



BALLAST

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ART
2020 MFA THESIS EXHIBITION

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Ballast
The Ohio State University
Department of Art
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February 18, 2020 – March 14, 2020

[Urban Arts Space](#)
50 W. Town Street
Columbus, OH 43215

INTRODUCTION

This catalogue represents the culmination of artistic practice over the three years leading up to this exhibition, the artists' full lived experiences, and the artistic environment and academic opportunities present within The Ohio State University. It's no accident that the works presented by the 2020 MFA class from the Department of Art are as diverse as the students themselves. What's profound is the distinction of each student's body of work; the ways in which their training, experiences, and strengths come through in the physical forms they share with us here.

This environment, the university in which we exist, has led to the creation of this annual MFA exhibition and accompanying catalogue by the participation and expertise of many students, faculty, and staff. The Department of Art provides the platform for each artist to find and hone their practice; the Urban Arts Space provides the space and resources to share the work with a broader audience; the departments of History of Art and Arts Administration, Education and Policy provide art criticism through individual interviews and writing; the Design Department provides expert design of this very catalogue. I'm struck by the range of work encompassed here, the issues addressed, the challenges made, the feelings revealed, and the stimulating visual presentation of meaning. I encourage viewers to sit with the discomfort, the beauty and the complexity of the work individually and as a whole; as it reflects these students' perceptions and representations of society in 2020.

In admiration,



—Karen Hutzel, PhD
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Arts
Administration, Education and Policy
Interim Chair, Department of Art

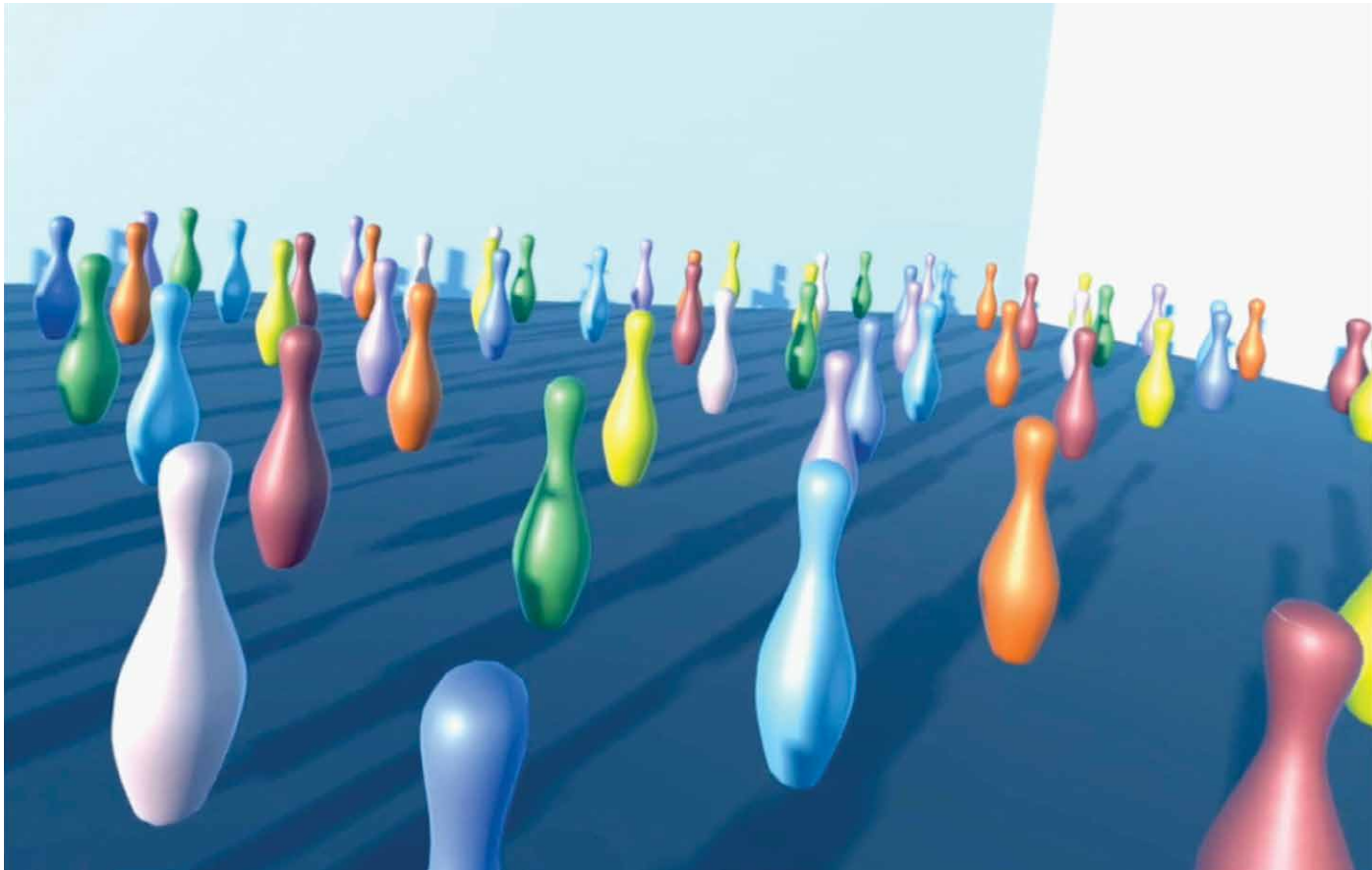


Fig. 1

SARAH M. BANKER

Hundreds of intensely colored bowling pins pop against the stark white of the gallery, arranged to invite viewers to become visitors and walk among the pins as in a field of flowers. Yet there is precariousness in this play: although bowling pins are meant to fall over, these particular pins are not as hardy as their bowling alley counterparts. Knock one over and it shatters—confetti and candy bursting out of the hollow interior. Congratulations! You found the surprise.

Sarah Banker’s sculptural installations are strikingly playful, joyful celebrations of how art can add enchantment to the everyday. Her art invites—even requires—interaction, and curiosity is rewarded in the most unexpected of ways, as when a monochrome pattern suddenly bursts with color when viewed through a smart phone’s augmented reality app.

Banker’s models are mass-produced tools of entertainment: bowling pins, Gameboys, adult coloring books. Part of the joke, of course, is

that these items are meticulously individually made using slip casting. Banker serves as a one-woman production line, constantly experimenting, learning, and inventing with a joyful curiosity that enlivens her work.

Rather than forcibly rejecting or subverting technology, Banker embraces it as a path to wonder, another tool as valid as any glaze or mold. It is also a source of inspiration: her candy-filled bowling pins are an homage to the Easter eggs and loot-filled crates ubiquitous in videogaming.

Banker gifts her audience with the revelation that the familiar “low” cultural forms of Gameboys, bowling pins, lawn flamingos, and even Lucky Charms marshmallows are touchstones that transcend difference through their ubiquity, becoming unlikely vehicles for the fundamentally human experiences of delight, fun, and joy.

—Emma Clute



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Fig. 1

Bowling Pin Installation
virtual reality
2019

Figs. 2 – 3

Bowling Pin Installation
stoneware, confetti, Easter Egg candy
2019



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

JESSICA BOUSHIE

How can people piece themselves back together after trauma and reclaim their power? Can one ever be whole again after having their power stripped from them? What does that look and feel like?

Jessica Boushie has been exploring these questions for the past three years, asking how people reform themselves after traumatic experiences. Her current work depicts multiple fragmented women's bodies, built and rebuilt from collaged parts of various two-dimensional media. The contrasting visuals of linocut and sintra prints add to the sense of deviation between a figure's hand and arm, or eye and chest. Yet these moments of mismatch also suggest the inherent impermanence of "the whole." A hand could shift or be replaced with a foot, but the figure is still fully intact. These women are whole because of their fragmentation; a person's self is never static, but always shifting

and adapting. As Boushie's project articulates, the body and the psyche not only interact, but are deeply intertwined.

The presence of chalk pastel applied over the printed material provides not only visual connections among the forms but also moments of softness amid a field of lines. The color on the women's bodies almost appear as bruises, visual reminders of the need for self-acceptance during difficult moments. The figures represent experiences that are both personal and universal. As the women lay, stand, turn, and face in different directions, poses, and states of being, they invite viewers to consider their own moments of reclamation, encouraging a moment of appreciation for the selves we have become.

