



**we
hold
these
truths.**

**2026 Access/VSA Emerging
Young Artists Program**

**Exhibit
Catalog**

**Large
Print**



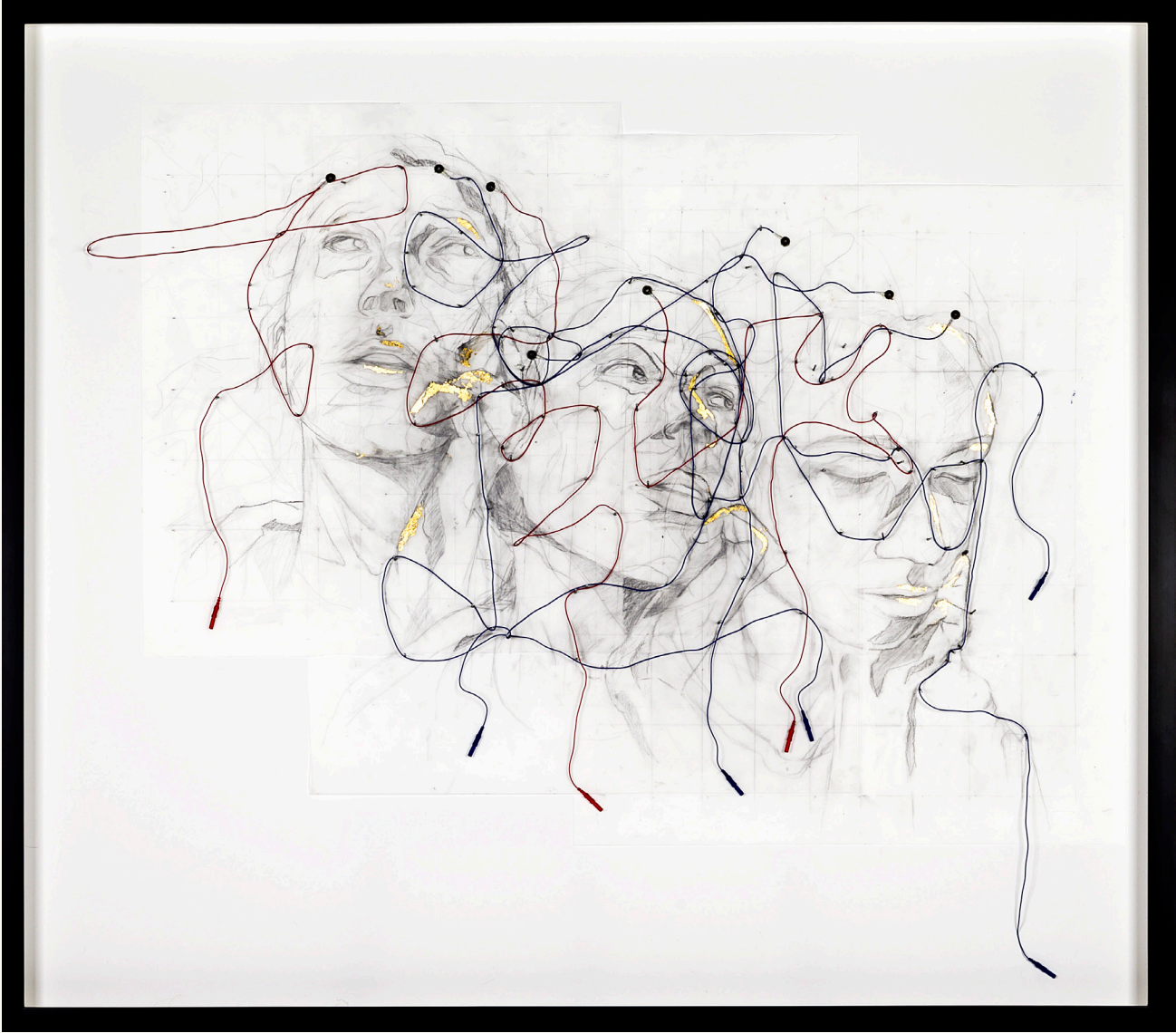
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We Hold These Truths is the 22nd exhibit presented as part of the Access/VSA Emerging Young Artists Program, a Jean Kennedy Smith Arts and Disability Program. This national art career development program and exhibition features fifteen artists with disabilities, ages 16-25. Each artist's unique individual talent, mode of expression, and view of the world is highlighted and valued. With this exhibition, we aim to amplify the work of artists with disabilities throughout the United States, positioning them to broaden our understanding of disability and the arts.

