



SHOALS **ART** INVITATIONAL

A juried exhibition by the University of North Alabama
Department of Visual Arts and Design

September 23 – October 25, 2024

Shoals Art Invitational

With great delight, the University of North Alabama Department of Visual Arts and Design presents its first regional juried exhibition, the Shoals Art Invitational. This exhibition aims to introduce a broader scope of contemporary art to North Alabama, contributes to developing the region's creative culture, and provides an opportunity to build the University's teaching resources. The Shoals Art Invitational Call for Entries invited artists aged eighteen and older from the southeastern United States to participate. Works created in any art medium on paper or using paper materials as a primary element were eligible for consideration. All the works presented in the 2024 exhibition are original and executed by the participating artists. This year's exhibition brings together thirty-two works of art by twenty-one artists.

Juror's Statement

**Marie Bukowski, Dean & Professor
College of Fine Arts, Wichita State University**

It was my great pleasure and honor to serve as juror for this inaugural Shoals Art Invitational Regional Juried Exhibition. The quality and diversity of submissions was truly impressive, making the selection process both exciting and challenging. In reviewing the entries, I looked for works that demonstrated technical skill, originality, and a unique approach to materials. I sought pieces that pushed boundaries, took creative risks, and offered fresh perspectives on both traditional and contemporary themes. Equally important was the overall impact and ability of a work to provoke thought, stir emotion, or capture the imagination.

Given the regional focus of this exhibition, I also aimed to select pieces that collectively showcased the rich artistic talent and varied cultural influences of the area. The final selection represents a range of media, styles, and subject matter - from landscapes that capture the unique beauty of the region to abstract works exploring universal human experiences. Narrowing down the submissions to the final selection was no easy task.

The overall caliber of entries bodes extremely well for the vitality of the regional arts community. This inaugural exhibition sets a high bar and establishes an exciting foundation to build upon in future years. I hope visitors will be as inspired and moved by this collection as I was throughout the jurying process.



Todd Johnson
Pieces of Cake, 2021
 acrylic on paint chip, 3" x 5"

As an art teacher, my workday reality involves sharing the images and ideas of other highly regarded artists with my students. In the studio myself, it seems only natural that this daily experience would inform my own art practice. Indeed, my interest in acrylic painting in miniature on paint store color samples is a reflection upon the nature of art itself. That is, I'm more broadly interested in the entirety of ideas surrounding the making, understanding and consuming of art. I don't name the paint chip or originate the painting. But in choosing the paint chip and corresponding image, the thoughts of other artists and critics are reflected in my thinking, and they give visual form to my work. Where my work begins and ends, however, is called into question, and in doing so becomes a platform for exploring new meanings. Most significantly, the work questions what it means to "know" a work of art.



Thomas Rosenow
Death!, 2024
 lasercut relief and collage on rag paper,
 28" x 36"

This series of work uses digital collages composed of found imagery to create narratives about how the internet shapes our view of the world. I've had access to the internet since age 9 and have been obsessively online since then. Right now, my generation is "guinea pigging" the era of social media and algorithmically-sorted content feeds. I investigate this situation by compiling screenshots of videos, comment sections, and memes then digitally abstracting them into bitmapped patterns. This breakdown into bitmapping creates an important separation from the source material and produces as "flattening" effect to all parts of the collage. I find this analogous to how, when viewing news through a phone, the content is comes across as a curated slurry of information. When the algorithm presents me with jokes and memes next to images of ecological disaster and war, it's hard to have the emotional elasticity to truly understand everything I'm seeing.



Cora Van Vleet
Negative Five Points, 2024
 oil on panel, 16" x 16" x .25"

Repetition is my ritual in the studio. I will take a shape and repeat it many times. Common sense dictates that the more you repeat a form, the better you know it. Repetition is also a process that offers up quirks. Blemishes occur. An ink pen inexplicably provides an unplanned wavy line. The simple act of breathing causes a brush to suddenly sway off-kilter. Each image has imperfections. Are they flaws? A stray mark frequently leads me on an unexpected trajectory or path. I parallel these thoughts to the experience of being alive in an imperfect world and aim to embrace these incongruities as part of the full tapestry of the artistic process.



Michael Herron
Despair, 2023
 digital photography, 18.5" x 6.5" x 1"

I am a business professional who has had a lifelong love for both Visual Arts and Performing Arts. I have been active in both stage and film productions as an actor and have recently switched my focus to the Visual Arts. The work, *Despair*, is from Valley of Fire State Park in Nevada. I named it *Despair* because of the vastness of the desert and the loneliness that the only person in the picture must feel when viewed as the lone person in this rugged environment. Whenever I first see a landscape, I know immediately if it will make a great impression as a piece of art. The landscape itself takes over and shows me how to frame it and present it for the enjoyment of all who see the end result.



