

PLAIN

&

*Fancy*





PLAIN & FANCY

Traditional Works from the Historic Bethlehem Museums and Sites  
paired with contemporary art

by

Leslie Fletcher  
Jill Odegaard  
Scott Sherk & Pat Badt  
Rhonda Wall  
Brian Wiggins

1810 GOUNDIE HOUSE  
Historic Bethlehem Museums and Sites  
September 21 through February 16, 2019

CENTER FOR VISUAL RESEARCH  
Cedar Crest College  
October 28, 2019 through January 2, 2020

THE PAINTING CENTER  
February 25 through March 21, 2020

THE WILLIAM J. AND PEARL F. LEMMON VISITING ARTIST GALLERY  
Kent State University at Stark  
October 1 through 30, 2020

# PLAIN & *Fancy*

Plain & Fancy makes connections between anonymous, early American traditional artisans and contemporary American artists.

“Plain & Fancy” refers to competing styles held in tension in historical Pennsylvania. “The Plain” discouraged decoration and nurtured a simple aesthetic of utilitarian objects and a humble, unadorned lifestyle. “The Fancy” engaged more directly with decorative and visual pleasure. “The Fancy” was more associated with the secular world whereas “The Plain” reflected the disciplined world of the severe religious communities. Sometimes, these lifestyles would converge with one another and plain would become fancy, while fancy became plain. These tensions between the insider and the outsider, the worldly and the meditative, the decorative and the utilitarian continue in the arts as we know them today.

Traditional quilts, rugs, pottery, fine china, chairs, kitchen implements and toys are paired with the contemporary work of six mid-career artists: Leslie Fletcher, Jill Odegaard, Pat Badt and Scott Sherk, Rhonda Wall and Brian Wiggins. Each artist has developed their work in highly unique and personal styles using drawing, fiber, painting, collage and sound. A sense of touch, texture and an affinity to materials can be found in the work of each of these artists. They find themselves caught somewhere between “The Plain” and “The Fancy”.

Leslie Fletcher’s work embraces both “The Plain” and “The Fancy”. Fletcher sets up polyptych compositions that establish resonance and difference between graphite monochrome drawings and the same composition done in heightened color. One could say the graphite greys are plain and the bold color plays fancy. Fletcher says his work “makes strong use of dualities: rational and intuitive, simple and complex, hot and cold, urban and rural, fast and slow, geometric and organic, hard and soft, quiet and loud.” Fletcher’s dualities set up oppositions and challenge expectations.

Brian Wiggins’ paintings emerge from and disrupt the grid, a different way to break expectations. Wiggins’ working method is to create a strategy for a given painting and then



implement it. Each painting demonstrates over time its own surprises. The novelty of the hand's work and the human touch create warm abstractions. Wiggins' method may be simple or plain but the results are fanciful.

Rhonda Wall's work identifies as fancy. The beautiful color and composition offers a way into the serious content of her pieces. Wall responds to real issues in real time. She cuts and pastes from current events to create quirky worlds that question what is going on now. Time collapses and past, present and future coexist in a sensory overload. In Wall's work more is more.

Badt and Sherk's approach is "less is more". They have been a collaborative team for over 2 decades. Badt brings color to their collaborations, Sherk sound. Their approach engages the viewer to participate with multiple sensory experiences by isolating simple colors and sounds and have them plainly resonate together.

Jill Odegaard also uses reduced means to create interesting dichotomies. Recently her work has explored place, through maps, constructing and deconstructing the grid. She comes to this as both a sculptor and a papermaker.

All of these artists currently live and work within the 2-hour radius of NYC in eastern Pennsylvania, although they come from different places. Often we think of the air, light and the general atmosphere of place as having a subtle influence on an artist's sense of color, composition, and narrative. Perhaps history too exudes a subtle influence. The older craft traditions of early America had a strong work ethic, an admiration of craft, design, function and style. Plain & Fancy offers the viewer access to unexpected connections between these beautiful artifacts from the past and and new work from these contemporary art makers.

