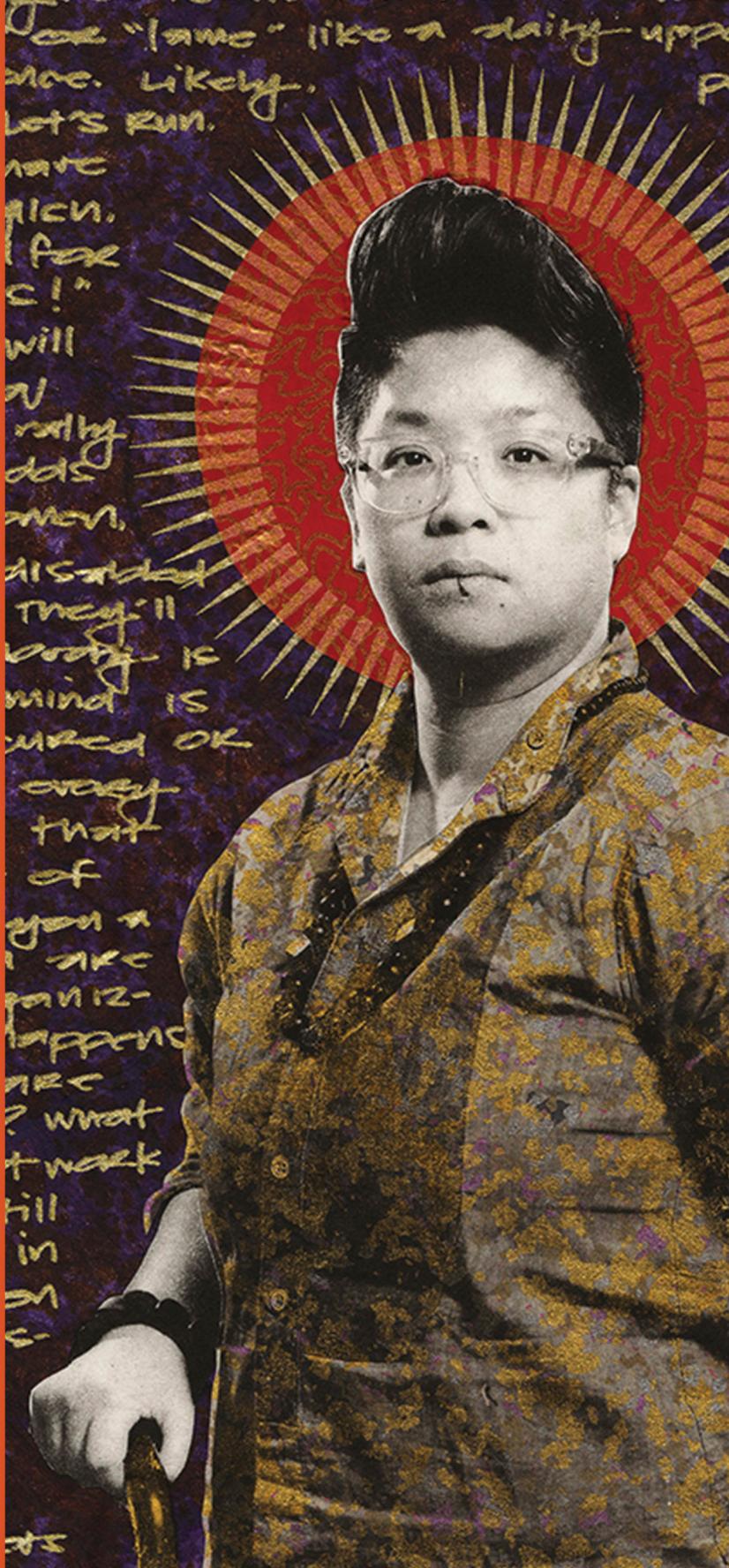


Shifting the gaze

Exhibition Catalog

collective
museum
of art





shifting the gaze

December 14th 2020–April 20th 2021

collective
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of art

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foreword

Millennials are the most racially and ethnically diverse adult generation in American history with 44 percent minority (Frey, 2018). Yet, museums fail to represent these ever-changing demographics within their staff, exhibitions, and collections. Sadly, this lack of diversity extends to our art history classes, textbooks, and other cultural institutions. Consequently, the Collective Museum of Art was created as a response to spark a conversation about strengthening diversity, inclusion, and cultural equity in museums.

