

An aerial photograph of a dry, cracked landscape. The ground is a mix of orange-brown and dark brown soil, with numerous deep, irregular cracks running across the surface. The overall scene is desolate and arid.

AMHH Conference 2023: Student Prize-winners

Judged by the AMHH Committee

Prizes presented by Prof Anthony Costello & Dr Bridget
McDonald

An aerial photograph of a beach. The top half of the image shows the ocean with waves breaking onto the shore. The bottom half shows the sandy beach, which is mostly clear but has some dark, possibly seaweed or rocks, scattered across it. The text "Creative writing" is centered in the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

Creative writing

Priya Amin: *The Most Fragile Gift of Life*

Drips from the sky-aquarium kamikaze
a life unknown onto my left cheek;
the liquid of an atmosphere, the breath
of the earth cycled from carbon dioxide
Tapers down the root
of a traveling question:
Am I a mountain person or an ocean person?

What this means for my children is:
do I see the world through
polluted starlight, or do I taste the acid
drops of an irreparable ocean?

Look!, dolphins dance in the Venice canals
whilst Cape Town caracals step out
To the ebbs and flows of our silent suffering indoors.
Silence!, deafening in each of our lives
As we lose another million or two to this disease.

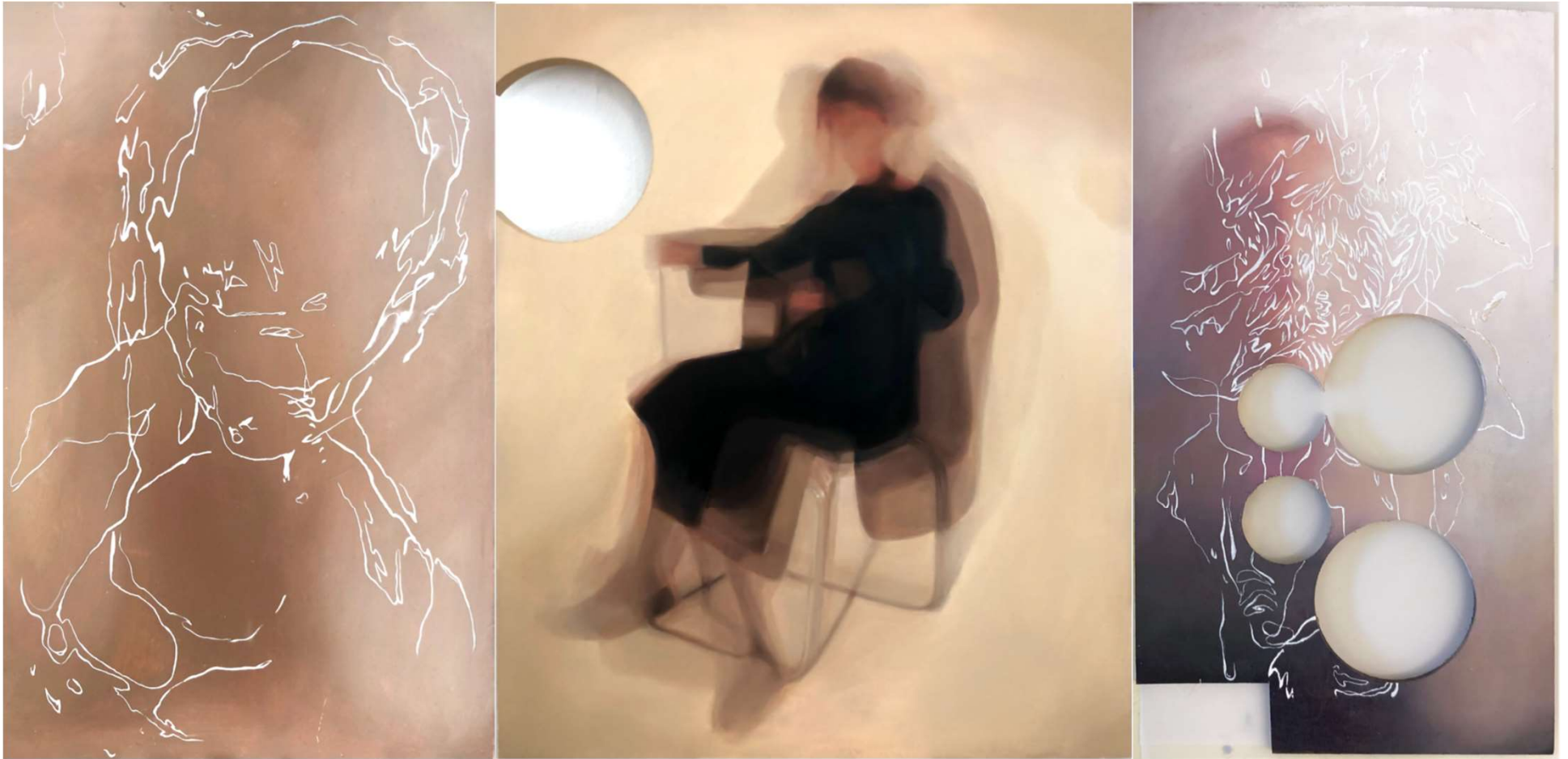
However poisoned the air, a surgical mask
protects my poison from your pollution
and the pandemic we've given the earth,
moistened with a prayer only your eyes convey.

