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Things Change

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THINGS CHANGE

By

Julia Leggent

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Aaron Holz

Lincoln, Nebraska

March, 2021

THINGS CHANGE

Julia Leggent, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2021

Adviser: Aaron Holz

The paintings in *Things Change* are pieces of my life; they follow my routines, thoughts, and worries, but these topics are experienced by many. The images of flesh, knobs, and pills are painted at life scale and are meant to be widely relatable. With each of my works, I hope to bring awareness to social, political, and feminine themes while drawing the viewer in and inciting interest in the ever-changing visual aspects of everyday life.

Examining routine, ritual, and time is always fascinating to me; I work to show this through my paintings. Practices change throughout the years. Strangely, you can go from doing something every day to suddenly not. You can go from touching the same knob, opening the same door, to never opening that door again. I have made three paintings of cropped doors. The images depict door handles or knobs on the front doors of the three houses I have lived in. Each of these doors represents a new beginning, the next chapter of my life. Sometimes things change in your life because of a choice you made; sometimes, it's out of your control.

In one way or another, the global pandemic has changed each of our lives. Living with someone who is at a higher risk for complications with COVID-19 has drastically affected my life. I am not resentful; I am grateful. I care deeply about protecting him from this virus, so we have taken every precaution. A pair of my paintings titled *High Risk* and *Low Risk* depict chests, my partner's, and my own. Nothing about his chest or

the way any part of his body looks would tell you he is at higher risk, but he is.

Therefore, I act like I am.

We all come from somewhere, a long line of women. Exploring this, I created a set of paintings that consist of three centered belly buttons: mine, my mother's, and my grandmother's. I was once connected to my mother, as she was once connected to hers, and so on. I have titled this piece *Ellipsis*, as the three belly buttons in a row resemble three dots in a row. Indicating the possibility of an unfinished thought, the possibility of me, as a woman, continuing that connection. This is and should be my choice.

Since November 28, 2018, I have made a painting of my birth control pill every day before I take it. Always centered on the surface, the pill is painted from life on two-inch by two-inch panels. The shadow and my position to the light source is one of the few detectable shifts in each painting; this mirrors the solitary moment I am within. The act and image reflect the following: my power to choose, daily self-reflection, and the twenty-eight-day cycle. From green to pink, the fluctuating background follows my menstrual cycle. I continue to feel the need to create a growing archive of these small pills, a visual manifestation of these pills' immense impact on my life. To go along with this series, I have created a straightforward painting of my current birth control packet, *Tri-Sprintec*. Birth control can have adverse side-effects; this specific product has worked the best for me. Not only have the pills alleviated stress and allowed me to have absolute freedom with my body, but they have eliminated pain from and completely regulated my menstrual cycle.

My mother taught me to be organized, to make plans, and to stick to them. Somethings can be planned; others cannot. I explore self, body, and femininity through

detailed paintings that typically operate at an intimate scale. The images depict highly rendered parts of anatomy, objects, and domestic space. Working from life and photography, I create paintings that explore topics ranging from personal to universal.



