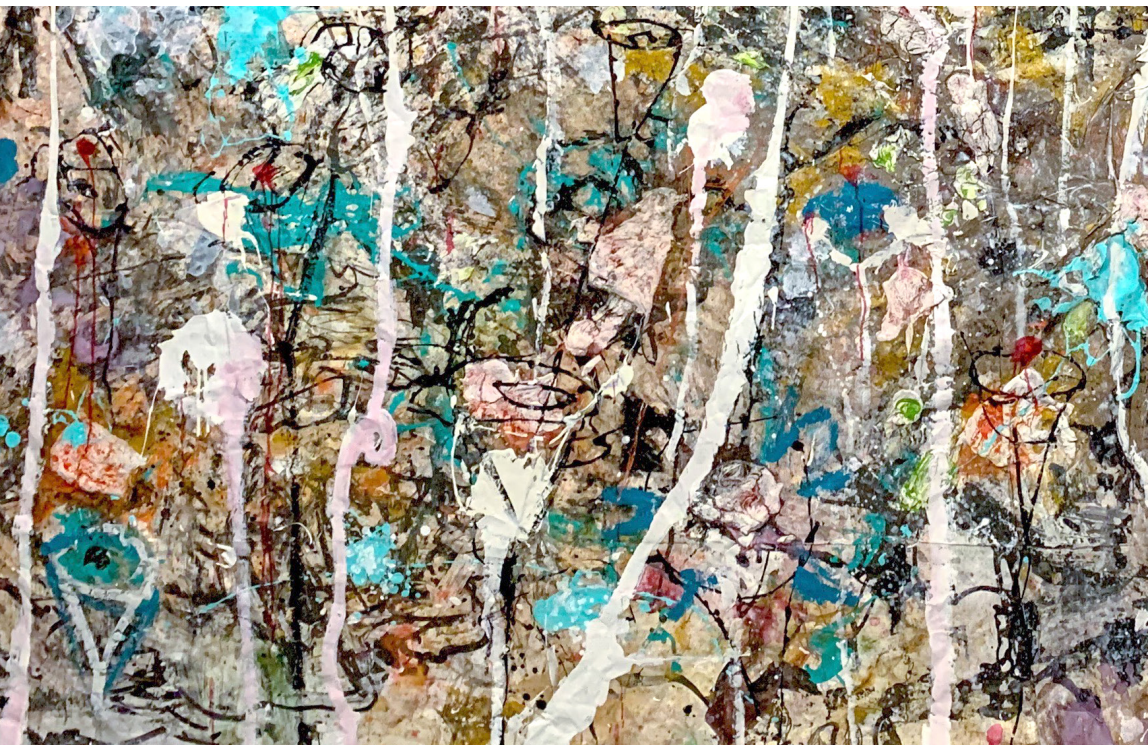




Seeking Form: Alumni Art Exhibit
September 21–October 31, 2021



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The Sarofim School of Fine Arts presents *Seeking Form: Alumni Art Exhibit* at the Sarofim Gallery, Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas. The exhibit includes work by graduates of the Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts programs in painting, drawing, and printmaking who have exhibited their work as practicing artists post-graduation and who have studied primarily with Professor Victoria Star Varner from 1985 to the present.

There were many more alumni artists than could be included in an exhibit of this type, that is, specific to one program within studio art. The artists were therefore chosen to represent various stylistic and conceptual approaches that demonstrate the versatility of a multifaceted pedagogical approach, which encourages artists to develop a degree of intellectual sophistication within a liberal arts education, and a nuanced technical and conceptual understanding within one medium before applying their abilities to other media. What results is an approach to artmaking that seeks artistic forms appropriate to the changing ideas within contemporary culture and investigations into the questions raised by current interdisciplinary challenges.

The exhibition is comprised of artists who have either stayed within the field of painting or who have ventured out into other artistic media using their foundational, conceptual education in painting theory and practice. Their works express various contemporary art approaches including high realism, abstraction, neo-minimalism, conceptual art references and post-conceptual approaches. The exhibiting artists have also stayed in touch with the faculty and Alumni Association, covering the U.S.A. map from California to New York, and several are returning to campus during Homecoming to talk with art students.

Because the exhibit is taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic, we wish to acknowledge the art of Kim Dembrosky, who was invited to exhibit, but whose work as a nurse does not allow her the time to participate. With this acknowledgement, we honor her dedication to public health.

