

Faculty Exhibition

Gallery Guide

9.12.2024 – 11.22.2024



VICKI MYHREN GALLERY

Artists and Teachers

This exhibition showcases interdisciplinary and multimedia artworks by current faculty in the School of Art at the University of Denver. Each artwork demonstrates the maker's mastery of their materials. The artists use a wide range of strategies and employ imaginative approaches to explore our relationships with and within the world around us. They do not shy away from the difficult and subjective but seek to investigate the ever-shifting interconnections between humans and the natural environment. Their works consider the boundaries between the physical and digital and tensions between forces seen and unseen, known and unknown. While some artists decenter the human and turn attention to unfamiliar worlds, others dive deep into the human experience. In their roles as teachers and artists, these individuals engage and challenge us, and they encourage us to look at the world through different lenses, to see and experience our position in space and time differently.

Featured Faculty

Damary Beltran	Stephanie Kang
Kate Casanova	Brad Klem
Catherine Chauvin	Roddy MacInnes
Rafael Fajardo	Laurel McMechan
Jennifer Ghormley	Mia Mulvey
Amy Hoagland	Colin Ruff
Deborah Howard	Jodi Stuart
Andrew Huffman	Chinn Wang
Eric D. Johnson	

Damary Beltran

Fight Club

2024

Quilting Cotton

Quilting is a recent addition to my art practice and marks a significant pivot from previous work. This is the first quilt I've created specifically for a show. The process of patchwork and appliqué has introduced a new level of excitement and playfulness to my work. While making this quilt, I was inspired by my cat, Miso. Living with Miso, I have had to reckon with the fact that there are things about him that I don't like but cannot change, because he is a cat and cannot be reasoned with. I simply have to accept those things about him in order to fully accept him. In doing so, I have also learned to accept the things in myself that I cannot reason with or change. In a way, simultaneously learning about Miso and quilting has taught me a lot. The balance of patience, tension, and enjoyment has been a profound and enlightening influence in both my art and life.



Kate Casanova

Foreign Bodies

2024

Glass, metal, silicone

This series explores bodies and the materials that inhabit them. With a focus on organic shapes, Casanova combines glass pieces with metal, silicone and bioplastic. The sculptures imply that humans too, are quasi-biological entities that form, and are formed by, the material world.

Intrauterine Slug Device

2024

Glass, metal, thermoplastic, silicone

Fruit of the Loom

2024

Glass, copper thread, hydrocal, pigment

Star Belly

2022

Paper clay, gypsum, acrylic paint

Bezoar 3

2024

Glass, hydrocal, pigment

Catherine Chauvin

Unravel

2024

Lithograph on Okawara paper

As a printmaker, I love the qualities of hand drawing and the ability to create multiples. Lithography provides both of these qualities. Striving to bring process and ideas together to explore scale, metaphor and more immersive work interests me.

Much of my current work is examining contemporary landscapes and how human activity interrupts those spaces. Knots, nets and fences construct visual boundaries that are often ineffective in holding back natural events. However, a subtext or parallel of this work engages nets to reference metaphors ranging from relationships to pulling together memories to current events. *Unravel* fits in this category.

Rafael Fajardo

Rafael Fajardo with contributions by Rick Griffith and Aaron Middleton

Soil: A Game

Nano RPG rules were created in 2020, print created in 2024

Letterpress printed rule set onto card stock

Silicon

2024

Letterpress printed poem into cardstock

Interposition

2024

Letterpress printed poem onto card stock

Code Drawing 2017 01 21 a 20 07 40

Code Drawing 2017 01 21 a 20 09 07

Code Drawing 2017 01 21 a 20 18 52

2017, 2024

Inkjet print onto acrylic of screen captured states of a program created in Hopscotch for iOS

I have been making code drawings in a number of programming environments for several years. Most often these environments were meant to introduce children to programming. Except for in the eyes of parents and their refrigerator door archives, the work of children is thought to be slight, to be beneath the threshold for conservation. And so the tools and materials created for children have a high acid content and are washable from surfaces. They are erasable, impermanent. And yet the programming environments crafted for children have been carefully devised for visual delight, for lowering the barriers to entry into abstract and difficult algorithmic constructs, for presenting expansive opportunities for expression. It's possible to do serious work in these environments.

The code drawings shared here were created in Hopscotch. I don't know to what extent the makers of Hopscotch have thought about the durability of the works created by their participants - people who, through network effects, co-create value for the company. Children don't often yet have the skill or the drive to reflect and so may not be thought to miss the work if it should suddenly, one day, vanish.

