

Artist's Statement

I do not deal well with trauma, art is my outlet and refuge, the expression through which I can gain some semblance of control over an otherwise free-falling reality. I lost that control when my brother was killed, I was too young and not sufficiently developed to process the emotions I was experiencing. All I did, all I still do, is feel the visceral pain that engulfs me whenever I remember. It may not be sufficiently translated in my pieces but ever since I last saw my brother, crying in my mother's arms at the end of the corridor the visual wrapped in the horrific sound of his unnatural cries, my art has dealt with the notion that I have yet to come to terms with a world in which I must exist alone.

My pieces are not visions of pain, rather of personal struggle, anger and insecurity, images of what my pain evokes. I faint, I throw fits of rage and pick fights, my work is a reflection of how I see those moments of blackness – dark blanks that I cannot protect myself from. I am helpless in those moments, naked and vulnerable metaphorically just as I am literally in some of my pieces. The nakedness should not be seen as a contemplation of sexuality, irrespective of the inevitable connotations that may arise in the viewer's mind. In my mind, I am naked in the world, I was ripped from the protection of innocence too young and have never reconciled myself to the idea that I have to keep going to grow up whilst David remains forever young.

My nakedness in my art also confronts the issues I have had with my body ever since I began to reach puberty. All my life I have fought vigorously against anything that I perceived as growing up, as moving further away from the memory towards a future that I am still not sure I belong in. I do not see my body as a canvas for sexuality but rather the focus of a lifetime of revulsion and expectations far beyond the sphere of plausibility. The piece "If Realism

is Not to be This is All I Am” confronts both my insecurities regarding my body and is an integration of the three visual languages of text, painting and the self coming together in a still life an art form some may consider out of touch with our global present but which I feel can still resonate forcibly within our contemporary modernity.

The self, in all its varying realities, is an integral part of all my work. In “Faint” I addressed directly the moments where I literally lose unconsciousness. I have a physical condition which means that I am prone to fainting at frequent intervals. In an institutional setting this poses a problem, I am seen as a legal liability, whose very presence is symptomatic of a lawsuit. The escalation of this situation, over which I have no choice, controlled as I am by an imperfect body and compelled by the institution to wear a riding hat, magnified the fainting episodes from an inconvenient sidebar to a pivotal problem in my daily life. Consequently I decided to reflect the fainting both visually in the form of abstracted self portraits constructed upon enlarged copies of my medical records relating to the syncope and directly through performance.

In order to prepare for the performance I took measures to increase the chance of being able to faint at a given time and place, namely I did not sleep nor eat anything except miso soup for three days prior to the performance. I also chose to stop taking my medications, increased my caffeine intake three-fold and decided to conduct the performance on a block two feet off the floor – i.e., when I fainted I would fall from a height, increasing the possibility of harm. In short, I went out of my way to do the reverse of everything my doctors and institution have commanded me to do in order to decrease the frequency of the faints, thereby taking back a small part of the control I have surrendered. The performance contains a strong element of the stupid, in order to salvage some control I felt it necessary to fall unconscious thwacking my head upon the floor like a slapstick comic – stupid but literal.

