

**2025  
Master of Fine Arts  
Thesis Exhibition**

**Angelyn Chandler**

**Ally DeRusso**

**Sara Griffith**

**Avery Hartranft**

**Chad Lubertowicz**

**Hoorah Mirabzadeh**

**Richard Soto**

**Ruan Strydom**

**Kim Tateo**

**Christian Henry Wechgelaer**

**University Art Museum  
University at Albany**



## **2025 Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition**

April 30 – May 18, 2025

We are pleased to present the work of Master of Fine Arts degree candidates Angelyn Chandler, Ally DeRusso, Sara Griffith, Avery Hartranft, Chad Lubertowicz, Hoorah Mirabzadeh, Richard Soto, Ruan Strydom, Kim Tateo, and Christian Henry Wechgelaer for the 2025 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, the University at Albany Alumni Association, and the Ann C. Mataraso Endowment Fund, in honor of Professor Emeritus Mark Greenwold, for support of the exhibition and this publication.

Danny Goodwin

*Chair, Department of Art and Art History*

Corinna Ripps Schaming

*Director/Chief Curator, University Art Museum*



## Angelyn Chandler



My art practice draws from deep, prolonged engagement with specific sites. I source dance, performance, photography, sculpture, and drawing, as well as my background as a licensed architect. I often insert myself into my work to explore movement, scale, perception, maintenance, preservation, infrastructure, and gender in architecture, investigating aspects of our constructed environment that are often overlooked.

I have spent the past two years exploring the architecture of the UAlbany campus, designed by architect Edward Durell Stone in 1961–62, and built in 1961–71. The work in this exhibition is site-specific and a product of my physical, observational, and investigative explorations. I have both praise for and criticism of the campus design: it brings me joy in its dramatic sculptural qualities and frustration in its lack of concern for the user and the urban context. My work seeks to propose new meanings for this campus focused on the personal, ephemeral, and tactile aspects of its architecture.

Angelyn Chandler, *Site One: Untitled*, 2023, digital image, dimensions variable

## Ally DeRusso



Through printmaking, photography, and textiles, my work explores themes of domesticity, recollection, and memorialization. Mining my personal archive of images, I create quilt-like objects that encapsulate moments in time. My photographs are translated onto fabric using silkscreen, etching, and woodcut. With each printing process, the original photograph becomes fragmented, and information is lost—underscoring the malleability and fallibility of memory.

Influenced by traditions of vernacular photography, I adorn my works with floral surface patterns, using the flower as an allegory of life and mortality. Printing the photographs onto fabric enhances the image's ability to provoke remembrance through the presence of touch and the body. Each step of translating an image—layering, repeating, shifting to a larger scale—simultaneously erodes and commemorates the photograph's previous stage, mirroring the process of remembering.

Ally DeRusso, *Reach the Shore*, 2025, screenprint, digital print, etching, muslin, felt, 50 x 45 ½ inches

## Sara Griffith



How does the architecture of daily life shape how we understand ourselves? What does it reveal about who we are and who we might become? My work and research explore how architecture reinforces and reproduces social constructs and hierarchies. Through site-specific installations, I engage with the material language of institutional spaces—particularly public housing. This work examines the supposed neutrality of standardized building materials, placing one institutional space within another: a stage inside a stage. By destabilizing elements that appear fixed—drywall, vinyl baseboard, modular flooring—I ask what becomes possible when these structures are bent, loosened, and reconfigured. In this fluid state, space becomes both a reflection and a metaphor for the systems it upholds: provisional, adaptable, and open to reconfiguring.

Sara Griffith, *Staging Devices (Study for Reconfigurations)*, 2024, vinyl baseboard, steel rod, dimensions variable

## Avery Hartranft



Layering paper, canvas, pencil, and paint, I create a metaphorical parallel to building a home. Idiosyncratic details, patterns, and textures from objects found inside my current apartment are paired with simplified renderings of the space's overall architecture, providing a concrete structure. Home is a framework, an experience, a body, a sentiment—building on itself and shifting constantly.

Iterations of small-scale collages and large-scale installations provide vignettes of different rooms, holding an accumulation of experiences and memories. Transparencies—within material and subject matter—exist to invite others to see their space within my own. I leave other passages intentionally opaque, protecting the vulnerable nature of this refuge and sanctuary. It is in these relationships with material and concept that my work aims to visually define home as both a place and a feeling.

