

UNWAVERING

FIRST ANNUAL ALUMNI EXHIBITION ROCKY MOUNTAIN COLLEGE OF ART + DESIGN

JUNE 23 - SEPTEMBER 1, 2023

OPENING RECEPTION: FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 4 P.M. - 7 P.M.

"Art is all about starting again."

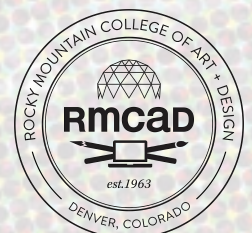
David Bayles, *Art and Fear: Observations on the Perils (and Rewards) of Artmaking*

Through diverse media and practices, Unwavering pays homage to the creative achievements of RMCAD alumni, coinciding with the 60th Anniversary of the college. Just as waves emerge from the gravitational pull of the moon, these talented alumni emerged from the nurturing environment of the college, pulled by their commitment to a career in the arts.

An artist's creative endeavors can face challenges, setbacks, and doubts; choosing a career in the arts is not an easy path. Yet, this group of alumni have continued to invest in their practice, again, and again, and again. The key is continuation. The end of one creative pursuit must swell into the next wave, the next artwork, the next pitch, the next design. This exhibit celebrates the artists' and designers' unwavering dedication to their work and practice.

From Lucas T. McMahon's mixed media landscapes evoking loneliness and aloneness, to a reckoning and embrace of identity in works by Steve Riederer and Jesse Ryan Crosby, to those who have pivoted their careers from their original field of study and launched thriving businesses, the exhibit embodies the vast range of artistic expression and creative growth of RMCAD alumni in the waves of the post-academic ocean.

Unwavering features artwork from ten dedicated graduates from a variety of graduating classes and degree programs including Blake Chamness (2009, Illustration), Jesse Ryan Crosby (2020, Photography), Whitney Grimm (2021, Graphic Design), Lin Wen-Ben (2016, Fine Arts), Lucas T. McMahon (2014, Fine Arts), Daryll Peirce (2000, Visual Art), Jade Ariana Phillips (2016, Fine Arts), Steve Riederer (2019, Illustration), Mike Sherrill (2004, Animation/Design), Denise Zubizarreta (2022, Fine Arts).



Blake Chamness
2016 | Fine Arts

My painting practice is driven by fascination and curiosity. I become captivated by something, usually from my lifelong interests of science fiction, nature, oddities, and storytelling. Skeletons and plants are endlessly explorable to me because of their different embodiments of beauty. They also represent the perpetuating cycle of life and death. Rather than humans, I usually prefer painting subjects that dodge the weight and preconceptions of race, gender, and other factors that can divide or group us. This allows the work to be interpreted more universally. Overall, the goal of my artwork is to haunt you, to give you the feeling of a stirring poem, song, or horror movie.

After graduating Rmcd in December 2009, I enrolled at MSU Denver to earn my K-12 art teaching license. The 2013-2014 school year was my first full-time teaching job and since then I've taught middle school and high school art. I currently teach art at Mountain Range High School in Westminster, Colorado.

Since graduating, it's been important to me to pursue my own art practice and to participate in the vibrant Denver arts community. Until recently I mostly focused on acrylic and watercolor painting, showing my work as a member at Next gallery for nine years. In 2021, I decided to pivot towards writing, illustrating, and publishing my own comics. I have started two series: *Sentience*, an ongoing science fiction robot story, and *Distortion*, a solo anthology of comics, poetry, and illustration. Copies can be purchased through my website, bachamness.com.



(left to right)

Sentience no. 2 Cover Art
2022
20" x 16"
acrylic on paper

Distortion no. 1 Illustration
2022
20" x 16"
acrylic on canvas

Adrift
2021
20" x 16"
acrylic on canvas

Jesse Ryan Crosby
2016 | Fine Arts

Jesse is a multimedia visual artist and poet, currently residing in the Midwest. They are a graduate of Rocky Mountain College of Art & Design, magna cum laude, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography. Their work spans a variety of mediums, including photographic media, large scale painting, avant-garde video, and creative writing. Resting between intersections of grief and personal healing, Jesse's work explores deep-seated themes of identity, gender, memory, moment, and place (re: belonging.)

