



CREATIVE DIRECTORY

ARTnet

**a legacy of art
and innovation:
one hundred artists,
one directory**

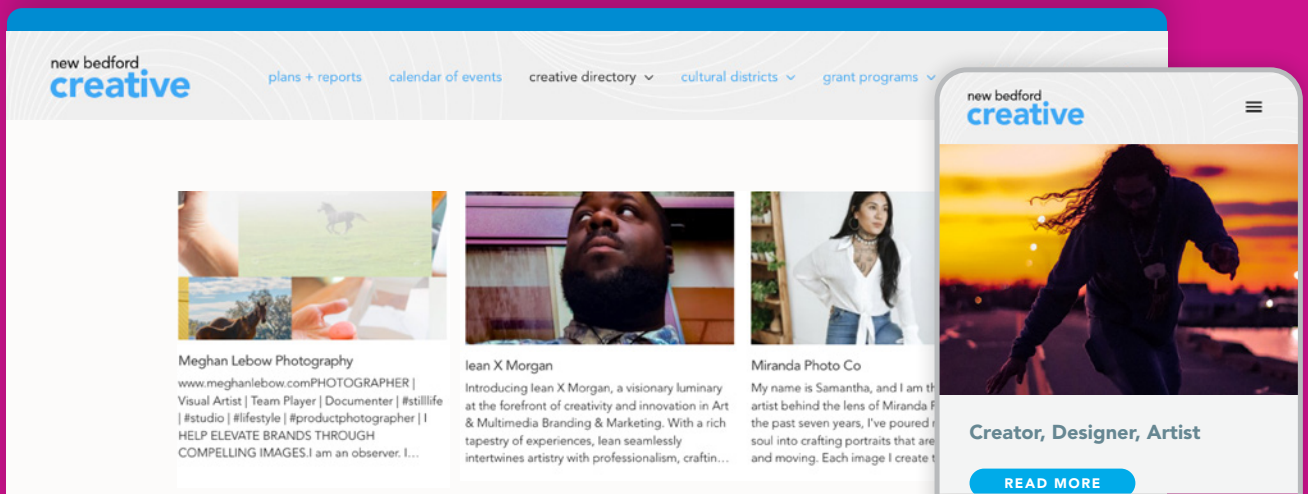
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Connect with greater New Bedford's vibrant creative community!



Are you looking to engage with thousands of artists, performers, and creatives who live and work in the greater New Bedford region?

New Bedford Creative has partnered with CreativeGround, New England Foundation for the Arts' free, online arts and culture directory.

This powerful tool offers:

➤ Connection

Network with artists, organizations, and cultural institutions.

➤ Visibility

Showcase your work and find others in the creative community.

➤ Information

Access resources and support to grow your creative practice.

Search for and connect with a region-wide creative network and unlock endless opportunities!

Start your journey today at
newbedfordcreative.org/creative-directory



new bedford
creative



Throughout its nearly 250-year history, New Bedford has maintained a vibrant creative and cultural community. Acclaimed artists in visual and performing arts, architecture, literature, and more, lived or worked here, including ornithologist John James Audubon, artist Clifford Ashley, painter Albert Bierstadt, painter William Bradford, author/orator Frederick Douglass, musician Joli Gonsalves, choreographer Carol Haney, author Herman Melville, photographer James Reed, painter Albert Pinkham Ryder, the R&B group Tavares, poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, and countless more.

Today, New Bedford stands as a vibrant hub of arts and culture on the south coast of Massachusetts, offering a rich tapestry of attractions and venues that reflect the city's cosmopolitan seaport heritage. At the core of this dynamic scene are the artists and cultural stewards — storytellers who challenge boundaries, honor traditions, and advocate for a more just and equitable world.

“The artists that comprise New Bedford’s thriving arts community are themselves small businesses. Funding to accelerate their emergence from the pandemic represents a timely investment in our economy and will energize our cultural scene.”

MAYOR JONATHAN F. MITCHELL (MAY 2022)

During the pandemic, this industry was hit hard, with many artists losing their livelihoods and income. The City of New Bedford, through the NBEDC and its New Bedford Creative platform, created ARTnet, an artist recovery and training network to help 100 artists recover from the economic impacts of the pandemic by providing financial support, business planning support, training workshops, and access to a network of creative entrepreneurs.

Funding for ARTnet was provided by the City of New Bedford through American Rescue Plan awards and its Arts, Culture and Tourism Fund. As announced by Mayor Jonathan F. Mitchell at Hatch Street Studios in May 2022, an unprecedented amount of funding was made available to support local artists and arts and culture groups and organizations.

To learn more about resources and programs that support small businesses in New Bedford, visit nbedc.org and newbedfordcreative.org

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Creative Lives, Powerful Stories: 100 Artists, One Directory

BY PAULA ROBINSON DEARE



In this directory, we honor the contributions of 100 artists involved in the ARTnet ARPA Recovery & Training Network. We focused in depth on twenty exceptional artists, makers, and creative enthusiasts of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and mediums. Organically and unexpectedly, their storytelling revealed the very essence of art and creativity.

The common thread amongst the artists in New Bedford is the ability to use imagination to dream of novel solutions and form valuable works based on new ideas. Such imaginative makers in this directory range from filmmakers, historians, and musicians to literary artists, designers and painters, and everything in between. They are all part of what is now a clearly defined creative economy producing jobs, generating economic growth, sparking innovation, and fueling cultural tourism.

In 2022, the creative economy in New Bedford alone contributed over \$300 million in direct revenue and accounted for 7.2% of the city's civilian workforce, underscoring the creative sector's essential role in our regional economy.* Nationally, the creative economy contributes over \$1.1 trillion to the U.S. economy, with Massachusetts at \$28.5 billion. However, there is a bigger story here than economic contribution. This publication provides a vivid tapestry of each journey of these artists, many who have traveled the world and most who have decisively chosen New Bedford as their home. Artists' lives and work are reflected in personal narratives, social justice, and transformative creativity.

This directory is a celebration of resilience, creativity, and community. Each artist embodies the spirit of New Bedford, weaving personal stories into a vibrant cultural fabric that speaks to shared experiences and collective aspirations. These creators not only challenge societal norms but also foster connection and understanding in an ever-evolving world. As we engage with their art, we are invited to reflect on our own stories and the transformative power of creativity, reminding us that in every brushstroke, note, and narrative, there lies the potential to inspire change and uplift the human spirit.

* To learn more about the impact of the creative economy in New Bedford, visit newbedfordcreative.org to view and download the 2024 report *The Composition of the New Bedford Creative Economy and Economic Impacts, 2018-2022*.


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A photograph of Beatrice Alder in her studio. She is a woman with short dark hair, wearing a dark jacket, focused on working with a small object in her hands. The studio is filled with various art supplies, including jars of paint, brushes, and a large window in the background that lets in bright light. The overall atmosphere is warm and creative.

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I'm originally from Edmonds, Washington, and after attending Stanford University, I spent some time moving around. I lived in Mongolia for a year after graduation, worked at a museum in Seattle, and then pursued graduate studies in Missoula, Montana, where I met my spouse. Together, we moved to Lithuania on a research fellowship and later applied for a joint artist residency at New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park, which brought us to New Bedford. We loved it so much that we kept extending our stay, and we've been here ever since.

I work across various media, including ceramics, textile arts, printmaking, collage, and rust art. Rust art involves creating prints using templates I plasma cut from salvaged steel to design on fabric. While I deeply engage in visual art, writing is my primary focus—I have an MFA in fiction and a background in history. My visual art, much like my writing, is narrative-driven, focusing on history, particularly stories that have been lost, erased, or unacknowledged. I'm especially interested in the history of marginalized people, of working class people, and queer people.

"Art gives us leeway to fill in some of the gaps and re-center people who have been left out of the dominant narrative."



Art gives us leeway to fill in some of the gaps and re-center people who have been left out of the dominant narrative, which we don't always have as historians or in the form of conventional scholarship. Part of what draws me to making art is the theme of human relationships to nature and ecology; so a lot of the work that I make is of reused materials. All of the art that I make is political in nature or has to do with my values and ideas about justice. Take climate change. The question with energy, oil, extraction of wealth, where that comes from, and who is being harmed in the process, is a huge concern for me and therefore represented in my art.

From an ecological perspective, and a labor perspective, whenever you see a huge concentration of wealth, like a really luxurious mansion for instance, my questions are: Where did that wealth come from? Who was exploited to make that concentration of wealth possible? And, how can we acknowledge those things to begin telling the true story, the full story, and set things right? Art is a really powerful tool for imagining what a better future could look like and that's something that takes artists to imagine.



