

OTHER SELF

MICHELLE MACKINNON

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ABSTRACT

The works created for the thesis exhibition *Other Self* depict not only the likeness of family members, but also the essence of the relationship between the model and artist. Through portraiture, I explore the stylistic decisions and theories that affect the viewer. This paper examines how I create moments of introspection for the viewer. When my drawn portraits provoke introspection, or the examination of one's self, there is a moment created – a moment for the viewer to focus on their own lives by experiencing my memories of the people who have shaped my life. The portraits and thesis are influenced by the words of my mother: you are who you hang around with.

In Part One, I discuss the genre of hyperrealism and its more-than-real use of exaggeration and detail, sparking the viewer's relationship with the drawing. I then explore the context of portraiture and its essential role in the connection between the model, artist, and viewer. Furthermore, I examine the use of the photograph as source material for drawing. Likewise, I will examine how the use of drawing and artistic decisions affects the work's reception. In Part Two, I discuss theories of phenomenology that encourage introspection in relation to my work and its connection with perception and memory. I look at the phenomenological and its connection with memory. To conclude, I relate Jan Zwicky's concept of 'Lyric Philosophy' to the experiential encounter with an artwork.

DEDICATION

*to my friends, my motivation
to my partner, my illumination
to my family, my inspiration*

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INTRODUCTION

“We were created to look at one another, weren’t we?”¹

-Lucian Freud

I relate deeply to the experience of quiet, where nothing must be said, but can be understood through the respectful regard for another. *Quietness* occurs when the absence of words presents the opportunity to simply look. A communicative moment occurs in the absence of verbal response, yet yields and encourages the act of self-reflection. The relationship between these moments of introspective quietness and looking exist to me as the key elements in the respectful regard between self and other.

I grew up on a county road just outside of Millhaven, Ontario with a fluctuating population of fifty. My neighbours consisted of a few families and a fair number of cows. On this county road, I grew up without any loud, overbearing, offensive noises: there was never any traffic, a hobby plane was a once-a-week occurrence, and the lulling rumble and whistle of a distant train was a welcome rarity. I grew up in a very ordinary and relaxed environment; nothing overly dramatic happened besides the escape of a farm animal and the collection of hay in the last days of summer. If you closed your eyes and sat down during the day, you would hear the white noise of insects, birds, and the rustle of leaves. With the window open wide in the night, you would hear the crickets, coyotes, and nothing all at once.

This sensation of quiet is significant to me still, and I have carried its presence into my recent years in the busier setting of Toronto; I prefer smaller groups of people, I am uncomfortable with the idea of large, overbearing crowds, and I cherish the environment of my cozy apartment and homey coffee shops. This is not to say that I

¹ Sarah Howgate and Lucian Freud, Lucian Freud Portraits (Yale University Press, 2012) 54.

enjoy seclusion, but I relish in the moments of quiet that I can find during the day in my ever-busy schedule between school and work.

What ignites my interest in representing my relationships with others are the words my mother always told me when she was concerned about who I was choosing to spend my time with in elementary school: *as far as everyone else knows, you are who you hang around with*. She taught me that people would create assumptions about me depending on whom I chose to associate myself with. This way of observing the people around me has followed me throughout my life and has impacted my choices about those with whom I will spend my time. When I was younger, this meant that I usually interacted with family and a select few close friends. I was close to my family growing up, and have remained close to them as an adult. I have become very particular about who, beyond them, I choose to be close to. I view the people I surround myself with now as an extension of myself; I am pleased to be associated with these people, and if people make assumptions about me by extension, I would confront them proudly. I trust that the people I have chosen are an accurate representation of who I am at this point in my life. Each of them has influenced my growth as an individual, and I am comprised of traits belonging to each of them.

The *quietness* Millhaven brought me has persisted through my life and is prevalent in work I have created for this thesis, *Other Self*. It is my intention that, through the drawings, I create a moment of quiet for the viewer, uncovering opportunities for introspection and possible connections. Cumulatively, what this series of drawings depict are the people in my life with whom I am closest and whom I feel currently represent who I am: a portrait of myself through others. In drawing these people, I am mimicking not only their likeness by observing each detail present on their face, but I am also working to portray their essence – what really makes them who they are. However, an exact, unbiased replica of their face is impossible due to the inherent memories I have of them and that they have of me; a connection with memory is inescapable. Just as replication is impossible, so is engineering a universal experience with the artwork. The viewer will identify with the work individually given their experience and background, either empathizing with or constructing meaning about the model. In any case, through the portraits in this series I am offering the viewer the opportunity for introspection.

