



30 UNDER THIRTY-ISH EXHIBITION

AUGUST 10 - SEPTEMBER 4, 2023

MAIA ESPEJO COCHRANE



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Maia Espejo Cochrane is a ceramicist and visual artist from Fredericton, New Brunswick, living in Halifax, Nova Scotia. She graduated from the New Brunswick College of Craft and Design in 2021 with a diploma in Ceramics. It was there that she began creating functional lines of pottery, which are largely inspired by her innate connection to her Mexican-indigenous heritage, and specifically Mayan culture and history.

She has sold her work at a select number of shops and galleries in New Brunswick. Notably, she has exhibited at McBeathe Art Gallery in Kingslanding, Prince William, Andrew and Laura McCain Gallery in Florenceville-Bristol and Gallery on Queen in Fredericton. In 2021, Maia also partnered with the Metepenagiac Heritage Park in Red Bank, NB to create a custom line of ceramics honoring their Mi'kmaq heritage and culture; the pieces were sold in their park gift shop. Through her ceramics and mixed media works, Maia hopes to express honor, beauty, gratitude to the land, and the interconnectedness of life. Now pursuing a BFA with a Major in Interdisciplinary Arts at NSCAD University, Maia is set to graduate in May 2024.



Artist Statement

My current work follows the deep tendril connections that I have to my Latin roots. Through the medium of clay, I am exploring the interconnectedness of land, identity, memory, dislocation and place. I spent many summers as a child in Belize and the Yucatan Peninsula. Located at the tip of Mexico, this place is home to some of the most beautiful, fascinating plants in the world, some that have grown there for centuries, others that have been brought over and cultivated over time. The ancient Maya used many of these plants for healing or for ceremony; this ancestral knowledge has been passed down generationally and is still practiced by many living in the area today. Through this work, I seek to highlight the beauty and cultural significance these plants represent. Finally, this body of work is a testament to my growing connection to the land of my ancestors and their depth of knowledge.

ALYSSA CONRAD



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Liverpool, NS based illustrator & traditional artist, and current NSCAD University student, Alyssa Conrad's series of works tend to hold a more surrealist feel to them, in addition with painterly style when working with softer aqueous mediums. In combination with these aspects, they start their process off by going through snippets of poetry or old short stories from children's literature, taking time to reflect and sit with their purpose and how their imagination plays out the written language visually.

Alyssa has previously created a set of 4 illustrations for a book cover for the Native Council of Nova Scotia student handbook, worked alongside international artist and painter Andre Haines to build their portfolio for university, and took part in NSCAD University's Sculpture Open House in Winter 2022 with their own plaster carving and installation.

Through illustrations and aqueous mediums Alyssa strives to capture images of childhood nostalgia, whether that be through fragmentations pieced together with new and old, or by adding fantastical imagery. Alyssa's inspirations come from Finnish author and painter Tove Jansson, as well as author and illustrator Maurice Sendak with their use of line work and creation of visual narrative.



Artist Statement

While attending university my thoughts and processes have been taken over by my inner child with childhood wonderment, building narrative, and the impressions left behind by the past, who was I and who am I now? What makes me... 'me', or how has nature vs nurture formed me internally as a being? My current art practice puts focus onto the use of fantastical, ethereal elements, vintage and new structures which reside surrounding my Maritime hometown of Liverpool, Nova Scotia and human figures to relay my thoughts visually. Prior research throughout my process comes from poetry pieces in relation to travel, home, or growth, as well as short stories from children's literature.

Whether it be on the dream-like transparency of the surface of yupo, or texturized tooth of watercolour paper, charcoal and water-soluble graphite are mediums which aid in encapsulating the softly sweet child-like nature of my illustrative narratives.

CLAIRE DRUMMOND



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Claire Drummond was born in Tio'tia:ke Montreal and is currently based in K'jipuktuk Halifax, where she recently completed an MFA in Painting and Drawing at NSCAD University. Before studying at NSCAD, she was almost entirely self-taught, though her mother taught her to paint when she was little. She previously completed an MA in Cultural Studies at McGill University, focusing on gender and performance in postwar film. She finished her MA longing to pursue painting full time, which led her to embark on an MFA as well as a lifelong career in creative practice. Her expertise in gender studies nevertheless informs her current practice, as well as her focus on the ways in which we can contemplate ongoing subjective and ecological crises through representations of the human figure. Claire's work is held in private collections locally and internationally.



