

MFA IN
VISUAL ARTS
**GRADUATE
EXHIBITION**
JANUARY 2025



FROM THE INTERIM DIRECTOR

It feels as though something almost magical has unfolded within our forty-first graduating class of Lesley University's MFA in Visual Arts. A palpable shift has taken place in their work—a willingness to take risks, begin anew, or even know precisely when to hold back. This maturity has brought a distinct clarity to their artistic voices. Even more remarkable is the diversity of interests that have converged to create a unique, dynamic catalog and exhibition.

Observing the ebbs and flows in the trends among our graduate students' creations often reveals evolving narratives and fresh insights. In the work of these five artists, we find complex reflections and investigations on our connection to the land, our (mis)understanding of place, and our relationships with ourselves and others. Their expressions tap into something deeper—an awareness that is not only personal but also political, and at times, even supernatural, merging tangible realities with ethereal qualities. Together, their work invites us to explore the layered, intricate nature of human experience and our surroundings.

The strength of our MFA in Visual Arts program lies in the community of artists and educators who continually inspire and elevate one another. This semester, our graduating class worked closely with Caleb Cole, Rafa Esparza, Jennifer Krasinski, Isabel Manalo, Greer Muldowney, Matthew Nash, Adam Putnam, Stuart Steck, Naoe Suzuki, and Joseph Wolin. Thank you all for your dedication, guidance, and openness. Together, we celebrate these graduates as they complete this milestone in their journey as artists and critical thinkers. Congratulations!

Andrew Mroczek

Interim Director of MFA in Visual Arts and Director of Exhibitions, Lesley University College of Art + Design

ON THE COVER:

Ehrald Solana,
Stacy Seated on a Couch, Oil on canvas, 30" x 40"



SPECIAL THANKS

For a project like this to succeed—aside from the dedication of the faculty, administration, and the students themselves—support from all quarters of an institution and beyond is needed.

Among the many to whom thanks go are: Trina Baker, Jen Barrows, Elliott Brennan, Christine Collins, Anita Costello, Dana Dober, Tom Englehardt, Tim Grills, Micki Harrington, Theo Hartlett, April Hunt, Renee Jordan, Bo Liang, Robin Laskey, Carolyn Latourelle, Atoosa Malekani, Nathaniel Mays, Debbie Mosher, Andrew Mroczek, Frank Mullen, Sabina Petrucci Coutis, Shirin Phillips, Maria Popp, Emme Rovins, Heather Shaw, Julie Stanwood, Janet Steinmayer, Stuart Steck, Brian Unwin, Sandra Walker, Wendy Whiteaker, Zachary Wray, Deanna Yameen, Adrienne Zonderman, and so many others who helped through small and large favors, gestures, and simply through the performance of their jobs. To them: please believe that the failure of memory is no reflection of the weight of our debt to all of you. The MFA candidates are incredibly grateful to the many friends, family, and mentors for their support and encouragement through the last several years.

Lesley University does not discriminate. Visit lesley.edu/equal for more information.



MFA CANDIDATES



- 4 Diana Carbone
- 8 Alex Ceacareanu
- 12 Jose Hugo Sanchez
- 16 Ehrald Solana
- 20 Shelley White



DIANA CARBONE

ARTIST STATEMENT

This Must Be the Place is a photographic body that was created in the aftermath of a chaotic six months of my life, which started with the loss of my grandfather. To survive the chaos, I isolated myself from friends and family as a method of survival, but this project was a way to reconnect myself to my own life. In order to be an active participant in my own life, I documented the minute and peaceful moments that I had missed in the chaos. Using imagery from my domestic space with my family, refracted light, physical barriers, and the symbol of hands, this project acts as a beacon that calls me back to my own personal timeline after experiencing grief and disorder.



Thursday Evening in the Kitchen,
Digital Photography, 24" x 16"



untitled,
Digital Photography, 24" x 16"



untitled,
Digital Photography, 24" x 16"



Route 127,
Digital Photography, 24" x 16"



untitled,
Digital Photography, 24" x 16"



