

Resilience: Myers Art Prize

Dates: Jan 18-Feb 12

Reception: Feb 12, 5-7pm

www.macyartgallery.com

TEACHERS COLLEGE
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Resilience:

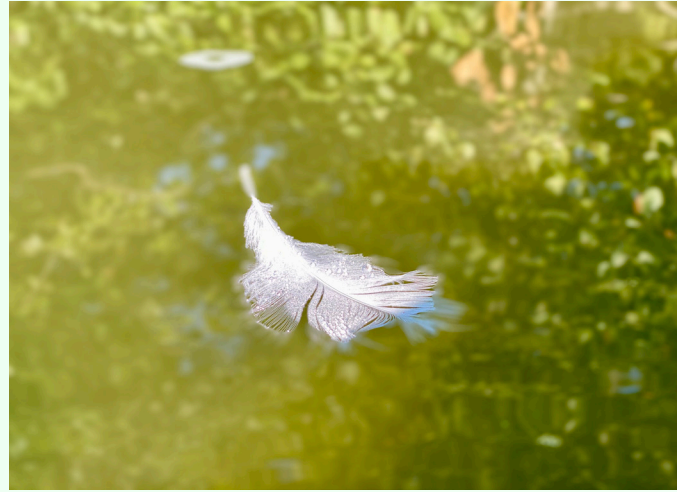
The Myers Art Prize Competition

The Myers Art Prize is an annual juried art competition open to all students in the Art and Art Education Program at Teachers College, Columbia University. The 2021 competition invited students to reflect on the practice of resilience during a time of social isolation and political unrest. We are honored that this year's juror was Dr. James Haywood Rolling, Jr.—a brilliant scholar-artist-educator-leader in arts education, and an alumnus of our program. Please join us in celebrating our Myers Prize winners and their thought-provoking creations, which will also become part of the Teachers College Art and Art Education Program's permanent collection.

Olga Hubard
Director and Associate Professor

Exhibition Catalog Statement Dr. James Haywood Rolling, Jr.

Here at the start of 2021, after one of the most turbulent and dangerous years in the history of our nation, the theme of this year's Myers Art Prize is resilience. According to its etymology, this word was originally a scientific term, taken from the Latin verb *salire*, to jump, and first used in English by the early scientific methodologist Francis Bacon. The 'resilience' of a material is its ability to return to its original shape after being compressed, stretched, or otherwise traumatized in its basic constitution. The works of art featured in this year's juried selections each summon the hope of just such a return to a recognizable form of our common humanity. Trauma undeniably changes things as we've known it and part of our contemporary experience now includes a once-in-a-century global pandemic. Nonetheless, our creativity continues to sustain us. Although our individual functioning and relations are sure to be irrevocably altered as we work to move forward once again as a civilization, our arts practices return us to our humanity even when it seems we've lost ourselves. We remain resilient. This exhibition offers evidence.



Ayelet Danielle Aldouby

The Ephemeral Lightness of Being

Digital photography

20 x 30 inches

2020

Nature is my lab but also my healer. It reminds me to be in the here and now. It was being in the moment that allowed me to embrace the miniscule miracles around me and notice a feather floating in the vast lake. Half-submerged, the feather stays afloat allowing the water drops to sparkle in the sun, offering a glimpse of hope. The fragility of the feather echoed my vulnerable state over not seeing loved ones during the pandemic. It is a testament to the inclusivity that nature holds and a potential promise that all shall pass. The photo was taken from the angle of the water and required numerous takes to capture the reflection in the lake as well as the tilted submersion of the feather. The lake serves as background in an attempt to create a topographical map with multitudes of green to accentuate the feather's white. My work focuses on 'states of matter' in an attempt to capture change and the process of becoming another. By juxtaposing materials, I highlight the focal object: The translucency and lightness of the feather set against the depth and heaviness of the liquid, the dry floating on the wet, the permanent versus the ephemeral. It is in the embrace of the inevitability of change that things start shifting and resilience sets in.

Stephanie Jenn Boggs

This Mask Manifesto

Writing/digital media

16 x 24 inches

2020

As an interdisciplinary artist, every creation begins with an intimate manifesto. For this piece, I chose to express myself through my first artistic love- written words. "this mask manifesto" started with the following simple manifesto. Today let me not hide behind this mask, but feel the fullness of knowing me. There are unfortunate burdens that many knowing Black bodies carry and hide. And as we navigate life, in many moments and many spaces, this is difficult. This piece speaks to these burdens and the profound burden of hiding You. This piece also speaks to an often quiet resilience and an often unspoken coping mechanism.

mask| the preferred covering for dark scars- the residual affliction(s) and lasting burden(s) of racially motivated trauma, microaggressions, macroaggressions, generational depression, self-hate, inferiority, suppressed anger, and extinguished joy.



