This special exhibition was commissioned and curated by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Discovery Center to highlight the work of six Seattle area artists with over 20 artistic interpretations of the foundation’s work with partners over the last 20 years. These artworks are organized into four themes that are key to the foundation’s work:

- Ensuring more children and young people survive and thrive
- Empowering the poorest, especially women and girls
- Combating infectious diseases that particularly affect the poorest
- Inspiring people to take action to change the world

Artists began creating their artworks for this exhibition in January 2020, just as COVID-19 was spreading throughout the world, which strongly influenced their work.
Ensure More Children and Young People Survive and Thrive

We believe the path out of poverty begins when the next generation can access quality healthcare and a great education.

In under-resourced countries, we focus on improving people’s health and wellbeing, helping individuals lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty.

In the United States, we seek to ensure that all people — especially those with the fewest resources — can access the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.
CORNERSTONE
Holly Ballard Martz, 2020
Student chalkboards, gold leaf, paint, vinyl on panel

Education is an essential building block for improving the well-being of people and communities.
A STRONGER EXISTENCE
Maya Milton, 2020
Acrylic paint, gold leaf, watercolors

Carrying the world on her head, she is walking out of the negativity and darkness of the past towards a brighter future for the world. While balancing the world, she is protecting it and moving it towards a beautiful green landscape. The sunrise awakens to a new day.
This floral form metaphorically conveys the survival of the future of youth and their thriving through education and health. The sculpture is based on the hexagon. Its radiating symmetry is constructed using geometry, which references education. A flower precedes the fruit to represent health, food security, and nutrition. Blossoming is the manifestation of thriving.
Trees offer places to gather, play, or rest. This tree was inspired by the national tree of India, the Banyan tree. When a Banyan tree thrives, its new growth is warm with cinnamon hues. In this image, it becomes a mandala for a mother and child — radiating life as it reaches from their central presence, not unlike how communities thrive when women and girls can meet their fullest potential.
THE SPRINGS

Jite Agbro, 2020
Paper, fabric, ink, beeswax, graphite, and thread

What if people received the nutrients they require from the food available to them, and malnourishment ceased being a plague that targets struggling families?
Stylized shapes occupy this piece as we humans occupy this world and aspire to go beyond. Whether that is spiritually or into the known universe the golden rule, to treat others as you want to be treated, we carry.
Empower the poorest, especially women and girls, to transform their lives.

We believe that by giving people the tools to lead healthy, productive lives, we can help them lift themselves out of poverty.

Every year, millions of people find ways to transition out of poverty—by adopting new farming technologies, investing in new business opportunities, or finding new jobs.

We know women and girls have a unique power to reshape societies. When you invest in a woman’s health and empowerment, it has a ripple effect, helping families, communities, and countries achieve long-lasting benefits.
DILI MASUKOD
ANG LANGIT
(THE IMMEASURABLE HEAVEN)
Romson Regarde Bustillo, 2020
Mixed media on paper

The word “langit” in my family’s mother tongue Bisaya can mean sky or heaven. This piece is a metaphor for the immeasurable potential in all humans; our role on earth, in the universe, and for each other’s well-being. We acknowledge the efforts of communities to rise from their circumstances; especially those made by women and girls throughout the world, striving, despite great obstacles, to exercise their potential and contributions.
WE BEGIN ANEW
Maya Milton, 2020
Acrylic paint, gold leaf

For this piece, the three females represent different generations, backgrounds, and the global need for empowerment. The book represents the need for education, the baby symbolizes the need for wellness, and the oranges show nutrition to be supported globally. The butterflies symbolize rebirth and transformation.
The ability for women to decide whether and when to have children is crucial to their physical and mental health, as well as their economic and educational opportunities. The power to decide is empowering.
Women overcome challenges and hardships by sharing with one another, by lifting each other up and teaching one another best practices. This painting honors the hard work of female smallholder farmers living in poverty and recognizes the connections between them that promote the successes not of one, but of many.
TO WHOM THE FUTURE BELONGS
Jite Agbro, 2020
Paper, fabric, ink, beeswax, graphite, and thread

How might communities develop if we removed the social and economic barriers facing women and girls?
Combat infectious diseases that particularly affect the poorest.

We believe we can save lives by delivering the latest in science and technology to those with the greatest needs.

We work with partners to provide effective vaccines, drugs, and diagnostics and to develop innovative approaches to deliver health services to those who need it most. And we invest heavily in developing new vaccines to prevent infectious diseases that impose the greatest burden.
VIRAL INTERCONNECTEDNESS
June Sekiguchi, 2020
Enamel on scroll-cut engineered wood

