

# APRIL 2024

## EXHIBITIONS CATALOG

*(de)composed/nocturne*, by Judith Klausner

*They See Love as a Reddening of the Earth  
Under the Sun*, by Deborah Grayson

IA&A AT HILLYER



The following catalog features a list of artworks that are currently on view at Hillyer during the month of April 2025. The document serves as a reference or resource to supplement the interpretative materials on view at the Hillyer.

Some of the works listed include a sale price. Hillyer does engage in the sale of artworks, so please contact the artist directly, if interested. We currently have one artist whose works are for sale.

**Artist Contact Information:**

Deborah Grayson  
deborah@graysonstudios.com

## ***(de)composed/nocturne***

Judith Klausner

*(de)composed/nocturne* is an exhibit in two parts: dark and light. Works in the darkened portion of the space utilize the science of light, including fluorescence, luminescence, and retroreflectivity. All of the pieces beckon the viewer to look closer.

Often when something has “gone bad,” it has given rise to something new, but it can be hard to appreciate new growth in the shadow of our disappointment. In this body of work, every element was made by hand: every rock and popsicle stick is painstakingly sculpted. This crafting of every detail inspires new ways of looking at familiar objects, and helps to reveal small and easily overlooked beauty.

*(de)composed/nocturne* reflects the artist’s journey to reframe life as a disabled person. It aims to encourage others to observe, reexamine, and perhaps find beauty for themselves.

**Judith Klausner** (she/her pronouns)

## Artist Statement

As a disabled queer woman, I am drawn to things that are cast off or othered, to beauty that is ignored or needs to be unearthed. I like the idea of spending hours meticulously crafting something generally viewed as ruined or frightening. I want to invite people to push past their discomfort and look closer.

I have worked with a range of non-traditional media over the years, including insects, packaged food, medical ephemera, and polymer clay. From miniature scenes constructed with mantises, to cross-stitch on Chex cereal and realistic reproductions of food and insects, one consistent factor across my work is the joy I take in tiny details. My experience of invisible disability and chronic pain play an integral role in how I view the world and create art.

## **Judith Klausner** (she/her pronouns)

### Biography

Judith Klausner is a Somerville, MA artist with a love for small, intricate, and overlooked things. She received her degree in Studio Art from Wesleyan University in 2007 after constructing her thesis primarily out of insects, and has since continued to search the details of her surroundings for inspiration. Her experience of invisible disability and chronic pain play an integral role in how she views the world and creates art. Her work has been featured in Harper's magazine, Reader's Digest, the Huffington Post and NPR, and exhibited in venues internationally including the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center, Susquehanna Art Museum, Museum of Natural History, RI, Museo di Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Trento e Rovereto, and the Boston Children's Museum. Judith enjoys playing with her food, both recreationally and professionally.

[www.jgklausner.com](http://www.jgklausner.com)

Instagram: [@miss.mantis](https://www.instagram.com/miss.mantis)

## ***Everything (and More)***

2023

Clay, paint, wire, pigment, recycled cellophane, fibers

Green bottle flies (also known as blowflies) are pollinators as well as important decomposers. Their larvae provide valuable use in the medical and forensic fields.



Artwork available through the artist.

***The Long and Winding Road***

2021

Clay, acrylic paint



## ***Formica/Formica***

2022

Clay, mica pigment, acrylic paint, wire, pen, resin, spice

I am privileged to stay at a friend's house on Cape Cod every summer. The kitchen was redone in the 70's, and the countertop is a cream formica with a pattern of small irregular dark spots. The first time I visited, I realized that one of the dots in the pattern was moving -then another and another: It turned out that the pattern on the formica was the same size and color as the sugar ants that would invade each summer! That kitchen countertop is like a magic-eye picture that comes alive depending on whether the ants have begun their summer onslaught.





## ***Lost and Found***

2021

Clay, acrylic paint, decoupage medium, spices, wire

Misplaced keys exude stories.



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***The Thing with Feathers***

2021

Clay, acrylic paint, wire

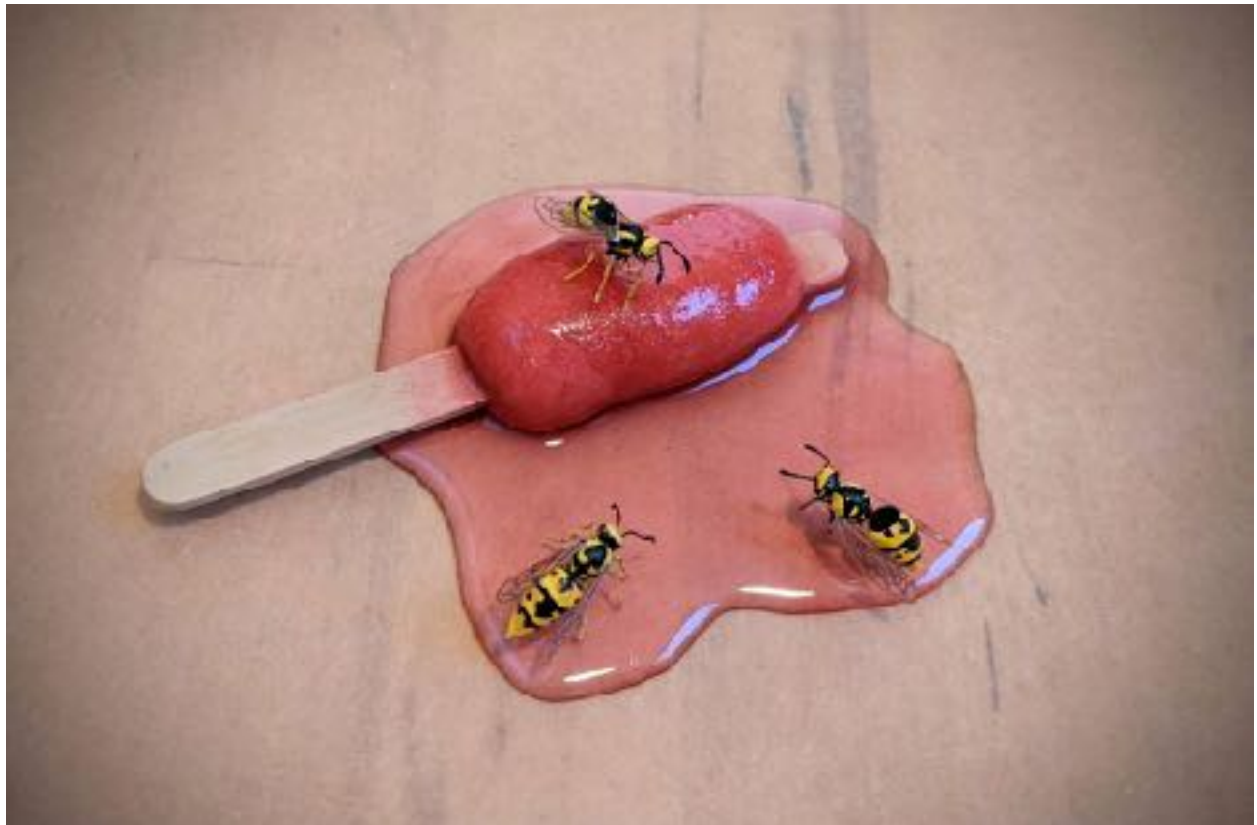


Artwork available through the artist.

