8-2017

Discourse

Kimberly Fabio
Winthrop University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/graduatetheses

Part of the Fine Arts Commons

Recommended Citation
Fabio, Kimberly, "Discourse" (2017). Graduate Theses. 53.
https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/graduatetheses/53

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the The Graduate School at Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Winthrop University. For more information, please contact bramed@winthrop.edu.
May, 2017

To the Dean of the Graduate School:

We are submitting a thesis written by Kimberly Fabio entitled Discourse. We recommend acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

____________________________
Shaun Cassidy, Thesis Adviser

____________________________
Tom Stanley, Committee Member

____________________________
Stacey Davidson, Committee Member

____________________________
Dr. David Wohl, Dean, College of Visual and Performing Arts

____________________________
Jack E. DeRochi, Dean, Graduate School
DISCOURSE

A Thesis Statement

Presented to the Faculty

Of the

College of Visual and Performing Arts

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the

Requirements for the Degree

Of

Master of Fine Art

In the

Department of Fine Arts

Winthrop University

May, 2017

By

Kimberly Fabio
Abstract

This statement describes, analyzes and comments on my thesis work, *Discourse*, which explores the figure and perspectives on body image as well as voyeurism. My experience drawing and interacting with my models was the catalyst for this work, from which illuminates my evolution from strictly a two dimensional artist to an installation artist and sculptor. My thesis exhibition is composed of four works: a mirror installation piece incorporating a sound track, and three sculptures.

During the course of my Master of Fine Arts degree at Winthrop University, I researched a variety of artists, art movements and techniques, which influenced me in order to find my own voice. This statement examines my development as an artist as well as explains my thesis body of work.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Winthrop University for providing me with the opportunity to further develop as an artist and challenge myself academically. Deep gratitude is also extended to Tom Stanley, my MFA Advisor and Chair of Fine Arts at Winthrop University who consistently gave me guidance and support. I would like to thank my Major Professor Shaun Cassidy who challenged me to think more critically and shifted my approach to my work. I would like to thank Stacey Davidson who always had faith in my abilities and guided me through the process of making my art. I would like to thank Dr. Clara Paulino for her time, assistance and encouragement during my thesis process. I would like to thank Dr. Seymour Simmons for his support and guidance with life drawing and teaching as well as Dr. Andrew Vorder Bruegge for his career guidance and support at Winthrop University during the pursuit of my Master of Fine Arts. Finally, I would like to thank my wonderful husband James for support and encouragement during the course of my study. I would not have pursued my dream of an MFA if he had not been by my side.
# Table of Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................... i
Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................ ii
List of Images ................................................................................................................ iv
Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1
Process of Exploration ..................................................................................................... 3
Research .......................................................................................................................... 4
Evolving Process ............................................................................................................. 6
Thesis Exhibition ........................................................................................................... 11
Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 18
Images of thesis work ................................................................................................... 20
Images that influenced my work .................................................................................... 22
Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 28
List of Images

Fig. 1 ........................................................................................................20
Fig. 2 ........................................................................................................20
Fig. 3 ........................................................................................................21
Fig. 4 ........................................................................................................21
Fig. 5 ........................................................................................................22
Fig. 6 ........................................................................................................22
Fig. 7 ........................................................................................................23
Fig. 8 ........................................................................................................23
Fig. 9 ........................................................................................................24
Fig. 10 ......................................................................................................24
Fig. 11 ......................................................................................................25
Fig. 12 ......................................................................................................25
Fig. 13 ......................................................................................................26
Fig. 14 ......................................................................................................26
Fig. 15 ......................................................................................................27
Introduction

This thesis statement is meant to shed light on my thesis exhibition, a commentary on body image and voyeurism. Here, I describe my development from a live figure painter to an installation artist and sculptor, and expose the reader to my research, which was a result of this change in medium. My thesis exhibition is an installation comprising four works: a mirror installation piece and three sculptures. Two of the three sculptures contain drawings of nudes, while the third contains a dressing screen and a mirror, which is etched with text in the center. I arrived at these pieces after a long creative process using the nude figure. At the beginning of the Winthrop M.F.A. program, I primarily captured the figure in paint or charcoal.

