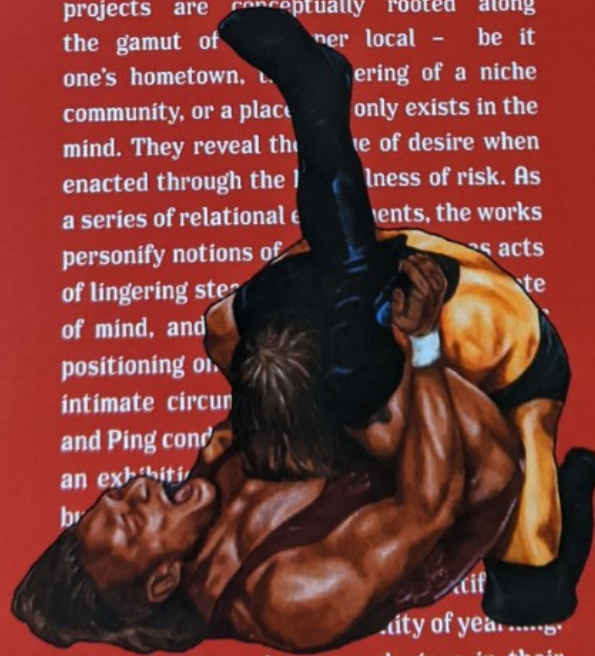


Dwelling

intimacy in three parts

The most vulnerable of gestures is admitting what one wants. The challenge isn't in revealing something momentary - something fleeting or reactive - but in vocalizing the deeper motivations surrounding things we dream of, and may or may not ever attain. The works of artists **Dwayne Bandy**, **Scott McPheeters**, and **Megan Ping** all grapple with these vulnerabilities through humor, tenderness, and moments of existential dread. Their projects are conceptually rooted along the gamut of - whether local - be it one's hometown, the gathering of a niche community, or a place that only exists in the mind. They reveal the nature of desire when enacted through the willingness of risk. As a series of relational elements, the works personify notions of - as acts of lingering steps - of mind, and positioning on intimate circumstances. Bandy and Ping conduct an exhibition by



The included works are audacious in their naming of what they want, but a gentle touch where it concerns the ways they intend to finally possess it. The artists' relationships to intimacy - real, imagined, public, and private - manifest three distinct strategies for shouldering the burdens of our collective desires.

Dwelling

Intimacy in Three Parts

Written by Ashley Stull Meyers

The most vulnerable of gestures is admitting what one wants. The challenge isn't in revealing something momentary – something fleeting or reactive – but in vocalizing the deeper motivations surrounding things we dream of, and may or may not ever attain. The works of artists **Dwayne Bandy**, **Scott McPheeters**, and **Megan Ping** all grapple with these vulnerabilities through humor, tenderness, and moments of existential dread. Their projects are conceptually rooted along the gamut of the hyper local – be it one's hometown, the gathering of a niche community, or a place that only exists in the mind. They reveal the value of desire when enacted through the hopefulness of risk. As a series of relational experiments, the works personify notions of *dwelling* -- some as acts of lingering steadfastly in a particular state of mind, and some with the physicality of positioning oneself within the context of an intimate circumstance. Bandy, McPheeters, and Ping conduct these experiments through an exhibition that unfolds in three distinct but cooperative parts, each expounding upon the last. Their individual efforts culminate in a singular environment, asking a multifaceted set of questions about the utility of yearning. The included works are audacious in their naming of what they want, but a gentle touch where it concerns the ways they intend to finally possess it. The artists' relationships to intimacy – real, imagined, public, and private – manifest three distinct strategies for shouldering the burdens of our collective desires.

