Vrinda Aggarwal
Jiayun Chen
Qijun Liu
michon sanders
Kim Sweet
Sola Yang

USC ROSKI SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN
MFA ART THESIS EXHIBITIONS
The poetics of mistranslation, botched aesthetics, memory through paint, a sculptural picnic table with painted phrases like “who made the potato salad?,” gridded landscapes, amorphous blobs of communication. These are just some of the intriguing elements found in the work of our 2023 MFA in Art cohort—Vrinda Aggarwal, Jiayun Chen, Qijun Liu, michon sanders, Kim Sweet, and Sola Yang—whose work encompasses painting, sculpture, ceramics, installation, video, performance, digitized 16mm film, and interactive works.

Before graduating, the students participated in two open studio events, one of which was timed to coincide with the Frieze Art Fair in Los Angeles, which drew art patrons, curators, and writers from around the globe. They also had the opportunity to build close collaborative relationships with the MA in Curatorial Practices and the Public Sphere cohort; curatorial students Nadia Estrada, Adrianne Ramsey, Hattie Schultz, Haiyang (Kevy) Yang, and Alice Siyuan Zhao became writers and curators on their thesis exhibitions. In addition, fellow MFA student Camille Siyan Ji and Yang provided photography.
Thank you to the faculty who served on this cohort’s thesis committees: Edgar Arceneaux, Enrique Martinez Celaya, Patty Chang, Sherin Guirguis, Suzanne Hudson, Amelia Jones, David Kelley, Mary Kelly, Karen Liebowitz, and Thomas Mueller. An additional thank you to faculty who taught our classes including Nao Bustamante, Suzanne Lacy, and Ruben Ochoa. I’d also like to add an extra shout out to our core faculty: Edgar, Nao, Mary, and Suzanne.

The Roski Talks series brought prominent artists, curators, and thinkers to the USC campus for lectures and seminars that enriched the studies of our graduates (see complete list of events at the end of this catalog). Studio visits from visiting artists, curators, and scholars also informed our cohort’s experience. USC faculty also conducted visits, from Roski as well as from other schools across campus, including Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences; Kaufman School of Dance; Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism; and the School of Cinematic Arts.

In keeping with tradition, the MFA students selected a past graduate of the MA in Curatorial program to write the essays for this catalog. It has been an honor to work with Kate Rouhandeh, MA ’21, whose insights into the students’ work is illuminating.

A strong team came together to produce this catalog. In addition to our writer, it’s been a pleasure to work with Communications Manager Kirsten Schmidt, Academic Program Administrator Nazeli Hosik, designer Amy McFarland, and editor Carol Cheh. Chris Hanke provided excellent exhibition documentation and Typecraft provided printing services. Other MFA program staff I want to thank include Student Services Manager and Student Services Director Antonio Bartolome, Facilities Technician Juan Morales, Makerspace Manager Timmy Chen, and Arts Laboratory Technician Oscar Yustman, who all do such great work in support of our program.

Finally, I want to thank Dean Haven Lin-Kirk for her support as well as my fellow graduate program directors April Greiman, Jenny Lin, and Ewa Wojciak.

Through this catalog, it is my great pleasure to introduce the 2023 graduates of the USC Roski School of Art and Design MFA in Art program.
The Artists
Vrinda Aggarwal began formally studying art just a few years ago, at the tail end of her undergraduate studies at USC, for which she relocated from her native country, India. Yet, for an artist with a relatively young practice, Aggarwal’s work across diverse media exhibits a long-standing critical engagement with embodiment, identity, and performance, which give her practice a depth and breadth that extend beyond her short period of artistic output.

In *leave out*, Aggarwal presents exploratory works across video, projection, and mixed-media installation, all of which share an investment in the artist’s body as a measure of time. Collected objects and refuse—including hair, menstrual blood, empty bottles and cardboard boxes, tax and travel documents, bank statements, and COVID-19 test results—evoke routines, habits, and cycles of growth and development. For *Somewhere Between a Self-Portrait and a CV* (2023), Aggarwal uses personal documents she has been collecting since 2021 to construct delicate paper sculptures which she then suspends from the ceiling. Watercolor marks blot out the specifics of this personal archive, though the formats of the brittle documents are recognizable as forms and formalities of contemporary life.

