



UNDERGROWTH

2018 BFA/BA Visual Art Graduating Exhibition

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UBC BFA/BA Artists 2018

The decision to be an artist is the decision to be free. Freedom is the condition of responsibility... To be an artist is not a question of form or of content, it's a question of responsibility. The decision to be an artist is a decision for the absolute and for eternity. That has nothing to do with romanticism or idealism, it's a question of courage. – Thomas Hirschhorn

More than anything, I wish I could tell you how it was everything I had hoped it would be. That what we see before us is the product of all that is true. But it was not and it is not. I think it is important that we say this first. That we own up to the failures within ourselves and our institutions to become more than the sum of our degrees. That we acknowledge the ease with which we find ourselves and those we follow slipping into half-measures and vague gestures of change. Let us admit our follies, as I have likewise become a perpetrator, clumsily stitching theory onto a form and calling it freedom. Because I have grown impatient with my own bankrupt ideals about the world, and I cannot speak to hope without first recognizing its lineage of despair. So what then and what now? Where do we turn from this acknowledgement? I cannot be the one to tell you because I do not know. Personally, I would like to believe that we can choose to live the virtues that we aspire to. To demand candour and courage from ourselves and those around us. To understand what is needed of us and to earn what is given to us as we pass through this moment and into another and another still. I would like to believe.

Josephine Lee

We would like to acknowledge that, as students at the University of British Columbia, we have been uninvited guests on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam people.

Cover designed by Michelle Fong
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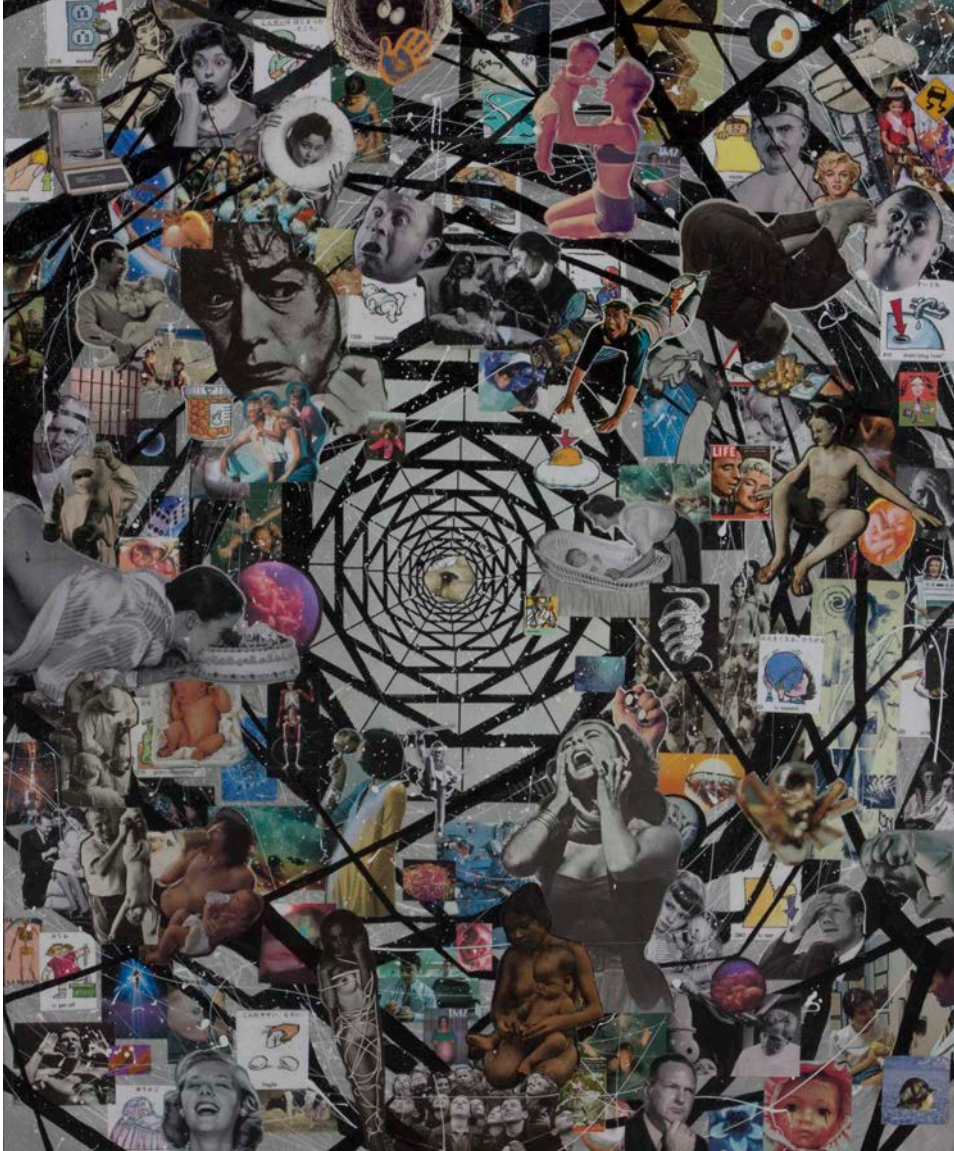
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*Space
Saris
2017*

