

It's in Your Blood

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Abstract

I make memorials that confront mortality from the perspective of the abject. My memorials stand apart from graves, monuments or public displays that contain crosses, stuffed animals or fake flowers. It is my goal to memorialize the fragility of our human bodies as experienced when we are alive. As a form of legacy, I utilize my mother's and my own blood as an ingredient in traditional recipes that have been passed down through the women in my family. This activity is a way to pass life onto generations in the future in a way that my body cannot. My life intersects my work in the form of inspiration. For my thesis I am drawing from personal experience to address larger issues of impermanence. My research includes abject philosophy and theories of how confronting one's own mortality can have positive outcomes. I will also address my work in the context of a death denying culture and other artists working with similar concepts and materials. In addition, I discuss my material choices, and process, and how I made specific decisions in order to create visceral reactions within my viewers.

Introduction: Life and Death Intersecting Art

My art expresses my fascination with death; driven from a dark, primal place deep inside myself. Until recently, I tried to hide the ugliness of the subject by communicating my compulsions and experiences in aesthetically pleasing ways. As I continue the development of my own practice, I have become more fascinated with the ugliness hiding under the surface of our civilized society and this has been reflected in my work.

I was never taught how to mourn, grieve, or face my own mortality in a healthy way. Due to that, as well as experiencing many losses at a young age, and seeing my mother's constant battle with illness; I have become transfixed with death. My inability to process my grief led me to use art as a way to memorialize my losses.

Loss from the third person perspective is very different than that of the first person perspective. My perspective of loss shifted in December of 2015, while in my last year of graduate studies, and it ultimately changed the trajectory of the goals of my artwork. I was diagnosed with ovarian cysts, endometriosis, and cancerous cells mutating inside of my uterus. I had to make a decision: risk the cancerous cells developing and spreading to other organs which would most likely kill me, or undergo a hysterectomy.

On December 23, 2015 I had a hysterectomy.

The surgeon removed my left ovary, fallopian tubes, uterus, and cervix. My organs were then cremated with other patient's dysfunctional body parts, swept into a gutter or taken out to the trash. Learning that my organs were disposable affected me profoundly. At the age of twenty-five, I faced the fact that the rest of my body is impermanent as well.

Not long after my surgery, the one ovary I had left went into shock and died, causing me to go into menopause. In addition to confronting my own mortality, my option to pass on my own genes died as well.

I cannot go forward with my lineage. However, I can go backwards and explore my lineage through domestic processes passed down through women in my family such as canning, candy making, and soap making. I believe these traditions are a way, while commemorating loss, to emphasize life by passing that knowledge on to future generations.

My experiences also led me to research death and dying practices in different cultures; funerary rituals; accepting death as an important stage of self-growth and abject philosophy. Abject literally translates to “to cast off”. In contemporary American culture the word abject represents the disgusting, degrading, repulsive nature of the human condition. Things that I believe are too taboo to discuss as it reminds people of their own mortality ("Abject").

Theories of the Abject and Death in Culture

In order to discuss abject theories we must first discuss theories that influenced abject philosophy. In 1933, Sigmund Freud coined the term “penis envy”. He believed that penis envy occurred around ages three to five years old, when girls realized they lacked a penis, or were castrated from birth. During this phase he theorized that girls grew closer to their fathers as they blamed their mothers for the disadvantage of their own genitalia (Cherry, "*Freud's Perspective on Women*").

Jacques Lacan, a psychoanalyst influenced by Freud, reacted to Freud's theory of penis envy by proposing his own theory of the “phallus”. His theory of the phallus is less about genitalia and more about primal urges. According to Lacan, primal urges and needs only truly occur during the first structure of the psyche which he called *The Real*. This phase is all about the baby's needs that have to be satisfied without any sense of separation from the world around him. Phallus occurs in the next stage, *The Imaginary Order*, and applies to both sexes. It basically states that the idea of the phallus is unattainable by anyone once language is understood, as language imposes rules, structures, and societal standards constricting a person's primal urges, aka the phallus. During this phase a child realizes that they are a separate entity from their mother and everything else around them. Due to the anxiety this causes and a feeling of loss, a child develops an idealized sense of self. Lacan proposed that after this a child accepts language, societal rules, and is able to properly engage with others, entering the final structure of the psyche, *The Symbolic Order* (Felluga, "*Modules on Lacan*").