This year's theme, ***We Hold These Truths***, invites artists to explore how the truths that they hold dear engage with their disability and artistic identities. We hope that as you view the work and learn more about these incredible young artists you are inspired to consider what personal truths ring most true to you in this historic moment marking the United States' 250th anniversary.



Anika Brown

UTAH · AGE 25

Benign

graphite, EEG wires, nails

24" x 42" x .25"

2023

Biography

Anika Brown addresses disability and pain in her oil paintings and mixed media installations. She draws from her experience with chronic illness and her recovery following a brain surgery in 2019.

In her work *Benign*, Anika has used EEG wires to contrast against fragile,

semi-transparent portraits. Reminiscent of pinned butterflies, over 100 nails are shoved through the faces. In this way, she studies the contrast between internal and external experiences in the body.

She hopes that her work can create a sense of community and understanding. Anika has a bachelor's degree in Fine Art from Brigham Young University. She is currently based in Utah.

Artist Statement

I am a painter who explores the vulnerability, grief, and hope associated with chronic pain. Disability is isolating. For those who experience this pain, I hope they see my art and feel seen in return.

But even those without debilitating conditions will experience pain. All of us will feel grief as our bodies age and change. In this way, I hope everyone can recognize themselves in my art.



PHOTO: ANIKA BROWN





Catie Cook

MISSOURI · AGE 24

Bred To Be Beautiful

oil on canvas

64" x 54" x 1.5"

2024

Biography

Catie Cook is a figurative oil painter raised in Gainesville, GA. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from The University of Georgia with an emphasis in painting, art history, and museum studies, and a Master of Fine Arts from the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts in St. Louis, Missouri. Cook's work has been exhibited across the east coast and the midwest including at Future Fair in New York City, The Kemper Art Museum in Saint Louis, and The New York Academy of Art, in New York City. Professionally, Cook is a Part-time Lecturer in the Painting Department at WashU's Sam Fox School. She has worked as a mural painter for Color The World Bright and as a member of the Director's Advisory Committee for The Mildred Lane Kemper

Art Museum. Notably, Cook's master copy of Van Gogh's *Stairway at Auvers*, created for programming for visually impaired museum guests, is a part of the Education Department's collection at The Saint Louis Art Museum. She is a Recipient of the The Laura and William Jens Scholarship at Washington University in St. Louis, and was awarded the 2025 Graduate Thesis Production Grant.

Artist Statement

Inspired by my upbringing in the American South, surrounded by the pageantry of the church, debutante culture, and beauty pageants, my paintings harness the symbol of the stage as a metaphor for the performativity of gender.

In my theatrical oil paintings, alluring imagery of lush curtains and white fur beckon the viewer into an uncanny narrative. The Dalmatian, a recurring character in my paintings, explores the parallel performances of beauty between show dogs and southern women. As my dogs snarl, pose, and leap across staged scenes reminiscent of the theatre, I weave uncanny narratives wrought with themes of control, beauty, and artifice, questioning the ways in which our patriarchal society demands performance and perfection. As the daughter of a scenic designer, I am drawn to the language of theatre — idealized imagery and carefully constructed scenes that, though imitating reality, often



PHOTO: CAITLIN CUSTER

feel eerie and artificial. Through the strangeness of a drape of fabric or illusion of stage lighting, there is a lingering reminder that my characters are performing for your gaze — a feeling emblematic of the female experience. Ultimately my work examines the antithetical nature of girlhood and asks the viewer to consider whether there can be room for both celebration and critique of femininity.



