

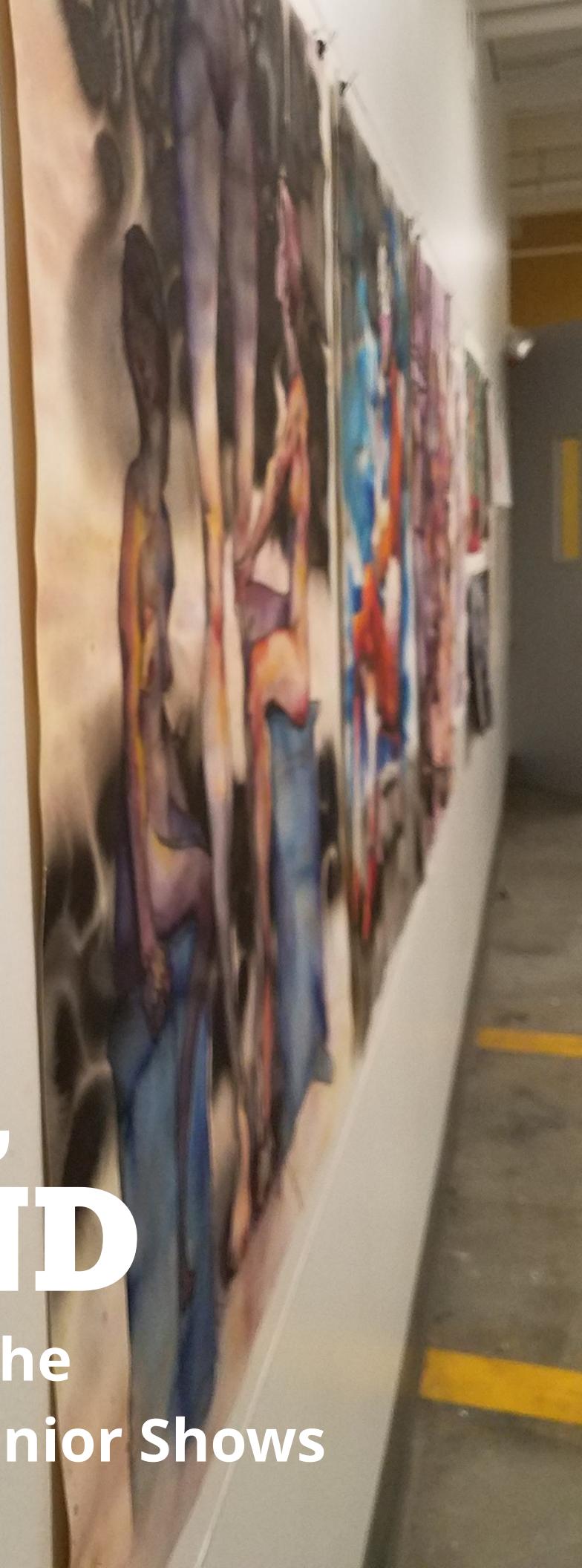
**SPRING 2017**

**60**

**Basement Gallery**

# **UNDER GROUND**

**Reflections from the  
Undergraduate Senior Shows**





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Special Thanks to Professor Diana Strazdes

"Underground - Reflections from the Undergraduate Senior Shows" is a collection of the writings produced from the students enrolled in AHI 198: Gallery Interpretation and Installation. AHI 198 was developed to accompany an interdisciplinary project between the Basement Gallery and the Art History Club. The AHI 198 students interpreted and installed the artwork of the graduating art studio majors exhibited in the Basement Gallery's Senior Shows. Within this review are the wall-texts used during the exhibitions to introduce the artists, as well as post-exhibition reviews. The Basement Gallery has displayed student artwork since its impetus in 1999, but the addition of wall-text from art history students to our extensive, quarter-long Senior Shows series is a first. We hope that "Underground" will act as an archive of the art major's final exhibitions as undergraduates and add insight to the hard-work of those involved in the making of the Senior Shows of Spring 2017.



Kaitlyn Griggs

Director of the Basement Gallery

# Forward

## by Greta Schatz

The Basement Gallery is a space that speaks to me, as I feel I have spent the majority of my undergraduate in basements at Davis. I spent almost my entire freshman year in Kemper's basement, groveling for help from the teaching assistants, thus making the Basement Gallery the epitome of the constrained self expression of undergrads in academia. Struggling with limited resources, bad lighting, and unbelievable work loads, these artists are expected to rise to the occasion and perform. They are expected to put on a show that walks the line between novel and personal, erring on the side of meta without losing the audience. Random students or teachers wander in between classes, while their internal monologues play and replay the daily stresses of exams and personal thoughts to random internal noise of "do I floss enough?" These people come into the space and view the tireless work of strangers, and are taken aback by the breadth of talent and undiscovered beauty that can be surprising to find in a basement.

The artists of the Basement Gallery shun the pretensions of academia, and refuse to suffocate under the stifling constraints of this subterranean space. The undergraduate experience is an anthem

chanted to the beat of the quarter system, with cycles of exams, projects, and papers that push us towards the looming threat of finals. Our grades are determined by how much you can regurgitate in a fifty-minute exam, and our scores are used to measure the trifecta of academic success: true talent, application of material, and graduate school potential. However this anthem falters when we are foiled by the pressure of expectation and self-doubt. This, coupled with the disenchanting realization that our undergraduate voice is limited to solving a toy problem that has already been answered, wakes us to the realization that whether our response right or wrong they will never be new, novel, or truly ours. You resist the urge to quit, and instead seek out a way to renew your self-confidence and rekindle an interest in learning. The Basement Gallery is a sanctuary of self-reflection and uninterrupted discovery that teases us with the brilliance of unbridled creativity, and reminds us of the world outside of Shield's Library, and the disappointments of SmartSite.

The Basement Gallery rejects these irrelevant forms of measurement of success as artists do not determine their self-worth or importance through the results of a scantron. The Basement Gallery is the only place on campus in which the true measurement of success is not determined by a grader, but by the

artists themselves. The grades are received when the artists step back and see their work spread before them and peek out over the heads of their friends and family to wave at a latecomer in the hallway. The grade is received when the artists watch from the corner as a hesitant viewer steps inside the reflective installation in the corner and screams in pleasant surprise at the image inside. The grade is received by the smiles and tears, and laughter, and emotion of life that swells up inside you and pours out of your lips in a quiet whisper of satisfaction when you stumble upon the hidden lives inside the paintings and sculptures that bring this underground space to life.

Yet the Basement Gallery not only gives voice to the artists but also the art history students that finally get to make their own answers to a question. As white cards float along the walls, filled with edited phrases gleaned from interviews and parsed from email correspondences by the diligent students of AHI 198, who work in tandem with the artists to capture the essence of their shows in a page or less. The objective of the art history students of class 198 is to seamlessly guide the audience by route of labels, explanatory wall text, artist interviews, and reflections through the show. The engaging and dynamic style of this course allows the students to experience the the role of curator, journalist, and writer, resulting in a delightful interlude of our own voices.

