



RSOAA
ROYAL SOCIETY OF AMERICAN ART™

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From The Ashes, We Will Rise

June 26 – July 26, 2020. Online Exhibition

The Royal is very pleased to present *From the Ashes, We Will Rise*, a group exhibition curated by Janet Rutkowski, featuring artwork by: **Ayako Bando, Caroline Bergonzi, Larry Brown, Hufreesh D. Chopra, Heide Hatry, John Manno, and Hillary Raimo.**

“In order to rise from its own ashes, a phoenix first must burn.”
— *Octavia Butler*

When I was asked to curate this show as a last minute effort to keep our gallery’s exhibitions going... I was hesitant. Can I do it? Yes. Am I inspired, motivated? No. How many of us have put our lives on a comfortable hold? Suddenly the image of the phoenix came to mind. As we slowly sift through the ashes of our burnt-out lives, we will shed the premise of death, mortality, fear and prejudice. During this outbreak, artists have spent much more time on their inward journey of creativity. And through this, art will rise in a glorious renewal. I chose work that reflects rebirth, despite inertia and isolation. Dark gives way to light. The sun, like the phoenix rises up every morning, bringing with it a new day and new hope.

The first artist that came to mind was **Heide Hatry** who has been working with traditional portraits but in an untraditional and unique medium. The ashes of the deceased. Although you might think this morbid, think again. What a glorious way to immortalize one’s life. Nothing is final, it simply transcends. Her portrait of young cancer patient, Haven, is a beautiful tribute to a short life lived fully.

The paintings of **Larry Brown** drew me inwards. Hades touched at the meaning of rising above the hell. *Deep Rise* gives the feeling of floating to the surface with a sense of serenity.

I was immediately drawn to the work of **John Manno**. As a still life photographer he transitioned interchanging the spaces of reality. Manipulating the scenery. Not to fool the viewer, but to take them into other worlds and, for a moment have them experience this wonderment. Yes, John, take us out of the ashes into a new reality!

The *Eternal Light* paintings of **Ayako Bando** bathe us in the baptism of spiritual rebirth by sparkling light and joyous colors. These paintings lift our spirit upwards.

The metalwork of **Caroline Bergonzi** speaks for itself. Her method of welding, plasma cutting, and torch cutting gives way to fabulous creatures of flight and renewal born in the fires of her studio.

I met **Hufreesh D. Chopra** eleven years ago when we showed together at the Florence Biennale. I have been following her work since. Her paintings are the quintessential representation of true spirituality. I have seen her work progress and rise over the years of our friendship.

Lastly, *Burn*, both photograph and writing by **Hillary Raimo** appeared as I was finalizing the show. Her photograph shows us the portal we enter after being consumed by the fire... a purification.

Each of these seven artists have heard the calling to rise above it, while creating work to touch our spirit and lift our souls

**Gallery Hours: This exhibition is virtual. We will be hosting online events to be announced.
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