

# The Creation of Identity: the artist and a book of adventure



SMP in Studio Art, Fall 2011  
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## Foreword: Identity in Formation

I have always been intrigued by the art of storytelling and the relationship between text and image within children's picture books. When contemplating my St. Mary's Project exploring this topic seemed to be the perfect culmination of my various studies at St Mary's College, incorporating both my interests in art and English. However there remained several missing pieces in the puzzle that was to become my final capstone project. I wasn't sure of what story I wanted to tell and how that story would relate with my decision to create a picture book for children. At first I considered creating a story about sustainable farming as a way to share the message of environmental awareness with children. I had worked at a farm, and had the appropriate experience and interest in the topic. However after wrestling with finding a plot, I found the topic too restrained. I realized that I was putting too many limitations on my creative process. The feedback I received on my initial ideas helped me realize I needed to broaden my parameters thereby allowing myself the opportunity to experiment with the book format and the different types of illustration before settling on a content topic. I realized that rather than arbitrarily choosing content I needed to create stronger connections between the physical presentation of the book, my own experience as an artist, and the underlying message of the narrative.

Interested in the folk-art method of paper cutting, I explored the art of "scherenschnitte" and began to understand the act of paper cutting as a process of formation. Pieces of paper are subtracted and added, as a way to physically transform the identity of the material. This same theme of identity formation occurs within the narrative I created. My book tells the adventure of a little girl in an unfamiliar city that ultimately ends in a revelation of self-discovery. Identities are formed, much like paper cutting, through a process of transformation, but instead of physical manipulation, we are the product of our experiences. Where we come from, the people we know, and all of our life circumstances form us into unique individuals. As Charli's identity solidifies over time she finds herself wearing various "hats" (hats serving as symbols of identity within the story) until she eventually realizes none of those "hats" were right for her. As an artist I found myself trying on various "hats" as I went through a process of self-discovery developing the narrative and illustrations while coming to terms with my own style of storytelling. I learn more about Charli, paper cutting, and myself everyday and I am not yet finished with my own adventure. One of the most important aspects I have taken away from my work thus far is that an identity cannot simply be dreamed overnight, instead it must be ripped and cut and snipped over time. The self is not a discovery, but a creation.

## Stage One- Inspiration

### SMP Summer Work

Over the summer of 2011 I was tasked with the assignment of reading the book *Themes of Contemporary Art: Visual Art after 1980* and selecting two themes as well as two artists to specifically concentrate on and to consider in relation to my pending project. What follows is my investigation into the artists Cornelia Parker and Ken Aptekar, and how their works affected my early thought process regarding the relation of image to text in narrative and storytelling.

#### Cornelia Parker

Cornelia Parker is a fascinating artist based out of London who was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1997.<sup>1</sup> Her work is mentioned in the “time” section of the text and it discusses a few of her many installation pieces. What primarily captivated me within Parker’s work was the way the suspended three-dimensional objects seemed to take on personified qualities as well as capturing a span of time. For whatever reason the three dimensionality of the objects seemed to draw me into the work, even though I was just viewing two dimensional photographs from the text and online. I found her works with *Mass* and *Anti-Mass* very provocative and thoughtful. While her work seems minimalistic in some ways, it asks the viewer to consider the objects in a new context, while still being reminiscent and aware of the older use of the objects. In her work *Landscape with Gun and Tree*, she again explores the jolt of juxtaposition by propping a 30ft high shotgun (described as being masculine) against a tree (described as being feminine)<sup>2</sup>. It is through this controversy that she brings about feelings of disorientation and the passage of time and its effect. With her works with *Mass* and *Anti-Mass* the disorientation is derived from the static qualities of the hanging pieces while in *Landscape with Gun and Tree* there is more of an *Alice in Wonderland* type feeling of disorientation being derived from exaggerated size and displacement (the tree and gun are unobtrusively placed in the woods where anyone going for a walk may just discover the installation by accident).

Time is an important element of story telling and it is important to capture the passage of time effectively without directly stating that time has passed. I hope that by studying works that address this concept I will glean techniques that can help me in my experimentation with the art of storytelling and help me to find methods that prove effective and engaging for the information I am attempting to communicate.

Parker’s work made me rethink the traditional story telling format within the context of a two dimensional book. I would love to experiment with paper cuts suspended from the ceiling. The exhibition could be composed of various stations that viewers could walk through and between. The paper cuts would be multi-layered (i.e.: a person would be a single cut and suspended independently, the background could be a second cut and also suspended independently, other objects in the foreground would also be individual cuts...etc.). It would be interesting to see how the story is perceived when viewers are able to walk through the story and experience it in a different way than they normally have the opportunity to. Perhaps it would be interesting to focus on the way the story is told in this case, and just use a traditional tale or well known myth to see how people reinterpret the plot when they are placed within the pages of the book. The words could be

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<sup>1</sup> 144, Robertson

<sup>2</sup> 1, Wade

read on a headset or on an overhead speaker to add another dimension to the story. The exhibition would be created with a youthful audience in mind but of course all ages would be welcome. As the viewers walked through the sets time would physically be passing in a more exaggerated form than it would be if they were just reading the pages of a book, as it would be literally taking more time for them to walk through the space than it would for them to flip through the pages of a story.

Another idea that Parker's work brought to my mind was the use of intense detail. Although her work does not come across directly as being detailed, in some ways it is. Each of the individual pieces of the churches in Mass and Anti-mass are suspended by individual strings from the ceiling, in an exact planned location as placed by the artist. This use of many separate pieces to create a whole asks the viewer to slow down and take in the entirety of the work. Even in a two-dimensional format this concept can still be applied by using extensive detail. When illustrations offer alternative story plots and information not provided by the text itself, viewers or readers are asked to slow down to examine the pictures in order to discover alternative and additional layers to the story.

Cornelia Parker's work deals mainly with single moments in time, which has been halted. She shows the concept of time in a very physical way by playing with space and suspending what might otherwise be considered ordinary objects. I hope to effectively utilize both time and space within my storytelling experience as I consider both literal and figurative aspects these characteristics and how they can be applied to my work effectively.

#### Bibliography

Robertson, Jean, and Craig McDaniel. *Themes of Contemporary Art: Visual Art after 1980*. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.

Wade, Mike. "Jupiter Artland Review." *The Times* [The UK] May 2010. Print.

#### Ken Aptekar

Ken Aptekar works with paintings created by other artists but alters coloration and creates various manipulations of the paintings by using close-up pictures and sandblasted glass<sup>3</sup>. Of particular interest to me is the way words are used in conjunction with the images and the way they affect each other. By placing nonsense words in front of classic paintings Aptekar plays with language, the placement of the actual artwork, and the connotations associated with the museum's namesake.

Similar to Cornelia Parker, Aptekar plays with the concept of time by conjoining past and present and engaging in a conversation between himself, the creator of the original artwork, and the viewer. Aptekar also utilizes space creatively by sandblasting words onto glass which is propped out from the wood panel painting, thus creating a three dimensional work<sup>4</sup>. This repeated relationship of three dimensionality and passage of time caused me to wonder if there is some direct correlation between the viewer at an exhibition, and the way the work itself is presented. For example, do two-dimensional paintings tie more closely to one single captured moment in time while three-dimensional works cause the viewer to think of a passage of time?

I also feel that this playful but thought provoking use of language can be applied to a storytelling book. It is important to use fun language especially in children's books. With my two example art pieces I worked on over this summer, I definitely did not utilize language in a way that would appeal to children. This is something I would like to work on with my future art works and

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<sup>3</sup> 227, Robertson

<sup>4</sup> 226, Robertson

as I explore the art of story telling; the effective use of words to communicate large ideas to children. Because there is a lot of factual information I will be writing about, it will be important to not get caught up in terminology but rather to keep the words as concise and simple as possible while still completely explaining the idea or concept being discussed. I hope to eventually play with rhyming text and rearrangement of letters much in the same way as Aptekar. I have also considered working with already established wives tales or stories and creating new images or playing with the subplots to create an open dialogue between the original interpretation of the story and the way the traditional tale can be applied in a new context to the 21<sup>st</sup> century with the aid of new images or by mixing the text in a slight way.

Although there is not a large quantity of art criticism on Ken Aptekar's work there is basic information displayed on his artists website and a few other critiques available on the internet. Aptekar definitely has a consistency throughout his work that makes it his own. There is a utilitarianism that comes across as his signature and although he plays with his work, he keeps the paintings fairly exact in relation to the original paintings he is working with. He may alter coloration or focus on one particular part of a painting, but he does not alter the structure or composition of the paintings, instead he adds a layer of glass on which he forms a sort of commentary on the paintings by adding text<sup>5</sup>. I sometimes feel overwhelmed with my SMP concept just because I feel the need to make everything in my work completely original. I think it is important to remember that incorporating the work of others in a creative and non-plagiaristic manner is not only healthy but is necessary in order to place your work in context of where it fits into the current artistic dialogue taking place. Even in the case of a children's book it is important to know what other work is available, what topics these works discuss, and what makes them successful or unsuccessful.

Through studying Ken Aptekar's work I hope to find my own voice and signature style. I've recently been struggling with knowing where to start my project, but Aptekar's work has encouraged me to find children's books already available on the market and to decide what I like or don't like about these books and in that way I can find a basis for my own work. I also found the way he played with text over top of what would be considered important classical paintings, very daring. The way he initiates conversations with these works asks the viewers to examine them from a different perspective and not to be afraid to comment on works that may be considered traditional classics.

#### Bibliography

KEN APTEKAR. Web. 31 Aug. 2011. <<http://www.kenaptekar.net/biography.html>>.

Robertson, Jean, and Craig McDaniel. *Themes of Contemporary Art: Visual Art after 1980*. New York: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.

What follows is my commentary on two artistic topics and their relationship to my work in its early stages.

#### Spirituality

“One basic way to expand our efficacy is through modern science and technology. But another is through integrated (emotional, mental, physical, and spiritual) growth and enhanced wisdom. This means growing in our sense of connection with nature and one another and learning to live in ways that naturally cultivate our capacity to be human.”- Peter Senge

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.kenaptekar.net/biography.html>

The idea of spirituality is in many cases closely tied to agriculture, man's ability to create plants and sustenance out of seeds, a seemingly god-like power. The text discusses spirituality as having both religious and nonreligious qualities.

Perhaps some of the first art to come to mind when thinking of both spiritual and agricultural matters is Western Art created around the myth of Adam and Eve and their banishment from the garden of Eden. The text goes on to discuss the sublime, the concept of nature as a spiritual entity. Brought about from the writings of Edmund Burke the sublime was defined as being "a powerful sensation felt by the viewer in the presence of the vast- a feeling that combines a sense of awe, horror, and supreme aesthetic pleasure."<sup>6</sup> This feeling was further explored by philosophers and defined apart from the concept of beauty, and it eventually evolved into the idea of transcendentalism. One of the artists specifically mentioned, Shurazeh Houshiary, pursues this concept through abstract art which explores Sufism; although her art does not contain any specific religious references, she attempts to understand the concept of self through content.

Likewise I hope to draw connections through my illustration between the concept of farming and the produce itself. I would like to experiment with creating potato stamps and slicing other vegetables in half to make impressions.

Instead of the process being the important part of farming, yield has become the focus around which farm life revolves. The farming ideal has become producing the maximum amount of product while imputing the minimum amount of work and monetary cost. This process has alienated the consumers from the growing process. When farming technologies began to advance during the Scientific Revolution productivity became essential and sustainability was ignored for the most part.

