



FLAGments & FRACKments

Nicky Enright

OCT. 16–DEC. 13, 2024 • FREEDMAN GALLERY



ALBRIGHT
Freedman Gallery



FLAGments & FRACKments Nicky Enright

ON DISPLAY AT THE FREEDMAN GALLERY

ALBRIGHT COLLEGE, READING, PENNSYLVANIA

OCT. 16—DEC. 13, 2024

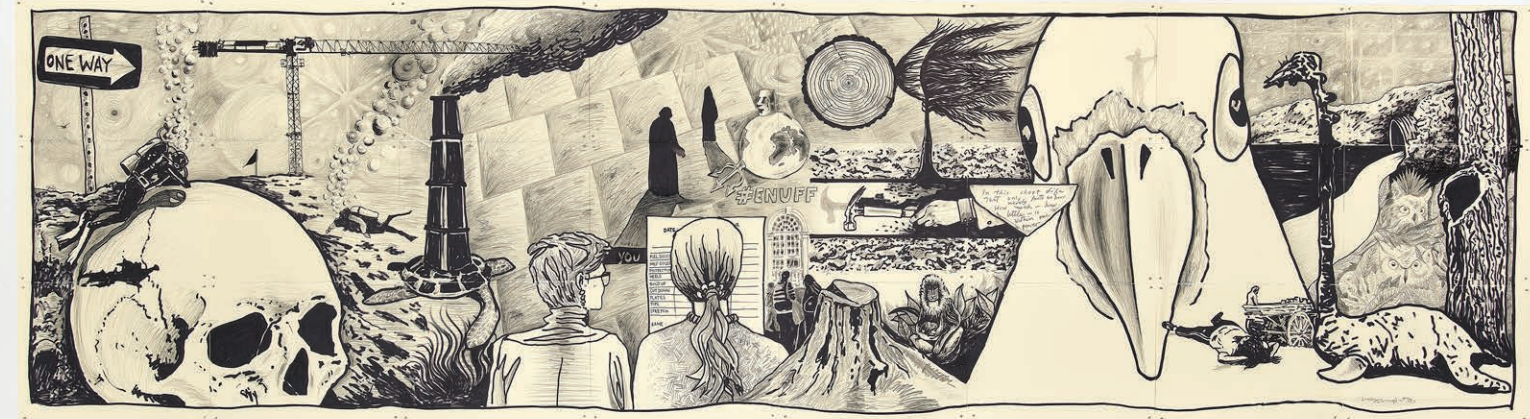
On Nicky Enright's FLAGments, FRACKments, and I'M MIGRATION

By Matthew Garrison

Bronx based artist Nicky Enright, born in Ecuador, disrupts and collapses events and observations in two monumental drawing series, *FLAGments* and *FRACKments*. In these works, images extracted from Enright's own photographs and past projects are distilled into immense black and white compositions. In tandem with the drawings, Enright's video, *I'M MIGRATION*, presents manipulated closed-circuit and aerial footage of individuals traversing parched landscapes behind boldfaced captions. Together, the work imparts an urgent need to address our international climate crisis as global citizens in a world where diminishing resources and violent weather events are driving people from their homes in search of safety and a living wage.

The largest of Enright's drawings from the *FRACKments* series, *FRACKments 01: Scape* (5½ x 20 feet) consists of a cumulation of multiple sheets of paper arranged side-by-side on the wall. Urgency is evident in the rapid application of ink and wax pencil. The materials preclude erasure. Consequently, improvised images and bold passages of light and dark emerge from its execution. Enright's early days as a graffiti artist seem to inform the energy and necessity of *Scape*'s realization. The drawing is a dense description of catastrophe, mutation and layered associations. Its constellation of colliding themes forecasts a perilous future. An enormous cracked skull on the left side of the drawing is counterbalanced on the right by an even larger portrait of an unwitting pigeon or parrot. The pigeon/parrot's massive size might be the result of an extreme close-up or, perhaps, giant birds inhabit Enright's unruly world. As the pigeon/parrot gazes outward from the drawing, two young figures are intent on a receipt, as if analyzing a list of challenges encountered in the chaotic world they've inherited. Elsewhere in the composition, scuba divers float above a bleak topography containing a small flag and large industrial crane. The arm of the crane intersects a billowing smokestack attached to the back of a turtle. *Scape* shows the planet on a precipice, where extreme evolution is necessary if habitats and species are to survive.

