

# **SOFIE WAY**

## **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.

# SOFIE WAY

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Sofie Way's work is currently evolving in its form, yet constant in examining grief, womanhood and the body. Moving from constant text, loud color and lines to a more minimalist and sculptural approach, she aims to convey the same emotions in a new way- breaking the boundaries of the canvas and what it means to express oneself. The new paintings are the manifestation of growing pains: the chasms which grow within us, the inner workings of humans concealed or bared, resurfacing cracks in our skin. Although they are completely new and unlike the artist's previous body of work, they are a sign of change and reinterpretation pointing towards recovery from grief.

Through painting, digital work and animation, **Sofie Way** examines topics in grief and womanhood and how the two interact with one another. Way, inspired by artists such as Tracy Emin and Rene Magritte, uniquely illustrates the surreality of being a young woman. Her work has been deeply influenced by both music and art in combination with grief and illness.

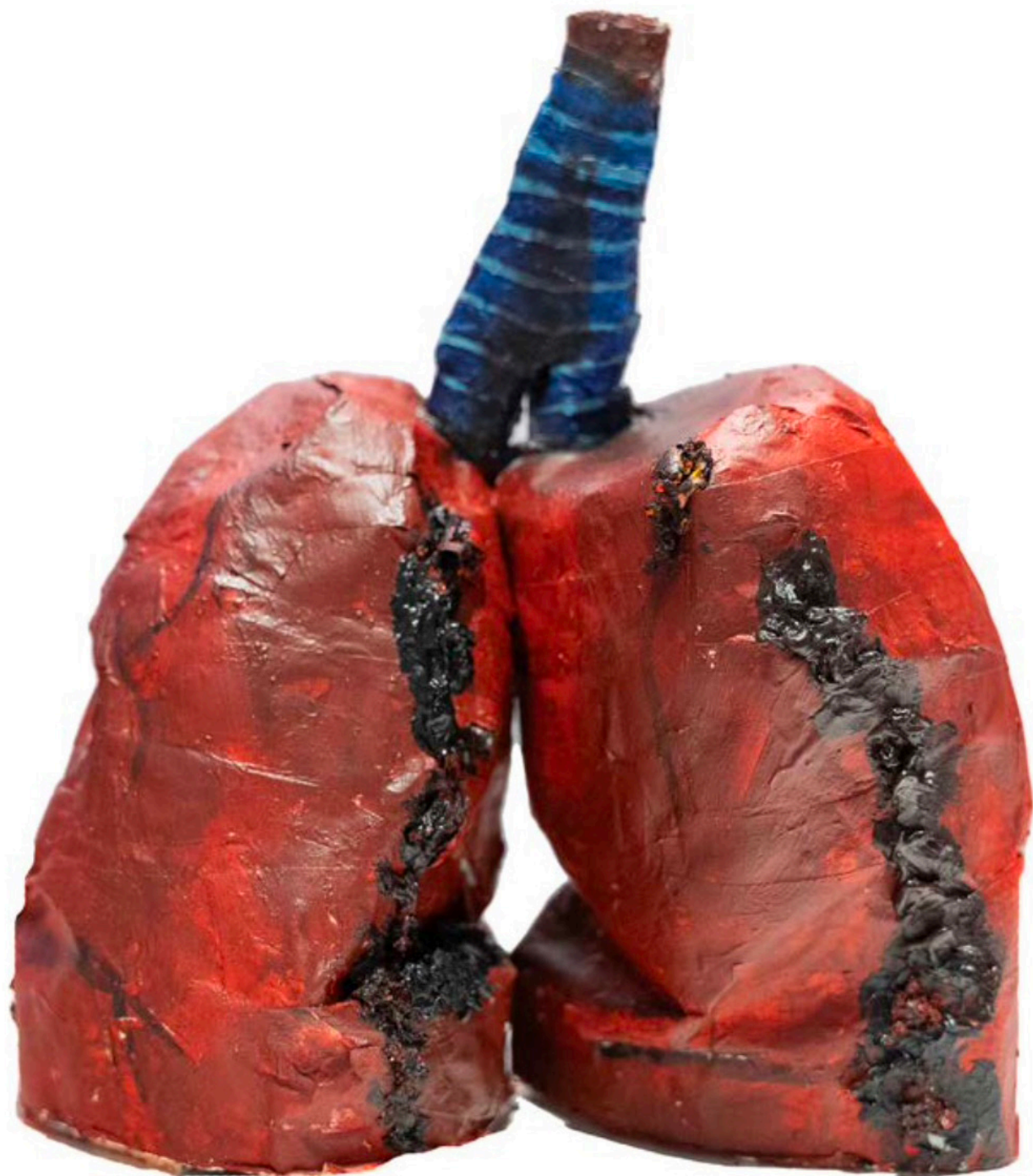
Way's work has been featured in the 2019 Juried Skidmore Student Exhibition at the Schick Art Gallery, the 2019 Tang Party at the Tang Teaching Museum, and 2018 Pattern Recognition at the Schick Art Gallery. She will receive her Bachelors in Fine Arts concentrated in painting at Columbia College Chicago in 2023 with a Record of Study and Achievement from University of the Arts London Study Abroad Programme.

