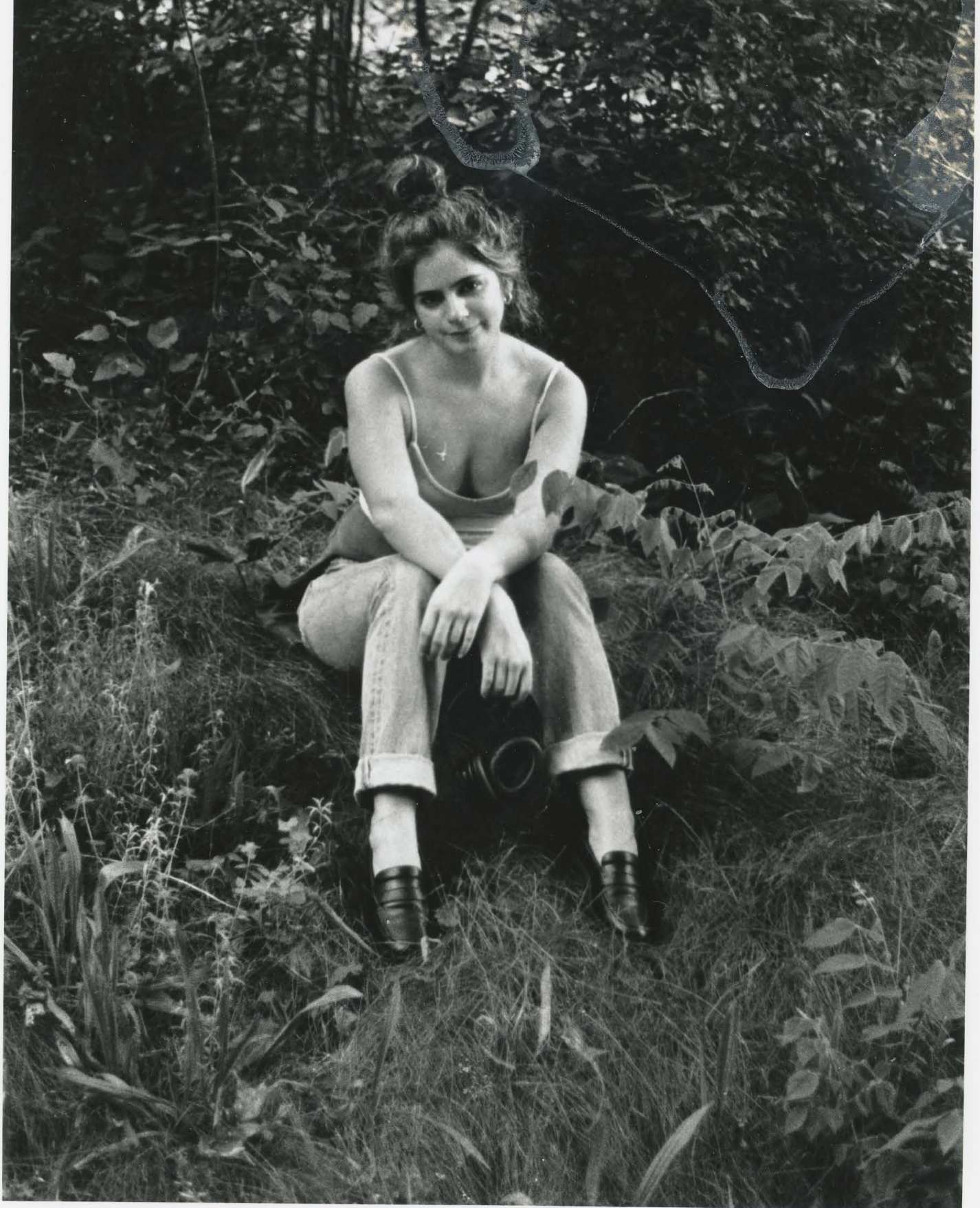
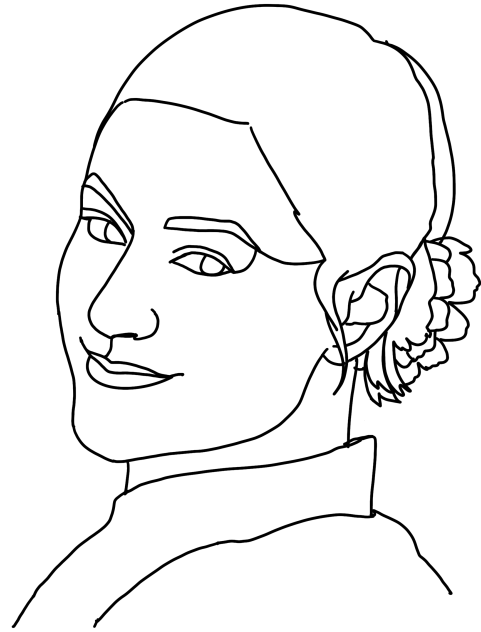