This paper investigates the formal and conceptual elements in my work that express moments of introspection. I will first explore the technical and stylistic aspects of the works that provoke introspection, including the genre of hyperrealism, the portrait as a means to explore the model and subsequent relationships (between the model, artist, artwork and viewer), and the use of the photograph. Furthermore, I will delve into theoretical ideas that support and fuel my drawings: the use of my phenomenological viewpoint, the inescapable aspect of memory, and the theory of experience as presented in lyric philosophy.

PART ONE: Affecting Decisions

Hyperrealism | With Embellished Authenticity

The Hyperrealism style focuses much more of its emphasis on details and the subjects. Hyper-real paintings and sculptures are not strict interpretations of photographs, nor are they literal illustrations of a particular scene or subject. Instead, they utilize additional, often subtle, pictorial elements to create the illusion of a reality, which in fact either does not exist or cannot be seen by the human eye.²

Used in the context of art, *hyperrealism* is a relatively recent term that fully developed in the early 2000s to differentiate this style from that of its predecessor, photorealism.

In regards to portraiture, photorealism, still based upon photographic reference, depicts a flattened image that is a copy of the photo. It often depicts mundane, everyday life and rarely has further psychological or philosophical elements. It is argued that the artist Chuck Close was the bridge between photorealism and the beginning of hyperrealism, and is known for “being one of the most successful in getting at the central problems photorealism poses.”³ His works, sourced from the photograph, began to give more of a sense of who his subject *was*, not just what they looked like. Close used his

² Wendy Campbell, Paul Cadden: Hyperrealism, ed. Wendy Campbell, 2009, Toronto, 4 Aug. 2012 <<http://www.dailyartfixx.com/2012/08/04/paul-cadden-hyperrealism>>.

³ Gregory Battcock, Super Realism: A Critical Anthology (Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1975) 145.

friends as his subjects, compelling him to be accurate in his renderings.⁴ His use of the gigantic scale (see Figure 1) makes the surface of the face an unavoidable encounter.

“The magnified irregularities of features and skin seem terrifying. The eye struggles to integrate so much closely observed information and absorb the humanity of the giant face. But Close loved the exacting detail, noting, ‘I’m as interested in the distribution of the marks on a flat surface and the patterns and the beat that comes up as I am with the thing that ultimately gets depicted.’”⁵



Figure 1. *Nancy* is 108 3/8 × 82 1/4 in.

His use of detail emerged in a time during the dominance of abstract expressionism. When everyone else was painting larger and making larger brush strokes, Close was the

⁴ Ibid, 150.

⁵ Brandon Brame Fortune, Wendy Wick Reaves, and David C. Ward, Face Value: Portraiture in the Age of Abstraction (London: Giles, 2014) 126.

first painter at the time to paint larger and make his strokes even smaller.⁶ His amplified interpretation of the photo forces a realization upon us, one that I strive to relay in the detail in my own work: “We have never carefully examined the world around us, or the various ways in which it is presented to us.”⁷ However, where Close and I diverge is in how we view details and in our intentions. Where Close aims to paint detail as it is presented without ‘cranking it up,’ I choose to exaggerate the detail in order to show the viewer how I see the model. My aim for the work is to observe the model and to translate *who* they really are.⁸

Though there is no set written definition of hyperrealism, seeing as it is still fairly recent, I will explain it as I understand and appropriate it in my work.

Hyperrealism reproduces reality as seen/interpreted by the artist

When creating my drawings, I am looking at the model’s photographed face and deciding what is best to exaggerate with more detail, and what can be left with less. Through this process, I am choosing for both myself and for the viewer what is imperative information for knowing whom the model is. Therefore, when the viewer observes the drawing, they receive my view of the model.

