

## ZARIA FORMAN

*Maldives #4, 2013*  
soft pastel on paper, 41 x 60 in



courtesy: Winston Wachter Fine Art, New York and Seattle

## CHRISTINE HUFFARD

### Octopus Lady Survival Patterns of the Octopoda

In December 2000, North Sulawesi, Indonesia was overwhelmed with floods. Bridges, villages, and mountainsides washed away. Koi overflowed from backyard ponds, careened down rivers, and gulped desperately in the bays, unable to process the brackish water. People carried them in bucketfuls home from the beaches and sautéed them with chiles over kerosene burners, a meal valued at more than a year's pay. At the harbor entrance, the runoff rushed out and erected a double-overhead standing wave. Lurching and bubbling erratically with brown foam, this upsurge shed a rogue wave over the bow of a small wooden boat just trying to make it home to the nearby island of Bunaken. The frightened passengers ran to the stern, tipping the boat on end, and most were washed overboard. Those who were still on board frantically unlashed jerry cans from stow and tossed the buoyant jugs over as life rings. That day, weeks before Christmas, Bunaken lost one of its elders, the month's supply of village generator fuel, and one of the island's only two phones connecting people to their distant relatives.

It is a unique quality of humans to attempt to understand someone else's priorities and struggles. And it might seem like an affront to evolution that we should spend energy on things that have no apparent connection to our own survival. On Bunaken my name is "ibu boboca"—"the octopus lady." Off and on for years, all day long, I floated face-down on snorkel, sometimes feet from the beach in inches of water. I had come all the way from America to write down notes on the second-by-second behavior of commercially unimportant pygmy octopuses, which most of my neighbors didn't even know existed. Although I did not speak the language when I first landed, the quizzical looks during introductions asked, "Could there possibly be a bigger waste of time and money for someone with so much opportunity?" People assured me that if they hadn't already known and revered my neighbor who studied mantis shrimps and coelacanths, they would have surely thought I was a spy—or at least not very bright. It was healthy for me to be given potent reminders early in my work that my discoveries could take light-years to make a difference to anyone else, if ever. Likewise, I learned to feel the weight of prior conversations wasted on weather, when I saw a baby lost to diarrhea for lack of understanding about dehydration, a pregnancy and marriage at the

athletic tape. My trusty watch face fixed to the slate is still ticking after four rugged years. As I slip under the shallow water, my ears fill with the crackling of shrimp and the low rumble of shifting sand. A frog kick pushes me quietly through the water while I peek up at the sunrise on my way to the octopuses' dens.

Eventually the female pushes up from underneath the pebbles at her den's entrance and bobs her pea-sized eyes up and down. When a little wave rolls by, tossing glare and shadows all over the place, she changes from dark brown to washed-out ochre and spills out over the rocks with the surge. Like a predator would, I almost lose sight of her, but her movements against the grain of the swaying algae give her away. I note the time. An hour later she's still looking for food. Her sucker-lined web blankets over rocks, and a flush of white spreads across her eyes and arms. Now and then she twitches, probably snaring little crabs. The male had been up at his den's entrance for an hour before the female emerged from hers, and had pushed a few armfuls of sand from inside his burrow. As soon as she'd crawled out and started to forage, he'd gotten out too. At best he has spent some of the past hour being dragged behind her by his specialized mating arm, and he's fought off a few rival males. But mostly he's just crawled through the seagrass keeping her in sight.

Breaking briefly from his watch, he ducks into a little hole in the sandstone, but instead of finding much-needed prey inside, it's his bad luck that he's chosen the home of a damselfish. Unable to make a quick retreat and catch up with his mate, he is held hostage in the hole, and is pecked relentlessly by the puny fish, which doesn't understand that letting him go would be a win for all. One minute. Five minutes. Ten minutes, and the stalemate continues. To my shock, a tuft of algae I glimpse out of the corner of my eye reveals itself to be the female, who had waited there instead of continuing to forage. She crawls over to the damsel, flares her arms and web, and grabs the male, pulling him past the stunned damsel to safety. Off they crawl, around the seagrass bed and back to their dens, where they sit in silence and watch the fishes go by until sunset.

## ZARIA FORMAN

*Maldives #2, 2013*  
soft pastel on paper, 41 x 60 in



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## NOTES ON THE ARTISTS

**Chantal Bizzini**, poet and photographer, lives in Paris. She has exhibited her photographs and photomontages at art galleries in Paris, and has taken part in several conferences relating to books illustrated with photographs, including events held at the Centre Culturel International de Cerisy and, in Paris, at the Sorbonne and at NYU. She also has published poems as well as translations of Anglo-Saxon, Italian, and Portuguese poetry into French.

Born and raised in Southern California, **Pamela Carroll** embraces the traditional focus of realism and pictorial illusionism. Her style of painting has been influenced by the early Dutch masters as well as contemporary realist painters. Carroll has been a dedicated artist for the majority of her adult life. In 2006, she was selected by the White House as Artist of the Year to paint a series of Christmas paintings for its Christmas brochure. She has been honored seven times as a finalist for *The Artist's Magazine's* annual juried competition, most recently in 2012.

**Christopher Felver** is a photographer and filmmaker documenting the people who have been shaping the higher discourse in our country since the 1950s. His work has been exhibited internationally—with solo photographic exhibitions—at the Arco d' Alibert, Rome (1987); the Art Institute for the Permian Basin, Odessa, Texas (1987); Torino Fotografia Biennale Internazionale, Italy (1989); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (1994); Roosevelt Study Center, Middelburg, Netherlands (1998); Fahey/Klein Gallery, Los Angeles (2002); the Maine Photographic Workshop (2002);

Robert Berman Gallery, Los Angeles (2007); and other galleries and museums. His works have also appeared in major group exhibitions, including *The Beat Generation: Legacy and Celebration*, New York University (1994) and *Beatific Soul: Jack Kerouac On The Road*, New York Public Library (2007).

