

12-2011

Confessions: A BFA Exhibition.

Mary Carolyn Molony
East Tennessee State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.etsu.edu/honors>

 Part of the [Illustration Commons](#), and the [Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Molony, Mary Carolyn, "Confessions: A BFA Exhibition." (2011). *Undergraduate Honors Theses*. Paper 154. <https://dc.etsu.edu/honors/154>

This Honors Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Works at Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Undergraduate Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ East Tennessee State University. For more information, please contact digilib@etsu.edu.

Confessions: A BFA Exhibition
by: Mary Molony

The Honors College
Fine and Performing Art Scholars Program
East Tennessee State University

November 18th, 2011

Contents

Page

• Introduction.....	3
• In the Beginning.....	4
• Inspiration from Abroad.....	5
• The Impact of Renaissance and Baroque.....	7
• Modern Masters.....	9
• Confessions: The Work Behind the Work.....	13
• Conclusion.....	27

Introduction: Artist Statement

As an artist, I am inspired by the art of the past. When I try to categorize what exactly I'm drawn to, it comes down to craftsmanship, ornate detail, and the commitment and dedication of the artists. In a world of instant gratification, I feel that perhaps my artistic aesthetic may be dying. There are particular aesthetics such as those found in the style of Gothic architecture that I frequently use in my work. After a summer in Italy, I found that my obsession with cathedrals only increased. They were built to be awe inspiring, and appeal to the emotions but I never knew how a structure could have such a personal impact on someone until I experienced it myself. "Interiors induce a sense of infinity by making the beholder aware of the unending variety and limitlessness of God's creation" (Panofsky 19). I am constantly looking at cathedrals with their pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and flying buttresses. Gothic architecture stands as a metaphor for nature with its aspiring arches and ongoing naves; they appear like trees in the forest with secret passages beyond. I believe this idea makes the cathedral mysterious, much like the concept of religion. Although these monuments were built to inspire man to see the greatness of God, or have a spiritual connection with a higher being, I feel that organized religion has gone awry. Addressing broad topics dealing with war, religion, and politics has become a focus in my work. I am able to use objects with iconic associations, such as reliquaries or a confessional to reflect how these topics affect me personally as well as the impact and relevance on society.

My art deals with the questioning of religion and its impact in not only my personal life but society as a whole. Growing up in a small town in Southwest Virginia, I was one of the only Catholics in my school. As a child I admit to being intimidated by the rules and guidelines of the Catholic Church, and never fully understanding what to believe in. In my growth as an individual, I have become more spiritual in my beliefs, meaning that I look to nature and science

and an inner reasoning on questions related to purpose in life rather than organized religion for the answers. With this found spirituality, I find a connection with the natural world. Studying art history from the Renaissance to the Baroque has helped me understand and refine this idea of spirituality, and how the structure of the cathedral was built to portray this.

Artists are inspired by the world and ideas around them. My ideas come organically, through many sources. When I make art it becomes very process oriented. I feel that I am an old soul, and want to create art that has a particular sensibility about it. Through my years as a student studying art, I have tried to expand my skill from painting, metalsmithing, bookmaking, to sculpture. My work is often time intensive and repetitive. I work both two dimensionally and three dimensionally in mostly printmaking and sculpture. Printmaking is so historically rich, dating back to 5th Century China, that part of me wants to have a hand in that history. With prints I am able to draw fine, meticulous lines on the copper plate and still allow me to fulfill a traditional practice. While printmaking includes drawing, it also involves the physicality of preparing the copper plate and running it through the press to create the finished print. Sculpture allows me to use different materials such as wood, metal, or found objects which only broaden the outcome of a piece. I enjoy the freedom of scale with sculpture; either making something encompass the viewer, or having them get intimately close to a piece. My art explores the ornate, excessive, decorative qualities in Gothic architecture, and the craftsmanship which I have the most admiration to continue

In the Beginning

In order to be an artist, I believe that one sees the world perhaps a little differently. We look at one tiny object, which can inspire a lifetime of work. As a child, instead of reading

books, I always just looked at the pictures. The illustrations allowed me to imagine my own stories. As I grew older, I never stopped doodling, or creating things. My high school art teacher saw the potential I had, and encouraged me to apply for an art scholarship. After receiving this scholarship, the answer then became very clear as to what I would study in college. This was the opposite direction my father encouraged me to go in. Coming from a line of doctors, which dates back to the 1640s I abandoned any further studies in medicine. I was unsure what medium to continue in after foundation level classes, so I took a variety of courses such as printmaking, bookmaking, and anatomical sculpture etc. After taking multiple semesters of metalsmithing and painting classes, I felt that it was too late to commit to something else. This time in my student career was affecting me so negatively that I didn't even care to continue with my degree. When I had the chance to study abroad in Italy the summer of 2010, I took it. Italy is so historically vast in the language of art that it is impossible to comment on everything that inspired me. Upon my return from Italy, a series of unfortunate events at ETSU changed my direction completely. I was dismissed from my ties with metalsmithing, and was encouraged by a new voice in my approach to painting. The exposure and overall newness I was encountering awoke new visions. Specifically, I can't remember when or even how I became so enamored with Gothic architecture; it just became this part of me, even before I studied abroad. How could I go to Italy and not come back without being inspired by the architecture? The structures that I became most absorbed, and obsessed with are cathedrals.

