

# **100 Years of “Delusions and Half Truths” New Mixed Media Works by Becci Davis in Collaboration with the Rhode Island State Archives**

Exhibition on View: August 20 – October 12, 2020

## **Exhibition Statement:**

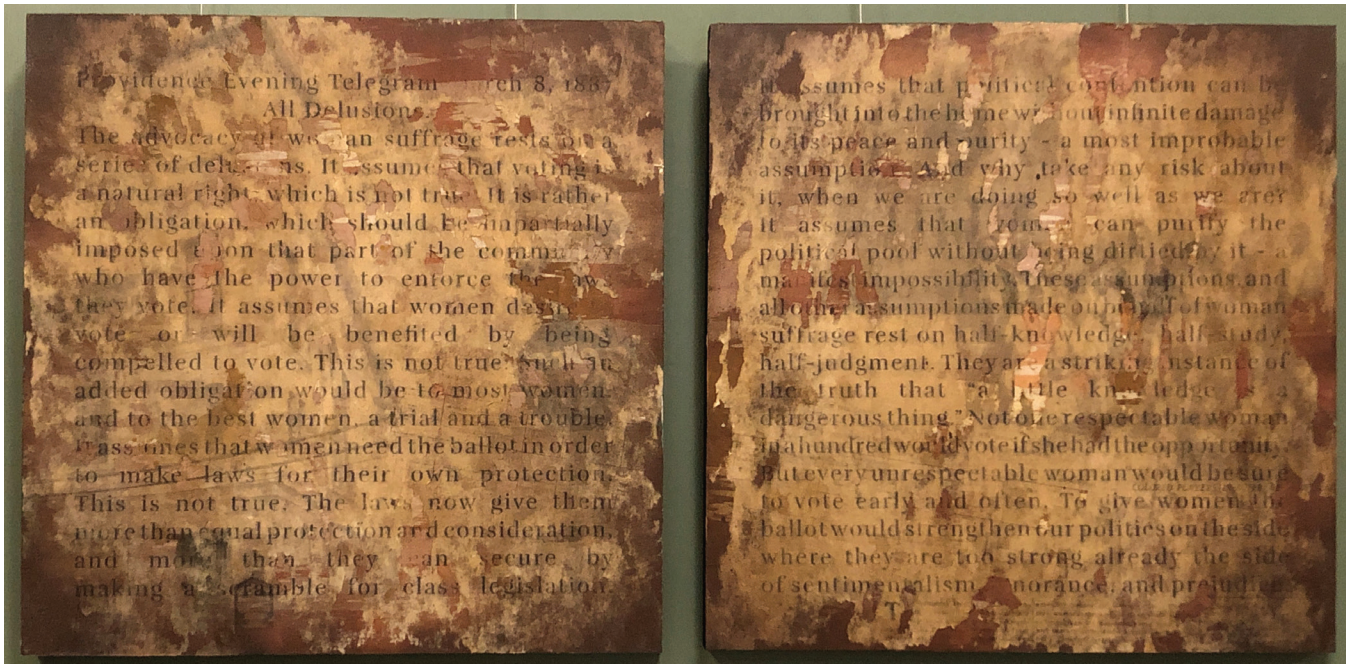
Using resonant artifacts from the Rhode Island State Archives, Becci Davis’ topographical palimpsests question widely-circulated narratives about women’s suffrage, exposing the complex questions of race often left out of them. Her mixed media sculptures are not only rooted in intersectional feminism and attend to the many ways Black women experienced structural and ideological barriers to suffrage differently than white women, they also interrogate the specifics of place, and the power of locality. Mapping a series of charged spaces that are as important as the people whose activism took shape in them, Davis’ speculative cartographies offer new paths through the 100-year-old story of women’s suffrage in Rhode Island.

## **Artist Statement:**

“One of the great lessons of 2020 has been to question what we think we know. Before engaging in the research for this body of work, all I knew about the suffrage movement was centered around the experiences of white women with class privilege. Many of the images we hold in our collective memory of the suffrage movement support this narrative. Creating this new work has opened my eyes to the activism of Bertha G. Higgins, a Southern-born Black woman who founded the RI Union of Colored Women’s Clubs and labored tirelessly to support the suffrage movement as well as the many other needs of Rhode Island’s Black community. Bertha’s story is emblematic of the difficulties Black women faced as they sought solidarity within the mainstream suffrage movement. Similar difficulties were faced decades later by women who walked in Bertha’s footsteps, at the vanguard of the civil rights and feminist movements. Audre Lorde describes poetry as the ‘revelation or distillation of experience.’ These seven works are visual poems that attempt to distill the experience of Bertha G. Higgins and the RI Union of Colored Women’s Clubs, the importance of place to their story and their intersecting work with the mainstream suffrage movement.”