Participating Artists:

Sophia Anthony	Becca Gordon
Kelsey Baker	Xan Koonce
Adam Bork	Alyssa Lester
Lauren Cardenas	Paloma Mayorga
Norma Clark	Lauren Muskara
Meili Corbin	Jake Pawelek
Sarah Fox	



Sophia Anthony, *Lineup 1*, Oil on linen, 8" x 6", 2019



Sophia Anthony, *Lineup 2*, Oil on linen, 8" x 6", 2019

Sophia Anthony is a Chicago based artist who makes paintings and drawings. She received her BFA in Studio Art with Departmental Honors and her BA in Physics from Southwestern University in May 2019 and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Chicago.

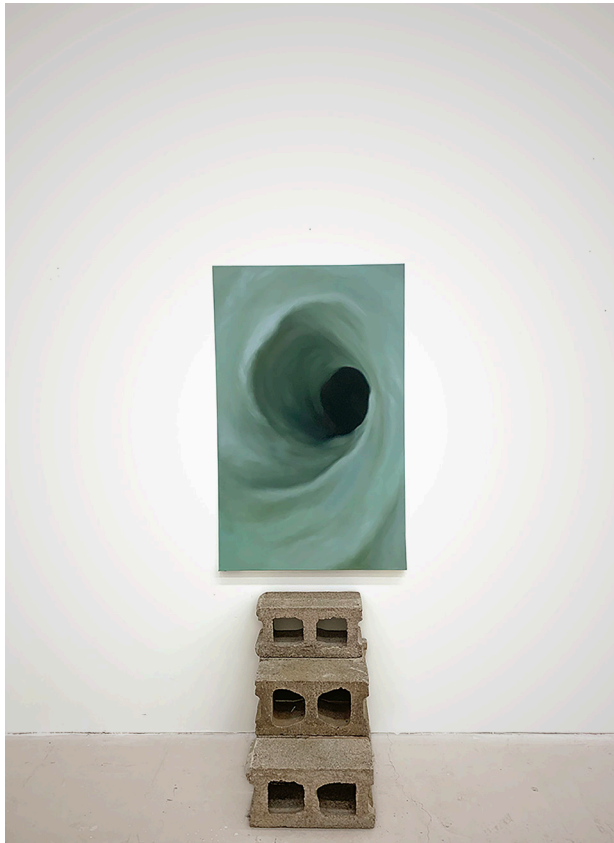
Anthony's awards include the Texas Young Master distinction from the Texas Commission on the Arts, National Gold Medalist in the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards National Exhibition, the Walt Milton Potter Prize at the King Creativity Grant Symposium, and the Lancaster Award in Studio Award at Southwestern University.

Anthony has exhibited her work throughout the United States, including the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX; the United States Capitol Building, Washington, D.C.; and Parsons School of Design, New York City, NY. In 2019, her first solo show, *The Speaking Silence*, opened at DEASIL at Bermac Arts in Houston, Texas, followed by her thesis exhibition, *Garden of the Laws*, at the Fine Arts Gallery, Southwestern University, Georgetown, Texas.

I explore the dichotomy between two disparate types of portraiture—honorific paintings and repressive arrest photography. In the series "The Lineup" I painstakingly transform and recontextualize mugshots into highly detailed oil portraits to challenge assumptive reactions to the original photographs and force an examination of how we view and interact with internment and the justice system.

This body of work began as an investigation into the implications, biases, and histories of mugshots. Invoking Allan Sekula's theory of portraiture's dual honorific and repressive capacity, I propose that the historical significance of portraiture can be co-opted to question the negative assumptions associated with booking photographs. I counteract the subjugating effect of mugshot photography through the meticulous act of painting, instead revealing the subject's emotion and individuality.

The series also engages with the tension between photography and painting. My pieces are painted with a carefulness that counteracts the mechanical nature of the camera, but the surfaces of the paintings are smooth, slick, and heavily glazed with a blue tint to appear more akin to glossy photo paper than canvas. Through allusion to the photographic surface, the works can emphasize the assumed veracity of the photograph, while subtly questioning its inherent limitations and biases. This work has prompted considerations about difficulties in painting, photography, criminology, sociology, and aesthetics and the debates that surround the processes of arrest and incarceration. It is my hope that this series will play a part in these discussions, eliciting questions about our own response and relationship to booking photographs.



