Summer 2019

Enmesh: The art of trauma and recovery

Joanna Pottle

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/honors201019

Part of the Art Education Commons, Art Practice Commons, Contemporary Art Commons, Fine Arts Commons, Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons, Modern Art and Architecture Commons, Other History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology Commons, Painting Commons, Printmaking Commons, Psychology Commons, and the Theory and Criticism Commons

Recommended Citation
https://commons.lib.jmu.edu/honors201019/639

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Honors College at JMU Scholarly Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Honors Projects, 2010-current by an authorized administrator of JMU Scholarly Commons. For more information, please contact dc_admin@jmu.edu.
ENMESH: THE ART OF TRAUMA AND RECOVERY

An Honors College Project Presented to
the Faculty of the Undergraduate
College of Visual and Performing Arts
James Madison University

by Joanna Wyndham Pottle
May 2019

Accepted by the faculty of the Department of School of Art, Design, and Art History, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

FACULTY COMMITTEE:

Project Advisor: Susan, Zurbrigg
Professor, Head of Painting and Drawing Department

Reader: Sarah, Brooks
Dr., Associate Professor of Art History

Reader: William, Wightman
Dr, Professor of Art and Art Education

HONORS COLLEGE APPROVAL:

Bradley R. Newcomer, Ph.D.,
Dean, Honors College
Liminal Space is an artistic installation within the ongoing, interdisciplinary creative/research project “Enmesh: The Art of Trauma and Recovery.” Utilizing a combination of research methods, creative processes, and cultural inspirations, this project asks the following questions: how can the artistic process (this project serving as a preliminary case study) parallel various modes of recovery and healing? How can this objective be visually communicated through a mixed media approach of drawing, painting, and printmaking and how can this approach be an effective tool of communication? What can we conclude from both modes of work (solitarily or collectively)? How do they accomplish different things? How is vulnerability, nuance, and a journey—key elements in both processes—conveyed?

This project is a preliminary case study for these ongoing, long-term art and research topics I will continue to pursue stateside and overseas. First, I executed a three-month long plan in my senior year, starting entirely independent and merging into collaborative components to eventually be an entirely collective experience with a few fellow painters and printmakers. The second part of the project bookends the artistic project with preliminary and conclusive visual and cultural research through art residencies and research trips in New York, New York, and Krakow, Warsaw, and Gdansk, Poland. I was able to generate paintings and prints during my trips that synthesized my visual language with the research I was collecting, predominately within the historical and contemporary context of Poland. Looking to Polish history of poster design, painting, trauma, and Solidarity, I found many parallels with my artistic practice and process and implemented those into my project.
Statement

Liminal Space is an artistic installation within the ongoing, interdisciplinary creative/research project “Enmesh: The Art of Trauma and Recovery.” Utilizing a combination of research methods, creative processes, and cultural inspirations, this project asks the following questions: how can the artistic process (this project serving as a preliminary case study) parallel various modes of recovery and healing? How can this objective be visually communicated through a mixed media approach of drawing, painting, and printmaking and how can this approach be an effective tool of communication? What can we conclude from both modes of work (solitarily or collectively)? How do they accomplish different things? How is vulnerability, nuance, and a journey—key elements in both processes—conveyed?

I take a twofold approach to investigating these prompts and do not seek to directly answer these questions in the traditional form of a written analysis as this it too complex of topic to address as such, thus, instead taking a visual inquiry approach. These questions are also an ongoing inquiry that are too excessive to cover within this timeframe and I will continue to pursue in my post-undergraduate work stateside and overseas.

This project is a preliminary case study for these long-term art and research topics. The first is the artistic project Liminal Space. A three-month long plan in my senior year, starting entirely independent and merging into collaborative components to eventually be an entirely collective experience with a few fellow painters and printmakers. Intentionally, I worked on the project individually to better understand my own creative process, needs, and objectives. Gradually, I introduced more contributors to the project to gain greater perspective, voices, and community. In both artistic and recovery processes, there needs to be components of solitude to reflect, listen, and heal combined with community engagement, collaboration, and accountability. The prints, paintings, drawings, and books are process work and visual research for this process-based project.