We at the Collective Museum of Art began to wonder whose histories are being obscured, whose histories are untold. As creatives and people entering the art landscape, we need to inspire the upcoming youth of artists. But, how can we if they can't see themselves in museums, galleries, and in the art world in general? Therefore, we dedicated a space where the stories of marginalized communities are amplified and different cultures and perspectives can be shared.

Our current exhibition, *Shifting the Gaze*, will feature works by Cara Romero, Helina Metaferia, Julian Kwon, Barry Lee, Amir H. Fallah, and Gabriel Garcia Roman. Through various media, such as paintings, photographs, sculptures, and mixed media, artworks will confront issues of immigration, displacement, racism, and identity politics. These diverse voices will come together to speak about pressing issues that are affecting their communities. Featured artists are representative of and/or depict BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and Disabled communities. For example, Cara Romero tells stories about Native Americans in modern society through photography. Ethiopian American artist Helina Metaferia uses her art to discuss issues of systemic oppression and inserting the black body into spaces that they've been deprived of. Now more than ever we need exhibitions that reflect our current cultural, social, and political landscape to invite discussion and encourage change.

Frey, William H. "The Millennial Generation: A Demographic Bridge to America's Diverse Future." Brookings, Brookings, 7 May 2018, www.brookings.edu/research/millennials/.

current
exhibition

shifting the
gaze

cara



romero

● **Water Memory**, 2015, archival pigment print, 56 1/8 x 56 1/4 x 1 1/2 in.

Amending the representation of the Native American community

Cara Romero, a Chemehuevi photographer, uses theatrical compositions to tell stories about contemporary Native Americans in modern society. Disillusioned by the way Indigenous people were portrayed by academia and the media, Romero turned to photography to challenge stereotypical depictions of Indigeneity and address Native American social issues. This series of photographs—that depict Native Americans floating or being thrust into water—is multilayered. It pays homage to her Chemehuevi tribe and other tribal lands that were flooded to construct U.S dams and stripped from its natural resources. It's also a grim reminder about the effects of climate change. Water that once used to be pure and clean, and represented life, has now become tainted by people who are trying to extract oils and other precious resources from their lands. These waters are now dark and murky and hold hundreds of questions. Where are the reparations for the Natives? What will the future hold for all these people?

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Oil Boom, 2015, archival pigment photograph, 56 1/4 x 56 1/8 x 1 1/2 in.



Eufaula Girls, 2015, archival pigment photograph, 56 1/4 x 56 1/8 x 1 1/2 in.

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barry



lee

● Another Day, Self-Portrait,
2017, photograph.

