

Sice.

An Artistic Journey by Tim McKay

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An Introduction to Sice

My plunge into the art world occurred 4 years ago after a series of concussions caused a shifting of spheres, socially and intrinsically. I had spent the previous 8 years of my life playing upper level soccer and primarily associating myself with other athletes and members of the “in” crowd. But after my third concussion in as many months, I had no choice but to give all that up, find new friends and new passions. I quickly picked up painting as a medium through which I was able to make sense of the injuries and life in general. I was able to “speak” through the painting in a way that wasn’t possible for my concussed brain to communicate via English. In short, I wasn’t able to speak coherently with other humans but I learned how to “conversate” with an art object.

Hence, 4 years later, my art still is an expression of my inner self as a sifting through of daily experience and allowance for a subconscious train of thought to realize itself. Since this unexpected occurrence impacted my life more deeply, I have learned to reflect more carefully on the day-to-day happenings of life. Specifically my relationships, the way different people fade in and out of the week, or those that stick around, are my biggest influences. My friends mean the world to me, I want to make them proud, I want my paintings to speak to them first and foremost.

The way I first learned to flow was in an extremely brutal and intense unfiltered fashion. I would leave holes in the middle of the canvas I was working on because I was putting so much energy into the work. It took a couple years to receive the benefits of a fully functioning brain again in my life, but since then I

have sought a balance between a conceptual, thoughtful nature, and an unfiltered creative expression. This is why the artist, Jean Michel Basquiat, is one of my biggest influences. Laurie Rodrigues quotes Greg Tate in her essay, "SAMO as an Escape Clause", to portray the style of Basquiat. She quotes, "Basquiat's work reveals a powerful poetic and visual gift, 'heady enough to confound academics and hip enough to capture the attention span of the hip hop nation'" (Rodrigues, 227). This balance between spheres, is what I want to achieve in my art making. On a smaller scale, what I believe that looks like within the Boyden gallery, is art which captivates both professors and students, art lovers and common folk alike.

As I grow, there is a theme of thoughtfulness I want to investigate. Rodrigues writes, "To think mechanically, as Basquiat does, is also to recognize that the given identities of our dominant thought are more fluid and changeable than we have been led to believe" (Rodrigues, 232). Therefore, if I want to effect and communicate to my friends and others, then my goal is to influence people's thoughts. This is what I believe will allow myself to break into the contemporary art market. This is what I want to cultivate this year through my SMP. I believe it will be achieved through many hours in the studio along with conversations with relevant, educated faculty members.

A Statement About Sice

Sice.

Sice.

It's all about sice.

What is sice?

Don't ask, just sice.

Sice is about choosing.

If you don't sice you're losing.

Sice is now. Sice is happening. Sice is effervescent. It brings out the best in all of us. If we don't sice, then we're condemned to being lame forever. Sice is about beginnings. It is the choice to walk through the open door. Sice is about ending. It is the adaptation to the results of previous sices.

Sice is action. Sice is brand new. Sice gives us new life. Sice is all around us. Sice is open to you, are you open to sice?

I love to sice. When I'm in the studio, I view art as an opportunity to sice. Hence, art to me is a series of choices. Whether it's a small, detailed, colorful drawing or a bigger, more simple painting, it's still a permutation of sice.

Sicing in the realm of drawing and painting boils down to the choice of a where to place either a straight or curved line. Once the placement and contour of the line is siced, then the execution of that sice can be siced. Then it's time to sice again.

When I'm sicing in my studio, there is a curious feeling that arises. It's a siced-up creative head-space, and it allows me to sice very quickly. Sicing quickly creates a flow of sice. This sice-flow is what allows me to create the art that I do. It is almost as if I am stepping outside of myself, and am able to witness myself sicing.

This curious feeling fulfills something within that nothing else does. If life is a puzzle, than this feeling is the most malleable, valuable piece that exists.

