

RESEARCH STATEMENT

Since 2007, my research has focused on producing collages, paintings, and drawings which explore imagery from media sources such as culture and lifestyle magazines containing inherent codifications of gender norms, and representations of luxury and consumerism. I consider the material histories of goods depicted, and how we as a human culture have assigned value to materials we live with, wear, and use to craft our identities. I re-contextualize these materials, disrupting their original intents and questioning aspects of the dynamics they perpetuate within visual culture. Aesthetic choices throughout my work are collage inspired. I consider collage a space of potential akin to compost: a continual recycling of materials in which a prolific range of transformations can occur. Collage aesthetics become a tool for ecological exploration, speculative fabulation, and queering, where I engage with the proliferation of both natural and synthetic worlds and reflect on the nature of consumer materials, their legacies and visual cultures.

As research, my work engages conceptual aspects of queer ecology, queer abstraction, and collage as a form of speculative fabulation, which I introduce to a broader public audience, as well as engage with other contemporary artists making work within this field of study. Exhibition and dissemination of my research occur in the form of traditional gallery spaces, community art centers, museums, academic spaces, and through workshops, lectures, panel discussions and other presentations, as well as through academic experiences as a visiting artist. My research focuses on generating artwork, participating in exhibitions, artist residencies, learning and incorporating new technologies, seeking public, academic, and scholarly lecturing opportunities, curatorial opportunities, and achieving inclusion into art collections. Additionally, I operate within a commercial gallery, which collaborates with architects and designers, and I offer as a part of my teaching practice this aspect of professional development for artists.

By re-contextualizing found materials and imagery, I disrupt their original intents and question aspects of the powerful dynamics they perpetuate. Blending aesthetic categories—synthetic and organic, flora and fauna, bodily and constructed forms—allows for an investigation of the boundary between the natural and the “unnatural”. Working in this way also affirms queer hybridity by rejecting cultural hierarchies and valuing different kinds of bodies. Collage as a process allows for taking fragments of culture and reinterpreting dominant cultural norms to produce queer associations.

The queerness in my work is not dependent on the original context of my original elements, but rather through the method and techniques of transformation through intermingling and collage, which emphasize queer aesthetics. The role of found imagery and the consideration of how such materials might be queered becomes infused within the process for each collage-based composition. This is engaged through aesthetic strategies of subversion, decoration, gender-bending and hybridization. I place imagery of marginalized or unrefined materials like scraps of fabric, trash, plant materials, fatty globs, flesh, hair, tentacles, bones, eggs, crystalline structures, and wood within equal territory to a Chanel purse, a pair of red Louboutin heels, or a Fabergé egg. This intermingling of natural and synthetic in intentional and multi-purposeful. I am interested in re-imagining aspects of our relationships to the natural world, subverting inherent power dynamics through challenging the original context and intention of materials, or elements lifted from common media sources, and I do this from a queer perspective, within a history of queer aesthetics. I look to David Getsy, Jack Halberstam and Lex Lancaster texts in establishing this historical context.

In my work I additionally abstract from imagery of objects of value, asking viewers to consider how value is defined and commodified, how particular cultural items become signifiers of desire or describe social value. I engage contemporary queer tactics of abstraction, and I am particularly interested in formal questions of queering without the presence of an understood human figure. I connect this to queer ecology's concepts of challenging understood territories of

"natural/unnatural" as well as challenging aspects of human consumption, and stereotypical hierarchies which place humans at the top of a historical (imagined) ecological pyramid.

I engage queer maximalism, an aesthetic prioritizing of flamboyant abundance, and a commitment to decoration and elaboration as a means of investigating identity, and critiquing, re-purposing or re-signifying cultural symbols.

