

A Discerning Vision: Christine Mack's Contemporary Collection

FEATURES – On Your Radar

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At the end of summer, the Southampton Arts Center presented “The Christine Mack Art Collection: Beyond the Present: Collecting for the Future,” an exhibition curated by award-winning art historian and founder of ArtMuse, Natasha Schlesinger, and the Executive Director of the Southampton Arts Center, Christina Mossaides Strassfield.



Beyond the Present: Collecting for the Future” (Installation View),
Southampton Arts Center, 2025.

This compelling exhibition of Christine Mack's thoughtfully curated collection of contemporary art reflects both personal heritage and forward-thinking vision. Through the Mack Art Foundation, Mack has dedicated herself to collecting and nurturing emerging artistic talent, building upon the distinguished legacy established by her mother-in-law, Phyllis.

Phyllis Mack's prescient collecting, which began in the 1980s, assembled works by now-iconic figures including Keith Haring, Nam June Paik, Richard Prince, Cindy Sherman, and Jean-Michel Basquiat. Christine has charted her own distinctive course, focusing on promising young American and international artists while paying particular attention to those with Scandinavian backgrounds—a nod to her own Swedish upbringing.

The human form emerges as a central preoccupation throughout the collection, explored across diverse media and artistic approaches. Particularly striking is the prevalence of women artists depicting women, a thematic choice that speaks to our current cultural moment of increasing gender parity in the art world. This commitment is evident in the numbers: twenty-nine of the sixty-nine exhibited artists listed are women.

Artists featured in this exhibition include Angeles Agrela, Elian Almeida, Willem Andersson, Ana Benaroya, Michaela Yearwood Dan, Marc Dennis, Devon DeJardin, Woody De Othello, Alexandre Diop, Callum Eaton, Camilla Engstrom, Bobbi Essers, Sharif Farrag, Mark Frygell, Alex Gardner, Mark Thomas Gibson, Sam Gilliam, Anthony Gormley, Jameson Green, Keith Haring, Megan Gabrielle Harris, Angela Heisch, Loie Hollowell, Sheree Hovsepian, Rugiyatou Jallow, Alexander James, Martine Johanna, Rashid Johnson, KAWS, Barbara Kruger, Austin Lee, Robert Longo, Wole Lagunju, Karen Lyons, Opal Mae Ong, Joakim Ojanen, Liz Marcus, POW Martinez, Danielle McKinney, Nat Mead, Marilyn Minter, Zanele Muholi, Vik Muniz, Danielle Orchard, Gahee Park, Leo Park, Claire Partington, Robert Peterson, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Thomas J Price, Robert Rauschenberg, Hannah Lupton Reinhardt, Melissa Rios, Brian Rochfort, George Rouey, Matthew Rosenquist, Laura Sanders, Kenny

Scharf, Yam Shalev, Cindy Sherman, Lorna Simpson, Jeff Sonhouse, Vaughn Spann, Alison Elizabeth Taylor, Joani Tremblay, Amanda Wall, Austin Martin White, Kehinde Wiley and Kennedy Yanko.



Rugayatou Jallow, "Tva i en," 2023. Courtesy of Christine Mack

The exhibition also highlights the Foundation's commitment to artistic development by featuring works from twelve artists who have participated in residencies at the Mack Art Foundation's Greenpoint space. Mack's expertise, honed through her background in design and her service on various councils at institutions including the Studio Museum and the Guggenheim, informs the collection.



Melissa Rios “Triago por dentro desvelo,” 2024 Oil on canvas. Courtesy of Christine Mack

Mack has built her dynamic collection through active engagement—personally seeking out, meeting with, and championing the emerging voices that define our contemporary moment. Her mission transcends traditional collecting; she has created a comprehensive ecosystem of support that nurtures artistic development through mentorship, financial backing, and the innovative programs of the [Mack Art Foundation](#) and Greenpoint Studios.

The Foundation’s residency program specifically targets promising artists from beyond New York City’s borders, recognizing that talent often flourishes outside established art centers. These carefully structured residencies span up to three months—a duration designed to allow genuine immersion in the city’s cultural landscape and provide sufficient time for meaningful creative development.

During their tenure, artists receive more than just workspace; they gain access to a furnished apartment and, crucially, introductions to the city’s network of galleries, curators, and collectors. The Foundation actively facilitates these connections while encouraging residents to develop community-based projects with local organizations, ensuring that the program’s impact extends beyond individual artistic growth.

The Foundation’s approach to space is equally thoughtful and community-minded. By transforming underutilized areas within residential and commercial buildings into functioning studios, the program helps reintegrate artists into the neighborhood fabric—a vital counterpoint to the displacement that often accompanies urban development. This model acknowledges that art and culture are essential to thriving communities, not mere luxuries.

Each residency culminates in a meaningful exchange: artists contribute a single work to the permanent collection, creating a living archive of the program’s impact while ensuring that each participant leaves a lasting mark on the Foundation’s growing legacy. Through scholarships, awards,

and targeted funding initiatives, the Mack Art Foundation has established itself as more than a collector—it has become a catalyst for fostering artistic careers and enriching the community.



Megan Gabrielle Harris, Mack Foundation Artist in Residence. Courtesy of Christine Mack

The transformative impact of the residency program is exemplified by Megan Gabrielle Harris, whose recent participation in a panel discussion highlighted the effectiveness of the mentorship model. A multidisciplinary artist with roots in landscape painting, Harris brings a unique perspective shaped by both familial influence—her father, Thomas Harris’s, artistic legacy—and her decade-long career as a professional model.

In a studio space adjacent to the exhibition, her current works-in-progress from the residency were on display. It was evident that Harris’s artistic vision centers on depicting women of color in states of profound tranquility. Her subjects appear regal and divine, inhabiting dreamlike environments. These carefully constructed scenes, painted against vibrant backdrops, challenge conventional representations by presenting Black women in moments of leisure, contemplation, and communion with nature.

In the Mack Foundation website, Harris explains: “*My work explores feminine power through communion with nature and self. Figures often wear their hair natural, symbolizing liberation and grounded confidence, inhabiting worlds shaped by serenity rather than survival.*”¹ Her practice draws from surrealism to imagine alternate realities—spaces of respite and possibility that serve as both meditation and response to our era’s mounting pressures: global unrest, climate change, and technological disruption.

The inspiration for these transcendent works stems from multiple sources: the aesthetic sophistication of fashion photography, the sublime beauty of natural landscapes, and her extensive travel experiences. Harris’s artistic evolution from model to painter brings an insider’s understanding of how women are typically portrayed, allowing her to subvert those conventions through what she describes as “*portals to worlds that might have been—or could still be.*”²

Her participation in Art Basel 2021 marked a significant milestone, and her current residency demonstrates how the Foundation’s support system helps emerging artists transition from promise to professional

recognition. Through her work, Harris continues the Foundation's mission of nurturing voices that expand our understanding of the possibilities of contemporary art.

1,2. <https://www.mackartfoundation.org/artists/megan-gabrielle-harris>