Kelsey Baker, who received a BA from Southwestern University in 2016 and an MFA from Washington State University in 2020, is an intermedia artist and the development director of Contracommon, an artist-run nonprofit and collective. She was a recipient of a King Creativity Fund Grant in 2015 and the Walter Milton Potter Prize in 2016. In 2019, she was awarded the John Ludwig Graduate Fellowship. Her work has been featured in group and solo exhibitions nationally, such as the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art in Pullman, WA; New Texas Talent at Craighead Green Gallery, Dallas, TX; The People's Gallery, Austin, TX; Terrain Gallery, Spokane, WA; Gspot Gallery, Houston, TX; and Off the Cost, Portland, OR.

I am using intermedia practices--incorporating painting, video and installation--to invent surreal landscapes and evoke liminal spaces. I present the familiar as strange using distortions in placement and scale, allowing the viewer access to realms or states of being that might be otherwise inaccessible. Viewers are invited to experience the in-between spaces.

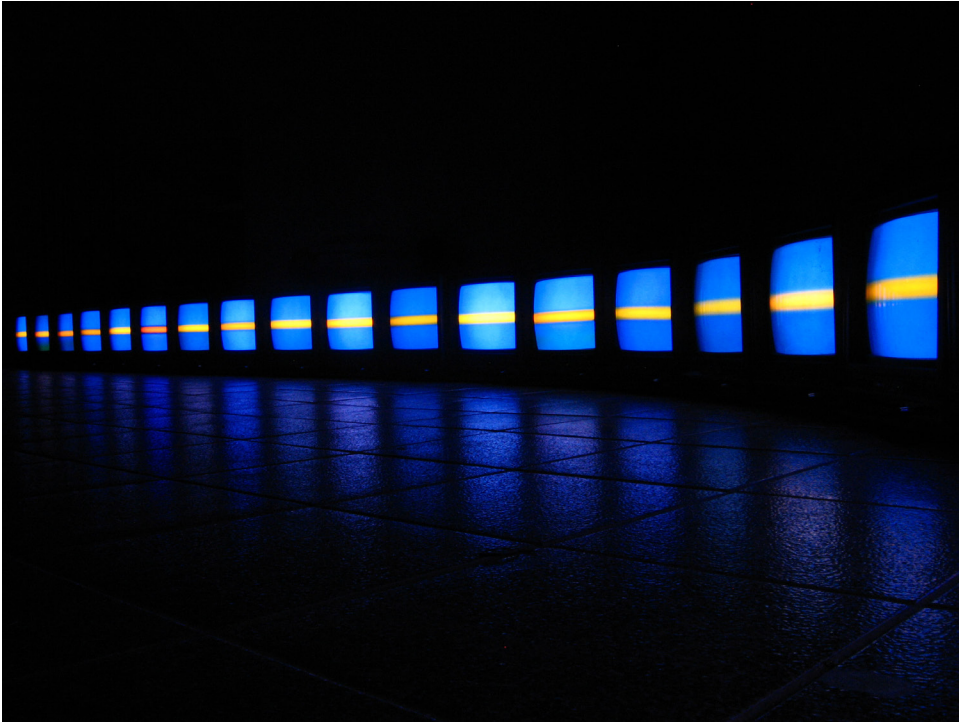
My most recent body of work presents multiple thresholds that offer imaginary access to Void-like spaces, and bodily experiences of these spaces that are felt rather than lived. Like standing at the edge of a cliff and imagining, despite oneself, how the ordeal of actually falling might feel. Edge moments like these invite one to live out, mentally, the mortal possibilities presented by the situation. The paintings are not portals, as such, but invite the viewer to experience a thinning of the veil.

Together, these works induce liminality, and enact a push and pull of seduction and repulsion that recalls the sensation of edge moments and draws the viewer's awareness to their experience of place and time.

Kelsey Baker, *Egress*, Oil paint on canvas, found objects, dimensions variable, canvas is 48" x 30", 2020

Kelsey Baker, *OBE*, Video installation, 48" x 64" x 6", 2020





Marfa-based artist **Adam Bork** creates multimedia installations that combine recycled technology, appropriated imagery, photography, and sound. The artist, known by Marfa locals as a jack-of-all-trades, works from his geodesic dome dwelling. Using the angular space as a temporary gallery for his eclectic work, Bork's home features stacked sculptures composed of low-fi computer and television monitors. The multimedia images glowing from these ancient screens feature Technicolor sequences made from found 16 mm films and uses analog synthesizers for the audio compositions which interplay with the imagery.

