University of South Carolina
Scholar Commons

Senior Theses | Honors College

Spring 2022

In My Skin, Her Skin: An Artistic Exploration of the Intersection of Queer Femininity and Body Image

Stephanie Allen
University of South Carolina - Columbia

Director of Thesis: Sara Schneckloth
Second Reader: Brent Dedas

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/senior_theses

 Part of the Library and Information Science Commons, and the Painting Commons

Recommended Citation

Allen, Stephanie, "In My Skin, Her Skin: An Artistic Exploration of the Intersection of Queer Femininity and Body Image" (2022). *Senior Theses*. 554.
https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/senior_theses/554

This Thesis is brought to you by the Honors College at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact digres@mailbox.sc.edu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THESIS SUMMARY

This exhibition is an artistic investigation of queer femininity and body image. As our bodies and identities are so deeply intertwined, this project explores the way in which the body and presentation create and structure perceptions of queerness, gender, and beauty. Each portrait represents a queer woman or non-binary person that was interviewed, directly rendering their appearance and abstractly interpreting their relationship with their body and queer identity.

ABSTRACT

This project aims to visually record the feeling of being seen and queer women and non-binary people's developing knowledge of their identity. Using interview questions that focused on body satisfaction, body selectiveness in partners, queer identity, and one's relationship with femininity, a series of "floating collages" was created to record and juxtapose the appearance of the body with one's internal relationship to the body. By realistically showing a variety of different body types that all relate to queerness and femininity in some way, one may expand their presupposed notions about the body enforcing identity. Additionally, despite these varying appearances of the body, the shared expressions of body insecurity, navigating queer expression, and learning self-love unify these differences to reinforce the idea that the person is so much more than the body.

Using interpretive, translative, and intuitive marks to interpret emotion, this project expands upon the use of abstract and portrait-based art. Understanding that the body is art and art is the person is a key component of this series. In extending the definition of art to include the body, one can shift out of a sense of moralizing critique to one of understanding, appreciation, and respect for both the self and others.

PERSONAL STATEMENT

The ways in which the spoken word and the creation of art can lead to a larger understanding of self was deeply considered in the creation of this project: by understanding other queer stories, I could more clearly engage with my own. This project began as an investigation into the similarities of the queer perception of the body and femininity. My artistic practice has long included direct representations and abstractions of the female form. This work is driven by the question of who owns the female body and what that sense of ownership means on an individual, political, and interpersonal level. I question the visual code switch that frequently happens when one shifts from looking at the female form in art to looking at it in life. Understanding that the body is art and art is the person is a key component of my work. Drawing the female form allowed me to alter my perspective on my own bodily dissatisfaction— by making art of and with my body, I could no longer consider my body ugly or inadequate. In extending our definition of art to include the body, we can shift out of a sense of moralizing critique to one of understanding, appreciation, and respect for both the self and others.

Growing up in an intensely religious environment, femininity was clearly defined—queerness was not. To be a woman was to be submissive. While tokens of traditional femininity such as dresses and the color pink were embraced, biblical womanhood was described as a quality of the heart. I was to strive to be a Proverbs 31 woman (a woman of grace, poise, and respect), and this biblical structure for womanhood was conflated with a societal expectation to accept and adhere to the patriarchy. My body was not my own but something belonging to God and my future husband. To have any kind of sexual agency outside of marriage (or even to stray from established expectations of modesty) was not only immoral but an act of theft, robbing my future husband from his right to a pure, unbroken body. From a young age, I knew that the

expectations of female subservience felt wrong. I recognized that my opinions and experiences were just as valid as those of my male counterparts (and often had little to do with my gender at all). Yet, because of the established expectation of feminine subservience, as I got older, my gender could not be detached from my perspective because my gender served to stifle any unique opinion that I had under the guise of male headship. Essentially, gender was not an aspect of expression but a means of oppression. As I began deconstructing from Christianity, I also began to discover my queer identity. From a queer perspective, femininity looked totally different. Femininity could be a tool for self expression, an aspect of identity, or something used to attract other women. In particular, femininity was not equated to womanhood. This project was an effort to reconcile these conflicting definitions of femininity. Could femininity be redefined to shift traditional expectations into something empowering? Can it exist as something outside of the Christian idea that femininity must complement and contrast masculinity? I was particularly interested in how the body dictates the personal construction of feminine identity. This project is an effort to expand the way in which I might perceive queerness and femininity in relation to the body outside of the rigid standards of Christianity.

