

James Madison University
School of Art Design
and Art History

MFA THESIS CATALOG

2022

CAMILLIA ELCI

HADEN KING

ANIKÓ SÁFRÁN



JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF ART, DESIGN, AND ART HISTORY

2022 **MFA THESIS CATALOG**



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

College of Visual and Performing Arts
Rubén Graciani, Dean

The Graduate School
Linda Thomas PhD, Dean

School of Art, Design, and Art History
Dr. Katherine Schwartz, Director

Duke Hall Gallery of Fine Art
Dr. Beth Hinderliter, Director

SADAH Graduate Program
Corinne Diop, Director

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THESIS COMMITTEES

Camillia Elci	Allyson Mellberg-Taylor, Chair Dymphna de Wild Hannah Sions PhD
Haden King	Lisa Tubach, Chair Kyle Hackett Dymphna de Wild
Anikó Sáfrán	Dymphna de Wild, Chair Kyle Hackett Beth Hinderliter PhD Greg Stewart

DR. KATHERINE A. SCHWARTZ

Director of the School of Art, Design, & Art History

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2021-22 MFA Graduate Exhibition. This catalogue documents the final thesis exhibitions of Camillia Elci, Haden King, and Anikó Sáfrán. These exceptional artists dedicated hundreds of hours to their research and studio practice, creating an exhibition that demonstrates their perseverance, integrity, and an honest exploration of ideas in a range of interdisciplinary media.

Camillia, Haden, and Anikó created work in response to the cultures and world they are living in, which includes: creating places to live and work during the global pandemic; the impact of consumerism on our lives and environment; and finding the balance between life responsibilities and making art. Their exhibitions challenge viewers to contemplate these issues, along with questioning our humanity in contemporary society: How do the things we collect shape our consciousness? How is our environment

impacted by our wants and needs? And, is it possible to focus on more than one thing at a time and still expect to be successful?

The questions raised in this exhibition reinforce the School's vision to radically transform ourselves and our communities through creative and scholarly work. Appreciation is extended to Professor Corinne Diop, Graduate Director, for the enormous contributions she brings to the program, and to the graduate faculty for serving as artist mentors. Curatorial assistance was provided by, Dr. Beth Hinderliter, Gallery Director, and we also thank Beth for managing the reception and the artist talks in the gallery. We thank Mia Greenwald for designing this beautiful catalogue; and Karen Gerard, Assistant to the Director, for managing the graduate files and budgets.

Warm congratulations are extended to Camillia, Haden, and Anikó for this inspirational exhibition. Thank you.

CORINNE DIOP

Director of Graduate Program in Studio Art

It feels like the time flew by since Camillia Elci, Haden King, and Anikó Sáfrán were starting their first semester of the MFA Program at JMU. They were all new faces in my Contemporary Art Theory class then, and here they are now with their Thesis Exhibitions completed! Their Thesis Monographs are headed to Scholarly Commons for the world to see, and the graduation hooding ceremony that honors MFA, PhD, and other terminal degree recipients will take place in just a few days.

In looking back, however, time felt slowed when the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic hit during their second semester in the program. Rather than returning to classes as usual after Spring Break 2020, classes pivoted online. The campus and even the streets of Harrisonburg remained nearly empty, the scheduled visiting artists and exhibitions took place only virtually, and even the Graduate End-of-Semester Reviews that typically feature an installation by each graduate student were canceled. For the second year, grads returned to their studios even though classes and programming were still weighted towards online meetings. It was a time of wearing masks, social distancing, constant hand-washing, and being careful at all times. While classes and other programming returned to fairly normal by their third year, the continued uncertainty about what might happen next persisted until the end.

I was impressed by the Graduate Faculty who continued to teach, mentor, and challenge the graduate students during this tenuous time, especially the Thesis Advisors: Dymph de Wild, Allyson Mellberg Taylor, and Lisa Tubach. Our School of Art, Design, and Art History Director, Dr. Kathy Schwartz, was also integral to providing leadership, stability, and a safe environment in the uncharted territory these three years took us through. This is her last year in this role before retirement; many congratulations to her, and she will be missed.

It was a pleasure to watch these three artists' intellectual, philosophical and artistic pursuits deepen each semester in spite of the challenges. Their remarkable resilience, persistence, and adaptability have been key to their success, and I am confident this success will continue throughout their lives!