—Allie Mickle

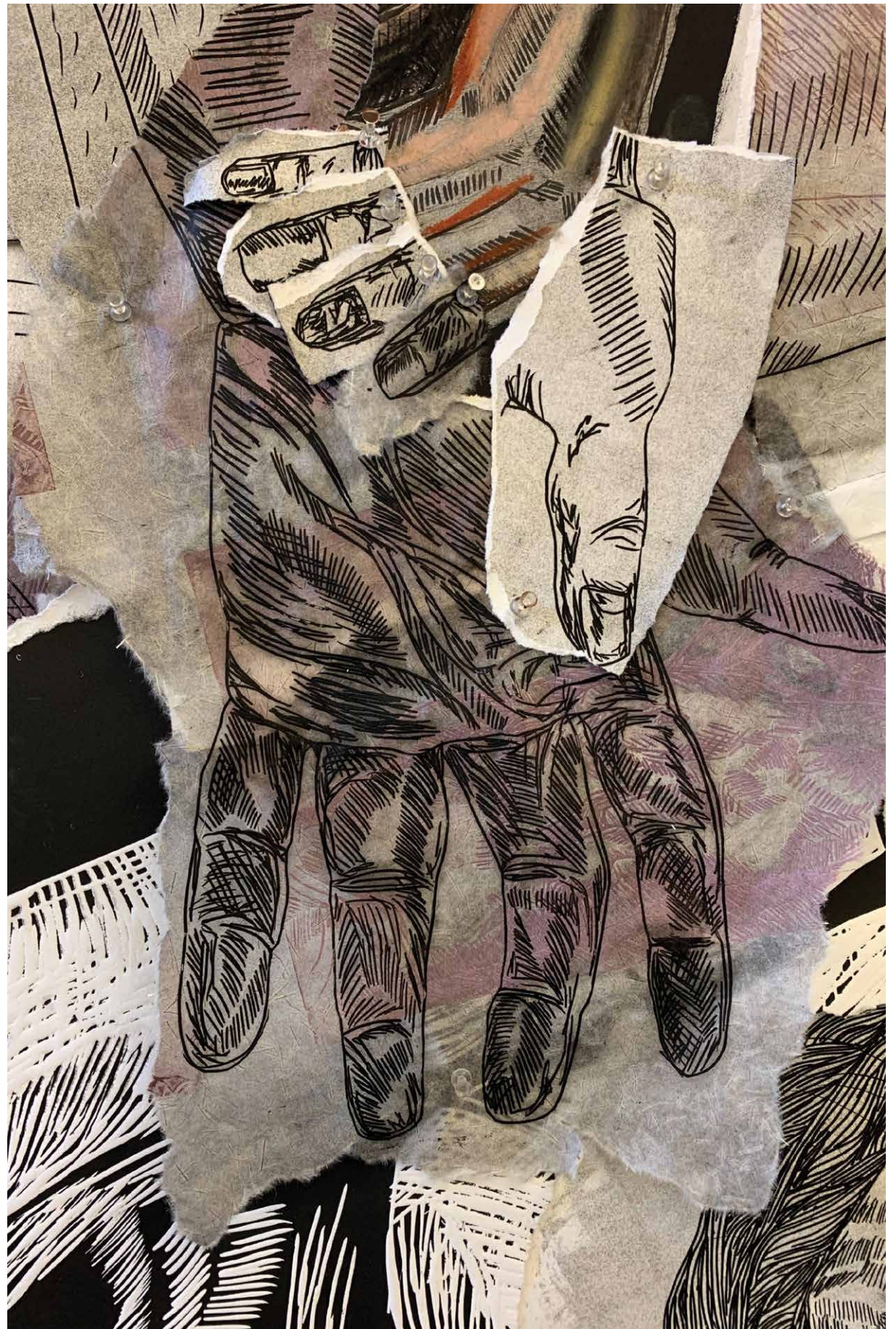


Fig. 3

Figs. 1 – 3

Reclamation
mixed media collage prints
132" x 312"
2018–2020



Fig. 1

JACKLYN BRICKMAN

Jacklyn Brickman’s interdisciplinary work explores the relationship between people and the environments that they inhabit. In an age of ecological upheaval, Brickman considers the environment—whether our immediate urban milieu, municipal land, or wilderness—as an autonomous agent, and encourages viewers to engage with hybrid and alternative ways of inhabiting our shared planet. In *Experiments in Biological Planet Formation*, the artist conducts laboratory research in which she proposes the creation of new planets via the propagation of onions, drawing on analogies between biological and astronomical processes such as mitosis and planet formation. Through her experiments, Brickman asks, “what if humans could harness the wisdom, science and magic of plants to form new planets?” Straddling the boundaries between art and science, her practice is intended to serve as an inspiration to imagine other, sustainable ways in which we might inhabit the environment.

Experiments in Biological Planet Formation consists of four incubators, each engineered to uniquely support the appropriate phases of biological

planet formation. Each chamber, or process, demands extensive care from the artist to ensure its health. Positioning herself as an artist and caretaker, Brickman reveals the non-visible labor that art often necessitates. Brickman’s practice of tending to onions resembles or, more accurately, intentionally mimics conventional forms of domestic labor. The artist further underscores the notion of domesticity as she constructs a sensory environment that triggers episodic memories. The scent of onions, which may evoke nostalgic associations with home, is conjoined with the incubator’s sound of mechanical breathing, heightening the sensorial experience. In *Experiments in Biological Planet Formation*, the conventional signs of domestic labor and food are transformed to address the entanglement of science and art, questioning different forms of labor often caught up in the politics of gender. Here, at the intersections of the feminist, scientific, artistic, and social realms, Brickman’s work offers us a poetic vision of a better future.

—Eunice Uhm

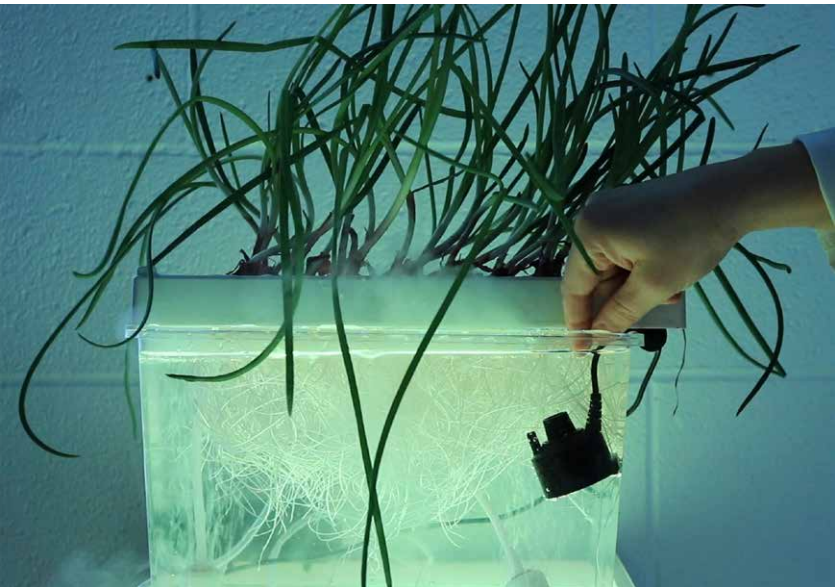


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Fig. 1

The Department of Planetary Futures Nebular Mitosis Laboratory
Polyethylene sheeting, water, onions, fans, timers, lights, aquarium, bubbler, pump, various laboratory supplies including cart, shelf, glass beakers, hot plate, light box, table, stool, heat lamp
2020

Fig. 2

Experiments in Biological Planet Formation Growth Chamber 1
onion roots, glass beakers, water
2020

Fig. 3

Experiments in Biological Planet Formation Specimen Analysis
heated onion extract on paper
4" x 6"
2020



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

LINDSAY COFFMAN

Each of Lindsay Coffman's hand- and machine-sewn tapestries is a portrait collaged from the fabric of everyday life: Jo is a karaoke star, if only for a moment; friends band together in *Aquarius Party*; the Closet Raiders affectionately pose, their personalities conveyed in their contours; and François le Freak's exuberant style informs, at once, the foreground and background.

Collectively, the tapestries stitch together themes and images informed by Coffman's artistic and personal identities. Coming from a photography background, Coffman initially explored the challenge of textiles and patterns through photography-based wallpaper works. They see their growing collection of previously used textiles—clothing, blankets, curtains, and more, much of it donated by friends—as an opportunity to find relationships between otherwise unrelated fabrics. This intuitive practice brings together questions of the past and present as they work to find a common language between their rural, Southern upbringing and their current queer community, which Coffman's work explores through both individual and collective experiences and engages with ideas around

identity performance (gender, sexuality, etc.) and its potential to reveal a queer future or a queer utopia.

Upon first glance, the fiber works rhyme with quilting traditions in their materiality and bespoke assembly, but also call upon photographic conventions, emphasizing the figures' posture, framing, and placement to present narratives amongst and between Coffman's cast of characters. Wanting the tapestries to be accessible to all, Coffman ambiguously renders the figures, focusing on their bodies, gestures, and physical presence, rather than more detailed or descriptive features.

Puzzling the pieces together, as Coffman says, forces them to problem-solve through material means. In this way, the tapestries weave together Coffman's artistic sensibilities and individual histories. This harmonious whole synthesizes the distinctive beauty found within its not-so-disparate pieces.

—Anna Talarico

Fig. 1

Jo at Karaoke
fabric and thread
dimensions unknown
2020

Fig. 2

Mallow and Mark
fabric and thread
74" x 53"
2019

Fig. 3

Aquarius Party
fabric and thread
dimensions unknown
2019

Fig. 4

François Le Freak
fabric and thread
dimensions unknown
2019



Fig. 1

LÉAH DWYER

At the center of Léah Dwyer’s work is an allusion to storytelling and its history with printmaking. While the artist’s black-and-white prints give the impression of a saturated etching, each form is actually the result of pounced toner powered through a mylar stencil. Each blackened point references a pin-mark from the artist’s studio wall that was made by a previous resident or herself. From that starting point, Dwyer plotted each mark into a larger network of dots and lines that could then be cropped into isolated prints.

For Dwyer, every point is curated into an image that mimics a type of record-keeping. This record represents a combination of personal histories and re-presents them to an audience that would not otherwise encounter them. This style of mark-making evokes the presence of individuals in the same way that pinpricked Renaissance cartoons served as guidelines for figurative frescos. Now, however, the figures remain as individual points

on the wall—their presence embodied within a single mark. Similarly, much as an author creates characters and unfolds a narrative around them, Dwyer’s plotting of points imbues each pin-mark with a sense-value by archiving them with heat-set toner powder on paper. This decision recalls the historical tradition of bookmaking—a process not foreign to Dwyer.

Though many of the artist’s large-scale prints stand alone, Dwyer has opted to bind others into smaller volumes. In doing so, she creates an ironic reference to the printing press and individually bound books by filling each page with indecipherable marks made permanent by twenty-first century computer toner. Challenging notions of seriality and print editions, Dwyer’s artistic practice not only conveys a past but it also tells a story for future audiences.

—Lauren Caskey



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Figs. 1 – 3

Mapping Pinholes
pounced/heat-set toner powder prints on paper
dimensions variable
2020



Fig. 1

MONA GAZALA

“My advice is to break at least one rule every day. Our first duty is to misbehave and to keep misbehaving, in order to destroy authority.”
—Jane Jacobs

In *Saving the Crew that Matters*, a collection of slip-cast ceramic soccer balls in varying states of inflation and deflation lay scattered around the base of a seven foot-tall, brightly illuminated sign. The sign reads: “Look how quickly you mobilized for something that didn’t matter.” It illuminates a black card rack that doubles as a designated area where Mona Gazala has invited notable Columbus locals to discuss and debate “Save the Crew” (a sports-related organized movement that swept across the city in 2018 and ‘19). Across the room, a “Save the Crew” banner hangs in the window, engaging with the world outside the gallery. Gazala’s work frequently depends on public participation—here, viewers are encouraged to join the discussion area and write postcards addressed to Mayor Andrew Ginther and Columbus city council members on the topic of civic priorities. Gazala relies heavily on text in her work, examining how spoken and

written language both enforce and question systems of power. Her past work (pictured here) pauses on the language of gentrification and pushes the viewer to consider how displacement and erasure are enforced through words.

Mona Gazala’s work is not simply about gentrification—in fact, it participates in challenging a political system that prioritizes real estate profits over community wellbeing, future populations over present ones, and putting money into multi-million dollar soccer stadiums over struggling local schools. Her work is deeply contextual: as a Cleveland native who has lived in Franklinton for nearly eight years, she makes work out of the overlapping spaces of lived experience, observed reality, and community engagement. How can art join a political struggle? When oppression seeps into language, what responses are possible? What can civic dissent look like? And how might we, as viewers, examine our own role in perpetuating and challenging inequity? Indeed, how quickly can we mobilize, and to what ends?

