

I Stay To The End

Gabriel Bleuwater/Lauren Boles/Zack Breitbach/Derek Chesnut
Claire Christy/Indigo Vance Eyebright/Yibo Liu/Dani Lopez
Chester Malinow/Diana Patin/Xinxin Wang/Messa Zheng

**BFA
FINAL
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**University of Oregon
LaVerne Krause Gallery**

I Stay to the End

“I Stay to the End” features the art of the graduating students of University of Oregon’s Bachelor of Fine Arts program. Representing a variety of media, including painting, sculpture, fibers, printmaking, photography, metalsmithing and jewelry, the artworks exhibited represent the artists’ accomplishments so far, while marking a beginning of continued artistic evolution. The phrase “I Stay to the End” is the literal translation of *permaneo*, the Latin root of permanence. This exhibition actually destabilizes the idea of permanence, not only because the artworks are temporarily installed, but also because the artists will soon be leaving the university, seeking out new ways of staying. “I Stay to the End” alludes to a shared artistic interest in the lasting effects of temporal processes, and also to the theme of haunting, which unifies the exhibited artworks.

In the photographic work of Diana Patin, multiple forms of haunting emerge. One of her photographs, which offers a view through a living room window, has been exposed such that the foliage of a tree appears like an apparition. This ghostly presence creates an eerie, emotionally charged image of an otherwise mundane interior. Capturing and presenting moments that force the viewer into emotional or even physical unease, Patin engages with the type of haunting that occupies consciousness.

The conceptual jewelry of Xinxin Wang draws inspirations from both elegant Elizabethan Ruff and murky shipwreck treasures, producing a sense of haunting that is at once tricky and beautiful. Wang works with materials such as lace, which have historically been used to demarcate power and identity. Simultaneously, she juxtaposes these markers of power with allusions to wreckage. Her pieces remind us that, just as something or someone can gain power, that power can be lost in an instant. Amidst wreckage and loss, the memory of power remains, like treasures on a sunken ship.

The idea of haunting as it relates to consciousness and memory can be used to understand the way history operates in Claire Christy’s work. As a celebration of the craftsmanship of the past and in opposition to the money-centric present, Christy draws from art history, specifically the Northern Renaissance and Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. She aims to push visions of the past to the forefront of modern consciousness and produce prints, collages, and murals that continue to resonate. Creating images that act as reminders of the past, Christy critiques the present as a time of historical amnesia.

In her jewelry and metalsmithing, Messa Zheng incorporates motifs related to death and memorialization. Through the inclusion of animal skulls and traditional Chinese symbols of death, she produces pieces that act like memorials. Zheng’s inclusion of deathly symbols in her jewelry urges wearers and viewers to become both unsettled and comforted by the memory of loved ones past. Referencing a wide Chinese heritage, Zheng’s pieces remain haunted by personal memories of deceased loved ones.

An interest in the haunting power of material processes is seen in the sculptural installations of Zack Breitbach. He has created some of his most recent works by layering cement on fabric. As the cement dries, it forms cracks while struggling to adhere to the fabric. The cracks weaken the structure of the cement, and pieces begin to flake off. Breitbach dubs the piece finished once he is able to sweep away the fallen pieces. For Breitbach, the empty spaces of his works are just as important as the cement that remains.

In the work of Gabriel Bleuwater, a combination of control and chance raises questions regarding the role of the artist. Bleuwater uses intensive chemical processes to create the plates for his prints, and also destructs his meticulously constructed plasters. Exhibiting broken fragments, Bleuwater confronts viewers with an unsettling sense of the value of these prints and plasters. This is heightened by the juxtaposition of unbroken plasters, which reveal the painstaking detail of Bleuwater’s work. These artworks question ideas of permanence, hovering perpetually in a state of becoming.

Lauren Boles confronts the belief that colors hold intrinsic qualities capable of evoking lasting emotions. She describes her practice as one centered on intuition, referring not only to her intuitive creative process, but also to viewers' intuitive perceptions. She finds herself drawn to certain colors that appear in everyday objects and throughout popular culture. These colors then become the primary forces in her painterly experiments. Her paintings signal the ability of colors to haunt through emotional resonance, while dwelling in a space of visual perception.

Chester Malinow explores the possibilities of spray paint in relation to improvisation and scale. His process is based in an extensive sketching practice. Malinow's preparatory sketches haunt his works, serving as ways of exploring abstraction that prepare him for the creation of a final work. The nature of spray paint allows for quick adjustments, allowing Malinow to explore moments of inspiration. His works are the culmination of extended preparations, finalized on canvas, sheets of steel, and public surfaces.

Dani Lopez entered the BFA program as a painter, but has increasingly been working with textiles. Weaving, traditionally defined as "women's work," has a long and gendered history. In making the shift from painting to textiles, Lopez gives value to the legacy of fibers, and acknowledges its place in the realm of high art. In many of her woven works, Lopez consciously chooses to use colors that are traditionally deemed feminine, allowing issues of identity to haunt art's constructed hierarchies.

Observing and questioning the formal qualities of everyday objects, Indigo Vance Eyebright disrupts the traditional goals of painting. In an effort to pull away from narrative painting, Eyebright's images render personal encounters as moments devoid of context. Eyebright transforms what might be originally perceived as an objective description into a subjective interaction between personal reality, painting, and audience. One of the ways he eliminates context from his paintings is through cropping, leaving viewers left to wonder what might lurk beneath his deceptively benign surfaces.

