

## PRESS INQUIRIES

941-365-2032 ▪ [press@artsarasota.org](mailto:press@artsarasota.org)

Su Byron ▪ [su@subyronenterprises.com](mailto:su@subyronenterprises.com)

## Art Center Sarasota's New Exhibitions:

**March 17-April 30**

### **Osa Atoe: “The Sea is Alive in Me”**

*A collection of wheel-thrown functional and decorative ceramic vessels inspired by the Gulf of Mexico and historical water storage pots.*

### **Philomena Marano: “Signs & Wonders”**

*Featuring works created from a cut paper process that straddles painting and graphic design. These vibrant compositions evoke the visual poetry and exhilaration of Coney Island and the thrills of the circus.*

### **Susan Sidebottom: “A Place In The Sun”**

*Sidebottom’s photography explores humanity, offering a deeper understanding of the connection between people and their circumstances.*

### **Juried Exhibition: Annual Members Juried Show**

*A juried exhibition of members artwork juried by Barbara Banks and Katherine Bzura.*

**Opening reception for all exhibits is Thursday, March 17**

(February 16, 2022) Art Center Sarasota’s exhibition season continues with four exhibits, March 17-April 30. **Osa Atoe: “The Sea is Alive in Me”** features a collection of wheel-thrown functional and decorative ceramic vessels inspired by the Gulf of Mexico and historical water storage pots. **Philomena Marano: “Signs & Wonders”** features works created from a cut paper process that straddles painting and graphic

design. These vibrant compositions evoke the visual poetry and exhilaration of Coney Island rides and the thrill of the circus. In **“A Place In The Sun,”** portrait photographer Susan Sidebottom tells people’s stories through the spaces they inhabit. **“The Annual Members Juried Show”** is a juried exhibition of members’ artwork juried by Barbara Banks and Katherine Bzura. **The opening reception for all four exhibits is Thursday, March 17, 6-8 p.m. Masks are required. Art Center Sarasota is part of #SafeArtsSarasota. Art Center Sarasota, 707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota. For information, visit [www.artsarasota.org](http://www.artsarasota.org) or call 941-365-2032.**

Ceramicist and Sarasota resident **Osa Atoe** describes her pottery as “people-centric.” Researching historical water jugs, and other traditional vessels, Atoe uses red stoneware clay and often leaves portions of her pots unglazed. Her works are decorated with carved and stamped geometric designs that give a nod to prehistoric ceramics; the patterns are simple and universal. “Some of my surfaces are inspired by the aged and weathered surfaces we observe in everyday life such as worn paint or oxidized metals,” she says, adding that, she wishes to “express a multiculturalism and a human universality” through her work. Growing up the child of Nigerian immigrants in the suburbs of Washington, D.C., Atoe says that her understanding of American culture is “diverse and the result of an amalgamation of varied ethnic and cultural legacies,” and she aims to highlight the positive elements of the American melting pot. “I prefer to see my pottery as a reflection of the cultural exchange that comprises the core identity of the United States. As a Black artist, I am wary of being put in a box so that I may be easily categorized and (mis)understood.” Aside from a one-year post-baccalaureate program at Louisiana State University completed in 2018, Atoe has been mostly self-

directed, using independent study to guide her practice. For this exhibition, which marks her first in-person exhibition, Atoe is expanding on her body of work by experimenting with sizes, glazes, and firing techniques.

“Osa has built a significant art following on social media platforms with a proven network of collectors worldwide,” says Kinsey Robb, the executive director of Art Center Sarasota. “Staging her works in one curated space is an exciting step—and we’re thrilled she chose Art Center Sarasota for her first formal exhibition.”

