



## Collaboration as an Art Form at the Islip Art Museum

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*Text by Mary Gregory, Photos by Adel Gorgy*



There's a proverb that says "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Working together – collaborating – is the antithesis of many artists' working methods. It takes concentration, deliberation and action to make art. And yet, artists get many of their ideas from other art and artists. The creative spark doesn't often catch fire in a vacuum, and most major artistic leaps have been made as reactions, responses, or outright rejections. Artists need art, and not just their own.

That's the impetus and concept behind the Islip Art Museum's current exhibition, "The Art of Collaboration." It features the work of 66 artists and was born of a renaissance in creativity for two of them, the exhibition's curator, Holly Gordon and painter, Ward Hooper. Gordon and Hooper have worked on a series titled "Brush/Lens" for several years, and two of their pieces are included. They're all about perspective, new ways of seeing, and inspiration, as are all of the collaborations in the exhibition.



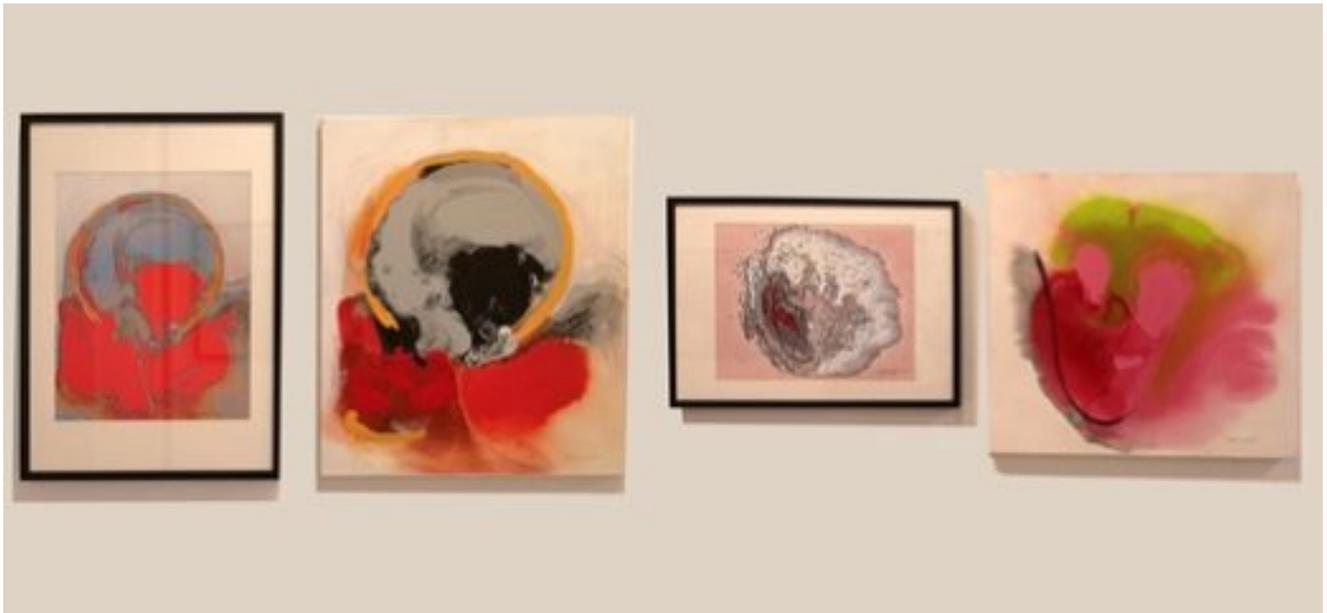
*Kym Fulmer, Lesley Obrock & Stephanie Pinerio, "Put A Bird On It" and "A Place at the Table," Mixed Media*

Gordon characterizes the exhibition as the "momentary culmination" of a process that's been set in motion, as friends, family members, imagery, words, sounds, thoughts, materials, shapes and labor have come together, sometimes for first-ever collaborations, sometimes extending long-time working relationships.



*Mark Tansey & Robin Tewes, "Soldier/Housewife," Oil and Acrylic on Wood*

Mark Tansey and Robin Tewes share two sides of a small painting, "Soldier/Housewife." Tewes painted the right side, Tansey the left. Those who've seen Tansey's work at the Metropolitan Museum or another major collection may recognize its monochromatic complexity. His work often portrays a moment of contradiction with a jolt of humor. Here, though, he uses his limited palette to depict a soldier in uniform, standing alone, looking down. Tewes also creates narratives through pictorial realism punched up with color. Their panel presents two individuals: a man and a woman. What can we tell about them? Each is wearing a uniform of sorts. Neither looks carefree. All that's revealed is something about their roles, nothing about their souls. So, in fact, their painting tells us a great deal about assumptions, labels, the masks people wear, how they're read, and the depths behind surfaces.



***Marsha Solomon & Adel Gorgy, "Star Formations" and "Calyx and Pink" Paintings and Photographic Artworks***

Marsha Solomon and Adel Gorgy present a group of vibrant abstract paintings and photographs. Solomon is known for the sense of atmosphere and space she achieves in evocative, ethereal forms and lines. Here, they recall natural forces from small to grand – a blossoming flower and the births of stars. Like the natural phenomena that inspired them, Solomon’s paintings combine precision and chance, subtlety and energy. Adel Gorgy’s photographic artwork is filled with layers, references, techniques and meanings. Yet, he states, all those fall behind, and the image is what remains. Gorgy merges the conceptual with the visual, challenging the boundaries of photography. He’s worked for years on series that abstract, recontextualize and blur the boundaries between painting and photography. Which came first? Who inspired whom? That’s not the point. Rather, for both artists, it’s about seeing more.



