

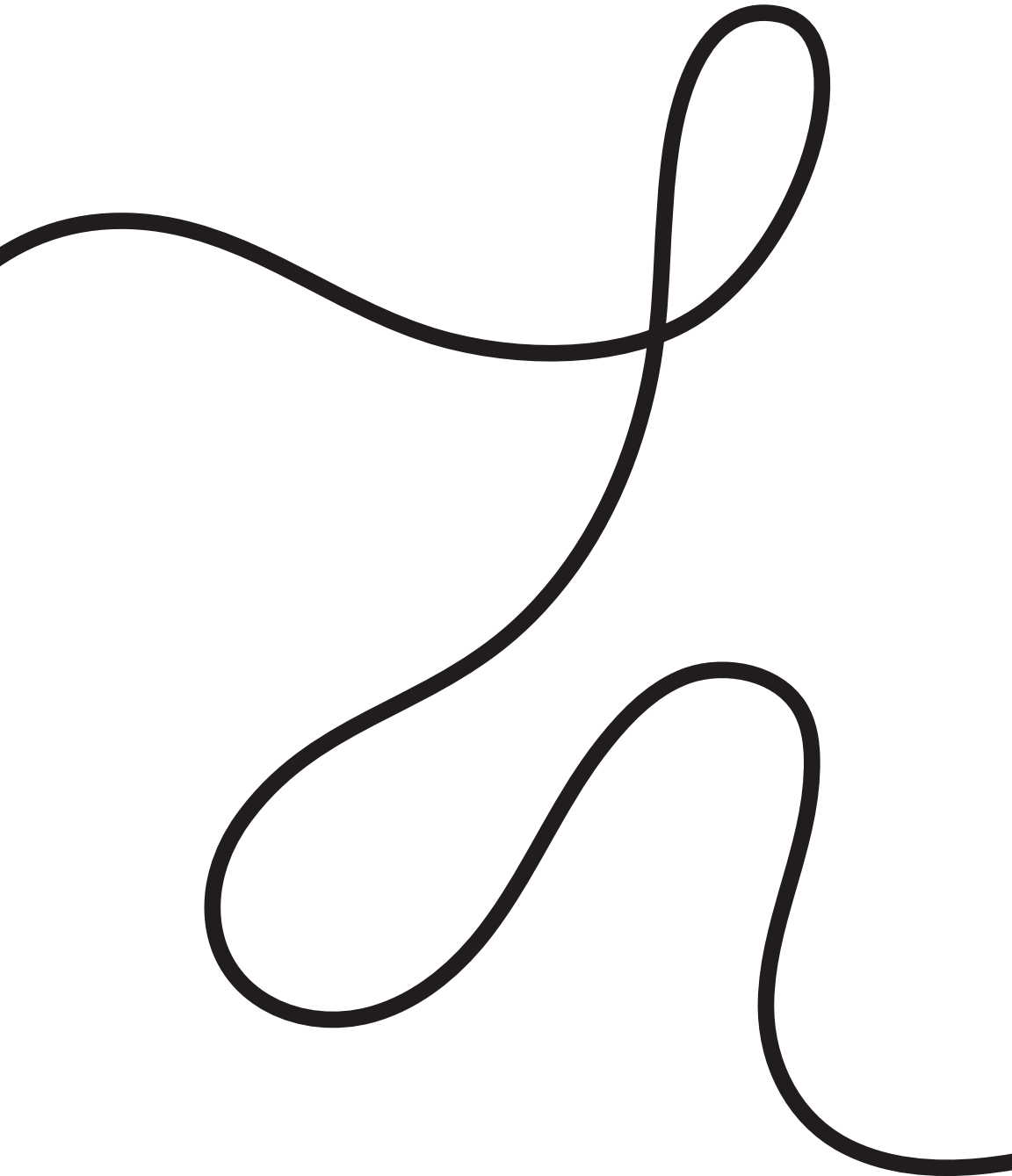


Boston University  
School of Visual Arts

MF 2023

Graphic Design  
Painting  
Sculpture

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# Director's Statement

It is my pleasure and honor to introduce the Boston University School of Visual Arts 2023 Master of Fine Arts thesis catalog. This publication was designed by MFA Graphic Design students and features the work of forty-two graduating students in MFA Painting, Sculpture, and Graphic Design. In 2023, after the disruption of the pandemic and a period of transformative construction toward a unified arts and culture corridor along Commonwealth Avenue, all College of Fine Arts galleries were open again for thesis season. The 808 Gallery hosts the MFA Graphic Design exhibition titled *Hide Self View*, and the MFA Painting and Sculpture theses are sited in both Stone and Commonwealth Galleries. The reach of our exhibitions across two buildings mirrors the sense of opening-up after several years of Covid-19 restrictions. The work also engages with what it means to create mental, physical, and social space and brings attention to the relationship of the self to larger systems. Form-making that pushes the boundaries of disciplines and dimensions, artistic systems informed by biology and daily habits, inventive imagery, and opportunities for interaction suggest ways of being in the face of pressure from social, political, economic, and environmental forces.

Questions of individual agency and collective impact are brought to the foreground by *Hide Self View*, an exhibition responsive to the experience of shared screen-space and personal vulnerability. Associate professor Christopher Sleboda writes, “The hide-self-view mode of practice allows participants to engage on their own terms: to show their work without needing to reveal all, to create space for others (collaborators, partners, stakeholders, friends, family, and community), and to look outward rather than inward.” The MFA Painting and Sculpture exhibitions also mine the gap between internal experience and externalized material expression, making invisible feelings and forces physical in a myriad of ways. Chair of Graduate Studies in Sculpture David Snyder describes the work from MFA Sculpture as “points of encounter between visionary interiority and the persistence of the external world in all of its material, spatial, and social complexity.” Chair of Graduate Studies in Painting Josephine Halvorson also attends to the ability of embodied making to express complex dualities, stating, “Painting can help us see inwards and outwards at once. As a material process that typically privileges the sensation of touch, it is rarely too far from the body of its maker.” The power of the individual creative gesture to transform and communicate human experience is made clear through the strength of the work in this book and in the exhibitions. ChatGPT, generating at my

command the conclusion for this text, stated “together, we will continue to unite as a community and work towards a better future, striving to create a world that values fairness, compassion, and respect for all people.” This AI response centers human artistic work and creative community as vital to a just future.

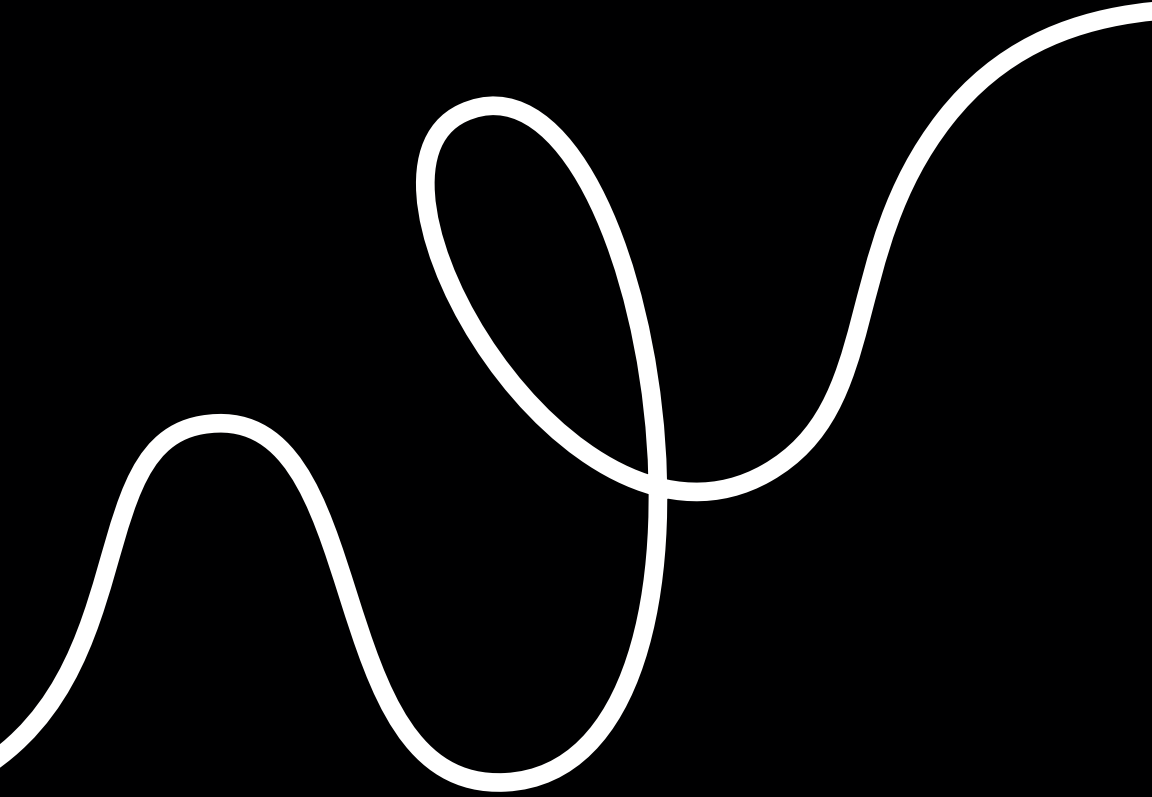
On behalf of SVA, I want to especially thank Professor Sleboda for his mentorship and vision in overseeing this catalog and the thesis identity created by graphic design students Annabella Pugliese, Sophia Viviano, Ash Wei, and Lucy Zou, with gratitude to this first and second year student design team for their wonderful, generous work. The work in this catalog represents two years of studio work and intensive artistic mentorship by members of the SVA faculty. Sincere gratitude to MFA program chairs and *ad interim* chairs, Josephine Halvorson, David Snyder, Kristen Coogan, and Lucy Kim, along with Director of Graduate Studies Nick Rock, for their graduate leadership roles. I am also grateful to current and former faculty Christopher Field, James Grady, Yael Ort-Dinoor, Christopher Sleboda, Mary Y. Yang, J.M. Howey, Fox Hysen, Breehan James, Hugh O'Donnell, Richard Ryan, Marc Schepens, and Gregory Gómez for their direct mentorship in the graduate programs. Thank you to Dean Harvey Young for his growth-minded leadership and Boston University Art Galleries Director Lissa Cramer for helping prepare our students professionally. I am grateful to the excellent SVA staff for ensuring the thesis process runs smoothly, particularly Nerissa Cooney, Julianna Fitz, Gus Wheeler, Josh Brennan, and Brandon Cohen working with Logen Zimmerman, Jessica Caccamo, and Beth Zerega. Together we sincerely congratulate the MFA Class of 2023 for their extraordinary work.

**Dana Clancy**

Director, School of Visual Arts

Associate Professor of Art, Painting

# Graphic Design



Lauren Albeni  
Valeria Alvarado Gutiérrez  
Graham Atherton  
Hongjie Chen  
Yulu Chen  
Wanzhu (Summer) Cheng  
Yingxuan (Eilis) Dan  
Hannah Diamond  
Jesse Finkelstein  
David Gao  
Nina Gozzi  
Beiqiao Liu  
Sarah Olick

Annabella Pugliese  
Shuning Ren  
Olivia Sanderford  
Siddharth Thanganatarajamani  
Jing-Yi Tsai  
Yu-Ting (Tommy) Tsai  
Tiana Umbach  
Reshma Vijayan  
Sophia Viviano  
Jialun Wang  
Shu Wang  
Riva Weinstein  
Sishu Zhong

## **Hide Self View**

The 2023 Boston University Graphic Design MFA Exhibition takes its name from the Hide Self View feature in popular video conferencing software like Zoom, which allows users to hide themselves from view during online meetings. The title serves as a framing metaphor, gesturing to the role of graphic designers in most visual communication: working behind the scenes to craft the graphic textures that shape collective and individual experiences. The three-word title also serves as an actionable strategy. Using the Hide Self View option is a way to reclaim agency and autonomy in a world increasingly dominated by the public gaze, cameras, and monitoring technologies. The hide-self-view mode of practice allows participants to engage on their own terms: to show their work without needing to reveal all, to create space for others (collaborators, partners, stakeholders, friends, family, and community), and to look outward rather than inward.

The twenty-six Graphic Design MFA candidates featured in this exhibition come from across the United States and China, as well as from Peru, India, and Taiwan. Each designer brings unique perspectives and experiences to this collective presentation of their thesis work, an event that serves as one of the culminating milestones of their studies at Boston University. Each graduate thesis explores different themes and conceptual frameworks, showcasing methodologies and ways of making that are wholly rooted in each individual's practice. Through this individual thesis research, this talented cohort uses graphic design to create and critique visual culture, questioning dominant narratives and amplifying new perspectives. Their investigations suggest possible directions of growth for the field of graphic design and trace the contours of contemporary practice.

*Hide Self View* invites reflection on visible participation, the line between personal and public work, and explores how visual communication can mirror the current moment. The exhibition creates an environment for self-discovery, knowledge-sharing, and celebration, while spotlighting the various ways and spaces where graphic design currently operates.

### **Christopher Sleboda**

Associate Professor of Art, Graphic Design

### **Kristen Coogan**

Associate Professor of Art, Graphic Design

# Lauren Albensi

## CONVERSATION PIECE

laurenalbensidesign.com

she/her

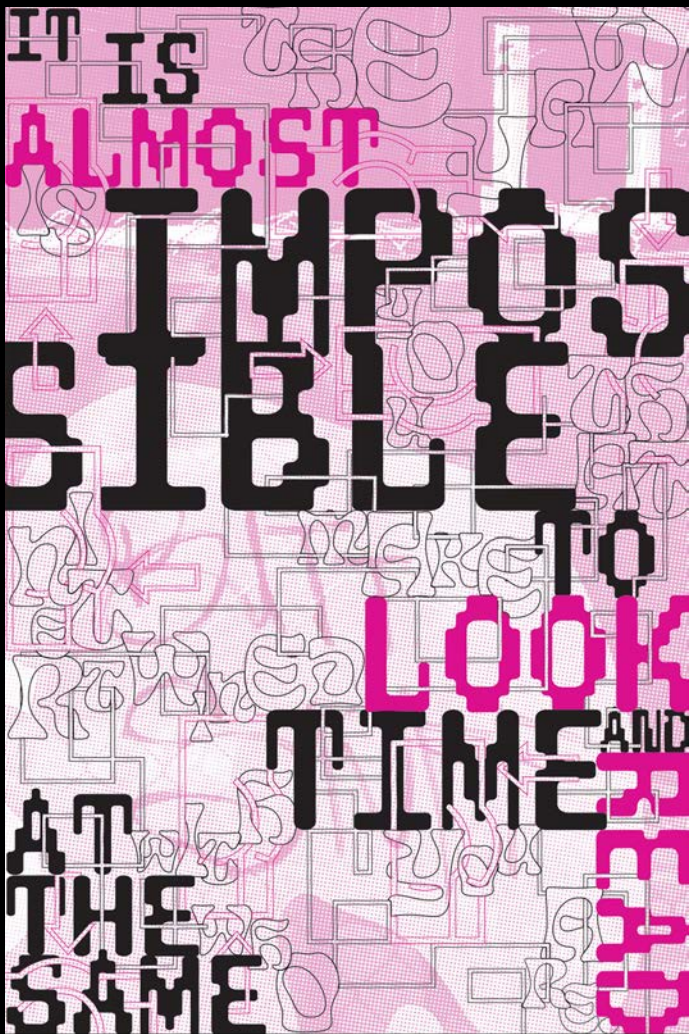
I have always been enamored by spectacle. I love things that are big, shiny, and colorful. As someone who is easily distracted by everything, a statement piece holds my attention best. In my personal life, I have always felt torn between multiple versions of me: one that is the center of attention/comedic relief/all eyes in the center of the ring, and one that prefers subtlety and mischievous hidden meanings and secrets. I am indecisive, I overshare and regret it, I switch up my style daily, I'm what you could call a "miscellaneous" category. This bleeds heavily into my design work, something I feel as though I am mentally and emotionally conjoined to at all times, making what feels like consistently inconsistent work to match whoever I am at that given moment.

My work explores the tension and pull between containing multitudes. I study the phenomenon of the "conversation piece," and ultimately which ways design can have multiple layers of communication. I create a lot of large, attention-grabbing pieces, and within them, sprinkle little jokes or subtle hints at a deeper meaning that tends to be on the personal side. My design work becomes a collection of moments, things, comfort, and emotions—a "catch all," if you will.

I have always lived by the phrase "a small girl in a big nothing." Like myself, my design looks for space to fill; creating that nothing into something notable and becoming something to talk about. Design that speaks for me when I don't feel like talking. Design that is playful and kitschy and weird. If my design is to be a "conversation piece," I design in layers to feel seen and heard, and curate every piece to match the story I feed into it.



A



B





C



D

- A 69 Questions, 2022. Printed matter and plastic.
- B Butt Stuff, 2021. Printed poster, 40 x 60 in.
- C Flaneur, 2022. Mixed media.
- D Fire Walk With Me, 2022. Paper and projection, 4 x 4 in.

# Valeria Alvarado Gutiérrez

## LEARNING THREADS

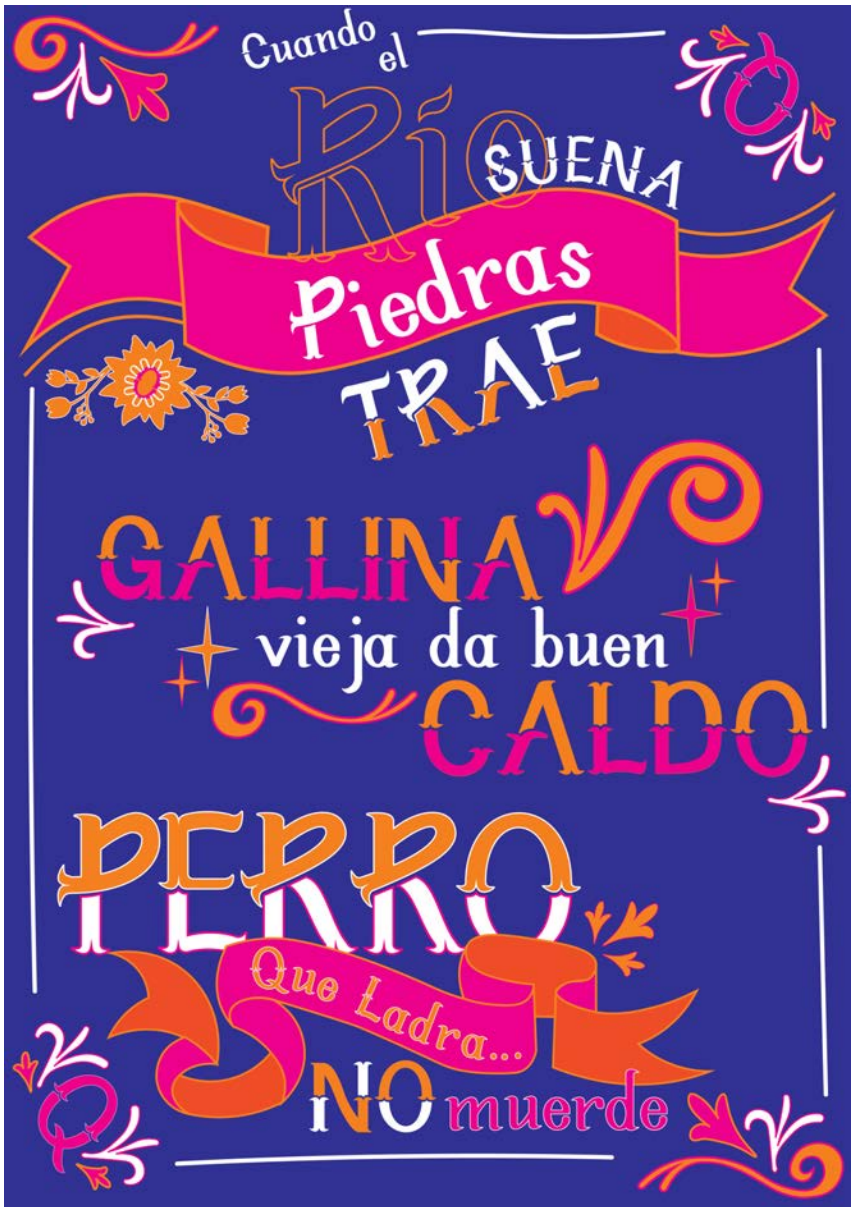
[alvaartanddesign.com](http://alvaartanddesign.com) // [@alva.art.design](https://twitter.com/alva.art.design)

Growing up, I struggled with learning challenges and adapting to a traditional education based on neurotypical academic goals. I was always a bit too energetic because of my hyperactivity, distracted because of my ADHD, and a bit slower at reading because of my dyslexia. So, I became a teacher. But different from the kind of teacher that you may have in mind. I became one that teaches with empathy, acknowledging all the different learning styles and disabilities—comprehending that play and exploration are essential for teaching-learning processes. I became a kid again, rediscovering the world in complicity with my students. I could re-learn with them by expressing divergent ideas through loud exploration, trial and error, design, and plastic languages.

This teaching methodology jumped into designing exhibitions showing parents and the educational community how children learn unexpectedly. I discovered that design is the tool that would help me create for those children that needed a different approach and for those adults that needed to become kids again and rediscover the world.

After eight years of working in the educational field, I decided to pivot and study design. Design tools enhance and complement my educational knowledge, and my expertise in early childhood education influences my design. I use design to create divergent, creative, outside-of-the-box, engaging, ludic, and educational experiences for children and adults. My work is experiential because it requires the audience to engage with it and feel something through a physical encounter or a spark of imagination.

I seek to create a graphic design practice that explores multiple learning styles for children and adults through various projects with unexpected materiality and forms to create a safe platform for exploration, innovation, and unlearning. Maybe even transforming traditional education.



A

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- A *Valerian Type Specimen*, 2022. Poster, 24 x 36 in.
- B *Perú Borda Historia*, 2022. Embroidered canvas paper and printmaking paper, 12 x 12 in.
- C *Weaving Designs*, 2021. Hand-bound book with talk and transparency paper, 7 x 10 in.
- D *Perú: Fantastic Tales, Myths and Stories To Discover*, 2021. Pop-up book on heavy stock paper, 7 x 11 in.
- E *Accordion Light Book*, 2022. LED lights on plexiglass, 6 panels: 24 x 36 in.

