



*STAY BACK I'M LONELY!*

2021 Junior Exhibition — Des Lee Gallery





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SAM FOX SCHOOL OF DESIGN  
& VISUAL ARTS

2021 BFA in Studio Art Junior Exhibition at Des Lee Gallery  
First edition

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This publication was designed by Grace Bristow, Shaelee Comettant, Sage Dawson,  
Nina Huang, Kay Ingulli, and Becca Tarter

This book has been composed in Futura

Cover Image: detail of *Fleeting and Soon Lost* by Becca Tarter

Founded in 1879 as the first professional, university-affiliated art school in the United States, the College of Art at Washington University's Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts offers rigorous graduate and undergraduate programs in art and design while drawing from the resources of a top-tier research institution. The undergraduate curriculum offers in-depth education in a wide range of areas—animation, book arts, comics, design for social practice, fashion design, foundry and metalsmithing, graphic design, hybrid and experimental media, illustration, interaction design, installation art, narrative design, painting, photography, printmaking, sculpture, textile design, typography, video and time arts, and visual reportage.

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 Washington University in St. Louis

# *Stay Back I'm Lonely!*

2021 BFA in Studio Art Junior Exhibition  
Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts  
Washington University in St. Louis

April 2, 2021 – April 10, 2021

## INTRODUCTION — ESSAY BY FACULTY

“Stay back I’m Lonely!” The words serve as a collective statement of tremulous defiance—urging us to keep our distance, while also inviting us to regard more closely their seclusion. This group of fifteen artists from Washington University is united by their shared solitude. Each is oriented and placed differently, all are present in and responsive to the tension implicit in the title of this exhibition.

Prepare to be surprised. After a year of making art under unenviable constraints, themes boldly emerge from this group. There is the body—a contested site, a hallowed territory—but also a billowy canvas of constructed identity, one that reveals secrets and raw truths. There is a magnified view of quotidian life, contrasted against an expansive view of the world, which shows us the enormous fragility of this moment. Works consider our immediate surroundings: an arcade, Heman Park, a scale model of isolation—much like the domestic space we shelter in day after day, week after week, and month after month. Binaries are rejected; the fluid and indeterminate are embraced. There are stories shared: of hermits, codebreakers, and imaginings of flamboyant congregations in the months to come. Time is an outlying theme and no one is immune to its immutable measure.

“Stay back I’m Lonely!” is woven together by the collective threads of curiosity about the world and an urgent need to respond to the moment in which we live. This group of artists have not averted their eyes or ears from the world around them. Stay back and expect to hear from this group—loud and clear—long into the future.

Sage Dawson and Jack Risley



Kale J. Day, *Homestead*, 2020, wood, tin, soil, and weather-radio, 20" x 30" x 50"

**STAY BACK I'M LONELY!**  
ESSAY BY NATALIE SNYDER



“Stay Back I’m Lonely!” is at once a command, rejection, exhortation, confession, and plea. We just recently reached half a million dead from the COVID-19 pandemic in America alone and still bear witness to a summer marked by wildfires, police violence, and wave after wave of grief. Though loneliness is one of the lesser evils that have plagued us, it permeates every day with relentless pressure. Lectures, critiques, conversation, therapy—everything we once knew within the physical world is processed through screens where we stare back at ourselves, stranded in an empty rectangle and surrounded by the detritus of our daily lives. “Stay Back I’m Lonely!,” laced with fear and puckish humor, implicates the viewer as an aggressor, one whose very presence both asserts and shatters its condition. It smacks of a paradox, but the contributing artists in this exhibition are well-versed in living with contradictions.

In *Come Poke My Play-Doh Pudge*, Logan Krohn mischievously subverts the image of the properly trimmed paper doll by reimagining himself as the subject. Front and back illustrations of the artist’s naked body are surrounded by pants, shoes, hoodies, and other accessories used to customize the figure. The entertaining faces he gives as options to place on his body set a lighthearted tone, but the humor evaporates quickly. By fragmenting his personhood into three expressions and a handful of garments, the complexity of the subject’s humanity is reduced to logos on fake fabric. Emphasizing the importance of clothing serves as a witty nod to the metaphorical closet, but it also summons a darker interpretation. As the combined viewer-handler, we have complete control of the artist’s paper body. If we want a limb gone, it only takes an easy tug to liberate it from the rest of the form. As the viewer selects and cuts out each desired piece from the sheet, they snip and reform the artist’s identity, clothing the subject while he is stripped of agency.

While Krohn’s self-portrait is objectified and commodified, Maia Cousins’ and Bo Schmit’s sculptures visualize the question of identity as an exchange of public viewership and private experience. Cousins’ *Through It Like Butter*, an unassuming white box neatly tied with clean white rope, explodes with raw emotion when unknotted. Rusty red and pink fabric spills from the inside, as vivid as a bloodstain, simultaneously conjuring impressions of movement and our own fleshy interiors. In comparison, Schmit’s sculpture is a quieter exploration. A red suitcase lies open on the floor as a string of quilt squares hangs vertically from a long pipe, each panel

framing folds indicative of genitalia. Apart from exposing what we usually, dutifully hide, the quilt squares and their display challenge the lines that we draw to define sex. In the same square, Schmit folds anatomy normally pitted against each other, reducing difference to its purely formal elements. Both of these works cast doubt on how we perceive those around us; they point to strangers and remind us that we are privy to only a slim slice of their identity.

Touching, packing, moving, undoing, altering—Krohn, Cousins, and Schmit's work all rely on change to construct meaning. Kaylyn Webster, however, relies on a fixed subject in her painting *Escape*. Captured in a runner's pose, the Black figure rushes against the confines of the frame, breaking the shackles that anchor her to something located outside of the work. There is no articulated space for the figure to exist in, forcing her to the extreme foreground and creating a strong feeling of claustrophobia. Paint streaks off the body, adding to the strong rightward movement and causes the borders of the figure to dissolve into the depthless, gray environment. What really completes the sinister mood, are the words painstakingly built up in paint surrounding the figure. Though Webster molds them with thick paint, their sharp angles give the illusion of being roughly carved into the image, narrowly missing the figure's body.

Like Webster, Alex Evets crafts a non-place in *The Impractical GPS* by merging memory with geography in a long, scroll-like map that emerges from a mysterious opaque box. The map itself is labelled only with vague gray outlines of roads and personal landmarks that range from sprawling chain stores to sites enmeshed in local cultural significance. Notes line the margins of the map, serving to dispense advice on how to best navigate these spaces and explaining the value of each nondescript business. But memory has its limits. Rather than freeing the viewer to explore, the map keeps us endlessly circulating the St. Louis suburbs, coasting from one shopping plaza to the next—casting restaurants like Hu Hot Mongolian Grill and Chipotle as assimilated stand-ins for the outside world.

