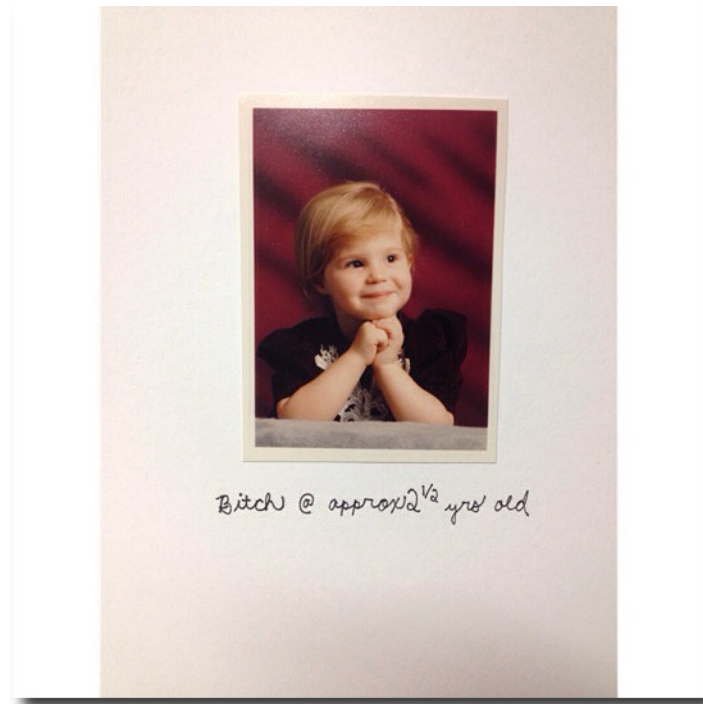


Empowering Identity



Creating Self-Portraits

Victoria Gottlieb

I have primarily organized my document book chronologically, spare the five art events that I have saved for the end, as they seem better suited as an appendix rather than integrated into the body of the document. Thus, the reader sees the general progression of my themes, my artworks, my reflections, and how the subsequent texts build off the previous texts. Accompanying images include my own work, which visibly portray the progression of my art, and work from source artists, which help contextualize some of my own considerations.

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Introduction

At the most essential level, the word “identity” is defined as a sense of self, the condition of being oneself. When one delves deeper into the word, they begin to uncover the term’s complexities: is identity something singular, or can one have multiple identities? Can various pieces of identity converge, creating a comprehensive whole? Identity encompasses a sense of self as well. I question what influences one’s sense of self? Is it constructed by ourselves, others, or both? How can one tangibly convey a sense of one’s self?

While my artwork does not resolve each of the aforementioned issues, it does explore them. Initially, my SMP work grappled with broad feminist identity issues and the desire to bring the private world of the “universal woman” to the public sphere. I analyzed the works of prominent feminist artists such as Hannah Wilkes and Nancy Spero, noting the ways in which their public works created narratives conveying women’s experiences. My own inclination to make the private public manifested itself as brightly colored, sculptural, tampon art that disappointingly perplexed my audience and did not effectively communicate the wealth of feminist knowledge I had gained through my extensive research. I found I struggled with the content of my earlier work because it lacked a clear focus. I clarified my focus and while my art still largely focuses on making the private public, my art centers on revealing specific truths about myself. In creating a wide variety of self-portraits, I achieve more genuine works, ones that speak the truth about my subjective experiences of myself, my femaleness, my identity.

Through the creative process of approaching a surface and either reproducing a specific mental image of myself or allowing an image to grow out of marks, I found many of the formal choices I made in the representations of myself revealed my complex considerations of my identity. Many of these considerations, both documented exteriorly in my self-portraits and present interiorly in my mind, were influenced not only by the words of others impressed upon my view of myself but also my struggle with bulimia. Though these less favorable life experiences are not the focus of my work, they play a significant role in it, functioning as a type of shading integrated into my perceptions of myself. While producing some of my later self-portraits in the body of work, I was especially inspired by the self-portraits of Frida Kahlo. Much of my research on Kahlo included explorations of her life, one that included devastating tragedy and complex experiences with which Kahlo had to contend. However, in deciphering her self-portraits, I found myself not dwelling on what could be considered pitiable experiences, but rather on the courage Kahlo possessed to expose her deepest, truest self, put herself in this position of vulnerability, yet do so courageously, with undoubted sovereignty over these portrayals of herself. One of my goals in my work is to achieve those kinds of striking images, ones so layered with meaning that they command the viewer’s attention and challenge the viewer to extract the deeper content beyond the surface.

Utilizing myself as the subject matter in my work allows me a unique view of my sense of self and how I choose to express it. My own sense of self is greatly affected by the intersections between how I see myself (as a female, a student, a daughter, a bulimic, an artist) and how others see me. I create a variety of self-portraits that illustrate the tensions and complexities of those intersections. Each image embodies a different aspect of myself, but each image portrays an account of myself that I view as an accurate representation of who and what I consider myself to be. For example, in some images I see

myself as a whole figure, and in others, I am reduced to parts. In some of the photographic portraits, I am constructing a self-portrait consisting of an image of myself from an other's perspective, and a description of myself from an other's words. Some images are immediately recognizable as a specific translation of my physical self while other images present a stylized, or caricatured figure. The fact that each self-portrait is a genuine embodiment of my sense of self unifies the diverse individual images to create one large, comprehensive self-portrait.

I arrange my self-portraits in a grid to encourage juxtaposition. I want the viewer to look at each individual portrait, then look at the comprehensive self-portrait, and begin to access the thoughts, feelings, experiences, and memories that shape my sense of self. I intend for the diversity of the works to enable the viewer to position their self in the work and reflect upon their own sense of self and the elements that influence it. Ultimately, I want the viewer to experience a sense of empowerment in the possibilities available for them to author their own identity, an experience I myself had and continue to have through my creation of self-portraits. Through exposing my core sense of self in such a range of self-portraits, I reinforce my belief that I ultimately make me who I am.

Initial Interests Statement

Over the summer, I created three very exploratory artworks, all of which included found objects. In these works, I enjoyed manipulating the found objects in a way that obfuscated their conventional meaning. Over the summer, I went out into my home community of Baltimore and saw a lot of found object works present in public spaces, which immediately caught my attention. I also visited GUTSY, a feminist art exhibit at Gallery CA in Baltimore. That visit greatly fueled my desire to create feminist art through reconfiguring objects and infusing them with alternative, feminist content. My initial interests statement that developed from my considerations of my summer work is as follows:

My primary artistic interests focus on themes of identity, specifically complex aspects of female identity in contemporary times. I prefer color and texture and tactile art; art that incorporates familiar objects excites me. I desire to achieve greater meaning by using my own hand to de-familiarize the object. In my art, I seek to infuse the art object with alternative or complicated meaning that conflicts its original, conventional significance. In doing so, I hope to challenge the viewer's original assumptions and beliefs, and offer the opportunity for a more layered perspective.

Initial Interview

Interviewed by Emily Jesteadt

What was your first memorable art experience and how is it relevant to what you are doing now?

I don't know if this is my first one but it's an early one. When I was little, my parents would send me to this summer arts day camp at the local arts center. I got to meet a lot of people. This was when I was pretty young and I guess at the time I liked the social aspect of it. So thinking about art now, I want to think about how other people influence my art and how my art can influence other people.