Other found materials are more closely yoked to the body—objects like collected bottles, cardboard boxes, shredded garbage bags, and clothes hangers conjure the everyday gestures that accompany them. Fallen hair gathered in bottles and the menstrual blood staining film strips are even more directly of the body, in a nod to the performance and body-based feminist art practices of the 1970s. Yet Aggarwal’s use of her body and its traces distinguishes itself from practices that uncritically cast representation and visibility in the affirmative. Instead, these bodily traces are framed through
subtraction (hence the exhibition title) and through Aggarwal’s explicit use of the word “trash” to associate these materials with failure.

Two of these mixed-media installations (both Untitled, 2023), accompanied by looping video projections comprised of hand-manipulated 16mm film, are immersive, which is important to Aggarwal because of the transformative potential of immersion. Floating Orbs (2023), a projection that features distorted close-up shots of various parts of the artist’s body orbiting around each other against a deep black background, calls to mind Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist’s ecstatic videos and installations from the 1980s and 90s while also echoing Aggarwal’s themes of removal, withholding, and concealment.

In the Super 8 film transfers Oranges (2023) and Oranges and Lemons (2022), Aggarwal draws narratives from historical and autobiographical sources to explore similar themes. Oranges follows a man who is in love with an orange across the cityscape of Los Angeles, with the lyrics of “My Favorite Things” from Rodgers and Hammerstein’s 1959 musical The Sound of Music serving as subtitles. “My Favorite Things” is a cheerful song that poses fanciful childhood pleasures like “cream-colored ponies and crisp apple strudels” as a balm for pain and sadness. “Bee stings” and “dog bites” are given as examples of things that make the von Trapp children sad, but they are thin euphemisms for the Nazi threat in this story set at the eve of World War II.

Oranges and Lemons similarly fuses playfulness with menace, citing a popular children’s nursery rhyme and singing game. There are several versions of “Oranges and Lemons,” which originally referred to specific church bells in London. Aggarwal notes that the Hindi version ubiquitous during her childhood is not only more narratively abstract than the original but also harsher and more focused on consequence; the severe colonial-era translation ended with “remember me / until I am dead.” These songs are records of displacement—soothing repetitive rituals that allow children to absorb trauma into their everyday lives, not unlike Aggarwal’s own small rituals for her body’s refuse.

Vrinda Aggarwal (b. 1999, New Delhi) is an interdisciplinary artist working with video, projections, installation, and performance. She received a BA in communication from USC in May 2021. Her most recent work deals with displacement, cultural loss, and nostalgia rooted in migration. She uses personal and found materials, often waste or unused products, as she thinks about the difference in consumption and behavior patterns between her old and new homes. She creates rituals and uses repetition to locate the self and take space. She recently showcased her site-specific installation, Boneyard, in collaboration with Sophia Stevenson at the Wrigley Institute for Environmental Studies on Catalina Island. Aggarwal received her MFA Art degree at USC Roski School of Art and Design in 2023.
Sola Yang was born and raised in South Korea, where she lived until moving to upstate New York, and then to Los Angeles. These moves are actively present in Yang’s painting practice, in which the distances between places, nations, and times frame considerations and representations of both individual and collective memory.

The title of Yang’s exhibition, From 0 (영에서부터), plays with the multiple associated meanings of the Korean 영 [yeong], which can be translated as “zero” or “spirit.” In invoking these two meanings, Yang lays out distinct stakes for the status and substance of memory, probing the possibility—and impossibility—of representing it. Her source materials are not necessarily her remembrances, but they are memories—if one considers memories a typology and form.

Photographs, including personal images and snapshots by her parents as well as selections from the Korean National Archives, provide the source material for Yang’s works, which occupy varying relationships to abstraction. For You (2022), depicting a bouquet given to the artist, and 한 [han] (2023), the show’s only painting to include figures, are the most obviously representational works in the show, while The Ground Hardens After the Rain (2023) and Rice (2023) hover between plant material and desaturated, expressive brushstrokes. Other works land in between.

The practice of abstraction in the face of violence and tragedy is not singular and can be seen in many cultural histories. In Korea, this took the form of the Dansaekhwa movement, often translated as the Korean monochrome...
movement and credited to Korean painter Park Seo-bo during the period following the Korean War. I say “following” to evoke the responsive nature of the movement and its sense of aftermath, but as Yang suggests, the Korean War never ended; the cut dividing the North from the South remains. Yang’s paintings take up the predicament of memorializing past traumas while also refusing to consider them past.

