

# PERSONAL SPACE(S)

BFA EXHIBITION 2024

# WELCOME

## BFA 2024

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On behalf of the University of Wyoming Department of Visual Arts, I want to congratulate our 2024 BFA graduates. The BFA students exhibiting this year come from two professional degrees: the BFA in Studio Art and the BFA in Visual Communication Design. The work in the Visual Arts Gallery demonstrates the attention, rigor, and guidance our BFA degrees provide. I congratulate these students on their fortitude, positivity and tremendous creative work as evidenced in this catalog. BFA in Studio Art and BFA in Visual Communication Design students are among the strongest in our program. Our BFA degrees prepare students for advanced creative work and professional activity beyond the undergraduate level. All BFA students contribute to the Department of Visual Arts and are leaders in our academic and creative community. We wish them all the best in their future career endeavors.



**Doug Russell**  
Head, Department of Visual Arts

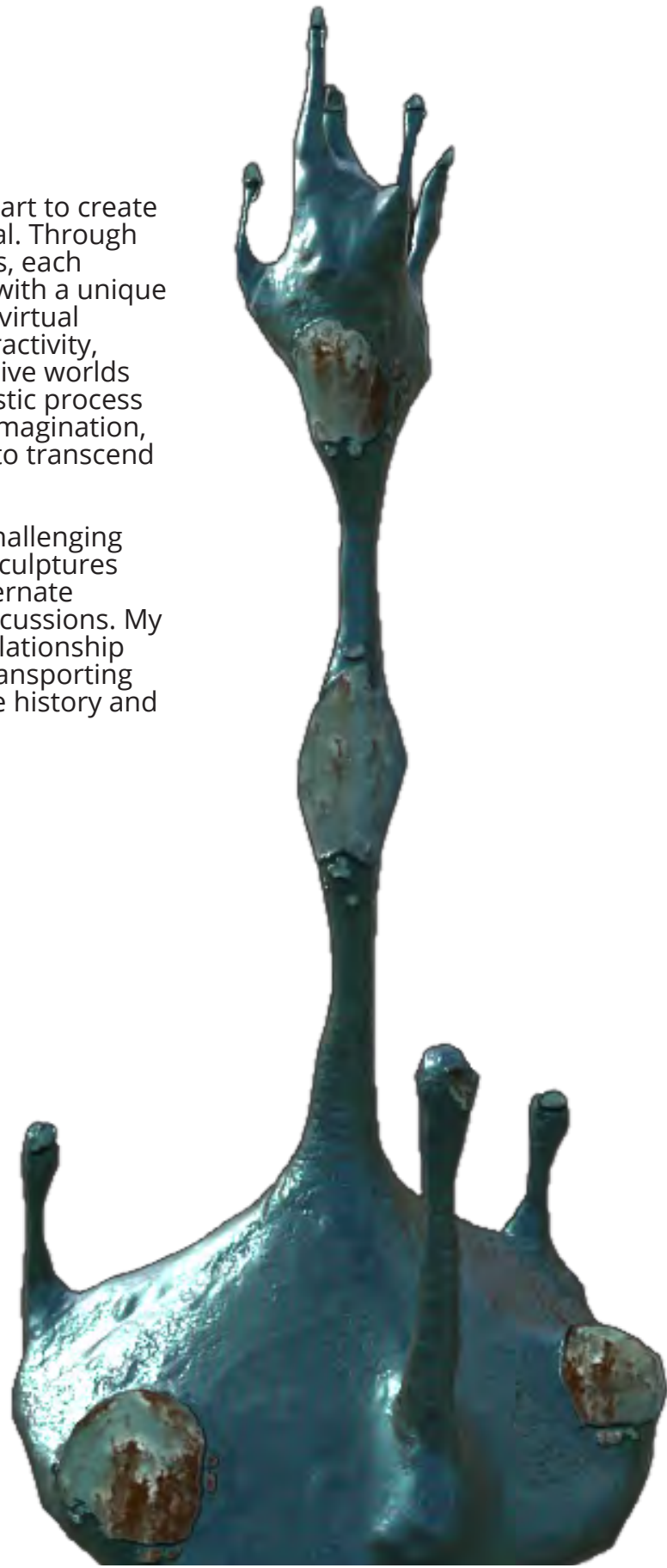
# Matthew Adams

Visual Design

I merge physical sculpture with digital art to create a seamless blend of the real and virtual. Through intricate details and imagined histories, each sculpture becomes a tangible artifact with a unique narrative. Augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) technologies enhance interactivity, inviting viewers to explore the immersive worlds I construct around each piece. My artistic process revolves around blending reality and imagination, inventing fabricated pasts for objects to transcend boundaries.