Enright's drawings belong to a lineage of large-scale work that layers imagery and highlights significant world events. The most recognized is Picasso's black and white response to the 1937 Nazi bombing of the small Basque town, Guernica. Picasso's grayscale palette is often compared to newsprint, the prevalent mass media of his time, but the painting's exclusion of color also distills the shear horror of the attack. Hovering over Guernica's destruction is a jagged lightbulb, emblematic of the detached technology that separates violent actions from tragic consequences. Similarly located in Enright's drawing, *Scape*, is a tree on its side, cleanly sliced through with a saw, its interior rings floating above a tempestuous world, indexing the passage of time and loss.

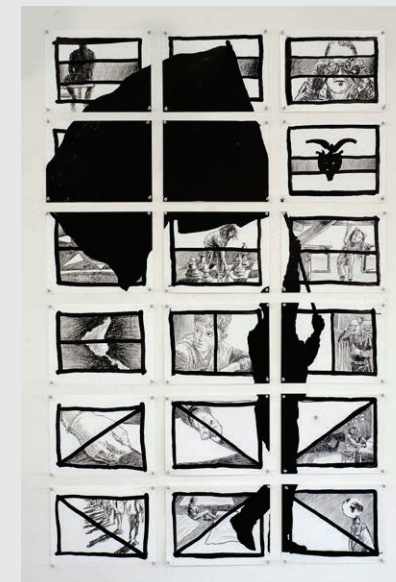


FRACKments01: Scape, 2023, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 20 x 5.5 feet.

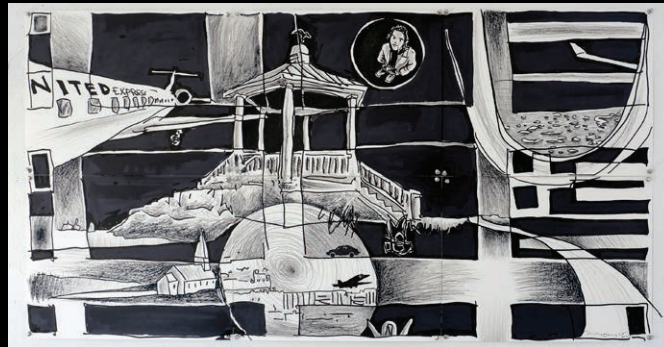


Left to right: *FRACKments 07: Trash*, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 32 x 20 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.
FRACKments 02: Cementerio Mundial, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 120 x 66 inches.

Life and resources are precious in *FLAGments* and *FRACKments*. For instance, in Enright's piece, *FRACKments 07: Trash*, the remnants of life are commemorated with white lines against a dark void, while the drawing, *FRACKments 02: Cementerio Mundial*, simultaneously evokes a "world cemetery" and the funeral of his uncle, Tío Miguel, who died in Ecuador in March 2024. Time itself is expansive in the work, reaching far beyond the present, encompassing past and future generations. Children are interspersed throughout the two series. Enright's young son, currently living in Switzerland, peers out of the drawing, *FLAGments 05: Gazebo*, and plays a game of life-size chess in *FLAGments 06: Stars*. In Enright's drawing, *FLAGments 03: Customs* (5½ x 10 feet), his son holds a blank sign. Text appears throughout many of the drawings as handwritten correspondence, brand names and graffiti, although it is occasionally absent in areas where words are expected. In addition to the empty sign, *Stumbling Stones* are incorporated into *Customs*. Enright encountered these small brass stones during a residency in Berlin. *Stumbling Stones* (Stolpersteine in German) is a vast memorial conceived by artist Gunter Demnig in 1992. Each stone, inscribed with the name of a Holocaust victim, is laid in front of the victim's last known private residence throughout Europe and Russia. The absence of names on the stones in Enright's work allows for personal reflection.



Left to right: *FLAGments 06: Stars*, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of photo paper, 40 x 60 inches.
FLAGments 03: Customs, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Stonehenge paper, 10 x 5.5 feet. Photos by Paul Mutino.

