

*THESIS 2018*

# THESIS 2018

The Ohio State University  
Department of Art  
Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition  
Urban Arts Space  
Columbus, Ohio

February 20 - March 17, 2018

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# INTRODUCTION

What I expected didn't happen and I didn't expect it would.

Charles Ives, *Some Quarter Tone Impressions*

It is common to speak of thresholds as at once marking beginnings as well as endings; as a point in time between a past and a future; or as the step between a here and a there. This exhibition by eleven students graduating from the MFA program in the Department of Art at The Ohio State University is no exception to the generalization.

Yet, in some ways, it remains distinct from the common rule. For example, although the MFA exhibit marks a cumulative experience for each student, it is not a cumulative survey of works produced over their three years in the program at OSU. It is, rather, a show of mostly new artworks continuously developed within and through a three-year time frame. It is a show of the unexpected.

I come to writing this brief introduction knowing each of these eleven artists and having firsthand experience of their work. Three years ago, we began our journey together in a seminar I teach with Ann Hamilton to all MFA students during their first semester here at OSU. For that seminar we often meet in the off-campus studio Ann and I share together, other times we meet at the Wexner Center for the Arts to listen to a guest artist, or sometimes we meet in informal, on-campus student exhibition spaces. But no matter where we meet, we gather to listen to each other; to try and hear each other; to look closely at whatever someone might bring into the room, and to ask ques-

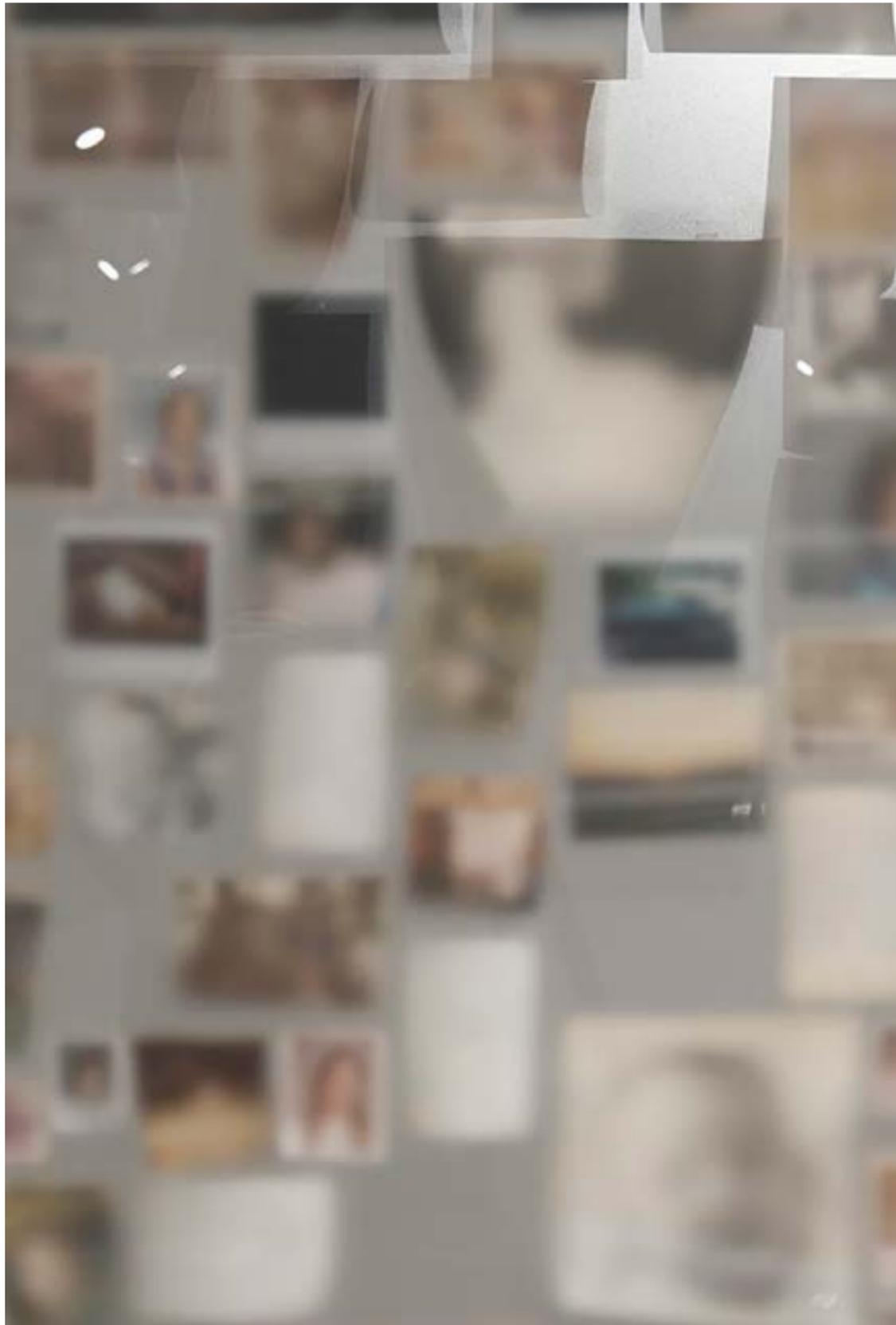
tions of each other that we may not have had beforehand. This exercise in not-knowing together, also called the first-year seminar, is an exercise in preparing for the unexpected.

The unexpected can be difficult and painful. "Break" forms the root, after all, of "breakthrough." But being open to working with and through the unexpected is the only sure way to step across the threshold to something or somewhere new. That is what, over three years, each of these students has come to realize. The artworks pictured herein, and the words pressed onto these pages give testimony to each of their individually hard-won realizations. Welcome to the new. Welcome to the unexpected. Welcome to surprise.

