



UIC 2025 MFA Thesis Show  
April 1–26, 2025  
Gallery 400  
400 S Peoria Street

M. Carson Day, Laurel Hauge,  
Lisa Marie Malloy, Dante Moore,  
Jeff Rivers, Sheldon Till-Campbell,  
Zulkhairi Zulkiflee, olivier



# *Nate Young,* *Dean of Graduate Studies* *Introduction*

Chat GPT,

Please write me a 200 word blurb describing clarifying critically analyzing an art exhibition. The exhibition consists of 8 artists who are curated together not through a thematic concept, rather their proximity is an occurrence enrolment in an Master of Fine Arts Program and therefore arbitrary. The exhibition's title "The Closest to the Future We Ever Got," does offer some insight into the time this young cohort of contemporary artists exists within. Pessimistic is a word that I would use to describe the general tone, not of the work itself or even the content that the work produces, but the subjects that they use to generate questions and propositions. Works defy recognition while simultaneously inviting our projection of stability. They refer to/predict future calamity that seems to be happening at the moment. In some of the work I read a desire to loosen the stability of language to define place, identity, subjecthood or even art itself. But this is not a pessimism that sits on its hands. It is an active pessimism and in its activeness one might even call optimistic. The future seems to be right in front of us simultaneously promising utopia and disaster. As it moves we appear to move. Closer . . . closer. But it's slippery, always just about the same distance from the current moment. Why then does it seem like we are closer to all that it offers than ever before.

Thank you  
Nate

*The Closest to the Future We Ever Got* brings together eight artists whose collective presence is defined not by shared themes but by a shared moment—concurrent enrollment in an MFA program. Their proximity is circumstantial, yet the exhibition conjures a distinct mood: a generational tone that feels shaped by looming uncertainty. The title offers a clue—a poetic paradox that suggests we are always nearly arriving, never quite arriving, at the future.

The works gathered here do not cohere around a common aesthetic or medium, but instead circle around subjects that feel unstable, ungraspable, urgent. They resist easy interpretation while inviting projection. Language, identity, and place are rendered slippery—sites of inquiry rather than resolution. There is a sense of calamity already underway, not foretold. But this is not a cynical show. The artists engage with collapse actively, even urgently, as if through the act of making they might puncture inevitability. What emerges is a kind of active pessimism—one that performs its own resistance.

We might not be closer to utopia or disaster, but we feel closer. The future hovers—unfixed, flickering. We reach toward it, and it recedes. Still, the reach matters.

- Chat GPT

# M. Carson Day



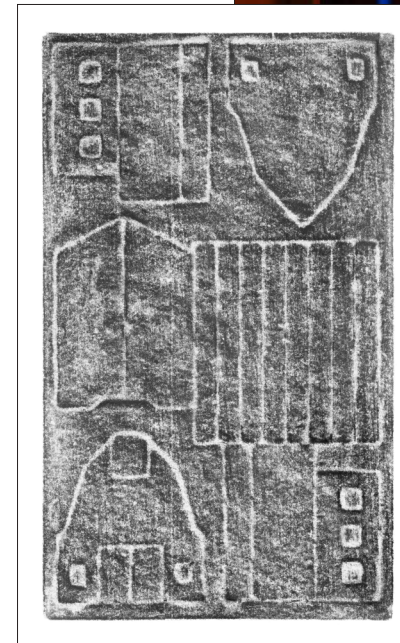
I am interrogating capitalism with poetics and deadpan humor.

Invoking my professional experience as a fabricator, my practice attempts to find the median between prop comedy and critical theory. Deeply inspired by class politics and professional wrestling but overwhelmed by the spectacle, the found-object becomes my vessel of concerns, acting as the physical junction of art, work, value, class, Americana, and satire.

Pieces are generated from stream-of-consciousness writing, associative thought-spirals, and obnoxious wordplay. Materially, the source-object or source-text dictates the form of the end result. However, my tendencies toward printmaking are insistent: work of any medium is developed through layering physical and conceptual processes that intend to question the "voice" of the artwork by distancing the hand from the idea and toying with the malleable presentation of fiction found in wrestling's own "kayfabe." The outcome is often slippery and circular in its positions, wondering which expectations to subvert—objects become monuments to their own objecthood, criticisms of their own purpose, punchlines to their own jokes.

My most recent body of work, *Our Towne™*, toes the perimeter of theater by expanding a hobby model kit into narrative space wherein it becomes the setting, the lead performer, and the stage.