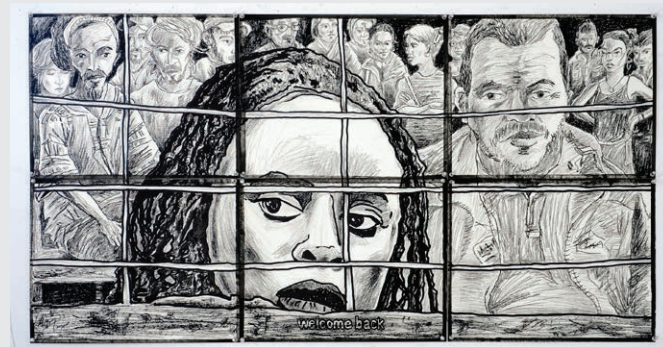
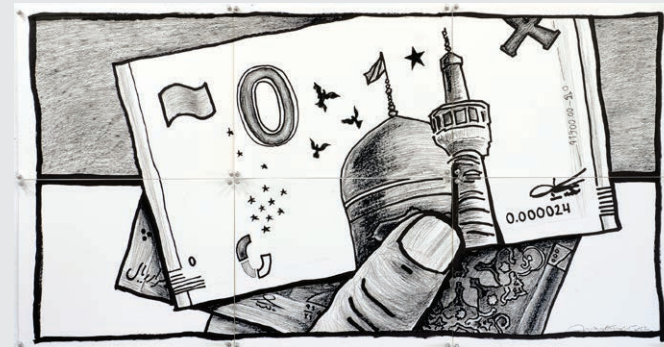


Left to right: Still from *I'M MIGRATION*, 3-minute silent video.

FLAGments 05: Gazebo, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Bristol paper, 42 x 22 inches. Courtesy of The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts. Photo by Paul Mutino.

Enright's art also aligns with artists whose work investigates the movement of people. For example, Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden addressed The Great Migration in paintings and collage. And, Mexican muralist, José Clemente Orozco, recounted the migration of indigenous American civilization thousands of years ago in the 1934 fresco, *Migration*, a part of his immersive mural, *The Epic of American Civilization*. However, Enright acknowledges modern modes of transportation and surveillance in his exploration of borders and migration. His video, *I'M MIGRATION*, consists largely of drone footage, while airplanes and vehicles are incorporated into his drawings. Consequently, border crossings come to encompass, not only checkpoints, but also the broader implications of flying, airport customs and transportation security. Enright's drawing, *FLAGments 05: Gazebo*, deconstructs air travel and flags through vertical and horizontal bands that read as an amalgamation of national symbols. The drawing includes both interior and exterior views of an airplane. A capsule shaped porthole in the upper right corner looks out onto the aircraft's wing through what might be seen as household blinds. A plane soars off the left edge of the drawing. This could be a rendering of the same plane observed simultaneously from interior and exterior perspectives or, perhaps, it is a representation of the arrival and departure of respective aircraft. A gazebo dominates the center of the drawing, described by Enright as a meeting place. Yet, the gazebo is empty, allowing for personal projections of community within its structure, or inferring an evacuation. Hovering above the gazebo is a bird's-eye view of a young figure encircled within a void, silently observing the ebb and flow of events.

Enright's installation of *FLAGments and FRACKments* in conjunction with *I'M MIGRATION* directly connects migration to nationalism and global warming. Also contributing to border tensions are populations seeking a living wage. In Enright's piece, *FLAGments 08: Zero*, a hand holds a bill adjusted to show its value in U.S. dollars (.000024). He explains that the design for *Zero* was based on the least valuable currency in the world at the time of its realization, the Iranian Rial. In response to this severe economic discrepancy, Enright advocates for a global minimum wage and has designed *The Globo*, a universal currency that incorporates legal tender from more than twenty-five countries. He also questions the very concept of borders established through dominance and warfare, which often contradict nature's own configuration of rivers, coasts, and mountain ranges. Once again, Enright's stance recalls Orozco's mural, *The Epic of American Civilization*.



Left to right: *FLAGments 08: Zero*, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Bristol paper, 42 x 22 inches.

FLAGments 01: Welcome Back, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Bristol paper, 42 x 22 inches.

In Orozco's panel, *Modern Migration of the Spirit*, a heap of religious artifacts lay at the base of a mountain comprised of heavy artillery. Here, spirituality is distorted to align with the values that justify brutality and barbarism in the shaping of civilizations. Christ himself, the *Prince of Peace*, is presented as an ax wielding warrior with his fist raised. A natural landscape has been recreated in the image of its conquerors.

Enright's expansive conception of time across generations necessitates a drastic and immediate response to the realities of climate change. Economies reliant on extracting value from precious resources and populations must recalibrate to emphasize restoration and repair and, in the process, acknowledge that migration is inevitable and beneficial to a healthy society. In Enright's drawing, *FLAGments 01: Welcome Back*, people are held captive behind a fence. They are looking in different directions, and some appear to be lost in reflection. Their detachment from one another implies sustained conditions that are unchanging, as though condemned to a perpetual state of waiting. The irony of the drawing's title inscribed on the fence calls into question their location. Have they returned home, or are they confined elsewhere? Will they be released or forcibly transferred? The humanity of the detainees is in stark contrast to their captivity. These conditions, so frequently viewed in the media, are often met with indifference, apathy and jingoist threats. An uncertain future permeates Enright's work. *FLAGments and FRACKments* encompasses a planet on the brink of ruin with inhabitants who must uproot to survive a fragmented world of borders, ideologies and governments that would prioritize nationalism over humanity.

