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Flushed

A thesis

presented to

the Faculty of the Department of Art and Design

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements of the degree

Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art

by

V. Kelsey Ellis

May 2016

Andrew Scott Ross, Chair

Mira Gerard

Travis Graves

Keywords: Beauty, Desire, Indulgence, Transformation, Alive

ABSTRACT

Flushed

by

V. Kelsey Ellis

The artist describes the process and development of the work throughout her graduate career, relating them to the most recent works of her thesis exhibition. Topics discussed include experiences of beauty and themes of transformation. Contextual influences include the Rococo period as well as ideas and theories of Romanticism and the sublime. Histories and theories on representations of the body are also discussed.

The artist discusses her MFA thesis exhibition *Flushed*, at the Tipton Gallery in Johnson City, Tennessee, from April 13th to April 24th, 2015. Two painting installations, a sculptural installation, and a number of collages are included. Media used to create these works include a range of wet and dry drawing and painting media, paper surfaces, and food.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For your unconditional support and acceptance, I'd like to thank: my fellow "graces" Dani Winger and Kathy Block; my Knudtsen sisters Heather and Krista; my loving, wonderful family; and most of all, God. Thank you for reminding me to be myself.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“My characters shall have, after a little trouble, all that they desire.”

- Jane Austen, *Becoming Jane*

I interpret the rosy hue of flushed skin as the presence of a vivid life force and underlying intense emotion. One of the body’s most complex signatures, it can be triggered by both physical and emotional tension, such as arousal, vigor, or embarrassment. With its multiple meanings I find it an appropriate metaphor for describing my contradictory feelings surrounding concepts of desire.

Beauty Transformed

My graduate research started as a journey to define beauty. However, the resulting work has turned into a journey tracking my evolving thoughts on the subject. Likewise, artistic works that challenge and transform notions of beauty and desire have transformed how I view these concepts.

The work of Frida Kahlo is a prime example, such as *The Two Fridas* (1939). In my first encounter with Kahlo’s work I read isolation, pain, and strained identity in her double self-portraits and split compositions. In the fissured surface of Kahlo’s painted skin and landscapes I found the gaping wounds disturbing; however, I was intrigued by the way her strong gaze connotes pride in the complexities that make up her experience. Kahlo attempted to not only illuminate the history of her culture but to transform her

identity through her art. The surreal quality of her work might lead some to believe that she wished to escape her life but Kahlo denied this idea, saying, “I never painted dreams...I painted my own reality” (fridakahlo.org). Kahlo’s paintings are more than forms of escape from her life; they are modes of self-reinvention and universal communication.

Kahlo’s depiction of the female form exemplified for me how a woman can paint women. In her nakedness Kahlo is literally and figuratively vulnerable allowing us to see glimpses of distinctly female experiences. Kahlo is taking part in creating her own self-image, challenging historical perceptions of women.

In the case of Kahlo’s work, my idea of beauty had expanded. Instead of finding her visceral imagery solely discomfoting, I instead found this evidence of her pain and struggle to be very poignant. The way Kahlo used her art to transcend her pain and limitations had inspired the transformative aspect of my work. I want to speak to my experience with beauty and pleasure while also transforming certain connotations of their associations.

The Problem of Pleasure

My work reveals a tension with pleasure and other forms of desire. Its mix of violent mark-making and calculated drawn lines parallels the tension between my desires and my corresponding feelings of guilt. The resulting image I depict is usually one of a torn and battered figure that does not easily coexist with the forces that rip through her body.

My body-centered religion has also influenced my use of the figure. There are theological, ritual, and spiritual reasons for the Christian "ritual embrace" of bodies

(Kamitsuka 4). Not only do we believe that our bodies are made in God's image, but our closest encounter with God was through the human form of Christ. Furthermore, Christ suffered wounds to the flesh but also bodily ascended into heaven after his death. In addition to believing we should treat our bodies as temples, we believe that we will acquire a new body when we enter heaven. As a result this influence is apparent in my work's similar emphasis on the body. For example, my use of flesh and viscera-like colors is a major motif of my work. Referencing the body seems to be a fitting platform for discussing my tense relationship with innate desires.

Because of this struggle, my graduate work has been marked by a schism between how I previously analyzed my work and what my art actually expresses. However, just as flushed skin can expose intense emotions, my work reveals the uncomfortable tensions and contradictions that I am internally trying to reconcile.