What inspires you? What are some of the sources, both within and outside of art that you turn to?

One of my huge inspirations is color in general, anything vibrant or saturated or with texture. It draws me in immediately and I want to engage with the art. And I guess now that I've been looking at a lot of Feminist art or art that has a statement, political art or controversial art. Art that makes you think or challenges your assumptions. Or, when I am drawing for myself, anything with my dog and stuff in general, stuff I'm passionate about. My main passions are art and helping people. I really like people and I want to be an art teacher or community artist. I definitely want to help other people make art too.

What draws you to the medium and materials you work in? How does your choice of medium(s) affect your work and contribute to its meaning?

My medium is influenced by some Feminist theory I'm reading, and I'm trying not to include text in my work because your language is based off of your culture and a lot of cultures, or at least the one I've grown up in, is patriarchal. Thinking about the language and how a lot of language around women is derogatory or offensive or crude specifically refers to a lot of the sexual language. I've tried to think of many famous artists I learned about when I was younger and primarily they're men and their mediums are male dominated. I'm trying to think 'Well, what can I do that's innovative?' I guess I'm just trying to have a genuine medium. So I've been trying to do more stuff with using my body and finger painting because that's unique to me. And I feel while it does have associations with the childish, I feel that's a more genuine or honest self.

How is your art a response to the world you live in?

Again, it's considering just a woman's place in the world, which I feel is very fluid and changing with the context, and I think it's just looking back at where women were and their specific context as homemakers. That's evolving and changing, but there are still domestic women and my art is just trying to figure out those various positions and roles women take on. And I know a lot of people are saying women are oppressed, but it's not as bad as it used to be, not as bad as it could be. Through my art, I'm trying to figure out where I stand between the positives and negatives, and figuring out not just my identity, but my identity in the context within women as a whole. I think it is important for women to have that solidarity, even women in different cultures or races or with definitions of women. I'd like to explore those issues in a more positive context and bring them to the public, do it in art that's not necessarily in a gallery because that's can be a really limited space. I want to create in a way that gets people interested.

Is your work ultimately more about your process or about the final product? Why do you feel that way?

For me it's definitely about the process. Personally, working on the process is a way for me to navigate the issues I want to express and really put myself in the art. I feel I learn a lot from the process, what's

working and what's not working. I think it's important for me and my viewers to see my process, where it's all coming from in order to understand the comprehensive whole.

Do you have a mission? What do you consider to be your purpose for creating art?

My ideal mission is to make art and help people. I want to make people think. I want to challenge their basic assumptions, about what art is and what its content is. I know a lot of people think art can only be a still life or something representational. I feel that art that isn't directly representational can open your mind in different ways and take reality and present it in a truer way. I want my art to bring a message. I know this is general. Even though I'm focusing on Feminist art, I'd like for women to self define and break labels and stereotypes of them. I want to make art that represents the truer woman based off of my interpretation of female experience. That's why I try to have general and accessible art because even though I can only truly speak for myself, I would like it to reach out to other people and impact them.

What about art intimidates you?

That people don't think my art is art. I always think of Marcel Duchamp's urinal, how people were like, 'What the hell is this?!' I know I shouldn't care necessarily if people look at my art and ask, 'What the hell?! Is this art?' because that's not how everyone feels and I know someone will like it and somebody won't. I feel that society makes us want to be validated through receiving approval from others. My fears are that my art won't be taken seriously when I take it very seriously and I feel that it has something very important to say and I'm putting so much effort into it.

If you could have your portrait done by anyone who would it be and why?

This answer is a little weird... Eventually I'd like to have a family. I don't want anyone to paint my portrait now, but once I have a family I want to say to my first kid when they're a toddler or have the motor skills to hold a pencil or play with paints, 'Okay draw a picture of Mommy.' I'd love to see what that'd look like. I feel that would be so genuine, and even if it doesn't look like me I feel like your own flesh and blood could really encompass that. I would like my kid to make a portrait of me. Then I'd probably frame it, I'd be so proud, not just put it on the fridge but frame it on the wall.

Marathon Works



Victoria Gottlieb, *Woman*, 2014
A reference to the vagina sculptures of artist Hannah Wilke.



Victoria Gottlieb, *Shavings*, 2014
An accumulation of colored pencil shavings.



Victoria Gottlieb, *Mound*, 2014
A quick painting of a body form.

Marathon

For the marathon, I had two weeks to create a body of diverse works. Some of those works evolved from prompts given to me by others, and some works developed from prompts I devised for myself. I challenged myself to work in ways new to me, cranking out work and creating spontaneously instead of meticulously planning every detail of my art. While the experience was challenging, it was liberating and very rewarding. I found myself moving away from the rigidity of pre-constructed found objects and into mediums I found more fluid, such as paper and paint. My reflection on my overall marathon body of work is as follows:

My artistic intentions include utilizing the female body and its experiences as inspiration for artworks that address woman and her complexities, especially within the context of a patriarchal society. Ideally, my works will stem from a variety of female experiences and offer viewers insight into and consideration of those experiences. I want my works to be simultaneously confrontational and accessible, meant for a general audience. I desire to create less two-dimensional works, pushing my art into physical space, an action serving as a metaphor for counteracting the stereotype of the passive, static, receptive woman. I want to emphasize physical presence and the female body. My peers suggested I explore in greater depth my interest in the body, which coincides with my goal to utilize less traditional mediums. Potential avenues for achieving this include incorporating actual bodies into my art, looking at the work of feminist artists such as Hannah Wilke and Carolee Schneemann. While I am interested in trying the human body as a medium, I am also considering employing my body as the tool for applying the medium, similarly to artist Janine Antoni. For my subsequent works, I will push my mediums to intertwine more with female body themes as well as start specifying the content of my work to convey the feminist complexities I have been researching. In these future works, I want to establish undeniable presence of the female body, and make appropriate formal choices to achieve that.

A Visit from John Deamond

On October 1st, 2014, after speaking to the SMP class about his work, John Deamond conducted studio visits. When he came to my studio, I started off by telling him about my general interest in feminist art, specifically themes of making the private public and the interior exterior. At the time, I was creating my post marathon work: a wall sculpture made of curled paper, evocative of a uterine form. John's comments on my work were straightforward but helpful. He realistically stated that the work I was creating and thinking about creating might be "wrong," but that I should keep doing it, regardless. We talked about how broad feminism is and how my attempts to interpret and convey a statement about feminism, the female body, and female identity might not always be successful, just as a result of the complexity of the issues I am considering. John suggested that I initially "keep marathon-ing," essentially attempting a variety of approaches to express my particular artistic goals.

Talking with John, we considered the tactility of my work, specifically how that element is visually engaging and thus has potential to contribute to meaningful content in the work. At the time, John Deamond was working on natural rubbings, placing paper over things such as leaves and then rubbing a medium over them to recreate their textures. I do not think that particular, organic method of achieving

texture is relevant in my work, but I do think some of my works try to recreate textures or at least evoke them just through the way in which I apply a particular medium to the surface.