Michael Mercil

Professor, Interim Chair

Department of Art



*Exposed*  
Contact print frame, exposed and  
unfixed silver gelatin prints,  
twelve 8"x10" images, 2018

## HEATHER BALLARD

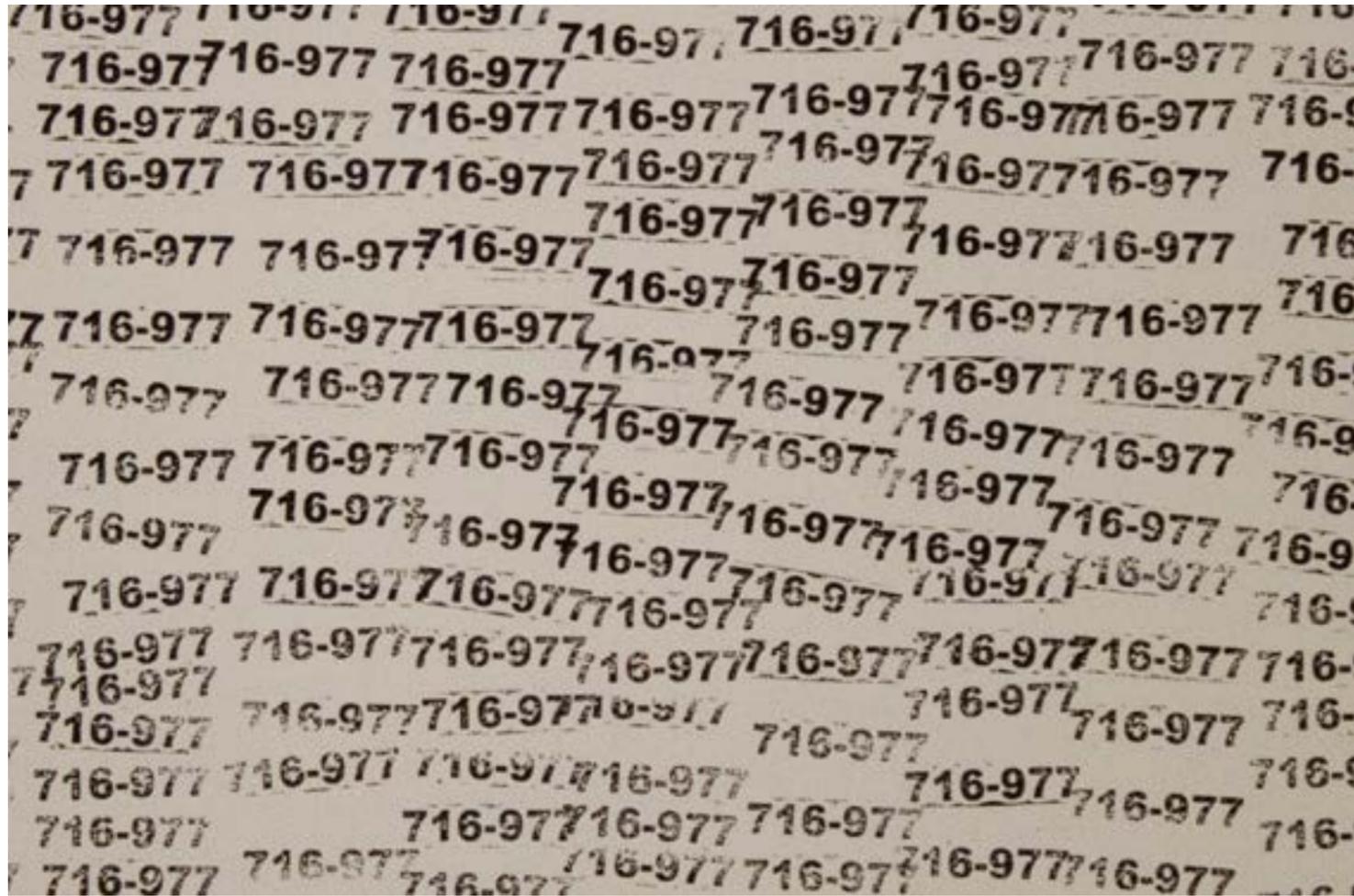
The unfortunate circumstances surrounding the recent incarceration and death of my father has forced me to question everything I thought I knew. My childhood memories are now clouded by this notion of knowing and not knowing, of truths unveiled. As I sift through realms of emotion, archive, memory and history, the mechanisms and implications of a photograph begin to articulate my questions about voyeurism, mortality, perception and reality. These notions circle in my head while I set the conditions of these works about my father, and I often find myself becoming the subject as well as the creator.



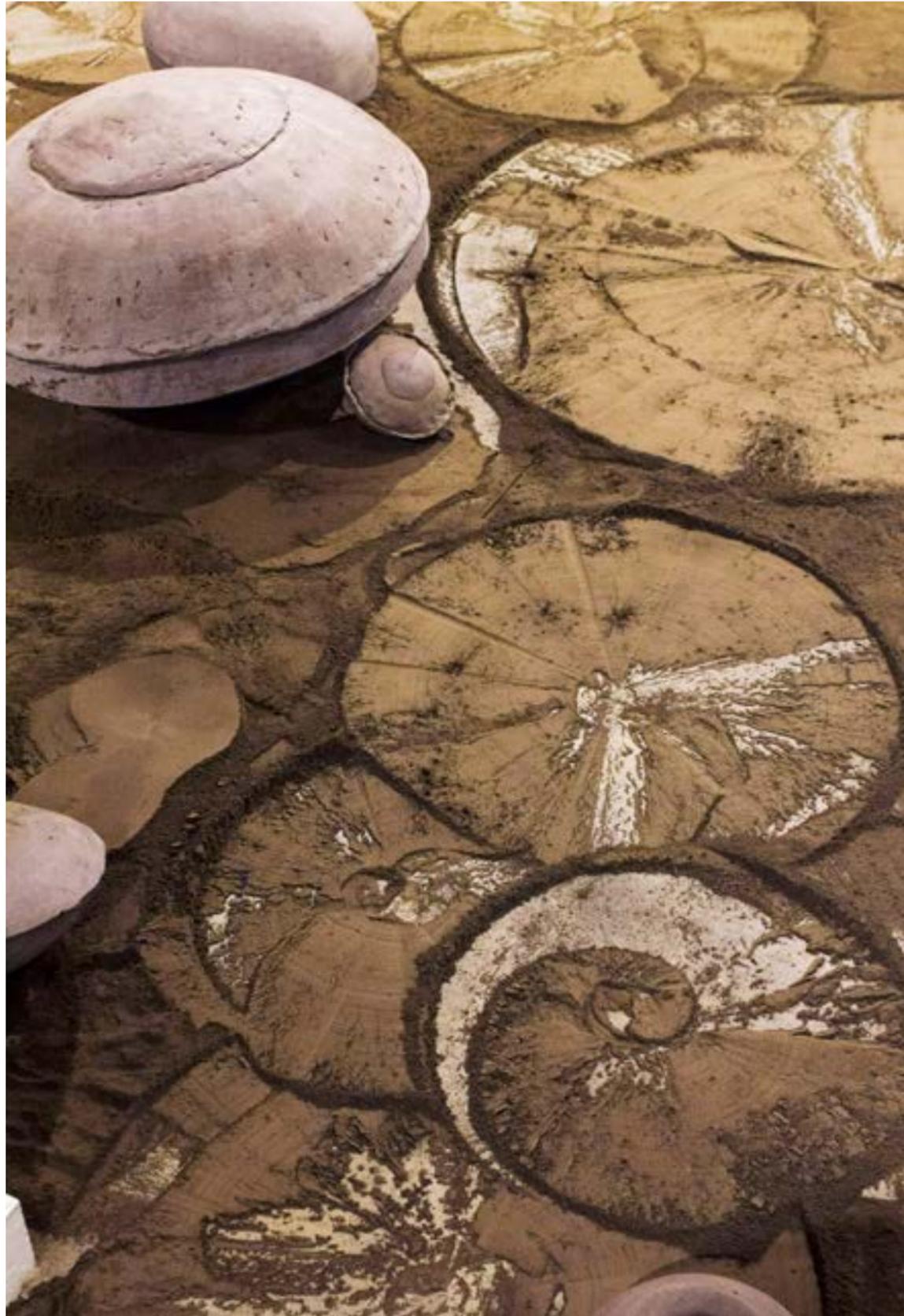
*Out of Focus*  
Photographs, clear and frosted plexiglass,  
two 4'x8' panels, 2018