The masks could finally come off the final weeks of their last semester, just in time to enjoy a catered reception at the thesis exhibition opening...

Congratulations to Camillia, Haden, and Anikó!



NEST

CAMILLIA ELCI

Nest was a self portrait through all the things I have collected both physically and mentally. I can clearly say that I needed to make this installation, I needed to imagine 1001 different ways it could be set up. I needed the act of gathering sticks, materials and my thoughts, individual layers of paint and fabrics to keep me up at night. The processes I have used as a ritual is what held my hand through this period of life. This nest was a way to bring all of my inner meanings together. My first focus for this piece was on the accumulation of materials which has been a part of my life and practice for a long time. I used to consider collecting as only the things I have found but when looking at *Nest* in its entirety I see that my purchased materials like tulle and paint are also constants in my life. Sometimes it's when I am in a lull and sometimes I know precisely what I am going to use them for. I might have used the word rescuing at one point to describe this practice—now I see it as recognizing myself in objects. Collections and Nests are synonyms in my practice. I kept thinking of opossums, and the way they collect materials for their den and I cant help but imagine that I must look similar dragging sticks and dead animals off the side of the highway.

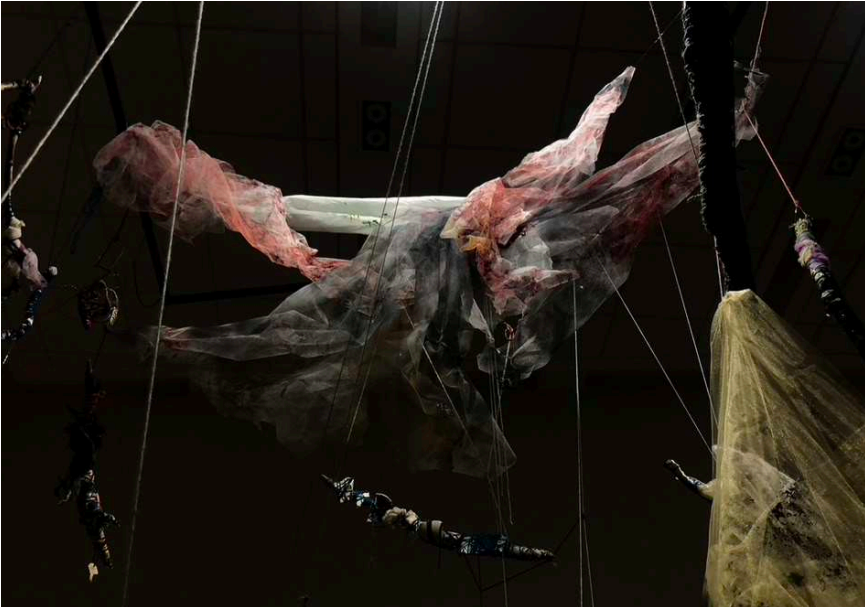
During my time in the MFA program I have been making the wrapped objects mostly out of tulle, yarn, and sticks, the objects that you see hanging from the grid and a few on the walls. Working with the repetitive motion of wrapping I was thinking of the inner layers vs. the outer, meaning the outside is what we present to the world and the inner is what I am assigning as the “true” self. So the parts poking through would be the parts of you that is not altered or filtered. They take on their own form depending on how tightly they are wound or how thick I made the inner layer. Another thought that I was grappling with last semester and again while I was installing is what is the difference between tangled and intertwined and why was it important for me to find out? I was able to work through this question physically during the installation. Intertwined is what we control, we intertwine our lives with others. It is when we have agency over our own lives and relations. I intertwined the tulle with the yarn, I intertwined the hanging grid with the pieces on the wall. Tangled is what happens when I lose that agency and allow life to happen to me. I realized through install, both are okay as long as I can see which parts I constructed and which parts happened on their own.



