

University  
of Oregon  
Department  
of Art

MFA  
Thesis  
Exhibition  
Catalog

# INTRODUCTION

Every spring our graduating MFA candidates' work emerges and activates the Art Department and the College of Design with an ethos of possibility and insight. Their creative research of new knowledge, or the rearrangement of old knowledge, brings with it the sense that a new day is rising.

The *2021 MFA Thesis Exhibition* culminates three years of independent research and experimentation by a cohort of eight artists whose various practices engage a broad range of inquiry, from expressions of the personal and diaristic to the examination and fictionalization of language, politics, and technology.

While the world teetered this last year—fraught over the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice, and political chaos these candidates focused on their practices as the world blurred. They've shaped new strategies to teach on-line, built new curriculum to communicate remotely, and cloistered in their studios articulating their practices all the while navigating crisis shared with the nation.

As the pandemic ebbs I hope the MFA Graduates of 2021 move forward with a sense of not only a new day rising but a new world emerging.

Jack Tuttle Snell-Ryan  
Director of Graduate Studies  
Professor

# CAROLINE TURNER



Caroline Turner is an artist currently based in Eugene, OR. In addition to her studio practice, Turner co-founded IRL Gallery in 2016 with Ian Anderson, an exhibition space that blurs the line between seeing art in *real life* and viewing documentation online. Solo exhibitions include *Solarsteading in Marielandia* at OTOT Studios, Cincinnati, OH and *Banks of the Calcarine Fissure* at Neon Heater Gallery, Findlay, OH. Recent group exhibitions include *I am thankful to be a ghost now*, Aldea Gallery, Bergen, Norway; *The Wired*, Alice F. and Harris K. Weston Gallery, Cincinnati, OH; *Fresh American Art*, Art Me Today, St. Petersburg, Russia; and *Broken Dreamz*, Kunsthalle Am Hamburger Platz, Berlin, Germany.



Hinterland is a proposition; a speculative state of being—a conspiracy. It is an arch, a gate, and a portal; congealing time and collapsing itself into the *present*. A hinterland is typically thought of as the less developed land next to a port, city, or coast; but it can also be understood as the limitations of knowledge, that which is unexplored and ill-defined. In the hinterland lies opportunity: to reimagine, to reorient, to build something new.

Perhaps there is a crisis in our current state of beliefs; in our inability to imagine a new way of being in the world. While we are busy sacrificing to Moloch, failing to coordinate at the planetary scale, it's important to remember that it hasn't always been this way. A compounding series of metaphysical mutations in our deep history as humans has created our world today.

There is solace knowing that nothing lasts forever. If we created this world, then we can create a new one, too. What if we could go back to a time before our smooth-brained system of exploitation and uber financialization? To a time before the invention of nuclear arms? Before the invention of reason and rationality—and Science as we understand it today?

What if we could go back to a time when magical ideation intuited episteme? Before Christianity swept through the Roman Empire at the height of its stability and control? To a time before the first seed was sown? Before the first symbolic gesture; before an image was painted on a cave wall? What if we could go back to a time before the first stone tool was chipped into form?

Of course, we can.

The future is not that which is uncertain; it is the past. The hinterland is not the sundown horizon, it is the daybreak we have yet to contemplate.



www

tierney.pink

# CLAIRE TIERNEY ANDERSON



Installation and digital artist Tierney Anderson sculpts playful and colorful objects and produces digital works that explore the fragile spaces between technology, self-expression, gender, subjectivity, and ambiguity. Construction of the self and one's identity exist concurrently within the entanglement of the real and digital worlds and Anderson confronts this phenomenon. Her digital performances shed ambiguity in order to directly consider intersections of feminism and technology as well as her personal relationship to both. The objects and textural forms that she makes often function as props within or as accessories to her digital work.

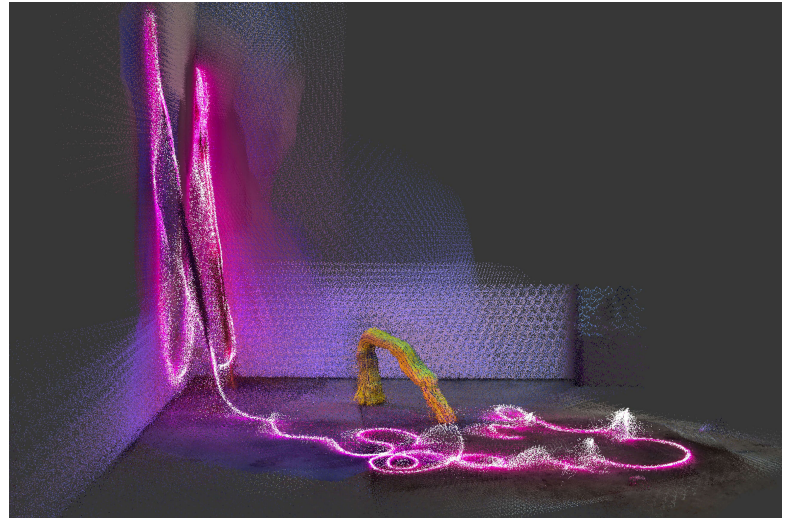


Anderson utilizes disruption as methodologies in her material and non-material works such as bright pink pigment interrupting a white gallery wall, or a design that disrupts the usability of an object, and she uses both color and function to disconnect the gender signifiers that encompass fly-ties—a male-dominated object used for fly-fishing. Each fish hook is consumed by neon plumage to showcase what she refers to as “drag flies” in order to bring attention to gender fluidity, feminist ideas, and constructed identity. Anderson’s methods run parallel to a glitch within *glitch feminism* ideology. Often referred to outside of glitch feminism as a fault or slippage, the glitch introduced by American curator and writer Legacy Russell is considered to be a transformable moment in which limitations and obstacles surrounding race, gender, sexuality, and identity can be sundered; possibility emerging from error.