*The Impractical GPS* and *Escape* can be read as closed circuits, explorations of living in a time where space and geography are alternatively critical and irrelevant. If Webster and Evets unravel space, Haejin An pokes fun at the ease with which we categorize the world around us in her video *Undisclosed Surfaces of Heavenly Bodies and Earth*. She takes our common perception of a moon— a pitted, gray circle surrounded by darkness— and challenges it by substituting different surfaces in its place. Not only does it force us to re-evaluate how well we know our moon, but as the images change from abstract textures to concrete forms, it distorts our sense of space to the point where we don't know if we're giants or ants compared to An's source material. It begs the question, are we ever really sure we know what we're looking at?

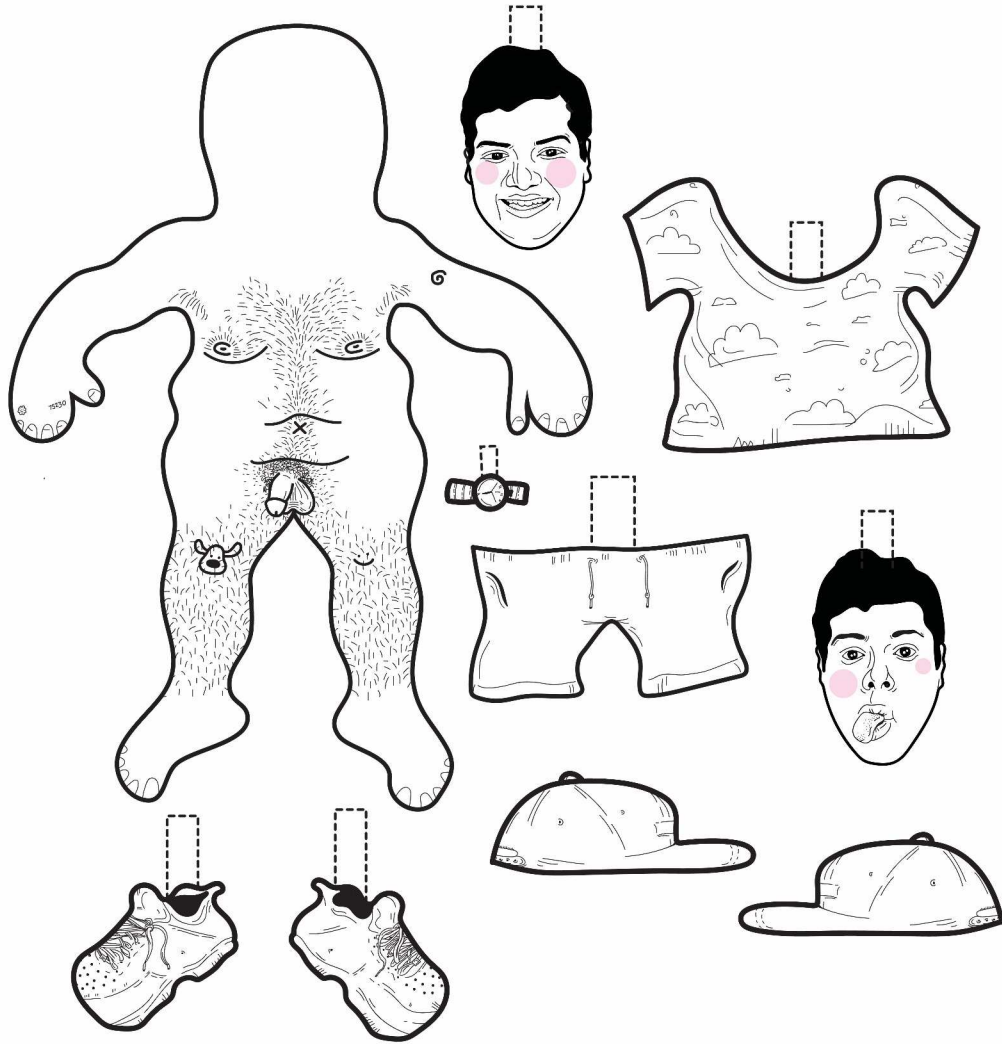
However untrustworthy our gaze is, we cannot help but look, and our continued looking leads to even more questions. Is Kale Day's *Homestead*, suspended on an island of soil, a sanctuary or snare? Does the subject of Connor Dolan's *200 Milliampères* invite us to come closer or flee for safety? When Becca Tarter's flock of birds in *Fleeting and Soon Lost* twist and float as a group, guided by the shared reason of one communal consciousness, do we want to shed our skin to join them? Denying the request of the exhibition is the only way to find out.

*Natalie Snyder is an amateur bookbinder, avid postcard collector, and student living in St. Louis. When she is not writing about art, she's probably making collages or reading someone else's diaries.*