Erasing the misconceptions of disability through surreal photography

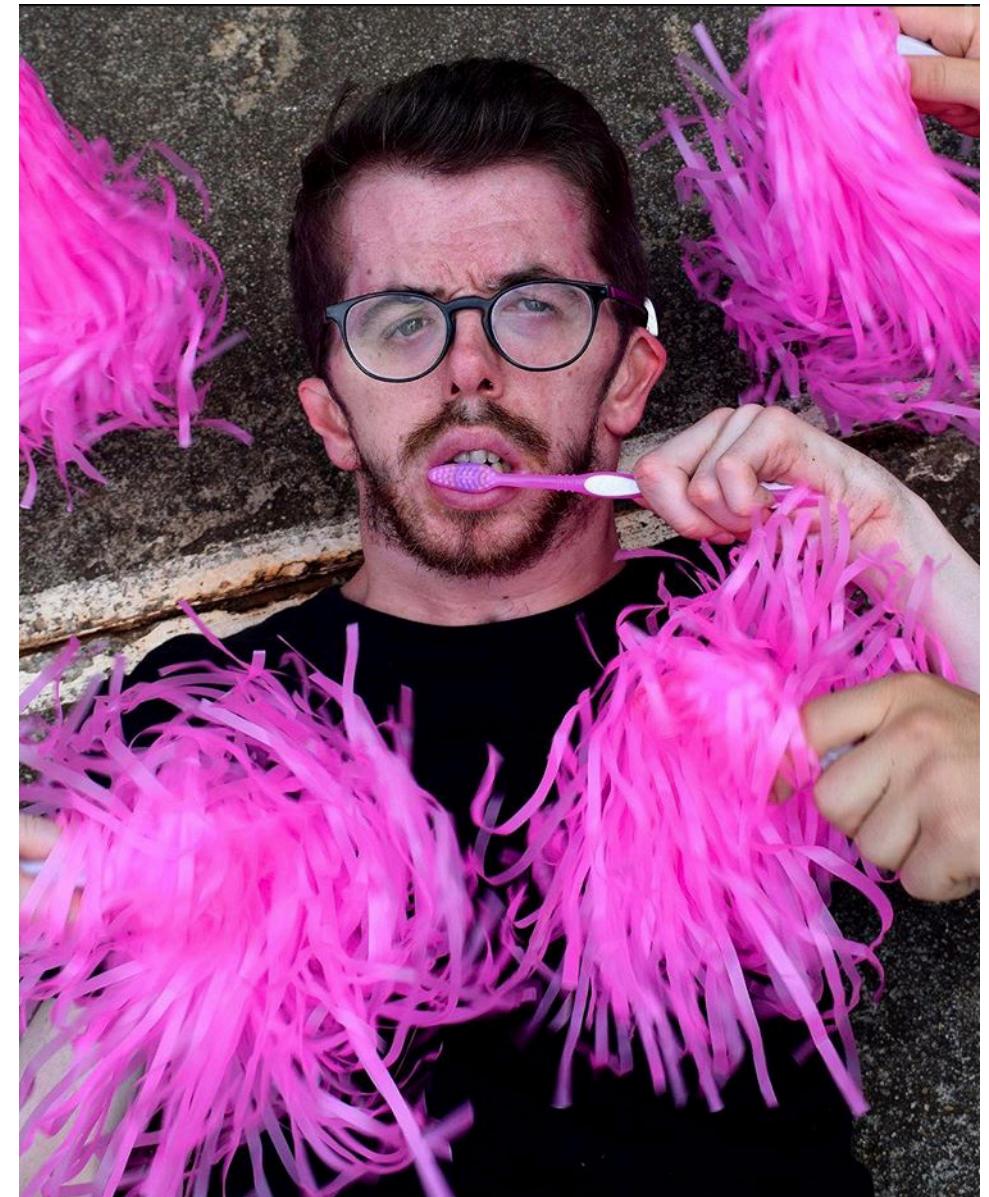
Through these surreal photographs, Barry Lee explores his experiences with disability, sexuality, self-love, and ableism. With titles such as *You Did It!*, and *Another Day, Self-Portrait*, Lee sheds light on some of the comments that he's dealt with growing up with Nager syndrome which causes deformation in the face and limbs. Because of his disfigurement, Lee led a life where people would ask about his appearance or congratulate him after he accomplished simple tasks such as eating or brushing his teeth. These actions were normal for Lee, but nevertheless, people reacted as if he were incapable because of his disability. Lee's photographs bring awareness to such events in hopes to change the way abled people perceive disabled people. *4 Fingers and 5 Toes* is an intimate close-up of the artist's relationship with their body. The image is clear and simple: a hand caressing a foot. This beautiful image of self-love recalls times where people were ashamed to be seen with him or around him. Now, he takes images loving himself and creating representation of people who look like him. He hopes that someone can look at these images and not feel alone in their disability.

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4 fingers 5 toes, 2017,
photograph.

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You Did It!, 2017,
photograph.

helina



metaferia

● Headdress 1, 2019,
collaged paper, 51" x 27".

