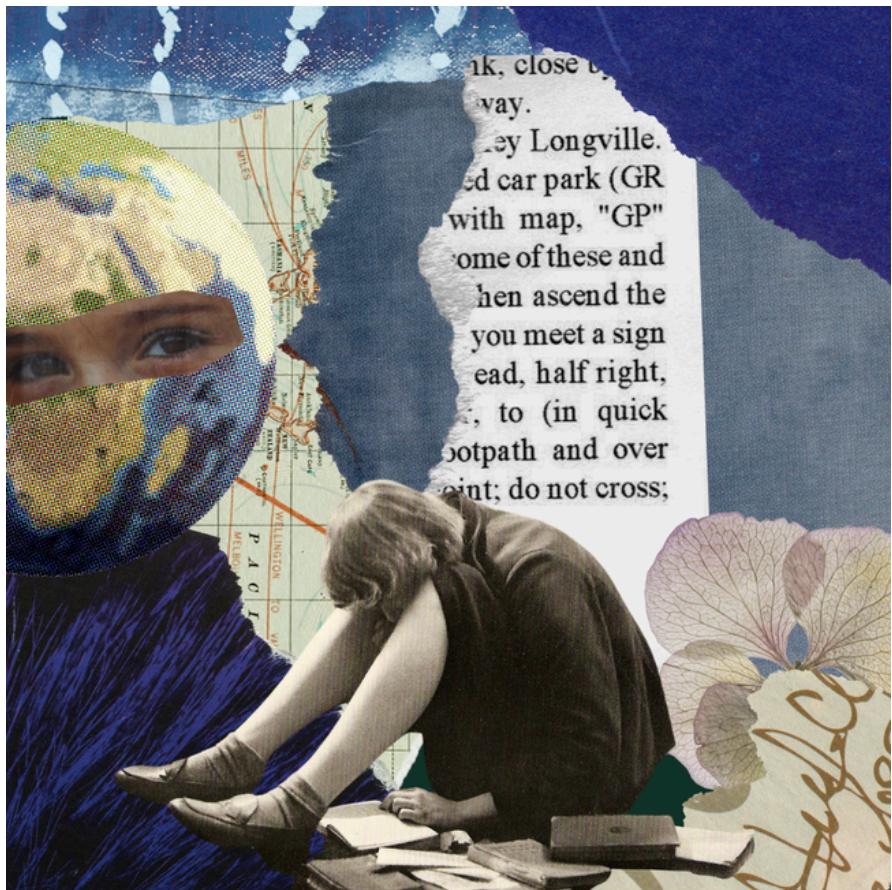


Featuring Undergraduate Student Works from
Fanshawe College & Western University

STUDENT LIFE: WE ALL HAVE TO SUBMIT





Aarushi Gupta, *In My Room*, 2025, acrylic paint on canvas

Student artwork takes on a wide variety of forms, styles, and concepts. Inevitably, it is underlined by its context, the turbulent world that surrounds it. In a world that is uncertain and rapidly evolving, what does it mean to be a student? What does it mean to create art in the face of personal turmoil, climate cataclysms, and political upheaval? Through this exhibition, student artists seek to reconcile their creative existence with the demands of a greater world. You are invited to witness how these pieces, though different in origin and conceptualization, are in conversation with each other, academia, and the juxtaposition of stagnancy and chaos on the global stage.

Visual Arts

(she/her)

Aarushi Gupta



Girls' Bathroom, etching on a copper plate

My name is Aarushi Gupta, and I am a multidisciplinary artist working primarily in acrylic paint and digital media. My work often covers themes of South Asian diasporic experiences and university life.

In My Room draws from my experience of moving into a student home for the first time. I wanted to capture what it felt like to navigate change and growth within the confines of that space. Through this piece, I hope to communicate the student experience of coming of age in the first home away from home.

Girls' Bathroom depicts the countertop of a girls' bathroom. Messy and cluttered, the countertop tells a story of the woman that uses it, from the objects she leaves behind to her daily rituals of getting ready and unready. Through this piece, I hope to capture a shared female experience of the everyday spaces where identity takes shape.



