points out, is also a celebration of life. "In the last year and a half, I've been making a lot of work about death," she says. "Right now, I'm trying to embrace the life side of it. ... In that lesson of death that we're all collectively grieving, I think we can learn a little more about how to manifest a vibrating life."



Something Old, Something New

Kim Rae Taylor discovers inspiration in even the most modest of settings. Working primarily in painting, drawing, and 2D media, Taylor likes to incorporate discarded objects into her work, aiming to build a mélange of textures and patterns. “It’s found scraps, like thrown-away stuff, the more discarded the better,” she

says. “If I’m walking and I find litter, sometimes it comes with me. I have bags of this stuff.”

During the pandemic, Taylor drew abandoned furniture, mostly chairs and couches, she explains. This venture speaks to her interest in how natural elements can transform what we consider trash, which is a

prominent theme throughout her art. “I was just really fascinated by how nature can reclaim these things that we use and that we think of as something important in our lives. A focal point in our home, and then there it is, and it just starts to disintegrate and turn into something else.”

Born out of one of those

drawings, this mixed-media piece features layers of acrylic, found object scraps, watercolor flora renderings, and oil. Her mood board also captures this marriage of materials—a menagerie of fabrics, color swatches, natural ephemera, and small discoveries Taylor couldn’t help but pick up and hold on to.





Making a Milieu

For Jamie Ricardo Rodriguez, this mood board, painting, and sculpture represent different tiers of inspiration leading to the immersive installation he will exhibit at the Armory Art Center in February. The landscape painting and others like it will help him develop a mood environment, one that is reminiscent of South Florida. "I'm usually influenced by the architecture,

history, and nature of the area that I'm working around," says Rodriguez, who is also calling upon touchstones from previous residencies in Spain and Portugal.

As a whole, his installation will be centered around the god Pan and words associated with him, such as pandemic and panic. Rodriguez explains that he frequently works from a social-political standpoint,

drawing inspiration from current and historical events, then bringing a touch of humor to them. Right now, he's very interested in propaganda and propaganda posters, especially those from World War II, and this is where his mood board comes into play.

"I've been interested in incorporating that element on top of the installation," he says of the

propaganda concept. "It's like this layering, and this is more of a propaganda mood board referencing trying to get people's conscience aware and get people thinking and set the tone. Not creating a literal 'mood board,' but using the idea of propaganda to then get people's minds going, to get my mind going to create a mood itself."



- БОГА НЕТ!



ABOUT THE RESIDENCY PROGRAM

Started in 2000, the Armory Art Center's artist in residency program is geared toward emerging artists of varied disciplines who have at least a bachelor's degree in fine arts. For nine months, the artists work in a studio space at the Armory's West Palm Beach headquarters, while also teaching classes and workshops in their areas of expertise. From February 5-25, these four featured artists will showcase what they've created during their residencies as part of a group exhibition at the Armory. An opening reception will take place February 4. armoryart.org, 561.832.1776

Walking into Spiderwebs

Having grown up in a tight-knit Italian family in Pennsylvania, Maria Camera-Smith says this piece captures how she's felt being away from her support system and acclimating to a new space. "As exciting as it is, there are always those anxieties that come with it," says Camera-Smith, who specializes in jewelry and metalsmithing. "The

way I designed this was informed by those feelings and pushing through them."

Camera-Smith has long found solace in the outdoors, and she turned to Florida's fauna for inspiration. Entitled *Expect Rain*, this copper, silver, and enamel pin depicts a golden-orb weaver, which the artist saw regularly when on hikes. "When-

ever spiderwebs become like a tent shape, that's kind of an indicator to expect rain," she says.

Her practice often involves going out into nature, contemplating where she is in life, and looking for points of repetition, such as the golden-orb weavers. "I start to look into those as a way to bring myself to a peaceful, calm mind so that I can go into the

studio and start creating."

Her mood board, she notes, was born out of the "studio chaos that went into making this." It features relics from her hikes, practice drawings, color tests, and tools of the trade, including the heavier ones for chasing and repousse juxtaposed with the daintier tools required for enamel work. ✽

