

Casey Koyczan
Mahsa Merci
Hye Yeon Shin
Julianna
Zwierciadlowska-Rhymer

University of Manitoba School of Art

Master of Fine Art Graduate Catalogue 2021

The University of Manitoba campuses are located on original lands of Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene peoples, and on the homeland of the Métis Nation. We respect the Treaties that were made on these territories, we acknowledge the harms and mistakes of the past, and we dedicate ourselves to move forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.

The School of Art at the University of Manitoba occupies a key role in Western Canada for the implementation of contemporary practices in the visual arts, design, and historical scholarship. The School is committed to advancing excellence in creativity, research, critical thinking, and knowledge in the service of the Winnipeg and Manitoba communities and, through its alumni, local and national contexts and the global cultural community.

School of Art

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MFA CATALOGUE 2021
[2021 MFA Graduates]

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The Master of Fine Art Program

Casey Koyczan, Mahsa Merci, Hye Yeon Shin, and Julianna Zwierciadłowska-Rhymer, the four artists featured in this catalogue, have successfully completed the requirements for receiving a Master of Fine Art degree from the University of Manitoba. This catalogue offers an indication of the work that they produced during their programs.

The School of Art offers a vibrant MFA studio program with state-of-the-art facilities, private studios, focused instruction, and technical support for a diversity of approaches to contemporary art production, including, but not limited to, ceramics, drawing, painting, sculpture, photography (wet and

digital), print media and video. An emphasis on studio practice is supported by close relationships with advisors, as well as frequent opportunities for individual and group feedback. Our studio culture, shaped by a dynamic faculty, actively encourages research that is rigorous, imaginative, and cross-disciplinary.

The University of Manitoba is located in Winnipeg, a Canadian Prairie city with an international reputation as a centre for contemporary art. Winnipeg is located at the epicentre of a continent-wide Indigenous cultural renaissance.

From the Acting Director and Associate Director, Graduate Programs and Research

It is with great pleasure that I offer my congratulations to the 2021 crop of MFA graduates from the School of Art. When I assumed the role of Acting Director towards the end of their respective programs, I was amazed at the results of their hard work during an especially difficult period. I am most impressed by the fruits of their labour: each of the four shows indicate the potential for a brilliant career, and each demonstrates the success of our MFA program.

Edward Jurkowski,
Acting Director
School of Art

Four new and especially strong exhibitions opened in April and May of 2021 at the School of Art Gallery and at Urban Shaman in Winnipeg. Casey Koyczan, Mahsa Merci, Hye Yeon Shin, and Julianna Zwierciadłowska-Rhymer mounted solo exhibitions as the concluding events in their Master of Fine Arts programs at the School of Art.

These artists offered meaningful reflections on some of the most pressing topics our society is engaging with: food security and health (Zwierciadłowska-Rhymer), housing and precarity (Shin), the diversity of gender and sexual expression (Merci), and the possibilities resting in and between nature and technology (Koyczan).

What stands out is that despite the breadth of the topics engaged, each exhibition featured, implied, or activated the body in a central way. Merci nimbly employs sculpture and painting to depict many colourful and textured human bodies; this contrasts sharply with the

absence of bodies in Shin's elegant installation, which poignantly implies the body by using precariously-balanced architectural components. Zwierciadłowska-Rhymer's skillfully rendered ceramic sculptures of food point to the grotesque excesses of the food industry and the ways our bodies are affected. Finally, Koyczan's powerful interactive installation requires the viewer to move toward and around huge hanging logs in order to activate an audio- and video-scape projected onto the walls.

What also stands out is how good these shows are! The formal, material, and conceptual strengths of these exhibitions are especially impressive considering how deeply the four graduating artists were affected by the closures and limitations associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Congratulations to Casey Koyczan, Mahsa Merci, Hye Yeon Shin, and Julianna Zwierciadłowska-Rhymer for succeeding despite the odds, and for mounting these exhibitions, each of them outstanding in their own right. Congratulations to our new MFA graduates!

