BAROMETRIC
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THE 2017 SENIOR EXHIBITION

Works by the Stanford University Class of 2017 Art Practice Majors

TARA HALSTED
COLIN CHOI KIMZEY
JACKIE LANGLEIER
ALLEGRA MCCOMB
ANDY MEISLIN
ALEXANDRA RISBERG
AISHWARYA ANANDA VARDHANA
CATHY YUAN

On display at the Mohr Student Exhibition Gallery & adjacent installation space at the McMurtry Building for the Department of Art & Art History
June 6 - 18, 2017
During their time at Stanford, eight graduating seniors majoring in Art Practice—Tara Halsted, Colin Choy Kimzey, Jackie Langelier, Allegra McComb, Andy Meislin, Alexandra Risberg, Aishwarya Ananda Vardhana, and Cathy Yuan—have experienced unprecedented extremes in weather patterns and radical shifts in national politics. Spanning years of historic drought to one of the wettest winters on record in Northern California, and ranging from the relative stability of Obama’s second term in office to a tense, heated 2016 presidential campaign resulting in the tumultuous start to the Trump administration, external change has come at a whiplash pace, especially within the last twelve months.

Even though these eight artists produce artwork in a wide range of material and media, and manifest varying thematic contents and conceptual intents, a common thread of choreography broadly runs through all of their work. Choreography not just in the typical definition of composing physical movements for the body, but also in the larger sense of arranging and manipulating plans and actions leading up to an event. In thinking about structuring the Senior Exhibition and identifying a working title, we talked as a group with this initial thought in mind, and the conversation ultimately gravitated towards the experience of being at Stanford through these extremities, both climatically and politically. We considered a number of ideas and phrases, and settled on BAROMETRIC as a unifying theme and title. In meteorology, a barometer is an instrument used to measure atmospheric pressure, especially in forecasting the weather. As a descriptive noun, a barometer is something that reflects changes in circumstances and opinions. The 2016-2017 academic year has witnessed profound climate shifts, both in terms of weather and politics, and we wanted to reflect this specific moment in time through the choice of this exhibition title.
Exploring embodied experience and (re)constructed memory, international culture and local history, and domestic environments and natural ecosystems as means to measure and contemplate our contemporary world, the work in this exhibition is created by eight highly talented, insightful, and promising young artists who are about to embark on a post-collegiate journey in continuing to engage with ideas through ever evolving and maturing visual lexicons.

To the eight students I have had the pleasure and privilege to work with this last quarter, always remember that opportunity = luck + preparation. As stated in one of the readings in class, you have the ability to control what you have agency with. So long as you adequately prepare yourself for when the time and circumstance comes, you are setting yourself up for a higher likelihood of success. We don’t have agency for when luck comes our way, but when it does, we do have the agency to be prepared. I frequently say this to younger, emerging artists—the work you produce five or ten years from now (visualize 2022 and 2027 on your exhibition label) will be radically different from the work you are making now, and that’s an exciting prospect to ruminate on. You haven’t yet begun to make your most mature, resolved work. I look forward to seeing it.

Kevin B. Chen
Instructor ARTSTUDI 249: Undergraduate Senior Seminar
Artist and independent curator
Through my art, I reflect my environment through the lens of my perspective. Reflective surfaces such as water question the representation of spaces by blending the surface reflection with the environment below. I aim to depict the feeling of existing in an underwater environment, submerged in an underwater world. My graphite drawings depict swimmers fully immersed in their surroundings, with the water distorting light and shadows across their bodies. I use drawing as a camera, to record details of my surroundings and give permanence to a moment by immortalizing an image. I often start with photography, then translate images into drawings by manipulating them and inserting my point-of-view.

tarahalsted.com
Below:
*Underwater World* (Series)
2017
Graphite
Triptych, each 24”x36”

Left and next page:
*Self-Portrait*
2015
Graphite
34”x44”
I am interested in how histories of social movements, labor, and migration construct urban space, particularly as battlegrounds between communities of color and larger systems of capitalism and colonialism. I explore these ideas in the context of San Francisco, California, the city of my birth and my family’s home for three generations. San Francisco is a unique site of political experimentation, multiracial organizing, cultural production, and systemic inequity. Gentrification threatens the ability of communities of color not just to stay in their neighborhoods but to tell their alternative stories of the city. These conflicts over space and narrative are major themes in my work.

