

**TEACHERS COLLEGE**  
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

# REST, WONDER, AND MEMORY

MYERS ART PRIZE EXHIBITION

---

Jan 18 – Feb 4, 2023

**Macy Art Gallery**  
[www.macyartgallery.com](http://www.macyartgallery.com)



# 2023 Winners

---

Corey Allen

Aimée Ehrman

Hyunsoo Kim

Catherine Lan

Allyson Montana

Nisha Nair

Savannah Nielson

Ugo Onyewuchi

Robin Reczek

Jason Watson



# REST, WONDER, AND MEMORY

## Myers Art Prize 2023

**Olga Hubbard, Program Director and Associate Professor**

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 2023 competition invited student artists to reflect on the topics of *Rest, Wonder and Memory*. We are honored that this year's juror was Liz Christensen, an independent contemporary art curator with over two decades of experience managing a significant art collection, curating exhibitions, and collaborating on artist projects. Please join us in celebrating our Myers Prize winners and their compelling creations, which will also become part of the Teachers College Art and Art Education Program's permanent collection.

## Juror's Statement

**Liz Christensen**

The global pandemic altered our lives, but the potential to experience loss and beauty remains always present. Events or sights that stop us in our tracks or slowly linger may be transformative or fleeting, joyous or disturbing, inspirational or moving in ways yet unknown. Transposing this spectral territory into visual substance falls to the extraordinary realm of the arts.

Drawing upon personal experience, historical references, digital technology, the language of abstraction, spoken word, or storytelling hybrids incorporating the above, each of the candidates has conjured remarkable images and concepts related to the theme of *Rest, Wonder and Memory*. The variety of responses underscores the wide range of interests and diverse approaches that each has outlined in their statements.

As future teachers of art, its history and practice, encouraging students to expand their frames of critical thinking and experiment with new materials and concepts is paramount to learning. Growing artistically is a lifelong challenge, and the continual exchange of ideas and information defines both teaching and art's noble professions. By investigating one's own thoughts and capabilities, many surprising, enduring rewards can be found along the way in the creative process.

All these entrants have shown the courage to express their ideas, displayed keen observation and interpretive skills and each need be congratulated. The proposals that pushed furthest to this end and were most successfully realized have been awarded the 2023 Myers Art Prize.

*Liz Christensen is an independent curator and arts administrator. Her focus on contemporary art has led her to collaborations with a range of artists and diverse practices. For nearly twenty years she worked as a Senior Curator at Deutsche Bank in New York where she managed the collection, including acquisitions, organized numerous exhibitions and collaborated on individual artist projects for Frieze Art Fair. She earned her BFA from the University of New Mexico and an MFA from the University of Southern California.*

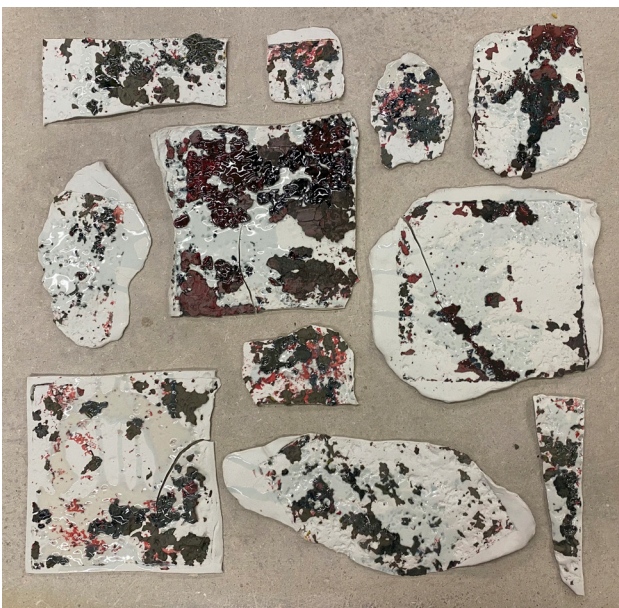


## Corey Allen

### *At Pont de l'Alma, 1997*

*Minky chenille, silver lamé yarn, polyester fiberfill, monk cloth, thread*  
36 x 28 x 10 inches  
2022