Artist, László Moholy-Nagy, observed in his seminal text, *Vision in Motion*, "From the time of the first flags and emblems, creating the romance of heraldry, the customs of religion, peoples and nations have been given meaning by hues of the spectrum." The chromatic identifiers described by Moholy-Nagy are referenced in *FLAGments and FRACKments* through its absence of color. Similar to Enright's selective employment of text, his drawings in black and white provide space for personal associations, allegiances and tenets. Although individual connections might also arise from self-imposed limitations, change begins with the realization that societal conditions and values shape and constrain our grasp of history and the moment we inhabit. Enright's recognition and dismantling of these internal barriers pave the way for a vibrant, interconnected world.

CHECKLIST AND IMAGE PLATES



Photo by John Pankratz.



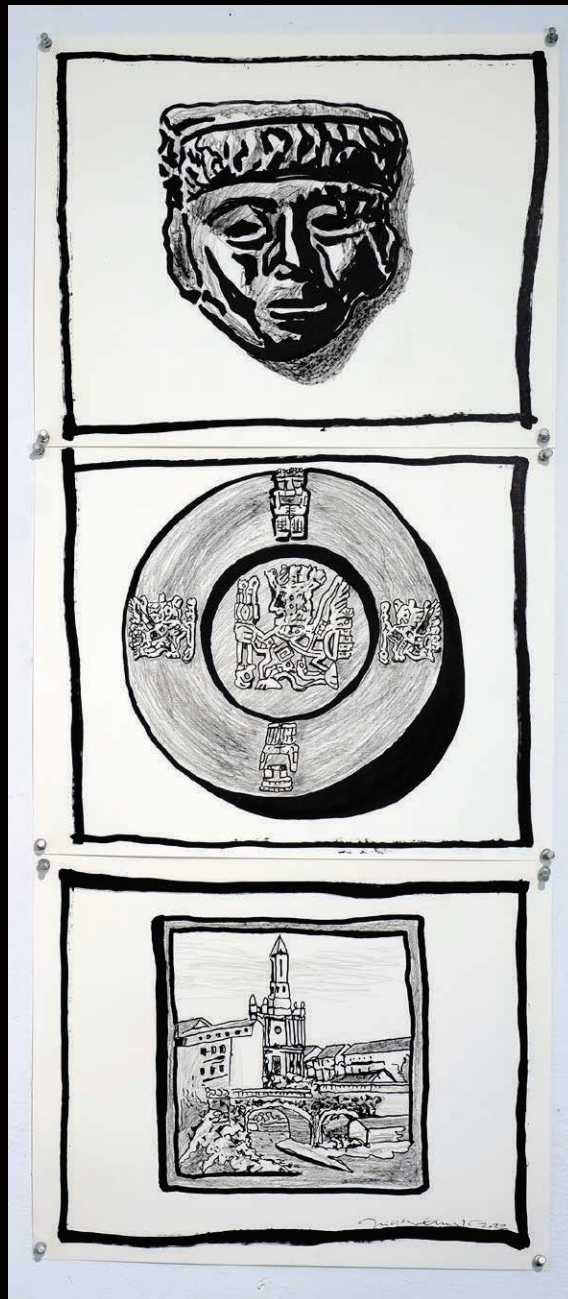
FLAGments01: Welcome Back, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Bristol paper, 42 x 22 inches.