Uisuk Byeon

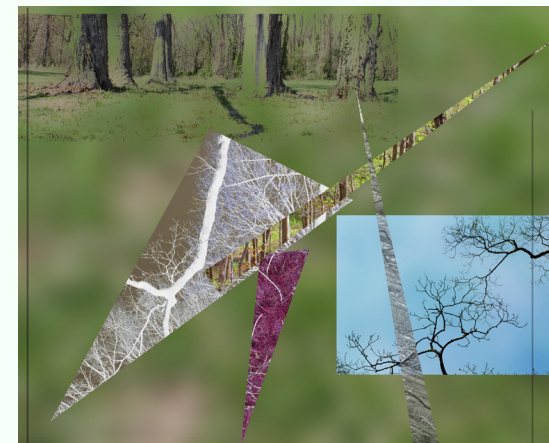
Emerged 1, Emerged 2

Acrylic paint on canvas

20 x 20 inches

2020

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, I had to move back to Korea from New Jersey in April 2020. As a student, artist, mom, and wife, my life had to adjust to a new isolated environment. This summer, I made this new series of paintings having vivid color and a cracked pattern. I created this artwork in a basement where I usually do not work, but this was the only available space to make paintings in a new place. Generally, paint materiality plays an essential role in my artistic practice. I have made artworks by interacting with paint materiality since 2008. I am interested in exploring how and what a material itself can do to create a visual phenomenon. This approach has started from my cultural background. To describe work development, I pour paints on canvas and let it dry on the floor. As the paint dries, the cracks are created naturally. The environmental elements such as temperature and humidity affect drying time, affecting the cracked pattern's designs and conditions. The basement is generally very humid in the summer. Thus, I struggled with controlling the humidity. I cannot control the cracked pattern's exact shape, which is the part that I like. I reflect on my thought that I cannot control my life. The vivid color came from the flowers of a little garden of my parents-in-law's house. Just looking at nature, the flower itself gives so much comfort and happiness during this difficult time.



Safia Fatimi

Pieced Spaces

Digital ink jet print

11 x 14 inches

2020

Photography has been a way for me to connect with the places that I encounter, especially now. Taking excursions to various "safe spaces" outdoors and photographing them during this pandemic helps me to memorialize a specific location that I visit during this challenging period of isolation. Capturing various angles, viewpoints, and distances from a particular environment allows me to study that very space and understand what draws me to it in the first place. Light, pattern, architectural details, and color are a few of the features that attract me to document a certain environment. Taking these spaces apart through the individual images and then putting them back together in a fragmented way re-connects me to that space but also acknowledges that we are in a time that does not make sense for a variety of reasons. The negative spaces and broken quality that the final montages have connect with the feelings of seclusion, frustration, and confusion that I have encountered during this challenging period. Continuing to create art helps me to resolve, communicate, and attempt to understand the state of our world at the moment and my place in it. This series of Pieced Spaces (I plan to make a total of thirty) both documents and tries to piece together this disjointed time we are all facing.



Nathaniel Garcia

Gnat's Long Walk

Digital video

Duration: 4:02

2020

My character is named Dr. Gnat. He's a Mr. Bean type of character who is an ethnobotanist and a professor of anthropology. He is interested in the native uses of plants, especially psychotropics and he gets into many adventures discovering these plants. I have developed many small videos of Dr. Gnat. Many times, improbable events occur and it is unclear what is real and what is an illusion. Things are not what they seem in Gnat's world.



Kelly Huang

Resilience in Nature

Digital media

18 x 18 inches

2020

Natural evolution has explored all the possibilities of creation in order to survive. This project is about reimagining art's possibilities by repurposing materials and re-presenting nature, which is the way I tackle resilience in my work. I used paper shreds previously created and colored them with acrylic and mixed them with a color pouring solution, then layered them gently on one of my previous canvas paintings. The whole process is about layering and rejuvenating the work by referencing the resilient mechanism of nature. The paper shreds reflect the reality of decay and tragedy. The scenery and the ground were developed in my earlier painting on canvas. Through building new artwork, the way I repurposed it reflects the phase of restoration and recovery. Finally, I use AI technology, which parallels the way nature and technology work together to mix creative colors with old materials. This project entails a fusion of conventional art, craftsmanship, and technology, so I would love to investigate the balance between physical materials and emerging technologies in our environment. I am creating a project that has never existed before, so it's been quite challenging to deal with unconventional art forms by using a combination of traditional materials and modern technology in this piece. But after lots of studies and tests, I am glad that I worked it out. I come with a background of being a visual artist in New York, so I'm eventually finding ways to fit in technological advancements alongside my conventional materials.

