



Installation view of the virtual *Young Contemporaries 2020*

### About this Teaching Resource:

This packet features artwork from the 35<sup>th</sup> annual juried student exhibition, [Young Contemporaries 2020](#), which is featured as a virtual exhibition at the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art at the College of Charleston. It is intended as a tool to help you look at art with your children/students. You can prepare for your inquiry-based discussions by reviewing the background information provided. Then use the Questions for Viewing below and artwork reproductions to look closely, think critically, and respond to the art together. Extend your investigations with one or more of the suggested activity ideas. In general, questions for younger audiences are listed first followed by progressively more complex ideas. Feel free to adapt the suggested activities according to the age group you are working with. We encourage you to check out the [Halsey Institute's blog](#) for articles related to the show, as well as interviews with some of the artists.

Share your teaching stories with us! If you use these materials, let us know by email at [halsey@cofc.edu](mailto:halsey@cofc.edu)

## About the Exhibition:

Now in its 35th year, the Halsey Institute of Contemporary Art and the College of Charleston Studio Art Department are proud to present *Young Contemporaries 2020*. The annual exhibition is a celebration of talented artists at the College of Charleston. With works selected by a nationally renowned juror, the exhibition reflects the strength and diversity of practice in the School of the Arts' rigorous programs. Featuring a wide range of media, including paintings, sculpture, photography, and prints, the exhibition showcases the efforts of the student body at the College.

Painter [Melanie Daniel](#) was the juror and awards judge for *Young Contemporaries 2020*.

Concurrent with *Young Contemporaries* is the *Salon des Refusés* exhibition, showing in the exhibition space of the Simons Center for the Arts. The works in the Salon were chosen by Studio Art faculty, and the awards were chosen by Charleston-based artist Joe Walters. The origin of *the Salon des Refusés* dates to Paris in 1863, when artists who had been rejected from the official Salon caused such a protest that Emperor Napoleon III ordered another exhibition held for them. Among the painters in the original *Salon des Refusés* were Camille Pissaro, Henri Fantin-Latour, James M. Whistler, and Edouard Manet.

## Questions for Viewing:

**Reproductions of the artworks in this section have been included at the end of the packet. You can also view the pieces in the virtual *Young Contemporaries 2020* exhibition by [clicking here!](#)**

Look at Halie Niedenstein's *Untitled*.

Portraits often include several elements such as pose, gesture, facial expression, clothing, and props. Mimic the pose. What words describe how you feel in this pose?

Look at Taylor Bigelow's *Self-Denial*.

Look closely at gesture and facial expression. What can you tell about this person based on gesture and facial expression? What do you think the title means?

Look at Meg Ha's *Come Here To Me*.

How do you think this person is feeling? What might this person be thinking? What do you see that makes you say that? What do you notice about what the person is wearing? Can you find any props? What more do the clothes and props tell us about the person?

Look at the works and artist statements by Bryn Berry and Lucas Romanova.

Can you think of some traditional expectations about gender and sexuality in our society? What are they? Based on what you see in their portraits, how are the artists challenging traditional expectations of gender identity and sexuality?

Look at the works by Caliyah Paker and Jonathan Varnell.

What do you see? Describe the lines, colors, and forms you find in each of the works. Where do you see movement? What type of movement can you find? Where do the lines begin? Where do they end?

Look at the series of prints by Taylor Bird.

Can you find examples of both symmetry and asymmetry in this work? Do the forms remind you of anything? Why do you think the artist chose to work in this medium?

Look at *Deteriorate* by Aika Ishimori and *After the Party* by Brooke Callery.

What materials can you find? How have the materials been transformed? What evidence can you find of the artist's process? What everyday item or natural material would you choose to use in a work of art? If you were going to create an artwork made from found objects, what would you choose to include? Why?

Look at each of the examples of sculptural artwork.

What materials did the artists use? Why might they choose to work with this material?