Rudolph Steiner the developer of the Waldorf school system also had theories regarding agriculture, which were never given serious consideration in the mainstream farming culture. His views reflected the importance of relationships within the context of growing your own food. He encouraged people to consider the ecosystems and organisms affected by food production. When farmers lose sight of these relationships their actions in effort to heighten production may have negative effects on the animals or crops they rely on for sustenance.

As the 21<sup>st</sup> century continues, farming faces more pressing challenges as fossil fuels are becoming depleted and the ratio of energy produced to the ratio of energy required to produce continues to diminish and the cost of production increases. Climate change has also had a significant effect on farm production as weather patterns continue to change and effect areas that could previously produce but are no longer able to. There is a definitive movement among smaller scale organic farms to concentrate on relationships and interconnectedness. One such farm in the Southern Maryland, Even Star Organic Farm area offers the best of it's produce to Poseidon at the start of every season, and it is not the only farm that hails to a higher power for assistance with crop production. The Amish lifestyle integrates both farming and religion as important parts of daily life, independent of each other but both essential. In fact, eating itself can be considered a spiritual experience for some, the process of enjoying and experiencing the food, while appreciating where it has come from and how it has arrived in the state it is at when it reaches a plate. Since the start of settled agriculture, farmers have looked to deities for rain, sun and other weather elements, essential powers that cannot be controlled by the growers themselves.

I hope to explore the idea that "good science" and "good agriculture" should spend more resources in researching nature's interconnections rather than treating organisms like individual entities. To ensure the future productivity of farming we must understand the complex relationships

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<sup>6</sup> P279



connect humans with the food they eat, as well as the relationships between the people who grow the food and those who consume it. Farmers must engage in conversations with the land on which they cultivate food. It is in this way that a true spiritual experience can take place and farming can integrate more sustainable and local production methods.

### Identity

Who are farmers? Where is their place in modern society? How does the produce they grow affect the lives of the people who buy it and the children of those people? These are all questions I plan to examine in detail through my illustrations. Portraying characters is an integral part of telling a story, and to describe these characters accurately, some research must be conducted as to what the identity of farmers is in modern society.

In many ways correlation can be drawn between James Luna's living installation in the San Diego Museum of man and farmers in modern day society. Since the advancement of technology small-scale farming has become increasingly rare and the role those farmers played has been lost to most of modern society. It is rarely the case that families are in direct contact with the farmer who is growing their food. Even with the local food movement families are still turning to larger chain grocery stores for processed products that are not available from farmers markets but that people have come to depend on. Just as Luna used creative means to convey thoughts on Native Americans and how they are often thought of in society today as no longer existent due to preconceived misconceptions, they same may be the case for the farmers of today. I hope to seek out a collective identity of farmers and food growers if one exists in modern society.

I also found Carrie Mae Weems' Kitchen Table Series extremely relevant. I was interested in how she portrayed the woman at the kitchen table. Perhaps there is something to be said of the farmer and his or her various roles and how they pertain to set places, for example in the fields, or in the farmers market. It would also be interesting to explore the contrast between the places small-scale farmers frequent vs. the places large-scale farmers frequent.

I think it is important to acknowledge the diversity among farmers and food growers as well. Although it is an interesting connection to acknowledge the connectedness of all farmers I think there should also be differentiations made among the group. For example, large-scale farmers may have some commonalities with families who maintain a garden in their backyard but there are important differences between the identities of each type of growing. Rather than blending these identities in the way that Yasumasa Morimura does in many of her works I think it would be interesting to explore the ways in which these groups of people share information and techniques.

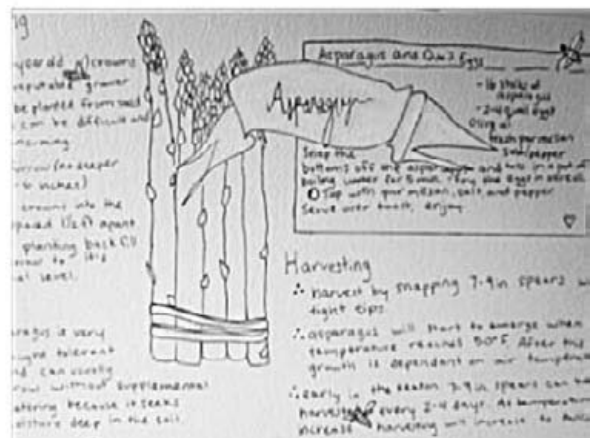
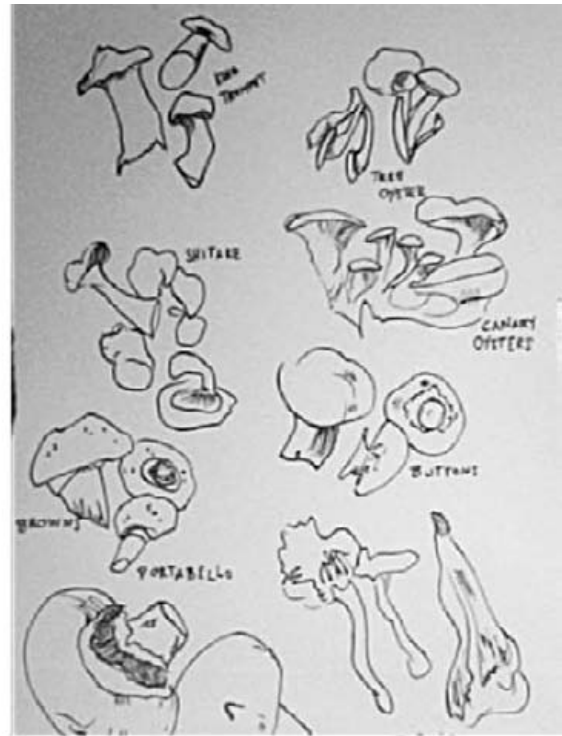
As I plan to tell a story, I think character development is also extremely important. To make the story engaging and the characters believable as well as realistic, it is important to be aware of how farmers identify themselves and to incorporate that identity into the story. I hope to look back over my interactions with farmers this past summer

I would also argue that the identity of farmers today is a changing one. As society is turning towards buying more organic foods and local produce large-scale farms are imitating the ways of smaller organic farms and technology is being used in different ways than it has been in the past. While all farmers remain focused on the output of produce, at some of the smaller farms I have worked at who participate in CSA's and farmers markets, there is a definite movement towards high quality of produce in addition to quantity. Smaller farms and their workers also seem excited and willing to meet the people and restaurants buying their produce, and to inform them about the methods used for raising the food their consumers are purchasing. I think this relationship is essential for people to appreciate the food they are eating and to make the cooking and eating experiences healthful and spiritual experiences, instead of just necessary monotony. I think for the

purpose of my story I will focus primarily on local small-scale farmers as these are the methods and techniques that are easily transferrable to sustainable family growing- the audience I wish to address.

The changing identity of food growers in modern society is a concept I hope to address in my book, even if it is geared towards younger children. If children are taught that there is only one way to grow food, that way being an idealized picture of commercialized farming, then they are not being informed about all the different ways and methods used to grow food today. With a large movement towards localized and organic food growing, a book that addresses these concepts and relationships even on the elementary level of a picture book may be a useful teaching tool for teachers and parents alike. Through out my project I hope to address the dynamic identity of farmers in the twenty first century and accurately explain the various ways food gets from the ground to our plates.

### Summer Artworks



## **Stage Two- Intentions**

### Original Parameters for my Project

After spending a summer thinking about what I wanted my SMP to encompass, I am sure I want to tell a story. This semester will be spent brainstorming ideas for what story I want to tell, why, and how. I am very interested in creating beautiful works of art that involve nature, particularly work that tells the story of food and how food gets to our plates, a process that remains a mystery to many children today. I am working mainly with picture I took over this summer while working at a farm and growing and cooking all of my own meals.

Although I am not positive what medium I will be working in, I have started experimenting with paper cuts and I am finding the process very rewarding. I enjoy working with single sheets of black paper, cutting out pieces to reveal a picture from within the paper, like lace. The process itself is extremely time consuming and therapeutic. However I am becoming increasingly aware that if I decide to produce paper cuts as my illustration of choice for my book, I should be figuring out what I am going to be illustrating very soon, as each of these works will take weeks to complete with the amount of detail I have been adding. I have been thinking that perhaps it would be best to choose an old tale or proverb that already exists that contains the ideas I wish to express (community with nature), and to tell that story using my illustrations, bringing it into the context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

I am also still debating whether or not I want to utilize color in the making of my work, and I have been playing with adding bits of color to various objects in the image to produce different effects. For the moment I am trying not to focus too much on the format of creating a book, but rather just on producing work, and then later on in the process figuring out how my work tells a story, and if a book is the best format for that story to be relayed. Because of the nature of the content of my work I have also been considering the ideas of creating a calendar or cookbook to tell a story.

In terms of themes I am striving to embrace in my artwork itself, I have found myself playing with the ideas of time and language. When researching my artists I studied Cornelia Parker, who uses three dimensionality and space to convey the idea of time. Using paper cuts is certainly not equivalent to a sculptural relief, but it does seem to add a sense of dimension that follows along with the ideas I had formulated around Parkers work (that three dimensionality can help capture a sense of time). I worked a bit with language in my summer work, both in the writing of a script for a children's story, and in my ABC vegetable drawings, but I struggled to find my point of view. I am hoping that this semester brings about clarity regarding who I want my audience to be and what kind of voice I want to have in my work. Lastly I believe my work embraces a sense of spirituality, or community with nature and the earth because of the content I am working with. Relationships are extremely important within farming communities, relationships to each other, and to higher powers and I hope to further explore these relationships through my work.

## **Stage Three- Exploration of Work**

Questions conducted by Elise Kielek

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

My first art experience was when I made my cousin a sequel to Winnie the Pooh for 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was an illustrated book, but had no plot. Another early art memory I have took place after our basement flooded during a hurricane. My parents had to tear down the bottom half of the dry wall to prevent mold from growing until we had drained all the water from the basement. Eventually the floor was dry but the walls were weird looking, cut back halfway to reveal the supporting beams of the house, and covered halfway with drywall. Since the basement was being refinished the following year anyways, my parents let a friend and I go to town with drawing and decorating the top half of the drywall. The walls of the basement became kind of like a huge mural across which we drew lots of imaginary creatures and created a place called “fairy-tale land.”

I suppose these early works are relevant to me today because I’m still working with writing narratives. I am fascinated with telling a story through my art. This idea is still what I am working on now. I’m using another medium, something new, but still keeping with the same idea. I’ve also started to use text again, which I had gotten away from in some of my art classes. I do also have to mention that I was highly influenced by Carrie Patterson’s Picturing Stories class, which was the very first college class I ever took- it was my core seminar in 2009.

### **Who is your favorite artist and why?**

If we are talking about famous artists from history, I’d say Van Gogh. I saw his work for the first time while abroad in Amsterdam, and ever since then I’ve had prints I bought from the museum gallery hanging on my walls. I love his mark making, and I love his use of color. My work is very different from his in that he focuses heavily on color versus my black and white paper cuts, but I feel very drawn to his work.

I’m also a big fan of Degas, Wolf Kahn, and Andrew and James Wyeth. I know that is a rather large span of artists, but I do believe they all share some fundamental beliefs about how the world is perceived and the purpose of art. Here again there is beautiful use of color, which is something I am not yet working with, but there is also particular attention to form and the manner in which ideas are conveyed. Art teachers have told me in the past that I don’t have to create works that people want to hang on their walls, that shouldn’t be a goal for me in art. And it’s not, but I do favor something in the aesthetics of the works of all of these artists I mentioned- they all DO create works that I would love to hang on my wall, to visit and revisit, to incorporate into my life. There is something about creating something that is just beautiful, that make me happy, and I think all of these artists have deeper convictions, but also realize the value of aestheticism.

