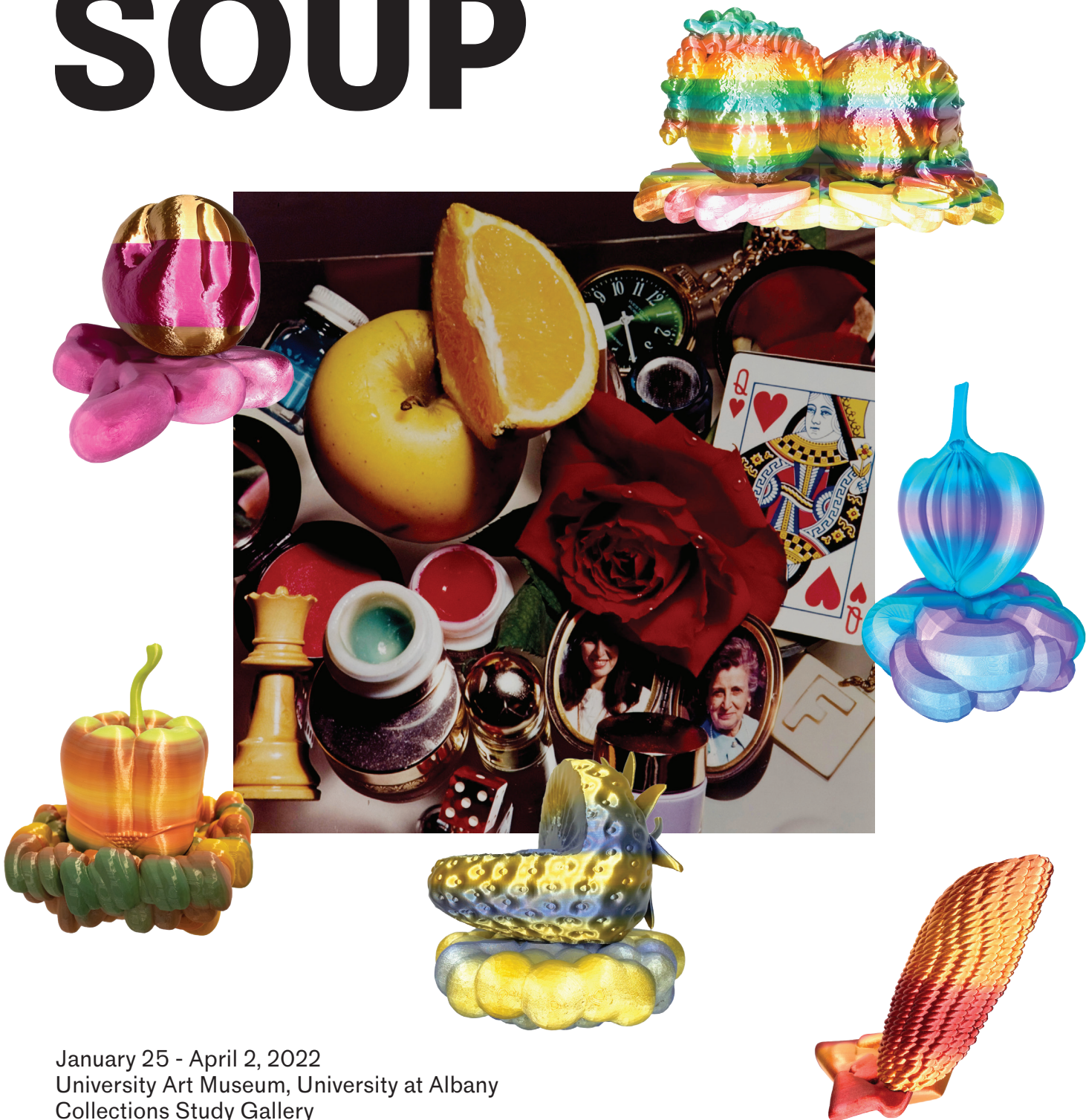


FRUIT SOUP

CONTEMPORARY VANITAS
BY AUDREY FLACK AND
GRACELEE LAWRENCE



January 25 - April 2, 2022
University Art Museum, University at Albany
Collections Study Gallery