A photograph, like an ink stamp, establishes a moment in time, filled to its edges with image but cut out or impressed by the maker. Although a photograph could be considered an index or record keeping system for our memories, it cannot explain what is happening just outside of the frame. Our impressions or memories can also become diluted or embellished over time. Perception plays a similar role in how we contextualize what we see. These works are my exploration into the maring of time and memory and how photography, perception, society and culture can manipulate what we know and see. Each installation is ongoing and will change over time and with each iteration.



16,812 Days/Inmate #716-977  
Ink, stamp, walls, time  
2 - 6'x8' cells, 2018



## ELAINE BUSS

This work is the formal exploration of fragments, relics, and artifacts that I found myself enraptured by in museums and ruins. They were often humble in origin – loom weights, millstones, and crypt-wall bricks – but for me, they were charged with mystery. They felt secretive, like they held endless stories but communicated with such quietness that I could not hear. If I spoke their formal language, maybe I could have access to their secrets?

My objects, made in response, share the common grammar of an inflated curve with an edge that interrupts and changes the direction of that curve. The objects and the field they exist within are roughly composed of the same materials in different states. One is raw, unaltered, and impermanent (clay field) while the other is transformed and permanent (ceramic objects).

I process my own existence through making, and I internalize formal properties as I work. As I make harmonious forms, I find inner quiet. When I produce these objects, I search for a sense of inflation and balance within each. I perceive producing multiples as evidence of an endless searching; I can discover infinite variety and subtle difference. This installation is a space of wandering and wondering discovery. When we wander, our minds are often at rest while our bodies are ambulatory. To wander is often also to wonder; both are to go astray into a place unknown.



*Wander / Wonder*  
Earthenware (raw and fired), Terra Sigillata, Frit,  
Plaster, 3' x 39' x 28', 2018



# EUN YOUNG CHO

My attention to languages and its authority compel me to make art. My questions are derived from the everyday encounters that prompt me to see through different languages. I reflect on the processes of language production, its mobility in translation and transformation of our often-fixed ideologies.

“The Old Men Gave a Hollow Smile” is a poem being translated. The poem is produced directly in English and translated back and forth between a native (Korean) and a host language (English) of the artist. The strictly procedural and word-for-word translation removes the intention of the translator to re-claim authorship, distances the text out of its original content, and records the remainders from the system of language.





*The Old Men Gave a Hollow Smile*  
wicked translation, polyester film, duct tapes  
160 (14" x 17"), 2017-18



## The Poem

The most innocent & dire thought  
Of life-death. Of no-thing.  
Cannot be summoned in my tongue  
Hence alive and I live  
On my palette 2ndary  
Derived is via shades of other tongues;  
I know merely how not to spend a day  
I know merely how not to die a day

조은영

# KATIE COUGHLIN

As a teenager, there were constantly clothes to take off the line. We had, at one point, three clotheslines reaching out from the windows to the telephone pole tucked away in the left corner of our backyard. The reaching of arms out the window as our legs anchored us inside was a brutal test of our ability to balance and stretch. Our body became a part of this apparatus-as it often does when we complete physical tasks; our joints propel us forward while shoulders and hips and heads bear weight and get worked. When our bodies become mechanisms, where does the boundary lie? Is the edge of our body the tip of our finger or is it the ends of the bristles of the broom as we sweep the floor?



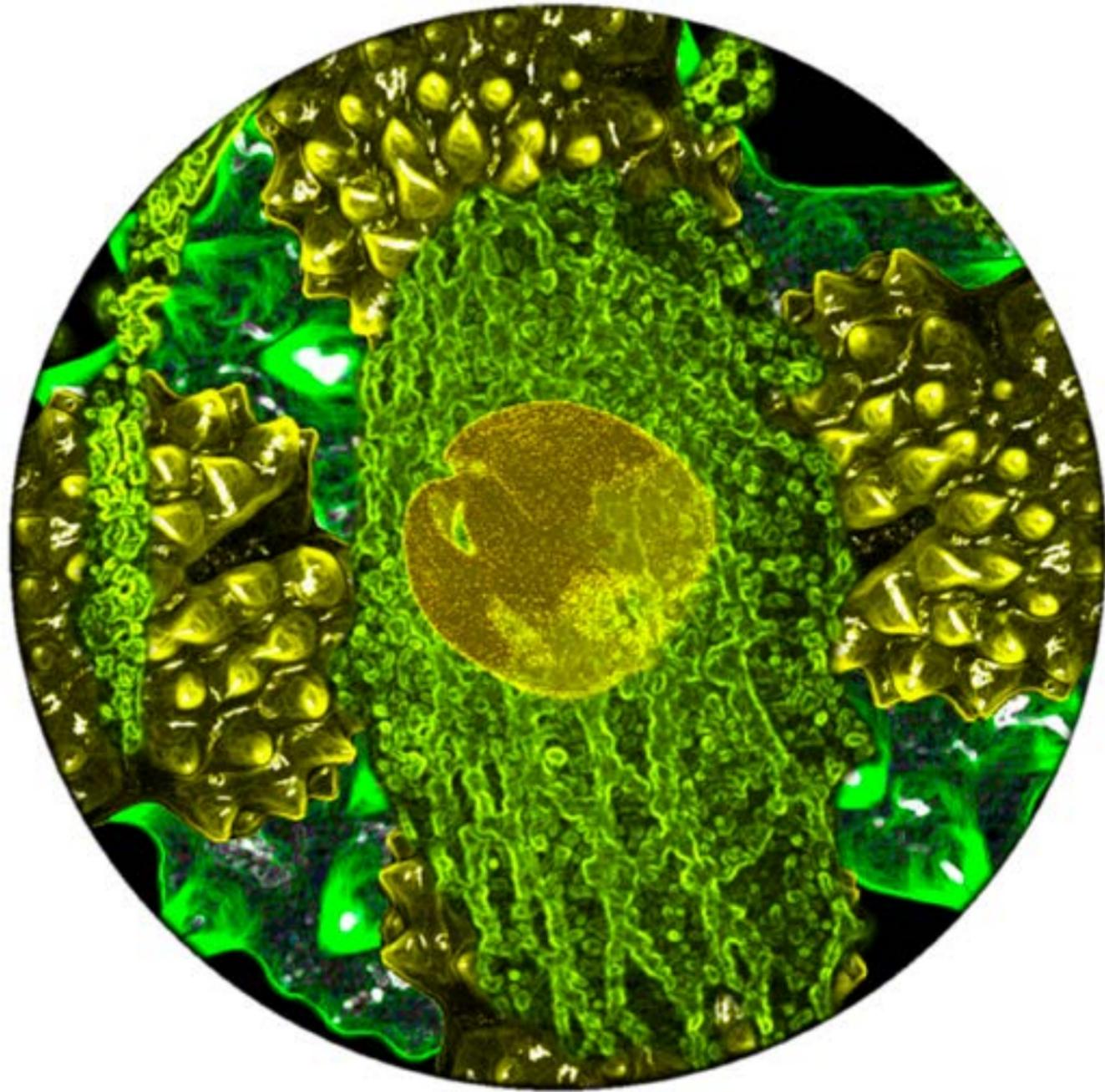
*Appendage*  
stoneware, porcelain, earthenware, maple, broomsticks, buckram, linen, muslin, cotton , 2018