*Hyperrealism goes beyond the means of a photographic depiction and extends the potential of digital photography.*⁹

The photograph, for my purposes, is a stepping-stone medium. Rather than using just one photograph, I tend to work from five to ten photos and bring their key elements together. I do not believe that one photo could provide me with all the detail I would need. The camera has different focal points, meaning distinctive amounts of detail can be chosen in specific areas of the face in the photograph. I combine the images while I am drawing, usually with three photos zoomed in on my laptop screen at once, taking from each what the other does not indicate. I see this, as artist Evan Penny does with his sculptures, as extending the potential of digital technology. The digital photo, without the help of Photoshop, cannot seamlessly combine the various detailed photos, and by only using one

⁶ Ibid, 151.

⁷ Ibid, 152.

⁸ Brandon Brame Fortune, Wendy Wick Reaves, and David C. Ward, Face Value: Portraiture in the Age of Abstraction (London: Giles, 2014) 155.

⁹ Daniel J. Schreiber, Evan Penny: Re Figured (New York: Distributed Art Pub Incorporated, 2011) 148.

photo, I would be leaving out details that are necessary to my observation of the model. Hyperrealism is an extension of the photograph (and photorealism), in this case, accurately depicting the model through exaggerations of the details found on the face.

Hyperrealism is a hybrid between the real and the artificial with overwhelming authenticity.

With the assistance of digital photography, a convincing collision of real and artificial can take place. As I mentioned, a single photograph is unable to show the viewer all the pertinent details I want to show in one photo. More important is the exaggeration of the real through the use of mark making on a large scale. When you zoom in on a section of the image, it does not necessarily read as skin, or an iris, or a lip; it appears as dots, lines, and circular smudges. However, when you take in the image as a whole, you understand the individual parts to be coherent and true. Because of the drawing's un-photographic intensity, the portrait can be seen as becoming more than its real world counterpart; the portrait exists as a likeness of the model, but also as homage to the unique details that make them up.

Hyperrealism fluctuates between the whole (being the sum of its parts), and the parts (being the sum of the whole).

This fluctuation is apparent in my drawings when you move between the works from up close and from afar. From afar, the whole is the sum of its parts. All the small details come together to form the portrait. However, when viewed up close, the portrait shifts to the parts being a sum of the whole. There are details in the work that do not necessarily look like what they are supposed to represent when viewed at a short range (for example, and perhaps most startlingly, skin).

Hyperrealism allows for the image to appear to be a frozen reality or the illusion of a moment brought to a standstill.

When the viewer encounters these drawings, they are encountering what appears to be a moment frozen in time. The expression of the model is precisely chosen to depict a strong



Figure 2 *Nana(Helen)* – Detail.

memory, or moment, in their relationship with me, the artist. This notion of a frozen moment alludes to photography where releasing the shutter also captures a moment. The influence of the artist's hand, however, asserts a greater projection of the artist's memory onto the drawn portrait due to the physical and laborious nature of the drawing practice. *Hyperrealism gives the viewer the opportunity to see the details that are generally unseen or supposedly have little significance.*

This is an important element of the work. To create these opportunities for the viewer to notice, I emphasize what is normally overlooked, such as insignificant facial details. The idea is to show the viewer my perspective of the model and how I experience them (for example, specific mannerisms, traits, or physical features).

There is something about hyperrealism that tugs at the eye; hyperrealism tells the viewer that what they are looking at is real, but not quite photographic. There is something more than just someone's likeness being represented here – there is the crux of *who* that someone is.

Portraiture and the Other | An Extension of Myself

Insofar as artists are reflected in their creations, they may be said to be models for them, even when something or someone beyond them is literally being represented in their work...It is a small step for model-creator and creation to switch roles.¹⁰

Portraiture has existed since as early as Ancient Egypt, and has been used not only to capture physical appearance, but also to denote power and status. My drawings rely on these historical assumptions of importance in the genre of portraiture to indicate the significance of my models; they are then not only seen as significant to only me, but they are also significant to others publicly. The portraits say to strangers that these individuals are worth your attention. In the 1960s, the realistic portrait began to re-emerge in the art world. The movement to assert realism back into art came from the poststructuralist view that language had become ‘terminally unreliable,’ and imagery was therefore more dependable as a communicative language.¹¹ For instance, Close’s portrait of his wife Nancy (see Figure 1) is more effective in his painted portrayal of whom Nancy is rather than if he were to explain Nancy’s character to someone; the details he provides speak to who she is more than words can describe.

