



Tabitha Arnold
Workshop of the World



Workshop of the World: Works by Tabitha Arnold

January 18 – February 25, 2024

List Gallery, Swarthmore College



**All We Create:
Tabitha Arnold's Political Tool**

Tess Wei
Exhibitions Manager & Associate Curator,
List Gallery, Swarthmore College

“Labor is entitled to all it creates.” This slogan is stitched into four picket signs near the bottom of Tabitha Arnold’s *Picket* (2021, opposite), a mid-sized tapestry she created using her own method of punch-needle embroidery. Tufts of wool and cotton yarn repeatedly run through a stretched linen substrate to create the image. In this lower portion of the piece we see signs held by figures whose green-, blue-, and yellow-yarn bodies serve as both narrative and pattern. They march in stride, side by side, with heads backlit by peach-colored halos. Above and below, one sees Scabby the Rat—a hallmark figure of the labor movement—as well as trucks belonging to the United States Postal Service and waste management, rowhomes, factory smoke stacks, tower cranes, airplanes, figures with bullhorns, and angels. Such clear indications of labor and political organizing, cross-pollinated with appropriated religious motifs, are central to the intricate textiles and works on paper presented in Arnold’s solo exhibition *Workshop of the World: Works by Tabitha Arnold*.

Arnold’s work synthesizes her research on contemporary and historic labor movements with firsthand observations of the physical, social, and economic infrastructure of her surrounding communities. She filters this deftly collected information through the influence of diverse visual traditions: Soviet-era murals in Bulgaria; war rugs crafted in Afghanistan; narrative quilts, known as *arpilleras*, sewn by Chilean women during the 1973–

1990 Pinochet regime in Chile; World War II-era German Expressionist woodblock prints; and Eastern Orthodox icons.

Arnold composes the majority of her textiles with loosely demarcated, horizontally stacked bands, recalling the narrative organization found in rugs made during and after the 1979-1989 Soviet-Afghan War. These rugs incorporate images of objects relevant to the conflict, such as AK-47s, military helicopters, and hand grenades. Similarly, Arnold’s tapestries reflect her sociopolitical environment. *Whose Streets* (2020, page 3), for example, offers an account of the Black Lives Matter protests and direct action taken by the public in Philadelphia during the spring and summer of 2020. She expertly distills her narrative by highlighting strategic figures and landmarks, such as police wielding riot gear, Philadelphia’s City Hall and skyline, and a bullhorn. The sounding bullhorn turns into a flood of flames engulfing an overturned police car—a reference to the car set ablaze on May 30, 2020, at the intersection of Broad Street and JFK Boulevard. Such a delicate balance between diligent specificity and imaginative open-endedness is present throughout Arnold’s visual system, which communicates intricate ideas through swift and accessible means while providing a morally decisive framework. Arnold welcomes the idea that her art is propaganda: “This is working-class propaganda. I think of these rugs as a way to memorialize the labor movement, to connect the contemporary labor struggle to its long tradition in history, and to inspire and empower others around me to join in.”¹

Arnold initially articulated her thoughts on labor and her experiences with it through pen-and-ink drawings; *Workshop of the World* brings together the most comprehensive collection of these works on paper to date. While her tapestries serve as important records of past





events and emerge slowly in the studio, her works on paper have a different memetic intention and pace. She intends them to be immediately reproduced and circulated as two-dimensional signs and logos—as agents of resistance for the public. In fact, some of these illustrations were made as political messages for specific organizations. For example, *Philly Socialists* (2021, page 12) is a t-shirt design for the Philadelphia-based organization of the same name. Beginning in 2021, Arnold created gouache and relief-print works on paper for covers of *Dissent*, an independent magazine dedicated to long-form political and cultural criticism. Physical copies of this publication were available to read in the List Gallery alongside Arnold’s original cover art.

In both her tapestries and her works on paper, Arnold’s narratives can be sorted into two categories. The first addresses ways in which people organize against exploitation and use collective resistance to cultivate community growth. This sentiment is embedded in works such as *Built for the People* (2022, pages 8-9) and *The People* (2021). The former depicts power plants and dams created by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), the federally owned corporation that sought to offer affordable electricity to the valley during the New Deal era. Their slogan, “built for the people,” was inscribed inside every TVA structure: “The TVA has many flaws, but it does remind me that a better world is possible and that the South has been home to many amazing people’s movements,” Arnold explained when describing the piece.²

The second category of works depict ways in which people are organized and subjugated by modes of labor and systems of power. Arnold draws our attention to this somber reality by portraying examples of exploitative labor, such as the inside of a leather-refining factory in *Pure Finder* (2021, page 23); the destruc-