Throughout her interdisciplinary artistic practice, Simranpreet Anand explores how cultural, feminist, and psychological theories interrelate and collide within contemporary society. She explores the intercultural nuances and experiences which define systemic racism and its characterization of parallel colonial histories through misunderstanding, failure, humour, boundaries, and language. Her research thus culminates in a mixture of cultural, textual, and minimalist forms. Simranpreet modifies and interferes with cultural forms – such as turbans, dupattas, and saris – in ways that raise questions of identity, gender, racial politics, place, and space. Alongside her material process, Simranpreet is committed to a socially engaged practice, having worked on community engagement and education projects with the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery, the Burrard Arts Foundation, documenta 14, the Hatch Art Gallery, and the Surrey Art Gallery.



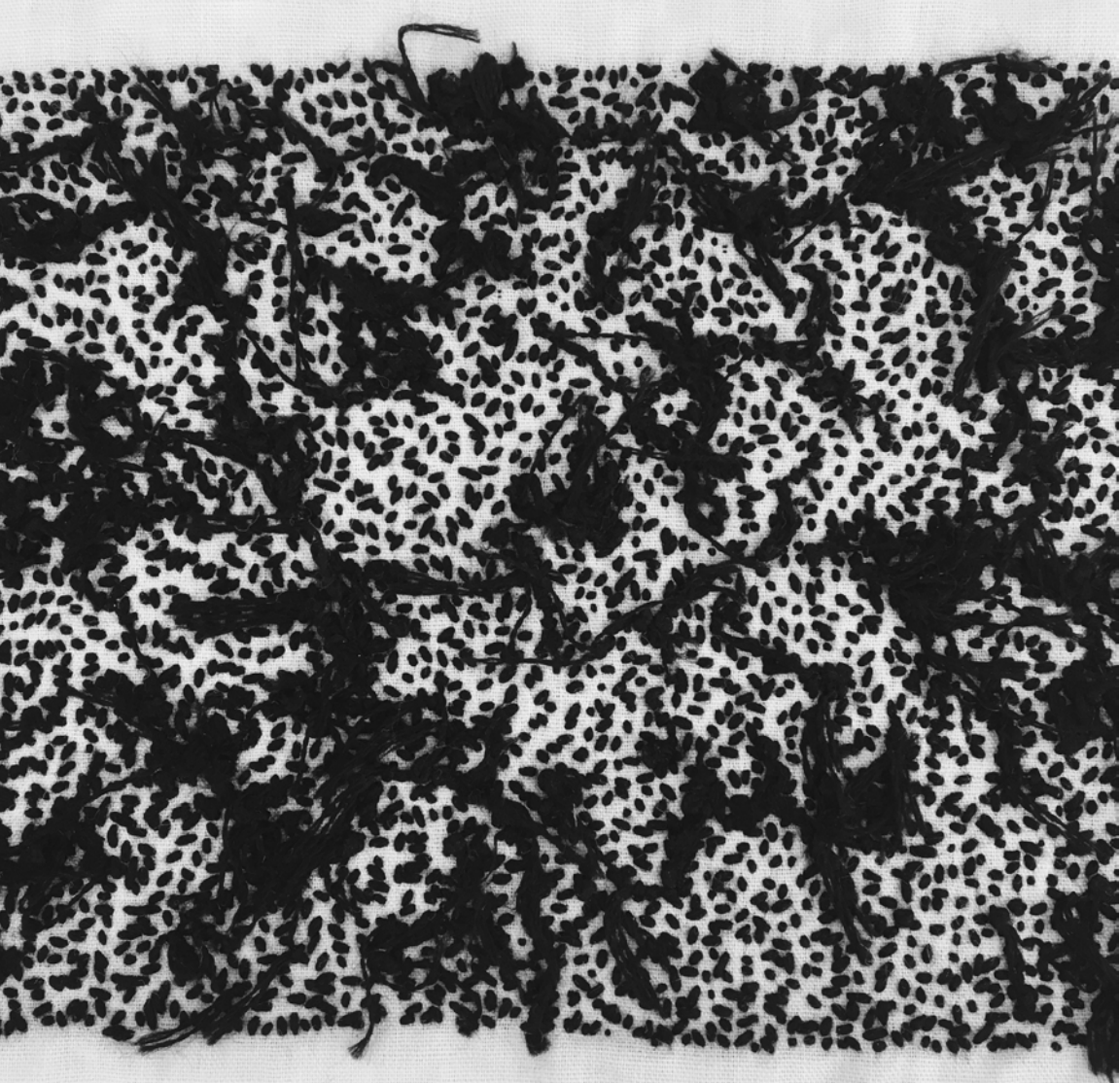
My work analyzes relationships between the self, the systemic societal structures we maintain, and the visual phenomena that represent these connections. I seek to understand the human experience, using the lens of Lacanian psychoanalytic theory to connect the personal and the political, the individual and the institution. Drawing connections between my mental health and the plight of society, my work questions the chaos on a micro and macro scale. The construction and maintenance of societal myths are of particular focus: how, for example, do we frame female sexuality, or the pursuit of scientific progress? Through collage, painting, installation, text, and video, I explore the material evidence of these stories and the power they have on the individual psyche, using psychoanalysis as a gesture to understand our fears and desires. My work investigates the spaces where aesthetics, pop culture, social systems, and myth cohabit; I work to understand who the human family is, and who I am within it.

