

in the void:

A Curatorial Exploration of the Queer Creative Process

by

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Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies

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a call for the incomplete

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Abstract

in the void asks what a queer creative process can be, by centering the incomplete, the messy, and the vulnerable within the making and exhibiting of artwork. This thesis critically questions the dominance of colonial and consumer-capitalist practices that shape artistic production. Through a two-part exhibition series, *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies* (November 2025) and *a call for the incomplete* (March 2026), I curate ongoing works from OCAD artists Evan Sagman, g blekkenhorst, Juliana Gagné, Kiera Harrigan, and Riley Midroni. By exhibiting unfinished artworks in both a gallery and an *archive*, a queer creatively disorienting process is made visible to the public, opening space for alternative ways of knowing. Drawing on auto theoretical and intuitive curatorial methods, I engage artistic creative processes as a “void”; a generative space that is unknown, unpredictable, and full of potential for queer world building. The exhibitions foster queer kinship, holding the unfinished task of what queerness means in the here and now.

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I write, create, and curate in Tkaronto, now known as the city of Toronto, which in Mohawk means “where there are trees standing in the water.” As a settler on the unceded treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, I recognize the historical and current context of my presence within ongoing colonialism. I acknowledge these lands as the ancestral and rightful territories of many nations, including the Anishinaabeg, the Haudenosaunee and the Huron-Wendat.

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Introduction

As a queer artist, I am haunted by what I have not finished.¹ Working across visual and literary forms, I have become acutely aware of the particular shame attached to the incomplete project—the idea without execution, the gesture unfinished, the not yet comprehensible. Above me, every time, an internal warning flashes: *messy, messy, messy*. Completeness becomes a signifier of my worth. And my familiarity has made me passive and impatient in my creation. I accept the disappearance of my own unrealized work. I grieve quietly, in a dusty discarded cupboard in my mind, at night, with a flashlight and my voice at a whisper. My collection of unfinished works remains private from public display, detaching me from other artists and from the curiosity so essential to creative process. All around me—within dominant art world frameworks—I see exhibitions, institutions, and profitable opportunities deny the value of artistic labor and creative process. I cannot separate this logic of productivity from broader cultural expectations of success. The demand for coherence, completion, and legibility frames any deviation as dysfunction and delay as deficiency. The unfinished work, like the queer body, becomes suspect; out of time, out of place, viewed as insufficiently formed and morally disruptive.²

in the void, I use the term queer as a mode of perception and practice that refuses constraint. The term queer stands outside normative culture, exceeding and unsettling the

¹ I explore the idea of haunting through Avery Gordon's *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (2008). Haunting is not a central theoretical idea in my thesis overall, but it is important to my description and experience of the exhibition *bad 2 the bone* (2023) and Kiera Harrigan's work *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg* (2024) where absence makes visible process, intimacy, and utopia. I use Gordon's theory of haunting to place the void as a convergence of unresolved past and unrealized future.

² My understanding of heteronormativity comes from Lauren Berlant's article *Sex in Public* (1998) where she defines heteronormativity as an assumed, systemic, celebrated practice, privileged for its moral standpoint. Therefore, ideas of value and intimacy are deeply connected to heteronormativity—and its support of capitalism—acting in the contemporary moment to deter the failures of normative culture (Berlant 1998, 556).

present's limited arrangements of the possible (Muñoz 2008). In José Esteban Muñoz's *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, I place queer as an oppositional orientation that looks toward what is not yet here—an anticipatory structure of feeling that emerges through desire, relation, aesthetic practice, and that keeps open the possibility of other ways of being (Muñoz 2009, 28). It is a celebration of expression and all its messiness, an ability to try without the expectation of success, prioritizing kinship and alternative futures that emerge from embracing what is incomplete.³

in the void is both a curatorial and personal inquiry into what it means to foreground unfinished works by queer artists within the gallery and archival space, to challenge the economies of visibility and validation that render such works marginal or unworthy. More broadly, this project asks what kinds of artistic and social possibilities might emerge if incompleteness were not something to conceal, but something to hold in public. The two exhibitions *Queer Creative Processes* (November 2025) and *a call for the incomplete* (March 2026), featuring OCAD artists Evan Sagman, g blekkenhorst, Juliana Gagné, Kiera Harrigan, and Riley Midroni, bring together incomplete artworks in a public gallery and the queer archive⁴ to revalue process as an opportunity for connection and rest.

I approached these exhibitions as embodied curatorial experiences making use of a narratively structured walkthrough to engage with each artwork in the exhibition space. As I navigated the exhibition, I actively translated both my curatorial imaginings and my own emotional, intimate, reactions, and recognitions in each work. I centered experiential knowledge,

³ I use kinship to describe the connections made during the process of these two exhibitions. The depth of shared conversations, expressions of needs, student experience, and more broadly what it means to be queer and make art.

⁴ I use the term archive in the context of Ann Cvetkovich's text *An Archive of Feeling* (2003) that emphasizes the importance of emotion (especially shaped from trauma), art, and activism in archival spaces. Cvetkovich centers queer communities in times of collective grief and survival as vital records of cultural production.

(Fournier 2021) to stay with a method of auto theory, as an intentional prioritization of my queer body and creativity (Fournier 2021). The value of this method lies in its vulnerability, as my own intimate narratives⁵ became a medium in which I understood and read process in the gallery and archive. I deliberately spoke from within the *mess*⁶ and recognized incompleteness as an opportunity for connection and expansion between the artists and the public.⁷ Collectively, the works resist conformity and reevaluate the creative process as an important condition of queer history where artists find each other in the vulnerability of artmaking, breaking the present's stagnancy (Muñoz 2009).

As an intentional display of process, this exhibition unified artists and audience in a shared refusal to meet the conventions of institutional completion. As a foundationally queer exhibit that hinged on unfinished artworks, each artist shared an ongoing artwork or artistic practice that exposed an aspect of their internal creative world (Muñoz 2009). Each work was a refusal to meet the demands and assumptions of value in the gallery and archival space. The mucky, messy world of making of art, the space between idea and execution, is undefined. What Muñoz would refer to as, “a horizon of possibility, not a fixed schema” (Muñoz 2009). I named this space the void, after an idea Jack Halberstam developed in the essay “Unbuilding Gender” (2018). Here, Halberstam drew on artworks to describe the void as a generative space—one that is empty of orientation or predictability (Ahmed 2014). Within a queer creative process, the void

⁵ By intimate narratives I am referring to interpretations of the art that go beyond artist statement and context and reflect my daily writing practice through out the exhibitions and thesis research. In the walk throughs of each exhibition, I prioritize the assumptions and poetics that resonate with me before following material clues and contexts. I reclaim intimacy from its heterosexual cultural institutions (Berlant 1998) to release it from taboo, privacy, and to center the intimate as a strength of queerness.

⁶ I reference mess here as an expression of emotion and process that is deemed, in capitalist colonial systems of value, something to be cleaned up, hidden, and shameful. As well, I recognize messiness as a vulnerable action in its refusal to perform clarity. Messiness is an alternative way of knowing that prioritizes concept over execution.

⁷ Connection and expansion between the artists and the public emerges from a shared acknowledgment of the fleeting moment. By showcasing works in process, the public is exposed to a momentary break from capitalist and colonial ideals of completeness therefore becoming a refusal to keep artistic labor invisible.

functions as the boundless, indefinite state of material presence and artistic practice. When the void encounters the institutional spaces of the gallery or archive, there is an unsettling tension, discomfort, and disorientation as audience and artwork contend with a meaning and form still in motion.⁸ Thus, the concept of the void positions each artwork as a space of vulnerability and messiness, a space which values artistic labor and defies the criteria of the contemporary art world.

In this world of disorienting and unbuilding, specifically through rejecting ideals of polished and comprehensible artwork, the spaces of the gallery and archive invite the void in. The nature of the void is one of potentiality, it is the creative process in action where kinship is built despite the unknown (Muñoz 2009). Vulnerability is at the heart of creative process often hiding in the darkness, yet to be understood. To invite a public to interact with artworks emerging from a process establishes a trust that unsettles the barrier between artist and audience in gallery spaces. *in the void* demonstrates the necessity of curatorial intervention as a foundation for change in historically colonial institutions (Procter 2021). I understand value within the queer creative process as a reconstruction of historically informed colonial-capitalist imaginings that rejects heteronormative order. In both the gallery and the archive, I use curation as a tool to redefine the value of intimacy and patience that is not possible within normative value systems.

Context

The following writing provides a framing of what influenced the conception of my thesis exhibitions and my curatorial method within them. I will be discussing the historical context of art spaces—and definitions of value within them—as well as the archive, also touching upon the

⁸ I use the term unsettling because it evokes discomfort as well as expressing the uneasiness of a loss of control.

local exhibitions that activated my curatorial process, as well as the concepts that arose, the void, public and private, and disorientation. Following this, I contextualize the forming of my own exhibitions and the structure I thought through.

Historical

The formation of the modern art market cannot be separated from the expansion of colonial capitalism (Mollona 2021, 17). As European empires extracted resources, labor, and cultural objects from colonized territories, they simultaneously established systems of classification, ownership, and display that have continued to define the visual arts for decades (Mollona 2021, 16). These systems worked to commodify artistic labor and to define which forms are recognized as valuable and worthy of preservation. Meanwhile the establishment of institutions such as designated and funded centers, galleries, and auction houses complimented the economic and cultural standards of Western society.⁹ These spaces and institutions have an authority that continues to determine worthiness, trendiness, and economic interests. Within this framework, artistic value is historically inseparable from regimes of extraction and accumulation, reinforcing the idea of *value* on the art market as something sellable.¹⁰ The system works linearly; the finished work circulates, is collected, archived, and historicized. Meanwhile other forms of artistic labor such as processes, drafts, and partial works, remain excluded within

⁹ Art exhibitions, emerging from the spectacle of the World Fairs, served as an abstracted social technology behaviour and personhood. The modern gallery acting as a sanitized, de-territorialized space for white society to reflect on progress and expansion (Mollona 2021, 16). The artworks become dual agents, in a role of de-productive intellectual aestheticism and as capitalist frontiers (Procter 2021).

¹⁰ I am referring to value as an adjective prescribed to consumer-capitalist and colonial interests. Throughout my thesis I shift the meaning of value, reshaping it through queer worlding as a force of potential rather than a scale for consumption (Ahmed 2014).

dominant systems of evaluation.¹¹ Based upon this exclusion, I rethink how the value system can transform institutionally.

In this project, *value* is reclaimed as a site of resistance, challenging the colonial foundations of the Western art market and the disciplinary expectations it continues to demand. BIPOC, disabled, and queer artists, curators, and writers have long disrupted these inherited frameworks, insisting on alternative understandings of artistic production, time, and completion.¹² Who has the time, space, money, and resources to make art determines what—and whom—society values as polished and sellable. As both curator and queer thinker, I have come to understand that queer creative processes serve as relief from these pressures.¹³ By recognizing the labor in artmaking—and valuing the pauses within it—we challenge the capitalist idea that only a finished product has worth.¹⁴

Similarly, the traditional archive is complacent in the art world's validation and preservation of colonial pursuits that continue to shape public perception and collective memory (Gordon 2008). Archival institutions, in the West, take on a large material responsibility in narrative creation, shaping both the past and future.¹⁵ Largely, they are follow standardized

¹¹ Making them legible is to disorient capitalist productivity and preserve artistic labour in the face of the institutional gaze.

¹²In *Art commons* (2021) Mollona emphasizes how minorities globally have continued to practice co-emergence, co-dependency and mutualism in art spaces as a valuable tool of survival and creativity (35).

¹³ The exhibition itself is a space of relief for the artists, since I specifically chose artists who are attending OCAD. I intentionally oriented the curatorial call to ask for less labour.

¹⁴ Product implies production and production implies finality, through Sara Ahmed's conception of production "as a means to the end goal," I view the action of producing, making, labouring as something often hidden that needs value apart from its service to the final form (Ahmed 2014, 70).

¹⁵ An example of this is the treatment of human remains in archives and museums. In Alice Procter's text *The Whole Picture: The Colonial Story of the Art in Our Museums & Why We Need to Talk about It*, she discusses the colonial history of Toi moko or mokomokai, the mummified heads of Māori people, in photographs and on display for the public in Museums (132). Procter points out that the representation of Māori people through such a limiting and historicizing lens can be interpreted by the public as a culture that is not still alive and celebrated. Not only is nonconsensual display of human remains a deeply unethical practice, but there is also the narrative of violence and vulgarity being built against Māori culture that is misinformed, based on colonial, racist beliefs.

modes of memory preservation that are not representational of the whole population.¹⁶ There has been a clear absence of queer focused archival collections, and over the years, the queer community intervened. For example, The ArQuives' independently organized in Toronto and began collecting Canadian and international LGBTQ+ histories. The ArQuives operates within the nonprofit sector, prioritizing preservation and community building as well as expanding upon traditional archive conventions. The materiality of a queer archive relies on ephemeral and unusual traces (Cvetkovich 2003, 8) to augment representations of queer life, especially reflected in donations from community members.¹⁷

Curatorial and Artistic Precedents

In Toronto, two recent exhibitions prompted my reflection on how queer art is seen, preserved, and circulated. These exhibitions demonstrate strategies for balancing archival preservation with generative potential, a tension that sits at the center of my curatorial practice. The first, *bad 2 the bone* (2023) was presented by the Ontario-based collective QueerSoftOrange (QSO) at The Plumb, an artist-run center (Crossman et al. 2023). Through a collection of numerous flyers and materials from past queer clubs and events, QSO makes a deliberate gesture that cites and moves queer history from static into a dynamic public space (Crossman et al. 2023). In doing so, ephemeral materials that would normally circulate informally are introduced to the institutional frame of the gallery. The exhibition transformed the gallery into a queer club, bringing in contemporary artworks alongside the ephemera from past queer events. Posters, flyers, stickers, zines, and other artifacts documenting community spaces that have closed filled

¹⁶ I refer to oral histories as undervalued in comparison with other forms like writing, photography etc.

¹⁷ For example, in casual conversations with other volunteers and staff about donations, some donated items included a degrading leather jacket, bag of human hair, and an old glory hole door still with its hinges.

each room while a one-night only dance party turned the gallery into an intimate, multi-use queer resource hub (fig. 1).



Figure 1. *Bad 2 the Bone*, Opening Reception, 2023. At The Plumb, 1655 Dufferin St Basement, Toronto, ON. Photo by Alison Postma.

In an interview, the collective describes the evening as a “disco inferno meets the gay student league meets a basement queer zine swap” (Crossman et al. 2023). The reception functioned as an extension of the exhibition itself, generating a shared nostalgic atmosphere through sounds, textures, and décor that resonated with different generations of queer attendees. Visitors entered *bad 2 the bone* as an archive, a dynamic activated by the collective presence of the community, as well as the materials reflecting their experience. QSO, whose members include Adrien Crossman, Maddie Alexander, Luke Maddaford, Tyler Matheson, Morris Fox, and Dana Buzzee, discuss the project’s particularities in an interview with Craig Jennex. Luke

Maddaford elaborates on the visual symbolism brought to the exhibition like the break in the bone logo (fig. 2), developed for merchandise and promotional materials.



