

September 22, 2017

Honors Thesis Proposal

Purpose

Ever since my sister passed away when I was six years old, I have been concerned with the nature of my current relationship with her. As I have matured, and my religious convictions have deepened, this ongoing investigation has been an ambient driving force in my art practice. I have adopted an interdisciplinary research approach in my search for personal answers, but a piece of subject matter that has grown in significance to me is the differing role of distance, and how it is portrayed visually. I am deeply interested in architectural features which serve as a threshold, such as curtains and veils and the differing roles of these features in different settings, such as theater, or religious structures. As my personal concern over the nature of my relationship with my sister, the deceased or otherwise removed from my immediate experience has deepened, I have become more and more fascinated by the role of distance and thresholds in these relationships. The purpose of my honors program thesis project is to explore, through a body of art, the potential embodiments of "distance." This work will be displayed in a solo exhibition in early february in Gallery 303 of the Harris Fine Arts Center. I will be focussing on the role of veils and curtains, their symbolism across the history of costume, architecture and theological traditions. Much of the work will also be an assertion to the environments that I currently find myself in. I will research these topics academically, and when it comes to art making, I will perform materials research and experimentation in order to ensure I am creating the aesthetic that is coherent with my content.

Background and Significance

There has been a large body of artwork created that deals with the materiality of distance. Two artists who significantly contextualize the work I produce are Do ho Suh and Rachel Whiteread. Both of these artists employ the visual languages of architecture, with similarly removed tastes, but with entirely different purposes. Do ho suh is an artist who analyzes his own disconnect towards his upbringing in South Korea. His ethereal silk constructions of former spaces that he used to inhabit. His iconic piece from 1999, "Seoul Home, New York Home," originated from a longing to retrace his steps back to "the last time he had a good night's rest." Each of his artistic endeavors requires a pilgrimage to the site of reference. In an interview, Do ho suh stated that this process is about immersing himself in the longing for a place. In essence, his art is about embracing and encapsulating the immediacy of the emotions that are heightened when we miss something that we are removed from. Likewise, longing is something that fills the space between individuals, and potentially drives them to rediscover each other. Rachel Whiteread is famous for her direct approach to the inquiry as to what fills the empty space between walls themselves. Her massive installations are actually concrete molds of interiors significant to her. These monuments are heavy to look at. To me, they embody the sheer "weight" of the experiences that

are conditioned by the environment provided by the encasing of four walls. In a very straightforward way, Whiteread's pieces also acknowledge that there is substance that fills the apparent vacuum caused by distance between walls and their inhabiting objects and persons. I can relate to these two artists' work in a very intimate way. I am concerned with the effects of the isolation and compartmentalization of memories and experiences within certain physical and spiritual constructs. What I intend to add to this discussion of spaces and longing, is an analysis of the barriers themselves. What happens to the matter within these constructs when we view the walls themselves as living. When the windows, curtains and doorways are anthropomorphised. This is the discovery I am hoping to make with my research, and I hope to find an adequate visual language to express.

Methods and Procedures

As stated above, I intend to perform both academic research, as well as materials research. The academic research will be ongoing, and will expand as new connections are made with other disciplines. I will meet with Collin Bradford and Joe Parry for conceptual development every two weeks. For now, I am going to focus my study on the role of curtains and veils in theater, religion and architectural language. For my artworks to be included, I intend to create a series of 4 videos to be displayed within the gallery scaled at floor to ceiling projections. For these videos, I will be travelling to various theaters and homes within Davis and Utah County to gather relevant footage, as well as iconic features of the Utah landscape such as Albion Basin, the Great Salt Lake, etc. This is critical, because it asserts my position in the narrative of environment and barriers that I am engaging with. You can't have a divider of spaces without asserting the context that it exists in. As such, the video element in this work will assert the context of my findings in the world that surrounds me. Also in my show, I will have a series of 5-8 wall sculptures that will be employing both textiles and building materials. I will be conducting a series of experiments with plaster and cement to create what I want.

Preliminary Outline

I anticipate the results of this project to include the 4 videos described, along with the wall sculptures I described above. Additionally, I will provide a write-up which documents the discoveries that I made through my interdisciplinary research, along with a justification for my artistic choices.