INTRODUCTION

As I continued my studio practice into a research-driven creative and studio-based thesis project, I wanted to specify my exploration of the body into an intensely personal sphere— rather than making art about my own experiences and presupposed notions about the non-male form, I wanted my art to reflect individual identity and expressions of queerness. When I initially began this project, I planned on exclusively featuring queer women. However, as I continued my search for participants and engaged in conversations with queer people, it became increasingly clear that

these questions of the body, identity, and femininity extended equally to non-binary people. While queer men may also fit into an exploration of bodily identity, their relationship with femininity and their experiences of bodily oppression differ from that of the non-male. Additionally, because this research is an extension of my work about femininity (and relates directly to my own personal identity), I did not find it necessary to extend this project to all queer identities.

Queer women and non-binary people have a unique relationship with the non-male body: it is both something they possess and are attracted to. To be a queer woman is to be a woman whose sexuality exists outside of traditional heterosexual expectations. A non-binary person is someone whose gender identity falls between (or outside of) the spectrum of male or female. Both identities have a duality in their perception of the non-male body: how they view themselves and how they view the people they are attracted to. Studies show that lesbian women experience the same level of bodily dissatisfaction as heterosexual women, but their preference for thinness in a partner is not affected by their relationship with their own body (Legenbauer, et al.). Similarly, though lesbians are said to reject societal expectations for female bodies, they are also still subjected to the same body ideals as other women (Basabas, et .al). This project explores the queer feminine bodily experience on an individual and personal level in order to reclaim and restructure the perception of the non-male form.

The initial expectation for this research was for this duality to significantly inform each other; that one's attraction to the non-male form would create a sense of stability, or that there would be a distinct kind of tension between one's self-perception and one's attraction to others. While this was in some cases true, I found that each version of this relationship varied widely, though most did put harsher expectations on their own body than that of those they were

attracted to. The body simultaneously dictates one's socially expected identity and functions as a blank framework that has no bearing on how the individual experiences personhood. Essentially, the body does not dictate expression, the person does. It is often the socialization of the body, not personal identity, that creates tension in the individual. These social expectations particularly informed the development of the non-binary participants' gender expression. This project aims to visually record the feeling of being seen and one's developing knowledge of their identity. Specifically, by realistically showing a variety of different body types that all relate to queerness and femininity in some way, we may expand our presupposed notions about the body enforcing identity. Additionally, despite these varying appearances of the body, the throughlines of body insecurity, navigating queer expression, and learning self-love unify these differences to reinforce the idea that the person is so much more than the body.

METHODOLOGY

This project began with a series of questions— ones that both guided the interviews and the process of drawing. While these questions flexed and flowed depending on the nature of the conversation and the identity of the interviewee, the structure of the interview remained generally the same. The questions were as follows:

1. What is your gender identity/what are your preferred pronouns?
2. What is your sexual orientation?
3. How would you describe your relationship with your body?
4. How would you describe your satisfaction with your body?
5. What is your favorite part of your body? Why?

6. What is your least favorite part of your body? Why?
7. How has your relationship with your body changed over time?
8. How does your queer identity impact the way that you perceive yourself?
9. If you had to give a verbal description of your body, what would you say?
10. Does the way you feel about women change or affect the way that you perceive your body?
11. Do you have size preferences concerning the bodies of female partners?
12. How would you describe the way you view the bodies of the women you are attracted to?
13. How would you describe the ideal body of a female partner, if applicable?

Aside from responding to these questions, the interviewee would also send me a photograph of their choosing from which I would create a graphite drawing. While I considered working from life or photographing the participants myself, I wanted the interviewees to feel as in control of their visual presentation as possible. Their comfort was my priority, so each of the depictions feature the individuals as they wanted to be seen. This method not only ensured the safety of participants, but also matched my thematic intensions. Because the project directly relates to the way in which each interviewee presents and perceives themselves, basing my graphite drawing on a photograph the participant took themselves (or personally selected) allows the viewer to see each individual from the eyes of the participant.

