

FIVE TO WATCH

There is a lot of superb art being made these days. This column shines light on five gifted individuals.

All profiles written by Allison Malafronte except Telvin Wallace's (by Charles Moore).



KLAIRE A. LOCKHEART (b. 1984), *Brodalisque*, 2020, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 in., available through the artist

Using sarcasm or irony in a painting to make a point is nothing new, but the way **KLAIRE A. LOCKHEART** (b. 1984) does it is. The South Dakota-based artist — who has earned both a B.S. and an M.F.A. — uses her sharp skills as a painter and thinker, as well as her acerbic wit, to comment on areas of injustice in art history and contemporary culture. Her *Brodalisque* series in particular takes a look at the antiquated role of woman as object. Turning the male gaze around, or “flipping the binary” as Lockheart describes it, this female artist presents a masculine, middle-aged man in a passive “odalisque” pose and asks viewers to objectify him in the same way a woman would be.

While compositions like these might elicit a quiet chuckle from viewers, they are not meant to be facetious. Rather, they are designed to help people take an honest look at age-old tropes and view them from a new, more equitable perspective. Lockheart has intentionally chosen a specific technique as part of the twist. “I create oil paintings in a Western academic style in order to have arguments with old, dead philosophers, colonizers, and misogynists,” the artist declares boldly. “I

purposely paint in a traditional manner as an act of rebellion because women have traditionally been marginalized in the art world.”

Other subjects in Lockheart’s oeuvre explore additional topics that loom large in society, including gender identity and political turmoil. Beyond the *Brodalisque* collection, her *Feminine Attempts* and *Domestic Sarcasm* series explore commonly held assumptions, expectations, and absurdities. And then there’s Lockheart’s *Thunderdomesticity* series — a collaboration with her photographer husband Aaron C. Packard — where the brains and brawn (not the beauty) of women help save the dystopian day.

Last but not least is the *Miss Art World South Dakota* series, which, ironically, is not ironic at all. Lockheart is, in fact, the South Dakota ambassador of Miss Art World, a new pageant system created by Los Angeles artist Katherine Cooksey that seeks to redefine beauty standards through a non-competitive, inclusionary exploration of performance and visual art.

Lockheart is self-represented.



KRYSTAL W. BROWN (b. 1968), *Season's End*, 2021, oil on aluminum, 16 x 20 in., private collection

Art-making has always been an act of joy and solace for **KRYSTAL W. BROWN** (b. 1968). Growing up in Northern Wyoming in a large family with five older brothers, she would often steal away to her room and get lost for hours drawing, painting, sculpting, collaging, and sewing. When Brown first accompanied her mother to an art class at age 10, her love of painting was officially born. She continued to dive deeper in the ensuing years, eventually earning a B.F.A. from the University of Montana.

Today, based near Houston, Brown has not lost that childlike sense of curiosity or forgotten how comforting and powerful art can be for herself and others. Although her portraits have gone from adolescent sketches in grade school to professional, award-winning works today, at her core she still sees art as “her very own beautification project” that can be used to uplift people and enrich their lives. “My vision is to bring more beauty and impact through my fine art,” she says. “To illuminate, connect, contribute, and help others create their own worlds.”

One of the most fulfilling aspects of creating for Brown is being immersed in nature and working from life. The beginning stages of her painting process are quite academic; she uses the sight-size method of measurement and creates a grisaille underpainting with transparent

oxide and cobalt to establish the composition. Then, as the painting progresses, she lets loose with an expressionistic style that explodes into a cacophony of color and light, as seen in *Season's End*.

Brown works in a variety of media — graphite, charcoal, pastel, oil, and watercolor — and with both traditional and nontraditional tools, such as brushes, palette knives, clamps, squeegees, and even twigs and string. Her lifelong commitment to drawing and learning to faithfully replicate what she sees creates a solid foundation under everything she paints.

Brown is also an instructor who finds great purpose in helping others discover and develop their artistic talents, as her mentors did for her. “I love encouraging students by sharing my process through workshops, demos, classes, and online instruction,” she says. “Helping them find their unique voices is one of my main goals. The world needs the beauty we each bring to it. Why keep it waiting?”

Brown's solo exhibition *Euphoric Perspective* will be on view at Johnson Heritage Post Art Gallery (Grand Marais, Minnesota) from February 4 through March 4.

Brown is represented by Marta Stafford Fine Art (Marble Falls, Texas).

It is certainly reassuring to find that sculptors continue to work even after the pandemic hastened the closing of numerous foundries and casting costs more than doubled. **ROBERT STUTLER** (b. 1989) is one of those who has remained committed to his fine art practice, even as he holds down a tech design job at Apple. Based in California, Stutler spends his days in Silicon Valley and his evenings, weekends, and spare time honing his skills at Oakland's Dogtown Sculpture Studio, an artist collective that meets multiple times a week to work from the live model.

Although Stutler uses classical methods and materials, he also experiments with digital techniques, including a sculpting program called Zbrush and printing 3-D models of those creations. "I do not belong to a single artistic lineage or school of thought, but instead believe in an individual process rooted in a strong sense of fundamentals," the artist explains. "I love to work from life because it provides endless inspiration. Everyone truly has a unique and individual character. Nature provides the answers; the sculptor's job is to observe using the emotional sensibilities within."