## ***Sweet on You***

2021

Clay, chalk pastel pigment, acrylic paint, wire, cellophane, resin



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***Putting Down Roots***

2021

Clay, acrylic paint, chalk pastel pigments, wire, sealant, coffee grounds, cotton

The average length of a dandelion taproot is 6-18 inches, but they can grow up to 10 feet. A dandelion can regrow from as little as an inch of taproot left in the soil.



Artwork available through the artist.

# ***How Does Your Garden Grow?***

2021

Clay, acrylic paint, wire



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***Cross My Heart/Spin Me A Yarn***

2023

Thread, clay, wire, paint

In 1973, two cross-orb weavers - named Arabella and Anita - were sent up in Skylab 3 and became the first spiders to spin webs in space. The eponymous cross marking on a cross orb weaver's abdomen is situated right above the heart.



## ***Home Sweet Home***

2022

Clay, acrylic paint, wire, sealant, cellophane, flocking

Female carpenter bees chew holes into soft wood to create nests. While many people find the holes aesthetically displeasing on their homes, carpenter bee holes don't cause structural damage like termites.

Male carpenter bees hover outside the nest to scare away potential predators (their only hope is intimidation through size and association, as they don't even have stingers. They're big softies.)



## ***The Fates***

2023

Clay, paint, wire, and thread

The Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone.



Artwork available through the artist.



## ***Joyous Infestation***

2023

Clay, paint, wire, flocking

My partner and I planned to get married in 2020. That was put on hold when the pandemic hit, but that summer their father was diagnosed with rapid onset dementia and began to decline rapidly. In early July, it became clear that time was short. My partner only had two living family members, and we wanted them both to be there in some way. In two weeks we planned a 12-person outdoor socially distanced micro-wedding. We were lucky to have a friend whose family had a beautiful piece of land nearby that they let us use.

Unfortunately, time was shorter than we had realized. My partner's father passed away 8 days before the wedding. It was a tumultuous and emotional time, full of both grief and joy. Just before the ceremony, the friend whose family owned the land picked me a bouquet of wildflowers from their pollinator meadow, which I carried down the grass "isle" between distanced folding chairs. I took the bouquet home and put it in a vase on my worktable. A couple of days after the wedding I noticed movement among the flowers. Closer investigation led me to discover that they were full of caterpillars! Loopers, sunflower borers, and even a monarch. As the flowers wilted, dried, and were eaten away, these caterpillars grew and transformed. It was an incredible gift.

# ***Joyous Infestation***

2023

Clay, paint, wire, flocking



Artwork available through the artist.

***Stuck on You***

2021

Clay, acrylic paint



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Artwork available through the artist.

## ***Paper Tiger***

2023

Clay, paint, wire, recycled cellophane

Paper revolutionized the spread of information. Humans learned to make paper from wasps.



