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gute von druff

18/11

shimmy-shimmy **plop-plop**

by

Jamie-Lee Girodat

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Printmaking

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Jamie-Lee Girodat

shimmy-shimmy plop-plop

As an isolated child, I plucked away at the new hair sprouting from my armpit, desperately clinging to my youth. I thought about the aches and pains my parents complained of and pondered; will I still swing on the monkey bars when I am their age? Ironically, I sat plump on the bench every recess, scanning the jungle gym, trying to fathom the concept of being an adult, let alone the possibility of having children of my own. As I squeezed the oil off my face and caressed the stretch marks on my inner thighs, I feared the beginning of many awkward and unnerving stages, wondering if I could get ahead of my ever-transforming body.



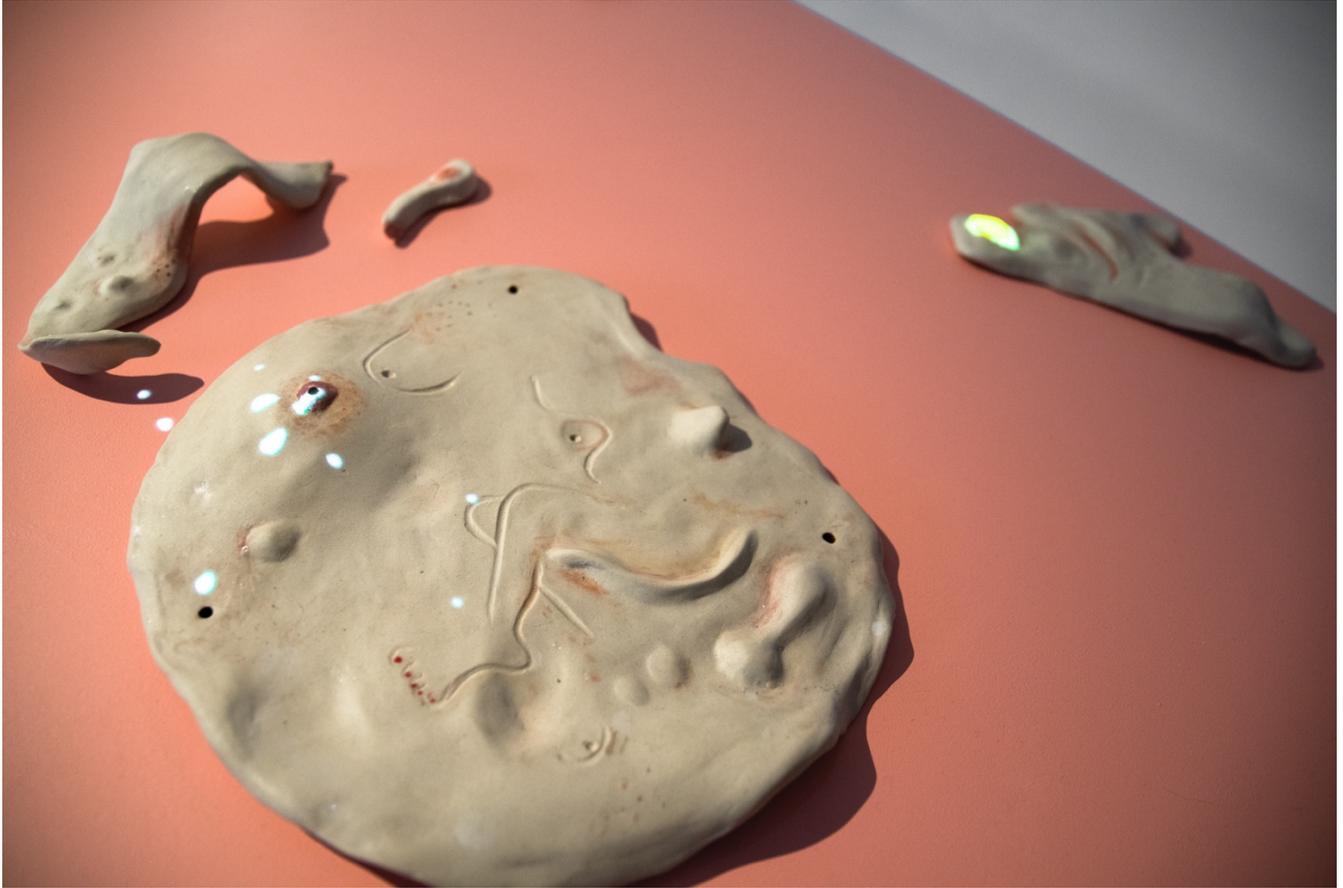
Girodat_001 *hereditary fireworks* 2021, *playground tears* 2019 and *count to ten* 2021 installation view

shimmy-shimmy-plop-plop is an exhibition longing for bodies free from disease and uncertainty. As I immerse the viewer in milky fireworks, sprouted hair, creases, and moles, I create a visual language of the infected and in-between aspects of the body. By embracing fragmented and exaggerated figures, I maneuver narratives informed by the potential relief of biomedical innovations in reproductive and genetic technologies. Yet, navigating the hype, benefits, and ethical impacts of these developments can be challenging. For many, they are out of reach. With the onset of the pandemic, concerns relating to access and education regarding our health have become even more paramount as the fear of disease cultivated. By creating works informed by theories of the carnivalesque and the abject, I render figures that are constantly evolving to comprehend biomedical information, disturbing the confines of the body.

For Mikhail Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World*, the carnivalesque acts as a spectacle and invites universal participation through humor to liberate established order. During the festival, disparities in status and wealth are turned inside-out, suspending prohibitions and allowing change and regeneration. As a celebration, it seeks expression of lively and undefined forms with ambivalent laughter. Through spirited body-sparklers and thriving, wiggling butts, my work strives to be a part of the carnival, attempting to escape the usual ways of life and reaching for a moment of utopia, equity, and abundance.¹

At the entrance of *shimmy-shimmy plop-plop*, the viewer is greeted with *hereditary fireworks*, a whimsical display of ceramic sculptures activated by vibrant pink, teal, and yellow projected animation. As bunions throb, an ear drips radiant fluid and surrounding zits pop off like fireworks. By embracing bright colours and textures, the work presents an artificial illusion, questioning the value of information obtained from 23andMe genetic testing. Each sculpture references the predictions of developing bunions, wet earwax, or any of the three BRCA mutations that can cause breast cancer. Yet, with over one thousand possible variants of the BRCA gene, how pertinent are the results? Presented in an array of hand-built, playful forms, *hereditary fireworks* alludes to the carnivalesque, portraying an adolescent understanding of genetics and acts as a starting point for the exhibition.

¹ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 7-11.



Girodat_002 *hereditary fireworks: BRCA 1 or BRCA 2* 2021 ceramics and projected animation 9 x 10"



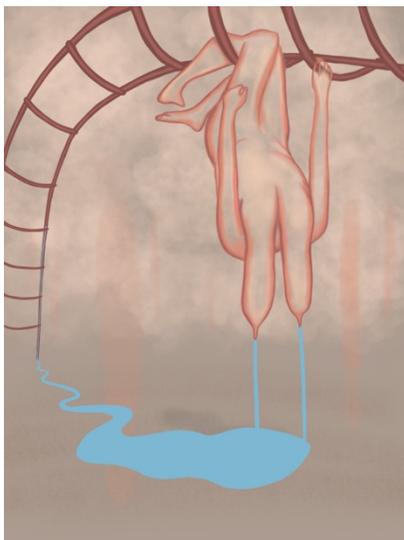
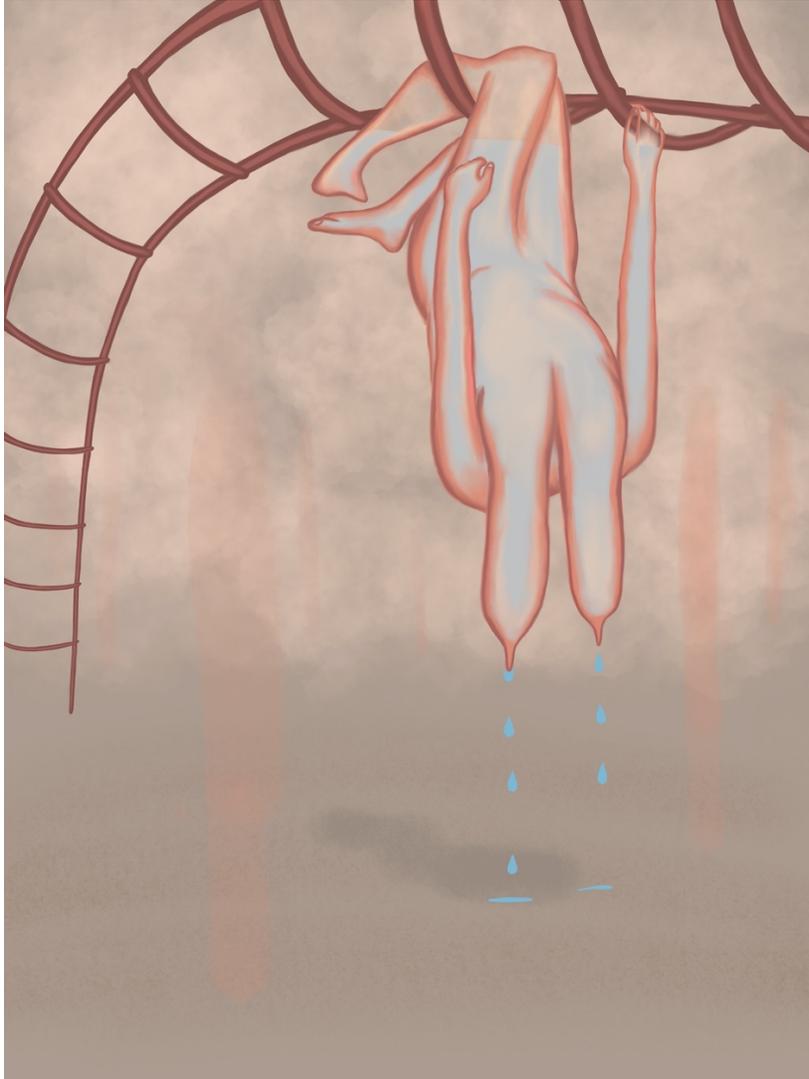
Girodat_003 *hereditary fireworks: BRCA 1 or BRCA 2, throbbing bunions, 23andMe told me my ear wax is wet* 2021 ceramics and projected animation dimensions variable

Bakhtin's carnivalesque concept relies on images of the 'grotesque' body, which is never complete and seeks to go beyond itself to create a new body. As a hyperbole, it is an impossible extension to develop unbelievable dimensions and characters.² It challenges established realities to construct new, equivocal ones through the combination of unrelated materials and subjects. As a result, it develops absurdities that nurture feelings of anxiety and vexation while at the same time paving paths for imagination and fearlessness.