Womb
Acrylic, ink, and collage
2017



(See Photo.)

Untitled
Dead seagull and plastic helmet
2015



I think about representation and its boundaries.
I think about art and craft and craft art.
I think about antiquated mediums.
I think about femininity.
I think about labour.

I think, I think, I think. Sometimes I make.

Surface Tension
Embroidery floss, fabric, and paper
2018

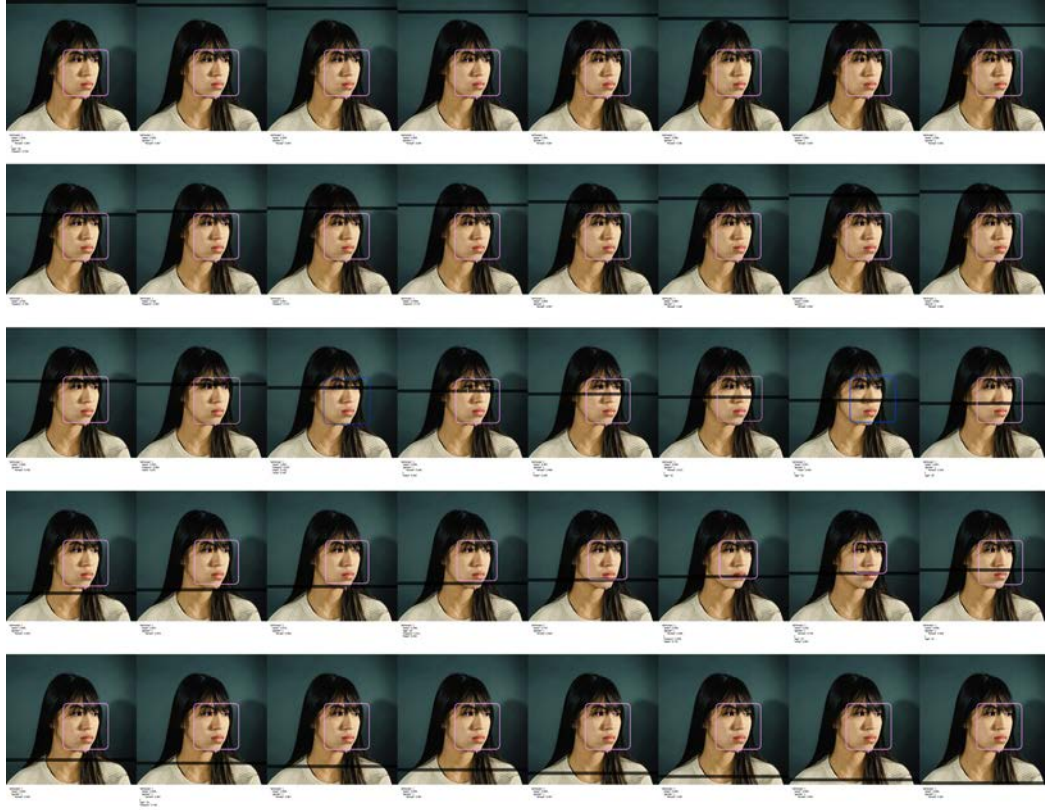


Infinite Lives
Interactive digital ROM hack
of the "Super Mario Bros."
video game for the Nintendo
Entertainment System
2016



Spr Mr Bros. (Gameplay)
Interactive digital ROM hack
of the "Super Mario Bros."
video game for the Nintendo
Entertainment System
2016

I like to think that my art reflects on the nonsensical aesthetic of the World Wide Web. Whether or not it is successful in this, I don't know.