I have been investigating various forms of dysfunction, which simply means something that is not working properly, such as trauma, abuse, substance use disorder, and mental illness as well as more abstract concepts of codependency, enabling, and shame. I am now moving towards a direction of analyzing recovery and more specifically, how artistic process can parallel various processes of recovery through the physical process of art making—in solitude and communally—with multimedia painting and silkscreen techniques. As investigating process goes beyond the tangible into an internal and relational state, so the imagery goes beyond the recognizable to a state of what I like to call “marvelous messiness.”
Generating active listening and meaningful conversation during the making and viewing, with the aim of promoting tangible change to move from a space of dysfunction to a place of healing.

The second part of the project bookends the artistic project with preliminary and conclusive research through art residencies and research trips in New York, New York, and Krakow, Warsaw, and Gdansk, Poland. I was able to generate paintings and prints during my trips that synthesized my visual language with the research I was collecting, predominately within the historical and contemporary context of Poland. An equally important component to executing visual research is to create an ongoing list of artists, movements, and work as sources. A few include Abstract Expressionists such as Philip Guston, Leon Golub, Cy Twombly, Helen Frankenthaler and Polish artists such as Henryk Tomaszewski, Stanisław Wyspiański, Jerzy Janiszewski, and Tadeusz Browozowsk. Looking to Polish history of poster design, painting, trauma, and Solidarity, I found many parallels with my artistic practice and process and implemented those into my project.

INQUIRIES:

How can the artistic process (this project serving as a preliminary case study) parallel various modes of recovery and healing?

How can the above idea be visually communicated and how can that be more effective tool of communication than solely written or oral?

What can we conclude from both modes of work (solitarily or collectively)? How do they accomplish different things?

How is vulnerability, nuance, and a journey—keys elements in both processes—conveyed?
2018-2019 TIMELINE

SUMMER 2018 // PRELIMINARY TRAVEL/RESEARCH
Participation in two residencies/workshops to generate visual and contextual research.

June / New York, New York, U.S.A.
July / Kraków, Poland

Initial inquiries and experiences into communal creative practice, visual research, Polish poster design and history, Solidarity movement

FALL 2018 // ARTISTIC PROJECT/RESEARCH
Mixed media collaborative installation of painting, silkscreen and drawing. Three 7’ x 9’ pieces total.

September / Piece I
October / Piece II
November / Piece III
December / Concluding work on all three pieces

Continuing research on artistic collectives, trauma, recovery, and Solidarity and putting them to creative practice.

SPRING 2019 // EXHIBITION/ TRAVEL/RESEARCH/PRESENTATION
Production of a variety of deliverables and conclusive research.

January / Installation Exhibition, LIMINAL SPACE
March / Poland (Kraków, Warsaw, and Gdansk)
April / Presentation

Concluding research and reflection on Polish connections to art/printmaking, trauma, recovery, and Solidarity.
KEY TERMS AND OBJECTIVES

Enmeshment of creativity and dysfunction. Artistic process and recovery (process).

I. Enmesh (v.)

Cause to become entangled in something Involve (someone) in a difficult situation from which it is hard to escape.

(enmeshment)
codependent relationships in an unhealthy symbiosis.

II. rana cięta (feminine) Polish word... gash.

cięta (v): to nick, to saw, to slice

III. Curate (n.) Latin word “curare” ... TO TAKE CARE.

French meaning ... One who has the cure of souls.

I tackle these questions by breaking down this project into groupings of THREE:

Three periods of time (summer 2018, fall 2018, spring 2018)

Three seven by nine foot canvases over three months with three primary mediums of oil paint, silkscreen, and charcoal.

Three key terms; Enmesh, rana cięta, and Curate.

Three Polish cities i.e. Kraków, Warsaw, and Gdansk

Three methods of deliverables; artistic project/exhibition, presentation, written deliverables.
SUMMER 2018

<<images of process/work, research from New York + Kraków>>

NEW YORK ACADEMY OF ART, June 2018
STUDIO KRAKOW, July 2018
LIMINAL SPACE, exhibition press release
Opening reception 16 January, 2019, 5-7p

In anthropology, liminality (from the Latin word līmen, meaning "a threshold") is the quality of ambiguity or disorientation that occurs in the middle stage of rites, when participants no longer hold their pre-ritual status but have not yet begun the transition to the status they will hold when the rite is complete.

The liminal space is the “crossing over” space – a space where you have left something behind, yet you are not yet fully in something else.

This exhibition is both a conclusive installation of my work, research, and process accumulated throughout my undergraduate career and the beginning of a new body of work and series of forthcoming projects.

