

kelcey bauer
heather brown
natalia vihreva
jennifer cannon
oscar lopez
tyler stannard
james jenkins
peter moen
john contreras
ashley ann vaughan

april 7 –
august 14

Lift Off

mfa sjsu exhibition



2022

ica san jose
2022 mfa sjsu exhibition

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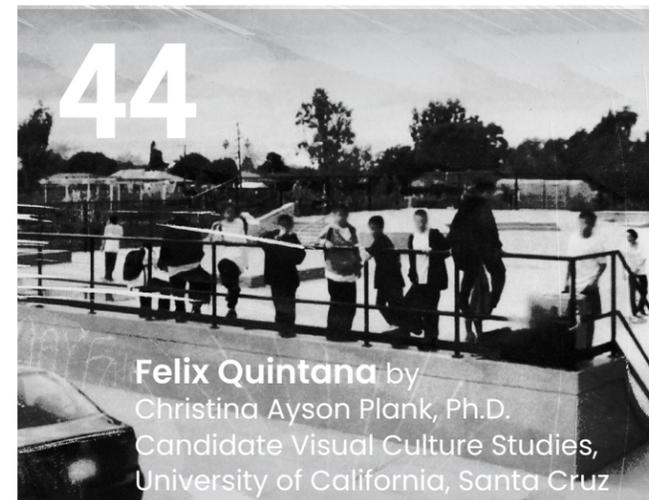


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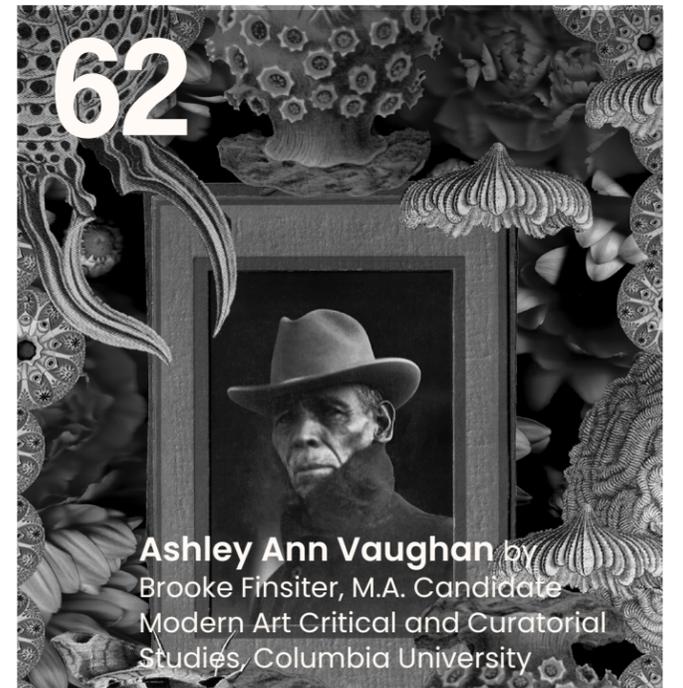


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Curatorial Essay

Do we exist?...

To question our cultures is to question our own existence, our human reality. To confront this fact means to acquire an awareness of ourselves. This in turn becomes a search, a questioning of who we are and how we will realize ourselves.

Ana Mendieta from the *Dialectics of Isolation: An Exhibition of Third World Women Artists of the United States*

The trials of the past two years have left us to contemplate the emotional-long haul of dealing with precarity. As we negotiate the spaces between fear and normalcy, we are faced with what it means to live today. The artworks in the exhibition articulate our relationships with language, domesticity, power, accessibility, fantasy, and nature.

The artists ask us to consider how we mediate our existence in a state of emotional limbo? How do we understand history and our past? How do we make sense of our present moment to connect, resist, and dream? Together, these varied perspectives illuminate the intersection and divergence of personal and cultural realities to create space for common ground and collective repair.

Artists investigate the feeling of languishing (the state of emotional limbo) and how we mediate our environment through screens. For Jennifer Cannon, *The Dinner Date* contemplates how the pandemic impacted activities like communal meals and our relationship to interior

and exterior spaces, alienation, and the act of sharing food. *INNER//REALITY* by Tyler Stannard invites visitors into an immersive experience—a virtual internal framework of the artist’s mind during the pandemic—to encourage alternative forms of connection.

How do we think about precarity? For theorist Lauren Berlant in *Precarity Talk*, “[Precariousness is] a rallying cry for a thriving world of interdependency and care that’s not just private, but it is also an idiom for describing a loss of faith in a fantasy world to which generations have been accustomed.” Precaritization is an ongoing process, not a singular past event, but a generational struggle over time and space.

Ashley Vaughan’s *Las Doradas* is a digital collage of archival family photographs with embellished vintage scientific drawings of sea life, paying homage to her family’s history, including her Jicarilla Apache roots. Subverting scientific ethnographical illustrations, Vaughan utilizes photographs of her Indigenous familial ties to assert their dreams for their futures into the present. Oscar Lopez Guerrero’s paintings *Los Olvidados* and *Las Sombras También Lloran* speak to his experience investigating the complex systems of globalization, imperialism, and capitalism in the U.S. through a Mexican immigrant’s lens. His work resists white supremacy and colonialism while remembering, honoring, and reclaiming his ancestors rights and roots. Felix Quintana’s

cyanotype postcard-like prints and collages reclaim narrative, combat surveillance, and represent communities from Los Angeles to San José. As a love letter to the archive, Quintana documents familiar places and acts of survival to investigate gentrification and collective memory.

How do we think about our relationship to power, marginalization, and accessibility?

For John Joseph Contreras Romero, his sculpture *Where La Moda Americana* discusses pedagogical power relations and the dialogues of violence and breaking out of one’s place or position. His work *Under One Sun Pt. 7* investigates how art can be a means of connecting and healing communities. *Large Scale Braille #4* by James Jenkins is a tactile sculpture that proclaims “equity” in the writing system of braille and raises concerns about accessibility and marginalization of people

who are low vision or blind. The sculpture expands communication in the museum space by inverting the art-viewing encounter into a physical reading experience. Peter Moen’s *Political Mire* responds to the current political division that evokes the feeling of distress and being stuck between action and spectacle.

For theorist Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *The Theory of the Body is Already a Theory of Perception*, through “...remaking contact with the body and with the world, we shall also rediscover ourselves, since, perceiving as we do with our body, the body is a natural self and, as it were, the subject of perception.”

Heather Brown’s *Bound Face Triptych* is a series of self-portraits that challenge notions of domesticity and ‘women’s work’ by unapologetically representing sexual desire to destabilize stereotypes of womanhood. Jackie



Solorio's Vagina Spider Web sculpture playfully balances comfort and aversion in relation to the female body, bringing to mind the history of abject art arising from psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva's book *The Powers of Horror* (1980). Natalia Vikhreva, interested in passive and active viewership, seeks in her sculpture *Pedestal 3* to create inquiry-based engagement where one may only find her work if they keep an open mind. Kelcey Bauer's series *The Land Within* is a set of archival pigment prints made up of overlaid photographs of nature on bodies that invite us to contemplate our relationship to nature and the boundaries of separateness or connection we feel as a society to the natural world.

Zoë Latzer
Liftoff 2022 curator
ICA San José

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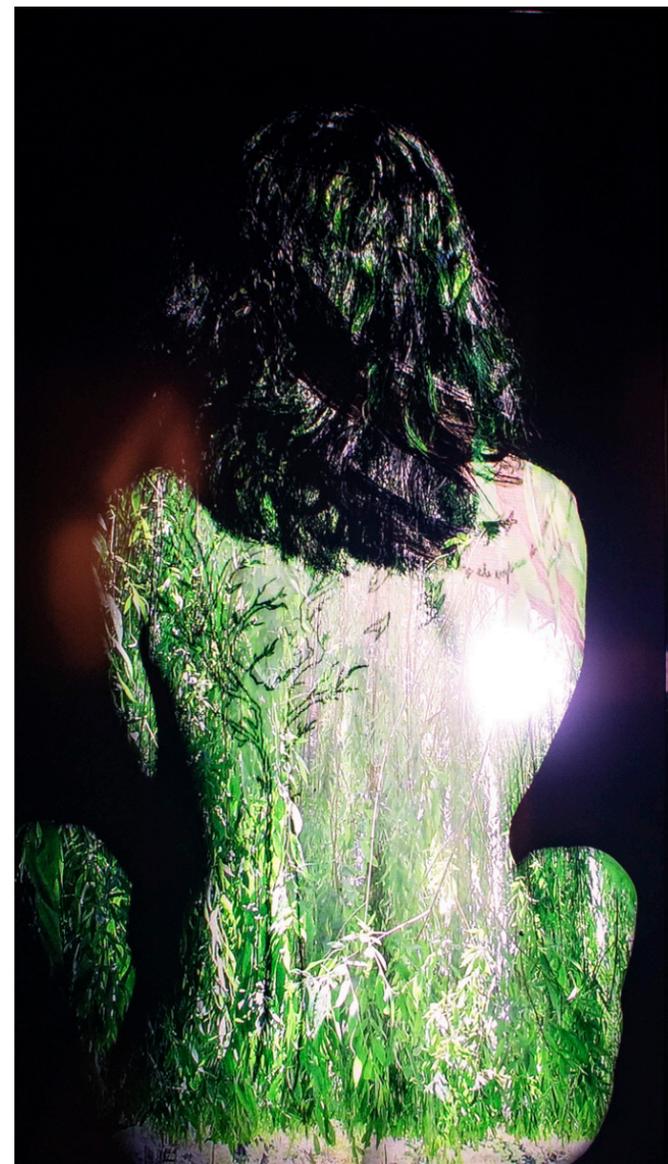
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kelcey bauer

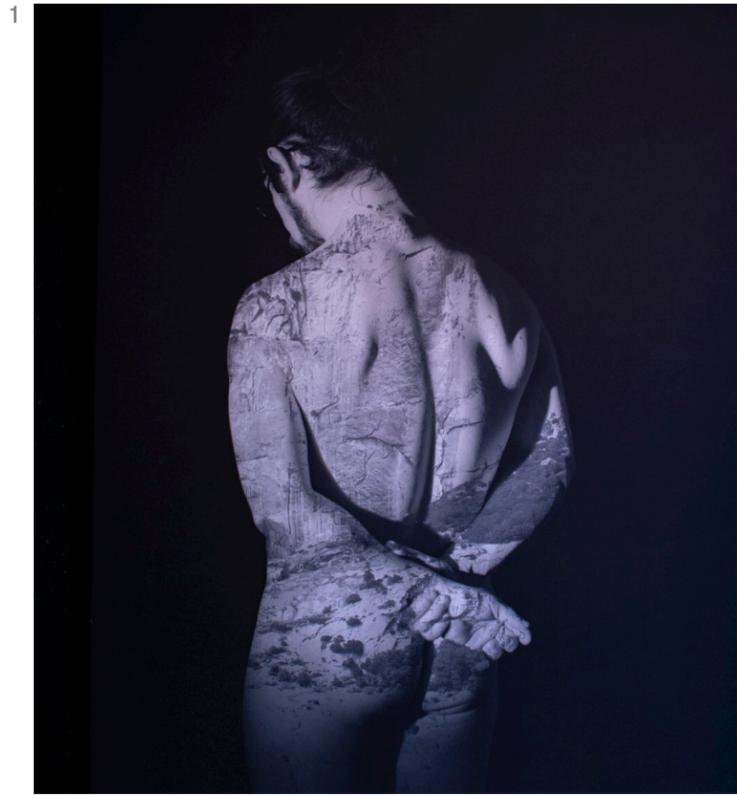
by alana rios



1. *Flow*, 2021
Digital video (Installation shot) 1080p
2. *Breath*, 2021
Digital video (Installation shot) 1080p

Not long after the 19th century invention of photographic printing from a negative, practitioners embraced combination printing of two or more negatives together onto one image. This served as a temporary solution to the shortcomings of emulsions' sensitivity to certain colors of light, which often renders landscapes devoid of descriptive information such as clouds in the sky. Soon combination printing offered a new language for photographers through the creative dexterity of bringing disparate subjects together. In her thesis exhibition *The Land Within*, Kelcey Bauer returns to this

methodology in order to heighten the relationship between the visceral quality of time spent in nature to the corporeality of inhabiting a human body. Her mural prints overlay studio portraits of the nude form with an array of landscape images made on her regular cross-country road trips between San José and her family home in Maryland. The nudes are of family and friends whose individual identities are withheld and anatomy resists typologies of beauty and embellishes the work with an invitation to ponder the congruous topographies of body and earth.



