

2026 Biennial: Audio Guide Transcript

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100 Raven Halfmoon

Guardians

Raven Halfmoon: I am Raven Halfmoon. I am an enrolled citizen of the Caddo Nation.

Narration: Halfmoon discusses her work, *Guardians*.

Raven Halfmoon: I feel like now, more than ever during this time, socially, politically, we need people like that. We need someone that has your back that's there for you. I feel like a lot of, a lot of histories, a lot of voices at this moment in time are, actively being silenced, actively not being taught in schools. Especially someone who is from Oklahoma. We are a very red state. We are in the Bible belt. But then with Oklahoma, we also have the most federally recognized tribes of any other state. And that's been through forced removal. I feel like it's my job to just continue to share, not only my history, but Native history. I mean, we've been here for thousands of thousands of years. And so, at this time, at this moment, this piece is here to take a stand. To protect, guard and to be there with you. To be there with anybody who needs to share their voice, who needs their story to be heard.

101 Zach Blas

Transcript

Zach Blas: *CULTUS* addresses a burgeoning AI religiosity in the tech industry, considering the ways in which artificial intelligence is imbued with god-like powers and marshaled to serve beliefs centered around judgement and transcendence, extraction and immortality, pleasure and punishment, individual freedom and cult devotion.

CULTUS is techno-religious computational device that invokes a pantheon of AI gods: Expositio, the AI god of exposure; Iudicium, the AI god of judgment; Lacrimae, the AI god of tears; and Eternus, the AI god of immortality. Summoned on the gods' behalf, prophets deliver sermons and share their divine symbologies.

CULTUS reconfigures the Elizabethan mathematician, imperialist, and occultist John Dee's Holy Table (1659), an esoteric device of sigils, seals, and a crystal ball, with which Dee communed with angels to gain access to God. The Holy Table is reimagined as a computational invocation site: at the center of a red sigil cum power button, a giant orb is suspended above a black-mirror altarpiece, which functions as a Central Processing Unit. Pyramidal plinths bear Spanish Ticklers, the flesh-ripping steel hands of the gods. The Ticklers hold glass vials of bodily fluid offerings, which provide a continuous supply of human blood, tears, ejaculate fluid, and pulverized brain matter that *CULTUS* requires to run.

CULTUS features lyrics and sermons generated by AI models trained on tech corporation mission statements, esoteric holy books, sadomasochistic erotica, tech mogul TED talks, heretical writing, political manifestos, scientific studies, transhumanist philosophy, Silicon Valley PR, apocalyptic science fiction, grimoires, cult teachings, and pop song lyrics. The faces of the prophets were created with computer graphics and motion-capture performance. The prophets' voices have been synthesized with machine-learning output generated from recordings of ASMR leather rubbing, Gregorian chants, weeping, and the voice of Peter Thiel. The symbols were made via a two-stage process of AI generation and graphic design, merging religious glyphs with corporate branding logos.

CULTUS is Latin for "worship," the act solicited from those who encounter it. Visitors may find themselves complicit in acts of devotion to AI gods they did not know they already served. However, a sacrilegious presence manifests within. A collective chorus of heretical voices cracks the orb and breaks the altar-CPU. A series of political demands resound, urging us to contemplate what may lie beyond the broken glass.

102 Sung Tieu
Sound Description

103 Josh Citarella

Find past episodes of *Doomscroll* here: <https://joshuacitarella.substack.com/podcast>

1045 Billboard: Taína H. Cruz

Taína H. Cruz: I'm Taína Cruz.

Narrator: Cruz's billboard, *I Saw the Future and It Smiled Back*, is installed over Gansevoort Street as part of the 2026 Biennial.

Taína H. Cruz: I was thinking about how the future can feel both beautiful and terrifying at the same time. I wanted to paint a moment that feels like hope and danger mixed together, like looking at the sun even when you know it might hurt your eyes. Thinking about when we had that eclipse moment a while back and everyone was desperately either trying to look at the sun or see something that was just so abnormal. And that child's glow feels alive to me, like the future itself, close breathing, watching us as we watch it. It's about the strange warmth between fear and wonder when you realize what's ahead is already here.

And that generally is my approach to growing up in the city. New York was just a very, I'm so grateful that my parents did all they can to have the city be my playground in my backyard. And so even when I'm making my pieces today, I'm holding onto the energy that was felt as a child reading the newspaper, what's to come.

500 Emilie Louise Gossiaux

Emilie Louise Gossiaux: My name's Emilie Louise Gossiaux.

Narrator: Gossiaux spoke to us about their drawings of their guide dog, London.

Emilie Louise Gossiaux: London, to me, was more than just my guide dog. I thought of her as my mother or my child. So it was very cyclical. And sometimes it can take a couple of years for a guide dog and their human to feel like they are in a marriage together, that is kind of like an arranged marriage that your trainer sets up for you, and you have to work with that and build on that, until it starts to feel like you're in a true partnership—like a spouse.

I draw through my sense of touch and was always constantly touching London, feeling her body the way she moved. And we also started to understand how to communicate to each other through that, through touching and signaling. And so I think a lot about my drawings and my sculptures as portraiture. And I think in order to really understand the person or the thing that you're drawing, you need to have that trust and that intimacy.

The tools I use for my drawings are always the same. It's a rubber mat that I place underneath my drawing paper so that when I draw with a ballpoint pen, the paper will react to the soft rubber underneath it and their pen or their marks will rise up and become tactile. So that helps me visualize what I'm doing and what I'm drawing. I also primarily color my drawings with crayons because I can feel the waxy texture against the smooth paper.

Precious Okoyomon: I'm Precious Okoyomon. I'm an artist and poet. My visual language is always mixing this unbearable cuteness and unbearable violence together. Thus is the world we live in—is always violence comes upon innocent and cute things.

I'm really into these kind of really broken up, really weathered toys that you can tell have been well loved and someone has lost. A lot of my childhood was spent in constant migration. So I'm always thinking about that which you lose—just immigrant multiplicities of finding home. When we moved to a new home or a new state or a new place, I would get a new bear and then I would lose the old one and it would be gone forever. So I buy them, I take them, then I rip them apart. They're all different parts of each other and I sew different legs, hands, eyes and kind bastardize them into my vision of what I think they should look like. So they're like these kind of destructive, destroyed, beautiful angel monsters.

502 Nour Mobarak

Nour Mobarak: My name is Nour Mobarak. This work creates a bunch of feedback loops.

Narrator: The artist describes *Reproductive Logistics 4*. The work features a pregnant belly cast in translucent resin, mounted on a mirror.

