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"my Self is the Art is": An Art Installation Exploring Self-Reflection in Art-making

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my Self is the Art is:
An art installation exploring self-awareness in art

Alexis Rubertino
Honors Project
Bowling Green State University
2020

my Self is the Art is:
An Art Installation by Alexis Rubertino

My Honors Project takes the form of an art installation. This Honors Project is also in fulfillment of my Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, as it coincides with the final projects for my Senior Capstone classes within the School of Art. The art installation was also accepted into the 2020 BFA Thesis Exhibition, *Firmament*, as presented by Bowling Green State University's School of Art. The art installation created is titled, "my Self is the Art is." This artwork was created in response to the guiding question, *How does self-reflection affect one's experience with art?*

Psychical description of installation:

There is a wall-mounted 50-inch flatscreen TV which plays a film of four vignettes. This wall is six feet in front of a table and two chairs. The two chairs are on the outside of the table so that the table is in between the chairs and TV. On the table are three books.

The books are hardcover – grey or black covers – with no title or images on the covers. Each of books are unique and are created with scans of my personal journals. The 8.5 inch by 10 inch book is solely of the outsides of the journals (covers, spines, sides). One 5 inch by 6 inch book contains scanned images of poetry, drawings, and diary entries and is augmented with new text from myself. The other 5 inch by 6 inch book contains scans of sketches, ideas, and inspirations for this project as well as augmented text from myself.

The table and chairs are utilized to invite the viewers to sit down and spend time with the work, for reading the books as well as watching the video. In turn, viewers become participators, and thus become part of the piece. The act of watching and participating in an art piece reiterates the role of the viewer and makes viewer as spectacle, or presentation.

As an artist, I have always found it important to try to understand why and how art works – how a viewer derives meaning and has an experience with a given work. To understand how a viewer interacts with art is to better understand how to create an art that aligns with one's intention as the artist. As an artist who works more off of concept than craft, it is important for me to provide tools for the viewer to have the experience I want them to have with my work; I must accumulate juxtapositions that point toward the goal for which I am reaching. For my work, that goal takes the form of a question: when a viewer looks at my work, I want them to be thinking about the elements of which my question ponders.

This project comes from this line of thought – I wondered *how* I create an artwork that fulfills my intentions, which means creating an artwork that is understood by an audience to provide some certain experience. I wondered how this was possible, as I, the artist, and the viewer are different people – I was planning ahead in anticipation of how a viewer would experience my work. To have this anticipation, it was necessary to understand myself as a viewer of my own work, and to think of how I would understand the information presented. I had to reflect upon myself and analyze how I was feeling, what I was associating with the information I was presented in my own work: I used self-reflection to understand my work as a work of art. However in the assumed "viewer" position, using my experiential knowledge of my interactions with others' art, I realized I was also assuming what the *artist* was expecting of me – what were *they* expecting me to experience, what does the given information try to tell me?

I considered this to be self-reflection as well as a preemptive assumption of another's self in order to adjust the information given in an artwork. So, not only am I considering a first-

person self-reflection, but also a “third-person” self-reflection as the artist anticipates one’s (internal and external) reactions – assuming the point-of-view of an unknown second party. I am viewing self-reflection as process of acknowledgement and understand that one has a self, which allows one to be subjected to experiences. I attribute this similarly to Viktor Gecas’ “self-concept” which is a *product* of the self’s “reflexive activity.” Gecas notes that R.H. Turner’s self-concept “involves the sense of spatial and temporal continuity,” which is important to not when considering one viewing art, as each individual is affected by space and time individually, based on their experiences.