1. *Forgotten Connection I*, 2021
Archival pigment print 50" x 40"
2. *Engage*, 2021
Digital video (installation shot) 1080p
3. *Forgotten Connection V*, 2021
Archival pigment print 50" x 33"

4. *Forgotten Connection II*, 2021
Archival pigment print 40" x 50"
5. *Collectively*, 2021
Digital video (Installation shot) 1080p

Bauer's work is ambitious in scale, originating in darkroom mural prints and culminating in digital print technology and video cinemagraphs that integrate sound recordings of natural habitats when approached by viewers in the gallery. The user activation of these soundscapes reinforces the immersive experience of standing in front of the near life-size human forms whose inverted silhouettes serve as an entryway to the sublime wilderness. Every trip to the gallery varies depending on your time alone as a single viewer or as a group triggering the sonic cross-pollination of rustling leaves, crickets, and flowing creek water. The layering of body, land, and sound is enhanced by the addition of cinemagraphs, or photographs partially activated by a short looping video. Bauer met the inventors of this technique, Jamie Beck and Kevin Burg, leading to her experiments with bringing still photographs to life. Akin to a GIF, the photo-video hybrids appear on large

monitors gently looping both gestural intimacy between multiple figures and/or footage of the natural movement in the land. The subtle animation is not a fixed formula; the layers oscillate in and out of sync, at times harmonizing details, like the contours of a spine with a lush breathing fern.

By mapping natural ecosystems into the human form, *The Land Within* finds a common visual language between macro and micro life forms. Bauer transforms expectations of scale by deftly aligning elements near and far in *Forgotten Connection IV* as an expanse of red canyon walls appear across a long human back in repose; only fingers crossing the line between rock and sky. Her images remind us of our common connections to the natural world while recalling Gaston Bachelard's words, "One might say that immensity is a philosophical category of daydream."



author bio:

alana rios

Alana Rios is a photo-based artist and educator using historical and contemporary processes to explore the relationship between landscape images, gender, and power. Her recent exhibition Post picturesque includes three bodies of work, *Superbloom & Cut Flowers*, *The Calendar Project*, and *Vista Points: Overview & Time-Lapse*. Her work has been exhibited at Root Division, Embark Gallery, and Joshua Tree National Park Council for the Arts. In November 2019, she co-moderated a panel discussion at the SPE West Regional Conference

titled "A Feminist View of the Landscape: An Intimate, Political and Emotional Relationship to the Land." She earned a B.A. in photography and printmaking from Bennington College in VT and an M.F.A. in photography from San José State University. She is currently a lecturer in photography at San José State University and resides in Oakland, CA.

artist bio:

kelcey bauer

Kelcey Bauer is best known for her large-scale photographs that merge bodies and nature. Bauer's devotion to photography started with a Spy Kids camera from a McDonald's Happy Meal. In addition to making pictures from a young age, Bauer studied the Cecchetti method of ballet, which informs her interest in the human form as it navigates space. The magical qualities of photograms —placing objects on a light sensitive surface—and working in a darkroom helped her overcome her fear of the dark.

While studying historical processes at Savannah College of Art and Design (B.F.A.), she developed an extensive portfolio of experiments, including silver leaf image transfers and Mordencage prints of the streets of Savannah at night. Bauer's hunger for learning led her to pursue a M.F.A. in photography at San José State University, where she expanded her work to include digital sound and video technologies.

1. *Forgotten Connection III*, 2021
Archival pigment print 33" x 50"
2. *Oneness*, 2021
Digital video (Installation shot) 1080p
3. *Forgotten Connection IV*, 2021
Archival pigment print 33" x 50"



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HUXLEY

heather brown

by dylan adams

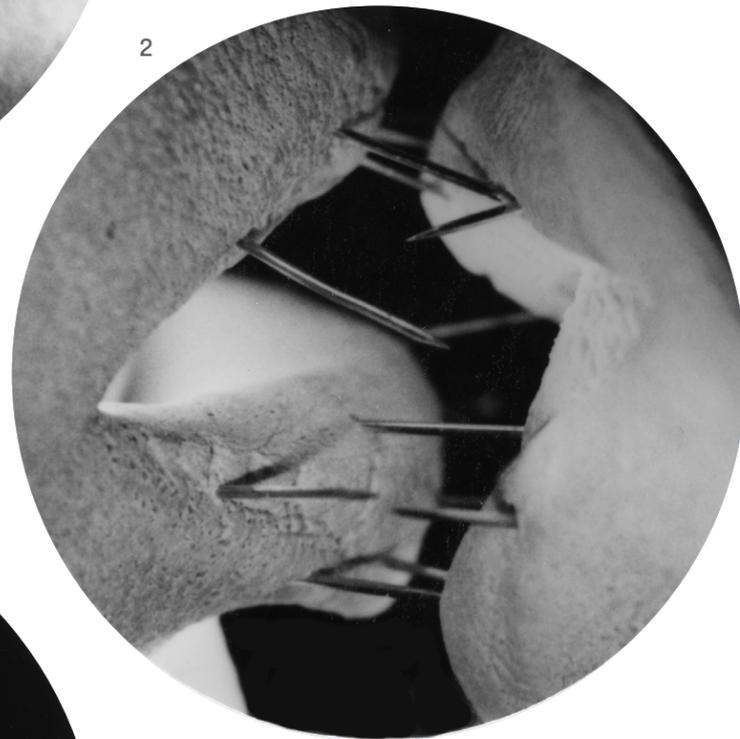
1. *White Hooded Face Mask* by Huxley Apparel, 2020
Archival Inkjet Print 12 x 12 in
2. *Respirator* by Huxley Apparel, 2020
Archival Inkjet Print 12 x 12 in

As an artist, Heather Brown is unafraid to redefine boundaries and explore sexuality as well as darker elements of society. They accomplish this in a refreshingly bold manner by utilizing photography and other unique media. Through the analysis of Brown's work, one is continually impressed by their attention to detail, level of artistic experimentation, and striking use of materials and imagery. Brown's most recent series, *Self Restraint*, is a compelling example of their ability to produce unique combinations of artistic ideas and concepts. The series features self-portrait photographs, which showcase the artist in variety of crocheted

BDSM gear. These wearable objects are handmade by Brown and utilize yarn as the medium. Before they are photographed, each piece is meticulously crafted from scratch. Countless hours go into the creation of these unique wearables. Not only does this demonstrate their advanced ability with the materials, but it also emphasizes their commitment to the laborious process of creation. This type of commitment again highlights Brown's remarkable work ethic and dedication to high quality production. By using the traditional medium of fiber crafting, the artist creates conceptual wearable objects that are thought provoking and visually striking. This



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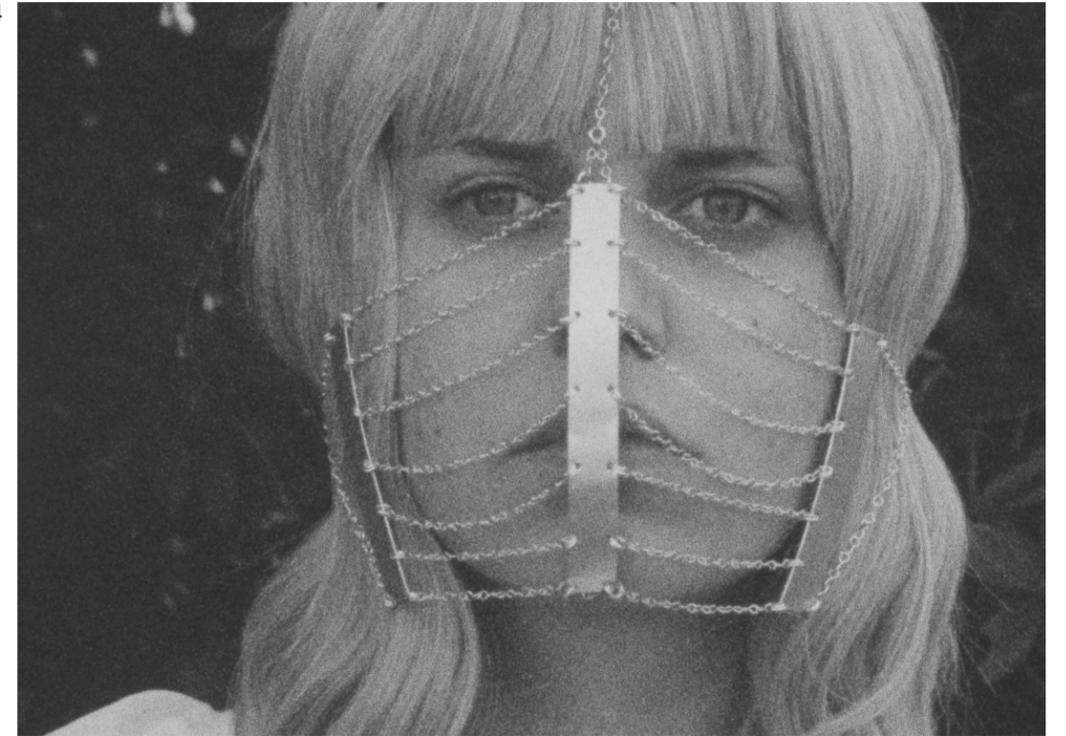
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1. *Sharpened Lips* (from the series *Self-Love/Hate*), 2021
Silver gelatin fiber print 4 x 4 in
2. *Penetrating Kiss* (from the series *Self-Love/Hate*), 2021
Silver gelatin fiber print 4 x 4 in
3. *Foreplay* (from the series *Self-Love/Hate*), 2021
Silver gelatin fiber print 4 x 4 in
4. Still from the film *Bind*, 2020
Film still 5 x 7 in

4



is important as the medium has been negatively associated with domesticity, femininity, and 'cuteness'. Ultimately, Brown seeks to elevate both fiber processes, such as crochet, as well as alternative forms of sexuality, such as BDSM, through this exciting new body of work.

Another captivating project by Brown is titled *Self-Love/Hate*. In this series of small-scale silver gelatin black and white prints, the viewer is presented with circular vignettes containing strangely visceral scenes. Within each vignette is a close-up view of two pairs of seemingly realistic lips attempting to kiss one another. However, these lustful lips are also embedded with outward-pointing sharp pins. In effect, the photographs depict both violence and passion intermingling in a shocking manner. To create these photographs, Brown created plaster castings from molds of their own lips containing carefully embedded metal pins. In this way, the photographs become a disembodied and surreal type of self-portrait. They are intentionally mysterious, combining elements of pain, pleasure, desire, violence, and anonymity. The

enigmatic nature of the photographs leaves the viewer to ponder their own psychological response. Are these images arousing or repulsive? Are they presenting scenes of romance or violence? Are these lips human or otherworldly? The answers may reflect one's own subconscious fears and desires.

Brown's personal background of growing up in the highly religious and conservative American South has in part inspired her current bodies of work. Accordingly, their rejection of heteronormative norms relating to gender and sexuality caused the artist to be ostracized from their home community. However, this in turn inspired Brown to embark on a journey both personally and geographically. To illustrate, Brown has taken artistic residence in cultural capitals such as New York, Paris, Rome, Florence, and Sydney and currently resides in San Francisco. Heather Brown is one of today's most ambitious, visionary, and provocative photography-based artists whose work pushes the medium to uncharted realms.



author bio:

dylan adams, ph.d

Dylan Adams is a Seattle-based art historian and curator. His research focuses on American photographers beginning in the 20th century until today. Adams is particularly interested in women and queer photographers and how gender and sexuality has been utilized in contemporary photography. Additionally, Adams has conducted qualitative

research on photographers working in rural areas of the Midwestern United States. He obtained his PhD in Art History from UCLA and currently teaches art history in the Seattle metropolitan area.



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artist bio:

heather brown

Heather Brown (they/she) is an artist, photographer, and arts educator based in San Francisco. For their art practice, Brown incorporates a variety of media, including film photography, fiber processes, metalworking, and filmmaking. Their work explores many themes both personal and universal, including gender and sexual identity, mental health and depression, capitalist decline, climate change, and existential dread. Brown often uses themself as the subject, creating unique

self-portraits that serve in part as personal catharsis. Recently, they have incorporated fiber processes such as crochet to elevate the medium to the realm of fine art as well as challenge the stereotypes of prescribed domesticity and 'women's work'. Brown received their B.F.A. from the University of North Carolina, Asheville in 2016 and is currently pursuing their M.F.A. from San José State University (expected graduation date: May 2022).

