

# Sotto Voce

Ash Sark

BFA Presentation 2021  
Drawing and Painting

Committee:

Sarah Kabot,

Tony Ingrisano,

Amber Kempthorn,

Tommy Mira y Lopez

<https://ahsark.wixsite.com/artwork>

# Statement

My exhibition titled *Sotto Voce* concentrates on internality, contemplation, and the interplay between unrest and calm. Some drawings are presented on the wall, while others are presented in a series of three books that guide a viewer through mindfulness meditations. The image-based work depicts the body, focusing on small, cropped sections of a figure. Other works refer to the body through text that prompts the viewer to engage with their own body. The small drawings bring a viewer close to the object to look at them or read them, encouraging a physical closeness with the work. The other drawings are larger than life-size with proximate depictions of a body being examined, displaying a moment of closeness and vulnerability that we don't normally see from others.

All works are rendered in watercolor on non-absorbent watercolor paper creating a hazy, dreamy feel that lends itself to the psychological topics I am capturing. On the figures, deep purples and blues make parts of the body look bruised or as if blood is rushing to the surface of the skin-- something is happening within the body that refers to a struggle. There is disquiet within the quiet. The combination of water-based media on a non-absorbent ground demonstrates disconnection; the watercolor doesn't soak into the slick surface of the paper, it pools and reticulates. These effects reflect the dissociative or anxious feelings embodied in the figurative works and cause distortion in the text. In the books, the combination of this distortion, the curation of the pages, and the prompted meditations slow a viewer down and ask them to be present.

# Statement Cont'd

These works reclaim both time and the body. My figurative drawings depict and embody anxiety manifesting in a body and the meditations are tools used to counteract that anxiety. Contemplating one's body is typically reserved for moments when one is alone and in a familiar setting. By bringing these activities into a public gallery setting and encouraging gallery patrons to participate, I encourage an audience to be aware of their body. The space I create with *Sotto Voce* emphasizes the value in introspection, emotional vulnerability, and close personal moments with oneself or with an artwork. My drawings and my books ask for close and slow looking while they whisper understanding to a viewer.

Sotto voce:  
"intentionally said in a  
quiet voice"



*Install Shot*

Throughout this exercise pay close attention to how your body feels. Be as aware of physical sensations as possible.

Breathe in for 4 seconds  
hold for 5  
release for 6



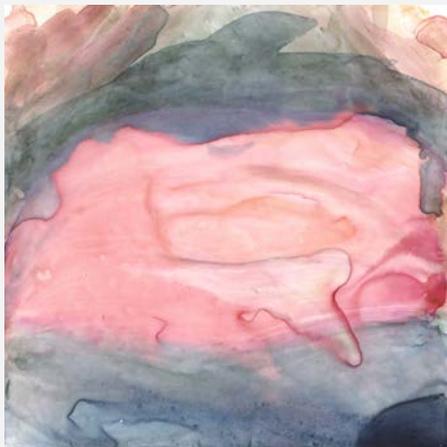
Start with your toes. Clench them for 5 seconds. Slowly release, feeling the tension leave your body.



Calves next. Flex for 5 seconds as hard as you can. Release.



Squeeze your thighs, glutes, and hips.  
.....  
release



Suck in your belly.  
continue to breathe.



relax.



Chest. Breathe in  
deep for 5, hold  
for 5

exhale for 5  
Visualize tension  
leaving your body  
with your breath.

Tense up your  
neck and shoulders  
Hold 5 seconds.  
Release.



Clench your jaw



and release



Scrunch up your  
face. Close your  
eyes.  
Relax.

Lastly, your hands.  
All of the tension  
left in your body,  
visualize it in  
your fingers.



Slowly release your  
fingers, visualising  
your anxiety exiting  
through your  
fingertips.



While taking part  
in this exercise,  
try to notice things  
around you that you  
may not notice  
normally.

What are 5 things  
that you see in  
your immediate  
surroundings?

What color are  
they? How far  
away are they  
from you? What is  
the size of the  
object compared to  
your body?

What are 4 things  
you can touch?  
Pick them up. How  
heavy is the object?  
What is the  
texture like?

What are 3 sounds  
in your environment?  
How loud or quiet  
are they? How  
distant? Is there  
any white noise?

What are 2 things  
you can smell?  
How strong are they?  
Are they good or  
bad smells?

Lastly, what is  
1 thing you  
can taste? Is it  
a strong taste? Is  
it sour? Sweet?  
savory?

Answer the  
following  
questions out loud.  
Listen closely to  
your voice.

What is your  
name?

How old are  
you?

Where do  
you live?

What will you  
do next?

