

**2021 UNDERGRADUATE
FINE ART THESIS EXHIBITION**

MIRANDA RANDEL



DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

MAY 10 - MAY 26 2021

DETRITUS AND DESIRE: 2021 UNDERGRADUATE FINE ARTS THESIS EXHIBITION

Detritus and Desire: the 2021 Undergraduate Fine Arts Thesis Exhibition features the works of four BFA candidates in Columbia's Fine Arts program. The exhibition, which includes drawings, prints, books, video, performance, and installation, represents the culmination of four years' worth of development of a cohesive body of work for each artist while earning their degrees. Taking place at C33 Gallery during Columbia's Manifest festival, this edition of the DEPS Artist Profile series is a way to connect audiences with the artists of the exhibition and give you an in-depth look into the processes and ideas that have informed this body of work.

Participating Artists: Darby Jack, iph, Amanda Adela, and Miranda Randel

MIRANDA RANDEL

Miranda Randel has been focusing on disease and infection in the human body. Throughout the last few years her family has had many ups and downs with health and wellness pertaining to disease and infection. After COVID-19 came into our lives last spring this became even more apparent as thousands have lost their lives. For the artist, using her artwork is one of her ways to process this pandemic and disease in the body. This inspired her to make an artwork where the viewer can enter a deceased skin-like structure. The outside of the structure has a skin like appearance that the viewer then ducks or crawls through to enter the installation. This juxtaposes how on the outside you may not see a virus or infection, but on the inside it can ravage an organism.

Thinking of disease, Randel always imagined disease as a black tar like substance in the body. This is partially inspired by seeing tarred lungs from passed smokers as a child. It is also inspired by imagery from movies like *Venom* (2018), where a virus chooses a host and feeds on their body. Those inspirations go hand in hand with images of sphere like tumor cells and disease cells in the body that are placed in the inside of the installation. Although inside the installation there is still a light as viewers can peer outside the installation with peep holes to the outside. This can be a light in the darkness to the viewer inside all of the chaos inside of the work.

Miranda Randel is a Chicago-based artist focusing on feminist, LGBTQ+, the human body, and sexual expression in her artwork. Growing up she always felt out of place and different and just tried to fit in for most of her childhood. As she got older, art became her form of expression and way to communicate with others her thoughts and ideas. Through painting, drawing, sculpture, and zine-making, her practice gains influence from past or present events such as her childhood, mental health, sexuality, body image, and social issues.

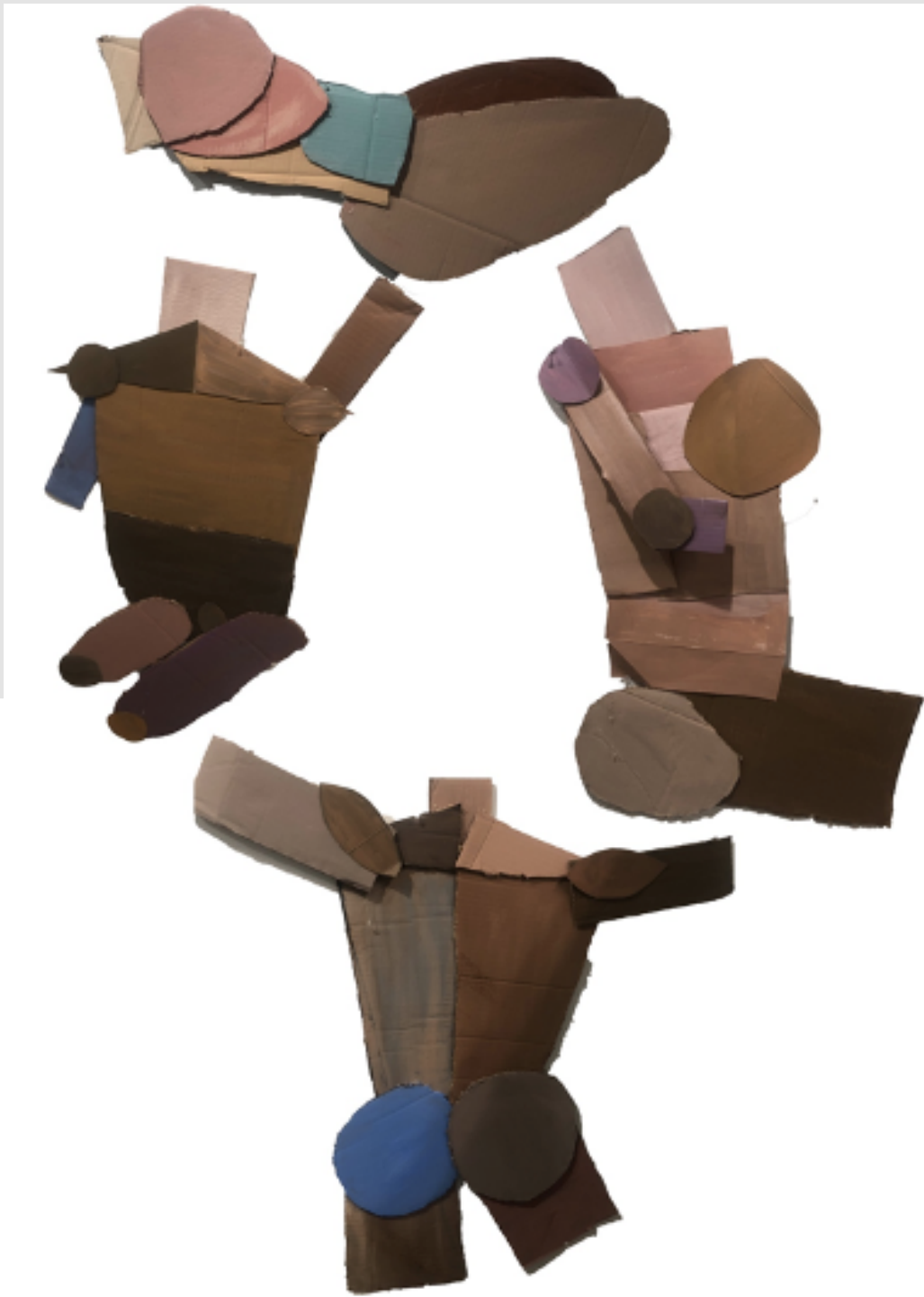
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We Are the World, 2018
Sculpture with foam, acrylic, & florals



