

community art collection



breaking through!

breaking barriers **through opportunity**





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Breaking Through showcases the initial year of development for the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) Community Art Collection. MATC is breaking down barriers that stand between students and their academic and career success, including by providing a safe place where differences are valued and celebrated. The campus has recently undergone many building renovations and the college is celebrating by recognizing our shared history and diversity in the display of art created by students, alumni and community members. *Breaking Through* offers us a glimpse into the lives, hearts, souls and minds of these artists. Join us in celebrating this community connection.

MISSION

Education that transforms lives, industry, and community

VISION

The best choice in education, where everyone can succeed

VALUES

Empowerment: We support our students and employees with the skills, tools, and autonomy to succeed

Inclusion: We provide a fair and welcoming environment where all voices are heard and where all students and employees feel a sense of belonging

Innovation: We are agile and responsive to changing conditions, while anticipating future needs to best serve our students and communities

Integrity: We demonstrate honesty, professionalism, and accountability in all interactions with our students, each other, and our community partners

Respect: We approach all interactions with openness and empathy, value different perspectives, and treat each other with civility and kindness

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2020-21

Community Art Committee
members

Julie Ashlock
Darele Bisquerra
Taneisha Brewster
Carole Burns
Equan Burrows
Darin Dubinsky
Micaela Erickson
Mark Felsheim
Karen Gaskin
Gwendolyn Green
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Lourdes Stehling
Gerald Trotter
Drew Van Wyk
Carol Voss
Thay Yang
Erich Zeimantz

Artists take the chance of expressing themselves. It's not always a choice, sometimes they're compelled in a desperate need to release what's bottled up inside: anger, loneliness, disbelief, but also joy, wonder and love. **Quiet and meditative or bold and brash, all methods and mediums make up our art.** Too rarely artists actually get paid to share their efforts, the toils of their creation. So often it stacks up in their studios, living a life unfulfilled. **This show opens up those doors and offers us a glimpse into the lives, hearts, souls and minds of others** who through training, practice and devotion to their craft have achieved a level of mastery that, **coupled with hard work and desire brings them to that magical place of creation.** To make something from nothing but a thought, a fleeting vision, an impassioned research-driven quest or a deeply ingrained memory is a **gift that they are sharing with us.**

Art is work for the purpose of expression. Join us in celebrating this community connection; **take a moment to appreciate the vision of others** so that you can **reflect upon your own humanity** within the larger scope of the world.

Dr. Julie Ashlock

*Chair, Community Art Committee;
Director, Center for Teaching Excellence*



JOHN KOWALCZYK

Artist

I describe my art as

*“shrine-like, shiny, symmetrical,
and seductive figurations that
become maps of my mind
combining myth, math and magic.”*

Some say that the collaged elements
of my artwork exhibit a
transcendent nature.



breaking through!

Create, Cultivate, Collaborate, 2021
Acrylic and fabric on canvas. Triptych, 48 x 36 in. each, 48 x 108 in. overall
John Kowalczyk (American, b. 1988)

Create, Cultivate, Collaborate is a triptych mixed-media painting collage featuring different hands creating and cultivating for the community. Whether constructing, cooking, designing, painting or collaborating – the hands represent a variety of rich programs offered at MATC. The birds flying through the piece represent the creative muses and inspiration within the college. As you view this painting montage I hope you will enjoy the color pattern and motion and be inspired to find your inner artist and create.

Your hands can cultivate your community.



Del Aguila 21

breaking through!

Corazon de la Vida (Heart of Life), 2021

Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48 in.
Enrique Del Aguila Mendez (American, b. Mexico, 1983)

Corazon de la Vida (Heart of Life) includes many important symbols within Latino culture. El corazón (heart), el colibrí (hummingbird), el panal (honeycomb), el cielo (sky), la mar (sea), el sol (sun), y la hoja (leaf) are combined in a colorful montage of life.

I hope you will think about nature in your own life as you view this painting. Take time from the intensity of the city to refresh yourself with the pure colors and organic shapes that echo la naturaleza vibrante (the vibrance of nature).



ENRIQUE DEL AGUILA

Artist

Since my childhood, I have always been passionate about art. Currently, I experiment by painting on canvas, wood or metal, varying my styles and techniques. As a graphic design major at MATC, I continue to grow in my visual and digital skills while exploring new subject matter and new methods for expressing my creativity.



