

BLISSTERS

2021 SENIOR ART EXHIBITION
LEWIS & CLARK COLLEGE

JAMES BULLOCK
JOHN CARR
EVELYN SHINING CHEN
MISHA DAVYDOV
RIQUEL DIXON
EILA GUSTINA
ZANDER HILL
SOPHIE HOGAN-CYTRON
AZH
KAI KIMURA-SWIFT
MICHAEL LUZADDER
ELLA MARTINI
SOPHIE SCHWARZENBACH
ALEXANDRA SILVA
SOPHIA STRENA
HANNAH STUBEE
JAKKI WISE
KAMALA WOODS

A NOTE FROM THE INSTRUCTOR

Most of the time, blisters are pretty unpleasant or annoying at best. Caused by friction, a thin skin layer forms a bubble often filled with some bodily fluid. Our intuition may encourage us to pop the irritation, let the liquid seep out, and wait for the post-bubble and new skin beneath to run their courses (though it should be noted that popping blisters is ill-advised). So what do blisters have to do with *Blissters*, and why is this word reinterpretation the title of the 2021 senior art exhibition? The allusion here is that saying *Blissters* may still evoke the sentiments expressed above. Yet, when reading the name and discovering the second intentional "s," we may picture a sense of relief, are provided a moment of flawless joy, or take a pause from the precarity of the now while still feeling the exasperation of an exhausting year. In a physical form, the works exhibited in *Blissters* offer solace from this weird and challenging time.

For the eighteen senior studio art majors, *Blissters* reflects their final year in which the hands-on approach of art-learning and making was somewhat usurped by a global pandemic, national protests and activism, the 2020 election, and west coast fires. Yet, the students' perseverance and dedication to their work and practice are celebrated in a tangible form, an exhibition as they imagined. Consisting of paintings, drawings, prints, sculptures, photographs, books, videos, sound art, ready-mades, and more, these remarkable projects, performances, stand-alone works, and installations invite our community to consider the importance of experiencing art in tough times.

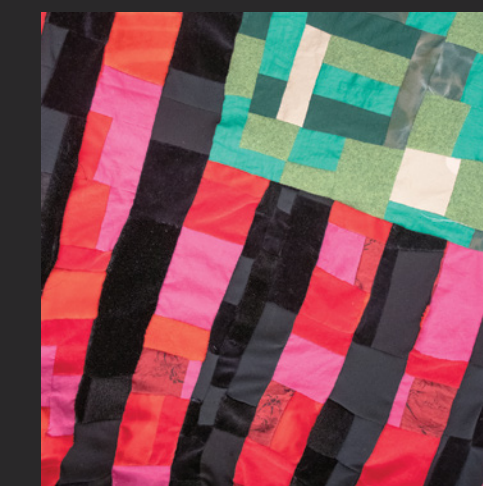
Blissters was generously supported by the Dean's office and wouldn't have been possible without the encouragement, support, and tireless work of many faculty, staff, and outside contractors. I especially want to thank Dru Donovan and Yaelle Amir for guiding and mentoring this year's senior studio artists. I also want to thank my colleagues, Ahyoung Yoo, Benjamin David, Bethany Hays, Brenden Clenaghan, Brian House, Cara Tomlinson, Dawn Odell, Dylan Beck, Jess Perltz, Jodie Cavalier, and Matthew Johnston, for teaching, guiding, and shaping this group. Thank you to Alison Walcott, Gabe Parque, and Tammy Jo Wilson for your continued support and considerable assistance in the realization of this exhibition. Thanks to Patrick Ryall, Justin Counts, and Mark Johnson for your technical prowess, project finalization, and installation expertise. Also, thank you, Jen Trail, for your excellent design of the *Blissters* brochure. And finally, to the students, THANK YOU for persevering through this challenging year, our virtual discussions, and making this show tangible—we all needed this. Congratulations, well done, and well wishes in your future endeavors.

