2019 – 2020

East Carolina University

School of Art and Design

Master of Fine Arts
ECU School of Art and Design is proud to be the home for our MFA students, representing diverse disciplines in creative research. They are innovative thinkers, distinguished makers, and global participants who understand the responsibility of interdisciplinary and civic engagement in defining our visual world. This publication captures their voice.

I would like to thank everyone who made this possible; the graduate students, BFA Graphic Design Seniors and their faculty mentors, the School of Art and Design, College of Fine Arts and Communication, and the Fine Arts Funding Board.

With gratitude,

Seo Eo
Graduate Program Director
SMACK OF JELLIES, 2019
Glazed ceramic, 2 ½” × 2 ½” × 6”– 4 ½” × 4 ½” × 10”

Julienne Beblo

Julienne Beblo is pursuing an MFA in Ceramics at East Carolina University. She has received a BS in Marine Science and a BA in Studio Art from the University of North Carolina Wilmington. She also completed a Master of Professional Science degree in Marine Conservation from the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. As a scientist, the numerous and dynamic interactions found in marine environments fascinate her and as an artist, the colors, forms, and textures are intriguing.

Julienne juxtaposes the precision of science with the organic forms and uncertainty associated with ceramics. Forming a piece on the wheel is dependent upon the physics of centripetal and centrifugal force, gravity, and the bonds formed between the particles. The fact that clay is naturally derived and reusable before being fired parallels the need for environmental understanding and sustainability. She enjoys working with this highly tactile medium that lends itself to three-dimensional forms. The natural world, particularly within the ocean, is multidimensional and dynamic. Ceramics is ideal for replication and portrayal of marine environments, organisms, and interactions.
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Adam Noah Berman

Adam Noah Berman is a nontraditional student that hails from Central Florida. He works in all methods of printmaking, including photographic printmaking. He got his BFA from the University of North Florida.

He is a chef by trade and considers printmaking and culinary arts related in many ways. He loves hiking, the water, most things outdoors and sandwiches.

FROST ASTER, 2019
Lithograph with collage, 22” × 30”
I make Prints to stay out of Jail. I gained my sobriety a few years ago and the main tool in keeping sober, for me, is printmaking. On this journey I started collecting things from outside the studio. Flowers, plants, and photographs. I was trying to record the feelings I had in these places. I started printing these things and learning about the flora. My goal is to help tell the story of my sobriety by sharing the serenity I find through printmaking in a form of Art Botany. I became, and I still am, intrigued by this process.

NEW FINDS, 2019
Cyanotype and color lithograph with chine-collé, 22" × 30"

PORTAL, 2019
Laser photo etching, 24" × 12"

DANDY LION, 2019
Photo and color lithographs with chine-collé, 22" × 30"

SWAMP SUNFLOWER, 2019
Lithograph with chine-collé, 22" × 30"
I am a photographer, student of life, and a lover of art. I always felt I was an artist at heart but had to experience other “things” in life before I could realize that dream. After spending many years in the financial services industry and subsequently retiring from my second career serving in the United States Army, I finally had my chance to fulfill that dream. I have come to realize those experiences, while not all pleasant, helped to shape me into who I am today, and ultimately helped to shape my art. I earned a Bachelor of Science in Economics from Longwood College in 1997, an Associate of Science in Photographic Technology from Saint Peter’s College, and I’m currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts at East Carolina University.