INTRODUCTION

Fruit Soup brings together *Audrey Flack: 12 Photographs 1973 to 1983* from the University at Albany Fine Art Collections by Photorealist painter Audrey Flack along with recent 3D printed sculptures by artist Gracelee Lawrence. Using an intricate three-layer (cyan, magenta, yellow) dye-transfer process, Flack was able to explore color saturation in these photographs, which also functioned as sources for her groundbreaking vanitas still lifes from the 1970s and early 1980s. Printed in multicolored, reflective filaments, Lawrence’s objects—which begin as 3D scans of bodies and fruit—exist in a transfigurative space between physical and digital reality. Paired together, Flack’s and Lawrence’s works provide meditations on time and subjectivity, mechanical and digital reproduction, and capitalist consumption in our contemporary world.

The works from *Audrey Flack: 12 Photographs 1973 to 1983* are contextualized with researched texts by Lily Hopkins (Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation Intern, class of ’21) and Iszzy Hernandez (Collections Intern, class of ’22). Through these photographs we begin to understand Flack’s larger interest in photographic vision and color, both central to her painting. In Hernandez’s and Hopkins’s texts, visitors will learn of Flack’s recurring themes—life and death, luxury and consumption. Flack symbolizes these using traditional iconography from 17th-century Dutch vanitas still life as a starting point. For example, her work often features fruit and flowers, which, while luxurious, show signs of decay and the vanity of life. In addition to incorporating personal objects and cosmetics, Flack gave this genre a 20th-century update by mirroring the spectacle of contemporary consumer culture through glittering light that sparkles among mirrored and glass objects. Central to this cultural spectacle is the photograph, highlighted in Flacks’s photography practice seen here; her paintings that captured the detail, depth of field, and focus of the camera’s vision; and moments when photographs appear within her still lifes, such as *Roman Beauties* (1983).

The continued salience of Flack’s themes in the 21st-century can be found in Gracelee Lawrence’s work. In *Fruit Soup*, Lawrence has produced a bushel of digitally-skewed fruits and vegetables dealing with hybridity, reproduction, humor, and sexuality.

The wall sculptures are each supported by a virtual reality-sculpted and 3D-printed shelf. The tabletop objects turn like a cake presentation at a diner or a preview of a 3D file, highlighting the reflective refractions of the material and its relationship to rendered digital surfaces.

Just as 17th-century Dutch still life revealed a story of commerce and power—the citrus fruits featured in those paintings, often imported from the Americas, were considered luxurious and “exotic”—so too does Lawrence’s work intertwine with issues surrounding contemporary foodways. The objects are all printed with polylactic acid (PLA) filament, a vegetable-derived bioplastic most commonly made from fermented cornstarch. In what the artist calls a “material poetics,” the works ask us to consider produce as a vehicle for understanding hegemonic systems of power and control, nutrition and intimacy, and technological invention.

The body, which was often represented in Flack’s photographs indirectly through skulls, cosmetics, or photographic portraits, comes to the foreground in Lawrence’s work. Lawrence merges digital scans—that is, a series of photographs taken of both fruit and body—that are then rendered into a 3D digital model, and prints them as hybrid forms. The ubiquity of photography has transformed the way we see the world since the 20th-century, a topic central to Flack’s work. Lawrence shows how the digital is transforming how we interact with the physical world. Lawrence’s sculptures dangle in the transfigurative space between digital and physical reality.

The juxtaposition of Flack and Lawrence invites us to contemplate issues of photography, the digital, and reality; of foodways and consumption. Creating a space for new ideas like these to emerge from visual dialogue is central to the Collections Study Gallery mission. The gallery’s rotating exhibition schedule highlights artworks from the Collections with past exhibiting artists and/or emerging or established contemporary artists, and works in tandem with the Collections Study Space, giving access to 3,000 objects to students, faculty, other researchers and scholars, and the community.

