

Video and Sound Art

Artist Statements; Words About the Work

Video 1 *Cosmetic*, Jan. 2019 3m 52s

Cosmetic is a video based around my personal hobby for makeup, where I explore conventions of beauty and how they apply to me, both physically and mentally. The video begins with a flickering interaction with my reflection, using primer on my face and pausing thoughtfully before cutting to where I begin the process of my makeup routine, normally a lighthearted and enjoyable task.

I use pomade to fill & shape the brows, turning them from nearly invisible to defined arches, then contour them with concealer. I gradually increase the level of pink light as the shots draw closer to my face and show details of the process at different angles.

"I beat my face with a sponge," The dialog of my video as I proceed through the makeup routine increases in its level of introspect, and I question the purpose of the makeup. "Where does that come from?" I use a long shot of my forehead and eyes while applying foundation to deliberately relate to the process of being stuck in my thoughts. I question myself and the validity I hold to myself, criticizing that my value changes depending on how I look.

The amount of makeup applied increases in the second half of the video, where I show the glitter highlight, the liquid lip and the finishing touches on my face, all in saturated pink light now. Here I am bringing the video to a conclusion; it is okay to acknowledge that the despairing thoughts are present, but now it is time to replace them with a new, positive voice.

I increase the sound layering with musical, electronic tones that I felt matched closely with what I originally envisioned as I hoped to project a dreamlike atmosphere and encourage the 'new voice.'

Video 2 *Profile of a Lady*, Feb. 2019 3m 32s

The relationship between plants and people is not as clear as one may think, and the language we use to talk about both plantlife and womenkind can leave the line even less clear.

My video *Profile of a Lady* introduces itself with the mimosa pudica, or sensitive plant, being zoomed in on and caressed lightly by a finger, resulting in each branch's leaves closing up on their own. The unique moving capabilities of this plant show that plants have a nervous system that have the ability to compute signals on command. This highlights the essence of the plant without dialogue and introduces that the work is not just a 'profile of a lady,' as the title mentions.

Following this I switch to a series of still images; Manet's Olympia, Mailles' Ophelia, Ingres' Turkish Bathhouse, Matisse's Blue Nude and Renoir's Bather Seated on a Rock. Even though these paintings range in age and the women vary in presence, status and posture, all of these images focus on an idealised,

reclining, nude womanly figure that embodies beauty and desire. All of their bodies are folding in a certain way to aesthetically or sexually please the viewer, because we know that all of these historical nudes were painted by white men and originally intended for the white male gaze. I wanted to use still images because I thought that they could still be as powerful as video, although keeping them all the same size and without layering images introduces a sense of the mundane or 'forced teaching' on the viewer. This was instinctual, but I feel I use this as a way to decrease the excitement one may feel from the image and to set these images as something other, or from another time so it can be unreachable sexually.

After the historical art images, which introduce a narrative charged with the presence of its own history, I quickly show 3 digital art photographs that all take the female body and integrate them with plants in a different way. The first is a pixelated image showing a double-exposure of flowers and the silhouette of a woman's head, which is a representation for traditional 'google images' and the overabundance of generalised images or stock art imagery. The second image is a current recreation of the Ophelia painting shown prior, part of a series called Dreams of Ophelia by artist Viet Ha Tran. This photo is an art photograph that embodies beauty, fragility and plays with art historical conventions. The last image is also an art photograph, called Potted Plant Life by Kristen Hatgi Sink. The photograph is part of her larger body of work, which also explores conventions of beauty in plants and juxtaposes a relationship to women. But this photograph I found to be nearly scary, contortion-like and awkward, so I emphasized that feeling throughout the still-image segment with the slowed down audio, deep rumbling voice and musical instruments. After being shaken with this sudden image of woman and plants coming together, the viewer is left with a black screen and nature sounds to contemplate and absorb the impact of the images they saw.

