

AMAIRANI MARTINEZ

BFA MANIFEST 2023 SHOW



DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

May 12–June 16, 2023

OUT OF THE BASEMENT: 2023 UNDERGRADUATE FINE ARTS THESIS EXHIBITION

Out of the Basement: 2023 Undergraduate Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition features the works of thirteen BFA candidates in Columbia's Fine Arts program. The exhibition, which includes paintings, drawings, sculpture, prints, books, garments, video, performance, and installation works, represents the culmination of four years of development of a cohesive body of work for each artist while earning their degrees.

Participating artists: Jacob Ashba, Charlotte Briskin, Daniela Castro, Michelle Goldshmidt, Amairani Martinez, Ariaunna McCloud, emmalyn mueller, Kevin Rivera, Carolina Romo, James Ross, Sofie Way, Cordelia Weatherby, Emma Wilmarth.

Out of the Basement: 2023 Undergraduate Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition is presented in conjunction with the Department of Exhibitions, Performance, and Student Spaces (DEPS) and the Art and Art History department, and Adam Brooks, Professor at Columbia College Chicago.

AMAIRANI MARTINEZ

Amairani Martinez's work raises awareness of the environment and its connection to portraying life and death through a philosophical view. Her work is a cycle; it resembles a motion that leaves the viewer trying to figure out its hidden messages. Martinez's art-making process is influenced by her everyday routine and environment exploration. She is interested in creating and recreating moments that bring attention to the concept of little moments in life that are often forgotten and underappreciated.

Her techniques are similar to methods used by surrealists, while also playing with the idea of texture and interactivity. An essential key to understanding her work is observation. Searching for hidden messages is a synergizing way for the viewer to keep searching for answers through the piece while also reading the story of the work. Martinez is connected to the contemporary critical dialogue around her medium through the ideas of the theorists who seek collective inquiry into the processes, assumptions, and certainties that comprise everyday life.

Amairani Martinez (b. 2000, Chicago, United States) is an interdisciplinary Mexican-American from Chicago who primarily works with acrylic paint, with additional experience in photography, printmaking, illustration, and sculpting. Her work raises awareness of one's connection to nature and portrays situations relating to life and death. She experiments with the perception of colors and how they affect people psychologically. Previously, her work has been shown in the Alcove Gallery in the 2023 exhibit *Make No Small Plans*: a small works exhibition by fine arts BA and BFA seniors. She is an undergraduate at Columbia College Chicago, majoring in Fine Arts with a minor in photography. Amairani is expected to graduate by spring 2023.

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

Website: amairanimartinez-elias.squarespace.com



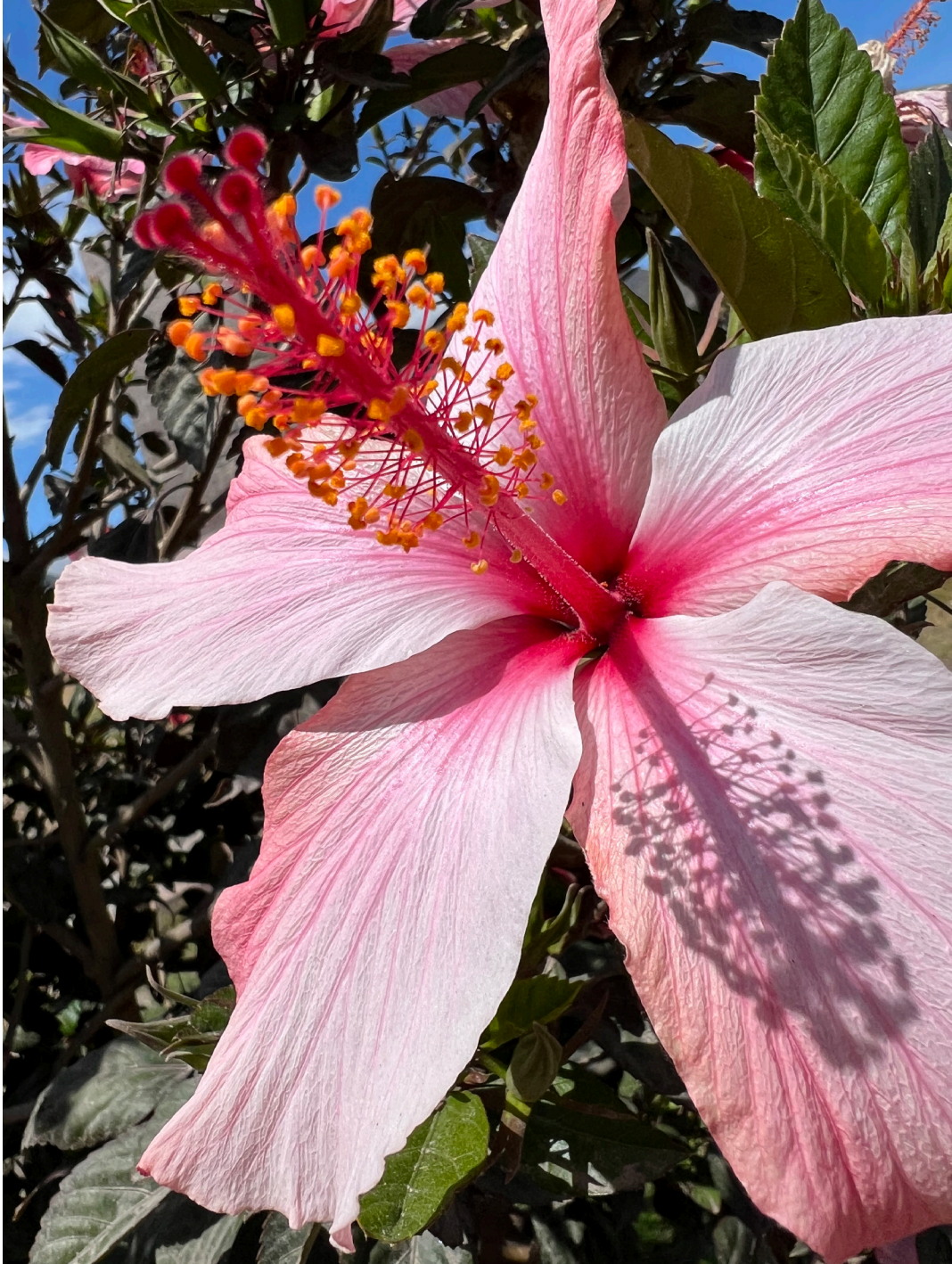
Untitled Dream, 2022, acrylic, acrylic gel beads, acrylic glass beads, glitter, and gold leaf, 27" x 34"



