





officer and jailer by many state constitutions—including Louisiana’s—that can defy typical principles of separation of powers. And as elected officials, they’re also given more freedom to engage in politics than many other types of cops. Jessica Pishko, a journalist and lawyer, explores how many sheriffs have come to embrace right-wing ideas. They can come to see themselves as defenders against other layers of government over issues like gun control, vaccinations, and spurious claims of election fraud, even at times claiming wide power to deputize supportive civilians. And she highlights the potential for abuse of power, citing claims of brutality by deputies and sheriffs, including former Iberia Parish Sheriff Louis Ackal. Orleans Parish Sheriff Susan Hutson appears in Pishko’s narrative as well, as an example of the paradoxically limited power of “reform-minded sheriffs” to achieve significant change. Pishko’s prose can be dry at times, and the book would have benefitted from a bit more analysis of sheriffs in the pre-Trump era, but it’s still a valuable and comprehensive examination of sheriffs today and the inherent dangers of such a powerful office. —Steven Melendez

**GAIL SIMONE / DAVID MARQUEZ
UNCANNY X-MEN #2
(MARVEL)**

Writer Gail Simone’s Southern gothic tale in New Orleans creates a touching introduction to a new teen mutant group named the Outliers. Simone designed the team to represent invisible disabilities, referring to how one can’t tell that the teenagers are mutants by only looking at them. Simone and artist David Marquez prove their commitment to horror with action-packed interactions full of creepiness. Rogue’s husband



Gambit might be cursed, the X-Mansion is now a prison run by extremists, and Professor Xavier’s college love interest has somehow become some sort of monstrous mutant hunter. This chaos is reflected in the lack of unity among the original X-Men. Rogue’s leadership is demonstrated beautifully when Wolverine’s lack of faith in himself acts as another catalyst for her to guide her peers. The parallels to Professor X and Rogue as leaders is another fascinating element at play, as both of these X-Men leaders’ romantic relationships have defined a large part of their character development and how they choose to express their morality and views on education. The interest in the extremists hunting down mutants may be lacking, but this is easily made up for by the enriching Southern gothic world Rogue’s personal narrative takes place in and the challenges presented to her character’s motivations. —Jamal Melancon-Hill



**CARLIE TROSCLAIR
ALLOWED OUR EDGES
TO MERGE
(SIBYL GALLERY)**

New Orleans artist Carlie Trosclair cast roots, cypress knees, and tree stumps along with bits of architecture, home decor, and fabric from days bygone for her exhibition *allowed our edges to merge* at Sibyl Gallery. The term cast has dual meanings here, as her works are assembled in a *mise-en-scène* throughout the gallery, like performers in a theater. Trosclair looks for philosophical and phenomenological similarities between her subjects, inviting us to perceive the vulnerability of both natural and man-made worlds.

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Using a latex of pale cream to create molds with pigment for narrative effect, Trosclair also allows for bits of bark, dirt, and brick to enter the casts, merging the real and imagined. Works range in scale from intimate to monumental; some are immediately discernible as real things while others are hybrids verging on science fiction. There are 29 artworks in total and all are abstractions of their original forms: houses, trees, furniture, swamps. “Home Relics VII” at 5” x 5.5”, appears as hardware from an old drawer oxidized green with a small conch shell attached, intimating that it has been submerged—an unnatural situation for furniture. The immersive “Canopy” (dimensions variable) is a beautifully eerie, life-size sculpture cast from Creole style windows and walls from Trosclair’s family home, with red brick defined by additional pigment. “Canopy” does not “stand” in an upright position, but instead hovers over exhibition visitors, tent-like and ethereal, swaying to the unnatural breeze of an air conditioning vent. Installed opposite the entrance, “Understory” serves as a key to the logic of the exhibition, hanging flat to the wall, with rooty tendrils languorously draping onto the floor. “Understory” conjures both the organic and man-made, simultaneously invoking tree root systems, insect wings, stained glass, and city maps with its faceted veining and riverbend arch. Consider the cicada nymph’s shell aligning against the silhouette of this piece and its song on these warm September days as its own life draws to a close. Also consider the gallery’s proximity to the riverbend and our eternal