I work in visual media, primarily screen printing and drawing. My use of screen printing is rooted in the medium’s history as a tool of social protest, as well as in its potential to produce multiples, giveaways, and ephemera that can intervene in public space. I employ the vocabularies of revolutionary imagination and local vernacular to create historical, site-specific work. As an act of cultural activism, my practice seeks to uplift the intergenerational stories of those who built the Bay Area and are now at risk of being swallowed up by its transformation.

Evoking one of the ships buried in San Francisco’s landfill, this site-specific, multi-level installation explores the presence of colonial and anti-colonial histories in the city’s urban geography. The sails show maps of Magellan Avenue and Lapu Lapu Street, named respectively for the Philippines’ first colonizer and the revolutionary hero who killed him. The print on the sails and the coating on the ship below are asphalt—both the material of urbanization and a derivative of pitch, which covered Magellan’s vessel and the other Western “Black Ships” that brought colonization and gun-boat diplomacy to the East.

colinkimzey.com
Above and previous page:
Beneath the Asphalt the Beach, or: How to get to Magellan Avenue from Lapu Lapu Street
2017
Asphalt, sailcloth, wood, concrete, cotton rope, cardboard
ALL STONE AND STEEL
My work is spun from an entangled web of strange fantasy, mundane banality, grotesqueries, and indulgences. I am interested in inhabiting the nodal point where attraction and repulsion interact—the transient space between the abject and the sublime. My goal is for my images to equally delight and disturb as I explore cycles of blooming and decay in both nature and within the female psyche.

jackieguber.com

Top:
*Mr. Asparagus Takes a Personal Day*
2016
Etching

Bottom:
*We Only Eat Vegetarians*
2016
Etching

Next page:
*Tender*
2015
Digital photographic print
My work is fundamentally rooted in studying the human body and embodied experience. Primarily, I aim to create images of bodies that toe the line between the uncanny and beautiful, the grotesque and sexy, the irreverent and the sacred. It is within these interstitial spaces that I believe we can most effectively interrogate our conceptions of sexuality, gender, control, vulnerability, and decay.

I often use self-portraiture as a means of meditating on both the metaphysical and sociopolitical realities of my own body. These images serve to examine the body’s deeply intimate role in mediating between our inner and outer worlds, and how personal ritual, agency, and power dynamics shape our physicality. I am interested in the ambiguity of the political and power dynamics arise out of offering one’s likeness as an object of visual consumption.

allegramccomb.com
I made this body of work when I was living alone in Italy for three months. I went on the trip as a sort of pilgrimage to my grandmother’s motherland—her parents emigrated from a small mountain village in Veneto to a coal mining town in Wyoming years before she was born, and she never returned to Italy. She died when I was an infant; I never really knew her.

These images were all made as part of a negotiation with my time there—of the fervent regimen of being alone in a foreign place, of the disillusionment of returning to somewhere you never knew, of the ineffable phenomenon of ancestral knowledge. They are born from the intersection of the sacred, the sexual, and the feminine.

I am interested in the digital glitch as a foray into the fever dream. Like so many things I aim to address in my work—sensation, emotion, abjection—it originates in a nonphysical realm, only to be made tangible and visible through careful choreography of physical actions.
ANDY MEISLIN

As a senior at Stanford, majoring in both Human Biology and Art Practice, I think a lot about the intersection of art and science. I see both of my fields as connected because in both I explore my curiosity about the natural world. Through my artwork, I am more deeply engaged with the world around me, and I am able to more meaningfully reflect upon my place in it. Photography is the main medium I work in to explore my environment. I have been practicing photography since I was 15 years old, and my art practice has been evolving since then. I started my photographic practice in my high school’s dark room with 35mm film. Beginning with film taught me to be extremely thoughtful in which photographs to take and how to frame them because of the limited space on a roll. At the end of high school and the beginning of Stanford, I took additional film photography classes that introduced me to 120mm film and alternative dark room processes. In my last two years at Stanford, my photographic practice expanded to include digital photography. I hope that my viewers see my work and are able to reflect upon the time and space in which it was created, and how that environment changed or will change in the seconds, hours, months, or years after the photograph.