—Robert R. Shane, PhD, Curatorial Consultant

Cover images: Gracelee Lawrence, *Delicious Romance of Solitude*, 2020; Audrey Flack, *Queen*, 1975; Gracelee Lawrence, *Desiccated Poignancy*, 2021; Gracelee Lawrence, *Massaged into Existence*, 2021; Gracelee Lawrence, *Trampled or in Your Hands*, 2021; Gracelee Lawrence, *Without Purpose or Craving*, 2021; Gracelee Lawrence, *A Greedy Cupidity*, 2021

ABOUT AUDREY FLACK: 12 PHOTOGRAPHS 1973 TO 1983

The following text was researched and written by:

Lily Hopkins
MSIS 4+1 Program: Archives and Records Administration '21
Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation Intern

Iszzy Hernandez
Studio Art and Art History '22
Minors in Psychology and Education Studies
Collections Intern, Department of Art and Art History

Audrey Flack is an American artist who is known primarily for her Photorealist paintings. Inspired by the 17th-century Dutch vanitas style, Flack’s works feature themes of life, death, and traditional femininity. The original predecessors of Photorealism were, in Flack’s words “cool, unemotional and banal” and often centered around cars, motorcycles, and urban scenery; meanwhile, Flack incorporated both everyday feminine ephemera as well as items of a macabre nature to create vibrant, complex, and emotional still life images that stood in stark contrast to their male-driven counterparts. These works, which garnered a considerable amount of attention and helped to pioneer the Photorealist movement as it is known today, began with detailed photographic still lifes from which the artist drew inspiration. According to Flack in *Hyperallergic’s* podcast *Audrey Flack and the Last of the New York School*, “I never thought of photography as in and of itself. It was a means for my painting.”

For Flack, these vanitas style still lifes were merely a waypoint for a multitude of different themes and styles. Following her fascination with Photorealism, Flack went on to spend a large portion of her career focusing on themes of goddesses and female icons—a subject that carried over from her use of feminine items from her still lifes. —LH

The following works are from the Collection of University Art Museum, University at Albany, State University of New York, on behalf of The University at Albany Foundation
Gifts of Stephen and Linda Singer



Audrey Flack
Roman Beauties (detail), 1983
Dye transfer on paper
14 x 22 inches

Throughout her work, Flack utilizes overarching themes of life and death through the use of living, dying, and dead objects such as flowers, insects, and fruit. In *Roman Beauties*, ripe fruit is piled atop a table next to a vase, a candle, and a small photograph. The photograph, adding a layer of complexity to the work, contains a similar image of fruit; however, this fruit is far less vibrant than the fruit in the original image, and appears to be nearly rotten in color and texture. This detail, though small, creates a strong contrast between the liveliness of the ripe fruit and the inevitability of what that fruit may become if left unconsumed. —LH



Audrey Flack
Skull and Roses (detail), 1983
Dye transfer on paper
14 x 22 inches

Flack’s aptly named still life *Skull and Roses* immediately draws the viewer’s attention to the large human skull crowned with pink, red, and yellow roses, and then to the various ephemera scattered around the scene: a tube of red paint, a seashell, a small tin of untouched watercolor paints, a jar of green paint and a jar of blue paint, and a half-melted blue candle inside a metallic jar. —LH



Audrey Flack
Rolls Royce Lady, 1981
Dye transfer on paper
17 x 22 inches

Glittering jewels, a gilded cup, a slice of citrus fruit, a bright red rose, fine perfume, and golden jewelry—all personal belongings of Flack’s—are strewn across the frame of this decadent image. This photograph, depicting “pure visual pleasure” according to the artist, stands as a symbol of traditional femininity. The title, *Rolls Royce Lady* (in reference to the expensive make of car), in combination with the fine objects scattered throughout the frame, implies themes of wealth, status, and extravagance. —LH



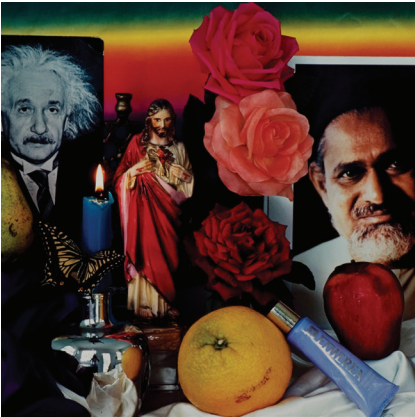
Audrey Flack
In My Life (detail), 1980
Dye transfer on paper
14 x 22 inches