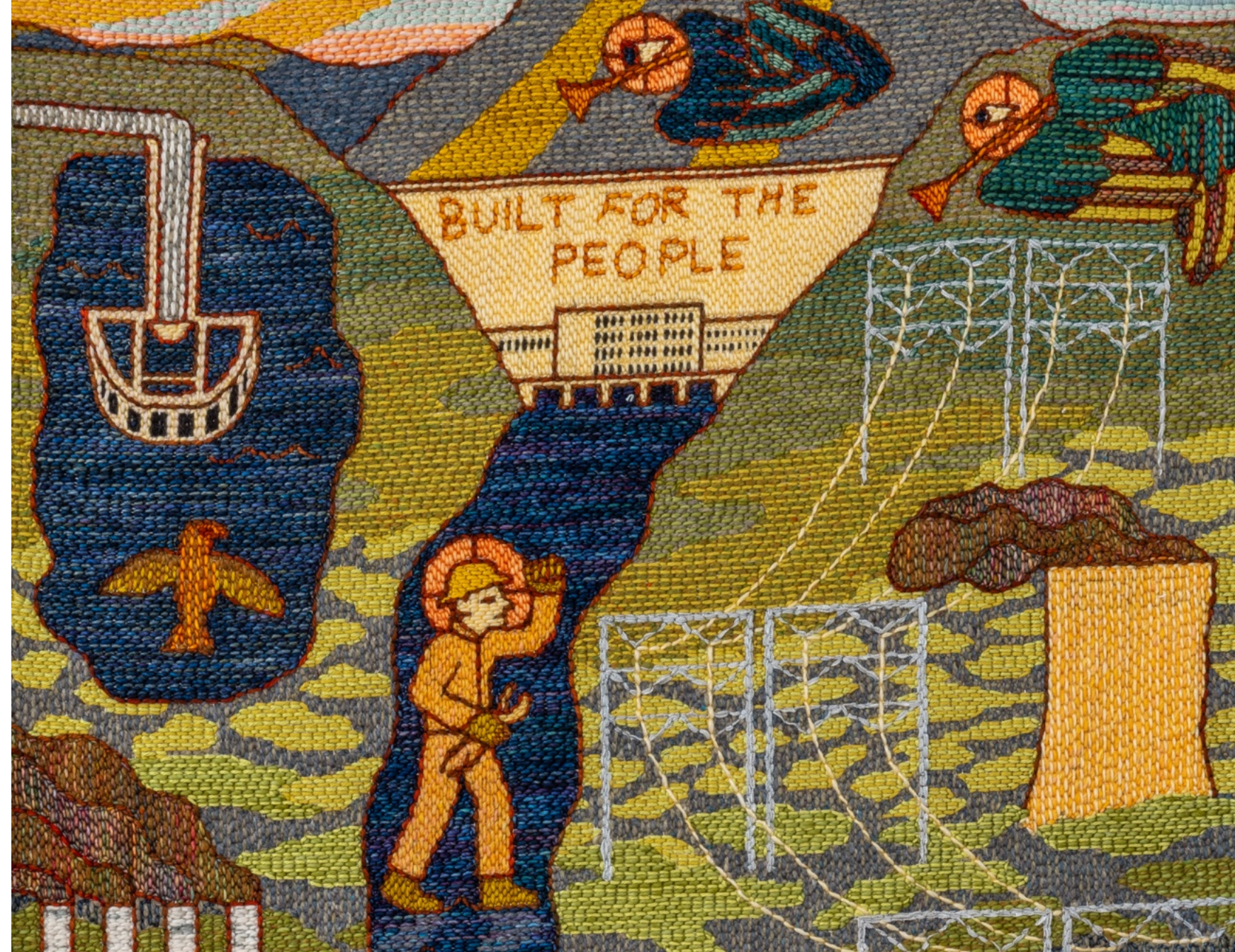
tive compulsion to acquire excessive capital in *Capital Consuming Itself* (2021, page 14); and the injustices of our carceral system in *Shroud* (2020, page 35).

However, Arnold avoids offering a cynical view of the future. Instead, she embeds all her work with a spirit of hope and visions of a triumphant working class. Sometimes subtly, sometimes overtly, Arnold portrays the potency of class consciousness, the vital delight in subverting power: prisons being evaded; factory workers broadcasting “Goodbye work!” from the rooftops; the success of Scabby-as-Trojan-Horse; the sanctity of grassroots organizing; and so on. Arnold’s propaganda is successful. Throughout *Workshop of the World*, we see Arnold using art as an indispensable political tool that allows us to envision a future built by and for the people.



¹ Tabitha Arnold, “Workshop of the World: Works by Tabitha Arnold,” lecture, List Gallery, Swarthmore College, 25 Jan. 2024.

² Ibid.





Gospel, 2023, wool and cotton yarn on linen cloth, 54 x 36 inches
 Courtesy of Nina Strohminger

Workshops of the World, Unite!

Kathy M. Newman
 Associate Professor of English/Literary and
 Cultural Studies, Carnegie Mellon University

In her tufted rug *Gospel* (2023) Tabitha Arnold poses the question: which side are you on? The question dates at least to the 1931 folk song “Which Side Are You On?” written by Florence Reece in Harlan County, Kentucky, during a time of brutal police attacks on striking coal miners, and later popularized by Pete Seeger on his album *Talking Union* (1941).

Arnold is most definitely on the side of labor. But if you look closely at *Gospel*, her question is also about the side of the rug she is working on. The word “Which” appears on the reverse of a banner that is coming fresh off the weaver’s loom in the scene below, while the rest of the question, “side are you on?” appears on the front. This is a witty nod to the fact that Arnold displays what is generally considered to be the reverse, or the “wrong” side, of her tufted rugs.

In an appearance on the YouTube series *Textile and Tea*, Arnold explains how she fell in love with the wrong side of the textile after she had finished her first piece: “I looked at the front when I was done. . . I thought this was going way better when I was looking at the back . . . [So I wondered], am I allowed to just keep it turned around? . . . So far, no one has stopped me from doing that.”¹

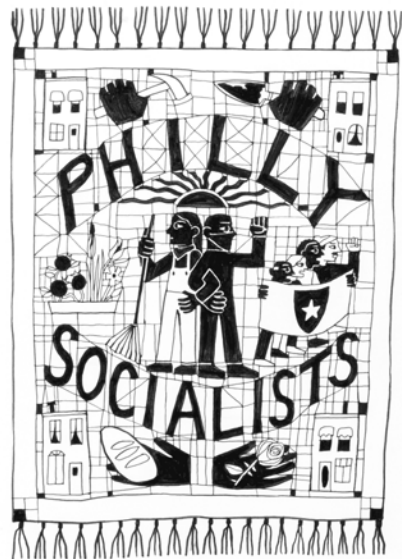
The fact that Arnold uses the language of permission here—“am I allowed?”—is noteworthy. She isn’t exactly a permission seeker. In virtually everything that she

does, she is a boundary crosser, a rule breaker, a rebel. *Workshop of the World: Works by Tabitha Arnold* brings so much of her work in one place, allowing us to appreciate how she rebelliously presents and seems to reconcile a series of contradictions between fine art and craft, labor and culture, the sacred and the secular, and art and propaganda. Taken as a whole, these works are humorous and breathtaking, and constantly reveal new and delightful details. In the end, *Workshop of the World* leaves us with the sense that, despite existential threats, human creativity and collective action can offer a way forward.

Between Fine Art and Craft

While Arnold was working on her college degree in painting at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, she began to realize that she didn’t like being a painter. Since then, she has wondered if her Protestant work ethic had made it hard for her to realize that she was unhappy. “It took me a really long time to understand that I did not click with painting as [a form of] expression.”