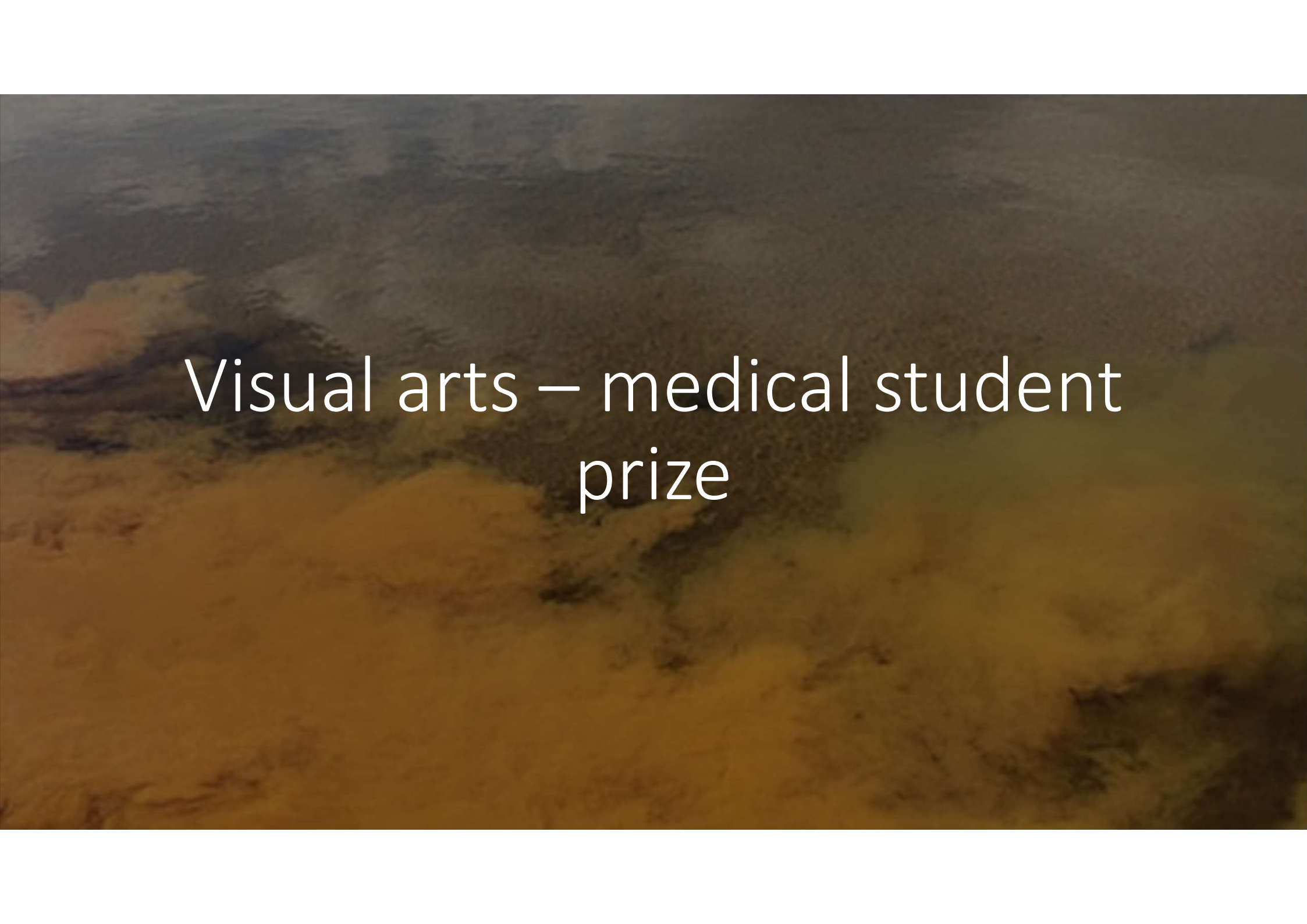
You: the art of losing, the blessing of humility,
are the most fragile gift of life.