After receiving the photograph, I would work to translate their body onto the page, forcing features to be slightly larger than life, working on paper roll measuring 42” in width, with variable length. This process fostered a deeper visual understanding of the body that had already been so closely described in words. Several had parts that they specifically wanted to be included— stretch marks, birth marks, skin folds, necklaces, scars. These drawings were, in

essence a “here it is!” This is the body that holds all these thoughts and feelings and identities. Working with these bodies and, ultimately, their abstractions, created a unique sense of empathy. In taking time to render their forms, I was able to memorize lines, curves, and angles— whether or not the subject liked those features on themselves. Because we often scrutinize and study our own bodies the closest, taking time to understand nuance of someone else’s body fostered a greater understanding of what it is like to experience life within someone else’s body. Regardless of the body type or any strained sense of identity, these bodies became works of art, pieces created and meditated upon for months. To converge art with personhood restructures the way in which their experiences are perceived by the viewer and, hopefully, the person themselves.

To mark this difference between personal experience and the social expectations (whether of gender or any other identity) of the body, I created a different drawing entirely, meditating on the interviews, with marks guided by the initial drawing (which was laid beneath the second drawing), intuition, and individual testimonies. This vocabulary of mark stemmed from notions of tension, expanding into images that reflect both my personal style and what I interpreted to be the essence of a participant’s personal identity, as disclosed in the interviews. As these drawings were on acetate, I used a range of mediums that functioned both practically and thematically. The durability of the material permitted scraping, drenching, and pressing, allowing for variety of textures and a physical expressiveness that was necessary to each piece. Working on a large scale gave space for the mark to extend into a full range of motion, empowering use of the whole body in making work about the body. Fingerprints and handprints extended this connection of body to art.

In experimenting with notions of identity and abstract mark-making, it only made sense for a project of this nature to extend into the realm of the personal. The idea of making a directly-

referenced and literal self-portrait felt distracting— that my focus would become on the drawing (and other people's perception of it) rather than expressing my identity. By shifting my work about myself nto the more abstract, I found expansive freedom in the intuitive mark. By first exploring the abstract self-portrait, I was able to identify an approach to narrative-based mark-making. This foundation then gave clarity to the mark that could be used to describe other people.

DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW-BASED PIECES

The subject of *That's Not a Dyke, That's a Lesbian* constantly feels their body. Folds, skin touching, and things shifting and rubbing define their daily experience of their body. Though they now identify as a non-binary lesbian, they often tried to mitigate the size of their body by softening and feminizing their presentation, turning their body into something "as consumable as possible." This presentation was an effort to placate their fears of being perceived as loud and brash in a plus sized body, and they relied heavily on the way that they thought they needed to be perceived (especially when previously identifying as a woman). They "feel like [their] body has a presence. And it's not quiet." As they discovered their non-binary identity, they began to find comfort in dressing for themselves. Having a loud body no longer seemed like something to be suppressed, but enjoyed and accepted.

This current sense of satisfaction required layers of growth. The subject previously struggled with internalized fatphobia and often projected those insecurities onto the bodies of their partners, searching for "conventionally attractive" partners that would balance out the presence of their body. The way that the two looked as a pair mattered significantly to them. However, their attraction to partners differs from how they would (or how they thought they

would) be perceived by others. They are attracted to the way a person holds themselves— the body is not the important part. “It’s the way that they use it. It’s the expressions that they have. It’s the way that it conveys things…it’s like, never about the body, it’s about their expression,” they said.

This piece combines the stifling feeling of being constrained to (while persistently trying to evade) stereotypes about fat people with an unapologetic volume of body and personality. The marks on this piece, true to their experience, could not be simple or quiet. Marks that suffocate and feel violent are integrated with delicate linework that emphasizes the complexity of their past relationship with their body, their gender identity, and constant sense of presence that their body has.

The subject of *Soft but Strong* described her relationship with her body as neutral— but it wasn't always that way. As a lesbian woman, she's felt the pressure of looking a specific way, hating her stomach when she was younger and disliking her flush complexion. With time and a group of supportive friends, she's begun to separate her body from her entire identity, explaining that "placing emphasis on what you look like no matter what... can turn negative really quickly." While she's felt the expectations of "looking queer," she prioritizes presenting herself in a way that feels right, leaning more towards feminine expression.

"In my mind my body looks like traditional woman… kind of a cool way. I just have very standard features," she said. Combining these notions of neutrality with those of traditional femininity, softness, and strength, this piece emphasizes curves while finding stasis with a series of straight lines.

