

Connected Isolation

December 1, 2022
- March 26, 2023



CASTELLANI
ART MUSEUM
OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

An Exhibition Curated by Niagara University's
Introduction to Museum Studies (AHM252A) Course

Exhibition Overview

Connected Isolation is an exhibition exploring the emotions of isolation and community connectivity experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. It includes pieces that appear in roughly chronological order representing communal experiences of the past few years.

The pieces were chosen to express the central theme of both individual and collective experiences during the pandemic, and how they fit together into a global narrative.

The art displayed here has been selected from the Castellani's permanent collection.

Connected Isolation has been designed and displayed as a final project by the *Introduction to Museum Studies (AHM 252A)* course at Niagara University.

This is a group of students with a deep interest in learning about the function behind museums, museum occupations, and how to construct exhibitions.

For this exhibition, students made personal choices about the layout, artwork selection, and messages that would be communicated through the art, based on their education throughout the class.

Acknowledgement

Few of us in this class are Art History with Museum Studies majors, but the skills and concepts learned from this class and project apply beyond the museums' walls. The ability to meet group and individual deadlines, create a unified vision, and bring an idea from conception to completion apply to all fields.

As a class, we'd like to thank: Mary Helen Miskuly for helping us gather exhibition works from the collection, Ellen M. Owens for teaching the course and guiding us through the process, Michael Beam for framing and installing the exhibition, and class contributors Carla Castellani, Edward Millar, Evan Wright, Eileen Sullivan, and Tito Ruiz.

Reflect on Your Experiences

What is the difference between isolation and solitude?

What personal transformations have you experienced during the pandemic?

How can we navigate grief?



(cover and above)
Takaaki Iwabu, *Christmas Wish*, 1995,
color photograph.

Takaaki Iwabu's photograph titled *Christmas Wish* shows a young Chinese girl on Christmas Eve at her parents' restaurant in Niagara Falls.

Iwabu worked as a photographer for the Niagara Falls Gazette and has since returned to Japan, where he works at Bloomberg's Tokyo Bureau as a photo editor.

Despite this photograph being taken 27 years ago, the sign in the picture is reminiscent of those seen walking down city streets during the "lockdown" phase of the pandemic.



Ellen Carey, *Self-Portrait*, 1978, gelatin silver print with acrylic.

Ellen Carey is an American artist whose main medium is photography. She later distorts or enhances these pieces to convey a message, which she does with other mediums such as acrylic paint and collage.

Self-Portrait is part of a collection called

Painted Black & White Self-Portrait Series, which spanned from the early 1970s to the 1990s. Carey once stated that “the photographic self was created to allow the unconscious self to materialize with the marks.”

This figure in black and white looks isolated and alone—feelings that relate to many people, especially during the height of COVID-19.

As a life-long admirer of cinema, **Enrique Araujo Grau's** work is based around themes of the human form and theatrical props.



Enrique Araujo Grau, *Rita at 10:30 a.m.*, 1991, painted plaster.

Rita was his most famous subject, and Grau has depicted her in both sculpture and painting since 1971. His depictions of Rita are robust and disproportionate, yet he maintains her beauty and sensual nature.

As the world emerges from the pandemic era feeling different or changed, we can reconnect with ourselves, our loved ones, and our communities in spite of feeling off-balance, as we too exist as intrinsically beautiful humans. Rita emulates a moment of both self-care and community connection through her laid-back posture and animated conversation into a classic telephone.



Mark Kostabi, *The Price of Resistance*, 2006-2017, oil on canvas.

Mark Kostabi is best known for his paintings of faceless figures that offer commentary on contemporary political, social, and psychological issues.

Kostabi draws influence from the Cubist painter, Fernand Léger, and the Surrealist painter, Giorgio de Chirco, both of whom painted abstracted figures and spaces, similar to this work.

With his bright, dream-like style, Kostabi also designed album covers for several popular musical acts including Guns N' Roses, The Ramones, and Seether.

