




# PRESENCE | ABSENCE

MFA Thesis Exhibition 2020

Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery | Stony Brook University

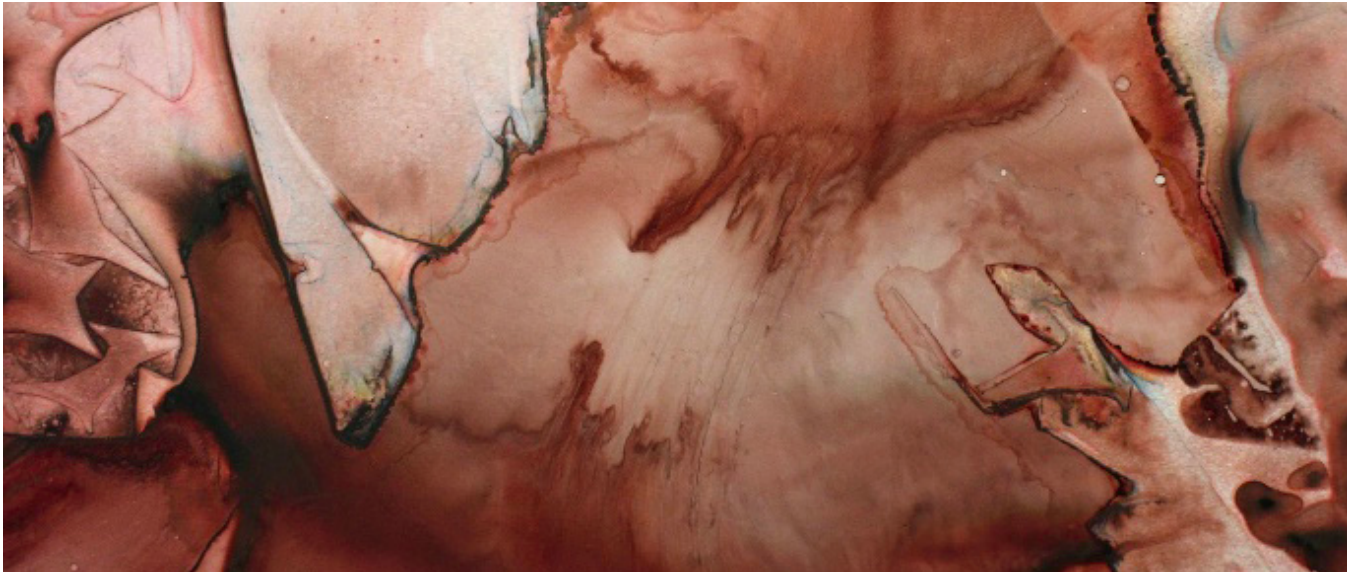
March 21- April 18







JULIA MILLER & JOSEPH SANTARPIA



This exhibition is one of the final requirements of our three-year Master of Fine Arts degree program at Stony Brook. The artists have gone through a rigorous proposal process and have spent the past ten months researching, creating, and installing their work for this show. Through close interaction with faculty, they have honed their artistic techniques and developed the means to express their personal vision in words as well as in art.

MFA candidates are encouraged to increase their breadth of knowledge by engaging with faculty in Art History, Philosophy, Music, History, and Women's Studies, among others. They also have transdisciplinary access through the Department's affiliation with the Humanities Institute and the Simons Center for Geometry and Physics. In addition, they have the advantage of being part of a large, world-class research university with resources that include the historic Pollock-Krasner House and Study Center. Finally, Stony Brook's proximity to New York City has enabled us to expand the influences on these exciting young artists.

Our students have also benefited from meeting and listening to incredible visiting artists: Toni Blackman, Ackroyd & Harvey, Dread Scott and Jenny Polak, Christine Sun Kim, Basim Magdi, Sara Greenberger Rafferty, and Jenny E. Sabin, to name a few. We especially appreciate the artists who have taken the time to do studio visits with our students, giving them valuable critiques as they create new work. Our students focus on their own work in individual studios on campus and have access to our excellent technical facilities which include state of the art computer studios, a metal foundry, ceramic kilns, photography darkrooms, and lithography presses.

Joseph Santarpia fuses his visceral embodied response to creative inquiry working across landscape imagery, using a variety of art forms to explore association and affect. Julia Miller's work helps the audience become attentive to their feelings by crossing the conscious/unconscious boundary, focusing on memories, and the remainders of materiality and mark. It has been a privilege for our faculty to work with these artists and we hope you will take time to discover both the perceptual and cognitive structures framing their work.