Kris Blitz Shelledy
Spirit Moves, 2021
 alcohol inks, 11" x 9" x 1"

A self-taught artist, originally from the Mid-West, currently in the Northern Tennessee Valley. Loves mixed media, fluid art, inks, textures, creating from the calm and the gentleness of nature. Having participated in juried shows since 2022, local invitational exhibits and local galleries. Has enjoyed commission work, which provides an opportunity and challenge to create something specific and personal for someone's home, vacation home or business.



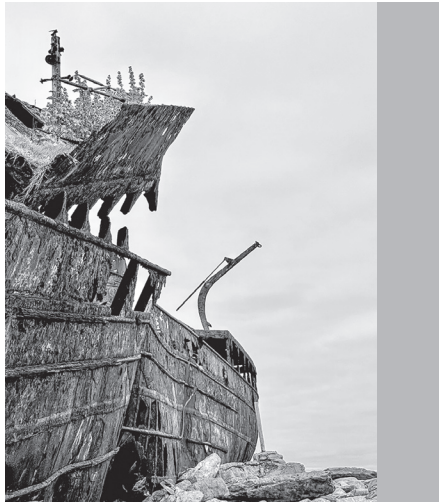
Alex Robison
Gateway, 2024
black and white film print, 10" x 8"

Infrared photography intrigues me because of its ability to capture light beyond what the human eye can see. It brings a new light to the image, revealing an invisible world that exists within ours. With this ability, infrared photography gives me a different perspective while transforming the scenes I capture. The distinctive pitch-black skies paired with the snow-white vegetation create a satisfying contrast that fuels my chase for this form of photography. Images have such a personality when captured in this manner and can speak to the viewer much differently than with black-and-white photography.



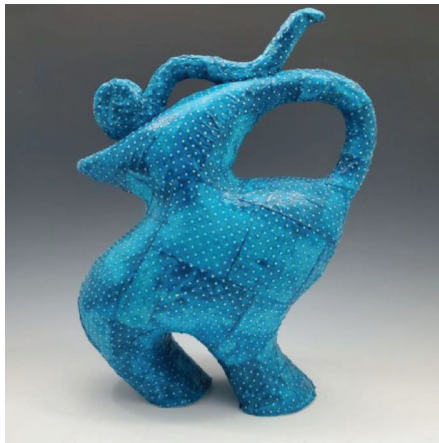
Pam Parker
Orange Peppers, 2023
soft pastel, 8.25" x 10.5"

I love the beautiful medium of pastels. I've chosen still lifes as my subjects because I enjoy putting together random objects into compositions of textures, shapes and colors that allow me to explore value, depth and design to create timeless images in the tradition of the old masters.



Sarah Vojnovich
Plassey Shipwreck, 2023
digital photography, 14" x 11"

Sarah Ashleigh Vojnovich is an upcoming December 2024 graduate at UNC Charlotte in Charlotte, NC. Vojnovich is pursuing a BFA in Photography with a minor in Art History. Her speciality is landscape and animal photography although she enjoys experimenting with all types of photography. She hopes to attend graduate school for a dual Master's program consisting of an MFA in Photography and an MA in Museum Studies or Museum Education.



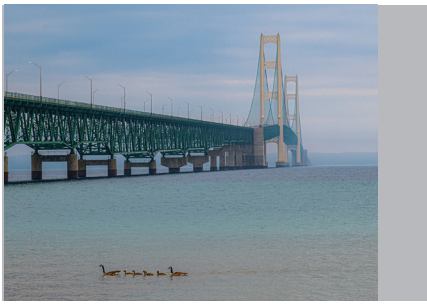
Sooyeon Kim
Celestial Whispers, 2022
handmade paper, 14" x 12" x 5"

My work is deeply inspired by nature, history, identity, and literature, distilled into simplified forms that explore the vast possibilities of vessel shapes in both functional and sculptural contexts. I utilize various materials, including paper, wire, and clay, applying innovative and boundary-pushing techniques. This sculptural teapot embodies the Korean concept of the 'big vessel,' symbolizing individuals with expansive hearts and personalities. It serves as a self-portrait, blending the female form into a streamlined design. The teapot, a vessel that both contains and dispenses, represents my role as a conduit for sharing talents, kindness, and energy. Like a teapot serves only when it tilts, this piece is a metaphor for selflessness and humility, exploring service, respect, and the importance of virtuous character in giving. My work aspires to enrich lives, pouring my essence into the world to make a positive impact.



