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Homeplace

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Homeplace

Megan Leigh Gainer

Thesis submitted
to the College of Creative Arts
At West Virginia University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
With
An emphasis in sculpture

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Morgantown, West Virginia
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Abstract

Homeplace

Megan Gainer

The sculptural work presented in this thesis and the accompanying exhibition showcase the ideas of memory, its fallacy, and why certain objects become tied to the idea of a specific time, place, and culture. Using my own personal experiences growing up in rural West Virginia, I call upon traditional crafting techniques to relay a sense of nostalgia commonly found throughout Appalachia. The expression of the hand present throughout the work highlights the importance placed on these seemingly mundane objects, which hold a special place in my history.

Acknowledgments

Throughout my life, I have been extremely blessed to have met and worked with so many amazing and wonderful people. I would like to express my gratitude to my professors here at West Virginia University, specifically Dylan Collins and Jason Lee, who helped me through a tough transition and knew when to be brutally honest and encouraging with all of their constructive criticism. I would also like to thank graduate coordinator Joseph Lupo and my committee members, Alison Helm and Naijun Zhang for helping me throughout my time here, especially with proofreading, well, everything.

I also wish to thank my fellow students, be they in the graduate or undergrad program. Your encouragements, suggestions, and critical eyes have helped solidify this work into what it is today. Thank you Kaitlyn Hunter, Brett Heron, Nathan Ditzler, Jake Guzan, Andrew Kellner and our undergraduate sculpture majors for the late nights, loud music, and lots and lots of coffee.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Content	iv
Introduction: Appalachian Craft and Art.....	1
Time, Memory, and Preciousness.....	2
Homeplace.....	3
Home.....	3
Brambleberry	4
Before My Time	4
Playthings.....	5
Hand-Me-Down	6
Cup of Tea #1-3	7
Two of a Kind	7
First You Add Oil	8
Amen[d].....	8
Conclusion	9
Illustrations.....	10
Bibliography	25
Resume	26

Introduction: Appalachia, Craft, and Art

In my work, I incorporate many materials that are often associated with mending or holding together, such as cloth and thread. These materials are presented as objects common to my Appalachian heritage, and in turn, my family and childhood. The tedious quality of the techniques used, usually decorative or craft-like in nature, highlight the importance in everyday objects. The care and treatment of such mundane things pose the question of why? Why has so much time and care been given to a simple thing? Is it an heirloom? Does it hold some sort of nostalgic or monetary value? I am interested in furthering the crossover of techniques and media, blacksmithing and jewelry, precious materials and common objects. Certain objects have become important to me based on the memories tied to them. To convey the vast importance of an everyday object is difficult, yet this remains my goal. Mixing these ideas with a variety of materials (iron, faceted stones, glass, thread) and techniques (stone setting, enameling, cross stitching), I hope to elaborate or challenge their preexisting notions by questioning the amount of time spent to beautify, repair, and alter these no longer truly usable objects.

Having grown up in rural Appalachia, I was raised believing that nothing comes before family, great stories can come from the most mundane memories, and that objects often have a history to tell if you listen hard enough and ask the right questions. In the small town of Spencer, West Virginia, chances are you know most everyone you meet. If not, a quick discussion of their relatives will help you realize who they are. Gardens and hunting are staples of the area and repurposing the old or broken is often a necessity. These activities and ways of thinking were so ingrained into my daily life that I never realized that they weren't standard and shared by everyone who lived outside of rural life. Instead, I soon learned these traditions and ways of living are distinct for the Appalachian people and their culture.

My father and mother both grew up in Roane County, West Virginia. Dad lived just outside of Spencer's city limits while Mom grew up in the backwoods accustomed to a more meager way of living. Despite the obvious differences, the habits and value of these two families remained roughly the same, though my mother's side of the family was more old-fashioned and more closely tied to the habits associated with Appalachian culture. My earliest memories are of exploring my grandparents' houses, searching for forgotten treasures, eating and helping prepare home cooked meals and canning or packaging food for freezing, and watching my grandmother quilt and sew. These are the things that have most influenced my life and my artwork. The objects that I make are physical representations of memories or people close to my heart. From the materials to the techniques I use, all of these things stem from what I now realize are the traditional ways of living in rural Appalachia.

