

Portland Symphony Orchestra's

# *Opening Night: Visual Sounds*

Featuring artwork from Maine College of Art & Design,  
created in response to *Pictures at an Exhibition* by Modest  
Mussorgsky

*Works will be on display at the Zand Head Gallery  
September 25 – October 9, 2023  
Open by appointment, email [mtrejos@meca.edu](mailto:mtrejos@meca.edu)*

In collaboration with the Portland Symphony Orchestra, Maine College of Art & Design students and faculty have created unique artwork in response to Modest Mussorgsky's 1874 piano suite, *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Photos of the art will be projected on a screen above the orchestra during the PSO's opening concerts on September 30 and October 1.

The original piece has a suite of 10 movements that were composed in response to Viktor Harmann's paintings, Mussorgsky's close friend. In this re-imagination, the artists were asked to respond to the movement with their own artwork.

This project is partially funded by a grant from the Maine Arts Commission, an independent state agency supported by the National Endowment for the Arts.



## ***Gnomus***

Kaitlyn Peters MFA '24

### **Biography**

Kaitlyn Peters is an interdisciplinary artist from Manchester, New Hampshire who is currently pursuing her MFA at Maine College of Art & Design. She is inspired by making the familiar unfamiliar, and the relationship between the known and the unknown; as well as uncertainty and mystery.

### **Artist Statement**

I responded to the first movement, “Gnomus”, and I was struck by how powerfully it began. There was immediately a strong sense of atmosphere, as if we were transported to a realm of tension and suspension. I translated these feelings by depicting a dense, intense foreground that expands into a vast, churning landscape. The light in the background is obscured by a hot and heavy haze.

While working, I was aware of the potent effect music has on our mind-body connection. It feels instinctual to replicate the movement of sound with the movement of the body, like a dancer or conductor. There is something about these movements that speak to our humanity, so I captured and emphasized them through gestural mark making.





## ***The Old Castle***

Maureen Hsu MFA '25

### **Biography**

Maureen Hsu is an artist and painter from New Hampshire working with everyday themes of memory, emotion, and time. Her work has been exhibited throughout New England. Maureen holds a BFA in painting from NEC Institute of Art and Design, and is currently pursuing her MFA at Maine College of Art & Design.

### **Artist Statement**

I am an artist and oil painter exploring and responding to my daily thoughts, emotions, and other fragments of flotsam. By creating a space on the canvas with colors and shapes, I speak to memory and imagination. Things both connected and disconnected interest me. By combining and distilling ideas, I conceive these singular interpretations; the results are concurrent inward and outward expressions. Often when painting, some objects linger while others dissolve. I imagine they are directing the story and trying to resolve their place in it. Art has the ability to transport us into the unforeseen, and I believe in trying to find that magic.