Bork studied studio art at Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas from 1988-1991 and photography at School of Visual Arts in New York, NY (2000-01). Bork has had solo exhibitions at Art Pace, San Antonio, Texas - Window Works, Spring (2009); Marfa Book Company Gallery, Marfa TX (2008); Wichita Falls Museum of Art, Wichita Falls, TX (2007); Galleri Urbane, Marfa, TX (2006) and Dobie Movie Theater Gallery (1993), University of Texas at Austin. His photographs have served as the primary design element in album covers for the band Soul Hat (Epic/Sony Records), one winning the Austin Chronicle Best Album Cover award, 1st place, Austin Music Awards (1995). His short films have been screened at the Alamo DraftHouse, Austin, TX; Other Cinema, San Francisco, CA; The Wichita Falls Museum of Art, Wichita Falls, TX and The Marfa Film Festival (2010). He founded, built and operated The Food Shark Museum of Electronic Wonders and Late Night Grilled Cheese Parlour in Marfa Texas from 2010-2016. He has been artistic director and operator of Food Shark from 2006 - 2021 and head chef and owner of Food Shark from 2014 to present, also in Marfa, Texas.

This program is a record of Improvisations with colors, shapes, movements, film grains, tones, sounds and repetitions of forms featuring imperfections and unpredictabilities of light and color reproductions through the use of vintage computer monitors with the hope of affecting feelings or causing reactions in the humans who observe and process these repeated forms and sounds in the specific spaces and during the specific times in which they are encountered.

Adam Bork, *Horizontal XXII*, 14" x 348" x 16.5", 2009/2021



Lauren Cardenas, *#sueñoamericano Ice Air inflight meal #1*, laser jet print on American cheese slice encased in plexiglass and rubber tubing, 12" x 9", 2018-2021

Lauren Cardenas is the Assistant Professor of Printmaking, University of Mississippi, Oxford. She is a studio artist who focuses on print media. She was the editor and founder of PIECRUST Magazine (2011-14), which was a biannual art and literary magazine based out of St. Louis. During that period seven small press publications were released. Lauren also was a co-founding member and co-director of Museum Blue (2014-17), an artist-run project space in St. Louis. She has co-curated many exhibitions, in attempts to bridge the gap between art and literature. Along with her curatorial and publishing practice, she was a founding member and an active part of the steering committee of the St. Louis Small Press Expo (2014-16). Cardenas holds a BA in Painting, Printmaking and Drawing from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, has completed the Tamarind Institute Printer Training Program and holds an MFA in Visual Art from Washington University in St. Louis.

I am an artist who struggles with my bifurcated Mexican American identity. I have felt the pressure to conform to both cultures. Though now I am ashamed of being called an American. Immigrants at our U.S. borders are denied the "American Dream." These prints represent portraits of unknown Latinx individuals, printed on slices of Kraft Singles American Cheese. Most individuals deported from the U.S. have never been on a plane. On their return flight, they are given an American cheese sandwich, which represents the most processed, commercialized, and symbolically "American" thing in this country.

After walking for months to escape danger in their home countries, Latinx refugees seeking the "American Dream" have been met by deportment, racism, and their families severed. In "#SueñoAmericano Series", images of Latinx people and their flight views are printed on slices of Kraft Singles American Cheese to question the reality of the "American Dream," its false promises of acceptance and opportunity for all.



Norma Clark is a native Texan, born in Taylor and raised in Georgetown, Texas, where she attended Southwestern University, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1997. She earned a Masters of Fine Arts Degree from Vermont College of Norwich University from Montpelier, Vermont in 2000. Solo exhibits in Texas include the George Washington Carver Museum, Williamson Museum, DiverseArts, Concordia University, and Bydee Art Gallery, among others. She has participated in over fifty group exhibitions and commissioned mural projects and is represented in the collection of African and African American Studies at the University of Texas, who published three of her art works in Ragbir and Smith's *Collecting Black Studies*.

My work as an abstract artist is intuitive and spontaneous, and my abstractions stem from various representational sources which document discoveries made during my investigations. I paint by responding to the mark making done on the canvas, and each step in the evolution of the painting reveals the next step in the process of my exploration. This method has been a key part of my creative process and is the reason I find abstract art so exciting; I do not have a perceived idea of the final image until I arrive at the destination with my art.