- 1. *Red Ball Gag and Black Mask*, 2022
Archival Inkjet Print 16 x 16 in
- 2. *Cage Mask*, 2022
Archival Inkjet Print 16 x 16 in
- 3. *Black Hood*, 2022
Archival Inkjet Print 16 x 16 in
- 4. *Crochet Red Ball Gag*, 2022
Acrylic yarn 8 x 8 x 2 in



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1. *Uncertainty # 1*, 2021
Silver patinated bronze and stainless steel 14"H x 7"W x 5"D
2. *Reining in Water # 2*, 2019
Glass, aluminum, granite, polymer clay 13"H x 6"W x 5"D
Photo Credit: Felix Quintana

jennifer cannon

by vickie simms

Sculptor Jennifer Cannon's process modifies objects and materials, whether fragile, pliable, or charred, into monuments that draw upon her emotions and evoke human compassion. She begins with a visceral connection to a site or a situation that leaves an imprint on her artistic sensibilities. The impression lingers within Cannon's creativity zone until it materializes into a work of art that expresses a profound moment of awakening. This awakening is how *The Dinner Date* came to be.

While passing through the Santa Cruz mountains after the fires of 2020, Cannon saw a lone restaurant nestled within

an unscorched mountainous area. There stood a curious, elegantly set table in the outdoor dining area, yet the space was empty of people. The new reality of isolation and social distancing enforced by Covid-19 exacerbated what Cannon witnessed. The atmosphere carried the residue of burnt wood lingering from out-of-control fires instead of garlic sautéed in olive oil and butter. Through Cannon's sentimental interpretation, it became *The Dinner Date*, a moment in time represented as a charred wood dinner for two, served with two glasses of California red wine. The project became Cannon's metaphor for an unfulfilled desire to dine in



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1. *The Dinner Date, Detail: Thorn Place Setting, 2020*
 Mixed Media: Bronze, stainless steel, burnt wood, resin, glass, acrylic, ceramic, cloth, plywood. Table setting: 48"H x 39"W x 39"D
 Photo Credit: Heather Brown
 2. *The Dinner Date, Gallery Installation, 2020*
 Same media as above.
 Photo Credit: Heather Brown
 3. *The Dinner Date, Installation, 2021*
 Mixed Media: Bronze, stainless steel, burnt wood, resin, glass, acrylic, ceramic, cloth, monitor, plywood. Table setting: 48"H x 39"W x 39"D
 Curtain with monitor approximately: 8' x 8'



4

a quaint restaurant and the loneliness, isolation, and lack of control inflicted by the pandemic and wildfires. As the flood of emotions became overwhelming, Cannon's process centered around control. With *The Dinner Date*, Cannon determined to surrender control to the art object.

The artist collected burnt wood left on the side of the highway for the dinner entrees. Cannon carved and chiseled the burnt wood in her studio, sometimes reattaching pieces to create the desired forms. Her modifications revealed a blackened T-bone steak and seared turkey leg. The entrees, teeming with an aromatic bouquet of freshly charred wood, were then ready to be arranged on white porcelain plates. The intense labor involved in modifying burnt wood evoked the extreme devastation left by the fire. Simultaneously, Cannon unwittingly reasserted control over her creative process, although not the emotions that inspired it. She created two flatware sets from cast bronze using lost wax metal casting. Cannon sculpted

wax around stainless steel flatware, which is strong enough to withstand the bronze firing process. One set is oil painted with Cannon's custom blend of glowing red-orange amber hues, signifying flames from the fires. Cannon layered hot bronze with different chemical solutions to achieve the perfect tawny bronze hue, and chemical oxidation gave the thorn flatware its handsome patina. The thorns recall the rose, with thorny stems that protect it from predators attracted to its sweet smell; on the flatware, they represent protective measures taken against Covid-19, such as social distancing, that instilled a fear of our fellow humans because they might infect us. Tilted wine glasses reveal the uncertainty of the time and a loss of control that lingers. What inadvertently remains is the afterglow of the fires, the pandemic, and Cannon's emotional memory of *The Dinner Date*.

4. *The Dinner Date, Park Installation, 2020*
 Mixed Media: Bronze, stainless steel, burnt wood, resin, glass, acrylic, ceramic, cloth, plywood. Table setting: 48"H x 39"W x 39"D

author bio:

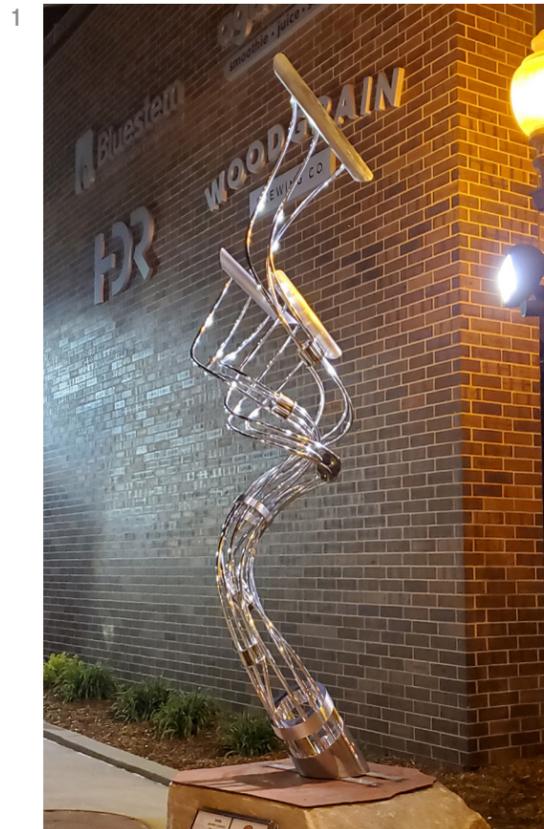
vickie simms

Vickie Simms is a graduate student in Art History and Visual Culture at San José State University. Her focus is modern art in the early twentieth century. Simms holds a Master's in Business Administration and a Bachelor's in Home Economics. Simms' career began in consumer products and the retail industry, moving forward to become a bank operations manager. Ms. Simms' fascination with visual culture, art objects, and their history informed her decision to study art history. Simms' first employment in art was as a

docent at the Diego Rivera Pan American Unity Mural at City College of San Francisco (CCSF). Simultaneously, she worked as a teaching assistant for art history professors at CCSF. Simms has also worked as an intern for Nexus Art Reach, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, and the de Young Museum's Get Smart With Art School Program. Her goal is employment in community, school, and museum art education programs.



1. 91019, 2020
Aluminum and brass
10.5'H x 6'W x 4'D
2. 91019, 2020
Aluminum and brass
10.5'H x 6'W x 4'D
3. Reining in Water #6, 2019
Glass, aluminum, granite,
polymer clay 11"H x 23"W x 11"D



artist bio:

jennifer cannon

Jennifer Cannon is an American sculptor best known for her outdoor public artworks of polished aluminum and brass, which speak to our ability or inability to exert control. Cannon was inspired to become a sculptor when as a small child she watched her father work on farm machinery and was attracted to the ingenuity and grit of transforming raw materials

into something imagined. She uses a combination of inventiveness, perseverance, and dedication to craftsmanship to create each uniquely fabricated artwork. These artistic qualities are also evident in Cannon's gallery work, where she incorporates a wide range of materials to express themes of control on a more intimate scale.

John Joseph Contreras

Romero

by Matthew Skurdahl



John Joseph Contreras Romero's sculptures explore memories of our transition from innocence to an awareness of differences, fear, and pain in the world. His method combines dissimilar objects to reveal the impact of premature or violent ends to innocence. He urges us to create our own interpretations of his pieces. His hope is that we consider a variety of issues relating to innocence, power, healing, and community. The objective is to create space for dialogue as an important step on the path towards justice. *Under One Sun* is a freestanding sculpture of an Opuntia cactus created from steel bars, bronze, and house paint. The Opuntia cactus

can withstand temperatures down to zero degrees and requires little care yet still bears fruit. Like the Opuntia, Mexican-American people frequently need to survive in challenging environments. As children, they experience discrimination in English-speaking schools. They often work in physically demanding jobs such as construction and agriculture. The leaves of the Opuntia sculpture are empty: we can look through them as we might look past people with a different background or ethnicity. *Under One Sun* asks us to consider a broader and more inclusive lens.

Where La Moda Americana and *Where Christopher Robin*

Played address issues relating to gun violence and children. Romero's family lives near East Palo Alto, which has frequently attracted national attention due to gun violence. A member of his family was shot in the neighborhood. Romero is a veteran of the US Marine Corps and completed a combat tour in Afghanistan.

Where *La Moda Americana* begins with a sweatshirt. The brand is Renegade, a popular label among children of low-income households in the 1990s. It is covered with the empty shells of hundreds of bullets. From a distance, it may appear to be haute couture. As we approach, however, we find the volume and weight of the shells make it unwearable. The updated hoodie captures the heaviness children feel when living in the midst of gun violence, even if they are not direct victims. The volume of shells speaks to the seemingly endless gunfire one faces when living in the East Palo Alto area. The idea for *Where Christopher Robin*

Played began with the death of Colonel Christopher Raible from an insurgent attack in Afghanistan at the Battle of Bastian. Cnl. Raible was the Commanding Officer and a mentor to Romero. A.A. Milne, author of Winnie the Pooh, was also a veteran, having served in WWI. In Romero's sculpture, the story of Winnie the Pooh is altered. Christopher Robin tells Pooh that he is stronger, braver, and smarter than he thinks. Pooh is filled with optimism and believes wonderful things will happen. Instead, he discovers Christopher Robin's body after he has been shot. The gun indicates the cause of Christopher's death, but the reason is unknown. Pooh recoils at the loss of his teacher and friend. The familiarity of the story allows us to pivot between the original and revised versions. We find ourselves like Pooh, wondering what happened and wishing it weren't true.



artist bio:

john joseph contreras romero

John Joseph Contreras Romero was born June 15, 1991. The first person in his family to enlist in the military, as well as a second-generation Mexican-American, his experiences are derived from living poor next to the richest city in the world: Menlo Park. His parents were both immigrants who cleaned and cut the grass of the wealthy to sustain life here in California.



author bio:

matthew skurdahl

Matthew Skurdahl is a graduate student in the Art History and Visual Culture M.A. Program at SJSU. His current area of research is the relationship between mental states and the creative process as depicted in contemporary surrealist paintings.



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Oscar Lopez Guerrero

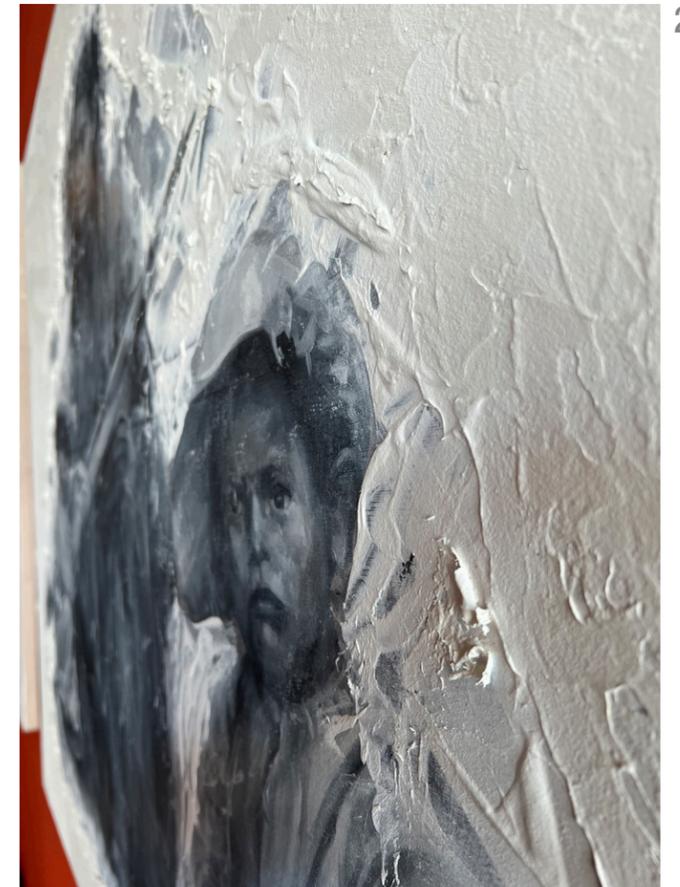
by tamsin smith

Art, like social history, like personal history, is a process of building and dismantling, covering and uncovering, shaping and reshaping. For his master's thesis show, Oscar Lopez Guerrero makes these linkages manifest in a body of work that is as aesthetically effective as it is emotionally affecting. In excavating imagery from the Mexican Revolution, Guerrero does far more than tell an old story in a fresh way. He is the grandson of one of the women who seized the moment to break free of traditional female roles and joined the fight for civil liberties, land rights, and justice, which would eventually end the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz and inaugurate a new

era for the country of his birth. Guerrero now lives in the United States but bears witness to the fact that the struggle for equity, respect, and humanity continues, regardless of geography or the march of time.