## ***Tulleries***

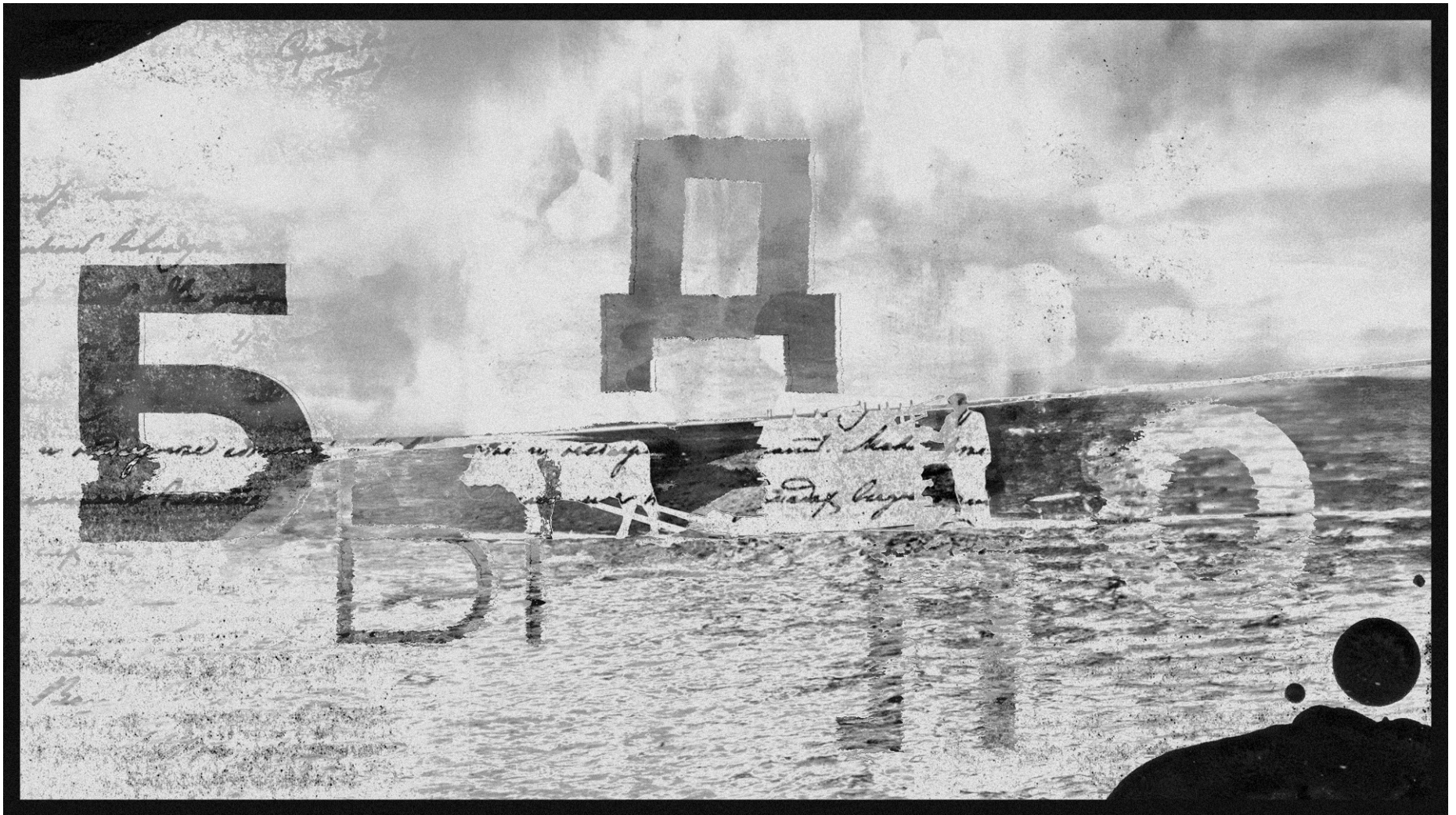
Liv Moore '24

### **Biography**

Liv Moore is a New England artist and current photography undergraduate student at Maine College of Art & Design. With early roots in San Francisco, CA and Exeter, NH, she currently resides and creates in Portland, Maine. Her work is primarily shot on 120mm or 35mm film and explores identity, authentic expression, love, and youthful communities through portraits.

### **Artist Statement**

My photographs depict a variety of youthful relationships and unique personalities that exist around me. My work explores how this new generation of adults is breaking rules and experiencing the aches and pains of discovering what authentic expression means to them. I bring a camera with me everywhere I go to collect these beautifully fleeting moments that might otherwise be forgotten. I am interested in the temporary bonds and communities formed in a developing person's life, and aim to familiarize viewers with change, queer love, and self-exploration through the reflections of myself I see in the people surrounding me. When I blindly reacted to Mussorgsky's Tuileries, I felt that it clearly mimicked what I believe the beginning of all human connection feels like; a slow yet playful beginning, followed by gorgeous transitions, and an ending that leaves you curious to know more.





## ***Bylbo***

Xander Munc '25

### **Biography**

Xander Munc is attending Maine College of Art & Design with an expected BFA in graphic design in 2025. He is from Columbus, Ohio and currently resides and works in Portland, Maine. He has recently been awarded the Bob Crewe Foundation Music Scholarship and was selected to learn sound reactive creative coding at Anderson Ranch in Snowmass, Colorado. His work uses multimedia: code, photography, projection, and sound.

### **Artist Statement**

Xander Munc is pursuing a BFA in graphic design as well as a music minor with an expected graduation date of May 2025. His graphic design explores a multimedia use of code, photography, projection, and sound. He finds the most beautiful work comes from combining these mediums. He is classically trained in cello, and plays piano, guitar, and bass guitar, as well as composing for each. He has also studied synthesis and sound design for his own productions. He plans to pursue a combination of music, code, and design in a career focused on combining sound and art.

For his piece of Mussorgsky's fourth movement "Bydlo" he created a multimedia collage utilizing text and photography to blend the background and subject into a seamless and intense landscape to reflect the pace of the movement. The word Bydlo has a double meaning, referring to both cattle, and a slang term similar to "Redneck". He merged this imagery with Mussorgsky's letter to Stasov (a musical critic) to bring the piece together.



## ***Ballet of Unhatched Chicks***

Joel Tsui '16, Salt '17, MFA '19

### **Biography**

*Probably Joel* is a conceptual artist whose practice and research lies in the intersection between documentary and art. Outside of his creative practice, he splits his time between graduate admissions work at Maine College of Art & Design, a professional practice photographing art, making ambient music with harmonicas and synthesizers, co-running the largest digicam community online, and building mechanical keyboards.

### **Artist Statement**

The photograph was made in response to two concurrent conversations: the Portland Symphony Orchestra collaboration with Mussorgsky, and a discussion about the aesthetics of refrigerator lighting with a friend. While there are no hyperpop or nightcore remixes of “Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks” that I know of, I hope to make a remix of the piece to transform the photograph into a true rager.





