

HOLLIS TAGGART

Hollis Taggart to Present Thesis Show of Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)'s MFA Painting Graduating Cohort

When We Meet Again: RISD MFA Painting Class of 2025 on view June 5 through July 18, 2025

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 12 from 6-8pm

May 25, 2025 – Hollis Taggart is pleased to present *When We Meet Again: RISD MFA Painting Class of 2025*, a thesis show highlighting ten artists to celebrate their milestone of graduating from the Painting MFA program at the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). Artists include Cassidy Argo, Jenny Chen, Mary Connell, Shamira Dharap, Noa Ironic, David Legrand, Xuân-Lam Nguyen, Abigail Parsons, Carrie Wilmarth, and Tim Zhang. The exhibition will be on view at Hollis Taggart from June 5 to July 18, with a reception on Thursday, June 12, from 6 to 8pm.

This exhibition crystallizes the exciting possibilities arising from the frontiers of contemporary painting today. Through very different approaches and sensibilities, the artists in the show mine the vast emotional geography of contemporary life, reflecting on themes such as the self-fashioning of bodies; the possibilities of sweetness in absurdity and uncanniness; science and spirituality; and operations of revelation and hiddenness. Some works in the show feel like half-forgotten memories, rendered woozy with sensuous brushstrokes; other paintings jolt us awake, with their saturated palettes and agitated surfaces.

When We Meet Again: RISD MFA Painting Class of 2025 will also feature a selection of works by alumni of RISD's painting program, such as **Jenny Holzer** (MFA 1977), **Kara Walker** (MFA 1994), **Julie Mehretu** (MFA 1997), and **Dorothy Hood** (BFA 1940), as well as other historic artists loosely associated with the school, such as **Arshile Gorky**, who took evening classes there during the early 1920s and **Sam Gilliam**, who was a visiting artist in the 1990s. These inclusions highlight how contemporary practices do not transpire in isolation but are always in conversation with those who came before them—not just in terms of artistic style, but also through institutional lineages. By featuring works by alumni and associated artists, we hope to build surprising and generative allegiances across bodies of work, past and present.

Cassidy Argo (b. 1999) is a figurative oil painter from Rhode Island. She received her BFA in Fine Art at Moore College of Art & Design in Philadelphia. As a love letter to a haunted childhood, Cassidy's work explores the delicate interplay of comfort and discomfort. Her paintings weave together themes of sentimentality, girlhood, and the fear of the unknown. Cassidy's work has shown in venues such as the Hygienic Art Gallery in New London, CT, InLiquid Gallery in Philadelphia, and the New York Academy of Art in New York City. She is a recent recipient of the Wind Young Fellowship from the Dina Wind Art Foundation in Partnership with InLiquid Gallery. Her work is in collections such as the Green Family Art Foundation in Dallas, Texas.

Jenny Chen is a Chinese-Canadian figurative painter and sculptor living and working between Providence and Vancouver. She received her BFA at Emily Carr University of Art+Design in Vancouver, Canada. Her work has been shown at the Neighborhood Gallery in Vancouver, Canada, 2022-2023, and the Song Jiang Gallery in Shanghai, China, 2018-2020. Chen's art practice magnifies and celebrates the feminine. Play is central to her work, inviting viewers into her world of imagination. Her latest work utilizes the circus space as a venue for play, while highlighting social issues among spectators, hunters, and victims. Chen invites viewers not only to experience but also to participate as characters in her circus universe.

Mary Connell (b. 1995, Hyannis, MA) earned her BFA at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell. She has shown her work in the Greater Boston area and in Providence, RI, with her first solo show in 2021 at the Arts Research Collaborative in Lowell, MA. Her creative work is influenced significantly by her relationship to labor in the

HOLLIS TAGGART

environmental science field, which includes working on the Asian Longhorned Beetle Eradication Program in Worcester, MA as an arborist. Connell's paintings imagine a more reciprocal relationship between human and nonhuman living things, searching for spiritual kinship with the specimens she observes closely using microscopes and imaging technologies.

Shamira Dharap (b. 1998) is a painter from Pune, India. Her work is centered on the landscapes and cityscapes she inhabits. Much of her documentation of these spaces is done from a moving vehicle, which destabilizes the acts of looking and observation. She has a BFA in Painting (2021) from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Maharaja Sayajirao University in Vadodara. She has worked with schools and independent studios as an art facilitator and curriculum designer for over seven years and hopes to continue this engagement alongside her studio practice.

