

CHANGING SPACES

2025 MFA THESIS EXHIBITION

February 28, 2025 — March 30, 2025

Level 4

Changing Spaces: 2025 MFA Thesis Exhibition

For artists, space is a precious resource. Materials, tools, and completed artworks require room for storage, and the artists themselves need a place to think and make. For the Miami University and University of Cincinnati Master of Fine Arts students in this exhibition, space has also been a site of transformation. For the last two to three years, these artists' studios have served as laboratories for learning, experimentation, and growth.

The artists in *Changing Spaces* utilize, depict, and think about physical spaces in a variety of ways. The compact insides of glass jars house bacterial cellulose used to make prints and sculptures. Concrete fills the nooks and crannies inside and around everyday objects, entombing them. Abstract representations of geographical space, such as maps and landscapes designed to entrap waterfowl, spark new ideas and explorations. Artists record videos or paint real-life indoor and outdoor environments—parks, waiting rooms, parking lots—drawing attention to the way it feels to experience these spaces and their psychological undertones.

This exhibition is organized by the Contemporary Arts Center in partnership with Miami University and the University of Cincinnati.



Kelley Booze
Looking Out at Morning (It's Nice Outside), 2024
Digital video
Duration 10 minutes, 20 seconds

Kelley Booze is from Springfield, OH. She received her BFA from the Columbus College of Art and Design and is currently an MFA candidate in Miami University's Department of Art. Booze's works investigate relationships with space. She is interested in how subtle events and gestures impact the surrounding environment. While using a variety of mediums to project these connections, Booze often explores choreography and movement as a shifting perspective and orientation throughout space and time. Her process also involves documenting brief moments like sunlight peeking through a window and other subtle shifts of movement. She finds that the details that are overlooked in these passing moments mirror a sentiment of wholeness.



Ishita Islam
Palimpsest, 2024
Self-made recycled paper, self-made natural ink, engraved tree trunks and tree bark
12 x 18 x 48 inches

Ishita Islam is from Bangladesh, India. She received both her BFA and MFA from the University of Dhaka and is an MFA graduate of Miami University's Department of Art. Islam's works focus on major global issues like ecosystem preservation, climate change, and the connection between humans and nature. Using a self-made natural ink and a variation of recycled objects found throughout nature and her neighborhood, Islam creates abstract drawings of lines and maps that explore geographical diversity. Through these pieces, she asks the viewer to question their responsibility to the environment while reminding them that we all breathe on the same earth.



Nazanin Najdmofarrah
Untitled, 2024-2025
Concrete installation
11 x 9 x 2 inches each

Nazanin Najdmofarrah is from Iran. She received her BFA and MFA from Al-Zahra University and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Cincinnati in the College of Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning. Najdmofarrah's works investigate the intersections of personal narrative and political history. Using a mix of materials like shoes, dolls, and strands of hair with concrete blocks, she comments on the constant tension between fragility and resilience. Najdmofarrah asks the audience to confront the work as they vulnerably kneel to view the misplaced objects in what mirrors a cemetery. By drawing from her experiences as an Iranian woman, Najdmofarrah allows viewers to question their histories and repressed memories.



Holly Yarab
Car Lot, 2025
Oil on canvas
58 x 44 inches

Holly Yarab is from Youngstown, OH. She received her BFA from Youngstown State University and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Cincinnati in the College of Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning. Yarab's works investigate grief and deal with medical trauma through the concepts of liminality and psychological spaces. Using oils as her primary material, along with collage, printmaking, and sculpture, Yarab warps the viewer's perspective as they look through waiting rooms, hallways, and doorways. These architectural passageways symbolize the physical and psychological transitions that one experiences during medical upheaval, creating uncertainty and reflection on change, loss, and the moments in between.



Jillian Campagna
Bacterial Cellulose Timescapes, 2025
SCOBY (Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria & Yeast) Installation
Dimensions variable

Jillian Campagna is from Cincinnati, OH. She received her BFA from Miami University and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Cincinnati in the College of Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning. Campagna's works combine science with art as she explores symbiotic relationships between human and non-human matter. Her practice revolves around collaborations with a living, unstable material called bacterial cellulose, also known as SCOBY (Symbiotic Culture of Bacteria and Yeast). While this material is not necessarily aesthetically pleasing, it seems familiar, as it is reminiscent of human flesh because of its neutral hues and leathery texture. Along with nurturing this bacterial cellulose, Campagna incorporates printmaking, drawing, and performance to contemplate her mortality and bodily being.



Ryan Kerr
Western Campus Nocturn, 2023
Oil on panel
16-1/2 x 21 inches

Ryan Kerr is from Cleveland, OH. He received his BFA from the University of Cincinnati and is currently an MFA candidate in Miami University's Department of Art. Kerr's works take a journalistic approach to landscapes as he works through a process of perceptual easel painting, a style that focuses on how colors and edges appear to the eye, rather than on the subject matter. He admires the temporal act of looking and believes that translating it through paint results in innovative and unique marks. This allows the viewer to interpret the details of the landscape, which change as the seasons do. He believes that painting can become a form of memory-making, record-keeping, and wish-making as the image condenses past, present, and future.



Jeshua Schuster
Leaving Traces, 2024
Hydrodipped ceramic
6 x 8 x 14 inches

Jeshua Schuster is from Toledo, OH. He received his BFA from Memphis College of Art and is currently an MFA candidate at the University of Cincinnati in the College of Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning. Through an amalgamation of painting, drawing, printmaking, and sculpture, Schuster explores the transmission of information, translation, miscommunication, and history within contexts of war, paranoia, and narrative collapse. His images and large-scale contemporary structures come together to showcase a sense of entrapment, dissimulation, and camouflage, which can ultimately influence people on a systematic scale.

Miami University Department of Art Faculty

Amanda Alexander (Chair)

Joel Armor

Andrew Au

Joomi Chung

Tracy Featherstone

Richard W. James

Rod Northcutt

Jennifer Purdum

Geoff Riggle

Robert Robbins

Dana Saulnier

Michael Stillion

Ann Taulbee

Roscoe Wilson

Jon Yamashiro

University of Cincinnati School of Art Fine Art Faculty

Mrinalini Aggarwal

Caroline Anderson

Kate Bonansinga (SOA Director)

Denise Burge

Mark Harris

Ma Lynch

Neil Daigle Orians

Emil Robinson

Edward-Victor Sanchez

Jordan Tate

Jenny Ustick

Xia Zhang



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