

### PRESS RELEASE

18 July 2019 (New Orleans, LA) **JONATHAN FERRARA GALLERY** proudly presents the second solo exhibition of New Orleans based artist, Tony Dagradi. Entitled *Diffusion*, the exhibition unveils forty-four new, hand cut book sculptures. The new work offers a wide array of imagery in both the subject matter of the books and the stylistic process of the cutting. We see Dagradi's characteristic work within the context of the original bookcovers (e.g. in "Imperial Series"), as well as, a new visual language in grids and three-dimensional sculpture (e.g. in the *Diffusion* series). The exhibition will be on view from 18 July through 30 August 2019 with an opening reception coinciding with the Arts District of New Orleans' (ADNO) *First Saturday Gallery Openings* on Saturday 3 August from 5-10 pm in conjunction with Hancock Whitney White Linen Night, an artful block party which attracts upwards of 50,000 patrons to Julia Street. **The gallery will also host a closing reception on the evening of Thursday 29 August from 6-8pm. Astral Project, Dagradi's award-winning and world renowned jazz ensemble which he has served as saxophonist for over 30 years with, will perform within the exhibition space.**

The artist says of his continuing artistic practice . . .

*My decades long career in contemporary jazz directly informs 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. I also feel very strongly that the mathematics and spirituality of music intersect all art forms.*

*My process in creating sculptural effects with books is continually evolving. When I first began, I sealed the edges of each book and cut through one page at a time, making choices on the fly as to what images I chose to keep. As my technical skills progressed and I gained more confidence and experience, I found this to be a somewhat limiting approach; I wanted more flexibility. In my current preferred method, I harvest the images I am most interested in, then add them back one at a time as the composition emerges. I still cut away one page at a time, and always work from front to back. In this way I have greater control over placement of each object as well as the direction of the entire composition.*

*I enjoy working with many types of books; graphic novels, atlases, scientific texts, technical manuals, etc. Each represents a different and unique challenge. I especially relish working with vintage books and encyclopedias. The eclectic photos and illustrations often represent material that is long out of date yet offer a fascinating window into our past. At the same time, the quality and condition of the paper itself, often extends its own unique challenge. 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 celebrated artists. He is most well-known for his work with Astral Project, an adventurous quartet of top New Orleans players dedicated to playing cutting-edge improvisational music around the world. His performing past also includes five years as a member of the internationally acclaimed Carla Bley and appearances and recordings with Bobby McFerrin, Mose Allison and Nat Adderley.

Since 2015, Tony has been exploring the visual possibilities of altered books. Choosing vintage and antiquarian texts, he carefully cuts through one page at a time utilizing existing images to create a three-dimensional collage or sculpture. The results allow the contents and imagery of long outdated material to be viewed in a manner that is both exciting and thought provoking.

For more information, press or sales inquiries please contact Gallery Director Matthew Weldon Showman at 504.343.6827 or [matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com](mailto:matthew@jonathanferraragallery.com). Please join the conversation with JFG on Facebook (@JonathanFerraraGallery), Twitter (@JFerraraGallery), and Instagram (@JonathanFerraraGallery) via the hashtags: #TonyDagradi, #JonathanFerraraGallery and #ArtsDistrictNewOrleans.