

Review: “Rupture and Release: drawing as an act of embodiment” at Fort Worth Contemporary Arts

What does it mean to embody an art work or to embody the process of making art? The literal definition of embody is to express an abstract idea in a specific manner, which leaves me wanting. I associate embodiment as a multisensory experience of being inside one’s body, and allowing awareness and perception to manifest in the making of and in one’s art.

In the exhibition Rupture and Release: drawing as an act of embodiment, at Fort Worth Contemporary Arts, artists Anne Allen, Joey Fauerso, and Dorota Borowa defy traditional drawing methods through their focus on process, experimental materials, and approaches to markmaking inspired by their relationship with their environments.



Left: Joey Fauers, “A Theory of Accidents,” 2025. Right: Anne Allen, “Let Me Give You Shelter,” 2026, digital print, watercolor, acrylic, colored pencil, collage on chiffon dimensions variable. Photo: Kay Seedig, courtesy of the artist & Cris Worley Fine Arts, Dallas

The exhibition features two bodies of works printed on chiffon by Dallas-based artist Anne Allen, whose work explores shapes and patterns found in nature, referencing the artist’s connection to the landscape. Allen’s somatic practice includes hiking. As she hikes, she photographs roots, leaves, puddles, cracks — detailed magnified patterns that define small moments in the natural world.

The work originates with a collage of digital imagery that is printed on polyester chiffon. The fabric's inherent qualities of translucency and fluidity emphasize ephemeral, transitory movement, reminding us of the presence of plastic embedded in the environment. The title of the series, *Unnatural* (2023-2024), underlines the use of synthetic material and the camera's representation of nature.

After the printing, Allen uses watercolor, acrylic, and colored pencil to deconstruct the photographic pattern, adding her own marks that evoke memory of place. She further ruptures the composition through cuts and tears, symbolizing resilience through destruction. As I examined the sculptural compositions from a distance, they resembled draped clothing; embodiment suggested through the absence of a figure.



Anne Allen, "Let Me Give You Shelter," 2026, digital print, watercolor, acrylic, colored pencil, collage on chiffon
dimensions variable. Photo: Kay Seedig, courtesy of the artist & Cris Worley Fine Arts, Dallas

Inspired by childhood trips to Oklahoma and recent volunteer work at The Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT), Allen's newest work, *Let Me Give You Shelter* (2026), explores historical shelter belts, built to protect the land from erosion. Responding to the extreme droughts in the 1930s, President Roosevelt initiated the shelterbelt project in six prairie states to protect crops and wildlife from destruction due to extreme weather. Allen remembers seeing the shelterbelts as a child. Researching the types of trees planted for the project, she discovered that the herbarium at BRIT had many of these specimens. Photographs of the trees and plants from the collection serve as source material for the resulting installation.

Using a similar process to the *Unnatural* works but on a larger scale, Allen draws, paints and cuts into the digital imagery, re-patterning to incorporate history, memory, and environmental ravages. The fabric appears to sag under the weight — the weight of history, weight of drought, dust storms, tornadoes, weight of land mismanagement and abuse. From a distance, it's easy to focus on the architectural structure of the work, but the real gem is examining the subtle details. The reward is in close observation, where beauty emerges from the tatters. The work conjures contrasting metaphors of safety, fear, fragility, and the need for nature to heal.

San Antonio artist Joey Fauerso's work often subverts classical canons of art. Trained as a painter, Fauerso uses nontraditional materials, performance, and video to emphasize the importance of learning, improvisation, and creative play in the act of art making. Her practice is grounded in theoretical research and responds to her immediate environment, which often includes her family as frequent collaborators.

The exhibition features multiple videos and two sculptural paper installations. In these works, drawing feels less like a final product and more like an embodied event. The video work entitled *Drawing Battles* (2015) is a series of eleven single-channel works that humorously explore family dynamics. Viewers often only have access to the finished work and not the artist's process or journey. Fauerso shifts the emphasis, de-rarifying and demystifying drawing by focusing on the process. We witness the artist's hand and the hands of her family as they quite literally battle for dominance.



Joey Fauerso, "Drawing Battles," 2015, 11 single-channel videos, 54 minutes (total running time). Photo: Courtesy of the artist

One of my favorite parts of this series include the artist's sons, Brendan and Paul, who collaboratively draw on the same white paper. Tension arises as they "battle" for control by drawing and obliterating each other's lines. The frenetic mark making delineating sibling rivalry makes me smile, reminiscent of my own children's frequent tug-of-wars. Another video shows Fauerso's husband Riley's hand drawing. We see the artist's hands enter the space, cradling his hand in hers. What begins as an intimate, poignant gesture quickly shifts as Fauerso's hands exert pressure and control in guiding Riley's movements. The video sound of the marker on the surface creates further tension, turning the act of drawing into something physical, visceral, and shared.