Jennifer Ghormley

Float

2024

Woodblock print on sheer fabric, thread

The intention of this piece is to bring a feeling of tranquility, rest and calm. The shape and pattern of the pieces is loosely inspired by nature and decorative elements. It is a site-specific installation, so it changes every time it is hung, depending on the dynamics of each space. As the viewer moves through the space, the piece gently moves and sways in response to the change in air currents. My favorite part is the play of cast shadows that are created by the lighting, making the piece fill the room.



Amy Hoagland

Thawing Web III

2023

Torch-worked scientific glass, HD video projection (00:52), light refraction

Courtesy of the artist and RULE Gallery

These sculptures span between light, glass, ice, and air, revealing connections in a shared state of constant flux. Moving images of ice in the Arctic thread and flicker through suspended scientific glass sculptures, refracting light like an iris of an eye or a celestial starburst. This sculptural multimedia installation heightens our perceptions of the un verbalized natural phenomena around us by uncovering material and elemental parallels within our environment.

Time Bending Like Water

2024

HD video projection (2:53)

This digital video features a scientific-glass and mirror sculpture reflecting water and the surrounding landscape in addition to my body. In this work I am thinking about ways in which time is expressed in the landscape. The element of reflection is seen frequently across my practice. Mirrors, like water, reflect the surrounding landscapes, providing a new perspective. Mirrors are signifiers of identity and subjectivity; they provide fleeting evidence of our materiality.

Deborah Howard

Migration and Memory

2023

Fragments of boots cast in wax and encaustic paint

Human migration is a natural process that has existed throughout time. It mirrors the movement of animals to survive and evolve.

Magnetic Moments

2024

Fragments of books cast in wax and encaustic paint

I learn from my students, and sometimes we collaborate. In this painting, students in my Painting Portfolio workshop painted together on this board using encaustic paint, an ancient Egyptian medium that must be molten hot to use. Later, I took the board to my studio, responded to the random colors and shapes, and harmonized them with new colors and the addition of three-dimensional boot fragments. The process was fluid and came together naturally by listening to the painting.

Beyond the Reach of Memory

Drawing: Graphite on clay-coated paper, 2022

Poem: Written on an index card on an old typewriter, 2023

The shoe depicted in this drawing is based on a photo of an ancient Roman shoe from two thousand years ago. The poem was written by a young man sitting at an antique typewriter near the plaza in Santa Fe, New Mexico. I paid him \$20 to write a poem. Before writing he asked me to give him two or three words. I said: "I cast shoes to make art". His resulting poem captures the reasons why I make art with shoes that is more profound than what I normally write. This young man and his poem came out of the void to remind me of the importance of all the arts, and that art can connect us to our past on a primal level.

Golda's Garden

2024

Fragments of boots cast in wax and encaustic paint

This painting is a response to the terrorist attack in Israel October 7th, 2023, and the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas. The attack and the war haunt me daily.

Andrew Huffman

Clearcreek Swallowtails

2022

Acrylic on canvas

Thundercloud

2023

Acrylic on canvas

The paintings *Thundercloud* and *Clear Creek Swallowtails* celebrate my frequent routine of cold soaking in different and equally beautiful high-elevation environments to clear my head, work out, hike, relax, and fish. The rippling effect of the abstracted curvilinear forms elicit the fluidity of running water, fluttering butterflies, fluctuating cloud patterns, and wind movements among many other things. The verticality of the *Clear Creek Swallowtails* composition takes inspiration from the monumental heights of Colorado's Clear Creek Canyon experienced while cold soaking in its streams. The palette actively pulls from the Colorado environment while highlighting the vivid hues found throughout the many fluttering Western Tiger Swallowtail butterflies.

Likewise, the oscillating downward-upward ovular composition in *Thundercloud* takes inspiration from a fishing trip turned precipitating-thunderous-downpour while hiking along the South St. Vrain Creek not far from the Indian Peaks Wilderness in Boulder County. The grey and colorful hues found within *Thundercloud* were partly extracted from thunderclouds and the flourishing flora along the creek side. The chromatic fluorescent intensities are balanced out by the abundance of grey hues along with the neutrality of the canvas tones. *Thundercloud* magnifies a dichotomy between the inherent beauty found throughout the mountainous landscape amongst the immediate looming danger of downpouring flood-zones and close-range lightning at high elevations. The orchestration and directionality of the many shapes and tonalities evoke an enigmatic sense of calm reverberating through a floating imaginative terrain.

Eric D. Johnson

Ecotension X, Kinetic Installation

2024

Concrete casted monotype, rebar, rubber bands, lag bolts, and washers

Ecotension X is a kinetic installation based on statistical data from sources such as the World Health Organization, that allows the viewer to feel the ever-increasing weight of our collective human biomass which strains the natural systems that are the foundation of our modern world. When the human biomass becomes unbearable, these vital systems will snap, greatly affecting our future.

