MFA EXHIBITION
SPRING 2020
The Art & Art History Department of The University of Texas at Arlington is pleased to present the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition through The Gallery at UTA. The Master of Fine Arts is a professional graduate degree in the practice of art – unique in that it is the artist's terminal academic degree. The MFA in the Art & Art History Department offers students a broad range of study and exploration within the areas of Intermedia, Film and Video, Glass, and Visual Communication Design. As a requirement for completion of the degree, candidates are required to present a culminating exhibition demonstrating excellence in their chosen field. The Spring 2020 exhibition features four artists – Mahyasadat Davachi, Alexandra Feeney, Addison Ginsberg, and Phillip King – showcasing their work in glass and visual communication design.

Darryl Lauster, MFA Director states, “While this exhibition has been moved to an online format in compliance with policies related to the COVID-19 outbreak, each of these artists have worked hard to fulfil their requirements under difficult conditions. The originality of this MFA thesis exhibition resides between the dynamic intersection of the object and its virtual image. It suggests a visual account of each artist’s ongoing transformation and individual studio practice. Their art reveals the scope and diversity of the artists within the MFA program at UTA at the nascent years of a new century.”

For more information, contact Darryl Lauster 817-272-0143
Mahyasadat Davachi was born and raised in Iran, where she earned her BFA in graphic design. In 2014, she had the opportunity to come to the United States to pursue her MFA degree in Visual Communication Design. A rich culture, particularly patterns on traditional pottery and textile, first sparked her interest in graphic design. She remembers being young and looking at the endless lines and shapes of her country’s art and thinking, “I want to design things like that one day!” Now, having grown up, she has traded pencils and paper for design projects on her laptop.

**STATEMENT:**

“Imposed Thought” shows the relationship between gender and political power that has traditionally been a concern of feminist research. Women’s coverage is an important symbol of the values of Islamic fundamentalism. Forced hijab was not the only policy, but it was the starting point for formulating an integrated policy on dealing with women in Iranian culture.

1. Compulsory hijab
2. Gender discrimination
3. Gender separation
4. Reducing the role of women as mothers, spouses or housewives

The symbolic significance of the struggle to abolish forced hijab is essential to the gender challenge and the “women’s revolution” against the values of the Islamic state, and in defense of individual rights in line with gender equality and secular values.

In my work, I have examined social awareness and the environment – especially urban, industrial and natural. I am interested in the intersection between place – city or nature – and human perception and utilization throughout history. As a designer who addresses the topics or issues that are neglected and denied by our society, I hope that my works arouses appreciation and consciousness for the natural world. I believe that we can build a successful future for humanity if we regain a greater awareness of our planet’s life and attune ourselves with the natural world, understand it better, and take better stewardship thereof.

*Installation view Hijab Posters with Tablet Screen and Painted Headphone Stand, 2019, 3 Digital prints, wood, tablet, headphones, painted wood stand, posters 36” x 24” each; tablet 10” x 10”; headphone stand 10” x 15”*
Headphone Stand, 2019, wood, headphones, painted stand 10” x 15”

Hijab Posters, 2019, digital prints, 36” x 24” each

Tablet Screen, 2019, wood, tablet, 10” x 10”
Ali Feeney  

BIO:  

Born in the mountains of Colorado in 1992, Ali Feeney is an emerging artist and educator. She creates mixed media sculptures exploring adoption and perspectives of her childhood. Feeney received a BFA concentrating in glass and sculpture from Alfred University in 2015 with honors. She has been internationally exhibited in publications such as The Glass Art Society Student Exhibition as a Juror’s Pick. She has also shown work at Var West Gallery in Milwaukee, The Midway Gallery in San Francisco, and Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA. Feeney travels extensively to pursue her passion for glass and has worked and taught at a variety of institutions such as Pilchuck Glass School, the Studio Corning, Santa Reparata International School of Art, and the Chrysler Museum of Art. Feeney is currently attending The University of Texas at Arlington as an MFA candidate.

STATEMENT:  

My work is a series of pieces that are based on my perspective to discuss emotionally complex topics. Adoption is the central focus within my artistic practice and I create works that emphasize different facets that influence adoption as a whole. Some aspects of adoption that I am interested in are the relationships between the child and the mothers, mourning as well as guilt as an adoptee, and nurture versus nature. These topics are interesting to me because I have always wondered about how much I resembled my birth parents and if I did things the same way they did. With hopeful moments of connection came depression and longing for connection followed by guilt for disrupting their lives. These conversations are important to me to emphasize as many people may not necessarily connect with adoption personally, however, many can connect with feelings of longing, disconnect, guilt, and fear of the unknown. Adoption offers a unique opportunity to discuss fragility within the context of an equally sensitive topic. Empathy is highly important within my work as it is a consideration I have when navigating different relationships between myself and my two families.

To begin unpacking such a topic, I look to forces of influence in people’s lives as they were for me. Landscapes and the communities that reside in our lives are major shaping influences that determine who we become. Home extends beyond a dwelling, it expands to include a community and the land surrounding. I created this piece to discuss how landscapes inform identity and how they shaped who I was to become. In the book Dry Place: Landscapes of Belonging and Exclusion, Patricia L. Price discusses human’s relationship to land and the significance it has on individuals who inhabit it. She goes on to say, “The same physical site may be dreamed, ignored, appropriated, or simply lived differently by different individuals or groups simultaneously. It is in this layered approach to place making, this simultaneity of stories, and the politics of making one’s voice heard, that place constantly, problematically materializes.” Our relationship to the land is unique and extends beyond just territory as we connect to it emotionally. This relationship to place is a core to human connection.