The catalyst for expanding the nature of my work came from the conversations with my models on the subject of their body image. By using sound, image, objects and mirrors in my thesis work, my intention is to engage the viewers further into the subject, inviting them to consider their own feelings about their bodies.

The work in my thesis exhibition is directly related to my background. My love of the arts was honed by my parents at an early age. They encouraged the development of my skill as a visual and performing artist. Sound, from classical music to Broadway tunes or the sound of my own voice, and movement, whether of my body practicing ballet or of the pencil across a sheet of paper were important elements of my development. My mother encouraged me to develop my talent by
enrolling me in art classes at a young age. My father was an illustrator and photographer, and my early work was influenced by the world of advertisements and fashion images on television and in magazines. This eventually translated into my career as a footwear designer, where the results of putting pencil to paper were commercial footwear designs.

Fashion and the search for what was aesthetically appealing at a moment in time became my primary artistic expression. My work for a variety of well-known brands from Converse to Tommy Hilfiger took me to many international locations, such as Korea, Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, China, England, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, and the Netherlands. While on these trips researching the footwear market, I made time to visit museums. From the National Portrait Gallery in London, to the Louvre and Musée D’Orsay in Paris, to the Uffizzi in Florence, my appreciation of the world of fine art was just as important to me as my work as a designer.

Gradually, I became familiar with the art of different periods, and the various aesthetic sensibilities. Concurrently, I had been practicing figure drawing, since my days as a student at Syracuse University. I was often intrigued by the conversation the model would occasionally have with the class as she was being captured on paper or canvas. We talked about favorite music, current events, and sometimes personal life. Little did I know how these early experiences would influence me later as an artist. My current thesis work is the outcome of the experience of listening to them, as much as it is of drawing them.
My work has evolved over time, though the one constant has been the nude figure, mostly standing. At the beginning of the Winthrop University M.F.A. program, I complemented the nude figure with a floral background, essentially a repeat pattern of a selected flower from the many photographs I have taken. Following the introduction of this decorative element into the work, I transitioned to a more graphic background of primary color and black and white, and then I further abstracted the work by capturing the figure in grey tones. In time, I became interested in integrating sound into my pieces. The painted series *Body Beautiful* was my first foray into using inspiration from conversations as a significant part of the work. I would not have arrived at my thesis exhibition had I not gone through this and other significant developments.

**The Process of Exploration**

As mentioned above, my thesis work is the conclusion of my development as an artist while a student of Winthrop University’s M.F.A. program. My awareness of ideas about body image and ideals of ‘beauty’ as a possible subject for artistic enquiry arose with my initial attempts at capturing the figure on paper. As I drew, trying to observe objectively and represent accurately what I saw, I was conscious of what I considered beautiful because I had judgments about the bodies I was drawing in charcoal. Were they too heavy or too thin? As John F. Murray, award-winning author on the subject of the body image, stated in *Body of Truth*, “The divide between thin and fat marks a line between good and bad, virtue and sin, success and failure,
beauty and ugliness, health and sickness” (Brown 158). This statement was made in reference to women.

I began to wonder what the model’s self-evaluation was, and began talking with them before the painting session. Did they feel good about their bodies, which they were exposing to me in the nude? I wanted to see whether their reflections affected the way I drew them. At the same time, I started doing research into other figurative artists.

**Research**

Since the inception of the feminist movement of the 1970’s, it has been the goal of many women artists to create a new visual tradition for the female body. This tradition grows out of women’s own experiences and their sense of the inhabited body, rather than out of the masculine desire to depict women’s bodies as objects for visual pleasure. American artist Bailey Doogan’s work focuses on body image as she creates charcoal images of the bodies of older women, which remain taboo in Western society as they go against the grain of idealized female beauty. Images of women as older or “ugly” are simply not acceptable in our society. She produces images that are difficult to look at. Some of her paintings present the body in awkward, unfamiliar positions that hint at voyeurism (Garrard 7) (Fig. 6). This suggestion of voyeurism is achieved because the images of women appear to be capturing private moments with their bodies. These images have influenced my work
because they represent the reality of an aging body and not the idealized notion of female beauty.

