The Rebirth Of Consciousness

2007

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THE REBIRTH OF CONSCIOUSNESS

by

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B.F.A. University of Central Florida, 2004

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art and the Computer in the Department of Art in the College of Arts and Humanities at the University of Central Florida Orlando, Florida

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ABSTRACT

Human beings encounter cascades of a plethora of experiences, one after another, every single microsecond of our lives. There are many things happening around. The world is full of events and occurrences. As they happen, the mind reacts to every individual input. This is a very exhausting and difficult. Thus, people have developed a process of self-defense against this horrible mishmash of information. Their minds have this amazing capacity of sorting them out and making sense out of them. Humankind’s survival depends on that. If one does not sort all this information out, one might not be able to make a simplest decision. As humans process the information, they learn to ignore and forget. They focus on their feelings and emotions. They forget the logic. The oversimplification process begins. Humans create rigid systems of oversimplified formulas. They assign adjectives to things, occurrences, and other people. The number of those adjectives is small. After assigning, those adjectives obscure everything else. A new world is created, stupid, limited, lazy, and in the end making humans very easy to control. What starts as a basic survival process ends up as a tool one can use to destroy the owners of the mind. In the end, the birth of consciousness leads to its death. My work fights this process. It aims to put a person back into that state of shock created by a mishmash of information and thus create the rebirth of consciousness.
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INTRODUCTION

My work aims to raise a new consciousness in the viewer. I attempt to use all visual means that I find necessary. Thus, medium is of no importance. I allow myself to use any medium, traditional or not. I subject the viewer into a dreamlike world, full of unconnected images. As Dadaists, I try to raise new awareness in the viewer. Influenced by existentialists, I force the viewer to make a choice, create a new aspect of what it means to be a human. Following the Taoist way of thinking, I allow myself a great deal of spontaneity, just letting things flow the way they want to. While influenced by the philosophy behind Feng Shui, I add a degree of intentionality to my work. I fight the automatic process, which Robert Cialdini— a social psychologist who investigated the forces behind influence— described. Artists such as Laylah Ali, Mc Gee, Zittel, Pepon Osorio, and Miro had a great influence on my artistic development as well. My work changed throughout the time and adapted to these ideas. This was all in effort for the consciousness to be reborn, repeatedly.
I have never really seen any substantial difference between computer-generated arts and the so-called traditional art. The difference between the two is superficial. The computer is simply another medium, another way of self-expression. Some people look at the computers, as they are alien, technology oriented, purely mathematical, unreachable, terrifying beings that poses minds of their own. However, the traditional mediums such as painting, ceramics, sculpture, photography and similar all involve technology, chemistry, skill and other overwhelming knowledge as well. As a person who tries to be as true to myself as possible, I try to rid my mind of those superficial boundaries.

In my work, I mix all mediums that I can get my hands on. I work with computer, office supplies, painting, sculpture, drawing, and fabrics. This will ensure the variety of input needed for achievement of the rebirth of consciousness.
DREAMS

In the past millennia prior to the twentieth century, it was a common belief that the world around was perfect. Everything around them existed for a reason. The universe operated in consort with a set of unchangeable rules. People were to strive for perfection as well. Thus, they mathematically structured everything they did, placed all things in order, clean and neat. The beauty was in the numbers. Everything including music, art, and writings had to follow the rules: the perfect, unquestionable, simple Pythagorean structure. It was only a matter of time for scientists to be able mathematically to predict the future of the entire universe, and a fate of singular humans as well. All human beings were fully rational. This was a one of the universal and unchanging truths. This meant humans had to be superior and perfect. Thus, people could outsmart nature. They could create a world perfectly in accord with their needs. They were on the path to eternal peace and beauty. This was inevitable. However, the Viennese physician Sigmund Freud shattered this theory when he set forth his theory in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In this work, he argued that deep in the unconscious (Id), there were chaotic emotional forces of life and love called *Libido* or *Eros*, together with death and violence called *Thanatos*. *Ego* – the conscious public face of a human, a balancing component, one that established inner resolutions – and the *Super Ego* – the will of society, internalized as the conscience – kept them in check. In Freud’s view, a true and lasting equilibrium among these three components of human psyche was impossible. The internal struggle was an inescapable constant. The struggle could shift one way or another. Those, who had pronounced imbalance, between these forces, suffered varying degrees of mental illness, ranging from mild neurosis to extreme psychosis. This internal struggle of *Ego* and *Super Ego* to prevent deeply submerged drives of the *Id*’s instinctual drive from emerging would shape the course of human lives. It was important then for a person to get in touch with one’s inner forces. In the life of sleep, the *Ego* and *Super Ego* were more vulnerable in their
repressive activities. Thus, interpretation of dreams was one of the methods to penetrate the murky realm of the human of unconscious. Freud put the minds of his times inward, in order to explore hidden depths of human personality, where the most primitive and dynamic forces of life dwell. The psychoanalysis, which he founded, was not simply a therapeutic technique that aided anxious patients. It was a descriptive philosophy, which proposed to account for human behavior and culture in general. In it, people were no longer depicted as fully rational.

