

BREAKING BARRIERS

★ ★ ★ *STILL in MOTION* ★ ★ ★



INTRODUCTION

Still in Motion is a presentation of thirty-seven photographs and nine videos created by seventeen USF and Tampa Bay military veterans. The artwork was produced during two *Breaking Barriers* summer workshops led by photographer Selina Román and assisted by Christian Cortez. The photography workshop focused on still life, memory, and place by means of objects and landscapes shaped through a variety of lens-based and digital techniques. The video workshop stressed the utilization of several approaches to narrative and filmmaking, along with the introduction to a variety of video practices. Due to COVID 19, the workshops were conducted virtually, and each artist created photographs or videos with their own cellphone cameras. These original images and videos tell personal stories, frame quotidian moments, and convey memories. Several artists explore landscape as an actual, tangible place, while others express their invisible and often intangible interior landscape. *Still in Motion* presents these personal and individual voices to both the local and larger civilian and veteran communities.

Veterans and their families face many challenges related to war, deployment, and the return to civilian life. As a result of their service, many veterans cope with physical, and often invisible conditions, which affect not only service members but also their spouses, children, extended families, and friends. It can be difficult to find words to articulate these hidden conditions, and to express internal thoughts and feelings which escape everyday language. *Breaking Barriers* offers participants an opportunity to communicate visually and develop a voice through artmaking.

I would like to thank all seventeen of the artists represented in this catalogue for their bravery in service but also for their bravery in undertaking a new creative endeavor. I deeply admire their courage to venture into unknown territories. Each year I am moved and believe it is nothing short of heroic to plunge into the art world, and to learn a visual language (sometimes for the first time) while being both behind and in front of the lens. We thank them for sharing parts of their selves and their stories with us, the viewers.

I would also like to thank the USFCAM team who worked diligently to make this catalogue and *Still in Motion* a reality

as we emerge from the unprecedented challenges of the global pandemic. The successful outcome of *Breaking Barriers* is due to the professionalism and inspiration from all who have contributed. Thank you to Selina Román and Christian Cortés for their knowledge, artistic vision, and organization, by which they led the participants to shatter their glass ceilings. To Margaret Miller, Director of USF Institute for Research and Art, for her support and leadership. To Randall West, Deputy Director of USFCAM, for his support and guidance. To Don Fuller and Martha De la Cruz, CAM's media team, for their graphic genius in creating the program's publicity, social media, and most of all, this catalogue. To Shannon Annis and Eric Jonas for their framing and installation expertise. To Amy Allison and Ana Vidal, enthusiastic and sedulous colleagues, and allies of the participants; their strengths made Team *Breaking Barriers* exceptional this year. To our cross disciplinary partners on the USF Tampa Campus, Dr. Steven Wilson, professor in the Department of Communication, who is spearheading the assessment with his crew including Denis Debeck and Ana Vidal. To our community partner The James A. Haley Veterans Hospital and Art Therapist Merrilee Jorn, who have helped us improve the program and who will exhibit *Still in Motion* at Haley in 2022. To Wally Wilson, Director of USF School of Art and Art History, and Forrest MacDonald for their printing collaboration. I would also like to thank Dr. Larry Braue, Director, and Jason Miller, Associate Director, of the USF Office of Veterans Success for their continuing support. Thank you all for the pleasure and privilege of working with you.

I am immensely grateful to our funders. *Breaking Barriers* is made possible by the Community Arts Impact Grant Program of the Arts Council of Hillsborough County, Love IV Lawrence 2020 Waves of Change Grant, and additional support from the ACE Arts for Community Engagement Fund and the Florida Department of State.

LESLIE ELSASSER

Curator of Education
USF Contemporary Art Museum





LOOKING BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

Everyday, we occupy a number of spaces and places—our homes, workplaces, stores, restaurants, parks and doctors' offices to name a few. We take so many of them for granted. But what happens when we stop and look a little closer? Upon closer inspection, perhaps it's the way afternoon light creates dancing shadows on the wall or the colors in an alley become more saturated. How can a place to which we are so accustomed feel new and different?

In my own work, I have been traversing the streets of Tampa after dark searching for purple streetlights. I discovered a handful of them in Seminole Heights in late 2020. Not long after, lights all over Tampa were turning shades of purple and blue. A manufacturing defect causes bulbs to emit the violet light. This in turn transforms the surroundings into surreal, otherworldly landscapes. I have found so much joy in how these lights create such interesting experiences, that it has become a full-blown photography project.

