

EMILIE PLUNKETT

2022 MFA PHOTOGRAPHY
THESIS EXHIBITION



DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

MAY 6-20, 2022

2022 MFA PHOTOGRAPHY THESIS EXHIBITION

The *2022 MFA Photography Thesis Exhibition* features the thesis works of the MFA candidates in Columbia College Chicago's Photography Department. This exhibition presents photographs, installation, and video works that are representative of the culmination of research and practice these emerging artists have maintained throughout their time in the program.

Participating photographers:

Jes Farnum

Sylvie Harris

Katharine Norton

Emilie Plunkett

Ziru Tang

Fengzhao Xu

Senjie Zhu

The *2022 Photography MFA Thesis Exhibition* is presented in conjunction with the Department of Exhibitions, Performance and Student Spaces (DEPS), and the Photography Department.

EMILIE PLUNKETT

In my current body of work, *Tenderised Valentines and Evaporating Tangerines*, I examine the complexity of the domestic space. A constantly shifting space filled with discomfort and unease, that affects the people living inside it. The people inside the home relate to it differently, using anxious comfort, and convoluted performance/posing. They are being affected by and affecting the home, seen through the images of left behind mess and constructed still lives. They are moving inside the home space, which is a living thing all on its own. My series explores these feelings through photographs and poetry. The poems provide both a connection to the exterior and a deeper relationship to the interior. The words articulate ways that the home is a living thing, how it has a pulse and a backbone, and how it affects and connects to the people living inside of it. It also gives a deeper look into the internal experience of the figures living inside the home, with lists about their dreams and their diet, and how they feel like out-of-season fruit. The poems give the viewer a more intimate look into the internal experiences of the home space. The photographs explore these same themes but through constructing and reenacting moments in the home. Examining the feeling of presence and change inside the home space.

Emilie Plunkett is a poet and photographer based in Chicago, their practice focuses on the domestic space and the mess, comfort and materiality of that intimate environment. They enjoy long walks by the lake, Alice Austen's photographs and plums.

Instagram: [@bronzeagebaby](https://www.instagram.com/bronzeagebaby)

Website: emilieplunkett.work



self portrait 3, 2021, digital image, inkjet print



restart, 2020, digital image, inkjet print



epiphany stretching, 2021, digital image, inkjet print



boiled in the same broth, 2021, digital image, inkjet print

I should start eating oranges in the shower like those people on Reddit

a drain is an open throat,
like milk cartons, potholes, and stigmata.
it's time-again to experience catharsis.
boiled water is a conduit,
for self-actualisation, self-patrolling, self-subscription, and finger biting.
I've been trying to rub my belly and pat my head,
like the monkeys at the zoo on anti-depressants.
and when i looked up,
the enveloping moon is staring,
"unamused".
it asks me to stop walking in circles,
please don't notice me,
there's maintenance to be done.

I should start eating oranges, 2021, poem

1-5

No. I dream of peaches rotting on the branch. Overcrowded trains and blame. Of belly button rings, of rebellion, of crying on the telephone. Of best-friends and sunburn and satisfaction. Of homemade spice blends, broken promises, broken ankles, broken wrist watches, broken dog whistles, torn up textbooks, throwing plates, throwing knives, meteors, flash flooding, and liquorice. Spitting. Chickpeas. Indigo. I dream of you and Annie, of razor burn, love bites, and stuntmen. I dream of our old house on fire.

1-5, 2020, digital text, inkjet print (in show)

INTERVIEW WITH EMILIE PLUNKETT

Conducted by Kaylee Fowler

Kaylee Fowler: I can genuinely feel the intimacy in your photographs, and paired with your poems; it feels like I am stepping into your home. Why has poetry and photography become your chosen form to communicate your ideas?

Emilie Plunkett: I'm interested in the way that images can articulate some things/ feelings/experiences but not everything and how writing is the exact same. They both have limitations with how and what they can represent. I find that putting the two together helps fill in gaps and further represent the feelings of discomfort and intimacy I'm obsessed with.

In *Tenderised Valentines and Evaporating Tangerines* the text is important because of the way it provides a look into the internal feelings of the characters in the home space. It describes scenes from both inside the home and outside of it, linking these characters to the outside world through referencing hawks circling the house or finding family with breadfruit trees. To me this link to a larger world gives context to what is externally impacting the characters as well as showing the difference between the complex outside and the isolating inside.

KF: You describe your body of work as the examination of "the complexity of the domestic space." What sparked your interest in these ideas?

EP: I've always been interested in stories of haunted houses and possession and the idea that a home can be a living thing. Something that is affected and connected to its inhabitants. I've been so fascinated by how a home functions as a highly intimate and private environment, as a space where we are at our most vulnerable. I think this tension

between a home being safe and private as well as it being full of isolation and unease is what I keep coming back to.

KF: In this body of work, *Tenderised Valentines and Evaporating Tangerines*, your poetry and photography work together to inform and give context to each other. How have these practices developed together over time, and is there a difference in how you see your work when these elements are together versus separate?

EP: The combination of poetry and photography came naturally for me, I have been making photographs and writing poetry for a long time, but it wasn't until 2019 that I took combining the two seriously. The writing came out of taking a few classes that focus on the relationship between text and image. I took some poetry classes and joined a writing workshop group outside of school to learn more about writing as a medium. Through this I became more interested in the relationship between photography and poetry and creating a visual language that used both for my work.

To me the poetry and photography function the same, it's something that feels hard to articulate but I don't think my work can be just photographs or just poetry. They inform each other and provide more complexity that I think compliments the themes inside my work.



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 is managed by Fine Arts major and DEPS Exhibitions Assistants Kaylee Fowler and Sierra Delamarter. Graphic design is managed by DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Gray Beyer. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at: colum.edu/deps

Contact information: Mark Porter, mporter@colum.edu / 312.369.6643

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