The Echoes of Invisibility presents five vignettes based on archival photos, which Guerrero has recreated with oil and graphite on four canvases and, in one instance, with drypoint on plexiglass. The painted portraits carry the aura of newspaper clippings but are rendered with faultless precision and a nuance of detail that elevates each individual's distinct human importance. Their dignity

1. *Escavando mi Pasado (Excavating My Past)*, 2020
Oil, Graphite, and enamel paint on board. 9"X 12"
2. *Los Olvidados (The Forgotten) (detail-1)*, 2020-2021
Oil, Graphite, and enamel paint on canvas. 4'X5'X2"



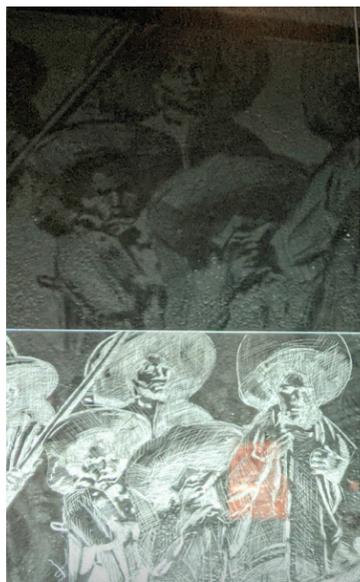
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- 1. *Marcas En Lo Invisible (Marks In The Invisible)*, 2021
Dry point on Plexiglass. 14"x15"
- 2. *Marcas En Lo Invisible, (Marks In The Invisible) (detail-1)*, 2021
Dry point on Plexiglass. 14"x15"
- 3. *Marcas En Lo Invisible (Marks In The Invisible) (detail-2)*, 2021
Dry point on Plexiglass. 14"x 15"



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seems to radiate. Guerrero then buries these reborn relics in white enamel paint, so that he may then literally chip away at this metaphor to reveal, well, what? The past, the patriarchy, sadness, fear, hopes, and dreams, or perhaps a pathway to deeper truths. There is a portal-like quality to these pieces. The viewer is catching glimpses, rather than a full picture. It makes one want to start chiseling away to lay bare the full picture. It's an artistically lyrical and intellectually powerful way of engaging his audience. Guerrero invites and compels us to become active participants in an exchange of ideas that matter today as much as in the days of his ancestors. What does it mean to erase a life? Whether through the violence of

war or the defacing impact of prejudice and discrimination, scars leave their marks. Guerrero turns to mark-making in the fifth and final piece that a viewer sees when moving clockwise through the show. Using drypoint, he carves *Las Marcas De Lo Invisibles / The Marks of the Invisibles* on a 14" x 15" piece of plexiglass. The white lines, which look like scars, reveal themselves as beautifully rendered portraits when cast upon the wall behind. What initially appears as ghostly imagery on the material surface is transformed by light—by the lens of Guerrero's vision and creativity—to reveal the figures as whole, vibrant, and larger than life. This is not art imitating life, but art illuminating our awareness of how it should be honored.

4. *Los Olvidados (The Forgotten)*, 2020-2021
Oil, Graphite, and enamel paint on canvas. 4'X5'X2"

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1. Los Olvidados (The Forgotten) (detail-2), 2020-2021 Oil, Graphite, and enamel paint on canvas. 4'X5'X2" 2. Las Vías De Un Destino Dado (The Roads Of A Given Destination), 2021 Oil, Graphite, wax, and enamel paint on canvas. 30"X40"X2 3. Las Sombras Tambien Lloran (the Shadows Also Cry), 2021 Oil, Graphite, wax, and enamel paint on canvas. 36"X36"X2"

author bio:

tamsin smith

Tamsin Smith was born in England and lives in San Francisco. Smith frequently writes art reviews and has contributed to several exhibition catalogs. She is also a published novelist: *XISLE* (2021), and poet: *Word Cave* (2018), *Between First and Second Sleep* (2019), *Displacement Geology* (2020), and *The Profound M: found photos paired with poems* (2021). Smith is also a painter, exhibiting with the Divers Gallery. She is also known for her pioneering work in the social impact sector. She was the founding president of (RED),

one of the most innovative and effective cause marketing efforts in history, and she has acted as brand architect for various mission-driven companies in the circular economy and sustainability sectors. Smith holds an M.A. from The Fletcher School at Tufts University and a B.A. from Kenyon College, where she graduated summa cum laude with highest honors in English.

artist bio:

oscar lopez guerrero

Oscar Lopez Guerrero is a visual artist born and raised in Mexico City. This was where he first came into contact with art in the Graffiti and urban art scene. This first contact with art is still present in his ideology and artwork. After immigrating to the USA, he focused on understanding complex society and social issues. Looking at the USA from the lens of a Mexican immigrant encouraged him to develop a personal pictorial language that can include the mestizaje of cultural ideas and problems that he witnesses. He has

studied traditional and contemporary art techniques and mediums, adding a twist to new experiments and innovations that reflect his bilingualism. This new pictorial language allows him to talk about the need for understanding and empathy among humanity. He is exploring mediums and subject matter resulting from a conscious understanding that the art has to respond to the time and place that the artist lives.



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1. *Really the Same*, 2017
Oil on Canvas 48.5 x 36.5 in
2. *Gay Christian*, 2018
Oil on Canvas 24 x 48 in

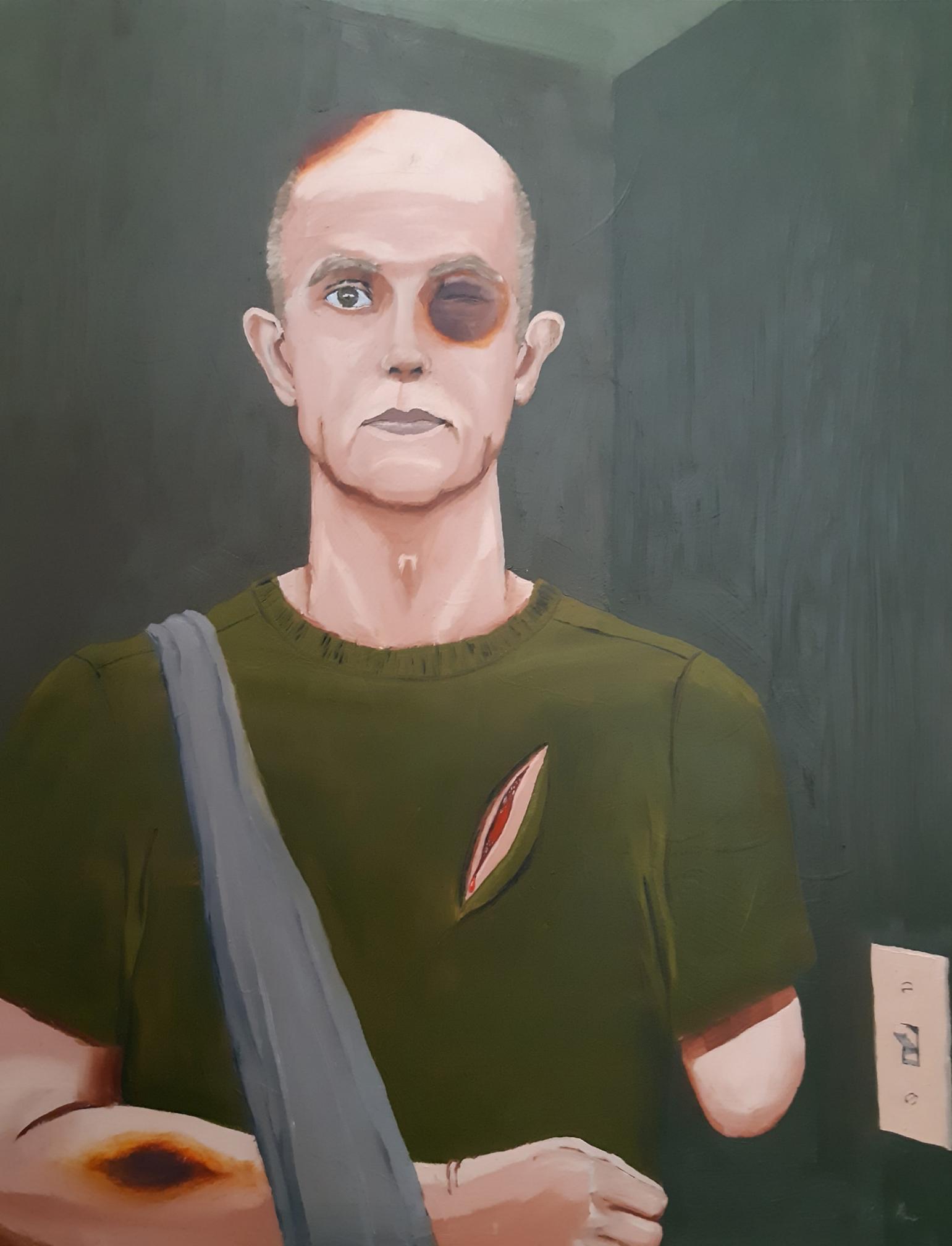
peter moen

by ghost author

Peter Moen is a pictorial artist best known for colorful portraits and political art. At 64 years old, Moen primarily creates oil paintings on large wood panels or canvas, as well as full installations. These pieces are intended to evoke empathy and create a shared experience in each viewer. Moen graduated from San José State University with an MFA in Pictorial Art and an AS degree in Fine Arts from San José City College, and his work can be found throughout several galleries across California.

While Moen creates accurate portraits, abstraction is vital in his work. Inspired by political topics, controversial events, human emotion, and

human flaws, Moen offers abstract art intended to provoke strong emotions and reactions in viewers. Moen's work also reflects the joy, pain, and trauma he feels regarding these topics and life experiences. To create a shared experience that may bring truth to light and inspire change, Moen expresses his own emotions in a pictorial manner that can guide the viewer to a conclusion or feeling about political events and statuses. Using his art as a psychological and physical release, Moen's emotion-inspiring oil paintings and installations provoke more profound thought and connection with the subjects of each piece.



2

Moen is influenced by artists Robert Beverly Hale and Rembrandt. He also draws inspiration from what he has experienced throughout his 64 years of life. Having participated in relief work in Beirut, Lebanon in 1982 and 1983 and traveled to many locations worldwide, Moen attributes aspects of his work to witnessing and empathizing with humanity in many states. While humanity, politics, trauma, and joy are all common themes throughout his work, Moen has also completed several exhibitions regarding the state of the world and humanity's relationship to topics such as pollution and its effect on the wildlife of the world, single-use plastic, and the death and destruction of the 2018 California wildfires. He offers artistic insight into the human experience through visual means.

Moen's pieces can be found in several California galleries in San José, Walnut Creek, Monterey, and Redwood City. While his installations and performance

pieces have received high regard from critics, collaborating artists, and viewers worldwide, he has shifted his artistic talent and attention back to a focus on oil portraiture on wood panels and canvas. Peter Moen continues to evolve, experiencing many changes in his creative and personal direction throughout time. Utilizing his own emotions and reactions, Moen continues to evoke strong responses in his viewers by promoting connection and empathy with political topics and events and has helped shape future generations' minds through his abstraction and creations.

