

PROXY

WALK



# *PROX IMITY*

Proximity  
BU and PAFA 2019 MFA Graduates  
Exhibition  
April 11, 2019 - April 27, 2019



**BU and PAFA 2019 MFA Graduates Exhibition**  
April 11, 2019 – April 27, 2019

**Anna Zorina Gallery**  
532 W 24th St  
New York, NY 10011

**Boston University School of Visual Arts**  
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Brookline, MA 02446  
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***Cover Image courtesy of Addison Namnoum***

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# Introduction

## Proximity

Josephine Halvorson and Didier William, respective chairs of their graduate fine art programs at Boston University and The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, have organized an exhibition of their students' work at Anna Zorina gallery in New York City. This is the third annual iteration of this collaboration which brings students from the two institutions together and shares their work with a wider public. The exhibition is on view from April 11-27, 2019, with an opening on Thursday, April 18 from 6-8pm.

During their graduate education, these artists have been given space and time at a remove from the market. To some extent they've had the freedom to set the terms of viewership of their art, deciding if and when to represent their practice digitally or present it in the flesh. They've had a hand in exercising that elastic membrane between private and public, the negotiation of which is critical for any emerging artist. Graduate school provides an important buffer, a protected space for vulnerability and growth.

New York City is geographically situated between Boston and Philadelphia. For decades artists have toggled back and forth along the northeast corridor, and this collaborative exhibition is no different. Each student has carried their unique piece from their studio to this particular location. We all agree implicitly that a painting, an object, or a video should be experienced in person, in close proximity with other artwork and a viewer. This is what makes an exhibition, after all. But with most art being seen online, proximity becomes a bold affirmation of presence and engagement.

The studio is an internal space of making, articulated separately from an external public. Along this sliding scale that demarcates the borders of self, artists find their voice and identify their agency. For many in this exhibition, softening these boundaries becomes fertile ground to think through perspective, history, architecture, and the body. Melanie Delach's paintings ask us to consider the residual spaces nestled between stable architecture and its ruins. Roderick Jones' provocative interventions use ornamentation and collage to restage our sensual relationship to familiar objects. Gus Wheeler scales up or down found imagery, carefully calibrating cultural context and speeds of legibility through the sense of touch. Matt Hufford's vulnerable surfaces transform as they cure or crumble, becoming part of the environment they represent.

Notwithstanding the ever-present commercial tendency to flatten and simplify, Proximity encourages us to make new meaning out of the textures, surfaces, and images that materialize the spaces between us.

# ABOUT THE

**Josephine Halvorson** is Professor of Art and Chair of Graduate Studies in Painting at Boston University's School of Visual Arts. Over the last decade, she has lectured extensively on her work throughout the United States and Europe and has taught at numerous universities and art programs, including the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture where she was resident faculty during the summer of 2018. Halvorson's work has been exhibited internationally and is represented by Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York and Peter Freeman, Inc., Paris. She earned her BFA from The Cooper Union School of Art and her MFA from Columbia University. She has been granted three yearlong fellowships in Europe: the United States Fulbright to Vienna, the Harriet Hale Woolley at the Fondation des États-Unis, Paris, and was the first American to receive the Rome Prize at the French Academy at the Villa Medici. Halvorson's work will be included in the project Intermittent Rivers as part of the 2019 Havana Biennial. She is a recipient of the James and Audrey Foster Prize at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, where she will present a solo exhibition of her work this fall. Halvorson lives and works in Massachusetts.

**Didier William** is originally from Port-au-Prince Haiti. He earned a BFA in painting from The Maryland Institute College of Art and an MFA in painting and printmaking from Yale University School of Art. His exhibitions include domestic and international institutions such as the Bronx Museum of Art, The Museum of Latin American Art in Long Beach, The Frost Museum in Miami, The Museum at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, The Fraenkel Gallery, Frederick and Freiser Gallery, Gallery Schuster in Berlin, Anna Zorina Gallery, James Fuentes Gallery and DC Moore Gallery in New York. His work has received critical acclaim from the LA Times, the New York Times, Hyperallergic, Harpers Magazine, New York Magazine, and Art In America. He was an artist in residence at the Marie Walsh Sharpe Art Foundation in Brooklyn and a 2018 recipient of the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award in Art from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has taught at Yale School of Art, Vassar College, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, and SUNY Purchase. He is currently the Chair of the MFA Program and Associate Professor of Art at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

# *PROFESSORS*







## **Jessica Elena Aquino**

Nepantla, 2018

Corn husks, yarn, thread, beads, buttons,  
textiles, tissue paper, paper combs, chicken  
wire, fishing line, jeans, plastic men,  
postcards, and canvas, dimensions variable

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My grandfather was a basket weaver.  
Abuelita spoke in tongues, now foreign.  
Papá taught mamá how to sew.  
I, too, was taught the art of thread and needle, and  
of pricked fingers.  
The calluses we built in our  
hands,  
tongues,  
and spirits.

I create work that addresses concerns of my own cultural identity and cultural homogenization through installations and sculpture, using textiles and fibers. My work is rooted in line. The line, assuming it is not just straight but is an object, a verb—a nonlinear dancing structure. Visually, multiple lines can create an optical or kinetic experience, however, they can also be socio-political statements. Growing up in a Mexican household, living in Gringolandia, the threads of identity are constantly in flux, entangled, and re-woven to create new forms of being. Using the line in the language of fibers, I seek to restore a sense of agency and identity. When one's storyline is cut by colonization, the interlocking system of oppression and internalization, there is an impulse to create a form of storytelling, or a mapping that not only mends, but weaves new narratives.

## ***Kayla Arias***

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Proximity is being close enough to see more than what's  
in front of you.



Palindrome #1 (Drawings 16-21), 2019  
Handmade ink on paper, 4" x 5"



Perceptual Machine, 2018

Red pine, birch, oak, steel, paint, car parts, buoys, electrical piping, crabs, moon snail shells, sneaker, gray squirrel hide, playing cards, birch bark, resin, shotgun shells, guitar, bird head, construction hardware, weed, cord, money, toys, lemons, clementine, snacks, 9'3" x 8'

