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Collecting and Selecting

Masy Hebert

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College

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COLLECTING AND SELECTING

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
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Master of Fine Arts

in

The Department of Art

by
Masy Hebert
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ABSTRACT

In *Collecting and Selecting*, I am exploring the way others adorn their lives and how these elements add up to emblemize the keeper of the treasures. With linoleum relief prints and drawings, I compose a unique type of portraiture that reveals the parallel identity between the way we dress ourselves and our living spaces. Within my process, I capture moments with photographs, draw, carve, print, and cut out the elements that hold a presence of the owner. Utilizing a heightened sense of contrast with black and white images, the textures and details of these objects come alive. Each gallery wall represents a different person, those persons being inspiring artist friends and my Mom—who's collected interior is what inspired this concept. These studies produce a visual narrative, which reveal the relationships and connections that we create with the material things that we collect as they become extensions of us.

INTRODUCTION

By exploring how people adorn themselves and their homes, an interesting representation of someone's character is exposed. My interest in collected possessions grows from my mom, who always dedicated a great deal of time to her home décor. After a diagnosis that resulted in her being unable to work, she made her home a visual landscape. As I watched her experiment with different pieces to create interesting tablescapes and wall hangings, the atmosphere transformed into something lyrical. Artificial flower arrangements are placed throughout the house that change with the seasons; family photos, vases, angelic statues, and things that remind her of her childhood are thoughtfully placed about. Each item is connected to the next by intertwined greenery and displayed on several small tables made of metal, marble, or hand painted wood, then topped with hand crocheted pieces from an ancestor. Patterns dance and connect from the rugs, to the curtains, to the furniture. Being that she is an avid estate sale goer, I was brought along with her starting at a young age. I've grown to habitually wander into estate sales where I have the realization that there is a parallel identity between the way we dress ourselves and the way we dress our living spaces. Even when a person isn't present in their home, you still have a sense of their presence, surrounded by the items of clothing, accessories, furniture, and decorative objects they have collected. Everyone has a different way of approaching self expression within the home. Some choose a minimalistic style, and others, like my Mom are more prone to claim most of the open space and create an interior of curated clutter. Since I grew up in a setting as such, I find a comfort and attraction toward it, best described in the words of Iris Apfel as, "More is more and less is a bore." Utilizing the medium of relief printing, my year-long plan was to study and be inspired by the home I grew up in and what it says about me, as well as the person who curated it. I posed the questions, "Do the things we collect and surround ourselves with really reflect our identity?" and "What relationships are formed with our possessions and self-created environments"

Visually I have been inspired by artists such as Edouard Vuillard, Mickalene Thomas, and Arnold Newman. Though these artists work in a variety of mediums, they all have a narrative aspect involving identity, the figure in an environment, and pattern, which is something my work has been gravitating towards. Philip Pearlstein has also been an inspiration in my work for his use of cropping, as I have begun using it as a tool to make the viewer feel like they are exploring the interiors with me. And lastly, printmaker Laura Berman's work such as her hand-cut intaglio rock collection, has inspired me to break out of the traditional rectangular print by pushing objectification.

TOOLS OF SELF EXPRESSION AND IDENTITY

There is power in the form of an object which can be identified as the extended self. Of all the arts, ornament has always been known for functioning solely as an aesthetic pleasure. Author Sherry Turkle discusses the obstacles ornamentation has faced to become appreciated when examining its real value and connection to people:

The acknowledgement of the power of objects has not come easy. Behind the restraint to examine objects as centerpieces of emotional life was perhaps the sense that one was studying materialism, disparaged as excess, or collecting, disparaged as hobbyism, or fetishism, disparaged as perversion. Behind the resistance to examine objects as centerpieces of thought was the value placed, at least within the Western tradition, on formal, propositional ways of knowing.¹

In my earlier studies of ornamentation, I received a lot of criticism with an overarching voice that ornamentation was overdone and unnecessary. I couldn't understand why it was frowned upon, as I grew up in an atmosphere where it was admired and encouraged.