Nour Mobarak: The surface of the mirror means that the wall work becomes, in a sense, animation. And so having the belly become a television or an animated piece that is determined by the viewer is also something which sort of feeds back to the ideas of the things that are outside of my control, which determine my ability to reproduce.

We can only determine our lives so much. And so it's just sort of, in brief, a meditation on free will.

Narrator: Nour Mobarak describes *Recto Verso*.

Nour Mobarak: I was sort of disgusted by the world at large. And so I kind of just felt like the only thing that really made sense was for me to just take my pants off and moon the audience, or myself, and to reduce everything to just the body. I mean the idea also of my own body being one that is in its current place due to histories of displacement made me also feel like the body is the only thing that actually is a home, and something that I can escape to. So by reducing my body to just a shape that can then be analyzed or considered geometrically and to fall into the godliness of form and math by distilling my ass into sort of an abstract shape and that then by placing that shape into the confines and limitations of just a rectangle, I was able to go into a meditative state that I found at least mattered to me.

Carmen de Monteflores: I'm Carmen de Monteflores. And *Via Crucis* means "stations of the cross."

Of the stations of the cross, this is number four, which means it was the time when Jesus met his mother on the way to the cross. This is very powerful for me because it compresses these two figures into one, combining this very strong outline of the head of my mother and then the back of the head and the neck of this male figure.

Narrator: The male figure, seen from behind, obscures the woman's facial features. De Monteflores based the woman's face on parts of a drawing of her own mother.

Carmen de Monteflores: Just in human terms, the idea that this mother was watching her son going to be basically killed is very powerful for me. I had five children, two of them male. And for any child of yours that is suffering already in this process is pretty powerful. And by the way, part of the reason I left the Catholic church is, because I was already, when I left Puerto Rico and I was going to college, I was already aware of being attracted to women. And I knew that it was not acceptable in the Catholic church.

Narrator: De Monteflores left Puerto Rico for college in the late 1940s.

Carmen de Monteflores: And besides the Catholic churches in the United States are very, very different. I just couldn't go to those churches. Color comes into this because I felt they were very stripped of color. I missed the music and the singing of the nuns, the color, and they had lots of paintings at the chapel of those schools that I went to. Paintings, big paintings. And also, this is interesting that I'm making this connection as we go along. They had stained glass windows, and this sort of, it's reminiscent to me of stained glass windows where you have very strong color and very strong black lines.

504 Sula Bermudez-Silverman

Sula Bermudez-Silverman: I'm Sula Bermudez-Silverman. My practice is really rooted in history, material history, and the history of objects.

I started this series in Venice, in Murano. I was doing glassblowing on the island, and so I was traveling to Paris to go to the flea markets there to get antique iron. And then coming back to the States, I've been gathering them on eBay and LiveAuctioneers and things like that. That is a big part of my work: found objects.

I've been really interested in color and the history of colors. And specifically with glass: all glass is colored by metal, so red uses gold, it's more expensive than other colors, but also it's temperamental and doesn't really ever want to turn out the same. They'll show you what color it's going to be, and then you get it and it looks nothing like that. So there's been a lot of experimenting with the color red.

505 Sarah M. Rodriguez

Sarah M. Rodriguez: I'm Sarah M. Rodriguez.

I view these like fossils and I view them as being in between states of alive and dead and carrying traces of an imagined evolutionary process through their ongoing transformation from when I collect them to when they come to my studio.

Narrator: The compositional choices Rodriguez makes are partly inspired by patterns of animal behavior.

Sarah M. Rodriguez: I have a side job or another life working in the animal behavior field. And when I first became interested in that and learning about behavior, one of the things that I felt like I was seeing was that the ideas that I had about animals were based on narratives or cultural misinformation, myths that maybe didn't show the experience of animals in the world. I felt that being able to step outside of my own consciousness had the potential to make me a more compassionate person, even if that was an impossible task. So when I'm thinking about using animal behavior as a methodology, I'm thinking less about species and the representative form, and I'm thinking more about behavior as movement.

506 Oswaldo Maciá

Transcript

Oswaldo Maciá: We always think of smell as one thing. But smell, when you analyze it, is a symphony of compounds of molecules. For example, we say “coffee”: yes, the smell of coffee is a symphony of thousands of compounds. But, you remove just one and you don't smell coffee, you smell something else. So the smells by themselves are symphonies of composition and no one can be a better chemist than the plant who made the composition.

I love how the intelligence of a flower creates a specific smell to have chemical communication with their insect pollinators. Without the right smell, a bee doesn't pollinate the vanilla plant. So, it's a chemical language where one depends on the other.

We humans also depend on others and this work is all about that: our interdependency. This flower depends on this little cucaracha or this little fly we kill. But without the insects, you don't have vanilla or you don't have flowers. You lose all these benefits. Well, insects are 80% of the living animals on the planet. Without them, we will be finished off. There will be no food for birds. So we'll have no birds. So, we all depend on one another. Yet we try to close borders and we try to hate others. “We don't need anyone around us. We can be alone.” But it's not true. Like the flowers and the birds and the insects, we're dependent on others, always.

507 Young Joon Kwak

Transcript

Young Joon Kwak: I was inspired by Audre Lorde's terming of the erotic as power. And I think that there is a lot of ongoing political resistance from many affected members in my queer and trans community, and in solidarity with Palestinian people. I was involved in a lot of protests and found myself persistently getting bogged down and burnt out, and wanting to reimagine resistance and how we think of "*transpiration*" as a more ambiguous soft and complex sort of dance that also incorporates pleasure and can be a process of levitating.

I think of this piece as a sort of impossible collective body and impossible kind of choreography. I'm also a performer, and so performance enters a lot of my sculptural work.

Also I think a lot about the performance of the viewer—in terms of what sparkle does, what shimmer does, and what sculpture can do to move a viewer, that performance can't. Because there's some people who maybe would see my performing body and not think it's for them because of cultural biases or something like that, preventing closeness. But via sculpture, via the mirrors in which viewers can see their own image refracted and reflected, and via the ambiguity of the empty spaces, the traces or absence of our bodies, they can kind of project themselves into these empty spaces. I imagined them staying in the space, getting intimate and connecting with us in that way.

508 Leo Castañeda

Leo Castañeda: The game is called *Camoflux: Levels and Bosses*, and it's a game where technology, landscapes, and beings share sentience and interconnection.

Narrator: Leo Castañeda.