Their work has been showcased in both online and physical exhibitions and galleries across the United States of America, such as Lenscratch, the Colorado Photographic Arts Center and Revolve Gallery at Ramp Studios, among many others. Their work has been published domestically and internationally, with recent features in Fifth Wheel Press, The Alchemy Experiments "It'll Be Alright," in Glasgow, UK, University of Baltimore's Literary Journal, Welter, Float Magazine, and several other digital and physical publications.

Jesse is presently involved with the local art scene in Denver, and you can routinely find them at curated art markets and events. Their self-published book, "Unlocking Hope," will be released this year.

<https://jesseryancrosby.com/>



(left to right)

Homecoming Diptych

2023

*Polaroid Color 600 Film, handwriting, original text
Archival Pigment Print*

Testosterone Still Life

2022

Polaroid Color 600 Film, archival pigment print

The Sun Rises And Falls With You

2022

Fuji Instax film, archival pigment print

Shot Day, Triptych

2023

Polaroid 600 Black & White film, archival pigment print

Hold Tight

2023

30 x 40 inches

original poem, acrylic on gesso primed canvas

**My Transness is the sweet nectar
of love and lemonade skies...**

2023

30 x 40 inches

*Excerpt from original poem "I AM,"
Acrylic on gesso primed canvas*

Whitney Grimm
2016 | Fine Arts

I'm a Colorado native who moved to LA in 2012 to find out who I was and what my gifts and skills were, and to explore the world around me. While there, I met many people in the fashion and creative industries who helped open doors and showed me how diverse these industries are. I was immediately drawn to visual merchandising, wardrobe styling, graphic design, screen printing, painting, etc.

Since RMCAD, I've been traveling the world, freelance graphic designing, doing commissioned art pieces in the states and internationally. I'm growing as an artist, designer, wife, friend, sister, daughter, and human being. Discovering who I am as an artist has been challenging, fun, and therapeutic. I walk a fine line of having a creative brain and [an] analytical brain. All the things I learned living in LA, Austin, traveling the world, and RMCAD have helped shape my voice and the stories I want to tell through my choice of medium. I've been doing commissioned work locally, by word of mouth, and off Instagram, but I'd also love to be hosted by different businesses, collectives, or galleries locally or around the United States.

My style is simple, clean, graphic shapes, textural, monochromatic/neutral colors with an occasional pop of color. I paint with my emotions. I feel it and see it on each canvas I create. I've been dabbling in using found materials and objects in some of my different pieces.

<https://www.whitneygrimmcreative.com/>



(left to right)

Untitled Series (no. 16, 5, 14, 12, 11)
2016 - 2023
mixed media on canvas

Lin Wen-Ben
2016 | Fine Arts

Ben Alderman, also known as Lin Wen-Ben, was adopted as an adolescent from Taiwan. Graduated with a degree in experimental animation from the Royal College of Art. He is an animation director as well as a fine artist. His works have been exhibited at Leon Gallery, Supernova Digital Animation Festival, Lakewood Cultural Center, and New American Painting No. 132.

In 2021, he was commissioned to do a projection mapping on the Lannie's Clock Tower in Denver, one of his most proud moments. In the future, he hopes to do creative projects for musicians, commercials for ethical organizations, and create moving images for art organizations.

<https://linwenben.com/>



(left to right)

Window to the Soul

2022

digital painting (R.I.P. 9 - 5 still)

Monopoly Man Sequence

2022

2D & 3D Animation (R.I.P. 9 - 5 excerpt)

~~**Mural Timeless Painting**~~

2022

digital painting (R.I.P. 9 - 5 still)

404 Not Found, Regeneration

2021

2D & 3D Animation (Comissioned by Denver Digerati)

R.I.P. 9 - 5

2022

2D & 3D Animation

Lucas T. McMahon
2014 | Fine Arts

Lucas T. McMahon is a visual artist living and working in Denver, Colorado. In 2014 he received his BFA in Painting from Rocky Mountain College of Art + Design. His work was featured in New American Paintings, # 114. He currently works as the 3D Studios Assistant at RMCAD.

