

One for the Rest of Us

Student Name
Department

Faculty Advisor:

Abstract

One for the Rest of Us seeks to explore intellectual and financial exclusivity in the art world. Connections are made between the artist's personal experience in formal gallery settings, the treatment of female artistic production of the 20th century, and the role of lithography and mass production in the development of a more democratic art market. By embracing and celebrating art styles and processes that have been excluded from the realm of fine art, the artist intends to create a body of work that is accessible and enjoyable to those who may not otherwise feel invited to engage in the world of galleries and fine art.



An Elegy for Dad. Woodcut, watercolor. 2018.

1.) Introduction

I was never exposed to a formal gallery setting during my childhood in rural North Carolina. I grew up with alternate forms of visual stimulation. We had quilts and blankets with patterns and scenes embroidered on them and thrift store paintings. We did not have the access to the “fine art world” found within city limits and high-income households. It was not until I began attending UNCA that I stepped into the first gallery I had ever seen. I was aware that I was lacking the vocabulary and historical knowledge that everyone around me wove into their discussions of the art. I felt stupid and remember that first gallery opening night as being one of the most embarrassing evenings of my life, one that made me question my declaration as an art major.

I tried to catch up. I enrolled in art history classes, surpassing required hours in the subject. I began drawing the way I thought would garner respect in this new world. I hated every piece of artwork that I produced during this period. It took me three years to realize this was not sustainable.

I started to draw things that made me laugh again. I questioned why I was so uncomfortable in gallery settings. I studied alternate art history narratives. It became clear that fine art is made for a few of us, not most of us. I decided to make art that can be appreciated more universally, stick it in a gallery setting, and hope that it welcomes those who feel excluded from these settings.

I identified what kind of artwork I enjoyed interacting with. It often connected to the visual culture I grew up with. I respond to ornamental and decorative elements, to the illustrations of children's books, to wallpapers and quilts and embroideries. I considered what these elements had in common: they are associated with the feminine realm of artmaking and they are not often allowed access into formal art settings.



Frog on a Swing. Lithograph, 10"x12".
2017.

2.) 20th Century Art History and the Feminine

In 20th century art history, the terms “decorative” and “feminine” were synonymous. These words were coded to mean “inferior”. Clement Greenberg’s opinion was that a “decorative” work was inferior to the “genuine” modernist developments of the early 1900’s. He felt decorative and ornamental works lacked conceptual basis. Conceptions were and are considered intellectual, courageous, and masculine, in contrast to the ornamental, which was and is considered unintentional, unintellectual, fragile, and feminine (Auther, 342). While historians no longer use the sexist language of critics like Clement Greenberg, our history books are still dominated by the artwork that he and his colleagues considered worthy of preservation.

Expanding this research is worthwhile because, while the 21st century has more readily accepted women into the art world, the erasure of female art production left us with limited exposure to a feminine artistic heritage (Dwyer, 119-122). Women should not be required to sacrifice their rich artistic history in exchange for admission into a formal gallery setting.

4.) Process

Lithography is a suitable medium to realize these pieces based on its recognition as a democratic art form and its inclusion in craft and fine art settings. It has been considered the lowly material of commercial production and yet has managed to elevate itself into the world of fine art schools and galleries.

My process involves the production of large editions of stone lithographs. Drawings are done on limestone, etched, and printed. A video demonstrating this lithography process can be found at <https://www.lindseysigmon.com/process/>.



The lithographs are cut, sorted, and arranged on panes of glass, which are displayed in wooden boxes. The boxes are built in various ways, usually requiring engagement from the viewer to access the piece. There might be a peephole, a door, or a sliding pane of glass. This rewards the viewer for touching artwork on a gallery wall and for indulging the curiosity the exterior of the box arouses. It also gives the viewer something to do other than stand in front of a wall and make conversation. Before I had the vocabulary and historical context to participate in the narrative of the art world, this was the part that made me feel unworthy. It is important that my art never makes anyone feel that way.

The research grant money will be used to produce lithographs and to build a variety of structures to house them.



If I Can't Dance with You. Cherry,
plexiglass, lithographs, watercolors.
7"x15"x3". 2018.



Frog on a Swing. MDF, glass, lithographs,
watercolors. 16"x13"x4". 2018.



Birdhouse built with Dad. Plywood, glass, spray paint, lithographs. 22"x12"x10".
2017.

Timeline

May 18th - Purchase supplies. Gather resources for UR paper.

May 25th through June 22nd- Print 30 sheets of lithographs a week

June 29th through July 6th- Cut 75 sheets of lithographs a week

July 13th- Create compositions for 20 boxes, cut Plexiglas

July 20th- cut MDF for 10 boxes/ construct

July 27th- cut MDF for 10 boxes/ construct

August 3rd- Adhere compositions to Plexiglas, assemble 10 boxes

August 10th- Assemble 10 boxes. Finalize UR paper and presentation.

The body of work will be included in a solo BFA exhibition on October 26th, 2018 at UNCA.

Research will be presented at the Annual Fall Symposium of Undergraduate Research at UNCA.

Research will be submitted for publication to the UNC Asheville Journal of Undergraduate Research in the fall of 2018.

Budget

Stipend- \$1,500

Two pieces of 49"x 8' MDF- \$63.90

150 sheets of Hahnemule Paper- \$492.00

6 sheets of Duraplex 30"x 60" Clear Acrylic sheets- \$203.30

20 barrel hinges- \$179.80

10x 8 oz. Valspar paint, assorted colors- \$55.80

Total- \$2,494.80

Works Cited

Auther, Elissa. "The decorative, abstraction, and the hierarchy of art and craft in the art criticism of Clement Greenberg." *Oxford Art Journal* 27.3 (2004): 339-364.

Dwyre, Megan Breen. *To be "high" and "fine": Quilts, art, and power, 1971-1991*. University of Maryland, College Park, 2012.