For an artwork on such a topic, I felt an installation was the most appropriate. I was inspired by some of the ideas that surround the Fluxus movement, such as the element of chance being present in the work as well as the merrgence of life and art. The actors in the Fluxus movement wanted to break down the process of art-making and viewing as an elitist act in order to redefine art outside the confines of institutions such as museums. (Di’Tolla) The interactive aspect of this installation allows for a viewer’s participation to affect their understanding and experience. The viewer may or may not physically interact with the objects given, which provides a different experience to the “ideal.” The video is also edited in such a way to play with the viewer’s attention, as the same image is used for each interlude between the four vignettes present: without staying long enough, a viewer might interpret the repeated image as the looping of the video they just saw. Further inspired by Fluxus ideas, one of the books presented on the table is full of sketches, notes, and research for the actual installation; an act of transparency, as the thoughts and planning for the piece are included in the piece itself. This is a way to disseminate the art-making process. The viewer is able to understand my planning and intentions when making the piece, *upon* investigating the artwork.

I was also inspired by specific artists and their artworks, both in form and function. Sophie Calle has been an interest of mine because of her performative and documentative works, which speak to privacy and intimacy between humans. Particularly, her series *Suite Vénitienne* (1980) is of interest because of the conversation surrounding the act of viewing the work. Calle followed and studied strangers, taking photographs and writing notes about them until she lost them; these photographs and writing became the artifacts of the piece and were what was displayed simultaneously as the work and as documentation of the performance. Her work sparked discussions of the boundaries an artist may or may not be restricted by for the sake of making art. I feel a connection between these boundaries and the way Calle also co-opted fiction writing into this piece by merging the “facts” from studies of the strangers with character-building and added information. (Sommer)

There is some sort of implicit trust in photography and so-called documentation to be presented as reality. As Blanchot says, “presence is presence of what could not be present... presence excluding or exceeding any present” (Duarte): what one can see is a result of events in the past; the present is a consequence of presences past. There is a chain that links what one sees to something else one does not see.

This is important in understanding that performance – or pre-action for the piece – is as part of the piece as the remaining documentation, and that what one sees is a summary of decisions and actions. I explore this concept in my piece with the videos and some of the books. The captions and audios in the video are recordings and transcriptions of performances I did which explored the process of memory, self-awareness, and reflection; these artifacts of performance are layered but spread among the four vignettes created, creating a space that feels to float outside of a given present. Duarte notes that “In both Barthes and Blanchot, the image

must be understood as a metamorphosis not only of presence, but also of time. In both, the spectral mode of presence converges with the spectrality of time..." (289). The layered quality infused in the moving image of the videos presented reference this spectral quality; additionally, the periodicals of scanned images (journal covers, spines and the contents of said journals) possess this same quality, reinforced by their confinement within the bounds of a(nother) book. These artifacts hold the presence of the image as it is seen and simultaneously the time of which they were created / captured / happened.

Again, this is playing with the guttural instinct of present(ation)-as-reality, as one instinctually knows of this time – a non-accessible present – but attributes it to the hand which placed the image. The resistance of equating the art to the artist – the image to the hand – is what lead me to Tracey Emin, an artist who separates reality with "truth," (where the combination of the two is not unlike Calle and her photo captions).

Tracey Emin uses props and images of her own, real experiences to speak on the broader subject of life; however, often her work gets attributed as a tell-all, or self-exposure to the point where everything that is viewed is seen as precisely of Emin's being. Emin, however, pushes against this; she says, "My subject isn't me – my subject starts with me" (Whicker). The art, or presentation, is not her, nor a mirror of her, but rather contains *parts*, even if just a reference point.

Duarte posits that Barthes chose the camera lucida as a "metaphor for the work of discovering what is not immediately shown by the photographic image, revealing an intimate and emotional search that mobilizes the viewer's bodily and subjective responses." I see this as the draw toward image as truth, that the inherent search when looking at an image *mobilizes* the response of a viewer, which gives them an active experience rather than a passive one. Image, here, can be taken as presentation of art. I argue that this reaction of mobility when presented with a presence not fully present is what leads to this assumption of art-as-artist; the viewer is trying to fill gaps, makes connections which reflect some sort of truth or understanding from the information which they are given. In my transparency of the periodicals within my installation, time has changed the outcome of what was expected from the initial writings; what was sketched and written about is not always what is demonstrated in the final piece. Though, with information which leads a viewer to believe that particular book is all "about" the work, the truth becomes blurred with reality.

