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Summer Plan Revision
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The research that I have been working through visually and conceptually explores chaos and control. My work is inspired by the human desire to have control while in reality, chaos surrounds us. I feel inspired to create art when thinking about the push and pull of the human state of being. We fight for control in every aspect of our lives but there is all too often this underlying sense of feeling out of control, where our minds wonder, play tricks on us, forces us into depression or a number of other mindsets. The way our minds work and the complexities of the human brain is what propels my work forward. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, believed that there was a cause and an explanation for human behavior. As Thornton states of Freud's belief, "freedom of the will is, if not completely an illusion, certainly more tightly circumscribed than is commonly believed, for it follows from this that whenever we make a choice we are governed by hidden mental processes of which we are unaware and over which we have no control." My work stems from this very place of human intricacies. We all want to have control over the things we say and do, and we do have that control on a small scale, but in the end our unconscious effects our conscious. Yayoi Kusama is an artist that creates artwork that is a direct result of her mental state. Swanson (2012) speaking of Kusama says, "whatever you make of her retreat into a psych ward, her mantra was always "self-obliteration"—to lose herself in the work, or to the work, to save herself." Kusama (2013) states, "I fight pain, anxiety, and fear every day, and the only method I have found that relieves my illness is to keep creating art." There is a fine line between order and disorder and my goal is to explore that line. I also

pull the contrast of chaos and control from the military, from the trained order of soldiers to the unpredictable chaos of the front line and the aftermath effects of war on the human mind. I find beauty in the contrast of organization and disarray and I want to continue to develop a body of work that visually and conceptually addresses that.

During the winter session it was expressed to me that I need to push my work further into one direction. At a complete loss of where to go, yet knowing that I needed to make what I enjoy, I used the beginning of the spring semester to make studies of medium exploration. I began exploring various mediums in order to find the best way to represent chaos and control. Visually, I sought to represent a contrast between the fluidity of inks with the control of graphic lines and patterns. After a couple of weeks of trial and error, I found my direction. I began incorporating various layers into the work using transparencies, helping create a conceptual depth. The bottom layer of each piece is made using alcohol ink and liquid acrylic. The use of the inks is an unpredictable process that requires patience and time. Each background is poured and manipulated before letting it dry. After it dried, I would go back in and add more depth of colors. Once the background layer was complete I began working on the line drawings and Morse code simultaneously. I have always been intrigued by the graphic quality of line drawings and I find myself taking inspiration from blueprints, scientific drawings and vintage catalogs to name a few. The transparencies allow for the abstract background to show through each layer, while the line drawing itself also allows for the background to show and intertwine itself. I feel that the line drawings are bold enough to stand out against the energetic background, yet subtle enough to work well together. The images I'm choosing to incorporate all abstractly relate to the Morse layer without being an

obvious representation of the word or words written. The images often have a vintage quality to them as I want to represent the past in present time, creating a sense of conflict of feeling stuck between times. For the next layer, I incorporated the use of Morse code to add additional visual and conceptual depth. All of the layers are then assembled and fastened together using small metal fasteners.

The incorporation of Morse code comes from my interest in history, the war, communication and it's graphic aesthetics. My grandfather learned Morse code in the war, and when he came back, he never stopped using it to communicate with his friends. In his house he had a room with all of his radios and machines that we called the 'dit dah' room. Whenever I went into his house I always heard the familiar tapping sound and I always knew just where to find my grandfather. He would be held up in his dit dah room communication over CW, laughing and sharing stories with people from across the country. As a child he tried to teach me, but over the years I've regrettably lost touch with all of it's meaning. Hearing the tapping and the dits and dahs of the machines can be chaotic and overwhelming to some, but is clear and makes perfect sense to others. For me, I might not be able to decipher the sounds and interpret it's meaning, but it's the opposite of chaotic and is all quite familiar and calming.

Morse code was an important advancement in our history and also played an important role in the wars. When I think about the use of Morse code during the war, I tend to think about the person transmitting the Morse message. The transmitter is in a war zone, surrounded by uncontrolled chaos and his job is to stay calm and send a message to whomever is on the receiving end. The message needed to be sent properly, as an extended pause or an extra dit could change the whole meaning. That

moment and state of being is what intrigues me and drives me to visually represent it through my work.

I want my work to be inspired by and address something without being literal and without having to depict an immediate connection and representation. Through my work I am addressing the constantly changing human state of being. In the broader sense we have control over what we say and do, but in reality, we have a lack of control over our reactions. We are hardwired to physically and mentally react a certain way under different circumstances, and for me, there is beauty in this dance of control and disarray. My work is meant to ignite a sense a wonder, questioning and emotion in the viewer. Morse code is a recognizable form of communication, but it is not a commonly understood form of communication. By using Morse in my work, I am planting a seed for the viewer to question what it means. The incorporation of the imagery adds to the mystery but yet allows for the viewer to begin to infer their own interpretation to the connection and meaning.

Incorporating Morse code into my work plays into my graphic aesthetics while also encompassing the military aspect that I am inspired by. I feel that language can be used visually as a powerful art form and I am continuing to push my artwork in this direction. Over the summer session, I will work on various sized square Yupo paper to create abstract backgrounds using alcohol ink and acrylic. I am cutting the paper down from rectangular to square in an effort to create visual uniformity and control. I have experimented with various papers and have found that the Yupo paper lends itself best to the paint choices, resulting in dynamic abstractions. I will also continue to work on the additional layers of Morse and line drawings using transparencies. I would also like to

experiment with printing images directly on the transparencies and possibly altering them further. Over the summer session I would also like to create museum captions for each piece, but have them printed in Morse code on transparencies. During my undergrad, I always had people telling me that my work wasn't art which led to an internal struggle justifying my practice to this day. Adding the museum caption is a way for me to channel that mental struggle and comment on the exclusiveness of the art scene and who decides what art is. For the end of summer show, my thought is to physically present this work in a way that emotionally effects the viewer. If the show is being conducted the same as last year, I would like to be able to position the walls in close proximity to each other to create a narrow hallway or a small boxed in room. By doing this, I am closing out the rest of the distractions of the room, allowing the viewer to be present with the work and their own thoughts. I also plan to incorporate the sound of Morse code into the installation for an additional sensory effect. During the summer weeks on campus, my plan is to drive this overall concept further while refining my work for the end of summer show.

Citations:

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