

# BEFORE NEXT

THERE  
IS NOW



Produced in association with  
2017 MFA Thesis Exhibition  
BEFORE NEXT THERE IS NOW  
April 7 — 30, 2017  
Beeler Gallery  
Columbus College of Art & Design  
Columbus, Ohio

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Images courtesy of Kyle Benson and the artists

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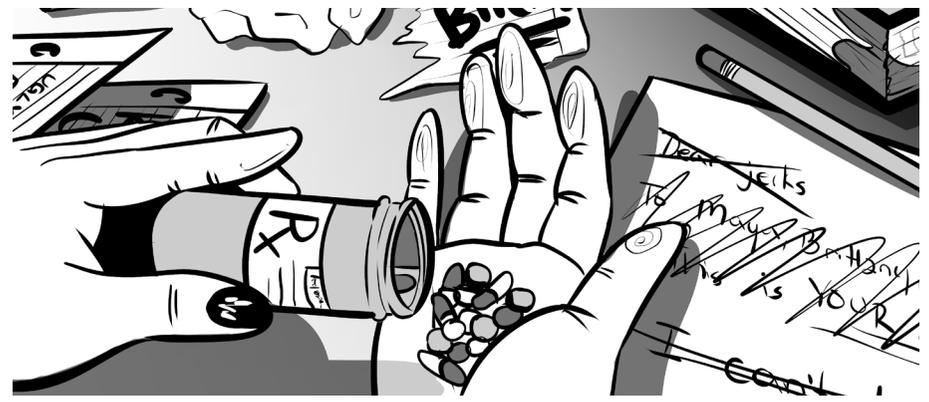
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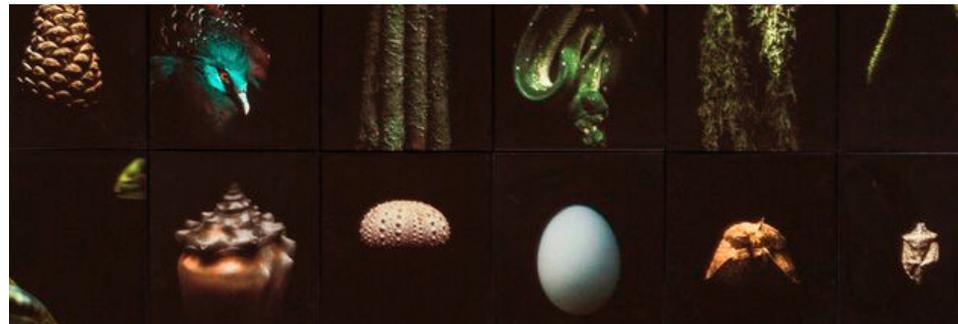
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REALITY:  
EXAMINED AT THE 2017  
MFA EXHIBITION

LIZ TRAPP, MFA

2017 MFA in Visual Arts New Projects Thesis Exhibition



KAT FRANCIS

*Before Next There is Now* showcases work by the MFA Class of 2017 at Columbus College of Art & Design. The exhibition displays fluency, not only in the exquisite craft and professionalism each project is rigorously rung through, but also in the way that each artist or designer grapples with socially relevant issues, both on a local and global level.



WILLIAM ARNOLD

It is striking to see how much work in the exhibition ties back to the local community of Columbus. Kat Francis isn't alone in her focus on the Columbus neighborhood of Franklinton. Attracted to lower-income neighborhoods because of a complex personal history with them, Francis urges viewers to see beauty in the seemingly cast-aside neighborhood through her complex mixed media sculptural building maquette series, which is offset with a backdrop of paper debris found in the neighborhood.

William Arnold's photographic series, *Franklinton on Film*, which consists of 50 images shown in two facing grids, takes the people and places of Franklinton as its subject. The gritty and raw portraits capture the humanity in the neighborhood. Arnold's series is incredibly specific and yet not specific at all — this is set in Franklinton, but it is universal enough to identify any number of similar marginalized communities across the country.

Meanwhile, Kelsey Joseph's large-scale installation *Empathy + Impact Project* focuses on themes of empathy and individuality and asks how the viewer can make positive change on the local level.