Cora Feist

MINNESOTA · AGE 21

The Sign Painter

acrylic on paper

20" x 16"

2025

Biography

Cora Feist has always had a keen eye for capturing the soul of her subjects. Currently based in Minneapolis and studying for her BFA degree, she has a fixation on color and acrylic painting. She typically starts her pieces with a vivid base color and works in layers to slowly develop the image. With this approach, every brush stroke contributes to the depth and complexity of the final painting. The semi-transparent quality of each layer allows the previous ones to shine through, often leaving hints of the base color peeking out as well. The glow this process creates contributes heavily to the near dream-like quality of Cora's work. With her studies, she hopes to refine this technique and hone her artistic voice until it speaks all on its own.

Artist Statement

I live, breathe, and love art, more than anything. I've been drawing longer than I can remember and, since my youth, my mind has been teeming with possibilities. This constant flow of ideas always felt like an endless well of inspiration, until it seemed more so like another sign of ADHD. I've learned to accept the persistence of my thoughts as being both a blessing and inhibition at the same time. I often find myself moving from project to project faster than I can complete them. For personal work, this never bothered me much, as I know my best ideas are always the ones that I'll come back to. However, when working on commissioned work, it makes the process quite disheartening. Without much spare time left for me

to create in a day, I often end up feeling depressed when I'm obligated to create things that are intended to generate profit for businesses. *The Sign Painter* was my way of processing these conflicting feelings that arise when having to balance both your passion and profession together as one. These incredibly heavy and complex emotions that stem from life under capitalism, and all those other feelings that are too nuanced for simple discussion, are what I am most driven to capture within my work.



PHOTO: MORGAN CONVERSE,
CONVERSE CANDIDS
PHOTOGRAPHY



Emerson Buffalow

PENNSYLVANIA · AGE 23

American Dream

silkscreen print and embroidery on denim

23.5" x 35" x 0.25"

2024

Biography

Emerson Buffalow is a multidisciplinary artist whose work centers around the hidden infrastructures of the fashion industry. Her work develops from interdisciplinary experiences during her time at Franklin & Marshall College. A bachelor's degree

in psychology, environmental studies, and studio art combined to shape a critical practice grounded in human behavior, ecological systems, and material experimentation. Her work has been selected and featured in Franklin & Marshall College's 2023 and 2024 Winter72 Art Show and in Franklin & Marshall College's 2024 Senior Capstone Exhibition, *beyond the frame*.

Artist Statement

I use discarded clothing and accessories in my work to question the sustainability of the fashion industry. My work is an examination of humans' rejected items and how to give them new life. Doing so goes against the typical dynamic of our disposable society. Addressing sustainability conceptually and physically, my work retains items' original construction to engage viewers with familiar objects or deconstructs them to question production, fashion, and consumerism. My ideas often originate from lived experience and pop culture, including sayings, books, and music, which I use to draw



PHOTO: JOE KELLY

viewers in before adding underlying meaning through form and material. While my projects begin with intention, the process frequently becomes improvisational as materials respond dynamically. In *American Dream*, I used a discarded pair of U.S. Polo Association jeans to juxtapose the brand's American identity and their outsourcing of garment production.



Erin Grimshaw

UTAH · AGE 18

She'll Be Fine

watercolor

11" x 14" x 1"

2025

Biography

Erin Grimshaw is a visual artist who primarily works in colored pencil, with occasional use of other mediums. Her work often reflects personal experiences and focuses on themes of identity, growth, and resilience. Diagnosed with a learning disability at a young age, Erin grew up navigating academic

challenges that were not always visible to others. Art became a space where she felt capable and in control. What started as doodling during class became a meaningful way to express herself without the pressure of grades or performance. Erin plans to pursue a career in art therapy and hopes to work in a children's hospital, helping young patients use creativity as a way to process and express their emotions.

Artist Statement

My piece is a watercolor painting of my eye as a young child, layered with the repeated words “She’ll be fine.” This phrase represents what my mom was told when I was diagnosed with a learning disability. It was meant to be reassuring, but it also carried uncertainty about what that would actually mean for me. Growing up with an invisible disability shaped my experience in school. Many of my challenges were not obvious, but they affected



PHOTO: CAMILLE GRIMSHAW

my confidence and how I saw myself academically. Art became a place where I did not feel defined by what I struggled with. It was something I could do freely and confidently. Although I primarily work in colored pencil, I chose watercolor for this piece because of how it layers and blends. The softness of the medium allowed the text and image to interact in a way that feels subtle but intentional.