The self-portrait has historically been used as a way to represent an outward expression of the inner self to communicate personality and to self-analyze.¹² Traditionally, self-portraiture has been practiced by artists who would depict their own likeness, declaring who they were and what they looked like when the portrait was completed. In *Other Self*, however, I am creating an untraditional self-portrait through my portrayal of others expressing something to do with their relationship with me. I choose to represent myself through the people I am closest to and who reflect my current self;

¹⁰ Wendy Steiner, *The Real Real Thing: The Model in the Mirror of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) 20.

¹¹ Donna Gustafson, Susan Sidlauskas and Lee Siegel, *Striking Resemblance: The Changing Art of Portraiture* (New York: Prestel, 2014), 50-51.

¹² Ibid.

they are the people who have intentionally (or unintentionally) shaped me into who I am. In turn, this representation reflects the relationship I have with them as models.

As author Jo Higgins writes, ‘portraiture is infused with questions of identity and representation: who is portrayed by whom?’¹³ The portraits in *Other Self* assume double representation: I am revealing my models as who they are in my eyes, and simultaneously their likeness speaks to who I am. There is a reciprocal correspondence between the artist and model, and subsequently the viewer becomes involved with the artwork as they interpret this relationship.

I situate myself as an observational portrait artist¹⁴ in that my interest in the portrait focuses on the ‘un(self-conscious)self,’ and relies on the communicative, non-verbal language of portraiture.¹⁵ My intention is to represent someone as *who* they are, not merely what they look like, and to critically observe my sitters in order to exhibit what details appear when we stop merely seeing and start acutely observing. In order to accurately do so, I draw the familiar people in my day-to-day life. I feel compelled to know who I am drawing, not just what they look like. I want to be able to translate the sitter’s energy in the drawing, not merely their likeness. I have chosen to depict my nana, brother, father, mother and sister. These are people who are very close to me, yet without any context for the viewer, they will be perceived as drawn portraits of strangers. This objective observation, however, is advantageous as the viewer can take in the work without any prior assumptions and therefore uniquely experience the work without prior knowledge of the pre-existing relationship between myself and my models. They may observe the drawing to understand the relationship of the model to the artist, their own relationship to the model, how the work makes them feel, etc., assigning a new layer of persona to the portrait. As an example, the titles are a glimpse into the relationship I have with the model. From the portrait of my father, entitled *Dad(Ken)* (see Figure 4), the viewer can distinguish that the portrait is of my father. His name is parenthesized to show him how others know him, as Ken. From there, the viewer can hypothesize the artist and

¹³ Jo Higgins, *21st Century Portraits* (London: national Portrait Gallery Publications, 2013) 11.

¹⁴ As opposed to a portrait artist working in the theme of *the body, Geopolitics and National Identity, Self Portraits, Commissioned and Celebrity Portraits, or Reinvented Portraits*, as outlined in the Forward essay in *21st Century Portraits*.

¹⁵ Jo Higgins, *21st Century Portraits* (London: national Portrait Gallery Publications, 2013) 9.

models' relationship, or build a relationship of their own with the artwork from relating the piece to their own memories. Author and Professor Wendy Steiner talks about the encounter that happens between the viewer and an artwork and particularly the uncensored possibilities that result in an individual introspective interpretation. Steiner states,

“We respond to art as the ‘non-real’ and we take on a hypothetical mindset in doing so. We are open to anything, and we are able to be that way precisely because there will be a little of nothing in the way of consequences once we exit the artistic encounter.”¹⁶

The viewer is free to make assumptions about the drawing once they have encountered it; they may choose to imagine the model to be anyone, based on facts of fiction.

Experiencing the gaze is an essential element of the portrait: “The look or – as it becomes with added fixity and intensity – the stare, is the most primitive and powerful



Figure 3 *Sister(Loni)* – Detail of eyes.

part of any portrait. The eyes are the source of presence and power.”¹⁷ In each portrait, the eyes are rendered in great detail with the intention of captivating the viewer immediately. In Western culture, viewers are conditioned to respond to direct eye contact

¹⁶ Wendy Steiner, *The Real Real Thing: The Model in the Mirror of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) 108.