Next I introduce the climactic part of the video. Contrary to the Mimosa plant's calm nature and the still images' mundane slide-like application; the excerpt from the film Deep End (1970) is a vivid encounter of an underage boy lusting for an older woman who has a fiancé. He is touching and kissing her arm in the theatre after he follows her into an x-rated vintage film and sits behind her out of the fiancé's noticing sight. We see him reach in and he touches her breast and after 3 seconds of touching she turns and wacks him on the head, with an 'I showed him' look on her face as a result. I cut to black quickly, then show documentary-like nature footage, nodding to the standard and typical manner that plants are filmed to draw comparison to Deep End. What is most important about this clip, though, is the dialogue. The woman states "they [plants] have developed an arsenal of biological weapons to protect themselves, but they've also created a treasure trove of seductive powers." This quote is the perfect example of how the language we are using to describe the plants is personifying the plants and treating them like women. The use of the word seductive is very charged and powerful. The words are also spoken by a woman, with 'seductive powers' being emphasized in her speech. She is no longer just talking about plants, she is talking about them being individuals and sexually active beings. It reflects the clip from Deep End well because she has used her force to express her distaste for his touch, but her seductive powers are strong and both parties are lusting for one another secretly. Next I show a clip highlighting carnivorous plants, and the dialogue is important as well. It states, "We shouldn't be too surprised to hear that plants kill animals. Unwary creatures can find themselves in an upside-down world where, what they normally eat, eats them." When thinking about the connection between this dialogue about plants and how it can be applied to people, the plants are the women and the men are the animals. The statement I am actually making is that men can be 'killed' by the women's seductive powers, men will find themselves in an upside-down world and men will encounter the unexpected, therefore 'eating' them. The slug gets eaten by the Venus Fly Trap and the viewer is left with a 'gross' feeling. The last clip I share in the film cuts back

to Deep End. The fiancé has left to go get the theatre manager for help and the boy and woman are left alone in the dark. The woman's mixed feelings about the boy show now, and she kisses him slowly. We are given different angles, showing them closely and showing the x-rated film's dancing naked women on a bed simultaneously to increase the climax. She is secretly not mad, but lusts for him, or rather for his attention and enamour. I feel I chose to end the film in this manner, with a kiss rather than a punch, to give the viewer an unexpected and unsatisfying ending, which ends up leaving the viewer questioning the validity of the empowering and strong statements made about women in the previous 3 minutes. It really seems, now, that it doesn't matter and men may always win in the end. Overall, I believe I highlighted many different facets and experiences that may make up the profile of a lady.

Video 3 *Inside Outside*, Mar. 2019 6m 26s

Inside Outside is my short film result from a desire to discover the potential of my home's personal surroundings in a visual format. A compilation of a wide variety of content, the video lacks a consecutive narrative and purposefully challenges time by arranging footage out of order, according to daylight levels. The window is the only standard symbol of time with the slow sunset through the video, yet it is broken up by other imagery which interrupts the flow of time.

I believe the most powerful shots in the film are the layered imagery with the windows, which resonates a feeling of intrusion and voyeurism, looking through the window at a somewhat blurred scene. It makes the viewer feel, even subconsciously, that they are outside looking in and the scene is not intended to be seen by the viewer.

The contrast between the indoors and outdoors is highlighted in the video, as well. The relationship is highlighted as mundane because of the view of nothing but metal and fence through the basement window. The outside is seen as cold and possibly foreboding, while the indoors is warm. I see myself as a figure of warmth as well. But the act of transporting the camera up the stairs in a jacket later in the film, revealing them to the darkness of the night while smoking highlights a sense of secrecy about the home surroundings and adds secrecy to the element of drug use at the home. I feel the mixture of shots will make viewers long to be at home themselves, possibly cherishing mundane tasks that they take for granted.

Video 4 *Windows*, Feb. 2020 3m 40s

Windows was the result of an investigation of the home and the beings within it. I wanted to use the (required) documentative assignment as an opportunity to create a documentary that is not really a documentary at all. To explain, the video has honesty and vividness in its chosen filming formats, yet there is no affirmative dialogue or an asserted narrative attached to the conglomeration of the video footage. Using some of the footage produced for the film *Inside Outside*, I established the scenes within the home and give a hint to the audience that the camera is acting like a window through which we see an articulated, yet honest perspective,

even despite double-exposed imagery occasionally in the frame. Later in the video I introduce a new category of footage, the security camera, which is a more aerial and wide angle-of-view, with different objects within the frame that have personal symbolism. My change of clothes, my journal, the song I'm singing under my breath and the longing look I give across the apartment were all intentional and have meaning. I interject with a few frontal, interview-like shots of my boyfriend and I in our tv room, where he is opening a new package of action figures. Here, the greatest things that had meaning to me in these shots were the prioritized art on the walls and the honesty in which the rolls of my stomach are shot in this part of the film. This part of sharing me is what makes this documentary intimate, as it is normally something I would cut out of a short film, but this is what my body was at this time in my life, and in my Doc I can't lie. I think this has meaning, really, in the power of the thought of it 'being okay'. I end the short documentary with another window-cropped shot, except this time with Tyler, The Creator lyrics and I am palette-knife painting. No matter all hours of the day, anytime, you can find some time to do somethin', for YOU. I am honest with myself, and I hope *Windows* can inspire people to do the same; to focus in, appreciate and be transparent with daily life.