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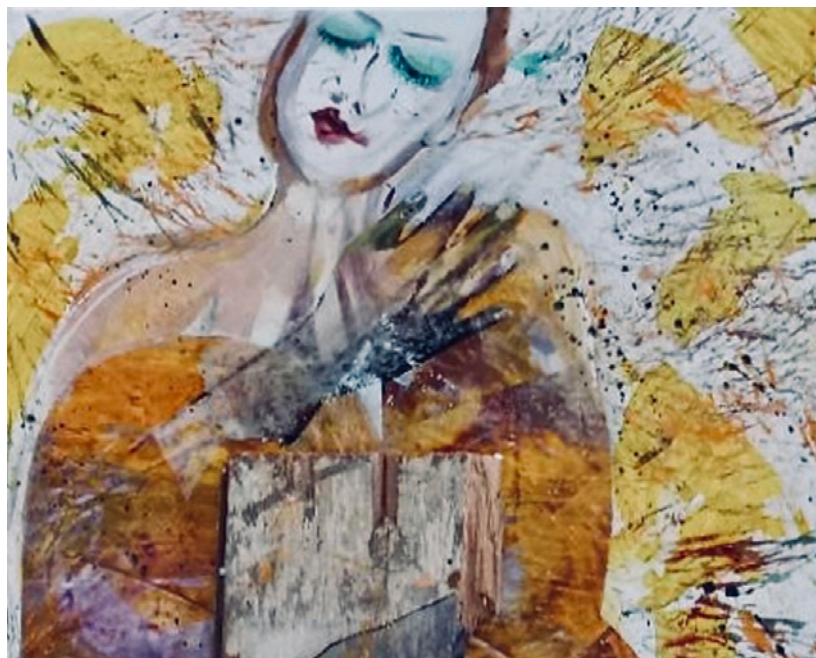
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I was born on a farm in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where I grew up learning both English and French, deeply rooted in my Ukrainian heritage. Winnipeg's landscape resembles Siberia, with expansive wheat fields and farm animals that sustained my family. My father worked as a foreman at a nickel mine in Thompson, Manitoba, and he instilled in me a strong connection to my roots, particularly the stories of my grandma. She was a farm wife renowned for her *Pysanka* – decorative Ukrainian Easter eggs made with dye, beeswax and meticulously carved with a stylus.

For college, I moved to Detroit, Michigan, to attend the Cranbrook Art Academy. The transition was daunting, a real culture shock. I vividly remember one experience at a restaurant where plexiglass surrounded the clerk, and a policeman entered with a gun—an intimidating sight. In that moment, I called my father, expressing my doubts about whether I could adapt. He reassured me. You see, in our community, policemen use clubs, influenced by our French and British heritage. It was during my time at Cranbrook that I met my husband, a painter of Portuguese descent from New Bedford, which ultimately brought me to this city.

"I strive to surprise myself, so my work never stays the same, as I believe art should be a challenge."



Creating art has been my lifelong passion, beginning in my teenage years. I eventually started teaching art programs for the New Bedford community, which I still love because I want to share the joy that art brings me. My style is eclectic; I embrace a variety of mediums and techniques. From printmaking to photography, textiles, canvases, paper, transfers, old woods, and found objects, like shingles from my house, I don't limit myself creatively. I work in acrylic paint and other mediums like wire statues and pearls, which allow me to make paintings and sculptures from everything. I like using recycled things, things that are overlooked every day, things that are man-made, and things that are in nature. Currently, I'm wrapping a beautiful dried branch in copper wire, a material I came to appreciate from my printmaking days.

My motivation lies in learning new techniques and exploring different artistic avenues. I strive to surprise myself, so my work never stays the same, as I believe art should be a challenge. My work almost always addresses desire in some fashion. Recently, I have been using recycled packing styrofoam and paper for 3d wall pieces and sculpture. I have made multi-panel assemblages using styrofoam, recycled exhibit postcards, vegetable and fruit netting and a rock. I am exploring artist photo or drawn digital transfers, and dismissed, cherished, found or mundane objects to inject into my paintings. The pieces I create are truly one-of-a-kind, and I am actively involved in exhibiting my work through portfolio calls, public art projects, gallery shows, exhibitions, and publications.



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The art I create is a reflection of my life experiences, a way to turn both positive and negative moments into something tangible. It's a process of self-expression, where I take parts of my life and paint them through various forms of media. My core values are infused into my work, whether it's through visual art, photography, or music. I aim to capture moments in time, like creating a video that complements a song and tells a deeper story.

In photography, it's about committing to the present moment. When I capture a scene—such as going by the beach—I think about how I want the water to flow, the light to fall, and the mood to be set. It's about paying attention to the details that are often overlooked in everyday life, pausing to reflect, and then capturing that vision as the focal point of my art.

"...where we can be vulnerable, where we can be open is part of our human story; it helps us connect with each other in a world filled with different perspectives."



With music, I illustrate what I'm going through at a given moment. Writing a song begins with finding a beat, then adding instrumentation for the emotional aspect. I want my music to not only make people think but also feel something meaningful. It's about making that connection, because across the board, everybody around the world listens to music. There are different types, there are different genres, there are different fields, but it's all about being in tune to that specific frequency.

As I've grown, my work has evolved to reflect my changing values and life experiences. My art now focuses on themes of education, social justice, civic pride, and cultural awareness. Meeting people from different walks of life has deepened my understanding of the world, reminding me that while everyone's story is different, we all share common experiences.

We're all put on this planet, and we have to define what self-expression and accountability is for us. My art is about finding spaces for vulnerability, openness, and self-expression. As we go through aspects of life we find spaces where we can be vulnerable, where we can be open is part of our human story; It helps us connect with each other in a world filled with different perspectives.

Sydney Hawes



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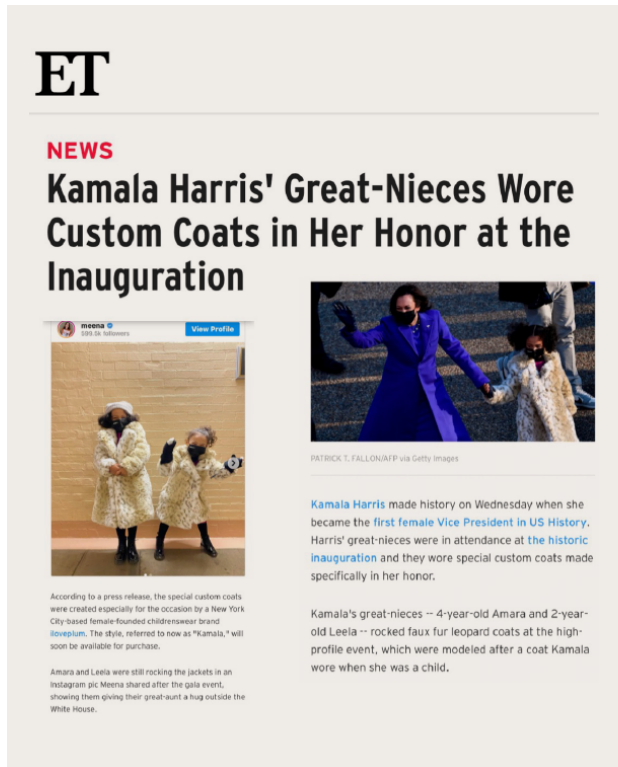
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I was born in Providence but raised in New Bedford, where my passion for art was deeply influenced by my parents. My mom holds several degrees in art history and has always immersed herself in the world of art, while my dad has been a source of love and encouragement. My grandmothers were also creative—both engaged in handwork, but my maternal grandmother had a particular love for cross-stitching. Growing up, I envisioned becoming a fashion designer and changing the world through clothing.

After graduating from college in 2008, I worked for corporate brands, primarily startups, helping them develop clothing lines. This experience took me around the globe—Japan, India, Vietnam, Turkey, and China—visiting factories and witnessing firsthand the complexities of the fashion industry. Traveling deep into mainland China and other manufacturing hubs opened my eyes to the ethical issues surrounding material waste and the environmental impact of fabric production. Some of what I saw made me sad—the throwaway culture I observed—and the unsustainable farming of materials like cotton, deeply affected me. It made me appreciate the current movement towards upcycling and the return to mending and handwork.

“Clothing is an extension of our being. I believe in the idea of slow fashion, of creating and connecting to the art of handwork and the history of sewing.”



I'm especially inspired by the connection between a person and their clothing. How we dress expresses our identity, mood, background, and more. Clothing is an extension of our being. I believe in the idea of slow fashion, of creating and connecting to the art of handwork and the history of sewing. As a child, I spent four years in a hand-quilting guild, which shaped my appreciation for the craft. One year, these women brought me to see an exhibit about the Underground Railroad quilts, believed to have been used to communicate escape routes. The resilience and creativity in using textiles to save lives left a lasting impression on me.

One of my career highlights was with the brand "iloveplum" leading up to the Biden-Harris inauguration. I designed custom leopard-print coats for Kamala Harris's nieces. I got the approval with a three-day deadline, so I just sewed by hand for three days straight. We had no idea what would happen, but her nieces wore them walking down Pennsylvania Avenue to the White House, and later with J-Lo and Lady Gaga. It was truly an unforgettable experience!

Independently, I've begun a new journey in costume design, teaching how to sew and create by hand; and with that, teaching how clothes are made. I recently created a stunning handmade headdress for an opera singer in a production of Chicago, and I'm excited to continue sharing this craft with others.



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A full-page photograph of Michael Pietragalla, an older man with white curly hair and a beard, wearing a denim shirt and jeans. He is standing in his workshop, leaning on a red toolbox. The workshop is filled with various tools, wood, and a workbench. A window is visible in the background.

Michael Pietragalla

practicing wood artisan and craftsman

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My mother worked as a stitcher at Economy Blouse in New Bedford, and though I didn't realize it at the time, her work was truly a craft. My father was a well-known hair stylist in downtown New Bedford, and my grandfather, a cobbler from Italy, set up his own shop on North Front Street in New Bedford after passing through Ellis Island. From a young age, I enjoyed working with my hands. As a kid, I had an erector set—and I created a castle with wood blocks and figures around Christmastime, which my mother let me keep up until spring.

I went to the Swain School of Design here in New Bedford and got a Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting. I learned how to draw, understood proportions and relationships with space and I had an eye for color. Afterward, I worked for the City of New Bedford, but it wasn't fulfilling. When my landlord learned I was out of work, he offered me a job in his small development business, where he'd buy apartment buildings in the city and fix them up really nicely. So through him, I learned basic carpentry skills and stuck with it.



“My business, Floating Stone, is a literal translation of my last name, Pietragalla—“Pietra” means stone, and “Galla” means to float or rise above.

