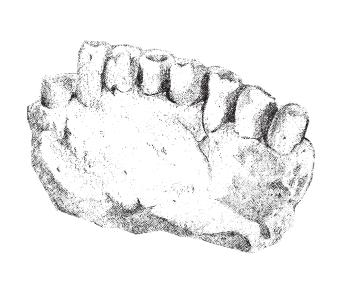
"Mythopoeia" April 2-29 2021



621 Gallery Tallahassee, Fla

Exhibition companion, ekphrastic response, & collaborative myth-making workbook.



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Exhibition companion, ekphrastic response, & collaborative myth-

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making workbook

Sirena LABURN
Rachel LOYACONO
Britt MCDERMOTT
Sarah NORMAN
Elise THOMPSON
Connie ZHENG
Collin CALLAHAN
Brett HANLEY
Lauren HOWTON
Diamond FORDE
Dustin PEARSON
Efin SLAUGHTER

e, Fla

Mythopoeia is a show of works on paper by six artists from around the United States, whose art shares in the creation of new iconographies, new systems of symbols that engender new personal narratives and myths responsive to our new lived realities, Sirena LaBurn, Rachel Loyacono, Britt McDermott, Sarah Norman, Elise Thompson, and Connie Zheng all engage in disparate modes of expression and mark-making, some working more observationally while others operate in full-on abstraction. The substrate of paper acts as a unifying element in this show. Paper is where the artist returns to develop new ideas; it is a medium that elicits the generation of alternative paths and encourages freedom of thought and expression. The works that constitute the body of both this book and the show, for they are

indeed two different things,

myth during our time.

exhibit bright new possibilities for

Myths are so intimately bound to the culture, time, and place that unless the symbols, the metaphors, are kept alive by constant recreation through the arts, the life just slips away from them.

—Joseph Campbell, The Power of Myth, p. 72

Stories must have some means of dissemination, else they die. When a story is circulated, it is reinterpreted by those who encounter it. The ekphrastic poems found in this book, written by six poets currently living and working in the Tallahassee, FL area—Collin Callahan, Brett Hanley, Lauren Howton, Diamond Forde, Dustin Pearson, and Erin Slaughter—begin the work of spreading the good news these works on paper proclaim. The poems are responses, interpretations, meditations, on the power of both the symbols and the mark making present in the works by our artists. You will find these poems paired with the artwork to which they speak.

You will also encounter images paired with blank pages. Herein lies an opportunity for you, the viewer, to respond to these works, to do the work of reinterpretation, to recreate the meaning and narrative found in the art. This book is an invitation to engage in the myth-making process yourself, to keep the story alive. Spread the word.

Nathan Mullins, curator March 2021

Imposter Syndrome, or the Lullabies I Sing Myself Before Bedtime

Diamond Forde

How many times have I died in my own mouth? Momma said I could speak anything to life but she comes from a line long with women whose prayers pour, tongues cupped under bible verses, and the last time I spoke the wine-thoughts worming my mind, I killed parts of me that mattered: my self-worth a skull necked into pearls. Oh, language—what power in your twigs and twine, to twist a shack of hope, and in the same mouth, dash it. I have made you palace and prison—my Black body presses to bolt through even the prescient blues of the night.



Sirena LaBurn

"Strike" mixed media collage on paper

11 x 14 in 2020

I Dry Sunflowers from Our Yard in the Books He Doesn't Read

Brett Hanley

And I hide the diamonds I manifest in his empty vases. My mother told me I was as pretty as a sea nymph, maybe even more so, but all I see of my face is that I'm a galaxy apart from myself. Sometimes Perseus looks at me like I'm the one with snakes in my hair. He doesn't think we're of the same stuff. I used to starspeak into his ear every night to try to earn his love. Tonight, I will go out and pick a baby tomato off the vine and bite into it until its juice coats my tongue like my own elegant blood.



Rachel Loyacono

"Sunflowa" charcoal and ink on paper

30 x 22.25 in 2021

The Sunflower Patch

Erin Slaughter

Pulled awake in summer's parched artery the stiff claw of the sky unbirding against its will, she salts her thigh

with auroral flare—a spectral bruise as corvid throats silver the air. Thinks about wars: how people sit in rooms & build them like custom

wedding dresses—how you repeat the same phrase across years & states & the words sound like a god's, or a stroke.

