



Michael A. Cummings, *Homage To Nelson Mandela*, 2014, Appliqué quilt, cotton, found fabrics, African fabrics, machine sewn/quilted, with embellishments, 80 x 55 in

## ***Crafting Reverence***

Mary Blakemore, Edward Cabral,  
 Michael A. Cummings, Charlie Goering,  
 Evan Halter, Edward Salas, Texas Red

Curated by Clarence Johns

**April 8 – May 14, 2022**

**Opening: Thursday, April 7, 2022, 6–8 PM**

Carracci Art is pleased to announce *Crafting Reverence*, a group exhibition curated by Clarence Johns featuring work by Mary Blakemore, Edward Cabral, Michael A. Cummings, Charlie Goering, Evan Halter, Edward Salas, and Texas Red. This will be the inaugural presentation at Carracci Art's new gallery space at 368 Broadway, Suite 305 in Tribeca. The exhibition will be open from **April 8 to May 14, 2022** and a reception will be held **Thursday, April 7 from 6–8 PM**.

*Crafting Reverence* presents artworks that reflect the experiential and theological implications of veneration. The 18<sup>th</sup>-century Italian rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto discusses reverence in terms of awe, fear, and love. Luzzatto posits awe as the emotive approach through which one is “purified of the darkness associated with [one’s] physical body, and is enveloped by the Divine Presence. The greater this awe, the greater the purification and envelopment.”<sup>1</sup> This notion of awe guides an interpretation of art where aesthetics can be seen to induce unique and mystical presences. The creation of an artwork, from conception to realization, elevates the subject, colors, materials, and references into the realm of metaphysics. Religious notions of reverence can be seen to guide an understanding of contemporary works, emphasizing their emotional and spiritual underpinnings.

Exhibited for the first time, Michael A. Cummings’ *Homage To Nelson Mandela* is a large-scale appliqué quilt depicting the activist and politician. Centered around a portrait of Mandela, Cummings constructs a collage-like composition of found fabrics and a wide array of embellishments. Bringing together a variety of patterned textiles, writing and objects, Cummings creates a memorial image that is both narrative and celebratory, heralding Mandela as the icon of the anti-Apartheid movement in South Africa as well as invoking his broader political significance. *Thoughts of separation bleed* is a wall-hanging sculpture by Mary Blakemore comprised of small hand-connected brass rings, with two overlapping portions creating an aqueous vertical flow. Suggesting the movement of a waterfall or perhaps time itself, Blakemore’s vertical application of material results in an aura of irreversibility.

Evan Halter and Texas Red’s practices use contemporary techniques to recontextualize Renaissance and Modern artworks. Halter’s *Untitled (After the Master of the Saint Lucy Legend)* contrasts immaculately rendered portions of a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Netherlandish painting of the assumption of Mary against rectangular patches of raw canvas. Texas Red’s *Picasso’s Seated Woman 1937* reinterprets Picasso’s harlequin-like portrait of Marie-Thérèse Walter with commercial spray paint and stencils. These referential works imply admiration for the source material and simultaneously create new and vivid atmospheres.

Reimagining the quotidian as reverential, Edward Cabral and Charlie Goering recast mundane items into objects weighted with signification. Cabral’s *Bent Domino’s Hawaiian Pizza Slice*, made to-scale with porcelain and acrylic paint, underscores the varied history of food seen as quintessentially American by preserving its aesthetic properties and altering its shape. Goering’s painting *Shoe* pairs a relic-like miniature stone head and a single black shoe; a surreal composition which focuses the viewer on the subtle communication between two ostensibly incongruous *objets trouvés*.

Reminiscent of the bold figures and colors of the Chicago Imagists, Edward Salas’ *Penitence* depicts three identical men in suits, their hands folded in prayer, moving in unison as if in a dance of atonement.

<sup>1</sup> Moshe Chaim Luzzatto, *The Way of God*, (New York: Feldheim Publishers, 1997), 267.

## Artist Biographies

**Mary Blakemore (b. 1982)** works in sculpture, writing, and photography engaging themes of change, regret, and the irreversible nature of existence. Blakemore graduated with a BA from Cornell University where she studied Literature and Poetry. In 2008, Blakemore published *Gallery Girls*, a collection of photo-based webcomics which satirizes the New York contemporary art world. Blakemore's zine *Some of It May Feel Special but None of It Is Unique* (2021) brings together a selection of her poems with black and white photography. Blakemore has exhibited at SPRING/BREAK Art Show, Kathleen Cullen Fine Arts, and CoWorker Projects.

