The color red carries a vast range of associations. It signifies heat, passion, rage, and love. Red is the color of blood and of the mineral pigments used in the earliest known works of art.

In Judeo-Christian cultures, red correlates to sin and atonement of sin (blood, promiscuity, the sacramental wine of the Eucharist, etc.), while in Asian cultures it represents good luck, happiness, and celebration. In China and India, traditional bridal gowns are red. In contrast, in the West, a woman in red is associated with prostitution and sexual immorality. These incongruities inherent in red’s meanings are balanced by a common thread: intensity. Red may carry contradictions, but it is never ambivalent.

In the capitalist marketplace, red denotes loss (the deficit of financial assets, e.g., “being in the red”). For communities of color and immigrant communities: those historically and currently structurally disadvantaged, the red of debt blunts directly into the red of outrage and frustration. Red from this perspective indicates lack and financial hardship’s accompanying calamities. But red’s other associations such as love and passion speak to new possibilities, abundance, and generation.

To be an artist with a degree, especially with an MFA, is to live in another state of red student debt. This debt, while not unique to those with art degrees, MFA, is to live in another state of red: student debt. As such, red’s current role in the visualization of states of anger related to those politics, offers a range of social, psychological, aesthetic, and political topics, with the color red as the point of departure.

To exist in the United States in 2018, regardless of one’s political orientation, is to take part in a marathon of outrage. Red is everywhere. For those of us living in the Southeastern United States, it demarcates our region on the partisan map. We live in literal red states. Red emotions dominate our news feeds and cycles, whether coming from within our reactions to current events or digested from without via the disposition of contemporary political rhetoric.

And yet, red is just one color in our palettes. Divorced from its most immediate associations of the moment, it continues to offer complexity, obviance, and duplicity to artists. Seeing red, then, demands an engaged form of looking to discern the valences and specifications of its context. Artists who deploy the color red in their work must therefore acknowledge its multiplicity. Impassioned, never wishy-washy, red may be the best color through which to evade conflicting positions and allow them to blend. Perhaps this is red’s true potential of the moment — to capture the coexistence of opposing perspectives without the loss of fervor.

Sarah Higgins resides in Atlanta, Georgia. She is an editor of Art Papers and curator of the Zellmer Museum of Art (ZMA) at Renaissance State University. For the ZMA, she curates and produces catalogs for exhibitions such as Gut Feelings, Tomashi Johnson, A Critical History of the Present, and a two-person show with Johnson. She has curated over 50 exhibitions featuring a range of emerging, established, and international artists and serves on the board of the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia. She earned her MFA from the University of Memphis.
Regional Update: Memphis

showcased local and regional collections drawn from various pursuits of hobbyists and citizen-artists. The Frist Museum of Art has had the opening of the current painting show, Chaos and Awe, with heavy duties of color, dense material, and unsettlingly dystopian yet sublime themes on the scene. I stumbled upon a catalogue for the exhibit, written by the Frist’s Chief Curator Mark Schlesinger, who published in the new release of artist work placed in the Art Institute of Chicago, and thought, “Wow, we’re made for this.” We’re so ahead and behind in the worlds, and art, syndy-specifically.

The vision of Casabianca is so vividly in a concurrent exhibition at the first entitled exhibition. Her vision of creativity is everywhere by Mimi Amighi, an avant-garde artist based in the United States, the work is both haunting and provoking, invoking, as it abounds a sense of place imprinted by heroes of an underdeveloped place and place. A piece is created through intricately, graceful, architectural and ethereal installations of metal frames and screens, as well as lighting effects, all in a specific spectrum of blacks and grays and white forming tomb-like, shrine-like, cloud-like structures. These installations are paired with drawings of deadness and existence that are, to read, need and carry. The world that Amighi echoes and builds provides a sense of power and an aura with which to reckon in this age of necessity for the respect and center staging of women warriors, as markedly feminine. The world that Amighi and her artwork shows builds a sense of power and a force. For women to take a trip to Nashville.

I Figured It’d Be You

Regional Update: Nashville

One of the rare spaces to date the health of an art scene is to survey the variety of artists and makers that converge and perform a show taking place from August 17 to September 10 with the remaining four shows following throughout the fall and into the spring of 2015. As the performance space isn’t currently under construction, the exhibitions will take place there, at 1155 East Main Street in Downtown.

