WILD CARD

University of Memphis
Fall 2026 BFA Thesis Exhibition



NOVEMBER 6TH 5-7 PM



Axel Anaya
Kalon Bridgforth
Rachel Christopherson
Victoria Cooper
Annabelle Jones



Jachee Lee
Traton McClain
Jaden Stanley
Ryley Wayne

Winnie Marchel
Megan McTigue
Cian Sutcliffe
Lyn Webb



Fogelman Galleries of Contemporary Art
3715 Central Ave,
Memphis, TN 38111

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Connecting with myself and my culture are some of the driving forces in my art. As a Mexican American, I am lucky enough to experience the bright aspects of being Latine daily. However, not everything is as sweet as it seems.

Since 2025, over 650,000 deportations have occurred, not including self-deportations. This project invites participants to tear a piece of the photographic print and metaphorically break bread with the Mexican community while being surrounded by headlines highlighting actions taken by ICE and the Memphis Safe Task Force. There's the option to keep the print and appreciate the culture or to discard the print, metaphorically taking from the community. As a neighboring country, Mexico has a culture that has often been co-opted and appropriated. Everyone is responsible, and what we do next changes our course.

AXEL ANAYA



My series “Sinat” centers on the love shared between two original vampire characters, Demetria and Wyatt, with their vampirism serving as a physical metaphor for worldly flesh. Even so, the work shows them joyful, allowing their curse to recede into the background. What occupies them instead is faith and family, their minds turned from unnatural struggle and their peace founded on God’s grace. The middle piece, “One Flesh,” depicts their holy union, with the veil symbolizing spiritual commitment and protection. They have no worries about the sun, knowing their light comes from within.

Demetria and Wyatt are central to my work as an artist. Created with my best friend, they reflect the biblical ideal of unity in a relationship and within a family as a whole. The series uses acrylic and oil on canvas, as well as printmaking.

KALON BRIDGFORTH



My body of work uses digital photography to explore themes of horror and surrealism. These themes often appear alongside a critique of important social and political issues, from women's autonomy to the consequences of our digital age. Pop culture and media from past decades inform the aesthetics of my photos, just as lighting design and worldbuilding are integral to my creative process.

This current project investigates the destructive advancement of modern AI through a post-apocalyptic horror lens. I use the fictional existence of a half-machine, half-human figure as a functional metaphor for AI, and government manipulation as the breaking point for apocalyptic collapse.

RACHEL CHRISTOPHERSON



Victoria

My work documents endangered species inhabiting North Mississippi to raise environmental awareness.

By sourcing and collecting wild clay, processing it, removing debris, and making other intentional gestures, I incorporate these species' natural habitats into their form. I maintain the natural rhythm of the environment and emphasize the need for conservation efforts.

I encourage viewers to engage and sit with these species to meditate on the importance of fleeting life.

I'm for the art of nature providing for us.

I'm for the art of survival.

I'm for the art of nature taking back.

VICTORIA COOPER



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My art aims to meld our world through spirituality, nature, and dreams, with the unreal that comes from creating vast, magical worlds. My work plays with real-world natural and pagan imagery, applying it to art that explores fantasy and storytelling. This installation, Sanctuary, creates an inviting, comforting atmosphere while also developing a sense of mythical unfamiliarity in the viewer. I encourage viewers to step into the haven and explore the ceramic works on display, from the vessels and charms lining the shelves and hidden within jewelry boxes to the spirits embodied by the dolls who call this sanctuary home.

CROW & QUILL ARTS
ANNABELLE JONES


Jaehu

This body of work captures moments of reflective consciousness by combining self-portraiture, abstraction, and cultural symbols to further explore metacognition.

Primarily using acrylic paint and linoleum-block printing, I build on personal metaphors with each layer of paint or ink I add. Each layer preserves the ephemeral aspects of my ever-shifting internal landscape: the colors, patterns, emotions, and interconnections.

With this exhibition, I invite viewers to engage with and explore the complex spaces of my mind.

