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INTRODUCTION

The works in this exhibition and catalogue were done by Boston College studio majors over the course of their senior year. The Senior Project is much more than a requirement that must be fulfilled in order to graduate. It represents a significant step in the challenging transition from undergraduate to young artist. Students are expected to identify a subject of personal significance and produce a cohesive and professional body of work that is conceptually and technically rigorous. It is a course of study that engages the body, mind, and spirit in a singular form of creative expression. It is not easy. Art making is an embodied knowledge, a knowing-through-making. It requires risk-taking, the ability to stomach uncertainty, and a willingness to go “back to the drawing board” again and again. Studio practice is an iterative process peppered with hundreds of experiments and little failures where questions and disappointments are gradually turned into answers and successes. Beyond learning how to paint and draw or develop film, the students in this exhibition have learned how to trust their subjectivity, to take criticism, to seek and to give help where needed.

Their achievements are evident in their work, and their work is testament to the belief that artists can make the world a more beautiful and interesting place.

Professor Sheila Gallagher
Associate Professor of Studio Art
Director of the Major Program
The Minors Project is much like a guided independent study. Students bring with them the knowledge from their major fields of study. They are expected to produce a body of work that investigates, in depth, an idea or set of concerns that are meaningful to them. Their work is often informed by their respective disciplines. The students in this class of 2016 struggled long and hard with their ideas, emotions, work habits, technical issues and budgets to bring into focus and give visual life to their very different visions of what art and the world look like.

As the faculty member fortunate enough to work with this group of students, I have had the pleasure to see not only the development of their work, but their growth as people. There is nothing quite like the bond that forms between a person and their work when it gives rise to a new identity. I never tire of bearing witness to that quiet miracle. I wish to thank you for the opportunity and applaud your achievements.

Professor Andrew Tavarelli
Assistant Chair for Studio Art
Director of the Minor Program
MAJORS
MAJOR ADVISOR: Professor Sheila Gallagher
KYRA CONSTAM
Studio Art, B.A. with a minor in French

Everyday life presents a myriad of events that exist within a minute timeframe. My goal is to capture the ephemeral and turn it into the eternal through a combination of digital and mixed media. Under the overarching theme of time, I aim to challenge perception and question vision by creating a complex look at banal moments. Through the use of GIFs and cyanotypes in pairs, I create visual representations of lost moments. A GIF is a series of frames that infinitely loop to create a moving image, while a cyanotype involves an analogue process that produces a photographic blueprint. By materializing time in two different media, the contemporary GIF versus the traditional cyanotype, I both abstract a moment and also document its constituent properties. By creating a duality between a GIF and a cyanotype, I provide the viewer with an alternate, material view of time that is now preserved eternally.
In this series, I am concerned with reconceiving iconic images in modern art in unorthodox ways, particularly through innovative garments. I begin a piece by identifying a source of inspiration. It is after I have established this foundation that I determine the medium I want to use. Despite my fascination with mixed media, I make a point to exercise technical drawing and painting skills, as well as creating from observation, to maintain a sense of precision and connection to craft. Each piece in this series conveys the elements that inspire me most from the work of the contemporary artists I have chosen to draw from. I consider each piece to be successful and complete when it strikes a balance between conveying a certain art historical recognition and expressing my personal vision.
I am drawn to the history of photography and particularly images, tools and processes that have been long forgotten. For my senior project, I have immersed myself in exploring how the techniques of traditional film photography, a medium which is dying in this increasingly digital age, can be wed to a contemporary subjectivity.

By constructing my own pinhole cameras using everyday objects such as matchboxes, altoid tins, and books from thrift stores, I create places where the art of the handmade object meets photographic image making. I combine darkroom methods, such as 35mm film, photographic paper, and liquid light, with classic bookmaking and contemporary geometric embroidery in order to create a modern twist on old-fashioned practices.
XUECHUN LI
Studio Art & Communications, B.A.

My senior project is an exploration and reflection of my cultural identity. My works are related to my experience of being an international student from China living in a completely different culture. My intention is to create hybrid works which express aspects of both Chinese and western culture and their impact on me. I want my work to convey my feeling of living in and with two distinctive cultures. I do not limit myself to one medium. Taking inspiration from traditional Chinese craft, I work with a variety of mediums such as porcelains and papers. My artwork takes a wide view of social, political and cultural issues. Working with symbols and visual metaphors from both cultures sometimes evokes a sense of national nostalgia. Overall, my works represent my self-perception and help me to interpret my fluid feelings of nationality and ethnicity.
SHUNJIA MAO
Studio Art, B.A.

The subject of my work is the fusion of classical Chinese ink painting and contemporary western approaches to image making. More specifically, my work is engaged in a dialogue with the court art of the Song Dynasty (960-1279 AD.) and the visual forms that have been made possible by the current digital age. Working with ink, clay, and digital printing processes allow me different ways to capture the tension between the ancient forms and the things that I see daily in America. The threads that run through my work include traditional Chinese themes of birds, flowers, landscapes, and scholar’s rocks. I take their forms and features and fuse them into a scene that references the visual forms of contemporary life such as personal electronics, skyscrapers, and bacteria under a microscope.