ALEX CEACAREANU

ARTIST STATEMENT

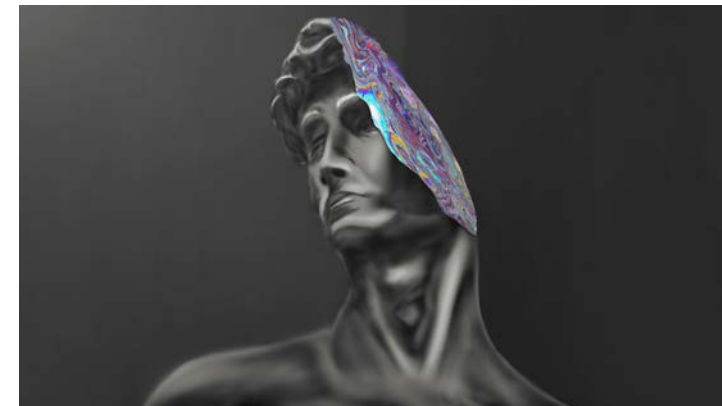
I am a Southern-born artist of Eastern European descent, raised in Western New York. My work combines illustration, animation, and the written word drawing from mythology, meditation, and deep contemplation. Through the fantastic, I translate my internal reflections, inviting viewers to explore the myths we live by and the hidden aspects of self. Rooted in a passion for cultural anthropology and inspired by Carl Jung's ideas, my art examines human behavior and psychology. I use imaginative worlds as a form of escapism and catharsis, exaggerating reality to offer a space where our inner drive can be safely explored. Here, the fantastic serves as a mirror for self-reflection, allowing viewers to confront both beauty and discomfort within themselves. My work guides audiences on a journey between 'objective' reality—the world as we see it—and our 'subjective' nature, the inner world that shapes our perceptions and actions. Using the language of fantasy, I aim to break the misconceptions of the medium as entertainment and address its power to manage and critique contemporary life.



Blue Mesa, Digital Paint Photoshop, 1200" x 676"



Bonnacon, Digital Paint Photoshop, 2914" x 2000"



Raskol, Digital Paint Photoshop, 2560" x 1440"



The Exodus Paragon,
Digital Paint Photoshop, 3200" x 1714"



Birth of a Shadow,
Digital Paint Photoshop, 3840" x 2160"



JOSE HUGO SANCHEZ

ARTIST STATEMENT

I am a Mexican artist living between Mexico and the United States, a reality that inherently makes me a border crosser. This dual experience deeply informs my work, which focuses on cultural phenomena and human conflict—exploring both their philosophical and aesthetic dimensions.

My art is rooted in research, drawing from diverse media to express complex ideas and emotions. Critical thinking is central to my process, resulting in a range of creative strategies. My practice spans performance art, monumental drawing and printmaking, sculpture, readymades, video art, stop-motion animation, and filmmaking.

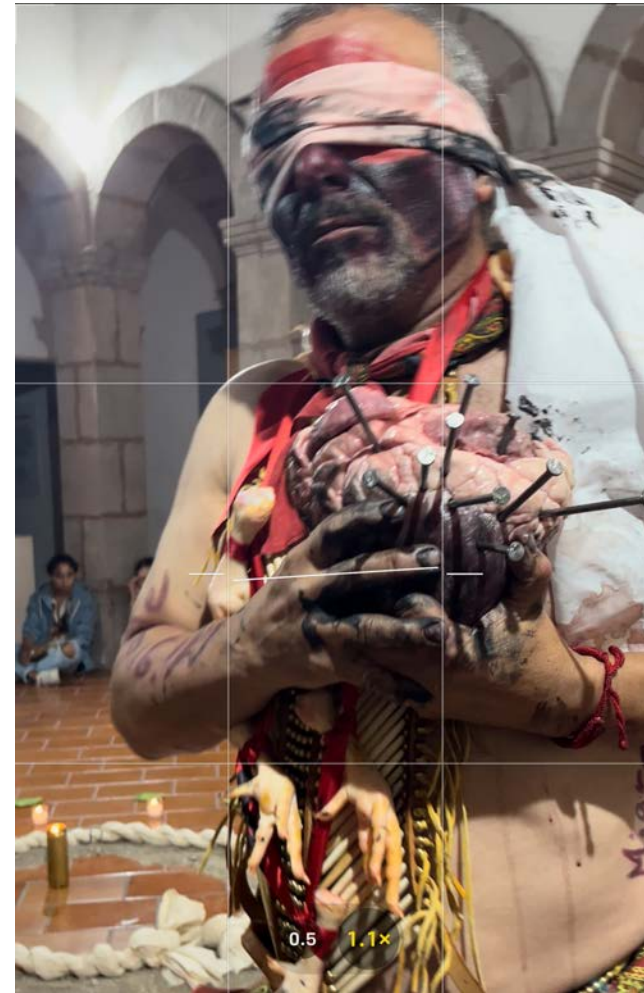
Currently, my work investigates migration, particularly the struggles of millions of refugees who cross borders in search of safety from war, poverty, and violence. I am profoundly moved by these stories and stand in solidarity with indigenous communities in Mexico, as well as Haitian refugees detained in Tijuana, who face harsh conditions in makeshift camps while unable to cross the border. My concerns also extend to human rights issues in the United States, where African Americans and migrant minorities continue to fight for their right to be recognized.

