

The Bank of the Arts National Juried Exhibition is the signature show of the Craven Arts Council & Gallery, drawing work and artists from across the United States, and this year, even from around the globe. The exhibition highlights the diversity of techniques, subjects, and media in the contemporary art world, and allows Craven County residents, visitors, and tourists to survey the latest and upcoming talent in the art world.

The 2020 exhibition took place in the Main Gallery from August to September. Despite the challenges of COVID-19 over six hundred pieces were submitted and carefully reviewed by juror Brandon Cordrey. Cordrey curated a final exhibit of one hundred and twenty three pieces, with artists from New Bern to Hawaii, and all the way to Spain.

In addition to visual arts, the Bank of the Arts National Juried Exhibition served as a inspiration for the Ekphrastic Poetry Contest. Poets are asked to write original compositions inspired by the works in the show. Over 150 poems were submitted from across the county, including numerous youth submissions from local high school students.

While CAC&G normally publishes online versions of our gallery exhibitions, it became especially necessary with COVID-19 in 2020. Many people who could not safely view the exhibition were able to do so online at our website, [www.cravenarts.org](http://www.cravenarts.org), and enjoyed the works and poems from the safety of their home.

Craven Arts Council & Gallery would like to thank the jurors, for their thorough and excellent work in selecting works and winners; the artists, for their creativity, craftsmanship, and inspiring artwork; the poets, for their vision and original compositions; and all our members, patrons, and supporters, who make our exhibitions, competitions, and programming possible at Bank of the Arts.

## Visual Arts Juror

**Brandon Cordrey** is an artist and the Executive Director of VAE Raleigh, a cultural arts nonprofit in downtown Raleigh. He joined VAE as the director of exhibitions in 2013 and became executive director in 2016. During his tenure, he has focused the organization on funding, producing, and exhibiting socially engaged artwork, specifically working in partnership with the local disability communities, communities of color, queer communities, and advocacy coalitions. His arts administration background also includes working at Flanders Gallery, Lee Hansley Gallery, Arts Access, CAM Raleigh, and the Greenville Museum of Art.



*"It was my great honor to get to review all of the nearly 700 entries for the 2020 Bank of the Arts National Juried Exhibition. As with all juried exhibitions, it was a complicated process to select works to be exhibited and awards, given the abundance of talent represented in the pool of the entries. My goal was to choose works that show the broad diversity of talent and perspectives across our nation—from traditional landscape paintings and craft to unexpected use of neon and contemporary technologies. The artists represented range from those with lengthy CVs to those exhibiting their work for the first time. When taken in as a whole, this exhibition shows the overwhelming base of talented artists who span the United States. I am humbled to have crossed paths with every artist who has work exhibited in this show."*

Brandon Cordrey

***Homage to Cattail Pond* by Laurie Richardson  
by Linda R Myers  
Inspired by *Cattail Pond***

Cattails!,  
mother would exclaim at wetlands or estuaries  
on cross-country journeys between San Francisco's Bay Area  
and South Carolina's Lowcountry.  
Daddy drove the 54 Olds 98.  
My brother and I tussled silently in the back.  
(We knew better. he could reach us from the driver's seat.)

Bulrushes, Daddy said, smirky growl through clenched teeth.  
It's in the Bible.  
Unlike Moses' bespoke basket,  
woven from such reeds,  
the stand did not protect  
from rants at gnats or back seat sniggering,  
as he called it.  
Daddy complied, pulled over.  
With mother, he withheld the bluster,  
was his most placid.  
Still metronome to Daddy's toothy teeter-totter moods,  
she prevailed.

The '98 was sanctuary of sorts.  
We sang A billy goat was feeling fine,  
ate three red shirts right off the line . . .  
You Are My Sunshine,  
logged states by license plates,  
took breaks for picnic lunch at wayside rests  
and potty stops in outhouse or behind a bush,  
listened to Hank Williams and Webb Pierce,  
or just rode, taking in sugar cane fields  
and handcuffed chain gangs of Black men  
slinging sickles in tormenting heat  
under the gaze of rifle-toting White guards  
until mother blurted out, Cattails!  
and pointed to sentinel stalks with tight brown flower heads,  
statuary in nearby bog or drainage ditch.  
Those week-long, blue-highway rambles  
etched tranquil memories and piercing insights,  
like Cattail Ponds' exclamation points in orange, purple and teal oils.

Unlike indigenous peoples  
who routinely used the Mesozoic Era survivor  
— roots for toothpaste, pollen as hair conditioner —  
Mother had no words on wild edibles,  
nor on gathering tender green shoots for spring pilaf.  
(Mother relied on oregano, onions and garlic.)

Nonetheless, she straddled, stretched over ditch or gully to fetch them,  
carry them home,  
tuck them on the sill between Port and Starboard.  
Some say cattails represent victory of mind, spirit and body.



*Cattail Pond*, Laurie Richardson

***Walking Along the Highway*  
by Zhi Hang Yang  
Inspired by *Reliquary***

As I walk along the highway,  
I reminiscence about my past,  
Clouds gathering above me,  
Showering me with regret.

As I walk forward,  
One step at a time,  
I see a billboard,  
Showing me the possibilities of my life,

I struggle with the present,  
Fueled by the past,  
As I walk along the highway,  
I know these bad times won't last