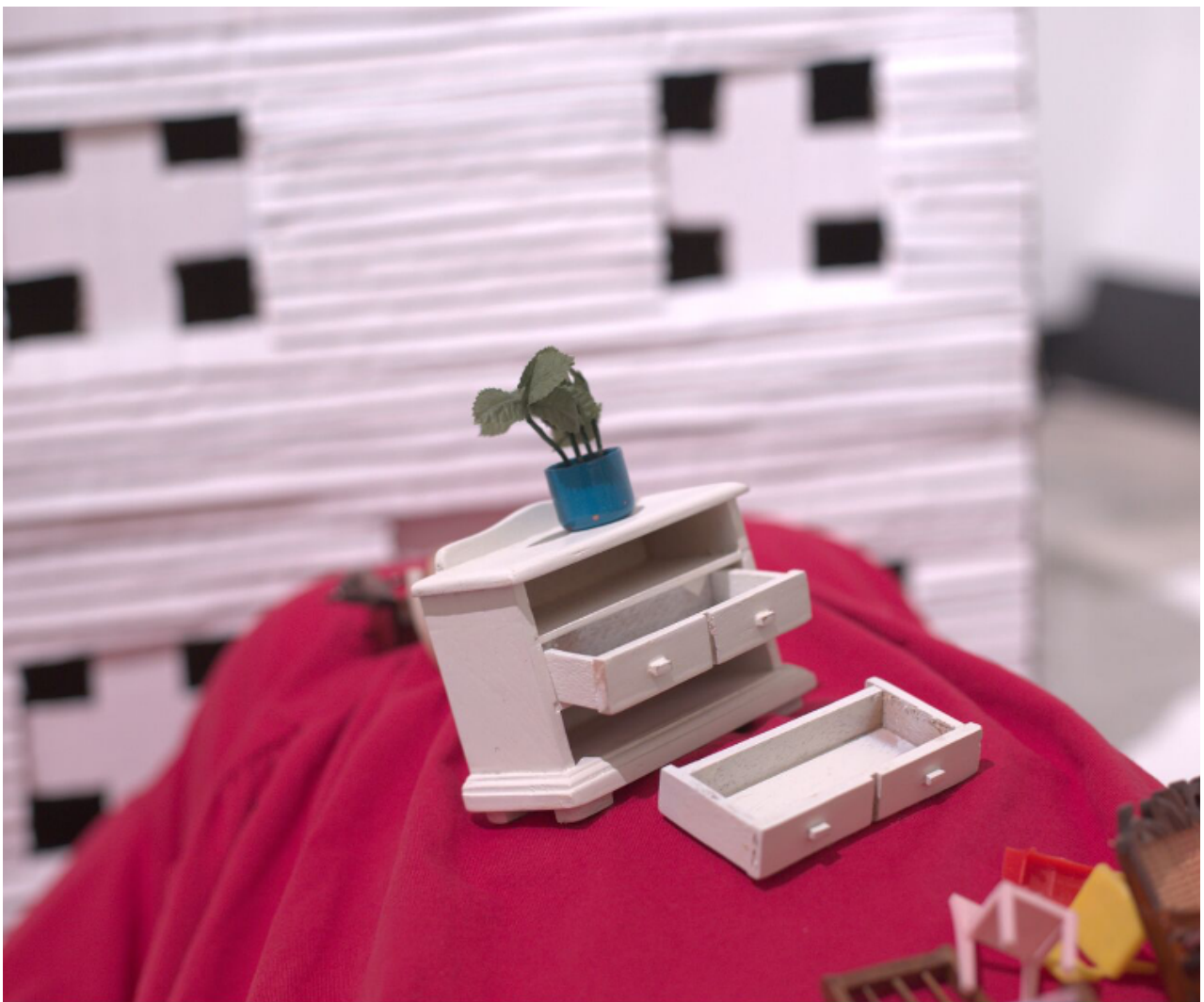


SKYE MURIE

2020 ART & ART HISTORY MFA THESIS EXHIBITION



Big Girl, 2018, interactive performance piece with dollhouse furniture
Photo by Johnathan Castillo

DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

MAY 2020 • SERIES 01 • VOLUME 28

2020 ART & ART HISTORY MFA THESIS EXHIBITION

The *2020 Art and Art History MFA Thesis Exhibition* features the works of MFA candidates in Columbia's Interdisciplinary Arts and Media and Interdisciplinary Book and Paper Arts programs. The exhibition, which includes artists' books, prints, drawings, textiles, sculptures, photography, sound, projections, and installation works, represents the culmination of three plus years' worth of development of a cohesive body of work for each artist. This exhibition, taking place at the Glass Curtain Gallery has been postponed to a later date due to the COVID-19 outbreak. This edition of the DEPS Artist Profile Series intends to give you an in-depth look at the work to come as well as a deep glimpse into the artists process.

Participating Artists: Julia Arredondo, Mary Gring, Rebecca Grace Hill, Selena Ingram, Maria VanDyken Li, Skye Murie, and Andrew Shoemaker

The *2020 Art and Art History MFA Thesis Exhibition* is presented in conjunction with the Art and Art History department and Paul Catanese, Director of Graduate Studies for Art & Art History and Professor at Columbia College Chicago.

COLLECTOR

Skye Murie is a theatrical producer, director, multidisciplinary visual artist and illustrator. She is interested in telling stories that deal with issues of feminism, friendship, family history, intergenerational trauma, queer identity and belonging. These concepts are often explored through shadow puppetry, theatrical adaptation, new play development, Design Driven Performance, and devised theatre.

For her MFA thesis, Murie presents *Collector*, a collaborative performance piece created through the Design Driven Performance process. In this form of devised theatre, design elements like sound design or set design propel how a performance is created. Traditional play scripts are not required, but if one is created it must start through an exploration of theatrical design. In the case of *Collector*, the sound design created for the show was used as a script to dictate what story the team created. The narrative, two recluse witches who must find a way to deal with, and move on from, the sudden death of their third roommate, was created through weekly collaborative sessions. In the end, *Collector* is a dark comedy and features shadow puppetry, dance sequences, and elements of slapstick and clowning.

This project was devised from a soundscape created in collaboration with sound designer Thomas McPhee, with performers Becca Regan and Al Simard, and documented by filmmaker and photographer Connor Doyle.

Skye Murie is currently an MFA candidate in Interdisciplinary Arts and Media at Columbia College Chicago and holds a BA in Theatre and Studio Art from Hampshire College. Her illustration work has appeared in children's books, magazines, articles for *HowlRound Theatre Commons*, *Gurl.com*, and an Apple HomePod commercial.

For more information on Skye Murie:

Skyemurie.com

@skiemurie on Instagram.