1. *but, inside*, 2021
Oil on Canvas 30 x 24 in
2. *Political Mire Mire*, 2020
Oil on Canvas 24 x 36 in



artist bio:

peter moen

Moen's paintings are punctuation marks in his life. He likes to use his skills as a portrait painter to make comments on current events by using partially abstract or non-objective oil paintings that include natural or abstract portraits. He grew up during the 60's in south San José, California, and after high school, he went to UC Berkeley to become an

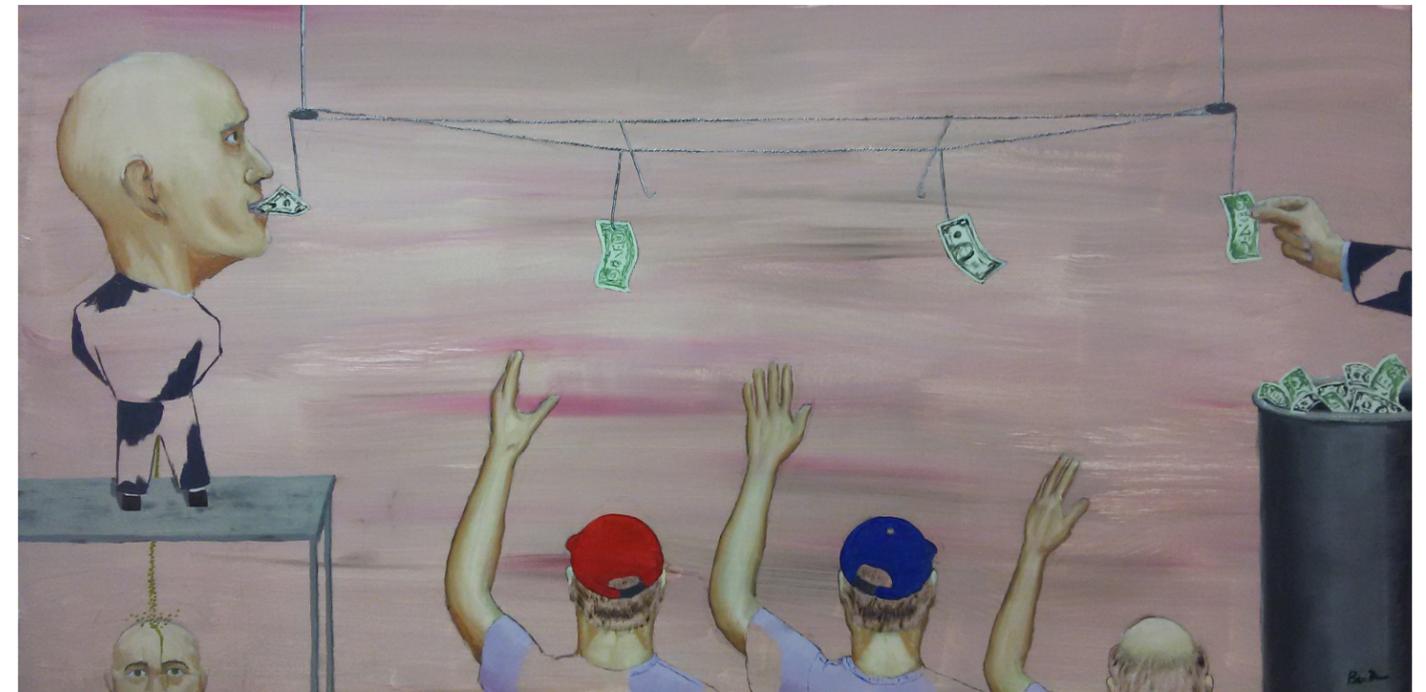
engineer. He then worked as an engineer, including at a rocket company. In 2006, he took a drawing class and found out that he could draw. Since that time, Moen has been working on becoming an artist. He has received an M.F.A. in Pictorial Art at San José State University and an A.S. degree in Fine Arts at San José City College.

author bio:

ghost writer

The professional author is a blogger and ghostwriter. With a passion for rhetoric and poignantly tailored tone, she aims to influence the world with the written word. Having worked for over 900 clients, she has mastered the ability to adapt the voices of hundreds, creating pieces that mirror the intention and personality of each client. Living with her husband, two children,

and dog, this writer uses her degree in Writing & Linguistics to maintain a freelance business and serve clients across many platforms. She finds inspiration for stories between the trees of local forests and fields behind her home. Finding joy in bringing the stories of others to life, she hopes to help share the experiences of those who cannot find their voices on their own.



1. *Voter Suppression*, 2017
Oil on Wood Panel 32 x 40 in
2. *Trickle Down*, 2018
Oil on Canvas 24 x 48 in



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2

felix quintana

south bay poetics by christina ayson plank

1. *Veterano with white bolsa and plaid button up at the bus stop on Alum Rock & King, 2021*
Hand-altered cyanotype print 5" x 7"
2. *homegirls walking down the block off San Carlos Street by the Western Appliance sign, 2021*
Hand-altered cyanotype print 5" x 7"

Felix Quintana's MFA exhibition *para los lil homies* is an act of cruising. Riding low and slow is a form of cultural expression for BIPOC communities who transformed their cars intoworks of art to exhibit their cultural pride and creativity. Quintana grew up in this culture in his hometown of Lynwood but found similar affinities in San José when he moved to pursue his MFA. For Quintana, cruising is also an act of resistance for Black and Brown communities—an announcement of their belonging and to take up space in neighborhoods. *para los lil homies* continues this tradition by encouraging BIPOC communities in San José to take pride in their culture and reclaim their space.

This evocation of cruising is represented in Quintana's collage series featured in the exhibition. The found objects used to create the series—including 99 Cent Store advertisements, bottle caps, family photographs, and a Toyota hubcap—are a collection of objects he amassed in Los Angeles. Many of the objects were also collected in San José, thereby marking and merging a new stage of his life with the past. The collages trace his life phases and becomes a historical record of his movement. Building an archive of his life is important to Quintana as a first-generation Salvadoran-American who knows few details about his family's history. The collages represent the literal and



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1. OG Lee's with New Tung Kee and Hair Salon on Santa Clara Street, 2021
Hand-altered cyanotype print 5" x 7"
2. homegirls walking down the block off San Carlos Street by the Western Appliance sign, 2021
Hand-altered cyanotype print 5" x 7"
3. Save La Pulga, 2021
Hand-altered cyanotype print 5" x 7"
4. Lil homies posted at the skate park in Mayfair, 2021
Hand-altered cyanotype print 5" x 7"



4

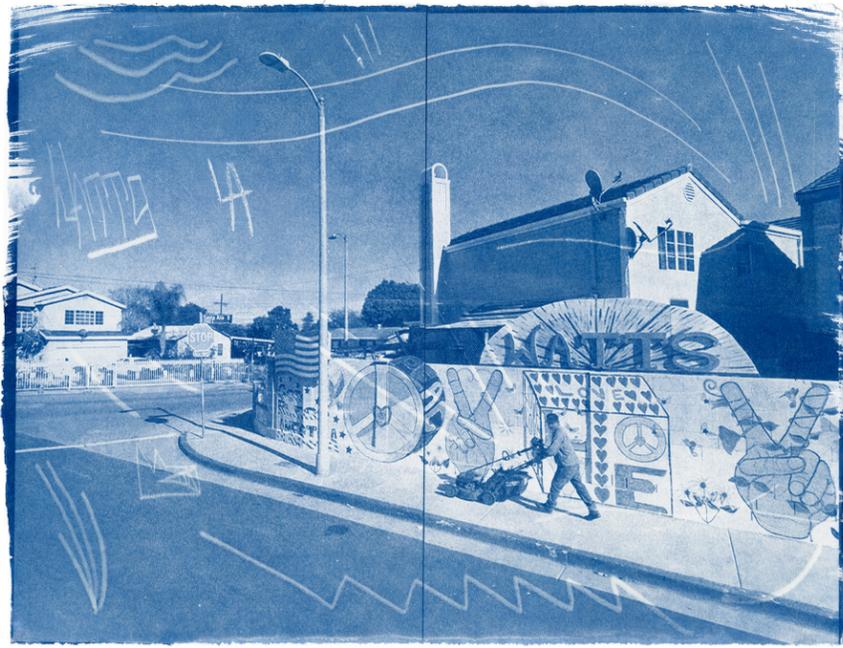
figurative pieces that comprise his hybrid identity. Quintana allows the viewer to cruise through layers of time and space through this assembly of objects.

Quintana's interest in mapping BIPOC spaces can also be seen in the series *South Bay Blueprints* (2021). The series features landmark sites, including Lee's Sandwiches and the San José Flea Market, that Black and Brown communities in the South Bay Area revere but would be commonplace to the uninitiated. Quintana cruises through the streets of San José using Google Street View and takes screenshots of these locations, which he uses to create cyanotypes. His use of Google Street View is an act of poetic justice against one of the largest and most powerful arbiters of gentrification in San José. In 2017, San José City Council unanimously approved the development of Google's newest campus. The sanitized version of the streets that can be seen on

Google Street View will soon be imposed on the physical landscape of San José. And yet, Quintana reminds the viewer that despite these forces, BIPOC communities will continue to thrive in the city. By scratching or "tagging" his cyanotypes with images and words such as "Save La Pulga," Quintana adds the poetics of the street to fight against the objectivity of Google.

para los lil homies is an invitation to Black and Brown youth in San José to continue celebrating their cultures and communities, especially within the sanitized space of the art gallery. Moving to San José marked a new and formative stage in Quintana's artistic practice primarily because of his involvement with local BIPOC organizations. His MFA exhibition is a love letter and homage to the South Bay community and the poetics of their streets.

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artist bio:

felix quintana

Felix Quintana is an artist and educator of the Salvadoran diaspora in Los Angeles. His multidisciplinary process spans drawing, photography, collage, assemblage, digital media, poetry, and teaching. His practice examines place, memory, home, and the street as a site for artistic activism, intervention, and critique. He has served as a mentor, teaching artist, and lecturer in artist-run spaces, continuation schools, non-profits, museums, community settings, universities, and emerging

virtual spaces. He has exhibited locally, nationally, and internationally in over 50 solo and group exhibitions including LA > < ART, Vincent Price Art Museum, and San Francisco State University Art Gallery. In summer 2022, he will present a solo exhibition at Residency Art Gallery in Inglewood, CA. He earned an M.F.A. in Photography from San José State University and a B.A. in Studio Art from Cal Poly Humboldt. He currently lives, works, and teaches in Los Angeles.

author bio:

christina ayson plank, ph.d candidate

Christina Ayson Plank is a scholar, educator, and curator based in San José, California. She is a Ph.D. candidate in Visual Culture Studies at the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her research focuses on migration, labor, and contemporary art of the Philippines and its diaspora. Her doctoral dissertation is tentatively titled "Counter-

Production as Resistance: Contemporary Art of the Filipino Labor Diaspora." She received an M.A. in Asian American Studies at UCLA and a B.A. in Art History and Studio Art at Marist College. As a born and bred South Bay Area Filipina, she is interested in highlighting local stories, voices, and spaces.

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1. *El jardinero de Watts*, 2019
Hand-altered cyanotype print 10" x 13"
2. *Monument for Nipsey Hu\$\$le*, 2019-2020
Hand-altered cyanotype print 10" x 13"

3. *Ode to the street hu\$\$LA*, 2019
Hand-altered cyanotype print 10" x 13"
4. *Ode to the east side san jo hu\$\$la, painting sides of buildings with their shadow*, 2021
Hand-altered cyanotype print 5" x 7"



jackelin solorio

by laamsha young



Jackelin Solorio's sculptures navigate a complex territory of power, vulnerability, strength, and humor. Her *Spider Vaginas* represent the dual nature of life: the embodiment of a shadowy danger that hides within the denizen of desire: bleeding and healing, nurturing and destroying. Solorio's sculptural work vibrates with the energy of the ceaseless creating, destroying, and recreating of life.

Working with the dynamics of a range of mediums from fragile, ephemeral substances like fired ceramics, wax, bodily fluids, and even her own body, to heavy, solid, sharp cast bronze and fabricated metal, Solorio uses the materiality of her media as a structural language for weaving

layers of meaning and intention. She is a multi-disciplinary artist with the skill and agility to coax the incorporated from the apposite material of her choice.

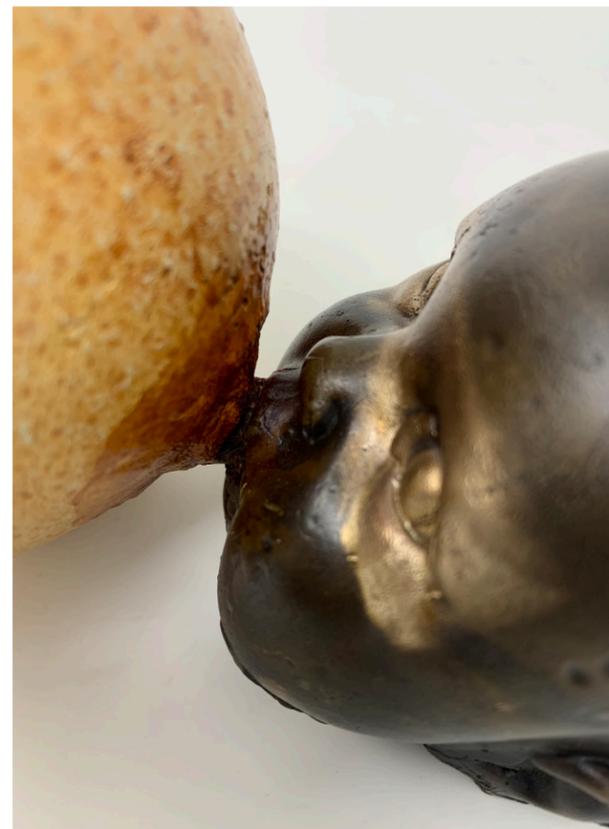
The idea of the *Spider Vaginas* came to Solorio in a dream. Or maybe it was an echo, of a remembered phrase in Spanish heard in childhood: the conflation of vagina and an animal-like creature. The idea stuck with her. She made prototypes in 2018, but left the concept behind for almost three years before coming back to it. Solorio investigated the behavior of spiders, and she studied the evolution of women's rights in relation to their bodies. She discovered an intersectional space of mysticism and fear, which women's bodies and

spiders both inhabit. As she scrutinized these moments of overlap, she explored archetypal behaviors that could be superimposed. Spiders lay many eggs. Sometimes, they eat their young. There are epic poems and science-fiction narratives that ascribe these behaviors to women as well. Spiders build elaborate structural webs, not unlike the delicate, gorgeously constructed ceramic cage Solorio constructed for her performance of Fruit of Knowledge and very much like the beautiful geometrical metal web which she constructed for her Spider Vaginas.

