

Wunderkammer

FEATURED ARTISTS

Yemmy Cen Wu
 Kristy Chen
 Jason Chow
 Caitlyn Coll
 Christopher Dela Cruz
 Maliha Fazle
 Xuanheng He
 Kimberly Hoang
 Louisa Hsu
 Rui Hu
 Mingda Jia
 Jade Liao
 Kenny Liu
 Wei Luo
 Iori Matsushima
 Calvin Moon
 Kachely Peters
 Romina Saravi
 Annie Song
 Nive Sridharan
 Caleb Tao
 Christopher Williams
 Sabrina Yip
 Emma Zhao

WUNDERKAMMER interrogates the original impetus of the traditional cabinet of curiosities and its self-appointed authority to collect, relegating the species and cultures exploited into a diminutive and exoticized position. Instead, the exhibition holds a subversive spirit in producing art as a collective to usurp the hierarchy and facilitate critical dialogues with fortified connections. *Wunderkammer* showcases the union of the interior and exterior realms in which we operate: how we relate as humans to other species, the culmination of the past to our current state, and investigations of the self in relation to others. The range of works from the two senior-level Studio courses demonstrate the cumulative experience of the artists' respective undergraduate degrees, satiating our curiosity through their varied insights and critical engagement with the past.



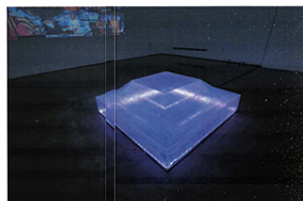
Kimberly Hoang



Wei Luo

Entering the space comes with the confrontations of deeply personal histories, relating to family dynamics and the endurance of pressures. Kimberly Hoang's *Lapping Insecurity: Shuttle Run* (2019) presents an instance of tension and anxiety in the artist's past as she had experienced the Multistage Fitness Test as a measure of inadequacy rather than one of ability. Hoang uses the recognizable tone of the beep to activate the memory of those that had participated in the test, reflecting upon nostalgia and varied responses depending on their experience. Akin to the notions of tension and anxiety, Wei Luo presents *Dinner Set-Up* (2019), constructing tableware out of corrugated cardboard. The installation is among the first that viewers encounter in the space, prompting an investigation of the artificial iteration of a dinner set. Luo created this work based on her family dynamic, recreating the four groupings of objects that mirrors the dinner table she is accustomed to within her household. Luo addresses the power imbalance in her father dominating the domestic space, evident in his seat at the head of the dinner table and his additional wine, beer can, and cup whereas the other members solely have their bowl and chopsticks. Both artists provide us with the opportunity to reflect upon moments that induce tension and pressures, whether relating to family dynamics or being subject to feeling incompetent.

Hoang and Luo's creations segue into other works featured in *Wunderkammer* that align with the notion of exposing and disrupting dominant ideologies, such as Ye Tao's text-based installation, *Free* (2019). Inspired by government censorship within China, Tao brews questions relating to security and the regime of truth, inciting viewers to actively engage in the search of occluded histories rather than passively consume carefully-produced media. Tao's installation is situated along side Louisa Hsu's work *Reflection* (2019) and Iori Matsushima's *Fake News* (2019). A symbiotic relationship between works is apparent while viewers navigate the space, particularly among these three in the west gallery and their interrogation of information. Each of the works addresses a specific subject: censorship and government transparency, the false immediacy and narratives of social media, and the terror of 'fake news'. Though they differ, Tao, Hsu, and Matsushima participate in a conversation about engaging critically with the information we consume and challenging what is produced.

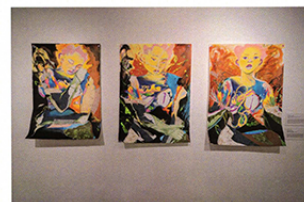


Ye (Caleb) Tao

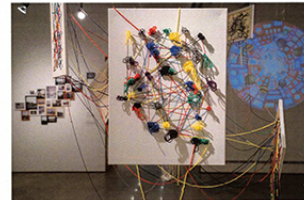


Louisa Hsu

Comparatively, Kachely Peters' *Fall in, so you can crumble* series (2019) is a work of affect and embodiment, assessing the nature of anxiety and how it is formative in an individual's growth. Unfurling as a dynamic display in terms of materiality and evocative in its rendering, the series of drawings offers an intimate glance at Peters' identity alongside the theme of mental health broadly. The work is entwined in personal history yet also carries universal applications regarding self-care and the investigations of internal and external selves. Rui Hu's *True Self* (2019) and Peters' series function alongside each other to explore how we understand the self, confronting the role of our emotions and the impact of our choices. Hu's work is a spectacle of colour, representing the emotions that express human nature, reflecting upon the decision-making process using interlaced thread. As Peters' series had blossomed from a singular portrait into a triad of brilliance, Hu's had similarly evolved from a singular canvas of cotton lines to an installation woven by the palimpsest of experiences that mark our lives.