Maximalism functions in my work as an aesthetic means to consider relationships between the decorative, and organic through hybridity. Through the merging of broadly ranging elements, I create hybrid forms that exist in ambiguous spaces, where the synthetic and organic overlap in unexpected ways. I re-interpret familiar consumer materials through abstraction as creature-like and completely unfamiliar expressions. The forms in my work exist across the boundaries between male and female, simultaneously as familiar and strange, and functioning as a rejection of heteronormative expectations of gender. I take inspiration from Donna Haraway's writings on compost in *Staying with the Trouble* as well as her concept of speculative fabulation, a practice which merges fiction and non-fiction as a mode of world-building. Speculative fabulation encourages a shift from the human-centered perspective to more fully consider non-human viewpoints, fostering an understanding of our inter-connectedness and fostering the ability to imagine and create better futures, full of creatures of the imagination. Donna Haraway applies this idea to a metaphorical understanding of compost in her writing—she addresses the idea of the biome as a place of messy entanglements, multiple structures and ideas, and looping back, cycling, recognizing "other than human" ways of being. These concepts are very in touch with ideas of queer abstraction to me, as well as my own interest in notions of object value, commodification and desire. I create performative kinship to my collaged forms. I consider collage a space of queer potential, as well as a metaphorical parallel to the process of composting—a natural recycling of matter in which a prolific range of transformations occur. For me, collage offers a conceptual and technical method for transformation, speculative fabulation, and "queering".

Future goals for my research include continuing to research historical aspects of the medium collage to offer new curricular possibilities in the Painting & Drawing Area. I am currently working on a community-based, large scale collage piece during my faculty sabbatical, which will function as a prototype for future workshops and community-based artwork construction, and well as serve as groundwork for further project proposals. I will continue exhibiting regionally, nationally, and have additionally applied to multiple international opportunities for expanding research. My artwork has grown from the desire to reflect and understand layered concepts which impact the ecological environment and my community, and I am excited to continue this exploration. I look forward to seeking new opportunities for communication and collaboration with other artists, academics, students, and community members.

NOTES:

Nicole Seymour, *Strange Natures: Futurity, Empathy, and the Queer Ecological Imagination*

Jack Halberstam, *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble*

Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure*

Eve Sedgwick, *Tendencies*

Freya Gowerly, *Fragmentary Forms: A New History of Collage*

Zachary Small, *The Quintessentially Queer Art of Collage*

Lex Landcaster, *Dragging Away: Queer Abstraction in Contemporary Art*

FOUND: *Queer Archaeology; Queer Abstraction*, curated by Avram Finkelstein

David Getsy texts on queer abstraction

Portals, Planets, & Petri Dishes



Depicted above, Top left to bottom right: *Horntooth*, *Cloudseed*, *Wingmouth*, *Conesprout*, *Mothballs*, 2024.

Portals, Planets & Petri Dishes is an editioned series of archival pigment prints, reproduced digitally from analog watercolor and collage compositions. Each print is 24 inches x 24 inches, printed on Hannemühl photo rag paper.

The series references familiar modes of looking/investigation (portal and petri dish) while also implying a world building itself, actively undergoing transformation (planet). Imagery within each composition includes conglomerations of elaborate yet abstracted elements, constructed from popular media photographs and advertising images. Sourced from luxury, lifestyle, and fashion publications, the resulting abstract images are layered with visual textures. The intermingling of photo elements with the painted watercolor surface introduces strange new forms and spaces, and communicates a tenuous, contained moment.

Compositions can be read as both micro and macro. From a safe distance, viewers investigate a churning, composting ecology, suspended in a sphere. The works contain allegorical and narrative allusions that address our material relationships as humans, ecological fragility, and mankind's precarious situation within that ecology. This layering of visual content gives viewers multiple access points through glimpses of recognizable elements. At the same time, it challenges viewers to relate to the seemingly familiar in new ways.

Research goals for this series include engaging conceptually with aspects of ecology, queer abstraction, and collage as a form of speculative fabulation, which I introduce to a broader public audience through the work, creating ongoing conversations with other contemporary artists making work within these fields of study.

Collaged Ecologies



Collaged Ecologies is an editioned series of archival pigment prints, reproduced digitally from collage compositions. Each print is 32inches x 38inches (horizontal orientation) or 38inches x 32inches (vertical orientation), printed on Hannemühl photo rag paper.

Depicted above, Top left to bottom right:
Frill-necked, Tickle, Puffer, Lorgnette, Proboscis, Pearl-popper, Mandible, Fanned, 2022.

Precarious Arrangements



Precarious Arrangements is an editioned series of archival pigment prints, reproduced digitally from collage compositions. Each print is 32inches x 38inches (horizontal orientation) or 38inches x 32inches (vertical orientation), printed on Hannemühl photo rag paper.