*a pie left cold Our Towne™*, 2024,  
installation with audio

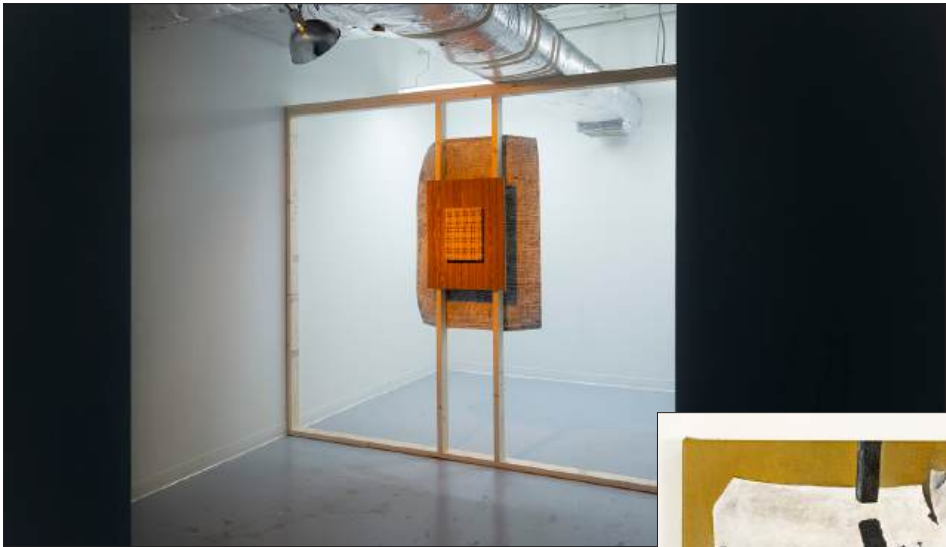


*barn*, 2024, graphite on paper and  
plywood, 9 × 16.5 inches

M. Carson Day is a multi-disciplinary artist and fabricator from the heart of America. Since then, he has spent over a decade working as an artist assistant and fabricator in both Los Angeles and Chicago and has studied art at Indiana University, Glasgow School of Art, Scuola Internazionale di Grafica in Venice, Italy and the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC). In 2025, Day is slated to have a solo exhibition at Comfort Station in Chicago.

@mcarsonday | mcdaystudio.net

*Our Towne™ Activation 2*, 2023, wooden studs, flannel on wood paneling, upholstery nails, double-sided graphite rubbing



*shadow poem*, 2023, acrylic on canvas, 10 × 13 inches



*a pie left cold in Our Towne™ (detail)*, 2024, installation with audio



*a pie left cold in Our Towne™ (installation view)*, 2024, installation with audio



# Laurel Hauge



Through the absurd, perpetual, and contractual world of exchange, my practice exposes systems of power which many take for granted. I rely on pre-existing frameworks which give the illusion of participation or on other agents expected to hold up their end of a contract—written or social. Through the deployment of administrative structures—such as hold music, ethics certifications, and CHI311 City Service Requests—my work subverts familiar concepts of artistic production. In the face of art's (mostly unrealized) potential to drive positive change, I deliberately engage with inefficient systems contrived to "better" the community, city, or world, but which predominantly generate traceable outcomes that end up in tidy piles of statistics.

The activities often delegated to staff, aides, and assistants constitute my practice. I prepare documents, file requests, complete training, place phone calls, send emails, etc.; all actions familiar to most anyone working a desk job. So what happens when an artist's practice is principally not only what someone else could do, but what many people already do every day? My occupation may look a lot like someone else's, but so far the return isn't much more than self satisfaction, if that.

Installation view of *Public Drop-off Point*, 2025-ongoing



Laurel Hauge (b. 1994) is a professional with nine years of experience as an underling and seven berets in her closet. She was an artist-in-residence at Viafarini in Milan, Italy, and has exhibited in group exhibitions in venues on both sides of the Atlantic. In 2024, she had a solo show at The Plan, Chicago, IL. Hauge holds a BA from Columbia College Chicago and is the co-founder of Have a Nice Day Press.