## ***Samuel Goldenberg and the Schmuyle***

Adam Masterman MFA '24

### **Biography**

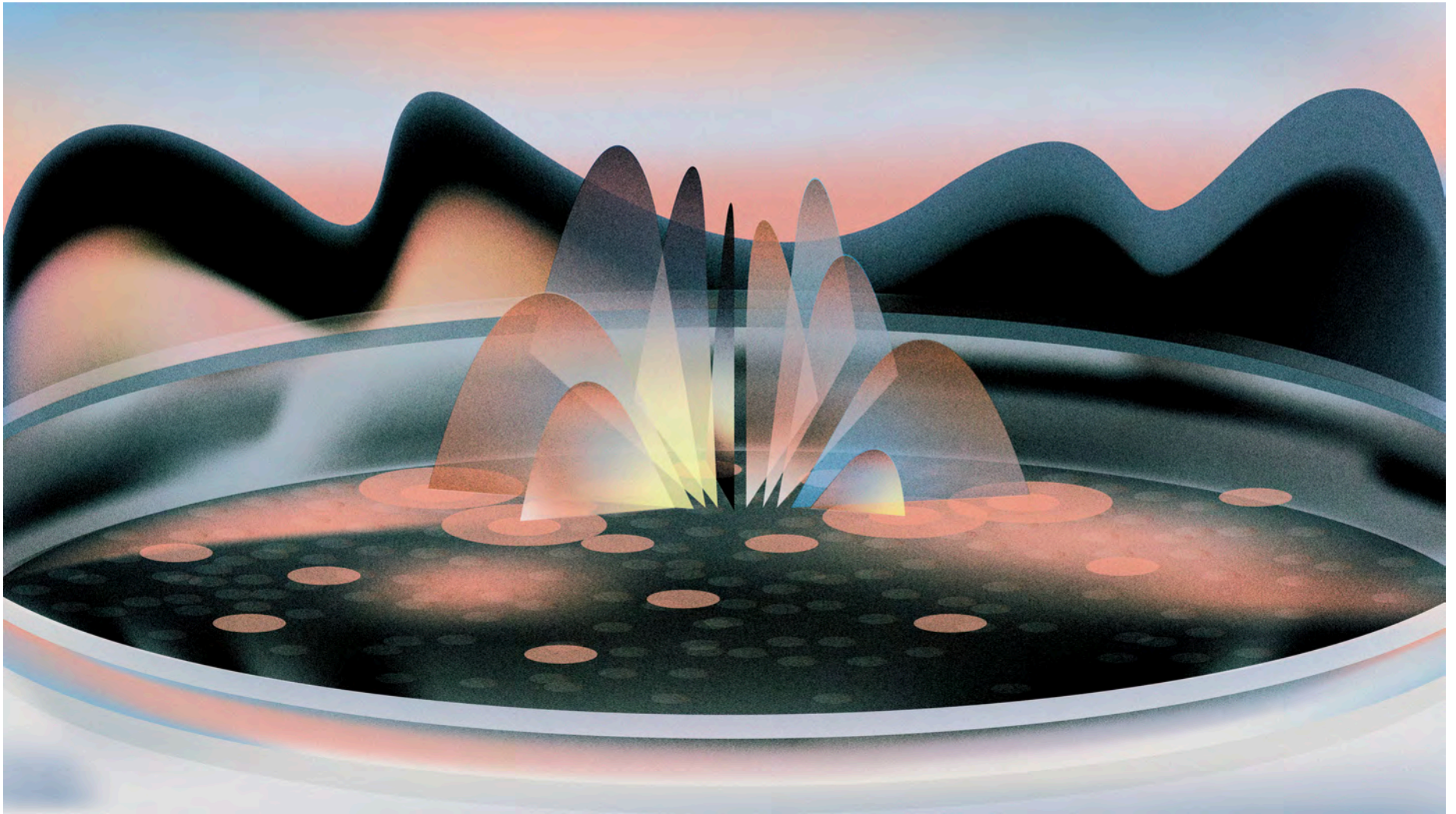
Adam Masterman is a painter, cartoonist, and teacher living and working in western Maine. He studied painting at Bates College from 1996 to 2000, and has worked in both painting and comics ever since. He is currently an MFA candidate at the Maine College of Art & Design.

### **Artist Statement**

Music exists with indeterminate content. Absent a lyrical exposition, the listener constructs their own emotional (as well as literal) subject matter through the interaction of its impression on their own specific template of experiences and temperaments. While engaging with Mussorgsky's piece (the 6th movement, "Samuel Goldenberg and "Schmuyle") I experienced it in a very linear, narrative fashion. The music tells a story, or rather, prompts me to do so as I listen. This piece, painted in response to that music, assembles large painted gestures with different figurative modes to capture the shifts in the mood and pace of the score. The images are intuitive, associative moments chosen to evoke rather than dictate. A country road, a face in contemplation, dancing nymphs/satyrs; each of the elements is intended to make

concrete the impression of the music without robbing the experience of its ambiguity and space for individual interpretation. The palette is lush and fanciful. Considering the nature of this prompt, as well as Mussorgsky's nationality, the rich reds and blues of Kandinsky's work, like his entire oeuvre, are inescapable

Ultimately, translating music into painting is interesting because it's so impossible. In this work, I'm satisfied if the image inhabits and dances in the space even to some extent. The music remains unchanged, but maybe the painting can borrow some of its liveliness, or at least bring it to mind.