# **Senior Show Dates - Spring 2017**

## **April 8 - 13**

Elena Peters

## **May 27 - June 1**

Roxanne Deyerle  
Yaqueline Ruiz

## **April 15 - 20**

Jamie Cook  
Emiko Ogasawara  
Jason Pestana

## **June 3 - 8**

Abby Auerbach  
Elisa Courtway  
Wendy Liu

## **April 29 - May 4**

Jake Beltran  
Beth Huth  
Paige Klugherz

**June 10 - 15**  
Devanny Agustin  
Julianna Ferrerya  
Nicole Washington

## **May 6 - 11**

Lawrence Davis  
Rachel Dirk  
Joseph Lee

**June 17 - 22**  
Anna de Benedictus  
Kaitlyn Griggs  
Christine Lee

## **May 13 - 18**

Ciera Pasturel  
Kelly Roberts  
Diana Tabarez

**June 23 - June 28**  
Sarra Mohamed Ali

## **May 20 - 25**

Cynthia Chong  
Ellie Lopez  
Kyla Wiegand

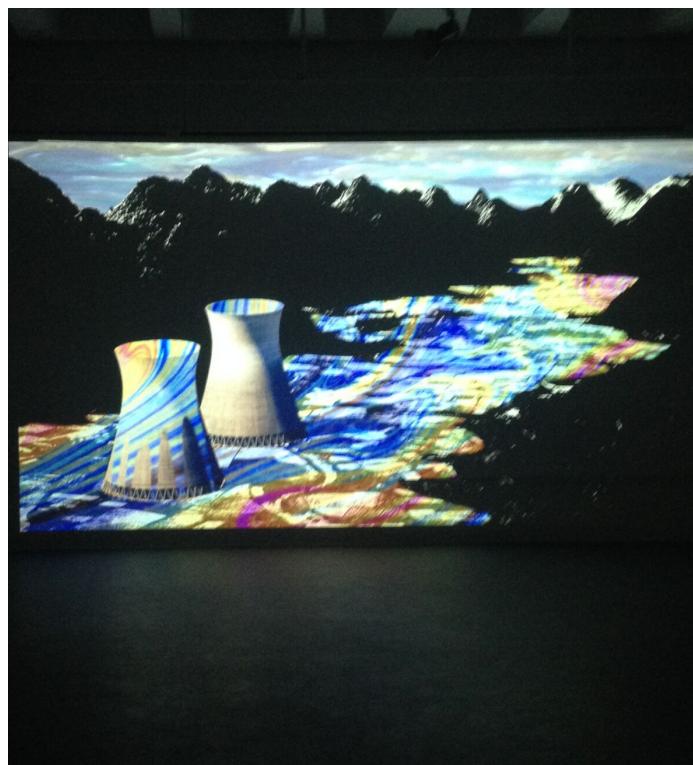
# Elena Peters

by Greta Schatz

Elena Peter's multimedia artwork piece is a dynamic exploration of socially conscious art that challenges the viewer to contemplate problems facing the world today. Her enduring theme of environmental awareness, present the viewer with the dichotomy between the visually appealing colors and shapes, and the threat of a radioactive meltdown and environmental crisis. Drawn to multimedia and digital art because of the accessibility, inclusivity, and the reduction in toxic waste produced by oil paints, Elena worked to produce a piece that would be a warning to the viewer.

*"The lyrics itself ask for peace..."*

"The accompaniment is a recording of monks chanting in Latin. The lyrics itself ask for peace, which is a theme I integrated into my work as well. This is a reminder to the audience of the importance in utilizing renewable energy, over nuclear power as radiation has permeated our natural resources. The multicolor background is a thermal map for future climate change projected by NASA." - Elena Peters



# Jamie Cook

by Kaitlyn Griggs

Jamie Cook is a representational artist working mainly in 2D mediums such as chalk pastels, charcoal and acrylic paint. Her senior show was filled with witty representations of figures interacting in both their own environments and within the Basement Gallery itself. One such art series was comprised of multiple, silhouetted cut-outs of figures. The unique cut-outs investigate the subjects as products of their environment. Each silhouette acts as a window, revealing an environment framed by the subject. Jamie utilized her curiosity of others' lives to create a personal narrative within each piece, interviewing her models to learn what their favorite place was and why.

*Jamie utilized her curiosity of others' lives to create a personal narrative within each piece...*

Along with the cutouts, Jamie brought more figures into the space with the improvisational addition of sketches on the Basement's pillar. Working directly on the painted concrete, Jamie designed multicolor figures in chalk pastel on each face of the pillar. These brightly colored and enthusiastically sketched figures existed for, and during, her exhibition.

Jamie's "Mental Vacation" book also displayed her witty ingenuity and curious nature. Wishing to bring humor and personality to the sterile landscapes of national park photo books, Jamie collaged and illustrated over the vistas. She sought to evoke the feeling of childhood road trips and drew personal motifs to reclaim the playfulness of visiting such places. Jamie's humor and constant drive for interpersonal connection culminated in her exhibition with its honest interpretations of the personal side of representational figure drawing.



# Exhibition Review

## The Second Senior Show

by Louisa Brandt

The senior exhibit on display from April 15-20 highlighted the work of Emiko Ogasawara, Jason Pestana, and Jamie Cook. Their shared use of the exhibit space and absence of wall labels invited viewers to closely inspect and freely interpret the pieces through bold placement of the sculptures and the text within the two dimensional works.

Upon entering the gallery, visitors are immediately confronted by a major sculptural piece that literally beckoned the viewer into the exhibit with an outstretched hand. This first work of a peacock inspired sleeping tiger seems to block the visitor, it also serves to ask how the close proximity to an artwork changes the viewers response to it. This same question arose with the ring of ceramic, ankle-high mushrooms dominating the middle of the room. The small scale of these objects served to bring the public closer in order to study them, but also pushed viewers away for fear of disturbing the display, much like being in nature. This use of familiar wariness meant that the sculptures, by themselves and as presented, contributed to how they might be received. The inclusion of writing within some of the hanging works on the walls also implied that viewers should come to view them properly and



perhaps receive a clue to the possible inspiration for the unattributed art. In the Christ-like portrait in the furthest corner from the door, phrases on the canvas connect the iconography of the painting, a man with a bleeding wound near his ribs reminiscent of one of Christ's five holy wounds suffered at crucifixion, to Biblical stories referred to near or on the figure. Finding writing within the works helped satisfy our need to identify the work as part of some tradition, whether as a style or a certain artists' repertoire. Unlike exhibits with barriers or pedestals to indicate where the visitor should view the art, Ogasawara, Pestana and Cook's display actively implied the opposite. The placement of the art pieces directly where a viewer might walk, and the explanation of works in the art itself helped to create a personal experience even while the works themselves remained unidentified.



# Gina Lavarone

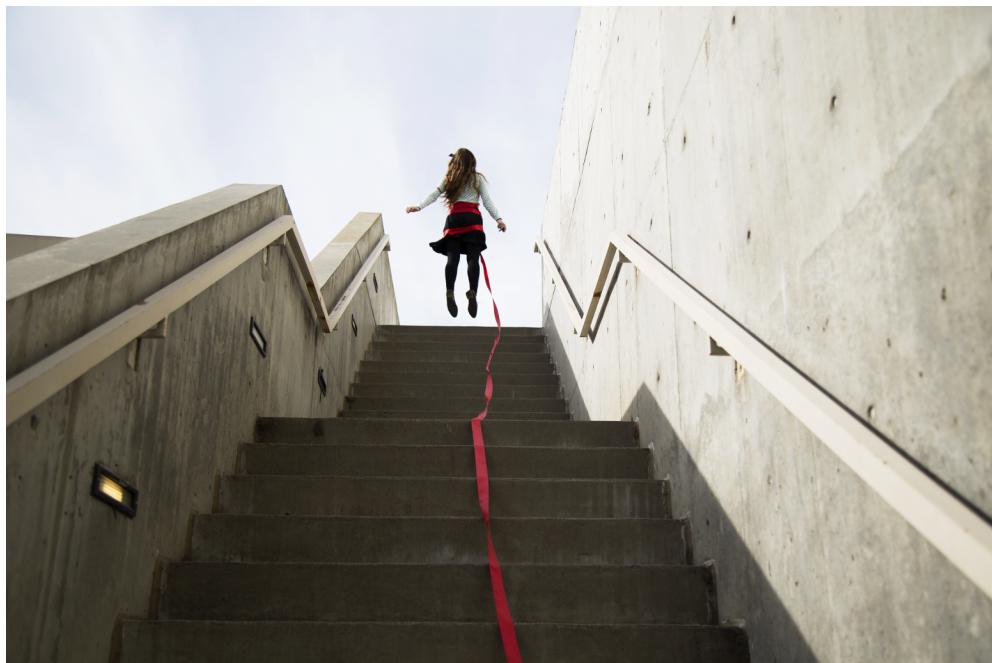
by Sarraa Mohamed Ali

*Written from Gina's perspective*

The question of a human.

"What's home?", I asked. It's a place of excitement. I have lost a place I called home to go back to a country I was born in. The only way to reconcile was to create art. For a period of time, I have used ribbons in my images as a sample of the soft and kind connections that we have to others. But at the same time, these connections and these ribbons trap us. They pull at you till it's hard to be free. Is it

(funny, sad,...etc) that the only deep connections I have are in my mind? In the world, physical connections have been replaced by digitalized limited screens. But what about death? Is it an end to our physical form or just a beginning? I have found that in death, new stories can still be told about you. New things can be learned. The idea of self can always evolve through the things we left behind. I guess, I'm in search of the boundaries of a human being.



# Exhibition Review

## The Third Senior Show by Cynthia Pantoja

On April 22nd through 27th Gina Laverone and Nelson Kan had their Senior Show exhibition up. This time the walk down to the Basement Gallery was not as scary as the first time. I still did not know what to expect but it was lovely surprise to find that there was a happy song playing inside the Gallery.

At the entrance there was an old, square, TV model playing a short film by Nelson. It was about halfway through when I started watching so I waited for the film to restart which is when I realized that it was a video of the UC Davis campus with two male cartoons illustrating a story. The foreign song had lyrics playing across the screen which helped add context to the story of the two cartoon men in the film. My interpretation to the story was that

one man was in love with the other one, and towards the end he built the courage to kiss his crush but the crush told him that though he appreciated that, he was still "straight". The story appeared to show the vulnerability of when a heart gets broken but, the song playing in the background seemed to create a contradictory emotion. It made the situation less depressing with the upbeat song.