## **Max Bard**

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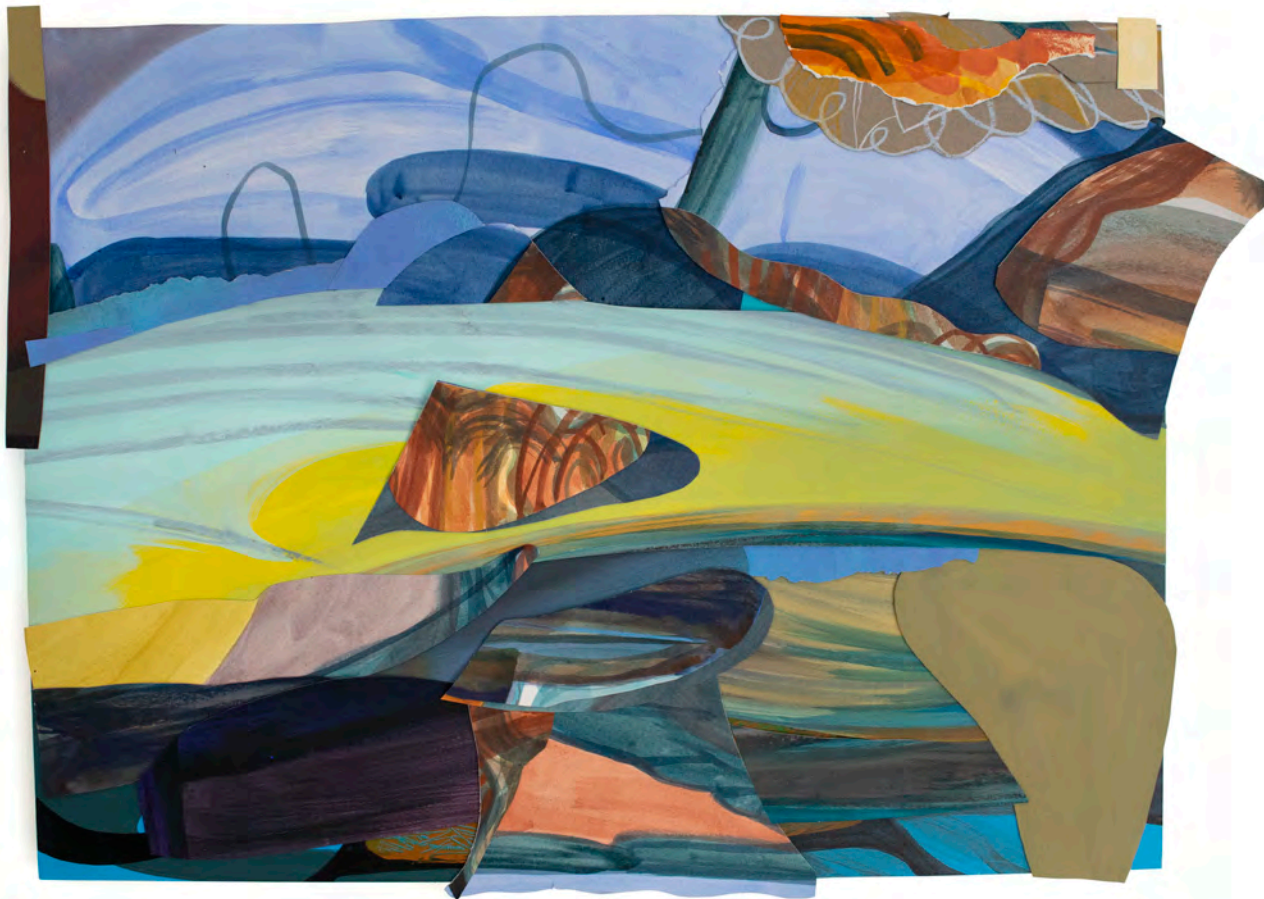
Proximity to me refers to the location in which an object exists and functions in relationship to the larger area surrounding it.

I experience proximity in this sense every day as it relates to my favorite daily practice, finding stuff and taking it. Whether taking a fork from the table or a tree from the forest, proximity is constantly in the forefront of my mind. The lumber in this piece came from a private development being built in my hometown. The trees were to be mulched due to their location in proximity to the building site. There was a small portion of town land that ran adjacent to this property. I decided I would cut the trees from this land myself. I was sad to think they would just be chipped away and felt they could become celebrated through art. So began a multi-month process of strategically removing a patch of pines from the development while eluding the property owners and the people working on site. The proximity of multiple things on many levels had to be considered. If workers were on site, I had to cut trees manually by saw so they would not hear me. Chainsaw work had to be done when no one was there. This meant waiting and watching for construction vehicles to leave the vicinity or dropping trees during thunderstorms. I was able to save around fifteen red pine trees. In doing so, the lines of trees that once so perfectly provided me the cover now was a patch of stumps that clearly disclosed my location. Under the cover of the night I felled the last few trees. At sunrise I returned and dragged the logs from once what was their home. Neither the trees nor I have been back.

## ***Rachel Briggs***

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I focus on the experience of personal memories and how my identity is shaped by the past, which I revisit to come to a better understanding of myself as I am in the present. My paintings collapse temporal space and make something solid and tangible from my intangible recollections. I attempt to archive visual information as it changes over time and becomes distant or unclear. The spaces and events I depict no longer exist as I once experienced, so I must arrange the details as I remember them. I examine how my memories are shaped over time and what details remain after all others have faded.



The river will reach us eventually, 2019  
Acrylic paint, paper, and wax pastel on panel, 24" x 18"





## **Melanie Delach**

Last night we came, 2019  
Acrylic, plaster, and papier-mâché on  
tile and wood panel, 48" x 72"

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My paintings focus on the way we look in on another's interiority. I'm particularly interested in the way the home is an accumulation of private spaces that become public. The private spaces I'm dissecting here are the ones within ourselves.

There is a correlation between the facsimiles of architecture set up in a house and the psychological boundaries and borders we set up within. This dual interiority is echoed too in theory of the mirror stage. What are we hiding? What are we revealing?