The elements in my work originate from specific remembrances - often involving a task being completed while the rest of a household moved around it. These objects reference specific fragments of familiar gestures. Harnessing traces of these memories, I seek to challenge notions of recognized movement and undertakings. The transformation from a remembered visual to a physical instrument enlarges an aspect of self, marking an extension of identity.

While at rest each instrument contains an implied action, however, the objects suggested utility remains unclear. The mechanisms are fully embodied when activated- initiating accumulated laborious gestures. Once all objects are in motion, their collective rhythm expands outward. The structure of the performance enables and enhances the identity of individual pieces within the whole.

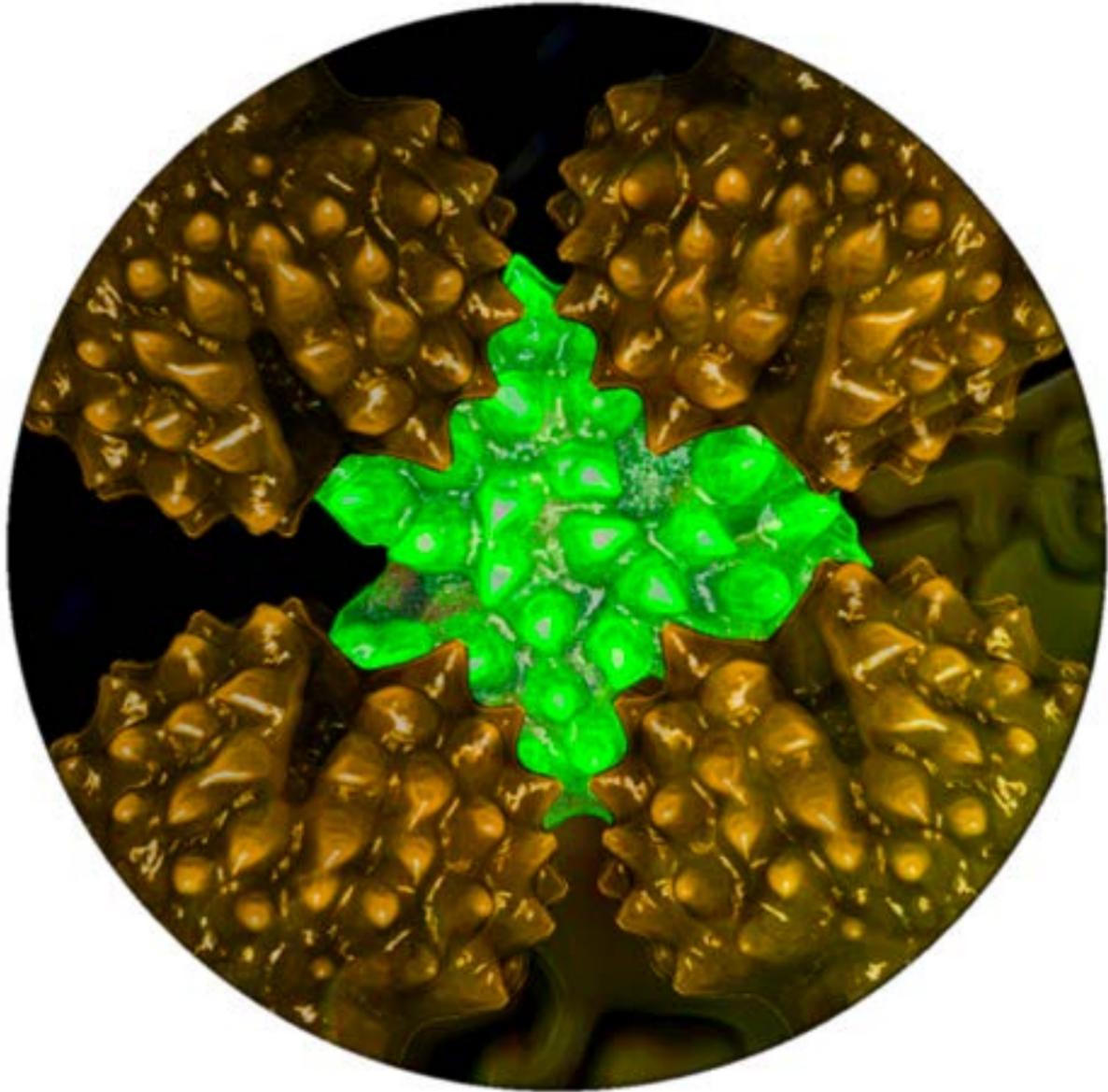




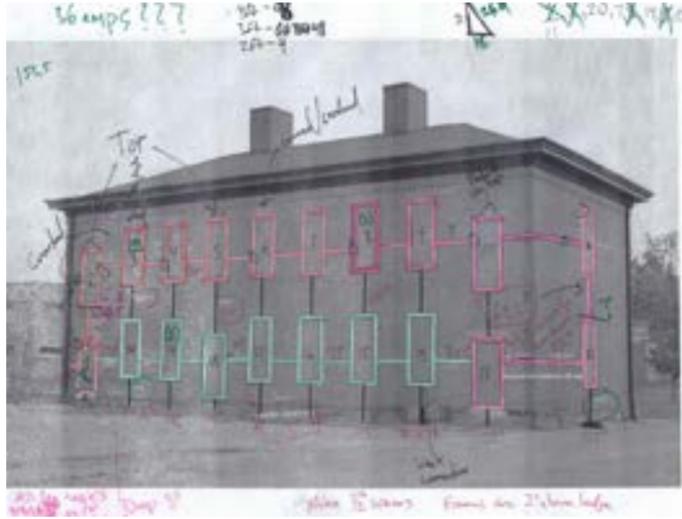
## AXEL CUEVAS SANTAMARIA

Stillness enables visitors to experience relaxation, mainly to test body awareness and the phenomenological perception of the physical plane. The storyline of this immersive installation focuses on the livability of wildflowers and the evolution and mutation of their pollen