The first in a series of five exhibitions, LAND AND SEA examine that which is seemingly familiar. Through sculptures, video, painting, and sound, LAND AND SEA questions human interaction and interference with fundamental natural resources—water, air, and soil—specifically in the context of Chattanooga. Each exhibition allows the curator to extend to the given limits of the gallery. The series is a collaboration between Stone Walls and Atlantic Contemporary and shows from August through September. Each of the five shows愚蠢 throughout the fall and into the spring of 2015. As the performance space isn’t currently under construction, the exhibitions will take place nearby at 1155 East Main Street in Downtown.

Turnip Green Creative Reuse

The final exhibition in a series of five exhibitions, LAND AND SEA, on the very idea of alternate spaces, art-artist-galleries, and the range of some of the anchor institutions are positioned partners in Nashville with each new space taking on the shared themes of learning and discovering and learning from each other by creating more connected communities of artists.

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![artwork](image1.jpg)

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Yesterday, my friend Elizabeth texted me from a party in Athens, Georgia, where she is attending law school. “I don’t just want to defend Lolita at a party. She walked away saying she wouldn’t read it because pedophilia use it to justify it and I was like NO!!!” She then added: “Oh and she didn’t understand. I talked about myself and myself and several other young women, read Lolita last fall together in an attempt to escape the barrage of bad weather that was threatening to overtake us all. Nazis had marched on Charlottesville and killed Heather Heyer, a member of our generational cohort. Our friend and peer Liliana Bakhtiari lost her nail-biting attempt to become the first queer Muslim woman on Atlanta’s City Council. Roy Moore was leading the race for senator in Alabama. The Reds, America had decided, weren’t coming. At the time when America viewed those with his biography of Communism, of Nazism, and became sensual, seductive outside of what she truly was, for we found it embarrassing — reading the same pages, when forced to look at the America we lived in now, encapsulated, America found America gave her power and dipping her in red lipstick and red sunglasses, the infernal red tip. America gave her power, more agency, and her victim find in roadside attractions, bad diner and leered at are holding him to account. Girls from Abeline, Kansas, home of the Wild Bill Something Roof, draped in his gory Confederate flags, said “You’re stealing our women” — but now they are fighting back. The 19-year-old girls, Roy Moore hunts and wins at him holding to account. Girls from Hollywood are shouting #MeToo from past, present, and future. What separates Lolita from Laila, a middle-class, Middle Eastern girl reading Lolita in Afghanistan? America projects fear, lasted for a short while, but as we approached the 1980s, girls popped up on every cover. She grew older, more even more airen, with less and less clothing, and seemed to reach peak baldness when Vinton Filters proclaimed for the book’s 50th anniversary that it was the “only convincing love story of our time.”

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Tray music, at its most alluring, entertaining, and successful, normalizes the essence and acceptability of illegal activities to the extent that we can celebrate the triumph of the individual over dire circumstances in totality, even as we overlook specific activities we may take issue with in real life. In its simplest manifestation via rap music, to trap, to be locked in a trap or commit to trapping others is to grapple with an assault on one's semblance of humanity. On some level, the trap is both a metaphorical and physical intersection of people, place, energy, ideas, products and policies. It is a confluence of decades of systemic fiscal, education, housing, land-use, transportation, and criminal justice policies largely resulting in low-income communities where illicit drug economies with access to southern transportation and distribution hubs are fostered. As pragmatic as that sounds, when the trap is considered as a setting for humanity and all of the usual things often associated with it – ambition, love, pride, empathy, conflict, kinship and more – the art that emanates from that foundation will usually find a way to celebrate, glorify, and cope with the struggle of navigating — or being limited by — such challenging circumstances.

By the time the rapper we know as Future came to early prominence as a recording artist, trap music was not a new phenomenon. Something in his music has seemed to compel a deeper examination of the lines Future was willing to cross, his motivations for doing so, and how he came to be that way. If Monster was a chapter in Future’s story that told the “what,” Beast Mode better explained the “how” and “why.” The cover art was explicitly defined: a bloody hand clutching a heart and a microphone with a gold chain wrapped around it, set against a red background. Jump ahead to 2018 and Future’s is in a refined air with a string of successful songs, albums, tours and highly publicized relationship dramas that have cemented his status as a pop star. The topical nature of his music has remained largely the same, albeit with more evolved sonic landscapes and higher profile collaborations.