1953 Seoul (2022), a large work composed of 15 individual paintings hung in a grid, gathers details drawn from black and white archival images of the destroyed cityscape. Gesturing toward the fragmentation and distortion that accompany collective memory, the individual paintings echo each other, yet refuse to resolve into a single image—a strategy that is subtly present throughout the entire installation. It is significant that Yang withholds the figures by situating the work that includes them in the furthest corner of the gallery, behind a small wall that creates a separate space for viewing. ḉa [han] is difficult to translate—it is sorrow, regret, and despair as well as hope. For both despair and hope to be contained in a single word speaks to the irresolute effect Yang’s work brings to the idea of remembrance.

On the day I visited the exhibition, there was a collection of wrapped bouquets carefully arranged on the ground, propped against the wall near the gallery entrance. I asked if these were part of the exhibition; they were not, they were given to the artist at the opening reception by friends, much like the bouquet depicted in For You. The presence of these flowers, while not a work per se, accentuated the way Yang probes the inconsistent relationship between personal and shared affect. Which is to say, a gesture between individuals can exceed the subjective, and in fact, particularity may best represent the mutual and cumulative.

Sola Yang is a painter who expresses an indigenous sense of Korea, elaborating on themes of life, place, and memory. She was born and raised in South Korea and moved to Upstate New York for her education in art. Her artworks embrace the ambivalence that exists between Western and Eastern cultures, emotions of joy and sorrow, and abstract versus representational imagery. Through a sophisticated combination of Western and Eastern concepts in her artworks, she overcomes the cultural and regional limitations within art. She received a BA in art and art history from St. Lawrence University in 2020 and received her MFA Art degree at USC Roski School of Art and Design in 2023. Yang currently lives and works in Los Angeles, California.
“...Listening to those strange sentences, I stopped worrying about whether or not they were grammatically correct, and felt I was gliding through water. From now on, maybe solid grammar would be replaced by some new grammar, more liquid or air-like.”

The idea that mistranslations are more than mistakes is a key presupposition of Jiayun Chen’s thesis exhibition, Scattered All Over the Earth. The show’s title is drawn from Yoko Tawada’s recently published novel of the same name, which imagines a future where national borders and identities have collapsed. Perhaps the logical aftermath of the Tower of Babel is not infinitely precise difference, but continued breakdown.

T-shirts carrying phrases like “I’m sorry little friend... I was hasty...you’re not a duck” (Save moving, Save moving! I’m sorry little friend...I was hasty... you’re not a duck, 2023), hung on armatures protruding from a gallery wall, read as primarily playful, not incorrect. The t-shirts are reproduced from internet-sourced products that Chen affectionately associates with her childhood in China. Another shirt, emblazoned with the command “BECOME DOOR!” (Kill them all, Let god deal with them! Become Door, 2023) suggests that perhaps, à la Gertrude Stein, these shirts, whether their makers know it or not, are not wrong, but are something else: they are poems. The viewer is left contemplating the notion of “becoming door,” which a chance bit of language makes possible.

The garments hang irregularly from “limbs” bearing nonsensical tattoos composed of Chinese characters, representative of phrases Westerners wear on their bodies that are gibberish to a native speaker. These image transfers on wood, representing skin, embody Chen’s interest in the graphic marks that

1. Yoko Tawada, Scattered All Over the Earth
convey translation and mistranslation, while also posing questions about the stakes of linguistic error. Chen sees the humor in it, but also something darker: the bearers of these trendy tattoos, one imagines, do not know or care to know the meaning of the language that they have adorned themselves with. *Chinese Tattoo Ruins* (2023) includes more tattoos gleaned from the internet which translate to “This is Tattoo,” “must destroy,” and “chicken noodle soup.” In an accompanying handbound Risograph zine, Chen notes that flawed food-related tattoos are common occurrences. She elucidates different categories of errors and reproduces the bastardized alphabet that many of these tattoos are based upon.

Mistranslation is not a direct equation; it produces infinite and varying distortions. *Foreigner* (2023) and *Peace love loyalty* (2023) incorporate mirrored vinyl text on the floor. A viewer must look down and physically reorient herself to read the anamorphic texts. A series of glazed ceramic towers, *Untitled Towers (series of sixteen)* (2022), walled off from the rest of the gallery, evoke the Tower of Babel, except that these towers are many, like the languages that proliferated after the collapse, and bend with whimsy. Some are topped with small flags while others resemble tiered wedding cakes.