Inspiration from Abroad

A cathedral is a Christian church which includes the seat of a bishop, which derives from the Latin word, cathedra. Cathedrals are known for their superior beauty, and in terms of today, "cathedral" is easily interchangeable with any church with impressive stature. "God's presence

was universal; but a cathedral was his home in two special senses” (Swaan 15). With many cathedrals, abbeys, churches, castles, and universities in Europe, Gothic architecture is prevalent. The style came from Romanesque architecture, and was succeeded by Renaissance architecture. The religious/spiritual beliefs at the time had a major influence on the changes being made. Some recognizable characteristics of Gothic architecture include flying buttresses, pointed arches, and ribbed vaults. The one feature which revolutionized the design of Gothic architecture was the pointed arch. This allowed more freedom for the architects to design structures reaching new heights, and reach further into the sky. Instead of thick bulky walls found with the Romanesque style, Gothic architecture allowed light to triumph over substance. It was believed that light was an expression of God, so the decision to add more windows was highly intentional. Including colorful stained glass windows was also thought to enhance the lightness and be awe inspiring to the common man. The windows sometimes incorporated narratives, such as episodes from the life of Christ, or represented saints to make religion more accessible to those who could not read. By raising the walls, and elongating the windows, the structure itself made people physically look upward toward the sky. Metaphorically speaking, the people were elevated spiritually when inside a Gothic cathedral. The massive size never inhibited the amount of detail from the ground to the ceiling; the intricate ribbed and fan vaulting is miraculous in aesthetically as well as structurally. Gothic vaults were designed to support irregular designs such as trapezoids. The attention to intricate detail even in the vaulting was yet another symbol of the greatness of God.

Gothic architecture becomes even more complex when applying the ideas of Scholasticism. In Erwin Panofsky’s book *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*, he talks about how cathedrals were designed to “embody the whole of Christian knowledge, theological, moral,

natural, and historical, with everything in its place and that which no longer found its place suppressed.” (Panofsky 44-45) He tries to convince the reader that the architectural style and structure provide visible equivalents to the scholastic definitions of the order and form of thought. The study of Scholasticism brings forth an entire field of research which I hadn’t even expected when beginning my research on Gothic Architecture alone. The relationship it has with Gothic Architecture appeals to my further examination on the subject

The Impact of Renaissance and Baroque

As I have mentioned before, to be an artist is to be inspired by many things. Throughout my education of art history, I find that one artist is inspired by another. It becomes quite the cycle, the master teaches the apprentice, and the apprentice will do what he/she will with that knowledge. I have always been attracted to art that has a particular quality and refinement. Craftsmanship and attention to detail remain an important aspect of my inspiration. Some of the finest examples range from the Renaissance to the Baroque.



Jan Van Eyck, *Arnolfini Portrait*, 1434, Oil on Panel, National Gallery: London

It is debatable whether or not there was one Renaissance or many renaissances in western art. As it is argued by Panofsky (1994), there were multiple renaissances before the Renaissance which were more like revivals. He further explains that the Renaissance was a cultural movement spanning from the 14th to the 17th century of gradual cultural reform. During this time we have the Flemish painter Jan Van Eyck (Flemish, 1395-1441), who painted highly detailed work such as the Arnolfini Portrait from 1434. The attention to miniscule lines absolutely amazes me, and pushes me to achieve a similar effect with oil paints. Albrecht Durer

(German, 1471-1528) dates may be regarded as the greatest Northern Renaissance artist due to his knowledge of Italian artists and German humanists. He was a painter, engraver, printmaker, mathematician, and theorist, who earned his reputation throughout Europe while in his twenties. Italy, arguably the center of the Renaissance, flourished with artists such as Donatello, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci. The age of enlightenment was a great span of history which grew into the Baroque Era.

The Baroque Era came after the Renaissance. Again, it wasn't as if one day it was the Renaissance and the next Baroque, the period started in Rome around 1600. Some distinguishing qualities found in the Baroque are drama, tension, movement, richness, grandeur. The term baroque can be informally used to describe something that is highly detailed, or elaborate. The later years of the Baroque began a new appreciation for spirituality rather than materialistic society.



Caspar David Friedrich, *Abbey in an Oak Forest*, 1809-10, Oil on canvas, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin

Caspar David Friedrich (German, 1774-1840) has been one of my greatest inspirations from this period. Friedrich was a German Romantic painter who is known for his allegorical landscape paintings that speak to the emotional response to nature. In 1809-10 he painted Abbey in an Oak Forest. Due to my own passion for Gothic architecture and how it very much so relates to nature, I am immediately drawn to this painting. The focal point is the ruins of the abbey, where you can't help but notice the Gothic window. Above this is a crescent moon which becomes a symbol of resurrection and hope. Around the ruins are leafless oak trees with dying, broken

branches which are silhouetted against the colorless sky. This eerie, remote space that lies beyond the cathedral speaks more to a spiritual essence than a clear representation of landscape. Friedrich presents the viewer with different ideas and emotions. He talks about the decline of the old Church, and the decay of faith which supported them. Quite literally he represents this thought through ruins of the abbey. He also relates nature to the structure found in cathedrals; how the nave is reminiscent of trees in the forest, with secret passages and hidden trails. He shows how nature is reclaiming the place where the abbey once stood. Finally, Friedrich is talking about death. It is a winter scene, which is an obvious reference to death and decay. We also see skeletal trees, ruins, a graveyard, and a coffin to reinstate the idea of death. Although the painting is so heavily weighted with death, there is one small detail to remind us of rebirth and life, the sliver of the moon. Friedrich's painting evokes more of the idea of the history of the church and fate of man.

