



My Artistic Practice

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Introduction

For all as long as I can remember, I have always had an interest in both the making of art and the looking at art. As a child, I was more concerned with the aesthetics of art making, attempting to replicate the images I saw in fashion magazines. I suppose this was the beginning point for my interest in drawing people, which has been a continued theme in my work. However, as I grew up, I realized art could be used to communicate messages, symbolize ideas, and become a forum for emotional expression or therapeutic reasons. I began to see the purpose in making art.

This text you are reading is the written progress of my art making at St. Mary's College of Maryland. My summer works were based on prompts of exploration, attempting to try new mediums and ideas, but more importantly, to understand what types of mediums and ideas are of interest to me. The semester was also a period of experimentation, with my work being made, presented, and critiqued through a *Marathon* event, in-progress reviews, and a mid-term critique. I began with an initial interest in making "beautiful" art for notions of positive associations, then investigated the concepts of abstract, conceptual, and process-based art, eventually retreating back to my primary interests in portraiture.

Unlike my previous portraits of people, I decided to show the characteristics of individuals through objects and still life compositions. My Christian faith is focused on the value of human beings, which is an influence for this type of portraiture. I enjoy the differences in people, and the way with which material objects can reveal their unique qualities. I want my images to show a story about these individuals.

Initial Beginnings

Artist Statement:

My artistic interests are centered on works with aesthetic components that bring about positive associations. With so much violence, anger, and selfishness occurring in society, the art I find myself most attracted to, are the pieces that remind me of pleasant or joyful things. More specifically, portraiture is one of my favorite subject matters because it focuses on other human beings apart from myself. Putting oneself in another person's perspective is comforting because it is a reminder that everyone has the same worries, concerns, and expectations. Therefore, artworks that contain concepts close to my personal convictions capture my attention.

Contemplations of Various Readings:

During the summer months of May 2012 to August 2012, I read several books on various topics, which helped to make me aware of my own sentiments, beliefs, and interests. *The Art Life* by Stuart Horodner was the first text of my summer readings. Divided into chapters based on such things as motivation, influence, advice, process, and criticism, this writing is a compilation of various quotes by many different artists. Reading about their fears and struggles as artists forced me to think about my own insecurities within my own art practice. What is my biggest fear about making art? Who do I make art for, others or myself? Did I have any goals concerning my artwork? In addition, Horodner's collection of quotes introduced a large throng of new artists. In particular, I found Anya Lifig's quotes about insecurity most appealing, but when researching her performance art, I was perplexed by her non-conformist work. I did not understand the images of Lifig positioning herself in various poses, while making unattractive expressions.

It was not until I read *The Collected Stories* by Amy Hempel that I was able to articulate my disinterest in abstract and conceptual work. I became frustrated with Hempel's short stories because they would jump around different subjects and end unexpectedly without any clear solution. I realized that I was fearful of works not direct in their meanings. I am scared of what is different because I do not understand it. But after reading the basis behind Liftig's work, I was less opposed to her art making and more appreciative of it because I was able to comprehend some part of it.

Love Does by Bob Goff was another book I read during my summer months. After only a few pages, I knew this text was going to become one of my favorites. It discussed Goff's personal experience as a Christian and his attempts to show his love to people. This work was very influential in strengthening my interest in portraiture because it discussed the moral concepts of love, compassion, and mercy. It was also helpful in forming my desire to make work with a purpose, to make work that is beneficial to other people.

Another book I came across was Ron Schick's *Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera*. This was an enjoyable read, especially since the text took an in-depth look at Rockwell's artistic process. I discovered many things I did not know before, sympathizing with Rockwell's experience as an illustrator. He was criticized for his heavy reliance on photography as source material, which is something that I have also experienced. My own work has been relegated to criticisms because I choose to work from photographs rather than from life. Schick's description of Rockwell's process as an artist was an encouragement for me to continue making art the way I have always enjoyed making it.

Unexpected Findings:

I had the pleasure of traveling to South Carolina for the first time, and when I drove to the city of Charleston, I did not realize the numerous art galleries that inhabited almost every street. Many times before, I had visited the museums in Washington, D.C., looking at work by well-known artists, and seeing their images in art history textbooks, but I had never been to any local galleries. *The Atelier Gallery* was the first place I stumbled upon. It was filled with such beautiful art. In particular, Tania Darashkevich and Jennine Hough were two artists I kept looking at. Darashkevich's still-life painting, *Morning Salutation*, showed a linear plane filled with three teacups. Although simple in subject matter, the skillfully painted objects and glossy consistency of the oil paint created a crisp image. My attraction to the piece was also a result of Darashkevich's way of evoking the essence of light. Jennine Hough's 36'' X 66'' painting showed a scene of an open door leading to the inside of a house. As the eye followed the path of the receding perspective, it moved in a zigzag to the various animals positioned around the room. Like Darashkevich's work, I was attracted to the vibrant colors and glossy consistency. Another gallery I visited was *The Pink House*, the oldest building in the city of Charleston. Most of the work exhibited in this place showed local scenes of landscapes and extravagant buildings. Alice Stewart Grimsley, the owner of *The Pink House*, was also the artist of the watercolor paintings that filled the gallery, and I was able to talk to her about her work, and the images she chose to paint.

Another local gallery I attended was the *Cake Walk Gallery* in Baltimore, Maryland. Although I am not usually interested in abstract work, I found myself most attracted to David Roesner's abstract paintings. His work was nonfigurative, but the scale and color was amazing. The forms were intricately rendered into either geometric patterns or swirling arrangements, and I could not take my eyes away from the complex configurations.

