

Her Kind





Alchemical Bride 71 (Amazon Ladies Fire Brigade) 2020 36" x 60"

Artist Statement

The Alchemical Bride series renews the language of painting with Feminist élan vital. Consider the painting language explored in these works as a kind of visual Spanglish, since I am blending aspects of Cubism with Pop Art and accenting them with a heavy dose of postmodern historicism.

Enriching painting with the mythical language of alchemy, here the bride image embodies Carl Jung's interpretation of alchemy as a metaphor for the individuation towards the Self. Alchemists called the furnaces in which base matter was transmuted into gold the "House of the Chick" and the "womb". This play of words intrigues me, as it situates the act of transformation within the human form. In the midst of the #MeToo movement, it seems critical for me to celebrate the elevated female body, imagining the liminal body of the bride as a site of distortion and transformation.



Alchemical Bride 40 (Hedy Lamarr) 2020 36" x 40"

Each piece in the series is an imaginal portrait of a woman or groups of women who overcame the constraints of culture and time to make extraordinary contributions to our world. I claim each of the women represented in this series as my ancestors and yours. They are our communal mothers, even if many have been forgotten or purposely erased from the historic canon. Each portrait is a reimagining of the female form as the actual source of value and meaning in painting and in our communal lives, brush-stroke by brush-stroke.

-Prof. Tatiana Garmendia, Seattle Central College

Paintings



Alchemical Bride 24 (Sojourner Truth) 2019 48" x 41"

Abolitionist and women's rights activist, Sojourner Truth was born into slavery but escaped with her infant daughter to freedom in 1826. She went to court to recover her son in 1828, and became the first black woman to win such a case against a white man. "Ain't I A Woman" was the first feminist text I read.



Alchemical Bride 48 (Berta Cáceres) 2020 48" x 36"

Berta Cáceres was an environmental and indigenous rights activist who won the Goldman Environmental Prize for her defense of Lenca land rights and successful campaigns to stop illegal land seizures by DESA, Honduran owned hydroelectric company. She was murdered for her advocacy. A Honduran court ruled in 2018 that executives of DESA ordered the killing of Cáceres. Seven men were found guilty.



Alchemical Bride 3 (Aglaonice) 2019 30" x 40"

This Alchemical Bride is named after the celebrated astronomer of antiquity, Aglaonice. Women in ancient Greece had no legal personhood, no right to education, and yet this extraordinary scientist could accurately predict lunar eclipses. She was considered a sorceress for that ability. Women who followed and studied astronomy with her were called the *Witches of Thessaly*.

Quite a few of the exceptional women I discovered in my research for this series were considered witches or enchantresses. This correlation led me to *Her Kind*, Anne Sexton's short but powerful poem. In her verse Sexton gives expression to the experiences of women, both outside and within the confines of their narrowly defined roles in society, casting them in the role of the liminal outcast, the witch. In the witch's refusal to be so restricted I see an archetypal and symbolic connection to Jung's image of the bride.



Bride 14 (Miriam HaYehuda) 2019 48" x 24"

Also known as "Prophetess", as "Jewess", and as "Daughter of Plato", a name reserved for white sulfur in Western alchemy. Mary is believed to have discovered hydrochloric acid and is the inventor of numerous scientific apparatuses. The bain-marie is named after her.



Alchemical Bride 66 (Martine Bertereau) 2020 36"x48"

Martine Bertereau was a pioneering mining engineer and the first recorded female mineralogist. She travelled extensively throughout France, surveying hundreds of potential mines in the service of King Henry IV. While in Brittany suspicious clergymen accused Martine and her husband of witchcraft and despite no incriminating evidence, they had to flee. Returning to France under the employ of Louis XIII, Bertereau continued to practice hydrogeology. Her requests to be paid for the expenses incurred for this official work moved Cardinal de Richelieu and the government to charge Martine and her family with witchcraft. Her husband perished in the Bastille while Martine Bertereau and her eldest daughter were imprisoned in Vincennes, where they both died.



Alchemical Bride 7 (Merit-Ptah) 2019 30" x 22"



White Glove Service (Tapputi) 2019 30" x 22"

We hear so much about the need for women in STEM, but women have been at the forefront of science, math, and technology since time immemorial.

Alchemical Bride 7 (Merit-Ptah), on the left, was a chief physician of the pharaoh's court during the 2nd dynasty of Egypt, circa 2700 BCE. Her inscription and records are found at Saqqara. Merit-Ptah is notable for being the first woman known by name in the field of medicine, and possibly the first named woman in all of science. She may also be known by the name Peseshet, Overseer of Women Physicians. Confusion over her real name has obscured her significance and led some medical historians to even deny her existence.