Josh Bigham
It is my personal feeling that photography and art in general is about storytelling. That story could be about a social issue such as abuse, homelessness, or Veteran’s issues. It may be about a memory that my subject is dealing with. Often times that subject is me and I use the work to tell the story of struggles I deal with in order to heal personally but also to raise awareness and hopefully allow others to see that they are not alone. That story may be remembering pieces of your past and smiling at them or learning from them. Sometimes, it is simply trying to tell the story of one’s individualism or passions. However, telling these stories isn’t always easy and my viewer may not read the same story in my work that I was attempting to portray and in my opinion that is okay. We do not all have the same experiences so if the viewer interprets the story a little different, they still interpret it and my goal is to affect them in some way. As long as that happens, I feel I was successful.
I, Peter Borsay, come from the American mid-west. My mother and father refuse to take responsibility for my current state. They say they did the best they could at the time. The old women in my father’s church claimed that I was cursed. But what does that really mean anymore when old superstitions have lost their power? I grew up stupid and bruised, cheating death a dozen times before thinking I’d figured it all out. I never learned how to do complex mathematical problems. I’m friendly to people and I try to act according to their customs. The trivial generation that I belonged to is still wandering in the wilderness. It makes me wonder. Will they ever start looking for the promised land? Because I was impressed by bugs bunny, monty python, comic book heroes and pink floyd my politic is culture. ‘Idiosyncratic’, which some will scoff at, but why do I care what they think anyway? They’ll bring you down, but only if you let them. I’m usually the best outward visual image of myself when well-rested, coffee insulated, wearing comfortable shoes and making things that please me – shamelessly individualistic. I wonder if I’ll ever know how much this curse has been a blessing.
In my work I find that the experience and process of printmaking plays a significant role; sketching, planning, preparing, printing and the end result of a physical print are all important factors of what I do. It’s very satisfying to go into the studio and create something that tells my story with visual imagery, and making prints is the most satisfying way for me to express my creative connection to the world. It’s not just about a finished print; the experience includes talking with other artists, working out problems and finding solutions, experimenting and the joy of being in the moment. Building a print with its multiple layers and observing the emergence of an image is tremendously satisfying.

The starting point for all of my work comes from the spontaneity of sketches and drawings that develop from my subconscious. This is the same automatic drawing style, or “surrealist automatism”, espoused by Austin Osman Spare and André Breton. Sometimes I draw directly to printing surfaces (matrix) so I can maintain the spontaneity of the original drawing without reproducing it. Other times I use digitally enhanced or printed elements to create the matrix. The subject matter for my prints is influenced by comic book art, graphic illustration, and mental images of past experiences. The endstate is to express the real functioning of my thoughts through pure psychic automatism.
Carolyn Buss is the owner, designer, and maker at Carolyn Buss Jewelry since its inception in 2007. Carolyn is a Greenville, NC transplant from Seattle, WA. In 2016, Carolyn and her husband relocated to Greenville, NC so that she could pursue her MFA degree in Metal Design at ECU; she graduated in Fall 2019. Carolyn has received awards for her jewelry making from the Edmonds Arts Festival Foundation in Washington state, and has been a recipient of several scholarships at ECU, particularly the Claire Armstrong Award and the Jenni K and John Satterfield Scholarships. She has taught beginning metals and enameling at ECU.
The radical act of self-love is one of the most important methods of resistance oppressed peoples can use today. I’m using self-portraiture and the creation of objects meant to be interacted with as a gateway to radical self-love. Fat women taking photos of their bodies and showing the world isn’t new; artists like Substantia Jones, Shoog McDaniel, and Tess Holliday among many, many others have been making such photography for over a decade. I hope to add a tactile and immersive dimension to this ongoing dialog.

My work highlights the beauty of bodily features typically seen as undesirable such as fat rolls, stretch marks, cellulite, café-au-lait spots, and varicose veins through both self-portraits on chiffon panels and the enameled copper bodies resting upon the pillows. The bodies on the pillows allow the viewer to interact with a symbol of fat bodies in a safe way, and allow the viewer to feel the texture of skin or cellulite, or to run your fingers over rolls and veins. The writing portion gives viewers the opportunity to add to a sticky-note conversation that has been initiated by me within the Jenkins Fine Arts building and online for over the period of a month.

I invite the viewer and participant to reflect on their own priorities with regards to self-love and how we give love to others, or who we withhold it from. My intention is that by experiencing this work, the viewer will find new ways to empathize with themselves and others.

**WANDERER, 2019**
Copper, vitreous enamel, mesh, thread, faux pearls, silicone, faux fur
Image Credit: Jenni Farrow

**SQUISH, 2019**
Copper, vitreous enamel, mesh, thread, faux pearls, silicone
Image Credit: Jenni Farrow

**VARICOSE VEINS, HELD, 2020**
Copper, vitreous enamel, mesh, thread, faux pearls, silicone
Image Credit: Jenni Farrow
Robin Carter is interested in locating the political utility within artistic activity. Whether employing the immediate strategies of creative activism or analyzing the hegemonic roles of cultural institutions, his desire to promote agency among the working class frames his aesthetic considerations.
All cultural productions are stand-ins for cultural aspirations.

