

# EMBODIMENT

## THE PERSONAL AND UNIVERSAL BODY

Co-curated by Abby Bryant, Gabi Kaminski, Alex Monge, and Katie Perroni



Images L to R: *Fragile Dreams*, Paula Currie. *Passive Brother*, Eli Ruhala. *Are We About To Kiss Rn?*, Lauren Walker.

With special thanks to:

Sara-Jayne Parsons  
Wendy Sepponen  
Kay Seedig

and contributing artists:

Emily Brown  
Paula Currie  
Shuang Gou  
Nijal Munankarmi  
Alfredo "Freddy" Ortega  
Raul Rodriguez  
Eli Ruhala  
Michael Scogin  
Brandi Alyson Simpson  
Lauren Walker

# THE CONTEMPORARY BODY

For centuries, the human body has been central to art practice, but its relation to artists has evolved over time. *Embodiment: The Personal and Universal Body* investigates the paradoxical nature of the body in contemporary art. It considers how personal, tangible moments are mediated through the body. While lived moments are unique to their subject, human experience is universal. Through the exploration of the body, this selection of MFA works considers shared concerns of memory, conflict, history, belonging, and relationships as fundamental to human embodiment. As a universal medium, the body is often taken for granted. It is not until one is confronted with the complexities of human existence— emotional, mental, and physical realities— that the human form is thoroughly acknowledged. *Embodiment* examines how these qualities of the body can only be fully appreciated through artistic intervention. It assesses the intricacies of embodiment through three lenses: the fragmented body, the archived body, and the metaphorical body.

Throughout the mid-twentieth century, bodies precipitately became a focus of sociological, phenomenological, and cultural studies. In *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968), Maurice Merleau-Ponty investigated the phenomenology of embodiment, focusing on bodies as vessels of lived experience rather than objects of scientific study [1]. Forty years later, in congruence with Merleau-Ponty, Sarah O'Reilly asserted that the body is a “potent signifier of lived experience” and medium of inquiry in contemporary art [2]. She differentiated the optically driven notion of the “figure” from the “body” which requires wider considerations of everyday life in *The Body in Contemporary Art* (2009) [3]. Concurrently, Helen Thomas’s *The Body and Everyday Life* (2013) questioned the “naturalness” of the body, instead asserting that the body is a constructed entity of lived experiences. Thomas advocated that the body becomes self-aware through disruptions such as revisited memories, conflicts, and relationships [4]. Increasingly, contemporary theories have focused on the subjectivity of the body and its encounters. While personal experience is at the core of *Embodiment*, the following artists also highlight the paradox of the human form as a universal medium. Human experience is both unique to the individual and shared among a global community.

# FRAGMENTED BODY



The human body is not monolithic. Bodies are complicated, consisting of a variety of systems, each with their own unique functions and characteristics. The body relies on an intricate interplay of various parts to sustain life. Often, the body undergoes significant changes throughout life. Through these changes, moments of experience will occur. Experiences can have stronger physical, mental, and emotional associations with a particular body part. The *Fragmented Body* section of the exhibition highlights the types of experiences held in various parts of the body. Artists will remove parts and display them to convey a particular sensation.

Fragmentation is a way in which these artists explore experiences. By breaking down the body, the artists challenge the division between personal and universal. How experiences manifest within an associated body part for an artist can differ from the viewer; however, these artworks create discussions about personal memories, and offer comfort with universal encounters. Paula Currie exposes the viewer to the vulnerabilities of childhood in her sculptures, *Fragile Dreams* and *Childhood Memories*. Internal organs are displayed as a reminder of hidden trauma. Shuang Gou fractures a human face with moving figures and bold colors in her painting *Bi-Polar*. The divided face expresses feelings of an unsettled inner state. Emily Brown dissolves a human head into blocks in her poster *Dementia*. The poster encourages a positive outlook within a serious condition. All three artists address physical aspects of the human condition, symbolizing the challenges, conflicts, and complexities of experience. As the body is deconstructed within these works, it is crucial to examine artworks which depict the human body as a whole. Experiences can manifest throughout the entire body, documenting a particular moment in time.

# ARCHIVED BODY



Recent archival practices have come to recognize this institution as a site of power [5]. Traditional collecting institutions such as museums, libraries, and archives catalog documents to preserve history. Historians use the archive to understand the past, collating and synthesizing traces of people and bodies in time into a cohesive narrative limited by the records and documents at hand. By treating the body as a visual archive, artists in *The Archival Body* elevate individual stories that fall outside the parameters of traditional, historical archives. Bodies record personal histories, and art can communicate and preserve these experiences beyond the constraints of traditional archive-based historical narratives.