In my search for other artists working on the same theme, I began to pay attention to British artist Jenny Saville, who is well known for her large-scale paintings of nude women. Her images are often distorted and exaggerate the size of heavier bodies. In an interview she stated, “I try to find bodies that manifest in their flesh something of our contemporary age. I’m drawn to bodies that emanate a sort of state of inbetweeness: a hermaphrodite, a transvestite, a carcass. I don’t paint portraits in a traditional sense at all…Bodies fascinate me. I find having the framework of a body essential” (Schama 124, 128) (Fig. 7). In my work, I attempt to expose the viewer to the discrepancy between the desired body image and reality. Like Doogan's, Saville’s work celebrates alternative views on beauty.

Considering the ideas of Saville, I painted the figure from life, which provided more information than a flat photograph. Models are living, breathing human beings. My early inspiration for this practice was American painter Philip Pearlstein, whose primary subject is the nude body. Pearlstein was an influence on me because he is a Realist and works from life. When I capture the model in paint or charcoal I always attempt to do so accurately, which is something I admire in Pearlstein’s work (Fig. 8).

The benefit of drawing from life has been a matter of discussion for centuries. By the mid-sixteenth century the study of the nude female model had become a fundamental concern for Renaissance art. Giorgio Vasari is explicit in calling for the study of live male and female models. He states, “The best thing is to draw men and
women from the nude and thus fix in the memory by constant exercise of torso, back, legs, arms and knees, with the bones underneath” (Bernstein 61).

As part of my research on the Renaissance, I looked at Titian’s painting *Venus of Urbino* (Fig. 9), one of the most familiar images in Western art that has come to stand for both the sensuality and classicism we ascribe to the culture of the High Renaissance (Goffen, Rosand 12, 37). While the psychological, political, social, and economic situations of women in Sixteenth-Century Venice all influenced Titian’s interpretation of women, it is the question of who is looking at whom that this painting problematizes. The male gaze directed to a nude female body has been a constant in the Western history of art, although it only became a subject of analysis in the post-modern Twentieth-Century criticism. In the Thesis Exhibition portion of this paper, I discuss the question of “The Gaze” in Western art, as well as in artists such as Yayoi Kusama and Doris Salcedo, who I discovered later in my artistic evolution.

**Evolving Process**

As my work evolved, it moved beyond the practice of drawing the nude figure, which was the center of my attention, to incorporating sound and installation. I recognize the postmodern influences in this change. Postmodernism is not necessarily considered a movement, but an approach to art that breaks down barriers between artistic genres and categories. Postmodernism is usually believed to have started with the Pop Art movement of the 1960’s and continues to the present day (Holt 85). Arthur Danto, an American art critic and philosopher stated the following:
In any case, the distinction between the modern and the contemporary did not become clear until well into the Seventies and Eighties. Contemporary art would continue to be ‘the modern art produced by our contemporaries’. At some point this clearly stopped being a satisfactory way of thinking, as evidenced by the need to invent the term ‘Postmodern’…the term ‘Postmodern’ really does seem to me to designate a certain style we can learn to recognize, the way we learn to recognize in instances of Baroque or Rococo. (11)

An element of postmodern art that is relevant to my work is the installation. Installations are constructed environments designed to bring forth a particular aesthetic sensation or to excite awareness of a specific idea or problem. Installation pieces were created throughout the 60’s and 70’s by artists who also worked in performance art, such as Nam June Paik, Joseph Beuys, and Rebecca Horn (Armason 701). The following paragraphs describe my transition from easel painter to exploring new ways of integrating the models into my work.

Last year, I was working with a model who had never modeled before. Because she was nervous, I engaged her in conversation about the pose before she took off her robe. She was a dancer, and most dancers are very aware of their bodies; she is also not a slim person or what she would call “the typical ballerina figure.” I became curious with what she thought of her own body, and not simply my own opinions and projections. I wondered what members of the dance community thought of body image, and became aware that this is a serious issue with dancers, women, in
particular. Pervasive beauty ideals disseminated through mass media are harmful to young women. These images, particularly in regard to body shape, are very unlike “real” American women.

The gap between the image and reality has grown in recent years, as the media images have become slimmer and Americans have grown heavier. In addition to magazines, images are also pervasive in other media such as movies and television (Milkie 194). Considering the image the media projects of women, I was particularly interested in how my model's attitude towards her own body image evolved after modeling nude for the first time. This conversation was the catalyst for my idea of an exploration of body image. I realized that knowing what the model thought of his or her body influenced the way I felt about how I wanted to draw it. If the model was heavy, but she felt proud of her body, I also saw her as beautiful as I drew her.