I moved to Boston in the late 70s to early 80s, where my attention to detail led me into finished carpentry. In the late 90s, I began making furniture, starting with small tables in the ‘Arts and Crafts’ style that I sold through antique shops in Vermont. I expanded my work to include custom furniture and antique repair—it’s meticulous work repairing veneers, that’s a lost art. Now, I create everything from custom outdoor gates to jewelry boxes, wooden utensils, chopsticks, and charcuterie boards. My pieces are sold in local shops around New Bedford, contributing to the local economy.

My business, Floating Stone, is a literal translation of my last name, Pietragalla—“Pietra” means stone, and “Galla” means to float or rise above. My work can be found in New Bedford at The Drawing Room and the Whaling Museum, and in downtown Marion at Mimi’s on Front Street. I’m always looking for new places to showcase my work. You can find me at Hatch Street Studios or contact me through my website, Instagram, or Facebook. I have a real live telephone number that people can actually call to talk about a project at 508-997-1079.



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I was born in Boston and raised on a farm in Rockland, Massachusetts, the youngest of ten children. We had free reign in our home to create. Growing up in a creative household, I was surrounded by art from an early age. Three of my older siblings were avid painters and drawers, serving as early role models for my artistic journey. My mother, recognizing our creative inclinations, sent three of us to art classes at the Museum of Fine Arts on Saturdays. Walking through the MFA, surrounded by remarkable works of art—the paintings, drawings and sculptures—ignited my passion to be an artist.

Self-portraiture has always been a powerful medium for me to explore my identity and life experiences. It has helped elucidate my journey as a woman and the roles I have played as a daughter, sister, mother, wife and teacher. After experiencing the loss of my parents and childhood homestead, I found myself flooded with memories of childhood and family, which I began to explore through art. Surrounded by family photographs I had not seen in fifty years, I was able to recall the life I once had growing up on the farm, reconnecting to my past. Collaging copies of old photos into large-scale multi-figure narratives has helped me realize the poignancy of the passage of time, aging and the inevitability of letting go.

"Surrounded by family photographs I had not seen in fifty years, I was able to recall the life I once had growing up on the farm, reconnecting to my past."



I earned a BFA from Southeastern Massachusetts University in 1972 and an MFA from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts/Tufts University in 1984. My son, Matthew Lucas, and I moved to Brookline so he could receive a strong public school education, and I began working in studios at Fort Point Channel.

Over the years, I've taught at Montserrat College of Art, the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University, the Museum School, and Tufts University before joining UMass Dartmouth in 1989. Teaching drawing at all levels for nearly thirty years at UMass Dartmouth was an incredibly fulfilling experience, guiding and motivating students until my retirement in 2018.

In 2008, I married my husband, Scott Currier, a cabinet maker and furniture designer, at the historic Seamen's Bethel. We bought a historic home in New Bedford in 2011 where we have made a wonderful home with cultivated beautiful gardens. For the first time in forty years, I have a studio at home, and I continue to paint self-portraits, as well as portraits of friends and family, capturing the essence of the life we have created together.



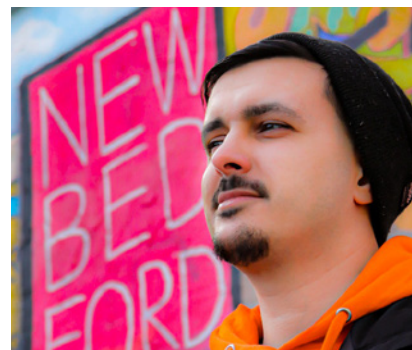
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I make individual-built ceramic objects using repetitive techniques to build up installations filled with multiple objects. My mother, who is Japanese and was adopted, provided an interesting backdrop to my artistic journey. Growing up, we often explored her heritage together, as she didn't know much about her culture or where she was from in Japan, because she had been adopted by Americans. When I was younger, we would research Japan together, learning about her history at the same time.

This experience ignited my love for Japanese aesthetics and pottery, as it feels like a distant, but not-so-distant connection. My grandma, from England, was also a significant influence, embodying creativity through sewing and knitting (she sewed a lot of my outfits). I reference a lot of Victorian and English things in my own work, like the eclectic mix of items she brought with her from England. My work often echoes the techniques of both Victorian and Japanese pottery.

I've always been interested in working visually in the arts, including photography and creative writing, but I feel like clay is a tactile medium where I really settle in. My journey began at a community college in Arizona, in a ceramics class I took for fun, and I just fell in love with the processes. While it's important for my work to be visually appealing, I strive to infuse a deeper meaning with it. My work focuses generally on creating domestic scenes, and ideas of femininity, especially with colors like pink and yellow—traditionally associated with the feminine—yet presented in a different way that invites viewers to reconsider the connotations with the domestic or with these colors. On the surface, my work may look like just a domestic scene—a simple vase that has a silhouette—but there's more to it for an active-looking experience.



"My creations often resemble lattices and screens, deconstructing traditional vessels and functional forms into open structures."

My creations often resemble lattices and screens, deconstructing traditional vessels and functional forms into open structures. So it's something that you feel like you'd like to reach out and touch, but then if you do it's something that you weren't expecting. Instead of being a solid base, you see a lattice structure you are looking at and through in earnest, because they're both open and closed. The openings in these forms are a way of playing with perspective. By rendering them open, I play with the light, another "material" I use. Light influences how my work is perceived both in illumination and in the shadows it casts.

I utilize liquid clay and extrude it through a pastry bag to build structures. When they're fired they resemble frosting but are, in fact, hardened porcelain. I complement this with glaze as well, as sort of a ceramic material, but more like a liquid glass that melts in the kiln. And then, I put wax on top of that which adds more layers. While ceramics serve as my base, I remain open to incorporating other materials.

In addition to my own art, I've run a gallery in downtown New Bedford, which invigorates my creative energy. I've done a lot more activism in my work, it's shown up as bringing people together as a community, because activism is very much community-driven. I'm very influenced by working with women in the arts. Engaging in discussions within the arts community enriches my practice, and I am committed to amplifying new voices within this vibrant field.

A photograph of Eden Soares, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a black beanie with rainbow stripes and a brown t-shirt. He is kneeling and using a spray can to paint a mural on a wall. The mural features bold, colorful shapes, including a large yellow and purple figure. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting with a paved ground and some greenery.

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I was born in Rotterdam, in the Netherlands, spent my early childhood in Portugal, and by the age of four, my family had settled in New Bedford, where I began school. Though I've lived in various places, I've always identified with my Cape Verdean roots. My father is from São Nicolau, Cape Verde, and my mother from Guinea-Bissau, Africa.

From kindergarten, I was constantly doodling—fascinated by the world around me. As I got older, I went from doodling to sketching, soaking up the details of everything around me, analyzing my surroundings. I became absorbed in studying everyday things, from cereal boxes to the layout of labels, every color and design. This close attention to detail sparked my love for art. I soon began drawing landscapes, futuristic designs, and cars, whatever popped into my head to set myself apart.

My passion for art was enriched by the opportunity to travel and experience different cultures. In 1999, I returned to the Netherlands, where I was born, to perform with another musical artist at a New Year's Eve event in Amsterdam. The global fear of Y2K meant the streets were empty, but the following night, the city was alive with celebration.

"My passion for art was enriched by the opportunity to travel and experience different cultures."



It was amazing and beautiful, a once-in-a-lifetime event. I've also had the chance to perform with a Cape Verdean art group in Portugal and in São Vicente, Cape Verde, with the first American rap group at a festival show. This is where I performed for an audience of 120,000, an awe-inspiring moment.

Another memorable trip to Cape Verde was with the UMass Dartmouth Cape Verdean Student Association, on their yearly trip to donate medical and school supplies, where I volunteered to create a mural for an orphanage. Seeing the joy and love of those children, despite their poverty, was profoundly humbling and reinforced how blessed I am.

In my career as a graphic designer, I worked in Boston at Studio 24 where I gained a lot of experience, and started my own company, Trigrfx (pronounced "Try-Graph-ics.") I've been fortunate to create murals across New Bedford, where my work ranges from lifelike human portraits to cartoons and freestyle. I've been lucky to be selected to create the murals of iconic Cape Verdean musicians Cesaria Evora and the band Sadia.

My murals celebrate Cape Verdean culture, pride, and spirit. On the side of the Cape Verdean Ultramarine Band Club mural, I painted the old Cape Verdean flag with scenes of women proudly selling their goods at the side of the road to survive and thrive, feed and provide shelter, food and clothing for their families. These experiences have definitely brought forward a love and passion for the Cape Verdean culture and I want to continue to share its richness through future mural projects.



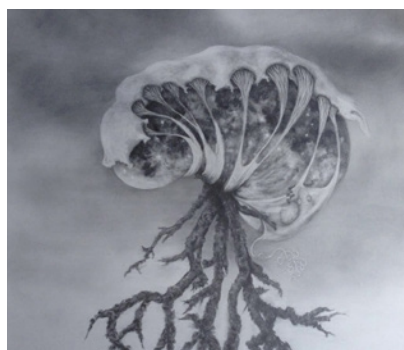
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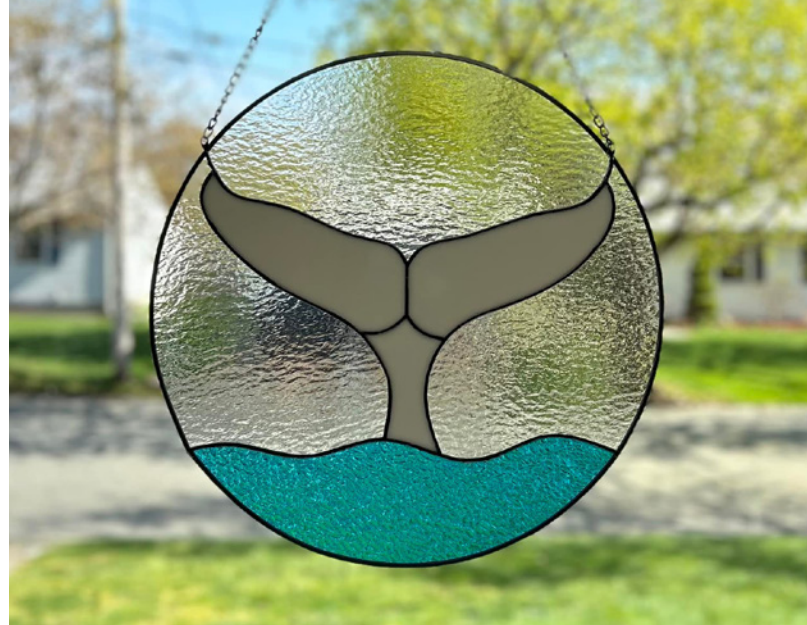
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I was born and raised in New Bedford, where my father worked as a welder at Aerovox and my mother was a homemaker with a passion for crafts. She taught me everything from crocheting to needlepoint, sparking my early love for working with my hands. Needless to say, I made lots of afghans. Crafting not only allowed me to explore new ideas but also helped calm my restless nature and keep me focused.