Following Russell’s trajectory within cyberfeminism, Anderson created a digital cyborg, or avatar, in order to navigate self-exploration within the space of online artificiality—artifice being the glitch. Anderson’s cyborg is named Tierney and is entirely derivative of images of herself. Tierney is a strategy for exposing the lack of agency Anderson encounters online and intends to use her avatar to emphasize the layering process associated with femininity, comparing the process to coding, performance, and oversimplification. A means of coping with the constant pressure to exist online, Tierney is an explorer of narcissism. Artifice is the possibility for self-exploration, not the error. In a recent untitled video work, Anderson records Tierney performing two separate laborious tasks. In the first, Tierney strenuously puts on a silicone life-cast bodysuit before then stepping into a royal blue pant suit. She sits down and tries to adapt to the weight of her skins, her layers, and her gender codes all the while restless. Accompanying that video is a close-up of Tierney attempting to kiss herself on screen through a clear body of water. In a tragic act of self-reflexivity she nearly drowns.

Tierney’s expeditions with artificiality, which Anderson regards as “sugar-coated riots,” connect to her artistic practice more broadly aiming to locate those ambiguous spaces surrounding the digital world, self-expression, gender, and subjectivity. Her work wants to create space for itself and seeks joy through that space, indulging in curiosity along the way.

Cassidy Schoenfelder, or Poppy  
Historian & Place-based Expeditionary Artist





# DEVON DEVAUGHN

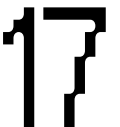


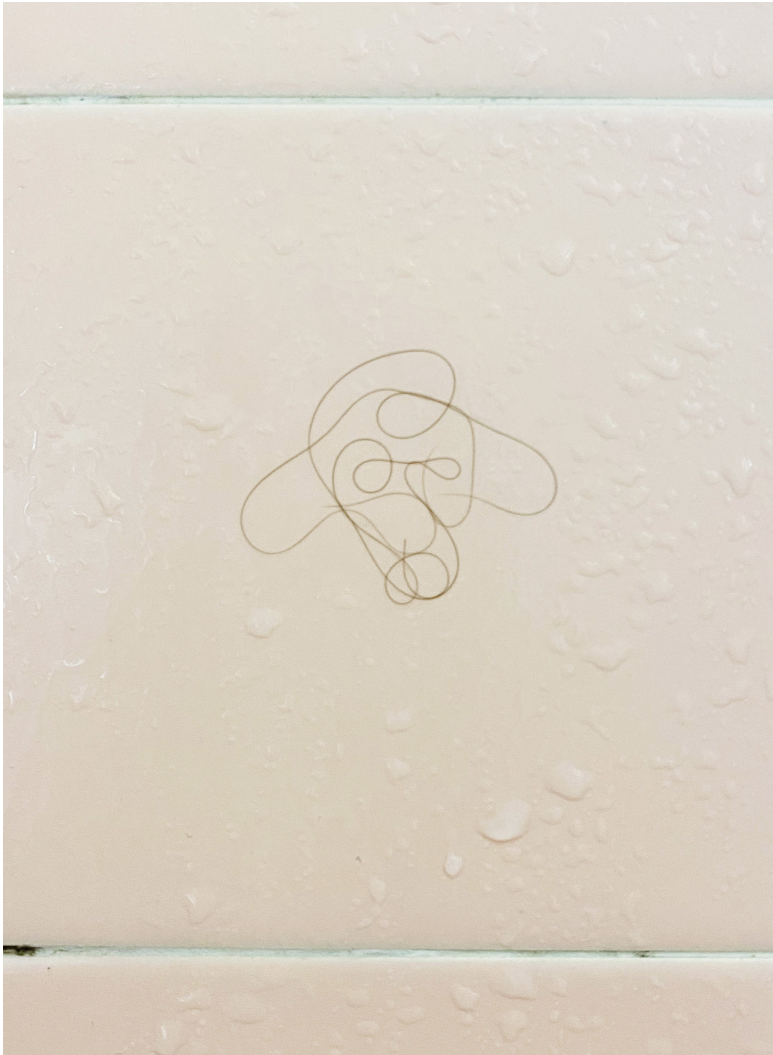
I create installations that use humor and the visual language of the domestic space to disarm and analyze emotional discomfort in order to create a more whole sense of self. The work invites those who choose to participate to consider themselves in a similar manner and to empathize with the forms that populate the installation. I've included dogs, the home, and mothers as subjects. Not meant to be a form of therapy, the work also connects to the social politics of the domestic space, gender roles, and our partnership with animal companions.