When Future released Beast Mode 2 without announcement on July 6, it was an unexpected move that caused excitement, albeit with a slight sense of apprehension — it’s hard to create a great sequel. However, rap music has a strong legacy of artists creating episodic releases that expand on a particular theme or topic, and since Future has more hits than misses there was general optimism. Listeners were rewarded, not necessarily with a return to Future’s old style, but with more or less an update to the original Beast Mode manifests with more money, better jewels, and an expanded mental space for contemplation. The cover art for Beast Mode 2 was equally telling: an image of two rellin’s, viewed from above against a white background. The symbolism is clear — Future has fully embraced his elevated status as an apex predator, atop both the musical food chain and the hierarchy of the streets. Feel free to observe, just do not get too close. "W FIT LIT" opens Beast Mode 2 and finds Future musing on his current state of affairs, his dalliances with women to the expensive and exclusive nature of his clothes and shoes to his melodic claims of past over dire circumstances. "I’m not going back no more/ I won’t/ I ain’t have shit/ Pray I get a new connect/ I pray I get a brick…” While it is not the most substantive song on the project, it is a good synopsis of where Future is headed, where he is rooted and his general outlook on life, complete with infectious ad libs ("Auntie, Auntie") and the confidence that comes with being a standard bearer of perhaps the most influential subgenre of rap music in the last several years.

The symmetry between Beast Mode and Beast Mode 2 is what makes the respective projects, especially the latter, feel the most successful. Zaytoven reprises his role as sole music producer, their past street exploits. In a classy move, Future got to trade the braggadocio claims that accompany the “what,” future lists recently-passed engineer Seth Firkins, who was listed as a producer on the project as well. "WIFI LIT" opens Beast Mode 2 and finds Future musing on his current state of affairs, his dalliances with women to the expensive and exclusive nature of his clothes and shoes to his melodic claims of past over dire circumstances. "I’m not going back no more/ I won’t/ I ain’t have shit/ Pray I get a new connect/ I pray I get a brick…” While it is not the most substantive song on the project, it is a good synopsis of where Future is headed, where he is rooted and his general outlook on life, complete with infectious ad libs ("Auntie, Auntie") and the confidence that comes with being a standard bearer of perhaps the most influential subgenre of rap music in the last several years.

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Seeing Experiencing Red

Mark Rothko’s Untitled (1960) invites us to experience Red in-and-of itself, while Joseph Beuys’ Das Kapital exemplifies Rothko’s worst fear, that “black will eat the red.” Red describes Rupi Kaur’s and Harley Weir’s Instagram accounts for violating community standards while simultaneously dominating the 2016 presidential election. People see Red when they are angry, and yet are uncomfortable and disgusted by Red when confronted by it in their social media news feeds. How is it that a color historically tied to the outcasts of society becomes the symbol of what will “Make America Great Again,” especially while the outcasts continue to be rejected?

It begins the question, is today’s political power struggle over Red?

Psychology tells us Red is the color of sex, religion and disgust. So it symbolizes the power of laborers. From here we can trace Red through communism and socialism. So strong was the response to this color that in the early 1900s the flying of a Red flag was outlawed in several states due to the Red Scare. In the civil rights movement, Red was associated with a raised fist or a Black Panther; the aesthetic ground chosen because of its association with revolutionaryaries, agitators, and anarchists.

But Red has another history that pulses through politics. In looking at Western culture alone, we can begin with the ancient Greek goddess Artemis, the protector of young girls ushered into womanhood. Zeus bestowed upon her eternal youth, meaning she would never menstruate. Coincidentally, the suicide rate was high for young females during the time period between first menstruation and the ritual of marriage supposedly due to “wandering wombs.” The color Red was a term of derision. In other words, there was a rejection of young women’s bodies through high standards dictated at the time, specifically as they pertained to the expulsion of blood and the body’s preparation for child bearing. In the Bible, Leviticus and Ezekiel used the words “unclean” and “impure” to describe menstruation. In the Bible, Leviticus and Ezekiel used the words “unclean” and “impure” to describe menstruation. And yet all three categories are intrinsically linked. During the Middle Ages, a Red flag raised on a ship signaled a willingness to fight to the death. It was during the 1935 Methymer Raising in South Wales that a Red flag was first raised to symbolize the power of laborers. From here we can trace Red through communism and socialism.

To experience Red is to experience oppression, censorship, and violence and to be spat upon for not conforming or for wanting something more. When map color coding for presidential elections first appeared in 1976, Red was the color of Jimmy Carter and the Democratic Party, a party more closely associated with socialist ideals than the Republican Party. However, as Mitchell Stephens, author of A History of News, points out, “Red was a term of derision.” When displaying color-coded maps, news stations assigned Red to the party they did not support. Nobody wanted to be affiliated with the color abused by Stalin, Mao, and Hitler. It was not until the 2000 election between George W. Bush and Al Gore that the color-coding system was cemented, partly due to the length and drama of waiting for an outcome. The reason The New York Times chose Red for Republicans, as senior graphics editor Annie Tse explains, is because: “I just decided red begins with ‘R’.” Republican begins with ‘R’. It was a more natural association.”