The subject of *Foreign* has, in the simplest terms, a complicated relationship with their body. Although they had quite a high level of body satisfaction, their body feels "backwards." As a non-binary person transitioning towards femininity, they feel that they've transcended their body. True to the evangelical standards they were raised in, they felt that their body was a vessel, but the strict notions of biblical manhood didn't seem to fit them. They always wanted to take on the female role. As they came to terms with "reality," they've learned to feel less controlled by a higher power and acknowledge their own autonomy. However, despite this mental switch, they don't always pass. They feel that they're "hot in a way [they] wish [they weren't]."

This piece specifically focused on the notion of transcending the body. As their process of transitioning continues, they've embraced— and even pushed— the complexity of identity. How complicated could they make it? Despite this shifting comfort in bodily appearance, identity, and presentation, they've still had to learn to manage the people who don't seem to understand their gender. "Silence is the best tool for destabilizing people," they said, explaining that forcing people to sit with their own bigotry is often more effective than arguing their own existence. Combining their childhood desire to dress up like a girl with the intricacy of their identity, this piece features drapery-like forms and lines that entangle themes of religious suppression with complexity of gender. The flipped sheet of acetate emphasizes feeling that something was backwards. Balancing traditionally feminine pinks with deep blues, the piece combines gender expectations with the desire to evade assumptions about presentation.

The subject of *Strive* long related to the stories of trans men, simply knowing that they did not feel the way that cisgender women feel. They didn't have the terminology for existing outside of the gender binary, assuming that being trans was their only option. "There was always something missing," they said. "I'm not a man." Eventually, they came out as non-binary, then struggling to find a presentation that felt balanced, assuming that they needed to take on a more masculine or androgynous appearance in order to feel validated in their identity. While other people's perception of them is noticed, they primarily focus on an internal, visceral sense of rightness when they dress and present themselves. As they've continued experimenting and finding more comfort in their identity, their resistance to femininity has eased. "I want to do what makes me feel like I look good each day, and if I do that masculinely or femininely depending on the day that's just how it is," they said. "I can strive for masculinity on this day and it can look different than striving for masculinity on a different day." It doesn't matter to them what people think a non-binary person "should" look like— getting the feeling right is what matters most. This process of finding an affirming presentation requires continuous experimentation. While this daily task can sometimes be fun, "some days it's just really tiring," they said.

While this subject identifies as a lesbian, they felt a hesitation to claim a term that often belongs to women. Additionally, (especially considering their previous connection to trans identity) they did not want to call the misalignment between body and gender identity dysphoria— they preferred the term "discomfort," not wanting to impose on a language that has such strong meaning for trans people.

This piece heavily focuses on the internal sense of rightness that the subject searches for, emphasizing their love for their shoulders, their desire for a more muscular form, and the tension of balancing masculinity, femininity, and androgyny. As the subject binds, I used excessive