That element of searching and surprise influenced this edition of *Breaking Barriers: Still Life, Memory and Place* and *Moments in Motion*. In this year's sessions, I wanted students to delve into these concepts that are cornerstones of photography and video. Since the advent of the medium, photographers have contemplated notions of time and memory, as well as the still life. Creating their own still lifes, taking pictures at night and looking at their own lives for inspiration, students created beautiful and poignant images and videos. As in last year's iteration of

Breaking Barriers, I wanted students to get the most out of the myriad features on the camera phone. These powerful cameras and their small size allow for interesting angles and effects that larger cameras do not possess. On the other hand, these cameras have significant limitations; however, it's in those limitations that forced students to be more inventive.

Again, I am so proud of the work that the students created. They attacked each assignment with curiosity and enthusiasm. I enjoyed being surprised each week by their insightful creations.

SELINA ROMÁN

Artist and *Breaking Barriers* Instructor





ABOUT

Breaking Barriers has been a wonderful collaborative experience. The workshop sessions allowed us to explore an array of photographic concepts and techniques with all the veteran participants. They were challenged every week with new concepts and techniques, and they always surprised us with their results. The results of these explorations were incredibly satisfying. It was a privilege and a delight to share ideas and critiques with everyone. The level of growth during this short workshop period was impressive. I always leave *Breaking Barriers* inspired and ready to make artwork.

The image that I shared in this catalog is a direct result of the inspiration and challenges that we presented during the summer workshops. This image was captured using a cellphone, a portable inconspicuous tool. All the edits and post-production were limited to the capabilities of the phone.

In my artwork, I explore the hypersexuality of masculinity in queer culture and I seek subjects that could trigger mischievous thoughts. Composing multiple images together I expect to sexualize things and objects that typically have no gender or are not thought of as naturally sexual. I add some of the hypersexual qualities of queerness found throughout queer history like leather fetishes, hair, rounded voluptuous curves, shine, latex, and bondage. My experience as an artist has been enriched by many of my students and the artists that surround me. I am very grateful for this experience.

CHRISTIAN CORTES

Artist and *Breaking Barriers* Instructor



ARTISTS

PHOTOGRAPHY

- 12 **ROXI CATO**
★ *US ARMY*
- 14 **WILDALYS CLASS**
★ *US AIR FORCE*
- 16 **AGUSTIN COLLAZO Jr.**
★ *US NAVY AND MARINE CORPS*
- 18 **MICHAEL CONGDON**
★ *US ARMY*
- 20 **GIOVANNA DELACRUZ**
★ *US AIR FORCE*
- 22 **AMANDA DODD**
★ *US ARMY*
- 24 **DAWN S. HARGRETT**
★ *US NAVY*
- 26 **EVAN FOUNTAIN**
★ *US AIR FORCE*
- 28 **MARK FREEMAN**
★ *US ARMY*
- 30 **ROBERT KIDNEY**
★ *US COAST GUARD*
- 32 **MIKKO MAKI**
★ *US MARINE CORPS*
- 34 **ALICIA MORALES**
★ *US ARMY*
- 36 **RAEANNE SWANSON**
★ *US AIR FORCE*

VIDEO

- 40 **JAMES ALEXANDER**
★ *US AIR FORCE*
- 42 **WILDALYS CLASS**
★ *US AIR FORCE*
- 44 **DWIGHT ENGLISH**
★ *US ARMY*
- 46 **LORETTA FIELDS**
★ *US ARMY*
- 48 **MIKKO MAKI**
★ *US MARINE CORPS*
- 50 **MATIAS**
★ *US MARINE CORPS*

PHOTOGRAPHY





ROXI CATO

★ US ARMY

Zorya in Sunken Gardens

This picture was taken on a hot, humid afternoon in the Sunken Gardens located in Tampa, FL. Zorya had walked ahead of us through the covered pathway and was staring at the huge succulents. She was framed so beautifully by the open space called The Butterfly Garden. I was in love with how many versions of pink were blooming and snapped a few pictures of the scene.

We saw exactly six butterflies. They knew better than us humans to stay out of the heat. This was one of many pictures I took that day with my Samsung A20 phone. I didn't use any filters, sizing, lighting, or other photo app edits. This is the raw image of my 3rd grandchild vibing with nature. Although she and her sister were overheated because we forgot their water in the car, they were able to see the beauty surrounding them.

This reminded me of the days I used to visit the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens. I loved feeding the Koi, turtles, and greedy ducks. Being there brought a meditative state much needed for the turmoil of my teenage life.

ROXI CATO

US ARMY





WILDALYS CLASS

★ US AIR FORCE

Cookies Are My Everything

I love cookies. I could part with anything, but never with cookies. Cookies brighten the day and are reminders of home, goodness, sweetness, and childhood. Like life, these cookies are both orderly and disorganized. They are playful yet purposefully arranged with care. I cannot leave the cookies alone. Once I take a bite, I immediately want more. More cookies, more memories, more sweetness, more goodness, and more reminders of home.