The sculpture shown here, Stutler's self-portrait, was developed over the course of a year. Much introspection and reflection went into

it, and the artist gave himself the time necessary to develop an honest portrayal of where he stood in his personal life. "It took on many iterations during that period," Stutler admits. "The natural evolution of this self-portrait became an instrument of learning to explore different sculptural processes and techniques. Originally sculpted in Chavant oil-based clay, it is my first finalized piece constructed solely for the act of creating a quality work of sculpture." Illustrated here is a stained plaster copy of the original at 3/4-life-size scale.

While developing this piece, Stutler was busy attending workshops around the country, something he does to continue developing his eye and artistic voice. He originally majored in industrial design at the Art Institute of Pittsburgh and then completed some postgraduate studies in fine art. From 2016 through 2019, he took advantage of his ability to work remotely and traveled around the U.S. and Europe attending workshops, participating in museum copyist programs and National Sculpture Society competitions, and offering demonstrations at art stores.

Stutler is self-represented.

ROBERT STUTLER (b. 1989), *Self-Portrait*, 2018, stained plaster, 10 x 6 x 6 1/2 in., collection of the artist





Edmond Praybe (b. 1982), *Excavating the Present*, 2019, oil on linen on panel, 48 x 60 in., available through the artist

EDMOND PRAYBE (b. 1982) has made an art of capturing the intangible essence and atmosphere of scenes with multiple subjects. Rather than creating a sensory overload, something set-ups of this kind might elicit in person, he carefully designs a composition that takes viewers on a peaceful visual journey around and through harmonious colors, textures, shapes, and patterns, offering just enough places to rest and contemplate.

Take *Excavating the Present*, for instance, where the artist revels in painting space, volume, colors, shapes, and edges. The printed and solid-colored textiles in soothing hues of blues, greens, and pinks are balanced beautifully by the white fabrics and heirlooms painted in grisaille, offering neutral areas for our eyes to land and exhale. So busy are we with an inventory of the intriguing arrangement of colors and patterns that we almost lose sight of someone resting in the upper-left corner, practically camouflaged aesthetically but clearly still an intrinsic part of the narrative.

For Praybe, the journey of conceptualizing and creating a painting goes well beyond the surface. Embedded in the items and ideas he composes are stories from another time and place. “I have held on to the objects depicted in my still lifes for many years, not only for their visual qualities but also for my attachment to the memories, places,

and people they represent,” he explains. “Old clothing, dishes, vases, hemlock cones, bird nests, fabric scraps, and stones all contain small stories and memories. I imagine these stories overlapping across time and space, converging in unassuming vignettes arranged in the studio. The meaning of these objects is open to a slow unraveling of elusive symbols and connotations. I have left room for the interpretation and exploration of visual and material qualities of the paintings without the trappings of explicit narrative.”

Although Praybe’s compositions may appear effortless, any artist will tell you that coordinating this many elements on multiple planes convincingly takes years of practice, technical skill, and a highly developed sense of design. Praybe has those qualifications and more, having earned a B.F.A. in painting from Maryland Institute College of Art and then an M.F.A. in painting from the New York Studio School. Now based near Annapolis, he has 15 years’ experience exhibiting in group and solo exhibitions in New York City and other major markets, and teaches and lectures at universities, academies, and art centers nationwide.

Praybe’s work will be included in the group exhibition Assemble: 22 at Trugony Gallery (Truro, Cornwall, England) February 7–20.

TELVIN WALLACE (b. 1997) grew up in what he calls the last rest area before the beach — a town of 3,000 people named Warsaw, North Carolina. He has since relocated to New York City, where he is building a career exploring his personal experiences in paint.

Growing up, the 2019 North Carolina Central University graduate always had a pencil in hand, and he recalls drawing from toddlerhood. Wallace didn't start painting until 2016, however, when Prof. Kenneth Rogers introduced him to the work of a master artist that transformed his trajectory. He was on the path to a career in graphic design when Rogers showed him some paintings by Simmie Lee Knox (b. 1935). The moment he learned about Knox — the first Black artist to obtain a presidential portrait commission (both Bill and Hillary Clinton sat for him) — Wallace began to reconsider his path. When another professor, Chad Hughes, encouraged him to explore narrative painting — conveying stories rather than placing figures on a plain background — he began to work in oils and develop his current style. He stopped recreating photographs from the Internet and started building deeply personal pieces from scratch.

Ultimately, Prof. Hughes played a key role in Wallace's decision to paint full-time, inviting him to visit his space at the Golden Belt Artists' Studios in downtown Durham, where he connected with other creatives on a regular basis. Just seeing other artists at work, Wallace explains, inspired him.

After earning his B.F.A. in studio art, Wallace took a year off and then enrolled in the M.F.A. program at the New York Academy of Art. Now in his second year, he credits his growth to the people and techniques he has encountered there. "It has become much easier to figure out what I'm going for," Wallace notes.

In his recent *Hell Hath No Fury*, Wallace showcases two women beheading a man who was modeled by the artist himself. All are dressed in deep blues that contrast powerfully with the brown-toned bodies and background, and with the sumptuous swath of golden fabric. Light pours in from top left, hitting the killer's shoulder, creating a shadow beneath her arm, and highlighting the figures' separation. Wallace has succeeded in producing an overarching sense of depth, resulting in part from the juxtaposition of warm and cool colors he admires so much in Caravaggio's *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (1598–99, Palazzo Barberini, Rome). Now his distinctive take on this timelessly compelling narrative is on view through January 17 at Charlotte's Harvey B. Gantt Center for African-American Arts & Culture in *Visual Vanguard: An Exhibition of Contemporary Black Carolina Artists*.

Wallace is self-represented.



TELVIN WALLACE (b. 1997), *Hell Hath No Fury*, 2021, oil on linen, 56 x 64 in., private collection