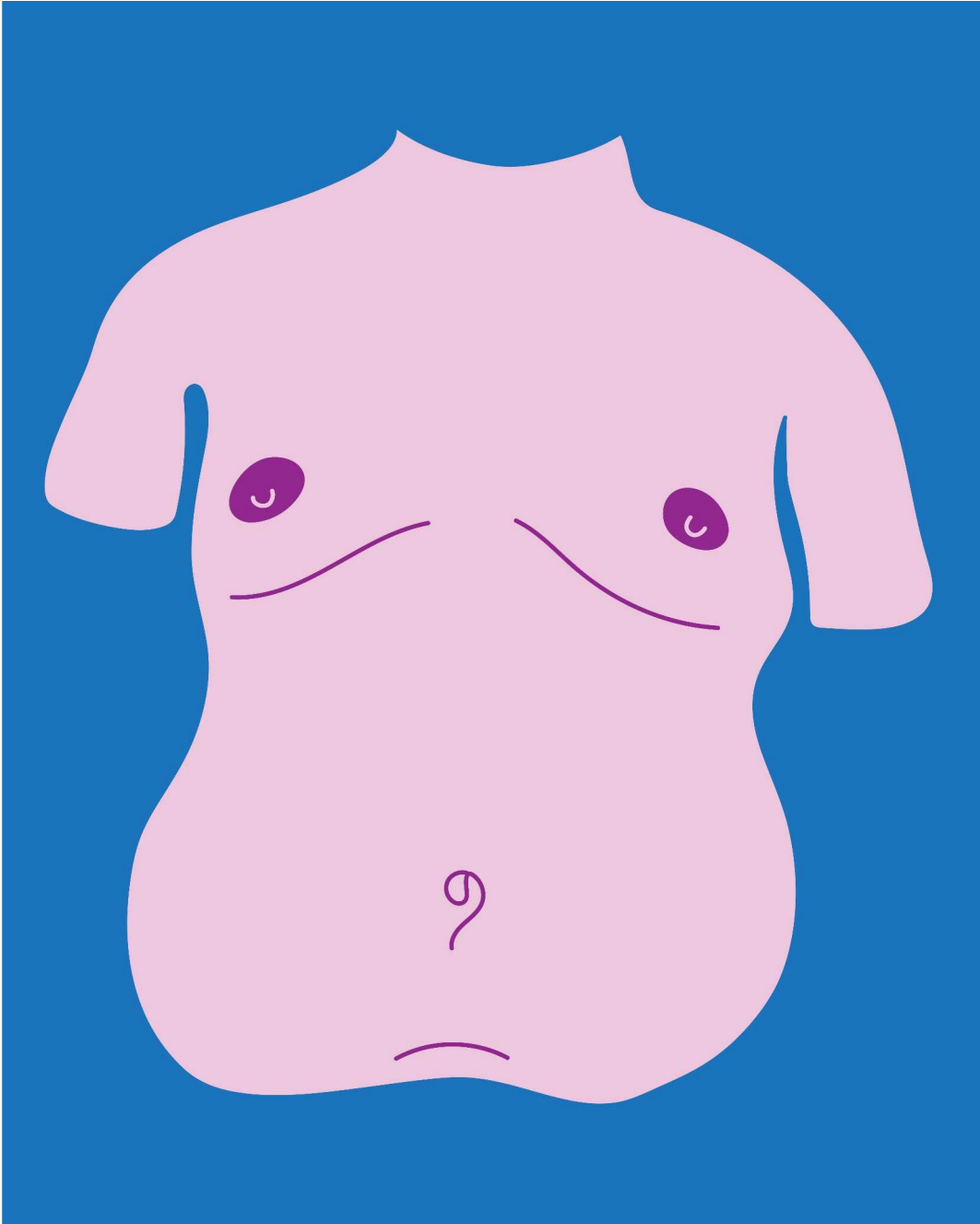


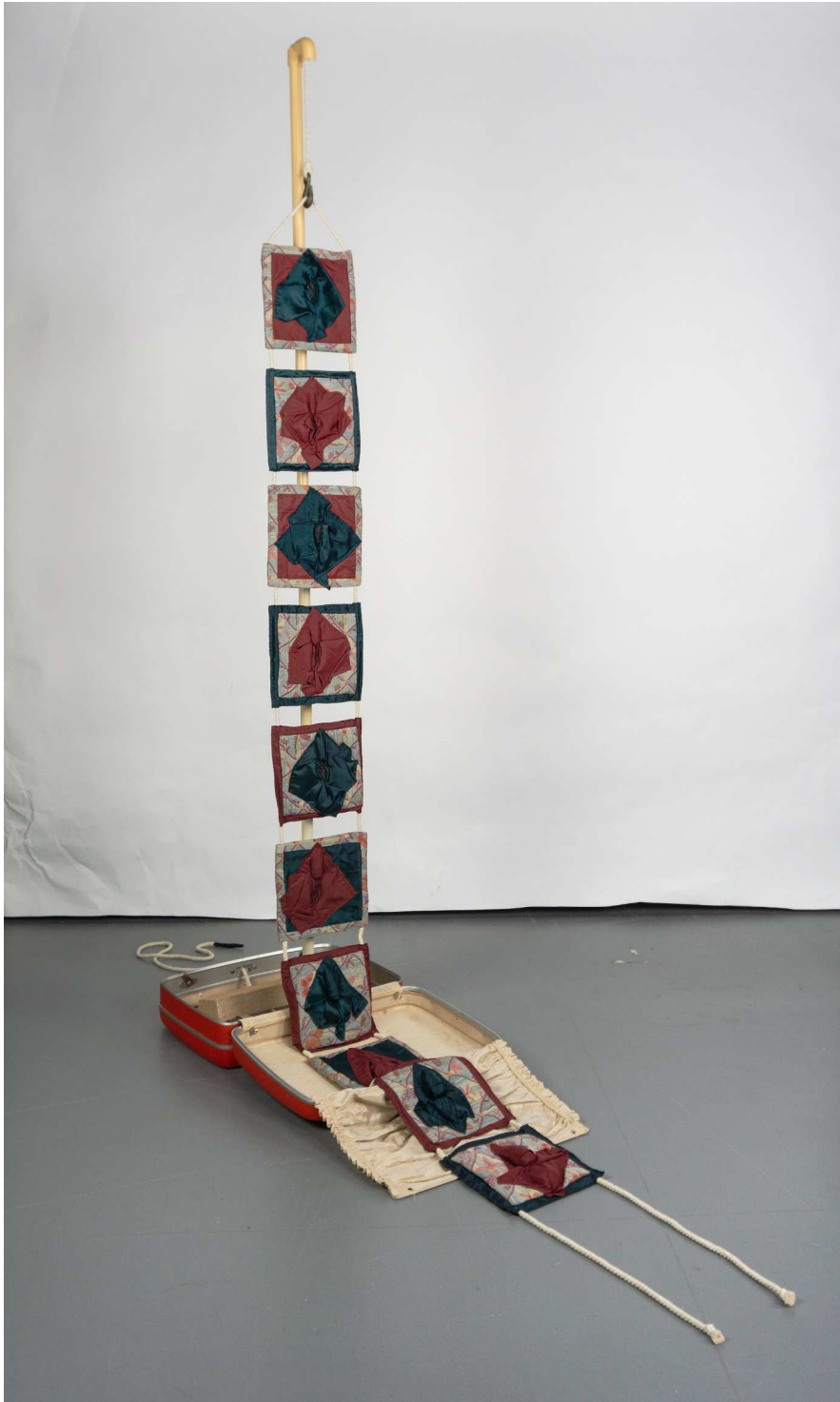
Alex Evets, *The Impractical GPS*, 2021, wood, medium density fiberboard, monotype and digital print, found object, and thread, 106" x 11.8" x 8.5"





Logan Krohn, *Come Poke My Play-Doh Pudge*, 2021, digitally printed wallpaper, Awagami Kozo paper, synthetic wood frames, iron powder, razor-fixed magnets, and paper dolls in cellophane bags, dimensions variable upon installation (each frame measures 16" x 20")