As a child, we did not always have much to eat. Yet despite our struggles, we always had cookies. They didn't need to be expensive cookies. We bought a small daily bag of cookies at our neighborhood bodega, and they always made me happy. It is one of the happiest memories of a happy childhood that I carry with me every day.

I was deployed to Iraq and would occasionally receive care packages. Foreign service members cherish packages from home. I treasured my care packages especially when they contained Chips 'Ahoy sent from the U.S. The cookies became my touchstone to home, happiness, and warmth. I would share the cookies with my colleagues and friends. The cookies created a sense of community and a thread to a world, our world so very far away. They were also, at times, the only real food we had.

When I returned from Iraq, there were many dark and difficult days. I struggled to maintain an even emotional keel. Yet through the sadness, anxiety and depression, cookies were a lifeline to my happiness. Cookies were my childhood, my home, comfort, and a round baked link to goodness. I cannot imagine a day without cookies. Cookies are my everything.

WILDALYS CLASS

US AIR FORCE





AGUSTIN COLLAZO Jr.

★ US NAVY AND MARINE CORPS

Through the Captain's Spyglass

The still life photograph *Through the Captain's Spyglass* is a selection of items I consider significant and represent key moments in my life. As you look at the photo you will see a Marine Corps coin, a US intelligence coin, a Naval Officer hat (called a "cover" in the military), a coin from the USS Eisenhower Strike Group and the American flag. All of which hold special meaning to me.

A crystal sphere was used to create the spyglass effect. This added a small amount of distortion to the photo, but I feel that it truly brought everything into focus. The measured and precise placement of all items was key to the effect you see.

My idea is to show military pride. I am very proud of my time serving our country in both the Marine Corps and the Navy which are represented by the coin and hat. I'm also very proud of my wife Marlene's active duty service in the US Navy. The Eisenhower Strike Group coin is representative of her service, and of a time in my life filled with nothing but worry. She deployed in 2016 with the Eisenhower Strike Group to the Middle East and I found myself praying every day for her safe return. A feeling I truly never understood before as I was the one who was always deploying.

Overall, I truly enjoyed diving into the still life aspect of photography and developing my own artistic process. This art form gave me the opportunity to explore and be creative. Limited only by your imagination, the possibilities are endless.

I'm a photographer, I'm an artist, and I'm a proud US military veteran. Godspeed.

AGUSTIN COLLAZO Jr.
US NAVY AND MARINE CORPS





MICHAEL CONGDON

★ US ARMY

Untitled





GIOVANNA DELACRUZ

★ US AIR FORCE

Suelo estable/Stable Ground

The inspiration for the picture came after my recent trip to the Dominican Republic. Every time I go home, I have a list of goodies that I must bring back. This time it was a *Muñeca Limé* (Dominican Faceless Doll) to replace the one that broke. The inevitable breaking of these traditional dolls is a phenomenon that seems to happen in every Dominican household.

The dolls are a symbol of the Dominican Republic as they signify the mix of cultures and races (Tainos, Africans, Europeans) that resulted from colonization. They are characteristically colorful and have unfinished faces, which leaves room for every Dominican to see themselves represented. Break lines have also become part of their character, telling a story of when they were bumped and dropped by children who were having too much fun. That's what happened to mine.

At first, I wanted to replace my broken doll, but I decided to repair it and let the break lines tell the story. I'm sure my kids will appreciate that. Before I repaired it, I wanted to capture the doll in its broken state, along with the new doll, as a reminder that there is beauty in brokenness.

When I was brainstorming the composition, I spotted the book "Clap When You Land" by Elizabeth Acevedo on my bookshelf. I had not read the book yet so it was just meant to be a prop, with the only link being it was by a Dominican author. I read the book shortly afterwards and created the picture for *Breaking Barriers*. My favorite quote from the book, "I hunger for

stable ground, somewhere else," is a representation of the immigrant experience of hoping for a better life. The image quickly became a very intimate representation of my identity and experience as a Dominican immigrant.

GIOVANNA DELACRUZ

US AIR FORCE





AMANDA DODD

★ US ARMY

Up on a Sea Wall

When I was younger, I never put much thought into what I wanted to be when I grew up. This was because I thought I would live out my life as a perpetual child. Playing out the multitude of imaginative adventures with all of my make-believe and invisible friends, always leading to the endless happily ever afters. The thought of growing up was never in the forefront of my mind. And yet as magical as an everlasting childhood may seem, the necessity of growing up eventually becomes a brutal fact of life.

I joined the U.S. Army when I was 17 years old and spent twenty years serving. I did a lot of growing up, and yet in more recent years I find myself longing for the imagination and the joy of playing make believe with my friends. Being a part of *Breaking Barriers*, in some strange way, allowed for me to indulge in my need for rediscovering the adventurous side of my childhood. I was able to reconnect with a part of myself without reservation because I knew I was amongst friends; fellow veterans. To create freely and without reservation was a wonderful experience. I am grateful for them helping to awaken the perpetual child within me and assisting to feed the never satisfied artistic hunger which constantly rumbles inside me.

