

INTRODUCTION

Graduating Class of 2021

Photography is a slippery medium, and the students in this cohort of the Parsons MFA program exemplify its promiscuity. Their practices vary wildly, encompassing elements of sculpture, performance, and installation. Some are preoccupied with two-dimensional images; many others prefer the narrative possibilities of video. The work in this exhibition runs the gamut from cerebral to erotic, reflecting processes that rely entirely on the manipulation of a lens, and processes that incorporate no lens whatsoever. This elasticity is perhaps what is most exciting about photography today. The field is porous, impossible to pin down, but thrillingly expansive in scope and context.

One context that unites these artists is the experience of refining their practices during a time of global upheaval with no parallel in living memory. This disruption led, in many cases, to fruitful new directions, work that engages with isolation, identity, and the politics of extraction and race.

Ruihua Liang's images excavate the notion of intimacy. Created mostly during lockdown in California, they are rooted in performances that restage childhood memories and scenes of domestic life. Liang is interested in ambiguities and double meanings. In some images, it is unclear where her body ends and her partner's body begins. These subtle photographs illustrate the fluid power dynamics of any relationship, and remind the viewer that things are often more complicated than they may seem at first glance.

Casey Kaufman is also interested in creating space for nuance, though in his case he interrogates the inherited cultural trauma of the Holocaust that looms large in his consciousness. Using found images from his grandmother's photo albums, his late father's cable-knit sweaters, and redolent images made in his childhood bedroom, Kaufman documents his own individual grief, while building a richer, more joyful narrative of Jewish American identity.

Gene Tolan's work is motivated by a similar desire to complicate prevailing cultural perceptions. He repositions Black bodies away from contexts freighted with colonial connotations. In his portraits, Black men and women stand in profile, eyes closed, against an inky background. In others, Black men confront the camera head-on,

the edges of their faces fading into darkness. Tolan carves out a liberatory space, one that illuminates the interior lives of Black people in the fullness of their individuality.

Wyatt Roderick Buescher, on the other hand, is preoccupied with the material qualities of a photograph. By purposefully breaking his lens, and engaging in other in-camera manipulations, he captures singular, sometimes disorienting perspectives. His sensual, large-scale images play with the notion of documentary reality. At the same time, his process criticizes the societal structures—academic and otherwise—that standardize behavior and values.

Amani Fairweather's work confronts a more specific systemic problem: the legacy of racism that undergirds the American medical establishment. For this exhibition, he has produced a series of prints of anguished figures silhouetted behind fabric barriers. He has also made a body of work that recalls 19th century daguerreotypes of enslaved Black people, placing a female figure in poses that convey the nightmare of coercion, while underscoring her inherent dignity.

Rolando Rivera's recent work incorporates no straightforward photographs at all. For years, his practice has revolved around a character named "Loserboy," which began as an Instagram experiment, and has evolved into a more diffuse entity that operates across a wide range of media. Working from his home in Los Angeles, Rivera has produced a book of humorous, contradictory drawings and texts that more fully embodies the Loserboy persona, expanding him from the digital realm into the corporeal.

Reils O'Neill is also intrigued by the potential of artificial personae, particularly on YouTube. He has created a short video that adopts and subverts tropes of Internet culture. Following the conventions of a reaction video, O'Neill assumes multiple confrontational identities, showcasing the outrageous, foul-mouthed behaviors that successfully drive engagement on YouTube and other digital platforms.

Anlan Tao's video work also engages with the benefits and limitations of building new identities online. Layering artificial colors and slick reflective surfaces, Tao illustrates the role of digital spaces for exploring fantasies and building community, while still pointing to their poisonous, addictive potential. Her screens are portals to new worlds, that can also act as unflattering mirrors.

Likewise, **Anlan Huang (Yasmine)** is fascinated by the power of the digital realm—particularly geolocation technologies—to effect

both intimate human connection and logistical catastrophe. In her meditative, three-channel video installation, she builds a fictional narrative based on the true story of a Russian man who died following faulty directions from Google Maps. A male and female character speak past each other in Russian and Chinese, reflecting the disembodied experience of communicating via apps such as Tinder, and the ways in which intimacy is subsumed or reinforced by larger systems of extractive global commerce.

Sun Park's work, a sculpture and video that operate as a single installation, also investigate systems of extraction, drawing parallels between mining for rare earth metals and cryptocurrency. Park's sculpture recalls the form of traditional mining equipment, incorporating a glass bulb that contains a spinning coin driven by a rare earth magnet. The projected video combines footage of ants scurrying mindlessly, interspersed with images that illustrate the absurdity of unbridled extraction, and spotlight the consequences of harvesting both tangible and digital assets.

Sophie Chalk, meanwhile, presents a body of work no less critical of contemporary market forces, but wholly invested in the physical realm. During the pandemic, they returned to their native Australia, where they could engage with the landscape in new ways. Employing chemical processes that have long anchored her photographic practice, Chalk created contact prints of Australian flora on large sheets of silk. In a process indebted to Indigenous notions of deep time, light and oxidation slowly transform the color and texture of these prints. Their alluring tactility celebrates the richness of a unique landscape, while confronting a heritage of settler exploitation.

Tielin Ding's work was inspired by his experiences in a very different landscape: the hiking trails of New Jersey. These trails are demarcated by markers that rely on a simple language of color and juxtaposition to communicate direction. Ding's poetic photographs and installations employ similar strategies to deftly illuminate the patterns that shape both urban and wild spaces, and that are often hiding in plain sight.

Photography has always been one of the most democratic of disciplines, and one of the most difficult to define. **No Space Know Space** assembles a head-spinning variety of perspectives, demonstrating the medium's exhilarating flexibility and multivalent cultural impact. In an interconnected culture built on images, these artists express photography's potential to forge new identities, reveal hidden beauty, and undermine oppressive systems.