These images are photographic reproductions of stand-ins for the neoliberal abduction of our educational institutions. The terms and conditions of this cultural capital hostage situation include a relentless accumulation of wealth and power for those at the top and an opportunity for poor and working subjects to rent what’s left of the commons.
Tim Christensen grew up under the big skies of the West looking at the ground. A passion for living things pulled him to get his PhD in Genetics from Cornell and become a Biology professor at East Carolina University. In the lab he studies the intricacies of DNA packaging. His well-practiced attention to the small and unnoticed bits and pieces of nature fills his walks through North Carolina. In pursuing his MFA in photography, he has explored historical methods including: Cyanotype, Gum Bichromate, Van Dyke, and wet plate collodion. He has also pushed the boundaries of digital photography in his work in astrophotography and the creation of micro-panoramas.
Tim Christensen’s work is driven by curiosity about the unseen and unappreciated bits of nature that surround everyone. He uses a full range of modern and historical photographic techniques to engage the viewer in conversations about what place nature has in our everyday walk through life. Inspiring curiosity and careful observation of the dynamic natural world that surrounds everyone is the overarching theme of his practice as an artist.
Lauren DelBrocco is from Rhode Island and received her BFA in Metalsmithing and Jewelry Design from Rhode Island College in 2018. In the Fall of 2019 she began her Metal Design Master of Fine Arts program at East Carolina University. She is determined to help other students grow while working as a Teaching Assistant in several departments at ECU, during her term as President of the Graduate Artist Forum and as Co-Chair of the Material Topics Symposium: Contemporary Clarity 20/20. When she’s not in the studio, she is either cooking or FaceTiming her dear family.

**ALZA 54MG: FOCUS, 2019**
Silver, brass, steel balls, lined paper, graphite, 2” × .75” × 1”
DelBrocco draws her inspiration from current events, first person stories, and her own experiences. In recent years she created work on substance and gun abuse and misuse and society’s misunderstanding of learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder. Currently DelBrocco is designing new pieces to reflect what she cherishes most in this world; family and food. As a shift in concept changes, her process of making stays clear. DelBrocco is a metalsmith and small object maker that believes to hold an object is to truly understand its objectness in the world. Through the use of small mechanisms and moving parts DelBrocco explains her ideas by allowing the viewer understand the information tactically.

**CURIOSITY,** 2019  
Dismantled handgun, silver, brass, acrylic glass, copper  
Box: 8” × 2” × 4”, Gun Piece: 6” × 1.5” × 1.25”

**DO YOU UNDERSTAND?**, 2019  
Wood, silver, brass, acrylic glass, enamel, steel balls, velvet pillow  
Necklace (pendants side by side): 4” × 22” × .75”  
Bowl: 5.25” × 3.5” × 5.25”
Briana Earl

Briana is currently a first-year graduate student at East Carolina University pursuing a master’s in photography. Briana grew up in eastern South Dakota and attained her bachelor’s degree in fine arts with a specialization in photography and a minor in art history at the University of South Dakota. Through her undergraduate career Briana found a love for history, alternative process, and digital methods. Her interest in gender and women’s studies has propelled her work and exploration of “women’s place” in relationship to history and contemporary understanding.
Through my work I became interested in the distortion of how we view women based on stereotypes, stigmas, and experiences. I was interested in hearing stories from other women about how they deal with many different subjects from gender, sex, feminisms, sexualization, objectification and other topics that relate to the “woman’s experience.” Many of stereotypes and perceptions of women are grounded in a long and deep history of patriarchy society. The perception of women through history and especially art history is also still affecting how we see, identify, and relate to gender today. Through my process I began to focus on how using a mix of alternative, historical, and digital processes and use these techniques to physically “blend” and explore these perceptions of women throughout time.