Just as I never found interest in abstract art, I also disregarded crustacean paintings as a type of touristy work. Yet, when I went to the *Annapolis Marine Art Gallery*, I found Rob Dreyer's *Portrait of a Blue Crab* to be one of my favorite paintings among the collection. The crab's shell was elaborately detailed with blue and neutral tones. Through these local galleries, I discovered many new artists, and developed an appreciation for abstract styles and animal paintings.

Artist Discourses

Matthew Fishel (September 19, 2012):

Matt Fishel's love of music and movies led him to the process of filmmaking. His piece, titled, *A Short Film Regarding Possibilities*, was a result of "rules" he set up for himself, in which he would make a small, short film with no plot. Fishel then became interested in constructing miniature models or sets, finding a liking for fake things. He viewed the very nature of artificiality as something to be easily distinguished but still maintaining a presence that can reach out to you. He described the "lizard part of your brain" as the primitive part that is reacting to what it senses in comparison to the rational part. These miniature models seen in his digital stills, *Landscapes and Interiors*, show environments made of plywood, sand, and Styrofoam.

Other works involved digital images of moving objects. Fishel began to take these artificial models and move them in his digital images, believing that moving them would turn them into what he wanted them to be. Some of his themes are about war and death, and although he knows these are awful occurrences, he finds that he frequently contemplates about these things. Making art is his way of reckoning with them.

Fishel also mentioned his artistic and philosophical influences. These included Alexis Rockman, a painter, who is described as not fearing weirdness but makes a statement about the world we live in, Anish Rockman, a sculptor, who is described as making work that overwhelms the viewer with a physical presence, and Ian Mackaye, a music group that makes music for the people. These inspirations have given Fishel a desire to make art for the community and to make art that reaches out to the “lizard part” of their brains.

Matt Fishel’s work is unlike any of my own work, but his inspirations for making the work reminded me of my own motivations for making art. He found his influences through the “morality” of giving to the community and to the people. After hearing his description of what he wanted to do with his art, I began to appreciate the work even more. His works are not necessarily a literal representation of information, but more concerned with emotional impact that is left with the viewer. This idea of the “lizard part” of the brain is very compelling because sometimes it is more freeing to just react rather than to just see, think, and readily accept.

Catherine O’Connell (September 26, 2012):

Catherine O’Connell began painting and eventually, her work evolved into sculptural forms. While in Rome, her work began to shift. She was captivated by the energy of the city, and this started to show in her work. O’Connell was interested in the physicality of the paint, aggressively pouring and scraping the paint onto the canvas. She was also interested in color, “almost to a fault.” But she did not want to fall into the category of “pretty art,” so her work shifted to smaller pieces, with more simplified elements. The color palette was lessened, as well as the mass of shapes that covered the canvas plane. When she entered grad school, O’Connell was working with people utilizing different materials. She started to draw images of her

sculptures and those of her fellow students. Her new work was concerned with visual spaces and the transformation of such spaces. They involved the ideas of accumulation and growth, in order to create narratives, as well as construct and deconstruct visual spaces.

I was most interested in O'Connell's statement that she did not want to get stuck in the category of "cute art." She still maintained her same expression of style by lessening elements of her work. I have never thought of my work as being of a certain type of art. Rather, I have always just wanted to like what I produce. Her progression of work was encouraging to see because it brings anticipation for how my work may transform over the semester

Jae Rossman (October 3, 2012):

Jae Rossman's lecture was very different from what I expected. I thought she was going to present her own work, however, she mainly discussed her career as a librarian and the various artist books she presents to students. These artist books were divided into three categories' of color systems, color samples, and conceptual works. Rossman mentioned Paul Renner's Color Order and Harmony, Josef Alber's Interaction of Color, and Carol Schwawwartzott's Josef Albers: Revelation through Constraint. One project she also discussed was the Bologna sample (1992) by Angela Lorenz. This work came about when the artist was taking residence in Bologna, Italy, also known as "the red city." She created swatches of red from memory and then went throughout the city to match up the reproduced colors to the colors of the buildings. Another artist book Rossman mentioned was Brian Kennon's Black and White Reproductions of the Abstract Expressionists. In this work, thirteen well-known paintings were presented in black and white, accompanied by a color key that indicated the different hues that made up the composition.

I was the most surprised at the amount of artist books focusing on the subject of color. It was also an appropriate evening to have such a lecture because our SMP seminar had already arranged to have a color lesson that very night. After hearing Rossman discuss the various works dedicated to the concept of color, I was reminded of how important the knowledge of color is to an individual's work. I have mostly been working with pen and ink, and Jae Rossman's lecture inspired me to be more intentional about utilizing color more often in my work.

