

**“In Search of Living Daylights “**

By

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## ***Introduction***

My thesis work, entitled *In Search of Living Daylights*, consists of a group of paintings that combines toys, adornments, and fleshy forms to explore the precious and pernicious role that culture plays upon the development and maintaining of a social identity.

Colloquialisms, introspection, and religious morality all inform the slightly dark tone and compositional approach to the construction of these images. Titles within this body of work are derived from colloquial terms such as *keep sweet* and *honey child*. These phrases often work as forms of endearment as well as directives of behavior. They are common in the piedmont regions of Alabama where Appalachian and Southern culture interweave. Vernaculars endearments and admonishments are the day-to-day manifestation of an underlying code of behavior and morality that is part of the shaping of identity and value-systems.

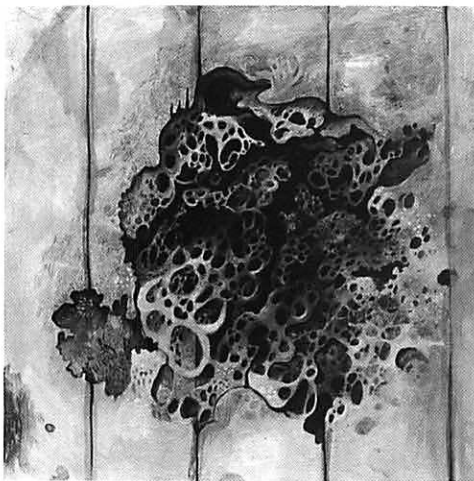
Both in my thesis work and in the homes of my regional upbringing, decorative objects such doilies and pearls, overlap with the severity of religious imagery. Within the *In Search* paintings, fleshy innards are caught in the midst of religiously inspired compositions. A veil of sweetness and radiance obscures and softens this severity, and bring up further implications of the layered nature of cultural cultivation.

The space of the dolls is transitional both physically and psychologically. The internal cavities depicted in my paintings accommodate the presence of the baby dolls by attempting to integrate and consume them. As viscera interacts with plastic, tension is created between the breaking down of what is interior and what is exterior, what is

protected and what is consumed, and what is desirable and what is repellant. The paintings show a journey of excavation through my body and identity. Through the labor of painting this history is made visible and present revealing the conflicts and catalysts in the formation of myself.

## Evolution of Graduate Work

During my time in graduate school, my work has developed from focusing on a regional ecology to exploring the ecology of my own identity. Upon entering LDSOA, my work took the form of drawings focused on the plant life of northeastern parts of Alabama. I was fascinated by the tension arising between indigenous and introduced species of plants. Kudzu, honeysuckle, and other species blanket huge portions the South. While their introduction was man-made, it has become an accepted part of the humid landscape; as iconic as magnolias and blackberries. I have long kept planted aquariums, and in gathering indigenous, aquatic plants I realized how pervasive this change in flora was. My initial work was a series of black and white drawings that intertwined plant-like forms with more porous and corrosive forms in order to explore this tension and



(Image 1) Sisters of Allelopathy  
acrylic on panel  
8 x 8 in., 2013



(Image 2) Untitled  
acrylic and ink on paper  
18 x 24 in., 2013

ever-changing relationship (Image 1 and 2). The edge between the deep crevices, and the undisturbed, flat space teems with wrapping, decaying, and expanding forms. The sense of growth and consumption is constant and indefinite. Which parts are being consumed

and which aspects are the consumers are intentionally ambiguous. Within this work are the notions of fluctuation, consumption, and a conflicted intermingling of form. My own aquariums, planted with a mixture of aquatic plants, became resources for observing the tenacious nature of certain plant life.