Up on a Sea Wall takes a place visited many times and opens the dialogue up to the possibility of "more." More imagination, more to the story, more on the other side of the wall, more to come; from up on the sea wall you can see the possibility of "more."

AMANDA DODD
US ARMY





DAWN S. HARGRETT

★ US NAVY

Good vs Bad Weather

My days start best when I wake up early, pray and go for a walk. I've noticed how it sets the tone for a "good weather" day or a "bad weather" day.

I took this photo while I was spending a weekend with friends at a bed and breakfast resort. I had decided that I would keep to my daily routine of getting up early to pray and walk. I'd say it was literally a good weather day. The sunrise was beautiful with almost clear blue skies.

On that walk, I noticed my shadow looming in the distance and a tree next to me. I stopped to "smell the roses". The idea of me being as tall as a tree was intriguing. If I had a chance to pick something from that tree, it would be a leaf from the top just because I'd have the ability to do it.

In life, some things are not always what they may seem to be and our approach to them makes the difference between "good weather" versus "bad weather".

DAWN S. HARGRETT

US NAVY





EVAN FOUNTAIN

★ US AIR FORCE

Miles to Go

I was not always a car guy, but from a young age I got interested in mechanical things. At age seventeen, with help from my parents, I bought an old car and learned to work on cars. Later that year my Dad introduced me to Chuck, a veteran of WWII and Korea who taught me how to handle a wrench. He became like a second father to me. It is because of that old car and Chuck that I am now an engineer.

Roughly twenty years ago I joined the USAF, then about eighteen years ago I bought a truck. It was the first vehicle I fully paid for. I've put thousands upon thousands of miles on this truck, and created equally as many memories within this truck.

The truck waited patiently for me while I was deployed, took me on dozens of treks up and down the eastern seaboard and a trip to California and back. While driving my truck I have experienced America in almost all of her glory. Behind the wheel we have visited twenty-three out of forty-eight contiguous states. We've crossed the continental divide, seen Monument Valley, visited the Grand Canyon, trekked up and down the Appalachian Trail, added yet more miles travelled by a voyager to Route 66 and the Lincoln Highway, and felt the salt spray from the Pacific and Atlantic oceans.

I've had a dozen first dates picked up in this truck, including one who would become my wife. I've experienced heartbreak and elation in this truck. I've brought home three wonderful dogs in this truck. I've moved homes over six times in this truck and helped friends move their homes. I've helped tow vehicles home, pulled friends and strangers from ditches, and helped direct traffic around accidents in this truck. In many, many ways, this truck is me. I have seen the world behind its glass, her highways roll along

under its wheels, and its people talk to me because of the care I put into this truck. I'm going to continue experiencing my state, and country behind the wheel for as long as I can.

EVAN FOUNTAIN
US AIR FORCE





MARK FREEMAN

★ US ARMY

Untitled 1

Two concepts that I find fascinating are how the Reticular Activating System (RAS) filters what you see and the premise of quantum theory that, by the very act of watching, the observer affects the observed reality. When you combine these two ideas, you realize that what you look at changes both the observer and the observed. The difference is between what you look at and what you see. There are some objects that you look at every day, but do you see them? Your focus determines your perception. Your brain filters out all the noise, so you pay attention only to what is deemed important. For example, you could drive the same route to work every day. You get to your destination practically on autopilot, hardly recognizing the world around you except to avoid any traffic accidents. If you drive that same route after deciding to buy a new Jeep, however, you become hyper aware of how many other people are driving Jeeps on the same roads. Your RAS has assigned a higher importance to Jeeps, so your brain tells you any time there are other Jeeps in our vicinity.

Photography is ubiquitous now. You carry a camera with you everywhere you go. You create images instantly to document a particular place and time. What moments are important enough that you need to document them? The very act of taking your phone out to compose the image and take the picture connotes meaning, even if you keep that photo to yourself. If you take it a step further and post this image, what are you trying to say?

As receivers of these messages, you can scroll through your social media feeds and see dozens of images in seconds. Which images stand out? What are you looking for? What causes you to pause or even stop? Just as the social media is programmed to give you more of what you look for, your brain is constantly scanning the world around you to reward

you with more high-value content. Your reality is shaped by the messages you give to your brain, which in turn filters your perception to match.

What are you looking at? What do you see?

MARK FREEMAN

US ARMY





ROBERT KIDNEY

★ US COAST GUARD

22 A Day

Twenty-two veterans end their lives every day to escape the pain they suffer from their service to our nation. The famous take their messaging to social media regarding their beliefs on societal issues. Yet, there is little to no coverage afforded the loss of our veterans or their families. These were our youngest and brightest who placed service to their nation and others before self. They swore an oath and committed their lives to support and defend our constitution, the foundation upon which a free America sits. We must all recognize this suffering and do our part to help those who now bear the burden for freedom, our safety and security.