## ***Limoges (Marketplace)***

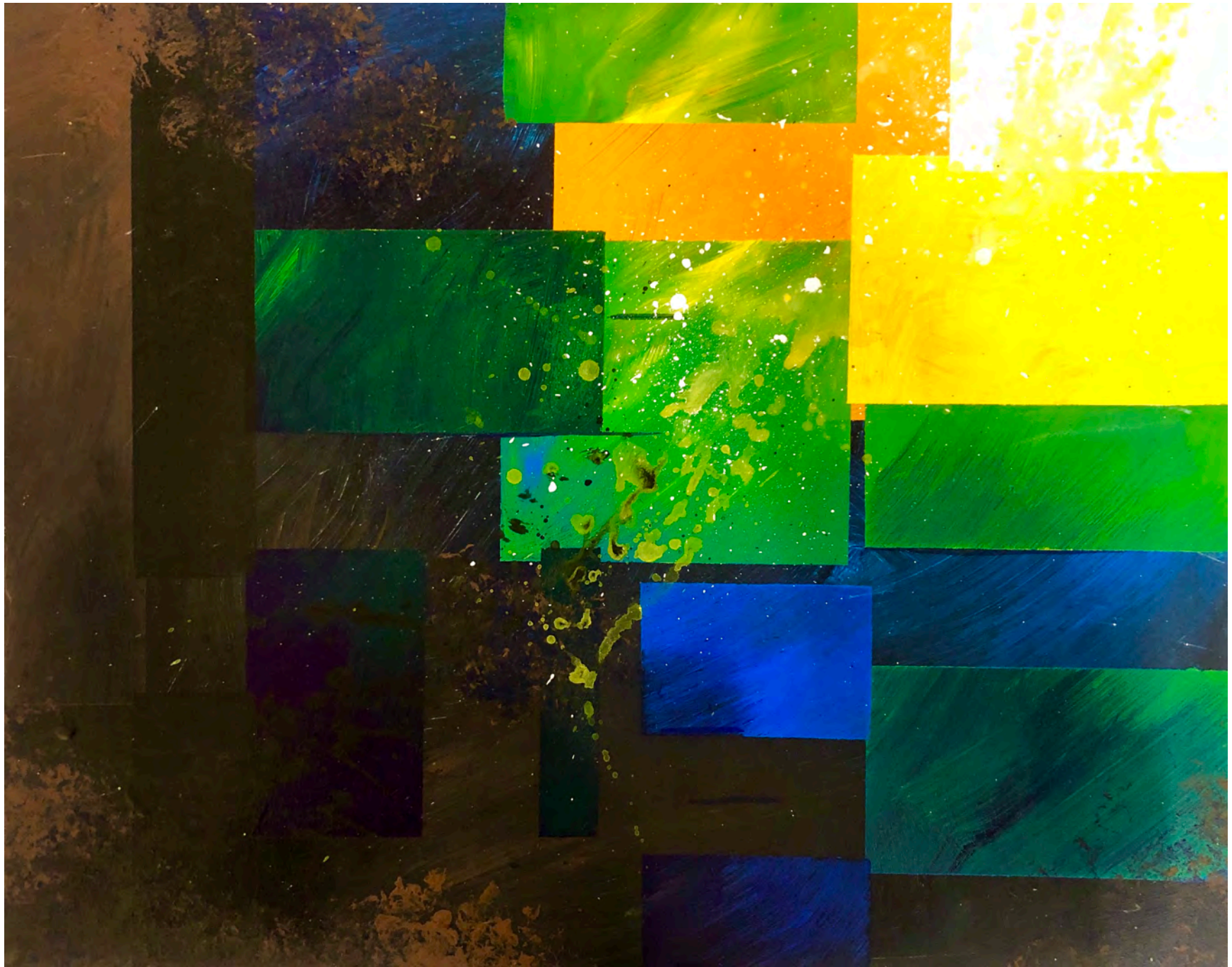
Sophie Chu-O'Neil '24

### **Biography**

Sophie Zoe was born in New York, NY and grew up in Rangeley, ME. She spent a lot of her childhood traveling back and forth between the two. She later attended Gould Academy and then graduated from Hebron Academy for high school. Sophie sought out both boarding schools in Maine because of their standards in pursuing multiple passions at once. For her, this included tennis, music, art, and writing. After a semester studying psychology, her mom convinced her to try art school before pursuing a career in the culinary field. Sophie is now in her senior year, soon to achieve a BFA in graphic design from Maine College of Art & Design. Sophie aims to attend graduate school so that she may one day teach courses in design herself.