An Ode to Girlhood, 2024, acrylic on canvas

Kendra Jackson

(she/they)

Chilean-Canadian artist Kendra reflects student life through the still and mundane moments. With her painting *An Ode to Girlhood* Kendra explores the delicate culture of childhood and adult life, with student life being right at the center of it all. Through *Wendy Cope Orange*, she reflects how love can be shown in the simplest of things and the beautiful nature that life has to offer. Kendra's painting reflects the final line of the poem "The Orange" by Wendy Cope: "I love you. I'm glad I exist." Kendra's paintings perfectly summarize the love student life has to offer.



Wendy Cope Orange, 2025, acrylic on wood

This piece began as a self-portrait in 2023 for a high school assignment, and has been collecting dust in my storage room. It never felt quite finished, so I decided to pick it up again and add some life to it. I didn't pay much attention to it before, but it started becoming more meaningful the more I added to it. I always identified with the eye in this painting, the central awareness observing this landscape. Before it felt separate, but as I added this new pattern that sprouted from within, the eye became one with its surroundings as well as its witnesses, all of them merging into a singular experience.

My practice is sporadic; the brush moves me more than I move it. It seems to have a will of its own, and my sessions range anywhere from a minute to hours. The process is still something that is revealing itself to me, and it will evolve as I do.

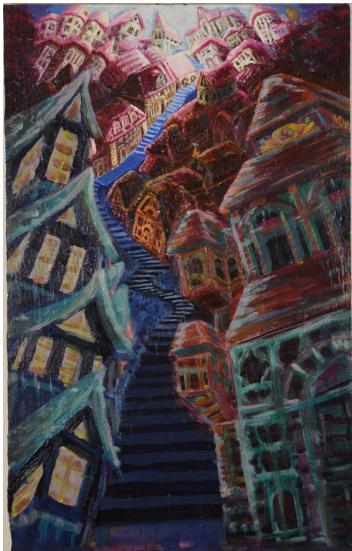
This piece reflects on my experience as a college student quite well. When you start school, you are an awareness thrown into a new pattern, submerged in something you've never experienced before. But as you adjust to it, you learn to live with the pattern and slowly become it.



A New Pattern Emerges, 2025, acrylic paint
on canvas

Jessica
Kumar
(she/her)

Aaron Alfaro (he/him)



Alleyway, 2025, acrylic on wooden board

I have always adored architecture, basically these behemoths that let people coexist in and around them, these artificial life forms are how I see buildings, from the cities to the most rural of places. I came to this country trying to grasp on better opportunities to pursue my love for art.

[M]y piece "Alleyway" stemmed from my homesickness and awareness that I am not in the same place as I was 3 years ago, physically and mentally. "Alleyway" is a conscious piece made romanticizing my origin and expressing my longing for my home country, the Philippines.

Kaitlyn Lunnie

(she/her)



Sword Fight, 2025, watercolour and pencil crayons

In my artistic practice, I like to be able to capture dynamic poses and combine my major of English and Literature to create scenes that could tell its own story. The Knight's story connects to the theme of student life as young learners subjected to the harsh world and climate around them. The knights fight for their kingdom and who they believe would bring them closer to a greater world and leadership. Yet despite that pressure of war and political battles, they can find themselves away from that turmoil, shed free of their armour and the weight of the world, and be liberated and happy in the solitude and company of themselves. Much like how I find comfort and solitude

Abby Smith (she/her)



The Growth Mindset, 2024, acrylic paint

The Growth Mindset was inspired by the pressure to always be improving (something most students know too well). I wanted to explore how the idea of "growth" can be both inspiring and exhausting. The woman in the piece looks calm and put-together, but the brown plants growing from her head show the intense focus on growth in society. In my art, I like portraits. And this was a way to add some deeper meaning and creativity to something fairly simple. For me, this piece connects to student life because it's about pushing yourself, sometimes past your limits, and questioning whether that's really what progress means. It's about the pressure to grow and to improve. And how that can be both beautiful and also really exhausting.