The focus on environmental transplantation evolved into looking at the aquarium-keeping hobby and its relationship with aestheticizing fish and artificial habitats. As my second year began, I accumulated research on different breeding trends within the hobby. I was startled at the modifications that were achieved through both breeding and maiming of tropical fish. <sup>1</sup>Fish are de-finned, tattooed, or bred to have exaggerated proportions. This led to a group of paintings on paper depicting views within various aquariums (Image 3 and 4). The fish residing in these paintings are immobile due to their bloated, malformed bodies, and they float above a bejeweled and bleak environment. They are influenced mostly by the Oranda and Ranchu varieties of goldfish. <sup>2</sup> The painted fish are heavy, awkward, and listless with bulbous bodies and empty, jewel-like eyes. The herniated, polyps of flesh that comprise their bodies are littered with embedded and piercing jewelry and this objectifies them even more.

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<sup>1</sup> There are several types of fish that are modified to increase aesthetic appeal. I focused on those I thought the most extreme. Tattooed mollies an altered form of the species *Poecilia sphenops* , is a common pet shop fish sold around holidays such as Mother's Day or Easter.

<sup>2</sup> The tradition of physical modification for aesthetic beauty is seen cross-culturally. Corsets, foot binding, neck-lengthening are all attempts to change bodies, particularly of women, to achieve an idea of beauty. In many instances this comes at the price of mobility and health such as with the fish.



(Image 3) Weight of Beauty  
Acrylic on panel  
18 x 14 in., 2014



(Image 4) Sea Dazzled  
Acrylic on Panel  
4 x 3 ft., 2014

Within this group of aquarium-based work ideas of voyeurism, excess, and artificiality are evoked and explored. The fish seem semi-permeable with their surroundings, and the edges of their bodies are occasionally unclear. They are contained within a glass box, yet the bodily adornments that are immeshed within their backs spread out into the landscape. In the process of expansion and loss of definition their sense of self is also dissolved. Fish transformed into objects through manipulation and adornment became a parallel for cultural pressures and gender identity within my own upbringing. The voyeuristic and controlling nature of the aquarium hobbyist was foregrounded, and it is this idea of the adorned and confined body that propelled the *In Search of Living Daylights* paintings.

Visually, I began to assemble a kind of human aquarium located within my own body that could be used to catalogue, construct and instruct the ecology of my identity; its



history, resources, pollutants, and interconnected artifacts. The psychological influence of culture is manifested in a collection of toys working within the physiology of my own body. How the toys interact with my internal ecology parallels how culture and gender expectations affect my own existence and sense of self.

## Setting the Stage

The *In Search of Living Daylights* paintings are painted from digitally edited photos that are taken of a constructed set. This process involves accumulating used toys, jewels, and decorative fabrics. The set consists of cave-like interiors constructed from acrylic mediums, spray insulation-foam, and multiple imbedded lights, jewels, fabrics, and toys. Ribbons, beads, and lace wrap throughout the environments and confine or join forms together. The insulation foam that creates the edges of the sets helps to obscure definitive sense of space by creating holes and caverns that can seem unending. Lights are injected into the foam and emanate from within and between these herniated masses. The foam along with the darkened corners of the setting denies a sense of structure and stability for the viewer. Populating these dark, bulbous worlds are toys acquired from thrift stores that are then reimagined through modifications. Foam, paint and jewels are used to embellish and to distort these artifacts of play, and overlay them with the environment they will finally inhabit. If the dolls are a vessel for their animator, than the edges of world and self are made indistinct. The initial selection of these toys is made from a sense of memory. Many of the toys inhabiting the thrift stores are the used and discarded toys of my own childhood. I select dolls, play sets, and other artifacts from the 80's and 90's era of toy manufacturing that have an acidic and lurid colors scheme as well as an almost exclusively plastic compositional make-up. The dolls are the subject as well as the pollutants. In the sets, the plastic of their bodies reveals a flesh-like consistency, and the dolls faces project out from a world of glut with painted lips, large eyes, and thick lashes. They often have a surprised expression with a partly opened mouth, and are surrounded by a motif of teacups, fake food, and costume jewelry. The miniaturized, domestically

themed toys are in familiar shades of pink and purple that stir childhood associations of Barbie dolls and dress-up themed toys. These particular colors like pantone 219c (Image 5) are associated with mattel and toys marketed to girls.<sup>3</sup>

The process of interacting with the set is reminiscent of setting-up and playing out scenarios as a child. Much like childhood play, narratives are enacted and objects are repurposed, as means requires. Play is a means of rehearsing adulthood as well as a space of projection and processing.<sup>4</sup> The set and dolls as a play environment still offers a means of disassembling conflicting feelings.