After the video I noticed that Nelson had his artist's statement to the right of the TV where he said he wanted to produce work that will evoke emotions to the viewers. That comment made me look forward to seeing the rest of the show. My natural instinct was to move clockwise and in doing so I came across two small



sculptures. I was not sure what I was looking at until I looked at the labels, in which I was able to connect more with "The Beggar" because it was almost as if I had seen someone carry a lot of black bags filled with recycling around the community.

On the other wall there was ribbon of photographs that were in a straight horizontal line across the wall that seemed to be talking about a breakup. In the center of that same wall there was a projector projecting images of different stages of depression. In between each group of projected pictures there were quotes that helped set the mood to the next set of images projected. The group of images that caught my attention was when the girl was in the bathtub and a quote that read "I thought I could do it alone, but I can't". It was such a strange feeling because as I stood there relating to those times of sadness the song from the video was still playing in the background. It was like for a moment in time I was connected with the girl from the projections and feeling what she was feeling yet, but at the same time there was a little bit of hope because the beat of the song was very uplifting. As I continued to circulate the show I realized that I had felt almost every emotion within the last 20 minutes of walking around. With Gina's work I was able to get that sense of nostalgia from places and family that I have left behind and also remember my moments of weakness that I have had to experience. While all of my feelings were being awoken all I could do was pull myself together because the

song that Nelson chose made everything better. I think it was even great that the song was in a different language because I had no idea what it was saying but it was making me find comfort in the unknown words.



# Jake Beltran

## by Cassondra McMichael

Jake Beltran will utilize the spontaneity of installation displays to bringing forth the hidden presence of materials, design processes, and the LGBTQIA community in his Senior Show from April 29th to May 4th. Double majoring in both Art and Design, Jake grew up surrounded by art that was either created by his grandfather or collected by his mother and grandmother. Using this as a way to draw inspiration for his artworks, Jake also uses his educational background to address the different qualities of design and fine art. Since design is more focused on blending into the white noise of society's activities, while art is created to stand out and make a bold statement. However, this conflict leads Jake to struggle to find a balance as he tries to use art making as a way of emphasizing the hidden presence of designed objects, that often times become enveloped into the white noise of everyday life and activities.

This is best seen in his work titled Fiber, which consists of two separate raw silk rectangles and emphasizes the presence of materiality in textiles. While one of the pieces was treated with cyanotype and the other with fabric reactive dye, Jake hopes that by presenting these two textiles side by side they will highlight the design process necessary for

manufacturing textiles. Nevertheless, the two pieces of the series offers documented evidence of what the textile had been subjected to. Thus allowing the textiles to establish their presence through the fabric and design process. However, Jake's artistic intent on bringing forth the hidden presence of textiles is also applied to minorities within society.

*Forage still works to bring forth the hidden presence of the LGBTQIA community by identifying those in the photographs as individuals rather than a labeled community.*

Forage is a culmination of two separate artworks that Jake had worked on previously and consists of photographs of Davis's LGBTQIA community along cyanotypes of pressed flowers. The mylar background used in the photographs acts as a symbolic mirror that allows the photographed individuals within the LGBTQIA community to reflect on their own image, while also reflecting on the world they live in. The pressed cyanotype flowers are representative of the delicacy

of the individual's sexuality, the topic of homosexuality, and the oppressed standards of society. These standards ultimately make it difficult for the photographed individuals to address their sexuality freely and without judgment, resulting in many of them to remain silent about their true identity and become confirmative. Even though this particular artwork does not specifically focus on the materiality of textile, Forage still works to bring forth the hidden presence of the LGBTQIA community by identifying those in the photographs as individuals rather than a labeled community.

By the end of our studio visit, Jake's artworks continued to communicate and emphasize the hidden presence of the materiality of textiles and the design process that he subjected some of the artworks to. As well as effectively bring forth the hidden presence of the LGBTQIA youth community in Davis. Upon deep analysis of the influences that Jake was exposed to when growing up, his artwork is creative and successful in maintaining a quality of iteration and continuity. Allowing his selected works to be brought together by his artistic intention and influences.



*When Forage is viewed at a distance the individuals presented in the artwork are no longer being identified as a marginalized group. Rather they become people whose photographs come together to create an artwork that is consisted of different colors as well as shifting lights and shades just as the flowers do.*

# Beth Hüth

By Candace Tyrrell

An argument can be made that most, if not a majority, of artists use their work to speak out about a subject or issue they are passionate about. But for Beth Huth she has not only accomplished this in her work, she also used her art as a way to overcome her addiction to heroin. The work that is displayed in the senior show reflects this personal obstacle, as well as the recurring themes of drugs and memory. In the two different series she walks the viewer through various subjects of addiction, by using different mediums to convey the message. In both series the small details tend to appear the longer you look at them, in which she handles the subject from a more abstract perspective.

The Alice series invokes the viewer into the world of addiction in a more memory like state, and when the viewer looks closely they notice the small writings throughout the works. The other series, which hereafter called the Mirror Image series, was abstracted photos of foil, flames, and shattered mirrors. The pieces fade out in some areas, as she explained memories tend to do but all the while repeating themes of addiction. Some of the works show some sort of crystallization along with the flames and foil, alluding to the drugs once more to

cohesively lead the viewer to her message. Her process of making her art for the show was an obvious point of exchange, for which she described it as being therapeutic for her, a way to face her addiction not only in the work but in the process to create the resulting pieces you see in this show today. When asked what her favorite piece was, she simply replied,

I enjoy all my works but with the [mirror image] photographs, the process was my favorite part. The resulting work is a memory of the process that has helped overcome my addiction.

Beth's works are a result of how she processes her work and her addiction, the art as her memory of the obstacles she has had to overcome. Beth Huth is not only using her art as a way overcoming her demons of drugs, but to increase awareness and help others to face those same obstacles in themselves.



# **Paige Klugherz**

## **by Cassondra McMichael**

Sitting at a weathered table behind UC Davis's historical TB-9 ceramics building, Paige and I made our brief introductions before she showed me the selected artworks would be displayed in her Senior Show from April 29th to May 4th. Each of her artworks demonstrate a juxtaposition between materiality and the relationship between Folk and Fine Art. The aesthetic of traditional craft techniques and materiality is important to Paige for both personal and practiced reasons. Given that at a young age Paige had been taught how to weave and knit by her mom, who in turn had been taught by Paige's grandmother. Quick to acknowledge the inferior connotations associated with Folk Art, Paige overlaps these two spheres in order to draw attention to the beauty of fine-skilled craft art through the experimentation with unexpected materials.

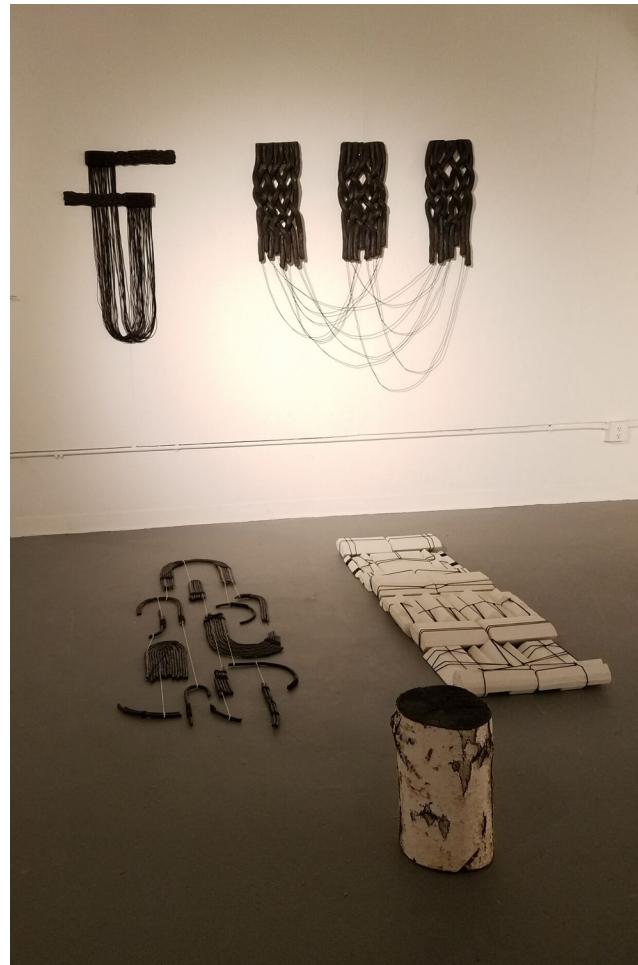
Being one of the first artworks shown during our virtual studio visit, I Breath, I Breath is a large wall piece made entirely of birch berna wood that had been sectioned off and then successively woven together. Measuring at six-feet, the artwork is both intimidating and inviting. Paige was able to achieve this response through the works daunting size, tribal impression, as well as her skillful

manipulation of the birch wood to create a smooth and contrasting surface. Though wood is traditionally identified as being a masculine material, it is beautifully directed through the act of weaving to create a final product that shifts in light and shade. Though weaving is largely focused on the interplay of color, Paige instead targets the viewer's gaze on the specific act of weaving and the simple beauty created from it through the production of line and form.

