

***Anthems, Highways, &  
Cosmic Roadtrips***

**Fred Fleisher**

# *Anthems, Highways, & Cosmic Roadtrips*

Fred Fleisher

November 13 - December 18, 2025

Essay by Chris Bors

Flecker Gallery  
Suffolk County Community College  
Ammerman Campus, Selden, NY

Director's Forward:

Flecker Gallery is proud to present *Anthems, Highways, & Cosmic Roadtrips*, a solo exhibition by Brooklyn-based contemporary artist and Army veteran Fred Fleisher. Fred was once my professor and has since become a good friend and generous mentor—so it's a particular joy to welcome him into our gallery not just as an influence on my own practice, but as an inspiration to students of Suffolk County Community College.

Fred's paintings and sculptures feel like a surreal American road trip / pop-culture fever dream, with surreal landscapes, and foreign yet oddly familiar characters. His characters are a mix between cute and grotesque, humorous yet unsettling, absurd but also tender. His hybrid creatures, "suits" and '80s pop idols share scenes with strange characters, unicorn motifs, robots, floating eyes, and toy cars, all rearranged into something just "off" enough to make us question what we are seeing. We recognize pieces of childhood, pop-culture, retro aesthetics and images of Americana that feel familiar. Maybe from a location we visited as a kid, or a dream we had that we still remember fragments of. At first glance, the work can feel playful, even goofy; stay for the ride and you will realize you're traveling through a layered critique of contemporary American life—mass media, consumption, authoritarianism, uncertainty, and the fragile way we look for meaning and stability in a world that now more often than not, feels like the chaos and absurdity doesn't end. Maybe in Fred's opinion that is the point— to not look for an end. Perhaps these paintings are telling us, the road trip—the journey to navigate the world and oneself—is the goal, not a comfortable or cozy ending, but a wild ride.

For our students, Fred's work is a lesson in both foundation and imagination. He channels his world view, media consumption, meditations, intellect and humor into paintings that are structurally solid—rooted in design principles, composition, color, and value, while also remaining experimental and open. His soft rendering and moments of trompe-l'oeil keep you guessing about what is painted and what is felt or collage. Painted clouds may feel like stickers and the felt components mimic his oil rendering. The materials feel both chaotic and controlled, reminding us that technical skill and playful risk can co-exist in the same piece. For art students who are trying to figure out how to turn their own life, media interests, and inner world into meaningful work, Fred offers a model to be honest, weird, grounded in foundational design, and to let your own paintings take you somewhere you didn't quite expect.

We are thrilled to showcase *Anthems, Highways, & Cosmic Roadtrips*, at Flecker Gallery of Suffolk County Community College. I hope viewers enjoy the ride through the immersive mythology and imagination of Fred Fleisher.

Joshua Olsen, Director

## More Posthuman Than Posthuman

by Chris Bors

Most young children have the innate ability to entertain themselves with the simplest of means: a game of hide and seek, tag, Simon Says, or creating an imaginary world for their toys and figures on the floor of their room (at least before the advent and proliferation of tablets and smart phones). In the latter, a familiar environment ceases to exist as a place for living and becomes the staging ground for magical play and the suspension of disbelief.

Brooklyn-based artist Fred Fleisher, a former Army Ranger—whose time in the military makes his perspective on the uncertain and fleeting nature of life particularly prescient given the current state of global conflict—uses childlike imagery, toys, and thrift-store detritus to stage scenes of hope, conflict, and psychological uncertainty. A handmade American can-do attitude can be seen throughout Fleisher's surreal mindscapes, whether in his collage-like canvases or his sculptural amalgamations made up from various doll-parts and found objects.

For his exhibition "Anthems, Highways, & Cosmic Roadtrips"



at Suffolk County Community College's Maurice N. Flecker Memorial Gallery, Fleisher presents a series of paintings and sculptures whose folksy narrative is far from clear, but by mining visuals we often associate with children, he creates a world parallel to ours that is both familiar and alien. In the painting *Solastalgia*, 2025, a man rides a violet-hued toy sports car adorned with a purple unicorn head. The figures exist in an indeterminate space, surrounded by various humans and hybrid creatures, including a man practicing martial arts, another holding an American flag, and a pair of lanky legs with painted toenails. Looming larger and in the middle ground are a man in a suit with multiple dinosaur heads and a green-haired cyborg. Despite the science fiction aspect of the narrative, there is a positivity that could allude to Fleisher's faith in the American dream, rather than a threatening vibe.

