



BLOCK GALLERY

Anything But Still

SEPTEMBER 11 – NOVEMBER 15, 2024



Raleigh
Arts

Raleigh Arts

The Office of Raleigh Arts, a part of the City of Raleigh's Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Department, fosters and promotes the arts in Raleigh by administering the programs of the Raleigh Arts Commission and the Public Art and Design Board and supporting the Pullen and Sertoma Arts Centers.

Block Gallery

Connecting local artists to the community through ongoing exhibitions and public outreach, the Block Gallery was dedicated in 2006 to honor Miriam Preston Block, a former Raleigh City Council member, and community leader. Greeting all visitors to the Raleigh Municipal Building at the Upchurch Government Complex in Downtown Raleigh, the gallery's marble walls, and elegant staircase provide an ideal setting for showcasing original artworks. Exhibits change every eight to twelve weeks.

Raleigh Arts Commissioners

Aurelia Belfield | Jay Campbell | Clodagh Lyons-Bastian | Toni Gadsden | Ledarius Hicks
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Raleigh Municipal Building

222 West Hargett Street

Raleigh, NC 27601




919-996-3610

M-F, 8:30am – 5:15pm

For more information, please contact:

Raleigh Arts

919-996-3610

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Anything But Still aims to expand the traditional concept of the 'still-life' beyond the simplistic definition of an arrangement of objects. Each of the artists included has a unique approach to their work and demonstrates the vast possibilities of interpreting the documentation of objects within their photography practice.

Artists throughout history have used objects as subjects to capture a moment in time and, in the case of the 17th-century Vanitas theme, assign meaning and symbolism. Each item within this motif was selected for its symbolic representation of the ephemeral condition of life and the fleeting futility of worldly possessions. Examples may include a skull or hourglass to show the passage of time, shells, exotic fruits, and coins representing wealth and travel.

Yana Slutskaya has a traditional approach with a contemporary take, "I approach each composition by envisioning the objects as dynamic characters, each playing a role in a captivating narrative." Her colorful compositions incorporate natural light as an additional subject. Meanwhile, Derrick Davis captures random events from everyday life, "I've been exploring still life photography in a nontraditional way. I love to create images that dramatically reflect the energy of a moment." And with that energy, Davis questions if, indeed, a still life needs to be still.

We view these objects and can't help but wonder about their histories, how they came to be, what circumstances brought this moment together, and who may have encountered and interacted with them. The scenes are much more dynamic than the initial surface appreciation of the image and our attachment to material things. Through this photography, we can examine the relationships between art, the object, and society. The still life can be reflective of our times – what we are experiencing economically, politically, and socially.

Leah Sobsey's new body of work "The Echoing Green" captures this relationship between history and objects seamlessly, [using] "the non-toxic chlorophyll photographic printing process to honor prominent historical women in the arts and sciences who were often overlooked in a male-dominated world." Delicate and haunting portraits develop through photosynthesis, creating a fusion of art and science.

Perhaps hiyin zhou's statement captures it best and expands the idea and genre of the classical still life, "[their] selected photo sequence reinterprets Still-Life in the politics of hope and endurance: as we are witnessing and living through multiple pandemics, genocides and ecocides, still, there is life."

— Stacy Bloom-Rexrode, Curator



About the Artists

Derrick Davis

 **esoderic3**

Derrick Davis Jr. is a photographer, griot, and aspiring Speech Language Pathologist. Above all, he's an adventurous, critical Black boy navigating a complex world. He seeks to find beauty internally through self-portraits. He seeks to capture beauty externally through landscape street photography and documentary style photography of the community. His ultimate goal is to achieve peace and express all forms of himself. Whether it's his advocacy for human rights, his career in communication, or his love for many subjects, he wants to see himself and all Black people, have the freedom to express themselves in any form. Derrick attended UNC-Chapel Hill for his undergraduate, earning a degree in Hispanic Linguistics with a minor in African, African American, and Diaspora Studies. He is new to the art world with his first work being exhibited in the NorthStar Church of the Art. His pieces, *Goofy Kreme* (2024) and *Pass the Kollektion Plate* (2024) are

part of the UPROOT: BIPOC Visions of our Food System organized by the Durham Powerful Arts Collective (DurmpAC) and the Committee On Racial Equity of the Center for Environmental Farming Systems at NC State. While new to the exhibition space, he has experience in curating stories through sneakers and clothing while working in Visual, Merchandising, and Styling at Nike's House of Innovation Flagship Store in New York City. He's looking forward to new experiences as he continues to find his voice and confidence in his art.



Derrick Davis, Vouch for Concourse C, digital photography, 1200 x 1800, 2024

Yana Slutskaya

yanaslutskaya.com

 artstudio.ys



Yana Slutskaya, *Hydrangea and peaches*, Giclee Photo Print Framed, 20" x 24", 2024

Yana Slutskaya is a Russian-born award-winning professional artist and contemporary still-life photographer based in Clayton, North Carolina. She holds a BA degree in Fine Arts, majoring in Painting and Theatrical Design, from Moscow State Academic Art College.