Home (March 1995 - August 2013), Oil on Panel, 10 x 12", 2020



Home (August 2013 - July 2018), Oil on Panel, 10 x 12", 2020



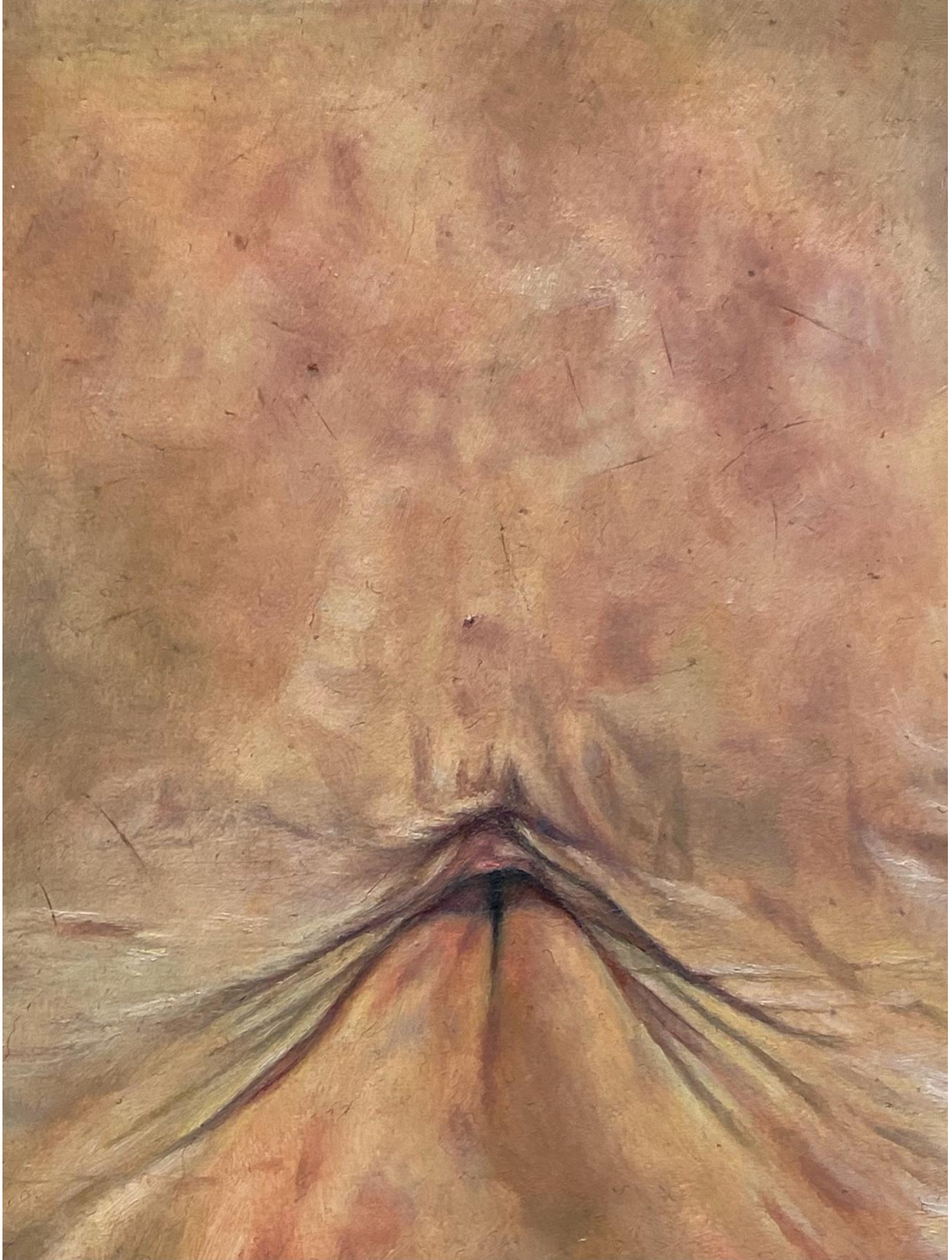
Home (July 2018 - Present), Oil on Panel, 10 x 12", 2020