Examples of Sice



“2 Mugs”

Acrylic Paint on Wood

24” x 9”

9/11/17

This is a piece I made at the beginning of the semester. It represents the theme of ‘bad painting’. The ‘bad painting’ is characterized by simple imagery presented in conjunction with fragments of language, painted without an overly sensitive attention to detail. The intention behind these pieces is to present the viewer with familiar objects with labels so that they make involuntary associations based upon their own previously existing relationships to the words and objects.



“YRB 123”
Oil Paint On Canvas
24” x 24” (individually)
10/15/17

“YRB 123” represents a turning point in the semester. I felt the need to break away from ‘bad painting’ and look to create works which were more clean in execution. The paintings represent a mathematical idea of choosing a primary color vs. black. There’s three canvases with either 1, 2 or 3 blocks of primary color vs. black.



“Oue Gontran”
Colored Pencil on Paper, Acrylic Paint and
Plastic on Masonite
24” x 24”
11/21/17

“Oue Gontran” represents the most recent body of work I’ve made. I felt suffocated by the process necessary to create works with perfect edges. It lacked the raw style I want to cultivate.

Some Questions about Sice

Interview 1 (9/12/17)

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

My first memory of making art was in high school ceramics class. I remember enjoying it because it was a release. High school was a low-stakes yet stressful time. Art class was a pleasant time because I could exorcise the demons of teenage angst. This is relevant to what I'm doing now because art making is still cathartic.

Who is your favorite artist and why?

My favorite artist is Jean-Michel Basquiat because he creates dynamic, dense and stimulating works of art. He has a distinct style which is easily recognizable. I love it.

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

My life. The good, the bad, and the ugly. Day to day happenings. Whether it's current events or socializing with friends or analyzing other human beings characters. Within art, the formal elements of line, shape, and color are the things I'm most interested in.

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

I like to paint because of it's seductive and it's simple. The sensation of putting a brush with paint on its tip and moving that tip across the surface of the canvas is

satisfying and sensual. Also its ability to readily create objects from reality attracts me to the medium. I use wood because I get it for free but I would prefer canvas.

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

Well first thing, it must capture the viewer's eye, and hold their attention. In this day and age, the amount of visual stimuli that people are exposed to is at an all time high. Hence, since an art object is just another thing, it must have some edge to it in order for it to break through the static.

What motivates you to make art?

The act of introspection. It's powerful for self knowledge and growth. Art making helps me be more open, honest, and aware of the rest of my life.

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

The world intimately is my work. Whether it be throughout the imagery I use or the societal drama that I reference. I use readily recognizable images in my work so that people can make psychological connections right away.

How do you think your art connects with other disciplines? What disciplines (if any) does your artwork connect with?

My studies of mathematics relate to my art making practices. Mathematics is the study of logic. Hence, by using logic in art making, I am able to guide my feelings in a way that can be aesthetically pleasing to a viewer.

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

My mission is successful communication between myself and the art object. When this happens it produces a remarkable feeling within. This is what I'm perpetually chasing when creating art.

What about making art intimidates you?

I hate having my work disregarded. If other people strongly dislike my work, that's fine, because it still has their attention. However, if they're able to ignore my work, then I've failed.

Interview 2 (10/20/17)

*** This interview was conducted under the premise that my SMP was following a certain path which has since been altered.***

How would other shapes like a circle or hexagon affect your concept?

This question is relevant. However, Sice is about two. Hence, the square is the perfect shape to portray this idea. An octagon would also be derived from two however it lacks the precision of the square.

Do you think a misunderstanding in with the word "Sice" might change the understanding of the artwork?

Another excellent discrepancy. Yes, I do think a clear description of sice is vital to the success of the piece. I want there to be a secure connection between the concept of sice and how the audience can apply it through their role in the artwork.

What about color values and hues? How will it change the overall look? (i.e. peach shades or neon colors)

Sice is about choice. And it is about that choice being clear. The primary colors offer a clearly definable essence. Hence, the primary colors are the most logical choice of any set of colors.

How many squares would help with the impact of your piece? How many shapes is the ideal amount?