My visit and conversation with John Deamond occurred a while back so I have had significant portion of time to reflect on his suggestions within the context of my developing work. For me, the most striking comment he made was the one in which he stated that I should keep creating even if it was wrong. I thought about that statement a lot, and I feel my current works start to better resolve that issue. Again, when I was making work and trying to encompass a too vague, too broad idea of feminism, my work did not communicate these intentions well. Now that I have turned to myself and my personal experiences and perspectives on my female body and identity, I feel that my work conveys my considerations in a clearer, more focused, more accurate way. Though I unify my work through the fact that I create self-portraits, the types of portraits obviously vary from one another. I believe this is my attempt to make less “wrong” work. By considering myself and my experiences through a multitude of lenses, and then visually expressing that in a variety of ways, I feel that I enable myself to more accurately reflect upon and portray my experiences. I have kept in mind my conversation with John Deamond and his encouragement to just keep creating; I feel that I embodied that advice for the midterm. In my subsequent art, I plan to keep producing a variety of work in an attempt to create relationships between the various ways I consider myself, my experiences, and the broader contexts in which they are situated.

Jubilee

An Artwork



Victoria Gottlieb, *Jubilee*, 2014

For my next work, I desired to build off marathon ideas in a more focused way. I was greatly inspired by my research into feminist artists, their artistic themes, and how they go about portraying them in their art. Maria Lassnig and her themes of body sensation and body awareness influenced this work. Lassnig’s art often presents the struggles between surface and inner world, inside and outside, artist as creator and artist as object, bringing the inside out and vice versa. In my Woman Word English class, we also talked about how artistic mediums can function to make the private [lives of women] public in order to reveal female experience often ignored. While Lassnig was the primary influence on this work, I researched the art of Nancy Spero, as

well. Spero’s work challenges and celebrates gender differences, and I definitely consider “Jubilee” a celebration. The feminist art I have been researching, while iconic (think Lynda Benglis), is sometimes shocking. While the shock-factor is fantastic for startling audiences and challenging assumptions, in my own work I want to create art that appeals to a wide audience. The more people I am able to reach, the better, so I create art that initially eases the viewer in then allows them to consider the deeper significance of the work.

In, "Jubilee," I tried to create a more dynamic composition in my wall sculpture, keeping it active and better utilizing the negative space through attention to shadows and having components of the work stick out into that space. I chose bright colors to parallel the theme of celebration, and I painted much of the work with my own fingers and fingerprints to emphasize the hand of the artist, which I really value in a work. In future works, I hope to continue along similar themes in different ways, and try to incorporate better my new thoughts and ideas inspired by my research on Spero and feminist art.

In-Process Review 1 Reflection

I presented my artwork *Jubilee* for my first in-process review and the critique helped me to realize I desperately needed to hone in my ideas and communicate a specific focus in my work. My following reflection processes the review as well as sets specific goals for my future works:

My intentions still revolve around exploring then expressing female body and identity, but in a much more concentrated way. My previous attempts to create works incorporating broad aspects of femaleness were unsuccessful because of their lack of specificity, so I am narrowing the focus of my work. My upcoming works will stem from my own experiences and perspectives of my female identity. In order to make the meaning of my works more readable, each work will prioritize a particular emotion or art element instead of attempting to accomplish everything in one large piece. Thus, I hope to employ specific visual clues to guide the viewer through the work rather than overwhelming the eye. Responses at the review suggested my work focus on a smaller part of the larger subject area of feminist art in order to communicate more effectively. My peers also advocated I approach one idea in multiple ways, which lead me to decide to create a series of self-portraits. In this series, I hope to communicate my individual experience of my female body and identity in a variety of ways. Each work will convey my experience, but do so in a different way through emphasizing something particular such as line, color, or gesture. By portraying subject matter I know well, I seek to communicate the multiple ways I experience and view my body, experiences and views shaped not only by my own perspectives but also influenced by persons other than myself and the society in which I exist.

Source to Self Essay

A Look at Maria Lassnig, A Look at Myself

Austrian painter Maria Lassnig worked in the mid-1900s through the early 2000s, creating art (most notably self-portraits) that conveys an acute awareness of the body. While creating, Lassnig utilizes not only a meditative process that informs the content of her art, but also formal elements, including expressive gesture and color, to give significant meaning to her work. In her artwork, Maria Lassnig employs body sensation and body awareness in both her process and her final product to portray her subjective experiences of her female body. Unlike Lassnig, I draw much of my artistic inspiration from feminist theory, and I apply this theory to artistic interpretations of feminine bodies and identities. Still,

similarly to Maria Lassnig's art, my considerations of female bodies and identities attempt to depict the tension between the surface world and the inner world in order to make public what has been private.

Regarding process, Lassnig approaches her art without intentions, or rather, without the desire to "paint something very specific" (Lassnig 69). Lassnig's work reverberates between sensation and awareness as it "explores the sensate self and expands the frontiers of the self-portrait" (Lang 66). Rather than working from photographs, Lassnig utilizes a meditative process to achieve experiential accuracy in her work. Critic Karen Lang uses the term "meditative slowness" (69) to describe Lassnig's process, in which Lassnig closes her eyes while she creates, and often works intimately with the canvas, working on it while sitting down or even lying on the canvas itself. Specifically, Lassnig's 2001 pencil and acrylic on paper artwork *Self-Portrait in the Mirror of Possibilities* exemplifies this body

consciousness achieved through a relaxed process. Here, Lassnig employs the act of drawing as a "'freer and more flexible' engagement with body sensation and awareness" (Lang 70). Again, the drawing process affords the artist the ability to draw while positioned in a variety of postures (such as sitting on the work), thus intimately interacting with the work by physically becoming a part of the work. This intimate interactivity allows Lassnig to reconsider her body's spatial

relationship with the work and become more unified with that work. In my own process, I meditate on my bodily experiences, but in a less literal way. Many of the current works I am creating evolve out of memories I try to inhabit before creating the work. Whereas Lassnig conscientiously embodies her body and creates her work concurrently, my process, thus far, involves more planning and less spontaneity. Attempting a less rigidly planned process, or even just working more relaxed way, sitting with and on my materials, experimenting with my physical relationship with my materials, might be beneficial in allowing me to achieve the honest expression so many of Lassnig's work successfully accomplish.

As for gesture, consider again *Self-Portrait in the Mirror of Possibilities*. The actual artwork is modestly sized, only about twenty-five by twenty inches, thus drawing the audience into its intimate space. Though the subject of the work is a recognizable figural bust, Lassnig's segmentation of the facial features with expressive lines conveys the tense emotion in the work, emphasizing the subject's interior feelings over the physical figure. Following the pencil lines that construct the figure, the viewer experiences "sensation taking the form of a provisional awareness- vague pressure drawing the eye toward the cheekbone, scent in one nostril, mental and manual concentration as a grip in the throat" (Lang 70). Pencil lines scratched into the figure's chin and brow suggest furrowing, clenching in the skin evocative of tense emotions and anxious feelings of uncertainty. Some of Lassnig's lines do not connect



Maria Lassnig, *Self-Portrait in the Mirror of Possibilities*, 2001



Victoria Gottlieb, *Esophaguess*, 2014

to others, indicating a type of bodily disconnect felt by the subject. The thinness of the lines, too, suggests that, in this portrait, Lassnig is presenting the thinness between emotions experienced internally and manifested externally.