I also like a lot of illustrators. Nikki McClure has been particularly influential because she does paper cuts. She bases her work around the environment and food and how food is produced. She focuses on this spiritual union between the individual and the world around them. I’m also inspired by the illustrations of Howard Pyle and Aubrey Beardsley with their linear qualities.

### **What artist or type of art do you dislike the most and why?**

Modern art can be inaccessible to me, but I still see its value. Another thing I don't understand when people do temporary work. Andy Goldsworthy, for instance, is all about the process, but has really no product in the end. I love his work, it's beautiful, but when the ice is melting and the sticks are washing away into the ocean it is incredibly frustrating to me. I could never do temporal work- it is so frustrating. I also don't understand video game creators... how do they sit in front of the computer all day? I would go crazy. I'm not really a digital art kind of person. I had thought about going to school for graphic design but something about the immateriality of it makes me nervous. I like to put away my work on the shelf, and then come back to it and feel it in my hands, to know that it is still there in that material space. With digital stuff you could lose a file completely by accident if you don't know the program well enough- I could never deal with that tension. I'm not familiar enough with computers.

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

I traveled for a year, since then I haven't had any lack of inspiration. Photographs bring back memories. I'm also inspired by blogs and I look at look at other people's works online. Food and the beauty of food also inspire me. For example I love to look at big picture cookbooks, particularly when they are written and illustrated by chef's who really care about their food. There is just such an aspect of spirituality in that. So much love and communion in the making and sharing of food, and I think that translates really well in photography. That is part of the digital world of today; photographs can be uploaded online and shared on blogs instantly. I have a blog and I love to go online and become inspired by the things people have created- not just food but lots of different things- wedding photographs for instance are also completely inspiring to me. I love living in a such a technical contemporary age where people can share their creations online.

Friends and family are also pretty influential on my own artwork. And the places and spaces I associate with "home." A lot of the photographs I use as reference are one's I've taken that have friends and family members as essential parts of the image.

### **What draws you to the medium and materials you work in?**

I began paper cutting at the beginning of this year, so it is definitely a new material for me to be working with. I feel like paper cutting is really relevant to the content I'm trying to express, books are made of paper and cutting the paper within the books makes the reader aware of what exactly they are examining. Furthermore I am exploring the concept of identity and children's identity, and paper cutting is an unforgiving process that makes you really focus on the additive and subtractive qualities of the paper itself, which can be a metaphor for the things that you add to or take away from yourself to develop your identity. If you don't have everything else, who are you?

When you're paper cutting, you are doing everything out of one sheet of paper. Everything is related to the other things on the paper. It sort of gestures to our relationship to people and things around us and is a derivative of the things I am inspired by, which I talked about above. It has that feeling of communion and of oneness. I saw paper cutting and I was just like, I really want to do that- that speaks to me.

### **What, in your mind, makes a work of art successful?**

On a personal level, it's whether or not I can relate to a piece of art. It is about accessibility. I think for the most part society thinks you're successful if your work is in a museum or a gallery. To me, if it is reaching an audience, it is successful. This audience doesn't have to necessarily be formal, but anywhere—in a shop, in a house, online, in a museum- it's all the same. It can be some sort of gallery setting but it doesn't have to be. A work is successful when it reaches the goals I set out to fulfill. Sue Johnson has really been pushing me lately to set specific goals for each of my works, and to not stop working until those goals have been fulfilled- that is a part of what makes a work complete and successful.

Overall, however, I don't think art is meant to be judged. Who creates something with the intention of having it physically or verbally ripped apart? I don't know, maybe some people feel like that is part of what makes a work successful, but for me I just want people to look at my work and feel a tug on their heart strings. To think, oh I can relate to this, this has happened to me or this is beautiful, it makes me smile, it brings a little happiness to my day. Many times children create things without any particular intended audience, or any particular thesis or message behind the work- and I don't find these creations to be any less successful than the work of great artists- they accomplish different purposes, but they are both successful.

### **What motivates you to make art?**

SMP is certainly motivating me. Lisa is really motivating me. Deadlines and certain expectations I am trying to meet with the art department are motivating me and also setting my pace. If I want to do a book, it has to have 12 or 15 spreads. I have to complete all those spreads to have a finished book. It's like I am racing against time. But at the same time I don't want these aspects of motivation to work against my interest in bookmaking and paper cutting.

I make art because I like making art. It makes me happy, and that motivates me. It's clearly not for money, or else I wouldn't be going into the art field. I'm striving to be most happy and therefore I want to incorporate art into my life as much as possible. Art is a means of expressing yourself, just like language but different. I want to explore these differences and the ways in which art and language can work together effectively in a text to create something interesting and captivating. In order to communicate there must be something you are trying to communicate, and in the artwork I am working on now, the message is that of identity and the child's identity. I am motivated to communicate this message. I am motivated to explore the world of paper cutting and to create enchanting pictures.

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

The art I'm creating now is about the identity of children and the relationships they have with other people. Objects, family, culture, all these things come together to create who children are. While I'm writing this children's story, I'm writing parts of myself, and parts of other people I know in my own life into a book. The book is a reflection of the world I live in, but also gives me the leeway to idealize things. Sometimes I like happy endings and sometimes I appreciate sad or thought provoking endings, but in this text and these images, I'm most certainly striving to be a happy ending person. I want to show children that they don't need all of the things society tells them they need, I want to encourage them to be brave and bold. So the person in my story struggles, growing

through life, judgment, and society's rules. But in the end, the character figures out what is right. In my children's book I'm allowed to make this idealized world, because it's my world. It's not a realization, but it's a possibility. And I am taking complete advantage of that to show my readers, both young and old that such a possibility exists.

### **Ideally, where do you see yourself in five years? How is art part of that?**

Ideally, I see myself living on the west coast, or in Maine in a white washboard house with a studio-barn out back and having dogs and chickens and a child. I want to be teaching, in an integrated learning environment. Maybe a Waldorf school or a Montessori school. I want to be using both my majors, English and Art, and I want to be illustrating children's books on the side. I'm hoping, this year, that I can create a portfolio that will help me in that direction. It would be neat to be teaching Yoga on the weekends. I'd like to have a garden and be at least partially self-sustainable, growing my own fruits and vegetables and canning jams and pickles. My grandmother and grandfather live on a little farm and are entirely self-sustainable even at their age- they are such an inspiration to me. I'd like to live by the water. I'm excited about the next stage in life where I get a house. I guess I really like to be in a routine that is not temporary. I'm so tired of moving from state to state, country to country, never having a place to call home for more than nine months out of the year, usually less. Traveling is great, seeing the world is fantastic, college is fun, but really I am so ready to just have a job and a family and home. I want to come home at the end of the day and cook dinner and spend time with people I love and not have to worry about reaching this huge monumental thing called graduation. I guess I'm just ready for some slow, boring, stability. Ha-ha. No, but seriously, I really do want a kitchen and a garden so I can work on cooking my own meals and producing my own food. Food is an art in my opinion.

## **Stage Four- Primary Revision**

The art I am creating is meant to be read by both children and adults. I use the word "read" because I want my work to tell a story, to follow a narrative and to progress from piece to piece in an interconnected manner. I want each of my pieces to be a part of a series that comes together to tell an entire story. The story I plan to tell in my work is one about a child discovering his identity and finding out more about him as he travels to a big city and acquires many earthly possessions, only to discover he never needed to leave home to discover who he truly was. The illustrations will not only tell this story, but also the subplot of a small mole who is, at the same time as the boy, setting off from his own home in the city, to go find a life for himself in the country, in a way reflecting the plot of the boy.

I want my work to enchant and captivate. I don't wish to create the type of work that will be placed in a frame and hung in a museum, but rather the kind of charming illustrations that draw readers back time and time again to look at the same image, and read the same words, but discover something new to take away from the work each time. I want to cause giggles and create conversation between the parents and the children reading the story. Perhaps most of all, I desire my work to be accessible, relevant, and interesting to parents, teachers, and children.

My artwork thus far has been rather large, but in the future I believe I will scale it down a bit in order to spend more time concentrating on composition and less time engaged in the actual cutting of the paper. I would also like to experiment with placing my artwork on top of different

surfaces before photographing it to emphasize the fact that it is a paper cut, rather than a print or an ink drawing. My primary focus in the upcoming days between now and midterm critique will be in slimming down my ideas to form a unified statement for my work. I believe I am getting to that point, but have not yet completely married content to medium and need to work more on the reasoning behind why I am innately drawn to the act of paper cutting and how it is the best mode for my work to be completed in.

## **Stage Five- A Visit With An Artist**

### **First Studio Visit with Ying Li: prior to mid-term critique**

Recently I went to visit Ying Li's place of residency at the Artist House, and had the opportunity to visit her studio and speak with her regarding her work. I loved her studio space, it was open and white and crisp and but her oil paintings were anything but that. For the studio visit, Ying had hung her paintings around the studio space in gallery style. I really enjoyed seeing her pieces in person, as it allowed me to contextualize her current work with the work she had showed us pictures of in her slide show at her artists talk. I found Ying's work absolutely beautiful, inspiring, and captivating. She works abstractly with colors and textures, giving the general idea of a place or thing instead of directly relating it to canvas. She talked with us about her process about how she tries to capture the essence of a thing rather than the thing itself. She said to me "in this one I tried to see how the water felt" and looking at it I did get a sense of the movement of water. She uses color in an uninhibited manner, that inspired me and made me miss working with color in my own work; however when she later visited my studio, she commended my ability to use black and white and encouraged me to keep color to a minimum.

We discussed composition, which is something I had been struggling with in my work, and she said to me "look at the negative space here, it is almost the exact same as the positive space right next to it, do something different, this is too much the same." I completely understood what she was saying about my use of positive and negative space and I want to try and keep that in mind with my next few works. I also hope to go back into my first spread and change the composition a bit, add some cuts here and there that change the way the piece reads. She also encouraged me to write down the text I want to add to the piece on a separate piece of paper and tape it into my work when it is being shown in a critique- this way the viewers have more of a visual idea of how the composition will come together as a whole and I won't have to worry about the words not being what I want them to be, as I can just take off the extra paper and change the words at a later point as I feel necessary.

Ying Li also suggested that if I plan to have the pieces be interconnected, I should be working on ideas for multiple spreads at a time, and bouncing ideas around from piece to piece. I love this idea and have already started sketches for two additional spreads. I also plan to go back into my first spread, so everything is in a fluid state right now and liable to be changed and altered. Ying Li's visit to my studio, and my visit to her studio helped me open my eyes to what I really need to be doing. I'm feeling excited to move forward with my work and realize this idea I have been forming and working on in my head for so long. I'm excited to bring it to fruition through sketches; the paper cuts will come in time.



**Stage Six- Secondary Revisions**  
 Post- Critique Writing: Mid-Term Critique

Work Displayed At Midterm Critique



*Critique Summary*

A. Heavy Handedness

1. Wrinkles in work, unclear cuts
2. Takes away from the image
3. Perhaps it can be fixed by working larger?
4. Could also be improved by using different materials such as rice paper.