**DEPRESSION,** 2019  
Mordancage inkjet print, digital collage, 24” × 17”

**AREN’T YOU GLAD I DIDN’T SAY BANANA?**, 2018  
Bronze, 7” × 4”

**VOYEUR**, 2018  
Mixed media, 7” × 5”
I am a second year MFA student in Metalsmith and Jewelry Design at East Carolina University. My work was focused on enamel pieces and settings from past semesters. The inspiration of my works come from my personal experiences but are represented by objects from nature. I like to make flower as cloisonné techniques on the enamel piece as well as add how my perspectives from my experiences to my works. The setting of the enamel frames my experiences, objects go beyond the surface and also contain concepts and emotions. The colors I use represent my healing process. I used muted colors in the beginning that transform into brighter ones. This also represents my transformation to a resolved state of mind. As time goes by, I strive to pull myself away from unpleasant issues of my past and learn to connect with others. By completing this work, I am focusing on my current happiness and not the anxiety of the past or future.
The concept behind my work is about healing the process from my personal experiences. Metempsychosis and reincarnation have always been topics of interest to me. They help me reduce fear of death and I have learned death is not a final destination because lives are going to repeat in another modality. My work uses enamel with different moments of flowers as images. Cloisonné and china paint are my favorite methods to create with. I like to use several different pieces to make different statuses of flowers, from the germination period to the blooming moment until they die away. I use flowers to represent people’s lifetime: born, grown and passed away. I would like to make different cyclical enamel pieces to express the life cycle and reincarnation. I also use 3D printing as the frame to set enamel pieces. The material of the frame is a versatile plastic and it shows the contrast between fragile plastic with hard glass on metal.
Noelle Gunn

Noelle is a 2nd year Painting and Drawing MFA candidate at East Carolina University. She was trained in traditional painting, drawing, and printmaking at The College of William and Mary and is currently exploring mixed media as a means to fully express the lush, rich texture of life she has come to experience in a life of sobriety. The artwork shares a narrative from her personal experience. In addition to making art, she loves playing roller derby, walking with her husband, and adventuring with friends.
Celebration, wonder, and authenticity are central to my practice. Entering the MFA program as a traditional drawer and painter, I now draw and paint with a variety of media, including many found and repurposed materials, threads, handmade paper, journal writings, and fabric scraps. These materials seek to represent a fullness and abundance expressed in an ongoing personal narrative through textures that literally come forth from a flat surface or live in the third dimension. I work organically through spontaneous play. With this method of working, I get to experience the unexpected ideas that come forth in the making process and revelations that come after the work is made that teach me about myself, my experiences, and how I ‘be’ with the world around me. I spent many years living an unhealthy life. My life has changed dramatically through working with others who were willing to make a change in their lives and their attitudes. Through making I am learning new ways to articulate my experiences with others, all with the intention of sharing a healthy, positive attitude and view of life; to share that life is truly wonderful with so much to celebrate.
Junghoon Han is from Seoul, South Korea and received his BFA in sculpture from University of North Carolina at Greensboro. He is currently based in Greenville, North Carolina, pursuing an MFA in sculpture at East Carolina University. His work is influenced by his childhood memory of economic crisis of South Korea and its gruesome consequences during the late 90s.

SMELL YOUR STRESS AWAY: ADAPTIVE ESSENTIAL OIL DIFFUSER, 2019
Red oak, aluminum, acrylic, 10” × 4” × 4”

Junghoon Han
Han’s work investigates shortcomings of the contemporary office surroundings and their influences in stress-related mental disorders among its occupants. Using the visual language of sculptural objects and mutation in function of familiar objects, he provides a visual interpretation of possible solutions for improving office workspace environment in both practical and humorous approach.

CORPORATE CRUELTY: OFFICE STAMP SET, 2019
Walnut, bronze, brass, 7” × 6” × 3”

INTERRUPTED REPETITION: ADAPTIVE DESKTOP AIR PURIFIER, 2019
Red oak, aluminum, 5” × 7” × 4”
I was born and raised in heart of Cajun country, in Lafayette, Louisiana. I received my Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in May 2015. I moved to Eastern North Carolina in May 2016. I was awarded a partial scholarship and work-study to attend Penland School of Crafts for summer session 3, 2018. I received my Master of Fine Arts from the University of East Carolina in December, 2019. I currently reside in Ayden, North Carolina and work at ECU as adjunct faculty.
Flower petals attract the attention of pollinators, who in turn collect and spread its pollen to neighboring flowers. Osmia avosetta, a lone pollinator, meticulously uses the same flower petals from which it makes its honey, along with wet clay to create an ornate and protective nest for its larva. Human relationships are built on exchanges, just like the flower and the bee. The interchange between people and their collected possessions, such as clothing, is a means for building relationships and memories. I am interested in the reciprocity of these relationships. My work uses collected materials to explore relationships.
Baby Its Space Outside, 2018
Intaglio, 9" × 11"