My work is a combination of two-dimensional and three-dimensional pieces to discuss the fragility of the relationships and the complexity of identity as an adoptee. I utilize glass as a vehicle to discuss fragility, clarity, and transformative qualities that is mirrored within my story. Glass is a material I use in my work to emphasize my perceptions of myself or the situation. It also offers the object to take in its environment visually, it changes color and texture internally as the environment around it changes. A blank slate ready to take an impression.

In addition to glass, I often employ materials that reference domesticity and femininity to speak on the matriarchs of my life. Their influence has guided me through life and passed down to me trades skills such as quilting, knitting, and felting. These materials are important to my work because I am speaking on presence within the home, influence on child-rearing and family bonding. They also reference a long history of heritage and culture that was exclusive to the families and trade skills respectively.

How long have you been carrying around that moment? 2019. video documentation of performance
How long have you been carrying around that moment? 2019.
video documentation of performance
Home Sweet Home, 2020, watercolor and pen, 11” x 8”

Between Us, 2020, watercolor and pen, 11” x 8”
Addison Ginsberg

BIO:
Addison Ginsberg grew up in Iowa. She received her BA in Anthropology from Tulane University in New Orleans. Prior to pursuing an MFA, Ginsberg cultivated an eclectic skill set while working as a custom fabricator for the music production industry and as an outreach coordinator and curriculum designer for museums in Iowa and Louisiana. Ginsberg draws from her professional and academic background to create work that is socially minded and intimately engaging. Addison is a current MFA candidate in glass at the University of Texas at Arlington where she teaches as an instructor of record in sculpture and glass.

STATEMENT:
This body of work focuses on the dynamic of the female body in traditionally human-made, male-dominated industrial spaces. Women have always been present in industrial trade spaces, but they are often overlooked (Perez). Machinery and personal protection equipment (PPE) are not designed to work with our bodies and materials are frequently produced and sold in units that can put added strains on our statistically smaller frames. Even when women can outwardly adapt to some of these challenges, we often quietly compromise our health in the process. In an effort to address this disparity, I have been manipulating and recontextualizing industrial materials and their association with "maleness". I maintain key elements of the material forms to keep them recognizable but alter the application. By recontextualizing them I hope to androgenize these materials to encourage the viewer to see traditionally male dominated trade and industrial spaces as places where the entire spectrum of gendered bodies should be taken into consideration. The work in this body is comprised of community-based activism that manifests as performances, genderbending sculptural work, and collaborative and interactive sculpture.

Collective Effort, 2019-20, drop cloth, mason twine, steel, 8.5' x 11' x 7''; created with Tanya Daniels, Ellen Ginsberg, Hannah Ginsberg, and Ziesse Ginsberg
Fits Like a Glove, 2019, steel, welding gloves, silk embroidery thread, 18" x 18" x 36"
5'4", 2020, chalk, snap line, 9' x 9'
Objects for Creating a Gathering 2019 - 20, steel, drop cloth, ratchet strap, electrical heat shrink, mason twine, safety orange spray paint, each unit 21” x 21” x 21”
Women’s Metal Working Workshops, July - August 2019, A series of workshops covering basic metal working but also safety concerns specific to women.
Phillip King

BIO:

Phillip King is an artist born and raised in Cottage Grove, MN. He attended the University of Wisconsin-River Falls and graduated with a Bachelor of Science-Broad Area Art degree with an emphasis in glass in 2013. In his studio practice he focuses on concepts concerning function, entropy, containment, and absurdity. In 2012, King traveled overseas to Europe in a study abroad program to research printmaking techniques on glass. During his college career King worked as an artist assistant for Eoin Breadon in River Falls, WI. In 2014, King worked as a studio assistant at the Chrysler Museum Glass Studio and was an Artist-In-Residence at The Works Museum in Newark, OH in the fall. From January to April 2015, King was a Studio Intern at STARworks NC Center for Creative Enterprise. That summer he traveled to India to further his international travels. King then worked as a studio assistant at Wheaton Arts and Cultural Center. He has exhibited his work nationally, most recently at Terminal 136 in San Antonio, TX, and the Portsmouth Museum in Portsmouth, VA. Currently King is a Master of Fine Arts-Glass candidate at the University of Texas Arlington, and teaches glassblowing classes at Dallas Glass Art.

STATEMENT:

My artwork focuses on constructing and deconstructing a variety of materials to create sculptural works that reverse, remove, or shift an object’s perceived function. The objects and materials I use consist of items that are perceived or intended to contain matter. In switching the way in which an object is intended to contain, or how it physically functions, I aim to render a sense of how we interpret and analyze space and form within an environment, and how this influences the understanding of the materials presented to the viewer.

The works I present are not meant to be interpreted as narrative; rather they are meant to confront the viewer with material combinations that arouse curiosity as to the relations between these materials.

"Volumetric Reversal", 2020, blown and solid sculpted glass, 8" W x 8" L x 10" H

"Preposterous Cup", 2020, blown glass, 3.5" W x 6" L x 6.75" H
"Untitled (Self-Contained #3)". 2019, blown and hot tack fused glass, 4" W x 4" L x 10" H

"Untitled (Self-Contained #2)". 2019, blown and hot tack fused glass, 5" W x 5" L x 5" H
"Untitled (Self-Contained #1)“, 2019, blown and hot tack fused glass, 5” W x 5” L x 10” H
"Constricted", 2019, blown glass and zip ties, 12" W x 25" L x 12" H

"Preposterous Punt", 2019, blown glass and epoxy, 3" W x 3" L x 10" H
"Preposterous Drinking Set #1", 2019, blown glass, dimensions vary

"Preposterous Drinking Set #2", 2019, blown glass, dimensions vary
THANK YOU!

The Gallery at UTA
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www.uta.edu/gallery

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