@laurelhauge | laurelhauge.com

Installation view of *Public Drop-off Point*, 2025-ongoing



Opposite page :  
*Retail Portrait (JCPenny-01)*, 2025





Installation view of *Public Drop-off Point*, 2025-ongoing

LAUREL HAUGE  
6027914343  
LAUREL HAUGE  
26 WILSON AVE, APT 3L  
BROOKLYN NY 11237

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Shipping label from *Public Drop-off Point*, 2025-ongoing



Installation view of *Public Drop-off Point*, 2025-ongoing



Installation view of *Public Drop-off Point*, 2025-ongoing

# Lisa Marie Malloy



My film and object-based practice engages nonlinear time, myth, and place. Drawing on science fiction, acoustic archives, and site-specific environmental research, I construct narratives that bridge human and nonhuman worlds. I rely on listening and play as acts of care, resistance, and attunement—ways of addressing the afterlife of systemic violence by cultivating intergenerational and cross-cultural relationships.



Install view of *Love is the Sound the Sound is Deaf*, 2025. Installation with *Tympanic Bullae* (Inner Ear Bone of the Oom)

Lisa Marie Malloy (b. 1994, Seattle) creates installations, short, and feature-length films arising from long-term collaborations with communities across the U.S., East Asia, and Central America. Their work has screened internationally—including at Berlinale, MoMA, Barbican, IFF Rotterdam, FICUNAM, the Academy Museum, Taiwan IDFF, True/False, and Centre Pompidou—and has been acquired by Arsenal, Cinema Guild, and Grasshopper Films, appearing on Criterion and MUBI. They are a founder of Wild Grasses Films and Little Egypt Collective.

@lisa.mariemalloy





Install view of *Love is the Sound the Sound is Deaf*, 2025. Installation with *Tympanic Bullae* (Inner Ear Bone of the Oom)

Still from *Love is the Sound the Sound is Deaf*, 2025. Installation with *Tympanic Bullae* (Inner Ear Bone of the Oom)



# Dante Moore



My practice is the deep fried search for ijbol (I just burst out laughing) fields. An unexpected stroll through the meme garden; a self portrait with a sunflower.

Installations that mimic your monitor, peppered with memes and photos that make ur eyes roll. I'll hide a couple personal photos in there too so u think it's a meme. The important question becomes... is that ur photo or did u pull that one from online? Who knows at this point? Giant stickers of an ed hardy jacket, collages calling her a fat bitch, ur dad being an artist @ career day.

U can sit in my sunflower and play my meme maker game. After u picked the image, the top text, and the bottom text - make sure to hit enter. There's still a few glitches so if u press shift while you're typing it'll pause... just press shift again.

I've come to the conclusion that sunflowers r yellow emojis. In conversation about my work I've heard it described as meme heaven; surprisingly funerary. I'll take it. Growing up online changes ur notion of self. Especially when u grow up in the meme garden.

Dante Moore (b. 2000), a post-internet artist originally from Tulsa, Oklahoma. Their work blends photography, sculpture, and video games to explore identity and internet culture. Moore creates immersive installations using memes, digital imagery, and personal photos. Influenced by internet theory, their work reimagines self-image in online spaces.

@zante2222

*Self Portrait with Sunflower, 2024.*  
Inkjet Print on photo tex, Unity 3D  
Game, repurposed advertisement  
board, wood, wheat paste.



Self Portrait with Sunflower, 2024.  
Inkjet Print on photo tex, Unity 3D  
Game, repurposed advertisement  
board, wood, wheat paste.



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Inkjet Print on photo tex, Unity 3D  
Game, repurposed advertisement  
board, wood, wheat paste.



# Jeff Rivers



Installation view, *American Story*, 2025.  
Acrylic and pastel on paper, inkjet  
photographs, and wood.

