



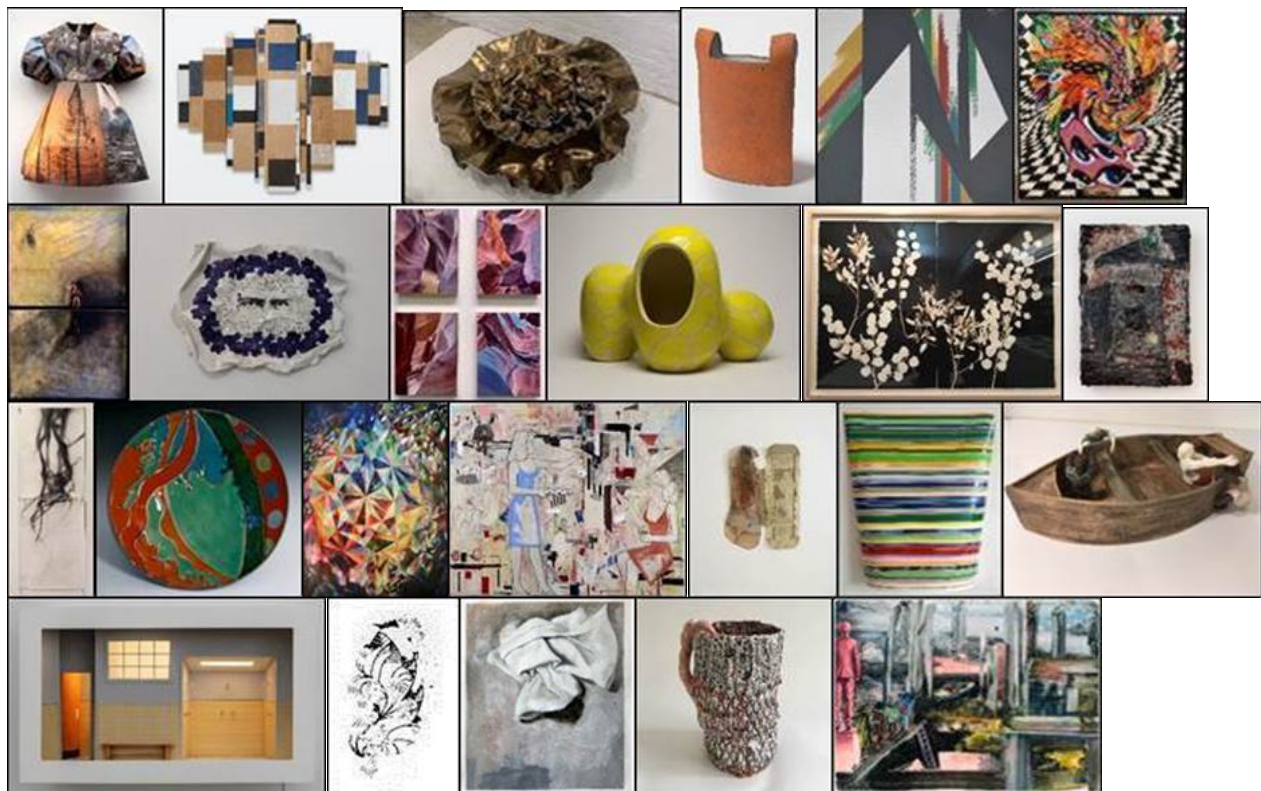
# FACTORY MADE

AN EXHIBIT OF 24 ARTISTS WORKING AT THE CAN FACTORY

19 - 30 OCTOBER 2019 | [THECANFACTORY.ORG](http://THECANFACTORY.ORG)

## ARTISTS

Andrea Lilienthal, Andrew Mockler, Barbara Cahn, Beth Bolgla, Beth Shipley, Caroline Larsen, Cynthia Ruse, Elissa Levy, Ellen Schneiderman, Janny Baek, Jenny Marshall, Laini Nemett, Luisa Sartori, Lynn Goodman, Michelle Hinebrook, Mike Cockrill, Nicola Ginzel, Sonita Singwi, Susan Handwerker, Susan Leopold, Tanja Konwinski, Tzirel Kaminetzky, Ulrika Stromback and Virginia Wagner. Images below are ordered as named above.



## CURATOR'S STATEMENT

XØ Projects Inc. is proud to present **FACTORY MADE**, an exhibition of work by 24 artists and artisans who make their work at The Old American Can Factory. The (OA) Can Factory is an historic, six-building, 130,000 sq ft industrial complex in Gowanus, Brooklyn that houses a curated community of more than 300 artisans, visual/performing artists, poets/writers, filmmakers, architects/designers, publishers, non-profit organizations and others working in the creative industries. This longstanding and ever-evolving creative hub is one of the pioneering cultural anchors of the Gowanus neighborhood, fostering an intimate sense of belonging for the artists who call The (OA) Can Factory home.