DENNIS ROBERT

Artist

Influenced by patterns found in nature as well as the characteristic shapes used in industrial settings, I began to create abstract outdoor and indoor metal sculptures. I'm drawn to working with metal because it starts out as a raw material and through refinement it becomes a medium I can shape, assemble and alter with the use of acids and patinas. I utilize the properties of steel and copper metals using various welding techniques to assemble and create sculptures.



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Three Rivers, 2021

Steel & copper (with patina) 13 x 26 x 54 in. plus 4 in. base
Dennis Robert (American, b. 1958)

I find something compelling in contemporary and abstract styles and allow that influence to direct and guide my sculpture designs. This sculpture embodies a theme of *Three Rivers*.

I invite you to think about the contrast of the geometric, rust-colored outer shell as it breaks open to show the bright blue within, symbolizing the natural flow of water beneath the surface.



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Transcendent, 2020
Screenprint, 18 x 24 in.
Julia Scheckel (American, b. 1997)



JULIA SCHECKEL

Artist

While going through my daily life or during explorations of the natural world, imagery will jump out at me, and in that moment I know that I need to record it. I reproduce these experiences through printmaking. Shown here are two woodcuts and a screenprint.



Incandescent, 2020
Woodcut, 26 x 24 in.
Julia Scheckel (American, b. 1997)

Woodcuts start with a piece of wood being carved with hand-held gouges, then ink is rolled across its surface. The ink is transferred from the wood to paper by pressing the two together.

Screenprints are made by using a light sensitive emulsion coated on screens to make stencils, which ink is then pushed through, creating an image on paper.



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Reverie, 2020
Woodcut, 26 x 24 in.
Julia Scheckel (American, b. 1997)

Crafting these prints is a time-consuming process which leaves open time to relive the moments being depicted.

My work encourages the viewer to slow down and appreciate what makes life worth living. For me, that means taking time to be present with nature or enjoying connections with others. Visual art can give people a chance to enter a different world, leaving behind their current stresses. I hope viewers of these works can immerse themselves in the imagery and come back to the present seeking out the things that inspire their own lives.



BYADA

Artist

I am an artist classically trained in Thailand, where, in the culture in which I grew up, there was a very traditional idea of murals and art. In pointing to the past, art reminds us where we come from, and the journey it has taken to arrive at the present.

My interpretation emerged as a careful revision of this thinking. I believe we can remember the past, and be present as much as possible, but we need to always keep an eye towards the future. Representing these concepts artistically is always a challenge, but one that is always growing and changing, much like the beauty of life itself.

breaking through!

Just find yourself and be yourself, 2021

Acrylic on canvas, 48 x 120 in.

Byada (b. Thailand, 1975)

In my artwork, I want to include everyone, young and old, men and women, and peoples of all nations and all types, bringing us into a moment of thoughtful nostalgia, one mixed with possibilities. A breath of fresh air, a moment of clarity, a quiet little daydream that brings a smile – these sorts of things are what I am interested in bringing out. In this way, I am most comfortable matching my images and colors to a particular place and location.



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Untitled (1 of 2), 2021
Oil on canvas, 36 x 60 in. each
Kim Burnett (American, b. 1986)

My favorite subject matter to depict has always been hands. In the *Untitled* artworks, I've created a diptych illustrating hands of all kinds doing work of all kinds. This theme directly correlates to the career opportunities that MATC provides to all people. The first painting depicts someone caring for a child, a photographer and a writer. The second painting shows a pastry chef, a mechanic and a medical professional. I chose these activities to show the broad range of subjects that can be studied at MATC.



KIM BURNETT

Artist

I am a Milwaukee artist and illustrator. I have been drawing and painting since I was 2, and art has always been my passion. I primarily work with oils and charcoal. My love of oils began as a child, when I studied the works of the Old Masters. I knew that I also wanted to work with oils, after seeing what could potentially be accomplished with this medium.



KEVIN BOATRIGHT

Artist

I grew up in Milwaukee and studied at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design. I love creating gritty, straight-forward paintings with urban echoes. I focus on spontaneity and directness of application. I am also concerned with capturing and showing the existence of spirit and interior emotional realities by portraying an unparalleled emotional darkness. I am also concerned with capturing and showing the existence of spirit.