The objective of my work is to create paintings that are visually engaging, expressive, chaotic (orderly chaos) that are visually coherent and contain an ambiguity of lines, space, color and forms. My paintings are personal and are reflections of a range of internal emotions and complexities of life. For me, creating art is to look beyond what can visually be seen to communicate a powerful image on canvas that reveals more than what is immediately apparent.



Meili Corbin was born in Austin, Texas, and has lived much of her life abroad in Germany, France, Austria and Italy. Her exposure to art began at a very young age and Meili was intrigued by how the standards of beauty were redefined in each culture she encountered.

Corbin graduated *magna cum laude* from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas, with a BA in Studio Art and minors in French and Art History. She earned her MFA in Painting in Corciano, Italy and Rome, Italy through American University's (Washington, DC) Art in Italy Program. For the past two decades, Corbin's work has revolved around her research in the sublime and the beautiful. Her work examines the shifting contemporary response to the sublime and the beautiful as it is experienced through the filter of consumerism, shameless multiples, physical barriers and distractions of everyday life. Currently, her images ponder the fragile state of the world and the implications of consumerism on future generations. Corbin's work has been exhibited in the USA and Europe, landed in private collections and is included in various publications including *Studio Visit* magazine. Meili currently lives and works in Southern California with her husband and three children.



My current work investigates issues surrounding human ecology. The subjects painted are scenes from my daily life, as I ponder our interactions with the earth and its resources. I often settle into transient moments that link us to the sublime and the beautiful. In my most recent work, I reside in those fleeting junctures, unsettled, as I try to make sense of the present fragile state of our world.

Crispin Sartwell writes: "That we can lose things, that in fact we are always in the process of losing everything we have, underlies the longing with which we inhabit the world. And in that longing resides the possibility of beauty." It is with such yearning that I collect transient moments and seek to preserve their memory through careful rendering.

Besides safeguarding recollections, my paintings also seek to expose our vulnerability as we live in a world where it is commonplace for nature to be exploited for human gain. In some paintings, our busy consumer lifestyle finds its way into the picture plane. Other times it is implied by the fragmentation of the sky and repetition of forms and shapes. Multiples mimic the cycle of consumerism to which we are all so inextricably linked. Our propensity to consume may gain us no more than great loss when it comes to the health of our planet and its inherent beauty. It is for that very reason my paintings long to capture what may someday be gone.

Meili Corbin, *Hexagons*, Oil on wood panel in Cedar Frames, 34" x 94", 2019

Meili Corbin, *Philosophical Enquiry*, Oil paint on wood panel, 12" x 12", 2014



Sarah Fox's multi-media narratives and characters are created from embodied female experience. Stories of life, loss, sex and love are told through corporeal hybrid creatures. The resulting collages, cyanotypes, and animations suggest a childlike fairytale but with an undercurrent of dark symbolism.

Her work has been shown throughout Texas, as well as in the Kinsey Institute (Bloomington, Indiana), Field Projects Gallery (New York, New York), Espacio Dörffi (Lanzarote, Canary Islands), Bedsetter Art Fair (Vienna, Austria), and Casa Lu (Mexico City). In 2019 she was a recipient of a Sustainable Arts Foundation grant that allowed her to live and work at the Women's Studio Workshop in New York with her son.

Fox earned her BA in Studio Art from Southwestern University and her MFA from The University of Texas at San Antonio. She was raised in Houston, Texas and currently lives and works in San Antonio, Texas with her 3-year old son William and their dog Myra. She is the director of the innovative community art space Clamp Light Studios and Gallery, the creator and co-director for the Brick Gallery in the Blue Star Arts Complex. She teaches at the Southwest School of Art and Texas State University.

The work included in this exhibition was created in the two years after the adoption of my son. This amazing, exhausting, life changing event created a deep shift in my work. For the first time in my life, I really started to think about masculinity. As a feminist, I started to deeply question the pressures and constraints gender norms place on little boys so early in their life. Onesies covered with footballs, roaring dinosaurs, the words "Strong" or "Brave" written on them seemed so violent and hard for my sweet, tiny baby. But these are the options given in most stores. Like most parents I constantly think about nurture versus nature and the person my child will grow into. But as an adoptive parent, these questions are even more poignant and pertinent. In an effort to allow my child to bloom into the most beautiful, whole version of himself, I am questioning the ways we teach how to be a boy to little boys.

