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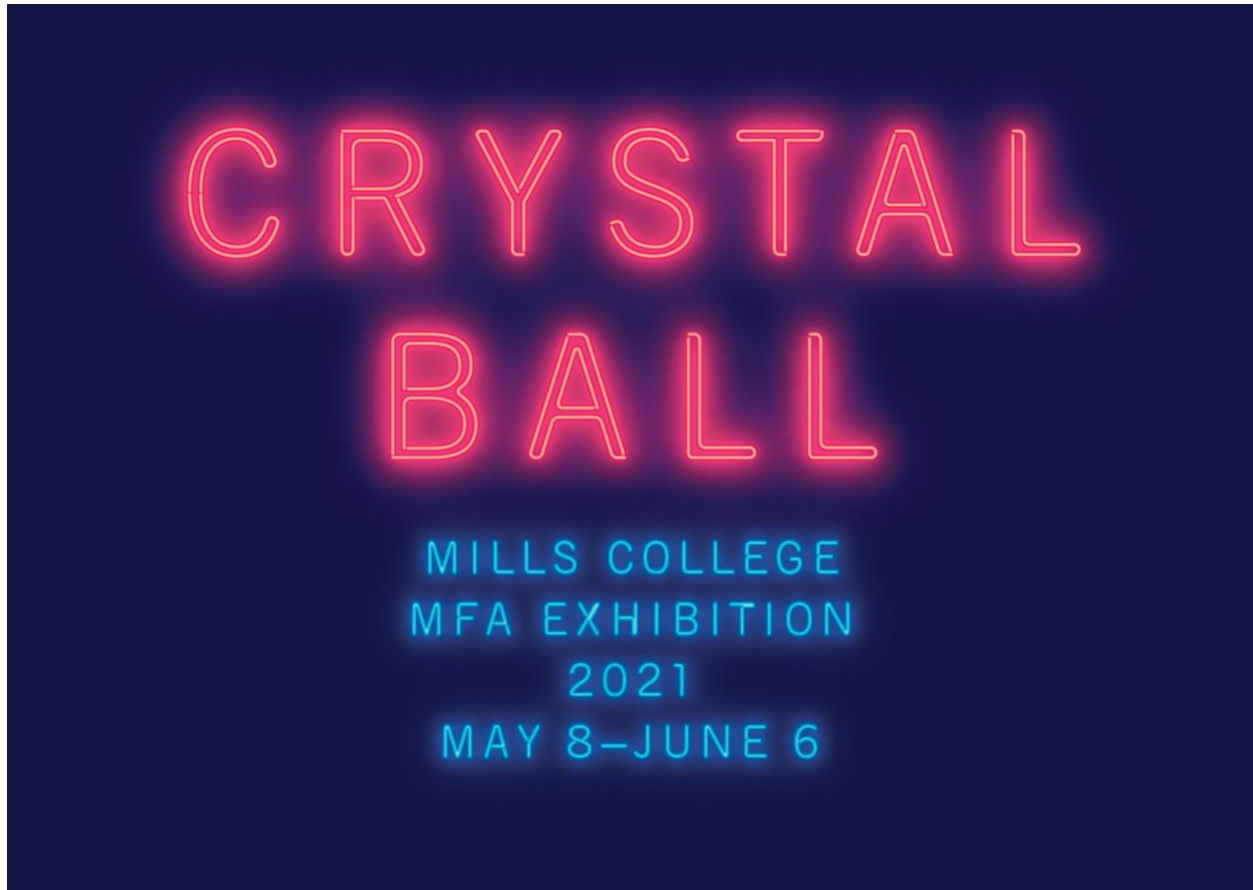


Image design by John Borruso and Thiago Mendes

CRYSTAL BALL

2021 MILLS COLLEGE MFA EXHIBITION

MAY 8-JUNE 6, 2021

[PRESS KIT](#)

VIRTUAL OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, MAY 14, 2021 | 6:00-7:00 PM | [EVENTBRITE](#)

Oakland, CA (April 12, 2021) — Mills College Art Museum (MCAM) is pleased to announce *Crystal Ball: 2021 Mills College MFA Exhibition*, on view from May 8-June 6, 2021. The annual MFA exhibition presents the work of graduating MFA candidates from Mills College's esteemed Studio Art program. This year's featured artists are Laura DeAngelis, Ashley Garr, Sveta Gayshan, Sylvia Hughes-Gonzales, Marlys Mandaville, Thiago Mendes, Kara Nelson, Alexandru Salceanu, and Beau Thomas.

Presented as a group exhibition in MCAM's historic main gallery, *Crystal Ball* showcases a final body of work from each graduate, curated by museum director Stephanie Hanor and Mills College's distinguished studio art faculty. Commanding a range of strategies—photography, sculpture, installation, performance, video and more—these emerging artists venture into fresh conceptual and material terrain, confronting critical subjects such as climate change, immigration, identity, hardship, and loss.