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***Microorganized II***

2021

Clay, acrylic paint, flocking, cotton, chalk pastel pigment

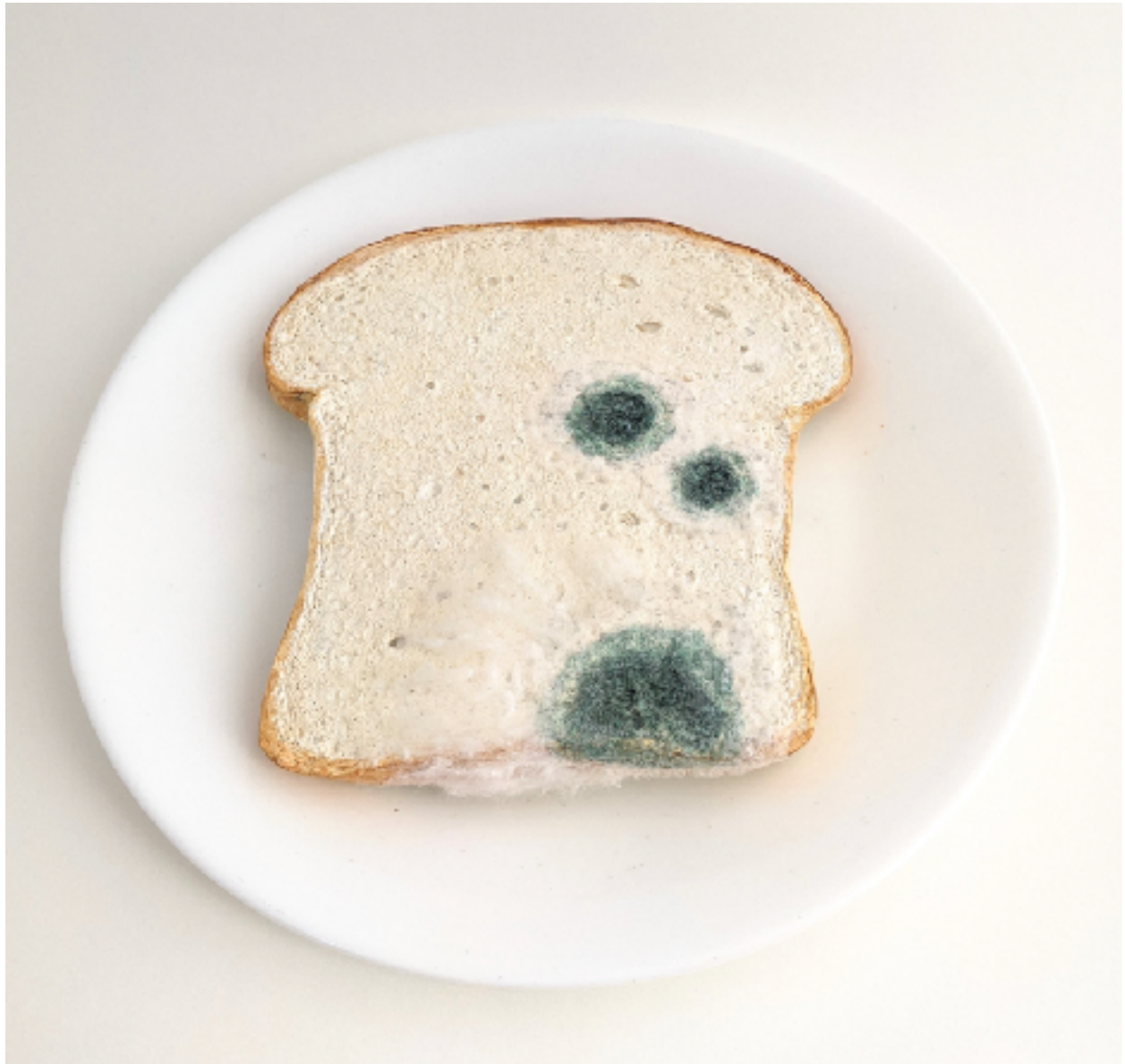


Artwork available through the artist.

# ***Microorganized I***

2020

Clay, acrylic paint, flocking, cotton



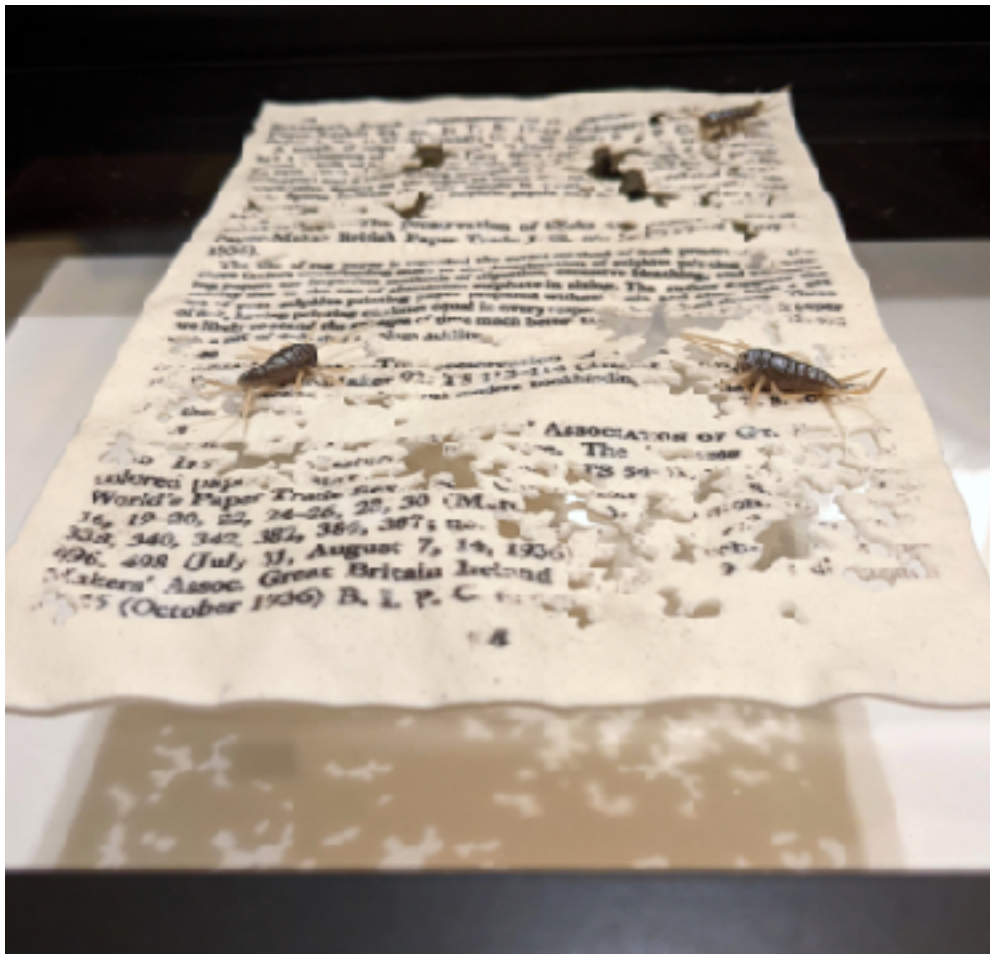
Artwork available through the artist.

# ***Illuminated Manuscript***

2021

Clay, acrylics, toner transfer from text

I am a lover of books. A damaged book always provokes grief in me, and to dog-ear a page would feel like sacrilege. Yet I am compelled by the delicate, lace-like creations of silverfish as they consume paper and ink.



## ***Climbing the Walls***

2021

Clay, chalk pastel pigment



Artwork available through the artist.



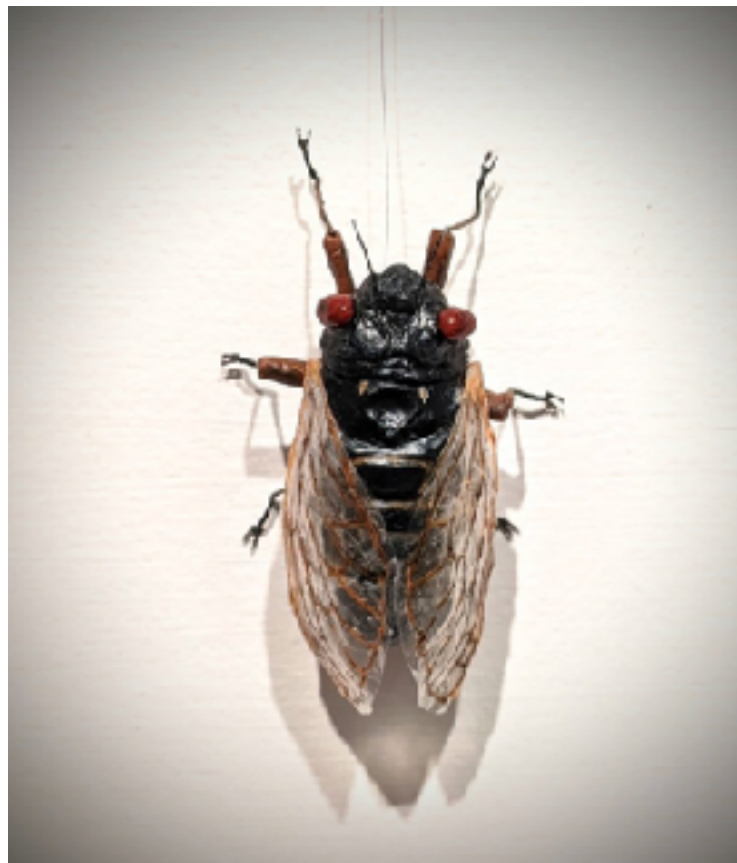
## ***Survival (Screaming Into the Void)***