My work investigates humans' dependency on and trust in technology. As the demand for more intelligent machines increases so does the importance of confronting new experiences allowed by these technologies. My practice is an exploration of these issues in hopes of revealing possible tensions.

Algorithm for Diversity
Inkjet prints
2017



Lovesickness

To the tune of Dian Jiangchun (Touching on the Red Lip)

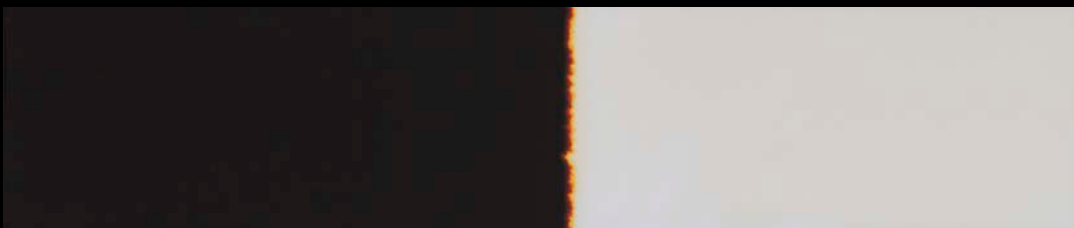
寂寞深闺，柔肠一寸愁千缕。惜春春去，几点催花雨。
倚遍栏干，只是无情绪。人何处，连天衰草，望断归来路。

Lonesome is my chamber,
My gentle heart, one inch wide,
Is wrapped in a thousand threads of sorrow.
I love the spring, but the spring is gone.
Some showers of raindrops hasten the departure of the flowers.

Leaning against the railing posts one by one,
I am in low spirits.
Where are you?
I stare at the path by which you will return home,
Swallowed up by the green grass on the horizon.

点绛唇 (Dian Jiangchun) Touching on the Red Lip, poem by 李清照 (Li Qingzhao),
translation by Yuanyuan Chen.

Lovesickness/Touching on the Red Lip
Acrylic on canvas
2017



The intent of my work is to blend the inarticulate, phenomenal instances of the everyday with the subjective human experience to evoke an introspective dialogue with the viewer. My artistic praxis is the synthesis of discourse relating to memory, nostalgia, trauma, identity, binaries, gender, and obsolescence in conjunction with affect and intellect. My process involves experimental interventions with photography and mixed media, which seek to transcend the realm of the “ordinary.” Interdisciplinary concepts, particularly themes in classic literature, combined with my life’s experiences, influence the trajectory of my work.

Untitled (Interruptions)
35mm film, trans backlight media
2017



My art is informed by the patterns and changes of my emotions at a given point in time; thus, my art is a “process” that records my growth as an artist as well as a person. I prefer to explore the “aesthetic value” of art and depict the world as I see and feel it in an attempt to break away from existing expectations from institutions and limitations, “high art” and “low art,” and the “rest in between”; and I endeavour to disrupt these pressures and create as freely as I can for myself.

2016 Wallflower Preservation
Acrylic, watercolour, and ink on canvas
2017



The concept of “love” is the primary focus for my artistic compositions. My works scrutinize the notion of “love” by critically analyzing the remnants of moments of intimacy between bodies and environments. The finite qualities of love organically lend themselves to concepts of death. No feeling or contact between two bodies or between a body and an environment can exist forever. There is a limit to which love exists as an amplified aspect of our lives. I often use traces of the human body in my practice; this is my attempt to capture transient gestures and acknowledge the absurdities of our lives. I use the body as an index, using it to stamp a surface or space, or even sacrifice portions of my body to communicate the spectral presence of a past being. This reflection of a transient yet traceable past affords us the opportunity to reflect on our own mortality.

Navels
Plaster
2017

قدر کمال خویش بشناختمی
 دامان خود از خاک بپرداختمی
 خالی و سبک بر آسمان تاختمی
 سر بر فلک نهم برافراختمی

I would shake the dust from my coat, and rise
 If I realized my own strength
 I would rush to the sky, empty and light
 And my head would be as high as the ninth heaven.