This piece encapsulates what parts of the pandemic may have felt like for people. The figure in the foreground is trying to protect itself from all the looming symbols of the media and exterior forces.

There are so many concerns in the world around us and they can pile up on us, making it difficult for us to function and fully reach our potential.

AHM252A: Introduction to Museum Studies

This course is a hands-on interdisciplinary introduction that builds understanding for museums' history, societal roles, and key functions. As students explore these components, they also learn about the process of building an exhibition and directly apply their knowledge and creative ideas to a public exhibition as the culminating project.

Course Instructor: Ellen M. Owens

Student Curators: Alexander Martel | Amaya Mack | Anessa Hanson | Ashton Drakulich
Becca Mansfield | Bennett Hunt | Danielle Wayda | Jaycee Pauline | Michael Chodkowski
Poppy Raker | Rachel Sheehan | Raven Grant | Sebastian Newell

Art History with Museum Studies Program

Art History with Museum Studies is both an academic and professional program that provides students with a scholarly study of art, culture, and museums, while focusing on the area of professional museum work such as curatorship, education, collections management, museum administration, and development.

Our partnership with the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, centrally located on the campus, is an integral part of the museum studies component and provides opportunities for museum internships and exhibition-based courses.

Exhibited Artworks

Charles Agel (American, b. 1957)
Dance Floor, Fiesta Jibaro, Mt. Carmel Parish, Rochester, New York, 1997
color photograph
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Museum Purchase, 1998

Vikky Alexander, Ellen Brooks (American, b. 1959, b. 1946)
American Garden Series #11, Desert Palms, 1990
Polacolor print mounted on board
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Museum Purchase 1992

John Buck (American, b. 1946)
Waterfall Man, 1981
acrylic on wood
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Martin Sklar, 2002

Charles Clough (American, b. 1951)
N.F., 1980
collage, oil enamel on paper
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Armand J. Castellani, 1987

Ellen Carey (American, b. 1952)
Self-Portrait, 1978
gelatin silver print with acrylic
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Armand J. Castellani, 1989

Marion Faller (American, 1941-2014)
Dyngus: Terminal, 1989
color photograph
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Commission to the Artist paid for by a grant from the New York State Council on the Arts Folk Arts Program, 1989

Enrique Araujo Grau (Colombian, 1920-2004)
Rita at 10:30 a.m., 1991
painted plaster
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Mr. Julian J. Aberbach and Mr. Joachim Jean Aberbach, 1991

Takaaki Iwabu (Japanese, b. 1968)
Christmas Wish, 1995
color photograph
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of the Artist, 1998

Mark Kostabi (American, b. 1960)
The Price of Resistance, 2006-2017
oil on canvas
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of the Artist, 2019

Martin Lewis (American, 1881-1962)
Little Penthouse, n.d.
etching
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of the Diane Castellani and Terrance Bromley Family, 2017

Roger Mertin (American, 1942-2001)
Rochester, New York, 1981
color photograph
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Mr. Marc Freidus, 2009

Suzanne Pascal (American, 1914-2021)
Torso in Glass, 1972
glass and aluminum
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Saint-Gobain Industrial Ceramics Corporation, 1997

Eve Sonneman (American, b. 1946)
Two Chairs, Samos, Greece, 1977
cibachrome photograph
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Robert Freidus, 1996

Maurice de Vlaminck (French, 1876-1958)
L'ecritoire, 1962
lithograph
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Armand J. Castellani, 1989

John Willenbecher (American, b. 1936)
Untitled, 1972
screenprint
On the Bowery, West Germany: Edition Domberger, 1971
Collection of the Castellani Art Museum of Niagara University, Gift of Marie and Thomas O'Donnell, 2011



Council on
the Arts

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ART MUSEUM
OF NIAGARA UNIVERSITY

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Please visit our website for current hours of operation.
The Castellani Art Museum is a free admission art museum.
Donations welcome.