

# Breaking Barriers

## Art Exhibition

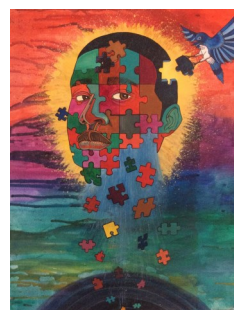
November 14-26, 2017

Massachusetts State House

Boston, MA

[www.mass.gov/mod/art](http://www.mass.gov/mod/art)

#ArtBreaking Barriers



In early 2017, the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) asked the public to submit original artwork that depicts the theme of “**Breaking Barriers**” and received dozens of amazing entries from talented individuals across the Commonwealth.

Our jury has selected the pieces that they agreed best reflected our theme. We are pleased to share this collection with the public.

**Visit**

**[www.mass.gov/mod/art](http://www.mass.gov/mod/art)**

For links to online gallery and audio description.

“Blindness took away my sight but gave me clarity of vision.”

— Lisa Fittipaldi, artist

“Do the best you can and never stop.”

— Stephen Wiltshire, artist

“Feet, what do I need you for when I have wings to fly?”

— Frida Kahlo, artist

“Find some beautiful art and admire it, and realize that that was created  
by human beings just like you, no more human, no less.”

— Maya Angelou, poet

## Featured Artwork



### “Kippy”

**Artist: Arienne Boley, Beverly**

**Description:** 12” x 16” illustration. For this piece, I created a character design to help bring awareness to Autism and SPD (Sensory Processing Disorder). I was inspired by my younger brother who I have learned so much from. One thing he does to relax from his sensory overload is snorkeling in the bathtub. This acts as a form of comfort as the overwhelming senses melt away for him.

**Artist Statement:** This colorful caricature is a character design to bring awareness to SPD. Those with SPD have senses which are either over-responsive or under-responsive, resulting in behavior correlated with what is going on in their body. Sensory processing differences may present as barriers to learning and also to social and relationship areas in the following ways: definite sensitivity to specific sounds, smells, touch and movement easily distracted by or seeking out specific sounds, smells, sights, touch and movements. Children with sensory processing disorder may have frequent meltdowns or tantrums, often misunderstood by others and labeled as “bad” behavior. My younger brother has SPD and one of the ways he breaks the overwhelming onslaught of his senses is a bubble bath. This illustration captures the moment of his release from the overload. The character design has playful long ears because of the heightened hearing along with a bundle of eyeballs to represent the enhanced sight. I chose the color blue for him because it is the symbol for autism, which he and many others who have SPD also have. As with other disabilities, SPD and Autism often result in being misunderstood and carry a negative stigma. My desire is to use my artwork to express how people with disabilities are different, not less.





## **“Good Morning America”**

**Artist: Dorothy Chaffee,  
Norfolk**

**Description:** 36” x 36” oil painting, a Joel Wood photograph that inspired me. With love and talent, I copied his figures, and put them in my composition. I also wish to thank Bill Boynton for technical information on

the lobster boat

**Artist Statement:** I planned a short trip to Monhegan Island in Maine to learn from Don Stone, a famous artist. I fell in love with the island, the surf, and the magnificent cliffs. I visited the island briefly for years. Painting the ocean allowed me the liberty to paint big with not too much detail, which is extremely difficult. I never told myself I cannot do it; it may take a little longer, a few tears. My peripheral vision now is doing very poorly, at 93.5 years old I live each day in gratitude for what I have, and can do. The MA Commission for the Blind has been a very helpful organization and I am grateful to them for the support they provided. I have started to paint in water color; I seem to be quite successful. The lack of precision allows more freedom. Some time you end up with “MUD PIE” but you keep trying.

**About the Artist:** I have been legally blind for 50 years. After my six children were self sufficient I wanted to express myself in the beauty of art. I signed up with the “Famous Artist Club” via mail; the books they sent covered everything I needed to learn painting. I was told that I had talent.



## **“Lumbosacral Abstraction”**

**Artist:** Andrew Comeau, Andover

**Description:** 14” x 20” oil on canvas paper. After having a lumbar spinal fusion, I had taken a considerable break from my studio practice and had spent a good deal of time trying to understand what was done to me and how it might affect my studio practice. I read countless hospital and surgical notes which kept me busy trying to decipher and understand exactly what they were talking about. Reading these notes inspired me to research muscle, nerve, and anatomical structures, which is how I came to creating this painting. While I was away from the studio, I made abstracted digital col-

lages of different parts of the anatomy that were altered during my surgery. Creating the collages was a way for me deal with what I was going through, but also to help me understand and learn what occurred during my surgery. When I got back to the studio, I had these digital collages and felt the need to try and translate one of them into an oil painting. The painting is a mix of different nerve, muscle, and anatomical structures which I reimagined through color and space.

**Artist Statement:** My painting depicts the theme “Breaking Barriers” as it relates to the challenges I have faced over the past couple of years due to lumbosacral scoliosis and especially in recent months after having a lumbar spinal fusion which I knew could temporarily or permanently have an impact on my artistic practice. This was the first painting I began to work on after my surgery and although it took me longer to complete in comparison to how I previously had worked, it was extremely gratifying to be able to get back into the studio, painting. Acquiring new ways of working and still having it feel just like it always had prior to surgery was a major victory for me.