¹⁷ Martin Gayford, *Man With a Blue Scarf: On Sitting for a Portrait by Lucian Freud* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2013) 64.

as a confrontational gesture; it is one that causes an immediate internal reaction within us. This reciprocal regard is what creates the initial connection between the model and the viewer, but it previously exists as the suspended gaze of the model looking at the artist. When confronted with the subdued, though evocative, expressions in the portraits, there must be a moment of individual introspection. The expressions do not tell the viewer how to feel, but rather give the viewer the opportunity to create their own persona of the model. The viewer can observe how the model was looking at the artist at the time of the photo, prompting an interpretation of the expression and how it relates to their relationship. The gaze is the most accessible opportunity for a viewer to open a dialogue with an artwork, establishing an engaged relationship between artist, model, artwork and viewer.

Photographic Influence | A Collaborative Act

“Photographs are the realists’ source material. As such, they are an essential component of their art and constitute the first step in the ... process.”¹⁸

Today’s photograph is not something that is as widely cherished as it used to be. Modern technology has made taking a photo as simple as taking out your cellphone and tapping the screen – a two second task. This act is in contrast to photography’s beginnings where taking and developing a photograph took time, skill, patience, and effort. By drawing a portrait, I am suggesting the insertion of patience and skill back into the process. Awareness of what is involved in the act of drawing compared to the act of photography makes the viewer think more about what they are looking at. In order to draw the model, there are many visible considerations and translations (such as mark making, contrast, application, etc.) in composing the picture plane. To be able to draw

¹⁸ Otto Letze, Photorealism: 50 Years of Hyperrealistic Paintings (Germany: Hatje Cantz Verlag GmbH & Company KG, 2011) 11-12.

from my eye, to my mind, into my arm, and through the medium onto the paper takes a great deal of technique and observation from a first person perspective.

I begin each drawing by taking photographs of my subject, as these source images are an essential step in my process. I use these photographs as a means to accurately draw what I perceive everyday. I use photographs rather than drawing from life as the work requires a live model for too many hours.

In *Other Self*, I asked each model to think of how they view their current relationship with me. For example, my father noted that he was proud of me and proud of how far I have come. In this case, photography is not a solitary act; rather, it is a collective effort between the model and myself. I work closely with the model to get the imagery for the portrait. Steiner considers the collective act of photographing a subject, believing that,

“As a photographer you’re collaborating with the subject. You’re doing something together, and if you can make the person feel like that, that’s when it works. I’m only half the act of taking pictures, if we’re talking about portraiture, so it’s a matter of having somebody just feel right about themselves and about how they’re relating to you. Then you can get a magic moment out of them.”¹⁹

It is important for me to allow the model to form a pose that represents an accurate account of whom they are. Figurative painter Lucian Freud thought similarly of the poses in his paintings, stating that, “You can’t really tell people exactly how to pose. They wouldn’t do it, and it also would be uninteresting. They pose for themselves to express themselves. The body has an emotional vocabulary.”²⁰ From there, I asked my models to interpret our relationship in their expression. Once they had decided how it should appear, I fine-tuned their expression for the camera into something that would translate properly in the drawing. For instances, the model and I would talk about their expressions, tweaking small things, or moving the body so it reads correctly in the light on camera. The photograph must be an accurate representation of whomever I am drawing and therefore I cannot hope to take only a few photos and then select the one I like best. In this process, the first fifty or so photos will not be successful, as the models

¹⁹ Wendy Steiner, *The Real Real Thing: The Model in the Mirror of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) 22.

²⁰ Sarah Howgate and Lucian Freud, *Lucian Freud Portraits* (Yale University Press, 2012) 54.

tend to be too tense since they are not trained models. In fact, most of them tend to be uncomfortable posing in any photograph that is not a family portrait or outside of a somewhat candid experience. In that case, to get the photograph that I need from them, I continuously take photographs while facilitating their pose or talking to them until they are comfortable and, most importantly, being themselves. These are the photographs that I choose from: the photos where the model is relaxed and exhibiting their authentic self.