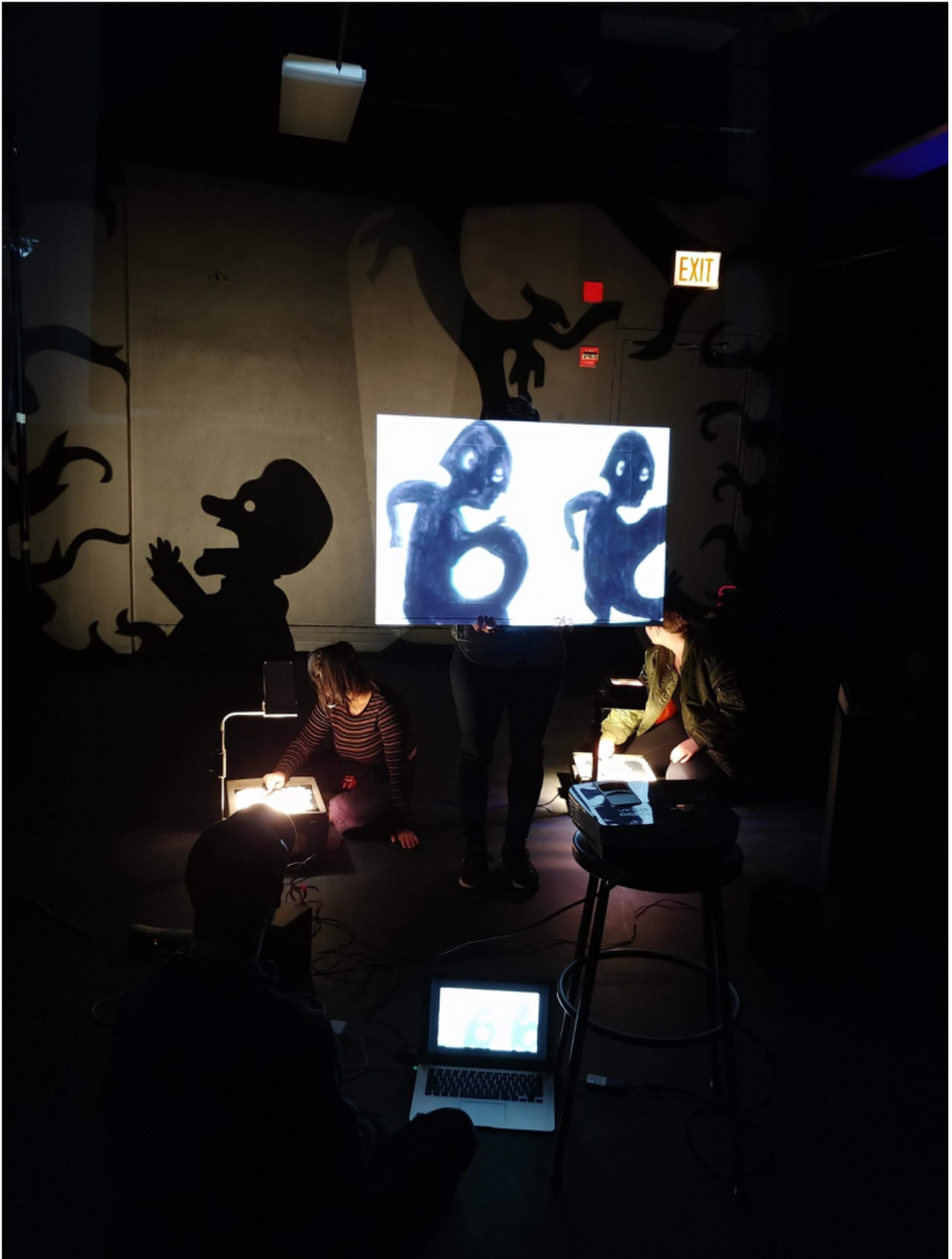
Behind the scenes, rehearsing *Collector* over Zoom