Figure 2. *bad 2 the bone* (promotional material: condom), 2023. Photo by Alison Postma.

The fracture in the bone references disruption: a moment of rupture that signals the beginning of healing, a turning point. The collective framed the exhibition as provisional and fleeting, emphasizing the feeling of the “not yet here,” a concept drawn from José Esteban Muñoz’s *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*. Rather than presenting queer history with any authority of completeness, the exhibition foregrounded traces of past queer life while gesturing toward unformed futures. In these gestures there is the reflection of the past and the

specter of potential queer futures (Muñoz 2009, 99). I understand QSO's ethos as an attempt to record the traces left behind by earlier queer communities who hoped for a future on the horizon (Muñoz 2009). Yet the QSO resists the descriptor of *nostalgia*, citing its idealization of longing. The collective prefers the term *haunting* as a more accurate description of the temporal logic at work in *bad 2 the bone*. The term draws the audience into a space of affective recognition (Gordon 2008, 43). I define the kind of environment QSO creates as an intentional clash of fantasy and reality, a heightened awareness of what exists outside the audience's grasp. The exhibition space becomes a haunted site, one that insists on a presence that continues to speak long after the audience exits the room.

bad 2 the bone offers a unique activation of the gallery space that I used to conceptualize my submission callout for the first exhibition. I asked for artworks in various stages of completion that existed primarily in studio contexts; works in process, fragments, ongoing series underdevelopment, or documented images. Bringing them into the gallery blurred the line between the vulnerability of private artistic practice and its encounter. This expansion, produced through recontextualization, is an act of taking up space. It resists the conventional expectations of gallery display, which often privileges the presentation of resolved, polished objects. What is typically hidden within studio process becomes visible, and with that visibility comes a shift in how the work is understood and valued. In both exhibitions of *in the void*, this refusal emerges through incompleteness. A rejection of capitalist and colonial expectations of productivity and value that continue to shape the art world.

The second curatorial example, *Mnemonic silences, disappearing acts (2023-2024)*, took a different approach to evoking history and community, positioning the exhibition as a critique of the queer and trans archive. Hosted by the Art Museum in Jackman Humanities Institute, this

exhibition centered on finding an artistic language to communicate unresolved and unrecorded queer histories in the archives. The artists expression of material traces and breaking points teased out the fault lines felt in the queer archive. The curator, Dallas Fellini, built a theme of absence, seeking fill archival gaps with meaning (Fellini 2024). The central question being, for Fellini, what happens when the archive forgets us?

The term *insufficient* emerges in both *Mnemonic silences*, *disappearing acts* and my own exhibitions as an articulation of what is missing, partial, or overlooked within dominant narratives. In my project, I speak of insufficiency in artworks, where process is visible in its fragments and resistance to completion. In *Mnemonic Silences*, *Disappearing Acts* however, insufficiency operates differently. The exhibition refers to the gaps within queer historical ephemera and archival records (Fellini 2024). The exhibition positions artists and artworks in response to these absences. I relate the work in the exhibition to my conception of the void in queer artwork where artists and curator unsettle gallery space, disorienting the viewer in their search for truth or comprehension. Hazel Meyer and Cait McKinney, Lan “Florence” Yee, Kama La Mackerel, Jordan King, and Kasra Jalilipour were the featured artists, and all interacted with the archive in different ways. Yee’s *Leaving Space* (2019), consisting of three sculptural textiles, gets right to the point of empty space in the archive (Berardini 2024); the void that so many queer and trans people inhabit (fig. 3).



Figure 3. Lan “Florence” Yee, *Leaving Space*, 2023. Hand-embroidered nylon thread, tulle, and galvanized steel wire, 10" x 7.5" x 15", set of three boxes. Photo by Alexis Bellavance.

Yee’s work plays with the idea that leaving space—as the artist does in these transparent filing boxes—is the same as a powerful reclaiming of space. In the exhibition, the work is a tribute to queer and other minority histories lost, claiming a spatial emptiness that invades the publics. Works like Hazel Meyer and Cait McKinney *The Pink Pegboard from Tape Condition:*

degraded (2023) (fig. 4) takes a different, materially focussed approach, by collecting queer desires and pointedly putting them on display.



Figure 4. Hazel Meyer and Cait McKinney, *The Pink Pegboard from Tape Condition: degraded*, 2023. Mixed-media installation on pegboard, dimensions variable. Photo by Toni Hafkenscheid.

Kink items sit alongside archival ones, VHSs, a wooden paddle, and soldering iron attached neatly on the creamy pink peg board wall (Fellini 2023). Nitrile gloves fall into both categories, an inclusion that acknowledges the overlap in how bodies and archival materials engage with

concepts of cleanliness and preservation. The tension between the artworks in the exhibition Fellini curates, manifests as a feeling of a calm surface water with something lurking beneath. Working with archival documents and contemporary artists, *Mnemonic Silences*, *Disappearing Acts* is an altering of the past, an exhibition that leaves the visitor questioning how public memory and narrative are formed.

These curatorial examples both hold an unwritten commonality, a hunger for more, a signal that what is here is not enough (Muñoz 2009, 45). I address this desire as an animation of invisibility in the gallery and archive, a representation of unfinished, unresolved, and messy practices. I situate *in the void* as an antidote to the absence of such works in galleries, inviting artists to present artwork at their chosen stage as an intentional pause in the process. In a culture centered around capitalism, an “in process” work serves no market and is often deemed as not enough (Muñoz 2009, 45). This type of gatekeeping¹⁸ reflects the rigidity of the function and terms of exhibiting artwork or preserved historical ephemera, and demands further intervention (Getsy 2016, 16). These fragments—that refuse to be whole—invade the predictableness of institutional spaces, positioning queer history and art as a disorientating force. The exhibition becomes an experimental muddling of the meaning and function of the gallery and archive as containers. Moving beyond the care and display of objects, these institutional structures are repositioned to support and defend vulnerable artmaking practices at all stages of completion.

The concept of the void that Halberstam offers as a framework for reading artworks, shaped my approach to the five artists I curated across both exhibitions. Through references to

¹⁸ The gatekeeping I am referring to is heteronormative culture and its use of colonial-capitalism to deter queerness and in this case the unfinished. In this instance, I look to Muñoz as he names that gatekeeper, as the representation of a straight present, one “who will labour to invalidate the historical fact of queer lives—present, past, and future” (Muñoz 2008, 65).

rupture, fragmentation, void, destruction, and spatial disorientation, Halberstam articulates the politics of trans* anarchitecture, a term coined by American artist Gordon Matta-Clark. Here, anarchitecture signals an anarchic, anti-normative engagement with the built environment—treating architecture as a metaphorical and material site through which the construction and deconstruction of transgender bodies can be understood (Halberstam 2018). Artworks by Gordon Matta-Clark engage with the body and the architecture as a site for unbuilding binaries. Such works do not merely represent transgender bodies but perform a function in the physical unmaking of gender itself, transforming architectural, sculptural, and performative space into sites of bodily and epistemological instability (Halberstam 2018, 4). This model is particularly useful for analyzing practices that foreground process, damage, absence, or collapse as critical strategies.

Alongside artworks of various stages of development, Halberstam is key to enabling an alternative political imaginary grounded in failure, fragmentation, and rejection. I first encountered Halberstam addressing the void through Gordon Matta-Clark's artwork *Splitting* (1974) and *Becoming an Image No.6* (2013) by Cassils.¹⁹ In these artworks there is a unique moment of space, empty but full of potential. *Splitting* is an act of “unbuilding”—cutting a suburban house in half—to conjure a sense of instability, fracture, and reveal an interior world (Halberstam 2018). The artwork Matta-Clark produces is unstable, a temporary rupture that resists preservation, ownership, and easy display. The work requires someone to be there to witness or to photograph and without this act, *Splitting* could disappear through destruction and demolition.²⁰

²⁰In Halberstam's text *Unbuilding Gender*, introduces the work *Becoming An Image Performance Still No. 6* by Cassils and *Splitting* by Gordon Matta-Clark as examples of the void. Both artworks contain a moment between, a

Similarly, in the performance artwork *Becoming an Image*, Cassils engages in punching a large structure of clay with a photographer and audience. The only light revealing their action is the camera flash that unexpectedly comes in and out, revealing body and impact. The moments that Cassils is invisible are the moments I can clearly see the void. The image of utter darkness is essential in placing both the gallery and the archive as functions not just for preservation but for a momentary vulnerability between audience and artist. The artworks are viewed in a moment of shifting, a place of generative being, in-between doing.

The void does not contain answers, no neatly written path to a utopic world. Here, making is situated in an acceptance of not knowing what spaces and bodies will come together (Muñoz 2009). Curatorially, Sara Ahmed's resonance with the void—through affect and orientation—further illuminates how bodies and emotions circulate in space, shaping not only how we inhabit environments but how we come to register what is within reach and what is not (Ahmed 2014). Ahmed understands orientation as the way subjects are directed toward or away from objects, histories, and possible futures, where lines of social normativity—especially heteronormativity—make certain paths feel natural and others obstructed or out of place (Ahmed 2014). In “Queer Feelings,” from *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, she argues that feelings such as discomfort, disorientation, and unhappiness are not simply private or interior states, but political orientations that expose the instability and exclusions embedded within normative forms of belonging.

These affective intensities resonate within unfinished artworks, where disorientation becomes a method rather than a problem—producing atmospheres that resist resolution, arrival,

pause in linear direction that extends queer meaning. In the literal split of Matta-Clark's work and the moment in between flashes of the camera in Cassils, the void is visually identifiable.

and coherence, and instead hold space for uncertainty and shifting relation (Ahmed 2014). Through a reading of José Esteban Muñoz alongside Ahmed, I understand movement not as a drive toward completion but as a queer tactic of refusal, one that privileges potential and productive abundance over fixed meaning or legibility.²¹ In both *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies* and *a call for the incomplete*, queer feeling is my curatorial tool, shaping spatial encounters to privilege vulnerability and longing.

Queer (2016) by David Getsy, is a focussed collection of artist essays, interviews, and written works that center queer tactics and concepts in the production, curation, and reading of art (Getsy 2016). Getsy's anthology is a useful source contextually as it gathers a variety of approaches to using the concept of queerness as a site of institutional critique (16). The collected texts cover perspectives from many generations, political movements, personal narratives, and hold a consistent interest in the relationship between private and public.²² One essay, *In Public and Private: Spheres of Influence* (1993) by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, argues that the division between public and private is not natural but constructed, mobilized by political and economic power to shape identity, desire, and discourse while deflecting attention from structural inequalities (Getsy 2016, 86). For queer subjects this false boundary collapses, as the state and dominant ideologies penetrate so-called private life to regulate intimacy, revealing that "the public" is a contested site where oppression is produced and materially enforced.²³

²¹ I intentionally put Muñoz and Ahmed in conversation as they both frame queerness as a disorientation and interruption to predictable flow.

²² In the curatorial role, I understand institutional commons as fluid thresholds between the private and the public, always moving along a delicate line between autonomy and the risk of becoming self-enclosed (Mollona 2021, 148).

²³ The concept of public and the private is a central tension for unfinished artworks. There is a distinctness to process as private and institutional spaces as public (not to all), when the artworks I curate move between the two there is a breaking of the mirage. I read similarities in conceptualizing the private and the public throughout Ahmed (2014), Muñoz (2009) and Fournier's (2021) work. The private becoming a necessary reality for queer and minoritarian subjects in the face of the public legally and socially molded to fit and benefit a certain way of being (Ahmed 2014, 148).

Another essay included in Getsy's anthology "Queer" that speaks to my curatorial motives is Nayland Blake's "Curating 'In a Different Light'" (1995). In it, Blake describes the construction of queer identity in the arts as an intentional tactic of disruption—through discomfort, or what he calls "pollution"—that resists coherence and refuses the sanitizing tendencies of normative exhibition-making (Getsy 2016, 120). I understand Blake's essay as a refusal to center curating in its public, finalized form, and instead as an insistence on the queerness of process: a close, ongoing attention to how works come together, come apart, and remain unresolved. I align with Blake's tactic in my own exhibitions, where I use curation to relieve some of the immense weight queer people carry under heteronormativity's constant questioning of who we are, what we want, and why we deserve it.²⁴ My curatorial process offers a space to experiment and to follow intuition, holding room for artworks and artists to linger within process rather than resolve into fixed meaning. Blake's essay resonates with my practice as an intentional reliance on what is collectively available—a gathering rooted in sharing and kinship that refuses the logics of heteronormative culture, instead creating spaces of in-betweenness. From this thinking, alongside Blake, I understand my curatorial strategy as one that creates the conditions for relational rest and recognition.²⁵

Thesis Exhibitions

My reflections on curation, queerness, and the unfinished unfolded across two exhibitions between November 2025 and March 2026.²⁶ Rather than presenting a linear progression of

²⁴ I use "we" here because I want to acknowledge my own embodied queer experience and curatorial role. I reference Ahmed's (2014) naming of the bodily tiredness queer subjects feel in making constant corrections and repeated battling of presumptions about their lives and identities in heteronormative society (147).

²⁵ By relationality I am referring to how the works act in space together, a factor that is not based on a specific foregrounded quality.

²⁶ Over this period, my research and approach underwent several shifts. I moved away from the term *ecologies*, which had initially informed both my thesis proposal and first exhibition through an exploration of the gallery the

artistic development, this iterative structure resists the expectation that artworks will move toward completion. To disorient expectations of polish and perfection, via email, I reached out and invited the same group of artists to exhibit again, to reflect on their creative process as integral and one that can be moved from the privacy of the studio, and the body, to a public gallery and archive.²⁷ In both exhibitions the artists contributed whatever material they chose, without obligation to continuity, refinement, or resolution. This repetition foregrounds temporal instability, allowing works to shift, stall, or expand across time. I pinned the poster around OCAD University's campus with a link to a submission portal. On the poster I do not ask for anything more than what the artist wanted to give, naming subject matter as irrelevant. I ask for a reflection within their submissions guided by these three questions (fig. 5):

- 1) What does a queer creative process look like in your practice?
- 2) What materials, environments, and relationships shape your making?
- 3) How do you track, value, or share your creative process?²⁸

gallery as an ecosystem. As my theoretical framework evolved, , my curatorial methodology gradually expanded, opening onto new lines of inquiry that informed the direction of the project .

²⁷ When I curated the first exhibition, I made it clear that I would be sending an email later on to invite them to participate in the project again. My wording in the email was: "As a companion show to *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies*, this exhibition (*a call for the incomplete*) is another opportunity to show up with what you have. That means the artwork you bring can be related to the last exhibition or be an entirely new project and process." In this same email I let them know that the location was off campus at The ArQuives which received a very honored, excited response and potentially affected the ongoing artworks they submit.