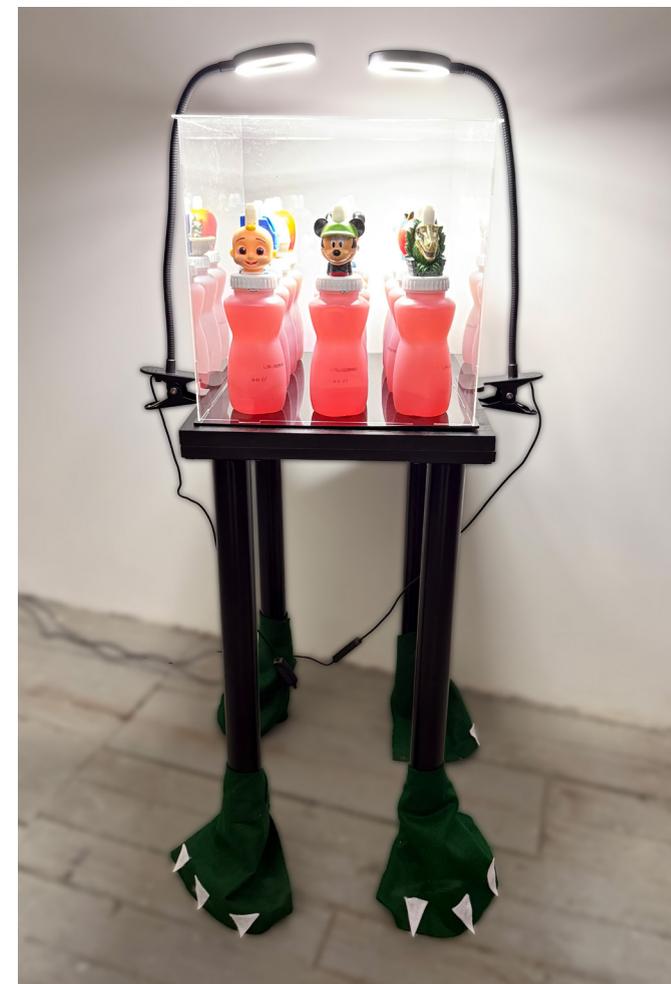
More abstract is *ChakraCosmic*, 2025, in which a male figure seems to be seeking divine inspiration from a totem-like goddess form which is glowing from within. To the side of the figures stands a grotesque head which makes an appearance in several other works. It's unclear if this represents the character's id, ego, or superego, but it seems to be an integral part of Fleisher's world. In *Feeling's Mutual*, 2025, for example, the same or a similar character scream out for help, but his words only appear in a comic-style thought bubble, so can anyone hear him? Perhaps it represents the façade many concoct to be able to deal with life—inner turmoil and pain masked by a smile. This lumpy clay-like form also takes center stage in *The Eternal Question*, 2025, this time flanked by another even more misshapen mound of flesh laying on its side. In a bold cartoon speech bubble the character asks "Why?" In Douglas Adams's *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, it took the supercomputer Deep Thought 7.5 million years to calculate the answer to "ultimate question of life, the universe, and everything" and all it came up with was "42." Similarly, we might respond to the characters in this instance with "Why not?"



*ChakraCosmic*, 2025, Oil, Acrylic and Acrylic Spray Paint on Canvas, 30”h x 24”w

In *Sailing Through the Void of Time*, 2025, Fleisher expands into mixed media, with oil, acrylic, spray paint, felt, tack paper and glue on canvas, pushing his collage aesthetic into new territory. Two figures, the artist and his significant other, are shown in a hybrid desert/outer space landscape, with a wise elder type of figure representing Time and a 50s-style wind-up robot looming above representing our present and future. This work gives off retro thrift-shop, home-crafter energy, and Fleisher's love of both his materials and subject matter comes shining through.