Testing shadow puppets for *Collector*



Documentation of older shadow puppets



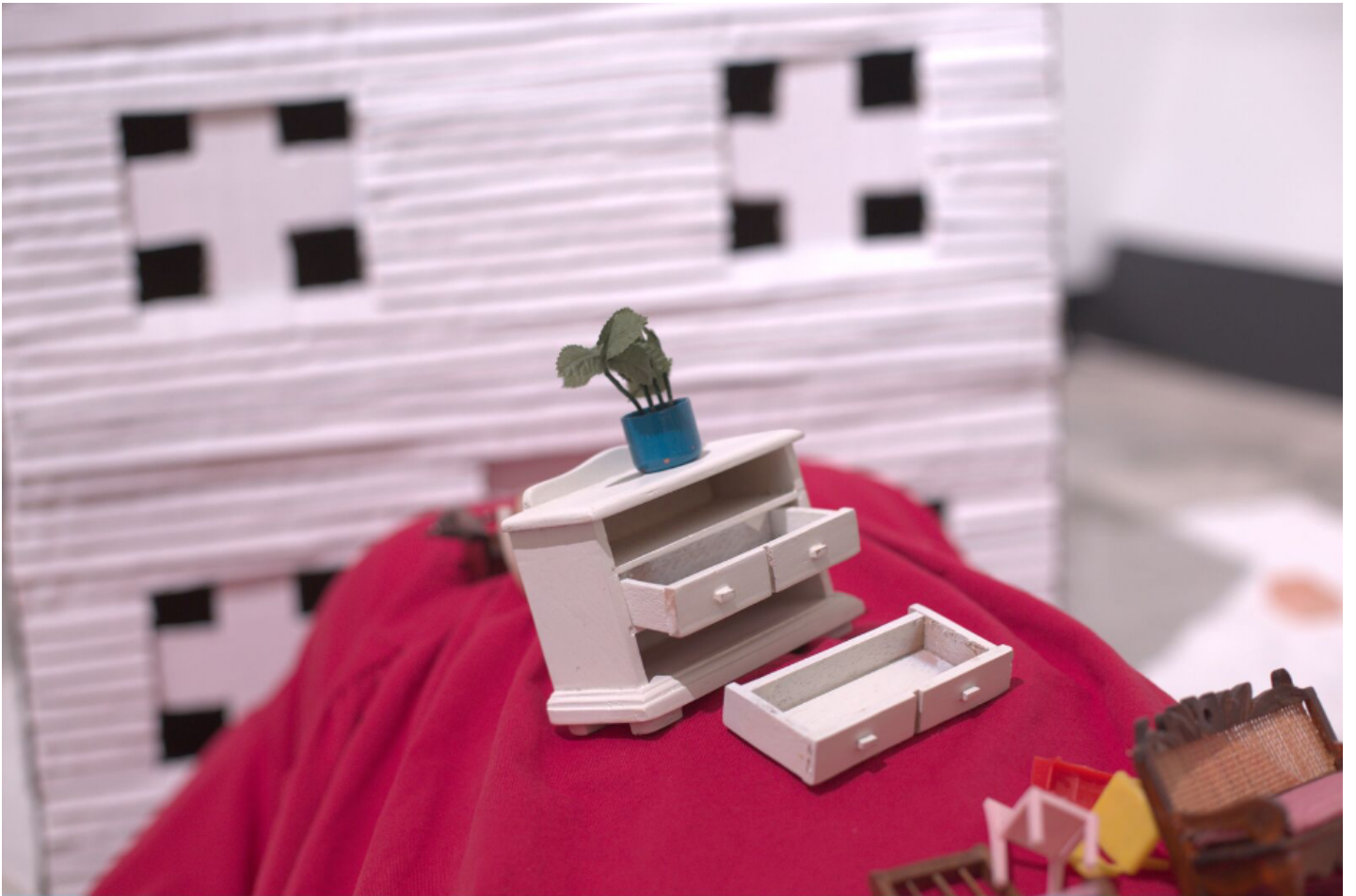
Rite of Spring, 2018, multimedia shadow puppet performance



Who Said Anything About It Hurting?, 2017, multimedia shadow puppet performance



Big Girl, 2018, interactive performance piece with dollhouse furniture
Photo by Johnathan Castillo



Big Girl, 2018, interactive performance piece with dollhouse furniture
Photo by Johnathan Castillo



Big Girl, 2018, interactive performance piece with dollhouse furniture
Photo by Johnathan Castillo



Cloud Lands, 2016, BA thesis play at Hampshire College

Photo by Amy Deyerle-Smith



Behind the scenes, rehearsing *Collector*

Photo by Connor Doyle

INTERVIEW WITH SKYE MURIE

Conducted by Kaylee Fowler

Kaylee Fowler: When making an illustration for a book or an article, do you strive to create pieces that can easily be seen as a visual interpretation of the writing, or is it something separate that stands alongside the work?

Skye Murie: Most of the time, especially if it's a children's book, I will make something that compliments the writing. But occasionally the job might need something that isn't a literal interpretation. A few years ago, I did a [series of illustrations for *HowlRound Theatre Commons*](#) on older articles that didn't have photos. Because a lot of the articles on *HowlRound* are on trends in theatre or short essays on a theory or specific practice, I got more creative and made images to reflect the "vibe" of what the author was talking about.

KF: What are some of the challenges you face when creating art in collaboration with others and their art, whether in illustrative work or theater?

SM: For theater I think the challenges are inherently part of it – scheduling conflicts, putting the right team together, figuring out technical issues, etc. What I struggle with currently, is having access to performance spaces and money. I'm relatively young and early in my career and still making connections and learning.

For illustration, I think the biggest challenge is having to do a drawing several times because it's not what the client had in mind. Now, before even accepting an illustration job, I try to talk to the client as much as possible beforehand about what aesthetic they have in mind, what kinds of colors they're drawn to, and if there are styles of art that have been inspirational to their work. Asking a lot of questions early on makes my job a lot easier.