Artist Statement


The entanglement of painting and motherhood is foundational to the artist's practice. Claire was taught to paint when she was little by her mother, Gail McGowan. Gail gave up her painting practice to raise Claire and her sister. The idea that one cannot be both an artist and a mother persists. Art Work Care Work presents an ongoing large-scale series of paintings of artist/m(others). This work is a protest against the systemic barriers that exist for artists who are also primary caregivers. The term "m(others)" encompasses both "mothers" and "others," including gender non-conforming and queer folks, who see themselves engaged in nurturing and sustaining life.

These paintings are deliberately unfinished while the figures are often depicted in multiple places at once in an effort to mirror the ways in which the conditions of maternal creativity are often of interruption and disruption. The titles of the paintings in the exhibition feature excerpts of interviews conducted with each subject in which we discuss the challenges of being an artist and a m(other) as well as the forms of systemic support that would make the art world more accessible to artist-parents. Art Work Care Work invites the viewer to reflect on the ways in which the cohabitation of art and care work can create space for a more caring vision of what it means to be an artist, as well as what it means to be human.

EMILY FLINN



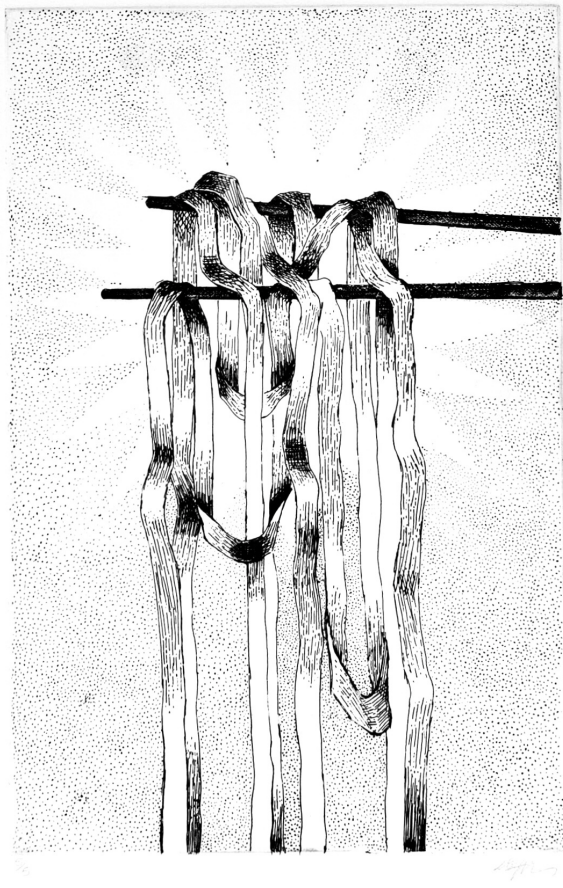
 emilyflinn.com

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Emily Flinn is a Vietnamese Canadian multi-disciplinary artist residing in Kijipuktuk (Halifax), NS. Primarily working in painting and printmaking mediums, Emily imbues her work with experiences of the liminality and ambiguity she feels from her cultural identity. She is currently studying at NSCAD University to earn a Bachelor of Fine Arts, majoring in Interdisciplinary Arts.

Artist Statement

Selected works from *Stomach Ache* — a collection of intaglio and lithograph prints — examine the artist's Vietnamese and Canadian heritage through food. Many Asian dishes are often highly scrutinized for their foreign status, but to many it is what they grew up with. To Flinn, however, Asian food, and all of its diasporic iterations sit in an in-between place. Flinn longs for these dishes — specifically the Vietnamese noodle soup, pho — to be a memory of home, but it is often a reminder of displacement and alienation from her Vietnamese heritage. Through these prints, Flinn reflects on her relationship to the dish: how the packaged and commodified version comforted her during childhood; the feeling of not quite belonging in a Vietnamese restaurant; and how she has learned to make it herself from scratch in adulthood.