An aerial photograph of a coastline. The top half of the image shows the ocean with white-capped waves breaking onto a wide, sandy beach. The beach is a light tan color, and the water is a deep, dark blue-grey. The text "Visual arts – art student prize" is overlaid in white, sans-serif font in the center of the image.

Visual arts – art student prize

Beth McAlester: *Vessels*, *In the waiting room*,
Too Many to count

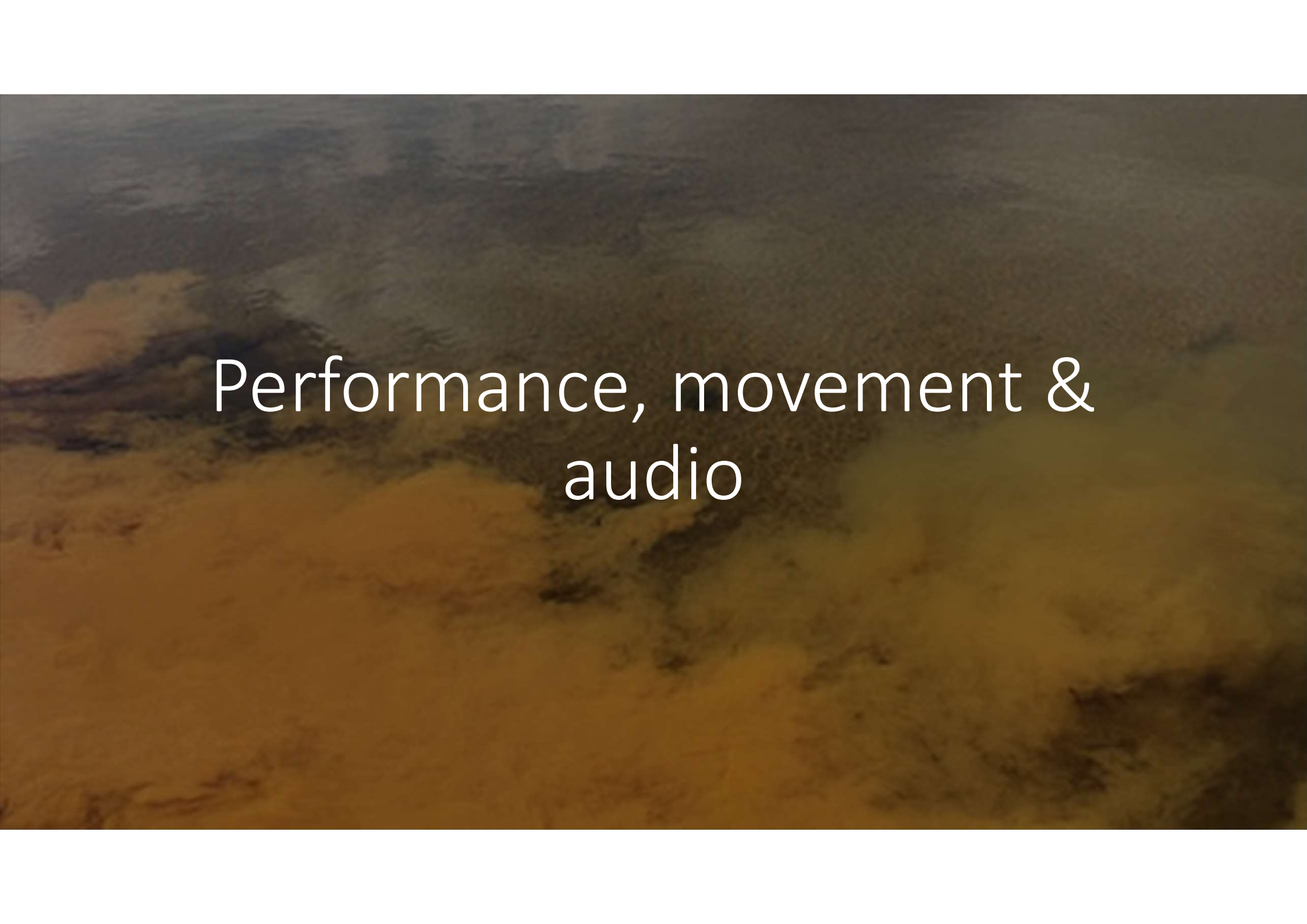


An aerial photograph of a coastline. The top half of the image shows the dark blue, slightly rippled surface of the ocean. The bottom half shows a wide, sandy beach with a light tan or golden-brown hue. The text is centered over the boundary between the water and the beach.

Visual arts – medical student
prize

Ella Finnigan: *Seeing, The Source, Reflection*



An aerial photograph of a coastline, showing a mix of dark, rocky or forested land and lighter, sandy or grassy areas. The text is centered over the image.

Performance, movement &
audio



Joseph Lewis:
STAY 'HOME'

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ioe_19822T7NIGJqDxPYI6I9FF5jOPmm/view?usp=share link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ioe_19822T7NIGJqDxPYI6I9FF5jOPmm/view?usp=share_link)

An aerial photograph of a coastline. The top half of the image shows dark, choppy ocean waves. The bottom half shows a wide, sandy beach with some darker patches of vegetation or rocks. The text is centered over the boundary between the water and the beach.

Undergraduate
research prize

Nina Djukic: *Physician social identities, moral injury, and subjective mental health outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic*



Moral injury and social identities in UCSF/SFVA physicians during the COVID-19 pandemic

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SUMMER EXPLORE 2022

Background

- **Moral injury** is defined as lasting distress due to perpetrating, failing to prevent, or witnessing acts that transgress or deeply violate one's moral or ethical code
- During the pandemic, physicians experienced ongoing challenges and potentially traumatic experiences in caring for COVID patients, which placed them at increased risk of mental health challenges and moral injury