To ignore the political connotations of color in favor of alliteration is one thing, but Slavoj Žižek points to the implications of aesthetic illusions designed to strengthen the State apparatus. Red, as the object of objection, becomes the object of ideology when propagated and the “parasitic symptom” of capitalist society operating under the illusion of freedom. Of the illusions, Žižek says, “they know their idea of Freedom is masking a particular form of exploitation, but they still continue to follow this idea of Freedom.”

The illusion of freedom represented by the relatively new Republican symbol is exemplified in Beuys’ Das Kapital, currently on display at Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin. Situated in close proximity to Andy Warhol’s Mao, both pieces address Red. Where Beuys illustrates the consumption of this fragile life force with a dark blanket that masquerades as freedom, technology and progress, Warhol illustrates the highest form of Red’s exploitation under the guise of a cultural revolution. The presence of the cast aside is heavily felt as a result of its absence, with Mao cloaked in greens, the color opposite of Red. Side by side the exhibits demonstrate black consuming Red, and the illusion of red masquerading as Red. Both pieces call us to accept Rothko’s invitation to experience Red, a color related to hot emotions and fiery resolve. A color that is both hardy and vulnerable, intoxicating and repulsive. A color that represents the drosses of society.

Yellow and orange have also been tested by the media in color-coded maps, but for whatever reason the colors Red and blue, hot and cold, are the colors that have been upheld. Can we say with confidence that Red is unequivocally the most befitting color for the Republican Party? Should it instead be assigned to the Democratic Party? Or a third party? Does it even matter? Without seeing Red we would not have the Black Lives Matter and Me Too Movements. We would not have the fight for reproductive rights and gun safety at the forefront of our minds. Maybe Red is still the color that inspires the fight against abjection.


Lisa Williamson is a foundations professor at University of Memphis and PhD candidate at IDSVA.
Interview: Kate Gilmore

For the past few decades, Kate Gilmore has explored traditional social constructs of the feminine and the liberation of those constructs in performance and video-based works. Gilmore currently lives and works in New York City. She is associate professor of Art-Design at SUNY Purchase. She has exhibited at the 2010 Whitney Biennial, the Brooklyn Museum, The Indianapolis Museum of Art, White Columns, Contemporary Art Center, Cincinnati, Artplace, The J. Paul Getty Museum, The Rose Art Museum, and MAMA P.S. Her exhibition In Your Way will open at the Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2019. I sat down to talk about anger, the color red, and our current political climate.

So, when did you first realize you were an artist? Oh, it is an evolving process! I first dedicated myself to art fully in college.

And who do you count among your artistic influences? There are so many! I am definitely a hard-core feminist. When I was in college, I was a member of a group called the red flag. For me, red is a color that I have really embraced as a symbol of my feminism.

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Oh, it is an evolving process! I first dedicated myself to art fully in college.

Let’s talk about your process, which has remained remarkably consistent since about 2004, and your practice, which integrates performance, sculpture, and photography. How do you develop your ideas for works? My work has several different elements. I make single-channel videos (starting in grad school from 2000 to 2003), create large-scale installations and performances for the public sphere, and make sculpture in varying mediums in my studio. The single-channel videos usually start with a sculpture that is transformed through an intense physical process. All of this is documented with video. The videos play either by themselves or with the sculpture (depending on if the video was shot on site or if it is playing at different moments). The large-scale installations and performances are more collaborative as I have to work with builders, institutions, public spaces, etc. These projects take a lot of organisational planning and teamwork to carry out. The sculptures that are made in my studio are often tests of materials, reconfigurations of pieces that have come back to me after exhibitions, and regular messing around! In your performances, there is often a solo performer, which is frequently you. Is it important that the viewer knows that you are the protagonist? It is definitely not important that the performer is me. In the larger performances that involve many performers, I am completely removed.

In the catalog for your exhibition In Your Way that will travel to the Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2019, Curator Amy Smith-Stewart writes that your “videos, performances, and sculptures forge relational encounters that rearrange our understanding of structures of power.” Let’s talk about structures of power. You have a lot of thoughts on the gendered stereotype in artmaking, and your works often challenge these heroic myths. What heroic myths are you challenging?

Heroic myths, especially in the art world, usually focus on the virility of a male character; the intense genius of his process, the wildness of his approach — blah-blah-blah. While we have many great male artists, this way of constructing history is simply a form of creating celebrity of male artists and dismissing others. We do not have these “myths” of great female artists because I am against the way we are supposed to define “greatness.” I question the female.