In combination of these two artist-influences, I merged ideas of playing with the give and take of artist and viewer; I take the idea of character building and documentation from these two artists as well as the idea of the dissemination of transparent information to interact with a viewer's expectations and understanding of the work. I give the viewer information about the piece that both conflicts and aligns with the information they see / experience in the present by looking at the piece. The video and periodicals exist on two different planes of attention and provide separate information (which takes advantage of their respective formats). The video plays material which is linked to very specific moments by way of imagery and audio, but transcend their objective qualities by the use of dissonance, layering, and repetition, which broaden their subjective scope; they become fragments of daily life which accumulate into one sense of being, aware of their oneness and wholistic presence as fragmentary images. Text (captions), audio, and video combine different aspects of how one achieves a self-concept, which I consider to be time, recall, layering, and reflection. The videos and editing techniques for each vignette was determined by the focused aspect of that vignette.

The investigative aspect of my piece was also inspired by artist Tracy Snelling, specifically one work of hers, *Rooms* (2016), which is also an installation which includes video. The work is made of four box-like sculptures installed on a wall and open face-out, which are altered to look like rooms inspired by bars. From a distance, the details which make each room unique are not obvious, and often details or the video component of the room are hidden from this far-sight – the viewer must want to get close to the piece and look inside, around it to find this extra information. (Snelling)

This installation is relatively light on participation, but still takes favor of the more active and curious investigating viewer; the viewer must *engage* the piece with their proximity. The application of participation-only information is a risk, but often aims to reward viewers. As Durate explains of both Blanchot and Barthes, “the viewer is attracted by the vision of what is impossible to see... [they do] not exactly perceive a real object belonging to the tangible world, but something undefined ... Desire reveals a sort of depth that is beyond the image.” So, but implementing this risk, I am able to reference this desire, which is a nature of the viewer. The viewer *searches*. In my project, the search is also viewed by people who can see a viewer viewing the piece, as well as the acknowledgement of the viewer being viewed; it’s an acknowledgement *of* participation, *of* viewing / searching, which aims to point the action of the viewer back to the viewer as a viewer.

I think this desire to investigate art, and to even create art, is because of the fact that one does not know everything about everything. Under ideas of object-oriented ontology (OOO), that might attribute to an objects’ infinite tool-being and presence-at-hand – an objects as it is available as a tool and untheorized versus when an object is noticed or theorized. Due to the endless possible presences-at-hand, the object can never be seen in its “true essence, its inwardness” (Leach). My project tests these ideas with the relationship to the viewer and the whole of the piece as an artwork; by utilizing participation, the viewer enters an active object/subject relationship which is augmented by a third party, creating a sort of omniscient presence as the artist – this creates a fluent mediator, between artist / art / viewer which switches between roles, as one has more information over the others at the same time being influenced by all.

Artist Statement

my Self is the Art is

The guiding question for this work is How does self-reflection play a role in artmaking, particularly involving tacit artist-viewer communication?

I consider the self to be the recognition of a sum of experiences which constitute a sense of being: the self is experiential baggage that actively shapes the way one experiences the world. Artists must analyze their self and assume the viewer's self to fulfil the intention of their art.

Art, loosely defined, points at or interacts with life and living – artists gather materials (visuals, ideas, audios, objects, etc.) and combine them to provide juxtapositions which create this experience. The artist looks critically at their relationship with these juxtapositions in order to anticipate what potential connections and experiences they might create for a viewer.

This installation explores this reflective, self-conscious part of artmaking and art-experiencing. Viewers are encouraged to sit down at the table, read the books, and watch the video; this participatory element is essential for the act of participation to become a prop of the work. As the piece is non-immersive viewers are susceptible to being watched: bystanders can see viewers as part of the piece, and thus viewing (participating) becomes part of the understanding of the piece.