Sarah Ciurysek
Associate Director, Graduate Programs and Research
School of Art



Ełexiìtq ; Ehts'qq / Connected ; Apart From Each Other

Casey Koyczan

Ełexiìtq ; Ehts'qq / Connected ; Apart From Each Other is an interactive installation that communicates the journey of learning more about my Dene culture through distance education and research by utilizing and adapting to work with technology and communication tools as viable resources for learning language, tradition, stories, and spiritual beliefs.

Biography

I am a Tlicho Dene interdisciplinary artist from Yellowknife, NT, who works with various mediums to communicate how culture and technology intersect with the political, economic, and environmental challenges in the world. A portion of my large-scale installation work utilizes Earth materials in order to evoke the idea of nature and people reclaiming architectural and cultural space. Within my digital work, I am inspired by science fiction and notions of the future; I implement various techniques of interactivity, audio-video, VR/360/XR, and the engagement of the bodily senses within my creations.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Urban Shaman for hosting my MFA exhibition, Chris Pancoe for help with making my work, Andy Rudolph for technical assistance, and Lori Blondeau for her guidance throughout my studies.





















Dichotomy as a Mirror

Mahsa Merci

Mahsa Merci is a queer multidisciplinary artist who works in various media and techniques, from drawing and photography to video art and installations. Still, she focuses mainly on expanding her unique oil technique in painting and mixed media sculptures.

Merci aims to continuously utilize various symbols of tradition, culture, religion, and ideology in her practice in order to emphasize a broad spectrum of social and personal subject matter.

Merci recently has produced a body of work that sheds light on marginal identities and untold stories of queer individuals, such as their lifestyle, desires, relationships, fears, dreams, dilemmas, and traumas. She broadly questions and challenges social structures dictated through human history. Moreover, these existential experiences mainly focus on gender, identity, and sexuality, especially in oppressive societies. By juxtaposing various personal definitions, she invites us to rethink our inherited ways of thinking.

Biography

Mahsa Merci, born in 1990 in Tehran, Iran, holds a bachelor's degree in graphic design from Tehran University of Art and a Master of Painting from Azad University in Iran. She recently graduated from the Master of Fine Arts program at the University of Manitoba, in Winnipeg, Canada. Merci has exhibited her works in over fifty solo and group exhibitions in the United States, Belgium, Hong Kong, Italy, the UAE, Cyprus, Canada, and Iran. Her works are internationally published in various magazines in Iran, the UK, Germany, United States, Canada, Norway, and Denmark.

mahsamerci.com

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Acknowledgements

I express my sincere gratitude to all the individuals who have helped and supported me during my graduate program, the creation of my thesis exhibition, and my career. I would like to thank my advisor, Dominique Rey, especially for all her help, support, and insightful input to my work and my committee members, Mark Neufeld, Holger Kalberg, Katherine Boyer, and Diana Thorneycroft, for helping me to take a deeper look at concepts vital for me. Many thanks to Lori Blondeau, Derek Brueckner, Sarah Ciurysek, David Foster, and Donna Jones for their guidance, time, and kind help during the two-year program. Finally, I owe a very substantial debt to my family, my lovely parents, and my husband, Mehdi Dandi, for their help, support, understanding, peace, and love in all aspects of my life.