Colby Caldwell (October 22, 2012):

Colby Caldwell's work merges concepts of technology and concepts of ritual to create photographs of the present. His work varies from images that result from corrupted files to scans of ammunition, to photographs of people. His work before coming to St. Mary's derived from a film called, Super 8, which is both made by his grandfather and is about his grandfather. The more he saw the film, the more he realized the significance of various, emerging ideas. For instance, the film showed his grandfather hunting and walking, which interested Colby in the idea of rituals, of repeatedly doing things. Another significant concept that emerged was that of color. He extended his experience of working with color, when realizing he could print on watercolor paper. Later on, there came a realization that he had been literally and physically denying the present, instead going through nostalgia for his grandfather and not looking at his surroundings. He started to take photographs of individuals that would visit him but position them in the same scene/location. The background scenery would change depending on the weather and the changing seasons. Colby knew, however, that he was ultimately interested in technology, tools, and making things look a certain way. His interest was rooted in the truth that technology is constantly changing, and that there is no authenticity in tools or an objective sense of what is produced by these tools. Colby then started to take long walks, taking pictures of what

he was seeing, trying to look at the surrounding landscapes in a more holistic and metaphorical way. He started to use a scanner to photograph the objects he found on his walks, attempting to “photograph blindly.” The pictures would be taken underneath, revealing to him, personally, of a transcendent moment.

I appreciated Colby’s concepts of the personal (nostalgia for grandfather), as well as the merging of two seemingly unrelated things. He was able to combine the ideas of hunting with the processes of technology to create compelling images. In addition, his work varied from abstract to representational, which also showed his interest in different styles.

A Few Questions from a Fellow Classmate

Interview #1:

Michael Bargamian: What kinds of things about the art making practice are still really mysterious to you?

Amanda Schmeltz: I guess in terms of representation, if I see something and I have no idea how it was made. In terms of unknown mediums, it’s a conversation between how a piece could be made and what it looks like.

M: What is the worst fear you have about your work?

A: That people will hate it because I do care what people think to an extent.

M: Who was the last person or thing that you were afraid of?

A: This past summer my fear was coming back to St. Mary’s. I was thinking about it all summer because I really did not want to regret my decision to stay here. But I love St. Mary’s now; I don’t regret my decision at all.

M: What natural occurrences do you find inspiring?

A: The only thing I can really think of is the earthquake from last summer. I was at home when it happened, and I remember all sorts of things falling off the shelves in my kitchen. It was

awesome. I think it had to do with the idea of me being such a small person in such a huge world, and the mysteriousness of being in something so big was very inspiring.

M: Is your work aligned with order or chaos? Why?

A: I would say order. Thinking on the idea of process, I'm usually very organized in what I do. However, lately I've not been planning as much as I normally would and working in a way that might seem orderly to someone else, but to me it's very chaotic because I usually don't work that way.

M: Do you prefer tactile or visual art making?

A: I can't really distinguish between the two. I have recently come to love paintings with texture, and I just want to touch all those textured paintings. So I guess that's kind of like both, visual and tactile at one time.

M: So when you are working do you love the process or the result?

A: I generally love the result, but lately I've become more heavily interested in the process behind a work. I think it depends on my mood. If I am in a good mood, I focus more on the result, but if I am in a negative mood, I would rather work on a process-based piece. There is this division because my focus is on my emotions.

M: What do you think you and your role models have in common?

A: One of my role models is my friend Lauren, and I guess we have the same beliefs and values. She has a genuine faith and cares about other people. My role models are people close to me who are genuine in their Christian faith.

M: Finally, what do you draw when no one is looking?

A: I just keep drawing the same things. No matter what.

Interview #2:

M: So since the midterm critique, it seems like you have been going through some serious changes in the way you are thinking about your work and the direction you want to go in. What caused these thoughts/changes, and could you elaborate on what you have done to address these changes, specifically?

A: During the midterm critique, I was very uncomfortable explaining my work because I did not

feel connected to it. I wasn't excited about the work I was making, so I decided to change directions completely because it was important that I like what I was doing (I did enjoy the abstract work, but it was not what I ultimately wanted to do). I have not made any concrete decisions, but I have considered drawing objects and various things to represent people - a twist on "portraiture."

M: Are people still the main inspiration behind your work? For a while it seems that you might have moved away from that area of inspiration.

A: People will always be my main inspiration because I find them to be the most important "concept" within life. I suppose my interest in people stems from Christianity and the ideas that every individual has value.

M: If people or interactions with people are what drives your work, do you tend to think of people in a physical sense (like what you did last with a friend, what they look like, etc.), or do you see them more as an essence (what the person means to you)? If so, why do they go in that specific direction in your mind?

A: I think about both ideas. In particular, I like to think about my first interactions with people. When I met my friend, Ana, I remember thinking she was very quiet. But now that I know her, I have realized there is so much more to her! The appearance of people can be very deceiving, and I think this idea between what someone looks like vs. who they really are is a humorous one because no one can ever get it right. You will never know someone until you actually meet them, and the way they look does not determine who they are.

M: Who was the last person that was in a dream you had? What happened in the dream?

A: The last person I had a dream about was my sister. We were fighting about something silly, something I can't remember. My dreams always seem so real, that I usually confuse them with reality.

M: In your newest works, who are the people that you are focusing on? How did you come to choose these subjects?

A: The people I chose for my newest works are close friends because I know them well. Since I want to show portraiture through objects, I need to know my subjects beyond a shallow surface.

M: So with the subjects you are now pursuing – both the people and the representational objects – do you feel like those people are becoming more central to your life? In other words, does constantly working on a portrait of someone close to you impact your daily life?

A: Definitely! This is why I love portraiture because it makes me more aware of those that I am drawing or thinking about. Since I am trying to evoke a particular message about my friends, I find myself more invested in their interests.

M: As you have worked on these portraits, have the artists you have looked at or been interested in changed at all? Have you specifically looked at portrait painters or landscape artists?