²⁸ These questions have changed over the course of my writing and curating. They were a starting point to my thesis proposal and to situate artists within the realm in which I speak of. The relevance of these questions has morphed away from evidence and quantifiability. If I could rewrite these questions, I would center them more on what the creative process is doing rather than what it could look like (Getsy 2016, 121).



I'm Ren — a queer curator, artist, and writer currently in my second year of the CCP graduate program at OCAD University.

I am curating an exhibition that explores what queer creative processes can look like when ideas of completion and productivity are questioned. This exhibition invites artists to present unfinished or ongoing creative experiments within a gallery setting in the fall of 2025. The project aims to challenge the implicit expectations of productivity and resolution that often shape art and design institutions.

Guiding Questions:

- What does a queer creative process look like in your practice?
- What materials, environments, and relationships shape your making?
- How do you track, value, or share your creative process?

Submission Criteria:

- Call is open to any queer identifying current OCADU students.
- Submissions must include a brief statement (around 250 words) describing artist process, material use, dimensions, and intent. As well as any images that you feel are relevant to the submission.

[Submit here!](#)

Deadline: October 25th, 2025

Exhibition dates : November 3-10th in the Graduate Gallery

For questions or further information, please contact: renatacrittonpapp@ocadu.ca

Figure 5. Renata Critton-Papp, *Call for Submissions: Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies*, 2025. Digital drawing and Canva.

Applicants interpreted the call in varied ways, frequently understanding “process” as something embedded within the making of a series rather than a singular work. This approach holds intention and anticipation for future outcomes without binding the work to a certain

strategy or use. I noticed unpredictability in the submissions, particularly wondering how their materiality and meaning might evolve. In response to this openness, I structured the project into two exhibition segments. The first took place during the fall of 2025, followed by an approximately four-month interval before the second exhibition. Both exhibitions feature the same artists, each again invited to bring whatever material they chose, without expectation of completion or continuity. The two-part structure of *in the void* is crucial in examining institutional context and unsettling linearity. The second exhibition differed from the first in location and in my communication with the artists. I had established a certain curatorial trust after *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies* that extended as an invitation without specificity. If the artist wanted to return for the second exhibition, I let them engage with their own practice and with the space of The ArQuives. I offered a space that was malleable, an expectation-less zone, like a bridge between studio practice and the public interaction/reaction. Ultimately, the trust in their artistic evaluations were an invitation for the audience to sit patiently with their artwork.

The second exhibition of *in the void*, titled *a call for the incomplete* (fig. 6) built upon the previous framework prioritizing artist autonomy and intuitive curating. The first action I took in curating was to offer the original artists; Evan Sagman, g blekkenhorst, Juliana Gagné, Kiera Harrigan, and Riley Midroni a second opportunity to approach the realm of the queer creative process.



Figure 6. Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025, Bronze, silicone, and metal, found wooden dresser drawers and cabinets, wood glue. Dimensions variable.

In this invitation I ensured that the factor of linear progression is not necessary. I wanted to highlight that anything they are developing is relevant as it captures another ephemeral process of queer art making in a different season, time frame, and location. The biggest change in method for *a call for the incomplete* was the location, and a different kind of institution. The ArQuives, (fig. 7) became a part of the exhibition, collapsing the display of works with the queer archive as a container of incompleteness.²⁹

²⁹ In my role as a volunteer on the curatorial committee at The ArQuives, I have spent hours gallery sitting, exploring their online cataloging, and speaking with other employees. My knowledge and connections with The ArQuives made it possible for them to host my exhibition. It was an opportunity which I took seriously and graciously.



Figure 7. Photograph of “The ArQuives” at 34 Isabella St. 2025. <https://arquives.ca/event/the-arquives-house-tour-april-14-2024/>.

The ArQuives: Canada's LGBTQ2+ Archives, formerly known as the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, is a Canadian non-profit organization, founded in 1973 as the Canadian Gay Liberation Movement Archives.³⁰ In my initial tour of the organization during my volunteer orientation, the depth and importance of the collection was clear. But the financial deficit in funding was also glaring; file boxes lined the hallway, years of information waiting to be preserved, in limbo. The ArQuives’ gathers a lot of its artifacts, ephemera, film, and literature through donation from the public.

Besides my initial research and callout prompts the basis of my approach to curating *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies* (November 2025) and *a call for the incomplete* (March

³⁰ “The ArQuives,” The ArQuives: Canada’s LGBTQ+ Archives, 2026, <https://arquives.ca/>. The website has a good amount of material online.

2026) relied on relinquishing my control over a cohesive narrative and instead adapting to the spontaneity between the artist's, their works and my responses. A type of curating that embraces informality where artist and curator are able share in an experience of finding meaning alongside one another. I interact with the collection of artworks as an encounter rather than trying to prioritize the exhibition attendee's ability to read and digest meanings. Instead, I can center curation as an exploration of collective queer desire, and a moment of pause from artistic expectation.

Walkthrough

Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies

The first exhibition for *in the void* was an important step in figuring out how value derived from the process takes shape in the gallery space. As a central method in this thesis, I grounded my writing in a narrative walkthrough of the exhibition, using my movement through the space as a way of thinking with and through the work as it unfolded. I start at the Graduate Gallery—205 Richmond Street West—I entered the space, taking in the emptiness, contained by worn hardwood floors and endlessly patched and painted white walls—that shone with glossy paint. There is a surplus of room to move, and my view of each artwork laid out in front of me feels almost topographic, little mountains, lakes, or islands to unpack. I orbited the space from my left, and as I moved, I looked up at the messily hand drawn exhibition title, *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies*, in red wax crayon, followed by artist names in a clear vinyl sticker (fig.8).

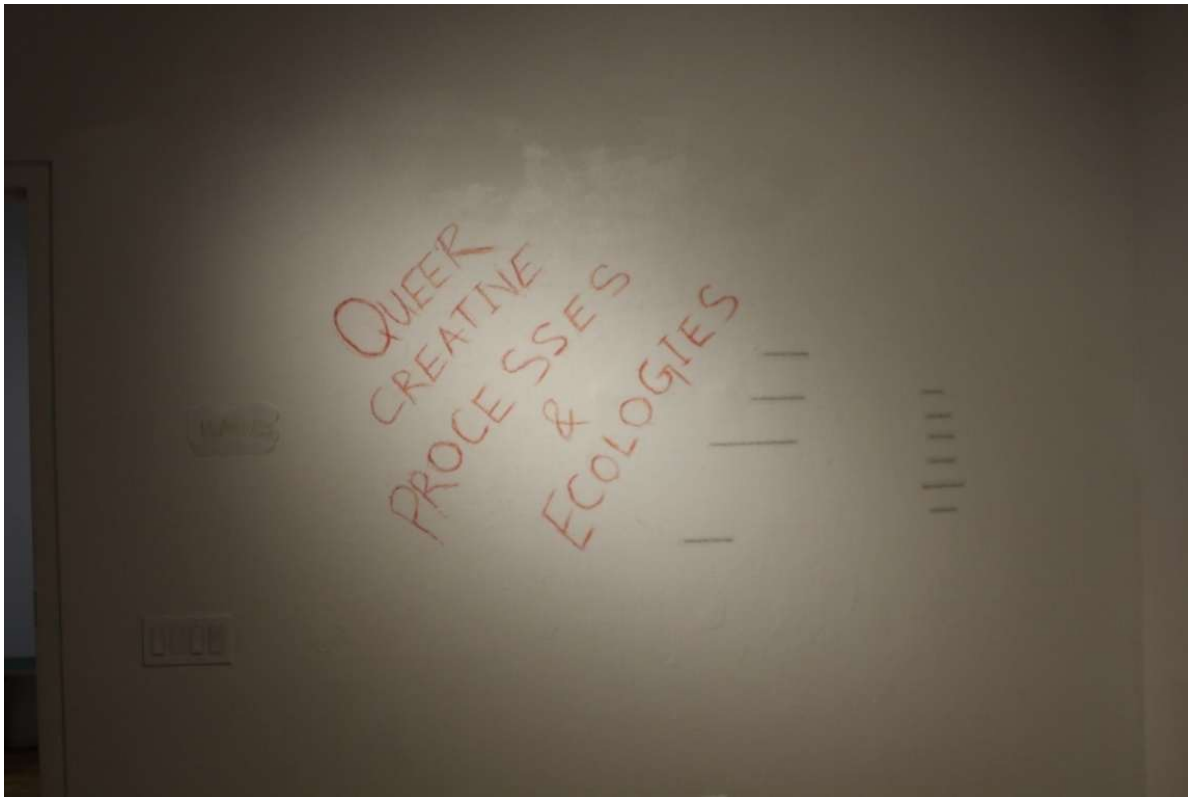


Figure 8. Renata Critton-Papp. Title wall of *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies*, 2025. Red crayon.

Evan Sagman's work sits demurely in my path placed on a rectangular plinth, a height that hits my belly button, causing me to bend my neck slightly. Laying quietly on the white-painted, wood surface, sits the early experiments of the series *Remnants*; the materials are manipulated but still identifiable; a piece of particle board and one of plywood (fig. 9).

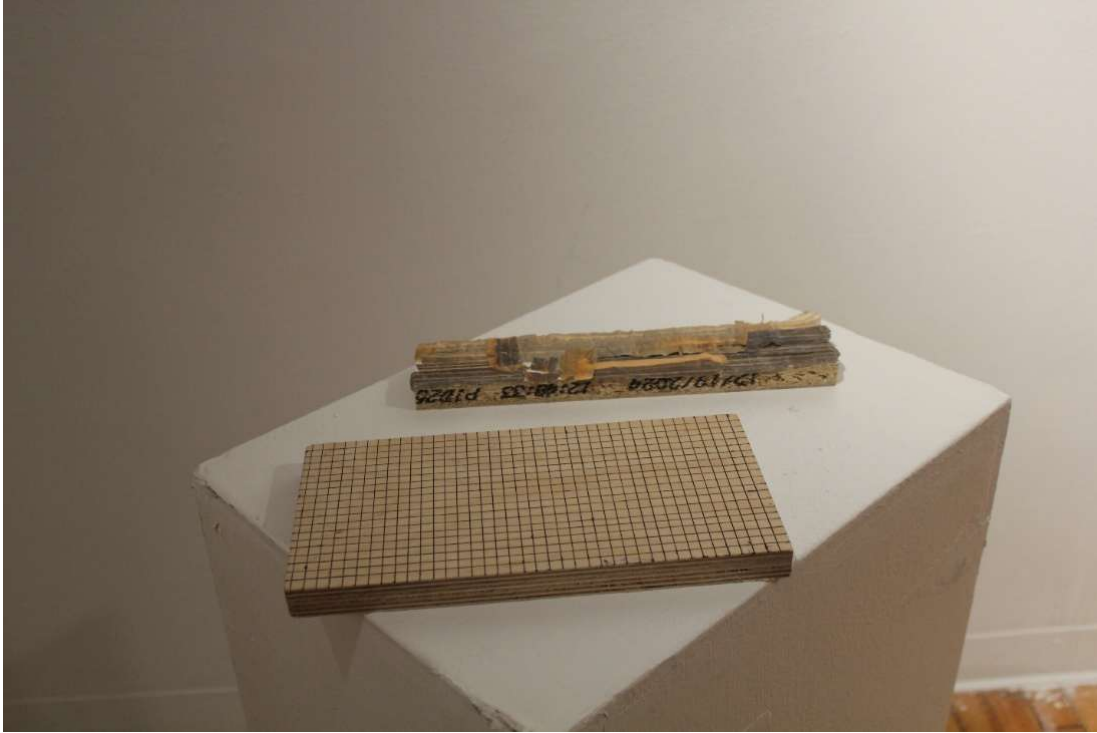


Figure 9. Evan Sagman, *Remnants*, 2025. Material experiments for series. found plywood, residues, deteriorating inner lining of a Harley Davidson rain jacket given as a gift from a now estranged friend, weld bond glue.

On their lone plinth the materials feel like emerging ideas of texture and pattern, the initial method Sagman's uses to gain familiarity with new mediums. The work is intimate, sitting next to the further developed works of the series (fig. 10). Including these materials—which function

as a separate artwork—and exposes Sagman’s definition of process. There is a line drawn between the various stages, both incomplete, and in tension.

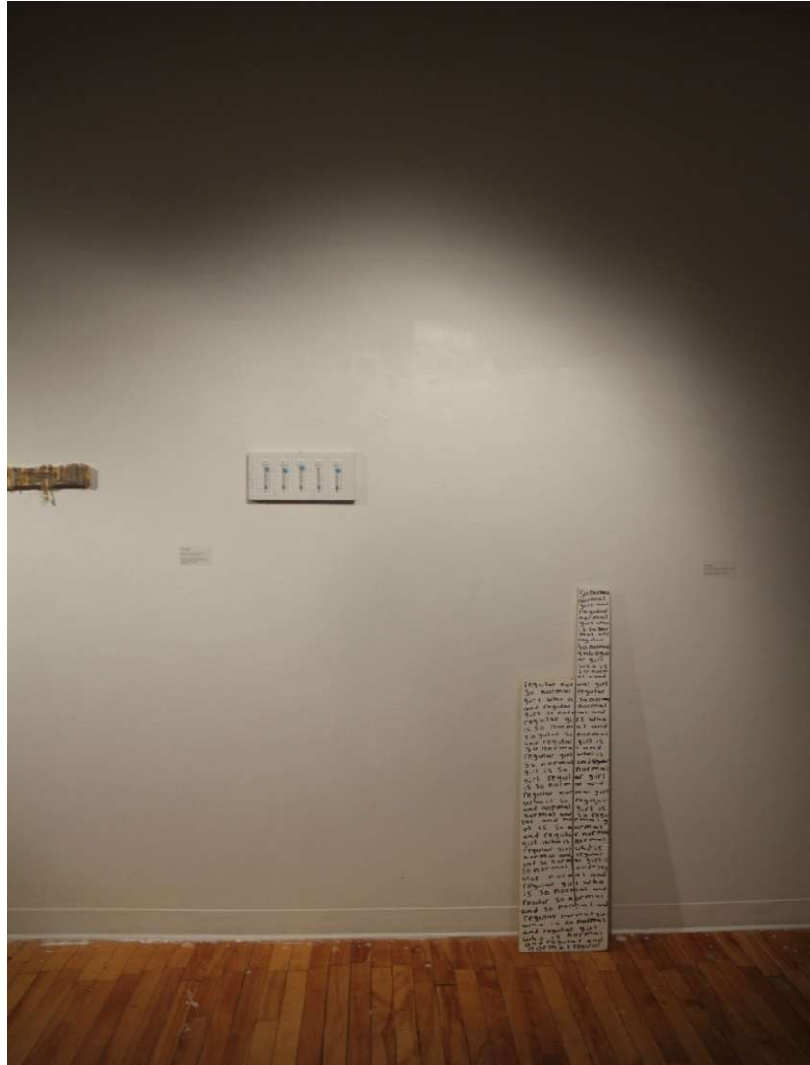


Figure 10. Evan Sagman, *Remnants (Accumulation 3, the more you say it the more they'll believe you)*, 2025. & *Remnants (Accumulation 1, Twig's Painkillers from April)*, 2025.