## Suggested Activities:

### *Your True Colors First*

Find three to five photographs of yourself taken by someone else, and then use a camera or camera phone to create a series of three to five self-portraits. When creating your selfies, think about how they might reflect or challenge the way you have been seen by others. Choose your pose, facial expression, background, props, and clothing with intention. Each is an important element that reflects aspects of your identity. Compare and contrast the two series of photographs. Write an artist statement that explores this topic. Be sure to include visual evidence from the photographs.

### *Art Activity*

Divide several sheets of 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper vertically into three equal parts. Draw a series of self-portraits with the head in the top third, body in the middle third, and legs in the bottom third of the page (Diagram A). Cut the papers into three sections and staple the stack of heads, bodies, and legs between two sheets of heavy paper (Diagram B). Mix and match various combinations of heads, bodies, and legs to create new characters.

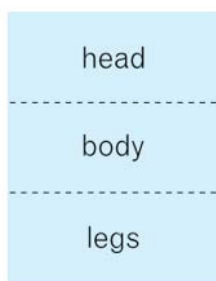


Diagram A

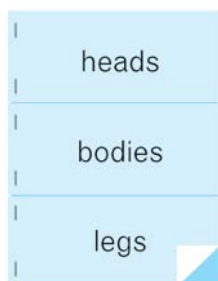


Diagram B

### *Photo Stories*

Some people say, “A picture is worth a thousand words.” You can even tell a story entirely through pictures. Find a large sheet of paper or poster board. Have a family member help you look around your home for interesting photographs or pictures in magazines. Arrange the pictures on the paper in a way that tells a story. You can write a few sentences if you’d like, but let the images be the main focus. Share your photo story with your family.

### *Timed Drawings*

Have members of your family participate with this simple game. First, give everyone a blank sheet of paper with the same shape on it. Start with something simple such as a circle, square, or triangle. Next, tell everyone they have five minutes to draw around, and on their shape, turning it into whatever they would like. After five minutes, share your drawings with each other.

### *Experience Journals*

The experiences you have everyday make you who you are. Keeping a journal can help you remember your favorite experiences and memories. Make a special notebook to use as your journal. Each time you do something that you want to remember, write a few sentences, draw a picture, and perhaps include a found object. Use this record of memories to inspire you to make art!

The Halsey Institute staff also wrote a blog post about our “You be the Judge” and “Value Judgements” activities. These activities are typically done in the galleries during our guided exhibition tours. We have adapted them to be done at home or in the classroom using either the virtual *Young Contemporaries* exhibition or artwork and objects available in your home or classroom. [Click here](#) to read the blog post!

## Related Readings available through the Overdrive Application (browser and smartphone) with Charleston County Public Library:

*Maybe Something Beautiful* by F. Isabel Campoy and Theresa Howell

*This Is How It Always Is* by Laurie Frankel and Gabra Zackman

*Rick* by Alex Gino

*Keep Going: 10 Ways to Stay Creative in Good Times and Bad* by Austin Kleon

*Tomorrow Will Be Different* by Sarah McBride

## Related Readings available through the Hoopla Application (browser and smartphone) with Charleston County Public Library:

*Mindful Thoughts For Makers* by Ellie Beck

*Art Before Breakfast* by Danny Gregory

*Art Starts With A Line* by Erin Mcmanness

*Art Making, Collections, And Obsessions* by Lynne Perrella

*The Sketchbook Project World Tour* by Steven Peterman and Shane Zucker

## Glossary:

**Aesthetic:** Being interested in how something looks and feels.

**Asymmetry:** When an object does not have sides that are exactly the same.

**Deteriorate:** To make or become worse or of less value.

**Geometric:** Characterized by or decorated with regular lines and shapes.

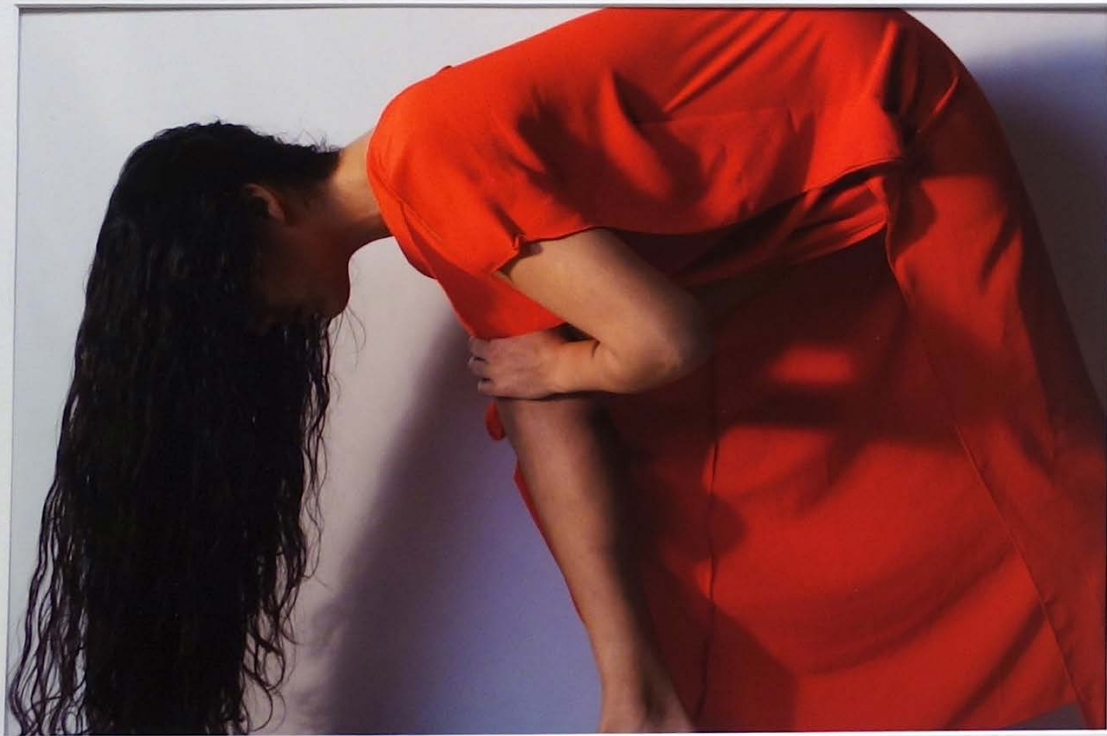
**Gesture:** Something said or done that shows a particular feeling.

**Phobia:** An excessive, often irrational fear of an object or situation.

**Symmetry:** When an object looks the exact same on one side as the other.

### Artist Statements and Artwork Images:

Reproduced below are images of the artworks referenced in the “Questions for Viewing” section in order of the questions asked. Some students submitted artist statements with their work and if available, those statements are included below. There are 40 more artworks in the exhibition. You can also view the rest of the pieces in the virtual *Young Contemporaries 2020* exhibition by [clicking here!](#)



