



Making Strange



Alice Alexandrescu

Cecily Culver

Annette Daniels Taylor

Jason Livingston

Tara Najd Ahmadi

SV Randall

Margaret Schrecongost

Masha Sha

Abiose Spriggs

Frederick Wright Jones

Making Strange

February 12th - May 16th, 2021

Curated by Tiffany Gaines, Katharine Gaudy, Zainab Saleh, Dana Tyrrell, and Rebecca Wing

**Burchfield
Penney
Art Center**
at Buffalo State College

BANK OF AMERICA 

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This exhibition is presented by Bank of America, with support from James & Joy Brandys, Frank & Cynthia Ciminelli and the Louis P. Ciminelli Family Foundation, Lynne Marie Finn and William & Linda Maggio.
Catalog Design by Michaela Worosz

ARE WE THE PEOPLE

NOW THAT
I AM ALMOST
NOT SURE
I AM BEHIND

BOILING
NORMAL
BLOOD



TRUST



Making Strange installation shot, East Gallery, south end

Making Strange

Weaving narratives both constructed and anecdotal, *Making Strange* explores the distortion of objects, places, and bodies. Through the artwork in this exhibition Alice Alexandrescu, Cecily Culver, Annette Daniels Taylor, Jason Livingston, Tara Najd Ahmadi, SV Randall, Margaret Schrecongost, Masha Sha, Abiose Spriggs, and Frederick Wright Jones respond to the volatile present. These artists reimagine the conventional and call viewers to question how opportunities for contemplation can emerge from distortion.

The focus of distortion in *Making Strange* mirrors our own moment; a time in which ideology, normalcy, and social systems are being tested. The past year has been characterized by protracted civil, social, and political unrest within a pandemic, and our shared reality has been wounded. And as we grapple with the uncertainty this creates, the artworks presented prod the structures buttressing inequity and injustice, while offering different ways of perceiving and unpacking our world.

Making Strange focuses on the tectonic undercurrents presently taking place not only through the artworks exhibited, but also through its curatorial process. The curatorial team — Tiffany Gaines, Katharine Gaudy, Zainab Saleh, Dana Tyrrell, and Rebecca Wing — utilized virtual studio visits to engage with contemporary artists connected to Western New York whose artwork reflected larger external forces and engaged with alternate realities.

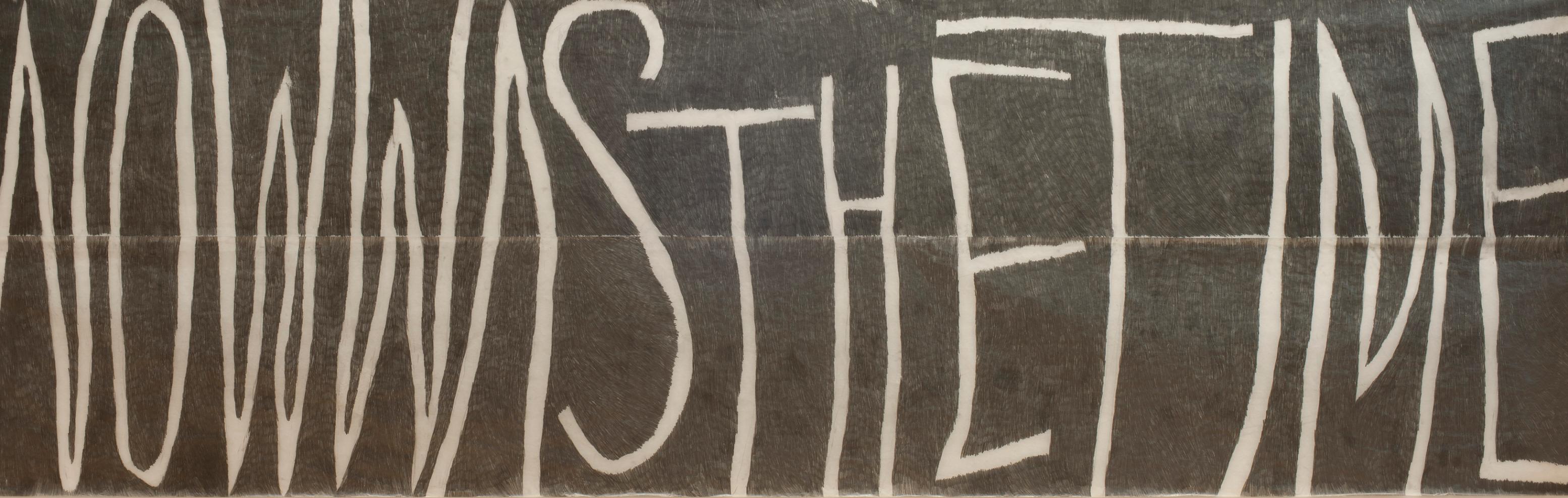
The collision of media and scale in the exhibition — small paintings, large drawings, sculpture, and video — offer a glimpse as to how art can make sense of an interstice. The artwork represents a unique moment of transition and flux, keeping rhythm with a turbulent time.

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Making Strange installation shot, East Gallery entrance

Masha Sha, *Now Was the Time* (top);
Tara Najd Ahmadi, *Three Minutes of a Headless Life* (still). (bottom left);
Frederick Wright Jones, *Blue Print for Survival - There Are No Screams in Space* (bottom right)

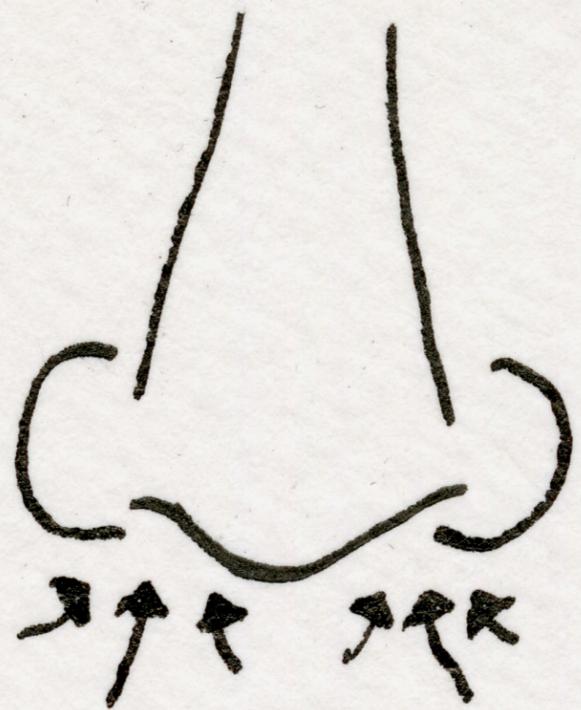






Making Strange installation shot, East Gallery

Previous page: left to right:
Cecily Culver, *2nd Ave Manhole*; Margaret Schrecongost, *Cheat Day in the Park*;
Masha Sha, *One*; Margaret Schrecongost, *Untitled*;
Margaret Schrecongost, *Loss*; SV Randall, *Entangled Hunters*



low

slow

deep

Alice Alexandrescu

Katharine Gaudy

Thoughts disconnected from a body, the threat of decapitation, bodies cut up, bodies crushed, bodies presented as food, and bodily inhabitant of objects.

All of *Making Strange* presents the “not-whole” of bodies, excepting some strange notes pinned on the walls throughout the exhibition space.

Scattered throughout the exhibition, these handwritten notes from Alice Alexandrescu are a call. A call to counteract this feeling of the “not-whole” of our bodies going about our daily lives. It is a call to reconnect with our body. A call to breathe low, slow and deep. A call to hold 5 seconds at a time. These notes are like secret love notes to gallery visitors, reminding them to do the most basic thing we often forget about: to breathe. Breathing which has been made strange by the pandemic. Breathing which has been made more private as we spend more time physically distanced from others and stuck with the non-physical dialogues of digital communication. Focusing on breath, to feeling oneself physically move, may be the most physical interaction one gets each day. It may be that, as Alexandrescu puts it, “The gentle breath is unconditional love”.

Alexandrescu makes art experiences based on her non-art related interests. Her work in this exhibition is guided by her experiences working with children from difficult homes and her own physical/mental health restoration practices. Alexandrescu continues her art practice of mediating environments between the viewer and other artists by inviting the viewer into a meditative action between, and while viewing, other art. For more than a decade she has placed herself in this fragile gap.