_Double Take_ is a series of photographs taken in South Africa, which touches upon human relations with the natural world. In my time in South Africa, on a BOSP overseas seminar focused on conservation, I never felt integrated to the people or the wildlife around me. I felt that there was both a displacement and intrusion regarding my presence. This feeling led me to constantly be questioning how and why I interact with the natural and human ecosystems in this place, and how they affect each other. The location, culture, and wildlife were just out of arms reach for my understanding and comfort. The name of this series, _Double Take_, reflects both my constant questioning of my place in South Africa as a white tourist and the nature which I hope viewers interact with my photographs. It is my hope that in looking at each
of these photographs, the viewer is able to take a first look, and continue to come back to the subject matter and feeling of the image with further investigation to be done.

*Higher Up the Mountain* is a photographic book about mountain life, climate change, and conservation that reflects both my areas of study: the sciences and the arts. With this senior capstone project, I have found a way to combine my love of photography with my love of skiing, the natural world, and my wish to conserve our beautiful spaces. During my four years at Stanford, I have witnessed dramatic extremes in the snowpack levels of California’s Sierra Nevada. The 2014-2015 season had a snowpack at only 5% of normal, while the 2016-2017 season saw a snowpack which peaked at over 200% of normal. These extremes exemplify the kind of weather that will become more frequent with unmitigated climate change. In this book, I explore how snow impacts water supply and jobs, and how climate change threatens the communities in and around the snow.

andymeislin.com
Previous page:
Detail from *Double Take*
2016
Digital Print

Below:
*Double Take*
2016
Digital Prints
Above:
*Higher Up the Mountain*
2017
Photographic Book
Alexandra Risberg works to redesign our relationship to the interior space versus the exterior environment. Born in Stockholm, Sweden, Risberg takes inspiration from the innovative culture of her hometown: where cultures meet to form new ideas and designs. Having moved to London, England and Geneva, Switzerland, Risberg grew up to be intrigued by the intersections of communities and people. As a result, she is concerned with the rise of globalization and its current effect on both the environment and its cultures. Today, with a double major in Art Practice and International Relations, Risberg has the ambition to design solutions for the communities that are affected by the rapid increase in globalization. Risberg’s work visualizes her most current concern with the rising urgency of immigration, homelessness and the international need for cultural and ethnic integration. Through her architectural installations, Risberg suggests a need to deconstruct our fabricated detachment from the natural environment, and to redesign our relationship to the domestic space. Risberg is inspired to reshape the vision of what a home is, and to integrate new ideas into building what a home can become.

alexandrarisberg.com

Right and next page:

RUM* [ɾʊmˈmɛːn:mɛːn]  
2017
Installation
AISHWARYA ANANDA VARDHANA

Born and raised in Portland, OR and Udupi, India, Aishwarya Ananda Vardhana is a Bay Area based visual artist and writer who is a recent graduate of Stanford University with a degree in Art Practice. Studies in product design, computer science, English literature, philosophy, feminist gender studies, and South Asian studies have informed and infused her broad multi-disciplinary practice. Working in digital art, animation, drawing, sculpture, installation and photography, Vardhana aims to tell stories through combining ancient art forms such as Bharatanatyam (Indian classical dance) and Carnatic (South Indian classical) music with modern art and technology. Her work bridges contemporary concerns with centuries-old cultural histories to reveal generational and cultural signifiers to a younger generation as a source of inspiration and empowerment.

Five hundred years ago Kannada composer Sri Purandara Dasa wrote a set of fundamental exercises for Carnatic (South Indian classical) music known as Alankaras (translation: “decoration”). This piece incorporates seven of the innumerable Alankaras, and each mark of light corresponds to a note in the Alankaras. The invisible past is transformed into the visible present as sound and light adorn the sculpture. Viewers walking through the strings become substrates for the light, bringing to question where the art begins and ends. In the Natya Sastra, a Sanskrit Hindu text on the performing arts, we read,

“A song without any alankara (decoration), would be like a night without a moon, a river devoid of water, a vine without any flower, and a woman without any ornament.”

https://avardhan.wixsite.com/aishwaryaananda
Ornamental
2017

Metal, twine, zip ties, video projection, audio (artist’s voice)
In this series, I explore the relationship between memory, experience, and aging through the process of overlaying prints of personal photographs over myself inside a pool. I align my body with my mother’s, while gazing at my infant self from many years ago. The prints mold imperfectly to my skin, suggesting the futility of memory as a pristine, immutable vehicle for experience. No longer can I return to my memories from the perspective of a child. As I take the helm of womanhood, I find in my mother’s experience both my past and the future.

*Special thanks to Ranjay Krishna as artist assistant*

cathyyuan.com

*Summer Pool (Series)*
2017
Digital Prints