MIKAYLA HALLIDAY



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Nova Scotia based artist, Mikayla Halliday, is an interdisciplinary artist with a focus in analog and historical photography. Born and raised in East Clifford NS, Halliday draws inspiration from her rural upbringings tying in themes of the historical archaeology, nostalgia, and memory. A NSCAD alumni, Halliday incorporates her experiences from her graduate studies in photography preservation to examine the intimate relationships people share with historical artifacts and documents both in and outside the archive.

First, using photography as a way to further understand her own emotions in relation to family memorabilia and nostalgia, Halliday now strives to deconstruct the formation of both individual and communal identity. She explores these themes of identity and place with the conception of photographs as objects through modern and historical photographic processes. By crossing aspects of digital and historical photo practices with her studies in collections, Halliday merges modern photo technology with aspects of analog materiality. Her studies in conservation, art history, and material, continue to direct her practice and inspire her gaze into what photography as an object can represent.



Artist Statement

Over Home is a series of photographic works that explores the relationships we share with artifacts of the everyday. Through the documentation process of family artifacts and memorabilia, Halliday strives to examine the sentimental narratives of everyday objects and the spaces they occupy. In addition, Halliday deconstructs personal feelings of nostalgia and pensive melancholy found within a collection of inherited family day books and photographs, as the future of a beloved family homestead becomes unclear.

Through the process of examining and reprinting these intimate objects, new emotional and spiritual family relationships are formed. This comforting yet distressing exercise creates a strengthened sense of individual and genealogical identity. This project has allowed Halliday to contemplate the role of family archives, while examining the human desire to feel connection to the past. This process allows Halliday to experience renewed feelings of closeness and understanding to those whose lives have inevitably shaped her own. Halliday finds herself conflicted, missing family that she has never met, and loving people she is inclined to forget.



Artist Statement

My inspiration for this artwork came from the angsty lived experience of teenage life. Teenagers feelings are often misunderstood. They are consuming, ever changing, and often lead to self isolation. Unintended and or intended, the act of evolving alone can be lonely.

As an Artist I found expressing these feelings of loneliness and angst through the creation of unique digital collages that held both a full and hollow presence to be comforting. The four images, titled "The Untitled Four" are a Collection of digital collages I made in high school, to creatively engage with my emotions. A set of four photos created in response to the angst that arose with aging.

I used my cell phone and a free digital app to blend together portraits and landscapes I took on my phone of myself and my friends while on our mental health walks. Creating this series helped me explore the feelings I had felt and heard my friends were also feeling. While having little access to art supplies and space, the ability to create these collages that didn't take up any physical space made me feel full. Being able to reflect on my emotions creatively on the go, helped me to feel empowered.

My collages were inspired by the light and darkness that teenage angst can hold. Today they symbolize the moment when I realized the importance of my art practice and started to create artwork that can spark joy in the midst of pain. Presenting these photos as a series seven years later feels like a powerful way to creatively call myself into community, and try something new.

KAWAMA KASUTU



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Zambian born Artist Kawama Kasutu, is a self taught multidisciplinary artist from Dartmouth NS. Kawama's mediums include Digital Collage, Poetry, Print Making and Soft Sculpture. The Inspiration in her work often blooms from within her communities, her passions for craftivism, community building and self expression. Some of her most recent work has focused on using art to take up space as a form of resistance.