Julia Kristeva is a philosopher and psychoanalyst famous for writing the Powers of Horror. She referred to penis envy and *The Imaginary Order* in her theories of abjection. She is most associated with the term abject, but the first theory of abjection actually came from Georges Bataille. Bataille outlined the first theory of abjection in 1934 in an essay called *Abjection and*

Miserable Forms. He wrote this essay during Hitler's rise to power. Bataille's theories of abjection referred to a lower class of people that were outcasts due to their jobs, income, living situations etc. This class of abject people were the "scum of the earth" and an imposition to higher-class people in society (Tyler, "*The Wretched of the Earth*"). They were a popular topic of conversation and considered problematic for society as "objects of disgust". Bataille theorized that this class system allowed fascism to occur as the abject lower class had no power and was considered a burden to the upper and middle classes (Tyler, "*The Wretched of the Earth*"). Kristeva took Bataille's ideas of abjection and broadened them beyond class structures and people. She proposed that anything disgusting and degrading that reminded us of the fragile nature of our human forms was abject. The specific points that interest me in her work revolve around the female body. The female, or "mother" as Kristeva refers to it represents the abject for many reasons. The fact that females are "castrated" from birth, as in their genitals are internal opposed to external makes the female body hard to understand (Kristeva, 9-10). This refers to Freud's theorized disadvantages of being born without a penis (Cherry, "*Freud's Perspective on Women*"). Then one can add the shame and dirtiness associated with menstruation; making females even more repulsive to civilized society (Kristeva, 9-10). I personally wonder why menstruating is shameful: is it because it involves rotting flesh and bodily fluids? Or is it subconsciously horrifying because it represents an unfertilized egg, half of the cells of a child that could have been? The blood itself is an obvious reminder of wounds (death), but with more inspection an unfertilized egg is literally a life that did not get the chance to come to fruition, possibly being a further reminder of life coming to an end.

Kristeva proposes that the least shameful thing the female body can do is to breastfeed. She then goes on to explain that the mother must also be associated with cleaning up dirty diapers, vomit, food waste after meals, and toilet training (all things repulsive and abject) in order

to break the bond built by breast feeding between mother and child to prevent incestuous behavior (Kristeva, 11-13). In this I believe Kristeva is referring to Lacan's second structure of the psyche, *The Symbolic Order*, where the child realizes that they are a separate being and began to develop their identity (Felluga, "*Modules on Lacan*"). I interpret this as the mother allowing the child to develop their own sense of self and break free as an individual from that which gave them life.

According to Kristeva, once the child develops their sense of self within civilized societies, they face rules and boundaries being placed upon them to protect them from all things primal (Kristeva, 4). I believe this is an elaboration on Lacan's third stage, *The Symbolic Order*. These boundaries come in the form of houses and apartments with walls, ceilings, fences, window and door locks, etc, to keep us safe from intruders that could harm us or end our lives. The rules come in the form of medication for a health condition so a person won't die. These civilized things provide illusions that deny death as a certainty of life. In these societies topics such as defecating, menstruating, rotting animal carcasses, death, and anything bodily are taboo and not to be spoken of (Kristeva, 35). Are these things taboo because they are disgusting? Or are they disgusting because they remind us all of our own mortality? I believe Kristeva would say both.

