

# 2021 BFA EXHIBITION

University of Wyoming

# Welcome

On behalf of the University of Wyoming Department of Visual & Literary Arts, I want to congratulate the 2021 BFA graduates in the Art and Art History Program. BFA students exhibiting this year are the first cohort to graduate with the revised and far more rigorous BFA degree, including two consecutive BFA Capstone Courses. The work in the Visual Arts Gallery demonstrates the attention, rigor, and guidance the new program provides. I congratulate these students on their fortitude, positivity and tremendous creative work as evidenced in this catalog. BFA students are among our strongest students. The BFA degree prepares students for advanced creative work and professional activity beyond the undergraduate level. BFA students contribute to the Department of Art and Art History and are leaders in our academic community. We wish them all the best with their future career endeavors.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Phila Rogers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.





# Jessica Brennan

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These windows look into my Grandfather's childhood home that still stands on our family's property today. He is the son of two immigrants from Ukraine who struggled with poverty in the rural areas of North Dakota. This farm is a place where my family and I have formed many happy memories. My cousins and I frequently played among the remnants of this past life. Inventing new worlds and lives around the buildings, cars, and landmarks that dot the farm. I found this process to be an exploration with time's ability to change physical spaces as well as memories of them. The colors I have chosen are meant to accentuate the relationships between the real place and the remembered. Throughout this process I moved further from the reference photos and into an abstraction of my own memory and experience.

Bedroom // 40" x 26" x 4" // Oil paint, paper, plaster, found objects





# Ashlyn Dubanski

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This work deals with the process of healing: exposure and rebuilding, vulnerability and repair. The art explores scarring as records of experience. Scars show a part of oneself that is so dramatically altered that, even after healing, it will never be the same. They suggest a story, evoking curiosity, or remembrance. Often, when telling the story behind the scars, it brings up feelings of vulnerability and exposure. The scars hint at something beneath the surface; more trauma, more healing, more injuries that cannot be seen. Sometimes what is seen on the surface is there because a deeper problem had to be fixed. Scars on scars on scars. If something is broken internally, the outer layer must be damaged to fix the inner. The outer is then forced to bear the mark of the injury, a record that there was something broken inside. Scars are not simply a record of physical injury. If a wound is now a scar, then you have survived it and the scar is the proof. The outside is regenerated, the inside is repaired, and the unseen healing has taken place. Healing on healing on healing. Scars represent more than the rebuilding of tissue. For the one bearing the mark, it may carry a regretted decision, memories of an adventure, or the lessons learned during healing. They are there because someone cared for the parts that were broken. The repair would not be successful without careful tending of each broken part, from the inside out.

Just as trees show records of experience on their bark; the human body shows signs of experience through scarring. Through tree imagery, the ceramic pieces speak to alteration and disfigurement. They suggest further injury under the surface and speak to ongoing healing. The prints deal with the delicate balance of injury and repair. They were printed directly from the scar on Ashlyn's back. The various stages and types of suturing echo the feeling of the mending process.

Records of Experience // 2" x 14" x 20" // Clay, underglaze, glaze, oil paint, chalk pastels







# Julia Fox

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My work has to do with a continuing exploration of holy spaces – enclosures, either physical or imagined, where one may encounter the spiritual. The juxtaposition of my Catholic upbringing with recent experiences of other religions has motivated my curiosity about the interface between spiritual and material worlds, the nature of sacred places, and how these are portrayed in art.

The process of making art can provide an antidote to our nonacceptance of the world as it is, when it seems to fall short of our inner vision of harmony. We search for something ineffable because this world is never a perfect fit. Many of us are aware from time to time of something beyond our earthly existence, whether during typical daily activities or times of greatest stress or suffering. And if we are not conscious of or believe in the existence of a Supreme Being or spirit, perhaps we've noticed hints or experienced out of the ordinary manifestations or feelings that point to something beyond everyday life. We often seek meaning in nature, hiking to get away. A mountain path, river or garden often provide a spiritual connection or a haven from difficulty and loss. Sacred spaces can be found in nature, but also in our memories. Nostalgia is a catalyst that can return us to a specific time and place of well-being and comfort, a record of earlier perceptions of security and belonging to a world that is constantly modified as life goes on. Sometimes we long to be transported to those scenes from the past which have been altered or are now out of reach and reside only in memory, beyond our current existence.