grains. The visual narrative of this project is composed of micro-photographic visualizations in sub-micrometer scale of pollen grains. The images were obtained using a confocal microscope from the Department of Molecular Genetics at The Ohio State University and accompanied by digital scanned images of the parent flowers contained in Petri dishes. An atmosphere of additive audio synthesis of whispering poems reveal scientific facts about CRISPR/Cas9 genome modification technology and the adaptation of the Plantae kingdom to our human-altered ecosystems.





*Stillness*, fulldome sculpture installation  
13' x 7', 2018

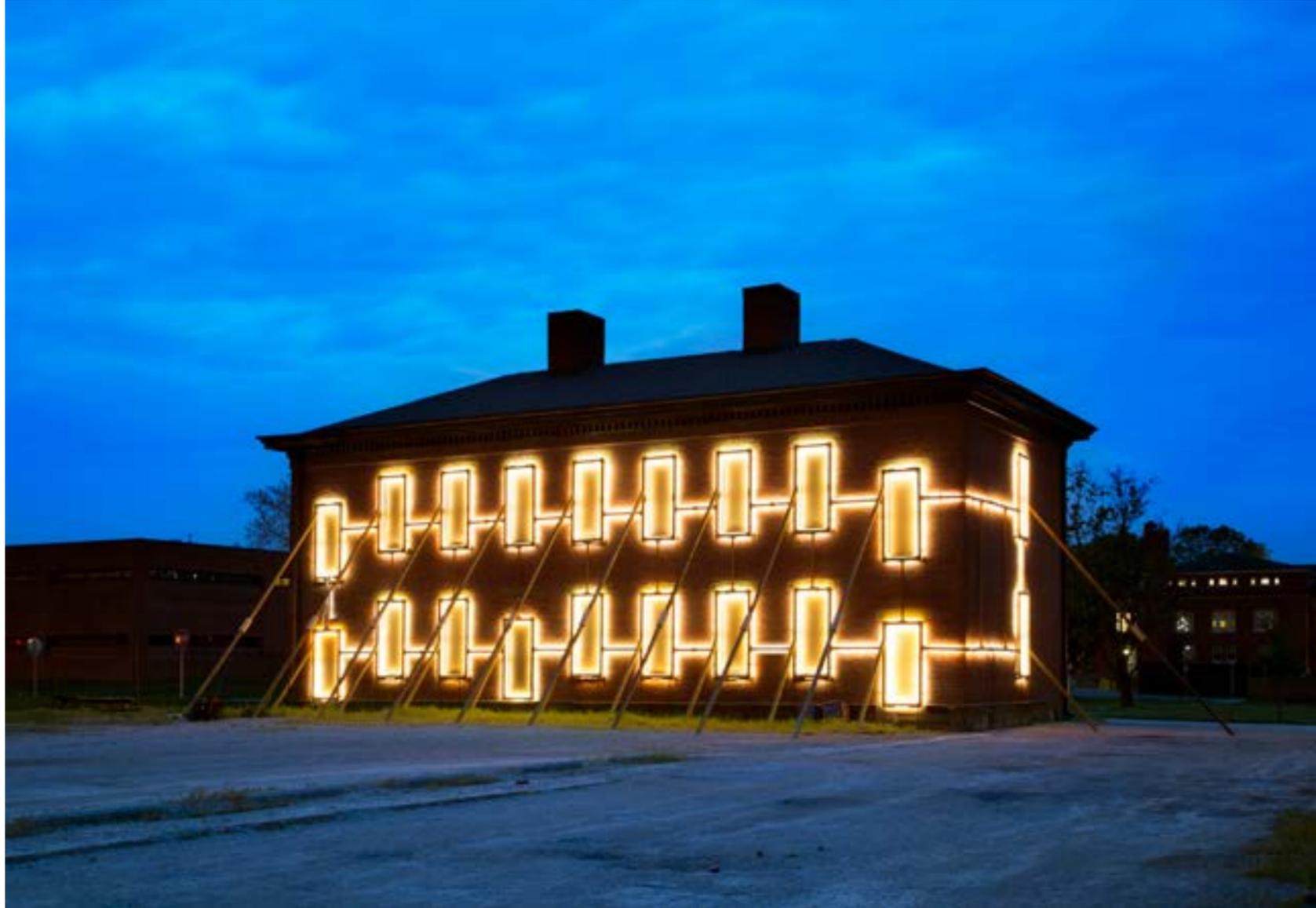


## NIKO DIMITRIJEVIC

On a basic architectural level, the effect of glass as it is most commonly used is to divide space but maintain a passage for light from the outside, in. It is also most often an interruption of a façade, an inlay into what is otherwise opaque and structural material. While my own work may not consistently foreground glass, the material is regularly being referenced as a way to locate the formal context and vocabulary of what I make.



*Line and Frame*, Used fluorescent bulbs, used ballasts, reclaimed wood, dimensions vary