Conformity came from my own fixation on normalcy and my love of insects. The scene in this drawing is that of taxidermy in progress, the various insects not yet put in their perfect spot, their beauty about to be preserved forever. The centipede very clearly doesn't belong, and no amount of ribbon on the taxidermist's part will ever change that. A centipede is a centipede, and will always be a centipede, and there is nothing wrong with that. Its beauty is different and that is what makes it wonderful. In life, and death we are similar to insects as we are judged by what is visible. As humans we still have much to learn in regards to embracing those who are different, and as an artist that is something we are specially equipped to do.



Conformity, 2025, pencil crayon

Morley Howe (they/them)

Lauren Davidson

(she/her)



Authorized Bodies Only, 2025, cyanotype on mixed media paper

This work explores how women's presence in almost every space often remains conditional - authorized only under certain terms. The cyanotype process, with its deep blue tones and reliance on sunlight, connects to ideas of exposure and visibility. The repeating stop signs act as both literal and symbolic barriers, layered with a female figure who challenges those limits.

As a student, artist, wife, mom, daughter, and neurodivergent woman, I often think about who is allowed to belong, speak, and be seen within different environments and among different power structures. *Authorized Bodies Only* reflects existing within spaces not always made for you, and the act of resistance that can come from simply showing up. My practice combines photographic and print-based processes to examine care, access, and gendered boundaries in everyday life.

Madisson Vanderberg (she/her)



Clear Skies Beyond the Garden, 2025, acrylic on canvas

Madisson Vanderberg is a third-year Fanshawe student currently studying Fine Art. Madisson primarily works with acrylic paint, charcoal and ceramics, but also enjoys experimenting with mixed media. Her work focuses on themes of identity, neurodiversity, patterns, and nature. *Clear Skies Beyond the Garden* explores what it means to see the good beyond the current chaos and, at times, to find beauty in it. This piece is a self-portrait depicting her and her service dog, who has helped her greatly in the few years they have been a team. Madisson is interested in floriography, using flora in her work to develop personal iconography and symbolism that often pertains to her current sentiments while creating a body of work.

Art students are faced with the challenge of creating work that is true to them while meeting expectations. Uncertainty can leave some feeling stuck, tangled up by roots of doubt. At times the best way to move beyond creative stagnation is to keep making, focusing on the blue skies that lie ahead.

Heidi Burrowes (she/her)



Wherever You Go, There he Is., 2025, graphite on paper

As a student, I am learning that to be an artist is to work – endlessly, insistently, with both devotion and fatigue. My days are filled with lists, assignments, and drawings, each one a reminder that practice is built through repetition. Even in the quiet rhythm of pencil on paper, the world intrudes: voices of power, decisions that ripple outward, noise that cannot be ignored. And still, I return to the work.

My drawings are built in layers, sometimes quick and certain, other times slow and hushed. I think of this process as moving through “personal mud” – a material and metaphorical accumulation that records both resistance and surrender. As a student, I embrace this mud as part of my education: each mark is sediment, each gesture a way of carving space for reflection amid the demands of study, labor, and the pressures of the world.

May Ly

(she/they)

This piece was meant to convey the state of chaos in the mind, too many ideas at once. Birds being very known for having calls which could symbolize chaos, but also freedom and soul. College has a lot of frustrating limits with time scheduling, and focus choices, especially with my program's funding being cut back, but it also has given me more chances to express myself individually, with more freedom than in high school and find my own style.



Oblivion, 2025, marker, ink

Installations
&
Multimedia

As an interdisciplinary artist, I use expanded drawing to meditate on the intersection of ecology and memory. My work unfolds over time—combining performance, drawing, and photography into intermedia artworks. The results of my creative process are deeply influenced by personal experiences and familial history. My family has varying levels of connection to place, immigrating from different countries at different times, for similar reasons. Their diasporic histories are interesting to me, and through my practice I find their stories rippling through my own journey.

Beacon (2023) is a representation of home, a reminder of where I came from. As a student living away from home during uncertain times it is important to remember loved ones. Art becomes my anchor in the storm while family illuminates who I am.