In the bricolage *Approximately 20 Gallons of Water*, 2025, cartoon character heads on top of juice bottles under plexiglass resemble a high thought science project crossed with a Pee-Wee's Playhouse prop. This shrine to American kiddie pop culture displayed on a table with felt dinosaur feet is either a dream or nightmare depending on your point of view. In all of Fleisher's work there is a familiarity with his symbolism, but parsing the meaning is what makes them challenging. Fleisher's allegories are at times clairvoyant representations, portrayals of the inevitable, and/or warnings not to repeat past indiscretions. The question remains will the kids be all alright or will something wicked this way come?



*Approximately 20 Gallons of Water*, 2025, Plexiglass, Table Legs, Felt, Lights, and Juice Bottles 36”h x 13”w x 16”d



*Solastalgia*, 2025, Oil, Acrylic, Glitter, Felt and Glue on Canvas, 56”h x 62”w



*Soul Slide*, 2025, Oil and Acrylic on Canvas, 30”h x 24”w



*Sailing Through The Void of Time*, 2025, Oil, Acrylic, Spray Paint, Felt, Tack Paper and Glue on Canvas, 53”h x 44”w



*What Wish?*, 2023, Toys, Wire, Glue, Clay, 12”h x 10”w



*Heart Attack*, 2023, Toys, Airdry Clay and Wire, 10”h x 10”w



*No Fly Zone!*, 2023, Toys, Wire, Glue, Clay, 12”h x 10”w



*No Hope?*, 2023, Toys, Wire, Glue, Clay, 12”h x 10”w



*The Beast*, 2022, Airdry Clay, Toys, Fabric and Wire, 18”h x 10”w



*Tiamat*, 2023, Airdry Clay, Toys, Fabric and Wire, 15”h x 18”w



*Anthropocosmic, 2024, Oil on Panel, 10” x 10”*



*Truck Stop Preacher, 2024, Oil on Canvas, 30”h x 40”w*



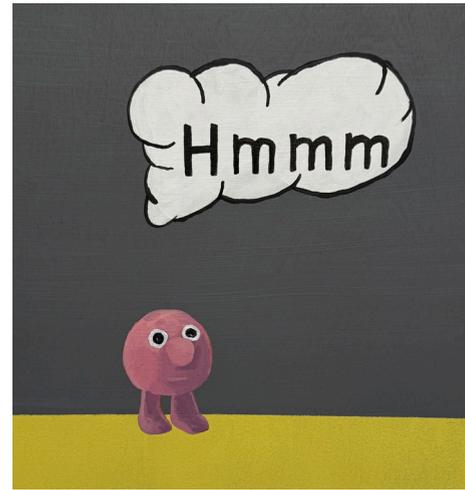
*Billings Large*, 2025, Acrylic on Canvas, 24”h x 20”w



*Cody*, 2025, Acrylic on Canvas, 24”h x 20”w



*Coconut Candy Sky & The Big Game, 2025, Acrylic on Canvas, 20”h x 24”w*



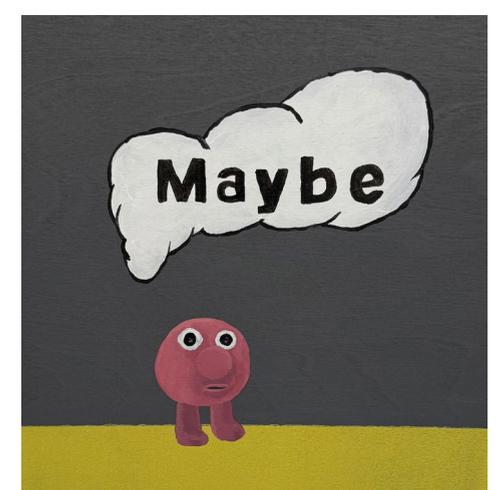
*Wandering Witness 1, 2025, Acrylic and Acrylic Marker on Panel, 12”h x 12”w*