Grace Ludmer

What You Eat Is You

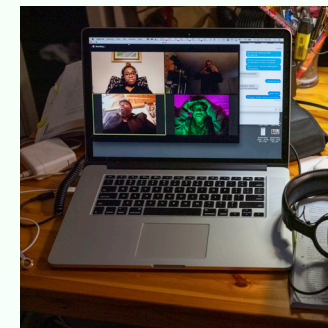
Digital illustrations printed on archival paper

16 x 18 inches (48 drawings)

6 x 6 inches (6 drawings)

2020

Inspiration for my project, What You Eat Is You, came in the form of a Tweet, which read, "Your quarantine nickname is how you feel right now + the last thing you ate out of the cupboard." I was feeling bored and eating goldfish crackers, and so I thought to myself, "I am a bored goldfish." Amused by the imagery this nickname evoked, I sketched it on my iPad. The drawing was both amusing and unexpectedly touching: the goldfish, relieved of its forced smile, was given permission to hang its head. It felt a little more like me. I posted the prompt on my Instagram page with an offer to draw any nicknames that others posted. I also requested that participants make a donation to No Kid Hungry, a nonprofit that provides meals to children who lost access to free school lunches due to the shutdown. Requests came pouring in. I drew an anxious cookie, a battered tamari cracker, a worried string cheese. I enjoyed the opportunity to connect with longtime friends and also some strangers. Together, we confronted our emotional landscape in a way that felt safe, by transferring it onto something deeply comforting, like a slice of pepperoni pizza. The forty-eight drawings constitute a junk food aisle of our hopes and anxieties. They're a reminder that resilience takes on many forms. How did most of us get through the early days of COVID-19 lockdown? Feeling our feelings and eating some fig Newtons, day after day.



Eric Mason

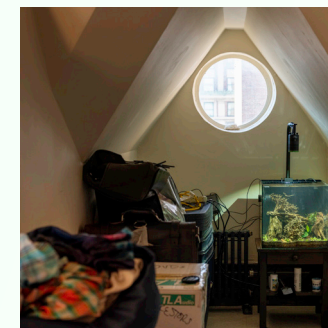
Diá a Diá

Photography

20 x 15 inches

2020

Times are different, I am different and the days seem to run together. The moments move faster than normal but it feels like less gets done. This imagery reflects the fragmented steps of the days as they pass from 1 to 8 days later in a blur. They just seem to pass. The world is on view from my vantage point and it is unfamiliar on both ends, both perspectives. Everything is through the window that has always been discomfoting. As I try to piece the fragments together I strive to make the most of the time and this is the succession. Diá a Diá...





Carina Maye

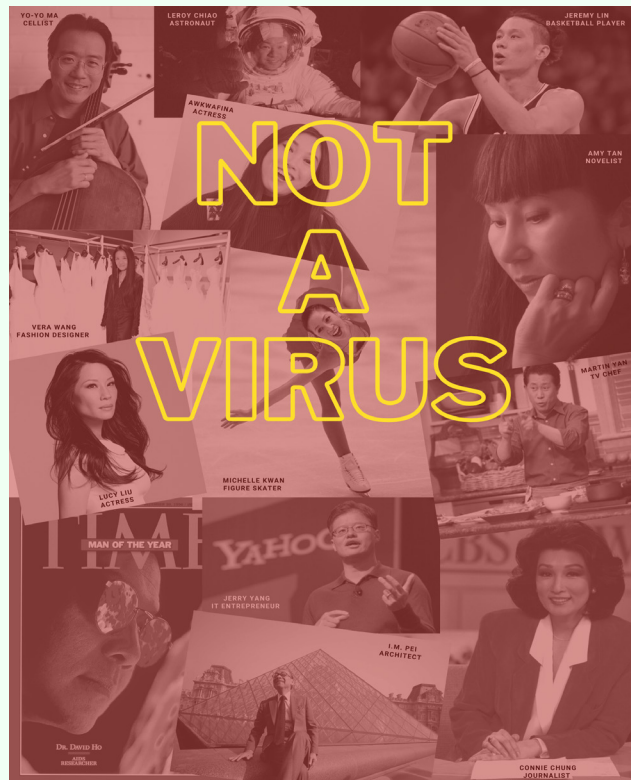
Black. I Might Be 34 (1-3)

Digital photograph on premium luster paper

11 x 17 inches

2020

Our shift online caused a sacred and personal place to become public. Adult learners and professionals were forced to manage their insecurities of revealing their homes. People on social media comedically tried to make light of our common struggle to find that quiet space. The right area with the least number of objects and distractions in our screen backgrounds to satisfy our peers, instructors, or superiors. Black. I Might Be 34 is born out of a photo series that captures the inside of the relative's homes as they are without staging their objects. This particular piece centers on my borrowed space, my on-campus room in New York, my new classroom. Far from home, I made my space into one to ground me. It was once the place that I could come into to recharge, remember who I am, where I'm from, where I'm trying to go and to remind myself that I have everything it takes to get there. My 329 sq. foot room is adorned with pictures of my family and friends celebrating one another. The wall is strategically decorated with a pennant that honors my family and our HBCU. As my chair travels the most basic ends of my room for lectures and conferences, I am anchored in love, history, and the constant visual reminder that I am Black in America. Shirley Chisholm's presidential campaign slogan rests in front of my largest African-American flag to remind me to push on, never change, or settle. It is under this flag and pennant I attend class. I can't negotiate my blackness, I won't. I'm Black (Period, Dot). But, I might be 34.



