

endings + beginnings

Shima Aghaaminiha Shamin Aghaaminiha
Larissa Kitchemonia Raegan Moynes
Alyssa Scott Amy Snider Brenda Watt

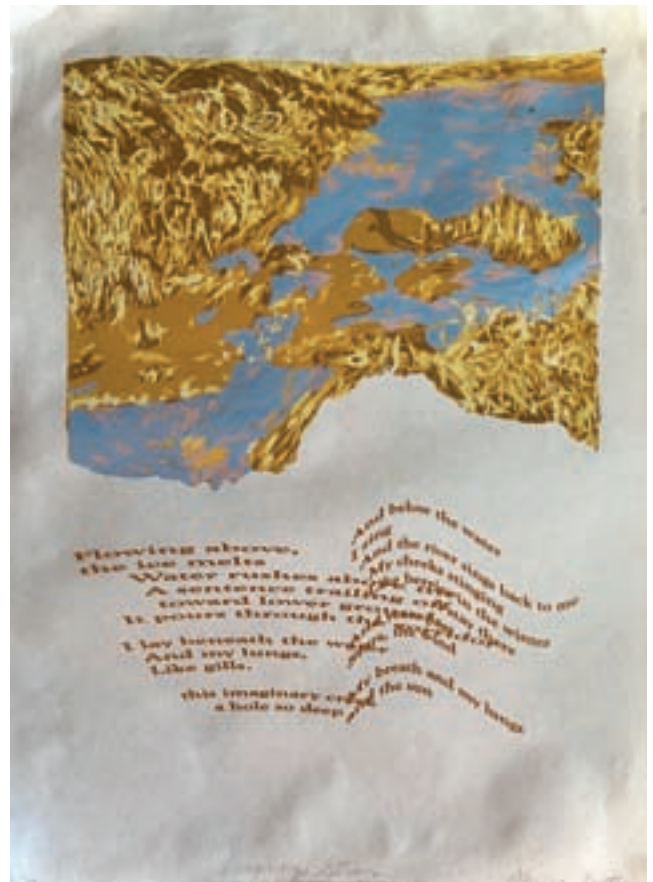
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endings + beginnings is an exhibition showcasing the works of Shima Aghaaminiha, Shamim Aghaaminiha, Larissa Kitchemonia, Raegan Moynes, Alyssa Scott, Amy Snider and Brenda Watt, a group of emerging artists and artists in the beginning of their careers as candidates in the MFA program at the University of Regina.

Our lives are filled with beginnings and endings that result from changes of all sorts. In our recent time, the Covid19 pandemic has imposed another ending and a beginning on us. Like with all defining events, our lives now have a line drawn through them: pre-Covid/post-Covid. What makes this situation exceptional is that these new definitions apply to every person's experience. Other global changes, political, technological, and environmental, are also looming or already happening at what feels like a continuously increasing pace. These constant changes to our lives and our understanding of the world lead us to the question of where one contemporary moment ends and another begins. The works in *endings + beginnings* are each reflections on this question.



Raegan Moynes, "Worm", 2020



Alyssa Scott, "Imaginary Stream", 2021

Shima and Shamim Aghaaminiha's clay sculptures both convey their desire to see an end to the oppression of women that they experienced in their home country of Iran and what it means to them to begin a new life in Canada. Shamim's piece features the Iranian dictator's favourite method of ending people's lives. Shima's piece reflects on the various ceilings and forms of abuse that women face in Iran. Larissa Kitchemonia's painting conveys the thoughts she had on the beginnings of creation



Brenda Watt, "Achemon Sphinx", 2021

while pregnant with her youngest son. Triggered by resurfaced memories from the past during the early days of the pandemic, Raegan Moynes engages in a material negotiation of identity through the reconstruction of her personal wardrobe, questioning the boundaries between past, present and future notions of self. Alyssa Scott's miniature print installation sculpture and print are about a stream behind her home. She questions its beginning and end points, from the surface water to its continuation underground through which she contemplates her relationship to water, land, life matter and the home. Amy Snider's sculptures convey her personal dilemma of how to face the fact that we are destroying the planet while continuing to live and create. Narratives implicitly evoke the concept of beginnings and endings, and Brenda Watt's ceramic plates memorialize Covid19 narratives that have become familiar to us within the past year.



Shima Aghaaminiha, "The Volume of Words", 2021



Amy Snider, "Dust Plate", 2021

This new work from these seven MFA students reflects the energy and excitement they feel at the beginning of their degree and artistic career.

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artists: bios + statements

Shamin Aghaaminiha

Shamim Aghaaminiha is a ceramic artist who is interested in creating conceptual installations. She holds a Bachelor in Handicrafts from Tehran University of Art and is currently studying for a Master of Fine Art in Visual Art at the University of Regina. She was born and raised in Tehran, Iran sixteen years after the "Islamic Revolution". Being raised in a strict religious society and making art under censorship has influenced her art practice. Through her art, she wants to be a voice of oppressed Iranians and reveal the truth behind media lies about Iran's dictatorial regime.