This is the crossing over of...

the artistic process and research back to artistic process and back again to research,
from dysfunction to a place of healing,
from awareness to raw to whole to angst to acceptance to vulnerability to action,
to apathetic living to intentional, meaningful existence,
of unfinished into resolved back to underdeveloped to complete,
questioning what resolved looks like and means,
multiple mediums interwoven within one another,

the climax of one season and the ushering into another.
the teetering from unresolved space to the pure and unapologetic unknown.
This project is twofold.

The first is the artistic project you see before you. A three-month long plan, starting entirely independent and merging into collaborative components to eventually be an entirely collective experience with a few fellow creatives. The prints, paintings, drawings, and books are process work for this process project.

I have been investigating various forms of dysfunction such as trauma, abuse, substance use disorder, and mental illness as well as more abstract concepts of codependency, enabling, and shame. I am now moving towards a direction of analyzing recovery and more specifically, how artistic process can parallel various modes of recovery through multimedia painting and silkscreen techniques. As it goes beyond the tangible, so the imagery goes beyond the recognizable to a state of what I like to call “marvelous messiness.” Generating conversation during the making and viewing.

The second part of the project is to take from that artistic project and accumulated research and generate a written deliverable. Within that document (and this exhibition) are elements of visual, literary, curatorial, and scientific research going back to this summer from my residencies in New York City and Krakow, Poland. Arguably, going back many years into one cohesive whole. Finally, it will incorporate my forthcoming and conclusive undergraduate research involving my return to Krakow for a few weeks this March.

Many sincere thanks to

The School of Art, Design, and Art History
The College of Visual and Performing Arts
The Honors College
The Office of Research and Scholarship Center for Global Engagement

For their generous support towards my research and projects.
IMAGES OF LIMINAL SPACE INSTALLATION AND PROCESS WORK BELOW
be interested, not interesting.

Joanna Pottle

SADAH Student Artist Lecture Series

04.18.19
b. 1996 Richmond, Virginia
BFA studio art, BA art history, art education
Enmeshment of creativity and dysfunction: Artistic process and recovery (process)
What does this look like?

Oil paint, silkscreen, charcoal, and words (etymology, poetry, language, prose). Less literally, music (rhythms, adagio, cadenza, and crescendo) etc., Brahms, Chopin, Puccini, and other such drawing implements.

What does this look like? Oil paint, silkscreen, charcoal, and words (etymology, poetry, language, prose).
I. Enmesh

(v.)
Causes to become entangled in something.

from which it is hard to escape.
Involves (someone) in a difficult situation.
Codependent relationships in an unhealthy symbiosis.
Collision
2017
oil paint on canvas
4 x 3
Hayley Michelle
2017
silkscreen on paper
4" x 11"
Embrace(d) 2017
silkscreen on paper
22" x 10"
2017 oil paint, silkscreen, mixed media on canvas 4' x 8'
ABSTRACT EXPRESSIONISTS / The New York School

Philip Guston
The Return 1956

Leon Golub
Coronation of Sesostris (Part V) 2000

Cy Twombly
Gigantomachy II 1966

Helen Frankenthaler

"There are no rules. That is invention is about. That is what the rules are for. Against the rules or ignore them. How art is born, how breakthroughs happen. Go against the rules or ignore them. That is what invention is about."
Caught in the Middle

charcoal and conte pencil on paper
2018

2018

II.

[Image of a drawing]

Clęta (v): to nick. To saw. To slice.
Polish word... gash..."

Il. Rana Clęta (féminine)
Codependency
2018
oil paint and charcoal on canvas
6 x 3
Unhealthy Symbiosis
2018
oil paint and charcoal on canvas
4 x 3
Voids
2018
silkscreen on paper
18" x 10"
Polish poster artists, painters, printmakers

Tadeusz Browcowoski 1918-1987, b. Ukraine, Kraków
Jerzy Janiszewski b. 1953, Gdansk
Stanisław Wyspiański 1869-1907, Kraków
Henryk Tomaszewski 1914-2006, Warsaw

"I do not have patience to admire beauty in itself—skilled eye or hand. I prefer failure to mastered perfection. I am not interested in showing-off accomplished forms anymore. I enjoy, instead, playing with a language I do not know yet." Henryk Tomaszewski
III. Curate (n.)

Latin word "curare" ... TO TAKE CARE.

French meaning ... One who has the cure of souls.

Detached
2018
Oil paint and charcoal on canvas
5 x 4
Streets of Krakow
2018
silkscreen on paper
10" x 22"
LIMINAL SPACE
Installation, 2019
Questions + thoughts?