—Layla Muchnik-Benali



Fig. 2

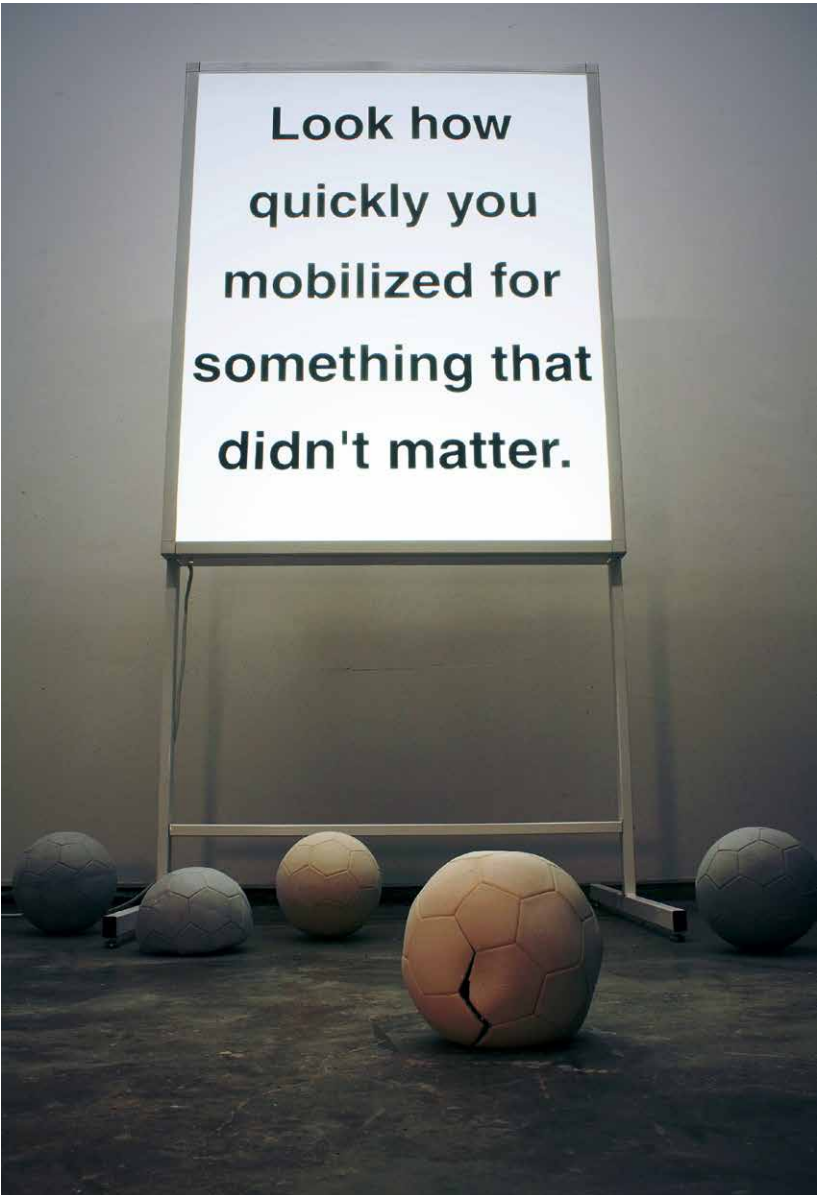


Fig. 3

Fig. 1	Fig. 2	Fig. 3
<i>Untitled</i> mobile guerilla signage 24" x 36" 2017	<i>Untitled</i> stationary guerilla signage 36" x 23" 2019	<i>What Matters</i> illuminated sign and unfired slip-cast ceramic 84" x 48" x 36" 2020



Fig. 1

HANNAN GOLD-VUKSON

Working against the idea that art needs to have an intended goal, Hannan Gold-Vukson focuses on the idea of “play” in his artistic practice. Working primarily with glass and 3-D printing, Gold-Vukson embraces trial and error in order to highlight the intrinsic nature of each material rather than its traditionally perceived aesthetic qualities. By introducing alterations to aspects of the process, the artist discovers unpredictable outcomes in his work.

By focusing on the variation of chemicals and heat levels, the artist chooses to highlight the potential of glasswork to subvert notions of the medium’s utilitarianism. Moreover, his acceptance of every roundel as a result affirms that no artwork can be either a mistake or entirely finished. This idea of outcomes *ad infinitum* is echoed in the fractal patterns appearing on the

surface of each roundel—their geometric form quite literally embodying the idea of both control and unpredictability.

Given his method of creation, Gold-Vukson considers his working process to be a part of a larger performance within the studio itself. Evoking ideas of art “Happenings” or Hans Arps’s “law of chance,” the artist’s work is reliant upon the interaction and reaction between materials within their immediate environment. The empty glass vials beneath each roundel become references to the many experiments that have already occurred as well as those yet to come. This “installation of performance” not only underscores the iterative nature of Gold-Vukson’s work but also manages to suggest a multiplicity of forms not actually present.

—Lauren Caskey



Fig. 2

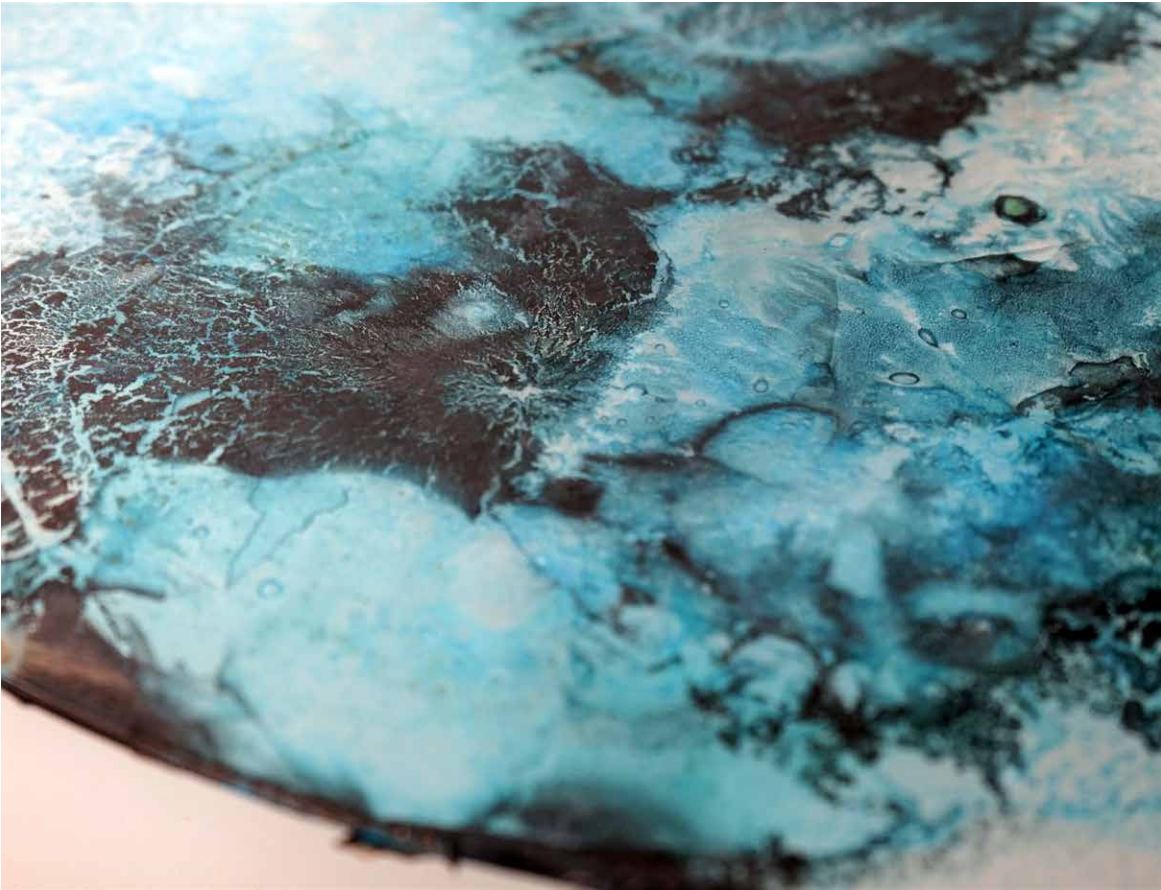


Fig. 3

Fig. 1

Blue Nebula
copper chloride on glass
21” diameter
2019

Fig. 2

Blue Snow #1
copper chloride on glass
19” diameter
2019

Fig. 3

Blue Nebula (abstract)
copper chloride on glass
21” diameter
2019



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

MAXWELL HOLDEN

Maxwell Holden, who has an academic background in religious and folkloric studies, utilizes ceramic pots as a ground to illustrate narratives that find their foundation in provincial fables. Inspired by the detail-rich Art Nouveau worlds of Danish illustrator Kay Nielson and the cognitive complexity of British artist Greyson Perry's contemporary ceramics, Holden produces dense, tactile scenes of activity and expressive interaction between figures situated in consistently shifting environments.

Holden does not set out to work with a complete illustration or a complete ceramic form in mind. What he draws (by incising the images before the pot is fired and later applying clay slip) is informed in part by the pot's shape and size, just as the pot itself is formed with the idea that it will function as a base for an illustration.

The large handmade vessels, ranging from a few feet in circumference and height to as tall as a typical gallery visitor, encourage circumambulation in order to view the work in full. The viewer's cyclical perspective causes a destabilization of the illustration's narrative – attempting to identify the logical sequential order of the

scene's events becomes a repetitive and futile effort. This ambiguity is pushed further by the artist's use of varying perspectival scales and settings that blur together, preventing the viewer from distinguishing the beginning of one section of the narrative from the end of another. By subverting the expectation of a cohesive structure, Holden aims to return the viewer's perceptual experience to a childlike state in which anxious anticipation and routine have not yet been established and the capacity to experience surprise and wonder still exist.

The artist is also interested by the way in which folktales are predicated on passing an anecdote from one person to another to build a collective, disjointed whole, as well as the perspectival shifts that occur with every retelling. This manifests in the subjective and montage-like quality of his illustrations. In his multi-lateral representations, no viewpoint is granted a higher priority than another and no scene is entirely independent from the larger narrative to which it contributes.

