

TAKMING CHUANG

LUCAS DEGIULIO

BEHNAZ KHALEGHI

SHARI PALADINO

JOVI SCHNELL

ANDREW WILSON

the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are living in poverty has increased from 1.2 billion to 1.6 billion. The number of people who are living in extreme poverty has increased from 600 million to 800 million. The number of people who are living in absolute poverty has increased from 300 million to 400 million.

The World Bank has estimated that the number of people living in poverty in the world will increase to 2.1 billion by the year 2020. This is a significant increase from the current population of 6 billion. The World Bank has also estimated that the number of people living in extreme poverty will increase to 1.1 billion by the year 2020. This is a significant increase from the current population of 600 million.

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The 47th Annual University of California, Berkeley Master of Fine Arts Graduate Exhibition

It is an immense pleasure to introduce the work of six talented and ambitious graduating students from UC Berkeley's Department of Art Practice in the annual Master of Fine Arts exhibition at BAMPFA. Takming Chuang, Lucas DeGiulio, Behnaz Khaleghi, Shari Paladino, Jovi Schnell, and Andrew Wilson have worked hard over the last two years to explore new territories in their practices. While each artist's works contain many themes and tackle specific issues, one unifying element among them is an interest in the constructed social norms that determine one's actions and perceptions of the world. The six artists respond to and expose the conditions that create and propagate notions of class, race, sexuality, gender, and education. Their works string together both latent and explicit, public and personal histories, anxieties, and utopias that challenge convention.

This exhibition extends across the Bay to San Francisco with a complementary presentation at the Right Window Gallery, located at 992 Valencia Street in the Mission District. The addition of this space gives the artists wider exposure as well as the opportunity to situate their works under conditions that differ from the museum setting.

It has been a pleasure to work with Allan DeSouza, Stephanie Syjuco, and Anne Walsh, faculty from the Department of Art Practice who have devoted their time, energy, and expertise to mentoring these six students and helping them develop their work for you to explore and behold.

Matthew Coleman, CURATORIAL ASSISTANT
Stephanie Cannizzo, ASSISTANT CURATOR



Takming Chuang

Takming Chuang's sculptures address the human body's natural, yet culturally dreaded impermanence to examine broader relationships between change and control. In his previous works, the artist made prints of temporary marks that were impressed onto the elastic surface of his skin. He also stained brass wedges with his body after working out at the gym, dulling the reflective surface with sweat and sebum that oxidize over time. These processes delivered a critique of fitness culture in a society that values youth and productivity over the grace and inevitability of aging.

As an MFA student at UC Berkeley, Chuang has further developed his sculptural vocabulary with unfired clay. Realizing that preservation is a tactic to fend off (or perpetuate) anxieties associated with change, he tightly wraps the unfired forms in plastic to prolong their wet and malleable state. As a result of these protective efforts, the objects remain ironically unstable. Within their polyethylene sheath, the natural process of change endures: the clay shrinks and hardens, forming wrinkles and blisters on the surface. The artist considers the fact that clay is a geologic substrate whose lifespan outlasts conceptions of history and time. These clay bodies hint at asynchronous timescales: the immediacy of their surfaces recalls human flesh, yet the earthy body of clay itself will endure through the flow of the ages.

Unfired clay is uniquely nonutilitarian. Unlike a finished ceramic product, it cannot support any weight, nor is it airtight. As long as they may last, the artist's sculptures emphasize inevitable change and entropy in spite of preservation tactics. The inability to preserve is far from a failure; rather, Chuang's sculptures beautifully demonstrate a sense of value in the inescapable nature of impermanence.



Lucas DeGiulio

Lucas DeGiulio collects flora, sticks, branches, and garbage from his excursions into nature. These materials become components or sources of inspiration for bodies of work that are linked together in a generative process, seemingly choreographed in a ritualistic ode to the transformative and flexible properties of the natural world and the detritus of humans. His sculptures, collages, and assemblages reflect the nature of our climate crisis, expressions of the evolving ecologies that occur through erosion and the extinction or propagation of flowers or fauna. Likewise, his studio is an ecology unto itself, with processes swirling and looping back, gesturing towards other objects and experiences.

DeGiulio crafts whimsical masks of animals and insects for his son, which stand behind a sofa welcoming guests to his studio. He traces the shadows cast by these masks with graphite on large panels of plywood and carves out grooves and channels that recall environments around the Bay Area. In contrast to his sculptures made of solely natural materials, his objects also take the form of vacuum-formed assemblages that freeze a particular state of nature, often colored with the chemically derived shocks of neon spray paint, hermetically preserved in transparent sheets of plastic.