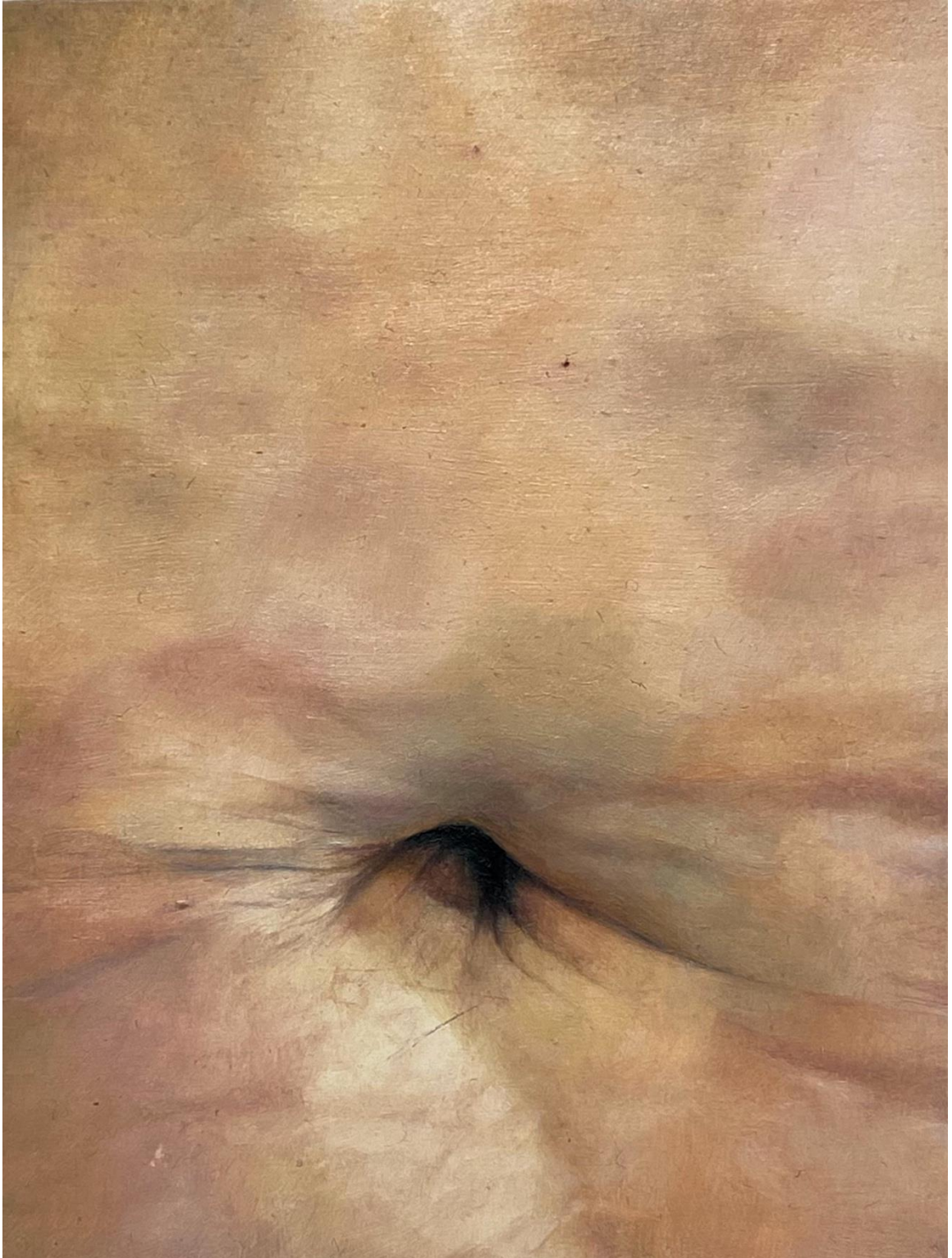
High Risk, Oil on Panel, 5 x 7", 2020



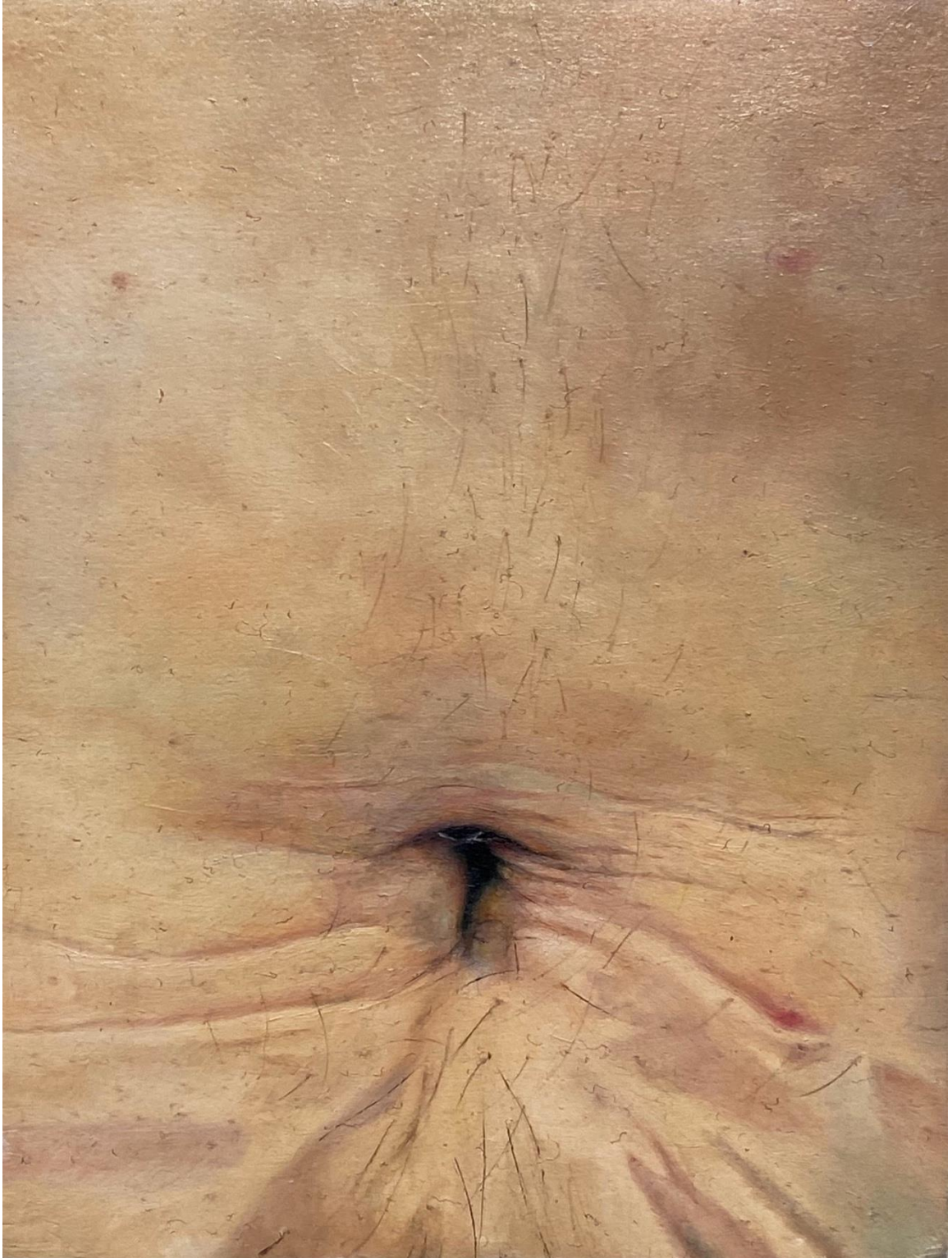
