

Lourdes Bernard

As an artist my work is centered on the exploration of nature, the figure, and the built environment as a way of examining the social and cultural issues that confront us today. My art making often mirrors my own experiences. In my work beauty is redefined as ugly-beautiful which is a quality that emerges from the interaction with the materials. Storytelling is critical and I rely on the image to carry the story. The narrative deals with loss and powerlessness and sometimes with joy and celebration. The work's physicality, the "skin" of the image, incorporates mistakes, surprises and happy accidents. The sublime beauty that emerges from the process is only possible because I retain these imperfections. The work strives to broaden the lens through which the audience can view their world and understand their relationship to the events around them. This is empowering.

Karen Hartmann

"They sharpen their tongues like swords and aim cruel words like deadly arrows. They shoot from ambush at the innocent; they shoot suddenly without fear." -Psalm 64:3-4

"Blame Me" is portrayal of personal angst and Biblically epic angst in a woman: maybe it's Mary, maybe it's Eve or maybe it's me. Is her situation a setup, a human manipulation, William Tell-ish? Should she blame herself or the serpent of old who doggedly hunts woman and children? Or do we just simply wear targets with our haloes, a bulls-eye included with our immense blessing from the Father above? Where is hope? This woman stands eternally, she stands now and she stands unharmed, arrows on the ground. Her eyes will follow you no matter where you stand, daring you to blame her, to attack her, go ahead and try!

Teuta Ibriqaj

My work is an abstract representation of my growing faith; an expression of worship as His words resonate in my heart. I place before you glimpses of my journey in layers of textures, colors, and contrasts -- every unique piece contributing to something larger. In each of these moments, I submit to patience to seize the beauty in them and rest the focus there in the hope and life found in Christ.

Lindsay Kolk

These doll-sized quilts are a collaboration between Lindsay Kolk and her nearly four year-old daughter. The quilts are inspired by daily neighborhood walks and her daughter's favorite activity of creating cozy beds for beloved objects such as dolls, stuffed animals and toy cars. The dimensions of the quilts' rectangles correspond to the average proportions of a New York City block and the number of quilts to the city's five boroughs. The delicate stitching intuitively follows the child's painted marks, creating a map that mimics the impulse-driven, winding manner in which children walk, even on gridded city streets. In the midst of the stressful whirlwind of city life, children always find ways to play and to rest. These quilts embody both play and rest, restorative activities that know no gender or status, which allow us all to clear space for hope. There are few things as disarming and hopeful as children, who express themselves with complete honesty at all times, whose needs are not hidden and who love freely.

Teresa Valla

Teresa Valla is a multi-media artist working with organic materials, organic forms and digital photography. The process of "reconciling the inner world-the *spirit* with the outer world," is a direction her practice is currently exploring. She transforms her walks in New York into musical uplifting hybrids hinting towards a more peaceful eternity.

Kristen Somody Whalen

After a heartbreaking struggle with pregnancy loss and infertility for over six years, I became pregnant in October of 2015 at the age of 39. My pregnancy was extremely high risk and at just 30 weeks gestation, I was rushed to the hospital where I stayed on bed rest for an entire month. I was immediately given a vision from the Lord that made it impossible to fear. There on top of a hill overlooking a warmly lit cabin, Jesus held on to my baby bump while I slept and rested in his arms. I was so filled with hope and peace from that vision that I decided to turn my hospital stay into something of an artist residency, and I started my *Flowers With Legs, Hospital Bed Rest Series*. Each image is a daydream of what I wish I were doing instead of lying in bed in a hospital room. Before I knew it, doctors and nurses began making regular visits to my room just to view my new artwork. I found that it brought them joy and laughter. What I was using to keep myself peaceful and happy was also having a great impact on others.