Lastly, Lassnig uses the element of color and natural associations attached to certain colors to heighten her expressions of internal emotions and experiences. Once more looking at *Self-Portrait in the Mirror of Possibilities*, the formal decision of the chartreuse background color encompassing the figure's silhouette contributes to the tumultuous feelings the work evokes. The actual figure "emerges from [this] space the color of bodily fluid," (Lang 70) exhibiting Lassnig's popular theme of bringing the inside outside. In another one of her works, a 1999 oil on canvas painting titled *Language grid*, Lassnig uses color to construct a perplexing figure. Here, color plays a significant role in conveying anxious emotion and a deep consideration of body sensation and awareness. In this work, "fauve-like zones of color contrast [invoke] visual pleasure," while "the color red enlivens and alarms" (Lang 69). The red seems most striking on the cheeks of the figure, giving the subject an emotional flush. The color present at the top of the figure drips down its head and neck, and ends in dribbles at the figure's throat. Overtop the throat lies a somewhat muddled, deep blue grid. The cool color of the blue suggests calm, static placement, but its contrast with the warm colors emphasized in the face of the figure suggests differently. The intersection and integration of throat and grid serve as the focal point of the painting, revealing how "verbal and visual language are enabling and constraining," (Lang 69) simultaneously. In this work, Lassnig's formal color choices contribute to the achievement of a fluctuating tension between inner and outer, showing how Lassnig's body sensation and awareness considers the intricacies and tensions inevitable in bodily experience. Thus in *Language grid*, Lassnig achieves a dramatic painting, a work in which "union of image and emotion creates a simplicity in which reality predominates nicely, since our external life dominates the emotional life, just as the ordinary person believes" (Lang 69). For me, the most striking aspect of *Language grid* is its fantastic color. Colorful artwork automatically engages me, and Lassnig pushes her color by deliberately using it to emphasize particular feelings in her work. As stated above, the red in *Language grid* creates a dynamic pulse in the work, viscerally exciting the viewer's eyes and emotions. In my art, I sometimes employ too much color and do so with a lack of selectivity, thus so the image becomes too busy and visually overwhelming. In the future, I plan to reference Lassnig and employ color more particularly so that it coincides with the emotion I attempt to convey through the work.

Lassnig's process, gesture, and color all inform one of the primary themes in her work: interior vs. exterior, primarily the translation of her personal, internal realm. Lassnig's artwork has been described as "a struggle between two worlds: 'the surface (of the skin, of paint), and the inner world (of the painter, of the person looking at the painting. The artist is at once herself, the body she inhabits, and the subject of her own creativity'" (Lang 66). Considering this description, one better understands how Lassnig simultaneously acts as her internal self (role of creator), her external self (body, vehicle for creation), and the product of that creativity, as Lassnig is the principal subject of her own work. By utilizing herself as the subject of her work, Lassnig maintains an intimacy with and an authority over her artworks' content, and much of Lassnig's intimate command over her art stems from her unique process, her expressive gesture, and her meaningful color. This significant theme of body sensation and

body awareness paired with interiority and exteriority aligns greatly with the considerations I explore in my own work.

In my general research on feminist art, I was drawn to artworks that presented female identities in ways alternative to the conventional stereotypes of woman as passive rather than active, woman as object rather than individual, and woman as recipient rather than creative contributor. In Feminist Visual Culture, editors Fiona Carson and Claire Pajackowka establish that “feminist exploration of visual culture aims to loosen the ties that bind gender and sexuality to visual representation in such limited, repetitive and stereotypic ways” (4). Thus in researching artists and creating my own artworks, I have sought out any unconventional representations of female bodies, female identities, and female experiences, even if the artist (such as Maria Lassnig) did not specifically designate her works as feminist art. Lassnig’s work resonates with me because of its visual simplicity and the rawness of emotion it conveys; Lassnig’s works are not overcrowded images, rather they straightforwardly and simultaneously communicate the artist’s bodily sensation and awareness of that sensation in a way unique to her yet still accessible to a general audience. Like Lassnig, I primarily desire to give feeling to my work through form. Though my initial work attempted to consider experiences of “woman” as a general whole, I realized my work required specificity to more effectively achieve its goals. Thus, I transitioned into self-portraiture and depiction of my own experiences in order to more accurately and honestly convey experiences of female identity. While Lassnig employs the benefits of meditation as a foundation for her process and then moves into unspecified creation of her work, my own process is less freely progressive. I tend to have an idea or image in my mind and then proceed to depict that on the page, allowing the image to emerge from my mind rather than emerge from the page. Attempting to achieve Lassnig’s almost spiritual process might be a potential route for future works, though, as I desire to heighten my bodily sensation and awareness in order to create more accurate, honest, and meaningful works that express my own experience as woman.

Midterm Reflection

My intentions remain similar to my last statement: to create works that convey my personal experiences of my female body and identity. My bulimia significantly influences my self-perspective and so it becomes a prominent theme in my art. I want my works to portray my unique situation while being accessible to a broad audience so that they can understand and even empathize with my experience. At the midterm, my professors and peers appreciated the expanse and variety of my work. However, I need to push the variety of my materials; I hope to branch into an even greater variation of mediums, materials, and formats for my works. Even multimedia works may prove useful to my goals. In future works I will not leave as much, if any, white background present, achieving more complete works and better conveying an experience rather than just an image on a surface. Professor Lisa Scheer even suggested using materials into which I could impress marks, working past just the surface. Also, my peers and professors noted how some works were identifiably me, and some works portrayed a potentially universal character. I am drawn to this idea of a character because, while the works stem from my experiences and me, an important component of my work is that they communicate to others and reach a wide audience. For upcoming works, I will just keep producing. I will increase my works’ variety and ideally make enough works to cover a large space and impose a strong presence.



Victoria Gottlieb, *Chunk Dunking*, 2014



Victoria Gottlieb, *untitled*, 2014



Victoria Gottlieb, *untitled*, 2014



Victoria Gottlieb, *Flucked*, 2014

A Visit from Billy Friebele

On November 3, 2014, Professor Billy Friebele visited my studio after he presented on some of his recent and upcoming artwork. In meeting with Billy, I wanted to further discuss some of the ideas mentioned at my midterm critique, such as the variety of my work and the possibility of multimedia. I

told Billy about what I was currently working on; Professor Sue Johnson suggested, in order for me to resolve my issues with predictable white backgrounds, that I create a variety of grounds first, rather than starting with a specific image. I took Sue's advice and picked out a variety of materials and grounds and began working on painting and marking the surface based on my emotions and feelings at the time. Sue believed that revising my working process would offer a more enriching artistic experience since I would have multiple grounds ready and waiting for whenever I had an impulse to create on those already manipulated grounds. Billy agreed that this was a good solution for dealing with a white surface background and making my works more visually engaging. I have primarily been making grounds and have not yet creating images on these established grounds, but both Billy and I agree that I should just keep pushing the variety of my images.