things are a part of me now

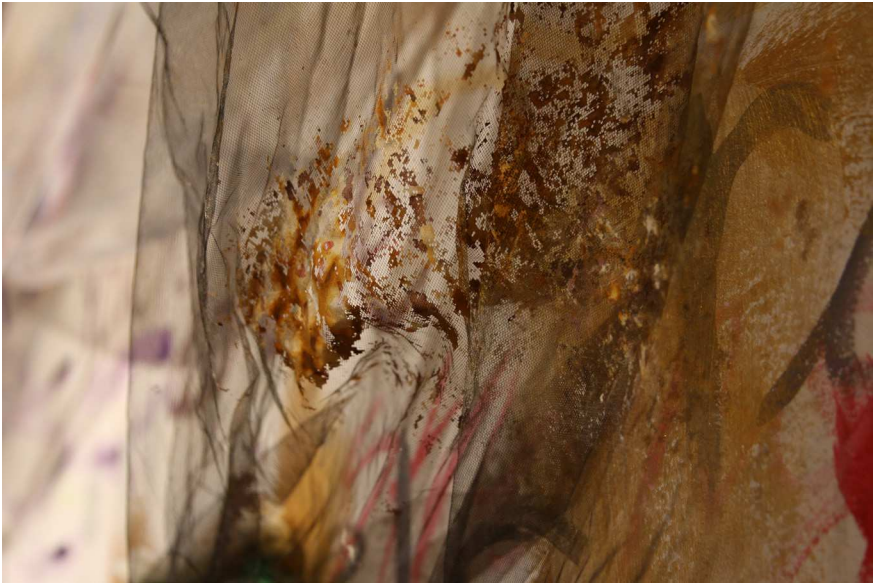
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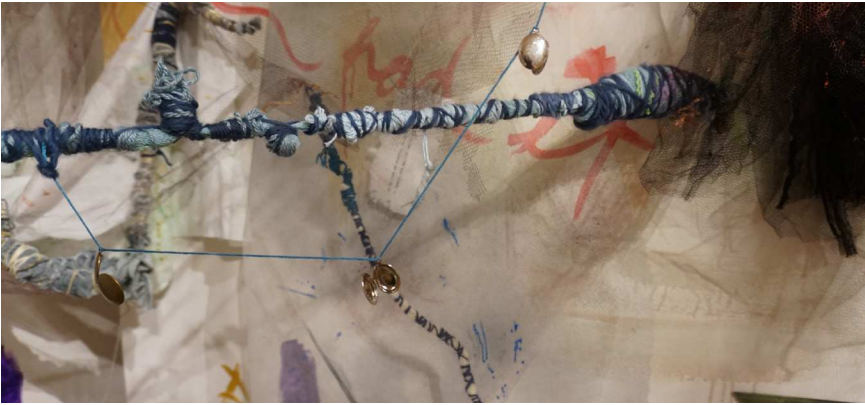














MORE THAN JUST FOOD

HADEN KING

Our relationship with the natural world--as it relates to our production of food--is complex. Drawing inspiration from principles of regenerative agriculture, my paintings explore the dynamics and perceptions surrounding food, health, and a sustainable future. I deliberately use idealized images--some of which comes from corporate marketing campaigns--to examine the tension between what is real and what is fake.