–Asia Adomanis



Fig. 3

Fig. 1	Fig. 2	Fig. 3
<i>Tragic Halloween</i> ceramic 15" x 9" x 9" 2019	<i>East Northwood Avenue</i> ceramic 27" x 22" x 22" 2019	<i>Gambling</i> ceramic 23" x 10" x 10" 2019

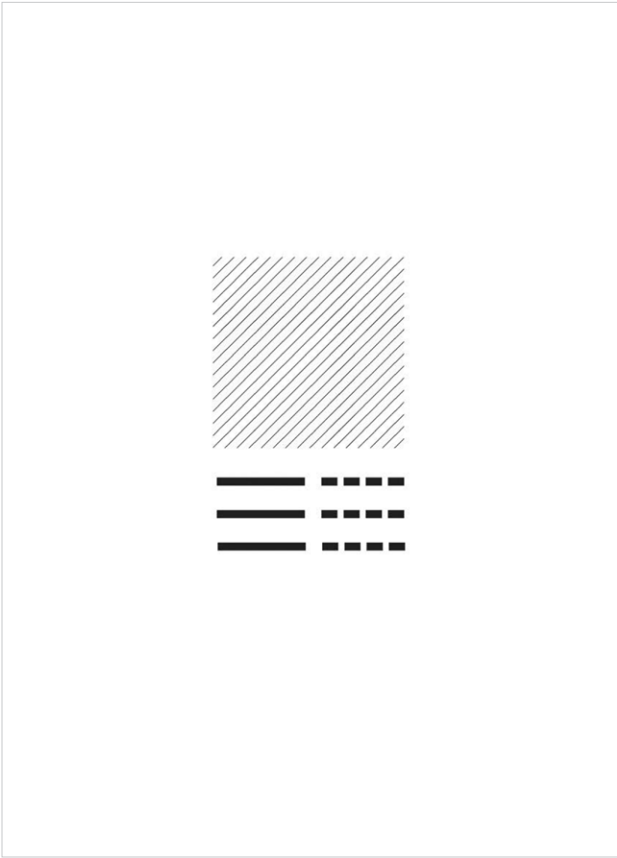


Fig. 1

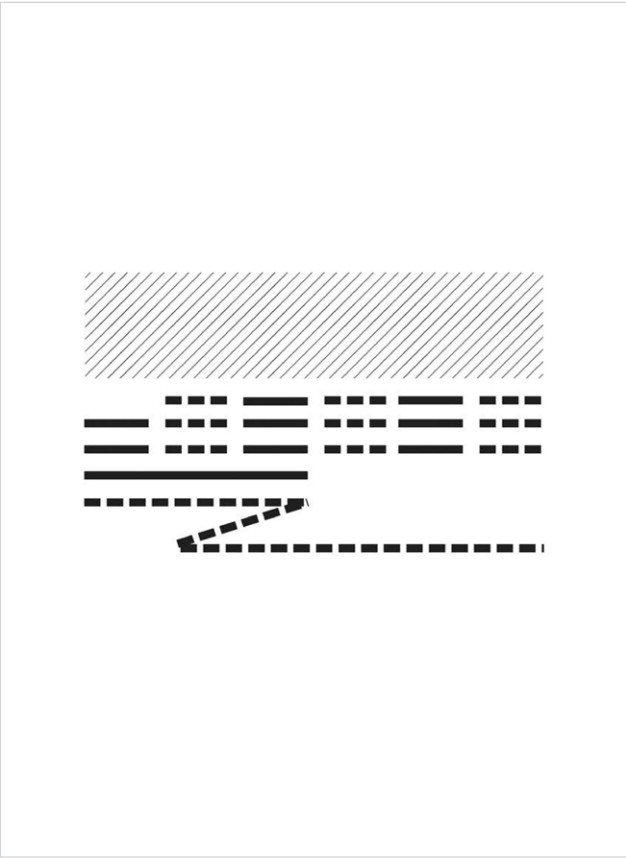


Fig. 2

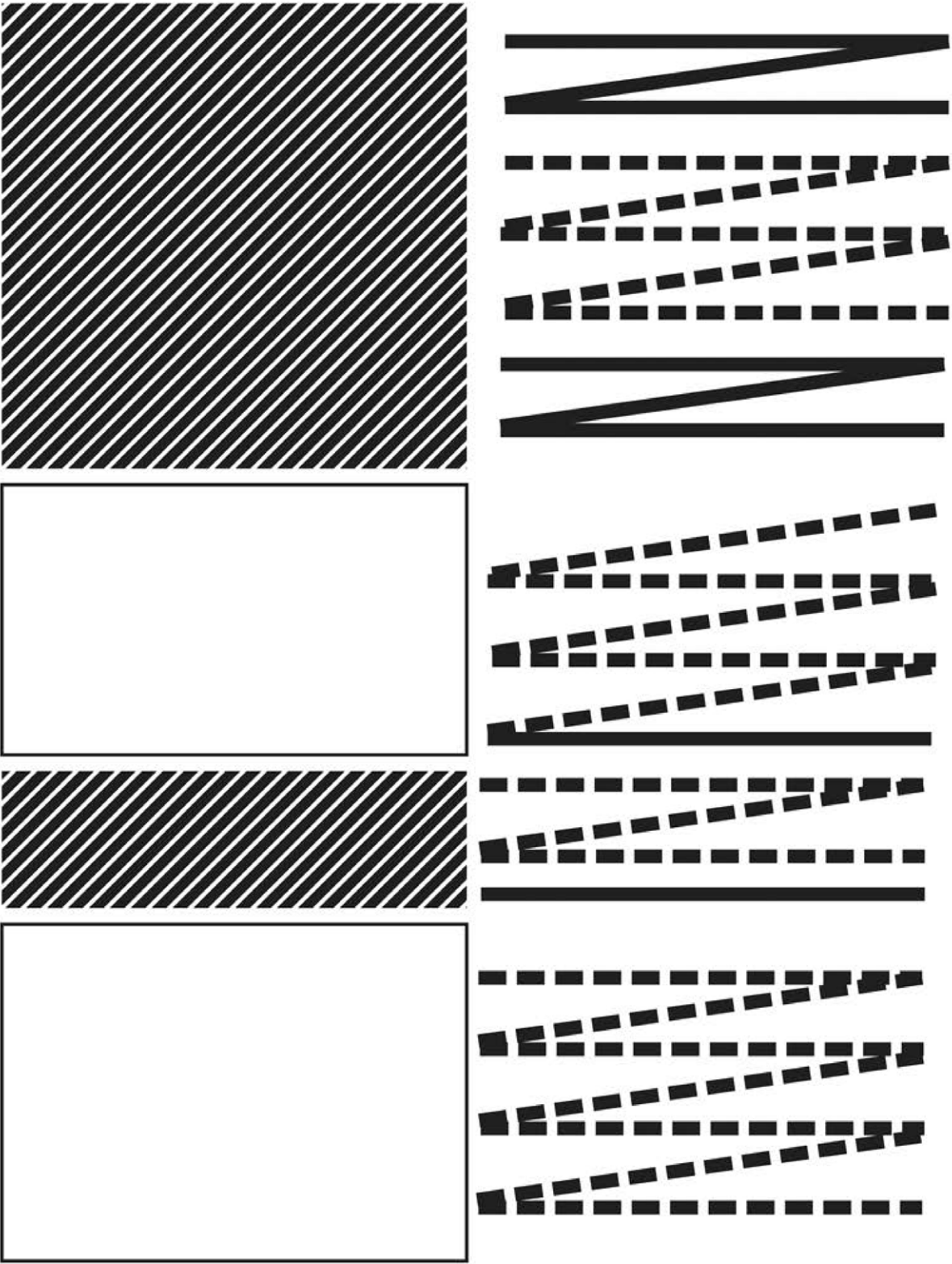
HYEJEON JEON

Jeon Hye Jeon’s practice combines her background in drawing with an intense interest in participatory art. In her *Breathing* series, the artist provides visual and written instructions to bring attention to the viewer’s subconscious corporeal experiences. Bold lines are fragmented into smaller dots that guide the duration of one’s breath, while a box of diagonal lines instructs the viewer to “blink naturally.” The visual language informs the ways in which Jeon communicates with her audience, yet also pivots attention away from it toward the corporeality of one’s own body. Nonetheless, Jeon intends the experience of her work not to be an individual or isolated activity. She places the audience within a shared space in order to establish a sense of community. Jeon conceives of herself as a producer of situations and positions audience members as co-producers or participants.

Such participatory and interactive spectatorship is taken a step further in her installation *Stormhead*. As a part of a series that explores the notion of “strange,” *Stormhead* asks the audience to

wear a fabric mask. The mask hinders one’s vision, creating a sense of alienation and confinement. Jeon constructs a disorienting experience in which the participants’ bodies remain exposed to the public, while their heads are isolated within private spaces. This confusion caused by the disjunction between interior and exterior heightens one’s sense of being physically positioned within a public, shared space. Through the participant’s perpetual awareness of her corporeal body, she becomes conscious of others in the room. As with *Breathing*, in *Stormhead* Jeon creates a participatory work that demands audience members be mindful of their bodies and spatial position and, in so doing, emphasizes their relation to others. In experiencing Jeon’s art, then, we are made to experience our being-together, with all the physical and psychological vulnerability that entails.