**About the Artist:** Andrew Comeau was born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1994. He received his BFA in Painting from the Massachusetts College of Art & Design in Boston, MA. He is currently pursuing his Masters of Arts in Teaching in Art Education at The School of Museum of Fine Arts at Tufts University in Boston, MA. Comeau’s new paintings and mixed media works explore the theme of traumatic experience and how traumatic experiences change the way artists create. Comeau has exhibited works at the Student Life Gallery at MassArt in Boston, the Godine Family Gallery in Boston, Bakalar and Paine Galleries in Boston, as well as at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Hospital (Longwood) in Boston.





## **“Autism: Mind and Body”**

**Artist:** Joseph Connolly,  
Rockland

### **Description:**

29” x 23” Still life showing a meditating Ganesha, a blue pot with a plant and an artist wooden model. The piece is called Autism: Mind and body. The Ganesha represents the mind and is known for having the power to remove or place obstacles in ones way. The

wooden model represents the body of someone with autism that functions but is limited by the illness. That plant represents the wiring of the brain and is shown leaning heavily around the body but not around the brain. The body and brain are shown reaching out to the mind but are unable to reach it My son Rorey who is diagnosed with Autism is the inspiration for this painting.

**Artist Statement:** I have a son who is diagnosed with Autism. We continue to suffer through the social ignorance in society that many people still have with this disorder. I want people to know that when they see my son being loud and having tics that is associated with autism that there is a wonderful loving person inside. Autism is still a mystery to scientists and Doctors and to everyone who is impacted by it As an artist all I can do is try to make sense of what I know and try to bring some awareness of Autism with the aide of brushes, canvas and oils.

**About the Artist:** I was born Joseph Timothy Connolly on April 10, 1970 to Donald and Arlene Connolly in Waltham, Massachusetts. I attended and Graduated from Waltham High School in 1988 and went on to work several jobs before deciding to enroll in the Peterson School to become an Electrician. In 2006 I was hired as a Utility Plant Operator at the Massachusetts College Of Art and Design and earned my BFA in Art History graduating with Distinction and Honors in 2013. I now reside in Rockland Massachusetts with my Wife Janet and my four beautiful children Liam, Rorey, Paige and Jessie. I continue to work at the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in the capacity of Assistant Director of Facilities. Currently I have a studio in the Wright Building in Rockland where I paint Still Lifes and Landscapes and am an active member of the 4th Floor Artists Association.



## **“Untitled, 2017”**

**Artist:** Cathy Crofut, Lee

**Description:** 20.5" x 30"  
Acrylic on canvas

**Artist Statement:** “Painting helps me get my emotions out on paper rather than holding them inside. I’m happy when I paint and am proud of my accomplishments with the finished artwork.” - Cathy Crofut

In Crofut’s paintings, one finds a unique freedom in sense of color, texture, tone and composition. Crofut achieves her geometric approach by plotting a series of points on the canvas with the support of a trained “tracker” who acts as her hands and who deliberately maintains a neutral voice in the creation of the work. The tracker prompts

Crofut with a series of yes and no questions that give her authority over each artistic decision in the creation of a painting. Crofut decides the size of the canvas, the composition and orientation of the work, the color and thickness of the paint, and the tool and speed with which it is applied to the canvas, using a laser pointer followed by the tracker or plotting points on the canvas until an image emerges. Cathy Crofut's work happens through Community Access to the Arts (CATA) in Berkshire County, Massachusetts. CATA provides innovative arts workshops to people with disabilities in a wide range of genres and then shares their artistic creations with the community through an annual performance and year-round art shows. These public events shine a light on the talents of 600 CATA artists, drawing attention to the ability within disability.

**About the Artist:** Cathy Crofut paints using a technique called Artistic Realization Technologies. Developed by Tim Lefens, Artistic Realization Technologies is an innovative painting technique designed to allow full artistic control to people with profound physical disabilities who do not have the dexterity to apply paintbrush to canvas. Crofut has been working in the A.R.T. process for over 10 years. Her work has been shown at the Berkshire Museum, the Lichtenstein Center for the Arts, the Clark Art Institute’s Lunder Center at Stone Hill and Good Purpose Gallery. In 2014, Crofut was commissioned by the law offices of Parese, Sabin, Smith & Gold after attorney Virginia Stanton Smith saw Crofut's work at a CATA art exhibit. The piece took nine months for Crofut to complete, measures 2 ½' x 10' and is the biggest painting she has completed to date. It was unveiled in April of 2015.





## **“Lend a Paw”**

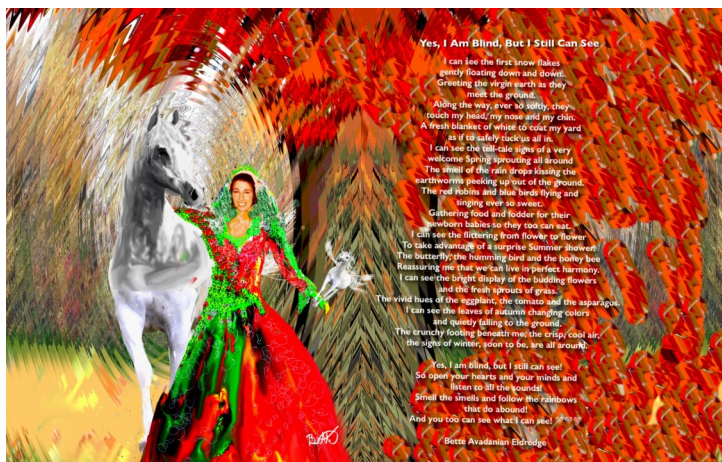
**Artist:** Teddy Cunha,  
Brookline

**Description:** 23” x 15”  
watercolor portrait of  
Marc Fucarile, who lost  
his leg in the Marathon  
bombing, and his service  
dog, Onyx. I volunteer at  
APAW (American Poo-  
dles at Work) and met

both Marc and Onyx. Both of them inspire me so I asked Marc if I could paint his portrait with Onyx. I have a retired service dog, Harmony, who was trained at APAW too.