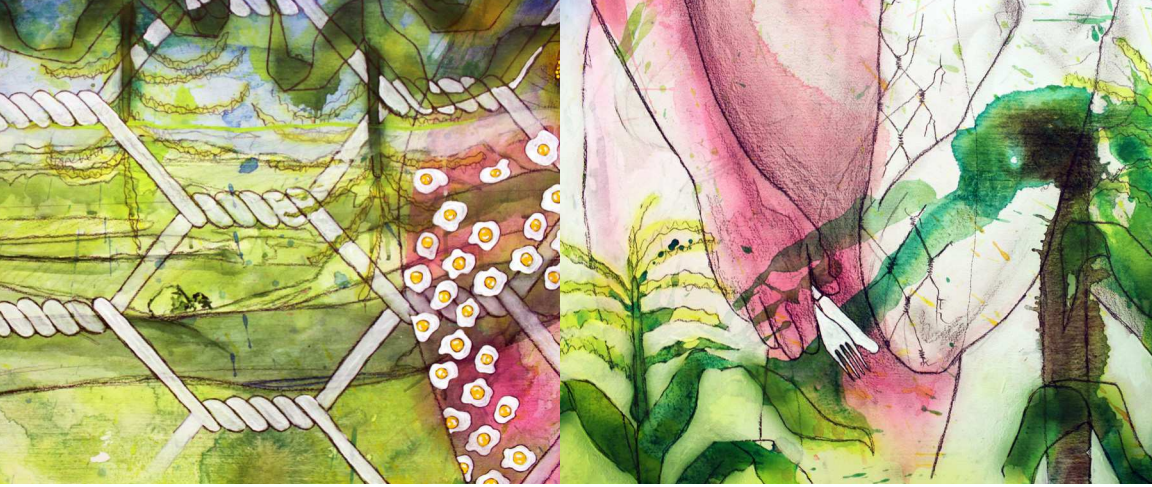
More Than Just Food

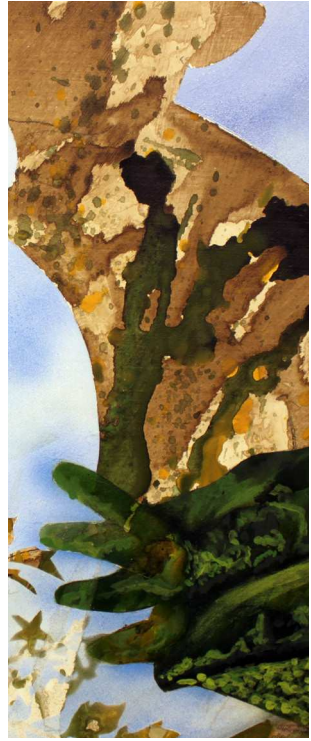
Haden King / MFA Thesis Exhibition

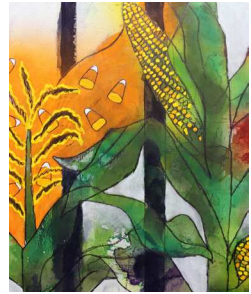
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SPINNING PLATES

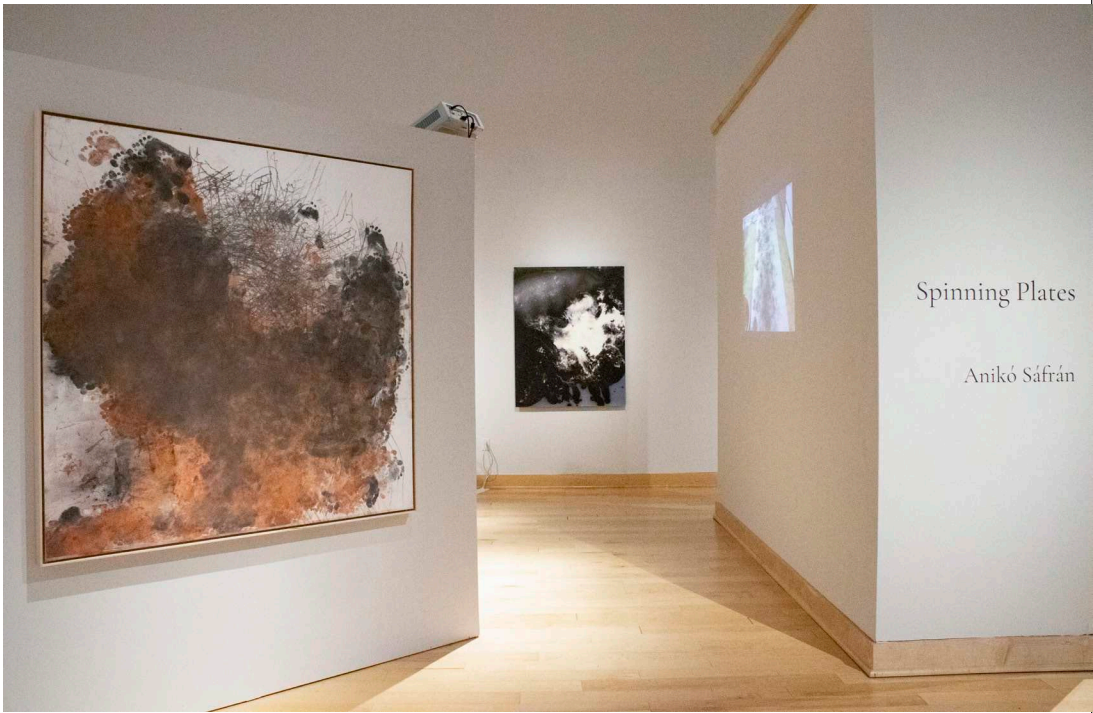
ANIKÓ SÁFRÁN

My studio and home are separated by a short distance rather than function. The line I drew between my work and home lives is now a blurry gray smudge. I use remnants of my family's routine lives as material to create my art. These traces of our existence, indications of our consumption, and evidence of our waste result from patterns that repeat daily. I make lumen prints with our food waste by laying the food scraps on the photo paper and putting it out in the sun for hours, days, or weeks. I create watercolors with my daily tea and husband's coffee, marking the passage of time - a year of tea on twelve pieces of paper. I use my body as a tool, tracking my movements in a confined space over time with charcoal, graphite, and pigmented powders. We were here. This is what we ate and drank, how we moved, how we lived, made messes, blurred lines.