One reason I particularly wanted to speak with Billy about my work is that I am considering including an audio component. Introducing an aspect of multimedia to my work was another suggestion made during my midterm critique. I have worked with a variety of mediums but do not consider myself well versed in multimedia, so I wanted to just have a conversation with Billy about potential approaches to possible multimedia works. My thought was perhaps including a somewhat subtle background audio that the viewer would listen to while he or she engaged with my works. Billy suggested I think about the sounds of my experience and the emotion; he asked, "What does that pain sound like?" I have multiple sound associations with my experience and if I do choose to incorporate an audio component into my work, I want sounds that the viewer can recognize and understand and consider meaningfully. I do not want any too radical sounds that disrupt the viewer or that do not cohesively relate to and work with the visual art. Billy lent me a voice recorder to use and suggested I explore possible sound components. We both decided that if I do have sound and it is not contributing meaningfully to the overall work, I could simply just not play the sound. In thinking about the upcoming show, I already know that if I do include sound, I want the viewer to interact with it intimately. This is, I do not want my sound to be heard in the open space, but rather than the viewer could listen to it off a device through headphones, thus more personally integrating the viewer's experience with my own as presented through my art.

In-Process Review 2 Reflection

Currently, my artistic intentions are to continue to push the variety of my self-portraits, but to do so in a way that allows for understandable comparisons and juxtapositions between the various works when they are presented together. I will continue to use a variety of mediums, primarily working on paper but also on canvas, too, in order to let some of the self-portraits inhabit a space more off the wall than others. This will allow for a greater diversity in presentation and permit each artwork to engage the other works and the viewer in different ways. My review response was less than desirable but I understand the feedback provided; I strayed a bit too far from my original works, which were working well together, and so I am returning to my initial concept of the grid. However, I am revising this concept by having differently formatted works that still align with one another in a final presentation, rather than having a jumble of formats, which just created confusion and disrupted the overall unity of the works. The one canvas painting I presented in the review was considered as "strange," and initially I disliked that adjective. Now, though, I want to push on the idea of the "strange," because I feel that

word begins to encapsulate my experiences of my self. My goals for my next works are to stay focused and expand the vocabulary of my self-portraits through an even greater variety of images that still achieve a unified whole.

Field Trip

Immersed in Inspiration

On November 7, 2014 I had the opportunity to visit the National Museum of Women and the Arts in Washington D.C. with my English seminar class: Woman Word, a class that focuses on women writers and the novel. This trip preceded our reading and discussion of the graphic novel *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* by Alison Bechdel, an artist recommended to me during my art SMP midterm critique.

At the museum, to familiarize ourselves with the concept and context of the graphic novel, we looked at original prints created by Helena Bochořáková-Dittrichová, a Czech graphic artist who is considered the first woman graphic novelist. Before solely discussing Helena's work, the library director of the museum explained some of the history of the woodcut tradition that influenced Helena's work. The director spoke about Albrecht Durer and Kathy Kollowitz and their work, especially how Kollowitz's work functioned in its late 19th century historical context by offering images that conveyed a sense of emotion and responded to the civil unrest leading up to the world wars.

From that, we transitioned to a discussion of the wordless novel and how Helena was essentially the first woman to work with this new art form. The wordless novel tradition stemmed from both the influence of prints and silent films, which were exceedingly popular at the time. Each of the aforementioned art forms functioned in telling a story through images and without dialogue. Helena specifically utilized visual language and its form uniquely in that her art centered around her own life and its progression, a depiction of what she as a woman dealt with in her everyday life. The prints my class looked at depicted the story of her traveling journey as a student. The subject matter was lighter than that of Helena's contemporaries, and so Helena's work had a refreshing feel to it.

Relating wordless novels back to the Woman Word class content, the director informed us how graphic novels tend to lean towards comics but are still influenced by the idea of using stylized images to convey serious stories. The director described this as a "non-linear cross pollination" between art forms, and I enjoyed seeing tangible hybrids of artistic forms because that is something I try to consider while creating my own art. Lastly, in the library, we looked at various examples of artist books on display. Each book varied significantly in its style, but they all utilized the form and general idea of the book to create an art form. Some of the books were extremely sculptural and so offered the viewer a journey through the art object.

After the library, the class was given a brief tour of the museum. The tour first stopped at a classical Renaissance portrait and we discussed how the painter, Lavina Fontana, established a firm declaration of her artistry/authorship through her work. Next, we looked at a self-portrait by Alice Bailly, who incorporated elements of both Fauvism and Cubism into her work. We talked about how her conscientious formal art choices achieved Bailly's control of her ethos and how she presented herself to an audience. I found this discussion particularly beneficial because of my interest in how self-portraiture

achieves a type of self-control (control of one's presentation of one's consideration of one's self) through a deliberate artistic act.

Though we did not discuss the portrait in depth, we were able to see Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait Dedicated to Leon Trotsky, 1937*. Our group turned the corner, and there was Frida, depicted in full glory. It was an incredible surprise to see a Kahlo portrait in person, especially because she is an artist significantly influential in my own work. In person, I could see how, despite her tumultuous life, Frida depicts herself proudly, unabashedly in her symbolic works. Frida's self-portraits tell an engaging story about herself and I seek to accomplish the same in my own art.

Art Event: Dr. Bevil Conway

On September 11, 2014, I attended Dr. Bevil Conway's neuroscience and art lecture "COLOR! What is it, and how is it computed by the brain?" Dr. Conway comes from Wellesley College where he is an associate professor of neuroscience. His page on the Wellesley website describes him as a visual neuroscientist and artist who "examines neural basis of color using physiological, behavioral, and modeling techniques." A while ago, I took a color theory class with Professor Carrie Patterson, and so I was interested in learning more detail about the brain's creation of color.

In his lecture, Dr. Conway that many people disregard color and its complexity when in actuality color serves a variety of practical functions. Through visual examples included in his PowerPoint, Dr. Conway showed how color aids in recognition under deteriorated viewing circumstances, how "diagnostic color" benefits healthcare professionals, and how color allows for rapid detection (for example, easily seeking out red berries that pop against a complimentary green background of foliage). These points allowed me to see color as more than something aesthetic; color vision plays a significant role in human survival because it has behavioral relevance.

Dr. Conway went on to describe the social functions of color, as well. Color relates to social cognition and color has emotional impact as well. Using popular brand logos as examples, Dr. Conway showed how pervasive color is in marketing and advertising. In one particularly striking demonstration, Dr. Conway brought up the DVD colors of several popular movies. Each DVD cover blatantly exhibited a complimentary blue and orange color scheme; apparently, human beings have a natural inclination for certain color combinations, primarily ones found in natural scenes.

Other significant visual demonstrations Dr. Conway showed included one by Joseph Albers, who I remembered from Carrie's color class. Dr. Conway showed the clever interactions of color, stating how the color we see depends on the context in which we see it. For example, objects of the same exact color can appear to be two different colors if they are placed against two different backgrounds. In the same demonstration, Dr. Conway showed how outlining colors with white, or leaving blank space around colors, allows the color to preserve its integrity and not be influenced by any surrounding colors. To illustrate this, Dr. Conway showed several artworks by Henri Matisse that exhibit this intentional inclusion of white space around colors.

What I take away from Dr. Conway's lecture is how useful a tool color is. Dr. Conway defines color as a tool to understand how the mind and brain works. Referring back to his Wellesley website page, I

noticed one of his endeavors is “an understanding of the neural processes by which color influences emotional state,” and utilizing this understanding “to explore color as a potential model system for investigating depression.” Since I took the color class, I have tried to be more conscientious of the emotional impact of color. I love color and hope to, when relevant, better use it in my art as a tool to emphasize and convey the emotional meaning of the work.