Derek Chesnut does not limit himself to a specific medium; he lets his concepts and ideas evolve through a variety of forms. Much of Chesnut's final year at the University of Oregon has been consumed by the writing and producing of an experimental play, entitled "Honey! I'm Home!." The play blurs the boundaries between performers and audience members, while mocking the ideal of the nuclear family. His stage sets, props, and sculptural works, which include rocks in wigs, painted skulls, and various quotidian objects, occupy the fragile boundaries between art, life and death.

Yibo Liu is a process driven artist who creates large-scale sculptures and installations. Liu allows her work to evolve via chance, the process of experimentation, and references to found materials, such as wallpaper. Despite the large scale of her sculptures, Liu manages to focus on small details, like droplets of wax and floral motifs. Liu believes there is no finality in her work, only the creation of more possibilities.

"I Stay to the End" signals the staying power of the lessons these artists have learned. The artworks exhibited articulate enduring presence, with no end in sight.

- Sloane Kochman, University of Oregon

The exhibition's curators and publication's authors are the students of Dr. Jenny Lin's seminar, "Curating Contemporary Art" - Jacob Armas, Gabriel Bleuwater, Tawnni Brandon, Zack Breitbach, Izzy Cho, Katelyn Giessinger, Sloane Kochman, Lisa Maier, Mason Moorman, and Chanin Santiago. This exhibition and publication have been made possible with generous support from University of Oregon's Departments of Art and the History of Art and Architecture.



Gabriel Bleuwater

Gabriel Bleuwater has used his year in the BFA program to hone his printmaking practice. Largely experimental in his method, Bleuwater uses a variety of contemporary and traditional methods to create his prints. These include laser cutting, printing with unaltered wood, and chemical alteration of copper. Adding to his interest in experimentation, Bleuwater has done many of his prints on plaster. Printing on plaster is a labor intensive process and highly unusual, as it makes it difficult to produce multiples of a print.

Mason Moorman is a first year MA candidate in Art History and is pursuing a certificate in Nonprofit Management.

Mason Moorman: Your interest in printing lies in your ability to combine chance with your strict control of the final product. What drew you to combining chance and control?

Gabriel Bleuwater: I find that printmaking specifically allows me much more freedom to experiment; especially with abstraction of the final “image,” but also with the manipulation of media used. Printmaking was a matured technology before it was relegated to an art genre (with the invention of automated printing presses). Although there is a contemporary push towards non-toxic printing, I prefer the traditional methods; the more caustic the acids, the more harmful the fumes, the happier I am. In a sense, there is an association with alchemy in printmaking due to the varied processes and ingredients that I use with it. On the control end, I think about everything that I do along the process of creating art. Nothing that I produce is art for the sake of art. Everything I produce is usually along the lines of communication; I want to say something to someone. So, when a copper plate reaches a certain point along the avenue of “chance,” I have to reel it in and inject my personal intentions to the outcome.

MM: Your original topic of your thesis was to depict the Metamorphoses, but you changed that focus. Can you describe why you changed it?

GB: Although I did stay with the concept of the narrative of Becoming and Change, associating it specifically with Metamorphoses would limit its impact to a visual reference to something that already exists. My greatest artistic interest and influence is the necessity of change, or flux, and the unseen energies that animate and propel such necessities. Language, in-and-of itself is an abstraction, a sometimes noble attempt to create, associate with, and accept or project a reality. When individual components of language are agreed upon, that abstraction becomes both a known and knowable system: communication. In a sense, the copper plates themselves represent not Ovid’s words, but the evolution of language from an abstraction to a known system of communication, the crowning achievement of humankind.

MM: By engaging in such a complicated printmaking process, you have to put in a great amount of effort to create your final projects. What do you get out of a labor intensive process?

GB: Printmaking offers an edge of physicality that I find both necessary and fulfilling for creating art; at least for me. As far as viewers go, I don’t particularly care if they know or do not know about my levels of intensity, work-wise; in fact, I think I’d prefer that they did not know. That desire to “not let them know” also extends into exhibiting: I think that all art, if it is art, should be anonymous, nothing of the process or the artist should be known when a viewer interacts with an art piece. I think that that may cloud the understanding or acceptance of a particular artwork. Then again, I want to produce art that is universally contemplative rather than representative of a particular artist, genre, or style.

Lauren Boles

Painter Lauren Boles recreates the visual attraction of a single hue - a straightforward and striking experience made ambiguous with vibrating patterns. The juxtapositions of quirky colors and textures create shifting illusionistic spaces but still maintain the sensation of that singular hue. There is a resulting trendiness in Boles' paintings which is occasionally used to narrate personal observations of pop culture. With many intriguing dichotomies offered, at the core of Boles' work is a process of thoughtful intuition that engages the viewers.

Izzy Cho is an undergraduate Art major with an emphasis in Painting and Drawing.

Izzy Cho: You state that color and observation are main aspects within your work. Can you describe these two aspects in relation to your process?

Lauren Boles: I am attracted to colors that are bright, bold, and aren't naturally around us. I'll find these colors by randomly coming across them, whether it's while I'm shopping for art supplies or seeing them in a commercial or textbook. Once I come across a color that I find intriguing, I'll immediately start thinking about how I can translate that experience into a painting. With my conceptual work, I use color to either index a specific idea, group of people, or personal mood based off of my own observations or popular societal views.