Through her construction of an alternative reality for a fictional character, Tru, Kelli Williams uses humor and lightheartedness to tackle complex social issues that mar our world today. The viewer experiences Tru in several ways: through evocative and catchy short stop-motion animations which are part music video, part "real TV" and part music video; photographic evidence; an active social media account; and an analysis of Tru's environments (or stage sets) which remind us of the craftsmanship that went into the animations.

While Williams is tackling large social issues through catchy animations, Tarek Marouani explores his relationship with his homeland of Tunisia in relationship to freedom of speech, something he gained perspective on once leaving the country. Marouani's film, *Shams*, focuses on the plight of the LGBTQ community in Tunisia and also explores the particular struggles of minorities in developing countries. Both artists use fine craftsmanship and provocative imagery to ask the viewer to confront complex issues themselves.



TAREK MAROUANI



TINA SPEECE



In a similar vein, Tina Speece tells a visual story through a large comic or storyboard frame-by-frame focusing on a character who commits suicide and deals with the politics of navigating the afterlife. Her work is filled with humor, but the topic of suicide, which hangs over the viewer's head, cannot be escaped.

When you think about it, the idea of exploring a futuristic, alternative reality is a complex social issue in our society today as well, and several artists take on this complex task in their projects. Two bodies of work take a particular focus on an alternative future. Mikayla Liang's fashion installation of utilitarian-inspired garments place the viewer in the year 2077. The garments' many survivalist qualities, which range from a series of straps and hooks to all-weather durable fabrics, give the viewer a sense of what the world might look like in the not-so-far-off future. Jianan He's short sci-fi-drama film, *2*, explores a gritty future of humanity beyond technology. While He is questioning what is real and unreal through a future in which technology is obsolete



CHIA-NING MIKAYLA LIANG



YUAN HUA

Yuan Hua, however, has created a fantasy for the viewer to step into which is based on the complex relationship between the real and the surreal. Hua is married to painting, but the frameworks for her paintings depart from the traditional square or rectangle formats and explore organic and silhouetted shapes that are filled with slightly environmental and completely abstract imagery. Hua tucks playful characters and towns into her fantasy-scape. For an added layer of complexity, Hua uses technology via projected animations to interrogate the very future of the medium of painting itself.



CLAIR FARRIS

*These landscapes are perhaps a representation of a larger human experience.*

A sense of lived experience inspires Clair Farris' grid of black and white panoramic photographs. Her subjects are inspired by travel, featuring landscapes she's visited in the United States like sites from Yellowstone National Park or Joshua Tree. Farris' photographs harken back to the history of the romantic landscape, explored by German painters in the late 1800s, and therefore suggest to the viewer that these landscapes are perhaps a representation of a larger human experience.



SANWAL DEEN

2017 MFA in Visual Arts New Projects Thesis Exhibition

History is a subtext running through this exhibition, with some artists exploring a future where the world forgets its history as in the example of Liang or He, or perhaps a world where the contemporary cannot escape its own dark history in the example of Williams or Speece. Perhaps it's the history of a place, the neighborhood of Franklinton, for example, or the sites that Farris visited. But two artists in the exhibition use history as the very framework for their projects.

Sanwal Deen's *Curiosity Cabinet* is a photographic series displayed in a grid, along with a supplement in book form. His subjects are a series of natural elements, specimens taken from nature. They're photographed against a black background with a sense of monumentality that might remind the viewer of those first photographs of Earth seen from space, glowing against the deep, impenetrable black of space. Deen taps into the history of curiosity cabinets, which harken back to the 16th century, and through this exploration, asks viewers to consider questions of curation and truth. And Mingyu Li's fashion installation evocatively combines the historical and contemporary through her line of garments which are heavily influenced by Naxi Dongba culture of China.

Zane Miller asks the viewer to confront themselves, their own histories, and their own perceptions in his interactive installation *Two-way Protocols*. In the installation, the viewer steps into one of two cubes made of two-way glass, which hang from the ceiling at head-level, and from there Miller alters your viewing experience. Miller's installation intersects with modernist minimalist sculpture on a formal level, but grapples with the contemporary and futuristic questions of altered (or enhanced) human experience.