2021

Clay, acrylic paint, wire, reclaimed cellophane, thread, sound recording

The Cicada's only defense mechanism is sheer numbers. Though many people find their appearance frightening, cicadas don't bite, sting, or even fly very fast. They are mistakenly thought of as a crop pest because of the colloquial use of the term "locust," which are actually a completely different type of insect. Their survival depends on emerging in such vast numbers that their predators can't eat enough of them to keep the species from propagating.

This piece includes an audio component. Please scan the QR code below and use headphones to listen:



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***If These Walls Could Talk***

2021

Clay, chalk pastel pigment

Peziza domiciliana cup fungus grows on rotten wood, drywall/ plasterboard, and plaster in homes, damp cellars, and basements. It is not at all dangerous to humans, instead acting as a sort of canary in a coal mine to let you know that there is a water issue within your walls or floors.



***Irrepressible***

2021

Clay, foil, acrylic paint, sealant



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***I Cannot Be a Meal, But I Can Be a Garden***

2023

Clay, paint, wire, pigment, wood board

When you get a potato, you have a set idea about what it's supposed to be and why it's useful. Say you're going to use it to make hash browns: that's how it succeeds as a potato, by being hash browns. If the potato sprouts, suddenly it's not useful for that anymore. It's ruined. You have to completely shift your outlook to what it can be now - a houseplant, a way to grow more potatoes - for it to once again be something of value.

That's very much the process I've gone through with my life as a disabled person. Growing up, I knew I was going to have a Career. That's how success was measured. And then...I couldn't. So I thought I was useless. It took me a long time to realize that I still have value, from my love and friendship to the art I put into the world.

Sometimes I still mourn the hash brown I thought I was going to be, or worry that people think a house plant is less than. But I've come a long way to seeing the value in my houseplant self. I cannot be a meal, but I can be a garden.

***I Cannot Be a Meal, But I Can Be a Garden***

2023

Clay, paint, wire, pigment, wood board



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***Glow Up***

2023

Clay, wire, paint, spackle, wheat, spices, fiber

The giant desert hairy scorpion is the largest scorpion in North America. The hairs on its many limbs help it to detect vibrations in the soil. Although intimidating looking, it's venom is actually fairly mild (comparable to a bee sting). Like most scorpions, it fluoresces under ultraviolet light.



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***Betwixt and Between***

2023

Clay, wire, wool, pastel powder pigment, paint, parafilm

Pallid bats play an important role as predators of desert insects. They are also indirect pollinators of several species of cactus, as they visit flowers in their hunt for insects.



## ***Blinded by the Light***

2023

Clay, paint, wire, flocking, acrylic rods, light bulb & fixture

Inspired by porch lights on summer nights. Moths throw themselves against the glass over and over, trying to reach a glowing source that would destroy them in an instant.



Artwork available through the artist.



## ***One Man's Trash***

2023

Clay, wire, wool, paint, glass beads, thread, foil, pastel pigment, ink, gloss glaze

(O)possums are the only North American marsupials. Often viewed as dirty and frightening, they are actually quite clean and non-aggressive. When threatened, a possum's body triggers a comatose, death-feigning state, which makes them less appealing to some predators. Although it is referred to as "playing possum," this state is involuntary, and can leave the possum more vulnerable (as in the case of oncoming traffic). It is extremely rare for a possum to carry rabies, which is theorized to be due to the possums lower body temperature relative to placental mammals.



Artwork available through the artist.

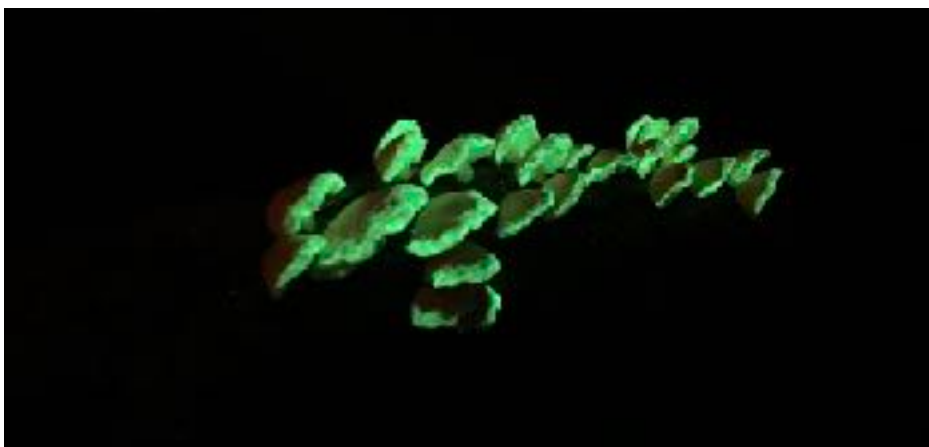
## ***Foxfire***

2023

Clay, paint, glow-in-the-dark pigment

“Foxfire” or “fairy fire” is the glow emanating from bioluminescent fungi. *Panellus stripticus* is believed to be one of the brightest bioluminescent mushrooms in the world.

The first known recorded observation of glowing fungi was from Aristotle, who wondered at the "cold fire" that sometimes emanated from rotting wood in the forest.



# ***They See Love as a Reddening of the Earth Under the Sun***

Deborah Grayson

*They Think of Love as a Reddening of the Earth Under the Sun* is about what happens at the intersection of the archive, biomythography, and spirit memory. For the last seven years Grayson has been deeply immersed in origin stories—stories that say something about who we are, where we've been, and who we might become if we rewild ourselves and our stories. She reflects on questions like: Who are our people? How have we connected with and nurtured lands and communities? What are the rituals that have sustained and carried our families? What artifacts have we fashioned to bring magic, love, and life to lands and communities? She asks these questions as she wanders through archives and maps, time, space and cultures to restore the stories that have been violently annotated or redacted. Each work of art in *They See Love* is inspired by the stories of our ancestors to ground ourselves in communion with the land and community.