Depicted above, Top left to bottom right:
Lure, Tongues, Strut, Man-o-War, Bouquet, Blue Banners, Mosquito, Chase, 2017.

In both *Collaged Ecologies* and *Precarious Arrangements*, I re-imagine aspects of our relationships to the natural world, subverting inherent power dynamics by challenging the original context and intention of materials or elements lifted from common media sources. I particularly quote imagery from media sources such as culture and lifestyle magazines, which contain inherent codifications of gender norms and seductive representations of luxury and consumerism. I consider the material histories of goods depicted, and how we as a human culture have assigned value to materials we live with, wear, and use to craft our identities, as well as the ecological legacies of our relationships to these materials and their visual culture.

By recontextualizing found images, I disrupt their original intents and question aspects of the powerful dynamics they perpetuate. Blending aesthetic categories—synthetic and organic, flora and fauna, bodily and constructed forms—allows for an investigation of the boundary between the natural and the “unnatural.” This approach foregrounds an affirmation of queer hybridity, rejecting cultural hierarchies, and valuing different kinds of bodies.

I look to contemporary tactics of queer abstraction (through formal strategies of queering) without making use of the traditional legibility of the human figure. Relationships are forged between the decorative and organic through collage hybridity. Resulting forms hover in a void, alternately seen as arrangements or creatures of an ambiguous scale and relationship to the viewer. The consideration of how such materials might be “queered” becomes infused within the process for each collage-based composition. This is engaged through aesthetic strategies of subversion, decoration, gender-bending, maximalism and hybridity.

Speculative fabulation as a queer ecological concept merges fictions and non-fictions, and practices of world-building to better consider multiple and non-human viewpoints. This shift from the human-centric perspective fosters interconnectedness, encouraging us to envision and create better futures, full of “creatures of the imagination”. I utilize speculative fabulation (through collage abstraction) as a means of engaging the queer ecological imagination. Abstraction in this mode offers new challenges to presumptions about the body, gender, and sexuality. New interpretations of materials beyond the literal depiction of a figure or body become a way of affirming and valuing all different kinds of bodies. And illegibility or ambiguity thusly becomes a powerful form of queer expression, difficult to homogenize, commercialize, or surveil.

I place imagery of marginalized or unrefined materials like scraps of fabric, trash, plant materials, fatty globs, flesh, hair, tentacles, bones, eggs, crystalline structures, and wood within equal territory to a Chanel purse, a pair of red Louboutin heels, or a Fabergé egg. I utilize flamboyant abundance and suggest layered identities through decoration and elaboration. I critique or re-signify cultural symbols through a kind of queer maximalism, or performative “drag”. Collage is a process that exceptionally allows for such queering, taking fragments of visual culture to reinterpret and challenge dominant normative frameworks, producing queered associations, and encouraging expressiveness and inclusivity.

Permeable Shapes



Depicted above, Top left to bottom right: *Permeable Shapes*, 1-5, 2025.

Each painting in *Permeable Shapes* is 48 inches x 36 inches (horizontal orientation) or 36 inches x 48 inches (vertical orientation)

Permeable Shapes is a series of oil paintings on panel. Compositions are constructed through alternating processes of drawing from preliminary collages, then layering paint intuitively in order to produce a space that feels evocative of both the collaged histories of the imagery, and a living, continually transforming environment. Through the merging of broadly ranging elements, I create hybrid forms that exist in ambiguous spaces within the painting, where the synthetic and organic overlap in unexpected ways. These forms suggest a future where nature has either overtaken, or merged, with the human-made.

