



Kelsey Gruber

2022 Fall

Capstone - Sculpture

Department of Art and Art History

Artist Statement:

My work explores the phenomenon of death as a portal. I transmute antiquated objects into something new through various types of preservation. I let most of my materials come to me through happenstance, or what I believe to be fate. This implies that the materials have died in some way, whether it be a literally dead specimen or a metaphorically dead object: one that is obsolete, or has been given up by its previous owner. I take these objects and I conserve their liminal attributes in a way that protects, honors, and holds as sacred.

I use vinyl plastic furniture wrap to preserve larger found objects that associate to the daily home (chairs, fence). I custom “tailor” the plastic wrap to each object and hand-sew the wrap along with the “ruined” parts of the found object; perceived brokenness. By honoring the broken parts, the pieces are given a new meaning and new life through preservation. For more natural materials like the wasp nests and dead flora, I apply coats of clear protective spray enamel to harden their structure and in some cases to add shine. This elongates their lives and “freezes” them in the state of death - this state becomes a portal to rebirth. By combining notions of overgrowth and death with preservation and protection, my work creates a liminal yet everlasting portal.

This transformation shifts our common narratives around death into something continuous rather than something that is final. I have been curious about death from a young age, and I needed to come up with a way that I could connect with death in a factual, but meaningful way. Death does not only exist in the cessation of life: it exists in creation and all throughout life in terms of rebirth. Death is not an end, it is in fact a cycle that is as close to us as our waking lives. Between these moments of constant death and life is where I find the fibers of creation; the poetry of existence; the honey and the egg.

Title	Original Format
Figure 1: Re-flourished; Installation	Installation, 10 ft x 30 ft
Figure 2: Brain Games	4 ft x 2 ft x 1.5 ft
Figure 3: Brain Games, detail	
Figure 4: Brain Games, detail	
Figure 5: Leaned	4 ft x 4 ft x 1 ft
Figure 6: Leaned, detail	
Figure 7: Leaned, detail	
Figure 8: Outside Within	Installation, 10 ft x 10 ft x 6 ft
Figure 9: Outside Within, detail	
Figure 10: Rake	5 ft x 2.5 ft x 4 in
Figure 11: Rake, detail	
Figure 12: Rake, detail	