Crafting techniques, common throughout Appalachia, are a prominent aspect of my work. From the blacksmithing I learned from my apprenticeship with artist/blacksmith Jeff Fetty through the Tamarack Foundation and the jewelry techniques from my time at Winthrop University, to learning how

to embroider, piece, and quilt from my grandmother, the handmade quality of my work is at the forefront of the finished piece. Traditional crafts are not the only things incorporated into my work. My family, knowing there was more to the world than our small town, came up with our traditional “yearly dose of culture” trips. These outings, whether they were close to home or far away, were the beginning of my realization that I grew up in a nestled culture steeped in tradition. The variations between each place were accented by the use of language to highlight what each culture found important, sparking my interest in words.

I am continually drawn to artists such as Melanie Bilenker, who recreates common mundane moments through line drawings constructed from the subject’s hair.¹ These moments focus on the small things and everyday moments that make up life, instead of the large moments that only occur once. Beili Liu’s work has a great deal of cultural associations that blend seamlessly with the physical objects she’s created or altered.² Liu’s play on words, chosen for their cultural slang and dictionary definitions, also highlight the cultural significance of words and objects. Wolfgang Laib’s material sensibilities and notion of a somewhat universal and easily understood symbolism through materials themselves is something I hope to achieve through the use of threads, faceted stones, etc. to represent repair, importance, and value.³ Cal Lane’s use of transforming everyday ignored, and somewhat ugly, objects through time intensive and decoratively historic piercing and cutting techniques, again, is something I hope to achieve through the decorative and craft processes I incorporate within my work.⁴ Lane’s work also serves to somewhat break the traditions of processes and materials as masculine or feminine by merging the two together. Other artists who use thread and needlepoint techniques, such as Debbie Smyth, Anila Rubiku, Ana Teresa Barboza, and Severija Incirauskaite-Kriauneviciene, are always on my radar, if for no other reason than the joy I get from seeing their work and being aware of what else is being done and why with these materials.

Time, Memory, and Preciousness

The three main overlapping themes present in my work are that of time, memory, and preciousness. While each of these elements has an important part to play in each object I create, they also overlap and hint at a deeper meaning. The time spent on each individual piece, in the process of creating a display, is mirrored in the passing of time associated with memories and hints at the preciousness of each object and the memory they contain. The now permanent reminder of familial memories such as *Before I Knew* and *First, You Add Oil*, made permanent in the processes of embroidery, quilting, casting,

¹ “Strand by Strand: The Making of Mementos with Melanie Bilenker.” Interview by author. January 2014.

² “BIO.” BEILI LIU 刘北立.

³ “Wolfgang Laib.” Artists.

⁴ Lane, Cal. “Artist Statement.” Cal Lane.

and stone setting used to create the works, is contrasted against the momentary glimpses of *Hand-Me-Down* and *Homeplace*, both of which are snapshots in time, allowing the objects to continue to change and making them impossible to be displayed the same way twice.

These three fundamental components are strengthened when used in tandem with their offshoots - family, fragility, inaccuracy, and sentimental value. All of these concepts build on one another to make each piece, as well as the entire body of work, stronger thanks to the conversations each piece has with one another. By coupling memory with something permanent and spending time to make each object well, its value as sentiment is brought to light. In contrast, by creating works that allow for change, or are dependent on multiple parts, the fragility of the object and idea, as well as the inaccuracy of remembering, are made present. You cannot have one of these concepts without another, be they the larger umbrella terms or the often overlooked outgrowths, for each notion is intertwined - growing together and feeding one another, making the whole stronger.

