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Third Year Outcome Report

In March of 2017, I proposed to create five films using 16mm footage. Each film would address a different emotion without the use of dialogue. The project, *Area*, was intended to serve as an exploration of audio and visual environments. I wanted to explore the idea of emotional curation. I wanted to understand if this was something that could easily be done. Could I make someone feel sad by intending to create a film using specific audio and visual components that would provoke such a feeling? Would a certain color provoke that reaction? Could I do this without being in the state of the emotion of which I was trying to address? Before approaching this project, I believed that conclusion to be true. I thought that I would be able to successfully create a work of art that one could turn to for a specific emotional response. This is before I truly understood how powerful emotions are; how it is not only hard to curate a genuine emotional response if the emotion is not truly felt, but also how work addressing an emotion may be best suited to a specific, unintended medium. While working on *Area*, I have learned a great deal about the importance of medium, technique, and a lack of control when addressing emotion centered work.

I gathered my materials at the beginning of the summer. I checked a Bolex camera out and I created masks. If I was going to film people, I wanted them to be anonymous. I created four paper maché masks, and on a warm day in June, shot a film about determination. It would be humorous. This was my second attempt at working without dialogue with 16mm. Film number two. I was ready and excited to keep going. I came back to school and edited the score with the analogue synthesizer that I had purchased with art scholar funding. What would come next? An emotion dealing with love? Was I feeling love in my life? I knew it would be easier to address the next emotion if I was actually feeling it.



Then August 12th happened. I went to the counter-protest with the music department. You can hear about Nazis on the internet but when you see them in front of your face, reality starts to stop making bit of sense. I went home and I was really confused. I was scared and angry and I didn't want to make a film. I just wanted to write. So I wrote something called "The Jogger". It's about a guy that just runs past important things in life. It was inspired by Kevin Everson, who said that the strangest thing about the events of August 12th were actually the runners just casually running by everything. To them it was just an OK thing, something that wasn't important enough to stop for.

I couldn't go back to curating emotions the way that I had previously done so because I wasn't able to rid myself of the strange nonsensical dimension of reality. I decided to save some money by shooting on MiniDV so I could buy some very expensive, Prismacolor markers. I began to draw what I was feeling. This felt as though it was a more honest depiction of my own emotions. I began to draw these women falling from the sky, and with them, flying creatures breathing fire. If I was sketching in class, it was these characters. They were all I could seem to focus on. Like my idea with *Area*, they were too speaking without any dialogue. They were falling to their deaths! How could such an action not have anything to say?



So I began to animate more. The animations gained the life that I had intended my 16mm films to gain. My first animation in the *Area* series, “Lovers in Despair” consists of falling women and angry flying creatures. One creature on the ground falls in love with one of the flying creatures, and together they are able to escape their world full of despair. I used the minilogue to create the sound and I think that it fits with the chaos of the imagery. Animation was not intended for this series but once I saw the final product, I realized that the animation medium was allowing a curating an honest emotion that I truly wasn’t able to verbalize. Something which I had always intended *Area* to do.

As I continued with this series, I continued to think of my end goal. Something felt that it wasn’t being communicated the way that I had intended. What was missing? Why was I deciding to leave out dialogue? What kind of dialogue? How specific does one have to be to just give an emotion away? I began to become extremely inspired by poetry and how it is able to communicate without being too blunt. I thought, why don’t I challenge myself to actually include dialogue in my last few pieces, without making it so direct? So I began to write poems about how I was feeling, without directly stating the exact emotion. This was a process that was extremely rewarding. I felt that I was able to communicate the values of this project on a very personal level. I believe that the two animations in this series which address guilt and jealousy are some of the best work that I have made so far.



I began to understand the transition and the growth within myself and my work after I had completed “Jealousy, Guilt, and The Sun”. I then knew that that I had the ability to create the works I was unsure of completing before I started this project. The last piece in this series is a longer animation which has a small narrative, yet does not include any dialogue. It is the longest of the piece and I’ve spent the most time working on it (3 months)! I now understand that works that require specific emotional direction may have to respond to other areas of my life, such as drawing or writing. I also feel an inclination to explore the nonsensical in animation in film, but at this moment, preferably animation. If I am going to address emotion in my work in the future, I now understand that there is a specific technique while doing so. This is a technique which requires listening to the self and giving the self space to understand what kind of emotional responses one is having. It also requires letting the self to lose some control, allowing room for emotion to take over. If this care is not given to the self, addressing emotion will not be genuine within the work, and it will fall flat when trying to achieve a goal of relating to an audience. There are also some mediums that work better with specific emotions. For myself, anger is something that can be discussed with animation better than live action. I have considered creating sets with live action in the future, but as of now with my resources, animation fits my more permanent goals. I also have realized that a lack of dialogue is not really what I had intended it to mean when pitching *Area*. By lack of dialogue I meant lack of directness, so poetry and it’s way of speaking in metaphors is a medium that works great with my visual work.



In the future, I hope to continue working how I have done so with *Area*. I feel as though I have learned so much about myself as an artist. I am kind to this person, I give her room to understand her thoughts and emotions. I am kind to her when she needs to address her projects in different ways. When she needs to take breaks. When she needs to only focus on her art. I am also so extremely grateful to The Miller Arts Scholars program, especially to Sandy and Vinie Miller and Evie and Stephen Colbert. I feel as though I can really take my goals seriously due to the incredible generosity of this program, and to me, that is priceless.