***Holly Gordon & Ward Hooper, "The Boys of Summer," Photo-Liminalism and Watercolor***

Seeing is also at the core of the Brush/Lens collaborations between Holly Gordon and Ward Hooper. Hooper’s vivid watercolors and Gordon’s organically evolving “Photo-Liminal” images create rich dialogues about locations,



mansions of the super rich grow, instead. In “This Is How I Say Potato,” Price has collaborated with Juan Lopez Espantaleon and 49 performers who appear on a video (next to a poster) pronouncing the word for potato in different languages. Some are comical in their recitations, some are serious or mysterious, but around the world, we all know potatoes – it’s an “E Pluribus Unum” kind of commentary.



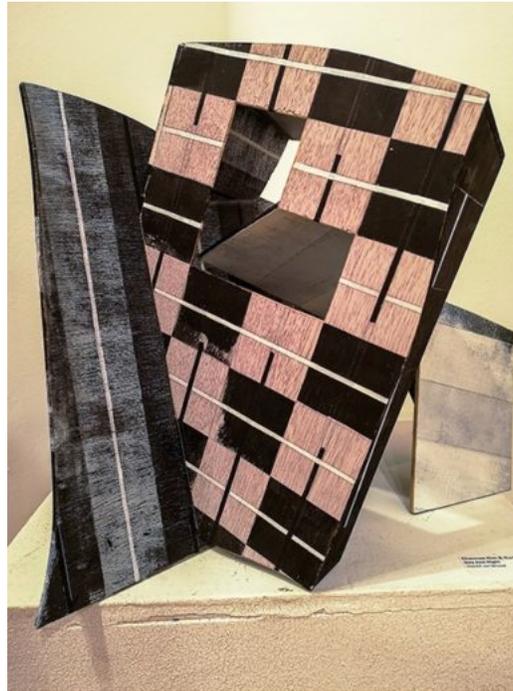
**Linda Prentiss & Mark Propper, “Border Crosser,” Woodcut Monoprint**



**Tian Hui & Ma Jin, “Made-in-China Is Over,” Garment, Chain on Plywood**

Another commentary with less subtle political tones is Linda Prentiss and Mark Propper’s woodcut monoprint “Border Crosser.” Tones of red, white, black and blue outline a weapon-wielding security agent, a hunched figure, and an American flag. Beneath the image is the famous excerpt from Emma Lazarus’s “The New Colossus,” *Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.* Tian Hui and Ma Jin present two large portraits with text

running through and across the surfaces. “The Road to Serfdom-F. Hayek #1 + #2” and their mixed-media panel, “Made-in-China Is Over” comprised of garments, shipping materials and chains, all make strong statements.



*Cheonae Kim & Kurt Steger, “Day and Night,” Pencil on Wood*



*Peter Josyph & Kevin Larkin’s Mixed Media Sculptures*

Rosemary Wilson Sloggatt and Constance Sloggatt Wolf worked together to create a large-scale woodcut print. Beyond the size of “Flora,” it’s filled with bold lines, energetic curves and strong contrasts. Positive/negative space, human/plant, black/white, innocence and a hint of menace come together powerfully. Three artists, Kym Fulmer, Lesley Obrock and Stephanie Pinerio joined their work in three sculptural assemblages that are filled with line, form, texture, layers and reminders of Braque and Picasso. Peter Josyph and Kevin Larkin’s painted sculptures hearken back to Rauschenberg’s “Combines” with some of Red Groom’s raucous energy mixed in. The written word and images come together in works by Christine DiMauro, Regina Halliday, Joanna Halliday, Galina Asanova Melnik and Irina Blinova-Nelson.



***Mary Ahern & Mary Schlotter, "Succulent Squared" and "Arrangement for Succulent Squared"***



***Matthew Moadel, Minoo Moadel & Alfonso Cid, "Mirage" and Flute and Percussion Accompaniment***

One of the delights of the show is the surprising combinations some artists have presented. Mary Ahern and Mary Schlotter join photographs of succulents with an arrangement of live plants. Matthew Moadel, Minoo Moadel and Alfonso Cid joined talents to pair a painting with a musical arrangement. Curator Gordon stated that her hope was that the exhibition "challenged artists to extend and expand beyond themselves." It also challenges the viewer to consider how art is made, what it can include, and how it can voice ideas and speak to those who listen.

Other artists included in the exhibition are Richard Anello, Beth Atkinson, Ryan Atkinson, Alex Atkinson, Krista Biedenbach, Joyce Bressler, Kathleen Celestin Parks, Loretta Corbisiero, Kelly Desmond, Vasilios Drakos, Suzette Dushi, Juan Lopez Espantaleon, Lisa Federici, Veronique Fischetti, James G Fishetti, Terrence Fogarty, Richard Gardner, Andrea M. Gordon, Justin Greenwald, Randee Greiner, Ellen Halle Schiff, Joanna Halliday, Katherine Hiscox, Tian Hui, Ma Jin, Lisa Kalish, Deborah Katz, John Kennedy, Cheonae Kim, Diana Kovacs, Andrea Manning, Kevin McCormack, Rachel Novack, Eileen Novak, Suzanne Rehor, Danielle Savarese, Joseph Scinto, Becca Seibert, Tom Sena, Kurt Steger, Dan Welden, and Meg Wenzel.