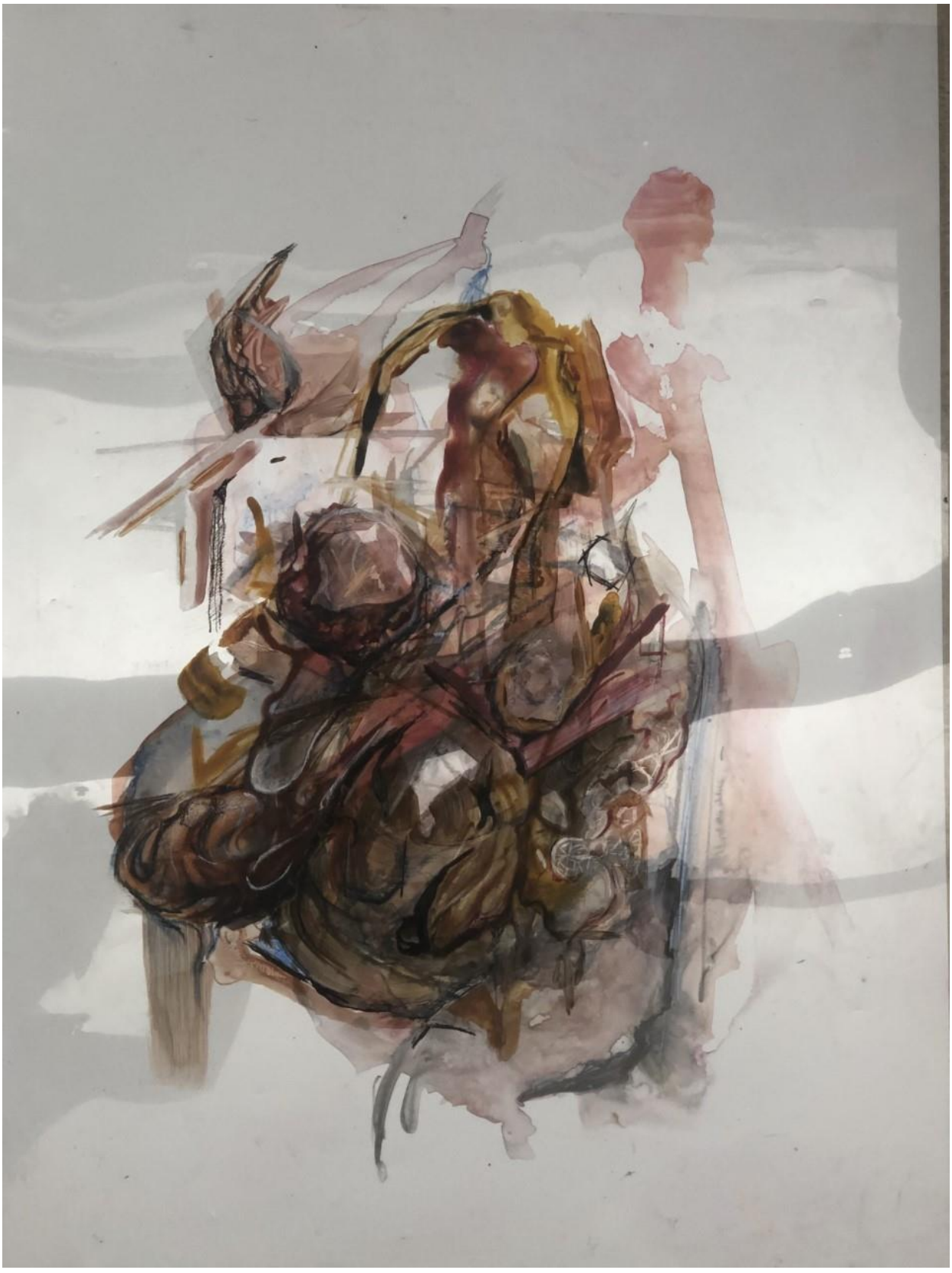
pressure and handprints to mimic the action of binding. Toying with the interplay between the fun and exhausting parts of presentation, this piece mixes heavy, dark marks with light and delicate linework. As this subject navigates the language and expression of queerness, this piece features meandering lines and convoluted forms that emphasize the subject's continual self-discovery.

