WOODERLUST



2024 University of Toronto Scarborough Studio Art Graduating Exhibition



Ralph Chau Harry Chen Xiaosong **Raffaella Chen Xing** Alexandra Chong De La Torre Arthur Cui Yuangiansheng Feliciana De Sousa Chang Coco Dong **Crystal Ge Kailin** Alanis Huang Tinglan Victoria Haseung Jung Joanne Kim Hans Li Li Muzi **Doris Xiao Ying Liu** Felix Liu Yutong Liu Mak Yuen Kiu Qian Yiyan Nikolas Radulovich **Charon Yixuan Wang** Vic Wang Wang Zhe Wu Yunjie Janusha Xavier Yang Junrou NonHTomas (Tomas Yang Qianfan) Henry Yuan Shuaixin Zhu Mingze Zhu Yuhan



2024 University of Toronto Scarborough Studio Art Graduating Exhibition



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Chair's Foreward

I am delighted to introduce *Wonderlust,* the University of Toronto Scarborough Studio Art Graduating Exhibition for 2024.

This year's graduating class shares with us a vision that is reflective, quixotic, and above all wondrous. This vision is all the more remarkable given the current context, where the world reels from the shock of so much, not least in the wake of a pandemic that profoundly re-ordered the way we view and experience life. This is a narrowing of the field of vision, where perception and connection at times seemed reduced to the pixelated prism of two-dimensional screens. But it is also more than this. Our artists show us the myriad ways that this narrowing can, paradoxically, widen perspectives.

The artists showcased here challenge us to look at everyday objects in a wholly different light. The works in this show attest to the myriad ways that the quotidian can spark the imagination, rendering unfamiliar the most ordinary, remaking them in ways most marvelous and extraordinary.

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to everyone who contributed to this show, our dedicated faculty, hard-working staff, and most of all, our talented students.

Thy Phu

Distinguished Professor of Race, Diaspora, and Visual Justice Chair, Department of Arts, Culture and Media

Program Director's Foreward

Every year I am inspired by the Herculean effort that it takes to bring the Studio Art Graduating Exhibition to fruition. For months, a choreographed dance of collaborative energy emerges between students as they strategize and plan all the details of putting on a professional gallery exhibition. This unique mentored experience gives them the necessary insight into the life cycle of being a professional artist: creating their work, planning its display and installation, organizing the exhibition's promotion, preparing for the opening event, and designing the exhibition catalogue. Through months of dedication and coordination, these emerging artists continually rise to the challenae; pushing their craft, honing their exhibition-making skills, and working towards their final, culminating exhibition of their undergraduate degree. This year's show, Wonderlust, demonstrates fearlessness in the face of uncertainty, a tenacity of inquiry into pressing contemporary issues, and a reimagining of future worlds.

When students begin their academic journey in the Studio Art Program, they explore a range of media, materials, and approaches through two foundational courses. They find their way through the program's many discipline-specific classes: drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, performance art, video, diaital art, animation, sound art, and curatorial practice. Students develop their technical prowess and critical thinking skills as they progress from medium-specific to interdisciplinary courses, where themes such as globalization, material culture, the body, social justice, and place are explored. Equipped with technical expertise, theoretical knowledge, and research methodologies, their fledging art practices are ready to enter the public realm. While Wonderlust presents artworks developed during the past four months, this exhibition culminates a four-year journey.

This year's araduating exhibition is a testament to collective effort, through the indispensable community of the Department of Arts, Culture and Media (ACM) at the University of Toronto Scarborough, home to the Studio Art Program and the Doris McCarthy Gallery (DMG). Professors Will Kwan and Hadley Howes have been inspired and fearless course leaders, keeping all the parts moving together. ACM's technical team of Josh Cleminson, Christopher Dela Cruz, and Manolo Lugo provided critical behind-the-scenes support for the students throughout the semester. ACM staff members Leah Manz and Claudia Wong provided invaluable support for the exhibition's events and communications. Our colleagues Erin Peck and Helen Su at the DMG, UTSC's professional gallery and Studio Art partner, supported the artists in the exhibition with mentorship and encouragement. With this partnership, the students have the privilege and acod fortune to experience a professional exhibition. Thank you to everyone!

As Studio Art Program Director, I am honoured to witness the evolution of the graduating student's creative practices over the years. As these emerging artists prepare to pursue careers as media and tech designers, creative entrepreneurs, teachers, media consultants, arts festival organizers, curators, and practising artists, I feel proud of how far they have come, knowing they will journey much further.

Marla Hlady

Associate Professor and Studio Art Program Director

Introduction

It is with great pleasure that we present *Wonderlust*, the 2024 exhibition featuring works by graduating students in the Studio Art Program in the Department of Arts, Culture and Media at the University of Toronto Scarborough. The exhibition is once again graciously hosted and generously supported by the Doris McCarthy Gallery, with whom the Studio Art Program has maintained a long and proud partnership.

Graduation is a milestone that brings with it a flood of hopes, anxieties, and unknowns. It is also an event that can, as the strictures of school fall away, unfurl much needed time and space, to wander, to wonder. This year's graduating cohort approached this destabilizing moment with humility, curiosity, and a willingness to push beyond what is familiar and toward what is possible. They impressed us tremendously with their bold and idiosyncratic imagination, their grit and fortitude, their humour, and their care for each other.

The title of the exhibition, *Wonderlust*, is a minor but potent détournement that captures a desire to embrace the uncertain and the unfamiliar, through imagination, inquiry, and encounter. The twenty-nine artworks presented in the exhibition and documented in this publication probe the idea of wonder in diverse ways, asking: can the digital re-enchant the everyday? What does AI have to teach us about the inexplicable? How does memory, forgetting, and tradition shape the future of families, diasporas, and other collectivities and shared spaces? For the artists in *Wonderlust*, curiosity forges the path through real and fantastical topographies of mortality, displacement, belonging, crisis, and social transformation.

As teachers, we feel fortunate to have seen each of the artworks in *Wonderlust* evolve from concept through to the exhibition installation, to have witnessed each moment of progress, struggle, and insight. We hope this publication that you hold in your hands captures the astonishment that we experienced. The results of this year's student efforts are thought-provoking, inventive, courageous, full of hope, and tinged with uncertainty. In a word: wonderous.