CHAPTER 2

EARLY INFLUENCES

I can trace my exploration of beauty and desire back to a piece I produced in 2012 titled *Flourish* (fig.2). My re-examination of this piece sparked the questions that would force me to challenge and transform every aspect of my work.



(Fig. 1) *Flourish*, 2012

This piece pictures a young woman, windswept in a flurry of plant imagery and swaths of color. I envisioned these elements as the girl's emotions flowing within and around her as she is being transformed into an otherworldly being. Taking inspiration from symbolism in Early Renaissance art, I used images of fruit and flowers to reference ideas of transformation, eternal life, or rebirth (Buchholz 134). Specifically including images of fleshy fruit dripping with nectar, I wanted these collage elements to have a

luscious quality, to appear desirable. The pictured girl longs to be adorned with her intense feelings that her body cannot contain.

This piece's most prominent influence was the work of artist Gustav Klimt (1862 - 1918). His portraits such as *Adele Bloch-Bauer I* (1907) often picture women's bodies blending into their decorative backgrounds, creating an ethereal image of a goddess-like creature. For me, Klimt's embellished figures, with their ornamental designs and patterns represent the embodiment of decadence. I wanted to capture this quality in *Flourish*.

During my first graduate critique, colleagues described this piece with words such as "commercial," "pretty," and "saccharine." Many of my cultural influences, including Klimt and other artists of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, have often been described with similar sentimental vocabulary.

Alma-Tadema's *The Roses of Heliogabalus* (1888) is another example of such influences. Like much of his work, this painting depicts the luxury and decadence of the Roman Empire. Paintings such as this one are often characterized today as kitsch and saccharine. Their beauty reminds the viewer of sentiment but not real emotion (Dutton).

While I enjoy the sentimental aspect of this painting, my understanding of it is not as one-sided as the popular conception. Beyond my initial reading of this work, there is a confusing discrepancy between where the flowers begin and the flesh ends. I wanted to create a similar image that does not separate us from desire but physically and metaphorically attaches us to them.

Following *Flourish*'s criticisms I realized that I was not defending its sentimental aspect but instead exploring my own complex relationship with pleasure and desire. In

Flourish I skim these topics, but I now wanted to fully embrace the saccharine aspect of my work that I initially deemed as frivolous and superficial.

CHAPTER 3

NEW APPROACH

In looking for inspiration for my process and approach, I found that Egon Schiele's portraits of women spoke more directly to my work's themes. One example is his painting *Woman with Naked Abdomen* (1911). Similar to my view of Klimt's women as adorned or clothed in desire, Schiele's girls seem to radiate with it. This is evidenced in his expressive line quality and visceral approach.

During his time, Schiele's art was deemed pornographic and degenerate (Laird). However, I find his use of the female form as more radical, one that transcends the usual view of the female body. Like Kahlo's representations of herself, Schiele's figures are raw and unflinching. Not traditionally beautiful, they are marked by sadness. Also like Kahlo's work, Schiele's combination of the beautiful and the disturbing resonate with me more poignantly than one of these traits alone. Inspired, I wanted to present such emotionally charged work in an unapologetic way.

Also influential to my process and imagery at this time was that of Cy Twombly. His energetic and gestural lines create an interesting paradox of chaos and control, a state that relates well to my inner battle between my emotions and my ideas. Equally important is the inventive ways in which he speaks to the idea of transformation in his work. An example of this can be seen in his painting *Proteus* where he uses myth to address the concept of transformation.

This work references the classical Greek figure of Proteus, the old man of the sea, from Homer's *Odyssey*. In the story, Proteus tries to escape capture by morphing into

various forms. Twombly's painting shows a cluster of colored marks that meet towards a center of support. A vertical line stems from this center point while a buildup of marks develops upon the form with a vortex-like energy. While Twombly references the Greek myth, the relationship of it to the painting remains somewhat elusive. Instead of simply illustrating this myth's theme it "actions" the idea (Wallace 44). The artist's painterly style becomes the narrator and thus enacts the myth. Twombly said of this work in 1957, "Each line is now the actual experience with its own innate history. It does not illustrate — it is the sensation of its own realization" (Cherubini). Here, Twombly gave me an example of how to depict a sensation or feeling rather than trying to illustrate it.

