



SHS

SENIOR HONORS STUDIO
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NYU CC

no time like the present. for ghosts.



(L-R), the artists circa
freshman year of high school
(Los Angeles, 2009).
the artists circa senior year
of college (New York, 2015)

*"April is the cruelest month, breeding
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing
Memory and desire"*

— T.S. Eliot, *"The Waste Land"*¹

The transition from winter to spring negotiates a delicate interplay of loss and promise; the memory of a mitten dropped on the sidewalk is balanced by the potential of thawing earth. The objects around us become imbued with these losses and gains, indirectly representing people and places once cherished. The remnant, through its presence, seems to signal something — or someone — else's absence

While they work largely in different media, both Laura Pfeffer and Susannah Liguori have adopted the remnant as their primary material. The thematic affinity between their bodies of work is hardly surprising; the two artists have known each other for nine years. Through sometimes poignant but never precious work, Liguori and Pfeffer ask how it is that we come to value certain objects, navigating emotional bonds, absence, and absurdity.

"When you find a bobby pin on the ground," says Liguori, "you don't think, 'Oh, this is from 1987!'" Divorced from their original context, the found objects in her work are timeless. Though they clearly once had a use, their capture and preservation in vacuum-sealed bags render that purpose illegible, forcing the viewer to ask: what is it? Their incomprehensible value produces a tension that animates much of her present work. Sometimes language itself is an obstacle for Liguori: words become mere traces of meaning and are never sufficient. Recent works present facts about the artist and unanswered questions along with traces of our lives as consumers, specifically receipts and business cards. What is valuable information? What questions can be asked, or answered?

Pfeffer puts found objects to work, producing videos that bear the trace of the Internet even though they circulate as fine art. Operating in the space between fiction and nonfiction, *Mollie's Interview* repurposes found footage of upstate New York — fragments of the lives of strangers — to "illustrate" the childhood home of Pfeffer's friend, Mollie. A new, parafictional purpose is inscribed on these digital remnants, estranging them from their original context. Pfeffer's works produce a dislocating dissonance that is sometimes quite funny: absurd and selfdeprecating humor are prominent in her oeuvre.



In addition to her practice as a video artist, Pfeffer has recently begun producing soil. She composted the soil in her contribution to the collaboration with Liguori using food waste from her friends and loved ones, including Liguori and myself. This act gives material presence and heft to the intangible bonds she shares with them. Once waste, the traces of these people have a second life in this space, charged with the potential for new growth, mixing memory and desire.

¹ T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land"
The Waste Land, Prufrock, and
Other Poems (London: Dover
Publications, 1998), 1.S