I seek to understand and support the migrant movement, working to create new “epistemological tentacular” thinking—a cognitive coalition between communities on both sides of the border. I use my work in stop-motion animation to construct fables that challenge the heteropatriarchal, colonial narratives of Western history, allowing my body and spirit to resist these oppressive structures, because for me, history, the clinic, and even the concept of God represent forms of control and death.

Through my art, I dismantle the violence that dehumanizes migrants who have been forced to abandon their homes. My work stands to reclaim the right to full citizenship and humanity for all, amplifying voices that are too often marginalized.



Migration Memory Of Blood 02, Stop Motion Animation 24 frames/second, 3.0 minutes time duration



Migration Memory Of Blood 04,
Performance-Installation, 20' x 30'



Migration Memory Of Blood 03,
Stop Motion Animation 24 frames/second,
3.0 minutes time duration



Migration Memory Of Blood 01,
Performance-Installation, 20' x 30'



Migration Memory Of Blood 05,
Installation, 20' x 10'

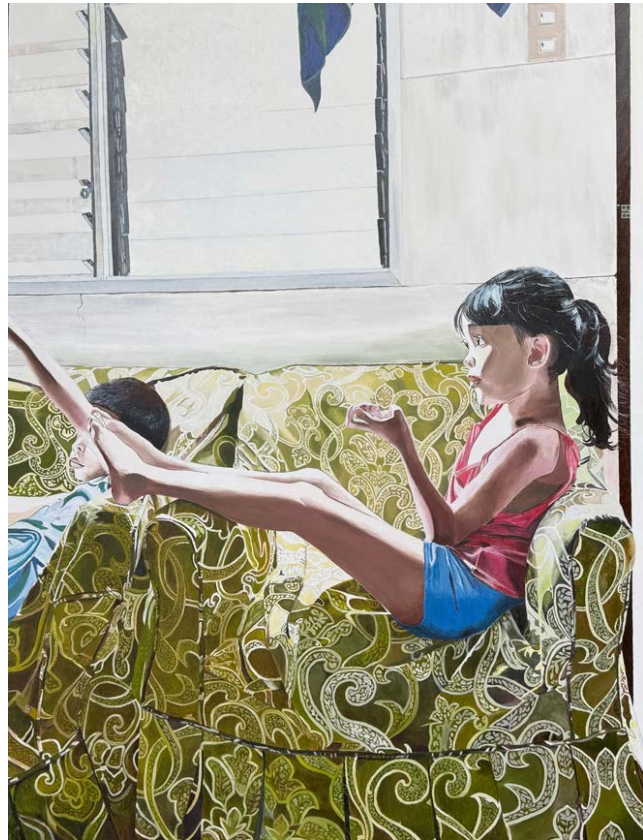


EHRALD SOLANA

ARTIST STATEMENT

My latest work, *Euphoria and Innocence*, explores the interplay between youthful joy and the underlying solitude often present in family dynamics. This series draws on my childhood memories, capturing the contrast between the external exuberance of youth and the quieter, introspective moments that shape childhood. Through a blend of vibrant colors and muted shadows, the work conveys both the innocence of these moments and the emotional depth beneath the surface.

In creating *Euphoria and Innocence*, I used personal photographs as inspiration, transforming them into larger works that reflect my evolving exploration of memory and identity. This continuity in subject and method marks a natural progression in my artistic practice. By layering these images with bold colors and reflective compositions, I uncover the emotional complexities of childhood—balancing innocence with the solitude and yearning it often entails. Through this series, I capture this duality, inviting viewers to reflect on their own experiences of nostalgia and emotional depth.