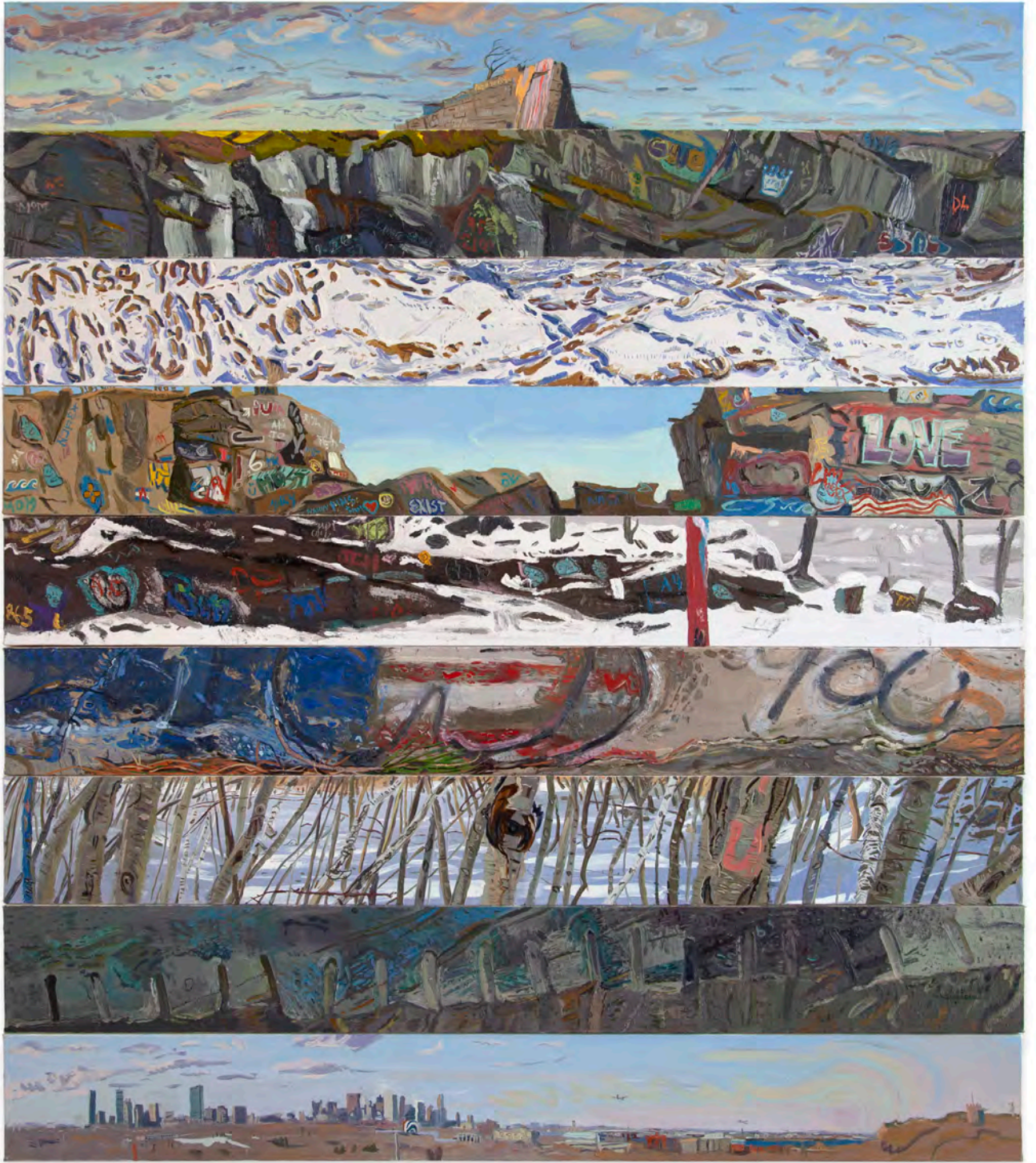
How does this affect the way we navigate our "homely" spaces? I question how we construct an understanding of a person's metaphorical exterior and interior space through the tiled spaces I create.

## **Elizabeth Flood**

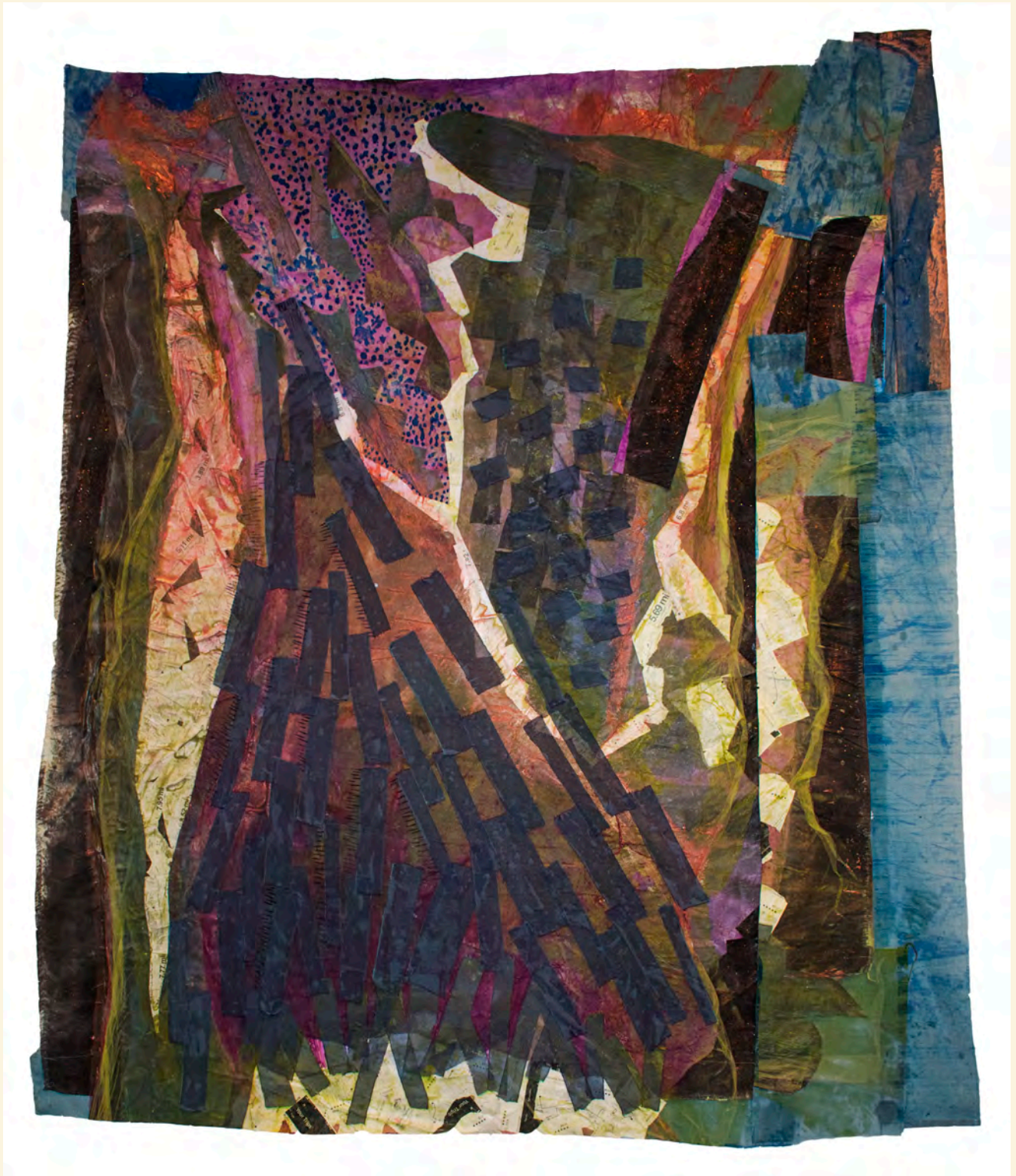
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Rooted in relationships, proximity is a word which measures the closeness of someone or something relative to another. Paint is a language of proximity, through which I can begin to depict where and when I am located. I work outdoors, hiking across the terrain and tracking my observations in paintings from multiple vantage points and elevations. Through multi-paneled paintings, I investigate the many layers—private, public, industrial, geological—which shape the current landscape. I want to build an image that looks everywhere at once; 10 miles away, 2 feet away, 60 feet down, 50 feet up, North, South, East, West, inward, and outward. I stack these disparate distances and viewpoints into close physical proximity in one painting, frenetically zooming in and out of the many layers which make up the current state of the land.

