



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***The Eyes Have It***  
**New Exhibition Reopens Lehman College Art Gallery**  
**August 31, 2021**



**Exhibition Dates:** August 31 – November 13, 2021

**Location:** Lehman College Art Gallery, Bedford Park Boulevard West, Bronx, NY 10468-1589  
Lehmangallery.org 718.960.8731 Tue - Thurs, 10 - 4

**Advance Reservations** thru Eventbrite [here](#)

**Please note that proof of vaccination is required to visit Lehman College Art Gallery**

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**Masks must be worn on Lehman College Campus at all times**

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**Lehman College Art Gallery**

250 Bedford Park Blvd W, Bronx, NY 10468

718.960.8731

[lehmangallery.org](http://lehmangallery.org)



The Eyes Have It — a dazzling array of artistic vision centered around the eye, sight, and the politics of observation.

In painting, sculpture, photography, video, and site-specific installation, 48 contemporary artists explore the eye and its importance literally and symbolically in art as well as its significance, today, in a world populated by screens, monitoring devices, and media dominated by moving visual images.

Lehman College Art Gallery opens its Edith Altschul Lehman and Robert Lehman wings from August 31 through November 13 to the work of artists from Pakistan and Guatemala, from Greece, Italy, and Spain, the Bahamas, Canada, and London, and across the United States, from Maryland to California. Their works, created in the last decade, truly bring “the eyes of the world” to the Gallery and exemplify the need to see and be seen — the central pillar of the visual arts.

In the Gallery’s Rotunda, Sima I. Schloss’ dazzling 30-foot, site-specific installation *The Eyes Have It*, allows for a wide breath of interconnectivity among all the exhibition’s works.

Artists include: Humaira Abid, Rodolfo Abularach, Derrick Adams, Carlos Aires, Janine Antoni, Firelei Báez, Gina Beavers, Angelica Bergamini, Huma Bhabha, Zach Blas, Justin Bower, Francesco Clemente, Julie Cockburn, Peter Combe, Esperanza Cortes, Diana Corvelle, Vanezza Cruz, Timothy Cummings, DAS INSTITUT (Kerstin Brätsch and Adele Röder), Dennis Delgado, Dale Dunning, Lauren Fensterstock, Stephen Frailey, Carla Gannis, Laurent Grasso, Gregory Halili, Peter Hamlin, Valerie Hammond, HoruX, James Jean, Laura Karetzky, Katherine Knauer, Fay Ku, Caroline Larsen, Ted Lawson, Lysiane Luong, Civil Milieu, Marilyn Minter, Felekşan Onar, Tony Oursler, Alex Prager, Joseph Raffael, Jamel Robinson, Dan Schaub, Sima I. Schloss, Laurie Simmons, Chris Smith, and William Villalongo

### **Exhibition Overview**

The graceful line of the eye and its colors, and its leading place in our senses has intrigued the painter and sculptor from antiquity to today’s art movements. For eons the eye performed well for humans and animals, receiving and signaling perceptions and, now, in its new host — a machine’s screen. Each work in this exhibition explores the eye in a human, predatory, or technological context. Interlocking themes encompass ageless associations from classical mythology to today’s threat of cyber-surveillance. The artists also contrast the strength and

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weakness of the human eye with the power of the animal eye – the watchful, predatory owl and the peacock with a thousand “eyes” set within the sweeping train of its tail.

The eye remains a symbol of power, protection and rebirth, a symbol that dates back to the most ancient civilizations. A talisman against evil, a harbinger of observation, and a comforting sign of God’s watchfulness, artists have always incorporated the eye into portrayals of human endeavor. Today, the eye continues to enthrall artists: its powerful associations and captivating gaze are coupled with its roles as the physical embodiment of sight and as visual metaphor for our need to see and be seen.

The exhibition reflects differing experiences of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual identity observed by the artists — as varied as the contested role of female drivers in Pakistan; exploration into the electronic eye of surveillance and how it may discriminate against people of color; and, technological attempts to single out members of the LGBTQIA community.

“Eye-appeal” has long been a catchphrase for what we find attractive, and many images of the eye in this exhibition are drenched with beauty. Beyond its surface attraction though, the eye represents “perception” or the ability to understand, to examine, inspect, or interrogate. We use our eyes to gather information from which we draw our opinions. The current moral and political climate demands that artists look at how we, as individuals, function in a large and complex society.

Among the many artistic highlights, **Gregory Halili**, in *Sorrow II* (2014) creates a literal depiction of the eye, while using a medium that combines historic religious symbolism with contemporary creative techniques: he chose mother of pearl, with a whiteness that resembles the *sclera* or outer layer of the eyeball, to create the eyes of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of the Sorrows. The tears shed by the Virgin are formed by the naturally occurring formation of pearls on the shell. The artist **HoruX**, in *The All Seeing Mother* (2021) turns to digital photography to reinterpret commonly seen religious images into surrealist works suffused with symbolism.

In video works, **Carlos Aires** comments on the power of the “eye-to-eye” connection of police power and the power of the State in the slightly ominous, but charmingly sensual *Sweet Dreams Are Made of This* (2016), while **Zach Blas** more overtly posits the dangers of digital recognition in his *Facial Weaponization Communiqué: Fag Face* (2012). In her highly topical 2021 *Tempting Eyes* series, **Humaira Abid** contemplates the politics and power of a woman’s eyes within an otherwise covered face, at a time when women’s rights to such essential activities such as driving are increasingly under threat by a resurgence of the Taliban. In *Shade*

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(2014), **Derrick Adams** creates a figure of striking contrast, as he similarly explores the politics of the covered face. In his collage only the eye is visible, combining jarring aspects of determined militancy with a feminine floral.

**Laura Karetsky** humorously explores the Covid-19 crisis in *We're Going to Have to Learn to Read the Eyes A Lot Better* (2020), by showing the eye seen through a phone or monitor lens. Her lens addresses the constant need to see and be seen through digital conversation. In a black mirror, **Lauren Fensterstock's** *Scrying #3* (2017) melds the ancient and modern, both reminiscent of today's eye-in-the-sky cameras and early scrying glass, its translucent surfaces an eye to the past, present, and future. Her work forces us to face our own reflections, our own beliefs, our own souls.

Additional image highlights from the exhibition are available [here](#)

The exhibition is supported by New York State Council on the Arts, Edith and Herbert Lehman Foundation, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, The New Yankee Stadium Community Benefits Fund, Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, Jarvis and Constance Doctorow Family Foundation and The Pierre and Tana Matisse Foundation.

### **Credits, Catalogue, and Related Content**

*The Eyes Have It* was organized by Bartholomew F. Bland and Laura J. A. De Riggi. The exhibition will be accompanied by a richly illustrated 120-page catalogue. Published by Lehman College, City University of New York and distributed by Lehman College. Available October 1, 2021.

Image (above): Humaira Abid. *Tempting Eyes XV*, 2021  
Carved and stained pine wood, pigments on handmade wasli paper, tru-vu museum acrylic. 9 x 4.5 x 4 inches.  
Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Adeel Ahmed

### **About Lehman College Art Gallery**

Always free to the public, Lehman College Art Gallery has been serving the interests of our diverse audience from the Bronx and greater New York City since 1984. The gallery specializes in thematic group exhibitions that bring together famous artists with emerging talents. Education is an integral component of the Gallery's programming and provides the basis of community outreach—from young students to senior citizens.

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