Though art has always been a part of my life, I didn't connect with it in school. I felt awkward, shy, and uncomfortable with exhibits. Instead, I pursued bookkeeping and typing without a clear sense of direction. I loved writing term papers, particularly about Native American culture and mythology, which led me to earn a bachelor's degree in sociology, but took many courses in art history and archaeology. My plan was to work as a social worker on a Native reservation, but life took a different path. After visiting my sister in Nashville and staying for a year, I returned home when my father fell ill and took a job as a pharmacy technician.

During this time, I discovered a stained glass course and instantly fell in love with the medium. The process of cutting and designing glass felt natural to me, and I even sold a small piece early on. My passion for stained glass grew, and I began making gifts for friends and family. Even after being laid off, I continued pursuing my love for art while taking computer accounting classes and learning design programs like CorelDraw, Glass Eye 2000, and PageMaker.



"Growing up around the old mills where my father worked, it feels natural to now have my studio there, carrying on a legacy of craftsmanship."

This led me to working at a local small newspaper setting up ads. All of the courses, jobs and experiences brought me to Hatch Street Studios where I own a full-time business designing, creating, selling, and exhibiting stained glass. I grew up around these mills. My father worked in these mills and I played in the mills. I kind of still do. I also paint and take lots of photos. I never thought that I'd be working with glass and hot metal, but I love it. I guess I have to thank my dad for his welding skills and mom for her creativity.

Over the years, I worked various full-time jobs, but stained glass remained a constant. Eventually, I set up my own business at Hatch Street Studios, designing, creating, and selling stained glass full-time. Growing up around the old mills where my father worked, it feels natural to now have my studio there, carrying on a legacy of craftsmanship. Both my parents would visit my studio during Open Studios and talk with everyone visiting. My dad has now passed away, but I know he is looking out for me. My mom, at age 90, is still crocheting. My work reflects my life's journey—its joys, challenges, and personal growth, including my deep respect for Native American culture. Today, my art can be found in local gift shops and the New Bedford Whaling Museum, where I sell many of my signature whale tail designs.



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I was born and raised in New Bedford, where I still live and work as a mixed-media artist. My connection to this city runs deep, and much of my work revolves around its history. I went to New Bedford public schools before earning my undergraduate degree in photography from UMass Dartmouth, later returning to complete a Post-Bac certificate program in printmaking. My artistic journey has always been rooted in New Bedford's past and present, reflecting my lifelong connection to the city.

During my undergraduate years, I began working at Spinner Publications, a local publisher with a vast photo archive documenting the history of New Bedford. My work with Spinner has shaped much of my art. In that role, I scanned and transcribed old photographs and newspaper articles, and I began to wonder how I could incorporate this archival material into my work. This led to my undergraduate thesis project, which focused on urban renewal in New Bedford and has remained central to my practice for the last decade.

In the mid-1960s to late 70s, entire neighborhoods in New Bedford were demolished as part of urban renewal efforts. The photos I worked with were originally taken to assess the value of buildings before they were torn down. To be fair, it seems as though they presumably paid someone, and then tore it all down. These images unintentionally became historical records of a lost part of the city. I started revisiting the locations in the photos, capturing what stands there now—often highways, parking lots, or vacant spaces. My work explores these transitions, as there are definitely deeper meanings in the way that decisions were made, and what people were impacted the most.



"these images unintentionally became historical records of a lost part of the city."

This project expanded into printmaking and mapping, where I began recreating maps of New Bedford. I've worked with old and modern maps, and created visual representations of the city streets as they are now, and I'm working on a map that is pre-Urban Renewal. I want people to see Urban Renewal in its entirety; what was really lost and what was gained. One of my major works was created under the tutelage of Marc St. Pierre, a professor at UMass Dartmouth in printmaking, who did a lot of encaustic map-inspired pieces. I used a CNC machine to carve an 11-foot woodcut map of New Bedford, now on display at the New Bedford Economic Development Council. The map, based on contemporary records and maps, is a detailed relief carving of the city's streets.

Though my work often reflects periods of prolific creation, I also experience quieter phases. During those times, I exhibit older pieces that still resonate with current audiences. Sometimes, I'll put something in a show years after it was made, and people are surprised to discover new facets of my artistic journey. People will say "Wow, I didn't know you did that!" Through it all, my work remains deeply connected to New Bedford's evolving landscape, its history, and its people.




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I was born in Natick, Massachusetts, and my family moved to Holliston, Massachusetts, during my middle school years. Holliston's arts programs, led by two art teachers, introduced me to the world of art. My upbringing came with several challenges. When my parents divorced, I faced the stigma of being from a poor, single-parent household—not with my friends but in the public school system. By eighth grade, I was placed on an alternative, non-college-bound track. Upset, I told my mother, and she fiercely advocated for me. Thanks to her determination, I became the first person in my family to graduate from college. My mom went back to school, got her GED, and took college courses, too. She remarried, and my stepfather, who chose to embrace an already-formed family, has been a wonderful dad. My biological father, a Vietnam War veteran, struggled with mental health issues, which shaped my perspective on family and resilience.

"When I came to New Bedford, the vibe here was so different. I felt at home in its multicultural and inclusive community."



These life experiences are woven into my art—it swirls together. I earned a Bachelor's of Arts in jewelry metalsmithing from UMass Dartmouth, where I studied under two incredible professors—Susan Hamlet, known for her intricate, nature-inspired neckpieces, and Alan Burton Thompson, who pushed us to create bold, statement-making and a bit controversial work. In graduate school, Tim Lazure taught me the art of blacksmithing and cold forging metals like silver and copper, igniting my passion for hammering metal—a medium that, like pottery, endures the test of time, like an archaeological site.

As an artist, I'm constantly evolving, developing, reinventing, and always striving for that next step, reflecting my love for art and my strong feminist beliefs. My sister and I grew up fascinated by women's fashion magazines, and their portrayal of women made me firmly a feminist. I realized how patriarchal our society is, and how at every turn, women are just fighting to exist equally. Who would have thought that right now, we would have to protest about pro-choice again? My senior thesis was dedicated to women's stories. I made neckpieces that demonstrated what women have to grapple with, and I continue to focus on social justice in my art.



When I came to New Bedford, the vibe here was so different. I felt at home in its multicultural and inclusive community, where all classes of people are welcome. This sense of belonging is why I chose to stay here because I felt like I fit in.



Karen Zukas

writer,
educator,
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potter

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I was raised in Mattapoisett and spent 35 years in Boston. My childhood was wonderfully unstructured, which allowed me to explore and develop my creativity by simply trying things. I have always had good hand-eye coordination, and that's how I began drawing. My art tends to be more conventional, rooted in realism rather than abstract.

I attended a conceptual art school, the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, which helped me understand how to express stories through a psychological or visionary approach. Early on, I used hyper-realistic drawings and paintings as a way to bring order to the chaos around me. Over time, as my life became more settled, my art shifted towards abstraction, though it remains rooted in recognizable subjects. People can still see a tree, a dog, or a person in my work.

As a portrait painter, I found that every portrait I made was, in some way, a self-portrait, even if it was someone else. Now, I teach art and enjoy experimenting with various media in my shop, the New Bedford Arts & Cultural Emporium at Kilburn Mill. We provide classes in scrimshaw, watercolor painting, writing, collage, textiles, clay/ceramics, plus portrait drawing, Ukrainian pysanky eggs, needle felting, decoupage, alcohol inks, paper quilling, even tide clocks! Teaching has been rewarding because everything informs art, and I encourage my students to start from a place of truth. Realism and honesty are the foundations of my work, and once that is established, artists are free to explore and lose themselves in their creations.



"Teaching has been rewarding because everything informs art, and I encourage my students to start from a place of truth."

I consider myself more spiritually inclined than politically-motivated. While I don't intentionally infuse my work with spirituality, people often find it moving in that way, which I appreciate. My experiences teaching English as a second language to people from over 70 different countries have deeply influenced my work, embedding diverse cultural elements that naturally emerge in my art. I just love it all. Sometimes when I paint portraits, I purposefully make them very colorful and pattern-centric or multi-patterned, but not always in relation to those involved with that pattern.

A lot of times people will see my pottery, for example, and say, "Oh, it looks Swedish, or Mexican, or Russian," but while people may associate my pottery with various global styles, my work is inherently American, shaped by my experiences. My shop is open to anyone with a desire to explore their own creativity. As long as there are folks who still have an artist's soul and a desire to see what comes out of them, then come to my shop at Kilburn Mill and let's have some fun.



