

A black and white portrait of a woman with dark hair pulled back, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. She is wearing a light-colored, possibly white, button-down shirt. The background is slightly out of focus, showing what appears to be a doorway or a wall with some papers.

# KENDRA KEEFER

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## BIO



Kendra Keefer is an interdisciplinary artist, educator, and poet. She designs installations combining new and traditional media. Through storytelling and autoethnography, her work interrogates how trauma informs patterns of behavior and recognizes that those who live with continual trauma usually become hypervigilant in their search for patterns in the chaos. The work finds kinship with non-human animals, who often must become hypervigilant for survival, as well. She also examines themes of movement and connection/disconnection to the landscape, the specificity of place, and the craving for home as vehicles for a deeper connection to the natural environment.

Keefer is the mother of three children, all neurodiverse, two queer, whose humor and brilliance inspire and sustain her. Her role as their advocate and ally, and the lack of community support and resources for people in marginalized communities, is a sight of investigation for her work.

Keefer has a BFA in Painting in Painting and Drawing and an MA in Art Museum Education from the University of North Texas, Denton. In 2002, she won a Marcus Fellowship to research how to transform art museums into welcoming spaces for underserved communities. She has worked at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Dallas Museum of Art, the Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, and the Danforth Art Museum in Framingham, MA, and at a low-income public school in rural Texas. She recently completed a Master of Fine Arts in Interdisciplinary Art from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

# ***INSTALLATION***



In 2021, I fled from a red state to a blue one to ensure the safety of my LGBTQIA teen. This multimedia installation maps out how that relocation, for me, intersected with other relocations from my childhood that continue to live in my memory.

***...OH, BUT IF I  
HAD THE STARS  
FROM THE  
DARKEST NIGHT***

***OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT***  
MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION, EXHIBITED DECEMBER 2024, NORTH LIGHT GALLERY,  
SIU SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS CARBONDALE IL



EXIT

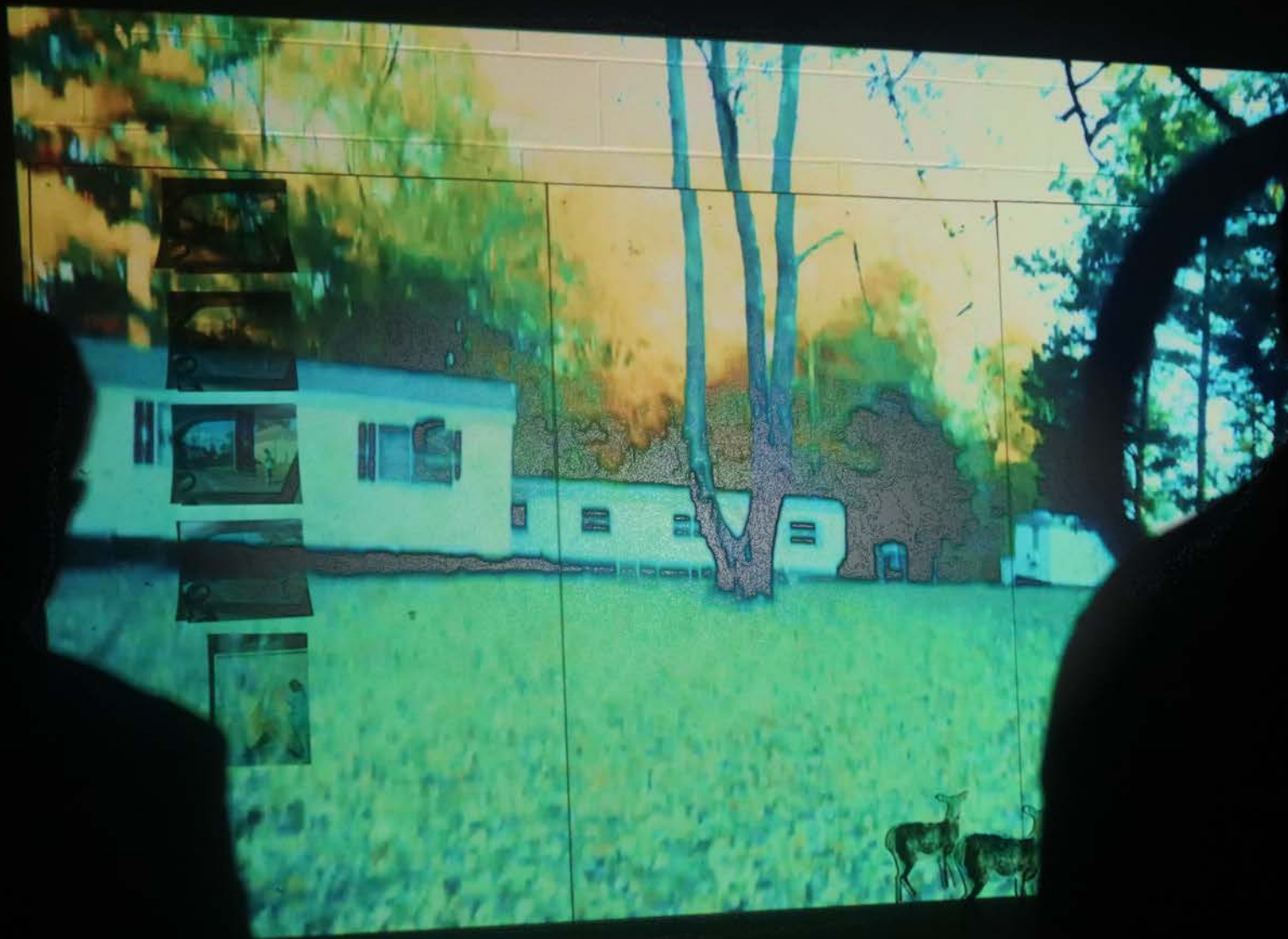
Layered video, photographs, and sketches from our journey North chart and signify the complexity of life as it is experienced. Song and text emphasize how gender, sexuality, race, socioeconomic class, psychological state, cultural expectations, and species all mediate our ontological status.



***OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT***  
MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION, EXHIBITED DECEMBER 2024, NORTH LIGHT GALLERY,  
SIU SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS CARBONDALE IL

“...it is half the art of  
storytelling to keep a story  
free from explanation as one  
reproduces it” (cont.)

***OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT***  
MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION, EXHIBITED DECEMBER 2024, NORTH LIGHT GALLERY,  
SIU SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS CARBONDALE IL



” . . . The most extraordinary things, marvelous things, are related with the greatest accuracy, but the psychological connection of the event is not forced on the reader.”

— Walter Benjamin

***OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT***  
MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION, EXHIBITED DECEMBER 2024, NORTH LIGHT GALLERY,  
SIU SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS CARBONDALE IL





“The work of memory collapses time.”

— Walter Benjamin

***OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT***

MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION, EXHIBITED DECEMBER 2024, NORTH LIGHT GALLERY,  
SIU SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS CARBONDALE IL





# WAKE: IF HEAVEN'S NOT MY HOME

In late Spring 2022, I encountered a young, male deer that had been struck by a vehicle. I had spent the previous year learning to be a single mother to a queer child while developing a new support system. I had also begun graduate school and had observed the herd the buck belonged to for several months. I was immediately compelled to honor his life in a meaningful way. As I was experiencing a period of estrangement from my family of origin, the rituals I had grown up with now seemed precious.