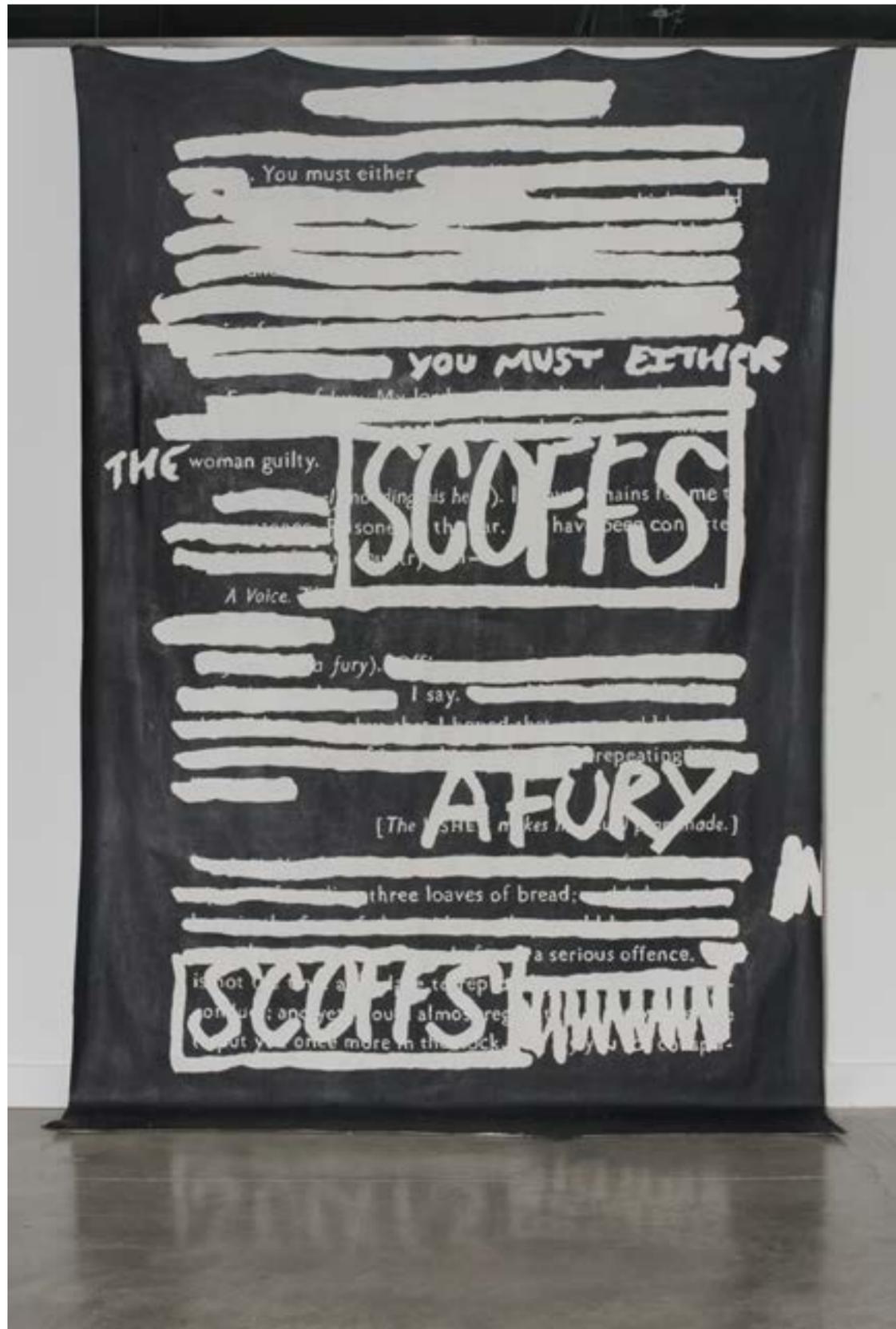
*Line and Frame*, Used fluorescent bulbs, used ballasts, reclaimed wood, generator  
dimensions vary

All of the physical work is constructed off-site and is engineered to be a collapsible system that can be brought and assembled directly onto a specific location. I try to be conscious of how the structure will actually touch the space as it is being designed, and often think of what I build as a brace or shell that mimics the architectural components it encircles, but will ultimately make contact at very few points.

Much of my material decisions are dictated by sourcing things for little to no cost that are either being given away, are traded for, or are some material remnant but for my purposes are in complete working order. I have steadily moved towards this economy of making responding to what I see as a paradox of manufacturing and technological advancements and their linkage to massive volumes of waste that still possess function.



*Line and Frame*, Used fluorescent bulbs, used ballasts, reclaimed wood, dimensions vary



## MAX FLETCHER

The paintings shown in these images are based on William Morris's play "The Tables Turned; Or, Nupkins Awakened". The play is an experiment in political theatre and is, in short, a piece of propaganda or agit-prop. Its language is heightened and the content is highly satirical. Published in 1887, it was intended to be both a source of anger and hope. Ultimately Morris's play has ended up as little more than a footnote in the history of theatre; barely in print and rarely performed.