# **Deborah Grayson**

## **Artist Statement**

Using vernacular, ethnographic and medical photographs from the early 20th century as source material, I examine historical archives to trace Black women's life-stories. Moving between figuration and abstraction, the historical and the intergalactic, the spiritual and the profane, I use printmaking (e.g. etching, woodcut, lithography, screenprinting) and drawing to re/animate the rich and sometimes quiet stories of Black women's lives. Ink, graphite, wood and paper are among the tools I find useful to do this creative, documentary work. In doing so, I work to build an archival imaginary—a visual representation of the present and future that is conceived through what should have been possible for Black women in the past.

# Deborah Grayson

## Biography

Deborah Grayson is a fine art printmaker, painter and scholar. She creates work about the interior lives of Black people and how they fully live in their lives. In her work Grayson is interested in capturing the nuance, beauty and dimensionality of Black lives that often gets drowned out by the necessity of always having to say truly obvious and basic things like Black lives matter. Kevin Quashie tells us that there is heft and history in everyday moments. For Grayson, to reflect on these everyday moments – to recognize and relish them – provides an opportunity for more expansive ways of seeing and being. Born and raised in Washington, DC and Montgomery County, Maryland (Go-Go for life). She earned a BA in English Language and Literature from the University of Maryland, College Park and an MA and PhD in American Studies from Michigan State University where her areas of concentration were literature, history and science. Her studio is located in NE Washington, DC.

***Still, Amidst the Cotton***

2023

Color reduction woodcut

Edition of 5, 1 AP

18 x 24 in (22 x 30 in paper)

\$3,800



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***High Cotton***

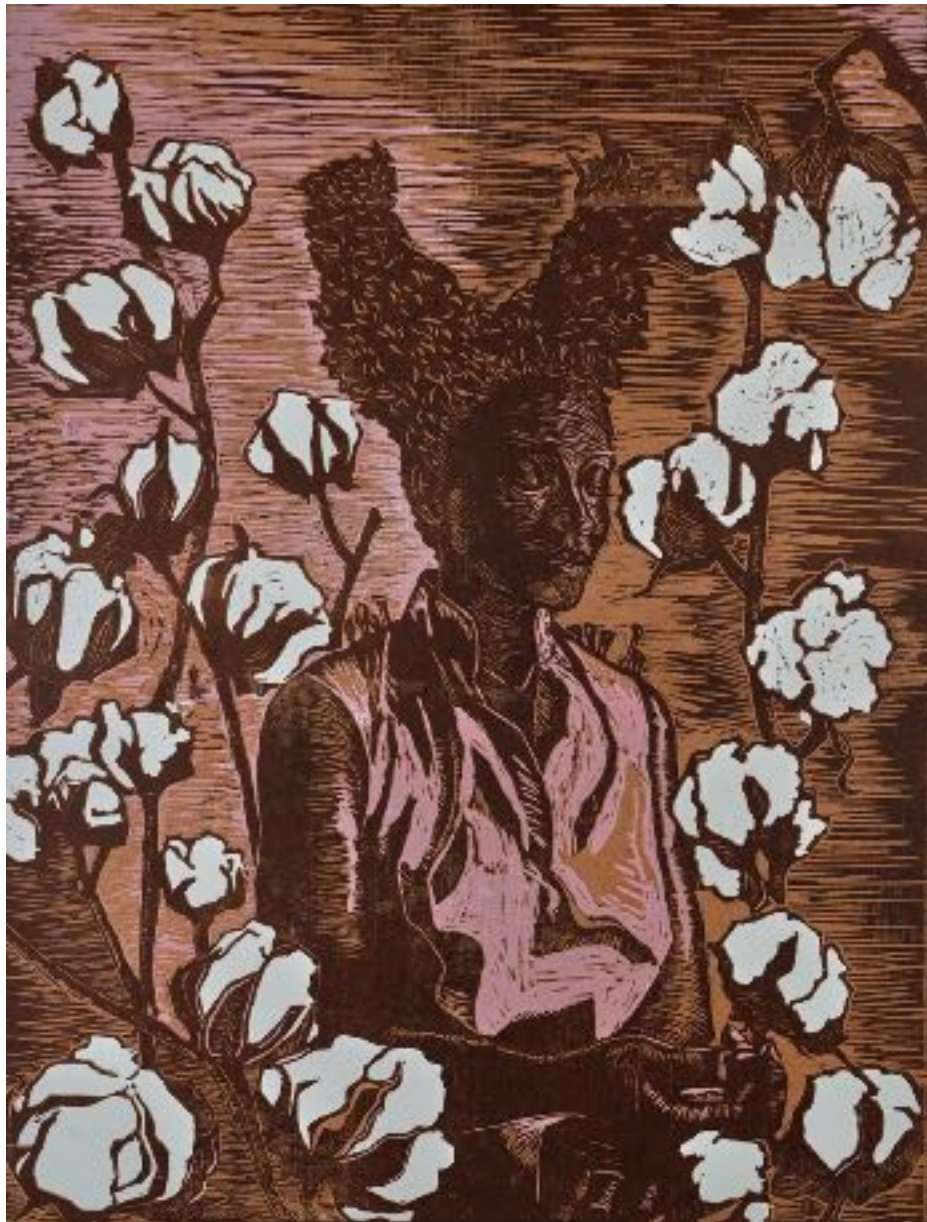
2023

Color reduction woodcut

Edition of 5, 1 AP

18 x 24 in (22 x 30 in paper)

\$3,800



Artwork available through the artist.

***Ahoskie is on the other side of Harlem***

2023

Color reduction woodcut

Edition of 5, 1 AP

18 x 24 in (22 x 30 in paper)

\$3,800



Artwork available through the artist.



