Fragmentation of Thought

Thomas Seay
Winthrop University, seayt05@yahoo.com

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

Part of the Fine Arts Commons, and the Sculpture Commons

Recommended Citation
Seay, Thomas, "Fragmentation of Thought" (2016). Graduate Theses. 25.
https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/graduatetheses/25

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 digitalcommons@mailbox.winthrop.edu.
May, 2016

To the Dean of the Graduate School:

We are submitting a thesis statement written by Thomas Seay entitled

*Fragmentation of Thought*. 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

__________________________
Alf Ward, Committee Member

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

__________________________
Dr. Jack DeRochi, Dean, Graduate School
FRAGMENTATION OF THOUGHT

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

Winthrop University

May, 2016

By

Thomas Seay
Abstract

This thesis statement expounds on my thesis exhibition, a series of four sculptures that explore the contemporary expanding field of sculpture through the fusion of non-traditional or unmonumental materials with portrait painting and collage techniques. The works are built on questions of form, and references historical art movements: Renaissance and Baroque, Cubism, and Post-Modernism. The first is present in the classical portraiture I include in the pieces; the second, in the fragmented style; the third, in the multiple narrative voices of viewers, in the use of non-traditional or unmonumental materials, and in the unexpected groupings of objects, both made and found, often generating humor and absurdity.

My intention is to allow the viewers to engage in creating individual narratives through conceptual connections made from the fragmented imagery and the recycled and repurposed material and objects. The varied fragments, imagery, and objects are also to be seen as a collection of voices or points of view, not one individual voice, which constitutes an opportunity for the engaged viewer to become the “author” of the narrative. However, for this to happen, time becomes an essential element of the work. Taking recognizable and familiar imagery and composing it into an unfamiliar, absurd, or humorous arrangement intrigues the viewers and engages them to take the time to look at the work from different angles, as well as at the space between and within the sculptures. In this respect, the viewer’s movement through space becomes important too. Therefore, I create sculptures that invite this movement.
Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Winthrop University for this amazing opportunity and experience. My grateful thanks are extended to my Master of Fine Arts thesis committee and art professors, Mr. Shaun Cassidy, Mr. Tom Stanley, and Mr. Alf Ward, for their patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement, and of critiques of my graduate work and my art history professor, Dr. Clara Paulino, for her valuable suggestions and constructive feedback of my thesis statement. I would also like to thank my painting professor Mr. Michael Dixon, for inspiring me to try performance in combination with portrait painting.

I would like to offer special thanks to other Winthrop University professors, like Mrs. Marge Moody and Ms. Stacy Davidson, for their guidance.

Special thanks is also extended to Winthrop University art students, Trent Chantemerle, Chris Clark, Charlotte Coolik, Meredith Dallas, Alyvia Dyches, Drew Edwards, Amanda Foshag, Ben Haile, and Will Lattman, who volunteered and performed in one of my performances.

Finally, I wish to thank my loving wife and my parents for their support, inspiration, and encouragement throughout my study.

Dedicated to my amazing wife, Shelley.
# Table of contents

Abstract ...................................................................................................................... i
Acknowledgments .................................................................................................... ii
List of images ........................................................................................................... iv
Introduction ............................................................................................................. 1
Art historical influences ........................................................................................... 3
Artistic influences .................................................................................................... 5
Arriving at this subject of exploration ..................................................................... 11
Thesis exhibition ....................................................................................................... 12
Conclusion ............................................................................................................... 16
Images
    of thesis work ........................................................................................................ 18
    that influenced my work ....................................................................................... 20
Works cited ............................................................................................................... 25
# List of images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Figure</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 4</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 7</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 8</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 10</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 12</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 13</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fig. 14</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

My thesis exhibition features four sculptures that stem from my research into the history of sculpture, as well as from an exploration of various media and personal histories. I explore the fusion of non-traditional or unmonumental materials, fragments of recycled or repurposed materials, made and found objects from previous sculptures and paintings, portrait painting, and collage. All of these elements are arranged so as to contrast with each other with the intent to intrigue the viewers by creating humor and absurdity as well as visual and intellectual engagement. The choice of materials, which range from fabric to furniture, household items, toys, and sculptures of my own, is less of a focus for me than the particular way they interact with each other. Cross pollination of imagery, materials, and objects helps the viewer make visual connections from one sculpture to the next.