The Third Barn



▲ Above Left: *The Last Time I Saw Renee* (variation) from the *Untitled Drawings Series*, Graphite pencil and watercolor paints on 300lb cold press watercolor paper, 12" x 9", 2019



▲ Above Right: *The Last Time I Saw Renee* from the *Untitled Drawings Series*, Graphite pencils on 140lb hot press watercolor paper, 12" x 9", 2019

**LESLIE FLETCHER** is an artist based in Allentown, Pennsylvania. For the past several years he has been working primarily on a series of expressive geometric/organic drawings, the Untitled Drawings. The series is concerned with the formal organization of pictorial space: the interrelationships of line, shape, color, value, texture, and space, developed in a manner that gives the drawings both an analytical — formal and emotional — expressive reading. His work has been exhibited widely throughout the country. Mr. Fletcher has taught in the art departments at Muhlenberg College, Moravian College, Lehigh University, Cedar Crest College, and Northampton Community College.

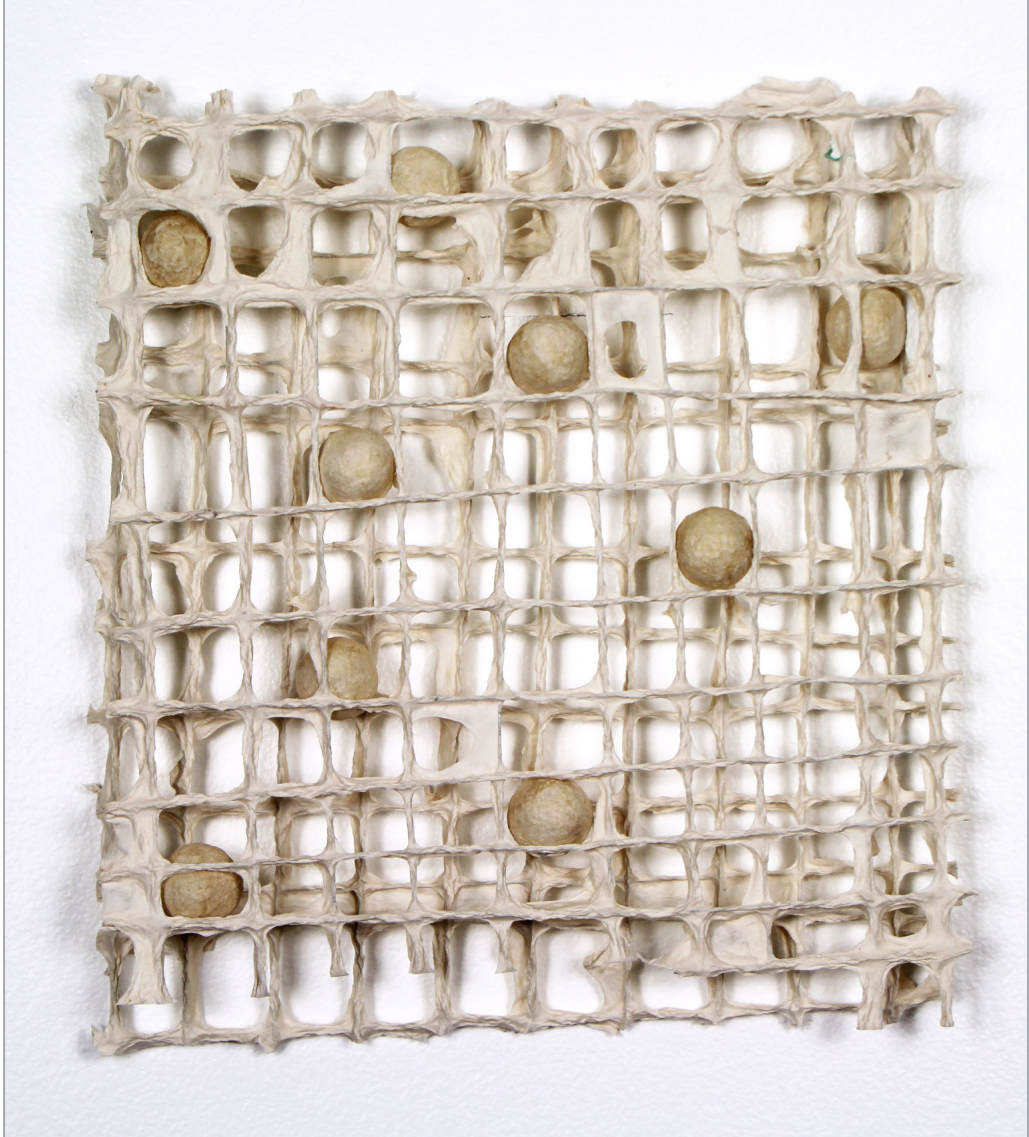
## FLETCHER ARTIST STATEMENT

The series, Untitled Drawings, is concerned with the formal organization of pictorial space: the interrelationships of line, shape, value, texture, color, and space, developed in a manner that gives the drawings both an analytical-formal and emotional-expressive reading. The drawings make strong use of dualities: rational and intuitive, simple and complex, hot and cold, urban and rural, fast and slow, geometric and organic, hard and soft, quiet and loud. As I develop the drawings I think about the sensation of an activity being observed from a variety of viewpoints (analytical, emotional, near, far) and being perceived in a variety of ways (observers watch the same incident from different viewpoints and with different points of view and each understands it in a different way). I am also concerned with concurrent sets of dualities, this and that together, more about that period of time when the dualities are apparent, but lose their sense of impediment and a tenuous resolution is achieved. The Untitled Drawings are currently produced in two different forms: in the first, a wide variety of graphite pencils (and sometimes color pencils) are used, each sharpened to a fine point and applied to a hot, or cold, press 140lb watercolor paper in a variety of hatched and cross hatched patterns; in the second, watercolor paints and/or gouache are brush applied to 300lb hot, or cold, press watercolor paper. Life seems very complex, filled with ambiguity, joy, mystery, frustration, and hope. I try to bring some sense of this, to varying degrees, to each drawing I make, activating, affirming, denying, and ultimately uniting formal and expressive qualities in each piece.