Proximity implies the presence of something other than yourself. Recently, my practice has led me to civic spaces; an old filled-in granite quarry-turned-public-park in Quincy Massachusetts, and a park behind my studio in Boston. These are spaces of communal activity, full of traces of people past and present. At the quarry, graffiti shrouds the granite cliffs; “I love you,” “RIP,” “I was here,” “Fuck you,” shout like a public forum of anonymous expression. Grooves from dynamite and chisels show engravings of past granite workers. Passersby pack down the grass into efficient diagonal footpaths. By making paintings in a communal place and sharing in a location, I am in proximity with the people, expression, labor, and family before and concurrent with my own time. As an artist who makes work in the landscape, I think it is my responsibility to document traces of historical, environmental, and human impact on the land with as much fidelity as possible. Through this experiential way of working, I want my paintings to be a record of vitality in a specific place at a specific time.



Strata, Quincy Quarries, 2019  
Oil on canvas, 66" x 74 1/2"



Esplanade, 2019  
Mixed media, oil paint, and acrylic paint on fabric, 84" x 72"

## **Katherine Gardener**

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My work explores the dynamics of moving through time and place, incorporating pathways that are open-ended. I'm restless and want to explore more. Layer upon layer, experiences, friends, and emotions collect. This is all part of my understanding of who I am. Each layer catches a glimpse of what was there at that time and place. We never experience a single place in the same way. In each passing moment it is covered with something new.

My shoes are worn, the iron is worn, the nails are gone. I can get there with new shoes and new iron. Let's try a new path. Where do you want to go? I can go on forever, I never get tired. If you peel back the layers you might be surprised what you find. Within the act of routine, I am always experiencing something new; nothing is static, and this will continually be part of my humanity. Being in close proximity to the soul is intoxicating. an artist who makes work in the landscape, I think it is my responsibility to document traces of historical, environmental, and human impact on the land with as much fidelity as possible. Through this experiential way of working, I want my paintings to be a record of vitality in a specific place at a specific time.

# **Samuel Guy**

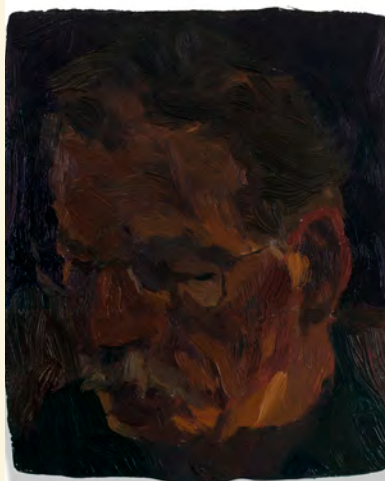
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Considerations of closeness are central to my practice. My work is, in many ways, a form of contemplation on the multifarious nature of experience within the proximities of physical closeness and emotional intimacy. The paintings become a representation of my subject's experience, a document of my own experience through my subject, as well as a creation of our shared experience. All of this requires that the paintings are made through the relational process of observational painting. The work focuses on friends and family members in places we share or have shared: my parents' house, my apartment, or friends' homes. They are a way of transcribing a moment, considering the past, and recognizing the temporality of each person, place, and relationship.

While I often depict the people closest to me, it is not always that they are the people that I am nearest to. Part of my practice has become traveling to paint those I care about, moving my studio to wherever my friends or family are. This counterpoint to digital connectedness embedded in the practice emphasizes the importance of physical nearness. These paintings are exclusive to the moment in which they are made and are responses to my sitters and our environment.



Dad Half Sleeping, 2019  
Oil on panel, 3 ¼" x 4"



Chris at Crestmont Rd, 2019  
Oil on panel, 3 ¼" x 5"

Self Portrait with  
Controller, 2019  
Oil on panel, 5 ½" x 8 ¼"

Carhartt, 2019  
Oil on panel, 4 ½" x 7 ¼"

Chris on Fire, 2019  
Oil on panel, 6" x 10 ½"



Self Portrait in J Crew  
Jacket, 2019  
Oil on panel, 6" x 10 ½"





Mine, 2019  
Gouache on found flattened can, 6" x 6"



Salty Fossil, 2019 Oil on unfired  
terracotta clay, 9" x 5"



Tufa, 2019  
Gouache on found tufa deposit, 6" x 6"



Crumpled Quartz, 2019  
Gouache on found scrap metal, 5" x 5"



## **Matt Hufford**

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As I arrange paintings on the wall, watch the oil wither and crack on ceramic, press clay against my skin, unearth rocks and debris from the ground, and vary the distance between my hand and the surface I'm painting, I frequently confront proximity in my work. This nearness in space, time, and relationship is mirrored by its counterpart, distance.

In my practice, I use proximity as a tool for telling a story. Why are these paintings connected, and why are those paintings further apart? My relationship with a found surface is different than the relationship I have to a surface formed with my body. Each piece shares a connection that is grounded in location, time, material, and color. My paintings are an attempt to extend a moment in time for the viewer and for myself. The fragility of the surfaces I use can cause changes to occur within weeks or months. This slow-motion decomposition of my paintings creates a temporal relationship between the viewer and the art, and it mirrors my experience of working from direct observation to paint a fleeting moment in time.

## **Erin Jesson**

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Within my studio practice, I attempt to delineate the subject/object relationship in regards to time and space. The proximity of subject to object will perpetually fluctuate as the historical context, geological time, and subject experience inevitably change. Proximity directly affects our senses, especially when considering scale and perception alongside time and space. It is nearly impossible to see things clearly when they are either too close or too far. When approaching the work, there is a sweet spot somewhere in between knowing and unknowing, a place of safe terror, the home of paradox, that exists in the studio.



Verb List, 2018  
Single channel video, 1 minute and 42 seconds



eros, the winged one., 2018

Marker, Xerox prints, acrylic paint, oil paint, toilet paper, pastel, glitter, sand, ink, charcoal, paper, candy foil, marbled paper, and found felt fabric, approx. 40" x 60" (dimensions variable)