# Graham Atherton

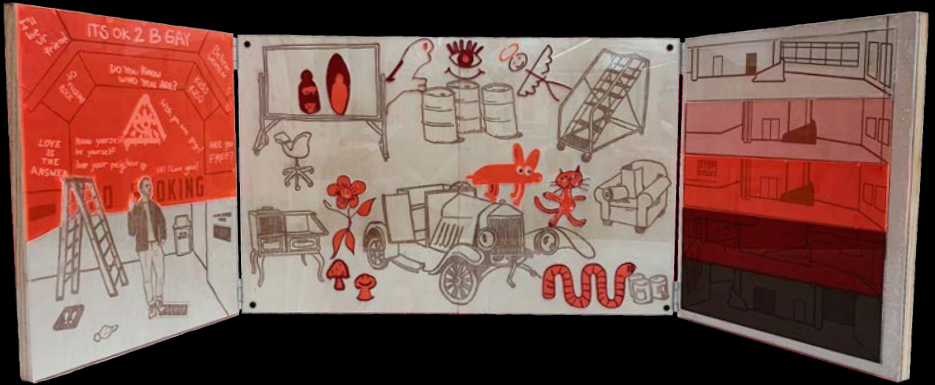
@ithinkthereforeigraham

Last night I was visited by the ghost of Saul Bass bearing a grave vision of my future. My Wikipedia page read: “Graham Atherton (1995–2024) was a renowned conceptual performance artist.” “NO!” I cried. “Are these things that Will be, or things that May be, only?” “You may yet live to see old age.” “What?” “You may yet live t—you saw the dates, right?” “Ohhhhh.” I laughed. “Yeah, that I’m not so worried about. It’s the conceptual performance artist part that startled me.” “Seriously?” “Oh, spirit! Pray tell, how—” “Saul.” “Sorry. Oh, Saul! Pray tell, how might I avoid such fate?” “Start by cutting the whole pray tell thing.” “I was trying to do, like, a Dickens kinda vibe.” “No, I know. That’s Shakespearean anyway.” “Sorry.” “Second: stop taking yourself so seriously. You’ve been doing projects about solipsism and all these isms. Lighten up, it’s not that serious.” “Mind if I work in RoboFont during this? I have undiagnosed ADHD and multitasking helps me foc—”

He slapped the MacBook out of my hands.

“Get off RoboFont, you nut. If you have to do something, draw the people around you. If you’re going to take anything seriously, take your life seriously.” “Oh, that’s good, can I use that in my thesis?” “Fine. While I’m here, your poster series for the SVA office was a little derivative. Felt like you were ripping me off there.” “First of all ... thank you for saying you saw a resemblance, that’s extremely flattering.” “Oy.” He sighed, rubbing his temples. “Listen, I’m on a tight schedule, I have to go try to scare some sense into Sagmeister for the millionth time. Don’t worry about the conceptual art thing. Just be careful what you take seriously. Try to find humor in serious things and take humor seriously.”





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**CFA AR 518**  
**Silkscreen Printing**  
 2 Credits  
 Mon / Wed  
 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

This course focuses on preparing the art department, the formulation of ink, and the design, making of silkscreen printing and the use of printing techniques in the past. Drawing will be reinforced, and students will work on layout and design and branding. Hands-on work with the capability of multi-color and branding.

2 units required for BA major  
 prerequisite: none

**CFA AR 535 ZF**  
**Drawing Trees**  
 4 Credits  
 Mon / Wed  
 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

A beginning drawing course that concentrates on drawing objects, including still life, landscape, and architectural subjects, and uses drawing as a means of visual communication. Students will work on layout and design and branding. Hands-on work with the capability of multi-color and branding.

2 units required for BA major  
 prerequisite: none

**CFA AR 238/638** **4 Credits**  
**Drawing Concepts**  
 Mon / Wed  
 8:00 am - 10:45 am

Overview of a broad range of drawing ideas, including drawing from memory, and their historical context. Introduction of drawing concepts, including conceptual drawing, and the use of drawing as a means of visual communication. Students will work on layout and design and branding. Hands-on work with the capability of multi-color and branding.

2 units required for BA major  
 prerequisite: none

**CFA AR 581**  
**Web Design**  
 2 Credits  
 Prerequisite Required

This course focuses on preparing the art department, the formulation of ink, and the design, making of silkscreen printing and the use of printing techniques in the past. Drawing will be reinforced, and students will work on layout and design and branding. Hands-on work with the capability of multi-color and branding.

2 units required for BA major  
 prerequisite: none

**CFA AR 535 ZB**  
**Relief Printing**  
 Mon, Wed  
 2:00 pm - 5:15 pm  
 Variable Credit

Relief, one of the most basic and oldest of printing techniques, is the first step in relief. In this introductory course, students will work on layout and design and branding. Hands-on work with the capability of multi-color and branding.

2 units required for BA major  
 prerequisite: none

**CFA AR 597**  
**Experience Design**  
 2 Credits  
 Mon 2:00 pm - 5:15 pm  
 Prerequisite Required

Students will study and design interactive experiences in a digital space. Emphasis on user experience, interaction design, and the use of drawing as a means of visual communication. Students will work on layout and design and branding. Hands-on work with the capability of multi-color and branding.

2 units required for BA major  
 prerequisite: none





D



E

- A The Ramp Altarpiece, Laser-etched wood and acrylic, 14 x 40 x 3 in.
- B Contemporaneous Notes & Sketches, 2022. Pen and ink, Risograph, 11 x 17 in.
- C Elective Flyers Series for Boston University School of Visual Arts, 2021. Inkjet prints, each 8.5 x 11 in.
- D Original Typeface Specimen Posters, 2023. Digital prints, 24 x 36 in.
- E Tender Buttons, an Imagined Newspaper. Newsprint, 18 x 24 in.

# Hongjie Chen

## ARTIFICIAL GARDEN OL

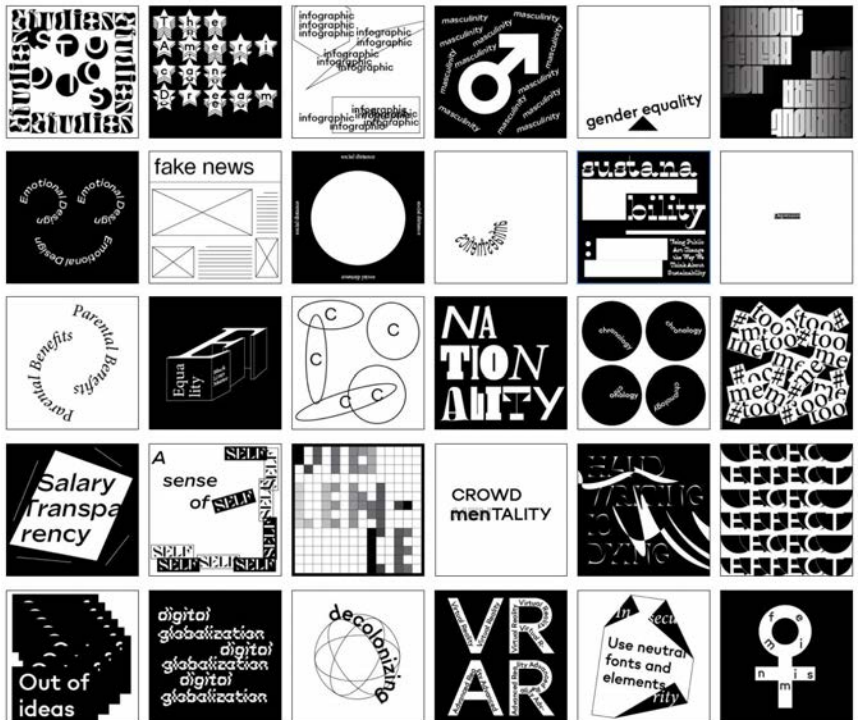
[chenhongjie.cargo.site](http://chenhongjie.cargo.site) // [@\\_chenhongjie](https://twitter.com/_chenhongjie)

Design is a tool for communicating with everyone experiencing the work and the result of thought, and it can be used in a variety of contexts. When every aspect of our lives is digitized, the process of acquiring and shedding possessions within the binary system of making everything electronic becomes muddled. This gives us the impression that we have no control over our lives. Everything else, including what we produce, is recovered through digital channels and forms; everything is transformed into data. This process will cause us to become disoriented regarding our location in the world. The process of physicalizing digital typography allows us to change the content being communicated through the use of digital and physical typography (we have the ability to change the meaning or interpretation of the message) and our existence, as typography has evolved from a linguistic role in the digital realm to a physical one, giving us the ability to create and reject new possibilities. Reconstruct the typical arrangement of the typeface by moving it to a new region as opposed to maintaining it in the same location as before. Explore various options for incorporating a more colloquial narrative into the narrative of this concept for an artificial garden. My design practices aim to pause and consider the various ways typography can be used to establish a routine for our physical and digital daily experiences.

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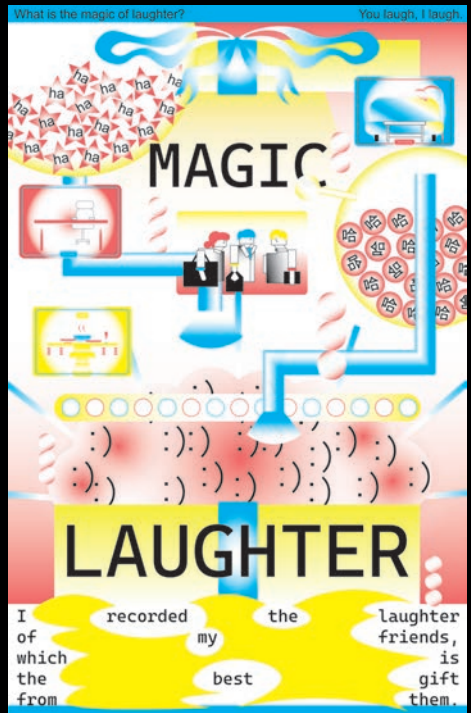




C



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- A Golden Hour, 2022. VR video experience, 1920 x 960 px.
- B Glossary Grocery Store, 2021. Website prototype, 1024 x 1366 px.
- C 50 Blanket, 2022. Interactive AR with motion graphics, 1920 x 1080 px.
- D Teleneuron, Font Design from "Chitchat", 2022. Digital, 11 x 17 in.
- E Magic Laughter, 2022. Printed poster, 24 x 36 in.



# Yulu Chen

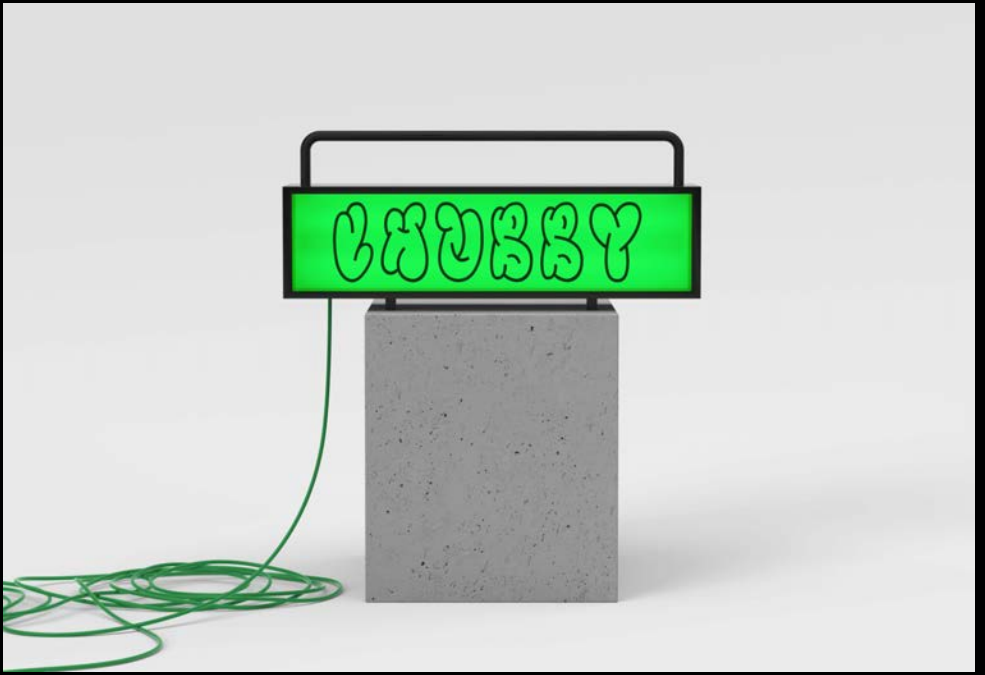
IN THE EDGE

@yuluchen2533

Under the overlap of multiple contexts such as the transformation of modernity, globalization and the Internet revolution, multiple cultures are coexisting in this rapidly evolving era.

How do the marginalized cultures or groups in society describe the world with their own voices and languages? How do the identities and experiences of being on the margins relate to the mainstream of this world?

In my work, I use my own particular visual language to re-emphasize the marginalized cultures or groups I observe, allowing them to generate certain tandem relationships in the real world, as well as self-identity exploration and identification. The data I collect and my work allow me to make neglected and mundane objects interesting and extraordinary and thus noticed—to unite the emotional culture of all humanity, rather than ignoring the right of one side to own its own culture.

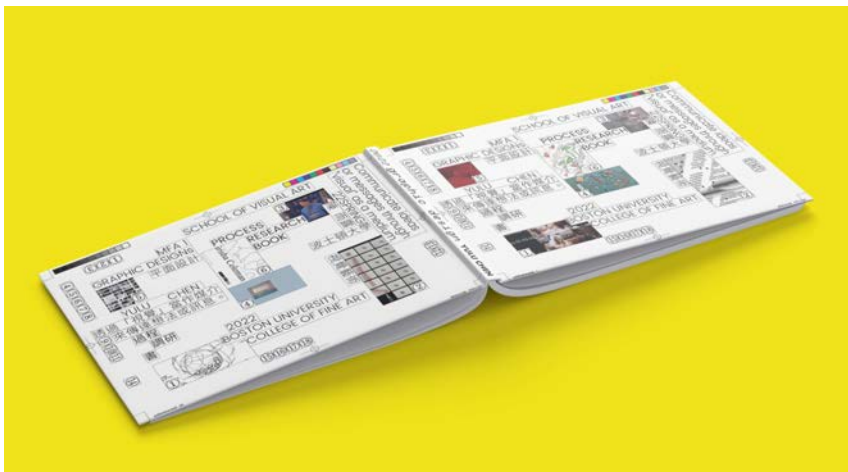


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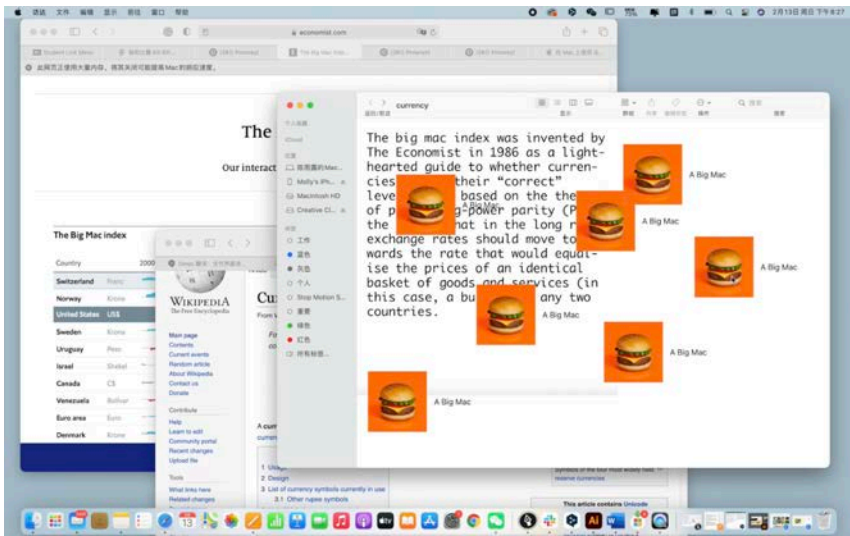


C





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- A Chubby, 2022. Digital typeface.
- B 50 Questions, 2022. Candles, tattoo stickers, and bricks, 4 x 9 x 12 in.
- C My works of 2022, 2022. Laser printed book, 8.5 x 5.5 in.
- D Currency, 2022. Mac system folder, 8.5 x 13 in.
- E A poster for Brittini Ann Havery, 2022. Laser print, 18 x 24 in.

# Wanzhu (Summer) Cheng

[cwzdesign.cargo.site](http://cwzdesign.cargo.site) // [@wanzhu.cheng](https://twitter.com/wanzhu.cheng)

*“We live in a vast world of beautiful, ordinary things. If only we would look up and notice.”* —Unknown

As an observant person, I have always enjoyed paying attention to small details of everyday life, such as shadows of different plants, or the display of a rainbow in a water puddle. I've come to realize that a lot of things in daily life are overlooked. In this mundane world, people can be overwhelmed by incessant competitions with one another—such as grades, wealth, and social status—during which they lose their ability to appreciate beauty as well as their senses for love. My thesis is dedicated to rediscovering the overlooked things and touching moments in our lives so that our senses may be rekindled to welcome beauty and love to our hearts again.



B



C



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E



- A System, 2021. Poster, 40 x 60 in.  
B To My Friend, A Plant Book, 2022. Printed on paper, 5 x 6 in.  
C Moments, 2023. Photo paper and poly zip bag, 3 x 3 in.  
D Overlooked Book, 2022. Various textured papers, 2 x 3 in.  
E Overlooked Book (Spread), 2022. Various textured papers, 2 x 3 in.

# Yingxuan (Eilis) Dan

EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE

@eiliis\_daan // @dan\_visualofficial

In this phase of learning, I am constantly discovering myself more deeply. I love a lot of things, among which I also make design work out of my interests and curiosities, such as music design, visualization, and immersive experiences. I kept asking myself why I am addicted to doing this sensory design and what it means to me.

After “dissecting” myself, I found that there are more and more specific characteristics. I am a perceptive person and experience “synesthesia,” which is a perceptual phenomenon that stimulates certain senses. For example, when I hear a type of music, a specific color or image appears in my mind. This is why I am so fascinated by “music visualization.” In addition, my aesthetic has a specific style, such as avant-garde and retro “acid graphics.” With this aesthetic, “idiosyncratic” and “maximalism” should be my official terminology.

EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE. Some people might like to have a beautiful vase with a flower as a decoration in their home. However, a shiny, eye-catching, beautiful vase with a big bush of colorful flowers is the most inspiring thing for me.

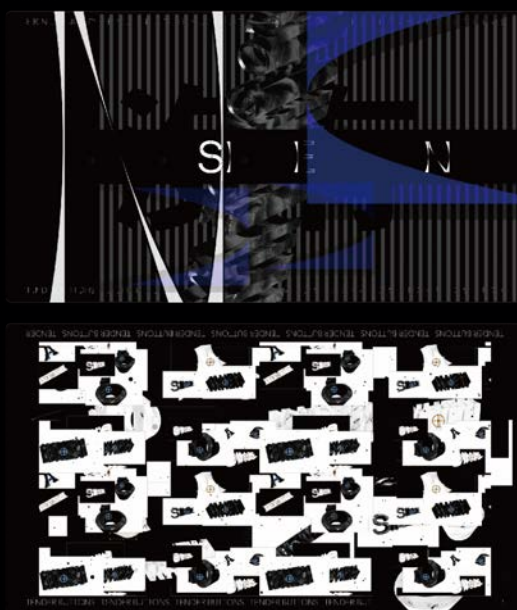




B



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- A *Personality Poster (Jaylen)*, 2021. Poster, 24 x 36 in.  
B *Masonry*, 2021. Poster series, 24 x 36 in.  
C *NO Since*, 2022. Motion video, 1920 x 1080 px.  
D *Remix (Music & Food)*, 2022. Music production, TouchDesigner, and motion video.  
E *Liminality*, 2022. Holographic projection.