*Before Next There is Now* eloquently redefines, examines, and interrogates the personal lived experience on several levels — and isn't that exactly what art and design should do? The MFA Class of 2017 at Columbus College of Art & Design has shown they can take on complex, personal, and universal issues in evocative, thrilling, and productive ways.

*Before Next There is Now eloquently redefines, examines, and interrogates the personal lived experience on several levels.*

# WILLIAM ARNOLD

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Springfield, Ohio, United States

Fear tends to frame our perception of neighborhoods that have a reputation for being dangerous, however exaggerated that illusion may be. What many see as dangerous, others see as home. This body of work challenges who we think of as our neighbors through capturing moments of humanity and cultural significance both unique to Franklinton, and yet so very common across America.

As the cycle of gentrification changes the face of neighborhoods, I aimed to capture an authentic exploration of a community "in transition." The imagery invites the viewer to experience the beauty of a place; most have little desire to venture otherwise.

The relationships built with community members during my time as a fellow resident were imperative in the true observation and pursuit of the neighborhood's reality. From South Central Ave. to Sullivant, and from W. Broad St. to Avondale, these streets have become my community, and I invite you to share it with me.

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*Franklinton on Film, 2017,*  
archival ink jet prints from scanned  
medium format film, 7.75 ft. x 8.5 ft.



## SANWAL DEEN

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Islamabad, Pakistan

Curiosity cabinets date back to the 16th century, when early European settlers labeled, categorized, stored, and displayed objects from their journeys. As time went on, these cabinets became too large to be displayed in any one household, and paved the way for laboratories, museums, libraries, any space that housed and displayed a collection of things.

For this project, I am building a curiosity cabinet of sorts; it is composed of a collection of photographs of natural bodies, stored in a black frame and mounted on a wall. Through this collection, I seek to explore the diversity, unity, and relationships of all life forms as seen through individual objects in nature. How this unity is perceived depends on how the viewer chooses to curate the "cabinet" in their mind. In doing so, it also raises questions about curation and truth, for more often than not, how truth is curated becomes more relevant than truth itself.

*The Curiosity Cabinet, 2017*, Inkjet Prints on Hahnemühle  
208 gsm Photo Rag Paper, 182.25 in. × 97.5 in.

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## CLAIR FARRIS

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Columbus, Ohio, United States

I look in the passenger side mirror at the cloud of dust that billows up from the tires as we pull off and onto the side of the road. I step out into unfamiliar terrain but there is something familiar about this place. Although I may be countless miles away, it reminds me of home.

I place my camera where I stand.

My view, experience, travel companions, and destinations are all part of the story I capture onto a piece of film. Multiple cameras lend themselves to multiple perspectives all coming from my panoramic view during this unique moment. I photograph nostalgia and a sense of home, which invite the viewer to join me on my journey.

*Old Faithful Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 2016*, black and white print from a medium format pinhole camera. Scanned negative and printed on enhanced matte paper, 45 in. × 23 in.



*Top: Old Faithful Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming 2016*, Black and white print from a medium format pinhole camera. Scanned negative and printed on enhanced matte paper. 45 in. × 23 in.

*Bottom: Logan, Ohio 2017*, Black and white print from a medium format pinhole camera. Scanned negative and printed on enhanced matte paper. 45 in. × 23 in.

## KAT FRANCIS

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Cleveland, Ohio, United States

Place is where we exist. It encompasses community, culture, and lifestyle. In this body of work, collage-like assemblages and fragments based on neighborhood, communicate the experience of my surroundings. My interest in place began from growing up in poor neighborhoods and wishing I could live somewhere safer, cleaner, and bigger. Throughout my life, I have moved often and had a hard time identifying a place as home. This allowed me to gain the ability to adapt and be exposed to varying communities within city life.

My current place, Franklinton, has been the most welcoming, unique, and dangerous place I have lived; I like to call it the city of answers. Every vision I have and idea I want to communicate has been encouraged by Franklinton and the wonderful people who reside there. In this body of work, I want to capture my memories, stories, and experiences to share with my audience. The intent is to recreate this inspiring, scrappy, and ever-changing community in a multi-material installation 3D and 2D forms, compiled from painting, drawings, photos, collage, and found objects are used to portray devastation and restoration.

*Walking Houses*, 2017, Mixed Media Sculpture; approx. 4 ft. x 5 ft  
and *Bottoms Up*, 2017; Mixed Media Collage; 18 ft. x 29 ft.