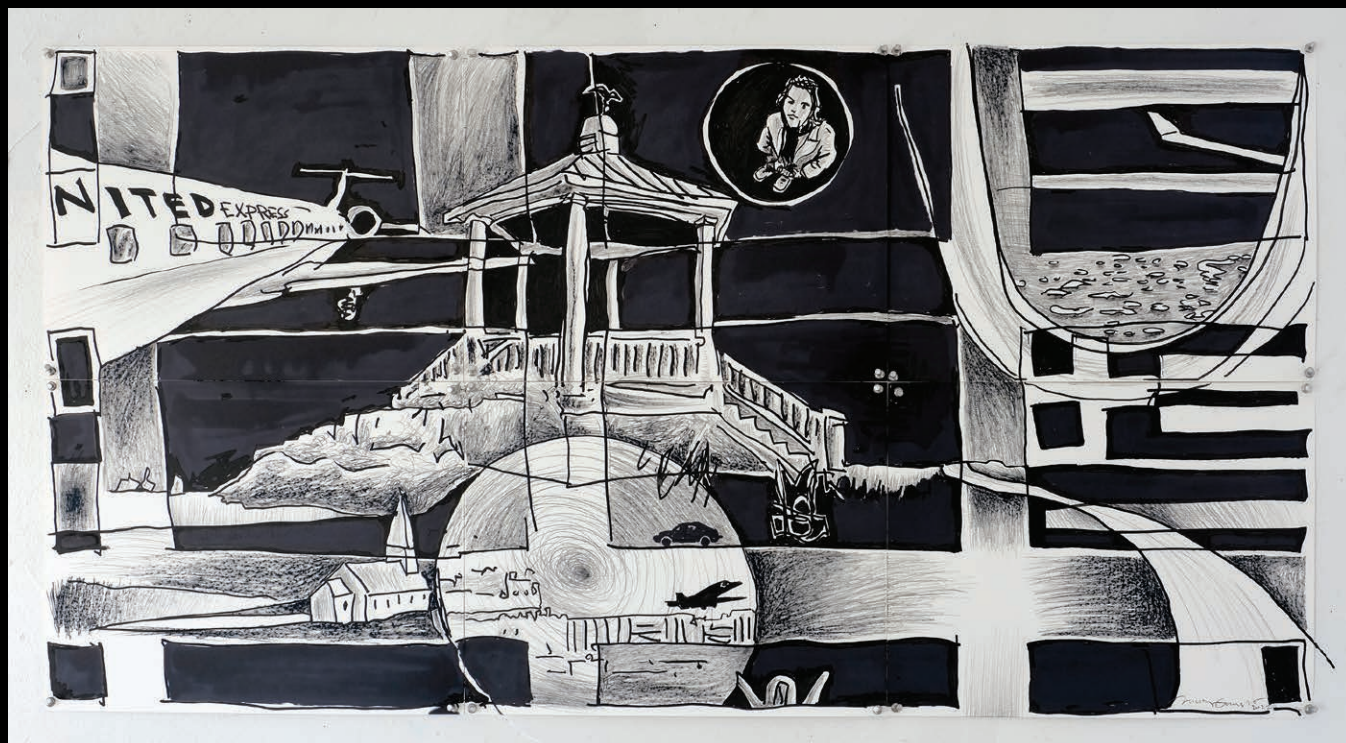
FLAGments02: Culture, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Stonehenge paper, 10 x 5.5 feet.