Modern Masters

Moving into the twenty first century, I am still drawn to artists who spend much time and dedication on their art. Like any other artist, I must admit to following the cycle that all artists are influenced by those before them in both positive and negative ways. Although I try to hold on to art from the old masters, I cannot completely reject contemporary artists such as Andy Warhol (American, 1929-1987), Maurizio Cattelan (Italian, 1960-) or Marco Everistti (Chilean, 1963-), who touch on the same concepts and ideas as me. As they all have a Catholic background, it interests me to see how it plays into their work.

If later in life you change religious views, somehow Catholic roots still feel embedded in you. It's not to say that my concepts are relatable to Warhol's, but there is similarity in the process that comes with both of our work. Andy Warhol had a Catholic upbringing, and I think it

is an important detail to point out, due to the constant ritual and routine of Catholicism and how it affects someone later in life. The majority of Warhol's work is nothing but repetition and routine, and it is because of this that I feel I continue to be part of the cycle; to be inspired by those who come before me.

Marco Everistti could be classified in the genre of shock art with pieces that deal with goldfish in blenders, and meatballs made from his own fat. The piece that speaks to my concept and views is titled Rolexgate. It is a model of the Nazi concentration camp Auschwitz. Like Al Farrow, his use of materials helps you arrive at this concept. He purchased gold teeth that were from Jews who were killed in Auschwitz. The teeth were melted down to make up eighty percent of the model. There is a train car entering the gate made of diamonds, which inside holds tiny skulls. Diamonds are used to represent how time can never erase the past and are



Marco Everistti, *Rolexgate*, 2007, Gold, diamonds, Rolex watch
Art Gallery Nikolai, Copenhagen

symbolic of our greed. The piece speaks to the atrocities and greediness that comes with war.

Maurizio Cattelan approaches social or cultural issues with dignified, satirical wit. He began his artistic career making furniture, and eventually grew to master his skills as a sculptor. I find his work refreshing because of its humorous approach to serious topics. My favorite piece is The Ninth Hour because I can't help but think it's funny. Although it does



Maurizio Cattelan, *The Ninth Hour* 1111, Wax, clothing, polyester resin with metallic powder, volcanic rock, carpet, glass,
Guggenheim Museum (current display), New York

stir up the debate between science vs. religion, I don't feel pressured to take it seriously even though it is the Pope being struck by a meteorite. Because it is done so realistically, it allows the viewer to reach the concept easier because you aren't distracted by formal issues, you can just look at the piece and understand what is going on. I am drawn to his work because at times, I feel that art is taken too seriously, or is forced to be something that it's not. To see an artist bring cleverness and intelligence through their work is very inspiring to me.

In my search, I am continuously inspired by these three particular individuals; Al Farrow (American, 1943-), Wim Delvoye (Belgian, 1965-), and Kris Kuksi (American, 1973-). All of these artists are skilled in multiple disciplines rather than just focusing on one. I feel it is important to understand many aspects of art, and being able to manipulate and master materials is part of that. These artists have impacted me more than any others in creating art, and developing my ideas.

Al Farrow is primarily a sculptor who uses a variety of media, from bronze, clay, to assemblage. After re-watching a studio tour, I find that his art resonates with me just as much today as it did a year ago. He uses his skills as a sculptor for his restoration job. During the tour, he shows walls and walls shelved with African, Pre Columbian, and Shamanic artifacts he's collected for years. Much of the collection stems from tribal art, which is affiliated with religion. Farrow explores how other cultures incorporate spirituality through objects. In talking about the religion, he clearly states that he is very involved with the concept of religion, but is against organized religion due to the hypocrisy. As Farrow also points out, God cannot be on everyone's side. Religion has become a government in itself; as seen with the Catholic Church, it has power, control over the people, and money. In the piece Cathedral we are presented with what looks to be a model of a church. Upon closer examination, the entire piece is made from guns, or

materials related to guns such as bullets. Once you realize what the materials are, you have a better understanding of how Farrow feels about organized religion. This piece resonates with me because I too think that religion has been detrimental in history; rather than separating people, it should unify and bring us together. It is a genius way of expressing the beauty of a cathedral while still reflecting the negative outcome that can come from organized religion.