Sound 1 *Sonder*, Sept. 2018 3m 8s

The first recording gradually introduces the sound and effect bringing the listener to a watery cavern, but more importantly it is meant to signify a space of isolation and introspection. When I listen to this part of the performance, it brings out my deepest thoughts; thoughts about my belonging in the world, the impact I have on the world and others, and brings up an inner debate about my personal value. I get lost in these thoughts; they can sweep away a person in one swift, flooding motion. I have gotten caught in that flood many times.

The audience listens to this work through headphones, which reinstates the idea of isolation by not allowing the listener to hear any other noises during the performance. The listener may also feel compelled to participate in introspective thinking during this meditative part of the piece. The walking footsteps and road traffic are introduced 1 minute into the presentation. We are pulled away from the possible engulfment of inner thought patterns that the first water sound brings forth. Slowly, the sound of steps and traffic increases and the water fades out. This recording is used to represent the incoming realization of our everyday reality. The topic of movement and travel is introduced, making this a literal representation of a transitional or evolutionary sound work.

Finally, the topic of 'the everyday' is accompanied by live dialogue in the last minute of the performance. I state "The rain leaves a slick shine on the streets; it reflects all in the sky on its surface. People drive past me, each living their own complex lives with their own destinations in mind. *Sonder*." The first sentence reflects on the small beauties of the water and the rain, showing how I notice these details frequently in my everyday life. The second sentence shows the consistent presence of *Sonder*, which is defined as 'the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own.' (Koenig, Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows) *Sonder* is an emotion that is difficult to articulate and may not even be present in the minds of many. But I feel a connection to this realization and it increases my compassion and

consideration for others, yet also perpetuates the isolation and loneliness to continue in my own mind.

Sound 2 *Digital*, Oct. 2018 4m 8s

I began the creation of my soundwork with a consistent base tone which was generated using the manipulation of an inverted sine wave. The generated tone does a smooth wave-like sound that bobs up and down, which I found to be somewhat calming, yet it also brings forth an imposing feeling of anxiety that is especially present when listening to the work with headphones. I combined this sound wave with three environmental recordings which supply different background noises, including puddles, walking, cars driving, crickets, other bugs and birds. These recordings introduce a natural and seemingly-random combination of sounds together to shape the environment that is constructed in the work. I leave the listener with these base sounds for nearly the entire first half of the piece, so these sounds have an opportunity to be heard and the listener can respond emotionally. Following this, I recorded a speech spoken by Marcel Duchamp, where he introduces ideas about intuition's role in an artist's work and how the part of the man who suffers must be allowed to contribute to the mind that creates. I chose to include these snippets of his speech because they were the most moving to me and they encouraged me to reflect on my own emotions and practice. I share my thoughts that come from his thoughtful words near the end of my soundwork. I share just a few sentences, not many details; and I cut and loop my words to integrate a mechanical or broken aspect, which captures the attention of the listener to that specific dialogue. Overall, I believe my soundwork was a reflection and a translation of abstract personal thoughts into a tangible work of art.

Sound 3 *Final Location Found Wandering*, Nov. 2018 4m 12s

Location-Based On-Campus Soundwork

I chose this site on the Sheridan Campus for several reasons; I thought it was an interesting perspective above the outdoor landscape that makes Sheridan beautiful, and you are nearly between two settings in the 2nd floor pass because you are suspended above the outdoors, yet you are indoors. This location is also meant for traveling through from building to building, so most people do not stop to observe the landscape beneath them as they don't stop moving. The purpose of the soundwork is to bring the outdoors to the listener in this location, where you can see these natural surroundings beneath you, but the accompanying sounds are not accessible through the barrier of the construction you are inside.

I used sounds completely from the location's surroundings; I used a hydrophone mic and a standard mic to record the creek above and beneath water, as well as the pouring rain from a spout. I recorded the sounds of the rocks alongside the creek being upturned & kicked into the water, the sounds of people walking through the location and added effects to make their voices distant or passing by, the stomping across the bridge, pavement and up the metal G wing

stairs concludes the sound work. I want the listener to feel hyper-aware of all of the sounds to notice and possibly a sense of loneliness or distance between others and the first-person role that you may hear.

Sound 4 *A Mixed Dream*, Jan. 2020 14m 16s

'*A Mixed Dream*' is an audiobook I created, that at the same time, is not an audiobook at all. '*A Mixed Dream*' is more of a letter or outpouring from oneself through the recorder, but using the overwhelming amount of details, events, memories, etc. to bombard the listener so that they mask the details from each other. It eventually becomes impossible to follow one storyline, and that is when anxiety creeps in. Meant to be listened with headphones, '*A Mixed Dream*' is a powerful soundwork that explores narrative, breakage, mental health and the effect of a sound, all through this personal, autobiographical journey.

Tell me what you gained from this work? You'll never be able to know the whole story...