In response to this year's theme of Rest, Wonder, and Memory, I am submitting a piece from my project titled "double angel," which is an ongoing multimedia material exploration that charts a symbolic throughline between the spectacle of violence and fractured identity surrounding the very public death of Diana, Princess of Wales (1961-1997). Princess Diana's accident happened when I was five years old, and I constantly had nightmares of car crashes that drew from the computer-generated images of the event. As an adult interrogating this memory, I found the imagery of these nightmares perplexing since the lack of real-time documentation of the event forced media outlets to create countless 3D models and illustrative diagrams mimicking what may have happened in the tunnel. Ultimately, the terror I was responding to was a warped reflection of a recreation of a singular violent event all wrapped in the malleable encasement of memory. This piece, titled "At Pont de l'Alma, 1997," is an abstracted depiction of the crumpled automobile that remained after the extraction of the victims of the 1997 car accident. This sculptural piece is an oversized pillow I made from velvet that is almost identical to the fabric used in the commemorative Princess Diana Beanie Baby. The image on the pillow was made from metallic yarn that I repeatedly pierced through the velvet substrate by punch needle embroidery. This piece, and the body of work it is from, questions if commodification and commemoration can coexist, and how the reality of a violent event can become wildly distorted once filtered through a variety of mediums and social spheres over time.



## Aimée Ehrman

### *Grounding #1*

*Ceramics*  
Variable - approximately 24 inches x 24 inches  
2022

"We have moments in our lives that sometimes abruptly and without our consent arrest us in our paths. These moments can immediately place us in a space that is uncomfortable, unknown, and even unwanted. But these can also provide us space to slow down and engage our senses, to engage ourselves more fully and become present to that which is in front of us.

Finding myself thrown into one of these life moments, I began moving in what feels like slow motion. I noticed that I started examining my immediate surroundings in detail, out of both comfort and necessity. What started to come into sharp focus were the small things - the discarded paper napkin that dances in the wind, the bark on the tree as I walked by, the small colored leaf alone on a branch before it released for the fall... In front of TC, I started to notice a spot in the street and became fixated. It had a small fresh batch of tar that had been laid, patching up something cracked and broken, and giving strength for the new weight it would need to bear. I started taking the clay to this tar and made pressings and molds. I knew I needed to capture this, to record this, and create with this. I know not yet what will come of this need. This wall piece, *Grounding #1*, speaks to my exploration into the ways of navigating my new reality.





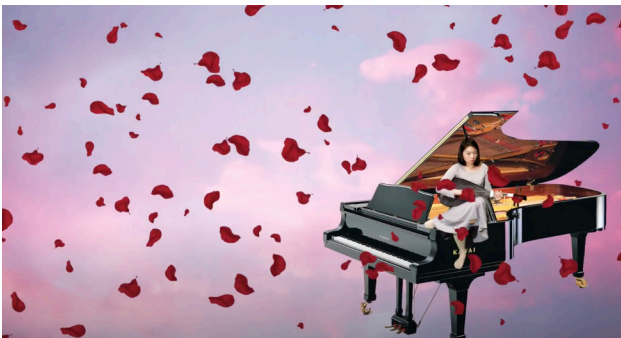
**Hyunsoo Kim**  
*Reimagining MoonJar*

*Mixed Media, Lasercutting*  
6.5 x 6.5 x 18.5 inches  
2022

Due to the flourishing of scholarly culture, Koreans of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910) valued modesty as a supreme virtue. Contrary to Europe during the Renaissance, which boasted of its wealth with splendid architecture and fashion, the display of wealth in Korea was taboo. Artisans therefore avoided dazzling decoration, placing a high value on maximizing the utilization of material property.

Drawn to the traditional moonjar’s modesty, roughness, asymmetry, and the beauty of curves, Kim’s Woven Moonjar Collection reimagines traditional inspiration through the eyes of a textile artist. Utilizing digital fabrication as a method of creation, clay is replaced by textiles and laser-cut pieces.

