

Working Thought

- March 5–June 26, 2022
- Heinz Galleries, Scaife
Gallery 15, Forum Gallery
- Label Texts

Heinz Galleries

Laura Aguilar

b. 1959 in San Gabriel, CA; d. 2018 in Long Beach, CA

Access + Opportunity = Success, 1993

gelatin silver prints

Carnegie Museum of Art, A. W. Mellon Acquisition Endowment Fund, 2021.21.A–.E

Access + Opportunity = Success depicts the artist holding pieces of cardboard with words and definitions scrawled in black marker. Laura Aguilar's stance is reminiscent of a mugshot, though she appears unapologetic in her self-representation as a queer, working class Mexican American artist. Using the camera as a tool of communication, she explored throughout her practice the theme of access—to proper physical and mental health care, to art equipment, and to money. Made in the turbulent early 1990s, when Los Angeles continued to be impacted by the police beating of Rodney King, Aguilar's photographs question ideas of success in oppressive and exclusionary systems.

Andrea Bowers

b. 1965 in Wilmington, OH; lives in Los Angeles, CA

The Triumph of Labor, 2016

marker on cardboard

Rennie Collection, Vancouver

Andrea Bowers's *The Triumph of Labor* refers directly to the 1891 print of the same title by Walter Crane, which came to visually define late nineteenth century English socialism. While mimicking Crane's composition, Bowers creates a grand and celebratory scene of laborers using black markers on cardboard. The artist thus draws connections between the iconography of historic labor posters and today's cardboard protest signs. This conflation of past and present highlights how labor movements intersect and overlap with other pressing social issues in the US today, such as immigration, women's rights, healthcare, climate justice, education, and racial equity.

Margarita Cabrera

b. 1973 in Monterrey, Mexico; lives in San Antonio, TX

Space in Between—Pittsburgh, 2021

border patrol uniform fabric, copper wire, thread, and terra cotta pot

Work created in partnership with Casa San José, Pittsburgh. Courtesy of the artist and Talley Dunn Gallery, Dallas

Margarita Cabrera's sculptural practice and community engagement initiatives reflect on labor, immigration, and the economic implications of the Mexico-US border. The ongoing project *Space in Between* is part of Cabrera's for-profit company Florezca ("to flourish" in Spanish), which aims to empower Mexican nationals on both sides of the border. Through ongoing mobile workshops, Cabrera engages Latinx immigrant communities in the US to share stories of crossing the border, bringing to light the intersecting histories of immigration and labor. Workshop participants personalize decommissioned border patrol uniforms with embroidery and transform them into sculptures of cacti. For *Working Thought*, Cabrera partnered with Casa San José, a resource and community center for Latinx immigrants in Pittsburgh, to create the sculptures on display.

Keith Calhoun

b. 1955 in New Orleans, LA; lives in New Orleans, LA

Mother and Children in Doorway, Treme, 1996, printed ca. 2010

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Chandra McCormick

b. 1957 in New Orleans, LA; lives in New Orleans, LA

Jamming at the Shop, Treme, 1987, printed ca. 2010

inkjet print

Courtesy of the artist

Devoted to representing the vibrant culture of their city, New Orleanians Keith Calhoun and Chandra McCormick present photographs of Treme, one of America's oldest Black neighborhoods, and a parade's second line, which involves people dancing and walking behind a brass band. In August 2005, when New Orleans was devastated by Hurricane Katrina, the negatives left behind as Calhoun and McCormick evacuated to safety suffered damage, unintentionally

creating blurry textures and splotchy colors seen on these new prints. Calhoun and McCormick embraced the altered conditions of the negatives to evoke the hardship and trauma faced by New Orleans residents, and the Black community in particular, as a result of the government's neglect following the natural disaster.