Avery Hartranft, *Velvet cushions, vintage orange...*, 2025, watercolor, gouache, colored pencil, handmade paper, cardstock, on watercolor paper, 12 ½ x 18 ½ inches



## Chad Lubertowicz

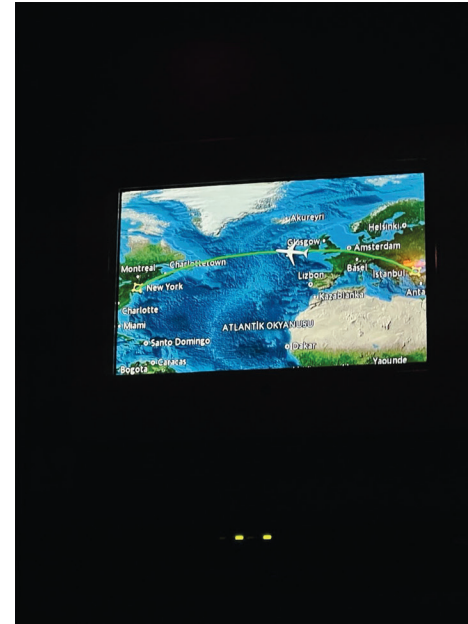


I make oil paintings that explore the moments of solitude that can occur in public spaces. Through a juxtaposition of realism and abstraction, I utilize multiple styles of mark-making and bright, saturated colors to capture quiet, individual rituals: people absorbed in their own inner worlds in liminal spaces like airports, subways, and train stations. The techniques and color palette are drawn from my desire to transform the everyday mundane into a scene that is dreamlike or otherworldly. Momentarily suspended in time, the scenes embody isolation and the deeply human act of waiting.

I work from photographs—both from my own archive and sourced from online databases—and my own experiences and memories. Through facial expressions, body language, imagined daydreams and public solitude, I use the encounter with these strangers as a lens to investigate my own inner world.

Chad Lubertowicz, *Exhaustion*, 2024, oil on canvas, 24 x 36 inches

## Hoora Mirabzadeh



August, 17, 2023  
Thursday, 18:58, in the plane  
Do you know how far Iran and the U.S.  
are apart?  
And how many countries and continents lie  
between us?  
oh! oh, that moment...!  
The worst moment, oh! The agony.  
when I opened my eyes, the plane had crossed  
the final land borders, and all the  
boundaries between me and all my belongings  
were now water.  
like a newborn whose umbilical cord is cut,  
signaling the death of her past world and  
the birth of a new one, and crying not to be  
served from her mother's being, I wept  
bitterly. I myself cut my umbilical cord,  
and the spiritual pain surrounded my entire  
body.

I am an Iranian woman artist whose entire being was transformed by the experience of migration. It turned me into both the protagonist and the narrator of my own story, not as a universal symbol but through the depth of lived experience. My narratives unfold through fragments of images, gestures, silences, and movements, born from a continuous negotiation between presence and absence, between “here” and what has been left behind.

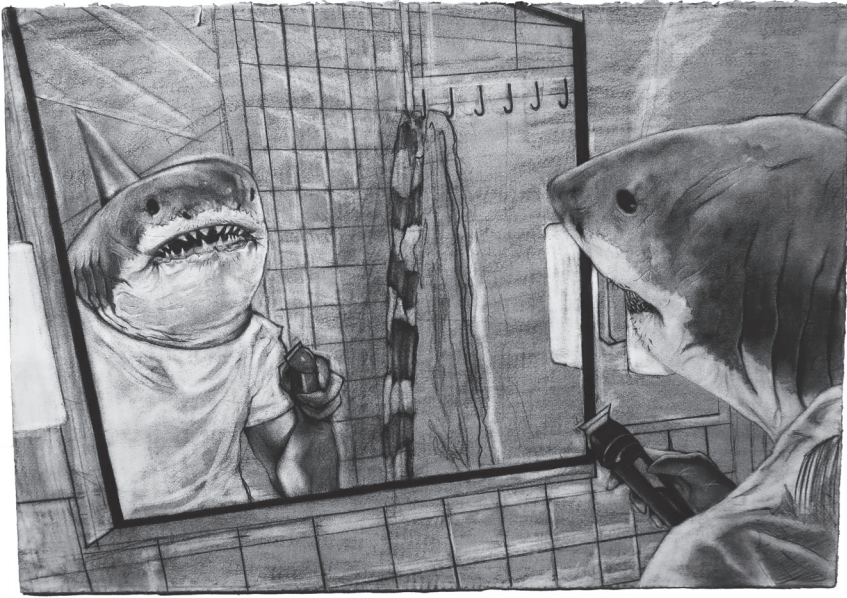
My work does not aim to document migration; instead, it attempts to embody it. I explore themes of identity, memory, and belonging. I move fluidly between photography, video, installation, and writing, not as separate choices, but as essential responses to the ruptures of displacement.

