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## **The UIS Visual Arts Gallery presents artist Guen Montgomery in solo exhibition and lecture series**

SPRINGFIELD – The University of Illinois Springfield Visual Arts Gallery is pleased to present “Junk Drawer,” an exhibition by Champaign-based artist Guen Montgomery. “Junk Drawer” will open on Monday, March 18 and run through Thursday, April 11.

In conjunction with this exhibition, the artist will present an Engaged Citizenship Common Experience (ECCE) Speaker Series lecture from 6 to 7 p.m. on Wednesday, March 27 in Brookens Auditorium, located on the lower level of Brookens Library. Montgomery’s lecture, entitled “Kinship Stories,” will feature images from her art practice, which draws inspiration from her rural Appalachian heritage and identity as a femme gay person—and the consideration of identity through studies of gender, regional narrative, and family mythology. This lecture is co-sponsored by UIS Gender & Sexuality Student Services & UIS Women’s Center.

Immediately following this lecture, the UIS Visual Arts Gallery will host an exhibition reception for “Junk Drawer” from 7 to 8:30 p.m. at the UIS Visual Arts Gallery. This event is free and open to the public.

The prints in “Junk Drawer” are made from fur pelts and family clothing that were inked and printed on an etching press. Montgomery prefers to create prints this way, to center the sense of touch – both the actual, literal, pressured touch of fur or fabric matrix to paper, and the sense of longing to touch that comes from the printed illusion of fur or fabric. Touch is a key anchor to our bodies and to the world, and it is a reminder that we can’t escape the material.

“Junk Drawer” is a queer meditation on a hard-to-name feeling. It could just as easily be called “Messy Closet” or “Forgotten Crawl Space;” it’s the dropped kitchen-drawer mental state that results from waking up inside the den of all your accumulated stuff, and realizing you’re a

furry, smelly animal with a fragile, uncontrollable body. We obscure this fact from ourselves, finding all kinds of fancy ways to hide it. Our storage sheds and attics haunt us with their immutability, becoming unwelcome reminders of our mushy, impermanent organic-ness and the impermanent organic-ness of everyone you love. “Junk Drawer” is trying to figure out what it means to be a person-animal in material culture today.

Guen Montgomery is an artist and performer whose work investigates identity through studies of material culture, gender, and family mythology. Materially, Montgomery’s work is located in the intersections between printmaking, performance, and sculpture. Montgomery has exhibited nationally and internationally and has work in multiple public collections including the Centre for Art and Design in Churchill Australia, and Mushashino Art University, Tokyo, Japan, with recent exhibitions in Nashville and St. Louis. Montgomery currently teaches in the Studio Arts program at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, where she lives with her wife, baby daughter, dog, and two cats.

This program is partially supported by a grant from the Illinois Arts Council Agency. The UIS Visual Arts Gallery is centrally located on the UIS campus in the Health and Sciences Building, room 201 (HSB 201). Gallery hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Thursday. For more information and future exhibitions, visit the [UIS Visual Arts Gallery website](#).

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