Another work that utilizes scale to focus the viewer's attention on the importance of materiality Through. Influenced by her experiences after living in Denmark for a year after High School, Paige directed these geographical and cultural influences into the creation of Through. Heavily based on the traditional geometrical form of a weaving loom, the artwork consists of a wooden frame that has been frosted in patching cement and filled with coils of thread that are drawn taut between the top and bottom of a circular frame. Originally displayed on a pedestal, Through again calls into question the assigned identity and perceived materiality of unexpected materials in Paige's decision to use thread to suspend the metal circle within the frame. Given that when the artwork is viewed from a

distance one would suspect that the coils presented within the frame were metal however, upon closer analysis the coils are actually made up of spindled thread. A material that is often associated with being fragile, yet Through demonstrates that this unexpected material is in fact reliable and is just as strong as metal to suspend something that may be double its weight and size.

Each of Paige's artworks reevaluate the standards constitute Fine Art, and whether craft and folk art can find a place within this discourse. Either way, Paige makes sure to challenge the viewer in their perception of materiality and the valuable techniques that are offered through the influences and inspiration of craft and folk art. In each of her artworks, Paige aims to challenge the negative connotation associated with traditional craft as being inferior or feminine through the manipulation of materiality and scale, in order to highlight the continued artistic theme of revealing the beauty that is capable through fine-skilled craft.



*Untitled* is more contemporary in its visual aesthetic given that it relies solely on the simple geometric form of large hallow cream white ceramics and the lines created by the black wax cotton cord wrapped and tied around the casted objects. While it embodies the contemporary Fine Art characteristics of modernity in the stable reliance of black and white forms and lines, the work still directs the viewer to the beauty of materiality that is possible through beautifully skilled and crafted artwork.

# Exhibition Review

## The Fourth Senior Show by Greta Schatz

The intimate, and understated qualities of the basement lend themselves perfectly to Jake's nude prints on the wall. The arrangement felt like an enlarged set of dated polaroid's, surrounded by bushels of flowers, to recreate the bedroom wall that could belong to any angst filled teen in America, who longs for exploration of self and others. This dichotomy between switching the roles of nudity as personal and space as impersonal, to the intimate space of the gallery, and the viewing of nudity as entirely impersonal, reminds the audience of the importance of perspective.

Perspective, symmetry, and personal narrative sewed three seemingly unrelated shows together. The ebb and flow of Jake's multimedia light presentation, mimicked the tides of personal trauma that washed over Beth's work.

*Perspective, symmetry, and personal narrative sewed three seemingly unrelated shows together.*

The heartbeat of Beth's work, was an undeniable personal narrative that brought the viewer into the smallest, deepest, most intimate part of Beth's

mind, and then delivered them into the open with her poem, with a promised hope of rebirth and redemption. The symmetry in Paige's sculptures marry well with Beth's prints, although the subject matter and story line diverge, the two artists share an interest in visual balance and exploring the use of nontraditional subject matter and material in symmetry. Jake's projection of the testicular ultrasound is the meta internal noise of the show, the whispering voice that lures you towards the moving light, and asks you to question what you know. The ultrasound itself is something usually associated with women, specifically, pregnant women. Once again, this switch in roles to the male subject as the ultrasound, as well as the male nude in the traditional female pose of the reclining buttock and spine, reminds the viewer of the paradigm shift in gender roles and identification present today, and the self reflection necessary to understand Jake's work as a whole.

# Lawrence Davis

## by Kaitlyn Griggs

What compels Lawrence Davis to focus on the human figure is its timeless relatability. Connectivity to the human experience is a continual theme in Davis' works as he investigates meaning and emotionality. He believes each viewer can bring their own personal meaning to his figure illustrations and paintings - joined through our experience of being human. Davis sought to "master the body" through repetition and careful reproductions of sculpture. This repetitive methodology is best embodied in his process of copying a plaster bust of Voltaire kept in his studio. During the summer of 2016, Davis drew studies of the bust every day.

Though the process strengthened his abilities, he found it tedious. Davis discovered new artistic momentum in his introduction to the artwork of Egon Schiele through his professor, Shiva Ahmadi. Both Ahmadi and Schiele imparted the notion that not everything needed to be perfect, leading Davis to embrace a sketchy and erratic style to create uniquely warped, illustrative works. Further studying form in this new style, Davis learned to involve writing in his process. Never before keeping a sketchbook, he found that writing out his ideas proved to be a mechanism for

discovering meaningful elements that he desired to translate visually through illustration. This translatory process is mirrored in his desire for his audience to participate - to seek interpersonal connections with his works through our undeniable connection of the human figure.



# Rachel Dirk

by Candace Tyrrell

Rachel Dirk's figures represent her message of the desexualization of the nude, the passion in her art reflecting her desire for people to be comfortable with who they are. Having mostly worked in the medium of oil, the show illustrates her experience with the medium given that she had made her own canvas for many of her oil paintings. Rachel also spreads thinned out burnt sienna over the canvas before she then paints over it with different colors to form the subject. Dirk's inspiration, however, comes from the subjects of her paintings themselves, the people who make themselves comfortable with their bodies for her to create her artworks. Dirk also prefers for her art to be unconstrained and controlled, her favorite work in the show are ones with her own subject matter and not part of an assignment, or as she called them, "independent pieces."

Complimentary colors are used to shade Dirk's figures as she forms her lights and darks, all the while she is maintaining bright colors that makes her style unique. Her painterly style of brushstroke is another quality of Dirk that tends to stand out, the clear and obvious brushstrokes reminds the viewer that this work was done by human hands which invokes the artist's presence. It is within these

aesthetic qualities that Dirk displays the human figure to convey the message of desexualization of the nude to the viewer.



*The subjects seem to be lying out but relaxed, through the lack of eye contact suggests that the subjects are not there for anybody but themselves and the artist, they are not there for an audience. The respect given for the two figures in the painting and the overall attention given by the artist displays the profound connection of the artist with the people she paints that ultimately influences her work.*

# Joseph Lee

by Louisa Brandt

The figural paintings of Joseph Lee reflect his goal of merging Eastern and Western art, while exploring his own relationship to identity and layered memory. Originally working with illustrations and digital art, Lee developed an interest in manga, a mode primarily considered "low art" used for comics and anime television programs. Studying the work of contemporary Japanese painter Takashi Murakami, Lee saw how Eastern pop art, which includes bright colors, and repeated bubble patterns could be transferred to being oil on canvas, and through this shift of medium be viewed as high or "fine" art. With this tool, Lee began, as early as high school, to explore complex themes such as that in his series on the stages of depression in a vibrant style accessible for a modern audience. Along with bridging the geographical and technical divides, Lee's artwork also serves as a surrogate to consider his relationship to society and his own past. Explaining his tendency to depict female subjects, he sites his introspection about how he might perform gender. His self-portrait, one of the few pieces depicting a male figure, therefore does not only focus on the single-eyed figure in the middle of the canvas but the arresting chicken pelt attached to the work. This

addition refers back to his coping with an early childhood confrontation with the death of a beloved pet. Also included in this portrait is his approach to applying paint where he lets some drip down the canvas on its own, imbuing the medium with its own life. Like the chicken pelt, this element adds literal and symbolic layers to the work so that some of the painting hides behind the extra paint. This intentional combination of traditions, mediums, and emotional qualities helps Lee to understand his art as reflecting the multifaceted "meaning of being human."