► **Right:** *Crossed Letter*, 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
From the Collection of Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century, people used a cross writing method to save money on postage and paper. When cross writing, the letter writer drafted a page and then turned it 90 degrees and wrote directly over the existing script. The resulting manuscript features a distinct cross pattern where the lines of handwriting intersect perpendicularly. It was then left to the recipient to decipher the layered document. Often, the letters would come with instructions much like those included in this letter to Mrs. Caroline Brown, who lived in Northampton, Pennsylvania from a sibling living in New York. At the end of the first page it reads: "Please read 3rd side crossed next, and then 1st and 2nd."







**JILL ODEGAARD** has lived and worked in Allentown as an artist and educator since her arrival to the Lehigh Valley in 2000. She holds the position of Professor and Chair of the Art Department at Cedar Crest College in Allentown PA. She earned her MFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Minneapolis MN and her BFA from Minnesota State University Moorhead, Moorhead MN. She has exhibited in solo and group shows across the United States and recently has been involved with The Woven Welcome in Pennsylvania, Oregon and Minnesota.

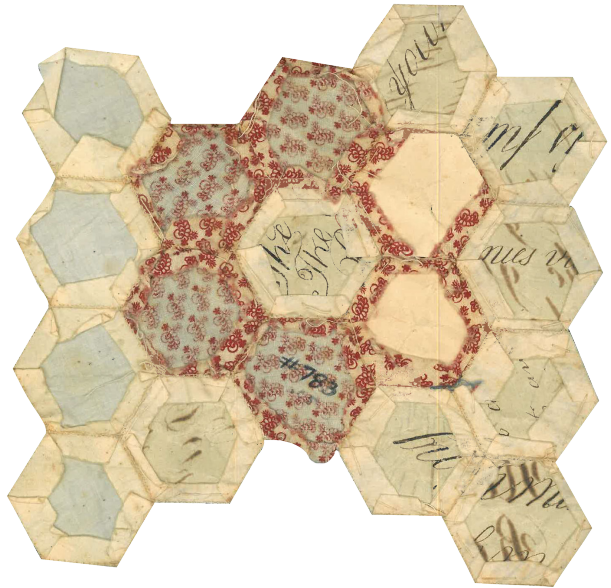
### ODEGAARD ARTIST STATEMENT

My work explores the tactile and ambient nature of design through the use of handmade paper, fabric, and other mixed media. My process is to create structure while de-constructing, weave as I unravel and bring order to the accumulation of material, modules, marks and stitches. Formal elements of line, shape, color, rhythm and repetition underlie decisions I make in my work. Exploration of contemporary interpretations of the grid as they relate to craft traditions and formats of weaving as well as the mark making potential of stitches as they come together to create pattern and texture guide my process. Structure and form evolve and patterns are revealed as emphasis is placed on the spaces between and marks around the edges which are an essential component to the whole.