My practice draws comparisons between domestic space and mental space, as they are both iterations of where and how people live. I'm particularly interested in how both require upkeep and maintenance, in order to be comfortably habitable. This is portrayed through the idea of the carpet, a material that requires constant vacuuming but still retains bits and pieces of all that have lived on top of it: it serves as body, record-keeper, and comfort object. There are other comfort objects in my work, such as pillows and dog imagery, that are meant to disarm emotional discomfort. Dogs are particularly important to this, as petting dogs has been shown to reduce stress levels. They also serve as witnesses to all that happens within the home. Imagery that is suggestive of a mother figure relates back to maintenance, as the mother fills the role of caretaker, housekeeper, and child rearer in a society that revolves around a patriarchal power structure. The beige color palette refers to domestic spaces, as well as a neutral "non-color" that is impartial to that which populates the home. I relate this to the desire to simply analyze, rather than extinguish, emotional discomfort in my work. I also employ a sense of humor through crude drawings, using materials that were excreted from my dog, and making stuffed forms with floppy limbs. Humor is incredibly important to my work, as it is a defense mechanism and a tool used to disarm, making discomfort more approachable and easier to analyze. I am hopeful that my work can instill a sense of kindness and understanding in those that choose to participate with it.

The work is meant to make participants feel welcome upon entering the installation. This is especially important in a gallery setting, as I (and many others) find them to be sterile, uncomfortable, and intimidating. I want folks to know that they are not alone in feeling discomfort.





www

edenvevans.com

CENTER FOR INVESTIGATION OF LAND MASS AGENCY

# EDEN V. EVANS



University of Oregon  
Department of Art

21



INTERVIEW WITH A ROCK  
FEBRUARY 25, 2021  
UNDISCLOSED RESIDENCE  
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

CILMA Agent: I'm not sure about rock etiquette, but how old are you?

Rock: To be honest I never kept track. Maybe it's because I exist in a different timescale than you do, so I just never really thought about it. I don't know.

*(Laughter)*

CA: That makes a lot of sense. So, do you measure time at all?

R: Sort of. I mostly notice when my environment has shifted somehow, or I am all of a sudden heavier or something. Like, you know when you gain weight gradually, so you don't really notice the shift in your form, but then one day you see yourself



and you're just like, "damn...." That's more or less what it's like. From sand to boulder, like it's not even hard.

CA: Is that a joke?

R: Yeah, little joke.

CA: Hah.

*(Awkward silence)*

CA: What about family, do you have any in town?

R: I used to live at home, but then someone stole me and put me in this Zen garden. I bet they knew it wasn't legal, so I sent out some bad luck energy. We'll see what sticks. Maybe I'll get to go home.

CA: Wow, that's intense. A Zen garden? Are you pissed? I'd be pissed.

R: Hell yeah, I'm pissed! But mostly I just want to go home. This Zen garden is pretty chill for now, but the only traces left behind are from the hand of the woman who stole me. Every morning she spends like thirty minutes pushing that damn rake across the sand. I really wish she would give it up and let me alone with the sand for a while, so we can develop our relationship.

CA: I mean, we all need to connect to something. Sitting here, I realize it's ingrained in us.

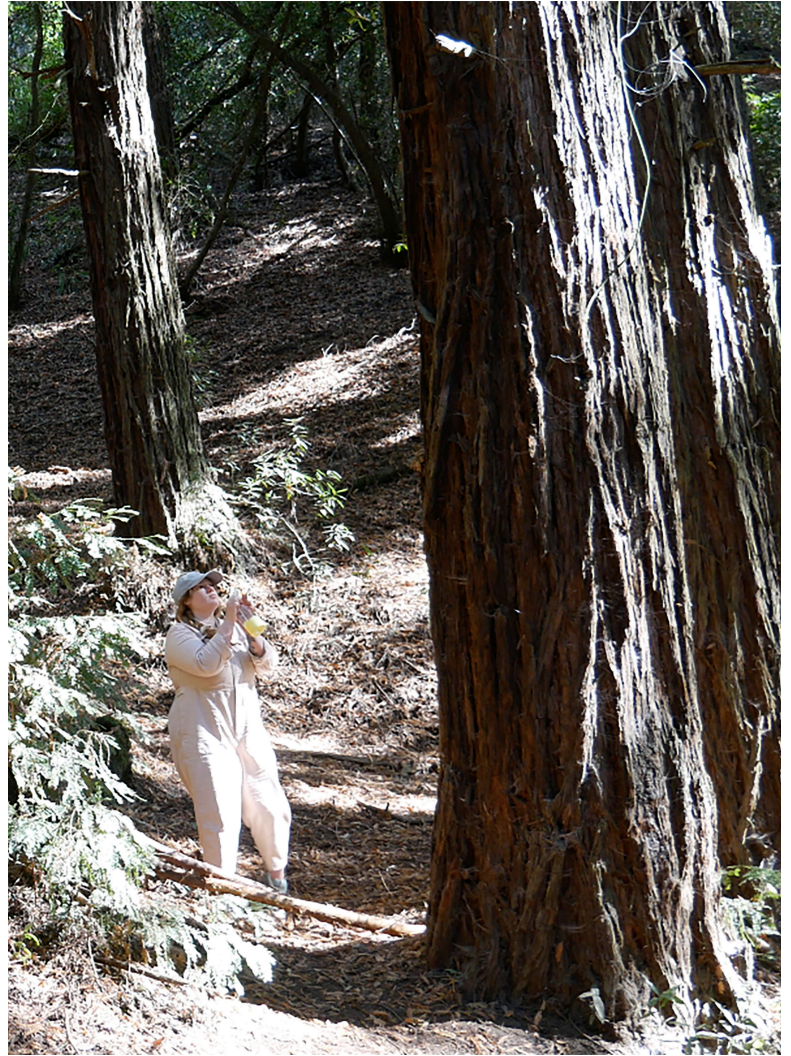
R: You can say that again.

