

**IOWA**

School of Art  
and Art History

# SPOTLIGHT 2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA - SCHOOL OF ART & ART HISTORY



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# FOREWORD

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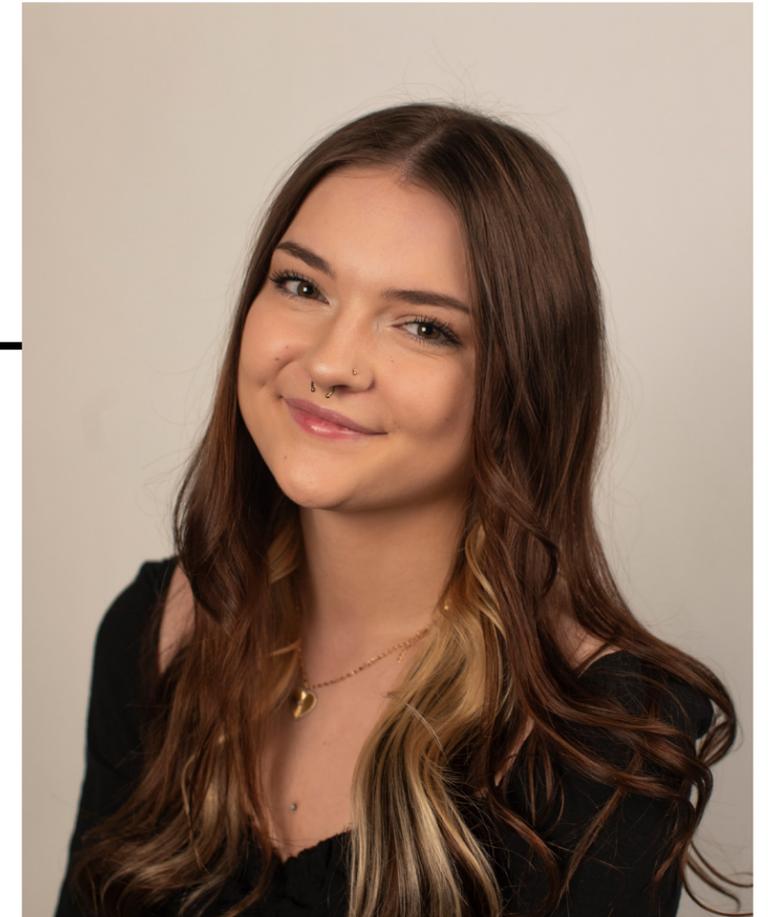
**DONNA FRIEDMAN**

It was a pleasure to view yesterday the exhibition of artworks created by students in the School of Art and Art History. My goal in supporting the creation of the Spotlight Grant program has been to encourage innovation within the visual arts, and the works included in this exhibition show that the students have taken seriously that goal. With the cost of higher education these days, it can be difficult to purchase the materials required to produce artworks, so I am glad to support some of these costs. I look forward to seeing similar exhibitions in future years, and I hope that the seven students represented in the exhibit today will continue to be creative as they go forward in life.

Donna L. Friedman Curry,  
April 21, 2023

# ALEXA CHRISTIANSEN

## GRAPHIC DESIGN



When Jeremy Swanston approached me about a mental health project here at the University of Iowa, I knew immediately that I wanted to be a part of it. Mental health has always been very important to me, whether it related to my friends, my family or myself. Our project is still a work in progress, but I wanted to display it at the Spotlight Exhibition because I believe its message should be shared. I wanted the posters to be cheerful, without diminishing the sincerity of their message. Discussions of mental health can be uncomfortable, so the challenge was finding a way to make the posters approachable while addressing a very serious topic. The posters will be displayed around campus, containing a QR code which will lead users to a drive where they can find numerous resources for mental health care and education. Stickers with the same QR code were distributed for people to access anywhere, anytime.

*Mind Matters, 2023*  
Poster  
18"x24"



# PAIGE HARKEN

## GRAPHIC DESIGN

When we're born, we start out as blank slates, like clean, untouched pieces of fabric. Hardships in life will give us tears, wrinkles, stains, you name it, but there will always be people, places, and things that help to patch up these rough spots on your proverbial piece of fabric. These moments of goodwill, kindness, and love permanently affect us, and the patches they leave help to protect us as we continue to progress through our lives. My project revolves around this idea and will incorporate people, places, and things in my life that have deeply touched and "patched" me.