## B. Text and Image Relationship

1. The image needs to carry some of the weight of the narrative; it can't all be in the text 2. HPB suggested I look over Persepolis and other graphic novels for inspiration 3. Joe suggested that I find a way to nail down the moment I want to draw using line sketches to map out the narrative 4. Sue suggested I use ink to map out my images before I begin cutting to get a better hold on the composition

## C. Identity and Paper cuts

1. Billy liked the idea of identity being formed in a similar manner as I form my paper cuts and asked me to pursue this topic

D. Source Suggestions 1. Persepolis and other graphic novels 2. Shadow Puppets 3. Paul Chan 4. Carrie's catalog of paper cut artists

## *Larger Topics and Main Critiques Referenced in Work:*

Several people discussed my artistic “hand” during the critique. Professors Sue Johnson, Carrie Patterson, and Joe Lucchesi all pointed out that parts of my paper was wrinkled and there were pieces in the work where the effort I took to make the cuts came through to the viewer in a negative way that detracted from the work. Carrie suggested that perhaps this effect could be lessened if I worked with larger pieces of paper where the cuts could be made with more ease and the heavy handedness would be eliminated or less evident. Sue thought I should try working on rice paper as that was the traditional paper used for some types of paper cutting. The fact that my hand was evident in my work brought the idea of effort to the viewer and Joe said it worked against my piece, taking attention away from the shadow, which was one of the highlights of my pieces.

Another topic discussed during my critique was the relationship between the text and the images. Hannah Piper Burns suggested I look at graphic novels such as Persepolis to find inspiration for telling narratives through images. Joe felt there was a bit of a backwards feeling between the text and images. He wasn't sure if the text came first or the image, but there was a quality of “going beyond the image” that was missing. For example, Carrie said there were certain parts of my work that came together as a whole in each piece, but there were also sections of each work that felt disconnected, a tree, a girl, a bird, but not necessarily a cohesive narrative. Sue said she loved the little skyline city and that it was working for her, but that there needed to be less detail and more concentration on singular important parts of the image.

The topic of paper cuts as a medium was discussed as a peripheral topic, but not one of great concern for the participants of the critique. Sue suggested at one point that I work in ink as an exploratory method that would help me access my images more quickly before I begin to cut. Professor Billy Frieble said that he felt the idea of paper cutting as an additive and subtractive medium aligned well with the idea of the development of identity and encouraged me to explore this idea further in my work. He felt that this idea would be a very interesting one to pursue if I could think of a way to communicate it more directly through my work.

Interestingly, my use of color within my book pages was not discussed. I had talked about introducing color into my cuts in one of my earlier critiques and had gotten mixed feedback on whether or not it was a good idea. For this critique I had kept my original paper cuts without color, but inserted color in small, very select amounts on a few pages. There was nothing mentioned about my use of color, which I take to mean that it was not glaringly unsuccessful.

I purposefully displayed my various paper cut pieces in different ways to experiment with shadow and to see which display allowed the piece to resonate most with the viewer. Sue said that the piece mounted on plexi-glass was most successful and she appreciated the acknowledgement of the shadow as an important part of the piece. She also voiced concern about this not being directly evident when the pieces were digitally formed into a book, as the end result looked a bit like printmaking upon first glance.

I also received some suggestions of resources for future research from several Professors. Carrie suggested I stop by her office to browse her copy of a catalog from a collection of paper cuts and paper art works. Hannah Piper Burns suggested I look at *Persepolis* and other graphic novels for inspiration, and she also offered up shadow puppets as inspiration. Billy Friebele suggested I view the works of Paul Chan, a contemporary artist.

### *Response and Reflection on the Critique:*

Overall this critique has left me feeling very positive about my work and full of ideas regarding where to go next. I believe my pieces were fairly successful, but I realized after the critique that they are not in a finished state yet. I feel the need to continue working with them and perfecting them so that they convey more of a sense of narrative in and of themselves, and are not merely illustrations of the physical text. For example, I would like to expand on the sub-plot of a little mole creature in my work. I would like the mole to be making the inverse voyage of the little girl, but to be learning some of the same lessons. The mole will not be mentioned at all in the text, but will be a story told in a sort of sidebar, apart from the main narrative but adjacent to it on the page. For further inspiration regarding this sub story I would like to look at some graphic novels to see how they tell stories with minimal use of line (because of the small amount of space) but a large impact. This little mole will never be mentioned at all in the text, but will be a charming little creature for the readers of the text to discover as they come to the text multiple times and revisit the story.

I am also considering working in a larger format. This idea scares me for multiple reasons, but I do think it may be a possible solution to the frustrated appearance of my cuts. The large format is a concern mainly because I have no idea where I would get huge sheets of rice paper to make the works. Dick Blick sells rolls of rice paper, that are very long, but only 18 inches in height. They also sell individual pieces of paper but these are only 30 inches by 22 inches. I know for a fact that craft stores such as Michaels and A.C. Moore do not carry rice paper in large sizes at all. I am thinking of sending Sue Johnson an email asking her if she knows of any other places I could check for large pieces of rice paper. Alternatively I could just work as large as the largest size of paper permits me to, on the same ratio scale as the scanner in the DIL lab in Montgomery Hall. I think it will be fun and beneficial to me to experiment with working with this new type of paper and it would help the precision of my cuts to work larger.

Within the narrative I think I would also like to draw on the fact that an identity is formed by the taking away of parts and the adding of parts to make a whole. Billy said this idea would work well for me if I could find a way to effectively include it in my work, and I am excited to do some quick sketches and pursue this idea. I would also like to re-do my entire storyboard and complete a few quick line sketches for each piece of text to figure out what I want to convey through my images on each page. Additionally I would like to experiment with die-cutting the actual book pages so that some pages have little peepholes where the viewer can look from one page to the next through a

removal of a piece of the page. This would not only emphasize the fact that the original illustrations are made from paper cuts, but also encourage the flow of the narrative and the interconnectivity in the illustrations.

Since bent edges and small smudges seemed to really detract from my work I am going to attempt to be much more careful with my pieces and “lighten” my hand in the work. I know I am often very rough while handling my work, and with some of these pieces I just spend so much time working on them that my handprints or fingerprints become evident and the paper wrinkles a bit. If I am a bit more careful I think the finished pieces will really present themselves in a more positive way to the viewer. I also think that sandwiching the pieces in plexi during presentation might help, although I would be concerned about the glare if that were to be the presentation mode. It is definitely an idea to be played with. Furthermore, I would like to begin working on large sheets of tracing paper, drawing out my ideas in completeness and overlaying the tracing paper over the piece of rice paper, and then cutting through both layers to achieve my final cuts. I think this will remove my hand even more from my work and allow the image to show in a less distracted form. I also think that this will just result in a cleaner cut with less over and undercuts and thus a more premeditated and thoughtful feel to the piece.

After this critique I am feeling more confident about the different aspects of my work coming together to form a whole. I have many ideas for my work and need to sit down and spend some time with new materials, experimenting with and expanding on existing ideas that are working for me. After the critique Sue said to me “The good thing about you is that you are very product oriented. The bad thing about you is that you are very product oriented.” I realize this about myself and understand that slowing down and completing more sketches before I dive into the work is an important part of the process. At the same time, I do want to perfect the product and make my story and paper cuts as unsoiled and beautiful as I can, so that the little wrinkles and drips of adhesive don’t take away from the cuts. I also want to lessen the complexity of some parts of the images to create focal points in my work, going along with the “less is more” mentality.

### **Revised Intention Statement**

I create paper cut illustrations out of black and white papers and craft knives. My work tells a story, following a narrative, progressing from piece to piece in an interconnected manner. The story I chose to tell within these images is about the search for identity and realization of self. As Charli ventures from her safe home in the balloon to the big exciting cities below, she discovers more about herself and the qualities that make her who she special and unique. She takes this sense of self with her in life as she leaves the city, setting off to explore new places in life with an open mind. The illustrations will not only tell this story, but also the subplot of a small mole who is, at the same time as the child, setting off from his own home in the city, to go find a life for himself in the country, in a way reflecting the plot of Charli.

I work on a large scale, creating the text of the story and the illustrations at the same time. So as I work on the narrative it is a very fluid and changing one. Often I work on more than one page at a time, working on spreads or even multiple spreads simultaneously to ease pieces of the image from one page to the next. I create my cut outs from paper, making large chunky shapes to represent and block out large areas of space on a page. I move these pieces around on the page until I am satisfied with the composition. At this point I begin to add detail into the image, carving the shapes out of

the large pieces of paper, drawing the picture from the page itself. After creating these cuts I scan them into the computer and piece them together using photo shop. Then I adjust the contrast of the images and add color and text before printing the final images, the book pages.

I am studying the idea of identity in my work and playing with the idea of how identity is created. Is your identity composed of what belongings you possess? Or is it something deeper, is it composed of different behavioral qualities that you learn through situations you go through in life? Charli is struggling to find her identity in life because she believes that without it she cannot truly experience happiness or wholeness of being. Brought down to the level of a child, Charli desires material possessions she does not have, because she believes they will make her a happier. However once she does attain these things, she realizes she is no happier than she was before. If anything, these possessions may have even made her less happy as they serve as a barrier between her and the beautiful world of physical experience.

I want my work to enchant and captivate. I wish to create charming illustrations that draw readers back time and time again to look at the same image, and read the same words, but discover something new to take away from the work each time. I want to cause giggles and create conversation between the parents and the children reading the story. Perhaps most of all, I desire my work to be accessible, relevant, and interesting to parents, teachers, and children.

### Artist's Who Inspire Me



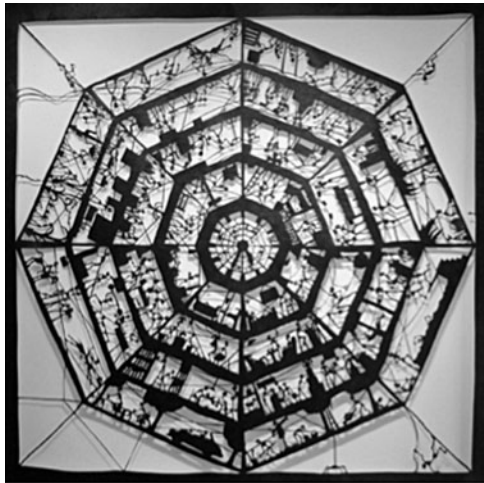
Nikki McClure  
"Invite"  
Paper cut



Louise Bourgeois  
"Maman"  
Bronze



Joe Bagley  
"Untitled"  
Paper Cut



Beatrice Coron  
"A Web of Time"  
Tyvek Cut

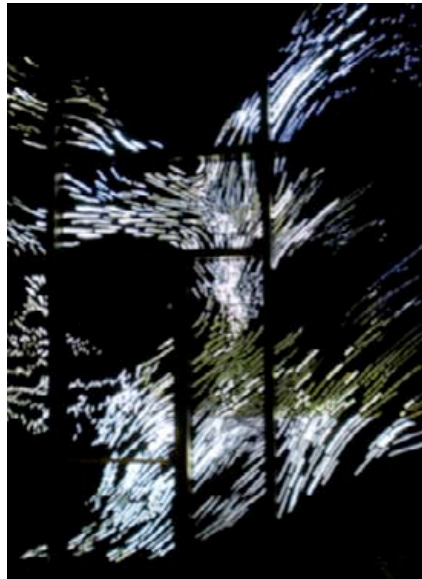
## Peter Rabbit



Beatrix Potter  
*Peter Rabbit* Illustration,  
Watercolor



Robert Ryan,  
"You Are My Universe"  
Paper Cut



Lenka Konopasek.  
"Instillation for Salt Lake  
Art Center"  
Paper cut



Lotte Reinger  
*Grimm's Fairytales*  
Illustration  
Paper cut

## **Stage Seven- Reevaluation of Work**

### **Interview Part 2: Articulating the Shift**

#### **How do you feel that the technical aspect of your paper cutting has developed over the semester?**

Well I've only been paper cutting since August but really I have improved immensely! I honestly feel that the spreads I have been working on to share for the midterm critique are really technically advanced compared to my previous cuts. I now understand the paper much better. I am familiar with the paper I am cutting out of and how it reacts to different knives. I use snap-off knives for cutting large sections with lots of straight edges and I use Exacto knives and ceramic knives for smaller sections of detailing and curvature. I change the blades on all of my knives frequently because I now can feel when a blade has been used and no longer cuts as smoothly, really it makes a big difference. I also understand the cuts much better compositionally. My process usually involves drawing out ideas into my sketchbook until I hit on an image I feel works well in conveying the message of the text or narrative. Then I use tracing paper, tacked to my Bristol board using temporary stencil glue, and I draw onto the tracing paper with a pencil, and erase and change my composition. Once I have it perfect, I block out sections using sharpies and microns on the tracing paper, these bolder marks show me how the composition will look in black and white. I can still change the image at this stage by adding more tracing paper on top and drawing onto that paper to change the composition. Then I begin cutting starting at the outside edges and working towards the center. I save pattern sections for last and am very cautious when cutting them to make sure I am cutting the correct sections to ensure the pattern comes through the way I desire.