–Eunice Uhm



Figs. 1 – 3

bleed into
ink, paper, organic material
dimensions variable
2017.10.23 – ongoing

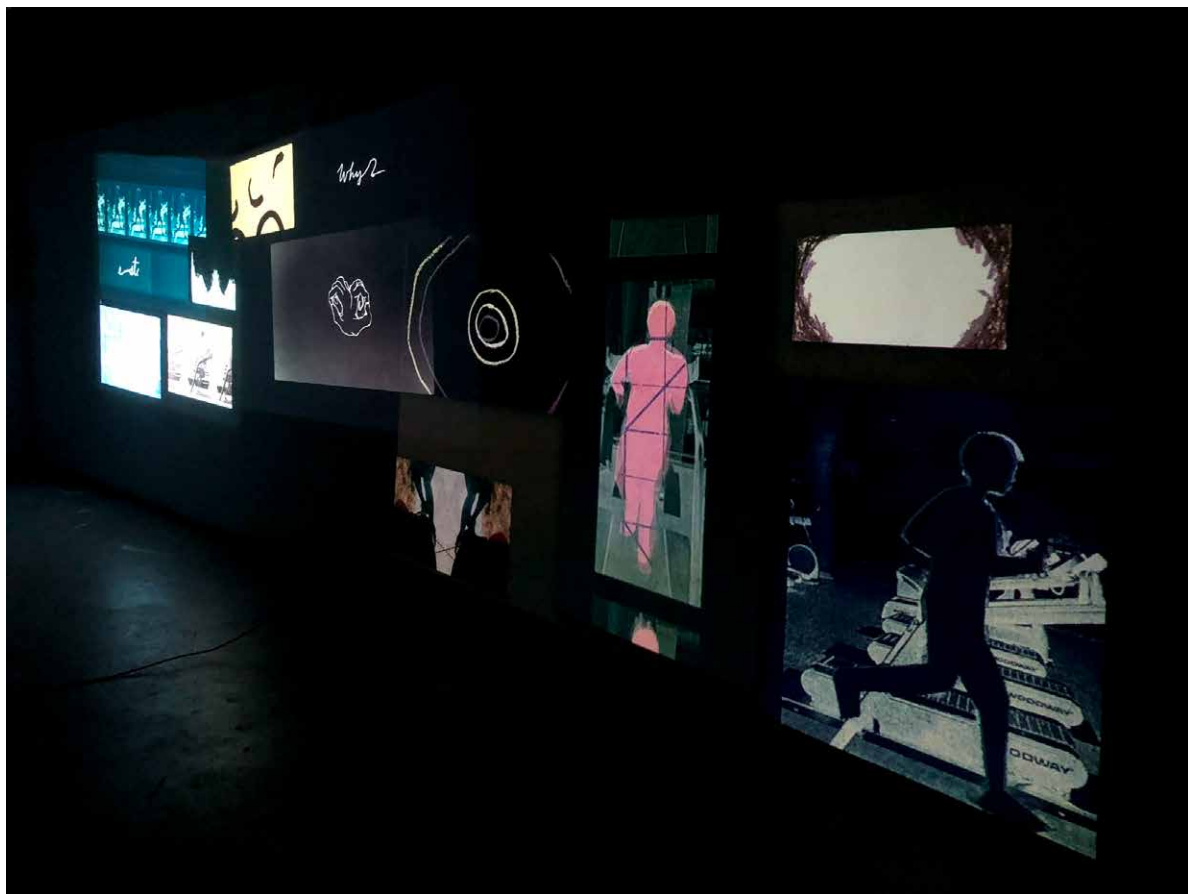


Fig. 1

LYNN KIM

At the center of Lynn Kim's piece *body language* lies a fundamental question: how can agency be reclaimed over a body that is inherently self-destructive? The ouroboros, or the snake which devours its own tail, serves as a reference point for Kim throughout the duration of the piece. Symbolizing the cyclical nature of life and death, creation and destruction, the endless circuits of transformation and renewal, the ouroboros is characterized by its perpetual and infinite loop.

A multichannel video work, *body language* employs a multiplicity of production processes: hand drawn and rotoscope animations, written text, photography, and live-action video. Forming their own montage, the channels often overlap with one another to construct a visualized network, mimicking the manner in which disease maps across the body to launch synchronous attacks.

The film oscillates between modes of representation and abstraction, in moments where Kim inserts herself into the work; she is

the figure running throughout the video. The act of running is a recurring symbol, reflecting the paradoxical desire to simultaneously enact and escape physical and psychological transformation. Running also functions as a tool to recoup, recover, and regenerate a body besieged by disease. The use of these opposing formal strategies replicate the body's shifting condition as it is slowly and continually altered by chronic illness. The first and last frame of the hand-drawn animations are identical, creating an endless metamorphic loop.

Through a highly visceral and textural display, *body language* unites formal elements of film and animation to capture the evasive trajectories of autoimmune disease, the continual breakdown of the body, and the desire to transform beyond its limitations.