# Hannah Diamond

## PROXIMITY

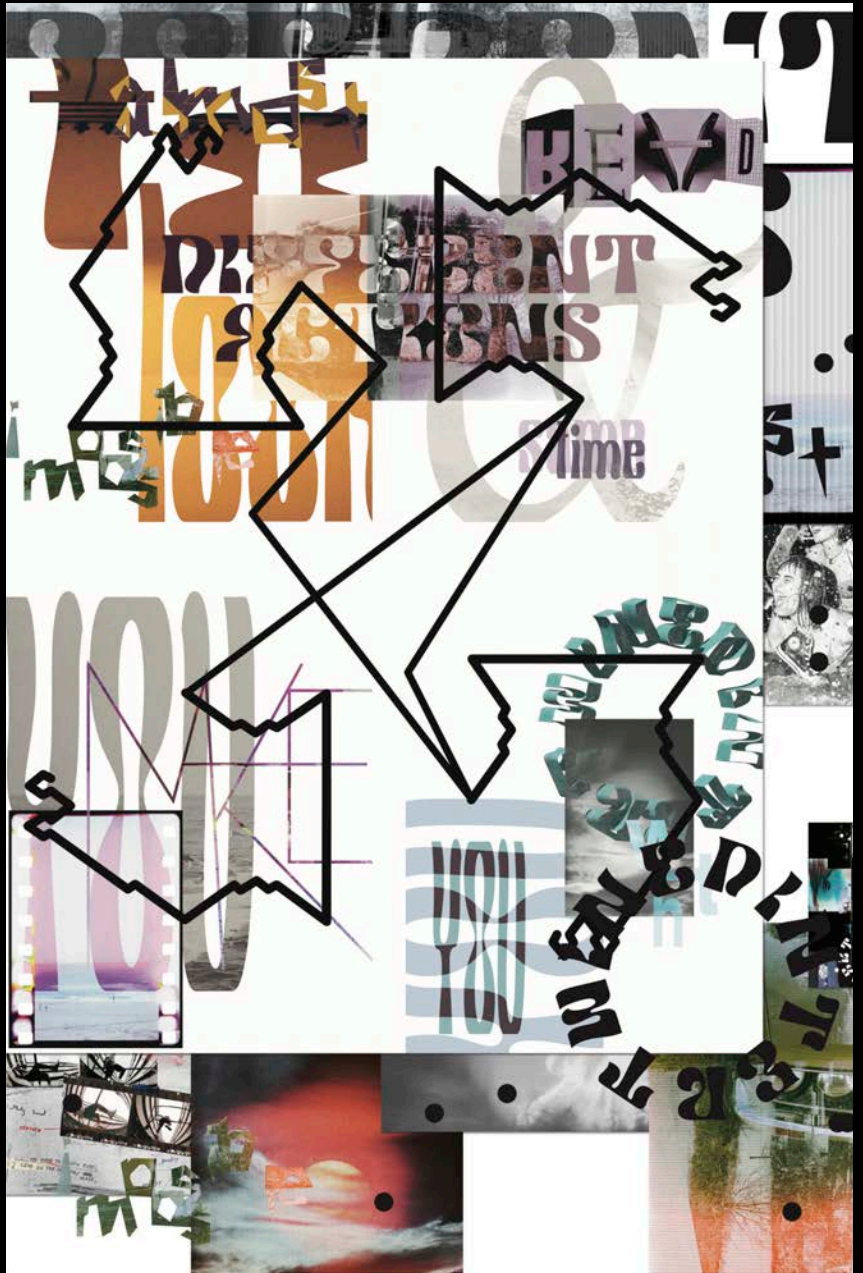
[hannah-diamond.com](http://hannah-diamond.com)

she/her

For most people, the term “intimacy” is in reference to purely sexual contexts, however, intimacy is something that goes beyond just a physical act. By definition, the word intimacy implies a feeling of closeness to another person. While creating work based on personal intimacies can make audiences uncomfortable, it is essential for artists and designers to create from a personal perspective that captures their inspiration and illuminates their universality for the world.

I believe that sharing these intimate moments through art and design, the artist and viewer are able to establish an extremely personal and intimate connection. Audiences react more strongly to design based on their own experiences and emotions, allowing for stronger communication and reaction. Almost everything in life can be an intimate experience if you treat it as such. Intimacy is a much broader idea than just a small dinner party or a deep conversation, and it is definitely so much more than a sexual act.

Through design, it is possible to pursue ideas of social connection and understanding and rethink societal conventions and ingrained patterns. When you design for intimacy, you leave room for vulnerability and wonder. As individuals and as societies, we can feel more comfortable with the uncomfortable if we create with this in mind, enabling dialogue on subjects that aren't often discussed, facilitating human connection, and ultimately enabling us to be more comfortable moving forward.



A

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- A Milk, 2021. Poster, 60 x 90 in.
- B Live Freely, 2021, Risograph and linocut, 8 x 10 in.
- C Pineapples Are In My Head, 2022. Silkscreen, 16 x 20 in.
- D No, It's Not Okay, 2022. Postcards, each 4.5 x 6.5 in.
- E Banned, 2022. Bread and thread, dimensions variable.

# Jesse Finkelstein

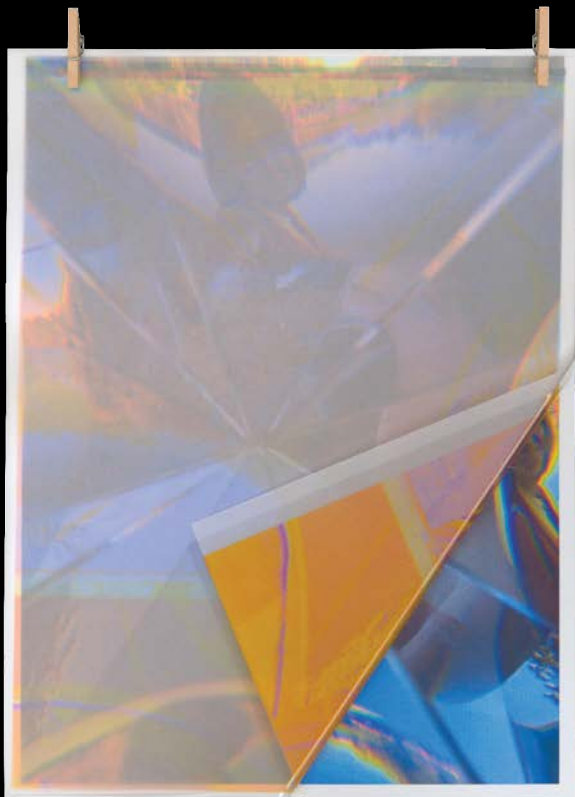
jesseraedesigns.com

Designing with purpose. It is okay for x to be only x without being x, y, and z. Something I look for in design is whether or not it makes sense. It is easy to get wrapped up in trying to rationalize things that are both unnecessary and distracting. Through thought, I choose what belongs in my design, feeling is how I relate to it, and meaning is what I prioritize.

As someone who is very easily distracted, it is notable that my works remain focused. In trying to explore alternative ideas for my thesis, I ended up confused, creatively stifled, and confined to the idea that what I wanted to write about was not worthy of exploration. Unsurprisingly, following these same ideas in an effort to create new work would leave me feeling the same. Ironically, at one point in time, I feared my thesis topic would be too egocentric. Now, I am excited to dedicate my thesis to exploring the relationship between my design practices and sensibility. I will continue to make, and I will continue to make it make sense.



