

# JACOB ASHBA

## 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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*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.

# JACOB ASHBA

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**Jacob Ashba** is a Chicago-based, Michigan-born artist who utilizes bright colors, unique characters, and surrealist imagery to tell stories through acrylic paint and canvas. Initially a film major, Ashba slowly discovered his love for the fine arts—and the joy of creative freedom that came along with it. Ashba has explored numerous mediums, and has taken his experiences from each artform to aid him in the creation of his current art.

**Jacob Ashba's** artworks are a surrealist exploration of characters and settings. The work acts as an invitation for the viewer to immerse themselves in strange, unfamiliar environments. Ashba's intuitive approach to painting allows his work to grow organically, creating art that functions as windows to other worlds—snapshots of scenes featuring characters that each have their own lives and histories that are unknown to us. The direct relationship between his paintings and viewers provides a space for them to craft their own stories that relate to their own experiences, making each interpretation unique.



*A Brief Gathering of Those that Avoid the Sun, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 10" x 10"*



*Court of Magicians*, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 10" x 10"



*Eve and Adam*, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 36"



*I'd Like to Walk in Your Shoes for a Day*, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 12" x 9"



*Old Friends by the Window*, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 36" x 48"





*Parade of the Sages, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 10" x 10"*



*School of Unorthodox Scholars, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 36"*



*This Debate is About You, 2022, acrylic on canvas, 48" x 36"*

# INTERVIEW WITH JACOB ASHBA

Conducted by Sierra Delamarter

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**Sierra Delamarter:** You depict wizards and whimsical and fantastical characters in your pieces. What inspires the characters and settings found in your paintings?

**Jacob Ashba:** I've always enjoyed media that present vivid personalities that can create bonds between a viewer and a fabricated world. I've drawn inspiration from media that is able to utilize that connection while leaving out enough context to give the viewer a sense of freedom in their interpretations. A huge inspiration for my work is found in the characterization and worldbuilding of Hayao Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli movies, where amazing and whimsical characters can connect with an audience despite any lack of context to why or how they are presented the way they are.

**SD:** How does your background as a film major impact your practice and the stories you express through your paintings?

**JA:** My pursuit of a film degree came from a desire to create. It wasn't until after I started college that I realized the world of film involved many moving parts that would prevent me from being as hands-on as I would like. Painting allowed me to take complete control over each aspect of my art without feeling constrained by the limits of reality, but also gave me an opportunity to use skills I could only learn by working with real people on sets. Characterization, direction, storytelling, personalization- these are all skills I acquired during my pursuit of a film degree, and all have had large impacts on how I create my current work.

**SD:** Do you create your images with stories or the viewer in mind?

**JA:** My paintings may portray scenes that each contain their own unique stories, but the intent behind the creation of these scenes comes from a completely organic process rather than being a choreographed set. My stories come from the viewer, not myself. Instead, I consider myself part of the audience, with my interpretation only being one of many.

**SD:** How do you choose the colors you use? Do you choose the color scheme before you begin a new painting, or is it an organic process?

**JA:** The colors that I use are decided based on intuition. I like to treat a painting as if I am revealing a scene rather than creating one, and therefore the colors I choose are ones that instinctively feel "correct," as if they were meant to be a certain color all along. I enjoy painting with a vivid color palette as it aids in separating our world and my painted worlds, with the colors being a visual indicator of both physical and spiritual differences.



## 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.