

Bean Gilsdorf
Lisa Jarrett

Jaleesa Johnston
Elizabeth Malaska

Maya Vivas
Samantha Wall

Curated by Blake Shell

Time being what it is.

For the time being

What is a Time Being?

Stretched, lengthened, squished, time-looped, mediated, frozen, layered, and ever-changing—the figures and bodily parts in this exhibition reflect on humanity’s relationship with time, history, and identity.

All of the artists in this exhibition do something strange with the figure. Somehow they make it weird, whether through exaggerations of scale or the flattening of time and space. Some pieces feel as if they could be moving forward, or backward, at any moment. Other works speak to our relationship with time itself, by reflecting on memories and stories and how we perceive our own histories and identities. Do these things shift continuously, or is there any permanence within our own selves?

As we near an end to the pandemic, as we wrangle our lives back in some ways, we can’t undo the fact of this past year. It remains inside us, inside our physical selves. The unusual experience of feeling unmoored from time and being physically separated from others, combined with mediated forms of communication, has made life feel unreal. We will carry that experience until it dissipates. As with any wound, eventually it will cease to exist, it will be reduced to a scar. In the meantime, we need to reflect, to process, and to feel our way through the final part of this transition. Samantha Wall said, “It just is, until it’s not.” We can sink into despair or take solace, depending on the moment.

Works in the exhibition

Samantha Wall

Samantha Wall's figures reflect a fragmented interiority influenced by the events of the past year.

We see into the body as if looking through an X-ray, but instead of sinew and bone, affective forms are revealed, sculpted by what they touch and what touches them. We are shaped by discourse, current events, and familiar bonds; however, being deprived of social interaction has created a hunger for other bodies, as well as a fear of them. Her figures reflect our longings and conflicted feelings about touch.

1

Missed Connections I–4 2020

Various sizes

Ink, gold leaf, Dura-Lar

2

We Were Close 2021

73 × 40 inches

Ink on Dura-Lar

3

You Don't Feel That Far Away 2021

Diptych, 50 × 83 inches

Ink on Dura-Lar

4

Teeter 2021

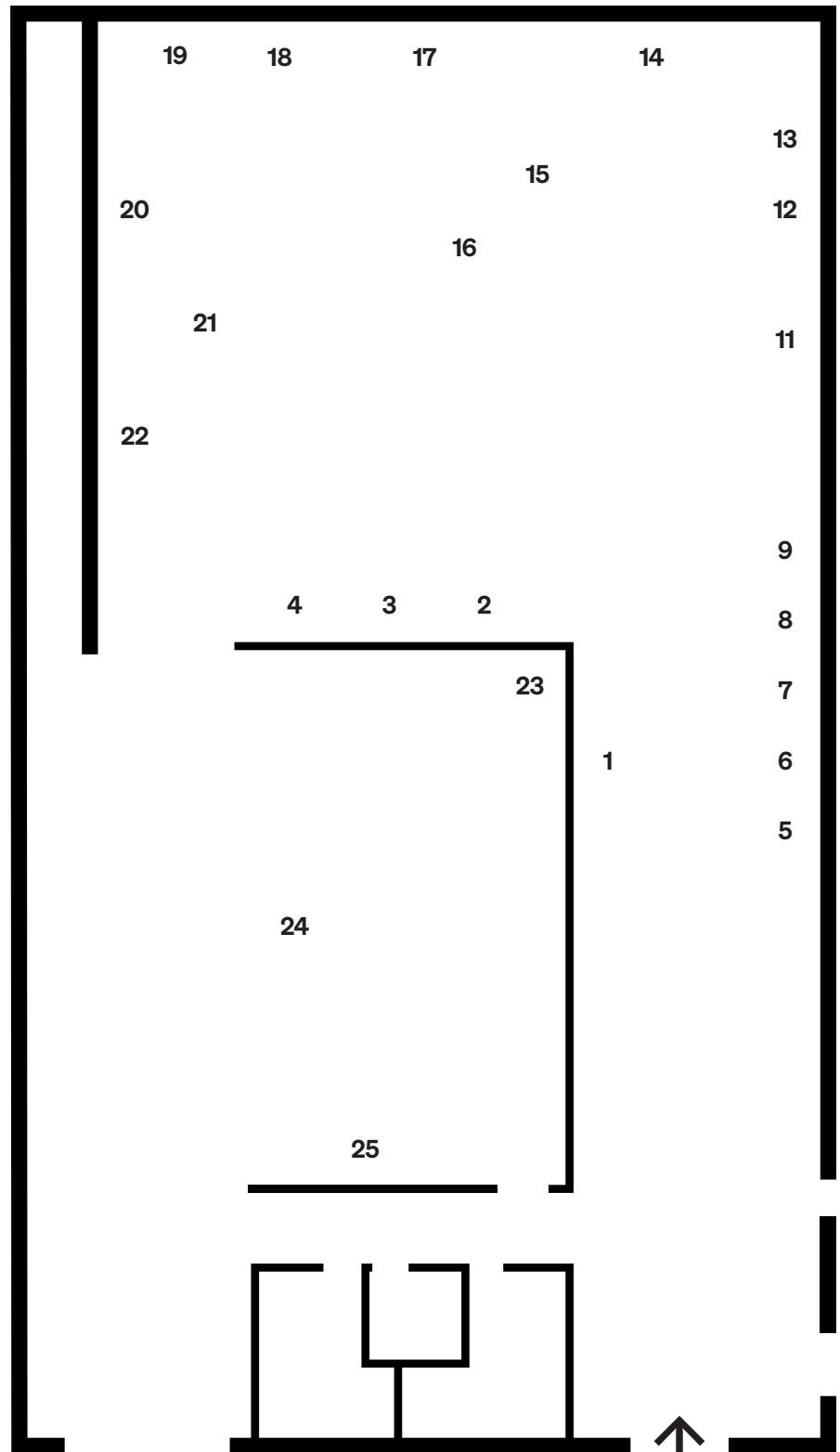
100 × 40 inches

Ink on Dura-Lar

Jaleesa Johnston

Jaleesa Johnston's figures are based on her movement performances. She collapses time, as Gilsdorf does, but instead of working with historical photos, Johnston repeatedly draws her own image. Different versions of herself appear to meet simultaneously. In her drawings and video works, representations of the Black body vary from clear figures to complete abstractions that the viewer can only glimpse, each form too close to be distinct.