Art Event: Katherine Gagnon

On September 24, 2014, I attended the talk of Katherine Gagnon, the current SMCM artist house fellow in residence. I already had the pleasure of learning of Katherine’s work when she visited the art SMP class, but her second presentation more formally elaborated upon her work. Gagnon graduated from the Maryland Institute College of Art with an MFA in painting and her works explore painting as communication. Some questions Gagnon considers include how does painting speak: what does it communicate and how does it communicate?

Another important factor in Gagnon’s work is color and relationships between colors within a work. Her early works investigate color through utilizing shapes and forms and their interactions as well. They explore the concept of “what can paint do.” When I asked Gagnon about her process for approaching color, she responded she is influenced by seasons and the colors she sees and interacts with in her daily life.

Moving on, Gagnon showed works in which text and language are significant components. By incorporating language, Gagnon questions its potential purpose in painting. Gagnon views language as capable of introducing a form of narrative through the relationship between words and images. Paintings utilizing language, such as her work *Whole*, serve to question modes of thinking through incorporation of wordplay. Many of Gagnon’s titles help inform the meaning of her works, too. Gagnon’s oil painting on galvanized steel, *Love Letter*, exemplifies this. Initially, the viewer sees a square resembling a letter. However, considering the title allows the viewer access to a more specified interpretation of the work and its significance. Utilizing titles to meaningfully contribute to the content of the work is something I seek to do in my own art as well.

Toward the end of her presentation, Gagnon opened up about her artistic process, a topic I found particularly of interest as a developing artist. She stated how she tries to be open to the process, seeing what marks can add up to, considering the gesture and sense of certain subjects. Gagnon mentioned the idea of translation, how her works translate experience and even how some of her paintings translate her drawings, showing the close relationship between two different mediums. Along the lines of relationships, Gagnon thinks about the figure-ground relationships within her works as well and how they function in the painting. Most reassuringly, Katherine Gagnon talked about how sometimes she allows time to step away from a work and see what happens, considering the possible narrative throughout the process.

Art Event: Lynn Tomaszewski

On Wednesday, October 1, 2014, I attended the Lynn Tomaszewski's gallery talk:

"Agglomophenomena." Explaining the title of her show, "Agglomophenomena," Tomaszewski pointed out her combination of the words "agglomerative" and "phenomena," the former meaning piling things and the latter meaning marvels. The phenomena aspect translates in the meta quality of Tomaszewski's works and her desire for viewers to be aware of their own looking. Along this line, Tomaszewski also talked about how the viewer is where art happens, in their experience of the work and what they bring to it through that.

Before the talk, while simply observing the works, I was struck by the pattern, repetition, and color Tomaszewski's work displays. In her talk, when speaking of the structure of her paintings, Tomaszewski explained her art reinterprets minimalism and so has a post minimalist sensibility. Some of her paintings' specific characteristics include being painted to the edge, but conscientiously not painted over it and being inherently flat regarding the surface. I took great interest in Tomaszewski's process, how she works in layers, often airbrushing the ground of a painting, then developing a structure or allowing one to emerge from the system, and ultimately filling areas of that structure (created from dots/circles) with color based on perceptual decisions. Tomaszewski's website describes how "her conceptually driven work explores how technology facilitates, alters, and influences perception and, subsequently, how perception constructs ideas." Frequently, Tomaszewski mentioned her process as a "game" with certain rules she sets for herself, such as circles must maintain a semblance of roundness and that the circles much touch.

In talking about inspiration for her work, Tomaszewski referenced political movements. Though she does not consider her works political, she notes they stem from considerations of collective power and collective behavior and how there is power in the numbers of gathered masses. Some of her previous art references animal swarming behaviors through transforming and translating images revealing the structure of collective behavior.

While I enjoyed the majority of Tomaszewski's work, I disliked her one interactive piece in which heat sensors sensed the environment and performed a generative growth model in response. Talking about this piece, Tomaszewski stated her endeavor to use coding as a tool, to take a generative system and have a program do that with rules around the works growth. I understand Tomaszewski's view of the piece as a "machine for collaboration," but she also described it as a way to do what she had been doing in some of her paintings, only at a much fast pace. I personally prefer the paintings because they obviously took time. When I consider Tomaszewski's process, I know her application of color inside her structures took meticulousness and concentration. I prefer how in her paintings, the artist makes the art as opposed to how in the interactive work, the artist makes the code that makes the art. Overall, I really enjoyed "Agglomophenomena" and how many of its works stem from the basic idea of collectives and gatherings present in the physical world, and transform them into unique artistic translations.

Art Event: Cassandra Kapsos

On Wednesday, October 15, 2014, I attended the artist talk presented by Cassandra Kapsos. Kapsos, originally from Missouri, graduated with a MICA MFA and currently teaches digital photography. As an artist, Kapsos is interested in themes of place and time as well as people and their “stuff.” Kapsos’ talk centered around her work in Baltimore and her considerations there of public art spaces.

Kapsos began her talk with presenting PLACE, asking questions such as what makes it and what makes it important? In her work, Kapsos explores place and public art, photography and community art. Being from Baltimore, I was immediately interested in Kapsos’ work there. Kapsos talked about residing in Baltimore and her initial distorted view of that place, influenced by what she heard rather than what she experienced. Kapsos utilized walking to explore the space of Baltimore. Serving also as a type of meditative process, walking allowed Kapsos to slow down, see the space on her own terms, and engage with that space and the community. Kapsos noted how entering a space impacts it and how place serves as a mirror that simultaneously reflects the self and the community, and their hopes and habits. Understanding place allows one to understand their self.

Kapsos presented another interesting view of space: places and objects can serve as portrait of space, memorializing that place. Photographs become a way to also memorialize space, and Kapsos described the photograph as “a safe space to view the landscape.” Continuing, Kapsos talked about the role of photographer and photographic images, and referenced artist Zoe Strauss. Kapsos described how Strauss, who considers herself a photo-based installation artist, utilizes urban Philly subject matter, focusing on overlooked or ignored places to create a “narrative about beauty and the difficulty of the everyday.” Kapsos also talked about Strauss’ ability to bring people to a particular space and activate that space by having a show underneath I-95 and transforming this obscure space into a public art gallery.

Next, Kapsos moved back to her own artwork, talking about her desire to have active participants in the community rather than passive viewer. Kapsos went about creating a public art space through an adopt-a-lot program. Kapsos and others transformed the space into a public art gallery and green art space, making it inviting towards others and utilizing the stuff already in that place to do so. For example, Kapsos transformed dumped bottles into a bottle tree, and converted trash into shrines. These shrines were made of artifacts left by people and so served as a form of portrait of those people. Kapsos would photograph the “relics” for documentation, construct those objects into a shrine, then place the shrine back in the place from which the objects came to enable interaction.

