

# **EMMA WILMARTH**

## **BFA MANIFEST 2023 SHOW**

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**DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES**

May 12-June 6, 2023

# OUT OF THE BASEMENT: 2023 UNDERGRADUATE FINE ARTS THESIS EXHIBITION

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**May 12–June 6, 2023**

**Reception: Friday, May 12, 5–7 p.m.**

The Hollis Sigler Manifest Awards will be announced at 6 p.m.

*During the reception on May 12, there will be a performance by Cordelia Weatherby from 5–5:45 p.m.*

*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.

# EMMA WILMARTH

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**Emma Wilmarth's** work is inspired by precious memories and intimate moments found within daily life. Her experience as a classical ballet dancer and the sudden loss of her father heavily influences her work as well as her process. Wilmarth explores the multifaceted nature of grief and loss. She draws from her daily life and lived experiences. Wilmarth shows a duality in her work, tenderness in moments of pain, and fondness (even in moments of extreme sorrow—it's the bittersweet where her work resides).

Wilmarth works with mediums including drawing, painting, papermaking, and bookmaking. While she experiments with many mediums, a common thread through her work is its often small-scale with fragmented images. She offers the viewer an almost voyeuristic perspective into her world. Recently, Wilmarth has started to paint on a larger scale, continuing the same soft, delicate color palette and creating dreamy portraits of her space.

By sharing her work, Wilmarth uses art as a means of navigating feelings of grief and loss through a hopeful, and sometimes even a joyful, lens. Her hope is that her work brings comfort to her viewers, as it does for herself.

**Emma Wilmarth** is a Chicago-based artist whose work explores intimate moments of daily life. Drawing from her lived experiences and her time as a ballet dancer, Wilmarth approaches her practice with a tender yet precise hand, always with a reverence to fleeting moments and the beauty found within the mundane. Much of her work has been small-scale (inviting the viewer into her world) but she has started to create larger scale paintings. Wilmarth's work has been exhibited through UneARTh Arts Society and Columbia College Chicago, where she will earn her Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2023.

**Instagram:** [@emmawilmarth.art](https://www.instagram.com/emmawilmarth.art)





Untitled, 2022, oil pastel on Rives BFK print paper, 26.5" x 19"



Untitled, 2022, oil pastel on Rives BFK print paper, 26.5" x 19"





*Love Letters to My Memories, 2020, found images printed on polaroids and hand-written notes placed inside an envelope and left around various locations in Chicago, IL*



*I'll leave the light on, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 24" x 20"*



*I want to keep you close...*, 2022, pendant using blister pearl and brass hung on a brass herringbone chain, 2" diameter





*Do they know?*, 2022, oil pastel on Rives BFK print paper, 13" x 9.5"



*Mine.* , 2022, iPhone photography, inkjet prints on handmade abaca paper, acrylic, waxed thread, vegan leather, vintage lock and key, 7" x 5"



Untitled (pattern study), 2021, handmade paper using cotton fibers, 10" x 7"





*Woman, 2022, aluminum, 4" x 3"*



*For my dad, 2021, scrap wood, acrylic paint on Rives BFK print paper, oil pastel on vellum, 9" x 6"*

# INTERVIEW WITH EMMA WILMARTH

Conducted by Sierra Delamarter

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**Sierra Delamarter:** How has your background as a classical ballet dancer informed your artistic practice? In what ways do you rely on the teaching you gathered as a dancer to inform your practice as a fine artist?

**Emma Wilmarth:** This was actually pointed out to me very recently by Willa Goettling in a studio visit, but I think that the biggest connection between the two is the taking of something that is or can be very intense and presenting it as soft and at times, even delicate. Beyond aesthetics, I think that the self-discipline, and tenacity it takes to navigate the world of classical ballet are things that I have carried with me and are integrated into my physical process of making.

**SD:** Your work uses intentional desaturated tones with only moments of bright colors. How does this support your expression of grief, loss, and the duality of emotions found in these experiences?

**EW:** When it comes to color usage, I think there are a couple of things at play; when I was in the thick of it [grief], I just felt numb, so I think that the soft, muted color palette conveys this dullness I felt after experiencing loss. I also tend to gravitate to a softer color palette in general, for example, my home is very neutral, and my reasoning has always been because if everything is just soft and neutral, even if it's a mess, it's not overwhelming for me to look at and I think that that mentality just naturally shifted into my artistic practice. So, when I am feeling overwhelmed by grief or pain, or any emotion for that matter, I can still express everything I need to, in a format that is both calming and comforting.

**SD:** How do you keep true to your style through your chosen mediums, such as papermaking, bookmaking, metalwork, and painting? How has your style developed as you have grown as an artist?

**EW:** I think that the ability to stay true to my style no matter what medium I am working in, came with building confidence and learning to trust my intuition. Now that I'm at a point where I feel like I've established my personal aesthetic, the medium often follows the initial idea and I just allow the materials to guide me as I work. Earlier in my work, I think I felt more pressure to use color in a way that I wasn't naturally inclined to and as I mentioned, as I started to trust my intuition more, that's when I started to lean into my color palette understand what subject matter was important to me and I think that's when I could see the confidence come through in my work and start to see it really develop into what it is now.

**SD:** What do you wish to achieve with your body of work? What goals do you have for your artwork in the future?

**EW:** Above all, I just want to express and work through my emotions through my work, and I think that even though I'm referencing very specific moments in my life, the feelings I am referencing are universal and so I can only hope that they not only bring comfort and validation to me but also to whomever is viewing my work. So I think my goal for my current and future work is that it reaches whoever it needs to.





## 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](http://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.