In the beginning of twentieth century, artists were anxious to use Freud’s theories as a basis for a new aesthetic. They created Surrealism. It was a movement both literary and artistic. It gathered around the journal *Litterature*, which French critic Andre Breton was editing. In this journal, Breton published his *Manifesto of Surrealism*, which paid explicit homage to Freud’s ideas on the subjective world of dreams and the unconscious. The superior reality of certain forms of association, hitherto neglected, the omnipotence of the dream, and the disinterested play of thought, were foundations of Surrealism. Surrealists decided that the rational and scientific viewpoint had been in the forefront too long. They wanted to liberate imagination and to highlight aspects of life that were more poetic.

According to Freud, “The dream, is the royal road to the Unconscious” (qtd. in Cunningham and Reich 391).

Putting the idea of a dream as an expression of subconscious needs away, along with all other potential neurological, psychological, and religious aspects of it, dreams are nothing more then confusing collection of stories, characters, strange symbols, dialogues, sounds, images, and other mishmash information. In the end, we are the ones who assign them a new meaning. This new
meaning is what I am looking for in my work. However, unlike Surrealists I choose not to simply paint dreamlike worlds. I choose to push it harder by making it possible for the viewers to create their own dream out of the images I provide. Then they assign their own meaning to it. In that creative process, they enrich their consciousness.
DADAISM

When nationalism, communism, anarchism, and other philosophies reached its extremes, people began to doubt objectivism, science, and the broad range of belief systems focused on idealism and positivism. This shift in thinking occurred especially after the World War when science and enforced order showed that an evil side of humanity was a possibility. The people, amongst them artists, had to deal with the evil and imperfect world. Absurdity, surrealism, the subconscious, and abstraction gradually became valid concepts. Dada was said to be born of the war itself and of the social, economic, and political calamities that followed it. In 1917, the American Society of Independent Artists organized its first annual exhibition for its members, a large unjuried show. Any artist who paid six dollars was able to enter. However, a little shock awaited the committee, when an unusual work arrived accompanied by the entry fee. Titled Fountain, it turned out to be a urinal, mounted upside down, and visibly signed Mutt. The last carried a sounding resemblance to the name of the Mott plumbing manufactory’s name. Members of the society considered it disgusting, insulting, and very indecent. It was rejected. The person that submitted the work was not surprised. In fact, Marcel Duchamp—the foremost Dadaist – was the artist who had entered it. He was the founding member of the society and chair of the entry committee. One of the reasons he submitted the piece was simple curiosity about how open the members really would be. However, the piece was much more than a cynical vexation. According to Duchamp and Dadaists, life and art were mere matters of choice, free from conventions of society and tradition. This approach paralleled the psychoanalytical work of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and others. The artists believed that art was a powerfully practical means of self-revelation and catharsis. The images that aroused from the subconscious had a truth of their own. One that was independent of the world of conventional vision.
Dada invited, rather than defied, the world to misunderstand it, and fostered every kind of confusion…. Dada has reaped the harvest of confusion that I sowed. However, the harvest of confusion was only a façade. Our provocations, demonstrations, and defiances were only the means of arousing the bourgeoisie to rage to shame-faced self awareness (Richter 9).

The viewer of Dada work must decode the meaning of the work in ways that transforms the experience into an intellectual exercise, yielding different and continually shifting interpretations for each individual. By creating *Fountain* and other jarringly innovative works, Marcel Duchamp forced people to think in a subjective and completely individual manner about the meaning of art. Within this approach to art and life, each act was individual and unique. Chance and dislocation were used in order to shift the viewers into a new awareness. This way of thinking about art, pushed to the extreme by Dadaists, without a doubt has been an incredibly important influence in the way I think and set goals when I create my art. I want to create a moment of confusion. Then I expect this moment to create a new concept or idea in the person’s mind. This new thought might be simply a new judgment about something or someone, or a new continued state of ignorance. However, this state of ignorance at least will bear some freshness and uncertainty with it, an opening, a potential for future freethinking.
EXISTENTIAL ISSUES

Existentialism was a reaction against more traditional philosophies, such as rationalism and empiricism, which sought to discover an ultimate order in metaphysical principles or in the structure of the observed world. It was more an attitude than it was a new, pure, and positivist school of thought.