Through a multiplicity of bodily details—pose, expression, location—the artists have documented individual experiences, memories, and emotions of a particular point in time. At the same time, each of these personal moments registers something more universal: one's relationship with a community; and the harm caused when access to the community is denied. Emily Brown's *Internment* series assembles photographs and documents from the US National Archives to meditate on the effects of relocation and internment on Japanese American children during World War II. Nijal Munankarmi envisions the body as part of a community with the iconic images of his *Jatra* series. In his *Premier Boxing Club* series, Raul Rodriguez photographs the life of the club as its young men seek to perfect their bodies and minds through physical training together. Eli Ruhala transposes family photographs to drywall, using joint compounds to recreate archived memories with the same sense of materiality that the original moment embodied. In each of the works, the body becomes the site through which memory and experience occur and remain, inviting the viewer to consider the past as something that continues to exist despite the passage of time. These works identify bodies which signify moments, although sometimes the artwork lacks a human body. Rather, objects serve in place, associating the same meanings behind the human experience.

# METAPHORICAL BODY



Traditionally depicted in a visible and identifiable manner, the body as a metaphorical art entity materializes in inanimate forms or symbols. Common stand-ins for the body include clothes, garments, or empty shoes arranged as installation work [6]. On a larger scale, some artists, such as Veronica Alkim França, compare buildings and housing structures to the body's shape and figural form [7]. While the objects found within an artwork can serve as representations of the body, a work itself can also gain recognition as having a life of its own [8]. This lens gives the piece itself a 'body' from which to operate, blurring the lines of human realities. In this way, the postmodern age transforms the body from being the obvious subject on the page to gaining representation as an abstract or unconventional form.

The artists in this section express the metaphorical body through a variety of media, materials, and modes. Alfredo "Freddy" Ortega takes an unconventional approach in his painting *Impermanence* by depicting the body as a potato with a mustache lying on a couch. For Brandi Alyson Simpson, the molded glass work in *Venus of Gotebo* exudes the curves of a human form, even as it presses through a steel funnel. However, Simpson follows an abstract path in *Everybody Works Here* where a section of fence expresses the body as a unit for construction and play. Similarly, Michael Scogin's distressed shoe sole in *Exhausted* entices the viewer to recall the body that once walked in it. The final metaphorical body appears in *Are We About to Kiss Rn?* where Lauren Walker uses toothbrushes as a metaphorical representation of two human forms. By removing the explicit body from these works, the viewer's own embodied experience rises to the surface, heightening the awareness of one's own physicality.

# AN EMBODIED FUTURE

Bodies take many different forms, but their invaluable facilitation of lived experience is universal. As considered throughout *Embodiment: The Personal and Universal Body*, contemporary artists recognize the paradoxical and complex nature of the human form. Although the body is ubiquitous, it also serves as a vessel for highly individualized encounters. The phenomenological consideration of embodiment through the three lenses of the fragmented, the archived, and the metaphorical body dispels the idea of an 'objective' body. Artists are interested in the body's self-awareness and its constitution. While the history of art practice has proven that fascination with the human form is timeless, there is still much to explore. As artists eagerly break away from purely physical notions of the body, they turn to the conditions of possibility for humanity. The future investigation of embodiment perhaps lies in artists' interdisciplinary assessment of the conditions, conversations, and power dynamics in which our bodies exist, as well as the reciprocally constitutive role bodies play in shaping those realities. There is no humanity without bodies, but can the notion of 'bodies' exist without the socio-political forces of humanity?

[1] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, edited by Claude Lefort, translated by Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).

[2] Sally O'Reilly, *The Body in Contemporary Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009), p. 8.

[3] O'Reilly, *The Body in Contemporary Art*, pp. 10-11.

[4] Helen Thomas, *The Body and Everyday Life* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), pp. 2-5.

[5] John H. Arnold "Voices and Silences", *History: A Very Short Introduction* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 60.

[6] Marina WitteMann, "Object as a Stand in for the Body," published April 27, 2021. <https://www.marinawittemann.com/post/object-as-a-stand-in-for-the-body>.

[7] Linda Sandino, "Body Architecture," *Verônica Alkmim França*, <https://www.veronicaaf.com/c%C3%B3pia-1>.

[8] Michael Kimmelman, "Making Metaphors of Art and Bodies: Making Metaphors of Art and Bodies", *New York Times*, November 15, 1996.



# **EXHIBITED WORKS**



Shuang Gou  
*Bi-Polar*, 2023  
Acrylic on canvas

*Bi-Polar* is rooted in the artist's empathy for her friend who is often misunderstood by acquaintances. Gou parallels her subject's mental stimulation and euphoria to the freedom of a wild horse that is difficult to rein in. Galloping powerfully across the canvas, this horse reflects the racing thoughts of her friend's mind. The dark shadow that trails behind the horse suggests the occasional paranoia that accompanies bipolar disorder. The horse's legs are reiterated to mimic a lightning bolt, splitting the figure between the eyes. Here, Gou emphasizes the duality and fragmentation of her subject's experience, alternating unpredictably from excitement to solemnity, engagement to isolation. Much of the subject's face is lost behind the interventions of forceful brushwork. Yet, amidst the crowded intensity of the composition, the eyes remain unobstructed. In a world that continues to misinterpret the nature of mental health conditions, Gou does not lose sight of the beauty of her subject.