Through research, I discovered that ornamentation was given a bad reputation when it began being overused around the sixteenth century as a representation of those who lived a life of luxury. For example, portraits from that era were telling of what class the sitter existed judging by their garments, layers of ornament, domestic space, and possessions. Elaboration of ornamentation spread from objects, to clothes, to buildings, and became seen as superfluous. With the nineteenth century came mechanical mass production of consumer goods. Fast production created more affordability and ultimately resulted in the loss of appreciation for craftsmanship in ornamentation leading to the modernistic style.² Around 1908, leading up to modernism were many critics such as Adolf Loos, spreading a negative idea of ornamentation by publicizing statements such as, "Ornament means wasted labor and therefore wasted health."³ After the repression of ornament, William Morris led the Arts and Crafts Movement beginning in the late nineteenth century as a reaction against the Industrial Revolution. Through block printing, printmaking was highly utilized as a way of producing elaborate wallpapers, curtains, and other home décor. Industrialization began mass producing ornament to profit from the aesthetic appeal of its association with handmade goods of higher quality. Today, a wide variety of printing techniques are used from the basic to the technologically advanced, spanning traditional craft practices, industrialization, and digitization.⁴ Printmaking continues to offer consumers a balance of handmade designs and manufactured goods as they are able to produce printed textiles in bulk at affordable prices.

In the exhibition, *Collecting and Selecting*, a series of studies produced portraits that tell the story of selected friends and family through the objects they possess.

¹ Turkle, Sherry. *Evocative Objects: Things We Think with*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2011), 6.

² Trilling, James. *The Language of Ornament*. (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001), 185.

³ Loos, Adolf, and Adolf Opel. *Ornament and Crime: Selected Essays*. Riverside, CA: Ariadne, 1998. 171.

⁴ Clarke, Simon. *Print: Fashion, Interiors, Art*. (London: Laurence King, 2014), 7.

The idea of the extended self is wonderfully broken down in an article by Banwari Mittal's:

Although the concept of 'I' can include virtually everything we ever come to own and live with, a systematic list would include six components: (a) our bodies; (b) our values and character; (c) our success and competence; (d) our social roles; (e) our traits, and finally (f) our possessions.⁵

Of the six components listed, I am focused on displaying the extended self through the body and that particular person's possessions because they are the two essential components that we as humans use as a visual display of expression. The other components such as their values, character, success, social roles, and traits can be perceived by the observer. I will give a brief history of how ornament was used as self expression both on the body, as well as through collected possessions in the past. Following up will be examples within *Collecting and Selecting* that exemplify how ornament is used with the body and possessions in today's modern world.

An understanding of the extended self through a relationship to the human body can most obviously be demonstrated through clothing. In earlier times, ornamentation was most popularly used as the demarcation of class and status. Specific laws were created, for example in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries of Europe, to designate classes of the society by making laws stating what they could and could not wear, as well as colors designated to specific classes. In today's world, no such ridiculous laws exist, yet clothing is still used to distinguish societies from one another and continue to be examined and broken down into further distinctions.⁶ In a world run by manufactured goods, people are able to afford much more clothing than in the past, which ultimately leads to more choice and freedom of personal expression through clothing. Styles have become highly personalized by having the ability to pick and choose inspirations from not only the present, but across time.

Tattoos are another example of self expression on the body which has been practiced for centuries. Widespread among certain nations until the tenth century, tattoos were then outlawed by Christian teaching until it returned in the sixteenth century onward following European expansion.⁷ Tattoos were used as a way to designate class, social rank, and group associations in the past, while today they continue to hold a personal statement.

Possessions standing in as the extended self have played a major role for centuries as they continue to do so today. Beginning in the nineteenth century, domestic interiors started to gain recognition as being expressive of the individuality of its creator through its fixed decorations, contents, and arrangement. During the time of architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright, it was common that the architect would have full control over the completeness of the space including all of its furnishings. Reactions against the movement of artist-architectures began in the 1870s, which encouraged people to express their individuality through their own arrangements.⁸ Soon after, specialized books and magazines of furnishing advice were available to the middle class,

⁵ Mittal, Banwari. "I, Me, and Mine-How Products Become Consumers' Extended Selves." *Journal of Consumer Behaviour* 5.6 (2006): 552.

⁶ Snodin, Michael, and Maurice Howard. *Ornament: A Social History since 1450*. (New Haven: Yale U, 1996),

⁷ Ibid., 97.