Existentialists were those who believed that existence of a being preceded its essence. Being’s consciousness was always referential, since it was always beyond itself to an object. Unreflected consciousness was a consciousness, before it was reflected upon or philosophized about. For example, when an individual rushed to catch the bus, the object of one’s unreflected consciousness was the “bus-to-be-caught.” In unreflected consciousness, one could find no self. There only existed objects like the bus. Reflective consciousness was a consciousness reflecting on itself. It was a consciousness, which has achieved self-awareness. Through attainment of it, according to Sartre, one could discover the ego or the sense of what I is. They were partially created in it. Once one studied consciousness phenomenologically, one discovered that it was a monstrous, impersonal spontaneity, in which thoughts came and went of their free will, not via human will. This spontaneity was a form of dizzying freedom and contemplation of it by an individual would lead to anguish. According to Sartre, people, as a matter of course, actively struggled to impose order on this free spontaneity. When they failed, neurosis and psychosis ensued. In addition, Sartre discovered that anguish -- angst -- could break in upon individuals when they least expected it. According to Sartre, rationalists were badly mistaken. Not only was being not necessary, it was also absurd: far from providing a sufficient reason for being. For Sartre and the Existentialists, there was no reason to exist at all. The Sartrean existentialist found one’s own existence as a sort of superfluity, excess, in the context of an absurd world. Yet, human
beings did exist. However, their being was not a stable, solid entity, designed to lasts throughout the time. Awaiting themselves in the future, individuals had to make and remake themselves from one moment to another. Not only they were to redesign themselves, they had to the same with their world. They did so by bestowing the values in the world. Values preexisted freedom, which consisted of one’s ability to choose between them. Through freedom, humans bestowed the values on the world by choosing alternatives. Thus, life had no meaning except for the one an individual seeking for it gave to it. Ultimately, one could not justify their choice of values. There were no eternal values. Nothing was set in stone, so that one could appeal to it to justify their choices. Objectively, no set of values was more valuable than any other set. This freedom, according to Sartre led to anguish. However, human’s freedom was not absolute. There were things in people’s existence that they could not change. If a giant stone fell in a path of a person, one was not able to alter the reality. The stone was there and it was impenetrable. The person could however interpret the meaning of it being there. One could see it as an obstacle. One could see it as an aesthetic or scientific curiosity. Thus, through one’s interpretation, one was freely creating worlds to inhabit. Here freedom was absolute. Consequently, one should face up to the responsibility and freedom, instead of blaming them on others, fate, or any other higher forces. One cannot blame one’s upbringing, parents, state of one’s economics, or hard times. Humans alone determine what it means to them. Humans are always free. There are always alternative values. The ultimate choice is death. “I am condemned to be free” (Palmer 351). Humans arrived into a meaningless world without their permission, where they experienced major complications in their freedom when they encountered other beings and situations. The Existentialism, in Sartre’s point of view, was an attempt to help people understand the world, their obligation to face up their freedom, and the kinds of ethics
available to people in a world bereft of any absolutes and meaning. Sartre saw a world in which every act was ultimately futile in the face of impending death. However, he looked at every individual as a hero: a creator of humanity.

When a person looks at my work, like with everything else in life, they make a choice. They create a new meaning to it. By doing so, I believe, they transform their consciousness. They create new individuals – themselves, together with a completely new consciousness and with it brand new worlds.
THE WAY

