

For Immediate Release  
October 11, 2019

## AMOR FATI

*Paintings by Sirena LaBurn, Samuel Levy, Nathan Mullins, and William Reed Explore Certain Death.*  
November 9, 2019–January 10, 2020



Sirena LaBurn. *Wheel of Fortune: Day*, 2019.  
oil on panel. 12 x 12 in.

**New York City, NY – October 9, 2019 –** *Amor Fati* broadens the definition of traditional *momento mori* to explore themes of life, death, and rebirth in paintings by Sirena Laburn, Samuel Levy, Nathan Mullins, and William Reed at Wagner College's Union Gallery. The four artists' works, each exhibiting individual interests and styles, converse about the hopes and fears inherent in our limited human experience, keeping an eye toward the certainty we all face, and welcoming that death as necessary.

The wheel shapes in Sirena LaBurn's (b. 1986, B.S. 2012, M.F.A. 2014) paintings reflect the cyclical nature of life and the circumstances in which we are born and will die. Drawing from her experience of motherhood, LaBurn creates images that speak to the wishes and fears she has for her daughter's future, including skeletons that dance in the deserts of the artist's home state of Texas, laughing at our attempts to make sense of it all.

The dichotomy of life and death is blurred in Samuel Levy's (b. 1980, B.F.A. 2003, M.F.A. 2009) observational paintings as stags and ducks seem to breathe before the viewer realizes that the animals are taxidermy stand-ins. This reversal of the original reading offers a chance to reflect on the line that separates the quick and the dead.

Figures both mythological and commonplace combine in the paintings of Nathan Mullins (b. 1989, B.F.A. 2012, M.F.A. 2015), finding equal footing to explore symbols of rebirth. The destructive and life-giving duality of water is a central theme present in these paintings that range in topic from *The Birth of Venus* to rising ocean levels.

William Reed's (b. 1981, B.A. 2003, M.F.A. 2009) *Pyre* paintings, a series begun some years ago, are visual meditations that deal with chance, death, and renewal. The flowers, gathered from spaces personally meaningful to the artist, lay scattered across floors in decay, but are revived with life and beauty by their arrangement as painting motifs.



William Reed. *White Pyre*, 2019. pastel on linen. 17 x 17 in.

**On View**

November 7, 2019 – January 10, 2020

**Opening Reception**

Saturday, November 9, 2019, 2pm–5pm

**General Information**

The Union Gallery at Wagner College is located on the Main Floor at One Campus Road, Staten Island, NY. Gallery Hours are Tuesday–Sunday 11am–5pm, Thursday 11am–9pm, or by appointment. The College offers free shuttle service from the ferry to the campus 7 days a week. Visit [wagner.edu](http://wagner.edu) for more info and for driving directions.

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