Memory Made Material: Unearthing the Histories of Monumental Matter
Em Chan, Senior, Art History
Mary Gates Scholar
Mentor: Lydia Heberling, English, University of Washington, Seattle
Mentor: Maria Elena Garcia, Comparative History of Ideas
Mentor: Jos?? Antonio Lucero, International Studies/CHID
Mentor: Adam Warren, History

This narrative web experience invites readers to rethink their own relationships with the material world. The piece frames materials within Western monumental structures — the marble pedestal, the bronze figure, and the “living” rock carving — not as inanimate instruments in colonial systems, but as living victims and actors within those very systems. I examine how these materials are treated within the Western monument-making process through alternate frameworks—namely Neolithic, Queer and Indigenous material theories—in order to expose the violences inherent in Western material theory and practice. This piece, structured in a series of web pages, leads the reader through a research narrative strung together from conceptual images, academic text, and instructions for a tactile activity. By highlighting these non-Western and anti-colonial material lenses, I explore how the critical lenses we choose to apply to examine monumental materials can act to liberate them from the inanimacies inflicted upon them and highlight the resistances they mount against monumentalization, prompting a further “dematerialization” of the Western monument. This liberation will allow us rethink the physical and ideological standards that have been established for monumentality and to ideate alternate material forms for future monuments that do not contain, impose, and idolize such colonial violences.

"The Orient is a Delicate Matter:" The Failure to Sovietize Non-Slavic Peoples in Film
Joshua Swynenburg, Senior, Russian Language, Literature, & Culture, International Studies
Mentor: Sasha Senderovich, Slavic Languages and Literatures

In the 1930s, Soviet ethnographic films often depicted the Sovietization of "the Orient," or the non-Slavic territories of the Soviet Union. The films, serving as propaganda, portrayed "the Orient" as undeveloped and in need of Soviet values. However, by the late 1960s and early 1970s, Soviet motion pictures discarded the propagandistic motive and portrayed the cultural assimilation of these territories satirically. Both the 1930s and 1960s-1970s -though the effects of the films during each era contradict each other- employ museum displays of the peoples of "the Orient" to gauge their assimilation into Soviet society. The latter era satirizes the exhibits of the earlier ethnographic films, ultimately portraying Sovietization as unavailing. I analyze Motyl's White Sun of the Desert (1970), which highlights the liberation of Central Asian women and Gaidai’s Kidnapping, Caucasian Style (1967), a comedy about bride kidnapping in the Caucasus. Specifically, I examine how the two films utilize museum exhibits to comically stage "the Orient’s" apparent need for Sovietization. In order to uncover why the films utilized exhibits, I compare these films to Soviet ethnographic films from the 1920s-1930s, including Vertov’s Three Songs about Lenin (1934) and Kalatozov’s Salt for Svanetia (1930). In my analysis, the films White Sun of the Desert and Kidnapping, Caucasian Style serve as docents for similar exhibits to those in the ethnographic films of the 1930s. Instead of highlighting the achievements of Sovietizing "the Orient," however, the films mock the ethnocentrism of the earlier films by portraying the orientalist tropes as enduring against Soviet cultural influences. By satirizing "the Orient’s" cultural assimilation, the films contend that Sovietization was far from achieved. Ultimately, examining how the films of the 1960s-1970s satirized the attempt to fuse "the Orient" with Soviet
culture prompts further analysis of how the narrative about its achievements contrasts with reality.

Public Works in Progress: The Winter’s Tale Adaptation as Utopian Process in the Context of COVID-19
Sophia L. Carey, Senior, English, Comparative History of Ideas
Mary Gates Scholar, UW Honors Program
Mentor: Scott Magelssen, School of Drama

Public Works is a values-based theater program within the Seattle Repertory Theater that invites individuals from all walks of life to participate annually in a large-scale theater production staged at the Rep. Due to COVID-19, Public Works’ 2021 production of Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale was produced as a film starring over sixty members of the community. My research seeks to introduce Public Works to the field of scholarship on values-based theater by answering the questions: How did this adaptation of The Winter’s Tale underscore challenges facing participants in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic and/or offer new ways of engaging those challenges? How did the process and practice of adapting from the form of theater to that of film impact participants’ ability to build community through participatory art making? How did the rehearsal and production process of The Winter’s Tale evoke affective experiences of utopia? I answer these questions through a method of performance ethnography, which included participating in The Winter’s Tale production process as a participant-observer as well as interviewing members of the Public Works community about their experience of the program. I recorded and qualitatively analyzed the interviews, putting the community’s testimony in conversation with my own experience and existing scholarship. I find that by centering process over product in its theatrical pedagogy and facilitating a shared experience of catharsis parallel to but also separate from the narrative being staged, the Public Works program at Seattle Rep provides community members the tools they need to not only imagine, but create in the theater space new ways of existing in the world and being in community. This project attempts to critically document the ways in which values-based theater can offer tools for community-building and communal growth in times of crisis including and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Flow of Life in Winslow Homer’s Late Marines
Alexander William Betz, Senior, Art History, Biochemistry
UW Honors Program
Mentor: Juliet Sperling, Art History, School of Art + Art History + Design