Acknowledging the overlooked labor of Black women in protest movements

Helina Metaferia created this series titled Headdress to honor her mother, Maigenet Shifferraw, a prominent Ethiopian women's rights activist who passed away in 2016, and to provoke a conversation about the overlooked labors of women of color in protest movements. At first glance, one would assume that these women are gracefully carrying fruits on their heads. But upon closer inspection, these headdresses represent years of Black history and historical activism. Here, Metaferia juxtaposed images of BIPOC women who participated in her activist workshops with Black Panther newspapers and South African apartheid movement posters. Images of important Black leaders and protesters with raised fists and signs are collaged into elaborate headdresses that adorn the subjects. The merging of images from the past and the present reinforces the idea of strength and perseverance of generations of black and brown people through generations.

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● **Headdress 5, 2019,**
collaged paper, 21" x 39".

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● **Headdress 6, 2019,**
collaged paper, 23" x 28".

julia



kwon

No. 15 (Oriental), 2016
oil on canvas, 24" x 24" x 2.5".

Embracing Asian identity, unapologetically, and confronting racism and objectification

Julia Kwon creates works inspired by her experience of being seen as the “other”. *No. 15 (Oriental)*, which has the word oriental camouflaged into the Korean inspired pattern, recalls the racist and objectifying comments Asian women like her would receive. Her most recent project, *Unapologetically Asian*, was created during a period where many Asian Americans were in a state of fear and anxiety. As a result of COVID-19, hate crimes against Asian Americans were on the rise. Her Korean patchwork masks served as a creative outlet and a response to the growing anti-Asian sentiment. From a Western perspective, these pieces of cloth are rather new. However, from Kwon’s perspective, these masks are embedded with generations of Korean history and Korean patchwork tradition. Once largely perceived as odd, unnecessary, or an overreaction, they are now becoming standard in the Western world. Today, wearing a mask in the U.S has become political and is seen as an infringement of rights by some. But, with these vibrant masks, Kwon aims to encourage mask wearing while celebrating her ethnic identity.

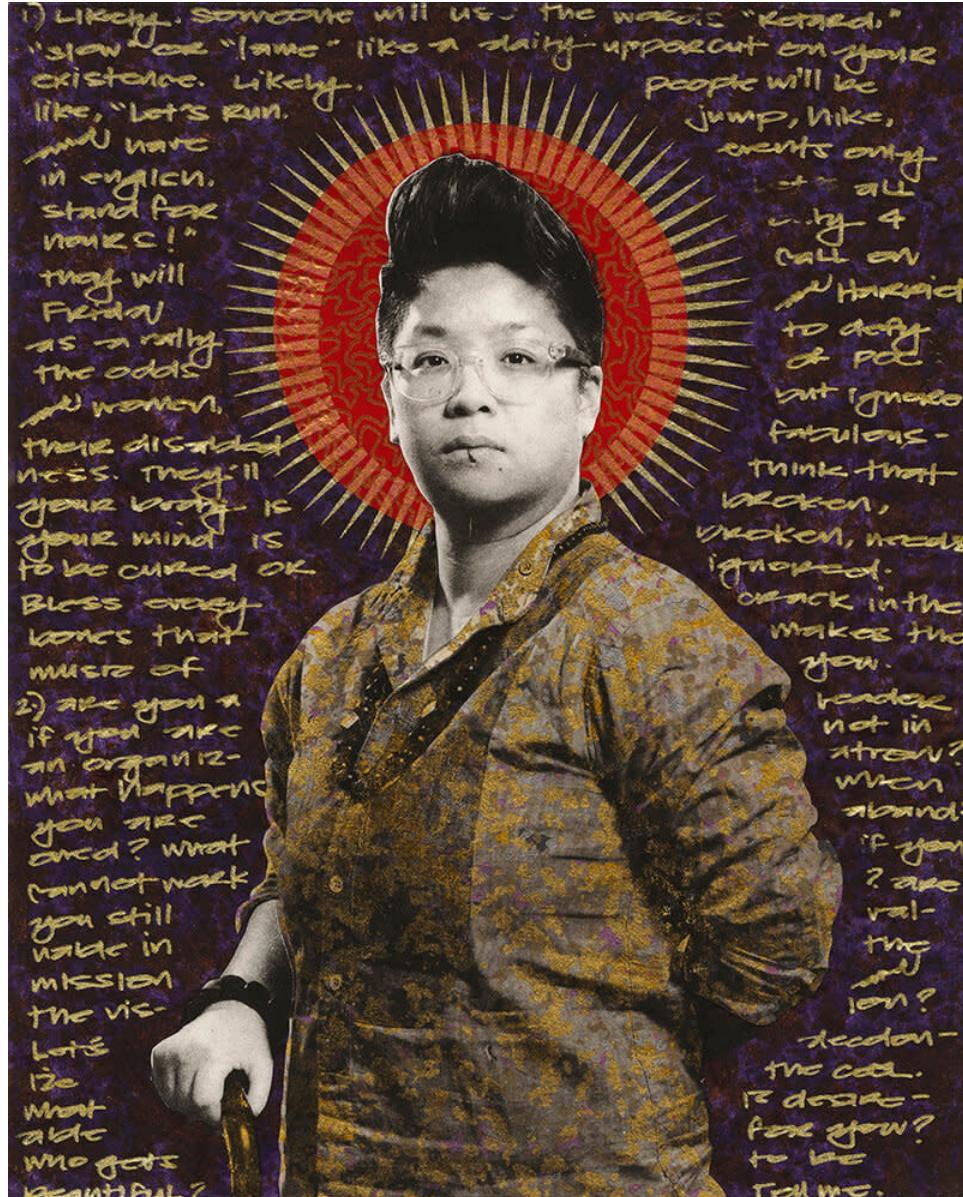
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● **Unapologetically Asian**, 2020, woven
cotton canvas, muslin, and Korean silk.

