



Blaffer Art Museum at the University of Houston
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a way to mend | curated by Doug Welsh
June 7, 2025—September 6, 2025

Public Opening Reception | June 7, 11am-5pm at the Blaffer Art Museum

HOUSTON, TX | April 22, 2025

a way to mend presents recent work by 19 Gulf Coast artists whose work engages relationships between abstraction and landscape, and whose practices connect art with processes of healing. Accompanied with texts commissioned from five writers, *a way to mend* studies emotional wayfinding, personal and communal protection, solitude, spirituality, and transformation.

Curated by Houston-based artist and writer Doug Welsh, the exhibition is anchored by an enigmatic 1949 painting by Forrest Bess (Bay City, TX, 1911-1977). A self-taught artist, Bess's paintings were connected to his experiences of "visions," and his close study of psychology, gender, and dream worlds. Several recurring motifs in Bess's visions appear in his paintings, including ovoid forms and wishbone shapes. As Bess scholar Clare Elliott has observed, by studying these symbols, Bess hoped to reveal a "collective unconscious," and to illuminate universal truths. Similarly, the artists included in *a way to mend* engage with patterns and structures that bridge human and non-human natures; they share an insistence upon the entanglement of healing practices with larger philosophical and formal abstractions. In particular, *a way to mend* considers a Gulf Coast attention to resilience, transformation, and repair.

The exhibition features work by Isela Aguirre, Forrest Bess, Sebastien Boncy, Crasis (Andy P. Davis and Anne Lukins), Julie DeVries, Garrett Griffin, Stephanie Gonzalez, Shangyi Hua, Jonathan Paul Jackson, Terrell James, Emily Peacock, Mitch Pengra, Alexis Pye, Gerardo Rosales, JR Roykovich, Eric Schnell, Adrienne Simmons and Benji Stiles.

The exhibition also includes analytic and poetic texts by writers Clare Elliott, Sarah Fisher, Liz Gates, Adam Marnie, and Emma Timbers.

About the Curator

a way to mend was guest curated by Doug Welsh, an artist and writer based in Houston. Welsh has curated several exhibitions, including most recently *leftovers*, landSPACE: a kunsthalle (Austin, TX, 2024); *It's OK to Feel This* LAR Gallery (Houston, TX, 2024); and *orbit*, ESS Gallery 1 (Houston, TX, 2024). The exhibition is supported by the Cynthia Woods Mitchell Center for the Arts at the University of Houston, several anonymous donors, and the Blaffer Art Museum Advisory Board. The following endowments sustain Blaffer Art Museum in perpetuity: Cecil Amelia Blaffer von Furstenberg Endowment for Exhibitions and Programs, Jane Dale Owen Endowment in the Blaffer Art Museum, Jo and Jim Furr Exhibition Endowment in the Blaffer Art Museum, Sarah C. Morian Endowment, and the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Blaffer Gallery Endowment.