In 2016, she went to an Ann Hamilton exhibition, *Habitus*, at the Cherry Street Pier in Philadelphia. It featured billowy draped fabrics suspended from forty feet and spun in circles from above on wooden wheels. The Hamilton exhibition was big, dreamy, and grand. But what made the most profound impression on Arnold, she has said, was the relatively modest display of “needlework samplers from the museum archives.” Seeing these triggered in her a sense of recognition and nostalgia. “[They] made me feel really nostalgic and remember how my grandma and other women in my family used to do needlework. I was curious about it, and I thought, ‘Why don’t I just try out some



kind of textile medium?" I made a loom out of canvas stretchers because I was a painter, and I still use canvas stretchers now . . . There was so much I could do with one little tapestry loom, so much variety that I could get. I found it addicting. I realized pretty much immediately, oh, this is how I'm supposed to feel!"²

Inspired in part by Sheila Hicks, a textile artist who creates modernist sculptural tapestries out of natural fibers, Arnold started weaving abstract fiber pieces. Then she discovered the process of making tufted rugs. She realized that she could paint with yarn, using the neat, tight stitches on the conventional reverse as the primary side, allowing her to render people, buildings, and street scenes.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, Arnold was working as a barista in Philadelphia. She was involved with the Philly Socialists, and was starting to “talk union” with her fellow coffee workers. During this time, Arnold began using the tufted rug process to record the movements in the streets that she saw around her, from the Black Lives Matter protests following the murder of George Floyd, to calls for rent strikes, to protests against the U.S. Immigration Agency (ICE), to the burgeoning labor movement. As she began organizing at her own workplace, her artwork became more explicitly political.

This activity also raised Arnold's curiosity about various textile and political art traditions around the world. She began taking inspiration from Palestinian liberation posters, Afghan war rugs, and Chilean storytelling *arpilleras* (burlaps), as well as the Soviet-era murals and monuments that Arnold witnessed on a trip to Bulgaria. In this move from painting to textiles, and from observational street scenes to more politically oriented work, Arnold was finding her voice.

The Labor Theory of Culture —————

Arnold calls her work “labor-intensive art,” referencing both the work involved in making the tapestries and work as her primary theme. Even today, the iconography of working people is often stuck in the twentieth century, repeating images of white men in overalls or construction hats. It has been long overdue for an upgrade. Arnold comes to the rescue here; in her artworks, workers are men and women belonging to multiple races and ethnicities, who work at every manner of job. In *Workshop of the World*, we can see airport workers, artists, auto workers, baristas, bartenders,

bike messengers, chefs, child-care workers, construction workers, delivery drivers, domestic workers, electric line workers, farmers, gardeners, graduate students, janitors, machinists, miners, musicians, religious workers, scientists, sex workers, textile workers, waiters, warehouse workers, white collar workers, and writers.

Representations of workers often constitute the bottom layer of Arnold's tiered compositions. They usually stand in a line, facing a single direction, with a tool in one hand and with the other hand stretched upward, cupped around the ear of the worker in front of them. They are, no doubt, “talking union.”

Arnold has described how talking to her café coworkers about pay, healthcare, working conditions, and unions was crucial for her own transformation: “In a union drive, it's imperative to listen to your coworkers and invite them to share the honest story of their experience at work. It awakens something in people, maybe because they end up admitting to themselves that they're barely holding it together at the job!”³ There is an interesting visual parallel between the cupped hand and the bullhorn, which is another of Arnold's favorite symbols. The hand amplifies the voice but also shields it, suggesting an intimate, excited whisper, while the bullhorn is public and loud, suggesting blaring, amplified noise. In *Whose Streets* (2020, page 3), for example, women's voices thread together and stream out of the bullhorn at the top of the tapestry, like water flowing from a showerhead.

Arnold creates her tapestries in tiered layers—partly because, as she explains, she creates the textile from the bottom to the top. Workers whispering to each other often comprise the base layer. Just above them is often another layer of workers holding picket signs. In *Picket* (2021, page 6), workers hold four signs that to-

gether proclaim: “Labor is / entitled / to all it / creates.” In *Hot Labor Summer* (2023, page 16), the workers hold picket signs representing their various unions: WGA, UAW, TUGSA (a graduate-student union at Temple University) and DC33 (Philadelphia's AFSME local). Since Arnold constructs her composition from the bottom up, perhaps we can deduce an order of operations: (1) first you “talk union;” (2) then you organize; (3) then you strike.



While giving labor-movement a badly needed makeover, Arnold has also infused her iconography with multiple references to labor's (and capitalism's) past. The phrase “Labor is entitled to all it creates,” for example, dates at least to the 1870s. As another example, Arnold frequently uses the paired symbols of bread and roses, a pairing that was popularized in 1911 by Helen Todd, a suffragette and factory inspector. The symbols of bread and roses are often associated with the 1912 textile workers' strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts.⁴ Sometimes Arnold depicts a hand holding a rose as a symbol unto itself. This could be a reference to the logo of the Democratic Socialists of America; Arnold was active in the Philadelphia chapter when she lived there. A pen and ink drawing that seems to hark back to the Gilded Age, *Capital Consuming Itself* (2021, page 14), features a stack of greedy capitalists, each one grabbing paper money with one hand and stuffing it into his mouth with the



other. They form two single-file lines at the bottom of the image, but in the center of the image they begin to climb over each other to get to the top. Behind them all, a single megacapitalist monster eats the oblivious fool who has reached the apex. In style and tone, this slush pile of grasping capitalists is in the tradition of Thomas Nast and other Gilded Age caricaturists of fat-cat robber barons and corrupt politicians.⁵ This image also brings to mind a recent critique, *Cannibal Capitalism: How Our System Is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet—and What We Can Do About It* (2022), in which Nancy Fraser argues that capitalism is consuming itself—like a snake eating its own tail—and dooming its own future along with everything else we hold dear.⁶

Arnold had a chance to learn more about labor in the Gilded Age in 2021, when she was awarded a residency in Philadelphia at Glen Foerd, a mansion built by the Foerderer family with wealth they had amassed from their goat-leather-processing business (goat leather was referred to as “kid,” as in kid gloves). Arnold learned that leather processing was an especially revolting job; workers had to collect bird- and dog feces for use in the processing. The chemicals in the feces were used to dissolve the goat hair, leaving the goat leather smooth beneath. These feces were dubbed “pure.”