As a modern nomad, Kim had innumerable experiences moving heavy artworks and delicate porcelain from one continent to another, which gave rise to the idea of transportability.



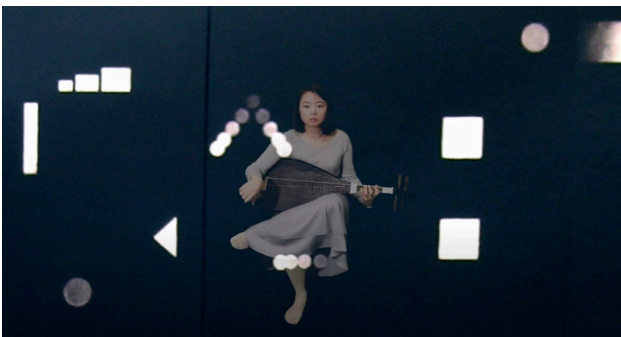
**Catherine Lan**  
*Putting One’s Grain of Salt*  
*(Mettre Son Grain de Sel)*

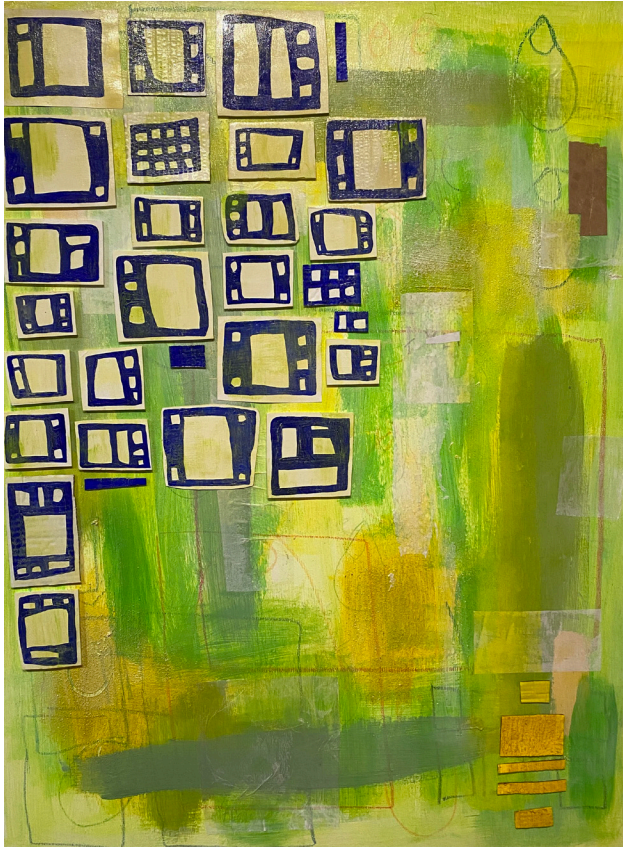
*Video with sound*  
3 minutes  
2022

Returning home is like departing from home, like a journey through a road movie. My wandering from one place to another was for study, but maybe I also longed for my cultural identity, for which art is my spiritual home. Born in Taiwan and raised in Australia, I have transitioned from nature and music into a digital realm that transposes my music to code. I begin this video with a painting by John Glover that expresses my nostalgia for my second home. As a young woman from Taiwan setting out on a journey to the West, my journey has an East-West component as well.

A classic musician by training, I incorporated white notations into the salt collage painting I created 16 years ago in Paris. Salt means speech in Chinese, and speech is music according to John Cage. I pose with the pipa, a traditional Chinese string instrument while playing electronic music that I composed, recorded, and dubbed. The idea of miming is influenced by my collaborative experience with other teaching artists who mime, dance, sing, and act.

As an idiom from the French language, Mettre Son Grain de Sel refers to the freedom of expression for everyone, the genius of Duchamp. Using dream-like music, I take the audience on a journey to find a common language through digital confetti that turns into a beautiful rain of rose petals - an impossible project that Christian Boltanski suggested but finally realized technologically in Motion and Final Cut Pro.