**Artist Statement:** With the aid and support of a service dog, Marc is learning to live his life after tragedy. Service dogs provide physical and emotional support as well as companionship to people with disabilities to help them lead a full life.

**About the Artist:** My name is Teddy Cunha and the artwork you see before you is titled, “Lend A Paw.” Here is a little about me. The portrait you see here is the second one that I have done, the first being one of my grandfather, before he passed away, and my dog, Harmony. I am a senior in high school at The Deck House School in Edgecomb, ME. I enjoy painting, carving wood, and working on my radio controlled car. I also enjoy playing sports like hockey and soccer. I have a twin brother who is 10 minutes older than me. I have a job as a lifeguard at the Boothbay Region YMCA when I am at school and at Boston College when I am at home. I love to do volunteer work as well. I have volunteered at APAW (American Poodles at Work) to help train and take care of service dogs. I hope to go into the Marines when I get out of college.



**“Yes, I am blind, but I can still see”**

**Artist: Bette Eldredge, Townsend**

**Description:** 30” x 19” original digital painting and poem of my horse and me walking down the path of life.

**Artist Statement:** Do not disclude the Blind from being able to see clearly what others can not

**About the Artist:** Bette Avadanian Eldredge  
Born: January 30, 1948 in Boston, MA  
Artist, Poet, Equestrian

1965-1969: Attended Massachusetts College of Art and Design and earned a BFA in Painting and Illustration, minoring in Graphic Design.

1969-1975: Owned and operated The Snakepit, a boutique in Davis Square, Somerville. I created a variety of items for my clients including: custom-made oil paintings, gold and silver jewelry and leather jackets, riding chaps, pocket books, sandals and belts.

1975-1986: Graphic Designer: Millipore Corporation. Specializing in catalog design, package design, technical illustrations and slide presentations.

1986-1997: Freelance Art Director and Graphic Designer: Romicon, Toso Haas, Koch Membrane Systems and Staples.

1997-2011: Graphic Designer: Staples Corporation, specializing in circular and catalog design and publication.

2011-Present: I started losing my sight in 2001 from Diabetic Retinopathy. Although I was laid off in 2011, as much as I loved my job...it was a blessing in disguise. As my disease progressed, I no longer could see well enough to paint or draw on canvas or paper. Then, one day a dear friend suggested creating digital paintings on my iPad. Fortunately, I could still see backlit devices. Now, Legally Blind, using my finger as my brush and my iPad as my canvas, I continue creating my art, poetry and short stories as I continue 'Breaking Barriers.'

**“Yes, I am blind, but I can still see”**

**Artist: Bette Eldredge, Townsend**

**Poem:**

Yes, I am blind, but I still can see  
I can see the first snow flakes  
gently floating down and down.  
Greeting the virgin earth as they  
meet the ground.  
Along the way, ever so softly, they  
touch my head, my nose and my chin.  
A fresh blanket of white to coat my yard  
as if to safely tuck us all in.  
I can see the tell-tale signs of a very  
welcome Spring sprouting all around.  
The smell of the rain drops kissing the  
earthworms peeking up out of the ground.  
The red robins and blue birds flying and  
singing ever so sweet  
Gathering food and fodder for their  
newborn babies so they too can eat  
I can see the fluttering from flower to flower  
To take advantage of a surprise Summer shower.  
The butterfly, the humming bird and the honey bee  
Reassuring me that we can live in perfect harmony.  
I can see the bright display of the budding flowers  
and the fresh sprouts of grass.  
The vivid hues of the eggplant, the tomato and the asparagus.  
I can see the leaves of autumn changing colors  
and quietly falling to the ground.  
The crunchy footing beneath me, the crisp, cool air,  
the signs of winter, soon to be, are all around.  
Yes, I am blind, but I still can see!  
So open your hearts and your minds and  
listen to all the sounds!  
Smell the smells and follow the rainbows  
that do abound!  
And you too can see what I can see!



## **“Up Up and Away”**

**Artist:** Christina Fairman,  
Springfield

**Description:** 8” x 11” monoprint on mulberry paper with watercolor highlights. The inspiration for this print comes from the accomplishments of Chelsie Hill, a 25-year-old dancer with a spinal injury who teaches and performs in California.

**Artist Statement:** Ms. Hill and other "wheelchair dancers" release us from the idea that dance is limited to those with functioning legs. Watch a performance by these artists, and the wheelchairs actually seem to fade into the background. We no longer see their chairs, but instead enjoy their athleticism, passion and grace.

**About the Artist:** Originally from Lexington, KY, I have lived in Springfield, MA, for the past 18 years. I graduated from Earlham College in Richmond, IN, in 1990, with a B.A. in Psychology and a minor in French. Upon graduation, I worked for a number of years at a nonprofit organization in Lexington that supported business and cultural ties between Japan and the local community. I left that job in the mid-90s to complete a Master's Degree in Art History at the University of Kentucky. Since earning my degree in 2002, my work experience has been in education and learning. I have worked in public schools both in Springfield and in Pelham, MA, where for two years I was a paraprofessional working with a student with Asperger's Syndrome. I then worked as a Public Library Young Adult and Children's Librarian for nine years, during which time I developed literacy programs for toddlers. I am currently an adjunct professor of Art at Western New England University, where I have taught since 2012.