White Glove Service (Taputti-Belatekallim) pictured on the right, represents the world's first recorded chemist of any gender. Her record in cuneiform dates to 1200 BCE in ancient Babylonian Mesopotamia, an area now known as Iraq, Kuwait, and Syria. Not only was she a chemist, she was also an overseer at the royal palace. A master multitasker.



Alchemical Bride 70 (Cecilia Helena Payne-Gaposchkin) 2020 48"x 36"

Women have persevered pursuing their research despite resistance from the status quo. While still a student, Cecilia Helena Payne-Gaposchkin published a paper contradicting her teachers regarding the composition of the sun and stars. She was right- the sun and stars are primarily made of hydrogen and helium and not as prevailing scientists of her day predicted, planetary crusts. One of her teachers, Henry Norris Russell, disagreed with her theories and demanded she take them out of her doctorate thesis defense. Later, he stole her idea, published it on his own, and got the credit for the discovery.

In recent decades, the credit for her discovery and subsequent work have been restored. Although she taught at Harvard throughout her career, her classes were not listed in the course catalogs. No matter. She went on to publish more than 150 papers on stellar atmospheres and stellar spectra .



Alchemical Bride 68 (Sophie Germain) 2020 40" x 30"

Mathematician and physicist Sophie Germain taught herself to read and research by sneaking into her father's library and corresponding with the leading mathematicians of the day under a man's pseudonym. Germain's work in number theory is still studied today, and she also made fundamental contributions to a general theory of elasticity.

When women are given support for their work, the world is rewarded with great advances in science and medicine.



Alchemical Bride 4 (Marie Curie) 2019 20" x 22"

Marie Curie, the first woman to win a Nobel Prize, was also the only woman to win it twice. She is also the only person of any gender to win the Nobel Prize in two different scientific fields. She developed the theory of radioactivity, as well as techniques for isolating isotopes. Marie Curie was also a hero, whose invention of mobile x-ray units for field hospitals during World War I saved a million soldiers. She tried selling her Nobel Prize medals to help the war effort but banks refused. Instead, she founded the Curie Institutes in Paris and Warsaw, which continue to be centers of medical research to this day.



Alchemical Bride 67 (Maria Victoria de la Cruz) 2020 36" x 60"

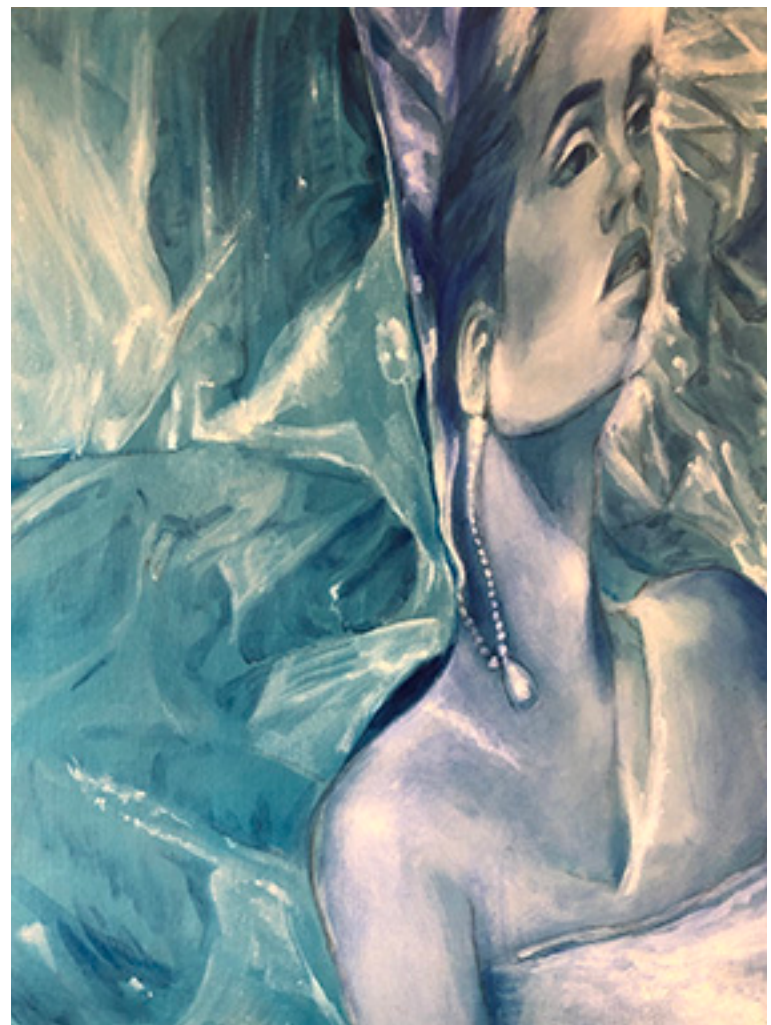
Maria Victoria de la Cruz was a celebrated cardiologist and medical researcher. Days before she died at 83 years young the Cuban-Mexican doctor was addressing an international meeting of pediatric cardiologists. Her contributions to the field of embryology forged our fundamental understanding of the heart. "I believe that human beings represent the interaction between socioeconomic and historical context in which they live," wrote the great research and pediatric cardiologist, explaining that she had access to education and familial support.