Throughout the artistic process, Gou engaged in unconventional painting methods to reflect the complexities of her subject's internal experience. Unlike previous oil-based works, Gou embraced the unpredictable fluidity of diluted acrylic to produce the abstract composition of *Bi-Polar*. She poured, sprayed, and flicked paint onto the surface then tilted the canvas to spread it across the frame. In doing so, Gou intentionally sought the uncontrollable nature of the artwork as a means to better understand the lived experience of her subject. The instantaneous and abstract nature of Gou's composition personifies the incalculable thought patterns of her friend.

ADB



Paula Currie  
*Fragile Dreams*, 2021  
Mixed media

As an artist, Currie tends to draw upon her life experiences and those of her family for inspiration. In *Fragile Dreams*, the artist represents her daughter's childhood dream of being a professional dancer. However, a scoliosis diagnosis at thirteen and a subsequent spine fusion altered that goal immensely. It pained her daughter both physically and emotionally to execute moves with her limited flexibility. As a parent, Currie struggled to see her child's aspirations derailed in such a permanent way.

Through sculpture, Currie illustrates her daughter's transformation in a clear and powerful form. The spine, split into a fused and natural section by color, reveals the fixed state that will be forever present in the body. The ballet shoes, worn and well-loved, cling tightly to their post rather than wrapping around the ankles of absent legs. This dynamic echoes the force of fragmentation as it changes not only the body, but also the mind and spirit. Nevertheless, pain and trauma manifest differently in each area, as the brain reacts emotionally compared to the physical pain felt in the spine. By breaking the body apart, one understands both the unique locality of past experiences and how the same independent pieces still make up the whole.

AM



Paula Currie  
*Childhood Memories*, 2022  
Mixed media

Childhood Memories navigates the personal trauma which Currie faced, while providing a space for collective contemplation. Currie sculpts glass in the shape of a delicate brain to evoke a sense of human fragility. Cruel words and phrases such as “Stupid,” and “Waste of...” are written on the surface with permanent marker to reveal the lasting effect of verbal abuse. Various parts of the sculpture have saturated reds, bringing an illusion that the sculpture bleeds. The piece recognizes the hidden trauma from childhood abuse. When reaching adulthood, no matter the amount of separation from the situation, the lasting verbal abuse remains.

By depicting her own vulnerability, the artwork fosters empathy and understanding of the profound impact of trauma. The sculpture bridges a connection between survivors of traumatic events and bystanders.

GSK



Emily Brown  
*Dementia*, 2023  
 Digital poster

The effects of dementia on loved ones feel personal. Even though they are still physically present, when they no longer remember who we are, it feels like we have lost them. Despite the individual nature of dementia and its personal griefs, the effect it has on families and communities has become commonplace. In 2023, 6.7 million Americans and their families were affected by Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

In her digital poster for the Association, Emily Brown deftly records the tension between the presence of the body and the absence of memory experienced by both affected individuals and their loved ones. Much of the stress for families lies in learning how to reconcile the person they knew and loved with the person the individual is now, memory loss and all. The white blocks clearly suggest memory loss, yet the woman remains. The choice of the color white for those blank blocks is significant. Black blocks would have suggested an unfillable void, but the use of white blocks instead is a subtle allusion to hope. Those blocks might be empty, but instead, they are waiting to be colored in. As the message filling in some of the white blocks asserts, memory loss is not the end. Instead, it can be an opportunity to fill in those seemingly empty spaces with something new— new experiences, new conversations, new memories— that witnesses and honors the individual still present.

KAP



Emily Brown  
*Internment* series, 2023  
 Digital poster

The series meditates on the relocation and internment of Japanese American children during World War II. Though Brown uses the materials of the archives to create these works, the collage method that cuts up and reattaches the different documents and images together creates a new record that maps the seemingly neutral accumulation of bureaucratic documents onto the bodies of these children. While the government recorded the logistics of relocating the Japanese American population, the children's bodies recorded the emotional effects of their displacement from their homes and communities.

Brown layers texts from the National Archives—maps, memos, and dispatches—with documentary photographs of Japanese American children and newspaper headlines from World War II. Though the black and white tones provide a sense of history to the collages, the emphasis on bright red throughout also suggests a sense of immediacy. Like a stop sign, the red draws attention to parts of the composition: a child's face obscured by a red circle or a child's body split apart by red rectangles. Such faceless and segmented bodies suggest the dehumanization at the root of the United States government's relocation of an entire population. Instead of individuals, historical forces have fashioned their bodies into objects to be tagged and sorted. As a result, these bodies carry with them a unique historical memory that, while incredibly personal, is one that must be universally remembered.