Hadley Howes and Will Kwan Studio Art Program Faculty

Artworks

Ralph Chau

I work with photography and videography to capture the subtleties of human emotions and relationships within urban landscapes and the digital realm. I work with a variety of wide-angle and telephoto lenses and offen manipulate light and colour to convey emotional narratives. Currently, I am exploring the evolving relationship between humans and Artificial Intelligence (AI), by interacting with Al-generated imagery to investigate our role in the age of AI. As technology continues to reshape our understanding of the world, the subject matter and the artistic media that I work with reflect human experiences in an ever-changing society. Through my work, I aim to evoke empathy and foster connection among viewers, inviting them to engage with the possibilities technological advancements represent and reflect on our identity within an evolving society.

Beyond Boundaries Video 2 minutes, 25 seconds, colour

In *Beyond Boundaries*, I explore the relationship between humanity and AI. The video narrative delves into the dynamic interaction between human imagination and technological innovation by using Photoshop Generative Fill to generate digital elements within real, documented spaces. I invite viewers to reflect on the profound impact of AI on our perception of reality and creativity. While AI offers endless possibilities, it remains tied to human intention and control. As I travel across the video frame repeatedly, the loop serves as a reminder of our role as the agents who control the AI-infused world. Ultimately, my artwork reflects the balance between human creativity and technological advancement in shaping our collective future.





Harry Chen Xiaosong

The mediums that I work with are painting, photography and sculpture. I approach my work with a strategy of abstraction because I believe this is the most successful way to express something intangible. I also explore subjects of emotion and memory. Everyone has their own unforgettable images and memories, and exploring these themes allows us to understand ourselves better and to find our creative direction. Materializing these ethereal things is also an effective way to preserve memories. In the future, I want to take a look at the vast world, visit more cities, and learn artistic styles specific to multiple cultures. I hope my audience will share in the thoughts and memories of my hometown through my artwork. I want my audience to feel a sense of freedom.

Freeze Frame of Memories Popsicle sticks, glue, string 72 inches x 12 inches x 20 inches

I am only able to visit my home, Weifang City, once a year. Every time I go back, I find that my hometown has changed. I feel that my impression is becoming increasingly vague. I have recreated my memories of home using popsicle sticks. Popsicle sticks have a personal childhood significance for me. My grandmother used to sell ice cream, and when I was young, she would often make ice cream for me. Every time I finished eating, I would collect the popsicle sticks and turn them into handmade toys. Kites were the most popular toys in Weifang City, and what my hometown is world famous for. Nowadays, when I walk in the streets of my hometown, kites no longer fly over my head, and there are no popsicles with the familiar taste in the small shops. I only see people flying kites during festivals. During New Year, everyone in Weifang City only flies dragon-shaped kites which symbolize luck and harvest. For Freeze Frame of Memories, I have used popsicle sticks to recreate a dragon kite from my childhood. This dragon will always be here, carrying my memories and flying.



Raffaella Chen Xing

I work with photography and videography to capture the subtleties of human emotions and relationships within urban landscapes and the digital realm. I work with a variety of wide-angle and telephoto lenses and often manipulate light and colour to convey emotional narratives. Currently, I am exploring the evolving relationship between humans and Artificial Intelligence (AI), by interacting with Al-generated imagery to investigate our role in the age of AI. As technology continues to reshape our understanding of the world, the subject matter and the artistic media that I work with reflect human experiences in an ever-changing society and interactions between human and technological advancements. Through my work, I aim to evoke empathy and foster connection among viewers, inviting them to engage with the possibilities of technological advancements and to reflect on our identity within an evolving society.

Wonderland

Interactive performance art installation

Hands, touching, feeling, hugging, and compressing... Those hands, weighing over 170 pounds entrapped me in an endless loop. This artwork explores themes of privacy and support, sharing the painful personal experience of intimate partner violence within public space by reframing a helpless scene from my past. Wonderland is a call for social awareness and intervention. My call is to pay attention to intimate partner violence. This issue, happening all the time, remains invisible and immune to the protections of law. Victims are often silenced by shame and stigma, faking the appearance of wonderland: the idealization of intimate relationship. The weight of these hands is exactly equal to the weight of my ex-boyfriend who subjected me to violence, symbolizing the lifelong burden I suffer and want to be rid of. The duration of this performance is determined by the audience's willingness to interact: I invite you to offer a hand to take a hand off my body. Are you willing to take a step toward social justice for victims of intimate partner violence? If you could take a hand?







Alexandra Chong De La Torre

In my artwork I combine handcrafting and digital media, bridging them together using Augmented Reality (AR). I use interactive technology to create an intimate viewing experience through the use of AR. I am interested in how the unreal affects us in the real world, often using it as a front to hide our more vulnerable selves within its beautiful lies. Fantasy is both a mask and a reflection of our true selves, much like a sketch on a page where we draw what the world is meant to look like. Through my artwork, I seek to bring comfort to others who also feel the need to hide behind a persona and document my feelings about why I find so much beauty in my lies. I explore the line between what is drawn in my heart and what plays out in the real world. I want to show the beauty in the unreal that I love so much.

Midnight Ramblings

Sketchbook with single stitching, digital art, animation, AR 8.2 inches x 6 inches

Midnight Ramblings is a hand-crafted sketchbook containing drawings that reveal another dimension when scanned with the Augmented Reality application, Artivive. A sketchbook is like an artist's diary, and this artwork is no different, as the book is filled with my personal ramblinas and drawings. The contents of the book deal with my inner feelings and desires to make the "me" in my heart real. The sketches in the book depict the character I portray myself as in the real world, but when the viewer scans the drawings my true feelings are revealed. I wish to explore how what is unreal and imaginary can affect us in the real world. By showing my perspective as someone who can find confidence through my persona, I hope to show that fantasy is more than just a beautiful lie and invite people to consider their relationship with what they believe to be a false reality. The title of this work, Midniaht Ramblinas, refers to the hour when the line between worlds is blurred and I am free to simply ramble about my feelings while still cherishing my mask, drawing in my sketchbook all the things I wish I could be. I want to connect with my audience through our shared longing for the unreal.