cycles of flooding, most recently from Hurricane Francine. In “Woodland Terrains,” tree stumps and rings hang from unfinished plywood walls, conjuring protective boarding for storms and unfinished repairs. The perfect irony of using latex—essentially rubber, a wood derivative—and pieces of wood to evoke trees and bark foreshadows surveys of land loss. Upstairs, hybrids of antique décor and organic details stand alongside works on green-tinted plywood walls. The green color story extends to the sculptures, conjuring moist environments of algae and mold; and Scheele’s Green, a dye used in the 18th and 19th centuries made from copper and arsenic that poisoned its users, signifies polluted water tables. In Trosclair’s casts of antique furniture, architectural and domestic details merge with actual textiles, reborn as adaptive and psychedelic post-disaster amalgams. In “Inheritance,” an antique gilt mirror “grows” jacquard algae, and a pendant lamp case attaches itself like a barnacle, intimating high-water levels. *allowed our edges to merge* can be framed in the multiple meanings of simulacra, as simulations that create their own reality and as copies of things that forecast the moment for which the original no longer exists. “Canopy” is also visible from the rafters here, and cypress knees cheekily pop up to remind us about resistance. Cypress knees are the remnants of old tree root systems of the city’s watery past, and present tripping hazards in yards and green spaces. They are habitually removed but most always return. *(On view at Sibyl Gallery through October 6)*
—Veronica Cross

RAISING LOUISIANA

cont'd from pg. 13

As it turned out, that day in the cathedral kicked off a long stretch of my child choosing to guess “boy” and I had some complicated feelings about that. Gender messaging from my own childhood put me in a place of over-analyzing my child’s choices, getting stuck in spirals of self-scrutiny of my parenting. When my child presented and identified in a way that was in line with mainstream notions of what gender is and means, part of me felt relief, and all of me felt horrible for feeling that relief. I’d always excelled at insomnia-fueled games like, *What If I’m Wrong About Everything? And How Much Did I Mess My Kid Up Today?* But I now had a few more hits to add to the mix: *Reinforcing the Patriarchy Without Even Trying*, *Failing at Being Cool*, and of course, everyone’s favorite, *Making My Child’s Existence All About Me*.

It was a lot and I worked at sorting it out. I worked at getting and staying grounded, at being present for my children’s fast-moving childhoods, at honoring and celebrating my kids for who they are, at accepting my own childhood experiences as just one piece of reality. Most of all, I worked at getting clear that my issues do not need to be my children’s problems, and in fact, their identities are not anyone’s problem, on account of this simple fact: It is not a problem at all. It is just part of the fullness of who they are. 🍀

RESOURCES

You don’t have to go it alone!

The New Orleans Pride Center hosts a variety of in-person groups and events including specific gatherings for parents of trans and gender-diverse kids, groups for trans and queer youth, and more.

[@nolapridecenter](https://www.nolapridecenter.org)
[nolapridecenter.org](https://www.nolapridecenter.org)

Louisiana Trans Advocates is trans-led and a great starting place for locating support systems, including navigating the legal landscape and looking at options for families that may need to relocate to a state that is safer for them.

latransadvocates.org/resources

The Campaign for Southern Equality has awesome resources on the “Families of Trans Youth in Louisiana” section of their website, including tips for conversations with family members about affirming and respecting the gender identities of children and youth as they evolve, locating support all over the U.S., grants for assistance with relocation and accessing health care, and more. southernequality.org/la

New Orleans metro area parents! Want to share your experience with ANTIGRAVITY readers? We’re always looking for a wide variety of parenting voices and circumstances to explore each month. If you’re interested, please get in touch: erin@antigravitiymagazine.com or head to our About page to fill out a contributor form.

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