KAP



Eli Ruhala

*Three Modes of Tenderness*, 2022

Drywall and joint compound

The present state of the archive is ironic. Technological advancement of the last thirty years has enabled history to be easily recorded and therefore quickly forgotten. For Ruhala, the abundance of archival documentation in twenty-first century life is overwhelming and deceiving. While images can immortalize the appearance of the past, they can also silence the voices and lived experiences of a particular moment. That is, until those voices are revisited and empowered to speak for themselves.

Transforming an old photograph into a tablet-like medium, Ruhala enlivens and reimagines the relationship between subjects of his past. He emphasizes the connection and tactility between the man, infant and his childhood self through his materiality. In doing so, *Three Modes of Tenderness* attests to the role of the body in both producing and reproducing memories. By rejecting the presumed objectivity of archives, Ruhala creates space to reconsider the ways humans continue to act upon and reshape memories over time. To some, the original photographic inspiration for *Three Modes of Tenderness* represents nothing more than a brief, mundane interaction between the artist and customers of his mother's business. However, for the queer artist, the scene offers him an opportunity to explore and renegotiate the meaning of the interpersonal connection between male subjects. Like Matisse's *Dance* (1910), Ruhala's *Three Modes of Tenderness* ultimately focuses on the significance of physical touch in conveying the deeper, universal desire for personal connection.

ADB



Eli Ruhala

*Passive Brother*, 2021

Drywall and joint compound

Through its nuanced materiality and transformation of a two-dimensional image into a sculpted narrative, *Passive Brother* challenges the neutrality of the archive. While the photograph reflects an intimate moment between the artist and his brother, its translation into a more sculptural form invites viewers to investigate the relationship between the two. The irreversibility and meticulousness of the carving process emulates an excavation, in which Ruhala revisits an earlier site of familial connection to unearth the reality of his fraternal relationship. In this, Ruhala actively unveils and renegotiates embodied experiences of his past through the nature of his medium.

The tensions between positive and negative space, void and substance, tone and value offer avenues into the literal and figural complexities of *Passive Brother*. Ruhala's carving process underscores the division between the brothers. Akin to an archaeological dig, the artist mines through his embodied past to better understand the relational dynamics of his present. Additionally, the coloration of *Passive Brother* highlights the ambivalence of Ruhala's relationship with his brother. While the two tones are distinct, they are close in value. Contingently, if the image were monochromatic, it would disappear almost entirely. Reassessing the dynamic between structural elements in *Passive Brother*, Ruhala emphasizes the human desire for strong connection and a secure sense of belonging.

ADB





Raul Rodriguez  
*Untitled (Premier Boxing Club series)*, 2016  
 Black and white photograph

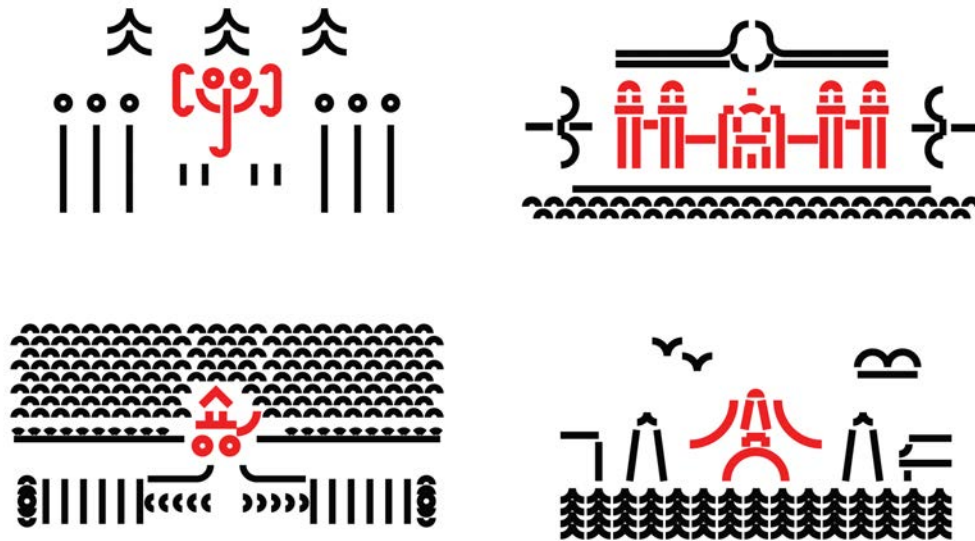
*Untitled (Premier Boxing Club series)*, 2016  
 Colored photograph

As a photographer, Raul Rodriguez seeks to share stories about his Fort Worth community and human resilience through documentary photography and portraiture. Out of a self-given residency, Rodriguez produced his *Premier Boxing Club* series. The photographs are an expression of the body in both active and passive states as they blur the line between traditional and alternative spiritual practice.