IC: What makes you so intrigued by color and why do you gravitate towards working with it?

LB: I think color is interesting because it's powerful. Color can portray so many different moods, feelings, ideas, or connections, and I love that. I also love how quickly color captivates me. If a work of art has a lot of color, it always pulls me into its space and forces me to look at it, but in a good way. A painting can go from one direction to a completely different one in a matter of brush strokes. The psychological effects of color are also interesting, whether it be in the commercial world or within the art realm.

IC: How do you decide what steps to take when painting? You mention intuition but can you elaborate what that means?

LB: With my more abstract work, I like to experiment and build texture in the beginning stage of the painting and then layer color or more patterns and texture on top. In the latter stage, I'm more free in my practice and use my intuition. To me, this means taking the next step in a piece of work, whether it is a risk or not. Since my abstract paintings don't have much pre-determined thought, I rely a lot on this. With my more conceptual works, I try to set a specific framework and stay within those guidelines.

IC: Many of your paintings have a vibrating quality to them. What do you think about this effect and is this something you intentionally try to achieve?

LB: This is something I never go for but just happens along the way. I work with texture in a particular way and it always comes across as hazy or uncertain. I definitely don't try to achieve this but love that it happens. It tends to cause the viewer to interact more with my pieces and view them from different distances, which makes my paintings more dimensional.

IC: Is there anything you hope your audience experiences when they see your work?

LB: I just hope that I provoke something inside of them. Whether it be a good feeling, a memory, or even a feeling of confusion or unsureness. I just want there to be some sort of a reaction to my work.





Zachary Breitbach

Zachary Breitbach is an artist and student in his fifth year at University of Oregon. This year he will be completing his Bachelor of Fine Arts with a focus in sculpture. However, it is apparent in his work that he has a wide range of talents and interests beyond sculpture. Breitbach's works show his affinity for materiality and experimentation, and his ability to push the boundaries of what sculpture is. His innovative use of materials, and his conceptual thinking, make him a promising new artist in his field.

Katelyn Giessinger is an undergraduate studying Art History and Fine Art at University of Oregon.

Katelyn Giessinger: Much of your work combines aspects of both painting and sculpture. What significance does this combination have in your work?

Zachary Breitbach: The work that I've been making lately has been on a sort of spectrum between the two, sometimes by making paintings that are very sculptural and others by turning sculptures I've made into paintings. There's an interesting relationship between the sculpture and painting that I examine in my work.

KG: What role does performance play in your work?

ZB: Lately I've been using performance as way to create work, or work out ideas that I'm not entirely sure about. Like I mentioned before I'm interested in merging different mediums and I see performance as being another part of that. For me the performance is something more for myself than an audience, and a way of thinking through ideas.

KG: What challenges have you encountered in your creative process?

ZB: Thinking is sometimes a challenge for me. I can often get so caught up in an idea and getting it into its perfect form that if I don't find it, it doesn't happen. I resolve that by just trying to make, even if what I'm making isn't what I want and I hate the outcome.

KG: Your thesis show was titled "To Remain", Can you explain how remaining relates to your art?

ZB: I've currently been casually reading Baudrillard and his essay "The Remainder" really struck home for me. The essay sort of addresses how the remainder functions in life and my process leaves a lot behind to be swept away when a piece is finished. With that said I also view my finished works as remainders as they're often the result of what's left behind, such as the spaces of fabric left after the cement has been knocked off of them.

KG: Cement is an unusual medium, what made you choose this material and what is it meant to communicate to the viewer?

ZB: I started working with concrete originally because I was interested in the way it feels so permanent, through process it began to do quite the opposite. I moved to cement as a way to create a sort of skin that spoke to its contradictory nature. The way casting something, fabric in my case, in cement seals it in time is the biggest reason I use it, but hopefully in the structure and form of my work the audience can see its flaws.

KG: What does the idea of permanence mean to you as an artist?

ZB: Addressing permanence is interesting for me, I create works that can change through process or performance, works that are very ephemeral. The art world is huge on preservation of works and that's something that's not necessarily possible and certainly not intended with my work. In a functioning sense I'm clueless about how well this oeuvre will work out. That's what's important to me though, I'm thinking a lot about temporality, ephemerality, and change as a whole so I think in a way it comes full circle.

Derek Chesnut

Through his studies at the UO, Derek Chesnut has worked with different media, ranging from sculpture and ceramics to video and performance. Most recently, he turned his focus to experimental theatre, in which his diverse artistic interests and approaches merge. His work is centered around the idea of spectacle and experience, both drawn from the artist's own perspective and engaging the viewer's perception, questioning our thinking and the systems that structure our everyday life and culture.

Lisa Maier is an Art History major, studying at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, Germany and the University of Oregon.

Lisa Maier: You work with sculpture, video art, and most recently, you wrote the play "Honey! I'm Home!" What is your process of conceptualizing your ideas into the final work? Do you find common ideas across the different media you work with?