A closer look at the materials identifies them as discarded, the kind of materials you would see on a curb or on the side of the road—invisible or insignificantly catching dust on a countertop. Sagman’s three artworks are part of an ongoing series *Remnants*. From old medicine vials for their cat to a discarded chopped plywood panel featuring the phrase “so normal regular

girl who is so normal and regular girl” repeated across the painted white surface in messy handwritten black marker (fig. 11). *Remnants (Accumulation 3, the more you say it the more they'll believe you)* (2025) is made from found Plywood, indelible Ink, and staples. In the work, the repetition feels almost musical, passing a reference to internet memes and twitter banter.

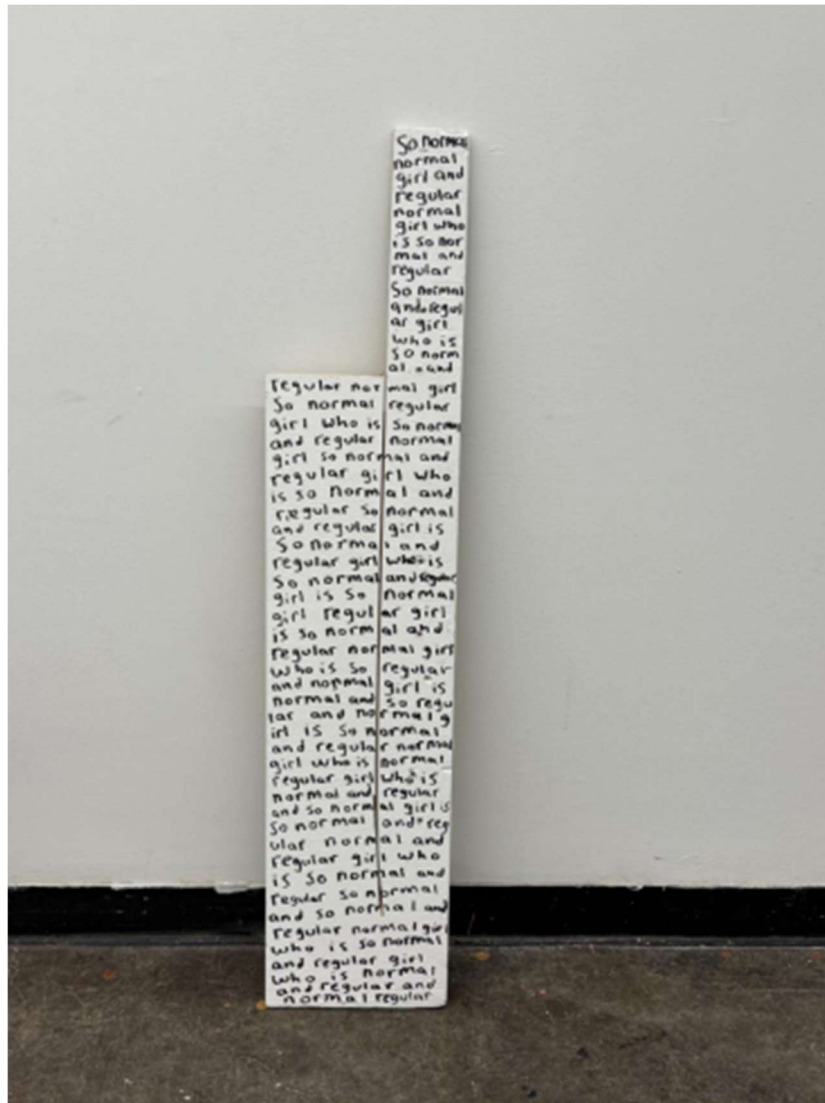


Figure 11. Evan Sagman, *Remnants (Accumulation 3, the more you say it the more they'll believe you)*, 2025. Found plywood, indelible ink, staple.

On the other hand, the next work, *Remnants (Accumulation 1, Twig's Painkillers From April)* (2025) (fig. 12) is made of found Plywood, white wall paint, buprenorphine syringes, buprenorphine residues, and weld bond glue.

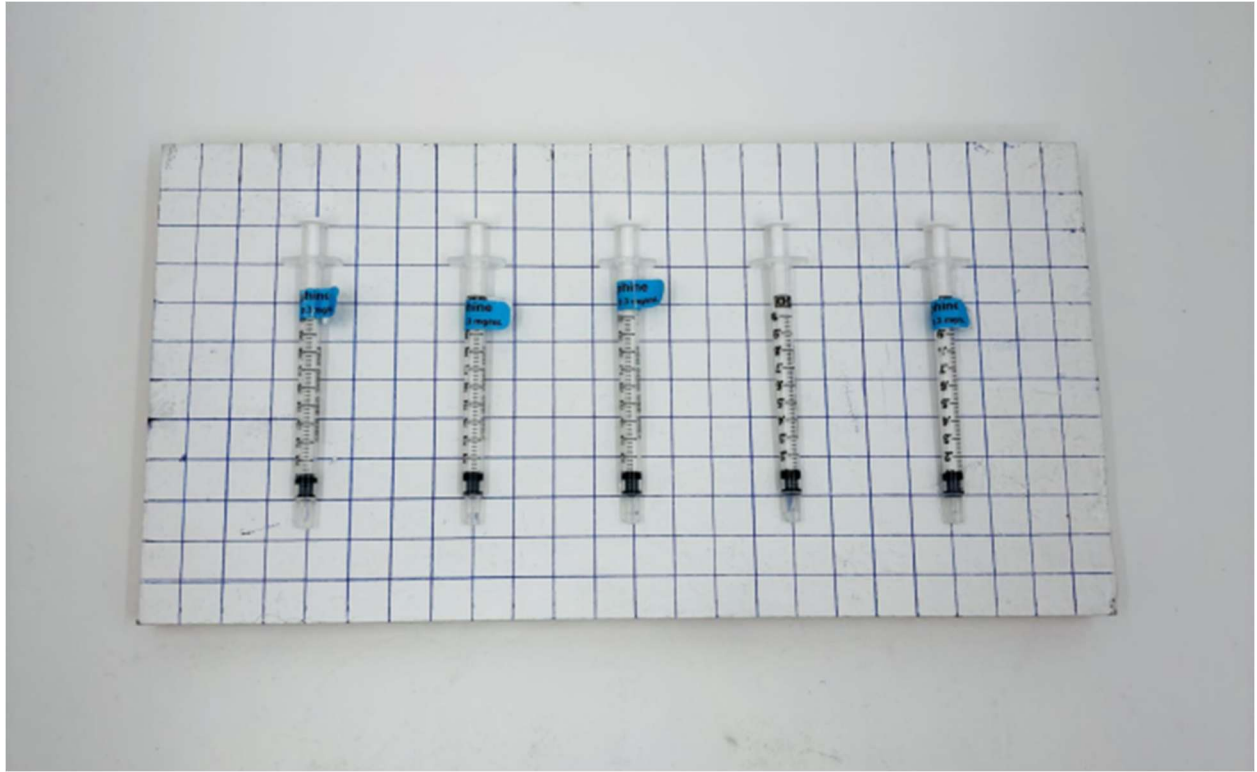


Figure 12. Evan Sagman, *Remnants (Accumulation 1, Twig's Painkillers From April)*, 2025. Found plywood, white wall paint, buprenorphine syringes, buprenorphine residues, and weld bond glue.

The mixture of materials is both mundane and intriguing; the syringes so plainly positioned offer a kind of disembodied medical tangibility. This work is a kind of altar to the kitchen counter, the coffee table, the junk drawer, or bathroom cabinet. A shrine translating an in between space where objects rest between use and disposal, truly an ode to loss and degradation.³¹ In the third artwork displayed, *Remnants (Accumulation 4, textures of miscommunication)* (2025) (fig. 13),

³¹See Appendix B for Evan Sagman artist statement.

found particle board, deteriorating inner lining of a Harley Davidson rain jacket given as a gift from a now estranged friend, welded together with bond glue forming a testament I witness as remaking.



Figure 13. Evan Sagman, *Remnants (Accumulation 4, textures of miscommunication)*, 2025. Found particle Board, deteriorating inner lining of a Harley Davidson rain jacket given as a gift from a now estranged friend, weld bond glue.

I understand the work as an enlivening of forgotten materials; a work made from fragments of meaningful exchanges with estranged friends that leave the audience with traces of a relationship gone awry. Evan Sagman's *Remnants* series operates within what Jack Halberstam describes as the generative potential of the void to create moments of queer intimacy (Halberstam 2018).

Sagman's work reflects a space produced not through construction, but through unbuilding and degradation. The materials Sagman mobilizes such as used syringes, splintered plywood, and fragments of gifted clothing occupy an indeterminate zone between utility and abandonment, presence, and disappearance. These objects, suspended in a state of after-use, quietly dismantle material value. Rather, the material reality of the objects is an emotional residue, a sticky feeling reminder of past intimacy. In this sense, Sagman's accumulations become minor architectures of the void: intimate altars to loss, miscommunication, and relational fracture.³² The kitchen counter, the street-side discard, and the fabric traces gain meaning—not through coherence—through further fragmentation. The void is not a complete absence or negation; it is in-between. A queer site of becoming, a generative interval where degradation and repetition transform abandonment into a slow, resistant presence.

Next to Sagman is Kiera Harrigan's work, "*Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg* (fig. 14) is tucked in the corner.

³² In Jack Halberstam's "Unbuilding Gender," he speaks of Gordon Matta Clark's work *Day's End* (1972) where Matta-Clark makes a series of incisions into a warehouse on Pier 52 along the Hudson River in NYC. The deliberate cuts to the building indulge in damage as a form of freedom. The more fracture that occurs, the less the space can contain. The interior is exposed to sunlight, the surrounding river, wind, dust etc. (Halberstam 2018). Sagman's work shares the urge to take apart a material and in doing so revealing a vulnerability.

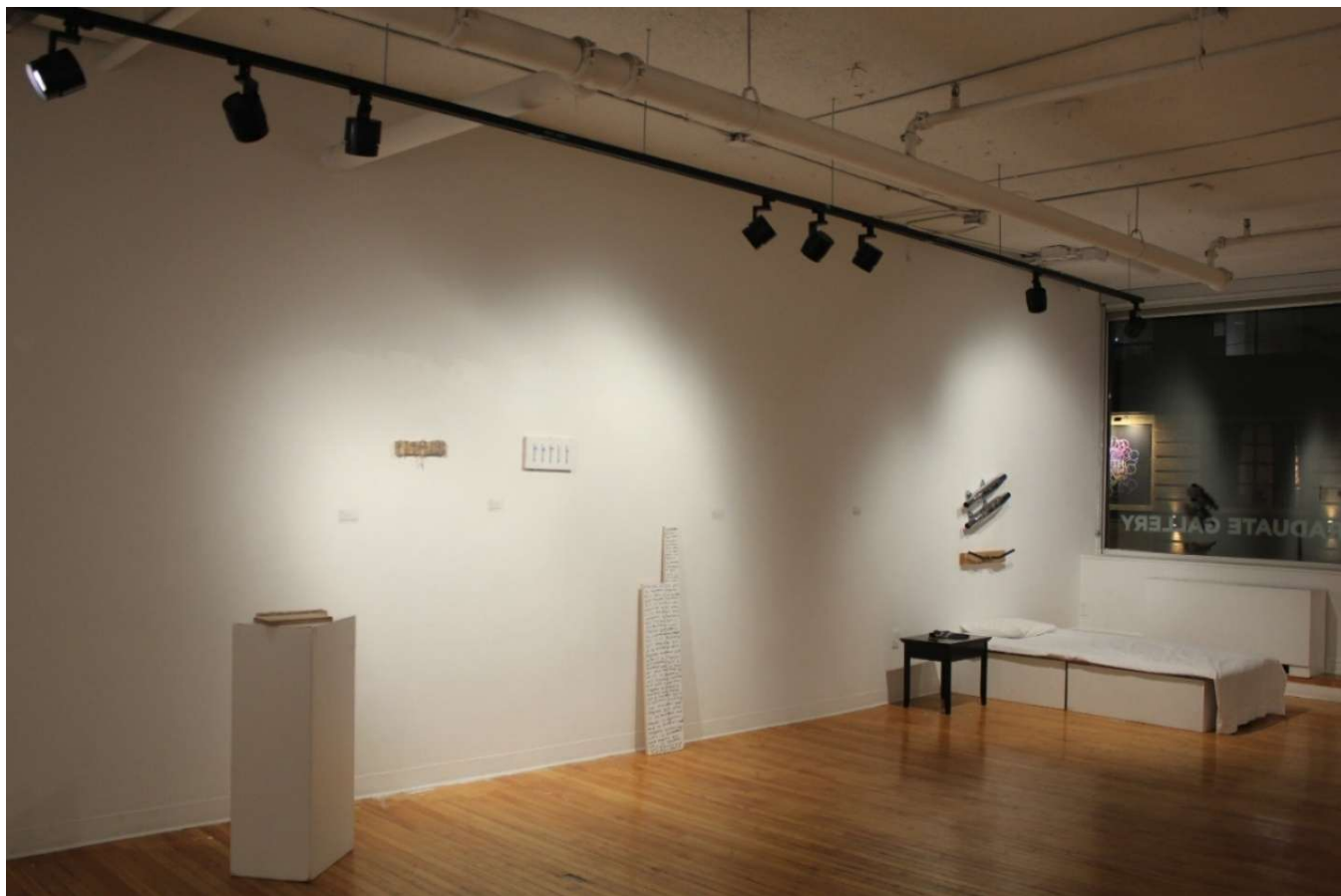


Figure 14. Evan Sagman, *Remnants (Accumulation 4, textures of miscommunication)*, 2025. & *Remnants (Accumulation 1, Twig's Painkillers from April)*, 2025. & *Remnants (Accumulation 3, the more you say it the more they'll believe you)*, 2025.

The bed, bedside table, and carefully placed objects make me feel like I am late to a hook up, filled with nerves and expectation. The presence of the furniture feels out of place in the open gallery, no privacy offered to whoever might occupy the bed. The thin twin mattress sits flatly on

two plinths, the most minimal amount of comfort. (fig. 15).



Figure 15. Kiera Harrigan, *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg*, 2025, Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood.

The bed slowly radiates a feeling of loneliness. The energy shifts as my eyes find—above the singular pillow— a kind of headboard made from a pair of bare, well-used bike handlebars

mounted on a wood plank and attached to the wall (fig. 16).



Figure 16. Kiera Harrigan, *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg*, 2025, Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood.

The implication of where hands would rest to ride the bike in relation to the bed is clear: instead of the road, the second bedmate might be riding their partner's face. The room is feeling fuller now with the spectre of ghosts clinging to each artwork. The traces of two lovers and their imaginary bodies suddenly so tangible. My eyes move further up the wall above the handlebars are a set of two exhaust pipes, shiny and new, looking like they have never known the taste of

exhaust or the mechanics of a bike (fig. 17).



Figure 17. Kiera Harrigan, *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg*, 2025, Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood.