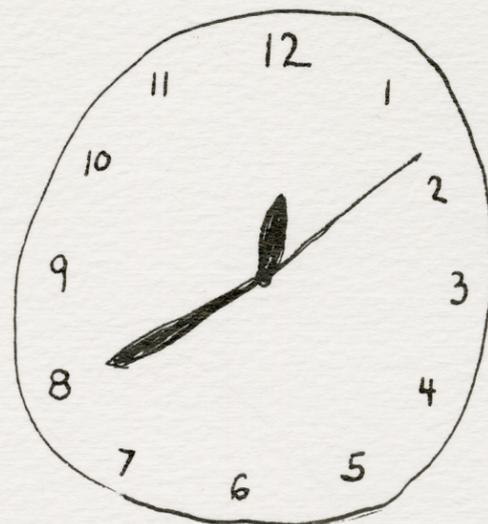


inhales increase
heart rate and size

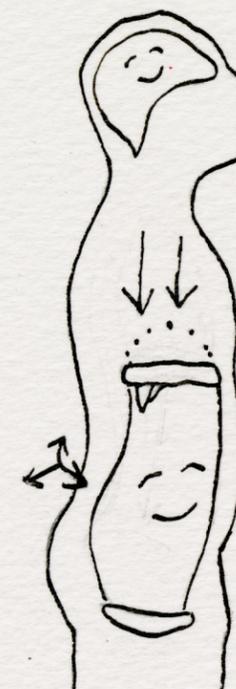


exhales give the
heart a hug

4 second inhale
6 second exhale

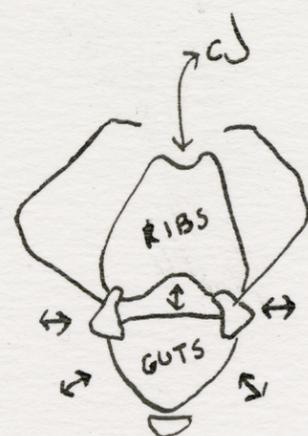


Six Breaths per Minute



inhale massages
guts - diaphragm
to pelvic floor

→ inhale 5 seconds
exhale 5 seconds
pause 5 seconds



relieving
relaxing
rejuvenating

What is your BOLT score?

The gentle breath
is
unconditional love.



Cecily Culver

Dana Tyrrell

Cecily Culver's artwork operates at the craggy boundary between the quotidian and the uncanny. Her sculptures, *Palm Creep* and *2nd Ave Manhole*, encroach upon the solace and pristine quarters of a white cube gallery. What interests the artist within these two sculptures specifically are the ways in which the everyday can become monstrous: through their intrusions, their juxtapositions, and their surreal and shy manifestations.

Turning a corner, no visitor expects to see a manhole and scruffy concrete rim protruding from the floor, the physical intrusion allows for psychological intrusion, whereby the artwork lingers as a phantasm long after one leaves their presence. These sculptures are not found objects in truth, but simulacra sculpted to mimic the overlooked and dispossessed objects constituting daily life while wedding the unremarkable to something darker, something eerie.

2nd Ave Manhole (2016) is a manhole cover appearing to pierce the gallery floor, embedded with a recording of the sound of street-level noise as heard from the underbelly of Brooklyn. The recording emanates, softly, coming in hushed waves. Whooshing and rushing and billowing, the sound from 2nd Ave. Manhole envelops the viewer as they move closer, asking each of us to pitch our bodies forward in investigation of the source of the sound.

Culver's *Palm Creep* (2016) mimics a sidewalk curb and sewer grate, and like *2nd Ave Manhole*, the universality of the subject obscures its undergirding psychological tension. By turns intrusive and wilting, *Palm Creep* offers the sharp fingers of a palm frond inching out from the depths of a sewer. Unlike *2nd Ave Manhole*, however, *Palm Creep* is activated through the back and forth swiping of the palm's tendrils--like a demented broom to be hopped over for survival.

One cannot help but wonder the kind of metropolis these sculptures have been transported from, an alternate dimension? The future? A city of the post-Anthropocene reclaimed by plants and ghosts?

Sculpture allows Cecily Culver's work to operate with a level of indeterminacy, marking it as psychologically charged. *2nd Ave Manhole* and *Palm Creep* each become a canvas for our collective unconsciousness and semiotic understandings of the material world. It is within their replication of the everyday in which we see our world reflected, and it is within their fissure from reality where horror makes its home.





Annette Daniels Taylor, *The Fillmore Stip* (still)

Annette Daniels Taylor

Tiffany Gaines

Existence in itself can be strange – the journey to understanding oneself, one’s purpose and what it all means is never quite linear. This reflection becomes further complicated when influenced by experiences with our external environment, especially at the intersections of considerations such as race and class. The works in *Making Strange* are connected in the ways they explore how bodies exist – and what distortions arise – when navigating such a space. Presumptions around Blackness have come to characterize the many realities of this contemplative experience, with history showing Black and Brown bodies are put at disproportionately high rates of harm as a result. The legacies of Emmett Till, Sean Bell, Tamir Rice, Freddie Gray, Breonna Taylor and countless others are a small testament that this particular experience transcends time and place. The social upheaval of the past year in particular, marked with persistent protests against the very police violence that took so many of these bodies, make this reality unavoidable for many who have not had to contend with it previously.

In similar fashion, the films of Annette Daniels Taylor bring the layered corporeality of Blackness in America to visual fruition. The films *My Neighborhood* (2018) and *The Fillmore Strip* (2018) integrate vivid experimentation with moving image and poetry, coalescing the two to give an intimate, honest look at Buffalo’s East Side community. The exhibition of the films makes it all but unavoidable for viewers to consider the reality of the localized subject and its residents.

Discriminatory practices and redlining have overtly impacted minority communities, with socioeconomic effects that resonate today--with a majority of Black residents in the city living east of Main Street, Buffalo’s reputation as a largely segregated city is no secret. Rarely is this reckoned with by centering the individuals and communities affected to share this history through their lived experience. As a result, their true identities, and the ways they come to terms with existence in such a layered space, become distorted and flattened. *[continued on next page]*



Annette Daniels Taylor, *My Neighborhood* (still)

Daniels Taylor subverts this narrative, seamlessly weaving candid conversations, expressive musings and moving image in *My Neighborhood*. The film offers viewers a new perspective, shifting the focus to see through the eyes of the residents themselves, the heart of a community defined by more than the conclusions drawn from the East Side's socioeconomic status. Daniels Taylor utilizes prose, with voiceovers narrating the depth of history's lasting impressions on a place where "dreams sometimes dance with despair." As the film cuts across a number of scenes – streets with speeding cars, corners crowded with people waiting for the bus, capturing houses, dollar stores, bright skies, nighttime fireworks and sunshine that wakes up the street – Daniels Taylor speaks of who and what she sees. She mentions a woman who lives alone, eating boxed macaroni, smoking menthol cigarettes and drinking cold Moscato.

"She dreams of a life she could have had, while laughing."

Mapping out the geography of her community, she identifies three liquor stores, five churches, three bars and several dollar stores.

"A supermarket is two miles away," she says.

The sobering reality of these observations force the viewer to reckon with the reality of people, places, and stories forgotten. Despite this, glimmers of hope remain: fragments from a conversation among neighbors can be heard, laughter followed by the proclamation, "I will not lose."

Fillmore Strip gives viewers a more ambient perspective of the neighborhood, with overlays of vibrant colors, moving image and sound consuming the viewer. The subtlety of its observational tone and 13-minute runtime of the film all work to challenge the viewer, to fully immerse them into the community, while seemingly questioning how many times they've taken the time to pay attention to these streets and the people among them. The films collectively pay tribute to a neighborhood whose true spirit is one of fierce resilience, community, grit, finesse, hustle, and an unwavering openness to embrace outsiders despite the barriers placed upon it by others.



Annette Daniels Taylor, *My Neighborhood* (still)



Tara Najd Ahmadi

Zainab Saleh

Making Strange asks the viewer to widen the space between what is unknown and familiar, to recognize newness in the overlooked, and to sit with discomfort wherever possible. It is in the context of the unique uncanniness of our current moment, as well as very real collective and individual traumas, that this exhibition gains momentum.