Moyra Davey

b. 1958 in Toronto, ON; lives in New York, NY

1943 (Carnegie), 2018

110 chromogenic prints with tape, postage, and ink

Carnegie Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Block, by exchange, 2020.26.1–.110

In 1943, the United States Mint created steel pennies to conserve copper for the manufacturing of munitions during World War II. For *1943 (Carnegie)*, Moyra Davey photographed 110 of these pennies in various states of decay, suggestive of the decline in their value over the decades since their production. After printing the 110 unique photographs, Davey folded, addressed, stamped, and mailed them to twelve staff members at Carnegie Museum of Art to bypass the expensive packing, shipping, and insurance costs related to the transport of artworks. Instead, Davey entered her artwork into systems of exchange and circulation not just as images but as mail, information, and another type of currency and commodity.

Kevin Jerome Everson

b. 1965 in Mansfield, OH; lives in Charlottesville, VA

Park Lanes, 2015

HD video, color, sound, 480:00 minutes

Carnegie Museum of Art, The Henry L. Hillman Fund, 2019.12

At eight hours in length, Kevin Jerome Everson's *Park Lanes* represents a full day of work at a factory in Mechanicsville, Virginia. From arrival to closing, Everson's camera silently follows the practiced choreography of each worker on the assembly line. Filmed in thirty-minute vignettes that function like work shifts, *Park Lanes* pays special attention to the gestures and body movements. Occasionally, the work is interrupted with laughing and chatter of coworkers. The film shows the expertise of industrial workers and the human touch required to make these products. By the end of the film, it is revealed that the components of their labor come together to produce objects of leisure: bowling alley parts.

Andrea Fraser

b. 1965 in Billings, MT; lives in New York, NY, and Los Angeles, CA

Index II, 2014

graph

Courtesy of the artist

Andrea Fraser's ongoing project *Index* is but one manifestation of her practice as a performance artist and writer invested in illuminating connections between art, economy, and hierarchies of taste. First published in 2011, *Index* links the rise in income inequality to the economic success of the art market. *Index II* followed a few years later and correlates the increase in the number of museums and prisons built in the US—a 700% increase between 1972 and 2009; the graph implicitly connects the income inequality and strong art market performance to criminalization of poverty and its corresponding incarceration rate as evidenced by proliferating prisons. Through these metrics, Fraser upends a perception of art collecting as a pure endeavor, uninfluenced by concerns about profitability.

Jill Freedman

b. 1939 in Pittsburgh, PA; d. 2019 in New York, NY

Tent City, 1968

gelatin silver print

Carnegie Museum of Art, The Henry L. Hillman Fund, 2019.48.13

In May 1968, the photographer Jill Freedman traveled from New York to Washington, DC, to document and stand in solidarity with the protest camp known as Resurrection City. Built on the Washington Mall, it was the culmination of Martin Luther King Jr.'s Poor People's Campaign, driven by his belief that equality for African Americans and other minoritized people would never be achieved without economic security. Freedman captured the full breadth of happenings at the tent city occupied by more than three thousand people from across the country—from a flash flood to the media presence to the arrests on the final day.

Theaster Gates

b. 1973 in Chicago, IL; lives in Chicago, IL

Long Run, Left with Guide Line, 2018

Long Run, Right with Guide Line, 2018

rubber bitumen

Courtesy of the artist and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

Theaster Gates Sr., who tarred roofs for a living, taught his son how to work with his hands, which inspired the artist's tar painting series. Just as it takes a team to build a house, it requires several people to create one of these paintings. Understanding collectivity as "the economies between political space and people," Gates has developed a collaborative practice that extends outside of the museum; his ongoing *Dorchester Projects* in Chicago's South Side, for instance, is a multifunctional cultural space for his neighbors. In the context of the museum, the tar paintings point to his larger practice of community building in addition to formally quoting the abstract painter Ad Reinhardt's iconic black paintings.

Liz Glynn

b. 1981 in Boston, MA; lives in Los Angeles, CA

Household Activities (Average minutes per day, F/M, 2015), 2017

cast pigmented cement

Collection of the Mohn Family Trust

Liz Glynn's sculptural practice questions value and represents economic theories that function invisibly. The two stacks that make up *Household Activities* serve as a three-dimensional bar graph that, on a binary division of female and male, captures the average time each gender spent daily performing certain types of domestic activity. Although the original study that Glynn researched provides a key to the color code, that information is removed in an abstract illustration of quantitative difference. This abstraction prompts a reconsideration of the division of domestic work and potential changes to these stacks in the future.