## “Take Flight”

**Artist:** Wayne Geehan, Acton

**Description:** 12” x 16” Illustration for a Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators Conference

**Artist Statement:** I was diagnosed at the age of 30 with MS, and now I am 70 years old. I am a freelance Commercial Artist and Illustrator of games, jigsaw puzzles, and an illustrator of over 18 Children's Books. Within 5 years of my diagnosis I lost control of my right side of my body, and being right handed, I learned how to write, draw, and paint LEFT handed. I walk with a cane and wear a leg brace. The piece of art I submitted

represents ME and the “Barriers I Broke” over the 40 years as an illustrator. I am married and my wife and I raised four children, three of them are married. We are Grandparents. I have a studio in Concord, MA where I illustrate my children's books and I also paint marine art, still lifes, and landscapes. I painted “Take Flight” for a Society of Children's Book Conference a number of years ago. The theme of the Conference was a contest to illustrate a painting that represents the double meaning of taking flight. I won second place in the contest with my fantasy painting “Take Flight.”

**About the Artist:** Wayne has been a commercial artist and illustrator for over forty years. He has worked as a freelance illustrator for various businesses and publishers and has illustrated jigsaw puzzles, games, magazine covers, art for advertising, along with over eighteen children's books. Wayne's first venture in children's books was to illustrate 48 page illustrated classics for Troll Publishing. The books were Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea, and Journey to the Center of the Earth, by Jules Verne, and Men of Iron, by Howard Pyle. For over fifteen years Wayne has illustrated the popular and successful “Math Adventure” children's books for Charlesbridge Publishing, Watertown, MA with a total of thirteen Math adventure books to date. Wayne has also written four children's stories with jigsaw puzzles for BePuzzled University Games. Wayne lives with his wife, Susan, in Acton, MA, has four grown children and at this time two grandchildren. When Wayne was 30 years old he was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. His MS is in remission and only affects his right side of his body. He wears a leg brace, walks with a cane, and once right handed, now writes and paints with his left hand. See Wayne's illustrations on [waynegeehan.com](http://waynegeehan.com)



## **“Self-Leadership”**

**Artist:** Nan Genger, MA, BFA, Cambridge

**Description:** 11" x 14" on paper: self-portrait image transfer with acrylic gel medium, tape, 4.5" x 6" original photograph with the word “Self-Leadership.”

**Artist Statement:** This collage represents the interaction between the exterior face of depression, acting as a protective cover, and the human capacity to heal through self-compassion and connection. Even through the facial curtain, you see the inner terrain to be explored to discover and witness our vulnerable and hurt parts.\* To best portray this duality, I chose to use an acrylic gel transfer technique of my self-portrait because it al-

lows for degrees of opacity based on the number of layers of gel medium used. The choice of matte versus a glossy medium, along with the linen texture created by alternating the direction of brush strokes with large bristles, further denotes the rough and foggy emotional state. The torn duck tape again depicts the rawness of depression. This overlays an original Photoshop photograph of a snowy mountain intersected by a train track leading up to the word “Self-leadership.” The photograph was taken through a window at a residential treatment center where I was beginning my healing work which continues today. Thank you.

\*In Internal Family Systems Therapy (IFS), this courageous healing journey is led by our “Self.” This was #50 of the series, 100 Parts in 100 Days, completed at Mass College of Art. Visit [www.nangenger.com](http://www.nangenger.com) to see the entire series and artist statement.

**About the Artist:** Nan Genger is an artist and political activist living in Cambridge, Massachusetts. With academic degrees in Cultural Anthropology and Women's Studies, she was awarded a full scholarship to attend the Massachusetts College of Art and Design to complete a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, majoring in 3D Fibers, in 2017. She is an advocate of disability rights and the end of racism, sexism, oppression of the LGBTQ community, and ageism. As a survivor of child abuse and domestic violence, Nan practices Internal Family Systems Therapy (IFS), and is currently researching/writing a workbook on IFS and art.





## **“The Many Hands of Faith”**

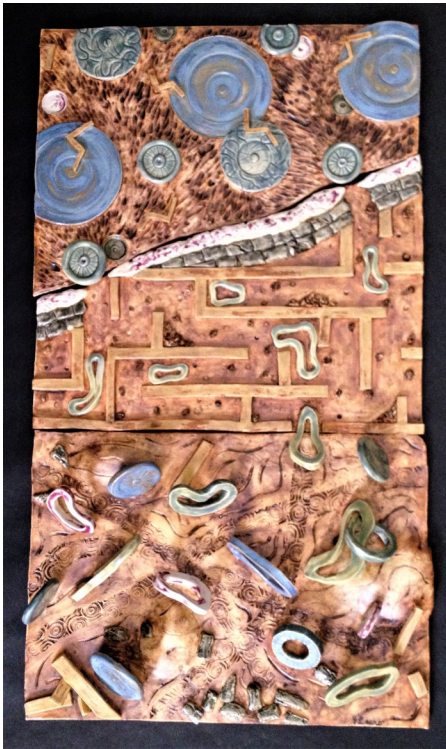
**Artist:** Dara Herman Zierlein,  
Northampton

**Description:** 11” x 15” watercolor on Arches paper of woman with many hands and eyes.

**Artist Statement:** Breaking barriers for people with abilities is hard enough based on your birth place and disposition. Breaking Barriers with disabilities takes courage and faith. I grew up with my Mother who was wheelchair bound from a car accident when I was eight years old. I watched her struggle in a world that was not accessible for her and as a single mom, but I also learned that you must break the barriers that may hold you back and move on to succeed. She was a strong role

model for many being an Interior Decorator rolling herself independently everywhere. I have audio dyslexia which causes me problems with learning/reading/writing, languages and I was told I would never make it to college, yet I graduated from Columbia University and became an art teacher. I want other children and adults to know they are able to express their personal experiences through visual arts. This painting signifies the many hands and eyes open one must have to break barriers. It represents to live with faith that you can do what ever you put your mind to regardless of barriers.