They hold a phrase, in tandem, the first engraving is “You & me ‘til the” and second is “wheels fall off.” They catch the light and mirror the bright gallery, blurring the words and making me squint. Harrigan gathered this phrase from an old dating ad, a dyke looking for a femme.³³ Next to me, a quiet dark wood nightstand hunches. Sitting casually on top is a pair of leather gloves, a relic, not for use, but for remembering. Stitched, in cursive font, “Bring me to the light” “I wanna

³³ Kiera Harrigan sources the phrase from a 1995 personal ad that reads, “Heavily inked & pierced NYC riot girrrl looking for butch lover. I love to get messed up, get wild & get off. I need an accomplice. Hey baby, you & me ‘til the wheels fall off! WRITE: Box #013.” Harrigan explains the inspiration via her artist statement (see Appendix).

burn” (fig. 18).



Figure 18. Kiera Harrigan, *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg*, 2025, Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood.

The gloves surge with some kind of heartbreak or grief. Next to them is a hunting knife, worn and old but well taken care of, inscribed on the handle is a phrase of acceptance and hope “As I am.” David Wojnarowicz in *Close to the Knives: a Memoir of Disintegration*, repeatedly frames artmaking as a process of bearing witness for those who are disappearing, and for the emotions that go unseen. In the gallery, Harrington’s work calls for a bed-side manner, of both an erotic and restorative nature. The empty bed evokes a moment of privacy, of grief for person or place, the art objects surrounding it like an altar. And the provocation of a single bed that would be hard to fit into with more than one person. Intimacy becomes both lifeline and wound, generating

powerful affective intensity for the viewer, still left without the full story, only catching glimpses of speculation. There are many moments that Wojnarowicz reflects this same barrenness and the meaning it holds. Wojnarowicz draws upon “the road” as a liminal space where experience and thought form a mirage.³⁴ Harrington too evokes through sleep, through exhaust pipe, and knife, a gesture that goes beyond this world. The acknowledgement of dedication and love as places of pain and weakness, of a joy that looks towards a horizon. Whether in the car on an endless highway, or this small installation that feels to have no end or beginning, there is a void before me with a step in any direction (Wojnarowicz 1991, 68). Approaching Riley Midroni’s *Fine Dining* (fig. 19) I have been invited to sit down and feast.



Figure 19. Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025, Bronze, silicone, and metal.

³⁴ Specifically, the roads in the mid-west that he drives on throughout the book, sometimes finding clarity, sometimes feeling like a mirage has trapped him. The movement in the vehicle, without destination or predictable company is central to how the artist stays in constant process. For if he is to become stagnant, to finish anything, that equates with his own death (Wojnarowicz 1991, 26).

On the table sits glowing bronze castings. An imitation of someone's solitary meal and as I move closer, I begin to grasp the disturbing nature of the cutlery and bowl. A fork created from a cast of Midroni's fingers, and the spoon her ear. The bowl is rimmed with teeth and filled with what looks like aging milk or sexual bodily fluid. From the center of the bowl juts a tongue, cheekily on display as I bend down to see better, and I sit down on the rickety chair letting myself feel the pull to become distant and reflective (fig. 20).



Figure 20. Riley Midroni, Fine Dining, 2025, Bronze, silicone, and metal.

The abject quality keeps me in the room, looking over my shoulder as if I will be caught attending a sickening taboo supper.³⁵ Midroni's work calls for the body in a confrontation with her own, placed intentionally on the table before me, as utensils. The vulnerability of this offering, a collection of little joints, cartilages, and muscles, feeds my curiosity. The shiny quality of the bronze and the simplistic nature of the chair and table evoke normative manners and gestures. The reproduction of Midroni's body parts, the fact that the table is for one, upsets these manners. The lone chair and table come to represent sustenance as a quotidian valued moment.³⁶ It is also a denial of normative familial dynamics-- this dinner is for one.

From my seat in the chair, I glance left and see the protracted line of collages named *(Dis)connected*, a work by Juliana Gagné (fig. 21).



Figure 21. Juliana Gagné, *(Dis)connected*, 2025. Archival photos and 35mm photo prints, personal poetry, and ink drawings.

³⁵ I am referencing Kristeva's abject. Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982). I do not take on the text in my research but from speaking with the artist and viewing the work, I think it is an important text to credit.

³⁶ Muñoz (2009) speaks of a quotidian act, like a meal or having a Coke with somebody as a signification of a "vast lifeworld of queer relationality, an encrypted sociality, and utopian potentiality" (6).

The complexity of each piece emerges, on bright construction paper cut-outs of archival photos and 35mm photo prints, personal poetry crafted from clippings and ink drawings that swirl and move across each page. Gagné's *(Dis)connected* appears as a practice of memory, a way to stay connected by exploring a family past. Just a little bit further down the wall is a slim plinth. Filling the entire small surface of the plinth's top are three tin containers, clearly a reused, painted, pocket-sized mint or cigarette tin (fig. 22).



Figure 22. Juliana Gagné, *Handheld Altars*, 2025. Stones, sea glass, archival photos, human hair, dried flowers, snail shells.

In *Handheld Altars*, Gagné finds bits and pieces of personal, and natural offerings to conjure memory, placing small stones, sea glass, their own hair, dried flowers, and an empty snail shell inside the tins. This work feels delicate enough that I step away so as not to disturb the carefully

placed objects. I feel like a curious child happening upon a fairy den, in awe of personal worlds I have no context for.

Gagné's practice does not attempt to construct a complete narrative. Instead, it stages absence as productive, where gaps, silences, and missing information that piques my interest. In other terms, meaning emerges through what is withheld, obscured, and only partially legible, resisting totalizing histories (Cvetkovich 2003, 142), and creating a pause for reflection (fig. 23).



Figure 23. Juliana Gagné, *Handheld Altars*, 2025. & *(Dis)connected*, 2025. & Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025.

Turning from the tiny tin altars, I am confronted with the artwork *Process #1* by g blekkenhorst is an amalgamation of thesis notes and doodles, coding, pen notes and drawings (fig. 24).



Figure 24. g blekkenhorst, *Process #1*, 2025, Note taking software, sketchbook pages, abandoned github repositories, pen, tape, pins, yarn. Dimensions variable.

The overtaking of this corner of the gallery feels like a complete disorientation from the rest of the exhibition: no readable rhyme or reason, just a snapshot of what has been shaping in

blekkenhost's mind as they work on their own thesis project. The notes are pinned and tied together through their relation in the creative process and red yarn (fig. 25).

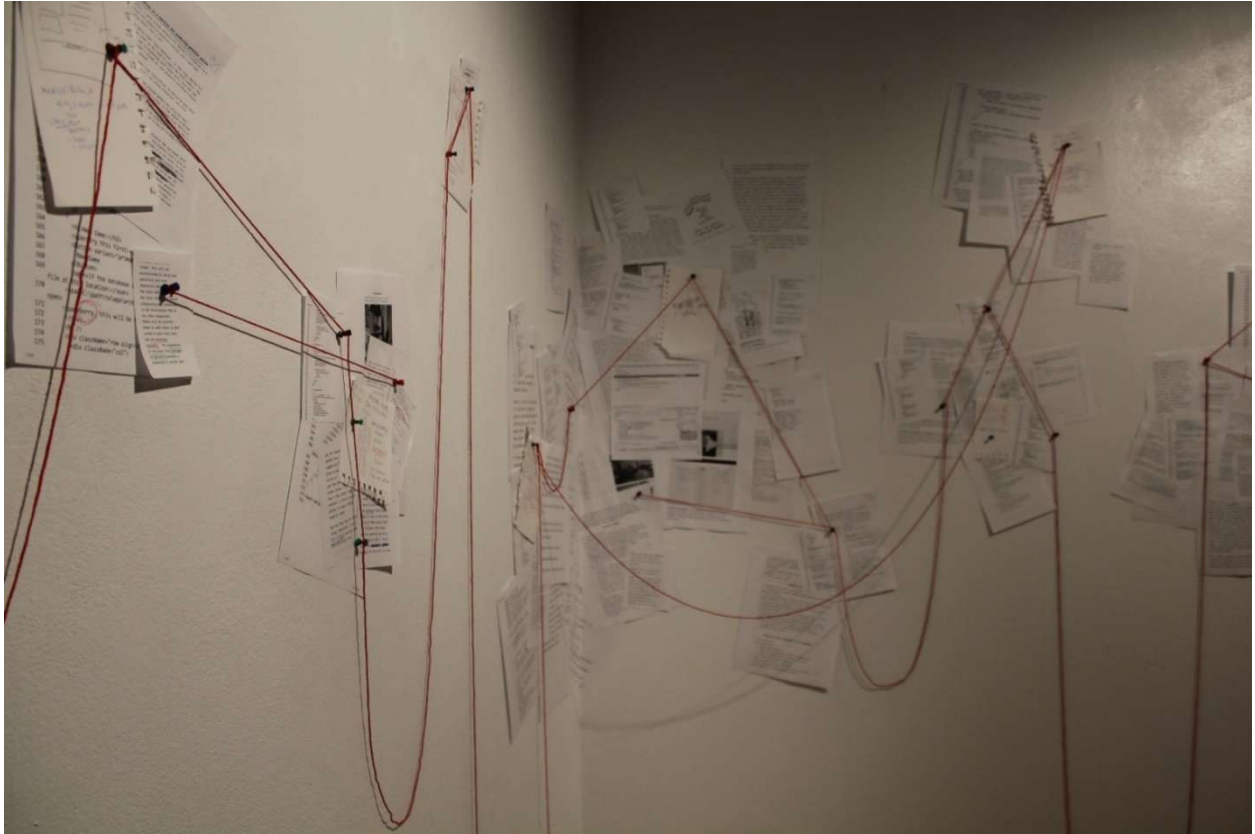


Figure 25. g blekkenhost, *Process #1*, 2025, Note taking software, sketchbook pages, abandoned github repositories, pen, tape, pins, yarn. Dimensions variable.

Like a murder board, the materials are a collected and connected representation of the artist's burn out and fatigue and a way to engage with the chaos of their thesis work. The piece demonstrates a common part of making something new, the part where you make it more difficult for yourself, reading, printing, and scribbling away. I find the mess of paper and yarn comfortable in its relatability. I stand back and observe *Process #1*, the concept that after all the mess that usually is left in an artist's wake, the hope for the project to emerge in a glory of clarity. g blekkenhorst loses themselves in a mess of process material, where ideas are printed

out on pages, threatening to entangle the artist and by extension, the visitor. When g
blekkenhorst has submitted their thesis, these notes will still live on as discarded.

a call for the incomplete

The ArQuives at 34 Isabella St. in Toronto's gay village is a classically presenting house of the 1900s in this region. Brick, trim, and a slender shape, the building is unassuming and doesn't indicate the depth of memory it holds. The humble space is overfilled with archival documents ranging from film to garments, tote bags, and an inviting reading room with a large collection of primary literature such as zines and manuscripts. I continue to the second floor, turning around the creaking banister to face the gallery doors, two of them opened like a gateway, welcoming me in. The ArQuives has a residential feeling with narrow staircase and creaking banister, a restless ghost as the artworks form a scene of domesticity.³⁷ The most overt expressions of home or housing are in Kiera Harrigan and Riley Midroni's installations. Furniture in both pieces become twisted and redefined while still holding a recognizable shape. The intimacy of a home is present in the way the audience moves around the installations, where a familiar etiquette of privacy and preservation overlaps. *a call for the incomplete* disorients the viewer, straying from the norms of a strategic narrative exhibition and opting for artwork that

³⁷ In keeping with the traditional nuclear family home, the house—a symbol of stability and normative social order—is being rendered unstable and estranged from its original function (Ahmed 2014). A disordered sense of “home” created from familiar but altered objects: Midroni's discarded kitchen interior, Harrigan's industrial bed and bedside table, as well the oversized intimate wire figures by Sagman next to the familiar two chair arrangement to view Gagne's projection.

does not read linearly in a world where heteronormativity attempts to dull queer futurities (Halberstam 2011).³⁸

The first work I encountered is Riley Midroni's *Fine Dining*, 2025 (fig. 26).



Figure 26. Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025 Bronze, silicone, and metal, discarded kitchen interior, wood glue. Dimensions are variable.

There are four kitchen structures arranged in a loose circle, spaced so I can move around them and take in each side. Closest to the entrance is a teetering stack of drawers, resembling a tiered cake made by an overzealous baker (fig. 27). On top sit bronze casts of Midroni's body—fingers and an ear—transformed into utensils. The contrast is immediate: the bronze is weighty and

³⁸ For example, I observed disorientation at the opening reception and during the gallery hours, where the same question was repeated by visitors: what is incomplete here? This question shed light on the dismissal and invisibility of creative processes in the gallery and archive.

permanent, while the drawers are warped and marked by time. The careful detail of the casts feels out of place on such a precarious base.

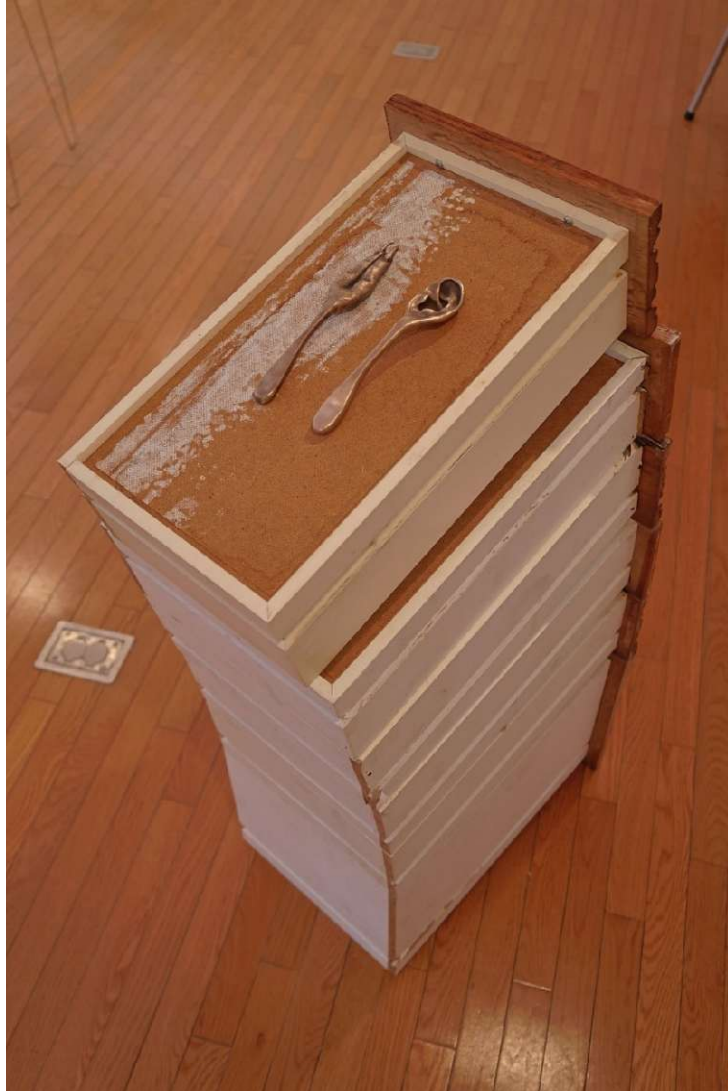


Figure 27. Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025 Bronze, silicone, and metal, discarded kitchen interior, wood glue.