Originally, the most important motivation for these choices was lack of money, which in the summer of 2015 led me to become resourceful in my approach to art-making through recycling and repurposing objects. The act of recycling gives objects a new life. In the whole history of art, ideas inherent in past artwork have been recycled and reused, sparking new ideas and leading to the expansion of innovation. One example of this is Robert Rauschenberg’s Combines.

My decisions regarding the construction of the work result from formal considerations, such as my reaction to images and materials and the importance I place in making them structurally sound and visually coherent. British sculptor Tony
Cragg (1949-) helps better explain my attitude toward formal questions when he states that “materials, because of their physical characteristics and the emotions and ideas they bring with them, play an essential role in the forming of the work” (15).

The exploration of materials and techniques that led to the creation of these sculptures involved focusing on refining my portrait painting skills while at the same time learning new skills with metal, like forging and welding. This, too, led me to place my attention on the construction of form in my work. Color, size, shape, scale, texture, balance, and composition all play a part. Choices regarding color, balance, and composition always dictate the completion of each piece.

Color is used to create visual engagement and intrigue for the viewers, while also creating cohesion within the sculpture. Scale is important because, as the height of the pieces varies, so do the angle and the compositional point of view accessible to the viewer. Shapes are fragmented to create space and shadows. The texture of a material or object is often set in contrast with other textures in the same piece to create absurdity, irony, or humor. Visual and physical balance often rely on each other due to the physics of the form. The composition of the parts creating the whole work informs my decisions about these formal questions.

Through form, I invite the viewers to construct meaning. I do not focus much on meaning myself. Making the object or image and allowing it to exist is more important to me than rationalizing about what the object means or why I made it. I choose to remove myself from projecting any specific narrative. This intention crystallized for me when I read philosopher Roland Barthes’ essay “Death of the
Author,” in which he advocates the end of the authorial voice in literature, which is replaced by the text and the reader’s interpretation.

In order for the viewers to become the “author,” I offer them time and space. The element of time is essential in order for the viewers to move around the work and construct meaning. And there is enough space for them to move around and between the sculptures. The work suggests that meaning can be found in form and in the multiplicity of narratives that fragmented form invites.

**Art historical influences**

This thesis work is deeply informed by the history of art. It includes references to the Renaissance and Baroque movements in the classical portraits I include, as well as to Cubist sculpture in the fragmented space and points of view, and to Post-modernism through the breakdown of the hierarchies of genres and materials and the multiple narratives. Most obviously, I blend forms and materials, both two dimensional and three dimensional, in keeping with the shifts in categorization of the past 30-40 years. Many contemporary artists’ work no longer fits into single categories of sculpture or painting. They have sought to expand the boundaries of disciplines by using a multiplicity of art styles and media. One example is Jasper Johns’ fusion of sculpture and painting.

One art historical reference that is fundamental to my work can be found in my use of the pedestal. In “Sculpture in the Expanded Field,” Rosalind Krauss discusses the question of the pedestal in the framework of the change from the
Renaissance period through Modernism to Post-Modernism. Historically, sculptures of the Renaissance were placed on large pedestals to separate them from the viewer, who were to consider them “elevated” work. Artists in the mid-1800s, like the French sculptor Auguste Rodin (1840-1917), expanded upon the definition of sculpture by creating smaller pedestals that brought the sculpture closer to the ground so people could see it more easily. This change allowed individuals to relate to the object in a new and more “equal” way. Rodin actually wanted to take the pedestal away completely in *The Burghers of Calais* (Fig. 6) but could not do so as the people paying for the work would not allow it. He explained why he wanted to do this:

I did not want a pedestal for these figures. I wanted them to be placed on... the paving stones of the square in front of the Hôtel de Ville in Calais... In this way they would have been, as it were, mixed with the daily life of the town: passersby would have elbowed them, and they would have felt through this contact the emotion of the living past in their midst. (Tancock 385)

In this respect, Rodin was ahead of his time. About a hundred years later, around the mid-1900s, artists removed the pedestal completely. Some good examples are Richard Serra’s *Te Tuhiangi Contour* (Fig. 7), American sculptor Carle Andre’s (1935- ) *144 Lead Square* (Fig. 8), and Swedish American sculptor Claes Oldenberg’s (1929- ) *Floor Cake* (Fig. 9). The attitude of reverence and awe was broken. There was no longer a separation between the sculpture and the viewer.
What I have done in my thesis work is to comment on this history by keeping the pedestal, while integrating it into the sculpture. The entire sculpture rests on the floor so there is no separation between it and the viewers. I want the viewers to have the opportunity to closely inspect and observe the images, the materials, and the space within and around the sculptures.

According to Krauss, the second major shift was the expansion of the definition of sculpture. Krauss states that “within the situation of Post-modernism, practice is not defined in relation to a given medium – sculpture – but rather in relation to the logical operations on a set of cultural terms, for which any medium … might be used” (42). Sculpture can now incorporate drawing, printmaking, photography, and other categories. This expansion is reflected in the diversity of practices held within the category of sculpture, and it has influenced me to explore the traditions of portrait painting in combination with made and found objects.

Artistic influences

The order I follow in making the pieces is the same in all four sculptures. First, I created the top portion of the sculpture out of cardboard and placed the pieces in a way that resembles the fragmentation of form in Cubism, specifically Picasso’s Guitar. Second, fragments of traditional portrait paintings and collaged images were attached to the surface of the cardboard. This references Californian sculptor Matthew Monahan’s (1972- ) incorporation of traditional drawing with sculpture and the historical expansion of the definition of sculpture. Third, my response to the
overall imagery, color, and form of the top portion of the sculpture informed my material choices for the bottom portion. For example, the maroon collaged paper on the top portion of my sculpture informed my choice of maroon material for the bottom portion (Fig. 3).

The viewers must engage with the work by moving to see the fragments to construct meaning. Time must be spent moving and seeing in order to remember the many parts of each piece. Twentieth-Century Italian art critic Giorgio Verzotti is an important influence in this respect. He wrote about the use of movement and memory in the work of American sculptor and installation artist Jessica Stockholder (1959 - ):

. . . exercising the memory of what we have just seen when, by moving, we go on to look at something else, so as to mentally link together all the stimuli the installation induces. Using memory to create a virtual reconstruction of continuity in what appears discontinuous: here we find a sense of order. (46)

In other words, movement and memory are needed for inspecting the work and finding a sense of order.

American sculptor Richard Serra (1939- ) commented on similar issues. In an interview with the American television show host and journalist Charlie Rose (1942- ), he speaks of how time and space in Japanese Zen gardens influenced his own work; he also mentions when walking through the gardens, as when walking around his work (Fig. 10), one sees objects shifting in space. For him, Zen gardens
are “about the notion of time, space, and movement being simultaneous” (Rose). The fourth dimension of time must be spent looking at the work and processing thoughts about what is seen. The space within, around and between the pieces allows the viewers to move in a way that exposes the relationships of form, making these visible within each sculpture and from one sculpture to the next.

As I mentioned above, my work reflects the idea of the viewer as the author, which has been expressed by Roland Barthes in his 1967 essay “The Death of the Author.” Speaking of nineteenth-century poet Mallarmé, Barthes states:

Mallarmé was doubtless the first to see and foresee in its full extent the necessity of substituting language itself for the man who hitherto was supposed to own it; for Mallarmé, as for us, it is language which speaks, not the author: to write is to reach, through a preexisting impersonality—never to be confused with the castrating objectivity of the realistic novelist—that point where language alone acts, “performs,” and not “oneself”: . . . (which is, as we shall see, to restore the status of the reader). (143)

