

MFA 2022

DOWNSTREAM

A THESIS EXHIBITION BY GRADUATE STUDENTS FROM THE
LAMAR DODD SCHOOL OF ART AT THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Athens, Georgia



Luka Carter
What the Hell Happened to You, Sweetheart?, installation view, 2022
glazed ceramic, vinyl pool, steel, enamel paint,
colored pencil, wood, chalk, Gatorade, photo courtesy of Kevin Bond
dimensions variable

THE ATHENAEUM
APRIL 15 - MAY 13, 2022





Forrest Lawson
Bare Hare/Hairy Bear, detail, 2022
borosilicate glass, wax, wood, soil, acrylic, blood rubber, O-ring
36"x42"x14"

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the fall of 2019, a small group of exceptional MFA students joined the vibrant community of artists and scholars at the Lamar Dodd School of Art. Three years later, amidst several interconnected, epoch-defining events, the annual thesis exhibition bears out their tenacity and fortitude, and, equally, the ambition that led them to pursue graduate work in the visual arts.

Obliquely and directly, poetically and with conceptual alacrity, the works assembled in this exhibition offer viewers a compelling, prismatic reflection upon the current moment – both in specificity and at the level of affect. Across media, method, and tonality, they inspire us with their meticulous craftsmanship, challenge us with their incisive socio-political critiques, and move us with subtle meditations on personal experience, memory, and, alternatively, fantastic worlds of their own invention.

For the part they played in making this exhibition and catalogue possible, we would like to thank the faculty and staff at the Lamar Dodd School of Art; the graduate students in art history whose writing appears in this catalogue; Andy Battaglia, whose essay evocatively engages with the exhibition and its overarching themes; Dr. Katie Geha, Director, Dodd Galleries; and Jane Ritchie, Graduate Advisor.

Michael Marshall / Isabelle Wallace
Interim Co-Directors, Lamar Dodd School of Art



Casey Connelly
Cast Off Your Burdens, detail, 2022
acrylic, oil, vinyl, foil on panel
37 x 29.5"

FOREWORD

Downstream opens with a fountain. Created by Luka Carter and placed at the entrance to the courtyard of the Athenaeum, the fountain announces the annual MFA exhibition, featuring nine students connected by their studies at the Lamar Dodd School of Art. The fountain, punctuated by a goofy guppy and a friendly alligator, gushes forth not with water, but instead Gatorade, a bright green colored energy drink favored by athletes. It is a similar product featured in Mike Judge's 2006 dystopian cult classic, *Idiocracy*. In that film, the energy drink is marketed as a healthy alternative for plants, which inevitably leads to a world-wide food shortage.

Not unlike Judge's spoof on the end-of-the-world, the artists in this exhibition grapple with our contemporary condition. At times, the work can appear playful, brightly colored, maybe even light. Look closer, and the artists, in their own ways, examine the difficult vicissitudes of living in America today. Themes that appear throughout the show include our current climate crisis, past trauma, stereotypes related to race, and late-stage capitalism.

The title suggests that these artists are moving with the flow or being carried with the current towards the mouth of the river, where one might be diverted toward a new direction. Just as they have worked alongside one another for three tumultuous years, they will graduate and move on, continuing their practice while inventing entirely new landscapes.

Artists in the exhibition include: Rosie Brock, Luka Carter, Casey Connelly, Victoria Dugger, Isys Hennigar, Matthew Torchiana Hoban, Craig Howarth, Forrest Lawson, and Annie Simpson.

Dr. Katie Geha

Director of the Galleries, Lamar Dodd School of Art



Matthew Torchiana Hoban
Found Portal #1, 2022

found photograph and frame, modeling clay, wood, dimensions variable

UP ON THE DOWN NOTE

"The river, the flow, is the bank and the water muddying one another, channeling one another." I thought of this quote from the great poet/critic/theorist/etc. Fred Moten when first charged with parsing *Downstream* as the title and maybe even a theme for an exhibition that would seem to resist being too cleanly corralled. The idea is that any holistic notion of a river is dependent on both the water coursing through it and the banks that keep it bound – and, more importantly, the fact that there's no real way to think of such distinct elements of river-ness as anything other than constituent parts of a concept that holds within it the prospect of not only crystal-clear fluidity but also a dirty, intermittently spurting mess.

Moten was responding a few years ago to the artist Arthur Jafa in a dialogue about the latter's extraordinary film- and video-editing techniques, which make connections where often there seems little connection to be made. ("I began to learn that what I was manipulating was not the images but the space the juxtaposition of the images was opening up, or disrupting," Jafa had said. "Think about a river: the river ain't the bank and it ain't even really the water.")

For me, however – at the Athenaeum for the first time and back in Athens, the beloved Classic City in Georgia I'd once called home decades ago – Moten was speaking more immediately about isolated but interconnected work offered up by a disparate group of artists making their way through murky, mucky, muddled times. Talking to the artists involved in the exhibition and hearing about the internal travels and travails they navigated while in a program punctuated by a long pause made the muddledness we all weather all the more clear – and their perseverance all the more inspiring.

I saw the everythingness embodied by that river/bank communion in a rope ladder in Matthew Torchiana Hoban's *The Pause and the Pull Back* (p. 43), a wall work tucked suggestively into a corner that – like so much else in the show – seemed to hold out a key to whatever lock a viewer might bring to it. Below an otherworldly landscape rendered with wood, paint, paper, and sand, the ladder, made from tiny tied pieces of twine attached to a platform at the bottom of the frame, offers either a way up to another realm or a passage down to parts unknown (it's hard to decide which was more right, enough so that the answer would seem to be both).

It was there in the exquisite ceramics and tapestry works of Isys Hennigar, who spoke of drawing from reading into histories shared among "folklore, mythology, symbology, alchemy, and early science," especially as they relate to "healing practices and remedies." But cures can be elusive, of course – or otherwise unresolved in a sort of quasi-quantum state evoked by the title of one of Hennigar's porcelain sculptures: *Between Moments of Dog and Wolf*. The words allude to a phrase in French that captures the time of day around dusk, when shapes seem not to want to reveal themselves and, as the light dims, distinctions between things can be hard to discern.

A riddled river of sorts spewed through Luka Carter's *Postmodern Transgender Experience*, a far from conventional

outdoor fountain that greeted visitors to *Downstream* with a splashing bath of bright green liquid the color of that never-natural sickly substance known as Gatorade. Tiled ceramic creatures (a fish, a dragon with teeth) leered like gargoyles from perches raised above, and the core of the monument was decorated with drawings and doodles of the kind that Carter remembers making as a kid. Of the connecting principle at the center of it all, Carter said, "There is something in art-making and self-actualization that is like surrendering, and then so many unexpected things happen and lead back to almost where you started. I see that in the circulation of the fountain."

Annie Simpson saw a subject worthy of a different kind of circulation in *nothing is known but impenetrable surfaces*, a mesmerizing and mysterious multichannel video she classified as part of "a sort of post-documentary fieldwork practice" with a special interest in "different sites and zones across the South that have strange significance in a way that allows us to imagine the region outside of itself." The zone that stimulated her curious camera and recitative musings was an area in Mississippi that Simpson described as the only known place east of the Rocky Mountains to play home to nuclear testing by the U.S. government, back in the wake of World War II. The blasts were set off underground, so as to assess whether such events could be detected from the surface. "People talk about the soil rolling like ocean waves," Simpson said.