(Image 5)

<sup>3</sup> Auster, Carol J., and Claire S. Mansbach. "The gender marketing of toys: An analysis of color and type of toy on the Disney store website." *Sex Roles* 67, no. 7-8 (October 2012): 375-388.

Mansbach and Auster, summarize previous research in the realm of toy marketing while adding in their own research. Patterns arose such as the prominence of pastel colors in girl's toys and clothes, while toys marketed to boys uses stronger colors, and often neon colors. This symbolic significance of colors is attributed to social construction. The earlier research of Seiter and Kline showed correlations that toys with a focus on battles, action, and domination were marketed to boys, and nurturing, glamour, and domesticity themed toys were marketed to girls.

<sup>4</sup> Mann L. Persuasive doll play: A technique of directive psychotherapy for use with children. *Journal Of Clinical Psychology* [serial online]. 1957;13:14-19.

"The medium of doll play has been found uniquely suited to the purposes of directive psychotherapy with children because of the "third person" approach it permits". Whereas a child is ordinarily suspicious of and resistive to any direct confrontation with his problems, he is frequently accessible when allowed to deal with them on an anonymous level."

## **b. Photography- Creating An Island of Flesh**

The use of photographs as a precursor to painting began with photographing my own aquariums, with an interest in the way water and a macro lens distorted space and scale. In those photos, adjusting lighting sources further dislocated their environments from reality (Image 6). In *The Search* paintings, I distort reality again in order to explore it. The world of the dolls becomes a kind of human aquarium through the process of lighting and framing. Aquariums are decorated with aesthetically pleasing objects for fish to interact with or to make viewing them more pleasant. Similarly, the dolls inhabit a constraining world of jewelry, fake food and miniature kitchenware. The dolls like the fish, are enclosed and on display. Their adornments and domestic objects reinforce the importance of being an object of visual delight and advocate limiting, traditional gender roles. Unlike when playing with the dolls, the angle of the viewer is made eye-to-eye with the dolls, addressing them with a sense of urgency. The plastic quality of the toys' surfaces is given a more flesh-like emphasis from pink and orange LED lights. These lights also convey an internal heat. Warm, lurid colors are further enhanced by digitally adjusting the chromatic and contrast levels. The image is augmented to convey the acidic colors schemes found in 90's toys and in commercial aquarium kits. Blown out colors cause forms to merge and become unrecognizable while the dolls seem to lose their impermeability and fuse with their surroundings like the fish. The use of photos is also a pragmatic attempt to capture a lighting situation that is both precarious and inherently dark.





(Image 6) *Plastic Fantastic*, Drema Montgomery, digital photograph, 2014.

### c. Interpretation

By painting from photographs, a type of interpretation happens not unlike the translation embedded in the vernacular nature of the paintings' and their titles. The semi-universal language of the camera and the photo is interpreted through the medium of both my body and my mind as I paint. Labor and touch imbue individualism, and preserve the physical history of the excavation of the artist's past. Each move of my explorative journey is made manifest in layers of paint. In addition to rendering, I airbrush through lace and jewelry to cover and enhance parts of the paintings. The silhouettes created by the doilies and jewelry embellish the world of the dolls, but also create a visual barrier that the viewer must traverse.