**Website:** [sway.myportfolio.com](http://sway.myportfolio.com)

**Instagram:** [@sofie.way](https://www.instagram.com/sofie.way)



*Arm and a Leg*, 2018, oil on canvas, 18" x 24" each



*Call Me*, 2022, papier mache and acrylic paint, 10" x 8" x 6"



Untitled, 2022, wire, 12" x 6" x 6"



*meloxicam 15mg*, 2023, chicken wire, papier mache, acrylic, 24" x 18"

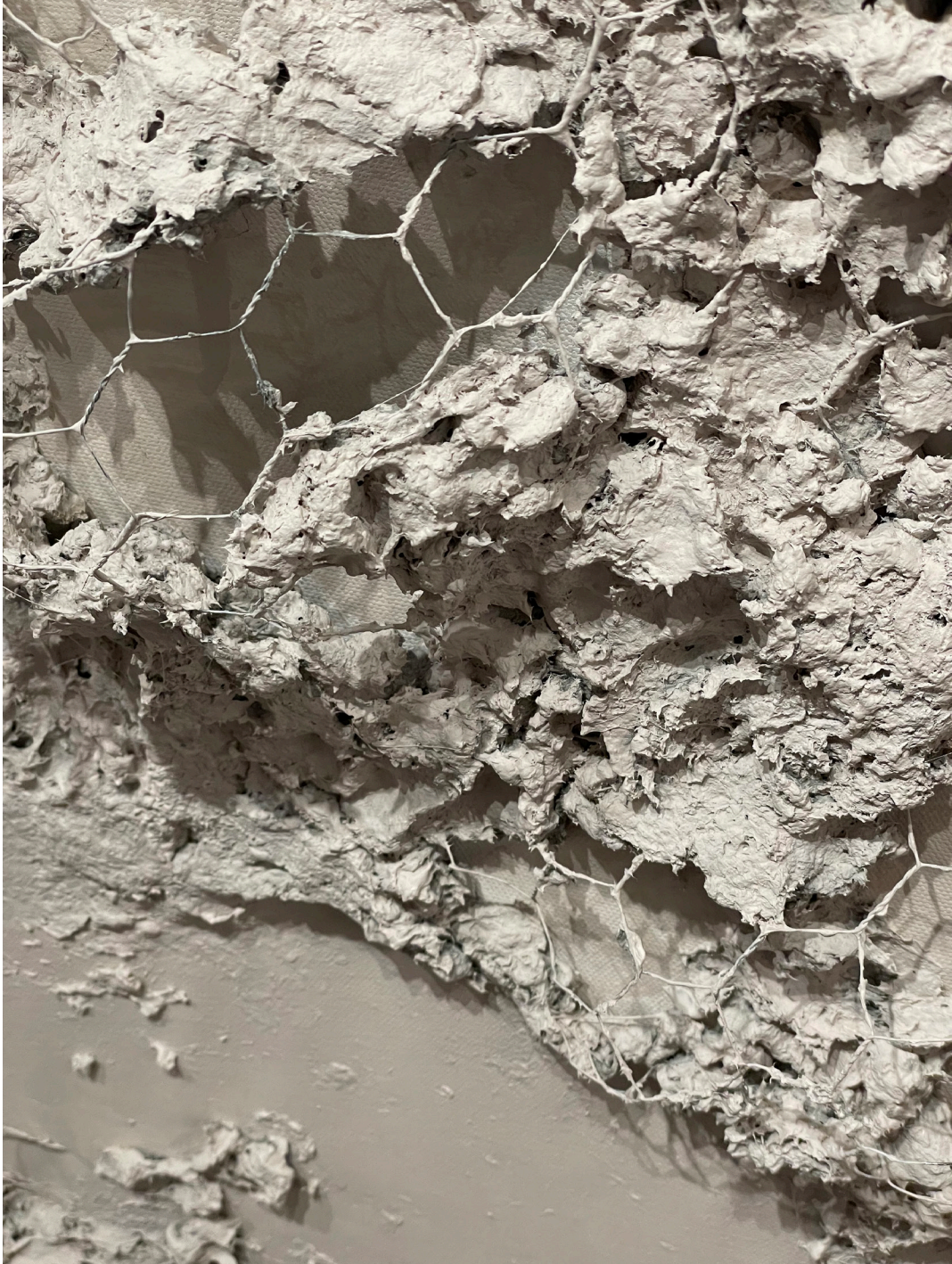


*meloxicam 15mg (Detail)*, 2023, chicken wire, papier mache, acrylic, 24" x 18"