On a wall opposite the towers, a series of geometric watercolors titled *Circles (series of nine)* (2022) uses repetitive geometry to evoke the impossibility of utopian, universal communicability. The figures don’t correspond to language though—it is more complicated than that. In the world that Chen has built, there is no undoing the Babylonian event, no return to a time before language. Instead, individuals navigate the semiotic rubble like garbage pickers—gleaning, blending, and remixing all over again.

**Jiayun Chen** is a Los Angeles-based artist from Wenzhou, China. She earned a BFA from the California Institute of the Arts and received her MFA Art degree at USC Roski School of Art and Design in 2023. Chen has organized and participated in exhibitions including *Reunion / 同乡会 / Tong Xiang a / 동창회* (Los Angeles, 2021) and *In the depth of the mouth inhabits the light that takes shape* at Fellows of Contemporary Art (FOCA) (Los Angeles, 2023). Chen also contributed work to *Swept Away: Love Letter to a Surrogate*, a two-day performance art event at Annenberg Beach House (Los Angeles, 2023).
I have a friend who refers to pets as “Prozac for the whole family.” In *squishy blob, circular dog*, Qijun Liu takes this notion further, casting the family dog as a nebulous and fluctuating entity onto which emotional and affective communiqués can be layered. As visitors enter Liu’s exhibition, they are immediately greeted by a wall of “tails” which may be worn by visitors with the help of a collection of appendages and an accompanying set of instructions. This sense of play and participation pervades the large gallery space, which Liu has nimbly filled out with intimate sound and video works and an abstract kinetic sculpture, tied together with networks of tape on the floor and PVC piping.

The dog itself is everywhere and nowhere. We hear it and we spot its accessories and visual signifiers, such as plastic head cones for post-surgery recovery or a hunk of fuzz that transforms a projector into something furry with a tail-like protrusion. In many ways, Liu’s construct of the dog is like a meme or other network-traversing image, laden with signifiers far beyond the signified and even beyond the logical. In *Aai Ze Ze, Sik Faan Faan, Caat Ngaa Ngaa, Fan Gaau Gaau (Say hi hi, Eat Food Food, Brush Teeth Teeth, Take Nap Nap)* (2023), a multi-channel installation that incorporates text and audio inspired by messages from Liu’s parents, who live in China, the malleability and liminality of the dog comes to the fore, as a figure or substance baser than language and indifferent to nationality and geography.
Dogs are funny, as are their failures. The image of a dog chasing its own tail offers a moment of lightness and also a softening of failure. The red piping used in the installation calls to mind the children's game of telephone or a problematic pneumatic delivery system of the Chutes and Ladders variety. Borrowing from the graphics of charts and diagrams (a Venn diagram occupies a large swath of the gallery floor), Liu’s installation evokes questions and obstacles for which the dog, perhaps, is a solution. Is “Add 1 Dog” the answer? Liu suggests that perhaps it is—at least in so far as one is searching for therapeutic models for family relations. (Another therapeutic model referenced is Traditional Chinese Medicine, and in particular, acupressure therapies.)

Throughout squishy blob, circular dog, the idea of triangulation pervades. Communication lines wander and cross while acts of translation—of language or of emotional affect—are inexpedient. Triangulation (2023) is also the name of a large inflatable triangular sculpture that quivers amid three fans situated opposite the triangle’s points. The sculpture is squishy and changeable, subject to the force of the fans. It seems to operate by some set of rules around systemic equilibrium, but they are totally opaque. Like the vestigial tail, there is no obvious purpose for this bit of engineering. The same is true of most pet dogs.

Qijun Liu holds a bachelor’s degree in studio art with an art history minor from University of San Diego. Her works tend to explore and reflect on observed phenomena through a conceptual practice that uses video, installation, sculpture and performance. A sense of absurdity and repetition are often embedded in her work. Rather than imposing a solution to a psychological conflict or societal construct, she aims to ask questions about these observed phenomena. Many of Liu’s works cohere around the word “relations,” as she attempts to see the social or cultural factors that form our ways of living and capture the ephemeral and subtle connections between things. She received her MFA Art degree at USC Roski School of Art and Design in 2023.
Visitors to michon sanders’ thesis exhibition, *All I Have To Do Is Stay Black And Die*, followed a parade of eye-level posters bearing the show’s title as they approached the gallery entrance.