**Edward Cabral (b. 1987)** explores concepts at the crossroads of food and American history in a multidisciplinary practice which includes Jack O'Lantern carving, over-piping style cake decorating, and sculpture. Cabral's trompe l'oeil ceramics act as artifacts that simultaneously investigate and celebrate vernacular culture. He received his BA in Visual Critical Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has exhibited at venues such as Heaven Gallery, Roots and Culture, Stadium 2, and SPRING/BREAK Art Show.

**Michael A. Cummings (b. 1945)** is a leading figure in the history of contemporary quiltmaking. Born in Los Angeles, California, he began his artistic career after moving to New York City in 1970. Inspired by relationships with Romare Bearden, Faith Ringgold, Norman Lewis, and Camille Billops, Cummings began experimenting with fabric collage using appliqué techniques. In 1972, he began working for the New York Department of Cultural Affairs. In 1976, he held his first one-person exhibition at The Studio Museum in Harlem. Cummings was the artist-in-residence for the New York Foundation for the Arts from 1977 to 1979, and joined the New York State Council on the Arts as an arts program analyst in 1980. He received his BA in art history from SUNY-Empire State College in 1979. Since the late 1980s, Cummings' practice has centered on colorful large-scale narrative quilts. He has held one-person exhibitions at the Francine Seders Gallery, Seattle, WA (1992); Akron Art Museum, OH (1993); Bates College, Lewiston, ME (1998); and International Quilt Festival, Yokohama, Japan (2011). His work is represented in many notable public collections, including the Brooklyn Museum, NY; The Studio Museum in Harlem, NY; Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY; California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA; Museum of Art and Design, New York, NY; and Renwick Gallery, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.

**Charlie Goering (b. 1993)** works in painting, drawing, and collage creating images that focus on surreal juxtapositions of images and *objets trouvés*. The mysterious and poignant communication between colors and objects in space underscore Goering's approach. Goering holds a BFA from Laguna College of Art and Design and studied at Florence Academy of Art in Italy. In 2017, he received the Manifest Artist Residency Award and The Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant. He has exhibited at venues such as SHRINE, Deanna Evans Projects, Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati, Brownie Project, Steven Amedee, and Manifest Gallery.

**Evan Halter (b. 1990)** combines strategies from Renaissance theories of perspective with an interest in the modern vocabularies of 20th century abstraction and surrealism. Born in Cincinnati, Ohio, he completed the New York Studio Residency Program in 2011. In 2013, he graduated with a BFA from the Art Academy of Cincinnati. Moving back to the east coast to continue his studies, Halter received his MFA from Rutgers University in 2016. At Rutgers, his practice developed toward a more precise and representational mode of painting, incorporating classical trompe l'oeil with atmospheric spaces. Halter's work has been shown in one-person presentations at The Gallery at W83, The Java Project, Clay St Press, Mom's, Neon Heater, and YES Gallery. His work has also been included in numerous group exhibitions, at venues such as Pablo's Birthday, Rolando Anselmi Gallery, Johannes Vogt Gallery, Ille Arts, Dress Shop Gallery, and Corridor.

**Edward Salas (b. 1990)** received his MFA in Painting from Alfred University in 2020. He received a BFA from State University at New Paltz in 2013. He has shown his work in various group shows in the United States and internationally including *The Jester Plays Dead* at Selena's Mountain in Brooklyn, *This Country* at Wesleyan University, *Neither Here Nor There* at the Manny Cantor Center, *El Museo Extemporáneo de Arte Popular* at BWSMX in Mexico City, *Esurient Eyes* at Regina Rex Gallery and 'American Fine Arts' a traveling exhibition organized by BBQLA. Edward Salas was in residence at the Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning in 2016.

**Texas Red** is the artistic identity of poet Lawrence Johns (**b. 1947**). Inspired by New York graffiti art, Texas Red began painting portraits of literary, historic and cultural figures in 2013 using stencils, commercial spray paint and reused canvases. Using two primary stencils based on cattle brands from the American Southwest—the 'Rocking TR' and 'Shifting Corral'—Texas Red crafts metaphysical portraits of his subjects. Artists, philosophers, poets, scientists, musicians, and theological figures are rendered as colorful spray icons. Texas Red investigates the spirit of each subject while simultaneously branding them part of his personal canon. Texas Red's first public exhibition at Artfair Portland in 2019 featured a large room dedicated to fifty of the artist's paintings. Johns is the author of two books of narrative poetry, *Love and Hate* (2005) and *Beyond Exile* (2008).