gabriel



g. roman

Kay, 2018, photogravure w/ Chine-Colle and silkscreen, 15" x 18".

Elevating queer people of color through Catholic Iconography

This series by Gabriel Garcia Roman, titled *Queer Icons*, echoes the diverse voices and identities of queer people of color. The subjects depicted are activists and community organizers, haloed amid verses of poetry that they wrote. Interestingly, Roman uses Catholic imagery to portray his subjects, a decision that seems controversial because of the churches' complicated history with homophobia and misogyny. However, as someone who is queer and grew up Catholic and surrounded by Catholic iconography, Roman wanted to give visibility to his community that he hardly ever saw represented anywhere. He wanted to portray queer people as regal, noble, and defiant. By using the portraiture styles of Renaissance, Flemish, and Christian Orthodox paintings he was able to elevate these powerful and proud contemporary figures.



Erika, 2018, photogravure w/ Chine-
Colle and silkscreen, 15" x 18".



Panda Dulce, 2018, photogravure w/
Chine-Colle and silkscreen, 15" x 18".

amir



h. fallah

● **Calling On The Past**, 2018,
acrylic on canvas, 60" x 48".

Discussing the immigrant experience and memories of cultures left behind

Amir H. Fallah's *How Far We've Come* series explores the relationship between identity and the immigrant experience. His richly colored biographical portraits depict immigrants from his community with objects that belong to them, giving us a glimpse into their lives. Events such as Trump's inauguration, the Muslim ban, and the birth of his son, has made identity the forefront of his work. Traditionally in portraiture, faces and expressions are predominant, however, in Fallah's rendition of portraits, these features are concealed with intricate fabrics. Subjects' race and genders are not revealed, and their skin color is disguised with a neon yellow color, further anonymizing them. Fallah was interested in stripping these qualities from their subjects to deter viewers from judging based on appearance. Instead, he allowed the subjects' objects to tell their stories. Born in Iran and raised in Virginia, this series reflects his own experiences of hybridity and being stuck in a cultural limbo.

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● **American Family**, 2018, acrylic and
collage on canvas, 84" x 68".

