

## Juror's Statement

Even if the pandemic circumstances of 2020-2021 did not allow me to visit, so far, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, I am immensely thankful to the Center for having invited me to be the Master artist-in-residence for the Residency #179, and now, the juror for the 2021 ACA University Student Exhibition. I have reviewed with great interest the portfolios of fourteen of the students, and I selected the work of five of them. This selection is of course subjective; another juror would have - no doubt - chosen differently. It is subjective, personal, but not so much based on taste as on kinship: "a feeling of being close or similar to other people or things".

We have been through so much the last long year. I chose these five artists because I recognized in them my own feelings of desolation and confusion, but also optimism and push to fight back. This common, ambivalent mood of both hope and despair led me to choose the works of Grace Schwarz, Casey VanDyke, Marina Dietrich, Savannah Fleming and Gabriel Marino. The films of Grace Schwarz, the found photographs of Marina Dietrich, the self-portraits of Casey VanDyke, the imagery developed by Savannah Fleming and Gabriel Merino, had sensibility and humor, generosity and combativeness, criticality and empathy. They open into the future, without naivety, with disarming promise.

This said, I greatly value the work of all fourteen young artists - students. I have seen in all of them the courage and energy that takes to be an artist, in times like these more than ever.

## About the Juror, Dora García

Dora García reflects on the parameters and conventions governing the presentation of art, on the question of time (real and fictional) and on the boundaries between representation and reality. Through her work the artist presents reality as multiple and questionable and explores

the relationship between the artist, the work, and the public. She acts like a cinema director who tells stories (or simply selects them), unchains a situation, situates us in a scenario or makes us participants in a game the rules of which are very similar to reality and for this very fact allow us to question it. Her work, conceptual in nature, consists of text, photographs, and installations restricted to a specific location. She often draws on participation and performance. Through minimal changes, the exhibition space is converted into a different experience for each visitor, who leaves it with his or her perceptions altered, or at least with a degree of skepticism and doubt. For more information, please visit <https://www.doragarcia.net> and <https://www.projectesd.com/artist/dora-garcia>.

## ACA Statement

ACA's annual University Student Exhibition honors the outstanding work being produced by Florida's state university art students. The selection process for this exhibition begins from within Florida's nine major state university art departments. Each art department is asked to nominate up to three full-time, undergraduate, degree-seeking students, working in any medium or style. By identifying and promoting these emerging artists, ACA hopes to focus statewide attention on the high level of creative and experimental work being produced at the college level.

**This exhibition is generously sponsored by Ed and Jeanie Harris.**

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ATLANTIC CENTER FOR THE ARTS

[May 14—August 7, 2021]

32<sup>nd</sup>

# 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual University Student Exhibition

Marina Dietrich – University of Florida  
Savannah Fleming – University of North Florida  
Gabriel Marino – University of Central Florida  
Grace Schwartz – University of Florida  
Casey VanDyke – University of North Florida

Juror: Dora García



atlantic center for the arts

# the artists

## Marina Dietrich – University of Florida



Marina Dietrich, *Diary*, 2021

I frequently perceive two spaces in the world: the real and the virtual. I exist, at once, alone and with the virtual. The merging of the two is something that takes precedence within my work. I search for elements of the “real” within the virtual and vice versa.

The making and taking of my artistic practice primarily occurs online and within my phone. Through the incorporation of found imagery, I assume the role of a

facilitator. The usage of found imagery is a method for uncovering a shared human nature often found in the corners of the internet.

I also work with my own relationship to the virtual. The archive of my data and my consciousness of virtual information both inspire and frighten me. My curiosity and my fear are the forces that work together to drive my work.

## Savannah Fleming – University of Florida

I explore aspects of Queer identity, historical reflection, and acceptance through painting, printmaking, and collage. I intend to reclaim art history and alter it to include those excluded from its canon. Within this work, I aim to create art that I searched for, when I began to question my sexuality, as well as my identity. I intend to build a body of artwork that offers acceptance by reintroducing excluded groups back into the history and textbooks that dominate academia.