Larry Tung

Not a Virus

Digital collage

1728 x 2804 pixels

2020

Social justice has always been the core of my artistic practice. During the early stage of the pandemic, Donald Trump called the coronavirus "the Chinese virus" in an attempt to divert the public's attention to his administration's mishandling of the pandemic. His racist rhetoric immediately caused an upsurge of attacks on Asian Americans all over the country. This collage is to serve as a reminder that Asian Americans are valuable members of the American society and should not be a scape-goat for Trump's failure to contain the virus. I selected photos of 13 notable Chinese Americans who have made great contributions in their fields, ranging from AIDS research to sports to fashion and the arts. The text "Not a virus" is a direct response to Trump's vile blame-shifting. With this digital collage, I hope it will evoke the message that Asian Americans are equal partners in American society and should be free from discrimination and fear. They are Americans. Not a virus. The hate must stop.



Erika Vogt

Channel

Digital video

Duration: 8:00

2020

The video's title is Channel. The submitted excerpt is from a video that is approximately eight minutes long. It is a diaristic work as are my other videos. It comes out of my wanting to put different categories of artists video together and work through material in time in an embodied way. I had hoped to weave together political events that I would have attended and recorded in person this year if they happened like the Democratic National Convention in addition to the video that I recorded in the studio of drawings and other materials. I started shooting and gathering footage in my studio after I had surgery in 2019 when I had to wear a neck brace for a number of months, and I could not move very well. I have been collecting material slowly working with my cellphone, audio recording, and drawings. I started editing the video in September 2020. Newspapers have been a material for me as a way to look and think about time and images for my entire practice. In this video, I wanted to hand swipe through the headlines to record a sense of time since Trump was elected which I don't feel I have. The video excerpt only has headlines from before May 2020. The work fits into my practice in a number of ways such as the layering and animation. Although my work has taken a diaristic view of time, that idea has been in the background of the work while in this video, it is foregrounded.



Qianyu Zhou

Social Distancing

Air hardening clay

12 x 12 x 12 inches

2020

My artwork is created under the pandemic situation this year. Currently, everyone in Canada needs to wear masks and keep social distancing everywhere. So, I created this artwork, "social distancing", which represents this special year. Since the beginning of this year, masks have been my daily dress up. My inspiration is also from masks. I started to use plaster to cast my face. I failed four times due to a lack of sculpture experiences. Sometimes the plaster I mixed dry so fast, sometimes the plaster was too thin to crack. I made the successful casting mold in my fifth-time experiment. Then I used roller tools (my water bottle) to flat air hardening clay, then put it in the face cast mold. When the clay face mask is dry, use sandpaper to polish it. Since this mask idea pops up in my mind, I tried many materials. I think face cast is a great way to show my attitude to the social situation this year because it looks like a mask and has identity meanings behind it. Right now, Everyone needs to wear a mask for protection and keep social distancing every day. We cannot see people's whole face; the daily conversation becomes much more challenging than before. People find it hard to understand the emotions of others. The color I chose for this artwork is all white. I think we lost so many colors in our life due to the COVID-19 Pandemic spreading. Furthermore, I used the mask band in my artwork. The mask bands represent the theme of this year: Resilience. If people wear the mask the whole day, the mask bands will protect our face and won't change the shape. In conclusion, the artwork "Social Distancing" represents my three wishes. I hope the pandemic will be controlled soon. I hope students will join the campus class soon. I hope everything will back to normal in the new year.

2021 Winners

Ayelet Danielle Aldouby

Stephanie Jenn Boggs

Uisuk Byeon

Safia Fatimi

Nathaniel Garcia

Kelly Huang

Grace Ludmer

Eric Mason

Carina Maye

Larry Tung

Erika Vogt

Qianyu Zhou

Teachers College, Columbia University | Program in Art and Art Education

Olga Hubard, Director | Carina Maye, Macy Art Gallery Coordinator

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Tel 212.678.3360 | **www.macyartgallery.com** | Mon–Thurs 11 AM–6 PM | Friday 11 AM–5 PM

Directions By Subway: #1 Train to Columbia University–116th Street

By Bus M4 & M104 on Broadway, M11 on Amsterdam Ave