◀ **Left:** *Between Spaces*, Paper pulp and wire, 10" x 9" x 1", 2019

▶ **Right:** *Quilt Fragments*, 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
From the Collection of Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites

Mosaic quilting was a popular technique in the early and mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The process began with paper pieces cut into geometric shapes, which were then wrapped with fabric and hand-stitched together. Mosaic quilting fell out of popularity as sewing machines became more accessible. The paper templates in these particular fragments appear to be made from remnants of a handwritten letter, as evidenced by the script still visible. These patches are believed to have been made by a member of the Kummer Family in Pennsylvania after 1817.





▲ Above: *Tears of Rain*, Oil on support with electronics and sound, support dimensions 40" x 30", installation size variable, 2017

## SCOTT SHERK and PAT BADT often work as a collaborative team. Scott

Sherk and Pat Badt both have independent studio practices as a sound sculptor and painter, respectively. They have been collaborating as a team since 1997 HorizonLines (Kim Foster Gallery). Their recent collaborations include: Route 22 Haiku (Soft Machine Gallery 2019), Edges | Transitions (Suzanne Arnold Gallery, 2017), Cor + Som at Evoramonte Castle in Portugal (2016) and After Lodi with Sound Shadows at the Allentown Art Museum (2015). They have a sound and color piece in the permanent collection of the American Embassy in Riga, Latvia. Individually they both have studio practices and are Emeriti Professors at Muhlenberg College and Cedar Crest College, respectively.

### SHERK ARTIST STATEMENT

I am fascinated by two things — the ability to create space using sound, and the possibility of revealing unheard sounds. Space + sound = place. Phonography — the art of sound hunting — provides material for my work. Sculpture — the control and manipulation of space — determines the final form. I search for sounds and place them in an immersive space using ambisonic surround sound. From revealing the sounds of electromagnetic forces within a computer to those mysterious noises deep underwater, I take the listener to a new place and a contemplation of the complexities of contemporary life.