Meanwhile, my home life incorporates my artmaking rituals and sacred spaces. "Don't put anything on this tray. It is my art." And I guard that tray as if it were something over which I have total control. I forged through my final year of graduate school as a sleep-deprived solo parent of an exuberant child while my husband went on ahead to put down stakes in our next home, New York City.

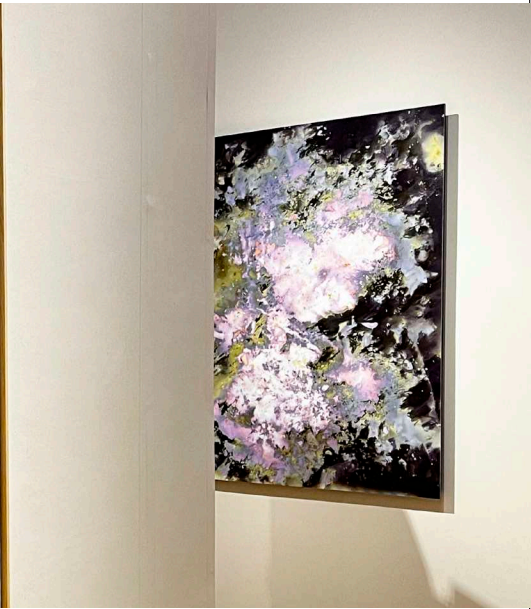
I started my multitasking series before the pandemic because, like many, I felt burdened by having too much to do in too little time. When it comes to housework and childcare, even though the role of the male partner in hetero relationships is more egalitarian than it used to be, data shows that women are still putting more time into housework than men - up to twice as much time, even when they have a professional occupation, and most do. Besides making art, I need to exercise, manage the household, arrange playdates and violin lessons, mow the lawn, and bake beautiful birthday cakes. I want to do all and be all. I say "yes" more often than I ought to, and it feels like spinning plates. At any moment, I might have to dash to catch a falling plate before it hits the floor.

The pandemic only intensified all of this by throwing us together, a multitasking family in a confined space, learning and working remotely. My daughter (and pets) entered my work - metaphorically, literally, and as a constraint on the range of materials I could use. Now, no longer under lockdown, but with my co-parent out of town, my adaptive method of artmaking has remained in place. I am creating art about multitasking out of necessity. It is not only about multitasking; it is multitasking. My daughter still enters my work. Rather than viewing her presence as an intrusion, I embrace her presence as essential to my work. And it is.

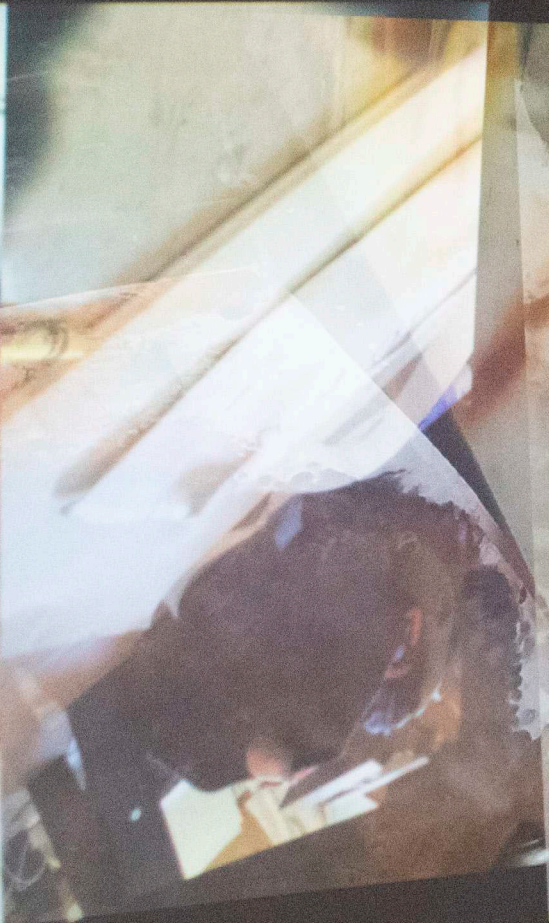
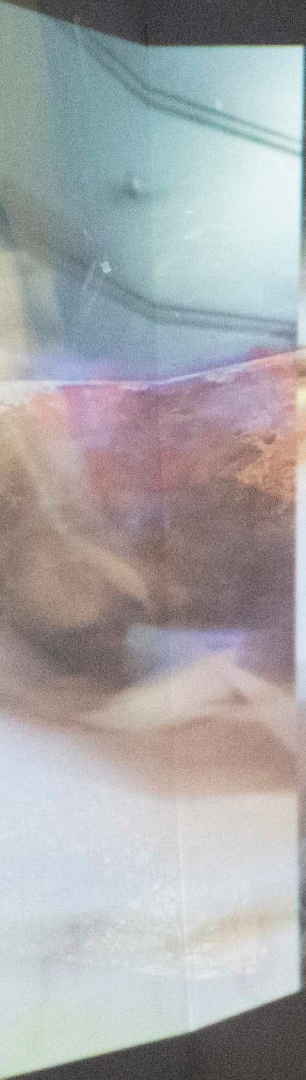