A



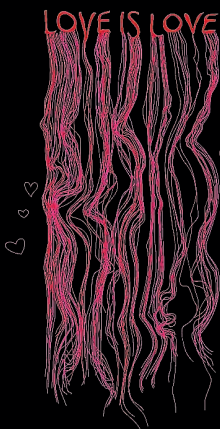
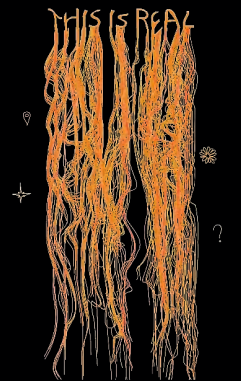
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"~0E0x#4T,`0014`_0/31`016:0`10P3,111
30`0E00000w
10`~#1~`h~00~cm01~5,`047]00~`9`
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01V0R0L
`1100
  
```

B



C





D



- A You're a Glitch, 2022. Text weight paper, vellum, and transparency paper, 8.5 x 11 in.
- B Inventory, 2023. Spiral bound book with inserts, 6 x 9 in.
- C Euphoria AR, 2022. Augmented reality, Adobe Aero.
- D Book of Books, 2022. Broadsheet, 17 x 22.5 in.

# David Gao

## AI-HUMAN SYMBIOSIS (AIHS)

[davidgaodesign.com](http://davidgaodesign.com)

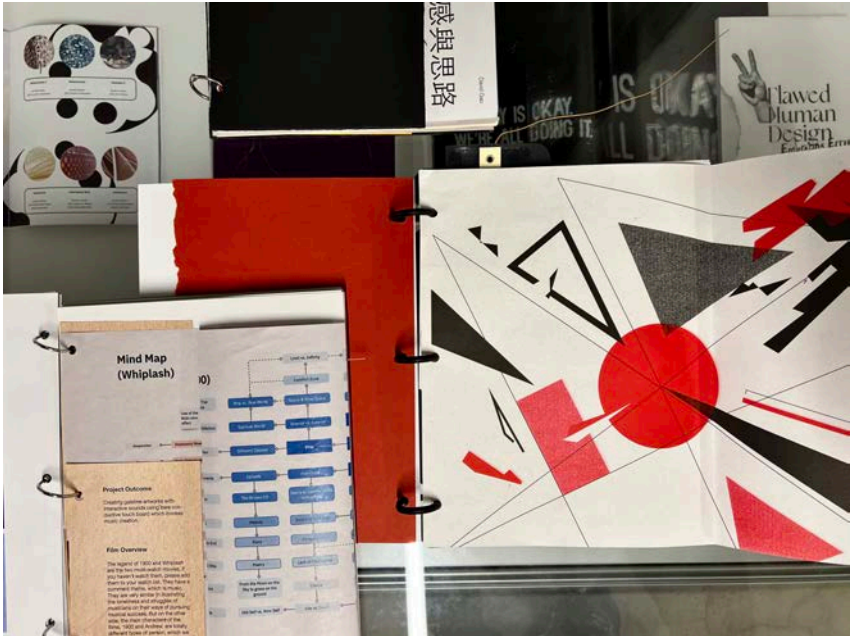
How does the creative partnership between human and AI improve experience and the quality of information being delivered and received? My research works will focus on some explorations of alternative relationships between human and technology in the process of creation. The first approach of the research tends to reinforce human interaction with design, technology and the immersiveness of designers' works, where the quality of information becomes perceptible only when the senses are mobilized. The second approach is to analyze the process of AI training and its database, since understanding the formation of a database is important to determine the outcome as we incorporate with tools.

Therefore, this research and series of projects will re-examine the role of AI. Understanding the operation of AI is essential for designers to use it as a tool and weapon against the possibility of being substituted, but more importantly, to improve user experience, and ultimately, to approach new methods of design that bring positive influences to our visual and living standards. Skylar.AI is the model that I am working with, along with projects that examine the way AI and technology mobilize our five senses, such as sound visualization, visual sonification, the metaverse experience, and interactive physical artifacts.

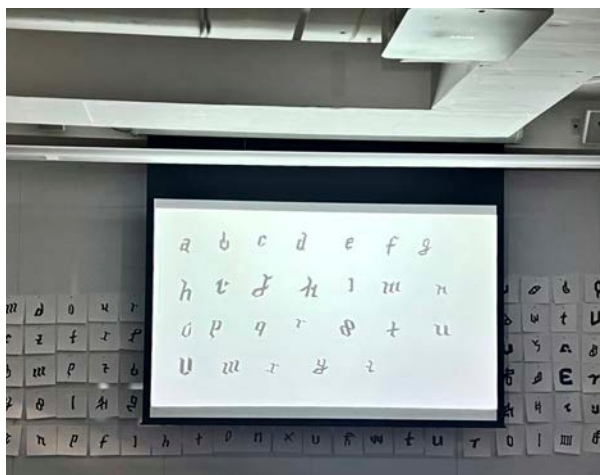
A



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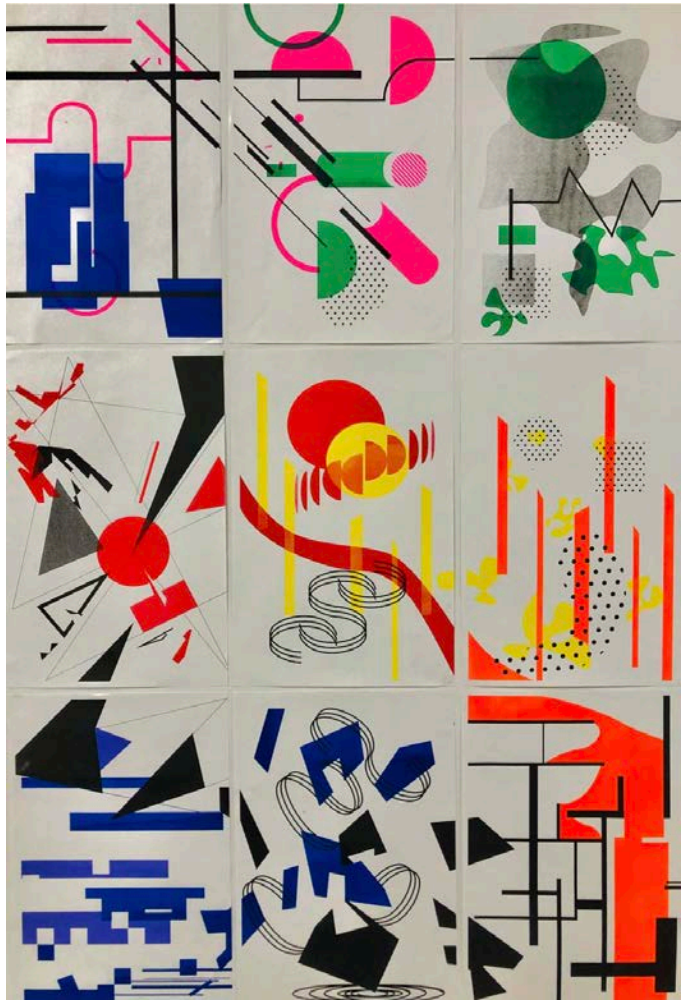


C



D





E

- A *Structure + Morphology*, 2022. Gelatin artworks and bare conductive touch board, set of 6, each 8.5 x 11 in.
- B *Feeling, Experience, and Process*, 2022. 8.5 x 11 in.
- C *Wall of Transition*, 2023. Typeface design, 6 alphabets, each 10 x 10 in.
- D *AI-Human Symbiosis*, 2023. Set of 9, each 17 x 22 in.
- E *Observe & Quantify*, 2022. Risograph, set of 9, each 8.5 x 11 in.



# Nina Gozzi

## PLANT ME AFTER READING

@ninagozzigraphics

The future of our planet is at stake and as graphic designers, we need to welcome resources such as education, innovation, and design to empower us to be active agents of change. It is vital to acknowledge the need for an environmentally-mindful future and find ways to work responsibly with our craft. Designers should believe they can contribute to meaningful change through their work in both their own practice and profession. Plant Me After Reading aims to define sustainability on a personal level within the framework of accountability, ethics, and growth.

Designing in a socially responsible manner does not mean limiting creativity; rather, it means understanding design as a rational practice for everything and everyone around us. It can feel extremely overwhelming trying to navigate ways to make a change. Practicing social responsibility isn't necessarily about macro movements, but rather small entry points.

In my work, I look to break down ideas to their most basic form and then reconstruct them in new and different ways. I turn to entry points and micro movements to implement small changes into my practice and attempt to re-contextualize what surrounds me. Recognizing the importance of sustainable pedagogy within graphic design is essential to my work. Also, at the level of professional practice, I look for ways to take an active stance as a steward, and model leadership that can be meaningful.



A



B



C





D



E

- A Secrets (Collaboration Nina Gozzi x Valeria Alvarado), 2022. Interactive installation, 4 x 10 ft.
- B Visual Sustainability, 2022. Book, 3 x 7 in.
- C Plant Me After Reading, 2022. Book, 4 x 6 in.
- D Building A Self-Sufficient Design Practice, 2022. Recycled paper and natural dyes, 4 x 6 in.
- E Point Judith, 2022. Silkscreen, 18 x 20 in.

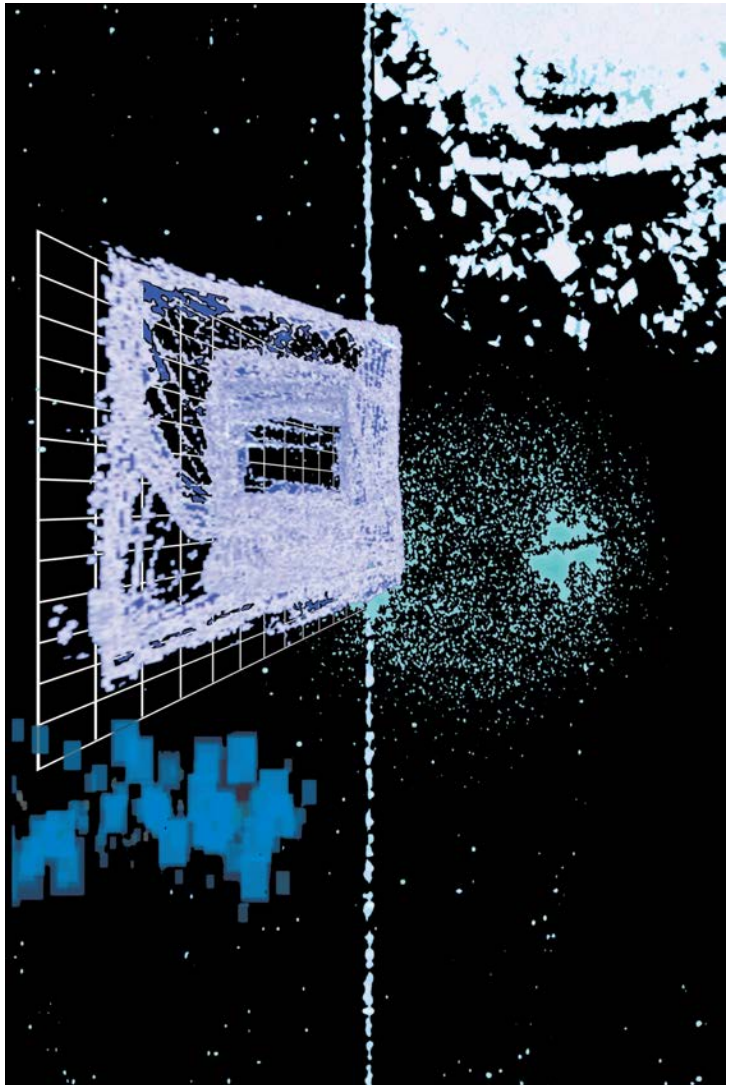
# Beiqiao Liu

## GENERAL METAPHOR

@jo\_liu09

There are many nuances, which are small but significant, in people's communication—mainly hiding in our languages and in other forms of our cultures, leading to misunderstandings, and visuals can be used as a form of communication to diminish or eliminate misunderstandings.

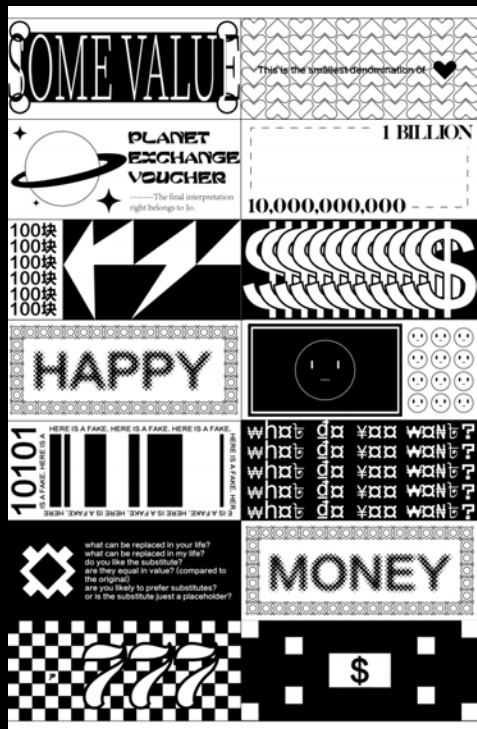
As metaphor is one of the most important ways to understand things, can I visualize certain things metaphorically so that some concepts can be expressed more clearly to help people understand each other better? Maybe it cannot totally let the ideas get expressed clearly as languages do, but at least it can let people realize there are gaps among us mentally.



A



B



C



D



E

- A *The Story Hidden in Sound*. Printed poster, 24 x 36 in.
- B *Typographic Final Poster*, 2021. Printed poster, 40 x 60 in.
- C *Currency*, 2022. Printed poster, 11 x 17 in.
- D *Masonry*, 2021. Printed poster, 24 x 36 in.
- E *I don't know what I am writing about*, 2022. Printed book, 5 x 6.5 in.

# Sarah Olick

## DIVERGENT PERCEPTION

saraholick.com // @saraholickdesign

she/her

So much of the art and design worlds surround searching for symbolism. I often feel pressure to find deeper, hidden meaning in both my own work and the work of others, so it almost feels wrong to ask if something can be just what it is, and nothing else. As a neurodivergent designer, I tend to work in a very literal space with little hidden meaning. The design choices I make are almost always either arbitrary or functional. I do not use symbolism as much as my peers and often cannot quite grasp the symbolism they are trying to convey.

I often feel left out of the supposed hidden meanings behind others' design choices. My view is that pressure to find meaning and symbolism in design leaves behind the opportunity to appreciate work for what it is, what it does, and how it does what it does. Design does not necessarily need to have symbolism or deeper meaning. I do not believe that every piece of design needs to make a statement. It is possible for a design object to be just what it is and still be valuable to the world of design. As designers and critics of design, we are potentially leaving out segments of the population by insisting that every design choice must mean something.

I want to start a conversation in design about appreciating work for what it is and welcoming people into work whether or not they understand deeper meaning and symbolism. I want to create work that is both useful and aesthetically pleasing. I hope to be able to design for the sake of design and design for the sake of joy.



A



B



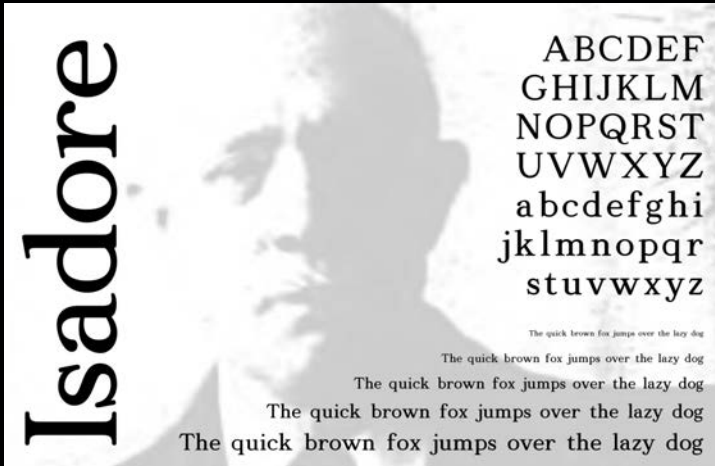
C



D



E



- A *Overwhelm*, 2022. Spiral-bound cutout booklet, 4.25 x 5.5 in.
- B *Remix (Genealogy & Watercolor Painting)*, 2022. Photo album with photos on transparency and scans of watercolor paintings, 6.25 x 8.25 in.
- C *A Collection of Tiny Children's Books*, 2022. Wood crate, perfect bound booklets, fabric, bamboo skewers, and embroidery thread, 6.75 x 3.25 x 4.75 in.
- D *52 Questions*, 2022. Playing cards (laminated paper), 2.25 x 3.2 x 0.875 in.
- E *Isadore Display*, 2022-23. Typeface designed in RoboFont.

# Annabella Pugliese

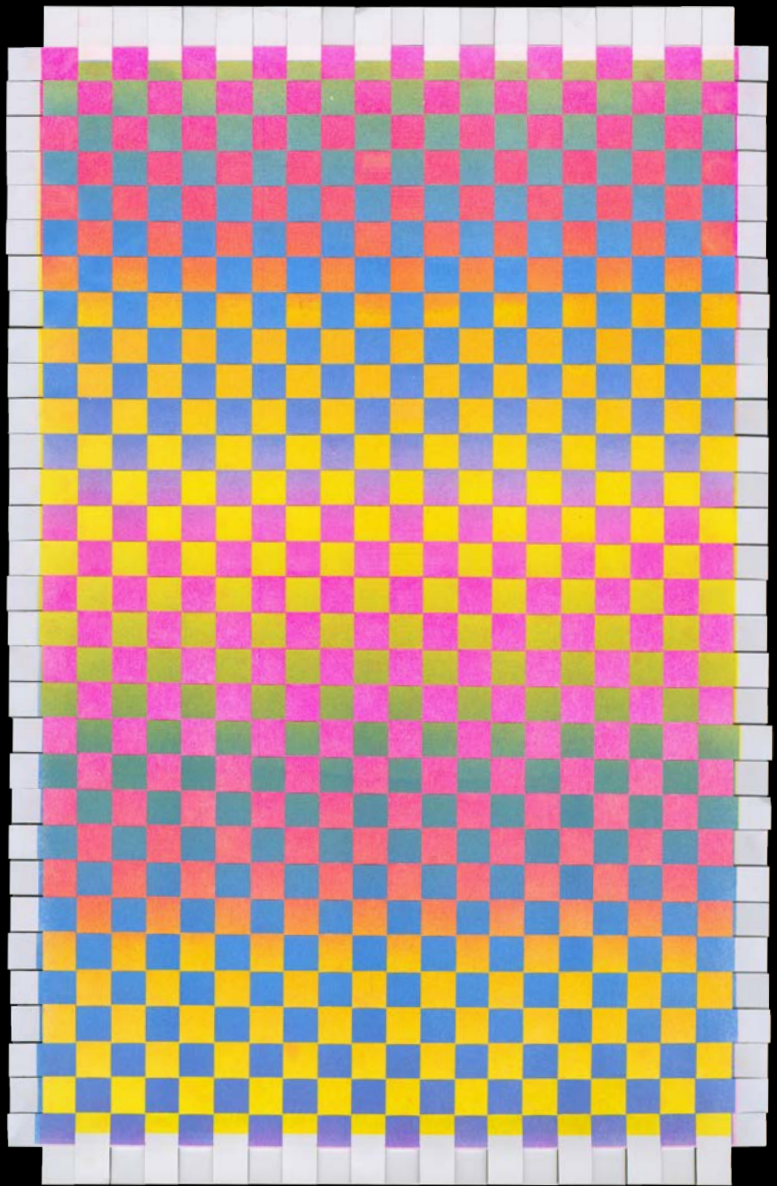
annabellapugliese.com

she/her

Coming from a background in fine art, I am naturally drawn to visual aesthetics and opportunities for creative freedom. My proclivity for logic and reason, however, led me to graphic design—a space where artistic expression meets objective communication. In my current design practice, I see this balance of seemingly contradictory forces as an interesting area for examination. How do objectivity, logic, and control work in tandem with subjectivity, intuition, and chance to create a successful design? Specifically, how do these elements find synergy in my own work?

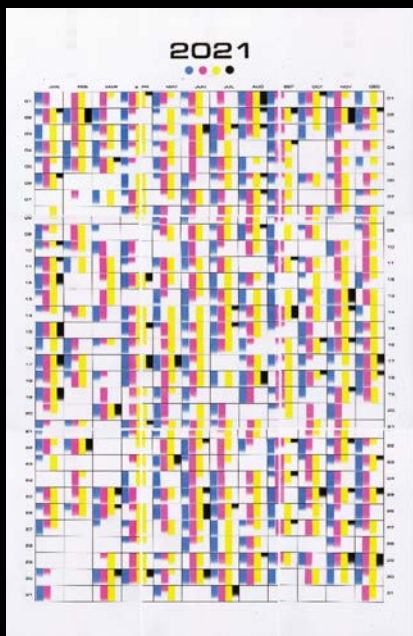
I've found that I rely heavily on organization and order. Many of my projects involve working with data or distilling dense content into a logical system. I find great satisfaction in documenting, cataloging, and arranging information in a digestible manner. Patterns, geometry, and symmetry ground me. However, there is also an element of experimentation in my work that usually manifests by way of form. Once I've made sense of the content and laid a systematic design foundation for myself, I'm free to explore different methods of production, design formats, and visual aesthetics. Having first firmly established my structure, I can then improvise and play.

This thesis is an investigation into the role that control plays in my design methodology. I ask the essential question: how does my reliance on order, logic, and reason manifest itself in my design interests, process, and products? Through this body of work, I aim to further explore the balance of systems and aesthetics, logic and intuition, and control and chance within the realm of design.

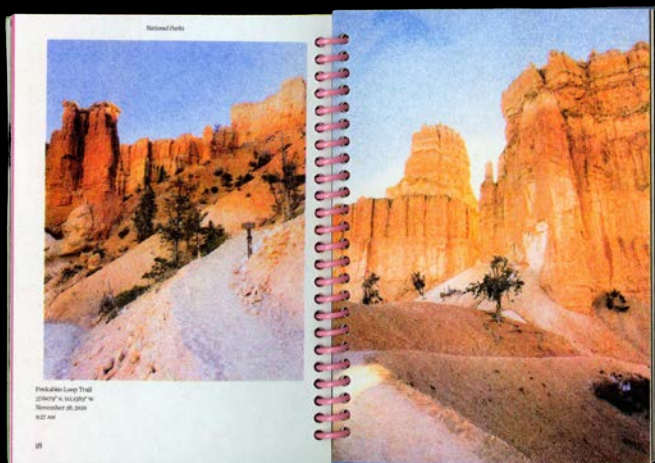


A

B



C







D

- A Gradient Weave, 2023. Woven Risograph prints, 11 x 17 in.
- B CMYK Calendar, 2022. Poster diptych printed with Risograph (L) and plotter (R), each 33 x 51 in.
- C Utah, 2022. Spiral-bound Risograph book with French folds, 4.5 x 6.5 in.
- D Process, 2022. Printed matter, various. Dimensions variable.

# Shuning Ren

@shuningren\_design

she/her

Graphic design, also known as visual communication, is the process of combining text, images, and color to create a visually appealing and effective communication piece. Visual communication is the use of images and visuals to express ideas or information. When we call graphic design visual communication, does it mean that we have to use “eyes,” and does it mean that we are rejecting people who are unable to use their eyes from joining our community? So, I asked myself a question, can we separate the “visual” from graphic design? Visual communication is just that “visual.” But does it have to be?

All these years of studying graphic design have gradually limited my view. Calling graphic design visual communication also limits our exploration of the liminality of the design. Likewise, we are rejecting the designers who are visually impaired to join our community and rejecting the audiences who are visually impaired to use, or even see our work. I started to think whether there was a possibility that I could express my visual communication works without visuals. What if graphic design is not about visual communication, but about hearing communication? Or what if it’s about feeling communication?

Globally, 1.1 billion people were living with vision loss in 2020, which means that at least 1.1 billion people in the world will not be able to use or even see our work. There are already enough designs for visually healthy people in this world, I want to think about the remaining audience of 1 billion who are visually impaired. I want to design for them, letting them feel and use my design. So, I want to explore the possibilities and liminalities of graphic design so that it can serve and help more people with disabilities.



## Aldus Manutius

Aldus Manutius was an Italian humanist, scholar, educator, and the founder of the Aldine Press. Manutius devoted the later part of his life to publishing and disseminating rare texts.



# join or die

*Book, Exhibition, Manifesto* ♦ 1. "The Pennsylvania Gazette"

- Benjamin Franklin ♦ 2. The Chap-Book - Herbert Stuart Stone ♦ 3. Die neue Typographie ♦ 4. The Great Exhibition ♦ 5. Constructivism ♦ 6. Bauhaus ♦ 7. First Things First

## Johannes Gutenberg

Johannes Gensfleisch zur Laden zum Gutenberg was a German inventor, printer, publisher, and goldsmith who introduced printing to Europe with his mechanical movable-type printing press.

## William Morris

a British textile designer, poet, artist, novelist, translator and socialist activist associated with the British Arts and Crafts Movement. He was a major contributor to the revival of traditional British textile arts and methods of production.

# KELMSCOTT PRESS

The *Kelmscott Press*, founded by *William Morris* and *Emery Walker*

published fifty-three books in sixty-six volumes between 1891 and 1898. Each book was designed and ornamented by Morris and printed by hand in limited editions of around 300. Many books were illustrated by Edward Burne-Jones. Kelmscott Press books sought to replicate the style of 15th-century printing and were part of the Gothic revival movement.

## Univers / Frutiger / Avenir

# Adrian Frutiger

Adrian Johann Frutiger was a Swiss typeface designer who influenced the direction of type design in the second half of the 20th century. His career spanned the hot metal, phototypesetting and digital typesetting eras.

## Graphic Designers

♦ W.H. Bradley ♦ Paul Rand ♦ Alex Steinweiss  
♦ Josef Müller-Brockmann ♦ Ellen Lupton  
♦ Roberto Baldazzini ♦ Giambattista Bodoni

B



C



D



E



- A History of Graphic Design, 2021. Poster, 24 x 37 in.
- B Van-Gogh, 2021. Poster, 30 x 45 in.
- C Glossary, 2022. Booklet, 3 x 5.5 in.
- D Swimming and Sleeping, 2022. Poster, dimensions variable.
- E Graphic Diary, 2022. Posters, each 4.5 x 6 in.

# Olivia Sanderford

## TEMPORARY PERMANENCE

[oliviasanderford.com](http://oliviasanderford.com) // [@design.oms](https://www.instagram.com/design.oms)

she/her

The proliferation of media and social media in contemporary society has had a significant impact on the way in which individuals, particularly members of Generation Z, process and respond to catastrophic life events. The idea of temporary permanence as it presents itself as the desensitization of Gen Z through media influence regarding catastrophic life events and the level of existential consciousness found in western culture. Gen Z is the first generation to always have a constant stream of information available at their fingertips since childhood and has led to a desensitization to the impact of these events and a disconnection from reality. I have always been intrigued by the idea and tactics that surround media consumption, this is something I have been interested in investigating further. I have previously explored this area of curiosity through a series of surveys and interviews surrounding the idea of “The Covid College Experience.” This project led me to become interested in the idea of temporary permanence and what else can be found through impactful life events, especially the relationships and connectivity found through several different occurrences. By taking a group of Gen Z and interviewing them, I was able to collect raw data regarding their specific experiences involving a pandemic taking place during college, some of their most transformational years. Through design, the goal is to bring awareness to the extent to which media is present in our lives and how it shapes our perception and understanding of the world around us. The aim is to encourage a greater sense of connection and meaning in the face of temporary permanence and to consider the ways in which design can be used to foster a more mindful and reflective approach to the manipulation found in media consumption.



A





B



C



D



E

- A *The Covid College Experience (Portraiture)*, 2022. Digital, dimensions variable.
- B *Taxonomy*, 2022. Poster, 20 x 28 in.
- C *50 Questions*, 2022. Toilet paper and adhesive labels, 4 x 4 in.
- D *In Memoriam*, 2023. Candles and matchbooks, dimensions variable.
- E *This One's For You ...*, 2023. Pamphlet stitched vellum and cardstock booklet, 5 x 8 in.



# Siddharth Thanganatarajamani

PECHUVAARTHAI: AUTHENTICITY AS A PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION

sidds.art // @feet\_candy

he/him

The ideal of authenticity has been one of the most vaguely defined and widely contemplated terms in human history. Subjective as they come, the concept of authenticity is particularly more nebulous for someone involved in art or any sort of creative production, and even more so for someone who has been an immigrant, and an active participant in multilingual societies. I'd like my thesis to be considered as a personal meditation on authenticity, and my attempt to present the concept as a process or multiple processes of negotiation. My thesis is informed by existing literature on language and identity, specifically in a poststructuralist and sociolinguistic lens, traditional and contemporary accounts of authenticity, interviews of peers and professionals in and around the art and design industry, as well as my own personal journey and negotiations as a third-world, bilingual, Tamil, international student studying in America. I look specifically at code-switching and multiple accounts of the linguistic phenomena as a source of insight for building my project. I also look briefly at exploring these understandings of authenticity in a rapidly AI world by conducting experiments and research on existing AI chatbots and generators, and studying what influences and contexts are pulled up.

PRODUCED BY ..... S. RAMANATHAN  
S. SIVARAMAN  
SCREENPLAY BY ..... PANCHU ARUNACHALAM  
STORY BY ..... M. D. SUNDAR  
CINEMATOGRAPHY ..... V. LAKSHMAN  
EDITED BY ..... VITAL

# தீர்திரை

STARRING  
RAJINIKANTH  
MADHU  
GOUTHAMI  
NIZHALGAL RAVI  
CHARAN RAJ



Music by  
RAJASEKHAR

Lyrics by  
ILAIYARAJA

