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ARTS

Arts This Week: Exploring spaces real and imagined



Kaupuko by Hula.

Courtesy of the Punto Urban Art Museum

By **GBH News**

November 11, 2021 **Morning Edition**

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Jared Bowen On Morning Edition | November 11, 2021

This week, GBH's Executive Arts Editor Jared Bowen recommends a two-person exhibition of tapestries, visits a survey of one of today's singular photographers, and explores an open air museum featuring 75 large-scale murals.

***Diedrick Brackens and Katherine Bradford* at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts through Dec. 23**



Installation view, Diedrick Brackens and Katherine Bradford, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Left: Diedrick Brackens, rouge test, 2017. Center: Katherine Bradford, One Man's Tub, 2018. Right: Katherine Bradford, New Shoes, 2019.

Julia Featheringill

This new exhibit at the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts at Harvard University features the work of two artists, with tapestries by Diedrick Brackens and paintings by Katherine Bradford. Bowen focuses on Bradford, an abstract and figurative painter whose career now spans six decades. Bradford started painting at the age of 30 while living in Maine and was among the group of artists who moved to Williamsburg, Brooklyn, in the 1980s.

"Her figures – or characters, as some describe them – are these very kind of amorphous, ethereal images that you see on her canvases, which by the way are very large-scale so it almost feels like you're interacting with them as you look at them in the gallery," Bowen said, noting that Bradford's more recent work on display includes vibrant color and "this level of intimacy."

"Something that I realize is probably a hallmark in her work, is that you see, as you're looking at these canvases, evidence of things she's painted over, but still leaves faintly visible," he added.

"I got that reaction a lot, that people like seeing the history of the painting underneath," Bradford said. "And so I began to be more open about leaving traces of what I've done before because I thought it was interesting, too. And when I see other people's work ... I like to see the sketch lines."

Bradford is this year's recipient of the Rappaport Prize, which is presented to a contemporary artist with strong connections to New England and a proven record of achievement.

Deana Lawson on view at the ICA through Feb. 27



Deana Lawson's DL Nation.

