

# RETURN



**FEB 2021 - JUNE 2021**

A Virtual Exhibit  
[www.awakeningsart.org](http://www.awakeningsart.org)





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Our community often gets put into the context of a single story. In this single story, the media and people we love assume that there is only one way assault happens or one way that healing happens. But this single story is not helpful or accurate to most of our experiences. There isn't a "right" way to be a survivor. We are each more than a single story, and as a group, we live many different versions of healing.

Survivors often experience violence in more than one way and have layered experiences and feelings around trauma. Healing today may look unrecognizable compared to healing yesterday, just as one person's survival is incomparable to someone else's. Our community bonds through caring for each other, through creating and viewing artistic expressions with each other, and through giving each other room to heal in everchanging ways.

Awakenings invited four artists back to the gallery to show artwork with us again. Alex Brightbill, Anneasha Hogan, Veronica Ravichandran, and Isabella Scott return to personal stories and historical narratives to expand our artistic expressions of survival with new views or mediums. This exhibit puts aside the single story and adds new perspectives through art.



# ISABELLA SCOTT

## **Recapturing Freedom 1, 2, & 3**

*Acrylic paint / mixed media*

In Recapturing Freedom 1, 2, & 3 I used the primary colors to really create three different moods however, each piece captures the same moment in time. Healing can be such a tricky process. There are moments I felt this trauma was absolutely behind me and I really felt free of the past. This greatly contrasts the moments where this trauma was the only thing I could think about. Each day is different from the rest but continuing to keep going by acknowledging the past and deciding it will not be something that weighs you down is an important step in healing. My first exhibition at Awakenings really got me to acknowledge all these negative emotions I hid for years. After that show it really gave me my freedom. By putting all this trauma I had experienced out in the open and I was able to leave it in the past. These past few months I have felt freer than I have in years. Some days I feel very different than others but this experience has really taught me to keep moving forward and continue to recapture my freedom.

## BIO

Isabella Scott was born in Winnebago, Illinois. She currently lives in Chicago, Illinois. Isabella works in a wide range of mediums. She has exhibited a photography series called Side Effects in Awakenings Gallery at the *A Stirring* show that was exhibited January through May of 2020. Which focused on the heavily on the direct side effects of sexual assault. She has also had her pen and ink illustrations exhibited in The Awakened Voices Issue 10 Online magazine that focused more on the healing from trauma. She continues to explore the theme of healing in the current exhibition *Return* through three acrylic paintings titled Recapturing Freedom.

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# ALEX BRIGHTBILL

**Ginevera**

**Ginevra I**

**Paw II**

**Paw**

**Paw I**

**Paw**

*Linocut Chine Collé, Mixed media collage*

*Linocut Chine Collé, Collage postcard*

*Woodcut Chine Collé, Collage postcard*

*Sometimes returning is painful, unraveling feelings of regret, sadness and anger... Worlds collide, there is uncertainty. In the end we must return in order to be free.*

This series started as a collage series and later developed into relief prints, which continue the ideas of beauty, colonialism, sexual identity and fertility. My starting point is an observation by the Kenyan artist Wangechi Mutu that “the female carries the marks, language, and nuances of their culture more than the male. Anything that is desired or despised is constantly placed on the female body.” So in this series, the female figures show their inner thoughts portrayed in their physical world – whether by using the form itself or the texture and patterns the figure is made from. Depicting women, many times shown in a seemingly sexual or sensual pose, invites discussion of the objectification of women, the physical scarring of a culture, fashion, animalistic language and fertility.

For the Return exhibit I wanted to experiment with recreating some of my earlier collage works using a different medium – printmaking. For me the idea of carving a surface is part of the ritual of this work. The materials used – handmade paper, wood and linoleum panels – are also very much connected to earth. Applied to these surfaces, the ink leaves its mark forever.

## BIO

Alex Velazquez Brightbill is a Mexican artist who immigrated to Chicago at the age of ten. She earned a BFA from the Northeastern Illinois University and has shown at numerous galleries and curated art shows and cultural events.