Even though Barthes is commenting on literature, this idea can be transferred into visual art. My intent is to allow the visual imagery to speak, not me. By “speak” I refer to narration. Barthes discusses the shift from the author as a God-like figure to the author in modern literature:

We know now that a text is not a line of words releasing a single ‘theological’ meaning (the ‘message’ of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from
the innumerable centers of culture. … The writer can only imitate a
gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix
writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to
rest on any one of them. (146)

Ideas and choices made during my creative process are taken from every
aspect of my life – what I see, hear, touch, taste, smell, breathe, and so on – all
senses common to human kind. Within these sculptures, a variety of images blend
and clash. No focal point is created to avoid leading the viewers toward a specific
meaning. No clear singular answers about the visual coherence of the narrative come
from me, the artist. In other words, the form allows the viewers to construct personal
meaning from the collision of fragmented objects and images but does not dictate the
construction of meaning or its meaning.

The critics, artists and artwork that most influenced my work are Pablo
Picasso and three American Post-modern sculptors: Matthew Monahan, Aaron
Curry, and Rachel Harrison. I discovered their work when reading Unmonumental, a
book by Massimiliano Gioni about an exhibition held at the New Museum of
Modern Art in New York.

Together with Georges Braque, Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) created the Cubist
style. He broke his subject matter into fragments as if the object was looked at from
varying points of view. His piece Guitar (Fig. 11), illustrates the fragmentation of
the guitar as seen through the eyes of multiple viewers. This same effect is achieved
in my own work through the fragmented geometric forms of recycled cardboard,
which I use to construct the abstract architectural top portions of the sculptures.
The German gallery owner and promoter of early Cubist artwork Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler (1884-1979) stated that Cubism was “no longer bound to the more or less verisimilar optic image which describes the object from a single viewpoint.” Up until the Cubist experiment, artwork denoted the intent and point of view of the artist. Kahnweiler adds that Cubism can, in order to give a thorough representation of the object’s primary characteristics … through several representations of the same object, provide an analytical study of that object which the spectator then fuses into one again in his mind (quoted in Chipp 256).

The top portion of my sculpture is constructed of mostly flat planes, resembling architecture and its ornamentation but not constructing a realistic interpretation of a specific building. The planes serve as a catalyst for the viewer to construct a building or town with their imagination. Again, this architectural component shows Picasso’s influence. For him, Cubism was a manifestation of a vague desire … to get back to some kind of order … to move in a direction opposite to impressionism. That was the reason we abandoned color, emotion, sensation, and everything that had been introduced by the impressionists, to search again for an architectonic basis in the composition, trying to make order of it (Williams 239).

As to the Post-modern sculptors mentioned above, Matthew Monahan fuses portrait drawing with figurative sculpture made from non-traditional materials. His
work creates a commentary on art history by referencing ancient Greek and Roman sculpture (Fig. 12). His work inspired me to integrate traditional portrait paintings into my work. Monahan uses materials like drywall to construct his pedestals, leaving the rough-cut edges of the drywall and screws visible. His alterations of the pedestal made me consider integrating the pedestal into my own sculptures. Aaron Curry (1972- ) expands on the Constructivist style in a contemporary way, by using non-traditional materials like spray paint, cardboard, and pop culture imagery (Fig. 13). In the words of critic Gioni, many artists “reach back to the forms of modernist sculpture and formalist design, like Aaron Curry, who explores ‘the legacy of Modernism. . . to open up new paths and possibilities’ by ‘viewing history not as a monolith but as a field open to interpretation’” (74). Finally, Rachel Harrison (1966- ) juxtaposes photographs and found objects with materials like Styrofoam, toys, and paper-maché to create ironic and absurd, abstract forms that often reference popular culture. Art critic Michael Wilson describes Harrison’s work as “a deliberate mixing of hierarchies, in which the different parts played by the found and the constructed are destabilized and interrogated” (176). An example of mixing hierarchies is found in her piece Two Bathers (Fig. 14), in which she combines Paul Cézanne’s (1839-1906) The Bather and a Calvin Klein underwear advertisement, with a crudely assembled polystyrene figurative sculpture.
Arriving at this subject of exploration

When I first enrolled as a Master of Fine Arts with a concentration in painting at Winthrop University in the fall of 2013, I was already interested in sculpture. Early in the program, I painted surreal landscapes, yet I also explored materials unfamiliar to me with a view to creating sculpture.