**Lawrence Ferlinghetti** is an American poet, painter, and liberal activist, and is a cofounder of City Lights Booksellers & Publishers. Author of poetry, translations, fiction, theater, art criticism, and film narration, he is best known for *A Coney Island of the Mind* (1958), a collection of poems that has been translated into nine languages, with sales of over one million copies.

**Fanne Fernow** has an artist loft at the Tannery Arts Center in Santa Cruz, and has shown her work at Santa Cruz Open Studios for many years. Fanne Fernow was born in Buffalo, New York in 1953 and lived there most of her young life. Later on, she moved to Massachusetts, and over fifteen years she lived from one end (Provincetown) to the other (South Hadley). She moved to Santa Cruz, California to reinvent herself and pursue a life as an artist. She has shown her work all over the United States and been published in numerous publications, both print and digital.

**Zaria Forman** trained at Skidmore College and now exhibits extensively in galleries and venues throughout the United States and overseas. In August 2012 she led "Chasing the Light," an art expedition sailing up the northwest coast of Greenland to artistically document the rapidly changing Arctic landscape. She continues to address climate change in her work and spent September 2013 in the Maldives, the lowest-lying country in the world, and arguably the most vulnerable to rising sea levels.

**Josie Gray** is from the shores of Lough Arrow in east Sligo, Ireland, and shares a tradition of landscape painting with such artists as Patrick Collins and Sean McSweeney. He has had many successful exhibitions in the USA, on both the east and west coasts, as well as in the Irish counties of Sligo and Leitrim. He paints both in Ireland and on the Olympic Peninsula in Port Angeles, Washington, where he loves the close conjunction of water and mountains.

A printmaking/color design instructor for twenty-five years at Cabrillo College, **Jane Gregorius** cofounded Printmakers at the Tannery, a cooperative studio of nineteen artists in Santa Cruz. She serves as chairman of the board of the Yuma Symposium in Yuma, Arizona, now in its thirty-fifth year of excellent artists' presentations. Her work includes

silk screens and intaglio prints, print installations, paintings, and book arts. She has demonstrated and shown her work widely in the USA and Mexico, where she has led painting and printmaking groups. She lives and works in Santa Cruz, California.

**Howard Ikemoto** studied under Wayne Thiebaud at Sacramento City College, then transferred to San Jose State University where he received both his BA and MA in art. He settled in Santa Cruz, and taught at Cabrillo College for thirty-four years before retiring in 2000. In 2010, he had a retrospective at the Triton Museum of Art in Santa Clara. Recently, his work examines landscapes through the process of painting. The works are often abstract and sometimes nonobjective. Howard's work has been exhibited in museums and galleries throughout California.

**Michal Mahgerefteh** offers collage workshops at The Muse Writers Center in Norfolk, Virginia ([www.the-muse.com](http://www.the-muse.com)). Her holocaust collage art is included in a group exhibition at The Anne Frank Center USA in New York City (2014). She is editor in chief of the international literary magazine *Poetica*, and author of four poetry collections: *In My Bustan* (2009), *Sipping Memories: A Poetic Journal to Morocco* (2010), *What's Left Behind* (2011), and *Field of Harps* (2013).

Since 1984, **Ron Milhoan** has been teaching Painting and Drawing at Cabrillo College in Aptos, California. He traveled extensively in Europe and the United States on two sabbatical research leaves, studying the history and culture of art from cave paintings in France to contemporary art. Ron's work has been exhibited nationally, and he is a recipient of NEA Painting Fellowships and a Santa Cruz County Distinguished Artist Award.

**Catie O'Leary** has always been interested in books. One of her father's first presents to her mother was an antique print of moths. After seeing a Jess exhibition at the University of California, Berkeley's Art Museum, she abandoned all other art forms for collage. Using engravings from antique books, she intuitively gravitates toward images that most interest her. The cut-out parts become puzzle pieces in her creative process. Her recent work has been shown at the Oberpfälzer Künstlerhaus in Fronberg, Germany; the Jack Fischer and Braunstein/Quay galleries in San Francisco; and the Palo Alto Art Center. Additional work can be seen at [www.catieoleary.com](http://www.catieoleary.com).

**Ed Smiley** is noted for his vivid and colorful abstractions. His recent work is primarily in acrylic and direct acrylic transfer of scanned, modified, and computer-generated forms. He

has also exhibited works in gouache, oil, alkyd, silk screen, intaglio, collage, xerography, assemblage, and kinetic light boxes. He has studied art, engineering, and computers, and has worked as a dishwasher, bean raker, software engineer, ironworker, software architect, bookstore clerk, cannery worker, and house painter.

**Tabitha Soren** was born into a U.S. Air Force military family, but grew up all over the world. She received a BA in journalism and politics at New York University, and later studied photography at Stanford University and California College of the Arts. Public collections include the Oakland Museum of California, Cleveland's Transformer Station, the Indianapolis Museum of Contemporary Art, the New Orleans Museum of Art, and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art in New Orleans. Her work is represented by Kopeikin Gallery in Los Angeles.

**Matthew Weston Taylor** was born in Stockton, California. He received a BFA from San Jose State University in 2008 and his MFA from the University of California Davis in 2011. Working primarily with painting and drawing, Matthew maintains a studio and teaches at San Jose State University and Cabrillo College. He lives with his wife and daughter in Soquel, California.