“**WAKE...**” records how my child and I used ritual, song, and flowers to memorialize that young deer, just as we would have done for any other family member.



WAKE

1. to emerge or cause to emerge from a state of sleeping.

1. *(Dialect \* Irish)*  
Hold a vigil beside (someone who has died).

2. A watch or vigil held beside the body of someone who has died.



**WAKE: IF HEAVEN'S NOT MY HOME**  
 PLANS FOR MULTIMEDIA INSTALLATION,  
 EXHIBITED AS PART OF THE ALT ART SHOW AT ARTSPACE 304, OCTOBER 2024, CARBONDALE, IL



The resulting installation was exhibited at Artspace 304 in Carbondale, Illinois, as part of a 2024 show called Alt Art. On opening night, I read *Bambi's Birth*, a poem I had written from the point of view of a newborn fawn in the first months after I realized that I would need to take on the responsibility for my youngest child totally on my own.



**WAKE: IF HEAVEN'S NOT MY HOME**  
MULTIMEDIA INSTALLATION INCLUDING VIDEO AND PERFORMANCE,  
EXHIBITED AS PART OF THE ALT ART SHOW AT ARTSPACE 304, OCTOBER 2024, CARBONDALE, IL



# CRACKS IN THE DARK

For this installation, I  
employed techniques  
of autofiction and  
autoethnography to  
compose a visual  
folk ballad. (cont.)



DIGITAL MOCKUP OF THE PROPOSED INSTALLATION, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, DECEMBER 2021, CARBONDALE, IL

© KENDRA KEEFER



(cont.) The narrative explores the complexities of domestic conflicts while delving into the profound influence of gender roles on the dynamics of heterosexual family structures. I was also experimenting with how to center a story within a specific place.



## **CRACKS IN THE DARK**

MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION, DECEMBER 2021, CARBONDALE, IL



“It matters what matters  
we use to think other  
matters with; it matters  
what stories we tell to tell  
other stories with it  
matters what knots knot  
knots (cont.)”



**CRACKS IN THE DARK**, DETAIL VIEW

“(cont.)...what thoughts think  
thoughts, what descriptions describe  
descriptions, what ties tie ties. It  
matters what stories make worlds,  
what worlds make stories.”

— Donna J. Haraway, Staying with the  
Trouble: Making Kin in the  
Chthulucene



**CRACKS IN THE DARK**, DETAIL VIEW



[illegible]

“Our new home is teeming with life, death, and its own mixture of the sublime and the excruciating. I try to look for meaning in my child and in the echoes and synchronicities of the other beings with whom we share our world. (cont.)

DIGITAL MOCK-UP FOR INSTALLATION, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE  
EXHIBITED IN MAKING KIN EXHIBIT  
AT THE SIU SCHOOL OF ART AND MEDIA,  
COMMUNICATIONS GALLERY, APRIL 2022 CARBONDALE IL



“(cont.) In this vein, I have begun observing a wild doe and her children, finding comfort in the idea that my story, as a mother, parent, and protector, although individual, is also part of a larger pattern. I am looking for echoes.”



### **WILD \* DEER \* NESS**

MIXED MEDIA INSTALLATION EXHIBITED IN MAKING KIN EXHIBIT AT THE SIU SCHOOL OF ART AND MEDIA,  
COMMUNICATIONS GALLERY, APRIL 2022, CARBONDALE IL



# WHEN THE CROWS

This site-based installation was conceived during the COVID-19 lockdown while I was quarantined on my mother's property in North Texas. Each painting employs water-based media applied onto found paper. A self-imposed constraint was to collage only found objects that my dogs had brought me from my family's 18-acre property. The work explores the profound impact of migration, intergenerational trauma, and colonialism on the land.

When the crows walk us home,  
The goats bring the joy,  
And the coyotes sing us to sleep,  
Then will we be free?



## **WHEN THE CROWS WALK US HOME**

MIXED MEDIA PAINTING AND FABRIC ON REPURPOSED PAPER, 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX, 48 X 36 INCHES, SITE  
BASED INSTALLATION, GOUACHE ON REPURPOSED PAPER, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX





***WHEN THE CROWS WALK US HOME, THE GOATS BRING THE JOY,  
AND THE COYOTES SING US TO SLEEP, THEN WILL WE BE FREE?***  
SITE BASED INSTALLATION, GOUACHE ON REPURPOSED PAPER, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX



# ***PHOTOGRAPHY***





***NOT IN OUR STARS***

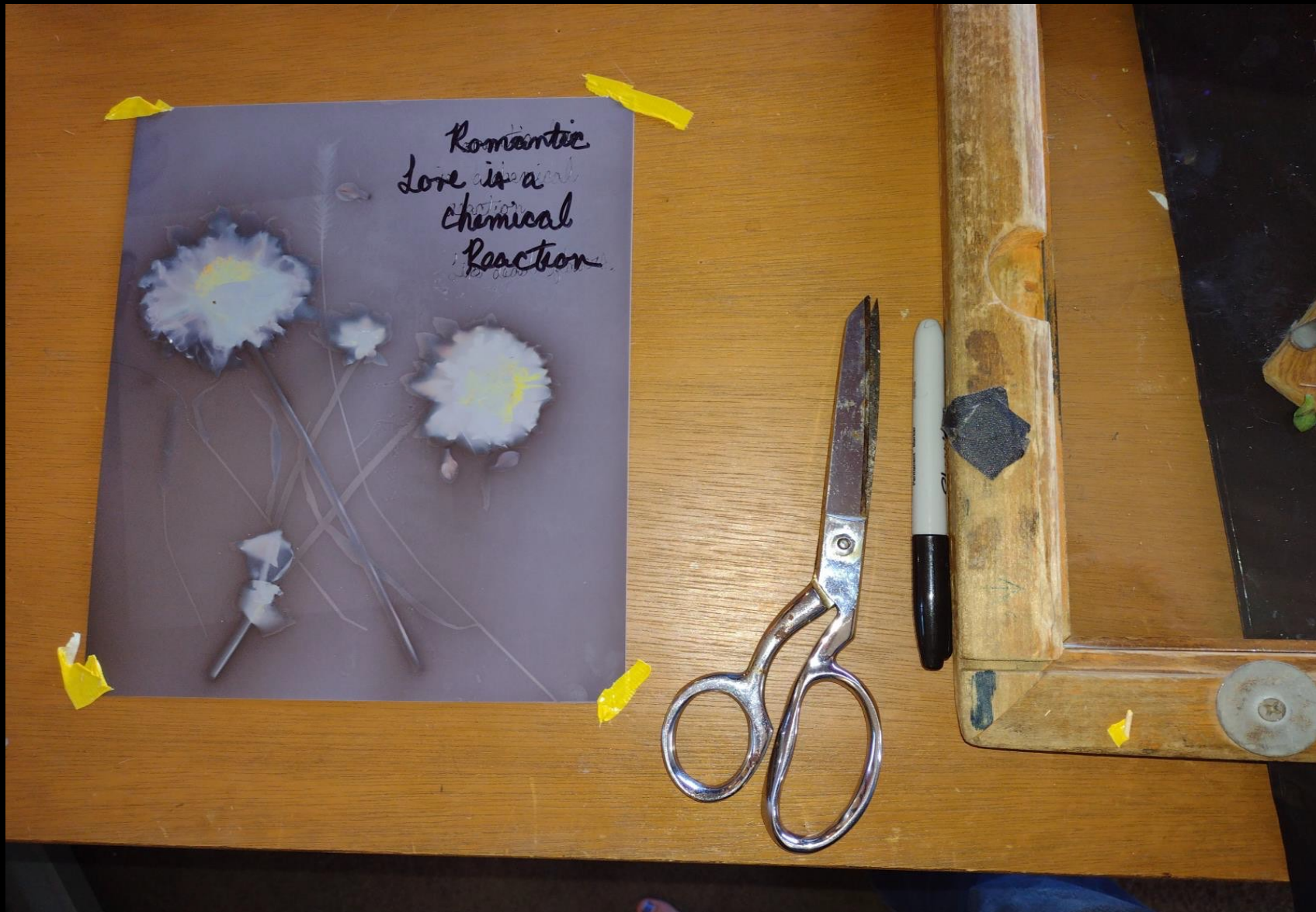
DIGITAL PRINT OF LUMEN PHOTOGRAPH, OCTOBER 2022, CARBONDALE IL



***CAPTURED***

DIGITAL PRINT OF LUMEN PROCESS, OCTOBER 2022, CARBONDALE IL





### **JUST A CHEMICAL REACTION**

DIGITAL PHOTO OF LUMEN PROCESS, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, OCTOBER 2021, CARBONDALE, IL  
EXHIBITED IN *WILD\*DEER\*NESS* IN *THE MAKING KIN* EXHIBIT, MAY 2022 AND [\*OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT\*](#)  
DECEMBER 2024, NORTH LIGHT GALLERY, SIU SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS CARBONDALE IL





***TELLING STORIES***

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH, SIZE VARIABLE, NOVEMBER 2020,  
GRAYSON COUNTY TX



***GHOST***

DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH, SIZE VARIABLE, 2018,  
GRAYSON COUNTY TX

# ***DIGITAL MEDIA***





***DANCING TO THE MUSIC IN THEIR HEAD***

DIGITALLY MANIPULATED PHOTOGRAPH, MARCH 2021,  
GRAYSON COUNTY TX, EXHIBITED IN [\*OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT\*](#), DECEMBER 2024, NORTH  
LIGHT GALLERY, SIU SCHOOL OF MEDIA ART, CARBONDALE  
IL



***FA, A LONG LONG WAY TO RUN***

DIGITAL COLLAGE, 2022, CARBONDALE IL  
EXHIBITED IN [\*OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT\*](#), DECEMBER 2024, NORTH LIGHT GALLERY, SIU SCHOOL OF  
MEDIA ARTS CARBONDALE IL



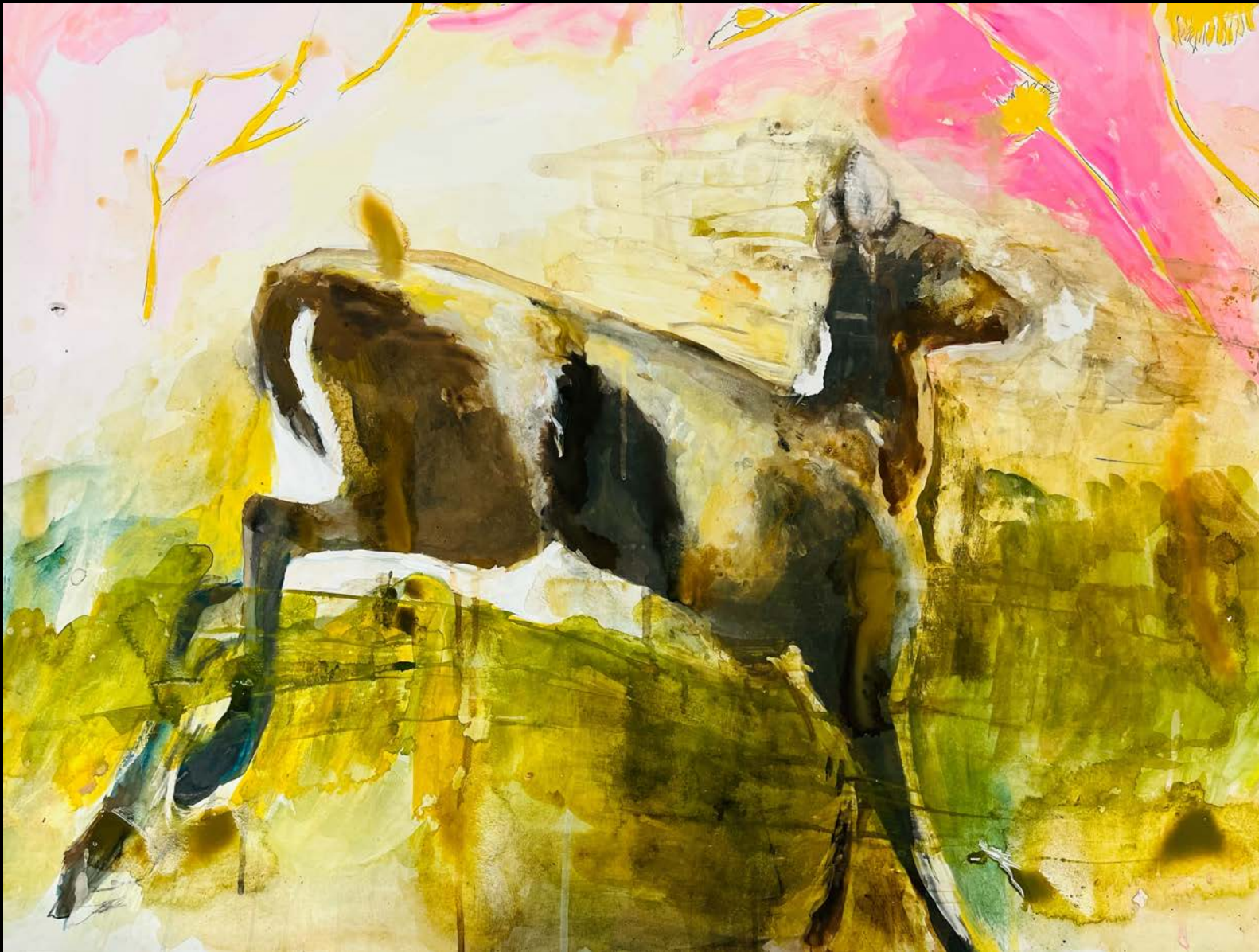
### ***NIGHT RUN***

DIGITAL COLLAGE, DIMENSIONS VARIABLE, MARCH 2022, CARBONDALE IL

EXHIBITED IIN [\*\*\*WILD\\*DEER\\*NESS IN THE MAKING KIN EXHIBIT\*\*\*](#), MAY 2022 AND [\*\*\*OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS FROM THE DARKEST NIGHT\*\*\*](#)  
DECEMBER 2024, NORTH LIGHT GALLERY, SIU SCHOOL, OF MEDIA ARTS CARBONDALE IL