MARITE KUUS

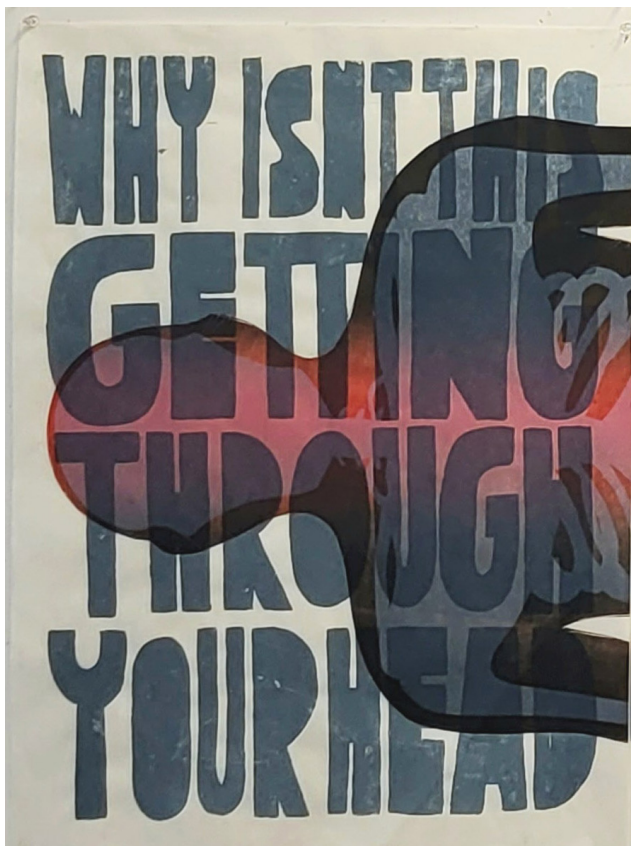


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Marite Kuus (she/her) is an artist and childcare worker. Originally from Estonia she is a newcomer to Canada and is now based in Kijipuktuk (Halifax, NS). Her artistic research explores the mundane through experiments with domestic materials on a quest to romanticise the unremarkable. Marite is also co-curator of the artist-run project Galerie Cecile, based in Kijipuktuk. Most recently she presented MEANDER, an interactive labyrinth, as part of Macro Digitals at Eastern Front Theatre in Kijipuktuk.





Artist Statement

Body is a recreation of a simpler work made in January of 2021. This original work employed similar themes however the content was not explored to its fullest potential.

Spencer's experiences as a disabled student have followed her from childhood into adulthood and have become a common subject in her artwork. This piece displays comments made by teachers, trainers and mentors, all of which have heavily impacted Spencer's perception of herself. Spencer depicts a silhouette of her body, true to scale and demonstrates how these statements are difficult to shake as she feels they have settled deep in her bones. The overlapping of text over a skeletal form depicts the visuals of this feeling.

This work is very important to Spencer as it speaks to a critical topic in her art practice; the proper treatment of disabled people in educational spaces whether that be university, public education, apprenticeships and more. Many students have had similar or identical experiences to Spencer's and one of her goals is to encourage educators to be more aware of how they speak to their students.

MEG SPENCER

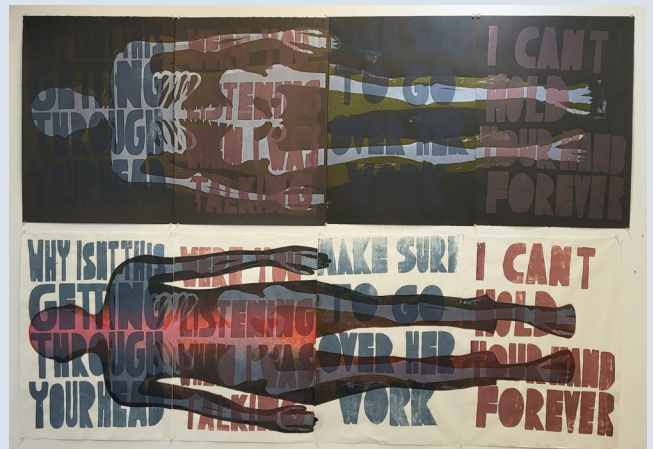


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Meg Spencer is a printmaker, oil painter and text artist from Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia. Her work has been shown in formal galleries in Halifax and the U.S. and can be seen in more informal settings such as murals and public installation. She is expected to graduate from the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in winter of 2024. Spencer is an amateur naturalist, birder and experienced camper. Her free time is spent exploring Atlantic Canada's numerous national and provincial parks.



COURTNEY TURNER



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Courtney Turner is an emerging contemporary artist, currently residing in the Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia. Turner's unique combination of abstract rug hooking and representational self-portraiture painting is a direct representation of the connections between her current self and her child self, her healing journey of living with chronic illness and memories of significant familial textiles that have brought her comfort throughout her life. Turner graduated from NSCAD University in 2020, majoring in Textiles & Fashion.