DeGiulio's artistic practice and role as an educator intertwine inseparably, yet one does not necessarily determine the other. He is an environmental studies teacher at a Waldorf-inspired school in Sausalito, where he regularly guides students on field trips into nature. Perhaps DeGiulio's work depicts his inner landscape, or captures shadows and projections of the beautiful uncertainty and unanswerable questions of nature and matter.



Behnaz Khaleghi

And if I laugh at any mortal thing

'Tis that I may not weep

—Lord Byron

Behnaz Khaleghi plays with scatological humor and phallic structures, placing her work at the edge of fear, absurdity, and the grotesque. Referencing violence and torture inflicted on women, such as stoning or genital mutilation, the artist rejects the perception of Middle Eastern women—or women in general—as victims. Instead she reflects on men's anxieties when it comes to women's power.

For her installation *In Heaven*, the artist creates a playful yet haunting, almost circus-like environment of video, painting, and soft sculpture, including a massive figure with a heart of pink yarn, who appears to be giving birth. Khaleghi refers to this figure as the “castrating woman.” Offering a feminist version of heaven, the artist pushes back against the idealized role of the virgin in paradise, and offers instead this mantis-like symbol of the femme fatale.

The turban is a motif in Khaleghi's work, placed in conversation with the colossal figure and a range of materials, objects, textures, and forms. The artist does not lose sight of the complexities and ambiguities of the work she presents, facing the challenges of post-9/11 Islamophobia. She acknowledges the harsh condemnation and climate of fear that shuts down any serious critiques of Islam that could give rise to fundamental reforms and reclamations, especially by women, as any turbaned man can be seen as suspect and is at risk of becoming the victim of a hate crime.

The viewer is placed in the midst of the conflict as an observer of the violence, and in a position to consider who is prey.



Shari Paladino

Shari Paladino's *Habitas* is a family of play-based artworks with a focus on the domestic interior—a hybrid space combining kitchen, lab, and school. Composed of sculptural works that incorporate wood or dough; digital video; photography; and text, *Habitas* is an outlet for a critical investigation into nostalgia, self-definition, and belonging.

Paladino will bring her work together in the video performance *Habitas: Recipes from the Dark Italian Cookery*, for which she constructed a 1970s/80s-style TV sitcom set as a way to reflect on her past. Her script *Dark Italian Recipe* is performed within this backdrop of artist-designed architecture, wallpapers, fabrics, and furniture, including a cuckoo clock that does not tell time or make a sound and a bread hutch that serves as a pinball machine.

Paladino examines ways in which the preservation of family recipes conjures claims of ownership and authenticity intrinsic to a given heritage. *Dark Italian Recipe* is a semi-autobiographical text told in twelve different cut-up voices. The text is transcribed and adapted from an episode of the radio series *This American Life*, telling the hidden paternity story of the artist's biracial brother. Paladino's script scrutinizes the term "Dark Italian" for the role it plays in the family's response to having a mixed-race child, exploring the term's peculiar combination of racism and charade. Fictional voices stand in for the artist's family members, including an imaginary childhood friend, Jeezy, who serves as a savior-like figure. The artist investigates the shifting, unreliable functions of memory, mixing various pieces of conversation and time with subtextual narratives of food, race, purity, and culture.



Jovi Schnell

Jovi Schnell is a painter of kaleidoscopic systems. Her paintings appear both on canvas and as large murals, and she has also designed site-responsive public mosaic works. The artist has exhibited her work in galleries since 1998 and has been a fixture in the San Francisco art scene for over a decade. Her research on plant intelligence, biological systems, algorithms, cybernetics, ecology, and historically “fringe” theorists, scientists, and philosophers finds its way into her psychedelic syntax of whooshing color and Rube Goldberg–like machines. The subject matter of her paintings includes speculative space gardens, elaborate grids whose compositions are determined by chance, and the meshing of the human with non-human objects and systems.

The artist grew up in a queer feminist homestead in the Ozark Mountains in Arkansas. The experience of this liberal culture was like living on an island in a conservative sea. Her “nontraditional” upbringing, coupled with traveling and living abroad, informs her understanding of ideology and power and is tempered by a spiritual appreciation of nature and fellow “outsiders.” These influences find a particular confluence in her new body of work, which, the artist writes, “evokes protean realms where the codes of nature, humanity, and culture flow freely.” Messages of technological utopia converge with dystopic reminders of imminent ecological doom, while graphic black-and-white figures resembling microbes negotiate flows and ruptures of prismatic abstraction.