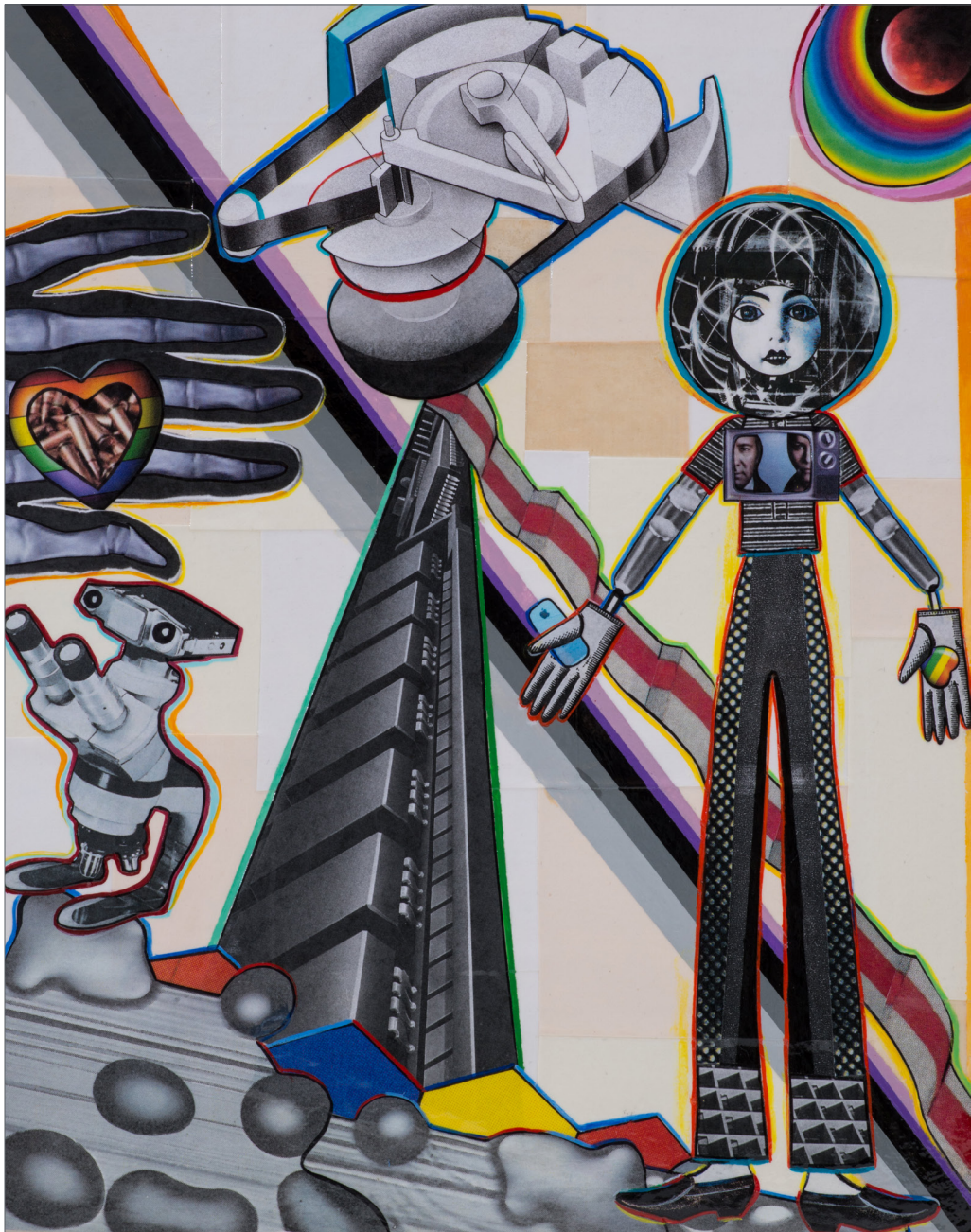
### BADT ARTIST STATEMENT

As a painter I want color to be my handwriting, not gesture. To do this I paint through a woven matrix of string that demands that I stay on the surface of the painting. Gesture is restricted and time is advanced in a kind of geologic accumulation of layers. These layers of paint become a history, just as their historical sources come from specific events that may be included as source material on the backs of the paintings or reflected in the painting titles. Art making for me is a process that filters experience through sensibility. I make coded color abstractions that recall specific places or events. Within the daily routine resides the culture of life and the act of painting is my way of marking and remembering.

► **Right:** *Trombone Choir Music Book, 19<sup>th</sup> Century*  
From the Collection of Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites

Music was an integral part of the daily life of the early Moravians. Wherever they went, Moravians brought their instruments, hymnals, and music manuscripts. The Bethlehem Area Moravian Trombone Choir was founded when the first complete quartet (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) of trombones arrived in 1754. This musical group announced the arrival of dignitaries and the death of Church members, played for the Easter Dawn Service, Christmas vigils, and many other religious and secular occasions. Trombone Choir musicians would play from books containing the individual, handwritten music for each member of the quartet.





**RHONDA WALL** received her BFA from Rhode Island School of Design and her MFA from Vermont College. Wall works in a variety of media including painting, drawing, collage, prints, mixed media, installation, and performance. In the 1980s, Wall was part of the vibrant NYC East Village art scene. Wall's work has been reviewed in publications including The New York Times, New York Magazine and ARTNews. Her artwork is in public and private collections including The City College of New York, the Allentown Art Museum and the Keith Haring Foundation. Recent solo exhibitions have been at Spring/Break Art Show, NYC and Accola Griefen Gallery, NYC.