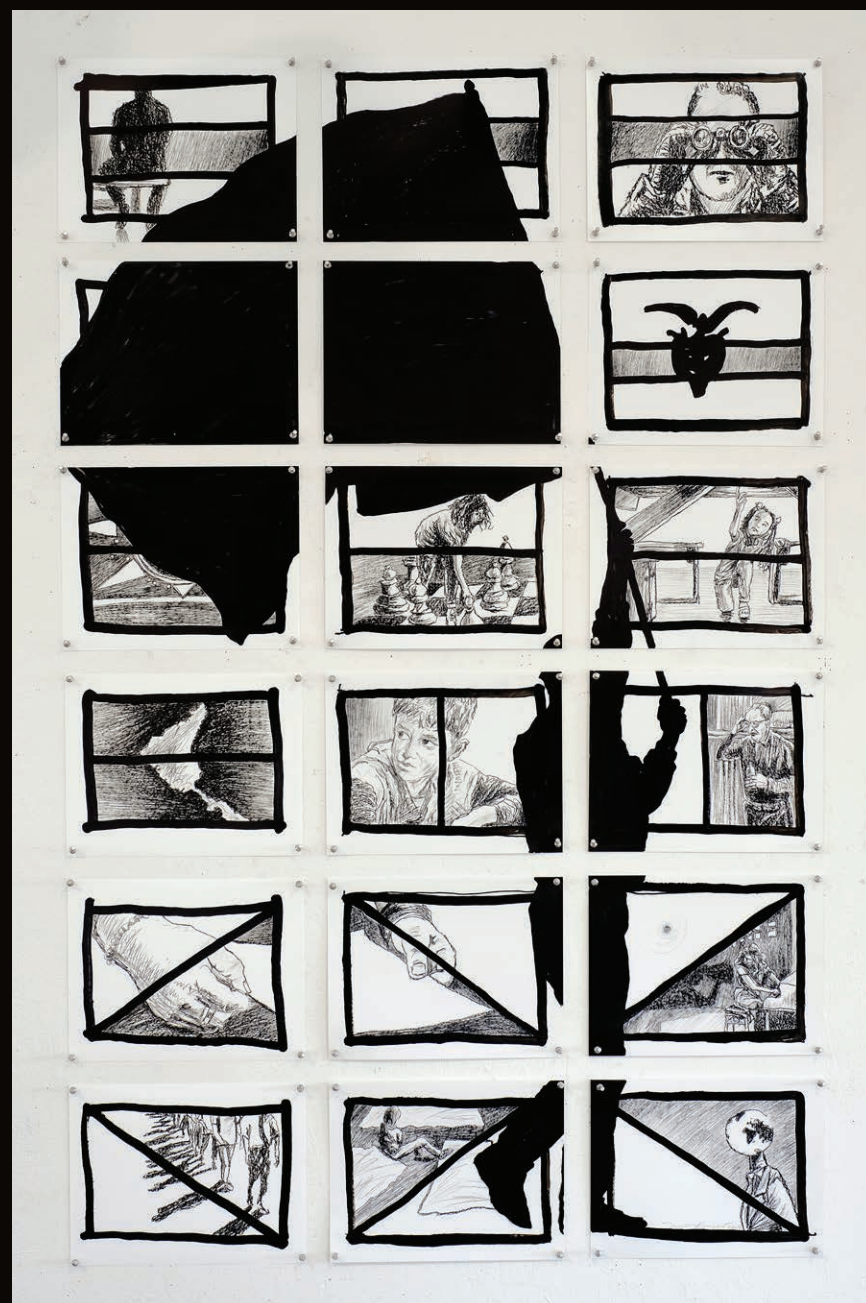
FLAGments03: Customs, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Stonehenge paper, 10 x 5.5 feet. Photo by Paul Mutino.



FLAGments04: Chasqui, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Bristol paper, 14 x 33 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



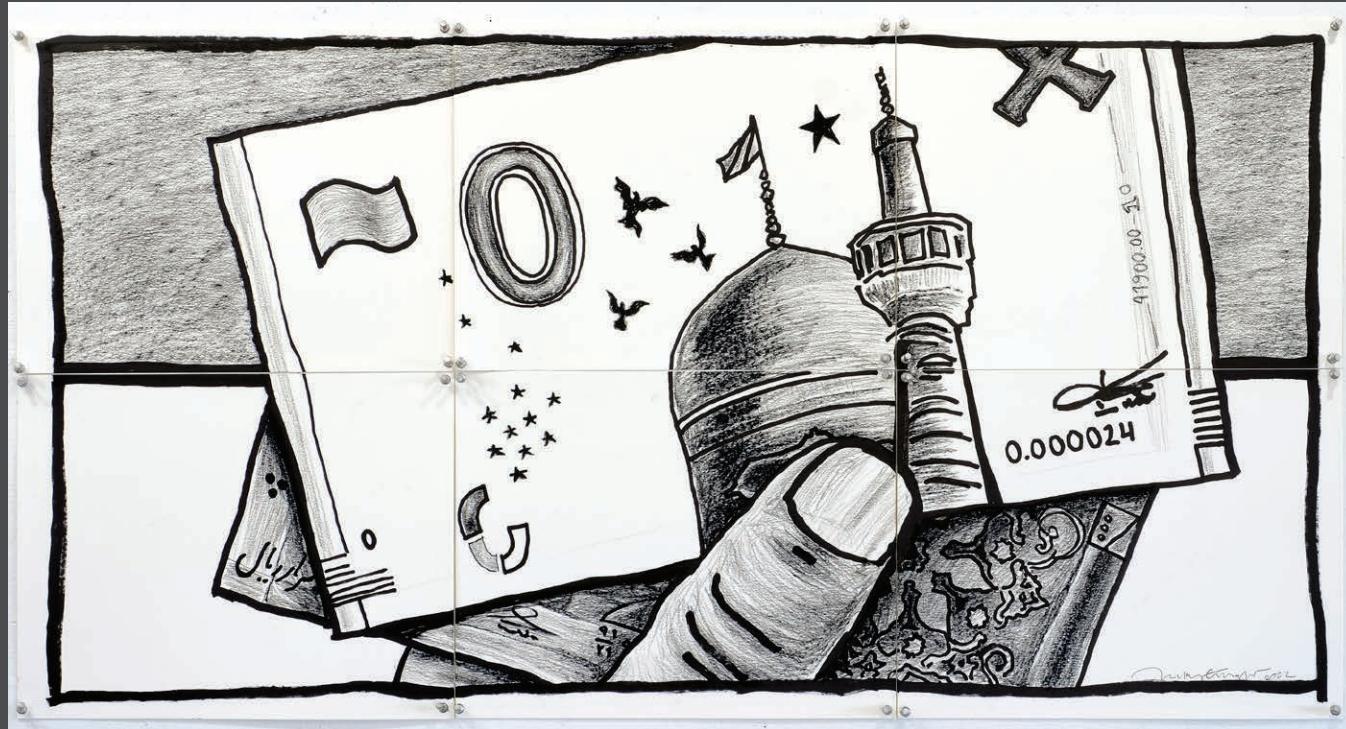
FLAGments05: Gazebo, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Bristol paper, 42 x 22 inches.
 Courtesy of The Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Photo by Paul Mutino.