She's known dark wonderlands

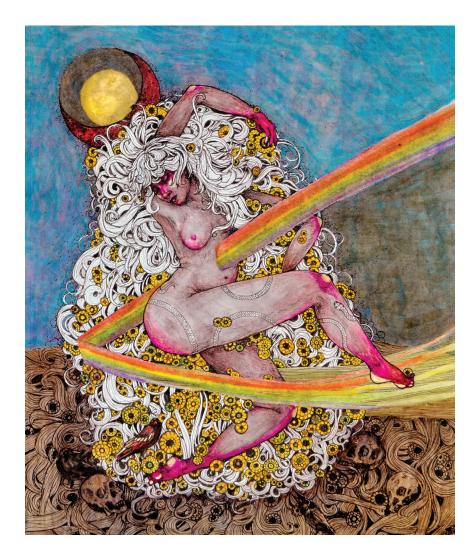
of sherbet glass, practiced kissing the nightsweat, fumbled her way dandelion-blind to the sycamore of loneliness. There is a windmill-

blazoned key she will never bury in the mud by the river tracks. Now, candled to this field, tangled in long-lashed medallions

sweet as suffering in its off-season she clasps roots, little arrows teething the earth's earlobe. For one day the heroine returns

to her corn-stalk prison, hunting rough boys from town who assumed their granddaddy's faces, places in the trees & finds

the fields shorn—the moon a feral lolling oracle's eye.



Britt McDermott

Geiger Counter Thanksgiving

Lauren Howton

Less than one-tenth of 1% of all the meat-things that have lived became fossils. But treasure hunters use potato forks to dig up hundred-year-old, unbroken perfume bottles. Radiation glass is hot right now, curio cabinets are being made with ultraviolet lights to display grandma's sorbet cups made with uranium. fluorescing science fiction green. There's a reason garbage dumps were next to graveyards; disease and rot riddles trash and body the same. Paper and flesh decay too quickly to fossilize. Maybe what speaks last is jawbone and gold fillings, plastic cores of root canals delicate porcelain veneers. Most Americans have had more than three cavities filled. We'll be an ancient cult of metal. remembered for trash, who kept god in their hollowed teeth. Uranium takes 4.46 billion years to decay into lead.



Sarah Norman

"Magic Teeth" graphite and color pencil on paper

In the Tunnel

Collin Callahan

underneath the refrigerator factory a few janitors fill their pockets with bits of paper.

I unscrew the airplane glue in the piggish light. The lamp is a tugboat

captain tapping his breast pocket like whatever is in there might crawl into the darkness.

Cows perpetuate a childhood hill. I am beginning to lose

trust in the neighbor. A snailtrail of autumn sunlight bloats like a corpse

in a field of sunflowers. Load the shotgun like we practiced, little mister.



Elise Thompson

"Set" acrylic and glass beads on dura-lar and paper

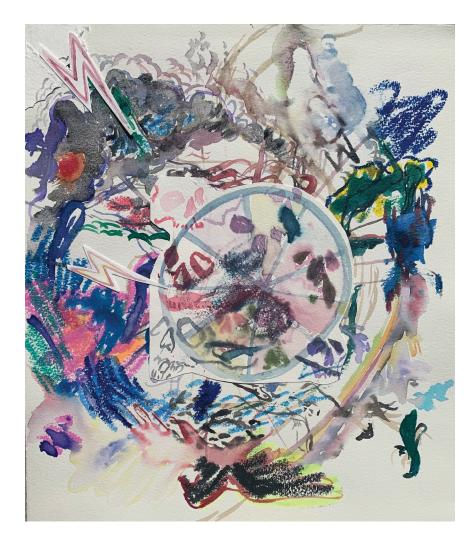
30 x 22.5 in 2021

We Had Heard the Sky Was a Field of Blue

Dustin Pearson

We knew better our first night beside the bush, our bodies brick-laid that short while after they began to run with red rain. We'd walked the path countless times before, marveling at the flowers for their color, their openness, even laced in a crown on our heads, on our shoulders, and with mouths still sweet from their fruits. That night we were perfect with the rustling, the ritual sonic light emanating and then everything seeing our rounds spill thick, skin bolden as the weather in accommodation. Who could house such fullness without breaking? Hold perspective with a world in miniature in their arms then release it to riddle the lies that unfold with growth? Who would reap the flowers being led to look skyward? Who would be the sky after walking the flowers?