Courtesy of the ICA

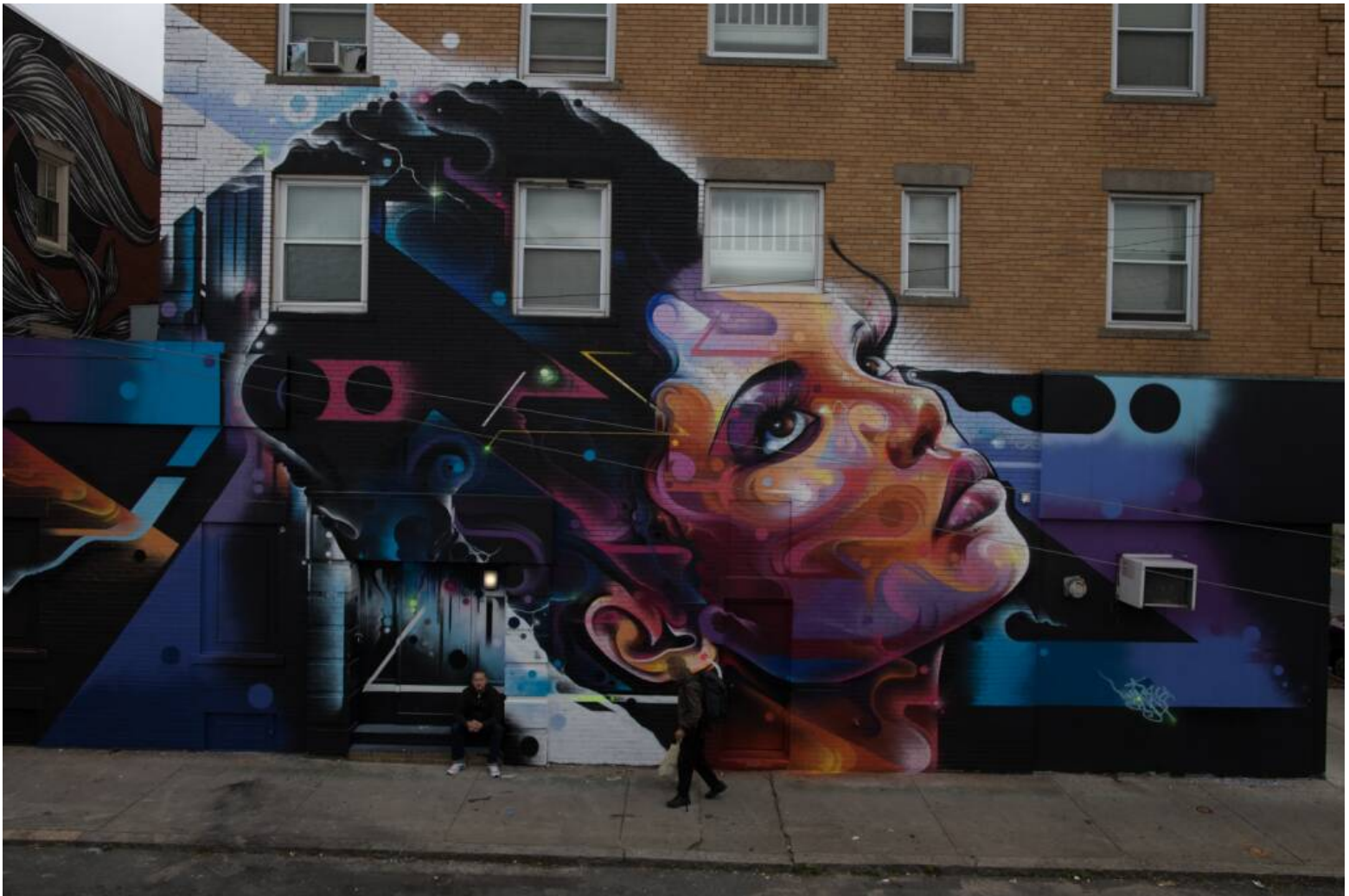
The Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston and MoMA PS1 have co-organized the first museum survey dedicated to the work of photographer **Deana Lawson**, which "draws on a wide spectrum of photographic languages, including the family album, studio portraiture, staged tableaux, and appropriated images," according to the museum's website.

But, Bowen says, don't be fooled: this exhibit of Lawson's work defies the standard traditions of photography. "Deana Lawson is somebody who has been capturing, as the music writer and art writer Greg Tate says in the catalog, 'real Black life,' but everything is a portal to an imaginative realm," Bowen said, echoing a conversation he had with Chief Curator Eva Respini as they toured the exhibition.

The exhibition features a selection of over 50 photographs from 2004 to the present, many which are "highly staged cinematic works," Bowen said, "where we see the subjects might not know each other, they might not be in their own homes or even in their own clothes. That's all by design."

"Sometimes you don't know what these cities the photographs are taken in. You don't know who the sitters are, you don't know their names," Respini said. "But that's not really the point. What the artist is asking us to do is to look carefully. To create our own narratives. To bring our own lens to the pictures. And she's creating a world just in the same way a painter world."

Punto Urban Art Museum, open to the public and for scheduled tours



The Queen of the Block by Artists, Mr Cenx.

Courtesy of Punto Urban Art Museum

When the North Shore Community Development Coalition took stock of its low-income housing, the group had the idea to bring more positivity into its spaces. That led to commissioning muralists and creating the Punto Urban Art Museum, "a mission-driven art program with the goal

of breaking down invisible socio-economic barriers," according to the group's website. This open air museum, in Salem's "El Punto" neighborhood, contains 75 large-scale murals featuring 40 global and 25 New England-based artists.

Artist Yenny Hernandez, whose work is featured on two murals in the collection, identifies with the neighborhood having grown up in low-income housing.

"Had I seen work like this, it probably would have had me thinking more, questioning more, maybe putting myself out there more," Hernandez said. "I didn't know what to do with my artistic abilities. I didn't know what outlets existed and so I found that much later in life. But I think monkey see, monkey do kind of thing. When we see it, we envision and we can manifest it. And I think that's the power of public art."

What other activities are you hoping to enjoy outside before the weather turns? Tell Jared about it on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)!

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