**Halie Niedenstein**

*Untitled*, 2020, Digital photograph



**Taylor Bigelow**

*Self-Denial*, 2020, Archival digital print

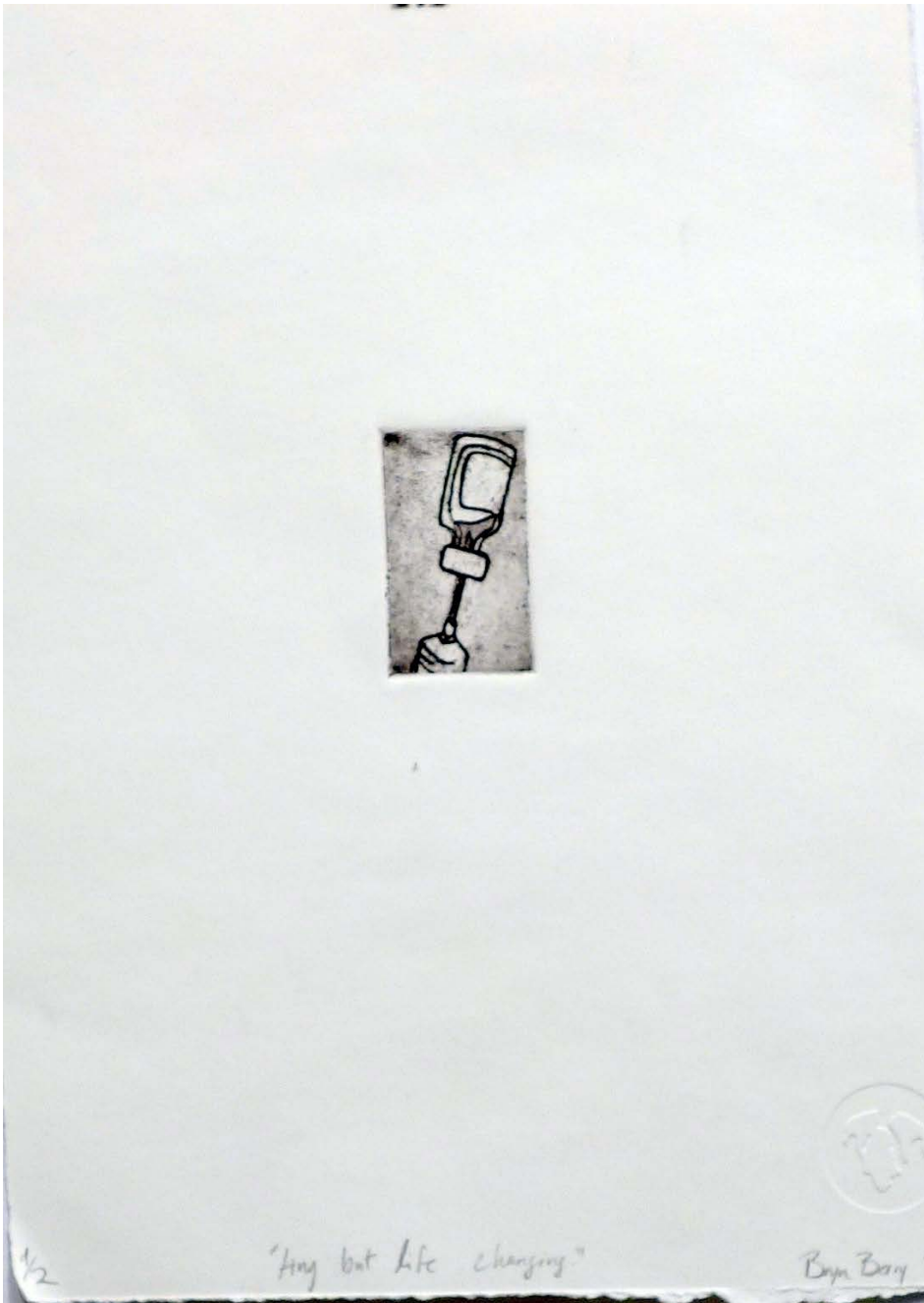




**Meg Ha**

*Come Here To Me*, 2019, Film photograph



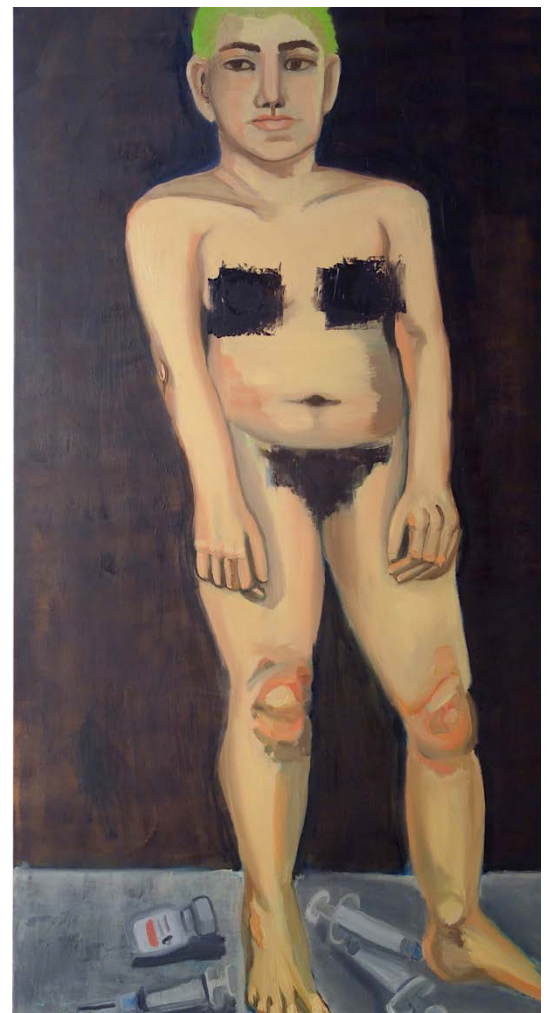


**Bryn Berry**

**he/him/his**

*Tiny But Life Changing*, 2019, Etching

*Tiny But Life Changing* is named after a comment one of my friends made on the first day I started taking testosterone. The bottle I picked up from the pharmacy was so small that that was all I could think about, and when she made that comment I started thinking about how much it would help me. This piece relates to my journey with physically transitioning and is meant to show people how one small thing can completely change a person's life and hopefully have them reflect on their own experiences to consider what really small thing changed theirs. As trans people are consistently demonized