

ARRIETTA VAN DER VOORT

2024 MFA THESIS EXHIBITION



DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

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5th Floor Student Center May 6–28, 2024

The 2024 MFA Thesis Exhibition features the thesis works of the MFA candidates in Columbia College Chicago's Art I Design and Photography Departments. The exhibition, which includes paintings, prints, drawings, photography, sound, and installation, captures the extensive research, exploration, critical analysis, creative inquiry, productivity, practice, and achievement these emerging artists have maintained throughout their time in the programs. With varied approaches to subject matter, distinct methods of creation, and a unique blending of personal, political, and historical narratives, the artists in this show weave together the nuanced strands of the contemporary moment.

Participating Artists: Andre Barker Jr, Nora Benjamin, Callie Clark Wiren, Noah Fodor, Eli Giclas, Ash Huse, Hillary Irene Johnson, Adam MacArthur, Giselle Mira-Diaz, Grace Papineau-Couture, Arrietta van der Voort, and andrew vogelpohl

The 2024 MFA Thesis Exhibition is presented in conjunction with the Department of Exhibitions, Performance, and Student Spaces (DEPS), the Art I Design Department, and the Photography Department.

ARRIETTA VAN DER VOORT

Arrietta van der Voort's *Pale Blue* focuses on solitude in the domestic space, which can feel at times fearful, at times joyful, and often full of expectation. In this work, van der Voort explores the experience of spending most of her time alone in her small apartment and the ways that experience is freeing yet isolating. The work is diaristic in nature, asking the viewer to engage deeply with her internal experience. Van der Voort's photographs are part of multimedia wall collages utilizing self-portraits, still lifes, interiors, archival photographs, handwritten journal fragments, and personal ephemera. **Pale Blue** prioritizes vulnerability, confession, and intimacy. Ultimately, van der Voort hopes to take inventory and make meaning of the sometimes mundane, sometimes dramatic, and intensely private experience of daily life lived alone.

Arrietta van der Voort is a photographer based in Chicago, IL. She explores themes related to memory, womanhood, and the home. Her work often incorporates written elements and archival photographs. Van der Voort graduated from the University of Virginia in 2018 with a BA in Studio Art and Art History and will earn her MFA in Photography at Columbia College Chicago in Spring 2024.



Window 1, 2022, Inkjet print



Self-Portrait in Blue Dress, 2022, Inkjet print



Bruised Legs, 2023, Inkjet print



Downstairs Hallway, 2023, Inkjet print



Sunrise, 2023, Inkjet print



Window 2, 2023, Inkjet print



Self-Portrait in Black Sweater, 2024, Inkjet print

INTERVIEW WITH ARRIETTA VAN DER VOORT

Conducted by Rachel Manlubatan

Rachel Manlubatan: Why do you choose to photograph yourself in positions where your face isn't fully visible, or with compositions focusing on other parts of your body (such as your back or legs)? How does being your own model and deciding your own expressions help or hinder your entire process, and how does it play into the feelings of solitude you hope to express?

Arrietta van der Voort: This is a question I'm asked frequently and I don't know if I've found the right answer yet! I think I'm less inclined to photograph my face or my entire body instinctively, because it is challenging to perceive yourself constantly, although there are a few fuller images of me in the show. But on a conceptual level, the way I live in my home is really shaped by my body, and picturing my face almost doesn't represent my own experience of myself. Being my own model has always been my preferred mode of working – my first artistic endeavors were as a performer and when making self-portraits I'm not only constructing an image visually but also entering an emotional space, in this case one of solitude.

RM: Although you are conducting your photos by yourself and you focus on the experience of being alone, has anyone else impacted your process? What outside influences have transformed your artistic style?

AV: I have a BA in art history, so I'm very influenced by the history of art, especially of painting. This project pretty explicitly references Impressionism, specifically the work of the female Impressionists, Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt, in both form and content. In many ways, they were the jumping off point for this body of work because I was interested in the ways they depict the domestic space as opposed to the men of the same movement. One of my pieces includes a postcard of

a Berthe Morisot painting, *Woman at her Toilette*, and the show also features a personal essay I wrote about that painting.

RM: How does photographing in natural light and with soft, earthy tones convey fear and joy at the same time? What other aesthetic choices have you started to use because of the time you've spent alone in your small apartment?

AV: My apartment is pale blue, which is both the name of the project and the starting point for a lot of the color palette. I was immediately struck by living somewhere that didn't have white or beige walls, and that had so much design and character before I even moved furniture in, which is maybe the beginning of my obsession with the space. Using natural light is my preferred mode of working, and because I spend so much time in the space I'm hyper-aware of exactly where the light falls at any given time of day. I think these aesthetic strategies can both create an atmosphere of peace but also of melancholy, hinting at the emotional dichotomy I'm discussing.

RM: What do you hope audiences interpret from your work as you center around interior settings and shadow versus light? How has experimenting with this project allowed you to discover more about yourself and the meaning of being vulnerable and intimate?

AV: I think this work has allowed me to really push myself in what I'm willing to share, which I think has been really useful for my growth as an artist. It's really interesting to stretch those boundaries and discover when to push and when to hold back. I hope that the work inspires mutual vulnerability from audiences, that because I'm open they can be willing to go there with me.



THE DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

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 and graphic design is managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Rachel Manlubatan. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at: colum.edu/deps

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Gallery hours: Monday-Saturday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.