

A New Chapter: Arion Press at Haines

Exhibition Dates: November 16, 2024 - January 11, 2025

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 16, 4:00PM - 6:00PM



Kara Walker, *Wolf in Sheep's Clothing* (left) and Michele Oka Doner, *The Fox & The Grapes* (right)
Artworks from *Fables of Aesop*, both 2024

This fall, **Haines Gallery** and **Arion Press** proudly present *A New Chapter: Arion Press at Haines*, a collaborative exhibition celebrating the press' recent move to Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture.

Since 1974, Arion Press has partnered with contemporary visual artists to bring seminal texts to life. Collaborating with artists whose practices and concerns often dovetail with these written works, their publications offer fresh perspectives on literary texts ranging from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* to Octavia Butler's *Kindred* to Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. The exhibition at Haines showcases a selection of Arion Press' handmade books alongside original artworks and limited edition prints by contributing artists such as **Enrique Chagoya**, **Kenturah Davis**, **Michele Oka Doner**, **Natalie Frank**, **Tim Hawkinson**, **William Kentridge**, **Alison Saar**, **Richard Wagener**, and **Kara Walker**. Many of these will be on view for the first time, including works from Arion Press' latest release, *Fables of Aesop*.

"We are thrilled to welcome Arion Press to Fort Mason, having long admired their publications and knowing how much they will add to the creative community here," notes Cheryl Haines, founder and principal of Haines Gallery. "Through this exhibition, we look forward to sharing their extraordinary work with new audiences."

A New Chapter includes **Enrique Chagoya's** artwork for "The Lion and The Mouse," a tale about size, power, and the reversal of fortunes in *Fables of Aesop*. As both an immigrant from Mexico and a naturalized US citizen, Chagoya's painting and print-making practice examines the recurring subject of colonialism and oppression, drawing from secular, popular, and religious symbols, from both ancient and contemporary sources. Cartoon characters such as Richie Rich and Donald Duck serve as

thinly-veiled stand-ins for political figures in *The Seven Deadly Sins* (2020), a series of paintings satirizing the state of American politics.

Kenturah Davis' sensitive, powerful portraits depict Janie Crawford, the heroine of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston's canonical portrayal of Black womanhood. Using text as a point of departure, Davis explores the fundamental role of language in shaping how we understand ourselves and the world around us. Her signature "text drawings" fuse the acts of writing and drawing. Here, she repeatedly inscribes meaningful phrases from Hurston's novel to build up her textured portraits, until their subject is revealed in dramatic chiaroscuro.

In a suite of psychologically-charged gouache and chalk drawings, **Natalie Frank** conjures the figure of Lenore from Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven*. She appears as a sorceress, an anthropomorphized raven, and as a series of sensuous, hallucinatory flashes that haunt Poe's unnamed narrator. Frank's practice examines feminism, sexuality, and violence in literature and contemporary discourse. Her lush, vividly colored works bring into focus a woman lamented after but never physically described, positioning Lenore as Poe's true protagonist.

Tim Hawkinson created his massive ink-drip drawings for Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* using a homemade contraption that mirrors gothic novel's themes of technology, nature, and consciousness, as well as the pursuits of the novel's titular inventor. For the project, Hawkinson built a customized pen tool with a hypodermic needle stylus and gravity-fed ink reservoir suspended from his studio ceiling. Sheets of butcher paper were fixed to the wall-mounted turntable. Hawkinson then spun the paper to make a series of horizontal lines to produce his cross-hatched images of scenes from the book. Ink dribbled downwards from each mark created by this idiosyncratic, unwieldy gadget, forcing the artist to embrace nature as a co-creator of his images.

Alison Saar's multi-disciplinary practice addresses issues of race, gender, and spirituality, particularly as they relate to Black female identity and the African diaspora. *A New Chapter* includes examples from Saar's three collaborations with Arion Press, including *The Escape*, black-and-white relief print rendering a pivotal scene from *Kindred* by Octavia Butler in her bold, distinctive imagery. These works are complemented by *The Copacetic Suite*, a series of striking linocut prints paying tribute to the artists of the Harlem Renaissance, published by Mallowney Printing. In scenes animated by her vibrant palette and swirling, energetic mark-making, Saar imagines dancers, singers, musicians, and patrons enjoying Harlem's heyday of the 1930s and 40s.



Enrique Chagoya, *Anger (from The Seven Deadly Sins)*, 2020
Acrylic and water mixable oil, with glass eyes
collaged on canvas, 12 x 16 inches



Kenturah Davis, *She would have the rest of her life to do as she pleased.*, 2023
Graphite on paper, 22 x 30 inches



Pages from *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
by Zora Neale Hurston with artwork by Kenturah Davis.
Published by Arion Press, 2023.

“As we mark our 50th anniversary with our historic move to the northern edge of the city and this iconic location by the Bay, we are buoyed by Fort Mason’s rich programming and incredible partnerships already underway with new neighbors including Haines Gallery. This exhibition celebrates the power of community, our past and future collaborators, and engages the public in a new and meaningful way,” says Rolph Blythe, Executive Director of Arion Press.

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ABOUT ARION PRESS

Founded in 1974, Arion Press innovates collaboration across literary and visual arts. Together with its hot-metal type foundry M&H Type, Arion is America’s last producer of fine press books whose entire production facility is integrated under a single roof. Housed in the vibrant cultural hub of Fort Mason Center for Arts & Culture, the press incorporates a letterpress print shop with an expansive collection of historic metal typefaces, second only to that of the Smithsonian Institution; a type foundry in continuous operation for more than a century; and a complete handbook bindery. Successor to the renowned Grabhorn Press established in San Francisco circa 1920, Arion is supported by the 501(c)(3) nonprofit Grabhorn Institute, designated an “irreplaceable cultural treasure” by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The institute sponsors paid apprenticeships, public tours, artist talks, and exhibitions that bring new and existing audiences together to celebrate the book’s role in contemporary culture. (arionpress.com)

ABOUT HAINES

Founded by Cheryl Haines in 1987 on the belief that contemporary art can change the conversation and transform the culture, Haines Gallery is a vital West Coast platform for celebrated and ambitious artists from around the globe. The gallery’s program aims to engage and inspire collectors, curators, and diverse audiences with artistic statements that are visually compelling and conceptually rigorous. (hainesgallery.com)

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Natalie Frank, artwork for *The Raven*, 2023
Acrylic Inkjet Print, 14.75 x 11 inches



Alison Saar, *Hep Cat* (from *The Copacetic Suite*), 2018-19
Multi-block linocut on Japanese kozo paper, 19.5 x 17.5 inches