For Tara Najd Ahmadi, “making strange” also means inhabiting feelings of estrangement. *In A Week with Azar* (2018), Tara Najd Ahmadi tackles the psychological impact of the immigrant experience within a xenophobic environment. Opening with still frames punctuated by chilling chords, Najd Ahmadi outlines the premise of the film: in the face of sanctions and travel bans, how does the individual make sense of what is so unjust as to be ultimately absurd? She resorts to irony and humor--both distancing tools in themselves--to assist her in seeing, holding open a space that might give rise new perspectives while suggesting a way to move through what feels impossible. For Najd Ahmadi, the medium of film is the vocabulary with which to make sense of the world: her use of still frames, for instance, suggests a freezing of time and movement in order to examine more closely; when she asks, in tandem with the image of a wave crashing onto shore, “One day we will have to ask ourselves: was this a step forward?” the reversal of both word and image evokes again the impossibility of undoing the past, even as we relive its consequences in the present over and over.



was this a step forward?

A Week with Azar examines a specific incident, perhaps because the magnitude of the generic is incomprehensible; in *Productive Frustration* (2016), she looks inward. Here, Najd Ahmadi explores how one persists in the midst of political and social turmoil, both present and past, and her quiet meditation on creating work in spite of it all is exhibited in the work itself: “Practice, a word stands for doing things over and over. To fail, and yet, to continue.” Najd Ahmadi mines both concept and image for answers, uncovering not resolution but richness, and in using the format of the essay film, she is at once editorial and exploratory. Here, as in her other films, Najd Ahmadi’s use of stop motion feels as natural as a signature. Whether an anthropomorphized wig-wearing tripod as in *Three Minutes of Headless Life* (2015), a puppet hand furiously working at a typewriter, or tiny dolls experiencing growth spurts, Najd Ahmadi’s playful stop motion interludes urge the viewer to question who pulls the strings, and to examine the systems in place, whether they govern the art market or individual psyches.

In A Week With Azar, Najd Ahmadi describes how she and Azar process their emotions by creating a papier-mâché sculpture of a head: “Creating the sculpture helped us to see reality in all its details, instead of acting in a play that was not ours. Helped us to see, instead of surrendering. Awareness, instead of being condemned. To see, instead of participating in the game.” When they eventually burn it, it serves as a release. As it slowly disintegrates on the screen, flames licking the paper into oblivion, one might wonder if a renewed humanity indeed rises from the ashes. Displacing the perspective onto the sculpture allows Najd Ahmadi an avenue to externalize her thoughts. *[continued essay on page 32.]*

Tara Najd Ahmadi,
A Week with Azar (still) [top left]
Productive Frustration (still) [bottom left]
Three Minutes of Headless Life (still) [top right]
Productive Frustration (still) [bottom right]





We were once your gods.

Jason Livingston

Zainab Saleh

Jason Livingston, in *Yoga Goat Nom Nom* (2019), accomplishes a similar feat, using talking goats to expound upon the impacts of climate change. *Yoga Goat Nom Nom* opens with a close-cropped frame of what we come to see are young goats at close range. Chiding us on our wholesale rejection of our climate, the goats proceed, by way of the subtitled “translation,” to interrogate the viewer, reminding us of our limitations in the face of our arrogance. The camera stays trained closely on the goats, tracking them as they munch on the grass by their feet, bleating and chewing furiously, while also providing some cultural commentary: “Stop feeding us ‘organic’ food. We want old batteries, Nestle bottles, gas cans and fumes”; “We don’t want your Youtube compilations.” A large eye and snout peers through the mesh fence, which, gridlike, reminds us of the framing apparatus of the camera and also of the separation between man and animal. As we watch this rather beautiful composition, with its saturated blacks and voluminous greys, the goats’ fur and eyelashes glinting in the light, and marvel at the vitality of these creatures employed in the basic act of self-nourishment, we are also berated by them and egged on to continue making disastrous climate decisions.

These past few months have seen our collective physical and psychical distancing, and with that, attempts at collapsing those distances through an increased dependency on screens. But this increased mediated renegotiation of our relationships has made, at best, an approximation of connection, and in becoming familiar with images of each other, we are also seeing ourselves being seen, opening up yet another space for reflection. This collective moment has also led to highlighting of the cracks in our systems; as our city, county, and nation grapple with our health systems, the economy, education, democracy, freedoms, we are seeing the absurdly thin threads that hold up life as we know it. Livingston marries irreverence with solemnity in an attempt to foreground these issues.

Where the goats in *Yoga Goat Nom Nom* are boisterously vocal, in *Goodbye, World!* (2021), Livingston and collaborator Jason E. Geistweidt present a quieter, more analytical take on the time left to reverse the effects of climate change. An ironic play on the classic coding exercise, “hello, world!” the installation uses electronic circuitry with real-time data to show the difference between the current temperature and the 30-year average in the four cities the polar bears represent: Shenzhen, Seattle, São Paulo, and Svalbard. With eyes that glow redder with the rise in global temperatures, the installation turns what is often made invisible--the infrastructure behind our ever-increasing data consumption--into a visual signifier of the impact of this data use on our climate. Livingston’s film, as well as *Goodbye, World!*, remind the viewer of our collective impact on the ecosystem, and that even our well-meaning attempts at connection can end up being yet another method of extraction without regeneration.

In Livingston’s and Najd Ahmadi’s work, illusions are uncovered, frameworks dismantled, and seams cracked open. They create in order to help shift perspectives, so that in seeing differently, one might begin to see better. The space for possibility is key, and they remind us that unmaking and remaking are but first steps--what we need are radically new systems altogether, much stranger ones.





SV Randall

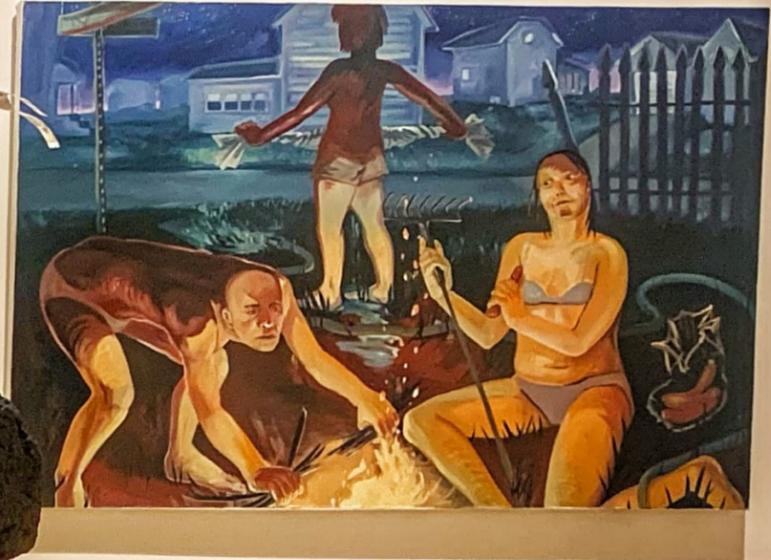
Dana Tyrrell

Echoing the exhibition's delve into the uncanny, SV Randall's practice also explores the slipstream of space between the mundane and the strange. Randall's works of art duplicate mass-produced items (wrought iron, suitcases, etc.) but in so doing, they become engorged and layered with skins to the effect of a mirage where the viewer starts to question what rests before their eyes.

The principal question that drives Randall's practice concerns how our exterior perception matches (or mismatches) our inner selves. It is in the misalignment that he finds opportunities for subterfuge; through material culture Randall carves out space in which viewers are confronted by totemic apparitions and spectral visions made solid.

Entangled Hunters (2020) extracts its source material from the tapestry series *The Hunt of the Unicorn*. Dated to sixteenth century France, the work depicts a group of nobles in pursuit of--and ultimately slaying--a unicorn, within embellished fields of green. Randall picks up the hunt in *Entangled Hunters* at the moment just prior to the beginning of the violence. Painted "Solarium Yellow" and milled from polystyrene, Randall reproduces the tapestry as a bas relief, simultaneously creating and erasing a hierarchy of characters through relief and the flattening effect of monochrome. It is this flattening which illuminates and washes over *Entangled Hunters*; the hunt ceases to function within chromatic dissolution, and the unicorn evades capture.

