

## *A Senior Exhibition: A Sample of Artist Statements, May 2021*



**JEFF BOWLING**

*Humanity*, mixed media installation, 2021

Humanity, what is it? Why should we care?

Within the last few decades there seems to be arise of hatred and violence towards people of different color, sex, and different religious beliefs. Through my art installation piece, I hope to create a visual statement that will show the viewer that there is an interconnectedness between every single human on this planet and the Earth itself.

In this piece I chose to use two main colors: red, to symbolize the blood lines, the blood vessels of the body, and blue to symbolize our origins, the organs of the body. The red yarn connecting each country is used to show how we are all connected no matter where we are from. There is a common thread in all of us. I wanted to use the rope placed in front of the wall display to show that even though there are many red yarns from country to country, in the end we are one, one human race, one world. I am trying to make it so that if someone were to pull the rope then it would bring all the countries together, thereby making the viewer a part of the art.

So why is this piece so important to me? We adults lead by example, everything we do is mimicked by our children and their children. When we show hate, our children show hate and when we show love and compassion, our children show love and compassion. Our youth are mirrors of who we are, so why not teach them to be kind and respectful of each other? What happened to the “GOLDEN RULE”?

Let's end the violence.



**MEGAN WILCOX**

***Structured Creativity***, Ink on fabric & Plastic on wood, 2021

My arching installation piece is designed to let an observer look around, into, and through how my mind perceives art, imagination, and thoughts. Every artist has their own creation process. At one end, you will have barely directed inspiration. At the other end, there is planned deliberate design. My method is the latter. I meticulously plan out my works, making sketches, writing notes, and plotting out the sequences of events. I am drawn to structure and clean lines. Yet I know art can often be about flaws and chance, as much as intended concepts. This why I am drawn to printmaking. Even with my affinity for calculation, the nature of the medium introduces unplanned elements into the pieces I create, giving each printing its own uniqueness. My desire for order is not diminished, but rather it is enhanced, by the inanimate whims of ink and paper. My piece, *Structured Creativity*, combines these two ideas to let an observer experience the flow of chance upon a foundation of calculated form. The idea for this piece began as a play on the theory of Right brain versus Left Brain. The left brain is supposedly the logical side whereas the right is the house of emotion and creativity. While the theory has been debunked, it did get me looking at how I perceive and devise my artwork. For me, the foundation of my creativity is in planning and design. This is illustrated by the squared wooden framework. It is made of right angles and solid construction. Even the painting on the uprights columns is formatted by even bands of complementing colors and the added shapes are all straight-sided polygons. Chance and whim are expressed by the flowing fabrics and the asymmetrical placement of the shapes. The painting while regular on the uprights is done in such a way to blend diluting the order. How the fabric would drape and where the shapes would fit could not be planned as the materials were drawn to where they would best fit. As it is, I created dozens of shapes that were placed on the arch, but I could not plan for their placements until the installation had begun. The top's cosmic expression was both planned and inspiration. The celestial ceiling is an expected design, expressing the limitlessness of the imagination. On the other hand, the blending of colors and randomness of the splattering of stars was freeform creativity. Lastly, is the arch itself. I wanted to invite the observer in. I am saying, "Come look through my thinking process. See what is hidden in the lit purple synapses flickering about in my head." While I am typically a private person by nature, this piece is a door into who I am. A view I wanted to share with the beholder.



**CECILIA DELL**

*Community Ties*, 4 Paintings on Canvas, 2021

My project, *Community Ties*, is a dive into how I view the impact of the communities I am a part of, through the people in my life with whom I associate the specific communities. The communities I chose to showcase are familial communities, political communities, and communities at a distance. For familial communities I chose to depict my mom with me as a baby, to represent how a lot of who I am and always have been has been deeply rooted in my family's values and morals. I utilized earthy tones for this piece because I have always felt very grounded through my relationship with my mom. For communities at a distance, I showcased an image of my friend Garrett and me on facetime, as he recently moved across the country, making our communication dependent on technology. The goal of this image was to show the incredible capability of creating or keeping bonds with members of your communities with the help of technology, especially during a time where people haven't been able to come together physically. I used greens in this piece because I associate the color with adventure, and I associate a great deal of adventure with Garrett. For political communities I wanted to show how seeing friends with similar beliefs and values fight for what they believe in is empowering as both a spectator or fellow participant. To show this I depicted my friend Lizzie, with me right by her side, holding up political signs. For this piece I used blues because of the colors' political application in the U.S. At the center of this installation is a self-portrait, with all of the colors from the outside pieces coming together in hopes to represent that these separate communities each offer me different things, which when put together have helped me develop into who I am independently. I wanted to create this display of my communities and the relationships they have given me because I wouldn't be where I am, let alone who I am today without them.