Derek Chesnut: I think about what I'm trying to say and an image or an idea builds around that, then I figure out the best medium to put that through. A lot of people say my work is really scattered because I have my hands in so many different practices, but the ideas between each work are pretty similar. I'm interested in how culture creates standards within our society. In addition, I'm interested in craft and the ability the artist has to create a novel object or experience. I have this megalomaniacal idea that by involving my hand in every part of something I create something completely idiosyncratic of myself.

LM: In what way do you consider the viewer while you are making your work?

DC: With "Honey! I'm Home!," the audience is acting as the live studio audience so in a sense they're part of the show. I like to make work that is centered around a spectacle and consider viewers an audience, meaning that I use the audience as an active participant in the work itself; the audience's interaction and interpretation of the work becomes important to the final result.

LM: Can the play be seen as a way of critiquing our everyday culture, although the traditional family model with a working dad, stay at home mom and two children seems to be outdated today?

DC: TV is going through a renaissance, so much so that the family sitcom really feels out of date. I felt like I could see through it. For instance, the laughter and reactions of a "live-studio audience" are completely removed from their identity. The viewer at home ceases to recognize them as people. That got me thinking about the massive disparity between what these shows were projecting versus the reality of actually making one of these shows.

LM: What is most characteristic about your sculptures - their materials, conceptual approaches, presentation?

DC: My sculptures often approach darker themes but have a kitsch or toy kind of aesthetic. My own hand is always a predominant part of the final piece as well. I did a series centered around death and loss. They were toys and mementos that you could interact with like a hand puppet that was your hand controlling another hand, bowls made from skulls, an unsolvable puzzle of a body of water, a crow encased in resin, and a lot of other small object sculptures that came from me dwelling over the loss of a friend. It was a way of making things that felt idiosyncratic to what I was thinking about without forcing meaning into each piece. I just let my process and impulsive first thoughts take over. I think a lot of my work places faith on myself to create something that feels unique to my experience.





Claire Christy

Claire Christy uses printmaking to showcase the importance of nurturing connections with the past in order to ensure a rewarding present. Christy originally majored in Art History, but will ultimately graduate as a double major in Art and History. Even though she shifted her focus away from Art History as an academic discipline, art historical sources play an important role in her explorations of the relationships between past and present. Her appreciation of the lessons of the past is fully articulated by the words of T.S. Eliot—“time present and time past are both perhaps present in time future and time future contained in time past.”

Sloane Kochman is a first year MA candidate in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture.

Sloane Kochman: With your background in art history, which periods do you draw the most inspiration from, both intellectual and aesthetic?

Claire Christy: I draw inspiration from Northern Renaissance painters and printmakers like Hans Holbein, and Dürer. These artists were known for their attention to detail and ability to capture the beauty of everyday objects and settings, which serve as allegorical clues to a deeper meaning. Different movements of the late 1800s including the Gothic Revival, Art Nouveau and the accompanying Arts and Crafts movement, also inspire me. All of these movements celebrate the beauty and power of the natural world and emphasize the spiritual importance of maintaining a connection to it.

SK: Your pieces are very beautiful with your rich color pallet and classical motifs. Do you feel like the aesthetic beauty of your work might cause people to misunderstand your intended concept?

CC: Yes, I often find that my preference for classical beauty, excessive use of gold, and rich colors is easily interpreted as a celebration of oppressive power systems, but I do not support the oppressive institutions that championed classical beauty and rich materials. Still, I cannot help but be consumed by the incredible beauty that came from it. As American culture and politics become increasingly seeped in Neo-Liberal capitalist philosophy, the accumulation of wealth becomes the only priority. I use these types of motifs to highlight things that I consider sacred because of their beauty and value while also referencing the toxic nature of greed for wealth and power.

SK: There seems to be a feeling of decay accompanying the beauty in your pieces. Is this an allusion to the natural life cycle? How else do you embed natural motifs into your pieces?

CC: Decay does play an important role in my work by alluding to the way American culture places greater value in things that are new and views things from the past as obsolete. No recognizing the importance of the past causes dissolution of important knowledge and values.

SK: What types of issue are you interested in addressing? How do you feel your current work addresses these issues?

CC: There is a complex web of interrelated issues in my head that I am interested in addressing through my artwork, but I try to imply them through symbolism. This obsession with the money-centric nature of our neo-Liberal capitalist economy creates a mentality where our culture's value for art and nature-inspired imagery is seen as inconsequential. So I've been thinking a lot about the idea of 'Iconoclasm' with my current work, which is defined as “the rejection of cherished beliefs.” I think our culture is undergoing a secular version of iconoclasm, as lessons, values, and traditions from the past are being discarded and viewed as devoid of importance in comparison to the new and modern. My allusion to decay paired with allegorical imagery derived from beautiful architectural motifs and the natural world imply the idea of something sacred being lost and posing as a reminder of something forgotten.

Indigo Vance Eyebright

Indigo Vance Eyebright is a fifth-year BFA student with a sincere, investigative approach to painting. His oeuvre includes slightly altered color schemes of corporate logos, and his most recent series depicts polychromatic vases precipitously stacked upon one another. The key foundational elements of Indigo's approach to painting are observation, understanding, and a whole lot of introspective questioning made manifest through associations (if not explosions!) of often high-key color schemes. Unafraid to offer a completely unscripted, room-filling laugh, Indigo Vance Eyebright's paintings are as dynamic and as recognizable as the artist's own seemingly independently animated personality.