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## JIANAN HE

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Shanghai, China

2 is a roughly 9-minute sci-fi/drama short film. Unlike the aim of pure science fiction, my goal is for the audience to be unable to find the answer. 2 is concentrated on the theme of life and death; it focuses on the humanity beyond technology. The world structure is split into one that is "real" and a virtual world that is created out of the air: the "comfort zone." It is a drama that comes with the choice of deciding to stay or go.

2, 2017;  
stills from film;  
1920\*1080



## YUAN HUA

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Anhui, China

We live on this unimaginable planet, and we are able to make fantasies. It is important for me to record, collect, and show these illusions of life that have flashed in my mind and expanded imaginings about my childhood, dreams, the literature I have read, and the observations and fantasies from daily life.

This work is created by projecting animations onto 2-dimensional paintings and collages to explore the playfulness and find hidden, interesting, and even irrational connections between humans and nature. I push boundaries with still works and animations of the real and surreal. If I compared my 2D paintings to some pieces of bread (reality), then the animation is delicious jam (fantasy).

*Games Without End (details and overview), 2017, Mixed Media:*  
acrylic, watercolor, projection, paper, cardboard, wood board;  
dimensions variable

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## KELSEY JOSEPH

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Columbus, Ohio, United States

In a world where there are many social issues and situations to feel bad about, it is important for us to know that we can create a more empathetic culture that is equipped to move forward and make positive change. This thesis highlights individuals in the Columbus community to show the moment in which they felt empathy toward an issue and decided to act upon it, in hopes that it would inspire others to do the same.

Project made possible thanks to generous support from The Puffin Foundation.

*Empathy + Impact Project (detail and overview), 2017,*  
cast acrylic, painted mdf, white oak 336 ft. x 20 ft.

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*Sometimes I think  
it would be easier  
not to care; the  
problem is, that's  
my **biggest fear.***



## MINGYU LI

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Qingdao, China

Naxi Dongba culture is the shining star and treasure of Chinese civilization. I choose this culture as the inspiration for my 2017 autumn and winter ready-to-wear collection. I combined modern fashion elements and specific construction techniques from Naxi Dongba traditional costumes in my garments' design in my own unique style. As a modern womens wear fashion designer, I always pursue innovation and I challenge myself to deconstruct and reinvent new ways of incorporating historical fashion techniques in a contemporary way; this collection is no exception. The garments feature pleating, tie dye, nail bead, embroidery, and silkscreen to pull in elements from Naxi Dongba culture. The goal is to take what would have been a traditional costume and have it become a contemporary fashion piece that is comfortable and stylish enough to wear in everyday life.

*NAXI DONGBA, 2017, Autumn and Winter Collection*

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## CHIA-NING MIKAYLA LIANG

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Taipei, Taiwan

*Ren* is a fashion collection project set in the year 2077. This dystopian future is controlled by a powerful mega-corporation that cultivates the Cyber Punk, an urban sub-genre of science fiction featuring advanced technology. People wear high-tech and functional garments to protect themselves. So waterproof, breathable, sun-protective, ultra-lightweight, and stretchy fabrics are all included in the collection. *Ren*, or lotus, also plays an important role in the collection. I conflate traditional paper-folding techniques to make patterns that mimic lotuses. Lotuses grow in the mud but produce pristine flowers. This imagery encourages the viewer to think about how to keep ourselves unsullied from the world.

*REN • The Era of Dystopia, 2017*, Highly functional outdoor fabrics  
(waterproof breathable, mesh, stretch, reflective) dimensions variable