**ALEXANDRIA O'BRIEN**

*Botanical Gardens, Desert Road, Small Town*, Watercolor & Ink, 2021

This project was greatly inspired by my gratitude towards my family. I come from a longline of artists who have continuously helped to motivate me to pursue art, so much so that I credit them for where I am now. Through these pieces, I wanted to capture a few of the many landscape photos I've collected, be it ones I have taken myself or ones that were sent to me from various family members. These paintings, to me, are more than just watercolor landscapes. The paper I used, the brushes, and even the paint have been passed down to me by other artists. Everything, including the subject matter, has come from my family and this was my way of putting them together. This is my thank you to them.



**SYDNEY HOGAN**

*Calm After the Storm*, Acrylic & Watercolor, 2021

I have lived in the small village of Northford, CT my entire life which has been a part of North Branford since the year 1831. Most people believe that the two places are one, but if you grew up here, then you know the difference. Northford is the side of town with the small grocery market that has been there as long as I can remember. It has most of the older, historical buildings and houses that are spaced far apart from one another. It is the rural side of town, meaning there is more open spaces and beautiful fields, whereas in North Branford, there are more new housing developments and fast-food restaurants. Northford is the more peaceful side of town, with less commotion from people interrupting the serenity of nature. From growing up on this side of town, I have learned to appreciate the open spaces and the beauty of the farmlands. I worked on a horse farm for about ten years and learned that in order to get the things I wanted, I needed to work as hard as I possibly could. Nothing teaches you hard work more than caring for a bunch of two-thousand-pound, headstrong animals and their living space.

When I ventured off to college, moving to a completely different setting, I learned to appreciate where I was from so much more. Willimantic feels like I am in the busiest city in the world, and I cannot wait for every excuse to go back home. Each time I return home, I travel the same route. The red barn in my painting is the first sign each time that I am home. The barn sits in a huge field next to a small old house, about a mile from my house. I later learned that it is one of the oldest farms in Northford, passed down through the Newton family. I always loved this farm because it is small and simple, but has the most enormous, beautiful field next to it. I want the viewers to get a serene, comforting feeling when they see my painting. The same feeling that I get when I approach this landmark on my drives home from school each and every time, without fail.



**JEFFERY DELGADO**

*Midnight Terrain*, Digital, 2021

Snowboarding this winter was some of the best times I have had throughout the Covid pandemic, so it was only fit I incorporated it into my final project here at Eastern. These designs I have created are mock ups for a snowboard company that me and my friends always talk about starting together. Till this semester the company was always just a thought but with this exhibition I decided to bring our dream to life. So here I present to you Midnight Terrain. I have designed and created stickers for all snowboarding equipment. These stickers can be re sized for the perfect fit on any snowboard or helmet. Also displayed in this exhibition is clothing apparel and company posters. Most of the designs were created with adobe programs primarily Photoshop and Illustrator. Throughout my creative process I had a lot of influence and guidance from my friend group so that the final product can be something we all created together. This being my final semester as a graphic design student I used skills I have learned throughout my four-year path to graduation. Applying classes such a photo imaging, digital illustration, and digital imaging into my final deliverables. I hope to continue designing for years to come as I begin my career as a graphic designer in the fall. Eastern has a done an amazing job preparing me for my future and I can't wait to see where life takes me next.



**AMARIAH RODRIGUEZ**

*Flatline Skate Co.*, Digital, 2021

Flatline Skate is a skateboard apparel brand inspired by street art, skateboard culture, and anime. This is a project that I've had in the back of my mind since high school, and it is incredibly surreal to see it finally put together. I wanted to create a skateboard brand that mainly focuses on women because we are often overlooked in many competitive sports dominated by men. I wanted it to be an equal balance between cool and colorful designs inspired by anime and

cartoons and the edgy grit that comes with performing such a physically demanding sport. Women should not have to sacrifice their femininity to succeed and be seen as worthy of performing in their passions. Flatline Skate encourages putting your all towards your goals and passions. It stands for figuring out what you want out of life and what you believe is the best for yourself, all while expressing yourself in the best of ways. If you would like to support me and look amazing in our merch, find @FlatlineSkate on Redbubble!