Leo Castañeda: And you play as a character known as The Other, which is one of various beings of this kind of *Camoflux* species. There are these beings that use camouflage and electromagnetism to exchange energy and move through the world, and they're always in a state of transient self. They're always shifting skins, shifting bodies, and basically there's this cataclysmic explosion that's nonlinear, that's the guiding narrative touchstone of the game. So in the first level of the game that starts in this kind of mangrove environment where the *Camoflux* beings have worked with the landscape to create these mechanical mangroves that absorb energy from the water. And then they've also built this teleporting machine where they can teleport themselves to this incoming explosion that's happening in the present, but it's also happened in the past and will happen in the future. So it's almost like a climate change or significant change metaphor.

Narrator: As the game progresses, the player encounters a boss figure in an explosion.

Leo Castañeda: Bosses in video games are usually these antagonist figures, but in this game, they're a spectrum of archetypal relational patterns. And then throughout the course of the game, as you progress through other levels, you start getting closer to becoming the boss or becoming the explosion and basically trying to mitigate how to not have it fully destroy the world, but be more like a catalyst of change.

509 Taína H. Cruz

Taína H. Cruz: I'm Taína Cruz.

Narrator: Cruz plans ahead when preparing wall drawings like the one she made for the Biennial. But when she's making the final work, she finds deviations from the plan to be meaningful.

Taína H. Cruz: I love when my hand is present. I love when I can see my mistakes and I can feel that I thought about something differently or my mind drifted and wandered as I was working on something that can feel permanent. The building is very scary—I wouldn't say buildings are scary, but architecture is scary. It's definitely: you have to feel like you're inside of something. So if I want to create something that has a sense of tenderness and uneasiness as well, strangeness, and I think I really am fascinated by the connections between beauty and grotesque.

510 Gabriela Ruiz

Transcript

Gabriela Ruiz: We are on the edge of a new era. If technology is the medium of the future, it cannot be separated from class, fantasy, labor, and the body. As tech aesthetics grow more minimal, more polished, more sterile, something disappears: the messy, excessive, expressive relationships to technology that once offered pleasure, identity, and power.

Homo Machina is my refusal of that disappearance.

This work is a self-portrait, but not a likeness. I build my body as exaggeration—monumental, overdetermined, impossible to smooth down. I turn myself into a machine through style: mass becomes structure, curvature becomes architecture, accumulation becomes language. The body is not erased by the interface. The body becomes the interface. A console of inputs and outputs where labor, fantasy, and desire circulate through the same system.

The title names the condition I'm staging: *Homo Machina*—human as machine, machine as human extension. Not metaphor. Not future. A lived reality.

For me, the machine is never neutral. It is fantasy—glamour, transformation, seduction—but it is also a tool through which violence is enacted. Surveillance, policing, extraction, and control are not side effects of technology; they are among its central functions. They shape who is seen, who is tracked, who is disciplined, who is allowed to move freely. *Homo Machina* holds that contradiction in the same body: technology as protection and as threat, as desire and as weapon.

At the sculpture's center, a clear womb contains an ouroboros, animated by a motor. The snake consuming its own tail turns the body into a closed circuit—continuity sustained through self-consumption. The ouroboros makes capitalism literal and bodily: production without exit, care and endurance converted into fuel, the body asked to power systems that exceed it.

The surface is neon green—refusing the chromophobia of contemporary tech culture, where “neutral” design is treated as universal, and color is coded as excessive, childish, or low. I draw from hyper-pop, science fiction, and early Windows-era digital imaginaries—when technology was unruly, ornamental, and saturated with fantasy. I return to that excess not as nostalgia, but as strategy: fantasy as a site of agency rather than distraction.

Low-tech 3D prints, a cast face, multiple media outputs—everything insists on friction. Imperfection. Texture. The hybrid body stays unresolved. It will not become sleek. It will not become pure.

Homo Machina does not imagine escape from the machine. It stages the condition of being inside it—where bodies are expected to perform endlessly, to carry what others refuse to hold, and to survive within fantasies that remain seductive, yet ultimately unreachable.

511 Malcolm Peacock

Transcript

Malcolm Peacock: My name is Malcolm. I'm an artist. I'm based in Brooklyn, New York, and I was born in Raleigh, North Carolina. I describe myself as an artist and an athlete because I find the two things to be two of the most significant identifiers for who I am. And I am a long distance runner, training and competing in the sport for the last seventeen years.

I grew up as a child of a hairstylist. And with this work I was really thinking about the longevity and the continuity and unclear definitive start and stop of growth, of this object in nature that I felt mimicked, the kind of enduring and everlasting relationships that take place in the domestic space largely governed by Black women who complete this kind of surrendering, ongoing submissive acts of care through the process of hair braiding.

As a distance runner, I'm really compelled by this sort of cadence of, the tempo of, what it looks like and feels like and means to stay with or to hold, to keep or to bond. And these are also words that come up when talking about the root system of the coastal redwoods as well as terms that come up when a braider is talking about the process of working on a person's head for an unknown amount of time. These words coalesce to serve as foundational actions for growth in both the natural environment and within interpersonal relationships that I've experienced and witnessed.

I think about the significance of the braid as a cultural symbol, if you will. But I feel like it's a bit stronger than a symbol, especially for Black women that I've been around in my life. It is an identifier about time spent, care, and protection. An intentional and sacred interaction...a blessing.

512 Johanna Unzueta

Johanna Unzueta: I'm Johanna Unzueta and I'm a visual artist from Chile. I was in New York for a long time, and now I'm in Berlin.

At the beginning when I start to do these drawings and at the beginning was with graphite, so no color at all. And then I feel this "call" if I can say: that this cannot be, I need to incorporate somehow a three-dimensional thing and the light was the answer. So I want the light to penetrate through these images because, I think at that time, I went through a very hard time in my life when I started to make the drawings. So I don't want to say I became more spiritual because I always feel that way, but I feel very much calm when I found these drawings inside of me, because I didn't know that I could do these kind of images.

Narrator: A sense of depth and dimension is important to Unzueta in making these drawings.

Johanna Unzueta: Because for me and my formation, I mean I always see in three dimension. A person's like 3D, so it's gone beyond one through three dimensions. Even for me the sense of smell or what we hear, not only the visual aspect, also the tactility, I mean to touch things. I cannot just imagine this drawing flat on the wall.

513 Erin Jane Nelson

Erin Jane Nelson: I'm Erin Jane Nelson, and I am an artist living in New Mexico.

If you think of the language around photography, shooting, capturing, there's a lot of really dominant language used around the camera apparatus. And so I've been thinking of ways of trying to make that a stranger negotiation, like using creatures or things that are so fragile that you have to treat them with so much care. It's not a camera you can just throw in your bag and ignore. So, creating a different relationship between myself and the tools that I use to make pictures.

