

Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition UAlbany 2022

Sara Alonge
Alicia Barton
Juliana Haliti
Maddie Hinrichs
Tara Holmes
Minling Lin
H.C. Tiffany Lo
Jeanna Mead
Dani Ruf

University
Art Museum
04/26 – 05/15

Sara Alonge

Stemming from a tumultuous relationship with the idea of home, my work engages with my life’s ceaseless repetition of displacement, absence, and instability. I dig to collect the earth of various places I have lived, and within these samplings my blood, spit, hair, and nails are mixed to finally create a lasting physical bond with the land. These materials are turned into temporary floor drawings and faulty mud bricks.

A transition between inhabitants speaks to the marks that we leave behind, as our bodies communicate with the spaces that we occupy. My photographs depict patterns of previous residents: drawers askew, walls that hold trace outlines, and doors that show surface trauma. My focus on impermanence has prompted an interest in the imprint of items that no longer remain: an elegiac description of remembrance.

Alicia Barton

Through a repetitive and intuitive process, I create visceral, ambiguous sculptures. I am influenced by a gothic aesthetic, creating work that contrasts the alluring and attractive with the repulsive and grotesque. A haunting sensation of familiarity shrouding the sculptures challenges what is known or unknown, living or decaying. My process forces me to surrender myself to materiality—as bulbous forms and cavernous areas emerge, I react and respond through building, stuffing, carving, and dripping. Miniature works allow for a greater sense of play, as I embellish the works with found and owned objects referring to my teenage self. Underneath the whimsical skins of these imposing “monsters,” an unnerving emotional weight is revealed which holds no absolutes. These forms serve as a mirror of my identity—exposing internalized anxieties and grief, then adorned by a candy-coated, luxurious shell.

Juliana Haliti

I grew up in a racist, homophobic, abusive, and controlling household in the era of mass consolidation of farming in America. The corporate overdevelopment of my hometown left me to surmise how the demand for animal-based products was being met all around me. Reflecting upon the blind faith of my childhood—my unknowing participation in racist and unethical capitalist systems—my paintings and collages draw on my overwhelming sense of culpability and guilt, as well as what caused me to challenge these systems.

My collages emerge from researching otherworldly visuals—the iconography of ecocide and oppression. My assemblages are products of this need to question and understand what these things look like and where I intersect with them. I collect objects like animal skin, bones, hair, fur, carcasses, and fragments of mechan-

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ical equipment, deliberately leaving my ethics in question, mirroring my own struggle of involvement and confusion. A parallel world emerges, revealing a safe space to question my complicity both past and present.

Maddie Hinrichs

The driving force of my interiors is memory, which fades over time and melds with dreams to create new spaces. I drift through once-familiar rooms as an outsider, appearing occasionally through reflections and silhouettes in self-portraits or larger panoramas. These new realms are realistic but disorienting and unsettling, jumping in time through architecture and historical references. The scale of my work varies to show both small, intimate moments and large, all-encompassing realms. Embroidery sits above the oil paint and creates a texture that is at once dimensional and flat. It leaps from wall to table to painting within one piece, finding a balance that endures in all my work: that of surrealism and realism, textile and paint, dreams and memory, old and new.

Tara Holmes

Through a mix of varying lens-based media, my work is centralized on the increasing commonalities in human gesture, demeanor, and response in relation to the heightening presence of the digital realm. My subjects are asked to reenact the physical interactions they experienced in activating technological conveniences. I explore these exchanges between humans and machines by photographing subjects peering into their resting screens, which act as portraiture, and thwarting the expectation of functionality by indefinitely prolonging the familiar loading icons and the viewers' time spent waiting. In my video of participants rotating their heads to a futuristic pulsing sound, I have removed the directive of a smartphone, leaving just the shared repetitive and unvaried motion, an almost cult-like performance required when activating Face ID. Each work exposes the similarities in behavioral practices seen around the globe, revealing the mechanical tasks, prompts, and responses asked of humans by machines.

Minling Lin

Making art is like meditation for me. I start making marks and associate those with an imagined object, such as a flower or a piece of fruit. From there, light, colors, and forms are conjured from memories, personal experiences, my cultural background, or my senses, inspiring me to paint a new world. My work emanates its own movement and vitality, rooted in energy and spiritual strength. Shapes and marks in my paintings represent the material world, or the macrocosm and microcosm. This process becomes a circular system for me to understand the spirit of universal connection and an opportunity for rebirth.