The painter Francis Bacon often spoke of how photography influenced his work and how he preferred the photographic reference to the live model. He states in an interview for Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art that:

I've had photographs taken for portraits because I very much prefer working from the photographs than from [the model]. I think that, if I have the presence of the image there, I am not able to drift so freely as I am able to through the photographic image...I find it less inhibiting to work from them through memory and the photographs than actually having them seated there before me.²¹

Though Bacon's paintings vastly differ from my drawings in their outcome, I identify with his reasoning of *why* he chose to work from the photograph. He used the photo as a reference, but not as an image to replicate directly. Bacon mentions that the model in the photograph becomes removed from fact and it only drives him to, "Return to fact more violently."²² Similarly in my explorations, I am adding the facts – the smallest of details – of who the models are back into the drawing through a tactile and personal approach. While Bacon's figures depart from traditional figuration, he conveys his models honestly. He once said, "What I do may be a lie [...] but it conveys reality more

²¹ Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art. Ed. Peter Hay Halpert. 2000. 3 Jan 2015. http://www.phhfineart.com/articles/francis_bacon.html>.

²² Peter Hay Halpert Fine Art. Ed. Peter Hay Halpert. 2000. 3 Jan 2015. http://www.phhfineart.com/articles/francis_bacon.html>.

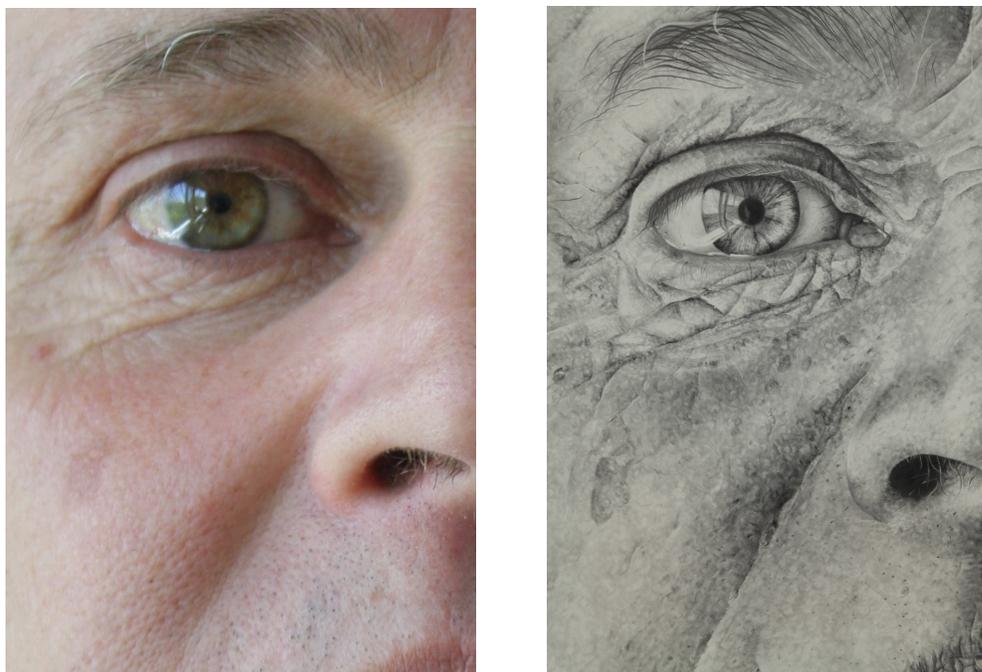


Figure 4 *Dad(Ken)* – comparison of details found in one photographic image versus what I have added in the drawing.

accurately.”²³ Similarly in my process, there are certain things that I know to exist either physically or within my models; when I take a photograph, I feel that the model’s essence is lost, and drawing them pulls it back together.

The photographs that I take of my subjects are not considered to be artworks themselves; I consider the photographs in the same way I think about any drawing utensil I use – it is one of my tools. When I begin a portrait, I take a series of photographs to get the information I need. This includes, but is not limited to:

1. The photograph that I use for the overall image – this is one that has the correct pose and, for the most part, the correct lighting.
2. A photograph that has ideal lighting conditions.
3. A photograph of the correct pose with the flash on – this is important as the flash picks up detail that the photo without the flash cannot.