A: I have always looked at Edgar Degas's work, as well as Mary Cassatt. Through these new works, I have discovered new artists, which include Audrey Flack and Alice Neel.

Post-Review Intention Statements

Post Marathon Review Intention Statement (September 19, 2012):

I have never made artwork without planning or thinking about it for a long period of time. When I realized we only had three weeks to make twenty pieces, I was nervous about the small duration of time and my own slow art making. But I picked up any materials in sight and started to work. I was somewhat self-conscious to put some of these images up because they were so unlike my normal style, yet the work that resulted from the Draw Air prompt, Fold it prompt, and Erased Figure Drawings prompt were the ones that I received the most comments about during the Marathon showing. It was a great experience, and I discovered some things about my work that I had not realized before. Although I typically prefer representational work, I felt my non-representational pieces had a stronger presence in the room. They stood out as something different and new. As I made the work from the prompts, I noticed I was always reaching for my micron pen and bottle of ink. Last summer was the first time I really started to use these materials, and I found through Marathon, how much I enjoyed the process of making art when using pen and ink. This medium is sometimes unpredictable, but I find excitement in

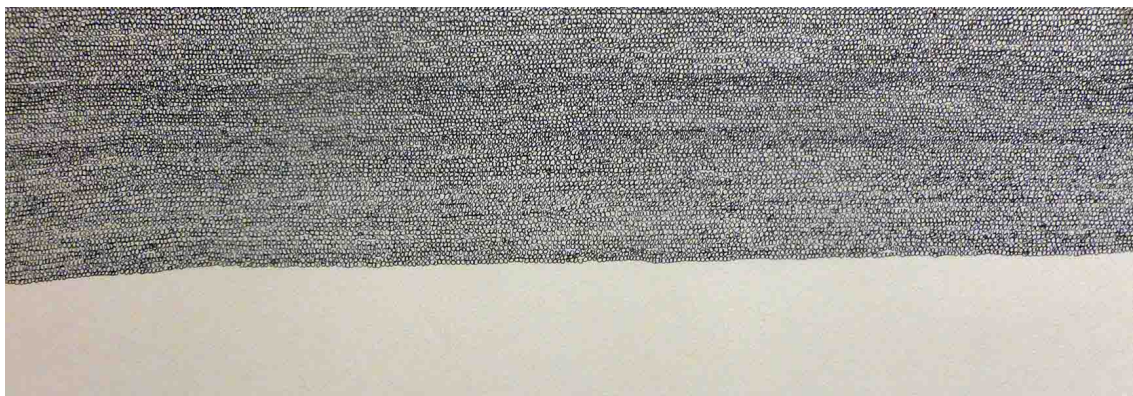
seeing how it controls my process, since I cannot always stop the dripping and bleeding of ink.

Significant information I took away from the review session was thinking about my unconscious reaction to the visual image. I seem to focus on the association or reason behind why I like or do not like a work, ignoring the aesthetic component that I am presented with. In addition, I also realized I have sharp dichotomies between what I like and what I do not like. This is also pertinent to the concept of the visual image because I do not need to categorize my preferences since my taste is constantly changing.

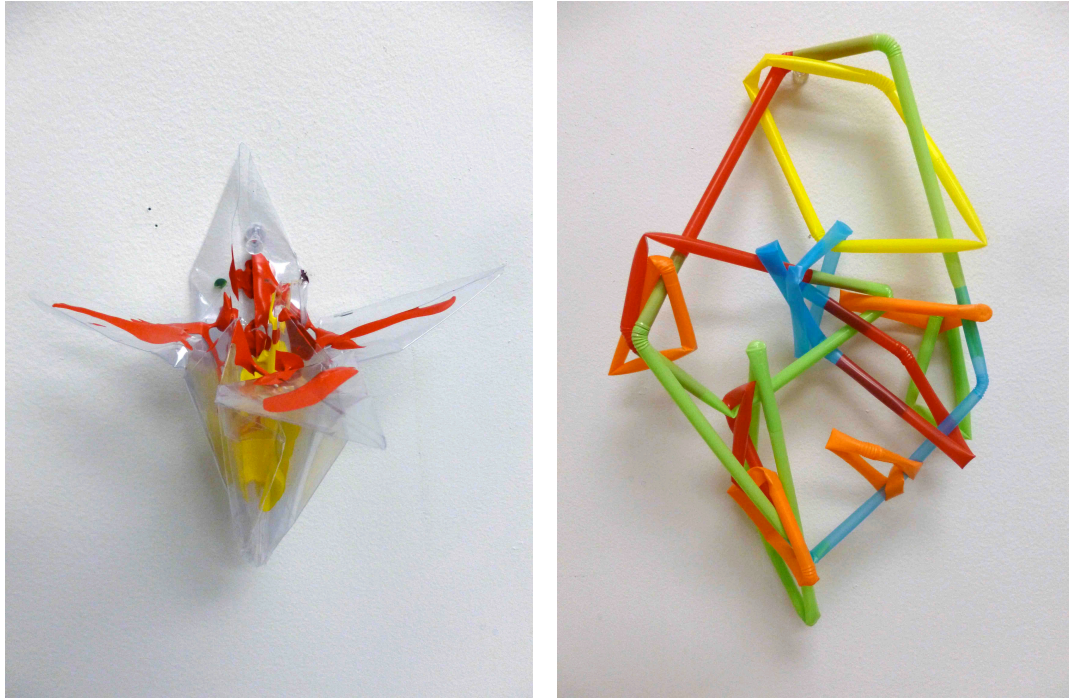
When I saw my twenty pieces hung together on the wall, I noticed most of my pieces were the same size. For future work, I'll try to aim for larger sizes. I also want to break apart the mental list of concepts I have acquired for concepts I do not like, or what I think I do not like. I want to confront art I am not familiar with in order to become more confident about my own work.