Next to this makeshift plinth is a table and chair first shown in *Queer Artistic Processes and Ecologies*, where Midroni's utensils flank a tooth-rimmed, silicone-filled bronze bowl (fig. 28).

But the table is not what it seems. The structure has been inverted, and the dining surface is now an amputated cupboard door.



Figure 28. Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025 Bronze, silicone, and metal, discarded kitchen interior, wood glue.

As I move through the space, the finger-fork and ear-spoon reappear, now staged in more museum-like displays only lacking the neutral white plinth so often used. The works instead sit on another Frankenstein-ish wooden structure (fig. 29).



Figure 29. Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025 Bronze, silicone, and metal, discarded kitchen interior, wood glue.

Another structure, a more intact cabinet, holds a recent work: a bowl rimmed with multiples of Midroni's pursed lips (fig. 30). Its smooth, polished surface feels almost too perfect, especially against the rough, worn surface beneath it. Inside the open cabinet below, a large wooden tooth sits in shadow (fig. 31), adding to the work's strange, slightly surreal tone.



Figure 30. Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025 Bronze, silicone, and metal, discarded kitchen interior, wood glue.



Figure 31. Riley Midroni, *Fine Dining*, 2025 Bronze, silicone, and metal, discarded kitchen interior, wood glue.

As the uncanny kitchen scene continues to unfold, I am aware of a corner bustling with papers, yarn, and crumpled pages strewn across the floor. And I turn to my left to observe an expansive chaos of paper and yarn. This is the third time g blekkenhost has exhibited *Process #1* (2025) (fig. 32) and the pages have become worn and the yarn tangled. In my first exhibition in

the fall, blekkenhost installed the work for the first time, using intuitive movement and the process as a place of relief from ongoing thesis stress.



Figure 32. g blekkenhost, *Process #1*, 2025, Note taking software, sketchbook pages, abandoned github repositories, pen, tape, pins, yarn. Dimensions variable.

blekkenhost's thesis show looms under a week away and *Process #1* is imbued with an increasing tension. I see the work in new light, no longer the chaotic brainstorm of November but a moment away from an impending deadline. The drawings, musings, and personal questioning have the intimacy of a desk in a private study where messiness is left without judgement. g blekkenhost writes pleas of "why are they stealing voices?" "do they even know

what a body is?” “bodies bodies bodies” (fig. 33). I sense frustration in the repetition of these words that act like a cacophony.

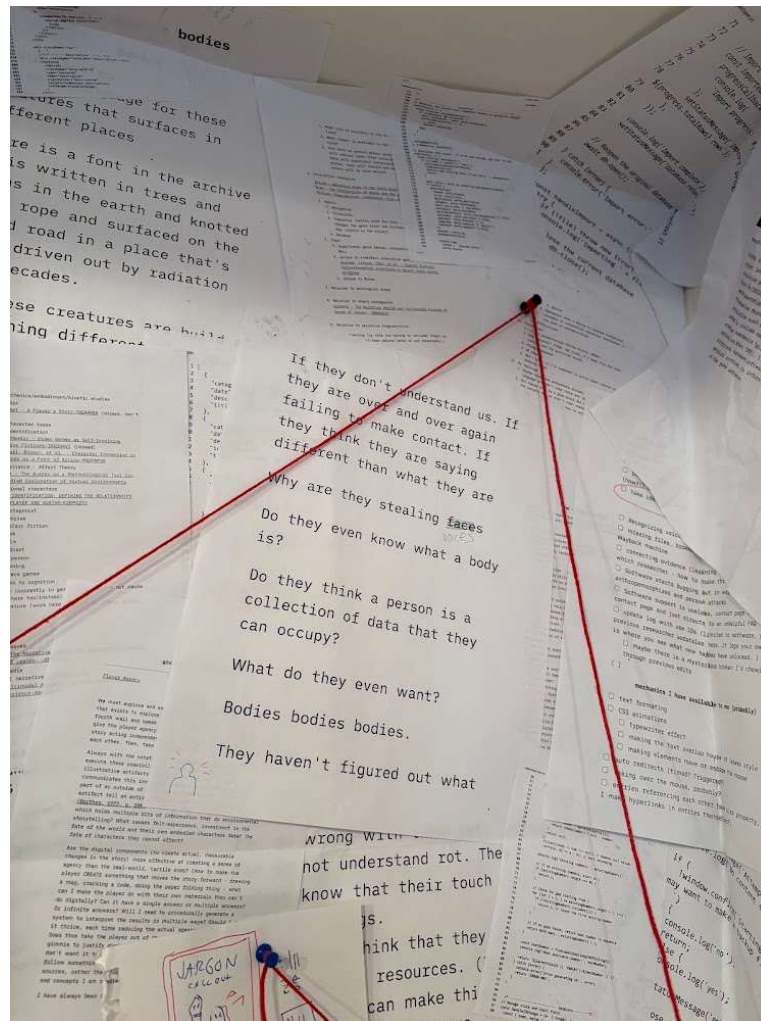


Figure 33. g blekkenhost, *Process #1*, 2025, Note taking software, sketchbook pages, abandoned github repositories, pen, tape, pins, yarn. Dimensions variable.

The multicolored push pins hold traces of past loops of yarn indicating the cutting and retying that goes into each install³⁹ (fig. 34).

³⁹ g blekkenhost is installing this work for the third time. The first was *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies* and the other, a conference at OCAD University titled *Experimentation Through (Dis)Pleasure*.



Figure 34. g blekkenhost, *Process #1*, 2025, Note taking software, sketchbook pages, abandoned github repositories, pen, tape, pins, yarn. Dimensions variable.

blekkenhost makes use of the change between wall and ceiling, placing small, typed, codes and questions folded into corners, dripping red yarn from the ceiling. The pages are like animals slowly slinking away from the pack across the wall. The installation expands, covering more space than the previously. It feels as if there is building distance between the bits and pieces of material research, they spread like a fungus and breakdown as they do, leaving unconnected yarn fragments that hang dully in the air or lay lifeless in coils on the ground (fig. 35). The depreciating points of contact hint at the ideas that stayed in the network and those that became dead ends, appearing in the space as a fleeting thought.

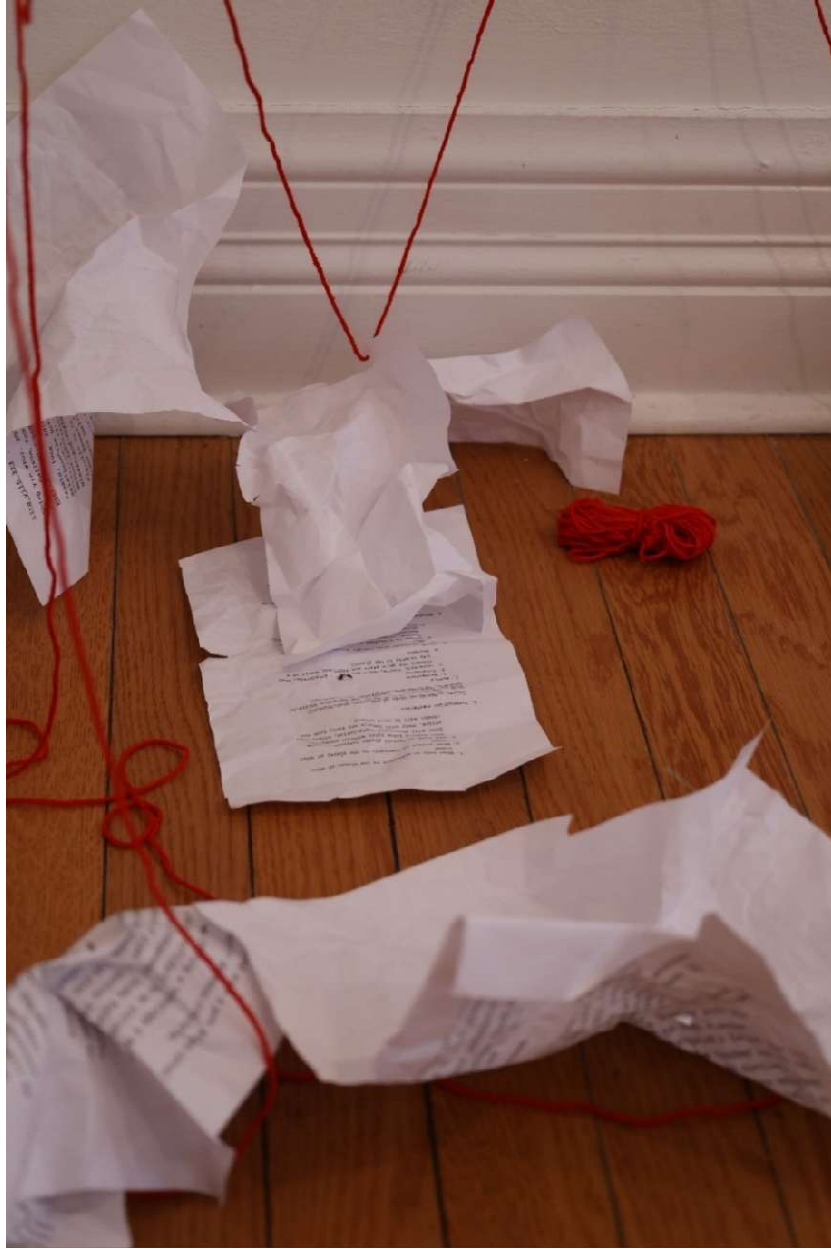


Figure 35. g blekkenhost, *Process #1*, 2025, Note taking software, sketchbook pages, abandoned github repositories, pen, tape, pins, yarn. Dimensions variable.

Kiera Harrigan's work is to my left now, *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg* (2025) (fig. 36) has not changed much since its first appearance in *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies* apart from the bed structure.



Figure 36. Kiera Harrigan *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg*, 2025, Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood.

The engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes sit above black bike handlebars mounted on a wood plank, the bed is now one constructed by Harrigan using plywood and an interlocking system. The frame is all she has built; its solid structure supporting one lonely piece of plywood (fig. 37).



Figure 37. Kiera Harrigan *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg*, 2025, Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood.

The scene is surreal and tense. The bed looks horribly uncomfortable like some kind of punishment in the aftermath of heartbreak. The whole frame is raised, sitting on four cinder blocks, rough, grey, and heavy, I can still feel the effort of carrying them up the stairs into the gallery. The bedside table has also been replaced with a cinderblock (fig. 38), the embroidered gloves and engraved hunting knife seem almost clinical now, laid out for some type of back-alley surgery, or S&M play, its unclear.



Figure 38. Kiera Harrigan, *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg*, 2025, Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood.

The whole scene has a heavier feeling than the padded white bed of the last exhibition. There is solemn seriousness surrounding the bed, I contemplate loneliness, I am encouraged to think about the impending doom of my next failed relationship, and Harrigan's work holds my hand as I get lost in cynical romanticism staring at the light reflecting off the exhaust pipes (fig. 39).



Figure 39. Kiera Harrigan, *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg*, 2025, Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood.

When I interacted with the work in the initial exhibition, I felt a ghostly presence, a person that might return or call out any second.⁴⁰ But here, in this space, I feel that this hard, plywood bed has been abandoned for good. The lovers are gone and the remnants of their time memorialized in these symbolic objects, carved into the various surface skins. To get to the next installation, I

⁴⁰ This feeling arose from the neatly, freshly made bed. The sheets and pillow so intentionally set, expecting someone soon. Now the bed is bare.

cross the field of Midroni's *Fine Dining* and enter into the space of Evan Sagman's steel wire, welded, sculpture, *bending over backwards just for you to look me in the eye* (*Intimacy 12&13*) (2026) (fig. 40).



Figure 40. Evan Sagman, *bending over backwards just for you to look me in the eye* (*Intimacy 12&13*), 2026, Steel wire.

In front of me are two slightly larger than life-sized forms, one laid on its side, the body on display with the slim head propped up by a sharp elbow, a pose that is cheeky and animated. The other is doing a bridge, a satisfying natural bend in the sculpture's wiry spine. In this complex position, the figure's eyes somehow meet—locked onto one another—as a familiar feeling washes over me. All I see is the disparity in comfort disguised by a playful position. I feel a deep empathy for the figure bent in half, contorting their body just to catch a glimpse of the other's gaze (fig. 41).

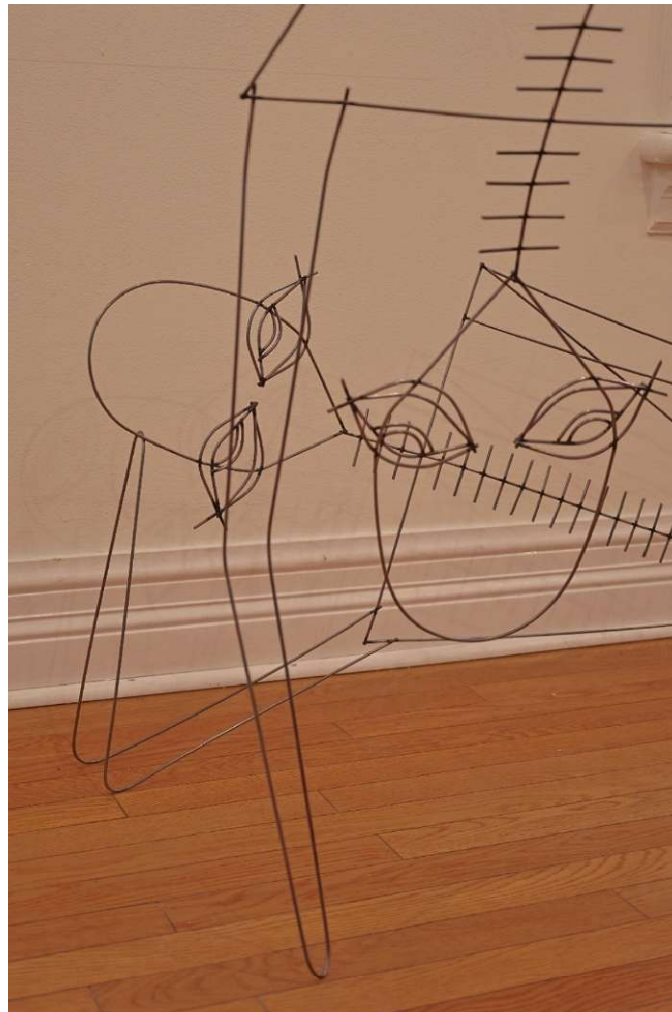


Figure 41. Evan Sagman, *bending over backwards just for you to look me in the eye (Intimacy 12&13)*, 2026, Steel wire.