There are 22 candles representing the 22 veterans we lose each day in America due to mental health struggles. The place setting represents the loss or missing in action or imprisoned service members. The lemon represents the bitterness of their family's loss. The salt on the plate represents the tears of their families and the pain they endure. The flag represents their calling to service of country. The white tablecloth signifies their innocence. The serenity of the setting represents the serenity they have provided us through the selfless service. The coin on the right represents all US armed forces. The coin on the left is a Coast Guard challenge coin representing the often forgotten US armed service. I tried to focus on a single candle in the image representing the loss of a particular service member.

Photography is an artistic medium I choose because it allows me to capture moments, scenes of beauty and emotion. Deep in our hearts there is a longing for purpose and a feeling of connectiveness. Life can be busy and exhaustive, and it makes it difficult for one to discern our true purpose. We forget the natural wonders that surround us. We travel in masses in a hurried state, and we never truly slow down and allow

our spirits to rest. If we would just stop, we would see the amazing creative wonders that fill our world.

This past year we have seen an abnormal separation from those we love. There are many who live lonely lives who fill their day with busyness. When one stops, there is almost a fear that we would have to answer that difficult question. Am I living a life of purpose, a worthwhile life?

When I am in nature my spirit settles and I come to realize the beauty that surrounds me. I am appreciative of the gifts in my life and the world I live in. When I choose a subject, it is in the hope that the captured image may help one lose their selves and find respite. Maybe, just maybe, they may realize they are part of a loving and beautiful world.

ROBERT KIDNEY
US COAST GUARD





MIKKO MAKI

★ US MARINE CORPS

Under the Sun on the EDGE

Written as told to Bethany Maki

I was inspired to make this image because every time I look at this sculpture from a different direction, I see something more. The way it mirrors the traffic roundabout that it sits in. The way it almost looks like industrial gears. The different tones in the concrete.

The one perspective I didn't have from all my walks past this art piece was what it looked like from underneath. I spent an hour lying at different angles under the Sun and captured these. Seeing the clouds through the Sun evoked memories of flying through and above the clouds throughout my career in the Marines. It's a great reminder to appreciate everything in life from all angles.

This sculpture is one of the newest additions to St. Petersburg, Florida's impressive outdoor art collection. The 30-foot sculpture was designed by Ilan Averbach and pays homage to the EDGE District's industrial past and sun-filled soul.

MIKKO MAKI

US MARINE CORPS





ALICIA MORALES

★ US ARMY

Mom's Soup

Like my mother, I was born in Puerto Rico. I brought the soup terrine to Florida, and it is the only object I have from my mother. This terrine was dear to my mother. She had it for sixty or seventy years, all my life. My mother served soup in the terrine but only for special occasions. She wouldn't allow anyone to serve themselves, she would serve them lest the terrine might get broken.

Despite her small size, my mother had a strong personality. She was very smart although she only completed the eighth grade. She was incredible in mathematics, needing no paper for complex addition or subtraction, she could visualize the computations inside her head. My mother worked as a hospital nutritionist for many years and later owned her own lottery franchises.

We were poor but never lacked necessities. There were seven of us kids, four girls and three boys. My mother was a great mother, a leader, a wonderful cook, and she raised all the kids by herself. She was both our mother and our father.

Mom's Soup was inspired by seventeenth century Dutch still life paintings and created during the *Breaking Barriers* workshop as a tribute to my mother. Many of the ingredients for the soup such as calabaza and platanos are native to the island. This was my mother's recipe. Yet, the still life is also a family portrait. Of course, there is a picture of my mother and the terrine. But each of the ingredients embodies characteristics of my brothers and sisters. Whether they were picante with red hair or shy like the hidden layers of the cabbage, we all belong in the same terrine, raised by our mother with care and love.

ALICIA MORALES

US ARMY





RAEANNE SWANSON

★ US AIR FORCE

Memories of My Maverick

I remember the first day I saw him like it was yesterday, even though it was almost twenty five years ago. He was at the Humane Society in Tucson, Arizona and was so excited that I stopped to talk to him. He was just a puppy, about four months old, and he had the most beautiful brindle coat and the stature of a shepherd. After bending down and petting him and talking to him for a few minutes, I got up and turned to walk to the next kennel. It was then that this sweet, happy puppy leaned against the wall and just slid down as if to say, "she doesn't want me either."

I knew at that moment that "Kenny" (his shelter name) had to be mine, and that he needed a unique name. It took me a few days, but I decided on "Maverick" because he was a special and a beautiful kind of different.