While the historical archive would normally view his series as documentation of physical excellence in the fighting realm, Rodriguez interprets the photos as records of the quasi-religious nature of the boxing gym. In the sparring photograph, the artist exhibits two figures activating their muscle memory to ensure quick reactions when their opponent jabs. At the same time, the boxers fight with a level of discipline and devotion akin to religious faith, stimulating their spiritual ascension.

In the locker photograph, the two figures sit still, save for their hands eagerly tying their shoes. From Rodriguez's perspective, their calm preparation evokes a spiritual act. He recognizes how the boxers take the time to ground themselves and connect with the energy of space. This interplay of the body and mind finds permanent residence in the photographic evidence that he captures for preservation. His documentation allows one to revisit their forms whenever they choose and reevaluate the role of the body in forging spiritual connection.

AM



Nijal Munankarmi  
*Jatra* series, 2023  
 Digital prints

The *Jatra* series depicts culturally significant items and locations based on Newar festivals. Due to globalization and Western capitalism, younger generations of the Newar lose interest in their own culture. Munankarmi attempts to address this issue through illustrating festival icons in a simple, geometric style. Bright red lines signify the joys of festivities. These images represent stories which he and many others grew up with and teach newer generations stories from the past.

A red elephant head – *Pulu Kisi* – parades through the streets, as lines of people watch. *Pulu Kisi* is believed to be the carrier of the God Indra, king of heaven. During the Indra Jatra, one of the biggest festivals in Kathmandu Valley, people play and dance with this masked creature.

Red lines build the façade of the Janaki Temple, birthplace of the Goddess Sita. The temple stands as a site of spiritual and cultural importance at the heart of Janakpur. During festivals, the temple and the city come to life as pilgrims from all over Nepal and the world flood the streets in honor of Sita.

A small red chariot floats in a crowd of heads as many celebrate the Bisket Jatra, a vibrant Nepalese New Year festival. Chariots bearing Nepalese deities navigate the streets of Bhaktapur, followed by music and laughter. The city transforms into a lively hub of cultural expression, reflecting the collective spirit of the community.

Red lines curve to form a stupa, perching above the hill. Swayambhunath sits in the Kathmandu Valley, with numerous prayer flags fluttering in the breeze, and surrounded by various shrines and temples. Adorned with both Hindu and Buddhist iconography, the site serves as a symbol of religious unity and harmony in Nepal.



Alfredo “Freddy” Ortega  
*Impermanence*, 2023  
 Acrylic on canvas

Comparable to early surrealists, Ortega explores a dreamlike state of mind, depicting a fantastical subject and otherworldly landscape in response to his personal battle with cancer. Portraying a couch potato in place of his own body, Ortega emphasizes the sense of lifelessness and vegetation he felt undergoing chemotherapy. It is in the removal of the bodily form that his experiences of discomfort and alienation from treatment become apparent. Pulled involuntarily into an unknown, desolate landscape, the potato lays passively on the sofa. The surrounding scenery acts as a satirical commentary on the phrase “todo es color de rosa,” translated as “everything is rosy.” The living room quickly fades into a barren landscape scattered with cinder blocks, packing boxes, and a satellite TV. The bright, vivacious colors of this domestic space are interrupted by the eerie orange, blue and green hues of an alien territory.

While ultimately reflecting a challenging experience in the artist’s personal life, *Impermanence* considers the universal vulnerability of the body to unpredictable circumstances. Through the anonymity of his metaphorical depiction, Ortega invites viewers to reflect upon their own disorienting experiences. *Impermanence* is a testament to the way in which hardship disrupts the familiarity of everyday life and leads to unexpected disillusionment. Acknowledging the multidimensional nature of embodiment, this piece highlights the effects of physical hardship on the intangible psyche.