# Exhibition Review

## "Figures"

by Helena Zittel

The "Figures" title of Rachel Dirk, Lawrence Davis, and Josef Yi's show encapsulates the way in which each artist uses the human body in their respective works. Rachel Dirk's large oil paintings of female nudes rendered in expressive impressionistic brushwork conveys the subtle emotion in her subjects. The centrality of the female figure painted in soft organic colors helps demonstrate Dirk's emphasis on the de-sexualization of the female body. Her piece titled "Soot" has real layers of soot on the surface of the painting, reminding the viewer of the impermanence of the painting as a physical object, as well as adding a layer of emotional depth and a patina of experience. Lawrence Davis also works in oils but manages the medium in a much different way from Dirk. The distinctive angular bodies and richly saturated colors convey intense psychological narrative. The painting titled "Haley" looks from a distance like a simple reclining female nude, but looking closer, there are supernatural twisting limbs, slightly reminiscent of Igres Odalisque. Davis' highly stylized figures demonstrate the way in which the human body can be used to convey complex psychologies and otherworldly narratives. Joseph Lee's artwork features a mixture of traditional

studies and anime-influenced figures. Lee works in both oil paint and ceramic, and each of his pieces creates an alternate world. Similar faces crowd each painting, echoed by the physical crowding of his paintings on the wall. Bulbous growths seem to infect and enclose Li's ceramic sculptures of human figures, indicating deep emotional meaning. The differing styles of each of the artists are made cohesive under the theme of "Figures," and each body of work demonstrates the way that emotion and narrative is demonstrated via the human form.



# **Kelly Roberts**

## **by Cassondra McMichael**

Being a natural born doodler and always having exerted an interest in the natural beauty presented in the human figure, Kelly Roberts has combined these two qualities in the artworks exhibited in her Senior Show. Though Kelly's artistic style was initially hyper realistic paintings of human figures, her style has slowly changed over the course of her academic career at UC Davis. Pushed out of her comfort zone by professors, Kelly's artistic style now consists of abstract human figures that have been rendered to the most basic geometric shapes that are then presented in various colors and tones. Though she has admitted that her subject matter is initially hard to identify in the chaos presented on the canvas, she says that her abstract paintings offer more depth than what would originally be demonstrated in her older hyper realistic figure paintings. Because the play of color and shape, both with the deconstructed subject matter and the fragmented background that the figure is placed in, cause the geometric masses within the canvas seem to move within each other. Though Kelly has commented that she has deconstructed the human figure as much as she could without the viewer being unable to recognize the intended subject matter, she plans to continue her

experimentation in abstract painting through other means. Rather than continuing to deconstruct the human figure, Kelly will instead pursue the interest of deconstructing the finished canvas into separate panels, which will subsequently be comprised of the patterns of primary and secondary colors created throughout the process of finishing a particular artwork, as she continues to pursue her career as an artist.



# Ciera Pasturel

by Sarraa Mohamed Ali

Are you going to tell us a story?

It's not what's in the pictures....

Sports can be art?

"It's not just mechanical and rigid scenes"

But....

Can you feel that? Excitement?

Yes...

" I call the orange dirt around the field magic dust"

Ciera Pasturel is a photographer studying Studio Art with an emphasis in photography and a minor in Art History. In her Senior Show, Ciera is exhibiting a series of photographs that best highlights the turning point in her career and passion. The photographs were taken while Ciera had worked as a photo-intern for the San Francisco Giants baseball team. Three years prior to this internship, she had believed that she wanted to be a photojournalist. However, as she was introduced to sports photography, something in sports ignited a new passion in her. It's perhaps because she had grown up with sports that she feels she's continuing her family tradition with sports photography. The photographs are centered on capturing the fan culture and

the emotions outside the baseball field. They carry a sense of excitement, and display a soft battle and contradiction between the subject matter and the editing process. Though some of the images are either compacted with positive space or reveal too much negative space, one is still able hear the crowd screaming and experience the overwhelming and emotional environment. However, because the photographs were edited with a 1920-1930's black and white effect rather than the vibrant colors typical of 2016-2017 photography, Ciera is simultaneously able to create an intimate and quiet moment within her photographs. As the crowd is depicted frozen in their excitement, the viewer is able to breathe before everyone begins to scream again.



# Diana Tabarez

## by Cynthia Pantoja

Diana Tabarez's source of inspiration was her family and upbringing, as she mentions that at the beginning of second grade she began to move from house to house. Using art as a therapeutic way to heal from all the shifts that were occurring and the unstable environment that she had been exposed to, Diana Tabarez's artwork shows substance and other lived experiences that she had to go through while growing up. Though Diana shares the journey that she has embarked on, she hopes that the viewer can find some peace in each of her displayed artworks in the Senior Show. In the hopes that she can remind people to slow down a little bit and not overwork oneself to the point of getting overwhelmed. Given that Diana has experiences with constant changes throughout her life, she imparts the lesson of appreciating transitional periods and moments of "in between" on to her audience through her artwork. Though Diana intends to continue practicing art she aspires to one day combine this love with her passion for education. Still unsure whether or not she would like to be a school counselor or teacher for middle school students, Diana nonetheless hopes to incorporate art as a resource for students to use it as a tool to

navigate through life and learn to have an appreciation of whatever comes their way. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that whichever path Diana does decide to choose she will always seek to help others find comfort and the beauty of life through the arts just as she did.



# Exhibition Review

## The Sixth Senior Show by Louisa Brandt

The May 13-18 Basement Gallery exhibit featured the artwork of Ciera Pasturel, Kelly Roberts, and Diana Tabarez. The addition of chairs to the gallery emphasized that the visitor should not rush through the space, but give time to the separate artists even though their ideas created a dialogue as a whole through their emphasis on the intangible sense of nostalgia.

Pasturel's black and white photographic series documenting her time as an intern with the San Francisco Giants' baseball team places the gallery viewer in the stands watching the team's unrealized hope to win a fourth consecutive "even year" World Series. Pasturel's photos convey this sense of the inevitability by showing moments of celebration through the glow and softness of black-and-white film photography even though these works are in fact manipulated from digital originals, as if we are seeing the present as past.

The fractured colors used in Roberts' abstracted paintings of figures contribute to a sense that they are the emanation of memories coming from her subjects who all look away from or past the viewer. In "Burn," a woman sits, with her nude back turned to us, on top of a fabric version of

the Bill of Rights, rejecting our gaze as well as the immense American flag that hangs to her right even as its colors play on her skin. The combination of bright colors and unavailable subject separates us from the paintings, much like gazing at them might allow us a distance from our own lives.

Tabarez's paintings touch on more personal themes that help to ground her much like the works show figures as part of their surroundings. The most apparent of this theme is in the portrait of her father in which his entire form repeats and mixes with the green chair he sits on. The link between chairs and it being an imprint of the self explores the connection of person and place, especially expressive during moments of repose, and the power of memories of people can be part of the space they occupied. The inclusion of chairs into the gallery, while not part of the artists' design, is particularly apt for the exhibit. As Pasturel, Roberts and Tabarez examine the connection between sitting, the figure, and memory, the gallery creates the space to become an equally participating observer of these personal moments.

# Kyla Wiegand

by Sarraa Mohamed Ali

Kyla Wiegand's work is inspired by the recent California storms that have brought life to a land that had suffered a drought for the past several years. Her work is an exploration of raw materials as each unstretched canvas interacts playfully with gesso and other different paints to create ripples on the outside edge. Though Kyla aims to capture the characteristics of the recent storms through the softness and kindness in her paintings. She views storms as invigorating since they are a mixture of intimidation, darkness and beauty. Moreover, just as the recent California storms have created a fresh start for the barren landscape, Kyla's own personal storms and battles have helped breathe new life into her, making her a better artist and person. While most of her work predominantly use the color black, a color

that is characteristically harsh if not used properly, gently blends with the different shades of white and pink while also maintaining its own identity. When asked when she is certain that a painting is done, Kyla replied that some of her paintings represent a moment in time. As time passes by, the painting is forced to be complete while other paintings can never be finished. When Kyla was also asked her if she will ever move on from her current style, she replied, "only when I reach perfection." To her, perfection is boring and there is something liberating about mistakes. The canvas has been forgiving. It listens and carries her worries, fears and dreams. As the paint flows widely on the canvas, each painting becomes special. Each painting has its own identity.



# Cynthia Chong

by Cynthia Pantoja

Influenced by the imaginative and dreamlike worlds depicted in Surrealist artworks, Cynthia Chong was drawn to art initially because of limitations of words in trying to express emotions. Her inspirations came from valuable life experiences, memories, imaginations and dreams. To Cynthia, these aspects of life are just as important to her as the colors, emotions and creativity put into her artwork, which allow her to communicate messages and ideas to her audience. However, this does not imply that Cynthia's interpreted message may be the same one that is received by the viewer when they analyze her artworks. Either way, Cynthia continues to create artworks through the use of colors and imagination in order to create artworks that visually communicate, inspire, and create sympathy within society. This ultimately results in artworks that are visually playful, vibrant, and produce a sense of familiarity since many of the colors used in Cynthia's artworks resemble those used in children's books.