Low Risk, Oil on Panel, 5 x 7", 2021



Ellipsis (Grandmother), Oil on Panel, 3 x 4", 2019



Ellipsis (Mother), Oil on Panel, 3 x 4", 2019



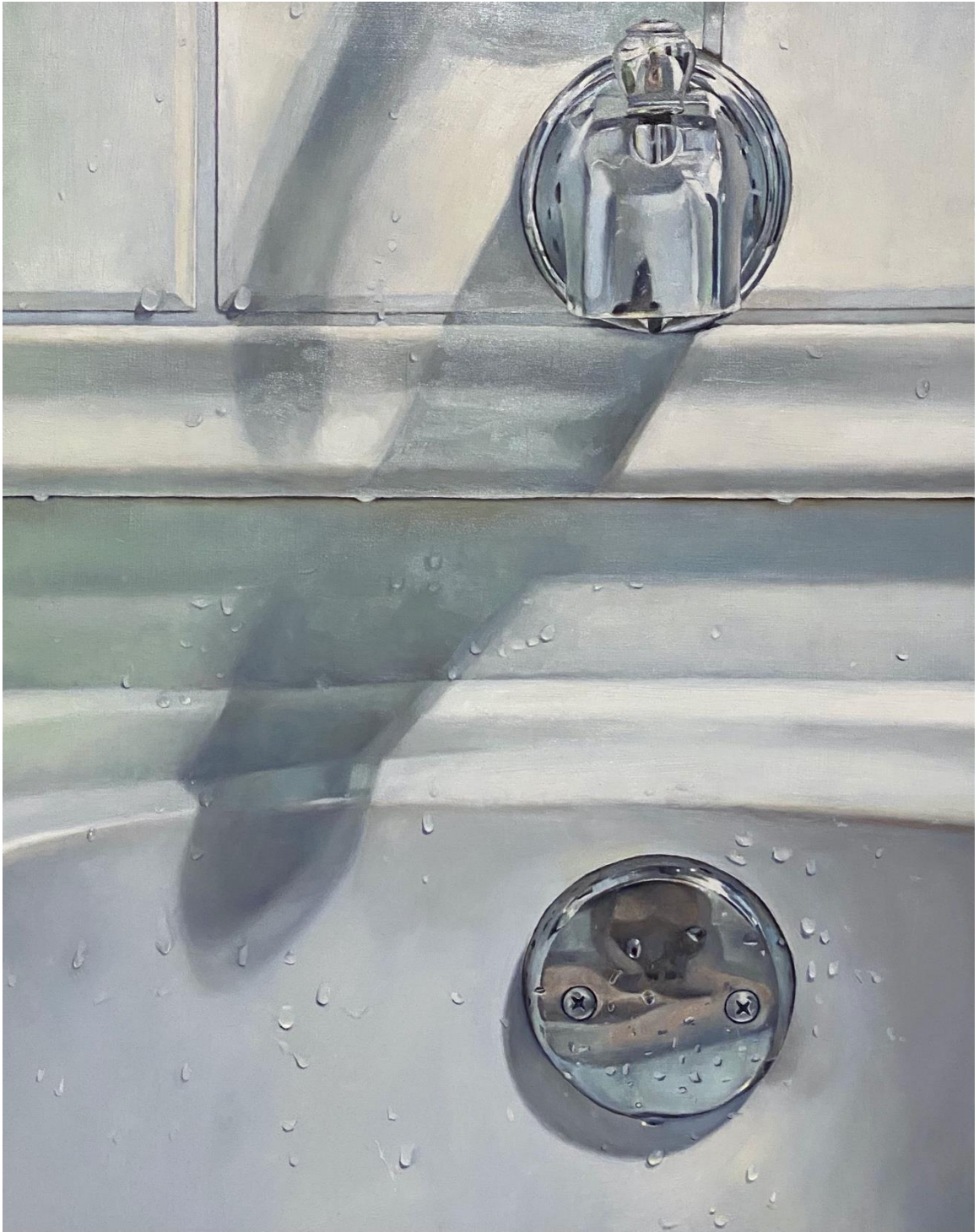
Ellipsis (Me), Oil on Panel, 3 x 4", 2019