Megan Ping is invested – in the body, in its capacity for performance, in all its sexual potential irrespective of gender norms. The objects and environments she builds, and the images she appropriates, are constructed from devotion and appetite. Ping has spent years immersed in the particularities of fandom for World Wrestling Entertainment. The WWE's entertainers are



dazzling not purely for their athleticism, but for the not-so-subtle underbelly of eroticism that colors their dress, choreography, and character development. Their storylines are soap-operatic, fueled by love, loss, revenge and ambition. Each match is filled with intimations of sex. The grunts and contortions are difficult to divorce from the scenes of erotic film, if you let yourself imagine. Ping lets herself imagine through a pointed combination of sweetness, boldness, and feminist rhetoric. Her work seeks to radicalize heterosexual desire through a language that female longing is often shy to employ – through a mode of wanting that complicates and upends the male-gaze. If men are to be allowed images of carnal want, like the tropes of the odalisque or venus, then Ping is allowed the sweat and ornamented briefs of male wrestlers. Her paintings, beginning as portraits that

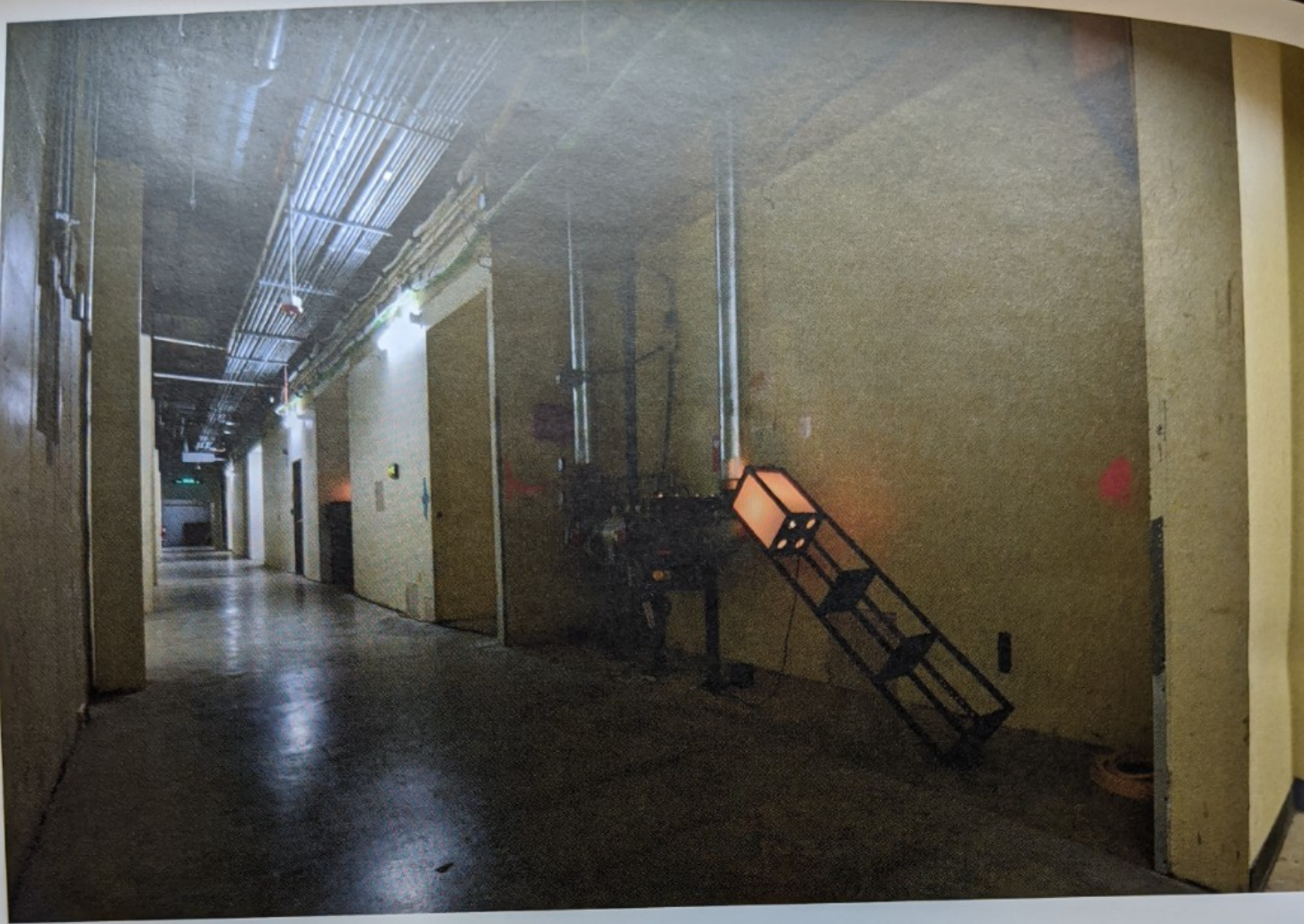
mimic the format of dating app profiles and expand to become nearly life-size cut-outs of the male backside, or meticulously posed snapshots that eroticize athleticism, are studies reminiscent to those of the female body during the heyday of Renaissance masters. They objectify with humor, but also a token of genuine covetousness. When framed within an immersive environment, Ping's works begin to reference scenes more universal to the experiences of puberty and sexual awakening. Her painted wrestlers becomes the stars of a peep-show, rather than the ring. She transports us to a place of teenaged longing from our bedrooms – where love interests we were introduced to via television or the movies live with us through their posters on our ceiling. We domesticate them in our imaginations. We dream of them from heart-shaped beds.