Homeplace

Homeplace recalls a generic rural home scene through the imagery of domestic wallpaper created through twined thread supported with sequin, or sewing, pins. The letters creating the title are left blank, leaving the viewer to acknowledge the emptiness and allowing them to ‘fill in’ these vacant spaces with their own experiences and memories of what home place means to them. This desire for a place to belong, something familiar that harkens back to happy childhood memories, is present throughout all of the work in the exhibition. The title of this work, as well as the exhibition, comes from a song by Kate Long called “Who Will Watch The Home Place.” This song is about a family losing their home, a place their family has lived and passed down for generations.⁵ This concern over place and history closely ties in with the Welsh word *hiraeth*, which has no direct English translation but loosely means a severe homesickness for a place, time, or person to which one cannot return or maybe never truly was.⁶ *Hiraeth* is something I am quite familiar with, having grown up surrounded by family and Appalachian culture, yet being fond of traveling and often experiencing outsider views of where I call home.

Home

This small print titled *Home*, on off-white paper held on the wall with magnets, can be easy to overlook. The paper itself has no ink, but is instead an embossment of a fold-up metal house finished with a wooden texture, rivets, windows, and a door. This object, created and used for a previous work, can no longer be found in its original, flat form. The subtle image, an indented impression of this once-

⁵ Long, Kate. Louis, Laurie, *Who Will Watch The Home Place*. Song Lyrics. Rounder Records. 1993.

⁶ Petro, Pamela. "Dreaming in Welsh." *The Paris Review*. September 18, 2012.

existing object, mirrors the emptiness found in *Homeplace* and the longing of *hiraeth* for the place that can no longer be found. The feelings embedded within this simple work solidify its place in the collection.

Brambleberry

When traveling the rural roads of West Virginia, it is quite common to come across road signs choked back with plant life. Oftentimes these signs, signifying sharp turns or displaying the names of streets or small townships, are unnecessary to those who frequented the routes and give little forewarning to the poor souls unfamiliar with the twists, curves, and rough conditions. In these signs hidden among the brambles, I see a metaphor for the unseen struggle of small towns. Throughout my travels, it is common to come across folks from more populated urban areas that describe these small towns as dead or dying, seemingly unnecessary to the growth of the area. The people who live in or near these small towns, however, realize the positive aspects of knowing your neighbors and having a community that will help during rough times. It is in these rural centers that culture flourishes and knowledge, like how to grow crops or mend cloth, is passed on.

Brambleberry is a name often given to thorny plants, such as blackberries, when they are not producing fruit. During this time, they are seen as more of a hindrance, but are cultivated none-the-less for eventually, they will bloom and bear sweet fruit. The discarded road sign used in *Brambleberry* is cross-stitched with this imagery of blackberry vines. The notion of weeds verses wildflowers, one desired for their beauty yet no different than their non-flowering or persistent kin, mirrors the struggles of small town life. Woven through the sign itself, the stitches slowly reclaim their home; no worse for wear from the introduction of this 'new' directional aid.

Before My Time

Quilting has been present in my life for as long as I can remember. Since I was a child, quilts made by my grandmother were given as gifts, used as adornment for our beds and the backs of our couches, always ready to chase away any chill. It was not uncommon to visit my grandparents out in Tariff, West Virginia, especially during wintertime, and see a quilt top being pieced together or ready for quilting. While embroidery and cross-stitch were the first things my Grandma Bailey taught me, quilting was the most amazing and elusive endeavor I had yet to learn. *Before My Time* was partially conceived as a means, not only to include my grandmother in my art making, but to also learn this useful craft often passed down from mother to daughter.

Before My Time incorporates several traditional techniques, including, embroidery, quilting, and white-working, which uses white thread on white fabric. Though this traditional style of embroidery

came about due to the lack of sure fabric dyes, it has, nevertheless, continued to be used as an elegant and simple way to decorate and adorn important garments such as handkerchiefs, christening gowns, and wedding dresses.⁷ My incorporation of white-working into this piece is based on the simplicity and subtlety of white-working and how difficult it is to see the imagery embroidered, just as it can be difficult to recall memories as they fade with time. *Before My Time*'s subtly also encourages the viewer to transpose their own history onto the worn-looking image, much like the colorless embossing of *Home*.

Depicted on the front of the quilt is an image from a faded photograph of my Grandma and Grandpa Gainer soon after they were married. These two beautiful people, who are difficult for me to recognize, are so similar yet strikingly different from the Grandma and Grandpa I knew growing up. While this image isn't from my memory directly, it is now one of the few that I have left, as my Dad's father and mother have since passed away respectively in 1997 and 2014.