in our culture, I feel it is very important for me to put my identity on the front lines in my art and normalize the existence of trans people and our experiences.



**Lucas Romanova**  
**they/them**

top left: *Taking T*, 2020, Oil on canvas

top right: *Transition*, 2019, Oil on canvas

left: *Transitioning Medically*, 2020, Oil on canvas

In my series of paintings that I created I looked at my relationship to gender and how being trans has affected the way I look at myself and others. My pieces are about transitioning and what that entails to the body more specifically injecting myself with testosterone. These works have made me face my fear of my body and my phobia of needles. With the increasing amount of representation of all bodies in the media my works were made to destigmatize trans people and face my internal battle of transphobia.

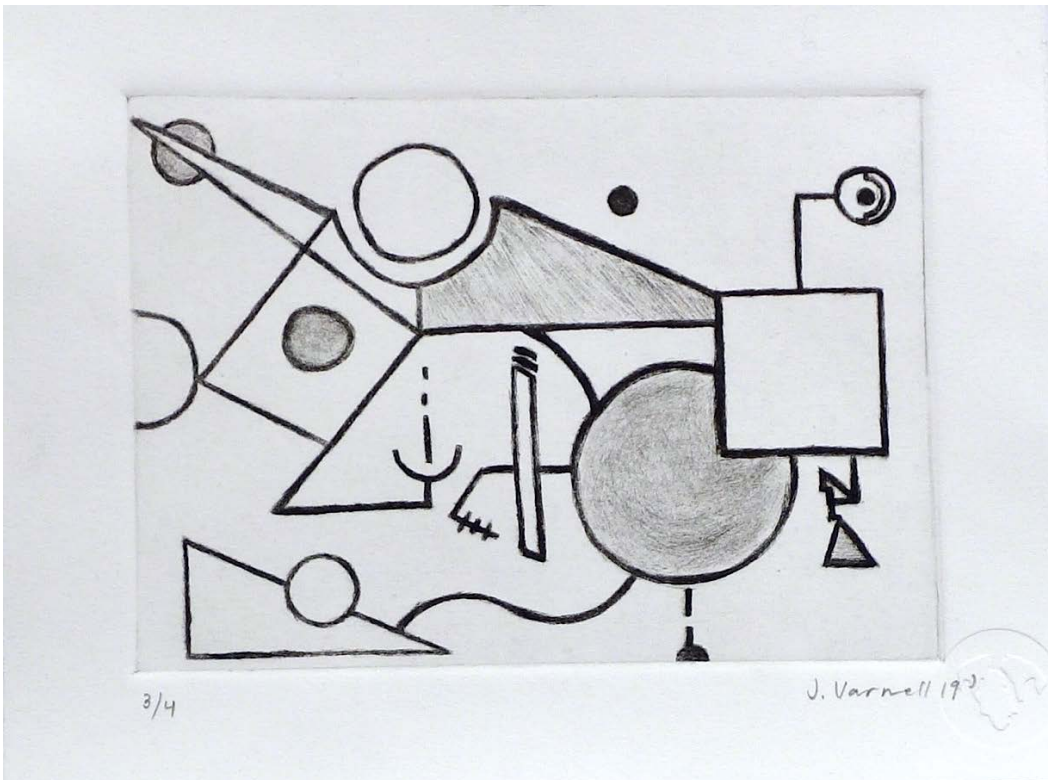
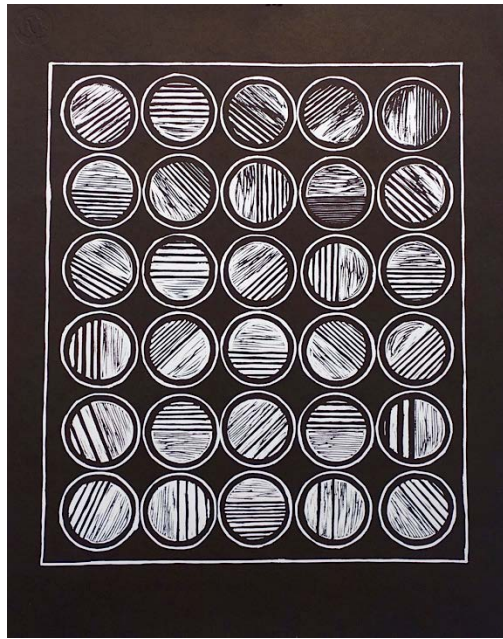