In reference to the Beatles’ song titled “In My Life,” Flack reinforces the overarching theme of “life” that is often represented in her work. An array of personal ephemera is strewn about the frame; a yellowed die, an ornate box, and a silver pocket watch are just a few of the objects that are scattered throughout the image. The mystery of the unopened box, the constant ticking of the pocket watch as time moves forward, and the game of chance associated with the single die are all representative of the fleeting nature of life as described in the song: “There are places I’ll remember / All my life though some have changed / Some forever, not for better / Some have gone and some remain.” —LH



Audrey Flack
Time to Save (detail), 1979
Dye transfer on paper
20 x 18 inches

A vase of flowers, various fruits, a tiny human skull, a clock and an hourglass, a single die, a glass bird, and brightly colored insects come together to form this vibrant scene. Created during the height of Flack’s Photorealist period, *Time to Save* once again pays homage to the artist’s fascination with life and death, a theme that is prevalent in the 17th-century vanitas style of painting. Time moves onward, as represented in the clock and hourglass, and even the most beautiful things—flowers, butterflies, ripe fruits—are subject to death and decay. —LH



Audrey Flack
A Course in Miracles (detail), 1978
Dye transfer on paper
14 x 22 inches

Flack uses religious imagery from several different traditions to express the idea of healing, spiritual strength, and human alliance. Following a serious illness, her interest in spiritualism and fellowship flourished. She references spirituality in the title and by incorporating the number three in terms of objects (specifically, roses). Flack includes several spiritual figures and metaphysical concepts within the work: She represents Hinduism through a photograph of Baba, Christianity as a statue of Jesus, and scientific thinking with an image of Albert Einstein. Other symbols include a European Jewish candlestick, the Old Testament, and a Jewish star. —IH



Audrey Flack
Greek Muse, 1977
 Dye transfer on paper
 19 x 18 inches
Greek Muse reflects an interest in vanity within ancient Greek culture. The ancient Greeks explored new methods of musical and artistic expression in which art is seen as an emphasis of beauty, mathematics, and self-expression. The idea of objects symbolizing the inevitability of death and the vanity of earthly objects or rewards was prominently featured in 17th-century Dutch vanitas painting and has been recreated in many artworks since. Through reflective materials, creative references, and humanistic forms, Flack has managed to show the human desire to accumulate material riches before death. Flack accentuates this idea through the sharp contrast in shadow on the sculpture bust, which is suggestive of mortality. —IH



Audrey Flack
Wheel of Fortune (detail), 1977
 Dye transfer on paper
 19 x 18 inches
 Flack’s use of grapes and jewels portray the human desire for consumption and luxury. The hourglass, calendar, and burning candle symbolize that life on earth is limited. The tarot cards represent fate and fixation on future events. The skull represents death in a literal form. The mirror invites the viewer to reflect on their own life. What choices have you made that will affect your future? —IH



Audrey Flack
World War II (detail), 1976
 Dye transfer on paper
 19 x 18 inches
 Within a still life of seemingly mundane objects, Flack brings to life a narrative of Jewish history and struggle during World War II. Included is a black and white photograph by Margaret Bourke-White of concentration camp prisoners, as well as writings by a Hasidic rabbi. These contrast with the bright and vivid depictions of the Star of David, red candle, pearls, shiny silver plates of sweets, and a butterfly. The sweets, flower, and butterfly are fragile and perishable, and can easily be disposed of and forgotten about, as can all of those impacted by war. The pearls and silverware represent her own Jewish culture—they are more difficult to destroy and will persevere through hardships. Flack’s intent was for the viewer to perceive these events in a new light, one that depicts hope in the face of hardship. —IH