Al Farrow, *Cathedral*, 2007, bullets, guns, glass, bone, Farrow Fine Art Gallery, California

Another artist who uses architecture as a staple in their work is Wim Delvoye. He is a Belgian artist known more for his work that deals with the body. He says that as a child he was influenced by the Roman Catholic society due to the importance of symbols. Unaware of what these paintings or sculptures were about, he understood their importance upon the people. Delvoye has many different series of work, from tattooing pig's skin to constructing Gothic windows with x-rays serving as the stained glass. The work that intrigues me most are his life size objects, usually machines dealing with construction. What makes the work so beautiful is that the designs are Gothic filigree motifs laser cut into steel, and constructed into the shape of



Wim Delvoye, *Caterpillar #5*, 2002, Laser cut steel, Public Art Fund, New York

machinery. The ongoing detail in the work relates directly to that of a Gothic cathedral. The idea of never giving the eye a break from the beauty and intricate detail is amazing. My first response to Caterpillar #5 was that the machine itself is used to destruct, and tear apart either the earth or pre-

existing buildings; it creates, and clears away rubble and debris. I find this relatable with Al Farrow's work, noting the destructive aspect of religion. Man can create beauty in the appearance of a cathedral. At the same time, the beauty can become adulterated by the hypocrisy and elitism sometimes found in the groups that practice organized religion within the structures.

Kris Kuksi will continue to be a master in my eyes. In his book Divination and Delusion I am unsure how anyone could be less than amazed by his work. The amount of detail alone



Kris Kuksi, *Churchtank*, 2010, Mixed media, assemblage,
LOCATION

should earn respect. Kuksi has always felt that the grotesque and macabre are beautiful. The piece which resonates with me most is Churchtank. “I was interested in the mystification of religion and Catholicism as a child. Later in life, I realized that the church was against many other ways of life, cultures, other religions, and beliefs and that instead of spreading peace and love, it often promotes hate and discrimination.” (Kuksi, 4) Kuksi feels that in today’s world, mankind is fragile and that we

are driven by materialism and greed. His work challenges organized religion and mortality while referencing iconic Gods and Goddesses. Each sculpture is excessively detailed with an exquisite sense of drama.

Confessions: The Work Behind The Work

In the spring of 2010 I was taking intermediate sculpture. The only guidelines for the first project were that it had to be mixed media. I had an animal skull which I found on my parents farm in Virginia, and I had to urge to design something around it. In sketching through thoughts, I was inspired by the idea of a confessional booth. In retrospect, I was drawing this idea from a personal experience I had when I was younger. Seeing how the majority of people in my

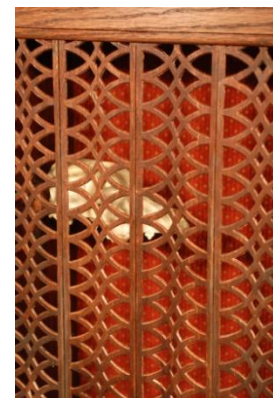


Confessions, 2010, wood, gold leaf, fabric, animal skull

hometown are Baptists, I always felt different; not the ostracized kind of different, but there was something about saying I was a Catholic. There was only one occasion where I went to confession; everything about it felt odd, and somewhat unnatural. To speak with a stranger about your sins, and in return you say so many Hail Mary's and you are forgiven? At this point, I knew I never truly embraced my religion. Only in the last two to three years have I examined my faith or religion and even had a mind to question it.

The piece Confessions is made to resemble a confessional booth. I wanted the viewer to approach the latticed window and look inside. They are now looking at a skull, which is obviously not from a human. I want the viewer to be confused, and maybe a little scared.

That was my reaction to confession, and my intentions are to allow the viewer to feel uncomfortable. I also added red material for the background to make it more realistic. The additional lighting from the inside helped give the skull a shadowy mysterious feel. For me, the idea of confession is odd, or perhaps outdated in a sense. This piece



Detail of *Confessions*

was a turning point for me. I finally felt as though the materials were benefiting my ideas rather than hindering them. Through the use of different mediums, I continued on to create my next piece.

Confessions allowed me to grow in skill and craftsmanship with wood. I felt more confident with the equipment, and wanted to do more. When I had the idea to make a family crest, I wanted to make it have a historical feel to it. I had also been thinking about my Irish heritage (my Father was born and raised in Ireland), and where my family comes from. In my research I found that many family crests were made out of metal or at least contained metal elements. I decided to use poplar since it is a soft wood, and carve out Celtic designs. For the additive element, I cut out multiple copper plates to fit into the design. The etchings I did on the copper were design elements taken from a metal shield found in Ireland. In order to make it more than just a shield, I



carved out a nook in the center, and attached a door. On the

front of the door, I etched my family crest of Molony, which is a bow and arrow. When looking at the shield with the door shut, it is almost hard to detect. Once you open the door, there is a lock of my hair tied to a ring inside. I had also been looking at a lot of reliquaries, and was fascinated with the idea. In a way it is my contribution to the line of



Family Relic, 2010, Poplar, gold leaf paint, copper, hair

my family. I am proud of my heritage, and wanted to make it more of a statement by including part of myself in the piece.