My goal is to captivate audiences by challenging traditional notions of art. Combining sculptures with AR and VR opens gateways to alternate dimensions, sparking curiosity and discussions. My ongoing exploration delves into the relationship between the real and the imagined, transporting viewers into unexpected realms where history and creativity converge.

*Matthew Adams*



**Matthew Adams**

Visual Design

02



Helpful Tips

- Click on the screen to activate the board.
- Click a cube to activate the laser.
- Click a cube again to rotate it.

RESET  
BOARD



VALUES:

- Cube State: 2
- Cube State: -1
- Cube State: -1
- Cube State: 0
- Cube State: -1
- Cube State: 6
- Cube State: 2
- Cube State: -1
- Cube State: 0

EXIT



EXPERIENCE  
ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

With the Companion App, visitors will virtually peel back layers of the cube replica to decode hidden data: sophisticated algorithms map out patterns representing everything from technical schematics to potentially encoded consciousness or memories. Engage with this exclusive interactive experience to glimpse tantalizing hints of what secrets still remain locked inside the enigmatic alien cube.



ALIEN CUBE  
RESEARCH  
DIVISION



Alien Cube Exhibit

CONTACT

Symbiotic Central in Paris  
symbioticcentral@gmail.com

ALIEN CUBE  
EXHIBIT  
COMPANION APP GUIDE

Helpful Tips

- Ask a question or try one of the following inputs:
- Can you summarize the book?
  - What are the Pudekai?
  - What are the cubes?

