

READY TO BOLT

2023 MFA THESIS EXHIBITION

Annual exhibition support is provided by Gale and Dave Beckett, Belflex and Jason McCaw, Barbara Weston Sasser and Carol Weston Roberts, Ronnie and John Shore, Helen and Brian Heekin, Barbara Myers Gand the generous contributors to the CAC Exhibition Fund.

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March 3 – April 2, 2023

Level 2, Lower

Ready To Bolt

The 2023 MFA Thesis Exhibition, Ready to Bolt, features work by five emerging artists from Miami University and the College of Design, Architecture, Art, and Planning at the University of Cincinnati. The work on view features the culmination of years of artistic research in media ranging from painting and sculpture to photography and video. Harris Martinson and James McKenna use material and painterly symbolism to explore existential questions related to the meaning of life and personal freedoms. Glover Marfo draws from African vernacular design traditions to construct wearables that comment on universal gender and economic inequalities. Baylee Schmitt and An Wang's weavings and photographs examine the intangible nature of memory, highlighting the transient nature of everyday life. Together, the works on view provide a snapshot of the concepts and practices being pioneered by some of Cincinnati's most ambitious and up-and-coming artistic voices.

The exhibition is organized by the Contemporary Arts Center, in partnership with Miami University and the University of Cincinnati.

Miami University Studio Art Faculty

Amanda Alexander
Joel Armor
Andrew Au
Joomi Chung
Tracy Featherstone
Richard W. James
Rod Northcutt
Jennifer Purdum
Geoff Riggle
Robert Robbins
Dana Saulnier
Michael Stillion
Ann Taulbee
Roscoe Wilson
Jon Yamashiro

University of Cincinnati School of Art Fine Art Faculty

Mrinalini Aggarwal
Britni Bicknaver
Benjamin Britton
Denise Burge
Mark Harris
Matt Lynch
Neil Daigle Orians
John-David Richardson
Emil Robinson
Edward-Victor Sanchez
Jordan Tate
Jenny Ustick
Xia Zhang



"Defensive Mechanism"

Glover Marfo

Glover Marfo was born in Ghana, West Africa. He obtained his undergraduate B. A. degree in Integrated Rural Art and Industry in 2014 at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. He received his Master of Arts in Studio Art at Eastern Illinois University in Charleston, Illinois in 2020. Currently, he is pursuing Master of Fine Arts at Miami University, Oxford Ohio. Additionally, he was a Residency artist at Penland School of Craft, Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts summer program at Miami University. His work has been exhibited at national and international venues including Table Art Center, Charleston, Illinois; Leeds Gallery, Richmond, Indiana; Adornix Gallery, New York; Hiestand Gallery, Oxford, Ohio, Eastern Illinois University’s Gallery 1910, Charleston, Illinois; Obelisk Home Gallery, Missouri; Manifest Gallery, Cincinnati, Ohio, Contemporary Art Gallery Beijing China; Penland School of Craft Gallery, Arrowmont School of Art and Crafts and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. He has also been included in publications such as the Blue Room Magazine, SNAG Metalsmithing Magazine, Jewelry Activist, Fancythis2020 rings, Trends Vision, Here and Now Magazine, and Danaca Design, Battle of Rings.



"Earthbound"

James McKenna

As an undergraduate James McKenna studied metalsmithing, making both finely crafted objects and coarse works reminiscent of artifacts from an earlier age. This breadth of capability remains evident in James’s sensitivity to form, surface, space, and light in every medium. James experiments constantly, investigating new materials, new techniques, new activities. He has begun using AI to shape and refine concepts. The fundamental experiences of mortality and transience are James McKenna’s major themes. He draws largely from his own experience, manifesting the universal through expression of the individual. James’s work is in private collections in New York, San Francisco, Phoenix, and Cincinnati.



"The Dip"

Harris Martinson
Oil on canvas

Harris Martinson’s work in painting, drawing, and sculpture is characterized by its emotional intensity and theological themes of attachment, light, and presence. He often makes use of simple and direct compositions that include the figure in moments of isolation and abandonment, but also in triumph and exaltation. He holds additional degrees from The University of Iowa (BA, History) and The George Washington University (MBA).



"Oak Chair 3"

Yarn, Wire
Baylee Schmitt

Baylee Schmitt is an emerging artist from West Unity, Ohio, working with fiber in two and three dimensions. She is currently pursuing her MFA at Miami University following a BA in pre-art therapy and psychology at the University of Saint Francis. Schmitt has exhibited work in the Northern Illinois University Art Museum, Miami University's own Hiestand Galleries, and in the Runyan Center at Earlham College with upcoming 2023 solo exhibitions scheduled in Toledo, Ohio, and Lexington, Kentucky.



"The Fog of Oblivion"

An Wang

An Wang is from Urumqi, China, the farthest city from all the oceans in the world. Influenced by his father, he began to learn photography at an early age. He has many years of working experience as a professional photographer and has his own photography team and studio in China. Before coming to the United States, An received his bachelor's degree in economics from Xinjiang Agricultural University. Now, An has extended his artistic explorations to more fields, such as video and performance art. He is keen to mix photography with other mediums of art and explore more possibilities of contemporary photography. His work has been exhibited in the Runyan Center at Earlham College, and in the Hiestand Galleries at Miami University.