### WALL ARTIST STATEMENT

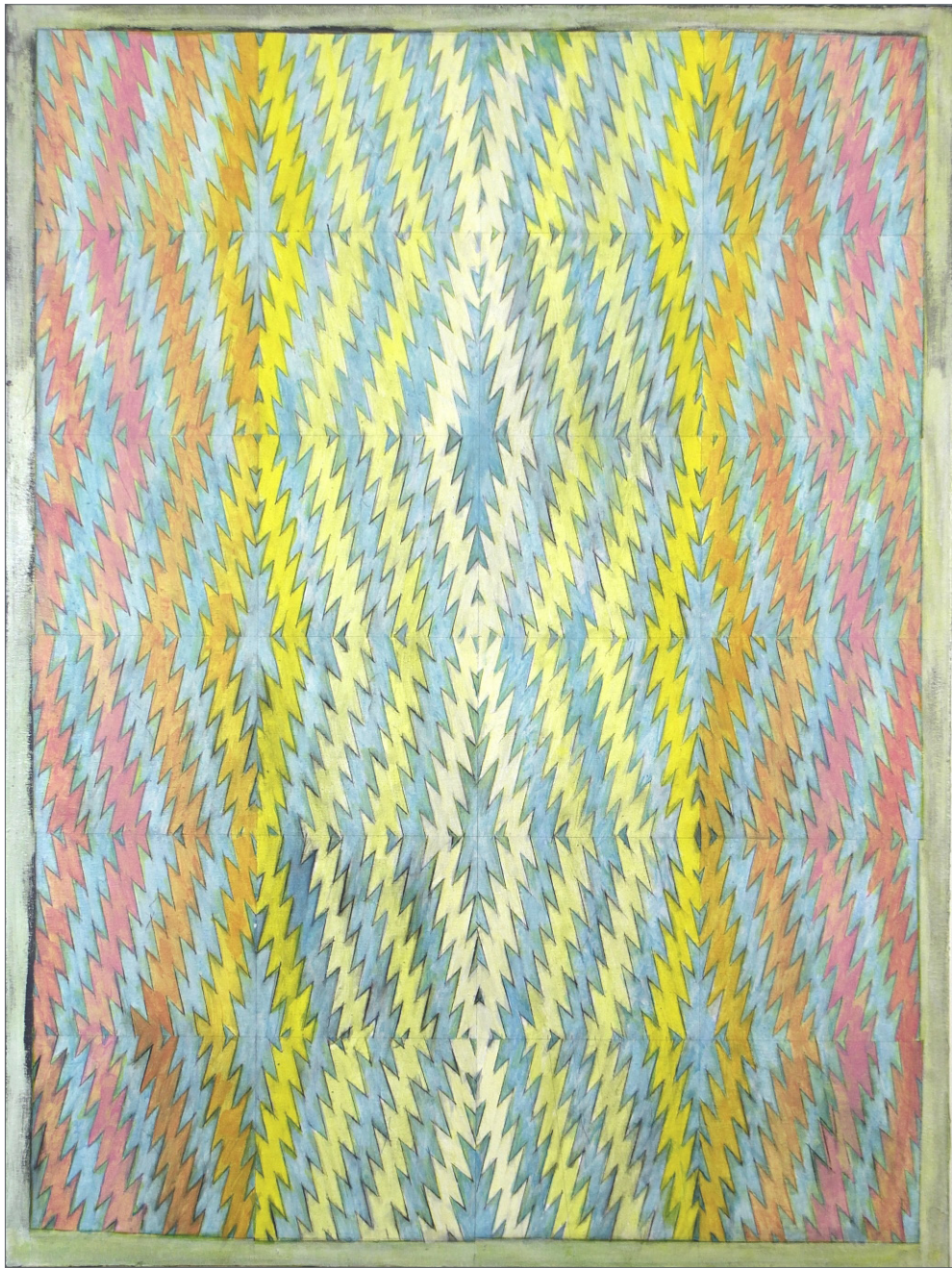
My painting/collages create hybrids of factual and fictional subject matter in an effort to transport the viewer to another place — an invented yet believable world where past, present and future merge together and everything happens at the same time. I research and collect images, headlines, and visual phenomenon based on a specific theme. The images come from printed matter and the Internet. From historical and pop icons, scientific breakthroughs, symbols, 60's advertisements, political campaigns and natural disasters, I pick things that are particular to the situation. A piece of collage is like a tube of paint, just another material to use. In the studio, I'm not afraid of anything. I like unpredictability, like a game, a challenge. I'll ask myself, "How is this game going to end?" It just has to play itself out; I am an observer and a participant. In the end, my work is about survival.