**About the Artist:** My paintings touch topics such as equal rights, women's rights, gender identity, environmental catastrophes and the consequences of plastic pollution on the environment. I have been interviewed internationally around my painting themes with activists like Beth Terry, My Plastic Free life, I Million Women in Australia, Earth Issue magazine in London and currently in Resist, a tabloid edited by Françoise Mouly (The New Yorker magazine). When I am not painting, exhibiting, writing grants, teaching, creating posters, working and submitting my art I am at home in Western Massachusetts with my husband, teenage son and our five pets, peacefully enjoying the life of an artist.



## **“As It Could and Should Be”**

**Artist:** Joyce Lauro, Canton

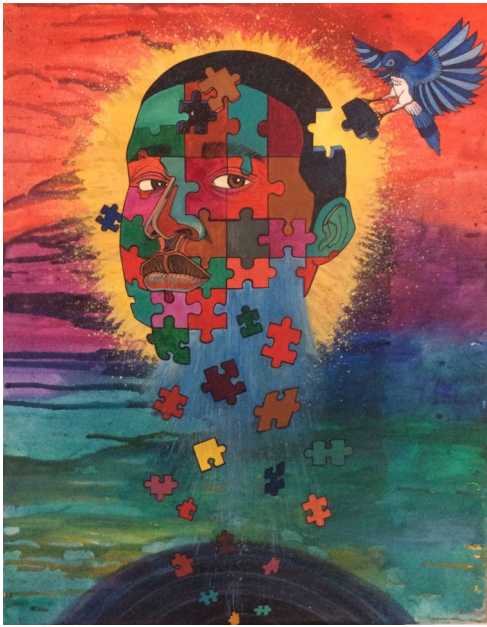
**Description:** 18.5" x 31.5" x 2.5" Wall tile dimensions

Ceramic with oxide and glazed finishes

**Artist Statement:** My ceramic relief piece, "As It Should and Could Be" is a conversation about those presenting emotional, developmental or physical disabilities and the barriers and stigmas they are subjected to from others. Averted eyes, non-acknowledgement, talking “down,” limited interaction and even avoidance of typical persons towards those with disabilities are everyday occurrences. Major barriers to access in mobility in Boston are snow banks and cobblestones represented in the beginning of maze section.

The top third of the relief references the shapes of parts of wheelchairs (parts of parking logo) and the physical barriers those with mobility challenges face. They represent not only the obviously visible and physical but also the unseen disadvantages experienced by all those with various disabilities. The middle maze section of flexible ovals representing “typical persons” is difficult to traverse but less so for those who are privileged and able to adapt more easily. The lower third of the relief is a mix of both top and middle shapes, leading the viewer to the question of how did all the parts make it across the obstacles to settle in a space which values all equally?

**About the Artist:** Joyce Lauro is primarily a ceramic artist and a current MAT graduate student at Massachusetts College of Art and Design. Her work has been exhibited in local, national and international group shows. She has taught both children and adults with disabilities for a number of years and is a parent of a child with autism.



## **“Peace of mind”**

**Artist: Sherwin Long, Boston**

**Description:** 16” x 20” painting inspired by the exploration of mental disability and how people can unravel and fall to pieces from symptoms and social ostracism. I know several people with schizophrenia, bipolar, and autism. They described it to me as trying to keep a bunch of pieces of yourself together. So, I decided to articulate that with a visual metaphor. The puzzle pieces are different characteristics or aspects of the person’s psyche falling into an abyss. The monotone facial expression is to show his acceptance of the circumstance. The bird represents friends, family, or anyone that cares enough to help put them back together.

**Artist Statement:** This piece depicts breaking barriers by showing the bird taking initiative to rebuild this person as they fall apart. The bird is flying down to the bottom of the abyss getting each piece and learning something new about the person they are helping, creating a relationship between the two. This relationship will unlock new potential which is symbolized by the universe under the puzzle piece in the forehead. Hopefully with the merging of art, culture, science, and psychology this interaction will bring about awareness and more advocates for the cause, therefore breaking barriers and unearthing new possibilities.

**About the Artist:** Sherwin Long was born and raised in Boston and graduated from Boston Latin Academy. He then attended Massachusetts College of Art and Design and earned a degree in illustration in 2013. From there he became a freelance artist/designer working with various non profit organizations doing community events sharing his work and making people aware of current global events.

My inspiration to pursue art as a career is to empower and uplift people with a strong message creating a visual and social dialogue that will impact the viewer deep in their subconscious.





## **"Breaking Barriers"**

**Artist:** Juan M. Lucero,  
Arlington

**Description:** 24" x 18" painting.

**Artist Statement:** What I've painted is the liberation of being placed and keeping you away from doing things that are normal to other people. Painting is a

form of expressing getting out your inner self and tell about your feelings and that is what I've painted here. "Breaking Barriers" as the titles say. Being on disability- it's a life changer in every aspect for me and is losing my hearing a sign that is very much of having NF2. We, humans, do everything with hearing but for the person that can hear well can not see the problem and that affects my life in general in every single aspect. So my idea of breaking a barrier for me personally would be to physically break a walls, barriers and finally arrive at the bright positive future without any barriers what so ever.

