



CORPOREAL BALANCE

2026 BFA Showcase
Gallery Guide



VICKI
MYHREN
GALLERY

May 14 - June 14, 2026



Corporeal Balance

2026 Bachelor of Fine Arts Showcase



Studio Art:

Ashlyn Bennett
Genevieve Desch
Bloom Welliver
Nour Zouhou

Pre-Art Conservation:

Taytianna Wise

Ashlyn Bennett

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Utilizing mold making, body casting, and sculpture techniques, Ashlyn Bennett explores relationships between the body and womanhood in the context of a patriarchal society. Bennett's artwork reclaims and recontextualizes the image of the naked woman by abstracting the female form, removing any voyeuristic or male-centered art historical connotations from these representations. Bennett integrates plant research into her work, particularly abortifacients, which historically have been used as birth control and to regulate the menstrual cycle. When their imagery is combined with abstracted forms, they become symbols of autonomy and ownership over oneself.

Bennett's figural work consists mostly of wax and ceramics, though concrete and other industrial materials are present and reference systems of thought that uphold patriarchy. The oversexualization of bodies, patriarchal beliefs, and the rise of the "pro-life" movement have caused societal expectations of women and the experience of being a woman to become disjointed. Juxtaposing soft, organic forms with hard industrial materials points to and highlights these feelings of dissonance. By incorporating abortifacients and abstraction into her artwork, Bennett is able to reject unfair societal expectations and regain autonomy over her body and gender.



Genevieve Desch

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I am a mixed-media artist driven by a desire to adapt, experiment, and learn through materials. Each medium offers a new way of understanding both the process and myself. I draw heavily from personal experience while grounding my work in broader socio-political contexts to critique our capitalistic society. My approach to topics like bodily autonomy and ecological devastation is not a statement of nihilism, but rather an acceptance of where humanity is at. Sometimes the most optimistic thing you can do is accept the fact of doom and still move forward nonetheless.

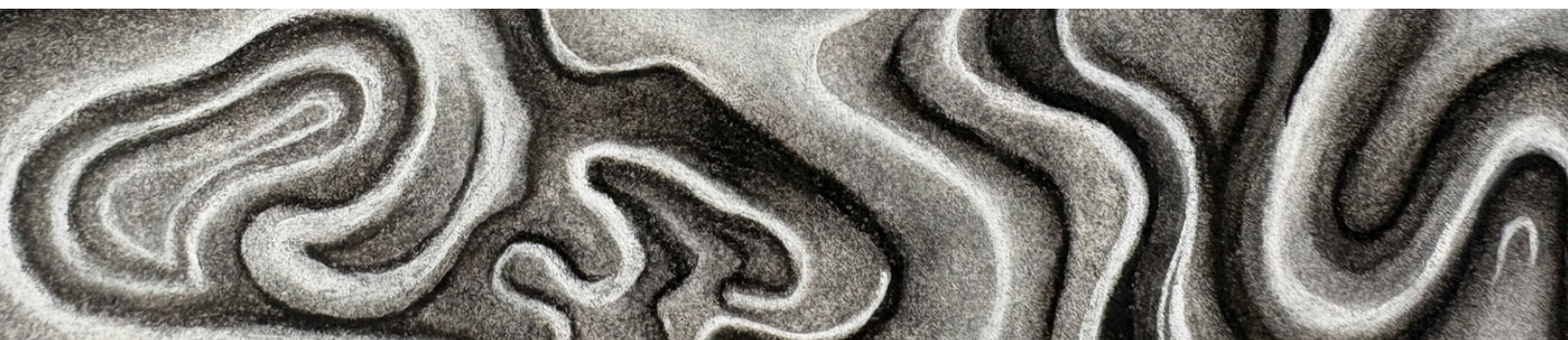
While also exploring pressures placed on bodies, I create work that exists between beauty and discomfort, attraction and death. Exploring gender contradictions, I utilize hard and soft materials: an elegant lamp rendered broken, delicate lace soaked in bloody crimson, a woman with curlers in her hair holding a gas mask, to understand the collaged experience of being in a "female" body. These visual conflicts challenge expectations and expose the inequitable distributions of pain.

Photography plays a central role in this exploration, particularly as it possesses the power of commodification and objectification. Taking your subject and capturing it into an image makes it now yours to control. The act of owning is exhausting, my art yearns for a world of existing and creation. By reproducing my own image, I question ownership, consumption, and control. Ultimately, my practice returns to self-portraiture as an anchor, an evolving site of resistance, reflection, and reclamation. Especially through self-portraiture, these images reclaim authorship over the body while interrogating its commodification.

Self-Portrait: The medical instrument used to clamp the nipples of the plaster cast is a Tenaculum, a device used during IUD placement to stabilize the cervix.

Liar: Walking in the bloody shoes of the many women who came before me, who dared to have sex, or had it forced upon them, who ended up dead because of inadequate access to birth control. The cheap plastic heels are reminiscent of the type of medical care and research allocated for those born with a uterus. A part of the photo series, *Abortion Liars*, this photo was taken in front of a pregnancy crisis center. The institution presents itself as a medical facility where low-income women can come seek information about their post-pregnancy choices. In reality, this place is funded by Catholic pro-life groups with skewed facts about abortion.