Annotated Bibliography

Cherry, K., and E.A. Goerner. "DOES ARISTOTLE'S POLIS EXIST 'BY NATURE'?" *History of Political Thought*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2006, pp. 563–585. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/26222110.

Abstract: Aristotle says polis exists by nature, but his critics say impossible because the polis is artificial; it's created by a legislation that forces it upon people. This is a critique on Aristotle's belief of the polis.

The polis is imposed on people, even subconsciously; that we feel different or see outsiders (people beyond ourself) is because of comparison created through standards or identifiers set by (other) people. While it is true that physically oneself is different than another, the way we categorize and define others is based on systems put in place by personal beliefs. This is relevant to my project because it speaks to the ephemerality of experience and the inherent fluid nature of art; as art is an experience – visual or otherwise – time, place, and values will change person to person: artist to artist, viewer to viewer. As these "standards" or values change from time and place, so does our concept of self, and thus our understanding of our own experiences.

Di'Tolla, Tracy. "Fluxus Movement Overview and Analysis." *The Art Story*, The Art Story Contributors, 21 Jan 2012, www.theartstory.org/movement-fluxus.htm.

This article is a general overview of what the Fluxus art movement was. Some key ideas from the Fluxus artists are as follows: They wanted to destroy the boundary between art and life; to make art all the time; and to show that art is for everyone, not just the educated or artists. They were focused on process of creating, not just in the final product; means guide the end, not end-guiding-means. They celebrate the element of chance, and their pieces often accounted for that element – in this way, it is related to the Happenings movement. They also applied their theories to the world, not just in art practice.

Duarte, Miguel Mesquita. "Photography and Writing, or the Intimacy of the Image: A Dialogic Encounter between Barthes's Camera Lucida and Blanchot's Philosophy of Otherness." *Photographies*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2019, pp. 283–301., doi:10.1080/17540763.2019.1627392.

This article is Miguel M. Duarte comparing Barthes' Camera Lucida and Blanchot's Philosophy of Otherness. Duarte goes in depth on both philosophies and analyzes their likenesses to establish a connection between the two philosophies. I see this as a great source for my project, as both a look on "photography" and "self" philosophies.

Within the article, I see the ontological desire (as Barthes said) of writing to be housed in the desire to capture moments with the clarity of photography. Writing and photography both are influenced by the artist's eye. Take the camera lucida: an object that allows an artist to trace a real-time viewer. Its ability to create an image relies on the "temporality and unbalanced physiology" of human vision – the original (real-time) is only seen by the original person. I see art and writing as related to using the camera lucida, as the intention of the artist is the only

“true” form of the intended object; the process is a tracing of (recreation, reproduction) the mind’s creation (ideas).

Gecas, Viktor. “The Self-Concept.” *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 8, 1982, pp. 1–33. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2945986.

This article provides a cross-examination of the term “self-concept” as it applies to social-psychological literature emerging at the time. The article examines self-concept and not a concept of the self but touches on how they differ and where self-concept emerged out of the term, as well as differences between self/self-concept under a sociological versus psychological lens. I find Gecas’ note of the distinction between the self and self-concept important for my piece as well as the emphasis on a social psychology point of view; “the self is a reflexive phenomenon that develops in social interaction and is based on the social character of the human language” while “‘self-concept’ is a *product* of this reflexive activity. it is the concept the individual has of himself as a physical, social, [and moral] being.” Gecas also notes Turner’s formulation of self-concept “involves the sense of spatial and temporal continuity.” This sense of continuity, as well as the idea of recognizing the self as an object which is affected by experiences, is important in the forming of my idea of self as it relates to how we process art; our expectations of artist intention and recognition of one’s own understanding of provided information.

Halsall, Francis. “Art and Guerrilla Metaphysics: Graham Harman and Aesthetics as First Philosophy.” *Speculations: A Journal of Speculative Realism V*, 2014.

Francis Halsall is a lecturer who has studied art and art theorists. This article is Halsall looking into the philosophy of speculative realism. This article does explain and give plenty of definition as it builds upon itself.