For the last project for the spring semester, I knew that I wanted to make a reliquary. The structure of it came easy to me, but I was unsure what the actual "relic" would be. My goal at the time was to make the viewer believe that this could be a real reliquary. I was particularly studying the forms and details found in reliquaries. I was asking myself why someone would want to save someone's finger, or head and display it inside a precious vessel. Again the notion



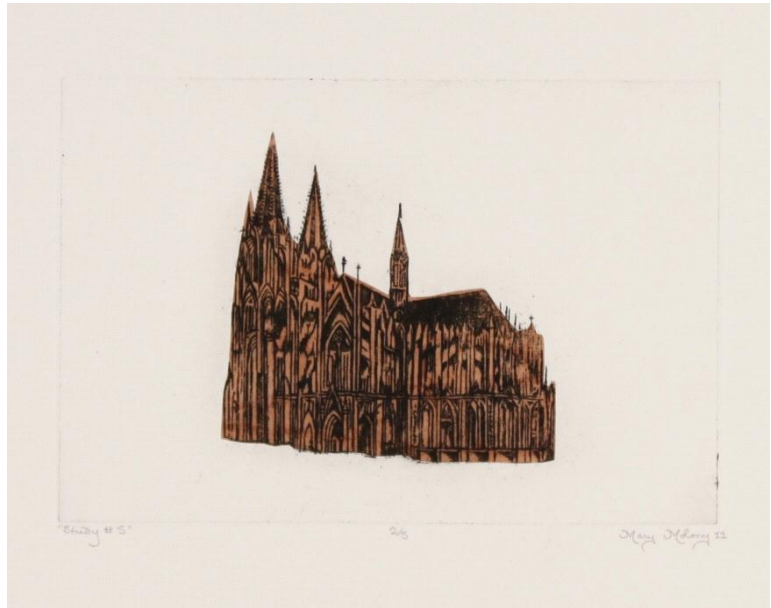
Reliquary 2010 Wood Clay glass, light

of this feels weird to me, yet I am fascinated by it. The other side of this is the power of the church. If there is a reliquary inside a cathedral, it automatically appears to have historical significance. In other words, when it is in the proper setting, you almost feel obliged to react to something when it is displayed with grandeur. I decided to fill the glass vessel with an index finger bone. Again, realism was the goal, so I sculpted the bone out of clay to the best of my abilities. I also added a light in the base so the vessel with the bone inside

would be illuminated. I wanted to add to that feeling of importance. If the piece is set in a dark room the structure itself becomes less important, where as the glowing finger becomes the spotlight. I included three pointed windows to give it the Gothic aesthetic. Once I completed it, the piece lacked in content, it just looked like a reliquary. I revisited my reliquary this fall and decided to take out the bone finger.

Following spring of 2010, I traveled throughout Italy while taking courses in sculpture, printmaking, and art history. Revisiting printmaking after not taking it for three years was

refreshing, with plenty of inspiration from my environment to draw from. I had etched two plates of fairly typical Italian architecture, and decided I wanted to do an etching of a cathedral. Although I was in Italy, I decided to do a study of Germany's Cologne Cathedral.



Study of Cathedral, 2011, Chine colle,

Not only did I choose it for its beautiful architecture, but when I see photographs of it, I feel like it is creepy. If you take it out of context, the structure is massive, dark, and full of points. It made me think that if I had never seen a cathedral before, I'm not sure if I would want to go into a place like that. The thoughts that came with this print led me in a new direction.

When I returned from Italy, I couldn't get cathedrals out of my head. There are a number of reasons why I kept thinking about them. You read about how they are awe inspiring due to their size, but it is hard to actually understand that feeling until you experience it yourself. I was amazed at the never ending ornate details. I couldn't stop thinking about how much work was put into even the smallest of details throughout. Not only on the inside, but on the outside the decoration isn't spared. With my inspiration fresh on my mind, I designed a scaled down cathedral. I wanted to further my obsession and build my own just to have a better understanding of the structure itself. Due to the length of time allowed for the project, I wanted it to read "cathedral" and not just a church-like building scaled down. When I finished it, it looked like a

kit you could buy from the store, instructions and all. I had to change it. In order to not make it so pristine and precious, I partially burned one half. It became a cleansing experience for me. I am the type of artist who strives for perfection, down to the smallest details. When the time came



Ashes to Ashes, 2011, Poplar, fire



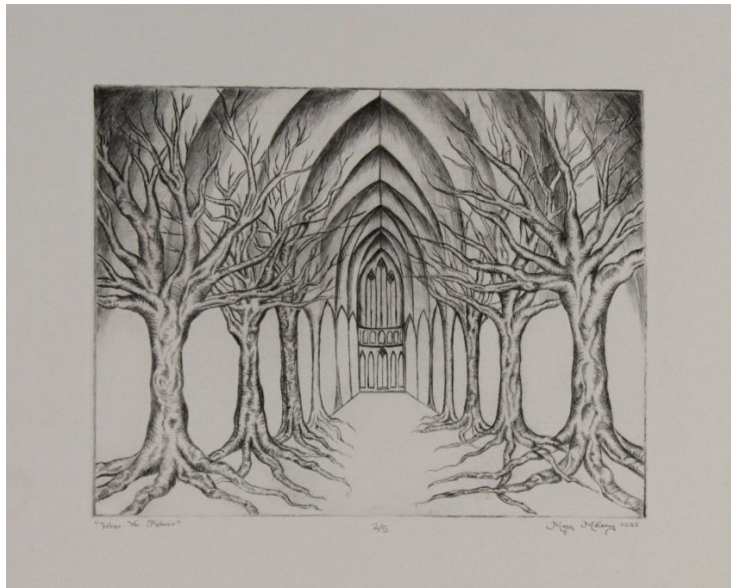
Exhibition display with table

to destroy it, I felt liberated. I also built a table to display the piece on this fall semester. I used traditional woodworking techniques such as mortise and tenon joints to assemble the table. By including similar motifs found in Gothic windows, the display table allows the piece to be read as a cathedral.