Kachely Peters



Rui Hu



Jade Liao

Another work that had undergone a metamorphosis has been Jade Liao's *If* (2019). Begun as a compact structure which adhered to a stacking formation on a plinth, the piece has evolved into a winding and seemingly endless installation. The *if's* make their presence known when they are bound around a pillar, the piping held together by plastic joints. The work carries an organic presence in that it grows like an ivy, having no reliance on an external substance to hold itself onto the column. The emphasis of "if" and its repetition reminds us of the constant activity of decision-making, similarly to Hu's concept and visual iteration.

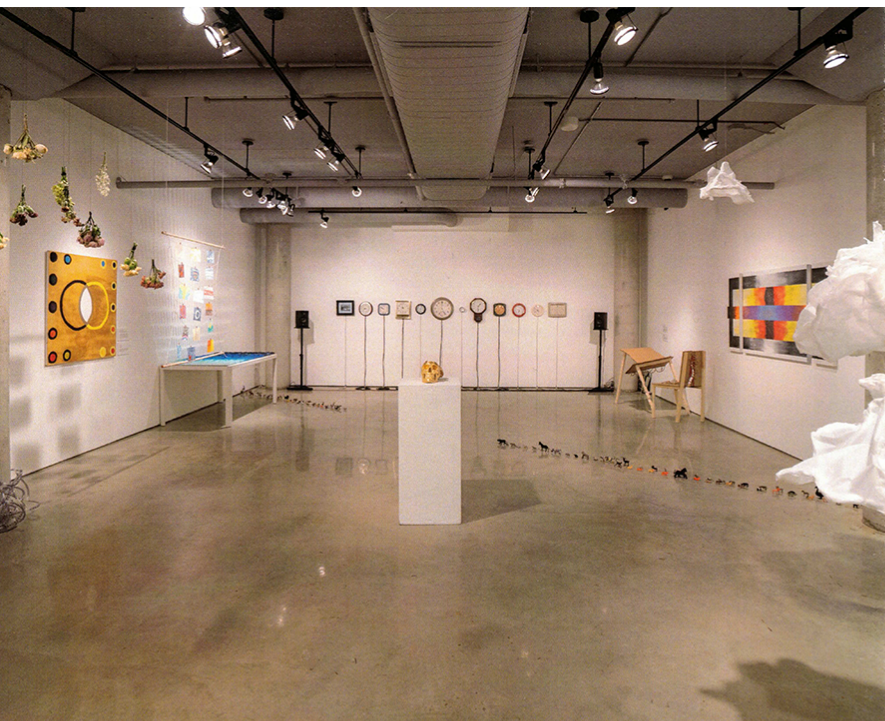
While some works are charged with political commentary and others offer an impassioned study of the self, *Wunderkammer* additionally calls attention to technological presence in contemporary art. *Intervals* (2019) by Christopher Dela Cruz is an undertaking of sound art with an interactive component to captivate viewers. This work partakes in a larger conversation of new media art and its transformation. *Intervals* merges concepts from 'found art' while employing sound as both the medium and its subject, highlighting the contemporary embrace of electronic media and repurposed materials.



Christopher Dela Cruz

This exhibition truly is a showcase of wonders, evoking viewers' inquisitiveness and prompting moments of reflection. All of the artists of *Wunderkammer* have provided viewers an opportunity to be privy to their moments of nostalgia, revelation, and explorations in artistic production. Though each artist shares their own narrative through a distinct visual testament, the exhibition has a collective energy woven into its studies of the interior and exterior – surely cultivated by the community of the Studio program and individual growth.





The artists would like to thank their instructors, Yael Brotman and Lee Goreas, for inspiring and guiding them to create the work in this exhibition. They would also like to thank Daniel Hunt for his installation assistance and Erin Peck of the DMG for all her support. Finally, they thank the Doris McCarthy Gallery and its director Ann MacDonald for generously allowing them to install their work in the gallery's beautiful space.

Thumbnail artists:

1. Caitlyn Coll
2. Yemmy Cen Wu
3. Kristy Chen
4. Emma Zhao
5. Xuanheng He
6. Romina Saravi
7. Maliha Fazle
8. Mingda Jia
9. Christopher Williams
10. Nive Sridharan
11. Annie Song
12. Jason Chow
13. Kenny Liu
14. Calvin Moon
15. Sabrina Yip



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Catalogue design: Iori Matsushima

About the essay's author: The essayist, Rashana Youtzy, is a Toronto-based writer and curator conducting research in art history, critical theory, and philosophy. Her inquiries primarily focus on how investigations of identity are manifested, and our constant desire to communicate this endeavor of understanding ourselves and the world around us.