Soil from the site of a different kind of rupture figured in a series of searing, searching sculptures by Forrest Lawson, who stared down the sadness and PTSD he endured after being disowned from his family in the house he recreated in ghostly forms by memory. "I was trying to explore liminal spaces and how that idea is attached to Queer identity," Lawson said. "I was trying to think about Queer space." He queered the space quite literally – in one case, filling a clear plastic architectural model with cow intestines that he recast as sausage casing and stuffed with used condoms and gay porn. In so doing, Lawson exerted a kind of presence and sense of pride and ownership that could be felt from the ground up.

The firmament that served as the basis for Rosie Brock's vast and expansive project – an assemblage of photographs, ephemera, and alternately authentic and fictional archival finds pinned like evidence on a makeshift plywood wall – is both real and imagined. It's inspired by a small town in Southwest Georgia that the artist's family has called home for generations – "this place that's kind of always stuck in my craw," Brock said – but the setting changed in her mind over time. "I wanted to do a sort of documentary project, but my process changed when everything shut down and I ended up extrapolating. I created my own imaginary town and, essentially, a world." At the heart of Brock's work is a story about a mysterious church, three unsolved murders of teenage girls, and the arrival of an artist/investigator who turns out to be Brock herself. Accompanying the wall on display in the exhibition are reams of writing – short stories, notes, etc. – that are still taking shape. As for the existence of a key to the mystery, Brock said, "It's alluded to in the writing but never explicitly stated."

Critiques of the world around us are both explicit and implicit in Casey Connelly's paintings – and, for the ways they came to signal variously troubled, tarnished, and transcendent aspects of that world, wound up being embodied by the paintings themselves. The subject matter doubles as surface matter: consumer goods, lifestyle



Luka Carter
What the Hell Happened to You, Sweetheart?, detail, 2022
glazed ceramic, vinyl pool, steel, enamel paint
colored pencil, wood, chalk, Gatorade, photo courtesy of Kevin Bond



Isys Hennigar
Moments Between Dog and Wolf, detail, 2022
glazed porcelain, china paint, ceramic decals, gold luster, bronze, copper, photo courtesy of the artist



Forrest Lawson
Sausage Fest, 2022
acrylic, cow intestines, gay pornography, monofilament, used condom
36 x 42 x 18"



Casey Connelly
An End to Suffering, 2021
acrylic, oil, paper, vinyl, foil on panel, photo courtesy of the artist
30 x 24"

accessories, signs promising a chance to “Cast Off Your Burdens” and find “An End to Suffering.” But the surfaces gleam – and enough so that the care and commitment required to make them so enticing becomes clear. “The paintings themselves are a critique,” Connelly said. “But I acknowledge my own complicity. I’m as stuck as everybody else. My hope is that there’s something beyond all this.”

There is, with certainty. And in ways we both can and can’t fully know, that something is flowing underneath us – rolling, burbling, churning – whether we know it or not.

Andy Battaglia

Andy Battaglia is a writer in Brooklyn, New York. He is an editor at *ARTnews* and *Art in America* and has written for many publications about art and culture.



Isys Hennigar
Mirror Images in Rot and Renewal, 2022
ceramic shards and embroidery on cotton jacquard tapestry
110 x 54"





Rosie Brock
River, 2019
archival inkjet print, photo courtesy of the artist
6 x 6"

ROSIE BROCK

On either side of a constructed pine wall, an assemblage of photographs, scraps of paper, everyday objects, bullets, and bones confront the viewer. Their organized but informal composition evokes the detritus of everyday routine, but here suggests an air of investigative curiosity. Accompanied by sheets of paper that mix poetry, conversational snippets, and ambiguous character studies, the installation's wall-mounted portraits and collected ephemera work to bring to life the fictionalized town of Tarwater, Georgia. Entitled *Soliloquy*, Rosie Brock's immersive collage ominously entices viewers, inviting them to scrutinize the disorderly pieces of a decimated town in the wake of a series of unsolved, grisly murders of three teenage girls in 1981.

Drawing on the tragic history of a real town in Southwest Georgia, Brock subtly obfuscates what is real and what is imagined in a community shattered by violent tragedy. Tarwater, which is also inspired by the flawed protagonist of Flannery O'Connor's novel *The Violent Bear It Away*, is likewise marked by complex tensions. For if the title character of O'Connor's novel commits an act of extreme violence that blurs the lines between salvation and psychopathy, so too, does Brock, whose installation echoes aspects of O'Connor's Southern Gothic style and engages themes of religious tension, misogyny, Southern regionalism, and violence.

The town of Tarwater, we infer, was once an important center for agriculture, lumber, and tar production in the Southeast, thriving amidst the landscape of pine trees planted by the town's residents. Industry regulations introduced in the 1960s catapulted the city from prosperity to poverty. Its economic descent left it susceptible to a charismatic newcomer, whose promises of economic and spiritual salvation lead to the 1975 founding of the Church of Prophecy. Assumed to have a connection with the spirit of Mary Magdalene, the newcomer created a cultic fervor, projecting the saint's complicated and misogynistic history unto the women of the town. Embodying tensions in Christianity between sensuality and spirituality, Mary Magdalene has historically exemplified the well-known dichotomy of the Madonna and the whore. Her alleged proximity to carnality made her the representative of temptation and sin, and yet her unquestioned acceptance by Christ gives hope for redemption and salvation. Against this backdrop, and in the span of just six months, three young girls were raped and murdered in the very woods from whose lumber their church was built. Integral to Brock's installation, pine is the literal support for Brock's "investigation" into the town's violent transformation.

Brock's bricolage of prose and ephemera are the transformed residue of the artist's chance meetings with individual figures subsequently reimagined in the guise of Tarwater's residents. Approaching her fieldwork this way, Brock establishes a generative connection between her method and content: her vulnerability as a woman alone echoes the plight of the real and fantastical victims embedded in *Soliloquy's* narrative. Indeed, a sense of threat pervades the installation – each potentially-revealing snippet beckoning the viewer to investigate the clues alongside the artist. Yet, Brock does not suggest a suspect; instead each character portrait paints the image of a town transfigured by poverty, tragedy, and religious tension. The oppressive Georgia heat pulses through each photograph; and the trees and kudzu encroach upon the dilapidated buildings like natural predators, which likewise elude capture while advancing in plain sight.



Rosie Brock
Soliloquy, 1993

photographs, ephemera, salvaged wood from the Church of the Prophecy structure, dimensions variable



Rosie Brock
Soliloquy, 1993
photographs, ephemera, salvaged wood from the Church of the Prophecy structure, dimensions variable



Luka Carter
What the Hell Happened to You, Sweetheart?, detail, 2022
glazed ceramic, vinyl pool, steel, enamel paint,
colored pencil, wood, chalk, Gatorade, photo courtesy of Kevin Bond

LUKA CARTER

Luka Carter's ceramic fountain, *Big Boy*, is, despite the rigid finality of its material, an ode to incompleteness, fluctuation, and origins. In many ways, *Big Boy*, which is ornately decorated with all manner of marks and blobby appendages, is explicitly biographical. In a technique Carter calls sgraffiti, the artist conjoins a style developed within the artist's tattooing practice with the traditional ceramic technique of sgraffito, in which a layer of white clay slip coating the main body of the sculpture has been etched through to reveal scenes from a youth spent exploring the streets of Los Angeles. The sculptural fountain sits at the center of an octagonal pool whose plywood paneled sides conjure the landscape of an urban construction site tagged by graffiti, even as the attached ceramic rings recall windows on the sea-rocked boat Carter once called home. In its pool of splashing water, the sgraffiti-covered *Big Boy* is aptly named, rising taller and more erect than the average man; it is, unavoidably, an enormous phallus. However, this symbol of masculinity and stable masculine bodies, in Carter's hands, becomes an expression of amorphous lives, bodies in transition, and masculinity in a state of becoming.