KF: What sparked your interest in shadow puppetry?

SM: When I was an undergrad at Hampshire College, I took a course on projection design for theater taught by Peter Kallok and the first module was on using an overhead projector. We mainly used those with cut-out paper shapes. That's when I became really interested in using the projectors to do shadow puppetry. Peter also told our class about Manual Cinema, a Chicago-based performance collective that specializes in shadow theater. I kept exploring shadow

puppetry when I moved to Chicago for my MFA program and a few summers ago I was able to intern with Manual Cinema. I learned a lot from them including different techniques as well as insights about starting and maintaining a company. I feel really lucky that I got to spend that time with the company.

KF: Where does the title *Collector* come from?

SM: When we started working on the project last summer, our team met in my apartment a few times and my Ikea "Ektorp" sofa became a popular inside joke. When we needed a name for the show I looked online to see what Ektorp actually meant anything in Swedish. I'm not sure if there's an English word for it, as it's actually a place in Sweden, but one clumsy Google translation did yield "Collector." We stuck with the name because it connected to our beginning meetings in my apartment and because its ambiguity of meaning suited our devised show.

KF: Do you think that you come to illustration and Design Driven Performance from a similar mindset? There seems to be a fair bit of interpretation and improv to both.

SM: I do think that my impulses towards illustration and Design Driven Performance come from the same place. For me it's about using those things to create a world and a tell a story. I started drawing when I was really young and I've always been a very visually minded and detail-oriented person. I look at the sets and costumes in a TV show or play as much as I'm paying attention to what the actors are doing.

There's so much overlap between art and theatre and music and dance and movies, etc. that they all are part of the same "art world" to me. There's a lot that you can learn from one discipline to take into another – you can have a sculptor design the set for a play or you can make a very cinematic graphic novel if you wanted to make a film but don't know how to or don't have the resources.

KF: What sorts of things do you usually end up taking away from one project to carry over into the next?

SM: In theater projects, I often take away a greater understanding of how to direct or manage a team. I am naturally a shy person and have sometimes found

it hard to balance being nurturing with remaining firm on an artistic choice. When you're in a leadership position in any kind of creative field I think it's really important to create an environment where people feel comfortable to explore while trusting that you will be able to steer everyone towards whatever the end point is. And I'm always learning and growing with that - I'll try something on one project and be like "oh let's not do that again." I just want things to be fun and for people to feel like the time and labor they put in on a project was time well spent.

KF: What do you hope to inspire or challenge in viewers of your work?

SM: I'm very interested in giving audiences an "experience" - usually having them explore a certain type of world or unusual environment.

Right now though, while we're in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, I've been thinking a lot about what my skills are and what I can do to keep people entertained while they're spending time indoors. I've done readings of screenplays with friends, a shadow puppet tutorial on Instagram Live, and I'm beginning to work on a comic series to put online somewhere. I've also been doing a lot of creative writing and putting that online, but that's something I don't share with the people in my actual life. I publish the writing anonymously so the people who are reading it are complete strangers and they don't know who I am. Sometimes it's nice to do something creative that I don't have to care so much about marketing myself for, but that is fulfilling to me and bringing other people enjoyment as well.

DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES



Documentation of older shadow puppets

The DEPS Artist Profile Series, presented by Columbia College Chicago's Department of Exhibitions, Performance, and Student Spaces (DEPS), is a virtual publication on select artists involved with the DEPS Galleries and the Columbia College Chicago community. Our goal with this series is to connect artist and viewer on a deeper level, and to highlight the amazing works and thoughts of our featured artists through interviews, artist biographies, and catalogs of work. Art has always been a way to connect with others, no matter where one may physically be. We hope by presenting the creativity and insights of the people involved in the DEPS Artist Profile Series that viewers may have one more way to stay in touch with and support the arts community.

The DEPS Artist Profile Series is managed by Fine Arts major and DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Kaylee Fowler. Design, animation and illustration by Graphic Design major and DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Gianella Goan.

For more information, please contact Mark Porter, mporter@colum.edu / 312.369.6643
<https://students/colum.edu/deps>

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