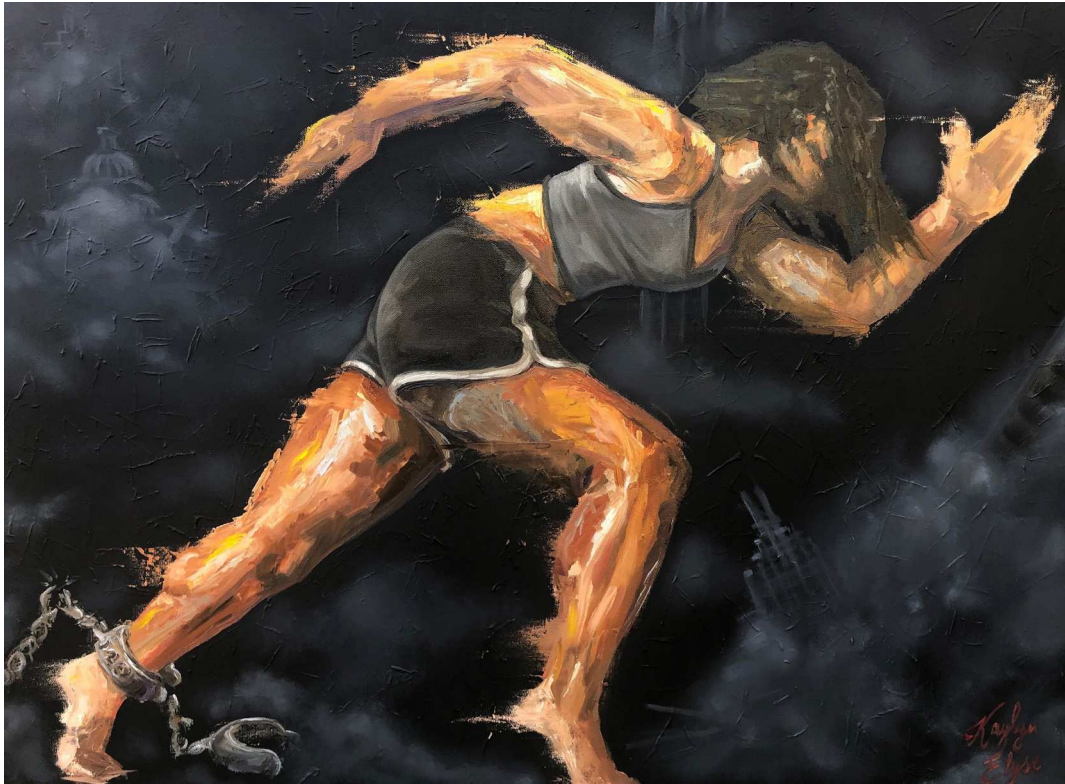


Bo Schmit, *Untitled*, 2021, suitcase, PVC, cotton rope, fabric, wood, brick, and metal hook, 90" x 20" x 84"



Nina Huang, *Entropy (Fallen Tresses)*, 2021, cyanotype on cotton sateen, dimensions variable (36 tiles, each cyanotype measures 6" x 6")