## ***In Search of Living Daylights Paintings***

### ***A. Keep Sweet***

*Keep Sweet* (Image 8) is an acrylic painting on canvas measuring 30 x 24 in. It was completed in 2016. The painting utilizes compositional elements from multiple versions of the deposition from the cross (Image 7). The doll is slack and its feet balance precariously on an overturned cup while a hand-like cyst creeps across its chest. The doll's eyes are covered with a large neoplasm, and its hands reach out towards the viewer. With its lack of sight and mobility, the doll is at the mercy of its external manipulators. The gravity of its body is a mirror of the slumping body of a lifeless Christ being removed from the cross. Awaiting the descending blue doll is an assortment of objects of both domesticity and wealth. The doll itself is perched precariously on an overturned teacup, and to the doll's left are a castle, silver serving tray, and a white giraffe. All the forms tip in precarious ways above the folded lustrous sea of fabric that grounds the bottom portion of the image. Beads entangle the landscape laying their weight upon numerous objects in the painting. Surrounding all of these forms are the teeming, intestinal forms that shift from a color scheme of lurid, glowing pink to a sickly greenish-brown. Every form both bodily and beauty radiates and glistens pulling the eye into the composition even as the dark shadows and viscera urge away the viewer's eye.

The title *Keep Sweet* references a cautionary command that is said to children before a social engagement such as visiting another's home or going to a public outing. It encourages a way of being that values passivity and docility over engagement or directness. The precarious footing of the objects and the sliding quality of the forms is

a signifier of the small and fragile space in which “sweetness” can exist. To not upset or disrupt others one must hold one’s self carefully.



(Image 7) *The Descent From the Cross*, Peter Paul Rubens  
1612-1614



(Image 8)  
Drema Montgomery,  
*Keep Sweet*,  
acrylic in canvas,  
24 x 30 inches, 2016.