Katya Hutchinson

Born and raised in rural Hawai‘i, Katya Hutchinson graduated with her BA in Art from the University of Hilo in 2018. Relocating to North Carolina, she began her MFA studies in Printmaking in the Fall of 2019. She looks forward to mastering the various processes in her field, while constantly exploring new techniques and methods. After homesteading off-grid for five years, she is thoroughly pleased with indulging in hot showers and light switches.
With a life-long passion for all things fantastical and creative, my work reflects my exploration of narrative themes both personal and surreal. I’ve always loved working with my hands, and Printmaking provides me an opportunity to focus my kinetic impulses. For me, the science and chemistry of my medium seem magical—and I constantly find myself drawn to delve deeper into the world of print.

SAINT BOYFRIEND, 2018
Intaglio, screenprint & embroidery thread, 12.5” × 15.75”

FUMAR, 2018
Intaglio, 4” × 6”

MIXED FOLIAGE, 2018
Intaglio, linoleum block & embroidery thread, 11” × 14”
Madi Johnson

Madi Johnson is from Burnsville, North Carolina, a small town located in the Western region. She received her BA in Studio Art with a focus in Ceramics from Mars Hill University in May 2019. In the Fall of 2019 she began her Master of Fine Arts program at East Carolina University with her focus in Ceramics. She merges painting and ceramics into functional work. Her work is currently based on Western North Carolina and memories that go along with living in the mountains. She loves to spend time with her family and continue helping with High School Cheerleading.

WOOD DUCK MUG, 2019
Stoneware, 4.7” × 3.2”
My work is a way to visualize Western North Carolina. Being in the mountains of Western North Carolina for 22 years gave me the identity I have today. Y'all, yuns, reckon, and many other words make me who I am. Hunting is a large thing in my town. Opening day is close to a National Holiday. Hunting and local farming is how my family and many others have been able to keep food on the table and meat in the freezer. Hunting is a sport to many in the area. Many of my inspirations for images come from the sport of hunting. The idea that one thing can supply for a family, while also bringing joy to the ones participating in the sport.

MALLARD VASE, 2019
Stoneware, 7.7” × 4.7”

MALLARD MUG, 2019
Stoneware, 4.7” × 3.2”

WOOD DUCK FLYING MUG, 2019
Stoneware, 4.7” × 3.2”
Youngjae Kim is from South Korea. He moved to America when he was fifteen years old. He graduated from the University of South Dakota with a BFA in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Printmaking. His work poses questions about being an immigrant in America. He is currently based in Greenville, North Carolina, pursuing an MFA in Printmaking at East Carolina University.

INVASIVE SPECIES: ASIAN CARP, 2019
Lithography, 22” × 30”
Invasive species: This series of work questions two aspects of the immigrant. If the immigrants are invasive species to this continent, then how far should this category be extended to describe the general population? Should the category include the individuals who landed in the United States at the time of the colonization of this continent? Or is the disturbance of the ecosystem by the invasive species part of the natural settling process? If the first aspect of the immigrant contains more truth, then most of the people living on this continent are invasive species. And if the second aspect has more truth, then I as an immigrant and an invasive species are in the middle of the metamorphosis to becoming an American.
Epiphany Knedler is an archiver of American life. Growing up in Vermillion, South Dakota, she finds comfort in Midwestern aesthetics and small-town familiarity. She graduated from the University of South Dakota with a BFA in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Photography and a BA in Political Science. She strives to find the quiet yet eccentric moments in familiar environments. She is currently based in Greenville, North Carolina, pursuing an MFA in Photography at East Carolina University. Her work has recently been exhibited with the North Carolina Museum of Art, CAM Raleigh, and Lenscratch. You can view her work at www.epiphanyknedler.com.
Wish You Were Here: Legends of the Great Plains examines the ways the Great Plains romanticizes its region using legends, folklore, and histories. This history is often commodified through roadside attractions and monuments where tourists can enter these places, take part in photo-ops, and buy souvenirs as proof of the experience and inclusion in this part of history. The Great Plains is full of legends rooted in truth, from the infamous Buffalo Bill in the Wild West to the spirits of the Badlands, but the stories overshadow some grim truths of Midwestern history. These stories become a sense of pride and comfort for the local population, who use iconography to perpetuate the ideas of manifest destiny and the Wild West. With awareness of this history, the authenticity of these spaces as well as their interpretations is put into question.
Heather McLelland

Born in Seoul, Korea, Heather McLelland grew up in Montclair, Virginia. Heather received her BA from Elon University in Psychology with a minor in Art. She furthered her education at UNC at Wilmington, where her interest in wood fired ceramics started. Continuing her pursuit in clay, Heather did an apprenticeship in Cromarty, Scotland.