Elegant



A

B



C

**N&RM**



D

- A Dharmadurai, 2021. Poster, 11.7 x 16.5 in.
- B Junk & Shadow Type, 2020. Random household objects, dimensions variable.
- C 'Nagaram' Typemark, 2020. Dimensions variable.
- D Taxonomy Tickets, 2022. Newsprint, 49 GSM, 1.25 x 2.75 in.

# Jing-Yi Tsai

## CONSUMING ORGANIC GRAPHIC DESIGN

@jyts.ai

As a gastronome and storyteller, I've been fascinated by every experience I have had with food. From my mom's kitchen to a five-star steakhouse. It is more than just the dopamine my brain releases after eating; it is pleasure that involves all the senses, the stories it carries, and the memories it creates. I decided to reveal and explore how design has been deeply involved in our lives, how it affects us even at the fundamental level—food, and what would be the next step for this art genre under the pressure of the advancement in technology.

Graphic design is an almost internationally recognizable language, while food, as a tangible cultural heritage, dominates human's five senses while telling stories. It is no surprise to see a collaboration between the two. Food arts such as food styling, food illustrations, chocolate arts, cake arts... and so on, have all become saturated fields, especially after the social media boom. Yet, we don't actually know what makes the art so appealing to us. Is it because it is art or is it because it is food? By unfolding and experimenting with the multipotentiality of storytelling in food, I would like to analyze the result while finding the common ground it has in graphic design.

“Design is the deliberate and reasoned shaping and making of our environment in ways that satisfy our needs and give meaning to our lives,” says John Heskett, a British writer and lecturer of industrial design. It sheds light on the connection between food and design, which I believe is worth exploring since we might be able to expand the possibility of keeping humanity within the design practice alongside the fast-paced growth of technology.



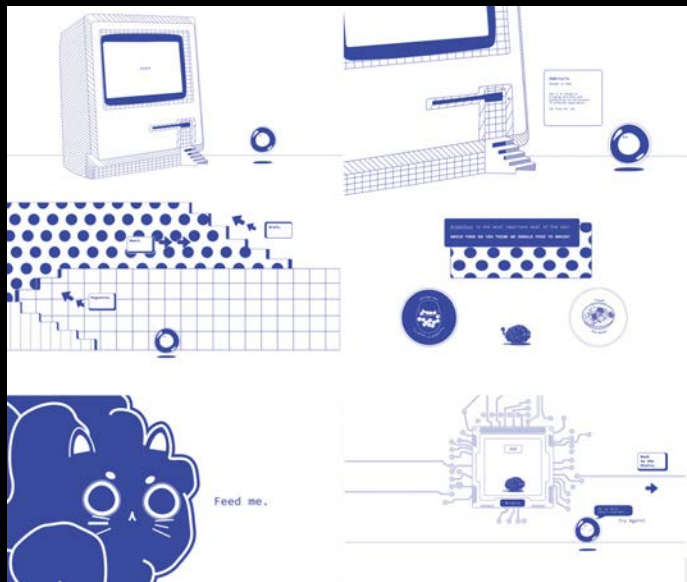
A



B



C





D



E



- A Theinhardt, 2022. Laser print, 5.25 x 8.25 x 0.6 in.
- B Messenger, 2022. Laser print, 2.127 x 3.37 in.
- C Soma and Ambrosia, 2022. HTML/CSS, 1920 x 1080 px.
- D Little Rocky in Wonderland, 2022. Risograph, 4.5 x 7.5 in.
- E Little Rocky in Wonderland, 2022. Risograph, 4.5 x 7.5 in.

# Yu-Ting (Tommy) Tsai

TIME FRAMED

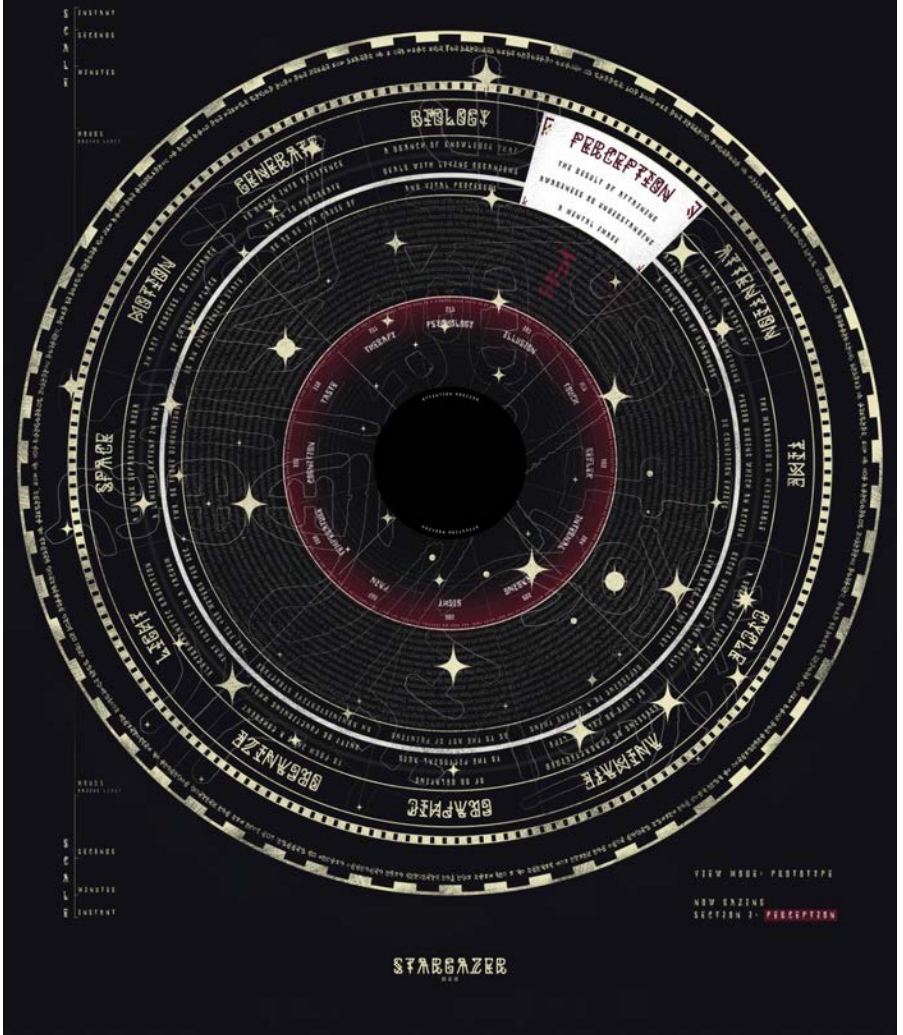
tommying.com

he/him

I believe a continuous investigation on how ideas and information are presented, transformed, and received in a specific range of time is not only beneficial for designers, but for everyone that communicates in this digital era. With the exponentially increasing volume of messages we are receiving, the time we have to expose ourselves and process this information remains the same. This insufficiency of time highlights the importance of understanding how information is processed and sometimes distorted when different visual strategies are applied. Throughout my graduate studies I have been interested in the practice of designing and reimagining projects in a different time-based medium. I find these “timeframes” play a major role in my learning process and access to information. My design practice focuses on investigating the transformation of visual identities between static and dynamic mediums, definition of still and motion, and the potentialities that lie within their respective boundaries. This thesis project is my attempt to explore the ways in which information can be compressed, expanded, and sometimes distorted in a visual form as a result of being translated across different timeframes.

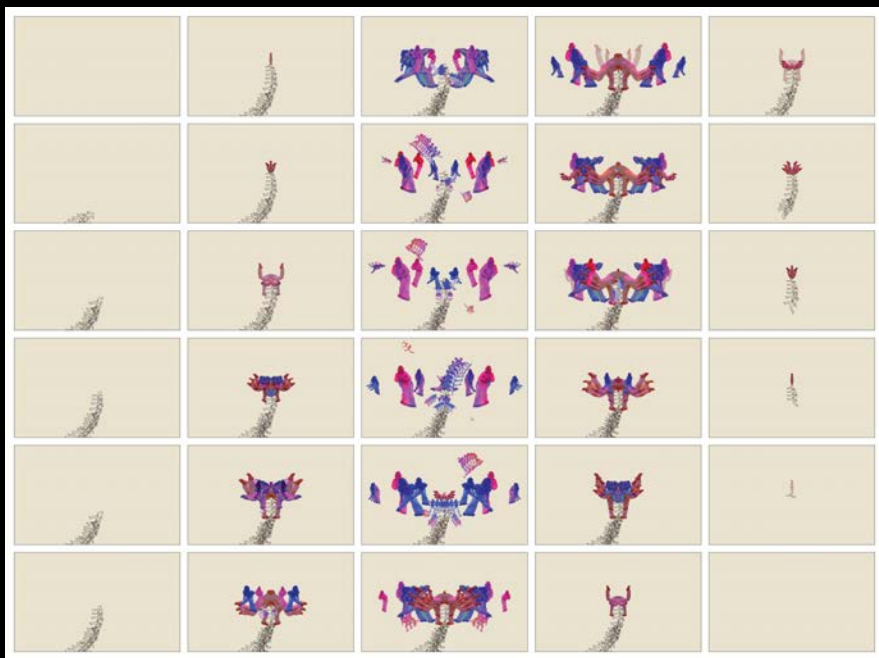
Understanding the significance of visual language in different temporal frameworks is becoming a crucial subject in designing accessible and effective communication systems. I intend to explore this through deconstruction and reconstruction of visual elements in different frameworks of time and provide my own interpretation on the role of graphic design in information perception, accessibility, and manipulation.

EXTREME SCALE TAXONOMY

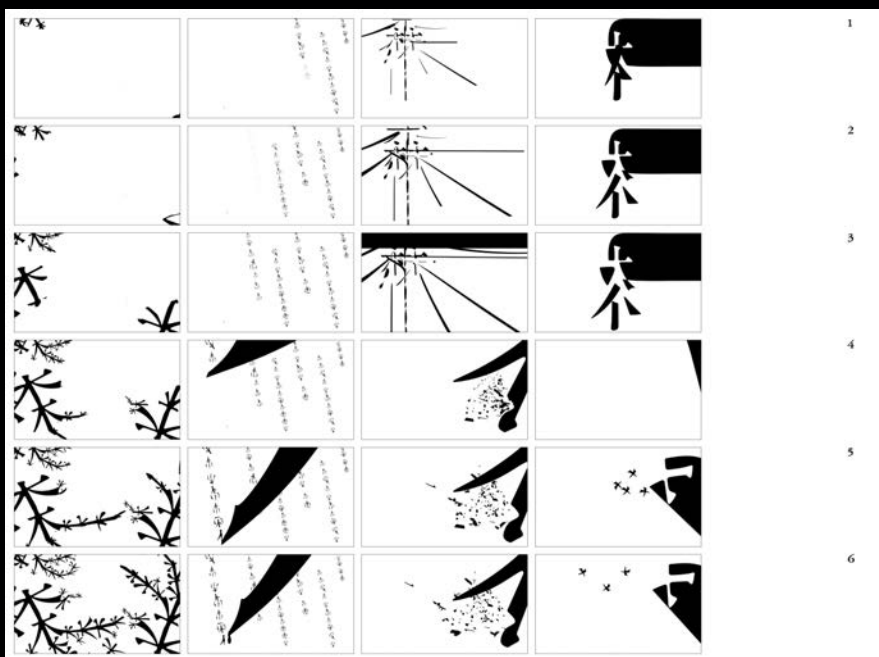


A

B

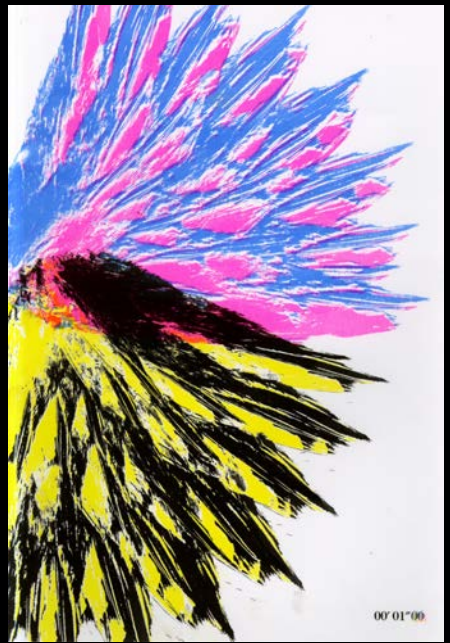


C





D



E

- A Stargaze, 2022. Print, 30 × 40 in.
- B Motion Sketch, 2022. Motion graphics.
- C Iterations, 2021. Motion graphics.
- D Captured, 2022. Prints, dimensions variable.
- E Frequency, 2022. Risograph, 11 × 17 in.

# Tiana Josephine Umbach

## ATTACK MODE

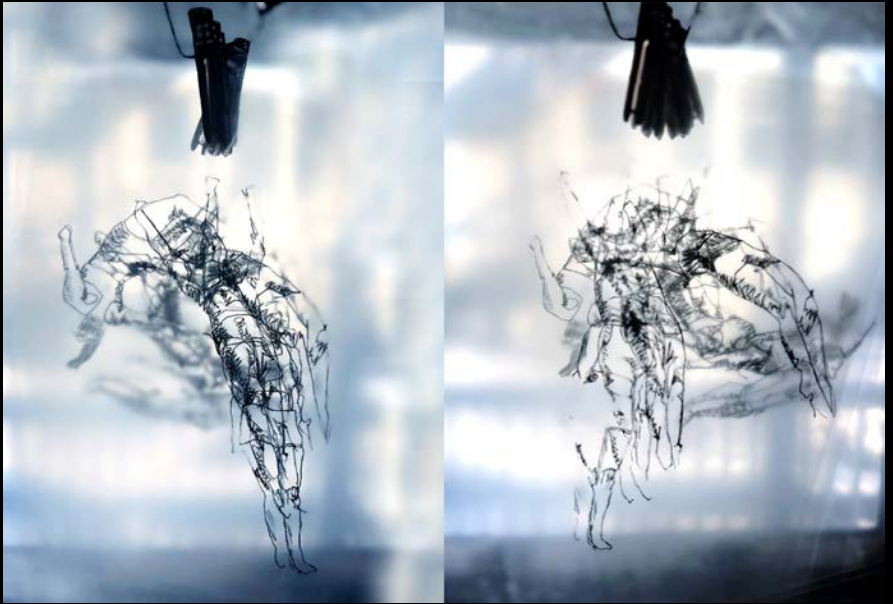
tianajosephinedesign.com // @t.j.creates

she/her

I've never been one to fall in with the norms. Alternative. Whether it be the music I listen to, the way I dress and do my hair, or even the body type I have. I am not the standard, and neither is the way I go about things. I've been told I am "so passionate" or "super animated" and I can tell they are not really compliments. But I don't care. When I go about something, I go attack mode. All or nothing, I always figure out a way to get it done. Maybe it's the stubborn Sicilian in me. To me it's more stubborn resilience. Where others would break, I stitch myself up and accomplish my goals.

My thesis outlines the framework of attack mode. It seeks to understand what it means to eschew norms. Not just being alternative, but cleverly doing it my way. My practice involves using dynamic forms, breaking down moments, and embodying velocity and strength. When digital form holds me back, I allow myself to return to what I know—physicality. I can investigate what design means through personal experiences and the use of my body. What happens when we question not if but how?

Other people might have hung up the cheer shoes after essentially tearing their leg in half. Some people might have even thought I was crazy or pathetic for not giving it up at my age. Yet, one of us gets to cheer professionally for the NBA in front of thousands of people at the TD Garden every week, and it's not the people who questioned me.



A



B



C





D

- A *Movement*, 2023. Digital illustration, embroidery on transparency paper, and clips, 9 parts, 8.5 x 11 in.
- B *State of Spirit*, 2022. Acrylic, 12 x 10 in.
- C *Once There was a Way to Get Back Homeward*, 2022. 10 cards in plastic case and Risograph on cardstock, 2.5 x 3.5 in.
- D *Liminality + Transition*, 2022. Risograph, 2 x 2 in.

# Reshma Vijayan

theinkrfloyd.com // @theinkrfloyd

she/her

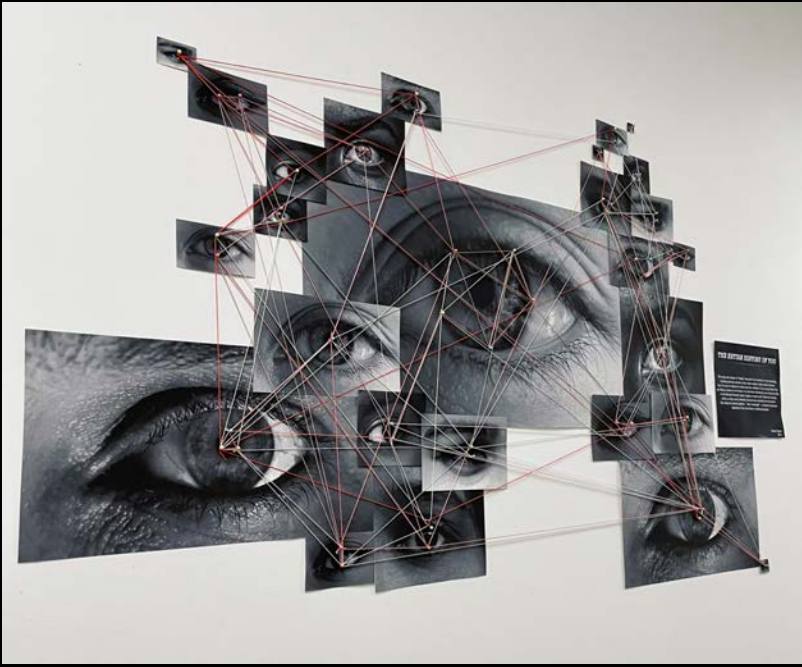
India's diverse and intricate cultural landscape has long captivated the attention of scholars and artists alike, yet the relationship between language, culture, and typography remains a largely unexplored terrain. Drawing upon my experience as a polyglot, this thesis deconstructs the notion of exoticism often associated with culture and questions the nuances of typography across cultures and how it influences our perception of speech and form.

I focus on creating an exchange of cross-cultural context, exploring the shared understanding of shapes, forms, and emotions. At the core of this exploration lies a methodology offering a unique approach to examining the capabilities and limitations of language and technology. Ultimately, this study underscores the transformative potential of creative experimentation in challenging preconceived notions and promoting a more inclusive and dynamic approach to typographic design. By creating an environment that encourages individuals to maneuver through this complex space, I aim to highlight the importance of fostering cross-cultural understanding in design, challenging stereotypes, and expanding our knowledge of the world. This thesis offers a unique and sophisticated perspective on typography and its role in conveying cultural identity, revealing the intricate interplay between language, culture, and design.



A

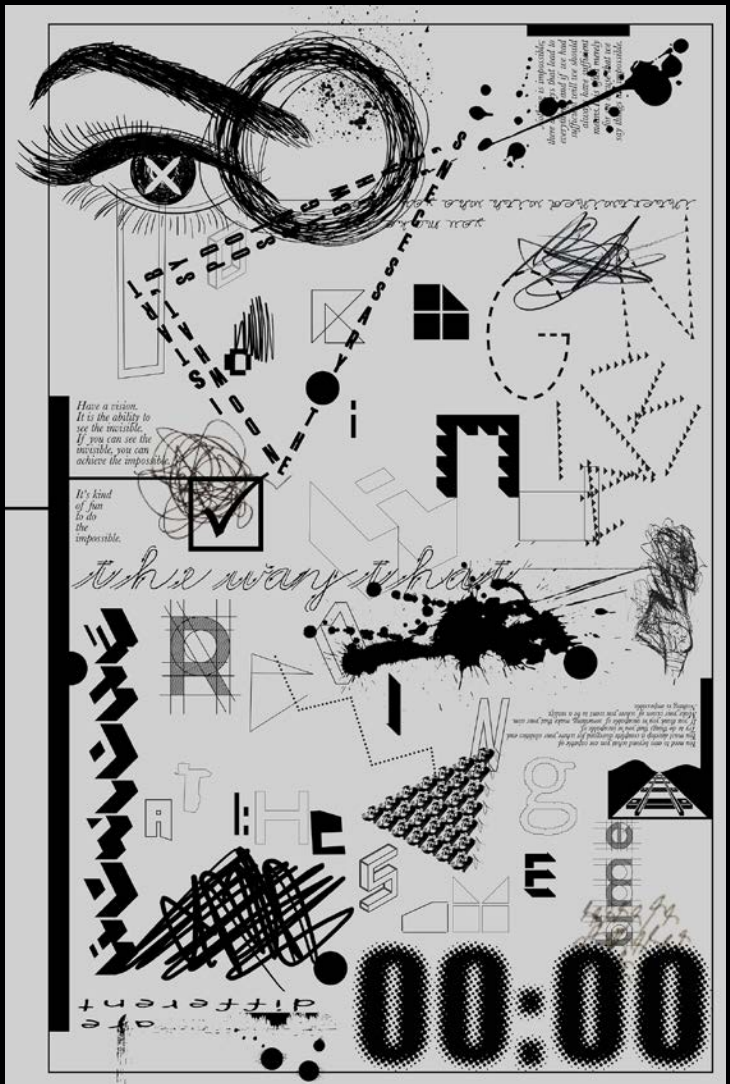
B



C







D

- A Amma, Bakshanam and Me - Open Recipe Box, 2022. Laser cut vellum and handmade paper, 8.5 x 5.5 in.
- B Who's Looking At You?, 2022. Print installation, dimensions variable.
- C Taxonomy, 2022. Print. Dimensions variable.
- D Mark and Type, 2021. Print, 24 x 36 in.



# Sophia Viviano

## APERTURES

viviano-designs.com // @viviano\_designs

she/her

The term “aperture” has several multidisciplinary uses. To photographers, the aperture is the space in the lens through which light passes. In typography, Monotype defines the aperture as “[t]he partially enclosed, somewhat rounded negative space in some characters such as ‘n’, ‘c’, ‘s’ ... the opening to the counter space.” Put simply, an aperture is a hole or gap.

Apertures exist as fixed systems in otherwise liminal spaces, and have an affecting influence on the content that passes through them. The camera aperture influences light, just as graphic design intermediates the space between content and audience. By varying the width of the aperture in a camera, a photographer can choose to have more or less influence on how light is translated into the final photograph. Analogously, charged with presenting a particular piece of content, a designer can influence whether their process has more or less visibility in the final outcome.

My interest in process historically manifested itself in my affection for puzzles and unfinished works of art. I am fascinated by these visual representations of systems that would otherwise go unnoticed. This same fascination has motivated my exploration into typeface design. My thesis is a mechanism to explore the influence of these exposed systems in my own work, and to develop a methodology for making and thinking about how graphic design functions as aperture.

Using this metaphor of design as an aperture for content I will apply my interest in exposing processes toward further illuminating the relationship between design and audience.

A



B

Book Weight

# Viviano

an inktrap  
half-serif

10 pt. geometric inspiration

20 pt. geometric inspiration

30 pt. geometric inspiration

40 pt. geometric inspiration

50 pt. geometric inspiration

8 pt.

The prompt behind the development of Viviano Book was to create a unique font to be typeset into a design publication. With this in mind, we decided to tackle the construction of a serif font, with a contemporary twist. Our goal was to produce a typeface that works well at a text weight, but with unique details that would provide intrigue at a larger scale.

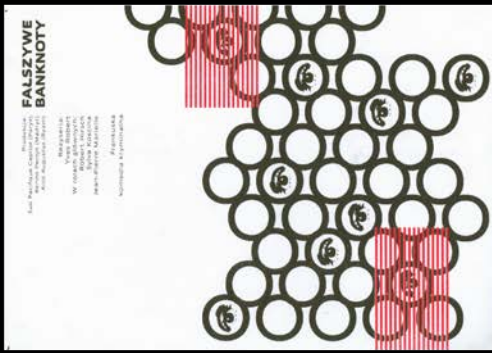
To do so, we referenced typefaces with serifs that had unconventional features, like *Lora* and *Noam*. We were especially interested in taking the idea of a half slab, half traditional serif and adding an inktrap component to that form. From there we began the production process developing with both analog and digital methods. A feature that began to creep into the characters was an angular cut across the top of the

rounded letters, making them more geometric and consistent with the angularity of the serifs. We began to consistently apply this element to the alphabet, while also maintaining a fully rounded version to use as a proportional control.

The angle became incorporated in a manner that followed the expansion model more traditionally. We began to look at typefaces like *GT Secura*, then integrated this geometry to increase the contrast of the pre-existing forms. The present iteration of *Viviano Book* includes inktrap or notched half-serifs, with a high-contrast angular component to the rounded letters. Additional weights and glyphs pending.



C



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- A *Unlocked*, 2022. Laser cut and engraved basswood, dimensions variable.
- B *Viviano* (Typeface), 2022-23. Designed in Fontlab.
- C *Process*, 2022. Sewn vellum with artboard, 4 x 6 in.
- D *Iterations: Counterfeit Banknotes*, 2021. Risograph on vellum, dimensions variable.

# Jialun Wang

gallondesign.com // @gallondesign

he/him

A perfect digital age may not come, so we will live in symbiosis with an environment that is mingled with the digital and physical, then design too. The motivation of Jialun Wang's thesis is to explore the possibility of a mutual space in graphic design beyond the physical and digital fields. This thesis aims to articulate a model that explores how designers can create an intangible third space through design practices based on the extension of media and experimental emotional resonance to achieve their functionality and form the collective identity in the current hybrid context.

Jialun Wang's design practice is drawn to a variety of marginal themes, which often exist in the context of contemporary hybridity, consisting of a mixture of digital and physical experiences. The relationship between physical and digital experience is often mapped as a representational dualism, where these two distinct experiences shape mutually opposing spaces in relation to each other: the physical field and the digital field.

In his research, he will explore how graphic design will construct a mutual space as an extension of the digital and physical fields and critique the functionality of design by exploring the visibility of the mutual space under different subtopics. These subtopics come from Jialun Wang's practice projects during his two years in the MFA program at Boston University. They include death, love, and family; culture and forgetting; gender and physical barriers; and conflict and confrontation.

In the mutual space, graphic design will form a tangible collective memory by conducting an extension of the medium, establishing experimental emotional resonance, and creating systematic randomness. He hopes to develop the third space (mutual space) as an open-ended critical structure based on the characteristics of the times, as a new exploration of the design discipline in the cultural landscape, social spectacle, and virtual spaces.



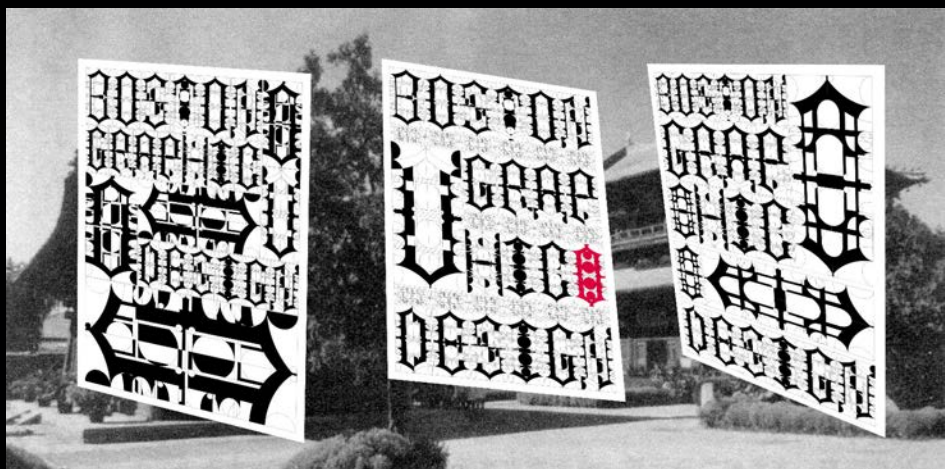
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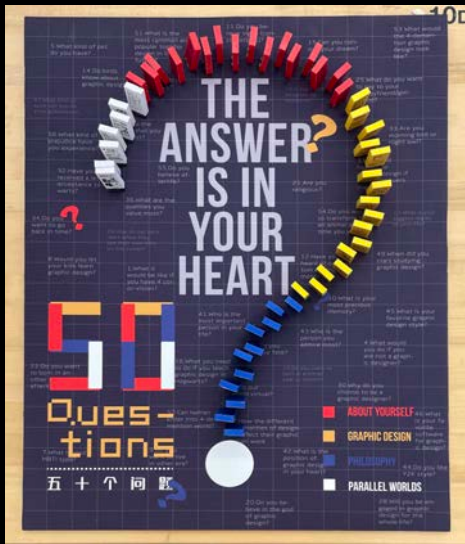
# Shu Wang

## SCIENTIFIC SYMBOLS

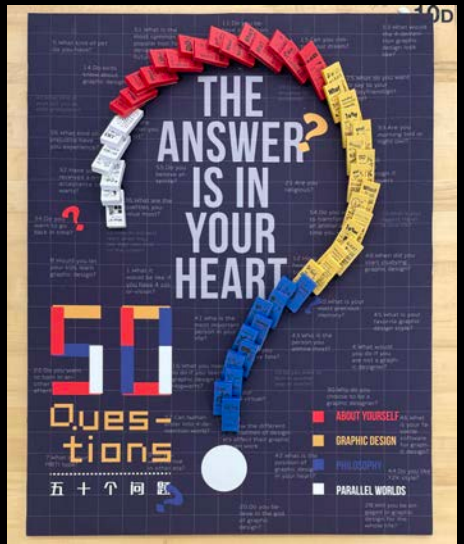
With the evolution of human civilization, the intersection of disciplines in different fields has become a trend. Sensual art and rational science are two things that seem to be very different, but the theoretical ideas and related elements behind them can compliment each other. The combination of the two can also collide with new ideas and presentations, bringing human beings richer knowledge combing visual experiences, and sparks of inspiration. However, for a long time, there has been a large fragmentation in both the education and research models of the two.

This thesis focuses on science-related symbols such as mathematical and physical formulas, chemical elemental symbols, and chemical reaction equations. It studies the visual system of the symbols themselves, the visual presentation of their meaning, and the methods of communication and education of the concept by means of graphic design.

Graphic design is a powerful way to express abstract concepts in the human mind figuratively. On the one hand, this thesis will use graphic design to present scientific symbols: based on the study of the development, use and meaning of scientific symbols in visual presentation, use fonts, logos, abstract patterns, anthropomorphism, typographic posters, and other graphic design methods to visualize and beautify abstract scientific concepts and theories. On the other hand, it will use scientific symbols to sublimate graphic design: extract and transform theorems, relevant knowledge, methodology and materials from the scientific symbol system, transform this theory and apply it to graphic design to create a new design approach.



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- A 50 Questions, 2022. Dominoes, print paper, and metal hinges, 22 x 27.5 in.
- B 50 Questions, 2022. Dominoes, print paper, and metal hinges, 22 x 27.5 in.
- C Illustration x Science, 2022. Print paper and photo frames, each 8 x 10 in.
- D Illustration x Science, 2022. PH test paper, acid and base solutions, and photo frames, each 8 x 10 in.
- E Theory of Design Evolution, 2022. Print, 18 x 24 in.



# Riva Weinstein

## THE WHEEL OF HISTORY: MYTHOGRAPHY AND NOSTALGIA

[rivaweinsteinart.com](http://rivaweinsteinart.com)

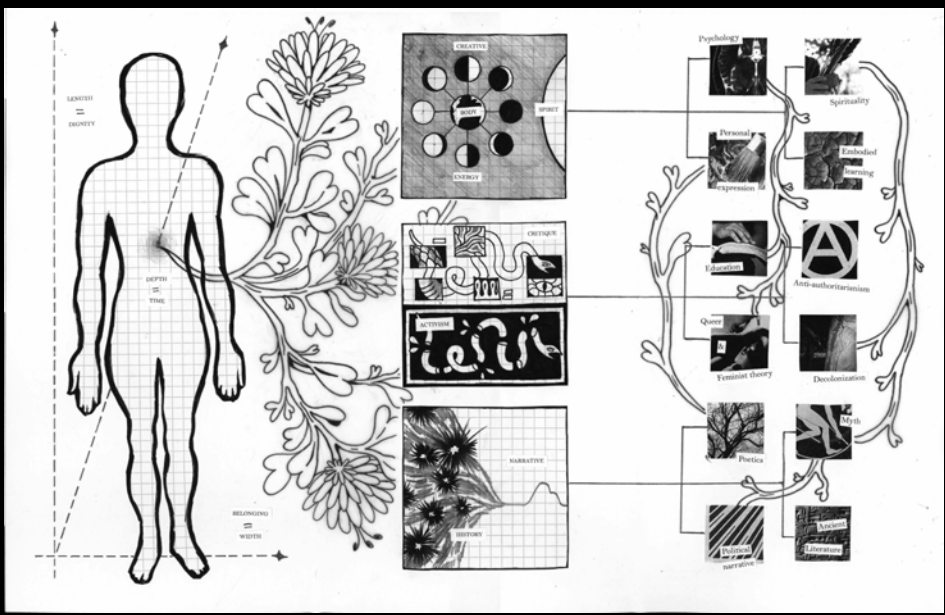
she/they/he

Lorraine Wild's "Great Wheel of Style" visualizes the life cycle of visual culture as it moves from high to low and back again. Perhaps the current popularity of retro and nostalgic design styles is only the current iteration of an eternal human tendency to idealize whatever visual culture we vaguely remember from our childhoods. Yet the popularity of consumer-critical aesthetics like Vaporwave and neo-Dadaism reflects more than simple nostalgia: it reflects a world in which visual culture changes so quickly, the Wheel accelerates so rapidly, that the lines between present and past, between "high" and "low" culture begin to blur. Using my love of mythological narratives as content inspiration, *The Wheel of History: Mythography and Nostalgia* critically embraces the blurring of time and value engendered by the digital landscape. Influenced by joy, creativity, and personal expression, yet tempered by historical critique, my work celebrates the aesthetics and ideas of the past even as it challenges us to question their place in the contemporary world.

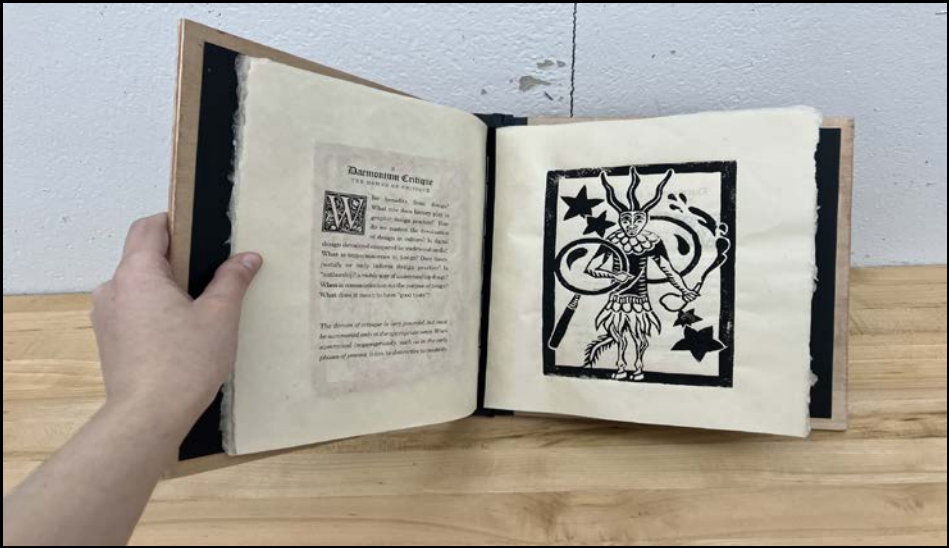
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- A *The Green Knight: Poster 4*, 2023. Digital and traditional collage with holly, 11 × 17 in.
- B *Methodology Map*, 2022. Collage, pencil, and ink on paper and vellum, 11 × 17 in.
- C *Daemonium Interrogandi*, 2022. Linocut on bamboo paper with wood cover, 8 × 12 in.