**Philomena Marano** was born in Brooklyn and holds a BFA from Pratt Institute. An enthusiast of the visual poetry of Coney Island, Marano created the winning poster for the first Spirit of Brooklyn poster competition, and is a master of *papier collé*, the elegant cut paper technique she learned as a studio assistant to preeminent artist Robert Indiana. She is most known for her collection, “American-Dream-Land,” a decades-spanning project of *papier collé* originals and limited-edition prints that reveal Coney Island’s twin promises of candy-colored paradise and gritty raw excitement. Her ornate compositions are cut out of “color-aid” paper—a type of paper coated with vibrant screen printers’ ink, the same paper which Romare Bearden frequently incorporated into his collages. After moving to Sarasota in 2017, Marano became inspired by the history of the circus in this region and her series “Circus Thrill Shows” features death-defying feats of local circus family, the Nerveless Nocks. Her work has been exhibited in New York by the Museum of the City, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Coney Island Museum and the ACA Galleries. It has also been exhibited at the George Krevsky Gallery in San Francisco and, in Florida, at the Museum of Art in DeLand and

Ringling College of Art & Design. She is represented in private, corporate and museum collections. Marano lives and works in Sarasota.

**Susan Sidebottom** is a portrait photographer who partners with community groups and collaborates with the people she photographs to offer a deeper understanding of the relationship between people and their circumstances. This exhibit is sponsored by the Gulf Coast Community Foundation and includes 25 images portraying working individuals in the community who lack affordable housing and other necessities. The people Sidebottom photographs are seeking a desirable position, whether it's happiness, comfort, success, or spirituality; and in their quest, they hold jobs in the community serving others who have already found their "place in the sun."

In 2020, Sidebottom was given the Merit Award from the National Council on Aging for her photographs depicting the homebound elderly. She received grants from the Arts and Science Council and the Foundation for the Carolina for her series, "On the Edge: Homeless and Working Among Us." Sidebottom's exhibit, "Suspended in the Balance," portraying the mental landscape of working poverty, is showing at Iowa State University's College of Design later this year. Sidebottom is a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with Bachelor of Arts degrees in journalism and speech communications. She has exhibited at The Levine Museum of the New South in conjunction with The Light Factory and at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. "A Place in the Sun" is made possible through collaborations with All Faiths Food Bank, Harvest House, Safe Children Coalition, St. Vincent de Paul Cares, and Unidos Now. The artist and Art Center Sarasota are donating a portion of the proceeds from the

exhibit to benefit Harvest House for their partnership and broad reach as a nonprofit supportive housing provider for those most at risk in the community.

“The **Annual Members Juried Show**” is a juried members’ exhibition. This year’s exhibition will be juried by photographer **Barbara Banks** and art historian **Katherine Bzura**. Banks picked up her first camera as a child, documenting family life and the world around her through the use of black and white film. Frequently commissioned by clientele in Florida and across the U.S., her work appear regularly in *Style*, *Sarasota Magazine*, and other popular Sarasota publications. Her fine art photography has been shown in galleries on Martha’s Vineyard, Sarasota and Naples. Banks is represented by State of the Arts Gallery, Sarasota. Katherine Bzura has been an art consultant for painters and sculptors in New York, and an award-winning gallery owner in Ybor City. In her current role as gallery director and assistant professor of art history at State College of Florida, Bzura continues to focus on the connections that exist between artists of all types and the communities and audiences they seek to reach. Outside of teaching and curating, Bzura is the co-host of the Suncoast Culture Club Podcast.

### **About Art Center Sarasota**

Art Center Sarasota was the first arts and cultural institution in Sarasota. Founded in 1926 as the “Sarasota Art Association” by Marcia Rader, the art supervisor for the Sarasota County schools district, the Association was later incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in 1943 and has been in its current location in the Sarasota Bayfront Cultural District since 1949. Art Center Sarasota is a member-supported organization that offers curated and juried exhibitions, adult and youth education programs, outreach initiatives for underserved youth, and culturally related public programming. Art Center Sarasota is admission-free and open to all public; its

mission is to inspire individual creative expression, nurture artistic talent and provide the community with accessible and diverse visual art opportunities.

**Art Center Sarasota**

707 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236

Phone: 941-365-2032

[www.artsarasota.org](http://www.artsarasota.org)

**Gallery Hours**

Monday-Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Saturday: Noon-5 p.m.