

For Immediate Release  
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**Clare Gallery new exhibit: *A Suspension of Perception***

Hartford, CT — 2023 is Clare Gallery's 20th anniversary year! *A Suspension of Perception*, from January 12 to March 12, is Clare Gallery's new exhibition of large-scale photographs by Christine Breslin, a National Endowment for the Arts recipient and longtime Hartford, Connecticut, photographer and educator. Breslin's images focus their attention on migrants and immigrants from areas south of our country's border. Her work asks us to look and listen to her subjects' stories. More importantly, it challenges us to reflect on our own understanding of collective humanity—who we are, where we come from, what we choose to do with our lives, and how we can help each other. Breslin wishes her audience to slow down and “suspend” their preconceived perceptions of others, trusting in the dignity of being human together.

The use of scale is crucial to creating a sense of “closeness.” Her subjects' portraits are larger than life. They look right into the camera (i.e., the viewer), sharing their full selves through their facial expressions and body language. Sometimes the images are singular portraits. Other images feature two subjects—perhaps a family. The works' composition, use of texture, unusual color (wet collodion prints, an alternative, historic photographic method) all combine to draw you into “their” space.

Breslin's personal interest and journey south is multifold. Initially, many years ago, she traveled to Colombia to bring home her newly adopted daughter. Her experience with Latino people and their culture created an opening for her to see the world anew. *A Suspension of Perception* began as an exploration of storytelling. Immigrants from Mexico and South America were photographed and asked to share their stories. The work blended photographs with video storytelling, becoming a process to connect more fully with people and cultures unlike her own.

In 2018, intense anger drew Breslin to the southern border after watching, in horror, how the U.S. separated children and babies from their families. She traveled to Texas with the organization Grannies Respond: Abuelos Responden. They spread the word about the gravity of the situation. During this experience, Breslin added new work to *A Suspension of Perception*. Her lens focused on the migrants, their families and their stories of risk, while traveling to our border in hopes of a better, safer life. Some of her subjects sat for her at the Catholic Respite Center in McAllen, Texas, where Sister Norma Pimentel, MJ, with her volunteers, would comfort them. For a few days, they provided food, shelter, and assistance in making connections to other family members in the States before the migrants continued.

Breslin's *A Suspension of Perception* documents the human condition with esteem and a sense of worthiness. Singularly each work visually communicates the beauty of each soul contained within. As a body of work, they document people's journeys, hopes, sorrows, anxieties, and tragedies. In the end, you see each one for who they are—a human being—among us. If you rest a while with them, you will notice they are no different than the subjects who sat on the “Front Steps” during Covid. *A Suspension of Perception* is partially funded by the CT Commission on the Arts.

# CLARE

## GALLERY

at the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry

Christine Breslin is a highly accomplished lifestyle photographer and fine artist. She believes in documenting the real person and takes attentive care in finding special moments highlighting her subjects' personalities and stories. Her commercial work spans from small business to Fortune 500 clients to entrepreneurs. In 2020, her work was published in *The Front Steps*, which highlighted a grassroots effort documenting how people coped with isolation, as well as how one found connections during Covid-19. Her fine art work has been exhibited extensively throughout the United States and is included in both the Polaroid Collection and the New Britain Museum of American Art. Breslin has an MFA from the University of Hartford and a long teaching career at higher educational institutions across Connecticut. One of her joys is working with students, in both analog and digital photography, helping them discover how to tell their own and others' stories. You can find out more at her website: [christinebreslinphotography.com](http://christinebreslinphotography.com) and her various social media platforms.

There will be a **virtual panel discussion on Thursday, February 7, 7–8:30 p.m. held via Zoom**. Panelists include: Christine Breslin, artist; Fr. Julian Jagudillo, OFM, director of The Migrant Center of the Church of St. Francis of Assisi in New York City; and Sister Norma Pimentel, MJ, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley and the Humanitarian Respite Center in McAllen, Texas. The panel will be moderated by Nancy Wynn, Clare Gallery Committee chair and associate professor and chair of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts at Merrimack College. **Registration is required for the virtual panel discussion**. Please visit the Clare Gallery website for link registration. Additionally, you can join us for an **in-person artist talk Sunday, March 5, 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.** with Christine Breslin and Grannies Respond: Abuelos Responden.

The Clare Gallery primarily features exhibitions that emphasize world religions or interfaith themes, as well as social justice themes, on either a global or local level. The Gallery is housed in the Franciscan Center for Urban Ministry at 285 Church Street, Hartford, CT. The Center is part of St. Patrick – St. Anthony Church, a vibrant and active downtown faith community.

The Clare Gallery's hours are from 9 a.m.– 4 p.m. Mondays through Saturdays, and Sundays from 9– 11:30 a.m. The Gallery is open to the public. Free parking is available directly across from the church, and the facility is handicapped accessible. Masks are recommended for entry.