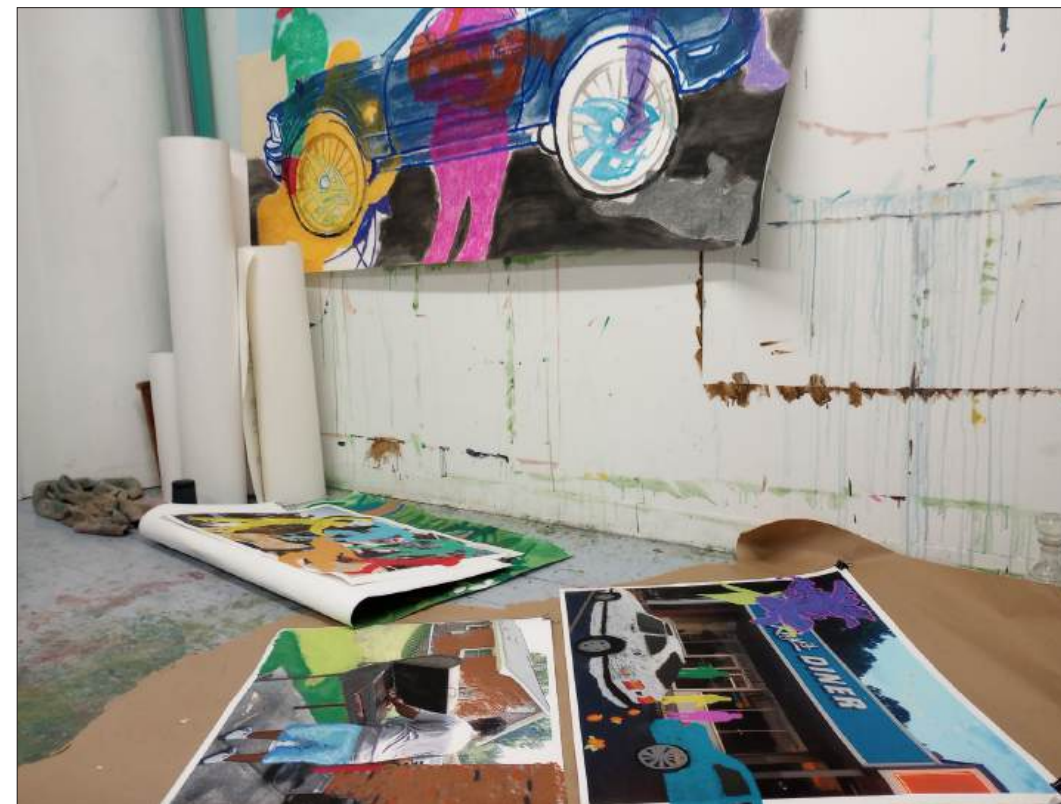


Jeff Rivers is an African-American artist and educator from Columbia, SC. Jeff's art practice asserts the Black body is a politicized vessel that is historically representative of interactions of struggles for power within socio-political discourse. To this end, Jeff's uses the Black Figure and Consciousness as a foundation to interpret culture and explicate our daily socio-political experiences.

@jeffisontherise | luvemore.com

View of artist's studio

Installation view, *American Story*, 2025.  
Acrylic and pastel on paper, inkjet photographs, and wood.



View of artist's studio

# Sheldon Till-Campbell



My drawing-based practice uses landscape as a framework to hold meditative space. The work grows from quiet, receptive practices of walking and observational drawing. These practices meander and accumulate, slowly generating abstractions that wrestle with scale, tactility, transformation, and ethical dynamics of attention.



*Untitled*  
2025  
Oil on canvas  
27.5 × 20 inches



Opposite page: (Left to right) *Untitled*,  
2025, Oil on canvas, 27.5 × 20 inches;  
*Untitled topography*, 2025, Oil on canvas,  
87 × 124 inches

Sheldon Till-Campbell (b. 1993) grew up homeschooled in Gladstone, Missouri and received a BA in Studio Art from Wheaton College. Recent exhibitions include a duo show at Comfort Station, Chicago, IL (2024), and participation in group shows at Dream Clinic, Columbus, OH (2024), Public Space One, Iowa City, IA (2024), Minot State University, Minot, ND (2022), The Walford Galleries, Wheaton, IL (2022), and Miniprint, Oaxaca, MX (2022).

@sheldontillcampbell | tillcampbell.com

*middleground*  
2024  
Oil on canvas  
20 × 30 inches







*Landscaping*  
(Performance documentation)  
2024

*Landscaping*  
(Performance documentation)  
2024



*a prayer*  
2023  
Clamshell artist book  
1.5 × 4.5 × 6 inches



*drift*  
2023  
Carved and sanded birch panel  
12 × 16 inches

# Zulkhairi Zulkiflee



At the core of my practice is an interest in Malayness, a term I see as propositional, even though commonly racial in usage. Geographically, the term captures a specific world located in Southeast Asia, or in particular, the region of the Malay archipelago. I think about the radiuses of Malayness, where I context-straddle between the specificity of my place of birth, the region, and the world. The latter forms a parallel interest in my work, where I take the "global" as a slippery marker that promises inclusion but often poses conundrums. Here, I consider contemporary art as a qualifying entry point in accessing issues of global belonging and difference. My current artistic research focuses on the buried town called Singapore, Michigan. As a conceptual terrain, I invoke an "excess" through the site.