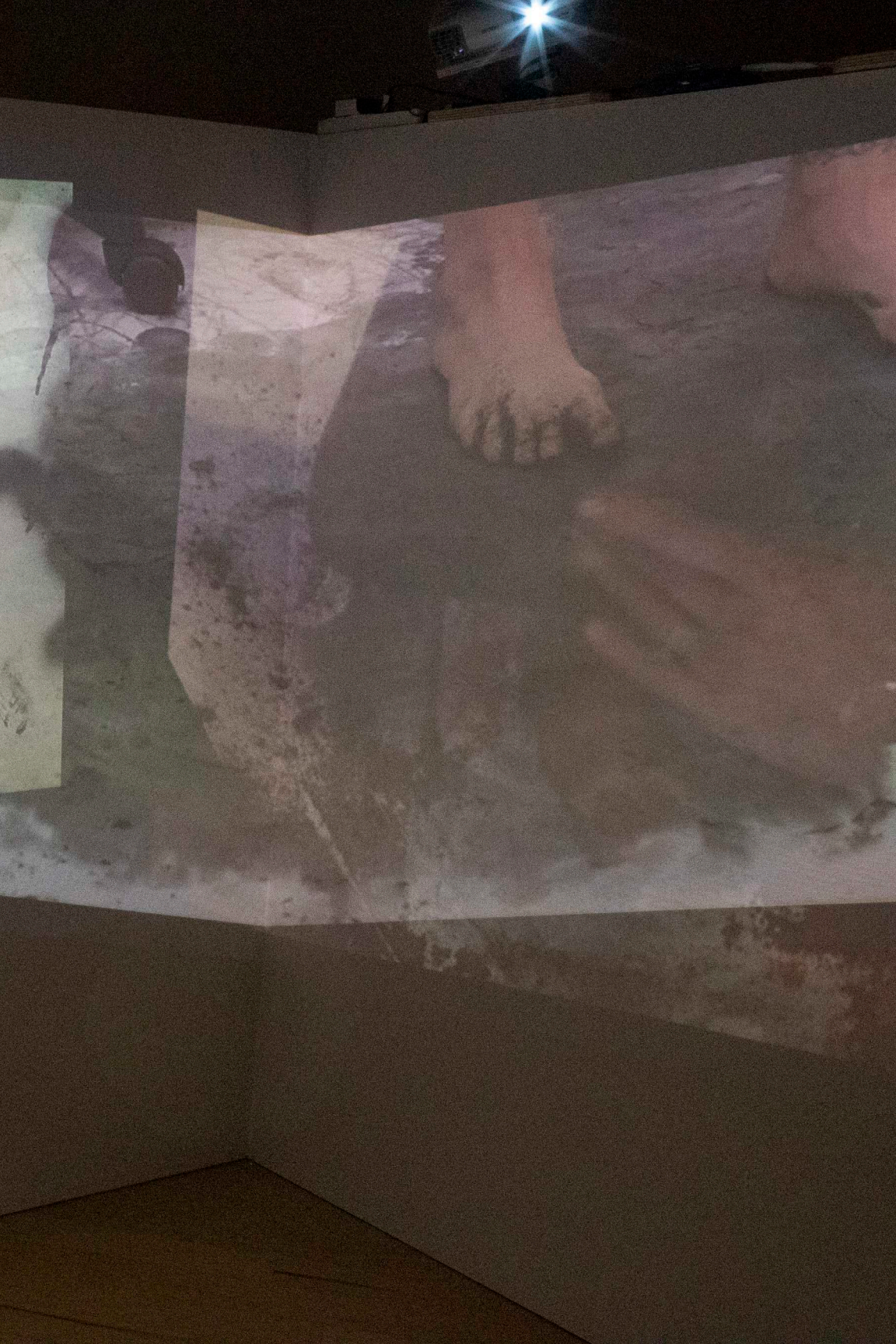
Spinning Plates