They are also a hope for a future I want for my son. The strange little centaurs that fill the work, fight, play, wrestle; but they also sleep, dream, pick flowers and hug. They are fighters, but they are also lovers. Tender and sweet, but tough and strong. As with femininity, the truth about masculinity and little boys - I imagine - lies in the in-between. Humans are far more complex and beautiful than society's gender norms allow for.

This work is about the nature of little boys and the men that they become. It is work I made in an attempt to be a better mother and to create a safer world for my son.



Sarah Fox, *Stud*, Cyanotype on cotton, 30" x 42", 2019

Sarah Fox, *Bruisers*, Cyanotype, ink, crayon, on cotton, 32" x 64", 2019



Becca Gordon is an abstract painter, designer and mural artist. Growing up with her classical musician parents, she was always surrounded by creatives. This created the groundwork for her interest in improvisation and bold expression through works of art.

Becca is fascinated by the challenges and problem-solving aspects of painting, as she sees her work similar to solving a puzzle—needing to be worked and solved.

After earning her B.F.A. in Painting from Southwestern, Becca now lives and works in Austin, TX. She has exhibited works around the United States, France, and Portugal.

I'm not particularly outgoing; I'm not very loud. My paintings are in many ways everything I'm not. My work is inspired by the desire to share thoughts, feelings and emotions. I communicate my thoughts through various thick and thin layers of paint to create stories of movement and ideas.

In my oil paintings and collage work, I combine fast layers of expressive brush strokes with carefully thought out graphic lines and geometric patterns that overlap, interact and play with organic abstractions. This brings together the past and the present—connecting past ideas from the Abstract Expressionist movement with more contemporary concepts of textile patterns and graphic design. My process involves numerous layers where I paint, tape, and then paint some more. Sometimes the process feels frantic, at other times I feel meditative and at ease. Ultimately, I'm seeking balance between controlled and spontaneous movements.

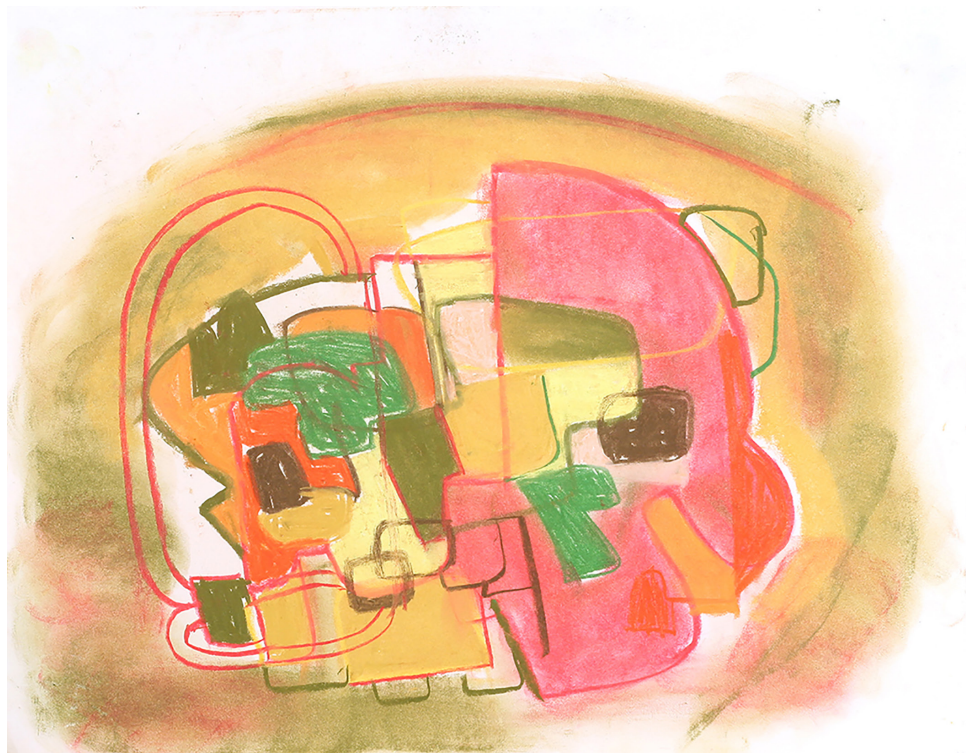


Xan Koonce graduated *magna cum laude* in 2005 from Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas with a BA in Studio Art and a minor in Art History. Over the last decade and a half, Koonce's work has been represented by multiple galleries across Texas including Cerulean Gallery, Laura Rathe Fine Arts, and Mary Tomas Gallery, among others resulting in more than twenty solo and group exhibitions. Her current work can be viewed at Cerulean Gallery in Snider Plaza, Dallas, Texas.