- D *Vaporwave/Postneoclassicism*, 2023. Accordion-fold book, 7 × 7 × 0.75 in.
- E *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen: 25 Year Anniversary Box Set*, 2022. Wood and paper, 3 × 5 × 3 in.

# Sishu Zhong

VOIDS

@suez1102

she/her

As human beings, we are constantly creating and assigning meaning to the world around us. Our cultural, social, and personal experiences shape our perception of objects, events, and actions. Therefore, the meanings we create are not inherent in the objects themselves but rather a product of our interpretation. Take the example of traffic lights—the colors red, yellow, and green signify different actions depending on the cultural conventions and understanding of road signs in a particular country. In some cultures, red is associated with danger and stop, while in others, it signifies luck and prosperity. The concept of VOIDS holds significant importance as it allows designers to challenge conventional meanings and question the status quo. The notion of meaninglessness suggests that there is no inherent meaning in an object or symbol, and it is only our interpretation that gives it meaning. This opens up a new realm of possibilities for graphic designers to experiment with and subvert conventional meanings to create thought-provoking visual communication.

Through this thesis, I aim to demonstrate the potential of meaninglessness in graphic design and its role in challenging traditional interpretations of symbols and meanings. By combining visual and literary research, I will present theoretical models that illustrate how meaninglessness can be expressed through semiotics and other elements in graphic design. These models will offer a comprehensive understanding of the power of meaninglessness and its ability to shape our understanding of semiotics and visual communication. Ultimately, my goal is to showcase how graphic design can be used to question and subvert conventional meanings, and to create a dialogue that challenges our assumptions about the world around us. By embracing the concept of VOIDS, we can broaden our understanding of the role of graphic design in shaping our perception of the world and its impact on society.





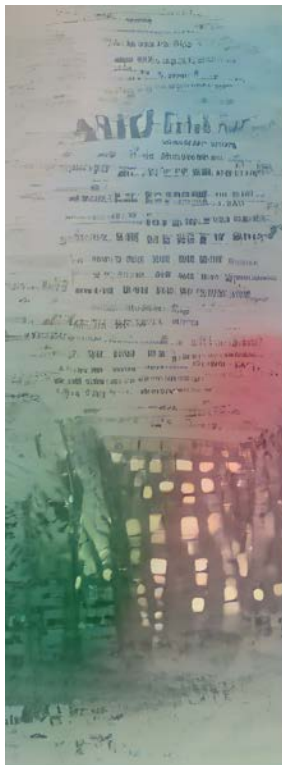
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- A Sunrise, 2022. Poster, 19.5 x 27.5 in.  
 B Water Waves, 2022. Animation, 1920 x 1080 px.  
 C Visualizing AuId Lang Syne, 2022. Poster, 11 x 30 in.  
 D Chu Shi Biao, 2022. Poster, 19.5 x 27.5 in.  
 E INTERRUPTION, 2021. Poster, 40 x 60 in.

# Painting



Megan Arné  
Bunny Correia  
Sakshi Doshi  
River Kim  
Young Kim  
Madelaine Kobe  
Andrew Lyman  
Bill Mattern  
Luke Morrison  
Shayan Nazarian  
Stephen Proski  
Vincent Samudovsky  
Hannah Steele

The MFA Painting class of 2023 shows us that painting can help us see deeply inwards and far outwards. As a material process that typically privileges the sensation of touch, it is rarely too far from the body of its maker. The smallest aspects of everyday life to the biggest events of our time can be made palpable through depiction, abstraction, and the wonder that making brings.

For several students from the class of 2023, art derives directly from their own experience. Bunny Correia paints the many shades of their persona in various representational modes. Cartoon-like opaque color, three-dimensional figurines, and naturalistic self-portraiture tell the tales of pain, love, and a lot in between. Megan Arné represents her daily life too, through a geometric language that chronicles her responsibilities as a mother. Breastfeeding and sleeping schedules create dizzying patterns, where symbolic representations of family add up to a layered and abstract portrait of the artist. Stephen Proski also works with shapes, increasingly tactile ones, made of canvas, ceramic, and cast resin. Foregrounding touch, he challenges the prioritization of the visual sense and the ableism it engenders. Like rebuses, his work reads as both language and image, speaking to his experience of blindness through symbols and architectural interventions.

For other students, painting offers the necessary critical distance to consider the conditions of contemporary visual culture. Andrew Lyman, Bill Mattern, and Luke Morrison use figuration to interrogate the very act of looking. The psychological effects of surveillance, voyeurism, and desire play out through painterly translations of film stills, 3D renderings, and observed and imagined scenes. All three artists carefully adjust the dials of legibility, bringing archetypes into and out of focus. By dragging sticky oil paint across his canvas, Lyman stretches his filmic referent to new places, pulling it from the narrative from which it originated. Mattern customizes and illuminates images of eroticized bodies, which, once identified, melt into their environments. In his depictions of shadowy figures and cities, Morrison uses flat colors and shapes to paint seemingly simple scenes of suspense. This work invites us to look but refuses an easy read. It makes us look harder—at images as much as the world around us.

Others trust what they observe to guide them through the painting. Sakshi Doshi's practice takes place off-screen and, at the outset, out-of-doors. During commutes and wanders throughout Boston, she stops to notice light effects on buildings. Returning to the studio, she recreates observed shapes through stencils and monotype plates, inking them up and printing sunshine and shadow on paper. Where Doshi seeks clarity, Hannah Steele throws herself into the complexity of vision. Describing tangled branches, leaves, and detritus, Steele gets lost in the painting, noting her whereabouts through energetic marks, charcoal dashes, and daubs of observed color. Through her rigorous pursuit of perception, she shows us there is no one way to see. Vincent Samudovsky's large and highly chromatic paintings invite retinal overload but give way to a space for contemplation.

Recognizable forms, such as doorways, backpacks, and landscapes denote journeys he has taken and, in some areas, dissolve into air. Through this work, Samudovsky keeps one foot in the physical world and one in the metaphysical.

Spirits dwell in the sculptural work of River Kim and Madelaine Kobe. Kim's bodily forms, made from synthetic fabric, foam, wire, and organic materials, are repositories for ancestors and ceremonial sites for healing. Drawing on her transcultural identity and her background in Shamanism and Buddhism, Kim's art translates and communicates her own private expression. Kobe's practice also engages notions of home and cultural inheritances through the materials she collects, such as charred bones from family meals and local soil from where she grew up in the American South. She draws on the spiritual and religious mythologies of her upbringing, looking to the land to bury and excavate the past while finding shimmering moments of transcendence.

Young Kim and Shayan Nazarian have informed each other's ways of thinking and making through conversations about the bigger themes in life, such as family, politics, war, and death. In his textual and allegorical paintings and installations, Kim has drawn inspiration from Korean folk art, *Minhwa*, as well as street art, calligraphic traditions, and graffiti. His interest in these popular art forms connects him with timeless representations of the human condition. Shayan Nazarian also uses visual art to tell stories of collective experience, particularly that of the civil protests in Iran, which have taken place while he has been a graduate student here at Boston University. Working in painting, digital collage, and video, Nazarian processes the images he witnesses.

**Josephine Halvorson**

Professor of Art, Chair of Graduate Studies, Painting





# Megan Arné

megan-arne.com // @studioarne

she/her

As a mother of two young children, I am motivated to create visual depictions of the complicated responsibilities of women and mothers that are often misunderstood outside of the domestic space. Using slow materials like thin, flat layers of opaque oil paint carefully applied on canvas, and yarn applied one stitch at a time with a punch needle, I create paintings that reference calendars, charts, or routines. I document and ease the physical, mental, and emotional intensity of motherhood by painting repeating symbols, meditative patterns, and coded sequences of shapes.

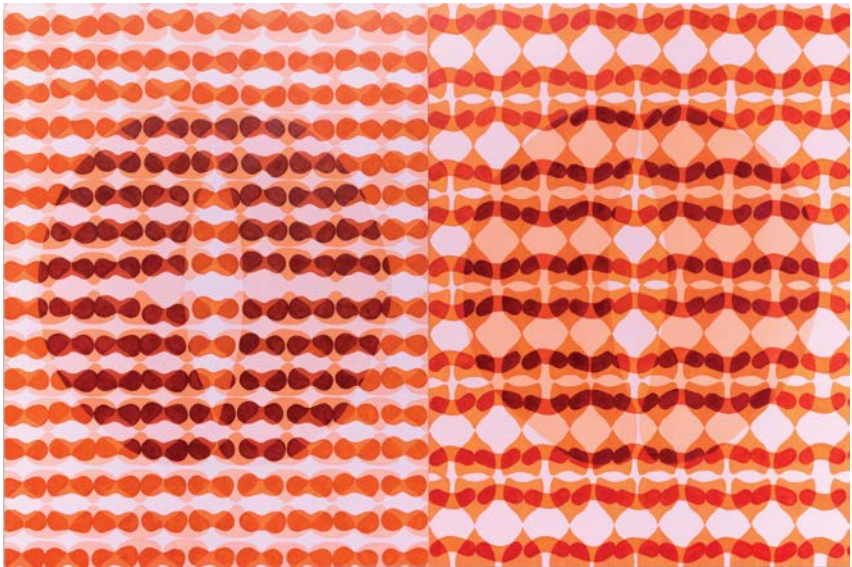
I make abstract paintings that are descriptive of universal narratives of parenting, alongside my personal experiences with childbirth and breastfeeding. A vital element of my practice is maintaining documentation of my daily activities as a mother, including detailed sleep logs and food lists. I construct paintings by implementing systems that convert my home-harvested data into images. I often pull from a lexicon of shapes that symbolize both my children's first foods and the female body. Each painting has a monochromatic color palette that also references nourishment and the body, such as the ochre and cream colors of breastmilk. I see the shapes and colors as love letters to my two sons, and the paintings as odes to the invisible labors of women and mothers. The shapes are employed using repetition and the grid for both catharsis and control, but also as content to point to the repetitive rituals performed by women to care for their own bodies and the bodies of their children.

I am interested in participating in the tradition of female artists who have used repetition and symbolic shapes to address feminist issues. I am continuing this conversation by using these tools to reference motherhood in order to elevate it out of mundanity and obscurity.

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- A *All My Eggs in One Basket*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas wrapped panel, 48 x 48 x 4 in.
- B *2 Births in Orange*, 2022. Oil on two canvases, 48 x 72 x 1.5 in.
- C *Liquid Gold I*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 24 x 36 x 1.5 in.
- D *Liquid Gold II*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 30 x 40 x 1.5 in.
- E *Can a woman forget her sucking child?*, 2022. Yarn and acrylic on stretched monks cloth, diptych, 36 x 58 x 1.5 in.

# Bunny Correia

bunnysarts.com // @soysaucemustacheman

I'm a traditional painter, but I find "artist" a better umbrella term. This vagueness is probably due to the materiality and circumstances of my art. In addition to making paintings, I sculpt, and sometimes I just have ideas. Let's just say I make things with my hands and brain and I'm called to it with an intense gut reaction. I'm indecisive but I keep on making. I like to see what happens.

My process starts anywhere from a photo reference, from my head, or just from a sketch. There's a burning desire to communicate visually without having to flat-out say anything. For the last six years, I've been making representations of my own persona, Bunny. I've painted them with colorful acrylic and oil paints. I've sculpted them from wood and even made some freestanding ceramic ones. Other subjects that appear in my work have to do with addiction, relationships, and scenes of my daily life here in Boston where I live.

I inherently feel a need to question power structures due to my upbringing and culture. As a first-generation Cape Verdean American, my people have used proverbs and sayings, often expressed by women, to express solidarity, provide support, and criticize society. Through our use of Creole, Cape Verdeans preserve our own history and local identity as distinct from our colonizers. As an artist I wish to do the same. I want to make my own visual language that similarly opposes oppressive power structures and ways of thinking.

On another level, I think that my work represents my state of mind. My mental health is a really big indicator of what I'm making. My paintings are usually colorful and expressive but because my art is so dependent on my mood, the tone varies frequently. Painting is a way to forget traumatic experiences. It's also a way to heal. I encounter objective power structures in the world but in my studio, I reclaim my own power and find something of worth through what I make.





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- A 2013 (*Nature will do what it does*), 2022. Acrylic and gouache on panel, 6 × 5 ft.
- B *Heart will do what it always does*, 2022. Oil on mounted Rives BFK, 12 × 16 in.
- C *The grass was not greener*, 2022. Gouache on mounted Rives BFK, 20 × 16 in.
- D *SadRabbit*, 2022. Acrylic and gouache on panel, 48 × 24 in.
- E *Angelic Space cowboy Alien*, 2022. Ceramic, 17 × 3 × 4 in.

# Sakshi Doshi

@\_sakshidoshi

she/her

I strive to capture the essence of change I witness through the light in the world around me. My work develops from observing shadows that I come across on my daily commute. The visual geometry of shapes, etched from light on architecture, is both chaotic and relaxing. I am fascinated by how structural the shapes look and, yet, how ephemeral they are, how soft they feel, and what stark forms they hold. I get even more excited by the way light touches a surface.

I relish the tactile nature of monotypes and collages. I revel in the layering of paper, fabric, and color to make sunlight in my studio. Each mark, each impression, is a moment captured in time. I explore the delicate balance of transparency and mark making to create depth and dimension in my work. I use a minimal color palette, most recently influenced mainly by the reds I notice in Boston. All the while, I think of my practice as daily journal entries.

Having lived in Baroda, India, a city that is compact yet expanding from all sides, I have witnessed its constant construction around me. I have captured the essence of the city's structures and have been exploring the relationship between the sharp angles of cranes, reflections of glass, and the texture of concrete. While the city has changed, so have I. In Boston, I explore the light falling on the grid figure of baked bricks and have developed a practice of walking, which informs my studio work. The theory of witnessing is essential to me, and recording visuals is habitual, revisiting and investigating its possibilities. The environment actively participates in my practice.



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- A *Shapes on the brick wall*, 2022. Monotype on Rives lightweight, 28 x 18 in.
- B *Untitled*, 2022. Monotype on Rives BFK, 30 x 22 in.
- C *Untitled*, 2022. Monotype on Rives BFK, 30 x 22 in.
- D *Untitled*, 2022. Monotype on Rives BFK, 30 x 22 in.
- E *Traces, Day 43*, 2023. Monotype on white lining cloth and Rives lightweight infinity, lining cloth: 40 x 10 in., paper: 40 x 32 in.



# River Kim

riverminjukim.com // @riverminjukim

she/they

As someone constantly shuttling between two disparate cultures, speaking through an art form has felt more natural as I am neither fluent in Korean nor English. Every gesture involved in artmaking attempts to communicate through my work, although the act of making is also a ritualistic means of healing. I consider my work the residue of anxiety and hopelessness.

With my family background of Shamanism and Buddhism, spirituality has been a significant part of my practice. I combine the elements of painting, sculpture, and performance to arrive at bodily forms for the spirits of my deceased family members to enter. I make bodily sculptures and paintings by combining soft and hard materials, such as fabric, upholstery foam, latex, hair, aluminum, chicken wire, coffin nails, and more. After a spiritual ceremony to invite the spirits, they become guardian angels to expel the negativities.

I often manipulate materials to mimic violated bodies by breaking, stretching, ripping, burning, poking, and scratching. I use Frankenstein-like stitches to show my attempts to heal wounds. I burn soft materials such as fabric and foam to imply my desire to return the negativities into the air, an act of letting go or releasing. In a Buddhist context, burning symbolizes the release from anguish. Extinguishing flames imply entering into the state of nirvana, simultaneously becoming symbols for uncured scars.

My artworks also protect me from shame: the shame of avoiding social interactions because of the language barrier, getting myself into a violent relationship, getting an abortion, and more. When showing my work to the public, I feel shame in sharing my personal experiences and the thoughts communicated through my work. By putting sculptures on the floor without pedestals and embracing mistakes, I confront this shame and accept myself as I am.



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- A *Watching You Vanish into Thin Air (June 14th, 2021), 2022.* Found leather fabric, acrylic on fabric, found velvet fabric, burnt fabric with ink, prints of burnt fabric, prints of Cola's vest, and thread, 93 x 112 in.
- B *Priscilla, 2022.* Chicken wire, stool, ping pong balls, acrylic, resin, found fabric, synthetic fur fabric, mylar, burnt fabric with ink, found scarf, and thread, 41 x 25 x 57 in.
- C *Dance With Your Ears Sealed, 2022.* Glazed earthenware, Suncatcher paint, found fabric, fiberfill, and threads, 15 x 14 x 9 in.
- D *Kai, 2022.* Synthetic fur fabric, vinyl fabric, thread, dyed skirt, beads, fishing line, and dyed parachute cord, 91 x 57.5 x 37 in.
- E *Matsuko, 2022.* Vinyl fabric, thread, sambe (Korean hemp fabric), and found object, 23 x 49 x 8 in.

# Young Kim

@gnuoykim

he/him