- Chase Martin

CONTENTS

- 6 Ruihua Liang
- 10 Casey Kaufman
- 14 Gene Nolan
- 18 Wyatt Roderick Buescher
- 22 Amani Fairweather
- 26 Rolando Rivera
- 30 Reils O'Neill
- 34 Anlan Tao
- 38 Sophie Chalk
- 42 JungSun Park
- 46 Tielin Ding
- 50 Anlan Huang (Yasmine)
- 54 Contact Info

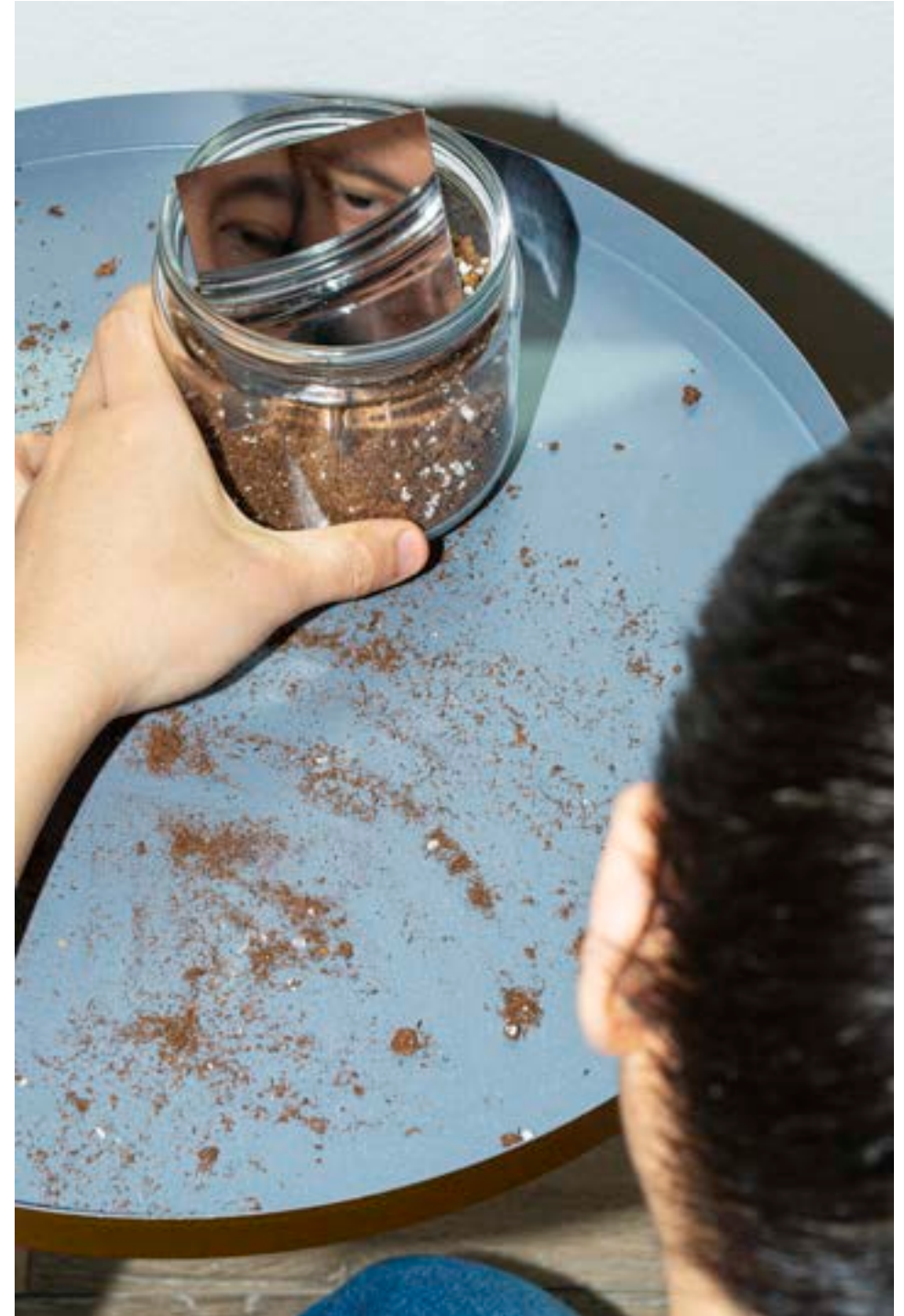


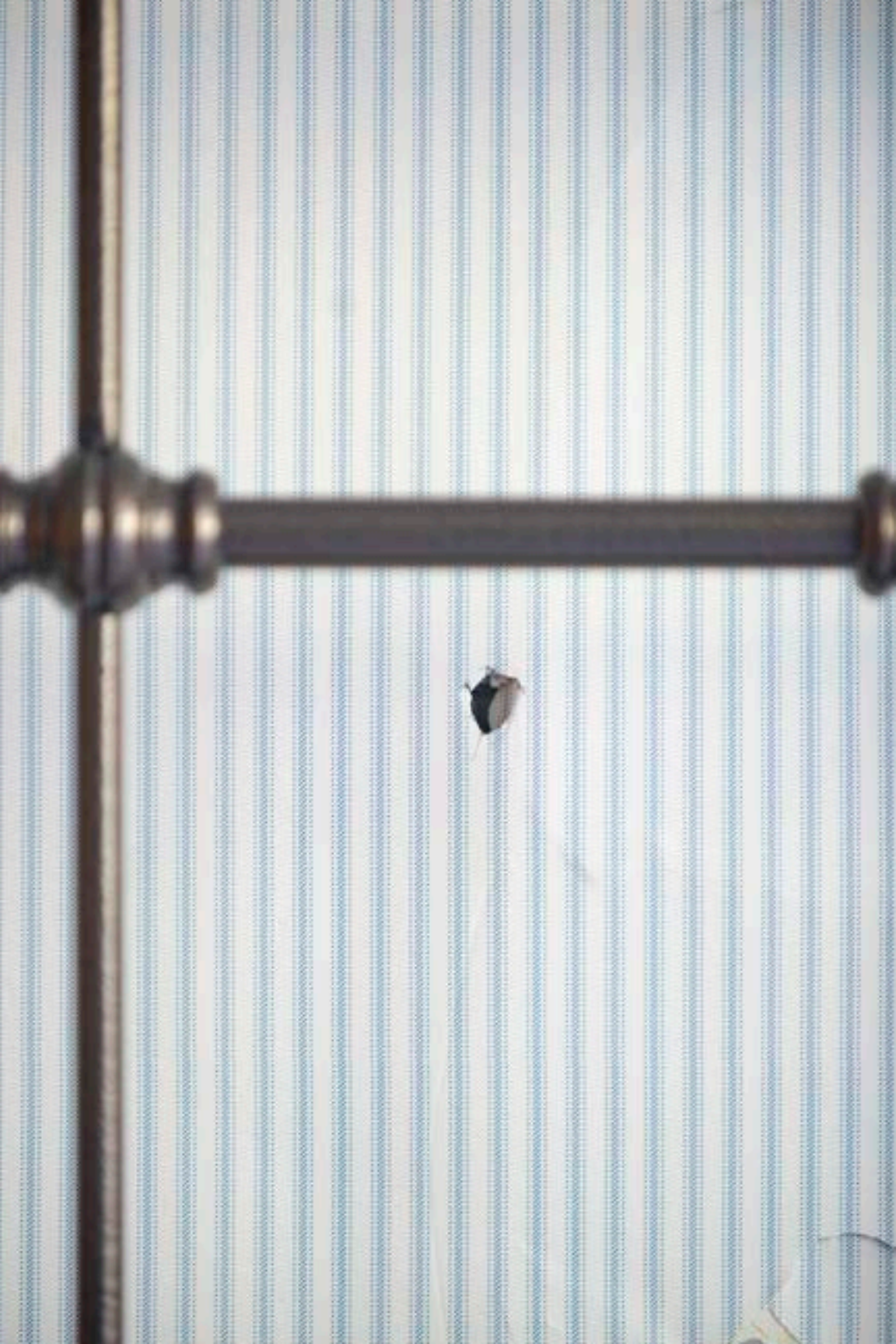
Ruihua Liang

Sweet Feedback



My work uses photography and performance to approach and explore both familial and intimate relationships. This work is mostly taking cues from my personal life experience and tries to demonstrate the universal complexity and fluidity of love. In collaboration with my partner, I use our intimate emotional geography to create relationships between objects and caretaking moments of domestic