Rather than water, *Big Boy* is filled by fluorescent yellow-green Gatorade, the sugary, electrolyte sports drink, that, in this context, evokes both urine and radioactivity. Carter's fountain engages with histories of fountains as sites for public hydration, bodily cleansing, and illicit sexual encounters, but in that vein, the wealth of ideas *Big Boy* elicits are purposely irreconcilable and at times discomfiting. Immediately, these include a beverage as well as its excretion, and a substance purporting to energize or fuel the body in association with one whose own energy threatens to agitate bodies into unpredictable growth and mutation. The fountain's four protruding appendages, each topped by a childish but grotesque, candy-hued monster spurting acerbic-sweet fluid from its sculpted mouth, nod to figures in sculptural groups streaming water through pursed lips in classically styled marble fountains. On the one hand, these gargoylesque figures appear like strange sock puppets, one fish-like with a red ring for lips and another baring sharp teeth with eyes askew. But the torso these arms erupt from is, of course, not a torso at all, but instead the base of the fountain's large, phallic central figure. Its baby-boy blue cap is quoted on the end of each arm where the domes' color and modeling smoothly transition into the body of each creature. *Big Boy* appears not only to reproduce itself, but to create new beings from its own body.

The playful elements of Carter's *Big Boy*, including, at its peak, facial features like an out-stretched tongue that might also be a slide and several orange handles echoing the rungs of a jungle gym, function most importantly as evocations of youthful open-endedness and creative play. While much of the sculpture's surface is abundantly covered by discontinuous elements from Carter's own youth – four tarot cards are also illustrated in sgraffiti: the fool, the hanged man, the wheel of fortune, and the hermit – it succeeds in pointing to larger, evergreen themes like new beginnings, metamorphosis, fluidity, and self-reflection. *Big Boy* denies completeness as a virtue or fact, instead celebrating a childlike sense of possibility and relishing bodies, lives, and materials that are not yet completely what they will (or may never) become.

AUDREY MARTINICH



Luka Carter
Postmodern Transgender Circular Experience, detail, 2022
glazed ceramic, wood, risograph prints, dimensions variable



Luka Carter
What the Hell Happened to You, Sweetheart?, detail, 2022
glazed ceramic, vinyl pool, steel, enamel paint,
colored pencil, wood, chalk, Gatorade, photo courtesy of Kevin Bond
dimensions variable



Casey Connolly
The World Will Be Made Anew, 2021
acrylic, oil, paper, vinyl, foil on panel, photo courtesy of the artist
30 x 24"

CASEY CONNELLY

Imagine walking into a shopping mall, your eyes adjusting to the fluorescent lights and your feet scuffing the white polished floor, as you shuffle along the promenade, gazing up at the bright pink, baby blue, and yellow neon signs and window displays filled with pedestals, mannequins, and various goods: gold chains, pet snakes, and t-shirts with slogans like “Free Hugs.” Eventually, you arrive at the mall’s core, the central meeting place known in every state as “the food court.” Raised above the tables, on the periphery, stand synthetic, shiny, and electric green plants. The echoing murmuring and laughing of gratified customers serves as a soundtrack as you examine the open, domed space – at once familiar and strange – a deeply American realm of chaos, order, and consumerism. You could be in New Jersey, Colorado, or Texas; the food court, like the airport, is a kind of no-place; neither a destination nor point of origin, but a place to pass through.

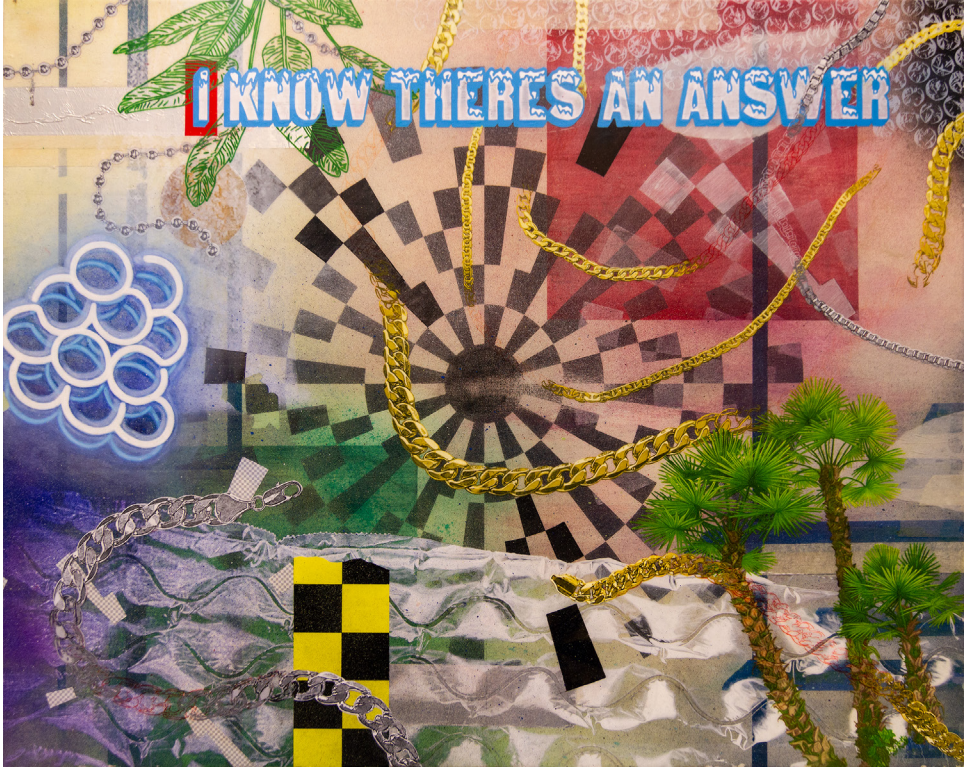
Casey Connelly’s four paintings, *The World Will Be Made Anew*, *An End To Suffering*, *I Know There’s An Answer*, and *Cast Off Your Burdens*, engage this layered and artificial existence, this every-place, and also react to this “established” yet un-natural world. Connelly embeds textual mantras in all four paintings, leaving the viewer to consider whether they are heartfelt, optimistic expressions or self-help slogans sardonically reprised. All four paintings also contain a grid-like, geometric pattern at their centers. Resembling a bullseye or dartboard, they effectively draw the eye toward the middle of the canvas and to the plane that lies beneath the works’ many synthetic and artificial symbols. These geometric patterns “transmit” information through their repetitive and uniform arrangements and combat the layered artificiality present on the surface of the canvas. Each grid interrupts the decay of our capitalist society, present in the neon lights, bubble wrap, and synthetic plants, through consistent and reoccurring patterns.

Connelly’s paintings employ media from his contemporary consumer environment; detergent-modified paint oil, acrylics, and dozens of other polymer-based media and films convey the contradictions of the digital and analog. *The World Will Be Made Anew* incorporates motifs suggestive of the four elements: fire, depicted through the lighter and flames on the left side of the canvas; wind, referenced through the atmospheric effects of the billowing flames; water, present in the droplets emerging from the upper left side of the canvas; and earth, portrayed through the presence of a horizon line on a neon sign. Furthermore, the painting references Adam and Eve through the presence of a multicolored snake and half-bitten neon apples, both of which suggest our lost connection to nature and God. References to contemporary American culture – neon lights, the plastic, bubble wrap, and gold chains – link our simulated, synthetic, present to a mythic past, both of which are marked by desire and consumption, whether for the apple and the knowledge it promised or for the narcotic pleasure of consumption as such.