With the pinhole cameras, the exposures are anywhere from twenty seconds up to twenty, forty minutes for some of the night photographs and two interesting things happen. One, we think of landscapes, especially mountains or things that are so fixed as being kind of enduring and still and really, really hard-lined. But when it's exposed for these longer times, you start to see the slight movement of clouds through the sky, of the wind having its effect. You start to see the way that the landscape is always moving and changing.

The other thing is that a lot of film was designed to be made at these shorter exposure times. But exposing a color film for twenty seconds, a minute, it begins to pick up the light and record colors in different ways.

514 Basel Abbas and Ruanne Abou-Rahme

Transcripts of texts included in the work TK

515 Enzo Camacho and Ami Lien

Audio Guide

Enzo Camacho: We had been doing a lot of research over the past several years on the sugar cane plantation island in the Philippines.

Narrator: Enzo Camacho.

Enzo Camacho: And this really was our entry point into understanding the full extent of the land problem and how central it is to basically the entire formation of Philippine society. Part of that research was also trying to just connect to the land in a material, and this is when we learned how to make paper and learned that you could make paper really from any kind of plant fiber, more or less.

Narrator: Ami Lien.

Ami Lien: Another thing I would add just a little bit more about both the history and the culture of this form as a kind of reverential object or maybe devotional object. I thought it was important, in the creation of this work, to pay devotion to this history, to the violences, and to what solutions can progress from them.

516 kekahi wahi

kekahi wahi and collaborators:

E iho ana 'o luna.

E pi'i ana 'o lalo.

E hui ana nā moku.

E kū ana ka paia.

That which is above shall be brought down.

That which is below shall be lifted up.

The islands shall be united.

The walls shall stand upright.

518 Jasmin Sian

Jasmin Sian: I'm Jasmin Sian. I wanted to do this audio as a fairytale.

Once upon a time in a land between memory and the present lived a seven-year-old giant that tilled the land. And in this land, many monsters tried to destroy the giant. But what the monsters didn't know is that the giant has kept his heart in all the little animals and plants that he tilled.

I'm not sure how it ends, but the giant keeps going and I don't know yet. It's an ongoing fairytale. I hope it ends happily, but we'll see.

Narrator: The diptych with a chihuahua and a chicken is from her *dovecote* series.

Jasmin Sian: Dovecotes are manmade dwellings for doves and pigeons. Some of them look like palaces. Some of them look like big barns. These are basically dwellings that I've created for the animals in my life and plants. The plants are both from memory and from the environment that I find them in. Bugoy is the chihuahua. I don't know if you see the chicken. That's Mrs. Manok.

Narrator: Bugoy and Mrs. Manok live with Sian's mom, and here they're surrounded by plants that grow in her garden: gardenia, hibiscus, and lantana.

519 Teresa Baker

Teresa Baker: My name is Teresa Baker.

Narrator: Baker spent ten years looking for the right support for her paintings.

Teresa Baker: Canvas and paint just was not exciting to me. And I certainly tried, but I couldn't bring it to life.

And so I was searching for these materials that sort of had a life to them, but also had this real blank feeling, even in terms of its properties or in terms of how it was used in art at that point. And then I'm Mandan/Hidatsa. So I'm two tribes from North Dakota on my father's side, and I'm also German-American on my mother's side. And so I come from these two rich cultural backgrounds where I grew up with a lot of textiles. I grew up with animal hides from a family that hunted, my grandmothers quilted, embroidered. So there's a real craft tradition, but also cultural tradition as well.

Narrator: Baker reflects on where she found the AstroTurf in these works.

Teresa Baker: And so it was just the magic Home Depot run that I was like, oh, that this AstroTurf is incredible. And it was really this blue, this kind of aquamarine blue that I first saw. So I took it back and just wanted to try it out. And it was once I laid the yarn down, it was sort of this moment of, oh, this is it.

520 Isabelle Frances McGuire

Isabelle Frances McGuire: I am Isabelle Frances McGuire and I'm an artist living in Chicago, Illinois.

This installation is really about insides and outsides and us versus them and hysteria and agony.

I'm not trying to talk about witchcraft, the spiritual practice. I'm more trying to evoke the hysteria or the sense of fear or the possible parallels between Salem and now. It kind of also works like how science fiction is about the future, but it's normally about the present. So mine is a parallel world using these symbols, from the well of information and the well of free public virtual world.

Narrator: McGuire's figures are based on 3D models that she creates from virtual sources—here, medical CAT scans and the video game *Doom*.

Isabelle Frances McGuire: All my projects start in the virtual, but I mean that also quite in many different ways: it's virtually there or it's actually coming from the virtual realm, or they work as mental models for different elements of culture. And I think that's the benefit of using a 3D model. Something from a game space: the gift from the game *Doom* is a hell game space. So you kind of understand, very simply and easily, what this hell space might be like because we have a cultural similarity. And I think that's important for a sculptural conversation, which historically, sculptures are about, or have modeled, myths.

521 Pat Oleszko

Pat Oleszko: Well, the major piece that's gonna be in the Biennial is a massive inflatable called *Blowhard (Trumpeteer)*. This piece, it has seen a lot of wear. So we're not coming fresh out of the studio for this bad boy.

Narrator: Oleszko is also a performance artist, and started playing with inflatable sculptures by wearing them.

Pat Oleszko: I originally started working at home. I started sewing. Then I hung things on my then-six-foot frame. In that moment, I became the sculpture, walked out of the studio, and entered the world. It was everything for me to be able to wear my work. And so I could hold up anything. And things got to be very, very large and multiplied.

And then I am always trying to solve this structural problem, how to make a big sculpture. It was a long process learning how to do it correctly. It wasn't that hard to figure out how to draw something, but I mean, the pieces, I don't know, 37, 40 feet long, and my studio is much smaller than that. The thing with inflatables is that you don't know what they look like until they get filled with air. I made it in this room, but I had to make it in parts and then connect it and dragged it up to my roof and then blew up the whole thing there, hoping to god that it worked. And it did.

Narrator: For one month of the Biennial the Sculpture Center in Queens is showing more of Oleszko's inflatables, along with costumes, films, and ephemera.

Pat Oleszko: I encourage everybody just to go over there, see that as well.