#### **Have you come to any conclusions about the display of your book (or the finished spreads) in the gallery setting?**

I think eventually- for the final gallery show I would like to display a few of my favorite page cut-outs mounted on plexi-glass so that the shadow comes through on the wall behind. I would also like to display a finished copy of my narrative in book form, since that has been a goal of mine throughout this entire project. I am not entirely sure how I would show the book, but right now I am considering self-publishing it in Blurb and ordering a copy of a hardcover version of the book. Then in the gallery setting I would have a small table or pedestal on which I could cut some foam core board and make a place for the book to rest so the viewers could turn the pages of the book. I would also like to spend some time next semester in local elementary school libraries sharing my book with children during their library times and receiving feedback from children regarding the plot, illustrations and narrative as a whole. During this time I would have a finished copy of the book but it would still be in flux and I could decide to change or alter the book in some way between this time and the time of the final gallery show to acknowledge the opinions of the students I visit. After all my book is meant for children AND adults so it would be appropriate to receive feedback from both age groups.

#### **Are there any new inspirational artists that apply to your work more recently?**



Hmm... Nikki McClure is still a huge inspiration to me, but there have been several new discoveries over the course of the semester, as one would expect. I look a lot at Beatrice Coron's Identity project. I also have looked at Rob Ryan for inspiration from the illustrative quality of his works. The show Paper cuts premiered at The Center for the Living Arts in Alabama and was shown to me online by Professor Sue Johnson, and I had the opportunity to look at several other paper-cut artists work that were the same medium but a very different nature of content than my own. The show included the works of Jaq Belcher, Beatrice Coron, Michelle Forsyth, Reni Gower, Lenka Konopasek, Lauren Scanlon, and Daniella Woolf. I have also studied artists from different mediums such as Louise Bourgeois for her perspective and respect of material, and Beatrix Potter for the qualities of her illustrations. So yes, I would say there have been quite a few new artists I have been inspired by! I am always encountering new inspiring material and taking it into my own work and individualizing techniques to fit my purposes.

**Where do you see yourself in your process at the end of this semester? Will you be proceeding with the book next semester also?**

Yes I do hope to be proceeding with the book next semester as well. I see myself at the end of this semester (2 weeks left after we come back from thanksgiving break?). I had planned out my project at the beginning of the year on the blackboard wall in my room looking at the format of a children's book. A traditional children's book has 32 pages but only 24 pages are used to actually tell the story. The other pages are just end pages, used for the end pages, copyright, and title. 24 pages translates to 12 spreads, and there are generally between 500 and 800 words within those pages. I planned at the beginning of the year to have 3 spreads completed by midterm critique, and six by the end of the semester. I am running on schedule and should have approximately six spreads, twelve pages to show at the end of the semester gallery show. Since I also had to figure out the storyline, narrative, characters, method of illustration, and other details this semester, I expect the work will go more quickly and smoothly next semester- allowing me time to revise my work after completing the book.

**You've discussed the idea of using hats to identify characters in your work. What does the hat symbolize to you, making it such an identifiable feature?**

Well it wasn't always hats! People say that writing children's stories is challenging and they are correct! I came into this project with the idea of wanting to share my ideas about the environment and local food farming and although my convictions haven't changed, my book certainly has! I have learned that you can't come to a project with specific ramifications because it limits you and really walls in your creative process. Soon after starting the project my book branched into three separate potential ideas which included a creation story stemming from a native American tale, a nonfiction book regarding the lifestyle of Amish children, and an idea regarding identity and possessions, which is the one I finally decided to wrestle with. At first the possessions in my story were very technological and I personified characters such as "society" and "all children" as embodying large ideas on a simplified level to make the material more accessible to children. However through feedback I discovered that attempting to fit huge ideas into a small book, was just going to be an impossible process for me, and so I began to simplify and refine my ideas. Which characters were essential? What was the main idea I wanted to convey? And through many- MANY revisions of my story I finally settled on hats as a metaphor for identity. Not only are the hats a metaphor, but Charli's journey also became a metaphor for my own growth and development as an artist. Charli

and I both embarked on voyages starting this September and we have certainly come a long way since that time!

**Will you present your work to children as well as place it within the gallery setting? How does your consideration of these audiences change the way you think about your work/composition/text?**

Yes, I really do hope to present my work to children outside of the gallery space. I am really hoping to get into some libraries this spring and share my book with children to hear their responses! I have done quite a bit of reading of children's books and I believe my book probably fits around the 3-6-age grouping of children's literature. It is an in-between transition book that I think really fits my content. What I mean to say is that the words and sentence structure are too complex for beginning readers to be able to read themselves, a parent or older sibling would have to be available to read the book to the younger child. However I do hope the younger child will still find the illustrations engaging in and of themselves (I'm currently doing some research regarding how text and image work in conjunction or as parallel methods of storytelling and so hopefully my methods will crystallize as I continue to learn more about these topics). At the same time I hope that older readers will still be able to be engaged by the story and to see the hats, not just as hats but also as a larger metaphor that they can understand because of their advanced age and insight. I have also considered inserting questions into the book to purposefully force the reader of the book to engage with the child who is being read this story, but I am not sure where exactly I wish to go with that, and I am still rolling the idea over in my head. My consideration of the various audiences who will approach my book is always on my mind, and indeed I really struggled with it towards the beginning of the project when I couldn't decide one specific audience but rather wanted my book to relate to everyone. Now I realize I can pick one audience (children age 3-6) who the book is geared towards but also be aware of the other ages of people who will be coming to this book from a different age perspective- I don't have to focus on everyone at once.

**What comment from Midterm Critique has really stuck with you and how has it shaped how you have proceeded with your work since?**

Hmm... I would have to say that Sue's comment about me needing to explore the "paperiness" of the paper has really stuck with me and driven me to make the connections I have established more visible within my work- I'm really trying to get to that point where my work speaks for itself and the connections between the form, content, and artist are visible and do not need to be reinforced through me verbalizing them! The other comment that sticks in my mind is Billy's comment about wanting me to dig around the idea of identity some more, to explore the meanings behind the word and to really strengthen the relationship I draw between identity as content and identity as form as far as paper cutting. I'm excited about the places I have taken these comments and I hope these two topics are spoken about during the approaching Boyden Gallery show!

## Stage Eight

### Visit With An Author

Kate Chandler received her undergraduate degree from the New College of Florida and her graduate degree from Pennsylvania State University. She teaches several courses on narrative and the novel, has conducted in depth studies regarding the works of Beatrix Potter (one of my greatest inspirations), and is also the Coordinator of the Environmental Studies Department in addition to being an English Professor.

I worked for Kate over the summer at the campus farm when I was first contemplating the various potential topics I wanted my story to be about and Kate and I have spoke on several occasions regarding my work at various stages since that time and her feedback has been extraordinarily valuable. Most recently Kate has encouraged me to really hone in on what age group I have in mind as an audience. This is very important to consider because at this point she feels as if the imaginary elements are aiming towards a younger audience but the complexity of the plot seems more applicable to an older audience. I have encountered this problem several time throughout my revisions of my story and illustrations and it is definitely one, which I am still struggling with. I hope to eventually resolve this issue by simplifying my plot to match the level of my imaginative details. I want to keep the metaphors within the story but simplify the literal components of the story to maintain a level of cohesiveness between the illustrations and the text, the narrative experience and the audience. Kate has also had me evaluate the techniques of other children's book authors and illustrators- she has encouraged me to read books that are currently in the children's section of libraries and to decide what methods work and which don't.

Kate has also reminded me that it is important to consider where my children's literature fits within the wider global context of contemporary children's books. I hope to continue researching this as the semester continues and to have a more cemented idea of how my book would be related to the other books of the time if it were to be widely produced. I see the value and importance of being very aware of where my book stands in the dialogue of children's literature and I am eager to begin pinpointing it in relationship to other books. I have been considering creating a visual map of my book along with other children's books and showing the relationships in a visual way in an effort to organize my thoughts prior to recording them in writing.

I will continue to work with Kate as the fall semester wraps up and the spring semester begins. I hope to speak more in depth with her regarding "text and image" within picture books, such as I examined in the source to self-research of Beatrix Potter. I am particularly interested in gaining more knowledge about the different ways text relates to or parallels images in a picture book and speaking with her about my ideas. Professor Chandler has been an instrumental part of the development of my story thus far, and I look forward to continuing to shape myself as an author illustrator, and my story with her advice and guidance.

## Stage Nine- Tertiary Revisions

During this final group critique prior to the Boyden Gallery Show at the end of the semester, I had the opportunity to receive group feedback on a couple of new ideas I had been working with since mid-term. I had had this idea regarding the specificity of Charli's hat, Lisa had asked me to consider more carefully what it was made of, since hats were beginning to play such an essential role in my story. At first I had thought Charli would wear an old worn out beanie, something simple but useful for keeping ears warm in the cold and the sun out of her eyes. Then I thought perhaps I should make the hat a bit more homely since Charli is striving for something "better", and so I had the idea of making the hat knit from yarn and being rather old, full of little pills and pulls and generally just not very fancy looking. However then Lisa had spoken to me about the idea of having the hat made of paper, and I really loved the idea of having a newspaper hat. It seemed to fit well with the idea of the illustrations of the book being made from black and white paper and it also seemed to work with the fact that Charli's hat is a bit "different" than the other hat's she see's in the city. A newspaper hat is all about pure imagination, anyone can make a newspaper hat, but most people don't wear them about as real hats in public- they are all about the imagination and playing. I introduced the newspaper idea at this critique with a fully drawn spread featuring the newspaper being cut with a pair of scissors and folded into a hat (I especially liked this idea because it involved scissors, which I thought was a clever idea of incorporating the form (paper cutting)and content (the narrative) together. However the spread was not well received and everyone thought it would be more appropriate if Charli's hat were composed of elements she finds in her hot air balloon basket, things like feathers, twigs and bits of cloud. Everyone agreed that Charli should make the hat herself out of these materials and then when she goes down into the city she will either a) not have a hat at all because it will not hold together when the cloud evaporates or b) she will look extremely peculiar. Working with this new idea of a cloud hat though, I am unsure of how the cloud is actually the "right hat for her" what services does it provide that are uniquely useful to her? This is a kink I still need to work out of the plot line I am developing.