### **Artist Statement**

Sophie Zoe began attending Maine College of Art & Design with a broad range of artistic interests including ceramics, illustration, film, photo, and textiles. After taking a class in digital design, she decided to claim a double major in Fashion & Textile Design and Graphic Design. A medical diagnosis rendered the additional school time to finalize the dual major improbable. Now, her thesis for her BFA in graphic design includes woodworking, textiles, design, and coding. Her work aims to bring attention to the choices people make regarding consumption; to have people deeply consider what they engage with as something that affects them and their thoughts. Sophie's artistic practice aims to encourage conscious decisions about the intentions of what one is putting out into the world for others to engage with. Depicting this through the example of furniture, food, clothing, media, and purposeful design is the focus of her work. Taking inspiration from publication illustrations from some favorite artists such as Jiayue Li and Sophie Miyoko Gullbrants, Sophie aimed to develop a scene that spoke to the highs and lows in the movement. She approached a composition featuring a fountain, often seen in photography of Limoges. The color palette references multiple works by Vladimir Hartmann, who often inspired multiple pieces composed by Modest Mussorgsky.



## ***Limoges (Marketplace)***

Cynthia Nathan MFA '24

### **Biography**

Cynthia was born in Winterhaven, Florida before moving to Madison, Wisconsin in her youth. This began a life of homelessness, which fueled works relating to mental health and the surrealism of idealized love. Upon moving to St. Louis, Missouri, she finished her undergraduate degree at the University of Missouri in St. Louis, graduating with a BFA in Studio Art with honors. She continues to make work that explores natural life and the implied worth of human physicality in her practice as an MFA student at Maine College of Art & Design. Contact @cynthu\_art on Instagram.

### **Artist Statement**

The movement titled "The Marketplace" inspired this painting. After listening to the movement, I was immediately drawn to the lightness of the tone. I listened to it over and over again, and was swept up in the consistent tempo. It was quick and dramatic which reminded me of the flight pattern of honey bees. Upon making this connection, I listened deeper and was drawn into the cadence of the strings and how they danced over the lower tones of the woodwind instruments. While painting, the biggest

indicators I was looking to convey were the brightness of the strings and the dynamic layers. I felt as though the layers were most apparent in certain parts of the piece. I wanted these overlapping sounds to be echoed in how I responded within the visual work.

I used a technique of painters tape and palette knife application to create bold superimposing surfaces. This technique, along with other textural tools, like bubble wrap and dry sponges, helped to give the effect that the brighter tones were emerging from the darker ones. I used a cool toned color palette that got warmer and brighter as it ascended up the panel. This was intended to reflect the lilted inflection of the strings and percussive chime. In the process of creating this piece, I was filled with a sense of urgency from the rise and fall of the tempo. In the ending there is a wondrous swell of the strings. I echoed this in the final touches of my painting. I added a light gradient diagonally across the piece in an upward motion, finishing the gradient in a bright cadmium yellow. In doing so, I feel as though I was able to capture the overall theme of "The Marketplace".









## ***Catacombs (Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua)***

Sam Shields MFA '24

### **Biography**

Samantha Shields was born in Massachusetts in 1991. She received a BFA in architecture from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 2015. Currently, she is pursuing an MFA through Maine College of Art & Design while living in Calgary, Canada. Samantha's paintings explore the relationship between parents and children in contemporary Western culture. Her work toes the line between figurative and abstract. Drawing from photographs, she recreates these images with incongruent color schemes and layers of transparency and texture to build a painting that captures the complex connection between parents and children rather than an idealized version of this bond. Her work is conceptually in dialogue with painters like Mary Cassatt and Chantal Joffe, while visually drawing inspiration from abstract figurative painters such as Margaux Williamson and Doron Langberg.

### **Artist Statement**

While listening to No. 8 Catacombs (Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua) I felt both excited and relaxed. This musical piece makes me imagine frolicking through a field examining the bugs, birds, and trees, while also curling up on the sofa for a nap. It holds mystery, hope, and adventure all in one place. I wanted to create paintings that reflected the intricate complexity of the music they would accompany. The colors I chose are a mixture of vibrant, synthetic tube colors paired with calmer, smokier versions of themselves. The imagery melts into its abstract surroundings. Faces, hands, fish, and figures pop into the foreground and then retreat in the same way the steady rhythm of piano keys comes in and out of the forefront of my mind as I listen to Catacombs.