In *Pure Finder* (2021, page 23), Arnold represents layers of workers in different stages of leather processing. Some kill and skin the goats. Some hold the skins up, their arms outstretched, as if offering their work to the gods. Some process the hides with large rakelike combs. Others are on their knees, praying. Arnold has pointed out that the factory owners, who were mostly Lutheran, and the factory workers, who tended to be Catholic, were all deeply devout. She wonders: did religion help the workers bear their toil? Did religion help the factory owners absolve their guilt?

Arnold also created the two *Workshop of the World* pieces, for which the exhibition is named, during her time at Glen Foerd (pages 28-31). *Workshop of the World I* represents what life was like for domestic workers inside the estate; *Workshop of the World II* represents what manufacturing life was like in Northeast Philadelphia, the part of the city that gave Philadelphia the nickname Workshop of the World.

In *Workshop of the World I*, domestic workers trudge up and down various staircases within the estate. They are each connected to a servant’s call box by an orange thread, suggesting the ways in which they are perpetually tied to their domestic labors. Above the call box, the owners of the Glen Foerd estate eat a sumptuous feast. At the top of the piece, a strange-looking preacher goat god, who holds the scales of justice, shoots golden laser beams from his head and arms. Is this figure a kind of devil? Or is he a divine arbiter of justice? Arnold explains that *Workshop of the World* was inspired, in part, by Rodin’s *Gates of Hell* (one cast of which is housed in The Rodin Museum in Philadelphia), which in turn was inspired by Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. Work, quite possibly, is hell.

On the other hand, perhaps work is also what makes us human. Arnold’s tapestries call to mind a concept in Marxist cultural studies known as the labor theory of culture, which is rooted in the idea that labor, especially the labor that results from the unity of conception and execution, is what distinguishes us from other beasts. As Friedrich Engels wrote in 1876, “Labour is the source of all wealth, the political economists assert . . . But it is even infinitely more than this. It is the prime basic condition for all human existence, and this to such an extent that, in a sense, we have to say that labour created man himself.”⁷ In other words, we don’t make labor; labor makes us.

We see this concept throughout Arnold’s art. The workers in her tapestries are not miserable; they are not in hell. They do cry sometimes—tears are a motif throughout her pieces. But the workers in Arnold’s tapestries are powerful. They are determined. And they are united. They are not degraded by their labor; instead, their labor has transformed them into modern-day saints.

The Sacred and the Profane

Arnold sometimes refers to her textile works as “memorials” or “monuments.” For labor struggles—past and present—she is a scribe, a historian, and a sculptor. Whereas mainstream news sites rarely provide in-depth information about union organizing or labor strikes, Arnold vividly depicts the complexity of modern-day labor. In *Hot Labor Summer* (2023), for example, Arnold shows the coalition of the labor, environmental, and social justice movements at work to halt Cop City, a \$90 million, eighty-five-acre police-training facility under construction outside Atlanta.

At the top of this piece, a protester stands with his hands outstretched, facing down bulldozers that are destroying Atlanta’s Weelaunee Forest. With this scene Arnold is referencing the story of Manuel Paez Terán (“Tortugueta”), a twenty-six-year-old Venezuelan activist and student at Florida State University who was killed by police at a protest against Cop City in January 2023. According to the *Guardian*, Terán is the first environmental activist to have been killed by police in the United States.⁸

In *Hot Labor Summer* (2023, page 16), just below the scene of the environmental protest, three angels carry flaming swords. Arnold may be referencing a moment in



the biblical book of Genesis when Adam and Eve are cast out of the Garden of Eden and God positions angels with flaming swords at the gates of Paradise. We can infer that the angels here are guarding Atlanta's Weelaunee Forest from the forces that seek to replace it with Cop City.⁹

Arnold portrays angels and saints throughout many of her works. Some angels hold swords; others play

trumpets—another version of the bullhorn, perhaps? If workers are forced to whisper when they “talk union,” the angels are free to trumpet their messages to the heavens. In addition, many of Arnold's workers and activists are depicted with golden halos around their heads, suggesting sainthood.

Arnold's personal experience with religion is complicated. Her father converted to Eastern Orthodoxy when she was a child, and she spent some portion of her youngest years gazing at the Byzantine icons displayed in its churches. In her youth, she rejected these images along with everything else about religion. Today, Arnold is not a practicing Christian, but she uses saints and angels in her art for their strong associations with morality and justice:

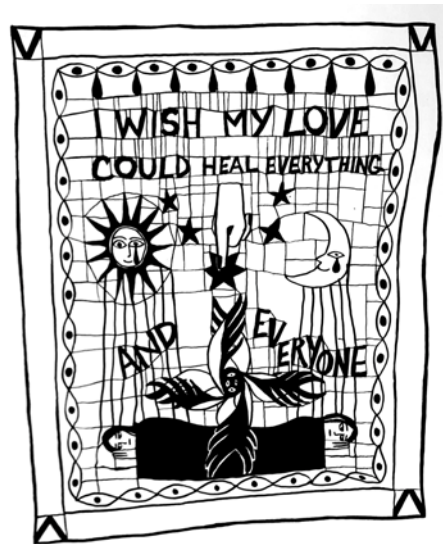
I was on a path seeking a way to communicate narrative and also values or ideology. I realized that icons are extremely good at communicating this. I [was also] interested in the idea of sainthood, or the idea of martyrdom, and how that is such a common theme in Christian art, and I wanted to play with that, . . . seeing myself as some sort of historian. And if I'm going to recount a scene from a political moment or a protest or a labor union effort, I wanted to question the idea of how a martyr would be in that situation, who would be sainted, in the recounting of those stories, so I borrowed a lot of that from iconography.¹⁰

Arnold imagines a world in which the moral power of the church, the swift justice of a ferocious angel, and the gemlike brilliance of a stained-glass window can all be put to use in the service of ordinary people, workers, activists, and even the sprite-like figure hurdling the subway turnstile in *Night on the Subway* (2022, page 33).

