

Boston University MFA Painting '23 *Into the Thicket*

July 13 – 28, 2023

Opening Reception: Thursday, July 13, 6-8pm

Megan Arné
Jason Correia
Sakshi Doshi
River Kim

Young Kim
Madelaine Kobe
Andrew Lyman
Bill Mattern
Luke Morrison

Shayan Nazarian
Stephen Proski
Vince Samudovsky
Hannah Steele

The artists in this show are the 2023 graduates of the Master of Fine Arts program in Painting at Boston University. *Into the Thicket* is a phrase that describes the daunting yet exhilarating feeling of entering life beyond their graduate education. The public field of contemporary art is dense and prickly but also a realm of exploration and wonder. Painting, for them, is a sprawling and evolving array of material possibilities, discourses, and histories. Through their distinct practices, these artists navigate the discipline by carving unique pathways of meaning.

Hannah Steele, Andrew Lyman, and Bill Mattern work at the edge of perceptibility. Through observational painting, pictorial collage, and digital rendering, each of them tests the limits of visual coherence. River Kim, Madelaine Kobe, and Shayan Nazarian use abstraction and the power of materials to summon faraway presences, such as ancestors, talismans, or guardians of knowledge. Sakshi Doshi, Young Kim, and Vincent Samudovsky study the visual effects of their immediate surroundings, such as etched shadows on buildings, the nebulous truth of painterly marks, and the physiological effects of chroma. Megan Arné, Jason Correia, Luke Morrison, and Stephen Proski reconsider expectations and societal norms, whether in domestic duties and intimate relationships, public behavior, or the act of encountering art itself.

I admire these artists because they're unafraid of getting aesthetically lost or intellectually snagged. They're already in the thick of it. After all, in early 2021, they submitted their applications the same week as the attack on the Capital, all while the pandemic raged on. In their studios in Boston, on the third floor of an old car dealership, they set their own terms, choosing how and when to spend their time and attention, cultivating interests and conversations, and learning through the failures and successes of making.

Beyond the studio is a chaotic world where mitigating circumstances and limitations exist at every corner. Society doesn't always train us to exercise our will, let alone want something so badly we make it ourselves. But that's what these artists have chosen to do. Through art, they've sought a place to untangle the ever-tightening knots of life, loosen the rigidity of ideology through critical thinking, and trust their own artistic decisions towards an independence of spirit. They're not intimidated by complexity; they seek it out.

- Josephine Halvorson, Professor of Art and Chair of Graduate Studies in Painting, Boston University

The Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program in Painting at Boston University School of Visual Arts promotes the discipline in its varied manifestations as a fundamental form of artistic expression. At its core, the program is studio-driven, with rigorous expectations about each student's focused commitment to their individual artistic practice. BU SVA is an established leader in the professional arts with five MFA degrees. The MFA in Painting is ranked #6 nationally (US News & World Report).