Poem by Rumi, translation by Mahsan Jaffari

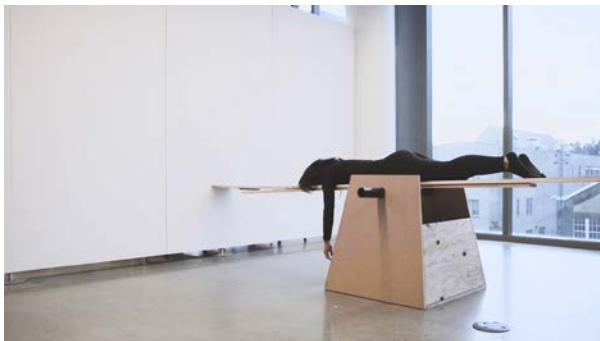
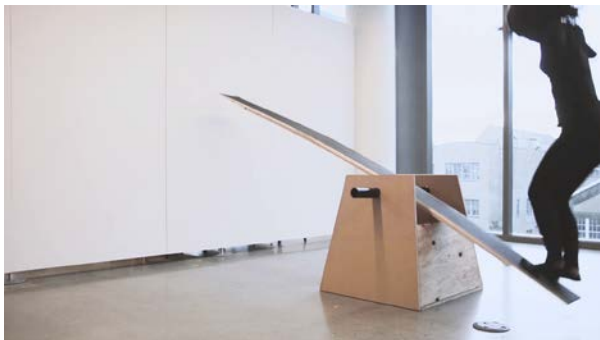
Untitled (Unread)
 Wood and spray paint
 2017





My work is about a growing self-awareness of my identity. It is about revelation, communication, and celebration of my culture, my history, and myself. Through explorations with text-based media, painting, and printmaking, I examine what it means for me to define myself as a young Black Bermudian woman and how this intersects with my lived experiences.

Mary Prince and Sally Bassett (Where Are You Really From?)
Acrylic on canvas
2018



My work is informed by my continued movement between the United States, Canada, and South Korea, as well as my research into racial class formations of labour, the systematization of sound and speech in connection to state power, and the construction of memory and place in relation to ruins. Pushing known forms and materials through this conceptual sieve, I examine their resulting unfamiliarity – in effect, their capacity to expand and slip through and between physical and psychic constants. Through my work, I enact seemingly impossible gestures in order to reveal moments of violence, resistance, stasis, and potential, as I aim to traverse the width of a particular moment and place in time as an antecedent to a deeper examination of the inadequacy of representation, the complications of overlapping racial histories, and the complexity of unfolding spaces of unknowing and unlearning.

neolttwigi/seesaw
Video performance
2017



As someone who feels alienated by all communities – imagined and real – I investigate nationhood and nationalism. Paradoxically, I query the concept of nationality. A significant part of my practice responds to Chinese social and cultural issues. I am uncertain about my identities, and my works reflect this uncertainty and contradiction. Working in installation and mixed-media, such as printmaking, photography, and sculpture, I seek to explore the identity of a free being and respond to global, national, and cultural issues.

ALIEN
Plants and resin
2017



digital semiotics, instantaneity, hyper-mediation,
subsumption, abduction,
subject(ive) screaming/laughing

mirror test, or, idiosynchronicity
Video
2018



My mixed identity is a constant factor in my work, which takes form through various mediums, including digital illustration, print media, video, and occasionally installation. I explore the issues regarding hybrid experiences through the use of contrasting visuals and concepts, often employing the duality of retrofuturistic aesthetics to examine how the problems of our past and present may manifest themselves in the future. I am interested in the fusion of humanity and technology, frequently utilizing the image of the android as a means of portraying those who exist outside of the common binaries of race, gender, and sexuality. My work aims to subvert the default gaze and make space for marginalized narratives.

chair.tcl
Wooden chair installation
2017



I'm not an artist who takes himself too seriously. Art for me is a selfish exercise where I draw upon my identity as a first-generation Chinese Canadian and on my other varied interests. I often explore the mish-mash of traditional values and contemporary ideas that dominate my world, and only my world.

Mak6 Seoi2 (墨水)
Video
2017



The environment, the body, and the nests of insects are all systems that mirror neurology and a network of ideas – a structure used in the natural world. The way our bodies function is through a mechanism of moving parts which all have a role that leads to our survival. The way humans interact is its own system; we have to use one another to survive and we all have a role. Insects are the basis of perfection in this system because they are all prepared to live and die for their singular purpose, building a world where their survival is dependent on each moving part taking on its perfect role without question. We all rely on the specificity of our network to represent our similarity and individuality; to illuminate our perfect role.