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## TAREK MAROUANI

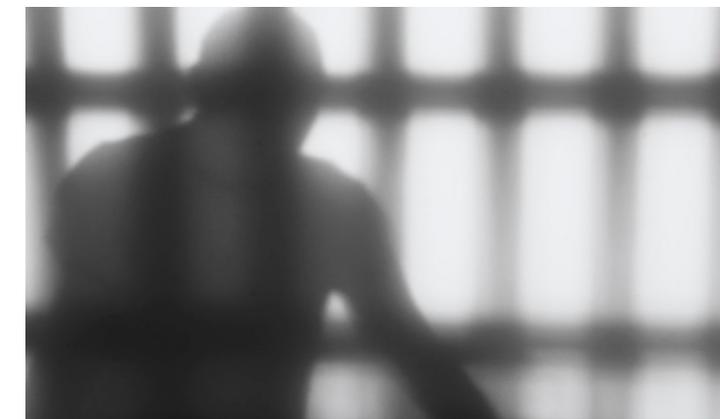
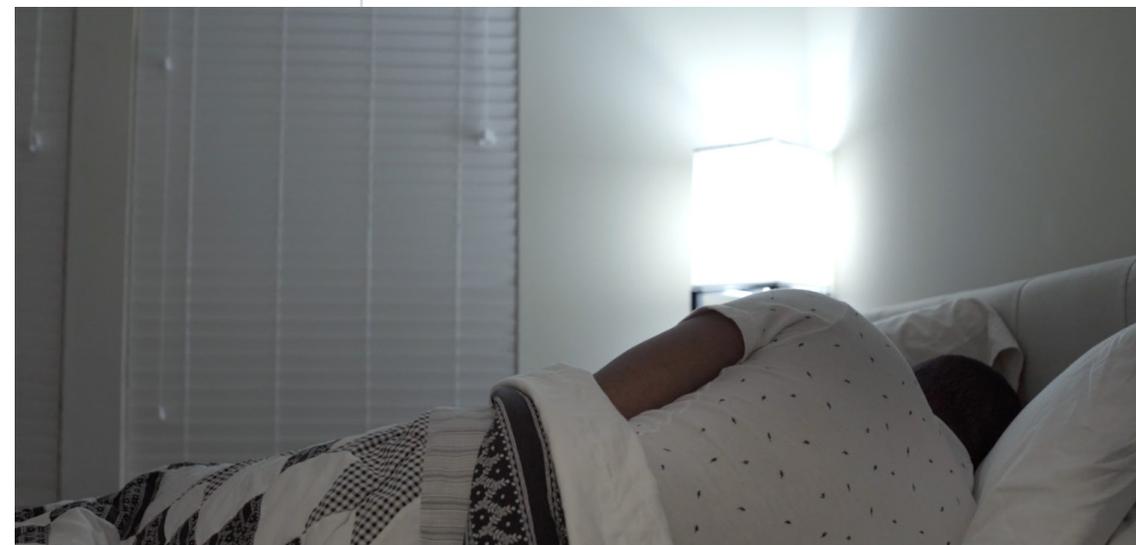
tmarouani.1@go.ccad.edu

Tunis, Tunisia

While growing up in the traditional society in Tunisia, I was always dreaming of change. Human rights and the rights of the LGBTQ community have become hot topics in Tunisia, but they are also topics that are in desperate need of progress. The objective of this film is to shed the light on "militant cinema" and its role in restructuring the cultural scene in post-revolutionary societies, using Tunisia as a focal point. A lack of freedom of speech is something that I have witnessed first-hand both on the big screen and behind the camera. Leaving Tunisia gave me enough distance to view these issues and see the steps that my home country is taking. Interviews with individuals who belong to the emerging LGBTQ community in Tunisia have inspired and shaped the work. This film is focused on an audience that belongs to the privileged majority and is unaware of what minorities in developing countries face on a daily basis.

*Shams, 2017;*  
still from film; 1920\*1080

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## ZANE MILLER

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Canal Winchester, Ohio, United States

*Two-Way Protocols* is an interactive installation comprised of two large suspended cubes constructed with two-way mirrors. Bodies that enter the interior of the cubes encounter a repetitive, mirrored environment that is spacious, isolated, and ephemeral. In darkness, participants can view the illuminated individual in the adjacent cube, while the public can clearly observe the participants within. This piece is derived from an interest in exploring perception in order to understand the detailed nature of experience. Relating to the investigative veins of Bruce Nauman and Dan Graham, among others, *Two-Way Protocols* aims to enforce the contrast between perceptual and physical experience of space, while allowing ourselves to become aware of our participation as subject and object.

*Two-Way Protocols* was made possible because of the kindness and generosity of Plaskolite, who have donated all of the acrylic glass involved in the completion of this project.