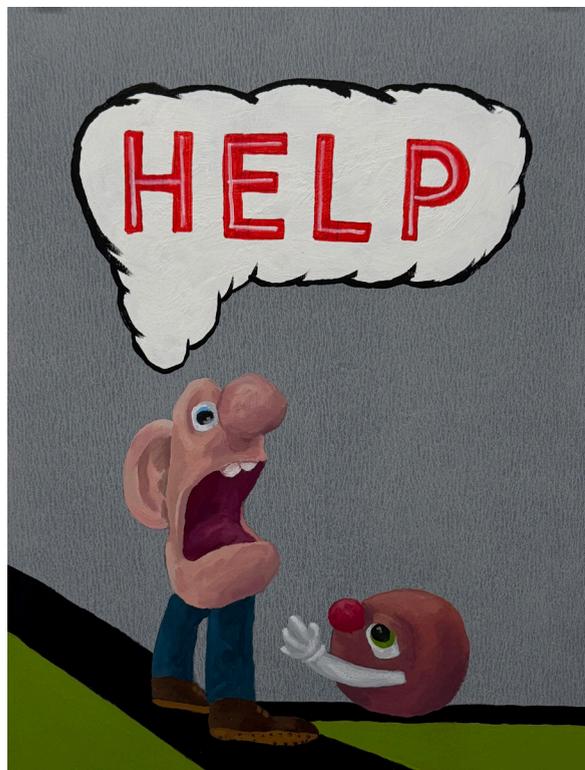
*Wandering Witness 2, 2025, Acrylic and Acrylic Marker on Panel, 12”h x 12”w*



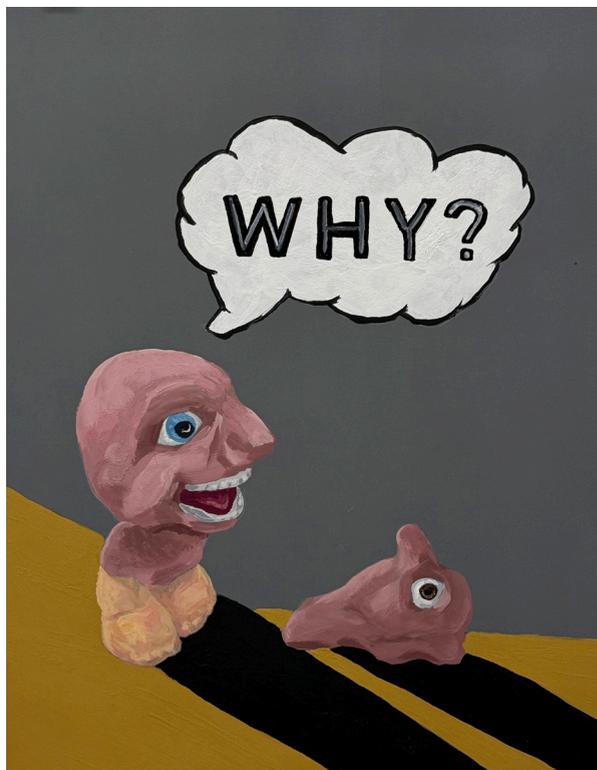
*Wandering Witness 3, 2025, Acrylic and Acrylic Marker on Panel, 12”h x 12”w*