Prompt: Make a painting with a 30-minute limitation



Prompt: Draw Air



Prompt: Fold it, Make a work look like play

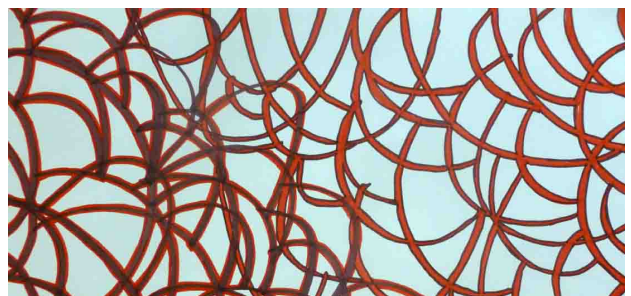
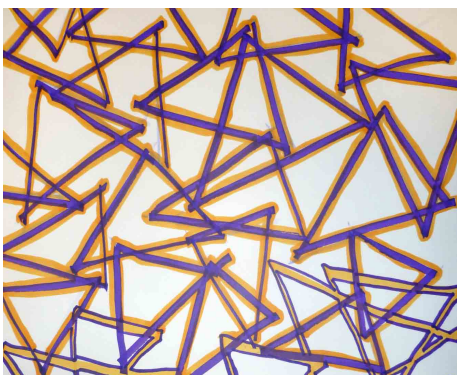
Post In-Progress Review Statement (October 3, 2012):

The work I presented for the Group In-progress Review was unlike my typical work. The pieces reflected a process-oriented art making rather than just the result of art making. Each work was titled according to the emotions I experienced when drawing the images. The more “successful” pieces seemed to be the ones that created spaces around the composition as opposed to the floating shapes in some of my other drawings. Although the work I presented to the group

was more conceptual based, I still admitted my reluctance to yield completely to this direction of art making. My interests in literal/representational art are still present, and I am not sure which direction to take. However, my response to drawing these various art pieces was therapeutic to my emotions. The response to making the work was enjoyable, and I find no regret in engaging with this type of work.

The response I received from the group discussed the difference between making a piece and just doing it, making a thing and being with the work. It was suggested that I experiment with stamps of some kind, while also working larger. In addition, color palette is another choice for me to consider. I was also asked if this was an art path I wanted to continue with, and my answer was not a concrete yes or no. But if I choose to continue with the process-oriented art, I should try other methods of creating these repetitive marks, focusing on the unplanned changes that occur when making these shapes.

After meeting with the group, my new set of goals includes working larger and experimenting with other materials, such as stamps. Since I am still unsure of what path to take for art making, I plan to continue the “just do” approach. I want to experiment further with different materials because my ideas about what I like and do not like are changed when I actually engross myself in different methods and unfamiliar styles.





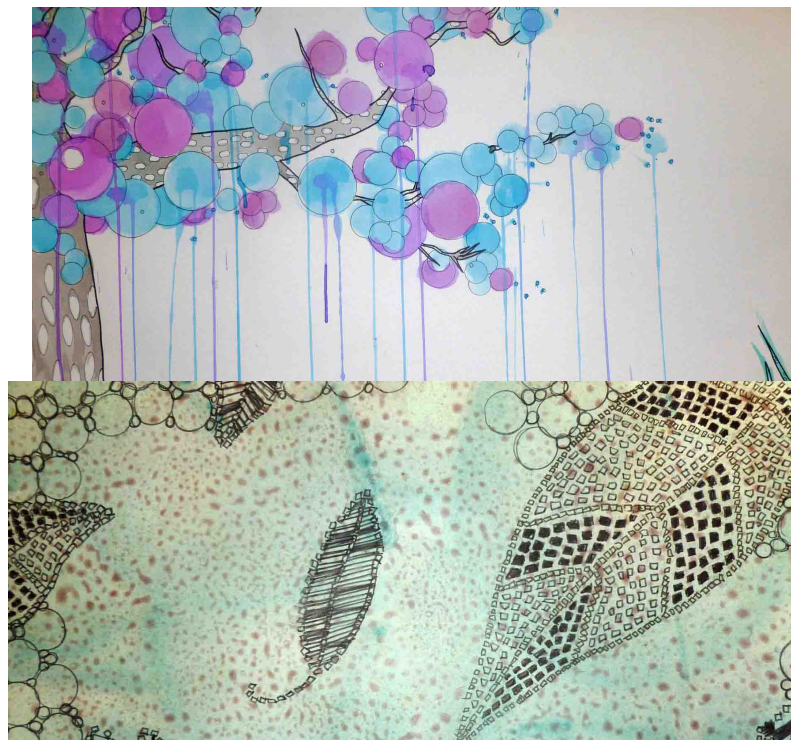
Post Midterm Review Statement (October 17, 2012):