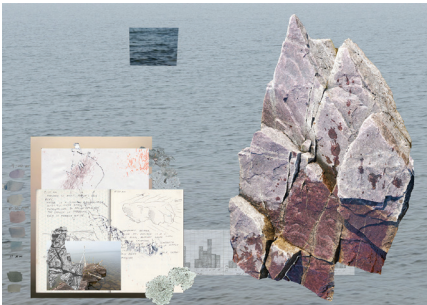
Taryn Kimbrough
Clara, 2024
film photography, 10" x 8"

I am an artist who works across several mediums including painting, drawing, and photography. Details have always caught my attention. I use art to capture the minutia of a moment that is part of a larger story. The intentionality engrained in film photography allows me to be more aware of these minute details. There is always an element of softness present in my work reflective of how I interact with the world. Each of my pieces shows the intrinsic beauty in the simplicity of these seemingly small moments.



Philip Hallmark
Mackinac Morning, 2024
 digital photography, 16" x 20" x 1"

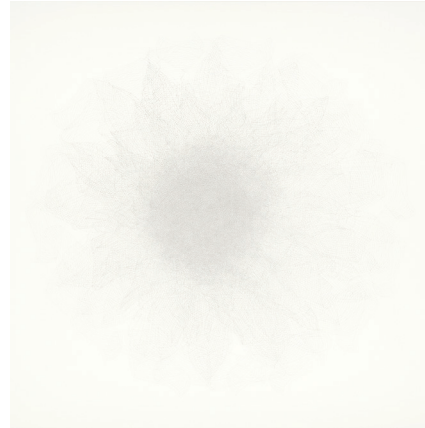
My photography is a tribute to my travels, as seen through the lens of my camera. It is a chance to share the beauty I see during my travels with others who may not have an opportunity to experience it. Nothing brings me joy like capturing with my camera a spectacular view, a majestic lighthouse, or the natural beauty of wildlife that I can share with others. I strive to capture the perfect light and shadows as they play across landscapes. I patiently wait for the perfect shot of the texture of feathers, fur, or sharpness of eyes in my animal shots. Through my photography, my ultimate goal is for people to have the wow feeling as if they are there experiencing what I see.



Claudia O'Steen
Keweenaw 7.18.21, 2023
 photo collage mounted, 24" x 34" x 1"

Claudia O'Steen is an interdisciplinary artist whose work combines sculpture, video, installation, writing, & performance. Through her research-based practice, she examines shifting landscapes via navigation, exploration, perception, & failure. She creates languages to convey distance, scale, & direction, giving evidence to a process that has taken place & creates landscapes supplemented by scientific curiosity & human memory. O'Steen's work

points to a never-ending process, a series of attempts to measure an infinite line, to chart the color of the sky, to capture the single point where a shift occurs in a limitless expanse. She uses sculpture as a tool for observation and perception by creating instruments and devices that capture and translate transitional moments, returning information distorted, amplified, and transformed. Failure, error, and disorientation are all important means to understanding her circuitous process of discovery.



Joey Tigert
Seed, 2024
 graphite and digital drawing
 on Hahnemuhle paper, 32" x 32" x 2"

My creative practice explores how advancements in technology intersect with human perception and the natural world. It's concerned with the interaction between our natural and rapidly emerging virtual environment, and I'm interested in how conscious we are of the changes that occur while immersed in this new space. My process involves converting 3D forms into drawings, creating a place where subtle variation evolves as my hand is separated from the work. This interaction creates confusion between what is digitally oriented vs. handcrafted. My work presents this intersection as a perceivable environment, one that is recognizable but also distinct from both interpretations of reality. Humanity has reached a place of rapid technological maturation, and we have arrived at a position where the future contains boundless opportunities and immeasurable consequences. We each enter this coplanar environment at definable points, but we reach outward into the entanglement of virtual reality.



Rodrigo Franzao
Mystic Lagoon, 2024
 acrylic resin on premium German eco-friendly paper infused with latex, mounted on canvas, 24" x 18"

Rodrigo Franzao is a contemporary artist who lives and works between New York, New Orleans, and São Paulo, focusing on creating textile art and mixed media. Using fabrics, acrylic paints, and eco-friendly paper, he emphasizes his commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. Each of Franzao's works is an intricate interplay of light, shadow, color, and texture, expressed through meticulously folded and layered paper strips on canvas, resulting in a dynamic effect reminiscent of kinetic art. With an academic background in Literature and Arts, an MBA in Museology and Art History, and specialization in Psycho pedagogy and Art Therapy, Franzao grounds his practice in the dynamic interaction of forms, colors, and textures. In 2019, he founded the Virtual Museum, Textile Museum, and the art magazine InTheArts, dedicated to contemporary textile art and mixed media, thus expanding his influence and research in this field.



Chris Rohling
Sinjang-dong 1-Ro, 2024
 film photography, 9" x 6" x 1"

I use a viewfinder to compose full-frame images in the street photography style around my home and during my travels. Black-and-white film is my preferred medium because the traditional photographic process demands deliberate decision-making. With film, I find myself considering the medium's capabilities with each exposure, specifically how it influences light and impacts aesthetics. Furthermore, concentrating on the medium and composing with film allows me to feel more in touch with my subject.