Arthur Cui Yuanqiansheng

Fashion and popular culture have produced a microcosm of who I am. Through performing for the camera, I attempt to investigate my identity as well as the conventions of fashion in general. I recognize that identity is evolving, fluid, non-hierarchical, that my ethnicity, personality, and tastes are inextricably shaped by influences in my surroundings. My staged photographic work is digitally manipulated in a way that enables the viewer to perceive the potential to disrupt and diversify conventional fashion and gender expression. The portraits I make not only explore my personal potential and shifting identity, but also invite the spectator to contemplate and consider changing societal norms. Fashion epitomizes our present perspectives, but in it we can also begin to witness the future.

April Issue Inkjet print 86 inches x 45 inches

April Issue is a meticulous exploration of personal identity and self-expression within the modern digital realm. Using self-portraiture, I weave together various poses and outfits, drawing inspiration from the imagery found in Vogue fashion spreads. Through a process that involves photographing myself from multiple angles, followed by careful digital editing, the artwork presents a montage that reflects the diverse facets of my ethnicity, personality, and tastes. The image invites viewers to contemplate the intricate layers that constitute one's sense of self in the digital age, while also prompting reflection on the evolving relationship between technology, fashion, and personal identity. Themes of fluidity, multiplicity and self-presentation are presented in the work through staged details, repetition, costume, and pose. This heavily constructed image invites the viewer to re-evaluate the role of technology in shaping ideas of authenticity and the self.



Feliciana De Sousa Chang

As an international student, I am far from my home in Macau. What inspires me as an artist is my strong connection to "home" and art becomes a way for me to express how much I miss it. I like to explore various experiences, so I don't limit myself to one medium or method. I want the freedom to capture feelings like homesickness and longing in the most fitting way. My art reflects my experiences and highlights my connection with home. I want to share my Macanese cultural identity through my art, offering a glimpse into traditions, memories, and emotions that define my idea of home. I want my audience to feel connected when they encounter my work, like finding something familiar in a world of different stories. Through sculpture and photography, I hope to create spaces where viewers can find reflections of their own stories, homes, and roots. I hope my art sparks a connection, like we have shared a common feeling or a memory. I want my art to bring people together, creating a sense of belonging and understanding.

The Essentials

Foam sheet, crafting wood, fabric, acrylic paint, pearl, paper straw, dropper, paper, zipper, towel, tissue paper 5.5 inches x 10.25 inches

The Essentials is a collection of miniature reproductions of items from my home in Macau that I cherish. These tiny treasures are an expression of my desire to bring a piece of home with me. I create each miniature item using materials that best capture the aualities of the original objects. The Essentials explores themes of homesickness, seeking comfort, and a sense of home from a distance. I created this artwork as a personal expression of longing for home and the comfort found in familiar things. I hope my viewers can connect with the emotion behind it and find similarities with their own experiences. Through my artwork, I want to share that even though the items may differ, there are small elements from home that everyone misses. We can all connect through a shared emotion of missing something special, creating a sense of collective understanding and connection.



Coco Dong

I am a multi-disciplinary artist working with digital illustration and sculpture. From a young age, I have had the privilege of traveling to different countries to learn about diverse cultures and arts, and being able to see different artforms has rooted my interest in mixed-media artworks. My work focuses primarily on topics such as feminism and interpersonal relationships, especially from a female perspective. I have made artworks about my relationship with my mother, a relationship characterized by unconditional love and care, but also by a loss of autonomy and independence—a common experience for mothers and daughters in China. My artworks explore the intricate layers of this relationship, neither criticizing this sense of control nor celebrating the sacrificial nature of maternal love.

Entwined Affection

Installation with digital prints and preserved rosebuds Dimensions variable

Entwined Affection is an artistic exploration of the complexities of maternal love through digital illustrations and flower sculptures. A digital illustration employing interwoven vines and flowers portrays abstracted parts of the female body, specifically parts of the body "sacrificed" by mothers from childbirth to postpartum and when pain and discomfort is experienced—breathing difficulties, fatigue, and leakage. The interwoven vines and thorns that form the body parts serve as a layered metaphor, representing both the pain of childbirth and the protective instincts inherent in maternal love. The artwork also consists of an installation of twenty-one preserved rosebuds that correspond to my age when this work was made. The neat alignment of rosebuds suggests my controlled upbringing. Positioned beneath the prints, the flowers hint at the power dynamics of our relationship. The colors throughout the artwork draw from nature and skin tones, enriching the artwork's balance of tenderness and the body.





Crystal Ge Kailin

In my artistic practice, I try to seamlessly integrate various media such as video and installation. I use these expressive tools in combination with a range of artistic strategies including abstract exploration and interactive engagement that I enriched with subtle humour. By delving into themes rooted in psychology, self-reflection, and self-awareness, my work acts as a catalyst for an examination of the self, feminism, and identity. My art attempts to challenge social norms by sparking conversations about female autonomy and identity. I often employ irony, playful texts, and subtle colour to create an empathetic relationship with my audience and to engage them in a thought-provoking but abstract interaction. Issues of identity and feminism are an important focus of culture today. My work serves as a mirror-revealing the subtle perceptions around gender roles and offering a space for reflection and introspection.

Looking-Glass Self Installation with mirrors and frosted glass film Dimensions variable

Looking-Glass Self is an immersive mixed-media installation that uses mirrors as canvases and words cut from transparent frosted glass film to evoke engraved text. The mirrors are placed throughout the gallery, deliberately scattered to reflect the fragmented, iterative nature of self-reflection. Each mirror is adorned with a short, ambiguous, and thought-provoking text that is only visible when the viewer stands close to the mirror. The text is meant to evoke images in the viewer's mind, to inspire deep contemplation and introspective dialogue. The strategic placement of the mirrors not only facilitates physical interaction as the viewer moves through the gallery, but also symbolizes the decentralized process of collecting and understanding one's thoughts and identity, literally and metaphorically, mirroring a process of introspection and discovery.



Alanis Huang Tinglan

As a multidisciplinary artist working primarily in graphic design, collage, photography, and videography, I am continuously drawn to the mesmerizing realm of abstraction. Through experimental techniques, I deconstruct reality into dreamy, surreal visuals, exploring the boundaries of perception and imagination. I am also fascinated with human intimacy, particularly the subtle emotions often concealed beneath the surface, such as the shy hesitance to express oneself. I think of these emotions as fluid essences and I wield my camera to capture their intricacy, sometimes enhancing them with special visual effects to manifest their invisible currents. My ultimate aim as an artist is to evoke an emotional resonance in the viewer that is complex and personal, and to create a mirror that reflects the shared emotional landscape we navigate together.