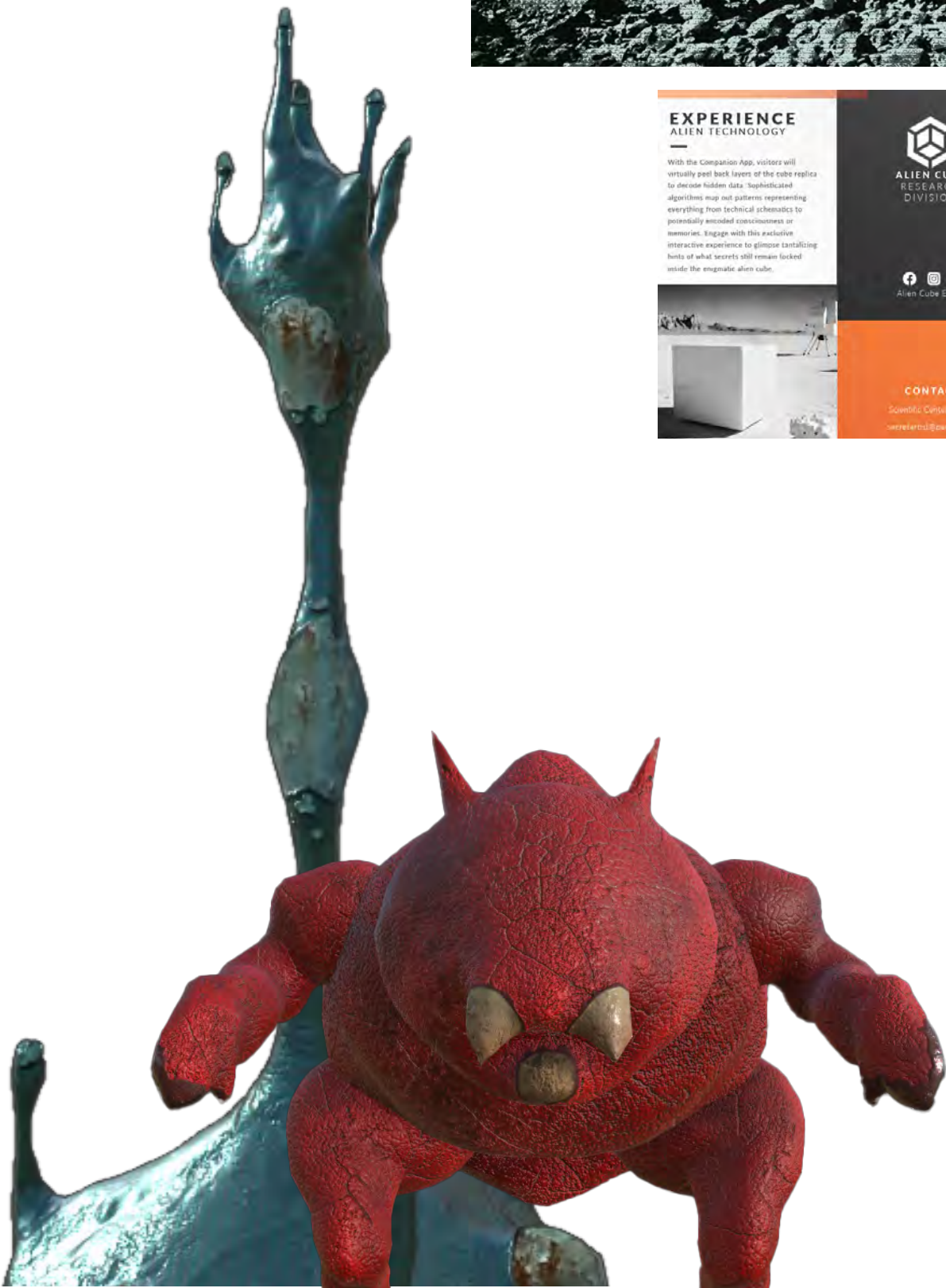


The cubes discovered by Dr. Helena Novak in the Błędowska Desert are enigmatic artifacts of unknown origin, defying conventional explanations and raising questions about their purpose.

Type here, then hit the arrow button to the right.

EXIT

Matthew Adams  
Alien Cube Exhibit  
2024  
Mixed Media







# Ahmad Ansari

## Photography

I work closely with the people I photograph, getting to know who they are. This helps them feel more comfortable when they're in front of the camera. As they think about their lives, their natural expressions come through, and that's what I aim to catch. I use my camera to capture those real, honest moments. These pictures are my way of holding onto the true stories of the people I meet. As an artist, I celebrate the rich and personal histories we all carry around. Also, I sometimes use film photography because I believe the results are richer in emotion and more real.

The portraits I take are like mirrors reflecting stories of someone's life in a photo. Every face has its own unique story. These stories are told by the lines and shadows of faces, marking a lifetime of feelings, moments, and dreams. It's the variety of human experiences arising from people with diverse backgrounds, cultures, and lifestyles that I find so rewarding to capture. To me, photography is about telling these stories.



Ahmad Ansari  
**I Want To See Him...**  
2024  
Digital Photography on Luster Paper



# Blue Ayotte

## Visual Design

How Icarus Flew is my attempt to explain my struggle with mental illness and recovery. I use the story of Icarus as an allegory for the lead up and recovery from my attempted suicide. Art and design are my biggest passions in life and when I hit a wall and suffered a massive burn out, I felt like the sun had melted my wings. My depression and trauma felt like an ocean with tidal waves crashing into me and dragging me down. All I wanted to do was sink to the bottom. Recovering from this has been a tremendous task and it has felt like rebuilding myself from the ground up.

I wanted this installation to communicate something that I have never felt anyone really understood: how isolating it feels to be depressed and contemplating suicide. I want everyone who interacts with this work to walk away thinking about how they would reach out to those they care about who are struggling, and how they themselves would tell their loved ones they did not want to live. The most important part of this work to me is expressing to others just how easy it is to not notice when someone is falling apart.

*Blue Ayotte*



**Blue Ayotte**

Visual Design





Blue Ayotte  
**How Icarus Flew**  
2024  
Digital prints, wood, paper





# Brianna Bonefield

## Sculpture

Many of us believe in something. The act of believing in or practicing something brings some of us peace and comfort in our lives. I make work that explores my interest in spirituality and the notion of a higher power. When it comes to life and death, like many others, I experience a feeling of fear for the unknown, yet I want to provide my viewers with peaceful, calming, and comforting emotions. However, spirituality is not simply about life and death, it can be about unplanned moments in life that cannot be attributed to science, but perhaps to an external divine force.

In my work, I am reflecting on these unplanned moments. Birds have become a symbol of the soul, and the embodiment of spiritual power in my work. I would describe birds as guardians. These guardians guide multiple elements upward, like iron-fabric and thread. Subconsciously, I was attracted to the upward motion because the form allows a viewer to look up, and often when addressing a higher power, we look toward the sky. The movement creates a sense of lifting, relieving stress and/or pain, which provides a momentary distraction. The string is a metaphor for wordless communication; a symbol of connecting, joining, and denying separation. I believe that there is an eternal connection between us – humans – and the world beyond.