Similarly, SV Randall's *My Left Eye* (2018) offers a figure in repose that has been adorned with a priapic comedia del arte prosthesis and lemon slices on each eye. Astride Randall's corporeal construction is a craggy asteroid dotted with markers of colonization through fences, flags, windows and ladders. Under the asteroid's weight the body crumbles, and the failure of one monument begets another. *My Left Eye* demonstrates how conflict can be transmitted even by static bodies, effigies, and monuments, while underscoring how our reading of history is precariously balanced, at best.



SV Randall, My Left Eye



Margaret Schrecongost, *Cheat Day in the Park*

Margaret Schrecongost

Rebecca Wing



A dystopian future unfurls in broad strokes across Margaret Schrecongost's paintings—the contours of an oft-told story laden thick with edifying significance.

While the narrative details are drawn loosely, to flex and fit the life of a mythology as it expands, the recurring motif of junk food staples, mysteriously passed between figures as both currency and coded message, acts like a strange balm soothing agitated tableaux.

Appearances of french fries, hot dogs, or onion rings— each of them significantly devoid of nutritional value—still seem uncannily fresh and remarkably unspoiled.

The rendering of their “wholeness” provides a contrast to Schrecongost's figurative malaise, where figures exist most often as parts or in pieces.



Margaret Schrecongost, *Dream Home Disaster*

Previous page: Margaret Schrecongost, *Red Flag*

LIS
IMM
ME
FV
TEN
TO
HIS
POR
TAN
T
SSA
GE
YOUR
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AIM
MENT

Masha Sha

Katharine Gaudy

She presses the pencil hard--as if to chisel the words into the surface--yet the marks threaten to swallow the message by their sheer volume; like a scream swallowed up by the silence between we who shout. Of all the work in *Making Strange*, Masha Sha's shouts the loudest.

Art can be said to shout when it is immediate and present: When it rushes the viewer; when it grates your thoughts, pinches your nerves; when it doesn't stay silent.

Masha's drawings shout quite like a protest banner. In all CAPS the performance of the drawing is hurried, done in a rush of passion, but what it shouts is not typical for a protest.





Excepting *We Are The People*, the majority of drawings read like your inner voice:

I AM SO FAR AWAY
KILLING TIME
TRUST
NOW THAT I AM ALMOST NOT SO VERY FAR BEHIND
CALAMITY KEEPS ME YOUNG
BOILING NOMAD BLOOD
NOW WAS THE TIME

Indeed, Masha Sha considers herself a kind of nomad--the kind of nomad that contemporary art allows for, living from residency to residency. The type of work she does fits her lived impermanence. Though the drawings are often large they can be rolled up into a light parcel; though they are delicate, Masha isn't too precious with them. In point of fact: she strikingly hangs them on the outside of buildings. The buildings she chooses are desolate warehouses that one can imagine are brimming with similar drawings; like a warehouse where a multitude of inner dialogues come to life. Drawn at the scale of bodies, they are bodies bare and bruised, deformed and shaky, but shouting nonetheless.



Abiose Spriggs

Tiffany Gaines and Rebecca Wing

There is a longstanding complexity in the relationship between Blackness and identity, particularly as it is defined through the lens of the American cultural experience. W.E.B. DuBois grappled with this reality for Black Americans in the essay “Strivings of the Negro People” for the August 1897 issue of *The Atlantic*. He coins the term “double-consciousness,” which he uses to characterize the duality that emerges when discovering oneself while in a country that deems one “a problem” for the very essence of who they are, and the strangeness of an identity that forms both in spite of and in response to this lived experience. The complexities represented in DuBois’s writing are far from new; they continue to intensify in the face of a national reckoning of continued implications from inequity, injustice and racism perpetuated in Black and other marginalized communities.

Painter Abiose Spriggs explores the layers of such an identity, visually representing his own experiences of navigating what it means to be Black in America. While masks have recently risen to the collective consciousness as a tool for safety and protection, for many the concept of wearing a mask has long been a necessary tool for self-preservation. Spriggs explores this notion in his own right, creating a number of small-scale compositions which are dense, layered and complex. Some are distinctly human depictions while others--bringing the strangeness of such an existence to physicality--are more figurative renditions of faces and spaces.

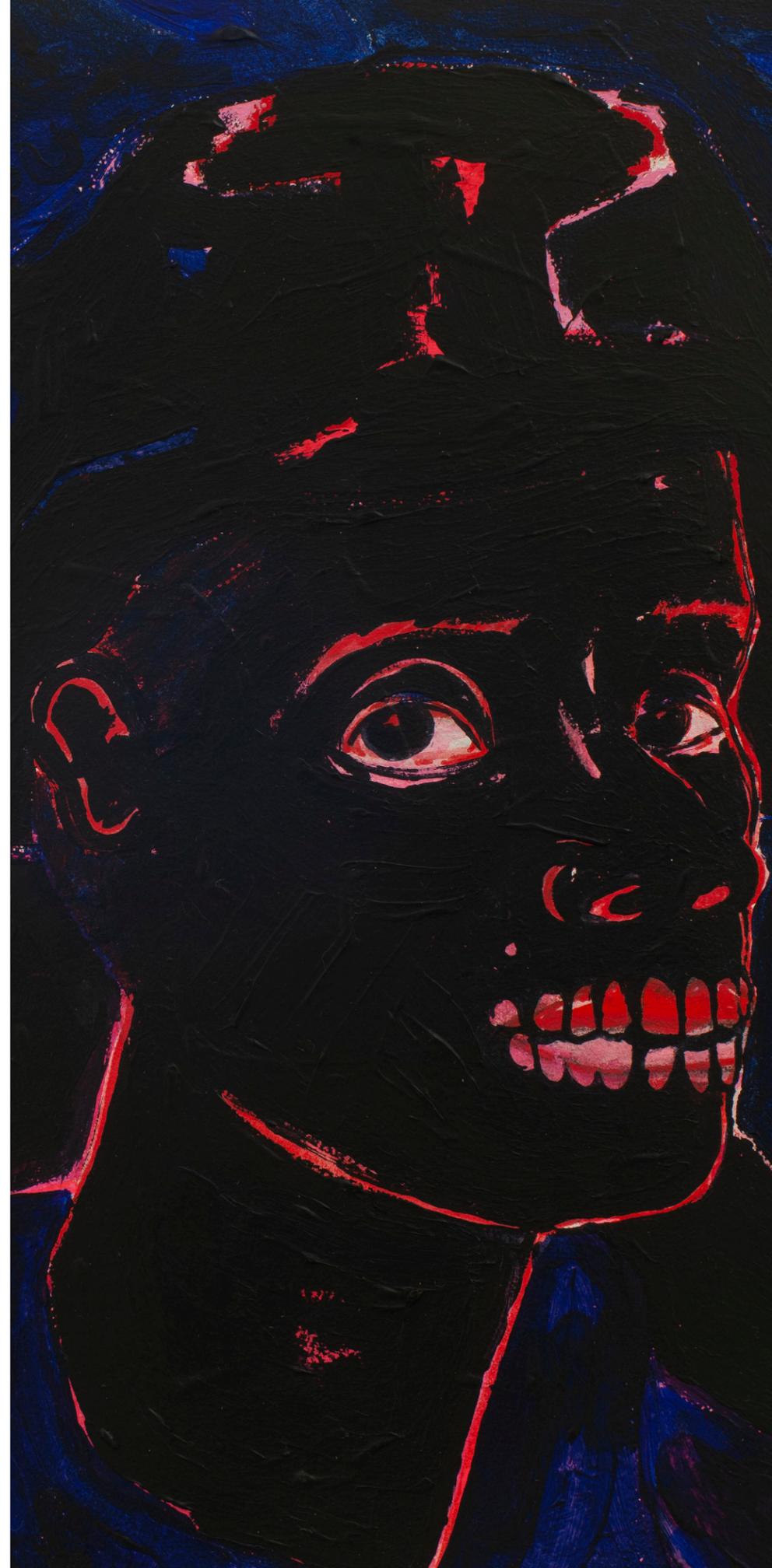
One series in particular --a body of untitled figurative renderings--is inspired by the 1980 Kerry James Marshall work, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Shadow of His Former Self*. Marshall’s depiction of a black figure on a black background was inspired by the idea of being both present and absent, particularly as a theme in Ralph Ellison’s 1952 novel, *Invisible Man*. Spriggs takes a different approach, utilizing a vibrant, highly saturated palette. He employs a light and loose technique, giving each figure a similar shadowy, half present, half absent effect. In doing this, Spriggs underscores the facades, or shadows of one’s identity; viewers are left to question how often Black and Brown bodies must distort their true selves to be embraced, accepted, or even seen, in the spaces they are part of.



left to right:
Abiose Spriggs, *Untitled (3)*; *Untitled (2)*; *Untitled (6)*;
Untitled (9); *Untitled (8)*; *Untitled (7)*; *Untitled (5)*

Taken collectively, the paintings of Abiose Spriggs—densely wrought at an intimate scale—form a notational outline of the diffuse and cyclical trajectories of the artist’s most immediate musings. With the familiarity of repeated phrases, Spriggs follows recurring threads of thought—circling always back to the indeterminate outlines that give new shapes to ideas of blackness, and the question of what it means to be Black—which solidify into possible conclusions with each new painting.