## ***Catacombs (Cum Mortuis in Lingua Mortua)***

Dylan Hausthor '15, Adjunct Professor of Photography

### **Biography**

Dylan Hausthor is an artist based on the coast of Maine. They received their BFA from MECA&D and MFA from Yale School of Art. They were a 2019 recipient of a Nancy Graves Fellowship for Visual Artists, runner-up for the Aperture Portfolio Prize, nominated for Prix Pictet 2021, a W. Eugene Smith Grant finalist, 2021 Hariban Award Honorable Mention, 2021 Penumbra Foundation resident, 2023 Light Work resident, and the winner of Burn Magazine's Emerging Photographer's Fund, as well as a 2023 Arnold Newman Finalist. Their work has been shown nationally and internationally, and they have three books in the permanent collection at MoMA. Recently, they were a 2022-2023 Lunder Fellow at Colby College. Dylan teaches ghost hunting, ritual, photography, and mushroom foraging. To write this biography, Dylan contacted a forensic medium, who suggested that they "seemed like someone who was passionate in the things they believed in and who hides messages in what they have to say".

### **Artist Statement**

I was recently visiting my hometown and stopped to fill up my car with gas. I noticed a woman sitting outside the gas station drinking coffee and recognized her as my old ballet teacher. I sat down next to her and we caught up. She had been going blind for a decade since I last saw her. She had fallen out of love, started growing a garden, and found God. She had a small collection of freshly picked mushrooms next to her and handed me one, saying "Mushrooms have no gender, did you know that?"

Small-town gossip, relationships to the land, the mysteries of wildlife, the drama of humanity, and the unpredictability of human spectacle inspire the stories in these images and installations. I'm fascinated by the instability of storytelling and hope to enable character and landscape to act as gossip in their own right: cross-pollinating and synthesizing. Cultural systems, communities bound by belief, ruralism, the ghosts that haunt landscapes, and the disentangling of colonial narratives are what drive these installations, images, and videos.

Sam has been photographed here on their way to the Catacombs—perhaps a wet liminal space between the photographable and a subterranean divinity. This image was made, not with the praise deserving of an icon, but the praise of a crime scene photographer, recording the dead languages for the sake of performing devotion.



*Still from video*



## ***Little Hut on Chicken Legs***

Cheza Willis MFA '24

### **Biography**

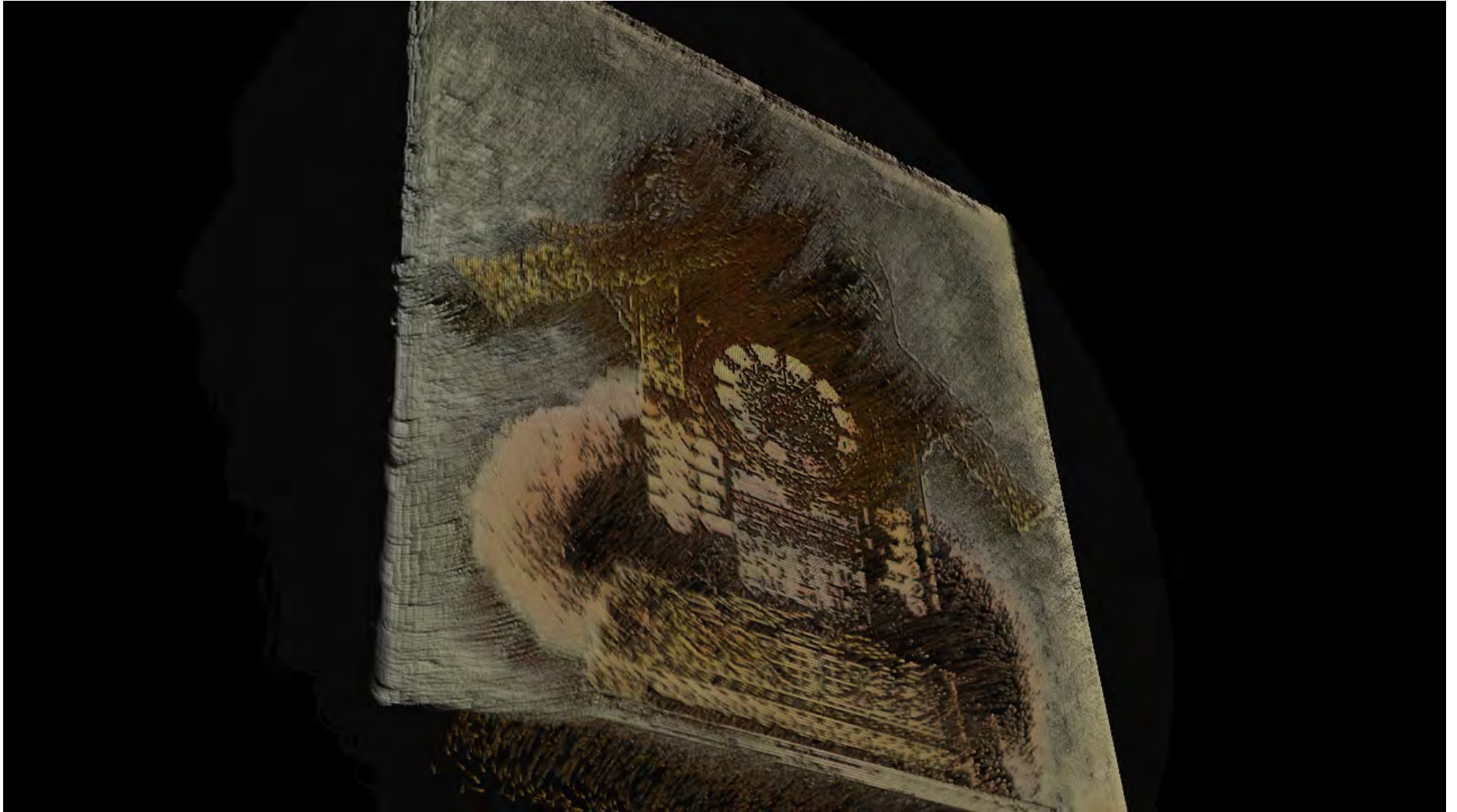
Cheza is a Minneapolis based theatre professional. She is also the Artistic Director of Acadia Rep, a summer theatre located on Mount Desert Island, Maine. Cheza began her return to education by achieving her Bachelor of Fine Art at the University of Minnesota and continues as a second year MFA candidate at Maine College of Art & Design.