When thinking of my influences for this project, contemporary artist Cat Del Buono comes to mind. *Voices*, an exhibition in the Winthrop Galleries, presented a compilation of her interviews and videos of multiple domestic abuse victims. A series of videos of their mouths moving in combination with their voices was very powerful. What made it compelling was the presentation of their commentary, both sound and mouths moving, simultaneously, on domestic abuse. There were twenty female voices and videos, which highlighted the fact that domestic violence is experienced by many women.

I experimented with a response to Cat Del Buono’s *Voices*, layering the voices as continuous background sound, with language relevant to the body image
highlighted. This was deemed much more successful in my class critique because it was a more interesting and more complex composition.

In my first exhibition that included sound and spoken word, I projected the sound from a boom box sitting on a pedestal in front of its respective image. I placed a chair in front of the painting to encourage the viewer to take a seat while looking at the work and listening to the audio. Essentially, the painting became a three-dimensional experience. My previous work, *Body Beautiful*, planted a seed that would lead to my current thesis work.

When I began to consider my final project and the space it would occupy, I thought of ways to hide the sound element and eventually came up with the idea of a structure on which paintings or drawings would be placed. The sound equipment would reside behind the structure. My first sketches of the structure still treated the painting as a painting, resting the work on a version of an easel. Coming up with the ideas for the structures was familiar, because I was using the skills I developed as a footwear designer. I was not only thinking of the aesthetics, but the functionality of an object and how it would actually be put together. By working with tools I was familiar with (a pencil, a ruler and xacto knife), I brought my concept to life in cardboard.

As I continued to sketch and create other options in which the drawings were more incorporated into the structure, I came to the first draft, which resembled a dressing screen in cardboard. Furthermore, when discussing the drawings with my professor, I realized I had to find a way to more thoroughly communicate my work's
preoccupation with body image, and decided that, in addition to the drawings, I would include mirrors, which would partially reflect the body of the viewer. This would further engage the viewer into the three-dimensional sensory experience.

It was then that the idea arose to use language as well. An artist I looked to as an example of how text can be used effectively is Barbara Kruger. “To question the seemingly natural appearance of images through the textural commentary” is how Kruger described her practice in 1981 (Foster 18) (Fig. 10).

Further inspiration for working with text came from at an exhibition at Davidson College, Seeing/Saying Images and Words, featuring the works of eighteen artists who use text as their image, or combine the image with text. The exhibition provided a cross section of ways in which images and words function together within works of art. The words were either typed, hand-written, scribbled, embossed, perforated, carved, painted, printed, or tattooed. Amongst the artists shown was Andrea Eis, who presented a series of black and white photographs with text. These photos showcased Greek myths reinterpreted from a contemporary feminist perspective. She placed her own words on top photographic compositions sourced from Greek sculptures (Newman 3, 18).

My next challenge was to somehow apply my figure drawings and text to mirrors. Previously, I had incorporated mirrors on to a dressing screen structure, and I wanted to continue working with mirrors. The viewers would see their own reflection as they engaged with the figure and with my text collaged behind the drawing. The first process I investigated was silk screening, which meant making a halftone of the
charcoal drawing in *Photoshop*. As I needed three screens to transfer the image onto the mirror in the colors I desired, which was not cost effective, I continued experimenting and ended up having the image framed by a four-inch boarder of mirror. In addition, I cut out key words from the printout of the text and mounted the entire image, which included the drawing with text collaged behind, onto the mirror. This was the final piece and the last step in the process, which has concluded in my thesis exhibition.

**Thesis Exhibition**

In a class critique of these figure/text/mirror images, I was challenged to take a leap and further and developed the concept of body image into a final installation, which I have titled *Reflections* (Fig. 1). *Reflections* is complemented by three sculptures which are also part of my M.F.A. exhibition. The cardboard dressing screen I fabricated in the beginning of the process was an important element, as it was then that I decided to incorporate mirrors into the work. The installation included numerous inexpensive full-length mirrors that I imagined to be familiar to the viewer, whether it be on a bathroom door in their home or in a clothing store dressing room. For *Reflections*, I decided to utilize these mirrors in an installation that included sixteen mirrors, four on each wall, in an eight foot by eight foot space. I decided to work with a corner of a room, which would multiply the reflections as the mirrors reflected off each other. The viewers are forced to engage with their own reflection
in multiples, along with the reflections of other patrons. The audio of words pertaining to body image plays from the ceiling overhead.