The desire to understand spirituality and its transformational power motivates my work. My objective is to magnify nature beyond its literal meaning to explore the relationship between nature and spirituality.

My interest is taking the beauty I see and abstracting it to gain greater insight. Once inspired, I apply seductive and radiant colors to my paintings as an expression of growth, strength, control and endurance. As I paint, my primary concern is conveying a sensual experience through color, line and composition.

My paintings embody the synthesis of abstract expressionism with the palette of Matisse. It is precisely this fusion of spontaneity and color that leads me to produce what I consider to be a rich and expressive body of work supported by my reverence for the power that beauty has to transform life.



Alyssa Lester is a visual artist currently residing in Brooklyn, New York. Her work celebrates emotional vulnerability through contemporary abstraction and shapes. She grew up in San Antonio, Texas and received a B.A. in Art from Southwestern University in 2016. Her work has been shown in Texas and New York City. Alyssa has previously worked as a docent at MoMA PS1 and is now working as a photographer for a fashion blog, spending her time shooting pictures on the streets of Manhattan.

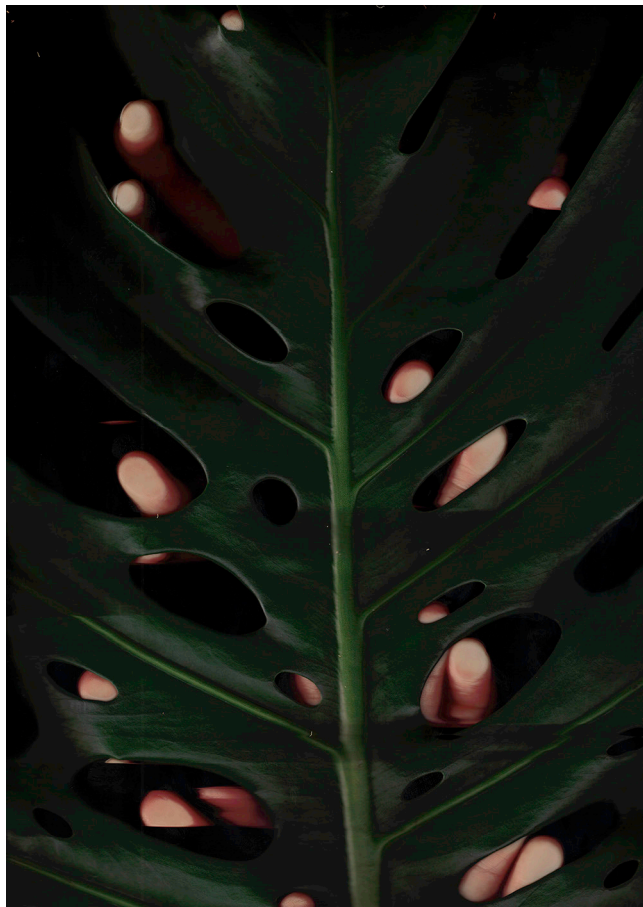
My body of work explores the organic nature of abstraction and the truth one discovers by working purely through feeling. Inspired by the utopian, visionary ideas and stylistic techniques of my Modernist predecessors, I re-evaluate these ideas to fit a more contemporary culture.

In a society where emotions and insecurities are becoming easier to hide through technology and social media, we are becoming increasingly distant and more afraid to confront our own inner battles. We are always expected to present ourselves in our finest form, creating an illusion of perfectionism. My work aims to embrace and cradle emotional vulnerability and find to beauty in our weakest moments.

By developing a vocabulary of quirky, visceral shapes in the company of color palettes that have been carefully selected from personal memories, I am confronting my gut feelings and aiming to work through them by giving them a sense of urgency through physicality. I believe that the process behind making is just as important as the idea that is being conveyed. Therefore each work undergoes several different physical states as I look through the past.