life. Through documenting gestures and postures, this work examines love, desire, and the fluidity of power dynamics in modern intimacy.





Casey Kaufman

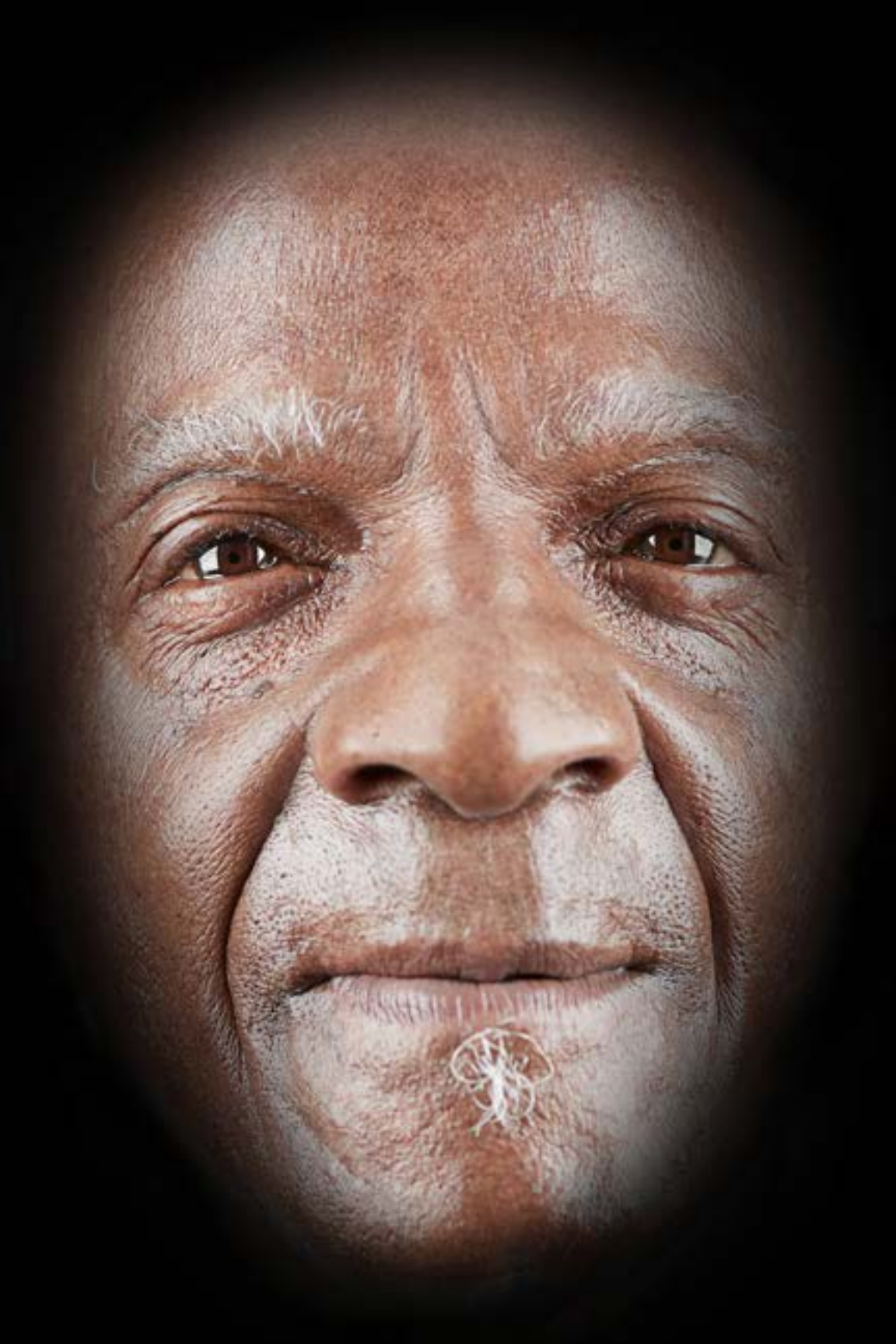
Past in Present



My work, both historical and contemporary, are made to form a sense of self that points to my American Jewish origins and contemporary experience of Jewish death, one that for the first time (for me) is not the same death I learned in Hebrew studies. *Past In Present* is but one of an endless collection of Jewish experiences that are not assimilated in the American historical ideal of what and who a Jew is. The photographs speak words of Jewish death and grieving, whiteness, historical memory, and other forms of Jewishness not found in our history textbooks.



