

designed • interviewed by Ethan FEDELE

TEART

work & interviews from
• Samantha HENSLEY • Brenna GREENWELL
• Ali DEANE • Hayla RAGLAND

designed by Ethan FEDELE • interviewed by Brenna GREENWELL

L R V J

T A R T

TART

A tart is delicate. A tart is sweet. A tart is warm.
A tart is strategic. A tart is comfortable. A tart is
calm. A tart is tactful. A tart is knowledgable.

**This book presents conversations with
four artists about their ideas, influences,
thought processes, and obviously more
that cannot be reducted.**

⁶ Samantha
Hensley.

¹⁴ Brenna
Greenwell.

²² Ali
Deane.

²⁸ Hayla
Ragland.

This book is called Tart, as tarts are commodities. I don't wish to describe this book as a commodity, but rather the language that the artists choose to express their thoughts, ideas, emotions, and previous visual expressions as a whole.

A tart is not only a commodity, but its qualities are unlike any other "thing". It is a pastry, so delicate. It is a pool of flavors. The pool will tend to be consistent among tarts, but what fills the pool is the warmth and intrigue.

This tart filling is what I want these artist's language and ideas fulfill.

This metaphor isn't sound, and a tart isn't the best method to explain something so simple as a book of interviews. However, this book needs to be called tart, and it must be stated that the way that an artist talks about their ideas and thoughts must be treasured.

It's a connection.

It's a tart.

Well, it's the filling I suppose.

This book is called *Start*, as that's where
I don't wish to describe this book as a commodity.
But rather the language that the artist chooses
to express their thoughts, ideas, emotions, and
previous visual expressions as a whole.

A start is not only a commodity, but its dualities are
unlike any other "thing". It is a beastly, so delicate.
It is a pool of flavors. The book will tend to be
consistently moving fast, but what till the book is
the warmth and intuitions.

This start thinking is what I want these artists' s
language and ideas to tell.

I deeply thank the artists that have been sharing
enough time lend me their attention for long
enough for them to express what they feel
necessarily. I value that time and attention more
than I value a start. Thank You Habya, Ali, Beruna,
and Samanta. I owe you a start.

It's a connection.

It's a start.

Well, it's the thinking I suppose.

TARI

Samantha Hensley



How would you describe what you do?

I help other people see what, where, and who I think about, but not very honestly, (yet).

Could you describe where your work exists within the culture of your surroundings?

haha whaaaaat . I hope to keep my art unique enough that its a departure from its surroundings, even in a building full of weird art stuff where doing that is inherently difficult.

Where do you find inspiration, both visually and conceptually?

my favorite images come from really mundane places like road signs, trash, animal carcasses, and thrift stores. Conceptually I refer to my favorite written stories and my most impactful or bizarre traumas.

How do you follow an idea?

I write it down quickly as a poem , sketch it if I don't hate the writing, start it if I don't hate the sketch, and finish it if I don't hate starting it.

What work do you most admire?

Unfortunately the work I admire right now is furthest from my own. I'm on a kick for "anti- aesthetic" that relies more on visceral con-

cepts than craft and appearance. I'm fascinated with art that feels like seeing someone else's intrusive thoughts.

Your work has an implied narrative quality to it; what is important about narrative within your work?

The narrative is important because its the only reason the things exist. It's not about shotwing you the character, its about showing enough of their suffering for you to empathize.

So could you say that a goal of your work is to allow your audience to observe suffering?

No, to allow them to remember it.

How do you decide that an idea needs to exist within three-dimensions or in two?

I am ashamed to say that right now that question is answered by logistics alone. If something seems more doable in three dimensions, I do it that way. Someday it will be determined by how good the idea is.

So, by that do you mean at all to say that the better ideas become sculpture?

Ideally.



9 *Untitled* Samantha Hensley



Do you personify the creatures you create?

Yes. The better ones feel like real beings I have known, and I cry over their hurt.

What emotions do you hope to create with your work?

Sometimes I start a joke not knowing how it will end, and it becomes about dying before I mean it to. I am so caught off guard that I laugh despite myself and the sadness I made. It makes the person I'm with embarrassed and uncomfortable, or they join me in the absurdity of it and laugh too. Either outcome is good.

