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- **Line of Inquiry**

My goal for this project was to create a visual platform to explore the relationship between humans, their love of nature and their, our, use of plastic. Deeply affected by the climate crisis, I wanted to find a way to represent the experience of having emotional conversations about Climate Change and how it is affected by the production and overuse of the toxic material, plastic. I found myself in these conversations on a regular basis, prompted by this material's ironic existence such as recycling issues and cost efficacy. Everyone I talked to in my community seemed to have so many conflicted *feelings and experiences*, that each time there was words shared they seemed to cover all the stages of actual *grief*. People expressed anger by defending plastic's convenience, and then shortly after, sadness and guilt that they were choosing this unsustainable material based on price and convenience. Which seemed to always lead to a discussion about listing ways they recycle and desperately want alternatives to the problem feeling helpless and victimized that there seems to be a lack of options when it comes to the ability to choose something equivalent but nontoxic.

I started this series of paintings with my own self portrait. These conversations I am inspired by, stemmed from my own guilt and anger by how much plastic waste I contribute to the planet. Art supplies, personal care products, food storage, etcetera are all laden with complexity that needs attention in order to sort out this new normal that is the Anthropocene, our human made layer of the Earth's crust. The Climate Crisis is created by a web of unsustainable, overinflated human practices that need to be examined in order for sustainable change to occur. I am fascinated by the hypocrisy of behavior—how can we, as humans, know we are harming and not change our ways? These paintings are about illustrating and honoring different people's experiences with the intent of invoking questions, that will lead to action in the form of change. I want to use my painting practice as a method of participating in the conversations about the idea of plastic being “disposable” or “single use” when in fact, it will take a thousand, or thousands of

years to “breakdown”—and breaking down really means becoming smaller; microscopic. Therefore, infiltrating more avenues of the ecosystem, because it becomes harder to see.

My system for creating these paintings was to collect pictures from the people around me by asking —family and friends at this point—for 3-5 pics each of 3 ingredients from their life. Single use, disposable or short-term use plastic items, something out of the natural environment they love and pictures of themselves. I attempted to paint in a way that would combine these elements in the tradition of Grotesque portraiture, not Traditional portraiture, in order to create new imagery. Using the template of Grotesque portraiture, I felt that there was a historical basis that would allow me the room to create focused on movement & vibration, absurdity & humor, but still follow the recognizable platform of portraiture to reach a wide audience. My audience is everyone, and these paintings are meant to be seen. By sparking an illicit or unfamiliar reaction, my goal is to create a longer lasting curiosity, that sparks their own personal experience surrounding the Climate Crisis and continues to resonate after they walk away. Maybe the viewer will discuss the work and their experience with their own people and add to a ripple effect that can spark a variety of actual changes in this crisis.

- **Goals for the project**

- a.) Use representational, abstract and expressionistic styles of painting.
- b.) Use humor & absurdity as a gateway to addressing overwhelming topic.
- c.) Render familiar subject matter that is common to most people’s lives.
- d.) Use a color palette that is engaging and familiar, based in nature and manufactured merchandise.
- e.) Create a sense of motion, movement and/or vibration by rendering a merging of different textures that illustrate a sense of the new world; one that represents the possibilities of the new geological age aka: The Anthropocene.

- **Research**

- Portrait artists: Grotesque and Traditional
- Artists that tackle Climate Change, climate crisis issues
- Prompted by Art + Ecology minor; PNCA Homeroom site
- Books:
 - a.) Naomi Klein, *This Changes Everything*, 2014
 - b.) Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring*, 1964
 - c.) Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature*, 1989
- Publications: (some)
Grist, Hyperallergic, High-Fructose, Frieze, Juxtapoz, Artists & Climate Change, National Geographic
- JStor & JStor Daily:
The Science of Climate Change, Michael Oppenheimer and Jesse K. Anttila-Hughes

- **Successes and Challenges**

- New substrates: birch panels rather than canvas
- Only nontoxic mediums: Walnut oil and walnut oil alkyd medium
- Painting in layers: Acrylic then Oil
- Composed on both Ipad and on panel
- Size of paintings
- Medium/alkyd misunderstanding
- Drying times
- Merging/morphing of organic and hard manufactured shapes
- Will continue this project!

- **Next Steps**

- Detail & Definition
- Contrast
- Glazing
- Break the mold for the next pieces in the series: explore new ways of collaging, blocking out, editing
- Continue to Research publications and studies; Scientific, artistic, social
- Continue gathering info for creating library of images & text with people
- Take my own photos of subjects: set up chiaroscuro lighting for subjects rather than use what they give me or online references
- Use social media, create a hash tag, and share with the public on other online gallery platforms as a way to share the urgent message