In its early days, there were no supernatural deities to worship in Taoism. To the philosophical Taoist, the ontological elements of all universal beings and even the universe itself are combined into Tao – the way. They existed before the universe was born. Tao has no limits. Its existence is eternal. It is not a supernatural force, but the ultimate principle of the universe. It is a prime element and it creates everything in nature. It may sound puzzling for the Westerner. However, from the old Chinese scientific standpoint, from which this philosophy originated, Tao's explanation of the mysterious existence of the universe is solid. Tao is made of two forces. There is Yin – negative force of darkness, coldness, and emptiness, which also stands for female side. There is Yang – positive energy, which produces light, warmth, and fullness. It is masculine. The two opposites reside together. They are contradictory, yet they complement each other. In the hearth of Yin there will always be Yang, and vice versa. They are indestructible and inexhaustible. They are the primordial paired opposing potencies that regulate the universe. This means that every object, substance, or occurrence carry both of them within. With life comes death. That which condenses will disperse. What disperses will condense. After the night, the day will come. Thus, for Taoist there is no Shakespearean question whether one wants to be or not to be. It is obvious. When one exists, this simply means that one will eventually cease to exist. One comes with the other. From not being comes being. The two forces unite. Thus, to fully experience life, one should know highs and lows. Moreover, one should enjoy not one, but both. This is due to the fact, that there is always fertileness where our lows are. Any resistance is futile. The followers of Taoism, along with Chinese people in general, felt that the cosmos was composed of five elements or forces. These were water, fire, earth, wood, and metal. Each element produced and changed another in cyclical succession. Matter and energy could change their form, however as such they were indestructible. The elements moved in
continuous cycle and responded one to another. When one became strong, the other became weak. This created infinitum. This means that the universe was as a vast sphere encompassing smaller ones, where in there was no beginning or end. Natural events took a path of spontaneous creativity through regular alternations of phenomena, such as sunrise and sunset, which proceeded unobtrusively without effort. As this world’s inhabitant, a human should follow the idea of Wu Wei — nonaction — in order to achieve appropriate relationship with nature. This on the surface means that one should not do anything and remain completely inactive. This may seem to be an inconsequential idleness, however if one focuses on the idea, one will discover a deeper meaning. To the Taoist, Wu Wei does not imply idleness, apathy, lethargy, or indifference. What it means is that one should adopt unresisting attitude, as one abides and communes with nature. One has to rid oneself of any ambitious desires, since these are initiating forces that engage one’s active movements. Since the greatest revelation lies in stillness, one should preserve it by dismissing all potential motives that would disturb it and draw it into action. One should never move in response to the outward inducements, but only to that which is inward and spontaneous.

Once the person transcends one’s ego and merges with nature, the person is in union with one’s Tao. Thus, one should be aware of the active principle, nonetheless one should stay with the passive principle. This does not mean the Taoist resigns to weak and timid docility. There is an unflinching fortitude in this disposition of patiently waiting without resistance. There is a tenacity required for keeping such hopes. “The Tao never acts, yet nothing is left undone” (qtd. in Chow 18). Eventually, the sun will shine behind darkest of clouds. One cannot alter the nature. Conscious efforts to do so, will only lead one into turmoil and entanglement. Perspectively, one ought to be as water — unassertive, inconspicuous, and the imperfect, always seeking home in the low ground, soft
and yielding. Yet, nothing can withstand water’s strength. Hard and resisting things can find no way of damaging it.

For many Taoism is a religion. I do not see it as such. I consider it a philosophy. I take bits of it and implement it in my life. In life and in art I try to let things flow. I allow my spontaneity to take me, wherever it is that it wants to take me. I allow myself to be free and create works out of my inner need to do so. Yet, I allow my surroundings to dictate the future direction of my work, where it is that my work is going. I consider it complementary, when someone feels an urge to change something in my work. Strangely, this passive approach works well for me. Chance, in art, generally produces interesting results. However, I do not let it steal my work. In order to achieve balance, I sometimes I resist the outside influence.

In the end, when I am done working, I do not feel a need to control whether a person likes what they see, or sees what I want them to see. All I want is for them to notice it, if only with one look, then as fluid as water I will subdue them. Then, passive or active, male or female, smart or ignorant, in motion or static, their brain will generate some sort of response, interpretation. This is my desire. The rest is up to the universe. I can only await the effects and consequences of the changes I dared to apply to the world.
FENG SHUI