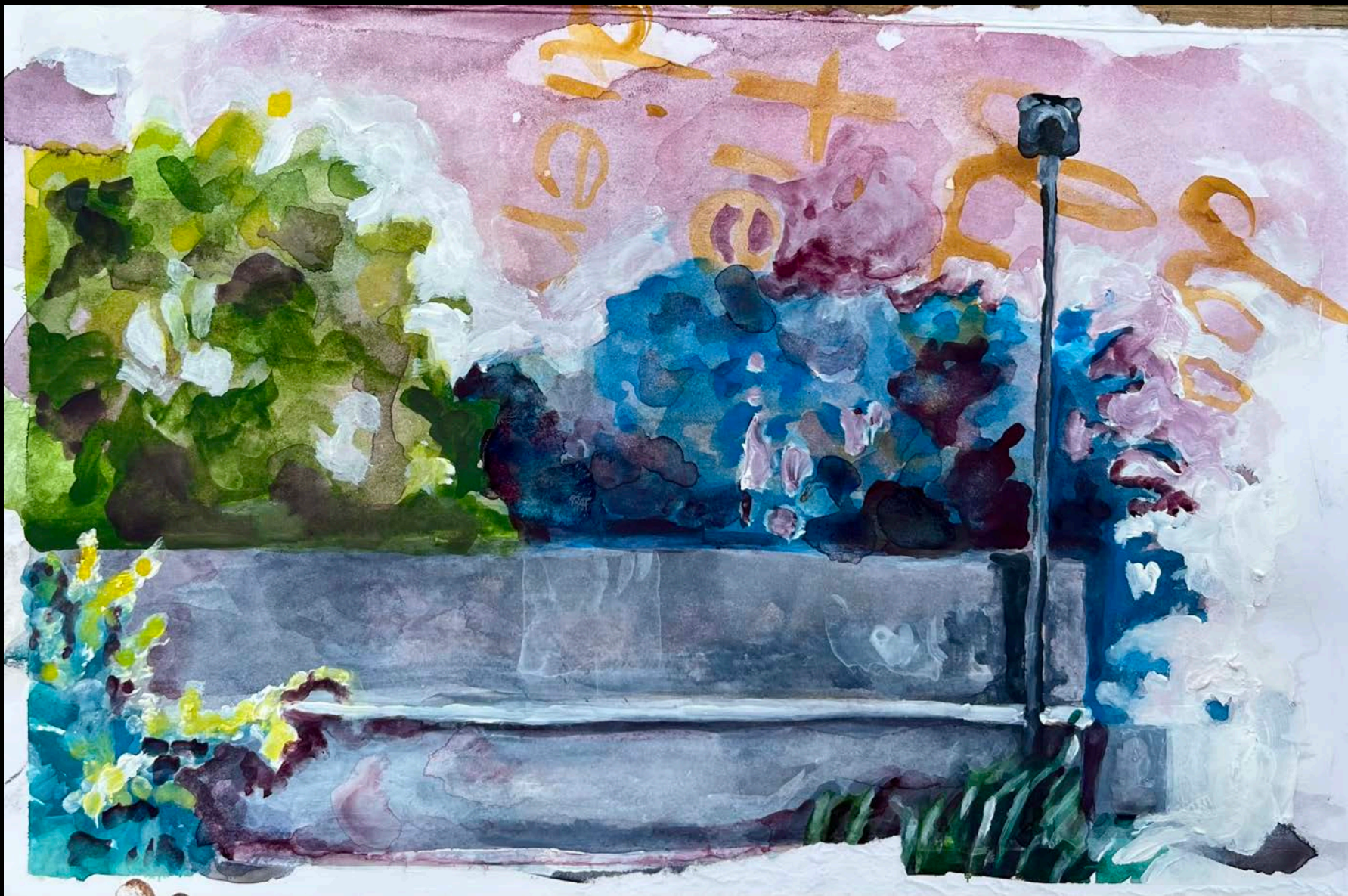
# ***PAINTING***



***A DOE, A DEER, FROM WILD\*DEER\*NESS***

MIXED MEDIA PAINTING FROM FIELDWORK, MARCH 2022, CARBONDALE IL,  
EXHIBITED IN [MAKING KIN](#) IN MAY 2022 AND [OH, BUT IF I HAD THE STARS...](#) IN DECEMBER 2024  
IN THE NORTH LIGHT GALLERY AT THE SCHOOL OF MEDIA ART IN SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY, CARBONDALE





***DIER, TIER***

WATER MEDIA ON PAPER, 8" X 6", JULY 2022, CARBONDALE IL,  
EXHIBITED IN PLEIN AIRE EXHIBIT, VERGETTE GALLERY, SIU, AUGUST 2022





**WHERE ARE WE GOING?, AFTER THE ANTHROPOCENE SERIES**  
XEROXED PHOTO WITH GOUACHE PAINTING, 9 BY 12 INCHES, JANUARY 2020, DALLAS COUNTY, TX





**WHEN THE CROWS WALK US HOME, [WHEN THE CROWS SERIES](#)**

MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON REPURPOSED PAPER ON REPURPOSED PAPER, 42 X 48 INCHES, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY, TX  
EXHIBITED AT VERMONT COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, 2021





***THE GOATS BRING THE JOY, [WHEN THE CROWS SERIES](#)***

MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON REPURPOSED PAPER ON REPURPOSED PAPER, 42 X 48 INCHES, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX  
EXHIBITED AT VERMONT COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, 2021





**AND THE COYOTES SING US TO SLEEP, [WHEN THE CROWS SERIES](#)**  
MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON REPURPOSED PAPER, 42 X 46 INCHES, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY, TX  
EXHIBITED AT VERMONT COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, 2021