Different Dangers, 2022, acrylic, heavy gel gloss on stretched canvas, 20" x 60"



Impact (Unfinished), 2023, acrylic on canvas and heavy gel gloss, 72" x 46"



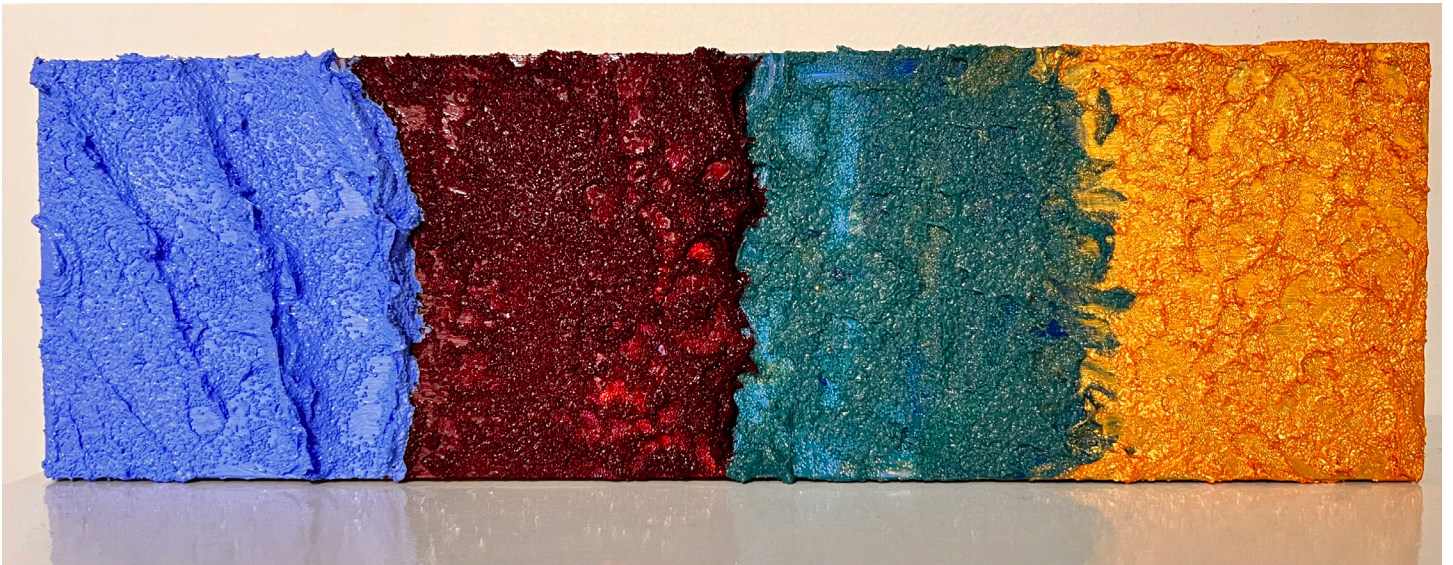
Hibiscus, 2022, digital photograph, 3024 x 4032 pixels at 72 dpi