The ideas of Feng Shui are universal and apply to a wide range of cultures and backgrounds. People, who follow it, believe it is not a religion, and that it does not interfere with their religious beliefs. Feng Shui comes from China. Perhaps it is derived from the same influences as, or is inspired by Taoism. It is the use of geographical, psychological, philosophical, mathematical, aesthetic, and astrological concepts in relation to space and flow of the energy of the universe. According to it, one is able to mend and somewhat control the way forces in the universe flow. The world and everything in it is composed of vital energy or life force that vibrates at different frequencies. It swirls in and around every being in nature, buildings, and space. Energy from the sun, earth, and air breathes life force into everyone and everything. Depending on density of the energy, one should be able to see it. However, even when one cannot perceive it, it still exists. For example as one pours water into a teapot, one obviously sees it. Yet, when one boils it, it turns into steam. Then as a gas, it becomes invisible. This energy bears the name of \textit{chi} in China, \textit{ki} in Japan, and \textit{prana} in India. It is a universal force of life of everything. Thus, all in the outer surroundings affect the course of one’s life. Energy permeates one’s physical body and the buildings where one lives and works. Subtle energy moves through each space a person inhabits affect that person’s life. The contents of person’s home reflect who they are and where they are going. Every object has the capability to absorb, project, and deflect energy. Dining table, plants, bedspread, and antique watch all contain their own energy field. This physical, emotional, mental, or spiritual energy influences person’s path to fulfillment. Ultimately, a person must love one’s space where one lives and everything that is inside of it. This encompasses every type of dwelling, including houses, apartments, condominiums, guesthouses, dorm rooms, and trailers. It ought to be a sanctuary, which replenishes as well as supports one’s aspirations. A person’s home is a place that reflects who that person is, their dreams, aspirations, and inner life shifts.
However, the energy of a home can be directed towards a person’s unique goals, since it follows thought. This means that with the strong intention, the thoughts can manifest physically. The stronger the intention, the faster the goals materialize. Intention is as a compass, an outline for the text of person’s life story, or a seed for the future. By implementing the Feng Shui techniques, playing on the subconsciousness with color, and creating a harmonious energy flow, one is bound to achieve results. The color of the walls, the size of a sofa, the wood floors, the plumbing, the electricity, the amount of sunlight, the smells, the tastes, the flora, the water elements, and the imagery affect a person on a daily basis. It is as if an invisible cords transmitting energy are running through a person’s environment, connecting people and objects. The cords transmit signals to a person at every moment. Those interactions either deplete or uplift the individual. Inherited items, antiques, articles from previous marriages have the energy imprint of previous owners. The energy must be healthy and life affirming. Changing it in one’s environment affects the way a person feels, thinks, loves, works, and plays. One may redirect the unhealthy energy and replace it with one that is new and positive. One that will support person’s physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual health. In addition, it will flow evenly and continually throughout a space. There are ways to purify objects of potentially destructive energy. One should keep only the objects that bring one joy, love, and happiness. One cannot predict how and when the intention comes into being. A person’s karma – the result of the choices and actions taken in the past, and a life path are special for everyone. The ways of the universe are mysterious and dynamic. One simply should place faith in them and follow the directions. When one places one’s dreams, goals, and desires in full view and within one’s environment, one forces one’s mind to focus on them, rather than on a blank or negative canvas. “Feng Shui is based on a premise that space mirrors your life” (Barrett 109). In essence, an individual becomes a painter of one’s own
prosperity, happiness, and success. One paints their own destiny. This concept raised a new awareness in my art.

I never thought much of Feng Shui. I hardly acknowledged its existence. This was so, until I met Tabitha. A Feng Shui expert and follower, she kept talking about it. She would often bring oriental and Hindu looking items with her and “cleanse energy” around her. I considered this philosophy to be somewhat as astronomy. It was something generic, unexplainable, mysterious, semi-scientific, and silly at the same time. Then I fell in love with a wonderful man. This resulted in a closer look at this set of superstitions and in two red candles in a South West part of my house, which are supposed to bring and support love. Tabitha made me aware of something else. “You keep drawing those girls, it’s like you are giving him ideas,” for cheating that is. This stopped me from drawing for a moment. I had to reanalyze my art. My work mirrored struggles, worries, ills, inner thoughts, and dark aspects of life. Depressing and overwhelming, they were a mirror of my life. There is a lot violence and sadness in this world. There is no need to celebrate that. There is no need for constant jog people’s memory about it. Smile brings about smile. People tend to imitate what they see. Hence, in my work I decided to play on people’s subconsciousness. Even if it occurs only for a moment, and even if the change that occurs in the world is very small, it does not matter. It may just be a drop of water in the sea. Dwelling on misfortunes does not improve anyone’s mood. Yet, I simply hold hope that this will bring improvement in the quality of life of other people, not only mine.
MOTHER TURKEY