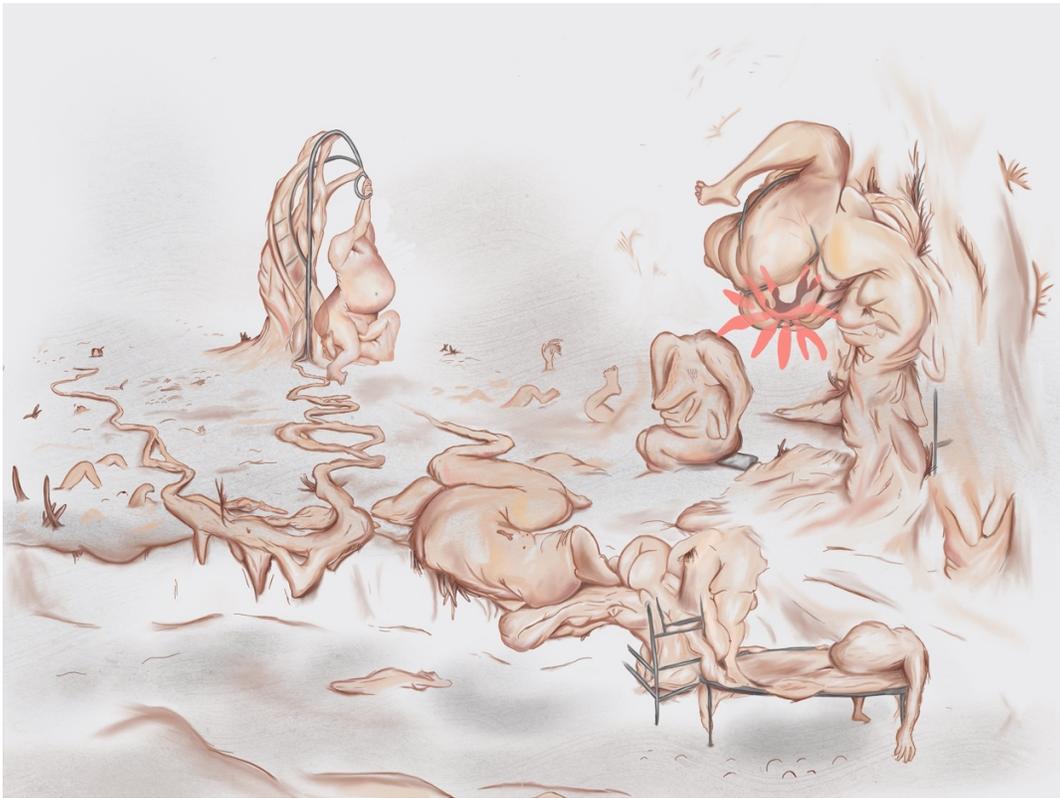
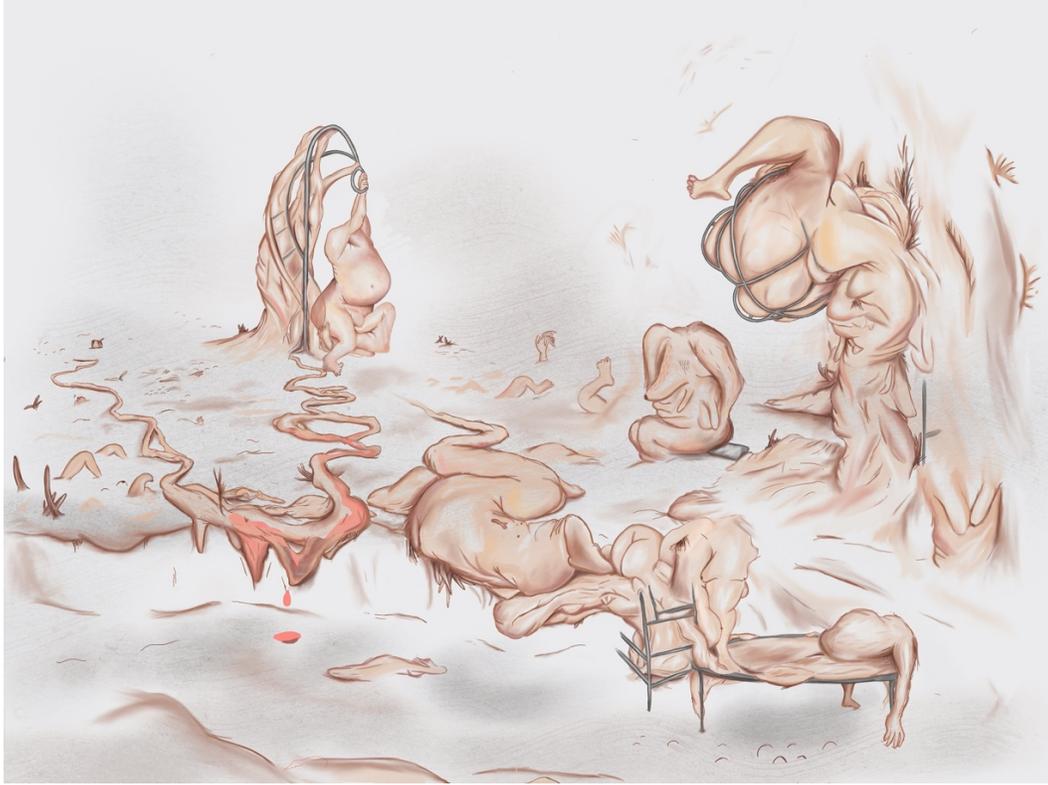
I nod to these notions of the grotesque by creating environments populated by enigmatic forms with preposterous proportions that expand and unfold to create outlandish scenarios. In *playground tears*, breasts stretch to extreme lengths, accentuated by gravity and time. In a looping animation, the fluid leaks, then sucked up by the monkey bars and refills the emptied figure. Repetition references interchanging generations, considering how our body evolves, but also echoes the past. *count to ten* is an extension of this work. Pink fluid moves through a playground of bodies within different periods of development, fluctuating between being a child or having children. As it travels through various life stages and modes of contemplation, it considers pregnancy's effects on the body. As the animation replays, it "reflects a phenomenon in transformation, and as yet unfinished metamorphosis, of death and birth, growth and becoming" finding "both poles of transformation, the old and the new, the dying and the procreating, the beginning and the end of the metamorphosis."³ The pulsating, ultrasound audio of an empty uterus vibrates in sync with the movements, prompting the limits of biological clocks. Yet, the work can dismantle the pressures of time as it rejuvenates, but also acts as a constant reminder of a looming deadline.

² Ibid., 307-308.

³ Ibid., 24.



Girodat_004
playground tears (stills)
2019
animation
dimensions variable



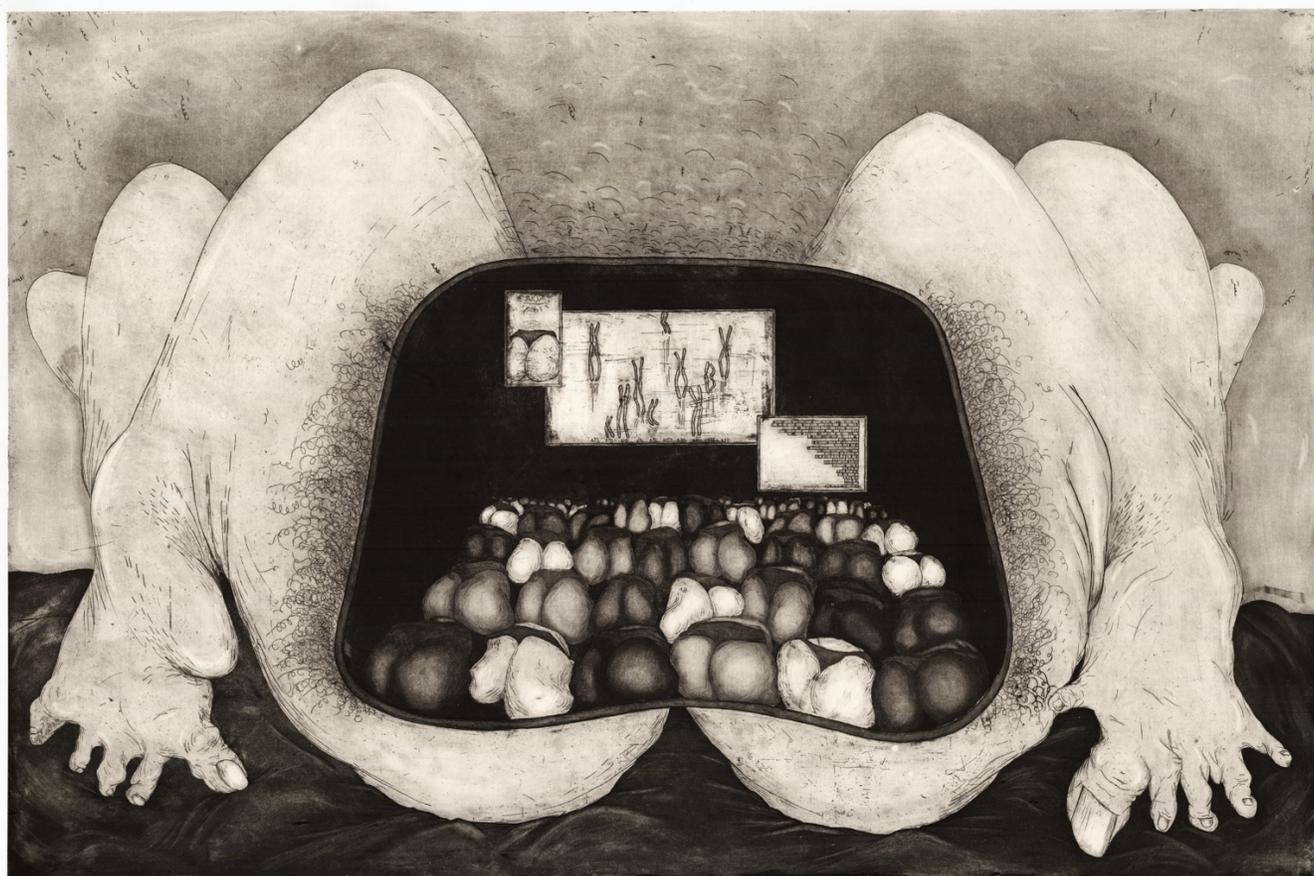
Girodat_005 *count to ten* (stills) 2021 animation dimensions variable

In *my IUD underground*, multiple figures curl in on themselves, stretching their arms to ridiculous lengths. They cram inside, extending their reach for the I.U.D. strings, emphasizing the invasive scope of various opinions regarding reproductive health, along with the implantation and removal process itself. At the same time, several pockets of wombs are scattered throughout the ground, each housing chromosomes and bums, causing the earth to become a nest of reproductive possibilities waiting to be surfaced. As an etching, the scratchy, excessive build of marks and detail heightens the complexity of the dense history of debates regarding advancements in reproductive health. Subsequently, the viewer is beckoned to look closer and question their ideas from different perspectives.



Girodat_006 *my I.U.D underground* 2021 etching, chine collé 36 x 24"

In *genetic bum draft*, a group of bottoms gather to be selected for birth— each with a different life span pre-determined by their chosen genetic traits. The draft sets the stage as a theatrical competition. With more money to spend the odds of being successfully selected for a long life increase. In this way, I echo the desire to control illness and age through advancements such as genetic engineering; but question how wealth and class might influence access to technologies that could extend and create new life.