Together, these media reflect a fractured narrative, a story rooted in migration, separation, and the ongoing search for belonging.

Hoora Mirabzadeh, *The Weight of Miles* (detail), 2023–25, pigment print, dimensions variable



## Richard Soto



My work is an exploration of my experience being physically disabled, and the feeling of being judged based on my appearance. I translate these experiences into charcoal drawings of monsters in everyday situations, often in urban and domestic locations that reflect my childhood growing up in the Bronx. The scenes are inspired by film stills and comic panels capturing a single moment of a larger story. The charcoal mimics the grime and dirt of the city, while the monsters are often performing everyday tasks that are mundane and familiar. Their appearance creates dissonance—like a cyclops doing her mascara or a snail-headed human mopping a floor showing that she's not actually that different despite her appearance. The monsters are drawn in a range of styles that fall along the spectrum of realism. Details are sharp in some spots and out of focus in others as a way to emphasize the subject feeling out of place, mirroring my own experience in otherness.

Richard Soto, *Clip*, 2024, charcoal on paper, 17 x 22 inches

## Ruan Strydom



My artistic practice is rooted in material exploration, while frustrations—fixations on *failed* experiments—are what ultimately bloom into finalized sculptures. These sculptures are entangled with social-political issues ranging from toxic masculinity, mental health, identity, and the threat to bodily autonomy.

Primarily I use disobedient media, such as torn cardboard, thin cement, and sheets of plaster—materials that warp and corrupt any ambition or societal pressure for perfection and control. The uncertain act of destruction—by force or burning—similarly challenges these conventions and serves as a victimless outlet for the violent behaviors reinforced by toxic masculinity—the only “passing” way for me to respond to stress as a trans masculine person. The remnants then live on as evidence to the dangers of enabling these behaviors.

Conversely, my mechanical sculptures aim to cultivate a refuge: made from recycled paper products, these installations create a non-precious space where viewers are invited to recenter and soothe themselves.

Ruan Strydom, *Untitled (Take A Breath)*, 2024–25, cardboard, paper, cement, computer fan (blower), vinyl tubes, insulation foam, 96 x 96 x 96 inches



## Kim Tateo



I use my creative practice to externalize the complexity of internal emotional landscapes. The physical act of painting is a release, and various brushstrokes and layers show the record of my hand and emotions. I do not plan my paintings but let myself make the next move intuitively based on what I see in the paint, resulting in abstract scenes of organic shapes, swirling color pools, and accidental moments. This process requires trust and patience as it transforms between application and drying.

Working with the land and tending to animals have helped me embrace change and understand that life and death are cyclical, interconnected, and mysterious. My practice is about accepting loss and allowing things to transform into something new. The paintings are meant to have a quiet calling and for my inner processing to be alchemized into something transportive, a meditative pathway to the present moment, while offering hope.

Kim Tateo, *inner ecotones*, 2025, acrylic paint, fabric dye, spray paint, and oil paint on canvas, 82 x 52 x 1 ½ inches each; 82 x 104 x 1 ½ inches overall

## Christian Henry Wechgelaer



Combining drawing, inkjet prints, and installation, my work is a response to the effects of digital images on my identity, and an exploration into how images function subliminally within technology-driven capitalism. I am interested in how the boundaries between digital space, mental space, and physical space can become blurred. Pulling from video games, the internet, and social media, I montage signs, symbols, nostalgic media, and spaces, through a drawing process similar to collage. These drawings build the foundation of my practice as they are scanned, edited, digitally printed, erased, transferred, and transformed into multimedia prints, books, and installations. By intentionally removing information, and using negative space, the images I appropriate shed their original context and become more open-ended. What results are traces that punctuate my experience in an era marked by overstimulation.

Christian Henry Wechgelaer, *salute\_the\_sun*, 2025, inkjet print, graphite, colored pencil, and carbon transfer on paper, magnets, unistrut cantilever, 62 x 1 ¾ x 48 inches



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University Art Museum  
University at Albany  
State University of New York

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