## Allyson Montana

### *Buried Story I*

*Acrylic paint, mixed media, sand*

2.5 ft. x 3.8 ft.

2022

#### **Storytelling**

We all think in stories. As an art history teacher, I have told the stories of others in ways that have benefitted me. I have defined myself, my art, my teaching, and my career on the unique stories of others.

Moving forward, I want to pause before assuming the role of primary storyteller. I hope to make space for others to tell their stories and to allow for multiple interpretations and ways of knowing. I hope to acknowledge the many ways narrative has been stolen throughout history in my teaching.

#### **A Good Story**

In this painting, I explore images from Catal Huyuk, a complex Neolithic archaeological site from Anatolia with a unique mural (photo included in application). In 1958, James Mellaart excavated the site and published that the mural was a map of the square dwellings of the city of Catal Huyuk and the nearby volcano, Hasaan Dag. This “first map in history” story is still prominently featured in Gardner’s *Art Through the Ages*, even after Mellaart was exposed as a fraud and a forger.

#### **Stories endure**

Faced with little information, we often assign narrative to the unknown. While this can be the realm of creativity and imagination, it can also be the source of great misunderstanding.

#### **Process**

To represent stratigraphy, I layered paint, media, and sand on canvas. Between layers I made marks and inscribed messages. The meaning of these messages is obscured by the materials and unremembered by me. The symbols from the mural at Catal Huyuk appear prominently to challenge the viewer to construct a narrative, and yet the real challenge lies not in telling stories.



## Nisha Nair

### *Parallel Processes*

*Repurposed plastic (1 gallon plastic water bottle) & Drawing*

*Sculptural work - 12 x 12 x 3.5 inches ; Drawing - 9 x 12 inches*

2022

Since 2019 I’ve been investigating the properties of prosaic objects that I encounter in the world as I seek to manipulate and transform them. Juxtaposed against my doctoral journey, these encounters with everyday objects, for me, have represented the act of perceiving things as they appear to be on the surface. While manipulating the materials parallels the acts of deconstructing received knowledge, reconfiguring, and constructing (and reconstructing) new knowledge in myriad ways. Through this process, all kinds of connections are made, layers revealed, and the possibilities embedded deep within, unfurled. The manipulated objects, in turn, reconstituted into a sculptural form, is analogous to my looking at things from a different perspective.

This artwork, created in the midst of my initial forays into dissertation terrain, filled with oscillating moments of euphoria and doubt, is part of my ongoing effort to remember and embrace the process while reconciling my artistic and intellectual pursuits.





## Savannah Nielson

### *Forgotten Film*

*Mixed Media*  
31 × 34 inches  
2022

I am infatuated with the way an image lays on fiber surfaces. This piece specifically was an investigation in efforts to combine the many techniques I've learned over time. I started by cutting up long yardage of handwoven fabric that used ikat weaving and dye techniques. I then hand-sewed the strips together to make one large composition. Next, I used cyanotype processes to add small, light image transfers of the film strips featured in the piece. I then enlarged one film strip and screen-printed it on one of the woven panels. Lastly, I cut out blocks of the weaving to create windows for the film.

My art practice references my understanding of memory and how I perceive intimate connections and personal experiences as time passes. Using traditional and contemporary textile-making in combination with photography, my work visually represents fading memories. My personal history is layered into the patterns, fibers, and photographs of each piece. The film sewn into the cut-outs of the piece depicts fleeting memory and my attempt to piece it all back together. The bits and pieces of the image that are blurred through the film of the substrate reference the loss of information as time passes and the bleeding cyanotypes of film strips and ikat patterns mimic how memories blend, making moments difficult to differentiate. My work attempts to create a feeling of familiar nostalgia and perhaps a bit of melancholy that the viewer can connect to their fleeting memories.”