Another major contemporary influence on my work has been the art of Kenyan artist Wangechi Mutu. *Hundred Lavish Months of Bushwack* (2004) is an example of her mixed media pieces that integrate beauty and horror through an absurd pastiche of mismatched imagery. They often picture ethereal hybrid-like females in sparse environments. Ink and paint appear luminescent, and color splotches look both like orbs of light as well as microscopic views of the body.

The element of Mutu's work that especially stood out to me was the way her use of the female form simultaneously speaks to contradictory views of beauty regarding race and identity. Her female hybrids were simultaneously grotesque and elegant, harsh and seductive. Mutu gives insight into this duality when she states that, "Females carry the marks, language and nuances of their culture more than the male. Anything that is desired or despised is always placed on the female body (Kerr 2). In Mutu's work, this could refer to violence against innocent victims of war or "modifications" made in order to follow fashion (Kerr 2). This idea helped solidify my view that the female figure is a

versatile form on which to communicate my various ideas. Like Mutu I wanted to speak not only to the universal ideas of beauty, pleasure and sensuality, but also to the stereotypical classifications and perversions that represent the darker side of them.

In the work of Mutu, Twombly, and Schiele I experienced a transformed view of beauty. The way these artists abstract existing narratives and source materials to create their own story inspired the next phase of my graduate research. Their work also inspired physicality in my process. I wanted my use of paint to be overindulgent and decadent in a symbolic way.

CHAPTER 4

IMAGERY

While re-examining my process, I started to use imagery that spoke to some of my own personal indulgences: decadent desserts, the decorative arts, and fashion. While these elements can speak to the consumer culture landscape that surrounds our society, they are often stereotypically associated with women and frivolity. I wanted to challenge myself to show that deeper meaning can be found in these seemingly superficial areas.

The Dutch still-life paintings of the seventeenth century, such as *Still life with fruit and lobster* by Jan Davidsz de Heem, inspired me to reference confections in my imagery. Symbols of luxury and worldly pleasure, these still-life objects were meant to communicate the futility of materialism and human values in comparison to the inevitable coming of death (Buchholz 134). I wanted to find new symbols for mortality and superficiality in my own work. The love of treats and the guilt about overindulgence seem to be a common issue for many people, and it is one that parallels my conflicting feelings about desire. Baking cakes therefore became part of my creative process (Fig.12), and I started to reference dessert foods through dripping textures and a candy-hued palette.



(Fig. 2) *Study*, 2012

The Rococo period in the early 18th century has also inspired my imagery. Originating in France, it was a reaction against the strict order and harmony of the Baroque movement (Fleming 437). Exclusively aimed at the wealthy, Rococo's emphasis on decadence encompassed all cultural and artistic mediums. Areas such as architecture, interior design, painting, sculpture, and theater were marked by its characteristic light-hearted mood and asymmetrical lines. I found a pictorial language for my theme of an overwhelming sweetness in its artificial color palettes and heavy decorative quality.

The palace of Versailles, a symbol of ultimate decadence in France's history, has become a similar metaphor in my work (Fleming 437). During my visit there I found its splendor exciting to look at, but was overwhelmed by the opulence of my surroundings.

The extravagant fashions of Versailles's aristocrats represent to me the same kind of attractive, yet oppressive force. The absurdity of immobilizing attire such as corsets, billowing dresses, and towering hairstyles is evidenced by caricatures known as "Nobody" prints. Their depictions of figures composed only of legs and elaborate wigs suggest that the aristocracy is "literally brainless" (McPhee 116). This concern for grand

display inspired me to depict these people whom history describes as slaves to their worldly pleasures.

In my drawing series *Cake Heads* (Fig.16) I aimed to capture the tempting world that Versailles represents to me. In each picture, a female head sports a wig-like form of dripping glossy textures reminiscent of confections, such as icing and cotton candy. Similar to the *Nobody* prints, I aimed for this to appear as its own kind of strange figure, attempting to use fashion as metaphor for immersing oneself in pleasure.



(Fig.3) *Cake Heads* Series 2012

I see the influence of Rococo's light-hearted mood in the way these drawings celebrate a superficial view of pleasure. I wanted my work to speak more directly to the dual nature of my desires, and I found a more complex portrait of the Rococo in the art of Antoine Watteau. Watteau's paintings feature pastoral scenes of the young French aristocrats flirting and frolicking. However, the mood of his works also has a slightly melancholic and wistful quality. In works such as *L'Indifferent* (1716), the sparse surroundings enhance the loneliness connoted by the lone figure. Connecting with what

seems to be themes of the fleeting pleasures of youth and isolation in Watteau's work, I started a deeper investigation of this time period that emphasized pleasure.