The Birth of Modern Reality: A reference to Adam and Eve and *The Birth of Venus*, the figures gaze upon the black swirling water as they are awakened to a new reality: impending ecological doom. The process of intaglio is the meeting of a cold copper plate and a soft piece of paper. This interaction exemplifies the conflict explored in this piece. The nudes (my lover and I) explore the gender dynamics of a relationship in a time where roles and identities are consistently being challenged. This very human experience is overshadowed by the creeks, rivers, and lakes of our childhood that are no longer swimmable due to pollution. This artwork explores the difficulties of finding one's identity in a time where so much is happening that it feels so much bigger than yourself.



Bloom Welliver

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My practice explores the emotional and psychological manifestations of living with anxiety through abstraction. I translate intrusive and cyclical thought patterns into visual forms, using line and texture to mirror the internal experience of anxious thinking. The process of confronting my anxieties first appeared in my work when I addressed my arachnophobia, or fear of spiders. Using this imagery, I was able to manage the uncontrollable anxieties of the world and began my exploration of visualizing internal tension.

Central to this practice is my relationship with my curly hair, which I perceive as a physical metaphor for the tangles and knots of my mind. Working with what I call my “mind tangle,” I examine the psychological and emotional dimensions of maintaining an ongoing relationship with anxiety. Through printmaking, drawing, painting, and mixed media sculpture, I experiment with materiality and process to capture both tension and resilience. In this way, my art becomes a therapeutic practice. It provides a way to self-soothe and coexist with fluctuating, persistent anxiety, while simultaneously inviting viewers to reflect on their own relationships to emotion, vulnerability, and mental well-being.



Bloom Welliver is a senior Bachelor of Fine Arts student at the University of Denver, with a secondary major in psychology. Her passion for mental healthcare and art drives an aspiration to become an art therapist. Welliver will be pursuing a Master of Arts degree in art therapy.



Nour Zouhou

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The dissection of personhood is at the core of my art practice, rooted in the representation of the visceral experience of sensitivity within my body and the world. Using bodily motifs of spikes, teeth, and veins in combination with a multitude of monstrous characters, I create dynamic scenes that exist as both fictional narratives and autobiographical impressions. Graphic linework and vibrant color coalesce in scenes where slithering and sneaking forms protrude through space, seeming to jump out at you, expressing the duality of warm vulnerability and cutting invincibility.

I utilize a cast of character selves, often monstrous, in dreamlike settings to explore ideas of personhood and sensitivity. Monsters are beings that are completely themselves. Their existence is brazen and unapologetic, and through my characters, their confidence is mine. My monsters represent my soft underbelly, the vulnerabilities that are my fears, desires, insecurities, and hopes. They are bodies for me to inhabit that provide the freedom to be exposed and protected all at once. They show the unglamorous gross imperfections of my being in a way that gives me the ability to accept my entire person.



With the body being so central to this operation, my visual language is based on the shared experience of sensation and manipulating it. I use the symbolic motifs of teeth, veins, and spikes in combination with imagery from the late 90's-early 2000s period to communicate emotional and physical experiences of anxiety, yearning, pain, and reverie. I apply them often to ritual and relics, items and routines from these times that were central to my childhood and strongly intertwined with my foundational experiences of sensation and identity. My work spans greatly across printmaking, painting, ceramics, installation, and drawing. The variability of materials and texture allows my work to create different sensations and moments reflective of the constantly changing state of the body and mind.

Overall, my character selves work with objects and space to spill out my internal world into tangible dreamscapes. My monsters exert vibrant agency and embrace the joy of complexity, personality, and being a sensitive person.



Taytianna Wise

Pre-Art Conservation, BFA

The BFA program in Pre-Art Conservation is among the more rigorous programs at DU. A highly demanding and specialized field, art conservation calls for an impressively broad skill base. Students master the practices of Art History, Studio Art, and Chemistry, combining these skills into the alchemy of art conservation. It is a rare and special student who is able to navigate this course of study. Students learn the principles, ethics, and practices of art conservation. The program culminates in an Internship and a hands-on conservation project in which the student conserves a particular work of art. This has ranged from paintings (in various media) to ceramics to stained-glass.

Dr. Scott Montgomery, Advisor to the Pre-Art Conservation Program



P.P. Gesson, *Portrait of a Girl*, 1882

As an art conservation major, I study both fine art and chemistry, which encourages me to examine the intersection of art and science. Growing up in Colorado fostered my interest in the environment and humanity's impact on it. As society grapples with climate change and pollution, I've developed a perspective focused on how the natural and built worlds interact. In my work, I explore this relationship by combining mechanical and natural forms through materials like paint, graphite, and printmaking. Some pieces use recognizable imagery, such as architecture and plant life, while others approach the theme more abstractly through line and composition. Across all my work, I aim to reflect the complex, evolving relationship between the natural and man-made forces that shape contemporary life.

As part of my degree program, I was granted the opportunity to conduct conservation treatment on a small oil painting in the University of Denver's collection under the guidance of professional conservator Samantha Hunt-Durán. This experience provided me with valuable insight into the diverse duties conservators perform during a project, from condition assessments to cleaning and repair. Overall, my treatment not only enhanced my knowledge as a conservator but also extended the painting's lifespan.



Congratulations all 2026 Graduates!

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