I create serene deserts and desolate gardens, often haunted by lonesome subjects isolated within these environs. These scenes have been called both enigmatic and dour. These works explore ideas of fear, uncertainty, and separation, as well as our relationship to others and our surroundings. They are meditations on time and transformation, encapsulated in stillness.

In the work Passages, five clay tablets are each framed in wood with a white backdrop. The tablets depict singular objects rendered in low relief. Each object sits solitary in a unique landscape. They are within the landscape but not a part of it, they levitate, heavy and ethereal. The tablets are shaped like tombstones or arched windows. They wait, indeterminable for how long or how long for. The objects study the viewer.



Passages

2023

*wood, stain, polyurethane, paint, flocking,
ceramic clay, ceramic decal print*

Daryll Peirce

Originally born and raised in the Sierra Foothills near Reno, Nevada, I was enticed by the bigger, yet not entirely overwhelming city of Denver, which, nestled at the foot of familiar but even more mountainous peaks of the Rockies provided a formative place to attend art school. The location was also ideal in allowing me to feed my skateboarding and snowboarding habits which were of equal importance at the time.

I received my BFA in Advertising and Graphic Design from RMCAD in the last year of the previous millennium (1999!) and went straight to work for the local Ellen Bruss Design firm. Throughout this time and after I've always pursued congruous careers of fine art, painting, illustration, and mural work alongside my various design, animation and art/creative direction pursuits.

My dueling careers took me to San Diego, Oakland, back to Denver, then back to the Bay to my home of San Francisco where I have settled with my family for the past 12 years. Throughout this timeline my design career has included everything from visually supporting small local businesses to creating full campaigns for major studio films with too many varying experiences and roles to summarize.

Simultaneously, my fine art career has taken me from small local galleries, to the depths of NYC subway tunnels, to the fairs of Art Basel Miami, to showing around the world amidst a sea of adventure. Currently I am enjoying my new-ish venture of mixing my art, illustration, and design work into silkscreen posters for bands. I also enjoy being the creative director for a brewery in Lake Tahoe and continuing design and animation work for a digital agency in Berkeley, CA. I am always taking on small projects for friends as desired, or time allows. My fine art is a steady constant and I recently moved into a new studio space back home in SF.

<https://www.daryllpeirce.com/>



(left to right, top to bottom)

Mastodon, Seattle, 2018
18" x 24"
3 color silkscreen poster, \$50

Mudhoney, Seattle, 2022, Night 1
18" x 24"
4 color silkscreen poster, \$50

Mudhoney, Seattle, 2022, Night 2
18" x 24"
4 color silkscreen poster, \$50

Melvins, San Diego, 2017
18" x 24"
3 color glow-in-the-dark silkscreen poster, \$50

Highly Fungible
16" x 20"
5 color silkscreen print, \$40

Slack Tide
18" x 18"
Acrylic and ink on archival paper, \$1200

Gigantic: Cloudbursting
16" x 20"
Giclée print, \$50

*All prints can be purchased with
free shipping from [daryllpeirce.com](https://www.daryllpeirce.com)*

Ufomammut, Brooklyn, 2019
18" x 24"
5 color silkscreen poster, \$50

Melvins, Petaluma, 2020
18" x 24"
4 color silkscreen poster, \$50

Mudhoney, Cologne, 2019
18" x 24"
3 color silkscreen poster, \$50

Ufomammut, San Francisco, 2018
18" x 24"
3 color silkscreen poster, \$50

Jade Ariana Phillips
2016 | Fine Arts

Jade Ariana Phillips is an American artist currently living and working in Austin, Texas. She obtained a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design with Summa Cum Laude honors in 2016. In 2018, she received her Master of Art degree with an emphasis in Studio Art at Eastern Illinois University. She was awarded Distinguished Graduate of The Master of Arts program at Eastern Illinois University, and additionally maintained a teaching assistantship during that time.

She has shown her work across the United States, including Colorado, Illinois, and Texas. Her work has been the subject of many group exhibitions throughout the Midwest. Jade's imagery revolves around alternative portraiture, reflection, and self-contemplation.