In his study of influence, Robert Cialdini describes a mother turkey. Mother turkeys are protective, affectionate, and attentive. The majority of time they nurture, warm, clean, and group their young beneath them. However, there is something peculiar concerning their maternity. When a polecat – turkey’s natural enemy comes within the range of her nest, she falls into a squawking, pecking, and clawing fury. She gives a stuffed model of a polecat, when pulled on a string close to her, a similar response. However, as soon as it contains inside of it a tiny recorder, which broadcasts the cheep-cheep sound of baby turkeys, she tends to respond in a different way. She welcomes it. She lovingly and protectively gathers it under her. As the tape recorder is off, she will instantly launch a ferocious attack. A simple unpretentious “cheep-cheep” – a noise of a juvenile chick, appears to be everything that activates of the motherhood response. Smell, touch, and appearance maintain a petty function. When a chick produces a “cheep-cheep” sound, the mother will nurture it. When it does not, then she will pay no attention to it, or slaughter it. She might look silly under these conditions. However, this kind of conduct is not exclusive to turkeys. There are countless sightless automatic blueprints for deeds in a broad range of species. The fixed-action patterns, they include elaborate and convoluted successions of conduct such as courtship and mating conventions. They take place in nearly indistinguishable way, under similar circumstances, every time. As if, the natural world had prerecorded tapes within. The circumstances as a totality do not stimulate them. There are particular triggers that set these responses on – a tint of color may turn them on. They tend to function favorably the most part. In nature, mother turkey will respond suitably, by responding merely to solitary “cheep-cheep” sound. It requires a con artist or a group of scientists with a tape recorder, to make her response seem silly. Moreover, humans have their preprogrammed tapes as well. Their automatic behavior patterns are mostly learned rather than inborn. They are more adaptable
compared to other animals. They are also more receptive and alert to a larger quantity of triggers. Automatic, stereotyped action is widespread and dominant in a great deal of human exploits. Most of the time, it is the most proficient retort. In other cases, it is plainly crucial. Humans need shortcuts. One cannot anticipate distinguishing and examining of every facet of each individual, occasion, and circumstances that one comes across every day. Nobody possesses this quantity of time, vigor, or the capability. As an alternative, at the time these trigger elements occur, humans must utilize stereotypes, typecasts, rules of thumb, or react without assessment. Even the best stereotypes and trigger features are not always effective. Humans endure these deficiencies. There is no other option. Devoid of these attributes, individuals would stand immobile, calculating, cataloging, appraising, calibrating, and then recalculating again, with time for action slipping away. As the stimuli in life keep increasing additionally convoluted and erratic, it is probable that humans will depend on stereotyping with growing addiction. People are more likely to react to facts in a controlled style, grounded on methodical examination, when they hold both need and capability to scrutinize it carefully. When they do not, they will be inclined to employ the simpler, routine, mindless choices. The shape and rapidity of contemporary existence does not permit individuals to craft a contemplative determinations, this includes numerous topics that are important to the individual. Every so often, the issues are too convoluted, the time tight, the disturbances invasive, the emotional excitement severe, or the exhaustion is so profound that a person is in no cognitive state to make a choice. Regardless of issue’s importance, one bound to take an easier path. Disparate to the typically inborn response sequences of nonhumans, human automatic tapes typically mature from psychological values and stereotypes they were trained to agree to. They differ in their force. A number possesses a great aptitude to guide human deeds. The majority hardly recognize this force. For others, this develops into a set weapon of influence. A person amplifies one’s odds of blunder, when one retorts and reacts in an automatic,
mindless fashion. The chance of it increases additionally when others look forward to profiting by setting up to arouse most wanted conduct at the most unsuitable moment. This explains Milgram experiment, which demonstrated that every person is capable of mindlessly electrocuting a person, as well as Tuskegee experiment, when a group of people infected others with Syphilis and made sure that the disease takes its toll. “Much of compliance process (wherein one person is spurred to comply with another person’s request) can be understood in terms of a human tendency for automatic, shortcut responding” (Cialdini 17).

As in life, which my work imitates, I put viewer in a spot. For a moment, one is frozen. The viewer becomes part of my art. I overwhelm his or her senses. Then one has to make a decision and create something new in their minds. This might be a new idea or a new set of concepts. Since training teaches us to make choices. I want the viewer to learn to think on one’s own. I hope that it will create at least one person in the world that will not be a mindless follower.
Laylah Ali constructs her petite symbolic gouache paintings on paper with an incredible exactitude. Many months need to pass in order for her to finalize a single work. Painstakingly, she designs all features of her composition ahead of time. This includes theme, hue selection, as well as the size of the brushes that she will employ. Her works have a look of a comic-book sequence. It is a mix of hieroglyphs and American folk-art. It frequently attains an elevated plane of intensity due to a contrast of brilliantly tinted images with sinister, sadistic themes. It portrays socio-political issues, current events, societal interactions, and treachery. Her images hardly ever uncover explicit inclinations. Her most celebrated and most developed sequence of images portray the brown-skinned and gender-neutral *Greenheads*. The more current ones contain portrayals and biomorphic creatures.