Art Versus Propaganda

Arnold is critical of capitalism and her artwork is meant to show that a better world is possible. She believes that if we learn how to “talk union” we can transform our lives, and, maybe even smite loneliness and alienation.

Concepts of love, care, and rest come to the fore in *Wish* (2021). Arnold writes, “I wish my love could heal everything and everyone.” In this drawing, Arnold depicts a symbol made of feathers that point in the four directions of a compass, perhaps referring to Native American symbols representing earth, water, air, and fire. At the bottom of this drawing, two young women, seemingly mirrors of each other, rest in bed—or are they ill and in need of healing?



Arnold often describes her art as propaganda. She explains that she is trying to provide an alternative to the daily avalanche of films, television shows, news stories, TikToks, artworks, songs, and advertisements—all of it promoting, hammering, and trumpeting such notions as capitalism, individualism, do-it-all-by-yourselfism:

One thing that really motivates me to create leftist art is the idea of owning the narrative. Like most people, I'm frustrated with the way the media portrays political events, and how easily disinformation spreads into conspiracy theories. Our images and stories are controlled by the ultra-wealthy few and it feels important to create a counter-narrative. As a Socialist artist, I really love portraying the world I see and believe in—one where workers are powerful enough to shift the course of the future, where protest is an act of heroism and martyrdom, where there is so much powerful work going on in the midst of all the despair.¹¹

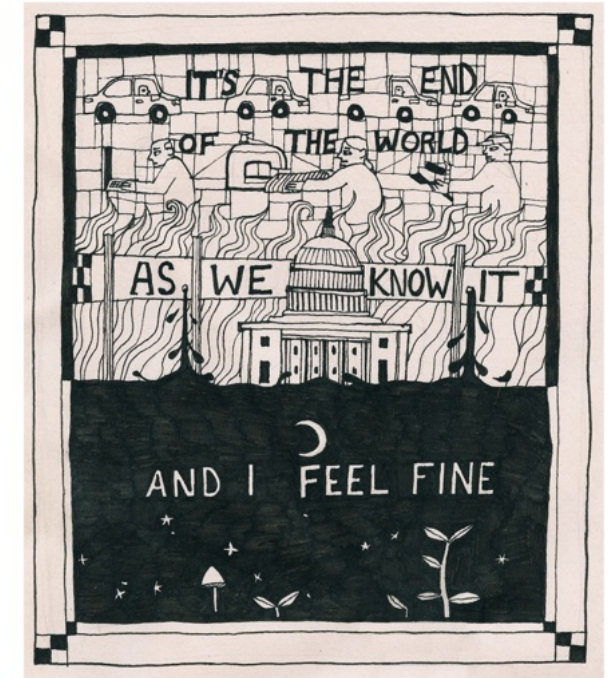
Some viewers have pushed back against Arnold's insistence that her art is propaganda. At an event in Sag Harbor, New York, one member of the audience challenged her to not “lean too heavily” on the word. That person continued: “Propaganda relies on everyone knowing the story . . . In your pieces we don't. You're actually starting to tell a story that is not particularly well known. So it can't stand as propaganda, it's more fresh narrative that draws on history.”¹²

What is the difference between art and propaganda? The artist Steve Lambert, who co-directs the Center for Artistic Activism in New York City, argues that most art is propaganda—but that it is usually propaganda for the “rich and powerful.” He points out that elite definitions of fine art may try to keep the idea of pro-

paganda at bay, but, that, in fact, art and activism are magnetically, and properly, linked: “For a movement to be successful it requires innovation, cultural relevance, communicating through images, theatre, and performance, and the affective, emotional power of arts and culture.”¹³

Arnold is a labor-movement artist. Her work is a call to action: to talk union, to create networks of care, to organize, to strike, to fight for a world in which workers will inherit and protect the earth. She understands that climate change is the greatest challenge facing all of us—plebes and capitalists alike. But would it be so bad if things utterly changed? Quoting a song from the band REM, one of Arnold's drawings proclaims, “It's the end of the world as we know it, and I feel fine.”

Does Arnold feel fine? Not always. Follow her on X if you want to see her capacity for frank criticism (@thetolerantweft). But her vibrant palette and images of collective action convey a more positive tone, implying that hopefulness comes from taking action, from creating, and from loving. Audre Lorde, in her dedication to *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, writes, “In the recognition of loving lies an answer to despair.”¹⁴ In Arnold's gorgeous, political, funny, meaningful, moral, loving, and inspiring work lies a much-needed answer to the despair of our current moment. Workshops of the World, unite!



Kathy M. Newman is Professor of English/Literary and Cultural Studies at Carnegie Mellon University. Her current book, *How the Fifties Worked: Labor, Film and Television* will be published by Rutgers University Press in 2025. Her first book, *Radio Active: Advertising and Consumer Activism*, was published by University of California Press in 2004. Newman is a regular blogger for *Working Class Perspectives*. She is also a graphic and textile artist whose political cross-stitches have been published in *The Nation*.



Endnotes

¹ Kathy Grupp interviews Tabitha Arnold for *Textiles and Tea*, episode 96, program of the Handweavers Guild of America, 30 November 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bw-YtKsNwUJ>, 9:30–10:57, (accessed March 27, 2024).

² Michelle Millar Fisher, “Tabitha Arnold by Michelle Millar Fisher: Textiles that Depict Workers and Labor History,” *Bomb Magazine*, November 8, 2023, <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/2023/11/08/tabitha-arnold-by-michelle-millar-fisher/> (accessed March 27, 2024).

³ “Rug Punching and Labor Politics: A Conversation with Tabitha Arnold,” Past Present Projects, March 27, 2021, <https://www.past-presentprojects.org/blog/rug-punching-and-labor-politics-a-conversation-with-tabitha-arnold> (accessed March 27, 2024).

