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PRESS RELEASE

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Hi-res images available upon request.

2017 Mills College Senior Thesis Exhibition March 28-April 16, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION: SATURDAY, APRIL 1, 2017 | 6:00-8:00 PM | MCAM

Oakland, CA—February 23, 2017. The Mills College Art Museum is pleased to announce *Open Dissonance*, the 2017 Mills College Senior Thesis Exhibition on view from March 28-April 16, 2017. An annual exhibition featuring the work of graduating Studio Art majors, the senior thesis exhibition provides these young artists with their first exhibition in a professional art museum—a rare opportunity. This year's presenting artists are Tara Batiste, Aliza Cord, Laura Elizarraras, Charity B. Ellis, Katie Ganz, Amy Leader, Connie Lee, Macie Lopez, Nora Roth, Anne Samberg, Lena Toney, Alyia-Renee Yates.

Experimenting with a range of forms and media from painting and photography to video-installation and ceramics, the artists in *Open Dissonance* navigate their final moments as undergrads with both anticipation and uncertainty. For these 12 artists, the exhibition is a strong demonstration of their artistic potential and the creative possibilities their work evokes.

THE ARTISTS

Tara Batiste explores traditional crafts, such as netting, beading, and pottery as a meditative experience to gain insight into one's history and culture. Working with clay, twine, and beads, Batiste asks how contemporizing such crafts can create a visual dialogue between one's self and the past.

Aliza Cord is obsessively curious about the eternal and transitory components of our psyches. Her figurative paintings employ gaze and unexpected color structures to dig into the moments between instinctive reactions and performed responses. Her ceramic sculptures explore the perpetual and the unobserved through repetition of forms and unhurried building processes.

Laura Elizarraras explores constructs of race, class, gender, ability, and sexuality to question power structures and highlight oppression. Using photography, video and sound installations, Elizarraras manifests "Artivism" —art + activism—through the lenses of marginalized people, for marginalized people.

Charity B. Ellis layers sound, image, text, objects, actions and scale to question the power of the gaze and to engage viewers viscerally in conceptual work. In her 360° three-channel video installation gesture meets geometry as Ellis playfully updates the Zoetrope.

Katie Ganz investigates atypical sex, attraction, sensuality, and eroticism. Working with paint and large-scale forms her unorthodox work is intended to make the viewer a voyeur, confronted with their own personal, fleshy reveries.

Amy Leader works intuitively to paint psychedelic landscapes and biomorphic visions. Inspired by the human figure, music, and nature, Leader mixes drawing, doodling and dancing to produce moments of serendipity that yield to disruption and change.

Connie Lee uses sculpture and photography to direct moments of physical intimacy and adaptation. With familiar tactile forms, Lee constructs unassuming interfaces for human interactions that teeter between habit and hesitation, play and vulnerability, motion and rest.

Macie Lopez experiments with photographic processes including cyanotypes and light sensitive paper. Through each process, she explores the history of photography as a medium and documents the relationship between light and chemicals.

Nora Roth's stop motion animations and photographic tableaux use observational humor to investigate the pitfalls of American public life. Her work features unlikely protagonists, whose adopted personas often fail to create convincing identities. Earnest but egregious social missteps provide a basis for understanding a culture that doesn't take itself seriously – often to a fault.

Anne Samberg works in various mediums to create authentic portraits of herself. Her art reflects her personal growth and struggles in life. The art explores the ideas of family, coming of age, gender, and reflects the greater Bay Area community.

Lena Toney explores the complex relationship between humanity and the environment. Utilizing painting, botanical illustration, drawing, and public art mosaics, her work reflects on how human activities impact nature.

Alyia-Renee Yates highlights the idea of Blackness—its exploitation and invisibility—within fantasy, religion, and pop culture. Using photography and video installation Yates plays with re-appropriation or “Black-washing” in order to pose the question, “what if this was someone like me?”

** The senior exhibition includes artworks with explicit sexual content.*

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Opening Reception

Saturday, April 1, 2017 | 6:00-8:00 pm
MCAM

Congratulate the graduating studio art majors on the culmination of their time learning and making while at Mills. Refreshments provided.

Voices of Dissonance

Wednesday, April 5, 2017 | 6:00–7:30pm
MCAM

Join graduating seniors for an evening of performance and discussion about the role of the artist today.

Dance Evasion

Saturday, April 15, 2017 | 7:00-9:00pm

Celebrate the final weekend of the senior exhibition with an electronic dance party on the Aron Art Center plaza.

About the Mills College Art Museum

Founded in 1925, Mills College Art Museum is a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices. Through innovative exhibitions, programs, and collections, the museum engages and inspires the intellectual and creative life of the Mills community as well as the diverse audiences of the Bay Area and beyond. mcam.mills.edu

Museum hours are Tuesday-Sunday 11:00 am-4:00 pm and Wednesday 11:00 am-7:30 pm. Admission is FREE for all exhibitions and programs unless noted.

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