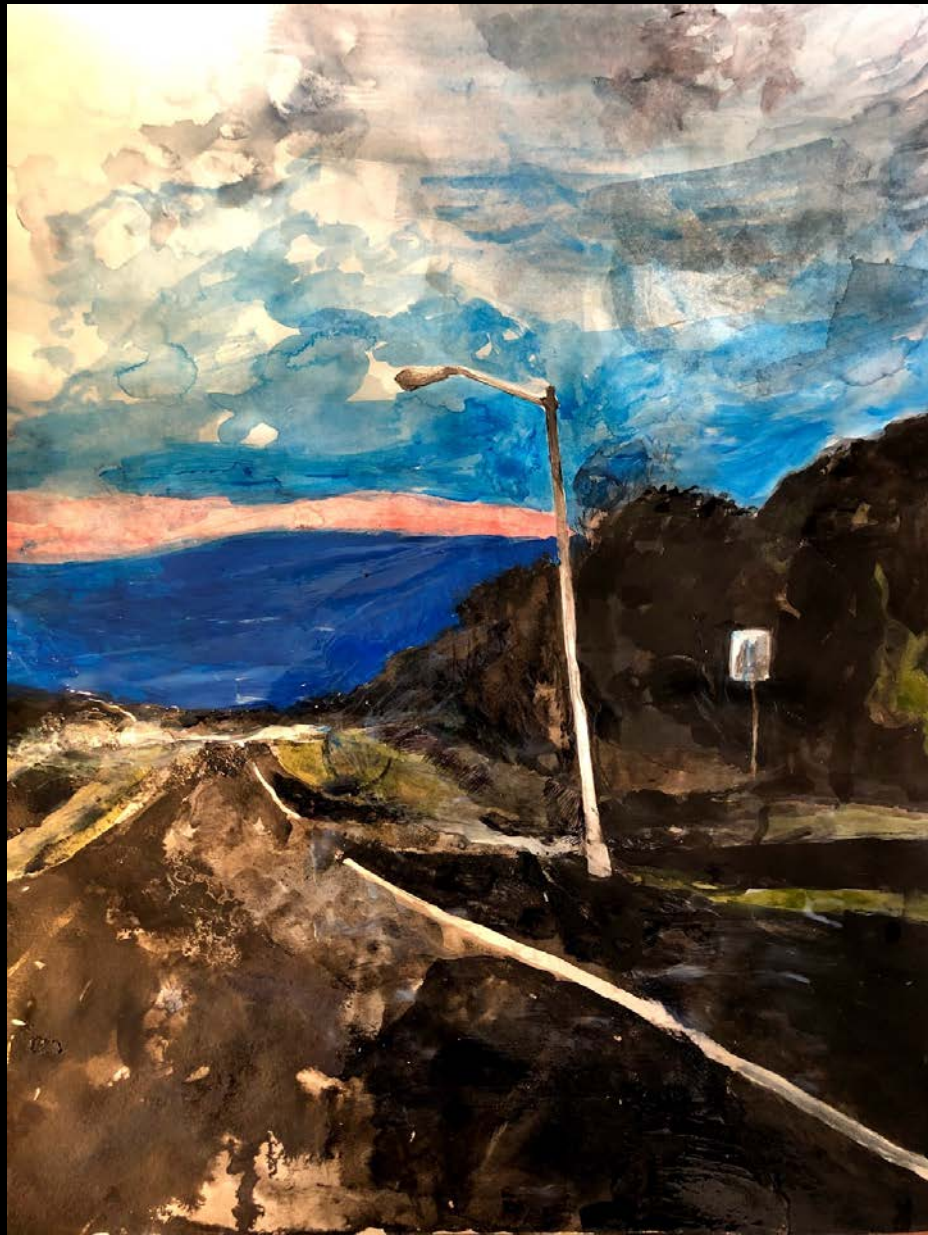


***THEN WILL WE BE FREE?, WHEN THE CROWS SERIES***

MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON REPURPOSED PAPER, 42 X 43 INCHES, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX

EXHIBITED AT VERMONT COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS, 2021





Exhibited at Great Plains Annual Juried Art Show,  
2020, Centre Gallery, Southeastern University, won  
best in show.

***AFTER THE ANTHROPOCENE , AFTER THE ANTHROPOCENE SERIES***  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER, 22 X18 INCHES, SEPTEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TEXAS



**WHAT THE DOGS GAVE US, [WHEN THE CROWS SERIES](#)**  
WATER MEDIA ON PHOTOGRAPH FROM THE ARTIST'S MOTHER'S LAND,  
36 X 24 INCHES, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX



Exhibited at **Great Plains Annual  
Juried Art Show**, 2019, Centre  
Gallery, Southeastern University, won  
Best 3D Work



***ROAD WARRIOR, BESTIARY SERIES***

MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON REPURPOSED DRAWER, 21 X 27 INCHES, 3 INCHES DEEP  
NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX

© KENDRA KEEFER





**WAKE 1 (DIPTYCH)**

MIXED MEDIA AND STITCHING ON PAPER, 6 BY 13 INCHES, FEBRUARY 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX



Exhibited at **Great Plains Annual Juried Art Show**,  
2019, Centre Gallery, Southeastern University



***THE OLD PRINCE , BESTIARY SERIES***

MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON REPURPOSED DRAWER, 27 X 21 INCHES, 3 INCHES DEEP, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX

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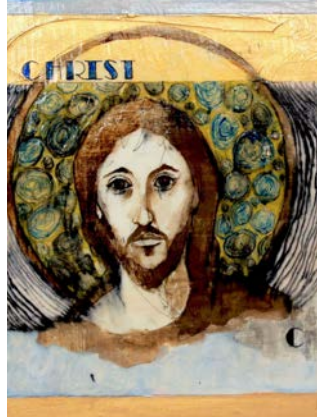


**SAW-WHET OWL , BESTIARY SERIES**

MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON CANVAS, 8 BY 8 INCHES, EACH, NOVEMBER 2020, GRAYSON COUNTY TX, EXHIBITED AT  
GHOST TOWN ARTS COLLECTIVE, SHERMAN TX AND THE MARY KARAM GALLERY, 2019, DENISON TX