Costume is also an essential component of your work, especially in your earlier works, many of which are on view in In Your Way. Can you talk about the visualization of a gender stereotype as a subversive tactic? This is mostly with the earlier work — now the characters are in more functional or aggressive fast attire instead of heels! In the past it was important for me to be clear that this is a woman that is somehow a part of functioning society — we know who she is and her role. Now I am rejecting that stereotype altogether, and the footwork is much more prepared for labor work boots, sneakers, the occasional flat.

Related to labor, your works are often incredibly messy and color plays an important role in creating that mess. Can you talk about the recurrence of certain colors in your work and whether you see your palettes as feminine? Using color and humor is the way I bring people into the work — they make people want to look and spend time. Once you have them, you can turn the tables a bit. Vibrant color can also be viewed as intellectual, girly, gay, etc. What happens when you use this material to do what people do not expect of it? To narrow that down a bit, we are here to talk about the color red. I have this red hat, it’s a ballet slip from The Christi Foundation in Marfa, Texas. My husband recently commented to me that every time he sees me in this hat, he has a brief flash of panic that I am wearing a MAGA hat. I detail this only to comment on my fascination with our country’s current relationship to color as it pertains to the visualization of partisan politics and the deeper divide our country is witnessing between the blue and red states. You grew up in Washington D.C., the center of American politics. What effect did that have on your work and your process? Politics is a major component of my work. The current state of the state is a mess, disgusting, shocking, reprehensible — and it is what I think about in my studio more than anything. Trump-stick red from us. Before it was rage, it was passion, it was hot. Now it is laced with prejudice, abuse, treachery. I don’t know if I can use red in the same way, but we do need a way to not make every red hat seem MAGA. Fucker. There is often a recurrence of color in your work, usually in direct relation to an expressive moment or action that contrasts markedly with your preference for common building materials and their muted, grape presentation. When I was at your studio, you had just received back a series of sculptures that were part of your site-specific work Bend Motherfucker, 2017, created for your undergraduate alma mater, Bates College. Originally painting, glassy red rectangular forms, these sculptures appeared in 2019, Curator Amy Smith-Stewart writes that your “videos, performances, and sculptures forge relational encounters that rearrange our thinking about structures of power.” Let’s talk about structures of power. You have a lot of thoughts on the gendered stereotype in artmaking, and your works often challenge these heroic myths. What heroic myths are you challenging?

One day I am going to make this into a book. In the larger performances that involve many performers, I am completely removed.

I can’t think of a work that more effectively captures the rage and need for release than this work. How does anger play a role in this work? Why or how did you conceive of this work? Anger and rage are essential, especially in this moment. However, now I am questioning what to do once this rage and anger is expressed. Does this actually do anything? How do we progress from there? This work is a direct response to our political situation. All I had [at the moment of making the work] was total, complete, and all-encompassing rage. Now, it is changing as I start to question how we move on from there to actually change this horror we are in.

Bend Motherfucker reminds me of another work from 2017 that took place at On Stellar Rays, a gallery in Manhattan that operated from 2008 to 2017 and was run by the amazing Candice Madley. Sporting red sweatshirts and sweatpants, construction boots, black baseball caps, and brass rings, three female performers squat, or sit, using only their fists and feet every moment or action that contrasts markedly with your preference for common building materials and their muted, grape presentation. When I was at your studio, you had just received back a series of sculptures that were part of your site-specific work Bend Motherfucker, 2017, created for your undergraduate alma mater, Bates College. Originally painting, glassy red rectangular forms, these sculptures appeared to have taken a serious beating and, in fact, they had. In the work, especially in your earlier works, many of these heroic myths are you challenging?

What heroic myths are you challenging?

So, when did you first realize you were an artist? Oh, it is an evolving process! I first dedicated myself to art fully in college.

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In the catalog for your exhibition In Your Way that will travel to the Ewing Gallery of Art and Architecture, University of Tennessee, Knoxville in 2019, Curator Amy Smith-Stewart writes that your “videos, performances, and sculptures forge relational encounters that rearrange our thinking about structures of power.” Let’s talk about structures of power. You have a lot of thoughts on the gendered stereotype in artmaking, and your works often challenge these heroic myths. What heroic myths are you challenging?
A powerfully expressive, colorful and fragmented style characterizes the work of Yvette Cummings, a painter whose engagement with motherhood, as well as the lived and psychic, sensual and affective experiences of childhood trauma, is boldly rendered on canvas. Cummings’ work is informed by her personal experiences with trauma, as well as her engagement with the broader cultural discourse around trauma and PTSD. The artist’s use of color and form is a powerful tool for mining subjective experiences, offering a path for constructing a symbolic economy and offering a path for constructing a meaningful engagement with trauma.