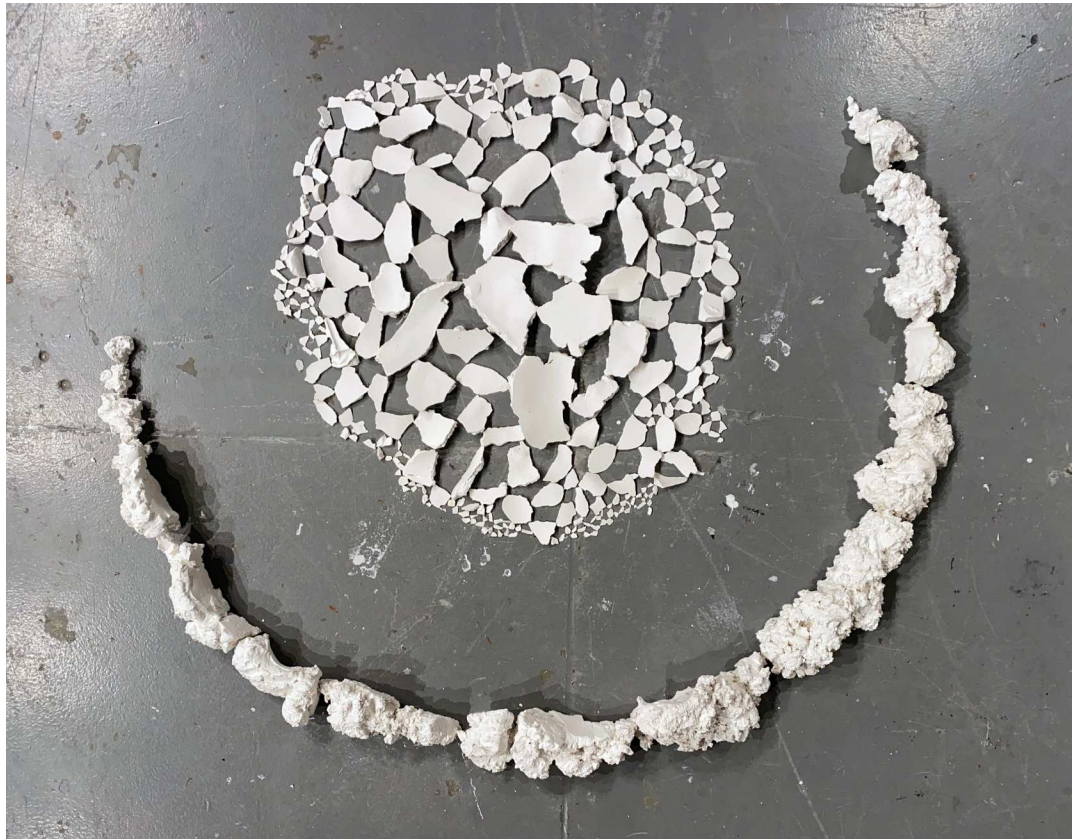


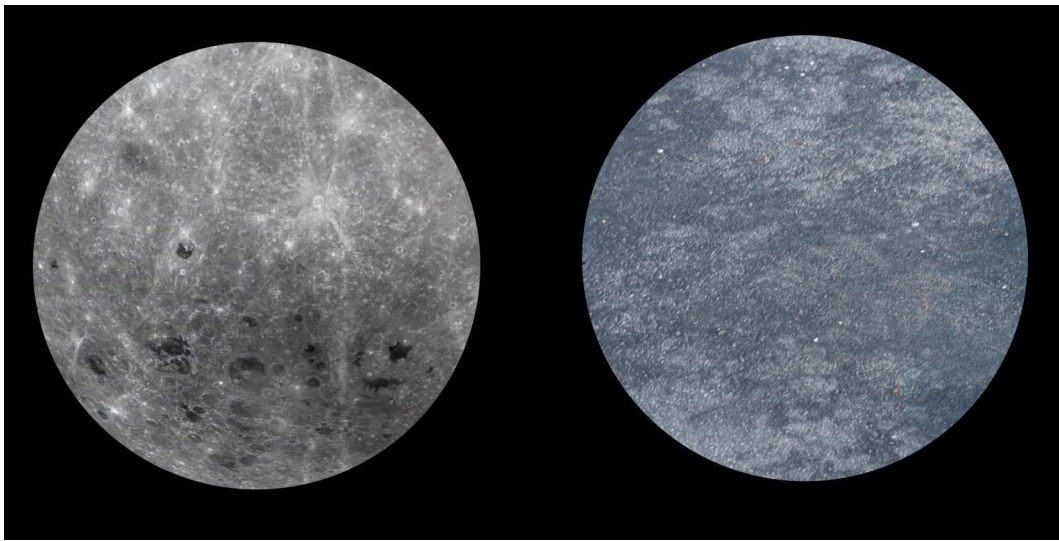
Kaylyn Webster, *Escape*, 2021, oil and acrylic on canvas, 30" x 40"





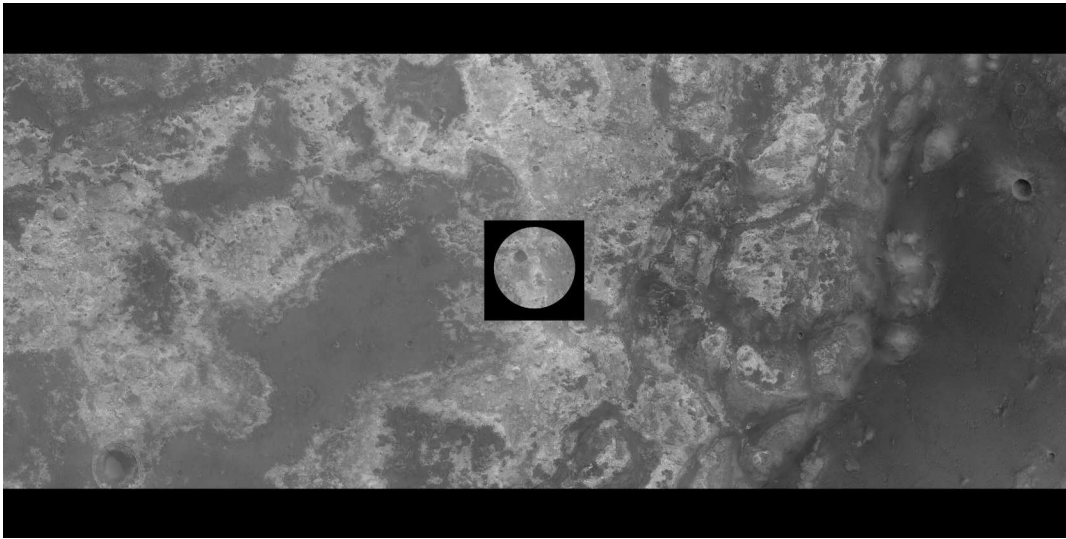
Grace Bristow, *Site (A Palm Reading)*, 2021, plaster and steel, 48" x 72" x 72"  
(dimensions variable upon installation)

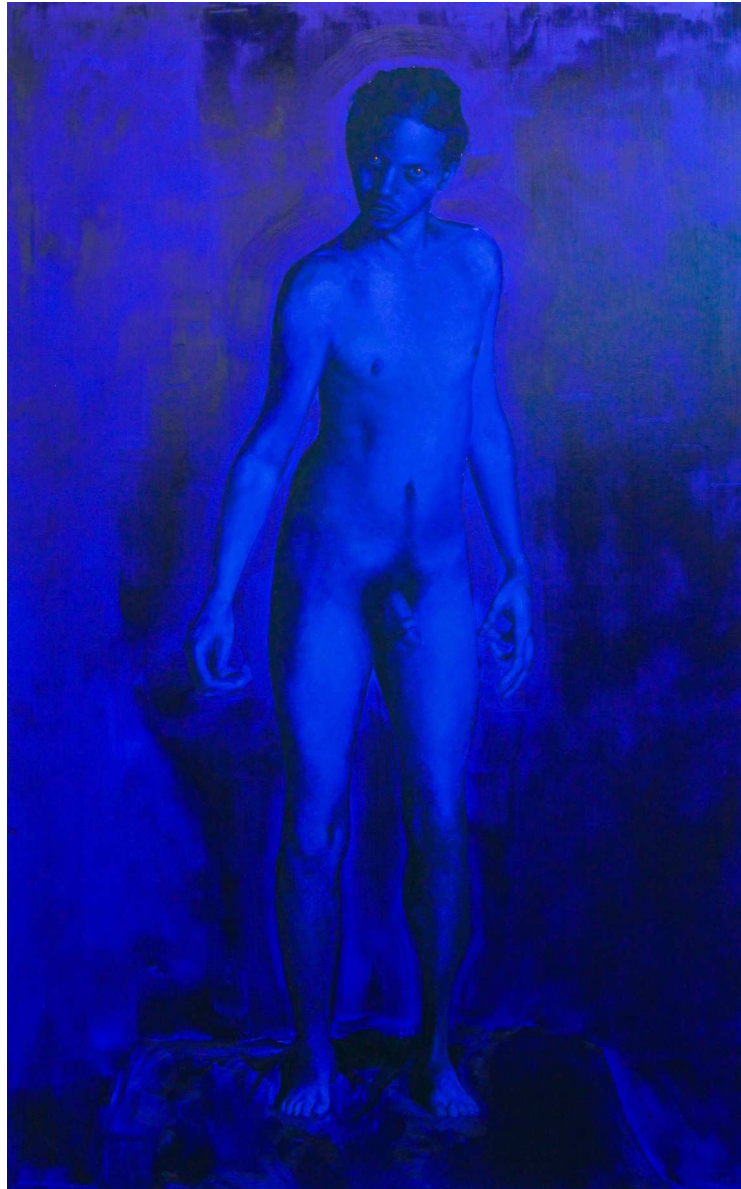




Haejin (Hezin) An, *Undisclosed Surfaces of Heavenly Bodies and Earth*, 2020, video



