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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Torpedo Factory Art Center Welcomes the 2021 Cohort to Post-Grad Residency Studio

February 18, 2021 – Alexandria, Va. – For the seventh year, Torpedo Factory Art Center welcomes four emerging artists to participate in the Post-Grad Residency Program: Eliza Clifford, Lindsey Kircher, Daniel Varillas, and Nicole Wandera.

This competitive juried program provides three months of exclusive access to a studio in the Art Center. Therein, artists can create and sell work, interact with the public and connect with other arts professionals. The residency is unique for addressing the critical post-graduation juncture in an artist's career, offering an opportunity for professional development, networking and a chance to define their practice outside of the academic context.

Applications were open to recently graduated students who earned a bachelor's or master's art degree from an accredited university. Submissions were accepted from across the nation, provided artists submit proof of their permanent residence in the area and/or commitment to contributing to the future of the region's arts scene.

"This program is about hosting and supporting rising artists within our creative community," said Brett Johnson, director of Torpedo Factory Art Center. "The residency has many opportunities for innovation and collaboration, between artists and visitors alike. We hope this studio continues to be a place where people exchange perspectives, techniques and ideas."

The 2021 program culminates in a group exhibition in Target Gallery, the Art Center's contemporary exhibition space, December 18, 2021– January 23, 2022.

The residency juror was Gretchen Schermerhorn, artistic director at Pyramid Atlantic Art Center.

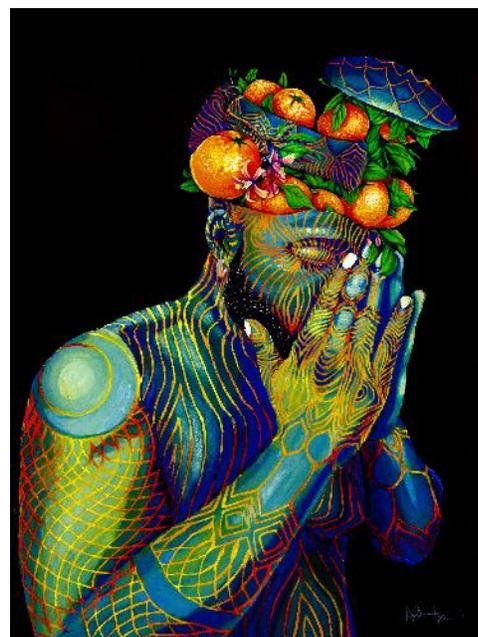
2021 Post-Graduate Residents

Nicole Wandera: January – March
Virginia Commonwealth University, 2019

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Communication Arts

Nicole Wandera believes in activism through creative expression. Originally from Nairobi, Kenya, her African heritage is a vital source of inspiration, and she uses acrylic or digital mediums to capture the richness of her culture. She uses art as catharsis for frustrations she faces as a black woman. Her goal is to create a visual dialogue around social justice, equality, and a future where all prosper regardless of our race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and economic status.

During her residency, Wandera combines her passions for art, technology, and community. She will create a series of works focused on healing the black woman, surviving domestic abuse, and how to use trauma to create beauty. She wants the art to help victims of domestic abuse or any women struggling with their mental health to know that they can be vulnerable and strong. She is developing



Nicole Wandera, *Strange Fruit*, 2019. Gouache, color pencil, ink acrylic on paper.

augmented-reality digital pieces that will correspond with the physical art that can be viewed in a socially distant environment with the same intimacy as a traditional exhibition. There will also be sensory components will be a combination of light and sound to enhance the work's emotional narrative and include the audience in the creative process. A very personal endeavor, this work is a form of therapy and a love letter to her daughter, who deserves to know she is beautiful and loved.

**Lindsey Kircher: April – June
The Pennsylvania State University, 2019
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drawing and Painting**

Lindsey Kircher takes inspiration from wild ancient female archetypes, transforming them fantastical self-portraits. She incorporates intense lighting and luminous figures to capture a mystical and primordial sense of natural wonder. She takes voluptuous Neolithic-esque forms and presents them in context of contemporary themes and issues, as they are extensions of herself. She creates scenes were these figures are simultaneously protected by their lush landscapes and also on the precipice of discovery, awakening to all that they are or who they can become. During her residency, she will build upon this body of work and hopes to engage the public on themes of resilience and transformation.