In Winslow Homer’s 1892 Coast in Winter, a single skeleton tree stands upon a snow-bitten shore amid the crashing waves of the North Atlantic. After a celebrated career painting at the center of the American art scene, Homer would spend the last years of his life on the remote coast of Maine. Captured by this environment, Homer’s paintings from this period became less and less populated with human figures until he removed them from the frame entirely. The paintings that come from this final chapter in Homer’s body of work have come to be known as his late marines and have been hailed by art critics and historians as his zenith. And yet, something about these works has remained elusive. Due to a seeming lack of human representation within the late marines, these paintings have escaped the grasp of description. However, there may be something deeply human about these oceanscapes after all. This essay proposes a new point of entry into Homer’s depiction of the crashing waves of Prouts Neck, Maine through insights offered by the study of Biochemistry, the study of life’s creation from inanimate matter. By tracing how the fledgling field of biochemistry emerged in tandem with Homer’s challenging late work, it contributes to ongoing art historical efforts to situate his art within the scientific developments of the time. Scientists at this moment were beginning to reckon with the understanding that the complex molecules that govern life’s mechanical systems operate according to the very same physical and chemical laws that define the nonliving universe. The natural forces of the North Atlantic and the mortal experience captured by Homer while standing upon its shores ebb and flow into one another as a swirling tide.

Neuroscience of Emotion and Movement
Haley Rundorff, Senior, Biology (Physiology), Dance
UW Honors Program
Mentor: Hannah Wiley, Dance

As a dancer, I know that emotion and movement have a reciprocal relationship. I’ve been dancing for more than half of my life, and while I’ve felt my mood change because of the choreography that I’m performing, I’ve also noticed instances when my feelings alter my movement. However, because the brain is so poorly understood in comparison to most other human organs, especially when it comes to complex subjective experiences such as emotion, the physiological nature of this relationship is very poorly understood. In this project, I will be investigating the reciprocal physiological relationship between movement and emotion in the human body. The first component of this project is primarily focused on writing a literature review. The existing relevant literature has covered so many otherwise disconnected areas of inquiry that tying them together in this foundation is crucial. The second part of the project is an exploration of applying my findings to movement. I will generate a series of improvisational scores, inspired and directed by my literature findings, that will aim to supplement the empirical with embodied research. The experience of dancing and observing these scores will be in dialogue with my scientific research to influence the direction and application of both. I’m expecting to find conscious
and unconscious connections between emotion and memory in the association of bodily movements and states with mental states; however, I’m also expecting it to be difficult for a dancer to identify many of their associations because they are complex, multi-faceted, and not entirely conscious. The findings of this study can be used to make recommendations for future research by identifying areas of unknowns as well as inform how dance performers and teachers approach emotional investment onstage and in the classroom.

More Than Stella and Georgia: Recognizing and Celebrating Women’s Contributions to Lindy Hop
Kristin Henning Vega, Senior, Biology (General)
Mentor: Juliet McMains, Dance
Mentor: Ben White, Dance, Syncopation Foundation

Women’s contributions to the arts, especially the contributions of Black women and other women of color, have often been overlooked in favor of their male contemporaries. As a result of this phenomenon, we find large gaps in the histories of many art forms created by women and communities of color. Lindy hop, a dance that arose in the African American communities of Harlem, New York, exemplifies this phenomenon. Although it started as a social dance, with both men and women contributing to the form, the vast majority of choreographers and famous dancers remembered and taught about today are men. The women we remember today, such as Norma Miller and Sugar Sullivan, contributed just as much to the development of the style as men did but are only talked about because they lived long enough to tell their own stories. Due to the nature of social dance, as well as systemic racism in academia, very little academic writing has been done on the growth and development of lindy hop and the people involved in it. What little research we have focuses primarily on the most privileged members of the movement, which are overwhelmingly men, especially white men. As a result, we are in danger of losing crucial parts of lindy hop history to Eurocentric academic practices and the continued passage of time. The goal of this project is to highlight the contributions of women to lindy hop and vernacular jazz dance as a whole through an analysis of performance video footage and interviews, both written and filmed, with three women: Norma Miller, Sugar Sullivan, and Dawn Hampton. Recognizing these contributions helps to build a body of academic writing and research on lindy hop, as well as shine light on under-recognized artists in danger of being lost to time.