⁸ Snodin, Michael, and Maurice Howard. *Ornament: A Social History since 1450*. (New Haven: Yale U, 1996), 138.

many of which written by middle class women. The movement of making the house a home took off in 1930 when interior decorator Emily Post published *The Personality of the House* and made justifications on embracing personal style such as the following:

Its personality should express your personality, just as every gesture you make—or fail to make—expressed your gay animation or your restraint, your old fashioned conventions, your perplexing mystery, your emancipated modernism—whatever characteristics are typically yours.⁹

Today, even if only on a mantelpiece, it is largely through displaying objects that we are able to say something about our personal identity.

In *Collecting and Selecting*, examples of the extended self through the individual and possessions are a main component and act as representatives of the individual. With the affordability and variety of goods created today, a material culture has been reborn. Objects and ornamentation can communicate so much more than what it was limited to in the past. The most popular stance being luxury is still valid, but has expanded to the ideas of self expression, evocativeness, and even companionship, as many of these materials have been around and passed down from generation to generation.

The two most common reasons that we possess material things are for souvenirs and to collect. Souvenirs tell a nostalgic narrative. They are kept as a reminder of the object's origin and displayed for a more consistent remembrance or sometimes hidden away for safekeeping. Collections are used to claim a space ranging in a variety of ways such as growing an assortment of objects alike or using a variety of gathered items to come into one curated space. My work is to be viewed as a contribution to the idea that objects and decorative elements are far from meaningless as they refer to an “immeasurable worth of actual relationships”¹⁰ that we as humans form and are able to connect with one another. This need for materialism is explored in a positive sense—an aesthetic of relationship, which emphasizes doorways to our soul and being.

⁹ Post, Emily. *The Personality of a House; the Blue Book of Home Design and Decoration*. (New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1939), 3.

¹⁰ TurnerKay. *Beautiful Necessity: The Art and Meaning of Women's Altars*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 109.

EVOLUTION OF WORK

In order to gain an understanding of how interiors and possessions can be an extension of oneself, I began exploring the concept by self portraiture. Different compositional approaches were tested by zooming out to capture the feel and flow of a whole room as well as magnifying certain areas of information to draw attention to details of texture in dress and décor. By removing objects from the interior and studying them separately, I began to understand that they were touchstones of memories, the relationships developed with them, and how the object itself could stand in as a representation of myself. Once my own identity was explored through my personal possessions, it created a voyeuristic hunger to learn about the way others connected with material things.

Evidently, I knew that my Mom would be represented in the exhibition because her fascination and obsession to accumulate ornamentation is what inspired me to explore the interiors of others. I soon realized that the perfect subjects were my artist friends who exhibited their individuality in a plentiful and confident way. I suspected that those which embodied the language of their clothing to reflect who they were, tailored their home in the same manor.

I specifically chose individuals that shared a confidence in the way they illustrate their persona, yet a difference in style and personality from one another. I began photographing the subjects within their home as a way to quickly record their created environment. Each person was asked to interact with the interior during their natural routine, and in these moments, the real details were revealed. Without asking, they began to share stories of what the objects meant to them and where they came from. As I took notes, I developed a better understanding of the relationships that people form with these inanimate objects. I looked for patterns to include within the focal point and wondered if they revealed deeper clues or psychological attractions.

After photographing each individual, the photos were transferred to linoleum blocks and carved. Through this transfer, like I learned from Mom, I am able to do some rearranging to make sure the overall visual feel of the compositions are lyrical in their own way. Also, the multiple image that printmaking brings is important to me because it gives me the opportunity to make changes to shape, composition, and create pattern play with repeated objects. With each subject, different forms of approach were taken as I journeyed to figure out the best way to represent an authentic experience reflecting each individual and their environment.