### **Artist Statement:**

I consider myself to be a multi-disciplinary artist, currently utilizing and translating my theatre skills into short videos. My interests encompass the 80's and 90's pop video scene, along with 'kitchen sink' films and writings.

As a fifty-year-old woman, I enjoy exploring my post-prime body and mindset along with the memories I have of growing up in Northern England. I wish to challenge societal conceptions of older women by exploring my own life journey.

In this piece titled, The Little Hut on Chicken Legs, I use the Maine landscape and the Atlantic Ocean as my visual inspiration. I found this particular part of the musical movement rather celebratory, quirky and fun. I wanted to play with my image swirling in a euphotic ecstasy along with capturing the moody mysterious quiet moments. The kaleidoscopic momentum of the music and visuals echo the dramatic atmospheric changes the Maine weather can take. It's pretty endless skies alongside the still and hovering of seasmoke. Figure and landscape united in an evocation of music.



*Still from animation*

## ***Little Hut on Chicken Legs***

Isaac Kim MFA '25

### **Biography**

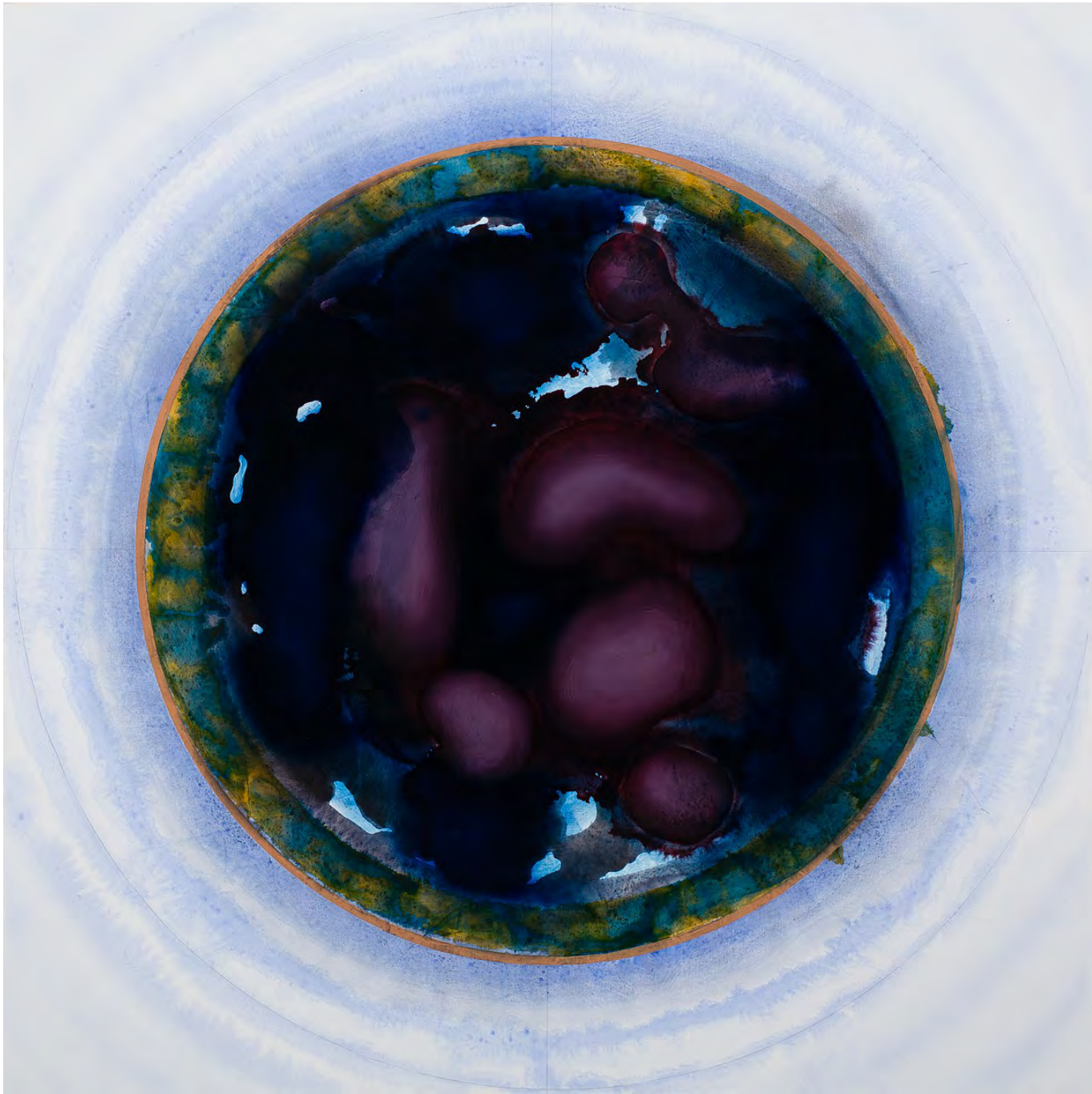
Isaac Kim is a multi-instrumentalist who works primarily in computer music composition, video art, and multimedia installation. Isaac Kim is interested in the intersection of semiotics and simulacra as both sonic and visual material and its relationship to the construction of reality and perception. He received his Bachelor of Arts at the University of Colorado, Boulder in Mathematics as well as an M.S.C. in Creative Technology and Design.