Gabriel Bleuwater is an artist specializing in printmaking, and completing his BFA in University of Oregon's Department of Art.

Gabriel Bleuwater: Do you think that your paintings represent you as a person or an artist, or are you more concerned with painting in-and-of itself?

Indigo Vance: I really can't understand what it is people mean when they say that they are interested in painting, or photography, or whatever, for its own sake. Personally I am much too self-centered to make work that is not about myself in one way or another.

GB : Your paintings for this show, much as a lot of your past works, deal with known objects and social symbols. How/where do you find inspiration for your work?

IV : Usually I will get inspiration by looking at the formal qualities of everyday objects. The way a pile of books is leaning precariously, or a pile of dirty dishes. My initial attraction to the formal qualities of something will lead me to ask, why is that interesting? Why have I never noticed it before?

GB : I find it very interesting that you both know and understand traditional formalities associated with historical understands of painting, but your works are very contemporary versions of that historical knowledge. As a painter specifically, do you see yourself as a traditional painter, or a more modern translator of historical understanding of painting?

IV : I think that traditionally painting has been associated with narrative, as a description of the world. The implication of that understanding of painting is that there is such a thing as an objective world that one can observe and speculate about from a safe distance. However, recent scientific advances among other things have called into question this long held assumption. So what is it that painting can do if it isn't busy describing things? I think this is a really interesting question.

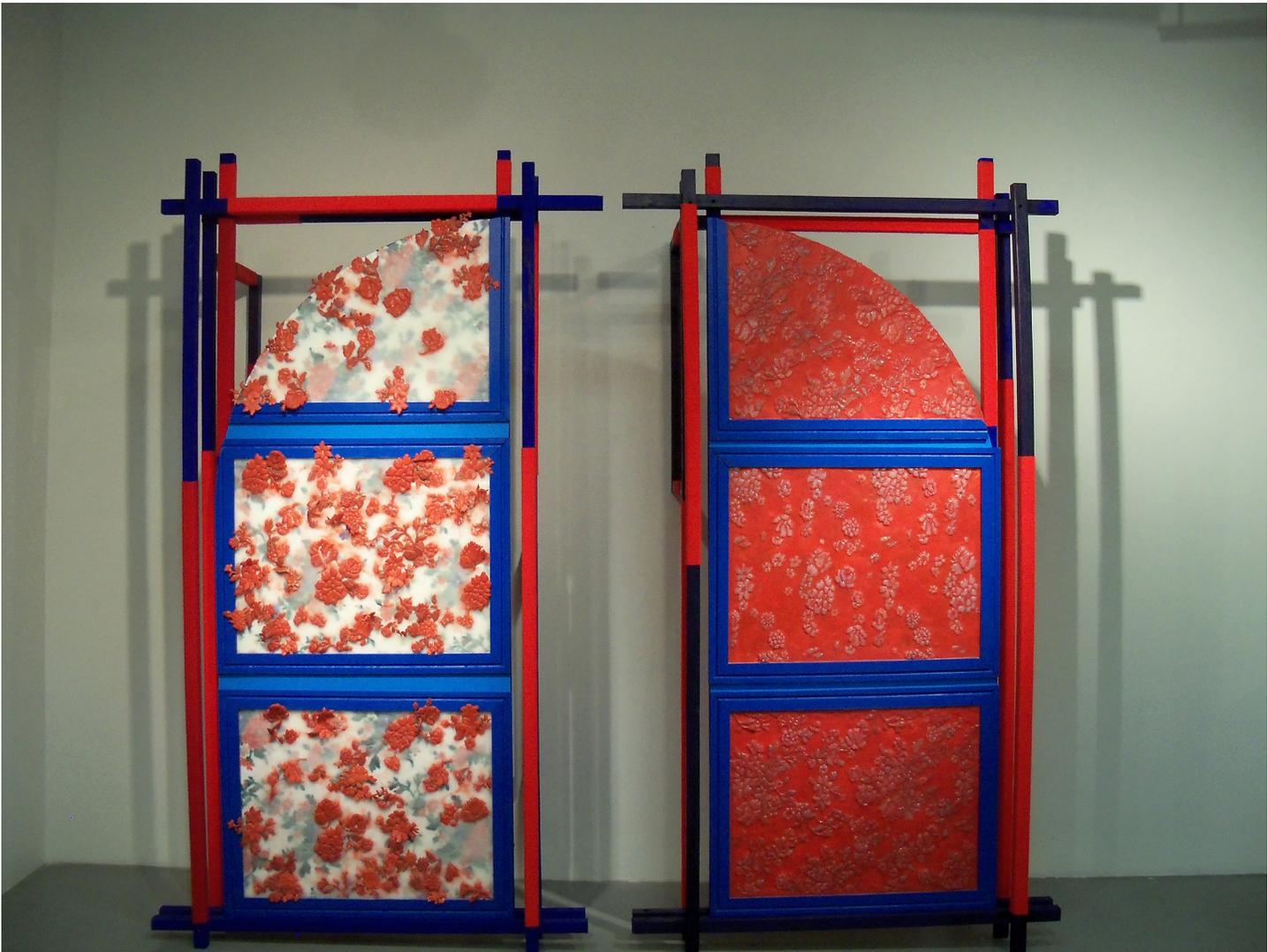
GB : I have noticed that the use of colors in your paintings are often high key colors painted on almost stark-white backgrounds. As a result, even your smaller paintings seem larger than they actually are. Is the transmission of light and space important to you (are you conscious of how you use colors)?