Where is your work headed?

Hopefully somewhere less contrived and dishonest. If I hear Tim Burton or Alice in Wonderland one more time I'm going to turn my body inside out and then guess where my face would be and shoot in that direction.

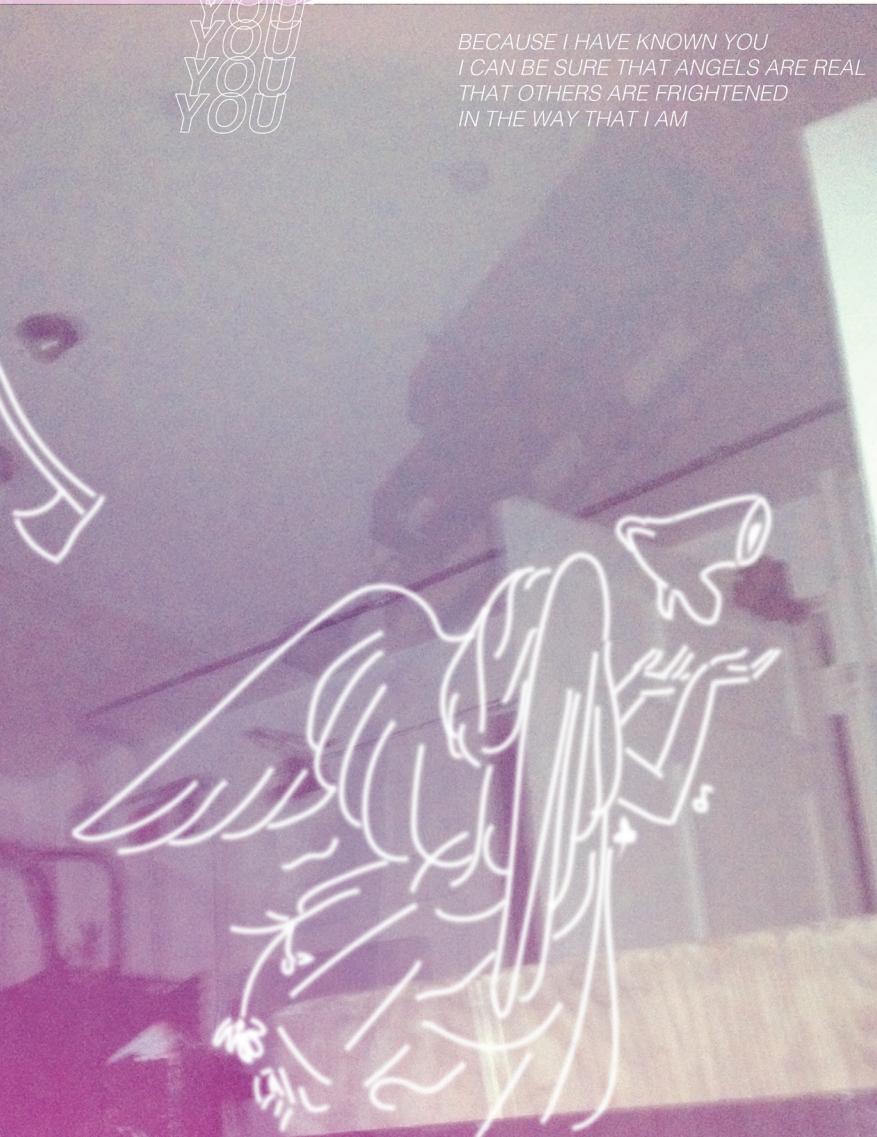
Where do you feel that this disconnect in concept permeates from?

I'm a coward and making the work I really want to makes me anxious.