Dragon City Mall Index (龍城 suo yin(g)) Zine 8.5 inches x 5.5 inches

Dragon City Mall Index (龍城 suo yin(g)) is a twenty-page zine chronicling the essence of Toronto's Dragon City Mall. Through a collage of photographs, graphics, and textual elements, the work unveils the kaleidoscopic tapestry that defines this bustling locale. In the zine, one encounters a visual journey with the spirited aesthetics of the 1990s, where vibrant hues of red, yellow, blue, and green collide in a chaotic yet strangely harmonious manner—a uniquely Chinese aesthetic. My work tries to transport the viewer into the heart of Dragon City Mall and Toronto's Chinatown to see the rapid flux of history and cultural landmarks and the dynamic interplay between tradition and modernity, nostalgia and progress. Dragon City Mall Index (龍城 suo vin(q)) invites its audience to immerse themselves in a nuanced exploration of an evolving urban landscape and cultural heritage.



Victoria Haseung Jung

I am a Korean-Canadian multidisciplinary artist, born and raised in Toronto. My work focuses on encapsulating personal, diasporic, and cultural experiences. Through artmaking, I aim to illustrate the complex sentiments of life and translate our shared human experiences into physical forms. I experiment with diverse materials including textiles, photography, and sculpture, to express my concepts, aspiring to evoke emotion, reflection, and resonance in my viewers. With a passion for studying different materials and techniques, my work often combines traditional and contemporary elements from Eastern and Western artistic cultures.

The jogaks I hold

Fabric, cyanotype chemicals, wooden dowel 79 inches x 79 inches

The traditional Korean quilting style *jogakbo*, consists of pieces of fabric that come together to create a larger panel of patchwork. The word *jogak*, meaning "a piece" in Korean, is expressed through the cyanotype images, depicting elements that are significant pieces to my diasporic experiences as a second-generation Korean-Canadian. Integrating traditional and contemporary methods, this domestic form stitches together the nostalgia, the reminiscences, and the reflections of a diaspora. *The jogaks I hold* assemble these pieces to continue healing and finding peace in my bicultural identity.





Joanne Kim

I am fascinated by the exploration of social interconnectedness. In my artwork, I use a curated colour palette that reflects the diversity and vibrancy of our society. Each colour is chosen to celebrate individuality, vet when viewed collectively, they create a harmonious composition, symbolizing unity in diversity. My digital illustrations are large in scale, inviting the viewer to immerse themselves in the interconnected forms and colours, navigate the spaces between the lines and shapes, and reflect on the essence of our contemporary connections. During my studies, I have explored the intricacies of diaital abstraction. The lavering, forming, and repetition of lines and shapes are not simply aesthetic—for me, they represent the coming together of different individuals to create a unified community. Through abstraction I create visual narratives that resonate with our shared experiences of togetherness, emphasizing the value of our collective humanity. I hope my art encourages people to look a little deeper, to see the significance of every interaction and the value of the collective strength and beauty that comes from our ability to coexist harmoniously.

The Mosaic of Us: Beautiful Bonds Digital print 100 inches x 24 inches

In *The Mosaic of Us: Beautiful Bonds,* I work with patterns, lines, and shapes, overlaying them to show that we are part of a bigger community, even in our differences. Bright primary colours are combined with diminished shades to represent people and emotions coming together. The interlocking shapes are like puzzle pieces, showing how we all fit into a bigger picture. I spread them out on the floor to invite people to participate in the art as they walk around it. This immersive illustration shows that being together and supporting each other is what makes us strong and beautiful. I aim for viewers to feel a sense of unity, belonging, and collective identity, realizing having human interactions with others makes life richer. I want my work to be a gentle reminder of how important and beautiful it is to be connected and supported among others.



Hans Li

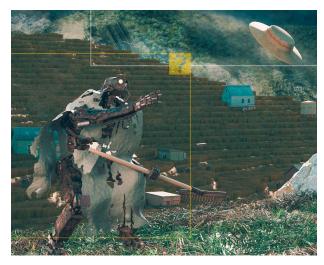
I create digital paintings of science fiction worlds that address real-world issues such as climate change. My work often portrays a journey of re-discovery in a post-apocalyptic world where human presence has been diminished, and nature has re-taken the surface of the planet. I am interested in how science fiction imagines technologies like space settlement and advanced Artificial Intelligence, that at the same time maintain some degree of realism that we can identify with today. Using these fictional features in combination with natural elements like vegetation, blue skies, and oceans, I explore the tension between humans and natural world. In creating artworks, I challenge myself and my audiences to think about how depiction of the future might be a vision of our world tomorrow, but in fact a reflection our present.

A Reunion Digital print 41 inches x 23.5 inches

A Reunion depicts the scene of a village formed by robots in a mountainous valley, accidentally discovered by a drone. Seeing through the drone's point-of-view, we follow as it investigates the wreckage of a space station, a mysterious sanctuary, terraced farmland, and a robot engaged in activities associated with human beings—the robot is wearing a hat, torn clothing, and seems to be a farmer. A temple in the landscape suggests worship. I want to create an unfamiliarity in this work so that the viewer can pull away and see from a third perspective. Do we stand apart from this scene? Are we superior? Through this work, I want the audience to "look back," to re-think, to consider the things we do today. Through fantastical scenarios, I want to free our imagination.







Li Muzi

My paintings often depict my memories of childhood trauma. I search deep into my memory to capture the gray areas from my childhood—a time I thought I had forgotten. Whether the experiences are good or bad, they have become part of me. I exaggerate the proportions of the objects that I paint—for example, inflating the size of the furniture—to highlight the cold, lonely atmosphere. In many families in China, parents often migrate to major cities to make money, while children stay at home alone for long periods of time with grandparents or other family members. This situation occurs because development in China has led to the transfer of surplus labor to cities. The psychological effects on children caused by this situation include developing inferiority complexes and depression, becoming withdrawn and unsociable, and adopting more severe abnormalities such as hostility and violence. My work tries to show that companionship is as important as material conditions.