ALAINE LAMBERTSON



Casey Connelly
Cast Off Your Burdens, 2022
acrylic, oil, vinyl, foil on panel, photo courtesy of the artist
37 x 29.5"



Casey Connelly
I Know There's An Answer, 2021
acrylic, oil, paper, vinyl, foil on panel, photo courtesy of the artist
30 x 24"



Victoria Dugger
It Ain't That Deep, 2021
gouache, sequins, glitter on panel
36 x 52"

VICTORIA DUGGER

Normality and othering, visibility and invisibility, abundance and atrophy: these are the themes and dialectics that underwrite Victoria Dugger's pictorial investigation of her experience as a disabled Black woman. Grounded in the myth of Narcissus, itself a meditation on identity and difference, Dugger's painting *It Ain't That Deep* centers around the trope of (self) reflection. The top half of the painting is occupied by a figure with red nails and a necklace of white flowers, who calls the viewer's attention downward by gazing with her right eye at her counterpart below. Evocations of night in the work's upper half – namely, stars and the deeper tones of the patterned background – are countered by the lighter plaid and fluffy clouds below. The figure who occupies the painting's bottom portion has teal nails and a necklace of yellow flowers, imperfectly mirrored by the fenced-in, fecund, and vaginal pool that bisects the composition and occupies its center. But which figure is flesh and blood, and which is merely an image? The viewer cannot say; moreover, it is unclear which is truer to reality.

If these problematics seem universal in scope, Dugger's works nevertheless emphasize marginalized identities, evincing nostalgia for Black girlhood in particular. Her playful works draw upon cartoon imagery and incorporate materials such as hair, beads, pearls, sequins, and holographic film. For example, in *Out of the Woodwork*, the central figure has cartoonishly large eyes and a gloved left hand that recalls Mickey Mouse. This hand holds three simplified flowers above the figure's genitalia, playing upon the art-historical tradition of blooming flora representing womanhood and fertility. The title likewise suggests a becoming: at once woman and girl, the figure, who sits on a hardwood floor, prominently displays her femininity and stretches out in the foreground of the composition, asserting dominance and demanding recognition. Yet, as noted, the painting clings to the symbols and pleasures of childhood. At the same time, Dugger's interest in disability can be seen in the central figure, whose right leg melts into the pattern of the floor and undermines the boundaries of the emergent body.

Nylon soft sculptures of arms and a chicken decorate the surface of *Black Magic* and similarly suggest a preoccupation with childhood and identity. However, the painting's playful appliqué forms subvert the violence of the work's subjects – not only Voodoo, but also the clichéd stereotype of Black people's appetite for chicken. The red, upright crest of implied feathers on the head of the dead chicken parallels the manicured fingers of the hands, visually tying the Black figure to its meal. At the same time, the gloved arms suggest an intimate point of view, inviting the viewer to assume a seat at the table and to see the world from the artist's point of view. On the plate before the viewer, an unknown speaker demands, "EAT ME," alongside bloody bones and a button, implicating both human and inhuman bodies and juxtaposing decadence with decay. Dugger calls attention to the deterioration of muscle through the swollen and stiff forms of the soft sculpture and depicts the inner workings of the body through the chicken's exposed viscera.

The ideas that pervade Dugger's artistic practice are related to the superabundance of her surfaces, reflecting the complexity of selfhood tied up in one's bodily form. Although disarmingly cute, her work is simultaneously confrontational, punctuated by racist clichés and outward facing stares. In this way, Dugger asserts that the female, Black, disabled body is not something to infantilize or overlook. Rather, Dugger insists that we acknowledge her presence and take a seat at her table.

LACY HAMILTON



Victoria Dugger
Out of the Woodwork, 2022
velvet, synthetic hair, gouache on panel
36 x 48"



Victoria Dugger
Black Magic, 2022
gouache and synthetic hair on panel
24 x 36"



Isys Hennigar
Moments Between Dog and Wolf, 2022
glazed porcelain, china paint, ceramic decals, gold luster, bronze, copper, photo courtesy of artist
21 x 11 x 18"

ISYS HENNIGAR

Perhaps a bird calls out from its perch, or a flower petal crosses your face with the help of a gust of wind. These things are concrete evidence: nature is the substrate of our world. In her ceramics and large-scale tapestry, Isys Hennigar attends to this essential fact, exploring, as does ancient myth, the human connection with nature and other inhuman forms of life. By exploring these links in her works, she hopes to “keep the world large, mysterious, uncertain and entangled.”

Hennigar’s contribution to the present exhibition consists of three ceramic works and an embroidered tapestry that is divided across two framed panels. As a material, ceramics emphasizes the constant change in the natural world reflected in the transformation of clay, as it was held, shaped, and molded by Hennigar. At once fragile and strong, delicate and malleable, clay echoes the complexities and contradictions of the living systems referenced by Hennigar in her work, so often adorned with painted images of plants and animals. Additionally, the artist’s ceramic forms – which make oblique and at times contradictory references to aspects of the natural kingdom – fail to resolve and instead retain a provocative ambiguity.

In works like *Moments Between Dog and Wolf* or *Sap Rising*, three-dimensional shapes are connected to one another by metal links, representing the bonds between things within a single, mutually sustaining ecosystem. Likewise, Hennigar’s two-dimensional work, *Mirror Images in Rot and Renewal*, is a reflection of the natural world. In these large-scale tapestries, Hennigar carefully stitched together the scenes of life that support our planet, from the sky to the streams. Various flowers and plants surround the borders of the image. Butterflies float among the tapestry, and a bird’s nest shows baby birds anxiously awaiting food from their mother. Shells are scattered across the bottom as if they were sitting on the beach or snails almost stuck in their slow movement. In addition, Hennigar has incorporated ceramic pieces, sewn into the threads, to give the tapestries a three-dimensional effect representing the multi-layered web of life and to further connect them to each other and other works in the exhibition. For despite spanning two large textiles, the scenes still flow together seamlessly, a testament to living systems that continue to exist with each other, despite the obstacles that may stand between them.

Hennigar has described her creative process as “improvisational” and notes that the mediums of textiles and ceramics serve as “mediators for negotiating our relationships with other species.” Fit to explore these connections, Hennigar’s shaped and molded works aspire to reflect, and in some small way restore, the complexity of various ecosystems on the planet.

MELISSA DEPIERRO



Isys Hennigar
Sap Rising, 2021
glazed stoneware, china paint, ceramic decals, platinum luster, copper
30 x 9 x 11"



Isys Hennigar
Like Milk from a Stone, 2021
glazed stoneware, china paint, ceramic decals, gold luster, copper
30 x 10 x 13"



Matthew Torchiana Hoban
Stuck in the Sill, detail, 2022
found box, found paper, pencil, pen, marker, photography, etching, photolithography, ceramic, acrylic
paint, modeling clay, corduroy, found fabric, paint rag, compass, brass chain, wood, dimensions variable

MATTHEW TORCHIANA HOBAN

Combining intentional meditation with automatic drawing techniques, Matthew Torchiana Hoban's practice traces the twisting avenues of memory as it shifts, dissolves, and becomes fossilized over time. In a series of monochrome drawings that includes *The Cling to the Hollow*, *In a State of Becoming*, and *Between*, Hoban breaks the traditional boundary between framed image and gallery wall through the use of frames that is unexpectedly and increasingly incomplete. These three drawings become progressively darker and their frames gradually more fragmented as the black border is traded for the live-edge shadow created by the work itself against the white wall. Like memory, the abstractions within the frame evolve into familiar shapes, shades, and depths that appear more cohesive from a distance; but as the viewer moves in for a closer look, they are swept into the overlapping, twisting, and elusive lines that converge and retract from one another.