The making process of this "quilt", my massive fabric tapestry, took around 100 hours in total to create. I sourced most of my materials second-hand, a practice I incorporate in most of my work. This project was certainly a labor of love, and was intended to be so. From the hand-painted illustrations to the absurd number of stitches completed, the making process allowed me to actively reflect on these "patches" and what they mean to me while completing the piece.

*Patchwork, 2023*

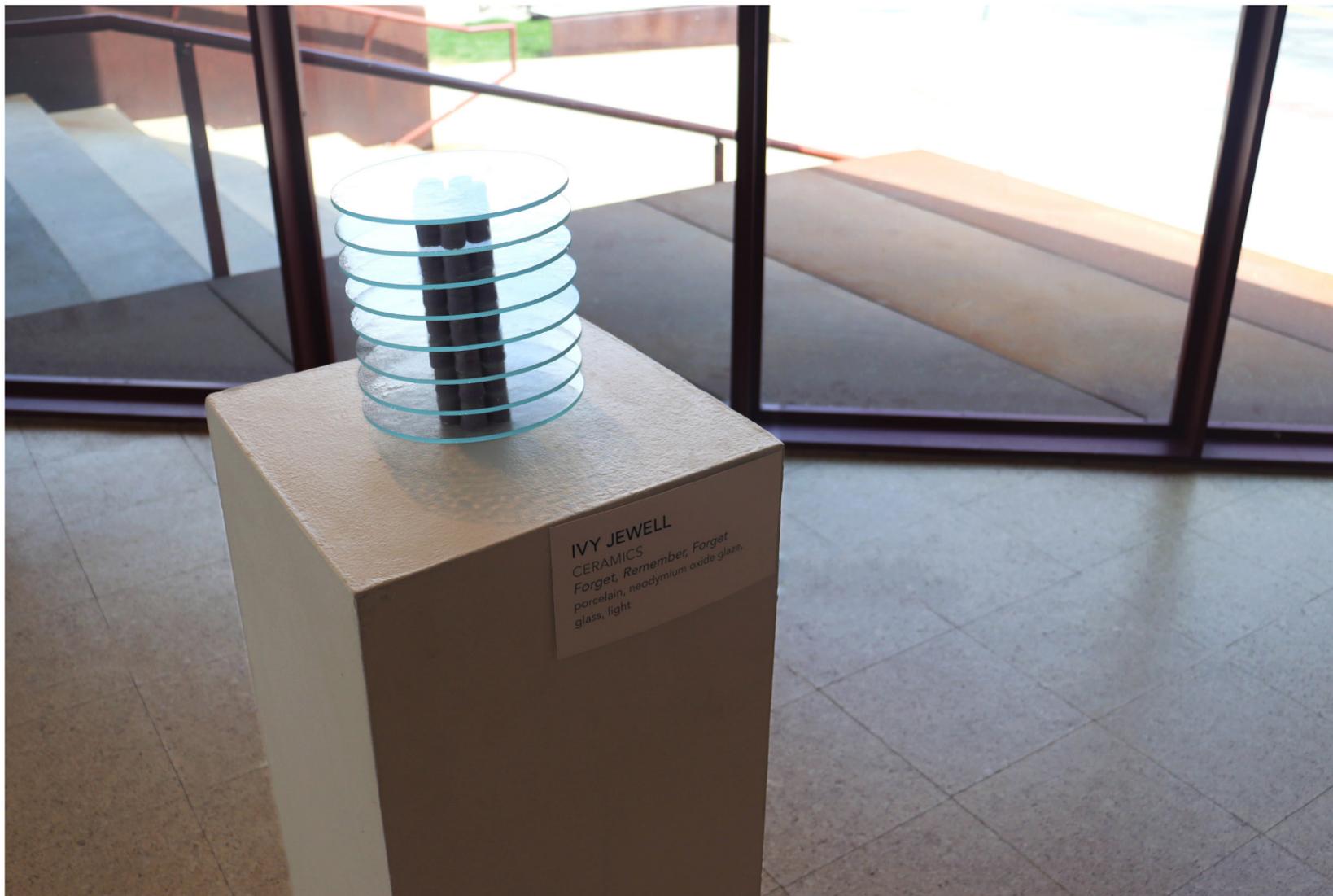
Various fabrics, acrylic paint,  
embroidery thread, assorted buttons

9'x6.5'



# IVY JEWELL

## CERAMICS



Living with C-PTSD, my relationship with memory varies. Memories are buried, they resurface, and alterations are made and dictated by time. In my work I investigate my ongoing introspection into my memory. *Forget, Remember, Forget*, conveys the cyclical pattern of memory and my shifts in judgment I have towards my traumas. For this piece I created a glaze using neodymium oxide that appears purple or blue depending on the quality of light in the environment it is displayed in. This material allows for conversation around the fluctuations individuals have when recalling shared experiences.