The Absent Parents Acrylic on canvas Four panels, 20 inches x 20 inches each

The Absent Parents consists of four paintings depicting memories from my childhood—of eating a dinner of instant noodles alone. Memories from childhood are long-term memories. Some childhood memories are neither happy and nor beautiful. When I recall them, what I remember is the feeling of loneliness and the coldness of the atmosphere. Loneliness is dangerous for physical and mental health—it increases the chances of anxiety, depression, stroke, heart disease, diabetes, and dementia. I hope my work resonates with the audience through the sense of loneliness, since it is a normal state of life. I hope that we can all learn to live with a little bit of loneliness but also to understand it.



Doris Xiao Ying Liu

My artistic journey is deeply rooted in various cultural influences, drawing inspiration from my own household traditions of protecting animals as they are regarded as symbols of prosperity and peace. I utilize the expansive capabilities of digital illustration to explore and convey intricate themes, particularly focusing on animal welfare and the complexities of human caregiving. I employ narrative elements and unconventional methods of display to actively engage viewers and effect tangible change. By leveraging diverse forms of presentation, such as mimicking the action of gifting, I aim to connect with audiences on a visceral level, prompting reflection and empathy. Ultimately, my art seeks to underscore the interconnectedness of all life forms, fostering a deep sense of empathy and responsibility toward the world we share. Through thought-provoking storytelling and immersive experiences, I endeavor to evoke the awareness of our shared humanity and our collective duty to nurture and protect our planet and its inhabitants.

Give and Take

Paper, cardstock, natural twine, cartons 6.25 inches x 4.75 inches x 4.25 inches 8.66 inches x 6.25 inches x 5.9 inches 11 inches x 7.5 inches x 5.9 inches

Give and Take is a digital pattern printed on gift wrapping paper. The imagery depicted addresses notions of exchange and reciprocity between animals and humans through care, consumerism, and responsibility. Patterns on the paper, captions on gift tags, and the form of display and presentation on gift boxes illustrate the urgency of animal welfare and the inequities of give and take in interspecies relationships. I aim to evoke sympathy in viewers and confirm that we are all capable of helping others. I want my viewers to remember the emotional value we receive from animals and how we can return that gift with care.



Felix Liu

In my video works, I attempt to recontextualize aspects of my everyday life into sarcastic, self-reflexive, often surreal single-character short films. In these works, I try to make sense of my love-hate relationship with an overactive mind. I am also trying to dissect personal anxieties and a sense of powerlessness about the state of the world. Much of my work originates from a point of media analysis. I take inspiration from a variety of film genres such as mockumentary, horror, and Surrealism as well as the Internet and pop culture. I like to dramatize the hidden disorder lurking under the mundane and transform it into surreal scenarios that I believe are the ultimate proof of my individuality and my statement of uniqueness. The artists that I admire the most are the ones who are not afraid to express unfiltered vulnerability and negativity. Like Charlie Kaufman, John Wilson, and Nathan Fielder, I also often arrive at bittersweet conclusions that give me therapeutic comfort. I try to use storytelling and filmmaking to get my audience to reflect on my self-reflection, or at least to entertain myself and others along the way.

Antipblixianphantasiarcharianism Video 13 minutes, colour, sound

Walmart, green peppers, colour pencils, and a childhood schoolmate. This film is me making a superficial closure to my time at university and the years of my life leading up to this point. Forced to face a next chapter, I recall all of the bad decisions that I have made, the grudges I still hold, and the unspoken and sentimental memories. I decided to make a short film that includes and concludes everything: the previous videos works I have made, the pandemic, cold-blooded capitalism-fueled institutions, day-dreaming, peer pressure, my fear of moving on... I don't know who I am nor do I know where to go, but I did enjoy making this film. In the end, I would like to quote Denis Villeneuve: "I think I did this movie for a single audience member, which is me."



Yutong Liu

I work with sculpture as my chosen medium and take a theatrical approach to abstraction and narrative. My focus revolves around topics of reality, nature, and feminism—the exploration of diverse experiences of "reality" is central to much of my artwork. There is a tendency for individuals to conflate imagined constructs with actual experiences, often overlooking the inherent chaos of reality and fixating solely on the idealized aspects of their fantasies. Through sculpture, I aim to visualize the discord and complexity inherent in reality. I prioritize creating impactful first impressions with my work, achieved through careful consideration of visual composition and abstract form. When viewers engage with my sculptures, I aspire to transport them into a theatrical space. The "theatrical" approach in my artworks allows for the incorporation of narrative elements, such as characters, scenes, or spaces. My intention is for viewers to not only perceive my sculptures as visual representations but to also immerse themselves in the experience they evoke.

This looks really pretty! Sculpture 55 inches x 35 inches (variable)

This looks really pretty! is a theatrical installation based on costume design display, where the front of a costume is showcased through reflection in a wall-mounted mirror and the back is presented directly to viewers in the gallery. This display effect corresponds to the interplay of fantasy and reality. The front and back of the costume design display have completely different effects. The front, displayed through the mirror, is the pretty part of the costume, addressing the fantasy aspect of the subject, whereas the back appears messy, addressing reality. I contrast "pretty" and "messy" to show the interplay of fantasy and reality. My intention is to address some people in today's society who immerse themselves in the beauty of fantasy while ignoring the imperfections of reality. I want the audience to discover the significant difference between fantasy and reality through this artwork. The title, This looks really pretty!, focuses on the pretty part of the costume, inviting the audience to deny it based on the messy part. I invite my audience to play in the contradictions of reality and fantasy presented by the contrast in my work.





Mak Yuen Kiu

My work revolves around the concept of escapism, in particular rooted in melancholy and nostalgia. I view art as a medium for delving into psychological experiences and for articulating complex emotions. Through drawings, paintings, illustrations, and collages, I visualise surreal imaginative spaces as manifestations of the inner self. This space often serves as an escape from the confines of dense urban environments, pressure and anxiety, and struggles with complex interactions with others. I believe that emotions are inherently complex and interconnected, defying simple description, each intricately intertwined with others, forming a web of interrelationships. Anxiety connects with fear and melancholy which can lead to despair, disappointment, discomfort, and annoyance. To explore this complexity, my works often utilize multiple drawings and collage techniques to construct multi-faceted narratives that conceive of emotions as landscapes. Through the transformation of my personal experiences into stories and by unravelling the intricate interrelationships between emotions, I hope to visualize a space of reflection for the viewer.