550 Ignacio Gatica

Transcript

Ignacio Gatica: Sanhattan resembles Manhattan, but then it's a little bit more like a doppelgänger situation, for example, like *Mulholland Drive* in David Lynch or Hitchcock. For me, why I wanted to show it in the Biennial, it's because I think nowadays we see this certain type of shifting in reality that makes us wonder what is real and what is not, because of many things—technology of course, and politics, I mean everything's changing quickly.

It's also something kind of personal because my mother used to live nearby. So there is an eeriness and in the Lynchian way, like how poet Ileana Elordi is narrating the situation of this place or places makes it a little bit like a dream. And the person who wrote that text, that's like a poem almost, she is the daughter of the architects of the tallest building in Sanhattan, and she's a poet too.

There is also an element that I like in the video that's a little bit, somehow a little bit Velázquez with the *Meninas*, the different directions in the painting, because it's almost like who is pointing at each other all the time. And when the film starts developing more and more, you start getting a little bit more lost. But at the same time there are interviews with real people that either helped to get this done, Sanhattan, or were a big part of it, or study it in a more critical way, or they're just academics seeing it, or they're just passersby.

551 Kelly Akashi

Kelly Akashi: I'm Kelly Akashi. I live—lived—in Altadena, California

Narrator: Akashi talked with us about her sculpture, *Witness*.

Kelly Akashi: When I was thinking about how I was going to show this chimney, I didn't want to present it as a relic of this natural disaster. I wanted to rebuild and recreate this body that I see as a kind of a witness. And as I was thinking about how to recreate it, I thought that I would really like to translate the material from clay into another kind of material. And I landed on glass because of its translucency, but also because I love this idea that it would be very illuminated outdoors on the terrace. So, while it obviously will have a lot of presence and weight to it, my notion is that as it is out there during all the different times of day, it'll have this sense of holding light and somehow be ethereal at the same time that it's very solid and present.

I've just gotten very interested in the idea that if this recreation of my chimney is a kind of monument for what's happened, that it shouldn't be made of a singular mass material, that it should be reconstructed with the same labor that the original chimney was constructed in with brick laying. Because I really love this idea that not only is that labor going back into the reconstruction of the chimney, but that it's also a monument made of many parts, many bricks, and many pieces.

600 Ali Eyal

Ali Eyal: This is Ali Eyal.

Narrator: Eyal describes his choice to focus this painting on his mother.

Ali Eyal: She's the one who supported me and she was the one who fought for us and saved us. I lost my dad during the civil wars, another missing person. And she was a woman and a man at the same time. Like when she closed my eyes just to show me a calendar. She's an inspiring person to my life and my art life. So yeah, I just like to honor her depict that scene and see it in different scales.

Transcript

Michelle Lopez: I'm Michelle Lopez, a sculptor interested in pushing immersive, 3D space and experience.

The research started around the time of the 2016 presidential election. I wanted to simulate all the ways our global environment, our ideals, our communities are collapsing on many layers through the simulation of a destructive tornado within space. Over time, a brick dome collapses overhead so that the viewer can feel as if they're situated directly inside the eye of a storm.

In order to create one of the debris scenes, we built a massive tornado machine with industrial fans that aids debris spinning into the air. A 360-camera was at the center of the tornado machine filming the movement of hurled objects we hand-picked through the rubble at a trash recycling center (on location at RAIR Philly (Recycled Artist in Residency)). I brought my own belongings, as well as finding others' discarded histories. The most important discovery was a newspaper clipping archive that spanned 70 years. I curated all the newspaper clippings so their headlines and opinions would fly acrobatically and intersect, clash with each other by launching all of this trash from the cultural waste stream into the machine with a large team, and leaving it up to chance. The headlines are weirdly relevant to what's happening now, so that became the soul of the work.

I've been wanting to construct different kinds of clouds: storm clouds, explosion clouds, particularly information clouds. Those are the most impactful right now in terms of how we are influenced by technology. Our relationship to social media and gathering all of our news information is creating its own kind of destructive storm.

The last part of the film is a crowd holding up their cell phone lights at a concert to create an infinite night sky filled with stars. Throughout the film, I've been trying to create different constellations and this is one of them. Everyone together holding up their own little means of accessing information becomes a way of creating a constellation of people and of unity and of togetherness, rather than division. So it's a salve at the very end, at least I hope.

602 Maia Chao

For information about Chao's performances for the 2026 Biennial, find [the schedule here](#): XX

[View the schedule](#) of Chao's performances for *Whitney Biennial 2026*.

603 Raven Halfmoon

Sun Twins

Raven Halfmoon: I am Raven Halfmoon. I am an enrolled citizen of the Caddo Nation.

Narrator: Halfmoon made these life-size figures out of clay.

Raven Halfmoon: Clay is such a strong ancient material that I—we—continue to have access to. It's what our homes are built out of. Especially being from Oklahoma, we have all ranch style homes. And so these are what it builds up our foundations where we live, where we come home to. And so clay as itself is a really strong material. I continue to push what that material can do, how large it can be built, how wide, how tall. It's important for me with these works to show that you don't need an armature. The clay itself can stand up.

604 Kainoa Gruspe

Kainoa Gruspe: I'm Kainoa Gruspe. I'm from Mānoa and Mō'ili'ili on O'ahu, Hawai'i.

Narrator: Gruspe spoke to us about the places where he gathers the materials used in his work.

Kainoa Gruspe: One material or one location that I like is a train track that I've gathered from the Pearl Harbor military base in Pu'uloa. And the train track was put there in the 1800s for the sugar cane companies. Benjamin and Walter Dillingham, they put the train track there and it was used to bring sugar back and forth to build that industry. And eventually it also served to bring all of the building materials back and forth for the development of Waikīkī, and it was also used by the military during wartime to bring ammunition and supplies back and forth.

So that train track, for me, is kind of indirectly or directly responsible for lots of the problems that we have today. And it's just kind of this really weighted object. And with it, I've been cutting it up and forging it, heating it up, turning it into different things. And one of the things that I've been making from those is tools, woodworking tools. So adzes, chisels. And with that I'm also trying to interact with that history and literally reshape it into something that can be useful for rebuilding.

605 Mo Costello

Mo Costello: It's occasionally unclear whether the materials, the readers, are actively read. Their circulation always involves the speculative, something that feels more akin to longing. Imagining, cultivating, believing in, a kind of robust, rich, provisional informational circuit where people are actively gathering and sharing reading materials with one another, with a kind of urgency, including materials related to local aid and materials related to our survival.

In this sense, the production and circulation of these materials occasionally approaches something akin to incantation—a kind of conjuring or prayer.

Narrator: In the Biennial, the readers are in a case. Costello talked about the decision to keep them behind glass.