Das Mannequin
Screen print on canvas mannequin
2017



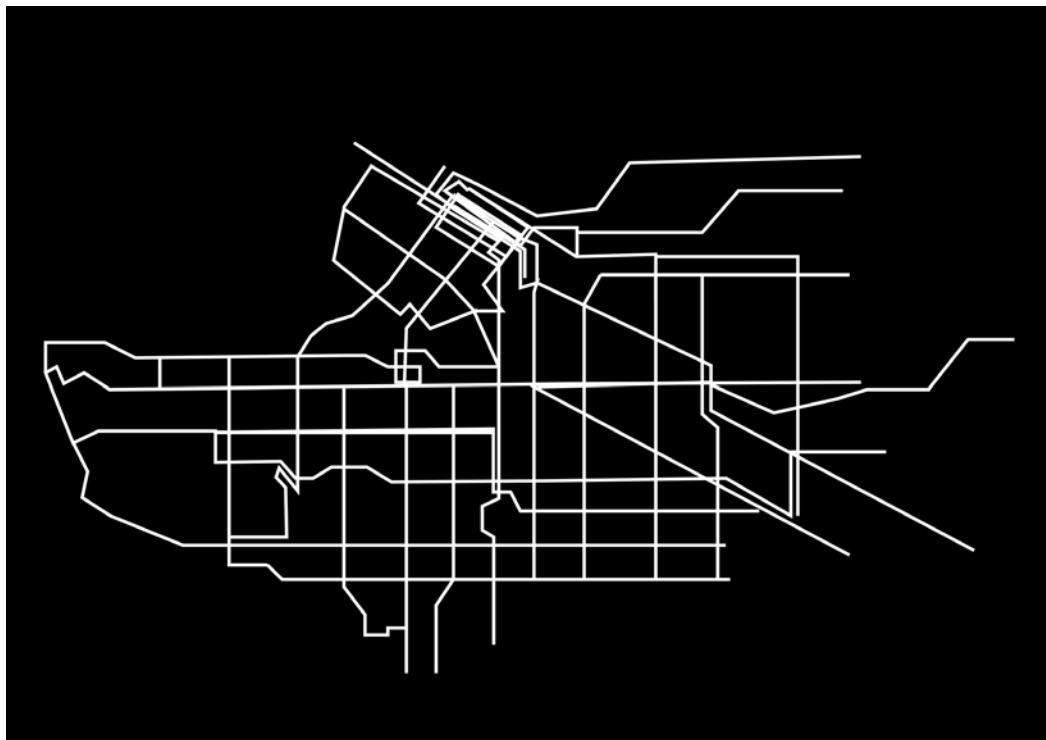
The body, flesh, that represents our identity and who we are
A self portrait
As vivid as the lines of our fingerprints
Colours? Too symbolic
They describe who we are!
Do they?!
They unveil our identity!
Such an absurd understanding of being
Uh!
Lost in the labyrinth of being
We, human beings, uh!
Incapable of understanding who, or what, we are!
Lost in the definitions of BEING!

Portraits
Ink on paper
2017



My interest in the materiality of art and having a minimalist lifestyle ubiquitous to Western millennial culture has shifted my practice in a new direction, which has led me to experiment with minimalist sculpture-making. My recent work *Cube in Cube* (2017) examines the simplicity of the cube, while its transparency reveals the work's inner structure. This piece examines the interchangeability of matter, as the fluid inside the cube simulates the outer medium – epoxy resin – when it was in its liquid state. *Cube in Cube* emphasizes how liquid traces remain unaltered despite other liquid particles transforming into a solid state, which evokes the beauty of transformation by minimized explanation. In reference to Hans Haacke's *Condensation Cube* (1965), which visualizes the cyclical process of condensation and evaporation over time in a Plexiglas cube. My work prevents the transition between states of matter, as the inner cube is frozen in an unstable position, while its interior liquid can never evaporate. *Cube in Cube* thus uses its minimalist form to evoke a continual sense of stabilization and timelessness. Its transparent mediums and simple shape encapsulate the minimalist ethos and my minimalist lifestyle.