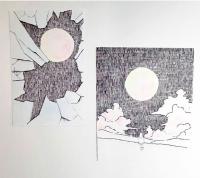
Inner Eclipse

Coloured pencil, pen, and acrylic on paper Dimensions variable

Inner Eclipse reflects on my fears around transitioning from one life stage to another. Through multiple drawings, I construct a narrative of falling into a surreal reverie. In this imaginative realm, I grapple with the fear of uncertainty and change. I use the sun and the moon to evoke the cyclical, with the moon representing movement and the night signifying a progression towards an inevitable "ending." The presence of the twin character serves as a representation of multiple selves, while the eclipse symbolizes a moment of convergence. Inner Eclipse visualizes a process of self-discovery and it invites viewers to find resonance in the struggle to navigate uncertainty.







Qian Yiyan

My artworks are deeply rooted in my background in media studies and art history, which informs my approach to exploring historical themes. I am interested in documentary photography because it provides a semblance of authenticity, but a narrative can also be constructed around it—the perspective can be guided. My work often delves into personal experiences, allowing me to speak with authority and foster a resonance with viewers. For example, my multi-media installation project Eyes on you is inspired by my childhood experiences of being monitored by my parents. In that work I use installation, video, and audio to construct a space constantly captured by cameras. My work aims to depict the psychological damage caused by excessive surveillance and control. I believe that exploring my personal history also serves as a way for me to reconcile with certain past experiences. Through my art, I aim to challenge conventional perceptions and offer new perspectives on culturally significant issues. For instance, I might explore themes like the psychology of international students through a series of documentary photos and explore environmental issues through multimedia installations. Ultimately, I aim to create immersive experiences that inspire curiosity, empathy, and meaningful engagement with the world around us.

Who Kills Sunday Mixed media installation Dimensions variable

My artwork combines photography and textual elements to construct a narrative puzzle inspired by evidence boards depicted in detective shows and movies. Within this framework, a fictional murder scenario unfolds, inviting the audience to engage with visual clues and textual prompts. In this story, a character named Sunday has died due to procrastination, a common condition of university life. Through this murder mystery, I aim to humorously reflect on the rush to meet deadlines that characterizes the academic experience. My artwork is a playful and absurd homage to the trials and tribulations of being a student.





Nikolas Radulovich

A fan of classic cinema from a young age, I have been experimenting with making my own productions for the last thirteen years. My series of shorts called "Brickfilms"stop-motion animations built with Lego-span genres from action-packed to narrative-driven. While Brickfilming is still an immense passion of mine, I have recently delved into the world of live-action filmmaking with my most recent project, Subsistence. Many skills from Brickfilming are transferable to live action, though I appreciate the expediency of filming something in live action, as opposed to the painstaking, meticulous process of stop-motion animation. I describe myself as a Cynical Existentialist, with a strong interest in how everyday jobs enforce routine and affect one's creativity and sense of purpose. I convey my ideas through a surrealist narrative framework, where the banal intersects with the absurd. By distorting the ordinary through the surreal, I aim to deconstruct the "normal" and the "necessary" and examine the absurdity of being forced into a routine.

Subsistence Video 14 minutes, black and white, sound

Subsistence is a narrative video short that looks at one's sense of purpose within North American society and how it relates to the routine and commitments of a job or career—how the apparent necessity of having a job leads to stifling one's creativity and learning and succumbing to distractions such as sports or television. Subsistence deconstructs the normalcy and routine of a stable job by implementing subtle Surrealist film techniques including its minimalist set design, edge lighting on subjects, discerning use (or lack thereof) of colour, disorienting pace and editing, non-diegetic soundtrack, and minimal dialogue. This project has profound significance to me personally, as I approach graduation. Staring down various potential future paths, I feel I must make a choice now to either try to make something of myself as an artist or find a "more stable" career path. I'm weighing out the promise of financial stability offered by joining the job market against my creative visions for my potential future. Subsistence explores the lack of choice that many people, including myself, feel.







Charon Yixuan Wang

I am a multi-disciplinary artist from China. My work explores social justice topics, such as women's rights and mental health, through performance, painting, and photography. I use images and documentation of performances to tell stories. I want the audience to resonate emotionally with the mental and physical anguish caused by social norms and discrimination that is depicted in my work. I incorporate text, design, and craft elements within my performance work to illuminate social conflict and express my perspective. I hope my work can speak out for people who suffer and lead the audience to reflect on social justice.

Healing

Digital photographic prints, nylon fabric, embroidery thread Dimensions variable

Healing combines performance, photography, and sculpture to examine women's internalization of contorted expectations of body image, shame, and discipline. My experience of Chinese society is that the strict criteria for femininity conflates being slim with being beautiful. In *Healing*, a flesh-coloured dress on which I have embroidered negative self-evaluations becomes a symbol of social discipline. The dress becomes the skin on which I write my own self-objectification—an involuntary misogynistic behaviour adopted under cultural norms. I cut these words from the dress to show my resistance to social discipline in the form of destruction. I hope that through this work, women can reflect on whether they experience misogyny in their daily lives, and audiences can reflect on the influence of social norms on self-image and self-worth.





Vic Wang

In my artwork, I aim to showcase the significant impact of plastic pollution on plants, while also illustrating how recycling can bring about positive change. My sculptural works are crafted from discarded plastic bottles, transformed into the shapes and structures of desert plants. By selecting plants that grow in tough conditions, I highlight nature's resilience and draw a connection to the enduring nature of plastics. While plastic waste can harm the environment if not handled responsibly, re-purposing it can help reduce our ecological footprint. My work highlights the truth of plastic pollution, likening it to the challenging circumstances faced by agave, cactus, and other succulents. In their transformed state, these plastics exist harmlessly without polluting the environment or threatening plant life. Re-purposing plastics as houseplants encourages us to see the worth and uses of things we typically deem insignificant. By viewing discarded plastic through the lens of art, I invite my audience to reassess how we affect the environment. The act of reimagining plastic as an element of the natural landscape invites us to reconsider our role in reuse and recycling.