## ***B. Over Yonder***

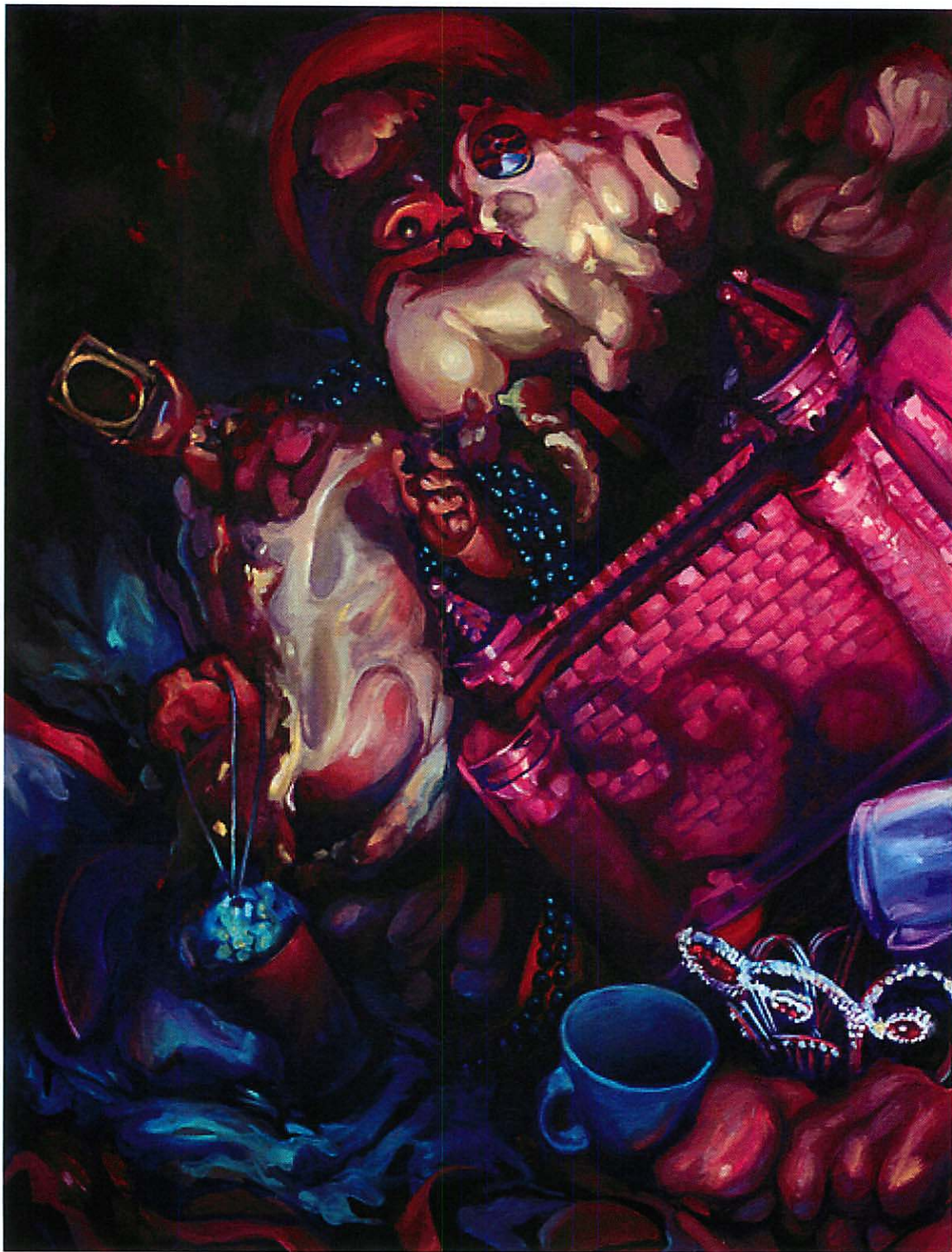
*Over Yonder*<sup>5</sup> (Image 9) is an acrylic painting on canvas measuring 20 x 24 in. It was completed in 2016. As with *Keep Sweet*, the doll's face and body has been covered and its limbs are entangled with blue, glistening beads. A teacup saucer acts as a faux halo behind the doll's head, and is a reference to the concept of the *angel in the house*<sup>6</sup>. The doll has been consumed almost entirely and now is indistinguishable from neoplastic masses that have attached themselves to its form. In addition to the cystic growths, toys press downward into the doll. A bright, pink castle pins the figure into place as it pushes into the doll's side. The pressure applied by these objects, is a nod at the gender constraints that weigh down and close-in women. The *princess in the castle* or the *angel in the house* is a trap comprised of societal expectations with false rewards. The halo and tiara are manifestations of both of these roles. Despite her affixed state, the doll still looks out towards the viewer. The title, *Over Yonder*, refers to a distance far away, a space that is made un-traversable by the doll's almost complete consumption. The doll holds out a hand, and looks out to spaces beyond.

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<sup>5</sup> Yonder references a far distance or is used as a replacement for "that". It is Germanic and English in origin and is a form of Middle English. Its use is prominent in parts of the southeast and Appalachia.

<sup>6</sup> The term "angel in the house" expresses a set of ideal traits that a woman should possess and comes from the poem, "Angel in the House" (1854) by Coventry Patmore.





(Image 9) Drema Montgomery, *Over Yonder*, acrylic on canvas, 24 x 30 inches, 2016.

### ***C. It's Easy To Give on a Full Stomach***

*It's Easy To Give on a Full Stomach*<sup>7</sup> (Image 10) is an acrylic painting on canvas measuring 3x 4 ft. It was completed in 2016. In this painting, the figures crowd around a makeshift table while one doll, washed in radiant pink light, holds up a broach. The composition is a nod to the last supper motif (Image 11). Simultaneously, the setting calls up images of tea parties, a social engagement often mimicked by children during play. The sentience of the dolls varies as each one experience different levels of mobility. The central doll looks out towards the viewer while holding a broach that the left doll admires with her own jewel-covered eyes (Detail 1). Her gaze is her only action; her legs and arms have been subsumed in the polyps of flesh around her. Across her chest she wears a golden necklace with the word "Mrs." The dolls to the right of the table reach out for each other but are restrained almost completely by the environment as well. Engorged flesh swells and subsumes the plastic feast and its occupants in a slick luster and bejeweled weight.