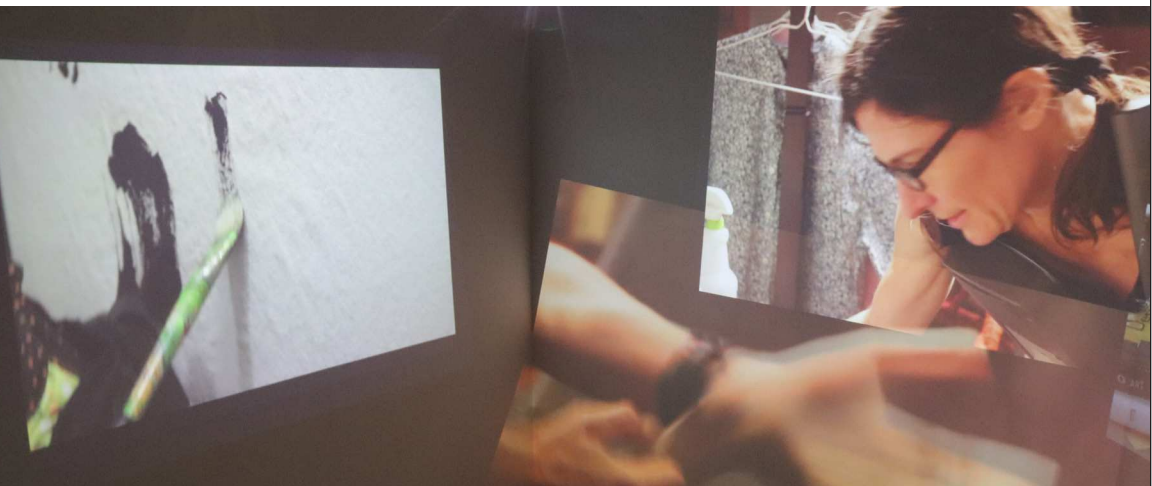
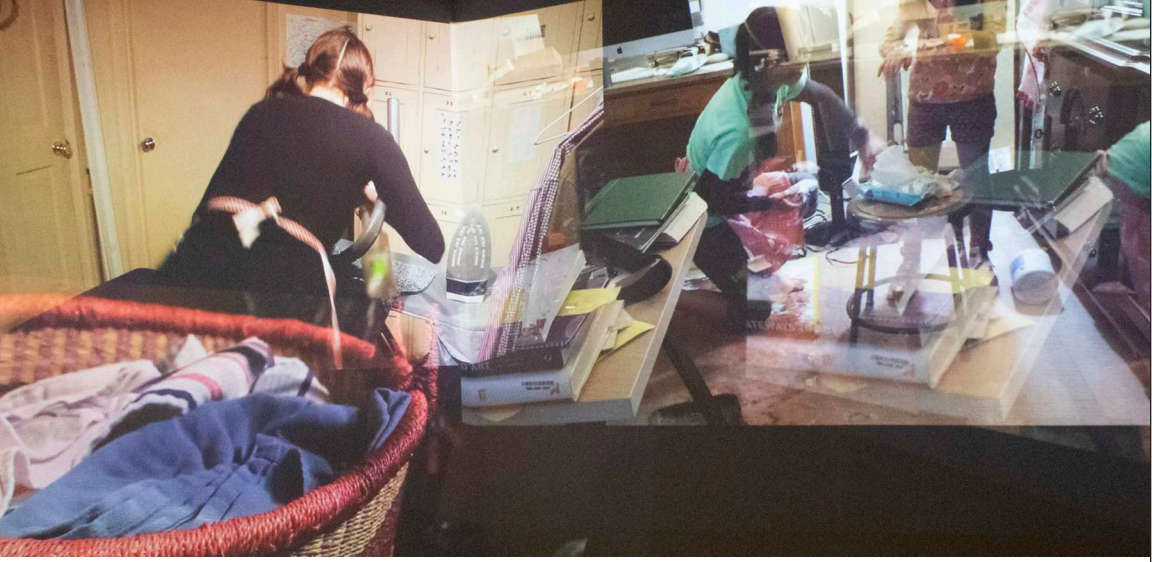
Anikó Sáfrán