Playthings

Toys are an indispensable part of any childhood. They foster imagination and relieve boredom. However, not all toys are equally favored. Surprisingly, the three Tupperware toys on display, (a giraffe, an elephant, and a dog), have watched three generations of children in my family grow, yet have somehow always managed to be one of the things most played with. The pull-apart-and-reassemble objects depicted in *Playthings* are altered toys used to represent the ones I used to play with as a child. These toys have been filed, carved, covered with cloth tape, and painted to be as close to the originals as possible. Being created from memory, these toys are not perfect replicas of their original counterparts. Instead, the toys have only the key things I remember about them mixed with what I now view as aesthetically pleasing. Without having the toys on hand to view and see the finer details, I depend on my visual skills as an artist to make the toys look "right." By putting myself into the design of the toys, I am accepting the fallacy of my memory and the inconsistencies that come with it.

No matter how accurately, however, these objects are altered, either from memory or meticulously studied from life, these reproductions will always remain replicas of the real things. The replicas will never hold the same meaning or connotations as the original toys from which they are derived, for it is the originals that show the wear and tear, scrapes, tape, and missing parts, that allude to the history and countless hours of play with my own hands. Therefore, the replicas themselves are covered with cloth tape, patched together as one would piece together a quilt, alluding to history and meaning where there is none. The cloth tape, being softer and intended for temporary use, allows me to better treat the surface of the objects so they more closely resemble the originals. While these toys will

⁷ Feyh, Debi. "Whitework in Cultures." Nordic Needle.

never hold the value or level of preciousness as that of the original “Circus Animals,” slowly, they glean a history all their own, worn on their skin for all to see.

Hand-Me-Down

Displayed on the wall in a decorative fashion is *Hand-Me-Down*, a representation of approximately 41 Homer Laughlin ceramic plates.⁸ These plates, photographed directly from the dishes handed down from my grandparents to my mother, show their use through the repaired cracks and faded designs. Given to my grandparents as a wedding gift, this “good” china was the only dishware they could afford. However, these dishes were never given a pampered life or left as decoration, forgotten out of sight. Instead of being kept in cabinets, these dishes were used every day. Everything about them, from the cracks and chips repaired with boiled milk to the odd number in the set from missing and replaced pieces, shows their importance to the daily goings-on of my family. To make *Hand-Me-Down*, each dish was photographed, like individual portraits, and the image transferred onto aluminum flashing and cut out to be displayed on the wall as is common of valuable or decorative plates.

Since image transfers are delicate surface treatments, not all of the photographic information always transferred, leaving white spots on the flashing. These faults, similar to those imperfections found within the plates themselves, were then ‘repaired’ with liquid gold leaf. While this process also mimics the gold luster found on the plates themselves, the process of repairing broken china with gold, called kintsugi, is a long-standing tradition common to the wabi-sabi aesthetic.⁹ Wabi-sabi teaches to embrace the imperfections that come from impermanence instead of hiding or discarding them. It is believed that, by emphasizing the broken or imperfections of an object, its history is acknowledged and appreciated, often considered more beautiful for the journey.¹⁰ This idea is something I do not need gold to see and welcome in these worn pieces of tableware.

As these objects displayed are not the real plates, it is the idea of these dishes’ significance that is elevated, finally giving them the honor they deserve. By taking away the items’ intended use, the viewer is left to ponder what makes these images, of dilapidated dishware no less, important enough to display in a place of honor on the wall. Removing the materiality of the dishes highlights the significance of intrinsic value, what makes it precious, and the ability for something so simple to make a large impact in a person or family’s life.

⁸ “Marigold by Homer Laughlin.” Laurel Hollow Park.

⁹ Bryant, Kimberly Lauren. “Kintsugi: The Art of Appreciating Imperfection.” Ignite. November 12, 2014.