Gene Tolan



The Black Male Body - Phenomenological Occurrences in Visual Media and the Possibility of Liberatory Images

I am a lens-based artist whose work revolves around intimacy, notions of masculinity, and the Black aesthetic—making legible the complex interior lives of Black manhood obscured by cultural narratives to reimagine the black male experience beyond the focus of its body. It is the interior I want to consider – my own and other Black men through photography and its ability to frame radical joy, beauty, and the erotic. My lived experience informs my research and practice as a body that lives in and between cultural narratives that black men navigate every day.



Wyatt Roderick Buescher

3 Card Monte Honesty

I am described as a painter who uses photography as a material for sculpture. Through physically interfering with the camera's mechanisms at the moment of capture I break the indexical nature of a photograph and return it to a representation of itself. *3 Card Monte Honesty* is a body of work where the apparatus is deliberately broken which becomes a proxy explanation for how academic ideology functions in our larger cultural systems. I use mark making, layering, broken camera photographs, and standard educational tools and frameworks to create spaces of overwhelming visual confusion that speaks to my personal engagement with processing information in a standardized educational structure that "others" everyone who doesn't fall into the categories of their dominant ideology.



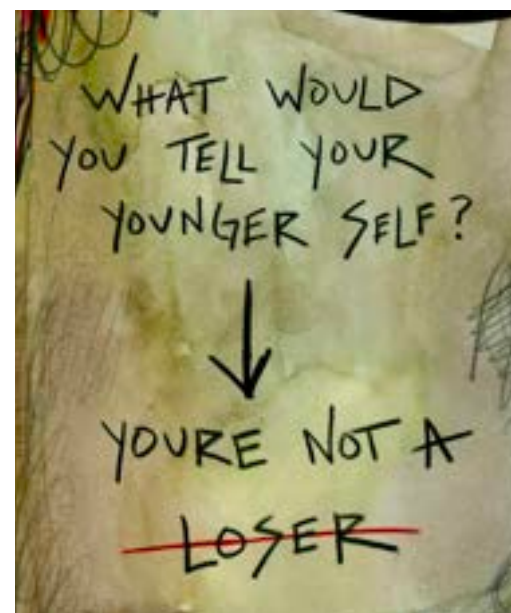
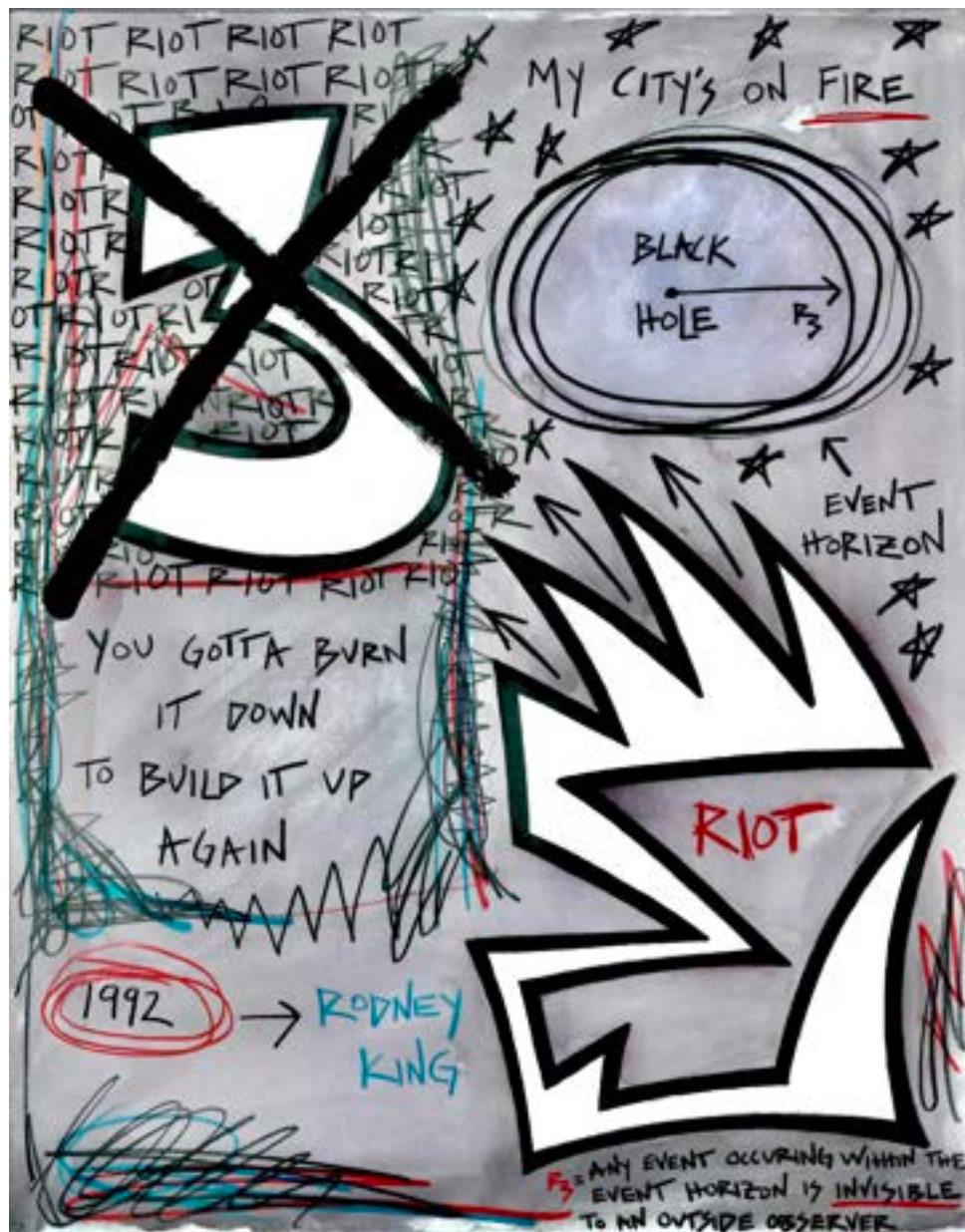