It is so hard to put into words the love that Maverick brought to me and my children. He was the dog who had to get in the car every morning to take them to school, the dog who spent hours listening to them read books and sing songs, the dog that let them lay on him like a pillow, the dog who loved every person and dog he met at the dog park on Saturday mornings.

Maverick was excited to share in any moment of happiness as if he truly understood what was happening in that moment, and he also sensed when you were sad or upset and he was always there to comfort you.

When Maverick would run to greet you, it was like he was smiling, and he earned the nickname "Smilin' Mav" from the many friends and neighbors he always greeted with enthusiasm.

I still see him out of the corner of my eye when I least expect it, and it brings back so many happy memories of him, and it often brings tears because I have missed him each and every day since he passed over the rainbow bridge a little over eight years ago.

Memories of My Maverick is my way to honor the life of a special member of our family and share with others the true joy that one "shelter dog" can bring to the hearts of so many.

RAEANNE SWANSON

US AIR FORCE



Maverick

VIDEO





JAMES ALEXANDER

★ US AIR FORCE

Self Portrait 2021

After retiring from the Air Force in 2011, I decided to take life easy. There had been enough hustle and bustle throughout my 24-years in the service. The life of an F-16 Crew Chief is a non-stop hurry-up. I have traveled the world. I have been to war. I have lost friends and co-workers. Now, I do what I can to take things at a less hectic pace.

Over the years since leaving active duty, I have pursued my interests. I went to college and got a degree — twice. I played around making abstract art. I tried my hand at teaching (I currently tutor high school kids part time for Hillsborough County Schools). And, since the pandemic, I started learning to play guitar.

Let me say something. With no background in music, learning guitar is hard. It took me six months to learn to play one song. That felt discouraging, so I 'took a break' for a while. Then one day, my father (who is musically inclined) introduced me to the electric bass guitar. And it spoke to me. I understood it. It understood me. I would say I fell in love, but my wife might get jealous.

Since that day, I have learned to play numerous songs on the bass. It has been a great escape from reality. While playing the world seems to fall away and, in the moment, it all becomes about the music.

Self Portrait 2021, is about that moment. In sharing it with the world, I hope it can help anyone else who might need a little escape.

JAMES ALEXANDER

US AIR FORCE





WILDALYS CLASS

★ US AIR FORCE

A Dancer's Nightmare

Daily living is a dance. We live in the world but also inside of our minds. Our emotions make little sense in linear or logical ways, they are like a dance always spinning and whirling. Sometimes I happily dance. Yet there are other times when my alter ego enters, pirouettes, and the dance is out of step. I come face to face with a darker version of myself, full of fear and disbelief.

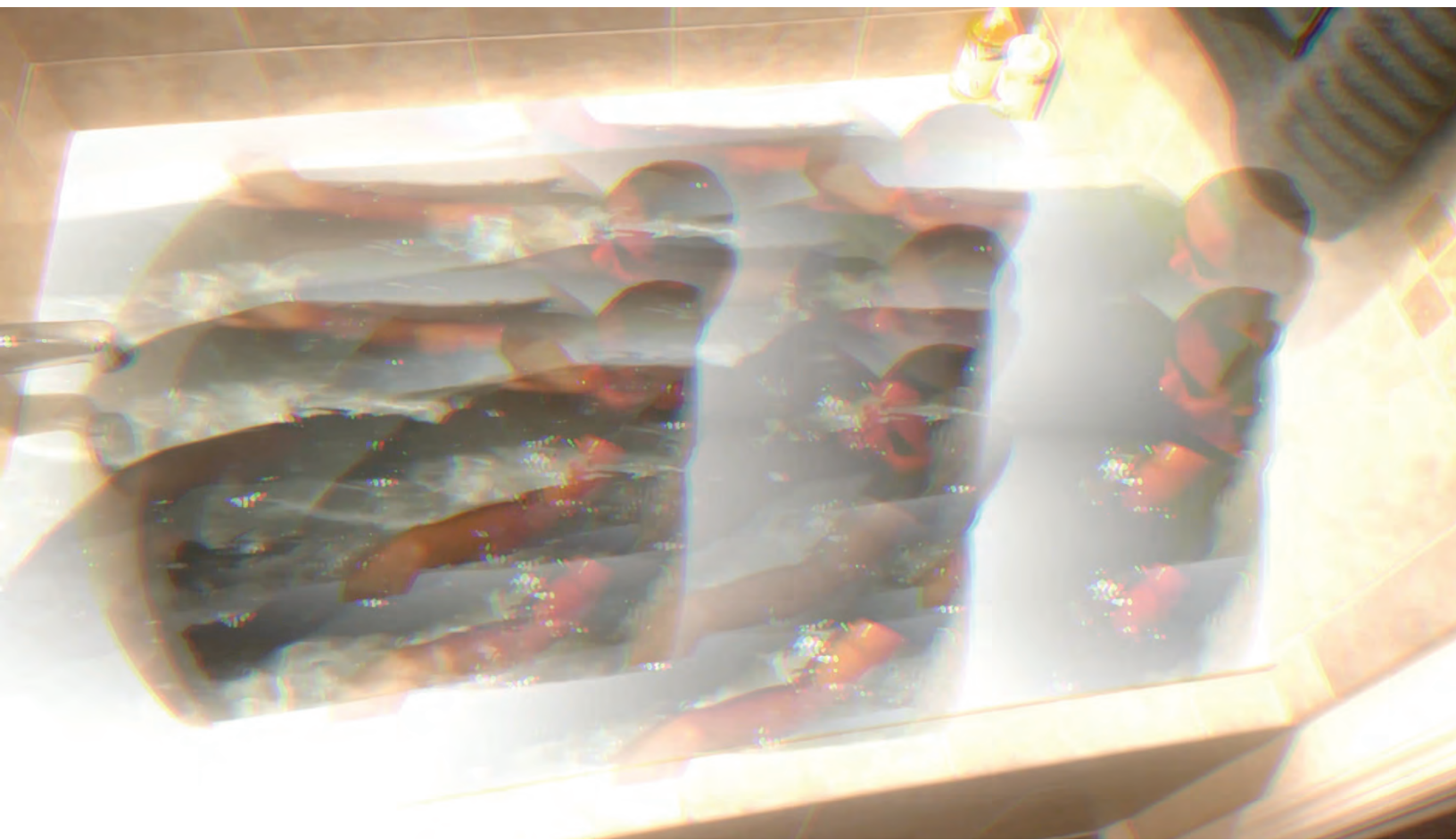
I always wanted to be a dancer, but never took classes. *A Dancer's Nightmare* is my dance between the light and the dark. The dancer awakens from a nightmare, full of fear, terrified of battling a darkness that is hidden behind her emotional shadows. When I was a child, I was happy. When I was a teenager, I danced with lightness. I have wonderful memories of who I was. However, when I returned from the military, I was different. When I came home, I danced with darkness. Some periods were better than others. Yet, I spent years fearing the sudden arrival of the blackness and my dark alter ego.