¹⁰ Jobson, Christopher. “Kintsugi: The Art of Broken Pieces.” Colossal. May 08, 2014

Cup of Tea #1-3

An object all too familiar to me, the idea and form of a teacup harkens to older times, fragility, and to some extent, wealth and ceremony. In my family, we have a collection of teacups, not often used, which were originally packaged in feed sacks to be used as scoops for feed. These overly decorative scoops were used for marketing as they could later be used as dinnerware. Mixing the aforementioned ideas with varying materials not commonly associated with teacups themselves (such as cast iron, faceted stones, and thread), I hope to elaborate or challenge their preexisting notions, as their inclusion of feed sacks influenced mine.

The set of three teacups each make use of a different technique that is associated with tradition, fragility, feminism, and domesticity, on a material (iron) I was once told was purely masculine yet lends itself well to these techniques (enameling, stone setting, cross stitching) and has a rich history in hand-working all its own. These techniques, chosen for their complexity, materiality, and the conversation they have with the iron, are all techniques that are heavily process oriented that I often find myself drawn to, hoping to one day master. Even the title of these objects, *Cup Of Tea*, is subject to duality. The objects themselves depict actual teacups but the phrase is a play-on-words describing something, an action or method, one excels at or enjoys.

Two of a Kind

The images cross-stitched into the aluminum panels making up *Two of a Kind* are a few more hand-me-down toys. The pink doll, decrepit from play and eyes calcified from age, was one my mother had growing up and my sister and I played with on occasion. In contrast, the purple doll, also one of my mother's toys, is a more traditional sawdust dolly, made by a family friend. This latter doll, which has aged better than her counterpart, seems to have rarely been played with. Upon closer inspection of the original, two or three bandages about the sawdust doll's feet hint that maybe this doll wasn't as suited to play and instead was admired from afar. Both dolls were kept and cherished, each for their very own reasons – the pink doll has memories of youth and play to accompany her wild hair and tattered dress while the sawdust doll was cherished for her craftsmanship and the memory of who made it rather than the memories of play and adventure.

Both of these kinds of preciousness attributed to each doll are valid in their own way, bringing to light two of the many different ways objects can hold valuable associations and can help us to recall memories. In the same way that scraps of cloth from different sources can be pieced into a beautiful quilt, these memories and ideas of value can be added to individual objects, making them more important to an individual, regardless of their monetary value or physical condition.

First, You Add Oil

Time out at my maternal grandparents' house always goes the same. We drive out to nowhere Tariff, West Virginia, miles off the main road surrounded by hills, livestock, trees, and small houses. After arriving, hugs are given and chances are, if supper isn't already on the table ("dinner" if it's later in the evening) it's close to coming off the stove. After the delicious meal, we all clean up, catch up with one another, then the games begin, always Aggravation or Phase 10. I have repeated this process thousands of time and it never ceases to delight me. Regardless of how many times I watch or help my grandmother cook, however, I don't think I'll ever be able to fix fried chicken or poor-man's gravy as good as her. The title of this work is the first step in making both of these delectable staples (two of my favorite) at the Baily household and, of course, they are always fixed in a well-worn, cast iron skillet.

The particular skillet used in *First, You Add Oil*, however, isn't made for cooking. Instead, it was made from a hand modeled wax and cast in iron with the intent to be set with the faceted stones adorning its surface in a traditional cross stitch pattern. The pattern itself includes flowering plants, which I associate with my rural, garden-growing grandparents, just as the cast iron skillet does. Having this pattern set in stones (literally) elevates it to a level of importance and class that is normally reserved for jewelry, high fashion, and other time-intensive crafts. This hidden gem represents a few of the things, such as traditional food and family, I love most about rural Appalachia, but it takes looking up close to find.

Amen[d]

Amen[d] is the most direct work in the show. Eight white, unglazed porcelain bowls sit spread out atop eight steel pedestals in a circular pattern with eight doilies sewn into a circle between them. The bowls are entwined through the loose threads; remains from the embroidery circling their rims, each bowl having their own color save for the two bowls stitched in white. Once again, these objects directly represent my family, specifically the seating arrangement around the dining room table during holiday family dinners. During the meal, we often share news and current goings-on of the family while afterwards is often spent telling tales and recounting past exploits. Even after my paternal grandparents passed away, we all still sit in the same self-imposed seating arrangement, sharing and reminiscing, never leaving anyone out of the stories and often including Grandma and Grandpa Gainer.

