

From Within

July 8–October 4, 2026

Oolite Arts Teen Residency Exhibition



Oolite Arts

From Within brings together the work of the Oolite Arts Teen Residents, offering a reflection on the experiences, memories, and environments that shape their creative lives.

Throughout this inaugural program, participants were encouraged to experiment, embrace risk, and reflect on the influences that inform their artistic practices. What began as an exploration of origin and inspiration evolved into a deeper inquiry into identity, voice, and self-expression.

The works presented in this exhibition emerge from that process of discovery. Personal and exploratory, they reveal the concerns, interests, and sensibilities that shape each artist's developing practice. Together, they map a series of inner landscapes—spaces of memory, imagination, and becoming—from which these young artists envision and create their worlds.

From Within features works by Ana Blanco, Noa Garcia, Melina Walsh, TJ Wright, and Emely Yanji.

Ana Blanco



Flea in a Herd, 2026. Cut wood, acrylic paint, and wooden picket fence, 45 × 57 × 3 inches. *Glimpse of Light*, 2026. Acrylic on canvas. 16 × 16 inches. 432, 2026. Vellum and colored pencil. 44 × 35 inches.

The title *The Lone Star State* refers to Texas's history of independence and its enduring association with rugged individualism. Although the transition between environments is stark, it reveals unexpected resonances across generations within Miami's multicultural diaspora.

Each piece takes images out of their desired context through fragmentation: a cow left by its herd, surrounded by an urban picket fence; a tree once held together by its environment, now constrained into circles and overlapping iron gates; a segment of a mattress found in Grandpa's house, used as wallpaper to replicate a familiar place with unconventional furniture.

Repeated throughout the room is the idea of severance in varying mediums. In the painting *Flea in a Herd*, segments of the cow's body are reassembled, challenging ideas of migration and assimilation. Additionally, the cow combines geographical references, transitioning from both "cookie cutter" suburban fences to the unique shadows of the trees reminiscent of Miami. The next painting, *Glimpse of Light*, lacks the inclusion of a figure, combining a natural element with a human-made environment forced to reconcile.

Scattered within each of the works stands a portrait turned away from the audience.



Artist Statement

My work centers on the cultural transition I experienced when moving from South Florida to Odessa, Texas. Living in a predominantly white city changed the way I speak, live, and interact with the people around me. Beyond the initial culture shock, the move also led my family to become more reserved and isolated, shaping my understanding of identity, belonging, and community.

I draw significant inspiration from the “Lone Cowboy” trope in popular media, finding parallels between this archetype and the idea of machismo

in Hispanic culture. Both embody a stoic, self-reliant approach to navigating the world. These influences appear throughout my work through the use of carved, rustic wood and vibrant color palettes that draw from both Western American culture and Hispanic traditions. Unlike the colorful and energetic environment of Miami, Odessa feels more neutral and monotonous. The contrast between these places informs my work, prompting me to reconsider and reimagine the bold visual language that characterizes my paintings.

Noa Garcia



0000, 2026. Oil on canvas. 6 × 8 feet.

This installation centers on a 6-by-8-foot oil painting on canvas depicting my younger self standing beside a toy locker. The locker functions as both a childhood object and a personal archive of memory, grief, and growth. The painting highlights the contrast between childhood innocence and the emotional significance the object has come to carry over time. The faded words printed across its surface (INSPIRE, CREATE, EXPLORE) remain as traces of childhood while also reflecting values that continue to shape who I am today.

The locker originally held glitter-covered dollar bills left by the tooth fairy and other childhood treasures. After the death of my aunt Jessica in 2017, however, the locker took on a different meaning. She was the person

who first introduced me to art and creativity, and losing her at a young age forced me to confront grief before fully understanding it. In response, I began writing letters to my aunt and placing them inside the locker. What began as a child's way of coping became an ongoing ritual that continues whenever I experience moments of joy, sadness, uncertainty, or change.

This work explores how ordinary objects can accumulate emotional significance and become vessels for memory. By extending the painting into a physical installation, I seek to recreate the intimate space the locker represents. The work reflects the enduring connection between art, remembrance, and healing, while honoring the ways childhood memories can preserve love across time and loss.