*sertraline 200mg*, 2023, chicken wire, papier mache, acrylic, 36" x 36"



*sertraline 200mg (Detail)*, 2023, chicken wire, papier mache, acrylic, 36" x 36"



*bupropion xl 300mg (Detail)*, 2023, chicken wire, papier mache, acrylic, 36" x 48"



*bupropion xl 300mg (Detail)*, 2023, chicken wire, papier mache, acrylic, 36" x 48"

# INTERVIEW WITH SOFIE WAY

Conducted by Rachel Manlubatan

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**Rachel Manlubatan:** Can you describe the discoveries you have made about womanhood and your identity as an artist as your art techniques shifted? What challenges came with changing your style, and how did you overcome them?

**Sofie Way:** As my techniques in art making have changed, I've discovered that I don't need to be loud to be heard. Women are often told to assert themselves and take space, but this process has told me that I shouldn't need to yell to have the right to own and fill my theoretical space. I should be listened to and given respect no matter my gender, and I want others who feel small sometimes to know this too.

It has been challenging to unlearn the aggressive ways I've been told to claim space, but I think the unlearning has led to a new aesthetic which is quite paired down and fresh. My compositions used to be extremely visually crowded but this new direction feels almost elegant. Once I found comfort and beauty in simplicity, I began to trust the materials to speak on the issues I normally address in my art.

**RM:** What draws you into close-up compositions of body parts, and what emotions do you want your audiences to feel when engaging with the intimate settings you have created?

**SW:** I've always loved the intricacies of the feminine body, it feels intimate and soft. While these new pieces I've made still investigate the intimacies and soft aesthetics, it's hard to ignore that the structure of them are crafted from sharp wires and will not leave those who come too close unscathed. To me, this means that closeness does not come without pain and cutting vulnerability. Even in your positive personal relationships, you must sometimes

bleed to find peace.

**RM:** What types of music seem to inform your portfolio most deeply, and how is your creative style influenced by these genres? Were you always drawn to surrealist techniques such as Magritte's and autobiographical techniques like Emin's, or was that an interest you found later in your aesthetic journey?

**SW:** I have always made music my whole life but in the past couple of years I've been in a quiet period. My visual work certainly is beginning to reflect this change, but that doesn't mean it's a permanent moment of silence. My work ebbs and flows and I really don't think I'd be a good artist if my work stopped changing. This is just where I'm at right now, and that's okay.

In terms of what I'm listening to now, I think I'm more interested in a deep sense of space. I've been listening to a lot of electronic music such as Grimes, Purity Ring, 100 Gecs and even Skrillex as weird as that sounds (his newer stuff is actually very cool please give it a try if you haven't listened)! These artists are doing incredibly strange things in their field but they're innovative, and that's what I think is so important in the contemporary moment-innovation.

I have always been obsessed with surrealism, but more recently in my art-making journey, I have been exposed to great thinkers like Emin. I love the vulnerability in her work and am very inspired by her contributions to contemporary feminist art work.

**RM:** Through experimenting with both traditional and digital mediums, you've found a way to harmoniously combine your drawings with video. How much do the tasks of making an animation with your conventional art deviate from your conventional art just

## INTERVIEW CONTINUED

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standing alone? What differences do you find within your examination of grief when comparing your paintings to your animations?

**SW:** Animation is an extremely tedious process, and that's coming from a painter. Hand-drawn animations are a tremendous amount of work. I do think that the laborious nature of animation is absolutely symbolic of dealing with grief, but sometimes it can almost be too much. Grieving anything at all is work intensive, so being gracious with yourself and almost allowing for ways to make work less painful is important sometimes. It's better to make a little bit of work that was maybe a bit easier to accomplish than no work at all due to feeling overwhelmed in my opinion.

**RM:** Can you expand on the exercises you engage in when brainstorming your artwork? What do you wish to accomplish and convey to your audience by exposing the planning part of your process?

**SW:** Most importantly, letting go of your own expectations of yourself can help in making something new. I would say that making something every day is important in keeping your hands and eyes sharp and stimulated. You never know what you're going to make once you pick up a pencil or brush, but you do know that you will not make anything interesting if you don't make anything at all.



## 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)

**Contact information:** Mark Porter, [mporter@colum.edu](mailto:mporter@colum.edu) / 312.369.6643

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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.