## **Artist Bio:**

Becci Davis’ creative practice explores the politics of representation, commemoration and monuments, both structural and cultural. It questions how to engage with an archive whose source and steward has historically been the oppressive culture that ignored, suppressed, and erased the contributions of her forebearers. Working across disciplines, she collects still and moving images, documents, sound, and oral narratives. Using this collection of evidence, combined with her own interpretation and response, Becci constructs what Pierre Nora would call realms of memory, devices for remembering people, places, and events. These devices create a new history and personal geography, bring visibility to hidden histories and merge collective memory and popular culture with documentation. This work explores the reciprocal relationship between environment and inhabitant by constructing spaces that serve as monuments of duality: past and present, interiority and the exterior environment, strength and oppression, obsolescence and relevance, memory and recorded history, evidence and critique. Her work can be found at: [beccidavis.com](http://beccidavis.com)



## All Delusions

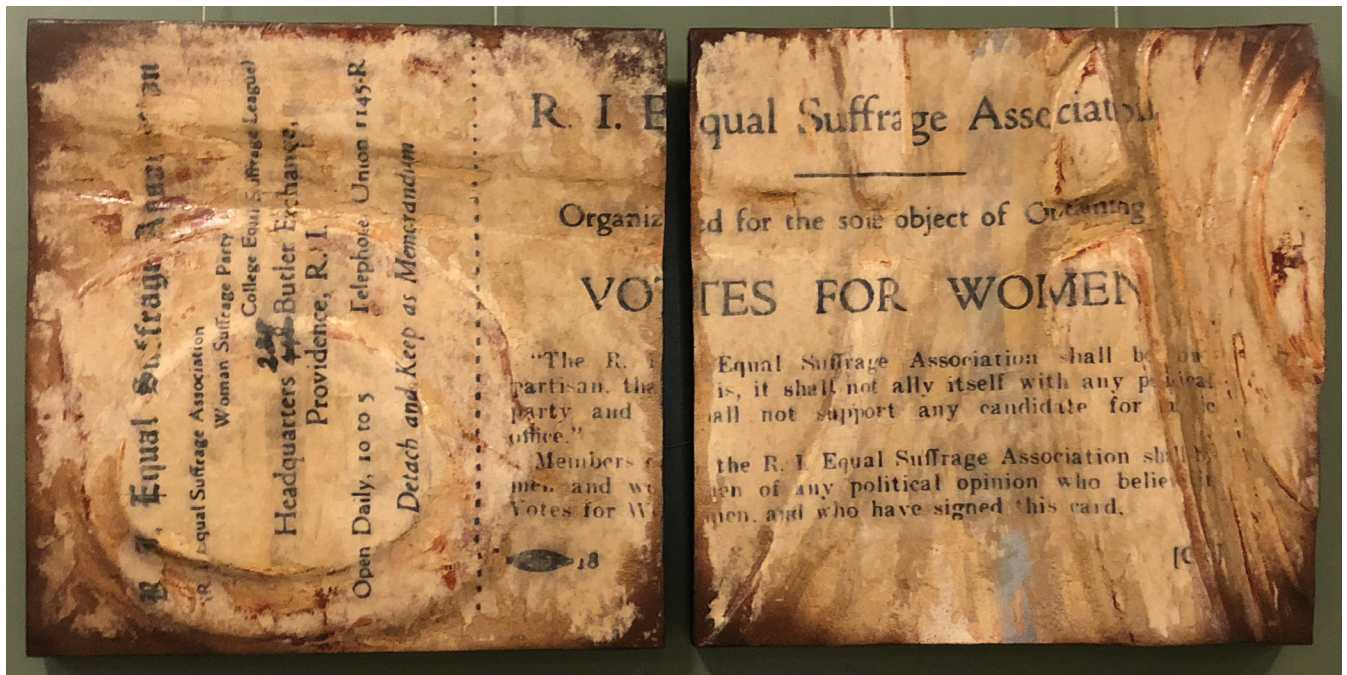
mixed media  
24" x 48"  
\$2,600



## Ode to a Poet-Whisperer

mixed media  
18" x 18"  
\$1000

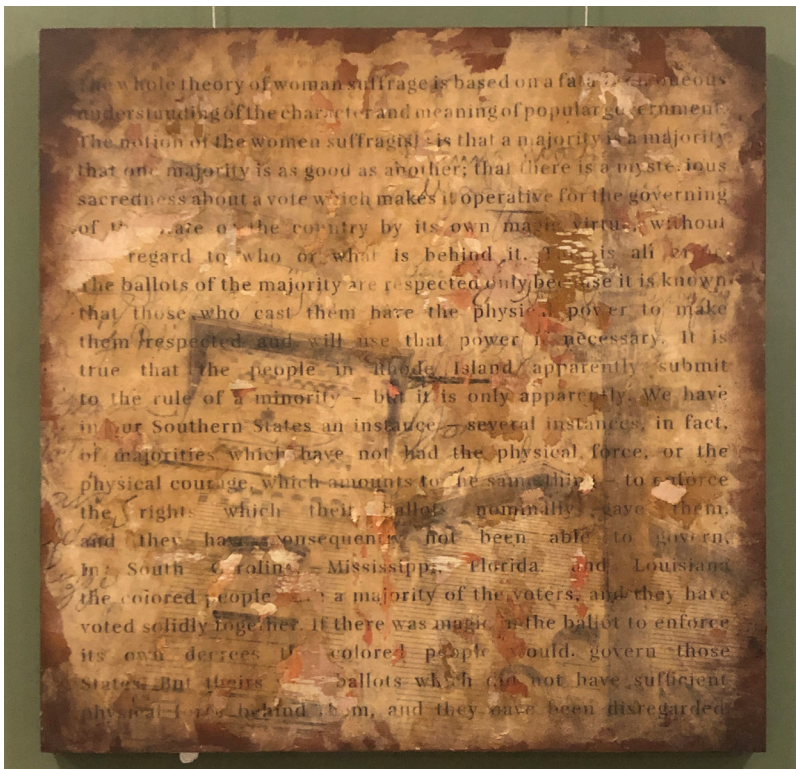




**Votes For Women**  
 mixed media  
 24" x 48"  
 \$3,000



**Bearing the Intimacy of Scrutiny**  
 mixed media  
 18" x 18"  
 \$1,500



### Physical Force and Magic Ballots

mixed media

36" x 36"

\$2,500



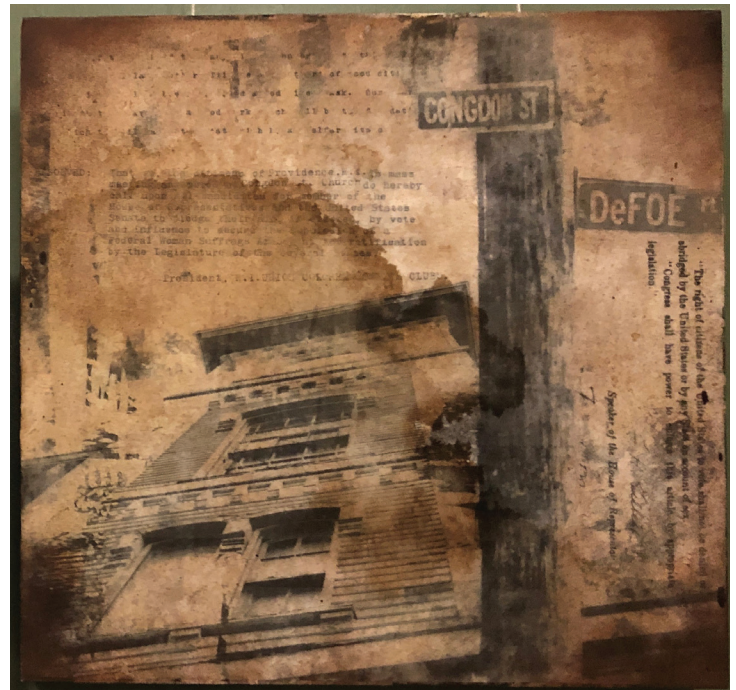
### We, in mass meeting assembled

mixed media

12" x 12"

\$500





**Resolved**  
mixed media  
16" x 16"  
\$800