***They See Love as a Reddening of the Earth  
Under the Sun***

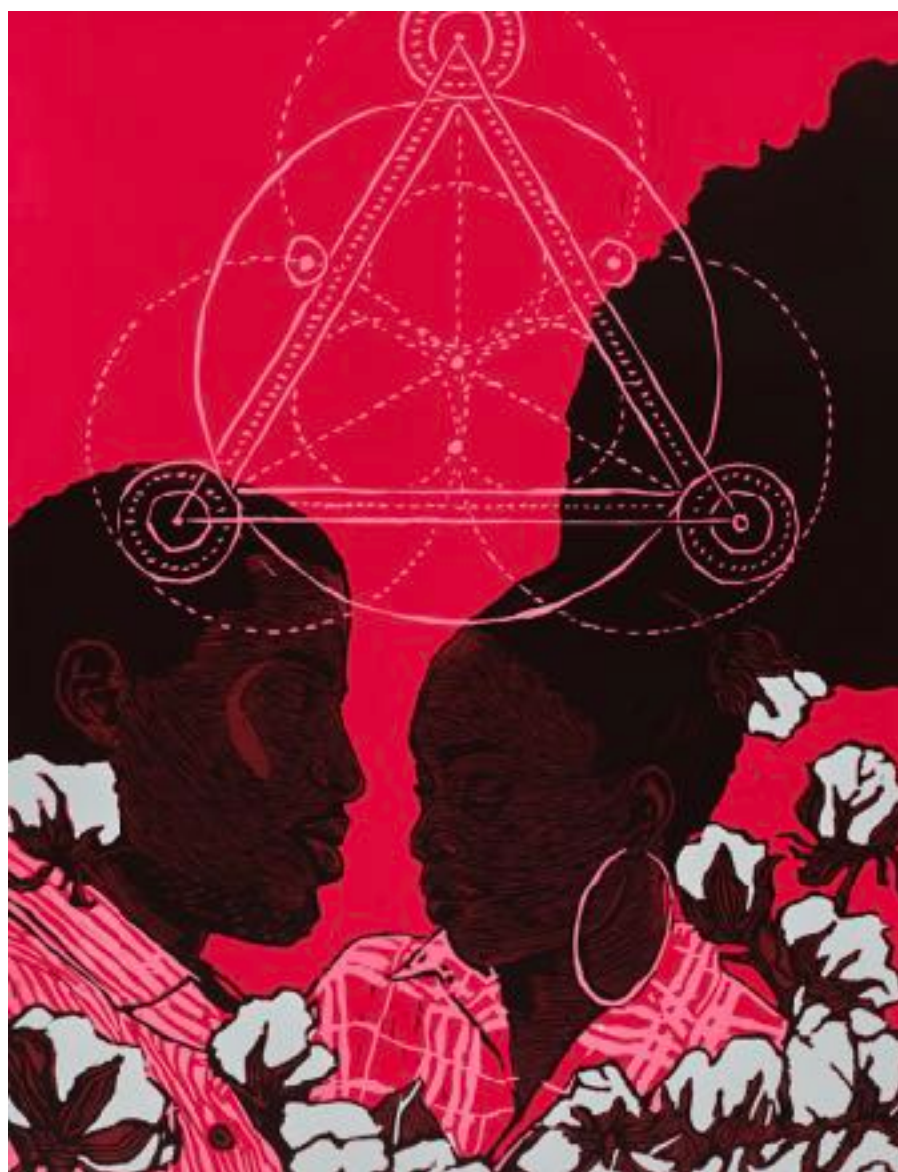
2024

Color reduction woodcut on Rives BFK

Edition of 5, 2 AP

22 x 30 in (25 x 33 in paper)

\$4,000



Artwork available through the artist.

## ***Past Life Premonitions***

2024

Color reduction woodcut on Arnhem

Edition of 5, 2 AP

24 x 36 in (29 x 41 in paper)

\$4,500



Artwork available through the artist.

***Softly, as the Morning Comes part 1***

2023

Woodcut on Hosho paper

Edition of 5, 1 AP

14 x 14 in (16 x 16 in paper)

\$1,000



Artwork available through the artist.