CA: It's ingrained in us.

R: I didn't mean literally.

CA: Oh. Well, yeah, anyway we're just about out of time. I know it was brief, but then again, I doubt you noticed.

R: Aaaaayyeee. Good One. Ha. Thanks for taking the time.



www

j-sm.info

# JAN SHERLOCK MOLLOY

This work is a representation of the ongoing renegotiation and reconciliation with personal traumas and mental illness—particularly bipolar disorder. It is an opportunity to document and compose both tangible and ethereal aspects of my experience. Through the photographs that constitute this work, I consider the tensions surrounding memory, the physical body, and notions of beauty.

Despite its malleability, memory has the potential to reconnect and clarify the ambiguities of the past. Through my traumas and dissociative tendencies, memory has been a central and enigmatic aspect of the work. However, more challenging but perhaps equally important is to accept the value of forgetting in the same



healing process. Forgetting can free one from the past and create space for movement. I am drawn to these concepts, not as two opposing poles, but as two forces that can work in tandem or even interchangeably toward a unified goal of resolution.

This work has allowed me the opportunity to openly speculate on the implications of aesthetics and traditional notions of beauty in relationship to the subject matter. Through aesthetic mediation, this work attempts to reflect on and communicate a tone which is often intangible, and to visualize a chaotic experience with a level of coherence. However, through aestheticizing the experience, I must also contend with the reliance on my own subjectivity, as well as the conflicted history of that process and its relationship to Romanticism.

Exploration of the disconnect between the psychological and physical self has been illuminating, though troubling, in making this work. There is positive potential in framing healing as reconnection between mind and body; however, emphasizing this idea risks reinforcing the false distinction between the two. The process of re-inhabiting my body is represented in this project through interventions between myself and the medium in ways that draw attention to the perceived disconnection.

With this project, I aim to reflect on, illustrate, and accept my lived experience and to embrace a new relationship with myself and the world. Though it is a record of a personal process, my hope is that it communicates a broader narrative on healing and reconciliation.