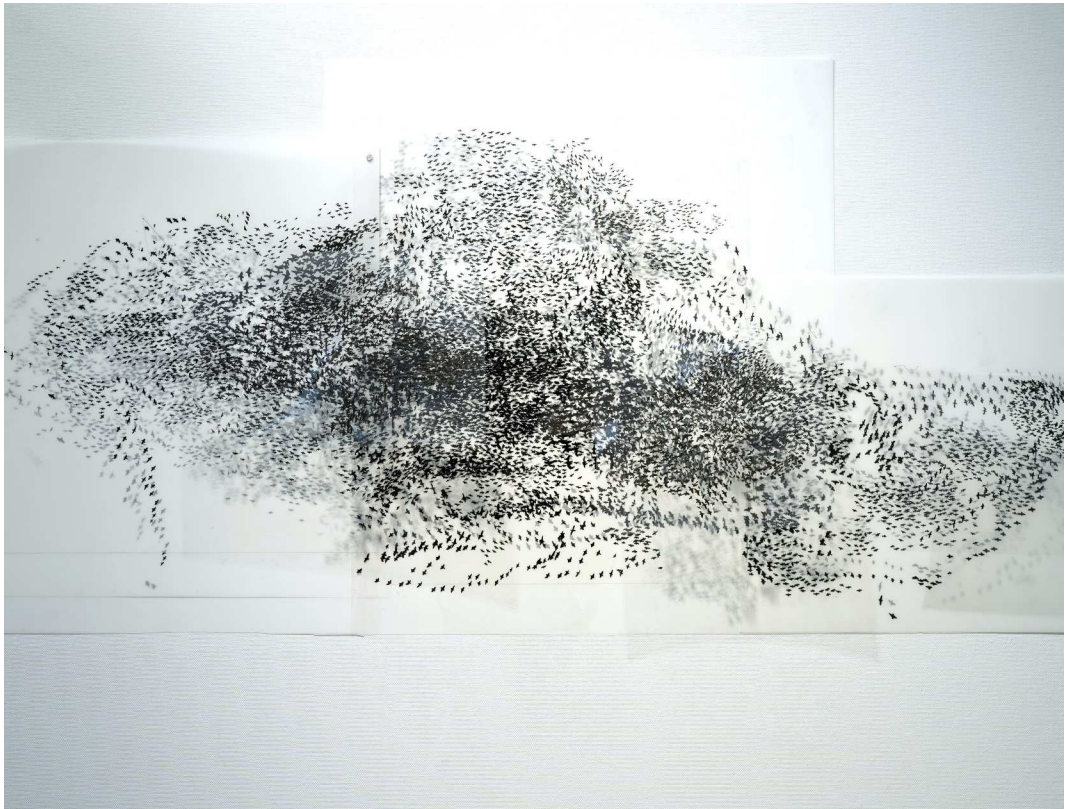




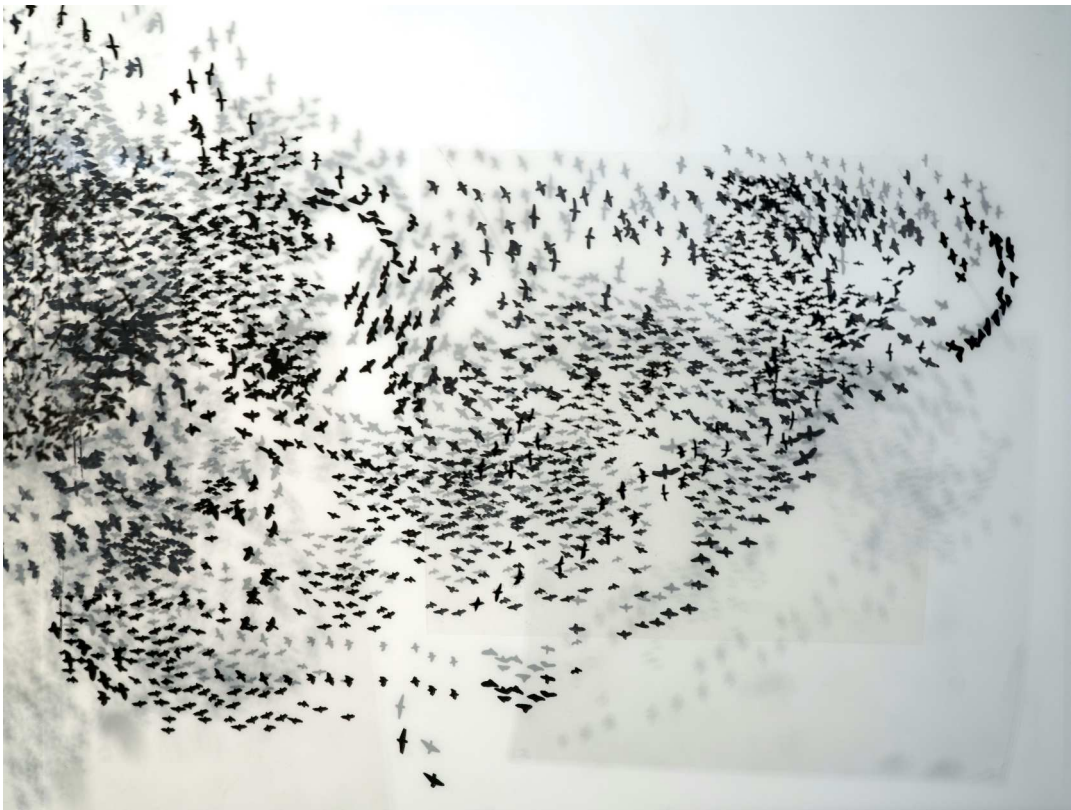
Connor Dolan, *200 Milliampères*, 2021, ultramarine pigment, Prussian blue pigment, and Adam 25 binding medium, 96" x 60"



Lily Leonard, *Stuffed Painting*, 2020, canvas, gesso, oil paint, thread, and plaster, 47" x 40" x 42"



Becca Tarter, *Fleeting and Soon Lost*, 2021, silkscreen on mylar and vellum, 36" x 48" x 5"