Solorio's work ethic is spider-like and tireless. She constructs every part of her sculptures with precision and intentionality. For her performance of Wise Blood, she created 120 candle wax babies. Obsessively working and wrestling with the weighty cultural convictions about motherhood, she created over 1,000 more wax babies, 606 of which were imbued with her menstrual blood. These babies

became the point of departure for her work, *Nine Months*. For works like her piece, *Untitled (mixed media)*, a mixed-media and ceramic piece, she gathered objects from the route that she runs daily and inserted them into ceramic vaginas and created a circular plaque covered with those brightly glazed vaginas, each with an object emanating from between the labia. When asked how she chose each object, Solorio mused about how each vagina could represent a particular woman and her experience of life. And, in her multi-layered and humor-filled way of talking about so much of her work, she went on to explain with a wry smile that she was "just thinking about things that could be put in a vagina."

Solorio's sculptures and performances have a humorous honesty that breaks open the cultural psyche to expose and interrogate hidden universal truths that are yet unacknowledged. Her work opens



up new dialogues about the wisdom of Woman as nature-itself and the idea that there are some things that you just can't talk about. As the spider lies, concealed in a web, an historic weight of shame, fear, and desire crouches in the depths of our cultural subconsciousness.

In Solorio's work, women are multi-faceted: the apple and the tree, the terrifying thirst for knowledge and the knowledge itself. Her work questions how it is that they still exist as citizens of scrutiny, of identities, and of expectations not their own. She acknowledges that womanhood comes with an ancient list of rules, each rule with its own special punishment for noncompliance. How much of a woman's life is spent fending off the social aggressions directed at them by cultural ideas about what they should look like and what they should do with their own bodies? Solorio's pieces *Perpetual Cycle*, *Digression*, and *Mother Nature* examine these aggressions through the use of her symbolic language of domination and submission, desire and revulsion. With

tiny, smooth bronze babies suckling and dominating life sized bronze breasts and babies eating and being eaten by the mother, Solorio's visual lexicon makes the uncomfortable queries about motherhood and intimacy explicit.

To open one's heart, to dialog with deep, inner fears, to know that you hold a power that is at once terrifying and universally mesmerizing is not for the faint of heart. Jackelin Solorio's work shoulders the burden of that power; exposing it, examining it, swaddling it, and using it wisely.



artist bio:

jackelin solorio

Jackelin Solorio is a Bay Area Latinx artist whose artwork is interdisciplinary. She received her B.F.A. in Sculpture from San Francisco State University in 2018 and her M.F.A. in Spatial Arts from San José State University in 2022. Solorio's artworks are conceptually driven; her inspirations come from her feelings while attempting to communicate her experiences. She has identified her aesthetics with her culture, naturally creating recognizable Mexican traits. Solorio grew up with a religious family in her early childhood, which has

left her grappling with personal issues, religion, women's bodies, and culture as recurring topics in her art. She also grew up with a very independent, hard-working mother in a single-parent household, and this has shaped her feminist ideals. Her work tackles ideas of strength, fragility, self-esteem, and sexuality. She strives to push herself to create while exploring her evolutionary journey.



author bio:

laamsha young

Laamsha received her B.F.A. in painting from Sonoma State University and her MILS from San Jose State University. She is currently enrolled in the Pictorial M.F.A. program at San José State. She has exhibited her work all over California and in Japan.



tyler stannard

by laamsha young

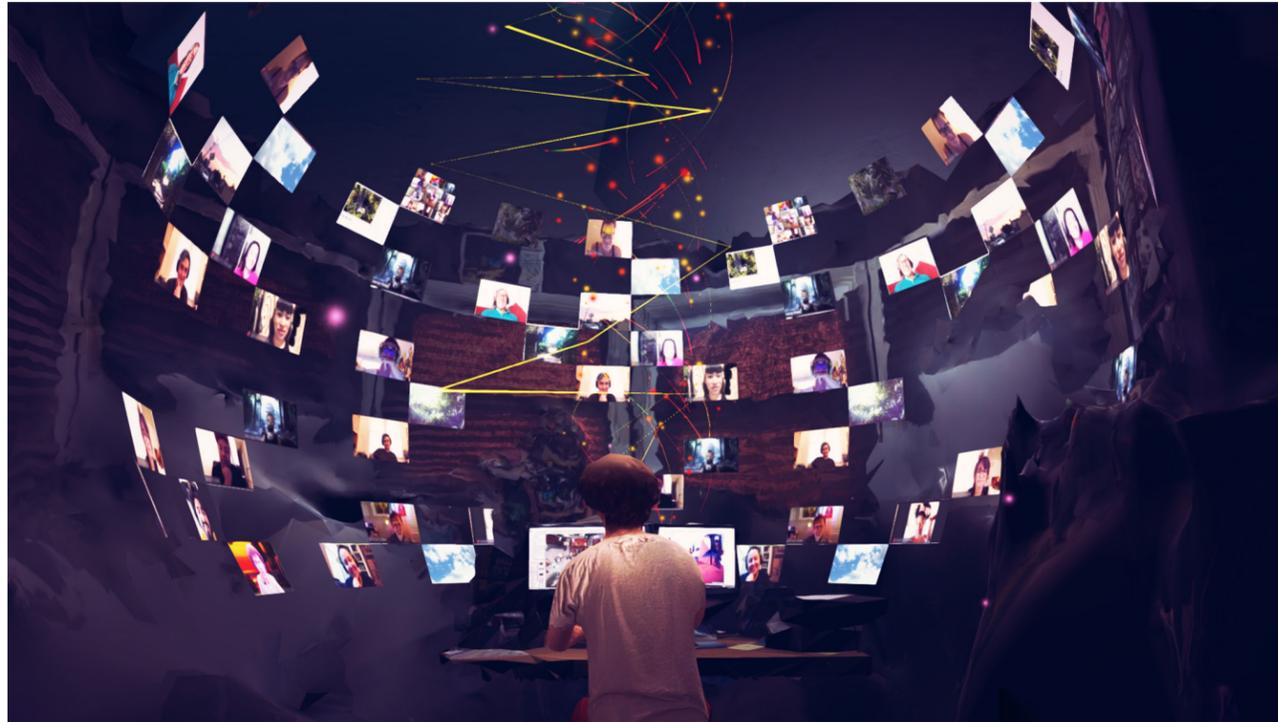
INNER//REALITY, 2020
Virtual Experience, Unity 3D



Tyler Stannard's piece *INNER//REALITY* is an interactive and fully explorable self-portrait that was originally created as a response to the Covid-19 lockdowns. He explains how it changed as he worked: "... my own virtual self-began to permeate through the work. To act as a literal guide for the viewer and for myself to become a part of the work itself. A lot of my previous work relies on Tyler (me) to guide viewers through the experience (it's a habit of mine) rather than to experience the work [alone]."

INNER//REALITY invites you to witness Tyler's avatar as he labors in his work space:

a virtual copy of his real life *mise-en-scène*. The work offers you a choice: "Take a Walk" or go "Back to Reality." (Do you take the red-pill or the blue-pill?) Choosing "Back to Reality" ends the experience in a desk-bound Kafka-esque scenario of never-ending toil. If, however, you choose "Take a Walk," you are offered the freedom and opportunity to traverse this metaverse on your own terms, uncovering hidden narratives that tie the work together as a whole. Tyler wants you to know that the choice you make ultimately determines both your corporeal and your virtual encounters.



Take a Walk, and you will follow Tyler into his daydream world of virtual landscapes: walking beside him through undulating hills rich with foliage, passing under glowing clouds and pausing at the edge of unexpected caverns from which unnatural shape-like phenomena emanate. He is there with you, but he is unaware of your presence. You are being guided by Tyler's avatar, who is mimicking Stannard, trapped by the demands of his tasks in one iteration and lost in the navigation of his own inner dream world in another. He is simultaneously remembering and creating, and he offers up glimpses of his world for you to add to your own memories. The layered virtuality of this experience is the vehicle for all moments to culminate in a shared creation of daydreams and personal impressions.

Stannard's self-portrait, *INNER//REALITY*, juxtaposes the object that exists (Tyler himself, the material world, the computer) with the object that is created (Tyler's avatar, the virtual computer, and its metaverse). The dialectic contains layers

in which the 'as-it-is-made' coincides with the immersive 'what-it-is-to-experience,' creating a thought-provoking dialogue between reality and virtuality. Stannard's self-portrait examines the dissonance between the rigorous methods and mechanisms of virtual creation and the feeling of emancipation offered by the free navigation of that creation as an inhabitant. *INNER//REALITY* is a metaverse in which all of the mechanisms of its creation exist at the same moment. It is a hall of mirrors within a hall of mirrors; a simulation within a simulation.

The philosophical space of 'being' is an ephemeral concept that encompasses both virtual and corporeal experience. Where does the aggregate of a person's experience, memory, and daily maintenance reside if not in the empirical, the land-bound, the terra firma of which we are made? Tyler's virtual landscapes invite you to consider the maker and the made; your experience of both his inner world and the physical making of that world, IRL.





author bio:

laamsha young

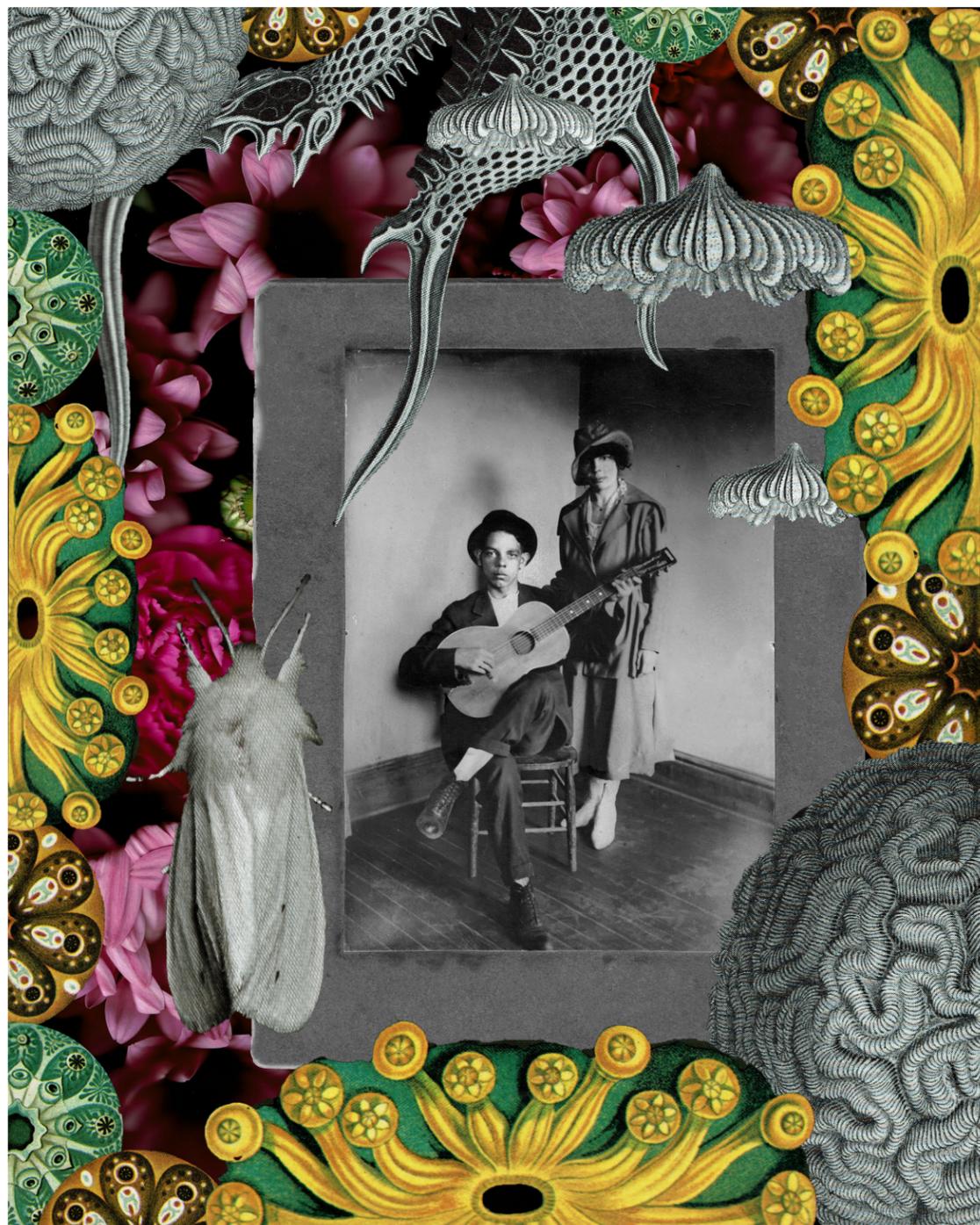
Laamsha received her BFA in painting from Sonoma State University and her MILS from San Jose State University. She is currently enrolled in the Pictorial MFA program at San José State. She has exhibited her work all over California and in Japan.

artist bio:

tyler stannard

Tyler Stannard is a digital media artist who investigates the way we observe, interact, and navigate between our multiple realities. He collaborates with the real and virtual to generate new worlds, avatar experiences, and stimulation through means of technoexpression. His focus is the transportation of one's agency and perception within the virtual realm, examining the transformative process of embodiment and observation.

