

**MEDIA RELEASE**

[University Galleries of Illinois State University](https://galleries.illinoisstate.edu/) is pleased to present *Selects: Libby Rothfeld, 2016-2024* from August 12 through September 29, 2024. All events are free and open to the public.

Since the mid-2010s, [Libby Rothfeld](https://www.libbyrothfeld.biz/) has been exhibiting her sculptures, photographs, and installations in galleries and artist spaces across the United States and Europe. *Selects*, her institutional debut, presents work she has made over the past nine years in a variety of mediums: ceramic, photography, drawing, painting, assemblage, and various combinations of these. Demonstrating the heterogeneity of Rothfeld’s approach to making art, the exhibition contains a sprawl of styles and formats, from combinations of found objects to a slideshow of pictures of birds. What connects these nine very different artworks is the way that each one serves as a reminder of the humor and complexity buried within even the blandest, most familiar-seeming things.

Each work in *Selects* is a collection of quotidian items and images that has been precisely arranged and presented in a befuddling configuration. Some of Rothfeld’s materials are found and unchanged; others are completely fabricated or slightly altered. *Felix’s Community (#5)*, for instance, is a short plinth with a giant numeral projecting up from its base; the wood-framed structure is covered with tile and laminate, and slots all over it contain a bizarre assortment of trash bags, a notepad, plastic bottles, and saltshakers. *Untitled (Walking)* is a large image of a person shuffling down a sidewalk in heels; they are mostly out of frame and the photo is out of focus, suggesting that it was snapped accidentally (or maybe surreptitiously). A ceramic mask of a pouting primate hangs atop the photo in its bottom right corner, directly to the right of which is a brown hat. *The Punisher’s Collections* comprises two large, rotating aluminum drums, each with sneakers banging around inside it.

Rothfeld has noted that, whenever such disparate objects are made to coexist on “the same plane, they start to work together, or shift in and out of one another, deconstructing each other’s isolated meanings.” Does the large “5” in *Felix’s Community* enumerate the bric-a-brac it is looming over? Is the sculpted face in *Untitled (Walking)* meant to belong to the walker, or to someone in their presence? Is the tumbling of *The Punisher’s Collections* supposed to accomplish something, or will the shoes just spin pointlessly on and on? These questions—and any others we might be compelled to ask about Rothfeld’s work—are unanswerable. They distract from how, despite their strangeness, the components of Rothfeld’s art often relate to each other in ways that seem structurally balanced and conceptually resolved. “It’s the act of breaking down ‘why this and not that’ that I am interested in,” she has said, “in taking away our subconscious readings in order to really consider the everyday.”

*Selects* is the center point of multiple educational programs. Libby Rothfeld will give a public lecture and meet with students and classes at ISU. University Galleries’ staff will lead art-making workshops for ISU students, families, K-12 students, and community members. Free virtual and in-person curator-led tours are available by appointment for the duration of the exhibition.

*Selects* is organized by Troy Sherman, Curator at University Galleries. This exhibition and programming are supported by University Galleries’ grants from the Illinois Arts Council and the Alice and Fannie Fell Trust.

**Artist biography**

Libby Rothfeld is an artist. She was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

**Events**

All events are free and open to the public.

* **Saturday, September 14 from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m.**

Artmaking workshop. Participants will engage in a short tour of the exhibition before creating an assemblage sculpture inspired by the artist. [Registration required](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=OphfCGkLcEK3HRBpUHa6_kx-qOKn8YxDrMuxRtAfh9xUMlpLQ0FLUVpDMkVFMEQ1MDI0SDdYTUFNNi4u)

* **Wednesday, September 18, from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m.**

Exhibition reception with Libby Rothfeld, Rafael Soldi, and Norman Long

* **Thursday, September 19 from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m.**

Artist lecture by Libby Rothfeld

* Free curator-led exhibition tours and workshops are available by appointment for classes and community groups. Contact Gallery@IllinoisState.edu to schedule.

University Galleries, a unit in the Wonsook Kim College of Fine Arts, is located at 11 Uptown Circle, Suite 103, at the corner of Beaufort and Broadway streets. Parking is available in the Uptown Station parking deck located directly above University Galleries—the first hour is free, as well as any time after 5:01 p.m.

You can find [University Galleries](https://galleries.illinoisstate.edu/) on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/UniversityGalleries), [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/universitygalleriesisu/), and [Twitter](https://twitter.com/UGalleriesISU), and sign up to receive email updates through the [newsletter](https://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=0017wkX2ma9Iz6YGXhiHaPkYlJ0Jep7qNDrUe6TlgGIh7Cn2AC77NtvDdjrsE56jJ3kL_6LqtbDcHtf3TbTaZ7cLZMWoGJ3uUU5OhImgL_ybAk%3D). Please contact Gallery@IllinoisState.edu or call (309) 438-5487 if you need to arrange an accommodation to participate in any events related to these exhibitions.