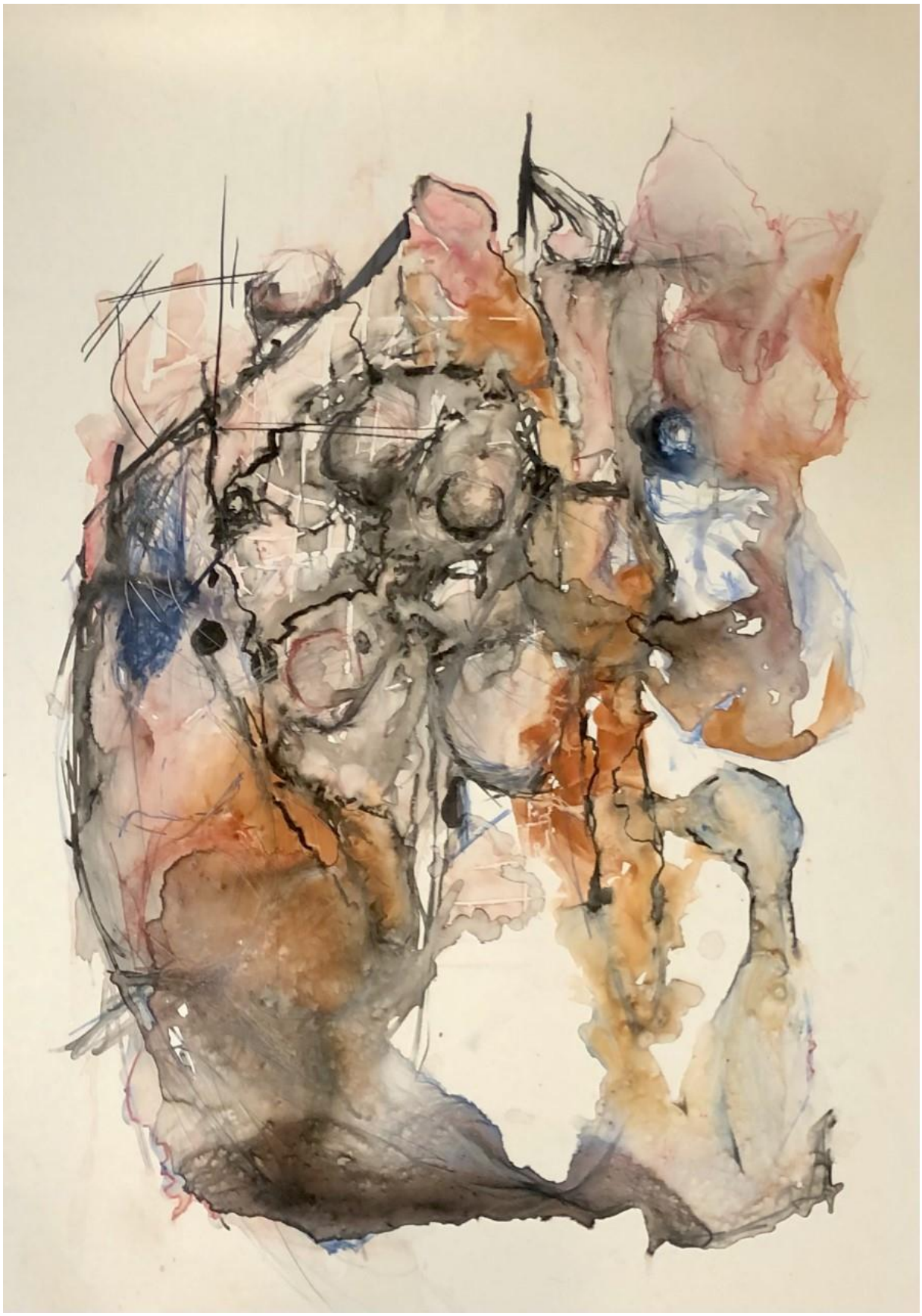
The subject of *That's Pretty Gay* didn't identify as queer at the beginning of their interview. That changed by the end of our talk. Like every interview, I opened with questions of gender identity and sexuality. When she first replied that she was bicurious (but would generally consider herself heterosexual), I paused the interview to inform her of my subject demographic; while I appreciated her time, this project was not about heterosexual women. Continuing in a conversational manner, I asked if she was sexually attracted to women. She said yes. I asked if she had ever had a crush on a woman. She said yes. One thing became clear to both of us: that's pretty gay. This interview, much like *Strive,* gave interesting insight into the difference between labels and sexuality. A label does not change experience, identity, or desires. It simply gives a succinct way of describing the self. The lexicon of queer identity shifts to accommodate and describe existing experiences; identity is not a product of the label.

In spite of this hesitation to claim a queer identity, this subject was otherwise confident, outgoing, and open about her experiences. "I was today years old when I learned that being a woman sexually attracted to other women was gay," she joked, laughing. "Oh my god." This piece then combines delicate lines (lines that are perhaps hesitant to enter the composition) with large, bold marks. She knew exactly what she liked about herself: she loved her butt, and was insecure about her breasts. She had a disdain for unhealthy beauty standards, but supported doing or wearing whatever makes a woman confident and comfortable. Using line and blocks of color, this piece (both by abstraction and by the pose sent in by the subject) emphasizes the subject's butt and hides areas that are disliked. This piece was driven by these combinations of confidence and insecurity, boldness and a hesitation to take up queer spaces.

DESCRIPTION OF ABSTRACT PIECES

What first started as an experiment with materials and mark-making turned into a series in its own right. Because these are not direct responses to questions like the interview-based pieces, I was able to expand the intuitive mark and explore my own identity through the lens of my experiences. As a bisexual woman, these experiences were not necessarily "queer" in isolation (in other words, some related to my relationship with men). However, these fragments create a patchwork of my own unique queer experience with relationships, sexuality, and personal identity. Focusing first on the method of mark-marking, these drawings quickly shifted to a means of visually processing my identity— and how emotion, experience, and choice can structure that identity. Using harsher lines to emphasize moments of confusion and softer shapes to describe release, comfort, and the body, these drawings complement the abstractions given to my other subjects and allowed for a deeper personal connection to this project.