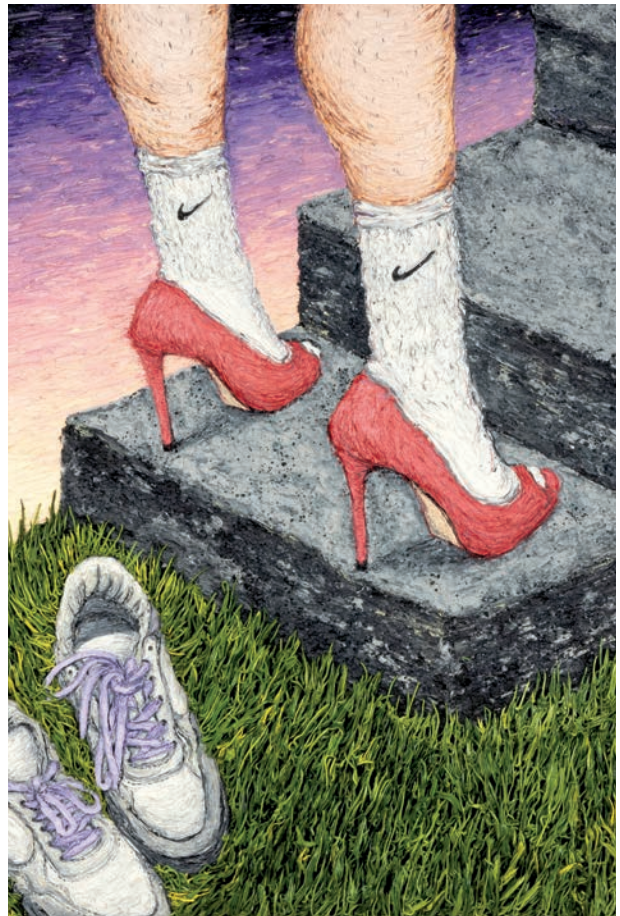




SELF











Isolated Island

Hye Yeon Shin

My works contain stories about social issues affecting urban space and development as a result of globalization and capitalism as it has been developing over the past few decades. I have been tracing and mapping the individual, cultural, and psychological impacts of significant developments in Korea. My core research interests have expanded to include the gentrification and redevelopment of residential areas across the world and the emotions thereby evoked. In my sculpture and improvisatory installation work, I utilize found construction materials and images referencing philosophies, experiences, and memories of over-development.

Biography

