



The Making of Things

FERNANDES • FRAGIONE • SALIMBENE

March 15 - May 12, 2017

Reception and Artist Talk:
Thursday April 20 4:30 - 5:30pm

Curator's Statement

“Look at everything as though you are seeing it for the first time, with eyes of a child, fresh with wonder.” Joseph Cornell

These words, from a letter in *Unfolding*, echo the working practices of artists Maria-Theresa Fernandes, Cianne Fragione and Nicole Salimbene. Using poetic combinations of ordinary and unexpected materials they make resonant objects that invite us to look closely, and to sense the extraordinary within the familiar.

All three artists incorporate words—poetry, letters, graffiti-like marks—into their work. *The Silhouette* series by Fernandes explores the history of Baltimore, where she lives and has a studio. Combining stitching, collage and digital photography, she crafts book covers into richly tactile layers of imagery and text. *Ann Maria Weems* is a collaboration with a local poet recalling the 1885 escape of a slave via the Rockville Underground Railroad and the 2015 riots in Baltimore.

A sense of place and memory are also present in the mixed media work of Fragione. Referencing Southern Italy, cultural identity and “the deep, unspoken textures of daily life that expose themselves only gradually”, her large-scale assemblages and small reliquary purses hint at tantalizing secrets. *Di Colonia Marescialla* is made of oil paint, artist drawings, text, gold leaf, textiles, Conté crayon, a perfume bottle, crystals, metal, and copper nails attached to a wood panel. The contents from a dainty handbag (and a life?) are layered with expressive marks and the artist's handwriting, like accretions on an ancient wall.

Salimbene's installation *Unfolding* invites viewers to sit in the artist-built environment and open an envelope with a poem, text or image inside. Semi-transparent envelopes line the opposite wall, containing handwritten letters, thread, seeds and maps; visual metaphors for the interior and exterior materials of our lives. Pictures of water are projected onto the facing wall, hinting at the metaphorical flowing of ideas and our changing relationship with the environment. In this contemplative space we are asked to reflect on the wisdom currently unfolding within our lives.

---Kiki McGrath, Curator, Dadian Gallery

Artists' Statements

Maria-Theresa Fernandes

I was born in Kenya and lived there for 21 years. I obtained my B.A. (Hons) degree at the Metropolitan University of Manchester, England, in Textiles with embroidery as the major discipline. In the early 70's I lived in Belfast, Northern Ireland, when the Irish Republican Army ran rampant. The stay was brief, but posed for new work addressing the turmoil in Ulster. In 1981 I moved to the USA and worked as an artist-in-residence in several states including Utah, Idaho, Nevada (including the Indian Reservations), Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina and Kentucky. I have also served in international residencies in the United Kingdom, Nigeria, Spain and France. As a recipient of the Charles and Fleur Bresler Award this year, I am, at present, an artist-in-residence at VisArts in Rockville, Maryland.

My work is mixed media with a strong emphasis on stitching using images, digitally photographed and manipulated. The subject of "Place" is an important element of the work. The works presented relate to the uprising last year in Baltimore City and the disparity between the rich and poor neighborhoods. Recent work includes one of a kind prints that are manipulated with stitch and collage. These prints evolved from the initial works that resulted from the death of Freddie Gray in 2015 in Baltimore City. Included is also a collaborative work with poet Stephen Pohl that is recent (2017) and relates to Ann Maria Weems who escaped from Rockville on the Underground Railroad in 1855. The book cover includes handmade paper, collage and text.

Ann Maria Weems, (collaboration with Stephen Pohl) mixed media, 2017

Silhouettes 2, mixed media, (collaboration with Stephen Pohl and

Nanette Bevan), 2017

Silhouettes Print, print, 2016

Silhouettes in Net, mixed media, 2016

Abandoned Buildings, Baltimore, mixed media print, 2016

Winter, Marnay-sur-Seine, France, mixed media (stitch), 2006

The Road to Courtavant, France, stitch, 2006

Cianne Fragione

Fragione's art has appeared in solo, group, and traveling exhibitions in the San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, Baltimore, Washington, DC, and Louisville, among others. Internationally she has shown in Italy, as well as in Sofia, Bulgaria (2012-15) and Vilnius, Lithuania, with the State Department's Art in Embassies program. She was nominated for the Anonymous was a Women Award in 2016 for her artistic achievement. Awarded: The Legacy Project (Art Cart: Saving the Legacy for 2015-16, Research Center for Arts & Culture, NYC, and sponsored by Joan Mitchell Foundation, NYC; documentation of life's work available for research at Columbia University NY); Artist-in-Residence, Lo Studio dei Nipoti, Monasterace, Italy. Fragione is represented by Gallery Neptune and Brown, Washington DC.

My art is process-oriented, and I am always seeking unexpected, poetic ways of combining found and fine art materials — a practice that comes in part from years of living in the San Francisco Bay Area, where I encountered a number of the Beat-era and funk artists associated with the region and was deeply touched by their work. In combinations of oil paint, drawing materials, collage, and a wide, unpredictable range of found assemblage objects, I strive to uncover the intimate, revelatory interactions that can occur between our individual and cultural identities, and between our specific natural and human-made landscapes. In the studio, I tend to work in series. These may be continuous or intermittent, and when several series encounter one another chronologically, they often overlap, and in doing so, can yield fresh, surprising, or unanticipated connections that exist between the themes and materials.

Covento della Clarise, Immacolata series, oil and mixed media on paper, 2015

Di Colonia Marscialla, Pocket full of Promises series, oil metal and assemblage on wood, 2016

Duomo di Siracusa: della Nativa di Maria Santissima (quadriptych), Immacolata series, oil and mixed medium on paper, 2016

Profumo Santa Maria (white purse), *Pocket full of Promises series*, oil and assemblage in repurposed vintage purse, 2017

Hair Catcher (curls), *Pocket full of Promises series*, hair metal and medals in repurposed Lucite purse, 2015

Carol's Pocketbook, Pocket full or Promises series, assemblage, mixed media, pen and ink drawings and repurposed vintage purse, 2015

Reliquary Siracusa Sicilia (sealed home), *Pocket full of Promises series*, oil assemblage, pasta, textile on repurposed vintage purse with resin handles, 2015

Nicole Salimbene

Nicole Salimbene is a Washington, D.C. based interdisciplinary artist working at the intersection of poetics, psychology, environmentalism and contemplative practice. Her work has been exhibited in juried shows and galleries nationally and internationally, as well as reproduced for publications and purchased for private collections.

Unfolding is an interactive installation contemplating the unfolding wisdom found in internal and external materials. Viewers are invited to step into the artist-built environment for an intimate look, and to sit at the ironing-board-transformed-desk, opening the envelopes placed there. Inside the envelopes, poems/quotes/images are intended to further examine the connections between the ordinary and sublime objects and gestures presented within the installation, as well as, for the viewers to embody the metaphor of folding and unfolding. The relational poetics examined within this piece hopes to inspire reflection and dialogue on the wisdom currently being revealed within each person.

Water, earth, roots, pitcher, glasses, cement, medicine cabinet, ironing boards, desk chair, lunch box, glassine envelopes, maps, silk thread, mustard seeds, lima bean seeds, dictionary pages, projected images, acrylic paint, spray paint, paper, bone folder, 2017.



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