OTHER ARTISTS

Functioning within a university (by design) gives ideas space to converge. Critiques not only gauge a student's own work, but expose them to the ideas and processes of their peers. Thus, this idea was initially triggered by the work of SVAD MFA graduate and printmaking instructor Aldric Morton, whose show *Empathetic Translation* was the product of interviews with drawn subjects, with drawings weaving together story, identity, and art. Inspired by the notion of interacting directly with a subject, I aimed to narrow my scope to a topic that engaged with my previous work about the body and femininity. This notion of empathy that drove Morton's work transferred into this project, inspiring ideas of connection through both word and image.

Additionally, Jenny Saville's work on the figure— and specifically her abstracted mark making in relation to the realistic form— provided compositional guidance as I navigated the relationships between my portraits and abstractions. Specifically, Saville combines colored abstractions and undulating lines with hyper realistic monochromatic figure drawings. This work provides insight into handling composition, mark making, imagery, and orientation of the mark. Her work combines the intuitive gesture with precise and accurate image-making. This amalgamation of emotion and figure-driven mark provides specific, image-based insight into how I can approach negative space, color, and line.

Carmel Jenkin's work in the abstract female figure has informed my approach to abstraction for years now with her soft approach to the form and curvilinear, repetitive lines. While these drawings do not fit my more realistic renderings of my subjects, her approach to the figure has widened my ability to articulate the body— and the person— through art.

CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

This process not only illuminated new methods of artistic technique, but was also a radical evolution from my normal conceptual approach to the human form. By basing my marks on the words, images, and expressions of others, I had to extend my art outside of my personal experience, requiring both an understanding of and empathy for their feelings. Ultimately, while each interviewee naturally had intensely personal relationships with their bodies and identities, there was a common struggle between transcending and accepting the body. This balance often related directly to the individual's ability to use clothing, haircuts, and other stylistic choices to both express and validate their identity. While most of the participants seemed to have developed healthy methods of navigating their relationships with their bodies, many participants validated my initial thoughts on the expectations placed on the non-male body. Additionally, several participants mentioned feeling pressure within the queer community to align with some kind of predetermined label or physical expression. These expectations related both to their own identities and that of their partners.

The non-binary participants gave particularly interesting insight into their definition of femininity. Their definition, rather than being something direct, was instead a deconstruction of what the feminine body is, what it should look like, and how femininity can be expressed and perceived. One participant in particular mentioned that their breasts did not cause dysphoria— they intuitively understood that their body was not one of a woman, so breasts were not an indication of womanhood. Despite this claim, it was not contradictory for this person to still maintain a personal relationship with femininity despite identifying as a non-binary person. By directly depicting these bodies visually, one is forced to consider what femininity is or, perhaps, how expansive the term can be. Their bodies physically exist— there is no changing that. It is

then the social perceptions of the body, queerness, and femininity that must flex to accommodate this fact.

In terms of technique, I have learned much about the combination of abstraction and realism and the development of what I now call a "floating collage." Because these layered drawings entered into the third dimension by simply including a gap between the two pieces, I am forced to consider how an invasion of the viewer's space can develop conceptually in future work. While I do not think I will continue to have the abstract and realistic so clearly divided in future pieces, the notions of fragmentation, dimension, and transparency gained throughout this process will continue to guide my work. In fact, as I continued this project, I became more attracted to the role abstraction can play in expressive storytelling. This does not mean that future work will not include representational iconography, but that I now have a wider range of tools, expressions, and materials with which I can navigate future conceptual complexities.

Because I have spent so much of my undergraduate studies focusing on the female form, I am interested in expanding this representational notion of flesh into future discussions of identity and the body. Additionally, the large scale of these pieces has only inspired me to continue to work on a grand scale (and has given me an itch to work even bigger). I do not want to limit myself visually or thematically so early on in my career, but the throughline of my identity as a queer woman will always influence my work, regardless of the subject.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Basabas, M., Greaves, L., Barlow, F., & Sibley, C. (2019). Sexual Orientation Moderates the Effect of Gender on Body Satisfaction: Results From a National Probability Sample. The

Journal of Sex Research, 56(9), 1091–1100.

https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2019.1667947

Basabas et. al used data from a survey that had responses from 21,937 participants. Queer identity affects an individual's relationship with their body and their body satisfaction. Lesbian women are said to reject societal expectations for female bodies but are still subjected to the same body ideals as other women. Sexual orientation does not necessarily stop body dissatisfaction. Studies find that gender socialization may have a greater impact on women than their sexual orientation. While bisexual women may feel less pressure to conform to beauty expectations, their identity does not necessarily reduce the way in which those expectations are internalized. Based on this foreknowledge of the tendencies of lesbian and bisexual women, I can analyze the diversity of body satisfaction among women in the queer community.