ADB

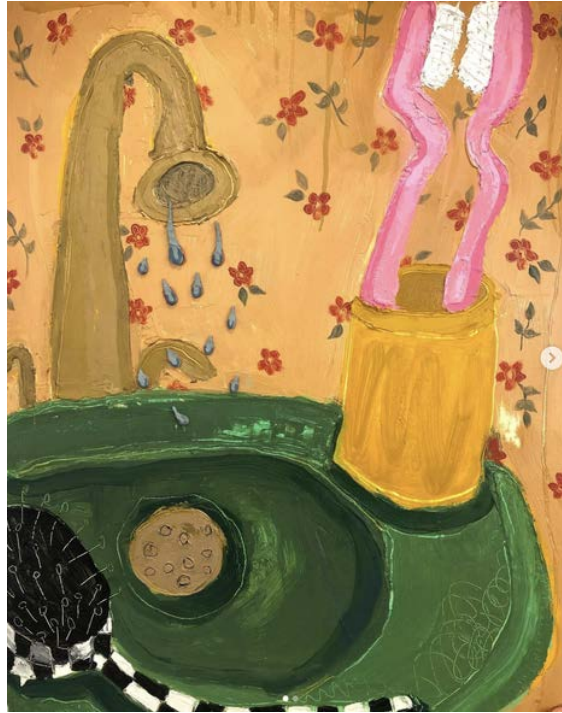


Michael Scogin  
*Exhausted*, 2022  
Bronze

The sole faces outwards, as if the shoe stepped onto the viewer. Long bronze has been soldered on the heel, dragging a sensation of weariness. The sole fits uncomfortably under a work boot, weighing down a step. Shines of yellows and blues bruise the cast. The denseness of the metal suggests a lasting burden of exhaustion. Although the human body is absent, *Exhausted* serves as a reminder of how the human body is taken for granted.

*Exhausted* was created from the perspective of the laborer. Scogin recycled pieces to create this sculpture, soldering pour splashes onto a failed bronze cast. His artworks are often handcrafted using methods of trade, informed by years of practice in blue-collar work. Many of his projects begin as material studies which inform his conceptual processes.

GSK



Lauren Walker  
*Are We About to Kiss Rn?*, 2022  
 Acrylic on canvas

*Are We About to Kiss Rn?* is a prime example of how Walker creates conversations around domesticity and the body's adjustment to significant life changes. In this situation, the pink toothbrushes model the tension felt between the artist and her partner as they navigate moving in together. The metaphorical bodies jammed in the same small cup leave little breathing room for one another. Their depiction reveals how the body can feel cramped or uncomfortable in new environments, even in the space of a loving relationship. By modifying the body into an object, the physical form can successfully separate from the conditions it lives in. Through this objective lens, one feels a greater awareness of the human body again, creating space for reassessment and appreciation.

While her subject matter illustrates a deeper narrative, Walker's bright and playful colors cast an illusion of cheer over the bathroom scene. The leaky faucet serves as a clear reminder that domestic life is not without tears or sorrow. However, hope persists in the form of the simple flower wallpaper that creates a jovial background for the piece. The jewel-toned sink grounds the space, acting as a reliable anchor for the objects and users alike. In the bottom left corner, a black and white checkered hairbrush lies abandoned, waiting for the household to come alive again.

AM



Brandi Simpson

*Venus of Gotebo*, 2023

Blown glass, metal funnel, glass vase

A simple metal funnel rests inside a delicate glass vase meant to hold flowers—objects cultivated for their beauty. The vase is empty, but the funnel suggests it should be filled. Instead of water and flowers—elements of life— a crackled bulbous lump of blown glass sits atop the funnel. The folds and cracked surface of the blown glass suggest the creases and patterns of flesh that cannot conform to the sensuous perfection of the curved vase. In this mixed-media sculpture, Simpson processes inherited and internalized attitudes about the female form developed over millennia of Western art history. In *Venus of Gotebo*, she assembles found objects and blown glass together to suggest the utter impossibility of shaping the body and, therefore, the self into the idealized, sexualized female form symbolized by Venus, the goddess of love and beauty.

The title is inspired by the Venus of Willendorf, a small prehistoric figurine. Though the proportions of that figurine suggest a preoccupation with fertility and the reproductive functions of the human body, the name Venus—given by a man—introduces associations of love and lust that likely have little to do with the actual purpose of the figurine. Gotebo is the smallest of small towns in Oklahoma and the artist's hometown. These words—Venus and Gotebo—suggest that these idealized expectations for female bodies reach women everywhere, affecting their experiences of their bodies.

KAP



Brandi Simpson  
*Everybody Works Here*, 2023  
 Mixed media

A dedicated maker of trash into treasure, *Everybody Works Here* exemplifies Simpson's mixed-media technique that combines found objects with other art-making processes, juxtaposing materials, textures, and ideas. Three glass panels and a used shop rag hang from the discarded section of fence pickets. Each hanging element features a printed image: a photograph, a lace doily, the text of the title, and an Ajax can. Though printed on, the panes of glass remain transparent and reveal the rough surface of the wooden fence. The clear surface of the glass contrasts with the opaque weave of the rag. However, its grease-spotted surface mimics the dark forms of the printed photograph, while the white Ajax can matches the white lace doily. This play of textures engages the visual and kinesthetic senses of the viewer's body as they sort out each element.