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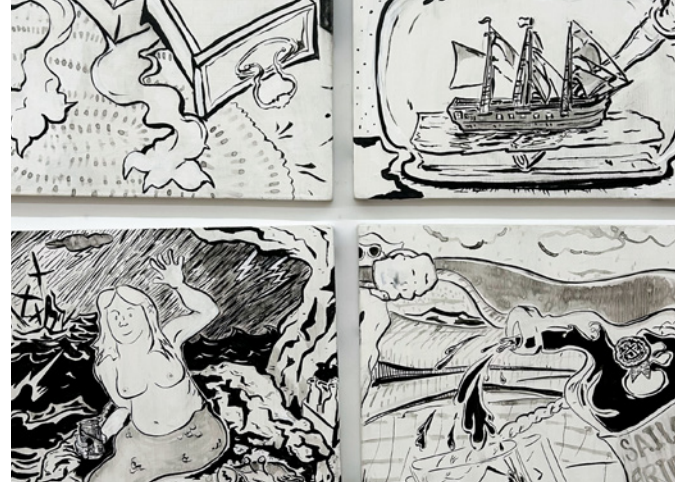
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I was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, and raised in Boston and Brookline. Growing up, I was always drawn to construction and creativity. I remember watching the Big Dig unfold. I wasn't particularly focused on art in high school, although I took some classes and dabbled in it. My real passion at the time was in shop classes. It wasn't until college, at Temple University, that I truly fell in love with art. I took an art class on a whim, and although it was challenging at first, I quickly became captivated.

As a kid, I was always creating. I loved playing with Legos, creating stories, mythologies and narratives, and making dioramas of car accidents with banged-up Hot Wheels. I was fearless in my creations, no matter how weird they seemed, and I was always supported by my family. My mother loved art history and was a second-generation Italian immigrant, and my father worked in marine textile and hardware. Both exposed me to a world of art and creativity. My family had a hands-on approach to life, with both of my grandfathers working in skilled trades. The older I've gotten, the less pretentious I am in separating art versus design or craft. This background gave me a deep appreciation for craftsmanship and the creative process.

Growing up, I was heavily influenced by skateboarding, punk rock, and counterculture. I spent a lot of time in Harvard Square at "The Pit," skateboarding around Boston, and interacting with all manners of people. I was immersed in hardcore music, which had a very DIY ethos. I also got into graffiti, which got me into some trouble, but was an important part of my experience. I had teachers that supported me through high school and helped me, and that was really important because that's what made art happen for me. During my senior year, I took a drawing class that included a trip to the south of France. That trip was life-changing for me. I used my Bar Mitzvah money to go, and it opened my eyes to the importance of art and travel. I visited places I had only seen in paintings, and the experience blew my mind—the Jura region, Montagne Sainte-Victoire—it all connected for me being a hands-on, tactile, mechanical thinker.



“Those things that I make to sell, they’re still my art with my soul in them.”

Initially, I studied architecture in college because of my love for Legos, but it felt too rigid for me. I switched to art history and soon realized I had a talent for creating art. A painting class with a wonderful teacher, Rebecca Saylor Sack, was a turning point. For the first time, I could spend hours in the studio, focused on painting, losing myself in the process. My teacher encouraged me to major in painting, which gave me a real sense of direction. I eventually transferred into Temple University's art program, where I continued to develop my skills.

After college, I worked in woodshops and gained valuable experience in making and fabrication. This knowledge became instrumental when I went to graduate school in Iowa and started exploring sculpture alongside painting. Working with materials like wood felt more natural to me, and I began merging sculpture, painting, and graphics in my work. My real happiness, my real tail-wagging was in drawing; ink drawings, and figuring out in the greater picture how all of this practice comes together.

Today, I live in New Bedford, because the ocean is really where my heart is. I grew to love Buzzards Bay and the area's history. Near the ocean, I feel like I could be anywhere. I have a deep appreciation for the greater New Bedford area, with its shipyards and rich maritime heritage, as the nautical atmosphere and sailing has always been a part of my life.

I'm still not making a living strictly on my art. I make the things that I love to make, and I make things to sell. Those things that I make to sell, they're still my art with my soul in them. These days, it's carved whales and tide clocks. They're fun. These pieces are full of personality, often made from reclaimed materials, such as mother-of-pearl from a Japanese inlaid screen, or saved pieces from my antique repair days, and each one tells a unique story.

Hannah Rose Schlieder

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I've been painting and writing since I was young, and my art takes many forms, though it often begins the same way—through sketching. My work is deeply connected to my inner source, whether it comes from visions or emerges as I sit down at the canvas. As a child, I often had vivid dreams that I could almost control, and now I channel those dreamlike visuals into my art. Sketches are just the beginning; the rest unfolds as I work.

My father has been a big influence on my creativity. I remember discovering poems he had written in the attic, and hearing stories of him being a singer in a band in high school. He and the rest of my family have always encouraged my artistic journey. If I'm facing a challenge, I'll call him and he asks, "Well, what are you creating about it?"

Living near the ocean is an essential part of my life. I've always had a deep spiritual connection with water, which is why living near it feels necessary for my well-being. Swimming has a cleansing effect on my soul, and I love painting at my favorite beach! My first experience painting as an adult was during a festival where they were creating a mural, and a friend gave me a section that I could paint whatever I wanted on it. I was given a blank canvas. I had just come out of a traumatic experience, and that empty space became a place of control, allowing me to find my voice.

Art has given me courage and communication, and helped me process many aspects of life, especially negative experiences as a woman. It has provided a space to share healing and process culture. My current series of paintings explores themes like resilience and higher consciousness. One piece, "Totem of Higher Self," is a meditative work designed to connect the viewer to their higher self, while another piece incorporates mirror tiles to remind people of their own resilience.



"Whatever energy I put into an object I'm creating is what the receiver is going to get out of it."

In addition to painting, I create jewelry with intention. Whatever energy I put into an object I'm creating is what the receiver is going to get out of it. I've studied the properties of gemstones since childhood and I design pieces with a focus on healing. I started making necklaces for expecting mothers, offering gemstones that could help ease the physical and spiritual transitions of pregnancy. This practice has expanded into making custom pieces for a variety of needs, like confidence-boosting tiger's eye, emotionally balancing moonstone, protection stones of rose and smoky quartz, or healing amethyst. These beautiful stones are an important spiritual connection to our humanity, our soul.

Rug tufting is my newest passion. Using a stand-up board and an automatic tufting gun, I create rugs with memory foam underlays that are perfect for my musician friends to stand on while performing. I'm always inspired by the creative community around me, and we often collaborate at live art events, such as "Sound v. Sight" at Play Arcade, where bands, live artists, and craftspeople came together, blending into an all-in-one fused event. Thanks to ARTnet, I was sponsored by the Marion Arts Center to paint "en plein air," which means capturing the beauty of my surroundings in real-time.

I'm currently exhibiting my work at Solar, a dispensary in Dartmouth, and I regularly showcase at the New Bedford Farmers Market and the Fairhaven Huttleston Market. Looking ahead, I hope to host or participate in art gatherings outside of a marketplace setting, where artists and the community come together.

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New Moon Dance Party
@newmoondanceparty

I was born in Canton, a small suburb just south of Boston. My father was a musician who worked as a house painter by day, but at night, he played in bands and eventually built a music studio in our basement, where he would record bands. Music became his primary focus after retirement. My mother, a talented writer, worked as an editor for a small newspaper, later became a tech writer, and often wrote creative fiction in her spare time. In her retirement, she shifted to painting. Growing up in this creative environment, I was naturally drawn to the arts.

I started as a visual artist, primarily working in photography and filmmaking, often exploring family dynamics through my work. Over time, my focus shifted outward, becoming more socially engaged. I lived in New York City for ten years, which had a significant impact on my creative journey. Initially, I thought I wanted to be a writer, but I found photography more engaging and suited to my strengths. I even earned a master's degree in photography, but after that, I sought new ways to create and connect with others, leading me to performance art.

I hosted performance art nights called "Lunar Teeth" in New Bedford for five years. The series coincided with equinoxes and solstices, but what excited me most was bringing people together. Performance art can be very esoteric, and the next step was to do something a little more accessible to the public. This desire for community led to the creation of the "New Moon Dance Party," an all-inclusive event that provides a space for people to connect. Our primary event, "Body, Body, Body," has been running for five years and is a nightclub-style dance party in a DIY space at the Co-Creative Center in New Bedford.

Lunar Teeth was tied to solstices and equinoxes, and New Moon was my way of continuing the lunar theme. The New Moon Dance Party will celebrate our fifth anniversary in December 2024. Our events are collaborative, bringing together resident and guest DJs, artists, and community members. We focus on creating a welcoming, inclusive space where people can express themselves freely. We prioritize a safe environment, promoting tolerance and respect while fostering a strong sense of community.



POSTER DESIGN: LIYA HOSHI

"We focus on creating a welcoming, inclusive space where people can express themselves freely."


"Body, Body, Body" always happens indoors, on Saturdays from 8pm to 1am, and although we've moved a few times, the series has consistently taken place at the Co-Creative Center, the multi-functional art space and gallery at 137 Union Street in downtown New Bedford. I love this space. The person who runs it, Dena Haden, is fantastic to work with. She supports us, which is a wild thing for her to do, considering we use the space in a much different way than anyone else. That is a testament to the trust and support we've created in the community.

We also host free outdoor summer events like "Riverside Beats" at Riverside Park and the "New Moon Roller Disco" at Buttonwood Park, both of which are family-friendly and accessible to all in the late afternoon, with uplifting disco and soul music that's good for outdoors to get people moving.

