

Transitions June 2021

Sara DeSmet, Maria Fuster, Alexia Kutzner, Eliza Ann Mitchell, Licia Wise

Alexia Kutzner, MA, MFA, LMFT, ATR-BC

ARTIST STATEMENT

The paintings that were created for the exhibition *Transitions* show the more positive side of transitions. Change to me means to be in some sort of movement and to change or transform from one state of being to another. *Fortune Cookie* becomes a container for a flower, in *The Happy Tree*, balloons grow out of branches. My own transition of moving from Germany to California has been my most life changing event. This is still represented in all my work by including landscapes from both places and continuing this dialogue of belonging or not belonging in either place. There is an awkwardness to transitions that I portray in using whimsical objects and things that do not quite go together.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Alexia Kutzner was born in Germany and moved to Long Beach in 2000. Alexia received her Master's in Fine Arts from California State University Long Beach and her Master's in Marital and Family Therapy from Loyola Marymount University. Alexia is a licensed MFT and Board certified Art Therapist. She is currently in her last year in an art therapy doctorate program at Mount Mary University in Wisconsin.

Knowing how much the creative process has shaped her own life, she tries to reach out to others by giving workshops, lecturing to non-art therapists and keeping connected to colleagues. Women surrealist painters and German fairytales have influenced her own paintings.

Transitions, especially life transitions have always fascinated her. In this series, Alexia explores the transitions through landscapes

and objects that resemble to us different transitions (water, growth, and the seasons).

Licia Wise, MA, LMFT, AT

ARTIST STATEMENT

Transitions are something we can experience on a large scale, through major changes and life events. We can also experience transitions on a smaller scale, from one moment to the next, in shifting thoughts, movements, emotions, and states of being. Transitions can be experienced on a personal level, a collective level, a global level; they may be planned, eagerly anticipated, entirely unexpected, blindsiding....

Large or small, individual or collective, we all experience transitions in our own personal way through our own personal journey.

In making art around this theme, I wanted to explore the process of transitioning as an inner personal experience of shifting, moving, growing, shedding, containing, opening and closing....

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Licia Wise received her Masters in Marital and Family Therapy from Loyola Marymount University, and works as a licensed MFT and Art Therapist. She also recently completed training as a yoga teacher.

Licia enjoys creating and working with her hands in many different crafts and media. Her process of drawing, painting and collaging has a special ability to translate an inner experience into imagery--it feels true and satisfying in a way that trying to put words to an experience can't reach. Both the creative process and the resulting image are their own unique languages, and this is what she loves about creating art and using art with clients as a therapeutic tool.

Eliza Ann Mitchell, LMFT, Clinical Art Therapist

ARTIST STATEMENT

I was initially inspired by the more physical transition from personal space to more public space, imagining a boundary that defines these inner and outer worlds--- What is held inside? When is it let out? What is let in? During this exploration, themes of round shapes emerged—webs, pods, eggs, bowls. Using three-dimensional sculptural material allowed a very tactile experience to explore a range of transitions. At times transitions were subtle like a material that changes form---from old work notes becoming papier mâché, or a surface evolving as layers are added. And, sometimes transitions can feel huge, exciting and totally overwhelming. I value creating as a way to see the felt experience.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Eliza is a licensed MFT and Clinical Art Therapist. She particularly enjoys mixing media, and working with sculptural elements. Eliza is inspired by the process of making, with the many subtle choices that come with creation—what color draws you, what medium, where you want to put a shape, what image feels most potent.

Eliza graduated from Scripps College in Claremont in 2005 with a dual major in French and Dance. She received her Master's degree in 2014 from Loyola Marymount College in Marital and Family Therapy with an emphasis on Art Therapy. Her artwork has been featured at TAG Gallery in Los Angeles, three consecutive department shows at Loyola Marymount University, as well as the 2019 Mirrors of the Mind exhibition in Los Angeles. She also has held monthly art groups for three years where she and others gathered to share their creative work and about their creative process. She is currently working at Coldwater Counseling Center and

continues her own art practice.

Sara DeSmet, MFA, MA, LMFT, ATR

ARTIST STATEMENT

We are often told that life changes dramatically at that single moment of becoming a parent. No worn-out adage or even the soundest advice prepares new parents for the lows and highs of what is to come, something that can only be experienced en vivo. Such advice, solicited or not, often comes from well-meaning family and friends whose own parenting experience may lack clear focus when recalling the toils and trials of these early days. Some presume before becoming a parent that a so-called “motherly instinct” will kick in and guide them yet handling uncertainty and change is part of the journey. What this series does is delve into the fears, worries, challenges and uncertainties that are part and parcel of parenting at these early stages. Change is inevitable, or so the saying goes. For work in this exhibition of *Transitions*, I explore how difficult change can be in adjusting not only to a tiny new being’s entrance into the world but in accepting the change ushered in by a new life stage. A transition to parenthood like all stages of development ushers in change, and that can be hard. Making this transition in a pandemic exacerbates some of the anxieties and isolated moments of this stage. Yet, like all periods of formation and change, valuable discoveries are often made. Emerging on the other side of a transition often brings this into light.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Sara DeSmet is a registered Art Therapist and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and Behavioral Health Clinician for the Orange County Parent Wellness Program. There she utilizes art therapy, narrative therapy and CBT in individual and group therapy. She believes that early intervention and prevention services are vital in treating perinatal mood disorders to help parents transition to their new roles and to ultimately promote bonding and connection between baby and parent.

Sara received her Master’s degree in Marriage and Family Therapy with an Emphasis in Clinical Art Therapy from Loyola Marymount

University in 2012, her Master of Fine Art degree in Studio Art from California State University Long Beach in 2007 and her Bachelor of Art degree in Studio Art and Psychology from St. Olaf College in 2001.

MARIA FUSTER, MA, LMFT, ATR-BC

ARTIST STATEMENT

The process of transition can create chaos and discomfort as it is a period of change in our lives. It is in the in-between state of transition that interests me and defines my work. In the throes of change things reveal themselves, new truths appear, and we can begin again. It allows us to constantly evolve and understand ourselves in the world. As a daughter of immigrant parents, transition has been a constant in my life as I try to find identity within two cultures. Through my art, I am able to visualize, document, share, make meaning, process, reflect, and embrace the multiple selves of being in the “in-between”.

ARTIST BIOGRAPHY

Maria Fuster is a board certified art therapist, licensed marriage and family therapist, and artist. Her work has been a personal journal acting as witness, guide, and healer through the multitudes of transitions life has brought and taken away. Where there were no words, the art gave a voice, created grounding, and helped to mend the wounds on her journey of transformation. As an art therapist, she has also been able to witness the power that art has, to give voice, guide, and heal for those that search for alchemy in their own lives. Maria’s creative process incorporates found objects and the use of mixed media to create layers of texture and meaning. She also repurposes items that are considered trash or useless and uses them in her paintings, collages, installations, and film. Born and raised in Los Angeles, California of Cuban immigrant parents, Maria received her Master’s degree in Marriage and Family Therapy with an emphasis in Clinical Art Therapy from Loyola Marymount University. She is currently a PhD. candidate at Notre Dame de Namur in Belmont, California.