THE CHOSEN ONES

My first subject was Verne: a folklore enthusiast, an art collector, a playful, animated, and outgoing spirit. Verne greeted me at the door wearing a polka dotted bandana, a crawfish pendant necklace, and a plaid shirt with paisley overlaps. Like her personality, her home instantly radiated a whimsical vibe. As I admired the artwork by her friend's hands playfully covering the walls, layers of festive accessories, and inherited mementos, Verne went on to tell me how she creates her space. "I used to always try and get sleek and minimalist objects, partly because of what I could afford and partly because I was the youngest always getting hand-me-downs. I liked new looking things because living on my own was new and having new things that had only ever been mine made me feel adult and independent. But the older I've gotten the more I want ugly and antiques looking things-- things that remind me of my parents or grandparents, knickknacks that people have gotten me, and art. So all my stuff is really a reminder of people and places." Verne is a fantastic story teller and for a portion of my time there, she read her favorite parts of a book to me beneath a majestic display of Mardi Gras beads. She told me stories about the patch cat pillow on her side which she received from her late grandmother and admired because of that, even though she made it clear that she was not a fan of cats. Verne proceeded to work on a skirt for an upcoming parade costume, then moved to her desk to draw on her intaglio plate surrounded by photos and artwork from friends. When Verne was asked what these material things provoke for her, she responded: "Xeno is the smallest amount of human contact two humans can share, a glance between strangers, etc. The objects are little vessels of xeno. Some of it is mysticism and romanticism, which really is very similar to the reason I have art hanging-- for inspiration both creatively and for positivity in my life. I think most of the objects, decorative not utilitarian, are there to promote spiritual growth. In comparison to my sister who keeps very little knickknacks and has little decoration, she travels all the time so she prefers a minimalist lifestyle. To her, objects weigh her down, whereas for me they are my spiritual center." Verne's walls are consistently staggered with artwork and photos, but it becomes clear that they are inspirational to her as they are more heavily placed above her work desk lined to the ceiling to draw inspiration and be reminded of her friends.

After photographing Verne within her space, the photos were used to create a panoramic view of the room so that the viewer is able to explore every aspect of it within one swoop. This format was created because she lived in a house with roommates, so by capturing the entirety of her room, there was no risk of getting someone else's hand mixed in with the ornamentation of her house. Verne is pictured multiple times to show the way she interacts with her space through the passing of time.



Figure 1. Masy Hebert, *Vivacious Verne*, linoleum relief, 16x36in., 2017

In searching for different ways to depict portraiture through ornamentation, there was some trial and error involved. After personally choosing items and found pattern to stand in as a portrait of Verne, I realized that a forced still life portrait didn't convey the representation imagined. The set up meant to serve as portraiture needed to be formed by the essential hand—it's owner. I felt the strong figurative presence of Verne in a femmage of objects made up of stacked vintage suitcases and assortment of jackets and accessories hanging above. This set up was created life size, as were other objects such as the mesmerizing Mardi Gras bead installation above her bed, as well as a wooden parrot her parents got on their honeymoon in the Bahamas that she "wished she could have a dozen more of".



Figure 2. Masy Hebert, *Totem of Belongings*, linoleum relief and pen drawing, 27x69in., 2017

The second individual was Hannah: a potted plant connoisseur, a skateboard aficionado, and a pattern enthusiast. Upon entering her home, it was immediately recognized that Hannah had a love for greenery as the outside and inside of her home were lined with blossoming botanicals. Hannah went on to tell me that her plants were her most prized possessions because she had put so much time into caring for them and keeping them alive. “I’m known for being the girl with too many indoor and outdoor plants, which probably has a lot to do with the conceptual focus in my work.” Natural wood elements were plentiful as well as patterned textiles comingling and connecting from room to room. With an entire house that Hannah had poured herself into, I was overwhelmed by the amount of material and possibilities. This made it difficult to narrow down what areas to use, so rather than cutting information out, a long linear

collage was created based off of how Hannah took me through her interior. From this collage came a series of prints where she is present and interacting with her created environment. Hannah began the tour in her sunroom where she spends her time reading on a cozy chair overflowing with Aztec and floral patterned blankets and pillows, under a white canopy with dangling dream catchers. A close up of Hannah is captured as she tells me about one of the books she is currently reading and her tattooed arm is on display illustrating the things she associates herself with.



Figure 3. Masy Hebert, *Persuasive Pattern*, linoleum relief, 18x24in., 2016

Along the walls of the sunroom, Hannah explained the different plants collected as she proceeded to trim down the leaves on one of her potted plants. Walking through the living room, moments were captured of her furniture and décor display along the mantle that were made up of collections of rocks, art, and showcased skateboards. Continuing into her bedroom, Hannah embodied the choices a person goes through daily to choose their attire as she exhibited her costume wigs, exposed closet, and shoes cascading down her closet door.