The slim limbs, metal ribs and circular belly button add a surrealism to the dramatic tableaux. Each figure has exaggerated eyes, huge and bug-like with wire details defining eyelids, retinas, pupils. The next pair sits next to the far wall, titled *your foot on my neck is the only way you can stand* (*Intimacy 10&11*), 2026, (fig. 42). As I approach them, I begin to feel I'm witness to a private event, a scene of vulnerability that leaves me intrigued but uneasy.



Figure 42. Evan Sagman, *bending over backwards just for you to look me in the eye* (*Intimacy 12&13*) & *your foot on my neck is the only way you can stand* (*Intimacy 10&11*).

In front of me is a tall looming figure, the wire of its forehead is bent downward, and I stand underneath its gaze feeling small. Open palms with long-pronounced fingers seem to stabilize the figure; one lies at its side while the other scarcely touches the wall, just the fingertip brushing and the shadow cast in a petal-like display onto the white surface (fig. 43).



Figure 43. Evan Sagman, *your foot on my neck is the only way you can stand (Intimacy 10&11)*, 2026, steel wire.

Following the steel wires of the figure, from head to toe, I pinpoint the flipper-like foot on top of the second figure's thin wire neck (fig. 44). The figure on the ground lies on its back with eyes towards the ceiling—an act of submission or of disassociation, I am unsure. Immobile, the two figures are caught in a tension whose power dynamic could be read as kinky or abusive.



Figure 44. Evan Sagman, *your foot on my neck is the only way you can stand (Intimacy 10&11)*, 2026, steel wire.

The figure that stands holds so much power; the wire seems to weigh hundreds of pounds. These two works are the first in an ongoing series on queer intimacy. Moving towards the corner of the room, Julianna Gagné's video and sound work, *Falling Through Blackness* (2026) (fig. 45). I

walk up behind the chairs and stand behind the tall white plinth that holds a small projector and a set of headphones.

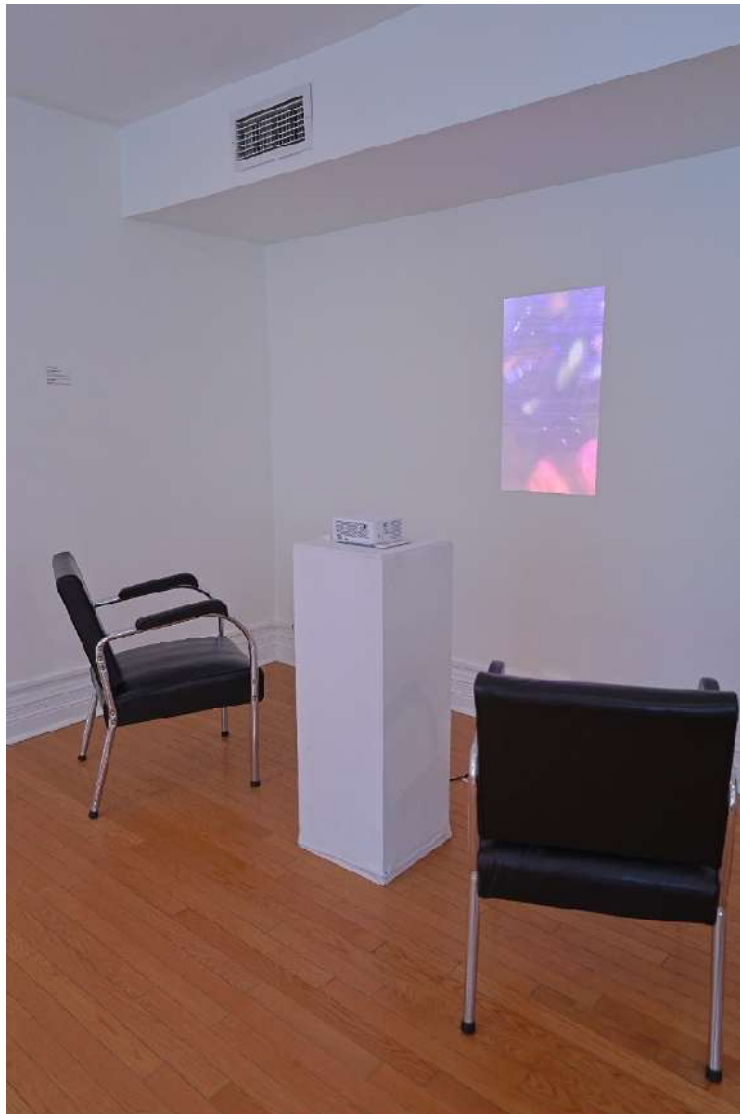


Figure 45. Juliana Nelson Gagné, *Falling Through Blackness*, 2026, Video length 5:33, Audio from Laney Skeel, Dr Liane Nelson, Juliana Gagné, Tanya Gagné and Zinnia Johnson Video shot in Canada and outer Cape Cod: Eastham and Provincetown.

Before I take a seat, I notice the stillness of the corner, silent as the projector loops the 5-minute video. I sit down and on the wall is a wash of color, shadow, and documentation of a parade, both pride and circus feeling. Gagné's own form appears with horns, gracefully dancing

their unidentifiable shadow in front of flames and circular stained-glass windows of light sweeping across the wall in their twenty inches by thirty-five-inch frame (fig. 46).

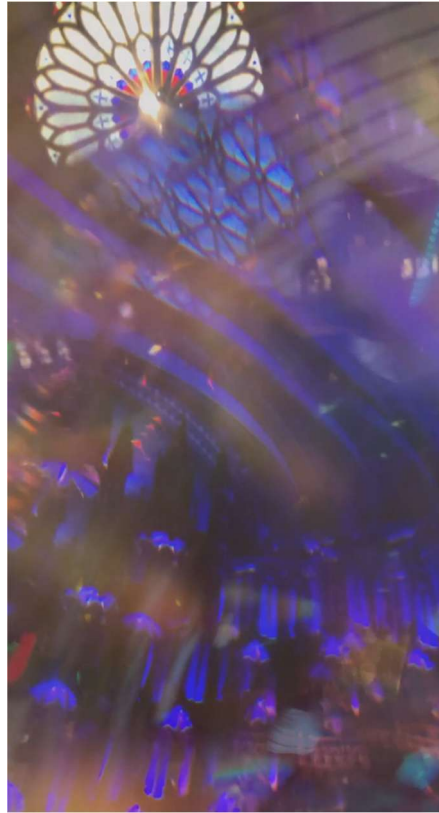


Figure 46. Juliana Nelson Gagné, *Falling Through Blackness*, 2026, Video length 5:33, Audio from Laney Skeel, Dr Liane Nelson, Juliana Gagné, Tanya Gagné and Zinnia Johnson Video shot in Canada and outer Cape Cod: Eastham and Provincetown.

As I sit and watch the video loop, I put the headphones on and am swept into a narration detailing familial queer histories. The stories and voice overlap at times, creating sound effects that tickle the senses. Moments of static, echo, sharp and then dulled, a soundscape of voices and perhaps of the wind. When the words are clear, it is poignant, watching the figures descending spiral staircases as the storyteller recounts their non-binary Uncle Joe's vocal, gay presence in

Minnesota⁴¹ in the 1940s. The work builds on thesis research that appears in the first exhibition, *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies* where Gagné uses the medium of collage and of material altar to explore their ancestry. The video work acts as a void, a space between the inspiration and the solo thesis exhibition that Gagné presented at OCAD, just a few kilometres away from The ArQuives. In the layering and playful editing of the video (fig. 47), Gagné reflects on a nonlinear experience of family history as the work collages the collection of clips and sound bites into a new form regardless of illegibility.

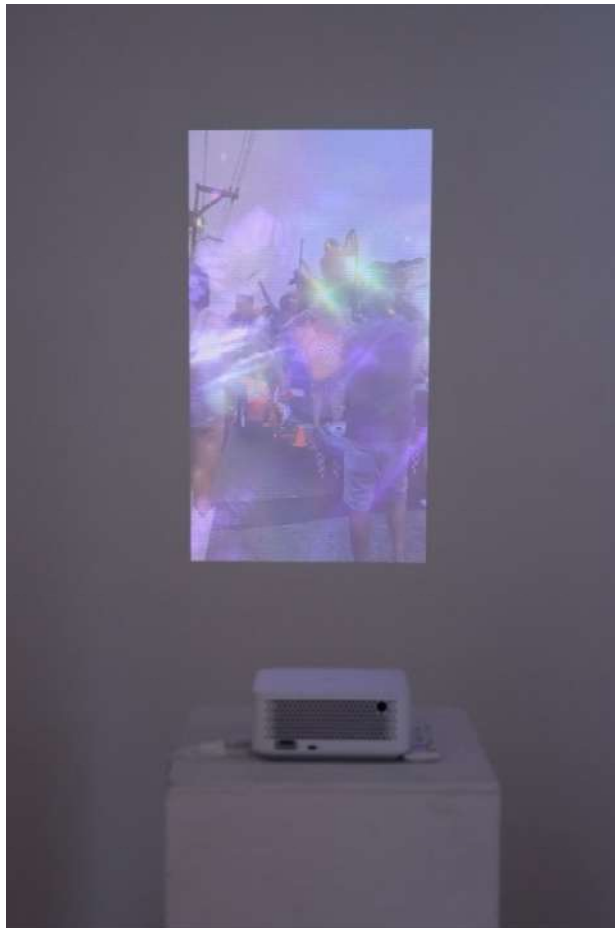


Figure 47. Juliana Nelson Gagné, *Falling Through Blackness*, 2026, Video length 5:33, Audio from Laney Skeel, Dr Liane Nelson, Juliana Gagné, Tanya Gagné and Zinnia Johnson Video shot in Canada and outer Cape Cod: Eastham and Provincetown.

⁴¹ Discussed in artist's statement, Appendix B.

The artist captured the audio from intimate conversations between family members and filmed the video clips over multiple months, across trips from Canada to outer Cape Cod, around the towns of Eastham and Provincetown.⁴²

Conclusion

Queerness resists closure: it does not settle into a final shape or become fully visible. To be queer is to work within an identity that remains in process, always shifting. *in the void* has argued that incompleteness, when centered within queer artistic practice, unsettles the structures of the gallery and archive. These exhibitions do not conclude an inquiry into queer creative process but instead make its conditions materially and spatially felt. What emerges across the project is not a fixed argument about what queer art is, but an attunement to how it moves—through fragmentation and refusal.

By inviting the same group of artists to exhibit twice—without expectation of continuity, refinement, or progression—the project resists a linear understanding of time and artistic development. Instead, it foregrounds temporal instability, allowing works to shift, stall, or expand across time. This is evident in the return of works like *Process #1*, where accumulated notes, tangled yarn, and worn pages indicate not necessarily progress but endurance. In Riley Midroni's *Fine Dining*, the expansion from a singular, solitary table setting into a dispersed, uncanny kitchen environment does not resolve the work but disperses it further, complicating its spatial and affective logic. What I have shown through my curatorial approach is that repetition does not produce clarity—it produces difference. Works return altered, not improved; extended,

⁴² See artist's statement, Appendix B.

not completed. They insist on a temporality that cannot be easily contained within institutional frameworks of exhibition and evaluation.

in the void is positioned against a Western art market where value has long been tied to completion, circulation, and accumulation. Unfinished works expose the fragility of these conditions and the colonial logics that sustain them. In Sagman's *Remnants*, discarded materials—plywood, syringes, fragments of clothing—are not refined into polished objects but remain visibly in process, carrying traces of use and relational history. Similarly, Gagné's *Handheld Altars* and *(Dis)connected* resist the production of a coherent narrative, assembling fragments of personal and familial memory that refuse totalization. In these works, duration and the uneven temporalities of making are not secondary to the work—they are the work. A pause in artistic labour—labelled as unproductive—is central, destabilizing the assumption that artistic value is tied to resolution.

A parallel intervention unfolds through the project's engagement with the archive, particularly in the second exhibition's location within The ArQuives. Here, the material realities of archival insufficiency—boxes waiting to be processed, histories held in suspension—are mirrored in the artworks themselves. The unfinished artwork operates as a kind of living document, one that records not only what has been made, but what remains in process, deferred, or unknowable. Juliana Gagné's *Falling Through Blackness*, with its layered audio, fragmented narratives, and nonlinear editing, extends earlier collage practices into a time-based form that resists archival closure. The work moves between clarity and distortion, presence and disappearance, embodying the instability of queer memory. Similarly, the installations of Midroni and Harrigan—where furniture is reconfigured, destabilized, or stripped down to bare

structures—reflect the tension between preservation and loss, continuity and rupture. In this way, the archive is not a site of stability, but one of ongoing negotiation.

Building on curatorial precedents such as *bad 2 the bone* and *Mnemonic Silences*, *Disappearing Acts*, which activate queer archival material and communal memory, this project relinquishes traditional curatorial control. Rather than constructing a cohesive narrative, I position curation as a relational process shaped by interactions between artists, artworks, and site. This is evident in the spatial and affective shifts between the two exhibitions: from the open, topographic expanse of the Graduate Gallery to the domestic, creaking intimacy of the archive house. In both contexts, the works resist being fixed into a singular reading. Harrigan's *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg* transforms from a ghostly, intimate bedroom scene into a stark, elevated structure of plywood and cinder blocks—shifting from presence to abandonment, from potential encounter to aftermath. The exhibition becomes a space of encounter rather than instruction, where meaning emerges through proximity, speculation, and embodied experience.

Disorientation emerges as a central curatorial method. Spatially, this is enacted through installations that disrupt the viewer's sense of coherence: the sprawling, entropic expansion of *Process #1*; the uncanny, reassembled domesticity of *Fine Dining*; the confrontational intimacy of Sagman's wire figures, caught in scenes of tension and imbalance. Disorientation is not simply visual, but bodily and affective. The viewer is asked to engage the work without the promise of resolution, revealing how deeply institutional spaces rely on legibility and completion to maintain their authority—and how quickly these structures unravel when confronted with the unfinished. These works do not guide the viewer toward understanding; they hold them within uncertainty.

Uncertainty was the starting point of this thesis, shaped by a frustration I had long encountered as both an artist and a student. I rarely finished anything. Works were either abandoned or left unresolved—sometimes existing as fragmented series of ideas, other times as notes in my phone. I found myself unable to commit to a final form or product, caught in a cycle of beginning without concluding. This created a sense of dissonance in my practice. I felt misunderstood and misrepresented, not only because I could not submit work to exhibitions, but more importantly, because I could not face the vulnerability of sharing it. I often felt like an outsider within formal exhibition spaces, as though my creative process—defined by stops, starts, and unfinished thoughts—was somehow invalid in the context of a space that prioritized completion and clarity.