**ALICIA DAVIS**

***The One You Feed*, Poster, 2021**

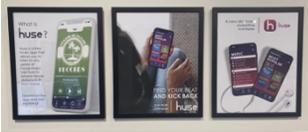
The One You Feed is 2D platformer game with a heavy emphasis on story and the aspect of choice. Having been approached by a fellow student and asked to take part in the creation of the game, I was assigned the role of Lead Artist, and was tasked with creating the art assets needed to create the first level of the game. As such, I designed the player character “Soul” and brought them and the various enemies of the game to life by animating them. My job was crucial in creating this game. Apart from the player animations, I was tasked with creating advertisement material for the game and group, such as a game poster, game icon, DVD Case, team business cards, and a team logo. After all these items were created, printed, or implemented into the game, we were finally able to actually see the game come to life. While the lead writer brought life through storytelling, and the programmer through code, I brought life to the game through its visuals. Suddenly a mere concept from a previous semester was realized into a physical game. While many in the world criticize games as a waste of time, I welcome them as a source of inspiration and healing. I have turned to games myself many times when the stress of the world got to be too great, with characters I could relate to and stories I could fall in love with. Through this project and my art, I strived to create something that people could play and enjoy. And through the lengthy process of making even just a demo to a game, I have fallen in love with the story and “Soul.” I hope to see the full potential of this game realized and be able to really stretch my wings and create even more art assets for the game. Though even with just a demo, seeing “Soul” come to life through the animations I created and the work of the lead programmer implementing them is like seeing through a window at the endless possibilities for the future of both this game, and work in even more game design.



**ALEJANDRA PEREZ-HANDLER**

***Monarch: Graphic Designer and Photography Company, Digital, 2021***

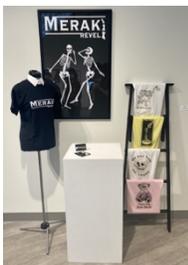
My name is Alejandra (Alex) Perez-Handler and I am the proud owner/founder of the Monarch:Graphic Designer & Photography company; this is my artist statement: I created this business, mostly because I knew I no longer wanted to work for someone else, some corporate company. All in all I came up with Monarch, a simple name, a name not easily forgetful. Why did I choose this name? Well, the shortest version is...it is basically my spirit animal, monarch butterflies have been around me for as long as I can remember. I wanted to honor this and when I decided to start my own business (not yet knowing what it would be) I knew the name monarch had to be in there. I have a passion for being a graphic designer, drawing digitally and taking photographs. I have been behind the camera since 2006, when I was about eight years old; I do believe I got the love for the camera from my uncle, who is an underwater photographer, and from my father, who may not be a professional photographer, but his love for it is intense. I did not always know that I wanted to be a graphic designer, at first, I loved anything art related, mainly sketching. Then in high school I had the great opportunity to go to a technical school, obviously I took it and I got into the architecture program, another little passion of mine; one I thought would grow into my dream job. Well, that is not what happened, life did and threw me a curveball and I never graduated from that school. Instead, I finished high school in a normal public school and eventually went to college. This is when I really started finding myself and realizing that I still loved photography and the arts. Around my second year of college, I started taking graphic design classes, and that is how I found out I loved this, it involved so many of the other aspects of art that I loved. So, I kept taking more classes and finally the time came where I decided to start my business. Monarch is very close to my heart and I really hope that it takes off. I would love to make people happy through what I create for them. I am able to do a huge variety of things, from making business cards to putting together websites, to taking portrait pictures of your loved ones (furry or human). I show off some of my other work in my portfolio, such as painting and ceramic items, but I do not actually make them anymore.



**JACKSON VANROOYEN**

*Huse Music App*, Digital, 2021

I work in digital design and graphic arts to produce stylized imagery. My intent is to translate societal issues into graphic illustrations that tell a story. Each project gives me the opportunity to reflect my interpretations of social issues to create a new way of looking at change, emotion, pain, happiness, struggle, and triumph. What motivates me is the challenge of converting the impressions and ideas in my mind into visual art that give the viewer a new way of seeing an issue.



**MICKAYLA PORTER**

*Meraki Revel*, Digital Drawing in Photoshop, 2021

*Into the Mind: Illustrations of Mental Illness*, Digital Drawing in Photoshop, 2021

Creating artwork comes from the mind and soul to construct ideas, values, memories and dreams. While illustrating my pieces I often pick topics I'm passionate about. For the senior show I wanted to showcase two sides of myself through art. For my illustration concentration I depicted mental illnesses to bring awareness and understanding to viewers. This was a heavy topic so for my second concentration in digital art and design, I decided to create fun graphics to print on tee shirts and other apparel.