While this is a highly personal memory, revolving around my family and its traditions, the feelings of change, loss, and remembrance are universal. In more rural areas of Appalachia, a plate or place setting is often left for the recently passed individual, marking their place though left empty. It is more common nowadays to simply remember the deceased through conversation and story telling. As the colorful threads from the bowls intertwine in conversation atop the 'table', the stark white threads trail

below, acting as an influence rather than direct participants. This visual representation of mourning through tradition is accentuated by the title, *Amen[d]*. Playing on the word ‘amen’ said after prayers and table blessings, the added suffix ‘d’ alludes to the ever changing tendencies of life, constantly being amended as life goes on.

Conclusion

It's easy to forget the place we're from is a big part of who we are. The things I used to be ashamed of, to ignore, or discredit about where I grew up are also directly tied to the things I cherish, protect, and admire. The faults I've found around me never go away, yet I now see them more as quirks resulting from a way of life. The habits of my grandparents that label them as poor, backwoods folk are the same traits I find in my art and myself. The things they feel embarrassed by, such as cracked dishes, quilts pieced from clothing scraps and feed sacks, the tendency to keep what might later be of use, are all things that create character, telling a story through the life of the object in its own right. This is what draws me to the materials and forms found within my work - they all somehow relate to my upbringing, heritage and experiences. They are what make me “me”.

Just like many craft/folk artists, I feel a desire to create.¹¹ Object making allows me to work through problems, organize my thoughts, and explain ideas. Oftentimes, these objects take the form of people, places, things, and habits from my childhood. Through the creative process, materials I use, techniques I've learned, and research collected, I'm able to glean a better understanding of my life and the world around me, while never losing track of where I'm from.

¹¹ *O, Appalachia*. Directed by Jim Brown. Performed by Raymona Lampell, Matt Collinsworth, Minnie and Garland Adkins, S.L. Jones, Charley and Noah Kinney, James Harold Jennings, Elmer Richmond. Jim Brown Productions/West Virginia University and Ramona Lampell, 2015.

Illustrations

Figure 1. Jeff Fetty, *Iris Sculpture*. Steel, brass. 19" high. Reproduced from jefffetty.com (accessed April 13, 2016)

Figure 2. Melanie Bilenker. *Brushing Teeth*. Brooch (2009). Gold, ebony, resin, pigment, hair. 4.4 x 6 x 1.3 cm. Reproduced from melaniebilenker.com (accessed April 13, 2016).

Figure 3. Beili Liu. *Recall / 回忆*. Paraffin wax, thread, hardware. 9'x14'x8.5'. Reproduced from beililiu.com (accessed April 13, 2016).

Figure 4. Wolfgang Laib. *Passageway* (2013). Seven brass ships, rice. 46 x 352.1 x 259.1 cm overall. Reproduced from <http://www.speronewestwater.com> (accessed April 13, 2016).

Figure 5. Cal Lane. *Gutter Snipes* (2011). Aluminum coated steel sewer pipe. Reproduced from <http://www.thisiscolossal.com/> (accessed April 13, 2016).

Figure 6. Megan Gainer. *Homeplace*(2016). $8\frac{1}{8}'' \times 6\frac{3}{8}'' \times \frac{1}{2}''$. Sequin pins, thread.

Figure 7. Megan Gainer. *Home* (2015). 9" x 10". Embossment.

Figure 8. Megan Gainer. *Brambelberry* (2015). 28 ¼" x 20 ¼" x 8". Road sign, embroidery floss, steel.

Figure 9. Megan Gainer. *Hand-Me-Down* (2016). Approx. 5'3" x 10'3" x 2" installed. Image transfer, aluminum flashing, liquid gold leaf, wooden displays, hardware.

Figure 10. Megan Gainer. *Hand-Me-Down* detail.

Figure 11. Megan Gainer. *Before I Knew* (2016). 6'3" x 5'1" x 1/4". Fabric, batting, thread, aluminum rod, cord.