**About the Artist:** I was born in Ecuador, South America. My father said that I should get a bilingual education. I arrived in NY City in November 1970. My sister drove there to pick us up. Two weeks later I entered grammar school in Watertown, MA and graduated from Watertown High School in 1975. I started studying Architecture at BAC but it was not creative enough so I quit and got a job at a medical agency in Kenmore Square. At lunch one day I was doodling in color when the owner approached me and asked me what I was doing and I said that I was at lunch then he stated that I was wasting my time there and I should join an Art School so I did by the next September at the New England School of Art & Design (Suffolk U), where they taught you about Art History. I graduated and got a job at a Printing Company so I learned everything to do with printing with no computers around.



## **“Testing the waters, way of the sky”**

**Artist: Christina Tedesco, Somerville**

**Description:** 30” x 36” framed triptych painting. Two or more figures walking around/sitting on a dock. Then one or two of the figures fall though into, what looks to be the sky. Or is it water? The figure on the top dock try to help the other figures back up.

**Artist Statement:** My work deals with the contrast between balance and imbalance, control and the lack there of. Specifically, I explore the movement of the human body through space and time. My interest in the nature of the human form comes from living with cerebral palsy – a physical disability. Over the years I have

developed two figures that have allowed me to show how I see my body. The two figures often look like an adult helping a child or two friends. One figure acts as my cerebral palsy, the other figure as my personality. The figures can stand alone or become one. My work tells a story, with many small moments making up a larger whole. My figures have no face, when most people look at someone with a disability you do not see the face or the Sex. Most people just see the disability. This piece is a tripchy. When I was making this piece, I was thinking about the psychological side of my cerebral palsy – a physical disability. There is a psychological barrier that we all have but for me it is the contrast of having a disability and having to go out in to the world and acting like I don’t I have to put on my “I am ok with my cerebral palsy” face to get others to look at me for who I am. Sometimes acting like I don’t have a disability gets to be too much for me. I fall into that “I can’t do anything space” and the idea that I have a disability takes over. I have to pick myself back up and force myself out of that way of thinking, breaking preconceived barriers along the way.

**About the Artist:** Christina Tedesco grew up in New Jersey. Christina’s Family has said, “Yes, Christina has Cerebral Palsy and Dyslexia. So.?” She moved to New England for college. She has an Associate degree in Art from Landmark College as well as a Master of Fine Arts / Museum Studies Certificate from Tufts University in affiliation with The School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She also has a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The Art Institute of Boston that is now Lesley College of Art & Design. Tedesco has been awarded the Somerville Arts Council Grant for the Switchbox Project 2015 and also the Somerville Artist certification 2016. Her studio is at the Mad Oyster Studios, Somerville, MA. Christina’s “day job” is working at The Harvard Art Museums. She also worked at The Institute of Contemporary Art educating people about art and the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum. Christina’s real passion is in teaching. Tedesco has been a guest speaker in the Brookline Schools. She works with students and talks with them about living with a disability and making art Tedesco is also a board member of Somerville Open Studios. See more at [Christinamtedesco.com](http://Christinamtedesco.com).



harbor view 2015  
Dyan McClimon-Miller  
Encaustic wax, paper & gold leaf  
12" x 12" x 2"

## **"harbor view"**

**Artist:** Dyan McClimon-Miller, Jamaica Plain

**Description:** 12" x 12" canvas. Encaustic wax, paper & gold leaf

**Artist Statement:** I have tried to break down the barrier of persons with multiple sclerosis not being able to create freely and expresses themselves equally to the standards of other fine artists.

### **About the Artist:**

Dyan McClimon-Miller  
Professor Emerita  
Massachusetts College of Art & Design  
Boston, Massachusetts

Dyan received her M.A. and M.F.A. in Studio Art from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa and received her B.A. from Saint Ambrose College, Davenport, Iowa in Fine Art. She lives in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts with her husband, Scott Miller. She adapts to living with multiple sclerosis with help from Scott, with the extraordinary care and treatment provided by the Brigham and Women's Multiple Sclerosis Center, and by making and teaching art.

Dyan McClimon-Miller makes works of art in encaustic wax with paper and mixed media works on paper. Now retired, she taught Handmade Made Paper and Book at Mass College Art and Design with supportive accommodations and a positive attitude.





## **“Stephie and Izzie”**

**Artist:** Brogan Joe Murphy, Watertown

**Description:** 36” x 24” Acrylic on Linen

### **Artist Statement:**

My portrait of Stephie shows her as I know her, ever ebullient, playing with her constant companion, her service dog, “Izzie”. I am a paraplegic, and I met Stephie and Izzie

through my work as a Peer Mentor at Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital. Stephie was a bright, athletic ten year old when she was struck with a rare neurological disorder called dystonia. As a result, her muscles progressively deteriorated, contracting in painful spasms, and leaving her body twisted. She was so contracted when I met her she was unable to sit up at all, driving her wheelchair fully supine, in an almost fetal position. Recent success with Botox injections have allowed her to sit up for the first time in years. Numerous operations and near constant pain have not kept her down. In spite of repeated procedures and cross country visits to neurological specialists, she finished high-school, attended the University of Illinois, and after graduating, found a full time job in Boston. As if that was not enough, she founded her own non-profit group, “Path-Ways”, for the purpose of arranging social engagements for the disabled. Stephie was my first thought when I considered a subject for “Breaking Barriers.” I have met few people who have overcome more barriers than Stephie. My painting shows her in a moment of joy with Izzie. Behind her, in the near distance, a grass covered path leads up to a fence, representing the many barriers she has overcome, and perhaps those that may still lie ahead.