For instance, *The Cling to the Hollow* is built upon a light underdrawing that becomes the unstable foundation for a mildly shaded pathway that leads into the chaos of movement and form. Hoban gradually illuminates certain lines, returning to various areas of the composition like the curvilinear shapes on the outskirts of the central passage. Soft impressions of graphite are layered underneath bolded moments of pen and marker that become shadows of recognizable shapes, mirroring the process of memory whereby experiences repeatedly returned to are infused with significance while others are allowed to fade away. Playing between positive and negative space, Hoban composes an organic score of recollection that, although based on personal meditation, allows viewers to follow their own patterns of memory through the diaphanous forms. The contrast between the blank space of the paper and the transitioning planes of the composition, created through the circumambulatory motion of the artist's hand and thought, invites the spectator to contemplate the spontaneous surfacing of memories and the condensed reels they create as unrelated moments are strung together and traced through the interrupted webbing.

Similar to the erosion between frame and drawing, Hoban's three-dimensional works make use of pedestals that function both as support for the elements that sit atop them and as sculptural elements inset with miniaturized, three-dimensional renderings of nondescript spaces like a living room, a front porch, and a fantastical cube of wallpapered windows and doors. The fragmentation of the installations requires viewers to engage not only sensorially with the amalgamation of objects at the top of the pedestal, but physically as viewers must lower themselves in order to explore the spaces below. In *Stuck in the Sill*, a found box is filled with a fragmented shingle roof, a handful of acorn tops, a vintage fabric layered under corduroy, a handmade book, the clay bricks of a wall, a blue window frame holding past etchings and aquatints, and a miniature automatic drawing with the artist's rag replacing one side of the frame. Below, one discovers a living room with a worn-leather couch of clay, a vintage fabric rug that matches the box above, and orange walls with a miniaturized photograph, and on the opposite side of the pedestal closest to the ground, a space filled with wallpapered doors and windows frames a compass. Hoban's packaging of the past underscores the way memories are continually recreated through repetition, collapsing the distance between past and present, myth and reality, time and space.

TARA KRAFT



Matthew Torchiana Hoban
installation view, 2022



Matthew Torchiana Hoban
The Pause and the Pull Back, 2021
found frame, wood, acrylic paint, tracing paper,
digital print on kozo paper, sand, twine

Matthew Torchiana Hoban
The Pause and the Pull Back, 2021
found frame, wood, acrylic paint, tracing paper, digital print on kozo paper, sand, twine, dimensions variable



Craig Howarth
Woven Catharsis, installation view, 2021
wool, pine, video performance, dimensions variable

CRAIG HOWARTH

What happens when the artist's studio and home are one and the same? *Woven Catharsis*, a body of recent work by Craig Howarth, serves as an answer to this question. Like so many, Howarth has been stuck at home the past couple of years, and his confinement in turn became an impetus to make four wool blankets on a loom roughly 35" square, similar in geometric form to Navajo saddle blankets, all while sitting at home. Presented in four wooden boxes, these woven pieces create an individualized experience while also referencing a collective one. Made using a small loom, Howarth wove these pieces with mutely colored wool yarn to create a larger blanket stitched together by hand. These works are thus artistic while also functioning meditatively as a form of communication between him and important figures in his life like his parents. He asks, "How does craft aid in working through mental health and trauma?" The constant throw of the shuttlecock and the pushing of the loom are a form of therapy: neither tapestry, nor diary, nor conventional blanket, Howarth has made something inbetween.

A catharsis is a release from something, a complete breakthrough. Hence, there is something contradictory in Howarth's method and title. Calling his works *Woven Catharsis*, Howarth complicates a process that weaves materials together and uses it to break apart and release personal emotion. Put simply, these works are about materiality and how weaving creates a space to let go.

Presented in individualized wooden boxes, Howarth's woven works can only be seen when the wooden boxes are slid open by the viewer. Craig thus invites viewers to interact with his work, touch it, and create a relationship with the work. One can follow the rows with one's fingers and feel the mark of the artist's hands as it informed the surface. In addition, Howarth exhibits his boxes with a video in which the boxes appear and are used by the artist. One sees the artist open and close the boxes, folding and unfolding his blankets, as his dog, Jax, stands by. There is something profoundly intimate and equally meditative about watching the video – a single figure with his dog and work. Craig has referred to his wool blankets as "love letters," something coming from a deep place and where words cannot be formed or expressed. Letters in general are an integral part of Howarth's practice to tease out his own human connections. Like opening an envelope, the sliding open of the wooden box reveals visual, non-verbal writings. *Woven Catharsis* is a work of labor, love, and repair.

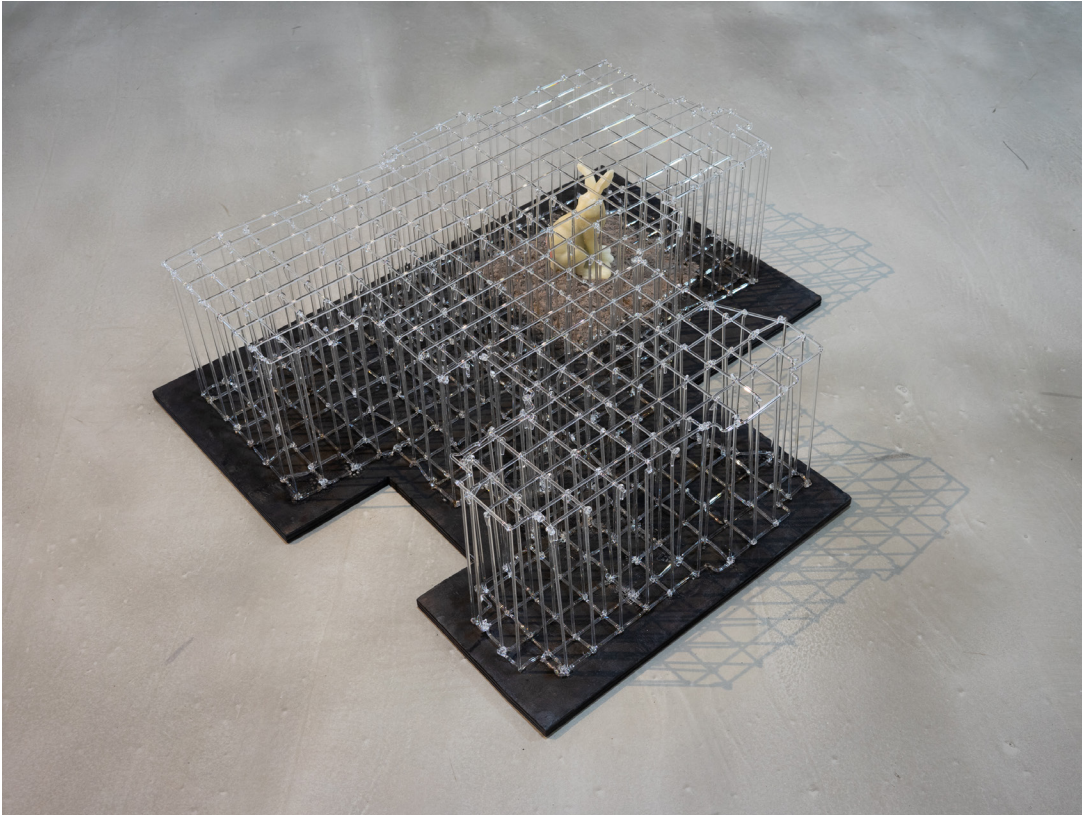
JAIME CIERA HARTMAN



Craig Howarth
Woven Catharsis, detail, 2021
wool, pine, video performance



Craig Howarth
Woven Catharsis, detail, 2021
wool, pine, video performance



Forrest Lawson
Bare Hare/Hairy Bear, 2022
borosilicate glass, wax, wood, soil, acrylic, blood rubber, O-ring
36 x 42 x 14"