No one wants to talk about abject topics because they are repulsive, but they repulse us because they remind us of the fragility of our human bodies (Kristeva, 35). Susan Sontag addresses the fear of the fragile nature of our own bodies in *Illness as Metaphor*. She suggests that using metaphors in regards to illness is not helpful, shows a lack of understanding of illness, and perpetuates fear (Sontag, 54-59). In *Illness as Metaphor* Sontag wrote

"Any important disease whose causality is murky, and for which treatment is ineffectual, tends to be awash in significance. First, the subjects of deepest dread (corruption, decay, pollution, anomie, weakness) are identified with the disease.

The disease itself becomes a metaphor. Then, in the name of the disease (that is,

using it as a metaphor), that horror is imposed on other things. The disease becomes adjectival. Something is said to be disease-like, meaning that it is disgusting or ugly.” (58)

I believe Sontag is saying that life-long and fatal diseases perpetuate the fear of their abject symptoms, and death. Therefore, in order for people to be comfortable that a certain disease exists, instead of accepting it for what it is, it might become part of a joke. People may turn a disease into a slang term and use it as an insult or to describe something negative, for example “Brittany is such a cancer to the workplace.” In this example Brittany becomes the disease, and the disease becomes a slang term to describe Brittany as negative. I believe this kind of conversing is what Sontag is referring to. Sontag goes on to describe how ill people are also victim blamed for being sick, as if their mental state caused the illness, and that if they practiced “mind over matter” they could cure themselves of said disease (Sontag, 46- 54). I believe Sontag is referring to the denial of how illness works, a lack of information on the matter, and an overall fear of sickness and death.

According to Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, an innovator in the field of near-death studies, most humans not only fear illness and death, they also fear seeing another person die. In *Death: The Final Stage of Growth*, Kübler-Ross states that in civilized societies, most people die in artificial environments such as hospitals. Kübler-Ross suggests that this shields the masses from death, and the abject. She says that the person who is dying is exiled into the hospital to suffer and die alone in a man-made environment (45). Yes, hospitals obviously help people and save lives. They are also a place where many people are sent to die--so that those in the world who do not want to face the inevitable, don't have to. Kübler-Ross notes that dead bodies are also removed quickly so living people don't have to see them. They are then taken care of by strangers in morgues who have no personal connection to said dead body. These strangers paint the dead bodies to look

alive and as healthy as possible again before the family has to face the body at the viewing (Kübler-Ross, 45). Even when people die, those living don't want them to look dead. This is unnatural, so why do we do it? In *Death The Final Stages of Growth*, Kübler-Ross powerfully wrote "Death reminds us of our human vulnerability in spite of all our technological advances" (5). When faced with the abject we are forced to realize that no matter how civilized our society is, and how advanced it has become, there has been no invention to prevent the inevitability of the expiration of our humanly forms.

This instills a fear caused by society sheltering us from death, decay, and the fragility of the human body. Why would society shelter us from something if it was okay for us to see? Why wouldn't we be afraid of something that we are so unfamiliar with? The mystery of what happens after death causes fear, but the act of dying itself is more fearful as we do not get to experience it happening in real time in front of our own two eyes often. We are overly sensitized to the idea of dying even though it is a part of living. How does one become desensitized to death? To explore this question I conducted an interview with Taylor Kreiss, Director of Special Projects for the UPenn Positive Psychology Center. Taylor Kreiss is a Positive Psychologist, meaning that it is his goal to teach people how to appreciate the day to day as an existentialist. He suggests recognizing the signs of mortality when they are exposed. Kreiss's advice is to accept that one day "I too shall perish". He suggests that this thought is not a sad thought; it is a freeing thought (Kreiss). I personally believe that this kind of thinking allows people to take the acceptance of death as a gift and stop taking minutes for granted, as our time here is limited.

Situating my Work in a Greater Cultural Conversation

I want my work to be the ear Jeffrey stumbles across in the field in *Blue Velvet*.