CHAPTER 5

MARIE ANTOINETTE

Searching for a narrative that spoke to Watteau's decadent yet empty Rococo world I found one in the story of Marie Antoinette, queen of France from 1774-1792. Her story is one that resonates with me.

History has viewed Marie Antoinette as a symbol of the malevolent extravagance of the 18th century monarchy (Weber 6). However, author Antonia Fraser paints a different view of the queen's indulgences in her biography *Marie Antoinette: the Journey*. She describes the queen's life as beautifully adorned yet tinged with sadness and her indulgences as attempts to mask her disappointment in her marriage and life (Fraser 145). While Marie Antoinette did enjoy the extravagances of the palace, they came at the price of having to follow the strict routines and ridiculous rules expected of a French queen. Her homeland of Austria, much different than Versailles, only added to her feelings of being an outsider.

My romanticized view of Marie Antoinette was inspired by the biographical film adaption, *Marie Antoinette* (2006). Directed by Sofia Coppola, this film's contemporary presentation of Marie Antoinette strengthened my connection to her, as it depicted her as a young woman struggling to find her place in the world. Unlike the typical stuffy biopic, these scenes are presented more like a collection of feelings as opposed to a history of facts. The film's numerous close-ups of French pastries, free-flowing champagne, and hordes of beautiful ensembles come together in pulsating montages. However, these same spaces of indulgence can also become the backdrop for moods of

melancholy and isolation. Versailles is pleasure in excess, and it transforms its inhabitants.

I sympathize with the paradoxical situations that characterized Marie Antoinette's experience. The many pleasures in which Marie Antoinette indulged also blinded her to the world outside of her walls. A product of her environment she was seen as nothing more than a silly and superficial girl. Identifying with feeling tension from repressed desires I can see why Marie Antoinette found solace in the only means she had available to her.

My identification with Marie Antoinette inspired my collage series titled *Doomed Beauty* (Fig.4). I allowed myself to react to found imagery from fashion and décor magazines rather than first drawing and planning out an image. Each part depicts women in varying stages of being enveloped by oozing paint or within folds of fragile tissue paper. Elements such as a cameo necklace, the bouffant hair shape, traditional French toile wallpaper, and the sculpted tissue paper were references to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Drawing from these times when elegance and beauty were held in the highest regard, I used the female form to symbolize ill-fated beauty. Like my vision of Versailles, I aimed to combine a darker and more serious element with the frivolity and gaiety of the decorative Rococo movement.

Like the seemingly depth-less quality of the Rococo period, the frilled and gilded edges of Marie Antoinette's life story have spoken to the tensions in my experience. Once again, I want to speak to the concept of transformation on multiple levels. With each piece that references her, I simultaneously try to repaint her ill-famed portraits from

history and paint my self-portrait. I want to transcend the stereotype that pink frills, young women, and a lighthearted disposition can only be perceived as frivolous.



(Fig. 4) *Doomed Beauty Series*, 2013. Photos by Marissa Angel.

CHAPTER 6

THE SUBLIME

The aspects of beauty, tragedy, and solitude that marked Marie Antoinette's world of pleasure inspired me to push these elements further in my work. Once again I found inspiration in another eighteenth century cultural movement: the Romantic sublime. Its theme of a pleasurable terror spoke to my combining of horror and beauty.

In eighteen and nineteen century Europe, the sublime was associated with the human responses to the vastness and disorder of the natural world. Much of this view was influenced by that of Irish empiricist Edmund Burke in his 1757 book *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*.

I took interest in Burke's dissection of the sublime into seven causes to include: darkness, obscurity, deprivation, vastness, magnificence, loudness, and suddenness (Burke 39). His view of the sublime as a "pleasurable and fulfilling terror" greatly influenced the eighteenth century view of the sublime's frightening effect as a positive experience (Riding 2). Burke describes an experience marked by a sudden transformative view and an indescribable sensation that transports the spectator.