*BAB*

Brianna Bonefield  
**Lift and Help Me to Soar**  
2024  
Cast Iron, Resin, Cardboard, Wire, Paper, Acrylic Paint

**Brianna Bonefield**

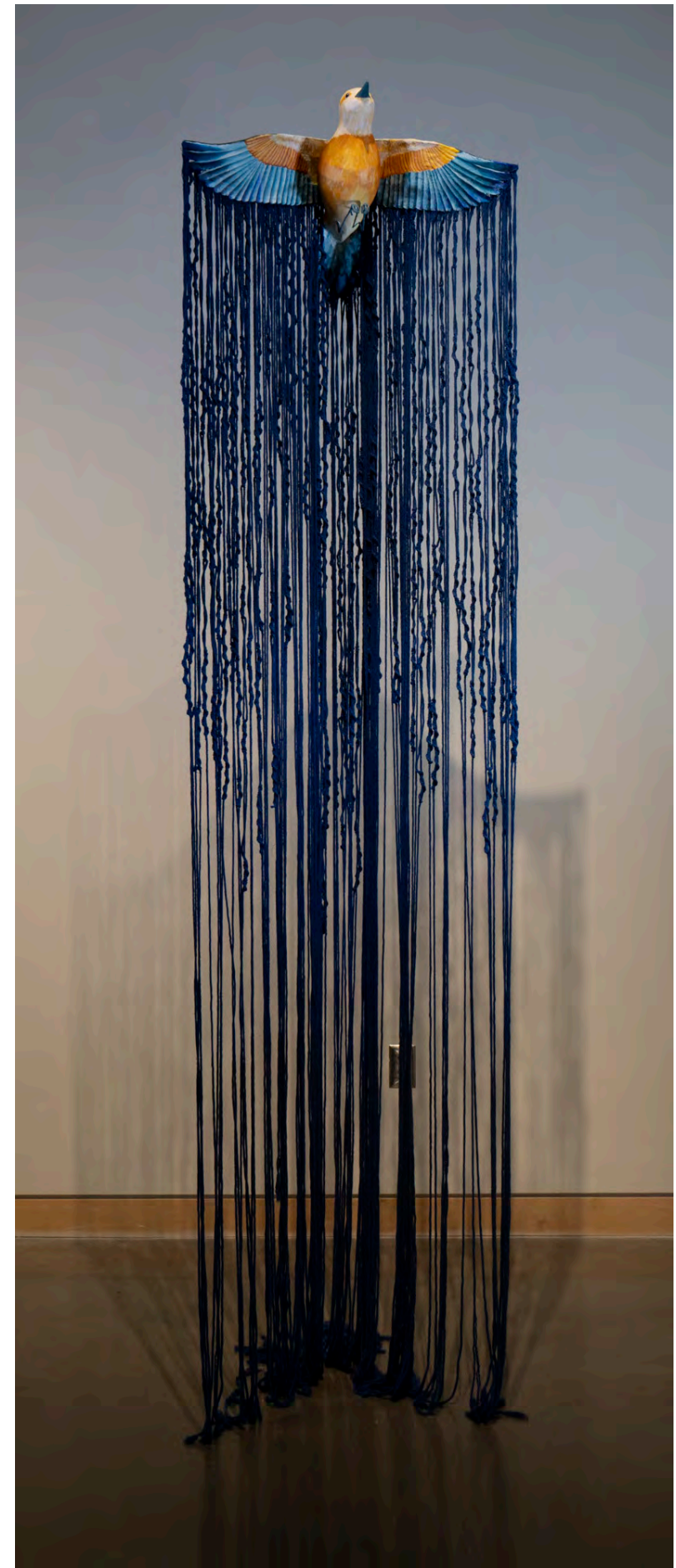
Sculpture

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Brianna Bonefield  
**Accompany Me to the Beyond**  
 2024  
 Cast bronze, paper, fiber



Brianna Bonefield  
**Ascend**  
 2024  
 Cardboard, Wire, Paper, Fiber, Acrylic Paint



# Lewis Balanoff

## Sculpture

A lifetime of pretending and being misunderstood or missing what everyone somehow innately knew separated me from my peers. Having Autism/ADHD and being Queer in Wyoming creates numerous social boundaries. (Not to ignore the privilege I do have.) It's through art that I have been able to process and translate the cyclical feelings of transition, isolation, and tension.

Communication, foundational to our perceptions of ourselves, in all forms, dictates our interaction with the world around us. Working repetitively and meticulously, patterns began to emerge throughout each artwork. A translation occurs as different materials are replaced or transformed by the casting process. Reflecting a conversation, allowing my art to become a conduit for conveying something I find difficult to put into words.

