FIRST-TIME VOTERS

July 31, 2020–January 3, 2021
Conte Community Arts Gallery

May 1–December 31, 2020
FristArtMuseum.org/WeCount

Organized by the Frist Art Museum

Oil on canvas, 67 x 57 in. Courtesy of the artist.
© Donna Woodley. Photo: John Schweikert
On August 18, 1920, the Tennessee state legislature voted to ratify the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which guarantees and protects women’s right to vote. As the 36th state to approve the amendment, Tennessee completed the three-quarters majority needed to make it the law of the land. We Count: First-Time Voters honors the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment by highlighting the first voting experiences of a diverse group of Nashvillians. Five local artists—Beizar Aradini, M Kelley, Jerry Bedor Phillips, Thaxton Waters, and Donna Woodley—created visual representations of these stories in a variety of mediums.

In the century since the passage of the 19th Amendment, Americans have continued to overcome obstacles and embrace the process of casting their ballots. The experiences of the people interviewed by the artists include becoming aware of everyday inequities, meeting the challenges of immigrating to the United States and pursuing citizenship, expressing passionate support for a candidate, facing disenfranchisement, and celebrating restoration of their rights to vote. The resulting works of art uniquely embody individual and collective insights on civic engagement.

All works appear in this exhibition courtesy of the artists.