—Dareen Hussein

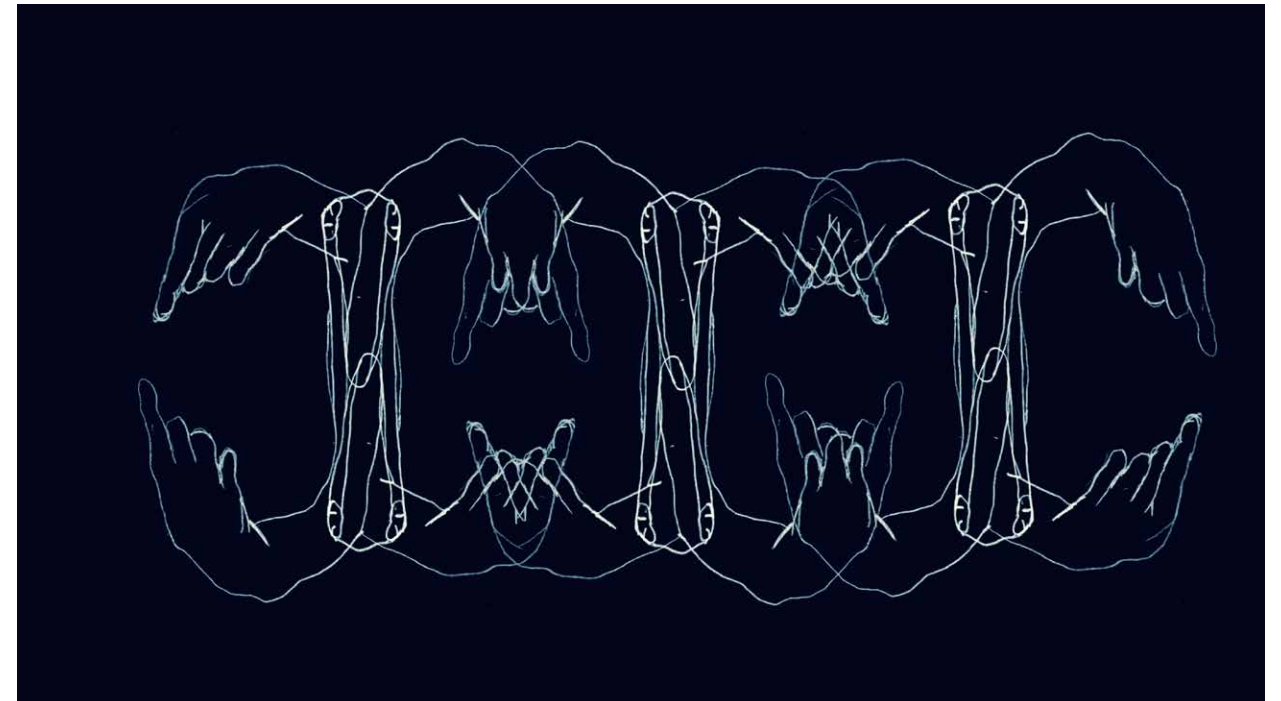


Fig. 2

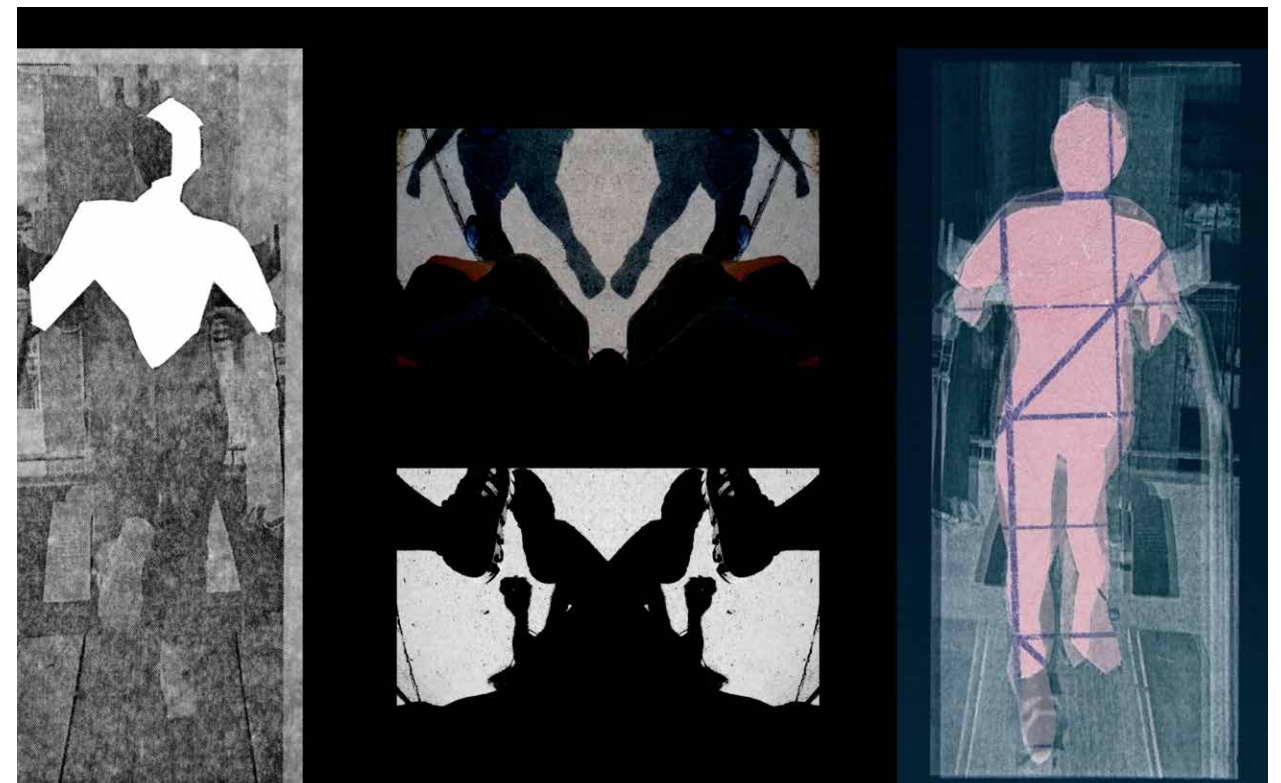


Fig. 3

Fig. 1

Figs. 2 – 3

body language
multi-channel installation
2019

body language
film stills
2019

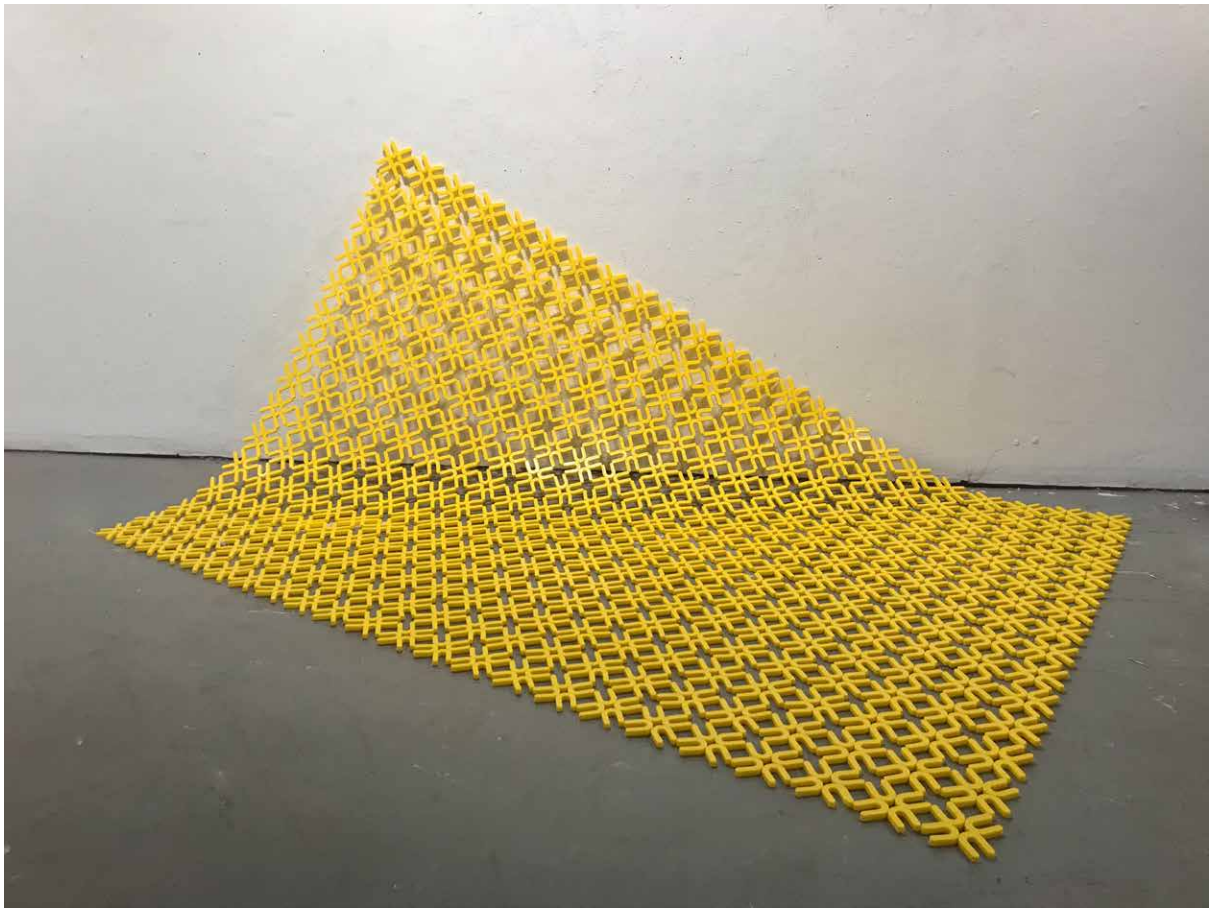


Fig. 1

JOHN MASELLO

With a background in ceramics, John Masello questions the relations between the inherent materiality and functionality of objects. He is invested in isolating and studying a material's essence and integrity, and finding those similar traits in other forms. His current project explores the material potential of small U-shaped tile spacers by connecting them together to create new objects. These created forms mimic other objects, like a block or a textile, and attempt to replicate their inherent functions. Yet the tile-spacer creations seem to perform their new roles only superficially, as Masello's installation highlights their inability to fully deceive.

A rectangle made of yellow tile spacers may assume the form of a block, but will fail in that role when asked to function alongside its cement counterpart. While the two different blocks exist within the same spatial dimensions, the tile spacers can never copy the density and mass of cement. Masello uses the connected tile spacers as a faux armor for the

block, sliding onto it and perfectly holding its form, creating a new and inadvertent relationship between the two materials. These newly created forms remain contingent on the materiality of the tile spacer, yet the functions they take on as a blanket or armor highlights their material distinctions.

What can a tile spacer do if it isn't spacing tiles? Could it be armor, a brick, a blanket? Masello suggests it can be all and none of these things at once. He questions understandings of form and function, 'queering' his materials' utility and making them perform in unintended ways. Their interplay and functional mimicry reflects an inclination toward camp and artifice, as Masello questions an object's ability to adapt, perform, and deceive.

-Allie Mickle

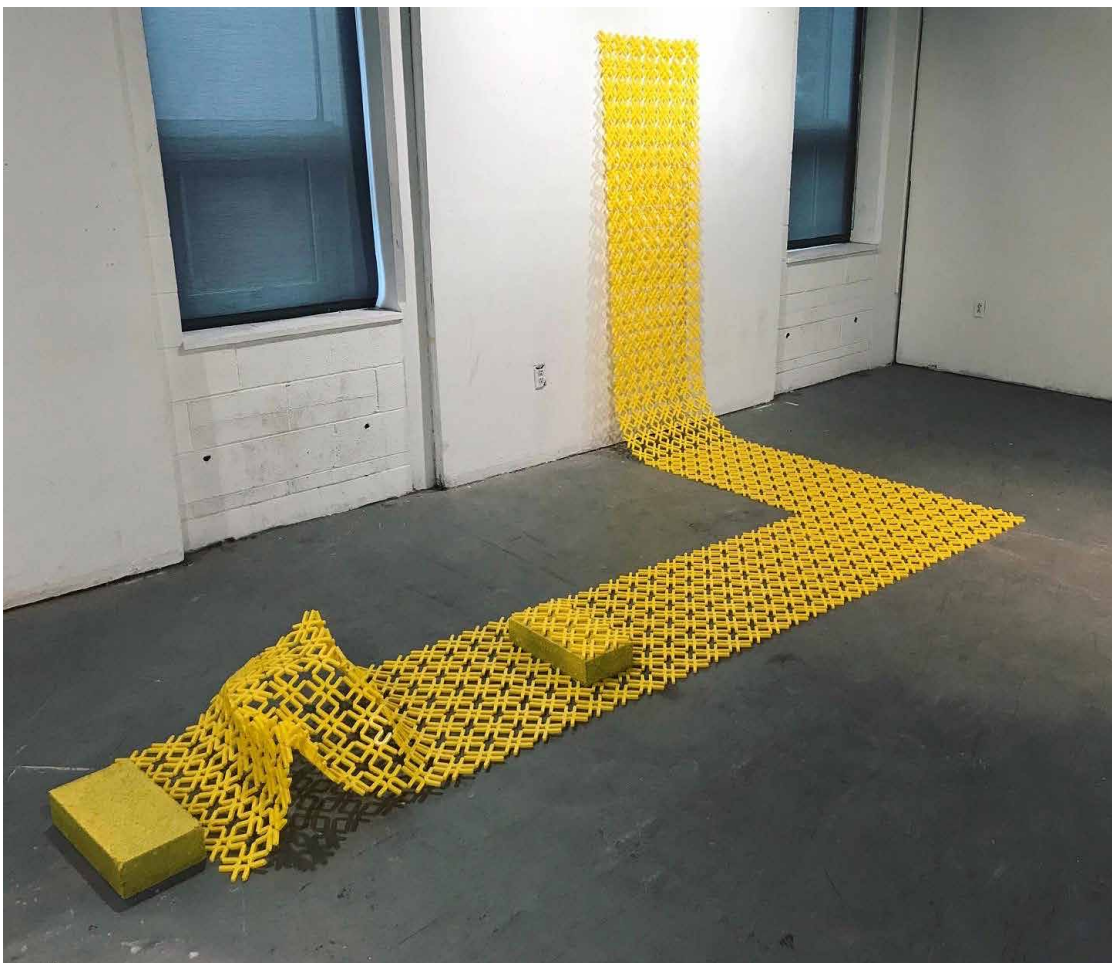


Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Fig. 1

u-blanket
Plastic tile spacers, monofilament
2019

Fig. 2

swandive
Plastic tile spacers, monofilament,
concrete, spray paint
2019

Fig. 3

Dredge
Plaster, wood, yarn, silicone
2019



Fig. 1

HANNAH PARRETT

Suzannah Biernoff writes that “looking” in the Middle Ages entailed a physical encounter between bodies. To look, in many ways, was to touch or to pass through the object of one’s vision. In Hannah Parrett’s paintings, drawings, and sculpture one looks and is seen, becoming aware of a likeness with multiple bodies, some visible through the mark of the brush, and others fragmented within architectural forms which remind the viewer of both the constraint and possibility of enclosure. Barrel vaults and colonnades serve as signposts guiding the viewer to what the artist describes as an arrival at the unknown. Behind her works on muslin, a dyed grid offers both stability and a site of material idiosyncrasy. Crisp, heavy color, a malleable picture plane, and a dynamic approach to mixed media in Parrett’s work—which are presented as modules within a single installation—make the differences between looking and touching seem slim indeed.

There are familiar materials and motifs at play in Parrett’s installation. Blue painter’s tape affixes “clouds” of drawings on tracing paper to the wall,

suggesting a drafting process. These small works feel mutable and impermanent, reminiscent of abstract data that change their meaning with every addition or subtraction. Monumental but nearly invisible, a two-story wireframe scaffolding forms a zone of transition between the viewer and the drawings on the wall. The stacked steel forms, made delicate by right of the sheer volume of negative space, can only be crossed by the gaze. The denial of immediate access to the works in dialogue with this curious piece of architecture demands an active kind of looking. To take in Parrett’s works, we must allow our eyes to wander. Once this wandering state is reached, the fragmented architecture and warped grids of Parrett’s drawings take on a dreamlike quality inviting us to explore without the final anticlimax of a destination.