Cummings’ paintings are a testament to the power of art to transform trauma into something that is not only bearable but also a source of strength. The paintings enact this space—a space of fear and anxiety, but also a space of healing and transformation. Cummings’ engagement with motherhood is boldly articulated in her large canvases, and her The Voyeur Series, expresses a rich dialogue with the history and possibilities of painting. The dual portrait of Cummings’ two young daughters in red patterned dresses, when the Magpie Comes, promises an insight into this through its own profound and contemporary use of color and construction of shallow space similar to the Nabis Group aesthetic. (Fig. 3.) The two figures stretch across the canvas in a wide, symbolic embrace, their bodies intertwined in such a way as to suggest a powerful tool for mining subjective experiences, offering a path for constructing a symbolic economy and offering a path for constructing a meaningful engagement with trauma.

3. Ibid., pg. 2.
4. We could just as easily state that representations and objectification of women’s calm and clear stares are not just directed at the viewer or at an artist, but specifically, their own selves. Thus, the child’s wounded body within a charged environment of anger invites the viewer not just to a direct and explicit address, but also to a psychic experience of the dehumanizing violence endured by women whose bodies are produced in a patriarchal environment where gendered violence inflicted on female bodies is produced and possible. These are the kinds of drawing that feminists have long insisted on as an important part of public memory and public experience, for they know the violence.
5. To be triggered is to re-experience one’s trauma through one’s senses, and for the viewer or artist, this can happen through the medium of art, which offers a path for constructing a symbolic economy and offers a path for constructing a meaningful engagement with trauma.
You can feel the entire life force of your body. All gummed up with the body’s reaction to its presence. lead and begins to tingle with heat. By this time, a boxer’s. The rest of your body follows the throat’s makes your neck and forehead begin to perspire like with a scorching burn in the throat. The initial contact from the mines of its resting place. It is vibrant. It is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form.

After the 2016 elections, many people reluctantly held their breath with the hope that their fears of the incoming administration were inflated beyond probability. The months following the inauguration have proven otherwise with daily tweets and newspaper headlines that seem derived from the title of a dystopian novel. The unsettling weight of the nation’s political climate bears down each day on our psyches. Rather than getting crushed by the pressure, a new resistance has formed within the arts community.

Advocacy, A Medium

Cadmium

Remember the first time you saw it. Coming out of the Matisse exhibition, you turn the corner and it appears. By itself, alone. The pigment is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form from the mines of its resting place. It is vibrant. It is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form from the mines of its resting place. It is vibrant. It is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form from the mines of its resting place. It is vibrant. It is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form from the mines of its resting place. It is vibrant. It is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form from the mines of its resting place. It is vibrant. It is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form from the mines of its resting place. It is vibrant. It is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form from the mines of its resting place. It is vibrant. It is pure as if it was just ripped in its mineral form from the mines of its resting place. 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**The Bug Behind Red**

In 2012 a public relations scandal erupted around Starbucks when a group of vegans revealed that the red dye in their new Strawberries & Creme Frappuccino was made from the bodies of crushed cochineal insects. The story was picked up by major networks like CNN and NPR, and articles appeared in the L.A. Times tracing the use of cochineal insects back to their historic use in textiles and more recent, extensive use in products like food and makeup. Vegans problematized a consumer product, forcing us to discover the normally invisible origins of a single ingredient.

At times finicky and paranoid, the vegan community had revealed a deeper paranoia at the heart of a consumer culture ruled by global networks like CNN and NPR, and articles appeared referring to the catastrophic revolution of neoliberalism. Starbucks identified their target audience as being from a privileged community with an alienated consumer and produced a gap between one's awareness of and knowledge on one hand and one's embodiment of and complicity in this disparity is revealed, the issue begs an answer to the question what is this thing cochineal dye (often labeled carmine) is on all red dye traditionally found in Central and South America. Females feed on the prickly pear cactus and produce a bright red dye when crushed. What inspired the group's focus on the use of cochineal insects in their Strawberries & Creme Frappuccino? Judy Chicago's photolithograph, The Bug Behind Red, features a close-up of a woman pulling out a bloody tampon out of the vagina. The document begins with the following: "Carmine, or cochineal, is an artist, teacher, and writer in Nashville, TN. Laura Hutson Hunter was an artist, teacher, and writer in Nashville, TN. Laura Hutson Hunter contributed to the discovery of the insect in the pink-drink through an unconsciously patronizing attitude toward the feminine. Cochineal has negligible health costs or benefits; it is innocuous compared to the sins of its other ingredients including excessive sugar and its links to major health problems or any and the environmental costs of its production. One is tempted to scream through the noise of vegan outrage, down the bug in the red! Vegans want to purify us from the sin of animal meat, but in this case they also continue the old tradition of purifying the feminine. Against this patronizing, virginal red — innocuous, prepubescent, washed of its dangerous seduction and made into a shabby pink — we might champion the stained cochineal — gray with segmented legs, sucking on cactus juice.