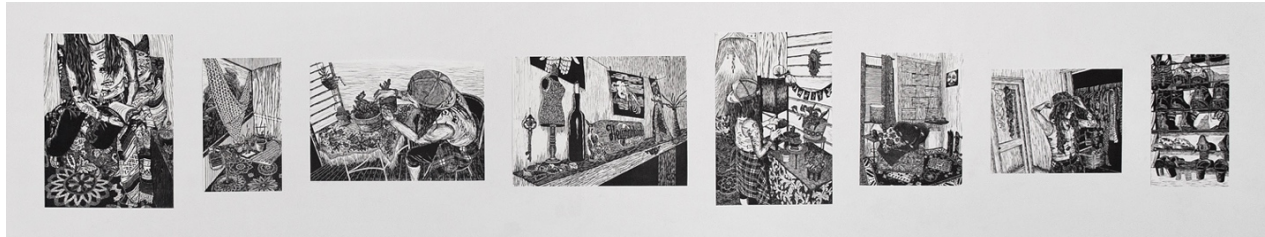


Figure 4. Masy Hebert, Installation shot, 2017

As an approach to uncover her personality through collected materials without depending on facial recognition, Hannah's face is purposely concealed throughout the prints. In this series, areas of the home are depicted as beautifully set up still lifes without incorporating her figure. A very small amount of rearranging was executed in these still lifes, if any at all, to let her self-created threshold of identity be more present. Writer Kay Turner beautifully explains the powerful importance of the connection between the creator and their constructed environment:

This power flows through the “thingliness” of the alter, its material reality. There objects and symbols are integrated into a coherent visual environment that marks their interdependence and connection with each other. This is achieved through the alter maker's selection and orchestration of materials, and by her application of certain techniques whereby images and objects that have no immediate affinity are nonetheless yoked together to forge new, interrelated meanings.¹¹

Focusing on the natural set up of Hannah's tablescapes as a visual compelling whole, I realized that the beauty of the interior was highly reliant on the arrangement by the collector to be successful. This realization led me closer to the concept I was pushing, but still didn't communicate the allure that the accumulation of objects beamed in person. Still lifes can easily become lifeless, so it was necessary to keep experimenting with scale and perspective when depicting her space to make the possessions become animated. Objects were then selected and created into life size drawings and relief prints to be cut out and advance the idea of objectification.

¹¹ TurnerKay. *Beautiful Necessity: The Art and Meaning of Women's Altars*. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 98.



Figure 5. Masy Hebert, *Hannah Vibes*, linoleum relief prints individually cut out, 2017

Possessions were chosen based off of those Hannah shared stories about, such as her mom's gift of a creepy potted plant with a Barbie doll emerging from the dirt. Things were also chosen based off of those that I felt fit Hannah's ambience, such as her bedside keepsakes of dried flower crowns. By going life size, cutting the objects out, and imitating settings, the environment comes to life and communicates the interest and curiosity one gets out of exploring the different materials we deem significant enough to have as companions.

My next subjects offered a new approach as I was examining the apartment of a husband and wife, Kelly and Travis: alter devotees, admirers of cultural experiences, and a zen temperament. For Kelly and Travis' study, my attention to detail was drawn to the small moments of adornment throughout the room. Grouped objects within the interior began to speak to me more than their space as a whole because each grouping acted as an alter. I thoroughly enjoyed exploring each alter as they held separate experiences when I moved from one to the next. Upon entering the room, my eye first went to a wooden table that held a centered teapot surrounded by a grid of assorted teas. Dancing along the walls is a display of elaborate hand painted Sri Lankan and Indonesian masks. Kelly described memories affiliated with each mask and how they are representative of different times in their life, associated with trips and loved ones. Multiple shelves are designated to different collections including Japanese collectables, stuffed animals, and both a Ganesha and Catholic alter. "All of these objects have their own power and some kind of mystery that always holds our attention as well as memories that help guide us through life. Some of my most treasured possessions are reminiscent of times when I got them and are still mysterious to me."

What inspired me most about Kelly and Travis' curious collections besides the objects themselves, was the remarkable organization of separate experiences. To share this with the viewer in the gallery, several of their displays of grouped belongings were recreated, then cut out, and installed in an authentic manner.