Humanity can only be enriched by learning the rich legacies left us by women. The destiny of our world depends on the contributions of future thought and culture leaders- many of them will identify as women and will need this historical context to see an open horizon before them. Not closed doors.

Women have always made lasting and important contributions to both the sciences and to the arts .



Alchemical Bride 56 (Hawa Abdi Dhiblawe) 2020
12".x 9"



Alchemical Bride 53 (Billie Holiday) 2020 12" x 9"

The renown Somalian activist and doctor, Hawa Abdi Dhiblawe, left, overcame the loss of her mother at a tender age, and helped raise her siblings. Married at just 12 years old to an older man, she nonetheless continued her education, and earned a scholarship to study medicine. After receiving her degree in medicine she went on to earn a law degree as well. Nominated for a Nobel Prize for her peace advocacy and work of taking care of the poor and vulnerable, even during war.

Forever changing the face of music with her vocal innovations, Billie Holliday (right) lost her father when quite young. She was among the first black women to work with a white orchestra, with whom she toured the segregated south. Her memorable song, Strange Fruit, references lynching. "It reminds me of how Pop died, but I have to keep singing it, not only because people ask for it, but because twenty years after Pop died the things that killed him are still happening in the South."



Alchemical Bride 63 (Ana Mendieta} 2020 35" x 54"

Although cut short by her tragic and mysterious death, Ana Mendieta's legacy continues to inspire artists whose work is centered on the body's relationship to the land and to culture.

Many believe Mendieta died at the hands of her husband, fellow artist Carl Andre, who was acquitted of murder charges despite damning evidence. Deeply misunderstood by cultural biases, Mendieta's work exploring blood and ritual, clearly referencing the Cuban afro-diaspora religion of Santeria, was used by the defense team to argue she was suicidal and had an unsavory attraction to death.

Many see in the response to the Mendieta's death the historical neglect of women of color and the blind eye we turn to violence against women in culture at large.



Alchemical Bride 61 (Lady Bird Johnson) 2020 36" x 70"

This Alchemical Bride celebrates Lady Bird Johnson for her work in conservation, and beautification of our urban landscapes and freeways. "Though the word beautification makes the concept sound merely cosmetic, it involves much more: clean water, clean air, clean roadsides, safe waste disposal and preservation of valued old landmarks as well as great parks and wilderness areas. To me...beautification means our total concern for the physical and human quality we pass on to our children and the future." Lady Bird was also an early LGBTQ activist, with enduring lesbian relationships.

Graphic Arts



Una Novia en la Playa, monotype accordion book, 2020

The Alchemical Bride series and Cubism 3.0's creolization of Cubism, Pop Art and feminism also finds expression in my drawing and printmaking practices. For me drawing and printmaking are painting's natural partners in the studio.



Bride 12 (Elizabeth Freeman) 2020 10" x 8"



Bride 15 (Wang Zhenyi) 2020 10" x 8"



Bride 8 (Dandara of Palmares) 2020 10" x 8"



Bride 3 (Selma Burke) 2020 10" x 8"



Bride 7 (Buffalo Calf Woman) 2020 10" x 8"



Bride 22 (Chief Funmilayo Anikulapo-Kuti) 2020
10" x 8"

Platonic and Archimedean Solids plus Prisms

During the quarantine of Covid19, I have additionally been experimenting with 3-D paintings and mixed media mono prints on vellum. Ultimately I conceive of these painted and graphic forms as occupying a space, creating an agora.

Consider the picture below a kind of studio sketch in which the painted Platonic and Archimedean solids, the printed obloids, polyhedra, and prisms are engaged in a visual discussion between the histories they represent, and the shifting, projected lights. Shadow patterns create the illusions of a changing city scape on the walls and floor. This agora, this scape, would not encroach on women's achievements as the suburbs in Anne Sexton's poem, *Her Kind*.



Studio view, The Agora, work in progress, 2020 dimensions varied