Evergreen

Sculpture 12 inches x 12 inches x 25 inches each (variable)

Evergreen showcases the impact of plastic pollution on plants, while also illustrating how recycling can bring about positive change. These plastic plant sculptures are presented as products, created with recycled plastic bottles and displayed in pots with price labels still attached. I have recycled the original bottles, re-purposed them, and given them new meaning. My intention is to encourage the audience to value the threat that plastic pollution poses to plants and to reflect on the role that humans play in the cycle of value, use and reuse.





Wang Zhe

I am is a multidisciplinary artist working in the data analytic field, whose work is a fusion of photography, digital art, and conceptual art. My artwork is a reflection of my analytical mind, where each piece is a visual representation, meticulously crafted and layered with meaning. My work transcends the traditional boundaries of art and technology, creating a unique dialogue between the two. My photography captures the world in its raw form, while my digital and conceptual artworks are a reinterpretation of these realities through a data-driven lens. My work challenges the viewer to see beyond the surface, to explore the underlying patterns and structures that define our world. My art is not just an expression, but a question—a call to engage, to analyze, and to understand.

But How Did We Progress? Vinyl prints 3 prints, 19.7 inches x 7.9 inches each

Love is a lot more than just a word. An intimate relationship not only shapes the way we perceive the world but also epitomizes our life stages. This artwork quantifies and visualizes intimacy between my partner and myself via chat frequency at different stages of our relationship. But How Did We Progress? is a series of three printed heat map visuals, each with its own title that describes the theme for the year. The theme in 2021 was "Longing, Passion, Differences, Acceptance"—when the passion of reuniting and moving in together contrasted with learning how to accept our imperfections. In 2022, we adopted two puppies—as they became what we worried about all the time, we constantly questioned ourselves: are we doing well enough as "parents?" 2023 was filled with anxiety—wishing to see through the haze of stress from immigration status and work, we attended to each others' needs and healed from the blues: "But I Do Want to See the Light."

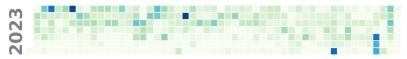
"*憧憬,热烈,不同,取舍*"





"我们做的足够好吗?" "Are We Doing Well Enough?"

"可我真想看到光" "But I Do Want To See The Light"



Wu Yunjie

My creative work is rooted in visual arts, filmmaking, and writing. I explore cinematic art and view the screen as a space for discovering the world and creating possibilities. encourage the audience to perceive the subtle details of everyday life, particularly through interactions with family, friends, or strangers. I aspire to construct a filmic universe imbued with warmth and love since the hurried pace of life and work blocks us from observing. My work also offers a diasporic perspective on life in Canada, through the lens of traditional Chinese culture and ideology, from Confucianism and filial piety to social justice. I draw on the education I received as a child which approached Chinese culture as fascinating and complicated. Through my work, I want to share aspects of Chinese culture, to help others to discover traditions that go back to ancient times. Films are not only the flash of images; they are also a bridge between me and the world that allows me to open my heart and bring the audience into my world.

There is the New Year with You Video 26 minutes, colour, sound

I use documentary and realist filming techniques to tell personal stories. There is the New Year with You explores the strong but changing emotional ties between people in the diaspora and their loved ones in the motherland. I present this broad theme through the subject of filial piety, a tradition that is important in Chinese culture. My short film is based on an event that happened not too long ago involving my grandmother's illness that had a significant emotional impact on me. The work also draws on the experiences of close friends who are also in the diaspora and most of whom have had similar experiences of struggling to maintain connections to loved ones living far away. I hope that my story will resonate with people in the diaspora who are separated from family in their homeland. Despite great distances, maintaining connections is vital. I hope my story reveals something about the complexity and challenges of filial piety while encouraging the audience to reflect on the bonds that are important for a harmonious relationship with family.





Janusha Xavier

Have you ever wondered what makes a moment beautiful? I aim to create art that invites the viewer to take a breath and feel the moment they are in. Using mixed media, including paint and sculpture, my miniature work illustrates the beauty of ephemerality present in our lives, often through moments which are forgotten. Certain aspects of my artwork contain life, as some plants will decay throughout the time the work is displayed, allowing the viewer to interpret a new scene each time the work is viewed. Delicate memories should be treasured, even if they only last for a moment. I invite you to stop and dive into my work, exploring it for as long as your heart desires. How many hidden details can you find before this too becomes just another memory?

Ephemeral Memories Clay, gel, moss, paint 9 inches x 7.5 inches x 4.5 inches

As temporary experiences, our surroundings present us with a new sense of ephemerality each day. But how often do we pay attention to these things since we live in a time of constant stimulation and change? *Ephemeral Memories* shows the relationship between the elements of nature and time, including aspects of life slowing down but still ever-changing. Some elements of this artwork will decay and change faster than others. Take a moment to slow down and view every aspect of this miniature vignette, seeing how much you can discover as you take a closer look. Try to find occurrences of similarity between the natural and the artificial. Come back another time and see how much has changed. Which ephemeral memories do you hold closest to you?



Yang Junrou

Chronic atopic dermatitis is a condition characterized by uncontrollable itching that leads to skin damage, inflammation, and thickening, which over time, causes severe physical and psychological trauma. My work connects organic materials with medical narratives in a sculptural representation of the fragility and resilience of the skin during an outbreak of the disease. The sculptures emit distinctive odours, presenting a dichotomy of attraction and repulsion, inviting the viewer to delve into the tactile, olfactory, and visual dimensions of the patient's condition and simulating an intimate exchange between observer and patient. By using this method of artistic exploration, I hope to encourage those who suffer from chronic illnesses like myself, to raise awareness of chronic and rare diseases, to perceive the enduring strength and suffering of patients, and to emphasize the importance of understanding and empathy in contemporary society.