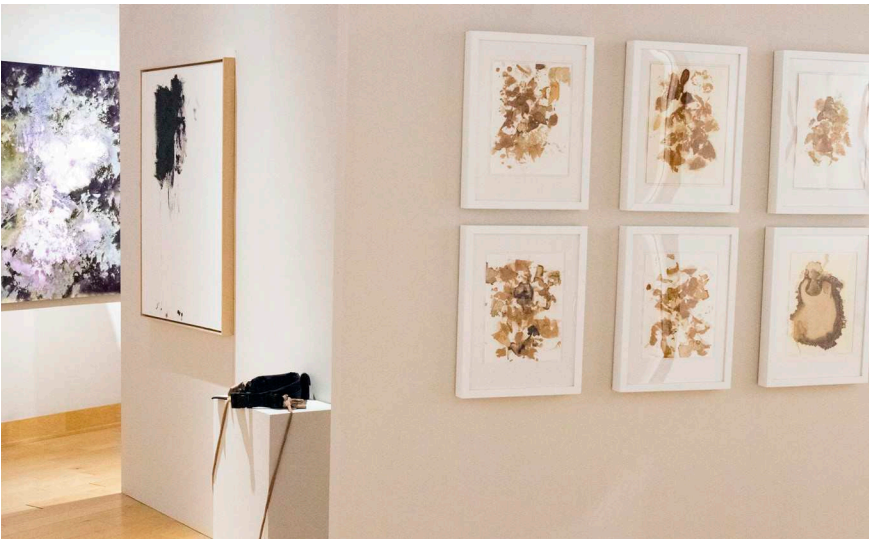




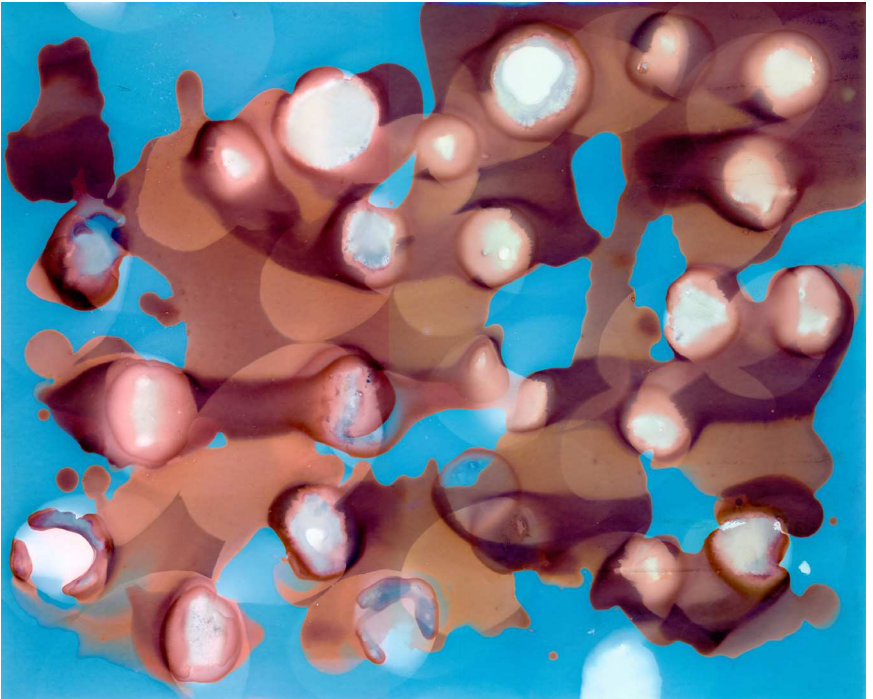














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