

# Black Mountain College

MUSEUM  ARTS CENTER

## **Fragments of a Vessel: Notes Towards Further Queer Histories of Black Mountain College**

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## **Queens and Chimeras**

Watercolors by Melissa Wilkinson

For my watercolor paintings, I appropriate existing images sourced from the Hollywood golden era, late 70s/early 80s tomboys and heartthrobs, disco, and private Tumblr accounts. These are personas that have informed my identity and personal sense of self. I further queer these images by creating a type of reassembled painting, one that combines masculine and feminine expressions. I reorganize images to challenge gender and propose the absurdity of traditional presentations as both limited and binary. I paint these images in order to create a coveted object, one that holds hours of considerate and loving application through a painterly meditation. They are hybridized portraits that complicate both vision and expectation. I seek to explore micro-expressions, gender play, and the exploration of my coming of age as a queer person. Influenced heavily by collage and digital intervention, I create meticulous watercolor and ink wash paintings in order to investigate what it means to labor on an object in the 21st century. I work in water media on paper to create a vulnerable object and a tender presence through my touch.

All of my work relates to my interest in dichotomies: obscuring and revealing, attraction and repulsion, good and evil, the past and the present. Through a tediously crafted watercolor painting practice, I seek to make something strange out of the ordinary. I am deeply interested in the interaction of parts and am attracted to the tactile in an increasingly technological and dehumanized time. The romantic process of painting allows me to meditate on issues of gender, identity construction, and beauty. Though the paintings are initially conceived of using digital processes, they are made employing a purist approach to watercolor. In doing so, I endeavor to uphold these painting processes while dismantling the elitism with which they are often associated.



Melissa Wilkinson, *Sleeping Endymion*, 2022. Ink wash on paper, 30" x 20".



Melissa Wilkinson, *Hold*, 2022. Ink wash on paper, 16"x 20".



Melissa Wilkinson, *Do It*, 2021. Watercolor on paper, 16"x 20".



Melissa Wilkinson, *Retro*, 2021. Watercolor on paper, 22"x 30".



Melissa Wilkinson, *Suspenders*, 2021. Watercolor on paper, 16"x 20".

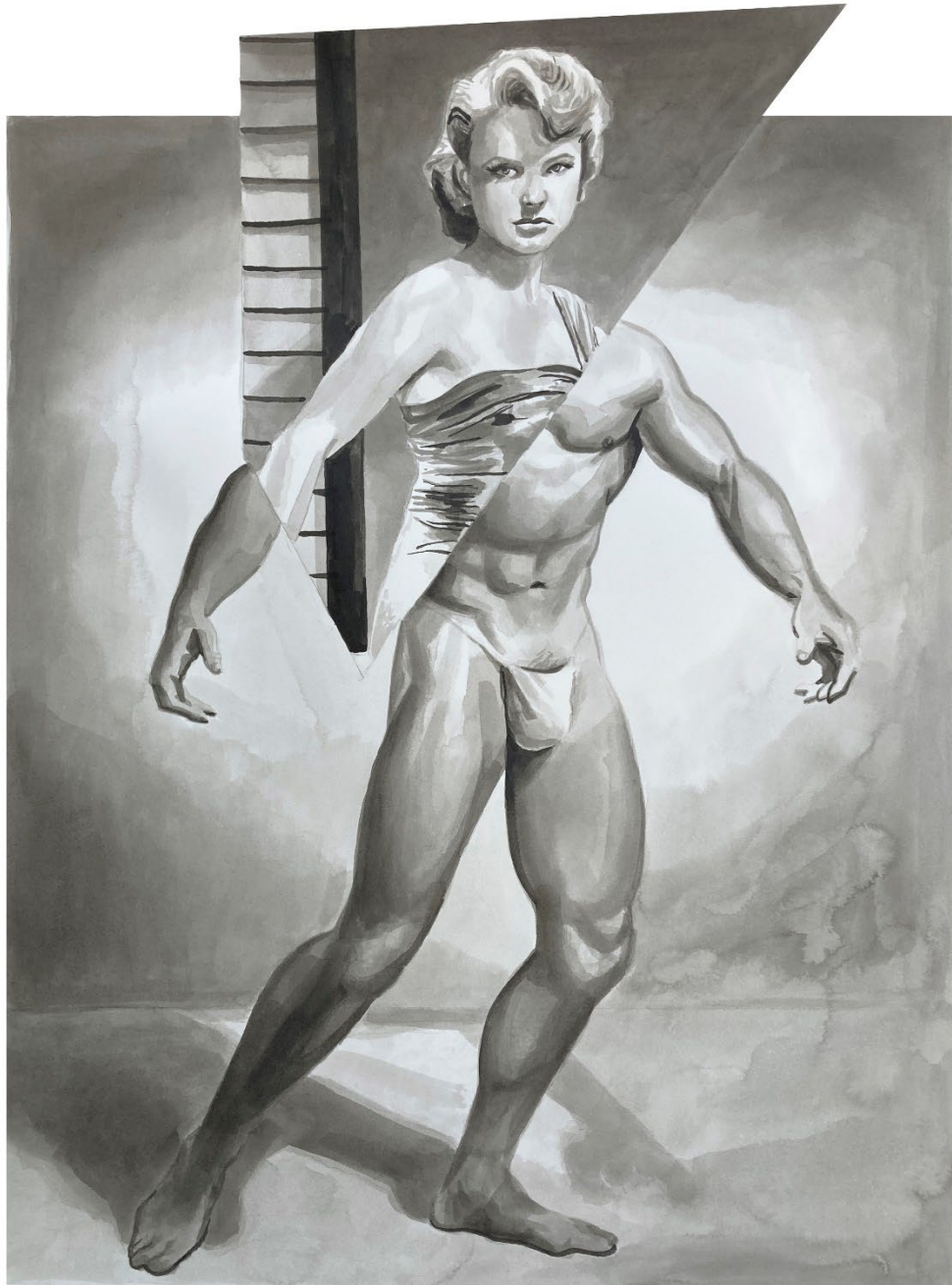


Melissa Wilkinson, *Theatre*, 2022. Ink wash on paper, 16"x 20".





Melissa Wilkinson, *Tattoo*, 2022. Ink wash on paper, 16"x 20".



Melissa Wilkinson, *Slick*, 2022. Ink wash on paper, 16"x 20".



Melissa Wilkinson, *Joan*, 2021. Watercolor on paper, 16"x 20".



Melissa Wilkinson, *Victor*, 2022. Ink wash on paper, 22" x 30".