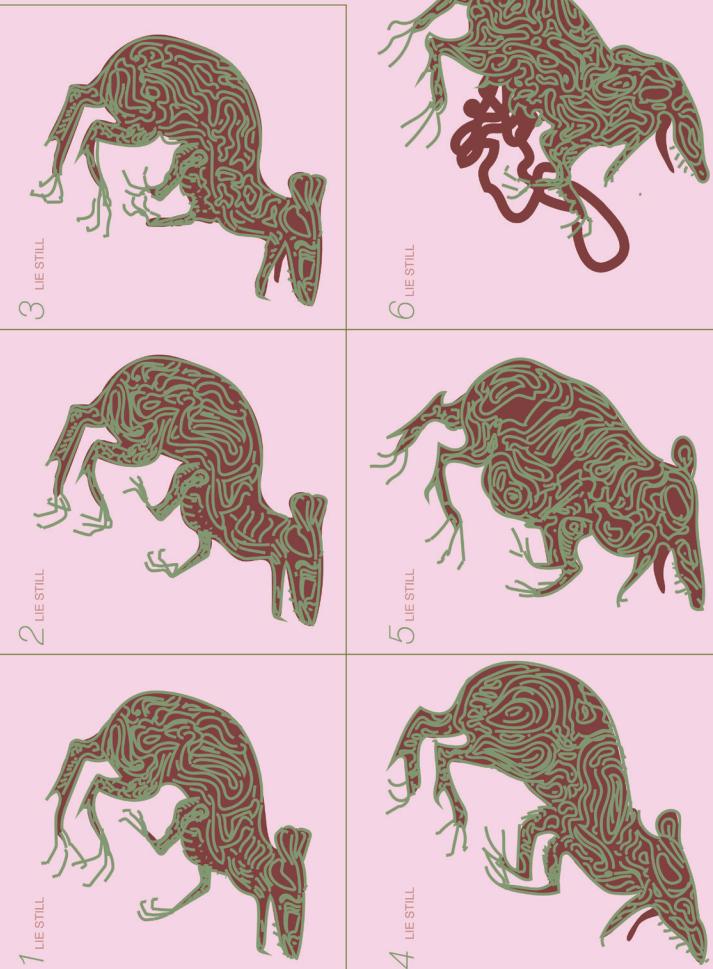


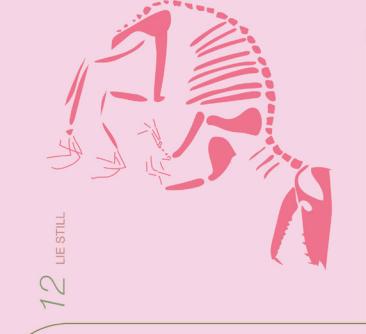
BECAUSE I HAVE KNOWN YOU
I CAN BE SURE THAT ANGELS ARE REAL
THAT OTHERS ARE FRIGHTENED
IN THE WAY THAT I AM



HOW TO DECAY GRACEFULLY

YOU WERE FRANTIC AND FOOLISH, YOU KEPT NO TRACK OF TIME, YOU RAN YOUR DELICATE BODY INTO ITS NATURAL END,
YOU BURNED ALL YOUR CANDLES TO STUMPS, YOU ARE TIRED AND HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO LAY DOWN,
YOU HAVE EARNED THIS REPERCUSSION, THIS REWARD, THIS RECKONING,
YOU FINALLY NEED TO KNOW





TARI

Brenna

Greenwell



How would you describe what you do?

70s Playboy Mansion/ St. Peter's Basilica/ old school pagan priestess' cabinet of curiosities.

Could you describe where your work exists within the culture of your surroundings?

I think it fits well within the ongoing sexual revolution from a lady's perspective. It also really appeals to those with the discarded Catholic upbringing that I share.

Where do you draw inspiration from, both visually and conceptually?

Vintage print porn (Playboy primarily, sometimes Hustler or unmarked photos dug up at flea markets), and Catholic iconography found in the lavish palace-like churches in Europe.

I'm always deeply inspired by the late Lee Alexander McQueen, as he had similar interests in the relationships between the female form, sexuality, and religion (Catholicism specifically). His use of organic materials; bones, antlers, animal skins, seashells, etc. and ability to distort the body through his sculptural pieces is something I will never get tired of.

Bunny Yeager's pinup photography is also something that I reflect on a lot when I need inspiration. She was both photographer and model, and is responsible for the most famous images of Betty Page. Her depiction of female sexuality from the perspective of a female pinup model is so valuable and rare, especially at the height of her career in the 1950s. Her relationships between herself and her models, and between herself and her camera, were able to capture moments of unapologetic and completely comfortable seduction, fully embracing the campiness and fun of cheesecake photography at the same time.