Figure 12. Megan Gainer. *Two Of A Kind* (2016). Each approx. 5'6" x 2" x 2". Steel, aluminum, embroidery floss.

Figure 13. Megan Gainer. *First, You Add Oil* (2016). Installation 9'10" x 5' x 2". Cast iron, assorted faceted stones, old nail, LEDs, wallpaper.

Figure 14. Megan Gainer. *Playthings* (2016). Installation approx. 4'6" x 6' x 9'. Altered toys, cloth tape, paint, table, rug, throw pillows.

Figure 15. Megan Gainer. *Playthings* detail.

Figure 16. Megan Gainer. *Cup of Tea #1-3* (2016). Each approx. 2¼' x 5" x 4". Cast iron, enamel, embroidery floss, assorted faceted stones, liquid gold leaf.

Figure 17. Megan Gainer. *Amen[d]* (2016). 4'6" x 4'6" x 2'8". Porcelain, embroidery floss, steel, doilies.

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- Zimmerman, Michael J. "Intrinsic vs. Extrinsic Value." Stanford University. October 22, 2002. Accessed April 13, 2016. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/value-intrinsic-extrinsic/>.

Education

Masters of Fine Arts –Sculpture West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia	Graduate 5/2016
Pittsburgh Glass Center Course, Pittsburgh, PA Instructors- Karina Guévin and Cédric Ginart	2015
Society of Contemporary Craft (SCC) Workshop, Pittsburgh, PA Instructor- Bob Ebendorf	2013
Edinboro University of Pennsylvania – Jewelry/Metals Edinboro, Pennsylvania	2012-13
Bachelor of Fine Arts - Jewelry/ Metals Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC GPA: 3.679 Dean's List Graduated Cum Laude, Honors Program Degree	Graduated 5/2012

Teaching Experience

West Virginia University Instructor of Record Foundations II – Three Dimensional Design West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV	Spring 2016
West Virginia University Instructor of Record Foundations I – Two Dimensional Design West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV	Fall 2015
West Virginia University Digital Image Database Image and data uploader West Virginia University, Morgantown, WV	2014-15
Studio Assistant Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA	Summer 2013

Work Experience

Graduate Volunteer for South Eastern College Arts Conference (SEACAC) Hosted by West Virginia University and Slippery Rock University Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania	2015
Special Interest Group on GRAPHics and Interactive Techniques (SIGGRAPH) Student Volunteer	2015
Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) Conference Volunteer Head volunteer for Education Resource Room, 2013 conference, Toronto, Canada	2009, 10, 12, 13
Gallery Assistant – Bruce Gallery Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, PA	2012-13
Studio Assistant – Metals and Jewelry Studio Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, PA	2012-13
Apprentice blacksmith with Jeff Fetty Designs, Inc. Spencer, WV.	2007-13
Jewelry/Metals studio monitor Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC.	2010-12
Anthology Prose Editor Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC.	2010-11
Volunteer at Penland School of Craft's Community Day Penland School of Crafts, Penland, NC	2009, 10
Blacksmithing demonstration with Jeff Fetty Ripley Elementary School, Ripley, WV.	2010

Juried Exhibitions

Surroundings: MFA Students Respond to their Environment(s) Creative Arts Center, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia Curator: Sally Deskins	2016
West Virginia University Juried Student Show Creative Arts Center, West Virginia University, Morgantown, West Virginia Received WVU School of Art and Design Director's Award	2014, 15
The New Paradigm, Juried MFA Exhibition The Art Gallery (TAG), University of West Florida, Pensacola, Florida	2014
Reliquary/Redux East Carolina University Symposium, Greenville, North Carolina Jurors: Danielle James and Kate Speranza	2014
Senior Metals/Jewelry Exhibition Student Galleries, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC	2012
Undergraduate Juried Exhibition, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC Juror: Steven Matijcio Curator for the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art	2011
East Carolina University Symposium Exhibition East Carolina University, Greenville, NC	2011, 13
Undergraduate Juried Exhibition, Winthrop University Gallery Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC Juror: Brent Skidmore, Director of University of North Carolina Asheville's Craft Campus	2010
Undergraduate Juried Exhibition, Winthrop University Gallery Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC Jurors: Allie Farlowe and Lora Holladay	2009

