

Lust After Curator's statement

"You don't decide to be an artist," the 104-year-old Cuban-American painter Carmen Herrera has said, "Art gets inside of you. It's like falling in love."

"Lust After," an invitational group exhibition, shows thirty-five NAWA artists who pursue of their passions through painting, printmaking, drawing, sculpting, and photography. The exhibition further explores the tension between an artist's desire to be true to an inner vision vs. the need for external recognition. How does this tension resolve itself in the creative process, and how does it manifest itself in the finished work?

Artmaking itself—the urge to create—is intensely personal. Strong work speaks with a clear, unique voice. Yet art without a viewer is an inner monologue, a bit like talking to oneself. The circle is not complete. The depth and complexity of the artworks in "Lust After" inspire a dialogue and visceral connection with the passion that fuels these artists.

The works in "Lust After" begin a conversation and keep it going in lively, engaging, and sometimes provocative ways. In *Aura 2*, by Dorothy Pilla, a woman looks back at us, her expression ambiguous but direct. We are invited to imagine her story, to reflect our experiences in her eyes. Lisa Goren's *Alaska Ice Crevice* feels spontaneous yet vaguely menacing, evoking a mix of reactions to the raw beauty.

Art speaks in many visual languages—color, form, texture, and space, to name a few. It also speaks conceptually and emotionally. A single work touches different individuals differently; each viewer as interlocutor brings her own experience to the conversation. Over time, a powerful work of art continues to draw one's gaze, and "grows on you" in the exchange. You'll find that the more you look, the more you discover, and the deeper the conversation.

"The true work of art is born from the artist; a mysterious, enigmatic and mystical creation. It detaches itself from [him], it acquires an autonomous life, becomes a personality, and independent subject, animated with spiritual breath, the living subject of a real existence of being."

-Wassily Kandinsky