Case Studies
Curated by Evonne M. Davis

Feb. 10 - March 16, 2018
Gallery Aferro Main Gallery
73 Market Street, Newark NJ

OPENING RECEPTION
February 10th, 2017
7pm - 10pm

GALLERY HOURS
Wednesday - Saturday
12pm - 6pm
and by appointment

Participating Artists:
Emily Bivens
Marcy Chevali
Kate Eggleston
Tatiana Istomina
Niki Lederer
Ann LePore
Laurie Murphy
Elina Peduzzi
Joanne Ross
James Sham
Sarah Walko
Eleanor White
Juno Zago
Mark Zimmerman
Case Studies features 14 artists who have been invited to intervene with re-purposed, salvaged museum display cases. The majority of these cases were donated to Gallery Aferro by George Washington’s Mt. Vernon Estate’s Museum, as well as from New York Historical Society and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Large, elegant, dark wood displays, previously used for a traveling exhibition of replica objects from Washington’s life, as well as plexiglass vitrines and pedestals, will be transformed by artists from across the country for a contemporary vision, creating a diverse and unique experience for the viewers because in effect each is creating an exhibit within an exhibit.

Ann LePore is conducting street-side interviews to ask people in New York what they think should be preserved and protected in a display case, and then projecting luminescent drawings of those objects for her display case. Tatiana Istomina’s case is given over to documents and artwork from the life of fictional Modernist painter, Alissa Blumenthal (1899-1991), derived from Istomina’s interest in the early 20th century avant-garde. Niki Lederer will be displaying 333 porcelain dogs, addressing questions of what happens when private collections are shown publicly in very non-domestic settings. Other artists are using their cases to address topics as divergent as state-sanctioned killings, the symbolism of the ace of spades, and the Newark-born inventor of the oreo cookie.

This exhibition creates a dialogue between museum culture, gallery experimentation, and the impulses and voices of artists. Whether described as cases, pedestals, vitrines, casework, or cabinets, the objects can evoke portability and itinerancy in art and culture, as well as ideas of what is imagined to be fixed, unchanging, and authoritative. Ideas about archiving, exposure, cultural access, historical narrative, Americana, Colonialism, “high” and “low” culture, containment, consumption, salvage and recycling, object reparation, looking and how it changes what is looked at, preservation, platform and power, the exoticized, and the uses of the past also might come to mind. Artist Fred Wilson’s Mining the Museum, as well as more recent projects such as Not An Alternative’s Natural History Museum remind us that there are no neutral objects. Which artists generally know better than most. Educators and activity planners are encouraged to contact the gallery to book a free tour of the exhibits for their youth or adult groups.