Beacon, 2023, bricolage made from found objects and cyanotype on fabric

(she/they)
Sarah
Smitherman

I am drawn to where the past lingers, to landscapes entwined with poetry, to the synthesis of material and metaphor.

Steph Katchabaw

(they/them)



Dinner Party, originally presented in 2024, found objects mostly with a few individually made and curated pieces

“Dinner Party” was originally created in an experimental art class, where the assignment was to create art using ‘found objects.’ After scouring Western campus, I found many of the key pieces in this exhibit, including, but not limited to a beaten up pair of heels, an unused tampon, a burnt out vape, an unused condom, several alcoholic beverage cans, broken solo cups, a pack of cinnamon flavoured gum, and an empty prosecco bottle. From this emerged the idea for a dinner table exhibit, playing on the intricacies of student living as an adventurous, joyful, studious, depressing, exciting, intimate, and often trying time in people’s lives.

I also wanted to explore the connections that form between students who are cohabitating – often, these people’s lives are moving according to drastically different schedules and principles, but still, they are able to find home and community together.



Friendship as The World Ends, 2025, video

Olivia Matheuszik

(she/her)

This piece reflects the pressure my generation feels as we try to imagine a future while fearing the world we are inheriting. The climate crisis and the lack of accessible environmental solutions often make that future feel fragile and uncertain.

Yet amid this fear, friendship becomes a source of strength. As Hern and Johal suggest, solidarity forms not through formal commitments but through choosing to care for one another. These relationships create small, steady places of hope. This work shows how friendship can ground us, reminding us that we do not face the climate crisis alone, and that connection fuels resilience.

Poetry
&
Words

Rose Coloured Glasses; Thorned Frames - Mandy Horvath

How am I to describe the vibrancy of a technicolour sunrise
and the healing it brings,
when it contrasts so starkly
with the ravenous, desaturated, and indiscriminately
ruinous
quicksand
holding me sternly in its comfortably suffocating,
familiarly cool depths?

How am I to compose poetry,
let my ink flow,
my canvasses stretch,
my pages fill,
my hands create,
when the words become part of a lost language,
when the ink well has dried up and ink flaking,
when the canvas is stretched too thin on too wide a frame,
when these hands that are meant to create
rip the pages from the spine,
pages that are oversaturated and bleeding through,
discarded hollow ribs falling off the spine of
a "Wealth of Potential"
housed in a grown child,
aching to return; aching to heal.

How am I to nourish the growing when I have not grown?
How am I to water the seeds of an unknown crop
in a world without enough water for me?
I see the beauty, it hurts me.
I see the beauty, it heals me.

"A Letter of Resolution" - Darby MacArthur

The prick of a needle is expected to puncture,
no matter how it is phrased.

You can brace for it, and it's best to look away.
Some can even ignore it,
but puncture **will** cause pain.

I have more important things to worry about, than **this**
blood test.

But I know the results won't cure the weight in my chest.

And the results came back negative, another test to run.
Another needle, another puncture, with nowhere to run.
Do they know that they contribute to where it is from?

I've given up.

If I no longer seek the reason behind it,
I'm no longer consumed with how to fix it.

But I won't forget my efforts,
or the time that was wasted,
so how could I ignore the **pain** that I am faced with-
or the fact that we're related.

Love,
Your Daughter

Mandy Horvath (they/them/he/him)

Being expected to thrive as a student in today's world feels akin to a pupa being asked why it cannot fly—and forced to try regardless. "Rose-Coloured Glasses; Thorned Frames" is a vulnerable reflection of my constantly evolving and conflicting view of the world. It was heavily inspired by practices I learned while participating in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, and the concept of two things can be true at the same time. It is a personal pondering of one's ability to cope with the unprecedentedly layered traumas of today in a world not built to house such pain—in a world that is also incredibly overwhelmed with wonder and massively beautiful experiences. I write when the words find me; they come nearer to my pen when provoked by emotion. I fill in any gaps in phrasing with memories woven through daydreams.

