

Artist Statement- End Semester Review 2012
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Some Little Language

I begin to long for some little language like lovers use, broken words, inarticulate words ... I begin to seek some design more in accordance with those moments of humiliation and triumph that come now and then undeniably.

From *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf

In my work I explore the ways in which literature can be translated into visual forms to evoke an experience linked to the texts and to the act of reading itself. I address questions related to the connections between the body, sensation, language, and the construction of meaning and a sense of self.

The viewer will be invited to take part in this exploration through the presentation of an installation reminiscent of the idea of the *wunderkammer* (“wonder-room”) from the Renaissance Europe in which collections of seemingly disparate objects were housed together to suggest connections, allusions and parallels. Included in the installation will be a series of mid-sized abstract paintings, handmade books, a collection of cast objects and paintings on book-shaped forms mounted on the wall.

My investigation begins with Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves*. In this novel Woolf explores the relationship between the self and the body, through the layered and overlapping interior dialogue of her six primary characters. The body is seen as an unstable entity and the self is constructed or fragmented in relation to the body and also by and through language. I have used a process of layering to develop abstract paintings representative of the characters themselves and of the ruptured time and space in which they find themselves.

Don DeLillo also examines the interplay between body, language and subjectivity in his novel *The Body Artist*. He uses traces of the body, such as hair, are used to reference the corporeal. These traces are juxtaposed with more ephemeral aspects of constructed identities such as language and its manifestation as voice. The rhythm, the tone and the colour of the voice are seen to create the identity of the speaker, not the words themselves. In such a way meaning in visual art is conveyed through these parallel modes in juxtaposition with indexical traces of the body and gesture.

Included in this exploration is an attempt to suggest the “pleasure” and the “bliss” described by Roland Barthes in *The Pleasure of the Text*. This as a possibility leads to the question, “Is sensation a form of language?”¹ Julia Kristeva asks this question in her essay *Time and Sense*. She, and Barthes, suggest that meaning is created in ruptures, junctures and places in-between. These are the areas that are of interest to me: between disciplines (philosophy, literature and visual art), between the visual forms (of painting, sculpture, drawing and printmaking) themselves and within each of the various objects that will form my final installation.

¹ Julia Kristeva, “Time and Sense” (1994) in *The Portable Kristeva*, ed. Kelly Oliver (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 116.