What is difficult to describe about the piece is that I really had no intentions of commenting on religion at all. It was an idea that I could not get out of my head and felt the need to extract it quite literally. The initial subject was the passage of time. Since I was constantly researching cathedrals, I wanted to bring awareness to the fact that cathedrals which are hundreds of years old are still standing today. Instant gratification burdens us to methods that are fast, cheap, and easy. As I mentioned earlier, I'm always finding multiple ideas, or images that inspire me. Looking at designs of cathedrals I came across photographs of Cologne Cathedral during World War II. The surrounding city was completely demolished, yet the bombers left the cathedral untouched. It made me think that if a cathedral can withstand a war due to its beauty

and magnificence, then why do we not take the time today to build more masterpieces? The piece Ashes to Ashes more than any other, I continue to question what exactly it is about. Maybe there is something subconscious that I'm touching on.

When I arrived at the concept for When We Return, I was simultaneously taking a course in 19th Century art history. I thought Caspar David Friedrich's painting Abbey in an Oak Forest was genius. He adapts the concept of the fallen church into the landscape. As I was working on Ashes to Ashes this image just came to me. I thought about how nature inspires architecture, and



When We Return, 2011, etching

also how nature reclaims our structures. The nave of the church slowly transitions into trees. In examining my own thoughts of religion at the time, I thought about what happens when we die. In simple terms, our bodies will return to the earth, and become part of the future environment.

Ideas for my next print followed the thoughts that came with When We Return. I was thinking about how artists are continually inspired by nature. An excellent example is Gaudi's Cathedral under construction in Barcelona. I have always enjoyed the examination of human anatomy. I started a drawing of the muscular system in a male and noticed similar forms to that of a cathedral. The way the muscles arch into each other resemble pointed arches of windows. Once I had the idea, I ran with it. I wanted to create the excessive, ornate Gothic architecture, yet intertwine it with the human body.

Study of Our Architecture can be taken different ways. In my beliefs, the world is so complex that I have a hard time believing there is no great mind behind it. Yet, the philosophical question is vast, and there is much room to explore it. The question I am facing is did man create God or did God create man? On the right we have the architecture of a cathedral, and the left the human body. It also speaks to our study of science, much like Leonardo da Vinci studying cadavers to see how the body works. The two sides of the print are compositionally separated by two entities. The contours of the body on the left flow, and create organic curves, whereas on the right there are straight, linear qualities. Between the two structures though, I saw how patterns and shapes could be intertwined and conformed into each other.



Study of Our Architecture, 2011, Intaglio

I was still working on Study of Our Architecture when I started Self Portrait in Architecture. Self portraiture is something I was never highly interested in. I had been doing so much thinking about myself and my interests at the time that it only felt natural to represent it in the form of art. I decided to use the traditional technique of etching on a copper plate. I knew



Self Portrait in Architecture, 2011, Intaglio, watercolor



Detail of *Self Portrait in Architecture*

with this method I would be able to achieve fine lines and detail. Much like the previous piece, I wanted to incorporate elements of Gothic style architecture into the curvature of my face. The shapes of different windows and ribbed vaulting helped create the contours. I decided that the hair would be hand colored with watercolor because including architectural details wouldn't have made sense. Overall, the piece was not as successful as Study of Our Architecture because it lacked depth. My take on the self portrait was to portray what is within me, and how my interests in this aesthetic are literally consuming my body.

My final print of the semester in printmaking was following the idea of my sculpture Confessions. I worked on the copper plate creating the screen of the confessional. The process

was meticulous, and monotonous. I etched the pattern and pulled a test print only to be disappointed in the result. Rather than abandoning the plate completely, decided to experiment with other materials. There is a technique called collograph where you take a thick paper, such as illustration board and coat it in matte medium. Once you have a thick layer you can draw into it making indentions. The overall look is a lot more rough and sketchy than etching. Once I drew the skull, I cut out the form and glued it straight onto the plate. I then decided to add chine colle



Outdated, 2011, Intaglio, chine colle

in order to give it the rusty coloration. Chine colle is a technique where you add coloration to a print with paper. The area in which you want to have the colored paper is cut out. Before you place the paper on the plate for printing, you lay down your colored paper in-between, lining it up with the plate. The colored paper usually has glue on one side, so when it goes through the press, the wetness of the paper adheres to it. I titled it Outdated because when I worked on it, I found out that you can now send your confessions via text message thanks to an "app" on the iphone. In response, I thought about how even church cannot escape technology.

After building Ashes to Ashes I was quite stuck on the destruction of war. Looking at photos from WWII, and seeing the devastation that became people's lives, I thought about what is happening in our world today. Every day I listened to NPR and noticed that I would hear "war in Iraq" all the time. Not that I didn't care, but it was easy for me to just turn off the radio and go on with my day. This got me thinking; how does this war in Iraq affect me from day to day? I wake up, go to campus, come home and eat dinner, and go to bed. It's not that simple for all, but just to break it down into what is pretty routine for people my age, we aren't affected at all.