*Wandering Witness 4, 2025, Acrylic and Acrylic Marker on Panel, 12”h x 12”w*



*Feeling's Mutual*, 2025, Acrylic on Polypropylene Paper, 16”h x 12”w



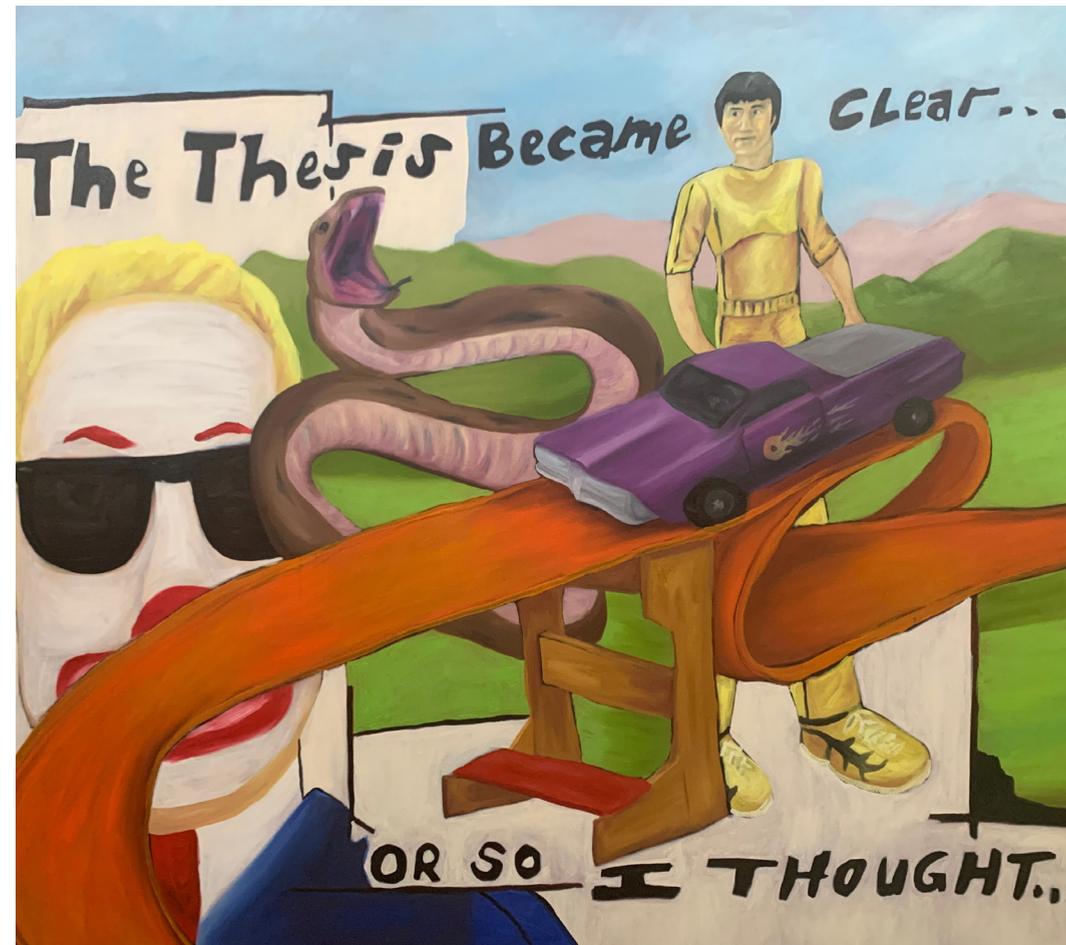
*The Eternal Question*, 2025, Acrylic on Polypropylene Paper, 14”h x 11”w