Much of Kapsos work considers how space functions for community individuals. The whole SOWEBO project that focuses on specific Baltimore communities explores the rich history of such communities with the goal of highlighting the stories of people in the area. Kapsos talks to people, engaging in intimate conversations, and the project (especially the projects websites) has evolved into a place of its own. Benefits of the SOWEBO project not only include the positive light it sheds on such communities but also grants individuals in the communities free advertising. Kapsos’ project echoes the work of Brandon Stanton, who does Humans of New York. Throughout her project, Kapsos has learned that people like to share as well as that people like to learn and read about others. Kapsos wants to always

bring the work back to the physical space and so has hopes of displaying her photographs of the community and its inhabitants in a public gallery within the community, thus keeping with her desire to involve others and share, enhancing connections to the space and to each other.

Art Event: Falling Man

On the evening of Thursday, October 30, 2014, I attended Falling Man: A Dance and Visual Art Collaboration created by Leonard Cruz and Caiti Sullivan. The performance and accompanying artworks were described as responding to the work of German Expressionist Max Beckmann. This collaboration was the first type of performance art I have seen, so throughout the piece I tried to interpret the visual clues and infer the content of the piece. To me, Professor Cruz's graceful yet weighted body movements indicated tension. He performed dramatic crumpling movements that made me think depression and being overwhelmed or overcome by struggles. Professor Cruz danced throughout several spaces established throughout the gallery; to me, most intriguing were an organized home space, set up with formally arranged flowers and mirrors and a video of a flickering candle, and another space in a corner in which was placed a mound of snacks. The home space seemed one of silence and reverence, more of an interior space. On the other hand, the food space was more dynamic. In the performance, Professor Cruz repeatedly raked in the mound of food, saying, "mine" multiple times. In this space, Professor Cruz initiated audience interaction as well, offering a piece of food to a nearby audience member. The audience interaction part surprised me, but I think it made the world of the performance more accessible to the viewer, especially since the performer initiated the invitation to the viewer to participate in the performance in some aspect.

After the performance, Professor Cruz invited questions about the piece. It seemed that most of the audience knew little about Max Beckmann's work. I myself did not look at Beckmann's work before the performance because I wanted to challenge myself to initially derive my own meaning from the work without being influenced by any prior knowledge. In the question and answer discussion, Professor Cruz revealed how the dance was improvised and that visual art collaboration involved autobiographical aspects. At one part of the performance, Professor Cruz incorporated into the dance trying on different articles of clothing. I viewed this as a fluid attempt at various identities, and at the end Professor Cruz spoke about how this did symbolize trying on multiple identities in a consideration of beauty and an attempt to be beautiful, actions influenced by society and what it impresses on us as beauty. In my opinion, the collaboration turned out to be much more multi-layered than I initially thought it would be, based on the descriptions provided about the work. I feel that though the work may have initially been inspired by the work of Max Beckmann, the final product seemed less a response to that and more Professor Cruz's personal response to his identity and context, influenced by a broad theme of falling man. While I was challenged to understand the piece as a whole, overall I really enjoyed it and hope to see more performance art in the future.

Annotated Bibliography

Feminism and Art:

Brodsky, Judith K. "Stepping out of the Beaten Path: Reassessing the Feminist Art Movement." *Signs* 33.2 (2008): 329-42. Web. 13 Sept. 2014.

This article's thesis establishes that the feminist art movement of the early 1970s has more historical significance than art history traditionally affords it, and that the movement actually pioneered postmodernism. Brodsky supports her claim by revealing characteristics of feminist art (such as art inspired by social, cultural, and political conditions, different forms of art making, and art that blurs boundaries between craft, culture, and high art) shared by postmodernism, too. Brodsky breaks her article into sections focused on each characteristic, each section containing at least one feminist artist and a specific work of hers that exemplifies that particular characteristic. This article functions well in my research in that the many characteristics of the art discussed are characteristics I want my own work to possess. This article offers a wealth of source artists and tangible examples of how and why those feminist art characteristics are significant and contribute to the goals of the works in which they appear.

Carson, Fiona, and Claire Pajaczkowska, eds. *Feminist Visual Culture*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.

The editors divide *Feminist Visual Culture* into essays based upon medium. The chapters including the Preface, Issues in Feminist Visual Culture, Feminist Debate and Fine Art Practices, Sculpture and Installation, and Performance Art prove most relevant to my goals of exploring the female body through mediums that enhance the content I seek to express. The Preface sets an introduction to the book and the subsequent Issues in Feminist Visual Culture chapter elaborates upon the fact that visual art functions to give experience a more tangible reality that text alone cannot achieve. This chapter also expresses feminist visual culture's functions of formerly enquiring into the codes that define and guide meanings of sexual difference in society's visual representations.

The Sculpture and Installation chapter focuses on the relationships between body and space, how public space moves away from interior, traditionally domestic spaces, and how female artists' employment of sculpture, a conventionally male medium, functions in society. This chapter also cited a wide array of feminist sculptors whose radical works made unavoidable statements regarding how society in general perceives women. While I am not personally familiar with performance art, the Performance Art chapter stated that in such art the physical body functions as the actual medium, a charged statement that offers a lot of potential routes for exploration. However, this chapter addressed the cons of performance art too, such as the difficulty of documenting it as well as issues of audience. Lastly, I found the Photography chapter interesting because it is considered the medium of democratization because it is so accessible to a variety of audiences. My only qualm with photography is how though the photograph is present in real time, it is a medium, along with video, that captures a past, already dead moment whereas I personally feel mediums such as sculpture embody are more present quality.

Bechdel, Alison:

Cook, Roy T. "Drawings Of Photographs In Comics." *Journal Of Aesthetics & Art*

Criticism 70.1 (2012): 129-138. *Art & Architecture Complete*. Web. 25 Oct. 2014.

Since I have incorporated physical photographs in my work, I was curious about the implication of drawn photographs in art. Cook's main argument is that within graphics (such as Alison Bechdel's Fun Home) the photographs are drawn with strikingly more realism than the surrounding artwork in order to lend those photographs a greater sense objectivity. While he utilized Alison Bechdel's work to illustrate his examples, Cook primarily discussed the objective associations with photographs and how those associations permeate drawings of photographs, lending greater validity to the fictions they depict.

Freedman, Ariela. "Drawing on Modernism in Alison Bechdel's Fun Home." *Journal of Modern*

Literature 32.4 (2009): 125-40. *JSTOR*. 2009. Web. 25 Oct. 2014.

At the midterm critique, Professor Carrie Patterson suggested I investigate the graphic novel work of Alison Bechdel. Freedman's article on Bechdel discusses the artist's construction of a personal story through the combination of images and words. Freedman cites artist Lydia Davis' term "autofictionalography" to describe the space between fiction and recollection that Bechdel inhabits in her work. This article appealed to me in how it portrayed Bechdel's depiction of how inherited perspectives can influence one's own life. Freedman assesses the structure of Bechdel's graphic novel Fun Home as well, analyzing how the panels separating the images and scenes of recollection offer an engaging juxtaposition against the Bechdel's adult-voice narrative text that accompanies the pictures. As I have just started to incorporate text alongside my images, I was curious in the way that Bechdel did this because both our works incorporate aspects of memory and recollection and past influence on the present. Though brief, the article does a sufficient job of discussing Bechdel's use of graphic narrative techniques such as fragmentation, juxtaposition, and textual play.