In addition to the mirrors the sound element is a key component of *Reflections*. The recording is composed of my voice reciting words pertaining to body image. These words include the following: Pretty, judged, healthy, obese, skinny, fat, diet anorexia, bulimia, media, underweight, overweight, perception, exercise, weight, food, appearance, self-esteem, struggling, pressure, confidence, perfection, body, image, eating, purging, starvation, control, too thin, too fat, beautiful, acceptance, models, influence, ugly, soft, disgusting, imperfect, flawed, self-conscious, comfortable, perfect, fit, mirror, judgment, self-love, obsession, aging, muscular, bony, gaunt, slender, lean, too large, heavy, etc. The audio begins with pretty, judged, healthy, and is gradually layered and collaged with additional words from the recording such as underweight and overweight. The layered voices eventually end and the audio returns to my voice reciting additional words such as male, defined, ridicule, slim, strong and ending with the word perception.

In the first draft for this concept I only had two walls to work with, but my final piece has four walls of mirrors. Comments from fellow students indicated that they felt uncomfortable, which was my desired effect, as they were forced to contemplate and confront their own body image while looking at themselves in multiple mirrors and listening to the audio which, through language, triggers a consideration of body image. There is no escaping the experience.
This direction using mirrors led me to investigate other artists who use reflection as a dominant element in their work. The mirror as a prop has been widely used in painting, as in Velazquez’ *La Venus del Espejo*. My investigation for the use of reflection included works of sculpture and installation, as well as painting. One artist that comes to mind is architect and sculptor Maya Lin, who created the *Vietnam War Memorial*, built to honor the courage, sacrifice and devotion of the nation’s Vietnam veterans. This memorial has 58,183 names which are etched half an inch high on a chevron-shaped wall of polished granite that slices into the ground (Fig. 11). The sheer number of names makes the work very powerful, as does the reflection in the stone. As the viewer reads the names and contemplates the sacrifice of the soldiers, they are confronted with their own image. We, the viewers, will also die. In her interview with Elizabeth Hess, Maya Lin was asked why she chose black for the color of the stone, and she said,

I wanted something that would be soft on the eyes, and turn into a mirror if you polished it. The point is to see yourself reflected in the names. Also the mirror image doubles and triples the space. I thought black was a beautiful color appropriate for the design… (Stiles 623)

Another artist who utilized reflection in her installations is Yayoi Kusama (1929- ), a Japanese artist who has worked in a variety of media, most of which display her interest in color, pattern and repetition. More importantly, her work includes the viewer, who is often a voyeur, as in my current work, and is included in
the work. In *Peep Show*, Kusama created a claustrophobic interior, a hexagonal mirrored spotlight space that excluded rather than included the audience. Access to the environment was not a doorway, but a small cut hole which the visitors were able to peer into. The viewer became a voyeur (Applin 47). Another work she created was *Infinity Mirror Room-Phalli’s Field*, which was an installation comprising a two and half meter-squared enclosed and mirrored room within a room. Upon entering, viewers were confronted with their own image repeated endlessly on its walls. The entire floor was covered with a sea of vivid, stuffed, fabric tubes of various heights and widths. This piece was powerful in its ability to surprise and disorient the viewer. Kusama encouraged physical interaction between the animated bodies of those who entered the room and the soft forms lining the floor. The viewers’ physical presence completed the work (Applin 44). (Fig 12)

The presence of the viewer is an essential element of my final project. It is the reflection of the people entering the constructed space that creates the environment for the contemplation of the self and the questioning of body image. The incorporation of sound is a further catalyst for the feelings that the piece is meant to evoke.

