

Audio Description for Access/VSA EYA Interchange Exhibit Pieces

Melina Ahmad

Several sheets of Plexiglas are layered like disorganized playing cards on a wooden table easel in this freestanding sculpture titled *Fragmented Self Portrait* by Melina Ahmad from 2023. The overall piece measures two feet high by almost two feet wide and is three inches deep. The Plexi sheets are glued together with dollops of clear adhesive and collaged with watercolor-painted paper like puzzle pieces to create the artist's somewhat fractured self portrait. Ahmad has pale skin and shoulder-length, wavy, light brown hair, a straight nose, and pink lips set in a line. A high-necked garment is streaked with oyster white and smoke gray.

Grace Benjamin

A brown-skinned young woman looks off to our left amid colorful, swirling patterns in this work, titled *Blue Moon* by Grace Benjamin, dated 2021. The color pencil and acrylic work measures twenty inches high and sixteen across, about the size of a microwave door on its short end. The woman's face is to our right of center. Light shines on her smooth forehead, high cheekbones, resolutely set jaw, and strong chin. She looks off to our left with light brown eyes, and her pink lips are parted, teeth visible. Swirling forms like the liquid in a lava lamp bubble up from her head. The plum purple, indigo blue, and black shapes are dotted with lines of white specks. A halo-like aura encircling her head is patterned with peacock-blue, sage-green, and shell-pink petal-like forms. A shiny gold disk surrounds her face, and the outer rim of the larger halo is edged with a glimmering gold band. A flat gold circle lies over the pattern in the halo, next to her face. Her clothing is made up of nested bands and rectangles in rust red, harvest yellow, and muted ocean blue. A meandering gold band along the left edge of the composition is filled in with crimson red, suggesting a winding river. A black and gold stylized tree or plant grows up from the far bank and arches over the woman's head. The two outermost leaves of the tree overlap a pearl-white moon, near the top center of the picture, which is in a black frame.

Ruby Cromer

Shown from the chest up, a pale-skinned person looks steadily out at us in this inkjet printed photograph from 2021. It measures thirty inches tall by twenty across. Titled *Self-Portrait (with Large Pharmaceutical)*, the artist, Ruby Cromer, wears a brown suit, a white button-down shirt, and a brown tie patterned with brown dots and tiny, shimmering ivory-white flowers. Her brown hair is slicked back, and her brows are slightly furrowed. Her body and face are angled to our right so she watches us from the corners of her gray eyes. Her skin is scrubbed clean, and her snub nose is sprinkled with freckles. She holds an oversized peachy-beige pill with one hand, to our right, up by her shoulder. The pill is wider than the palm of her hand, and writing on it reads "Paxil Paroxetine HCL" in all caps. The number 20 is impressed on its surface below. The background deepens from ultramarine blue immediately behind her body to deep, marine blue at the edges and corners. The photograph has a white mat within a black frame.

Grace Fisher

Intro description (along the lines of other works described here)

This five-and-a-half-minute video, titled *A Gritter Fable - Short Film*, intersperses scenes of the artist, Grace Fisher, conducting an orchestra and painting in her studio. In each setting, she holds the conductor's baton or paintbrush, respectively, in her mouth. The landscape she paints is filled with flowers, meadows, mountains, and a vivid sun against a pale blue sky. We spend most of the film moving in three dimensions through her landscape, where we witness the journey of a blue and orange caterpillar, who fails to turn into a butterfly after forming a chrysalis. The caterpillar encounters other critters along the way, who together show the caterpillar how to bring color to flowers and thrive in a lively, joyful world.

Audio description script

[0:03] A black screen gives way to refracted blue lights. The screen lightens to show a person in silhouette, sitting in an assistive chair facing away from us. The conductor's baton she holds in her mouth moves left and right. A harp is blurry in the distance.

[0:14] Screen to black. White text appears: "We have a choice to be held captive by our past expectations or we can be pioneers and embrace new possibilities."

[0:21] "Grace Fisher."