Group Exhibitions

Confluence Artist Image Resource, Pittsburg, Pennsylvania	2014, 15, 16
Interchange Kipp Annex Gallery, Indiana University of Pennsylvania, Indiana, Pennsylvania	2013
The Superfluities Bates Gallery, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, Pennsylvania	2012
Senior Metals/Jewelry Exhibition Student Galleries, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC	2012
East Carolina University Symposium Exhibition East Carolina University, Greenville, NC	2011, 13
The First Lunch Voices of Homelessness art project Displayed in conjunction with the annual student juried exhibition Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC	2009

Conferences

College Arts Association Conference (CAAC)	2016
South Eastern College Arts Conference (SECAC) Pittsburgh, PA	2015
Special Interest Group on GRAPHics and Interactive Techniques (SIGGRAPH) Los Angeles, CA	2015
National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts Milwaukee, WI	2014
Sculptural Objects Functional Art (SOFA)	2013
East Carolina University Conference	2010, 12
Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) Philadelphia, PA, Houston, TX, Phoenix, AZ, Toronto, Canada, Boston, MA	2009, 10, 12, 13, 15
Southern Ohio Forge and Anvil Artist Blacksmith Conference in Troy, OH.	2007, 08

Activities

Shepherd University Iron Pour	2013-15
Fairmont State Iron Pour	2014-16
Assisted in installation of Carol Hummel's WVU tree	2013
Assisted with the first annual WVU Iron Pour	2013
Organizer of Senior Metals/Jewelry Exhibition	2012
Student Galleries, Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC	
Co-creator/organizer of Winthrop University's Undergraduate Intercollegiate Jewelry and Metals Exhibition, Lewindowski Gallery	2011
Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC	
Juror: Bob Ebendorf	
Guild of Emerging Metalsmiths of Winthrop University	
Vice President, Treasurer	2012, 11

Achievements/Awards

Candidate for International Sculpture Center's Outstanding Student Achievement Award	2015
Published in The Pensacola News Journal for work in The New Paradigm Exhibition	2014
Published in Parnassus: Taking the 'S' Out of Crafts	2014
Peer-reviewed journal published by the University of Louisville's graduate student organization of the Hite Art Institute	
Co-founder of the Guild of Emerging Metalsmiths(GEM) Supply Store	2010-11
Not-for-profit run by GEM allowing for the purchase of metals materials on campus	
Winthrop University's Gerald Benney Award for Metalsmithing	2012
Winthrop University's Ken Hartwell Award for Hollowware	2012
Winthrop University Undergraduate Exhibition Derksen Purchase Award	2009
Winthrop University Undergraduate Exhibition Plumb Merit Award	2009

Organizations

College Arts Association	2016
Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG)	2008-Present
Special Interest Group on GRAPHics and Interactive (SIGGRAPH)	2015- Present
National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA)	2013-2014
Guild of Emerging Metalsmiths of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania	2012-2013
Guild of Emerging Metalsmiths of Winthrop University	2008-2012
Artist Blacksmith Association of North America (ABANA)	2008-2012
Southern Ohio Forge and Anvil (SOFA)	2007-2009
Appalachian Blacksmiths Association (ABA)	2007-2009

Skills

Proficient with Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel
Proficient with Rhinoceros, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator
Knowledgeable in several 3D printing processes, printers, and companies such as Ponoko and Shapeways
Knowledgeable in the use of bench jeweler tools, MIG and stick welding, vacuum and centrifugal casting, stone setting, soldering, enameling, raising
Excellent problem solving skills with design and construction
Strong communication skills to both viewers/customers and trained jewelers
Knowledgeable in the processes used in mold making and metal casting, large and small scale, ferrous and non-ferrous materials
Knowledgeable with woodworking equipment such as table, miter, jig, and panel saws
Conversational in American Sign Language (ASL)

Collections

David Wohl – Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts at Winthrop University
Karen Derksen – Winthrop University Gallery Director/Professor
Alf Ward – Artist/Professor
Touchstone Center for Crafts, Farmington, PA