Cube in Cube
Resin, plastic, and oil
2017



While I work in a variety of methods and media, communication design has become my main focus this year. Through this medium, I create simplified structures that surpass the organic materials in the “real world” that they are representing using both text and graphic media. My background in marketing and digital advertising permeates throughout this medium, which permits me to create imagery that, through a psychogeographic lens, simultaneously deconstructs and reconstructs my perception of the world.

My work therefore directly approaches how we perceive, navigate, and ultimately infiltrate space, and how these engagements generate problematic social structures. My relationship with digital design in respect to my artistic practice is a reflection of my own physical and social navigation within Vancouver’s geography. Within communicative design and my background in advertising, I reconstruct the space I occupy, break it down, and “market” it to my audience.

Vancity
Digital design
2017

In the process of finding a balance / I enjoy finding parallels
between (sometimes conflicting) interests of

Logical and Non-Linear Thinking
Design and Contemporary Art
Cognitive Systems and Visual Art

As someone on the shy side I make art, which means
I dislike the idea of others getting but, I'm also trying to get others
inside my head, to understand what's
it makes me uncomfortable, in my mind.

Research in psychology suggests that hemispheric dominance (left-brained versus right-brained) is a misconception, though it is one that persists. Studies of brain-activation scans and split-brain patients suggests an integrated network with individual variations. Finding new links and patterns among seemingly unrelated pieces of information while considering the whole is what I consider in my art practice.



The Studio
Foam, balsa wood, video
2017



Through my artistic practice, I look at topics that relate to spirit, memory, and motherhood. I feel that, being a First Nations female artist, I relate to the “spirit,” and I believe that art has a way to channel that spirit. It is our subconscious coming to terms with reality. We need to no longer imagine; we can have a physical representation of it. I believe that the spirit and materiality are in conversation in my work, and that I can embody and unmask the spirit through the negotiation of motherhood. For I cannot claim the role of mother without opposition.

Ghost Net (Turtle Island Series)
Rope, twine, and acrylic
2017



I am interested in materializing the psycho-logical concept of dream analysis and interpretation. In particular, I focus on the conscious and unconscious levels of the brain, dealing with my own memory and interpreting dreams from my perspective. Working in the form of thread installation – chiefly, colourful threads stretched out across space to create different patterns surrounded by the meshwork – I seek to create a dialogue between the perspectival space (brain structure) and the metaphoric representation of all interconnected living things within the dream. Working in the technique of acrylic pour painting, I seek to recreate the fluidity and amorphousness of the dream.

Dream Catcher
Installation with threads
2017



The primary focus of my practice is mixing feminist theory and ideology into the analysis of female characters, and feminine portrayals in video games. More specifically, I analyze these characterizations in relation to the presentations of these coded characters in history, and their relations to divinity, she-devils, and potential. Regardless of whether or not I'm working in my mediums of comfort – watercolour and acrylic – presenting them in a traditional form of media is key, as it acts as a relation to the history of female figural painting. Furthermore, my work functions to unite the digital with more traditional methods of representation – which also intersects with the history of female representation in the modern age of contemporary art.

Morrigan's Bliss
Acrylic on canvas and paper
2017



You see, season three is a great reason to forget all about reason itself – it is the season to seize on to letting reality go, to me fealty is no more unbelievable than any double cream double sugar extra whip macchiato shot – and you can do it all from home, there's no going, we're all showing that the buzz is no more than as it does, sure he runs, we all run from once upon a time towards once upon a – it's bad I know but what does that show I'm just having uhh, I'm used to distraction retraction and dissatisfaction, much better to be caught in all the action, no divide and faction best stifle your reaction, who knows watching he knows catching through backyardtelescopes, there's periscopes for all, seeing and believing, these mirrors keep deceiving, coping with make-believing, why's there two moons there but I've got three – superstition permeates like sedition, with permission procreates nothing but substrates of great editions of issues, twisting itself, rewinding.

Untitled (Work in Progress)
Plastic bags and vegetable oil
2018



Along with the traditional practice of acrylic painting and pencil drawing, I experiment with materials – such as felt, yarn, and Vaseline – that are traditionally used for crafts rather than for the fine arts. My installations embody concepts surrounding transitions in culture and emotions that are affected by globalization, immigration, and education.

My interest in these concepts arises from my experience in both Chinese and Canadian cultures, primarily within their educational systems. I have often felt a disassociation due to different expectations imposed on me by both cultures. As a result, my work is informed by my suspended state of being amid the transitional movement between the East and the West. My work's expression relies upon the viewer's own perspective, whose phenomenological engagement will question and ultimately determine the manner in which the installation's materiality and form have been manipulated to their final, present state.

