Juror Statement

As a curator of contemporary art, I believe the role of a juror is not necessarily to pass judgement on individual works, but rather to select a group that will form a cohesive exhibition. This was an ambitious task, given the overall quality of the works submitted by The Center’s members. What made it easier was envisioning the “conversations” that could occur between specific works once they were installed in a gallery setting.

While there is no unifying theme, what connects all of my selections is their collective evidence that art has the power to heal, inspire, or sometimes just offer just the diversions we crave in difficult times. Ultimately, I chose art that made me want to look—and look again. I was energized by the geometric and biomorphic abstract works—especially the array of sculptures. After a period of restricted travel and contact with other humans, it felt almost nostalgic to see faraway places, animals eating and drinking, and people who inspire us. Several works captured the activist spirit that prevailed though much of 2020.

I also found myself drawn to images of light. Perhaps this was just a coincidence, and the compositions, colors, and subjects would have made each choice sufficiently compelling on its own. But having navigated this past year, it is tempting to see them—and all of the works in this show—as necessary antidotes to darkness. What a relief!

Mary Birmingham