Jessica Jackson Hutchins

b. 1971 in Chicago, IL; lives in Portland, OR

We Want Everything, 2021

fused glass

Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, New York and Aspen

Jessica Jackson Hutchins has long explored domesticity, labor, and craft through ceramics and sculptures, and, more recently, glass. Her skylight work, *We Want Everything*, filters sunlight throughout the gallery and includes representational and abstracted imagery inspired by artists such as Jacob Lawrence and Bob Thompson, as well as John White Alexander's mural *The Crowning of Labor* in the Grand Staircase of Carnegie Museum of Art. In addition to these art historical references, the glass panels carry images of childbirth (a labor of a different kind), a COVID-19 stop-the-spread graphic, and visual signifiers—such as a burning car and broken

glass—of social uprisings in 2020, which demanded racial justice across the country and around the world. Hutchins draws from the history of stained glass which was used to create a place of religious sanctity and literally elevates the subjects of labor as well as protest and social movements.

Kahlil Robert Irving

b. 1992 in San Diego, CA; lives in St. Louis, MO

***[STREET & Stars | (Memories < > Matter) fair and FREEDOM] Black ICE*, 2019**

glazed and unglazed stoneware, white clay, grog, cement, found and constructed decals, luster, and gilded pyrometric cones

Collection of Alison & John Ferring

The title of Kahlil Robert Irving’s work is an homage to the rap group Goodie Mob’s song “Black Ice (Sky High).” Like the dangerous road condition the song title refers to, Irving’s sculpture explores the hidden obstacles, both physical and intangible, that one may face on the street. The ceramic tiles formatted into a grid resemble the street, with trompe l’oeil recreations of city detritus, and a sublime skyscape speckled with white debris. Incorporating transferred images of newspaper and social media posts that refer to both white supremacist violence and antiracist protests, Irving situates the street as a place of exchange and commerce, as well as witness to and catalyst of Black resistance.

Tomashi Jackson

b. 1980 in Houston, TX; lives in New York, NY, and Cambridge, MA

***Among Sisters and Brothers (Three Families)*, 2021**

acrylic and soil (from the Parrish Art Museum grounds on Long Island, NY, a former potato field) on canvas, cotton textiles, paper potato bags, and paper bags with archival prints on PVC marine vinyl mounted on a handcrafted redwood awning structure with brass hooks and grommets

Courtesy of the artist and Tilton Gallery

Tomashi Jackson’s *Among Sisters and Brothers* stems from research on the history and continued presence of Indigenous peoples and communities of color on the eastern part of Long Island known as the Hamptons. An exclusive vacation destination, the Hamptons became a site of inquiry for the artist known for layering site-specific materials and imagery from a collaborative unearthing of local history. The painting features a family portrait provided by Richard “Juni”

Wingfield, a longtime Long Islander. By creating her painting on materials such as paper potato bags and affixing it to an awning structure, the work symbolically takes to the streets the residents' claim to the place they call home.

Fred Lonidier

b. 1942 in Lakeview, OR; lives in San Diego, CA

I Like Everything Nothing But Union, 1983

gelatin silver prints and photostatic printing on board

Carnegie Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. William Block, by exchange, 2019.28.1-.49

Throughout his five-decade career, Fred Lonidier has engaged with issues of labor and class as an artist and a dedicated organizer. *I Like Everything Nothing But Union* was originally commissioned to hang in the boardroom of the San Diego and Imperial Counties Labor Council, American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO). For this work, Lonidier interviewed and photographed members from affiliated unions. The resulting panels capture a range of workers—representing various positions within their organizations, races, genders, and ages—who describe, in their own voices, the impact of unionization on their lives and work, as well as attitudes toward the union itself.