One day’s answer is never so unshakable that it satisfies scale and the scope of questions that follow the next day. The frequency of repeated imagery provides markers for where those threads of thought linger and search for purchase—most overt in a series of Untitled monochromatic paintings that revisit Kerry James Marshall’s figure in his 1980 painting, *The Artist as a Shadow of His Former Self*. Each painting voices emphatic allegiance to its own tube-fresh palette. The near-flat surface holds the buildup of painterly shapes while efficiently-gouged contours outline figures and landscapes that once recorded, document a single entry in Spriggs’ chronicle of lived experience.





Frederick Wright Jones, *The Devil is in the Detail*

Frederick Wright Jones

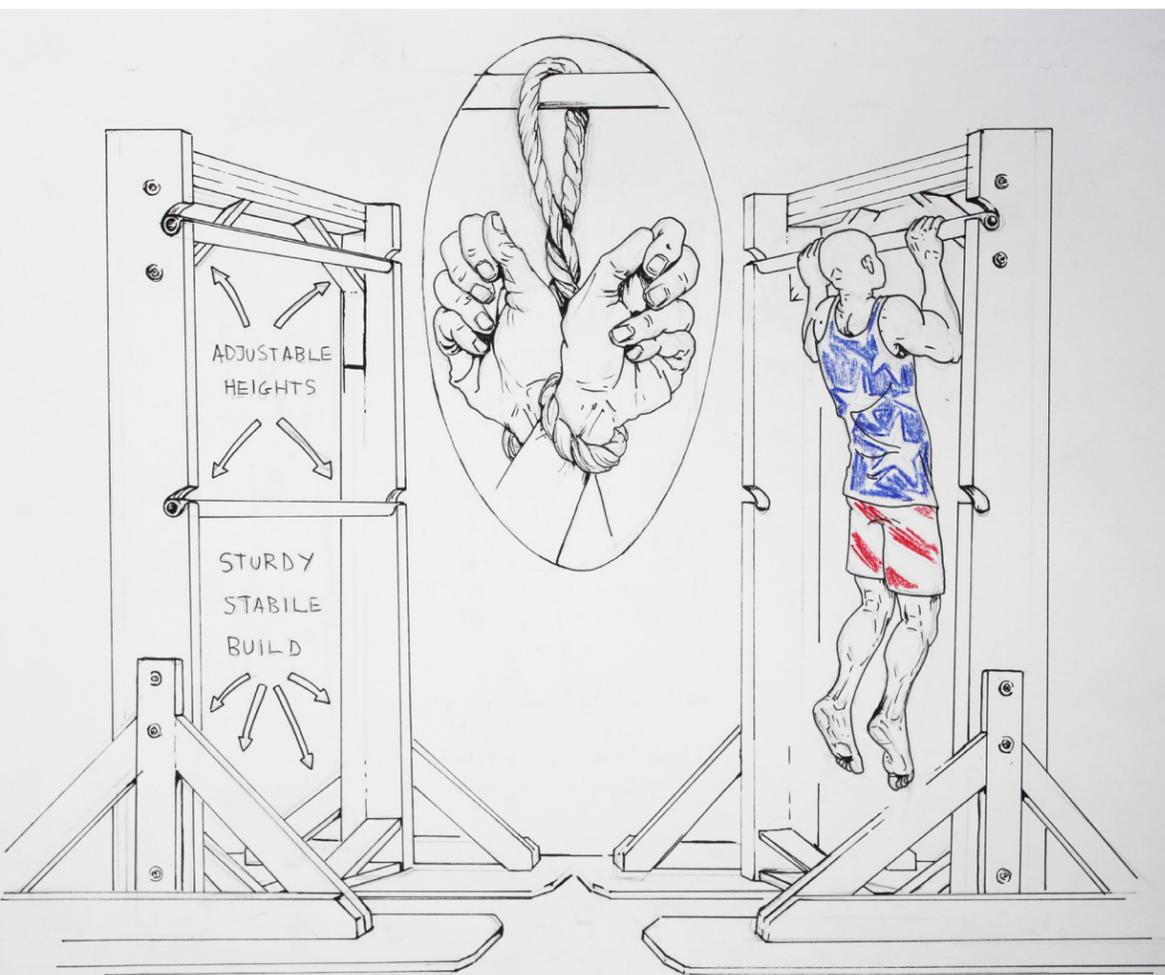
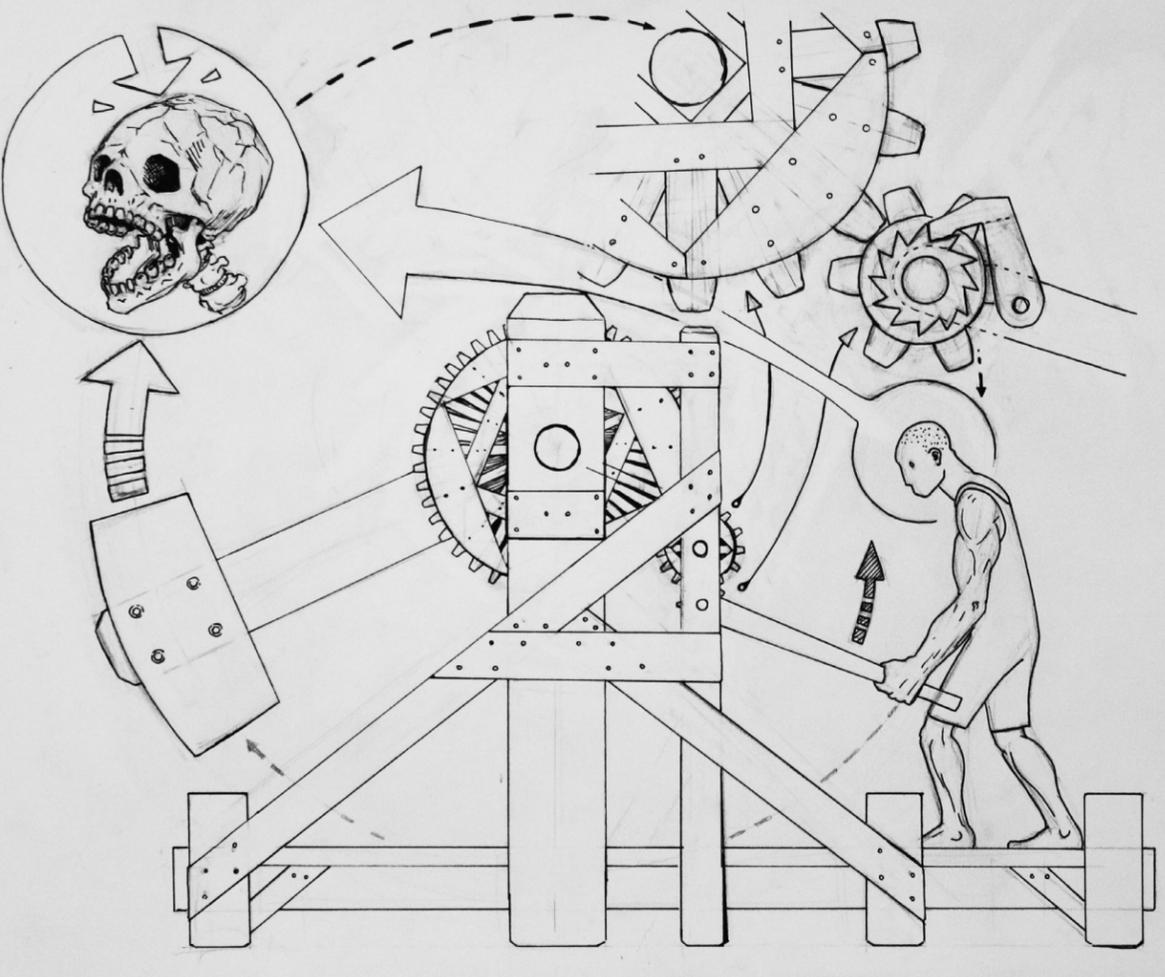
Rebecca Wing