*Two-way Protocols*, 2017, Two-way mirror, acrylic glass, steel, arduino, neopixels, x-band sensor, 96 in. x 48 in. x 144 in.

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## TINA SPEECE

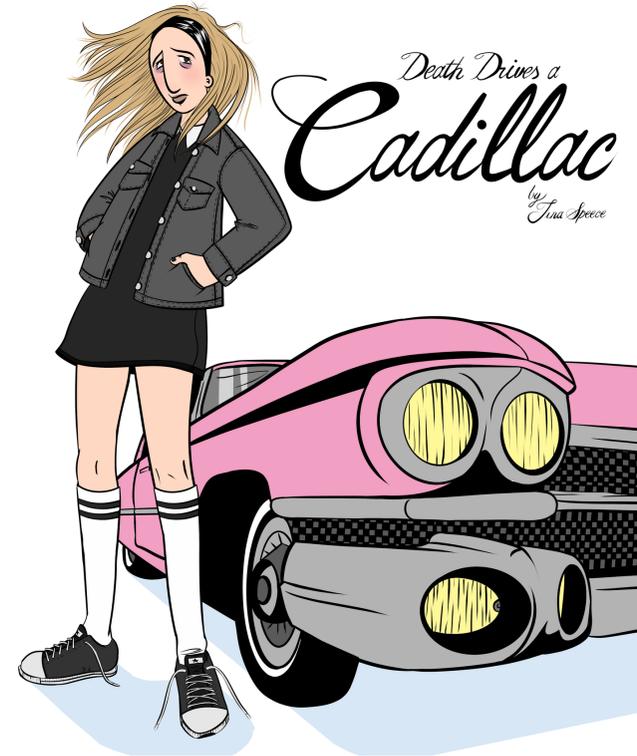
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Daleville, Alabama, United States

*Death Drives a Cadillac* is equal parts buddy-cop movie and conversation with my younger self. The story itself is about a young girl (Kiddo) who commits suicide and finds herself in the bureaucratic trappings of the afterlife, apprentice to an occasionally inappropriate Reaper named Dee. Along with learning about the job, Kiddo also has the tremendous task of learning about herself, because, after all, death is only the beginning.

Follow the adventure at [deathdrivesacadillac.tumblr.com](http://deathdrivesacadillac.tumblr.com).

*Excerpts from Death Drives a Cadillac*  
2017; Graphic Novel

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## KELLI WILLIAMS

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Landover, Maryland, United States

Social media is the nucleus of modern society. Conversations about formerly taboo and heavy topics of politics, cultural appropriation, sexuality, and religion are all driven by the influence of social media, regardless of involvement. *This is Tru* is a stop motion animated web series that comments on society through the lens of social media and technology. The narratives I portray through my work walk the line between reality and fiction that are representative of the subconscious or the idea of our “virtual selves.” Humor and satire are driving forces within my work in order to create a “safe space” to form dialogue on difficult topics.

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Top:  
*Sundays Bar and Grille*, set and assets from *The Autocorrect* episode, 2017, Mixed Media, 24 in. x 48 in.

Bottom:  
*Clicks Department Store*, set and assets from *The Domepiece* episode, 2017, Mixed Media 36 in. x 72 in.













# THINK. DO. THRIVE.

**CCAD teaches undergraduate and graduate students in the midst of a thriving artistic community in Columbus, Ohio.**

Founded in 1879, CCAD is one of the oldest private art and design colleges in the United States, offering majors in art and design that produce graduates equipped to shape culture and business at the highest level. Its two-year, 60-hour MFA curriculum allows students to design, create and explain a project with one-on-one feedback from select faculty and industry professionals.

CCAD is committed to diversity and has been educating elite talent for more than 135 years. It's a place for people who think differently, care about the larger world, and strive for greater understanding of the human community.

## MASTER OF FINE ARTS: NEW PROJECTS

Our Master of Fine Arts program allows graduate students to pursue creative excellence through specific projects rather than specific media. So we have illustrators, graphic designers, animators, sculptors, fashion designers, and writers all working together.

The program stresses studio mastery, individual scholarship, organization, communication, clarity of thought, leadership, and entrepreneurial skills. We educate artists who are capable of taking on interesting artistic endeavors and who also have the skills and talents to make their vision manifest.

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