Ali bestows her paintings with outside elements like dodge balls, sneakers, and band-aids, together with traditionally threatening elements such as nooses, hoods, robes, masks, and military-style uniforms. Her sketches are free, instinctive, and lighthearted. She tends to use them as a source or ideas that she investigates more genuinely in her paintings. Many aspects of her personal life are included in her art. When she glances at the paintings, especially the earlier works, she often identifies bits and pieces of what she witnessed or experienced in her youth. These personal things go in there, stay, and deepen it. Her subconsciousness and her history work together with the larger narratives. Her creations advance by having an externally pointed private significance. “On some level you make things because you have to. There’s a kind of electrical energy in you that means you have to do this thing. I think that a lot of my creative output has to do with that, I have to have a place to put whatever electrical or chemical loose ends I have. I do what I have to do” (qtd. in Wesley). The way she approaches her work, her process of creation are incredibly close to mine. Ali’s aesthetical
approach, high level of tension and the outside world influence her work without inspire my work.

We both look inward and outward in our works. We both attempt to somehow affect the viewer.
Group of crowded drawings, photos, and signs in thrift frames are arranged on the walls of Mc Gee’s installations. They produce a sense of peeking into a visual diary. It has all the pages visible at instance. With the storyline, that has no fixed linear passage of time. His revelation for these assemblages of framed images took place on a residency in Sao Paulo, Brazil, in 1993. He stopped in Sao Cristovao, near Aracaju, where he came across a native inhabitant of this town who agreed to present the area to Mc Gee. This person took him to an old church with plethora of carvings made by folks who painted or carved a personal inscription on each of them. Clusters of tiny framed images, drawings of people, places, and cars filled the wall. Once a year, people made pilgrimages to this church. They left these items behind as offerings. The innocence and honesty he saw instilled in these, inspired the artist. He embarked on framing the buildup of sketches he was creating for years. Then he assembled them on the walls of his studio. Groupings of framed sketches of the haphazard details of life, he created them on all that was obtainable at the moment of inspiration. This included, but was not limited to, newsprint, images from magazines, as well as music notation paper. These assemblages started appearing in his gallery and museum installations. All of his work takes its ideas from current city environment. It utilizes vacant bottles of liquor, cans of spray-paint, tagged signs, wrenches, scrap wood or metal, and even a school bus. McGee was working on the streets of America’s cities since the nineteen eighties, where he uses the tag – signature – *Twist*. He perceived graffiti as a fundamental and imperative means of dialog. Communication that allows him to stay in touch with a bigger and a broader audience than the one he could reach conventionally utilizing gallery or museum. “Compelling art to me is a name carved into a tree” (Strorr 211), said McGee. His trademark icon was a caricatured male character with baggy eyes and a puzzled face. It brings to mind the transients characteristic to city’s environment.
I value McGee’s artwork mostly on the formal level. I love the way he draws. I love the way he assembles his work. I love the humor, crudeness, and quality all mixed together. His work makes one feel, as they are part of something bigger. It transforms a person for a moment, for a moment giving the viewer a new identity. They become a part of a global city. This sort of transformation, kidnapping of person’s consciousness and process of transforming of it, is what I look forward to when I place my own assemblages of images.
Andrea Zittel’s is a woman that has the guts to do carpentry and constructions. In fifth grade, I had to take a class called Practical and Technical Activities along with my peers. During this course, there occurred a separation into two groups – boys and girls. While the first were learning how to build things in wood, girls were learning how to sew, make flower arrangements, and make potato stamps. It was the most debilitating and humiliating experience at that time. Knowing that the knowledge they are gaining will never be passed on me and staring through the key hole, I looked at what boys were doing with a growing feeling of envy. The approach of the school I went to resulted in me being unable to do any construction project without feeling like an insanely stupid next to male species. However, after looking at woman artists like Andrea Zittel, I feel more courage and I do not abstain from such challenges.

Andrea Zittel’s sculptures and installations alter all life necessities, such as eating, sleeping, bathing, and socializing, into art experimentations in life. Transcending the boundaries that occur between art and life, her ventures encompass her personal home and attire. She constantly reinvents her relationship to her domestic and social environment, by dressing into the same outfit for an entire season, or by frequently remodeling her home to fit to shifting needs and influences. Inspired by modernist architecture and design from the early twentieth century, she formed a one-woman mock organization, called A–Z Administrative Services. She constructs furniture, homes, and vehicles with cleanliness and focus on organization. She is more fascinated in exposing the need for order of humans and accomplishing a feeling of liberty through her structures, than in laying down a sole amalgamating standard or method of design. Her A-Z Pocket Property, a floating fantasy island, weighting forty-four tons, off the coast of Denmark, custom-built for the Danish government, contrasts the artistic
escapism with the loneliness that takes place when an individual is isolated from the world. Altering and investigating trivial features of existence her work reacts to body’s daily pulse and the human need to match surroundings to shifting manifestations of life. She declares, “I am always looking for the gray area between freedom—which can sometimes feel too open-ended and vast—and security—which may easily turn into confinement” (qtd. in Storr 213). As Andrea Zittel, I play with people’s sense of space and safety. I keep this in mind, when I work with three-dimensional, as well as two-dimensional work. Like her, I create constructions and take on projects that somehow mirror life. Both of us attempt to create different awareness about life.
OSORIO