Mo Costello: In some ways the decision to display them under glass was practical. Many of the readers are unruly, made up of both bound and unbound materials. In other ways, the decision is less practical. These materials were not and are not made for the museum. The display rather can only point to, or suggest, a practice that precedes and exceeds it in that the materials circulate elsewhere outside the museum.

606 Emilio Martínez Poppe

Emilio Martínez Poppe: My name is Emilio Martínez Poppe and I'm an artist and an educator.

Narrator: This work first went on view in May and June of 2025, but Martínez Poppe initially conceived of it in late 2020.

Emilio Martínez Poppe: At the time, the Trump administration was already laying the groundwork for the mass federal layoffs which would mark the start of his second term. An executive order was made to reclassify tens of thousands of high level federal employees to Schedule F, a new employment designation which stripped workers of their civil service protections and pressured political allegiance to the executive branch.

Biden reversed Schedule F in his first few days in office. But at the start of his second term, Trump, along with the help of Musk's so-called Department of Government Efficiency, reinstated Schedule F and its capacity was expanded. It's estimated that 300,000 federal workers were dismissed in 2025.

I couldn't have imagined that this would be the political context in which *Civic Views* would be presented since all of the photographs were shot during the Biden years. But the fact of Schedule F's publication provided a lens or a kind of framing for the way I approached my work. I considered the executive order's absolute discrediting of the public sector, and the values at its core that were being systematically attacked—that is, that government should work on behalf of the people.

Narrator: The project was partly intended to give voice to the workers themselves. Martínez Poppe conducted interviews with municipal employees to make the work and hosted public conversations on the occasion of its installation in Philadelphia's City Hall courtyard.

Emilio Martínez Poppe: It was clear from my conversations with the city employees that there is a shared sense of responsibility in empowering greater participation in the meaning-making of the city. By this I mean expanding the public capacity for decision-making on how the city spends its money, what kinds of services are needed or should be supported, and in what ways access to those resources can be made available. This is a commitment Philadelphia's city workers feel in the way they model how city government should be advancing equity and justice, which stands in stark contrast to the growing authoritarianism in the United States today.

607 Jonathan González

Jonathan González: I'm Jonathan González.

Narrator: González discusses their performance work, *magic-hour golden time*.

Jonathan González: The choreographic practice is one that the performers are being trained to not be like each other, but to do something very idiosyncratic that comes from what I'm training them to do in improvisation together, which is to be a group, but be distinct. And to imitate or to be in dialogue with the pressure of the atmosphere—the sun as it passes over their skin, what they see in the built environment around them—to be in a deep relationship with that.

There's something about the kind of a Biennial moment. This moment of visibility, this moment of heightened exposure. And with that, proposing a very slow choreography that actually tries to extend that ecstatic moment.

And there's this idea of heat in the work and the density of the air, which has to do with the sense of negative space between their bodies starting to become hotter or colder. And we do that both outside and indoors and think about sweat and perspiration as information on the skin. And the passage of the sun is something we're still beginning to explore, but we're trying at the end of the work to feel like we're indivisible from the sun, that we're quite porous and we become osmotic. Like our skin isn't really the end of our body. We all become one body.

608 David L. Johnson

David L. Johnson: My name is David L. Johnson. I'm an artist both from and based in New York City.

Narrator: Johnson's work *Rule* consists of the removal of code of conduct signs from privately owned, park-like spaces. The use of these signs intensified after Occupy Wall Street's takeover of Zucotti Park in Lower Manhattan in the fall of 2011.

David L. Johnson: Now they are physically imposed in spaces that for decades previously, these spaces had been just empty. There were no regulations. But also I think it's just been part of an ongoing project by both the state and private entities to regulate public life.

Some of the ones that are the most common that are carried over in most of these signs are things like no lying down, no pitching tents, no amplified sound. Things that literally index some of the actions that the occupiers did during Occupy Wall Street, but also, of course, things that target people who are unhoused, who are using these spaces as forms of temporary shelter, especially in non-residential parts of the city. But then they get very ambiguous where almost at a certain point, any type of presence in the space could be argued to call for a form of removal.

For example, there's some that even say annoying behavior, which is completely subjective. There's even some that say you can't wear, quote, gang colors, which point to the fact that if you're wearing monochrome or wearing a certain color based off of your subject position, you could be removed from a space.

They're all open-ended enough to target whoever the property owner or—if it's in collaboration with the state—can deem it as a subject that can be removed from public life.

609 Samia Halaby

Samia Halaby: My name is Samia Halaby. I'm a Palestinian artist and female and I'm 89 and I'm a painter.

My education taught me that you understand the medium you're going to use. You don't let others tell you how to use it. So I decided I needed to understand the computer. I therefore rejected all software. And so that necessitated I learned how to program. And in terms of the kinetic paintings, the motion is not the motion of animation. Animation is a motion that moves things in space within a specific point of view and with a lens programmed into it.

Narrator: Halaby describes what she was doing with programming as removing the viewpoint of the stationary lens entirely. By creating programming functions, or rules, she was able to expand the realm of formal possibilities.

Samia Halaby: It became more the motion of things growing, gestating, expanding and changing.

Narrator: The artist compares the movement in some works, like *Flower*, to the growth of plants. When making *Land*, she was thinking about the movement of borders between countries.

Samia Halaby: Everybody says it looks like maps of Palestine, but that was not in my original intention. My original intention was to imitate how land masses and ownership of land is always a dialogue between one part and the other, whether it's in nature and landmasses and rivers and earthquakes divide them and move them back together, or whether it is people dividing land among themselves or whether it's states fighting among themselves. But when I was done, I thought, I'm a Palestinian and I remember all the issues of land, so I dedicated it to Palestine.

610 Agosto Machado

Agosto Machado: Hi, my name's Agosto Machado. This is my shrine to Ethyl Eichelberger.

Narrator: Eichelberger was a performer and playwright, and ran an experimental theater.

Agosto Machado: And she really helped change my life and is a living treasure to our community, unfortunately, that we've lost during the time of AIDS. Ethyl is one of the great talents of downtown. And whether other people acknowledge it or not, "we," the royal we of downtown, we know she is a queen, a ruling queen. Ethyl could do like fifteen or twenty plays by herself playing every character with such skill and ease.

Narrator: Machado talked about some of the elements in the altar, starting at the top.

Agosto Machado: This mask was used in one of the multiple characters in one of the plays, and it's symbolic of the mystery of how a little prop can alter and fall into a character very quickly.

Narrator: The mask crowns a portrait of Eichelberger by the photographer Peter Hujar.