**About the Artist:** In 1978, Murphy began his lifelong study of painting with David Hardy at the Atelier School of Classical Realism. Trained in methods and materials of the old masters, Murphy is equally at home with portraiture, landscape, still life, and figurative work. Murphy has participated in successful group and solo exhibitions in Boston, New York, Washington D.C., Minneapolis, Tulsa, Sacramento and San Francisco. His works are found in prominent public and private collections, including the White House, and the Maryland State House. In 1993 Murphy suffered a serious back injury, eventually requiring two spinal fusions. A mishap during the second surgery left him a paraplegic. In spite of his paralysis, Murphy continues to paint from his studio in Watertown, Massachusetts. A gallery of his work can be seen on his website at [broganjoemurphy.com](http://broganjoemurphy.com).



## **“Spinal Chord”**

**Artist:** Jessica Nora, Jamaica Plain

**Description:** 16” x 21” photograph of an original steel sculpture, Spinal Chord. The steel sculpture is twice the size of a human spinal chord. Different sections of it are wide and sturdy, while other parts of it are thin and seemingly fragile. Inspired by my experience with Narcolepsy, this piece balances on what appears to be the most fragile part of the sculpture, sitting on the pointed edges of the appendages. The sculpture evokes pain and tension while also displaying elegance and grace. This image shows the sculpture as well as multiple shadows that

distort the shape of the sculpture. These distortions speak to the complexities behind living with an invisible chronic illness.

**Artist Statement:** At the age of 18, I was diagnosed with Narcolepsy. Narcolepsy still needs a lot of research, but it is commonly accepted that this illness effects the central nervous system. Spinal Chord depicts the continued success in completing seemingly impossible tasks, as is my experience living with multiple invisible illnesses.

**About the Artist:** Jessica Nora is a sculptor from Boston, who works in various media, particularly metals, fibers, and wax. She received her BFA in Interdisciplinary Fine Arts with a focus in Sculpture from University of the Arts in May 2016. She also studied abroad at Studio Art Center International in Florence where she had the opportunity to work in Carrara White Marble and develop her love for carving. She has shown her work at University of the Arts’ Annual Art Unleashed and a variety of curated shows at University of the Arts, as well as in two shows in Florence, Italy. Her work is also shown regularly at the Kugel Collaborative Gallery in Philadelphia, PA and can be occasionally viewed in galleries throughout the greater Boston area. Louise Bourgeois is known to have said, “An artist can show things that other people are terrified of expressing.” This one line acts as the strongest motivation in Jessica’s artwork. With this ability, comes a responsibility—a responsibility to talk about the uncomfortable things that need to be said. Jessica Nora uses her work to get a conversation going, often about the subjects of invisible illnesses or trauma. [JessicaNora.com](http://JessicaNora.com).



## **"Catch My Drift?"**

**Artist:** Elaine Richards, Andover

**Description:** 9.5" x 8" painting.

This was a familiar object from a closer perspective at varying angles, with an alternate palette. It created an interesting expression of colors and qualities. I always find unique beauty in Nature's creations to inspire me. A distinctive piece of driftwood was used for this graphic composition, and the arrangement was unplanned. It was fun to see each section evolve naturally!

**Artist Statement:** My piece reflects the distinct uniqueness of each individual, whose interesting differences are appreciated even more when you look closely, and by changing perspectives. Each person adds their own colorful qualities to the world in a special way. Especially when we dare to express and even celebrate our different abilities!





## **“Banana 55”**

**Artist:** Kyle Stockford,  
Boston

**Description:** 36” x 29” painting, My paintings are a projection of what I believe are a perfectly balanced arrangement of forms, a cohesive map of my mind.

**Artist Statement:** I was removed from Marshfield high school five years ago and placed in a school for students who have social/emotional challenges that complicate their learning. My parents always told me I was going to college. I really didn't think it was a possibility; it just felt like my brain didn't work. My mom and I were told that I have a slow processing speed; I thought it meant I was stupid. My first quarter at Granite Academy I was introduced to the art teacher, Marissa Nadler, and that's when things started to change. Marissa made me realize that I had an outstanding artistic ability. She pushed me; that summer I was accepted to the Massachusetts College of Art and Design Summer Studios Program, and I was hooked. In the next year, I was accepted to five colleges across the United States. Massachusetts College of Art and Design just felt right; it has been my home for over three years now. Since I started at MassArt I have been in 13 off campus group exhibitions, one magazine, and the recipient of the Gamblin Paint Award.

**About the Artist:** Kyle Stockford is an American painter living and working in Boston Massachusetts. Stockford uses an array of tools and materials to form semi-transparent layers of different types of mark-making. This year Kyle Stockford received the Gamblin Paint Award from Robert Gamblin of Gamblin Paints. This November Stockford will have work on display at the Mosesian Center for the Arts in Watertown Massachusetts as a part of the “Open to Interpretation” exhibition. May of 2018 Kyle Stockford will receive a Bachelor in Fine Arts from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in painting.



## **"The Acrobat"**

**Artist:** Elena Stoeva,  
Milton

**Description:** 21" x 19"  
canvas print of an original oil painting depicting a Halloween party in an old prison.

**Artist Statement:** I was inspired by the surreal world which was built in just one evening, where the most unique ones get the highest acceptance and approval.

They are cheered and

celebrated and the boundaries of reality are crashing down as shown in the painting. The surreal world the painting describes breaks the limits of our daily lives. Barriers are broken by searching and admiring the new normal. Which is to be different and show off that you are. I lived in a world created for one evening, but hoped I can carry it out of this old prison with this painting.