Amani Fairweather



From the Antebellum Period to Present Day: A History of Medical Racism and Violence on the Black Body

Life, death, a mother in mourning.
Mourning the reality of her child
being a product of slavery. Mourning
her child's humanity being reduced
to a test subject. Mourning for
herself, because she's nothing more
than a tool being used to extend the
life of slavery. One set of images
serves to chronologize the story of a
pregnancy, a birth, and a death of a
baby for the advancement of colonial
medicine. The second set of images,
to show how photography was used
to classify and analyze "the other."
I'm using the sheet and silhouette
as a way of preserving some level of
secrecy but allowing the viewer to
still bare witness to what's occurring
on the other side.



I want that humorous feeling that comes from being an amateur. That feeling of not being taken too seriously but still having something to say. This need to rebel when you don't fit in. Be outrageous, be loud, get heard! That's at the heart of what I do. Every image, every drawing, every text is an action of recasting the ordinary.

As I write this I'm thinking how I can break away from it. How I can make it more me? I ask this with every project I start and the end product is always a representation of being unconventional. Break it, make it messy, cross it out... I've always believed that there is something unique about being different. The intense repetitive nature of the work is meant to create structure and the pops of color animate the work. The work focuses on the underdog, the amateur, the loser. There is fun and power in not being taken seriously because they will never see you coming.



Reils O'Neill

This is Art...Seriously

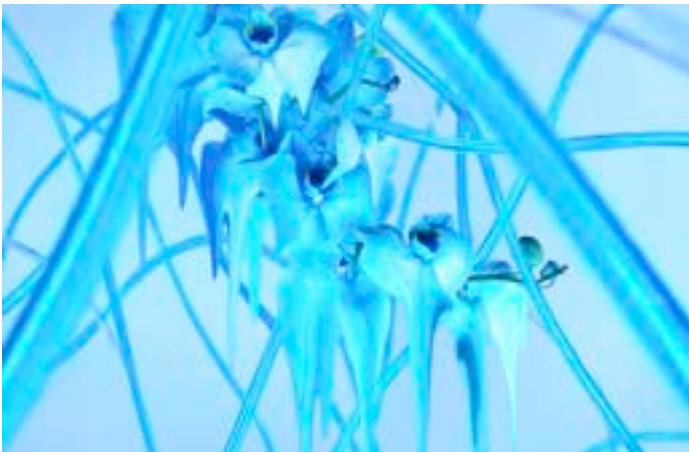
Drawing from a personal fascination turned obsession with internet content, I turn myself into a YouTube personality and create videos to 'perform' around the algorithms that control what we consume online. The phrase 'Aspirational Media', coined by Illana Harris Babou in her video works, describes content hosted by an individual who paints themselves in an idealistic light and allows their character to be formed by what surrounds them. I take the aspirational one step further, into the realm of the parasocial where anonymous viewers of the content engage in a one-sided and confusing relationship with a host of characters through tutorials, react-videos, vlogs and more. The content of the videos themselves function as a critique of the art world, further emphasized by a parallel criticism of internet culture and its tropes. Additionally, Duchampian questions about the nature and function of art are relevant to this work. Some of these notions having to do with marketing, getting lucky, and the 'yoink and twist'.