Because of my work with the figure and mirrors, I was encouraged to research the question of “The Gaze” in Western art. At the heart of recent feminist theories about art is the claim that various forms of representation, painting, photography, and film assume a male “gaze.” The notion of the gaze has both a literal and a figurative component. Literally, it refers to the actual looking. In figurative terms, to say that
the gaze is male refers to a way of seeing which takes women as its object. Both men and women have learned to see the world through "male" eyes. So for example, throughout their lives women spend enormous amounts of time, energy and money making themselves “beautiful.” In undertaking this costly process, women judge themselves according to internalized standards of what is pleasing to men (Deveraux 338).

The core of my concept of body image is that both men and women adopt a male gaze, and that this gaze not only occurs when looking at others but when looking at themselves. The male gaze reveals itself not only in the Reflections installation, where mirrors reflect the viewer, but also in the conversations where the models do not have a neutral view of their bodies. The models are very judgmental and have a patriarchal way of seeing themselves, whether male or female. To some extent, when I observe the nude model from life, I am also adopting a male gaze. The voyeuristic character of “the gaze” brings with it the question of who is looking at whom. In my thesis exhibition piece, Reflections, people are looking at themselves and looking at others. My viewer is also a voyeur.

The evolving awareness of “The Gaze” question led me to incorporate my drawings into a piece that would complement the sound and mirror installation. The voyeuristic aspect of looking at someone nude led to the idea of having drawers to house the drawings collaged on top of a custom fit mirror. I finally decided on a chest of drawers—a piece of furniture that usually holds clothes in the intimate space of one’s bedroom. The dresser I decided upon titled Hidden measures 32 x 30 x 18.5
inches and is painted grey. (Fig. 2) To give the viewer a clue that there is something inside the drawers, I cut an 8.5 x 11 inch hole in the top of the dresser to reveal the drawing laying inside the top drawer. I inset an 8.5 x 11 inch piece of glass on top of the hole. (Fig. 3) The dresser has three drawers that contain drawings of three of my models, two females and one male. Each drawing is collaged in front of a mirror. The collision of the drawings and the viewer’s own reflection triggers an emotion about their own body image.

As I worked on the dresser, I began to research a Columbian artist, Doris Salcedo, who consistently uses domestic furniture in her pieces, including some that once belonged to victims of political violence. She is a sculptor who has an interest in the articulation of a civic, public space geared toward the expression of collective acts of mourning. According to Madeline Grynsztein, “In Salcedo’s hands these objects, closely tied to human presence and to the social fabric of the everyday are dismembered and regrafted together in disturbing juxtapositions.” (12)

As part of Salcedo’s research, she conducts interviews. In preparation for a public project in Chicago, she interviewed mothers who lost their young sons to gun violence. In many of her finished works, no literal connection to a specific individual is recognizable, but the works still communicate a sense of loss and anguish. Salcedo’s largest and best known work to date is the group of untitled sculptures that fuse domestic furniture with concrete and steel, made between 1989 and 2008. In Untitled, 1995, she utilized a wooden dresser with upholstery, concrete and steel (Gynsztein, 12, 13) (Fig. 13). The dresser I created is different to that of Salcedo and
my subject matter is less serious, but we both use a piece of domestic furniture to communicate our ideas.

After learning of Salcedo, I began work on my third piece *Judgment*. It includes a dressing screen measuring 73 x 59 inches, and painted the same grey color as the chest of drawers. My dressing screen is modeled after Japanese screens, known as *Byobu*, which divide the open plan Japanese home and are often decoratively painted. The screens were imported to Europe and America in the late nineteenth century and were an inspiration to artists, including Pierre Bonnard, who in 1899 created a large folding screen, *Promenade of Nursemaids, Frieze of Fiacres*, made up of four lithographs. (Armason 66) (Figure 14) The connection with my work is the presence of a decorative object that at the time was used to hide behind when undressing.

The dressing screen in my piece is placed in front of a mirror on which the word “Judgment” is etched, in the center. The mirror is mostly covered by black curtains left slightly opened to reveal the mirror underneath, as an invitation to the viewer to walk behind the screen and open it. Impressions and judgments about one’s body are often hidden, and the viewer is forced to confront those thoughts with the opening of the curtains. (Fig. 4)

The final piece of the exhibition is my fourth piece, *Presence*. This piece is directly influenced by my past history as a footwear designer. The sculpture consists of a pair of high-heeled fashion boots covered with a fabric (Fig 5). The fabric is printed with a repeat pattern I designed using the photographs of a variety of my
figure drawings. While I am aware that the boot can be read as a fetishist object, this was not my intention. I selected the mid-calf boot because I wanted to convey a concept of beauty that is often presented in fashion magazines and contrast that with the reality of the nude figure. I also wanted to have a lot of surface area to showcase the drawings. Shoes and boots are articles of clothing, which like any fashion item create an image the wearer wants to project.