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The Natural, 2019
Acrylic on canvas, 36 x 60 in.
Kevin Boatright (American, b. 1982)

The Natural is about natural and traditional hairstyles worn by people around the world. For me as a person of color, the natural hairstyle is an Afro, depicted in this work. I chose to represent this person in a very abstract style. I like to leave gender and race open to be decided by the viewer. This artwork is also about the long history and proud heritage that runs through every strain of hair. Because of this, I chose to portray the Afro hairstyle as an endless strand of abstract faces. Also, to embody the sense of empowerment and freedom natural traditional hairstyles represent – stuck within the hair, I included an abstract depiction of the signature Afro pick.



STEFFON DIXON

Artist

I grew up in New York, then moved to Florida around age 12, eventually moving to Wisconsin to attend the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. I'm a painter, but also a performance artist and poet. Painting has taught me patience.

I believe that art is not cherished enough. As a community we have not used art to tell babes that their expressive thoughts can inspire, teach and propel. As an instructor, I make this a daily reminder. I make sure my students are well aware of the ideas that come out their mouth, and how those ideas affect others.



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The Building Blocks, 2021
Acrylic on hardboard, 72 x 48 in. each
Steffon Dixon (American, b. 1996)

In this series of paintings, you can see my love for portraits. Here, I've taken photos of younger students (ages 8-12) in the Milwaukee area community and rendered them in acrylic paint. The scale of *The Building Blocks* heightens the impact of the individuals portrayed. My hope is that young people will pass these portraits and feel inspired. The goal is for them to see the value they possess at a young age, and ultimately be able to visualize themselves on a college campus.



MELISSA DORN

Artist

I live and work in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and hold a BFA from the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design. I've been a practicing artist for over 20 years, and most recently had the great fortune to be an artist-in-residence at the Sam & Adele Golden Foundation for the Arts. I have exhibited widely throughout Wisconsin as well as in Illinois, Michigan, South Dakota and New York.



Ardie Clark-Halyard, 2021
Acrylic on industrial felt, 20 x 16 in.
Melissa Dorn (American, b. 1967)

I've had a five-year obsession with industrial mopheads. Initially the attraction began after reading the word "mop" in a book and being transported back to my mom calling me a mophead every time she wanted me to get a haircut. They began as self-portraits, mop as hair, and I explored my many selves. And while everyday objects have been a focus of my work for a long time, the mop really epitomizes the everyday for me and has led me to explore not only myself but also my relation to labor, intersectional feminism and community.

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Dr. Laura Ross Wolcott, 2021
Acrylic on industrial felt, 20 x 16 in.
Melissa Dorn (American, b. 1967)

Glorious Malone, 2021
Acrylic on industrial felt, 20 x 16 in.
Melissa Dorn (American, b. 1967)

The series I've created for MATC is titled Honoring Milwaukee Women and is a continuation of the mop exploration. Made on industrial felt, a rather ordinary material and also a nod to Milwaukee's industrial history, the portraits focus on hair created with a palette knife and acrylic paint. These abstract silhouettes are a reflection of Milwaukee's influential women, while leaving room open for interpretation and the viewer's own journey.

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The Power to Change Lives, 2021
Mixed media (encaustic, oil, and found objects), 24 x 36 in. each
Lennis Mathews (American, b. 1964)

The artwork I've created for MATC is a triptych, featuring the words: *Unity, Acceptance, Diversity*. I believe these words embody MATC staff and students. This encaustic artwork was created using paper ephemera with a Milwaukee origin plus worn/rusted metal and wood objects related to manufacturing and construction.

My rural upbringing gave me an appreciation for hardworking people and the objects that helped them do their work – now, and in the past. My work honors and celebrates these people.



LENNIS MATHEWS

Artist

I am an artist based in Milwaukee who formerly worked as a media designer at MATC. I maintain my studio practice as a VAR artist in residence. My mixed-media work explores memory, acceptance, place and belonging.

I find inspiration from vintage ephemera and rusted metal.

Creating beauty with the worn and rusty, the disused and discarded.

My work is made through the collage method of building up layers of encaustic medium, incorporating found objects and adding meaning to pieces through incising and painting.