Stacy Seated on a Couch
Oil on canvas, 30" x 40"

The Grandmother and her Grandkids,
Oil on canvas, 30" x 40"



The Duality of Life,
Oil on canvas, 60" x 80"

The Reconstruction of Self ,
Oil on canvas, 60" x 80"





SHELLEY WHITE

ARTIST STATEMENT

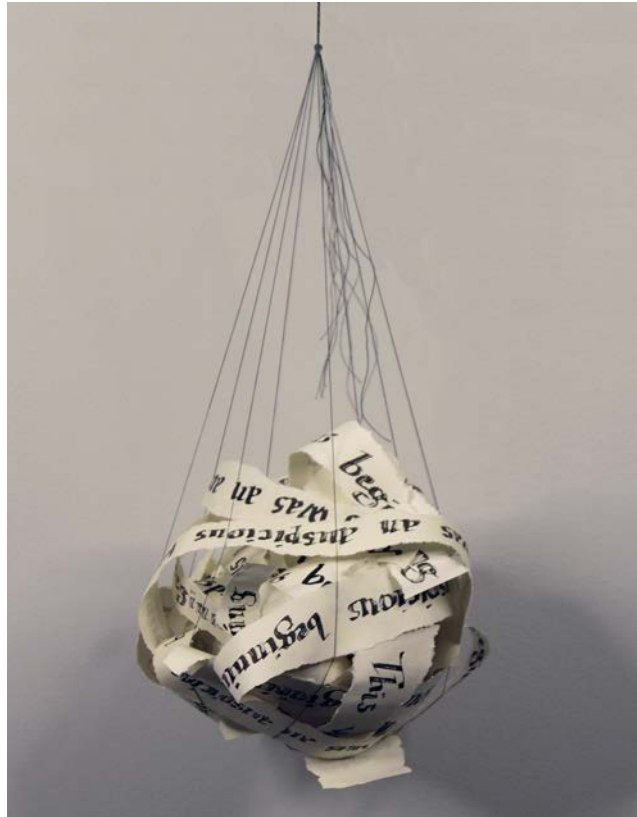
What does it mean to make art that matters? This question drives my artmaking as I confront social and environmental injustices, drawing inspiration from past social movements where art reshaped narratives and sparked new possibilities. As an interdisciplinary artist, I blur boundaries and engage in an experimental practice with visual arts and creative writing to challenge systems like economic globalization, border militarization, structural racism, and climate crisis. Through painting, drawing, printmaking, mixed media collage, and sculpture with found, natural, and discarded materials, I create multi-layered imagery that explores the seen and unseen.

My thesis project, *Auspicious Pernicious Beginnings*, examines the role of my earliest ancestor in the U.S., who arrived in 1634 and drew boundaries across Massachusetts and the Northeast, overtaking Native homelands. This project explores materiality and imbued meaning through mixed media collages and sculptures that incorporate natural, familial, and found objects, along with torn historical and contemporary maps. The work challenges settler colonial mythologies while holding space for memory, love, and grief for my elders.

Reflecting the broader themes in my work, this project grapples with identity, complicity, and the complexities of existing within—and resisting—a world that renders people and our planet disposable. While providing space to process personal and collective loss, I offer counternarratives of hope, imagining possibilities for humanization and systems change.



Heirloom, Crackle paint, salvaged frame, torn maps and paper, ink, oak tree tea dye, grandmother's thread, family silver, leaves, wax, 22" x 20"



Detail 1, Torn paper, ink, oak tree tea dye, grandmother's thread, 8" x 20"



Concord | Conquered, Crackle paint, chalk, pastels, torn maps and paper, ink, oak tree tea dye, grandmother's thread, 24" x 36"



Detail 2, Ink, tracing paper, water, tea, 18" x 14"

Naturalized Narratives, Crackle paint, chalk pastels, torn maps and paper, ink, oak tree tea dye and natural elements, 36" x 24"



MFA VISUAL ARTS FACULTY

CALEB COLE

Caleb Cole is a Midwest-born, Boston-based artist whose work addresses the opportunities and difficulties of queer belonging, as well as aims to be a link in the creation of that tradition, no matter how fragile or ephemeral or impossible its connections. Cole has received an Artadia Boston Finalist Award, Hearst 8x10 Biennial Award, 3 Magenta Flash Forward Foundation Fellowships, and 2 Photolucida Critical Mass Finalist Awards, among other distinctions. Their work is in a variety of permanent collections including the Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Newport Art Museum, and Leslie Lohman Museum of Art. They teach at Boston College and Clark University and are represented by Gallery Kayafas, Boston.