Salcedo, too, uses shoes in her work. Her installation *Atrabiliarios* (Fig. 15) was made in response to her research on the experiences of female victims of disappearance. She concealed individual and paired shoes within small niches built into the walls of various exhibition venues. Here, Salcedo used mundane personal objects to invoke the bodies that would have worn them (Adan 30). In all of these works I am creating scenarios that force the viewer to make a decision on how to react and interact with the piece, whether confronting their own image in *Reflections* or making the choice to open or not to open the drawers in *Hidden*.

**Conclusion**

During my Master of Fine Art study at Winthrop University, I created a cohesive body of work, which took my exploration of the nude figure in directions I could not have imagined at the beginning of the program. In my evolution from live figure painter to installation artist and sculptor, I studied artists I was not previously familiar with, from sculptor Doris Salcedo to installation artist Yayoi Kusama.
Through my research, I have placed my work within the context of the Renaissance and Postmodernism.

Within the framework of body image, I experimented with sound, mirrors, objects, and installation. The combination of my audio and numerous mirrors forces the viewer in the installation to contemplate their own image. The smaller sculptures incorporate found objects, mirrors, and the drawings, which were a key component of my investigation.

Throughout this thesis statement I have articulated what my main influences have been, from artists who have inspired me in the past to artists who influence me currently. It is my hope that the work in my thesis exhibition will evoke an emotional connection in those who experience it.
Images of thesis work

Fig. 1- Reflections, 16 mirrors, Plywood, Acrylic latex paint, audio, 8’ x 8’ x 8’, 2017.

Fig. 2- Hidden, Chest of Drawers, glass, collaged drawings, 32” x 30” x18.5”, 2016.
Fig. 3 – Hidden, detail, Chest of drawers, glass, collaged drawings, 32 x 30 x18.5”, 2016.

Fig. 4 – Judgment, Acrylic latex paint, plywood, fabric, metal, etched mirror, 73” x 73” x 23”, 2017.
Fig. 5 – Presence, pair of mid calf boots, printed cotton canvas of figure drawings, leather, spray adhesive, thread, Peruvian lilies, 24” x 10.5” x 10”, 2017.

Images that influenced my work

Fig. 6 – Bailey Doogan, Self Exam in Nation, detail, 4 panels 72” x 52 “ each, 72” x 208” total, charcoal on primed paper, 2005.
Fig. 7 – Jenny Saville, Branded, oil on canvas, 7’ x 6’, 1992.

Fig. 8 – Philip Pearlstein, Male and Female Models on Greek Revival Sofa, watercolor, 29 ½ x 41 “, 1976.
Fig. 9 – Titian, Venus of Urbino, oil on canvas, 3’11” x 5’ 5”, 1538.

Fig. 10 – Barbara Kruger, Untitled (Your Body is a Battleground), photographic silkscreen on vinyl, 112” x 112”, 1989.
Fig. 11 – Maya Lin, Vietnam War Memorial, black etched granite, 2 acres, 1982.

Fig. 12 – Yayoi Kasuma, Infinity Mirror Room – Phallis Field, mirrors, fabric, 750’ x 766”, 1965.
Fig 13 – Doris Salcedo, Untitled, wooden dresser, wooden chairs with upholstery, concrete and steel, 93” x 41” x 19”, 1995.

Fig. 14 – Pierre Bonnard, Promenade of the nursemaids, Frieze of Fiacres, Color lithograph on four panels, each 54” x 18 ¾ “, 1899.
Fig. 15 – Doris Salcedo, Atrabiliarios, Shoes, drywall, paint, wood, animal fiber, surgical thread, 43 niches and 40 boxes, overall 1024” x 759”, 2005.
Bibliography


Stiles, Kristine, and Peter Howard Selz. *Theories and Documents of