My work reflects upon art from Greek, Roman, Italian, and French history.

The process of collage is a significant

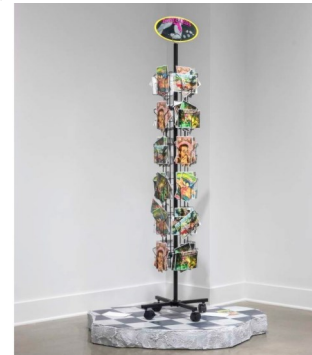


Savannah Fleming,  
*Translating Memory*, 2019

aspect of my work because it is a process of search, research, discovery, and problem-solving as I fuse and alter pieces from art history to develop a new narrative. These references and alterations are my way of addressing the erasure of Queer and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) from the art historical canon, while battling with modern-day confines on individuality.

## Gabriel Marino – University of Central Florida

My production of advertorial-inspired, glitz-heavy imagery delivered through a kitsch, tongue-in-cheek humor celebrates community and facilitates conversation surrounding the conflicts between Floridian and queer cultures. My subject matter is informed by queer culture and its relation to the environment and my aesthetic elements are inspired by advertorial and commercial photography to create visually appetizing and attention-grabbing images. I reference art history for its heavily produced and staged holy imagery, using artifice as a means for ironic candidness. Through digital compositing and attention-grabbing iconography, the imagery I produce is meant to be an outspoken visual cacophony to establish an intimate and lasting connection between subject and viewer in a positively tacky and extravagant fashion.



Gabriel Marino, *Gay Postcards*, 2020

## Grace Schwartz – University of Florida

My work is a series of investigations and confrontations about what constitutes my everyday: Technology, Christianity, Baseball, Gender, and Sexuality. My work generates discussions about how each of these things interfaces with my physical and mental self. By using such metaphors as dimensionality and materiality that we know of: The way 2, 3, and 4-dimensional theories co-exist, negate, and reinforce each other are major influences of my decision making of my materials. I explore the use of insects, religion, sports, and building construction as



Grace Schwartz, *Holy*, 2020

representational artifacts to allow my work to follow multiple threads that dissect family dynamics, our constantly shifting society, and my own physicality. The symbolism that arises from this approach is generative of the way that I

question where and who I am in the process of creation.

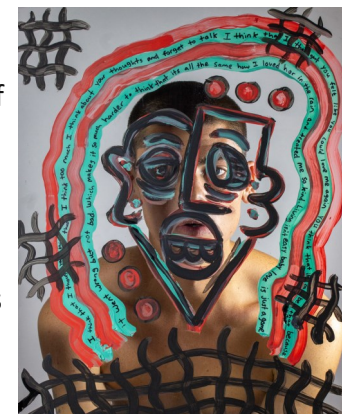
My work is not a means to an end, but an attempt at grasping the reflection and growth that arises in my own identity and my practice.

## Casey VanDyke – University of North Florida

I use a variety of mixed media and digital techniques to create self-portraits discussing topics of self-identity, mental health, and introspection. As I try to process and accept who I am as a person and try to place myself among countless others, I create a visual record to help cope and sort out my own experience. The words and phrases I have chosen are taken from my journal and placed next to drawings and paintings of creatures, shapes, and colors that make up a visual environment that is entirely myself.

The work lives amidst the passing of thoughts in what seems to be infinite space and between the characters in my brain. For there I exist in my most comfortable form and feel the most myself. This series highlights issues of self-identity, mental health, and isolation in a stylized way in hopes of communicating a message to the viewer that what we are experiencing is all normal.

If the viewer can reconsider how they treat themselves, among others with mental health issues, as well as somehow relate to the work in their own personal way, I feel as if my work has done its job.



Casey VanDyke, from the series *A Thought in My Head*, 2021