## **rod jones ii**

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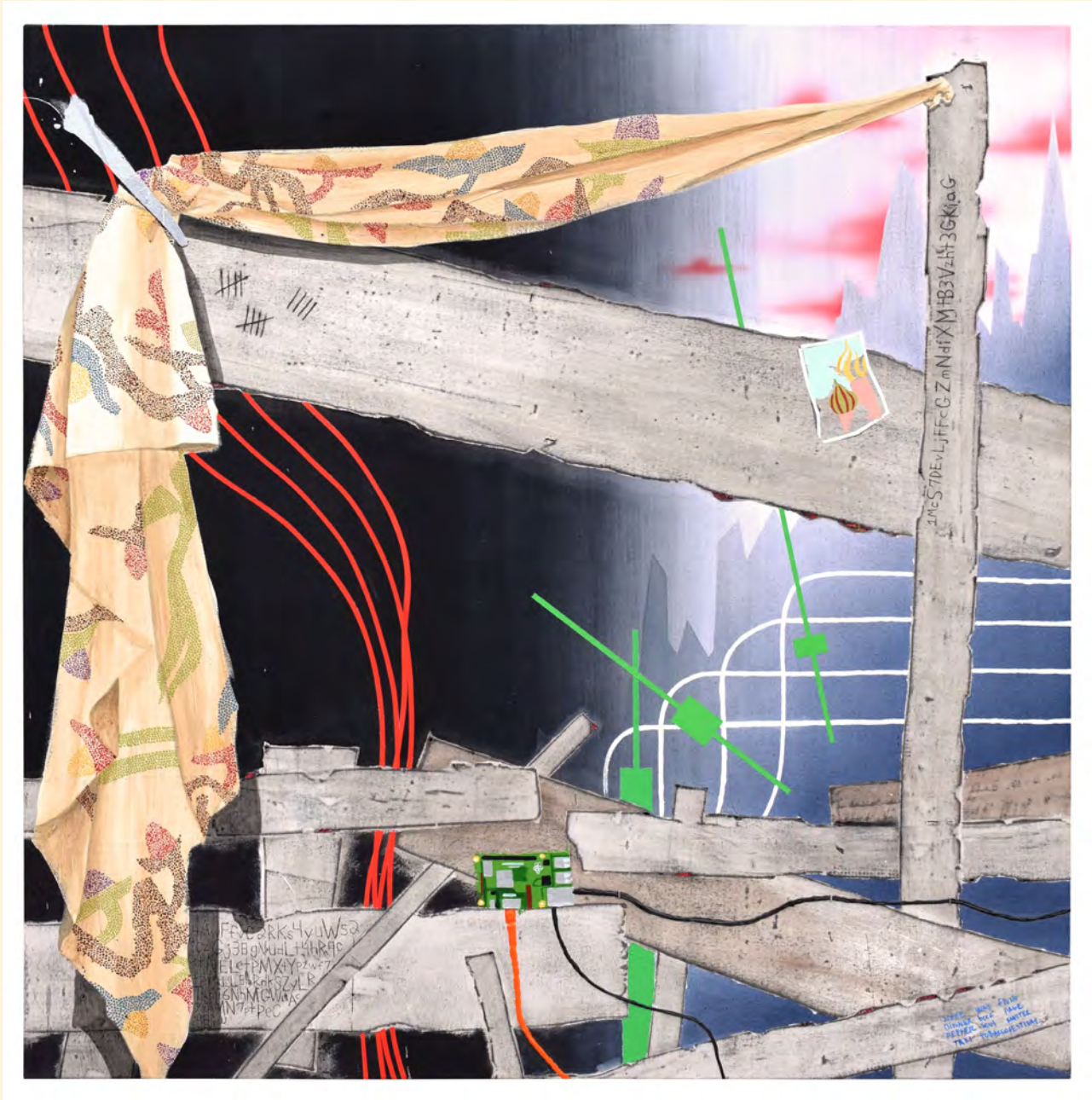
invincible, i am...  
you look at me and i look at you and i know i'm  
invisible. you think you invisible too. i say you're  
invincible. standing the test of time, unwilling to  
compromise nor succumb to what life has to offer.  
never fold nor falter. instead you patient and accepting  
offers or tokens of appreciation for how this nation  
leaves you aimless taking everything ya name has to  
offer. i see myself in thee, a hero for me to read and  
watch and observe and learn to weather the storm since  
that's the norm. niggas is torn. so instead of grabbin life  
by the horns we just bow and cry, get sad and ask how  
and why did life bring strife to my front door. while i  
want to give way to the weight on my plate i see you  
everyday and you are proof that new days mean you  
have been reborn.

## **Michael F. Kondel**

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The distance between something familiar and a place of the unknown comes to mind as I visualize spaced-out clusters of dots. I imagine the dots on the outer fringe are either lost or having the best time. I personally love the unknown; my interests have always deviated from prevailing forms of thought. The space between knowns is often more interesting. It is change that I seek which leads me to stray further from the cluster.

I celebrate and revel in the wreckage from the collision of new technology and cultures, and the begrudging coexistence with consumerism. I'm excited to tear down traditional ideologies and watch the impact it brings, while at the same time noting some skills and ways of life worth preserving. As I become a new American, I'm aware of where I came from, and sometimes I love to forget. I contemplate the complex strengths and shortcomings of myself and others on the threshold between the local and global.



Nearing the Bottom, 2019  
53" x 53"



Su alma, Naniki Pu (Visiones del Cerro), 2019  
Oil on canvas, 32" x 26"



## **Jotham Malavé**

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### Proximity

todo se quema  
a diestra y siniestra

1,585 millas de distancia

manchada con el tizne del fuego  
nada más cerca  
me quemaron a mí, a ti

todo se quema  
el compromiso,  
se quema la soledad  
se quema la compañía  
se quema la lealtad  
se quema la pintura  
se quema el arte  
se quema la proximidad

## ***Charles Mason III***

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The attempt to know myself can only exist in a world where the black body is loved, not for how strong and beautiful it is, but simply for being a human being. For some time, I wasn't aware of my value and power. I hadn't yet grasped that being a person of color is to be constantly living the experience of understanding and learning about oneself. So, when I create work, I think of each piece as an individual object that is part of a greater whole. This maneuverability of the work gives me a ground to enter into the complexities of what blackness entails for me at any instance.



There is rarely a moment of true vulnerability where the trauma and pain from simply existing can be examined or digested, 2019  
Acrylic, house paint, paper, and found wood,  
dimensions variable



The Walker, 2018

Found wood, tire, inner tube, rope, bamboo, burlap, plaster, and resin,  
28" x 18" x 26"

## **Silas McDonough**

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I create art in a wide range of materials and mediums, from sculpture to drawing, painting, and printmaking. Pulling from experiences and memories of my connection with natural spaces, I explore the complex relationships that exist between people and our environments both collectively and individually.

Underlying my work is the tension between natural and human-made environments. I play with the lines between the natural and constructed, the living and inanimate. The objects that come from this play are often multilayered, referencing ideas of consumption, use, and waste while at the same time paying homage to the significance of natural spaces.

The organic forms I create suggest a twofold sense of growth and decay. These are constructed largely of postindustrial and found materials such as tires, lumber, metal, wire, concrete, and plaster.

The use of found materials calls into question our relationship with materials around us—where they originate and where they are deposited. Like shells or skins, these conglomerate sculptures retain evidence of bodily postures that hint at a past life. They have histories and intentions that remain unclear.