Giusiana Prosser

WASHINGTON · AGE 22

Pressure

acrylic paint on stretched canvas

20" x 16" x 1"

2023

Biography

Giusiana Prosser explores the depth of the reality of life-altering illness with her work. As a multimedia artist working primarily in acrylic, each brushstroke is intentional. She uses deep blues and gray hues, translating fatigue, resilience, and loss into a visual form. Her work articulates physical grief and persistent pain into composed, immersive pieces that invite contemplation. Alongside her art, she is active in the medical advocacy community, where she combines storytelling, visual work, and public outreach to support patients, reform care, and advocate for ongoing patient-centered policy

change efforts. Giusiana's commitment to advocacy heavily bleeds into her art. She aims to use her paintings as another outreach, with her work acting as a visual voice for those whose struggles remain invisible. Giusiana Prosser is an internationally collected artist with collectors in over eight countries and an award-winning rare disease advocate. Her future goals include growing her organization, Rare Living Foundation, dedicated to public awareness and patient resources, and to never stop advocating for the voiceless and invisible in her art and community.

Artist Statement

My work is influenced by my lived experiences navigating a world that was not made to accommodate bodies like mine. It reflects the tension of inhabiting spaces and systems that systematically overlook people who don't fit in the narrow space of what is "normal." I employ contemporary abstract elements and deep, cool colors in expressive figures to portray this tension. Painting, for me, is a way of creating a visual form for experiences that are otherwise invisible; the fragility of life, the heaviness of loss. My pieces are often portraits of the female figure, capturing experiences that words often fail to capture.



*PHOTO: STARLA SHAULIS
PHOTOGRAPHY*

The reality of disease is often an uncomfortable topic and my pieces reflect that discomfort. My work asks the viewer to confront what it means to live with pain, sometimes without hope of relief. It features tortured bodies and medical equipment playing the role of instruments of pain rather than healing.



Isaac Stern

WISCONSIN · AGE 25

CFZ(S) Spine Sample

agar agar, copper, wood, acrylic

3' x 1.5' x 8"

2025

Biography

Isaac Stern is a metalsmith and interdisciplinary artist who explores how medical imaging and biomaterials craft the experience of the disabled body through installation. He translates scientific data into sculptural objects that challenge the medical gaze by re-embodiment experiences that are often abstract or invisible. He is currently pursuing his MFA at the Maine College of Art & Design after earning a BFA in Metalsmithing & Jewelry from the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater, under the mentorship of Teresa Faris.

Artist Statement

My practice investigates how crafted forms within an installation can collapse the distinction between the observer and observee. Grounded in the scientific literature on CFZ(S), Carey-Fineman-Ziter Syndrome, my work acknowledges the precision of molecular diagnosis while refusing its distance from embodiment. Through material, I translate genetic mutations into macro forms that resist fixity. Influenced by Ian Hodder's theory of entanglement, I treat diagnostic technologies as forces that actively shape the narrative of identity. In response, craft becomes a critical methodology in what Glenn Adamson terms "material thinking," where slow, iterative handwork disrupts the medicalized demand for

productivity and resolution. Rather than reproducing the medical body from data imaging, I invite a sense of self that the processes of diagnostics often exclude. By reframing the visual language of dimly lit displays, my installations confront institutional authority; creating a space where the specimen and the viewer may reflect on one another. In alignment with Amanda Cachia and Azia Lafleur, my work insists that disabled bodies are not merely objects of study, but producers of knowledge; simultaneously interested in authoring their own visibility, capable of re-embodiment, following the aftermath of becoming the specimen.