—Maggie Wilson



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Fig. 1

A Space that Holds. A Space that Opens.
gouache and oil on paper, tape, plywood, frame, oil stick
and acrylic on muslin, carpet fragment
20' x 40' x 20'
2019

Fig. 2

A Space that Holds. A Space that Opens. [detail]
Oil stick, marker, tracing paper, tape, plywood,
gouache, paper
6' x 8'
2019

Fig. 3

Vessel
Oil pastel and acrylic on paper
18" x 20"
2019

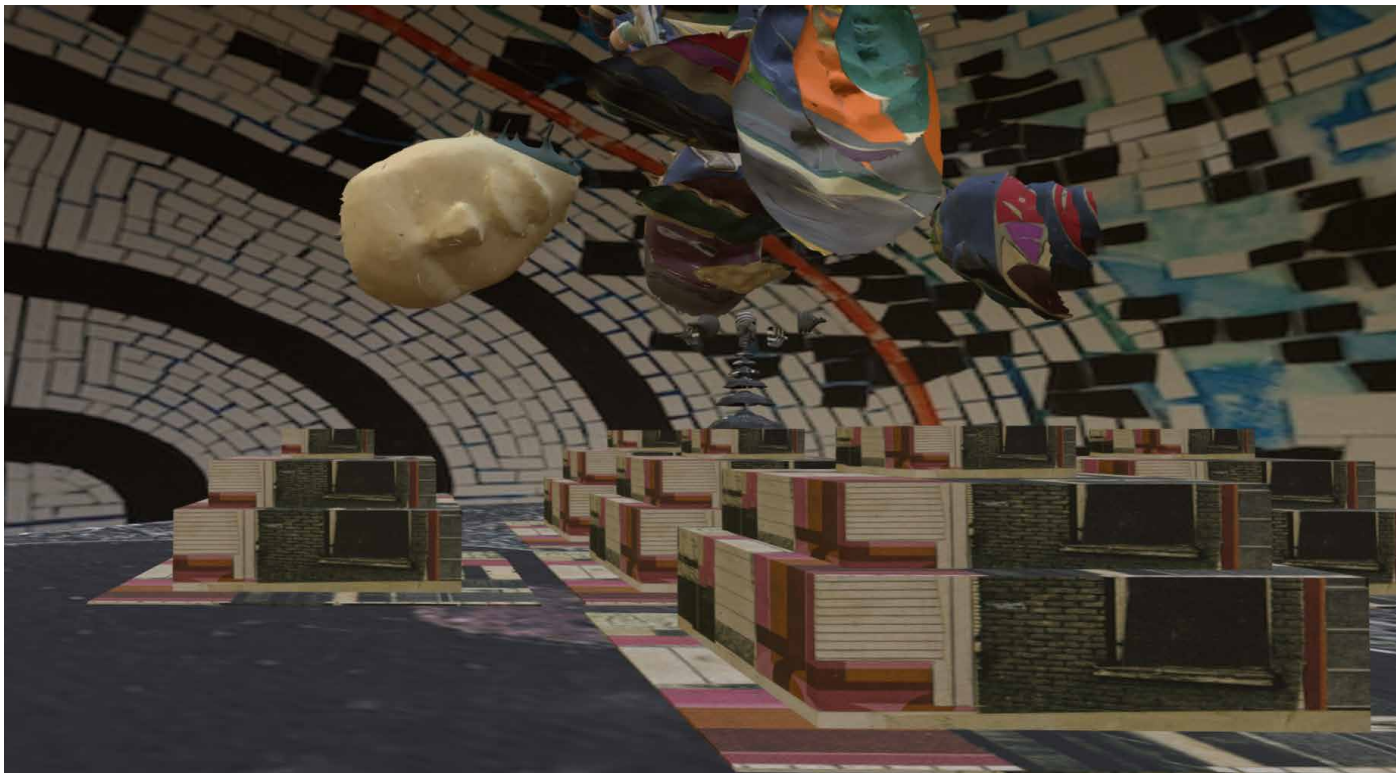


Fig. 1

JAMEEL PAULIN

Is it truly possible to affirm Black life and Black experiences by applying frameworks that were founded on Eurocentric rationality? For Jameel Paulin, the answer is no. Working primarily as an oil and portrait painter, Paulin in his earlier practice explored and disrupted baroque painting styles and Catholic iconography and their intersections with Black and Latin American liberation theology. However, deeper theoretical investigations into these fields and their foundations in humanism left him at an impasse. How does one reckon with a foundational approach built on a system that upholds the dehumanization of your identity? Paulin's desire to make the Afro-diasporic subject the center of his worldview led to a paradigm shift, and ultimately the development from the ground up of a new visual and theoretical frame. His most recent works reflect his transition from the artist as image-maker and commodity-producer to world-builder and mythmaker. These worlds and myths look to Afrofuturism to inform their construction and are imbued with memories of Paulin's upbringing in New Orleans as well as his personal and ancestral connections to the

city's jazz history. Furthermore, Paulin's practice is now recontextualized through hip hop and music reproduction, as demonstrated through the inclusion of sampling, improvisation and repetition in his Afrocentric visual worlds. His use of color is a nod to Black modernist painters such as John Scott, Aaron Douglas, Lois Mailou Jones, and Romare Bearden, whom he honors as ancestors. More importantly, Paulin's experience in a city where Black life was disrupted and dispossessed drives his desire to create art in alternative ways— ways that subvert hegemonic practices for the cultivation of Black futures.

—Sharbreon Plummer

Figs. 1 – 3

Congo Square
Multi-media virtual reality installation
2020

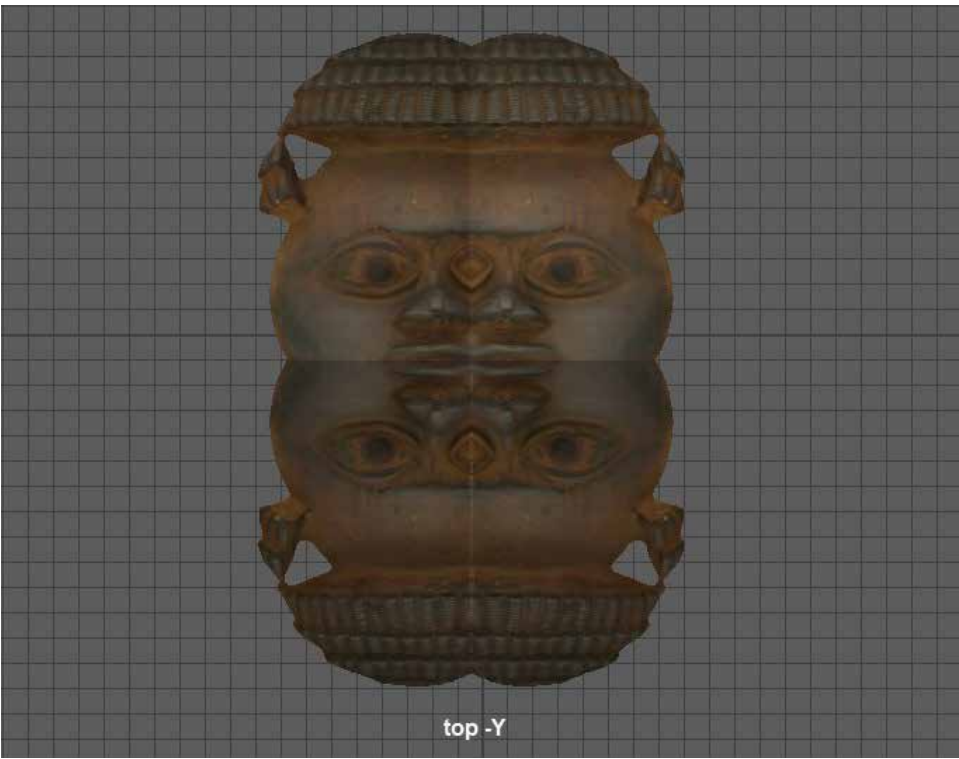


Fig. 2

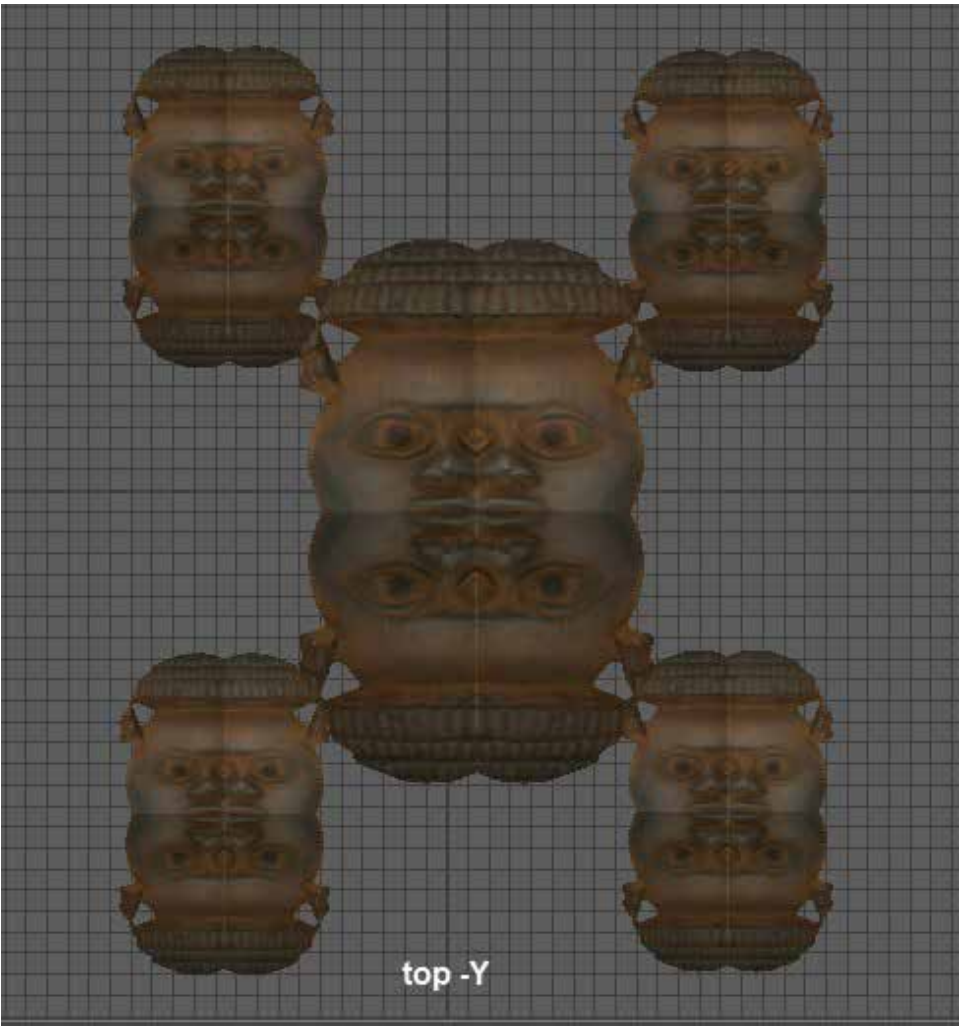
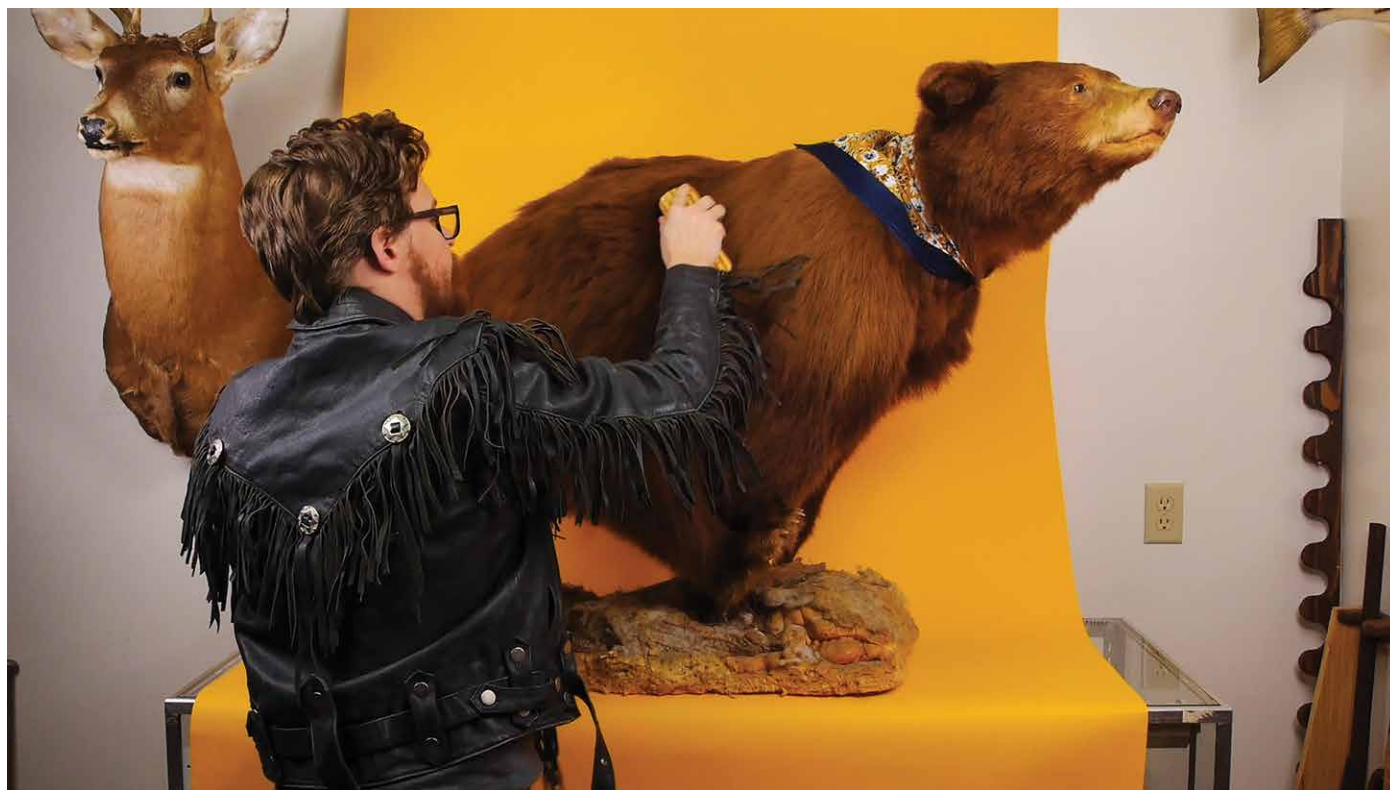