Inspired by iconic New York clubs like the Loft and Paradise Garage, New Moon fosters inclusivity, tolerance, and a sense of togetherness. The parties have strong ties to the queer community, though they are not exclusively queer events. The organizers actively promote a no-tolerance policy for bigotry, sexism, ableism, or non-consensual behavior, creating a safer space for everyone, especially women and queer individuals. In the event of misconduct, the community is empowered to intervene, ensuring a respectful atmosphere.

New Moon also hosts the Marie Equi Zine Library (MEZL) at its events. The MEZL, founded by New Bedford native Aneshia Savino, provides guests with access to radical queer feminist zines and literature. This pop-up library enriches the party experience, offering guests a break from dancing to explore unique and thought-provoking materials.

New Moon events are a celebration of creativity, inclusion, and community. Through these gatherings, we create spaces where people can connect, dance, and experience something meaningful together. It's more than offering music and dancing, these events also serve as a reminder of the importance of human connection, tolerance, and respect for humanity.

A photograph of Julia 'Julz' Roth, a woman with reddish-brown hair tied in a ponytail with a blue scrunchie. She is wearing a black t-shirt and large, white, abstract earrings. She has a tattoo on her right arm. She is looking down at a large white sheet of paper she is holding up against a wall. The paper has the words 'LOVE LETTERS' and 'TO BEDFORD' printed on it in large, bold, black letters. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Julia "Julz" Roth

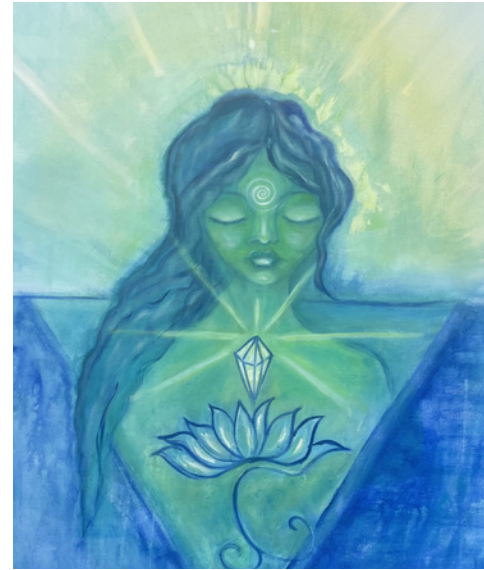
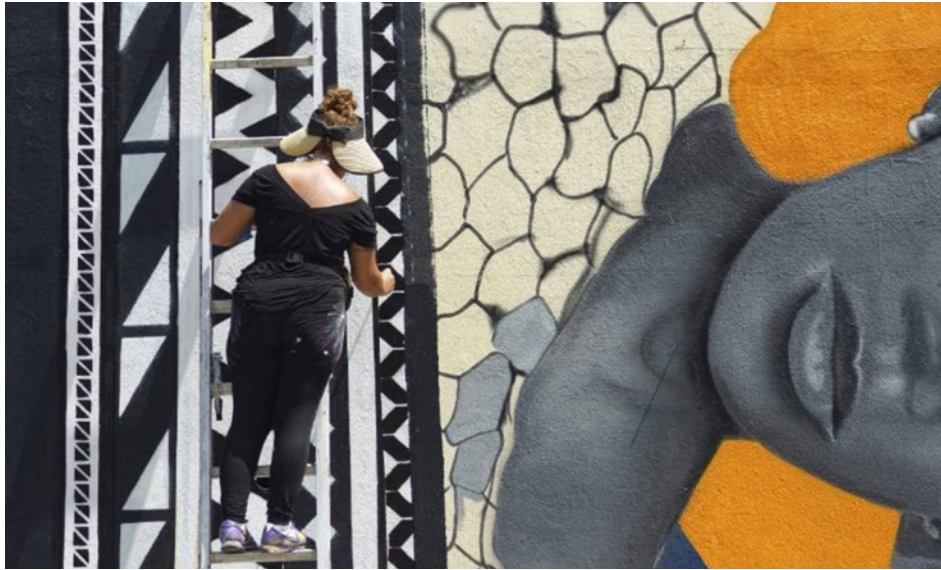
**visual artist,
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 @julzroth

I'm from Burlington, Vermont, and I moved to Boston to attend Lesley University, where I earned my Master's Degree in Expressive Arts Therapies. Art has always been a constant presence in my life. As a child, when life felt overwhelming, my mother or grandmother would hand me art supplies and encourage me to sit, draw and chill out. That space to make art became a refuge. My mother, a creative person herself—an artist, woodturner, and landscape gardener—instilled in me the idea that art is about process, not perfection. She taught me to create without worrying about the outcome, a philosophy that has stuck with me.

The therapeutic power of art has always resonated with me. There's scientific evidence that just 45 minutes of creative activity can reduce stress, and this practice has been a consistent source of relief for me throughout my life. Sadly, many people forget that art and creativity are always available to them. They forget how to play and how to be in a flow state; just letting yourself create and explore. Society often teaches us to only pursue what we're good at, or what's deemed productive. But creativity isn't just for children or the "gifted"—it's an essential skill for all adults. The ability to play, explore, and create freely can offer deep emotional healing.

Before moving to Boston, I was a single parent in Burlington, where I ran a community-based art studio open to anyone who wanted to create. That experience sparked my interest in the intersection of art and healing, leading me to pursue a career as an expressive arts therapist, which I've practiced since 2012. This work has become a vital part of my life, although it doesn't replace the joy of making my own art. I describe my artwork as multidisciplinary meditations, grounded in a process that begins with centering myself through movement, breathing, and a connection to my inner peace.



**“Through movement, creativity, and exploration,
we can reach a pure, sacred space within.”**

As both a therapist and an artist, I explore public art, studio-based work, and expressive arts. I also integrate soul yoga and meditation into my art practice, helping others tap into their own creative processes. My goal is to help people find the sacred space within themselves, a place of calm and truth, where they can process their experiences and emotions. This is where the healing power of art truly lies.

For me, art is about accessing that deep, sacred space within each of us. It's not just about the act of creating, but about using creativity as a tool for self-discovery, healing, and connection. Through art, I've learned to process difficult emotions and experiences, and it's something I encourage others to explore. We all carry stories and experiences that shape us, and art helps us make meaning of those moments. One of the biggest lessons through this life is that some of the hardest moments become the ones that open us up the most, to being able to understand why we're here and what we get to give back to each other, to the earth, to the cycles of the universe. It's a form of communication that transcends words, and it has the power to bring people together, bridging divides and fostering a sense of shared humanity.

Art is often viewed as secondary to life's more "serious" concerns, but it's actually a vital part of our shared human experience. It connects us to ourselves, to one another, and to the world around us. When we allow ourselves to create freely, we enter a flow state that enables us to process trauma or other barriers and shift our perspective toward healing. Through movement, creativity, and exploration, we can reach a pure, sacred space within. Taking just 45 minutes to engage in creative play—unstructured and spontaneous—gives us a rare opportunity to be truly present and happy. And that is the gift of art.



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Aneshia Savino

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watercolor artist

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I am a watercolor artist. I focus on nature-inspired art derived from my hikes, travels, kayaks, and journeys between Southcoast Massachusetts and Downeast Maine. My artistic journey has been shaped not only by my connection to the natural world but also by my family's deep roots in the textile industry. My mother was a seamstress who practiced ceramics, my godmother was a fashion designer, and my father worked in coat factories, eventually becoming a designer of machines to improve the cutting process at the height of New Bedford's textile industry. Growing up in this environment, I learned that creativity extends far beyond fine arts—it's in how you cook, dress, and create your home.

Although I experimented with various mediums during my youth, I didn't start working with watercolor until much later in life. I initially pursued art in college, minoring in ceramics while earning a degree in art history, but my life took me in different directions for nearly 30 years. I always kept art supplies on hand, hoping one day I'd return to it. In 2017, after 11 years with a corporate restaurant, I was laid off. This moment gave me the time to reflect and reconnect with my creative side. Looking around, I realized that the art supplies I had collected were primarily watercolors—a medium I had unknowingly been drawn to for years. I began teaching myself, slowly learning the complexities of watercolor through books, online classes, and trial and error.

After a very brief return to the restaurant industry, I knew my heart was elsewhere, and I made the decision to commit to my art. With the support of my husband, I left my job and took the leap to become a full-time artist. It's been a journey filled with ups and downs—there were months when I questioned everything, but there were also moments of immense satisfaction. I started teaching small groups, primarily older adults who, like me, were rediscovering their creative side after retirement. My business, The Wandering Brush, was born from this shared experience. I wander around, travelling to various locations, teaching watercolor to those who are looking for a new way to express themselves.



“Nature offers the most peace, no matter what’s happening in life.”

I’m also inspired by my wanderings in nature: flowers, animals, birds, the way the sun hits the water. When I was younger, it was more important that there be a theme to my art, but today it’s just what strikes me. Nature remains my biggest inspiration, whether it’s the color of a sunset or the way light filters through trees. I love capturing these moments in my paintings and helping others find joy in the process of creating. Nature offers the most peace, no matter what’s happening in life. Walking in the woods, with no phone, just breathing and listening, makes me feel connected. I focus on slowing down, observing how light shapes the trees, and capturing a moment in time.

Being an artist can be challenging, especially during dry spells. Sometimes classes don’t fill, or pop-up shows don’t sell. I start questioning if I’m on the right path and when to pivot. In the beginning, I put my art in several shops, rotating pieces. Eventually, I narrowed it down to two stores that consistently sell my work. Every year, I reassess and focus on what works.

I’m reading *Big Magic: Creative Living Beyond Fear* by Elizabeth Gilbert for the second time and considering a watercolor class inspired by it. Watercolor involves a lot of trial and error, requiring patience and perseverance. You learn through failure, correcting as you go, and you know when something sparks excitement in others that it’s working. Teaching has become a rewarding way for me to connect with others, and I’m continually growing.