My art is a journey of finding my way between cultures. With the flow of ink, water, and clay, I create a conversation between ancient cultures and popular subjects, and the mysterious relationship between them. I find that the harmony between man and nature that is invoked by the art of classical China provides an antidote to the anxiety of our current ecological crisis.
The subjects of my paintings are simple – mostly windows and bathrooms where I use repeated patterns and grids to define the space. My paintings typically progress from representation towards a certain level of abstraction, as I use color, shape, and texture to explore the specific sensations and visual properties of each image. Additionally, I use a combination of painting languages and media, blending the delicate lines of observational drawing with the bold abstraction of sign enamel, to reexamine the possibilities of the domestic interior genre from a place of contemporary subjectivity.

Within each painting, I work to create a unique self-contained environment based on my personal memories and experiences of places. Although informed by autobiography, these paintings strive to evoke atmospheric sensations and describe everyday objects that can be accessed by others.
96.9% of the time when I begin a painting, I do not have a specific vision. I usually start by covering the canvas with three different colors which I believe have a dynamic relationship. This first layer prompts an intuitive response of lines and shapes on the surface. Subsequently, I make formal decisions to determine where all the puzzle pieces will go and where the composition should land. I work on a large scale with energy, intuition and a physicality, which has made me realize the influence of artists such as Jackson Pollock, Wassily Kandinsky and Lari Pittman have had on me.

Ultimately, a painting becomes alive when all of the elements play with each other to become a harmonious tension. I work by creating lines, shapes, textures, and blocks of color that overlap to complicate our perception of near and far causing us to engage with ourselves as viewers.
MINOR ADVISOR: Professor Andrew Tavarelli
These works were largely influenced by my political science major and subsequent focus on the politics and society of the Middle East. This passion of mine was reinforced by a trip to Morocco, where I experienced firsthand both the beauty and imperfections entrenched in Islamic culture and art. In this project, I attempt to capture the non-figurative, patterned, geometric, and precision embodied in Islamic art.

My work brings together the breath of open space and areas of intense detail. Although the types of patterns I design can be busy and complex, they can also have a beautifully meditative aspect, which manifests both in the artist’s process as well as in the viewers’ observation.
I am fascinated by the internal landscape of the brain. The view of the brain’s neurological pathways and receptors offered by medical imaging technology could be the work of pure artistic imagination. My project was inspired by asking to what extent the human mind is guided by the heart and vice versa. How do we navigate through life in relation to our desires and intentions? Can this abstract concept be expressed in a tangible, visual form?

In my installation, cerebral electrochemical imaging takes on a spiritual, yet romantic depiction of a human connection, communicating the harmonious relationship between two distinct entities. Whether this relationship is between an individual and their vocation, a sisterly bond, or two soul mates, we make the connection on an inherently biological level. A true visceral response occurs at these points of contact, and it’s a connection we seek to find meaning in...
JACE EDDY

Applied Psychology and Human Development, B.A. with a minor in Studio Art (Painting)

My work is inspired by my experience with leukemia as a child. Each painting represents a different aspect of the treatment process: the scar left from the medical port surgery, the medical port itself, and the cancer cells. Making art goes beyond mere narration; for me it is a therapeutic process, a means of healing. I am interested in art therapy and will be pursuing a Master’s degree in it this fall. As a psychology treatment, art therapy is used as an alternative method of traditional “talk” therapies. Other cultures use art as a means of healing. The Native American tribe of the Navajos used sandpaintings to heal patients. A specific set of paintings correlate to a distinct chant which is selected by the chanter for the afflicted patient. Similarly, certain Eastern cultures chant the mantra of the Medicine Buddha in the presence of a lapis lazuli depiction in order to heal.

In this project, I have created layered images with several translucent washes. Re-envisioning the medical devices of my youth abstractly have voided much of the pain and heaviness from my memories of the hospital and proved a truly cathartic process.
WILLIAM FOSHAY

Finance, B.S. with a minor in Studio Art

This work is an analytical one – it hopes to question and suggest the way information from books (both public and personal) is collected, stored, and recalled. I act as a system, without much of an intervening hand. I photograph each spread of the book in its entirety, and then lay these images on top of one another, allowing them to interact. The result is an entire book, an entire set of ideas interacting as one final image. I imagine this is much of the way information may be encoded in our heads. The books range in privacy and accessibility, from a Bible to a sketchbook, a textbook to a car manual. In the more personal works I am entrusted with others’ personal thoughts, as they hand over their notebooks to be looked at, photographed, and displayed. Because of the ambiguity and scale of the images the viewer is in some way looking through frosted glass, witnessing the derivative interactions of greater complexities they know exist somewhere within.