I explore various aspects of relationships with oneself, other individuals, and society in my work, aiming to make a connection with the viewer. Although not everyone may feel like an observer, paralyzed at times by thought, the human experience doesn't spare anyone from anxiety, labels, or feelings of isolation.

*Lewis Balanoff*



Lewis Balanoff  
**Isolation**  
2024  
Cast bronze, Aluminum, Fiber, Mixed Media



Lewis Balanoff  
**Communication**  
2024  
Drop Cloth, Mixed Media





Lewis Balanoff  
**Tension**  
2024  
Cast Iron, Jute Twine





# Keeley Hagen

## Fiber Arts

I create work that is not only for me but for those who are quiet and well-versed in observation rather than hasty action, for individuals who walk through life softly, value mindfulness, and exist in a state of quietude. My creative practice explores the dichotomy between the rejection of domestic activities and the contemporary construction of new definitions of craft. Fabric, embroidery, stitching, tea dyeing, and collage are materials I welcome as characters that contribute to my practice in contemporary craft and drawing in the expanded field. Sitting beside my mother and learning how to crochet was my portal into repetitive processes, attention to detail, and learning how to slow down.

I believe that referencing these stereotypical characteristics given to women such as being nurturing, gentle, and intuitive through my use of muted color palettes, automatic making, and hand stitching redefines the feminine. The historical rejection of hyper-feminine activities, or in simplified terms "craft," is done in fear of upholding the domestic mythology of home and family. In the last century, the reclamation of these crafts has pushed certain power structures away from their continued insistence on keeping women subdued. There is an unseen brutality that has allowed me to become this soft.

Slowing down magnifies time. Stitching is violent.

*Keeley Hagen*



Keeley Hagen  
**I Am All You Could Have Been and You Are All I Might Be**  
 2024  
 Collaged fabric patches, hand-stitched thread, knitted thread, embroidery floss, yarn, and notes from Mama on tea-dyed muslin

**Keeley Hagen**

Fiber Arts



# Katie Hines

## Sculpture

In nature, we find intuition. Birds fly south for the winter, the sun rises and sets each day, and everything works together. Trusting oneself is a hard skill to learn, but by observing the natural world we are shown that it is possible. Soul searching, change, and healing are never described as linear or easy but rather seem to ebb and flow between moments of frustration to moments of mending.

We all experience moments of transformation in our life, moments that urge us to change and grow in order to find our authentic selves. This process is difficult and requires the acknowledgement that no one is perfect, patience in moments of frustration, and the motivation to keep going when all we want to do is stop. Who helps you along the way? Where do you rest your head when grief pulls you down? What provides you peace in the chaos?

Dreams have the ability to communicate the deeper emotions we have and show them to us in fun and interesting ways. Dreams represent the subconscious mind and can make us aware of the influences on our actions and feelings. How can we endeavor to understand ourselves better through the messages we receive in dreams? My work does not attempt to find an answer, but instead provides a space for answers to exist. To do this, I primarily use fiber and mixed media, allowing the materials to guide me in the making process. By using material as metaphor, I enjoy exploring the juxtapositions between hard and soft, light and heavy, what we feel and how we act. All of my work seeks balance and authenticity, to be true to itself, and by extension, to me.

*Katie Hines*







Katie Hines  
**Leap of Faith**  
2024

Cast bronze, hand dyed cotton fabric, wire





# Avendah Lowe

Painting

Pattern, color, and form are at the foundation of my practice. With a maximalist sensibility that rides the edge of being 'too much,' I find inspiration in everyday ornamental designs such as wallpaper motifs and printed textile designs. I combine eclectic elements such as shaped canvases, meandering patterns, realistic illusions and morphing color fields, into one composition.

The overlooked pattern and decoration movement impacts my creative process and way of thinking. Led by intuition and a detail-oriented mindset, my process is open-ended, and I frequently observe the world around me for representations to express through painting. Trial and error are significant to my process and ultimately produce the most authentic version of myself in my work. High chroma, intense colors that catch one's attention are beautiful and political, highlighting the way colors are affected by their context.