Artist Statement

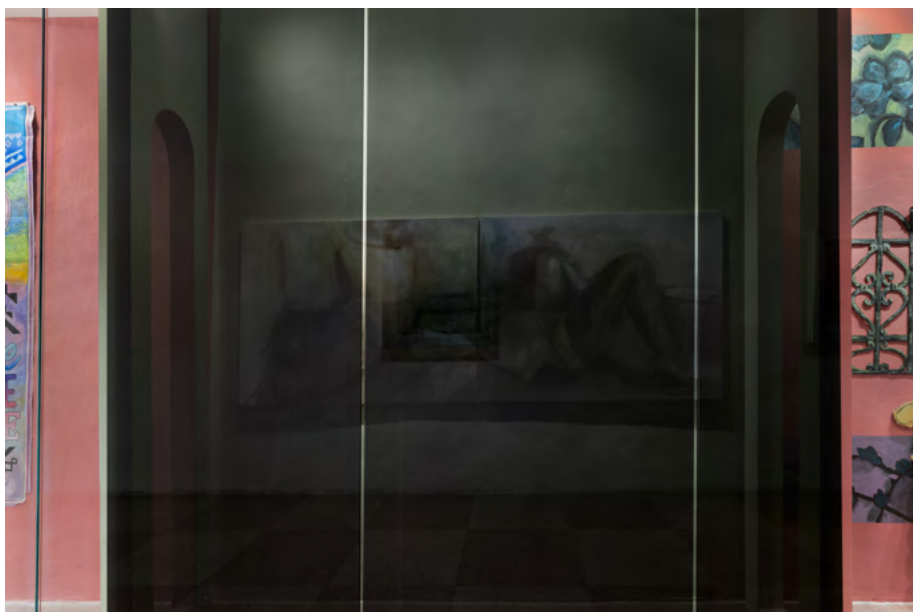
What we see is rarely all that exists. Through realistic painting and colored pencil, I create images inspired by moments, places, and memories that carry deep personal significance. While the work begins as a way of understanding and preserving my own experiences, I render it with meticulous realism to invite viewers into those moments alongside me. Realism is the closest I can come to the way memory presents itself—vivid, specific, and emotionally charged. The process requires me to slow down and look closely, revealing details and meanings that might otherwise pass unnoticed.

I intentionally focus on specific figures, details, objects, and places that may appear insignificant to some yet hold deep meaning for me. Memories and images, like people, carry different meanings for each of us. One example is a self-portrait I created in oil paint.

I am standing in the front yard of my childhood home in Los Angeles, where I was born and raised before moving to Miami with my family. I wear a dress printed with landscapes inspired by places I have traveled. Growing up, travel was something my family cherished, and leaving home to discover new places has always felt meaningful to me. The world is full of details worth stopping for, and that is what I am always chasing in my work.

Through this work, I confront emotions I might otherwise overlook. Every piece I make is carefully considered because, for me, nothing is included by accident. My late aunt was my greatest creative inspiration. She worked realistically, and some of my most treasured memories are of creating alongside her. That shared language of realism is something I carry with me. When I make work, I am creating for both of us.

Melina Walsh



Untitled (78%), 2026. Oil on canvas, sheer garments, 78% light-blocking window tint. 72 × 96 inches.

This work explores the extent to which privacy can be sustained through materials intended to imitate or conceal, such as tights worn against the skin. It questions the boundary between what is considered intimate and what is made visible, and how that boundary shifts through presentation. By repeatedly translating specific objects and images, each rendition becomes increasingly abstracted, a process reflected in the ambiguous depiction of my own figure, painted and encased behind tinted glass.

Multiple forms of concealment are imposed on the work. The window tint obscures the sheer garments that originally functioned as a visible layer between skin and viewer. The painting can be fully experienced only through close proximity, inviting a more intimate inspection of the figure. With each layer of mediation, the illusion of privacy becomes increasingly fragile, ultimately revealing an exposed figure on display.



Artist Statement

The cultural disconnect between my Ecuadorian mother and American father led to unintentional omissions in stories about my childhood, family history, and relationships. These gaps have shaped my understanding of the past and informed the way I construct meaning in my work.