## Ugochukwu Onyewuchi

### *For Abe (Triptych)*

*Photography*  
18 × 24 inches each  
2022

A pendulum in a clock helps it keep an accurate reading of time. But what is that reading of time was tied to a biochemical process, like decay? This piece, inspired by Sir Walter Scott's Monument Clock designed by W.F. Evans in 1850, seeks to reimagine our ways of knowing through timekeeping.

To build the clock, I cut down branches from a palm tree that was near my bedroom window in Nigeria. Using Ankara fabric purchased in Balogun market on a trip to Lagos, I wove an Igbo ekete (basket) from the leaves retrieved from the tree. I then visited a local craftsman who helped me build a 34 x 34 frame. A clock was nailed to the frame, and the ekete was connected to the pendulum. The movement of the pendulum exerts a force that rotates the basket, and the rotation of the basket equally exerts a force on the pendulum. This symbiotic relationship affects the pendulum's timekeeping. For example, the frequency of the force vibrations on the pendulum caused the clock to gain 2 seconds every 13 hours. Ironically, as the basket ages—changing in weight and color, it gains the timekeeper time, as it itself loses time.

Throughout July, I photographed the clock as it aged. On July 8, while photographing, news came that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was assassinated at 3:05 pm, in Japan. To honor his memory that day, at 3:05 pm, in Nigeria, I paused my day and photographed the clock for a minute. The clock and the rotating basket became a socio-culture document, linking our experiences across oceans and time that fateful day. Rest in power, Abe.



## Robin Reczek

### *Saves Me*

*Alcohol ink on polypropylene film*

*22 x 11.5 inches*

*2022*

Two years ago, I returned to graduate school. After 13 years of teaching, I was in need of a lifeline. I had become “just an art teacher,” no longer thinking of myself as an artist. It was in the Studio Practice for Art Educators program that I saw hope. Through my studies, I found a new medium (alcohol ink), a desire to create, and reestablished my independent artistic self. This specific work is part of a series I made during my favorite part of the program: the summer studios. After many hours in the ThingSpace, I learned how to use the vinyl cutter. This new technology provided a unique way of expressing my complicated relationship with teaching. The visual contrast of clean line text juxtaposed with free-flowing alcohol ink speaks for both sides of me. The text is my teaching side calling out to my artistic self. Despite its best effort, because the text is cut through the paper, no matter how hard the ink tries, it cannot fill the spaces created. “Saves me” is a plea to my own work to “be the one that saves me.”



## Jason Watson

### *Architectural Idols (1 & 2)*

*Ceramic*

*Two sculptures, 26 x 16 x 16 inches each*

*2022*

A key component of my studio practice is my ongoing life drawing practice. Aside from the pause of the past two pandemic years, I have kept the habit of drawing from live models at least once a week. I find observational figurative rendering both grounding in its meditative predictability and endlessly variable. When we observe live bodies in real space and time, we capture a living, breathing moment. The ephemeral is made concrete, passing gestures solidify into structure, and the studied body becomes as specific and complex as a building’s blueprint.

My recent experiments in clay led me to a different avenue of figurative exploration. I initially approached the material as a novice engineer, testing its strengths and tensions, how it might stand and support itself or crumble under its own weight. When I first thought of translating my life drawings into ceramic sculptures, I interpreted lines and charcoal smudges on the page as architectural structures in-the-round. Arms and legs became crossbeams and weight bearing columns; torsos suggested enclosed courtyards punctuated by windows and arches. This pair of golden idols function as architectural models of my drawing mindset; translations of bodies posing, little monuments to the marks that record them.



---

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

Olga Hubard, Director | Samantha Clay Reagan, Program Manager | Jennifer Ruth Hoyden, Gallery Coordinator  
Katherine Cheairs, Gallery Fellow | Larry Tung, Gallery Fellow | Carolina Rojas, Design Fellow

525 West 120th Street | New York, New York 10027 | Macy Hall 444

**Tel** 212.678.3360 | **www.macyartgallery.com** | Mon–Thurs 11 AM–4 PM | Friday by Appointment

**Directions** By Subway: #1 Train to Columbia University–116th Street  
By Bus M4 & M104 on Broadway, M11 on Amsterdam Ave