Repeated over and over again, the declarative title becomes a mantra, yet exudes a perplexingly ambiguous affect, even if one is familiar with the expression. (It has appeared in Langston Hughes’ 1951 book-length poem suite, “Montage of a Dream Deferred”; in Maya Angelou’s autobiography; and in the 1989 film *Lean on Me*, where it is spoken by Morgan Freeman.) In the context of the work on the display in the gallery, however, what it is to “stay Black and die” wholly emerges: it means to live. In short, it means everything.

Working mostly from family photographs, and often in portraiture, sanders’ canvases depict Black life—and more specifically, her family’s life—by capturing joy, gatherings, and a sense of community. Forgoing the standard white cube format, sanders painted the gallery walls a warm, matte black; the first painting one sees upon entering the exhibition is a self-portrait of the artist giving a humble and welcoming shrug, entitled *I Feel Most Colored When I Am Thrown Against a Sharp White Background*.

Large canvases with pops of vibrant color depict children (*Let’s Keep This Between Us*, 2022) and adults (*When Them Two Get Together*, 2022) taking pleasure in each others’ presences; sanders’ effective use of scale monumentalizes the larger-than-life figures. Even small, interstitial details, like a hand holding a plastic fork near stacks of red Solo cups (*Already Fixed Your
Daddy a Plate, 2022) and a fragment of orangey-brown upholstered furniture (That’s The Ugly Couch We Had, 2023), have the sweet-nostalgic sting of monumentality that one finds when looking back at family photos. The shirt that you forgot about, the ugly couch that no one liked but that now holds the small treasures of memory.

Between works hung on the gallery’s back wall, a projection of a vintage home movie offers generous insight into the artist’s process, alluding to the specific source materials that generated the work on display and underscoring the welcoming and inviting spirit that characterizes the entire show. There is also a picnic table emblazoned with intimate chatter such as WHO MADE THE POTATO SALAD? and NOW I NEED SOMETHING SWEET, and a church pew with the phrase ALL ARE WELCOME carved into the seatback. These are places to rest as well as community spaces in which a family goes about the business of living. Even though I didn’t see anyone using the furniture, the effect was instantly palpable: the space had become a place to gather. A brief vocal performance at the exhibition’s opening accentuated the sense of warmth and intimacy that Sanders captured.

Yet, nothing about Sanders’ work covers over pain either. In a portrait of a young girl (I Will Be Everything They Dream and More, 2023), the background and other figures have been removed—or rather, obscured with black paint—including the arms wrapped around the small child’s body. The artist explains that this is a self-portrait: she is the young girl, and the absent figure holding her is her mother. Her sister was also in the source photograph and an earlier version of the painting. Floating on the black background, the younger version of the artist is both held up and strikingly alone. For Sanders, to monumentalize and to memorialize are distinct but overlapping acts, just as joy and pain are overlapping emotions. To “stay Black and die” includes both.

Michon Sanders (b. 1980, USA) was raised in the Southeastern United States—an upbringing that has deeply influenced her art-making. She received her BFA in painting and drawing from California College of the Arts in 2020, the same year she won the AXA Art Prize. Sanders has been featured in T: The New York Times Style Magazine and her work was included in the 2021 For Freedoms x Converse initiative, Hear Her Here. She participated in both seasons of In the Paint, the Los Angeles Lakers’ arts initiative. Sanders has had solo exhibitions at Friends Indeed Gallery in San Francisco and Giovanni’s Room in Los Angeles (both 2022). Sanders received her MFA Art degree at USC Roski School of Art and Design in 2023.
“...How do we rethink Blackness in the context of contemporary art and exhibition display? One of the cornerstones of Sanders’ practice is expanding the audience’s understanding of the Black body, and re-framing the narrative that said bodies were only to be seen through violence and trauma. Through her transformative painting practice, the artist dismantles normative binary approaches to constructing histories relating to Black people. In so doing, she also reverses conventional modes of display, as is evident in the exhibition’s title, ‘Staying Black and Dope: Essays in Afro-Modernist Power and Representation’.”

—Andrianna Ramese, from “Play On, Playa: An essay written for this exhibition”
At first, the title of Kim Sweet’s exhibition of paintings, The Small Things In Between, seems at odds with her subject matter, chiefly because the landscapes that make up her works are monumental in scale. Implicit in Sweet’s work, however, is a refusal to take up the grandiose narratives that accompany monumentality—from Romanticism to Expansionism—in favor of the smaller, the in-between. This intention is mirrored in the artist’s process, which often begins with reference photographs but is ultimately led by intuition rather than representational objectives.