After returning, I was diagnosed with a bipolar condition. It was an ailment that I refused to acknowledge. I did not want to accept the mental health issues. I was frightened by the threat of my depressive alter ego and my newfound negativity. My days were precarious. I would awaken to confront my shadow self, my waking nightmare. The knowledge that there was this thing in my life left little peace. The looming darkness was always present.

A Dancer's Nightmare is an acceptance of my condition and an awakening from the nightmare. My dancer wears a majestic purple leotard as she wakes from the darkness and leaps toward her light-filled future that is well lived with hope, joy and poise one day at a time.

WILDALYS CLASS

US AIR FORCE





DWIGHT ENGLISH

★ US ARMY

Untitled 1





LORETTA FIELDS

★ US ARMY

Let it Rain

I am US Army Veteran who served many years in a human resource capacity. Most of those years were spent working inside an office environment. I have lived in many states, but after my service during Desert Storm, I developed some medical conditions that required me to live in a warmer climate for healing. I chose Florida. I moved to Florida in 2005 and was impressed by the times it rained and the volume of rain that can accumulate in such a short amount of time. Most of the other states where I lived did not have the same volume of rain that I have seen here in Florida. These states were mostly mountainous with rocks, cliffs, and other types of terrain. Thinking that because of these factors, the state did not suffer from lack of rain. In Florida however, I was impressed that it would rain on one side of a street and not on the other side. Rain is refreshing to me because it represents the beginning of something new and refreshing.

I chose cheerful music for the soundtrack in my video as a way to appreciate the effects of rain and how the rain could be captured during my travel from an appointment in Oldsmar to Temple Terrace, FL. I thought about the volume of water pouring down and if it would be the same as I drove. It was not the same. There was no rain in Temple Terrace when I arrived. But later in the day it did rain and it was coming down at the same volume around my property as it was earlier when I was in Oldsmar.

Today, we hear of climate changes and resources that are needed to help the environment. I am sure that research has been done on the benefits of rain,

but I do not have the knowledge to elaborate on such matters. Meanwhile I will continue to enjoy the rain and look at the affects of change and explore new beginnings after the rain. Oh, how refreshing!

LORETTA FIELDS
US ARMY





MIKKO MAKI

★ US MARINE CORPS

In the Drink

Written as Told to Bethany Maki

After sustaining an acquired brain injury 6 years ago, I gave up photography. My reduced cognitive capabilities and processing speed just didn't allow me to use traditional cameras. But the iPhone camera let me get back into taking still shots to some degree.