Therapy

Onion skin, gauze, tung oil, milk, white vinegar, baking soda Dimensions variable

Therapy consists of two suspended panels, similar to therapeutic drapes, made of onion skins and gauze. The process of creation begins with boiling onion skins and dyeing gauze to capture the essence and colour of medical dressings. The layers of gauze affixed with onion skins are a metaphor for the healing process of my own atopic dermatitis—a cycle of recovery and relapse through the application of ointments and bandages to prevent infection and control inflammation. This sculpture depicts a healing process characterized by repetition, discomfort, and visual pain. Scattered underneath the drapes are onion skins emulating the constant shedding of my skin due to dryness and itching. By arranging the panels parallel to one another, I invite viewers to walk between them and immerse themselves in the olfactory and visual effects of the physical conditions approximated by the artwork. Therapy aims to give viewers an intimate experience of atopic dermatitis while raising awareness of other serious, rare, and sometimes incurable diseases which are often accompanied by experiences of discrimination and psychological harm. Through this work, I invite viewers to compassionately reflect on the plight of those suffering from rare skin diseases.





NonHTomas (Tomas Yang Qianfan)

The rise of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) has shaken the foundation of my artmaking. In my artworks, I explore the fundamental difference between AI and the creative self. The process of "thinking" is a key to this problem. AI mimics the human brain. However, it is far stranger than that. I want to reveal to my audience what a complex entity a human being is, but also to help them to appreciate this new technology that humans have developed.

Flotsam Installation with digital prints Dimensions variable

Generative Artificial Intelligence software is created as a tool to facilitate the process of creative production. Yet it can also undermine creativity. To produce the AI generated imagery seen in my artwork, I choose not to give the software a text-based prompt. Instead, I inputted settings and recorded the software's output and the time when it made the output. As a result, what the AI has generated is, in my view, the raw product of an "Internet unconsciousness." My artwork takes the form of digital prints because I want to give the AI's output a physical form. I started this project as a chance to learn more about generative Al, but also to deny it. My ideas about Al have begun to evolve. Although generative AI technology seeks to mimic the human mind, how it "thinks" is vastly different than a human mind. I believe we have not yet realized its level of alienness.

Henry Yuan Shuaixin

I am a documentary and street photographer. My subject is the changing face of the city that I capture through a documentary lens. This medium allows me to explore the developmental interplay between progress and the past, revealing hidden stories in buildings and streets. My focus on the urban landscape is not just an aesthetic appreciation, but also a critical commentary that invites the viewer to consider the cultural and social impact of our changing environment. I document what I see and aim to provoke thought about the impact of urbanization. My work acts as a mirror to the nuanced complexities of urban life, encouraging a deeper understanding of the spaces we inhabit and shape.

Bridging Narratives: The Pulse of Toronto Through Its Arches Photographic prints 15 inches x 10 inches each

Bridging Narratives: The Pulse of Toronto Through Its Arches is a street photography series showcasing thirteen bridges in and around Toronto. From railroad bridges to pedestrian overpasses, each photograph is carefully composed to highlight not only the physical details of the structure but also its role in the geographical location. The photographs document the evolution of the city, while text is added reveal the impact of the bridges on the watersheds and rivers that they span. My project encourages the viewer to see the significance of these structures in a new light. I want the viewer to think about how water connects the bridges.







Zhu Mingze

I am an artist from Changchun, China, navigating the rich artistic landscape of Toronto. Immersed for eight years in this city, I have been exploring the intersections of the digital age, identity, self-evolution, and faith through my art. Art is a dialogue—a medium to pose questions, offer answers, or convey messages that resonate on a personal and universal level. Each artwork is an opportunity to delve into the complexities of life, employing a diverse range of mediums, from sculpture to digital illustration, installation to Virtual Reality. I choose these mediums not just for their expressive potential but for their ability to translate my thoughts into tangible experiences, inviting viewers into a space of introspection and emotional connection. In this journey, there is no final destination, only continual exploration, discovery, and innovation. I approach my art practice as an evolving act of creation, a way of being that honours both the individual journey and our collective experiences.

To Cherish

21 rose petals and stem, 21 frames, pedestal Dimensions variable

Twenty-one frames each carry a lone rose petal, each a silent narrator of loss. Accompanied by the stem and a pedestal designed to enshrine it, To Cherish underscores a reverence for every element of the rose—and all beings. These fragments of what was once whole and vibrant now stand as silent witnesses to the ongoing flow of life. Embraced by frames, these petals and their accompanying stems are not merely preserved in their faded elegance but cherished for the challenging moments they symbolize. They silently convey a profound notion: the moments that have made us tremble are the very foundation of our being and our souls. Words become superfluous, for with each gaze, a soul perceives—the struggles and discomforts of life are, in fact, accolades to our will. I invite you to steady your gaze and contemplate this offering, honouring those marks once considered scars. These imprints shape us, guiding us into realms aglow with enduring luminance: the morrow's promise.



Zhu Yuhan

As a multidisciplinary artist rooted in Toronto and Shanghai, my artistic journey is influenced by the mosaic of experiences that shape my identity. My works explore the intricacies of family lineage, navigate intimate emotions, and forge connections. Drawing from my Asian heritage and queer identity, I explore the intersection of personal experiences with broader societal perceptions, focusing on themes of memory, cultural diaspora, loss, love, anxiety, and intergenerational relationships. Weaving together diverse media including photography, found objects and organic materials, I construct narratives that engage viewers in immersive experiences and prompt reflection on the interconnectedness of our individual stories, fostering dialogue and understanding.

Nil Admirari Mixed media installation 26 inches x 26 inches x 55 inches

In Nil Admirari I explore the complex emotions and experiences surrounding my grandmother's Alzheimer's disease. As I reflect on our shared memories, I am drawn to the image of the persimmon and loquat trees that stood at the entrance to her home, which has now been torn down. Using resin, I encapsulate the persimmons, preserving their outer shells while the inner flesh decays—a metaphor for my grandmother's fading thoughts and memories. What shapes a person? I see a horrifying change inside her, as I am too aware that she is no longer the woman I once knew despite her familiar appearance. Through processed vintage family photographs, I depict the gradual erosion and melting away of memories. Like peering into these images, glimpses of her past are fragmented, leaving me, her granddaughter, forever unable to grasp the full picture of who she was. Nil Admirari serves as a tribute to my grandmother, a reflection on her passing. The title, meaning "marvel at nothing," reflects my acceptance of her inevitable departure. Through this installation, I embark on a journey across generations, bridging the gap between past and present. Perhaps as I trace back to the long-lost memories, we will eventually reunite.





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ARTS, CULTURE AND MEDIA