IV : Color is a mystery to me. In order to attempt to make sense of it I will often try to find colors from the world and bring them into my paintings. Like for example the brown of a cardboard box or the orange of a hand-painted sign. What this does is to bring some specificity into a painting and helps me get out of the vague emotional terrain which color often implies. The sculptor and ceramic artist Anders Ruhland described color as a material like any other, a description that I really like.

GB : Where do you see your work going?

IV : I think I will just keep painting. There are certain boundaries inherent in painting that I find incredibly helpful and productive. When you make a painting, there is a limited set of variables (color, line) that one is forced to work within. What this does is foster an amazing sense of boredom, which I quite enjoy butting heads with.





Yibo Liu

Yibo Liu is a graduating BFA student who, this year, began experimenting with large sculptural works made primarily of found materials, dripped wax, and wood. Her work focuses on the presence of detail in large pieces, rather than commenting on monumentality. Yibo's art could be described as the end product of her evolving mental considerations concerning how we interact with materials we encounter everyday. There is not a preconceived idea of mass or articulation of space when Yibo starts her work, rather; the finished product encapsulates her understanding of the relationships between colors and materials.

Jacob Armas plans to double major in Arts Management and International Studies with a professional concentration in Culture, Art & Development.

JA: You have a very process-orientated approach to art-making. Can you discuss some of the thoughts you have while working and how you decide how to expand your installation and sculptural creations as they unfold?

YL: I think this is hard to describe so far, because I still want to find out those ideas in my working process. I only can say: I want to transform my works through working on materials. This process could involve many possibilities that happen during the working process, so I have to keep thinking and choose which of those possibilities to use in my working process.

JA: I see a lot of wallpaper use in your work. What is your interest in materials and where do you get them? What relationship do you see between different materials and your frequent use of red wax and blue paint?

YL: Wallpaper is my found material. When I choose a material, I don't care about what it is, but I care about what it's going to be. I just want to use the floral pattern of wallpaper, and make wallpaper into another thing that I want to create. Red and blue are two colors that I use a lot in my works. I like those two primary colors.

JA: Your experience in the previous four years of your undergraduate program focused on different approaches, techniques, and mediums than what you work with now. Has any of that experience transferred to your interest in large-scale installation work, or are you venturing into completely new terrain with your latest works?

YL: It's kind of my challenge in my working process. I think I like to work with large size works, but it's not just about size. There are a lot of details in large works and I have to figure out those details during the working process.

JA: You've stated that you have an interest in space and in transforming everyday materials, such as the ubiquitous flower pattern on everything from purses to wallpaper. How do you conceptualize this transformation? Do you see your work as adding to the perceived beauty of the flower pattern, for example?

YL: I want to make a relief through using the pattern of wallpaper. I don't think it's just the floral pattern for me, however, I think it's an object with which I choose to start working. I want to transfer flowers into another space/subject. So far, I don't have a solid concept for this transfer. I try out many ways of working on materials or using just one material.

JA: You have a strong view of your working process as a dialogue between yourself and the material. How do you know when this dialogue is finished?

YL: I think I try to find the language inside of materials, or how I try to speak about materials. I think (so far, I am still working on my works) I only can make more "possibilities" happen during my working process. I don't think there is a "finished thing" in my works, I just find the balance between finished and unfinished.

Dani Lopez

Dani Lopez is a painting BFA that is particularly interested in weaving, fibers, and contemporary craft. Lopez uses color, structure, and composition to explore ideas of femininity, the body, and women's work. She uses a highly laborious and meditative process of weaving to create patterns that explore the gendering of colors along with repetition, and the artist's hand. When not at the loom, her ways of working reflect the way she thinks about weaving. This includes drawing patterns in ways that would be difficult or impossible to create through weaving.

Zack Breitbach is a BFA student with a focus in sculpture.

Zack Breitbach: You're a painting BFA, but you've recently been working primarily with weaving. How do see the two mediums interacting with each other?

Dani Lopez: I started weaving a year and a half ago and my affinity for it gave me the confidence to pursue new leads, ask new questions, and to consider narrative in a new way within my work. Since then I've been trying to talk about contemporary craft, painting, and weaving at the same time within works I've made this past year. While not always successful, those are the parameters I've set for myself and I think it's interesting that they do interact with each other. I read something that alluded to canvas being a woven fabric, yet we don't think of it as such. To me, the two mediums interacting made sense and also set up a challenge for me.

ZB: Could you say a few words about what contemporary craft is, how your work relates to it, and what that means to you?

DL: Contemporary craft is a movement that's happening right now and primarily involves people who are working under the craft/fibers umbrella, but they are finding new ways to update these old styles of making. Many of these artists are taking woven or knitted work and sculpting them, others are using contemporary references. I'm still working on and figuring out how my work fits into this context, but I have a strong interest in taking the traditions of craft and craft history and finding news ways of contextualizing it within my own practice.

ZB: We spoke a lot about formal concerns in your work. I'm curious about the personal experience. What drives you to create?