Prior to Attending ECU, Heather worked as a studio potter, the ceramics technician at Cape Fear Community College and UNCW, while also teaching classes at Orange Street Pottery in Wilmington, NC.
Our fast-paced culture makes me want to be more thoughtful in how I engage with others and to be mindful of my time and belongings. I try to be aware of what and how I choose to consume on a daily basis and how these choices can influence the environment around me.
LET ME KNOW IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG, 2019
Book arts, varying dimensions

Sofia Mendez Subieta

Sofia is a triplet, a fan of sunlight, orange juice, biking, and instrumental music. She grew up in Cochabamba, Bolivia, a city known for its “permanent” spring and gastronomical legacy. From the context of her upbringing, she has learned the value of stories and superstitions, as well as of conservation and heritage. She enjoys working with fabric and experiencing the world through the lens of a camera.
In my practice I handle objects that belong to community such as language, communication, digital information and stories, in order to address, and access, the sociological concept of the Imaginary—a shared understanding of our social whole formed by a common history and set of moral values. I construct objects such as books and maps, which allow for the unfolding of story and sequence, to investigate nuances and contradictions involved in the Imaginary. I primarily utilize photography and textiles in the construction of my work because of the dialogue between the functions of documentation/distortion in photography and preservation/repetition in textiles. I display narratives in the form of multiples, which appear as collections, such as pages and diptychs, that make up a single project. These collections lend themselves to several iterations of one idea. Iterations, at the same time, lead the way to contradictions. Contradictions, such as simultaneously tangible and intangible artifacts, information that is both public and private, and fragmented unity, exist at the core of my work. The book-form also demands interaction from the viewer, which highlights the idea that we are all involved in the perpetuation of the Imaginary, a collective memory.
Mairin Narron Gwyn

Mairin is a North Carolina based artist who creates work pertaining to engendered stereotypes by using candy as her medium. She received her Bachelors in Fine Arts at East Carolina University where she also is currently a Masters in Fine Arts candidate. In her undergraduate career, she studied heavy metal fabrication and created large steel sculptures. As a female sculptor who worked with steel, she experienced various forms of sexism which were the impetus to her creation of her current body of work. She hopes that through awareness, her work will impact those who view it to adjust their views on engendered traditions.
My recent artwork focuses on women’s rights, challenging both obvious and “hidden” forms of sexism and misogyny. Using candy as my medium, my work questions who holds the power, why, and how we might improve the balance. In this series, rather than “sugar-coating” hard issues, I point out the prevalence of everyday sexism. Artists need critical thinkers to continue to observe and question the world around them to gain new meditations on forms and examples of formal representation to offer as food for thought. I have combined my research on feminist theory with my work and joined the two so that the theory can not only be read, but seen and potentially inform those who have not experienced sexism and thus change their perspective entirely. My work is simultaneously tongue-in-cheek and serious inviting viewers to not be intimidated, while also seriously reflecting on the concept. Ultimately my current body of work is a reflection of my continuous journey seeking empowerment.
Nikki Purcell is a little gal from Texas, here to have a good time. She was born in Houston Texas. Her father is a geophysicist and encourages her to break down a problem, understand every element, and then formulate a solution. Her mother can have three conversations going on at the same time and Nikki was taught this is how thoughts work- three or more sets at the time all tangled together by tangents. Combining these two ways of thinking influenced Nikki’s undergraduate work. She received a BFA cum laude at Stephen F Austin with a major in jewelry/metal working and a minor in geology studying under Lauren Selden making art about science. She was also a camp counselor and the art director at the YMCA trotter family and the camp director for 1 year for 3-7 year olds from 2008-2014. After graduating at SFA in 2016 she studied enameling with Jan Harrel at Glassell in Houston Texas from 2016-2017. Her work transitioned from making art about science to using science to make art with experimental enameling. This transitioned further to understanding art and science were escapism tools to avoid emotions and feelings the artist didn’t have the tools to engage with. She now believes that material processes and textures represent different feelings and experiences to her. She participated in assisting or organizing the annual Material Topics Symposium as a presenters assistant in 2018, gallery vice chair in 2019, and gallery chair in 2020.
My graduate experience has been a huge transitional moment during a particularly transitional time in my life. This program has allowed me to experiment not only in materials but also professionally. I originally came to ECU for the enameling program and with my background in geology I began several experiments seeing what limits and boundaries were within enamel as a material. At first I thought this was my scientific background that pulled me to glass on metal, which is true, but enameling for me personally is also associated with curiosity and satisfaction which were emotions that I was most interested in engaging with. 2 1/2 years later I am now more comfortable with engaging with other emotions, all of which have textural and material process associations. Because I’m a tactile learner my experiences never started off as words, they were always a feeling connected to touch, so it makes sense that textured materis is where I can express my feelings and experiences in the most honest way while also still being indirect and maintaining an amount of privacy. In addition to my work I’m also interested in curating show. The mix media bowl shown here was part of a larger exhibition that I curated between ECU and Edinboro University PA called Keepsakes.
Suzanne Richey is a part-time, first year graduate student in Ceramics. She earned a BS in interior design and worked as kitchen designer for fifteen years in the Triangle and Eastern NC and in the Hudson River Valley NY. She has always enjoyed painting with watercolor and drawing with pastel in her spare time. She discovered clay later in life and has not looked back. She enjoys turning stoneware clay on a kick wheel into bowls, vases and platters with plenty of surface area to experiment with slips, oxides and glazes. Much of her work is fired in a soda kiln, but she is also a wood firer or she may fire pots in oxidation depending on the desired outcome.

