This 2022 M.F.A. thesis exhibition is the culmination of two years of intensive work by M.F.A. candidates in the Division of Art and features works in a wide-ranging variety of styles and mediums.
Being from the border, I found myself within familiar elements such as the arid land of the desert and the open sky. The world that Analise Minjarez creates with clay, drawings, and ceramic objects, transported me to a place of wonder as she explores a natural environment that engages the concept of consciousness. In these works, Minjarez interprets the idea of portals to create connections about our sense of existence. The artworks require quiet contemplation and careful investigation to get a glimpse of this world that she has created for us to move back and forth through these fantastic portals.

As I walked through Minjarez’s studio looking at drawings and objects filled with profound interpretations of nature, life cycles, memory, and the process of healing, I found myself deeply engaged in the installation Time Study 2. Unfired clay takes over a corner of the studio where Minjarez articulates the desert space in a large rectilinear shape with raw and fired clay of two different tones. Adjacent is a window covered in a thin layer of clay that diffuses the light. Thin moonlike shapes are scraped from the glass panels that depending on the time of day, the light passes through to form oval shapes on the wall. This visual poem spoke to me about time and place, taking my thoughts immediately to early dawn in the desert when the sky is barely shifting colors before the world starts to wake up.

Transporting myself through Minjarez portals, I looked up at Untitled (Portal 3) installed on the wall. The curvilinear shape is made with ceramic objects echoing the installation Time Study 2. The fact that I had to look up to see the piece as if looking at the sky made me think about comets, and about how land exists not just under our feet, but above us, outside of this world. As I look back to the drawings, Rain Grid and Hold Minjarez guides us through her portals to discover ideas of movement, earth, and constellations through repeated forms, grids, and openings creating negative space.

Furthermore, it is this repetition of grids that anchors me to discover moments of her life through symbolic imagery. For instance, the abstracted drawing Tolerance for Ambiguity delves into the symbolism of the tomato in healing rituals practiced by her great-grandmother. This makes for a larger conversation about belonging when feeling like we are of two places.

A limited color palette makes Minjarez’s body of work seem quiet, but it is in this quiet space where we can begin to think deeply about our existence. How do we begin to heal in a time of constant anxiety? I’m thinking about being present, honoring the land we share, and the need to look beyond ourselves.

Out of Body Language
Write up for Analise Minjarez  
by Karla Garcia

Ceramic
24" x 84"

Image 3: *Rain Grid and Hold*, 2022
Watercolor and color pencil
16”x20”

Image 4: *Tolerance for Ambiguity*, 2020
Cochineal ink, tomatoes, & color pencil
34”x 60”
Analise Minjarez is an interdisciplinary artist that seeks out the possibilities—and limits—of wonder through nature. Minjarez received her B.F.A. in Fibers from the University of North Texas in 2013. She is currently an M.F.A. 2022 candidate at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, TX.

Minjarez has taught classes at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Oak Cliff Cultural Center, Oil and Cotton, SAY Sí, and the Southwest School of Arts. She has exhibited work at the Xolo Gallery in El Paso, TX, and the Nasher Sculpture Museum in Dallas, TX as part of the 2020 Nasher Windows Series.

Most recently, Minjarez is the second annual Spring Residency Artist at Sweetpass Sculpture Park in Dallas, TX. She will use the park over the course of the six-weeks as a studio and project space, culminating in an open studio at Sweetpass on April 9, 2022.