

JAKE HIMOVITZ

2021 ART & ART HISTORY
MFA THESIS EXHIBITION



DEPS ARTIST PROFILE SERIES

MAY 5 - 21 2021

2021 ART & ART HISTORY MFA THESIS EXHIBITION

DEPS is pleased to present the *2021 Art and Art History MFA Thesis Exhibition*. This exhibition showcases a body of work from each artist formed and refined during their time in the MFA program, and features a range of media from painting, sculpture, photography, installation, and beyond. Taking place at Glass Curtain 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.

Jack Bradley

Josué Esaú

Chelsea Noelle Fetherlin

Jake Himovitz

Ava Makenali

Sabrina Pastard

Leave Me Alone While I Wrestle with This Thing

Jake Himovitz merges his life and his artwork as a means to understand what it means to be a human being. He creates paintings, poems, films, and performances that emerge from his meticulous collection and analysis of cultural ephemera and personal symbols. His practice is a melding of representational figurative art with a visual language of dried out cultural icons, vernacular aesthetics, and gestures of playful curiosity to imply enigmatic narratives.

Jake Himovitz is a Chicago based artist and educator. Himovitz creates paintings, poems, films, and performances that emerge from his meticulous collection of cultural ephemera and personal symbols. His paintings merge figurative representation, with a careful analysis of the formal elements that make up a visual language. Both his teaching and creative practices are founded on values of process, curiosity, play, and self-study. Himovitz will graduate with a MFA in Fine Art from Columbia College Chicago in May of 2021.

[@Jakehimovitz](#)
[Jakehimovitz.com](#)

JAKE HIMOVITZ



Muse Bodies, 2021

Birch wood

8.5' x 8.5'



Falcon Sport, 2020
Gouache on acid free paper
6" x 6"



The Firm, 2020

Oil on birch panel, newsprint, charcoal, shells, and gesso
2'x2'



You Leave Me Breathless, 2020
charcoal on newsprint



Interpretation Melodrama (Flirt) 2020

Oil on wood panel cutout

18" x 24"

INTERVIEW WITH JAKE HIMOVITZ

Conducted by Kaylee Fowler

Kaylee Fowler: Within your painting practice, you challenge some of the traditional confines of what a painting is by including sculptural elements and found materials. What do you hope these elements add to a viewer's perception of your work, and what do you think is the role of painting in the contemporary art scene?

Jake Himovitz: My work is and has always been a process and I can't help but live all aspects of my life in a creative way. My process is physical, I make in whatever way my body is drawn to make, whether that is performative, sculptural, musical, or painted.

My sculptural paintings are no different except that they have been created from a more deliberate process. Cutting, carving, and shaping wood requires me to be more meticulous about formal elements than I might have been while making a painting. The shapes began as free flowing, intuitive sketches. After a process of refinement, they became three dimensional forms. I've always bounced between the raw impulse and the carefully considered decision and I hope that the viewer might experience a bit of that pendulation while looking at these works

KF: You've written on how impactful collaboration has been in life; how has collaboration changed over the past year for you during COVID-19? I'm sure it probably looks different, but has the inspiration and internal affects been maintained or evolved in unexpected ways?

JH: All of life is a collaboration. We grow and evolve by mirroring each other,

containing each other, and responding to each other. Quarantine has allowed me to collaborate with myself. I've been able to re-meet different aspects of who I am and make conscious decisions about how I live.

I have been challenging, questioning, and nurturing myself so that I can make my work from a more authentic, uninhibited, and loving place. I've been collaborating with this moment, where we are politically, and where I stand as a privileged white man. Learning what that means, how to heal and what my responsibilities are in this world.

I have also been collaborating with my fiancée Kyra Lehman and her 8 year old son Luka. We often make films, dances, outfits, meals, and more that exercise our "yes" muscles. While COVID-19 has made it difficult to work with other people, we've enjoyed the time to be creative in smaller, more intimate ways.

KF: You've said that your work uses a visual language of dried out "cultural icons and vernacular aesthetics," and could be categorized as Americana; what inspired these visual references? Are there certain elements of these categories that you chose not to incorporate in your work?

JH: My imagery helps me make sense of my place in the world. Last year, I made several paintings of white men. These figures are a part of my lineage. As I worked to get beneath my own identity, the reference imagery gave me something to push up against. Recently, I've come back to my instincts. The sculptural paintings have helped me purge myself of that "dried out" "Americana" subject matter and replace it with a visual language that is more honest and direct. The elements that I choose to leave out are those that doesn't support the whole of what I'm showing.

INTERVIEW CONTINUED

KF: The title of your thesis work is *Leave Me Alone While I Wrestle with This Thing* which refers to the often very private nature of an artist's creative process, coming from the perspective that the process is a way for the artist to self-study and attune. Given that the title of this work points to the often obscured and private act of creating itself, what do you think is the value of there being transparency between the artist and the viewer about the process of creating a work? How does it change the viewer's relationship to both the work and the artist?

JH: The title of this work holds me accountable and asks me to be transparent. I am attempting to frame and translate my personal practices as a body of work. All of it, the challenges, the questions, the softness, the throwaways, the excitement and the crashes. Every artist has their own process and many choose not share them. I recognize my own process as healing, playful and personal. My artworks are like a container for my curiosity; they allow me to ask questions and test myself.

KF: What do you hope viewers will learn about your own process through your thesis paintings?

JH: I'd hope my work gives permission, relieves pressure for others to work in their own way, time, style and voice. That making artwork can also be healing, pleasurable, and completely bewildering.

KF: What was the most fun you had creating your thesis work?

JH: I have really enjoyed the constant flow of feedback from my classmates, professors, faculty, etc. I loved dancing with the entire zoom room at the end of the spring critique!

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

MFA Thesis Exhibition

May 5 – 21, 2021

Glass Curtain Gallery–Columbia College Chicago

1104 S Wabash Ave, 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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