Halsall explains speculative realism as “object-oriented philosophy” and explains how one might understand the world through metaphysical speculation, as imagining what a “mind-independent reality might be like” (or, a reality not based from our interpretations or experiences). The allure of some things is that they feel foreign to the point of being a total Outsider, something that yourself cannot experience. Again, I am thinking that this is what poetry does while it works, because it speculates what might be, not necessarily creating something that we don’t know (for even speculation comes from our own assumptions).

Halsall, Francis. “Niklas Luhmann and the Body: Irritating Social Systems” *The New Bioethics*, vol. 18, no. 1, 2012, pp. 4–20., doi:10.1179/2050287713z.0000000001.

Halsall is investigating and challenging Niklas Luhmann’s view of the body within Luhmann’s idea of modern society, as comprised “of a number of operatively closed [and] distinct sub-systems.” Halsall believes that the body still has a “significant function” within these systems and does not exist by way of “impersonal communications.”

Halsall's main claim in his disagreement is that "the body has the ability to migrate between different systems..." So, he believes that the body has agency, and in this agency transcends a static label within these systems. The body interacts with different systems at different times, *with acknowledgement* of this moving. This moving is what allows an "observer" to gain meaning from something, as meaning is "generated [by] the process of self-reference." The body has the ability to cross the borders of these systems, as "matter which has intentionality; ... that which is both part of the world and yet transcends it." Bodies, then, possess this intentionality, which holds the ability to disrupt systems put in place which contain their own communication; they cross communications as they interact with multiple social systems, existing as a mobile object which disrupts borders.

Halsall, Francis. "Object Oriented Aesthetics and the Re-Materialization of the Art Object." *YouTube*, uploaded by Cranbrook deSalle, 22 January 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=naxlItILmlw&list=PLrWzXMPTGXtQM1DrwhsDDHjPg1Xu7U-jm&index=6&t=1815s.

This article contains speculation of objects and technology and how these ideas interact with each other to create an experience that one would deem as art.

An important question arose: Where does some art exist outside of its documentation?

Experiential art often has its basis of meaning in the individual experiences of viewers -- does the art exist independently of these experiences, or of these viewers / thoughts? Yes, each object does exist in the world as it is, but as soon as it is interacted with by a person its experience (to that viewer) is intrinsically combined with their past experiences leading up to that moment of "discovery" -- therefore, all art takes objects outside of their internal experience (it experiencing itself) and allows for people to imbue their experiences onto it to derive meaning.

Halsall says poetry comes from things that are left over after signification and "poetry is the swath of language, language is the swath of the world." It's this idea of things being "left over" that I believe art comes from and why it is created anew from preexisting experiences (re: Halsall, intentionality in "Niklas Luhmann and the Body...")

Leach, Tessa Gwendoline. "Anthropomorphic Machines: Alien Sensation and Experience in Nonhumans Created to Be like Us." *School of Historical and Philosophical Studies*, Minerva Access, 2018.

This is the thesis for a doctoral of arts degree candidate for Tessa G. Leach. This research is very recent, dated to June 2018, which is important when dealing with technology.

Leach attempts to explain the importance of dehumanizing language and thought to better understand technology and non-human things without the "eyes" or context of humans. Leach argues that it "is not a frivolous exercise" as the way we speak of technology and nonhuman artifacts can affect the critical study of the objects. She is aiming for a non-anthropocentric dialogue and is using "object-oriented ontology" (OOO) because she believes it's important and possible to consider outsider perspectives beyond human perception and experience. The idea of OOO relates to my project because of its nature of considering the "outsider" or the unlike. By trying to empathize with things outside of humans, one must project their experiences and

recognize their nature is individualistic. It is the ability to recognize that existence and experience exist beyond the self and that the self is influenced by multiple perspectives (perhaps non-human ones); the idea that there are non-human factors that influence our behaviors. “ready-to-hand” or, tool-being, and “presence-at-hand” are important ideas which relate to how objects experience other objects, without the ability to access its totality, its “true essence, its inwardness.” I see this relating to Blanchot and Barthes’ ideas of presence with subject/object relations. My project tests these ideas with the relationship to the viewer and the whole of the piece as an artwork; by utilizing participation, the viewer enters an active object/subject relationship which is augmented by a third party, creating a sort of omniscient presence as the artist – this creates a fluent mediator, between artist / art / viewer which switches between roles, as one has more information over the others at the same time being influenced by all.