*Cynthia Chong's surrealist inspired work implores the viewer to apply themselves in understanding and interpreting the pieces to arrive at a meadow of satisfaction and understanding. This process is unique to the individual, and her artist statement reminds us that each of our conclusions will arrive at a slightly different place and the geography of this destination varies based on our route of comprehension influenced by past experiences, memories, dreams, and the internalized bias of our own monologue.*

-Greta Schatz

# **Ellie Lopez**

## **by Cassondra McMichael**

Maria "Ellie" Lopez began her journey as an artist when she was 16 years old. Initially interested in anime, Ellie found herself becoming particularly interested with the depiction of the male face overtime. Prompted by the Art Historical notion of the male gaze of the female figure, Ellie decided to challenge this notion by subjecting men to the female gaze. Taking advantage of this vulnerable position, Ellie then pushes her subject matter further by going outside of the typical canon representation of men as being chiseled, heroic, and dominant figures. Inspired by the vulnerability expressed by Ellie's grandfather when her grandmother became sick and her own emotional experiences, Ellie sought to depict men the way they should be seen, which is another human being or "creature" that is equally subjectable to emotional vulnerability. While many of Ellie's exhibited works in her Senior Show are physical manifestations of her own emotional hardships, her artworks also aim to interact with the viewer through their own personal emotional experiences. Ellie is able to achieve this by meticulously animates the eyes of her male portraits to ensure that a range of emotions can be communicated and interacted with to the viewer. This, in

addition to the saying, "eyes are the windows into one's soul," results in something that is both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. While the stranger's eyes in Ellie's portraits work to captivate the wondering viewer, the unfamiliar face begins to morph into something that we once saw in ourselves. Whether it was the face that stared back at us when we were uncertain about our path, the anger at the difficulty of life's obstacles, or the hope that fills us when we arrive victorious from finals.



# Exhibition Review

## "Here's the Thing"

by Candace Tyrrell

The senior show consisting of Kyla Wiegand, Ellie Lopez and Cynthia Chong was a unique experience of different styles and processes that the artists brought forth, and was exceptional in capturing the art at its best. All the paintings had the right amount of space between them and was at average eye level for the visitor. Even though the wall text was mounted in odd places beside the paintings, the font of the text was of good size and overall didn't interfere with the main function of the gallery devoted to undergraduates. The appearance of the show was that two of the artists, Kyla and Ellie, had either collaborated together or had been interacting with each other, and while the third artist's work seemed different from the others it was placed on its own wall so as to keep the show organized. This was confirmed by one of the artists, Kyla Wiegand, who was at the gallery installing more pieces. The questions about the show overall lead to a discussion of her works and what they represented, answering questions I had about her art as I was looking at it.

When I spoke to Kyla Wiegand at the gallery she mentioned her pieces in the show were more focused on and about the production of her art rather than having a finished product; her art is more

about exploring the process of creating artworks by allowing the paintings to drip, fall, and splatter. She allows for the paint to run and mix in different places, allowing change to happen and adjust from there. More discussion was made from there about what her art represented and what the message she was trying to convey to the viewer. In that regard her art is not meant to have a specific message for the audience, the message is about what the viewer can make of it and what they wanted out of the experience. The insight was helpful and allowed her works to be looked at more in depth, as well was explaining how the show was organized overall. In fact, the artist message of the viewer deciding the message is shared by Ellie Lopez as she plays with the concept of the male subject. Ultimately the show was portrayed well and provided different ways of exploring the medium of paint, with an overall freedom to the viewer to form the message behind the works.

"The rich colors inflicted on the canvas [of the works] were beautifully painted. Even though some of the art had dark shades they were smoothly plotted out." Rebekah Peña, visitor.

# Roxanne Deyerle

## by Louisa Brandt

Roxanne Deyerle's artwork blurs the borders between repurposing/commercial branding, and propaganda/self expression. Though her interests span the different mediums of painting, as well as numerous types of printmaking, she presents the viewer with non-confrontational motifs that appear in multiple works. On the surface, Roxanne shows the versatility of her materials, but also brings to bear the meaning of an image that can be employed as separate parts and altered in color and presentation to form different artworks. While the patterns are primarily floral, her work offers an open space to consider how the reuse of such stencil pieces could be employed as a symbol for political or commercial ends. Roxanne's exploration of Snapchat, the popular smartphone application often used for "selfies," address the theme of the mass-produced versus personal image. Her framed Snapchat portraits which use the features available on the app to alter the image so much that she is nearly unrecognizable, challenges the assumption that these editing options will be used to make the user appear more stereotypically "beautiful," but instead funny, weird or ugly. The technique of reusing and reapplying available materials and public

content connects Roxanne's emphasis on borders to her greater point about "utopia," a word not often used for its literal definition as a "nowhere." The word "utopia" perhaps should be considered as a way for the viewer to analyze the implications of anonymous mass produced images and ephemeral self-fashioning.



# Yaquelin Ruiz

## by Louisa Brandt

Contrary to her medium of choice, Yaquelin Ruiz's works cannot be duplicated. Using the monotyping technique, her artworks share aspects of both traditional printmaking as they are made using a pre-cut plexi-glass plate, and painting as each work is made unique through the alteration of the image during, after or because of the printing process. For example, in one succession of images hung together as a series, Yaquelin made the set using the same base image, in which each sequential image is either altered by applying more ink to the plexi-glass plate, leaving traces of the original ink creating "ghosts" of the first print, or adding different material to a dried print. In another assemblage of prints, Yaquelin chose a different color for each work, arranging them to create a collage much like a wall of posters but without identical repetition. As a method distinct from mass-produced propaganda, monotypes offer meaning to her subject matter of the Syrian refugee crisis so it is not again a conflict to be "consumed" by an American public as a succession of news articles and images indistinct from one another. In altering her prints to make them discrete works, she draws attention to the dual nature of the conflict which is at once, indeed, a repeated cycle

of violence and destruction suffered by Syria's innocent citizens, but within each story is undeniably an individual whose life has been taken or destroyed through urban bombing or their desire to flee the region. Yaquelin's perceptive and compassionate depictions of the Syrian Civil War do not attempt to cover up the cataclysmic and painfully graphic nature of the conflict, but by applying her own imprint on each work she allows her nameless subjects to reclaim their humanity, a step not always taken by outsiders trying to understand unspeakable tragedy.



# Exhibition Review

## The Eight Senior Show

by Sarraa Mohamed Ali

Is it time? I asked myself. I was waiting for Trump's ideology and politics to trickle into one of the senior shows. Borders ...Walls...how would Yaquelin and Roxanne respond to them?

*Yaquelin depended on the use of negative space and black color as a contrast created a battle scene.*

As I walked in the exhibition, I found however something deeper than any particular political figure. I found a space that was virtually divided between the question of survival and the question of exploring identity and sexuality. Yaquelin depended on the use of negative space and black color as a contrast created a battle scene. Even though gender was blurred, I sensed the characters were men,... no, they were boys. I saw youth. The repetitive posters with alternated colors of white, silver and gold trapped time. The war is going to be repeated over and over again. Only the running blood can clean the scene and prepare the canvas for a new death. Yaquelin's art work didn't bring me closure. It brought instead a mother protecting her child and bright colors that fight off the darkness to

reveal two lovers on oil painting. Is the mother a representation of a land that tries to protect its people? Is it love a symbol of hope? I don't know. All I knew was that now I'm half way into the exhibition and I'm faced with Roxanne's work. I'm torn with guilt. Should I think of fighting identity, sexuality and beauty standards when someone else is fighting bullets and bombs? This is the world that we live in today. Roxanne's art explored the effect of technology and software such as photoshop and snapchat that create an illusion of self. She questioned our own hypocrisy, claiming to fight beauty standards and yet being appealed and attracted to "beautiful" features of large eyes, small nose and full lips. Her use of repetitive posters that composed of some organized and some chaotic marks reflected a mind or a soul trying to be freed from the borders of the paper. In the end, as I left the exhibition, I stood to take one final picture of the space and I thought there is no need for Trump's wall, we have already build our own walls to protect our hearts from feeling others' suffering and pain.

# **Wendy Liu**

**by Candace Tyrrell**

Deconstructed is a reassembled image of trees, distorted and fragmented by Liu's disassembling process. The fragmentation is further proven with the difference in the subject matter, in some areas the trees appear as they would in the natural world but in others the branches appear man-cut wood.

Deconstructing is way that Liu plays with memories by taking apart an original image and then reassembling it into a work that is made whole. Deconstructing is made up of reconfigured buildings, fragmented and distorted by Liu's process that in some ways is a literal deconstruction of memories.