I understand that you wish to enter the mortuary industry, how does this interest surface itself within your work?

I would say my pinup centric work is connected in its own way to what mortuary work really boils down to; the preservation of beauty and youth. I also find inspiration in using organic remains in sculptural work like animal bones, skins, and human



17 *Holy Ghost at Sweetheart Bridge* Brenna Greenwell





Ritual Brenna Greenwell



What importance does your choice of medium hold?

I work in a fairly wide variety of medium, some with more significance than others. All my 2D work, even screenprinting, is very drawing based just because that's what I've done more than anything and that's what I'm best at. I'm a terrible painter. I enjoy the relatively quick and easy way to have multiples of whatever you're making in screenprinting, and I just enjoy the process overall.

Cast metal sculpture holds a little more significance I think. I love the ritualistic qualities that the whole process holds, and the fact that my metal pieces will almost definitely outlive me is oddly appealing too. There's nothing quite as satisfying as breaking a fresh iron sculpture out of its mold at 2am on the same beer and blood stained floor that so many others have used for the exact same thing.

What mood do you hope to create with your work?

Reverence. I want the viewer to feel like they're entering a sacred space, while still allowing for the playful nature of pinup and not taking it too seriously. Reverence in presentation and execution, irreverence in content and attitude.

How do you make decisions in creating?

A lot of decisions I make are just a series of trial and error based on the materials I have access to. I'll get really excited about an idea I have and I can be pretty stubborn about how I want it executed. Most of the time I'll jump into a project and just roll with the punches as they come and try not to get too pissed off.

What concepts are you drawn to?

Like I mentioned before, I'm strongly attracted to anything glorifying female sexuality and playing with themes of Catholicism. The female form has been simultaneously objectified and glorified since art began, and I enjoy taking images from what has typically been seen as objectification (print pornography) and elevating the models to deity status. I want to portray them as otherworldly beings who should be venerated.

All real art is self portraiture (Guillermo del Toro tweeted that) and pretty much all of my work falls into that category. I see myself in the models I use in my work.

The simplest way I could describe this is that my body is a temple where I worship myself and live in decadent, glamorous sleaze and hedonism that mirrors the traditions that were ingrained in me through my Catholic school upbringing.

What visuals are you drawn to?

I'm always drawn to the female form, again as a form of self appreciation. Anything that's distorting that human figure in an interesting way always gets me too. My love for the occult and attachment to Catholic iconography and stories of the old saints is always fascinating to me as well. There are more visual connections between Catholicism and occultism than one might think; both are incredibly violent and grotesque and heavily incorporate themes of the paranormal. So many Catholic saints are remembered more for their gruesome deaths than anything and are often depicted in artworks in these events. That could just say more about what I've taken from religion than how Catholicism is for everyone though.

Is there a medium that you are interested in creating work in, but haven't?

I really want to work in taxidermy. I've used skins and antlers and bones in sculpture before, but I want to actually create forms to stretch skins over. It's just a process that could be really useful to be familiar with. I want to make wearable sculptural pieces as well, similar to that of McQueen.

How do you follow an idea?

Usually stubbornly. I'll get stuck on something and literally will not be able to sleep or think about anything else until I've at least started on it. While I'm working with one concept or medium that'll usually produce a few other ideas along the way that either overshadow what I was originally working on or at least give me something else to work on.



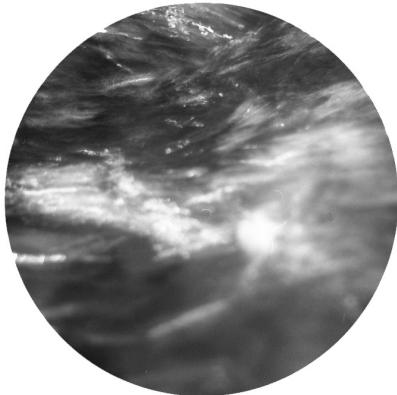
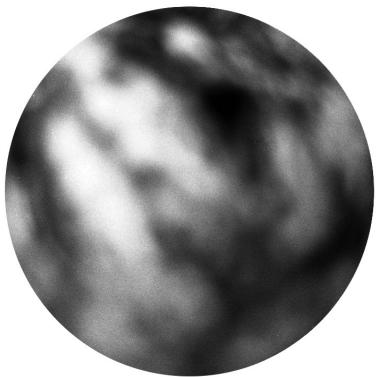
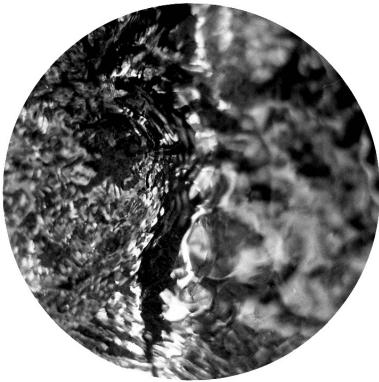
TARI