This frustration felt strangely akin to something I had experienced as a queer person: the consistent pressure to have my identity figured out, to present myself as a coherent, stable “thing” that could be easily explained and understood. There’s this constant societal demand to make identity legible, to offer it up in clear, rational terms that others can comprehend. Yet identity is rarely so neatly packaged; it is ongoing, shifting, and often contradictory. I felt the weight of that pressure in both my artistic practice and my personal life: the compulsion to provide a neat, coherent answer to who I am or what my art is. I was never able to satisfy that demand, as both my identity and my work both existed as messy, in-process entities that resisted rationalization and the systems of order that sought to contain them.

in the void became a way to contend with that discomfort and to test the boundaries of incompleteness, both personally and theoretically. It forced me to ask what it would mean to *remain* in uncertainty, to exhibit works still in the process of becoming rather than neatly packaged and finished. The project was not only about confronting my hesitation as an artist, but

about embracing the very process that made me uncomfortable. It required me to trust that meaning possibility that meaning could emerge from what was unresolved, and that there was value in the works themselves regardless of whether they fit conventional definitions of "completed" art. In the same way that I had struggled with present my own queer identity—something I could never fully explain, because it is always shifting—I had to challenge the expectation that art must be fully concluded in order to be valid.

By embracing the messiness of both my own practice and the participating artists' works, I came to understand incompleteness not as a failure, but as an opportunity for depth and complexity. Rather than resolving discomfort, the exhibition became a space to foreground it—allowing the tension of what was “unfinished” to remain visible and generative. I realized that my discomfort with incompleteness was not a weakness, but part of a larger, ongoing process that mirrors the queer experience itself. Queer identity, like queer art, is never fully formed. It remains in flux, resisting definition and the demands of completion. To accept this as both an artist and a curator meant leaning into vulnerability, exposing process rather than concealing it, and trusting that being in process can itself be a legitimate and powerful creative act.

This process was not only an intellectual but deeply emotional. The project forced me to engage with my own vulnerability ways that felt exposing. For so long, I had been conditioned to protect myself, to keep my art and my identity wrapped up in a form that others could easily understand. But *in the void* asked me to take a step beyond that comfort zone.

Theoretically, this project engages with and extends conversations around queer temporality through José Esteban Muñoz's concept of queer hope. For Muñoz, queer hope is “profoundly resistant to the stultifying temporal logic of a broken-down present,” refusing

confinement within the limitations of what is (Muñoz 2009, 12). It is a mode of critical openness, an investment in potentiality that exceeds the here and now. Within *in the void*, the unfinished artwork can be understood as a material expression of this hope. To remain in process is to resist the demand to arrive; to refuse the linear temporality of straight time that structures both artistic production and institutional validation. Queer hope disrupts this timeline, insisting on other rhythms—ones marked by delay, return, and incompleteness.

To value process, then, is to embrace the possibility of something else. It is to refuse heteronormative mappings of time and space that demand coherence, productivity, and forward progression. As Muñoz suggests, queer hope reaches beyond the affective constraints of the present, imagining “another collective belonging” that is not yet realized (Muñoz 2009). The works in *in the void* do not resolve into this future, but gesture toward it. They remain open, unsettled, and in motion—holding space for potential rather than closure. This openness is not passive; it is an active refusal of finality and a commitment to imagining otherwise.

What this shifts within curatorial practice is an understanding of exhibition-making as a site of resolution, but of relation. *in the void* positions curation as an ongoing process rather than a finished product—one shaped by vulnerability, trust, and responsiveness. By collapsing the boundary between private process and public display, the exhibitions make visible the conditions under which art is made without demanding their resolution. This reorientation challenges dominant curatorial models that prioritize coherence, authority, and control, offering instead a framework grounded in care, uncertainty, and collaboration. Meaning is not delivered to the viewer, but emerges through their engagement with the work, the space, and their own affective responses.

Looking forward, *in the void* remains necessarily unfinished. There are clear opportunities for expansion, particularly in foregrounding the voices of the participating artists more directly. While this thesis has taken an autotheoretical and intimate approach—grounded in my own readings, experiences, and embodiments—future iterations could incorporate in-depth interviews, allowing artists to articulate their own relationships to process, incompleteness, and exhibition. This would deepen the project’s relational framework while attending more closely to the particularities of each practice.

I am also interested in exploring alternative exhibition sites that further disorient expectations of space and display, extending the project’s engagement with instability and encounter. Beyond this, there is a need to consider the social realities that underpin this kind of work: how vulnerability is supported, how community is built, and how practices that resist productivity can be sustained within systems that often demand it. These questions point toward a broader field of inquiry—one that extends beyond the scope of this thesis but remains central to its concerns.

Guided by queer hope, this work does not arrive at a conclusion so much as it opens outward. It remains invested in potential, in the not-yet, in the possibility of different ways of being, making, and relating. To embrace incompleteness is not to accept lack, but to insist on futurity—to remain critically open to what might emerge beyond the constraints of the present. In this way, *in the void* does not end. It continues, unresolved, as a commitment to process, vulnerability, and to the enduring possibility of something else.

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Appendix A: Promotional Materials for Exhibitions

Queer Creative Processes (November 2025)



Figure 48. Renata Critton-Papp, *Queer Creative Processes*, 2025, Canva.

a call for the incomplete (March 2026)



Figure 49. Renata Critton-Papp, *a call for the incomplete*, 2026, Canva.

Appendix B: Artist Biographies, Works, and Statements

Evan Sagman (they/them) is a Toronto-based interdisciplinary artist and curator. Their work focuses on themes relating to the body, love, intimacy, sexuality, mortality, decay, and duality. Working primarily in metal, wood, and experimental mediums, they create bodily forms that serve as portraits of the intangible.

Artwork in *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies*:

Remnants (Accumulation 1, Twig's Painkillers From April), 2025

Found plywood, white wall paint, buprenorphine syringes, buprenorphine residues, weld bond glue 6 in X 12 in

Remnants (Accumulation 3, the more you say it the more they'll believe you), 2025

Found plywood, indelible ink, staple Roughly 12 in x 40 in

Remnants (Accumulation 4, textures of miscommunication), 2025

Found particle Board, deteriorating inner lining of a Harley Davidson rain jacket given as a gift from a now estranged friend, weld bond glue Roughly 2 in x 8 in

Artist Statement:

I am working on a series focused on accumulation and remnants. Repeating patterns and the physical objects left behind illuminate themselves as tangible evidence of personal and shared histories. In a gesture to embrace order within chaos, I have extended my process to embody a more experimental nature. I found I had adapted to a more formal sequential approach, which

enabled both a honing of skill, and restriction of freedom within the making process. There is room and need for both approaches, as well as their intersections. These objects both physical and ephemeral trace lifelines, documenting lived experiences. Queerness as an environment shapes the experiences I have and share within my practice. This current mode of experimental practice allows me to negotiate the relationship between finished and ongoing, as it exists in the space between and beyond the two.

Artwork in a call for the incomplete:

your foot on my neck is the only way you can stand (Intimacy 10&11), 2026

Steel wire 7 in. x 7 in. x 4 in.

bending over backwards just for you to look me in the eye (Intimacy 12&13), 2026

Steel wire 2'8 in x 5'5 in x 6'6 in.

Artist Statement:

Continuing my thematic exploration of intimacy through metal forms, my newest works are finding their place at the intersection of connection and disorder. I think there is a tendency for some to hold onto intimacy even when we know the consequences are greater than the benefit.

Two sets of wire figures displayed as diptychs, share snapshots of transient relationships, froze in time, distorting space. *your foot on my neck is the only way you can stand (Intimacy 10&11)* illuminates the pain of simultaneous connection/disconnection as intense and immediate.

bending over backwards just for you to look me in the eye (Intimacy 12&13) presents a duo that appears playful and fun, where the tension is hidden in varied perception of the poses.

Vulnerable and open, they gaze upon the self/other before them, existing as a body and a moment in time, observing the observer.

Kiera Harrigan (b.2005) is a visual artist working in oil paint and installation work, currently completing a BFA in Drawing and Painting at OCAD University. She is interested in 21st century portraiture, rendering canvas moments otherwise captured for social media. She is interested in feminist analysis of the digital self and the construction of identity through signifiers of beauty and prosperity. Through her installation work, Kiera explores identity and themes of belonging.

Artwork:

Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg, 2025

Engraved Harley Davidson exhaust pipes, leather gloves, thread, hunting knife, black bike handlebars, wood. 13.4 in x 46 in x 38 in x 71 in.

Artist Statement:

On a bike can you see the ground? Or is it all just blurred? Leather armor shines under streetlights. Black concrete, black leather, black gloves. American heavy metal isn't just music—it's what your body's riding, it's America the great, it's factories and bright shining machinery. Bright white gleams off the exhaust pipe, here in the light it burns bright. Take me to the light, I wanna burn. I want that written on your gloves in white, I want you to feel it in the light. *Who's Afraid of Leslie Feinberg* explores intimacy, sex and desire through queer expression and history, specifically exploring butch-femme dynamic and motorcycle culture. The gleaming

Harley Davidson exhaust pipes are hand engraved with the quote “you & me ’til the wheels fall off!”, which is pulled from a 1995 personal ad. The whole ad reads: “Heavily inked & pierced NYC riot girrrl looking for butch lover. I love to get messed up, get wild & get off. I need an accomplice. Hey baby, you & me ’til the wheels fall off! WRITE: Box #013”. Adventure and love on the open road, an American Dream pursued by the people it was never made to include. To think of what lies beyond the bend is certain death – I focus on the grip of the handlebar and the road ten feet ahead. Leather bound in a dark helmet, masculinity blurs at high speeds and a level of safety and security is found atop that unforgiving machine. Then and now, to ride is safer than to be still. You and me, you and me. Til the wheels fall off.

I've got no choice. I drive around the bend. You and me, flying. Free.

g blekkenhorst is a Canadian artist and experimental narrative designer working across multiple media, but tending towards games, ttrpgs, comics, writing, fabrication, poetry, illustration, etc, etc, and next week they'll be someone else. Their work deals with fear, vulnerability, monstrous embodiment, cognitive dissonance, reluctant capitalism, never knowing what's going on inside the meat or the mind of yourself or anyone else and feeling generally haunted.

Current course director of Games & Prototyping @ York University and digital futures masters grad @ OCADU.

Artwork:

Process #1, 2025

Note taking software, sketchbook pages, abandoned github repositories, pen, tape, pins, yarn

Artist Statement:

My process involves a lot of highs and lows, starts and stops. I keep cycling through hyper graphic manic bouts where I am generating thousands of words and drawings trying to find something and then sinking into burnout in between those flurries. A lot of this note taking isn't just capturing my research, it captures my moods and my fears in the process. It can feel as though I am writing around something, attempting to write myself through something. This sketching and outlining becomes invisible, discarded for newer iterations, or code nestled inside of more audience-friendly interfaces like bones inside bodies. But it is the aspect of the art that I spend the most time with, and it is what I see whenever I look at whatever the smaller, finished package becomes.

Riley Midroni is a third-year sculpture and installation student. Their practice is rooted in the concept of the abject, which we cast off yet lingers at the edges of the self. Working with bronze, silicone, and metal, they build hybrid forms that distort the familiar and open space for discomfort, curiosity, and recognition.

Artwork:

Fine Dining, 2025

Bronze, silicone, and metal, discarded kitchen interior, wood glue

Large cabinet: 31 in x 30 in x 13 in.

Plinth of cabinets: 30 in x 16 in x 14 in.

Drawer plinth: 40 in x 21 in x 14 in.

Artist statement:

Fine Dining draws from the repressed queer discomfort I felt growing up. Much of my practice is based on the idea of questioning and probing why we exist and why we think as we do. To elicit emotions and then ask why. It may be my own queerness or intergenerational trauma; it is essential to identify why. Physical affection has always been a signifier of love, something I have yearned for yet hold a deep discomfort with. Through this work, I aim to question how intimacy, shame, and queerness intertwine. To ask why queerness is mediated through heteronormative frameworks that often exist in media as a spectacle, something so othered, it borders on cannibalism. With my work, the body becomes both medium and metaphor, a site where these concepts merge and push the viewer to ask questions about ourselves and the world around us. I do not aim for resolution but for resonance, an unfinished conversation between body, material, and viewer that continues long after the work leaves my hands. In *Fine Dining* I confront a point of shame in my life through acceptance and curiosity. The work will ultimately become a full eight-person dining set, configured for a performance where it will be eaten off of. Through this project, I hope to expand my research beyond the solitary, engaging in dialogue with others whose inquiries intersect with mine. Collaboration and shared inquiry are central to how I want my practice and myself to continue growing.

Juliana Nelson Gagné is a queer multidisciplinary artist and writer originally from the Northeast "US". They have a BFA in Fine Arts from Parsons School of Design and are currently an MFA candidate at OCADU studying Interdisciplinary Art, Media and Design. Through their thesis Juliana explores how water acts as an inter-dimensional portal to the Spirit World with multi-layered videos and an installation of cyanotype mobiles. They have exhibited their work in group and solo shows in Turtle Island, Germany and Catalonia, notably: a solo show *The Dream Dimension* (Massachusetts 2025), group show (Dis)comfort Zones (Toronto July 2025) and solo show *Echoes of Water: They Called Her A Witch* (Toronto 2026).

Artwork in *Queer Creative Processes and Ecologies*:

(Dis)connected, 2025

Archival photos and 35mm photo prints, personal poetry and ink drawings

Handheld Altars, 2025

Stones, sea glass, archival photo, human hair, dried flowers, snail shell

Artist statement:

My work explores family history, epigenetics, immigration, place-memory, and the Spirit World. I work in a variety of media and often combine them, including illustration, experimental photography, printmaking, embroidery, collage, video and sound art and installations. One of the dominant figures in my family I create art about is my Great Uncle Joe, he was my Grandfather's favorite brother, and he was out and proud in Minnesota in the 1940s and fully accepted by our family. I was born almost exactly 50 years to the day of his death, and I am interested in further

exploring this legacy not only of queer elders in my family, but also the intersectionality of being queer and disabled. In the past year I have created collages using photos of Joe and his boyfriends, combined with other family photos and illustrations as well as block printing. I also work with imagery of living queer family, including my Aunt Tanya (a famous trapeze/circus performer) known for her gender bending performances, along with my "Aunt" Laney and my younger cousin Jamie. I have an ongoing research project where I interview family members about our ancestors as well as their own lives for my thesis where I explore water as a portal to ancestry and the Spirit World.

Artwork in *a call for the incomplete*:

Falling Through Blackness, 2026

Video length 5:33

Audio from Laney Skeel, Dr Liane Nelson, Juliana Gagné, Tanya Gagné and Zinnia Johnson

Video shot in Canada and outer Cape Cod: Eastham and Provincetown

Dedicated to the memory of Emma von Euler and Sherwood “Joe” Nelson

Artist statement:

This video examines queer family and elders, both living and deceased. Laney Skeel (currently in her 80s living in Minnesota) was disowned by her parents when she came out as a lesbian, she was subsequently “adopted” by Milly and Juliana’s grandfather, Dr Sherman Eddie Nelson, her psychology mentor and father figure. Juliana’s mother, Dr Liane Nelson, discusses the 15 years she ran a queer youth group in the wake of the suicide of Emma von Euler in 2009. Dr Nelson

also discusses her Uncle Joe, who was out and proud in Minnesota in the 1940s before dying at 26. Audio from Zinnia Johnson and Aunt Tanya Gagné link their queerness to magic, tarot and the circus community.