In the film, *Blue Velvet* by David Lynch, the main character, Jeffrey, is throwing rocks in a field. He leans down to search for another rock to throw and instead finds a dismembered human ear infested with ants. Jeffrey crinkles his nose in disgust, and his mouth hangs open in shock, yet he doesn't move away from the ear (Lynch, *Blue Velvet*). Why doesn't he back away?

Desire.

Jeffrey desires to know more about this cut off ear. He is simultaneously repulsed yet attracted to the object. He starts looking around the field for something to put the ear in and finds a paper bag. After he puts the ear in the bag he walks with it to the police station (Lynch, *Blue Velvet*)! Instead of taking the cops to the ear he takes it to them, again referencing how he is seduced by this disgusting symbol of all of the horrifying things in the world that civilized society tries to distract us from. It is important to note that the field in which Jeffrey finds the ear is located right behind his white picket fence suburban neighborhood (Lynch, *Blue Velvet*). This is further alluding to the ugliness going on all around us that we don't notice; as we are so caught up in our day to day routines. The curiosity that builds inside Jeffrey due to the discovery of the ear is what leads him to uncover wretched things going on behind closed doors in his very Norman Rockwell-esque neighborhood.

When viewers approach my work, I want them to have a similar visceral reaction to Jeffrey's when he finds that ear. I want my audience to look at the components of my work - lollipops, soap, candles, and jars all including my mother's and my own blood, and be both repulsed and intrigued. David Lynch could have picked a more shocking or disgusting body part for Jeffrey to find, but the ear was just the right amount of disgusting. It was a small enough body part that it wasn't intimidating to the character. It was a little rotten but not so much so that Jeffrey,

or someone watching the film would want to regurgitate. It was a small gesture with great impact. That is the kind of shock value I want my work to have. My hopes are that a viewer would be shocked that someone would be so transparent to approach ailment, lineage, and mortality by going to great lengths to obtain blood. My goal would be that the genuine, personal nature of the work would also create desire in my viewer to know more about the abject and how that leads to confrontations with mortality. In order to draw the viewer out of their daily distractions and into a confrontation of mortality, the gallery or setting for the work is my field behind Jeffrey's neighborhood.

Context

My thesis exhibition includes *Your Blood, My Blood, Our Blood*, which is 28 jars stacked in a pyramid filled with clear toy candy and blood. Also presented is *Blood Soap Basin*, a 16" diameter wash basin made of soap and human blood, filled with saline. Additionally I will have on exhibit *Communion Photograph Series*, a group of images of myself consuming foods, traditionally made by women within families, containing blood.

My exhibition will present the objects that I create alongside photographic stills documenting performative interactions between the objects and myself. I believe in combination, these pieces speak of presence and absence. In *Your Blood, My Blood, Our Blood* the filled jars stand in for my mother's and my own human bodies. In *Blood Soap Basin*, the blood, my mother's and my own DNA are literally present, without our bodies there. The blood and soap represents the presence of traditions, while the lack of bodily interaction shows the uselessness of the object when a body isn't present, addressing the fear of loss of oneself. In the documentation of my interaction with the foods containing blood (lollipops, and cupcakes), I am present but the image is cropped so that only part of myself is visible while the rest remains off screen. This alludes to a fear of losing parts of oneself.

Showing a woman eating can have sexual undertones. Even though the work is derived from a surgery on reproductive organs, it is not intended to be pornographic or for sex to be the sole message it conveys. The work may also be read as having religious undertones but I don't want it to be seen as being purely about religion. Within the small community I am from the idea of purifying oneself and partaking in communion are rituals that occur on a regular basis in many people's lives. It is not my goal to comment on these rituals in a negative way. It is my goal to compare these religious rituals, based around the sacrifice of spiritual figures, by partaking in similar rituals to confront the fear of losing oneself. I'm aware that combining things of a