*PHOTO: BENJAMIN
STORBAKKEN*



Juliana Scheopner

NEBRASKA · AGE 23

Psychosomatic Triptych: Grief, Anxiety, Stress

watercolor

10" x 24"

2024

Biography

Juliana Scheopner is a printmaker, curator, advocate, scientist, and lover of nuance. Her work addresses lived experiences with dynamic disability, documenting moments of joy, frustration, and absurdity. She is drawn to the nuance inherent to these disability experiences. Through artwork and conversation, she dreams of a more understanding, empathetic, and accessible world. Her work crosses disciplines as she seeks to understand how people process and respond to complex ideas. She has exhibited nationally and internationally, curated exhibitions, taught workshops, and advocated for access and inclusion. She is based in Omaha, NE, pursuing dual degrees at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. She will graduate in May with a

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Art, a Bachelor of Science in Psychology, and a minor in Art History. She finds great satisfaction in the intersection of art, science, and the relentless pursuit of hope.

Artist Statement

My hand-produced prints focus on my experiences as a dynamically disabled woman. The experience of disability is often misunderstood or perceived as one-dimensional, but reality is complex: the positive, negative, and neutral aspects of disability are all worthy of inclusion. Borrowing the idea of embodiment from disability studies, my creative practice relies on the connection between somatic experiences, environment, process, and rhythm. At

every stage, I manipulate materials with my hands to create a connection with the viewer. The physicality of interacting with materials is what draws me to the process of printmaking. My artwork is a way of documenting and sharing memories of growing up disabled, interactions with people, and emotions. I explore ableism — structural, attitudinal, and internalized — while imagining and creating a world where inclusivity is prioritized. I frequently combine handwritten text and visual imagery, often collecting quotes from people who encounter my disability. Using these direct reactions to disability allows me to point out the frustration, absurdity, and humor of daily life with dynamic disability. My artwork and community-engaged practice leans into the tension between



*PHOTO: LUIS ANGEL
BUSTAMANTE SALGADO*

the world as I see it now and my hopes for a more accessible future. I am deeply inspired by disability rights activists and printmakers throughout history who used the tools at their disposal to advocate for the world that they wanted. I am both an artist and an advocate. Because I am an artist, my advocacy can speak to people I will never meet, and because I am an advocate, my art has something to say.



Katherine Gilchrist

PENNSYLVANIA · AGE 17

Ab Aqua Libertas (From Water Comes Freedom)

fabric, scoliosis brace

50" x 16" x 16"

2025

Biography

Katherine Gilchrist is a 17-year-old fashion designer from the Lehigh Valley in Pennsylvania. Katherine's experiences with early onset juvenile scoliosis and ADHD shape her designs. Since age seven, scoliosis required her to wear a rigid, corset-like brace for 23 hours per day, designed to control the S-curve of her spine. In response, Katherine's

designs focus on balancing freedom with strength. Her works incorporate her ongoing research on textiles at Lehigh University by experimenting with flow and structure. Katherine received a National Gold Medal from the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards and her work was featured at the Scholastic Art National Exhibit in NYC. She is currently a high school senior planning to continue arts and disability advocacy into college.

Artist Statement

I am mesmerized by the effortless movement of draped fabric, its ability to express everything I feel internally but cannot physically embody. Over the years, each time I outgrew a brace, it felt like shedding a skin. These “shedded skins,” alongside hundreds of old sketches (products of my ADHD), mark the stages of my artistic and personal metamorphosis. They show how each limitation pushed



PHOTO: LISA TAN

me to develop a stronger creative voice. *Ab Aqua Libertas* translated means “from water comes freedom.” Rather than hiding my scoliosis brace, the dress is designed to showcase my secret. This was the first time I designed an outfit *for* my brace, not designed *in spite of* my brace.



Kilaine Shelley

FLORIDA · AGE 24

Double Crossed (Symptoms no. 6)

charcoal and ink wash on paper

9" x 6.5"

2024

Biography

Kilaine Shelley is a queer, disabled painter and draftsman based in Orlando, Florida. Their introspective work positions the body within intimate spaces to address their relationship

with care, pain, and illness. They graduated from the University of Central Florida with a Bachelor's of Fine Arts in Studio Art, specializing in drawing and painting. Their work has been shown at the UCF Gallery, The Chained Gallery, and Surfing Florida Museum.