Girodat_007 *genetic bum draft* 2021 etching, chine collé 36 x 24"



Girodat_008 *genetic bum draft* 2021, *my results back* 2021, *I'd party if I could* 2021, *my I.U.D. underground* 2021, *imbalance theory* 2020, *when they cut open the wrong foot* 2021 installation view

I investigate concerns and debates in using innovative medical applications by developing imagery informed by various sources, including news articles, journal publications, forums and podcasts. By referencing commonplace, exposed origins of information, I mirror the anxiety of understanding health risks and possibilities. Sites like Web M.D., Wikipedia and Reddit have made us more prone to self-diagnosis. Genetic testing applications such as 23andMe make us aware of predispositions, while media outlets announce studies that claim to prevent disparate illnesses, but how does this information serve us? How much is accurate? What is attainable?

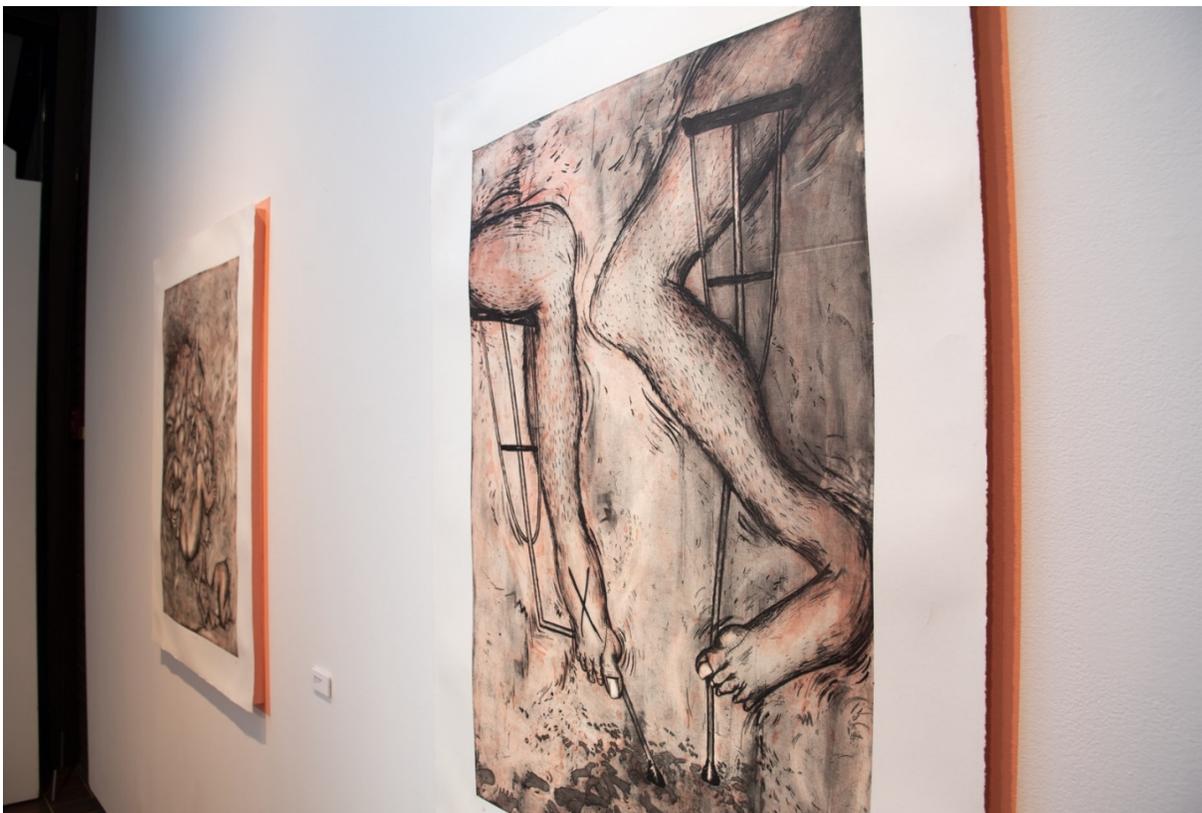
Drawing from Bakhtin's notion of the grotesque to convert horror into something delectable,⁴ I embrace celebratory motifs to bear humor to poignant landscapes. For instance, in *hereditary fireworks*, I question the usefulness of 23andMe genetic testing through enticing spectacle. Similarly, selected etchings are framed with painted teal and pink from underneath, illuminating a glow that suggests a radioactive material

⁴ Ibid., 38.

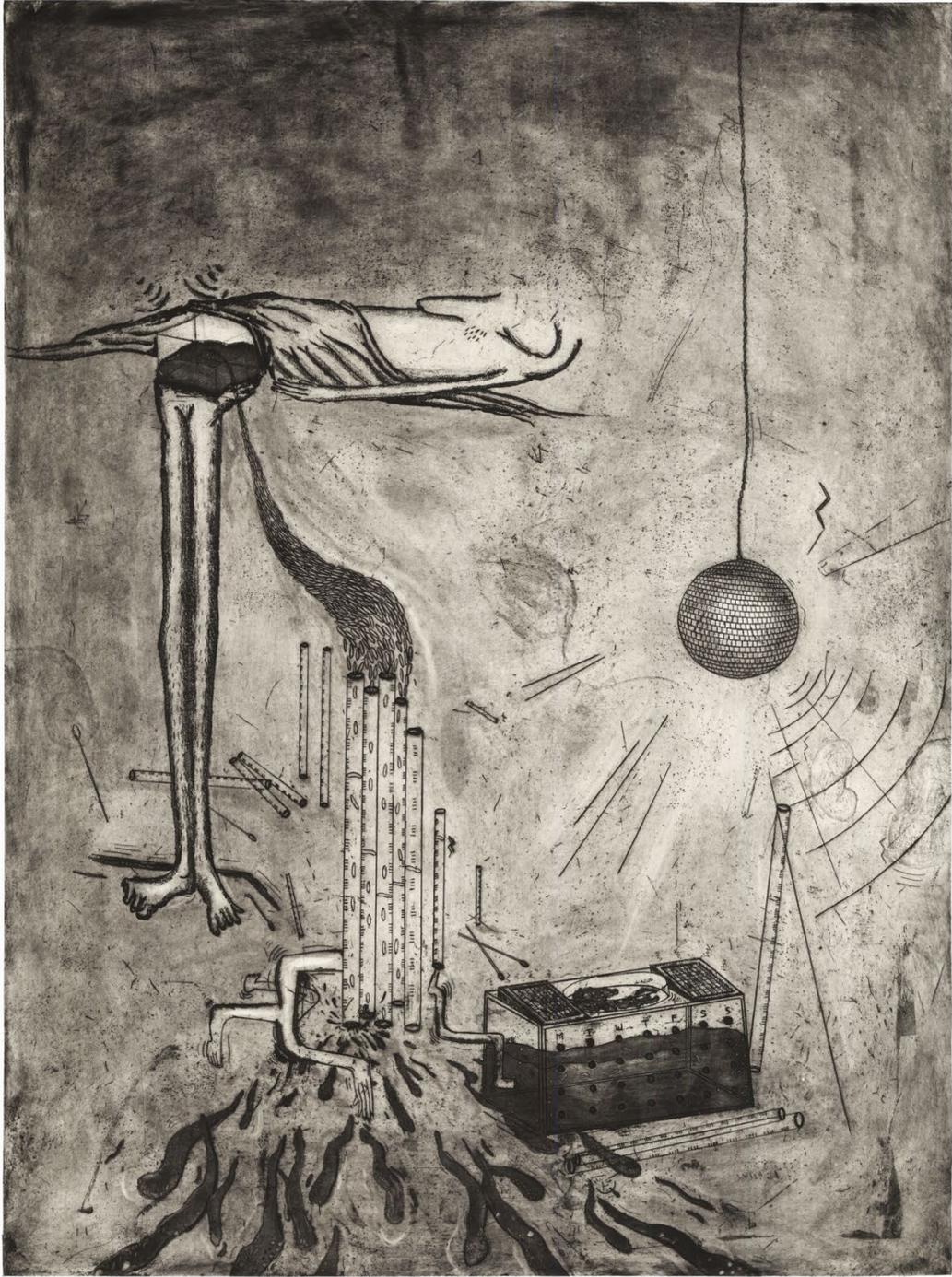
or a reflection of a dance light. Through these works, apprehensions created by companies and the media are perforated by the absurd.

In *I'd party if I could*, a figure bent backward surrenders to pain, imaging being at a dance populated by a disco ball and DJ booth. The odd scene deflects reality, opting for comic relief and optimism. Therefore, Rejecting the popular Romantic version of the grotesque, conceived as primarily limited to tragic and terrifying scenes by developing experiences of allure and trepidation. Through grimy yet playful spurts and spasms, I transpose the hierarchal elements of the material body to diffuse the uncertainty of unsettling scenarios.

when they cut open the wrong foot is informed by a bunion surgery that went wrong. Unfortunately, there was nothing that could be done, but it increased the healing time exponentially. By introducing a layer of pink gushes, it adds charm to the etching, making light of the absurdity of the situation. Nonetheless unsettling by reminding the viewer of flesh and its fragility. Positioned beside *imbalance theory*, the works interact to critique how far we have come in evolution in the medical field. The media can quickly report grand scenarios in advancements, but ultimately simple mistakes still happen, suggesting there will always be setbacks.



Girodat_009 *imbalance theory* 2020, *when they cut open the wrong foot* 2021 installation view



Gp

I'd rather party

P/21

Girodat_010 *I'd rather party* 2021 etching, chine collé 18 x 24"



92

my results back

1/21

Girodat_011 **my results back** 2021 etching, chine collé 18 x 24"



Girodat_012 *imbalance theory* 2021 etching, chine collé 24 x 36"



GP

when they cut open the wrong foot

GP/21

Girodat_013 **when they cut open the wrong foot** 2021 etching, chine collé 24 x 36"

Julia Kristeva's concept of the abject informs the unnerving experiences in my work as a breakdown between the self and other. A fascinating and disturbing sensation, it "beckons to us and ends up engulfing us,"⁵ focusing on the expelled aspects of the body. In this way, I render divided forms, making us vulnerable and uncertain on how to respond. Figures renounce a sense of identity with heads turned away, blurring the lines between object and subject, corpse, and mid-motion. Devalued fluids leak and ooze, depicting the challenges of aging. Yet, they are vital to maintain, survive, and flourish. The juice of the infected causes us to recoil, but by drawing with great care, empathy, and detail, I highlight the malleability and potential of our bodies.

Kristeva writes, "It is not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, and order."⁶ We intentionally hide bodily fluids like urine, excrement, semen, puss, and leaky breast milk from the public sphere. By embracing the abject and resisting smooth, impenetrable surfaces, I renounce prohibitions of social constructs. In this way, the abject subverts rule to disrupt systems that negate equity concerns presented through health disparities.