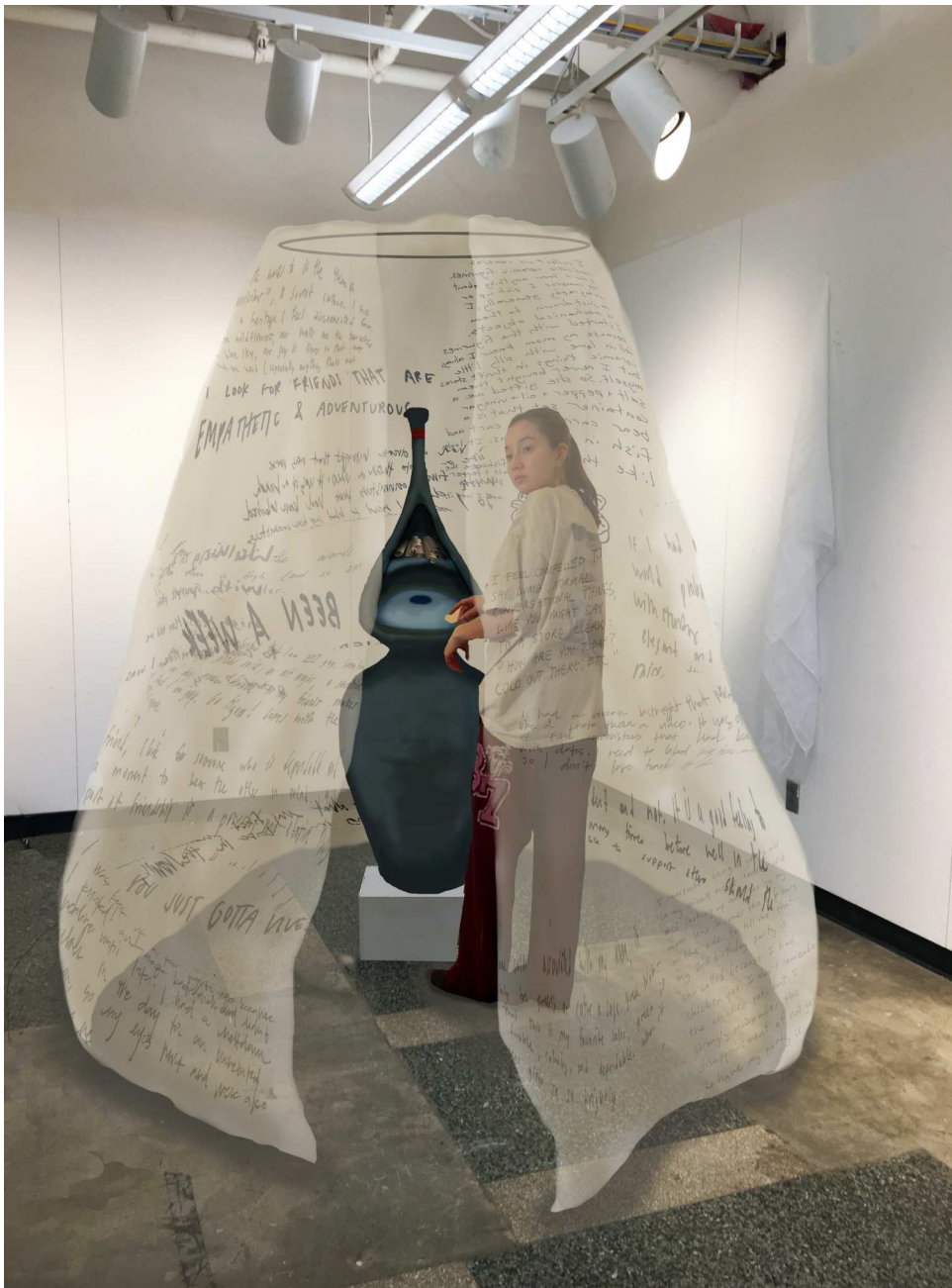


Lou Friedman, *Vessel for Space*, 2021, canvas, webbing, metal hardware, and plastic tubing, 24" x 10" (backpack), 66" x 48" x 36" (expanded)



Shaelee Comettant, *Most Of The Time I Sleep With My Feet Out From Under The Covers*, 2021, performance and trace monotype on microfiber polyester bedsheet, 64" x 97"





Kay Ingulli, *I'm Afraid to Ask Anything of You*, 2021, ceramic, pronto plate lithography on cheesecloth, cotton thread, newsprint, 96" x 90"





Maia Cousins, *Through It Like Butter*, 2021, wood, fabric, and enamel, 14" x 15" x 18"  
(casket), 3" x 75" (tapestry)

## BIOGRAPHIES

Haejin (Hezin) An (**She, Her, Hers**) is a South Korean multimedia artist and a poet studying Art, Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Design. Her work is grounded in her love for science fiction and strange organisms, and experiences of growing up in Korea and leaving it, and they can be found in *Spires*, *Washington University Political Review*, the cover of *Remake*, and a public art project about River Des Peres for University City.

Starting with a single image of Mercury, the video *Undisclosed Surfaces of Heavenly Bodies and Earth* consists of minimally edited circular forms of planets and moons taken from NASA presented side by side in sets of twos with pavement images that share formal similarities, with occasional interludes from larger images before the circular cropping that flashes by rapidly to show the scale and construction of the image. It is revealed later in the video that the right images are pavements, and the video ends with a single image of a pavement made to look like the initial Mercury image.

Grace Bristow (**She, Her, Hers**) stacks building blocks made from accidents and relates the pieces fallen from a question. She likes verbs because they get in the way of thinking too much.

*Site (A Palm Reading)*, comprised of plaster extracted from skin or piped into rings from the hands of the artist, creates a simultaneity of scale—one imagines towering over a landscape or existing amongst the microscopic. A piece embraced as fiction, yet encountered as a physical, walkable re-imagining of topography.

Through the use of her body and the absence of body, Shaelee Comettant (**She, Her, Hers**) works in her practice to navigate her identity in relation to her personal histories and the space she occupies. She uses cartography of the body's traces and connects her practice through strings of anecdotes, narratives belonging to her and others to map out the memory of individual experiences.

*Most Of The Time I Sleep With My Feet Out From Under The Covers* uses trace monotype printing to capture the movements the artist made in her sleep through a series of seven performed full nights of sleep and naps from February 22, 2021 to March 3, 2021 in varied locations as listed; in her own bed, a friend's bed, on the grass outside her apartment, on a couch, and in her car. Each sleep is recorded in a different color to distinguish the traces from each other. Amidst the overwhelming isolation of the past year, by inviting the audience to witness the evidence of the private performance of sleep, the artist creates a shared sense of intimacy between herself and the viewer, putting on display the details of a daily personal ritual.

**Maia Cousins** is a painter and sculptor whose work is influenced by their native landscapes of Idaho and Eastern Washington and an enduring interest in the body and its alienation. A pervasive aesthetic of horror and viscerality dominates their work, setting the tone of the exploration.

*Through It Like Butter* is a casket, about the size of a small child or mid-size dog, made of enameled wood and designed to be mounted on the wall or carried. Inside, a length of distressed fabric pierced and embroidered into a fleshy tapestry waits to be unfurled.

**Kale J. Day** is a visual artist from rural mid-Missouri with an interest in history, sociology, and critical theory. He now lives and works in St. Louis, Missouri.