PENTIMENTO





The installation spread out upright birch branches to mimic aspens, mounted lighting gels to recreate the yellow effect of the forest's canopy in the fall, and kept windows open to let in a breeze. The sound that fills the space consists of field recordings from a real aspen grove, letting visitors hear sounds of birds, leaves, and wind. The field recordings mix with vibrations that come from bass shakers within the tree branches. The Witches used these elements to achieve their goal of "making sound spaces that make people think and meditate about things deeply," Funkhouser explained. It is a pleasant space, but their work is still able to remind us of how powerful nature is and how deeply connected it is to our existence. Our lives and nature are "one thing," Funkhouser shared, "that scary stuff is inside us, as well as the nice stuff."

Another recent installation, titled *Aftermath*, relates to the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Half of Funkhouser's family was living in Puerto Rico at the time of the storm, and thus its impact felt far more personal than any set of statistics. The installation included a table with four chairs where people can sit and hang out while surrounded by the detailed sound art that pervades the space. The quadraphonic sound piece has four speakers in each corner following the four cardinal directions, with each speaker playing a different sound simultaneously. A number of relevant sounds are incorporated into the experience, ranging from a recording of Funkhouser herself trying to radio her uncle to the sounds of airplanes flying to San Juan. She also used a digital programming language, Max, to create sounds based on data sets from free online data. For instance, she used the report from the Harvard dataverse about Puerto Rican students who lost all their school's labs and resources as a result of

the storm, and using Max she was able to synthesize the data into a score that would play in the exhibit. In addition, she included the sounds of tree frogs – "the constant lullaby of Puerto Rico," as Funkhouser described them – but she distorted the once calming sounds as a reflection of the distress the storm brought about.

Her installations also explore the environment of a confined space and how people react to the spaces they enter, as seen in her collaborative project *delay/decay/evade/endure*. This project considers how a location's environment can be manipulated and used to one's creative advantage. Exhibited in the San Francisco Art Institute's Diego Rivera gallery, Funkhouser made use of this "art temple," as she called it, which features high ceilings and beautiful lighting thanks to an oculus that lets in light across the floor and walls. Because this was not a space built for sound art, sound reverberates quite loudly, making it an uncomfortable space for those sensitive to noise. With this in mind, Funkhouser considered the space and sculpted sounds and structures that would play with the natural sound of the gallery. The audio program has four channels all playing the same sound. On the gallery's wall, Funkhouser mounted a steel five foot wide parabolic dish that she welded and assembled herself. The sounds were sent into the dish, which was able to amplify very tiny noises to speaking level. The noises projected in the space were meant to be very calming, in turn creating an incredibly peaceful environment. Funkhouser explained how remarkable the effect was: people who entered the gallery didn't need to be told to remain quiet – they just did. "People came in there to chill out," she noted – students even used the space to study in silence.