Advancements in biotechnologies can prevent disease, prolong life expectancy, and create new beings, yet they are not accessible or affordable for everyone. In my work, I use the carnivalesque and abject as a generative force that embraces imperfections while craving for equal opportunities. Influenced by Legacy Russell's *Glitch Feminism*, each image "is a glitch that jars the construct of corporeality. As embodiments of persistent refusal, both performers wander within a wilderness of unrecognizable being, actively re-imaging and re-centering neoteric realities. Each provides us the opportunity to reimagine what a body means, how it can be redefined, what it can do, and what to continue celebrating."⁷

In *plop-plop lab* I create avatars of "anti-bodies" in lived experiences and imagined future landscapes wrapped up in a restricted game-like sewage structure. Each scene is informed by the pandemic's onset and reflects how its impact has brought to light broader concerns within the healthcare system. As a Costco supervisor during this time, I was motivated by working in the public while facing contrasting viewpoints to the media. Therefore, *everyday cashier* presents an exhausted figure, yearning for space among heaps of infected groceries. In contrast, *prep for party island* references how individuals such as Kim Kardashian can afford to escape to a birthday party on a private island. While *cleans everything* reflects on former president Donald Trump's pristine hospital treatment as he suggests others ingest bleach. At the same time, *mammogram disco* uses celebratory visual language to displace the stress of missing

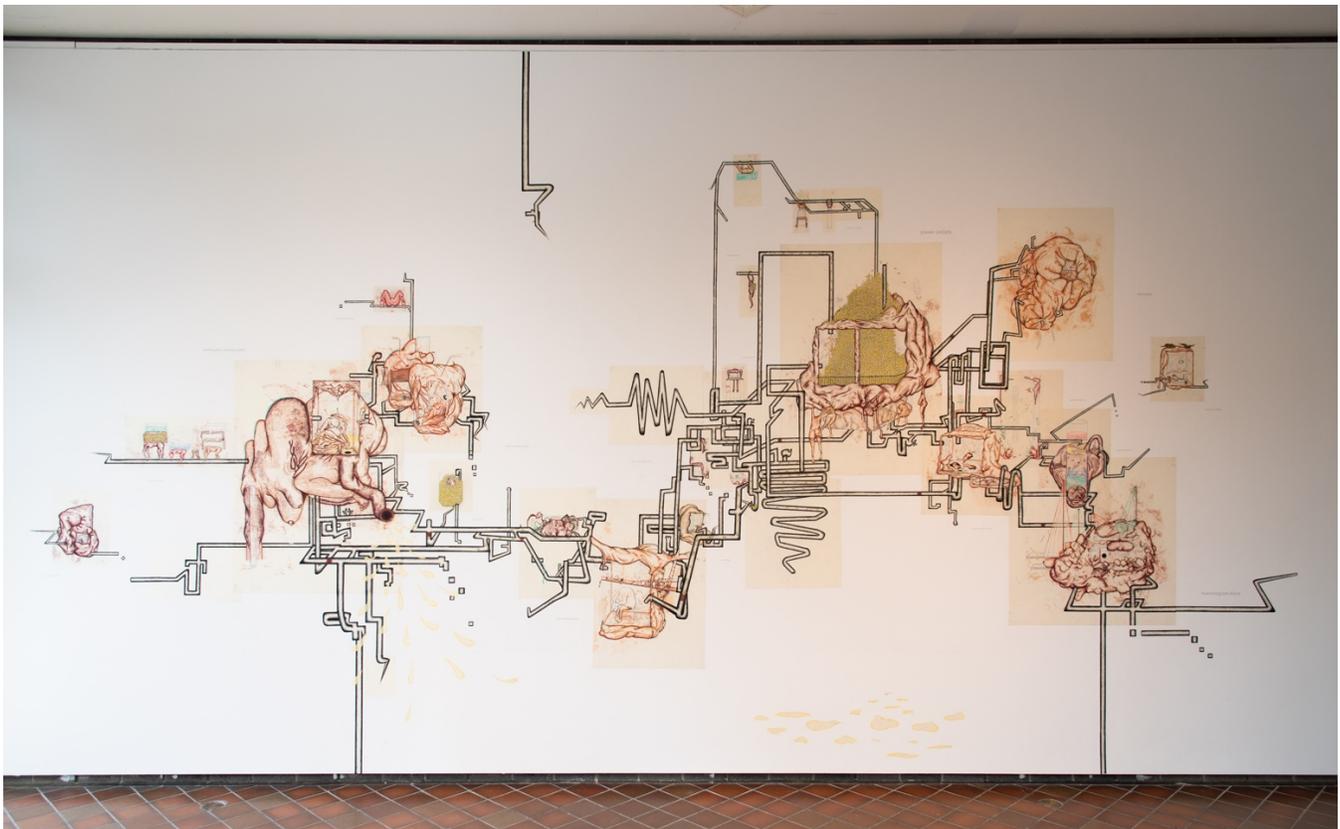
⁵ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of horror: an essay on abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.

⁶ Ibid.

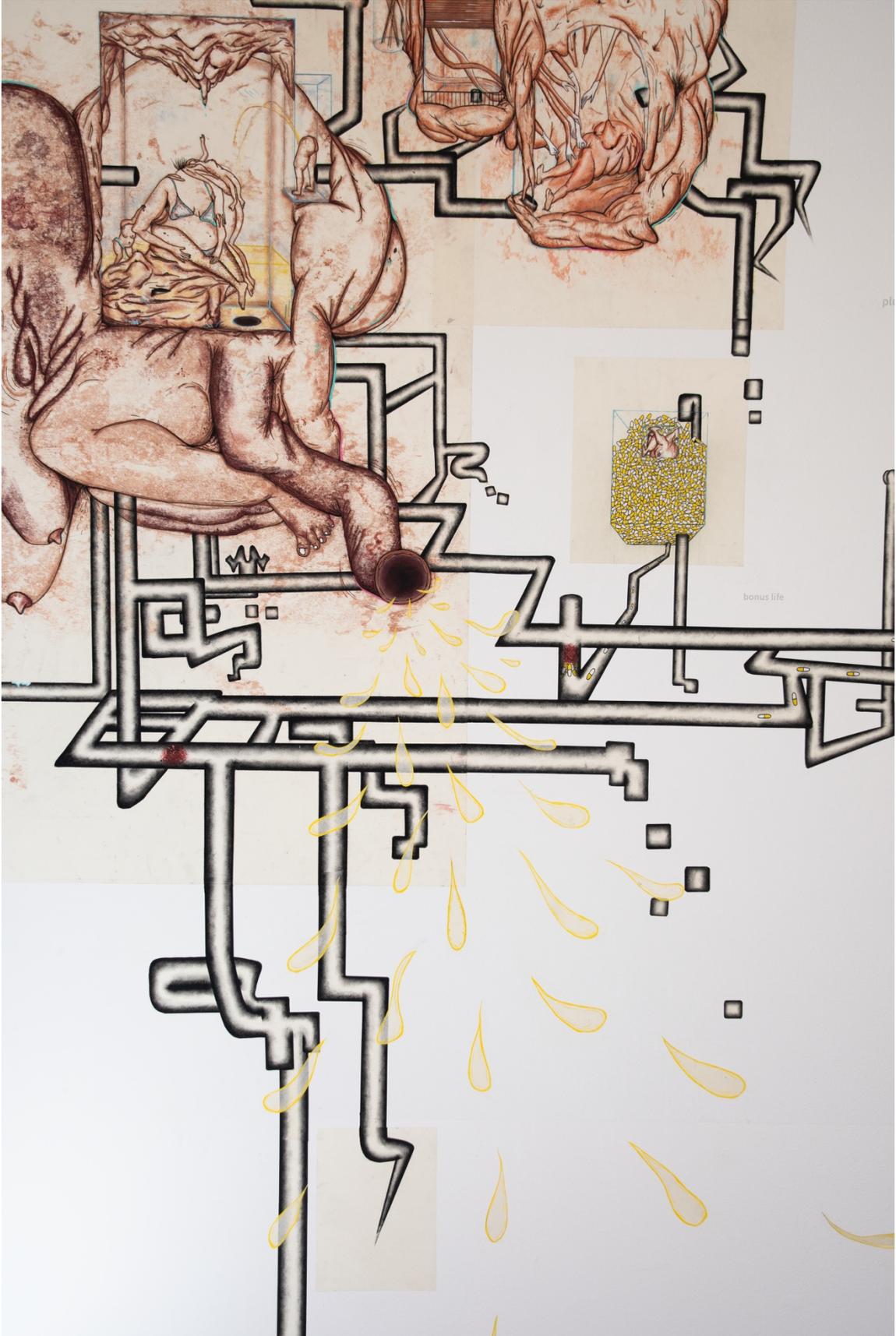
⁷ Legacy Russell, *Glitch Feminism: A Manifesto* (Verso, 2020), 98.

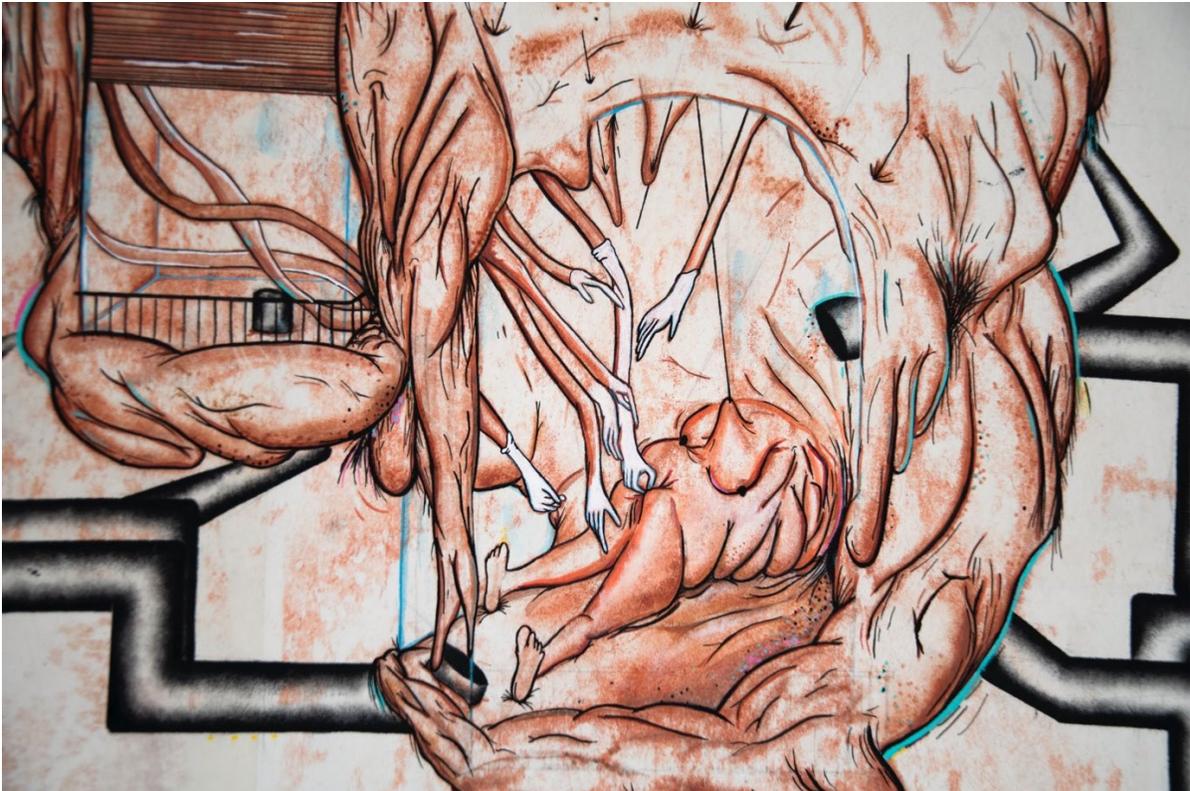
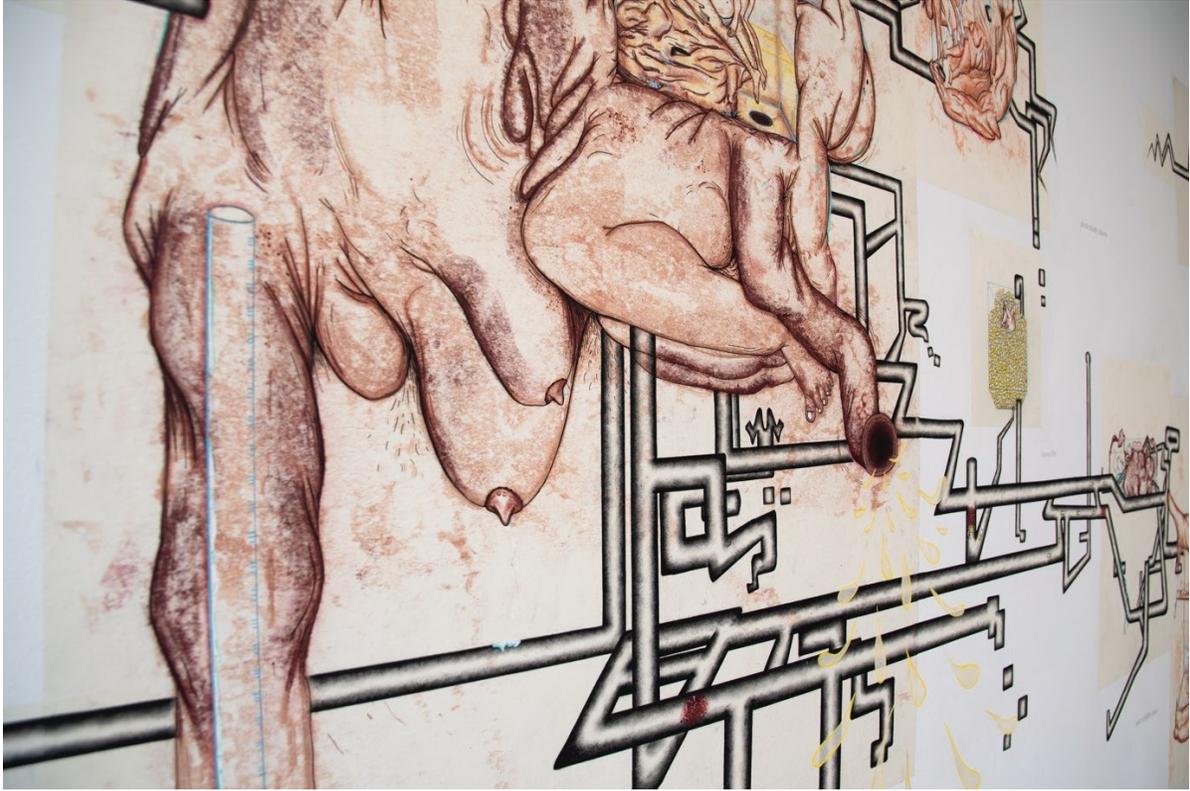
appointments amongst the chaos. Together, these works are joined by complex piping, acting as a flawed video game of limited access.

