

TRUST ME

OBJECT LABELS

Lola Flash

b. 1959; Montclair, NJ

Untitled, Provincetown, MA, 1990

From the series *Provincetown*

Chromogenic print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2022.40

Laura Aguilar

b. 1959; San Gabriel, CA

d. 2018; Long Beach, CA

Nature Self-Portrait #6, 1996

From the series *Nature Self-Portraits*

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Director's Discretionary Fund 2019.395

Laura Aguilar

b. 1959; San Gabriel, CA

d. 2018; Long Beach, CA

Will Work For #4, 1993

From the series *Will Work For*

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Director's Discretionary Fund 2019.394

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Muriel Hasbun

b. 1961; San Salvador, El Salvador

¿Sólo una sombra?/Only a Shadow (Ester III), 1993–94

(printed 1994)

From the series *Santos y sombras (Saints and Shadows)*

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2022.211

Muriel Hasbun

b. 1961; San Salvador, El Salvador

Todos los santos (Volcán de Izalco, amén)/All the Saints (Izalco Volcano, Amen), 1995–96 (printed 1996)
From the series *Santos y sombras (Saints and Shadows)*
Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2022.212

Mary Manning

b. 1972; Alton, IL

Milling Around the Village, 2022
Chromogenic prints, mat board, and artist's frame

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee

Mary Manning

b. 1972; Alton, IL

Mulberry (for Moyra D), 2020
Chromogenic print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee

Jenny Calivas

b. 1984; Dover, NH

Self-Portrait While Buried #16, 2021
From the series *Self-Portraits While Buried*
Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Anne Levy Fund

Genesis Báez

b. 1990; Attleboro, MA

The Sound of a Circle, 2018

Inkjet print

Purchase with funds from the Anne Levy Fund

D'Angelo Lovell Williams

b. 1992; Jackson, MS

Elysian, 2018

Inkjet print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2020.129

Genesis Báez

b. 1990; Attleboro, MA

Parting (Braid), 2021

Inkjet print

Purchase with funds from the Anne Levy Fund

Barbara Hammer

b. 1939; Los Angeles, CA

d. 2019; New York, NY

Barbara & Terry, 1972

Gelatin silver print on board

Purchase with funds from the Director's Discretionary Fund 2018.149

Though best known for her avant-garde, lesbian, feminist filmmaking projects of the 1970s and 1980s, Barbara Hammer also created a series of black-and-white photographs at the beginning of her career of herself as well as her friends, lovers, and collaborators. Through tender depictions of bodies at rest, at play, or engaged in sex, the artist affirms the worthiness of the everyday as a subject for art, while offering these intimate moments as testament to a life lived joyfully in queer community. The photographs also give shape and dimension to the artist's social circle at the time; some individuals appear more than once, and Hammer frequently names them in the works' titles. In *Barbara & Terry*, Hammer lies in tall grass, entangled with her then partner Terry Sendgraff—an aerialist and choreographer who would also feature in Hammer's 1978 film *Double Strength*.

Alvin Baltrop

b. 1948; Bronx, NY

d. 2004; New York, NY

The Piers (collapsed architecture, couple buttfucking),
1979 (print date unknown)

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2018.186

Alvin Baltrop's images reveal the intertwined communities of gay men cruising, transgender people, sunbathers, artists, and the unhoused who found refuge—if not safety—within the architectural disarray of the then crumbling Hudson River piers, some of which still stand near the Whitney's current location. Baltrop frequented this area while working as a self-employed mover to support himself after serving in the Vietnam War. Naked bodies, often engaged in sex, appear at a distance (as in this image) or perform close to the camera. Baltrop sometimes hung suspended from a harness to make photographs surreptitiously, and at other times worked collaboratively with his subjects—mostly gay men like himself. The art historian Douglas Crimp has written about the era of the piers pictured here (roughly 1975 to 1986): "The complexity of Baltrop's legacy resides not only in the record his photographs provide of utopian and dystopian occurrences, but also in their evidence that the moment in Manhattan's history when we could so thoroughly reinvent ourselves was as precarious as the places where we did it."