Vanessa Osmon
Before the Seasons Ends, 2024
 oil, pastel, gouache, spray paint on arches
 oil mounted, 36" x 34" x 2"

Military spouses move every 2-3 years across cities, states, and countries. As a military spouse of 20 years, I investigate identity, belonging, and community through a feminist lens in an ever-shifting lifestyle. My work explores these universal themes through a process similar to military life: the chaotic and relentless cycle of breaking down and starting over. I utilize line to draw and redefine figures while spray paint, gouache, and oil are used to destabilize them. This visual representation of the disruptive mechanisms that shape our lives is repeated, creating a layered, unfinished look. My surfaces often reveal traces of unresolved figures or figures partially obscured by brushwork and lines, because I believe that as military spouses repeatedly start over it is difficult to reach their full potential. Furthermore, the work highlights spouses' sacrifices during their stressful itinerant life: goodbyes are often and never easy, careers are left, and dreams are put on hold.



Jessica Smith
Loom, 2024
 watercolor on paper, 135" x 36"

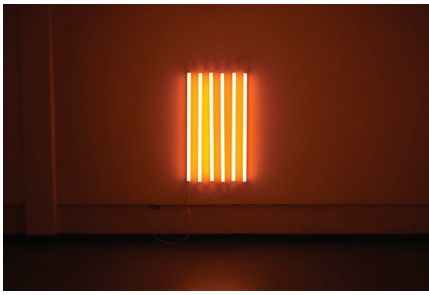
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Allie Craig
Rain in the City, 2024
 acrylic, tempera stick, oil pastel on paper,
 24" x 18"

A. A. Craig is a Huntsville, AL native exploring expressive and impressionist abstracted works in mixed media. Her works seek to provoke the fine line between poetry and painting. She has received a B. A. in English with a minor in Studio Arts from the University of Alabama in Huntsville. She creates mixed media paintings, poetry, short fiction, and zines. Her work begs the question, what do you see? How do you know? She hopes to present the viewer with an opportunity to craft their own visual experience. Her works on paper are quick, expressive, and quietly performative. They are a call to action to play - first thought, best thought out in the open.



Adam Farcus
The Color Andrea Estrada, a funeral director, chose to represent her feelings about climate change. 2024
gels, lights, hardware, 36" x 24" x 3"

My work investigates with the negative emotional ramifications of and positive emotional responses to climate change. Many of my works have a purposeful ambiguity created through abstraction and juxtaposition which point toward the often unsettling and chaotic state of our planet and society. The social-political climate and dire environmental state of our society cause specific kinds of fear, anxiety, complacency, and hopelessness that are stultifying. In opposition to and persistence against these emotions, my work offers viewers, participants, and collaborators a physical embodiment of these emotions and a kind of care. My goal is to instill a complex emotional relationship with the phenomena. The purpose of my work is to ask viewers not to ignore climate change or its effects, but to confront their fears and anxieties, acknowledge how we are part of the issues, and find motivation and strength to be part of the solutions.



Colin McLain
Local, 2024
four color screen print, 14" x 9"

This series of work deals with nostalgia and photography as processed through a digital format. Photographs are reproduced via screen print with modified color while thinking about the initial mood when they were taken. This particular set of images was taken from a trip to Seattle and Gastown Vancouver Canada.



Justin Remo
Swallow Your Pride, 2023
woodcut print, 35" x 21" x 1"

My work explores the interpersonal weight of solastalgia, existential distress caused by negative environmental change. I aim to convey my own solastalgic experiences and the conflicting complicated emotions I feel towards my decomposing interpersonal friendships, the chaotic degradation of my home, and the frighteningly rapid obliteration of our planet and the animals we share it with.

Hand-carved into plywood, the matrices of these prints become memorial artifacts, satisfying the raw tangible craftsmanship of relief printmaking, and physically preserving every doubt and regret engraved into their surface. his series stands as a bittersweet memorial to the global and interpersonal ecosystems I have inhabited during my adolescent years, and a farewell to the weight of my personal history as I witness the place from which my life began continuing to sink from a distance.

The University of North Alabama is an accredited, comprehensive regional state university offering undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral degree programs through the Colleges of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering; the Sanders College of Business and Technology; Education and Human Sciences; and the Anderson College of Nursing and Health Professions. The Department of Visual Arts and Design in the College of Arts and Sciences and Engineering is an accredited institutional member of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design.

Nestled in the heart of Florence, UNA occupies a 130-acre campus in a four-city area that includes Muscle Shoals, Sheffield, and Tuscumbia, collectively known as the Shoals. The University is an equal opportunity institution and does not discriminate in the admission policy on the basis of race, color, sex, religion, disability, age, or national origin.



VISUAL ARTS *and* DESIGN

University of NORTH ALABAMA