Figure 1: Re-flourished Installation

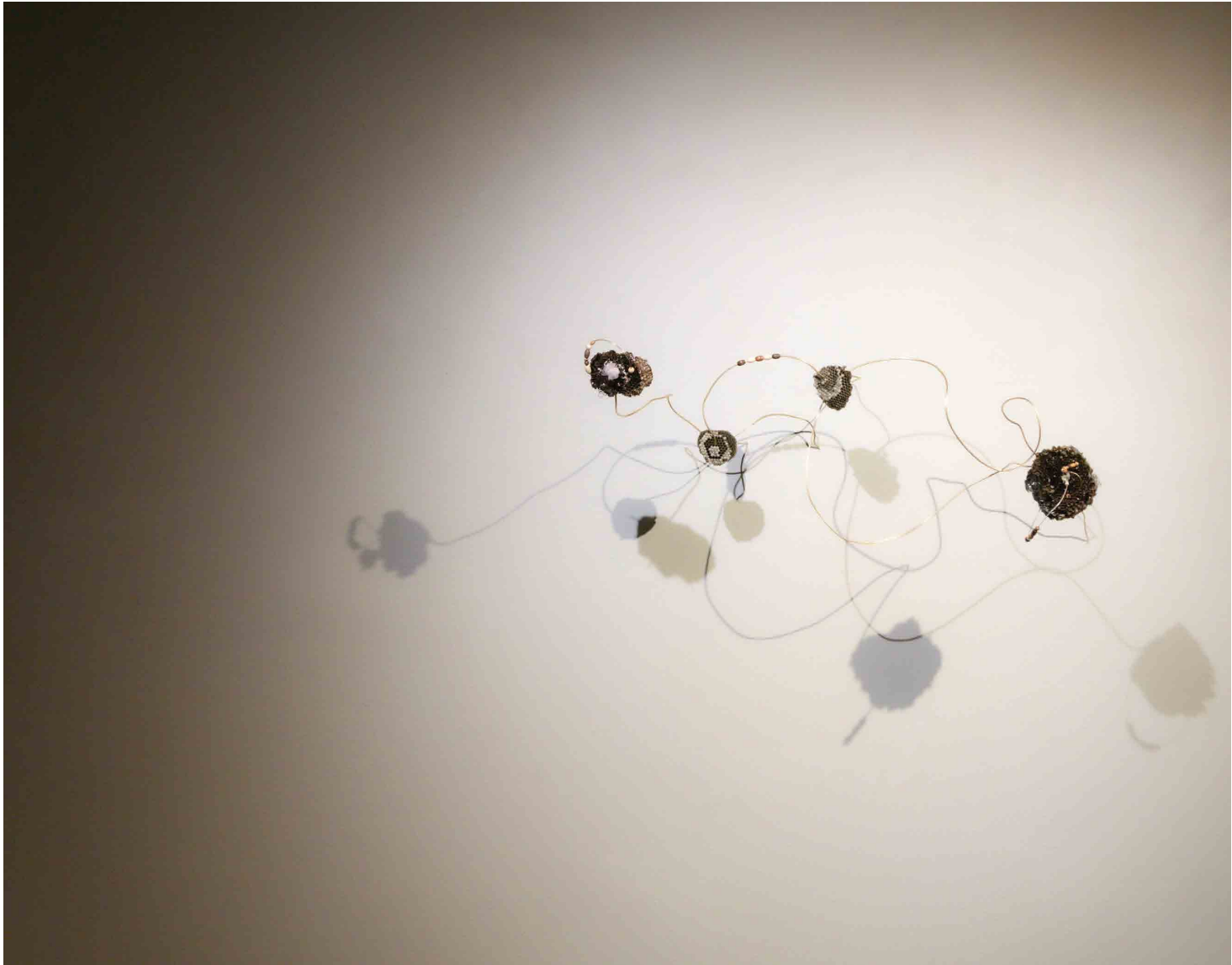


Figure 2: Brain Games



Figure 3: Brain Games, detail



Figure 4: Brain Games, detail



Figure 5: Leaned

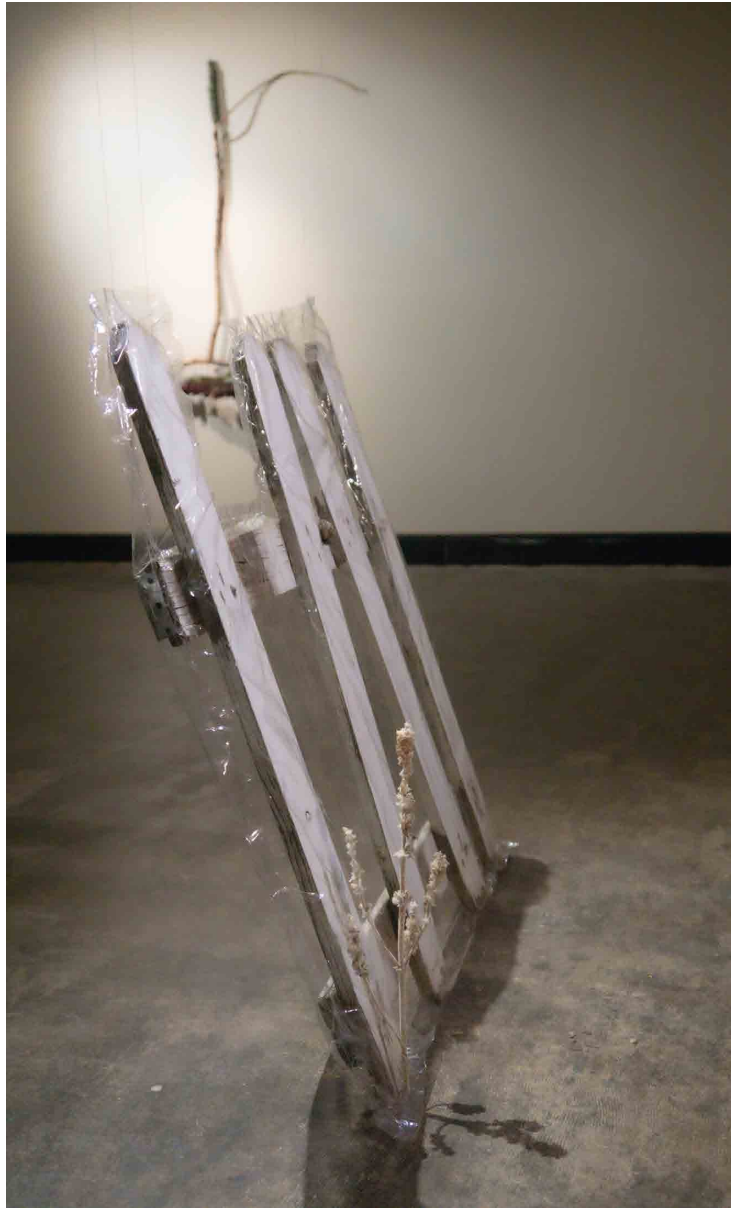


Figure 6: Leaned, detail



Figure 7: Leaned, detail



Figure 8: Outside Within



Figure 9: Outside Within, detail



Figure 10: Rake



Figure 11: Rake, detail



Figure 12: Rake, detail