

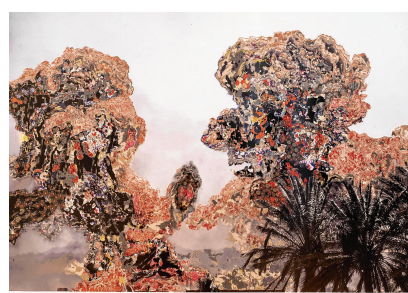
Caregivers' work on display at Opalka

The exhibition, 'Painting at Night,' runs through Oct. 12



Above, Padma Rajendran's "Vessel Shelf," glaze on stoneware, 2021, at the Opalka Gallery show "Painting at Night."

Below, Eirini Linardaki, "Monster Series, Syria" (2022), printed digital collage from the Opalka Gallery exhibit.



By William Jaeger

Fall is here, and the new season of exhibitions at the always-vigorous Opalka Gallery is kicking off with an expansive call-for-entries group show, "Painting at Night: An Exhibition by Caregivers." The works are at turns charming, warm and sincere. And interesting. Since the art isn't always about caregiving in particular — the show statement says only that it "celebrates artists who are also caregivers" — it ends up as a smorgasbord of styles and intentions.

There are, though, a number of works that do touch on notions of caregiving. You might even see the textile sculpture by Mexican American Monique Crabb called "Bad Mom" from far across the gallery as you walk in, a joke (maybe) or a confession (reasonably), the title shouting in big letters. In a similar way, Dominican American Francena Ottley's yarn work "I'm Not Me I'm Just Mom" shouts its title in all caps. Both are reductive, of course, but both are having fun.

Some of the caregiving artists are indeed moms, but room has been made for others, too, such as Brett Davis, the father in charge of the largest work in the show, "Love Like an Ocean." This series of oversized hanging garments, kimonos of sorts, covered with collaged photographs, forms a repeating cutout that creates a huge airy tunnel you can see through and around. The taped-on snapshots are a public display of family. (One of the co-artists on this work is Davis' child, Toko.) Malaysian artist Padma Ra-



Raul Gonzalez's "Sewing with Cecelia, Doing Werk Series," (2019), an acrylic on cotton duck canvas on view at the Opalka.

jendran's "Vessel Shelf" makes a virtue of the home, and of immigrant women, as told with her hanging stoneware plaque, showing a loosely depicted shelf with still-life knickknacks. Elsewhere, with an edgier feel, the screen-print diptych by the Mexican-born indigenous artist kaory santillán bueno pairs a photographic image of cacti and cacti sculpture in the desert with a stark textual declaration: Honor Your Roots.

There are some works about mothers that are especially intriguing and well resolved, aesthetically. And with some surprising twists. Emily Gherard's hanging sculptural piece, "The Mothers #6," looks at first like an irregular abstraction made of small black blocks of cedar and black geometric linework on white surfaces in one corner. It's idiosyncratic, and it feels confident and convincing. But what of the title?

It turns out the work is an interpretation of an etching, "The Mothers," by expressionist artist Käthe Kollwitz.

With similar formal control, the geometric gel pen drawings by Shanti Grumbine are dark and hard to access at first, but the visual energy of both "Floating Window" works on black paper are compelling. Also dark and a bit difficult to view is an ambrotype by Kaitlyn Danielson, with abstract swirls of dark grey embedded in shadowed transparency. Then, with almost opposite tonal air, the pale leafy designs on bright white by Xin Xin make a virtue of fading elements that layer and disappear before your eyes. "An Exhibition by Caregivers" is what it is. Because the theme centers on the art-makers rather than the art, the works in the show resemble the range you would find in a regional exhibition

IF YOU GO

"PAINTING AT NIGHT: AN EXHIBITION BY CAREGIVERS"

When: Through Oct. 12
Where: Opalka Gallery, Sage Colleges, 140 New Scotland Ave., Albany
Hours: Noon to 5 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays, noon to 8 p.m. Thursdays
Info: opalka.sage.edu/exhibitions/ or 518-292-7742

(remember those?), each surviving on its own terms, though with a generally conservative tilt. The little bit of sculpture, video and animation make you wish there was more formal diversity to match the global diversity of artists.

The show is the fourth in a series initiated by Artist/Mother Podcast, with an earlier iteration at Collar Works Gallery, which remained active in this show as well. (Indeed, the QR codes on the labels for the artworks take you to a Collar Works site that includes extensive artist statements, bios, prices and even a shopping cart, all a click away.)