**FACTORY MADE** is an intramural presentation, conceived temporally rather than thematically, as a snapshot of the great vitality that characterizes the work being made within the walls of The (OA) Can Factory at any given moment. It offers a rare and tantalizing glimpse of creative production normally hidden behind closed studio doors. There are, of course, resonances between the works; some born of actual conversations and artistic exchange, while others have been brought into dialogue within the exhibition context.



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The artists' common interest in materiality is evident throughout the exhibition, as they explore an array of media and processes. Made of felt, wax and other materials, the geologically layered works of **Ellen Schneiderman** are small but intense, inviting close scrutiny with their density and impression of mass. Their sense of excavation and history is echoed in the vessels of **Ulrika Stromback**, who creates ceramic sculptures by taking molds of textures and materials from the urban surroundings of the building. **Mike Cockrill**'s heroically scaled work, too, makes use of nearly geologic strata of paint and collaged materials, which he works and re-works to create a seductive surface complexity.

The layering of materials is a touchstone throughout the show. The surface pentimenti of **Cynthia Ruse's** painting are penetrated and punctuated by stitching, as is the delicately sewn assemblage by **Nicola Ginzel**, which uses a shoe insole and cardboard packaging as a support for a shimmering gold frottage.

The delicacy of such stitched work is echoed in works referencing nature and the landscape. Lyrical beauty is undeniable in the work of **Luisa Sartori**, whose slim, nude branch in black and white is attenuated and delicate. Likewise monochromatic, the work by **Jenny Marshall**, made by running plants and ink through a high-pressure printing press, invites us to wonder where the plant ends and the ink begins, suggesting a symbiosis between art and nature in the work's creation. In contrast, **Laini Nemett's** work thematizes the striking natural palette and vertiginous canyons of natural rock formations, echoing the patterns of the sedimentary rock layers in her brushwork.

In the age of climate change, the relationship of humanity to the landscape is not only one of appreciation; it is fraught with the knowledge of our imprint upon it. **Susan Handwerker's** palpably handmade clay figures are bailing out a rowboat that stands in for humanity, suggesting our culpability in creating disaster and our own self-victimization. The terror wrought on our children by climate-accelerated wildfires and other disasters is thrown into heartbreaking relief by the newsprint childrens' or dolls' clothes, sewn into patterns from the past by **Andrea Lilienthal**. In them she manages to reflect the victimization of the innocent by using newspaper photos of disasters as fabric, and depicting the immigrant victims of climate migration.

Exploration of form is another feature frequently found in the work of Can Factory artists. The biomorphic yet abstract work of **Janny Baek** has an elegance and decorative sensibility that belies its evocation of a mysterious undersea or alien ecosystem just beyond the reach of human knowledge. **Tanja Konwinski**, on the other hand deftly merges the decorative and biomorphic in unexpected ways, in graphic black and white drawings marked by a tightly controlled yet sinuous line.

Formalism per se may be found in some of the larger scale works in the exhibition. **Sonita Singwi** calibrates color and contrast, using the curl of tape to transform a work on paper into a three-dimensional shape. **Andrew Mockler's** wooden construction uses the contrast between natural wood and opaque color in a bold, sculptural painting where the form echoes the patterning of color. **Beth Shipley**, on the other hand, uses a muted palette and carefully modulated pressure on the paintbrush to highlight the act of mark-making, alternating between a feathery, light brushstroke that reveals the white ground of the painting and heavily applied solid color, all controlled by masking off areas with tape as she works. While **Michelle Hinebrook's** work, whether painted, or sculpted in stained glass, is perhaps not fully abstract, the prismatic sense of color has kinship both to the German Expressionists' glass architecture and natural crystalline forms.

Women's creativity, and the celebration of media and processes historically within the domain of women's work are also in play here. **Beth Bolgla's** earthenware vessels suggest baskets or totes used for gathering or market shopping, and are made from materials often found in kitchen wares. **Barbara Cahn's** metallic platters and bowls bring a touch of luxury to biomorphic forms that elevate both the practical craft of making housewares and the



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aesthetics of the domestic environments for which they are intended. In a clever twist on this theme, **Caroline Larsen** uses cake decorating techniques and tools in her vibrant oil paintings, elevating the ephemeral and edible craft while breathing new life into the staid medium of painting. **Lynn Goodman**'s ewer and basin evoke Victorian life, even as they use a contemporary visual vocabulary of vivid color and metallic glaze.