⁴ Wendell Phillips, a nineteenth-century labor leader and abolitionist, ran for the Massachusetts governorship in 1870 on the platform “Labor is entitled to all it creates.” Emanuel Garret, “Men and Women of Labor Out of the Past,” *Encyclopedia of Trotskyism*, <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/garret/1939/07/phillips.htm> (accessed March 27, 2024). The phrase “bread and roses” is often traced to the young women who conducted the Lawrence textile mill strike of 1912; according to legend, the striking women inspired the poet James Oppenheim to write the poem “Bread and Roses.” However, the origin of the phrase has been traced to Helen Todd, a suffragette and factory inspector. In September 1911, in the pages of *American Magazine*, Todd noted that a pillow in a house in which she was staying had the phrase, “Bread for All, and Roses, Too” embroidered on it. Oppenheim’s poem appeared a few months later, in the December issue. Pascal Tréguer, “‘Bread and Roses,’ Meaning and Origin,” *World Histories*, <https://wordhistories.net/2021/09/11/bread-and-roses/> (accessed March 27, 2024). See also Tom Juravich, “‘Bread and Roses’: The Evolution of a Song, Labor Songbooks, and Union Culture,” *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History* 17, no. 2 (2020), 81–98.

⁵ For more on the work of Thomas Nast, see Fiona Deans Halloran, *Thomas Nast: The Father of Modern Political Cartoons* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012).

⁶ Nancy Fraser, *Cannibal Capitalism: How Our System is Devouring Democracy, Care, and the Planet—and What We Can Do about It* (New York: Verso Press, 2022).

⁷ Friedrich Engels, “The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man,” unfinished article (May–June 1876), published in *Die Neue Zeit* 1895–1906, translated from the German by Clemens Dutt, first published in English in Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1934, see <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1876/part-played-labour/index.htm> (accessed March 27, 2024). I discuss Engel’s essay and the labor theory of culture in Kathy M. Newman, “Defining the Labor Theory of Culture,” in *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, May 2024.

⁸ Timothy Pratt, “‘Cop City’ Activist’s Official Autopsy Reveals More than 50 Bullet Wounds,” *The Guardian*, April 20, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/apr/20/manuel-paez-teran-autopsy-cop-city>

⁹ Hannah Love and Mennan Donaghe, “Atlanta’s ‘Cop City’ and the Relationship Between Place, Policing and Climate,” *Brookings Institute*, September 21, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/atlanta-cop-city-and-the-relationship-between-place-policing-and-climate/> (accessed March 27, 2024).

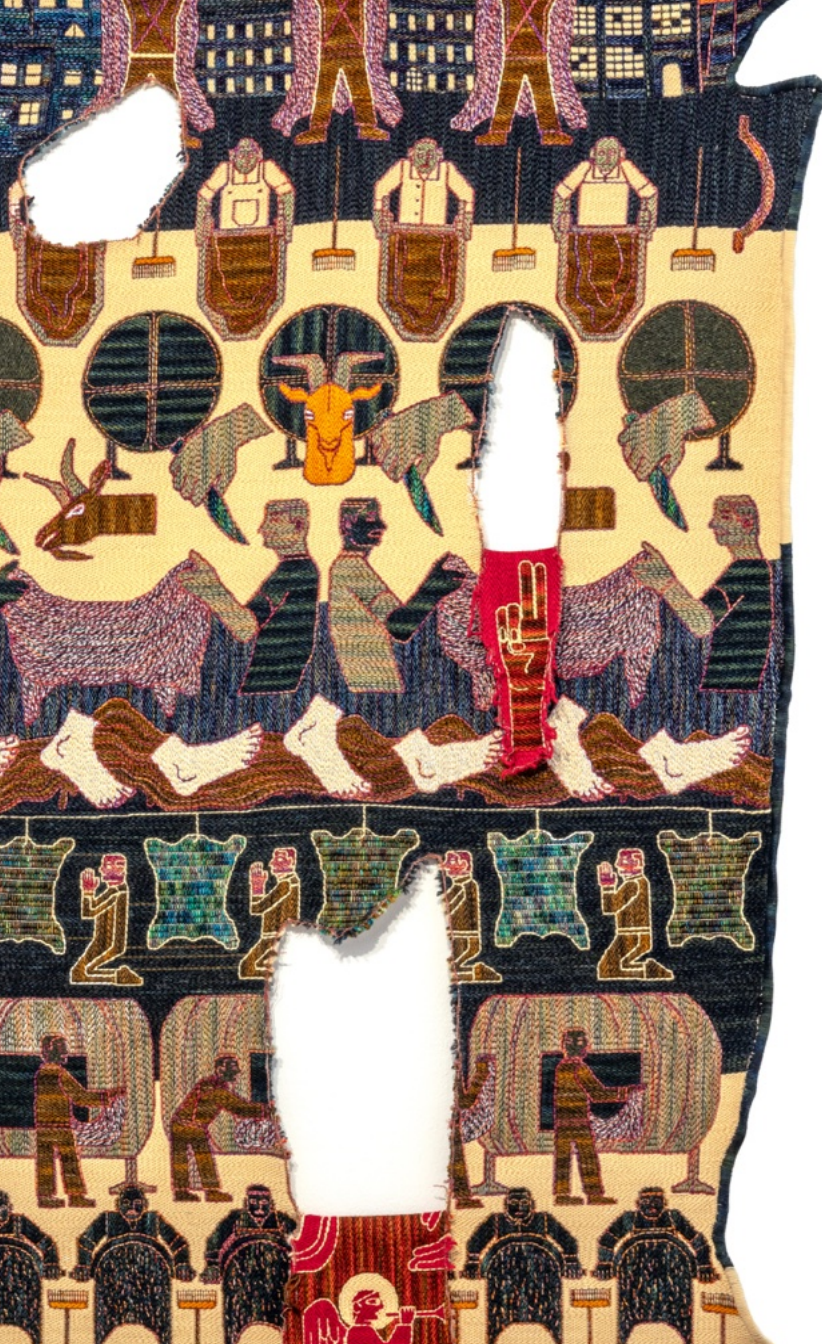
¹⁰ Tabitha Arnold, “Artist Talk with Tabitha Arnold,” Sag Harbor, NY, August 30, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AffMZu4upDM>, 15:23–16:10 (accessed March 27, 2024).