Artist Statement

My mixed media art reflects my healing process whilst living with mental and physical illness. By combining rug hooking and painting, I have found comforting and unique processes that feel truly authentic to me. In my art practice, I play back and forth between the consolatory and hard aspects of life. I pay tribute to soothing or nostalgic textiles, to offset the uncomfortable content that I might be working through. These tributes will appear in my artwork abstractly through specific textures, colours and/or pattern. Most of my paintings are representational self-portraits, as I find painting my physical body as the main subject to be grounding and a means to reconnect my mind and spirit with my body. I channel my inner child when I create as I feel that she is my most authentic self in her essence. Through channeling her, I am healing my inner child and working through shadow work. Within my art, you will see black graphic gestures, symbolic of my symptoms and ineffable feelings, inspired by black crayon scribbles I would repeatedly make as a toddler on colouring book pages. I start my process by writing a secret message to my inner child on the burlap with black crayon. The friction is indicative of how uncomfortable, yet cathartic it is to work through emotional responses to the hardships of life. I write these messages intuitively and hold the crayon as a child would. I then create an acrylic painting overtop, leaving some of the burlap exposed for rug hooking.

SELINA WAMSLEY



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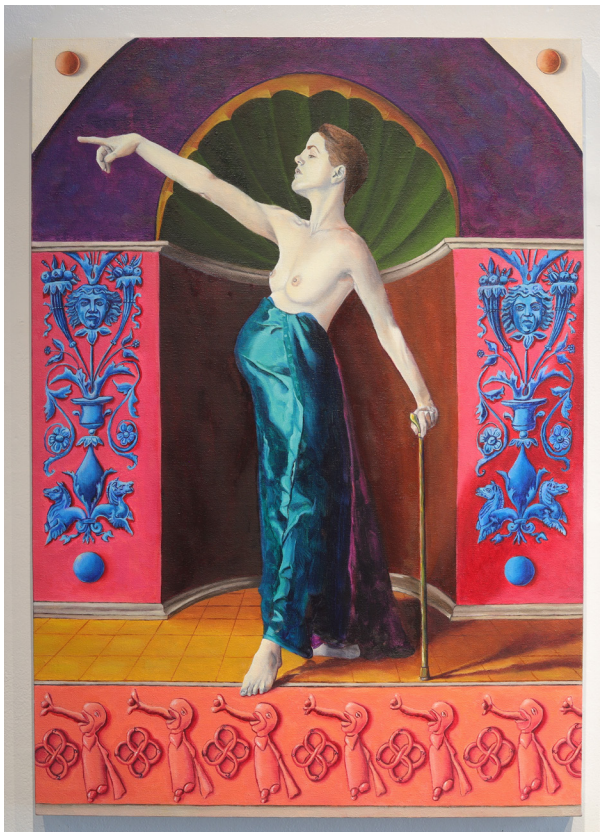
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Selina Wamsley (they/them) lives and works in Kijiktuk, Halifax. They work in oil painting to explore themes such as gender/sexuality, selfhood and spirituality. Currently they are finishing their final year at NSCAD as a mature student.

Artist Statement

“there is nothing within this universe of change that I can call myself for very long, nothing I can say I am that is the whole truth. In fact, much of the time we feel like we are pretending to be someone else simply by pretending to be anything at all.”

Who Dies? An Investigation of Conscious Living and Conscious Dying by Stephen Levine.





ABOUT THE CHESTER ART CENTRE

The Chester Art Centre (CAC) is a non-profit art gallery serving artists and the local community year-round. The centre hosts exhibitions in the gallery space that shows the work of local, national and international artists. In addition, the CAC offers classes and workshops taught by working professional artists creating in diverse mediums; weekly community programming; presents the annual Donald Curley Lecture Series, and offers an Artist-In-Residence program. The programming at the CAC encourages adults, youth and children to learn new skills, take risks and have fun. The centre works diligently in the Chester area to foster a strong arts community and strives to make art accessible to everyone, regardless of their background, needs, or financial means. Originally founded in 2007, the Chester Art Centre moved to its current home in 2013.

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