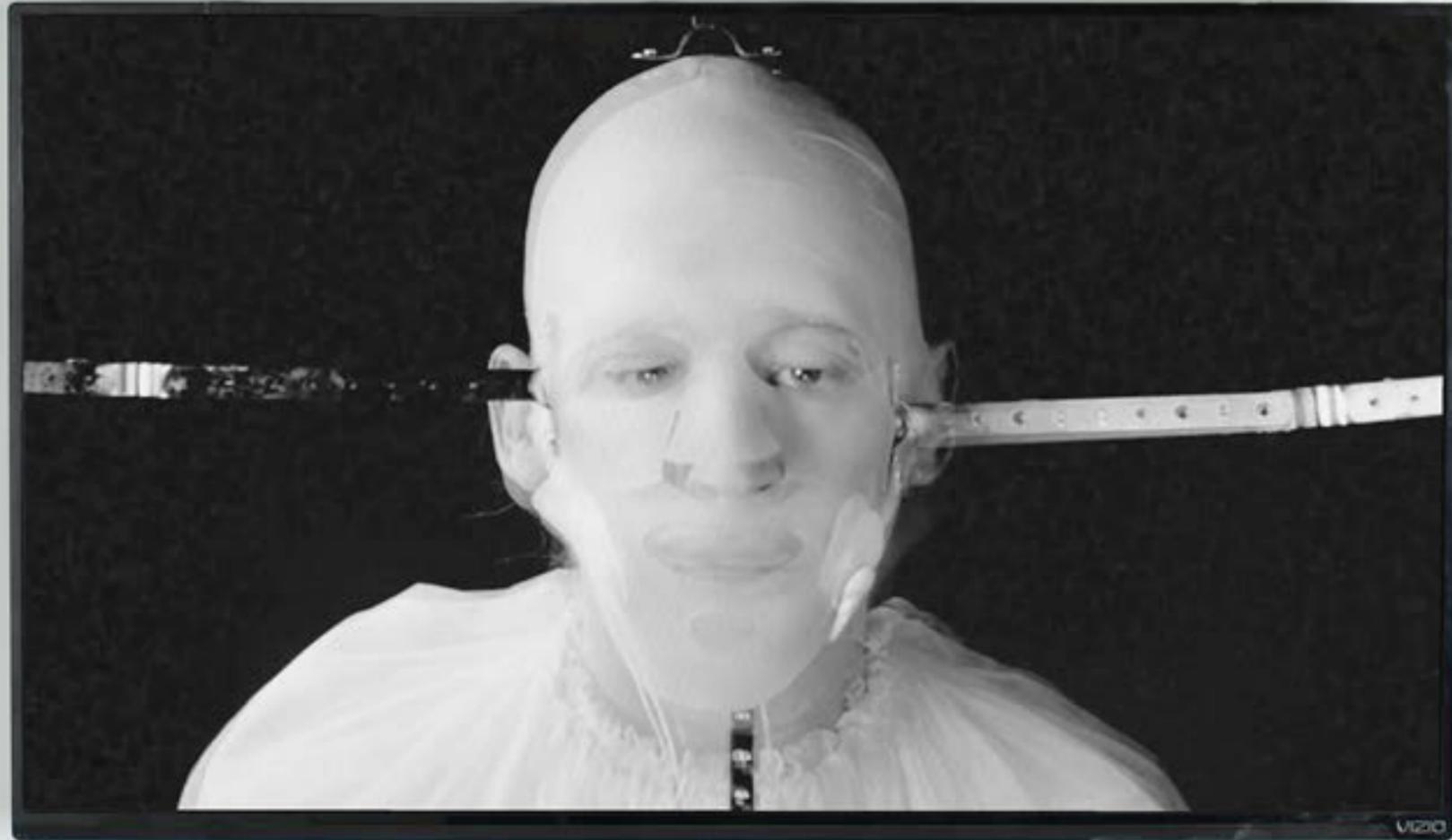


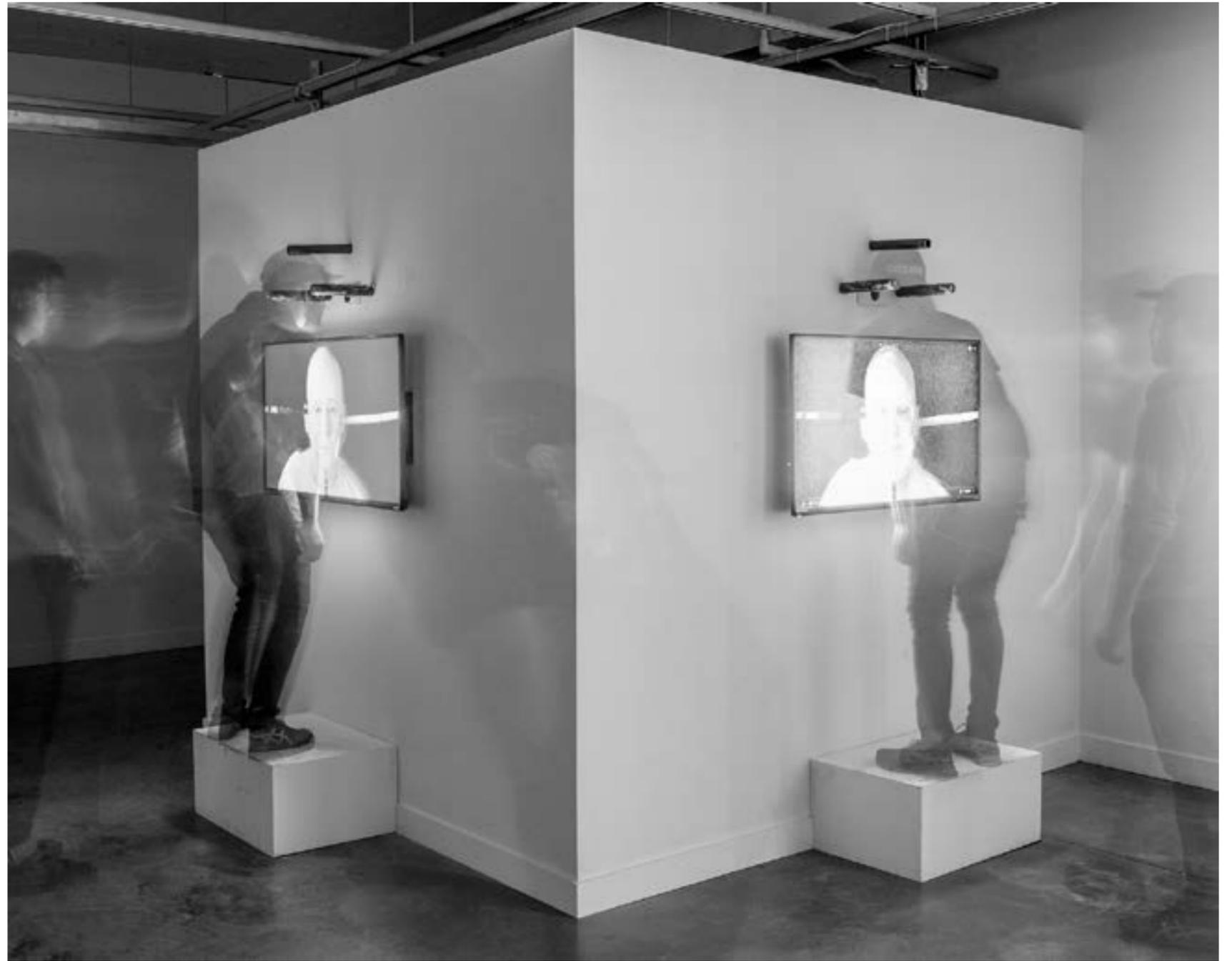


# JEFF HAZELDEN

Nothing to give, somewhere to hide. Absolve the residual.









Wall of Drawings: Selection of Drawings 2016-18, Detail

## MORTEZA KHAKSHOOR

It has been over a year now that I began to obsessively search, collect, and look at every photograph and documentary film I could get my hands on that are depicting Iranian politicians before the 1979 Islamic revolution. The homo-social aspect of those historical records with an inevitable-never-ending trace of power struggle embedded in them coincides with my fascination with men and their projected personas in a broader sense.



*Just Another Meeting*, Multi-layer Screenprint on paper mounted on panel, 29" x 43", 2018



*Wall of Drawings: Selection of Drawings 2016-18, Pencil, Charcoal, Marker, Ink, and collage, 2018*

The four panels presented here specifically and, to a lesser degree, the drawings on the other wall are interpreted, edited, and distorted alterations of some of those photographs. These are accompanied with some everyday elements coming from different times and spaces. I select my characters from a cluster of images, most of which I have never seen before mainly due to the very selective circulation of images of this sort during my earlier education in Iran. It is a constant flipping through old magazines and books, digging up historical archives, and surfing the internet.

It is very amusing yet curious to watch these figures either acknowledging each other's presence and behaviours or completely ignoring it by the force of drawing or printing. A figure of a very respected ambassador might end up sitting next to a group of anti-government leaders all together watching a cock-fight in my pictures.

I am particularly interested in the character castration that happens when these bodies travel from one image to another, often to a place they have never been in their real life. It is an attempt to reshape the history. I like to think that I am a puppeteer, and these scenes are my own interpretation of what alternatively could or should have happened. Given the current political climate when it feels that the events of the Twentieth century follow into Twenty-first century, these images go back and forth in time and space.