An example of these qualities can be seen in Burke's theme of 'Frightening Nature' where he enumerates on the sense of sublime solitude that can be communicated by the daunting emptiness of a vast landscape. This idea encouraged my continued use of the solitary figure in my work, a scene that peaks to the concept of isolation.

Burke's idea of a more powerful experience being induced by the combination of horror and beauty speaks to me as a Christian. I liken it to the transformation that occurs

in my visualization of Christ's crucifixion – an image of both doom and beauty. Both the story's spiritual message and its representation in art history transform the way I view this scene. The image of Christ nailed to the cross is graphic, but artists have visually romanticized it. *Crucifixion (Christ of San Placido)* (1630) by Diego Rodriguez Velazquez is one example. The disturbing bloody imagery and the eloquence of its depiction intensify the beauty of its meaning.

Sublime religious imagery like this has inspired the more visceral quality in my work. Referencing blood and other viscera I began to include crimson hues in my work's flesh-hued palette. Furthermore, I started to use cuts and wounds as symbols of transformative gateways. In the Catholic tradition Christ's wounds are often compared to windows and doors; they are signs of positive suffering, and an opening up to the divine (Peto 24). I touch on this idea of "open wounds" in the rips and tears in the paper surfaces of *Doomed Beauty*. However, I now wanted to use this symbolism in more dramatic way.

CHAPTER 7

DANAË

The meaning of the word sublime has also inspired my use of windows and doorways as metaphors in my work. Its connotation of striving or pushing against an overbearing force inspired my imagery of women standing at doorways, windows, and other barriers between their world and another. This motif can be seen in my piece *Danaë* (Fig.5 & 6).



(Fig.5) *Danaë*, 2014. Photo by Tijana Stevanovic.

Inspired by sublime artistic devices such as scale, I drew upon the Baroque era's manipulation of cathedral windows. Attempting to create a sense of drama I created my own kind of stained glass window with transparent paints.

Danaë depicts a scene of a young woman sprawled on her back in a grassy, flowering field. She has a look of euphoria on her face, her hands limp as her body seems to have been struck by some kind of powerful force.



(Fig.6) *Danaë*, (Detail) 2014. Photo by Marissa Angel.

The title of this piece derives from the Greek myth about the princess Danaë. Locked away in a tower, she is visited by Zeus who appears to her in a shower of gold and impregnates her with a divine son. A multitude of artists have depicted this scene throughout history such as *Danaë and the Shower of Gold* (1787) by Adolf Ulrik Wertmeller.



(Fig.7) *Danaë* (Detail), 2014. Photo by Tijana Stevanovic.

Similar to the spiritual eroticism present in Bernini's *St. Teresa* (1598-1680). Danaë's figure also appears overcome with intense passion. Images of the *Annunciation* such as that of Albani Francesco have also inspired my abstraction of this myth. Like the gold coins that shower Danaë, the Holy Spirit's soft light that envelops Mary's figure is an abstracted version of intimacy. However, in these paintings I see this act as not merely a sexual one but instead a transformative experience for the female subject.

Drawing inspiration from the way Twombly's *Proteus* enacts the Greek myth through its physicality, I wanted to enact the decadence of Danaë's sensuality through the physicality of my mark-making. The field's flowers start to morph into the same oozing substance in the folds of her dress. Paired with the light that shines through the window, this woman's figure is literally and metaphorically illuminated by her desires that spill out of and encase her body. The overall impression is a violent one, but like the wound symbolism in Crucifixion imagery, I see it as a positive suffering. Through her "wounds" this body is now open to some type of transformation.



(Fig.8) Danaë (Detail), 2014. Photo by Tijana Stevanovic.

CHAPTER 8

PASSAGE



(Fig. 9) *Passage*, 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.

Using some of the same pictorial language from *Danaë*, I took a similar approach to creating my piece titled *Passage* (Fig.9). Made up of five painted images on translucent drafting film, this imagery pictures a young woman as she draws back a window curtain. Her passions rushing through her and enveloping her body, viscera-colored swipes of paint weave in and out of her body, continuing off of the page on to the wall. These succeeding moments are meant to connote the passage of time. As the viewer walks from one panel to the next, they witness the gradual engulfing of her body.



(Fig.10) Passage (Detail), 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.



(Fig. 11) Passage (Detail), 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.