A familiar form from the “good old days” of American industry, the *Devil is in the Detail* is a reproduction of the many water-powered flour mills that populated rural Pennsylvania in the 18th and 19th centuries. These mills were part of an early industrial system in which grain and flour commodities, produced in abolitionist, Quaker Pennsylvania, were destined for the Caribbean, where enslaved peoples were worked in the agricultural production of tobacco and sugar.

Global markets, and the distance between them, provide a troubling veil of abstraction, obscuring some of the violence embedded in those dynamics.

The artist’s rendition shares a particular end goal with its many predecessors—the maker’s design serves to make it functionally viable. Jones’ self-annihilating *Skullcrusher* (an earlier working title) confounds the productive purpose of such a tool and makes clear the immediacy in the cause-effect relationship between production and destruction.





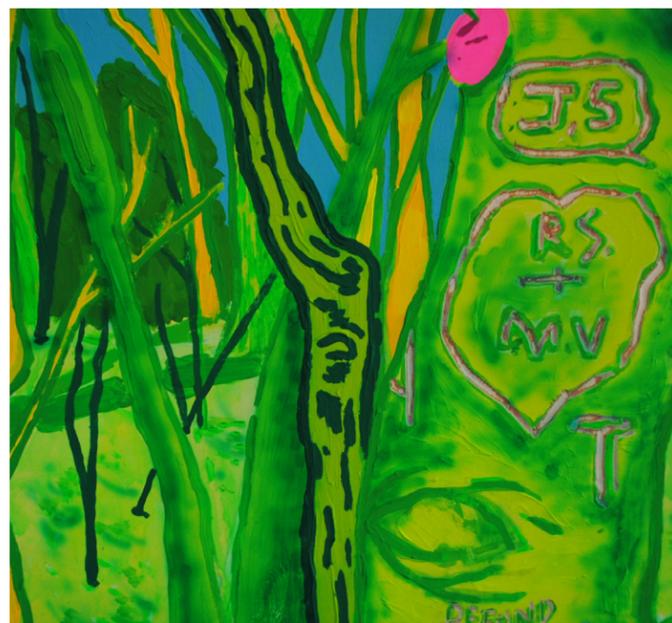
left to right:
Frederick Wright Jones, *Skullcrusher*; *N. Pain N. Gain 2*; *The Devil is in the Detail*

Previous page:
Frederick Wright Jones, *The Devil is in the Detail*

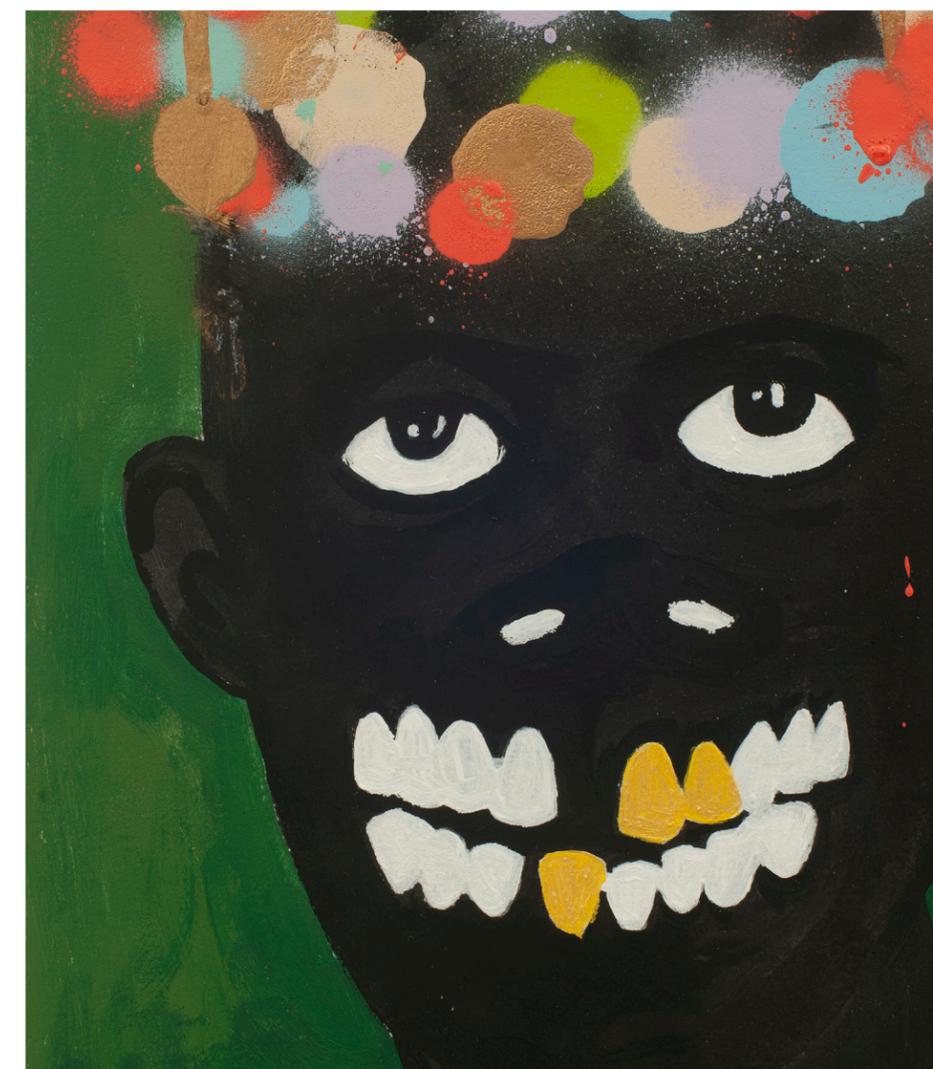
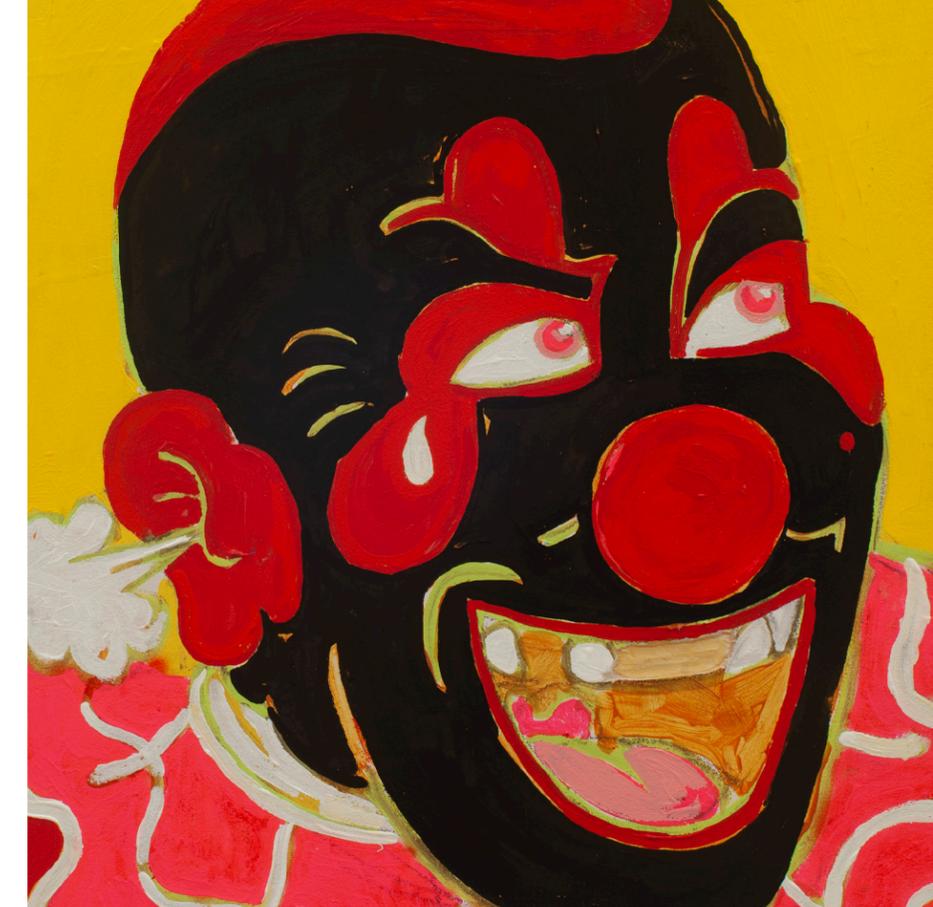