[0:27] Amid amber-gold orbs, text reads "Grace Fisher presents."

[0:34] A small white butterfly flits across blue lights on a dark screen.

[0:40] Text appears, "A Critter Fable." The butterfly alights on the capital C of "Critter."

[0:48] Lights come up on Grace on the stage once again, and the camera slowly pans to show an orchestra playing to either side of her.

[1:12] Now we see Grace in her studio, painting a landscape using a brush in her mouth. Grace has pale skin and long, wavy blond hair pinned back with two butterfly bobby pins. Painted with visible strokes, the long, horizontal landscape has a band of pink, red, blue, and yellow wildflowers along the bottom edge. A green meadow stretches to our right, and a golden harvest is to our left. Earthy brown mountains flecked with tan rise in the distance along the horizon, which comes halfway up the painting. White clouds with ultramarine-blue undersides skim across the pale blue sky.

The landscape fills the screen, and telescopes into the distance as we enter the space. We dip down among more flowers, where we encounter a caterpillar with an orange face and blue body walking across the sandy-colored ground.

[2:16] Two more caterpillars join the first. One is mint green, the other multicolored, and both smile.

[2:36] Cut to a bright, butter-yellow sun glowing in the sky over two branches, along which the three caterpillars crawl. They slide down to the underside of the branches and create chrysalides.

[2:56] The sun sets. The sky deepens and then lightens with the passing days.

[3:07] The chrysalides fall to the ground. Two colorful butterflies flutter away.

[3:18] The orange and blue caterpillar crawls down the branch and walks, eyes sad, on the ground in front of the empty, black outlines of flowers.

[3:53] It comes across another caterpillar and a snail with its shell painted with the star and stripes of Captain America's shield.

[4:00] The snail begins to climb the stem of an outlined flower, which fills in with color. The new caterpillar does the same.

[4:32] Under a spinning sun, our original caterpillar also climbs a stem. The petals swell with deep and light purple. The caterpillar smiles.

[4:45] The black outlines of all the flowers disengage and float away, leaving only jewel-toned flowers and leaves behind under the bright sky.

[4:55] Butterflies and dragonflies flit across the landscape as we pull back. More insects move across the dirt ground.

[5:18] As a large butterfly flies across the screen, we return to Grace painting in her studio.

[5:36] Fade to black.

Al Gatta

The Complexities of an Inhospitable Environment

Branches, neurons, and symbols are painted in sapphire and sky blue, pale turquoise, violet, and buttercup yellow in acrylic on wood. *The Complexities of an Inhospitable Environment* from 2021 is by Al Gatta, and measures just over fifteen inches high and is almost a foot across, about the size of a vertically oriented large computer monitor. Near the center of the composition, a starburst overlays a spiraling form like a conch seashell. A dark yellow pill capsule floats nearby. Yellow stars at the top corners are nestled among branches reminiscent of trees or the circulatory system. Yellow neurons in the lower corners reach golden arms out against azure-blue waves. Bands of marigold orange and russet red suggest a sun-drenched horizon, about a third of the way up the panel.

Anger, Anguish, and the Angel of Apathy

A field of robin's egg-blue flowing out of a shallow bowl across the top half of this composition is loosely mirrored below by a scarlet-red, spiky form in this abstracted acrylic painting on wood. By Al Gatta, *Anger, Anguish, and the Angel of Apathy* from 2021 measures just over a foot across by ten inches high. Topaz-blue lines create wing-like sections in the lighter blue shape in the top half of this painting. The light blue tapers to a delicate, forked tail. The bowl itself is encircled with a halo-like ring, at first glance resembling a teacup and saucer. The red form below has a rust-orange eye and beak-like shape within an eight-lobed ring. A thick artery leading from the beak splits into ever-smaller capillaries. In the background behind these forms, the top edge is painted royal blue. A streak of amethyst purple, serrated across the top and bottom, separates this from a flame-orange band across the center of the composition. The bottom edge is powder blue.

