

genesis

To brainstorm for the 'Influences' assignment, I thought back to my childhood and my daily routine, and from this process, discovered that I am very much enamored with the complexity of the everyday - the ways in which we are continuously being inspired by experiences, connections, and actions, no matter their supposed mundanity or remarkability, and whether it is intended or not - as well as the interchangeable relationship between these quotidian and our dispositions.

The genesis of my motifs came first from familial themes. Many of my influences were related to my upbringing, and just a general need for satiation from interconnected emotional experiences: the comfort of my grandmother making lemon honey tea for me, sledding in the snow with my mom, my role as the middle sister, pear-picking with my parents, etc. Then, from there, I drew mini themes between a few other influences, such as my introduction to concepts of the luxury of travel, pomegranates and dark chocolate, or the sensuality of honey, saxophones, pomegranates and dark chocolate.

duality, fruits of labor, codependency

But my largest motifs were found in duality and fruits of labor. A large number of my influences are related to the care, the flavor, and the people put into making our everyday lives feel so 'everyday' to us, thus juxtaposing a duality in the labor versus the fruit. I'd always been interested in this even as a painter, and one of my influences was a painting I'd done exploring the dichotomy between the beauty of a common body in conjunction with its grotesqueness - particularly how neither could be possible without the other. And I furthered this question of the codependency between beauty and grotesqueness in my other influences: the murder scene created by shucking aphrodisiac pomegranates, the grinding necessary for the creation of smooth dark chocolate, the bees' regurgitation for a golden honey, the versatility in range from rawness to delectability in eggs, the scarred lip from practicing for perfection on the saxophone, the sweat put into plucking plump pears from trees, and the greatest duality of time: how my innocent and precious familial memories contrast and contribute to this matured sensuality for meaning despite horror or abnormality.

I am thus fascinated and in awe of the warmth and comfort that is elicited first by flaws and discomfort: how beauty can exist in the labors, how pain can exist in the fruits, and how both exist in each other. And part of this duality is also about visibility, and its lack thereof. What parts of the fruits of labor go unnoticed and hidden, and what parts catch our attention; it's easy to categorize ugliness and pain into concealment and beauty into regard, but it doesn't deny our attraction to the unknown and invisible and the curiosity, and consequent enchantment, we may hold to things that bring us pain or discomfort.

environment, enrichment, immersion

It became also about how to live in the everyday is a luxury: first, by having the financial means to travel to see the ways in which others live their lives in Estonia, in China, in France, but also, by staying to see how the places I was already growing up in - New York City, Coney Island, Guangzhou, sunsets at Heavenly Farms - were filled with riches that requisite no additional wealth: these being love, kindness, stories - and how these were represented in the books that I felt fundamentally shaped me (Eleanor & Park, Humans of New York: Stories, Everything I Never Told You, The Power of Kindness: The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life--Tenth Anniversary Edition).

In many ways, these are a prime example of the silent labor that helps to mold the disposition, or fruit, of a person: the immersion that comes from environment and enrichment. Though much of my experiences were with the important people in my life, a large portion are also in thanks to the temporary people and short-lived moments that accumulate to create a buzz in my daily life, again, theming with this idea of invisible contributions.

style

Regarding my style, because I see my influences to be so all-encompassing, as I move forward, I plan to continue to think about design to be off-paper, a notion that is living concurrently with me. I'll take note of the way I plate my food, the way I arrange the fridge, the way I lay out my room, right down to the very last post-it I put on my desk. I'm a huge perfectionist, and so I love organization, but at the same time, the curiosity in me loves to come out to play; by breaking convention and mixing attractive intention with life's element of surprise and unpredictability in the distorted, I hope to synergize the grotesque with the beautiful in a way that embodies an oxymoronic character - cleanly chaotic, balancedly asymmetrical, shapely flexibility, and so on - representative of the everyday lives we lead.

the everyday
come into fruition