The fragility of human life on the planet becomes all the more visceral with outbreaks such as the current pandemic of the coronavirus and its deadly, insidious invisibility. The chain pattern bordering the edge symbolizes the economic interconnectedness of the global supply chain. The random scribbling pattern in blue represents the chaos that ensued in the wake of the outbreak.
Poor women see the impact of disease intimately and in stark terms. They are also the power behind the work of preventative care and healing. This piece honors the efforts of women who go the distance — from advocacy to ensuring that vaccines get to the children who need them and so much more. Women are the engine for community-driven change.
The importance of infectious disease prevention and the preciousness of vaccines has been made exceedingly clear as we face a global pandemic. Prevention truly is the best medicine.
Fighting a battle that she’s destined to win, she is unbroken. She symbolizes the grit and strength needed to treat and cure disease. Behind her are healthy cells that represent a battle fought and won. She knows others are fighting the same battle globally.
TOGETHER
Romson Regarde Bustillo, 2020
Mixed media on paper

As I worked on “Together” the COVID-19 epidemic was upon us. My thoughts are of the first human who did not accept suffering or death as a foregone conclusion when faced with illness. Somehow, through keen observation, courage, and determination she discovered that this herb or that root would help with recovery. From that time immemorial we are here, each generation contributing to a knowledge bank that lifts us forward and honors that ancestral will.
What would it be like if the wider availability of treatment and improved effectiveness and use of interventions eliminated AIDS?
Inspire people to take action to change the world.

We know our resources alone are not enough, so we work to change public policies, attitudes, and behaviors to improve lives. We partner with governments and the public and private sectors and foster greater public awareness of urgent global issues.
THE WORK OF LOVE

Janet Fagan, 2020
Charcoal, acrylic, spray paint

For all of the hearts that have reached out to another, held on a little tighter, worked a little harder, taken a chance on someone, created a new path, spoken their truth, given their time, believed it was possible, kept going when it was really hard or scary — this work is about you. Thank you for doing the hard work of love that makes this world a better place for each of us.
Imagine how the world might change if every student were given a voice, a good education, and an equal opportunity to succeed.
RAISE YOUR VOICE
Maya Milton, 2020
Acrylic paint, gold leaf

As she raises her voice in hopes for an open ear to listen, crowds gather in support. We are in this together — with beauty shining from within and around. The more voices we have, the louder the sound, the greater our actions become the change.
Stylized shapes occupy this piece as we humans occupy this world and aspire to go beyond. The things that sets us in motion concurrent with the things that allow us pause empower. In this artwork science, the arts, our cultures, dialogue, community, and meditation guide us forward.
FOR EVERY ACTION THERE IS A REACTION
Holly Ballard Martz, 2020
Encaustic, mirror on panel

Even the smallest action creates a reaction. Just as ripples from a single droplet expand and travel outward, individual actions make an impact. Start here.
MEET THE ARTISTS

These six artists were selected by a committee of Gates Foundation employees for their diversity of mediums and lived experiences.

JITE AGBRO

Jite Agbro is a collage artist and printmaker. Her work explores the notions of belonging and acceptance and continually shifting context. Jite finds her direct inspiration from everyday objects and the experiences of shared cultural cues and symbols. Jite is based in the Pacific Northwest. She is represented by MUSEO Gallery in Langley, WA.

jiteagbroart.com
Janet Fagan has a deep background as an exhibiting artist and art educator in Seattle. Informed by her love of the outdoors, Janet’s practice works to connect people to nature and support organizations advocating for the intrinsic worth of wild lands. Janet graduated from the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Art, received her BFA from the University of Pennsylvania, and her MFA from the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University. Her work can be seen at the Confluence Gallery in Twisp, WA and the Winthrop Gallery in Winthrop, WA.

janetfagan.com

Romson Regarde Bustillo is a Seattle-based interdisciplinary artist. Born on the island of Mindanao, the Philippines, his family immigrated to the U.S. in 1978. He is a 2019 Artist Trust Fellow. In the words of Bustillo, “The tools we use to process information and the context of that information propel and challenge the direction of my work. I explore how knowledge is transferred through visual cues and privileged information. By populating my art with coded and identifiable references, I am trying to provoke dialogue.”

instagram.com/romsonbustillo
Maya Milton is a Seattle artist whose goal is to create art that reflects her focus on empowering Black women, women of color, and celebrating our differences. She uses acrylic, mixed media, and ink as her mediums. Maya’s work has been exhibited in several local galleries including Gallery ONYX and the Nepantla Cultural Arts Gallery. She is also one of the local “100 Changemakers” for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Discovery Center.

Holly Ballard Martz uses language and found objects to create iconic, mixed-media works about deeply felt social, political, and personal issues, including mental illness, gun violence, and reproductive rights. Her two-dimensional, sculptural, and installation-based practice includes casting, sewing, metalwork, and encaustic. Based in Seattle, Martz has exhibited nationally and her work is held in many private and public collections. She is represented by ZINC contemporary in Seattle, WA.
June Sekiguchi creates sculptures, installations, and public art. The primary tool for her studio practice is the scroll saw where she cuts highly intricate patterns into flat sheets of wood. Being an Asian born in Arkansas focused her interest in cross-cultural explorations to inform her work. June is an arts advocate and curator with interests involving social justice issues, cultural exchange, mental health, and elder communities. Sekiguchi is based in the Pacific Northwest. She is represented by ArtXchange Gallery in Seattle WA.