After discussing this question with several faculty, Prof. Lucchesi helped me come up with the decision to use twelve square tiles. However, there will only be nine spaces on the wall to choose from. Thus, we settled on the number twelve because the idea of having leftover tiles emphasizes the choice not to sice something.

How would the free will of someone taking pieces of your work effect it?

That would be hilariously tragic. This is why my concept/instructions must make it clear that there are rules to sicing. Stealing my work is without a doubt, not okay.

Have you thought about putting the tiles on tables or other surfaces rather than a wall?

To be honest, I haven't thought much about this. Simply because I believe the wall is the most reasonable place to put the tiles for maximal visual interest. The wall offers a view from This is because they have the greatest visual range, and it makes sense to create a piece which is attractive from near and far. If the blocks were on the floor or ceiling, then the gallery would have to have some abnormal features for this to be the most reasonable placement of the tiles.

What if you put attachable tiles on top of the ones connected to the wall? i.e. layers of tiles.

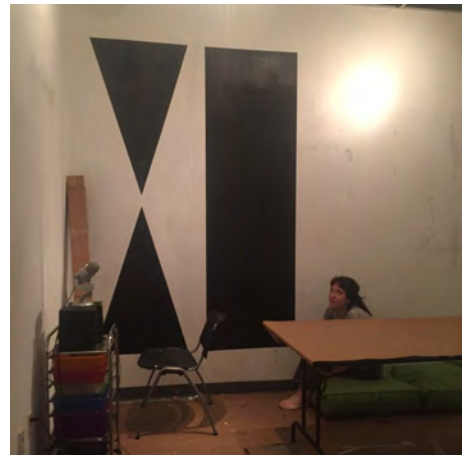
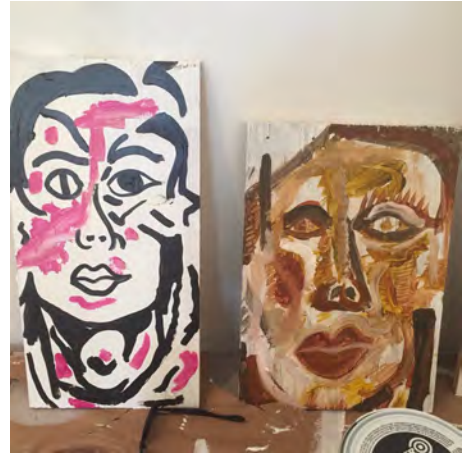
I love the thought of an attachment to the tiles which would distort them visually in an aesthetically pleasing manner. However, I think allowing stacking of tiles would disrupt the integrity of the tiles. Hence, I want one tile to represent one space on the grid.

What do you want people to take away from your artwork?

I want to offer people a concept. My hope is that they accept my offering, and that they consider the implications of what sice has to offer. If my plan is successful, than I have clearly communicated an impactful idea that my friends and I developed while studying mathematics in Hungary this past spring.

Some Reflections on Sice

This semester has taken many twists and turns in regards to the foreseen direction of my project. I began the semester making expressive paintings of male faces based on the images of male models which were posted around my studio. Then I found a niche making 'bad paintings' of simple objects and short phrases. After this I felt the need for order. This would come in the form of clean, geometric images. I did this because I wanted to create order in my studio as well as order in my life. I ended up just putting them on my wall. But they served a place. What happened next is the studio became a place to do work in with friends. I held study groups in my studio and this was facilitated by the clean, black, painted geometric forms on the walls. At this time I had an idea for a final project involving a dozen clean geometric forms. The viewer would enter the gallery and encounter them in a space and it would be their duty to align them on the wall as they saw fit. It was an interactive/performative idea for a piece. So I spent several days in the sculpture studio creating these dozen forms. They ended up being 23.5" x 23.5" masonite panels with $\frac{3}{4}$ " strips of plywood attached around the edge of the back. However once I began applying paint to them, I



realized I needed to change again. I wasn't up for the type of work necessary for this idea because of its monotony. Additionally, I didn't think I wanted to continue that train of thought for the SMP 2. Hence, I started drawing because I needed the specific type of creative freedom akin of drawing. It is whimsical and reactive to even the slightest movements of the hand. Once I accumulated a fair number of drawings, I cut them up and began collaging on the masonite panels I previously created. This is where I am now. I will have multimedia collages on masonite panels to exhibit for the "SMP in Progress" show coming up.