(Left to right) *Untitled (Zinkepoel)*, 2025. Single-channel video. 7:31 min; *Unhomely*, 2024. Digital print on matte paper and mounted on dibond; *Native*, 2025. MDF, sand, print on sandpaper and lighthouse souvenir and *The Avoidant (Singapore, Singapore, Singapore)*, 2025. Large format print on frosted sticker (Courtesy Archives of Michigan).



*The Avoidant (Singapore, Singapore, Singapore)*, 2025. Large format print on frosted sticker (Courtesy Archives of Michigan) and *Native*, 2025. MDF, sand, print on sandpaper and lighthouse souvenir.

Zulkhairi Zulkiflee (b. 1991, Singapore) is an artist-curator whose lens-based practice focuses on contemporary Malay identity. Zulkhairi's dynamic practice is rooted in Malayness as a propositional term, exploring its evolving representations. His image-centered artworks foreground the body as a plural marker, situating the Singaporean-Malay experience within broader global narratives.

@22ulki | zulkhairizulkiflee.com



*Native*, 2025. MDF, sand, print on sandpaper and lighthouse souvenir.



*Tongue*, 2025. Singapore, Michigan pressed penny and sand.



*Unhomely*, 2024. Digital print on matte paper and mounted on dibond.



*Tongue*, 2025. Singapore, Michigan pressed penny, and *Unhomely*, 2024. Digital print on matte paper and mounted on dibond.

*olivier*



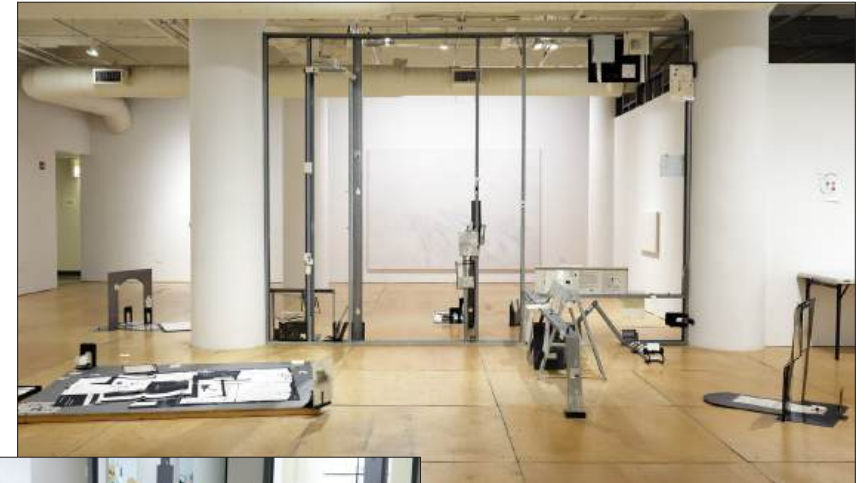
I find language constraining and languaging allowing.

My practice unfolds in the creases of "trans-" and "para-" ness. I toy with the instability of language and position, unobjectifying texts to allow the uncategorisable to generate paradoxes. As a time-traveller, I live in tautologies and sleep between genres—translating interventions for my politically exiled, diasporic, queer selves for self-annihilation.

"Re-reading" as medium: an intuitive negation of how language lures and spits. It is (Is it?) impossible to apprehend language or to be inside/outside of it. The paradox of desiring comprehension while admitting the sourcelessness of translation drives my practice. I see rearrangement as a tool for un-identifying. This "un-ness" is tied to an anarchival way of being—without a clear moment of origin or finish—demanding attention to illegibility and opacity.

My practice desires to detranslate itself for the sake of "writing oneself off" (killing oneself off). Is it possible to make a work that is ultimately a my-self, obliterating my other selves?

In genrelessness and gesturalities, the object toys with me. Let the bookshelves fall on me, and words abandon me. This affirmation of selves through self-annihilation is perhaps the elusive chance to encounter my selves ...