ERIC STENZEL

Artist

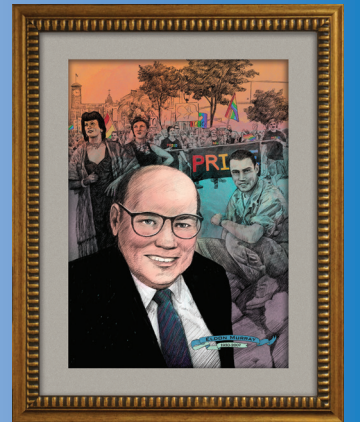
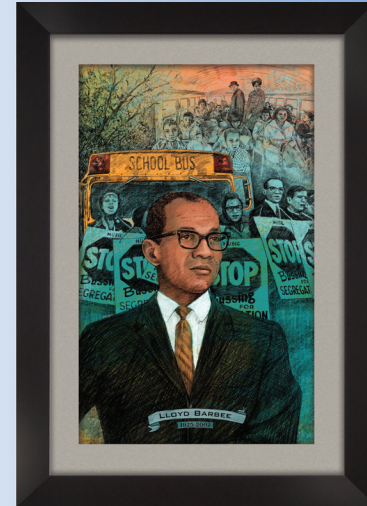
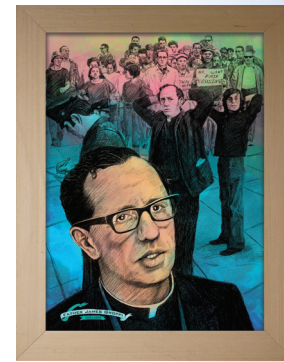
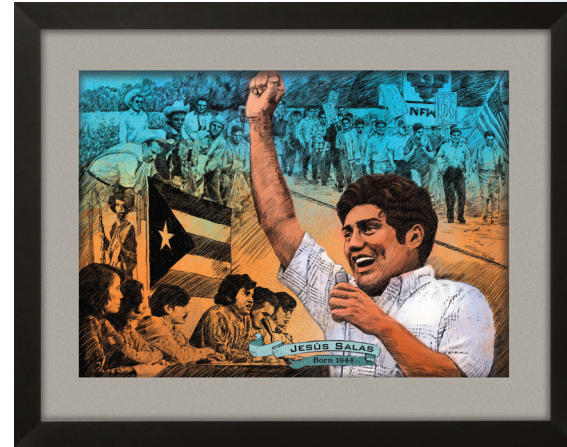
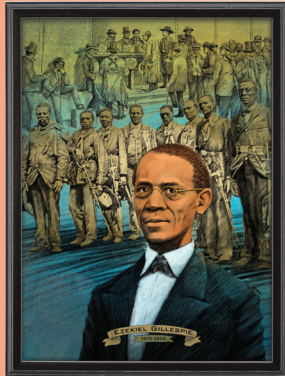
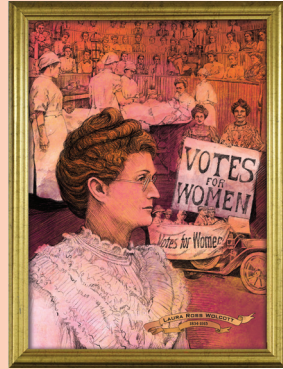
My work is a combination of study, exploration and development of ironwork ideas using the fundamental steps of forging and blacksmith techniques. This sculpture, *Realm Antenna*, was forged from steel and exhibits traditional joinery such as riveting and forge welding; it was designed and built in the “biomechanical” style.

I use metal-working techniques as well as drafting and design skills that I acquired through classes at MATC to create three-dimensional artwork. As it bends and twists, I feel that *Realm Antenna* is a design for today made with Old World techniques. I like people to follow the forms of the metal as they can see it joined and assembled. There is a mechanical logic in its step-by-step construction, and I want those that experience this sculpture to feel the structure, the flow and the overall cohesion of the biomechanical energy within this art.



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Realm Antenna, 2021
Steel, 36 x 78 in. with base
Eric Stenzel (American, b. 1979)



I find inspiration in history – in particular small histories as told by the life of everyday individuals. I invite you, the viewer, to consider the subject of each portrait and their contributions in context of the history of Milwaukee. Envision how the life of each citizen contributes to the larger story and how the contributions we make paint the big picture of our society.

breaking through!