¹¹ Sabrina Sigler, “Tabitha Arnold: Whose Streets,” *Disobedient*, April 2, 2021, <https://www.disobedientmagazine.com/disobedientonline/2021/02/04/interview-tabitha-arnold-whose-streets-and-peoples-art-sabrina-sigler> (accessed March 27, 2024).

¹² Tabitha Arnold, “Artist Talk with Tabitha Arnold,” Sag Harbor, NY, August 30, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AffMZu4upDM>, 56:38–58:20 (accessed March 27, 2024).

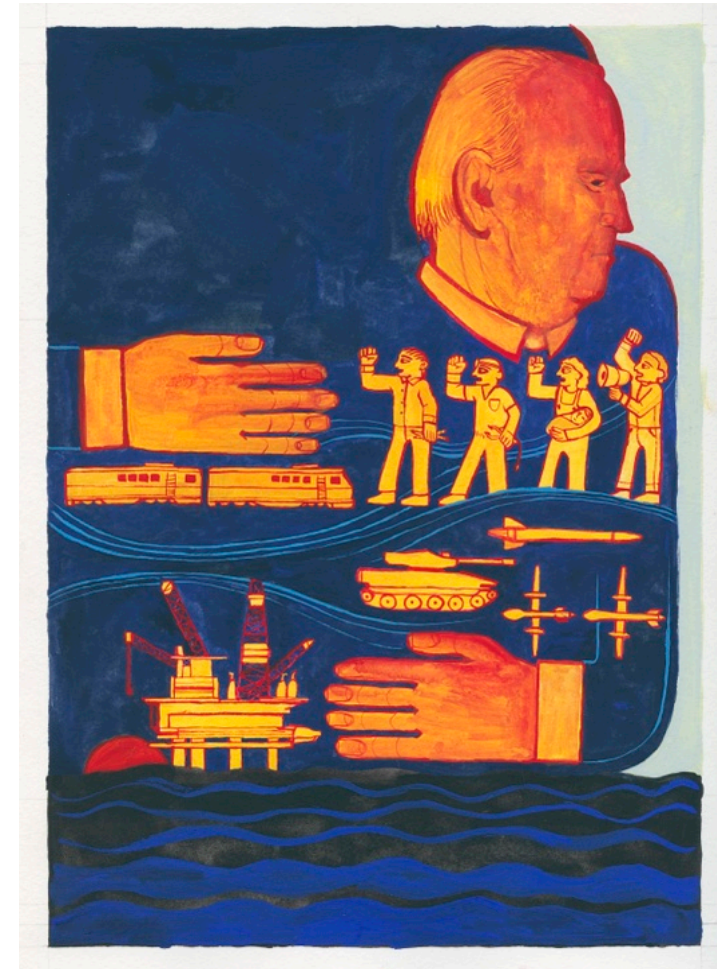
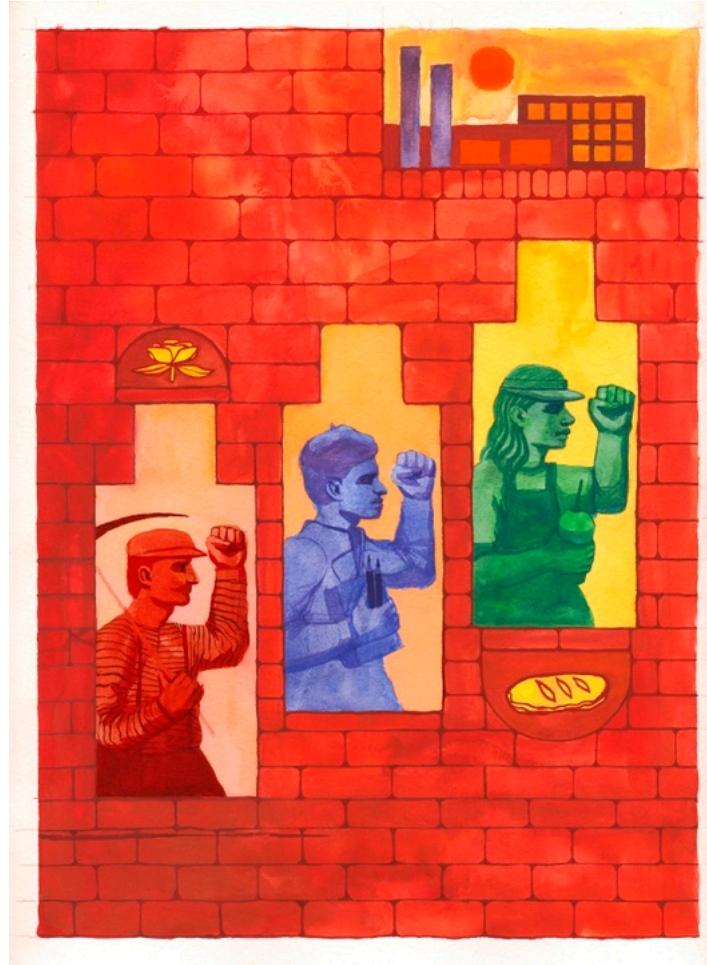
¹³ Steve Lambert, “Art and Fear of Propaganda,” *Media-N | Journal of the New Media Caucus*, 17, no. 2 (Fall 2021), 146.

¹⁴ Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (New York: Crossing Press, 1982), dedication page.