He has exhibited artwork across the Bay Area and the World Wide Web. Stannard earned his Bachelor in Fine Arts in Digital Media Art from San José State University in 2017 and is currently pursuing his Masters at San José State University while teaching.



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ashley ann vaughan

by brooke finsiter

Vaughan's practice and life have intertwined into a thesis on the Indigenous past for use in the spiritual present. Often lopped together as a collective people, her work uncovers the personal and uniqueness of her Indigenous identity, lost to the gaps of archives and Western influence and eroded through loss of land connectivity. A 35mm black and white film visual artist focusing on generational and matrilineal connections that center on family, ritual, and dark dreamscapes with modern constructed systems in mind. This post-colonial approach to race, class, and family creates critical thought around conformity, mental health, space-making, and systematic

change. The migratory journeys of Indigenous histories complicate Vaughan's understanding of history and personhood.

A byproduct of this fragmented past is her work's spiritual and ephemeral connection through still and moving images. The digital collage of worlds builds an understanding of how displacement has played a role in society both ecologically and generationally. This imagined present, composed of past moments in time, is vital when considering concepts such as Saidiya Hartman's practice of critical fabulations in diasporic scholarship. By bringing suppressed voices to the forefront, the viewer confronts

1. *My Grandmother's Uncle Jerry and his Wife*, 2022.

Archival Print Scan, Inkjet Print, & Collage on Board. 36 x 24 in

2. *My Grandmother's Father Grandpa Ash School Photograph*, 2022.

Archival Print Scan, Inkjet Print, & Collage on Board. 24 x 36 in

1



1. *My Grandmother's Uncles. Uncle Louie (left) his son Gordon & Uncle Jerry (right)*, 2022
 Medium Format Negative Archival Scan, Inkjet Print, & Collage on Board. 24 x 36 in
 2. *My Grandmother's Grandfather Cricencio Carrion*, 2022
 Archival Print Scan, Inkjet Print, & Collage on Board. 36 x 24 in

the spectator with the attempts to generate a complex narrative that is still alive.

The reclamation of Indigenous history actively uncovers and presents a complete history through discovery. *The Mission Project 2022* is illegible photos and collages. The piece's sounds mimic the anxiety of searching through archives for non-white records, leading to gaps, ghosts, and the haunting feeling that there is never a complete picture or place in the world. Stepping into digital formats is an act of preservation of this journey. What is unearthed are more audible and disjuncting questions and shifting images to be sorted, categorized, and reflected on from time to time. Our roots and connections to each other are natural and built in an ecosystem that clashes with the neoclassicist and often capitalist gaze.

Part of the process of uncovering and decentering non-white voices and bodies is moving through a cycle of regeneration

and a continuation of time and thought that is not linear. The old archives resurrect into new meanings and signifiers of a present that creates a vulnerable feeling of loss needed for healing.

Identity as a tool, medium, and inspiration: there is a moment of mourning for the answers that may remain hidden. The courageous act of moving through grief is a necessary scholarship in both academia and visual culture. The work is a perspective of the past that would have otherwise been omitted from the complex understanding of being a child of a matrilineal lineage of strong women.

Suspended in time, moment, and memory, our past is very much alive in our present day. This work, presented as archival, is a moment of reflection into the psyche of one artist, moving through a feeling and theory of how we can live with our ancestors in the practice of voicing their presence in our life.



2



1. *My Grandmother's Grandmother; Epifania, my Grandmother's Mother Ruth (right) and her baby sister Ramona (left)*, 2022. Archival Tintype Scan, Inkjet Print, & Collage on Board. 24 x 36 in

2. *My Grandmother's Mother Ruth (left) and her sister Marina*, 2022. Archival Print Scan, Inkjet Print, & Collage on Board. 24 x 36 in

author bio:

brooke finsiter

Brooke Finsiter is a first year Masters' candidate at Columbia University of the City of New York within the MODA: Modern Art Critical and Curatorial Studies program. Her Bachelor's in Art History and Visual Culture with a minor in journalism was completed at San José State University in 2020. Her academic work includes publishing an undergraduate manuscript as a McNair Scholar at San José State in 2020. This paper looked to the legacies of Black Arts organizations and their role in carving out a space in Western Art

culture for Black artists in communities that favored a white bias in the art market, which led to the Black Arts Movement and protests. As for industry experience, Brooke has worked in multiple galleries and museums in visitor services, art handling, education, coding, facilities, and public programming in San José, California. Her current research looks at The Black Atlantic, Black Feminism, and sculpture.

artist bio:

ashley ann vaughan

Vaughan's practice is a mixed approach to articulation: a diverse contact of intention and subject, using the photo as a symbolic means of communication. Her practice centers around time and its connection to place, ritual, and matrilineal descent. She creates with generational connection in mind and is inspired by her ties to those women who came before her.

Exploring topics of familial post-colonial identity, belonging, and personhood in relation to place, Ashley is interested in

the contemporary constructions of race, class, and gender in the United States in connection to class politics and social conformity in production and outcome. She informs her practice from both historical and contemporary critical thought and hopes to produce new and innovative complex interpretation through image production and making. She looks forward to continuing this path of education and professorship to support her own creative growth and inspire systematic change.





natalia vikhreva

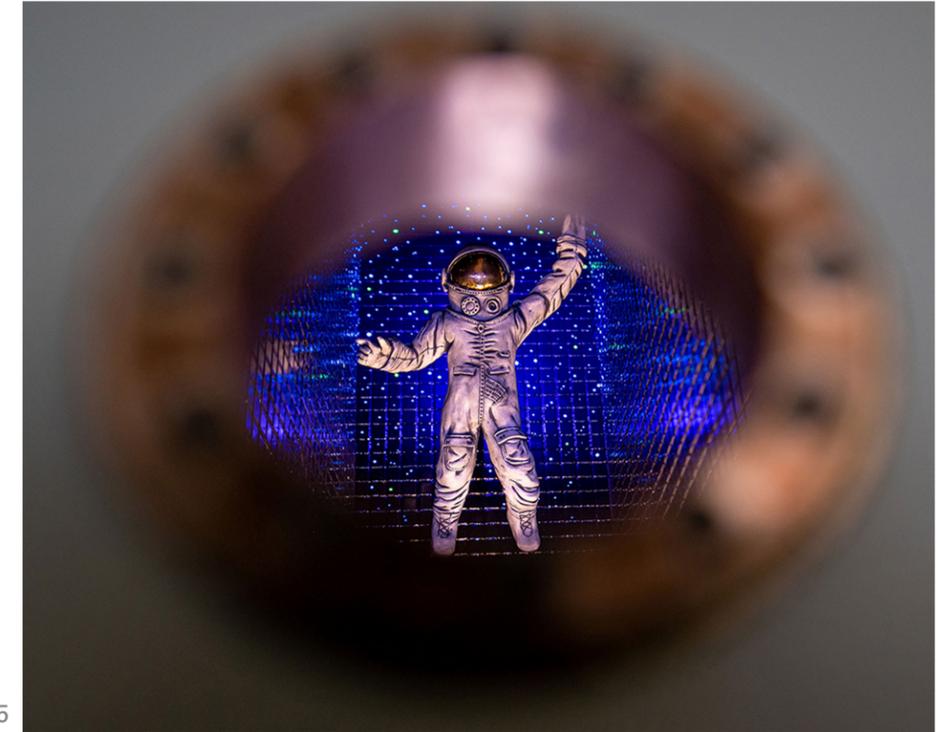
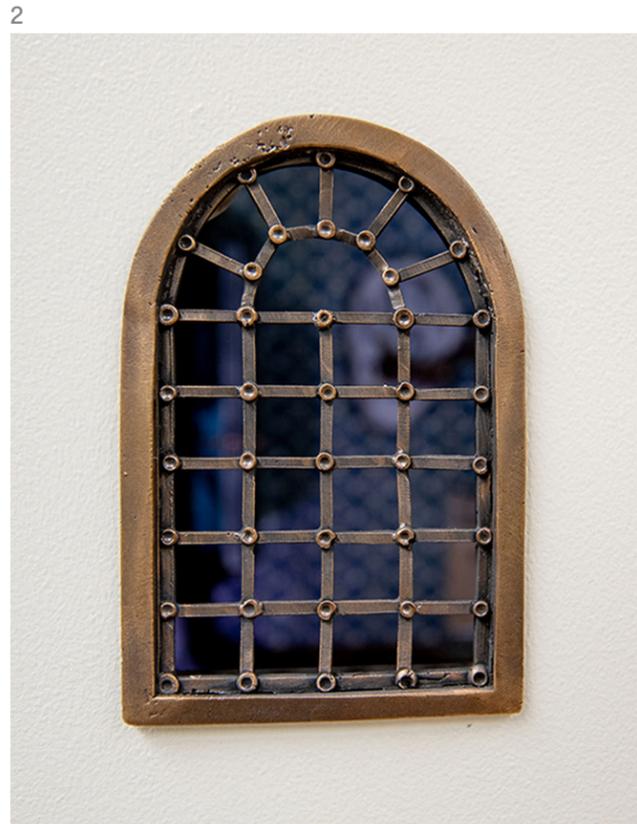
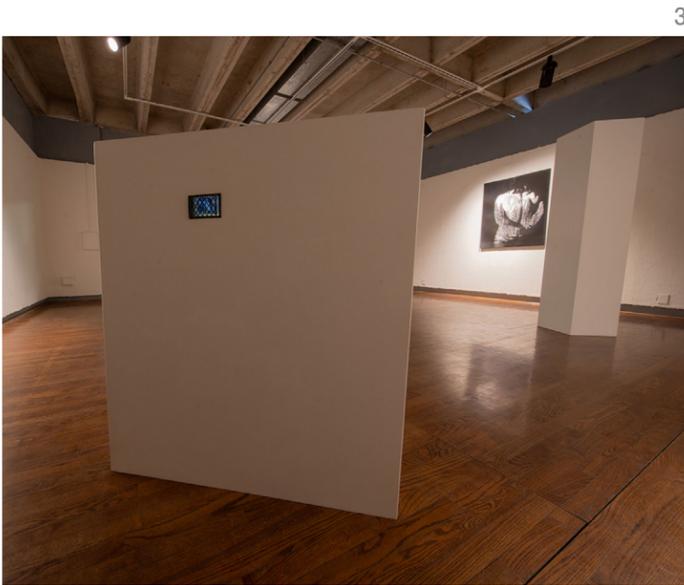
by olga zaikina-kondur



1. PEDESTAL 2, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze, LEDs,
mixed media External Pedestal: 41H x 37W
x 25D, Internal Diorama: 15H x 22W x 15D
2. PEDESTAL 1, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze, LEDs,
mixed media External Pedestal: 82H x 15W x
15D, Internal Diorama: 13H x 13W x 13D

Pedestals by Natalia Vikhрева is a series of three white large geometric boxes—either free-standing or wall-mounted. Upon entering an exhibition space, viewers can bypass them, mistaking them for either actual pedestals without displayed artworks on them or as trivial minimalist sculptures. Only a curious viewer willing to give the boring a chance to surprise them will notice a tiny window hidden on the back or on the side of each box, and this find will be rewarding. The miniature worlds hidden behind those windows are as contrasting to the simple and uneventful geometry of cubes as can be. Each room is a surreal

dream-like space occupied by incongruous characters and whimsical, somewhat uncanny, constructions of body parts and furniture elements. A fanciful miniature world observed through a secret aperture brings up the nostalgia of children's sense of magic. In visual arts, the act of peeking has been employed as a strategy of exploring memories, fears, phantasies, and dreams. The genre of a lightbox or diorama is not new—it includes a variety of art forms from a popular innocent tradition of dollhouses to Marcel Duchamp's provocative *Étant donnés* and the Quay Brothers' eerie *Décors*. Yet, what makes Vikhрева's lightboxes stand out from



1. *PEDESTALS (gallery view)*, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze,
LEDs, mixed media.
Dimensions vary

3. *PEDESTAL 2*, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze,
LEDs, mixed media External
Pedestal: 41H x 37W x 25D, Internal
Diorama: 15H x 22W x 15D

2. *PEDESTAL 1*, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze,
LEDs, mixed media External
Pedestal: 82H x 15W x 15D, Internal
Diorama: 13H x 13W x 13D

4. *PEDESTAL 2*, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze,
LEDs, mixed media. External
Pedestal: 41H x 37W x 25D, Internal
Diorama: 15H x 22W x 15D

5. *PEDESTAL 3*, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze,
LEDs, mixed media External
Pedestal: 38H x 25W x 9D, Internal
Diorama: 30H x 23W x 8D

previous examples is precisely the large white monoliths inside of which these small rooms are contained.