Caleb Cole,
*This World Is Not
Enough*, 2021, Installation
view: Gallery Kayafas,
Boston, Modular stage/
table with installation of
mirrors, mylar curtains,
lights, found confetti
from club floor



JENNIFER KRASINSKI

Jennifer Krasinski is a writer and cultural critic who frequently contributes to *4Columns*, *Artforum*, *Bookforum*, *The New Yorker* (Goings On), and other publications. Her essays have been published in numerous books and catalogs including *Reza Abdoh*, *Jill Johnston: The Disintegration of a Critic*, and *Hilton Als's Andy Warhol: The Series*. She was an art columnist for the *Village Voice* from 2014 to 2018, and served as both senior editor at *Artforum* and later as the magazine's digital editorial director, launching their video series "Artists On Writers," and "Under the Cover." She was on faculty in the MA Art Writing department at the School of Visual Arts (2013-2021), and has taught at Art Center College of Design, New York University, Yale University, and elsewhere. She is the recipient of an Andy Warhol Foundation Arts Writers Grant (2012), a Rauschenberg residency (forthcoming), and is a 2023-24 MacDowell fellow.

ANDREW MROCZEK

Andrew Mroczek is an artist and curator with a BFA from The Art Institute of Boston and an MFA in Visual Arts from Lesley University College of Art and Design. Mroczek's studio practice investigates themes of power structures and dynamics, sex and sexuality, and the pervasive impacts of patriarchy. His work has been widely exhibited, with solo shows at the Museo de Arte Contemporáneo de Lima, Peru; the Museum of Sex in New York; Lugar de la Memoria, Lima, Peru; the Centro Cultural de España, Lima, Peru; Chicago's Schneider Gallery, Houston's McClain Gallery, and Gravedigger's Daughter in Maine, as well as group exhibitions across the US, Cuba, Bolivia, India, Spain, and Venice, Italy. His work has been featured in online and print publications including *Artnet*, *the Huffington Post*, *Musée*, *Paper Magazine*, *VICE/Broadly*, *New York Magazine*, *the Advocate*, *Lenscratch*, *The Houston Press*, *El Comercio Peru*, *Artsy*, and *PRI's The World*.

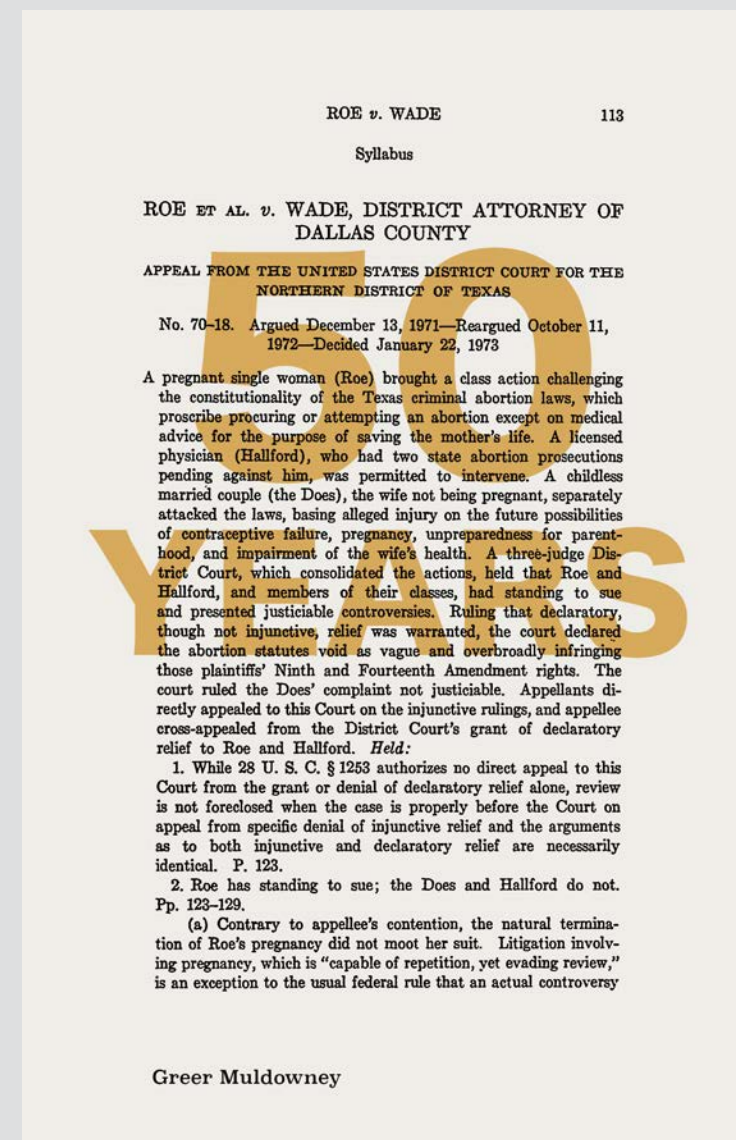
Mroczek has received numerous accolades, including a Massachusetts Cultural Council Fellowship and a Photolucida Critical Mass Award. His work is included in several prominent permanent collections, such as the RISD Museum, Lugar de la Memoria, the Bill Arning Gay Art Collection, FOTOMUSEO in Bogota, Colombia, and in the book collections at Harvard, Stanford, Princeton, and MoMA in New York.