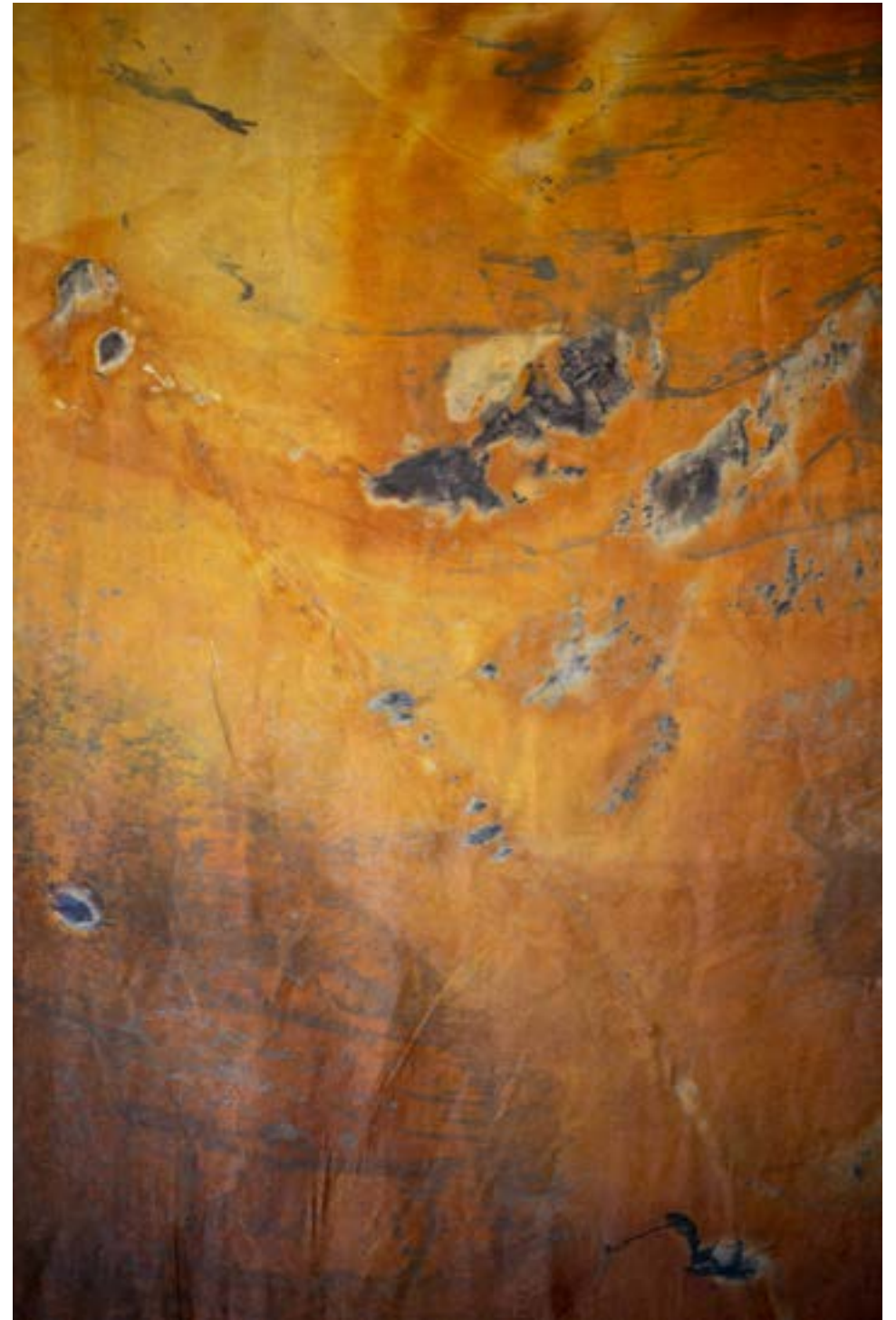


Anlan Tao

Blue Bubble



My work reflects on contemporary reality in our increasingly digitized world. Bright colors and surreal scenes are applied in the video to reveal a fictional and absurd fantasy world. The video begins with a tunnel made up of the moving image of sky and a mirror reflecting strong light. The blue flowers are connected by intertwined pipes, continuously transmitting blue substances, and producing bubble gum. In another space surrounded by mirrors, the protagonist and the mirror images separated from herself repeat the meaningless entertainment of blowing bubble gum. When entertainment is supreme and consumerism prevails, I wonder will our world enter a stage of simultaneous utopia and dystopia driven by technology and fantasy?

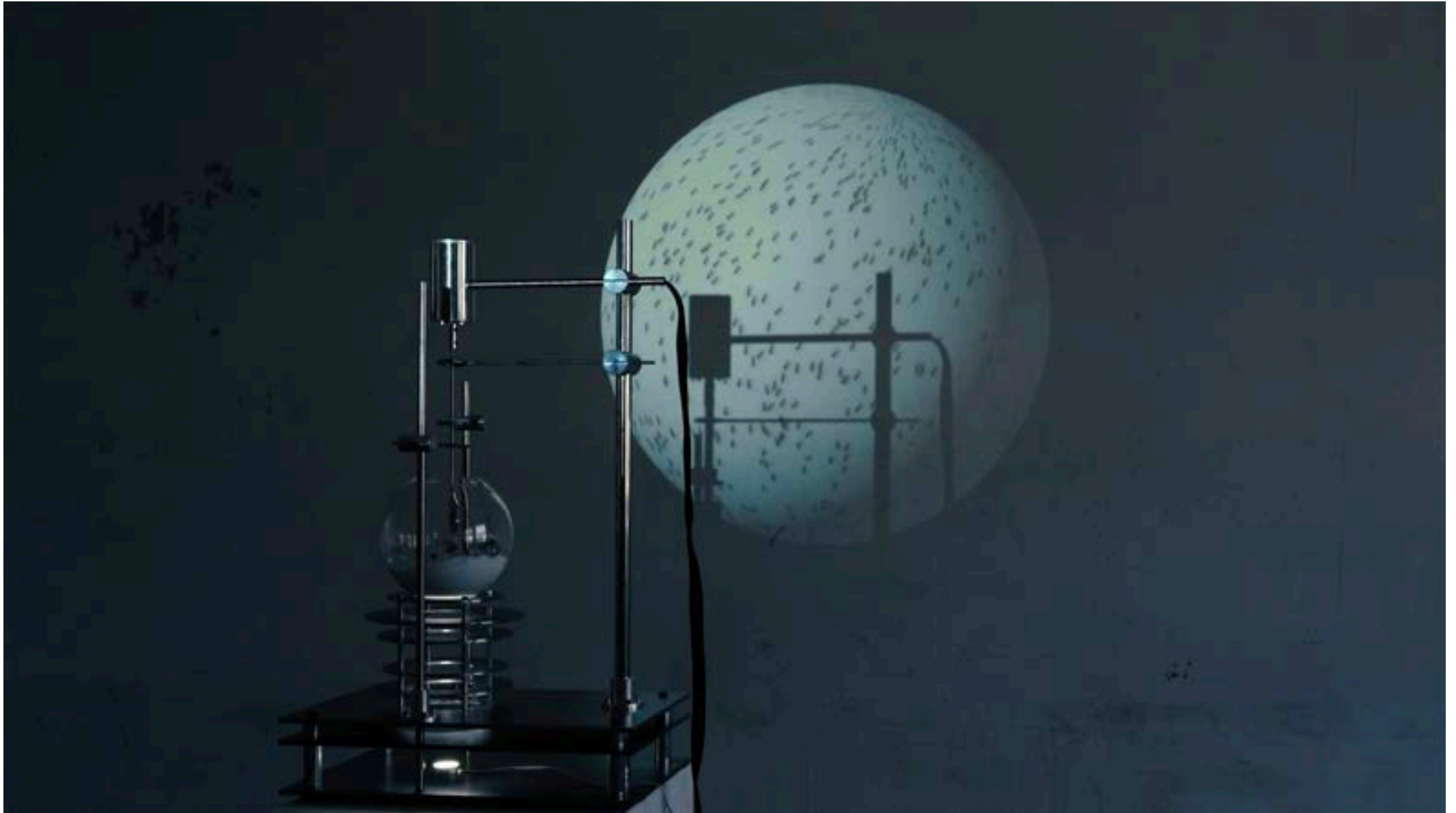


Sophie Chalk



Ghost of A Plant

Fundamentally I am a queer alchemist, I (mis)use photographic chemistry in its most elemental forms. Creating images that are an expression of deep listening and techne: a study in how things came to be. In this latest body of work, shifting, disintegrating landscapes imbued with archival chemicals operate as a metaphor for the process of deconstructing my own ideologies. Upon exposure to its environment the silk sculpture will erupt with colour, eventually turning a ruddy brown. Yet the botanical transfers will remain. In the wake of the disintegration is a revealing of truth; nature exists and will continue to exist independently of us unless we find a path to ecological similitude with the natural world.