Noa Ironic (b. 1993, Eilat, IL) lives and works in Providence. Ironic was raised and educated in an orthodox Jewish household. She is a graduate of Shenkar Multidisciplinary Art School (BFA, 2019) and has been represented by Rosenfeld Gallery (IL) since 2020. She won the emerging artist award from Edmond de Rothschild Foundation Center, Tel Aviv (2021). She was the recipient of the America Israel Cultural Foundation Award (2019). Her solo exhibition *Ride Your Ego* was exhibited at Plan X gallery (Milan) in 2020, and her solo show *Much Respect* was presented at Rosenfeld Gallery in 2021. Ironic's work is included in private and public collections worldwide.

David Legrand (b. 1995) is a Haitian American artist who earned his BFA in Fine Arts from Cornell University in 2023, where he was honored with the Faculty Medal of Art. His MFA at the Rhode Island School of Design is supported by the prestigious Society of Presidential Fellows Scholarship. A part of his practice is interested in how rest, in its simplest form, is a biological necessity, and how rest can function as a radical act of resistance and reclamation within the context of Black artmaking. His work has been exhibited at Sol Koffler Gallery, RISD (2024); Experimental Gallery at Cornell University (2023); Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art (2022); among others.

Xuân-Lam Nguyen (b. 1993, Hanoi, Vietnam) is a Fulbright scholar and multidisciplinary artist. Before coming to the US in 2023, Xuan-Lam's solo show *Rendezvous Between the Old & the New* was co-organized by the Vietnam National Museum of History and the Vietnamese Women's Museum. He has participated in group exhibitions at the Vietnam Pavilion, World Expo 2020 in Dubai, UAE, and numerous venues in Vietnam. In 2023, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands commissioned him to create artwork marking the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Netherlands and Vietnam. The following year, the French Development Agency invited him to design a public artwork for the inauguration of the Hanoi Metro Line 3, symbolizing the Vietnam-France relationship in the 21st century. His work is part of the art collections of the German Embassy, the Italian Embassy, the Netherlands Embassy, and the National Assembly of Vietnam.

Abigail Parsons is a multidisciplinary artist based in Providence, RI, whose work explores the absurdity of systems, using humor to highlight moments of failure and embarrassment. She approaches her practice through series, creating multiple perspectives of a single moment or event. Parsons received her BA in English from the College of the Holy Cross and a post-baccalaureate certificate from Brandeis University. Her work has been exhibited in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, including at the Abigail Ogilvy Gallery, Pollack Projects, and Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University.

Carrie Wilmarth (b. 1990, Los Angeles, CA) earned their BA in Philosophy at Mount Holyoke College in 2014. Her recent group exhibitions include *The Unspeakable State*, RISD Design Center, Providence, RI (2024); *In The Middle With You*, The Middle Room Gallery, Los Angeles, CA (2023); *The Body's Guest*, Ice Cream Social, New York, NY (2023); as well as a solo exhibition *Tomorrow is a Long Time*, The Java Project, Brooklyn, NY (2021). They are the recipient of the Baruch Kirschenbaum Scholarship, Providence RI (2024); the Rhode Island School of Design Fellowship, Providence, RI (2023); first prize winner of the Calliope Student Journal of Art (2017); Merit Scholarship, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL (2017).

HOLLIS TAGGART

Tim Zhang (b. 2000, Shenzhen, China) lives and works in Providence, RI. He earned his BFA degree at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. His works focus on the posthuman relationship between religion and science. Through multidisciplinary practice across painting, programming, and animation, he aims to present the ambiguous nature of idealism and materialism. Tim Zhang is a 2019-2023 Merit Scholarship recipient. His work was shown at Middle Ridge Gallery (Idyllwild, CA), Melissa Morgan Gallery (Palm Spring, CA), Las Laguna Art Gallery (Los Angeles, CA), and Jones Gallery (Kansas City, MO).

About Hollis Taggart

Founded in 1979, Hollis Taggart presents significant works of American art, showcasing the trajectory of American art movements from the Hudson River School to American Modernism and the Post-War and Contemporary eras. Its program is characterized by a deep commitment to scholarship and bringing to the fore the work of under-recognized artists. The gallery has sponsored several catalogue raisonné projects, most recently for the American Surrealist artist Kay Sage, and has been instrumental in advancing knowledge of such artists as Alfred Maurer, Arthur B. Carles, and more recently, Theodoros Stamos, Marjorie Strider, and Michael (Corinne) West. In the summer of 2019, the gallery announced the formal expansion of its primary market business and focus on the presentation of contemporary work. It continues to expand its roster of contemporary artists, focusing on emerging and mid-career talents. With more than 40 years of experience, Hollis Taggart is widely recognized by collectors and curators for its leadership, expertise, and openness, on matters of art history, market trends and opportunities.

###

For press inquiries, please contact Aga Sablinska at aga.sablinska@gmail.com or 862-216-6485.