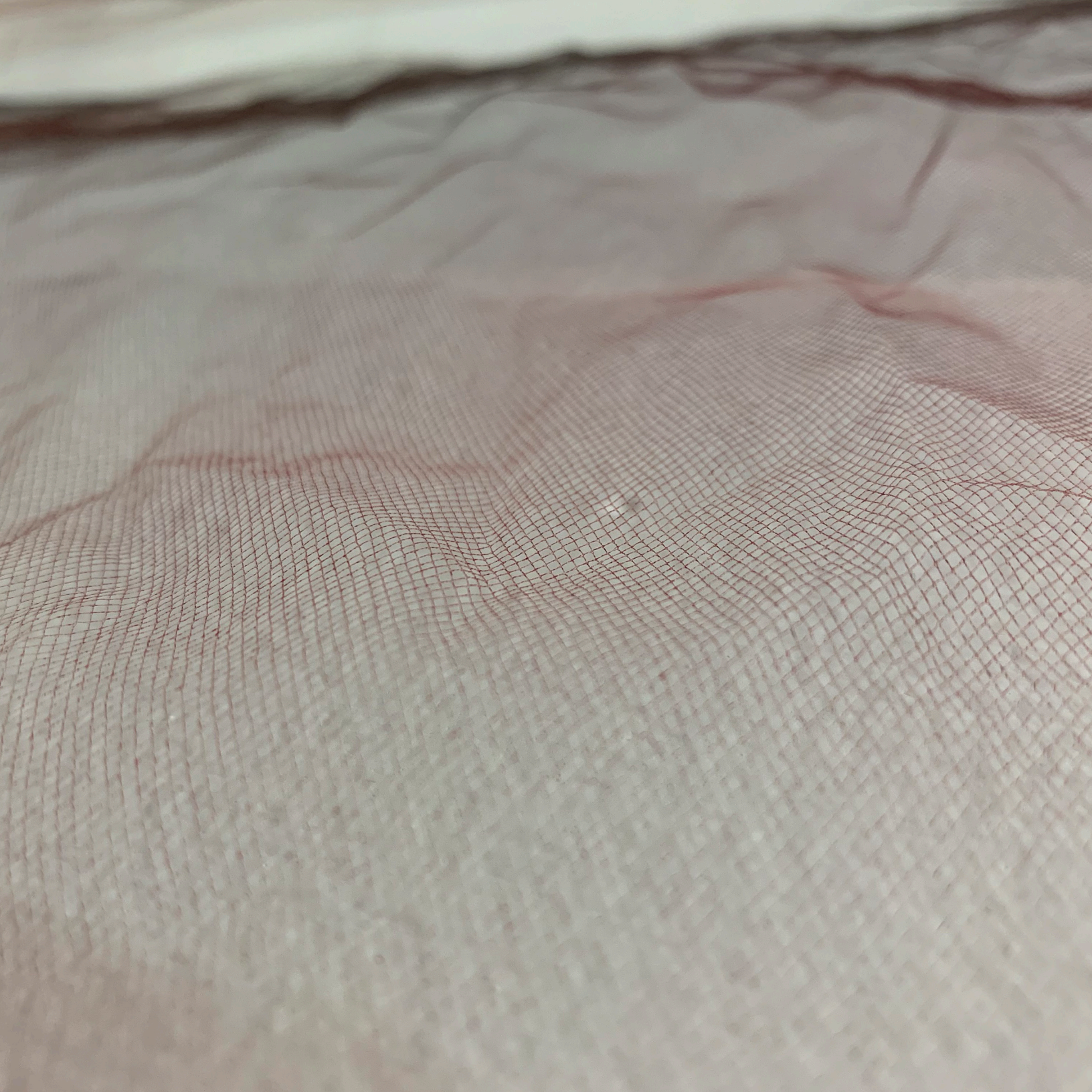
The art department wishes to thank Karen Levitov, Director of the Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery, for making this exhibition possible. She is a force for good in the department, the university and the wider world of art. Beyond her powerful curatorial eye, she truly cares about the art and the artists. Our students and the larger community benefit from the incredible shows she brings to campus.

I hope you find the show rewarding.

Dr. Margaret Schedel  
Chair, Department of Art

Julia Miller, *The Act of Painting* (detail), 2019, house paint; installation 7' 7" x 12' x 4'  
Joseph Santarpia, *Scope VII* (detail), 2019, monotype with alcohol ink on Yupo paper, 90" x 60"