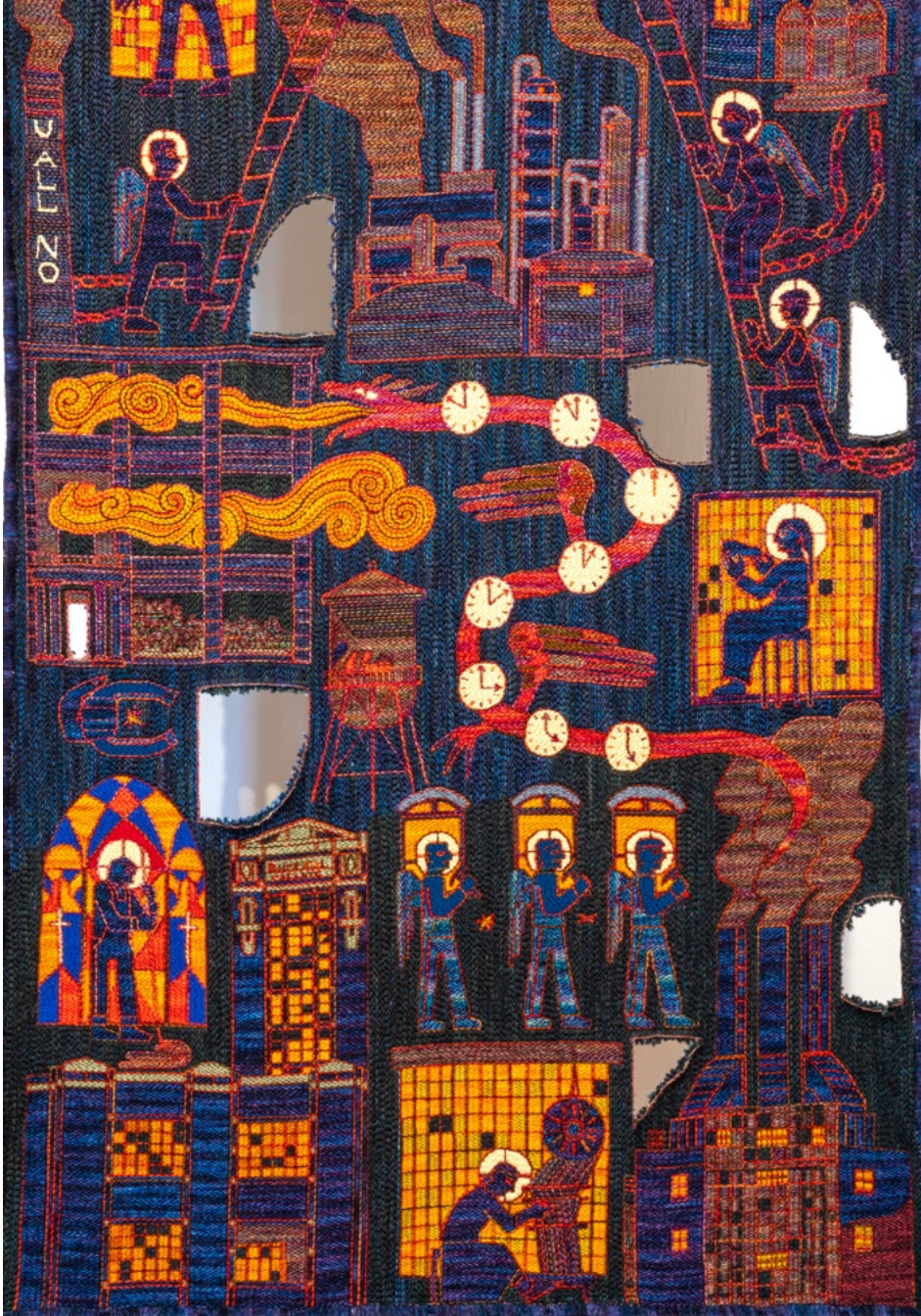
Tabitha Arnold (b. 1995) graduated with a BFA in painting from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 2017. Her textiles have been featured in *Hyperallergic*, *Jacobin Magazine*, and *Forbes*, and her works on paper have been reproduced on multiple issue covers of *Dissent Magazine*. She has been awarded residences at MacDowell (Peterborough, NH); The Church (Sag Harbor, NY); Córtext Frontal (Arraiolos, Portugal); and Glen Foerd (Philadelphia, PA). She is also part of the American Craft Council's 2022 Emerging Artist Cohort. Most recently, Arnold was a resident artist at the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre (Hamilton, ON), where she mounted a solo exhibition in fall 2023. Her work is included in the permanent collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and Córtext Frontal in Portugal. She currently lives and works in her hometown of Chattanooga, Tennessee.

















Acknowledgements

Workshop of the World: Works by Tabitha Arnold, this catalog, and accompanying public events at Swarthmore College were made possible by the Bruno Fine Arts Fund and the generosity of Joan Gordon.

Additional support was provided by Kaori Kitao, William R. Kenan, Jr., Professor Emerita of Art History, Swarthmore College.

I would like to thank Whiston Ramsey for expertly installing this exhibition in the List Gallery. I am also grateful to Mary Christianson for her editorial guidance. As always, none of this would be possible without the support of Andrea Packard, Director of Swarthmore College Art Collection and Curator of the List Gallery.

In addition, I am grateful to the lenders whose generosity made this exhibition possible. I am particularly moved by Tabitha Arnold's trust. I look forward to seeing all that Arnold creates in the years to come.

This catalog was published in conjunction with *Workshop of the World: Works by Tabitha Arnold* presented at the List Gallery, Swarthmore College January 18–February 25, 2024.

© 2024 List Gallery, Swarthmore College

All rights reserved. This book may not be reproduced, in whole or in part, including illustrations, in any form (beyond copying permitted by Sections 107 and 108 of U.S. Copyright Law and except by reviewers for the public press), without written permission from the publisher.

.....

Exhibition Curator: Tess Wei
 Catalog essays: Kathy M. Newman and Tess Wei
 Catalog design: Tess Wei
 Catalog editor: Andrea Packard
 Consulting editor: Mary Christianson

Photographs: Joe Painter

All installation views: *Workshop of the World: Works by Tabitha Arnold* January 18–February 25, 2024, List Gallery, Swarthmore College

Printing: Brilliant Graphics, Exton, PA
 ISBN: 978-0-9984564-9-2

.....

Cover image: *Whose Streets* [detail], 2020, wool and cotton yarn on linen cloth, 24 x 56 inches. Courtesy of James Beacham

Back cover: *Hot Labor Summer* [detail], 2023, wool and cotton yarn on linen cloth, 56 x 34 inches. Courtesy of Harry Winkler

Inside front cover: Installation view: *Workshop of the World I* and *Workshop of the World II*, 2022, wool and cotton yarn on linen cloth, 72 x 44 inches each



List Gallery, Swarthmore College