## **Addison Namnoum**

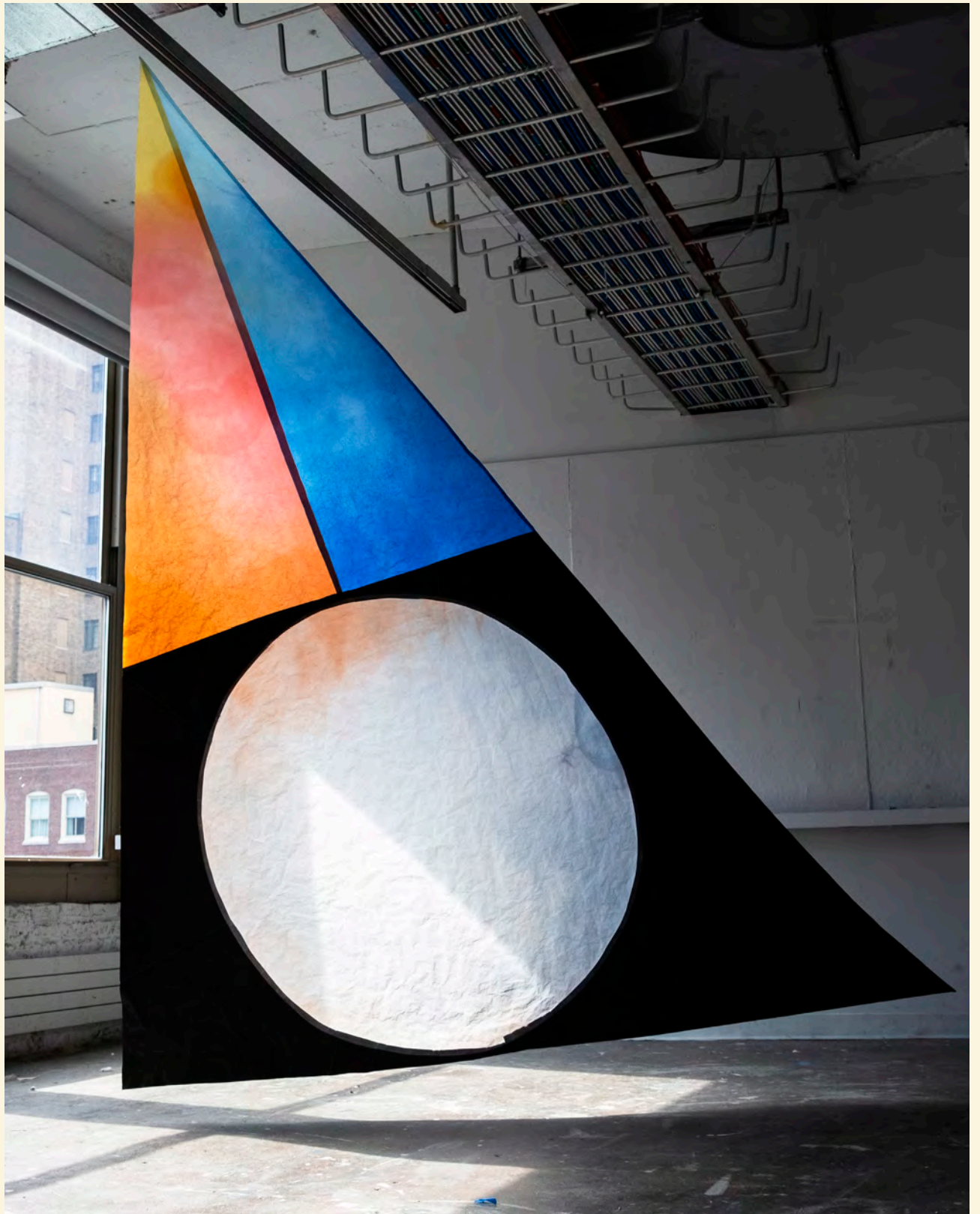
Moon and Two Skies, 2019  
Dyed and sewn sailcloth, 8'5" x 10'10"

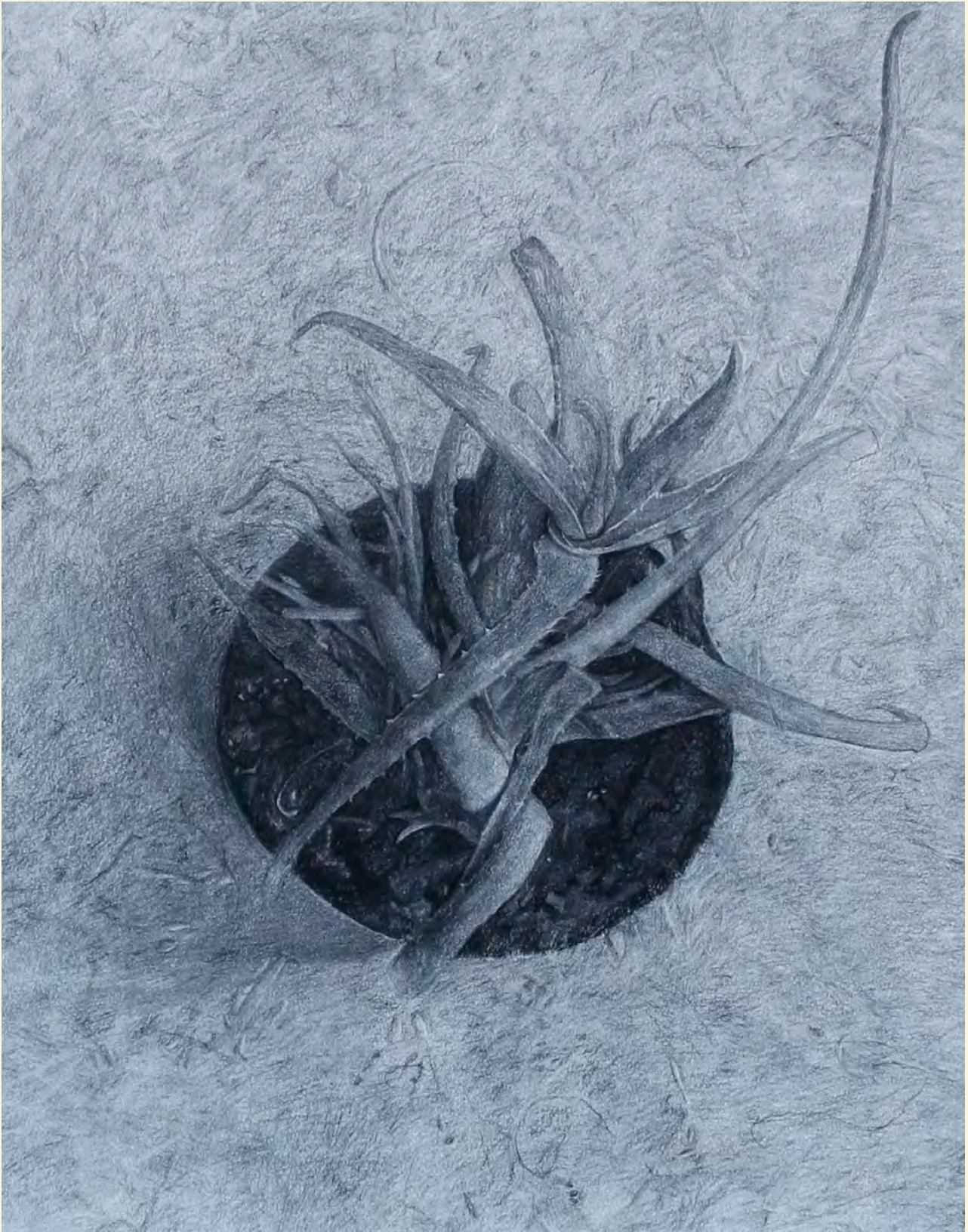
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As I sit and think about the requested prompt of proximity, light from the courtyard washes into my living room. It's morning, and the few house sparrows that live in the eaves of my windows speak in wet voices, quarrelling. Occasionally one or two will fly out from their wooden nests and pass my line of sight in a blur, then return again, still singing. Outside, a spring rain is coming down. We say spring rain because we know a spring rain from a winter rain; when the water comes, this time life will take. That is the constancy of weather and a grammar that responds to it.