- Existing studies have demonstrated stark inequities in susceptibility to COVID-19, with socially marginalized communities due to race and income disproportionately represented in hospitalization and death rates
- Little is known about the role of physician social identities (e.g. race, gender, immigration status) in susceptibility to moral injury and mental health and functional outcomes among those who cared for COVID patients

Objectives

1. Preliminarily describe the association between various social identities, experiences of moral injury, and mental health and functional outcomes in physicians and residents employed by the SFVA and UCSF who treated COVID patients during the pandemic
2. Gain physician perspectives on potential interventions and support services that would maximally benefit physicians in these circumstances

Methods

- Cross-sectional study design
- Mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative)

Participants

N = 7 (recruitment ongoing) physicians who reported caring for COVID patients at the SFVA or UCSF during the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020-present)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Support by grants from UCSF Summer Explore



Witnessing structural injustice and inequity is a form of moral injury for physicians caring for COVID patients

Measures

- Interviews conducted via Zoom, where physicians were asked about:
 - Salient identities that may have affected their experience of caring for COVID-19 patients
 - How those identities influenced their care or experience.
 - Any experiences of moral injury and their subjective current mental health symptoms and functional outcomes
 - Ideas about interventions and support that could benefit providers
- Questionnaire data collected via Qualtrics including:
 - Demographics (age, race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, subjective social class and childhood adversity, spirituality, immigration status, years in profession, and years at UCSF/SFVA).
 - Quantitative screening surveys for depression, anxiety, PTSD, alcohol use, moral injury, and brief functional measures

Results

Several key themes were raised which merit further exploration and analysis in our interview data.