SODA FIRED BOWL, 2019
Stoneware, 5” × 14”

Suzanne Richey
Creativity is a means of communicating that transcends all boundaries. Clay has been a medium for creativity for thousands of years, by all humans, on all continents. My personal connection to clay was formed centuries ago in central North Carolina, rich in natural clay deposits, where I grew up and where many of my ancestors settled from Scotland. I have always appreciated traditional NC pots not only for their beauty and utility, but also for the stories they tell. Who made them? How they were fired? How were they used over the decades and centuries? I choose clay, mostly stoneware, fired in whatever method is available at the time, to continue the story. There will always be a need for a useful pot, in the home or in the garden. I also enjoy making decorative wares, as meaningful gifts that commemorate a special event such as a wedding or the birth of a child. Clay will tell these stories for a long time beyond the existence of the people who created and enjoyed them providing a tangible connection to the past.

SODA FIRED BOWL, 2019
Stoneware, 5” × 14”

SODA FIRED VASE, 2019
Stoneware, 13” × 6”
Dana Smessaert is a seer of the liminal. Through family structures and conflicting values growing up in post-industrial South Bend, Indiana, she understood from a very early age the inconsistencies in what is said and what is. She graduated from the Herron School of Art and Design of Indiana-Purdue University of Indianapolis with a BFA in Integrated Studio Practice and minors in Art History and Anthropology. There are many aspects to Dana’s practice, her experiences with her co-workers and friends are, above all, a driving force to illustrate the inconsistencies of the world around them. Pursing her MFA degree at East Carolina University of Greenville, North Carolina, she explores these cultural and academic structures that dictate the stories of others.
Lost in Translation is an exploration of myth and reality. The artist explores her displacement in the American South by confronting and acknowledging the violence of being a white woman in the South. The houses are moments of confrontation. Being a neighbor but yet still an outsider unable to come in paired with the threat of the gaze. In these liminal landscapes, the viewer becomes apart of the mythos of the South, the romanticism the storytelling, implementing their ideas of the occupants. Calling into question who narrated these stories, who’s history are we referencing, where does the root of our implications begin? Is it problematic that these houses cannot merely be houses? The American South’s history is complex and seemingly transparent to those on the outside. However, the stories of those who live here still exist in the space betwixt myth and reality.

ALL IMAGES FROM: AN OBLIGATION TO DO ONE’S BEST SERIES, 2019
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Text set in Eras Bold
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