THE ARTISTS

Laura DeAngelis relates her art practice to a meditation on *being* in the world. Rooted in performance and the body, her work responds to lived experience through gesture and repetition. Deeply influenced by her home in the redwood forest, she sources material from her surroundings as a means to better understand her relationship to time and place.

Ashley Garr carves a path toward a broader awareness of how the changing conditions of our environment impact the living world. Motivated by climate change and the recent California wildfires, she observes and investigates nature with a playful approach. Through this work, Garr offers a glimpse of a subsurface world, allowing life to be observed and the undiscovered attainable.

Sveta Gayshan was born in the former Soviet Union, and moved with her family to the United States as refugees in the early 1990s. She has a background in printmaking and analog filmmaking, and often works in multiples. Her current work explores propagation as a medium, how propagated plants and plant matter can exist in forced environments, and how found materials can apply a critical lens to humanity's usage of resources.

Sylvia Hughes-Gonzales works in sculpture and social actions to address themes of celebration, destruction, and the ways they intersect. She makes objects, installation, and utilizes procession in urban spaces to explore invisibility, hospitality, loss, and the power of collective grief.

Marlys Mandaville starts a painting as any painter would: by stapling a canvas to the wall and priming it. Then they cut the canvas into forms that they paint, twist, glue, velcro, and drape. Working to create immersive environments, they find themselves at the intersection of painting and video: they animate oil paintings on a green screen, use stop motion to capture velcro paintings morphing over time, and program visuals in Max. Combining Max patches with vocals, Ableton sounds, field recordings, and sounds synthesized from Mills' Moog, they make music.

In Brazil there's an expression commonly used when people have difficult problems or situations to solve: Having to peel a pineapple. The pineapple appears in **Thiago Mendes's** art as a sign to talk about Brazilian struggles and hardships like violence, identity, colonization and massive inconsequential parties. Through paintings, sculptures and installations he is implying a redefinition of the perception about the tropical, called Tropical Dark.

Kara Nelson's work explores intergenerational stress and witchhood. She investigates the systematic oppression of womxn through the archetype of the witch. Using a language of ritual and craft, her practice highlights healing, repair, and growth.

Stemming from personal experience, **Alexandru Salceanu** explores the ways in which the past influences the present and how it impacts immigration. His work addresses the legacies of political ideologies, the systemic effects of legislation, and the cultural impact of globalization. Juxtaposing the dissonance of political and economic theory with the intimacy of lived experience, he stitches together historical facts and personal accounts through photography, video, social practice, and mixed media.

Beau Thomas creates found object sculptures and mixed media paintings by sourcing natural materials and discarded items. Through the inextricable merger of the synthetic and the organic in his artwork, he alludes to a reality that cannot be filtered.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Visit mcam.mills.edu for details.

Virtual Opening Reception

Friday, May 14, 2021, 6–7PM | REGISTER: crystalballopingreception.eventbrite.com

Join us in celebrating the opening of *Crystal Ball*. Congratulate the MFAs on their tremendous accomplishment and wish them well on their artistic journey after graduation. This virtual event will include a 360-degree virtual gallery walkthrough accompanied by commentary from the artists.

Thiago Mendes | How to Draw a Perfect Pineapple

May 17, 2021, 6-7PM, Instagram Live: @millsartmuseum

In Brazil there's an expression commonly used when people have difficult problems or situations to solve: having to peel a pineapple. Join Thiago Mendes as he draws you the perfect pineapple, an object that appears in his art as a sign to talk about Brazilian struggles and hardships.

Sylvia Hughes-Gonzales | Tinsel Dream

May 19, 2021, 6-7PM, Twitch Live Stream: twitch.tv/millsartmuseum

Sylvia Hughes-Gonzales works in sculpture and social action to address themes of celebration and destruction, and the ways they intersect. Through this live stream of tinsel shimmering, Sylvia will showcase one of her favorite materials to work with. Viewers are invited to observe and meditate on tinsel's alluring, garish, toxic, and ethereal qualities. The chat will be open for community engagement, and Q&A with Sylvia, for the duration of this performance.

Kara Nelson | Held In Teeth

May 26, 2021, 6-7PM, Zoom Event

Kara Nelson's divination pendulums are created to balance the anxiety of uncertainty and the comfort of perceived knowledge. Like Kara's other artworks exploring witchhood, her pendulum performances incorporate ritual and embrace what was once feared. This program will combine the serious practice of divination with candid, lighthearted interactions with the attendees. REGISTER: karanelson.eventbrite.com

About the Mills College Art Museum

Founded in 1925, Mills College Art Museum is a forum for exploring art and ideas and a laboratory for contemporary art practices. Through innovative exhibitions, programs, and collections, the museum engages and inspires the intellectual and creative life of the Mills community as well as the diverse audiences of the Bay Area and beyond. mcam.mills.edu

Museum hours will be Tuesday-Sunday 11:00am-4:00pm with timed tickets.

To reserve your ticket visit mcam.mills.edu

Admission is FREE for all exhibitions and programs unless noted.