My work has been motivated by questions that arise when thinking about spiritual enclosures. If God is everywhere, why do we need a specific location for devotion? Why are spirits associated with certain places – either man-made or natural? How do associated rituals or history confer sacredness? Why do certain places seem to be possessed of a spiritual quality?

Desert Spring // 4.5" x 5.5" x 6" // Copper, brass, thread, wood, paper







# Shelby Galik

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"Liminal" is a term that defines the threshold where reality meets unreality, or a state of transition that occupies the space between here and there. While these liminal spaces can be physical, I was interested in visually exploring the mental and emotional thresholds that I have been dealing with during the pandemic. States between action and inaction, freedom and constraint, and the shift from one identity to another are some of the focal points of the work. Due to liminality being an intangible and metaphorical concept, I played with figurative imagery such as flower language and animal symbolism as well as relied on intuition to tell me what felt right about depicting such abstract ideas. With these pieces, I hope to visually portray intangible points of transition that challenge the viewer to consider the liminal thresholds in their own lives and what it means to exist within those spaces.

Freedom in Constraint // 12" x 24" // Mixed Media





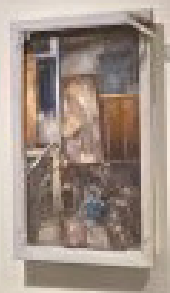
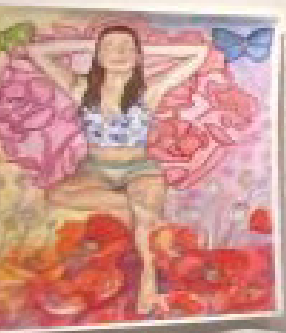
# Isabel Leininger

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For my piece *Shredded Memories*, I drew inspiration from the healing process and my ever changing perspective of losing someone to suicide. Directing my emotions and thoughts into printmaking and paper cutting processes, I was able to work through stages of healing and understanding by cutting different mandala patterns and creating a fragmented collection of designs. Other than physically losing my aunt, I cannot and do not associate with losing every part of her existence. My experiences with the physical world changed after I lost my aunt, and it was confusing at first, but creating art has helped me open my eyes and embrace all my emotions. My experiences include close interaction with butterflies, hawks, and feathers. The mandalas are the abstract representation of my experiences. Healing mandalas have played an important role in history with the work of Buddhist monks who worked with colored sand to create elaborate and meticulous mandalas. Concentrating on mandalas can help you focus on more abstract emotions and thoughts. One of the most important steps in creating a sand mandala is to destroy it; this helps the monk understand nothing is permanent. The fragmented aspect of this piece is inspired by the truth of 'nothing is permanent,' but only continuously changing, transforming, and engaging in the circle of life. I hope viewers can find healing and understanding of their own traumas in the constant battle of impermanence.

*Shredded Memories* // 44" x 136" x 36" // Stencil printmaking, paper cutting









# Leslie Podjun

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For me, there is no stronger way to convey a feeling from one human to another than the nude form. The nude is like a universal language we all have an ability to understand. Positioning and angles give us the information needed to know what is trying to be communicated. Nature in the form of foliage also links to emotion. When people are trying to explain how they feel they often use nature as an example. A raincloud over your head when you are sad. You are a ray of sunshine when you are happy. Being stubborn is like a dandelion growing in a crack on the sidewalk. Though my imagery may appear at first glance whimsical and decorative I hope to address some deeper emotions that go past just a beautiful picture. As I get older, I have begun to realize that there are an infinite number of emotions to be had. More often than not, they occur at the same time. These complicated intersections of emotions are what I hope to explore and share.

Gemini // 40" x 79" // Pastel, ink, hand dyed paper







# Cassidy Post

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My BFA work creates a space, emotionally and literally, to reflect on the many large and small changes that the COVID-19 pandemic brought about. My artwork looks at the pandemic not as a dark time, but as a natural cycle of life, a time for transitioning and growth.