By exploring memory and its relationship to shifting social and cultural perspectives, I examine how attention directed toward specific subjects can alter their meaning over time. Without a concrete way to represent these disconnects, I use my body as a vessel through which subtle gestures and physical cues

suggest unspoken narratives within intimate and exposing situations. Through abstraction in my paintings, I expand upon these absences by resisting complete clarity. Body parts dissolve into their surroundings, while disorienting compositions serve as a counterpart to the instability of memory and the uncertainty of unresolved spaces.

What is remembered, obscured, and omitted becomes equally significant. Through exaggerated or ambiguous poses, I explore how the body can mirror the fragmented nature of memory itself.

TJ Wright



Untitled (Tiles), 2026. Mixed media performance stills on ceramic tiles. 2.5 × 7.5 feet.

Untitled (Tiles) began while I was watching YouTube videos documenting construction projects across South Florida. I became fascinated by the use of time-lapse photography and its ability to compress long periods of development into a format that can be easily observed, transforming gradual, often imperceptible changes into visible events. Inspired by this process, I turned the camera toward my own bathroom, using time-lapse recording to document the movement of objects shaped by habit and routine, as well as the subtle transformations that unfold over time.

The final stills from the footage were transferred onto ceramic tiles and assembled into a composition mounted on a wooden support. By adopting both the visual language and material structure of a bathroom wall, the work echoes the environment from which the images originated while reframing a familiar domestic space as a subject of sustained observation. Through this process, ordinary patterns of use and movement emerge with unexpected clarity, revealing how repetition, habit, and the passage of time leave their mark on even the most familiar spaces.



Artist Statement

My home, Miami, has long been defined by an obsession with construction and development. Over time, I have come to recognize a similar obsession in myself.

As new developments continue to reshape South Florida, they become attached to buildings, streets, and structures I once overlooked, places I only begin to value when I realize they may not be there tomorrow. When tomorrow arrives, I find myself longing for yesterday. This awareness has led me to pay closer attention to the environments I inhabit and the subtle ways they transform over time.

Through multidisciplinary approaches, including sculpture, installation, video, printmaking, textiles, performance, and photography, I record, reconstruct, and reimagine these shifts. Drawing connections between familiar and unfamiliar spaces, I explore how time creates absences and alters our relationships to people, places, and objects. My work considers the tension between permanence and

impermanence, and the ways memory both preserves and reshapes what is lost.

My work exists simultaneously as an object and a record of time. Influenced by my early training in photography and performance, I expand these mediums into conceptual forms that examine memory, change, and perception. Documentation functions not only as a record, but also as an active part of the work's meaning. Through observation and recording, I seek to reveal subtle transformations that often escape notice.

I am particularly drawn to found materials and to working directly from my surroundings. Whether through images, objects, or installations, I seek to uncover the histories embedded within ordinary spaces and the emotional resonance carried by everyday things.

Ultimately, my practice explores how individuals and communities navigate continual transformation by creating spaces for reflection on attachment, memory, and the fragile yet enduring connections that shape our experience of the world.

Emely Yanji



Lejos de Aquí (Away From Here), 2026. Acrylic on cardboard installation. Dimensions variable.

Lejos de Aquí is an installation of cardboard paintings that explores how distance reshapes memory. It reveals traces of presence shaped by faith and nostalgia, suggesting how memory alters our perception of reality. Through the arrangement of everyday objects, the installation explores how absence can become a form of presence, and how longing transforms what was once tangible into something spiritual, distant, and deeply personal.

This exhibition functions as a collage of fragmented memories, bringing together symbols of familiarity, absence, and personal mythology. The installation weaves together themes of freedom, spiritual connection, abandonment, and resilience, exploring

how places continue to inhabit us long after distance and time have transformed them. Through the presence of forgotten objects and overlooked spaces, the work blurs the boundary between loss and renewal, suggesting that what is left behind is not simply abandoned but continues to evolve in memory. Ultimately, the exhibition questions whether memory preserves reality as it was or continually reshapes it into something new.

For *Lejos de Aquí*, I experimented with scale and composition by intentionally distorting the size of certain objects to recreate the feeling of memory: blurry, fleeting, fragmented, and inaccurately beautiful.