Ken Lum

b. 1956 in Vancouver, BC; lives in Philadelphia, PA

117 Dwight Eisenhower BLVD, 2009

plexiglass, enamel paint, powder-coated aluminum

Courtesy of Royale Projects and the artist

Although Ken Lum's *117 Dwight Eisenhower BLVD* appears to be a plausible strip mall sign extracted from a suburban landscape, the sculpture is completely fabricated, from the layout to the names of businesses. Lum's interest in how taste and class status intersect with race and ethnicity manifests in the imagined shops—"Paris Bakery" that sells Vietnamese sandwiches and pho or "Elite Fashion Accessories" that claims to "lead in fashion." Furthermore, the numerous white rectangles signaling vacancies in the plaza suggests an economic decline in this community of vendors and shoppers.

Joe Minter

b. 1943 in Birmingham, AL; lives in Birmingham, AL

Where Is My Hammer?, 1996

metal wrenches, toolbox, rebar, chains, padlocks

Courtesy of Souls Grown Deep Foundation

Constructing his sculptures from found objects often sourced from the streets, flea markets, and thrift stores, Joe Minter pays homage to the contexts, memories, and relationships to labor held within each part. For Minter, the materials are a metaphor for the resilience of people who once held these tools and centuries of labor provided by enslaved peoples from Africa. A metal worker whose workplace exposure to asbestos led to retirement, Minter turned to art as a means to address history and racial injustice. In addition to making individual sculptures, Minter has devoted the past three decades to create and maintain African Village in America, a quarter acre sculpture garden for his work in Birmingham, Alabama.

Gordon Newton

b. 1948 in Detroit, MI; d. 2019 in Detroit, MI

Untitled Head, 14 (Love, Life, Geometric Heritage), 1989

paint, pastel, and varnish on paper

Private Collection

Gordon Newton was a leading figure of Detroit's Cass Corridor movement—a loose group of artists whose practices were grounded in the material culture of the city's declining industrial center and who were responding to the racial and class tensions during the 1970s and 1980s. Within the dynamic range of Newton's artistic output, the *Heads* series marked a turn to figuration. At times, shades of rust and ocher in the background appear to take over the surface and smother the anonymous face, even as they simultaneously convey strength, boldness, and vulnerability. These portraits of solitary figures bear complex expressions of a Detroiter who persistently strove to bring art and life together in a city experiencing economic divestment.

Ricardo Iamuri Robinson

b. 1976 in Pittsburgh, PA; lives in Pittsburgh, PA

BLACKBODY, WHITE NOISE, 2021–2022

cast iron, sound

Courtesy of the artist

At the site of the now decommissioned iron blast furnaces Carrie #6 and #7—a symbol of the once dominant steel industry in Pittsburgh and the region as well as its collapse and subsequent loss of jobs en masse—Ricardo Iamuri Robinson forged two cast iron cubes. Using sensor and contact microphones, he then recorded the sound of the metal gradually heating under the sun. The resulting audio was combined with clips of various speakers' commentary on racial politics and social injustices, and the final composition emanates from speakers housed inside the cubes. Referred to as Black bodies by the artist and forged on the grounds of Carrie, the cubes conjure the history of Black steelworkers in the region.

Cameron Rowland

b. 1988 in Philadelphia, PA; lives in New York, NY

Norfolk Southern (Georgia), 2017

steel relay rail

7 1/8 × 192 1/2 × 28 3/4 inches (18 × 489 × 73 cm)

Relay rail is rail that has been removed from its original line and resold. Relay rail was first sold by railroad companies to mining companies for pit railways. Steel rail is made using coal and iron ore. In the late 1860s, the Alabama and Chattanooga Railroad; the Georgia and Alabama Railroad; the Selma, Rome, and Dalton Railroad; and the Macon and Brunswick Railroad were constructed using convict lease labor. By 1895, all of these lines had been consolidated into Southern Railway, which built hubs in Birmingham, Chattanooga, and Atlanta, allowing it to transport coal and iron ore throughout the Southeast. In 1982, Southern Railway merged with Norfolk and Western Railway to create Norfolk Southern. This Norfolk Southern relay rail was used in the Georgia section of the system.