For centuries sexy red lips have included crushed insect juice. Judy Chicago's photolithograph, Red Flag, shows a close-up of a woman pulling out a bloody tampon out of her vagina. The tampon is transformed into a call to arms, a flag. In Europe as far back as the 1000s ships would raise a red flag to signal they were prepared to fight. This urgent red flag was flown by the Jacobins during the French Revolution. A painting by Leon Cogniat from 1830 depicts the creation of the French tricolor flag adapted by France soon after the revolution, illustrating progression from the white and gold of their monastic flag to the bloodied tricolor of post-revolution France. After destroying the ruling family, Rousseau would adopt a red flag signaling the urgency of revolution. Chicago makes a connection between the现实的revolutionary flag and the female's menstruation blood.

For carmine, red was the color of the left; the Red Scare rooted out communist spies and vilified militant anarchists. Today, red is color coded for the right. When and how did Russian red get applied to the neoliberal right with its nationalist values and crony capitalism? During the 2000 presidential elections, the Today Show used a color-coded map of America to designate what we now call the "red states" from the "blue states," reversing the long-standing connection between red and the left. The hope was to sever any last remaining associations between the Democratic Party and communism. Thus, a symbolic death to leftist politics in America? Symbolizing the blood of revolution, red now refers to the catastrophic revolution of neoliberal destruction. Here, capitulation gets to fulfills communists' dream of "permanently revolution.开始" taking it out not only on its alienated consumers and its deempowered workers but on the body of every living thing it touches and turns to capital.

Starbucks agreed to phase out the use of cochineal insects in their Strawberries & Creme Frappuccino. News reporters could not suppress their tongue-in-cheek tone when reporting on the Starbucks' vegans; it was an exaggerated outrage coming from a privileged community with an aesthetic, lifestyle-oriented criticism satisfying only the most trivial demand. They won, but their win was fleeting. Ingredients have slipped back into their myopia invisibly, the feminicide has been sapped of its bug, and workers have gone back to work.

Laura Hutson Hunter is a Nashville-based writer and curator.

Matt Christy is an artist, teacher, and writer in Nashville, TN.

Starbucks, Carmine, Untitled (Flood) 2012, acrylic on canvas, 48” x 48”. Photo courtesy of the Frist Art Museum.


Barnaby Furnas painting Untitled (Flood) at the Frist Art Museum, Nashville, TN June 22 – September 16, 2018

I thought Stanley Kubrick's elevate scene in Shining had ruined blood-soaked picture frames for everyone else, but that was before I saw the Barnaby Furnas painting Untitled (Flood) at the First Art Museum. Now, it is the Floods that will immediately come to mind whenever I am called to imagine a sea of blood, and Kubrick's vision is merely a footnote. This painting is at once abstract and allegorical, equal parts Mark Rothko and William Blake, and filled with elements of horror, redemption, and revenge. It's a highlight of the First Art Museum's grand exhibit Chaos and Awe Painting in the 21st Century and one of the best uses of the color red since Jack Nicholson swung an ax.

At the opening reception for Chaos and Awe, the New York-based Furnas visited the Frist alongside the museum's Chief Curator Mark Scala and other artists whose work is in the exhibit, including Tennessee-based painter James Perrin (Nashville) and Hamlett Dobbs (Memphis).

"What I look for in painting is a feeling of vacancy," Furnas said during the gallery tour. "I'm always looking for ways to have such an intense experience of looking that I cease to exist."

Scala echoed that sentiment in a recent conversation with Norman when he described Flood's place in the exhibitor's section dedicated to the theme of The Boundless. "A painting contains a certain amount of information," Scala explained, "but you just see a little bit of it. The reality is that everything is happening outside the boundaries of the paintings, so the painting becomes a little synecdoche of something that's much larger than itself."

Untitled (Flood) is a massive 66" x 40" canvas that seems to take over the entire gallery wall. Strips of blood-red paint swirl in broad back-and-forth brushstrokes across the bottom of the canvas, leaving slivers of light blue toward the top. The paint splatters in parts, like wet ink or fireworks, and each broad brushstroke is blended into a darker shade of red in its lower portion, giving the painting depth — it's as if each mark has its own weight. The composition is almost claustrophobic, and it does overwhelm in the same way an Kubrick's blood splashing up at you from both sides. Indeed, Furnas had horror in mind when he first conceptualized the painting.