Receiving the ARTnet grant allowed me to upgrade marketing materials and tools, and provide quality supplies for my watercolor students. I’m working on building an online audience for The Wandering Brush to reach more people. A big win was having one of my art pieces featured in Cheap Joe’s Art Stuff Catalog. And the most rewarding part is when people recognize me from my classes or online following—that always takes me by surprise.

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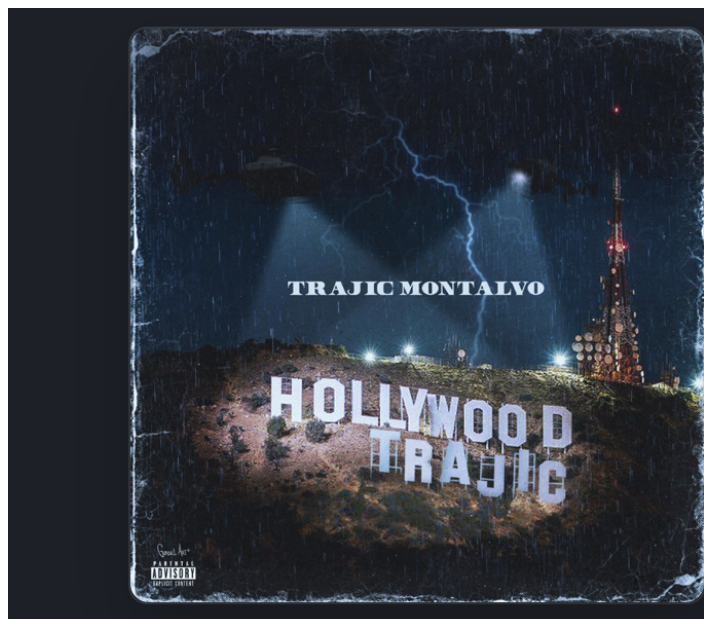
 @TrajicM

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I was born in Miami, Florida, and spent my early years there before my family relocated to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where I was raised. Although we frequently visit Miami, New Bedford feels like home. My mother, originally from Guatemala, navigated the journey to become a U.S. citizen, while my father faced health challenges later in life. These experiences taught me to embrace the gray areas of life rather than seeing things in black and white. I proudly identify as Puerto Rican and Central American, Guatemalan, with deep connections to both cultures, especially through music, food, and art. It brings a lot of flavor to my life.

Music runs in my family; my father was a musician who played the congas and introduced me to various genres, from Bachata to Merengue, and I love a mixture of music from my generation, like Reggaeton, rap and hip hop. My mother also expresses her creativity through painting. Growing up, I absorbed influences from both sides, multiple generations have shaped my identity as a multimedia artist. Living on the coast allows us to meet so many different people from different cultures.

"I want people to recognize that everyone has their own story, and through my art and music, I aim to share not just my journey but also the struggles and triumphs of others."



I believe that art serves as a powerful form of entertainment. It's an escape from the everyday problems, stresses and questions drilled in our minds. Whether through a movie, an art show, or a live performance, it's finding something creative that you enjoy. I want people to recognize that everyone has their own story, and through my art and music, I aim to share not just my journey but also the struggles and triumphs of others. I draw inspiration from diverse cultures, blending my experiences into the sounds and visuals I create. Entertainment is the one thing that's going to survive because people need those smiles. They need that happiness. They need that free ability to let their brain roam away from worry for a couple minutes.

My voice is my primary creative instrument, but I've also rekindled my passion for graphic design, crafting merchandise for my clothing business. I enjoy acting, directing, and songwriting, often collaborating with other artists to help bring their visions to life. I embrace raw creativity, recording spontaneous thoughts in the studio to capture authentic emotions. My artistic process involves painting without a specific theme, allowing the work to evolve organically.


Lately, I've been exploring various musical styles, from hip-hop and rap to R&B, Reggaeton, house music, and techno. I aim to create uplifting, relatable music that resonates with listeners of all ages, addressing themes of community, self-acceptance, and personal growth. I want my audience to feel safe and inspired through my work, fostering a connection that encourages growth over time. I actively share my art and music across multiple platforms, including Apple Music, Spotify, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, ensuring my creativity reaches as many people as possible.



Emilio Tirado

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Hadisesadat Tourikarami

MIXED MEDIA/FIBER ARTIST

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ADDITIONAL ARTNET ARTISTS:

Crystal Cruz: educator

Jonathan Cruz: actor, filmmaker

Dawn Lopes: filmmaker, writer


Rafael "Macho" Nieves: singer-songwriter, sound engineer

Isaiah Grace: actor, filmmaker

Andy Ramos: music producer



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I am the first creative person in my family, apart from my grandmother, who was an extraordinary seamstress; growing up in South Boston as one of 19 siblings in a challenging environment shaped her resilience. I was born in New Bedford and attended Jireh Swift Elementary School before my family moved to Dartmouth, where I continued my education. Both of my parents are graduates of UMass Dartmouth, with my mother working as a nurse and my father for the Massachusetts Department of Mental Health. My sister is now a nurse practitioner, following in our mother's footsteps.

I was fortunate to have a parent who prioritized my access to creative supplies. My mother encouraged my artistic endeavors from a young age. The pivotal moment came during high school, where supportive art teachers, particularly a beloved ceramics instructor, fueled my passion for art. Despite my mother's fear of me having a "starving artist" lifestyle, she became more supportive after a meeting with my art teacher, who explained the myriad opportunities in today's art world. From there, I went to the UMass Dartmouth College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA), where I had amazing, supportive professors. I've been blessed with a long lineage of rock-solid art teachers, which made me want to be an art teacher myself. When I passed my portfolio review and secured my first teaching job, my mother's confidence in my future as an artist blossomed.

The art I create is inter-dimensional, multimedia, explorations of the self. In my teaching, I often share stories of my family, particularly my great-uncles from Southie, who chose paths that led many to prison. Their experiences highlight the importance of creative problem-solving and choice. My grandparents' decision to break free from that cycle allowed my mother to forge a different path, which ultimately shaped my own. This lineage inspires me to offer my students opportunities that may change their lives, especially those who come from challenging backgrounds.



“How do we talk to the quietest places within us? What or who lives there? How do we reconnect and care for this sacred place?”

After ten years teaching at a charter school in New Bedford, I sought a change post-COVID and found a position within the juvenile justice system. I love meeting the students in this environment because we can have more honest and open conversations. Many young people that I teach have dealt with trauma, family separation, various domestic violence issues, homelessness issues, learning challenges, mental health issues, and so on. Here, I witness firsthand the life and language skills my students often lack, as well as the importance of nurturing their inner worlds. How do we talk to the quietest places within us? What or who lives there? How do we reconnect and care for this sacred place? My goal is to empower them with the ability to create their own visual voice.

My personal artistic body of work, on the other hand, focuses on storytelling narratives, utilizing diverse media such as performance, painting, animation and sculpture to evoke wonder and allow the viewer to feel a childlike sense of awe. It's a place to really question archetypes that we hold within ourselves as well as those society holds for us. Through my work, I aim to challenge archetypes and address themes of social justice, conservatism, saint and sinner, encouraging viewers to confront their inner worlds.

My current project features a character named “Whisper Man,” a villain of an inner world void in which he funnels toxicity incarnate from a giant tower to sustain himself. If he doesn't draw you into the void, then he will wither and die, so his job is to keep the void open with evil elements of our society.



lean Morgan

**multimedia artist,
graphic design,
photography,
videography,
music**

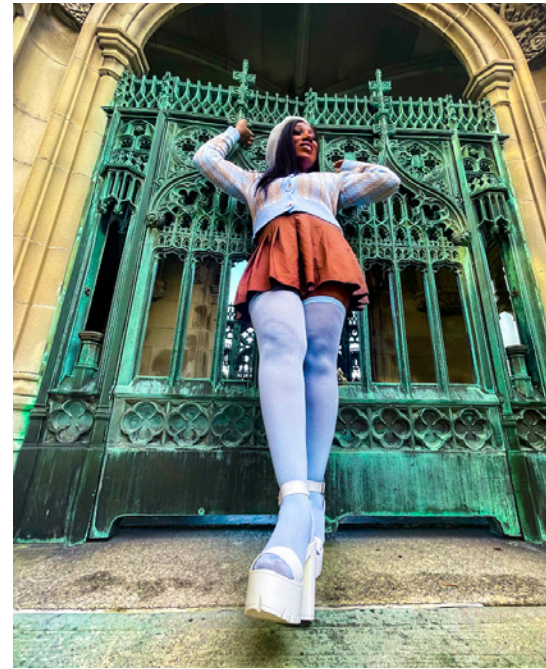
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  @leanxmorgan

I was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and raised in East Hartford and Manchester. My childhood was shaped by the challenges of growing up in the Department of Children & Families system, which pushed me to find solace in art. Creativity became my escape, and the handmade wooden carvings my mother gave me on birthdays are reminders of where my creativity comes from. My sister, with her beautiful singing voice, is also an artist. In many ways, art was my language when words failed. It helped me express complex emotions and navigate a reality that often felt overwhelming. I could really connect with people through my artwork. A lot of my stories dealt with themes like coming together and working with people or being able to stand on my own and have confidence. There was a world that I was looking for and having a community to belong to was a huge thing.

My love for storytelling began with books and comics, and soon I found myself drawn into a world of vivid imagination. Classic video games also inspired me, as they presented a new way of interacting with stories. As a child, art was not just a hobby but a form of communication. My work often explored themes of connection, confidence, and community, reflecting my desire to find belonging in the world. Through my art, I was building a way to reach out and create bonds with others.