FORREST LAWSON

In his sculptural practice, Forrest Lawson uses blood, the body, and lived experience – both personal and communal – to dissect the complexities of homophobia. His carefully researched and curated installations expose the psychological trauma caused by discriminatory language, actions, and environments weaponized against the Queer community. Referencing abuse, neglect, and rejection, Lawson calls attention to the ways in which heterosupremic messages can result in a divisive, destructive cycle of self-denial. In his most recent collection of sculptures, *The Sissy Boy and Heterosupremacy*, Lawson traces these conceptual interests to a personal origin point, a childhood home. Placed on the floor beneath the eye of the viewer, the replicated, dollhouse-scale structures and floorplans reference his personal experience with abuse as well as the false ideology of “home sweet home.”

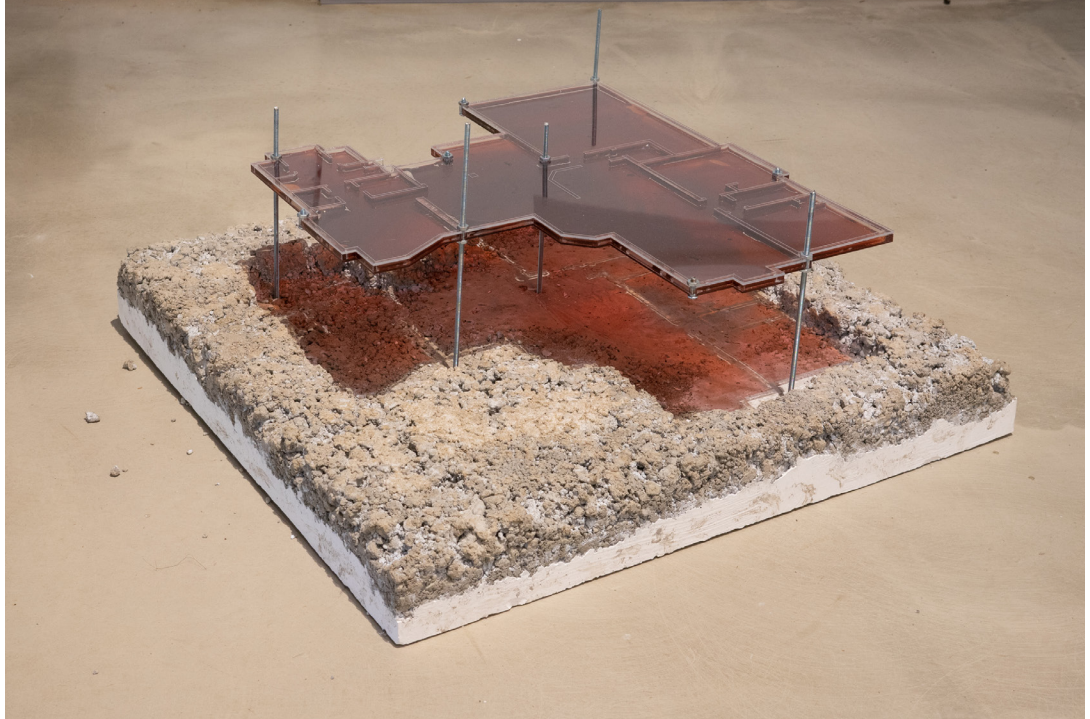
The skeletal structure of *Bare Hare/Hairy Bear* cages a blood-filled, beeswax hare with bright pink buttocks within a delicate architectural frame of glass cylinders. Drawing from a first century monk’s equation of homosexual males with rabbits, the house’s fragile appearance, combined with the adjacent, clear acrylic box stuffed with a harness made of rubber and blood, highlights the entrapment caused by cultural norms that are projected and perceived as solid barriers. The active compression of Queer desire in *Bare Hare/Hairy Bear* is amplified in *Johnson*, a solid beeswax model of the home. Using this fleshy material to conjure the body, a reference underscored by its use for the figure of the rabbit, *Johnson* is simultaneously a testament to life and evocative of a tomb, its opaque walls alluding to hidden aspects of the self that are divulged in the other, adjacent iterations of the home. *Sausage Fest*, for example, is a three-dimensional, clear acrylic model of the house that has been stuffed with pellucid cow intestines that occupy the structure and lend it meaning. As close looking reveals, the innards are stuffed with printed thumbnails of gay pornography, which they simultaneously expose and conceal. Combining desire and the abject, the hidden photographs, just barely visible through the weft of intestinal track, weave a complex narrative derived from memories that center on the suppression of one’s identity – an identity flushed into the house’s bowels to maintain secrecy and safety.

Referencing Judges 9:45, in which salt was sown on the battlefield to ensure that the land remained barren, *Salted Earth*, an acrylic blueprint of the house suspended on metal rods over a ground made of plaster, cement, and salt, forms a veiled portrait of Queer identity within an abusive home. The artist’s blood is congealed between low-relief acrylic layers, and the vulnerable mediums cast a shadow of the diagram onto the “salted earth” below it. The stratified components conceptualize the external and internal warzones of self and acceptance, projecting the effects of childhood abuse onto the space in which they occurred. Lawson’s conflation of house and battlefield challenges ideas of refuge and exposure, calling into question the contrasting associations of safety and secrecy with home. Yet, Lawson’s work betrays resiliency, for as viewers progress around and through the buildings, Lawson’s models therapeutically guide them through not only the artist’s architecture of self but through their own ideological restructuring.

TARA KRAFT



Forrest Lawson
Johnson, 2022
beeswax
36 x 42 x 16"



Forrest Lawson
Salted Earth, 2021
acrylic, Queer blood, concrete, plaster, salt, steel
18 x 18 x 14"



Annie Simpson
nothing is known but impenetrable surfaces, 2022
three-channel video with surround sound, photo courtesy of the artist
7 minutes

ANNIE SIMPSON

Annie Simpson's multidisciplinary practice explores cultural markers and landscapes that have the capacity to complicate our understanding of the American South. Her projects, which consider the relationship between people, history, and the current geological age, often take a site-based approach.

Part video essay, part travel documentary, *nothing is known but impenetrable surfaces* (2021-22), gives us a glimpse onto the Salmon and Sterling Sites – the only place east of the Rockies where the United States Government has detonated nuclear bombs. Filmed on location by the artist, the work chronicles a road trip that weaves between Alabama and Mississippi, all the while looking for a companion's ancestral cemetery and the location of the experiment.