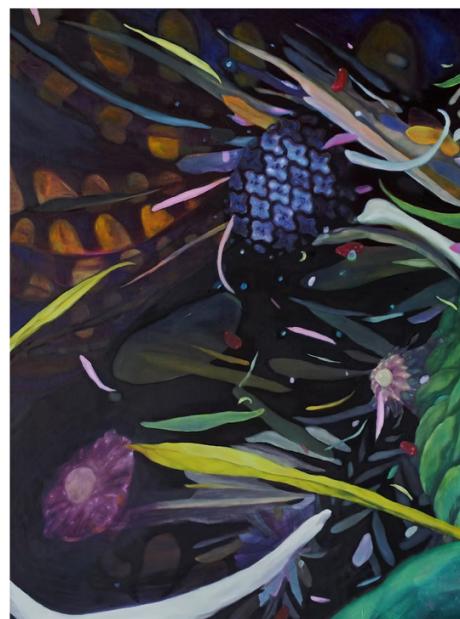
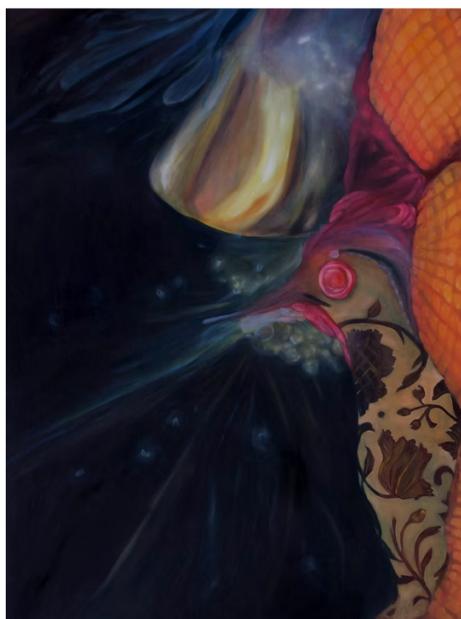
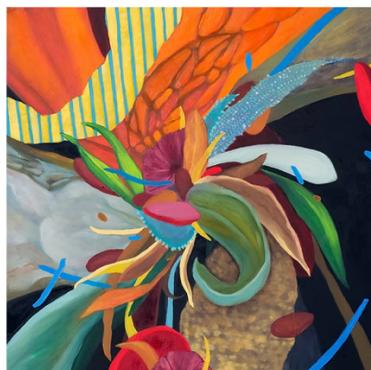
Influences for my paintings include compost piles, cast off cuttings from collages, and other visual references which allow for a merging of aesthetic orders, prompting a mixture of natural and human-made proliferations seen in the work. Employing entanglements, and unexpected visual collaborations and combinations, I am interested in Donna Haraway's ecological thoughts on "hot compost piles", as well as her theories on speculative fabulation, and multi-species worlding. Speculative fabulation merges fictions and non-fictions, and practices of world-building in order to better consider multiple and non-human viewpoints. This shift from the human-centric perspective fosters inter-connectedness, encouraging us to envision and create better futures, full of "creatures of the imagination". I apply a version of speculative fabulation to my painting process through collage, and with an aesthetic that echoes composting.

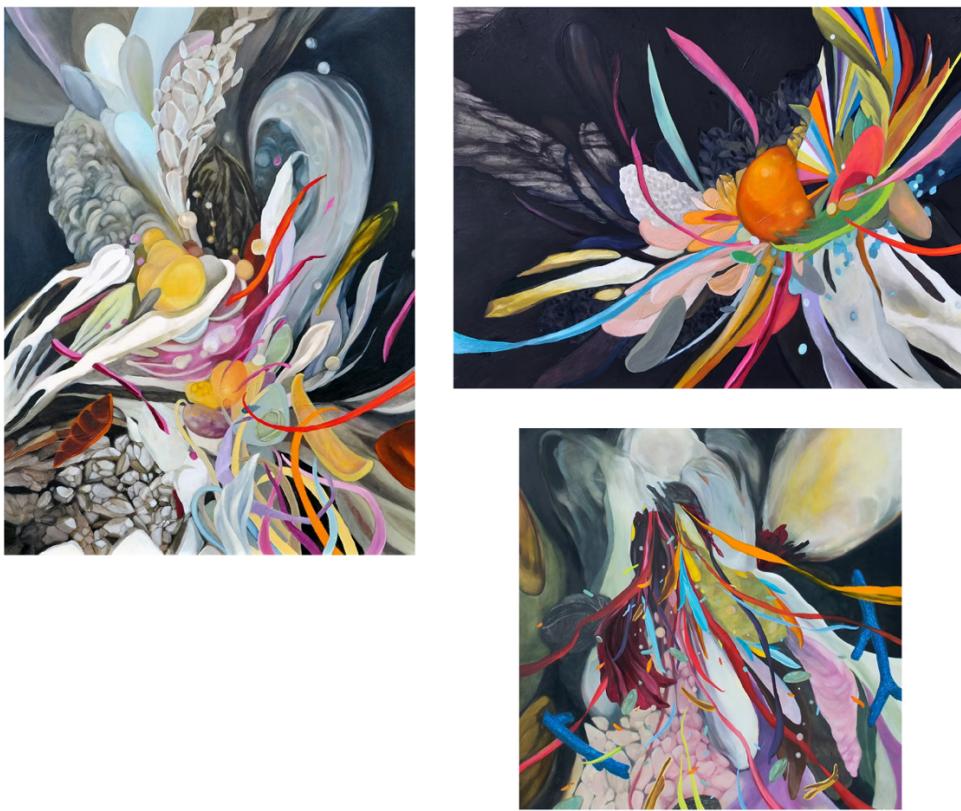
I title the series *Permeable Shapes* in a nod to the fragmentary, abstract, and intuitive experience that Merleau-Ponty summarizes as a kind of pre-language perception. Perceiving is grounded in having a body, which in turn inhabits a world. The world around us is endlessly transforming, and we are also in constant metamorphosis within our bodies, as we experience the world. However vague or permeable the boundary may be between the body and the environment, it cannot collapse entirely, and yet it is a space of infinitely layered possibilities. In our bodily capacities and dispositions, perception grounds the basic forms of our experiences and understandings within our bodies, and we attempt to interpret through orientation, figure/ground, focus and horizon. This feels particularly conceptually applicable to speculative fabulation, as well as to making and looking at paintings.