Scott McPheeters is from Biddeford, ME – a mill town that mostly resides in pop-cultural imagination for its “Biddeford Blankets”. The artist's history with this town, and with the way it has shaped his ever developing sense of identity, have found delightful and surprising overlap in his ideating around an unlikely mascot – Ticks. Ticks, which occupy an important place in Maine's natural ecosystem, are bloodsuckers. They're scorned in community imagination for the exaggerated probability

that they carry disease – that the intimacy of allowing one near your bare skin could prove dangerous. Scott, thinking through the political stakes of queerness and society's disallowance of male intimacy, empathizes.

The explorations of two seemingly disparate cultures – the particular homogeneity of southern Maine, and the boundless one of *queerness* – become a cohesive thesis around longing for acceptance. McPheeters' practice grapples with longing and intimacy in many forms. Through his choreographic work situating the body as the most intimate and generous of materials with which to make, he fuels the hope that the body is not simply a container for wanton desires, but a platform for the foundational connections we all find to community, and to ourselves. His work is meditative, vulnerable, improvisational, and in some cases, deeply funny. All told, McPheeters is interested in people. His practice is less about the objects needed for contextual support, and more invested in the relationships within which we can articulate our earnest desires, and the spaces where that can most comfortably take place. He's unafraid to employ a variety of facilitators, be they musicians, fellow movement workers, or insects. His works are anchored in breath – in conversation, in lung-filling silence, in the brevity of life-sustaining pause.





Dwayne Bandy's work has an enduring insistence in its explorations of power and other consciousnesses. The objects he constructs encapsulate a kind of longing that's less emotionally vulnerable than that of his peers, but exposes its stakes through reaching for philosophical ground to uphold the coded desires at play. Bandy's work not only wants, it wants through justification. His recent explorations attend to the hope and possibility of parallel worlds. His practice, manifesting here as sensorial glitches in light and sound, seeks to transport its audience to a metaphysical plane where this reality is not the only one. The artist hopes this audio-visual experience will act as a springboard for re-evaluation – of the space in which one currently stands, and of the ways it can be bettered through an infusion of dreams.

The origin of this particular experiment is an anonymous anecdote found on the internet platform, Reddit. The writer suffers a traumatic experience and, while

temporarily incapacitated, is transported to another plane of consciousness wherein his life is wholly altered. He attains many of the objects of his subconscious longing – family, purpose, stability, support. But this parallel sense of reality is ultimately fractured by his keen observation of uncanny physical objects. The living room lamps, ordinarily innocuous, become keys (or portals) that hint toward what is actually a vast instability between states of consciousness. Bandy's internal mechanism for making is much like these keys. The objects he constructs are symbols for what he wants, and a frustration in feeling his reach is continuously in flux.

The three artists of *Dwelling* know desire is a tool. They each have unique senses of how to leverage it, and how to give it legs to run. Together, the results are a thesis statement on what happens when we are vulnerable in what we want. The intimacies detailed create an instinctual cradle of empathy for the little longings we all recognize.