Portrait of Milwaukee Progress, 2021
Digital, 11 images, various dimensions
Rochelle Weiner Carr (American)

This collection, *Portrait of Milwaukee Progress*, tells a specific story. I have researched historical figures since the birth of Milwaukee who have been instrumental in forwarding civil rights, fighting for social causes and succeeding despite crippling structural biases. These 11 portraits tell the stories of a diverse range of individuals, some of whom are familiar and others whose voices have been dimmed over time. My aim is to shine a light on their remarkable lives and honor their considerable contributions to the progressive history of Milwaukee.

breaking through!

ROCHELLE WEINER CARR

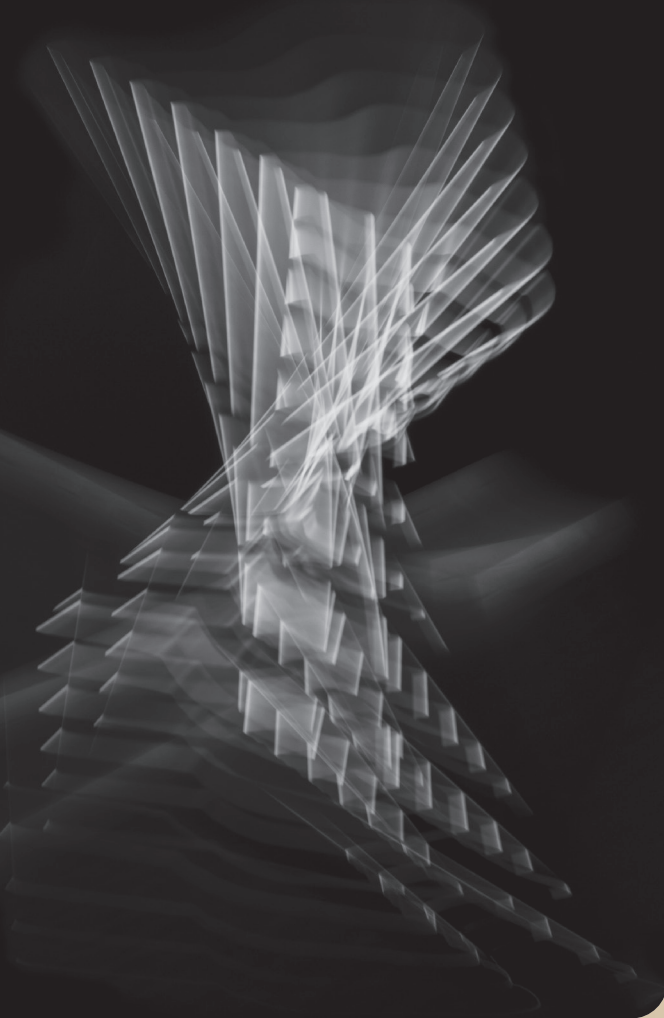
Artist



I have long been a collector of vintage family snapshots and portraits – both from my own family and also the kind you find jumbled together in big bins at antique stores. I am drawn in by the humanity in these photos, and that has inspired a series of multimedia and digital works. The finished pieces are my interpretation of who those people might be – the story they might tell if they were here to tell it.

Family Farm, 2020
Digital, 34 x 34 in.
Rochelle Weiner Carr (American)





Our experiences inform and bias how we view the world around us. Graphic compositions and abstraction are used to de-identify the locations and remove the framework and context from which to conventionally interpret and understand them. New meaning is revealed by showcasing them in a new light.

breaking through!

Perspective, 2021
Black and white photographic prints, 12 x 18 in., 16 x 24 in. each
Libby Sutton (American, b. 1983)

Perspective is a photographic series that examines the hidden beauty of the ordinary and familiar in our lives. It represents what is possible when you look at something differently; how a change in perspective can lead to a greater understanding of what it is you see and, in turn, a greater understanding of self. The seven photographs are of specific locations throughout the various MATC campuses – places staff and students visit every day. The series begins and ends with the same location, but the photographic approach to interpreting it is different. To see the same thing differently, to gain a new perspective, we must be open and willing to change ourselves.



LIBBY SUTTON

Artist

I am a native Milwaukeean and current MATC photography student. I've held a deep affection for the arts since childhood. The technical rigor of photography challenges me and the emotive power of a two-dimensional image captivates me. My analytical training informed my taste for capturing order and structure in the built environment.

Would you like to collaborate with the MATC Community Art Committee?

To contact us, please email: communityart@matc.edu

Want to dive deeper into MATC's Community Art Collection?

Scan the QR code below for additional information:



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