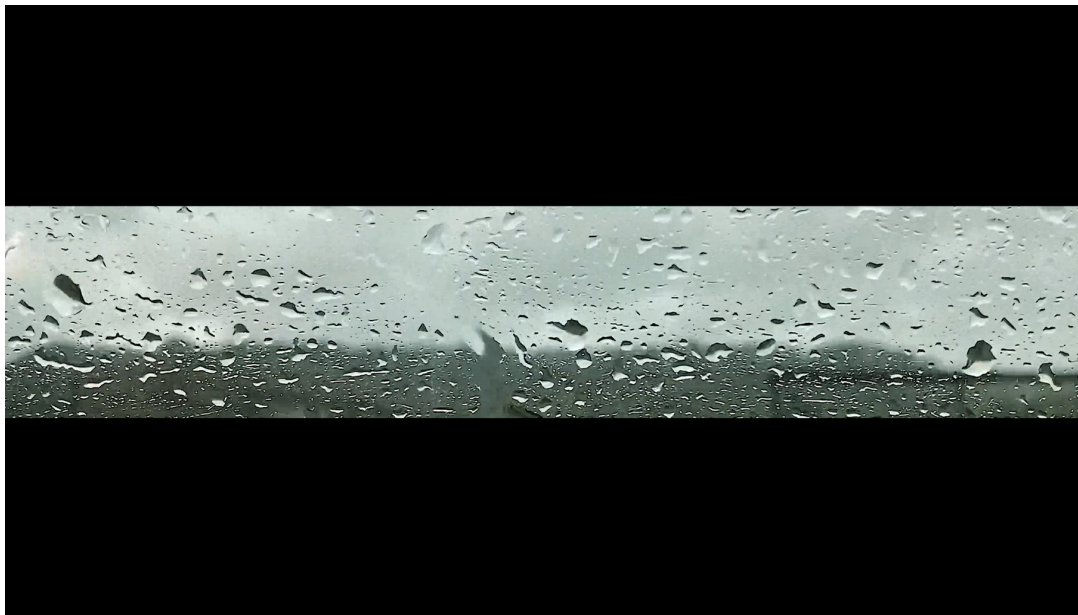
Projected onto the wall in three separate but adjacent frames, the video oscillates between tracking shots of the highway and the plaque found at the monument that marks the nuclear site. In so doing, it engages the legacy of nuclear experimentation – a lasting contribution of the Anthropocene, the geological age marked by humans' impact on the climate and environment. The radioactive material from the nuclear detonation, now entombed about a mile below ground, will outlive hundreds if not thousands of generations and will remain permanently scorched in the earth. And yet, because the bombs were detonated underground, the site is marked but not seen. Hence, Simpson shows what is evident: a cultural marker or monument, that is itself pocked with bullet holes made by hunters. Throughout the video, however, even the monument remains elusive, shown only in fragmented shots that are littered throughout the seven-minute loop. In a departure from the film's images of highway and forested ground, a blank, computer-generated monument floats, covered in a flowing cloth and yet entirely translucent. A striking contrast to recurring footage of Simpson rubbing graphite on paper placed atop the monument's marker, the video documents, visually and verbally, Simpson's attempt to capture and process its message. Simpson recites the plaque's admonition, stumbling through its governmental jargon: "No excavation, drilling, and/or removal of materials is permitted."

Field recordings, the ambient sounds of a car driving, and the faint murmur of conversation accompany footage of powerlines and clouds that at times resemble explosions. When this footage aligns across all three frames, it creates the illusion of moving through space, thanks to a wider field of view that invites us along for the expedition. As one travels with Simpson down the path, a summer storm begins and raindrops fall onto the car's window, obfuscating the terrain and returning us to the window's "impenetrable surface." Through the trickling sounds of rain, a site guide contracted by the government patriotically recalls the area as it was before the site of a nuclear experiment and reflects upon the day the bomb went off. The video is littered with looping clips of the road that place viewers in a liminal space, neither here nor there, atop a surface they cannot traverse.

FRANCESCA FELICELLA



Annie Simpson
nothing is known but impenetrable surfaces, 2022
three-channel video with surround sound, photo courtesy of the artist
7 minutes



Annie Simpson
nothing is known but impenetrable surfaces, 2022
three-channel video with surround sound, photo courtesy of the artist
7 minutes





ARTIST BIOS



Rosie Brock is a photographer and writer based in Athens, Georgia. Brock's work is influenced by her lineage and ancestral stories in the context of the American South. She earned her MFA in studio art at the Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia in 2022 and holds a BFA in Photography and Video from the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Her work has been published by *Oxford American*, *Photo District News*, and *The New York Times*.



Luka Carter is an interdisciplinary artist who lived on a boat for three years in Rockaway Beach, New York, a trailer in Bolinas, California, and plenty of places in between. The friends and community that he finds in each of these places has allowed for a strong, beautiful network of friendship and artistic collaboration, similar to what futurists might call tentacularity. His practice spans zines, furniture, tattoos, ceramics, and installations.



Lulu Carter is a companion animal temporarily based in Athens, Georgia. Her work, which oscillates between circumlocution and stasis, investigates human consumption and waste via olfactory means. She received an honorary MFA degree from UGA in 2022.



Casey Connelly is a multidisciplinary artist from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Prior to earning his MFA at the University of Georgia, he received his BA in studio art from the University of Pittsburgh. His work, which has been exhibited throughout the United States, is an extended meditation on the absurdity and disconnection of contemporary existence. Within a variety of media, including paint, print, photo, sculpture, and installation, he tracks the creeping capture of all aspects of human experience by soulless business ontology and market logic.



Victoria Dugger was born in Columbus, Georgia. She attended Columbus State University, where she received her BFA in Drawing and Painting. She earned her MFA in studio art at the Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia in 2022. Her work has been featured in *New American Paintings* [South Edition], *Burnaway*, and *Flagpole*, as well as various other publications. In June 2021 she had her New York debut solo show *Out of Body* at Sargent's Daughters gallery. She is represented by Sargent's Daughters gallery in New York.



Isys Hennigar's work in ceramics and metal considers the complex ways in which humans engage other species through stories. Hennigar received her BFA from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Her work has been exhibited at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Lump Gallery, and the Hambidge Center, and she was named one of *Ceramics Monthly's* 2021 Emerging Artists.



Matthew Torchiana Hoban, originally drawn to the arts as a musician, ultimately received a BFA in visual arts at the Tyler School of Art in Philadelphia, where he focused on printmaking but also developed work in sound, sculpture, and ceramics. While pursuing his MFA at the University of Georgia, his interdisciplinary practice grew to include stop-motion animation, book arts, and assemblage. He has exhibited work throughout the East Coast, in galleries in New York, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.



Craig Howarth is an artist and maker from Northern California. With a background in sculpture, jewelry, and small metals, craft is at the core of his artistic process.



Forrest Lawson draws on the history of blood, as is tied to Queer identity, from the AIDS crisis through present uses of socio-political tools that continue to relegate Queerness. As an interdisciplinary artist, he draws from Queer and feminist theory to inform sculpture, print, and book arts that align with activist and liberatory practices. He was awarded the Grand Prize of ArtFields in 2019 and has continued to exhibit and attend residencies both nationally and internationally.