**Caliyah Parker**

top: *11*, 2020, Oil on panel

left: *As Above*, 2020, Oil on panel



### **Jonathan Varnell**

top left: *Untitled*, 2019, Lumen print

top middle: *Untitled*, 2019, Print

top right: *Untitled*, 2019, Print

bottom: *Untitled*, 2020, Plaster, metal, and wood

My work in this show reflects the overall aesthetic that permeates throughout all of my artmaking. Using an inter-disciplinary approach, the work explores abstraction through geometric and asymmetrical forms. The concept is to allow the viewer to assign their own meaning to these familiar forms. The goal is to make the art simplistic, yet multivalent and engaging.





## Taylor Bird

top left: *Fronds*, 2019, Ink on Bristol paper

top right: *Portal*, 2019, Ink on Bristol paper

bottom left: *Toxin*, 2019, Ink on Bristol paper

bottom right: *Untitled*, 2019, Ink on Bristol paper



**Aika Ishimori**

*Deteriorate*, 2019, Acrylic on adhesive strips

Much of my work explores human suffering: the pain that comes with loss, illness, personal traumas, and addiction. *Deteriorate* represents the struggle with self-destructive tendencies. Putting an end to self-harm does not mean the urge disappears; there is reassurance in knowing that this behavior is always there to fall back on as a twisted means of catharsis or as a distraction when life becomes overwhelming. Changing this mindset is not simple and recovering from it is never a linear progression.





**Brooke Callery**  
*After the Party*, 2019, Makeup wipes and thread

Sculptural artworks not already included above:



**Mariah Gehringer**  
*Organic Cabbage*, 2019, Steel





**Asa Perryman**  
Commodity, 2019, Found object, clay





**Margaret Rich**

*GMO*, 2019, Cardboard, plaster, and pigment

I was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I received my bachelor's degree at the College of Charleston in Art History and Studio Art. I am the daughter of a farmer and contractor. My mother instilled a passion for botany as well as picking up strays. My father cultivated a pride in working with one's own hands and a curiosity of life's inner workings. I spent my youth roaming the endless desert.





**Paris Stream-Dau**  
*Untitled, 2020, Steel*