On the table, toy food and gems are held tight within a particularly dark, oozing viscera. An empty spoon juts forward, but the food is untouched and intact. In the gut-like landscape the dolls don't eat, but they are themselves consumed. An empty teacup, a repeating objects in the paintings, tilts to the side revealing its persistent lack-. This unfilled cup points towards women's societal roles as vessels. Women are expected to provide for and nourish, but are not encouraged to nourish themselves. Women act as societal repositories for ideals and culture, but this often means giving from an empty cup.

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<sup>7</sup> The title, *It's Easy to Give on a Full Stomach*, is a phrase that highlights the difficulty of charity when one has very little to give.



Overlaid atop the painting are the silhouettes of doilies that float above the world of the dolls bringing forth ideas of concealment, labor, and the feminine. They glow as they move between floating and covering the objects of the painting. Doilies act as a way of beautifying the bodily and somewhat unpleasant portions of this internal landscape, but they are themselves a testament to women's labor, and a claiming of feminine space.



(Image 10) Drema Montgomery, *It's Easy to Give on a Full Stomach*, acrylic in canvas, 36 x 48 inches, 2016.



(Image 11) *The Last Supper*, Juan de Juanes. Oil on panel (116 x 191 cm), dated ca. 1560.



(Detail 1) detail of *It's Easy to Give on a Full Stomach*, acrylic on canvas, 2016

#### ***D. Living Daylights***

*Living Daylights*, (Image-11) is an acrylic painting on canvas measuring 3 x 4 ft. It was completed in 2016. Unlike the previous paintings in the series, in *Living Daylights* the dolls' faces are completely subsumed within the bulbous forms and objects. Only their bodies and limbs are present as they fling in all directions full of action denied to the other dolls. A sense of movement is amplified by the spreading of ribbons and hair around the flipping dolls. The emergences of flickering lights and shifting colors also create visual movement. Jewels, beads, and a central globe act as the painting's eyes in lieu of the dolls. The silhouettes of pearls and gems are more pronounced as they intermingle with the beam of light and lace that coyly suggests the annunciation (Image 12). In *Living Daylights*, the string of beads that is present throughout the series no longer act as restraints, but instead evokes a sense of rosaries. Where *Its Easy to Give on Full Stomach* focused on the gut, consumption and restraint, the painting *Living Daylights* is located closer to the mind. Enlightenment, looking, and ritual inform the objects and space. Gone is the solid sense of ground, and a flood of light falls across the space. Prominently in the center is a fleshy pair of lips that edge towards the feet of one of the dolls, a deformed version of the religious practice of kissing feet. Unlike the tenderness of that tradition, *Living daylights*<sup>8</sup> is part of a common phrase within the South usually used in a negative context, beating the living daylights or scaring the living daylights out

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<sup>8</sup> Living daylights is an English idiom from the 18<sup>th</sup> century that refers to the eyes. It is often used as a term of extremes, beating the daylights out of someone, etc.



of someone. The slightly panicked position of the rightmost doll mimics a fleeing position, an attempt to escape the entanglements of the mind and soul.



(Image 11) Drema Montgomery, *Living Daylights*, acrylic in canvas, 36 x 48 inches, 2016.



(Image-12) Fra Angelico, The Annunciation and Life of the Virgin (in the predella), c. 1426, tempera on wood, 194 x 194 cm (Museo del Prado, Madrid)

## Resources, References, and Influences

Much of my work is an intersection between my personal testimony and documentation of the particular aspects of the northeastern region of Alabama culture. This takes the form of common cultural practices and language as well as southern Christian ideals. *In Search of Living Daylights* is also informed by research on the subject of gender construction in children's play and toys as well as the writings of Susan Stewart in *ON LONGING: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*.