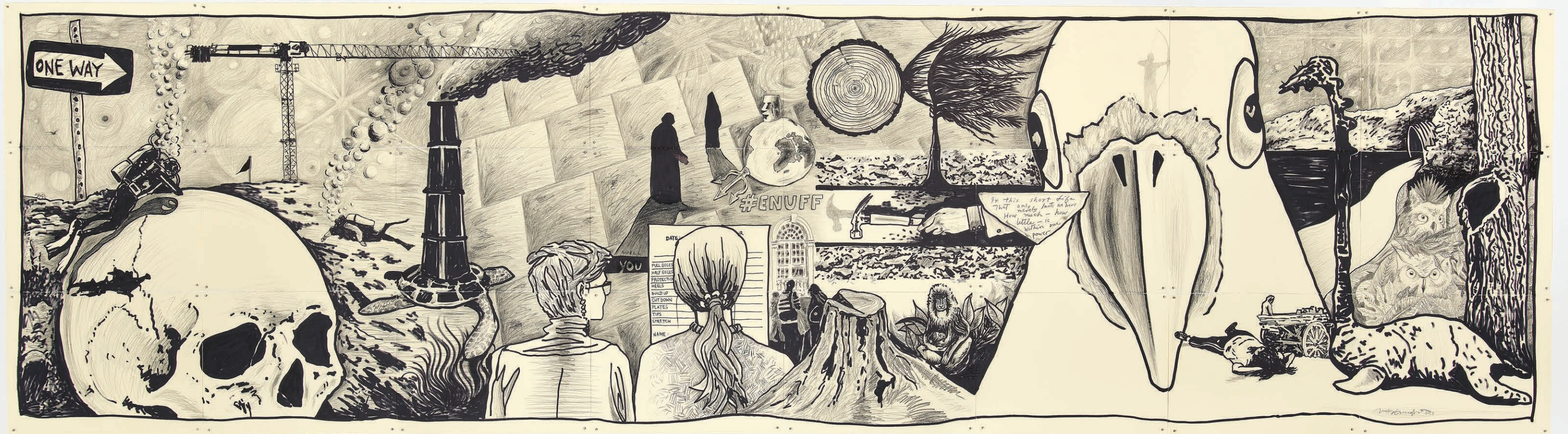
FLAGments06: Stars, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of photo paper, 40 x 60 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



FLAGments07: Stripes, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of handmade paper, 12 x 45 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



FLAGments08: Zero, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Bristol paper, 42 x 22 inches.



FRACKments01: Scape, 2023, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 20 x 5.5 feet.