Joel W. Fisher, Department of Art and Art History Chair, Associate Professor of Art

GALLERY INFORMATION

Ronna and Eric Hoffman Gallery of Contemporary Art
Lewis & Clark College
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Portland, OR 97219

Exhibition visits are by appointment only.
Please write art@lclark.edu or call 503-768-7390 to schedule.
www.lclark.edu/hoffman_gallery



JAMES BULLOCK

In the installation *Uncovering Identity*, I aim to encapsulate a living room, reminiscent of one in my grandmother's home, as a means to elaborate and comment on what is often one of the most central spaces in constructing one's identity. A bookshelf filled with white books covered in tar highlight the exclusion of black bodies within white-washed literature. Black and white photos draw attention to the consumption of blackness. A quilted black liberation flag drapes over a couch, reclaiming a history of quilting that is also asserting themes of community and care. A United States-shaped coffee table held up by black hands, and planter vases throughout the room are symbolic of the black bodies stretched to their limits while still being vessels capable of growth. The installation intends to disrupt and dismantle a complicated and often racist history in the U.S. that has failed to offer an accurate representation of me and my family's experience.

Uncovering Identity, 2020-2021
Books, tar, acrylic paint, ceramic, soft textile, plaster, wood, paint, resin, and inkjet prints
Dimensions Variable

Image: Black Liberation Flag Quilt (Detail)



JOHN CARR

I make wheel-thrown, semi-functional ceramic objects and then amplify their compromised state through performance and humor. My overtly satirical performances focus on the simplistic ways we interact with ceramic objects to draw attention to their purpose. As I engage, smash, and question the meaning of these objects, I want my audience to laugh and feel anxiety from the precarity and idiosyncracies revealed in the videos. For instance, a quick cut from one scene of me wheel throwing a mug to a plague doctor attacking me with no explanation offers no resolution for the viewer. Bewilderment is key. I aim to leave the audience sitting in a puddle of confusion resulting from a dichotomy of unpleasant and awkward aesthetics. The actions in my performances are stupid, janky, or somewhat annoying. The goal is to confuse the viewer, separate them from their reality and allow them to reconstruct the meaning on their terms.

The Illusion of Brokenness, 2021
Ceramics, miscellaneous materials, video loop
Dimensions variable

Image: Tea Party (excerpt)



EVELYN SHINING CHEN

In *Practicing Heritage*, I attempt to reconstruct unresolved aspects of my personal and cultural identity. My Taiwanese parents taught me Mandarin Chinese as my first language, but English quickly overtook the position of priority, and I gradually became more illiterate in my family's native language. The only words I can write in Chinese are the three characters of my birth name, which I continue to practice writing in the style of traditional calligraphy. By crafting calligraphy brushes made from my hair, using ink infused with my saliva, and writing on paper made with my urine, I try to reconcile the parts of my cultural identity that I never properly learned but wish that I had. Through ritual and repetition, I invite viewers to consider the power of seemingly trivial actions by executing them with attentiveness and care.

Practicing Heritage, 2021
Hair, saliva, urine, blood, vaginal discharge, bamboo, thread, fiber, carbon ink
Dimensions variable

Image: *Practicing Heritage* (detail)



MISHA DAVYDOV

My practice deals with implicit hierarchies of materials and processes of the everyday within an art-making context. I am interested in discarded items, artifacts, and their ability to hold new meaning when they function outside of the categories of usefulness. Abandoned belongings, defective tools, and perishable bodies serve as a starting point; my practice involves manipulating the obsolete to create a new relationship between form and content. The conflation of sculptural and photographic in hybridized forms — where representations function as objects and vice versa — mitigates space and the viewer's place in it, extending this inherent photographic phenomenon into the viscerally understood physical world. Knowing that the way we interpret reality is malleable, relative, and not predetermined helps me process and resolve tensions within my own identity, asserts the intrinsic power I have to redefine what I know, and offers this opportunity to others.

Transparency, 2020-2021
Roadkill plaster body cast and pelt, metal tripod; found glove turned inside-out; cleared specimens, lightbox; two window frames with cyanotypes on cotton; photographic prints
Dimensions Variable

Image: *Transparency* (detail)



RIQUEL DIXON

Working with existing and often "gendered" materials such as pantyhose, underwear, and other domestic objects, my art is about gender identity, the body, permeability, and boundaries. Boundaries such as social structures and systems, like sexism or heteronormativity, that affect our everyday lives hold immense power, although they might be something as fragile as pantyhose. Permeability in this context is about understanding how those boundaries are both long-lasting and lacking in substance. In the installation entitled *Emerge/Breach, Settle; Grow*, and *Testing, Testing...* I utilize video, sculpture, and installation in three related works that describe space, growth, secrets, solace, and intimacy within the broader themes of gender and the body.