"ART CAN CREATE ITS OWN ENVIRONMENT"

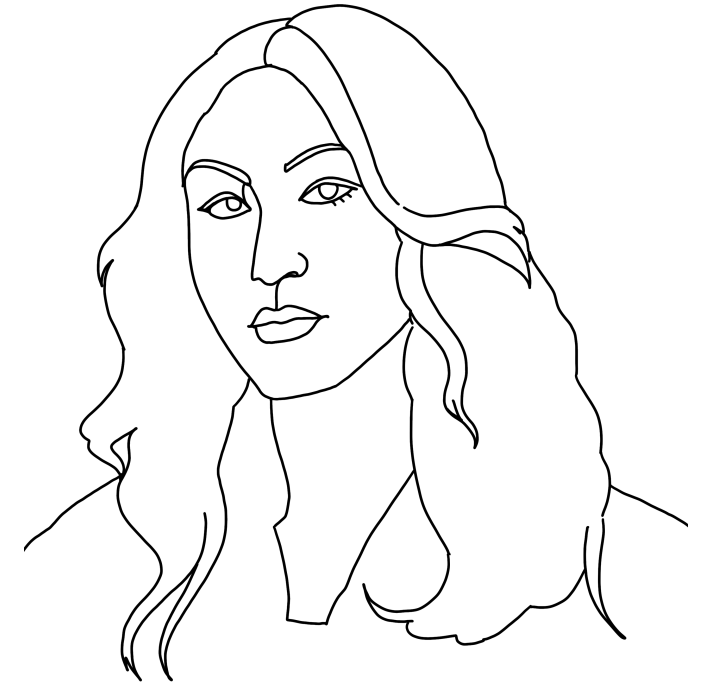
Funkhouser's work is powerful in its sheer size, thoughtful planning, and the way all its elements speak to their installations' wider theme. Certainly, these elements contribute to the environment fabricated by Funkhouser herself, and that is just what she aims to do. "Art can create its own environment," she explained to me, and this allows artists to transfer feelings and ideas to viewers that words can't communicate in the same universal way. These intentionally constructed environments carry this unique quality that enables it to transmit a specific, shared bodily experience to people of all backgrounds. Not only does the work of Giuliana Funkhouser comment on the natural and social environments of today's world, but it harnesses this power to construct spaces that reach us in such a way that only art can. •

Art in the Environment of Capitalism: An Interview with Matilda Berke '21

By Mabel Zawacki '24

The liberal arts experience depends on the principles of interdisciplinarity and diverse class schedules. Many students explore those ideals at Wellesley, yet many also pursue academic disciplines they are comfortable with. Matilda Berke '21 started taking art history classes during her last years at Wellesley while fulfilling majors in English and International Relations Economics. Although Berke had been writing poetry for many years, taking art history courses taught her how to turn a critical eye towards fine art. During her senior year, Berke was a curatorial intern at the Davis Museum. At the Davis Museum, she helped put together different narratives and create a story from the art, which taught her how to look at pieces in a cumulative context rather than individually. Today, she works at Goldman Sachs, where she applies those skills of narrative building and stories to her clients. Her goal is to someday get a master's degree in art history and work in a gallery or auction house where she can meld her two interests: economics and art.

Through her time taking classes through the Art History department at Wellesley, Berke learned how to view art history as a dynamic study that emphasizes theory and the ideas behind each piece: "[They are] teaching you not just how to look at art, write about art, and talk about art, but how to think about not only art, but the construction of something." Culture and art influence each other – that, to Berke, is as inherent in the study of art history as art history



itself. The Art History department taught the metatheory of what it means to create art and the connections between theory, art, writing, and philosophy.

"ART EXISTS IN AN ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT WITH DEBATES OVER WHERE THE ART GOES AND WHO GETS ACCESS TO IT"

When asked about how she sees art in the environment, Berke said that she sees it everyday in the lobby of her building with the Julie Mehretu 'Mural.' The immediate thought that came to her mind upon seeing it was the fraught relationship between capital and art and the historical relationships between large institutions and funding. Art exists in an economic environment with debates over where the art goes and who gets access to it. This dynamic posits art as something that one can't depend on – it assumes one can't be an artist without a certain form of income or privilege, an idea which is inherently flawed. It also brings in the ethical question of the connection between funding creativity and the funding of creativity,

and whether conflict of interest negates any sort of political power the art has. “[How] you can create a radical symbol, but society tends to consume and subsume radical symbols and turn them into consumerist symbols.” How can the public turn a piece of art criticizing consumerist culture into a capitalist venture (as Berke referenced, Barbara Kruger and her work, for example)? While capitalism can

“HOW CAN YOU BE FUNDED BY OR SUPPORTED BY INSTITUTIONS AND CRITIQUE THEM AT THE SAME TIME?”

publicize the work and ideas does it diminish the validity of those ideas. This conundrum is centered in a crucial question: how can you be funded by or supported by institutions and critique them at the same time?