Minimalism emerged as an attempt to make art as non-involved and objective as possible. The austere geometry shielded Minimalist objects from the viewer's emotional or intuitive perception, instead directing the viewer's attention to their phenomenological experience of the environment. Minimalism encouraged the viewer's bodily awareness in a specific space organized by simple geometric forms. The different sizes and shapes of Pedestals evoke the viewer's anthropology: the largest column, *Pedestal 1*, responds to the viewer as an upright free-standing human being. So does the cabinet-like vertically oriented box, *Pedestal 3*, wall-mounted at the height of the viewer's head. It stimulates the environmental associations of our body, just like the shorter block on the floor, *Pedestal 2*, which invites the viewer to lean against or sit on it. Upon noticing the windows, however, the mode of bodily self-awareness switches to the regime of visibility, engaging the viewer

at the level of imagination, the irrational play of the unconscious. On the one hand, the inconspicuous peepholes continue the Post-Minimalist tradition of challenging Minimalism's claim for the neutrality of art, indicating instead the latter's secrets. The jarring contrast between the two artistic traditions of Minimalism and Surrealism, brought together in Pedestals, is what enlivens both. On the other hand, the containment of psychopathic Surrealist domains within the perfectly neutral façades of Minimalist sculptures reveals a potential for our own ways of dealing with skeletons in the closet—that is, by embracing them. Vikhreva renders such a camouflage not as suppression, but as an amusing play of hiding, seeking, discovering, inspecting, and hiding again, at no cost to the perfectly calm and rational self-aware human presence in the world.

artist bio:

natalia vikhreva

Natalia Vikhreva is a spatial artist best known for her “secret” dioramas—miniature interior rooms hidden inside large geometric volumes, or, as she calls them, pedestals. The dioramas are seen through small window cut at awkward heights in pedestals’ sides. The minimalism of massive geometric white volumes and vibrant surrealist contents of hyperdetailed interiors creates positive tension in Vikhreva’s work, while hidden messages within the miniatures reveal

light-hearted, mischievous inclinations. Vikhreva uses painted MDF panels to fabricate the pedestals, while embellishing the interiors with tiny sculptures made from porcelain, cast bronze, wood, and more. As an emerging artist, Vikhreva sees potential in the world of sculptural miniatures and continues to explore countless possibilities presented by the genre.

author bio:

olga zaikina-kondur, ph.d.

Olga Zaikina-Kondur holds her Ph.D. in Art History from Pennsylvania State University. Her scholarly interests include Moscow Conceptualism, Soviet visual and material culture, and post-WWII International art. She is currently working on a monograph in which she examines the role of domestic space in the late Soviet underground art. Olga’s work has been published in the University of Toronto Art

Journal, AA Files, Hypperallergic blogazine, and elsewhere. Her curatorial experience includes conceptual art exhibitions and performative art reenactments.

1. PEDESTAL 1, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze, LEDs, mixed media. External Pedestal: 82H x 15W x 15D, Internal Diorama: 13H x 13W x 13D

2. PEDESTAL 3, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze, LEDs, mixed media
External Pedestal: 38H x 25W x 9D, Internal Diorama: 30H x 23W x 8D

3. PEDESTAL 2, 2020
MDF, plywood, porcelain, bronze, LEDs, mixed media
External Pedestal: 41H x 37W x 25D, Internal Diorama: 15H x 22W x 15D



Artist Statements

Kelcey Bauer

What comes to mind when you think of nature? The viewpoint of nature that I had growing up was simply of the woods that grew behind my house. This place with statuesque trees so tall that when you looked up, you felt the excited, dizzying effects of the breath of the trees. I started to expand what nature was to me, not just the woods in my backyard, but the foliage that lined the streets in a city or the house plants my mom keeps. I started to explore this fascination with the natural world through my art in the form of images.

In the exhibition of *The Land Within*, I share my relation to nature. The connection I see between the body and the land. Overlaying images and videos of the outside world onto the body allows for the artwork to start blending in places as the imagery begins to take a breath with the viewer: hair flowing down the back like leaves hanging from a tree, or the strong cuts of a mountain showing in the valleys and curves of a body. This likeness between us, the body, and the natural world is not just a likeness but a connection. This connection continues to expand through technology, which surrounds and engulfs us, like the natural world that forms around us.

Heather Brown

As an artist, I use my practice as a form of meditation to cut through the layers of self-judgment and existential dread. Though my background is in film photography, the camera for me is by no means an exclusive vessel of creativity. In fact, I am often quite bored by photography alone. Rather than adhering to a single technique, medium, or theme, I traverse across many new realms of production and thought. These mediums include experimental filmmaking, metalworking, mold making, fiber art, wearable sculpture, and analog-digital hybrid photographic processes. My artistic goal is to push photography to new boundaries, to truly test the limits of these post-industrial image capturing machines. Instead of viewing photography as the end point, I see it as the beginning of an unusual journey.

Jennifer J. Cannon

My artwork has always centered around the theme of control. As the youngest of seven, I realized that I couldn't control much of the world around

me but have always striven to do so regardless. I believe that much of what people are fighting for is simply a livable wage, equity, and the ability to pursue happiness. As individuals, we are only small pieces of a much larger system, so we need to work together to make significant change. My work portrays this theme in a variety of ways such as a surfer riding a giant wave or small mechanized units attempting to control a larger flowing form. Recently, I have depicted the alienation many of us feel as we struggle with the current pandemic, lack of social interaction, and food insecurity. As we begin to close out the first quarter of the twenty-first century, we are in a state of great societal turbulence, uncertainty, and reckoning. As an artist, I hope to help elucidate these events, capture moments for posterity, and bring people together by incorporating personal experiences that have universal meaning.

John Joseph Contreras Romero

War, trauma, childhood innocence (lost), and culture—no one can genuinely escape these moments in their lifetime. Yet, if we do pretend to, we suffer from cognitive dissonance and disassociation of ourselves and the life of others around us. Through my exploration of sculpting, I find memories that shed more light on these lost conversations. These dialogues of violence, power, the breaking out of place or position, and access are means for connecting, healing, and moving forward to understand humanity.

Oscar Lopez Guerrero

The Mexican revolution is a significant event in the Americas. I feel attached to it not just due to my great grandmother's participation but also because some of the echoes this war made are still heard now.

Some of the same issues that the revolutionaries in Mexico experienced, immigrants are experiencing 110 years later. Inequality, exploitation, and discrimination are recurrent elements of the daily life of many immigrants like myself in America, on top of the daily battle of acculturation and assimilation.

Recovering and listening to the echoes of the ones that have been invisible is an essential part of this body of work to honor, learn, and give them a place in contemporary times by digging

physically and metaphorically through the artwork processes and the history of social, economic, and geopolitical affected minorities.

Recovering images from public and digital archives, most of them in the hands of American collectors, is the base to create new compositions that never existed yet are sharing the emotions and feelings of people that were ignored and forgotten.

Peter Moen

The last few years have been a rollercoaster of fear, trepidation, and horror, but there have been hopeful signs among the dark clouds. I am horrified by the COVID-19 pandemic, political events, and the turmoil that has happened around them. I really want to express that in my art: my emotional reaction is a big part of my art practice. I like to use my skills as a portrait painter to make comments on current events by using partially abstract or non-objective oil paintings that include natural or abstract portraits. I use oil paint on wood panels, canvas, or other substrates like single-use plastic. My art practice is rooted in growing up in the 60s and 70s when people were focused on protests and fixing the world's problems.

Felix Quintana

My work is an intrinsic process of developing photography, digital media, and collage as a tool for social change, honoring the right to affirm hybrid identities, experiences, and cultural layers. Through image-reclaiming, my work embodies a lived experience of movement, place and displacement, memory and amnesia, struggle and conflict, justice and poetics. As a Salvadoran artist, photographer, and educator, I facilitate truth-making and am guided by radical praxis and pedagogy. I intentionally express for BIPOC youth to live beyond institutional molds and actively engage in both actual and digital worlds.

My thesis work is dedicated to the students who have been left with their hands raised and still thrive in the trenches of the institution. My work is a call to reclaim space and place and fight for autonomy, ownership, and representation. Through my graffiti, artifacts, and imagery, I work to inspire BIPOC youth toward forward movement

and action so that the next generation may climb higher ladders. *para los lil homies* and *South Bay Blueprints* are both an homage to Black and brown youth, communities in resistance, and the joy felt from Los Angeles to San José—proof of empathy, being, and healing.

Jackelin Solorio

My work is a reflection on the power and repression of societal expectations of women's bodies. In researching the evolution of women's rights in the context of their bodies, I have found that there is a vast spectrum of what these bodies represent. There are often two or more perspectives that make women's topics intersectional. In creating these sculptures, I have visualized what makes the female body mystical, while also hinting at how this mysticism also oppresses them. This work explores the beauty and pain in attempting to make personal choices regarding my role as a woman and as a non-mother while navigating societal pressures and varying opinions of what it means to be a woman.

Tyler Stannard

My praxis lies at the intersection of the real and the virtual while exploring the ways we navigate, embody, perceive, and experience multiple realities. The goal behind my artwork is to stimulate our senses through the interaction with technology to provoke a dialogue between reality and virtuality. I perform an intricate dance between software interfaces, coding environments, and physical systems to construct virtual worlds. My work has promoted and critiqued the current status quo of virtuality, be it through virtual reality, web browsers, or mixed reality through augmentation.

Stimulation through interaction with the virtual in turn generates an immersive state where one's sense of agency transfers into the virtual environment. Theory, research, and my own experiences with simulation, video games, virtual and real environments inspire me throughout my practice. The virtual acts as a vessel to connect others with my art and communicates my ideas and concepts within the work itself. My art becomes a catalyst for novice and experienced

virtual visitors to inhabit new realities and through interaction spawns the creation of new real memories through simulation.

Ashley Ann Vaughan

The industrial revolution would see our family leave Raton (New Mexico) in 1943. Las Doradas made in homage to my family's legacy. A part of familial rituals of honoring our dead, of honoring those who came before and paved the way for us. In thankful reverence for our connections.

Our oldest familial images, here wreathed in vintage scientific drawings of ocean creatures. Calling to our presence in time, and arrival at the sea (Santa Cruz, California) in the 1940's. Using these scientific anatomical drawings to subvert inaccurate salvage ethnography practices made in our country at the turn of the twentieth century. Bringing forward the personal photographs of my own indigenous familial ties. To honor our Diné (Jicarilla Apache) roots and those who my grandmother held so dear.

My ancestors dreamed me into being, something always understood where family is concerned. Depictions of sea life, positioned in reference to each other to evoke thoughts of generational connection. Creatures showcasing our unique descent and constant belonging to the outskirts of structural normality. The moths serve as symbols of the cyclical, death, and rebirth in familiar solidarity. To illuminate our finite connection to the whole of complex American histories of occupied land.

Natalia Vikhreva

I build miniature dioramas hidden inside large box-like encasements. PEDESTAL 3 is a wall-mounted pedestal. Like the rest of the pieces in a series, it offers the viewer two very distinct visual experiences: that of a bystander and that of an active participant.

The bystander is presented with a view of plain white box: its unexpected proportions and awkward positioning on a wall intrigue, but its plain appearance instills a feeling of completeness and does not warrant further interrogation. To the active participant, however, this wall pedestal presents a unique world of discovery and wonder. Through a small porthole that could be found on its side, one gains visual access to the heart of the pedestal—a miniature diorama—depicting a dream-like vision: an astronaut floating amongst the stars above a hoof-footed tub in a narrow, black, tiled room.

The exterior pedestal and its interior are locked in a never-ending dialogue of contrasts: big and small, colorless and vibrantly colorful, black and white, minimalist and hyperdetailed. This juxtaposition and colliding of the external and internal realms create unresolved yet playful tension within PEDESTAL 3, as well as the rest of the works from that series.

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