Where are  
you now?

What have  
you done today  
so far?

What are you  
doing now?



*Meditations*, hardcover books, 7" x 7", 2021



Installation View





*Untitled (Tugging)*  
watercolor on Yupo  
20" x 26"  
2020



*Untitled (Stretching)*  
watercolor on Yupo  
20" x 26"  
2020



*Compression*  
watercolor on Yupo  
26" x 40"  
2020



Scale Reference



*Close-up*



*Close-ups*





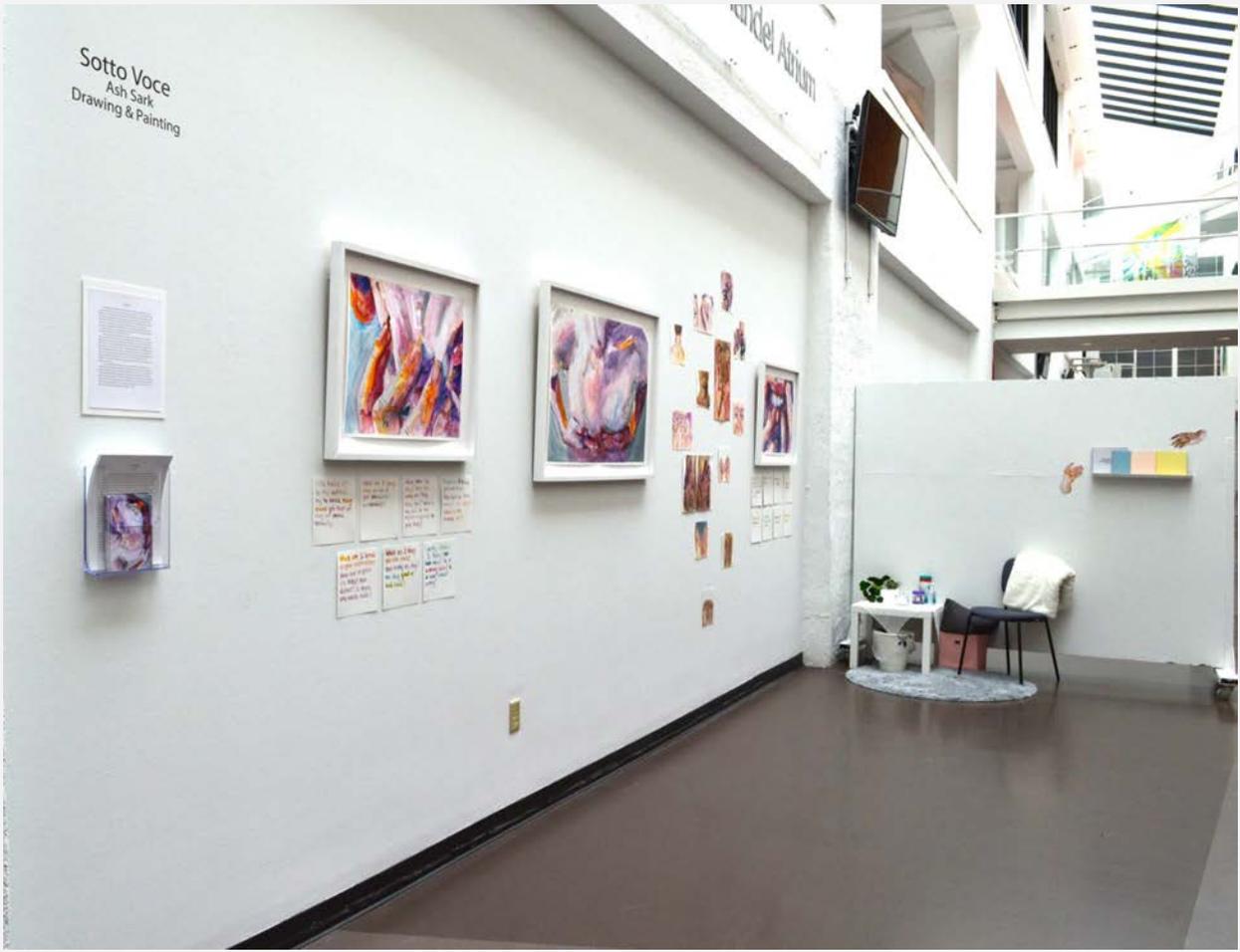
*Untitled 1-3*  
watercolor on Yupo  
Size variable  
2021



*Untitled 4-5, watercolor on Yupo, 9" x 9" each, 2021*



*Untitled 6*, watercolor on Yupo, 12" x 18", 2021



*Install Shot*

Thank you!