With this piece I wanted to engage the viewer's space through its large size and integration with the wall's surface. Each scene of the painting was pinned from its top to the wall with its bottom edges hanging freely. I sanded large areas of the painting, aged the surface and again tried to give a tattered quality to its delicate, skin-like surface. The sanding also created a speckled texture that connotes the idea of light as well as gives the

look of scraped skin or a microscopic view of cells. I aimed for this piece to have an ongoing tension between control and chaos, reason and emotion, as well as pain and pleasure. The slower rendered line drawing of the figure is in contrast with the expressive marks that spill off of the paper onto the wall. Like Twombly's work, I wanted my marks to act as evidence of my work's process, further inviting the viewer to experience the painting.



(Fig.12) Passage (Detail), 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.



(Fig.13) Passage (Detail), 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.



(Fig.14) Passage (Detail), 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.

CHAPTER 9

FLUSHED

In planning my thesis exhibition, I wanted to illustrate the journey my art had taken throughout my graduate school experience. To introduce this exploration I found it appropriate to begin the exhibition with *Doomed Beauty*. These works mark the beginning of my more complex investigation of beauty and pleasure, so I placed them in the front of the gallery.



(Fig.15) Exhibition Photo (Flushed), 2015. Photo by Matthew J. Brown.

My exhibition centered around my piece *Gratified* (Fig.35). This installation included a banquet table, piled with flesh-hued desserts. Six young women, dressed in costume, served treats to guests, while a cellist played improvisational music. An automated punch bowl and fountain of peach dyed chocolate were meant to add to the animated and elaborate nature of this display. They also provided a more directly interactive element as guests were able to serve themselves. To encourage interaction

with the table, the young women offered food to guests on small pieces of wax paper, forcing them to eat the sticky sweet treats with their hands.



(Fig.16) *Gratified*, 2015. Photo by Matthew J. Brown.

As in some of my earlier works the piece's elements referenced the lavish world of Versailles, specifically the feast of the *Grand Couvert*. At this grandiose banquet the king and queen would dine in front of the entire court, a display meant to exemplify the king's wealth (Nichols). I drew on this ritual's wastefulness and theatricality to create my own version. For example, the Jello molds referenced the "fancy jellies," of the eighteenth century, which were more for display than consumption. The cake, fruit, and chocolate were other items that were likely to be included in this royal menu.



(Fig. 17 & 18) *Gratified*, Detail 2015. Photos by Marissa Angel



(Fig. 19& 20) *Gratified*, Detail 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.



(Fig. 21) *Gratified*, Detail 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.



(Fig. 22) *Gratified*, Detail 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.

I also referenced such banquet settings in my inclusion of music and eighteenth century inspired fashion. For example, the cello player was a nod to the period's popular style of chamber music. Fashion elements such as the bustle were referenced with the texture of folds at the waist. Usually placed at the back of a dress, it has been moved to the forefront, a metaphor for the idea of pent up emotions that flow out in relief. For the

makeup, the female servers' heavily blushed cheeks referenced the rouge makeup of the eighteenth century, a style which the people of France viewed as a sign of debauchery.

This installation could be viewed as a study of contrasts that characterize my views of beauty and pleasure. Like the frilly-guts that protrude from my servers, breaks of relief occur within this tension. In these moments contradictions are recognized but not reconciled.



(Fig.23) *Gratified* (Detail) 2015. Photo by Marissa Angel.

CHAPTER 10

CONCLUSION

Despite the various forms my graduate research has taken, I have been attempting to recreate the same ideas behind *Flourish* (Fig.1). My adorned and enveloped female subjects act as self-portraits in a constant state of tension between feelings of desire and self-restriction. What I initially saw as my guilt-ridden desires have actually been the same forces I previously was referring to as my work's "life-force." I struggle to live with them yet I cannot live without them.

The concepts of beauty and desire are subjective, making them difficult to define for the masses. Even now, I think my ideas of them may continue to evolve. However, I can now state with more assuredness that I do not shy away from embracing the saccharine and sweet side of my work. While the knowledge of my beliefs will always temper these passions, I feel freed from my view of them as guilty pleasures. I am not sure that these feelings will ever be reconciled, but I have become more interested in examining how I coexist with them.