1. Physician self-identified social identities played a critical role in experiences of patient care and moral injury during the pandemic

"...seeing an ICU full of Black and brown people makes you realize that there was a failure in our society somewhere and in our system, in our healthcare system, our society, all of the above...I felt really bad about that. That our society had gotten to the point where...in this huge moment where these vulnerable communities needed us the most, I think those communities, at the beginning of the pandemic, were left...without any help and any support....I felt like a lot of those communities were just abandoned."

"...wanting to care for my own community, and...the structure of that environment made it such that it was hard to actually do that, was very distressing."

2. Physicians would find therapy and mental health support helpful in their moral injury and distress, but face barriers including concern for professional repercussions, scheduling accessibility, expense, especially for trainees

"I think most residents and fellows feel some kind of way about seeking therapy, to be honest....because it has implications for your job, it has implications for can you get disability insurance....your medical license asks you about it....I feel like because of that, and because, mental health is stigmatized in our society, and in our profession, honestly, I think a lot of residents and fellows, at least in my generation, feel some kind of way about seeking therapy....I think it's hard often, for us."

"...at least in my generation, we grew up and we went through the system where it specifically asks you, have you ever had a mental health disorder, have you ever seen a mental health provider, and you have to click yes and no. And I think because of that we all know.... the implications of that...can you go to residency, can you go to fellowship, can you get a job, can you get a medical license. And so, I think probably most people including me, I think that's probably what comes to the top of the list of....why would I be concerned about seeking mental health support. "

"...therapy's expensive, you know...most insurances don't provide therapy and if they do it's not that great. You usually have to pay out of pocket and...a session of therapy can be \$2-300 per session, and that has to be some kind of long term thing....[and].if you're a resident and fellow....you're working like all the time."

Conclusions

It is important to consider the role of social identities when examining the impact of the pandemic on physician experiences. Further exploration of these themes through additional interviews will be helpful in understanding how social identity affects physicians, as well as how physician wellbeing and mental health can be best supported by their institution.

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An aerial photograph of a coastline. The top half of the image shows the ocean with white-capped waves breaking onto a sandy beach. The bottom half shows the beach and the water receding. The text is centered over the image.

Postgraduate
research prize

Lucía Guerrero Rivière: *Sights of struggle and wounded eyes: narratives of ocular maiming in Colombia*

Sights of struggle and wounded eyes: narratives of ocular maiming in Colombia

Lucía Guerrero Rivière

Abstract

During the social upheaval of 2021 in Colombia, human rights oversight organisms registered at least 103 instances of ocular mutilation produced by the police's use of crowd control weapons. In most cases, persons at sites of protests were struck in the face by kinetic impact projectiles or tear gas canisters, resulting in injuries with significant impacts on the life course of victims and their support networks, such as disfigurement and visual impairment. This ongoing project is motivated by the need to enact justice for the disabling and debilitating effects of direct and structural violence in Colombia without reproducing normative notions of bodily capacities. Drawing on critical disability studies perspectives and scholarship on violence and embodiment, I examine how individual and collective narratives make sense of these injuries, and the material, symbolic, and cultural repertoires on which they are grounded. While such narratives are produced by a variety of social actors from different sectors (e.g., journalists, NGOs, medics, among others), I focus on the stories and practices of survivors and those most impacted by these injuries.

Background

On April 28th, 2021, a proposed tax reform catalysed mass protests decrying socioeconomic inequalities, the inadequate implementation of the 2016 Peace Accords with the FARC guerrilla, a lack of social support amid the COVID-19 crisis, among a host of other issues. Among other human rights violations reported throughout the two months of protest, including gender-based violence and disappearances, instances of riot police shooting at protesters' eyes became a topic of concern. As with the Chilean protests in 2019 (which coincided with the 2019 National Strike in Colombia), the injured eye quickly became a symbol both of the resistance and the violence with which it was met. At the time of this writing, the most recent case of ocular injury was in February 2023.

Far from a novel or unique practice, ocular mutilation (particularly by "non-lethal" weapons) has been documented since 1990 in countries including Kashmir, Hong Kong, Palestine, and Chile, which suggests a potential systematicity in this form of brutality across contexts and regions.