Simpson discovered the photograph, with the title "Everybody Works Here" written on the back of it, at the Old Home Supply Store in the local Fairmont neighborhood. The original picture depicts a man bathing in a tub outside, Ajax can in hand, while a woman paints his portrait with a comically large paintbrush and palette. Rather than having to peek over a fence to view the private world of this couple, hanging the elements on the fence invites the viewer to safely delight in the odd, even silly, way these two people pose their bodies. While the title proclaims *Everybody Works Here*, the scene this couple has made through their creative work reminds viewers that bodies are capable of play, too; the serious work of everyday life need not be so serious. Even though the piece itself requires work on the part of the viewer— to look, think, and interpret— it also encourages the viewer to have some fun in the process.

KAP

# **BIBLIOGRAPHY**



Aaronson, Deborah, Diane Fortenberry, and Rebecca Morrill. *Body of Art*. London: Phaidon Press Limited, 2015.

Alfano Miglietti, Francesca. *Extreme Bodies: The Use and Abuse of the Body in Art*. Milan: Skira, 2003.

Alphen, Ernst van. *Staging the Archive: Art and Photography in the Age of New Media*. London: Reaktion Books, 2014.

Alsmith, Adrian J. T. "Bodily Structure and Body Representation." *Synthese (Dordrecht)* 198, no. 3 (2021): 2193–2222.

Arnold, John H. "Voices and Silences." in *History: A Very Short Introduction*, 58-79. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

Arya, Rina. "Taking Apart the Body: Abjection and Body Art." *Performance research* 19, no. 1 (2014): 5–14.

Callahan, Sara. *Art + Archive: Understanding the Archival Turn in Contemporary Art*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2022.

Chaplin, Adrienne Dengerink. "Art and Embodiment: Biological and Phenomenological Contributions to Understanding Beauty and the Aesthetic." *Contemporary Aesthetics* 3, no. 1 (2005): unpaginated.

Crowther, Paul, and Oxford Scholarship Online Philosophy. *Art and Embodiment: From Aesthetics to Self-Consciousness*. New York; Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1993.

Cvoro, Uros. "The Present Body, the Absent Body, and the Formless," *Art Journal* 61, no. 4 (2002): 54–63.

Foster, Hal. "An Archival Impulse," *October* 2004, no. 110 (2004): 3–22.

Kimmelman, Michael. "Making Metaphors of Art and Bodies: Making Metaphors of Art and Bodies." *New York Times*, November 15, 1996.

Leder, Drew. *The Absent Body*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Visible and the Invisible*, edited by Claude Lefort, translated by Alphonso Lingis. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968.
- Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, and Donald A. Landes. *Phenomenology of Perception*. New York: Routledge, 2012.
- Nead, Lynda. "Art History and the Body", *Art History* 15, no. 1 (1992): 104–7.
- O'Reilly, Sally. *The Body in Contemporary Art*. London: Thames & Hudson, 2009.
- Pultz, John. *The Body and the Lens: Photography 1839 to the Present*. New York: H.N. Abrams, 1995.
- Sandino, Linda. "Body Architecture." *Verônica Alkmim França*.  
<https://www.veronicaaf.com/cópia-1>.
- Sokolowski, Robert. *Presence and Absence: A Philosophical Investigation of Language and Being*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978.
- Van der Kolk, Bessel A. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York: Viking, 2014.
- Whitney, Kay. "The Body, The Object, The Other." *Ceramics Monthly* 68, no. 11 (2020): unpaginated.
- WitteMann, Marina. "Object as a Stand in for the Body." Published April 27, 2021.  
<https://www.marinawittemann.com/post/object-as-a-stand-in-for-the-body>.

# **BIOGRAPHIES**

# MEET THE ARTISTS

**Emily Brown** holds a BA in Art History from Baylor University, an MA in Art History from Texas Christian University, and a BFA in Visual Communication Design from the University of Texas at Arlington. She is currently working on her MFA in Visual Communication Design at the University of Texas at Arlington. Her research explores the interdisciplinary use of printmaking and photography in design and the use of collage in presenting alternative narratives based on social commentary design. She is a native of Texarkana, Texas, but considers Fort Worth her adoptive home.

**Paula Currie** is a Texas born artist specializing in sculpture. She completed her undergraduate degree at UTA and graduated Summa Cum Laude in 2023 with a BFA in Art Education. As an artist, she draws upon her life experiences and those of her family for inspiration. She is currently an MFA student at University of Texas Arlington focusing on intermedia. Paula's work has been exhibited in several art exhibitions including: the 2023 TASA Artovation Student Show, the 2022 BFA Show at UTA Gallery, the 2022 TASA Artovation Student Show, and the 2022 Emerging Great Woman Artist Exhibition at Gallery West.

**Shuang Gou** is an MFA student of intermedia at the University of Texas at Arlington. Shuang Gou was born in Luzhou, China in 1988 and received her BFA in Liaocheng University in China. In her artistic career, Shuang Gou has been included in various exhibitions. Upcoming shows include a solo exhibition at Daishaboard Gallery. She hopes her work can communicate well with the beholders and give them a different angle of viewing this world.

