

HOLDING THE MOMENT

Artist Narratives

April 26, 2021 - May 31, 2021



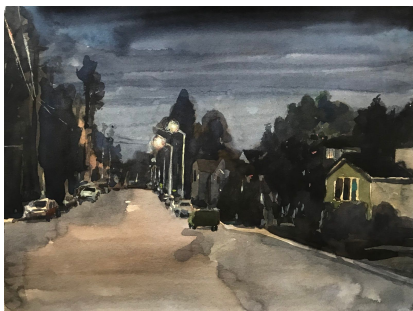
Pilar Agüero-Esparza | *Stratum 5*: Covid-19 revealed how profoundly interconnected and interdependent we are with each other. The impact of the virus has made visible the inequities of race and class in our country. *Stratum 5* is an abstract representation of race through the use of a palette of skin tones. Each color represents a person; the placement indicates a social status or social dynamic. The resulting design represents complexity and interconnectedness that is familiar and orderly; yet metaphorically implies hierarchies of power, structure, balance, and imbalance.



Nak Bou | *Donut Express*: Donut Express' is named after my friend's family business in Hayward. Many Cambodian immigrants have found owning a small business as a way to survive in America. The artwork is a celebration of small businesses and their current struggles to survive during this pandemic.



Lacey A. Bryant | *Grounded*: FOMO (Fear of Missing Out) is real. The sting of rejection, of being left behind while the world flies away above you. One can be tied down by circumstances, by people you love, by responsibility, by a global pandemic. This small family drama of child neglect also mirrors feelings of neglect from underserved groups towards failed government responses. For many, the feeling of being left to fend for oneself is already too familiar.



Yawen Chien | *Dark Time*: There is no activity on the street, save for the street lights turning on, and hints of the residents preparing their homes for nighttime. The rhythm of change is slower. Night follows day follows night. The cars appear not to have moved for weeks. The scene is anything but inert; it reflects anticipation and even anxiety. The bright streetlights against the dark sky urgently invite the viewer to walk the empty sidewalk and break the fragile solitude.



Kylee D. Dougherty | *Hide in the Bath*: The piece portrays a unique way of coping with tough emotions.



Lalo | *Ecdysis (n.)*: The process of shedding the old skin during growth. Ecdysis allows damage to be regenerated or re-formed. Complete regeneration may require a series of molts.



Logan Low | *Half to Eat*: This picture captures a moment shortly after shelter-in-place was announced, when in panic people emptied the shelves of grocery markets across the state. After losing the ability to go through our normal day, many of us had epiphanies about life. In losing what we've taken for granted, perhaps we will find an appreciation of and gratitude for lost luxuries. Like the duality of the empty shelves and the lady restocking, it has taught us about the privileges and necessities of life. The fragility of society has never been so apparent, and without the cooperation of everyone, nothing can change.



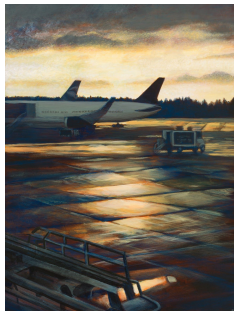
Logan Low | *Half to Drink*: Moments after the shelter-in-place was announced, hordes of people ran out to grocery stores to stock up on necessities. This image depicts a milk aisle at the beginning of the pandemic. These racks were emptied of most of their items. The dichotomy presented in this picture, one side being stocked and the other completely emptied, is symbolic of the nature that COVID-19 has manifested. By losing many of our basic privileges of daily life, we gained a newfound appreciation for things that we often took for granted. Through the process of finding new balance, we've gained a new outlook on life.



Rayos Magos | *Heart Space*: "Heart Space" embodies the beauty and the power of holding space. By holding space, we protect the sacredness of life and love. A product of this sacred space is empathy and solidarity. The imagery of the hands forms a protective shelter that keeps the light of love lit and strong.