I utilize collage aesthetic in a gender-queer mode, in an ecological mode, and in resistance of an easy legibility. There are moments that create questions for the viewer and ask the viewer to categorize and figure out where the original material is coming from, and why it might be pointed out. But there is also an effort to not obliterate the varieties and variations of beauty that are possible, as well as the sense of mutability happening within the compositions. Exuberance in my work occurs through depicting accumulations of brightly colorful and adorned "bodies" in constant transition-- alternately understood as permeable/impermeable, sedimenting/spontaneous, positive/negative, fragmentating/fusing, foregrounding/backgrounding, visible/invisible. Perception is left open to the viewer to actively shift ideas of power, and shift ideas about the surrounding world. I find this openness subversively beautiful, queer, and potent with possibilities and considerations.

Feral Beauty







Paintings in *Feral Beauty* are painted in oil on panels. Paintings range from small paintings sized at 8 inches x 10 inches, 12 inches x 12 inches, mid-sized works at 18 inches x 24 inches (horizontal orientation), 24 inches x 18 inches (vertical orientation), 24 inches x 24 inches, and one large-scale work at 36 inches x 48 inches.

Select works depicted above are from *Feral Beauty*, an ongoing series of oil paintings made between 2015 and the present. Like my drawing series *Creatures of Excess* and *Feral Bouquets*, these paintings fuse a wide range of visual elements into hybrid, unruly forms. I employ color, pattern, and textural artifice to generate corporeal proliferations—forms that seem to grow or bloom beyond their expected boundaries. These amalgamations inhabit ambiguous spaces where the synthetic and the organic intermingle and become difficult to parse. In these works, the forms hint at a future in which nature has either overtaken or merged with the human-made, forging new ecologies that trouble distinctions between bodies, objects, and environments. Their surfaces aim to be alluring and sensuous, even as they border on the repellent and abject.

Compost offers a model for thinking about matter—and meaning—as something perpetually in flux: breaking down, recombining, metabolizing, and generating new life through mixture. This queer ecological logic resists linearity, hierarchy, and binary thinking; it values the exuberant, abundant, and unruly. In my paintings, I adopt this logic by allowing forms to evolve through the deliberate mingling of incompatible textures. The painting surface becomes an active zone where imagery mutates in ways that challenge normative ideas of beauty, nature, and embodiment. It is a place where new ecologies can be imagined, in which the boundaries between creature and object, flora and artefact, human and nonhuman are continuously undone and reconfigured. In this sense, the work participates in a larger inquiry into how visual cultures, consumer materials, and environmental imaginaries might decompose and reassemble differently, giving rise to forms of life that are less about stability and more about ongoing, generative transformation.

Compression Portals



Pieces in the series include small graphite drawings on paper, each 9 inches x 9 inches in scale.

Depicted above, Top left to bottom right:
Compression Portals 1-8, 2025.