www

nathanalexanderward.info

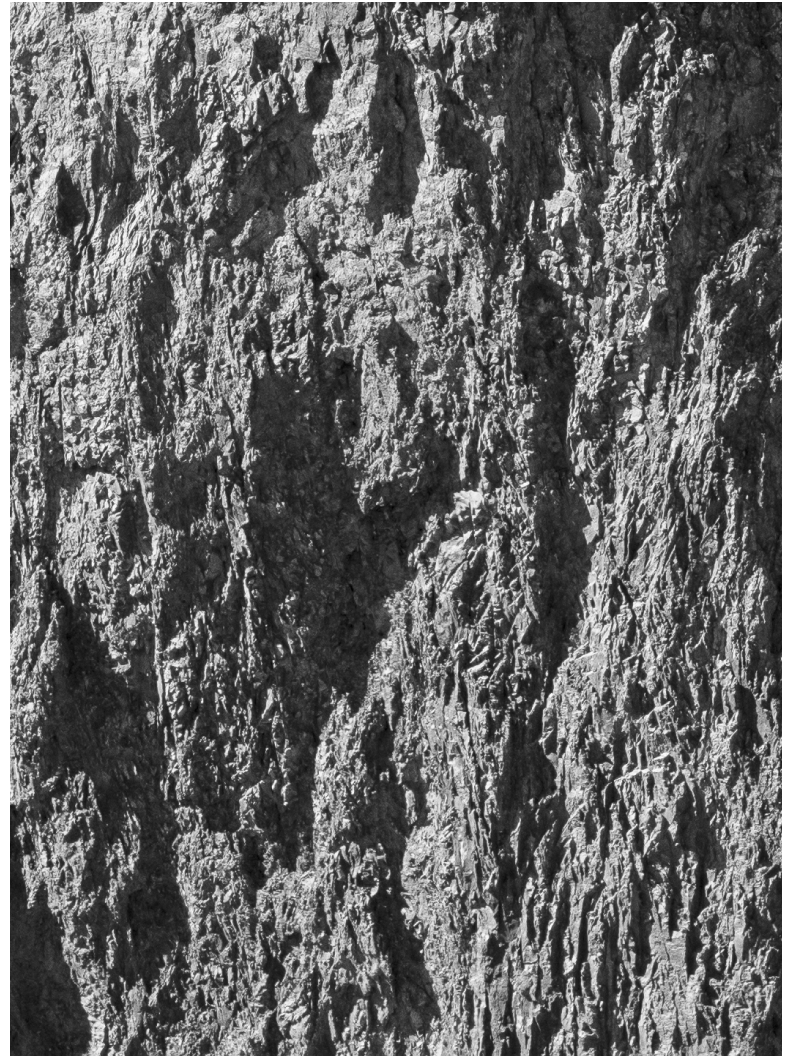
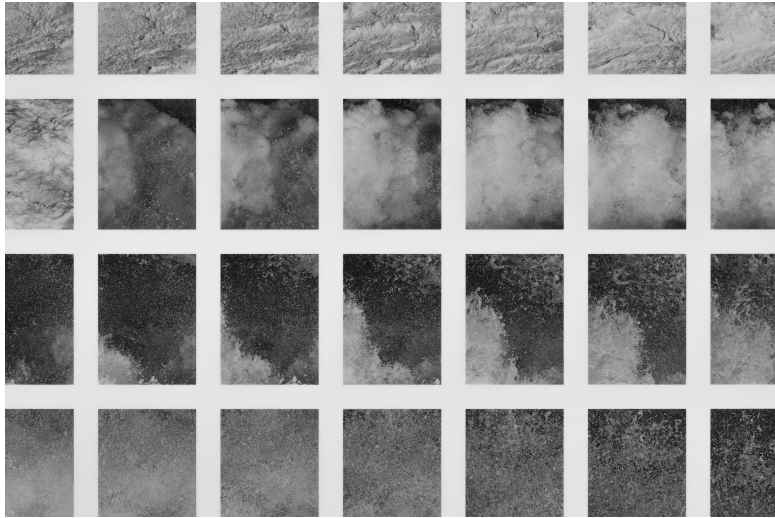
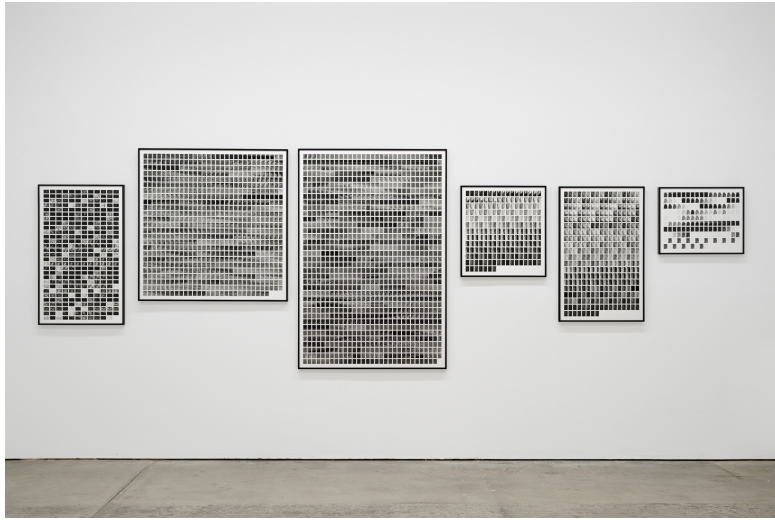
# NATHAN ALEXANDER WARD

Photography is both a medium and a subject in my work. Often, my projects begin as an encounter with photographs created by others, from a catalog of concrete blocks to space exploration archives. These encounters initiate a process of technical speculation and experimentation that results in new photographs of peculiar character that urge scrutiny of what is depicted in them but also the means of their depiction. Through continual analysis and improvisation, this generative process enables me to develop series that leverage the indeterminate nature of photographic images and to present psychologically charged experiences in the form of artist books and installations.

