List Projects 29: Brittni Ann Harvey & Harry Gould Harvey IV

March 7–June 23, 2024, Bakalar Gallery
The final exhibition of the List Projects series highlighting artistic collaborations features Fall River, Massachusetts–based Brittni Ann Harvey and Harry Gould Harvey IV. Over the past four years, the two artists have tended to an ongoing collaboration as cofounders of the Fall River Museum of Contemporary Art (FR MoCA). This contemporary art space and cultural center sustains a dialogue with the town’s material culture, historical and present, as well as its industrial past. The duo conceived FR MoCA as a shared social practice with an educational mission, and its program seeks to “illuminate the shadows of past industries” in the Massachusetts South Coast region and contribute to the well-being of what they call Fall River’s “social ecology.”

Just as the artists prioritize a relationship to place in FR MoCA, so, too, do they in their respective artistic practices. Bringing this critical aspect of their work into focus, the exhibition features a newly commissioned sculpture that marks a new mode of collaboration for the two. Framing the large, collaboratively authored assemblage, recent and new works by each artist engage, in various ways, the socioeconomic histories and the visual and linguistic culture of the region.

In Brittni Ann Harvey’s Robot Dog series (2021–ongoing), for example, creaturely forms rendered in sinewy bronze and upholstered trefoils connect Fall River’s once-thriving textile mills to the robotics and tech companies now flourishing in Massachusetts. While her fluency in techniques ranging from the traditional (wax casting) to the computerized (machine embroidery) yields objects that appear uncannily out of time, the machined textiles throughout her work reference Fall River’s history with that industry. Further, the artist’s frequent manual interventions to increasingly advanced mechanized production underscore long and complicated relationships between human labor and new technologies that have threatened to devalue it. Woven through a digitalized jacquard process, a new tapestry featuring cybernetic, devotional, and mythic imagery (There was Silence in Heaven about the Space of Half an Hour & I Couldn’t Help but Hear the Humming of Machines [2024]) continues the artist’s formal, conceptual, and personal reflections on links between weaving, computation, automation, and artificial intelligence.

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Harry Gould Harvey IV’s works also consider the region’s economic, labor, and class dynamics. Across his prolific drawing practice, he often blends religious and esoteric imagery with references to Fall River’s significant architectural landmarks (Presupposition of Saint Anne [2023]) and tongue-in-cheek critiques of recent green development strategies (United States Department of Forestry Removal [2021]). For a series of recent sculptures, the artist reclaimed—and charred—segments of carved wooden interior ornamentation from Belcourt Castle, a Gilded Age mansion in Newport, Rhode Island. To these portal-like relief sculptures, the artist adds particle board salvaged from window coverings on the abandoned Bradford Durfee Textile School and his own cast bronze detailing—allusions to postindustrial economic decline as well as to the fact that much of the detail on the Newport mansions was the handcraft of laborers from Fall River.

As frequently as motifs, materials, and techniques relating to the visual culture of the South Coast region appear in both artists’ works, so, too, does devotional iconography. Their shared interest in the esoteric and transcendental lends a spiritual dimension to their respective reflections on the area’s social and economic conditions. The optimism and capacity for healing in mystical and visionary art also offer a hopeful framing for their collective contributions to the stewardship of Fall River’s past and present cultural life.


ABOUT THE SEASON
This special series of experimental List Projects programming commemorates the tenth anniversary of the series and comprises three exhibitions in the Bakalar Gallery. Each presentation pairs two artists who share a history of conversation and fosters their continued collaboration through a joint commission.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Brittni Ann Harvey
Lamb of God (Bowing Robot Dog), 2021
Embroidered polyester, plywood, polyfill, bronze
19½ × 41½ × 23½ in. (50 × 105 × 60 cm)
Courtesy the artist

Harry Gould Harvey IV
Deconstruction Reconstruction, 2021
Colored pencil and charcoal on paper, carved walnut from the Newport
13 × 6½ × 2 in. (33 × 16.5 × 5 cm)
Courtesy the artist

Lament of Resting WaveFace24’/Light/ning Rod
Harry Gould Harvey IV
2024
Colored pencil, graphite, and charcoal on paper
11 × 8½ in. (28 × 21.6 cm)
Courtesy the artist

Weeping Willow Angel (Robot Dog on Hind Legs), 2021
Polyester on jacquard-woven fabric, plywood, polyfill, bronze
19 × 30 × 18 in. (48 × 76 × 45.7 cm)
Courtesy the artist and Someday Gallery, New York

Deconstruction Reconstruction
Harry Gould Harvey IV
2021
Colored pencil and charcoal on paper, carved walnut from the Newport
13 × 6½ × 2 in. (33 × 16.5 × 5 cm)
Courtesy the artist

SPONSORS

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PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Gallery Talk with the Artists
Thursday, May 2, 2024, 5:30 PM
In-person program

All List Visual Arts Center programs are free and open to the public. Registration is required. For more information about events and programs related to this exhibition, please visit: listart.mit.edu/events-programs

FREE DIGITAL GUIDE

Explore the List Visual Arts Center online using our new digital guide, available on Bloomberg Connects, the free arts and culture app. Learn more about the work on view, access videos, view photography, and more, all from wherever you are. Once you download the app, search for or scroll to the MIT List Visual Arts Center to get started.

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