I was born in 1981 in Seoul, South Korea. I received a bachelor's degree in Psychology, a Bachelor of Fine Art, and a Master of Art from Ewha Women's University in Sinchon, South Korea. I have had three solo exhibitions in Korea and have participated in 35 group exhibitions internationally.

I am a visual artist who looks at the relationships between people and cities, particularly at gentrification and the redevelopment of residential areas around the globe. From the perspective of a foreigner from a largely monocultural society such as South Korea, I explore philosophical and conceptual ideas about cities through the creation of sculptures and installations made from discarded objects.

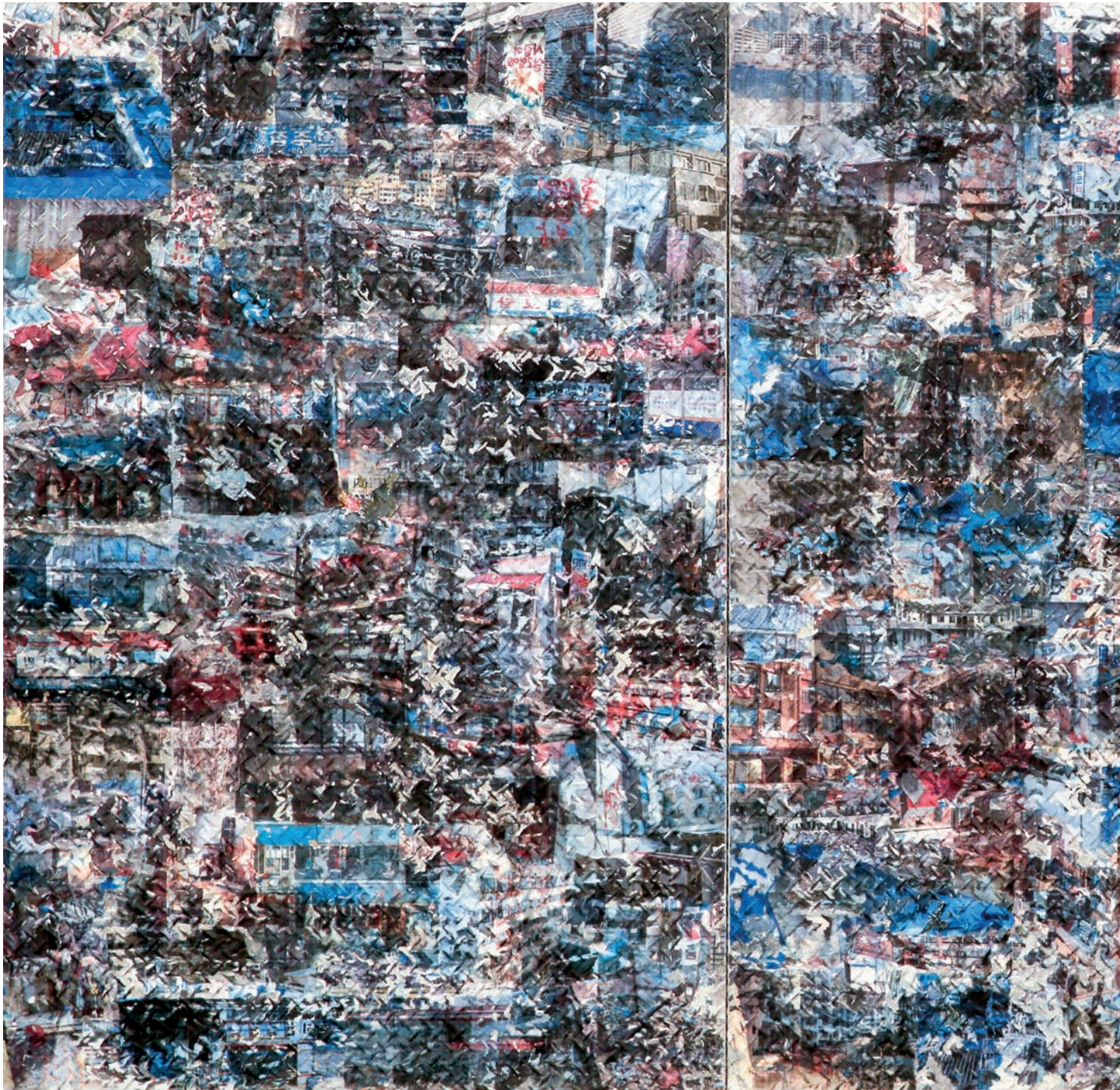
[instagram.com/_hye_shin_](https://www.instagram.com/_hye_shin_)