Audrey Flack
Leonardo’s Lady (detail), 1975
 Dye transfer on paper
 17 x 17 inches
 Using tones of blushing pink, whites, and shiny golds, Flack depicts a small statue of a child, a pink rose, a mirror, fruit, makeup, and a perfume bottle—objects with a feminine connotation. Also included is a portrait of a woman by Leonardo da Vinci. Flack emerged as an artist during a time when the art world was dominated by male artists. She broke through barriers in the artworld by becoming the sole notable female Photorealist and attending Yale. —IH



Audrey Flack
Queen (detail), 1975
 19 x 18 inches
 In *Queen*, Flack depicts the passing of time. Perishable items, such as a sliced orange and a rose, will soon rot and decay. Pictures of the artist and her mother will eventually fade or be forgotten. Reflective surfaces represent the present, while a watch reminds us that time continues forward. Makeup reminds us of our attempts to hide the effects of time. Flack conveys that life is finite and imperfect, and needs to be lived in the present. —IH



Audrey Flack
Royal Flush (detail), 1973
 Dye transfer on paper
 14 x 22 inches
 Crowded with playing cards, money, and various gambling paraphernalia, the objects within this piece, such as the cigars and coins, lead the viewer’s eye to the royal flush—the strongest hand in poker. No other hand can beat a royal flush, even the full house at the top of the image. The pair of dice represent luck, which is a key component in poker, as most of the game is up to chance. The cigars, cigarettes, and alcohol represent mortality—one’s actions determine not only the length but also the quality of life. This piece embodies hope for the future and the inevitable passing of time. —IH

GRACELEE LAWRENCE



Gracelee Lawrence
Anything Can Happen Anywhere, 2022
Polylactic acid 3D print
7 ½ x 9 x 8 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Better Than Reality, 2022
Polylactic acid 3D print
5 x 10 x 8 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



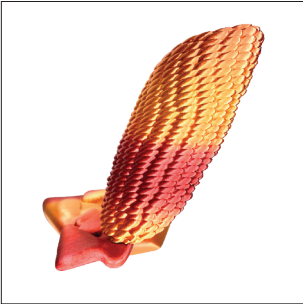
Gracelee Lawrence
Without Need or Desire, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
11 x 8 x 8 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Without Need or Desire, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
8 ½ x 8 x 7 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
When Language Fails, 2022
Polylactic acid 3D print
8 x 16 x 6 ½ inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



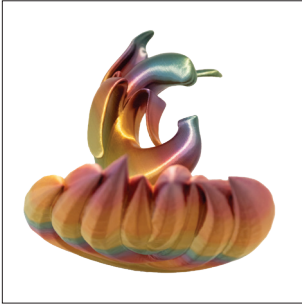
Gracelee Lawrence
A Greedy Cupidity, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
10 ½ x 10 x 7 ½ inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Without Purpose or Craving, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
12 x 9 x 7 ½ inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Delicious Romance of Solitude, 2020
Polylactic acid 3D print
6 ½ x 7 ½ x 7 ¾ inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Borrowed Courage, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
10 x 8 x 8 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



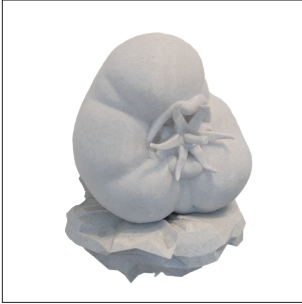
Gracelee Lawrence
Desiccated Poignancy, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
9 ½ x 16 x 9 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Sensitized to Objecthood, 2020
Polylactic acid 3D print
13 x 10 ½ x 5 ½ inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Special Hungers, 2020
Polylactic acid 3D print
8 x 6 ½ x 7 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Lack of Permanent Connection, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
10 x 6 x 7 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Massaged into Existence, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
10 ½ x 9 x 7 ¾ inches
Open edition
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Terminally Alive, 2020
Polylactic acid 3D print
8 ½ x 6 x 6 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Too Easily Obscured, 2020
Polylactic acid 3D print
6 x 8 x 4 ½ inches
Open edition
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Trampled or in Your Hands, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
10 x 9 ½ x 8 inches
Edition of 10 with 2 APs
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
Trampled or in Your Hands, 2021
Polylactic acid 3D print
5 ½ x 5 ¼ x 7 inches
Open Edition
Courtesy of the artist



Gracelee Lawrence
To Eliminate the Risk of Uncontrollable Feelings, 2019
Polylactic acid 3D print, CNC routed foam, gypsum, cellulose, epoxy resin, paint
27 x 35 x 38 inches
Courtesy of the artist

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

AUDREY FLACK

Born in 1931 in New York, New York.
Lives and works in New York, New York.

