Laura Carlson
Vice President and Associate Provost  
Dean of the Graduate School  
Professor of Psychology

Maria Tomasula
Michael P. Grace Professor, Painting  
Director of Graduate Studies  
Art, Art History and Design

SOLARIUM 2022
Opening Reception  
February 24, 2022  
4 to 5 p.m.
The Graduate School is proud to present *Intersections 2022*. Within the natural light of the Grad School’s Solarium Gallery housed in Bond Hall, we feature a juried sampling of creative work produced in Riley and West Lake Halls by nine talented University of Notre Dame MFA students.

“Art is coming face to face with yourself.” – Jackson Pollock

Through compositions in clay, wood and steel; the capturing of form through shadow and light; vibrant arrangements on canvas; and engaging interactive digital media, *Intersections* invites all to come face to face with these works and engage, interpret, and contemplate each piece, both in its own context and in conversation with the gallery space.
Alex Carmen — Ceramics
Alex is a multimedia artist from St. Louis, Missouri. He is in his second year at the University of Notre Dame, pursuing a master of fine arts degree. He received his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Bowling Green State University in 2018. His art practice revolves around making large scale sculptures, mainly constructed out of clay, informed by drawing, painting, and metal working. Alex’s sculptures have been selected for multiple public spaces across the midwest. His current body of work is focused around urban spaces, architecture, and the growth or decline of urban cities.

Jason Carley — Industrial Design
Jason is an industrial design graduate student whose current work focuses on sustainable product development, circular economies, and consumer behavior. This collection examines our relationships with resources and how whole-system design can enable empowering experiences with dramatically lower environmental footprints.

Jason’s love for learning “how the world works” has led him to explore a wide range of projects, always finding something fascinating about the relationships between people, objects, nature, and the built environment. He practiced design professionally in Chicago and has conducted research across the US, Canada, and Europe. His work has appeared on ABC’s Shark Tank, TBS’s America’s Greatest Makers, and in installations at Disneyland Parks, Madame Tussauds in Times Square, and The Four Seasons Resort in Oahu. Jason earned his BSME and BA degrees from the University of Notre Dame.
Riley Fichter — Sculpture

Riley grew up along the watershed of the Wisconsin River near Baraboo, Wisconsin. This locale instilled in him a passion for the outdoors and conservation of our natural resources. He received his BFA in sculpture from the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point, where he focused on metal fabrication and installation-based artworks. Post-graduation, he took on internships and residencies at several sculpture parks around the Midwest that allowed him to create publicly installed sculptures that engage harmoniously with their site environments. His current research is focused on creating installations and immersive experiences that challenge a viewer's relationship with waste materials and encourage environmentally positive actions.

Geneva Hutchinson — Photography

Geneva grew up in the south and has used her upbringing as a southern pastor's daughter to inform her artwork. She uses found items such as domestic objects and textiles to create a conversation about the daily oppression women face, including in the church and home. She works through a variety of forms, such as photography and installation, and most recently has begun using embroidery – a traditional gendered labor – as a small way to honor the women who have gone before her. Geneva received her BFA in printmaking and BA in communications from Clemson University in South Carolina.
Jonathan Kusnerek — Ceramics

Jonathan grew up in Pensacola, Florida where he developed a love for nature and the outdoors. His exposure to ceramics came via classes at Pensacola State College. In later studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), where he studied ceramics and painting, he was introduced to the possibilities of combining painting and clay to create elaborate surface decorations. After earning his BFA in ceramics and painting from SAIC, Jonathan returned to Florida and taught ceramics at First City Art Center for several years before returning to school to pursue an MFA. Jonathan enjoys coffee, long walks, good music, dancing, and that wistful nostalgia that comes in early fall and leaves at first frost.

Jacob Lehmann — Painting

Jacob’s work is an investigation of the impact of isolation on feelings of child loneliness. Growing up in the rural south as a queer child, feelings of isolation informed his methodologies and purpose around play. These pieces explore imagination and space by traditional use of perspective with materials like crayon, marker, cut vinyl, etc. In creating artificial spaces, influenced by the visual language of digital technologies of his childhood, the work attempts to hold his childhood precious or significant. The work contains barrier elements, distancing viewers, and restricting entry into imaginative spaces to reckon with childhood play and nostalgia. Dirt and mess are deliberate, evoking the messes we make as children but also abandonment as though left behind by adults, no longer participating in the play of a child. These also call back to specific memories of his childhood, playing “pretend” as an adult to relive a time that in retrospect feels more free.
Joseph Matty — Photography

Joseph is a photographer from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, focused on the exploration and application of historical photographic processes. Drawing from 19th-century resources, such as the geographical surveys sponsored by the Department of War and early imaging techniques, his most recent photographs are created as documents that explore the virtual worlds that we inhabit in video games. By using the process of wet-plate collodion, he creates a physical object representing these non-existent places. He seeks to mirror the relationship between the real and unreal that the player experiences.

Hans Miles — Ceramics

Hans earned his BFA in ceramics from Arizona State University while working as the ceramic technician at Paolo Soleri’s Cosanti and as coordinator of the Mission Clay Art and Industry program. His current work in large scale, non-objective ceramic sculpture is rooted in a gamble; he is positing that twisting and compressing/freeing common shapes and lines might lead to a better understanding of our unspoken spatial language. In doing so — by speaking shape and form at the human scale — we might glimpse a more unified language; we might gain a connection beyond our modern headache; we might cut through the plastic everything; and we might remember what it feels like to melt together, for once and forever, with stone and the dirt beneath our feet.
Nik Swift — Visual Communication Design
In Collaboration with Elle Velazquez

In the years since his computer science education, Nik has built a practice of collaboration with artists of vastly diverse backgrounds and experiences. He uses his design and technical background to help bring artistic visions and important stories to life through music, video and installation production.

Elle was born and raised in Mexico City before moving to America, experiences which heavily inform their multidisciplinary artwork in paint, poetry, and dance. “Enamorarse a la Mexicana” was written from a place of nostalgia and longing, for the special way that love is seen and practiced through their Mexican upbringing and culture.

Swift created the digital rendering accompanying Velazquez’s poem and ofrenda to Mexican love.