Artist Statement

My work contrasts unforgiving ink washes with fragile, memory-like charcoal to communicate my experience with chronic illness and traumatic stress. The drawings and paintings reconcile my past and present to address dissonant relationships with the body and mind, inviting the viewer into private everyday scenes related to my disability that may not otherwise seem medical.



PHOTO: KALEI DELACRUZ

Through fragmented layers of charcoal, I explore the anger, grief, and surprising tenderness that can come alongside being sick. In response, I ask the viewer to question and engage with their own relationship with care, illness, power, and pain.



Kit Davenport

MARYLAND · AGE 22

Breathe

ceramics

10" x 10" x 1"

2024

Biography

Kit Davenport, a multidisciplinary artist located in Baltimore, Maryland, explores the spiritual connection between the human body and the Earth. Her work develops from an intrinsic fascination with symbiotic relationships as seen in the human ecosystem. In *Breathe*, the figure emerges resting against gentle hands, surrounded by a cascade of

flowing plants, conveying a serene calm evocative of nature's beauty. Her work portrays the grandiosity of our simple existence. She hopes that her work helps others recognize their humanity through universal symbols. Kit is currently finishing her Bachelor of Fine Arts in General Fine Arts and Master of Arts in Teaching at Maryland Institute College of Art, and plans to become an exhibiting artist and educator.

Artist Statement

In my work, I explore the relationship between the human body and the Earth — exploring the spiritual connection through universal themes of life and death. Portraiture captures the feeling of grandiosity when standing next to the Earth's infinite attributes. Using the figure is an intentional choice that allows the rest of the composition to flow with gentle abstraction. This allows me to create a balance of slow curves and sharp edges, that contrast beautifully against the raw umber of the clay. I have always



PHOTO: KIT DAVENPORT

had an intrinsic fascination with human connection that leads me to my creative practice beyond the studio and into the world. While my work is of our material existence, ultimately, I am creating a space to reflect on our humanity. In doing so, I hope to bring forth a conversation about where that connection lies — and with whom.



Preston Lowe

ARKANSAS · AGE 18

Flip Side

acrylic on canvas

40.50" x 30.87" x 2"

2025

Biography

Preston Lowe is a painter and mixed-media artist whose work explores perception, identity, and the less visible ways people come to understand themselves, others, and their environments. Working across painting, mixed media, and textile-based approaches, his pieces often blend techniques and materials in unconventional

ways, encouraging viewers to sit closely with the work. Reflecting his lived experience as a neurodivergent artist, he seeks to discover how his materials guide the making of his work. For him, creating is a way to immerse himself in the world's intimate details through textures and process, while drawing connections between them. From Arkansas, Lowe plans to pursue a BFA in Visual Art.

Artist Statement

Noticing how small differences in what appears the same can allow individuality to emerge. In *Flip Side* I explored the ways attention can gather around what becomes visible and what remains hidden. Fascinated by an image I came across online, I made my own interpretation of two men wearing suits with their backs turned. This representation reflects how formal clothing influences how a person might seem to



PHOTO: AMBER LOWE

others, while also showing how clothing styled for fashion can subvert the expectations it carries. These insights highlight the unexpected roles everyday objects hold in influencing how people see — and are seen by — one another.



Sarah Hawkins

VIRGINIA • AGE 25

The Underneath

digital

2024

Biography

As an artist, I began making work as an outlet for my own emotions, as well as a way to communicate with the world. Thus, my work has always been heavily based on my subconscious. Themes that I focus on are how it feels to live inside of a body, the sensation of being covered in skin, having an external form, innocence, residual feelings from alienation and abuse, as well as living with chronic health issues and a disability. I received my BFA in Kinetic Imaging from VCUarts in 2022, and am set to receive my MFA in Experimental Animation from CalArts in 2026. Through

animation, video, three-dimensional objects and textiles, and still imagery, I focus on texture and detail in order to create an immersive message. Despite the medium, all of my pieces are primarily analogue or hand made. I fully believe in the healing nature of art and its ability to connect one to the self. Continuing to use tactile media acts as an extension of my body and mind, and grounds me to the physical world during a digital age. This surpasses words, and creates a level of empathy and understanding for each others' perspectives.