Acknowledgements

Thanks to my advisor, Professor Mark Neufeld. I was able to complete my thesis and exhibition with his considerate guidance. Also, thanks to Lori Blondeau and Dominique Rey for always giving me clear advice. I also sincerely appreciate the brilliant comments of Professor Lancelot Coar from the Department of Architecture. I cannot forget Professors Kevin Kelly and Leigh Bridges for their support in my first year, and Sarah Ciurysek, who is the most thoughtful person I have ever met. Furthermore, I am lucky to have had Jacqueline Jordaan as my tutor and I am fortunate to have been part of an amazing MFA cohort over the last two years.

Lastly, I really appreciate my husband Seung Young, my son Joshua, and my daughter Clara, and I give glory to God, who sent me here and fills me with so many good things.















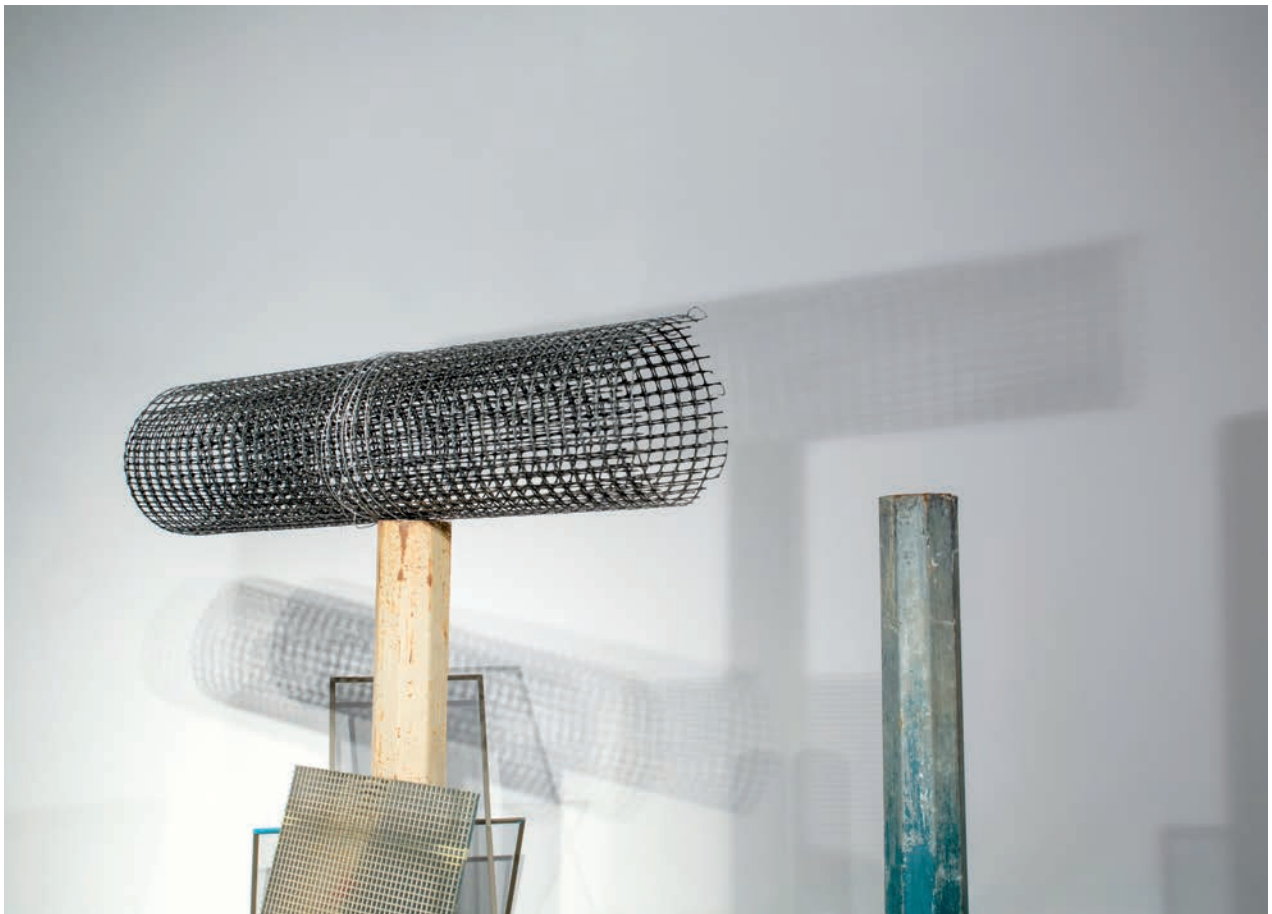






Table Manners

Julianna Zwierciadłowska-Rhymer

Through the medium of ceramics, my body of work *Table Manners* explores the realities of food production, gluttony, and ignorant consumption within the western world. I create abject and grotesque pieces about our food consumption that invoke unpleasant and uncomfortable feelings, though I do so with playful curiosity. The abject causes a breakdown between the self and the other. Incorporating abject elements in my work allows me to challenge deep-set cultural concepts and familiar narratives by provoking disgust, fear and repulsion. Abjection and horror allow me to pose challenging questions, often with problematic and overwhelming answers that are sometimes difficult to digest. Food brings us together for celebration and offers us comfort, memories, and joy. I create sculptures of luscious cakes and desserts that act as a vehicle to discuss more serious matters. Their elaborate detail and extravagance seduces the viewer into closer inspection, thereby revealing the disturbing and grotesque elements of the work. In my practice I explore a side of consumption and excess that most of us would prefer to ignore, hide away and pretend doesn't exist. It examines the over-abundance of items we consume for both sustenance and pleasure, while turning a blind eye to the darker side of food production. The installation discusses the fragility of our food systems and our unconscious consumption, and constitutes a warning of what may lie ahead if we do not change our relationship to food.

Biography

Julianna is an emerging artist from the Prairies of southern Manitoba. She received her first Bachelor of Fine Art in Art History from the University of Manitoba in 2011. After graduation, Julianna moved to Cracow, Poland to attend Jagiellonian University to study Polish language and culture in order to more deeply understand her cultural background. Upon returning to Canada, Julianna moved to Vancouver, British Columbia and attended Emily Carr University of Art and Design, receiving her BFA (studio) in 2017. In June 2021 Julianna defended her thesis and graduated from the University of Manitoba. She works primarily in clay, but also extends her practice to include a variety of other materials.