Sun Park

The bubble of myth does not burst



We are witnessing the prevailing political order devastate/consume our ecosystems. I am examining our fear of techno-dystopia as it intersects with the current climate crisis. The digital age has seen the birth of capitalist extractivism. A new type of mining involving intensive labor. One that artificially creates scarcity in virtual spaces while consuming the physical environment. Wealth is being generated at the expense of labor, both physically in Rare Earth and technological sites. With my three-dimensional installation, I am confronting the infinite absurdity of our current era. Fusing traditional mining with digital mining, I am striving to provide viewers a space to situate themselves in the timeline of extractivism and observe its effects on ecology.



Tielin Ding



A Walk With Blaze

Guided by my experience as a volunteer to maintain a trail and my practice of drifting and encounters with trail markers, I became interested in how the sign of a trail marker guides me to open up a new world of signs and language, both physically and virtually, across urban and natural spaces. I am also interested in how a sign in general functions as a way of talking about the expression of wayfinding systems and the memory/experience across the different visual languages of space. Involved with my interventions towards different environment in this project, I am also thinking about a trail as a metaphor of the psycholinguistic structure of "entrance-body-exit" in our daily life.



From air, current, affair,

Anlan Huang (Yasmine)

Servitude: do not believe that Google Map



In December 2020, Sergei Ustinov, aged 18, left Yakutsk. Instead of navigating on the Russian-based search engine Yandex, he chose to trust the direction on Google Maps and headed down a notorious highway, which led him to death and hypothermia in icy Siberia. In the other largest apolar city being Norilsk, where is stronghold of metal giant Norilsk Nickel, the icebreaker set off with tons of nickel, sailing up the Yenisei River to Rotterdam, Pittsburgh, Shanghai, or wherever the cargos could be unloaded. The story of the video is adapted from the above news. A young girl in love is re-examining the myth of globalization and trying to escape from the polar city, which exists only for metallurgy. As the global layout of a multinational corporation sees the city or the individual as a mere pawn, whether lust or allure can provide a possible way out.

Ruihua Liang

Ruihualiang.com | Mia.Ruihualiang@gmail.com

Born in Guangzhou, China, Ruihua Liang is a photographic artist currently working and living between California and New York. Her works are inspired by her personal experience in her intimate emotional geography, exploring the complications and contradictions in modern partnerships. She is currently a graduate student in the fine art photography program at Parsons School of Design. Her work has been exhibited in the U.S., China, South Korea, and the Netherlands.

Casey Kaufman

Caseykaufmanstudio.com | Caseybkaufman@gmail.com

Casey Kaufman (he/him) [b.1995 – Walnut Creek, CA.] is a multidisciplinary photographic artist currently located in Brooklyn NY. Casey's work is engaging in the connections between photography, memory, history, and image. In an effort to understand his Jewish origins in the United States, Casey came to see how critical education and 'image' is in constructing and perceiving historical narratives and the people implicated in such histories. Favoring a practice that encourages reflections and meditations on the past in the present, Casey makes use of a mix of materials, from loved one's clothing to family photographs, his work encourages one to think of the images missing from national and historical canons as well as engaging with the historical and personal construction of his Jewish identity. Casey earned his BA from American University and his MFA from the Parsons School of Design in NYC. He has exhibited in New York, Washington D.C., Maryland, and China.

Gene Tolan

Genetolan.com | Studio@genetolan.com

My name is Gene Tolan, and I was born in Atlanta, Georgia, and currently live and work in Brooklyn, New York. I will receive my MFA in Photography from The New School, Parsons School of Design, at the end of this summer (2021). As a lens-based artist, my work investigates the complex interior lives of black men with and around concepts of radical joy, beauty, and the erotic. These concepts have intrigued me since I was young, growing up in the South, where they operate both overtly and covertly at the same time in visual spaces where they are denied for black male bodies. I capture images of these concepts from a romantic perspective situated in the Black aesthetic. Thus, I disrupt the historical portrayals of Black masculinity and render the Black male interiority visible—simultaneously complicating and reconciling – my own and other Black men's access to radical joy, beauty, and our erotic.

Wyatt Roderick Buescher

Wyattrbuescher.com | Wyattcbuescher@gmail.com

Wyatt Roderick Buescher [b.1996 – Chicago, IL.] is a multidisciplinary photographic artist who works primarily with the concepts of education, light, and perception in order to understand and thereafter reveal the operations behind the Standardization of the American educational system. Fueled by the ubiquitous nature of photography Roderick Buescher investigates his personal struggles with how his learning disability has functioned in various learning structures. Using photography as a poetical metaphor for his visual learning experience he creates 'broken camera photographs' that become their own objects instead of representations of objects. Roderick Buescher earned his BFA at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, VA, with a major in Photography and Filmmaking, and his MFA in Photography at Parsons School of Design at The New School in New York, NY. Currently based in Chicago, he has exhibited in Chicago, New York City, Richmond, China, and the Netherlands. And is a current YoPro Board Member for the Intuit Center for Outsider Arts.