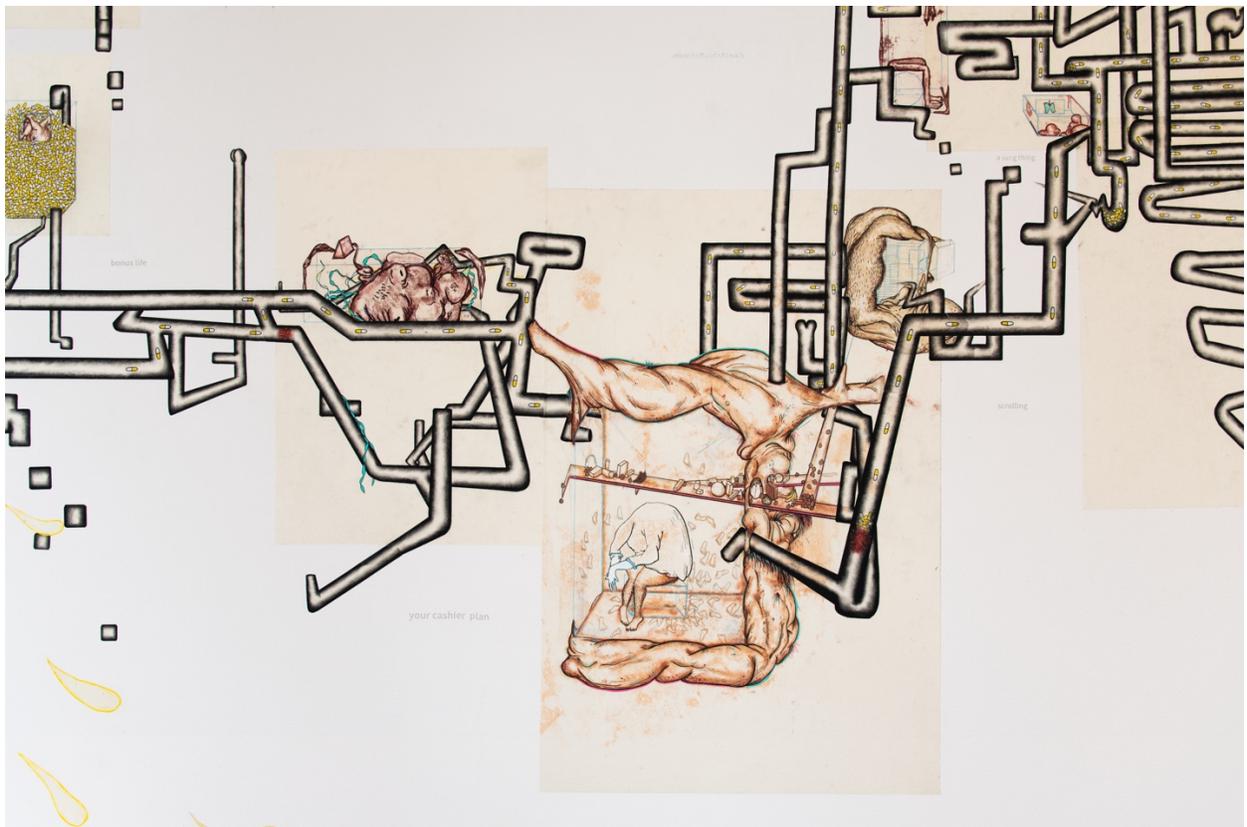
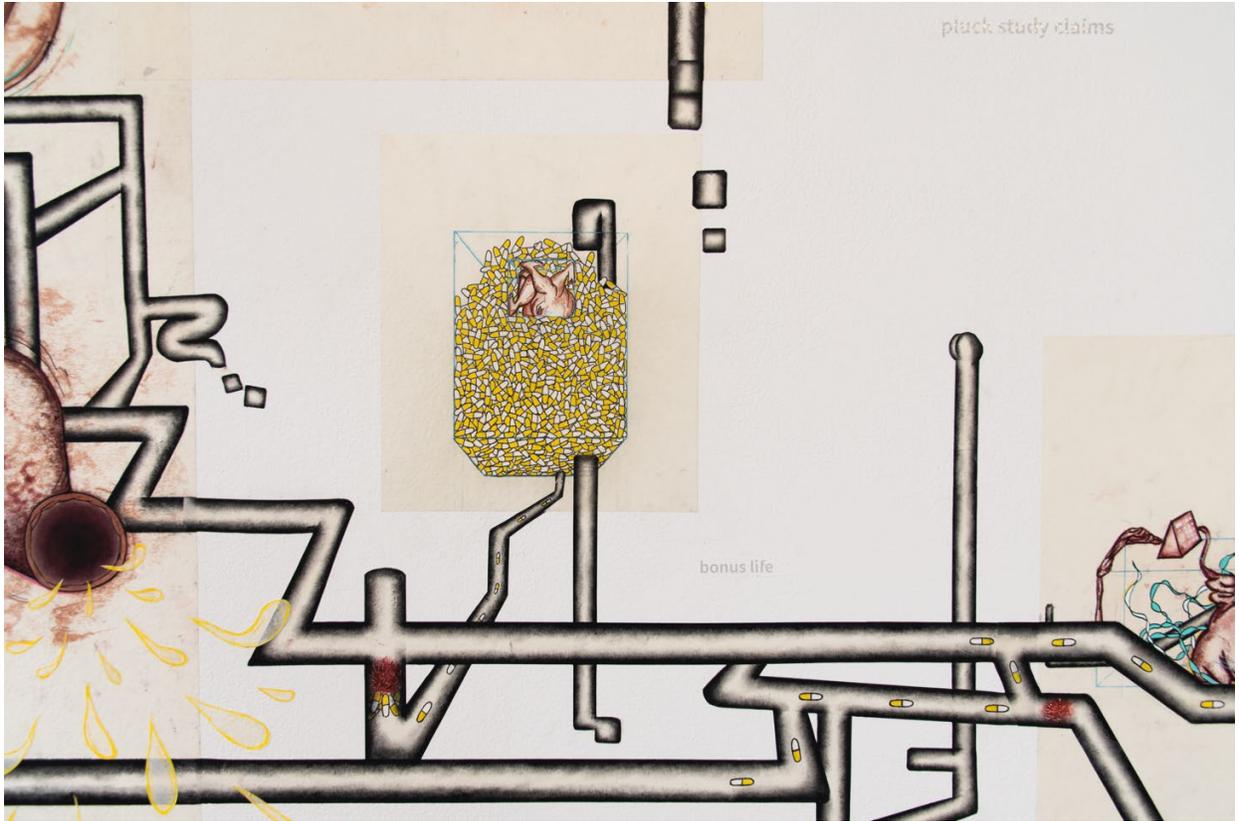
Titles for the assorted images float throughout the installation, informed by strategies on Reddit to reach a perfect score in Pac-Man. Video and computer games can become a cite of relief, a relatively safe way to interact and an escape from daily lives. Disparate worlds can communicate with cheeky language, leveling status for the sake of leisure. However, this game is complicated by blood clots that suddenly appear, blocking pellets of medication from reaching the ones in need. In the center of the work, *power pellets* isolate medication from bodies desperately clinging to the surface as they hope for survival. Through this system of gamification, *plop-plop lab* investigates competition for wealth and health resources.