Arguably, people could say they have loved ones serving our country, and I understand that, but for Americans we don't have to worry about the physical hardships of this war.



What Are You Serving For..., 2011, Paper, paint, clay, wood



Detail of *What Are You Serving For...*

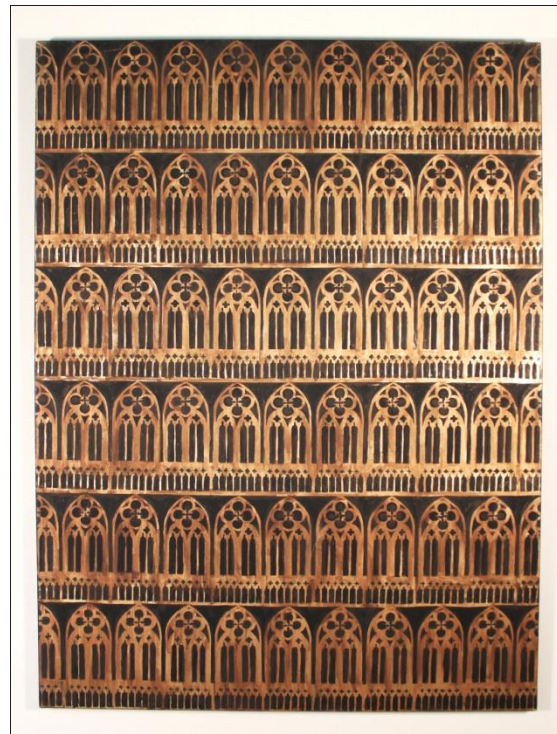
What Are You Serving For... was my next sculpture. It was a complete step away from the aesthetic I was using in printmaking. I decided to use a real gas mask because of its association with war. On the interior I constructed a scaled down kitchen to fit the contours of the mask. The glass for the eyes became windows for the kitchen. I had to use many different materials, such as clay, wood, paper, etc to make the small scale furniture. The outcome of this piece surprised me because it was such a step away from anything else I had made. The title is supposed to have double meaning. It questions why people serve our country, and risk their lives during war, and also from the standpoint of the unaffected and the daily question what are you serving for dinner.

After What Are You Serving For... I finally had a solution for my reliquary. Rather than filling the glass vessel with one object, I thought about what I wanted to honor. After thinking about religion and war, and how they are often unfortunately related, I decided to fill up the structure with army men. The original color of the plastic was too dull, so to make them look more notable, I used gold spray paint to give them the gilded look. Reliquary For the Fallen is my dedication to those who have lost their lives in this war.

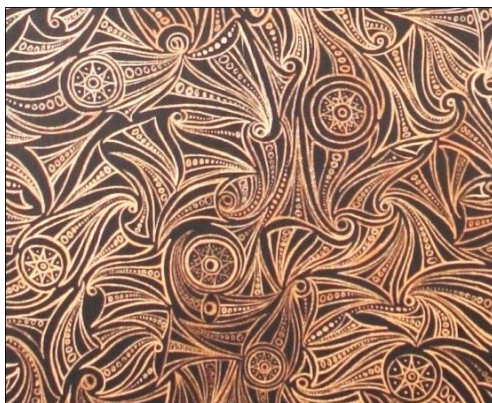


Reliquary For the Fallen 2011, Wood, gold leaf, glass, plastic army men, spray paint

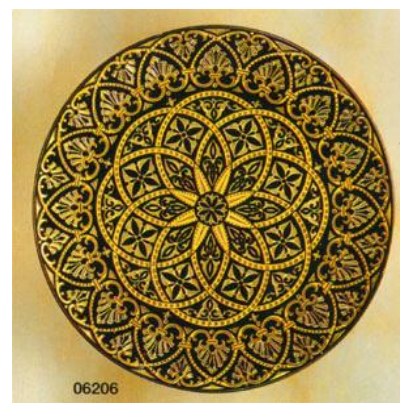
I also wanted to include two paintings which were very important in the development of my show. Every painting I had ever done previously was based on the "old master painting" techniques. In the fall of 2010, my painting professor persuaded me to turn a small doodle into a large scale painting. I painted the 3x4 foot canvas black and only used gold leaf paint for the design. The art of Damascene was the inspiration for my choice of materials. The technique is still largely practiced in Toledo, Spain. Damaskeening is when gold is inlayed into iron or steel in intricate patterns or figures. My doodle relates to this work due to the repetitive quality, and ongoing detail. The painting took around two months to complete. As I worked on it, it was only about process and getting to the edges of the 3x4 foot canvas. When you stand in front of the completed painting, it gives off a chaotic, moving tension. I want the viewer to get lost in it, and study the pattern and think about every dot or line on the canvas. The partner to the first painting took on a much different appearance. I created my own stencil of a Gothic style window and



Diptych in Chaos and Order, 2010, Gold leaf paint, spray paint, acrylic



Detail of *Chaos*



Example of Damascene

drew it on a gold spray painted canvas 60 times. I then painted the outline of each window in black. Again, the process was so monotonous that I found myself almost getting lost in a meditative state. I also thought about the repetition of prayer, going to Mass every week, and how monotonous that can be. When the two paintings are side by side, one is obviously very



Just A Man, 2011, Fabric, coat rack, umbrella

structured, and the other chaotic. I included these paintings in my show to stress in an abstracted way how the structure of religion can land in chaos.