Isaac is currently pursuing his MFA at Maine College of Art & Design.

### **Artist Statement**

I was interested in the original works that inspired Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. Mussorgsky composed the music as a response to the death of his friend Victor Hartmann, who was an artist, designer and architect. I focused my work on the piece "The Hut on Hen's Legs" which is a drawing of an ornate bronze clock inspired by the myth of Baba Yaga. Interestingly, many of the original works of Hartmann that inspired the other movements are no longer in existence, and are missing from history. I found the contrast of the preservation of Mussorgsky's work versus the absence of the work that inspired the composition to be interesting. The performance of Mussorgsky's work is an action of preservation and continuation through re-interpretation. I thought the visual work to accompany the movement should reference the original, and as such, I wanted to make a response to the absence of many of the original pieces. Luckily, there was a picture of the original drawing of "Hut on Hen's Legs". I thought then to remix and re-interpret the image, in this case an act of preservation, and distort the work to reference the absence of many of the other original works. I decided to create motion that made the work move as if it were dissolving and becoming dust as it becomes lost in time, occasionally resurfacing as the original image. Like Mussorgsky, I wanted to respond to the loss of Hartmann, but in this case to the loss of his work rather than his person.





## ***Great Gate of Kiev***

Honour Mack, Professor of Painting

### **Biography**

Honour Mack lives, teaches, and maintains a studio practice in Portland, Maine. Born and raised in central New York, she moved to Maine early in her career. Her studio practice focuses on process, perception and transformation. While she primarily focuses on painting, she loves to experiment with a variety of materials and approaches to making work. She feels a deep connection to color and light as conduits for poetic communication, and is inspired by nature and science, and the cycle of seasonal changes in New England.

Honour Mack is currently a Professor in the Painting Department at Maine College of Art & Design in Portland, Maine. She exhibits her work regionally and nationally. Mack has received Fellowships to the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, the Vermont Studio Colony, and Chautauqua Institution. She received her Bachelor's degree from Skidmore College, and her Master of Fine Art degree from Yale University School of Art.

### **Artist Statement**

I am interested in improvisation, perception and transformation. My images

encourage active seeing, where the perceptual experience becomes a visual exercise. My paintings offer no concrete destination, but seek to suspend a viewer in the present moment. This objective is supported by my interest in the intersection of references to anatomy, man-made structures, early esoteric philosophies, and ancient scientific examinations of the world.

The painting, "Chaos Movement", connects the majestic theme and rich resonance of the orchestration in "The Great Gate of Kiev", with color, shape and repetition. The circular form can be seen as sound waves emanating from a speaker or the timpani and bass drum, as it punctuates the climax of the movement and suite. I rely on the confluence of process, material, color and metaphor to direct me. It's enigmatic and unpredictable, entirely reliant on previous painting decisions. My images evolve, without a known target. I work in intuitive and unexpected ways, so that I can find alternative solutions. In this way, I relate to analytical processes, by asking myself how many ways I can approach or manipulate an idea. Early decisions in the paintings provide structures to push up against with more and more spontaneity. I am excited by the discovery of things I've never seen before while I am painting. I want - and work - to be surprised, and I hope that the person viewing the work will be as well. I'd like to offer people something unique and new to look