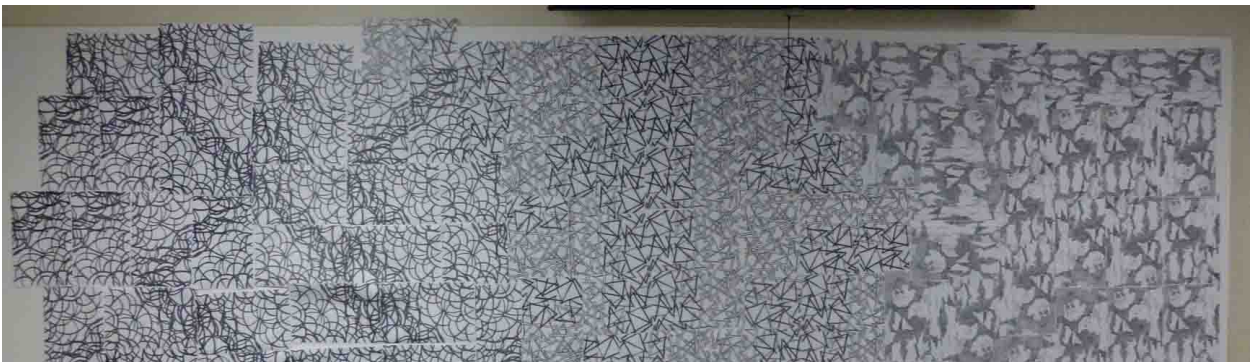
For the midterm review, I presented five drawings that I had categorized as “conceptual” works, and I also presented five other drawings that I categorized as still being “conceptual” but merging with my interests of representational art. I have enjoyed exploring this type of process art and repeated mark making, however, I wanted to return to my original interests of portraiture. As I was trying to construct an image using tiny units or shapes, the process became a much different process than when I made the first five drawings. It started to become less about the process and more about the result; yet, I did not completely mind this change because I have always had an interest in constructing a figurative image of some sort

During the review, I was given a lot of feedback, spanning from my confusion of vocabulary to my use of color and finally, to my use of material. The division I had between “conceptual” and “representational” was not evident to all of the faculty members and they asked

if I had confused my terms, instead meaning to use the word “abstract,” rather than “conceptual.” In addition, one of the professors pointed out the success of one drawing over another, showing how the small shapes filled the space to create a compelling look. When looking at these small shapes, they had to ask, “What is that?” versus looking at one of my other drawings and noticing that it was a tree and then immediately moving on. They said my use of shapes drawn as repeated marks kept the viewer’s gaze because one had to attempt to distinguish its form. Another suggestion I received was to rethink the scale of my paper. Why not draw directly on the wall? The presence of my shapes was too big for the page.

For future goals, I plan to first implement the advice given during the review, which includes Xeroxing many pages of my shapes to create a bigger composition and compiling a vocabulary list of terms to better understand their meanings. I know my five previous drawings were more successful than the five most recent drawings I completed (this was said in the review and I agree), however I still cannot seem to turn away from portraiture since it has always been an interest. But this exploration of mark making has been an interesting experience, and I feel torn between continuing this type of work and completely abandoning this concept.





Xeroxed copies after Mid-term

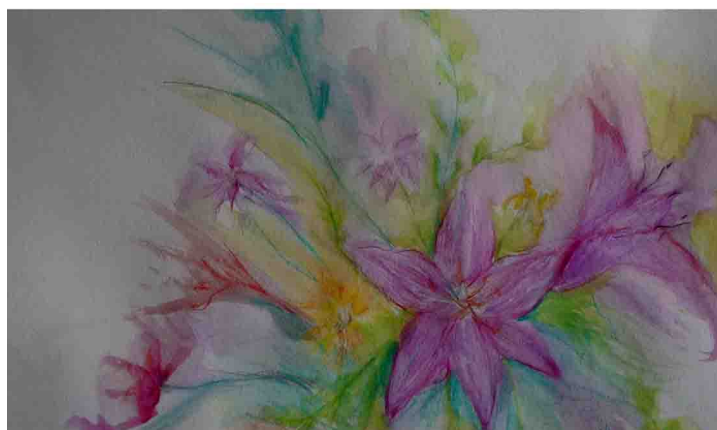
In- Progress Review Statement #2 (November 7, 2012):

For this in-progress review, I was showing work that was different from my previous drawings during other reviews. I decided to change paths from the process-based work to depictions of inanimate objects. My intention was to show portraiture through the representation of objects, implying the characteristics of individuals through the objects themselves and the way with which I render the objects. For instance, my friend who has a serious disposition was represented without color, while my friend with a lively personality was represented with gestural lines. All of my drawings contained a similar tabletop setting, giving them related appearances. I chose to render the objects this way because I was concerned that not laying them out in the same construction would instead appear as mere still life drawings. I wanted to be sure that my work was evoking a sense of portraiture.

However, the responses I received thought I was limiting myself with the tabletop construction. It was said that simply having names as titles for my pieces would carry enough weight to imply the representation of people. In addition, another critique that was stated said my

work appeared like IVT classroom assignments, which I definitely agreed with. When looking at the drawings, it was evident which ones I enjoyed making and which ones I found little interest in. Additionally, my use of different media did not actually reflect the different personalities of my subjects but rather seemed to reflect my “multiple personalities” instead.

I was very pleased with how my review went because the responses were well communicated. I am more excited to render these drawings in more dynamic compositions, focusing on the light direction and linear quality of the objects. I also plan to compose a list of characteristics for my subject matters, keeping them as reference points while making my drawings. Lastly, I plan to research more source artists, ones that work/worked with portraiture and still life themes.