Installation shot, East Gallery

left to right:
Abiose Spriggs, *Thieves in the night*; *illevillians*; *SATRN*;
Django (kid); *Disco Devil*; *Surviving the Times*; *Untitled (10)*



ALL THESE
LIS TEN TO HIS
IMM PORTANT
MEME S SA GE VOUR
FAMV TERT AIM ENT
WILL DR ESU ME

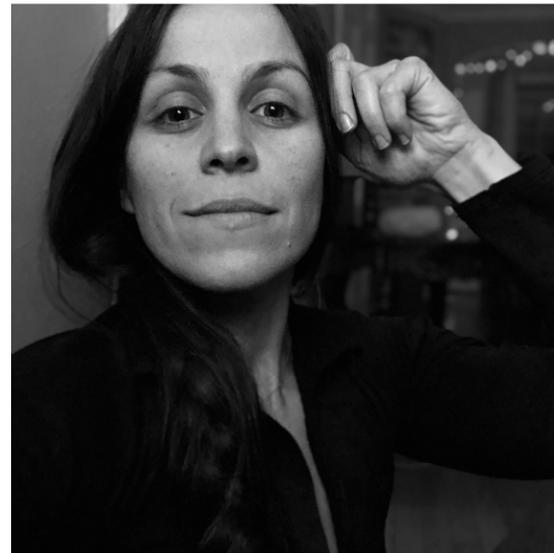




Installation shot, East Gallery

Previous page: left to right:
Masha Sha, *Important Message*;
Abiose Spriggs, *Don't Gas Me*; *More teeth please*

Artist Bios



Alice Alexandrescu

Since 2009, Alice Alexandrescu has side-stepped her way from Military Service to Media Art Education, to Sustainability Activism, to Children and Family Mental Health Work, to Personally Healing as a Veteran. Along the journey, Alice's connection based media art practice has been charting the mysterious territory of "Behavioral Aesthetics" which she defines as creating aesthetic purpose from the present scenario and materials available. Alice's approach occupies the interstitium between reality and meaning making. She sources matter for her work based on what matters to her and the immediate social circumstances of an artistic event. Breathing and Personal Defense are her current contemplations.

In 2020 Alice was awarded 3rd place in the National Veterans Art Festival for her piece entitled "888 Paper Cranes," which she gradually completed while hospitalized for PTSD saying, "during my treatment, crushing waves of emotion, thought and sensation were delicately folded into each crane." As of 2018 Alice's work can be viewed on her Instagram where she displays her studio and research methodology as a public living journal in video and photography. She is based in Buffalo, NY.



Cecily Culver

Cecily Culver is an interdisciplinary artist; she creates experiential, sculptural works. Cecily holds a Bachelors of Fine Arts from Rochester Institute of Technology and a Masters of Fine Arts, in Sculpture, from Arizona State University. Cecily currently maintains her studio practice from Rochester, NY, where she also serves as faculty in the College of Art and Design at Rochester Institute of Technology.



Annette Daniels Taylor

Annette Daniels Taylor is an award winning playwright, poet, author, actor and artist-filmmaker. As a native of Staten Island, she attended multiple colleges in the NYC metropolitan area including the Borough of Manhattan Community College, Fashion Institute of Technology and City College. Daniels Taylor took courses in pattern making, draping, millinery, art history, drawing and performance. In 2015, she received a BA in Performance and Communications from Empire State College. Recently, in 2018, Daniels Taylor was a MFA candidate of Media Arts Production at the State University of New York at Buffalo (conferred 5/2019). As a media maker she has studied with artist-filmmaker Isaac Julien, Sarah Elder, Teri Rueb, Sama Waham, and Bruce Jackson. Her cinematic poems are screened and exhibited internationally.

Daniels Taylor has received multiple fellowships and awards, including the 2018-19 New York State Public Humanities fellow (2018-2019) and the Arthur A. Schomburg fellow with the Department of Media Study (2016-2018). She is a three time NYSCA awarded artist. Daniels Taylor won the 2008 Artie Award for Outstanding New Play, *A Little Bit of Paradise*; the 2008 Moms Who Rock award for poetry by the Motherhood Foundation; nominated for Best Actress Artie Award in 2009, for her role as Mama Nadi in Lynn Nottage's *Ruined*; and the Sista's award in 2016 for community activism.



Jason Livingston

Jason Livingston is a media artist, writer, and film programmer. He is currently pursuing a practice-based PhD as a Presidential Fellow with the Department of Media Study at the University at Buffalo.

Livingston graduated from Cornell University with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy. He then received his Master of Arts and Master of Fine Arts Cinema degrees from the University of Iowa.

His work ranges from experimental nonfiction films featuring protest movements to poetic engagements with language and landscape. Several of his films have been shown at festivals and venues, including the Rotterdam International Film Festival, Anthology Film Archives, Austrian Film Museum, Margaret Mead Film Festival, and Ann Arbor.



Tara Najd Ahmadi

Born in Tehran and based in Vienna, Tara Najd Ahmadi is a filmmaker and writer. Her essay films and art projects have been shown in various festivals and venues including Edinburgh International Film Festival and International Short Film Festival Oberhausen. In August 2019 she received her doctorate degree in Visual and Cultural Studies from the University of Rochester, where she investigated the notion of “incomplete and unfinished” in art projects and films. While living and working in Rochester, Tara was awarded the George Eastman Museum graduate fellowship (2016-2018) and the New York State Council on the Arts Media Arts Assistance Fund (2017).



SV Randall

SV Randall is an interdisciplinary artist from Buffalo, NY. He received his MFA in Sculpture + Extended Media from VCU and his BFA from Alfred University. His work has been exhibited at David & Schweitzer Contemporary, Brooklyn, NY; the El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, TX; Ditch Projects, Eugene, OR; and the Museo de Arte de Ciudad Juárez in Mexico. SV is the recipient of the Toby Devin Lewis Fellowship Award and has most recently participated in residencies at the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture (Skowhegan, ME), Sculpture Space (Utica, NY), the Fine Arts Work Center (Provincetown, MA), the Vermont Studio Center (Johnson, VT), the Roswell Artist-in-Residence Program (Roswell, NM), and he is currently an Assistant Professor of Visual and Performing Arts at the University of at Texas at Dallas.



Margaret Schrecongost

Margaret Schrecongost is a painter who works in both large scale figurative narrative, and multimedia collage. She earned her BFA in Painting and Drawing at Alfred University in 2016. Since graduating she has attended residencies at the Vermont Studio Center, Cite' Internationale des Arts in Paris, and most recently at Herekeke in New Mexico in 2019. Margaret lives and works in Buffalo NY.



Masha Sha

Masha Sha was born in Chukotka, RU in 1982. She graduated from Pro Arte Institute, St. Petersburg, RU (2005), and received an MFA from the University at Buffalo, NY (2010). Masha then completed The L. Jeffrey Selznick School of Film Preservation in Rochester, NY (2011). She primarily works in the mediums of drawing and video. Masha received the International Award of Recognition from STRABAG in Vienna, Austria (2014) as well as the Young Artist Prize for "Innovation" in Moscow, Russia (2006). She is currently a resident artist at The R.A.i.R Foundation in Roswell, New Mexico.