Paloma Mayorga is an interdisciplinary artist and independent curator based in Austin, Texas. She earned a B.A. in Painting from the Sarofim School of Fine Arts at Southwestern University in 2010, and has gone on to receive the Emerging Artist Award from the Emma S. Barrientos Mexican American Cultural Center in 2015, Best Visual Artist by the Austin Chronicle 2017 Reader's Poll, and Southwestern University's 18 Under 40 Award for 2020. Currently, her work can be found on artsy.net, on view at The LINE Austin, Soho House Austin, and at The Contemporary Austin Jones Center.



The pandemic began and I immersed myself in plants, seeking to absorb lessons of healing and coexistence. These works are a selection of quiet meditations inspired by the ontological writings of Emanuel Coccia, who studied the behavior of plants to find solace in the intricate ecosystems of which we are a part. In my photographs, I embrace, drag, poke, and rip delicate flora apart as the light of a scanner exposes the objects that lay on the glass bed. The movement creates glitches that allow for fragments of my body to disappear and reappear again, questioning my relationship to the physical world. "tócame/no me toques (touch me/touch me not)," an ongoing series of photographic transfers on gelatin, embraces the fragility of decomposition and further refers to an exchange of consent. How do boundaries, both physical and psychological, prompt us to respect the space of others and/or stimulate our intrinsic desire to touch?

Paloma Mayorga, *Ansiedad (Anxiety)*, Digital chromogenic print on Fuji Crystal Archive paper, Limited edition print, 45" x 30", 2017

Paloma Mayorga, *tócame/no me toques (touch me/touch me not)*, Photo transfer on gelatin and glass, 3" x 2" x 1", 2021

Hailing from Plano, Texas, **Lauren Muskara** graduated from Southwestern University in 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts in Studio Art, a Bachelor of Science in Biology, and a minor in Health Studies. During her time at Southwestern, she divided her time between conducting undergraduate research in a molecular ecology lab and developing her fine arts practice, which looks at blurring the division between the fields of art and science. In addition to being a Paideia, King Creativity, and SCOPE scholar, she received the Lancaster Award in Studio Art, the Vicente D. Villa Award in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and the Walt Potter Prize.

Following graduation, Lauren began studying at the University of Illinois at Chicago, working towards a Master of Science in Biomedical Visualization. Interested in combining her passion for art, science, medicine, and technology, Lauren plans to explore the possibilities offered by interactive media—such as augmented reality and virtual reality—3D modeling, scientific/medical illustration, and anaplastology with a goal of making STEAM education more inclusive and accessible.

*Composed of large realistic and minimalist-inspired paintings aimed at amplifying the molecular components of objects, my work questions the connections between scientific exploration and the expressive, conceptual aims of art. Although my work appears to be created with traditional painting materials, I incorporate foreign matter into the paint, which calls into question the meaning of the work. For example, my painting of an apple snail, *Pomacea maculata*, physically contains copper sulfate, a substance that environmental managers often use to kill the very object represented in the painting. The focal snail species itself represents a non-native, invasive organism that results in detrimental impacts on native species. Artworks like this aim to question concepts of what is "real" (copper sulfate, paint, canvas) versus "illusionistic" (centuries of art mimetic traditions) versus "abstract" (the abstract shortcuts that the sciences use to demonstrate concepts like chemical structures) to ignite conversations between the fields of art and science.*



Lauren Muskara, *Pomacea maculata*, Oil and copper sulfate pentahydrate on linen, 41" x 47", 2019



Jake Pawelek currently lives and works in Texas. He received his BFA degree in studio art from Southwestern University in 2015, when he also received the Lancaster Award for the outstanding senior in studio art. He mounted two solo exhibits in 2016 at the Mercury Project, San Antonio and The Shop at Design Associates, Seguin, Texas. He recently created a mural for Discovery Land Company.

As an artist, I use painting, sculpture, installation, drawing and writing to fuel my creativity. Influenced by the impatience of living in an over-stimulated culture, my work investigates the character and developmental, constructive states of a figure. I am critically engaged in the idea of transcending materials to explore larger ideas of life and believe materials can transcend their physical existence to become something entirely new by manipulating their appearance. Through the physicality of molding, building, ripping, tearing, scraping, and attacking the surfaces, my work enacts a primal interaction between the artist, the work, and the viewer.

Jake Pawelek, *SREWOLF TSOHG*, Mixed media on industrial wrap, 115" x 180", 2019



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