***Softly, as the Morning Comes part 2***

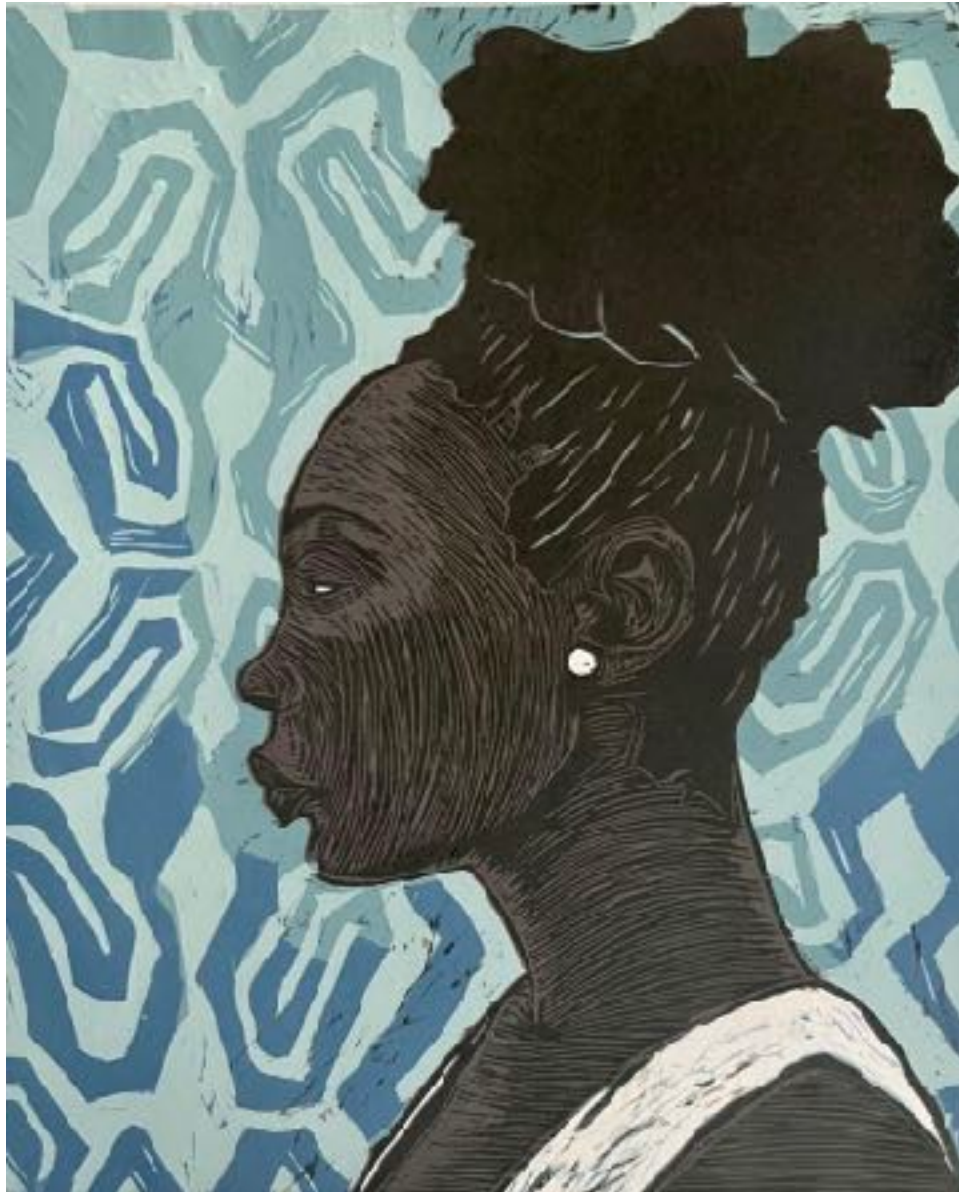
2023

Woodcut on Hosho paper

Edition of 5, 1 AP

11 x 14 in (13 x 15 in paper)

\$1,000



Artwork available through the artist.

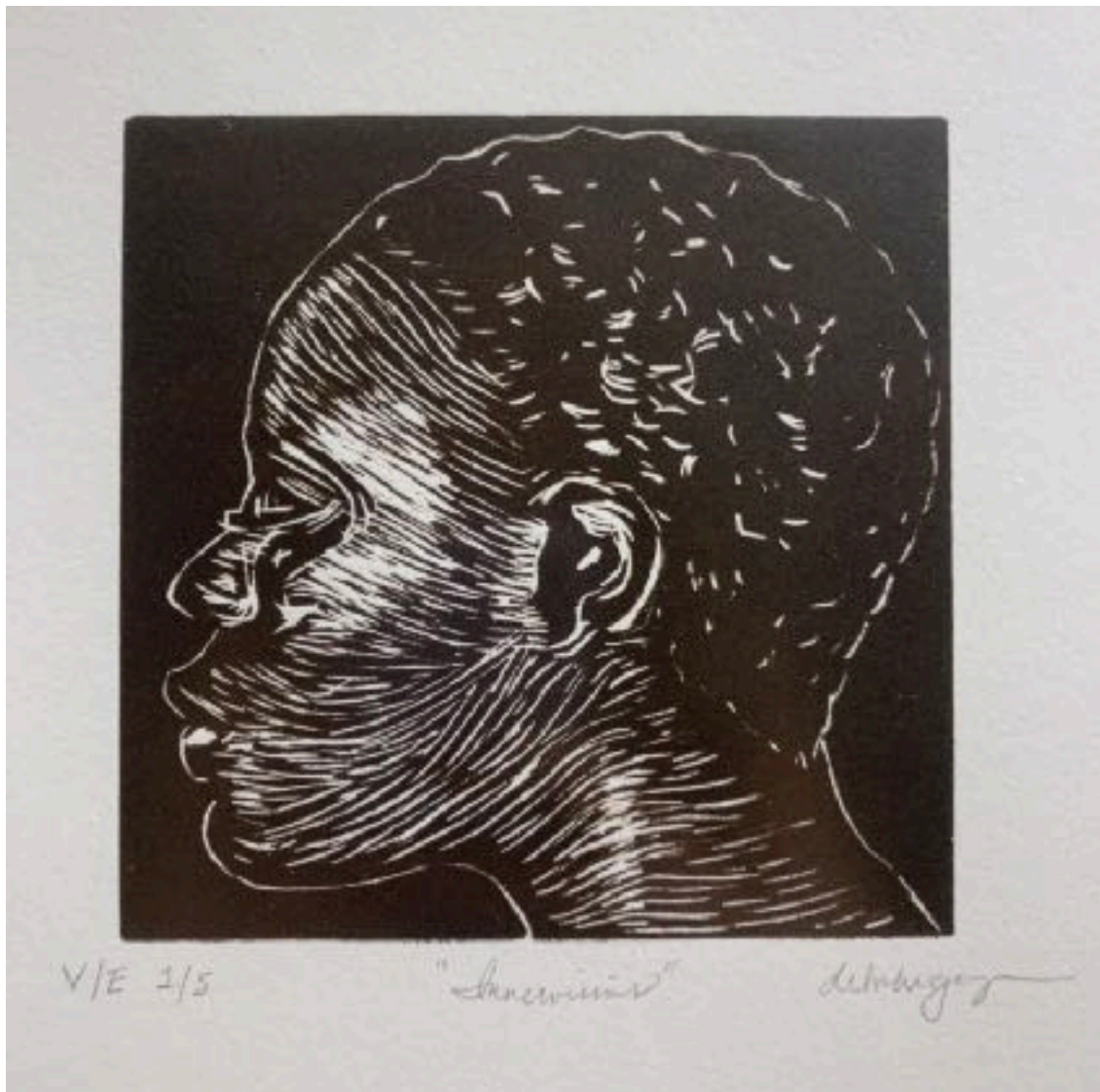
# ***Innervisions 1***

2021

woodcut on Arnhem

10 x 8 in

\$550



Artwork available through the artist.