Artist Statement:

My installation "The Office of Ayatollah" is a room full of ropes hanging from the

ceiling the way capital punishment execute in Iran and the dictator uses it as a pretext to execute innocent people. The dictator ends Iranian life brutally. Because of the tyranny, I couldn't talk about it in my home country but now, that I am in a free land I can start and raise awareness regarding human rights issues in Iran. I used the snake figure as a metonym of evil to represent the character of Khamenei. It also contains some rucks that make the snake look like his turban. The noose show the dictator's favorite way to ends Iranian life. By speaking up I hope it can be a new start of ending his rule and hopefully collapsing the dictatorship.



Shamin Aghaaminiha, "The Office of Ayatollah", 2021

Shima Aghaaminiha

Shima Aghaaminiha is a ceramic artist whose work extends to performance and installation. She earned her BFA degree in handicraft from Tehran University of Art. Aghaaminiha was born and raised in Iran, and its patriarchal religious system informs her work. Human rights issues such as freedom of speech and beliefs and feminism are the main subjects of her artworks.

Artist Statement:

In "the Volumes of Words", I want to show the barriers women from all around the world face during their lifetime and their suffocated voices when they want to speak but the patriarchal society suppresses them.

The installation consists of three different ceilings made of various materials such as iron for the first ceiling, wood for the second one, and glass for the last ceiling.

This difference in the hardness of the materials is a metaphor for various difficulties and discriminations in the distinct social contexts, for example, Islamic beliefs affect middle-eastern societies severely, and because of this, we observe egregious forms of abuse of women's rights there including in my country Iran.

Although developed countries are in quite different standards at least in terms of civil laws, unfortunately, there are still other things that threaten women's lives such as domestic violence, sexual harassment in workplaces that is exactly what all of us know as the glass ceiling!

Larissa Kitchemonia

Larissa is an Anishnaabe-Saulteaux woman from The Key First Nation, living in Regina, Saskatchewan. In her painting practice she creates artwork using contemporary themes and methods intertwined with traditional Anishnaabe – Saulteaux epistemology and practices. The focus of her work is rooted in reclaiming traditional identities and exploring Anishnaabe – Saulteaux culture and traditions. She has completed a Bachelors Degree in Indigenous Fine Arts from the First Nations University of Canada and she is currently a Interdisciplinary Studies Masters of Fine Arts candidate at the University of Regina.

Artist Statement:

“Pregnancy Brain” (2021) is an acrylic painting with rice paper on canvas. The artwork is about when I was pregnant with my youngest son and enrolled in school. I experienced this all-encompassing feeling of being powerful, combined with this sacred connection to creation and my lineage. A lineage that goes back to Creation and pushes forward new life. Simultaneously I experienced such frustrating brain fog and mental fatigue. I was always told by my mother that sometimes your biggest source of support is the smallest person in your life.



Larissa Kitchemonia, “Pregnancy Brain”, 2021

Raegan Moynes



Raegan Moynes, “Untitled (with Worm)”, 2021

Raegan Moynes is multidisciplinary artist and an MFA student at the University of Regina. She holds a Bachelor of Design from Ryerson University and a Post-Baccalaureate from the U of R. She has lived in Toronto, Vancouver and Melbourne, Australia and is currently living and working in Regina, Saskatchewan. Her work examines issues of the body, identity and memory through the exploration of real and imagined histories embedded in discarded garments. Her interest in clothing as a primary material is informed by her background in fashion design and costuming. In response to her experiences, her practice seeks to challenge the function of clothing to protect the body and project identity, by using it as a vehicle to explore her own vulnerability.

Artist Statement:

“Worm” (2020) is a process-based meditation on the construction of identity through the medium of my personal wardrobe. This ongoing work was driven by an impulse in April 2020 to purge the contents of my closet – an emotional, material and tactile record of unsettled memories. Embedded in these garments, are traces of past selves.

Reflecting the introspective process of negotiating these selves, I deconstruct, repair and reconfigure the discarded fragments of their flesh. The emerging tubular form is intended to be read not as a finished work, but as perpetually in the process of becoming. The work functions as an act of reclamation of my fractured identity that questions the limits of its representation.

The accompanying photograph, *Untitled*, uses the tubular form to depict my experience within the uncertainty of this transitional period. *Worm* attempts to return to its function as protector of my body – in the form of armor, a shelter, a straight jacket, a shell for my vulnerable self as it seeks comfort in the liminal space between what was and what is to be.