To acquire more practice on painting portraits to incorporate into my surreal landscapes, I attended a performance and portrait-painting course at Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC in the summer of 2014. This experience was the beginning of the practice of incorporating other media into my painting. During my time at Penland, each student completed three solo and one collaborative performance, all of which were photographed. For me, the photographs had a dual purpose: they documented the performance, and they also became a reference point for the portrait paintings that I would produce upon my return to Winthrop University. During this time period, I continued exploring materials and sculpture techniques new to me, such as welding, forging, inflating steel, polyurethane mold-making, and casting in plaster to name a few. I also continued to create performances and document them with photography so they later could act as the basis for portrait painting. I have incorporated these very portraits into this body of work.

When I returned home in Pennsylvania in May of 2015, I found myself without a source of income. I had to find a way to build a body of work for an independent study course I took at Winthrop University. This situation forced me to become more resourceful and creative. During this time, I was reading
Unmonumental, the book that features reviews of the contemporary artists I previously mentioned, all of whom use non-traditional materials. Suddenly, I saw my financial situation in a positive light. This book also introduced me to the idea of the expansion of the definition of sculpture by integrating it with other categories of art; in my case, this ended up with the combination of portrait painting with sculpture. I embarked on a new way of making art.

The idea of using everyday materials that are readily available struck the core of my personal beliefs. There can be much waste involved in art-making, which is contradictory to my environmental and conservationist views, instilled early by my parents. I noticed my recycling bin filled with cardboard boxes and plastics, which became my main source of materials. On my return to school, I rummaged through all the scrap materials collected over the last two years in my studio to see what other supplies I could use to create sculptures. Therefore, I can say that halfway through the program, I began to create sculptures that included 2-D, my portrait paintings, and recycled materials.

**Thesis exhibition**

Each of the four sculptures in my thesis exhibition contains references to the art movements I have been mentioning. My portrait paintings allude to Renaissance and Baroque portraiture through accurately rendering the human face. One of the hallmarks of European portraiture is a sense of reality, an apparent intention to depict the unique appearance of a particular person. Each portrait is thus meant to
express individual identity, but as Erwin Panofsky recognized, it also “seeks to bring out whatever the sitter has in common with the rest of humanity” (quoted in West 24). I cite Cubism through fragmentation of space and point of view. The third reference is to Post-Modernism for all the reasons mentioned above.

In all four pieces, it is in the top portion that the references to Cubism and Post-modernism are found; the bottom portions are created with found objects in a formal response to the top. While building the sculptures, I simultaneously work on portrait paintings. My personal aesthetic preferences of color, shape, size, and orientation as well as my response to the form of the sculpture inform what portrait paintings and images are chosen and where they are placed upon the top portion of the sculpture. The images are not organized in sequence, and look nonsensically placed. When constructing the bottom portions of the sculptures I respond to the upper portion. One move leads to the next almost systematically. The object’s form and narrative possibilities drive my next move.

The first piece, titled Black, white, slick, thick, pause, (Fig. 1) stands 85 inches in height, is 21 inches wide, and 15 inches thick. The entire sculpture is made from cardboard, plastic containers, magazine images, Damask wallpaper, portrait paintings done in oil on watercolor paper, and cardboard, gesso, plywood, screws, PVC pipe, red velvet cloth, polyester quilt batting, lacquer, rusted steel, masking tape, and used engine oil. The top portion has Damask ornamented wallpaper pieces that relate to the associative qualities of velvet cloth that I found in my studio. The richness of the fabric and wallpaper reminded me of the upper class and of crown
jewels displayed on a red velvet cushion or pillow. So, I created a velvet cushion on which my sculpture sits.