Moyra Davey

b. 1958; Toronto, Canada

Trust Me, 2011

Chromogenic prints, collaged printed labels, tape, canceled postage stamps, and fiber-tipped pen

Gift of Laura Belgray and Steven Eckler 2020.181a-p

In the 2010s, Moyra Davey began mailing color photographs to friends and gallerists, who would return them to her with surface abrasions, dents, tape residue, fingerprints, stamps, and creases—scars from the many hands and mechanisms of the postal system. The works in this series feature soft, interior scenes from Davey's own Washington Heights apartment in upper Manhattan, and relate to the artist's long-standing practice of representing her living space through photographs and film.

The work on view features passages from Lynne Tillman's novel *American Genius, A Comedy* (2006), in which a recurring theme is the narrator's sensitive skin and the relationship between scars and memory. The skin's tenderness and fragility at times seem to mirror the narrator's fretful anxiety, suggesting a kind of slippage between physical and psychic vulnerabilities, which is also foregrounded in Davey's mailed photographs of her most intimate surroundings. In the pairing of images with text fragments, Davey's photographs and Tillman's words each take on an additional charge.

Lola Flash

b. 1959; Montclair, NJ

4 ray, 1991

From the series *Provincetown*

Chromogenic print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2022.38

In November 1990, Lola Flash's friend Ray Navarro, a fellow artist and ACT UP activist, died from complications related to AIDS at the age of twenty-six. A few months later, on an early morning walk along the beach in Provincetown, Massachusetts, Flash encountered an abandoned wheelchair, interpreting it as a sign from Ray, that he was present on the beach. This work is an example of Flash's signature "cross-color" technique, which they developed in the late 1980s by printing images shot with slide film onto negative photo paper to achieve a dazzling reversal of light and dark, and of warm and cool colors. This transformation helped preserve the anonymity of their subjects, most of whom were queer people of color. The cross-color photographs offer visions of a world in which queer sociality, love, and joy are celebrated and protected, while also making space for anger, grief, and remembrance.

Flash describes the impact of AIDS activism on their photography.

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Laura Aguilar

b. 1959; San Gabriel, CA

d. 2018; Long Beach, CA

Plush Pony #2, 1992

From the series *Plush Pony*

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Director's Discretionary Fund 2019.396

Laura Aguilar's *Plush Pony* series features portraits of regulars at the eponymous lesbian bar in the Eastside section of Los Angeles. The artist made these photographs in 1992 in the wake of widespread unrest after four LAPD officers were acquitted for the brutal beating of Rodney King. In letters to her friends, Aguilar decried the skewed images of a violent and racialized working class she saw in the news, and the palpable feeling of despair in the city at that time—especially for people of color. The *Plush Pony* photographs offer another perspective, depicting working-class women as members of a loving and caring community. Aguilar did not always feel a sense of belonging in this scene, however, and the more reserved images in the series hint at her fear of exclusion.

Muriel Hasbun

b. 1961; San Salvador, El Salvador

X post facto (6.7), 2009–13

From the series *X post facto (équis anónimo)*

Pigmented inkjet print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2022.215

During her childhood, Muriel Hasbun’s father—a dentist—was asked to identify casualties of the Salvadoran civil war (1979–92) using eerie and outsize images of teeth, fillings, and other anatomical signatures to identify otherwise anonymous victims of violence. Hasbun rediscovered the dental X-rays decades later, after her father died, and rephotographed them to make the series *X post facto (équis anónimo)*. The resulting new photographs offer intimate linkages to people we cannot see or know, revealing only what the artist calls “relics” or “traces” that have been “recorded in the flesh.” Markers of cultural identity, both hidden and overt, run through Hasbun’s work, gesturing to her father’s Palestinian origins, her mother’s Polish and French Jewish ancestry, and her own upbringing in El Salvador.

Mary Manning

b. 1972; Alton, IL


His Estate, 2022

Chromogenic prints, mat board, and artist's frame

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee

In *His Estate*, Mary Manning rephotographed two pictures made decades earlier by their father, Mike, shortly after his death from Covid-19 in 2020. During Manning's childhood, Mike would regularly pull his car over to photograph flowers he had spotted from the road, leading to many interrupted journeys and exasperated passengers. The artist now recalls these times with great fondness and used their father's old camera—inherited from him—to make this photograph. *His Estate* insists on the importance of the everyday: people, objects, and moments made extraordinary through the artist's careful attention to them. Works like *Milling Around the Village* (on view nearby) similarly describe webs of friendship and creative community. In the thoughtful configuration of 35mm prints, Manning draws out poetic and formal relationships between seemingly unrelated images, inviting the viewer's own associations.

