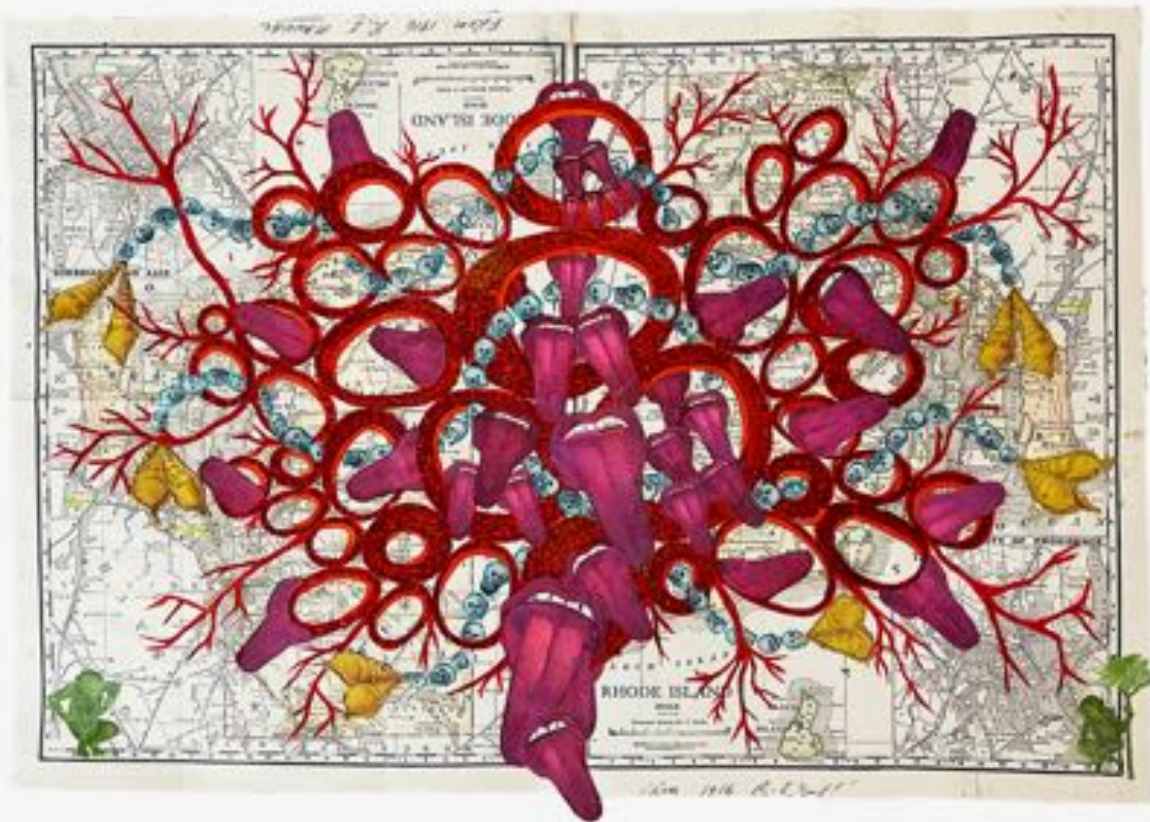


Witches Take Over Westchester

Bowen's multimedia art is an alchemical mix of the sensuous and arcane, and it is more than a little witchy.



Faye Hirsch April 2, 2023



Nancy Bowen, "Double Rhode Island" (2021), digital print and gouache on maps, 14 x 19 inches (photo by the artist; all images courtesy the artist)

VALHALLA, New York — Among the recent works in a 30-year survey of sculptures and collages by Nancy Bowen at Westchester Community College Art Gallery is a group of 20 tombstones (2020). Made of gray-toned paper pulp encrusted with tiny shells and pebbles, and veined with black pigment, each bears a ceramic plaque with the name of a woman or man killed during the Salem witch trials, an event presided over by one of the artist's ancestors, Samuel Sewall, who eventually repented and atoned. Bowen took care to individuate each tombstone, surmounted by a set of ceramic wings and a skull facing in one direction, and grounded by ceramic shoes that project from the bottom. The head-and-wings motif is from early American funerary art, and symbolizes both mortality and resurrection; the shoes convey a feeling that these whimsical little characters — for that is what they are — might transcend their horrible fate by simply picking up and walking away.



Nancy Bowen, "Teraton Necklace" (2003), glass, ceramic, hair, and steel, 18 x 96 x 96 inches (photo by the artist)



Nancy Bowen, "Exalt" (2007), glass, wax, mirror, epoxy resin, 50 x 54 x 34 inches (photo by Alan Wiener)

Nancy Bowen: Sometimes a Body Is Not Just a Body continues at the Westchester Community College Art Gallery (Hankin Academic Arts Building, 3rd Floor, 75 Grasslands Road, Valhalla, New York) through April 12. The exhibition was curated by Joe Morris.