This shack, *Homestead*, is a ghost, a hollow shell filled only with static emanating from a portable weather radio nestled within its dark interior. It is a diorama of the loneliness, melancholy and isolation represented by the innumerable shacks and clapboard structures slowly decaying across the Midwest, themselves ghosts of the long dead frontier.

**Connor Dolan's** art involves the human body—both insides and outsides—as well as other natural processes. His figural works often radiate an uncomfortably vivid silence.

Rendered in Yves Klein's famous blue, this disproportional self-portrait vibrates within a narrow value spectrum, offset with piercing orange eyes.

**Alex Evets (He, Him, His)** is an artist who enjoys tangents in conversation, in his walks, and in his practice of making things. His work meanders around many kinds of sentimental histories, be they relating to a sense of place, family, or his love of making for its own sake.

*The Impractical GPS* is a highly personal artifact that consists of a sturdy toolbox holding an itinerant map. It is important to use this analog navigation system to understand the best ways to travel Olive Boulevard, a route that connects both large swaths of St. Louis County and the artist to his hometown.

Lou Friedman (**He, Him, His**) is an artist focused on craft, material exploration, and the fabrication of functional objects. The pieces he makes exist simultaneously as art and utilitarian objects: they serve a purpose or fill a niche but are also made with an attention to craft and aesthetics with materials that support the use or concept of the object.

*Vessel For Space* is a portable vessel which expands in an instant from the bag in which it is enclosed. The vessel is meant to be inhabited, but the dimensions are prohibitive, not allowing the average person to sit tall inside.

Growing up, Nina Huang (**She, Her, Hers**) never kept a straightforward diary. She thinks of visual systems of translation as records, disguises, and protection for secrets and privacy.

*Entropy (Fallen Tresses)* consists of 36 tiles of cyanotypes printed from strands of human hair, in an interconnecting pattern that flows from one tile into another. What is made rootless and grotesque through detachment transforms into a network of connections—indeterminate and changeable—waiting to be reconfigured and rearranged.

Collecting has always been a guiding practice for Kay Ingulli (**She, Her, Hers**). Her work grows from accumulated waste, dreams, music, memorabilia, tree leaves and seeds, iPhone videos, and, most recently, handwritten responses to personal questions from her peers. She uses this modular creative process to explore intersections of human, nature, and fantasy relationships with a budding focus on mental health, environmentalism, and social change.

Enter *I'm Afraid to Ask Anything of You* and participate in a conversation of distanced outreach. You are invited to take a paper scroll, write the lodged thought in your head waiting to be released, secure it with red thread, and share it in the central vessel. Your note will join a collective of unspoken considerations, never to be read. Meanwhile, hand-printed statements of prompted reflection from others in St. Louis and across the country will curtain the exchange. I only ask you to read them in return.

Logan Krohn's (He, Him, His) Grindr profile has the display name of 'Yo!' because he lacks the creative luster to come up with anything better. He is an anti-capitalist fan of social engineering and big business, a budding eccentric, and a life-long black sheep. His Slack profile picture is 2006 Paris Hilton, and no less than 54% of his friends have a recent photo of his butt on any sampled day. His most recent work includes cutting off his pinkie toe with an exploded bottle of Deep Eddy's Grapefruit Vodka, losing his heirloom bracelet to an elevator shaft, and stealing a shopping cart from CVS.

*Come Poke My Play-Doh Pudge* is a collection of works centered around the artist's naked portrait. The pieces encourage participants to drive the decision making on how the artist's body is staged: how it is clothed, how it is groomed, and how it is considered. *Come Poke My Play-Doh Pudge* includes the paper doll piece *Hey Daddy! dress me or undress me, just do it in the closet*, the iron filling and frame piece *Willy (not wooly)*, and the wallpaper print *Martha Stewart's Favorites: wallpaper that will make your guests say 'wow'!* The installation also includes a number of staged purchased, found, and stolen objects.

Lily Leonard always chooses the least effective and most time consuming way in her material processes. In manipulating materials to do the opposite of what they want to do Lily finds personal struggle and material magic. Through her ongoing series about human attachment to objects and personal introspection into her life as a repressed hoarder, she has developed a fascination with sensory perception and memory.

Six unique and ambiguous stuffed limbs make up the *Stuffed Painting*. This piece resembles a stuffed animal and maintains sensory elements such as softness and squish. At first glance the paintings on the piece are childlike, colorful, and seemingly innocent, however there are references to darker themes within the paintings. Alongside the violent and eerie nature of the stitching, there is tension created by the cognitive dissonance of assumptions about the piece.

Bo Schmit (He, Him, His) is a sculpture and installation artist whose work explores domestic sites of identity, trauma, and power. Familiar objects become metaphors for the body in his dreamlike recreations of sexual and gendered experiences that collapse the binary of internal and external.

A collapsible quilt depicts the stages of development from clitoris and vulva to phallus and testicles, drawing on the viewer's experience with sex, gender, and sexuality to derive meaning. A homely and precarious assemblage; the banner rises from a clamshell suitcase, drawn up by a flesh-colored post and weighed down by a brick.

Photography, pattern and memory are prevalent in **Becca Tarter's** artwork. Through a variety of perspectives, mediums and scales, she creates work inspired by her personal relationships to places.

Inspired by the hopes and setbacks of a loved one recovering from addiction, *Fleeting and Soon Lost* represents clusters of serenity, strength and fear in the fight for sobriety. The delicate pieces sway as one walks by—living and breathing in the present.

**Kaylyn Webster (She, Her, Hers)** is a painter from Memphis, TN, whose work is greatly influenced by America's political climate and the minority experience in the country. Her interests in African and African-American Studies and Western Art History provide the themes for her narrative paintings that often tie the larger social landscape to her and her family's day-to-day lives.

*Escape* is a richly textured painting that captures the strain of the year 2020 through its thick strokes that construct the human form, and its high contrast that captures the intensity of this current moment. The jagged marks and raised forms penetrate and build the figure as she is frozen in this act of escape.





## ABOUT THE GALLERY

The Des Lee Gallery provides Sam Fox School students and faculty a formal gallery space for presenting exhibitions, and also has earned a national reputation for showing work by local and internationally known contemporary artists. Located in the heart of the historic Washington Avenue Loft District, the 1,300-square-foot gallery opened in 1999, and is housed in the University Lofts building, an eight-story, 100-year-old refurbished warehouse. The gallery is named in honor of E. Desmond Lee, a 1940 graduate of Washington University's John M. Olin School of Business (now the Olin Business School), who provided significant support for the University as well as the greater St. Louis community during this life.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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