The Cartesian grid is visible to varying degrees in Sweet’s paintings, emerging with clarity in some areas while receding in others. Tape used to mark the grid has been left on some of the works; at the top edge of You Think You Know (2022)—a muted landscape in oils and gold—a curling piece of tape pulls away from the canvas. The curl discloses a degree of the artist’s process just as glimpses of underpainting can, but also marks gentle resistance to the authority of the long-established apparatus of the grid. The grid may appear as a stable structure, a template for representation through recursion, but it stands in for something almost opposite: the singularity of a point of view. Its logic may provide cues for translating visions of the material world to the picture plane, but the grid is also a screen, with the inherently contradictory functions of concealment and exposure.
In *The Broken Places* (2023), the grid is marked with annotations, suggesting that it actually functions as a map. But the notations don’t necessarily offer the viewer any information; though they are semi-legible, their content isn’t really the point. Sweet notes that the marked coordinates have personal weight, not geographic or spatial meaning. In a way, then, the grid is a false flag: a visual cue that suggests a superstructure or sense of objectivity but ultimately serves to orient the viewer, not the view. Sweet is interested in the idea that the landscape itself may be neutral and disinterested, but it cannot be perceived or depicted as such; perspective necessarily requires a specific point of view, even if it is an imagined one.

The work from which the show draws its title, *The Small Things In Between* (2023), depicts a darkened landscape below a night sky. Underneath this scene, there are several other landscapes that have been cycled through, which is standard practice and process for the artist. The viewer can’t perceive the North Carolina scene that is buried underneath, or any of the other covered-over, lost landscapes. This is not unusual in painting, but Sweet seems to foreground this ambivalence as a way of reflecting the ambivalence of the land itself.

Landscape painting is an invented genre, but the land itself is not. Sweet’s paintings may be devoid of figures and other signs of human life, but no landscape, composite or otherwise, can be truly devoid of these things. I find it difficult to look at contemporary landscapes without thinking of present and intensifying ecological crises. I think of Joan Didion’s iconic quote, “we tell ourselves stories in order to live”; we also tell ourselves stories in order to see. Ultimately, it is this discrepancy that serves as the animus for Sweet’s work.

Kim Sweet is a Los Angeles-based artist with deep ties to Phoenix, Arizona. Her paintings explore the temporality of human existence and are visual representations of the echoes of consciousness. The grid that is often imposed on, or buried into, the paintings points to humanity’s awareness of “the world” and how we are both part of—and separate from—it. Through the intersection of the natural landscape and the human-constructed grid, Sweet seeks to make sense of our small place within the vastness of cosmic time. Kim Sweet earned her BFA in painting from Rhode Island School of Design and her MFA degree in painting at USC Roski School of Art and Design in 2023, where she was awarded the 2023–2024 Post Graduate Teaching Fellowship. Her work has been acquired by several prominent Los Angeles collectors and has been featured in *Art and Cake.*
In The Small Things In Between, artist Kim Sweet invites her audience to contemplate their place in the world and meditate on the echoes of once vibrant memories lost to time. The artist utilizes the landscape as a point of departure to venture beyond her physical site and delve into the layers of nostalgia embedded within it. Sweet draws upon the notion that a landscape is not a fixed representation of nature but a constructed reflection of the viewer's inner and outer reality. Her paintings embody the intangible and ephemeral nature of memory, just within reach yet ever elusive.

Nadia Estrada, Co-Curator

Sweet's usage of the grid should not be seen as a barrier between the viewer and the painting, but instead as an opportunity to explore human consciousness and how connected we can be to a specific space. How do we map out our own sense of clarity within a desolate arena? Are we still able to find our destination when we don't have directions?

Adrienne Ramsey, Co-Curator
Viroid Agarwal

PAGE 8
Disappearing Act, 2023, trashcan, embedded screen (looping), 3 min, 2 sec

PAGE 11
Somewhere Between a Self-Portrait and a CV, 2023, watercolor on found paper, dimensions variable
Installation view, Viroid Aggarwal, leave out, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design

PAGE 14-15
Untitled, 2023, Hair, cardboard boxes, alcohol bottles, 16mm film, menstrual blood, ash, two-channel, video projection (looping); 8 min, 30 sec

PAGE 15
Installation view, Viroid Aggarwal, leave out, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design

PAGE 18
Installation view, Jiayun Chen, For You, 2022, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 inches

PAGE 19
Installation view, Jiayun Chen, For You, 2022, oil on canvas, 40 x 30 inches