There was a lot of work put into "Caregivers," which has a lot of work in it. Whether there is any overarching distinction to be found in art by dads and moms and others who give care (which might end up being most of us, after all) is probably not discoverable here. But there are insights scattered throughout — varying with each viewer, for sure, but individually waiting to be discovered.

BOY SCOUTS

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started a movement for inclusion called Scouting for All, and Jennifer Terrell, a lesbian mother whose expulsion from the Scouts reignited the gay membership controversy.

"I wanted this book to have a narrative feel. I wanted to develop these characters who were so important in bringing change to the organization. I didn't want it to read too factual. I also wrote quite a bit about myself and my own experiences. I liked doing that, but it was also difficult to revisit some of those experiences when I faced so much homophobia. Those days were confusing times for me and writing about them was emotionally challenging."

He came up with the title of the book while looking through his 1998 Scouting

Handbook. "It is stated in there that Scouts need to be 'morally straight' and that was often one of the reasons gay Scouts were kicked out. According to the handbook, to be 'morally straight' meant that you should be honest to those around you and that you should stand up for what is right. It said nothing about sexuality."

On May 23, 2013, the Boy Scouts of America's National Council voted to end the organization's ban on gay youth membership. "It's no longer their policy to ban LGBTQ people from scouting, but they're not super proud about it," De Socio said. "The BSA is quietly inclusive because they don't want to get pushback from the conservative faction in the organization, which is a disservice to so many of the queer and trans kids who could thrive in this program. It could help them as it helped me during my youth."

De Socio acknowledges the courage it took the early activists to speak out against such a powerful organization like the Boy

Scouts. "A lot of change occurred in the 2000s. Not only do we have same-sex marriage today, but so many people feel more comfortable about coming out. Everybody knows a gay person today," he said. "They're in our families and in our neighborhoods, and it's not such a big deal like it had been."

Before it changed its policy, the Boy Scouts suffered a lot of backlash. In 2020, the BSA filed for bankruptcy and by November of that year 82,000 claims of sexual abuse had been made against the organization.

"The Boy Scouts, like the Catholic Church, had been guilty of relocating abusive Scout leaders. Other organizations like the Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA were quicker to embrace background checks."

De Socio enjoyed writing the book and looks forward to another topic in the future. For the past four years he's had a successful career as a freelance writer for various mag-



Mike De Socio/Provided

Mike De Socio, now a freelance journalist, at the Eagle Court of Honor when he was a Boy Scout.

azines and periodicals.

"Climate and clean energy is primarily my main beat, and writing for two or three different publications on a regular basis allows me some flexibility to write about different things. This fits my lifestyle well."

FROMMA

From page 4

using credit cards. Credit cards offer convenience, but that debt can quickly accumulate if you don't pay off the balance in full. If credit card debt fueled your summer fun, now is the time to pay it down and reduce discretionary spending.

"Credit cards make it easy to spend beyond your means, so using a debit card or cash instead can help you keep better

track of your spending," recommends Hershfield. "Credit card debt can accumulate quickly. If you find yourself in debt, try to cut your credit card usage to zero until you pay off your debt. This focused approach can help you manage and reduce your debt more effectively."

Be more mindful about how you spend your money. Focus on intentional spending by making purchases with a clear purpose that align with your financial goals, adds Hershfield. Identify areas where you can

reduce spending.

For example, cut back on dining out or cancel unused subscriptions. Reallocate these funds to your savings account.

Now is also the time to start prioritizing saving, too, he says. The easiest and most effective way to save is automatically. One sustainable way is to save by using an embedded wallet like Accrue. The platform allows you to gradually set aside funds without accruing additional debt or fees.

You can also "round-up" your

spare change through various financial apps, like Accrue, Acorns, Qapital and Chime. Every time you swipe your debit or credit card your purchase will be rounded the nearest dollar. The cyber coin you accumulate will be stashed in a savings account or investment fund. Even a small amount can add up over time.

Since we are just days away from digital toy catalogs and holiday jingles, start planning your holiday budget early. Consider what you will spend on

gifts, travel, and other festivities. By estimating these costs now, you can adjust your savings plan accordingly.

While you're at it, look ahead to next year, suggests Hershfield. Now is the ideal time to start planning your 2025 summer getaway. You can pay over time, secure lower rates and avoid the price hikes that often occur as the travel date approaches. By laying the groundwork well in advance, you can avoid overspending and ensure a stress-free, enjoyable trip.