Preliminary Bibliography

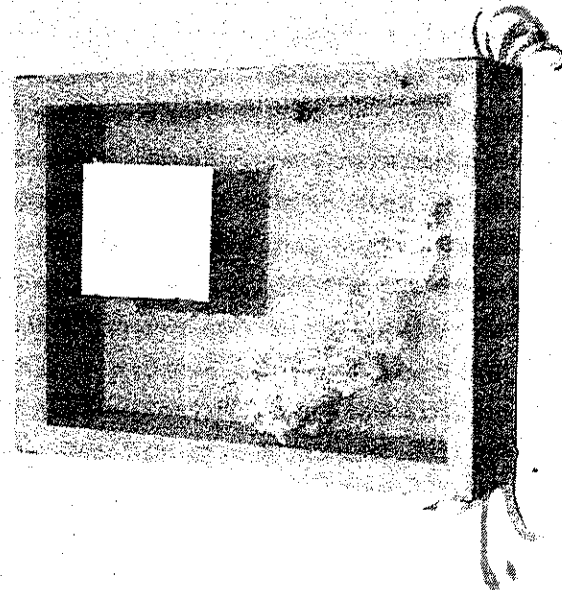
- Anderson, Amanda. *The Powers of Distance: Cosmopolitanism and the Cultivation of Detachment*. Princeton : Princeton UP, 2001. Print.
- Belcove, Julie L. "Artist Do Ho Suh Explores the Meaning of Home." *The Wall Street Journal*. Dow Jones & Company, 06 Nov. 2013. Web. 08 Feb. 2017.
- Derrida, Jacques. *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and beyond*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1987. Print.
- Foster, Hal. *The art-architecture complex*. London: Verso, 2013. Print.

Woodruff, Paul. *The necessity of theater: the art of watching and being watched*. New York: Oxford U Press, 2010. Print.

Derrida, Jacques. *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and beyond*. Chicago: U of Chicago, 1987. Print.

Qualifications of the Investigator

I am an artist, and an honors undergraduate student at BYU. In my past work, I have drawn the viewer's attention to the idea of place-association and memory compartmentalization. I have also created work that has used unconventional materials in painting, such as bubble-wrap, insulation, plexi-glass and other materials found in infrastructure. I am trained to try to access a visual language that exceeds that of verbal communication through art, and I am continually searching for new mediums to make my work more accessible to those around me. Additionally, as stated in my statement of purpose, this project is of utmost personal significance to me. Here is a sample of the wall sculptures that will be continuing to develop:



Qualifications of Advisor and Reader

Collin Bradford received an MFA from The University of Illinois in 2008 and taught at Grand Valley State University before coming to BYU in 2016. He currently serves as the coordinator of the department's BA program and he teaches both seminar and studio courses related to contemporary art practices, new genres, and interdisciplinary ways of making art. He is qualified as my advisor because of his interdisciplinary focus in his own practice, and his experience in evaluating art in this light.

Doctor Joseph Parry is the Department Chair of Philosophy, the former Director of the Honors Program at BYU, and a professor of interdisciplinary humanities with special interest in phenomenology and its emphasis on the "situatedness" of human experience. He was both editor

and contributor to *Art and Phenomenology*, published by Routledge in 2010. He is qualified as an advisor in overseeing that connections made between disciplines are coherent, as well as directing my research to be more comprehensive and accessible to those without a background in art.

Timeline

October-

study theater architecture, and the role of the curtain in audience, performer interaction. Travel to one site and make a 10 minute video. Meet with advisors all at least once. Purchase materials such as cement and wood from Home Depot.

November -

continue materials research, particularly with textiles. Study religious architecture

December- collect footage of snowy landscapes, travel to home to Washington DC and collect footage and source materials on freemasonry, possibly. Visit museums for research on other artists. Produce two videos based on footage collected that interacts with the Utah Landscape and NYC.

January -

preliminary BFA board review, fine tune aesthetics of my show. Finalize write up for the honors program. Advertise for the show on various social media and other platforms.

February-

Finalize art pieces, and set up my show. Thesis defense.

Funding - total requesting: \$535

\$100 - Editing Software *Doesn't std already have access to this?*

5 months of adobe suite student membership so I can work from home and travelling.

\$300- Materials

This should give me freedom to purchase wood and building materials from home depot, Blick art store and Joannes with some room for error and experimentation.

\$135- Fuel

714 miles to Albion basin, spiral jetty, little sahara, antelope island.

According to the milage fuel rate which reimburses \$0.19 to the mile.