Tri-Sprintec, Oil on Panel, 3.97 x 2.72", 2020

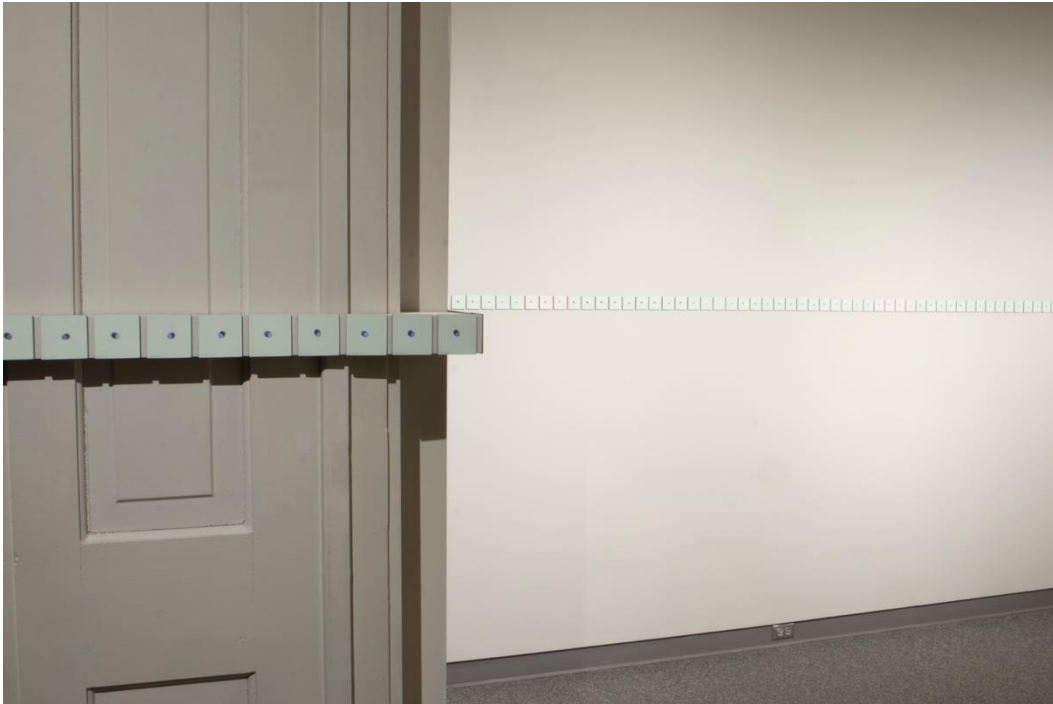


Cutting Ties, Oil on Claybord, 11 x 14", 2019

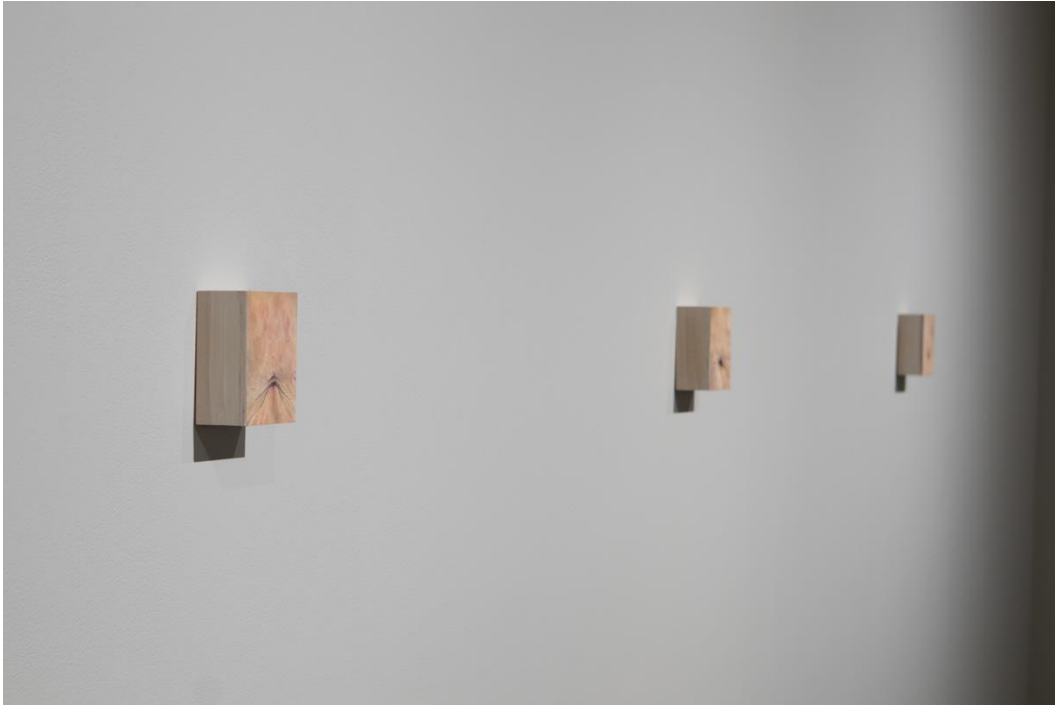


Self-Reflection, Oil on Panel, 11 x 14", 2019

Documentation of Exhibition:



The Daily Pill, Oil on Panel, 2 x 2" each



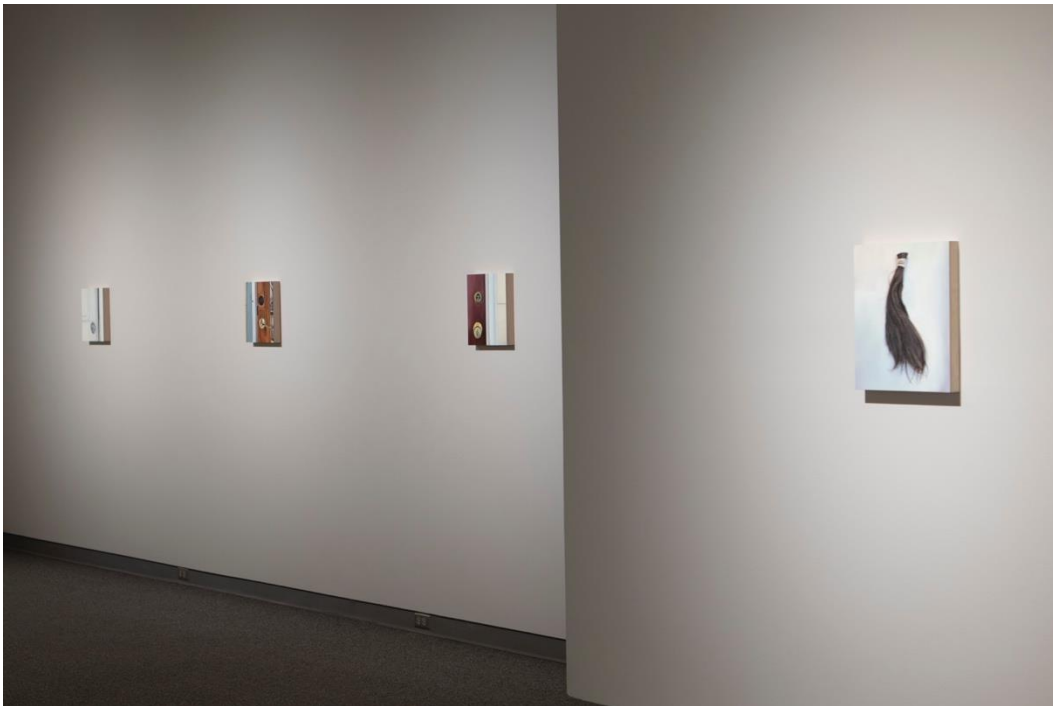
Ellipsis, Oil on Panel, 3 x 4" each



Self-Reflection, Oil on Panel, 11 x 14"



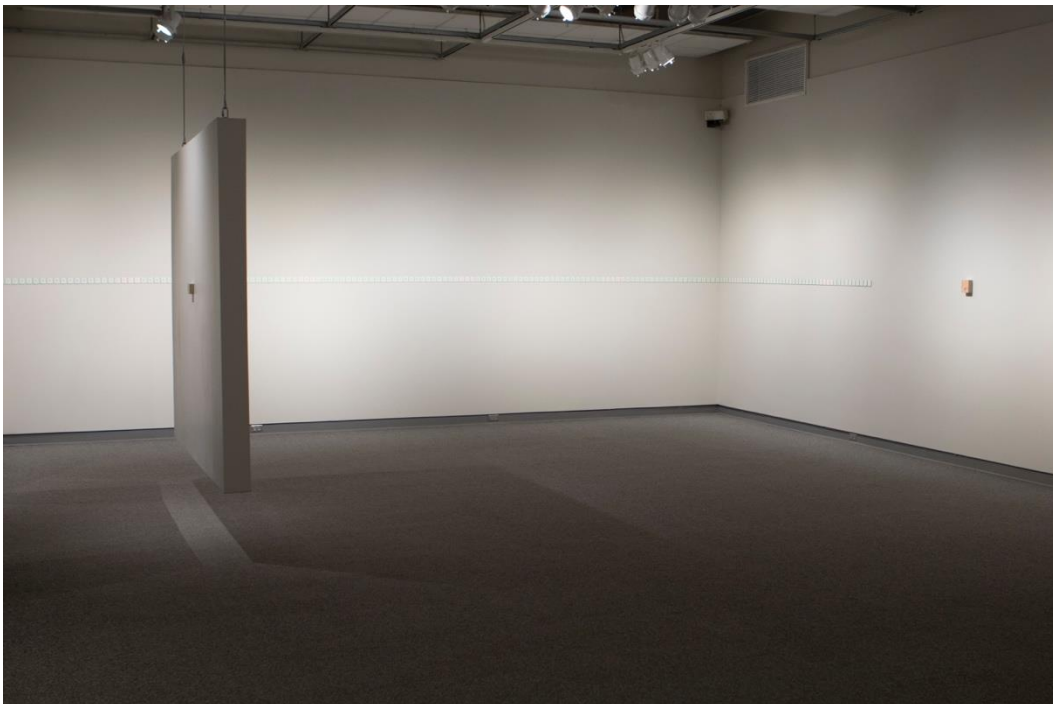
Low Risk and High Risk, Oil on Panel, 5 x 7"



Home, Oil on Panel, 10 x 12" and *Cutting Ties, Oil on Claybord 11 x 14"*



Cutting Ties, Oil on Claybord, 11 x 14" and *The Daily Pill*, Oil on Panel, 2 x 2" each



Tri-Sprintec, Oil on Panel, 3.97 x 2.72" and *The Daily Pill*, Oil on Panel, 2 x 2" each

This project was made possible, in part, with support from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts' Endowment Fund.