At the core of my artistic practice lies a curiosity about the fundamental issues that shape our society. My paintings reflect my deep-seated desire to capture the complexities of the human experience: love, war, death, life. Drawing inspiration from a wide range of sources such as emotions, memories, myths, and histories, I create works that questions the norms and values that shape our understanding of the world around us.

When I begin painting, I layer and texture surfaces with graphite, oil paint, and various mark making tools. These layers become the entry points for my subjects. As I continue to explore the painted surface, I excavate and summon figures, landscapes, and texts. Then, historical icons, mythical creatures, and dreamscapes, that encode a wide range of messages and ideas, are woven into a composition.

As an artist living within two cultures, Korean and American, I am interested in the merging of motifs and techniques from Korean folk art, street art, and traditional western styles. The resulting paintings are *décollages* of found visual and linguistic elements. Throughout my creative process, I strive to imbue each painting with a sense of history, capturing the traces of its preceding iterations in tears and remnants.

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- A *Eli Eli Lama Sabachthani?*, 2021. Oil, graphite, charcoal, dust, and debris on canvas, 68 x 72 x 2.75 in.
- B *Untitled*, 2022. Oil, graphite, charcoal, dust and debris on canvas, 68.5 x 70 x 2.75 in.
- C *Collisions*, 2022. Oil, acrylic, graphite, charcoal, marker, dust, and debris, woodblock print, collage, on OSB board, 126 x 101 x 4 in.
- D *Meditations*, 2022. Oil, acrylic, graphite, charcoal, marker, dust and debris on paper wall panel, 132 x 144 x 2.5 in.
- E *Heaven in Disorder*, 2022. Oil, graphite, charcoal, dust and debris on canvas, 64 x 52 x 2.75 in.

# Madelaine Kobe

madelainekobe.com // @madelainekobe

she/they

As an artist from the American South, primarily Louisiana and North Carolina, I make work that is informed by my own natural history, and questions what it means to live in these regions now. Building off the myths of my Christian upbringing, folk tales taught in elementary school, country music, and a mystical relationship with the natural world, I navigate these superstitions and examine what it means to create my own.

My work functions as reminders of finitude, pointing to the urgency of the present, of living. The art objects I make, paintings and sculptures, are embedded with found materials imbued with personal narrative. The forms in my work often resemble holes, portals, and tombs, referencing death while suggesting the potential for something more porous. Birds, as a symbol and motif, represent this space and exist between the earth and sky. Their wings are rarely functional, and they are entirely confined to the present world.

I use clay and pine needles from my parents' land in North Carolina, inks I make from acorns and walnuts found while walking, rocks and objects collected from creek beds, mud from the bed of the Mississippi River, and charred bones from family meals. Each material undergoes a process of distillation, envelopment, or physical alteration. The act of transforming and redeeming these materials promises an opportunity for transcendence. They become more than memento mori, finding hope in the fleeting material world.

Knowing a deep sense of spirituality in the forests of Appalachia, I am learning what it means to love a place that can be hard to love, to love a landscape that loves me back. I make my work with gratitude and admiration, and as a critical yet redemptive response to the complicated places I call home.

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- A *The moon has friends who he talks to all night long, throwing wild star parties like there's no tomorrow, 2022.* Sumi ink, gouache, graphite, and ground pumice on paper, 15 x 11.5 x .06 in.
- B *Somewhere where your only offspring is the land, and where the land loves you back, 2022.* Pressed cardboard, paper, Sumi ink on wood panel with embedded lucky objects: pennies and dimes found heads up, a bird's nest, bay leaves, a wishbone, wishing stones, freshwater pearls, and charred bones from my family's meals, 72 x 84 x 16 in.
- C *Here, sometimes, people glow white, 2022.* Collected clay pigment from North Carolina, and gum arabic on paper, 74 x 67 x .06 in.
- D *Where fate doesn't exist and there is no godspeed, 2022.* Handmade walnut ink, acrylic, gouache, and oil on panel, 30 x 36 x 4 in.
- E *Where shadows carry their own weight, 2022.* Sumi ink, gouache, chalk, oil stick, and graphite on paper, 11 x 10 x .06 in.



# Andrew Lyman

ablyman.com // @andrewlymanart

he/him

My paintings imply the shortcomings of image-based communication through melodramatic imagery whose legibility is subverted by a lack of narrative context. The paintings are composed from film stills that, for their theatrical costume and anachronisms, cannot be mistaken for documents of reality, and the unreality of those images deepens as they are removed from narrative sequence, isolated, and made static in paint.

I choose imagery containing clear emotional cues, well-worn emblems that verge on the cliché for the universality of their evocations—the lonesome wanderer, the brooding smoker, the scorned lover. The image loses narrative context when it is removed from its place within a film, but as it is translated into paint it takes on the psychological resonance inherent to that medium. Since the image has been hollowed of its narrative implications, I remain open to material-guided improvisation while painting, which often results in new elements being added or removed from the composition. I want to recreate the image, not reproduce it. What results are paintings that are rich in detail and suggestion, that oscillate between deep feeling and vacuousness. On the surface, my work appears to be generous toward prolonged looking, but all the while there is an uneasy sense that something is being crucially withheld.

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- A *The Green Lamp*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 48 x 60 in.
- B *Untitled*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 46 x 65 in.
- C *Haunter of Lanes*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 20 x 24 in.
- D *Haunter of Lanes (2)*, 2023. Oil on canvas, 36 x 48 in.
- E *Anhinga*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 30 x 40 in.



# Bill Mattern

@bill\_mattern

he/they

By interrogating states of change, I question the meaning of legibility through large-scale oil paintings as I depict translucent, glass-like figures that melt and traverse luminous, reflective environments. In creating custom, ephemeral 3D renderings and inkjet prints, I employ them as either finished work or source material to visually inform and complicate the paradoxical permanence of my paintings. In this system, I emphasize technology as a tool for direct sensation. Through cyclical processes of embodied construction and destruction, I examine my queer identity to prompt the viewer to question the complexities of self-image and the transgressions of external perception.

As I examine eroticized bodies and environments, I define a slippery call-and-response system of looking that blends primordial and contemporary dreams of homoerotic desire. When classical references are in conversation with queer histories of visual exchange, such as cruising, I create moments of missed glances through body mirroring, compositional cropping, and material erasure. This line of making blurs the line between those who desire and those who are desired. By engaging these questions, I interrogate the experiential stakes of my own queer longing through historical traditions of hiding in plain sight.

While a scream is considered a captured, invisible force in relation to horror, I question what the invisible and unnamable forces that relate to beauty are. Through the embodied process of painting, I examine the disparity between the human hand and the machine to bridge the contradictory nature of forming and losing an identity. Since decadence etymologically links to decay and decline, I visually distort the explicit and the implicit to evoke mediations between torture and pleasure. As one desires something until the moment they have it, my work eludes identification to illicit dreams that were never one's own to fulfill. Eternally grasping, never reaching, my work revels in the chase itself.



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B

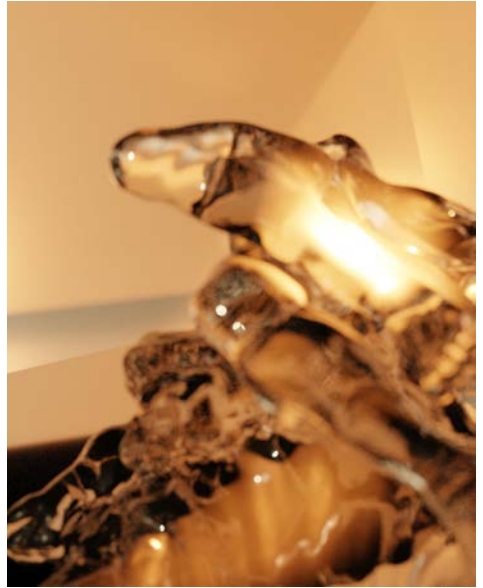


C





D



E

- A *Twink Detection*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 52 x 60 x 2 in.
- B "All I want ... " he said, "is thirty seconds.", 2022. Oil on canvas, 72 x 96 x 2 in.
- C "All I want ... " he said, "is thirty seconds." (Close Up), 2022. 72 x 96 x 2 in.
- D *Lay it On Me*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 44 x 33 in.
- E *Near Here Lies*, 2022. Inkjet on paper, 44 x 33 in.

# Luke Morrison

@lukermorrison

he/him

I make acrylic paintings that use simplified imagery to construct scenarios that explore and play with observed and imagined social dynamics. These scenarios show archetypal representations of working and commuting people in a sleeper city performing daily life with ambiguous intentions. This ambiguity builds suspense and a tension that feels ever-present in contemporary life, where surveillance, information gathering, and judgment are much easier than participation. The paintings also contain tensions between the gravity of things and the humor of them, between our bodies and the world we've built, and between looking and being looked at. It's through these dynamics that the paintings offer a point of reflection and practice towards comprehending certain ever-changing and deep-seated societal norms.

Using acrylic paint, I am able to repeatedly attempt and edit a painting to build an intriguing scenario. Like a stage director, I arrange and rearrange representational elements to discover strange narrative associations. Figures are defined and redefined by visual makeup such as professional uniform, gender, or gaze. Muted color and hazy lighting are gradually focused to elaborate and establish an ominous or uneasy atmosphere. Contrasting this unease are exaggerated, curvaceous bodies that lighten the mood through expressive gesture. Other forms, like buildings and cars, contain their own angles and curves that frame and heighten the awkwardness of these bodies and scenes.

These visual determinations are used to implicate viewers in conscious acts of voyeurism or looking that unearth habits of placing judgment and desire upon strangers. While some paintings allow a viewer to fully indulge in these tendencies, others confront a viewer directly by returning the gaze. In all instances, the paintings create space for the social norms of daily surveillance storytelling to be simultaneously pleasurable and discomforting.

A



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- A *Jury Duty*, 2022. Acrylic on linen, 26 × 40 in.
- B *Bus Scene (bus & baby carriage)*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 18 × 24 in.
- C *Presentation*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 30 × 24 in.
- D *Reporter*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 30 × 24 in.
- E *Executive*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 36 × 24 in.



# Shayan Nazarian

shayan.blog // @shayannazarian

My work starts with my reaction to my first circle of community, my Iranian family, where I learned the meaning of responsibility and care. As I have gotten older, I continually redefine the notion of community and realize that there are many contradictions evident in the bigger cultural picture, particularly around what is made public and visible, and what hides in the private realm. The first time I faced the restrictions made by religion and the state in my country was when I understood that people had to lie about their lifestyle in public to stay safe. As a member of the first generation growing up with the internet, I was never religious or interested in politics but the system I was living in made me research history and religion to get at the core problem. Through what I have learned, I have become a rebellious person against traditions and superstitions. This is what I explore in my art.

In painting, I break down the boundary between private and public by capturing the most personal moments of myself as an artist to present on the surface of my work. First, I create a psychological state of being adventurous like a kid, then the physical process of painting starts. I erase and add different layers of acrylic paint spontaneously to create different textures and patterns until I arrive at a picture that resonates with how I'm feeling. Afterwards, I try to strengthen and edit the painting in formal terms. Most of my paintings end up looking both abstract and figurative. I use acrylic paint because it gives the option of fast drying, and I can add layers upon layers in a short period of time. I see the final surface as the communication of my subconscious, first with myself, and then with my audience.

In videos and prints, I've captured the historical moments when people of my generation are facing the brutal government of Iran, from the scope of social media which has become a significant tool for the people of Iran to spread awareness and make their voices heard. I use found video footage and photographs from social media and the news, as well as my own documentation to create a hybrid experience of private and public perception.



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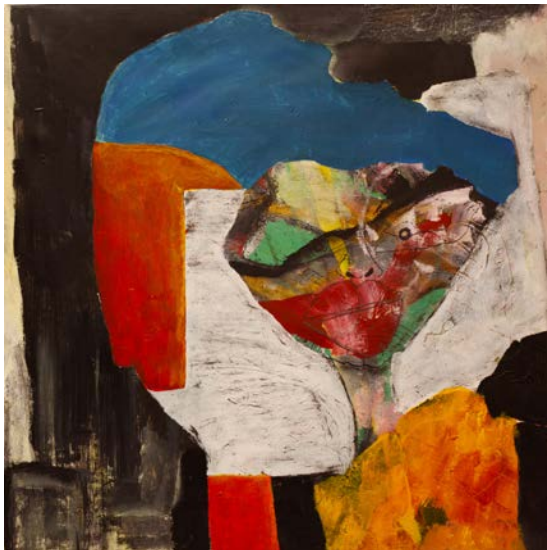
C



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- A *Untitled, 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 39 x 39 in.*
- B *Untitled, 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 39 x 39 in.*
- C *Untitled, 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 39 x 39 in.*
- D *Untitled, 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 39 x 39 in.*
- E *Untitled, 2022, Acrylic on canvas, 39 x 39 in.*

# Stephen Proski

stephenproski.com // @stephenproski

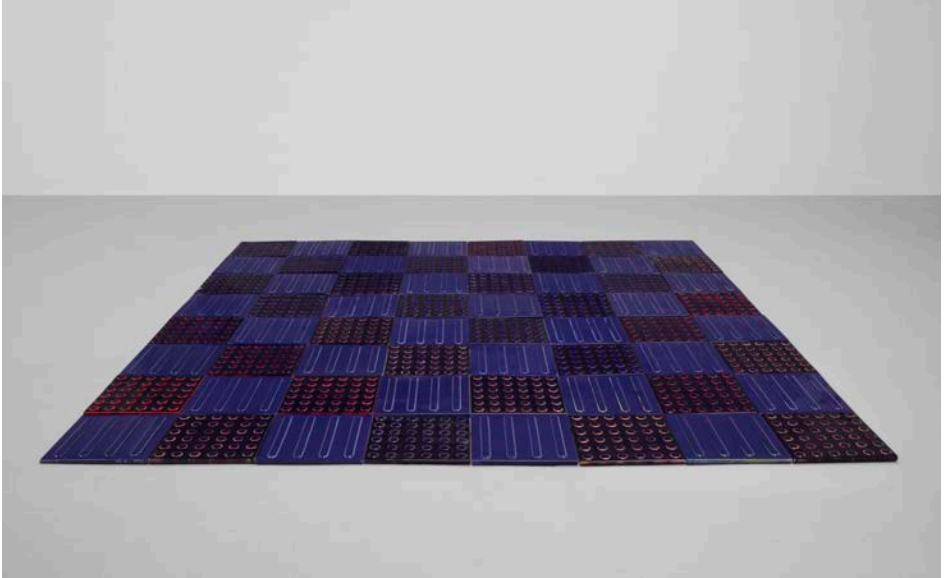
he/they

I'm interested in communicating an awareness of something that happens in the world that affects all of us and that no one is separate from: the prioritizing of vision has made us blind to our surroundings. The ideology of ableism, specifically what is commonly considered normal or not normal, keeps us from creating meaningful changes that would be necessary for all of us to thrive as a society. I want to make art that addresses my own personal experience of blindness, while questioning and interrogating the imposing hierarchical structures that continue to shape, oppress, and favor the ocularcentric.

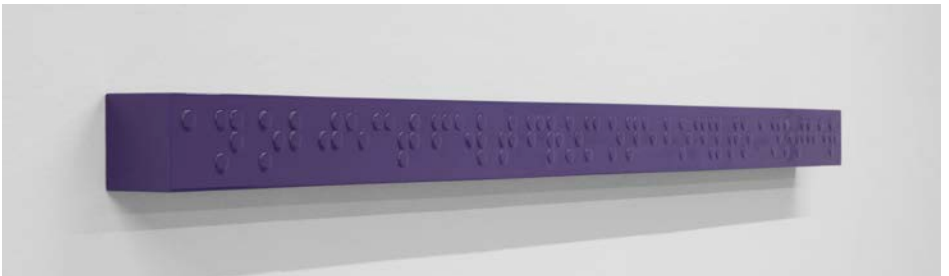
My work is physical to make and although visually seductive, tactility ultimately prevails. I use blindness as a cipher to articulate my own predisposition to the world. The constant misuse of materials and processes aggressively seep, soak, and spill into one another—resin, concrete, ceramics, acrylic, and text, complicating the distinction between image and language. As an artist, I am guided by the metamorphoses that take place through translation—language to shape, shape to form, form to language, and so on—to offer the experience of sensation without distinction, pleasurable surfaces coercively molded for the touch of the eye in collaboration with the other senses.

I interrogate the physical and mental structures of able-bodied spaces—in painting, installation, text, and “compositional objects” that explore themes of precarity, vulnerability, and the blurry territory between legibility and illegibility. My work conjures lived experiences of blindness that often implicate and antagonize the body into moments of discomfort, empathy, and introspection. By imposing a disability upon the architecture of a room, I subvert the choreography of how we encounter and confront these truths, focusing attention on the theatricality involved in disabled bodies having to contend with objects in time and space.

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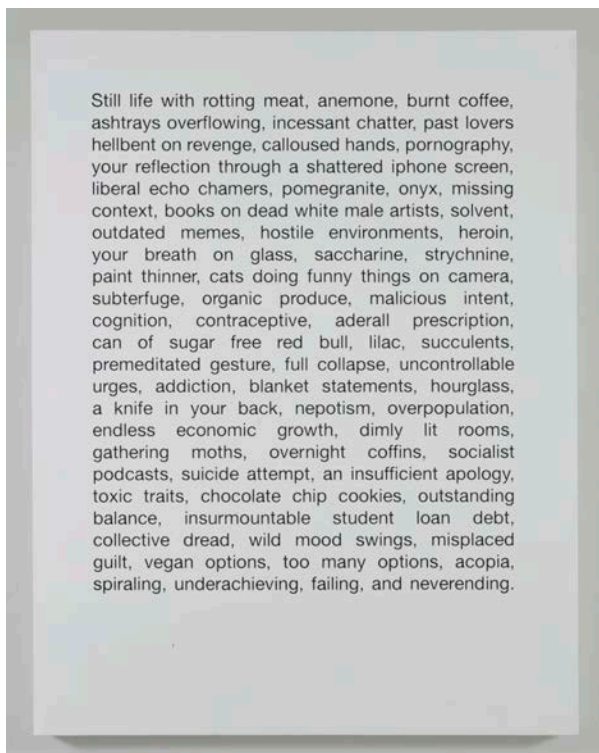


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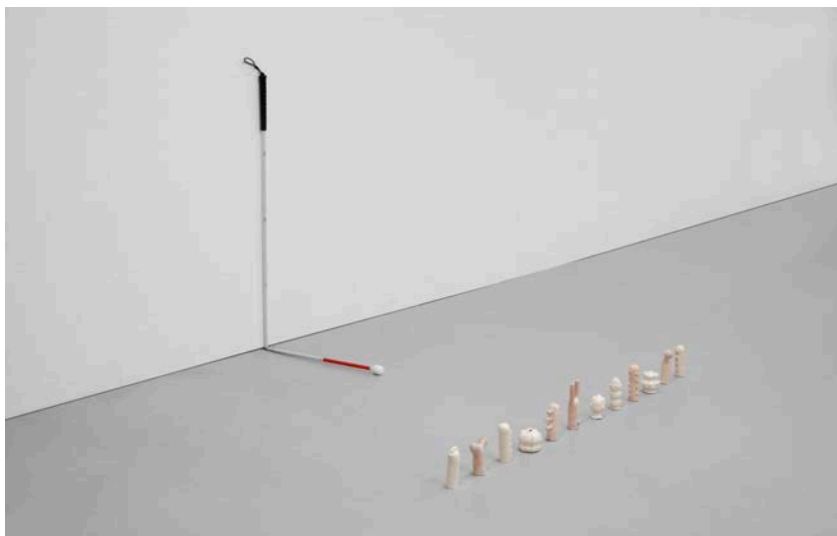




C



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- A *Trap Door to a Bottomless Pit*, 2022. Pigmented resin and plaster, 96 x 96 x 0.5 in.
- B *Untitled (purple rain)*, 2022. Pigmented resin and wood, 5.5 x 96 x 5 in.
- C *Untitled (still life painting)*, 2022. Acrylic on canvas, 45 x 35 x 1.5 in.
- D *Untitled (trip like i do)*, 2022. Mobility cane and glazed earthenware, dimensions variable.
- E *An Unfinished Incarnation*, 2022. Glazed earthenware, 30 x 24 x 2 in.

# Vincent Samudovsky

[vincentsamudovsky.com](http://vincentsamudovsky.com) // [@vincent.samudovsky](https://twitter.com/vincent.samudovsky)

My paintings synthesize formal structures and imagination. Combinations of forms, colors, materials, and found objects interact within geometric shapes. Painting becomes a bridge between me and the viewer, interior and exterior, past and present, object and image. In my practice, I construct images that create a space for contemplation where the tangible, material, and tactile can hold the intangible experiences of life such as memories, emotions, and spirituality.

I revel in color's materiality and chromatic dimensions. Paint is applied in a variety of ways: thickly and thinly, dry-brushed and glazed, washed and dripped, scraped and brushed. As the layers build, the painting accrues its own history. The works float between illusionary and actual space. Vividly rendered metronomes, attics, backpacks, architectural structures, and landscapes bring imagination into material terms through metaphorical forms and imagery. These subjects provide a place in which I can gather myself together and articulate an indwelling of personal experience.