Artist Statement

The Underneath is a video piece that follows atypical bodies floating aimlessly in a small pool of water. The forms are drawn with graphite, and display bodies that reflect internal feelings of tension. Dongchen Zhu's accompanying soundtrack enhances the atmosphere and creates a feeling of unease surrounding the work. As someone that lives life with Ehlers-Danlos, I experience being in a body much differently than many other people. This video piece reflects my experience of discomfort and the feeling of "waiting." This piece captures the feeling that one is in limbo



PHOTO: SUDE ÖZ

while trying to participate in everyday life; the feeling of being suspended in liquid. The subject is trapped in a cycle that they both desperately want to be excused from, yet have the urge to fit into. This piece exhibits the emotions and discomfort that are constantly bubbling beneath the surface.



Saya Amend

OHIO • AGE 23

My Skin Doesn't Fit

clay, ribbon, beads

13" x 12" x 11"

2025

Biography

Saya Amend is a multimedia artist who focuses on exploring insecurities and illness derived from personal physiology. She paints her feelings and sculpts her experiences as a way of communicating when words fail her. She likes to distort the body in uncomfortable ways as a reflection of how uncomfortable her body makes others feel.

After Saya graduated from the University of Cincinnati with her BFA, she grew her position in a ceramic studio and took on a teaching position for the Cincinnati Adaptive Arts and

Music Camp, which focuses on adapting instruments and artist tools for kids with disabilities. Her stance is that all people, no matter their ability, should have the right to decide if they enjoy pottery or not.

Much of her work stems from her love of architecture and music. She explores gothic architecture and themes as a way to showcase technical ability. Her adoptive parents have encouraged the arts within her and her siblings and have been major influences on both her artistic and professional career.

Artist Statement

In my work, I explore insecurities derived from my personal physiology. I'm interested in breaking down the body into a man-made object — a piece of production that if it fails, it's rejected — to reflect what we as a society deem as invaluable. To achieve this, I focus on the medical disruption of the body and how it affects our perception of beauty. I use contrasting textures and materials to get my point across, such as imperfections being represented with recyclable objects that are then adorned with store bought jewels.



PHOTO: SAYA AMEND

I make my anthropomorphous sculptures life size or enlarged to confront the audience of their judgement towards the unremarkable body. The need to be accepted and beautiful has plagued my life since I was conscious about my differences. When you believe with your chest that you are a monster, you will do whatever it takes to fit inside the box.



Sophia Apold

MINNESOTA · AGE 19

Guest at a Party
acrylic on canvas
48" x 36" x 2"
2024

Biography

Sophia Apold is a 20-year-old neurodivergent artist on the Autism spectrum with a communicative (expressive, receptive) and a cognitive disability. While her communication skills are limited, she loves creating art, mainly abstract painting. Sophia's artwork explores her identity and sparks new inspiration as a creative artist. Sophia's art reflects a deep connection between emotion

and material, creating a unique and authentic voice. As an artist with autism, her process beautifully embodies the interplay between sensory feedback and self-expression. Sophia's artwork has received recognition within her community and from the Scholastic Art and Writing Foundation both in her state of Minnesota as well as nationally. Sophia plans to continue to create and share her artwork, raising awareness around diversity and inclusion.

Artist Statement

As a neurodiverse artist, I take a mood driven approach to selecting colors and materials to demonstrate how art can be a form of self-expression and self-regulation. My art offers insight into how creative practices can help individuals connect with their emotions and navigate their experiences. I choose a medium and materials based on how I am feeling. My adaptive approach demonstrates a profound sensitivity to texture, movement, and the tactile feedback each medium offers. My attentiveness to how colors, shapes, and materials interact reveals a thoughtful and intentional process taken with each piece I create.



