

NOT IN SHOW



# NOT IN SHOW

May Abou-Khalil  
Tessa Chai  
Molly Leach  
Emily Lehman  
Megan Sagastume

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THE TROUT GALLERY, Dickinson College



# Introduction

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The senior seminar is the capstone experience of the studio art concentration in the Department of Art & Art History at Dickinson College. This exhibition is the culmination of an intensive period of artistic development that spans both semesters of the senior year. During this time, students are pushed to challenge their notions of art and develop a unified body of work that is equally considerate of both technical and conceptual aspects. True to the nature of a liberal arts education, students are encouraged to think across boundaries and draw from four years of rigorous learning and life experience in order to explore the ideas that have captivated them.

The title of this year's exhibition, *Not in Show*, is a reference to all of the work made that will not be seen in the exhibition. The work in this catalogue, and the exhibition, are the success stories. It took many failed works and a strong sense of resolve in order to get to this point. Specifically, what *Not in Show* also attempts to address are the unknown aspects in the process of creation,

the struggles that take place in and out of the studio, and the moments of surprise discoveries and seeming defeat. If the students in the seminar learned anything through the course of the year, it is that any worthwhile endeavor takes much work and persistence. More than leaving Dickinson with a strong portfolio, it is our hope that students leave with a resilience and stubbornness that allow them to work through situations that will continue to confront them both in and out of the studio.

Todd Arsenault  
Assistant Professor of Art



# May Abou-Khalil

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The foundation of my work is largely based on techniques associated with printmaking; its rigid emphasis on process, and the ability to make multiples, serve as a basis for my work. I do not use the printmaking medium in a way that adheres closely to tradition, but rather approach it in an experimental manner that challenges the conventions associated with it.

Much of my work is based on various dichotomies such as the relationship between two- and three-dimensionality, abstraction and representation, and organic versus graphic imagery. While I am moving towards a synthesis of these dichotomies, I recognize that my work also thrives on them and it is the tension that exists between these opposing forces that establishes an important dynamic in the work.

I have always had an obsession with miniatures, and while the small scale is natural for me, it also forces the viewer to look more closely and become immersed in the environment of the work. The environment is usually based on patterns that I am drawn to in everyday objects and nature. Patterning has a rhythm and repetition that creates a sense of time and serves as a ground for the figure. The figures in these worlds are meant to be

anonymous, which keeps the narrative possibilities more open for interpretation. The relationship between scale, subject matter, and presentation is meant to draw the viewer into the larger world that exists among various pieces, encouraging them to draw conclusions of their own.



Untitled, 2014, ink on mylar, 8 x 8 inches





Untitled, 2014, ink on mylar, 3½ x 2½ inches



Untitled, 2013, sharpie on shrinky dinks, 2 x 2 inches





Untitled, 2014, ink on paper, 2 x 2 inches



Untitled, 2014, ink on paper, 13 x 1 ½ inches

# Tesha Chai

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After four years of studying away from my native Jamaica, I have found a new identity as someone who is more open and free to explore in a place where I feel less inhibited. Upon my arrival in America, I was the introverted, relatively subservient daughter of a Chinese family in Jamaica. I find it intriguing how my temperament, values, and beliefs can change so substantially as I move from one environment to the other.

My process of making has been driven by this newfound freedom and recognition that the environment in which an artist exists has a profound impact on what they make. My work is ultimately an exploration of my inner reflections and subconscious impulses. It is a form of reflection and meditation that is expressed by the marks and shapes I place on the page at a specific moment in time.

I have an interest in many types of imagery and my work deals with both abstraction and representation. For a long time I worked from photographs, but abandoned this approach as it was too specific and predictable. I want the drawings to have a connection to the body and find that the paper can be manipulated to take on a visceral, skin-like quality. In this sense, the paper becomes a material that has the ability to work as a metaphor for my exploration of self-identity.



Untitled, 2014, charcoal and oil paint on paper, 47 x 66 inches





*Outcropping*, 2014, charcoal and pen on paper, 22 x 35 inches





*Self-Portrait*, 2014, charcoal on newsprint, 18 x 24 inches

# Molly Leach

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Frustration drives much of what I do. Contemporary culture is a source of vexation for me and I use drawing as a way to question and challenge the conventions of society, striving to better understand the world around me. The drawing process is a source of liberation, and a venue where I can investigate cultural issues and other sources of fascination. The idea of flight is also something I explore in my work. It interests me in a physical sense and also represents a metaphorical escape from the constraints of society and the limitations of the body. The visceral journey of making art gives me that sense of escape, even if just for that moment.