Figures 1, 2,3 & 4, 2020
Acrylic and oil paint on cardboard



The Dirty Work (video still), 2020
performance



Blossom, 2018
Clay, hot glue, and florals



SKIN 1, 2020
Acrylic, eyelets, and cording on denim

INTERVIEW WITH MIRANDA RANDEL

Conducted by Kaylee Fowler

Kaylee Fowler: Several of your previous pieces use clothing and other coverings as a medium; what do you think is the value in using clothing to talk about the themes you explore?

Miranda Randel: I think the value in using clothing in my work comes from an accessibility standpoint, but also a personal connection to fabric/clothing. I have accumulated a lot of fabric over the years due to a love of sewing, and once COVID-19 hit last March it became a way to make my art. With the artwork made from clothing, I have a fascination with upcycling and making old clothes new. I think it is also a way to play with the way we show and express our bodies. Clothing lets us hide and reveal as much as we choose to show, and the way one clothes their figure fascinates me.

KF: For the BFA Thesis showcase, your project is an installation focused on disease and infection in the human body; how do these issues intersect with your other feminist explorations of the body? Do you feel as if there is a feminist way of talking about disease?

MR: Disease of the body has always been an interest to me as they all interact differently in person to person. I specifically think of disease in the female body as I have had many women in my life deal with cancers, PCOS, and other things that ravage and effect our mental, emotional, and physical health. I also find women's health to be such a mystery and not fully understood, as the cis-female body has not been studied as much as the cis-male body has in our culture. I think this leads to a lot of misinformation about what a woman's body does and I think it is important to express and explore that through art and medical research.

KF: What are your thoughts behind making an installation for this work dealing with disease, when the recent pandemic has made things like installations much harder to view? is there a relationship between the two that you are trying to explore?

MR: Since the pandemic started and family health issues have come up in the last few years, I have wanted to make an installation reflecting on that. Since the installation only allows one viewer at a time to enter and take in the work, I think it creates a unique experience for the viewer. I also felt during the quarantine most people felt alone in isolation and had to experience this change on their own. This made me want to create an experience of the viewer coming into an installation alone and experience whether good or scary emotions in the installation. I think it reflects a lot of the fears we all have had during this lockdown.

KF: You take a lot of inspiration from both past and present events for your work; since lockdown started, have you found yourself more drawn to exploring things of the past, or dealing with the issues of the present? Do you think there is a relationship between what you are exploring now and the effects of lockdown on your focus?

MR: I think since lockdown I have been doing a lot of thinking about current events in the media as well as my personal life. My art has always been affected by the environment and experiences around me, but I really dove into doing work reflecting issues that are present, such as the pandemic, equality, and feminism. I think the lockdown allowed me to reflect on past and present events and let me dive deeper into them as I had more time to explore and meditate on certain topics and ideas.

INTERVIEW CONTINUED

KF: What do you hope viewers will take away from your work, and what are some things you are looking forward to coming up or that may be happening in the near future?

MR: I hope the viewers can take away that although disease can be scary and big, there is a way in and out of it. And although there may not be a lot of light, there is an ending and beginning to it. And whatever emotions and feelings they feel in the installation it is perfectly normal and okay.

In the future I hope to do more installations, paintings, and prints in the near future whether in galleries/events spaces or just for fun. I am looking forward to being in more unconventional spaces and collaborating with other artists for films and fashion.

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 Assistant Kaylee Fowler. This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

Learn more at colum.edu

C33 Gallery
33 Ida B Wells Dr, 1st Floor, Chicago, IL 60605
Gallery Hours: Monday–Friday, 9 a.m.–5 p.m.
Capacity of gallery is 10 visitors, and masks are required.

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