Abiose Spriggs

Rochester, NY based painter, Abiose Spriggs, has lived and worked in the Western New York area for over 5 years now. With pictorial flatness and often using un-mixed paint colors from the tube, he invites viewers into his headspace heavily shaped by technology, music, and current affairs (locally and globally). Focusing primarily on his contemporary portraits of imaginary figures adorned with hats and gapped teeth, clowns, and militaristic monochromatic images of young men. His interest in “the artist hand” and his natural surroundings, often produce landscapes focused on trees where people have left marks, tags, or names.

“I have been afraid for many years of achieving my dream as an artist, and I no longer fear failure. Thank you for the opportunity.” - Abiose



Frederick Wright Jones

Frederick was born in Boyertown, Pennsylvania. Growing up a light-skinned African-American and then living as a foreigner in Germany, motivates his work. The uniqueness of each place, the parallels and slight cultural shift between New and Old Worlds—Europe, with its varied levels of reconciliation with past atrocities, and America with its history split along color lines—leaves Frederick floating in the Atlantic. He has found a home in the identity of the eternal outsider, from there exploring how notions of power, guilt, duty, and entitlement define citizenship.

Frederick Wright Jones is currently an assistant professor of sculpture at Muhlenberg College in Allentown, PA. Having studied at Rhode Island School of Design and the University of Pennsylvania, he received his MFA from SUNY Buffalo. On his way to teaching, alongside raising a family and continuing his artistic research, Frederick Wright Jones has 13 years of experience working as a rope-supported arborist. The inherent risks, team oriented dynamic, exposure to the elements, and intensity with material connected to urban forestry, all feed into his sculptural practice.

Curator Bios

Tiffany Gaines

Tiffany Gaines (b. 1995) is a writer, curator, and multimedia creator. She is interested in highlighting the diverse arts and artists of her community through her curatorial work, content creation, and writing. As an artist and creative, her practice explores the intersections of narrative, history, and possibility with understanding her identity as a Black woman in America. Currently she serves as the Curatorial and Digital Content Associate at the Burchfield Penney Art Center. She holds a BA in Journalism from SUNY Buffalo State.

Katharine Gaudy

Katharine Gaudy (b. 1985) is an artist and curator. Her sculptures and performances rely heavily on material transformations to express a state of abjection. As a curator, she focuses on contemporary artists that are nonconformists and provocative in their approach to making. She holds an MFA in Fine Art (2017) and BA in Art History (2008) from the State University of New York at Buffalo. In addition to creating various underground happenings she has exhibited and curated exhibitions at the Burchfield-Penney Art Center, Big Orbit Gallery, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo Arts Studio, Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center and the UB Art Galleries.

Zainab Saleh

Zainab Saleh (b. 1985) is a writer, curator, and community organizer based in Buffalo, NY. She holds a Masters degree in Visual and Cultural Studies from the University of Rochester where she co-founded “On Film,” a film series that aims to exhibit rarely-seen work in their original formats. Through her work at Partnership for the Public Good and Frontline Arts Buffalo, she stays actively involved in the fight for equal opportunity and representation for artists of color and those from frontline communities.

Dana Tyrrell

Dana Tyrrell is an artist, curator, and writer from Niagara Falls, New York. A graduate of University at Buffalo (2015), and Guggenheim Fellow-In-Waiting (2033), Tyrrell’s artwork has been exhibited throughout Western New York and is held in the permanent collections of the Castellani Art Museum, the University at Buffalo, the Pride Center of Western New York, and the State University of New York at Fredonia. Past curatorial projects include exhibitions with the Castellani Art Museum, and non/profit galleries throughout Western New York. In 2018 he was selected as Curatorial Resident as part of Squeaky Wheel Film and Media Art Center’s “Workspace Residency.” This residency was in support of new research on queer bodily legibility within contemporary media art. His arts writing has appeared in Cornelia, Buffalo Rising, and University at Buffalo publications, among others.

Rebecca Wing

Rebecca Wing is a visual artist who lives and works in Buffalo, NY. She received her BFA in Sculpture and BA in Art History from the University at Buffalo. Most recently, a solo exhibition of her work titled Soft Things Rigidly was shown at BOX Gallery in Buffalo in early 2018. Wing is the Art Education Coordinator and Curatorial Assistant at Hallwalls Contemporary Arts Center, where she is involved with the visual arts programming. In 2015–17, she co-curated Amid/In WNY, an eight-part series of exhibitions at Hallwalls, with John Massier and Kyle Butler. Her writing about artists, works, and the series as a whole is included in the Amid/In WNY catalogue.

Artwork

Alice Alexandrescu

Breath Easy [1-8], 2020, ink on paper. Courtesy of the artist.

Cecily Culver

2nd Ave Manhole, 2015-16, Concrete over armature, speakers, mylar, tft screens, digital video and digital audio recorded from the interior of a manhole on 2nd Avenue in Sunset Park of Brooklyn in the spring of 2015. Courtesy of the artist.

Palm Creep, 2015; Chicken Foot palm frond, concrete over armature, motor and other electronics, 36 x 55 x 7 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Annette Daniels Taylor

My Neighborhood (still), 2018; digital video with sound; Courtesy of the artist.

The Fillmore Strip (still), 2018; digital video with sound; Courtesy of the artist.

Jason Livingston

Goodbye, World!, 2021; networked installation (toy taxidermy, custom electronics, real time data), in collaboration with Jason Geistweidt. Courtesy of the artists.

Yoga Goat Nom Nom, 2019; video, 3 min, 44 sec; Courtesy of the artist.

Tara Najd Ahmadi

A Week with Azar (still), 2018, Digital and 16mm film.

Productive Frustration (still), 2016; stop motion animation, digital and 16mm film, 13 mins, 30 sec; Courtesy of the artist.

Three Minutes of Headless Life (still), 2015; Stop motion animation on 16mm film, 2 mins, 25 sec; Courtesy of the artist.

SV Randall

Entangled Hunters, 2020; acrylic on Polystyrene, 294 x 168 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

My Left Eye, 2018; mixed media.

Margaret Schrecongost

Cheat Day in the Park, 2016; oil on canvas, 67 x 53 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Dream Home Disaster, 2016; oil on canvas, 48 x 72 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Loss, 2019; acrylic on paper, 14 x 17 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Red Flag, 2019; oil on canva, 69 x 45 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Untitled, 2017; acrylic on paper, 17 x 14 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Masha Sha

Are We the People, 2019; crayon on paper, 30 x 196 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Important Message, 2020; ink on tracing paper, 115 x 96 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Killing Time, 2020; crayon on tracing paper, 46 x 36 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Notwithstanding, 2019; graphite on tracing paper, 64 x 128 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

One, 2019; graphite on tracing paper, 80 x 68 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Abiose Spriggs

brotherman, 2020; acrylic and gouache on panel, 11 x 14 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Disco Devil, 2020; acrylic and gouache on panel, 11 x 14 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Don't Gas Me, 2020; acrylic and gouache on panel, 8 x 10 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Fun Guy (for Edith), 2021; acrylic and gouache on panel, 11 x 14 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

monster, 2020; acrylic and gouache on panel, 8 x 10 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

More teeth please, 2020; acrylic, gouache and spray paint on panel, 8 x 10 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

rockstone, 2020; acrylic, gouache and glitter on panel, 11 x 14 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Surviving the Times, 2020; Acrylic and gouache on panel, 11 x 14 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Untitled, 2018; gouache on illustration board, 8 x 10 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Untitled (1-10), 2018; gouache on illustration board, 8 x 10 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Frederick Wright Jones

Blueprint for Survival- There Are No Screams in Space (Beyoncé + Jay-Z), 2021; wood, clay, pigment, mirror, 84 x 23 x 21 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

N. Pain N. Gain 3, 2018; pen, ink, pencil, 14 x 17 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

N. Pain N. Gain 2, 2018; pen, ink, pencil, 14 x 17 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

Skullcrusher, 2018; pen, ink, pencil, 14 x 17 inches; Courtesy of the artist.

The Devil is in the Detail, 2020; wood, bolts, screws 120 x 144 x 120 inches, 10 ft x 12 ft x 10 ft; Courtesy of the artist.



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