Though I do not begin with a set narrative construct in mind, as the drawings develop and evolve they begin to tell a story. While they might seem suggestive, the narratives and elements of my drawings are purposely open to interpretation. A common visual element of my work is the dark, stormy atmosphere. The atmosphere appears to be ominous, but there are elements of intense light that provide glimmers of hope in the dark chaos.

I have gone through various modes of working this past year and have experimented with materials in an alchemic manner, trying various combinations until something resonated. Through these experiments I began to use drywall as a drawing surface. Its lack of traditional ties to art history lift any constraints and preconceived notions associated with paper. The weight and resistance of the material allow me to work with a physicality that paper does not, thus bringing a greater possibility of surprise to the process.



*One Day Too Many*, 2014, charcoal, paper, acrylic paint, oil paint, oil stick, ink, glue, puffy paint, water, and plaster on paper, 47 x115 inches





*Language with No Ears*, 2014, charcoal, paper, glue, puffy paint,  
and ink on drywall, 15 x 21 inches





*Destiné à freiner les heures*, 2014, charcoal, paper, acrylic paint, oil paint, oil stick, ink, and glue on drywall, 16 x 27 inches

# Emily Lehman

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*I wonder what it would be like to be a maggot.  
I imagine that I would see an infinite expanse of  
colors and shapes.  
They would pass by me, the world would move  
around me, and I would exist.  
To be alive and unassuming would be an  
incredible feat.*

Emily Lehman, March 2014

The meanings and context of my paintings are important to me, but I do not feel the need to share them explicitly with my audience. I want the paintings to be open to interpretation and for the viewer to decipher them based on their own experiences.

Within the human brain is a world of visual fragments and ideas that can serve as a vehicle for artistic exploration. In my studio practice, I use these raw pieces as part of a larger visual investigation that includes references to the body and imagery from found sources.

My work is developed through an intensive process that usually unfolds over a long stretch of time. In their final appearance the paintings and drawings are mainly abstract, but beyond this ambiguous nature, I want them to have a sense of familiarity that can engage the viewer. For example, some of the abstract forms in my paintings evoke cellular matter. This comes from a visual deconstruction of the human figure, as though I am exploring the body from outside to inside in order to explore the ways we perceive the body in our imaginations.





*The Mother*, 2013-2014, oil and mixed media on canvas, 62 x 49 inches





*Maude's Brunch*, 2013-2014, oil, acrylic, sharpie, and mixed media on masonite, 31 x 23 inches





*Inhabited*, 2014, ink and acrylic on paper, 17 x 11 inches

# Megan Sagastume

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I share a close personal connection with the individuals depicted in my work. It is through this intimate understanding in which I hope to convey a sense of emotion that goes beyond that of a photograph. I choose to use photographs as a source because they freeze the subject in a specific time and place—moments when the individual is lost in their thoughts or actions, unaware of the camera. I render important details and emotional qualities through my empirical knowledge of the individual.

I want to transform the subjects of my drawings and give them a sense of monumentality that portrays their significance to me. In doing this, I utilize exaggerated points of view and skew the perspective in a way that makes the figures feel like they can barely be contained on the page. I also distort parts of the body, such as hands, in a way that makes them more significant and can work to strengthen the narrative of the figure.

I am attracted to the effects of light on the skin. Because of this, there is not a specific sense of place in my drawings, but rather a particular sense of light on and around the figure. The temperature of light on skin tones can have a profound impact on the warmth or coolness of the overall palette,

which can emphasize certain emotional qualities and strengthen the narrative. I employ the use of oil sticks in my work because they have a malleable, skin-like quality that allows me to render the figure in a way that gives it weight, as if it were being sculpted in clay.



*Carmen in Purple*, 2014, oil stick on paper, 24 x 48 inches





*Ma with Che*, 2013, oil stick on paper, 11 x 16 inches





*Black and White Knees*, 2013, oil stick on paper,  
6 x 7 inches

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Carlisle, Pennsylvania

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