“I create collages, paintings and printmaking. My inspirations are based on my childhood experiences, animals and social justice”

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# VERONICA RAVICHANDRAN

## **My World Lost Here Comes the Sun**

*Watercolor / Micron pen*

*Watercolor / Washi paper*

Natalie Foster, a Phoenix art therapist and president of the Arizona Art Therapy Association, said “Art gives people a way of getting what happened to them out there without necessarily having to say it.” She said, “Pictures speak a thousand words, and art is a universal language.” My hope in showing these two vastly different pieces side by side is to convey that healing is possible, the journey may be hard but there is always a light at the end of a dark tunnel.

The first piece sees sorrow, the countenance of her face shows weakness, and there is stillness and emptiness in her eyes. Holding back her tears, we see only a drop and no more. She refuses your sympathy. She wants none of it. The roses should represent good love but to her love has no meaning, instead of red, it is black and white symbolizing clash of emotions and turmoil.

Instead of black roses there are sunflowers in this opposite piece. Much of the meaning of sunflowers stems from its namesake. The sun itself symbolizes joy, happiness, warmth, and growth. The lady is surrounded by it and her world has changed. The color yellow, a prominent color in the second piece, stands for her enlightenment, clarity, positivity, optimism, quite different from the black and white roses that symbolizes turmoil. The opposite countenance of both faces shows that journey from turmoil to peace and freedom. She has found clarity in her life, and her journey healing has begun and thereby entitled “Here comes the Sun.”



## BIO

Veronica is a self-taught artist and is currently based in Vegas. She has exhibited in New York, Chicago, Las Vegas, and Texas. Her art was chosen and displayed at Texas Capitol Hill by Rep. John Bucy III as Artist of the Month in March 2019, in conjunction with International Women's Day and Women's History month.

She is a mixed media composite artist whose main medium is watercolor, acrylic, and posca pens. She is often educating herself in other techniques like using magnets and resin to manipulate her art and even adopted the Japanese Chigrie method of using washi paper in her art.

She draws inspiration from her own life experiences and in the countries she lived in like Australia, Israel, Canada, New Zealand, Denmark, and Texas. The vast array of designs, culture, colors, and the stories behind them have greatly influence her work.

[www.etsy.com/shop/2Elephantsgallery](http://www.etsy.com/shop/2Elephantsgallery)

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# ANNEASHA HOGAN

**Angel in a Red Room**  
**Skin Grafts and Bone #1 & #2**  
**take care of urself**

*Colored pencil on paper, salt*

*Mixed media*

*Mixed media*

Much of my work involves returning to past events; both historical and personal. All making involves processing memories to some extent; I believe it is extremely important to consider experiences and how they make us who we are, mourn losses, and appreciate how they may of shifted our lives in both good and bad ways.

In Skin Grafts and Bone #1 & #2 I attempted to extricate substances, materials, and textures from traumatic contexts. I used my research on medical racism through history - including the origins of gynecology - to make sense of nonsensical horrors. When ideas are broken down into basic shapes and textures, they can be understood in new ways.

In Angel in a Red Room I created a fictional space where an undefined traumatic event occurs. The empty tiled room represents the private, domestic spaces that abuse can happen in. In the tiled room is a morphing shape, something un-perceivable, some kind of spirit. I like to think that even when it doesn't feel like it, we are guarded and protected through our most horrific moments. In making this piece I am entering a dangerous space. I sprinkle a ring of salt around the person stuck in the room as a communion of protection.

## BIO

Anneasha Hogan is a multi-disciplinary, Chicago-based artist. She graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2017 with a BFA in Studio Arts. She uses photography, video, traditional media, and soft sculpture to create multilayered works that are not bound by any medium.

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# SPECIAL THANKS TO:

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All of our participating artists

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**JUDITH'S CIRCLE**

Join our core squad of Awakenings' supporters and join Judith's Circle. By committing to making a monthly donation of any amount, you are directly impacting a survivor's healing process. Your contribution directly supports our artists and Awakenings' ability to provide trauma-aware, professional arts experiences like this for our survivor artists.

Join the Circle at [awakeningsart.org/judiths-circle](https://awakeningsart.org/judiths-circle).



# UPCOMING PROGRAMS:

**Return Artist Talk** | *February 17th*

**Awakened Voices Issue 12** | *May 14th*

**Embodying Justice Exhibit** | *Summer 2021*

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