*Avendah Lowe*



**Avendah Lowe**

Painting

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Avendah Lowe  
**Brain on Panel**  
2023-24  
Oil on Masonite

# BIOS

## MATTHEW ADAMS

Matthew Adams, a 3D modeling artist specializing in world-building and visual design, refined his craft during two years of intensive study at the University of Wyoming. Immersed in design principles, Adams gained invaluable experience through an internship at the 3D Visualization Center at the University of Wyoming. The culmination of his ability is highlighted in the ‘Pudelka’ (The Boxes) exhibit, known for its meticulous 3D character modeling, Unity game development, poster and picture design, brochure creation, book design, and richly developed lore. Adams’ work offers audiences a captivating experience within a unique universe, defined by his attention to detail and immersive worlds.

## AHMAD ANSARI

Ahmad Ansari grew up in Tehran, Iran, and came to the US shortly before the pandemic. He has been running his photography studio in his country since 2007 and decided to pursue further education in art. In his studies, he has chosen to focus on marginalized communities and express their stories through his artwork. If you have any ideas, or if you are someone who wants to make a difference for marginalized communities, or racial and ethnic minority groups, he is currently open to collaboration. Please email him at aansari@uwo.edu

## BLUE AYOTTE

Blue Ayotte is a designer and artist from Cheyenne, Wyoming and will be graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design from the University of Wyoming. Never being satisfied with sitting still, Blue explores multiple mediums and subject matter in their work, but has a deep love for graphic design, digital illustration, and drawing. Blue’s main goal in life is to always be creating and sharing ideas with as many people as possible.

## BRIANNA BONEFIELD

Born and raised in Gillette Wyoming, Brianna Bonefield is expanding her education in fine arts. She graduated from Northern Wyoming Community College with her Associates Degree in Fine Arts and is advancing her education at the University of Wyoming as a Bachelor of Fine Arts candidate. She integrates sculpture and painting into her work while exploring spirituality and how humans and/or nature connect to a greater power. Her work incorporates both realistic and abstract elements. Much of Bonefield’s work depicts her subjects in a realistic way, while placing them in a setting or activity that is unnatural to the subjects. She derives much of her inspiration from nature and organic forms.

## LEWIS BALANOFF

Lewis is an artist from Wyoming, that grew up in both Laramie and Cheyenne. He attended the University of Wyoming and will be graduating with a BFA in studio arts in 2024. Lewis primarily focuses on drawing and sculptural practices with a distinct interest in cast forms. Most of his work focuses on expressions of identity and his interaction with the world. Post-graduation he aspires to become a full-time professional artist.

## KEELEY HAGEN

Born and raised in Gillette Wyoming, Keeley Hagen is pursuing a BFA in Studio Art at the University of Wyoming. Trained in painting, drawing, and fiber arts, Keeley’s current creative practice is an attempt to bridge the gap between contemporary craft and fine art, highlighting the importance of relationships between women in her life, and reflecting on notions of the feminine. In addition to visual art, Keeley enjoys spending time reading fiction and writing poetry. She also dedicates most of her time to her two puppies, Gus and Myrtle, often described as the world’s cutest chiweenie and pug. After graduation, Keeley plans to apply to MFA programs emphasizing in fiber and material studies.

## KATIE HINES

Born in Lander, Wyoming, Katie is pursuing a BFA in studio art from the University of Wyoming and is an enrolled member of the Eastern Shoshone tribe. Hines enjoys exploring abstract art and non-representational imagery through sculpture, mixed media, and fiber art. Her work is very process oriented with emphasis on topics of identity, feminism, and healing from trauma. After graduation, Hines plans to keep working and to apply to MFA programs.

## AVENDAH LOWE

Raised in Rapid City, South Dakota, Avendah Lowe is a BFA in Studio Art major at the University of Wyoming who works primarily in painting. Only in this past year, Avendah developed a distinct style which includes bright colors, patterns, abstract forms and rendering technically challenging objects with observational accuracy. At the 2024 Annual Student Juried show sponsored by the UW Art Museum, Avendah received two awards for her painting “Moments Before,” including a purchase award and the Edington Family Award for Excellence in the Visual Arts. In addition, Avendah’s painting “Jewelry Tells the Truth,” was included in a recent show at the SOK Gallery in downtown Laramie. Interests such as fashion, travel, thrifting, and reading mystery novels weave their way into Avendah’s painting practice. Studying abroad in Florence, Italy in the Fall of 2022 was a highlight of Avendah’s undergraduate experience and impacted her outlook on art, art history, beauty and craftsmanship. From this, she developed a new respect for the craft of artmaking and how beautiful it can be to explore.



# ABOUT

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 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

**BAILEY EDWARD RUSSELL &**

**AHMAD ANSARI**

CATALOG DESIGN

**MATTHEW ADAMS**

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