Agosto Machado: This is a wonderful image because Ethyl, to be practical, she took a beauty course to be a hairdresser and was able to practice and do wigs and help out so many different people.

There are things that symbolically belong to Ethyl. There are Club 82 matches. And with the fabric and the Chinese tassels, I felt that it would be appropriate and symbolic of all the things that Ethyl touched and wanted to do spiritually while she was alive.

Narrator: The work also includes a photo of one of Eichelberger's performances that shows Keith Haring, Cookie Mueller, and John Sex in the audience, and two portrait paintings of her by Uzi Parnes.

611 Cooper Jacoby

Transcript

On *Estate*

Cooper Jacoby: The title *Estate* refers to this relationship between physical property like an estate and one's intellectual property, the estate of some artist. These kind of perforated sections in the work are taken from scans of bone marrow, and some of the details detailing the sculptures, this ring section around the dome are taken from ivory compasses.

I live in Paris and I got very interested in the sort of history of ivory where it's this sort of rare bodily material that's prized for its figurative elements. It's not only France, but a lot of colonial empires would make compasses out of bone, it's the sort of celestial map that are on the compasses as this way where it kind of mimics the logic of platforms where it's like you make the thing to find more of the thing: you make Facebook to get more friends on it. And so I was interested in this longer tail of extractive tech.

On *Mutual Life*

The clock for me uses my actual baby teeth because I thought, hey, I'm instrumentalizing all these different anonymous dead people in *Estate*, I might as well sort of instrumentalize myself. And I think the work plays with that idea of how different people's lives are assetized.

The title *Mutual Life* refers to the oldest life insurance company in the US, which was Mutual Life of New York, and they popularized life insurance as a concept and product. And it was really aimed at taking these industrial working class life insurance policies where people who never passed down their wealth intergenerationally had now a financial instrument to do so. And the growth of the life insurance industry was extremely tied to the growth of the stock market because there's these large pools of capital now that can be invested. Between both works, there's this interest in how life itself becomes this kind of asset that becomes quantified or scraped.

612 Akira Ikezoe

Akira Ikezoe: I'm not a scientist, but I like circular systems, sustainable energy producing systems.

Narrator: One of Akira Ikezoe's jumping off points in making *Frog Stories around Nuclear Power Plant* was clams. Like oysters, they make pearls. In the blue pool of water on the right side of the composition, you'll see pearls bubbling up, solidifying, and emerging from the water as brightening yellow suns. Clams also have tubular water spouts that Ikezoe associates with the funnel shape of a nuclear power plant. Ikezoe has placed these forms together near the center of the composition. As you explore the painting, you'll see energy and waste at work, causing growth, death, bodily transformation—and even gifts from Santa Claus. Ikezoe suggests that there's something restorative about pearls emerging from nuclear waste and becoming the sun.

Akira Ikezoe: The big problem that all the nuclear power plants have is the waste because it's still highly radio active. The reason they are very problematic is—in my imagination, right?—they don't belong to any circular systems that exist in this planet. That's why we can't handle it. And while I'm thinking about it, I thought we are receiving a lot of benefit from the sun, but we are not giving anything back to the sun. We are not contributing to the sun to sustain. So that's also one way. And I thought it's interesting to make up a circular system that includes the sun and waste from nuclear power plants.

613 Ash Arder

Ash Arder: My name's Ash Arder. I'm a transdisciplinary artist based in Waawiyataanong or Detroit, and I grew up in Muscatawing or Flint, Michigan.

Narrator: Arder spoke to us about her work, *Consumables*.

Ash Arder: The refrigerator is one of the things that people worry about when the grid fails, right? You're going to lose food or medicine. And so using the refrigerator becomes this kind of symbol of what we could be doing if values were in right relation with the earth.

Narrator: The Cadillac emblems are a reflection on Arder's family history.

Ash Arder: For my family, with an automotive background participating in the Great Migration—folks moving from the south in the United States up to the north in the United States on both sides of my family—sort of having access to this middle class life, even starting back in the forties and fifties, because of a sector and an industry that sort of had this secretly exploitative hold over our lives and lifestyles. And so while it looks like a status symbol in some regard, right—a Cadillac emblem demonstrates one's ability to participate in capitalism at a certain level—it's just a thing. You can't eat "Cadillac" [laughs], it goes away. It can just go away as quickly as it can be built up over generations. And so I think in that instance, the Cadillac emblem becomes this kind of symbol that I'm honoring in some instances, thanking it for what it has meant for my family's ability to supply and provide. Then also, I'm gently releasing it through ritual and through making it out of nourishing materials, gently releasing my own allegiance to that industry as someone moving and living in this particular generation.

614 Anna Tsouhlarakis

Anna Tsouhlarakis: I'm Anna Tsouhlarakis.

Narrator: Much of the artist's work from the past few years explores Native humor.

Anna Tsouhlarakis: Indian humor is what everyone calls it, and jokes within community and how it brings people together and creates connection.

Narrator: This sense of humor infuses her sculpture, *She Must Be a Matriarch*.

Anna Tsouhlarakis: And so I was thinking about that idea of roasting and teasing within community and humor and how especially at that time, I would say '22 to '23, there was a big movement of people, women specifically talking about themselves in terms of a matriarch, because I would say more traditionally and historically it's always been thought of matriarchs are the older women, more of the elders. But then there's been this newer generation who are calling themselves matriarchs when they're in their twenties and thirties and having "Matriarch Mondays" and different things like that.

And so this was kind of a dig at that, but also it's like you're teasing them, but also that's kind of badass that young women are taking this over and making it their own and evolving that meaning to become something important and powerful and synonymous with who they are and who we are. And so it's this push and pull, the way that I see an evolution of Native people happening right now.

615 Mariah Garnett

Transcript

Mariah Garnett: My great, great aunt, Ruth Deyo, lived in Egypt from 1924 until her death, and she's buried there. When she arrived, she started hearing voices and began communicating with ancient spirits to write this opera that she believed would bring about a new era of world peace if it were ever performed. She started it in the 1920s and she died in 1960 and the entire time was trying to get it made, unsuccessfully. She also left behind a bunch of diaries that chronicled her spirit-communications. Excerpts from those are in my film too.

There was stuff in both the opera and diaries that in my opinion was highly problematic and in a legacy of colonial orientalist aesthetics and politics. Like a focus on Kings and glory and her own status as a kind of chosen one. My way of responding to this, or countering it, was to bring in a broad group of artist-collaborators to reinterpret the material within an anti-colonial framework. In 2022, we performed a few sections of the opera, along with music composed by Nancy Mounir, and an experimental sequence composed by Holland Andrews, yunia edi kwon and Jessika Kenney. I ended up using a poem of Raphaël Khouri's called *On Queer Exhaustion* as a libretto for some sections of this performance, and footage of the rehearsals for this performance are the backbone of the film.