Annie Simpson is an artist working via sight-/site-based investigation to make videos, photographs, and essays. Her practice, rooted in paradigmatic shifts in spatial perspective and nested orientations of scale, often considers landscapes which complicate an understanding of the American "South" as a territory. She holds an MFA from the University of Georgia (2022) and a BFA from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (2019). As of fall 2023, she will be a doctoral student at Harvard University's Graduate School of Design and an ongoing contributor to Port Futures & Social Logistics.



Mandy Simpson is a companion animal temporarily based in Athens GA. Working in collaboration with Annie Simpson, her research in the field of performance art uses body modification and sense deprivation to explore the limits of companionship and sweetness. She received an honorary MFA degree from UGA in 2022.

CATALOGUE CONTRIBUTORS



Melissa DePierro is a first-year MA candidate in art history at the University of Georgia. She received her BA from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill with majors in art history and classical archaeology and a minor in anthropology. DePierro's research focuses on the animal motifs of mosaics from the late antique villa Piazza Armerina and their relation to one another while moving through the villa. She also currently serves as an intern at the Georgia Museum of Art in the registrar department.



Francesca Felicella is a second-year MA candidate who studies modern and contemporary art with a focus on photography, video, film, performance, and dance. Her research interests include artistic labor, artists' use of emerging and experimental media in the twentieth century, and ephemera. Previously, Felicella worked at the Georgia Museum of Art, Norton Museum of Art, Snap! Orlando, UCF Art Gallery, and UCF Archives and Special Collections. She completed her BA in art history with honors at the University of Central Florida in 2019 and recently completed her master's thesis on the holographic works of Simone Forti.



Lacy Hamilton is a second-year MA candidate in art history, specializing in twentieth century modernisms with a focus in American modernism. Her current research interests include the relationship between dance, music, and the early urge to abstraction, as well as archival preservation of materials of various documentary forms, including photographs, ephemera, and oral history recordings. She completed her BA in art history at the University of Georgia in 2020 and is currently an archival processing assistant at the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies.



Jaime Ciera Hartman is a first-year MA candidate studying modern art with a focus in early-twentieth century avant-garde in Italy and Eastern Europe. She graduated summa cum laude from Goucher College in Baltimore, Maryland, receiving a BA in art history with honors and a minor in literature. Her MA thesis focuses on the works and writings of Karel Teige (1900-51) and his involvement in the European avant-garde during the 1920s and '30s. Hartman's research interests in book and print culture, ephemera, the modernist canon, and politics are intertwined with her experiences both in and outside of the classroom.



Tara Kraft is a second-year MA candidate studying art history. Her master's thesis explored the verbal and visual intersections between Leonora Carrington's "La Dame Ovale" short story and painting, examining themes of migration, foreignness, and the fluidity of portraiture. She is excited to be continuing her education at UGA, pursuing a PhD in art history beginning summer 2022. Her research interests are centered on the Surrealists' adaptation and appropriation of the detective genre during the 1920s and '30s.



Alaine Lambertson is an MA candidate focusing on late modern German and American art. She is particularly interested in international and cultural interactions and representations of dance, gender, race, class, and labor. Her thesis will focus on the bodily manifestations of grief post WWI through the lenses of art historical iconography, dance history, and gesture theory. She completed a Diplom, the German equivalent of a BFA, in dance at the Iwanson International School of Contemporary Dance in Munich, Germany in 2019, studied art history at the University of Pittsburgh, and graduated summa cum laude from West Virginia University in 2021.



Audrey Martinich is a second-year art history MA candidate studying contemporary art with a focus on new media, installation, photography, and video. Her current art-historical interests include distinctions between high and low art, spectator experience, and art concerned with the role of images and image-making in society.



Megan Neely is a PhD candidate at the University of Georgia. She earned her BA in 2012 in art history with a minor in classical and medieval studies. She continued on to her Master's at UGA, with a particular focus on Renaissance and Baroque art. Her thesis addressed issues of political gift giving, mythology, and artistic copies in the art of Federico Barocci. Currently at UGA, Neely's doctoral research addresses the intersections between artistic identity, poetry, and mythological punishment in sixteenth-century Venetian art.

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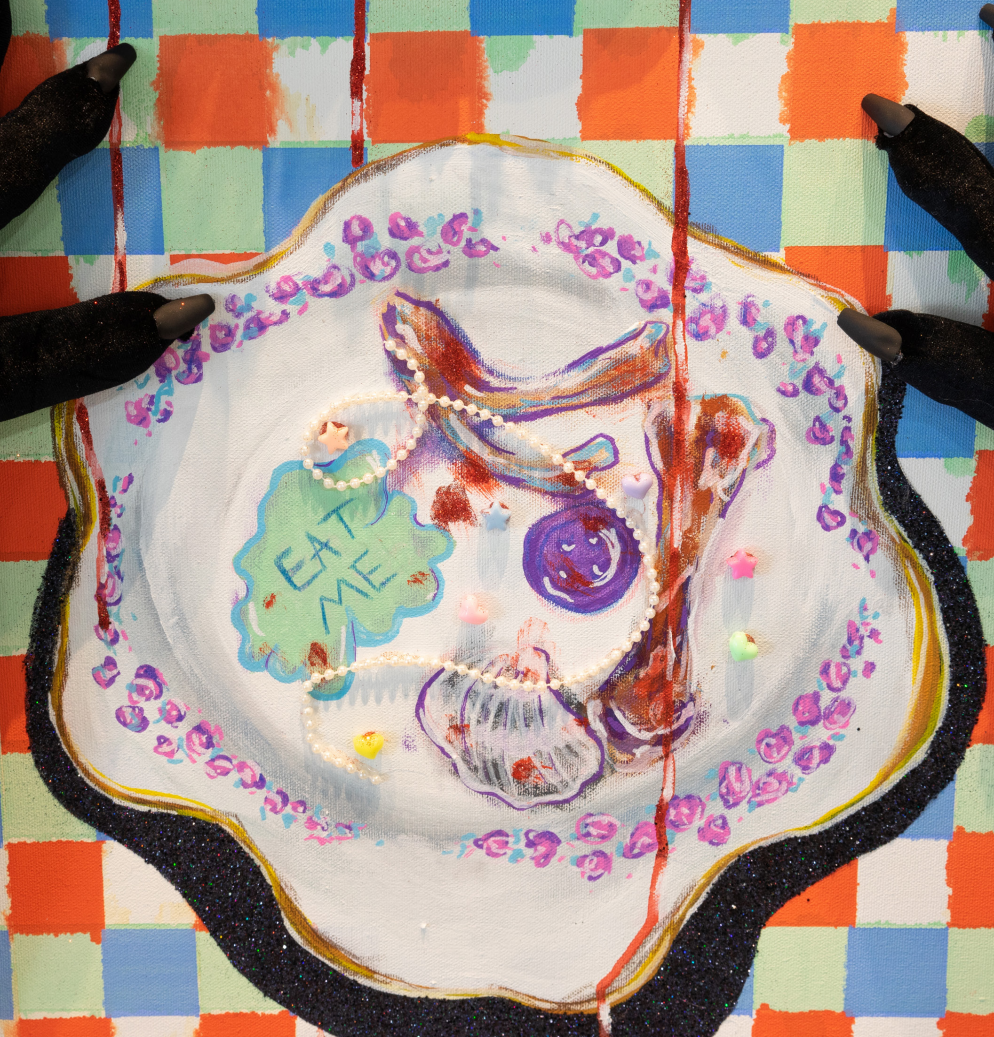
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Victoria Dugger
Out of the Woodwork, detail, 2022
velvet, synthetic hair, gouache on panel
36 x 48"