In Colombia, survivors of ocular injury have formed a collective called Resistance Movement Against Ocular Attacks (known in Spanish as MOCAO), to advocate for police reform, reparations, and an awareness of the stigma and discrimination they often face because of the



Research objectives

My overarching research objective is to identify and characterise the narratives that foreground and emerge from the phenomenon of ocular mutilation in Colombia.

In particular, I am interested in the consonances and dissonances of how the ocular injury is invoked and represented in individual and collective narratives. To this end, I approach ocular maiming as a point of encounter between social and individual bodies as well as forms of direct and slow violence that touch bodies in both conspicuous and covert ways, producing a life history of the wound as well as of the wounded.

Moreover, as an engaged research project, it has the ulterior aim of gaining insight into how disability-sensitive justice may be enacted in cases of state violence. Thus, I have sought to integrate the interests of survivors of eye injuries (and other groups affected by ocular mutilation) and attempted to maximise the benefits they may derive from both the research process and outputs as the project progresses.

Top: banner that reads "we gave our eyes for change and a new country" at a rally in November 2022. Bottom: banner that reads "who gave the order to shoot at [our] eyes?" held by members of MOCAO at a rally in early 2023. Photos used with permission.

Theoretical frameworks

This research is germane to contemporary critiques of the social model of disability, where scholars have argued that the violent origin of visual impairments in ocular attacks generates friction with rights-based disability politics that are often formulated in a Global North context. Specifically, Jasbir Puar's articulation of debility as an unsettling of the disability-ability dyad has alerted me to the ways in which the phenomenon of ocular mutilation might relate to forms of violence that are both direct and durational, where a discrete incident of disablement is not always identifiable.

This prompted me to explore the works of Rob Nixon, Lauren Berlant, Johann Galtung, and others on slow death, debilitation, structural violence, and slow violence, which note the narrative challenges posed by these harms. Finally, I briefly look to the criminological and human rights practice literature on the use of weapons in policing for insight into how these technologies encapsulate relations between the state, violence, and the governance of the lives and bodies of the citizenry.

Below: word cloud based on an online inception meeting for the documentary with members of MOCAO in January 2023. I asked members to use one word to describe what the group meant to them. From notes, and using the group's logo, I produced this register of words including light, resistance, future, reparation, strength, and resilience, as well as the names of victims of ocular injury to whom they would like to dedicate the documentary as a memorial.



Methods and approaches

The approach to data collection and analysis for this project is informed by engaged research practice (particularly Latin American participatory action research) and constructivist grounded theory. To date, I have used online interviews with artists, journalists, and human rights defenders as well as data culled from the digital archive (ranging from civil reports to images that circulated during and after the National Strike) to identify the sources and recurring themes in narratives on the topic.

During the in-situ phase of the research, I will be holding confidential narrative interviews, mainly with survivors of ocular attacks. Also, incorporating elements of participatory film methods, I will co-produce a documentary in collaboration with MOCAO, focussed on the collective's practices of mutual aid, resilience, and advocacy for survivors. It is hoped that this process will provide an opportunity to gather information about collective narratives about ocular injuries in a scenario that proves worthwhile and meaningful for participants.

Expected contributions

This project aims to contribute to emerging work across the fields of disability studies, human rights practice, law, medical sciences, literary studies, medical humanities, and criminology that has responded to the urgency of ocular injuries as a transnational phenomenon. It is hoped that my work on the Colombian case might contribute to understanding ocular injuries and how it has been signified in other contexts and cases. To date I have collaborated with scholars studying ocular maiming in Chile, Kashmir, and Palestine.

Examining the symbolism of the wounded eye in narrative – either romanticised as a symbol of the revolution or stigmatised as belonging to destructive 'vandals' – gives insight into how individuals and collectives relate to the ocular injury through existing notions of sacrifice, public order, martyrdom, and the cultural value given to sight and visibility – a phenomenon named by Latin American scholars as ocular-centrism.

These aspects of the meanings assigned to and constructed around witnessing, surviving, attending, and living with the ocular injury, I hope, will enrich approaches to other forms of police violence as well as push the boundaries of disability politics. In particular, I hope it will raise questions about how wounded bodies – specifically, injured eyes – (dis)appear in the rhetoric and practice of social movements.

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