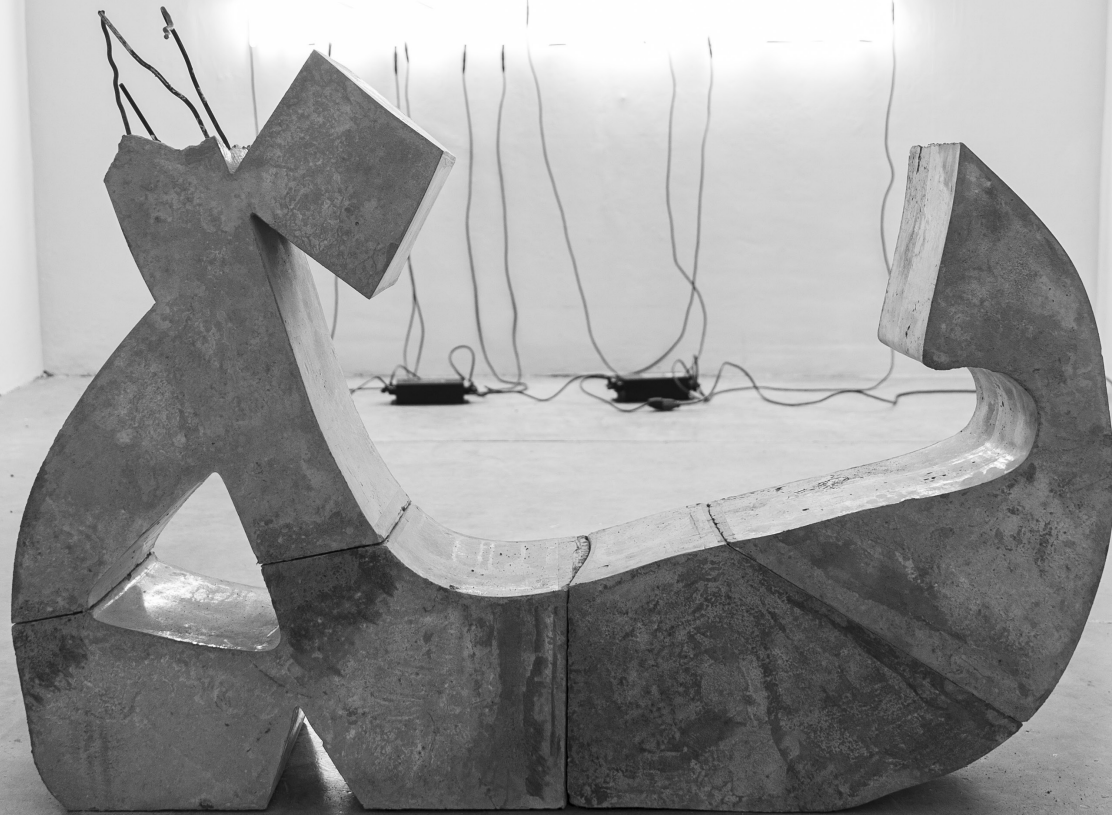


*A Porous Order* is a body of work that brings together several years of photographic experiments that were inspired by my discovery of a post on a consumer-oriented photography forum, wherein a conversation developed that aligned with long-standing philosophical dilemmas regarding the nature of the medium; in particular, discrepancies between human and camera vision and the limit to which appearances can be accurately duplicated. I was surprised by what was written in this thread because of its non-academic context and, intrigued by the idiosyncratic perspective, determined that it could prove valuable to my ongoing exploration of the dubious correspondence between photography and reality.

I used the various positions of the commenters in the thread as a loose framework for developing conceptual and formal strategies to be used in the creation of new photographs of my own. In addition to the original photographs in this project, I created an accompanying text, selected from the comments in the thread and fictionalized to varying degrees. The fragmentary language is a poetic parallel to the sequence of images which draws attention to the significant concepts of the work, as well as represent a kind of intrapersonal dialogue on those concepts. In doing this work, I hoped to gain further insight into the role of agency within the photographic process and to explore the ambiguities which can arise from photographic technologies.



# SADAMINI

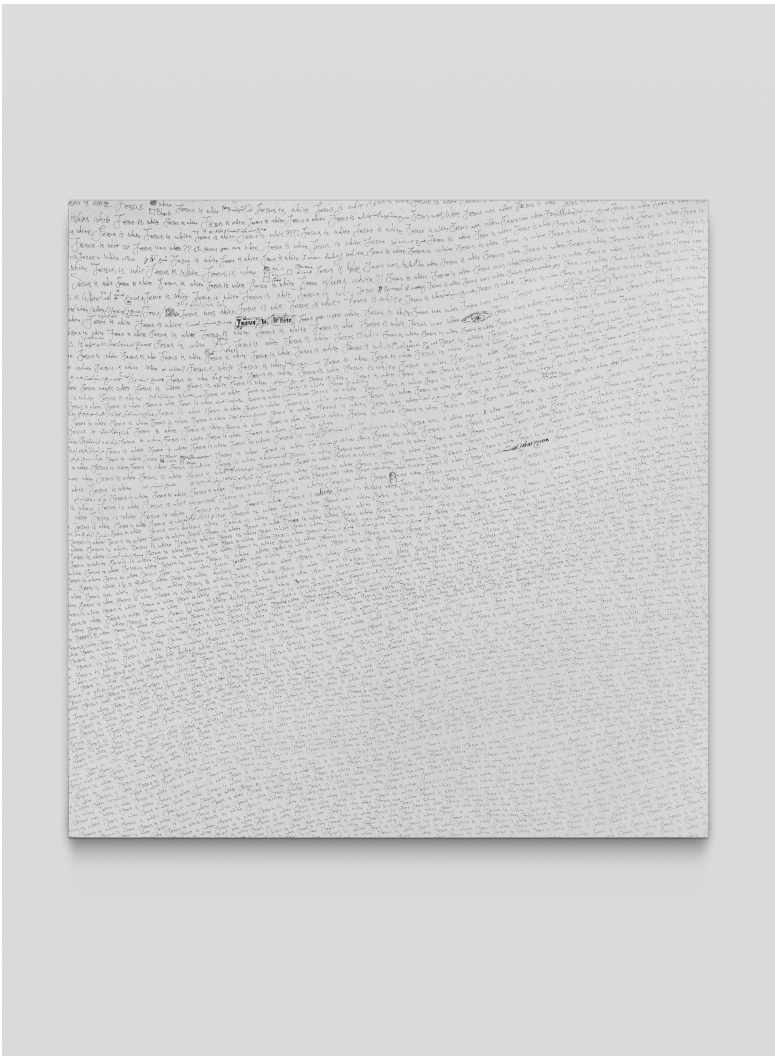
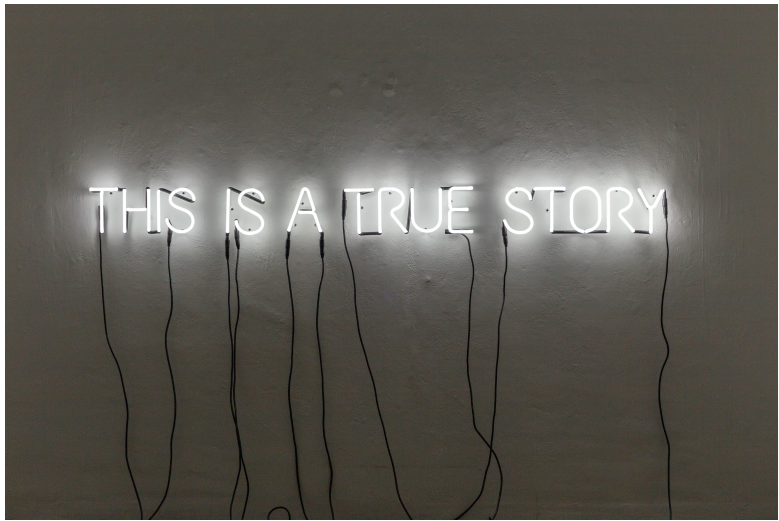