Sophia Gibbins

A pale-skinned woman with dark hair stands barefoot, an IV in one arm, in this multimedia painting and sculpture. The work, titled *IV*, measures six feet tall by three feet across and was made in 2022. The young woman looks down at the IV in her right elbow, which is to our left. Her brows are gathered, lips parted, and her round jaw hangs loose. Light gleams on her dark hair, which is parted down the middle and braided into pigtailed. Long bangs frame the far side of her face. She wears an arctic-blue, short-sleeved shirt tucked into a white, knee-length skirt. She holds some fabric of the skirt up with her free hand. Pale yellow highlights and lavender-purple shadows suggest that both garments may have a sheen. Her heels are together, and she appears to stand in a clear plastic box, created by a plastic sheet. A three-dimensional IV is taped to her right elbow, with tubing leading down her arm, past her downstretched hand, and to her feet.

John Groves

The Tumor Watched Me Grow, by John Groves in 2023, consists of two parts: a three-dimensional spine hanging on a wall attached by a wire to a laptop on a pedestal to our right. The spine measures just over three feet high and is made from acid-green zip ties to resemble the spurs of vertebrae, which come off of pipe straps that wrap around a central bundle of white wires. The spine arches away from the wall where it hangs. A camera is affixed to the spine near its base, and the laptop shows what the camera sees. What the computer shows will vary on who is in front of the piece, captured by the camera.

Pins Leese

Drawn in ink pen and marker, *Center of Influence* shows a crowded Metro station platform packed from edge to edge with curious, unexpected, and witty animals instead of the people we might expect. The work was created by Pins Leese in 2023, and measures twelve by nine inches, just larger than a standard sheet of copier paper. The train comes toward us and has signs reading "Franconia-Spring," "Blue," and "Metro." One driver is a hawk and the other a bat. Commuters pouring out of the open doors along the side we can see collide with those on the crowded platform, which teems with animals of all kinds, including a porcupine, cat, sheep, frog, penguin, duck, giraffe, raccoon, and even sharks with their heads

surrounded by blue fishbowl-like helmets. All the animals wear coats, suits, uniforms, or varsity-style letter jackets. Cockroaches enter and exit through their own door at the bottom of the first car of the train. On the platform across from us, more insects amble along the third rail down in the track to an opening near a sign reading "Look out for humans!" A sign hanging over the platform to our left communicates the wait times for different trains. Under the headings "LN" for line, "CAR," "DEST" for destination, and "M" for minutes, the first line reads, "BL" for the blue line, "5," "FRAN" for Franconia, and "2." Next is "RD" for the red line, "6," "SPRN" for Springfield, and "10." The last row reads "BL 5 FRAN 12." Signs on a bridge and elevated walkway that spans the top of the drawing are plastered with signs. One reads "Good Company! Doughnuts & Cafe Open 7-4." Another, "Visit Atlanta," is illustrated with two peaches, which are filled in with that color. A rainbow banner with text reading "DC PRIDE" hangs next to a rat-like creature, who dangles from the balcony and holds an oversized fly dressed in a tracksuit by a thread. The fly flails and cries "AHHHH." The scene is mostly black, white, and gray with touches of color in the signs, the train's yellow headlights, and the marine animals' helmets. The work has a white mat lined with canary yellow along its innermost edge, within a black frame.

Santiago López

Rooted in Two Worlds is a multimedia piece made with cardboard, acrylic, watercolor, and digital media. Made by Santiago López in 2023, it measures just over a foot high by ten-and-a-half inches across. At the center, gold and silvery wings spread behind a clean-shaven, medium-skinned man wearing a baseball cap. The man holds a shoebox-sized container in both hands. A tree grows from the box so its ash-brown branches and flat, pine-green leaves fill the top half of the composition. The man looks up at the tree, which supports two houses in its upper branches. Both houses are painted with vivid yellow, blue, green, and hot pink. The trunk of the tree casts a shadow across the man's face. He wears a navy blue, long-sleeved button-down shirt, untucked over dark pants. The box appears to be filled with blue water, which breaks with white foam against the base of the tree trunk. The inside of the open lid is striped in warm red, yellow, icy blue, black, and white. Pale clouds against a light blue sky fill the background, and two buildings cut up into the scene from the lower corners. To our left is a terracotta-red roofed turret or tower. To our right, a central spire is surrounded by a cluster of smaller steeples. The work has a white mat within a black frame.