Compression Portals is a series of small graphite drawings on paper, each 9in x 9in. Much like the collages seen in *Portals, Planets & Petri Dishes*, this series also references the portal and petri dish, implying a sample taken from a larger ecosystem, as well as a pathway. Each drawing presents a compressed, self-contained world, seemingly isolated, but capable of growth-- like a seed bomb. Imagery within each composition includes conglomerations of elaborate yet abstracted elements, introducing strange new forms and communicating as a potent bundle, or a chipped away chunk from a larger amalgamation.

As in the collaged spherical pieces, these works contain allegorical and narrative allusions that address our material relationships as humans, ecological fragility, and mankind's precarious situation within that ecology. This layering of visual content gives viewers multiple access points through glimpses of recognizable elements. At the same time, it challenges viewers to relate to the seemingly familiar in new ways. Drawing mediums emphasize aspects of observation from scientific eras before the camera was a useful tool, as well as a form of observation requiring interpretation.

Queer Compost





Pieces in the series include small graphite drawings on paper, 17 inches x 14 inches in scale, 14 inches x 11 inches (vertical) or 11 inches x 14 inches (horizontal).

Depicted above, Top left to bottom right:
Compost Burl, Compost Bulge, Compost Vortex, 2022.

Select works depicted in *Queer Compost* and *Tumbles* echo ideas seen my painting work. Compositions merge broadly ranging elements into hybrid forms. Imagery in my drawings employ pattern, and textural artifice proliferating in corporeal forms. These amalgamations exist in ambiguous spaces, where the synthetic and organic overlap in unexpectedly. Forms suggest a future where nature has either overtaken, or merged, with the human made. Compositions are engaging and seductive, while also repellent and abject.

Drawing on entanglements and unexpected visual juxtapositions, my work engages with Donna Haraway's ecological notion of "hot compost piles." The collage aesthetic materially recycles found images and elements, reshaping them into something new. Metaphorically, the icons, symbols, and ideas of visual culture can themselves be composted—broken down, remixed, and allowed to cross-contaminate in ways that generate fresh interpretations.

Compost, as a queer ecological notion, resists purity, hierarchy, and linear progression. It is an unruly mixture where boundaries blur, where decay and growth coexist, and where identities, materials, and meanings intermingle without fixed outcomes. In this sense, compost becomes a site of queer possibility: a space that welcomes hybridity, transformation, and the unexpected. It models a world in which materials and beings are constantly becoming—with one another through processes that are collaborative, messy, and generative.

The terrain depicted in this work becomes a site of such potential—akin to compost, a continuously shifting substrate in which a prolific range of transformations can occur. Through collage aesthetic, I explore ecological thinking, speculative fabulation, and the queering of nature, engaging with the proliferating entanglements of both natural and synthetic worlds. In doing so, I reflect on the afterlives of consumer materials, their legacies, and their visual cultures, imagining how they might decompose, recombine, and flourish differently in a queer ecological future.