Emerge/Breach, 2021
Used underwear, wire, embroidery thread, wood glue, clothespins, cord
78" x 84" x 18"

Settle; Grow, 2021
2 chairs, pantyhose, potting soil, seedlings, thread
42" x 24" x 30"

Testing, Testing..., 2021
Video Loop
9'18"

Image: *Emerge/Breach* (detail)



EILA GUSTINA

Where the dust settled looks at the home as a symbolic container and active participant in our daily lives. The images covering the surface express what the home, as a multifaceted character, can be, immersing the viewer in a world of protection, isolation, nourishment, and repetition. They offer comfort and safety but also hint at the danger of compulsive ritual and isolation. Throughout my practice, I seek moments that can hold the weight of nostalgia and familiarity, pieces collected from the natural world, ideas of containment and protection, ritual, history, and the home. I focus on fleeting moments which simultaneously highlight the strange and uncomfortable and the magic which exists in the everyday. This work is made using stitched together paper printed over with linoleum blocks. The process of carving away, stitching together, and layering highlights the complexity of the ideas themselves and the disparate definitions we have for home.

Where the dust settled, 2020
Linocut prints on sewn paper, wire, papier-mache
52"x52"x52"

Image: *Where the dust settled* (detail)



ZANDER HILL

As a painter, I am interested in paint as a physical material as well as its ability to create surfaces that allude to skin. Paint is a malleable material that records the layers of care put into it, becoming a stand-in for tactile experiences of a body. Crafting paint into these expressive objects compliments the experimental fascination I have with odd sensory experiences such as the perceived diffusion of one's skin into the atmosphere while laying in the sun. Thick layers of heavily applied pigments serve as an anchor, and my work explores sentimental themes of intimacy, sensation, and memory of the human body. The subjects in my paintings exist as considered and crafted bodies rather than tools for illusion or representation. Each piece recalls a moment of interest, whether that is as simple as an interpersonal embrace or bare feet together in the kitchen. The beauty in these reminiscent pictures works to celebrate a deeply personal record of care, which both paint and bodies carry.

Meniscus Line, 2021
Oil paint and resin on canvas
8.5" x 25"

Diffusion, 2021
Oil paint on canvas
19" x 49"

Scrapbooking, 2021
Acrylic paint, corn starch, and glazing medium on bristol paper
Dimensions variable

Image: *Scrapbooking* (detail)

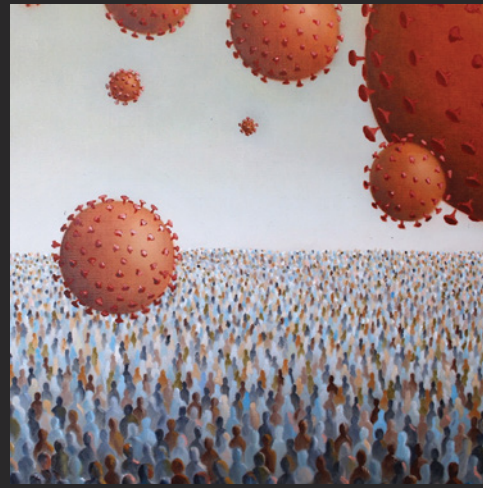


SOPHIE HOGAN-CYTRON

My art is about creating moments of self-reflection within domestic settings that I am comfortable in both physically and emotionally. This work is a representation of exploring how being in a physical body is recognized by consciousness. Through the process of setting up the camera, composing my personal space, putting myself in front of the camera lens, and clicking the shutter release, my pictures aim to reveal moments of honest vulnerability. Placing myself in spaces that I am physically comfortable in, and performing routines that I am mentally comfortable with, and then recording myself in these repeated rituals allows me to access how my physical body moves and feels within these spaces. This work also represents an exploration of how being in a physical body is recognized by consciousness. Placing myself in settings that I am physically comfortable in, and performing routines that I am mentally at ease with, allowed me to reconcile feelings of existential angst.