*Castaway*, 2025, Oil on Canvas, 30”h x 40”w



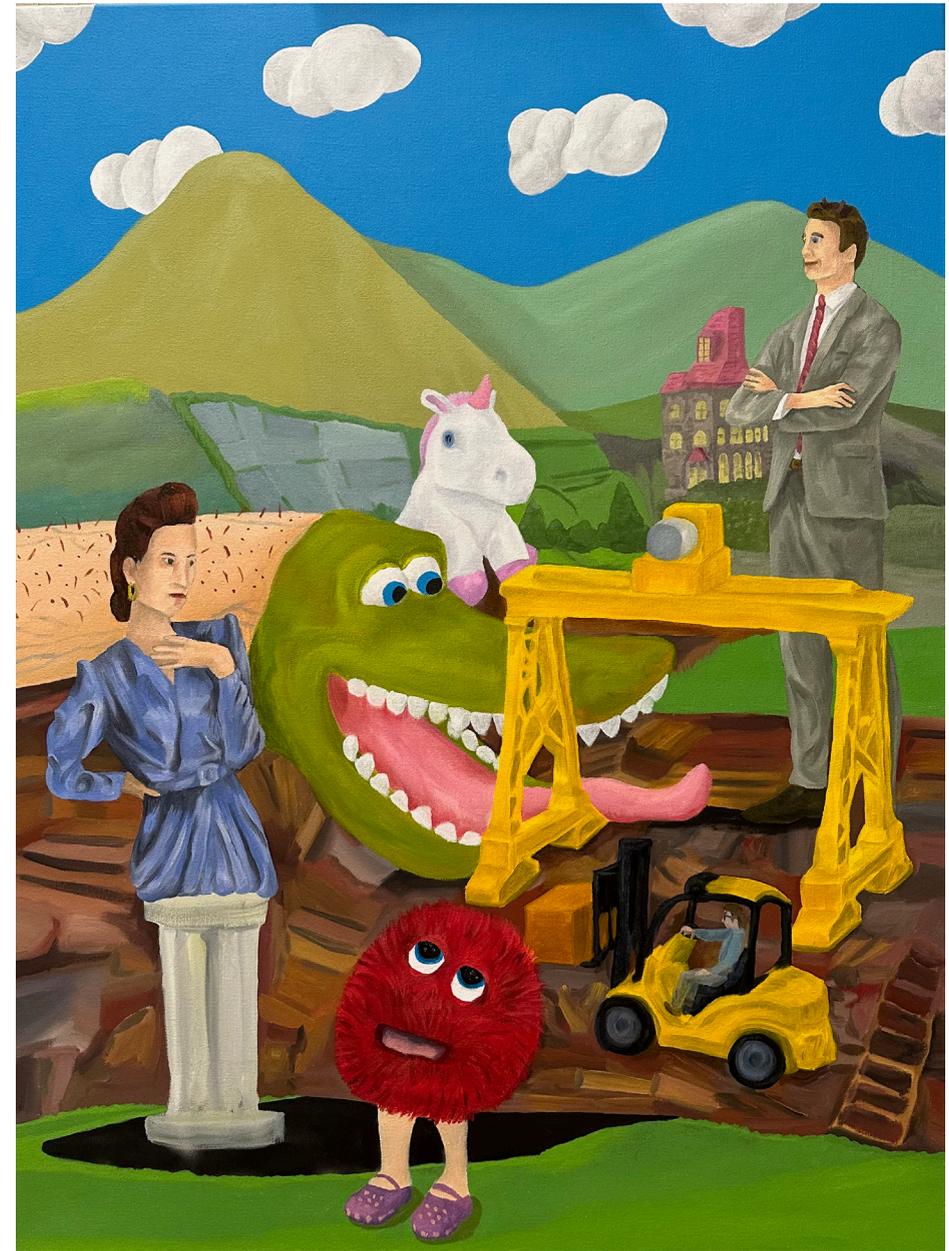
*Illuminated Path*, 2025, Acrylic on Panel, 14”h x 18”w



*The Thesis Became Clear or so I Thought*, 2022, Oil on Canvas, 44”h x 50”w



*Coachella, 2024, Oil on Panel, 10" x 10"*



*Gentrifying the Book of Revelation, 2024, Acrylic on Canvas, 40"h x 30"w*



*Approximately 20 Gallons of Water*, 2025, Plexiglass, Table Legs, Felt, Lights, and Juice Bottles 36”h x 13”w x 16”d



*ChakraCosmic*, 2025, Oil, Acrylic and Acrylic Spray Paint on Canvas, 30”h x 24”w



Fred Fleisher is a Brooklyn-based artist, educator, and curator whose multidisciplinary practice encompasses painting, sculpture, drawing, installation, video, and performance. His work critically interrogates the paradoxes embedded within contemporary American culture, employing satirical symbolism to examine themes of consumerism, identity construction, collective memory, and the sociopolitical mechanisms underlying late capitalism. Born in Pennsylvania, Fleisher served in the U.S. Army and completed Ranger School, an experience that continues to shape his artistic practice. He has exhibited his work internationally for over two decades, with recent solo exhibitions with IFAC Art at The Yard (NYC), Brian Leo Projects (NYC) and RAM Gallery (Brooklyn, NY). His work has regularly appeared in curated exhibitions in New York, as well as shows in Los Angeles, Chicago, Berlin, and Zurich. He holds a BFA in Painting and Drawing and a BS in Art Education from Penn State University, as well as an MFA in Studio Art from Queens College, City University of New York. Currently, he is an Associate Professor in the Visual Arts Department at SUNY Old Westbury.