*Forget, Remember, Forget*, 2023  
Porcelain, neodymium oxide  
glaze, glass, light  
6"x6"x8"



# RYLIE KELLEY

## PRINTMAKING

These pieces were made to honor two (of many) of my queer and trans aunties, uncles, and guardians who helped me to become who I am today, Jefri and Xander. Growing up gay and gender non-conforming can be either a source of immense joy or of terrible hardship, depending entirely on the people you're with and the family you've been given. Thankfully, from the moment I became a part of this world, I have been lucky enough to be surrounded by a loving queer community that has made sure I was always taken care of. Butch babysitters changed my pull ups and taught me not to bite. My parents' friends invited me to their big gay weddings. Lesbian aunties who divined I was queer before I did introduced me to sapphic literature, and my trans found family taught me how to redefine and reinvent my own version of masculinity. I owe everything I am and everything I will be to the community that raised me, and that encouraged me to become the queer, gender-nonconforming, confident-in-my-own-shoes butch that I am today. I cannot thank them enough.

*Jefri & Xander, 2023*  
Oil and water based  
monotype  
24"x30"



# ISABELA LARIOS GARCIA

SCULPTURE/MIXED MEDIA



Death is a very personal thing. Each of us weaves the idea of what a restful place is, where we would like to go at the end of our life, an event that we all have in common, with the outmost security that it will come. This is my peace, my ending, fresh water of a river on a summer day, sleep for a restless mind and always awake hands. In a way a reminder for the living, to be conscious of the things we leave behind and a promise that the noise life provides will come to an end.

*Searching for Peace*, 2023  
Mixed media  
4' x 5'



# BRIANNA MUCHAI

## 3D DESIGN

The Furtherance Collection is comprised of three objects, a LED light fixture, side table, and stool. This collection furthered my interest in wood and using the CNC router. The Furtherance light fixture is comprised of 3D printed material, LED lighting, and red oak plywood. The Furtherance side table and stool are made up of 3/4in red oak plywood. The Furtherance collection is a continuation and deeper dive into the concept of my Cupcake chair which is primarily built with wood and full of obtuse angles.

*The Furtherance Collection, 2023*  
Light fixture, stool, side table  
10"x10"x5", 14"x20", 24"x28"



# SAM UDITSKY

## PHOTOGRAPHY



The *tallit* is an iconic Jewish symbol and garb used for prayer by Jews around the world. I explore the history of this traditional garment through the process of making my own. My goal was to create the pattern on the *tallit* using cyanotype, an alternative photographic printing process that honors the hand-made technique of *tallis* making. For my project, I researched the process of making a *tallit* and printing cyanotype on silk, as well as the histories behind the garment and alternative process.

Traditional *talliot* (plural of *tallit*) are four cornered rectangular garments designed to fulfill the mitzvah, the obligation, of wearing *tzitzitiot*, tassels, on four corners of a standard garment. There is a specific number of strings, knots, and wraps to be made per each tassel that adds to the number 613, the number of commandments in the Torah. I kept tradition in mind when creating the garment, using pomegranate seeds as imagery and to add more color to the silk, as pomegranates are said to have 613 seeds. The rest of the pattern and texture was created using turmeric, soap, distilled vinegar, and a process called wet cyanotype.

*Cyanotype Tallis, 2023*  
Cyanotype, silk noil  
70"x18"

The overall result reminds me of the silk painted *talliot* seen throughout the community.

# ALEXIS WILLIAMS

## 3D DESIGN



Ledge is a multipurpose shelf intended to be viewed from a variety of perspectives. While most shelves are meant to be placed against a wall or put in a corner, Ledge is able to be placed in the middle of a space as it has no “back” which also allows for whatever light is in the space to shine through emphasizing its transparency and vibrant color. I have always been attracted to the playful elegance and sophistication of stained glass, and to play off of that concept, I incorporated tinted plexiglass into the design. The process of making this piece was new, as the mediums I have most recently worked in, 3D printing and metal, allowed for the creation of extremely organic shapes so I pulled from my design experience with those mediums to push what I could do with wood, which resulted in the combination of organic and geometric forms.

*Ledge, 2023*  
Maple plywood, plexiglass