Margie Matthews | *Mother's Day Pandinner*: While my family has not become infected with the terrible COVID-19 virus, the pandemic has resulted in our isolation from one another. A family reunion on Mother's Day was unthinkable. One family at a time at my house was workable. As I arranged the tables outside and awaited the arrival of my family, the remarkable scene struck me. My painting tries to capture the stillness of sheltering at home, the rigid structure of social distancing, and my own sense of separateness as a grandmother.



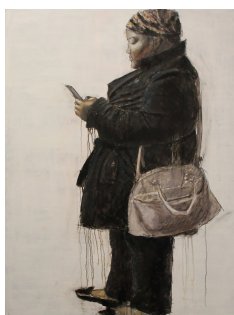
Julie Meridian | *Flight Delay*: At the start of a trip is anticipation – planning, and timing, and coordination, and waiting for these pieces to align. An unexpected delay is an opportunity for a quiet moment of reflection. With shelter-in-place we are all experiencing that small moment of "pause." We are drawn to the windows to observe and to remember we are in transit. We are in the midst of the journey and not yet at our destination. We are simply at a point along the way, keeping space for others who are on the frontline.



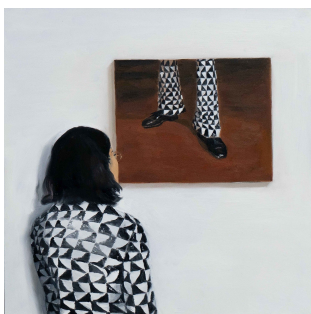
Peter Moen | *Ray of Hope*: We have dealt with the pandemic with courage. This painting embodies the hope that we share for the future. There is a crowd scene of diverse people in darkness on the side, but in the middle, they are in light. They are all looking toward the light, as I am looking in hope for the return to normal.



Vanessa Niembro de Paz | *Unemployed*: Here we are. The circumstances of and surrounding COVID-19 sank our economy. After months of agony, the company couldn't survive and finally we lost our jobs. I saw him after filing for unemployment benefits. He was exhausted, dripping his angst, his fears, and his hopes in front of this uncertain future.



Vanessa Niembro de Paz | *Essential Worker*: Here we are, the actual circumstances at the onset of the pandemic caused some workers to become suddenly essential; conducting their jobs on the frontlines... doctors, grocery stockers, truckers, nurses. They left their homes to do their essential jobs that kept the rest of us safe at home. She is one of those essential workers who returns home exhausted after a long day full of fears and uncertainties that slide and drip off before she gets home.



Ruxe Zhang | *It's Myself Talking To Myself About Myself*: Living in San José during the quarantine makes me think of how our experience of seeing has changed. How this affects us seeing and depicting the world. Seeing through the Internet, other's eyes becomes the norm. We all look at things differently. I want to share my perspective and make the viewer aware of what they are looking at.



Debi Lorenc | *Born into the Pandemic*

A sudden gasp of air
a wail
Born into the pandemic
At his mother's breast
pain forgotten

We wait

A mockingbird calls
for a lover
mourning doves coo
Sky, electric blue

We wait

Deadly microbes
steal breath

We go alone
no hand to hold
no cheek to kiss

We wait

A cop kneels
on a Black man's throat
seven minutes
forty-seven seconds
He cries out for his mother

We gasp

Wall of moms chant
"Feds stay clear, moms are here"
Fannie Lou Hamer
Sojourner Truth
Nina Simone

"I can't breathe"
But it's too late for him
We'll have to save another
mother's son

We rise-up

But now she's the one alone
And he can't see her now
hold her hand
kiss her cheek

Madre, madrina, hermana, tía
lo siento

Te queremos
Respira, respira, respira

Rezamos

Now three months old
with a smile
to ease a broken heart

We long
to hold him
to kiss his cheek

Inhale—we pray
Exhale—we wait

Images may be cropped to fit this narrative format.

To view the full image, please visit the exhibition or online: www.sanjoseca.gov/HoldingTheMomentSJ.