JAEHEE LEE



Nina Mae McKinney

My work is about different sequential images that unfold as a narrative. I manually process my prints to control highlights and contrast. It is important to me to be hands-on to allow the process of documenting each image. These stage scenes suggest a story rather than fully explain it. Each photograph is a partial event, requiring the viewer to piece together meaning across the series. Images are organized in a way to create tension, encouraging viewers to question the environment and circumstances within the narrative. I am interested in revealing a surveillance that had been going on for years. By presenting moments that feel intimate yet observational, my work invites viewers to take on the role of a witness, as if surveilling fragments of a private life. This black-and-white series creates an unsettling feeling, allowing viewers to observe the subject's private life and space.

WINNIE MARCHEL



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“Let’s Be Fabulous Together” is about Teeree the Fabulousiter. Teeree can wear the spirits she interacts with as clothes. She travels to other worlds in the observable universe. Teeree wields the Impeccable Rod of Possibilities that aids her in transforming into her outfits. She is also an extension of myself!

The main works in my exhibition are “Neptune Series", “Venus Series”, “Pluto Series”,”True Venus", and “Celestial Arch". These illustrations show my romance, optimism, and love for color. Thank you for viewing the “Let’s Be Fabulous Together” prologue!

TRATON MCCLAIN



Megan Mettig

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Fairytales are told over and over again, each story with a new iteration from the last. Fairytales reflect on how we view traumatic experiences and how they can warp into a different memory over time. Through these scrolls, the stories transform from one aspect to another. Each scroll represents a different fairytale, which permanently changes the lives of the characters.

In my pieces, I use a mix between warm and neutral colors to create the shift between scenes, making each fairytale distinguishable from each other. Through my work, I don't follow a particular pattern and choose to decide how the characters interact with the environment myself. My works will hopefully evoke the idea in the audience that traumatic memories can be both changing and forgettable.

MEGAN MCTIGUE



My work explores the construction of identity and the ways in which we perform versions of ourselves for others. Through photography, styling, clothing, and material, I examine the space between authenticity and presentation, questioning how much of identity is truly our own and how much is shaped by the expectations of others.

By transforming and restyling a single individual, I explore how appearance influences perception and how a person becomes a character in the eyes of the viewer. Rooted in an increasingly digitized world, this work reflects the pressure to curate and present idealized versions of ourselves. Through photographs and tactile materials, I invite viewers to consider the relationship between identity, perception, and performance, asking where the performance ends and the authentic self begins.

JADEN STANLEY

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My work explores the relationship between metal and latex paint, particularly the strength and durability of metal in contrast to the fragility and unpredictability of casting latex paint. I am interested in the balance between control and letting go. This balance reflects aspects of my personal life, where some things feel within my grasp, while others require me to surrender control.

Through my work with these materials, I accept the process as part of the artwork itself. I am inspired by the beauty of mundane and neglected places and objects. I find meaning in the possibility that these contain traces of the human experience.

CIAN SUTCLIFFE



Humor is a constant and permanent aspect of my practice, used as a crucial mechanism for processing reality. I take personal observations, internalize them, and translate them into visual narratives inspired by real-world events and the shifting landscape of pop culture. By holding up a mirror to everyday life, my work exposes and reframes the inherent absurdity of living in the modern era.

This selection of animated works explores this concept through diverse and experimental visual languages, and the audience is encouraged to view each film in its entirety.

RYLEY WAYNE



"How are you?"

Our answer to this question is typically not a true reflection of how we feel. Recess explores the superficial emotions we use to mask the unpleasant feelings hiding beneath the surface. Whether it's performing for others when it tears you apart on the inside or losing your own identity as time passes, my work challenges appearance versus reality. We are first exposed to our emotions and how they impact other people through early childhood experiences, such as kindergarten.

I use bright colors to create a playful atmosphere to initially lure the audience, but then upon closer inspection, the viewer is then confronted with emotional dissonance and the illusion of stability. Adopting familiar materials from my childhood, I utilize ceramics, printmaking, and textiles to create nostalgia and emphasize the normalcy to suppress our emotions.

LYN WEBB

CREDITS

THESIS PROFESSORS

- **Cheryl Hazelton**
- **Yangbin Park**

PHOTOGRAPHY

- **Rachel Christopherson**
  pg.2,6,12,14,16,18,26
- **Winnie Marchel**
  pg.4,8
- **Jaden Stanley**
  pg.20,22,24
- **Melissa Lukawitz**
  pg.10

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