DL: Personal experience in my work is not always present or evident to the viewer. Feminism and women's stories are a huge part of the original concepts of most of my work. Whether it's thinking about "girlish" colors, thinking about the seductive nature of color, and the loaded, gendered history of craft, using these particular personal experiences and stories provide an endless amount of mining for me. Oftentimes while working, I'm thinking of the personal stories of women I know and I think of specific pieces as portraits. At the end of the day, my identity as a feminist and as someone who connects with women's stories is the reason I go to the studio.

ZB: Being a BFA myself I've seen a change in the way I work. How would you say the last year of working as a BFA has affected your work?

DL: Having the studio space and the time has been monumental to my practice. Having ongoing meetings made me engage in my practice and my work in a much more rigorous way. While theory is a part of that, that rigor came from following leads, asking questions, and giving myself the permission to play in the studio. Lastly, developing a serious, laborious studio practice was what I needed as an artist.





Chester Malinow

Chester Malinow has utilized his final year in the BFA program to explore the fine art possibilities of spray paint, while expanding his printmaking practice. Originally working in a graffiti style, Malinow has more recently used spray paint to develop his own method of abstraction. He has also started creating more representational work using spray paint. In his printmaking, he explores similar motifs as in his paintings, but allows for more negative space. The influences in Malinow's abstractions include computer rendered graphics and street graffiti from the 1980s.

Mason Moorman is a first year MA candidate in Art History and is pursuing a certificate in Nonprofit Management.

Mason Moorman: One of your biggest influences is the medium of spray paint itself with its inherent qualities of allowing control and chance. Is spray paint a tool for creating a certain kind of art, or are you more drawn to the potential of spray paint?

Chet Malinow: I am drawn to the potential in the nature of the medium. Having painted a few murals with spray paint, I realized that there are no size restrictions to support the medium. Whereas, with oils, there would be the constraint of a canvas. The aspect of chance in the use of spray paint is also something I am drawn to. A lot of times in the studio I will scrap down a few layers and catch myself jumping up and down yelling. "Oohhhh that's so sickkk!" The ability to cover up areas you aren't fond of in an instant also appeals to me. This way I can easily bring images forward or backward within the piece. Manipulation of spray to create layering is endless with the use of stencils, tape, squeegees, and can control for the variation of line weight.

MM: Using a graffiti method to produce art works for a gallery environment could be seen as controversial, as many people consider graffiti to be more powerful as a public art practice. How do you see your graffiti-inspired artworks interacting with street graffiti?

CM: The more I askew from letter forms the less I feel that my work represents graffiti. The connotations attached to spray paint will always scream lowbrow art or an inferior medium to traditional painting methods. This is partly why I am interested in using spray paint. I like the idea of bringing street culture into the gallery, but manipulating the medium enough that there is only a clue as opposed to a strong reference.

MM: You have also completed a number of murals for clients. Are your murals more of a commercial practice or do you get something with murals that you can't get from your gallery work?

CM: My favorite part about painting murals is the interaction with the community in the area of the wall. I love talking to bikers or pedestrians as they walk by and hear their input on what I am doing. Cops have also tried to stop me for "graffiti" multiple times while painting murals and I just get to laugh and put a note in their face telling them that I have permission. Great feeling, haha. Murals to me are more an opportunity to get to work out in the world than a commercial endeavor. Don't get me wrong - having someone's credit card to buy supplies and getting paid is awesome, but to me it's what I am adding to the city for everyone to see. The scale of a wall is also something that challenges me to push myself into taking a sketch and stretching it sixty feet long and twenty feet high.

Diana Patin

Diana C Patin is completing her Bachelor of Fine Arts at the University of Oregon. Her practice is based on an exploration of the world around her. She considers what she doesn't know or understand her biggest catalyst. She is particularly interested in the changing nature of identity, coming-of-age, the passage of time and interpersonal connections.

Tawnni Brandon is a graphic designer, screen printer, professional portrait painter, and a senior in University of Oregon's Department of the History of Art and Architecture, where she primarily studies Chinese and Japanese antiquity.

Tawnni Brandon: What connections does your art have to you personally? What does your art mean to you and your growth as an artist?

Diana Patin: I define myself through my art. As I grow and change, so does the work. Whether consciously or through working, making art gives me a space to focus on whatever is most important to me at the time. [...] Making art is an extension of my conscious mind. Without it, I fear what would happen and how rampant my thoughts would run.

TB: What connections does your art have to the external world, politically, environmentally, economically, etc.?

DP: I don't think of myself as an artist who makes anything extremely political. [..But] I do think of myself as someone trying to access universal truths. I think the most obvious connection to the world at large in my art is through identity. By making things that hold true for me, my hope is always that something in them resonates with other people too.

TB: How do you make use of your photography to discuss what is becoming of the contemporary art world?

DP: I'm fascinated with combining processes both contemporary and historic to reference the history of photography while keeping my work relevant in a contemporary discussion of the medium.

TB: What impacts your photography?

DP: I keep returning to themes that were pertinent to me earlier in life, or artists I used to be obsessed with resurface. Things always come back.

TB: And what is it that most motivates you to make your artwork? What themes do you return to?

DP: Motivations for me come in the form of things I don't understand. Time is a huge one for me, and a lot of the reason I practice photography in the first place has to do with time itself. Photography has such a deep history with the concept of "a moment" and "freezing time," which makes it a great medium with which to discuss those themes...Most of the things I make images of are emotionally charged for me. Whether it be the natural world and organic matter, or portraits of people who I love deeply in my life, it's hard for me to not feel a lot about anything I make art about.