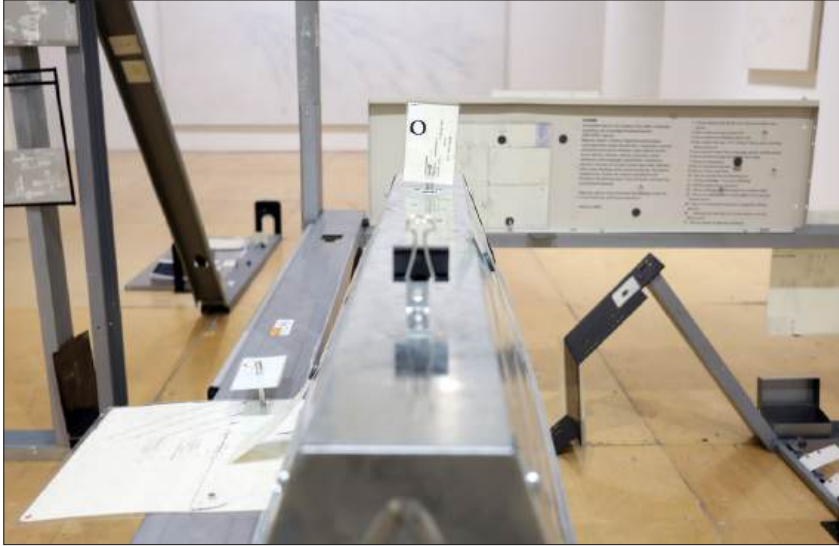


olivier is an artist and cataloguer. They have lectured, performed, exhibited, and published internationally in artist-run spaces, libraries, and museums, including London, Hong Kong, LA, New York City, Chicago, and perhaps your dream state. They founded the speculative UFO archive The UFO Lobby (2021–).

olivier holds an MA in Visual and Critical Studies. Born and raised in British Hong Kong, olivier and their time machine are temporarily stuck in this dimension. So it goes ...

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Previous pages:  
*Incomplete Copy of o (In company of an index): A selected rereading of an unresolved translated paradox.*

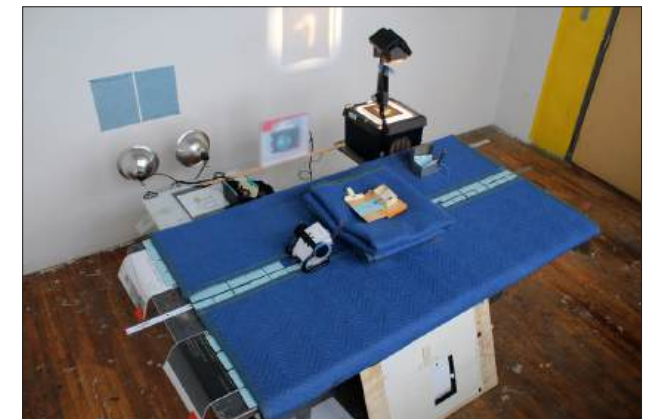
2023-2025, ongoing

Magnets, papers, markers, fragmented photocopies, rearrangements, loyalty and devotion, ruminations, pencils, attempted instructions, kinships, made-objects-turned-found-objects, citations, indexes, loanwords, loaned sentences, three languages, possibilities, frustrations, desires or the lack-of, oil paint, scotch tape, steel, stainless steel, wood, dwelling, prints, loaned bookends, disruptions, needed-trust, doubts, ink, crayons, temptations and flirtations, Stonehenge paper, time, demands, and lingering on unfinished business

"Open up, enter in. If you find there the meaning of what (it) is. If you touch me, you'll know what (it) is."  
 —Memory (1981)

*Bibliographical, nonsense #2:  
 A(n) (Book) Encounter  
 2024  
 Sculptural Lecture*

Purposed findings, accidental findings, archival box with a 2016-2024 UFO personal collection, 1 Chicago-united friendship, 1 Evanston-united kinship, 1 bibliographic-united mentorship, an (attempted) encounter of self, a lovely book encounter, found materials, drawing, phot copies of indexes, borrowed imageries, black pipe cleaners borrowed from a cat, obsessive analogue cataloguing arrangement on an office desk





## ***UIC 2025 MFA Thesis Show***

Contributing Artists: M. Carson Day,  
Laurel Hauge, Lisa Marie Malloy,  
Dante Moore, Jeff Rivers,  
Sheldon Till-Campbell, Zulkhairi  
Zulkiflee, olivier

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Layne Thue-Bludworth

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Cream 65# Cover, Office Depot  
EnviroCopy 20lb

Typefaces: Warsaw Gothic Oblique,  
YouTube Sans Regular

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