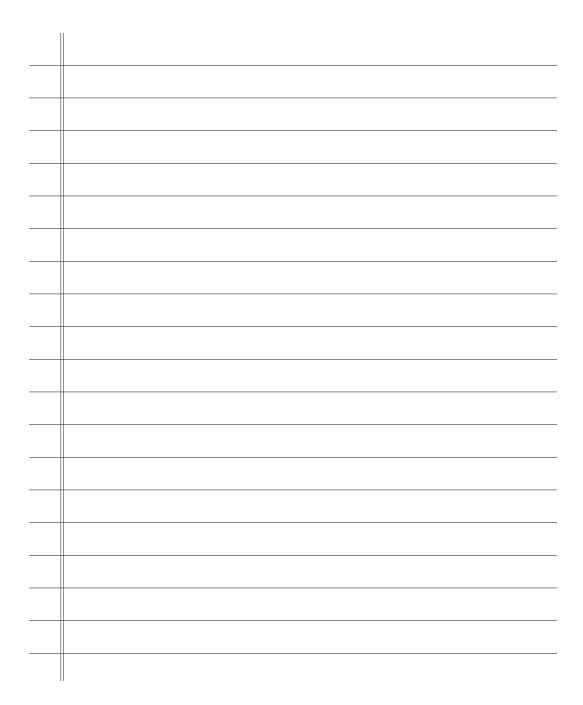




Sirena LaBurn

"Hermes" mixed media collage on paper

12 x 10.5 in 2020

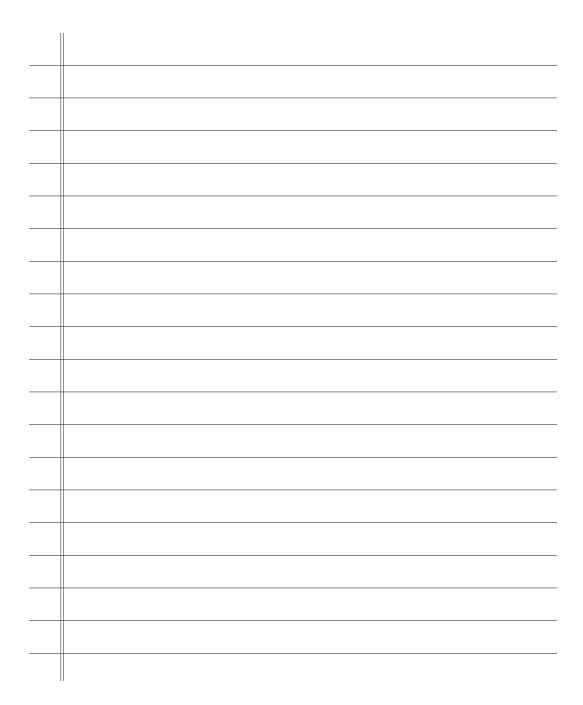




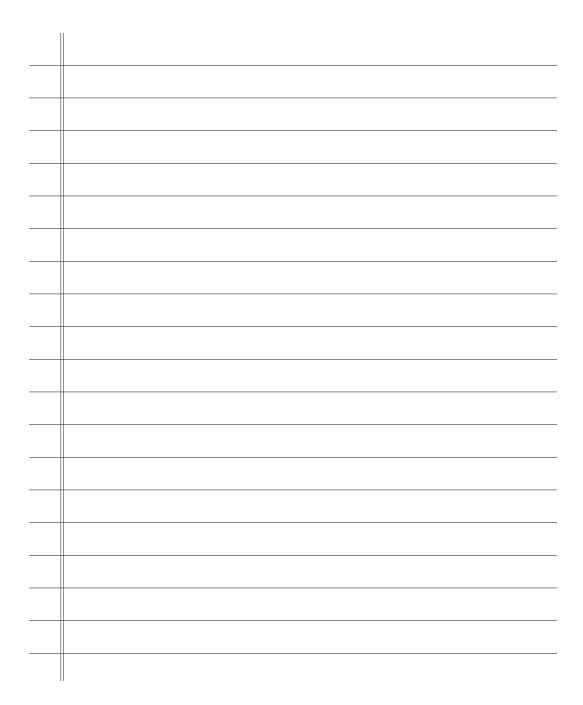
Rachel Loyacono

"Vessel" charcoal and ink on paper

30 x 20 in 2021

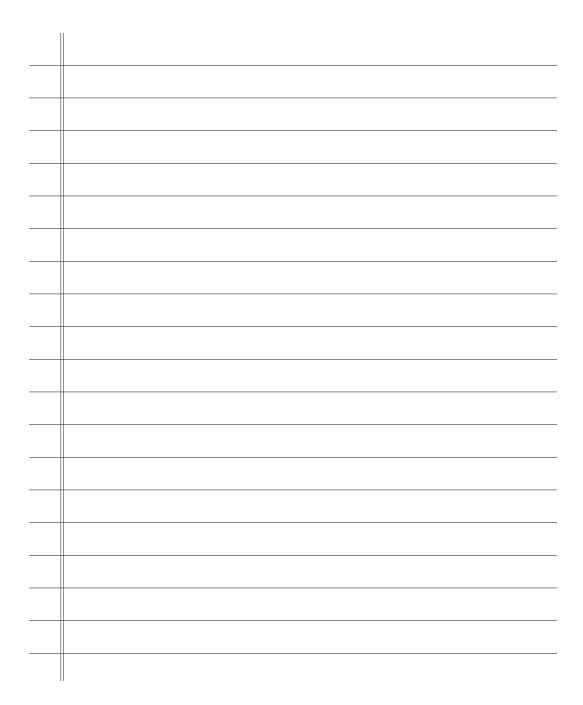








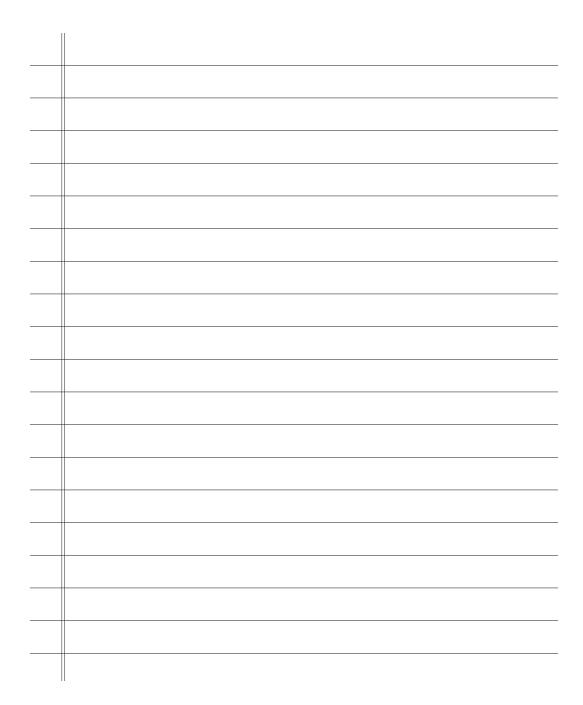
Sarah Norman

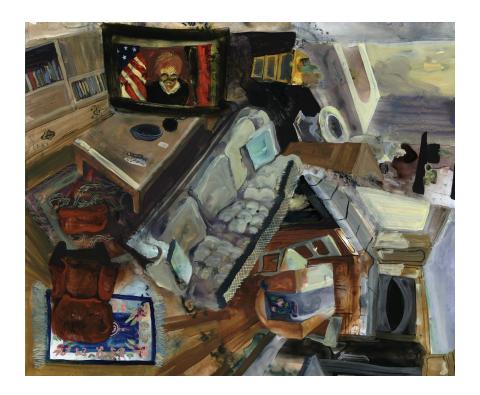




Elise Thompson

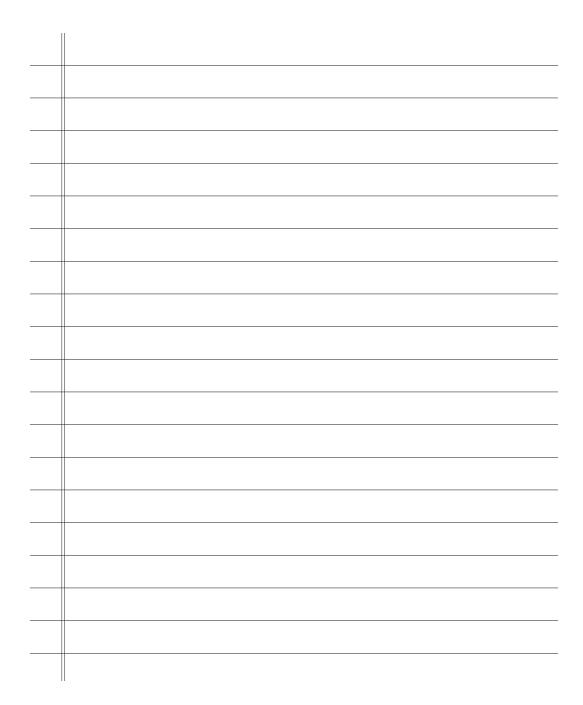
"Grate" acrylic and glass beads on dura-lar and paper





Connie Zheng

"This world is not my home, I'm only passing through" mixed media on Yupo paper 20 x 22 in 2019



MYTHOPOEIA

621 Gallery, Tallahassee, FL April 2-29, 2021

Artists: Sirena LaBurn, Rachel Loyacono, Britt McDermott, Sarah Norman, Elise Thompson, and Connie Zheng.

Poets: Collin Callahan, Brett Hanley, Lauren Howton, Diamond Forde, Dustin Pearson, and Erin Slaughter.

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All proceeds from the sale of this book directly benefit Planned Parenthood of South, East and North Florida.





Planned Parenthood of South, East and North Florida