Xinxin Wang

Xinxin Wang is a graduating BFA student in the Jewelry and Metalsmithing program. Upon entering Xinxin's studio, I was interested in the array of images tacked up around her bench. They were of Queen Elizabeth confined in ruffs next to waify models dripping in jewels. As I looked at her work, I was impressed by the form composed of pierced silver sheet metal married to casted sterling silver. The juxtaposition of delicacy with substance evoked the sense of power and weight of nobility with the flightiness of glamor.

Chanin Santiago is an artist and MA candidate in the University of Oregon's Arts Administration program with a concentration on Community Arts and a certificate in Museum Studies.

Chanin Santiago: What is your background in art/design? What do you like about jewelry and metalsmithing?

Xinxin Wang: For more than ten years I have been creating black and white line drawings. My jewelry is like one of my three-dimensional drawing in space. I make non-traditional jewelry that explores the distortion of fragile patterns in the precious and stable material of silver. When I came to the United States, I majored in Graphic Design at La Sierra University, California where I took some art classes. Then I just fall in love with design and art. I transferred to UO because of this Metalsmithing and Jewelry program. I've been collecting earrings for a long time so I wanted to make my own jewelry someday.

CS: What are your thoughts on art jewelry? What do you think the relationship is between art jewelry and commercial jewelry?

XW: Art jewelry is really different from commercial jewelry, even though they share some similarities. The most obvious aspect for me is that art jewelry is very unique and creative. It is expressive and can be used for storytelling instead of only looking good.

CS: Concept, research, and processes are important components in the Jewelry and Metalsmithing program. What is your inspiration and context for this body of work?

XW: My inspiration is originally my black and white drawings. Also, the Elizabethan ruff and the treasures found in shipwrecks.

CS: Your pieces are expressive in the quality of lines and variety of forms. What is your creative process? What are your first steps in designing jewelry?

XW: So there are many different steps and techniques that are included in my work, but the first step is my drawing. It is a very abstract drawing that I process mentally, and bring it up to two dimensional drawing, and then transfer it three dimensionally into metal.

CS: Your work utilizes a variety of techniques. What are the techniques/processes you use? Why do you use these techniques and processes? What process do you enjoy most and why?

XW: Some of the techniques I use are piercing, forming, casting, and fabrication. They are all really vital throughout the process. I really enjoy piercing and casting. They are totally different processes, but both need a lot of patience and focus.

Xiaoyu “Messa” Zheng

Xiaoyu “Messa” Zheng is a graduating BFA student focusing in Jewelry and Metalsmithing. Her work presents a contrast of ornate fabrication and organic decomposition.

Chanin Santiago is an artist and MA candidate in the University of Oregon’s Arts Administration program with a concentration on Community Arts and a certificate in Museum Studies.

Chanin Santiago: I notice there is a particular motif of animal skulls and butterflies in your work. What are the inspirations for your pieces? What do you hope to convey through your work?

Messa Zheng: These pieces are like memorials and deal with my own feelings of loss. Eastern and Western cultures represent death differently. In China, white represents death. Flowers are used for memorials in both cultures. Animal skulls come from my deep love for animals. I love birds and butterflies. I have had many pets in my life and some have died. They are dead but still loved and exist in my mind. In the Miao culture, butterflies represent death. People are told not to catch butterflies because they are dead people. I hope through my work, the viewer or the wearer will feel the lightness and the weight of life.

CS: I understand there are eight craft skills that are highly regarded in China; filigree is one of them. You use filigree and other processes in your work. What draws you to filigree? What are the other processes and materials you utilize in this body of work?

XZ: Last summer, I went back to Shanghai and happened to walk into an art gallery, Shanghai Two Cities Gallery. I met the owner, Sharon Guo. She is also the head of the Jewelry Program at Shanghai University. We discussed the idea of combining the traditional Chinese handy craft of filigree with contemporary Western approaches. Guo recommended I meet a famous Miao silversmith, Master Zhengyun Li. Miao people are minorities in China and are known for their filigree. I went to Guizhou, China to learn filigree from Master Li. They usually don’t teach outsiders or females but nowadays the kids don’t want to do it. It’s hard work. They want to keep the tradition alive. In my works, I use the techniques of fabrication and casting. I pierce the metal to create the details in the butterfly wings. I create the filigree from wire. I cast animal bones in plastic. I like the idea of plastic. It is lighter than metal and not precious. I cast lace and real seahorses with silver. I also use organic, natural materials, such as shell and coral.

CS: What do you believe the relationship is between conceptual/art jewelry and commercial jewelry? Where do you locate your practice along this continuum?

XZ: Jewelry is not only an expensive piece of material that shows the wearer’s wealth, it can show the person’s taste. I like to make people feel confused about what they think of as jewelry so I sometimes use plastic instead of precious metal to replicate and shift their idea of jewelry. I consider my current work as conceptual art jewelry. Art jewelry is far away from commercial jewelry. I hope they meet together in the future. Maybe art jewelry can help develop commercial jewelry.

CS: Do you have any advice for others who are interested in the field of jewelry + metalsmithing?

XZ: Have patience and passion. Get ready to work hard!