**Nijal Munankarmi** is a Newar artist, based in DFW. His work focuses on graphic design, creating simple yet familiar imagery for the viewer. He is currently an MFA student of design and visual communications at the University of Texas at Arlington. He graduated Summa Cum Laude at UTA in 2021 and received a HND at Edinburgh College in 2012. Throughout his artist career, Munankarmi has participated in various design contests and student shows.

**Alfredo "Freddy" Ortega** immigrated to the United States from Chihuahua, Mexico in 2009. He graduated from the University of Texas at El Paso in 2020. Freddy is a first-year MFA student at Texas Christian University. He has received international acclaim through the Ambos Lados traveling exhibition and currently holds the Arlene Smith McKinnon Endowment Purchase Award for Overall Best of Show. His primary medium is painting through which he explores Pop-surreal imagery interwoven with political and satirical messages. Recently, he has incorporated personal narratives into his work.

# MEET THE ARTISTS

**Raul Rodriguez** is an MFA student in his second year at Texas Christian University. Rodriguez is a photographer, artist, curator and educator in Texas. He received a BFA from the University of North Texas College of Visual Arts and Design. He photographs people and things that share stories about community, identity and human resilience through documentary photography and portraiture. His work has been published in Remezcla, NBC News, The Dallas Morning News, Aint-Bad Magazine, Art & Seek and KERA.

**Eli Ruhala** is a multi-disciplinary artist currently pursuing his MFA at Texas Christian University. He received his BFA in 2021 from the Maryland Institute College of Art with a concentration in painting and has exhibited in a range of venues across the country in cities such as Dallas, Miami, New York, and Abilene. He has been featured in *New American Paintings* (#165), *Friend of the Artist* (Vol. 13), and a selection of other publications. Currently he explores building immersive installations and compiling daily drawings to design a model for queer love.

**Michael Scogin** is an MFA student of Intermedia at the University of Texas at Arlington. He graduated Summa Cum Laude at UTA in 2019 with a BFA in Sculpture. His artworks connect the perspectives and experiences of blue-collar workers and laborers within art. Scogin has exhibited in various exhibitions including: the 2023 Southern at SAS Gallerie, the 2023 Polarize at Austin College, the 2023 Ecologies at Gallery West, and the 2022 Small Works at Art Room Ft Worth.

**Brandi Alyson Simpson** is a Texas-based, mixed-media artist, whose practice is deeply rooted in the female experience and the social roles of women. Brandi earned her BFA in Studio Arts with an emphasis on Sculpture from the University of Texas Arlington and is currently pursuing her MFA in Glass Studies from UTA. Brandi's work often explores how experiences shape how we value and perceive ourselves and our bodies.

**Lauren Walker** is an MFA student in her third year at Texas Christian University. She explores the nature of domestic spaces through painting, sculpture, and ceramics. Her work often utilizes playful and fun colors to reference a dollhouse as she investigates and deconstructs narratives of domestic spaces. Outside of the current Embodiment exhibition, Walker has been featured in multiple shows around the Dallas-Fort Worth area including Arts Fort Worth, The Pool Near Southside, Fort Worth Contemporary Arts, and 500X Gallery. She will graduate with an MFA in Painting in 2024.

# MEET THE CURATORS

**Abby Bryant** completed her undergraduate degree in History of Art and Architectural History at the University of Edinburgh in 2022. She currently works at the Kimbell Art Museum as a Museum Educator and is a first year MA Art History student at Texas Christian University. Her interests revolve around visual culture of the twentieth century, especially issues tied to urbanism, class and cultural identity in a rapidly globalizing world.

**Gabi Kaminski** is a first year MA in Art History student at Texas Christian University. They received a BA in History and Art History at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Although primarily focused on 18-19th century Polish art, Gabi is interested in expanding their research to a global scale (non-Western). They aim to pursue work in museum collections after graduation. Also, maybe pursue a Ph.D. in Art History.

**Alex Monge** is a first year MA student in the Art History program at Texas Christian University. She received her BA in Spanish at Arcadia University with minors in Italian and History in 2023. This is her first time formally studying art history. She is eager to gain a deeper sense of art's place in global cultures and civilizations. Alex's Mexican heritage greatly influences her interests with Mesoamerican art being her main focus. She hopes to explore work in the museum field as an educator or registrar.

**Katie Perroni** completed her BA in Art History and English at Oklahoma State University and is now a first year MA student at Texas Christian University. She has previous museum experience working as a tour coordinator for the Kimbell Art Museum for six years. Before beginning her MA, Katie taught high school AP English literature and AP Art History in Fort Worth, Texas. Katie's interests range far and wide, but she is planning to focus on 18th-century European art. Her hope is to pursue educational work, either in a museum or school setting.