

**MATTEAWAN**  
GALLERY

**MYTHS &  
LEGENDS**  
OF THE HUDSON VALLEY

Deborah Brown, Deborah Davidovits, Scott Daniel Ellison,  
Valerie Hegarty, Jackie Mock, Wendy Small

November 14 – December 20, 2015

Opening reception Saturday, November 14, 6-9 pm

Matteawan Gallery is pleased to present Myths & Legends of the Hudson Valley, a group exhibition about the history of the Hudson Valley. Participating artists include Deborah Brown, Deborah Davidovits, Scott Daniel Ellison, Valerie Hegarty, Jackie Mock, and Wendy Small. There will be an event with storyteller Jonathan Kruk on Sunday, Nov. 29 at 3:00 pm.

The Hudson Valley has long been a destination for writers and artists, and it is the setting for numerous stories and artworks about the region and its inhabitants, both fictional and real. From Native American legends to Washington Irving's stories, ghost tales to travel diaries, the area has captured the imagination of many who have lived here or passed through on the Hudson River. The landscape itself plays an important part in these legends, especially as portrayed in the art of the Hudson River School painters of the nineteenth century. In their work, mountains, forests, sunsets, and waterways have a mythic idealized beauty that was part truth and part fiction as industrialization made its way across the country. In recent years there has been a renewed interest in the Hudson Valley, and it is inspiring a whole new generation of writers, chefs, filmmakers, travelers, and artists.

Myths & Legends of the Hudson Valley brings together the work of six artists who are interested in exploring history, art history, and literature in a variety of mediums. The exhibition includes paintings by Scott Daniel Ellison and Deborah Brown, photographs by Wendy Small, drawings by Deborah Davidovits and Valerie Hegarty, and sculpture by Jackie Mock.

Deborah Brown's portraits reference Classical and Baroque sculpture, 18th century paintings and 19th century novels. While not directly about the region, the figures in her paintings could easily inhabit the stately mansions and inns of the Hudson Valley like Boscobel in Cold Spring or The Beekman Arms in Rhinebeck. Brown's paintings are characterized by "a tangle of brushwork verging on abstraction," that somehow accentuates the feeling of being from the past, as if the subjects themselves are distorted by history and time.

Valerie Hegarty creates paintings, sculptures, and installations that comment on American history and society, addressing such themes as colonization, Manifest Destiny, environmental degradation, and repressed histories. In her drawings in this exhibition, images of Frederic Edwin Church's landscape paintings are printed out, crumpled in the artist's hand, and then painted in watercolor as still lifes. Hegarty is interested in contrasting the idealized landscapes of the Hudson River School painters with the action of crumpling a piece of paper. The gesture is part of the artist's process of striving for perfection and its necessary failures. The

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drawings also relate to the destruction of the natural environment, a concern in the nineteenth century as well as today.

Wendy Small's photographs of ships are created without a camera, using chemicals, objects, and light to create an image. Her dark sailing ship seems to refer to the legend of a ghost ship on the Hudson River that would disappear as other ships came closer. Her smaller ship images are drawn with photo chemicals, and are reminiscent of barges and tanker ships making their way up and down the river at night.

Deborah Davidovits created a series of drawings about the Leatherman, who roamed the Hudson Valley and Connecticut in the mid-nineteenth century. Little is known about him, but he is the subject of much speculation. In his time he attained a mythic status because of his reclusiveness and eccentric way of dressing from head to toe in heavy leather garments. Much was made of his peculiar habits; yet what he wanted most was probably to be left alone. Davidovits' drawings of a boot, a pie, a cave opening, and a portrait of the man himself eloquently capture the Leatherman's unusual and solitary existence.

Jackie Mock's work is a combination of alchemy, archaeology, and art that references reliquaries and Victorian specimen displays. Her work in this exhibition chronicles the disappearing physical evidence of the traveling American circus, which had its origins in the Hudson Valley in the early 1800s. Mock's sculpture *Birth of the American Circus* is a handmade cabinet that contains artifacts from actual people and places, including soil samples from the site of P.T. Barnum's mansion lost in a fire long ago, a splinter of a barn which overwintered a pair of giraffes and a rhinoceros, and a piece of the pew in the Episcopal church where General Tom Thumb was married. Accompanying the cabinet is an abstracted map that contains soil samples from the route the artist traveled while researching and collecting artifacts for the piece. Her practice stems from the obsessive need to collect, catalogue and archive unexpected objects. The final meaning of these pieces is as much about the artist's personal history as it is about the history and presentation of the artifacts.

Scott Daniel Ellison's paintings portray a world that is mysterious and frightening, but also darkly humorous. He was born in Warwick, NY and his work is influenced by the time he spent outdoors as a child exploring the woods around his house. He imagines what the Hudson Valley was like before Henry Hudson's voyage in 1609, and even earlier, before humans existed there at all. Ellison writes "I can feel that history. So much has changed here-in the landscape and natural world-yet much has stayed the same." Included in the show are paintings of a Wappinger Indian, a bald eagle, and a mastodon. His work is an attempt to bring together the memories and wonder of childhood with the many sources of inspiration he has found since, from found photographs and obscure horror movies to Scandinavian folk art and folklore, outsider art, and Native American sculpture.