McIntosh, Donald. “The Ego and the Self in the Thought of Sigmund Freud.” *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, no. 67, 1986, pp. 429–448. www.pep-web.org/document.php?id=ijp.067.0429a

Abstract: Freud separates a person into two things, the ego (subject) and self (object). The ego is what the person is (actual person) and the self is what they wish to be. So, the self is a *percieved* idea of the person, not necessarily aligned with what actions they have done.

In the context of my project, I am exploring the awareness of the action of perceiving a self – consciously evaluating and reflecting on the actions and thoughts one has had in order to proclaim one’s own identity and assume the reactions of others based on their assumed identity. This idea of perception, rather than a fixed truth, is important because I see self-reflection as an understanding of assumptions and art as a perception of ideas that do not naturally exist as they are in the real world.

MoMa Learning. “Howardena Pindell: Free, White, and 21. 1980” MoMA, www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/howardena-pindell-free-white-and-21-1980/.

This article describes the creation of a video by Howardena Pindell after she experienced a crash which resulted in memory loss. The video is about experiencing racism. The article summarizes the film as well as her life and gives context to the other work she does. It details the film and speaks to the way Pindell is using herself to transform into multiple people and experiences through spoken-words and visual altering – how she presents as a white woman with face-paint and costume, how she peels off a translucent skin to reveal herself again.

MoMa Learning. “Investigating Identities.” MoMA, www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/investigating-identity/intersecting-identities/.

The Museum of Modern Art’s (New York City) website has a section about art and artists which explore identity and how identity in art has changed over the years. This is a good site for seeing general consensus on what artists are doing and have been doing in terms of identity and is also

good for specific artists to look up and do further research. This portion highlights a critique of the feminist movement of the 1970s which is that it was white-centric and excluded women of color, and mentions the identity politics of 1980-90s art which seemed to critique the lack of intersectionality in social action.

Snelling, Tracey. "Sculptures: Rooms." *TRACEY SNELLING*,
traceysnelling.com/artwork/4065949-Rooms.html.

This is Tracey Snelling's website, which has her own writing and images of her work. It is important to hear intention and description from the artist and see how they curate their own work on their website. This article is an image of her installation "Rooms" which is four box-like sculptures installed on a wall and open face-out with small depictions of rooms inside. This intimate looking of a piece inspired me to create a work which requires investigation and curiosity – the desire of the viewer to look and study a piece, or else risk missing information. As Durate explains of both Blanchot and Barthes, "the viewer is attracted by the vision of what is impossible to see... [they do] not exactly perceive a real object belonging to the tangible world, but something undefined ... Desire reveals a sort of depth that is beyond the image."

Sommer, Carol. "Sophie Calle Artist Overview and Analysis." TheArtStory.org, 16 December 2018, www.theartstory.org/artist-calle-sophie.htm.

This website gives a general overview of her biography of her general life as well as art practice. There is a lot of great, quick information about how some of her pieces came to be and what has been create after / because of her progress.

Much of her art's rich meaning comes from the process of making (or viewing) and the physical pieces are secondary. The article explains that sometimes Calle would even devise a set of rules to follow for a piece. The idea of process-heavy content is something I have been gravitating toward, especially after learning about Calle; then, the performance of creating is just as much in tact with the "product" as what is physically seen. It is also important for my project that the viewer must think about my process of getting the footage used; for Calle's work, part of the intense experience of being a viewer is becoming an enabler of her invasive and stalkerish actions that were necessary to create the piece.