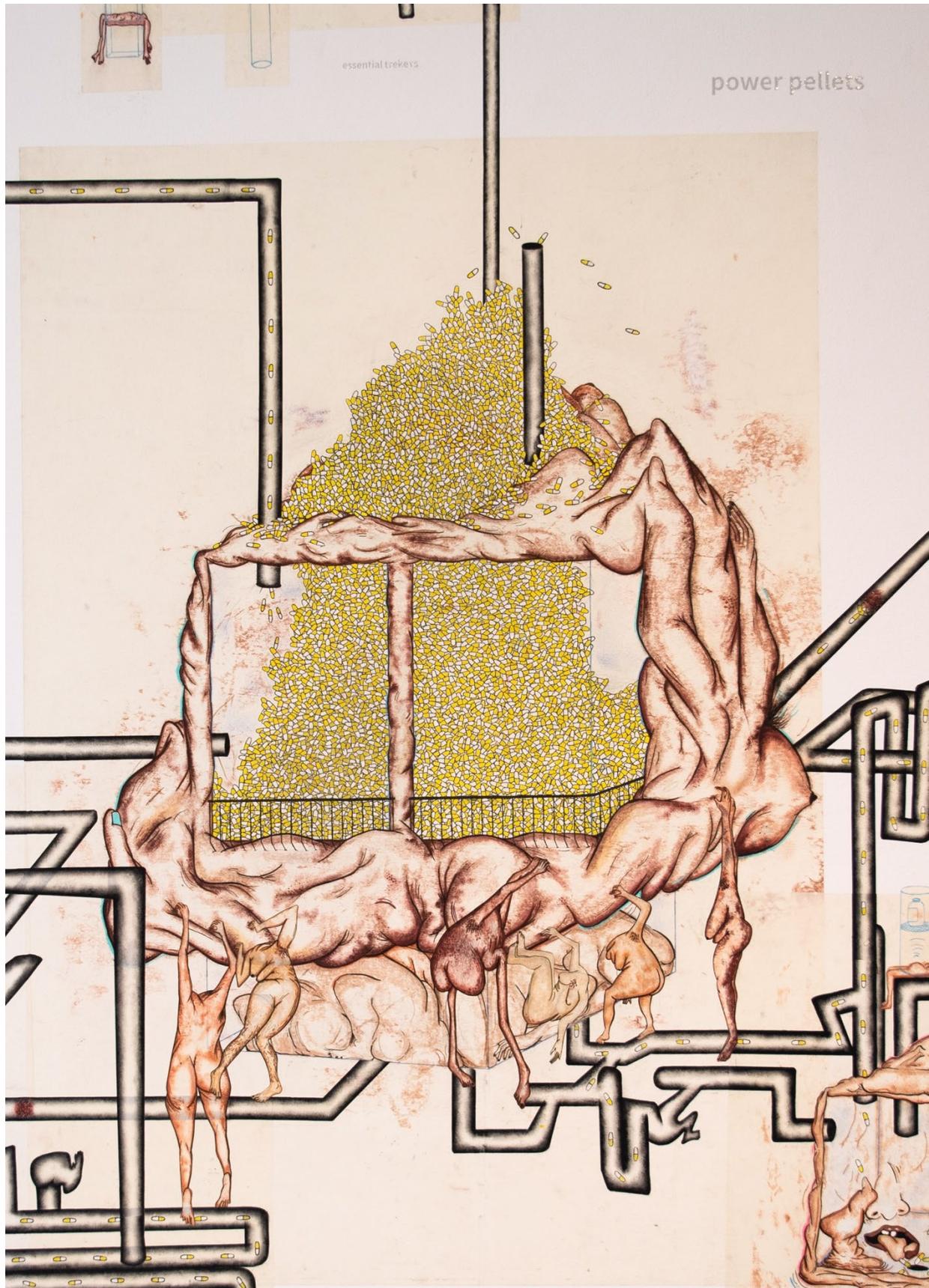


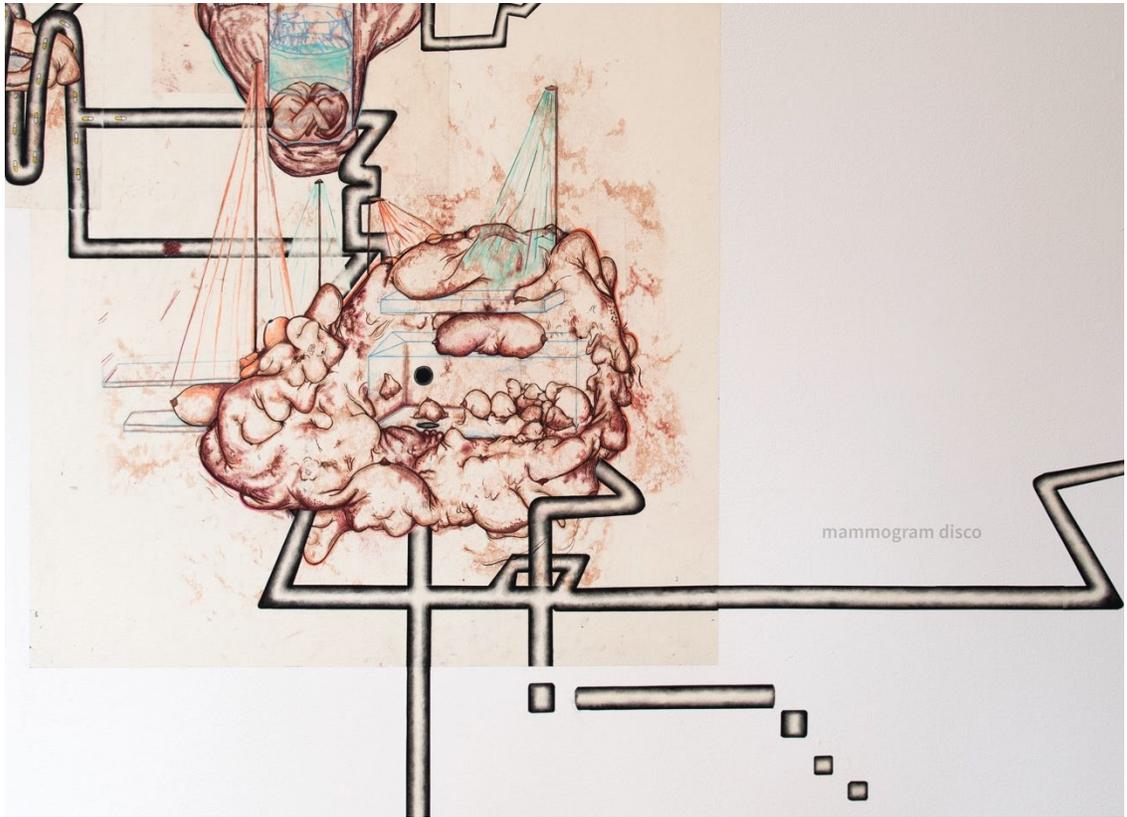
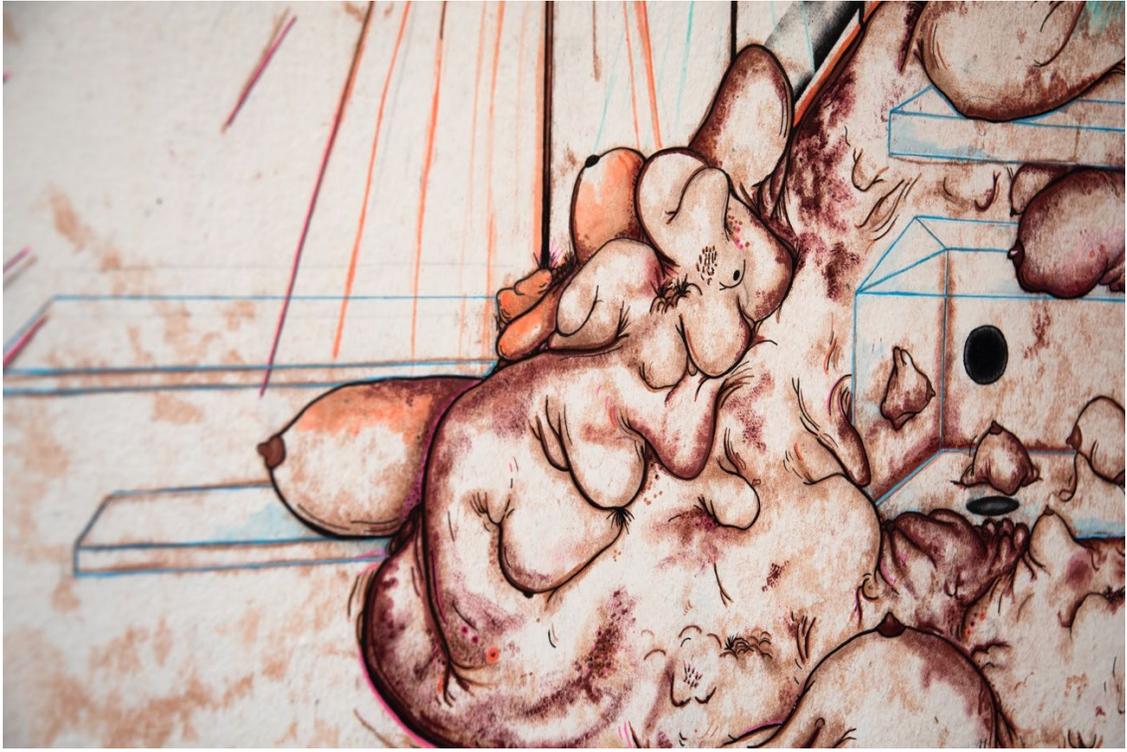
Girodat_014 *plop-plop lab* 2021 trace monotype, pochoir, gouache, acrylic pens, chine collé
21 x 11'