Ali Deane





TARI



How would you describe what you do?

I work in analog process photography due to the authenticity that embodies the practice. As an artist, I am driven by the meditative nature and physicality present in process heavy techniques.

Could you describe where your work exists within the culture of your surroundings?

We live in a world that is filled with precarious industrial practices that negatively effect the entire environment, and ultimately all of life. Every move we as humans make has an effect on our environment. In order to sustain life, our water and our air must remain tolerable. As an artist, I produce work to provide individuals with important information and awareness. Because of the visual culture we exist in today, I believe the art world is one of the best spaces to establish this awareness. I can only hope for change to arise.

How do you follow an idea?

I research until I make myself crazy and I write a lot.

What work do you most admire?

Pipilotti Rist

Where is your work headed?

I'd like my future work to become more about polluted water's effect on the human body's reproductive system and life cycle





26 *Untitled* Ali Deane

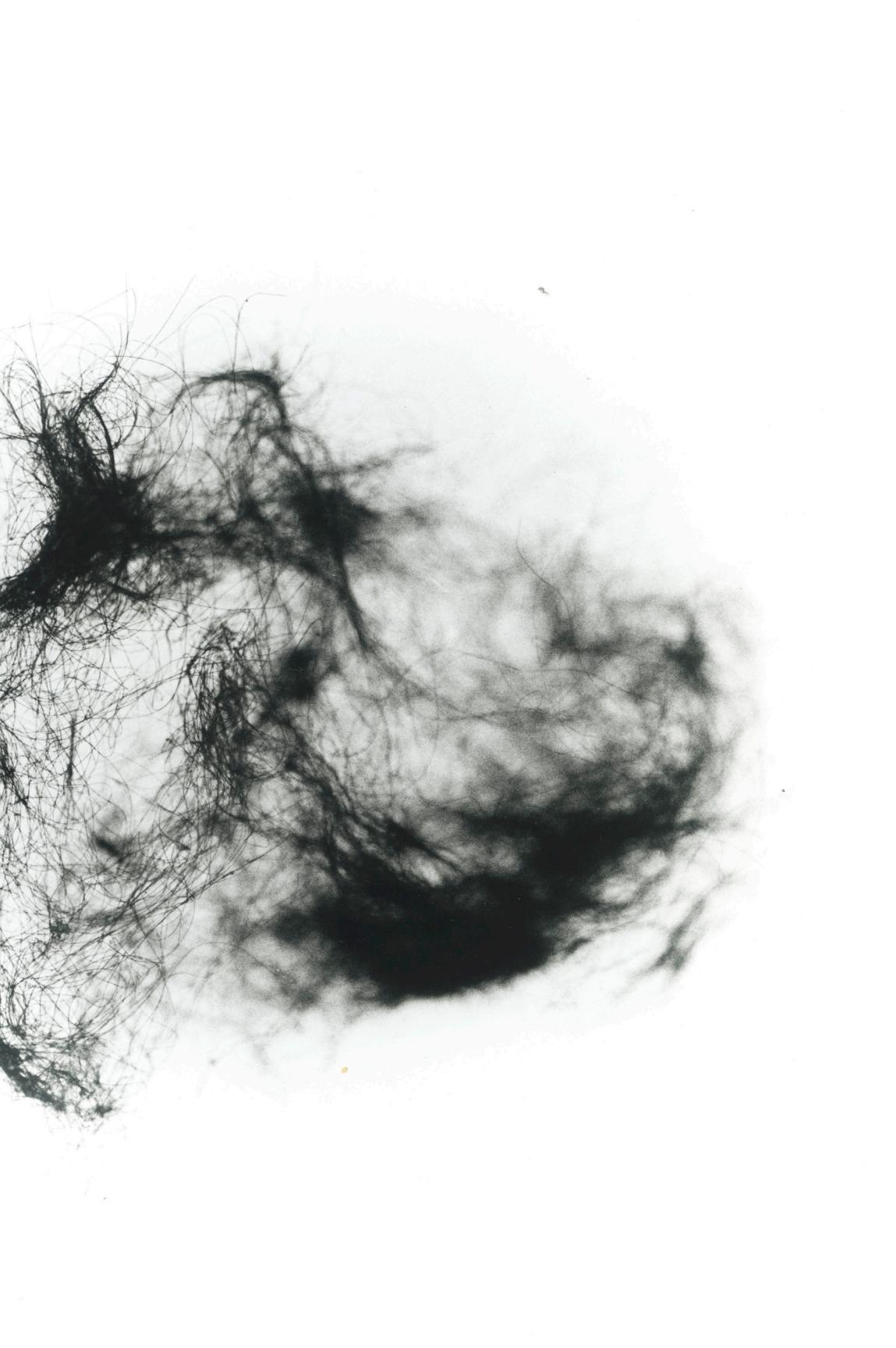


27 *Untitled* Ali Deane



TARI

Hayla
Ragland



How would you describe what you do?

I make things, but I think that's a bit liberal. More often I find myself too entangled in the properties of my materials and in experimentation to be concerned with resolving them into objects. The final piece is never as satisfying as the making, which is why I tend towards work with archival and ephemeral qualities; wherein the notion of process can be allowed to survive a work's formal resolve.

Could you describe where your work exists within the culture of your surroundings?

It exists on the outskirts, that's just a definitive feature of the grotesque. When it becomes so aesthetic that it loses its power to repulse, it no longer demands introspection from the viewer and then its value is lost. People make work like this for a lot of reasons. Even though I'm using a specific personal experiences and theoretical perspectives to inform the work it still aligns itself with work "about the body."