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Acknowledgements

Many thanks to everyone who helped me during my time in graduate school, especially to my advisor, Grace Nickel; I greatly appreciate everything she has done for me. Thank you to my committee members, Katherine Boyer, Kevin Stafford and Lin Xu. I'd also like to thank my cohort, Casey Koyczan, Mahsa Merci and Hye Yeon Shin. I'm so happy I had the opportunity to meet them, and that we were able to go through this program together. Special thanks to my parents for all their encouragement throughout my academic career. Thank you to the University of Manitoba and the School of Art for the opportunity to pursue my MFA. Thank you also to the Manitoba Arts Council for offering support during my final year of graduate school and for making this exhibition installation possible.



















Image Lists

All measurements are in centimetres. The pages that given works are illustrated on are indicated in the left-hand column.

Casey Koyczan

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- 10–11 *Etexiitq ; Ehts'qq / Connected ; Apart From Each Other*, 2021, Installation, 914 x 194
- 12–13 *Etexiitq ; Ehts'qq / Connected ; Apart From Each Other*, 2021, Installation, 914 x 194
- 14–15 *Etexiitq ; Ehts'qq / Connected ; Apart From Each Other*, 2021, Installation, 914 x 194
- 16–17 *Etexiitq ; Ehts'qq / Connected ; Apart From Each Other*, 2021, Installation, 914 x 194

Photographs by: Robert Szkilnicki and Karen Asher

Mahsa Merci

- 19 *Waited*, 2021, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6
- 20 *Sofia and Tirdad* (detail), 2021, oil on canvas, mirrors, false eyelashes on MDF, 50.8 x 40.6
- 21 *Sofia and Tirdad*, 2021, oil on canvas, mirrors, false eyelashes on MDF, 50.8 x 40.6
- 22–23 *Angle of Self* (detail), 2020, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6
- 24 *I Am Carrying My Beauty Everywhere*, 2021, mixed media, 94 x 71.1 x 35.6
- 25 *Find Yourself Through Myself*, 2021, mixed media, 71.2 x 66 x 40.6
- 26 (tl) *Sunset* (detail), 2021, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6
- 26 (tr) *Sunset*, 2021, oil on canvas, 50.8 x 40.6
- 26 (b) *Taking Rest* (detail), 2020, oil on canvas, 35.6 x 28
- 27 *Taking Rest*, 2020, oil on canvas, 35.6 x 28

Images courtesy of the artist

Hye Yeon Shin

- 29 *Ant Cave* (detail), 2021, acrylic and collage on aluminum, 180.3 x 350.5
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- 32 (t) *Ant Cave* (detail), 2021, acrylic and collage on aluminum, 180.3 x 350.5
- 32 (b) *Ant Cave* (detail), 2021, acrylic and collage on aluminum, 180.3 x 350.5
- 33 (t) *Ant Cave* (detail), 2021, acrylic and collage on aluminum, 180.3 x 350.5
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- 34–35 *Shelter*, 2021, installation, mixed media, dimensions variable
- 36 (t) *Shelter* (detail), 2021, installation, mixed media, dimensions variable
- 36 (b) *Shelter* (detail), 2021, installation, mixed media, dimensions variable
- 37 *Shelter* (detail), 2021, installation, mixed media, dimensions variable

Photographs by: Christine Church

Julianna Zwierciadłowska-Rhymer

- 39 *High Tea Delight, Table Manners series* (detail), 2021, ceramic, 56 x 30 x 30
- 40–41 *Table Manners*, 2021, ceramic and mixed media, 457 x 91 x 91
- 42 (t) *Table Manners*, 2021, ceramic and mixed media, 457 x 91 x 91
- 42 (b) *Wild Appetite, Table Manners series* (detail), 2021, ceramic, 26 x 20 x 20
- 43 *Restricted Diet, Table Manners series* (detail), 2021, ceramic, 30 x 25 x 25
- 44–45 *Table Manners* (detail), 2021, ceramic and mixed media, 457 x 91 x 91
- 46 *Table Manners* (detail), 2021, ceramic and mixed media, 457 x 91 x 91
- 47 (tl) *Discount Meat, Table Manners series*, 2021, ceramic, 53 x 30 x 30
- 47 (tr) *Stomach Flu, Table Manners series*, 2021, ceramic, 22 x 12 x 11.4
- 47 (b) *Cupcakes, Table Manners series* (detail), 2020–21, ceramic, dimensions variable

Images courtesy of the artist