Fig. 3



LANCE PRUITT

Lance Pruitt's *Intimate Architectures* is an investigation. When Pruitt's grandfather passed away three years ago, he left behind an unfinished concrete armory and a vast collection of vintage guns, holsters, taxidermied trophies, more guns, leather goods, and other personal effects. In *Intimate Architectures*, Pruitt enters his grandfather's material world, inviting the viewer to join and witness his investigation. In one video, Pruitt engages in playful questioning—he layers several gun holsters on top of each other across his shoulders, and grooms a taxidermied black bear (the same bear we see standing curiously in the gallery) before wielding a bear paw to comb his own hair. With each new action, Pruitt seems to be asking: what happens if I do this? How do these objects shift and change depending on how I engage with them?

To be sure, his grandfather's armory and collection of objects form the nucleus of *Intimate Architectures*. While Pruitt contemplates his own relationship to these objects, other possible investigations inevitably emerge: notably, threads concerning memory, value, and gender run through each element of Pruitt's installation. What ideas of gender are bound up in taxidermied hunting trophies and vintage firearms? And when a human life ends, what remains? We might think of assets and belongings—but we might also think of ideas and values. The term "value" evokes monetary worth, but it also suggests intangible cultural principles, and this permeability of meaning is not lost on Pruitt. If inherited objects carry legacies of social and financial value, what does it mean to remember a life through material effects?

—Layla Muchnik-Benali

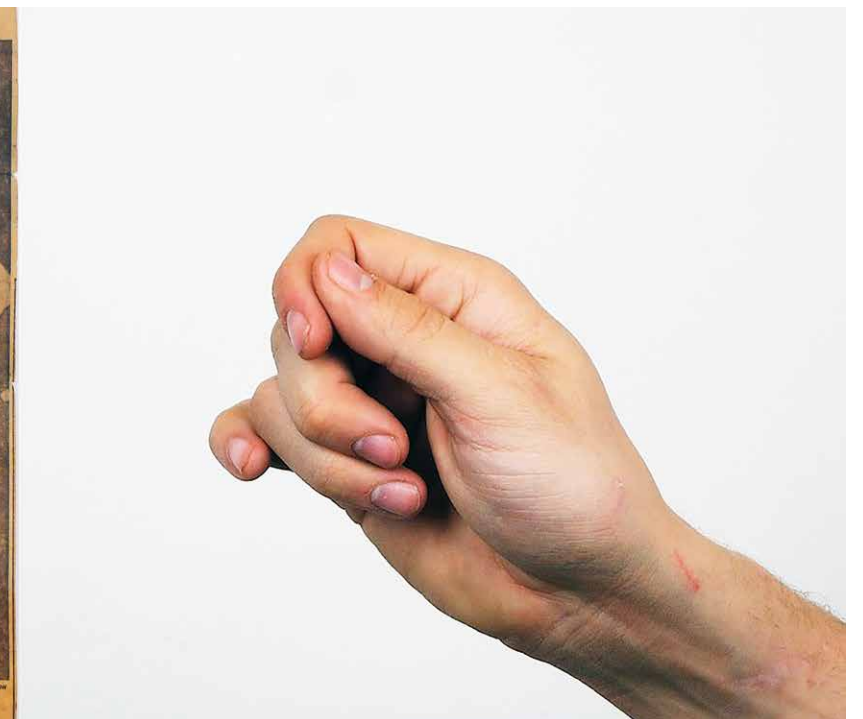
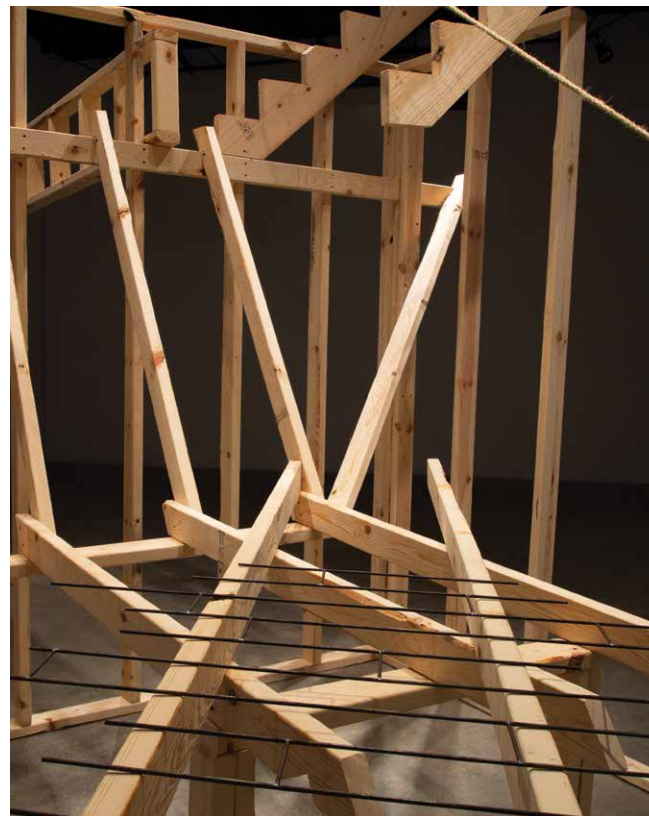




Fig. 1

BENEDICT SCHEUER

Benedict Scheuer’s studio is lined with large drawings in crayon and watercolor: vegetal, psychedelic, and erotic, unceasing amalgamations of shape and color that in some places resolve into form. They have a Lisa Frank-quality about them; “the stuff of my childhood,” he says and laughs. Benedict calls them “one-offs”; each drawing may take up to eight hours to complete, but they are nonetheless spontaneous, “automatic” works. Somewhere between sketches and landscapes, these abstractions emanate from “the spiritual center” of the artist’s practice: a garden he tends with his partner overlooking the Cumberland Gap in rural Tennessee.

A few sunflowers stand in the corner, ten feet tall and brooding. Benedict describes sewing them together as an emotional part of this project. They will lay in a fifteen-foot-long plaster cast made from a trench in the garden. Weighing over 500 pounds, it must be moved in pieces; reassembled the cast looks like a shallow pyre on which the flowers lay entwined.

A twelve-minute video—part observational documentary, part performance, and part daydream—offers the viewer an intimate encounter with the garden as a place where physical and spiritual cycles coincide. A DIY greenhouse encloses the video in its final installation—large swaths of light blue denim stretch over the frame, nine feet tall at its peak, the inside quilt-lined with gold fringe complimenting a purple carpet. Benedict tries to embrace his tendencies toward kitsch, elaborating his attitude as “not ‘fuck you’ but ‘fuck yeah!’”

These dual dispositions, equally mindful and playful, distinguish his work. While Benedict has shifted his focus to drawing, his first artistic inclinations as a teenager sharing self-portraits in the amateur Flickr community still inform his practice. A certain unselfconsciousness and openness to surprise present themselves in his current work as a drawing out, a permeability of inner and outer landscapes projected onto paper, into space.

—Kevin Pementel



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Fig. 1

Moon Hugging Me
Summer 2019

Fig. 2

Rainbow Resting In Garden
Summer 2019

Fig. 3

Eye
Summer 2019

Note: These images are not work documentation images. Instead, they function to contextualize the work that will be seen in the thesis exhibition, grounding it in a real, physical location.

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