Over time, my artistic focus shifted from illustration to photography, a wicked rewarding medium that allowed me to tell stories in new ways. I'm currently working on creating a magazine, which combines my love for photography and videography, giving my storytelling a fresh perspective. As the world embraces digital technology and AI, I'm constantly exploring how these tools can enhance my work. These advancements offer me new opportunities to push the boundaries of my creativity, whether it's through digital publishing or multimedia storytelling.



"New Bedford, my adopted city, has such pride in its artists and I think that's a beautiful thing."

We are each unique, and we must center ourselves to achieve greatness. I often remind my clients: the heart pumps blood first—without it, even the brain doesn't function. This symbolizes how essential it is to follow our passion. I proudly embrace my Afro-centric identity; for me, it's about loving and uplifting my community, especially given the challenges African Americans face. Whether I create stories about race, gender equality, lifestyle, culture or growth, I am grateful for programs like ARTnet that provide support to artists to see this kind of work produced. New Bedford, my adopted city, has such pride in its artists and I think that's a beautiful thing.

Ultimately, telling a story that helps move somebody forward in an authentic way is my art. At the core of everything I do are seven guiding pillars: trust, respect, passion, dedication, understanding, acceptance, and growth. I put them in that order because if we don't establish trust first, the rest cannot be maintained over time. The wave of life in the universe is unpredictable, so holding a set of values is important to ground us. These values shape the stories I create and the work I put into the world. Through my art, I aim to inspire small but meaningful changes, planting seeds of growth and reflection in my community. I believe that through authentic storytelling, we can make the world a better place, one narrative at a time.

ARTnet At-A-Glance

AGE AND INCOME

The 100 ARTnet participants were all aged between 19 and 78 years old, with an average age of 41.

20%
18 - 29

31%
30 - 39

31%
40 - 49

6%
50 - 59

8%
60 - 69

5%
70 - OLDER

ARTnet participants showed an average decrease of \$12,059 in their annual income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BEFORE THE PANDEMIC,
ARTnet participants were making an average of
\$40,171 annually.

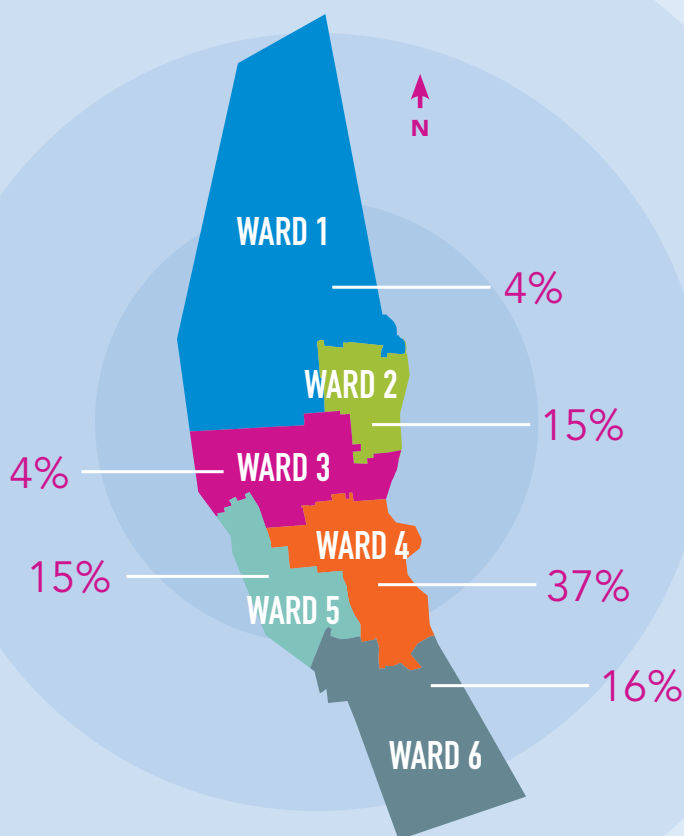
AFTER THE PANDEMIC,
ARTnet participants were making an average of
\$28,112 annually.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The 100 ARTnet participants live and work in all six Wards of New Bedford.

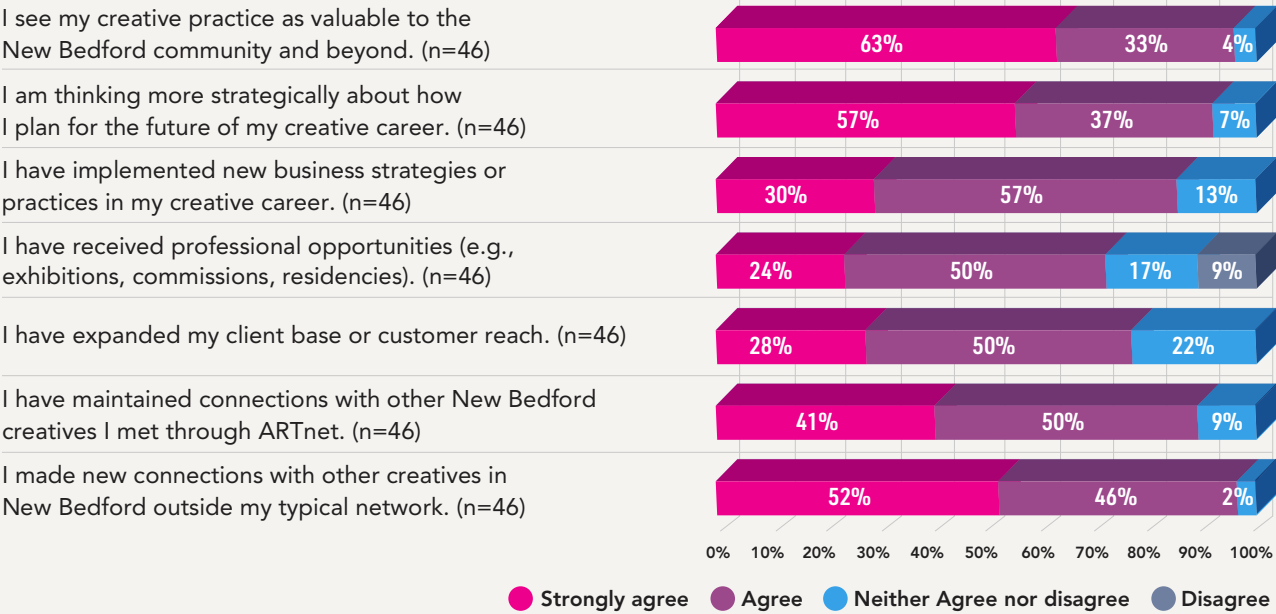
63% of artists live outside the center downtown area.

Additionally, 78% of all ARTnet participants were based within HUD-Qualified Census Tracts.

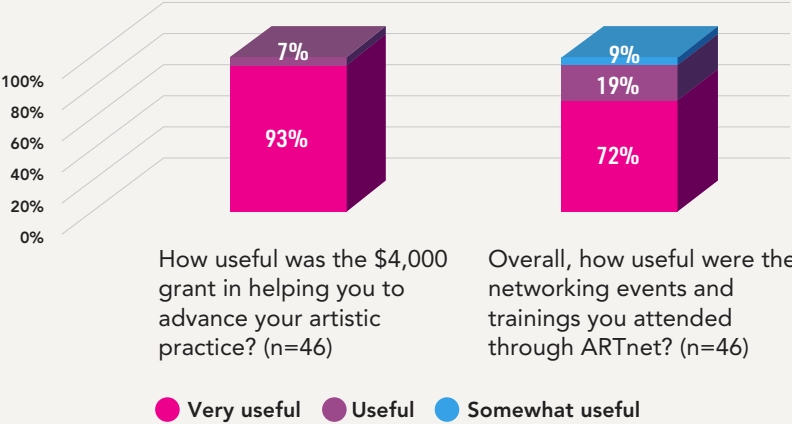


New Bedford Creative commissioned an independent evaluation review of ARTnet by Dr. Deryn Dudley of National Arts Strategies. Here are some results from the first few groups of artists who completed the year-long program.

Percentage of agreement toward achievement of program outcomes.

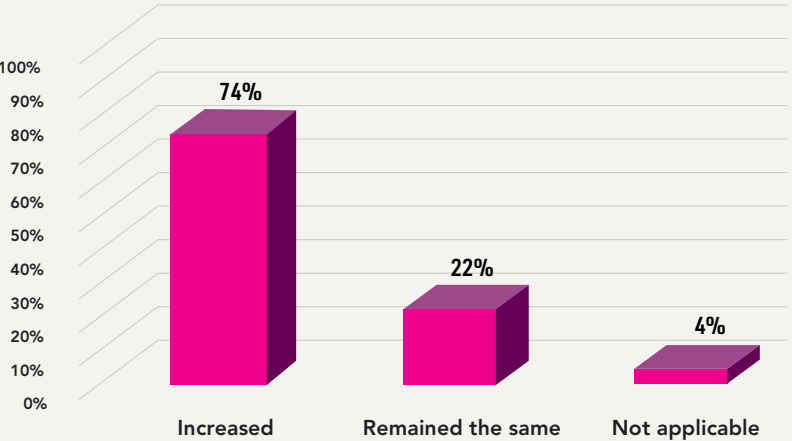


Usefulness of the \$4,000 grant and network events and trainings.



Respondents' ratings of changes in their business revenue.

To what extent have you seen changes in your business revenue or income streams due to participating in ARTnet? (n=46)





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new bedford
creative
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ARTnet

We acknowledge that the land where we live, work, and draw inspiration encompasses the traditional and unceded lands of the Wampanoag peoples.

We honor their ancestors past, present, and future.

May we go forward, honoring those whose hard work and lives were lost in struggles for liberation and decolonization on this land, and hold ourselves accountable to both the past as well as our collective future.