Andrew Mroczek,
HIM, from the series: *Fantastic Imaginary Use*,
2020, modified bull blinder, steel, iridescent enamel,
nylon, metal hardware

GREER MULDOWNEY

Greer Muldowney is an artist, photography professor and independent curator based in Somerville, Massachusetts. Her work often tackles the relationship of policy making and how it affects landscape, housing and community. She received an undergraduate degree in Political Science concentrating in Urban Policy and Studio Art from Clark University, and an MFA from the Savannah College of Art and Design. She has acted as the Curator for the Desotorow Gallery in Savannah, GA and was the Regional Coordinator for the Flash Forward Festival on behalf of the Magenta Foundation in Boston, MA. She serves as the Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Midway Artist Studios, and is the Founder and Director of Undergraduate Photography Now, an arts organization bolstering the work and professional development of photography students. She has juried and curated exhibitions nationally, and currently is an Assistant Professor at Boston College.



Greer Muldowney,
50 Years (front cover), 2022, limited edition book

STUART STECK

For the past two decades, Stuart Steck has worked as both a curator and academic. Although he was originally trained in the field of decorative arts, his current interests focus on postwar art and critical theory. He has taught undergraduate and graduate courses with us since 1998, and is currently the Director of Integrated Studies.

Stuart has held faculty positions at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Brown University, Boston University and Suffolk University. He currently serves as the president of the Visual Culture Consortium, Boston and produced the Short Attention Span Digital Video Festival from 2007-2011. Over the years, Steck has received research grants from the Henry Luce Foundation, the Pittsburgh Foundation and the Boston University Humanities Foundation. He received his BA in History from Cornell University and his PhD in Art History from Boston University.

NAOE SUZUKI

Naoe Suzuki is a Japanese American visual artist born in Tokyo, Japan in 1967. Her multidisciplinary practice combines research, mapping-based study, community engagement, and movement. Suzuki works with drawing, video, installation, language, and archives to explore the interconnectedness of our world, inviting viewers to reflect on our lifestyles, histories, relationships, and the legacy of colonialism to our environment with particular focus on water and land.

Suzuki was awarded grants from Massachusetts Cultural Council (2022, 2006 & 2001), Pollock-Krasner Foundation, Puffin Foundation (2023 & 2013), and Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation (2013 & 2004). Her residency fellowships include Sitka Center for Art and Ecology, Blue Mountain Center, MacDowell, Millay Colony for the Arts, Jentel, Studios at MASS MoCA, and Tokyo Wonder Site in Japan. Suzuki was an Artist-in-Residence at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard in 2016-2017. She received an MFA in Studio for Interrelated Media from Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 1997.





Naoe Suzuki, *Extinction Studies*, 2024, Installation view from the exhibition: *Language, Like Letters*, Roberts Gallery, Lunder Arts Center, Lesley College of Art and Design

JOSEPH R. WOLIN

Joseph R. Wolin is an independent curator and art critic based in New York, and Consulting Curator and Editor at the Museum of Art and Design at Miami Dade College. He has taught in the MFA in Photography and Integrated Media program at Lesley since 2016 and in the MFA in Photography at Parsons since 2008. Previously, he taught in the MFA in Visual Arts program at Lesley, as well as at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Mass Art; RISD; Fordham; and Drew University.

The curator of more than thirty exhibitions around the world, his recent projects include exhibitions at Clamp and Jane Lombard Gallery in New York, and at Sean Horton (presents) in Dallas. He was the co-curator of *Living Together*, a series of exhibitions, performances, concerts, film and video screenings, panel discussions, lectures, readings, and workshops that took place at venues across Miami in 2017-19. The author of some 240 exhibition reviews in *Time Out New York*, his writing about art and artists has appeared in exhibition catalogues, journals, and magazines, most recently in *Glasstire*, *Frieze*, *Border Crossings*, and *Public*.





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