Carnegie Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. And Mrs. William Block, by exchange, 2019.78.A-E

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

b. 1940 in St. Ignatius Indian Mission, Salish and Kootenai Nation, MT; lives in Corrales, NM

Trade Canoe: The Surrounded, 2018

mixed media on canvas

Carnegie Museum of Art, The Henry Hillman Fund, 2020.3.A–C

Drawing from references that span continents and centuries—ancient Mayan sculptural heads, medieval triptych altarpieces, Abstract Expressionism and cartoons—Jaune Quick-to-See Smith creates paintings that address the histories and lived experiences of Indigenous peoples

in North America. *Trade Canoe: The Surrounded* is part of a series addressing the mass dispossession of Native peoples from their land and ongoing oppression under settler colonialism. Weighed by an enormous mound of objects, the canoe is represented as a site of exchange and accumulation against the backdrop of centuries of settler occupation of Indigenous land.

Aaron Spangler

b. 1971 in Minneapolis, MN; lives in Park Rapids, MN

The Band Played the Night of the Johnstown Flood, 2021

carved basswood, black gesso, and graphite

Courtesy of the artist

Aaron Spangler uses wood carving, a medium associated with rural craft, to sculpt narratives of economic decline in the Midwest. In the new work, *The Band Played the Night of the Johnstown Flood*, Spangler presents a visual narrative of the 1889 Johnstown Flood. Originally built by the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, South Fork Dam in Johnstown was privatized then modified to accommodate a lakeside resort for wealthy businessmen such as Henry Clay Frick and Andrew Carnegie. The modification and poor maintenance compromised the integrity of the dam; during a heavy rainfall, the dam broke and flooded the nearby town, claiming more than two thousand lives. In Spangler's somber allegory, lifeless bodies pouring out onto a landscape is overseen by a winged figure caught in a tangle of pipes.

Mierle Laderman Ukeles

b. 1939 in Denver, CO; lives in New York, NY, and Jerusalem

MOVIN' ON ALONG: BARGE AND TOWBOAT BALLET, 1992/2022

video, sound, color, 16:39 minutes

Frank Zadlo, editor

Toby Perl Freilich, producer

Rex Nordheimer, director of photography

Courtesy of the artist and Ronald Feldman Gallery

As part of Pittsburgh's 1992 Three Rivers Arts Festival, Mierle Laderman Ukeles—who famously penned the *MANIFESTO FOR MAINTENANCE ART 1969!*—co-created an urban river ballet with workers. First, Ukeles loaded barges with tons of glass, steel, and aluminum (classic Pittsburgh materials) returned as recyclable sculptures formed into symbols of value and power—a diamond and a ziggurat. Captains and crews of the towboats and barges performed rarely

attempted maneuvers on the rivers. Second, Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR), a group fighting to restore healthcare and respect to those abandoned by the bankrupt steel companies, presented a co-created choreography built from factory workers' gestures.

For more information, please take a copy of the excerpt from *Mierle Laderman Ukeles: Seven Work Ballets*, Sternberg Press, 2015.

Kara Walker

b. 1969 in Stockton, CA; lives in New York, NY

Sugar Makes This World, 2013–2014

ink, watercolor, ballpoint pen, and pencil on sheets of notebook paper

The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York, Acquired through the generosity of Ralph Goldenberg, Donald B. Marron, and Dian Woodner in honor of The Friends of Education of The Museum of Modern Art, 2015

Sugar Makes This World derives from Kara Walker's extensive research into the sugar industry and its dependence on the labor of enslaved Africans. Omnipresent today, sugar is rooted in American and Western European imperialism and colonialism, and Walker questions the persistence of those systems through drawings that incorporate direct indictments such as "Slavery changed our diets." Furthermore, Walker's drawings suggest that the process of refining sugar is symbolic of Western practices of colonialism and forced assimilation. Underscoring the desire for refined sugar and the process of turning the naturally brown crystals to white, Walker folds in a larger conversation about society's desire and expectation for whiteness.

