

PRESS RELEASE

26 February 2018 (New Orleans, LA): **JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY** is pleased to present the debut solo exhibition of New Orleans artist **Tony Dagradi**, entitled *Books Transposed*. Perhaps best known for his musical talents as a Grammy-award winning Jazz Saxophonist, in 2015 Dagradi began to apply his methodologies of jazz composition to visual creations using his collection of antique books. The final products are sculptural collages, which act as a sort of visual summary of the book in question's contents. The exhibition will be on view from 26 February through 30 March 2018 with an opening reception on Saturday 3 March from 6-9pm in conjunction with the Arts District New Orleans (ADNO)'s *First Saturday Gallery Openings*. There will be a **special performance by Astral Project during the opening on Saturday from 7-8PM.**

The artist elaborates on the correlation between his music and visual artwork . . .

My decades long career in contemporary jazz directly inform my work as a visual artist. Music, for me, has always had a visual component, with the diverse elements of music suggesting colors, shapes and textures. The juxtaposition of abstract shapes, which come together as I work on a book, is very much how I perceive the interplay of melody, harmony and rhythm.

Improvisation is also key to my approach in both genres. Within a jazz ensemble, each player is responsible for an individual part, which must support and inspire the other musicians. In the heat of the moment, unexpected phrases or motivic ideas can affect surprising new directions for the collective ensemble. Similarly, the tension and harmony, which naturally occurs as I uncover each new image, unfailingly impacts the whole and often shifts the form and concept of the emerging composition.

Cutting through each book page by page to expose selected subject matter is primarily a subtractive process. However, I often choose to reserve certain images for later use. This too is comparable to the open-ended conversation on the bandstand, and provides me with greater control over the development of each piece.

I prefer working with vintage books and encyclopedias. The eclectic photos and illustrations represent material that is long out of date; yet offer a fascinating window into our past. Ultimately, I hope to provide a perspective on the transitory nature of what earlier generations understood to be factual, and offer insight into the way ever evolving media has shaped contemporary perspectives.

TONY DAGRADI is an internationally recognized jazz performer, artist, composer, author and educator.

For over three decades he has made his home in New Orleans, performing on tenor and soprano saxophone with many of the Crescent City's most celebrated artists, including Ellis Marsalis, Allen Toussaint, Professor Longhair, James Booker, The Meters, Dr. John, James Black, Johnny Adams

and Gatemouth Brown. An accomplished classical performer as well, he's often called upon to augment the woodwind section of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra. His performing past also includes five years as a member of the internationally acclaimed Carla Bley Band and appearances and recordings with Bobby McFerrin, Mose Allison and Nat Adderley.

Dagradi is most well known for his work with Astral Project, an adventurous quintet made up of top New Orleans players dedicated to playing cutting-edge improvisational music. In addition, for over twenty-five years, he has been a Professor of Saxophone and Jazz Studies at Loyola University in New Orleans.

For further information, press or sales inquiries please contact the gallery. Join the conversation with JFG on Facebook (@Jonathan Ferrara Gallery), Twitter (@JFerraraGallery), and Instagram (@JonathanFerraraGallery) via the hashtags #TonyDagradi, #JonathanFerraraGallery and #ArtsDistrictNewOrleans.