### On Longing: Projecting out and Looking In

In her collection of essays, Susan Stewart sates that "The body presents the paradox of container and contained at once."<sup>9</sup> The paintings locate the bodies of the dolls within the environment of the artist's body. The interior locale is coupled with objects that are themselves vessels in which identity is projected. Placing the memories and fabric of my identity within multiple parts of my body. These ambiguous forms echo the surfaces of organs from the brain to the intestines. The memories of these objects have been internalized, and the viewer peers into this inner world with only a hint of what is beyond and what is unseen.

Stewart discusses the role of dolls as a means of creating an outer space in which one can imbue and mirror their own internal world. Children create through the dolls an avatar and a world that exists with an alternate temporality. Through the dolls' plastic bodies, children can experience these islands of imagination. The fleshy dollhouses of the

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<sup>9</sup> Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 1993. Print. 103-104.



paintings create a kind of within within within space that plays on the tension between exteriority and interiority and the way in which we mentally seek to occupy these spaces. The realm of the imaginary offers opportunities to magnify and recontextualize objects and rituals of cultural coaching.<sup>10</sup>

Stewart discusses the interaction with dollhouses and figures in relation to a sense of time. She explains that personal temporality is another way in which playing with dolls changes our experience. When playing with miniatures, time itself seems to slow. This experience of an alternative temporality exists within painting as well. Paintings live in their own time, and we experience them separate from our usual temporal life.<sup>11</sup>

### **Personal Influences: Jesus Wallpaper and Doilies**

Each of the paintings from *In Search of Living Daylights* pulls from religious compositions and motifs of the past. Through the process of creating these paintings, I became aware of the formative influences of seeing religious prints throughout my mawmaw<sup>12</sup>'s house. The didactic power of these religious images and iconography are repurposed in my work in order to question the moral and cultural messages professed by Christianity as well as create a dialogue with the history of painting. In particular, I utilize the dramatic lighting and rich colors of Baroque era paintings, and the artificiality and instability of Mannerism. The dolls gestures and stances refer to gestures used within

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<sup>10</sup> Stewart, 55- 60.

<sup>11</sup> Stewart, 65-66. People were given miniatures to play with, like a model or dollhouse, and then asked to say when they thought 30 minutes had past. The smaller the miniatures, the quicker the people playing with the toys thought 30 minutes had past. Its as though time had slowed down for them, and 5 minutes became 30 minutes.

<sup>12</sup> grandmother.

religious iconography. In *Keep Sweet*, we can see the slumping form of Jesus begin removed from the cross, while in *"It's Easy to Give on an Empty Stomach"* we see the dolls gathered around a feast while one doll addresses them.

Such as with colors and adornment, religion also becomes a tool of shaping behavior and gender. It was used as a guide towards goodness or away from sinful behavior, an evocation of shame or guilt. The goal of goodness and specifically of good-femaleness shapes the behavior and form of both the dolls and the children who enliven them. The dolls expression, clothes, and accessories all advocate for particular behaviors and roles. That structure of morality is transformed into the compositional structure within the paintings and the roles that the dolls inhabit. Through inhabiting the religious visual language, they also erode and re-contextualize them.

### **Contemporary Influences**

Beyond literature and personal experience, contemporary painters, Hannah Faith Yatta, Marilyn Minter, and Lisa Yuskavage also influence this body of work. Each artist is motivated to engage with the female body in a different way, and uses representational imagery as well as a strong sense of color. While I do not depict the female body explicitly within my work, it is present in my own interiority and the figures of the dolls.

Lisa Yuskavage stylized forms and process of sculpting her models influenced the construction of my sets and dolls. The interaction with the physical object affects the way in which it is depicted. Her works often featured saturated colors and silhouetted forms as well as rounded globe like figures and elongated limbs. Her females are sexually charged and have exaggerated, asymmetrical bodies with large bellies and hanging

breasts. I'm interested in the psychological atmosphere that the acid colors create when imposed upon familiar forms, like the dolls. This along with the manipulation of their proportions heightens the sense of the uncanny, or unhomelike. Yuskavage does not explicitly acknowledge the feminist ideologies or content within her work. Nonetheless, her imagery creates a space for such discussions to happen. My own association with the stereotypically feminine objects within my work is complex and shifting. Pink can be oppressive and powerful. I want to create space within my own work for discussion on the relationship these objects have, and the value they offer.