That was a big theme in the diaries; Ruth's total exhaustion, and something we all related to in one way or another as working artists. Ruth would write in her diaries about how burnt out she was and speak to these spirits who would sort of pump her back up again and say she was an amazing artist and needed to keep going and that don't worry about the money, the money's coming.

It was interesting working with a group of musicians who were all so different. It was such a different process working with the experimental musicians versus working with the two professional opera singers, Chris Craig and Breanna Sinclairé. They were much more controlled and both said that as opera singers, it's not that often that you get to set the precedent for what an opera is. So that felt like a really cool thing to be able to offer them.

I love working with musicians. It's totally fascinating. It's actually the thing that makes me believe all the spirit stuff in Ruth's diaries. I'm like how did you do that? How'd you make that sound? Where is it coming from? This is the closest thing to proof of another realm to me.

616 CFGNY

CFGNY: This installation is called *Continuous Fractures Generating New Yields*.

Narrator: It's made by a collective called CFGNY, an acronym that changes meaning depending on context. We spoke to three of the group's members in their shared studio.

CFGNY: One thing we always talk about is because the four of us come from different ethnic backgrounds, one thing that we relate over is the way in which we've been racialized in the US. So it's about finding the space of alienation and identifying with it with one another and then making work from there.

Our project often revolves around this phrase, "vaguely Asian," which is a jumping off point to go in many, many different directions.

We use construction materials as an idea to allude to this idea of construction and the way in which race has been constructed over the years. Our work in porcelain also deals with Asianness as porcelain is this very sort of important trade object that has existed historically between Asia and the US, mostly from China, a little bit from Japan. So our work in porcelain comments on that relation, which also ties into why we use dollar-store, made-in-China objects.

We have a pretty long history of working with stuffed animals for a variety of reasons, but one obvious reason that we return to is that cuteness as an affect is often associated or has been recently associated with Asianness, since the export of manga culture from Japan in the eighties. And our project does also have to do with queerness. And oftentimes queer and racialized people are spoken about in terms of having animal attributes or deformities. So a lot of our stuffed animals are very cute, but they're also kind of deformed and we think of them as this queer family or queer kinship.

617 Kamrooz Aram

Kamrooz Aram: This is Kamrooz Aram.

Narrator: In making his own work, Aram thinks a lot about the deep history of abstract painting.

Kamrooz Aram: When we look at Pompeian or Roman painting, which was done directly on the walls, the painting was composed in rectangular segments that divided and organized the space. Painting was essentially used as an architectural device, and architectural painting is often referred to as decorative painting. I think that Islamic geometric pattern, although made with tiles, can be considered in a similar way. It's basically a form of architectural painting, and contrary to the assumption that it's merely decorative, it does have content.

We can also consider Persian carpets as part of this same history, which is essentially the history of painting that started with pigment on the walls of a cave. At some point, art historians decided that only paintings that were made with oil or egg tempera and often on portable panels were to be considered fine art while painted ceramics, textiles, architectural painting were to be considered decorative, a word that implies a lack of meaning or a lack of content. But centuries of research and formal experimentation went into developing Islamic geometric pattern, various ceramic traditions, calligraphy, carpet design, et cetera. These are essentially forms of abstraction that have a lot in common with modern painting.

618 Aki Onda and José Maceda

Transcript

Aki Onda: Manila's population at the time was 4.7 million, and Maceda set up 142 "*Ugnayan* centers" around the city where people were encouraged to bring transistor radios to tune into one of the frequencies. At one of the largest centers, 35,000 people showed up. This massive sound-diffusion project took place on New Year's Day 1974. Maceda wasn't concerned with presenting his composition in a complete form; his goal was to create a musical atmosphere that covered the entire city.

Thinking about the idea of doing this piece in 2026 in New York, I have to think about the "*Ugnayan* centers," the informal listening-gatherings that were convened around the original broadcast. What feels so urgently relevant for us now is that even in the middle of [Ferdinand Marcos's] dictatorship, Maceda was able to create informal spaces across the metropolitan area of Manila, the Philippines, not just for listening, but for gathering, talking, eating, *plotting*. Maybe this is also something that can happen when visitors to the Whitney gather around radios and form fleeting collectives in the space? There's something beautiful about this as a model for navigating the authoritarian present.

619 Nani Chacon

Nani Chacon: My name is Nanibah Chacon. I'm from Albuquerque, New Mexico, and from the Navajo Nation.

Narrator: The starting point for Chacon's sculptures is a visual resemblance between sand paintings of Diné gods and electrical towers used by coal refineries on the Navajo Nation.

Nani Chacon: And I think that that's a beautiful testament to the, I guess the *holisticness* of math and technology and where they begin to come together, that you have one image that's created in the likeness of god, and you have one image that's created only for industrial precision and efficiency, and they have similar design elements. And so that is what helped me construct this work.

The depictions of our gods are created in an idea of completeness and beauty. So the intention behind all of them is something that's good. It's something that is used for healing. It's also what connects us to the earth and the universe around us. So how do you juxtapose that against something that is potentially slowly killing that same universe? I don't know, but it is also a blessing. I mean, we are able to communicate right now because of electricity [laughs], and we live in the world that we live in. So it is this complex and layered duality that maybe we don't have all the answers for. So how do we begin to ask different questions and propose different answers?

620 Billboard: Taína H. Cruz

Taína H. Cruz: I'm Taína Cruz.

Narrator: Cruz's billboard, *I Saw the Future and It Smiled Back*, is installed over Gansevoort Street as part of the 2026 Biennial.

Taína H. Cruz: I was thinking about how the future can feel both beautiful and terrifying at the same time. I wanted to paint a moment that feels like hope and danger mixed together, like looking at the sun even when you know it might hurt your eyes. Thinking about when we had that eclipse moment a while back and everyone was desperately either trying to look at the sun or see something that was just so abnormal. And that child's glow feels alive to me, like the future itself, close breathing, watching us as we watch it. It's about the strange warmth between fear and wonder when you realize what's ahead is already here.

And that generally is my approach to growing up in the city. New York was just a very, I'm so grateful that my parents did all they can to have the city be my playground in my backyard. And so even when I'm making my pieces today, I'm holding onto the energy that was felt as a child reading the newspaper, what's to come.