Martin Wong

b. 1946 in Portland, OR; d. 1999 in San Francisco, CA

Ten Brooklyn Storefronts, 1985–1986

acrylic on canvas

Collection of KAWS

Ten Brooklyn Storefronts depicts the running facade of closed and shuttered Latinx businesses in a rapidly changing working-class neighborhood. Wong renders striking details, including weathered signs and grimy doors. Each panel features a different business, ranging from corner bodegas to social clubs, populated with people, food, and approximations of Puerto Rican and Dominican flags. The work is part of Wong's *Sunset Park Series* (1985–1986), which captured shuttered storefronts as the artist processed the turbulent waves of neighborhood and personal changes brought on by the AIDS crisis and gentrification that defined the decade.

Scaife Gallery 15

Tony Cokes

b. 1956 in Richmond, VA; lives in Providence, RI

Black Celebration, 1988

video, black and white, sound, 17:11 minutes

Carnegie Museum of Art, Second Century Acquisition Fund, 2019.8

In *Black Celebration*, Tony Cokes adds sound (music of the industrial band Skinny Puppy) and text (quotes from leftist artists and intellectuals) to newsreels of the 1965 uprisings in the Watts neighborhood of Los Angeles and their offshoots in Boston, Detroit, and Newark. News reports at the time demonized African American protesters by ignoring their motivations and emphasizing instead the monetary losses related to property damage. Cokes appropriates and distorts the media's interpretation to expose the structural inequity underlying these uprisings. Scenes of police and National Guard troops surveilling the destruction are interspersed with pointed textual critiques of consumerism and commodities while the gritty music forges a link to anti-establishment, punk rebellion.

Forum Gallery

Carmen Winant

b. 1983 in San Francisco, CA; lives in Columbus, OH

Pictures of Women Working, 2016–2022

Dedicated to Qandeel Baloch

collage, acrylic, bronze leaf, newspaper

Courtesy of the artist

Carmen Winant's use of found imagery in her mixed-media and photo-based collages demonstrates how visual culture and historical archives challenge, affirm, or dismiss gendered expectations of labor. In *Pictures of Women Working*, photographs of women athletes appear alongside portraits of feminist activists, images of lesbian erotica, and depictions of child-rearing. Winant pulls from a variety of disparate sources—newspaper clippings, magazines, books, and advertisements—to display the multiple ways in which women's labor—including waged and unwaged domestic work, sex work, and emotional care and support—has been represented.

Rodney McMillian

b. 1969 in Columbia, SC; lives in Los Angeles, CA

Untitled, 2011

carpet

Courtesy of the artist and Vielmetter Los Angeles

Through his unapologetic presentation of deteriorated objects such as this domestic rug, Rodney McMillian explores the myths of a universal middle-class home with spotless furnishings that are meant to signify comfort and security. This carpet, however, holds stains, rips, wear, and odors—traces of human presence, touch, and experience. Presented in the context of a museum as though it is a monochromatic painting, the carpet signifies dislocation and an absent body. In describing his artistic materials as postconsumer objects, McMillian layers different economies of domestic space, the used goods market, his studio, and finally, the museum.

Jessica Vaughn

b. 1983 in Chicago, IL; lives in Brooklyn, NY

Irrational Rest (2), 2022

Programmed LED lights mounted on 8/20 system

Courtesy of the artist

Jessica Vaughn frequently employs the mundane aesthetics and materials of bureaucratic spaces to point to inequities within various systems. For *Irrational Rest (2)*, she was interested in the lighting conditions in large processing facilities like fulfillment centers and post offices, in which employees work consistently under bright white lighting. Vaughn's light sculpture contains a custom-built LED system that automatically adjusts the emitted light in a 24-hour cycle, with the brightness increasing from morning to night to imitate the artificial environment of a processing facility.

From March 15 to May 31, 2022, the lights from the sculpture will be turned off from 11 p.m. to dawn as part of Birdsafe's Lights Out Pittsburgh, a city-wide conservation effort to darken the night sky for migrating birds whose flight trajectory may be affected by artificial lights. Vaughn's consideration of the natural environment further underscores the unintended consequences and effects of ceaseless capitalist production.