Audrey Flack is known not only as one of the pioneers of modern Photorealism, but also as the only female Photorealist painter during the twentieth century and one of the most renowned woman painters of that time. Flack received a Bachelor of Fine Arts in 1952 from Yale University, where she studied under distinguished artist Josef Albers; studied Art History at the New York University Institute of Fine Arts in 1953; received a Graduate Certificate in Fine Arts in 1951 and an honorary doctorate in 1977 from the Cooper Union; and received an honorary Doctorate degree from Clark University in 2015. Flack’s Photorealist paintings were the first of their kind to be purchased for the Museum of Modern Art’s permanent collection. Her work is also displayed in several major museums around the world, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. Flack’s contributions to the Photorealism movement were a major driving force behind the popularity of the genre during the twentieth century and continue to be of significant influence today. —LH

GRACELEE LAWRENCE

Born in 1989 in Sanford, North Carolina.
Lives and works in Troy, New York.

Selected solo exhibitions include *Finger-Width* at Thierry Goldberg Gallery in New York, New York (2019); *Pear Shaped* at Bunker Projects in Pittsburgh, PA (2017); *When Watched* at Bridge Art Space in Bangkok, Thailand (2017); *and she was* at Rumpueng Art Space in Chiang Mai, Thailand (2017); *Canteloupe* at MOM Gallery in Austin, Texas (2015); and *murmurs* at UMLAUF Prize Exhibition, Umlauf Sculpture Garden in Austin, TX, USA (2015).

Selected group exhibitions include a solo presentation at NADA Catskill with Postmasters Gallery in Catskill, New York (2021); *Surface is Only a Material Vehicle for Spirit* at Kavi Gupta Gallery in Chicago, Illinois (2021); *Indoor Dining* at Marinaro Gallery in New York, New York (2021); and *Hybrid Futures* at PAD Projects in NADA 2021 Governors Island in New York, New York (2021).

Lawrence has installed large-scale public sculpture works at Wave Hill in the Bronx, New York; Franconia Sculpture Park in Shafer, Minnesota; Times Square in New York, New York; Mary Sky in Hancock, Vermont; and UMLAUF Sculpture Garden and Museum in Austin, Texas.

Lawrence is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor of Sculpture at the University at Albany, State University of New York in Albany, New York. She is a founder of MATERIAL GIRLS, a recipient of the 2021-22 Individual Artist DEC Grant, a 2019 Jerome Fellow at Franconia Sculpture Park in Franconia, Minnesota, and a 2016-17 Luce Scholars Fellow.

Lawrence received an M.F.A. from the University of Texas at Austin in Austin, Texas in 2016 and a B.A. from Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina in 2011.



ABOUT THE COLLECTIONS STUDY SPACE

The Collections Study Gallery will follow a rotating exhibition schedule highlighting artworks from the University at Albany Fine Art Collections in tandem with past exhibiting artists and/or emerging or established contemporary artists.

In 2018 the University Art Museum (UAM) unveiled its new Collections Study Space, a multipurpose space designed to safely house over 3,000 objects reflecting 50 years of modern and contemporary art, and simultaneously make them accessible to students, faculty, other researchers and scholars, and the community. The UAM is proud to further this mission through the new Collections Study Gallery, as well as a redesigned digital database launched in 2020. The database can be viewed at: universityartmuseum.org

Gracelee Lawrence, *To Eliminate the Risk of Uncontrollable Feelings*, 2019



Support for the University Art Museum exhibitions and programs is provided by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the Office of the President, Office of the Provost, The University at Albany Foundation, the University Auxiliary Services at Albany, the Robin Kanson Lewis '70 Exhibition Endowment Fund, and the Jack and Gertrude Horan Memorial Endowment Fund for Student Outreach.