The issue of economic interest is important; the concept of accessibility and class privilege does still have an impact. One way in which this is an issue is in the funding of internships. There have been many improvements to this, Berke mentioned, but it does create a divide between who can work in the museum industry and who can't. Another concern Berke had was the pigeonholing of certain ethnic groups into certain focuses. As someone who is half-Chinese, Berke doesn't want to be pigeonholed into Asian art because of her identity. As museums get more specific and devote more energy to parts of the collections that aren't the western canon, there is a worry that people from marginalized communities are going to be stuck in certain positions or roles. Berke made sure to emphasize that we have to recognize diversity and what we consider material art and culture, and what we consider what is worth listening to. When we start to deconstruct what we consider art and why we consider it art, and the context in which certain pieces are created, we start to up against questions of who holds power. “What power lies behind this particular piece of art, what institutionally does it mean?”

Another concept that relates to the ideas of accessibility and diversity is that of repatriation. According to Berke, repatriation is not as simple as simply returning objects. Part

of the imperialist push was that many colonized countries' infrastructures had been destroyed. Repatriation comes with the responsibility to rebuild that infrastructure while not making it a neo-imperialist exercise. It is almost an instance of investment and reparations. One way to maintain the educational factors of different objects in museums across the world while repatriating them is through technology. Berke mentioned specifically the use of virtual reality simulations to recreate that specific educational experience. Technology gives people the opportunity to be innovative with maintaining educational and ethical integrities while fulfilling the purpose of returning pieces to where they belong. It creates an experience that maintains educational value while not requiring the presence of physical objects, creating the capability for repatriation. For all of this to work, however, the political and economic questions have to be resolved before anything can begin.

All of these thoughts coalesce into the questions: why is art important? Why is any of this worth it? “Learning about art and learning how to appreciate art – which can mean different things for different people – [is] the closest thing people can get to immortality, to the sublime, to touching something that is eternal and universal.” As Berke said, there is something about art that captures uniquely

“ART TEACHES YOU HOW TO UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN REACTION”

universal human experiences; it transcends languages and cultures and all of the artificial boundaries drawn by society. There is something deep and true about art that you don't need an education to appreciate; you don't need an education to feel it. Art teaches you how to understand your own reaction, it teaches you how to understand why something is creating that reaction, and it teaches you to understand the intricacies and nuances of what exactly it is doing to you and what it means. It is one of the only ways you can truly understand another person's perspective; to see the world through another person's eyes. The more we can access those other perspectives, the more empathy you can create within yourself. The world needs more of that. •

ZINES

The *Pentimento* team is excited to announce that we are establishing a new space on the magazine's website dedicated to featuring & publishing Wellesley student-made zines. Since as early as the 1930s, zines have gained popularity as a form of self expression and political critique. Their self-published format ensures zines are free from censorship and allows their creators to prioritize community expression over commercial control. Zines have long been utilized as a means of distributing information in the face of censorship and a form of expression used to bring together communities. We want to recognize and acknowledge that they have become an important aspect of social and artistic culture on campus, an aspect that is emblematic of a communal passion for informing and uplifting our sibs. We hope to preserve & continue this history of community, art, and passion. As the art publication on campus, *Pentimento* seeks to provide a platform for people to share their work and speak their minds. By creating a space which centers zines as a creative outlet for students, we want to emphasize their political, artistic, and social importance, both throughout history and on Wellesley's campus. The zine page on the website will represent a continued effort to platform student voices, and as such will accept rolling submissions of zines created and published by students.