Artistic Advice from the Wise and Experienced

Professor Carrie Patterson (October 9, 2012):

I met with Professor Carrie Patterson the day right before our midterm review. After looking at my work, she commented on the various things she saw, which included pattern, repetition, compressed space, a mark making of some sort, and small units comprising a larger whole. Some of my drawings were different, and she pointed out the distinct things between them, telling me to consider form vs. pattern on a surface, or additive materials vs. subtractive materials. Some of the artists she suggested included Jonathan Lasker, Thomas Nozkowski, Howard Hodgkin, and Keira Rathbone. I identified the most with Jonathan Lasker's work, particularly since his shapes seemed to fill the page the way my shapes were filling the page. Yet, I was fascinated with Keira Rathbone's typewriter work, which used icons to form a distinguishable image.

Professor Catherine O’Connell (October 17, 2012):

When Catherine came to talk with me, I had just finished taping my Xeroxed copies to the wall in one of the rooms. After mentioning that I did not want to go down this path, she instead talked to me about other things I could consider. For instance, she asked me why I liked drawing portraiture, as well as what my process orientation was like. I first responded that I like drawing portraiture (particularly of close friends and family) because it was like I was really seeing their faces. Spending many hours looking at their features reminded me of them, what they stood for, and what they mean to me. It was interesting because somewhere in our conversation, she said when looking at one of my process-based works (composition made with squares) she felt as if I had produced the piece in an intense focus. I told her that I actually find myself more intensely focused when drawing portraiture, working away from people. The process-based works were therapeutic, but when making most of them, I was in the company of other people, talking and multi-tasking. Catherine then started to tell me about her friend from college who made work based on the concept of generosity. He would draw “portraits” of his friends, but the images would consist of things that reminded him of his friends. For Catherine’s portrait, her friend drew an image of gold fish crackers because she always ate these snacks. She also suggested that I think about how to incorporate this type of mark making into portraiture if I decide to go down this other path.

Professor Susan Johnson (November 7, 2012/November 12, 2012):

At our last in-progress review, Professor Johnson thought I was limiting myself in my work. By placing my objects on the same tabletop plane, I was making all of the “portraits” look too similar. Rather than evoking a sense of who the person was, I was making the objects do the

“heavy lifting.” She advised that in order to capture a sense of portraiture, a focus on composition, light, and interaction between the objects would create a much more successful work. She also suggested that I look at artists working with portraiture and still life themes, such as Audrey Flack, Giorgio Morandi, Ambrosius Bosschaert, and Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin, as well as Dutch *vanitas* and traditional symbols in art.

Annotated Bibliography

Artists/Artworks:

Horodner, Stuart. *The Art Life: On Creativity and Career*. Atlanta: Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, 2012. Print.

Stuart Horodner is the Artistic Director of the Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, experienced in the applied issues of art making and its identity as a profession. This book is a compilation of various quotes from artists, singers, writers, composers, and dealers about the topics of motivation, influence, advice, subjects, process, writing, reading, community, audience, criticism, career, and success. These issues made me question my own artwork and own art practice, and I began to think a lot about my identity as an artist.

Nemser, Cindy. *Art Talk: Conversations with 15 Women Artists*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1975. Print.

Cindy Nemser is both a critic and art historian, finding an interest in women artists after realizing the shame that came with being a female artist. Her book is a collection of interviews with fifteen individuals, which include Lee Krasner, Alice Neel, Eva Hesse, and Audrey Flack. Through these conversations, Nemser hopes to present the accomplishments of these women, as well as provide insight into their artistic practices and values.

Rewald, John. *Cezanne: A Biography*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1986. Print.

John Rewald's book looks at Paul Cezanne's early life, education, artistic influences, and artistic styles, also including descriptions of various works, such as *Tulips in a Vase*, *Still Life with Curtain*, *Jug*, and *Comptier*, as well as portraits of various individuals.

Robertson, Bruce, ed. *Sargent and Italy*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2008. Print.

This book is a collection of essays by different writers, discussing the artist, John Singer Sargent, and his relationship to Italy. In particular, Richard Ormond focuses on Sargent's interest in modern life subjects. He analyses various works, including *A Capriote*, *Rosina*, *Capri*, and *Street in Venice*, all of which included figural representation of Italian subjects. Ormond also describes the change in Sargent's artistic style, particularly after his exposure to the works of Diego Velasquez.

Schick, Ron. *Norman Rockwell: Behind the Camera*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2009. Print.

Ron Schick discusses well-known artist, Norman Rockwell, and his process of art making. He gives biographical information about the artist, but mostly focuses on Rockwell's reference to photography and other technologies. The original photographs are included alongside his illustrations for visual reference, revealing the carefully planned photo shoots Rockwell spent hours putting together. The photographed subjects are also quoted, telling about their experiences with the artist.

Solmi, Franco. *Morandi*. New York: Rizzoli, 1987. Print.

Franco Solmi gives a short excerpt of Morandi's style and influences. This biographical text discusses how he came to the work with which he is known for. The rest of the book is filled with images of Morandi's paintings and drawings.

Updike, John. *Still Looking: Essays on American Art*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2005. Print.

John Updike's book brings together his assorted essays about artists and the work they came to produce. His essay, *A Lone Left Thing*, discusses the career of Marsden Hartley and the portraiture of his close friends and lovers. His work, *Sustained Comedy* and *Portrait of a German Officer* are along the basis for my ideas of using objects as portraiture. Hartley's work used military symbols to memorialize his late lover.