Artist Statement

I am a figurative, multidisciplinary artist from Barquisimeto, Venezuela. By experimenting with surfaces such as cardboard, canvas, textiles, and wood, I engage with contemporary approaches to figuration that examine how people inhabit and experience the world around them. Through my work, I seek to communicate my perception of time and place, exploring how these elements suggest the presence of individuals through quiet depictions of intimacy.

I capture personal moments and depict objects drawn from my everyday life and the people who matter most to me.

The objects I choose to paint are selected with intention, each carrying emotional resonance and personal significance. Through these intimate representations, I invite viewers to reflect on their own relationships to memory, attachment, and the ways both tangible objects and intangible experiences shape their sense of self.

Ultimately, my work invites viewers to find meaning in the subtle, often overlooked moments that shape our shared human experience.













Oolite Arts Teen Residency

The Oolite Arts Teen Residency is a mentorship-based program for artists aged 16–18 who aspire to pursue careers in the visual arts. Designed to connect young creatives with the contemporary art world, the residency provides direct access to working artists, curators, studio practice, and hands-on professional experience.

Throughout this inaugural program, residents developed new work while participating in critiques, studio visits, and conversations with members of Miami's arts community. Guided by mentorship and curatorial support, they were encouraged to experiment, take creative risks, refine their ideas, and cultivate their individual artistic voices while laying the foundation for future careers in the arts. The culminating exhibition celebrates their achievements and marks an important milestone in their artistic and creative development.

Gonzalo Hernandez
Teen Residency Mentor

Catalina Aguayo
Education Program Manager



924 Lincoln Rd.
Miami Beach, FL 33139

@OoliteArts #OoliteArts
OoliteArts.org

Thank You to our supporters

Oolite Arts gratefully acknowledges the visionary support of the following partners and funders:



**KNIGHT
FOUNDATION**



**THE JORGE M. PÉREZ
FAMILY FOUNDATION**

MIAMI BEACH



**CULTURE
BUILDS
FLORIDA**

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DIVISION OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS



**Florida
ARTS & CULTURE**

SHE SEE
HEAR
ENGAGE
Collective

Collective Circle

Tito's
HANDMADE  VODKA

Walgreens



**LITTLE HAITI
CULTURAL
COMPLEX**

This exhibition and program are made possible by the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council, the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; The City of Miami Beach, Cultural Affairs Program, Cultural Arts Council; the Mayor and City Commissioners of Miami Beach, State of Florida; Department of State; Division of Arts and Culture; and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

Special thanks to the Little Haiti Cultural Complex and the City of Miami for partnering with us and generously providing space for the Oolite Arts Teen Residency.



924 Lincoln Rd.
Miami Beach, FL 33139

@OoliteArts #OoliteArts
OoliteArts.org

Staff

John Abodeely
President and CEO

Megan Braasch
Chief Development Officer

Rina Carvajal
Senior Director of Programs

Kosta Kreiman
Chief Operating Officer

Catalina Aguayo
Education Program Manager

Andre “Junior” Charles
Facilities Manager

Cherese Crockett
Director of Artists Residencies

Claudia DoCampo
Director of Communications
and Marketing

Matthew Forehand
Print and Fabrication Facilities
Manager

Melissa Gabriel
Adult Art Classes Manager

Hansel Porras Garcia
Cinematic Manager

Javier Napoles
Senior Accountant

Sofia Loren Perez
Development Assistant

Danny Plana
Senior Graphic Designer

Lucas Schrier
Executive Operations Manager

Celeste Viana
Programs Coordinator

Melissa Wallen
Director of Exhibitions and
Community Outreach

Willie Baez
Gallery Assistant

Brigette Roseman
Gallery Assistant

Board of Directors

Marie Elena Angulo
Chair

Alessandro Ferretti
Vice Chair

Eric Rodriguez
Secretary and
Treasurer

**Anthony Thomas
Abraham**

Vanessa Almeida

Germane Barnes

Edouard Duval-Carrié

**Diego R. Figueroa-
Rodríguez**

Lilia Garcia

Thomas F. Knapp