continued



Jaleesa Johnston

continued from previous

5

Push In Two 2018

18 × 24 inches

Pen, gouache, human hair on watercolor paper

6

Twin 2018

24 × 18 inches

Pen, gouache, human hair on watercolor paper

7

An Invocation 2018

20 × 30 inches

Pen, gouache, human hair on watercolor paper

8

Entrails 2018

18 × 24 inches

Pen, gouache, human hair on watercolor paper

9

Proximity 2018

18 × 24 inches

Pen, gouache, human hair on watercolor paper

10

Plummet 2018

24 × 18 inches

Pen, gouache, human hair on watercolor paper

11

Selected works from the *Encounters* series

2017–2020

36 drawings of various sizes

Pen, human hair, glue on paper

23

Overspaced 2019

Two-channel video installation

Bean Gilsdorf

Bean Gilsdorf's work freezes moments in time, collapsing multiple familiar images into a single space. Reflecting on memory, repetition in media, and the diminishment of women throughout history, the artist takes an image of Jackie Kennedy from the day of JFK's assassination as a key component of contemplation. Few images have been made to bear the weight of so many meanings and associations, ranging from fashion to politics to national trauma, and even to a vast labyrinth of conspiracy theories. As viewers of Gilsdorf's work, we must wrestle with the compression of so many meanings into one image. Does this make the meaning clearer or more real to us as viewers, or negate it through too many iterations?

12

HC 2018

61 × 36 × 30 inches

Polyester, aluminum, paint

13

MO 2018

Approx. 60 × 44 × 29 inches

Polyester, rayon, aluminum, paint

14

Works from the *Nov. 22, 1963* series

Each 21¼ × 30 inches framed

Completed with grant funding from the Oregon Arts Commission

Top row, L to R:

Pink Suit (Sunny Day) 2021

Polyester wool, cotton

Pink Suit (Backward Glance) 2021

Polyester, wool, cotton, plastic

Pink Suit (Demure) 2021

Polyester, wool, cotton, plastic

Pink Suit (Chanel) 2021

Polyester, wool, cotton, plastic

Bottom row, L to R:

Pink Suit (A Faithful Wife and Mother) 2021

Polyester, wool, cotton

Pink Suit (Immaculate) 2021

Polyester, wool, cotton, plastic

Pink Suit (Blush) 2021

Polyester, wool, cotton, plastic

Pink Suit (Older and Wiser) 2021

Polyester, wool, cotton, plastic



Bean Gilsdorf

continued from previous

15

MT 2018

Approx. 66 × 37 × 29 inches

Velvet, cotton, polyester, chenille brocade, aluminum, paint

16

LB 2018

60 × 44 × 29 inches

Polyester, rayon, aluminum, paint

Elizabeth Malaska

Elizabeth Malaska's work layers female figures within domestic scenes. Each tableau's story is also layered, incorporating gestures and poses that recall historical moments as well as objects and clothing that are common contemporary markers. The tensions between these different eras suggest longer and more complex narratives, leaving the context up to each viewer. Are these cyclical time loops, or myths that speak to universal truths?

17

Reflection I 2017

57½ × 45½ inches

Charcoal, Flashe on paper

18

Fountain 2021

47 × 72 inches

Mixed media

19

Leashed 2021

76 × 50 inches

Mixed media

Lisa Jarrett

Lisa Jarrett's works examine Black femme culture through the lens of hair and beauty rituals. How do routines, products, and beauty standards affect the self-reflections, representations, and stories of those who identify as Black femme? Hair connects us to our mothers, our ancestors, our histories; it speaks deeply of who we are, how we are seen, and how we see one another.

20

Migration Studies (No. 17, Drift) 2021

66 × 98 inches

Mixed media (hair nets, acrylic, India ink, thread)

21

Migration Studies (No. 16, Momma will I make it?; After Octavia E. Butler) 2021

53 × 16 × 53 inches

Mixed media (time travel on braided Spetra hair and rope spool)

22

Migration Studies (No. 14, prototype, iteration 2) 2021

60 × 165 inches

Mixed media (hair nets, acrylic, insect pins, tracing paper)

24

Migration Studies (No. 15, Home) 2021

Variable (riser 10 × 96 × 96 inches)

Mixed media (patience, tension, stillness, love, repetition, time on braided Spetra hair)

Maya Vivas

Maya Vivas's sculptural ceramics are queered future bodies engaged in self-evolution. Each figure navigates different stages of augmentation, and all are in continual unspoken conversation with one another. They ebb, flow, bulge, and retract. Are they growing or shrinking? Are they birthing or being birthed? The swirling figures feel as though they could be from ancestral times, but contemporary cultural markers propel them into the present.

25

Selections from *in their own image* series 2021

Various sizes

Ceramic

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Oregon Contemporary would like to recognize that our programming is being held on the traditional lands of the Chinook, Cowlitz, and many other Nations. We take this opportunity to offer respectful recognition to the Native communities in our region.

Oregon Contemporary

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