In a building built from brick and mortar, it should come as no surprise that concrete reality, too, enters into the studio. **Susan Leopold** makes perfect miniature architectural maquettes, devoid of human occupation, leading the viewer to wonder about the significance of the rooms depicted, and what might have happened in them. Similarly mysterious are **Tzirel Kaminetzky**'s and **Virginia Wagner**'s paintings. The former paints still life elements over architectural photographs, bringing the real world into conversation with the history of using still life as a canvas for formal exploration, a la Cézanne. Wagner, on the other hand, creates cryptic landscapes full of seemingly useless human construction, occupied by figures engaged in impenetrable interactions. The fun for the viewer comes in puzzling through the intricate compositional and narrative devices to arrive at one's own idea of what is happening. **Elissa Levy**'s work, too, refuses easy interpretation; she has printed vintage newspaper pages from the Nixon era onto aluminum sheets that appear to crinkle and scatter in the wind, like the detritus of history, questioning what (and whether) we have learned.

In short, the work of the artists in The (OA) Can Factory represents a diverse range of practice. Reflective of a given moment in the history of this decades-old institution, the work nonetheless speaks eloquently to the broader context of the present time.

-- Elizabeth Grady

## CURATOR'S BIO

*Elizabeth Grady is a curator, writer and cultural advisor with a focus on Socially Engaged Art. She was inaugural Director of Programs at A Blade of Grass for five years, and prior to that, was Program Manager of smARTpower at the Bronx Museum; a US State Department initiative. She has organized art projects globally and worked in Curatorial at MoMA, SFMoMA and the Whitney. Elizabeth has written and edited many books, journal articles, and reviews; has moderated many workshops, panels and lectures; and has been teaching art history, art theory and museum studies for more than 20 years. She earned her BA in Art History & German from Macalester College, and her MA and PhD in Art History from Northwestern University. Elizabeth resides and works in Brooklyn, NY.*

**ABOUT THE (OA) CAN FACTORY** (CONTINUES BACK OF THIS PAGE)



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## THE OLD AMERICAN FACTORY

### PRESENT

The Old American Can Factory is an historic, six-building, 130,000 sq ft industrial complex in Gowanus, Brooklyn that houses a curated community of more than 300 artisans, visual/performing artists, poets/writers, filmmakers, architects/designers, publishers, non-profit organizations and others working in the creative industries.

The (OA) Can Factory was developed and is operated by XØ Projects Inc (XØp) .

### PAST

The (OA) Can Factory complex was built in phases between c. 1884 and c. 1910, first as Somers Brothers Decorated Tinware Co and after 1901, as American Can Co which built several new buildings and upgraded the original ones. By the 1930's, portions of the complex were no longer used for manufacturing cans but the facilities generally remained in operation through World War II. In the early 1950's, when the buildings were sold, and through the 1970's, the complex had fallen into disrepair, and a small variety of tenants occupied most of the complex, including several renown artists.

In 1983, six of the seven buildings were acquired by its present ownership, and modest improvements were made to stabilize and improve the buildings. In 1989, after a major fire destroyed most of the rear mill building, XØp was engaged to lead its reconstruction and restoration. In 1991, XØp moved its offices to The (OA) Can Factory, and in 1996 took over management of the complex. In 2003, XØp assumed its role as developer, and over the next several years, completed the redevelopment of all six buildings with a focus on serving the arts and culture industries.

To that end, XØp has produced and presented hundreds of exhibitions, performances, markets, lectures and other cultural events in and around the complex, often in collaboration with other institutions, to audiences totaling more than 100,000 persons.

### FUTURE

In 2013, XØp initiated a comprehensive planning process to grow The (OA) Can Factory community by building an additional ~200,000 sq ft to accommodate a mixed-use development and continuing its focus on art, design and cultural uses. The expanded facilities would allow for additional artisan manufacturing and office space, and also accommodate work-live units for artists, designers and artisans, especially for those that are aging, in addition to providing Mandatory Inclusionary Housing. The complex will be known as **INDUSTRIANA®GC** at The (OA) Can Factory.

The plan for **INDUSTRIANA®GC** was guided in part by *Bridging Gowanus*, a community-wide visioning process initiated by Councilman Brad Lander in 2014. Currently, XØp is working with city agencies to confirm an 'as-of-right' path to realizing that development plan within the city's broader Gowanus re-zoning process.

Additional information about The (OA) Can Factory is available at [thecanfactory.org](http://thecanfactory.org)

Additional information about XØ Projects Inc is available at [xoprojects.com](http://xoprojects.com)