In my work, the issue of identity is a phenomenological attitude towards the authenticity of being, the incessant conscious endeavor of assessment of relation with the Other. Being in the diaspora is being among the Other while experiencing the sense of Otherness from one's own homeland. This displacement of the body due to social and political upheaval intensifies the sense of loss and lack of ownership. The ephemerality of cultural and geographical connections leads to the crisis of subjectivity. The existential reexamination of these connections to achieve the authentic potential of being is my artwork's core concept.



I fill up the gap of loss of ownership and crises of subjectivity by incorporating what I call monumental text. Although the meaning of language is an intangible entity, the myth of a monumental text's meaning deviates itself from the reality and literal translation of words. It exists in the structure of power. Because of its social and political affiliation, the monumental text has a significant impact on the issue of subjectivity and defining the self.

In a monumental text, the hermeneutic loop of meaning influences our understanding and reveals the absurdity of language. The experience of reading a text alters our understanding, and this comprehension again influences our experience of reading. There are always other words in a word, other texts in a text which makes this process infinite. A loop between the reader and text, the endless chain of the signification of language, and time, provides a three-dimensional liminal space that I want to experience and share with the spectator. This absurdity conveys a sensation of the Real, which we construct through the language's symbolic nature.



www

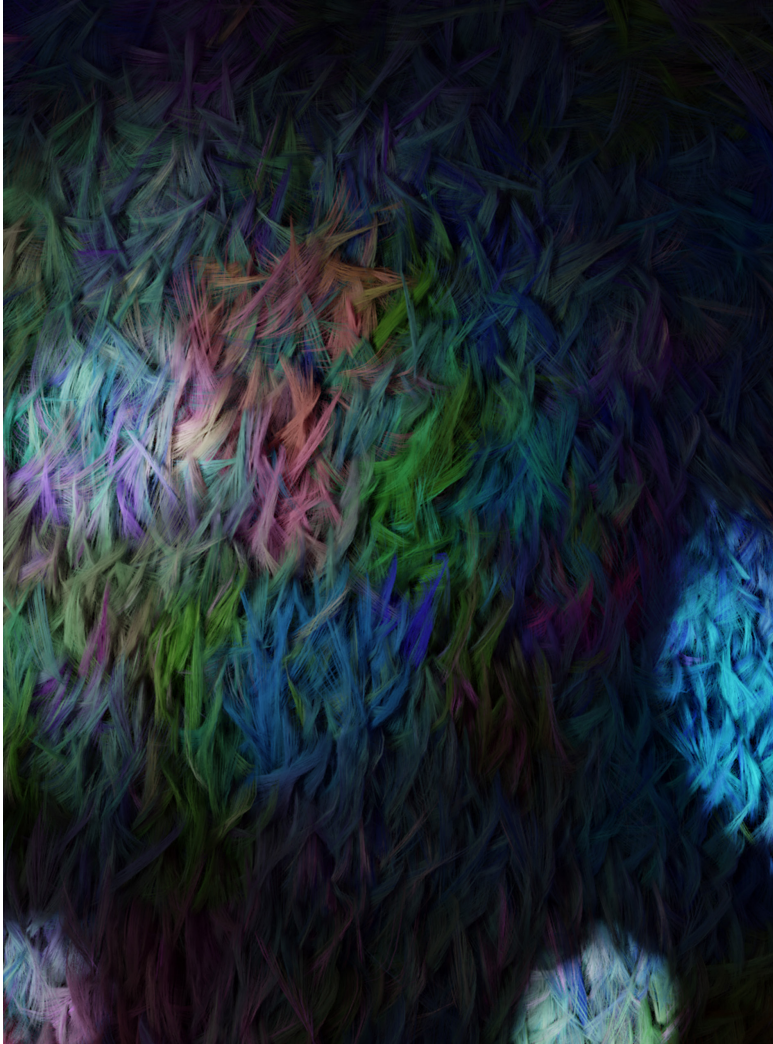
trtrtrtrtr.net

# TANNON RECKLING



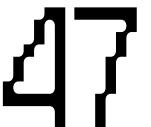
Tannon Reckling uses their creative practice to write, curate, and construct trans-disciplinary formal work for an esoteric queer audience to develop later kinship on the internet. Recent work includes digital collages, video work ft. an older gay relative, and 3D software explorations of semiotics and materialisms located in viral, queer, metaphorical ontologies.