Why have I started this way? Sometimes to get nearer to a word we first have to get nearer to our surroundings, to the grammar that structures the material world around us. So often words intertwine with and obscure the world they have come to signify. They take on weight and density. Proximity, for instance, is a word with quick rhythm. It feels urgent in the mouth, reports with a mathematical sort of specificity that A might be here, and B might be there, and this is the space or time between. Though at its heart it asks about a more nebulous thing, the thing of nearness, which is itself an idea that when opened spools out into several directions. How near is nearness? Proximity wants to know. What is the tissue which will connect this and that?

The little routines that make up my day's work are full of these interstices. On days that I work in my home studio, I fill my dye pot with water and set it to boil, and while it goes, I wander about my house, thinking, waiting. So much of work is waiting. Waiting, and watching, to understand. What is significant? Where is the meat? When will I know? And so on, until the space between here and now and there and then draws tighter, then snaps shut, and an answer is found. But the questions have their own constancy. They'll return, and with them an opportunity to look again through the window.







## ***Marsal Nazary***

Grounded, 2018  
Charcoal on paper, 23 ½" x 23"

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My practice is rooted in the studio and the process of observation. The notion of proximity first appears as I negotiate where to stand relative to the scene that I want to explore through drawing or painting. I often consider how my work changes once I move closer. As I observe the scene before me, measuring between proximate relationships, between constants and differences, I recognize the fundamental fragility of making sense of my experience.

# Joseph Lazaro Rodríguez

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We Float Freely

This place  
This island of thoughts  
This barrel of questions  
This raft of convenience  
This price we paid.

So close. So close  
Fingertips almost touch  
Arms flung wide

This thought I had, which fled  
This war I thought was won,  
This loss which never occurred.  
This moment collapsed  
This space between us.

Seconds from the walls  
A slow thrum, a hot noise  
An almost but never

This web woven  
This ship tacking alongside  
This wake we weave through.  
This geometry we walk with  
This tiling of emotions.

Near enough, finding others  
At the border, the boundary  
The fricative edge ever eroding

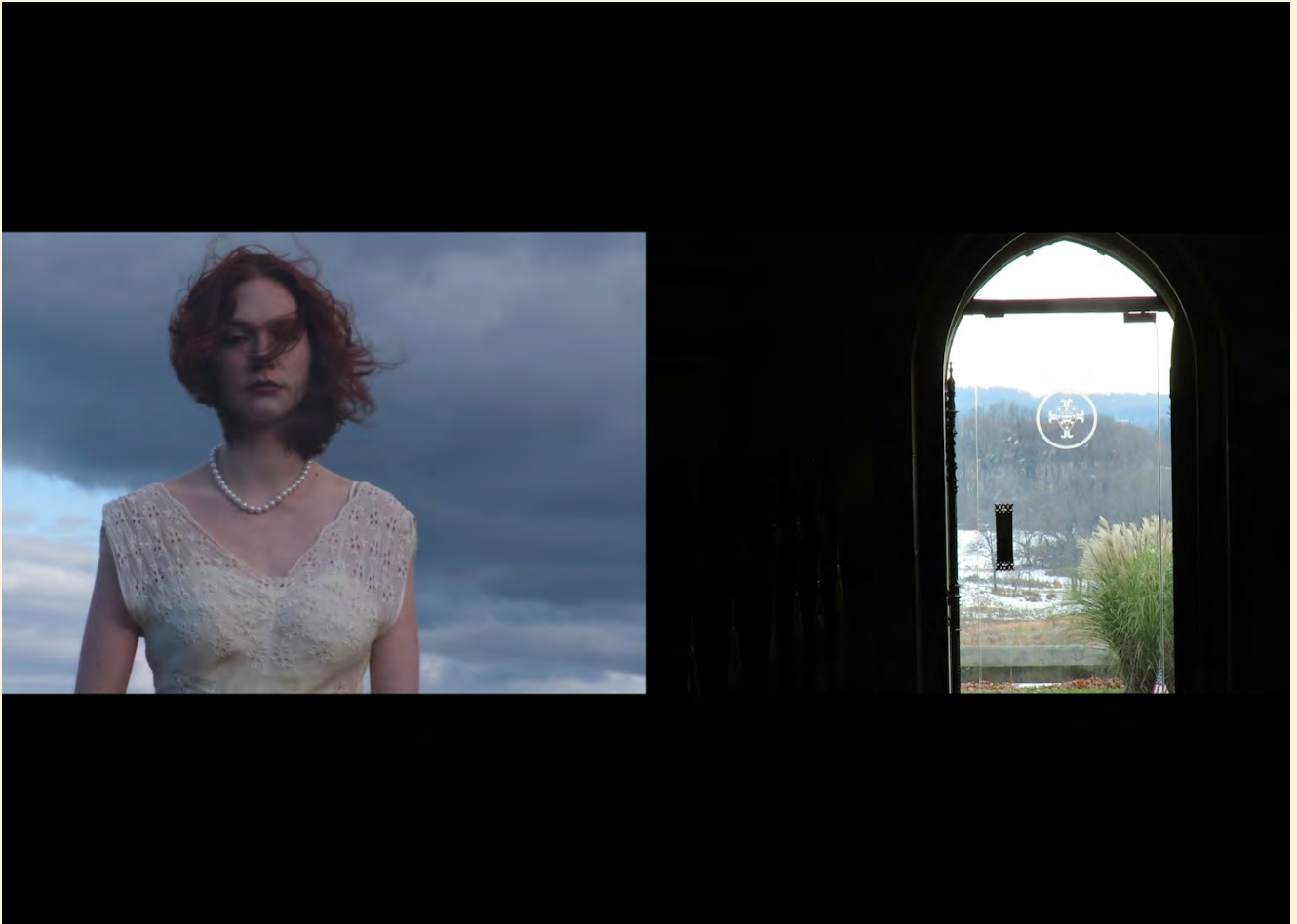
This amassing of spent fortunes  
This truth, almost revealed  
This candle unlit, match unstruck  
This darkness repelled  
This is proximity.

Never enough to stand on  
The ground golden,  
The floor falls away  
We float freely



These Old Gay Bones, 2019  
Flashe, acrylics, wax, oils, and paper on  
wood panel, 40" x 40"

## *Isabelle Schipper*



Pinkie, Amelia Ann  
Two channel video, 8 minutes and 57 seconds

“OH FOR THE TOUCH OF A  
VANISHED HAND  
AND THE SOUND OF A VOICE  
THAT IS STILL”

*Excerpt from a Tennyson poem found on the tombstone of Minnie Hurd,  
Greenwood Cemetery.*

When I think of proximity I think of closeness, degrees of separation. Me, to my mother,  
to her mother. How far are we really? How close?