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533 College Road, Selden, NY 11784  
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Gallery Director and Curator: Joshua Olsen

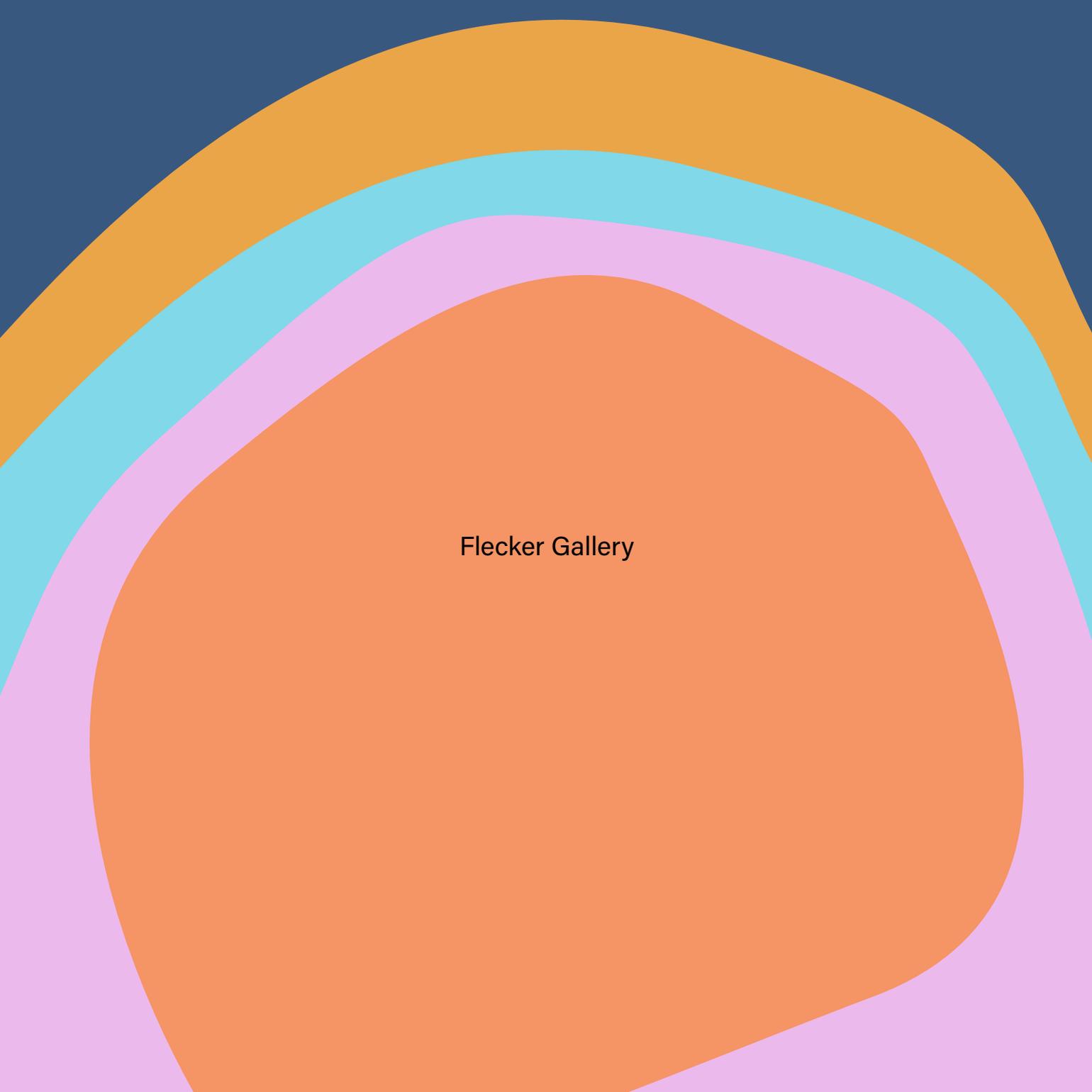
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