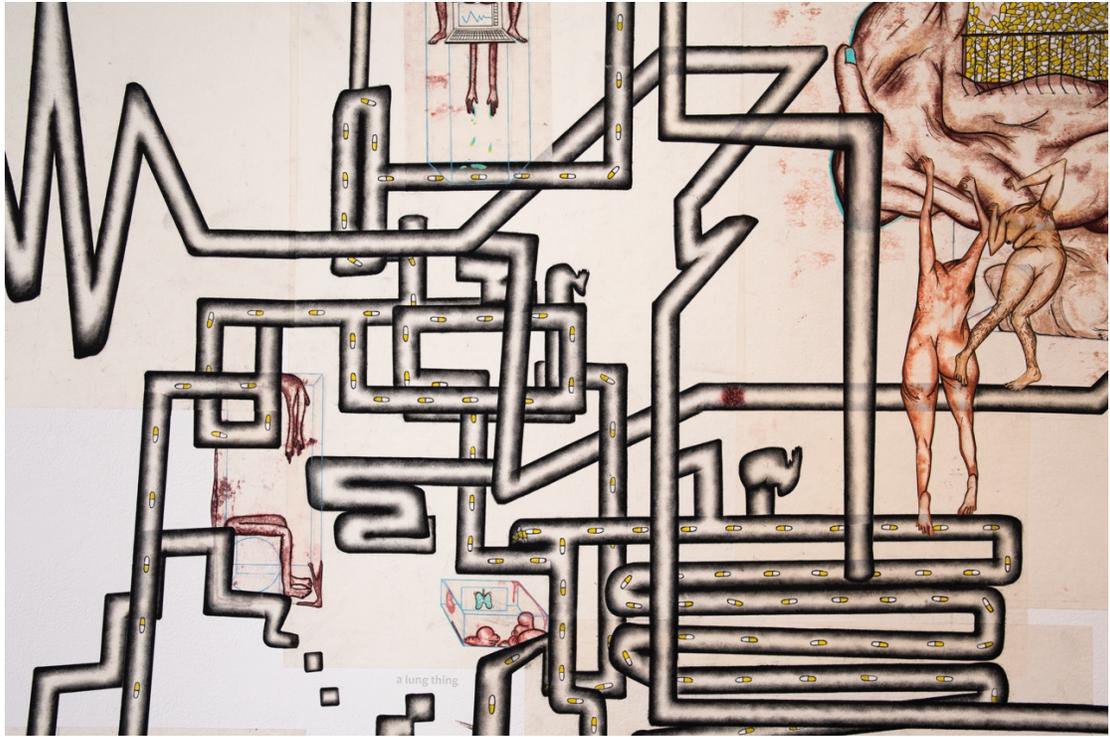


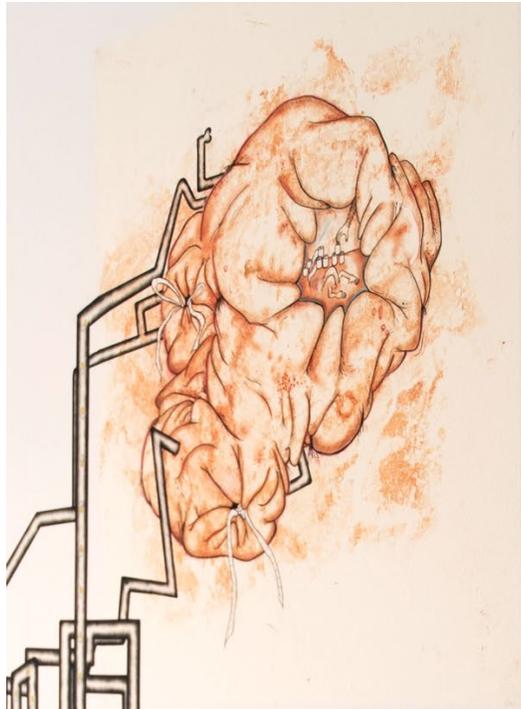




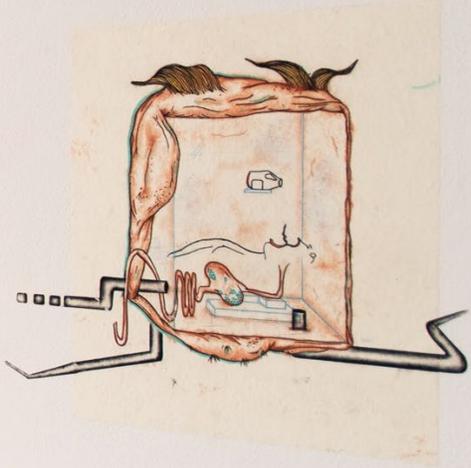




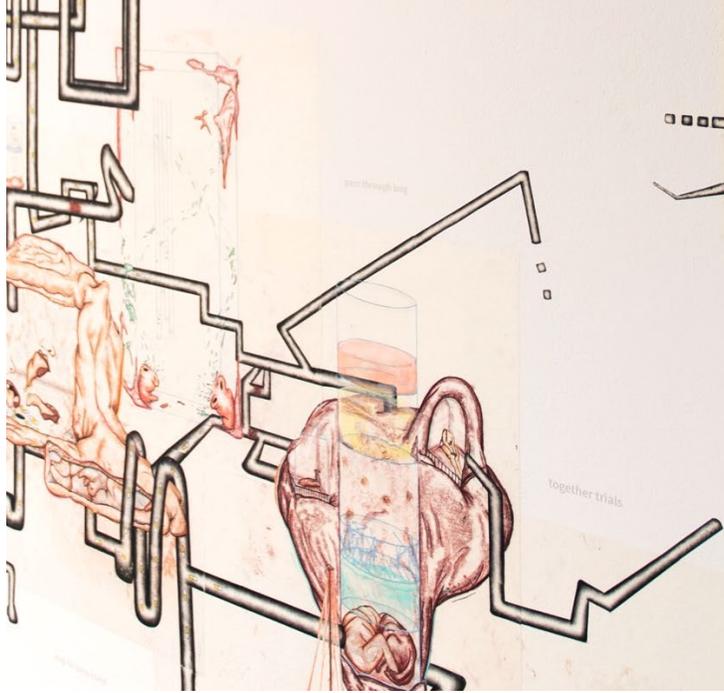




burn piles

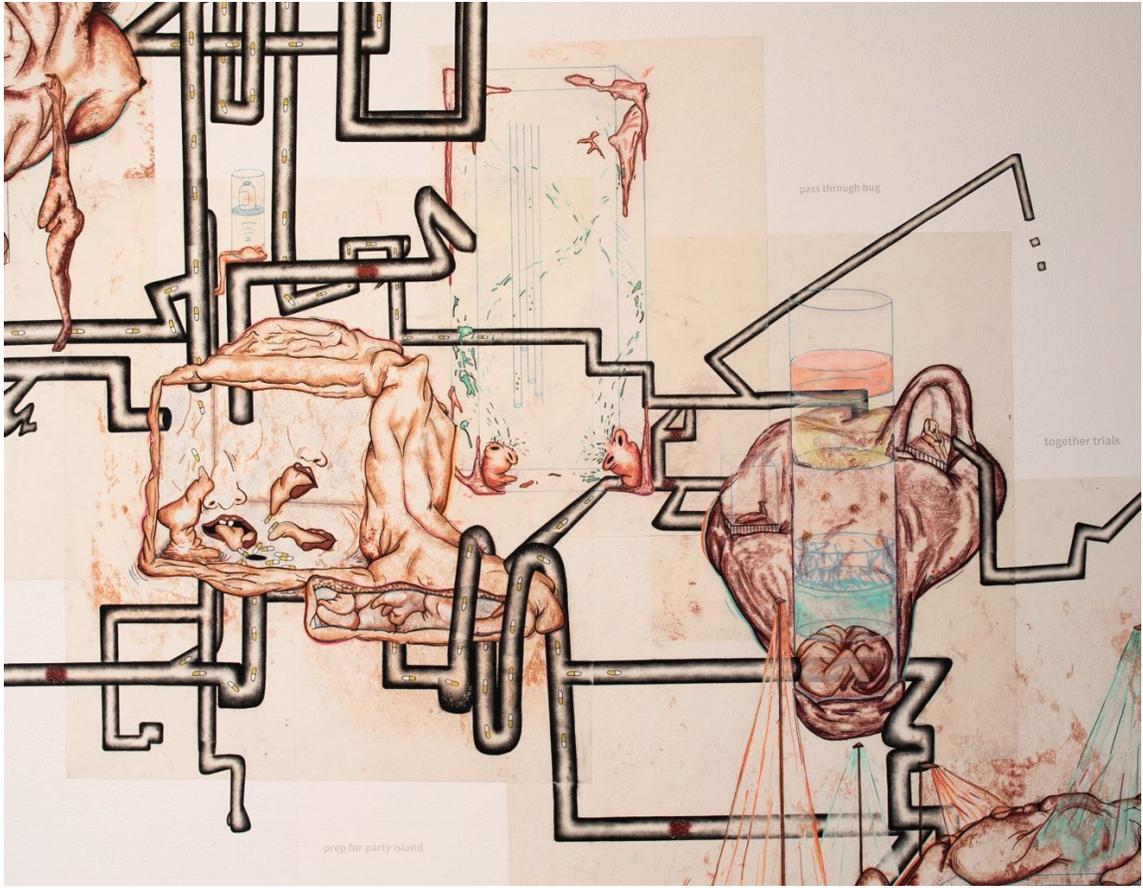


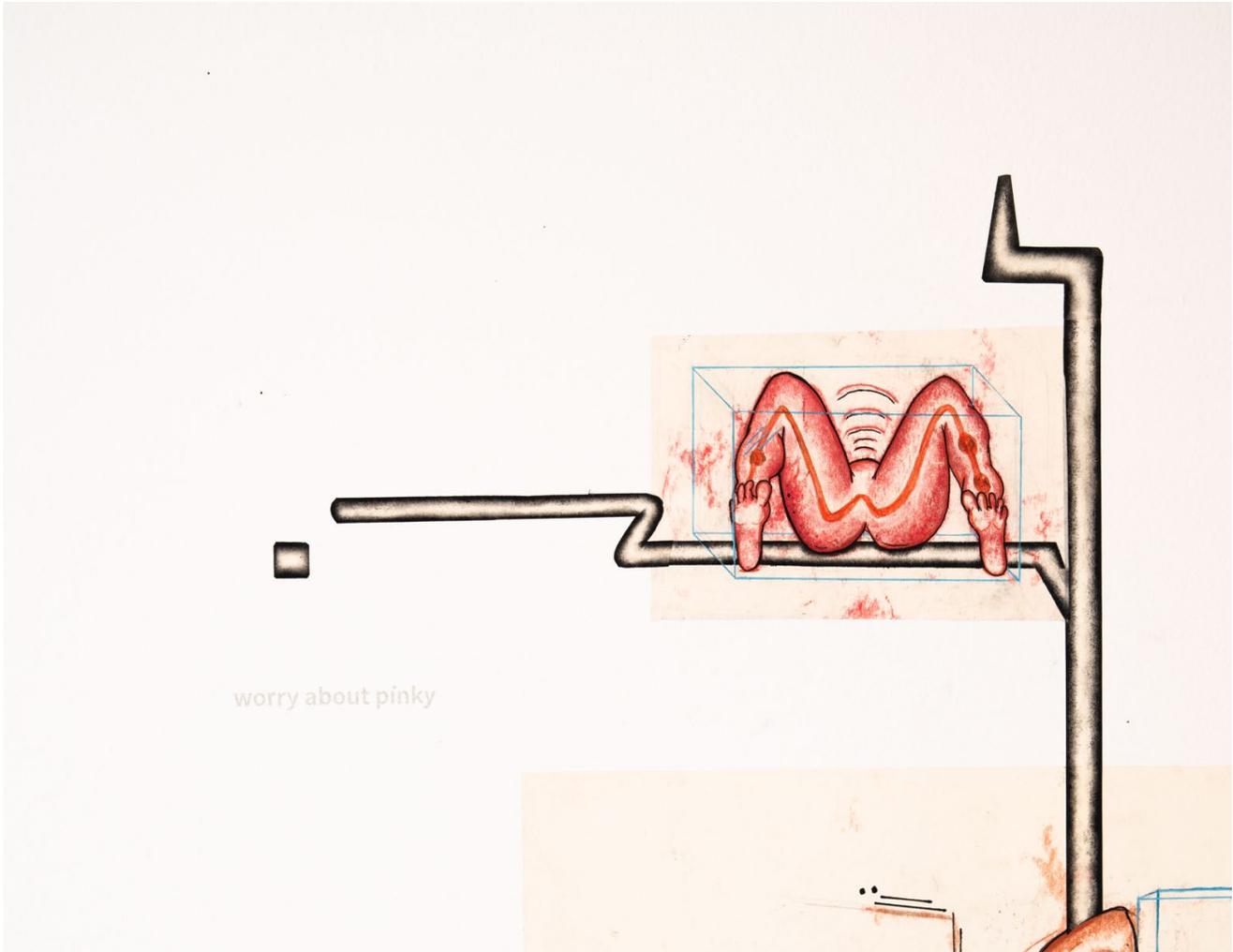
cleans everything



pass through long

together trials





Girodat_015

plop-plop lab:

lure the ghosts

essential trekers

working days, working nights

worry about pinky

pluck study claims

bonus life

your cashier plan

scrolling

other half is out of reach

a lung thing

power pellets

prep for party island

pass through bug

together trials

bum piles

cleans everything

mammogram disco

2021

trace monotype, pochoir, gouache, acrylic pens, chine collé

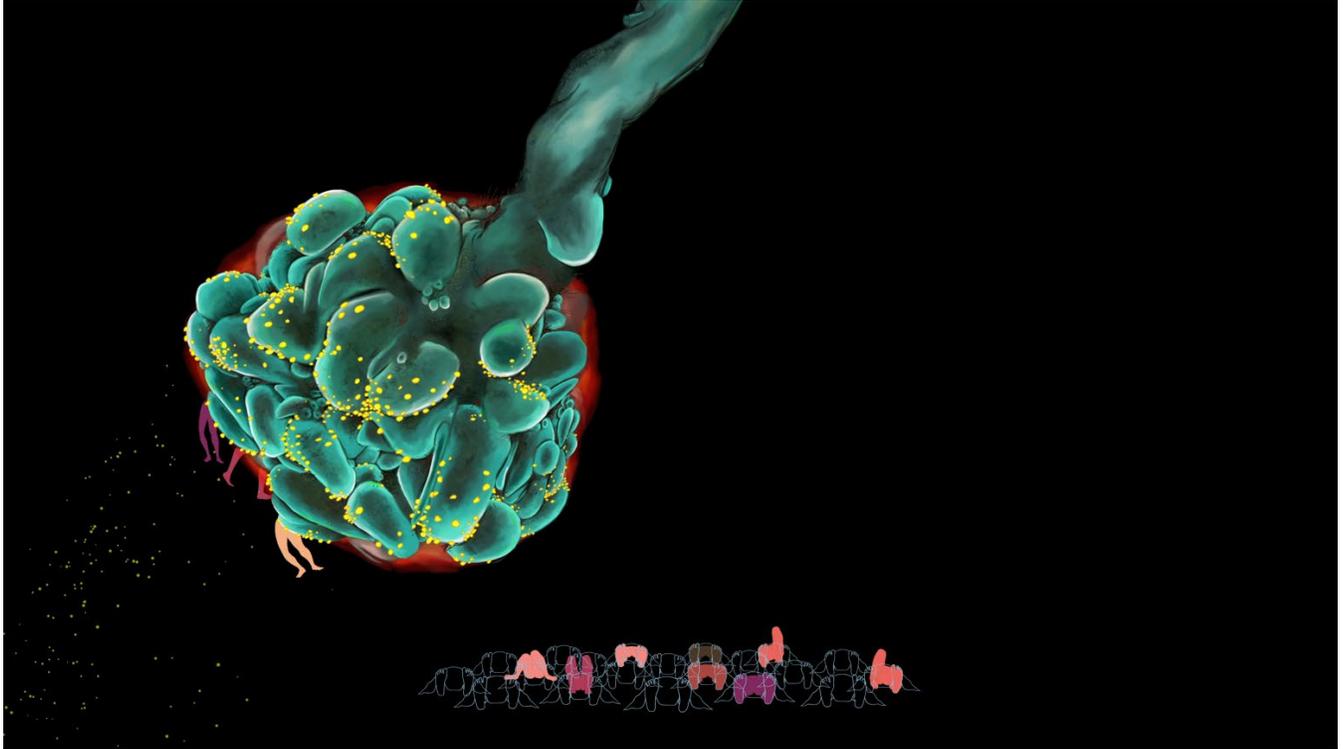
21 x 11'



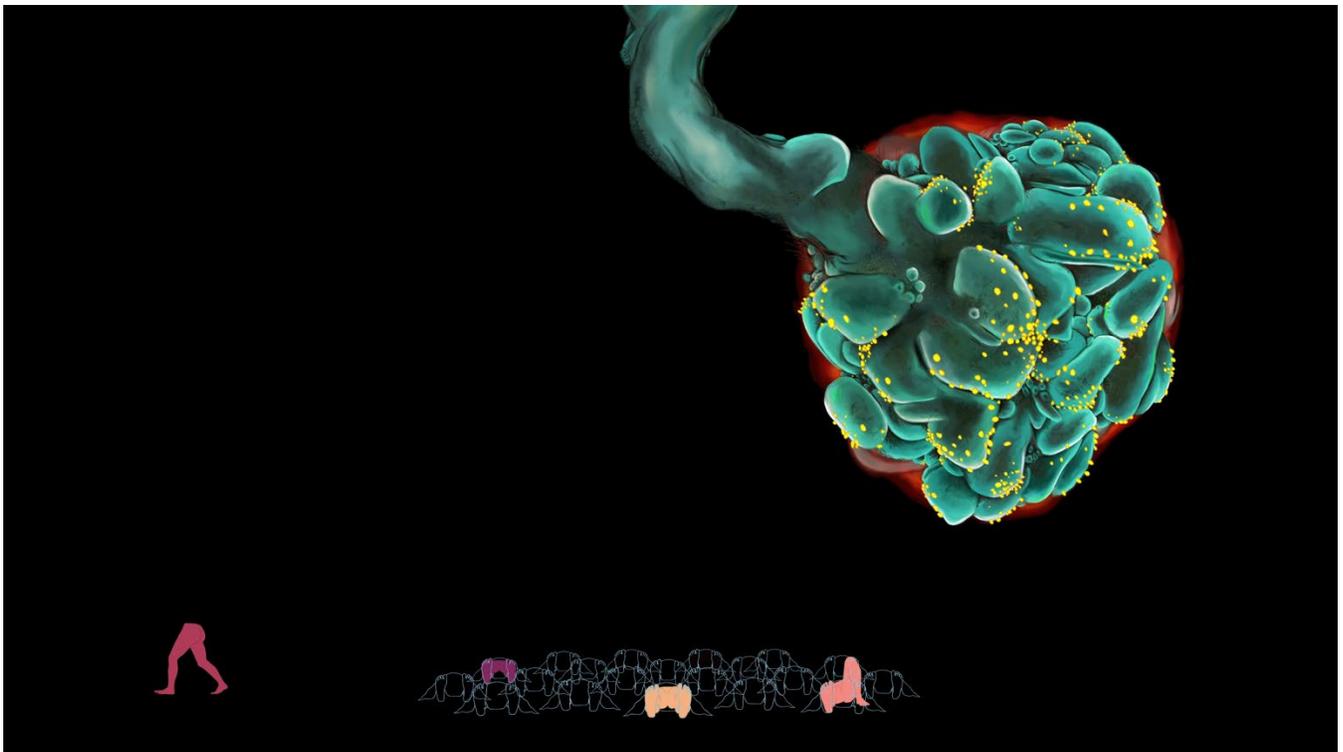
Girodat_016 *plop-plop lab* 2021 installation view

facing the metronome confronts the viewer as the final work in the exhibition. An engorged, intimidating blob that sways back and forth, facing us with the limits of time. Drawn by referencing an inaccurate, looming image of the coronavirus from a news article, the work evokes the anxiety of navigating misinformation. One by one, sets of legs attempt to stand up, only to be bulldozed by the mass above. Gradually, the speed and intensity rise, allowing the pressure to mount and feel hopeless. However, the frequency of legs also grows as they keep trying, ultimately allowing the viewer to cheer for them as some successfully escape. As the work is presented in a hypnotic display, it lures the viewer in, but adds a note of optimism as we move through a health crisis.

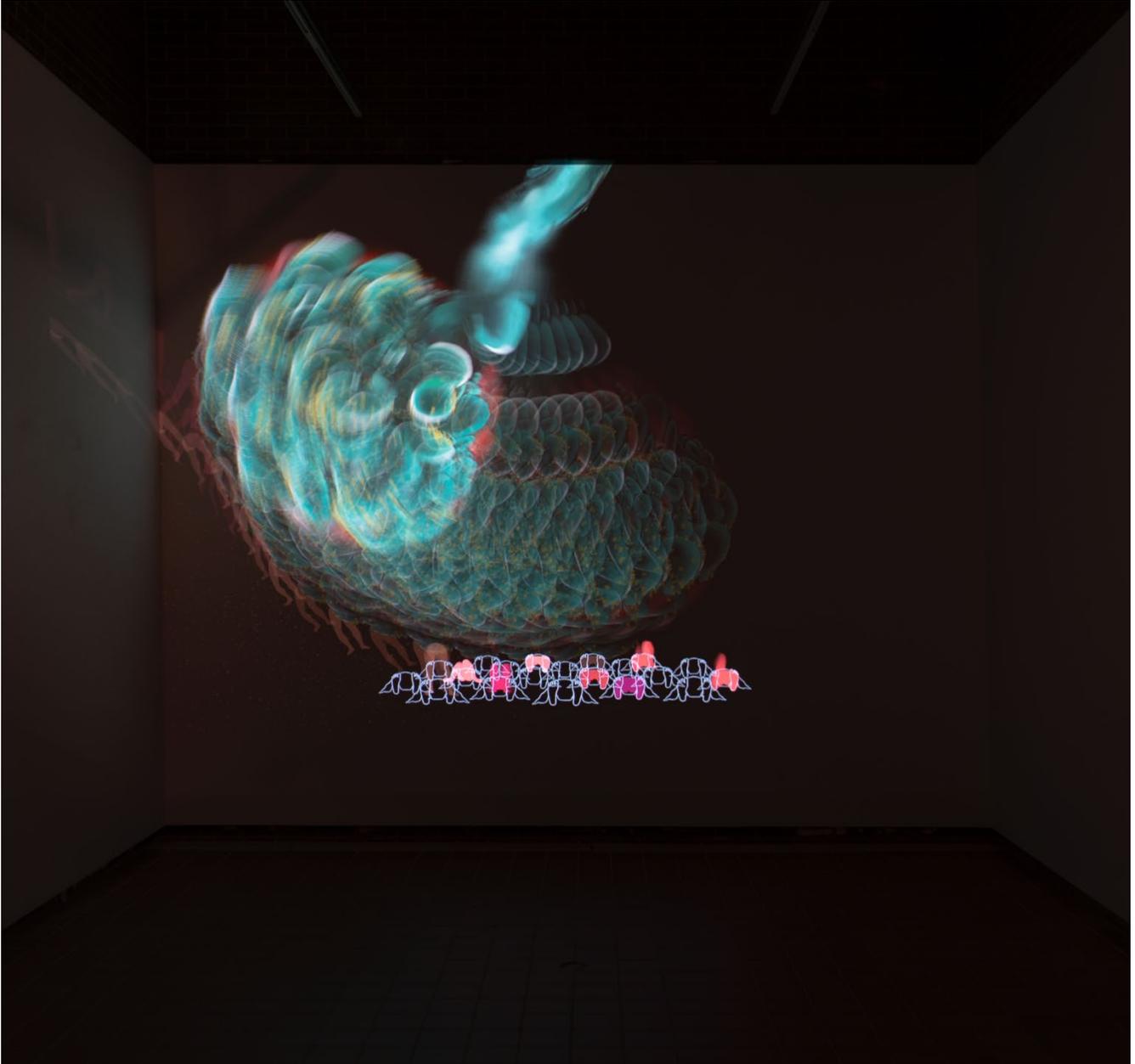
shimmy-shimmy plop-plop bewilders the material body through printmaking, ceramics, and animation. Pining to dismantle constraints and fears, the work attempts to enter a state of renewal and possibility. Between the lines of unease and intrigue, it welcomes peculiar sites of pulsing bunions and wobbling dances. It greets the genetics of the past and envisions the beings of the future. Visceral plops, dribbles, and folds remind us of our mortality but subvert rules of the established order. By embracing figures in a constant state of flux, the exhibition transgresses boundaries and reimagines medical realities.



Girodat_018 *facing the metronome* (still) 2021 animation dimensions variable



Girodat_018 *facing the metronome* (still) 2021 animation dimensions variable



Girodat_017 *facing the metronome* 2021 installation view

Perhaps the monkey bars will not always be within reach.

But,

there is always the tire swing.

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www.jamieleegirodat.com