During this critique I also introduced a third illustration in addition to the new spread, which everyone agreed worked well. Lisa had me make a few adjustments to the composition, so that the angle of the arms formed a complete circle around the child in the center, but other than that it would seem my handle on composition and paper cutting is improving! My hand is becoming less evident in my work as I am taking more precautionary measures to ensure that I don't accidentally wrinkle the paper or drip glue or adhesive in the wrong places and this has improved the aesthetic quality of my work. I am also concentrating on patterns and learning how paper cuts can be used to effectively communicate space. Even though I am just working with black and white positive and negative space, I need to be careful that neither element is overwhelming the page, unless that is the effect I want. I was told one of my spreads was overall too dark and it was being perceived as a night time scene when in reality I had pictured it taking place in the daytime, I amended the image with the idea of patterns and in mind and cut away more sections of the image. I think the final result is really much improved at accurately communicating my ideas and the fact that I am beginning to be able to make these revisions is exciting for me.

## Stage Ten- What's Next?

When picture books are brought into the lives of elementary school aged children they encourage a renewed excitement for learning. Because children of this age are usually competent readers and writers, and curriculum dictates the reading of chapter books and short novels. However the return of the picture book brings more than just enthusiasm, it can also serve as a learning tool to these older children who are more aware of what they are reading. It can help teach literary elements and exemplify good writing while also conveying important content. Although my book is based towards a slightly younger audience, I really believe that the information offered is extremely relevant to older children as well. I am really excited about potentially taking a mock-up of my book into local libraries and schools to share my story of identity with children in this age group. I am very interested in receiving feedback from a younger group of children so that I can gauge what needs to be revised within the book before it's final presentation in May.

As a child the wide span illustrations of picture books were some of my first introductions to the worlds of creative literature and art. It was from these seemingly simple children's books that I began to form my ideas about wider concepts such as morality and behavior. The correlation between the words, the pictures, and the message they send to the young audience continues to captivate me to this day and as I work on creating my own story I strive to create the material in the book in a manner that will make it accessible to the children who read it. However it is difficult to judge the successfulness of my work without receiving feedback from my intended audience. I look forward to sharing my work with children, and specifically talking about what they take away from the narrative in terms of a more globalized idea, namely their ideas regarding identity and it's place in the book and in their lives.

I am also interested in conducting some more research on the different type of relationships scholars have found between text and image within children's literature. There are a variety of proposed methods such regarding the manner in which text and image work together, or separately to complete a narrative, and I believe it is important to realize what method my book uses and why that method is most appropriate.

### *Proposed Bibliography of Secondary Sources:*

Cunningham, Patricia Marr. *Phonics They Use: Words for Reading and Writing*. Boston: Pearson, 2009. Print.

Henry, Jomarie. *What Elements of Picture Books Increase Levels of Student Engagement?* Rockville Center, NY: Molloy College, 2006. Print.

Hunt, Peter, and Dennis Butts. *Children's Literature: an Illustrated History*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.

Lange-Niederprum, Iris, and Sarah Baron. *Monsters, Dragons and Wild Things: Being Creative with Children*. Mt. Waverley, Vic.: Dellasta, 1998. Print.

Lerer, Seth. *Children's Literature: a Reader's History, from Aesop to Harry Potter*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 2008. Print.

Olley, Anne-Maree. *Thinking about Picture Books: a Guide to Thoughtful Discussion*. Invercargill, N.Z.: Essential Resources, 2006. Print.

Pope, Alice. *2011 Children's Writer's & Illustrator's Market*. Cincinnati, Oh.: Writer's Digest, 2010. Print.

Rosenberg, Teya, and Wyile Andrea Schwenke. *Considering Children's Literature: a Reader*. Peterborough, Ont., Canada: Broadview, 2008. Print.

Shapiro, Juliette Paperny. *An Experimental Approach to Creative Writing for Children*. Regina: [s.n.], 1967. Print.

Strachan, Linda. *Writing for Children*. London: & C Black, 2008. Print.

Tan, Shaun. *Picture Books: Who Are They For?* Marrickville, N.S.W.: Primary English Teaching Association, 2006. Print.

Tatar, Maria. *The Annotated Classic Fairy Tales*. New York: Norton, 2002. Print.

*A few useful on-line sources for further research:*

[Annotated Bibliography](#) for Nodelman's Pleasures of Children's Literature

[List of Journals](#) featuring articles on children's and YA Lit from Rutgers

[ChLA Homepage](#) for the Children's Literature Association

## Appendix A: *Charli's Hat* Text in Full

### Charli's Hat

NOTE\* the words provided in parenthesis are actually not going to appear on the page. They are just suggestions regarding what I would like the illustrations to convey on those pages.

Spread 1	(page 1) (picture of the hat)	(page 2) There once was a very special hat. It had been knit together with love and well wishes and it was meant always to belong to a young girl called Charli.
Spread 2	(page 3) Charli loved her hat. She wore it everyday in raindrops and sunshine, in snowflakes and wind. Slowly the hat lost some of its pieces and small holes started to appear, the yarn had started to stretch and pill but the hat didn't mind and neither did Charli.	(page 4) It kept her dry and warm and protected her from the sun. Charli's hat wasn't fancy but it was just right for her.
Spread 3	(page 5) Then there came a day when Charli grew older and more curious about the world around her. She decided to visit the big city.	(page 6) So Charli moved to Bigton to discover who she was and to make a place for herself in the world. Her mama and papa, who loved her dearly, were sad to see her go but gave her some money in hopes she would find a place for herself in the world.
Spread 4	(page 7) (Charli is pictured here in the city. The street is crowded and everyone is wearing hats pertaining to their personality/profession. The "Hat Store" is evident across the street.)	(page 8)
Spread 5	(Page 9) (everyone walking by on the street has LARGE and ELABORATE hats, including a passing cat)	(Page 10) (it is made clear in the illustrations that Charli feels sad and ashamed of the size and plainness of her hat, as a result she makes a visit to the "Hat Store")
Spread 6	(Page 11) (Charli walks out of the store with a ridiculous pile of 16 hats on her head)	(Page 12)

Spread 7 (PLOT TURN)	(Page 13) Attempting to flaunt her new hats Charli carefully walked in the direction of what she thought might be Main Street...	(Page 14) (hats attract bees)
Spread 8	(Page 15) (ribbons get caught on the sign posts)	(Page 16) but confused and disoriented by her new hats, she accidentally wandered out of the city completely, and she pushed up the brim of her hat to see she was quite lost and in the middle of nowhere she knew.
Spread 9	(Page 17) Luckily for Charli it was just then that she spotted a small figure a little ways away.	(Page 18). “Achoos me do woa bakada chity?” said Charli, who was having trouble speaking as the brim of one especially floppy hat kept sinking down over her face and covering her mouth.
Spread 10	(Page 19 Pushing up the brim of her hat and squinting out into the sunlight Charli thought to herself, I would never wear such an atrocity on my head, never in a million years.	(Page 20) It was just then of course, that suddenly a strong gust of wind came along and carried Charli’s uppermost hat from her head and over the water, it landed square in the center of the pond and sent ripples through the reflection Charli had thought was another girl.
Spread 11	(Page 21) Realizing her mistake, Charli blushed. How silly it was of her to be wearing all of these hats, just to impress the people of the Bigton. It was in seeing the reflection of herself that she realized the silliness of all of these new hats.	(Page 22) She could not for the life of her remember why she had wanted them in the first place. But one thing was certain, there was one hat that was perfect for her. It kept her dry and warm and protected her from the sun. Charli’s hat wasn’t fancy but it was just right for her.
Spread 12	(Page 23) And for the rest of her days she lived in the hat that was made for her. It was a little bit faded and some of the strings were a bit out of place, but Charli found it fit her just fine...	(Page 24) and the hat thought so too.



## Appendix B: Bibliography of Research

Pitz, Henry C. Illustrating Children's Books: History- Techniques- Production. New York: Watson-Guption Publishers. 1963.

This book is divided into two sections, the first focuses on specific time periods and areas of the world in relation to children's book illustration, the second focuses on techniques and book production. I concentrated mainly on the first half, but did read parts of the techniques section as well. The historical side of the book talks about over 200 illustrators, including Edward Lear, Beatrix Potter, and Howard Pyle all of whose work I considered while creating my own illustrations. Edward Lear seems to capture such a sense of comedy within his work by personifying animals and plants and putting them in exaggerated situations. I love this sense of nonsense and charm that his characters give off, and I think that it really appeals to his audience of children as well. I hope to forge a similar connection to the whimsical and charming in my own work by exaggerating features on characters and putting them in imaginative settings. Beatrix Potter has also captivated my attention, as many of her books gave off a general message regarding voyages and discovering of self. And although her works deal mainly with animals, there is a sense of whimsy in the fact that her scientifically correct rabbits and mice wear clothing and talk to each other as people would. Howard Pyle is another artist whose work I concentrated on for its sense of composition. Even though Howard Pyle creates a very flat space within his illustrations, he is able to engage the viewers through the detail and the motion of his images. Many artists since Pyle have been inspired by his work, and I feel that there is much to learn from his style of printing. This book aided my discovery of the relationships that exist between established illustrators. For example, both Beatrix Potter and Howard Pyle were illustrator-authors, integrating text and image.

The technical section of the book helped me finalize my audience. The text described the various age groups that illustrators create their pictures for specifying what aspects are important for different audiences. I am creating my book based towards children aged nine and twelve, which is considered the "most important reading age" where children are reading to themselves and but are also still interested in the illustrations.

Meyer, Susan E. A Treasury Of the Great Children's Book Illustrators. New York: Abrams. 1983.

Edward Lear, John Tenniel, Walter Crane, Randolph Caldecott, Kate Greenaway, Beatrix Potter, Ernest H. Shepard, Arthur Rackham, Edmund Dulac, Kay Nielsen, Howard Pyle, N.C. Wyeth, and W.W. Denslow were the thirteen artists this book focused on. Published more recently than the other treasury I had studied, this beautiful book is filled with large colored pictures of the illustrations and specific information on the featured illustrators. The purpose of reading it was to glean more knowledge about the dialogue

going on between great illustrators of the past and to help me learn more about the lives of these illustrators, their approach to their art. I read more in depth about Beatrix Potter who found inspiration, as I do in the work of Edward Lear. Stylistically I feel there is information to be gleaned from Lear's way of line making that can be transferred into the paper-cutting medium I'm working in. On a more general line of thinking, I love the way Lear's work has that sense of childish charm that he establishes through simple pen and ink illustrations that seem to "amplify the words" of his stories. Beatrix Potter was also inspired by the pre-Raphaelites and "their somewhat niggling but absolutely genuine admiration for copying natural details", and unbeknownst to me I think I have transferred some of their astuteness for detail into my own work, as I had studied the pre-Raphaelites fairly intensely during my time in Oxford this past spring. Interestingly, Potter and Lear had an intimate feeling for the English countryside, and having spent some time in the Cotswolds this past year I can understand their love of the place, and their desire to translate their love of old farms and the peaceful countryside into their work- I want to do much of the same!

McClure, Nikki. To Market To Market. New York: Abrams. 2011.

This is actually a children's book, written and illustrated by Nikki McClure. McClure is a "self taught artist who has been making paper cuts since 1996" and it was her work that first led me to paper cutting as an illustrative medium. It was really a bit of a revelatory experience to read one of her books as it allowed me to examine the way she handles the medium within the form. For example I was able to see how she deals with the crease in the middle of the page, how she works with composition, how she uses color to create an engaging picture, and how she incorporates text into her work. I really do love the way McClure utilizes color- and despite receiving mixed feedback on incorporating color into my own images during the first critique, I may play with color digitally as I start to finish the hand cut pages and begin to work more with my images on a computer. McClure also successfully provides instruction for children within her book without forgetting her audience and making the text and image feel "too adult." I am striving to find this balance in my own work!

Sandness, Karen Elsa. Sawasaki Nobuto, Sasaki Mikio. Creative Paper Cutting: Basic techniques and Fresh Designs. Boston: Trumpeter Books. 2010.

This book focused on various techniques and ways to approach paper cutting as a craft. Even though it didn't contain any information about fine art, or technical aspects of composing and image, it did deal with what types of knives are effective for this medium and ways in which a paper can be folded to produce certain reflections within the image. This book helped me come to the realization that I am greatly influenced by the artistic creativity of my youth. When I was younger I loved creating things out of clay, drawing, and reading technical books such as this one, that provide instruction on how to create something beautiful that can add beauty to daily life. I realized that some of my earliest interactions with paper as a craft material came from creating paper chains and garlands, used to celebrate a holiday or count down for an event. I learned that the medium of paper cutting has always been utilized in celebrations through the ages: Chinese paper cuts were created for births,

weddings, and symbols of luck and happiness, Mexican paper cuts were made to commemorate special moments in people's lives, such as coming of age birthdays. Re-visiting this sense of paper cuts as a celebration made me feel even more confident about the medium I've chosen to work in, as I believe using paper cuts as a mode of illustration helps me to establish the idea of celebrating identity that I address in my work.

Bettelheim, Bruno. The Uses of Enchantment: the meaning and importance of fairytales. New York: Knoph. 1976.

Lisa Scheer recommended this book to me after I introduced the idea of a plot into my book as opposed to making it directly informational, and it has been instrumental in my SMP work since reading it. I agree Bettelheim's idea that children need to be exposed to tough situations through narrative to help them learn that life is not all fun and games. The author points out that the fact that death is addressed in many fairytales is not by accident, and while this may seem gruesome, it allows children this once-removed exposure to the concept at an early age and gives them the ability to confront difficult situations later in their lives. But I also agree that happy endings are appropriate to instill a sense of ability and confidence in the reader. I have also learned much from what Bettelheim has to say about the fairytale being orchestrated in such a way that the reader can come back to it time and time again and associate the metaphorical trials in a story with different parts of his or her life as he/she grows older and their view of the world is enlarged. After reading this portion of the text I went back to my own plot and I made some drastic changes so that my story was not quite so direct and the trials are more abstracted and thus can be perceived in different ways as children (people) develop and approach my work from a different perspective.

Henri Matisse: Drawing With Scissors, Masterpieces from the Late Years. Ed. Olivier Berggruen and Max Hollein. New York: Prestel, 2002.

When I was looking through the Document books from the previous year I saw this book on Allison Yancone's bibliography and I thought it might be a helpful book for me to examine. I had not realized that Matisse worked with paper cuts, and it was interesting to see this more abstracted take on what had traditionally been considered a craft or "decorative art." I was also interested in the fact that he created books known as "livre d'artiste" which were limited edition artists' books. This text has several illustrated essays that focus on different aspects of the making, meaning, and interpretation of the art works. Many (if not all) of Matisse's paper cuts dealt with color, and the fact that using paper was using color directly, without having to apply it to the page as you would have to do with painting. I love the patterning in his work *La Gerbe* and the way Matisse seemed to concentrate on form and positioning to establish his composition. I also was inspired to learn that his work environment was "like a jungle" filled with scraps of paper he had been cutting, which lay on the floor around him, just like in my studio right now. It was also interesting to hear about the relationship Matisse believed surrounded images and text and how that effected his

placement of each in his books. Matisse generally cut out his shapes freehand using a small pair of scissors and saving both the cut item and the cut out- then he would arrange the cut outs, adding new ones, modifying old ones, until he was happy with the result. I have begun hanging my own works on the wall and looking at them from farther away, and I believe it has helped me with my sense of composition.

Howard Pyle, Lucien L. Agosta

This book provides a lot of biographical information about Pyle and his career. Pyle was an illustrator and author, primarily for children. He was born in 1853 and lived his whole life in Wilmington Delaware until the final year of his life in 1911 when he moved to Florence, Italy. He taught art at Drexel University and eventually founded his own school of illustration (The Howard Pyle School of Illustration). The term “Brandywine School” was later given to his style of illustration and the artists in the region where he lived. One of his most famous students was N.C. Wyeth, who was also part of the Brandywine school of illustration. In 1883 Pyle published *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, and then in 1888 he published *Otto of the Silver Hand*. His work was mainly concentrated in historical, fiction, and adventure stories. Pyle did not have as much concern for historical accuracy as did original poets writing for children. Pyle was widely respected throughout his life and he continues to be regarded as an exemplary illustrator. Vincent van Gogh wrote of Pyle saying Pyle’s work “struck me dumb with admiration.”

The Changing Status of the Artist. Emma Barker, Nick Webb, Kim Woods

This book concerning art and art history talks about Pieter Brueghel in Case Study 7: Pieter Brueghel the Elder and the Northern Canon, as an early modern period artist. It is estimated within the text that Bruegel was born around the time that Durer died, in present day Belgium. The book goes on to draw several connections between the work of Durer and Bruegel, they both lived during turbulent times, Durer during the Protestant reformation, Bruegel during the political and religious trouble of the Netherlands in the 1550’s and 1560’s. Both artists were known for their graphic work as well as their paintings. Durer was also known for his engravings and Bruegel provided designs for engravings that were completed by professional technicians. Both artists focused on religious subject matter, and both traveled to Italy early in their careers and were influenced to some extent by the Italian style, although they did not include the fashionable figures, motifs, or subjects of Italian art. Next the book looks at specific artworks of Bruegel, such as *Artist and Connoisseur*, *The Peasant Wedding*, *Fall of the Rebel Angels*, and *The Artist at his Easel*. The meanings of Bruegel’s paintings are notably difficult to uncover. Bruegel was known for being a great intellectual, and spent much of his time with books rather than with his art. However when viewed under the lenses of the mind sets of the time- humor, class-consciousness, morality, political affiliation, his work creates innumerable narratives which cause the viewer to ponder the meanings of his work.

Duff, James H. *An American Vision: Three Generations of Wyeth Art: NC Wyeth, Andrew Wyeth, and James Wyeth*. Boston: Little, Brown. 1987.

This book focused on the three generations of Wyeth's and how their work reflected their shared experiences, and but also how the work of each Wyeth was unique and had different points of interest in terms of subject matter and audience. I read the book in its entirety but I was particularly focused on Andrew Wyeth, as he was the artist whom I was studying for the purpose of my transcription piece. I was interested to find that Andrew Wyeth grew up in a home that was very focused on and aware of the art making taking place during the time period in which he was living, but he himself did not receive any formal art education until he was older in life, in his teens. His father, N.C. Wyeth, felt that Andrew needed time to explore his own interests within art before being subjected to other opinions and methodologies. When Andrew was finally taken into his fathers studio and given more of a formal art education, his father had him draw and paint still lifes for hours on end, then, he would remove the objects and ask Andrew to paint them from memory. I think this early training may have affected the younger Wyeth's eye for detail that he painted with in his later, more developed works. It was this detail that I was so interested in when performing my transcription. I often use excessive amounts of detail in my work, and I use the term "excessive" because during critiques people have told me that there is actually too much detail going on, and as a result the image is often flattened or confusing. However, in Wyeth's work, the use of detail is successful, and I think it is the use of detail in appropriate places, and the complexity or simplicity of the composition that allows this detail to really blossom. I was also interested to find in my reading that Andrew Wyeth was inspired by some of the same early illustrators that I am such as Kate Greenaway, Randolph Caldecott, and Howard Pyle. I was surprised to find these illustrators as influences of his work as Andrew Wyeth does not work with illustration, but rather takes the aspects of these works that he is interested in and examines them in the ways they are successful, rather than just directly applying these aspects to his own work. I think this ability to be removed from your work and the work of your inspirations and the ability to step back and examine with an outside eye is essential. The artist must be their own first critic, and learn to realize when things are working for or against the goals they want to accomplish in their own work.

Nikolajeva, Maria, and Carole Scott. *How Picturebooks Work*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

This text looks at the relationship between text and image, as it specifically applies to children's literature. The various chapters look at setting, characterization, narrative perspective, time and movement, mimesis and modality, figurative language, metafiction, interest, and picturebook paratexts. I found the direct references to Beatrix Potter in the chapter on setting particularly interesting as it discusses the dark side of the text that does not appear in the comfortable imagery (Jemima Puddle ducks eggs are eaten, Mr. Rabbit is put into a pie, and the flopsy bunnies are nearly killed as well). In Elsa Beskow's picture book *Children of the Forrest* (1910) there are many images of forest plants in the illustrations that the children reading the story are expected to recognize, however the wild mushrooms are explicitly named as the children reading the story are expected to be learning the names of these mushrooms. I also found the section on character development

interesting in its use of both text and image. “Narrative description is the most basic, involving both external, visual detail (what do the characters look like, how do they move, what are they wearing) and emotional, psychological, and philosophical characteristics. The text then goes on to talk about the number of terms used by critics to describe the relationship between text and image: duet, counterpoint, and interference. Polysystemy, congruency, synergy. The author states that the “Degree of friction or harmony” between the text and image can be considered an extension of the narrative. These interactions make picture books less linear than textual books according to the author, however there is little room for characterization within picture books and as a result they tend to be more plot oriented (opposed to character oriented). Descriptions of characters can refer to them both externally and internally in verbal and visual manners and these two types of communication can either confirm or contradict each other. Very helpful and specific examples are provided from various types of texts including *Mina and Kage* by Anna Holund, *Granpa* by John Burningham, This is really just a fantastic book that is full of interesting information.

Pantaleo, Sylvia. ""Reading" Young Children's Visual Texts." *ECRP* 7.1 (2005). Web.

This text from the *Early Child Research and Practice* journal discusses a study that investigated how first grade children perceive sophisticated picture books. The introduction to the work informs the audience about some of the pervading ideas regarding text and image in children’s literature offered by other scholars. However the body of the text concentrates on a specific experiment where the author explored children’s responses to literature and the ways that teachers “read” pictures created by children, two very different but related ideas. Twenty first graders were read various stories, including *Willy the Dreamer* (Browne, 1997), *Something from Nothing* (Gilman, 1992), *Tuesday* (Wiesner, 1991), *The Three Pigs* (Wiesner, 2001), *True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Scieszka, 1989) *Shortcut* (Macaulay, 1995), *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 1998, and *A Day At Damp Camp* (Lyon, 1996). These books were chosen as they all demonstrate creative integration or usage of text and image. After having the books read to them on various reading days, the children were asked to respond to the stories by creating pictures of their own. These pictures along with the student’s dictated statements were considered in regards to how they interpreted the book. Of more interest to me, was the portion of the essay that talked about the various types of storytelling including parallel storytelling and interdependent storytelling. This essay analyzed the children’s pictorial responses to the storybooks, rather than the storybooks themselves, but the information provided was still useful and related to my topic. The category of “Interdependent Storytelling” was broken down into three further sections including “Text extending pictures”, “pictures extending text” and “Text extending pictures and pictures extending text.” The results of the study showed that approximately 60% of the picture responses completed by the first grade students reflected interdependent storytelling (the text and pictures communicate alternative information) while 30%, 16%, and 14% of students responded with interdependent storytelling where the text extended the pictures, the pictures extended the text, and the text extended the pictures and the pictures extended the text, respectively. *Willie the Dreamer* (Browne, 1997) had the most examples of parallel storytelling responses, potentially as a result of the narrative style of the book. *Tuesday*

(Weisner, 1991), *The Three Pigs* (Weisner, 2001) and *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* (Scieszka, 1989) had the most examples of interdependent storytelling. A few lines in the closing discussion seemed particularly relevant to my study “if we want to see what lessons have been learned from the texts children read, we have to look for them in what they write” and “When children use a combination of drawing and narrating, the linguistic and spatial multiple intelligences reinforce each other.” The author describes the children’s responses as “two languages” word and picture in joint force. (NOTE: this text has a fantastic reference page with tons of great sources)

Marsh, Emily E., and Marilyn Domas White. "A Taxonomy of Relationships between Images and Text." *Journal of Documentation* 59.6 (2003): 647-72. Print.

This paper looks at the manner in which the relationships between text and image can be codified. Specifically the paper looks at prose, images, font types, color, and spatial relationships to analyze which combinations are most effective for communicating information effectively. The taxonomy developed and explained in the paper answers the following question “How does an illustration relate to the text with which it is associated, or, alternatively, what are the functions of illustration?” The demand for a common language to describe these various relationships springs from the vastness of material, which it incorporates, for example, advertising, education, journalism, and information studies. The article goes on to discuss all the various careers where text and image relationships are essential, and then moves on to discuss methodology and the way the taxonomy was developed. The system of classification was developed in two levels: the first level identifies, integrates, and organizes concepts describing relationships between images and text already described by other researchers in various fields. Then the taxonomy derived from the first stage was tested to gauge its “appropriateness and sufficiency” for identifying the relationships discussed. The concepts were categorized into three groups: functions expressing little relation to text; functions expressing a close relation to the text and functions going beyond the text. The second level involved testing the classification on actual texts and images to attempt to determine the meaning of the message in specific cases using this system of taxonomy. The text uses specific examples to demonstrate the methods of classification using excerpts from a book on war crimes and a book on radio waves. Both excerpts were classified using the two-stage process of analysis.

## **Appendix C: Event Evaluations**

### **Analysis of Art Events From Throughout the Semester (In sequential Order)**

#### **Chris Saab: “NIGHTSCENES”**

Visiting artist Chris Saab graduated from SMCM with a degree in Philosophy and an interest in photography. Following his graduation he received an internship working with “new media.” He later moved L.A. and began working for commercial production companies. Although he was busy during the day with work, at night he would go make art for himself taking photographs of the local area. Up until this point he hadn’t worked with color and as he started playing with art making at

night he focused on the use of color within his photographs. He noted light temperatures and how they transformed a space within his images.

He was also interested in space during this time period. He invited the audience to imagine themselves within the space he created in his photographs and spent a lot of time thinking about how to enhance that.

His first body of work was built from 2002-2005 (during his first year of graduate school) and was titled “nightscenes.” Within this work he strove to place the viewer at a very specific vantage point. For his exhibition he mounted the images on Plexiglas and then hung them in shadow boxes. The lights he hung on the ceiling reflected off these boxes and made the images appear almost backlit. Like film screens. He made the point that presentation is important (a point I took to heart and spoke with him about after the formal talk).

His second body of work is called “displacements.” In this body of work Saab advanced from his previous exhibition building on the work he had completed. He knew he liked the limited color palates and the way they would reveal things about the space and he began using techniques that are commonly used in film to create effects in his photography. He found that he would collect images and they would have pieces that “worked” and pieces that “didn’t work” and he began piecing his images together digitally and creating scenes that had not ever occurred in reality. He started looking at the work of pictorialists and early cinema and it was from these influences he drew the aspects of the edges and vignettes that appear in his work.

In his work “untitled” Chris Saab used the material to reconstruct a space and warp the perspective, constructed spaces where you could see downward and forward simultaneously. He uses set “images” or ideas from various movies or songs to give him a direction and feeling of atmosphere within his work. Currently Chris Saab explained that he is sampling materials, not thinking in a dimensional space but trying to think more about art as kinetic energy. In the final image he showed us there was no reference point, the audience can enter into the image wherever they choose. However the texture and the detail of image are powerful and resonate with the audience even without a discernable content.

I found artist Chris Saab’s work to be distinctly different than what I have been working on but it was still interesting to me and inspired me to continue pursuing my work with enthusiasm! I loved the fact that he is an SMCM alumni and has gone out into the world and presented his art to various people in exhibitions all over the U.S.. In fact one part of his work that I found particularly relatable to what I am working on now was the way in which he presented his work. When I talked to him about his presentation he said he made the shadow boxes himself and ordered the glass from a company in Silver Spring. Over Fall break I hope to look for an effective and potentially similar way to display my work for the midterm critique.

Recently I went to visit Ying Li's place of residency at the Artist House, and had the opportunity to visit her studio and speak with her regarding her work. I loved her studio space, it was open and white and crisp and but her oil paintings were anything but that. For the studio visit, Ying had hung her paintings around the studio space in gallery style. I really enjoyed seeing her pieces in person, as it allowed me to contextualize her current work with the work she had showed us pictures of in her slide show at her artists talk. I found Ying's work absolutely beautiful, inspiring, and captivating. She



works abstractly with colors and textures, giving the general idea of a place or thing instead of directly relating it to canvas. She talked with us about her process about how she tries to capture the essence of a thing rather than the thing itself. She said to me "in this one I tried to see how the water felt" and looking at it I did get a sense of the movement of water. She uses color in an uninhibited manner, that inspired me and made me miss working with color in my own work; however when she later visited my studio, she commended my ability to use black and white and encouraged me to keep color to a minimum.

We discussed composition, which is something I had been struggling with in my work, and she said to me "look at the negative space here, it is almost the exact same as the positive space right next to it, do something different, this is too much the same." I completely understood what she was saying about my use of positive and negative space and I want to try and keep that in mind with my next few works. I also hope to go back into my first spread and change the composition a bit, add some cuts here and there that change the way the piece reads. She also encouraged me to write down the text I want to add to the piece on a separate piece of paper and tape it into my work when it is being shown in a critique- this way the viewers have more of a visual idea of how the composition will come together as a whole and I won't have to worry about the words not being what I want them to be, as I can just take off the extra paper and change the words at a later point as I feel necessary. Ying Li also suggested that if I plan to have the pieces be interconnected, I should be working on ideas for multiple spreads at a time, and bouncing ideas around from piece to piece. I love this idea and have already started sketches for two additional spreads. I also plan to go back into my first spread, so everything is in a fluid state right now and liable to be changed and altered. Ying Li's visit to my studio, and my visit to her studio helped me open my eyes to what I really need to be doing. I'm feeling excited to move forward with my work and realize this idea I have been forming and working on in my head for so long. I'm excited to bring it to fruition through sketches, the paper cuts will come in time.

### **Robert Steele Gallery Talk in conjunction with the exhibition *Successions: Prints by African American Artists from the Jean and Robert Steele Collection***

The gallery talk and exhibition displaying the collection of Jean and Robert Steele was overall very interesting, and filled with both historical and current information regarding the gallery itself and the collection being presented. Prior to the Steele's speaking directly about their collection, the founder of Boyden gallery, who happened to be in the audience that night was called upon to say a few words. She gave a rather extensive but entirely captivating introduction, wherein she explained how the gallery came to be. She spoke about a time when SMCM had weaving, pottery, metalsmithing and other more "trade" oriented crafts as opposed to the more "fine art" classes we have today. Her and her husband started collecting pieces from artists by allowing them to exhibit their work in the gallery in exchange for one piece of work. Over time the galleries collection of course expanded greatly until it came to be as it is today.

Then Robert Steele came up to talk about the different aspects of collecting art. He spoke about how one must collect around a certain topic, content, or artist. He also talked about how one must collect using their eyes, their ears, their goals, their head, and their heart. Personally I had never given much thought to forming a personal collection of art in a formal manner, but reflecting on what Robert said, I believe that in some ways I do have a collection of art. I not only save the majority of my own work, I will also order copies, prints, or even originals of works that I find

online through blogs and tumblr that really speak to me and inspire me. I understand the aspects of collecting art, but it was interesting to hear this more formal perspective.

Next Jean Steele presented some of the specific artworks in the collection. She shared stories of finding treasures in basements, visiting artist's studios, and having a good eye for art. All of the works in the collection on display were prints, specifically focusing on African American artists from three generations. Robert got up to speak about some of the pieces Jean hadn't covered, and elaborated on the idea that money is not necessary for collecting art, provided the collector has an eye for the work they collect. I understand where Robert is coming from, as I often notice art that has been thrown in the dumpsters outside of Monty and even consider pulling out some pieces that people have made but thrown away. However in the world of fine arts, I do believe it is necessary to have some amount of money if you truly wish to start an art collection. It was inspiring to hear Jean and Robert talk about their collection, and it was interesting to me that the collection was co-owned. I had never thought of art collections as being a personal thing, something a more than one person could work on, but collaborating in a collection is a great idea, and increases body and variety within the collection as it is encompassing two different people's ideas of the topic or theme at hand.

## **Ying Li**

Ying Li stood before us in the library, a small woman with delicate features and long dark hair. She told us her story, how she had first come to painting when she lived in China, where she had painted and why, and then explained some of her works and methods to us. I found her extremely engaging and I came away from her presentation with new ideas, inspired to head back to my own studio and begin working again.

She explained to us how she had first realized she was good at painting when living in a small village in China during the revolution of the 1960's, after her forced separation from her father and her exodus to the countryside. She had been commissioned to paint a portrait of Mao in the style of a mural. Later on in life she was accepted into a college and began her academic studies of art. It was at this college that she first studied oil painting, saying she found traditional Chinese styles to be "boring." For her senior thesis painting she worked on a young man and woman who were going to their jobs, while in the background loomed a bridge, the construction of which was under intense debate. She was asked to repaint her work, as the critics found the woman's dress too tight however Ying Li refused to edit the dress and instead painted another picture entirely.

Ying Li came to New York City at age 30, and was amazed by the life of the place. She went to museums and saw many of the classical painters works that she had admired for so long, in person. Also at this time, she applied and was accepted to the Parsons graduate program. While here she became homesick for her native land and began looking at traditional Chinese paintings once again. During the presentation she showed a few pieces in particular which she found the use of space and line to be particularly interesting. She enjoys the way the images seem to recede into the space and the viewers' eye follows the landscape through the image. In her presentation she read to us the six principals that traditional Chinese painting is based around, including spirit resonance, bone method, correspondence to object, suitability to type, division and planning, and transmission copying. In particular we discussed the "spirit resonance" and how all art, not just Chinese ink paintings should strive to meet this principle to be a successful work. She attempted to incorporate

this idea into her own work by choosing her subjects carefully, and by portraying them in a manner in which the viewer really gets a sense of what she is seeing as the artist, and not necessarily just a realistic portrayal.

The idea of “spirit resonance” is an idea that I am working with in my art as well. Her presentation seemed to clarify for me the importance of the relationships within art. The relationship of the artist to the work must be strong, so that the relationship of the viewer to the work can also be strong. I really want to put so much time and effort and imagination into my work that the viewer can see that and respond to the image I am creating by becoming engaged or emotionally involved with it. This is particularly important as I am working towards becoming a children’s book illustrator in my life after college, a career that demands that connection of the viewer to the work, and therefore demands the utmost attentiveness of the artist. Just as in Ying Li’s work where she utilizes individual marks to make a whole, I want my work to come together as a whole. Although many pieces are removed from the page, the physical paper is still one piece, still one unified whole, and the pieces that have been removed work with the negative space to create an image.

Ying Li’s work is truly fascinating, and her methods of painting a single object or scene repeatedly have opened my eyes to the immense benefit and understanding that can be gained by slowing down and really concentrating on the same thought or idea in many works. Ying Li is an art professor at Haverford College but is currently living in the artist house at SMCM for the second time in her career. I am intimidated but looking forward to meeting her in a more intimate setting, and even having a crit. with her.