Stephanie Kang

This is Fiction

2023

Color video with sound (12 minutes, 30 seconds)

Set in 1930s Japan, the film *Okawo Koete* follows the true story of the artist's great-grandfather Mah Haesong, a renowned Korean writer who lived in Japan during the occupation era. Although the film reflects confirmed biographical details about his life, like most biopics, it does not hide the creative freedoms that it took in its storytelling, delineating the underlying tensions that exist between official and unofficial histories and how fact and fiction can easily become distorted. In "This is Fiction", Stephanie Kang remixes existing archival materials, like *Okawo Koete*, with personal family relics to resuscitate those memories that have been lost in time, subconsciously buried in the past by transgenerational experiences of trauma and forgetting. By drawing connecting threads between Mah Haesong's experiences of cultural and political suppression during the Japanese occupation, his children's memories of the Korean War and their immigration to the United States, and the artist's own disconnections to these linguistic and cultural heritages, "This is Fiction" reframes diasporic dislocation through a hopeful and liberatory mindset that reimagines the forgotten as a source of new possibilities. By playing upon the fictionalization that often happens within canonized accounts of history, it allows space for a counter-memory that reconfigures the past, conjuring an adaptable and ever-shifting conception of reality.

Bradley Klem

Pure Ice

2022

Porcelain, china paint

Our planet is undergoing irreversible change, driven by our relentless consumption and pollution. My work explores the intersection of these human impacts and the environment, focusing on the cultural significance of materials like ceramic and plastic. Historically, ceramics have served as vessels for storytelling, preserving the essence of civilizations. However, plastic waste dominates our narrative today, an irony I capture through my art.

"Pure Ice" is a porcelain sculpture that confronts this irony head-on. Inspired by the everyday sight of ice bags adorned with whimsical images of penguins and polar bears—creatures threatened by the very industry that produces these plastic bags—this piece embodies a stark reality. The cheerful cartoon on the front contrasts with the grim image of a skeletal polar bear on the back, revealing the dark humor and tragic consequences of our environmental negligence.

By replicating this plastic artifact in porcelain, I aim to elevate the conversation around our climate crisis. The sculpture serves as both a critique and a commentary on the absurdity of our cultural artifacts, questioning what legacy we leave behind. Will our history be marked by the beauty of the natural world or by the plastic remnants of our destructive habits?

These are the artifacts of the Anthropocene.

Roddy McInnes

Honeymoon in Finland

2021 - 2023

Archival digital photographs

Honeymoon in Finland is the second project inspired by the discovery of an album of family photographs in a Denver, Colorado antique mall. A North Dakota woman, Nina Weiste, made the photographs in 1917. Nina's photographs created a lens through which I could examine how family memories are constructed and reinforced, and they allowed me to extend that understanding to my own experiences. The general themes in our photographs are essentially the same, which led me to invite Nina into my family album and me into hers. The first project resulted in the publication of a book, *Family Album* (2017).

Nina's Grave (Imitate Proximity), Wheatridge, Colorado, 2021

103 St. 392 Ave., Savo Township South Dakota. Two Miles from the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church, 2021

New Finnish Church, Savo, South Dakota, 2023

Opera House, Ellendale, North Dakota, 2023

Outhouse, Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church, 2021

Self-portrait, Opera House, Ellendale, North Dakota, 2022

Congregation, Savo Finnish Church, Brown County, South Dakota, 2022

Wedding, Savo Finnish Church, Brown County, South Dakota, 2022

Nina's ancestral home, Jokijarvi, Finland, 2021

Before the Storm (homage to Kalle Päätalo), Jakijavi, Finland, 2023

Myself, Jokijavari, Finland, 2023

After the Storm (homage to Kalle Päätalo), Savo Finnish Church, Brown County, South Dakota, 2023

Laurel McMechan

Netting (Diver)

2024

Acrylic, embroidery thread, copper tacks, wood

Netting (Galloway/ Tacoma Transit/ Basra Iraq)

2024

Acrylic, embroidery thread, wood

Netting (Government Food/ Good Conduct/ PTSD)

2024

Acrylic on canvas

Our lives are tapestries of memory and experience, altered and repaired over time. This work is inspired by the warp and weft of memory and the present. Paint squeezed through woven netting is a metaphor for the way memory and experiences fuse together. The combination of fabric, ribbon, thread, plastic and paint creates a patchwork of pattern, texture and personal symbolism. Embedded references and codes include signal flags, camouflage designs and military ribbons.