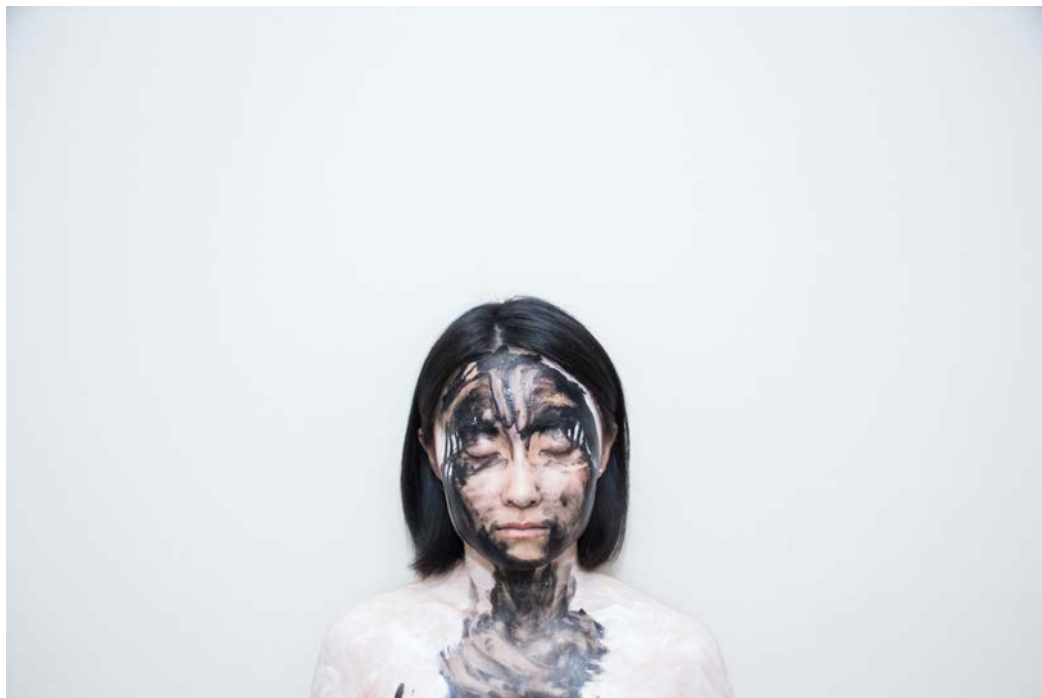
Untitled
Felt, yarn, and books
2017



My artistic practice is based on my previous experiences in China, revolving around themes such as memory, self-identity, and Chinese social and political issues, such as the truth behind the harbour explosion in Tianjin, China, in 2015. After moving to Canada, I found out that the educational environment in Canada is more focused on concepts, which is totally different than in China. Therefore, I decided to not only focus on techniques, but also concepts. For example, I changed the mediums I work with, from two-dimensional charcoal drawing and oil painting to three-dimensional wire, Styrofoam sculpture, and resin installations. I also repurposed Chinese gunpowder for my art practice. Due to the limitations of my living space, I cannot make large-scale sculptures or installations, therefore, after I graduate, my practice will address these more.

Behind the Scene

Chinese gunpowder and charcoal on canvas
2017



Ketty Zhang works with installation, printed matter, and digital media to explore her interest in diaspora, which is rooted in her immigration to Canada at the age of fourteen. As a result, themes of (mis)translation, language, media, and the shaping of individuals by technology (and vice-versa) can be found in her work. Her artistic practice relies heavily on researching how to activate, amplify, and intervene with existing discourses around everyday objects in critical and playful ways. Central to Zhang's work is the use of readymades: she combines fire cups, newspaper, MP3 players, makeup, and other materials from consumerist culture, with the intention to invite discussions on diasporic experiences from historic, contemporary, collective, and personal perspectives. Zhang's work has been exhibited at the Surrey Art Gallery, Vancouver Art Book Fair, HiVE, and Minibar (Stockholm).

True Colours
Inkjet prints
2017

This catalogue coincides with and supplements the 2018 University of British Columbia Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Arts Visual Art Graduating Exhibition, held in the Audain Art Centre from April 19 to 26.

Curated by the 2018 class of VISA 475.

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all parents, guardians, partners, colleagues, faculty, and staff who have encouragingly guided us in our journey so far. Thank you to the Department of Art History, Visual Art and Theory, the Faculty of Arts, and the University of British Columbia for helping us realize this exhibition.

ahva
ART HISTORY + VISUAL ART + THEORY



THE UNIVERSITY
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