Hear why Manning describes this work as a “tribute.”

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Jenny Calivas

b. 1984; Dover, NH

Self-Portrait While Buried #12, 2021

From the series *Self-Portraits While Buried*

Gelatin silver print

Purchase with funds from the Anne Levy Fund

In her ongoing series *Self-Portraits While Buried*, Jenny Calivas pays homage to artist Ana Mendieta's *Siluetas Series* (1973–80) and broader traditions of feminist image-making. In Calivas's photographs, the culmination of a larger performance, a wired timer shutter remains visible in the artist's hand. Although her collaborators play a critical role in both the burial process and in helping to frame the image, Calivas retains control of the camera and how her body is depicted on film. The artist's agency is central—and essential to counteracting a traumatic memory from her past: as a teenager, Calivas dozed off on the beach and awoke to find a man masturbating as he watched her from nearby. Through the meditative ritual of returning to and emerging from the earth, Calivas seeks to reclaim and rediscover her relationship to the natural world.

Genesis Báez

b. 1990; Attleboro, MA

Crossing Time, 2022

Inkjet print

Purchase with funds from the Anne Levy Fund

In *Crossing Time*, Genesis Báez represents intergenerational ties with a length of thread supported on one end by her mother. The artist's shadow appears to hold up the other end, creating the illusion of an unbroken line between the disparate worlds of the two figures. Through such carefully staged tableaux—mostly featuring the women in her family—Báez's photographs convey the many forms of distance felt by members of the Puerto Rican diaspora, and how gesture and touch can bridge them. Báez grew up between Massachusetts and Puerto Rico, and her work reflects this inherent tension, a sense of place and belonging “disrupted,” as the artist has said, “by migration, colonial legacies, and climate change.” Cinematic and sometimes surreal, the images offer potential answers to impossible questions: How does one photograph a whisper, for example, or describe the sound of a circle? Can a certain slant of golden light, and the shadows of bodies, reveal hidden pathways and points of connection?

Dakota Mace

b. 1991; Albuquerque, NM

Diné

Béésh Łigaii II, 2022

From the series *Béésh Łigaii*

Chemigrams

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee

As a teenager, Dakota Mace discovered that an allergy to silver not only would prevent her from practicing her family's trade (silversmithing) but also from adopting the artistic technique of gelatin silver printing, the process used for most black-and-white photography. This sensitivity led her to the experimental approach to artmaking that she is known for: combining beadwork, embroidery, and other craft traditions with alternative photographic processes like the chemigram—in which images are made without the use of a camera by painting chemicals directly onto light-sensitive paper. In the *Béésh Łigaii* series, the artist pays homage to the significance of the number four in Diné culture as a symbol for the interconnectedness of all things, and to the silversmithing designs passed down through generations of her family. In this particular work, Mace abstracts those designs to honor bonds of kinship and ancestry, while also making her own unique contribution to this lineage as a visual artist.

D'Angelo Lovell Williams

b. 1992; Jackson, MS


Nah, 2018

Inkjet print

Purchase with funds from the Photography Committee 2020.130

D'Angelo Lovell Williams has said *Nah* is a meditation on freedom. The image was partly inspired by reports of the May 1803 passage of enslaved Igbo people from what is now Nigeria to the United States. As the voyage neared its end off the coast of Georgia, a group of the Igbo rose in rebellion, drowning their captors and grounding the ship before committing mass suicide by submerging themselves in the marshy waters of St. Simons Island. In this self-portrait, the artist wears a diaphanous white gown that they had previously worn to a drag ball, asserting their freedom of self-expression. The work's title refers to the historical example of resistance to enslavement, as well as Lovell Williams's refusal of "anything or anyone that keeps Black and queer people from living full lives and succeeding."

Learn how Lovell Williams took this self-portrait.

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