PAGE 20-21
Installation view, Sola Yang, From 0, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design

PAGE 21
Installation view, Sola Yang, From 0, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design

PAGE 22-23
Installation view, Sola Yang, From 0, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design

PAGE 24
Installation view, Jiayun Chen, Foreigner, 2023, vinyl, image transfer on wood, 117 x 38 x 38.5 inches

PAGE 27 CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Save moving, Save moving / I’m sorry little friend...I was hasty you’re not a duck..., 2023, image transfer on wood, vinyl on t-shirt, 28 x 22 x 12 inches
Kill them all, Let god deal with them / Become Door, 2023, image transfer on wood, vinyl on t-shirt, 24 x 30 x 10 inches
I don’t know I don’t speak Chinese, Sky word flow word kong / shut the fuck up the slang which I learned frst / teach, 2023, image transfer on wood, vinyl on t-shirt, 29 x 28 x 20
Save moving, Save moving / Think Less stupid m, 2023, image transfer on wood, vinyl on t-shirt, 31 x 27 x 17 inches

PAGE 28-29
Installation view, Sola Yang, Untitled (series of sixteen), 2022–23, glazed ceramic, acrylic on ceramic, dimensions variable

PAGE 32
Installation view, Qijun Liu, Aai za ze, sik faan faan, caat ngaan ngaan, fan gaau gaau (Say hi hi, eat food food, brush teeth teeth, take nap nap), detail, 2023, multi-channel video installation, dimensions variable

PAGE 35
Installation view, Qijun Liu, Aai za ze, sik faan faan, caat ngaan ngaan, fan gaau gaau (Say hi hi, eat food food, brush teeth teeth, take nap nap), detail, 2023, multi-channel video installation, dimensions variable

PAGE 36-37
Installation view, Qijun Liu, Stay Black And Die, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design

PAGE 38-39
Installation view, Qijun Liu, Stay Black And Die, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design

PAGE 40
Installation view, michon sanders, all I have to Do Is Stay Black And Die, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design

PAGE 43 FROM TOP
Go On And Sit Down, 2023, acrylic on pressure-treated wood, 72”L x 60”W x 30”H
When Them Two Get Together, 2022, oil on canvas, 79 x 46 inches

PAGE 46-47
Installation view, Kim Sweet, The Small Things In Between, MFA thesis exhibition, 2023, Graduate Gallery, USC Roski School of Art and Design
USC Roski School Community

---

### Dean
Haven Lin-Kirk

### Vice Dean of Research
Amelia Jones

### MFA in Art Program Director
Jennifer West

### MA in Curatorial Practices and the Public Sphere Program Director
Jenny Lin

### MFA in Design Program Directors
Ewa Wojcicki
April Greiman

### Academic Program Administrator
Nazei Hosik

### MFA in Art Class of 2023
Vrinda Aggarwal
Sola Yang
Jayson Chen
Olijin Liu
michon sanders
Kim Sweet

### Thesis Committee Members
Edgar Arceneaux
Enrique Martinez Celaya
Paula Chang
Sherin Guirgis
Susanne Hudson
Amelia Jones
David Kelley
Mary Kelly
Karen Liebowitz
Thomas Mueller
Jennifer West

---

### Roski Talks Lecture Series
Fall 2021–Spring 2023

In order of appearance

- Queer Survivance panel: Ron Athey, Ponyle Estrange, madison moore, Judy Simseros, moderated by Joanna Vaccaro
- Edgar Arceneaux, artist and USC Roski faculty
- Michael Eillsworth, designer
- Arleta Joyce Napolitano, curator and USC Roski faculty
- Judy Baca, artist, and Gabriela Uriagha, Curator of Exhibitions, Vincent Price Art Museum
- John Kline, artist
- Brian Allen, designer and creative director
- Hing-An Truong, artist (Photography Lecture)
- Frances Anderton, radio host, author, and design and architecture specialist
- Belongings as Survival: Creativity, Activism, and Community event: Situ Kuratomi, Bhamunik, Adrian De Leon, Patrick “Pato” Hebert, Joecelyn Jackson
- Julia Johnson, photographer and creative director
- Heidi Lau, artist
- Ku’er Worlds: Queering Chinese American Identities in Art and Film screenings and panel discussion: Patty Chang, Andrew Thomas
- Huang, Jenny Lin, Lesley Ma, WangShui, Hao Wu