◀ *Left: House of Shards, Bullets, I'm with Orlando, Paint and Collage on board, 11" x 14", 2016*

▶ **Right:** Cookie Cutter, 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
From the Collection of Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites

Tin cookie cutters were often handcrafted by tinsmiths out of scrap material. They featured a variety of shapes and subject matter. This cutter depicts a variation of the "heart in hand" motif frequently found in Shaker communities. The design is believed to be inspired by Mother Ann Lee, founder of the Shakers, who declared: "Put your hands to work, and your hearts to God." It continues to serve as a symbol of charity and warm welcome.





**BRIAN WIGGINS** was born in Northwest Arkansas in 1965. He completed his BFA in painting and printmaking at Memphis College of Art in 1989. After moving around a bit he eventually ended up in New York City and currently lives and works in Northeastern Pennsylvania with his family.

### WIGGINS ARTIST STATEMENT

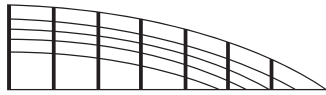
I'm willing to divest painting of many things to achieve a particular sense about space. Space that isn't just solid but maintains the same qualities of transience as light. The directness of the design establishes an equilibrium that is then undermined by the placement of color. This spatial imbalance and continual flux is what I look for.

◀ **Left:** *Untitled*, Acrylic and pencil on canvas, 60" x 30", 2019

▶ **Right:** *Toleware Tray*, 19<sup>th</sup> Century  
From the Collection of Historic Bethlehem Museums & Sites

Toleware or "tinplate" refers to a process in which tin objects are treated with a series of decorative techniques including japanning, lacquering, hand painting, and embellishing with gold or copper. The layers of varnish and paint help to prevent the tin material from rusting despite frequent use and washing. Though toleware typically features a dark, almost black base, the tray depicted here incorporates a brighter, metallic brown background and the vibrant floral themes most frequently associated with American Folk Art.





#### CENTER FOR VISUAL RESEARCH

The mission of the Center for Visual Research at Cedar Crest College is to present exhibitions that introduce our community to innovative ideas and timely concepts about the practice of making art. Our exhibition programming leans toward contemporary art that directly relates to the art major curriculum.

## **Historic Bethlehem** MUSEUMS & SITES

#### THE GOUNDIE HOUSE

The mission of Historic Bethlehem Museums and Sites is to bring history to life by educating the public about Bethlehem's rich heritage, by preserving historic sites and by collecting, preserving and exhibiting historical and artistic objects that can be used to tell the stories of Bethlehem's people.



# THE PAINTING CENTER

## THE PAINTING CENTER

The Painting Center is a non-profit organization in New York City with strong roots in the art community and a reputation for integrity in its programming. Our mission is to provide exhibition opportunities for emerging, mid-career and established artists. Curators use our space to present contemporary thesis exhibitions on visual arts, artists, and art making practices. The Painting Center has continually built upon its purpose of offering an alternative space dedicated to the exhibition of painting and various media regardless of market appeal. The Painting Center is a gathering place for artists and those who love art; it is a democratic arena that fosters dialogue, experimentation, and community among artists. It does not champion one school or tradition, but welcomes and encourages diverse viewpoints.



**STARK**

## THE WILLIAM J. AND PEARL F. LEMMON VISITING ARTIST GALLERY

The Lemmon Gallery is a teaching gallery for KSU at Stark Campus and Stark County community. We have a commitment not only to students, staff and faculty but also to the community at large to present high caliber art through exhibitions. The gallery contextualizes the work by stressing the meaning, function, and the relationship between the artwork and the social or historical condition in which it was created. Each exhibition has been chosen by the gallery committee for its relevance to our curriculum so that the exhibit may further the teaching we do in our studio and art history classrooms.



#### EXHIBITION ORGANIZER

The Third Barn is an experimental studio portal that includes curatorial projects and art studio practice. Its mission is to build community by generating conversation through art, exhibitions, and performances. The Third Barn encourages interdisciplinary and inter-generational dialog through the arts: visual, sound, written word and performance. Its goal is to find intersections between different disciplines, to introduce new artists and to foster openness to connections between people and different art practices. [www.thethirdbarn.org](http://www.thethirdbarn.org)



#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# CEDAR CREST COLLEGE

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Hours: M – F, 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.  
Sat. – Sun. , 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. and by appointment.  
Gallery closed on College holidays.  
All events are free and open to the public.



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