She finds competitions and solo exhibitions incredibly rewarding, as they give her a chance to be part of the creative community while also showing her works at galleries, and museums, as well as to collectors and art enthusiasts nationally and abroad. Yana's works were featured at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Cameron Art Museum, Research Triangle Foundation, 311 Gallery, C-MAC Gallery, Campbell House Gallery, Truist Gallery, ArtFields Festival, Cary Gallery of Arts, and others. According to the prestigious International Photography Awards 2024 35AWARDS, she was recognized as a TOP 70 USA photographer.

Yana is well known for her unique style of still-life photography inspired by classic European art traditions. In her works, she strives to weave together storytelling and visual delight while infusing them with hidden symbolism and deep philosophical meaning.



Leah Sobsey, *Anna Atkins*, The Echoing Green series, Archival pigment print from original Chlorophyll print on Hosta leaf, 16x20", 2024



Yana Slutskaya, *Hydrangea and peaches*, Giclee Photo Print Framed, 20" x 24", 2024



huiyin zhou in collaboration with CAO Collective, *Care Work, Photography*, 18" x 24", 2024



Derrick Davis, *Mom Made Cookie Rolls!*, digital photography, 1800 x 1200, 2024

Leah Sobsey

leahsobsey.com

 [leahsobsey](https://www.instagram.com/leahsobsey)

Leah Sobsey is an image maker, Associate Professor of Photography, Curator, and Director of the Gatewood Gallery at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

Recent exhibitions include Photofairs NYC, The Sachs Museum, The Harvard Museum of Natural History, Paris Photo, and a forthcoming exhibitions at the Brandywine Museum and the Huntington Museum, CA. Her books include *This Earthen Door* Datz Press, 2024. Collections: *Birds Bones and Butterflies*, 2016, and *Bull City Summer*, 2013. Her work is held in private and public collections across the country, including the North Carolina Museum of Art, Bill Gates-Microsoft, Fidelity Investments, Cassihaus, Duke Hospital, Duke Raleigh Hospital, Maine Media College, Rose Community Foundation Denver and many more. She has been an artist in residence at Virginia Center for the Arts, Dumbarton Oaks, Plant Humanities residency, Ayatana Research residency, Penland, Mother's Milk, The National Park system, Vermont Studio Center, Hewnoaks artist colony, and Hambidge to name a few.



Leah Sobsey, *Mary Somerville*, The Echoing Green series, Archival pigment print from original Chlorophyll print on Hosta leaf, 16x20", 2024

Her images have appeared in Artnews, New Yorker.com, the Paris Review Daily, Slate.com, Hyperallergic.com, The Telegraph, and Audubon. Sobsey has exhibited internationally, and her work is held in private and public collections across the US. She is represented by Rick Wester Fine Art.

huiyin zhou

huiyinzhou.com and caocollective.com

📷 [huiyin.zhou](https://www.instagram.com/huiyin.zhou) and [caocollective](https://www.instagram.com/caocollective)

Born and raised in the industrial hub of Dongguan, China, huiyin zhou 徽音 (they/she) is a transnational queer feminist organizer and community-based photographer, writer, translator and multimedia artist. They are based in Durham, NC and NYC. They work with digital and analog photography, text, installation, and performance. Photographing with intimate and tender sensibilities, huiyin explores themes related to queer feminism, intimacy, memory, diaspora, and community and approaches photography with a relational, reciprocal praxis.



Other than photography and writing, huiyin co-founded and co-direct a queer feminist art and activist collective, Chinese Artists and Organizers (CAO) Collective. They are a 2024-25 resident at Durham Art Guild and a 2023-24 resident at BRIClab: Contemporary Art Disability Artistry as a co-leading artist for CAO. huiyin has received accolades such as SEEK Raleigh (2024-25, Raleigh NC), John Hope Franklin Documentary Award (2023, Durham, NC), Benenson Award in the Arts (2023, NC), Dora Anne Little Service Award (2023), and Budding Writer 文学新苗 (2019, Guangdong Writers' Association, China). huiyin's individual and collaborative work has been shown nationally.

huiyin holds a B.A. degree in Cultural Anthropology from Duke University.

huiyin zhou, *Memories of Grief*, photography, 24x 18" (matted and framed), 2024

Artist Reception

Thursday, October 10, 2024, 5:30 – 7:30 pm

Artist Talk and Book Signing

Wednesday, November 6, 2024, 5:30 – 7 pm

Stacy Bloom-Rexrode

Curator of Exhibitions and Collections

Cover Image: Derrick Davis, *GoBlackBoyGoBlackBoyGo - Black Passing Series*, digital photography, 2024