Fauerso's video *In a Classroom* (2025) and the sculptural installation *A Theory of Accidents* (2025) resulted from the ARCUS project residency in Moriya, Japan, housed in the historic Oisawa Elementary School. Responding to her new surroundings and using materials found on site, the artist and her two sons engaged in creative play. The video's title comes from Adrienne Rich's poem of the same name, which questions modes of learned knowledge versus the value of embodied experience.

In the video, we see fragments of bodies interacting within the seemingly empty space. It is a dance of sorts — how does one activate and disrupt the normative architectural space designed for utilitarian function? Fauerso shared with me that she found a slew of white

paper bags in the backroom, and these became a source of play and experimentation. One of my favorite scenes is when Brendan and Paul jump on the bags, creating loud pops that resonate within the empty classroom. Childhood pranks — what I wished I could have done to disrupt a boring teacher during class.

After using the bags as collaborative performance partners, Fauerso researched crumple theory and Paul Virilio's concept of "integral accident." Smoothing out the creases and lines on the bags, the artist used black paint to emphasize the imperfections rather than trying to hide them. The resulting installation looks like a mountainscape — a beautiful landscape made from disposable materials where our eyes transform simple marks into small topographies of chance and imagination.

Dorota Borowa is a Polish artist living in Ireland. Like Allen's work, Borowa seeks inspiration with nature. Rather than incorporating nature as a subject however, the artist collaborates with the natural world, specifically water to address issues of mutability, climate change and the relationship between humans and the environment. Grounded in mindfulness, close observation and an emphasis on process as a performative act, the drawings create a liminal space between accident and design. Borowa confided that her process mimics life — sometimes it doesn't work out.



Dorota Borowa, "In Search of Presence (Obstructed)," 2026, black ochre natural pigment, oil paint, Fabriano paper, movement of water, glassine, dimensions variable. Photo: Kay Seedig, courtesy of the artist

Installed in the gallery lobby is a large-scale work entitled *In Search of Presence (Obstructed)* (2026). Water is a co-collaborator in this piece. The movement of the water creates the marks on the paper. Two glycine panels obscure two-thirds of the drawing. This simple act references the unfinished quality of the work, and the absence of the artist's body.

WHILE WAITING AT THE AMERICAN CUSTOMS IN SHANNON I WAS TRYING HARD NOT TO FALL APART IN FRONT OF THE OFFICERS AND DREAMING ABOUT THE SAFE ENCLOSURE OF MY CAR, PARKED AT THE LONG STAY CAR PARK, WHICH WILL SILENTLY EMBRACE MY ANGER, DEVASTATION, SADNESS AND FRUSTRATION. BUT I WAS ALSO THINKING OF THE FEELING SHARED BY MANY WHO ARE DENIED ENTRY. I AM COMING BACK TO THE PLACE I ADOR, TO THE MAN AND CHILD WHO ARE WAITING FOR ME, AND TO MY SAFE SPOT ON THIS PLANET. HOW MANY OF US HAVE THAT? TODAY AND TOMORROW I THINK ABOUT THOSE WHO DON'T.

Dorota Borowa, "On Thursday, August 13, 2026, Dorota Borowa was denied entry to the US as she travelled to Texas to install her work for 'Rupture and Release.' The work installed here, featuring text and preparatory drawings, is part of her response to this experience. Dorota will now visit TCU in September to complete her site-specific drawings as originally intended."

On Thursday, August 13, 2026, Borowa was denied entry into the U.S., as she traveled to Texas to create her work for the exhibition. In response to her situation, she wrote about her experiences. The resulting text serves as a journal, also functioning as drawings: text as image, markmaking with the artist's hand creating an archive.

In her writings, she expresses the fear, confusion and frustration of being denied entry. "All the questions, a stranger wouldn't dare ask, the customs officer is allowed to. My body being touched without permission... images of me taken which I can't refuse. How does it happen that the law accommodates making an innocent person feel like a hardened criminal?"

The text and some preliminary ideas for the exhibition are on display in the main gallery. As of this writing, she travels to Fort Worth this week to complete her work in the gallery. In keeping with Borowa's emphasis on process and uncertainty, I thought it fitting to leave this article unfinished — to be continued as the artist's journey and her work continues to unfold.

Rupture and Release: drawing as an act of embodiment is on view through September 25, 2026, at Fort Worth Contemporary Arts, Fort Worth.

— COLETTE COPELAND