Kahlo, Frida:

Latimer, Joanna. "Unsettling Bodies: Frida Kahlo's Portraits And In/Dividuality1." *Sociological*

Review 56.(2008): 46-62. *Art & Architecture Complete*. Web. 25 Oct. 2014.

In her article, Latimer discusses the significance of the specificity of Frida Kahlo's self-portraits in understanding notions of the self and reality. Kahlo's portraits portray her outward physical self, her individual uniqueness, and how these both appear to an outside viewer. Kahlo's distinctive portraits challenge the viewer, utilizing assemblage of symbols and particular, iconographic characteristics to show what comprises her self. Latimer argues that while Kahlo's images depict a whole, in showing what constructs that whole, Kahlo reveals a body-self in perpetual division, a self navigating that simultaneously divided and comprehensive self through art. Latimer discusses how Kahlo's self-portraits explicitly reveal the "divided nature of embodiment." What especially stood out to me in this article is that Latimer argues that, by the nature of her portraits, Kahlo refuses to allow herself to be reduced to a singular perspective, which is a theme that I feel relates to my own works and why I am drawn to multiple, true representations of myself.

Siltala, Pirkko. "I Made A Picture Of My Life—A Life From The Picture: The Life Of The Body

In The Pictures And Writings Of Frida Kahlo." *International Forum Of Psychoanalysis* 7.3 (1998): 133-155.

Art & Architecture Complete. Web. 25 Oct. 2014.

Sitala's article deconstructs a number of Kahlo's self-portraits, incorporating aspect of Kahlo's life throughout as a type of framework for the viewer to understand the complex content presented in Kahlo's portraits. The article explores a variety of paintings, offering visually analyses of them, then supplementing these with psychoanalyses. The psychoanalysis aspect of the text is less relevant to my artistic concerns, but Siltala's inclusion of some of Kahlo's quotes and diary entries offered insight into the artist's mindset and her life influences manifested in her work. Siltala's primary exigence is to argue how, through and in painting, Kahlo paints her disabled physical self into existence by constructing it in art and presenting it to the world. The article focuses a lot on how, in her portraits, Kahlo presents the complexities of her feminine self so complicated by her tragic physical reality. The article concludes by asserting the action of painting as a means of concretizing one's life process, serving as a type of documentation.

Tate, Teresa Neva. "Frida Kahlo." *Salem Press Biographical Encyclopedia* (2013): *Research*

Starters. Web. 6 Nov. 2014.

This brief encyclopedia article offers an account of Frida's life, more specifically her painful life experiences that became prominent themes in her artwork. The article addresses how Frida participated in a Surrealist exhibition in Mexico, but other sources I have read reveal that Frida did not identify herself as a surrealist; rather, she asserted she painted her reality. The article concludes by pointing out Frida's status as a notable pop culture and feminist icon.

Tuchman, Phyllis. "Frida Kahlo." *Smithsonian.com*. Smithsonian Magazine, Nov. 2002. Web. 5

Nov. 2014. <<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/frida-kahlo-70745811/?no-ist>>.

Though the article starts off by mentioning the Frida Kahlo movie, it proceeds to offer a more in-depth look into Kahlo's life and how her life experiences influence her art. Primarily, it focuses on her tumultuous relationship with her artist husband Diego Rivera. Still, it presents a comprehensive chronology of Kahlo's life, referencing her participation in specific shows throughout her time and her interactions with other well-known artists such as O'Keefe, Duchamp, and Kandinsky. I favored the Kahlo quotations in this source and the fact that this source showed the positive characteristics of Frida (Viva La Vida) rather than only mentioning her painful life struggles.

Lassnig, Maria:

Lang, Karen. "Maria Lassnig's Body Sensation, Body Awareness." *X-tra: Contemporary Art*

Quarterly 12.2 (2009): 66-70. EBSCO. Web. 13 Sept. 2014.

Though Lang's article on Lassnig is brief, it offers images and analyses of a few of Lassnig's works and also provides significant information on the artist's creative themes, many of which are similar to my own. The article defines body sensation and body awareness and shows how Lassnig's art encompasses these two elements. Lassnig's art considers interior/inner world and exterior/surface, artist as subject

vs. artist as object, and bringing inner expressions out. Lassnig views her work as an articulation of sensation, feeling, and memory, which all exists on the inside without articulation, but need articulation to exist outside, in the world.

In her process, Lassnig tries to see past conventions and so approaches her work without a desire to paint something specific. She often meditates to achieve heightened awareness of the self she seeks to articulate through her brushstrokes. Lassnig's images emerge from color as she gives form to feeling, a translation that she likens to fencing in clouds. Lassnig's images also utilize contributions of the imagination, something I seek to achieve in my work, too.

Spero, Nancy:

Dobie, Elizabeth Ann. "Interweaving Feminist Frameworks." *Journal of Aesthetics & Art*

Criticism 48.4 (1990): 381-94. *Art & Architecture Complete*. Web. 13 Sept. 2014.

In her article, Dobie discusses the artwork of Nancy Spero and its achievement of interweaving feminist frameworks through engaging three frameworks of sexual difference: experiential difference, positional difference, and difference accounted for by psychoanalysis. Dobie talks about Spero's themes, which explore social and political questions regarding treatment of women, their position in discourse, and portrayal and control of the sexuality.

In analyzing Spero's scroll works, Dobie points out that this Spero utilizes this format to allow the viewer to approach the artwork in a non-linear way, thus allowing the viewer agency in the fact that they dictate their interaction with and participation in the work. Spero's work also portrays active, energetic female figures, counteracting ideas about traditional female passivity. The diverse women portrayed in Spero's work depict many women's roles, including those of victim or survivor, working to challenge and celebrate gender differences. Rather than present one sole women's Truth, Spero presents multiple Truths in her various conceptions of difference. Relating this to my own work, I seek to create art in which the viewer wants to engage. While the article states that Spero's work does not demand a male gaze, in my own work (which focuses its attention on women) I want to allow for male gaze, just not dominating ones. I try to achieve this through using visual cues that are familiar to women (such as incorporating feminine hygiene products as a material in my work) rather than men, yet that still engage men so that they are open to inquiring about the meaning of the work.

Future Reading List

Brand, Peggy Zeglin. *Beauty Unlimited [Electronic Resource] / Edited By Peg Zeglin Brand ; Foreword By Carolyn Korsmeyer*. n.p.: Bloomington : Indiana University Press, c2012, 2012. *St. Mary's College of Maryland Catalog*. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.

Chadwick, Whitney, and Dawn Ades. *Mirror Images : Women, Surrealism, And Self-Representation / Edited By Whitney Chadwick ; Essays By Dawn Ades ... [Et Al.]*. n.p.: Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, c1998., 1998. *St. Mary's College of Maryland Catalog*. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.

Knafo, Danielle. *In Her Own Image : Women's Self-Representation In Twentieth-Century Art / Danielle Knafo*. n.p.: Madison [N.J.] : Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, c2009., 2009. *St. Mary's College of Maryland Catalog*. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.

Rich, Sarah K. *Through The Looking Glass : Women And Self-Representation In Contemporary Art*. n.p.: University Park, Pa. : Palmer Museum of Art, the Pennsylvania State University : Distributed by the Pennsylvania State University Press, c2003., 2003. *St. Mary's College of Maryland Catalog*. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.