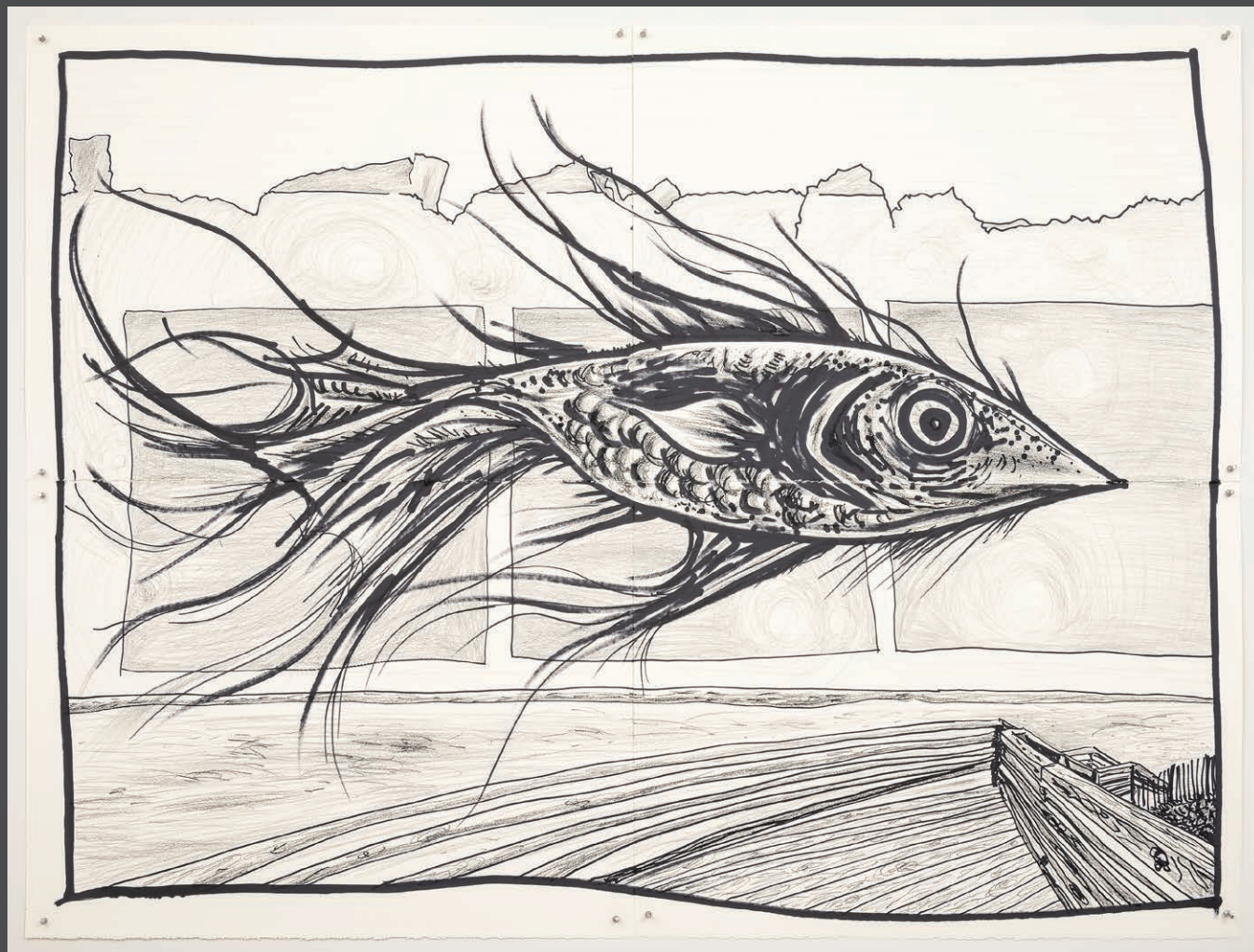
FRACKments02: Cementerio Mundial, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 120 x 66 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



FRACKments04: Hands, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 24 x 18 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



FRACKments03: Witness, 2024, ink and acrylic on canvas, 24 x 24 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



FRACKments05: Fish, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 60 x 44 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



FRACKments06: Time, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 48 x 24 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



FRACKments07: Trash, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 32 x 20 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.



I'M MIGRATION



Humans



State.
of Mind.

Stills from *I'M MIGRATION*, 3-minute silent video.



FRACKments02: Cementerio Mundial, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 120 x 66 inches. Photo by John Pankratz.



FLAGments02: Culture, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Stonehenge paper, 10 x 5.5 feet with Nicky Enright.

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The Freedman Gallery at Albright College, named after former Albright trustee and alumna Doris Chanin Freedman, is located on the ground floor of the Center for the Arts. Since its inception, the gallery focuses primarily on contemporary, living, American artists and hosts approximately twelve exhibitions each year rotating in the Main Gallery, Project Space and Foyer Gallery. Freedman Gallery is located at 13th & Bern Streets, Reading, PA 19612. Gallery hours are Tuesday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. and Sunday 1-4 p.m. The gallery is closed on Mondays, holidays, breaks and summer. Scan the QR code to visit the Freedman Gallery.



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Front cover: *FRACKments07: Trash*, 2024, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of paper, 32x20 inches. Photo by Paul Mutino.
Back cover: *FLAGments03: Customs*, 2022, ink and wax pencil on multiple sheets of Stonehenge paper, 10 x 5.5 feet. Photo by John Pankratz.