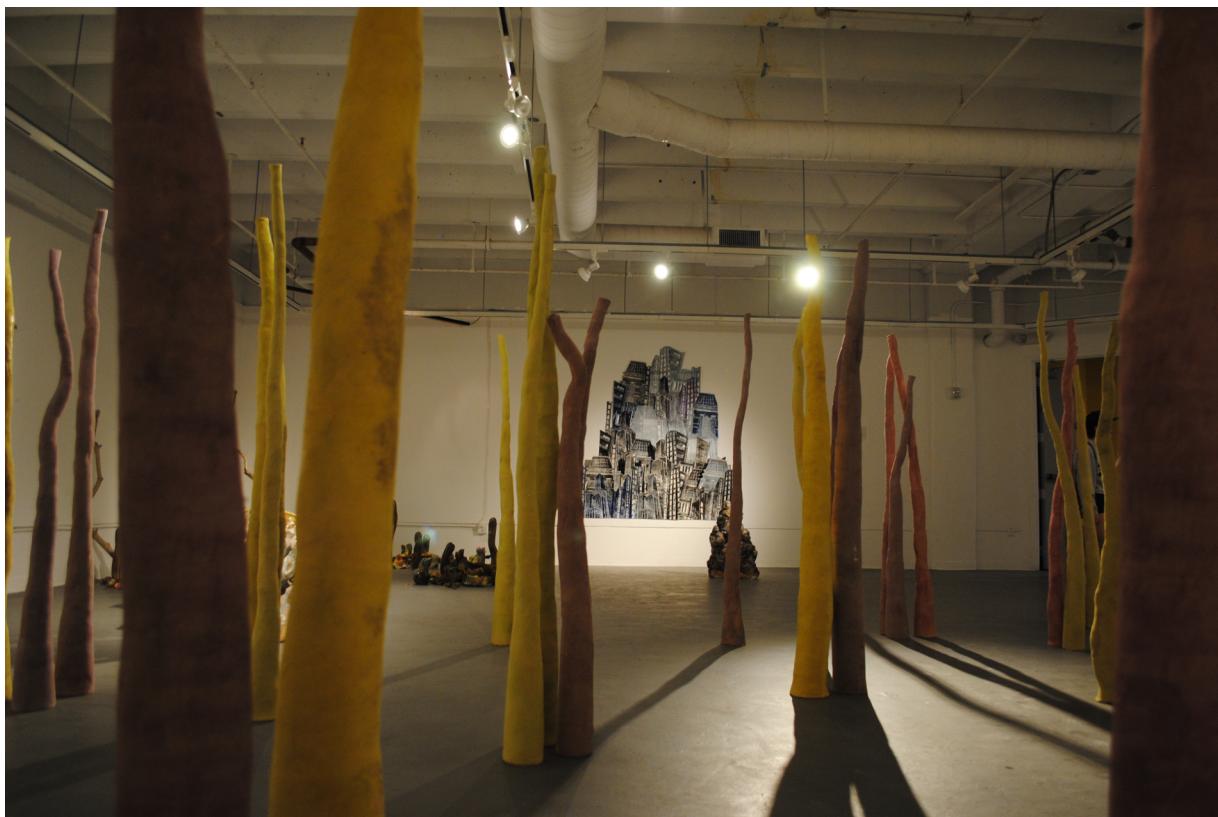


# **Abby Auerbach, Wendy Liu and Elisa Courtway**

## **by Sarraa Mohamed Ali**

Abby, Wendy and Elisa have been inspired by rocks, floral, forests and artificial city landscapes. Their art depicts reality through emphasis of the subconsciousness. They create a world where imagination is the truth and reality is an idea. In some of the work, Wendy breaks the boundaries between the world of an unfamiliar forest and her home city to create a space that may define our changing and growing identity. A space

that Elisa then borrows to build strong and fragile ceramics that is safe to wander through and explore femininity and sexuality. A space that Abby also uses to find a reminiscence of the body form and natural phenomena. The stories that are behind the "AWE" exhibition, I can't do them justice. But perhaps it doesn't matter, because the stories that are going to be told for the next few hours are ours.



# Exhibition Review

"AWE"

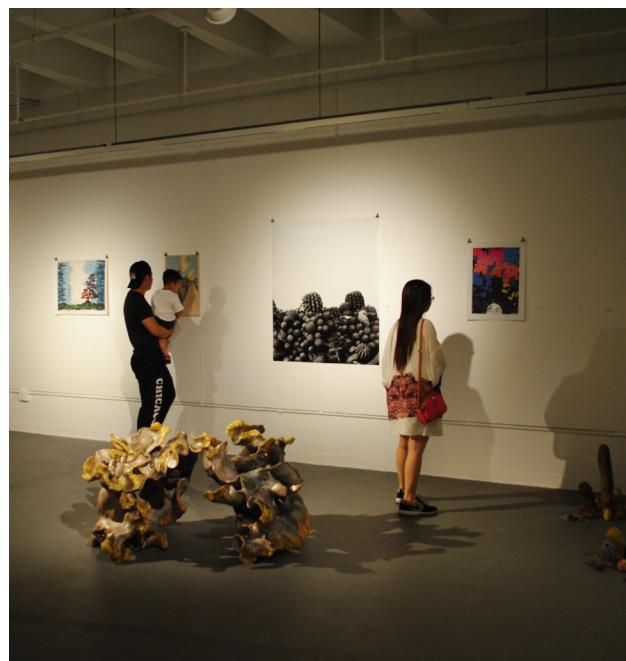
by Louisa Brandt

Awe is defined as being "a strong feeling of fear, respect and wonder." The clever title of Abby Auerbach, Wendy Liu, and Elisa Courtway's senior show displayed from June 3-8, AWE, provides an apt lens to examine their exhibit filled with imaginative ceramic pieces, and delicate drawings, photographs, prints, and etchings on the walls. While the works were all individually identified, the dialogue created through their presentation made them like one unit inviting the audience to reflect on their meaning of awe.

Beginning at top of the stairs, a coral inspired statue marks the way down to the Basement Gallery, preparing the visitor for the abundance of ceramics inside. The sculpture series turned the gallery space into a forest of multicolored tendrils, barnacle-like painted ceramics attached to the pillar and a mélange of driftwood and naturally colored ceramics in a corner. Through and around these different environments were two dimensional works largely of urban spaces in similarly muted colors, some pastels, and light-hearted as Liu's "My House," or dark like her woodprint collage "Deconstructed." The act of walking into or looking between the sculptures themselves makes the small sign on the

door suggesting that visitors leave their backpacks behind conform to the fear of hurting the works, respect for the works like nature itself, and wonder at one might find on the other side.

AWE created the opportunity to explore, feel, and consider what makes unnerves us and what is comfortingly familiar. Auerbach, Liu, and Courtway's cohesive exhibit therefore successfully raised questions about how we react to art, with awe or otherwise, and if these reactions are appropriate for the subject matter.

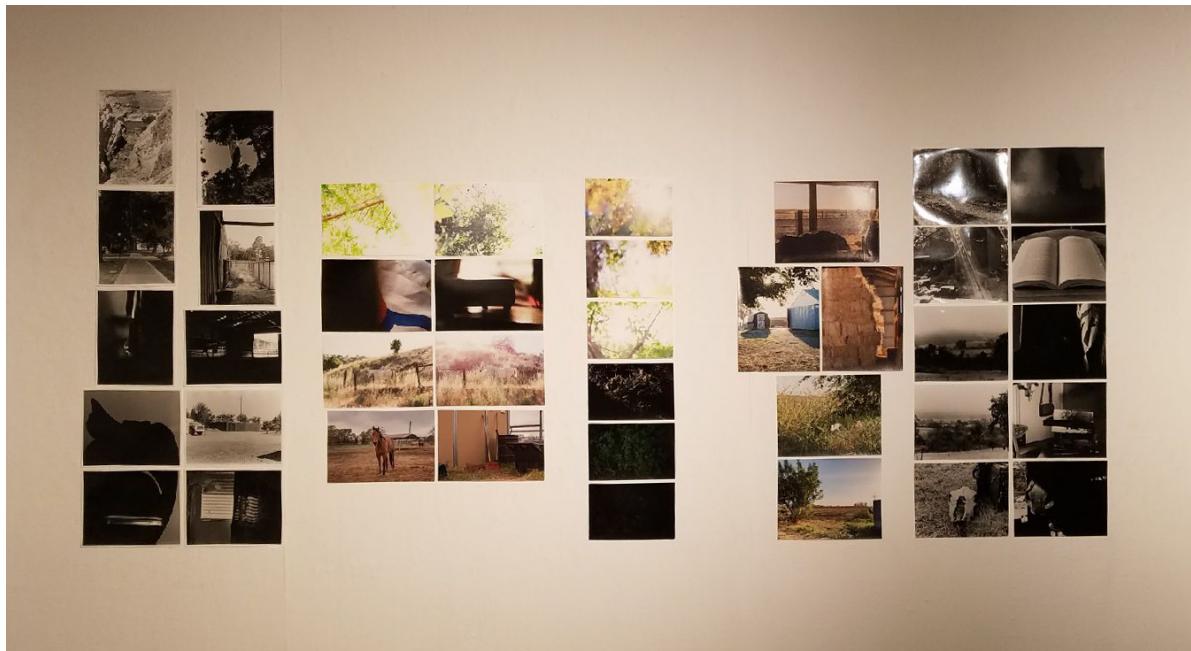


# Nicole Washington

## by Greta Schatz

Nicole Washington's senior show illustrates the transformation of her technique and skill as a photographer, while the subject matter regresses to her roots in equestrianism, resulting in an exploration of her familiar surroundings with an unfamiliar perspective. Her pieces prompt the viewer to pause and reflect on the image, simultaneously intrigued and perplexed by the abreacted images. As a

double English and Art Studio major, Nicole offers the unique perspective of writing narratives both linguistically and artistically. Her senior show is the culmination of her own personal narrative at Davis, and it is our pleasure as the audience, to be guided through her life through the lens of her digital and film camera.



