



music sessions. With the warmer weather last year, they began hosting outdoor events on a piece of their property they now call The Meadow. According to Ben, the response was overwhelming, and a strong indication of community support. Live music under a starry night with the occasional surprise visit by a food truck—summer bliss. Who knew this place could become even more magical? Watch for The Word Barn’s continuing outdoor concert series and Sarah’s long-awaited book of poems called *We Hold on to What We Can*, published by Loom Press. —Jennifer Mancuso

**Between Worlds: Delita Martin at the Brattleboro Museum and Arts Center Brattleboro, VT Through May 2022**  
[brattleboromuseum.org](http://brattleboromuseum.org)

Sometimes there is so much joy it cannot be contained within a space or hung on a wall. The Brattleboro Museum and Arts Center (BMAC) has installed acclaimed artist Delita Martin’s *Between Worlds* on the outside of BMAC—glorious digital reproductions in the large window bays across the front and side of the museum. Each piece, on average, is about 6 x 5.5 feet. I encountered the panels for the first time while running an errand. Initially rushing to my destination, the panels caught me by surprise, inspiring me to turn the car around and go meet them.

In some ways, it’s not fair to call this an exhibition or installation, it’s an experience. Whether you’re walking around downtown Brattleboro or driving by, the Black girls within these large panels invite and demand a

moment of pause, contemplation, and joy.

In addition to the vibrant oranges and blues within the pattern of *Wild Flower*, the energetic geometrics in *Star Children*, or the interplay of color and soulful gaze in *Soul Mates*, something else surfaces for the viewer. Martin’s Black girls engage you directly in a way that carries forth the question, “Are you the viewer or are you being viewed?” And so the dialogue begins.

For Martin’s work—which is focused on correcting the ways that Black girls and women have been historically marginalized—this question is key and shifts the power dynamic. It’s also clear that these figures unapologetically take space, inviting the viewer to stop and engage with this experience of seeing and being seen.

As a Black woman within this time when there are many moments of national tragedy and repetitive trauma, standing on the lawn at BMAC, as I have at different moments, experiencing *Between Worlds* felt like receiving permis-



Above, from left: Delita Martin, *Wild Flowers* (Panel 6), 2019, digital reproduction of mixed media work (acrylic, charcoal, fabric, hand stitching, liquid gold leaf, Stabilo pencil, vintage jewelry), 30 x 46". *Soul Mates* (Panel 4), 2020, digital reproduction of mixed media work (acrylic, charcoal, decorative papers, hand stitching), 51 ½ x 72". *Star Children* (Panel 5), 2019, digital reproduction of mixed media work (acrylic, charcoal, decorative papers, fabrics, hand stitching, liquid gold leaf), 52 x 72". All courtesy of the artist.

Below: Eben Blaney, *Blockbuster* (wall sculpture): ebonized mahogany, 12 x 12 x 1". Courtesy of the artist.

Opposite: An audience enjoying the magic and power of safely gathering in The Word Barn Meadow. Courtesy of The Word Barn.

sion to experience joy. It was also an emotional moment and an answer to a question that I have been asking myself of late, “What does it mean to matter as a Black woman in America?” It means streets marked with “Black Lives Matter” within a system that has not yet caught up with the meaning of those words, and yet the murals speak to the power of art to heal, soothe, and spark joy within and outside ourselves.

Each viewer will be impacted by the experience of being with this art in open space. You’ll be present on the lawn in front of the BMAC yet also transported, emotionally and intellectually, by these vivacious women. What will you discover between these worlds? —Shanta Lee Gander

**Beyond Function: Eben Blaney at Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens Boothbay, ME July 14–October 17**  
[mainegardens.org](http://mainegardens.org)

Eben Blaney is a master in the medium of wood. Contemporary in style, with a distinct nod towards the mid-century modern