Getting Dressed, Solid Ground, Too Tight, Deciding, Habitation, Sitting on the Bed, At Night, My Vision, For Eyes, Telling Time, Untitled (hiding under the sheets), Untitled (laundry day), Untitled (after a night out), Untitled (socks on), Untitled (hand on hip), 2020-2021
Inkjet Prints
Dimensions Variable

Image: *Sitting on the Bed* (cropped)



MICHAEL LUZADDER

As a student of both art and biology, my art practice acts as a bridge between science and society by offering creative and personal ways to relate directly to scientific information. Science is often conducted in closed laboratories, whereas art most often directly engages the public. The inaccessibility of empirical information creates a disconnection between science, art, and society. The Covid-19 pandemic has brought the disconnection between science and society to the forefront of the conversation. My work draws a connection between primary data and the human situation in the Covid-19 pandemic. By translating DNA, RNA, and amino acid sequences into sound, my work offers another way to relate to scientific data concerning the virus and our relationship. The songs replicate genetic information in the environment that allows the virus to spread and shape our lives. The paintings contextualize these songs and provide an outlook for the viewer at both the molecular and human scales.

Ode to SARS-CoV-2: Spike Protein, 2021
Ode to SARS-CoV-2: Spike Protein, mRNA Vaccine and ACE2 receptor, Variants and Mutation, 2021
Oil paint, canvas, music boxes, coated paper, speakers, mp3 players
Dimensions variable

Image: *Ode to SARS-CoV-2: Spike Protein* (detail)



ELLA MARTINI

I create drawings that consider how human emotional experiences mimic ecological processes which transform the earth over time. I am particularly interested in the similarities between the fire cycle and the human experience of grief, where periods of suffering, rage, and devastation cleanse the body (both earthly and human) and enable new growth to occur. By incorporating natural materials foraged from the environment into my drawings, like charcoal and other natural pigments, my work aims to highlight connections between human beings and natural ecosystems through my materials and content. In essence, my work aims to break down conceptual barriers between natural environments and the people who occupy them and re-situate human beings as a part of nature rather than as consumers of it.

Two Cycles, 2021
Natural charcoal, compressed charcoal, pastel
3.5' x 16'

Image: *Two Cycles*



SOPHIE SCHWARZENBACH

My artistic practice has become an effort to decode and understand the language of nature and close the gap between the impositions of a constructed world and acknowledgment of a natural one. I am interested in a conversation about ecofeminism and recognizing how living bodies, both plant and human, are mistreated under the conditions of capitalism. The current climate crisis and the lack of empathy our population has shown for the living world inspire my current body of work. Reconstructing discarded materials—taking things otherwise considered to be waste—through storytelling and blending these objects' past, I aim to reveal their future potential. Impermanence is always present within my work, and a willingness to accept uncertainty and use that in collaboration with my materials. In the act of misusing materials and exploring their potential for art-making, I hope to challenge uniformity and encourage imaginative modes of rethinking the world around us.

Reaching, 2021
Video loop
3'8"

Untitled (Burning Body), 2020
Video loop
29'23"

Grieving bodies, 2021
Mud, tree roots, plaster, paint, chicken wire
Dimensions variable

Image: *Reaching* (excerpt)



ALEXANDRA SILVA

The anxiety and pain that come with being dyslexic are a theme that runs through my art practice. I constantly feel at odds with emotional turmoil, and I work through this by making art. *Intense Gaze* and *Untitled (Table and Chair)* are inspired by my discomfort with written exams and the overall testing environment. I work with materials that are hard to manipulate, such as steel, plaster, and ash, as a way to represent my struggles. Often, these materials are unruly and hard to control, much like how I feel when I try to read through a document. I allow for the materials to be influenced by their unwieldiness as I sculpt them into significance. Using materials that are notoriously rebellious against anything other than their natural state parallels the strength it takes to deal with my challenges. I hope that viewers relate to my art, letting them know they are not alone.

Intense Gaze, 2021
Styrofoam, Papier-mâché, wire, acrylic paint
24" x 25" x 8"

Untitled (Table and Chair), 2021
Wood, plaster, acrylic paint
29" x 48" x 24"

Image: *Intense Gaze*



SOPHIA STRENA

Sit With Me is a group of 3 paintings that aim to acknowledge the role of contact in mental health. It is also an invitation, physically and mentally, to be present with ourselves and our contexts through a single pair of legs that remember what it was like to touch. The need to touch is an inherent part of painting. Colors and textures merge to create an emotional atmosphere. Representations of legs are impacted by an embodied point of view, casting the experience as personal. This representation is made up of scumbled blues and oranges to create an overall sense of dissociation and longing. The heavy blue surroundings generate the experience of the painted legs the way our mentality shapes the way we understand ourselves. Just as distinct emotions are experienced simultaneously, merged layers of tones and hues create their own language and become the voice of the paintings.