I never met my grandmother.

At times she feels very close, tangible even.

Other times she feels very far away.

I try my best to conjure her.

My mother told me when she was a little girl she walked into her dining room after  
coming home from school to find her mother dancing naked with a hand mirror,  
watching her reflection in its glass.

I imagine her mother must have been very far away not to notice her young daughter  
walking into the room.

I found an antique silver mirror with a capitol “A” engraved on its back and danced with  
it in my hand, holding my reflection in hopes of seeing hers. In hopes of getting closer.  
The mirror is a portal between the realms of living and dead, present and past, self seen  
and self unseen.

When I started looking into her I looked for newspaper clippings. I found some from  
her childhood, but the latest entry was her wedding announcement from 1950. After  
that, nothing. I told my mom, and she said she thought her mother’s life ended after  
marriage.

In my mind she carries a bouquet of tiger lilies because my mother told me they were  
her favorite flower, “the redheads’ flower.” I am not naturally red-haired, but my mother  
is and her mother is and I decided to dye my hair red last August.

I think she has been visiting me for some time now.

## **Lorena Sferlazza**

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I make paintings of decaying walls as transitory records of what is forgotten. Tactile and tangible yet distant and bruised, their layered histories are marred, covered over, and reduced to façades. My paintings exist as urban palimpsests that recall exteriors often bypassed throughout a city, whose metaphorical density we seldom dissect. We are sheltered in walls as we are housed in our bodies. Walls deteriorate as our minds age over time. Vulnerability is questioned in the use of the term: you “wall something in” to conceal or contain, whereas you “let your walls down” to expose truth. By contrast, walls are erected to divide under the guise of defense: the Berlin Wall, the Great Wall of China, and most recently, the Mexico-United States Border Wall. At some point, each wall is subject to both natural weathering and imposed destruction via the workman’s hand, making transience palpable.

I peel back and probe these scars and meanings through the act of painting. Measuring Impact juxtaposes the synthesized and the found: a man-made, walled construct with scavenged and simulated building materials. Its gritty, eroded surface is akin to wounded skin, with textural transitions that collapse time and space into the illusion of a topographical map of archipelago and ocean. The mounted lumber acts as a tool of quantification between the object versus the natural world: to what extent do urban remnants interfere with native habitat? What is their lasting impact?



Measuring Impact, 2018  
Oil, acrylic, faux cement, and spackling paste on panel  
mounted to found lumber and nail, 36" x 24"

I wouldn't ever live it down,  
2018  
Acrylic, ink, collage, and leaf  
on matboard mounted on  
panel, 7 1/2" x 15 1/2"





## **Zachary Simonson**

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In mapping space from a memory, the notion of proximity becomes an interplay between near and far. I want to organize the memory's parts to better understand its whole, while still retaining the sense of being in that place at that time. In the blending of physical architecture and psychological space, I attempt to analyze where I've been, where I am, and where to go next.

## **Zak Shiff**

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Proximity reminds me of the distance between clarity and discrepancy. I think about the tension I am building through the process of engaging materials with each other while juxtaposing them on a surface or as a three-dimensional object all while creating love-and-hate-relationships between them. Each time I choose to negotiate a material and identify its presence, I am also searching to reveal its ridiculous side, like telling a joke.



Self Doubt, 2019  
Mixed media, 35" x 45 1/2"



Four Pack, 2018  
Acrylic, canvas, and dropcloth, 18" x 24"

## **Michael Ward-Rosenbaum**

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Proximity is a device used to determine the spatial relations between two points. Its definition implies closeness. It creates the illusion of unity, similarity, and singularity even when both points exist within different conditions. The absence of proximity is dissociation. Dissociation works to separate, which is necessary in establishing an individualized identity for each point.

Following this logic, all things in proximity share a singular overlapping identity. All things not in proximity are working to establish their own. When we accept the unified identity we lose the individualistic qualities of each point. When we acknowledge the components on their own merit, we risk losing perceived wholeness.

When can two points exist in proximity without becoming singular?

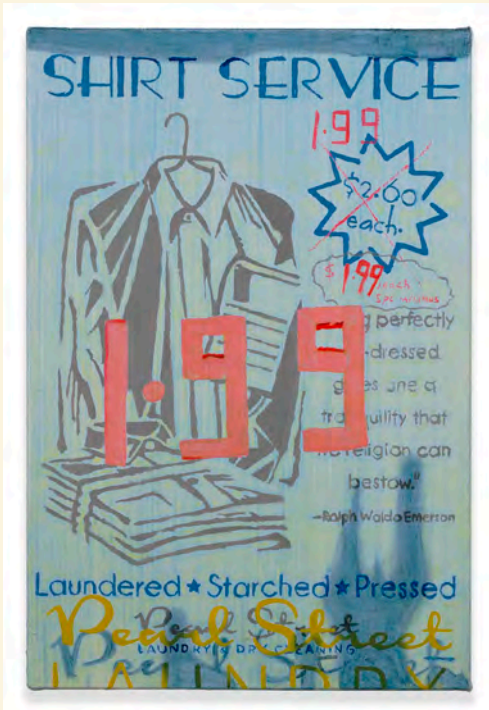
## **Gus Wheeler**

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The subjects of my paintings are fragments of our commercial and urban spaces, things like warning labels, logos, decals, signs, and advertisements—all images which I encounter in my everyday life. These types of images address us directly in varying tones and tenors, largely as warnings or enticements. Not only do they communicate a straightforward message, but they also suggest a motivation. I am often drawn to ones which are poorly designed, misprinted, or abraded. In these flaws the image's clear intention breaks down and the meaning can bend.

I make handmade replicas of mass-produced objects. When going from the machined to the crafted, I accept a degree of mutation: I paint fonts which were once printed, I imagine details in the bokeh of a glossy add. Through my process of photographic documentation and then transcription through painting, the final image has undergone many minor transfigurations. The painted image is imbued with the results of my attempt to understand it not only as something to be re-created formally, but also as form of communication.

These paintings are about images. Images which are known; exhausted of any real knowledge, they are simply signposts pointing towards mirage-like concepts. These are images which seem to exist neatly within the confines of a generic type like “California surfer sunset,” but are nonetheless custom graphics commissioned for specific reasons. My painted images are members of these categories, yet also supersede them. In their formal qualities the images I choose grab your attention and yank it sideways, express an extra meaning, invoke an unexpected image. I take this up in painting: I paint a bright new sign, and tack it up on the signpost pointing in a new direction.



A Tranquility That No Religion Can Bestow, 2019  
Oil and acrylic on canvas, 10" x 15"



No Trespassing (Hello), 2018  
Enamel and oil on canvas, 15" x 10"



Keep Away, 2019  
Enamel and oil on canvas, 14 1/4" x 10"