somewhat sexual nature with religion may be interpreted as a negative towards religion, or could be a controversial, blasphemous topic as I use myself as a subject in these works. Religion is a sensitive topic in the world, and I certainly would not want my work ending up in scandal like Andre Serrano's *Piss Christ*. *Piss Christ* is a photograph of a glass container that holds a wooden and plastic crucifix submerged in Serrano's urine. He says that the urine is meant to symbolize his closeness to Christ, similar to the way I use blood to symbolize a continuation of life through legacies (Sage, "*Piss Christ in France*"). It was not well received by the general public as many considered the piece blasphemy. Serrano received death threats due to creating this, as did gallery owners that displayed it. Christian protesters vandalized *Piss Christ* at a show in France (Sage, "*Piss Christ in France*"). I understand why people could read Serrano's work this way, as I could understand similar readings to my own work.

I believe the perfect setting for my art would be the front gallery of the Mütter Museum. I believe my work would thrive in a setting like this as people go to the Mütter Museum to specifically see the fragile nature of our human form by viewing their many specimens addressing injuries and ailments. I wouldn't face the issues of showing here that I may come to face at other galleries. Specifically, being the fear of human blood as a biohazard. Artist Jordan Eagles did a show called *Blood Work* at the Mütter Museum in 2014, His prints/paintings are blood on plexiglass and sealed in resin, Eagles primarily works with cows' blood, and he primarily shows his work at scientific institutes (Eagles, "*About- Jordan Eagles*"). The places that accept his work would seem to be good venues for mine. If they would accept art made from cows' blood, why not human blood? Barton Benes did not always have as easy of a time showing his work as did Jordan Eagles. Benes created a series called *Lethal Weapons* where he filled a squirt gun, hollow darts, a perfume atomizer, and other objects with his HIV positive blood. Many galleries and museums found this work controversial and refused to show it. When he showed his work outside

of the United States people called him a “terrorist”. In Sweden they made him heat the blood to 160 degrees fahrenheit in a hospital so it was no longer contagious before they would show the works (Browder, "*The World of Barton Benes*"). Although my mother and I are negative for HIV, I am concerned that galleries and museums may reject the work, or make demands like those on Benes due to the bio-hazardous nature of blood as a material.

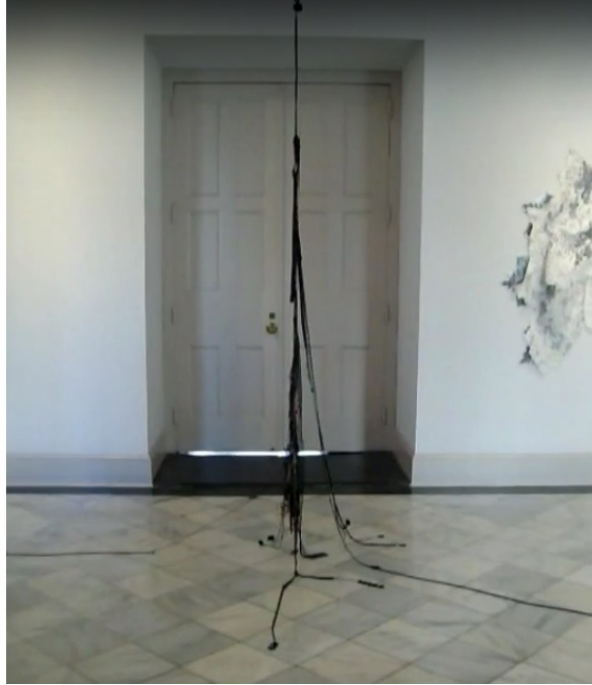
The Path to my Current Materials

In the fall of 2015, my mentor Ryan McCartney said “You are making symbols of memorials, my challenge for you is: how do you make an actual memorial?” This question pushed me define what memorials actually are, and in turn sparked a new trajectory for my art.

A memorial is a public gesture to commemorate the loss of someone/something deemed important. A memorial usually goes hand in hand with funerary rituals but can be erected many years after someone’s death if they are then seen as relevant to the time, location, and current culture. I’m less interested in the commemoration of cultural losses, and more interested in memorials created from a place of personal loss. An example would be the roadside displays of crosses, flowers, and stuffed animals where a person died in a car accident.