The easiest way for people to understand what I make is by associating it with other artists who depict the body. That generalization constrains the work, I have to find ways to push people to understand their experience of the work in a different way; which is as complicated as it sounds and likely dependent upon nuances I've yet to uncover.

Where do you find inspiration, both visually and conceptually?

I wanted to make paintings about dissociation. About disowning physicality. I had a wild auto- inflammatory response growing up, that wasn't diagnosed as autoimmune until much later. I couldn't control my body or how it was responding to different things, nor could I control the destructive impulses I had. It was a war that played out on the surface (of my skin) and that became by primary surface material.

Skin speaks to the dichotomy of interiority and exteriority it's the ultimate divider between self and other, its the primordial home which, in my condition was not, in the Freudian sense, homely at all. I discovered in psychoanalytic theory a universal dimension to my personal experiences with my body. The source material I use is at an intersection between the two.



31 *Untitled from Graft series* Hayla Ragland



How do you decide whether to pursue an idea?

I never decide. I try everything, excitedly, in a hurry, and often without thinking. Impulsivity underscores everything I make. Often the pieces which are the most resolved is the rubble from some other failure.

Whose work most drives you at the moment?

There a lot of artists with achromatic, minimalist, non-traditional material based work. There are even artists who are uniting this sort of sculpture with photography and drawing (Suzannah Macmurray for example) in the same way that I often do...but by far Eva Hesse is my biggest influence.

Is there a certain mental space that you find yourself in when you feel most driven to create?

It's one of those impulses that never really leaves. I do find myself preferring to work at night, and I'm the most creative when I'm alone. I think that's true for a lot of young artists. You have to have an uninhibited environment in order to problem solve.