In all my thoughts of the Catholic Church and troubles along with it, I took into consideration the Pope. Once I had the previous work completed for my show, I purchased a coat rack, designed, and sewed together my own Miter (the liturgical headdress for bishops and the Pope.). The piece Just A Man is simply about being human, and making mistakes. I wanted to make an object with iconic presence more

approachable to the everyday person because when it comes down to it, even the Pope is just a man.

The last piece I completed was a drawing titled From Our Own Creation. It was based off of the print Study of Our Architecture. As I was nearing my show, I obsessively thought about the work I was displaying, and the reoccurring themes. It was a self portrait in the sense that when I draw, or think of making something, I always refer to Gothic architecture, or some aspect of it. The drawing portrays that idea literally growing out of my own hands. The title implies how man has created beautiful things in the world, and maybe it is up to me to keep this “old world” aesthetic alive.



From Our Own Creation, 2011, Graphite

Conclusion

Through the countless hours of monotonous work, and the unforgiving frustrations an artist encounters, I feel lucky to practice art. In completing my senior exhibition, I feel accomplished and ready to continue in the field of art. After spending years trying to develop this concept, the outcome has given me a positive outlook for the future. Although this feels like the ending of something, I am confident that it is not the end of my artistic career. From the age of seventeen to twenty three, change is inevitable. In my growth as a person and artist, I continue to evaluate what it is to be an artist, and where it will take me. With my studies in a number of

different artistic mediums, I feel comfortable pursuing different processes, and ways to execute my ideas. In my encounters with fellow art students, I find that creating art is easier when you are enclosed in the scholastic environment. The challenge I now face is in where I take my work, and continue to expand on my interests and skill. My work will continue to grow from the ideas and concepts that I have portrayed through Confessions.

Works Cited

- Al Farrow Reliquaries*. N.p., 2011. Web. 21 Nov. 2011.
<<http://www.alfarrow.com/reliquaries.html>>.
- Arslan, Edoardo. *Gothic Architecture in Venice*. London: Phaidon, 1971. Print.
- Berlin, Jeremy. "Gaudi's Masterpiece." *National Geographic* Dec. 2010: 24-27. Print.
- Bucci, Cristina, and Susanna Buricchi. *Renaissance Art: Masterpieces in Painting, Sculpture and Architecture*. [Antella, Italy]: Scala, 2007. Print.
- Ciagà, Graziella Leyla. *Cathedrals of the World*. Vercelli, Italy: White Star, 2006. Print.
- Lee, Chang W. "Maurizio Cattelan: All." *The New York Times Art and Design*. Guggenheim , 3 Nov. 2011. Web. 21 Nov. 2011.
<<http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2011/11/04/arts/design/20111104-CATTELAN-6.html>>.
- Codina, Carles. *Goldsmithing & Silver Work: Jewelry, Vessels & Ornaments*. Asheville, NC: Lark, 2003. Print.
- Kris Kuksi Sculpture*. N.p., 2011. Web. 21 Nov. 2011. <<http://kuksi.com/artworks/sculpture/>>.
- Kuksi, Kris, and Jon Beinart. *Kris Kuksi: Divination and Delusion*. Brunswick North, VIC, Australia: BeinArt, 2010. Print.
- Lavin, James D., and Ramiro Larrañaga. *The Art and Tradition of the Zuloagas: Spanish Damascene from the Khalili Collection*. [London?]: Khalili Family Trust in Association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1997. Print.
- Lowry, Bates. *Renaissance Architecture*. New York: G. Braziller, 1962. Print.
- Panofsky, Erwin. *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism*. New York: Meridian, 1957. Print.
- Panofsky, Erwin. *Renaissance and Renascences*. Gambier, OH, 1944. Print.
- Public Art Fund, New York . Web. 21 Nov. 2011.
<<http://www.wimdelvoye.be/gothicworks.php#>>.
- Rolexgate*. Galerie Heike Strelow, 2007. Web. 21 Nov. 2011.
<<http://www.evaristti.com/marco/rolex.html>>.
- Rosenblum, Robert, and H. W. Janson. *19th Century Art*. New York: Abrams, 1984. Print.

Scott, Robert A. *The Gothic Enterprise: a Guide to Understanding the Medieval Cathedral*. Berkeley: University of California, 2003. Print.

Swaan, Wim. *The Gothic Cathedral*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1969. Print.

The British Museum , London . Web. 21 Nov. 2011.

<http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database/search_object_details.aspx?objectid=3002245&partid=1&searchText=saint+jerome+in+his+study&fromADBC=ad&toADBC=ad&numpages=10&orig=%2>.

The National Gallery, London . Web. 21 Nov. 2011.

<<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/jan-van-eyck-the-arnolfini-portrait>>.

the warhol . Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh , 2011. Web. 21 Nov. 2011.

<<http://www.warhol.org/>>.

Zaczek, Iain. *Celtic Art and Design*. Wakefield, RI: Moyer Bell, 1996. Print.