About the artists:

Deborah Brown's work has been exhibited extensively in museums and galleries, with recent solo exhibitions at Flecker Gallery, Suffolk Community College, Selden, NY; Lesley Heller Workspace, New York; The Active Space and STOREFRONT, Brooklyn, NY. Her work has been included in recent group exhibitions at Madlyn Jordon Fine Art, Scarsdale, NY; Life on Mars Gallery and Odetta Gallery, Brooklyn, NY; the Heckscher Museum, Huntington, NY; and the DeCordova Museum and Sculpture Park, Lincoln, MA. Brown's public art projects include mosaics commissioned by the MTA for the Houston Street subway station in NYC and roundels for the Royal Caribbean Cruise Terminal in Miami, FL for Miami-Dade Art in Public Places. In addition to her practice as an artist, she owns and directs the gallery Storefront Ten Eyck in

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Brooklyn. Brown received a BA in Art from Yale, summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, and an MFA from Indiana University. She is represented by Lesley Heller Workspace and lives and works in New York.

Deborah Davidovits has exhibited nationally and internationally at venues such as MoMA PS1, Long Island City, NY; the Drawing Center, New York, NY; Sculpture Center, Long Island City, NY; Weatherspoon Art Museum, Greensboro, NC; Kunst-Werke, Berlin; and Dogbite International Festival of Film Art, Balchik, Bulgaria. She received a BFA from the Massachusetts College of Art, Boston, MA and an MFA from Tyler School of Art, Philadelphia, PA. She lives in Beacon, NY and is also a beekeeper.

Scott Daniel Ellison has exhibited nationally as well as in Sweden and Italy. In 2014 he had solo exhibitions at Matteawan Gallery and at Clamp Art in New York. Ellison's paintings have been included in recent group exhibitions at Conduit Gallery, Dallas, TX; Candyland, Stockholm, Sweden; University of Maine Museum of Art, Bangor, ME; the Norton Museum of Art, West Palm Beach, FL; Monya Rowe Gallery, New York; Galleria Traghetti, Venice, Italy; and Carl Berg Projects, West Hollywood, CA. Ellison was awarded a Fellowship in Painting from the New York Foundation for the Arts in 2012. His first monograph: *Iowa, Ohio*, was published by Schilt Books in 2014. Ellison is currently represented by ClampArt in New York City. He received a BFA and an MFA from SUNY Purchase, Purchase, NY. He currently lives in Cold Spring, NY.

Valerie Hegarty's solo exhibitions include Nicelle Beauchene and Marlborough Gallery Chelsea, New York; Locust Projects, Miami, FL; Museum 52, London; The MCA Chicago; and Guild & Greyshkul, NY. Other projects include a commission for a public sculpture on the High Line in New York, a show of site-specific installations in The Brooklyn Museum's period rooms, and *River Crossings: Contemporary Art Comes Home* at Olana State Historic Site, Hudson. Hegarty's work has been included in group exhibitions in New York at Artists Space, The Drawing Center, D'Amelio Terras Gallery, Derek Eller, White Columns and MoMA PS1. She received grants from the Pollock Krasner Foundation, NYFA, the Rema Hort Mann Foundation, and the Tiffany Foundation and has been awarded residencies from LMCC, Marie Walsh Sharpe, PS 122, MacDowell, and Yaddo. She was the first Andrew W. Mellon Arts and the Common Good Artist-in-Residence at Drew University, Madison, NJ in 2014-2015. Hegarty received an MFA from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, a BFA from San Francisco's Academy of Art College, and a BA from Middlebury College, VT. She lives and works in NYC.

Jackie Mock lives and works in New York. Her recent exhibitions include the Spring Break Art Show and The (un)Scene Art Show, New York, 2015, as well as a full room immersive installation at the Governor's Island Art Fair, New York, 2014; Tracy Williams, Ltd., New York, 2013, Denny Gallery, New York, 2013 and in the Wassaic Project's Return to Rattlesnake Mountain, Wassaic, NY, 2012, among others. Mock's work has appeared in The New York Times, Gothamist, Hyperallergic, Jack Spade NY and in other digital and print publications. She received a BFA from Parsons School of Design, New York.

Wendy Small has exhibited extensively in the United States, with recent group exhibitions at Von Lintel Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Miami Project, Miami, FL; Morgan Lehman Gallery and Schroeder Romero Gallery, NY; Neoteric Gallery, Amagansett, NY; Haines Gallery, San Francisco, CA; and Etherton Gallery, Tucson AZ. Small's work is in numerous private and public collections, including Capital Corporation, Los Angeles, CA; Cleveland Institute, Cleveland, OH; and the Kinsey Institute, Bloomington, IN. Small received a BFA from the School of Visual Arts, NY and a BSN from New York University. She lives and works in New York.

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