Nicole Mattick

Nicole Mattick's *Different Does Not Mean Broken* from 2023 is a multimedia piece made with stamped ink and Photoshop. It measures eleven inches high by seventeen inches across. Text in scarlet red and black, with some touches of slate blue, seems to nearly vibrate against the turquoise-blue background. The text reads, "Don't pray for handicap people we are not broken" in all caps. The letters were made by dipping the flat side of an Easy Key Turner Mobility Tool into ink and then stamping it before being scanned and edited in Photoshop. Most of the lines of the letters follow the gentle arch of the mobility tool but some are angular and jagged, especially the tight turnings of the letters P, R, and B. The work has a black mat and frame.

Camari Michael

Camari Michael's *Effervescent Coalescence* necklace from 2023 is wearable art. White pearls are woven into a thick rope and encased within a criss-crossing net of garnet-red beads. Six teardrop-shaped pearls on short silver chains together make a wide V shape at the front. The short chains hang from another silver chain that has been affixed to the net with jump rings just along the center. The necklace is displayed on a headless neck bust.

Jess Schwarz

White silicone letters, each half an inch thick, spell "WHAT" in this work titled *The Exhaustion is Really Getting to Me Now*, which is spelled out in all caps. Created by Jess Schwarz in 2023, each letter melts down the wall and slides, drained, onto the floor so that only the arms of the W and H, the top of the letter A, and the crossbar of the T remain propped upright against the wall. Each letter is a foot high and together they span five feet.

Sarah Simmons

Seven glass medicinal bottles printed with ghostly images of body parts or medical scans are lined up against a window covered with open horizontal blinds in this black and white photograph. The work, *Isolation* by Sarah Simmons in 2022, measures twenty-one inches high and twenty-nine inches across, about the size of a car window. The vessels are cylindrical or narrow with squared shoulders. They all have squat, columnar necks as if for stoppers. Each is printed with a different ethereal image. From left to right, we find what might be an x-ray of a spine next to another scan of a spine with a channel, perhaps an esophagus. Next is a close-up of an eye and nose, then parted lips, and the outer corner of a closed eye. The last two show two feet with the bottoms pressed together and, finally, what may be a scan of a ribcage. The floating images are reminiscent of specimens preserved in jars. The photograph has a white mat and black frame.

Celeste Tooth

Chrysalis is made with sheet metal, clear enamel coating, and undyed, pearl-white wool. Created by Celeste Tooth in 2002, the sculptural piece spans five by eight feet, and is five inches deep. Two pieces of pierced sheet metal have comb-like edges where they face each other, and branch into eddying, spiraling branches that flare like wings to each side. The openings in the pierced areas are roughly oval, lung-, or kidney-shaped. The wool is gathered behind the teeth of the combs, and each bunch is pulled into a point affixed to the wall. The two points are close but do not touch.

Maris Van Vlack

A woven textile measuring almost eight by eight feet and four inches deep shows a forest scene and architectural ruins. Titled *Vestige*, by Maris Van Vlack in 2023, any visitor would need to look up or take

it in from a distance when hung on the wall because the center is at about eye level for a standing person of average height. The edges are irregular and dip and bulge to follow tree roots, canopies, and stone structures. Dark brown and green trees and lime-green moss are closest to us. The remains of lichen-green and slate-gray walls with arched openings as both doors and windows angle away from us, zigzagging into the forest. The light-drenched, distant center of the composition is woven with frosty lilac purple and warm peach. The texture of the threads is reminiscent of the natural materials it replicates, like bark, leaves, and stone, yet also resembles painted brush strokes from a distance. Some open work, especially along the top, reminds us of the weaving process.