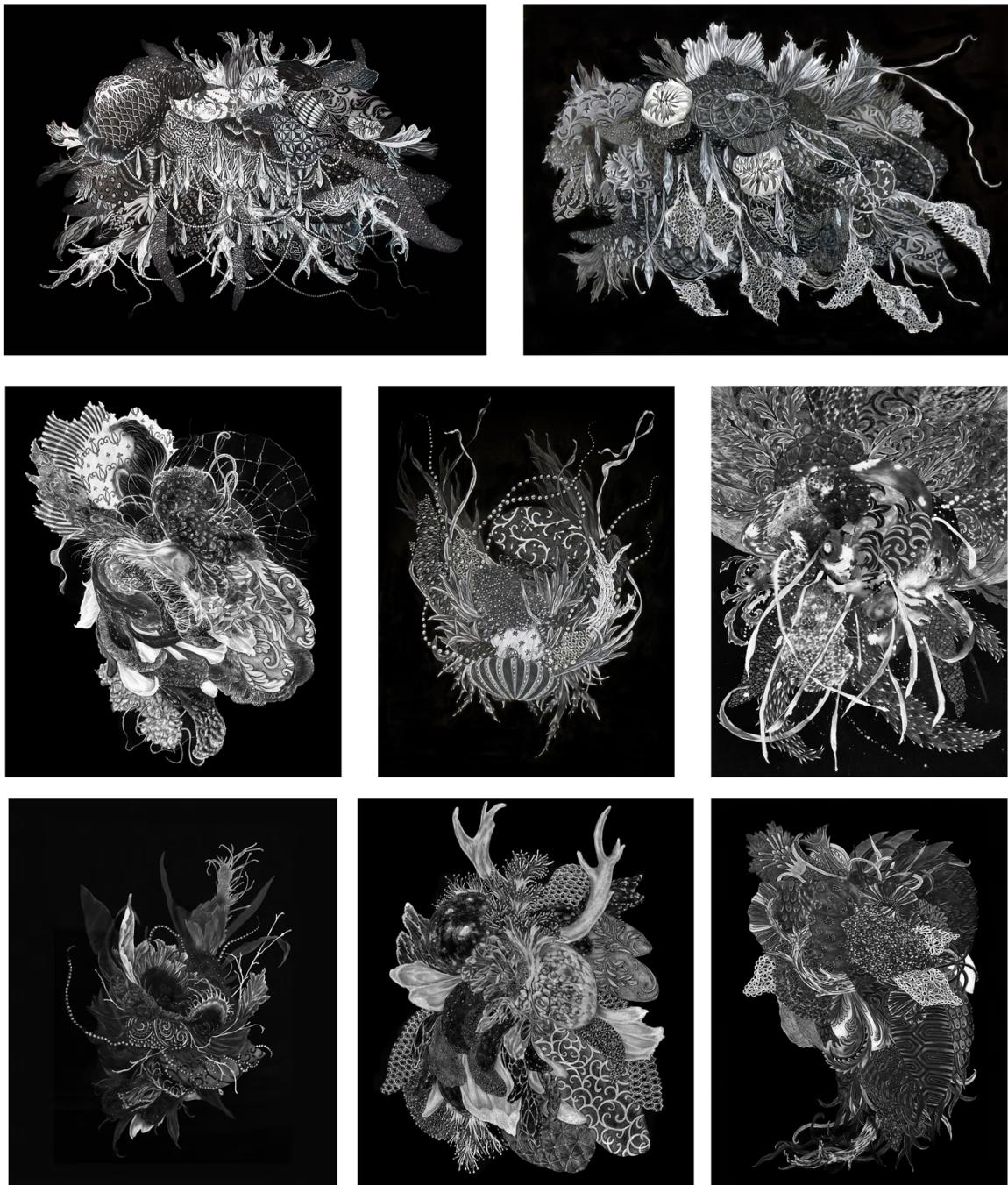
Tumbles



Pieces in the series include small graphite drawings on paper, 10 inches x 7 inches (vertical) or 7 inches x 10 inches (horizontal).

Depicted above, Top left to bottom right:
Tumble 1-5, 2013.

Lonely Hunters



Depicted above, Top left to bottom right:
Chandelier, Shivaree, Imperious, Beetle, Chimera, Nest, Helmet, Ex-Voto, 2010-2015.

Lonely Hunters is a series of colored pencil drawings on black paper, featuring abstract accumulations, and creature-like hybrids of flora and fauna, in dark environments. The drawings reference memorial bouquets, and traditions of mourning such as Victorian hair jewelry and jet jewelry craft. Jet jewelry ornaments were fashioned from black vulcanite or compressed coal. It was a particularly private and intimate form of mourning to keep a lost loved one's hair, and fashion the material into a bouquet or bracelet or other form of adornment to express love, grief and devotion. Each piece held meaning as a memento, and a brooch could convey a message symbolized through flowers, hands, weeping willows, or other forms.

I quote this practice for its beauty and sentiment, mourning a lost connection to nature while crafting new speculative forms. Exploring aspects of gender through lush, baroquely queer embodiments, the overall abstraction in this series belies specific invocations of materials: hair, feathers, fabric, pearls, petals, and honeycomb, which are rendered in curves, bulges, folds, and florid shapes.

The title, *Lonely Hunters*, references the Southern Gothic literary genre, and like characters within the genre, the forms or creatures depicted in these drawings are solitary- at once seductive and repellent, grotesque and beautiful. Pieces in the series include both large-scale and mid-sized drawings, ranging from 38 inches x 56 inches in larger works, to 30 inches by 22 inches in mid-sized works.