© KENDRA KEEFER





## THE ANXIOUS CHILD'S ALPHABET

Kendra Keefer-McGee



**413 MAKERS**

413 Main Street,  
Denison, TX, 75021

**Opening Reception  
7-10 June 3, 2017**

Exhibit on view  
through July 3, 2017

## THE ANXIOUS CHILD'S ALPHABET

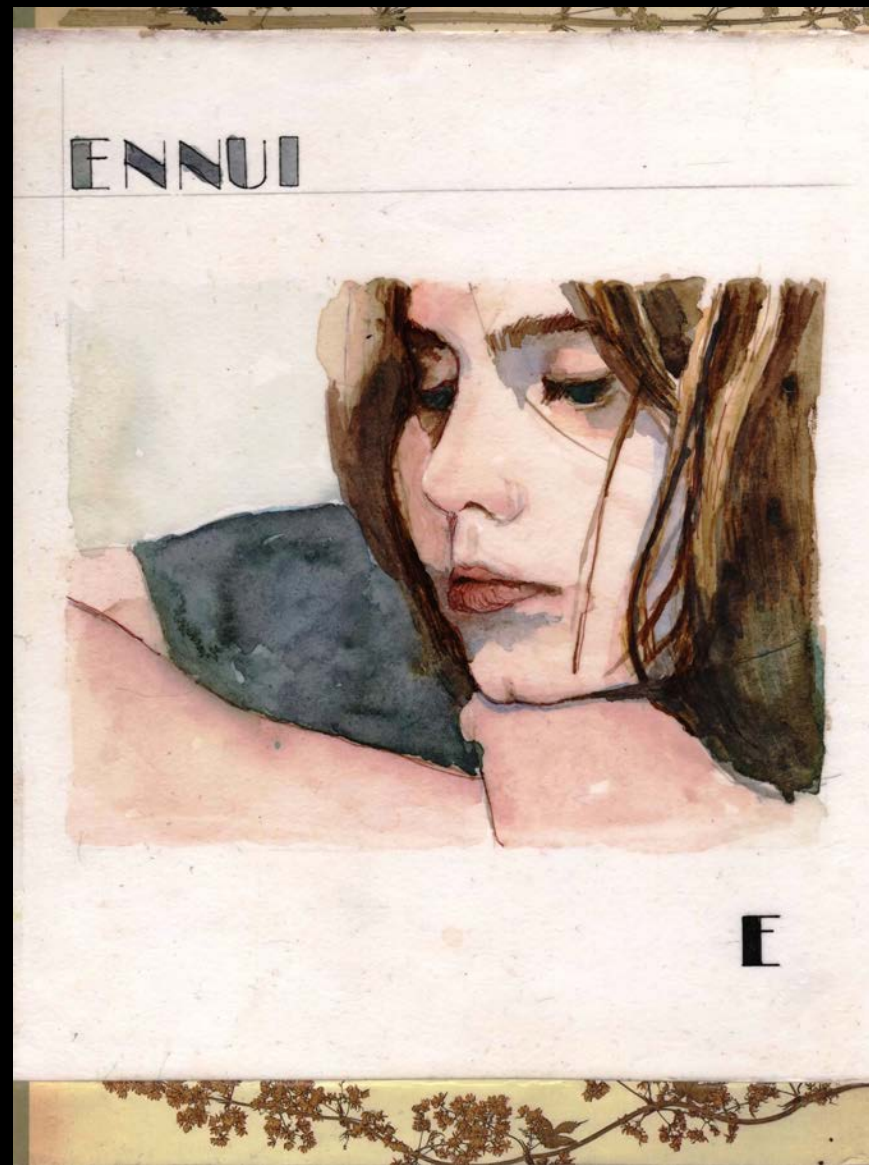
consists of 26 mixed media works on cradled wood panels that investigate the existential anxieties of a child who experiences the world differently. My oldest child's 'existential angst' began at age 3. She worried about war, viruses, injustice, mortality, and religion, issues that are usually seen as adult concerns. I decided to document the kinds of things she *actually* thought about and chose the format, a series of 9 x 12 images representing each letter of the alphabet as a critique of the nostalgic Never, Neverland of media directed towards children and families.

I planned to complete the alphabet in a year. However, as each of my children was eventually diagnosed as a different flavor of neurodivergent, Individualized Education Plan meetings, counselor's appointments, doctor's appointments, testing, the everyday of loving and guiding, the drudgery of cleaning, and maintaining my career as an educator, ate up my time. It took me seven years to finish the series.

Each new piece began with a family discussion about which word best represented the letter at hand. Some words were chosen almost instantly (Plague, Raven, Love), while others took weeks to figure out (Junebug, Thistle, and Yellow Jacket). Once I had the word, I would brainstorm representative images with my children and ex-husband.

I created each panel with mixed water media (watercolor and acrylic), ink, pencil, charcoal, and/or colored pencil on paper that I attached to a cradled board. Many panels contain snippets of past work or ephemera. A few include drawings by my children. The lettering was done with an antique stencil I found at a yard sale in Cambridge, MA. The typeface reminded me of my mother, who was the breadwinner for my family in the 1980's and '90's. She was a graphic artists and often did lettering by hand. The pieces were meant to be exhibited together, but they have occasionally been split up.

The entire series was exhibited in a gallery and an [online literary journal](#) in 2017.



***B IS FOR BIRD INFLUENZA AND E IS FOR ENNUI FROM [THE ANXIOUS CHILD'S ALPHABET](#)***  
MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON WOODEN PANELS, 12 X 9 INCHES, 2012 BOSTON MA





***L IS FOR LOVE AND Q IS FOR QUEST FROM [THE ANXIOUS CHILD'S ALPHABET](#)***  
MIXED MEDIA AND COLLAGE ON WOODEN PANELS, 12 X 9 INCHES, 2012 BOSTON MA

# ***SOCIALLY ENGAGED PRACTICE***





**GROWING NOTES : A COMMUNITY ART EVENT**  
 MAPPING AND JOURNALING ABOUT NATIVE PLANTS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY  
 ORGANIZATIONS IN CARBONDALE IL





**PHOTOS FROM THE GEORGE FLOYD MEMORIAL, 2022**  
PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE GEORGE FLOYD MEMORIAL IN MINNEAPOLIS FOR *THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER OPEN*  
*SCHOOL FOR KINSHIP AND SOCIAL EXCHANGE.*





ON THE BUS TO THE WATER PROTECTORS CENTER



PRAYERS TIED INTO THE TREES AT THE PROTEST SITE



THE GATE TO THE WATER PROTECTORS CENTER

### ***NOTHING GOES AWAY***

ARTICLE AND PHOTOGRAPHS ON THE WELCOME WATER PROTECTORS CENTER IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP, *THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER OPEN SCHOOL FOR KINSHIP AND SOCIAL EXCHANGE*. THE CENTER WAS THE SITE OF A STAND-OFF BETWEEN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISTS (WATER PROTECTORS) AND MULTINATIONAL ENERGY CORPORATION, ENBRIDGE, INC., IN 2021.

# ***GRAPHIC DESIGN***



# PRESERVING PUBLIC SOUNDS



Josh Shepperd is an assistant professor of media studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. Josh designs applied policy and public humanities projects for the Library of Congress, and serves as director of the Radio Preservation Task Force and Sound Submissions Project. He is author of *Shadow of the New Deal: The Victory of Public Broadcasting* (University of Illinois Press), and is the founding Associate Editor of *Resonance: The Journal of Sound and Culture* (University of California Press).



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EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

FEBRUARY 22, 2024  
4:30-5:30 PM



## SIU SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE SCHOOL OF MEDIA ARTS

Current works, performances, and installations of audio art, time based media, and more created by SIU School of Media Art (SoMA) MFA students.

Individuals with disabilities welcome. Please call 618-453-5738 to request accommodations.

JORDAN BARDGETT  
NICK KARPINSKI  
KENDRA KEEFER  
ASHISH KUMAR P.  
NATHANIEL OGDEN  
LEAH SUTTON  
DREW YEPSEN



SIU SCHOOL OF MEDIA ART  
FALL MFA EXHIBITION

## Framing Realities

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2022 4:00-9:00

Southern Illinois University  
Communications Building,  
NORTH LIGHT STUDIO, 1251  
1100 Lincoln Dr.  
Carbondale, IL 62901