Schnell’s works demonstrate a push toward speculative thinking and a pull away from the objectivism of science to find a happy medium in which creativity and objectivity can be used to find new truths. The paintings culminate in representations of the mesh of natural and unnatural, abstract and figurative—a demonstration that everything on this planet is woven together in unfathomably complex ecosystems where each element shares similar implications for any changes to the larger network.



Andrew Wilson

Andrew Wilson describes his process as channeling black, queer, slave, and family bodies as a spirit medium. He works in jewelry, sculpture, textiles, photography, and book arts, with each object telling a different part of a story, each illuminating details that others cannot. Wilson creates his own fashion line, FRUIT, which makes use of this multimedia approach and situates it within a conceptual framework. He explores various ways in which black bodies, particularly male bodies, have been consumed and commodified throughout American history.

Wilson grew cotton plants in his Oakland backyard to understand the lifecycle of the plant and the ways in which his ancestors were tied to the production of the crop. Cotton, poplar, hair, and brass are his favored materials. Cyanotype prints on simple cotton kaftans reveal, upon close inspection, details of slave ship blueprints and tree branches bearing hanging figures. Brass cowrie shells stamped with the words MADE IN USA repossess a slave trade economy. Cowrie shells were used as currency in West Africa, where eighteenth-century European traders purchased men and women into slavery at a rate of about one pound of cowries to thirteen pounds of human flesh. Based on this ratio, Wilson designed and created regalia adorned with more than two thousand of his brass cowries—roughly equivalent to his own body weight. His current body of work includes cotton boll husks cast in bronze, incorporating the same ratio.

FRUIT serves as a means to explore the economics of slavery and to memorialize its human toll. On a recent evening in the artist's studio, the fruits of Wilson's labor came together in a performance he called *#FRUIT Fashion Show*. Nothing was for sale, but something was reclaimed.

ARTISTS

TAKMING CHUANG has exhibited at Tyler Wood Gallery, San Francisco; Right Window, San Francisco; CHC Gallery, New York; Loewe Contemporary, London; and the Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California. He holds a BA in economics and business management from Binghamton University, State University of New York.

LUCAS DEGIULIO has exhibited at the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York; Richard Telles Fine Art, San Francisco; Jancar Jones Gallery, Los Angeles; and Overduin & Co., Los Angeles. He holds a BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and is a teacher at the New Village School, a Waldorf-inspired school in Sausalito.

BEHNAZ KHALEGHI has exhibited at the Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California; the San Francisco Foundation and SOMArts, San Francisco; and the de Young Museum, San Francisco. She is the recipient of the 2016 Edwin Anthony & Adalaine Bourdeaux Cadogan Scholarship from the San Francisco Foundation and received an honorable mention in the Eisner Prize film and video competition at UC Berkeley. She received her BSc in physics from Sharif University of Technology in Tehran.

SHARI PALADINO has exhibited at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Richmond Art Center, Richmond, California; and the Worth Ryder Art Gallery, Berkeley. She received an honorable mention in the Eisner Prize film and video competition in 2016. She holds a BA in interdisciplinary studies: art education and disability from UC Berkeley.

JOVI SCHNELL is represented by Gregory Lind Gallery, San Francisco. She has also exhibited at Derek Eller Gallery, New York; Oakland Museum of California; Western Exhibitions, Chicago; and Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, Florida, among others. Her work has been commissioned by the city of Tampa, Florida; the San Francisco Arts Commission; the Art in Embassies Program for Belgrade, Serbia; Weiden + Kennedy (UK); and the Chambers Hotel in New York. She received her BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, and was in the studio program at De Ateliers '63, Amsterdam.

ANDREW WILSON has exhibited at OMI Gallery, Oakland; Z Space, San Francisco; Joyce Gordon Gallery, Oakland; Root Division, San Francisco; SomARTS, San Francisco; Worth Ryder Art Gallery, Berkeley; University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; FiveMyles, Brooklyn; and Gallery 2001, Delaware, Ohio. He is the recipient of the 2016 Jack K. & Gertrude Murphy Award. He received his BFA in studio arts from Ohio Wesleyan University.

THE 47TH ANNUAL UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY
MASTER OF FINE ARTS GRADUATE EXHIBITION IS ORGANIZED
BY BAMPFA CURATORIAL ASSISTANT MATTHEW COLEMAN AND
ASSISTANT CURATOR STEPHANIE CANNIZZO. THE ANNUAL
MASTER OF FINE ARTS EXHIBITION IS MADE POSSIBLE BY
THE BARBARA BERELSON WILTSEK ENDOWMENT.

Dear SF, Love Berkeley is an extension of this exhibition
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2017. Founded in August 2007, Right Window is a gallery/
exhibition space in the ATA building at 992 Valencia Street
in San Francisco. www.rightwindow.com



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