Images of Wyoming insects, animals, and plants are printed on indigo-dyed cloth, creating a 'changing room' installation made with hanging curtains. The outside of the cloth room displays creatures in their beginning phases, while the interior of the room is filled with the creatures and plants fully transformed, representing the changes happening outside our bodies and inside our minds. A printed image of a giant cicada welcomes the viewer into the space as they slip inside between its wings. The joyous hum of these beautiful insects in the summertime seems to sing the blessings of having spent a time growing in the dark. Each image on the outside of the installation is printed within a circular format, a 'cycle,' while the prints on the inside of the room break free from the circular boundary, symbolizing the release from confinement and isolation. Watercolor self-portrait paintings are hung alongside the changing room with repeating circular motifs, representing the cycles of emotion and seasons of self-growth and reflection I experienced from 2020. My artwork offers people a chance to find peace in nature, in uncertain times, and in their own cycles of life.

Cycles // 22.5" x 30" // Watercolor paint





# Em Whipple

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My work is an exploration of concepts and themes of gender identity within and beyond social norms and expectations. The imagery and inspiration for my work is sourced from advertisements and applied to the documentation of individuals that have defined themselves outside of the cisgender-heterosexual(cishet)-white social standard. The combination of image and text is inspired by advertisement layout but lacks the quick readability, prompting the viewer to search for meaning within the letters. While it is impossible to represent all, my work is meant to represent individuals that have existed as "Other." I am inspired by artists that have a unique way of integrating identity and activism such as, Barbara Krueger, Jenny Holzer, Adrian Piper, Lorna Simpson, and The Guerilla Girls. My goal as an artist is to encourage individuals who have not had to justify or contemplate their gender identity to ask themselves what their values and expectations are for themselves and others based on aspects such as social media, advertising, education, etc. Additionally, prompting the viewer to be empathetic and understand what it is like to break through social expectations of the relationship between a person's characteristics and their gender identity.

Blurred by Expectation // 66" x 27.5" // Screen print

Strength Beyond Perception // 66" x 26" // Screen print

Exhausted by The Bonds of Flesh // 66" x 26" // Screen print





# Rene Williams

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My BFA at the University of Wyoming is focused on sculpture and metalsmithing. I merge unique materials and methods and have developed some unconventional techniques while exploring merging organic materials with glass, concrete, metal and other unlikely combinations. I often use architecture and traditional building materials in my work and have a deep connection to those materials. I use these techniques in my sculpture.

Living in France for 9 months inspired me and my work with concrete and architecture in a way that brings experiences and history together. I was inspired by medieval and Roman jewelry and metalsmithing designs and techniques. The use of concrete for over 1,000 years in Europe, with the marks of history on the buildings and old worn streets tell a story. The past lives in the materials inspire me to recreate that experience with my own work.