Figure 6. Masy Hebert, *Geisha alter*, linoleum relief prints and pen drawing cut out, 2017

When asked what inspired their interior setting, Kelly responded, “Our interior space has definitely been cultivated to form what I'd probably describe as an eclectic world buffet. Trav and I were both brought up in Christian-minded households and one that has always stuck with me, and continues to feel like some of the most sacred forms of expression to me, is the Greek Orthodox liturgy and the creation and contemplation of Orthodox Christian iconography. Before we met, Trav and I were both very interested in religions of the world and studied other concepts of god(s) and worship which led to the inclusion of some of these practices and elements in our own space (always with understanding of and respect for their origins). For Trav, a big influence was Hindu practices and iconography. Individually, we both came to believe that there is no right and wrong religion, there are pros and cons to all, and that all are in recognition of the same sacred entity. It has entirely shaped our living space and is the reason we adorn our walls and shelves with things like icons, masks, sentimental items from family members, singing bowls, drums, etc.” The unique quality I find most fascinating about Kelly and Travis is their interest and appreciation for religion and culture. It is so essential to their being and lifestyle that it was necessary to bring in this aspect when portraying them through their collection by representing them with items such as masks and alters.



Figure 7. Masy Hebert, Installation shot, 2017, photograph by Kevin Duffy

This love for culture comes through in recreated photographed moments when Kelly assembled one of her highly condensed costumes that integrates pattern, texture, and jewelry representative of different realms of rituals, meaning, and experience. Pictured below is a linoleum relief print that was inspired by a photographed study with Kelly.

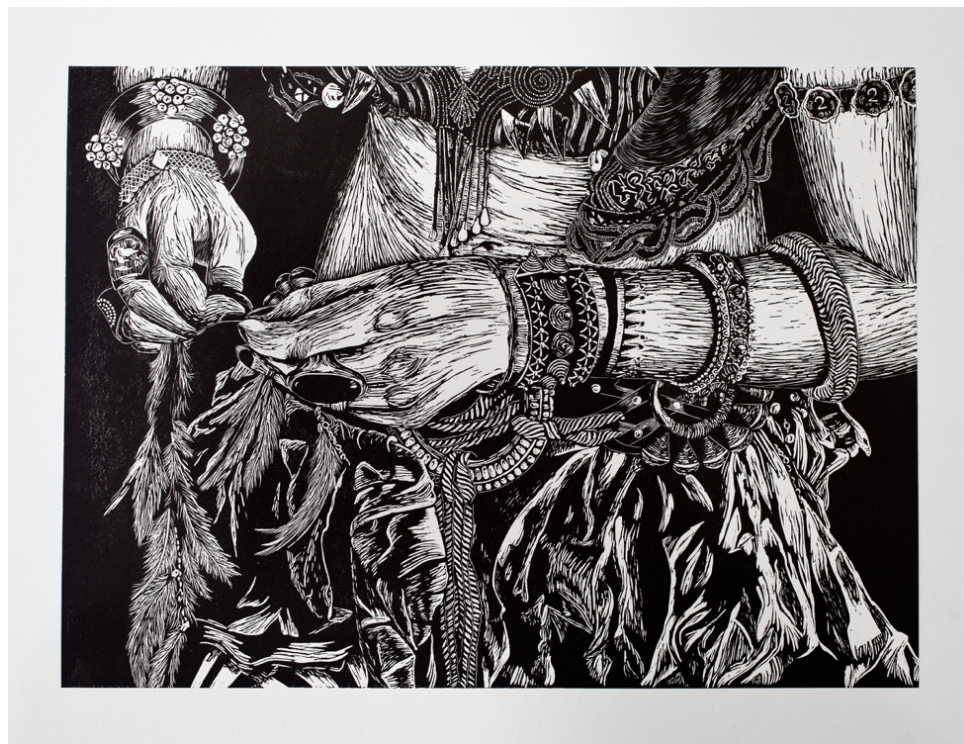


Figure 8. Masy Hebert, *Belly Dancin' Kelly*, linoleum relief, 16x22in., 2017

The suitcase holds her grandmother's collected craftsmanship of crocheted doilies and hand-made baby clothes consisting of floral and polka dot patterns that were made for my mom and her brother.



Figure 10. Masy Hebert, *Suitcase of Keepsakes*, linoleum relief, 2017, photograph by Kevin Duffy

As my visit with Mom went on, she nestled into her favorite spot in the living room with one hand holding her phone and an I-pad on her lap as she glared at the television. The contradicting moment of her dependent relationship with objects in the technological present meets the décor of wistful mementos recalling her to the past. Rather than trying to conceal her facial identity, it is exposed in “Sentimental Surroundings of Mom”, in order to capture the entirety of the room as she is relaxed and fully immersed within it.