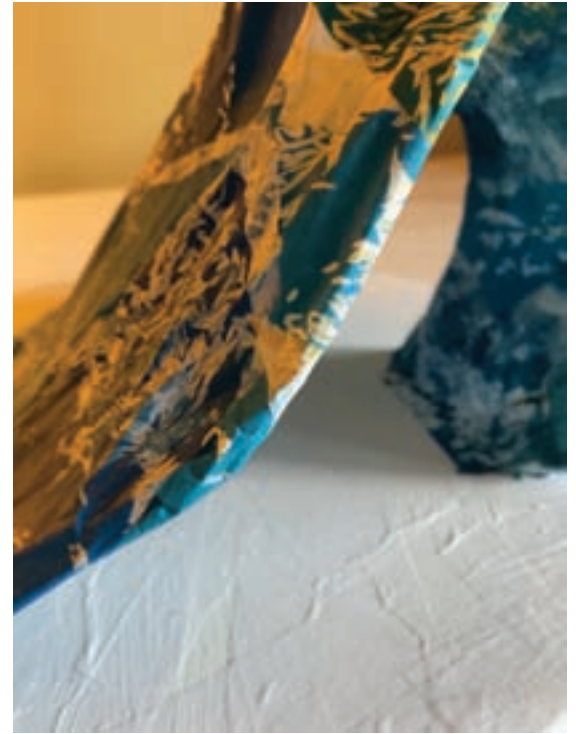
Alyssa Scott

Alyssa Scott is a visual artist, working in print, installation, painting, collage, found materials, photography and creative writing. Through her work she contemplates our relationship to land, life matter and the home. Alyssa is based in Kingston, Ontario and Regina, Saskatchewan. She received a Bachelor of Fine Art (Honours) with Distinction from Queen's University in 2019 and a Bachelor of Education at Queen's University in 2020. She is currently a candidate in the Master of Fine Arts program at the University of Regina.

Artist Statement:

There's a stream running behind my home. It always shines vividly in the midday sun. The water runs through a thin corridor. It suddenly diverges: part of it traverses the waking land, the other enters a small, deep hole through cracks in the limestone. I imagine the stream, flowing into the ground, an abyss beneath me, filled with water.

"Groundwater Cave" (2021), is a miniature print installation sculpture where I explore the possibilities of this imaginary space. The sculpture takes the organic form of a cave and is fashioned from thin, slightly translucent paper. "Imaginary Stream" (2021), is a print which embodies the surface stream: the stream itself in image and a poem printed in the form of flowing water. The paper is my thread connecting the words, images, and cave together - a thin, ephemeral, yet incredibly resilient surface.



Alyssa Scott, "Groundwater Cave" (detail), 2021

Amy Snider



Amy Snider, "Build a Wall", "Keep it Up", "Hold it Together", 2021

Amy Snider has a post-baccalaureate in visual arts from the University of Regina and is currently one of their MFA candidates. She uses a variety of media, predominantly clay and ceramic, to create conceptual works that reflect on the climate crisis. Climate change is an issue that she believes requires us to shift how we think about our own as well as our collective existence on this planet. She is involved in environmental activism, participating in several environmental organizations and taking part in political advocacy. Her artwork is an extension of her commitment to this cause.

Artist Statement:

We are facing planetary system failure that will make it difficult for many species, including our own, to survive. As a cerami-

cist, I express my constant feeling of living on a precipice via a series of preposterous dinner plates. "Keep It Up," "Hold It Together," and "Build a Wall" (2021), convey my worry about relying on technology to repair the world. While some technology can help us reduce the damage we are causing to the planet, these solutions also require us to change how we lead our lives, and we are not, as a society, changing quickly enough. Other innovations proposed for getting us out of this crisis are too expensive, too slow, and too dangerous. The situation has me imagining a potter not learning how to make a pot properly (cracks are a potter's bane), yet hoping to fix the problem after the fact. "Dust Plate" and "Dust Bowl" (2021) are the final pieces of ceramics, made entirely of clay dust. Their own impossibility conveys the situation we are in. Enduring drought, as seen in the Great Depression, is likely to be one of worst consequences of climate change we will face in this part of Canada. These works stem from my personal dilemma: how to face the fact that we are destroying the planet while continuing to live and create nonetheless?

Brenda Watt

Brenda Watt is a visual artist who lives and works in Regina, Saskatchewan. She has a Bachelor of Education and a Post-Baccalaureate in visual arts from the University of Regina. Upon completing a career in education, teaching art and digital technologies to high school students, she has returned to the University of Regina and is working on her MFA. Brenda's current work unites contemporary themes with historical techniques and media.

Artist Statement:

I use the art form of ceramics to tell stories that I find meaningful about the daily lives and collective narratives that define this time. Ceramic objects, both formally and conceptually, are an ideal medium to preserve and deliver these stories. Through my work, I aim to bring the ancient arts of ceramics and storytelling together. I use traditional media and techniques to create colours and images with layers of vintage china paint, oxides and handmade inks. Each porcelain form is fired multiple times to preserve the narrative layers on its glazed surfaces before finding a stage in people's daily experience.



Brenda Watt, "Sewing with a New Pattern", 2020