Amani Fairweather

Instagram.com/Amanixanthony | Fairweatheramani@gmail.com

In his practice, Amani Fairweather has explored beauty and the grotesque, and the medical institutions history of violence on the Black body. Amani began photography as a means of dealing with people's perception of him and the insecurities that arise from being hypercritical of oneself. In his early work, he created self portraits with the face always hidden. The images then saw an evolution from picturing someone who is unsure of himself, to someone becoming more confident. Amani later experimented with silhouette abstraction and sculpture to highlight the long history of medical violence on the black body. He recently returned to image making to still look at the long history of violence, but also to explore photography's role in that.

Rolando Rivera

Loserboy.net | Loserboyworld@gmail.com

Establishing LOSERBOY in 2015, Rolando Rivera has used multimedia to fully construct and express what LOSERBOY is as a brand and how it transitions into the art world. Think of Rolando as a mad scientist and LOSERBOY as the creation. Rolando strives at making work that puts LOSERBOY in a position of acceptance and rejection. LOSERBOY is an enigma that questions the idea of success. Born in South Central Los Angeles, Rolando received his Masters of Fine Arts in Photography from Parsons School of Design. Rolando is now based in Los Angeles focused on introducing everyone to LOSERBOY's world.

Reils O'Neill

Reilsoneillstudio.com | Reilsoneill@gmail.com

Raised in Pittsburgh, PA, Reils O'Neill is an artist currently based in New York. He received his BA from Gettysburg College in 2019 with a degree in philosophy and his MFA in Photography from Parsons School of Design at The New School, New York, NY. O'Neill makes video works about YouTube. Specifically, about how YouTube can be used as a medium for art itself. He often uses a program called Streamlabs OBS, to record his screen and 'react' to others' content. Additionally, O'Neill includes narratives about his family and their involvement in art making and the art world itself in his work. He finds inspiration from philosophy, performance and easily consumable internet content. Exhibitions include: Battery Street Jeans, Burlington, VT (solo show), Influx group show, New York City, NY, and the Exposure art gallery, Sewickley, PA.

Anlan Tao

Instagram.com/anlantao | Taoanlan.tal@gmail.com

Anlan Tao is a New York based artist from China. Her work combines still life photography and video of constructed spaces to explore the idea of reality while raising broader questions regarding contemporary life. She earned her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2019 and MFA in Photography at Parsons School of Design in 2021.

Sophie Chalk

Sophiechalk.com | Sophiechalkstudio@gmail.com

Sophie Chalk (they/them) is an Australian multi-disciplinary photographic artist working primarily with concepts of queer identity, ecology and historical consciousness. Drawing upon photography's history and philosophical theory, their works are powered by the notion that the photographic can be a driving force for social engagement and change. Chalk's practice incorporates methods from traditional alternative processes to camerless methods such as botanical printing and some of their own creation. A self-described queer alchemist, their most recent works combine found natural materials with raw minerals that have been adopted into photographic processes through history. Creating tension between representations of nature and nature itself. Photography is used in Chalk's work as a metaphor for human perception, ultimately questioning our relationship to nature and our self-described separation from it as well as our increasingly relevant and disaster-ridden ecological reality. Chalk earned their BFA at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia with a major in Film and minor in Photography. They are an MFA candidate in the Photography department at Parsons School of Design. Currently based in both New York and Melbourne, they have exhibited in Adelaide, Melbourne, Indonesia and New York.

Sun Park

Sunkiart.com | Jungsunpark.st@gmail.com

Sun Park's body of work lies in the concern of our made-up system, including cultural context, technology, and science. These elements are part of our evolution that is interconnected to create the current climate crisis and fear of techno-dystopia. Her work guides viewers to ponder the complexity of nature-human-technology in this time of the collapse. Sun Park is a multidisciplinary artist who lives in New York. She holds a BFA From the School of Visual Arts and currently an MFA Photography candidate at Parsons School of Design.

Tielin Ding

Tielinding.com | Tielinwork@gmail.com

Born in 1996 in Chongqing, China. Tielin Ding is a flaneur, observer and interdisciplinary artist based in NYC whose diverse practice involves working with playful objects, indeterminate traces and movements to create durational performative actions. His application of the methodology of "Mapping" and "Walking" gives him more opportunity to reflect on invisible systems within urban and natural spaces. Influenced by 1960s' Fluxus and Mono-ha movement, he has been very interested in drifting in the field of language and space, risking getting lost from point A to point B.

Anlan Huang (Yasmine)

Yasminehuang.com | Yasmine.anlanhuang@gmail.com

Born in Guangzhou, currently working and living between New York and Hong Kong, Anlan Huang (Yasmine) is an artist and writer. She received her BA in Creative Media and an MA from the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Hong Kong. She had her MFA degree at Parsons School of Design. Yasmine wanders among poetry, digital humanities, and underground culture, fascinated by undetermined anecdotes and myths. She plays with her multiple personas and combines moving images, installations, and performances by mirroring her trauma to a broader narrative, to transcribe the co-existing love and hurt. Oftentimes, she uses her own body as a weapon to provoke the answer of the feeling to fall in love with a digitized entity, or, be a digitized entity. Recent exhibitions include: Guerrillas in Flatland: Unite! Digital Voyagers (Power Station of Art, Shanghai, 2021); South Sour Water Performance and Visual Art Festival (Waley Art, Taipei, 2021); Ars Electronica (Austria, 2020); SpeakAIR Online Residency (SpeakART, Canada, 2020). Her writings and translations are published in Heichi Magazine, Gallery Vacancy, Sample Mag, and others.

THANK YOU

Anthony Aziz
m. Burgess
Song Chong
Mike Crane
Sammy Cucher
Simone Douglas
Hashem Eaddy
Em Good
Nathaniel Harger
Sarah Hasted
Andrew Jarman
María del Mar Hernández Gil de Lamadrid
William Lamson
Stacy Miller
Leah Renee Monsour
Keren Moscovitch
Demetrius Oliver
Arthur Ou
Laura Parnes
Henry Portillo
Jim Ramer
Keisha Scarville
Iris Stevens
Marie Vic
Joe Wolin

THE NEW SCHOOL

PARSONS