



PHILEMONA  
SELECT WORKS  
WILLIAMSON

JANUARY 23 TO MAY 1, 2019



*Eventual Autumn*, 2003 | oil on linen, 62 x 50 inches

**IN 1834, CHARLES SMITH OLDEN** – together with his new bride Phebe Ann Smith – returned to Princeton after a ten years absence in New Orleans. Using savings from a successful mercantile business and a small inheritance, he purchased his grandfather’s homestead and authorized the construction of Drumthwacket. The impressive Greek revival style home and colossal portico is inspired by the southern architecture of the city that left an indelible mark upon the future Governor.

Almost 200 years later, the buildings and architecture of New Orleans continue to inspire New Jersey painter, Philemona Williamson. Each oil on paper piece features a single structure set against vibrant hues that simultaneously fill columns or seep through windows. Space is mostly undefined as background and foreground merge in the interplay of shape and color. Only the titles of each work root the images to a specific place. Philemona’s house portraits simultaneously capture a respect for the past, celebrate the present and suggest the future.

Philemona’s signature work features adolescent youth. Each oversized canvas is dominated by one or two figures set against rich colorful backgrounds punctuated with just enough information to set the scene. There is an element of fantasy that only the innocence of childhood can conjure, yet the dream-like tranquility is disrupted by the burgeoning undercurrents of adolescence. The dizzying transition from childhood to adulthood is breathlessly suspended within the universality of Philemona’s figures. The young people depicted, in the artist’s words, ‘blur the lines between race, gender and class.’ They represent every child and remind the viewer more of what unites the human experience than what may divide.

On behalf of the Drumthwacket Foundation, I would like to thank Philemona Williamson for generously sharing her work; June Kelly, owner and Director of the June Kelly Gallery, NYC for her assistance with the exhibit; and Robyn Brenner, Curator and Executive Director of the Foundation for bringing Philemona’s work to Drumthwacket.

Tammy Murphy



First Lady

President Drumthwacket Foundation



*Sunday Picnic*, 2010 | oil on linen, 48 x 60 inches



*Children on Green Leaves*, 2017 | oil on linen, 46 x 75 inches



(above) *Orion Avenue* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches  
(below) *Melpomene Place* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches



*Terpsichore Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches  
*Conti Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches



*Humanity Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches  
*Verbena Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches





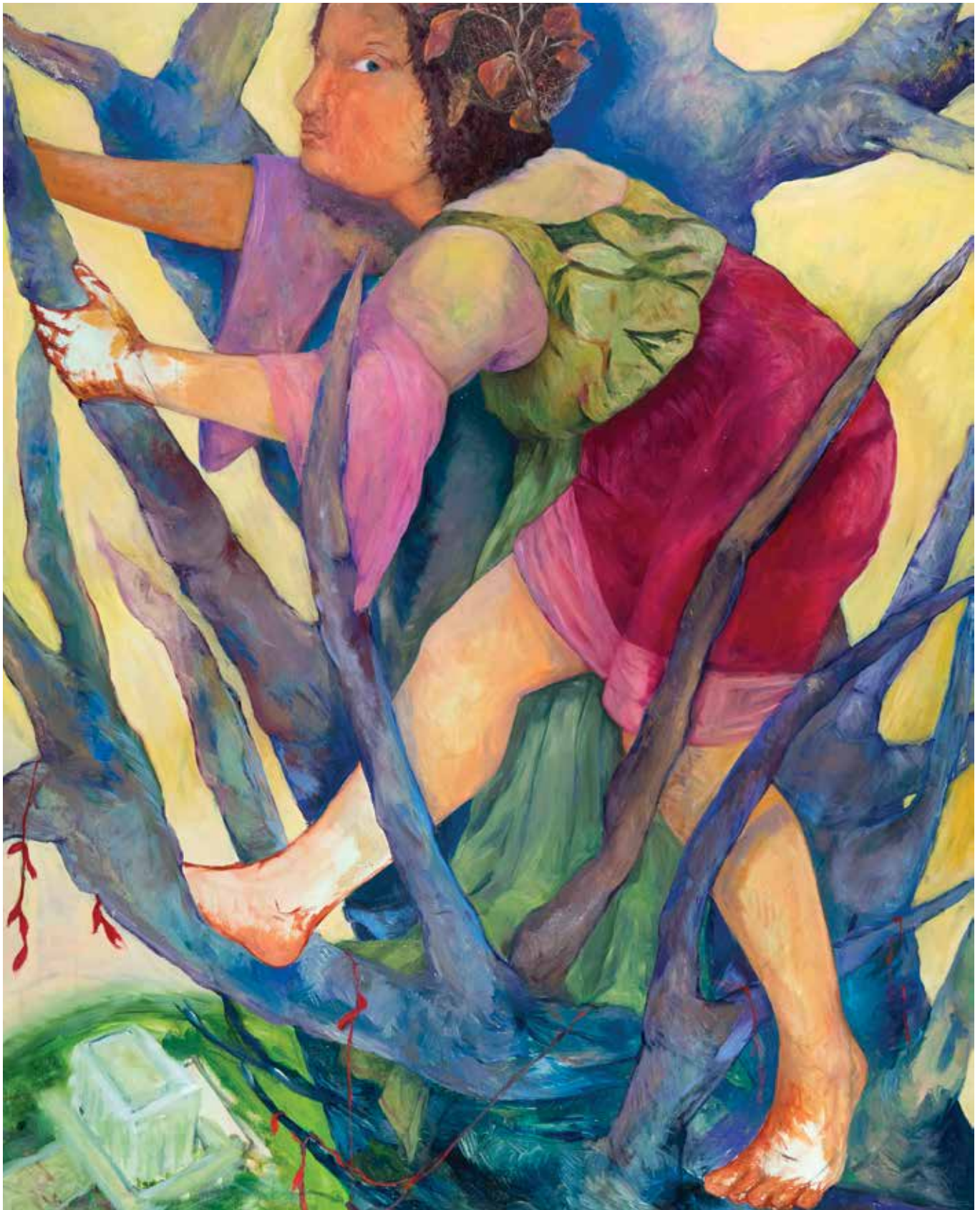
*Dryades Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches  
*Lowerline Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches



*Erato Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches  
*Pauger Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches



*Desire Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches  
*Marigny Street* | oil on paper, 22 x 30 inches



*A Contemplative Perch*, 2017 | oil on linen, 60 x 48 inches



*False Tinder*, 2018 | oil on canvas, 48 x 60 inches



## PHILEMONA WILLIAMSON

### EDUCATION

- 1979 MA, New York University, New York  
1973 BA, Bennington College, VT

### SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS SINCE 2010

- 2017 *Philemona Williamson: Metaphorical Narratives*, retrospective, curated and essay by chief curator Gail Stavitsky, Montclair Art Museum, NJ; catalogue  
*Hovering Tales*, June Kelly Gallery, New York  
*The Beautiful Somewhere: The Art of Philemona Williamson*, guest curator, Arturo Lindsay, former Professor Emeritus and former Chair of the Department of Art and Art History, Spelman College, the Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Black Culture and History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; brochure
- 2015 *Black & Colored: Recent Paintings*, June Kelly Gallery, New York
- 2013 *Philemona Williamson: New Works*, Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts, Wilmington, DE
- 2012 *Philemona Williamson: New Work*, Center for the Arts, Holtzman Gallery, Towson University, Towson, MD; catalogue
- 2010 *Fractured Tales*, June Kelly Gallery, New York

### SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS SINCE 2009

- 2017 *Converging Voices: Gender and Identity*, curated by Karen T. Albert, Deputy Director and Chief Curator, Hofstra University Museum, Hempstead, NY; brochure
- 2016-17 *Visions of Our 44<sup>th</sup> President*, organized by the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History, Detroit, MI, curated by Peter Kaplan of Our World, LLC, The Black Archives Historic Lyric Theater, Miami, FL, travelling exhibition
- 2016 *Recharging the Image: Selections from the Mott-Warsh Collection*, Visual Arts Center of New Jersey, Summit, NJ
- 2014 *Aljira at 30, Dream and Reality*, New Jersey State Museum, Trenton
- 2012 *Five Decades of Collecting*, Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE; catalogue
- 2010 *Shrew'd: The Smart & Sassy Survey of American Women Artists*, curated by Sharon Kennedy, Sheldon Museum of Art, Lincoln, NE; catalogue  
*Children's Pleasures: American Celebrations of Childhood*, curated by Donna Barnes, Ph.D., Emily Lowe Gallery, Hofstra University Museum, Hempstead, NY; catalogue
- 2009-12 *A Complex Weave: Women and Identity in Contemporary Art*, organized by Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts and co-curated by Dr. Martin Rosenberg, Rutgers University and Dr. J. Susan Isaacs, Towson University; catalogue. The exhibition will travel nationally under the auspices of the Curatorial Assistance Exhibition and Art Services; catalogue

### PUBLIC & CORPORATE COLLECTIONS

Kalamazoo Institute of Arts, MI  
Mint Museum of Art, Charlotte, NC  
Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey  
Smith College Museum of Art, Northampton, MA  
Hampton University Museum, VA  
Sheldon Art Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE  
Mott-Warsh Art Collection, Flint, MI  
Reader's Digest Art Collection, Pleasantville, NY  
AT&T, NJ

### GRANTS & AWARDS

2015 Joan Mitchell Foundation Residency, New Orleans, LA  
2008 Bau Institute, two-week residency, Otranto, Italy  
1997 Joan Mitchell Foundation Award in Painting, New York  
1993-94 Ludwig Vogelstein Grant, New York



## **THE DRUMTHWACKET FOUNDATION**

The Drumthwacket Foundation serves to inspire pride in and enhance civic awareness of Drumthwacket, the official New Jersey governor's residence and a nationally landmarked historic site. The Foundation facilitates restoration and conservation of the residence and offers educational and cultural programs that recognize the rich diversity of New Jersey's communities and residents.



## **THE DRUMTHWACKET FOUNDATION**

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