CATALOGUE OF EXHIBITION

1. *Doomed Beauty I* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)

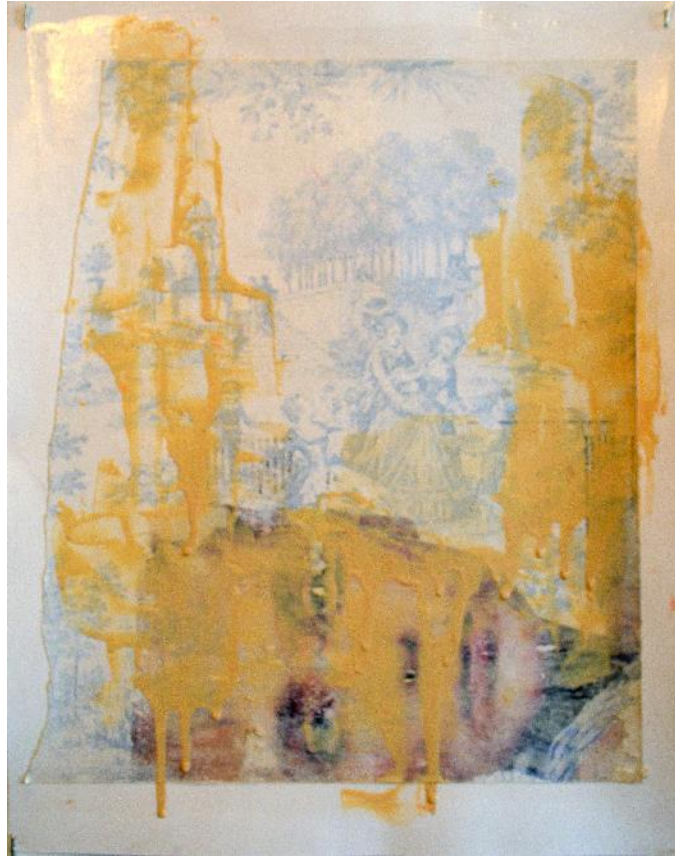
Mixed Media Collage, 2014



2. *Doomed Beauty I* (Detail)



3. *Doomed Beauty II* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)
Mixed Media Collage, 2014



4. *Doomed Beauty II* (Detail)



5. *Doomed Beauty III* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)
Mixed Media Collage, 2014



6. *Doomed Beauty III* (Detail)



7. *Doomed Beauty IV* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)
Mixed Media Collage, 2014



8. *Doomed Beauty IV (Detail)*
Mixed Media Collage, 2014



9. *Doomed Beauty V* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)
Mixed Media Collage, 2014



10. *Doomed Beauty V* (Detail)
Mixed Media Collage, 2014



11. *Passage* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)

Acrylic and Mixed Media on Drafting Film, 2015



12. *Passage (Detail)* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)



13. *Passage (Detail)* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)



14. *Passage (Detail)* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)



15. *Passage (Detail)* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)



16. *Passage (Detail)*



17. *Passage (Detail)*



18. *Passage (Detail)*



19. *Passage (Detail)*



20. *Passage (Detail)*



21. *Passage (Detail)*



22. *Passage (Detail)*



23. *Little Wounds* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)
Mixed Media on Yupo, 2015



24. *Little Wounds (Detail)*. Photo by Marissa Angel.



25. *Gratified* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)
Mixed Media Installation 2015



26. *Gratified (Detail)* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)



27. *Gratified (Detail)* (Photo by Matthew J. Brown.)



28. *Gratified (Detail)* (Photo by Marissa Angel.)



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Professional Experience: Graduate Assistant (Instructor of Record), East Tennessee
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Publications: Mockingbird: ETSU's Award Winning Art and Literary
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Exhibitions: SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Flushed*, Tipton Gallery, Johnson City, TN

2012 *Let Go* (Senior Fine Arts Exhibition): Derthick Art
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GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2015 *Through the Fish Bowl*: Reese Museum, Johnson
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2014 *Exposed Spaces*: Reese Museum, Johnson City, TN

2014 *Flesh: A Two-Woman Show*: Tipton Gallery,
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- 2014** *Diverge*: Reese Museum, Johnson City, TN
- 2013** *Woodkeepers*: Tipton Gallery, Johnson City, TN
- 2013** *Journeys of Women*: McKinney Center:
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- 2013** *Ascension*: Tipton Gallery, Johnson City, TN
- 2012** *Milligan Art Exhibition*: Nelson Fine Art Center,
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- 2012** *Art Exhibition*: Elizabethton, TN
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