Lichen Cuff // 6" x 4" x 1" // Copper, enamel, lichen, resin



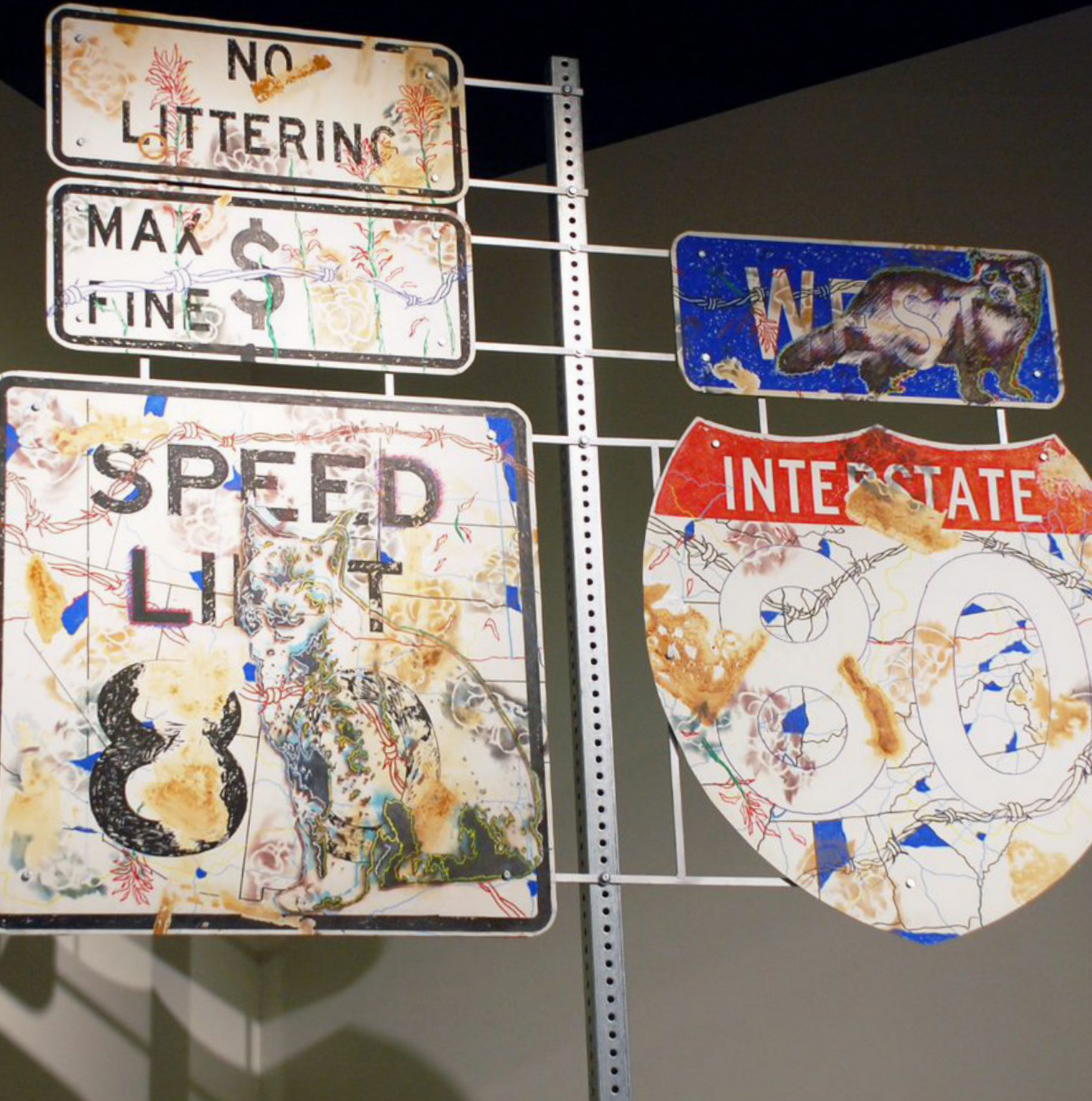


# Drew Yerkovich

The work comprising Inverted Semiotics is driven by the ever-expanding human infestation and infiltration of the natural world. While boundaries once existed and a sacred perspective on nature was respected, capitalism has driven the attitude of the everyday citizen and general consumer towards wasteful lifestyles.

This work is a dialogue that questions the relationship between mundane symbols and objects in juxtaposition with natural elements. Through drawing, printmaking, sculpture and applications of street art, a highway road sign installation becomes a paradox. It is a sign of a sign that is fake but real simultaneously. The combination of the faux and real sign investigates how the viewer exists in a Postmodern-shaped society.

This work asks questions regarding our individual and collective habits that have impacted and contributed to a global crisis. It challenges the toxic habits of humanity and how we choose to treat a global epidemic through the lens of economic priority.



Inverted Semiotics // 57" x 72" x 1.5" // Found trash, Dirt, Road Sign Pole, Drawing, Pochoir, Rust Print, Spray Paint on Cut Stonehenge paper mounted to foam core



# 2021 BFA Exhibition

## Department of Visual and Literary Arts

The Art and Art History Program supports the creative, aesthetic and cultural development of students within the university community, and serves the cultural and educational needs of the state. The department is dedicated to preparing its graduates to assume leadership positions in their professional lives while maintaining an inner commitment to the aesthetic standards of their chosen discipline.

The BFA degree is considered the honors program of study in the Art and Art History Program and is the preferred program for students preparing for graduate school and professional careers in the visual arts. BFA candidates work closely with their academic advisors to plan a program of upper division course work to meet their artistic and professional goals and objectives and to define an area of concentration and development.

# Special Thanks

Visual Arts Gallery Preparator  
David Jones

Catalog Photography  
Ashley Hope Carlisle & Featured Artists

Virtual Exhibition  
Brandon Gellis

Catalog Design  
Shelby Galik

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