Using paint to transform mundane objects, I express a spiritually inclined worldview made evident by an active search for meaning. Through heightened use of color, symbolic form, mark-making, and found objects, the paintings acknowledge our everyday sensory experiences while seeking to transcend them and uncover a deeper understanding of what it means to be human. The works stress the measuring of time as a record of journeys undertaken and a snapshot of a journey ongoing. Although personal to me, the paintings create space for the viewer and offer a place to hold their personal experiences and journeys within the images. In this way, my practice utilizes the container of painting to connect with something greater than myself and with the world around me.



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- A *A Memory on the Steps of the Subway*, 2022. Oil on canvas, 72 x 62 in.
- B *Attic VII (Hummingbird)*, 2022. Oil, cold wax medium on canvas mounted on wood panel, wood dowel, and hummingbird wind chime, 36 x 72 in.
- C *Dumka (Metronome II)*, 2022. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 84 x 48 in.
- D *Backpack*, 2021. Oil on canvas, 24 x 18 in.
- E *Grove*, 2022. Oil and acrylic on canvas, 72 x 62 in.



# Hannah Steele

[hannahsteeleartist.com](http://hannahsteeleartist.com) // [@hann.steele](https://twitter.com/hann.steele)

I make oil paintings on canvas via observation of large-scale still lifes I construct in my studio. I begin with an armature like a wooden frame or window which I use to hold and drape found foliage, branches, and other debris. These inert constructions transform into forests, bushes, and canopies—lively tangled swarms to visually travel throughout. Through sustained observation, the subjects open more and more; the inner networks of a single leaf become an entire landscape of its own. I want to contend with the infinity of visual information by entering the overwhelming nature of it and chasing moments of clarity within.

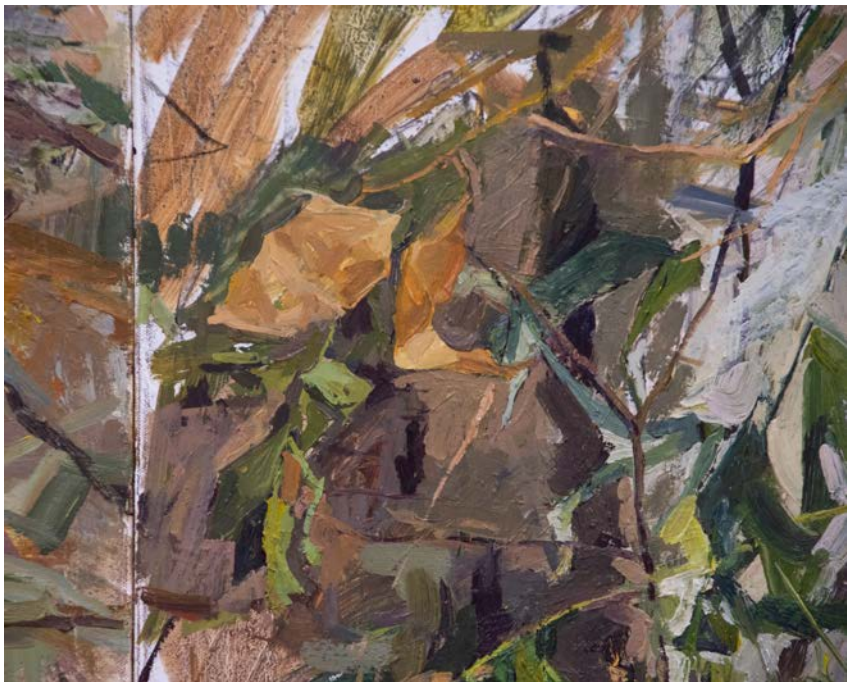
As I paint observationally from these constructions, I fluctuate between large transparent washes, drawn lines, chiseled-out detail, economical strokes, material build up, fast and slow tempos, searching and finding, and an expanding and narrowing of focus. Through retaining this range of perception and mark making in the finished piece, the primordial coexists with the heavily built and the surfaces are preserved in a state of active formation.

While both my still lifes and mark making possess an active life force, various architectures ground them. The armatures support, interior walls enclose, branches cradle, and the window shields. The canvas itself becomes a container for paint and drawn lines define edges of otherwise amorphous brush strokes. These fixed architectures both enforce boundaries as well as provide sites of cultivation. My work thus fluctuates between the stable and the wild. It is contained and longs to go beyond, to expand, infinitely branching out through the window.



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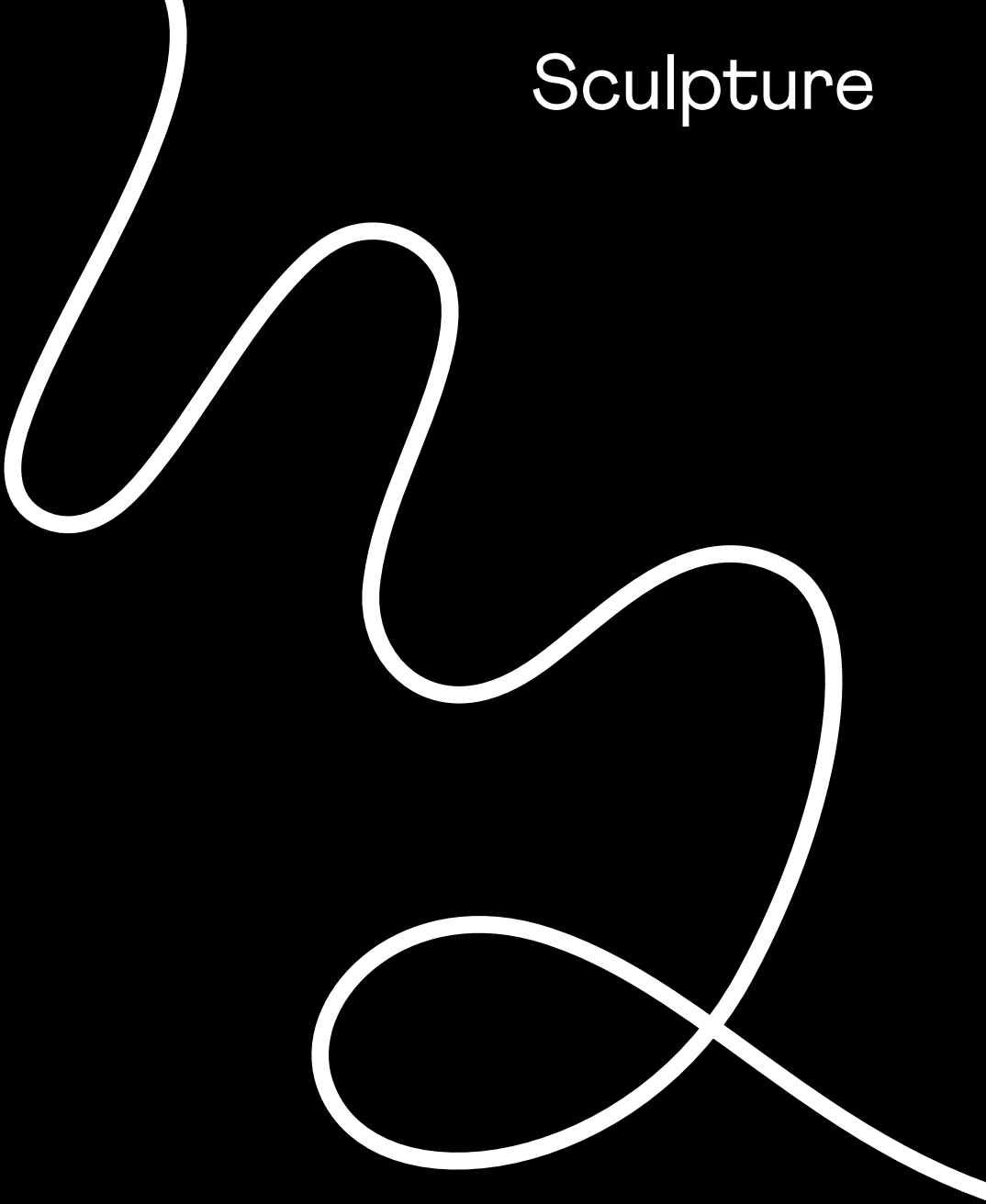


E



- A *Windowsill Storm*, 2023. Oil paint and charcoal on canvas, 60 x 48 in.
- B *Windowsill Storm (Detail)*, 2023. Oil paint and charcoal on canvas, 60 x 48 in.
- C *Windowsill Debris*, 2023. Oil paint, charcoal, and pastel on canvas, 26 x 34.25 in.
- D *Windowsill Pile*, 2022. Oil paint on canvas, 18 x 20 in.
- E *Windowsill Pile (Detail)*, 2022. Oil paint on canvas, 18 x 20 in.

# Sculpture



Ry Beloin  
Leah Naxon  
Sohyoung Park

Any attempt to draw a circle around the vivid and varied work of this year's MFA sculpture cohort would be bound to fail. The pen would bleed dry before the circle could be closed. Over the past two years, these artists have pushed their practices in a surprising number of formal and thematic directions. Their work has been driven by a wide range of urgent questions about the ways in which both emotional and physical labor are valued, the need for new forms of personal and collective care, the dilemmas posed by increasing legislation over bodily autonomy, the emergence of new technologies—including forms of artificial intelligence—that hold both promise and threat, and the alienating quandary of personal agency within the context of our global climate crisis. The results of these and other inquiries constitute an expansive range of objects and experiences, by turns resplendent and subtle, luscious and repellent, riotous and of an intimate stillness.

And yet these artists share certain attitudes and priorities. There is a shared interest in experimentation with a broad range of materials, including those that make “unconventional” seem a bit euphemistic. A tally of these materials would overwhelm: everything from ceramic and plexiglass, latex and lumber, paper and steel (sometimes corroded by vinegar), to chicken bones, SCOBY (Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast, also known as kombucha leather), actively composting bloodworms, fungus, and other less-than-palatable substrates. The results of the experiments—though wildly different—share an attentive appreciation for rich surface detail, as well as an uncompromising, specific approach to the use of physical space as a primary component of the work itself. Above all, these three artists—Ry Beloin, Leah Naxon, and Sohyoung Park—share a commitment to following the threads of their distinctive and improbable processes through to inevitably surprising conclusions.

All of this entails frequent brushes with the oft-extolled twin creative virtues of risk and failure. Sometimes they face the prospect of doing things the “hard way,” or even of doing things the “wrong way” in the service of their work. And again, the results defy the tidy circumscription of the taxonomist's pen. But in the case of Beloin, Naxon, and Park, to draw a circle is to miss the point-by-point emergence of practices that appear within, along, and beyond the margins of our expectations. Highly personal, particular, and relentlessly curious, their work defines points of encounter between visionary interiority and the persistence of the external world in all of its material, spatial, and social complexity.

**David Snyder**

Assistant Professor of Art, Chair of Graduate Studies, Sculpture



# Ry Beloin

rybeloin.com

I make sculptural objects from experimental combinations of common objects, collected specimens, and art and construction materials. I play with tenuous, jerry-rigged assemblages to offer absurd and distorted experiences of light and looking, like low-budget magic. I make things in order to play with the act of viewing itself, designing framework objects—lenses to see, and also see through. The core of my artistic drive and inquiry has always been doubt, shifting most recently into a more specific suspicion, one of “seeing clearly.”

I’m a scrappy maker and thinker. I collect bones, feathers, and sticks as I come across them, and keep an eye out for toys, lenses, lights, and light-receptive materials from mundane places like dollar stores, dumpsters, and yard sales. I play with what’s doable through learned skill (for instance, the kinds of material processes involved when building an upholstered chair) and what’s an inescapable uncertainty (as in, atmospheric effects on a suspended sheet of sugar). I destabilize dependable sculptural material like plaster, wood, charcoal, paper, tape, and resin with experiments in bones, rust, sugar, plastic, and oil. A plastic cockroach smells terrible when it melts. Steel rusts itself into nothing. A baggie of water bends sunlight into a burning pinpoint.

What energizes me is that all things ultimately speak about what they are. I can’t force a material to tell a single convincing lie, so I can break, warp, soak, balance, and burn the truth, right out where I can see it. I practice the witchcraft of obsessively seeing what stuff is.



A



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- A *Untitled Variation (standing)*, 2023. Steel, resin, bones, foil, boar bristles, cyanotype emulsion, paper, cardboard, plywood, vinyl tape, and chalk, 67 x 10 x 10 in.
- B *Untitled Variation (prism)*, 2023. Goose feathers, battery operated string lights, Fresnel lenses, fiberglass tape, boar bristles, polystyrene beads, and wood ash, 10 x 8 x 11 in.
- C *Pain Machine, Prayer Machine* (this is completely safe), 2022. Fresnel lenses, fiberglass tape, copper and vinyl tubing, water pumps, coffee can, bowl, and crates, site-specific installation, dimensions variable.

# Leah Naxon

@leahnaxon

she/they/he

Conversation centers my studio practice. It starts with an internal dialogue between myself and my body. The relationship of my body to the traumas that result from existing in a physical form informs the visual presentation of my work. Having a history with mental illness, physical disability, and existing in the world as a “feminine” person are all complex and horrific experiences that leave me feeling at least moderately uncomfortable at every moment. I’m aiming to create an experience that is not immediately overwhelming but leaves viewers just noticeably uncomfortable. I want to mimic my agonizing invisible personal experience with owning a body, and then put that onto others.

An active dialogue between myself and the materials takes place as well. What draws me to working with materials such as latex, SCOBY, and fabric is the life they breathe into my work and their inevitable lifespans. As pieces dry, their color and texture shifts. And as time passes through them, they continue to transform. They have their own objectives, and I have to respond accordingly.

As these conversations erupt, I learn how to subtly imbue this process into the final piece. I aim to converse with every sense; the visuals of these materials, the way it moves, its texture, and an overall emotional response both visually and physically. Hints of the mundane are given new purpose by the hidden conversation imbued within my art. My goal is to find the balance between something that has a sense of familiarity and yet superfluously alien.



A



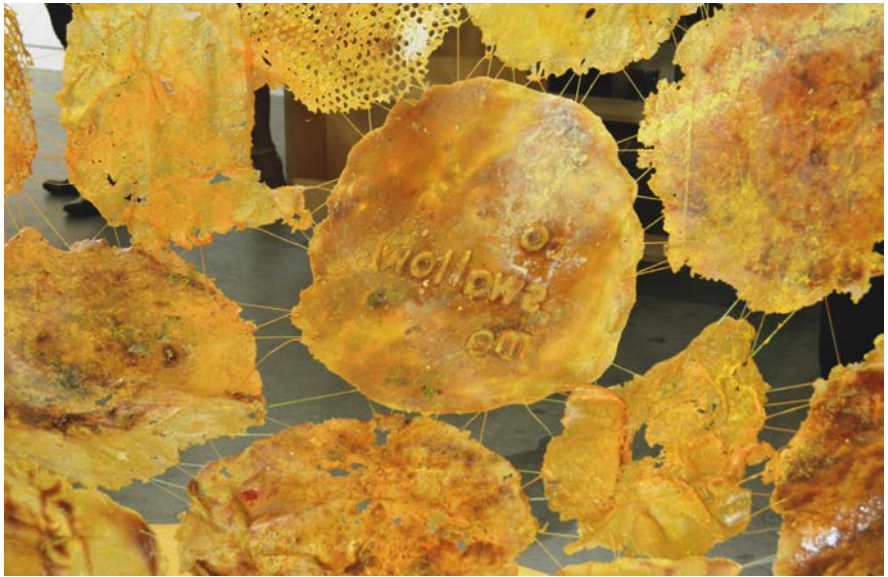
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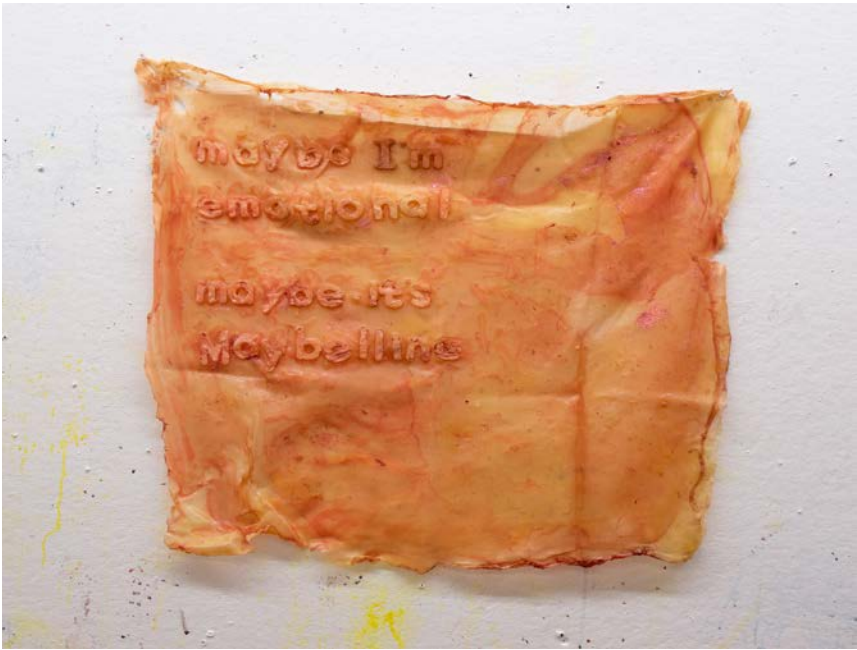


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- A *This Silence Is So Loud*, 2022. Foam, polyfill, embroidery thread, latex, and tulle, 16 x 8 x 4 in.
- B *Outside of Myself*, 2022. Cardboard, latex, and yarn, 48 x 16 x 3 in.
- C *I Couldn't Sleep Last Night*, 2022. Latex, glitter, rope, and thread, 78 x 80 in.
- D *I Couldn't Sleep Last Night (detail)*, 2022. Latex, glitter, rope, and thread, 78 x 80 in.
- E *It's Only Skin Deep*, 2022. Latex and glitter, 24 x 28 in.

# Sohyoung Park

[parksohyoung.com](http://parksohyoung.com) // [@sohyoung11](https://www.instagram.com/sohyoung11)

she/her

The pursuit of one's happiness in the course of suffering inspires my artistic approach and is a recurrent theme. My art captures images of the agony of the disadvantaged in the contemporary era through the lens of feminism. It stems from challenges that arise in life as a first-generation Asian woman immigrant, experiencing inequality, racism, social injustice, and climate change. I also consider human nature and how it impacts the environment.

My work is rooted in the mutable relationship between humans, nature, and technology. In two recent installation works, *Trail to Eden Garden* (2022) and *Cursor to Origin* (2022), I created imaginary utopias and dystopias by twisting subject matter and using abstract symbolism. I use discarded plastic and manufactured components and position them alongside biodegradable and eco-friendly materials, such as mushrooms, bloodworms, compositing ceramic pods, and living plants. Within each artwork, I am interested in creating actions between elements that enhance a spectator's sensuous experience, such as sounds, tactile elements, smell, humor, and emotion. Curiosity through immaterial ingredients—sounds of a windstorm, the texture of dry dirt, and the scent of fallen leaves—is a form of exaggeration of physical elements.

In studio practice, repurposed materials are transformed into a different surface, bringing back the value of previously forgotten and abandoned objects. My physical interaction with the materials I gather in my studio practice condenses data and information, consumer history, and the mystical qualities of found fragments of life. I'm interested in continuously conducting materials by covering surfaces and revealing a purpose as an act of meditation and prayer that contains the rule of the problem-solving process. I make narratives in sites where these different kinds of materials, each with its own history and origin story, congregate and are integrated. My work questions how value shifts in the time and space of the physical world.

Through my idiosyncratic rituals in the studio, my working process has the potential to revitalize forms that have lost their desirability—at the same time, a metaphor for finding sparks in the darkness that lifts my spirit.



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- A *Clumsy Spirit*, 2022. Cardboard, sawdust, wood stain, newspaper, plant grow light, spinach, 38 x 16 x 14.5 in.
- B *Cursor to Origin*, 2022. Recycled cardboard, wood, plaster, foam, found plastics, newspaper, leaves, brown paper bags, stone, sand, living plants, and ceramics, dimensions variable.
- C *Headwater Sanctuary*, 2022. King oyster mushroom, straw, cardboard, newspapers, plaster, and chestnuts, 29 x 36 x 27 in.
- D *Little Oasis*, 2022. Cardboard, newspapers, found plastics, ocean trash, water, water pump, and acorn, 21 x 36 x 11 in.
- E *Trail to Eden Garden*, 2022. Recycled cardboard, plaster, found plastics, ceramic, newspapers, worm composting pod, automatic irrigating system, water bottle, brown paper bags, living plants, and mycelium, 167 x 107.99 x 60 in.



# BU SVA MFA

Founded in 1839, Boston University is an internationally recognized institution of higher education and research. In 2012, BU joined the Association of American Universities (AAU), a consortium of leading research universities in the United States and Canada. Established in 1954 as part of the larger University, the College of Fine Arts (CFA) is a top-tier fine arts institution. Comprising the School of Music, School of Theatre, and School of Visual Arts, CFA offers professional training in the arts in conservatory-style environments for undergraduate and graduate students.

The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program in Painting at Boston University promotes the discipline in its varied manifestations as a fundamental form of artistic expression. At its core, the program is studio-driven, with rigorous expectations about each student's focused commitment to their individual artistic practice.

The MFA program in Graphic Design provides a sequenced studio approach to advanced design thinking and problem solving for visual communication, preparing students to thrive in a dynamic professional environment. A solution-based practice framed by key principles defines the core graphic design studios. Students are challenged to articulate a design perspective and method through studio projects emphasizing form, communication, authorship, audience, and medium.

In the MFA program in Sculpture, students are encouraged to explore personal expression through a variety of media and diverse stylistic forms. Work ranges from intense observation to imagination and invention, and reflects various philosophical and artistic points of view.

In all programs, a rigorous studio practice is supplemented with critical dialogue in the form of weekly seminars, lectures, discussions, critiques, and visiting artist programs.

Students form a close working relationship with faculty and peers forging networks that will serve them professionally and socially for a lifetime. Students benefit from expansive facilities, including welding and wood shops, state of the art printmaking studios, a 10,000 square-foot graduate graphic design studio, and individual studios for painters and sculptors. Students also have access to the Engineering Product Innovation Center, which features the newest and most exciting technologies available to makers.

Our award-winning faculty have work in the collections of major art museums across the globe including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, the National Gallery of Art, and the Victoria and Albert Museum. Our alumni have careers in exciting creative fields, develop innovative businesses, and exhibit their work widely in galleries and museums across the US and beyond.

We invite you to discover more about Boston University School of Visual Arts and the many accomplishments of our faculty, students, and alumni by visiting [www.bu.edu/cfa/visual-arts](http://www.bu.edu/cfa/visual-arts).

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April 6-22, 2023

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Kristen Coogan, Associate Professor of Art, Graphic Design  
Josephine Halvorson, Professor of Art, Chair of Graduate Studies, Painting  
Christopher Sleboda, Associate Professor of Art, Graphic Design  
David Snyder, Assistant Professor of Art, Chair of Graduate Studies, Sculpture  
Lissa Cramer, Managing Director, Boston University Art Galleries  
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