*Oh, but if I had the Stars from  
the Darkest Night ...*



Thesis Installation  
& Performance

**Kendra Keefer**

featuring *Siabhon, Elijah,  
and Elliot Keefer-McGee*

Committee Members  
Chair, Heather M. O'Brien - Takahashi  
Member, Jay Needham

6PM-8PM

Friday December 6  
North Light Gallery

SIU COMMUNICATIONS BUILDING  
1100 LINCOLN DR, CARBONDALE, IL 62901

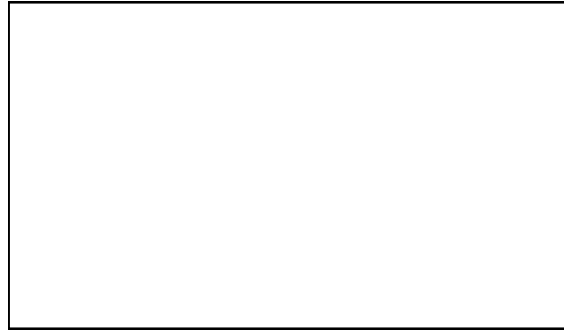


DIGITAL DESIGN: FLYERS

© KENDRA KEEFER

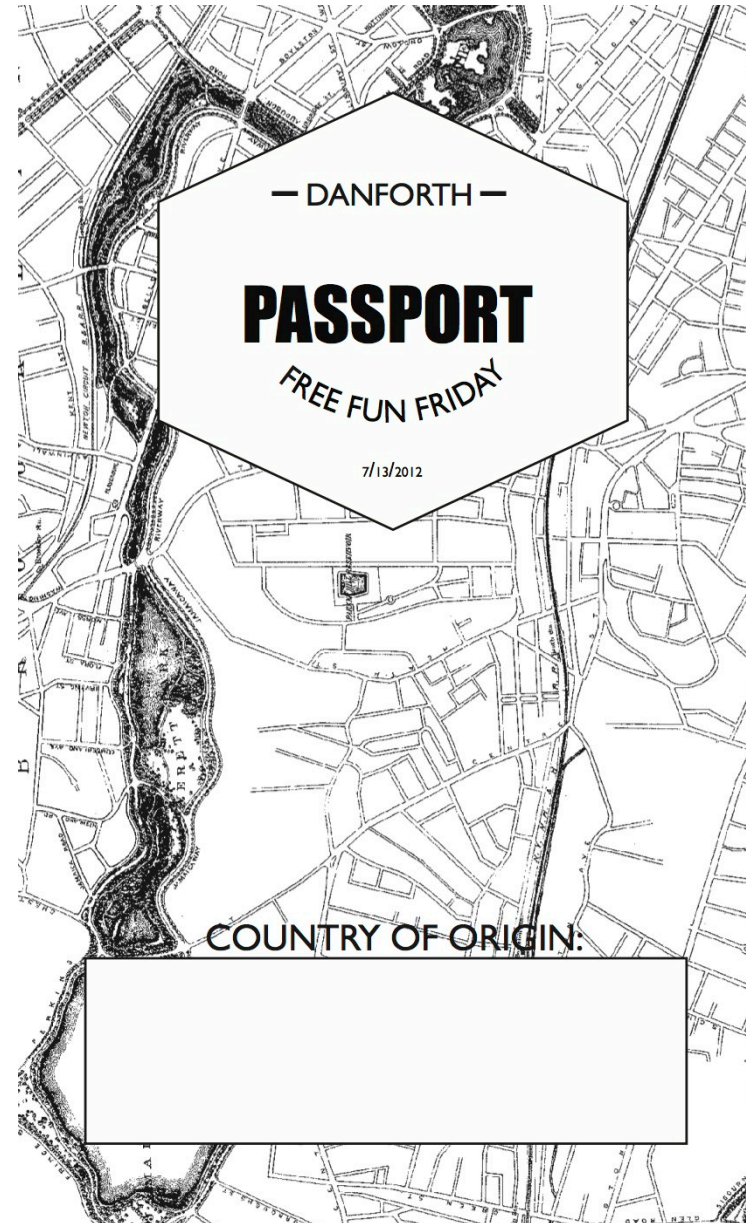


Visit [www.danforthmuseum.org](http://www.danforthmuseum.org) to learn about Danforth family programs and classes.



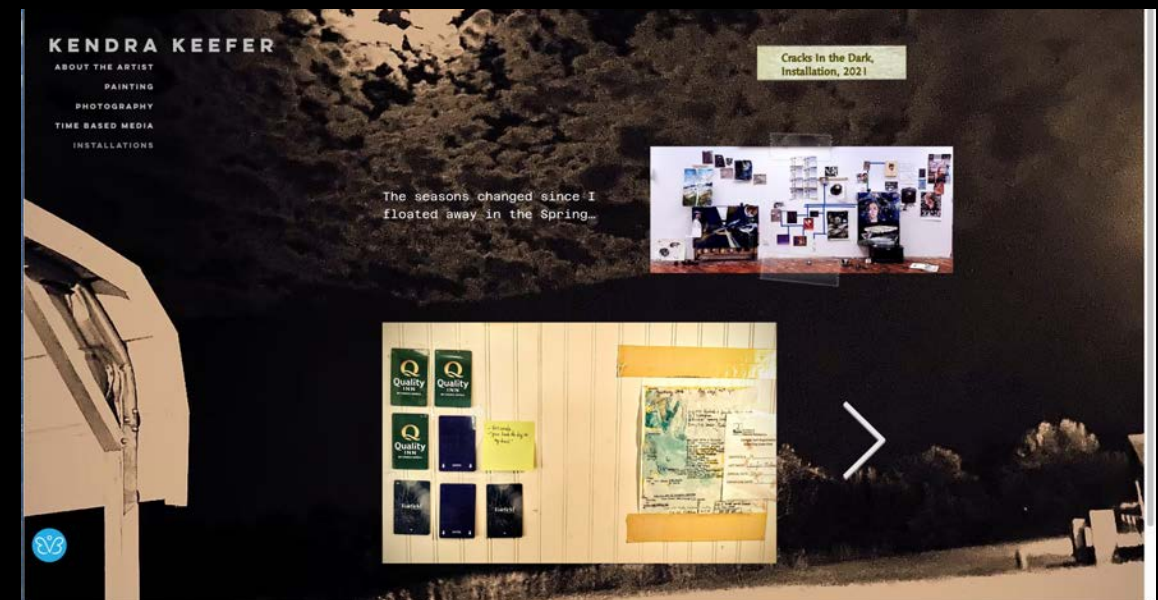
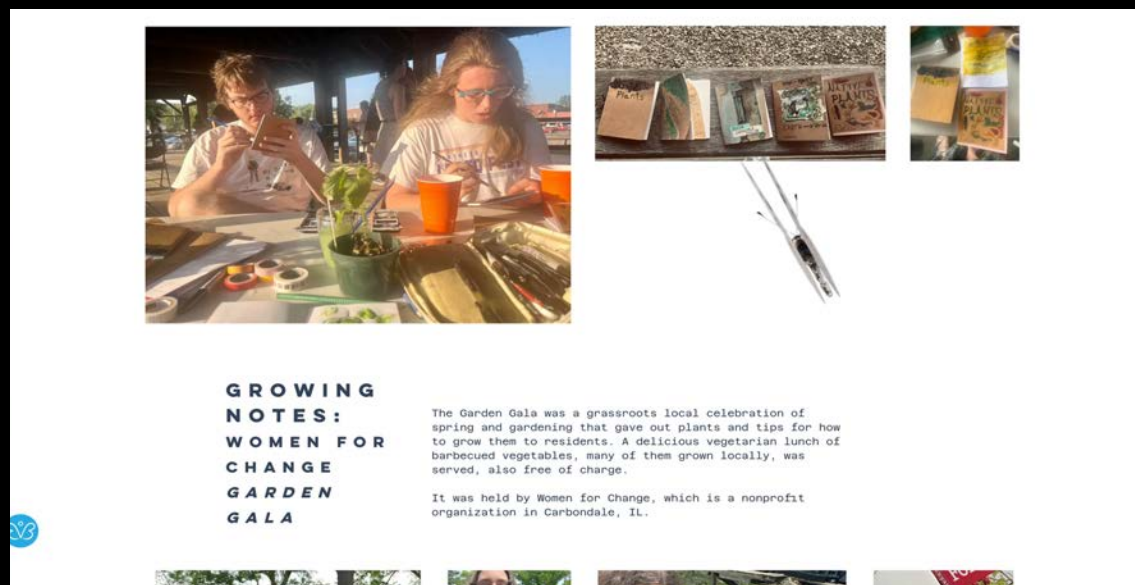
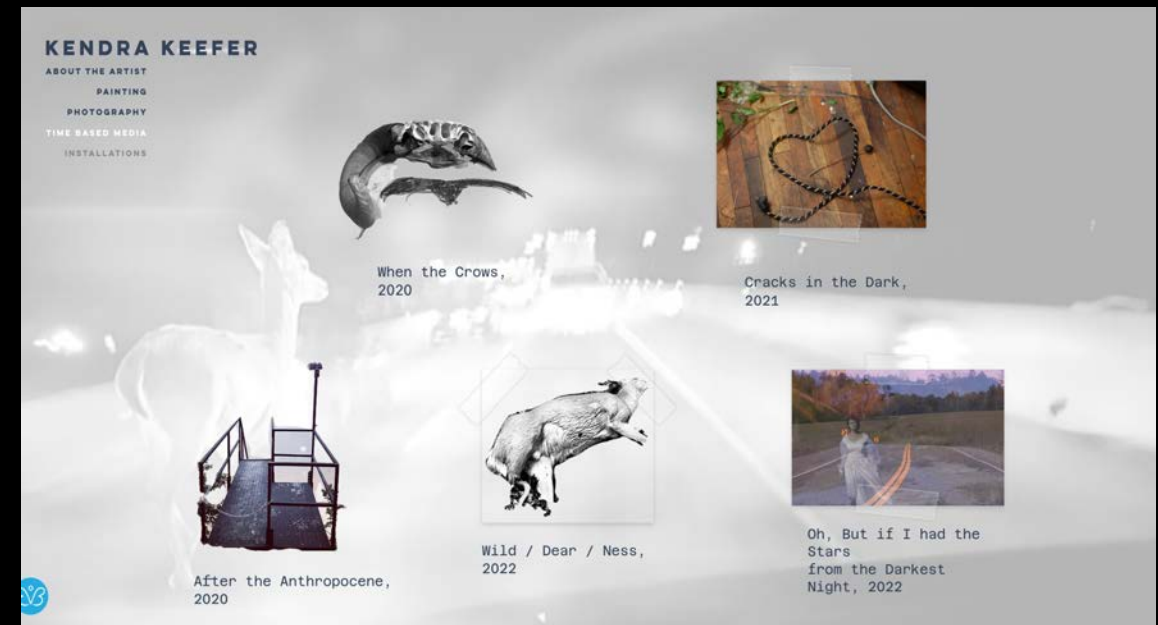
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DIGITAL DESIGN: FAMILY PASSPORT FOR DANFORTH MUSEUM EXHIBIT