Reckling is currently thinking about: queer death drives, rendering systems, slime, pink capital, genetics & agriculture, moiré, dyslexia, and enby farmer raves in near



future agrarian-scapes, among other things in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which will soon enter the realm of other historical health care emergencies before it: affecting lower classes and othered bodies. Who did you help during this ongoing pandemic besides yourself? Who did you ignore? How did you do it? Why did it turn out this way?

Here's a list of rabbit holes, especially if you are a fellow burned out fag that's not from the suburbs: Nora N. Khan, Bryn Kelly, Los Frikis, Nao Bustamante, Carlos Motta, James Bridle, Jennifer Doyle, Jasbir Puar, Jubilee (1974), Benjamin H. Bratton, Macarena Gomez-Barris, McKenzie Wark, Aria Dean, Las Indetectables, Patrick Staff, Shu Lea Cheang, AA Bronson, Oli Rodriguez, Puppies Puppies, Teresa de Lauretis, Cassils, Born in Flames(1983), Taft-Hartley Act, The White Pube, Sam Feder, Chitra Ganesh, Zach Blas, From Here I Saw What Happened and I Cried, Mona Hatoum, Caroline Busta, Visual AIDS, Lucas Larochelle, Can't Get You Out of My Head: Part 3, Danielle Brathwaite-Shirley, Paul B. Preciado, Goddess Bunny, Paul Gilroy, Jack Halberstam, The Exterminating Angel, Fierce.Net: Imagining a faggoty web, Gayatri Spivak, Joshua Citarella, Sara Ahmed, American Artist, Chris E. Vargas, Harun Farocki, K-Hole.





University of Oregon Department of Art  
MFA Thesis Exhibition 2021  
May 14, 2021 at Disjecta, Portland, OR

Department of Art Faculty + Staff

Hiba Ali, Jonathan Bagby, Marissa Benedict, Carla Bengtson, Alida Bevirt, Mika Boyd, Michael Bray, Chad Bush, Rebecca Childers, Isami Ching, Colleen Choquette, Joe Coleman, Sonja Dahl, Jovencio de la Paz, Tannaz Farsi, Derek Franklin, Brian Gillis, Eric Ramos Guerrero, Damon Harris, Wendy Heldmann, Heidi Howes, Maia Howes, Colin Ives, Steven Joshlin, Ron Jude, Anya Kivarkis, Sylvan Lionni, Charlene Liu, Christopher Michlig, Donald Morgan, John Park, Dan Powell, Jacob Riddle, David Rueter, Jack Snell-Ryan, Risa Saavedra, Michael Salter, James Schauer, Jeremy Schropp, Reanna Schultz, Stacy Jo Scott, Rick Silva, Jeremy Smith, Jessica Swanson, Ying Tan, Jessie Rose Vala, Laura Vandenburg, Kate Wagle, Terri Warpinski, Ty Warren, Amanda Wojick

2020-21 Visiting Artist Lecture Series

Simon Starling, John Mann, Jenna Sutela, Jess Perlitiz, Caroline Woolard, Fred H.C. Liang, Jillian Mayer, Laura Fritz, Glenn Adamson, Alison Saar, Hank Willis Thomas, Hamza Walker, Rebecca Morris, Amir Zaki, Natalie Ball, Mario Ybarra Jr.

Special thanks to the graduating MFAs who navigated unprecedented circumstances with generosity and progressive positivity, to Department of Art Head Amanda Wojick, Director of Graduate Studies Jack Snell-Ryan, Graduate Committee members Jovencio de la Paz and Eric Ramos Guerrero for their generous support.

Designed by FISK

University of Oregon  
College of Design  
School of Art + Design  
Department of Art

5249 University of Oregon  
Eugene, OR 97403-5249

Office: Lawrence Hall, 254

541-346-3610  
artuo@uoregon.edu  
artdesign.uoregon.edu/mfa  
@uoartmfa

The University of Oregon is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. This publication will be made available in accessible formats upon request.

 UNIVERSITY OF  
OREGON | School of Art + Design | Art

01 INTRODUCTION

02 CAROLINE  
TURNER

08 CLAIRE TIERNEY  
ANDERSON

14 DEVON  
DeVAUGHN

20 EDEN V. EVANS

26 IAN SHERLOCK  
MOLLOY

32 NATHAN  
ALEXANDER WARD

38 SAJAD AMINI

44 TANNON  
RECKLING