Stoetzler, Marcel. "Subject Trouble: Judith Butler and Dialectics." *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2005, pp. 343–368., doi:10.1177/0191453705051709.

This article is Marcel Stoetzler taking a critical look on Judith Butler's history of dialectics, particularly as they relate to referencing subjects. This article is of interest for this project because as the Self deals with identity, one must understand how a sense of identity might be formed. Butler questions to claim and keep a sense of agency and autonomy in becoming – that if the body exists as a passive subject to be subjected, then there lies any power that anybody can subject their body to that of their own desires and wishes. This claim interests me as I look at how the Self is created – there are identities that are proclaimed by an "outsider" that has been

created by “systems” (as Butler puts it) which we claim for ourselves as we perceive how we exist next to and with the definitions of these systems. With the systems intact, one is able to choose a “right” and “wrong” for themselves as they compare identities that do or do not match their perceived Self – even so far as to be able to recognize an entirely new category must be created. As the body interacts with the world, it is never self-created as it is influenced by factors of the systems already in place.

“Tracey Emin.” White Cube, whitecube.com/artists/artist/tracey_emin

This article by gallery White Cube gives a brief overview of what Emin’s method and themes of her works to be, as well as her history of mediums such as video, painting, and installation. There are also examples of her artworks and links to videos with Emin speaking. This article seems a bit too focused on Emin’s feminist ideals and the fact that she uses her life as inspiration; I see this article as falling into a viewer’s tendencies to attribute presentations (art) as truth. Duarte posits that Barthes chose the camera lucida as a “metaphor for the work of discovering what is not immediately shown by the photographic image, revealing an intimate and emotional search that mobilizes the viewer’s bodily and subjective responses.” I see this as the draw toward image (the “desire,” as aforementioned under the “Sculpture Rooms” entry) as truth, that the inherent search when looking at an image *mobilizes* the response of a viewer, which gives them an active experience rather than a passive one.

UbuWeb. “UbuWeb Film & Video: Howardena Pindell - Free, White and 21 (1980).” UbuWeb , ubu.com/film/pindell_free.html.

This is the video of “Free, White and 21” by Howardena Pindell. It is the full video and audio. The white woman, portrayed by Pindell, is an example of how other’s identities (beliefs) can infiltrate your Self and become part of your beliefs -- here, this is demonstrating internalized racism. While she is clearly playing another person, the words she speaks come from her mouth, her own thoughts of what other people think of her and people like her (people of color). The perceptions of other people - how other people perceive you - become your own perceptions of your self and your perceptions of others, categorized by certain likenesses (e.g. race, gender). This likeness, or resemblance, as Duarte would put, stops representing a “stabilized of univocal reality” (Duarte); “Barthes thereby invokes the existence of a co-extension between the referent and its *other*”. A likeness is an ever-changing, temporal manifestation of images which represent no fixed identity.

Whicker, Alan. “Tracey Emin – In Confidence.” YouTube, interviewer Laurie Taylor and interviewee Tracey Emin, 3 August 2013, www.youtube.com/watch?v=vSNXVjU_Tdo.

This In Confidence interview is a good source for first-hand thoughts from Emin about her process. Emin makes an interesting point in the In Confidence interview. She said, “My subject isn’t me – my subject starts with me.” Here, I believe that Emin was trying to argue that while some of the aspects of her work may stem from her, the art is not fact or a mirror that reflects on

her life. The fact that it is art means that whatever is used to create the work has been curated: the pieces of her life used to make the artwork has been selected and presented in a purposeful way, which removes them both from their reality and factuality and makes them carry a different weight. By selecting bits and pieces of one's life and putting it back together in a specific orientation, you are automatically changing the context around those "items." Emin describes the process as the same phenomena as having a dream; a dream is a conjuring but then within the dream it is real.

Documentation & Images

Link to full video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U4b_a7wNjKM&feature=youtu.be

Images as installed for *Firmament*, BFA 2020 Senior Thesis show:



