THINGS LEFT
remember, repurpose, renew

Julianne Hunter
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“Anamnesis means remembrance or reminiscence, the collection and re-collection of what has been lost, forgotten, or effaced. It is therefore a matter of the very old, of what has made us who we are. But anamnesis is also a work that transforms its subject, always producing something new. To recollect the old, to produce the new: that is the task of Anamnesis.”

-Jere Surber

Hiraeth- a Welsh word with no direct translation. “It’s an unattainable longing for a place, a person, a figure, even a national history that may never have actually existed. To feel hiraeth is to feel a deep incompleteness and recognize it as familiar.”

-The Paris Review

Repurpose- to change something slightly in order to make it suitable for a new purpose; adapt for use in a different purpose.

-Oxford Dictionary
Artist Statement

“The mind sees and continues to see objects, while the spirit finds the nest of immensity in an object.” - Gaston Bachelard, The Poetics of Space

Using images from the house I grew up in has become a way to create a personal relationship to the work while allowing viewers the opportunity to experience it in their own way. Returning to this now uninhabitable space has presented something cathartic for me in the wake of its loss. That space was once protective and solid, like a nest, but still permeable. Now vacant, it is untended and deteriorating, but somehow seems more secure in its degradation.

Objects are a way in which we remember; the things we encounter are subject to temporal boundaries. Repetition in process and the use of meaningful materials releases and memorializes objects that are important to me. The origin of materiality is intrinsic to the work. Embedded meaning exponentially increases the layered emotional content within each piece. The materials used in my work come with their own history which inherently impacts the way I continue to develop that narrative. Through this repurposing, the work creates a connection between time, decay and growth.

The current body of work is an exploration within this metamorphosis of structure.

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Introduction

The spaces we occupy and the objects we value vary in degrees of importance at different times. The idea of “home” often encompasses a certain feeling of ambiguity and temporality that is always in flux. For some, home could mean simply a shelter, a vessel for a person to stay, a compartment to keep belongings, or something else, like a person, object or place. This body of work is an investigation into the possibility of cultivating that feeling of “home,” even just for a moment, where a connection or sense of nostalgia is open to experience.

“For our house is our corner of the world…it is our first universe” (Bachelard, 4).

Structures, dwellings, shelters, communities, condominiums and cardboard boxes are all forms of “home” dependent upon their occupants. The transformation of these spaces can be tragic and beautiful simultaneously and that transformation can happen slowly or in an instant. This phenomenon occurs in many ways and is universal- almost all humans, animals and even dust particles travel from space to space and experience a change in what they may classify as “home.” Once these spaces are no longer physically accessible, they remain in our memories and are evident through photographs, objects, and stories.

Objects often represent another form of home and sometimes emote a feeling of comfort or security, or may be a tie to the past. The individual items we treasure can be as unique as our DNA. The objects we carry with us daily, the ones that make the cut
when packing boxes and relocating, are reminders of something, someone, or somewhere no longer accessible. They begin to have their own history. While these objects may not serve their original intended functions, nonetheless, we save them. Finding new purposes for some of these materials and objects that may be considered useless are another driving force behind my work.

Remember

The house I grew up in has become a cornerstone in my work, literally and figuratively. A place I considered my “home” is now abandoned, deteriorating and taking on a new form. The transformation of this structure is key to the anamnesis that I attach to its past and present states and critical in my goal of repurposing its image. This space, forgotten and deserted, is a place of my past but an important part of who I am and clearly evident within my work. This historical residence evokes an uncanny feeling in its unobtainability. “History is hysterical: it is constituted only if we consider it, only if we look at it- and in order to look at it, we must be excluded from it” (Barthes, 65). Returning to this house, drastically altered in its use and appearance reinforces its impossibility to be claimed. It is no longer my home, but rather, a place for my memories to originate and dwell. Now, it hosts a collection of mold, fungi, vermin, animals and earth. Now, it is “home” solely to its surrounding environment.
The objects evident within the works included in the installation of *Things Left* all have personal significance and at the same time are universally manifested. Objects such as denim, pockets, paper, locks, doors, windows, corners and keys are represented and employed in creating the pieces. It is crucial to my practice to use materials that have meaning embedded within them. This allows for a connection to be made between myself and my viewers, because each person experiences the objects in their own way and may have their own history with such images. It lays a groundwork for common understanding and a starting place for discussion.

Although I have moved countless times, there are certain objects that I cannot bring myself to dispose of, regardless of their function. I have had a pair of my father’s
jeans that consistently get moved to the bottom of my own stack of jeans each time I relocate. The significance and nostalgia within this object holds a psychological and emotional importance. It is a connection to my deceased father. He was the only other person to put his hands in their pockets. The car key to his last car is attached to my keys and has been since his passing. This vehicle is no longer in my possession, however it is one of the only other tangible links that I have to him. Using these objects in my art has been, and continues to be, very important to me.

Repurpose

*Things Left*, as an installation, is a type of self-portrait of my own anamnesis. Anamnesis is described as a type of recollection of what has been lost, forgotten, or effaced, with the ability to transform its subject (Surber, 2). The main material used in this installation is paper, both handmade and found. In *Remnants I and II*, I repurposed scraps of paper to create manually-laminated paper stacks. The process consisted of finding, sorting, tearing, and gluing each piece together, one by one. Once assembled and dry, I cut the paper stacks; either manually or with a band saw. It was challenging to print on the sculptures, but I was able to use silkscreen to transpose the images onto their unconventional surfaces, due to the freedom to print without a press. Creating a photo-stencil on the screen allowed for a free registration on each piece. By floating the screen over the sculptures, I was able to strategically register the image on each sculpture and create layers with the images, utilizing a wide range of transparency achievable with silkscreen inks.
Remnants I
Detailed installation view
Dimensions variable

Top left and bottom (detail)
3” x 3.75” x 2”

Top middle
7.5” x 4” x 1.25”

Top right
2.25” x 5” x 1.5”

Middle
5.25” x 8” x 4”
After the initial exploration and developments of *Remnants I*, I began experimenting with cutting cross-sections from the sculptures in order to print with various mediums. While silkscreen allowed for a fast, immediate result, any slight imperfection in the surface or curvature in the piece made printing unpredictable. Cutting the cross-sections from the larger stacks presented new challenges, due to the fragility of the paper near the edges; modifying the amount and type of adhesives used within the stacks prevented some of these issues. Practice and repetition with the band saw made the dissections less problematic and eventually, I was able to get thin enough slices to run through a traditional printing press, but thick enough to be secure and withstand the process.
Discovering the cross-sections presented a new matrix to work with and opened the possibilities for transposing images through various print mediums. *Remnants II* are composed of the cross-sections cut from the sculptural pieces, intaglio, nails and glue and are mounted on individually cut pieces of wood. Some of the pieces within this installation also include photo transfers and silkscreen detail directly on the wood, underneath the elevated prints. Xerox transfer-etched zinc plates and photopolymer plates were used to create the images for each piece included in *Remnants II*. The zinc plates allow for a wide tonal range and deep, precise line work with a heavy embossment created by running the plate and the paper slice through the etching press. Photopolymer plates allow for a high-resolution, photo-quality image that is less illustrative than the zinc plates and creates a far less dramatic embossment in the printing process. Within these prints, a limited palette of blacks, browns, greys and blues were utilized to enhance the relationship with both the paper components themselves, and their sculptural counterparts that make up *Remnants I*. The selection of images chosen for each print also come from the house I grew up in and are repeated on various pieces within the three panels that compose the installation.

*Remnants II*, three-panels, as installed, 48” x 48” each
Remnants II

Selection of details
Intaglio on paper with nails and glue, mounted on wood
Dimensions Variable
Renew

The Things I Had Left I, II and III are the final pieces that complete the installation. The series frames the three works included in Remnants II and are consistent in shape and size, measuring in at 48” x 48”. On the left wall, The Things I Had Left I, a large grid composed of forty-nine white embossments are encased within a raised white frame. The Things I Had Left II and III, found on the right wall feature two similarly formatted grids that fade from blue to white as each piece descends. The forty-nine embossments within each print represent each year of my father’s life and one for his memory that lives within me.

Within these pieces, I wanted to create a new life for the objects I had left from my father. His car key is something that I carry with me every day, a small token of remembrance. For The Things I Had Left I, over the course of forty-eight hours, I dissolved the key in ferric chloride, a type of etchant, and took an embossment once per
hour. The dissolution of the key is a representation of how a person’s physicality disperses and diminishes over time. This was an emotional piece to create, with initial feelings of sadness and loss. In the construction of the grid, I felt some sense of control and structure putting them all together.

A year later, I discovered papermaking, a versatile media that became very relevant in my work. In the same way that printing and embossments happen methodically, in soothing, repetitive movements, making paper was a similar type of physical meditation. I have had a pair of my father’s denim jeans for many years, sitting in my closet. Sometimes, I took them out and put my hands in their pockets, feeling one of the only other spaces that belonged solely to my father. The function of the jeans no longer exists without him. Unwilling to donate, recycle or throw them away, I repurposed the material in order to make paper. Cutting, washing, rinsing, boiling, beating and processing the material, I broke up the fabric into pulp and pulled over 200 sheets of paper. With each set of four sheets, I added two pints of white cotton pulp, diminishing the purity of the denim with each sheet pulled. By the time I had ran out of material, the paper was almost pure white. There are however, strands of denim evident, even in the last sheets. Diffusing the fibers of the denim, but ultimately seeing the remains within the pieces represent my father’s spirit continuing within my own life. The embossments within both The Things I Had Left II and III are what I now have left of the denim; only the seams, zipper and pockets.
Remnants II and Remnants III, 48” x 48” each

Conclusion

The body of work that makes up *Things Left*, shown at the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art in May 2017 is ultimately an homage to my father. Each piece is created with universal images and symbols that are open to interpretation. The personal significance is what connects myself to the work, but I hope for the viewers to find their own unique connection to it. What remains are the essential pieces to begin conversation, share emotions, experience nostalgia and form a connection; to something, someone, somewhere.
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Show Card

things left.

julianne hunter
mfa thesis exhibition

opening reception:
friday, may 12, 2017
5 pm - 7 pm

exhibition hours:
may 12 - may 16
11 am - 5 pm

samuel dorsky museum of art
alice and horace chandler and north galleries
state university of new york at new paltz
1 hawk drive, new paltz, new york, 12561

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Bibliography


https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/repurpose

https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2012/09/18/dreaming-in-welsh/

Julianne Theresa Hunter

juliannehunterart@gmail.com

Education

Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking, in progress
  State University of New York at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
  May 2017, 4.0 GPA

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Sculpture
  The College of Saint Rose, Albany, NY
  May 2008, Minor in Art History

Teaching Experience

Instructor of Record
  State University of New York at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
  • Fall 2016, ARS 105: Introduction to Studio Art
  • Spring 2016, ARS 205: Introduction to Printmaking

Adjunct Faculty
  State University of New York at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
  • Summer 2017, stacked course, graduate and undergraduate
    ARS767 and ARS382: Media Intervention
  • Summer 2016, stacked course
    ARS 205: Introduction to Printmaking and ARS 280: Basic Printmaking

Teaching Assistant
  State University of New York at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
  • Fall 2016, Art Seminar with Prof. Thomas Albrecht
  • Spring 2016, Art Seminar with Prof. Thomas Albrecht
  • Fall 2015, Basic Printmaking with Prof. Rimer Cardillo

Coordinator
  • Fall 2007, After School Art Program, The Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic School, Albany, NY

Workshop
  • Photo silkscreen workshop, focus on printmaking on and with ceramics, SUNY New Paltz

Professional Experience and Awards

2017  Outstanding Graduates Award
2017  Sojourner Truth Scholarship Recipient, State University of New York at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
2017 Presenter for Independent Study Research Project focus on SUNY Seamless Transfer, SUNY New Paltz
2016 Research and Creative Projects Awards Recipient, SUNY New Paltz
2016 Residency at Zea May's Studio, Northampton, MA, specializing in non-toxic printmaking methods
2016 Sojourner Truth Scholarship Recipient, State University of New York at New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
2016 Participant in Screen Printing with Encaustics Workshop with Jeff Hirst, R & F Paint, Kingston, NY
2016 Member of Fine and Performing Arts Advisory Council (by invitation only) SUNY New Paltz
2015 Research and Creative Projects Awards Recipient, SUNY New Paltz
2015-2016 President of Student Art Alliance, SUNY New Paltz
2015-2016 Graduate Assistant Printmaking, SUNY New Paltz
2008 Studio Assistant to Paul Mauren, Sculpture, The College of Saint Rose
2007 Assistant to the Curator, Juried Show, The College of Saint Rose
2009-2015 Commissioned for Holiday window paintings and décor, Heights Café and Armando’s Bar and Restaurant, Brooklyn, NY
2007 Marble Sculpture Course, Scuola Lorenzo di’Medici, Florence, Italy

**Group Exhibitions**

2017 *MFA Thesis Exhibition*, Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, New Paltz, NY
2017 *Press Pause* Williamsburg Art & Historical Center, Brooklyn, NY
2017 *Neoteric Abstract*, Limner Gallery, Hudson, NY
2017 *120° Intercollegiate Regional*, Saratoga, NY
2016 (Curator) *Summer Printmaking* Fine Arts Building Rotunda, SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
2015-2016 *Fundamentals in Printmaking* McKenna Theater, SUNY New Paltz, New Paltz, NY
2009 *Discard Avant Garb* Albany, NY
2009 Market Place Gallery (formerly Contompasis Gallery) *Nothing Left to Lose* Albany, N.Y.
2008 The College of Saint Rose, Senior Exhibition, Albany, NY
2006-2007 The College of Saint Rose, Juried Exhibition, Albany, NY

*languages: conversational Spanish and basic Italian*
For my Dad.