When I first entered this program in the summer of 2014, I attempted to make work about mortality in memory of those I’d lost. I did this by recycling costume jewelry and fake flowers from people who passed away. I deconstructed the jewelry and flowers, hot-glued them to various matrixes, then painted them with spray paint and metallic acrylic paints. I was attempting to make a shrine in memory of a person who passed away from their belongings. During critiques with faculty words like kitsch, campy, and outsider art were used to describe my work and this pushed me to quickly realize that the visual language I was using wasn’t properly communicating my ideas to viewers.

I continued to wrestle with costume jewelry for the next six months, ditching the matrix, and stringing it together ceiling to floor, creating chandelier-like, spray painted structures.



(*Phantasm No. 9*, 2014, jewelry, fake flowers, spray paint, 144" x 154" x 98")

These installations came closer to communicating ideas about death when painted black. However, the word kitsch was still coming up too often in critiques, so I put aside the jewelry and pursued fabric as a new material. I cut and then glued together fabric that reminded me of people I had lost, in the shape of mandalas. Women's work, and domesticity were frequently referred to by faculty when viewing these pieces, but my ideas of mortality and loss weren't communicated. I then moved on to merge the fabric and jewelry together. I used the jewelry as a stencil, then spray paint over it, so the ghost image was left behind on the fabric. Around this time, Ryan McCartney became my studio mentor. He knew that I had goals for my work that were not being identified by my viewers. He gave me the hardest but most beneficial challenge of my whole graduate school career: How do I make an actual memorial?

Around this time, I was diagnosed with cancerous cells in my uterus, and told my best option was to have a hysterectomy. Thinking about my upcoming surgery, surgeries in general,

and mourning the loss of bodily organs, I became deeply interested with the idea of preservation. I had an epiphany: when someone is lost you try to hold what is left for as long as you can. I asked myself, “how did we preserve things in my household?”.

Canning.

From the age of four or five, my mother and I would can the vegetables from our garden in the summer to last us through the winter. I decided to incorporate that process into my work.

I strive to make my work evoke similar emotions as *Portrait of Ross in L.A.*, 1991, by Felix Gonzalez-Torres. *Portrait of Ross in L.A.* is an art installation made of a huge pile of candies wrapped in various colored metallic candy wrappers. Ross was Gonzalez-Torres’s lover who died from AIDs. The weight of the candy is equivalent to Ross’s body weight, except it never really does weigh the same amount as Ross because viewers are allowed to take a piece of candy from the pile and eat it. The candy melts away in your mouth quickly as a bittersweet reminder of the fleeting nature of not only Ross’s life, but of life in general.

When I went back to investigate *Portrait of Ross in L.A.* further I was reminded of making clear toy candy with my mother as a child. Candy is nostalgic. It is a reminder of youth, and childhood. Candy is commonly given to children on holidays. Companies like OldTimeCandy.com even sell decade themed candy sets so adults can relive eating their favorite candy from their childhood. Not only is candy a reminder of youth but it is also transient in nature so it lends itself to be an ironic contrast to the themes that run through my work. Like canning it also refers to another ritual passed down through the women in my family.

I began to put jewelry, fake flowers, fabric, and other various items in modern canning jars to be preserved in the clear toy candy which I make by boiling sugar, corn syrup, and water - my mother’s recipe precisely. This recipe evaporates the liquid creating a sugary thick syrup that must hit the 300 degree mark to turn it from a liquid into a solid hard candy.

I presented these jars in three groups on three separate shelves. Words and phrases like “preservation”, “nostalgia”, “memories”, and the attempt to hold onto something lost became associated with the work. I was making strides but not yet quite successful with making a *memorial*. The groupings weren’t specific enough, neither were the items in the jars. Shelley Spector, a visiting critic for our winter critiques, advised me to look back at the work after my surgery and see how I felt about it then.