The project jumped from my fascination of images by Étienne-Jules Marey and Eadweard Muybridge, mostly in their ability to present many images as one composite that speaks to the perception of the whole. I love thinking about what is shown, lost, and transformed of the individual images in their work, and I think my work gives way to a similar allure. My work also relates to photography used in one of its originating functions: to index. For me, indexing becomes a meditation - an acknowledgement of diversity and of its interaction between the like and the unlike.
The Rapture

As a Nigerian-American artist, my work has always reflected both my experiences and my identity. I enjoy exploring the multifaceted nature of culture as it relates to me as a being. The medium in these works, Ankara Dutch-wax fabric, is not only an object of personal adornment but also a method of communication. These fabrics act as a way of depicting syncretism between culture and body, a means of portraying the social, political, and religious complexities that constitute my worldview. The pieces sometimes resemble wearable clothing, like a dress or traditional headgear; other times, they are more evocative and abstract. My goal is to inspire others to form meaningful questions and incite conversation about the human experience. I have been directed by works of artists like Peju Alatise, Nnenna Okorie and Yinka Shonibare who, through the tactile nature of their work, share stories about their interactions with the world.
ALEXANDRA PEAR
Marketing and Computer Science, B.S. with a minor in Studio Art

These paintings form a personal narrative, an attempt to take the viewer into my mind’s eye. This triptych conveys the voyage of the Boston marathon in its entirety and, by virtue of separate canvases, in stages. It is an abstracted view: it is not meant to realistically represent the route, but rather to be a visual combination of my perceptions, emotions, and physical associations.

For instance, the highly vertical nature conveys the magnitude and distance of the undertaking. The separate canvases mirror the mental compartmentalization of the stages of training, fundraising, and racing.

This is a personal story, but the project also encompasses my formal artistic interests of the past four years, particularly in relation to manipulating compositional depth, color palette, and brush quality. During my process, I continue to explore color blocking, the nuances of layering oil paint, and the balancing of geometry and fluidity.

As both a painter and graphic artist, I draw inspiration from Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists, especially Cezanne and his swathes of color, signature brushwork, and simplified shapes. The vibrant, crisp imagery of pop art, the clarity of graphic design and the elegance of typography similarly feed my work.
Humans of the T began in the fall of 2014 when I noticed how isolated and lonely the single seats on the trolley car could be. Ever since then, I have been fascinated with how people interact on the T or in the train station. Initially, this project was limited to Boston; however, it has since expanded to include the New York City subway system. Many people think of the T or the Subway as being unsanitary and rather broken down; while this is true, I also think that the T and the Subway are the most vital parts of their respective cities. With this in mind, I want my images to contain vibrant colors, while maintaining the dirty, grungy look that these forms of transportation are known for.

For me, capturing the riders of the subway captures the essence of their respective cities. I also believe that if one really wants to know what a city is like, then don’t look at the Prudential or the Empire State Building, but instead look at the people around you—then and only then will you truly get a feel for the city.

As a history major, I have always been interested in preserving moments in time through photography. I hope that one day people will be able to look back on this work and have an idea of when and where these images were taken.
In this series I have attempted to bridge my interests in photography and creative writing as forms of personal expression. After having worked within the parameters of each medium separately, I have come to an appreciation of the unique potential and limitations of both. In my experience with photography and writing I have often considered the question of what can be expressed in writing that cannot be expressed in a photograph, and what can be communicated through a photograph that could never be communicated through words alone. I have found at times it is best for the visual to stand alone (to let the image do the “talking,” as the old adage implies) and, conversely, to leave the written word to penetrate the imagination without a visual accompaniment. I have also witnessed, however, composites that work beautifully by layering elements of both mediums. How does one’s experience of an image shift when words are added to it, I wondered, or to a text when an image is presented with it? What is lost; what is added?

Through my choices of pairings I have tended to choose texts for images not as explanation, description, or direct ‘translation’ but as an additional element of the image itself. I have manipulated the visual qualities of the text—its font, size, color, transparency—depending on the particular relationship of the words’ meaning to the image’s atmosphere. Some words or letters are barely visible; some are meant as an afterthought; all are meant to present a conversation between the visual and the verbal.
JULIA WALKER
Political Science, B.A. with a minor in International Studies

My fascination with surrealism is evident in my art. I find the stretching of reality and the spinning of other worlds awe-inspiring, and strive to recreate this quality in my work.

I am most driven to create when I’m under stress and in an anxious emotional state. For this reason, I strongly gravitate towards an expressive use of bright, intense colors, agitated lines, and chaotic composition. These drawings best convey what I am feeling at the time and the process proves cathartic.

Process-wise, my work is largely internal and improvisational. Although my drawings are often triggered by a concept that suddenly comes to mind, this idea shifts dramatically over the course of the art-making process. Sometimes, I’ll end up cutting up the original piece and rearranging it until I reach a point at which I feel intuitively satisfied.
Art, to me, is a route to a state of deep concentration where I problem—solve and breathe visual life into my memories. The sources of these memories are my experiences of places I’ve visited and cultures I’ve explored, especially my homeland of Venezuela.

My approach involves breaking down the image in my head into simplified, abstract shapes and finding textures, patterns, and colors to re-present it. In juxtaposing these shapes, the challenge is to create a balanced composition that maintains the ambience of the original memory.

I achieve this by experimenting with layering and transparency using materials like oil paints, tissue paper, fabric, newspaper, and stencils. My passion lies in satisfying my curiosity of how aesthetic and formal problems can be solved.
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