We have a deep-rooted desire to see ourselves in a different light. In us lies an unspoken urge to observe ourselves; to be the object in the mirror that's looking back. My work embodies the skewed perspectives we have of ourselves. This imagery allows us to consider that the way we see ourselves is transitory, always under construction, and never a constant truth.

<http://www.jadearianaphillips.com>



Honey Pot
2018
48" X 36"
oil on panel

Steve Riederer
2019 | Illustration

When I was a kid, I was utterly fascinated with drawing. I'd draw cats, dogs flying planes, caricatures of my dad and countless other characters with charming features. I fondly remember making copies of my best works and sharing them with my family, and circulating them throughout the hallways of my parents' offices. While the subject matter changed frequently, there was always a common underlying theme of humor, and fun.

Steve attended RMCAD from 2016 through the spring of 2019, and graduated with a degree in illustration. He now works as an advertising specialist designing social media ads for a software company. He thoroughly enjoys freelance illustration/design work, and is a passionate ally/advocate for the LGBT community. He remains a giant nerd with current aspirations of writing a book and finding Denver's best pizza.

<https://stevedraws.com/>

In Between

Rarely have I drawn something that I've connected with so much as I did with this without throwing it out or deleting the file. This is/was personal for me - and every stroke/color was very deliberate.

The idea for this came from the concept of being "in the closet" and the inherent difficulty of putting gender into clean cut boxes. I wanted to reflect on the limitations of societal norms and expectations, and to embrace the beauty of authenticity. In a society that often pressures us to conform to narrow definitions of gender, this is a small reminder that true liberation comes from accepting our true selves, and that is no small feat.



In Between

2023

*digital painting on inkjet fabric banner,
door installation*

Mike Sherrill
2004 | Animation / Design

I graduated RMCAD with a BFA in Animation in 2004. Finding a job/career in Animation at that time was tricky to say the least, with a slim pick of studios and job positions available in that field. I shifted focus more toward graphical application of my art including illustrations, logos, custom paintings, and murals to stay busy and create while being able to stay in my home state of Colorado.

Staying motivated and inspired to continue my art path, I worked with many individuals on collaborative projects. It became clear to me that this was what I wanted to do, and working with friends and fellow creators was a pretty special thing that could be possible with the right people and ideas in mind.

We decided to establish one name and business that could encompass all the creative endeavors we were trying to accomplish: TH!S!. We created the entity of TH!S in 2012 and were able to use it as an outlet for any art, print and design projects we could drum up. With grassroots growth and a constant dedication to producing the highest quality and best outcome for any given project that came through our doors, we have been able to grow TH!S into a formidable Art, Print & Design firm for any customer or client that may be looking for a project here in Denver or anywhere in the country (and sometimes across the world!)

I'm gracious and lucky to have the opportunities to grow and provide my art throughout the years to all kinds of clients, brands and individuals. It all has come with hard work and a dedicated, positive attitude towards making and continuing to create better and better art with each new step in my life. I have learned many things about the industry and business process of it all through my years at RMCAD and throughout my career in the art, print & design field.

<https://www.thisproject.net/>



(left to right)

Go Fly a Kite
Squirt Gun Commando
Ready, Swing, Fire
2014

*newsprint, acrylic paint, spray paint,
woodcut attachments on panels*

Denise Zubizarreta
2022 | Fine Arts

Denise “The Vamp DeVille” Zubizarreta is a neurodivergent Puerto Rican + Cuban multidisciplinary creative, researcher, and scholar currently living and working in Arvada, CO with a BFA in Fine Art from the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design. She currently focuses her writing on arts and culture for both Hyperallergic and Southwest Contemporary. Her mixed media works explore post-colonial theory through traditions, memories, and contemporary life that are blended in her work to honor, reclaim, as well as, reinvent narratives of the past, present, and future.

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<https://www.thevampdeville.com>
<https://www.bohitibotanica.com>



Bohiti Botanica Product Display
2023

*bath salts, essential oils, soap, muscle balm
serum, clay, lip balm, face wash, cleanser*