Toe Curl, 2021
Oil on canvas
16" x 20"

Side-by-Side, 2021
Oil on canvas
16" x 20"

Ghosting, 2021
Oil on canvas
14" x 11"

Image: *Toe Curl* (detail)



HANNAH STUBEE

Borrowing the authority of museums, *The Living Museum of Care* displays everyday objects that relate to caretaking in the pandemic to elevate them to the status of "artifacts." At the heart of the museum is the idea that collecting and documenting objects so others may see their importance is an act of care. Care is not just for items in a collection but also for a community that learns from them, contributes to the narrative, and benefits from the museum's shared space. I am interested in using unorthodox methods to examine how self and community care manifest during the pandemic, particularly because unprecedented challenges call for unprecedented modes of investigation. I collect objects and data, engage in social practice, and participate in meditative mark-making to facilitate physically exaggerated caregiving behaviors. These behaviors emphasize that leisure, connection, and contemplation are essential to, rather than separate from growth.

The Living Museum of Care, 2021
Collection (including face masks, picnic blanket, and artifacts submitted by the public), glass display case, desk, shelves, vinyl wall text
Dimensions variable

Image: *The Living Museum of Care* (detail)



JAKKI WISE

My work explores the insight provided by the imagination of children, untainted by enforced societal world-views, to approach the fragility of the socially constructed experiences. My practice emphasizes a direct translation of two-dimensional media through 3-dimensional works by utilizing recycled materials such as fabric, wire, and paper. To respond to social constructs' tenuosity and the self's idea, I construct physical objects and figures out of minimal and delicate materials typically utilized for two-dimensionality. The sculpted line's simplicity provides more room for interpretation; a wire creates barriers, acts as a bridge, and guides viewers to question the relationship between the ascending/descending form and the space in which they appear. Through these familiar gestures, I reveal the true sardonic nature of the social structures that the false idea of the self is founded.

Containers, 2021
Wire
8' x 20' x 4'

Linus, 2021
Construction paper, mannequin
55" x 15" x 12"

Image: *Linus and Containers* (detail)



KAMALA WOODS

For the series *Dinner Table Talk*, I recorded conversations, often without my family's initial awareness, and then reconstructed these lived experiences where I play and ad-lib each role. I use costumes, wigs, and makeup to create caricatures of my family members. Creating intentional lighting designs, costumes, sets, and props, I revisit mundane family dramas in visually dynamic ways so as to highlight the humor and profundity of daily life. Working this way, I play with the imaginary and the real, where documentary footage becomes the basis for a dramatic reinterpretation. *Dinner Table Talk*'s installation consists of multiple large-scale projections as a way to highlight my family life's richness even further. In juxtaposing these two extremes, the ordinary and the fantastical, *Dinner Table Talk* explores the depth hidden in subtle moments.

Dinner Table Talk, 2021
Video loop
14'

Image: *Dinner Table Talk* (excerpt)



KAI KIMURA-SWIFT

I gravitate towards art that explores the journey of identity and displays the human condition as inevitable and uncontrollable. I am queer and biracial: Japanese and white. My work explores how language and self-expression contribute to the forming of a person's identity. Relating to labels and language in my work, I explore how I comprehend and explore my own identity by learning how others project theirs. The installation entitled *私はきれいに感じます* consists of a handmade artist's book containing my Japanese translation of the subjects' experiences from the makeover and reflection interview. It also includes excerpts from the interviews handpicked and written by the subjects themselves. The intent is to reconcile constructs of gender and identity that don't translate easily in different languages and forms of human communication, such as a photo book or a scroll. The book's low placement intends to engage a western artist in a bow to the scroll above that states, "study the old to understand the new."

私はきれいに感じます, 2021
Handmade book, hanging scroll, wooden stand
72" x 46" x 24"

Image: *私はきれいに感じます* (detail)