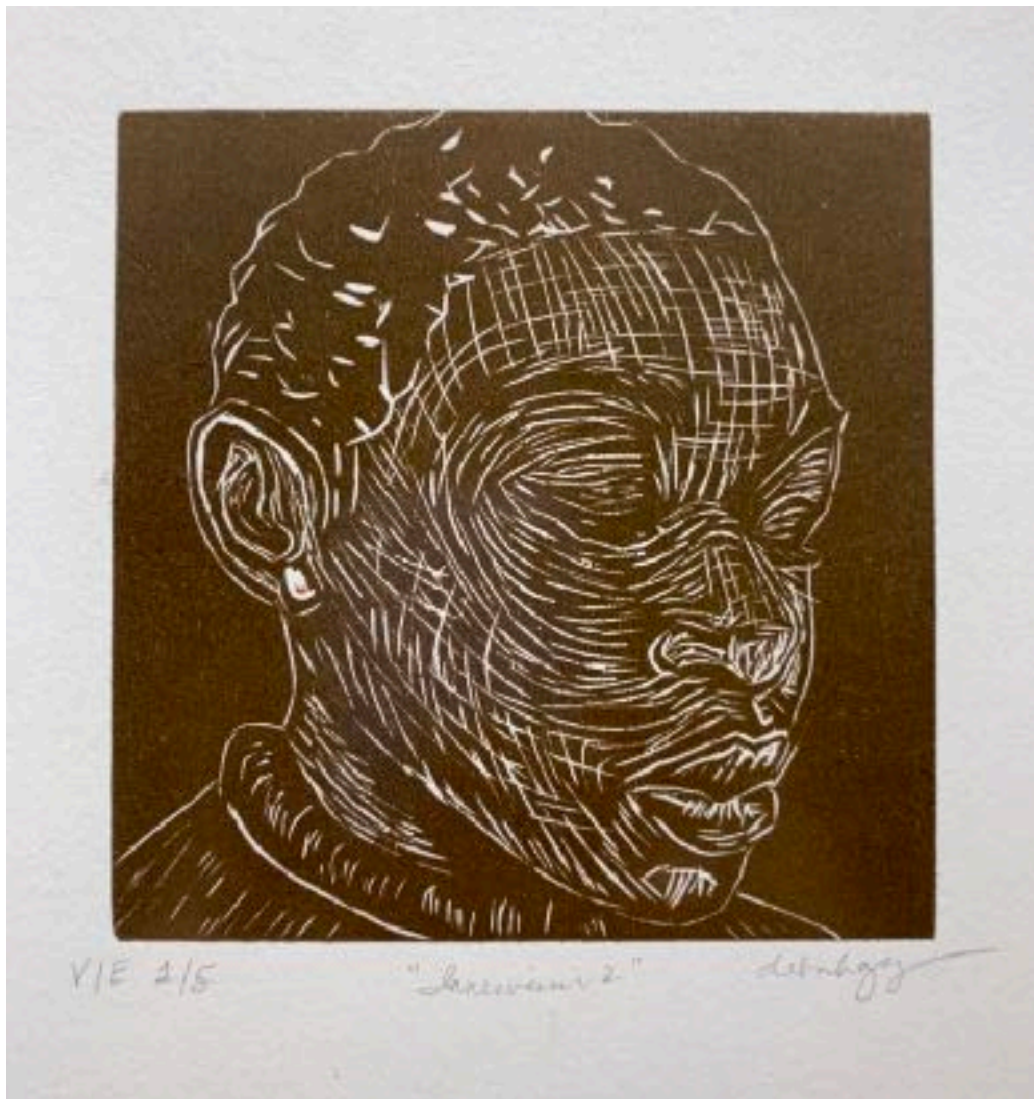
## ***Innervisions 2***

2021

woodcut on Arnhem

10 x 8 in

\$550



Artwork available through the artist.

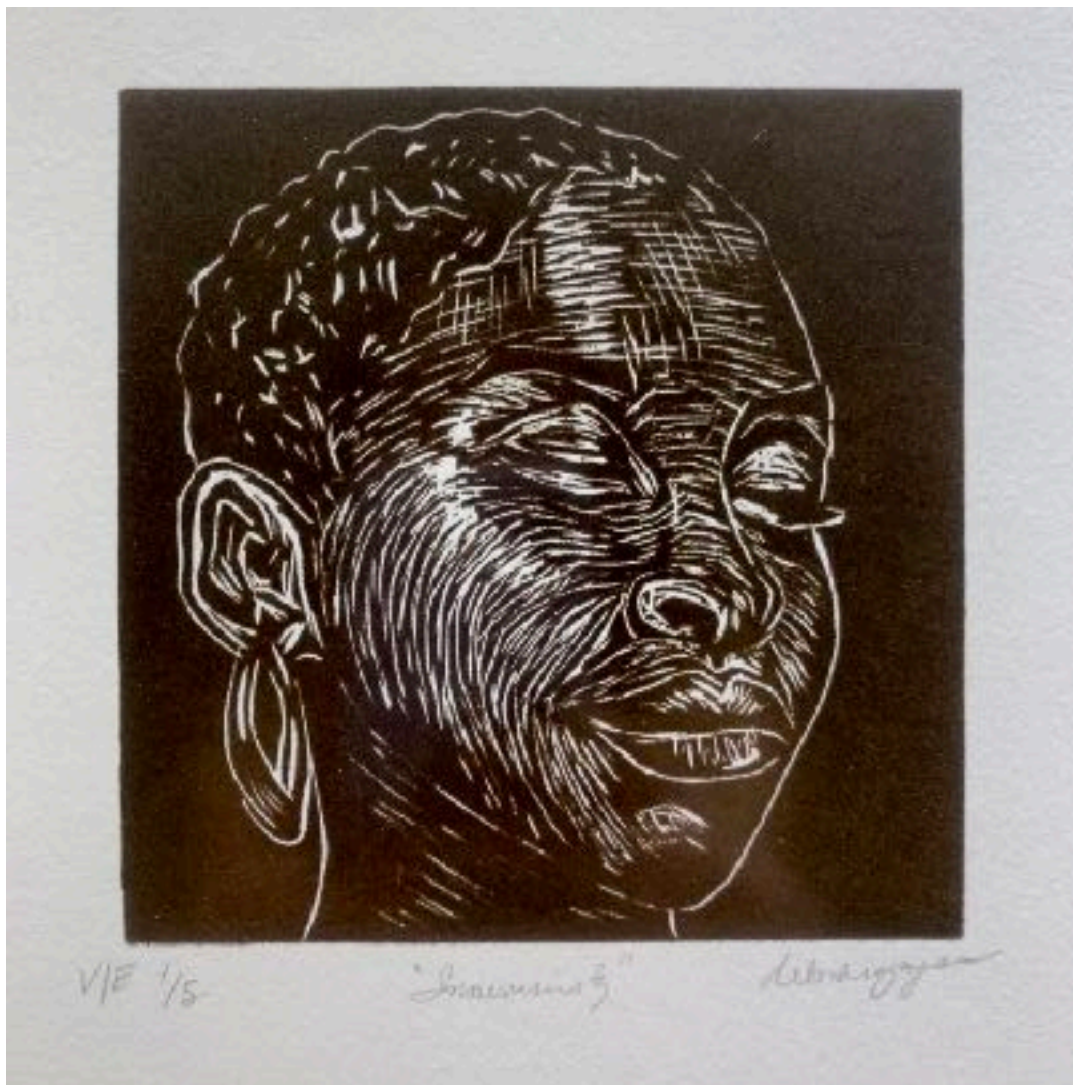
## ***Innervisions 3***

2021

woodcut on Arnhem

10 x 8 in

\$550



Artwork available through the artist.