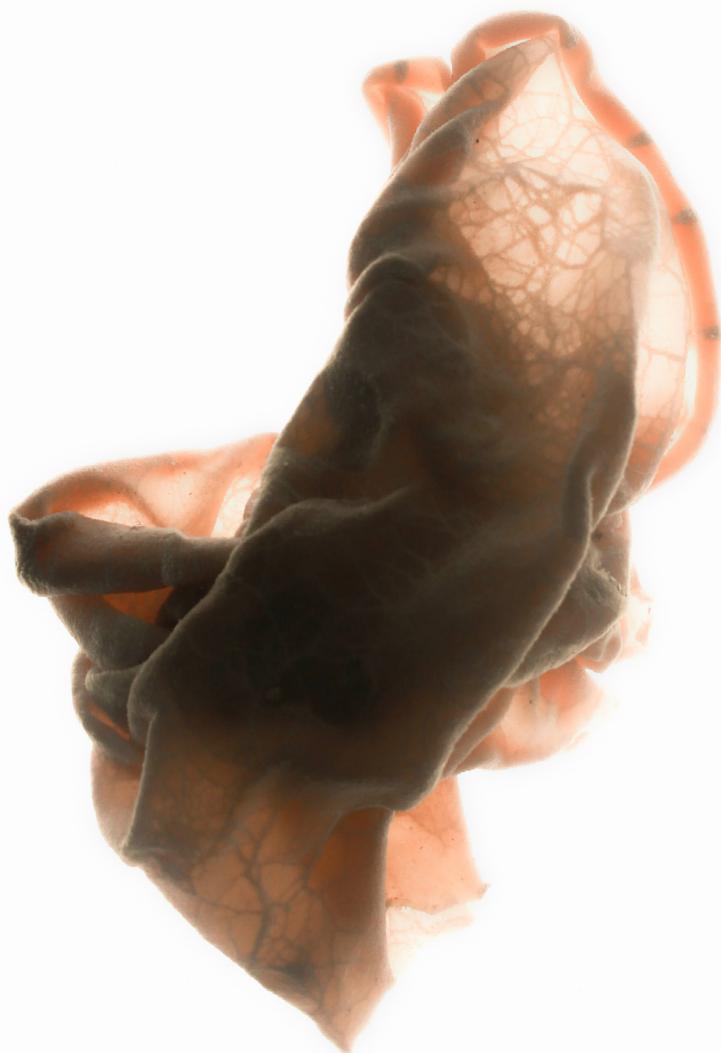
Do you feel that you adhere to any ideology within your work?

"Form follows function" to some degree. I like when the materials resolve the work according to their own performativity. It's not important that my hand can be read in the work - and the sorts of materials I use don't demand 'craft' in the traditional sense.

I understand that you are studying psychology; does this field directly inspire any part of creation?

Psychoanalysis in the literary and philosophy sense play an important role in my work. Traditional cognitive, behavioral, social, developmental topics in psychology are less influential. I'm informed about them, I have trouble avoiding references to certain theoretical findings. Anyone who's ever critiqued with me can testify to that.

I'm still adjusting my opinions about the overlap between psychology and visual art. Because I'm studying both, I don't know how much of it is just a personal conflation between science, theory, and practice.



33 *Untitled from Graft series* Hayla Ragland



What concepts do you wish to explore with your work?

I've been exploring a cohesive set of motifs with a variety of materials and for a decent amount of time. I'm still not entirely sure what it's all saying, or how important it is to me that it expresses (or renders for the viewer) something specific or more universal.

Conceptual resolve is something that never happens for me until I've finished a series of pieces and can look at them all together. Specific ideas and themes drive the making, most of these regard documentation, the construction /destruction, and preservation of the self through the manipulation of objects. But this is extremely broad, and unrefined. I'm working on it!

What decisions are involved in creating your assemblages?

The assemblages are essentially experiments. The work references body/organs, etc. but very slight changes can transform something horrific into something elegant. It's a precarious aesthetic; it demands experimentation, trial and error.

Where is your work headed?

I've been working increasingly with the construction of objects as well as with digital photography. I'd originally hoped to make large scale installations out of the materials I fabricate but I found this 1: difficult and 2: deleterious to the nuance of the work.

Now I'm thinking more about the relationship between works rendered in series, photographic documents and appropriated objects which reinforce associations with a particular environment. I don't want my work to show in a space and immediately quote a medical space (because of the body imagery). So I'm playing with how I can appropriate materials or installation and framing methods which reference a more domestic space.



35 *Untitled from Graft series* Hayla Ragland





36 *Untitled from Graft series* Hayla Ragland



37 *Untitled from Graft series* Hayla Ragland



L R V J

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