Darby MacArthur (she/her)

I drew inspiration for this poem from my overlapping personal experiences with medical testing and generational trauma. With this, I aimed to explain the manifestation of chronic illness under the stress of witnessing, developing, and intercepting harmful, repetitive habits derived from such generational traumatic experiences. The poem is in the form of an addressed confessional piece, utilizing concise space and structure to accentuate parentification in the unintentional responsibility of resolving generational trauma. The blood test imagery is meant to symbolize the gradual, internalized pain and depletion of strength, much like the accumulating grief from continuous emotional disappointment. This poem emphasizes the common student experience, in indulging in education and coping mechanisms while gaining independence as a young adult, of realizing the limitations between personal growth and generational trauma or familial burdens.

Still I Draw - Kim Crawford

In winter's skin, I walk - or wheel-
Through halls that echo youth's ideal
A canvas heart, yet hands grown slow
But fire inside still dares to glow

Each brush stroke stutters every line.
A quiet protest, bold, defiant sign
My body bends, my brain misplays
But art gives shape to muddled days.

They see my age, my shifting gait
And wonder why I tempt this fate
They say it's "cute", or worse "a phase"
As if I'm wasting twilights blaze

They file their forms and count their costs
In board rooms where their souls get lost
To them, a sculpture has no worth
Unless it feeds financial mirth.

But I am pigment, mess and will
A trembling hand that sketches still,
A mind that leaps in colours wild
Neuro-spiced and undefiled

You'll not find in ledger lines
Or profit graphs or grand designs
But in the charcoals breaking edge
In quiet truths a brush can pledge

For art is not a young man's claim
Nor something built for praise of fame.
It is survival
It is breath
It is defiance dressed in depth

So let them scoff, let funding fade
I'll craft with what the world forbade
In every crease and trembled flaw

Still I draw oh Still I draw

Pawns in Their Game - Kim Crawford

We stand here, notebooks bare,
Empty desks and hollow stares.
Promises like chalk dust fade,
While debts and doubts are softly laid.

The government points, the union fights,
Sharpened words in polished lights.
Yet in the crossfire, lost and slighted,
We—the students—go un-righted.

No funds to fill our aching hands,
No safety nets, just shifting sands.
OSAP crumbs, too thin to hold,
While stress and silence take their toll.

They bargain lives like chips,
While hope drips from tightened lips.
No care for minds left in the fray,
Just pawns they move—then cast away.

So raise your voice, though they protest,
We are not their chessboard jest.
The future's weight is ours to bear,
But not without our rightful share.

**Kim
Crawford**
(she/her)

I am a second year Fine Art student at Fanshawe College. I started writing and drawing in 2001 and decided to attend college late in life after becoming medically retired in 2015 and spent the next ten years as care giver to my mother. Art is a soothing and invigorating world to be a part of, and helped me through many stages of my life. With all the changes and uncertainties in the art world, colleges, and the political environment — I feel a lot of anger and frustration. Writing poetry helps me express these feelings, and direct my emotions into a creative form.

Credits

Curators:

Promise Chen, Ellie Smith, Steph Katchabaw, Alana Pielechaty,
Maya Allison, Karam Bhuee and Jasiah Tahirim

Supervisor:

Dr. Ruth Skinner

Poster and Promotional Design:

Ellie Smith

Booklet Design:

Promise Chen and Ellie Smith (cover)

Gallery Space:

TAP Centre for Creativity: LAB 203

Student Artists:

Aaron Alfaro	Steph Katchabaw
Heidi Burrowes	Jessica Kumar
Kim Crawford	Kaitlyn Lunnie
Lauren Davidson	May Ly
Aarushi Gupta	Darby MacArthur
Morley Howe	Olivia Matheuszik
Mandy Horvath	Abby Smith
Kendra Jackson	Sarah Smitherman
	Madisson Vanderberg

Special thanks to:

Dr. Ruth Skinner, for her generous guidance and mentorship,
Prof. Marla Botterill, for her support of the exhibition,
the TAP Centre for Creativity staff and installation team, for their
help in installing the artworks,
and all the artists and writers who contributed to this exhibition!