# Jullianna Ferreyra

## by Candace Tyrrell

Force is a ceramic sculpture that has offered Jullianna Ferreyra a way to focus on the contraction and releasing of breathing in a unique abstract way. The nature of this piece is to convey the act of breathing, to which Jullianna has sculpted a subject that is supposed to feel like it is growing, but at the same time is being pressed or weighed down by force. This is one of the many works Jullianna uses to convey certain aspects of the living body, in an attempt to invoke discussion about sexuality and control over one's body. Force sheds light on this subject by having the work appear weighed down, with the drips of yellows and brown further aiding in adding to Jullianna's passion to appeal her message to her audience. Overall this artwork brilliantly focuses on the autonomy of the human form and sexuality that is not often discussed. Red offers Julliana Ferreyra a way to bring out discussion of an avoidable subject in our society—the discussion of menstruation. The ceramic sculpture is fairly large with various tones of browns, blacks and yellows, but what makes it relevant to the artist's intent is the red stain in the crevice of the sculpture. This crevice alludes to a vagina, given the strategic placement of the red glaze, which links this work to Jullianna's repeating reference to the

living body as seen in her other works throughout her Senior Show. In this work of art Jullianna is conveying to the audience her message that there is uncomfortableness about talking about menstruation, further indicating the lack of control women have over their own bodies. In many ways Red is Jullianna's approach to removing the shame and opening up the dialogue of menstruation, instead of referring to it as a subject that women should continuously keep hidden away.



# **Exhibition Review**

## **The Tenth Senior Show**

**by Sarraa Mohamed Ali**

As I walked in, the space felt empty. There was little text to guide me around. It was hard to find a connection between the three artists, but as time passed by I could see it. Nature was the common theme.

Devanny reconciled the nature of the city where she grew up in with her new home, the drawing studio. She captured empty parks, streets and train stations, not to evoke sadness or loneliness but rather a sense of peaceful nostalgia. She established intimacy and care to her new home by having a model dancing around in still images. The model's movements then create a conversation with Julianna's ceramic sculptures, which stood near the middle of the room representing body forms dancing and flirting with each other; as if they were sharing a secret joke. The sculptures were painted with earth tone. They stood on cold red platforms that didn't steal away from their beauty. They're sensational with an appeal to touch them. As for Nicole, there was a connection to nature and animals in specific horses and her passion for solidarity. Her images were bright. I could feel the playful warm California sun on my skin. Overall, there was a maternal love in the space. Even though the sketches and painting were in grey tones, I found myself filling in colors in my mind to see my own mother.

# Anna de Benedictis

## by Kaitlyn Griggs

Enrolled in both Beginning and Advanced Ceramics this Spring Quarter, Anna de Benedictis discovered her affinity for the process and material qualities of clay and sculpture. Color, form, and space physically present themselves in three dimensional works, providing Anna with multifaceted opportunities to communicate with her artwork.

*..Bodies come in different forms... Mine is small and broken, but still whole."*

Anna's experiences with her cancer diagnosis at age fifteen and recent car crash in January, present themselves in her fragmented self portraits. Tackling her own bodily trauma and the physical makeup of the human body, Anna's pieces utilize heavy symbolism. "...Bodies come in different forms and hold different experiences... Mine is small and broken, but still whole." The process of creating the sculpture is integral to her work and the mess is part of the art. The act of dipping cloth and string in slip, having it burn out in the kiln, is transformative. "The breaking and rebuilding .... burning to become delicate, hard and strong" is interconnected to her own bodily experience and presents a personal narrative to her concentrated body of work.



# Kaitlyn Griggs

by Helena Zittel

Temporality and the physical space of the Art Studio department is central to the theme of Kaitlyn's art. Her work is firmly rooted in the present, and she strives to capture exact moments in the art studio as an act of preservation. The pieces that Kaitlyn creates are focused not only on the figure, but on the physical environment of the studio as well.

*Kaitlyn emphasizes the setting for the act of creating art as a kind of "figure" in its own right.*

By painting or drawing a figure within the context of the studio, Kaitlyn emphasizes the setting for the act of creating art as a kind of "figure" in its own right. As an Art History minor, Kaitlyn is fascinated by the way that art functions as a type of archive, and by purposefully including the physical space of the studio she captures the constantly-shifting atmosphere of creation that being an Art Studio student embodies.



# Christine Lee

## by Louisa Brandt

Little appreciation is given to the artist as a student who tries out new mediums and experiments with subject matter in each work. Christine Lee's artworks seek to confront this as she displays the work from her classes to showcase her improvement over her four years at UC Davis. This challenges the notion that a young artist should entirely know themselves and be able to pursue and produce consistent work. Instead, Christine offers a transitioning self, using humor and images of those important to her to reflect the personal struggles and interests she has confronted while being a full-time student. Altering formal elements into more humor-driven or surreal content has been a way for

Christine to express herself, while also showcasing that rudimentary decisions and execution in art-making are just as valid and existent as "finer" art. Her small series of painted birds scattered throughout the gallery are presented with playful intentions, and are a simple tribute to a species of animal she admires. Yet with Period Piece, a more jarring oil painting addressing stigmas against female biology, Christine illustrates her capability to produce conceptual art that focuses on relevant and topical matters like feminism and sexuality. These representations, sometimes whimsical and other times confronting, show that "just an assignment" can become a body of work.



# Sarraa Mohamed Ali

by Cassondra McMichael

There are five primary emotions in psychology: anger, disgust, sadness, fear, and happiness. We have each felt these emotions at one point or another. They aren't constrained by a language, religion, culture or nationality. Feeling them brings us out of our own biases and judgment towards another person. An example of how these primary emotions are able to do this was one of Sarraa's own experience. As she was about to board to go back to her home in Egypt, she witnessed an older Egyptian woman being demeaned by airport staff. The woman struggled to ask for help in Arabic with little to no knowledge in English. Sarraa felt for her.

*Her photographs center on the emotions projected by her nude models as they are stripped of any identifying marker.*

She imagined the old woman's suit case filled with gifts of affection for her children and possible grandchildren while most probably forgetting herself. She imagined (and knew in her heart) this woman has spent her life caring and loving her family. Yet, because of her

language and clothes, the airport staff had already assigned a label to the woman and treated her with disdain. On other hand, Sarraa with her unusual accent for an Arab woman was treated like a human being for a few seconds before showing her passport. If the elder woman were to have remained quiet and had no identifying marker that would have pointed to her religion, ethnicity, or nationality, would the airport staff still have treated her so differently? It's this incident (among many others) and Sarraa's passion for psychology is what inspires her artwork to explore emotions and their role in allowing strangers, or we as the viewer, connect and feel for what we see. Her photographs center on the emotions projected by her nude models as they are stripped of any identifying marker. Leaving bare for the viewers gaze, a pure and almost innocent depiction of a women feeling lost in a crowded room or a struggling mother with her son. Though there are stories behind each fragmented photograph, it doesn't matter whether or not the viewer is able to interpret the story. Rather, Sarraa's artwork hinges on whether or not the viewer is able to feel when they see a model that happens to embody how we feel. Whether it's the happiness we felt

when we see our families, or the loneliness we experience when we feel lost in the trajectory of our lives. There is no right or wrong answer. These photographs ask the viewer to put aside their biases, ignorance, and judgment if only for a brief moment as we gaze upon an unidentified individual who is captured in a moment that we once experienced.



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