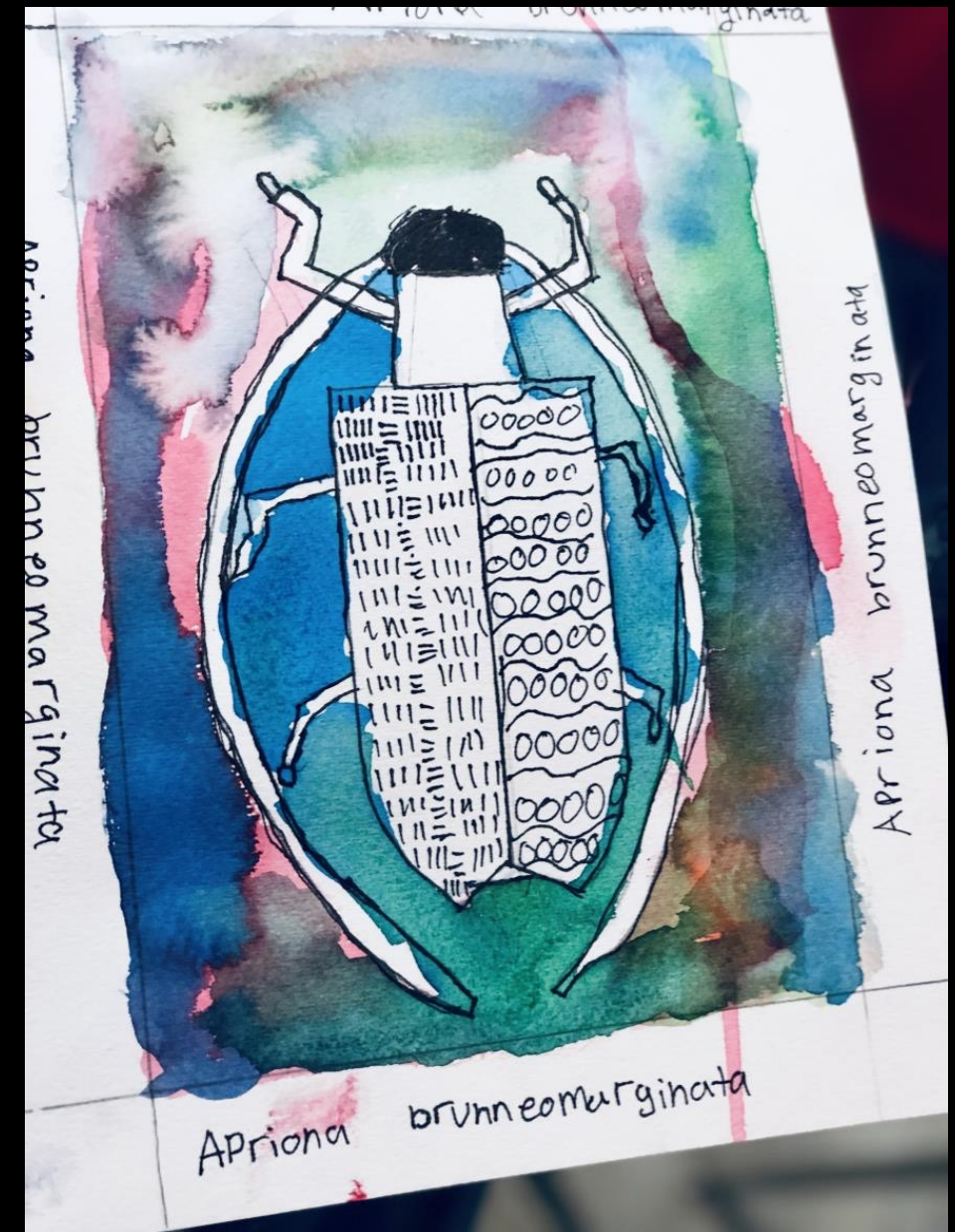
***TEACHING***





UNIVERSITY STUDENT WORK-JOHN A. LOGAN COLLEGE





ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT WORK





ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENT WORK