Legenbauer, T., Vocks, S., Schäfer, C., Schütt-Strömel, S., Hiller, W., Wagner, C., & Vögele, C. (2009).

Preference for attractiveness and thinness in a partner: influence of internalization of the thin ideal and shape/weight dissatisfaction in heterosexual women, heterosexual men, lesbians, and gay men.

Body Image, 6(3), 228–234. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2009.04.002

The author assesses the relationship between an individual's body image and their preferences in their partner. Lesbian women did not have significantly different degrees of body dissatisfaction than heterosexual women, but their degree of preferences of thinness in a partner were not affected by their satisfaction with their own body. This piece highlights the unique relationship queer women have with the female body as those

who are both attracted to women and as those who are subjected to negative expectations. Additionally, they are less likely to have high expectations of attractiveness. In my thesis, I plan to artistically examine this dynamic and deconstruct these differences in perception. I can specifically target and challenge these findings in my interviews with women for the project by directing questions about the differences in their self-perception and their expectations for their partners.

Levan, Lori Don. "Thirteen: Recognizing and Representing Bodies of Difference Through Art Education." *Counterpoints*, vol. 467, 2016, pp. 133–140. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/45157137. Accessed 7 Feb. 2021.

Art educators must work to structure their curriculum in a way that actively dismantles fatphobia and instructs children to have positive associations with their bodies. Even from a very young age, children are able to develop prejudices against fat people. By breaking down these fatphobic stigmas in education, teachers will be able to reconstruct narratives about female bodies in a patriarchal society. The piece addresses how art-making exposes bias within our visual culture and how it can encourage people to reexamine their perspective on the bodies of others. Art can both contribute to and combat fatphobia. This source will reinforce my goal of addressing body diversity within art and provide useful information about the development of biases against fat body types. When interviewing subjects, I can consider asking them to describe their body type to see if there are any correlations between the way they self-identify and whether or not they have positive associations with their own bodies.

Morrison, M., Morrison, T., & Sager, C. (2004). Does body satisfaction differ between gay men and lesbian women and heterosexual men and women? Body Image, 1(2), 127–138. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bodyim.2004.01.002

Owen-Smith, Ashli A., et al. "Association Between Gender Confirmation Treatments and Perceived Gender Congruence, Body Image Satisfaction, and Mental Health in a Cohort of Transgender Individuals." *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, vol. 15, no. 4, Elsevier Inc, 2018, pp. 591–600, doi:10.1016/j.jsxm.2018.01.017.

This author explores the relationship of body satisfaction in transgender individuals, while also closely documenting aspects of racial identity. This study, unlike the other sources I have utilized, will provide more information about the unique and additional challenges transgender people face in their relationships with their bodies. Unlike cisgender women, transgender women have the combined pressures of gender identity and expected female beauty standards. This source allows the diversification of the project, ensuring that I incorporate aspects of gender identity in combination with body satisfaction. Body satisfaction extends outside of internalized fatphobia but also includes gender dysphoria and social "passing."

Polinska, Wioleta. "Dangerous Bodies: Women's Nakedness and Theology." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2000, pp. 45–62. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/25002375. Accessed 7 Feb. 2021.

Women's bodies in art and theology have historically been catered to the male gaze and are presented as conduits of deception. Within the historical intersection of art and the church, women's bodies must cater to male desire while also being blamed for the seduction of men. The narrative of the naked female form is continuously tied to its

relationship with men, rather than a woman as an individual entity. Female artists are able to reclaim their personal identity and restructure the ideas surrounding women's nakedness. The existing structures for female identity can be further dismantled into varying sexual and racial identities. This source will give me historical perspective on the women's reconstruction of their own bodily narratives. With the knowledge of past depictions of women's bodies, I can willfully create art that parodies or deviates from the established expectations for female nudes.