I had always wanted to explore videography before my injury, so when *Breaking Barriers* offered a video class, I trusted them to guide my broken brain through learning this medium. It was very hard, honestly too hard, for me. This video reflects my confusion and anxiety through the class. There are so many elements to consider in creating a video—story planning, visual and audio creation, editing, etc. I now have a great appreciation for what videographers must do. This was humbling and let me know that while there are some things I can do, there are many I can't. Knowing where those barriers are is important for my health. Not all barriers have to be broken to succeed.

MIKKO MAKI

US MARINE CORPS





MATIAS

★ US MARINE CORPS

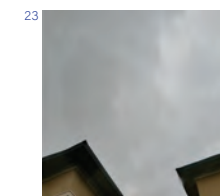
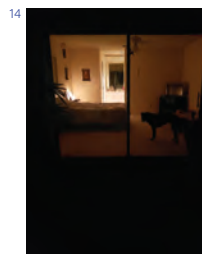
Exequy of Lichens

A typological impression of an American veterans' cemetery. Sound and moving image.

MATIAS

US MARINE CORPS





James Alexander
1. *Self Portrait*, 2021
2. *Ponderous*, 2021

Roxi Cato
3. *Zorya in Sunken Gardens*, 2021
4. *Succulents in the Night*, 2021
5. *Cherry Craving*, 2021

Wildalys Class
6. *A Dancer's Nightmare*, 2021
7. *A Fun Day*, 2021
8. *Cookies Are My Everything*, 2021
9. *Hue*, 2021
10. *A Cowboys's Peace*, 2021

Agustin Collazo Jr.
11. *Through the Captain's Spyglass*, 2021
12. *Time in a bottle*, 2021
13. *Reflected Memories*, 2021

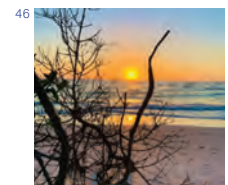
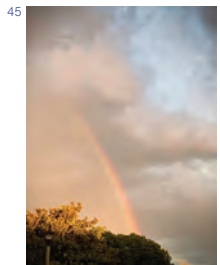
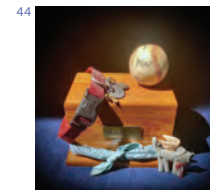
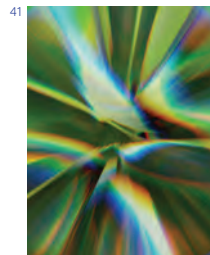
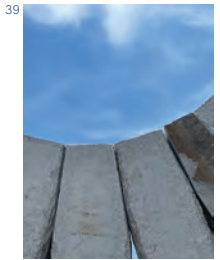
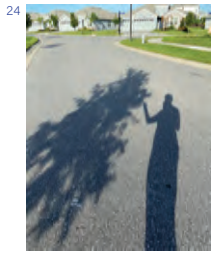
Michael Congdon
14. *Untitled*, 2021

Giovanna Delacruz
15. *Suelo estable/Stable Ground*, 2021
16. *Homework Comes First, Unfinished Delight*, 2021
17. *Waiting on the Bubbles to Settle*, 2021

Amanda Dodd
18. *Up on a Sea Wall*, 2021
19. *Disconnected*, 2021
20. *Recycle*, 2021

Dwight English
21. *Untitled 1*, 2021
22. *Untitled 2*, 2021

Loretta Fields
23. *Let it Rain*, 2021



Dawn Hargrett
24. *Good vs. Bad Weather*, 2021
25. *Get Ready to Launch*, 2021
26. *A New Dawn*, 2021

Evan Fountain
27. *Miles To Go*, 2021
28. *Nightly Walk*, 2021
29. *Almost Home*, 2021

Mark Freeman
30. *Untitled 1*, 2021
31. *Untitled 2*, 2021
32. *Untitled 3*, 2021

Robert Kidney
33. *22 A Day*, 2021
34. *Covid Lake*, 2021
35. *Springs of peace-tuned-healed*, 2021

Mikko Maki
36. *In The Drink*, 2021
37. *Under the Sun on the EDGE*, 2021
38. *Between the Rays and Under the Clouds*, 2021
39. *Through the Sun on the EDGE*, 2021

Matias
40. *Exequy of Lichens*, 2021

Alicia Morales
41. *Hidden Life*, 2021
42. *WaterIce*, 2021
43. *Mom's Soup*, 2021

RaeAnne Swanson
44. *Memories of My Maverick*, 2021
45. *A Split Sky*, 2021
46. *Tranquil Reflections*, 2021

CONTEMPORARY ART MUSEUM
University of South Florida
4202 East Fowler Ave. CAM 101, Tampa, FL 33620-7350
(813) 974-4133 | caminfo@usf.edu | cam.usf.edu




UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA
College of The Arts
Institute for Research in Art
Contemporary Art Museum



 **HILLSBOROUGH
ARTS COUNCIL**



 **LOVE IV
LAWRENCE**