You're so golden, 2023, pre-cut mosaic glass, mirrors, gold leaf, and cobalt green paint on plywood,
3.5" x 3"



Modern, 2022, Pre-cut glass, black gesso, on plywood, 4" x 4"



I Drowned, 2022, acrylic gel glass beads, acrylic on plywood, 16" x 7"



Sally Lightfoot Crabs, Galapagos, 2022–Present, acrylic on canvas, 40" x 30"



It's you!, 2022, acrylic on canvas, mirror, adhesive, 30'' x 48''

INTERVIEW WITH AMAIRANI MARTINEZ

Conducted by Rachel Manlubatan

Rachel Manlubatan: Can you talk about what underappreciated moments that highlight the cyclical formation of existence look like to you in your everyday life?

Amairani Martinez: Some underappreciated moments that I refer to are moments where one stops and admires a certain object or space in time. Where one just hyper-focuses and observes the details of the object or place that's being observed, often I fixate on objects or plants, usually tiny, and observe the tiniest of details, scratches, textures, colors, patterns, etc. More than half the time I end up taking a photo. Usually, this tends to happen every 2-3 days or whenever I go out and see something that attracts me and draws me in.

RM: As you began to explore the significance that the environment plays in relation to life and death, what changes were made to your art and other techniques you use to describe your thoughts and emotions?

AM: I began to see myself become more interested in the conceptual meaning of what it means to be alive. It might sound poetic, but I gradually grew interested in ways to show "to be alive." At first, I was fixed on the idea of painting just animals in their natural habitats, and adding the element of death. Be it with their natural enemy, Potential wounds one suffers that can be fatal. But I still felt lost and confused as to what I was going for. Eventually, I thought more about the depiction I was aiming for, and it lead me to create works that not only show what it is to be alive but depict life using bright colors and the details of the creature. When displaying death, instantly I thought of bones. But instead changed it to be the moment before death. In other words the moment/ seconds before a fatal encounter. As the last seconds happen.

RM: Can you describe how you brainstorm the materials you want to use in each work of art? Which forms of art did you first experiment with, and why did you choose to expand past that?

AM: When it comes to thinking of ways to create work, I usually base them on creatures or photos I've taken on my phone. Once I see an image that catches my attention. I go on a whim for canvas sizes. (Recently I've been working large-scale) I tend to freestyle my work and go with the flow. But with paintings, I want to create detailed work.

I paint a base coat of color that feels right to me or vibrant enough to catch someone's attention. After applying the base I draw out where I want my figures using Crayola's chalk. I prefer chalk because it's a lot faster and easier to clean and cover up without the mess of a pencil and eraser. I then outline the silhouette of the figure and begin to color block. From that point on the heavy detail journey begins. Leading to constant research and process.

A few of the first art forms I first experimented with were crayons and pencils which eventually changed the more I was exposed to different mediums. As of now, I've begun to explore oil painting and ceramics. I chose to expand past traditional art because I want to be someone who can call themselves a multidisciplinary artist with knowledge of different art forms.

RM: The subjects in your pieces stand in an extremely eye-catching manner due to your contrasting colors and consistent use of a dark background against bold tones. What lessons do you wish to portray by creating a dark atmosphere around the stories in your artwork?

INTERVIEW CONTINUED

AM: Not everything is as pretty and bright, just like in society, colors can be deceiving and colors can make you feel. Not everything is just a pretty moment without thinking of the “What if” catastrophic possibilities.

(Partly this is from a third-person standpoint of how I see myself and how I perceive people think I am, Happy, bright, and bubbly without knowing the dark moments I too face just like others)

RM: What type of questions do you imagine viewers asking themselves as they experience your pieces? What questions do you ask yourself as you explore different representations of life and death?

AM: A few questions I often imagine the viewers ask themselves about my work are:
Why did she pick these animals?
Why Are they on Bright backgrounds?
Where are these from?
Do they or do they not have a deeper meaning?
What was the reason for having these creatures be so close and huge?

Some of the questions I ask myself are:
How can I add a sense of emotion to these stills?
Why am I interested in portraying life or death using creatures as my inspiration?
Would things be perceived differently If I approached this concept in a more abstract work?
What other ways can I include texture without taking away from the main focus?



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 DEPS Exhibitions Assistant Rachel Manlubatan and Sierra Delamarter. Graphic design is also 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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Glass Curtain Gallery: 1104 S Wabash Ave, First Floor, Chicago, IL 60605

Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.