Construction of this cushion consisted of many steps, with much time spent figuring out how to execute three-dimensionally the form in my mind. I traced the perimeter of the base of the sculpture on ¾ inch plywood and added one inch to the perimeter so the cushion is wider than the base. After cutting the shape out of plywood, a piece of velvet was also cut to match except it was approximately 5 inches wider on each side, so when the velvet plywood shell was stuffed with loose polyester quilt batting, there was room for the cushion to expand. Drafting the pattern so it was large enough to expand like a cushion took many attempts to accurately execute, which is an exciting part of my creative process. The velvet was stapled on the underside of the plywood and filled with batting. Once the cushion was formed, I attached the sculpture to the cushion by screwing through the plywood, velvet fabric, and batting. Old black screen-printing ink was used to cover the plywood frame.

The clean look of the sculpture and images of wealth led me to search for contrasting imagery. Around this time, I had completed a small art project unrelated to my thesis body of work, in which I used old engine oil. The combination of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe with old engine oil struck me as the perfect contrast to the associative qualities and texture of the velvet and Damask wallpaper. The cushion and top portion of the sculpture rest on one 4-inch, one 1-inch, and one
kinked 2-inch diameter PVC pipe, which all extend down into the bottom section of the sculpture that rests on the ground.

While working as a shop monitor in the metal shop at Winthrop University, I found a 20-inch diameter by 4-inch tall rusted steel ring in the scrap pile. This ring was used in the bottom section of the base. One 20-inch diameter plywood circle was placed flush with the bottom of the steel ring and the other is roughly \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch recessed from the top. They are both held in place and attached with silicon caulk. Lastly, engine oil was placed in the \( \frac{3}{4} \) inch deep basin. This piece is the culmination of an analytical constructive approach to sculpture through responding to previous formed fragments of imagery or objects.

*Sturdy, impermanent, fluff, rough cruising* (Fig. 2) is made from cardboard, plastic, portrait paintings, oil paint, magazine clippings, gesso, plywood, screws, recycled plastic fibers, ink, art paste, chair legs, and a chair wheel. Its dimensions are 15 x 57 x 12 inches. The imagery and colors I used informed my decisions for the bottom portion of this sculpture. The maroon color of the fluffy structure, which the top portion rests on, contrasts with the maroon fragments of imagery in the top portion. The orange lines in the top are mimicked on the chair legs of the bottom. The irony found in the odd combination of materials, specifically where I attached a chair wheel to the bottom of one of the four legs, resembles the irony and absurdity in Rachel Harrison’s work.

*Watch, reflect, sky, lemon, flow* (Fig. 4) has two Cubist-style top portions supported by one bottom portion. One of the top portions rests upon a mirrored glass
cube-like construction. The mirrored glass accentuates the fragmentation by reflecting bits of the sculpture. The bottom structure is constructed from recycled wood and screws. Absurdity is found in the construction of the bottom section with its frail and haphazard appearance. The yellow and blue lines on the top portions of the sculpture are complemented by the use of yellow and blue splashes of color in the bottom section to create cohesion within the piece.

*Imperial, dependent, waver, wedge, hope* (Fig. 5) shows a clear mixing of hierarchy that was mentioned in Rachel Harrison’s work. The top portion rests upon a 4-inch thick slab of concrete, which in turn rests upon a recycled steel structure. The juxtaposition of the portrait paintings on the top portion with the concrete and steel is common and therefore creates irony. A fabricated steel wedge is placed under one of the steel legs for structural support; the resulting disequilibrium evokes humor.

**Conclusion**

During my time at Winthrop University, I was given the opportunity to experiment and explore materials in new ways, and thus acquired more knowledge and skills. My art practice broadened after I took a performance course and a portrait painting course at Penland School of Crafts in the summer of 2014; performance, documented by photography, became a visual reference for my portrait paintings. After experimenting with materials sculpturally, and honing my portrait
painting skills, I decided to fuse them together to create the sculptures in this thesis exhibition.