*PHOTO: ZAHLER
PHOTOGRAPHY*



Jury



Annie Leist

is an
artist and
accessibility
professional

based in New York City. She holds degrees in studio art and mathematics from Wake Forest University, an MFA in visual arts from Rutgers University, and studied semiotics and cultural theory at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland as a Rotary Ambassadorial Scholar. Her artwork, inspired by her perspective as an urban pedestrian with low vision, can be found in numerous public and private collections. Recent series include *Beacons*, meditations on visual symbols

separating order from chaos in the city; *Revolving Doors*, abstractions harnessing the transitional liminal moments between inside and out; and *Real Paintings*, work poking at the intersection of art, accessibility, and AI. In parallel with her artistic practice, Leist is a leader in the accessibility field. She advocates for meaningful inclusion of disabled people in all aspects of cultural experience, with significant lived and professional expertise working with individuals who are blind or have low vision. She currently works in Access Programs and Initiatives at The Museum of Modern Art in NYC.



David Fierman

has over twenty years of experience

in the contemporary art world. Founding FIERMAN Gallery in 2016, he has always had a passion for integrating outsider art into the contemporary mainstream. He has been featured in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Art Forum, The New Yorker. He has placed work in the collections of The Whitney Museum of Art; ICA Miami; and The Speed Museum, Louisville; among others. He holds a BA in Art History from Columbia University.



Gordon Sasaki

is a visual artist whose work blends

unconventional techniques with contemporary ideas of identity and culture. Combining an unexpected use of images and materials, his work purposefully crosses over traditional categorical boundaries to create possibilities and inclusion. As a wheelchair user, Gordon has a long history of developing and implementing programs that support disability awareness. Including as a founding and continuing administrator of the Wynn Newhouse Awards, an international grants program dedicated to supporting artists with disabilities.



**Quána
Madison**

is a multi-disciplinary African-

American Queer artist with disabilities, a healing arts facilitator, and a well-being advocate. She dived into the world of arts and wellness topics to support her holistic well-being journey, after a life-changing near-death experience from cancer previvor treatments and the sudden onset of chronic illnesses. Quána has lived with chronic pain since childhood. Quána strives to inspire, educate, empower, and uplift people through her artwork, consulting services, and community engagement. She collaborates with Habitat for Humanity, the National Pain

Advocacy Center, the National Institutes of Health - HEAL Initiative, Colorado Artists in Recovery, and LBGTQIA+ organizations. A New York University and Colorado College graduate, Quána holds an MA in Education and a BA in Philosophy. quanamadison.com



**Rachel
Adams**

has served as Chief

Curator + Director of Programs at the Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts since 2018. Previously, she held curatorial positions at the University at Buffalo Art Galleries, Disjecta Contemporary Art Center (now Oregon Contemporary), and Arthouse at the Jones Center (now The Contemporary Austin). She holds an MA in

Exhibition and Museum Studies from the San Francisco Art Institute and a BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Adams's practice is centered on fostering meaningful relationships with artists and advancing projects at the intersections of photography, installation, sound, performance, video, new media, and architecture. Her writing has appeared in numerous catalogues and in publications including *Afterimage*, *artforum.com*, *Art Papers*, and *Modern Painters*. An alumna of the 2016 ICI Curatorial Intensive and the Artis Curatorial Research Trip to Israel, she has lectured widely at universities and arts institutions across the United States.



Xang Mimi Ho is a fashion photographer and adjunct

professor at George Mason University. Ho received her BFA from George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, and her MFA from the Maryland Institute College of Arts, Baltimore, Maryland. Her artwork explores themes of identity and social issues. Ho is a 2005 VSA Emerging Young Artists Program First Place winner, and participated in the 2015 EYA retrospective exhibit *Focus Forward* at the Center. She is a practicing fashion photographer, and her photographs are included in two published books: *Portrait from The Pike: A Celebration of Community* and *Living Diversity: The Columbia Pike Documentary Project*.

Access/VSA Emerging Young Artists Program

ABOUT ACCESS/VSA

Our programs for artists with disabilities shape the future of the arts. The Access/VSA Emerging Young Artists Program amplifies the voices of emerging visual artists through career development and professional empowerment. This national juried exhibition seeks artwork that demonstrates the excellence and important perspectives of artists with disabilities, ages 16-25, residing in the United States. Fifteen artists each receive a \$3,000 financial stipend, engage in professional development activities, and have their submitted work featured in an exhibition.

**[kennedy-center.org/
emergingyoungartists](http://kennedy-center.org/emergingyoungartists)**

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