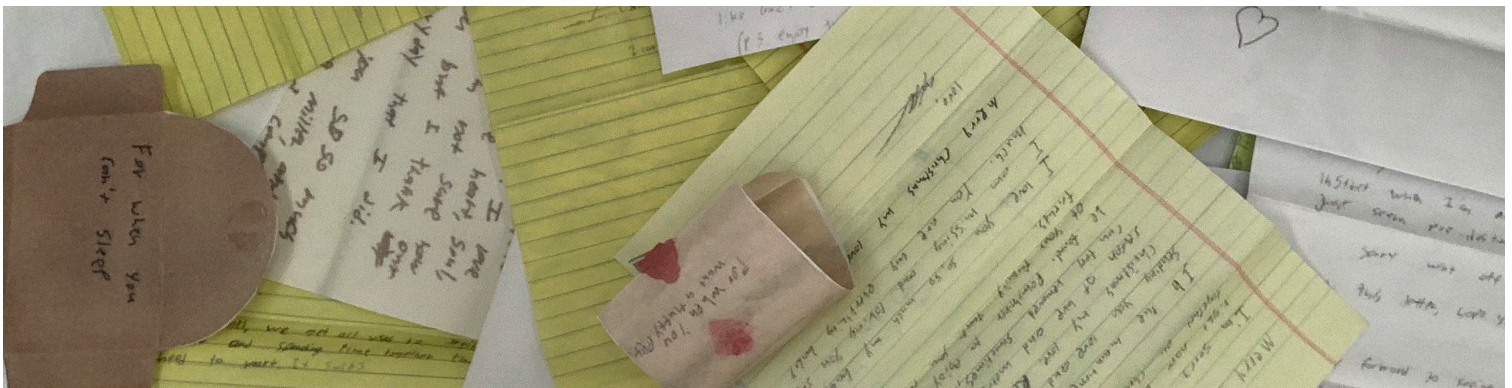


My practice begins by peeling apart the experiences that have shaped me into who I am today. This takes form as material presences and absences as I examine connectivity between people who are close to me, objects from my past, and childhood memories.

Following the destruction and rebuilding of my home and town from superstorm Sandy, I have become interested in exploring the memories of family traditions and physical space. The process begins by creating a sculpture that will be removed from the final piece. The mark left behind is a soft layered outline of paints suggesting the absence of the original object. When evoking memory, absence is more important than the actual physical presence of the sculpture.

To explore experiences from my life now, I create tangible works by using printmaking, found objects, clay, plaster, metalwork, and photography. My work titled *Earnest* examines the need and vulnerability of two lovers living apart. Through printmaking, I replicate the marks and language that connect these two people.

[juliamillerartist.com](http://juliamillerartist.com)



Opposite Page: *Curves* (detail), 2019, spray paint on tulle, 3' x 5'  
This Page: *Earnest* (detail), 2020, photocopy prints, dimensions variable







## JOSEPH SANTARPIA

---

Using pigment and fluid on paper, my work leverages autopoiesis—the self-creative capacity of material—to explore questions of release, embodiment, and landscape. Evoking forms shaped by gravitational forces, land formation, and bodily regeneration, I produce artworks that speak to the function and structure of the body and the external world, resulting in new visual forms with varying degrees of abstraction. Through a series of ink paintings and cyanotypes, a sculptural piece, and a video, my work takes on a stark contrast of darkness and luminosity, referencing both the visceral interiority and the perceptual intensity of massive landscapes. My materials interact through varying ratios of fluid, sediment, light, and object. Pigments saturate, concentrate, and isolate to articulate new visual languages: inks bleed, paper buckles, fluid stains.

Following the procedure and recovery of my spinal fusion surgery, I've grown to be intensely attentive to my body's sensations: pain, muscle tension, mobility, and the general interactions that occur along muscular and skeletal chains. The lived experience and physical consequences of this procedure have since quantitatively informed my life and art practice. As a consequence, my interest not only emerges from my own distinct embodied condition, but from my fixation on expansive space, driven by my desire to link the interiority of my experience to the extensivity of the physical world my body inhabits.

[santarpiastudio.com](http://santarpiastudio.com)



Opposite Page: *Untitled Video Still 02*, 2020, video  
This Page: *Repetitions I* (detail), 2019, cyanotype, 51" x 56"

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

---

PRESENCE | ABSENCE: MFA Thesis Exhibition 2020 is the culminating embodiment of the intensive three-year MFA program at Stony Brook University. I would like to thank the artists, Julia Miller and Joseph Santarpia, for the process of creating and presenting their compelling and beautiful work.

My gratitude to Dr. Margaret Schedel, Chair of the Department of Art, and Professor Nobuho Nagasawa and Associate Professor Isak Berbic, MFA Graduate Program Directors, for their contributions to this exhibition. I also want to express my appreciation to the staff of the Staller Center for the Arts, especially Director Alan Inkles and Gallery Coordinator Georgia LaMair, as well as our student gallery assistants.

The 2019–2020 Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery exhibition schedule is made possible by a generous grant from the Paul W. Zuccaire Foundation. Additional funding has been provided by the Friends of Staller Center. We are extremely grateful to our sponsors for helping us present our exhibitions to our campus community as well as to the local and regional community.

Karen Levitov  
Director and Curator

## Gallery Hours

Monday–Friday 12–4pm. Also open during intermission and one hour prior to Staller Center season performances and films. Admission is free.



Staller Center for the Arts  
Stony Brook University  
Stony Brook, NY 11794-5425

631.632.7240  
ZuccaireGallery@stonybrook.edu  
<http://ZuccaireGallery.Stonybrook.edu>



**STALLER**  
CENTER FOR THE ARTS



© 2020 Paul W. Zuccaire Gallery, Stony Brook University