Surgical procedures can involve massive losses of blood, as can the recovery process. It became clear to me that what I needed to preserve is blood. My mom took care of me throughout my recovery, she had previously had the same surgery and the processes I was already using (clear toy candy and canning) were things she taught me. In using her blood and my blood I am able to address legacy through the work.

Next problem to tackle: how the hell do I get our blood?

My mom has struggled with illnesses since I was a little kid. She has a semi-permanent I.V. line that goes into her arm and to her jugular vein so she can feed herself intravenously. She has a nurse that comes by her house once a week to change her bandages and to draw her blood to check her nutrient levels. The nurse always draws one tube of blood to clean the line and throws it in my mom’s personal biohazard bin before taking the actual tube she needs to check my mom’s levels. My mother and I started to steal these spare tubes of blood from my mom’s biohazard bin. I asked EMT friends to take my blood but no one could hit my veins. I tried to draw my own blood, and that ended with me passed out on my kitchen floor. I was running out of options, and my mom was growing distressed about my failed attempts to get my own blood. At my mother’s request, her in home nurse agreed to help me get blood.

With mine and my mother’s blood supply as my material, I used vintage canning jars from the 1960’s like those my family traditionally uses. I canned our blood inside of these jars in clear

toy candy and stacked 28 of these jars in a triangle. The 28 jars represent the average woman's cycle, and each jar weighs three pounds, 84 pounds total, what my mom weighed when she was at her most ill. The work is a memorial, derived from the personal, but the use of my mother's and my own blood with our absent bodies alludes to the broader issues of loss.



(*Your Blood, My Blood, Our Blood*, 2016, clear toy candy, blood, canning jars, 50" x 25" 3.5")

With the work *Your Blood, My Blood, Our Blood* completed I pursued making more works that preserve our blood, using various domestic craft rituals passed down through women within a family, like clear toy candy to make lollipops. My mother and I made soap when I was in girl scouts. Using her safe soap recipe (shea butter soap base, olive oil, coconut oil, and peppermint essential oil), I infuse the soap with our blood in silicon molds before the bars harden. I also make paschal candles. Paschal candles are candles used in the Christian and Catholic faiths. They are often lit at Easter in honor of Jesus's resurrection, baptisms in honor of spiritual purification and

accepting Jesus as one's savior, and lit at funerary services signifying hope of the spirit entering heaven. I made my paschal candles out of soy wax, paraffin wax, peppermint essential oils, lemongrass essential oils, and my mother's and my own blood.

Janine Antoni's *Lick and Lather*, 1993-1994, inspired me to perform with the objects that I create. As Antoni interacts with the objects she creates they gain depth in emphasizing their fleeting nature. I feel the objects I create also beg to be used. I photographed the aftermath of eating one of the blood lollipops, and blood cupcakes. I photographed myself washing my hands with the blood soap, and I also made a video of myself scrubbing my hysterectomy scar with it. I photographed and filmed myself pouring the hot wax from the paschal candles on my scar. These performances not only highlight the utilitarian use of the objects I create but the attempt of trying to put something back in my body that has been lost.

Conclusion

In the future I plan to continue my Scar Photography series. In this series, I photograph women's scars who have shared similar ailments as myself. As research, this series allows me into the perspective of other's experiences. Additionally I might use it in my work, where through Photoshop, I will incorporate other women's scars on my own body. I may also cast my own scar in wax. Perhaps I will put blood in the wax like I did with my soaps and candles. I am interested in including domestic processes from other women's lineages into my work.

The work I create addresses the fragile nature of the human form and confrontations with mortality. My gestures are intended to be minimalistic, clean, quiet, and contemplative. I believe it is important to make art with the message that life is fleeting, but there are ways to continue a legacy past your own time limit in a society emphasizes youth.

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