Deborah Howard and Laurel McMechan

Ida B. Wells Barnett

2024

Printed and painted silk, cut plexi-glass, and mirrors

Our installation honors Ida B. Wells who was born enslaved. She was a suffragist marginalized by White women in the movement.

She dedicated her life as a Civil Rights activist to put an end to the horrors of lynching of Black men, women, and children that was legal in the U.S. during her lifetime. Lynching was gradually outlawed by individual states, but shockingly, was not outlawed by the federal government until 2022.

A driven journalist, Ida had her own newspaper in Mississippi that was burned down by a White mob. She escaped to Chicago where she wrote articles and lectured in the North and Great Britain on the terrors of lynching.

The plexiglass shapes in our installation represent gerrymandered congressional districts. We believe past and current gerrymandering is an insidious form of racism that blocks Black and Brown citizens' participation in representative government that mirrors the political racism Ida endured.

We created this installation remotely during the pandemic for an exhibition celebrating the 100-year anniversary of women's right to vote. The process of collaboration pushed our creativity, enabling us to invent a new work of art that we could not have made alone.

Ida's legacy is vital at this moment in time. Ida's conviction and perseverance paved the way for Vice President Kamala Harris to possibly become our first woman president of color.

Mia Mulvey

Inscription a Hand Writing (Lilliehöökreen)

2024

Cyanotype, porcelain, sound

This piece is a collaborative work between artist Mia Mulvey and poet Bin Ramke. To activate the work, the ceramic object must be picked up and held close to the surface of the image, turning the paper itself into a speaker.

The Mobility of Geology (Valley of Fires, White Sands, Continental Divide)

2024

Documentation of sculptural action in landscape, ceramic

Throughout deep time, geology itself has been moving and changing its location around the globe. This work explores the potential of non-human communication across time at rates faster than the slow transformation of geologic time. Using the human body as a host for mobility across landscapes, this rock, cast from one residing in Colorado's Rocky Mountains, exists as a replica with abilities to form dialogues between landscapes. Utilizing acoustic horns as both receivers and conveyors of intangible knowledge, what information would this mass of earth be able to communicate and understand?

Colin Ruff

A Sound Principle

2024

Graphite, India ink, colored pencil, gouache collage

Around and Around We Go

2024

Graphite, pastel, colored pencil, gouache collage

I'm interested in the role "experience" plays in the construction of our reality, the brief moments of cognition where we recognize something as new or familiar. I explore our experience with visual motifs and "iconography" as a commutable tool. My work reconstitutes visual motifs and iconographies by deconstructing and reconfiguring them, seeking to destabilize and at times critique the original intent behind many of these images. Through this process, I hope to create a dialogue of the collective experience both physically and socially, personally and satirically. My art operates in the mode of postmodernism, creating a meta-narrative within the larger, grander, and delusional narrative of our American history. Visually my work uses drawing, collage and appropriation as a foundation. My process is guided by a playful intuitiveness and personal humor where I explore a balance between representation and abstraction, High art vs. Low art, and the commutable value of sourced imagery.

Jodi Stuart

Flagellum

2024

3D pen-formed plastic, plaster, Flex-foam, pigment, resin

I am interested in the body and technology, I explore the aesthetics of hyper-stimulation and sensory overload. I am fascinated by the virtual versus the physical and the dissolving boundaries between the natural and unnatural. I work with high-tech tools and materials but use handmade and tactile processes. I aim to create works that simultaneously allude to craft traditions, like weaving, knitting, basket making, as well as virtual space, neural networks, and bio-mimicry. My sculpture 'Flagellum' is inspired by scientific visualizations of bacterial flagellum, images which were, in the mid to late 1980s, used as evidence to support the concept of 'Intelligent Design' in US Courts. Under contention was that 'Creationism' is a legitimate science which could be taught in public schools as an alternative to 'Evolutionary Theory'. I am fascinated by the aesthetics of scientific renderings of tiny organic things and the meaning these visualizations engender.

Chinn Wang

Tête-à-Tête

2024

Painted wood panels with mirrored acrylic

Windbag

2024

Metal stands, perfume atomizers, bicycle horns, gold chain, and pendant

Chinn Wang explores themes of erasure, lineage, and superstition as well as complex transitions in desire, chance, and mortality. Her new artworks, *Tête-à-Tête* and *Windbag*, continue an ongoing investigation into the passages between life and death. Wang's recent creative research plays with a series of invented symbols – a collection of seemingly banal everyday objects such as a fireplace bellows, a teapot, a perfume bottle, a bicycle horn – that illustrate a final expression of air in comical and prophetic ways. The coded visual metaphors of these “last gasps” mirror her own grappling with inevitable loss and the perpetual evaporation of memories.



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