H.C. Tiffany Lo

I consider my work a kind of souvenir box, containing precious memories of my upbringing in Hong Kong. Having lived in America for more than a decade, my recollection of growing up in Hong Kong has become blurrier. My paintings are directly inspired by photographs of my hometown that I have taken or collected from friends and family. Influenced by my background in graphic design and architecture, I organize these photographs into categories depending on patterns that appear in homes, restaurant signs, product designs, buildings on the streets, or scenery by the water. When combined, these patterns form the basis of polychromatic game board-like paintings.

Jeanna Mead

I am trying to free myself from a blind faith in a firm “phallacy;” my work is a way of laughing through the struggle. From steel to silk, bricks to breast pumps, cement to sewing machines, I create video installations that bounce between craft and craftsmanship. I have brandished a needle and thread while sporting a welding helmet—flipped up, standing on my brow like some absurd, fire-resistant tiara. Printing, performing, painting, filming, animating, sculpting, making—I construct a land of clunking machinery and clacking heels. The worlds I produce exude the excess that is America and the multitasking nature of motherhood. They echo a media-driven society marinated in misogyny, porn, twisted body images, and rape culture. Through rage, shame, power, complicity, rebellion, and satire, I offer a safe, smiling point of entry into thorny topics, or a rally cry to battle.

Dani Ruf

I create my own world, transferring memories of my childhood home into theatrical sculptural installations. Crossing into fictional territories, they often reference horror and fantasy. I reconstruct rooms based on the items that most stand out, using a mixture of nostalgic objects, pieces of furniture, and their scaled-down recreations. Each vessel is consumed by a flooding, repetitive element unique to each space. I start from the idea that our rooms, and the items that reside within them, act as symbolic extensions of ourselves. My work is balanced by revealing and concealing personal information. These narratives target moments of overwhelming joy and fear, which appear either frozen in time or as the abandoned aftermath of an activity.



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Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition

April 26 – May 15, 2022

We are pleased to present the work of Master of Fine Arts degree candidates Sara Alonge, Alicia Barton, Juliana Haliti, Maddie Hinrichs, Tara Holmes, Minling Lin, H.C. Tiffany Lo, Jeanna Mead, and Dani Ruf for the 2022 Spring Semester. The 60-credit M.F.A. is the terminal degree in studio art. A tradition since 1983, the M.F.A. exhibition is an important way in which the University Art Museum and the Department of Art and Art History collaborate to enhance the academic environment at the University at Albany. The exhibition represents the culmination of these students' intensive training and study in studio art practices. It provides an opportunity for them to exhibit in a professional museum setting and to share their efforts with the academic community, alumni, and audiences of the Capital Region and beyond.

We are grateful to the Office of the President, the Office of the Provost, The University at Albany Foundation, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Ann C. Mataraso Endowment Fund, in honor of Professor Emeritus Mark Greenwold, for support of the exhibition and this publication.

Sarah R. Cohen

Chair, Department of Art and Art History

Corinna Ripps Schaming

Director/Chief Curator, University Art Museum

Image credits:

1. Sara Alonge, *Vagabonds*, 2021-2022, wooden doors, steel rods, SAE washers, acrylic paint, and wooden baseball bat, dimensions variable
2. Alicia Barton, *Mini Monsters*, 2021-2022, polyurethane foam, aqua resin, various found and owned objects, dimensions variable
3. Juliana Haliti, *They Lied to Me*, 2022, wood, paper, foam, rope, acetate, acrylic paint, lift shackle and strap, elephant hide, giraffe hide, and shark vertebrae, 66 x 48 x 8 inches
4. Maddie Hinrichs, *Self Portrait II*, 2021, oil on canvas, 24 x 21 inches
5. Tara Holmes, *Adit I*, 2021, archival pigment print, 24 x 36 inches
6. Minling Lin, *Mind River*, 2021, oil on canvas, 36 x 24 x 1 ½ inches
7. H.C. Tiffany Lo, *Vision (Series of 40)* (detail), 2022, acrylic on wood, 52 ½ x 133 ½ inches
8. Jeanna Mead, *Surrounded by Dicks*, 2022, installation (featuring a still from *Penis Envy (Surrounded by Dicks): The Catholic*, video, 2:28; color), dimensions variable
9. Dani Ruf, *Dollhouse I* (detail), 2022, mixed materials, dimensions variable