---

### South of Expo: Art, Artists, and Cultural Spaces Since the 1960s two-day symposium: multiple speakers and performers
- Annette M. Kim, artist, researcher, and faculty, USC Price School of Public Policy
- Rozae Nichols, designer
- Gala Porras-Kim, artist
- Rick Griffith, designer
- Live Artists Live performance event: Joy Harjo, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Edgar Arceneaux, Xina Xuruer (Young Joon Kwak and Marvin Astorga), madison moore, Daphne A. Brooks
- Charlene Liu, artist
- Taipei Night at USC Pacific Asia Museum: Jenny Lin, Vivian Lin, Charlene Liu
- Andrea Bowers, artist
- Vashal Jugdutt, artist
- Danielle Dean, artist
- Martin O’Brien, artist, scholar, and teacher
- Louise Sandhaus, designer
- Majid Khorsand, artist and scholar
- Day, faculty, USC Roski, and McKenzie War, writer and scholar
- Genevieve Gaignard, artist
- Clara Kim, chief curator & director of curatorial affairs at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles
- Paula Scher, designer
- Aurora Tang, curator and researcher
- Lucy McRae, artist
- Guadalupe Rosales, artist (Handteffheim Photography Lecturer)
- Sadie Barnette, artist
- Nicole Miller, artist

These visiting lecturers also conducted studio visits with the MFA in Art candidates.

---

### Studio Visit Guests
Allison Agsten, curator, director, USC Bennington School for Communication and Journalism
Enrique Martinez Celaya, artist
Jean Cooney, director, Times Square Arts
César García-Alvarez, founding director and chief curator, The Mistake Room, LA
d. Sabela Grimes, choreographer and faculty, USC Kaufman School of Dance
Essence Harden, visual arts curator, California African American Museum, LA
Vishal Jugdeo, artist
Anna Katz, curator, Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles (MCA)
Christine Y. Kim, curator at large, Tate Modern
Josh Kun, scholar and faculty, USC Bennington School for Communication and Journalism
Akira Mizuta Lippit, scholar and faculty, USC School of Cinematic Arts
Tala Madani, artist
Tara McPherson, scholar and faculty, USC School of Cinematic Arts
Aram Moshayedi, Robert Soros senior curator, Hammer Museum, LA
Amanda Sroka, senior curator, ICA Los Angeles
Hammza Walker, director, LAXART
Holly Willis, scholar and faculty, USC School of Cinematic Arts

### Full-Time Faculty
- China Adams
- Edgar Arceneaux
- Nao Bustamante
- Andrew Campbell
- Caroline Clerc
- Patty Chang
- Paul Donald
- Carla Estefan
- Jason Ellenberg
- Jud Fine
- April Greiman
- Sailor Guirgis
- Amelia Jones
- Eric Junker
- David Kelley
- Mary Kelly
- Suzanne Lacy
- Bruno Lemgruber
- Karen Liebowitz
- Jenny Lin
- Haven Lin-Kirk
- Murisa Mandler
- Keith Mayerson
- madison moore
- Thomas Mueller
- Ruben Ochoa
- Brien O’Connell
- Julia Pauly
- Jean Robison
- Oswaldo Trujillo
- Ruth Weissberg
- Jennifer West
- Ewa Wojcicki
- Alexís Zoto

---

### Part-Time Faculty
- Eugene Ahn
- Sam Alden
- Carlos Avila
- Ray Barrett
- Ariel Brice
- Laurie Borruss
- Danielle Cansino
- Lucy Cook
- Zoe van Dijk
- Gaimahre Fulton
- Ashley Hagen
- Yaron Halkin
- Peter Holzhauer
- Phung Huynh
- Samuel Jernigan
- Helen King
- Nony Lumey
- Alverro Marquez
- Melanie Nakaue
- Brian Olson
- Ruby Orsiro
- Lisa Oxley
- Helene Reiner
- Jackie Rines
- Peter Robbins
- Rodem Rosental
- Amy Santoferraro
- Oscar Santos
- Jovi Schnell
- Biddy Tran
- Hector Torres
- Joseph Valencia

---

### Board of Trustees
Angele Berger
Ann Ehringer
Phyllis Epstein
Helene Galen
Robert Galstain
Susan Gesundheit
Homeira Goldstein
Betty Haagen
David Judson
Arthur Lewis
Faith Porter
Gayle gastrus Roski*
Marna Schnabel
Nellie Scott
Neil Sherman
Topper Taylor
Grant Wiese
Dalley Wiese Packer

---

* deceased