These pieces have strong art historical influences that I acknowledge openly—Renaissance, Baroque, Cubism, and Post-modernism—and they are open to the viewer’s interpretation. In this work, I explore the fusion of non-traditional or unmonumental materials, fragments of recycled or repurposed materials, made and found objects from previous sculptures and paintings, portrait painting, and collage. All of these elements are arranged so as to contrast with each other with the intent to intrigue the viewers by creating engagement, humor, and absurdity.

I plan to continue incorporating portrait paintings into sculptural work that interacts with the space it is shown in. Fragmentation and incorporation of divergent and contrasting materials will continue to interest me for the foreseeable future. I plan to attend more summer art schools like that Penland, as a source of ideas and techniques to further explore in my own work.

My current work has been deeply impacted by attending art history courses, researching art history on my own, and reading about contemporary art. My hope is to continue researching areas of art history as sources of inspiration. With this body of work, I hope to have effectively engaged viewers in a unique visual experience as I broaden their thoughts about what qualifies as sculpture.
Images of thesis work

Fig. 1 – Black, white, slick, thick, pause. Cardboard, plastic, magazine clippings, portrait paintings, gesso, oil paint, plywood, screws, PVC pipe, velvet, batting, lacquer, steel, and engine oil, 21” x 85” x 15”, 2015.

Fig. 2 – Sturdy, impermanent, fluff, rough, cruising. Cardboard, plastic, magazine clippings, portrait paintings, gesso, oil paint, plywood, screws, recycled plastic fibers, printmaking ink, art paste, chair legs, and chair wheel, 15” x 57” x 12”, 2015.
Fig. 3 – *Sturdy, impermanent, fluff, rough, cruising*. Cardboard, plastic, magazine clippings, portrait paintings, gesso, oil paint, plywood, screws, recycled plastic fibers, printmaking ink, art paste, chair legs, and chair wheel, 15” x 57” x 12”, 2015.

Fig. 4 – *Watch, reflect, sky, lemon, flow*. Cardboard, plastic, magazine clippings, portrait paintings, gesso, oil paint, recycled scrap wood, plywood, screws, mirrored glass, and printmaking ink, 48” x 67” x 22”, 2015.
Fig. 5 – Imperial, dependent, wedge, waver, hope. Cardboard, plastic, magazine clippings, portrait paintings, gesso, oil paint, recycled painted steel, steel, concrete, faux fur fabric, batting and bolt, 11" x 74" x 20", 2015.

Images that influenced my work

Fig. 6 – Auguste Rodin, The Burges of Calais, Bronze, 94.02" x 82.52" x 75", 1884-1895.
Fig. 7 – Richard Serra, *Te Tuhirangi Contour*, 56 Corten steel plates, 252m x 6m x 50mm, 1999/2001.

Fig. 8 – Carl Andre, *144 Lead Square*, Lead (144 units), 3/8” x 12’ x 12’, 1969.
Fig. 9 – Claes Oldenberg, *Floor Cake*, Synthetic polymer paint and latex on canvas filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes, 58 3/8” x 9’ 6 ¼” x 58 3/8”, 1962.

Fig. 11 – Pablo Picasso, *Guitar*, Paperboard, paper, string, wire, cut cardboard, 25 3/4 x 13 x 7 1/2”, 1912.

Fig. 12 – Matthew Monahan, *Riker’s Island*, mixed media, 205 x 110 x 45 cm, 2005.
Fig. 13 – Aaron Curry, *Fragments from a Collective Unity (Standing)*, Wood, rope, paint. Leaning piece: poster, resin, wood. Overall sculpture: 106 x 33-1/2 x 32-1/2", Overall base piece: 67 x 45-1/2", 2006.

Fig. 14 – Rachel Harrison, *Two Bathers*, Wood, polystyrene, cement, Parex, acrylic, Calvin Klein briefs, digital print of "The Bather", 1885 by Cezanne, plastic, 85 x 27 x 24 inches, 2005.
Works cited