Kircher graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Schreyer Honors College at the Pennsylvania State University and held residencies at Open Wabi in Fredericktown, Ohio, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts in New Smyrna Beach, Fla. Her work has been highlighted in *White Hot Magazine*, *Art Maze Magazine* and *AucArt* magazine.



Lindsey Kircher, *No Way But Through*, 2020. Oil on Canvas.

**Eliza Clifford: July – September
University of Wisconsin – Madison, 2018
Bachelor of Fine Arts in Graphic Design, Printmaking and
Book Arts with Certificate in Gender and Women's Studies**

Eliza Clifford lives in Bethesda, Md., where she works as a freelance graphic designer and multidisciplinary artist. Her work focuses on ideas surrounding womanhood, mental health, ephemeral identities, and evolving social/political environments. Her goal is to express a greater desire for feminist ideals to be realized through the liberation of identity. She utilizes a variety of mediums, including intaglio, serigraphy, book arts, comics, and textiles. She is currently an apprentice at the Pyramid Atlantic Art Center and a bookbinding associate at Distinctive Bookbinding and Leather Designs. She also owns a small Etsy shop, Lavender Lizard Press, and sells a variety of small screen prints, etchings, and other hand-made goods.

Clifford has been focusing on projects about mental health and the lack of individual freedom in a socially toxic society. Her time at the Art Center will allow her to expand the core themes into new forms and vehicles. For example, she will explore new ways to engage the viewer by creating relatable narratives and displaying them thru interactive mediums, including playful bookbinding, comics and zines, and even designing board games.

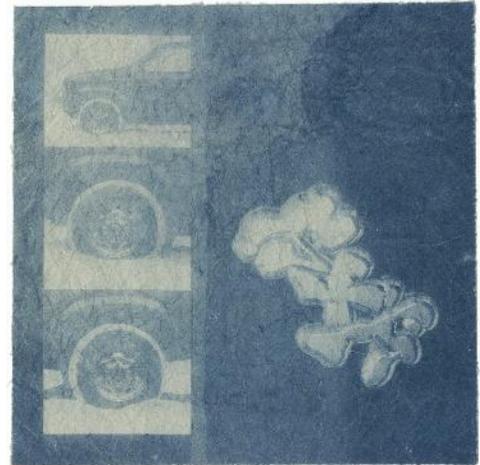


Eliza Clifford, *Picnic Girls*, 2020. Screenprinting with flocking.

**Daniel Varillas: October – December
Maryland Institute College of Art, 2019
Master's of Fine Arts in Graphic Design**

Daniel Varillas is a multidisciplinary artist and designer from Rockville, Md. As a first-generation Salvadoran-American, his work explores ideas of culture, identity, memory, spirituality, and family history. His work confronts ideas of power structures, labor and oppression, and simultaneously celebrates and elevates Latin-American voices and experiences. He works across media in printmaking, fiber arts, and graphic design. During his residency, he will continue to explore ideas of personal histories and diasporic memory while experimenting with digital and traditional forms of making that reference Latin-American history.

In his professional design practice, Varillas is focused on brand identity design for the art and cultural sectors, and he is currently with the internationally recognized design studio, Pentagram. He has worked on identity projects for clients including American Express, Nike, the National Landing BID, Under Armour, and Studio Theatre.



Daniel Varillas, *Recollection of Cut Grass*, 2020.
Cyanotype on paper made from father's work uniform.

About Torpedo Factory Art Center

Founded in 1974 in an old munitions plant, Torpedo Factory Art Center is home to the nation's largest number of publicly accessible working artist studios under one roof. The City of Alexandria manages Torpedo Factory Art Center through the Department of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities as part of the [Office of the Arts](#)' family of programs and facilities. Just south of Washington, D.C., Torpedo Factory Art Center overlooks the Potomac River in the Old Town section of Alexandria, Va. Each year, more than a half million national and international visitors meet and interact with more than 160 resident artists in 82 studios and seven galleries. For more information, visit torpedofactory.org or follow the Art Center on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Pinterest](#) via @torpedofactory.

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High Resolution Images and Interviews Available

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