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colophon

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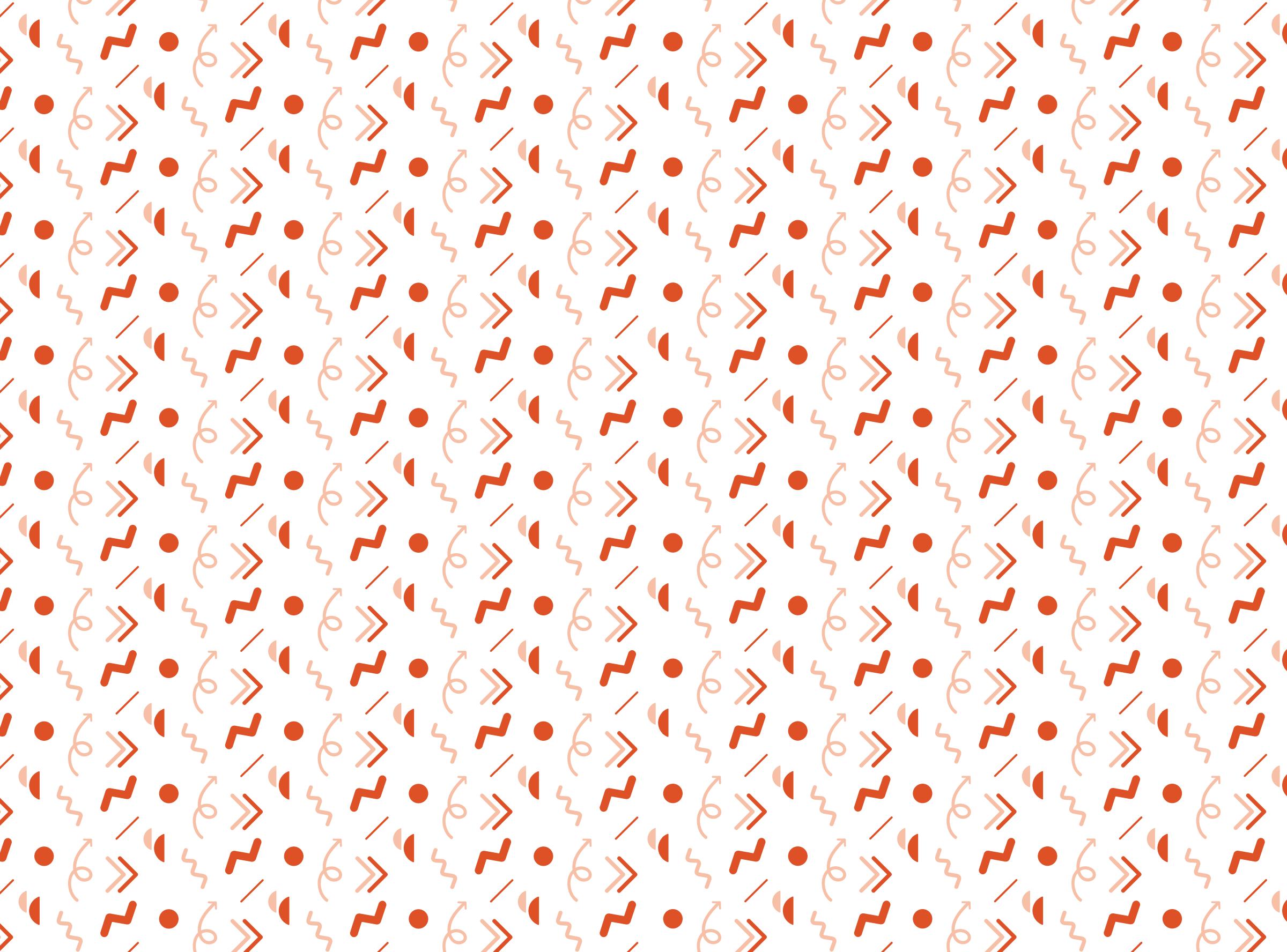
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**where art,
diversity, and
inclusivity
intersect.**

**collective
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of art**