Figure 11. Masy Hebert, *Sentimental Surroundings of Mom*, linoleum relief, 24x32in., 2017

The importance of highlighting this moment is best explained by Sherry Turkle as, “We live our lives in the middle of things. Material culture carries emotions and ideas of startling intensity.”¹² Many of us use objects as companions, some more dependent than others. The need to accumulate sometimes promotes a benevolent contagion. As a woman who lives alone, Mom has become reliant more so than ever on accumulating as company in place of human company. My Mom’s space is heavily tied to souvenirs of her past that connect her in some way to the people who once owned them. When asked to describe her interior, she commented, “Pure Pam. Comfortable, yet with so much family history from aunts, uncles, grandparents, and parents. I would imagine it to be referred to as junk to others but to me, so very sentimental. I carry a piece of them everyday with me now that they are gone. Their history is all I have left.”

Walking into Mom’s home, it’s hard not to notice her need to display decorative still lifes on small tables throughout the house. The tables are hand picked with the intention to be a display ground for objects that indicate her beliefs, experiences, memories, and emotions—things she admires.

¹² Turkle, Sherry. *Evocative Objects: Things We Think with*. (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2011), 6.

To give the viewer the same voyeuristic involvement, I experimented with lowering eye level in “Angelic Marble Table”, a work illustrated below, by changing the perspective of tablescapes as well as placing objects that sit on the floor.



Figure 12. Masy Hebert, *Angelic Marble Table*, linoleum relief prints and pen drawing cut out, 20x35in., 2017

PRESENTATION

In order to make the relief prints and drawings dominate the gallery space and invite the viewer to be more interactive with them, objects were taken out of the traditionally framed, rectangular print. To objectify the table set ups and wall hangings further, shadow play is encouraged in the installation by using different length magnets to create a space between the object and wall. Because I printed some on thin mulberry paper, I am able to utilize possible air movement, as well as allow the paper to work naturally with humidity and curl to create roundness. The authenticity of the cut out objects is not to bring trompe l'oeil into play, but to give the viewer more information about the objects by showing actual size and the temptation to touch and explore as you would in real life. By cutting the objects out, they hold a stronger presence in the room as they invite the viewer to respond to the room as well as to its inhabitant.

While many objects are cut out to highlight them, there are more traditionally printed rectangular works within each subject's space. The function of these is to allow the viewer to step into the prized moments my eye was drawn to photograph as I interacted with the figure and interior. The prints are reminiscent of a captured moment and neighbor the cut out objects to allow the viewer to step into the lens of the camera with me, as well as have their own interaction with the cut out objects. Many of the cut out objects can be found within the rectangular prints, pushing the viewer to find the relationship between the two and explore the connections.



Figure 13. Masy Hebert, Installation shot, 2017, photograph by Kevin Duffy

CONCLUSION

Throughout history, people have used possessions as a means of constructing and preserving identity. With the rise of ornamentation, from its fall, to its resurrection, material things hold a powerful and sustaining bond with their owners. As we travel through life, we are all attracted to possess different things of meaning that connect us to one another. In *Collecting and Selecting*, I have chosen friends and family who not only inspire me, but exemplify the way we as consumers use possessions as extensions of ourselves and the intimate relationships we create with them. I honor these collectors and collections and consider it a collaboration of sorts as I use the stories they tell to guide me to their most valued possessions as well as the affect it has on me as a viewer. Through an eclectic array of several people, it becomes evident that significant objects in our lives generate different narratives and create an effective presence. My goal is to invite viewers to share the moments I experienced with the interior and the individual. By creating life sized possessions and highlights of moments captured, the viewer is transported to segments of the interiors and the energy of each subject becomes present. I hope to represent each character in a truly authentic tribute.

Through observing, communicating, collaborating, and translating, I was able to find a set of images within each subject and create ways to perceive each person. With hundreds of cut out objects, I look forward to future experimentation with the different ways individuals can be represented in an exhibit. In this journey, I learned that although each subject was chosen to stand out from one another, details were uncovered that connected the subjects in unexpected ways. Each of these objects tell stories and connect us to one another. Inspired by this discovery, I anticipate a continued study to unearth the wonderful things that connect us to one another.

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VITA

Masy Hebert was born in Houma, Louisiana in 1989. She received her Bachelors of Fine Arts from Nicholls State University in Thibodaux Louisiana. She will be receiving her Master of Fine Arts from Louisiana State University in May of 2017.