*Amateurs*, Multi-layer Screenprint on paper mounted on panel,  
29" x 43", 2018



*Men of High Culture*, Multi-layer Screenprint on paper mounted on panel,  
29" x 43", 2018

# ALICIA LITTLE

Make object relations.  
Gain from them reassurance and pleasure,  
which can counteract loneliness.

Recurrent experiences of losing and regaining.

What is the desire to hold something in your mouth?  
There is peaking but no resolution.

What would you know about transferring sand from glove to glove?



*Touchless Threshold*  
Installation comprised of carpets, temporary walls, fabric,  
clay, plastic, latex paint, hydrocal, two video projections  
18' x 24', 2018



*Touchless Threshold, video stills*

A pile

A pile

A pile

A pile

A pile

A pile

A permeable container.

Companionship with a good object  
can lead to being in bits.

To survive in the mouths of  
long after those  
whom the ballads are composed for  
are gone.

Superficialities attacking habits of feeling.  
That flourish is,  
the weight of notes.

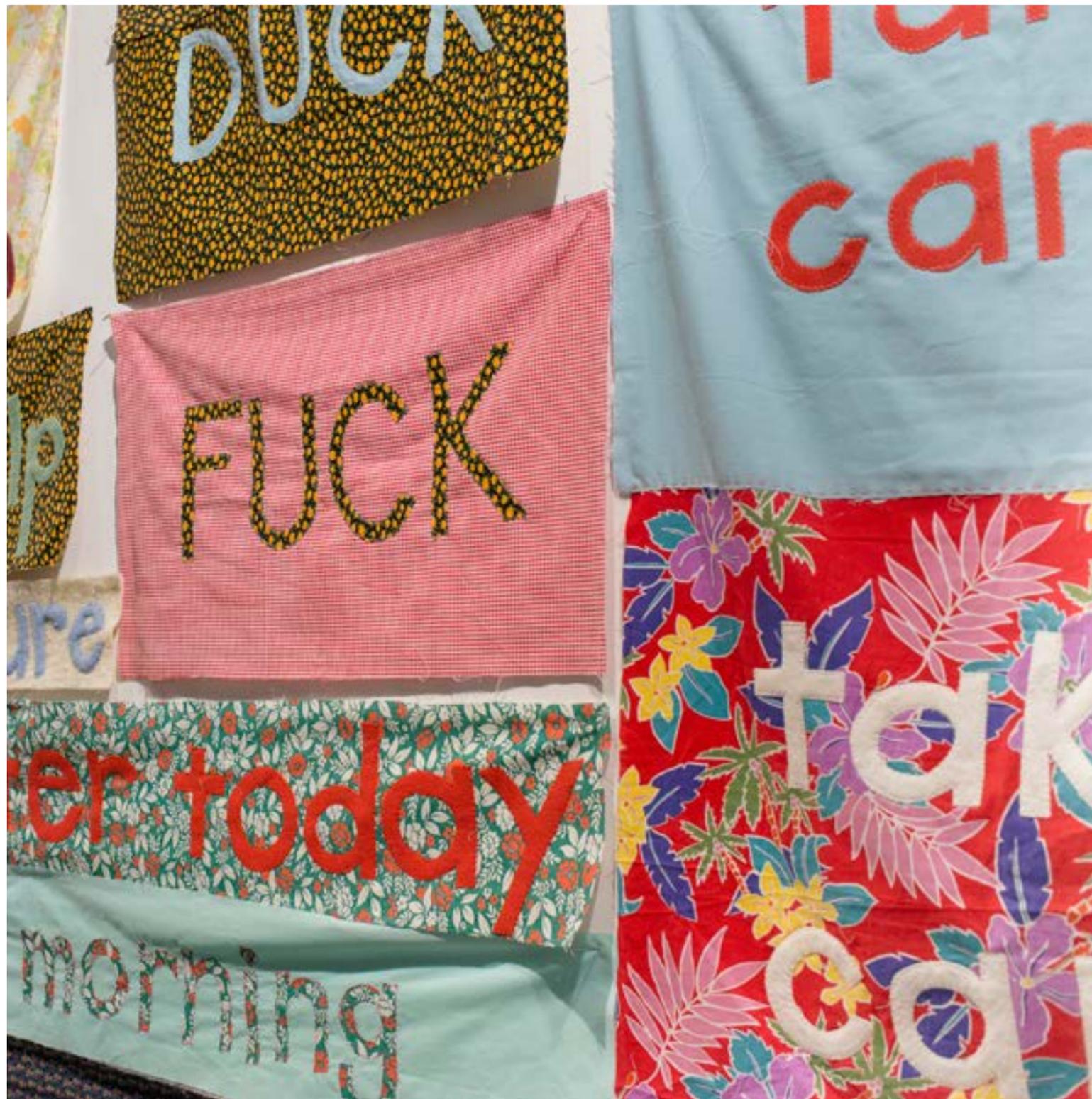
de-

r i v-  
a-

t i v e

The lost parts, too, are felt to be lonely.





*Mangez des roses (detail)*  
running stitch, zig zag stitch, fabric, and thread  
16' x 12', 2018

## CAT MAILLOUX

Two summers ago, I read *Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez. In this novel, a young man was so sick with love that he ate roses. In the spirit of magical realism, I cut out these words from fabric in French, *mangez des roses* (eat some roses). It was the language I was learning at the time, and is the mother tongue of my distant ancestors, a language I like to look to as a mirror. Since that time, I have continued to make fabric banners wherein language finds its place between color and pattern.

I make these fabric text works when I encounter language that impresses me in some way, is peculiar, or ironic. Sometimes they are words as precious as manna. Others are rich with a sick double meaning. Some are written by me as I speak to the bravery of my mother or declare love for my father. At times, I sew a made-up mantra that I use to steady myself or thoughts I would not have the courage to speak aloud.

They help me stay afloat within the harshness of reality. The cheerful patterns, mismatched colors, and childlike handwriting soften, or maybe just delay, a more somber reality. I find them liberating because the language does not try to conceal pain or embarrassment or wish anything away. These fragmented thoughts are placeholders, shorthand for a larger narrative that is continuously unfolding.



*5/10/2002, 9/30/2015 and 10/6/2017  
pounced graphite on plaster  
5' x 4' x 1/5", 2018*

These drawings are made through pouncing, a traditional method used to transfer cartoons to wet frescos. I lay the perforated stencil over the plaster surface and press graphite through the holes. In this work, I image the x-ray of my ten-year-old spine undergoing treatment for scoliosis and my father's first and last brain scans.



*Salvage Work*  
perforated rice paper, pounced graphite on plaster  
18' x 14' x 6', 2018

# THESIS 2018

is the record of an exhibition held at The Urban Arts Space in Columbus, Ohio, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts from The Ohio State University Department of Art.

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BACK COVER IMAGE Cat Mailloux

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