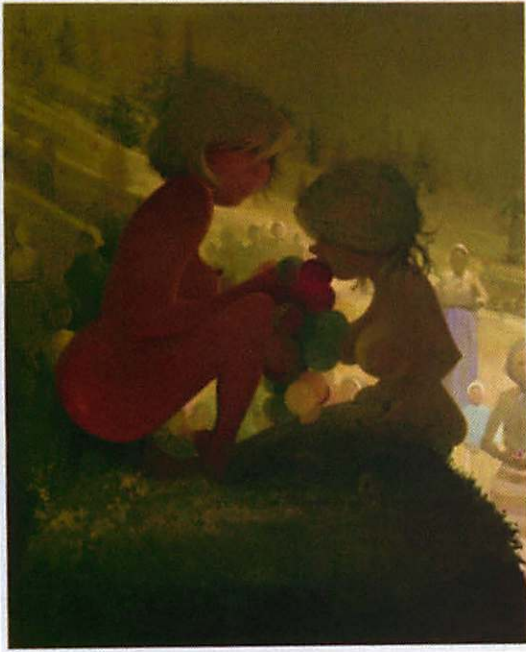
Hannah Faith Yatta's works intermingle animal and female forms. Many of her women wear masks, jewelry, feathers and other adornments while interacting with a world that seem to be shifting or forming. Her blurring of bodies, and use of aquatic references influenced my approach to both the aquarium series and my thesis work. Yatta's work explores heavily the exploitative use of women's body, animal's bodies, and natural resources.<sup>13</sup>

And finally, Marilyn Minter's use of the glass barrier, orifices, and jewelry help fashion the way in which I approach the intermingling of the veil, the adornment, and the flesh. She approaches the controversy of glamour and adornment in the realm of women. As she sates in an interview with Westword, "That's what my work is all about — showing the paradox of all of this. I make things people find disturbing, but they are also really beautiful."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> "Hannah Faith Yata - Artist Interview - WOW X WOW." *WOW X WOW*. 2014. Web. 15 Mar. 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Davies, Bree. "Marilyn Minter Talks Photoshop, Feminism, Fashion and Fine Art." Westword. 2015. Web. 18 Apr. 2016



*Afternoon Feeding*, Lisa Yuskavage , 2011



*Take Me Seriously*, Hannah Faith Yatta, 2013



Marilyn Minter, *Orange Crush*, 2009

## Conclusion

Through the body of work, *In Search of Living Daylights*, I have begun a kind of archeological dig of my own psychological motivators and influences. This approach offers opportunity for documentation against the tide of change, but also a greater understanding of origin and causation. As I have catalogued my findings, I have also refined my process of making both formally and conceptually.

My process involves multiple steps where I approach the same forms again and again. Attempting to open the symbolic vessels, and investigate within. Through creating multiple physical manifestations of intangible subjects such as gender and culture, I am able to more clearly understand the points of complexity and conflict that arise within myself. Through building physical sets, photographing, and painting, I continue to readdress and investigate those conflicted positions. Within this exploration of the personal, empathetic experiences can arise within the work for the viewer.

Much like Stewart's dollhouse, the paintings map out a history of identity and work as a third space for reflection. They also explore the ambiguous and conflicting social expectations of femininity. Young girls project on to the dolls during play. The dolls are both the vessel of identity, as well as oppressive shapers of self. The tension created when something is both alluring and disturbing, cherished and feared is where I find the most fruitful catalyst for my work. This group of work is still being created and explored because it continues to offer up new revelations, and situations of unrest that like a pieces of sand in an oyster compel me to work over these ideas until I have fashioned them into something new and lustered.

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