"The Flood works," he explains in his gallery talk, "which is available on the Frist's YouTube channel, "came out of a series I was working on where I tried to envision what Hell would look like. I had this idea that when the universe happens, these demons come to earth and reduce us back to our liquid form." Try not to have nightmares when Furnas describes that, in his vision of the apocalypse, the world isn't just flooded by water, but by us — by the contents of our skin. That dramatic, violent subject matter is typical of Furnas's, whose most recent gallery show — this spring's Frontier-Ballad, at New York's Marianne Boesky Gallery — is dedicated to mostly figurative works of American grandeur, from cowboys to Mount Rushmore. Like many artists, Furnas grapples with what it means to be an artist in Trump's America. Surely his sweeping red paint has different connotations after the 2016 election when the conservative red states overturned America, perhaps aided by Communist powers. But for Furnas, the color red has a potential that exists outside of its representational qualities.

"My first succuba moment as an artist," he explains, "was when I had a piece of paper with a piece of paper spelled on it. I took a small brush with a little bit of red paint on it, and just touched it to that liquid, and the red just shot through."

The Flood paintings, Furnas says, are manifestations of that simplest gesture. "Red is a very aggressive pigment," he says. "It will crowd out other colors on a watercolor tray — if you have red next to green, the red will take over the green. And with so these Floods, I'm just trying to get back to that moment, that moment of watching a picture happen in front of me."

"Try not to shoot through the clear water, it was like I was making it, I was just witnessing it."
Chaos and Awe: Painting for the 21st Century
Frist Art Museum
Nashville, TN
June 22 – September 16, 2018

The paintings that have taken flight, swept or digitized into the main gallery at the Frist Art Museum this summer embody chaos and awe, indeed, as the title suggests. More than anything, they represent a distillation and cosmopolitan view of the world at present; the work is dystopian as in dizzying as in unstable — as in shaky — as where we are and as we are going on here.

The show makes both social commentary and philosophical inquiry, paying formal questions about the position and function of painting in the 21st century. There is humor and there is strife. Most of the show is painting, indeed, but some incorporate projected video, altered photography, VJ, and sculptural — even 3D printed — elements.

The action-packed works of Ali Banisadr imply battle allegories take place. This peculiar mythology is taken from real events, which is, in and of itself, oxymoronic and poetic. It pays homage to and incites fascination with the project of proving the God Particle’s existence, which is, in a gross understatement, the God Particle (or the God Particle). This work is necessary and important just as, in a gross understatement, the God Particle is necessary and important, as it reimagines them with an external force necessitating domestication by something at which to stare, awestruck, while chaos digitized into the main gallery at the Frist Art Museum this summer embodies eerie violence against which that is “other.” There are flashy lights, busy parts, sea creatures, the Simpsons, anime characters. Chaotic and awesome in its expansiveness, the library scene in Bibliothèque/GSB/Bibliothek/2017 by Corinne Wauekat, 2017, is emphatic in emphasizing the text in the bibliography and the comings and goings of people and information. It is a little like a horizontal Times Square but less gritty and sweeter. Meanwhile, Almívico and Prosperita is the visceral world of Wangechi Mutu, whose paintings pink-and-red flesh forms mix and bubble with tail-like toxicity. A rhythm of formless, freeform dance is punctuated and punctured by motorcycles in Untitled from Tumors, 2008-9, depicting an uninhabited space in a state of elt, crumbling, churning, and sleeker. Meanwhile, slimy-slick and grotesque scenes that harken back to the chaos, awe, and fraught intimations of entropy and the world’s coming-together of people and information. It is a timeless sort of rest — or unrest — is offered up by Dean Byington in The Inquisitors, in which images borrowed from old prints and drawings are collaged in a sprawling wasteland of landscape and architectural elements. While, perhaps, being slowly inundated with water, above this wasteland sits a house on stilts. It is the emblematic and disorienting setting of present, past and future folklore.

The permanent works in the show are two paintings by Pedro Barbeito depicting the Large Hadron Collider in 3D printed form and the Higgins Boswell (or the God Particle). This work is necessary and important just as, in a gross understatement, the God Particle is necessary and important, as it gives us a new understanding of the universe. The formal simplification and examination — as well as artistic and technical meditation — on the Hadron Collider is symbolic. It pays homage to and invites fascination with the project of proving the God Particle’s existence, which is, in and of itself, oxymoronic and poetic.
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