Movements and Time Periods:

Kallen, Stuart A. *Post Modern Art (Eye on Art)*. Farmington Hills: Lucent Books, 2009. Print.

Stuart Kallen gives a historical overview of Post Modern art, defining art terms, referencing specific artists, and explaining the concepts behind such artworks. The art movements covered include Modern Art, Conceptual Art, Installation Art, Appropriation Art, and Neo-Expressionism. This text was very helpful in allowing me to understand the differences between Conceptual and abstract work, particularly while I was working with my process-based pieces.

Kahr, Madlyn Millner. *Dutch Painting in the Seventeenth Century*. New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1978. Print.

This book looks at a specific culture within art, explaining the style that emerged during the seventeenth century in the Netherlands region. Specific artists, such as Rembrandt and Vermeer are discussed, as well as the several types of painting subjects, including landscapes, still life, architecture, and social life. I looked at this book for references about Dutch *vanitas*, another form of symbolism through objects.

Laclotte, Michel. *The Book of Art: French Art from 1350 to 1850*. Ed. Michel Laclotte. Vol. 5. New York: Grolier, 1965. Print. 10 vols.

The Book of Art is a pictorial encyclopedia of various art forms, focused on an assortment of French artists from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth century. It also looks at the styles that emerged over time, including international gothic, Baroque, Rococo, and Realism.

Shepherd, Rowena, and Rupert Shepherd. *1000 Symbols: What Shapes Mean in Art and Myth*. New York: Thames and Hudson, 2002. Print.

Rowena and Rupert Shepherd categorize symbols within the visual arts through the classifications of *Heaven and Earth, Characters and People, the Body and Actions, Living Creatures, Mythical Beasts, Flowers, Plants, and Trees, Objects and Artefacts, and Abstracts*. These symbols are defined and explained, as well as visually represented throughout the text. I looked at this book for ideas about my own symbolism. The individuals I have chosen to represent in my work are attracted to nature and its organic forms. Therefore, an awareness of nature's traditional meanings may bring more insight into how I can successfully render my friends' characteristics.

Religion:

Goff, Bob. *Love Does: Discover a Secretly Incredible Life in an Ordinary World*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2012. Print.

Bob Goff tells humorous and challenging stories of personal experiences, later relating each one to a biblical truth. For example, he describes his persistence to attend law school even though his grades did not meet the standard. After seven days of waiting outside of the Dean's office, Goff was admitted to the institution. He relates this story to the moral of perseverance in hard times. Goff's book is really about living the Christian life in a radical way. This work strengthened my interest in caring for people

Hempel, Amy. *The Collected Stories*. New York: Scribner, 2006. Print.

This book is a collection of short stories by Amy Hempel, covering topics of love, marriage, death, and hopelessness. Her stories range from one to thirty pages in length, not concerned with the solutions of issues, but rather the psychological nature of one's mind.

Ryken, Philip Graham. *Art for God's Sake: A Call to Recover the Arts*. Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2006. Print.

Philip Graham Ryken is a minister of Tenth Presbyterian Church and discusses the connection between art and the Christian faith. He talks of the importance of the arts, especially as a way to serve in the Church. He references biblical stories to support his arguments about the significance that art brings to our culture, while also mentioning the issue of idolatry and the issues art has brought to the Church.

Sill, Gertrude Grace. *A Handbook of Symbols in Christian Art*. New York: Macmillan Publishing, Inc., 1975. Print.

This text primarily looks at Christian symbolism within Western Art, alphabetically categorizing the symbols into fifty units. Each symbol is defined and explained, and then referenced to specific works of art.

***The Student Bible*. Ed. Phillip Yancey and Tim Stafford. New York: Zondervan. Print. New International Version.**

This text is the core influence for my work, in terms that its doctrine is focused on human beings and their value. *The Student Bible* is divided into the Old Testament and New Testament, with the Old Testament containing 39 books and the New Testament containing 27 books. These books vary from stories, parables, prophetic messages, and poetry, describing the origin of life and the way in which individuals can find fellowship with God through mercy and forgiveness.

The doctrine in this book is the core influence for my own beliefs, which have become the basis for why I prefer to focus on people.

Future Readings:

Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting by Norman Bryson

The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century by Svetlana Alpers

The Body of Raphaelle Peale: Still Life and Selfhood, 1812-1824 by Alexander Nemerov

Unexpected Findings II

I am constantly shocked at my own indecisive nature, which is ironic since it seems to be a

constant theme in my experience. I completed five watercolor paintings with the intention that they would evoke a sense of portraiture. Unfortunately, my goal was not successful, and I found myself at a moment of both panic and frustration. What artwork would I exhibit for the in-progress gallery show? I decided to retreat back to my system based work of photocopied drawings. When I had first put them together to make a larger image, I was interested in the result but was somehow convinced that my portraiture would be more successful. However, after experimenting with both types of art styles, I realized that my systematic artwork was not only more successful but more satisfying as well.

Artist Statement for the In-Progress Gallery Show:

My work initially began as a therapeutic form of artmaking. The marks I made were based upon my feelings during the time that I created the work, resulting in unplanned forms, shapes, and spaces. Just as the term *system* is defined as smaller components making up a larger whole, so my work is a process of small forms making up a larger image. My photocopied drawings are similar to this concept of systems, with each form connecting to make a unified design. I am interested in human nature's condition of emotion, and while my work is based upon my own personal feelings, I want my visual images to overwhelm the viewer with an emotional response.