**QUINN VELEZ**

*Spaw Dayz*, Digital Animation, 2021

When brainstorming ideas for my senior project I moved between several concepts, but the one thing I knew for certain was that it was going to be an animation. Animation as an art form has fascinated me my entire life and was the foundation of why I wanted to pursue art. As a kid I wanted nothing more than to one day create an animation with my own characters. Now, after many long days and sleepless nights, that dream has become a reality. Inspired by my job as a dog bather, SPAW DAYZ follows the protagonist as they arrive in a new city looking for a job. Finding a hiring ad for a new dog bather, they decide to check it out. Upon entering, they quickly realize this place isn't your average grooming salon. This location is where fantastical creatures living amongst humans bring their beastly pets to be bathed and pampered. Frightened by this discovery they try to leave, but it's too late. Before long they're thrown into a hectic new world with challenges around every corner, you know, just your average retail job. Working on my animation has been a truly gratifying experience being able to combine both my artistic work and my part-time job. For the past four years while working towards my degree during the week, I've spent my weekends at my dog bathing job. I've always loved the juxtaposition between my creative free-form work at the university, and the fast-paced methodical work of the busy salon. It's always felt like living in 2 different worlds which was the driving inspiration for my work. This concept felt like the perfect way to showcase my experience with these two sides of my life, and I look forward to further developing my story and animation skills moving forward. This art piece will always hold a special place in my heart.



**RACHEL V. GERVASIO**

*Unmasked*, Mixed Media Installation, 2021

Kindness has become hard to come by. Between constant political debates, constant anger, and the inability to care for others, the human race as a species seems to have forgotten what kindness is. What some seem to have trouble realizing, is that the way someone presents themselves externally is not always how they feel internally. The cashier you just yelled at for messing up and overcharging you could be struggling with a mental illness or learning disability. The barista at that Starbucks may be 16, working their first job, while also being in school, causing them to have trouble focusing. Your neighbor who's run by your house around the block every morning may have an eating disorder. The way you treat people may not be important to you, or seem like a big deal to you, this is most likely due to the fact that you do not see your actions as being problematic, because they do not hurt or affect you. However, being kind costs you nothing. Showing patience, and losing a couple minutes of your time, will not be a big deal in the grand scheme of life. However, what you say could affect someone's mental health for years. This photo series hopes to help you and the human race consider what is going on inside others' minds. That just because someone looks fine on the outside does not mean that they are not internally struggling.

I decided to express this through the use of vector portraits. I wanted to show images of people, real people, who may be struggling with a mental illness. Some of them, do not display mental illness, some do, however, you do not know which is which. I hope to make these images

in a way that shows the person, as well as quotes they have given about an illness inside their silhouette to depict what is going on, inside their head. I want these portraits to convey the message, that you do not know what someone is going through, so treat everyone with kindness as you would wish to be treated if you were in a rough spot.



**NOAH YILMAZ**

*Unmasked*, Mixed Media Installation, 2021

Where would you be now if the pandemic never happened? While an appreciation for hugs, handshakes and high-fives was realized throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, a wave of fear, skepticism, and hardships also swept the globe. Political tension around the very existence of the virus, or the reliability of the vaccine, has caused civil unrest.

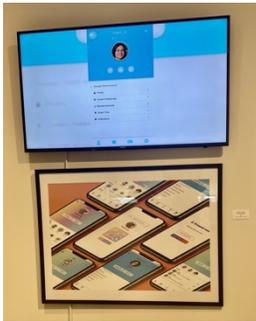
My piece, *Unmasked*, aims to memorialize the time and spread awareness to areas of concern created from the pandemic. To wear a mask is an act of compassion, keeping others safe from ourselves. Others say it stifles their freedom; a muzzle put on them by those seeking to control them. To show one's bare face in public is to instill fear in those around you, and even break the law. The pandemic has had health, environmental and cultural impacts worldwide.

The work's importance stems from its contemporary relevance. The installation comments on environmental and public health concerns, using masks as a symbol of the virus, obedience, and care for the community. Portraits of shielded figures are arranged atop the cascade. Using masks in a repeating and oversized manner draws attention to an otherwise ordinary object, elevating the material within the context of fine arts. The work serves as a reminder to care for the environment and each other, hoping to inspire viewers to be mindful in the disposal of their masks and do what they can to end the pandemic.



**MACKENZIE HILL**

*In the Hands of God*, Acrylic, 2021



**MELINDA TOURIGNY**

*Friend.me UI APP*, Digital, 2021



**JOHN GRAHAM II**

*Pressure: Movie Poster Illustrations*, Charcoal on paper & Digital, 2021



**JULIA TIGELEIRO**

*Weimador Brewing Co.*, Digital, 2021



**EM J MOTTA**

*Little Middle*, Digital, 2021



**MADELINE DEMARTIN**

*Mendi Lea Cosmetics*, Digital, 2021



**THOMAS BLAIS**

*Uber Media Package*, Digital, 2021



**MARGARET RUSSELL**

*Animal Portraits*, Digital Illustration, 2021