Pepón Osorio’s large-scale installations are the most recognized of his creations. His experience as a social worker in New York is the prevailing influence in his art. In his *Badge of Honor*, he constructed two rooms, sites for a therapeutic discourse connecting an estranged father and son. This installation extracts its topic from a family that endures trauma, detachment, and discrepancy. The two spaces are as dissimilar as possible. Father's room is harshly lit, clean, and meticulously orderly. It is an extremely exaggerated and dramatic depiction of a prison cell. The other side depicts a teenage bedroom. In it, the family photographs unite with the interior decoration. They become one with sports trading cards, composed so densely they construct wallpaper. A procession of sneakers follows the wall. A mirrored floor increases the intensity of the place. The room staggers in its overindulgence. One might look for asylum in this glowing and vibrant environment. In addition, one might attempt to refute the depressing world, where one’s family is falling apart. Together, the rooms project intense, surreal, exactly opposite and counterpart worlds. They are two stages for a twenty-two minute synchronized video discourse of father and son. They converse, sharing recollections, aspirations, and their regrets. The dialogue gradually grows to be increasingly deep and sincere, demonstrating father and son’s pains to maintain the family unit unharmed regardless of difficulties they endure. Although separated, they unite in this video installation and in their act of collaborating with the artist. *Badge of Honor* is a work created for the spectator who comes across it, as much as it is for the father and son to find something that unites them. Mystical and yet graphic, it plays with tough issues and lives of actual individuals, as a parable of modern-day domestic existence. “My principal commitment as an artist is to return art to the community” (qtd. in Storr 213), says the artist. In doing so, he takes from elements from this community – the real world. Then he employs
these elements and places it in his art. This creates an interesting dialogue with the audience –
something I aim to achieve in my art as well.
MIRÓ

Some people see Joan Miró’s work either as Surrealism, playground for the subliminal, rebirth of the innocence, or as an expression of the Catalan patriotism. In his interviews, he demonstrated dislike of typical traditional approach to art creation, as well as a wish of its annihilation. This would create space for a more up to date course of self-expression. In his early days, he enjoyed the company of the population of artists in Montparnasse. After moving to Paris in nineteen twenties, affected by poets and writers, he created his new distinctive way of working. He created organic forms and flattened picture planes drawn with a sharp line. Surrealism and Dada somewhat affected his style. However, he discarded any attachment to any art movement. Nonetheless, many perceived him as the utmost surrealist. “Rather than setting out to paint something, I begin painting and as I paint the picture begins to assert itself, or suggest itself under my brush. The form becomes a sign for a woman or a bird as I work…. The first stage is free, unconscious…. The second is carefully calculated” (qtd. in Tansey 1081). Automatism fascinated him and he employed sexual symbols, such as ovoids with radiating wavy lines. This creative process, at first highly subconscious and in the moment, then changing into a more intentional, rational approach is the one I use as well. The moment will stay fresh and inspired by the outside world, so will the work. This means that in the end, achieving the objective – affecting the viewer, on the subconscious level – should be more fluid.
DEVELOPMENT

The following images are the visual diary of the formal development of my style. They are a fragment of a map of my development process.
Figure ii Drawing
Figure iii Drawing: *Suddenly Silence*
Figure iv  Digital Media: *Intermission*
Figure v Digital Print: Charlie
Figure vi Installation: *Please Sit Down*
Figure vii Installation: Fear of Empty Space
Figure viii Installation: *Fear of Empty Space*
Figure ix Installation: Asylum
Figure x Installation: *Asylum*
Figure xi Sculpture and Installation: *Cage Faze One*
Figure xii Sculpture and Installation Detail: Cage Faze One
Figure xiii Sculpture and Installation Detail *Cage Faze One*
Figure xiv Sequence Art Book: *It Figures*
Figure xv Page from *It Figures*
Figure xvi Digital Print: *Cube Spread*
Figure xvii Postcard for Masters Mystery
Figure xviii Installation: *Fat Lip*
Figure xix Installation: *Fountain*
REFERENCES