REFLECTIONS FROM THE SEMESTER:

9/13/17 - Studio visit with Joe Lucchesi- Joe came to the studio this afternoon to discuss my recent works! It was a really nice visit. We discussed the paintings that I had done and talked about what was working and what wasn't working. It was productive to have his input in conjunction to Tristan's. They're both highly educated but they come from different backgrounds and have different things to offer. Tristan disregarded my abstract works but found a

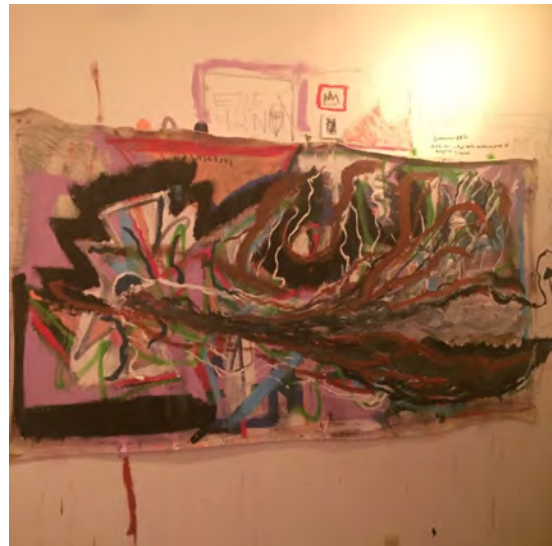


sliver of something valuable in my "2 Pieces of Toast" painting. Joe helped me decipher what it was about this painting that Tristan liked. We agreed that it probably came from Tristan's preference of conceptual work and that is simple, direct and open to interpretation. We also talked about possible options for the future. I want to make other paintings like this with other objects.

"2 Pieces of Toast"
Acrylic on Canvas
19" x 36"

9/30/17 - Studio Visit with Joe Lucchesi -

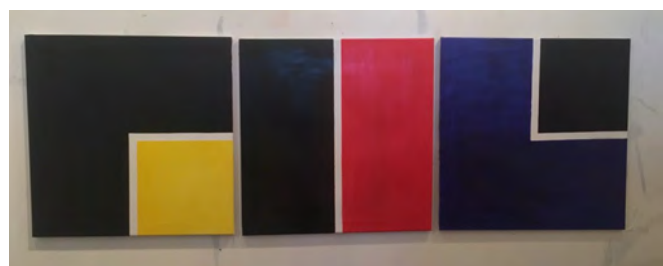
Joe came back to the studio today again but the format was totally different from last time. Instead of us primarily discussing past works and projections for the future, I worked on a large scale painting on canvas and he gave me immediate feedback. We talked decisions through and analyzed their repercussions together. This dialogue was immensely helpful. Although an interesting thing I learned about myself and my process is how I don't always consciously make decisions about what to do in a painting.



“Continuity (A to B)”
Acrylic on unstretched canvas
48” x 96”

There's a feeling that comes over me and my body acts intuitively based on the information perceived by my eyes. I'd like to do this sort of session again.

10/16/17 Studio Visit with Raven Glidden - I was dubious as to how this meeting with Raven would go, since he isn't a member of the art department. But I had a feeling it would be worthwhile and his visit earlier today proved me right. He's far more wary of happenings in the Contemporary Art world than I had imagined. We discussed my new set of works “YRB 123”, three 2' x 2' canvases with select amounts of a primary color vs. black. I had the idea to create an interactive exhibit and he came up with the idea to use



“YRB 123”
Oil on Canvas
2' x 2' (3 of them)

velcro to attach the canvases to the wall such that it's more fun to take the canvas on and off the wall than if it was just canvas being hung on nails. It was an excellent discussion. I like his ideas.

10/17/17 MID-SEMESTER CRITIQUE RESPONSE

My work is conceptual and I believe there exists a strong connection between the product and the statement. Although I believe both the work and the statement need to be developed, I think they're at a strong starting point. My concept revolves around 'sice' which relates to the idea of free will and choice. My work shows that the free will we possess has infinite possibilities, yet our choice is limited to a specific set of objects.

The concept of sice will continue to be refined. I'll seek guidance from faculty and students in order to make sure the message of sice is clearly communicated. I don't want there to be any confusion as to what I mean when I define sice. As for the work, the 3 works I have now simply are not good enough. They're poor in execution and they don't really get at the nature of the message I'm trying to impart.

I have a new idea which involves the creation of a station where there are two sets of 'sice blocks'. The sets of 'sice blocks' will contain 4 blocks. The first set will be black and white. The sections will be divided via the diagonals. The first block of the first set will be one quarter black, the second will be half black and half white, the third will have three-quarters filled with black and the fourth will be all black. The second set of 'sice blocks' will be solid colors. The options will be red, green, blue and yellow.

Some of the recommendations I was given during the critique include the consideration of other shapes for the sice blocks, the examination of the number

of canvases in use (since this too is expressive), give thought to the nature of the lines within the blocks and other possibilities with them, be aware of how this notion of free will is limited or expanded by the essence of the blocks.

I believe the square is the best option for my work because it is concise. The square contains four equal sides. Four is a power of two. Two is the cornerstone of 'sice', hence this is a rational choice.

As of now, the only set of 'sice blocks' has a cardinality of three. Three is dynamic, but sice is two. Hence, the 'sice blocks' should have four. Four is a power of two. Since, the square is the most logical shape of sice, it's also logical that the participants can create a square with their choice of the 'sice blocks'. I will consider the option of 8 or 16 more, but as of now, four is the best number.

As previously discussed, my new plan involves the division of the canvas via diagonals. I like this because it encourages both slanted and normal orientations. I think straight lines are the best because sice is about precision, curly lines aren't precise. In reference to the colored blocks, there won't be any lines because the essence of that set is about the expressiveness of color and not about line.

I want to show how each individual on this planet has free will but their free will is limited to a finite number of objects. Hence, I am the one making the 'sice blocks'. Nobody else has a say in what the 'sice blocks' look like or what's on them. They're choice begins at the two sets, then the orientation, the finale is them taking the blocks off the wall. I don't want people to leave their work up because I want to show people they only have a finite amount of time to sice.

11/15/17 Studio Visit with Raven Glidden

Raven and I had another positive discussion about my work tonight. He gave me new ideas about what to do for the exhibition. His opinion of what my work is and what it represents is process. I think his point is valid. Hence, he thinks it would make for an interesting show to place my newer drawings on the masonite panels on the wall and have my 'bad paintings' on the floor below the wall drawings. So we set up a quick version of what this is and what it might look like in the lobby of the Artist Annex. I think it's a cool idea because of the sheer amount of work that I have. Also, it's different. I've never heard of works being shown like this. I'll have to check with Tristan to see what his opinion of the matter is in class tomorrow. I doubt he will be completely on board with this because previously he explained the importance of completed works. Even if that means only showing 2 pieces in the show.



"Mock Exhibition in the Artist Annex"
Acrylic Paint, Charcoal and Colored Pencil on Wood and Canvas
Variety of Sizes

An Analysis of Sice

Moment for Modernism

Although there are conceptual undertones present in my work, I consider myself chiefly to be a modernist. Modernism was a glorious art historical period in which tremendous leaps and bounds were made by artists to push art into new directions. Chief curator of Modern Art at the Cleveland Museum of Art, Edward Henning, argued that the first two decades of the twentieth century were when the majority of these leaps and bounds were made. He believes it was a result of the road paved by the likes of “Gauguin, Van Gogh, Seurat, and particularly Cezanne” who were able to push “avant-garde art to increase the role of formal qualities at the expense of literary features” (Henning 243). Hence, Piet Mondrian is a prime example of this turn in art.



“Composition II in Red, Yellow and Blue”
By Piet Mondrian (1930)

In the journey towards objectivity in his artistic career, Mondrian moved away from figurative and towards the abstract. He stated “One must create as objective as possible a representation of forms and relations. Such work can never be empty because the opposition of its construction elements and its execution arouse emotion” (Henning 243). Mondrian may have a style which is dissimilar from the vast majority of my work, yet his conceptual framework provides a direction I’d like to push myself in during SMP phase 2.

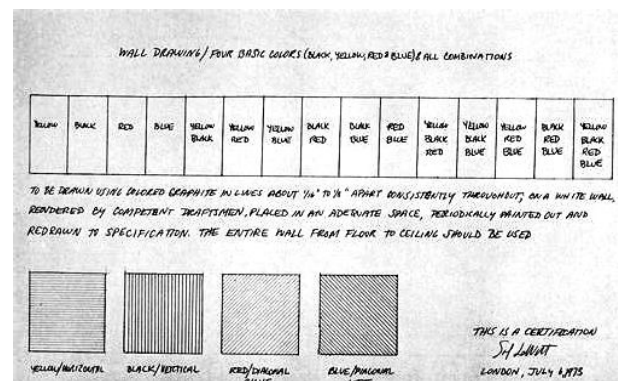
In an attempt to break out of my 'bad painting' spell of SMP phase 1, I created "YRB 123" to send myself in a new direction. Hence, I thought a series of clean paintings in primary colors would be the perfect way to do this. I was sick of making messy work. But after making these and some other work like them, I was feeling stagnant. The lack of the creative moment was the main issue. Thus, I had to move on once again.



"YRB 123"
By Tim McKay (2017)

A Conceptual Reverence

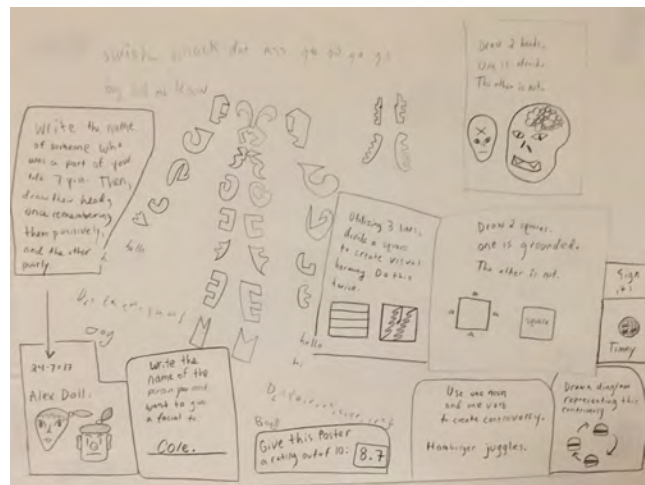
Sol Lewitt describes the essence of conceptual art as the emphasis on ideas. He states, "When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair" (Lewitt 1). This is how he builds credit for himself in his approach to art making. Lewitt is known



"Wall Drawing"
By Sol Lewitt (1975)

for creating instructions on how to make an art piece, and subsequently selling them as artwork. Next, it is the person who purchases Lewitt's idea, who carries out the 'perfunctory affair' of executing the idea. This idea of premonition in the process of art making inspired a drawing I made recently.

"Drawing with 2" offers a series of boxes which partition the piece of paper. Within each box lies instructions as well as the completion of the aforementioned instructions. For example, the first box I made is located roughly in the center of the paper. The instructions are as follows, "Utilizing 3 lines, divide a square to create visual harmony. Do this twice." Then, I complete this idea. First with my right hand, and then with my left hand. The box completed with my right hand contains three simple horizontal lines, evenly spaced within the original square. On the other hand, the box completed with my left hand has two curvy, diagonal lines which leave a void in the middle of the piece. Then, the third line descends straight down from the center of the top line of the square, stopping just before the center of the square to jut off to the left.



"Drawing with 2" (Sketch)
By Tim McKay

This technique of ambidextrous creativity is what gives this piece precedence in my body of work. I've had the ability to use both of my hands in the process of drawing and painting for a year and a half now. Yet this drawing is the first time I've used them simultaneously in a work of art. It may sound farfetched to state that there is a connection between this technique and a peculiar cerebral

Although this is the first piece I've created in this new drawing/painting hybrid style, I think it serves well to pave a path in a new direction for where I want to take my work.

The Bibliography of Sice

As a growing artist, the external guidance of current and deceased contemporary artists plays an integral role in my work. A wise man once said, if we don't learn from history, we're doomed to repeat it. Hence, credit is due where credit is due. Here, I acknowledge those forces and offer brief explanations as to how their work is present within my process.

Curley, J. J. (2005). Fuzzy Language: Joseph's Kosuth's "Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)", 1967. *Yale University Art Gallery Bulletin*, 125-129. Retrieved October 22, 2017, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40514630>

This article offers a brief introduction of Joseph Kosuth's work as well as a specific explanation of his piece "Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)"(1967). His work is relevant to my SMP because we both use images as reference points to portray greater ideas.

Munroe, A., & Hendricks, J. (2000). *Yes Yoko Ono*. New York: Japan Society.

"Yes Yoko Ono" offers a plethora of essays surrounding Ono's work as well as examples of specific works. I want to study her work because of the innate requirement of the viewer's engagement with her art. Her work is very simple in nature, yet it is so powerful. These ideas are related, I want to apply this conceptual framework to my art too.

Inwagen, P. V. (1975). The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism. *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*, 27(3), 185-199. Retrieved October 22, 2017, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4318929>

This excerpt on free will will allow me to investigate the philosophical nature of sice. Sicing is based upon the notion that we have free which is both infinite and confined. I can use Inwagen's argument to bolster mine.

Morgan, R. C. (1996). *Art into ideas: essays on Conceptual Art*. Cambridge: University Press.

This book offers a thorough examination of conceptual art from its birth to the present moment the book was written in (1996). It offers the reader an explanation of the definitions and premises that conceptual art was created under.

Henning, Edward B. "A Classic Painting by Piet Mondrian." *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 55, no. 8, Oct. 1968, pp. 243–249.

This is an essay by Edward Henning focusing on Mondrian's work and it's conveniently laced with quotes by Mondrian about his artistic philosophy. Mondrian progressed towards objectivity in his career and I think that's a direction I'd like to move in as well, yet in a different manner. He formulated ideas and relationships in terms of primary colors and black and white lines. I'd like to do it in drawings of familiar objects in my own style.

Lewitt, Sol. "Paragraphs on Conceptual Art." *Paulj.myzen.co.uk*, Artforum, June 1967, www.paulj.myzen.co.uk/blog/teaching/voices/files/2008/07/Lewitt-Paragraphs-on-Conceptual-Art1.pdf.

This is a concise essay surrounding Sol Lewitt's philosophical framework towards conceptual art. My main take away from this piece is that the

essence of conceptual artwork lies within the preconception of a work of art. The completion of the work of art is perfunctory.

Thompson, Robert Farris. "Royalty, Heroism, and the Streets: The Art of Jean-Michel Basquiat." *The Hearing Eye*, Feb. 2009, pp. 253–281., doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195340501.003.0012.

This writing is an analysis of the factors which contributed to all that Jean-Michel Basquiat was. It specifically focuses on the social scene he was a part of as well as the music he listened to and how these things played a part in his art making process.

Rodrigues, L. A. (2010). "SAMO© as an Escape Clause": Jean-Michel Basquiats Engagement with a Commodified American Africanism. *Journal of American Studies*, 45(02), 227-243. doi:10.1017/s0021875810001738

This essay is important to me and my work because it's a critical analysis of Basquiat's life and his work. It's well-written and it focuses on the New York art scene of the 1980s and how Basquiat was simultaneously a product of this culture as well as a primary creator of the culture too.