

Jennifer Weigel
Woman Made Gallery
HOME, A Virtual Exhibition

Juror's Statement

In jurying *HOME* for Woman Made Gallery, I was drawn to the diversity of expression and willingness to share our most intimate moments: our laughs, loves, and losses. How we see our homes is very much a reflection of how we see ourselves. What is important to us? What dark thoughts lurk in the closet or under the bed and keep us up at night? What lights our way to carry us through our dark times, and what gives us cause to sing and dance in the kitchen? Home is a reflection of where we are in our lives, where we have been, and where we are going.



A strong sense of tradition and ancestry emerged, reflecting on those who came before, how they and we have made our homes, and our present connections to our pasts. Jessica Wagner considers how heroines of the past inspire us in difficult times. Jennifer Jenkins, Nura Husseini, and Edith Mendez explore their rich and diverse cultural heritages and traditions and the influence that legacy has had on their lives and community. River Kerstetter, Susan Lehman, and Whitney Lea Sage reflect on how places are imbued with the energy and memories of their previous inhabitants and what is gained and lost when one leaves.

In some artworks, objects are imbued with greater significance. Tricia Townes finds connection with her ancestors through objects in her home. Children's stuffed animals take on the personas of loved ones in JL Maxcy's painting. Juliet Goodden and Karen Hanrahan document ritual and the passage of time through objects. Juliet Martin tells a story and relates her life experiences and loss through objects that remind her of the past. Chairs take on a special significance to Red Sagalow and Kathleen Garness.

Relationships help define and create a sense of home. Zoe Kennedy worries about bringing illness home to her husband because she is considered to be an essential worker, while Sherin Shefik explores what it means to be married during the stay-at-home orders. Ellen Starr Lyon reflects on her grown son's presence in the home. Tulika Ladsariya collaborates with her young daughter and her mother in India to focus on relationships in the home and beyond.

Many artists also highlight how we live and how that has been affected by COVID, including snapshots of their daily lives, comings and goings, and the interactions they have had during the stay-at-home orders. Dorothy Broers, Li Lin-Liang, and Mickey Satkiewicz reflect on family activities, the passage of time, and sheltering at home. Rachel Dickson explores what it means to be at home alone during the stay-at-home orders. Melon Fernsebner addresses the relationship with self and sexuality, at home and on Zoom, and the impact that COVID has had.

Other artists consider those who have experienced hardship and trauma inside and outside the home and how individuals have been affected when traumatized and confined to places, relationships, and situations in which they are not or do not feel safe. Christine Ilewski, Karen Musgrave, and Anne Nordaus-Bike explore how home appears from outside versus within and how those interpretations and experiences may differ. Indrani Nayar-Gall draws attention to increased reports of domestic violence globally, while Elaine Woo's drawings moved me to concern over her personal well-being. Tina Starr invites the viewer to bear witness to how deep and long-lasting the effects of trauma can be. Kari Black and Malika Jackson force us to acknowledge homelessness and to recognize those who do not have a home to go to in these difficult times.

For some, nature and the environment also play a significant role in the idea of home and of finding peace. Mary McFerran focuses our attention on a bird's presence. Susan Bloomfield, Caro Dranow, and Carol Shikany reflect on the role of nature in their feeling grounded. Elaine Alibrandi's tactile artworks draw our attention to the details of the natural world around us. Maria Villanueva explores performance and an immersive experience in the environment.

Humor is a strong undercurrent in many of the artworks and creates a sense of relief and resilience. Ruth Keitz imbues the postal system with sinister properties to be contained at all costs. Susanne Swanson-Bernard seeks humor in COVID-19, while Sarah Blaszcak, Christina Canzoneri, and Sophia Etling convey the surreal absurdity of the circumstances that have evolved. Dawn Liddicoatt's goddess figurines take a tour of the kitchen to humorous effect.

A few artists explore their ideal home versus their reality of home in the midst of the stay-at-home orders. The Corona Maisons project invites artists to imagine life at home in a large collaborative and evolving high-rise building, and Pamela Hobbs considers an ideal stay-at-home studio situation. Christine Giancola contrasts the freedom of New York, where she could take risks with the security of home, with where she actually is. Fanny Brodar shows us "everything she wants," while Aunia Kahn looks for home within herself. After a chance encounter, Maureen May questions just what she is looking for when contemplating the role of home.

Home is where our visions of past, present, and future come together, where we reconnect with our ancestors and history through objects and photographs and shared stories, where we take care of ourselves and our families, where we raise our children to go out into the world and make their own way. Home is a sense of where we find comfort and where we are at peace. Home is where we can be ourselves regardless of what image we project beyond its confines, where we can relax and let loose at our best and at our worst. Home is where we allow our vulnerabilities to show and our strengths to shine.

—Jennifer Weigel June 12, 2020

<https://womanmade.org/home-a-virtual-exhibition/>