## “Legs Optional”

**Artist:** Jennifer Marler, Watertown

**Description:** This multimedia piece, a wood core that has been painted with nail polish and glazed with resin, is centered on a sign reading “You Don’t Need Legs To Stand Tall”. It is intended as a metaphor, broadly emphasizing the wholeness and abilities of disabled individuals, regardless of specific physical or mental deficiencies.

**Artist Statement:** She is a “santos” – a statue that, in particular religious traditions, would be created to represent a saint or revered holy person. A santos can include simply a hand, a head, a bust or a whole person. Originally, I created this piece in the image of Brené Brown, a social worker and author who

has been a leader in the understanding of shame, vulnerability and human connection. When I became disabled ten years ago, I had initially felt a sense of shame myself – something I gratefully worked through by reading Brené’s books and listening to her TED talks. I created her for a private shrine in my living room. When I heard about the MOD Art Exhibit, I was so excited about the prospect that I decided to develop Brene further. She had helped me overcome my shame and I wanted to share the mantra that arose from that experience. You don’t need legs to stand tall...nor arms...nor working eyes or ears. You don’t need to learn in the same way as anybody else or meet criteria that society frequently imposes. You simply need to realize that YOU ARE ENOUGH and that you bring to the world your own voice, perspective and gifts. Being disabled can mean feeling vulnerable. That can be a gift – encouraging us to present ourselves as we truly are and requiring that we, ourselves, embrace that reality.

**About the Artist:** I am a 56 year old Canadian who came to the United States 27 years ago. My early career was as a photojournalist for the United Nations, documenting medical programs on the Thai-Cambodian border. I went on to study medicine and became a pediatric plastic surgeon. A decade ago, I developed an aggressive autoimmune arthritis. My disability experience has prompted new directions for me as an author, artist and disability advocate. I am reentering professional life in the area of health policy.





## **“Freedom From Shame”**

**Artist: Pops Peterson**

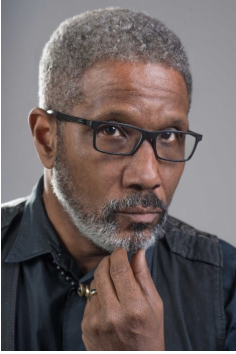
**Description:** 15.5” x 23.75” canvas by artist Pops Peterson, “Freedom from Shame,” portrays a sports hero, a hockey player with left arm ending at the elbow, in his moment of glory. After winning big at a hockey match, a teammate pours champagne over his head in celebration.

**Artist Statement:** “Freedom from Shame” was an intriguing title suggested to me by the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) for the body of work I am creating as their Artist in Residence. A suitable visual concept eluded me, however, until one evening, at a dinner party, I

met Dylan Bader. Dylan was young, tall and ruggedly handsome, unpretentious and remarkably self-assured. Although he was wearing a tank top, it took a moment before I noticed that his right arm ended at the elbow. Yet he was utterly unselfconscious about it. And when Dylan told me he was trying out for a professional hockey team I knew my search for a concept had ended. And I had found my star. Having once been disabled myself due to an accident, paralyzed and using a wheelchair at the age of ten, I have a deep personal connection to the disability community. The massive physical scars I bear on my legs made for an adolescence fraught with insecurities. Dylan could never hide what makes him different. Yet his bearing and his outlook are completely free of bitterness or shame. If anything, Dylan radiates love and power as well as humility. I was profoundly moved by his courage and strength. In an instant, young Dylan Bader became a hero in my eyes, and his example continues to boost my spirit.

In my canvas, “Freedom from Shame,” I set out to portray Dylan as a sports hero in his moment of glory. After winning big at a hockey match, a teammate pours champagne over his head in celebration. The image metaphorically declares that every day of his life Dylan is a true hero. I intend for this image to symbolize the heroism in each and every individual who triumphs daily with a mental or physical disability.

## Jury



**Pops Peterson, Artist** has emerged as a voice for Civil Rights. His desire to make imagery relevant to our times gave him the notion of reinventing the iconic images of Norman Rockwell. Earning a civil rights award from the Northeast Conference on Fair Housing and Civil Rights, Pops became the first ever Artist in Residence of the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. Pops is represented by Sohn Fine Art, Lenox, MA.



**Marian Brown, Founding Executive Director, Arts Connect International**, a Boston-based non-profit committed to cultivating and connecting leaders in the art field who are committed to cultural inclusion and social equity on a global scale. Previously, Marian was the recipient of a Global Health Corps Fellowship to work at the Art and Global Health Center in Malawi, Africa.



**David D'Arcangelo, Director, Massachusetts Office on Disability** Legally blind from a young age, David has built successful careers in both the public and private sectors. David now serves the Baker-Polito Administration as the Director of the MOD, working to bring about full and equal participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life.



**Dan Serig, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Massachusetts College of Art & Design**, where he was previously Dean, Chair and an Associate Professor of Art Education. Since 2002, Serig has been part of dozens of arts programming evaluations throughout the U.S. including the NEA Education Leaders Institutes.



**Charles J. Washburn, Vice President & COO / VSA Massachusetts**, has worked for VSA Massachusetts since 1987. Under his direction VSA Massachusetts created the Open Door Gallery and a second gallery in the Worcester Art Museum. Charlie has helped develop a multi-art and multi-sensory approach to performing arts known as *Inclusive by Design*<sup>SM</sup> to create performances that everyone can enjoy.



Photo credit: Deb Luchini



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–Thank you!



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