²³ Michael Peppiatt, *Francis Bacon: studies for a portrait: essays and interviews* (Connecticut, Yale University Press, 2008) 114.



Figure 5 – example of various photographs I took as source material for *Mom(Donna)*.

4. A macro photograph of each of the facial features, one with a flash, and one without (including each eye, nose, mouth, forehead, chin, neck, ears, hair, etc.) from the correct angle.

I construct the drawing from these individual images, narrowing my collection of photos down to five to ten photos for each portrait. I use details found in each photo that do not exist in another and integrate them together to create the highest level of detail and understanding from the images. These inclusions allow for small details that may have slipped out of one photograph to another to become more noticeable. The drawings are not reproductions, but exaggerations.

The Drawing Process | Intimate Portrayal

*The physical intimacy of drawing, its utility, and its universality are the primary reasons for my great appreciation and affection for drawing. Each person's body, with all of its unique characteristics, is imbedded in the marks he or she makes on the paper. The hand of each artist is particular.*²⁴

To me, drawing is a direct, dedicated and intimate art form. The tactile approach to drawing serves as a visual, detailed record of my interaction with the model and is ideal for the level of detail I look to achieve in my practice. The act of drawing itself is dependent on a physical process between the eye, the hand, the body, and the materials.

The act of drawing does appear to be mundane. It is repetitious observation and representation: working on small areas at one time, discerning, drawing, erasing, and adding. But all the repetitive marking, erasing and drawing progressively accumulate, materializing as content.²⁵ Similarly, artist Evan Penny has a similar process and hopes:

[His] works have gravitational pull. [He] always hope[s] that there's a certain point where people are lost for words, if you wish. That they have to re-verbalize what it is they've just seen. The work should be powerful and unexpected.²⁶

This framework gives me immense personal satisfaction to see a slow, gradual, steady process building upon the page, evolving into something grand. The deliberate and unhurried process gives me time to evaluate and be precise in my next markings. When the series are exhibited and encountered as a whole, they work together to direct the viewer into introspection.

²⁴ Ian Berry and Jack Shear, Twice Drawn: Modern and Contemporary Drawings in Context (New York: Frances Young Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College, 2011) 155.

²⁵ Daniel J. Schreiber, Evan Penny: Re Figured (New York: Distributed Art Pub Incorporated, 2011) 27.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 17.

Powdered Graphite

To achieve the level of detail necessary for the encounter with the portraits, I use the medium of powdered graphite in conjunction with paper stumps, cotton swabs, sponges, brushes, and minimal graphite pencil work. Powdered graphite is essentially graphite ground into a soft, fine powder that, although it can easily be messy and difficult to use, allows for smooth, continuous tones as well as fine gradient detail when manipulated properly.

When I began to work in powdered graphite, I considered the work of Melissa Cooke, an artist currently creating powdered graphite drawings. Her portraits (similar in size to how I worked at the time and approximately half the size I work in now) employ brushes to dust powdered graphite onto the page, allowing for what she refers to as a ‘soft focus.’²⁷ When experienced from afar, the drawings look lush in detail; however, when you get close, you notice that the image has blurred edges and the immense detail is an illusion that softens into apparent brushwork. I appropriated this appearance of detail



Figure 6 | Melissa Cooke, *I LOVE RED LIPSTICK (EVEN IN BLACK AND)*

²⁷ “Melissa Cooke,” Koplin Del, ed Eleana Del Rio and Ron De Angelis, Kolin Del Rio Gallery, Washington, 2015 < <http://www.koplinelrio.com/content/melissa-cooke-0>>.

WHITE, 2009-2010

from afar, but introduced cotton swabs and paper stumps to heighten the detail I am able to produce now. I work against the naturally smooth medium to produce texture that appears lush from close up as well as from afar.

The grey-scale quality of powdered graphite adds monumental presence to the work, lending gravity through the absence of colour, alluding to the idea of black and white classic photography and, more literally, stone monuments and permanence.

Scale

The use of scale is an important aspect for the viewer's introspection. Through monumentality's ability to denote importance, an artist can create a sense of empathy and affection for the model that perhaps would be otherwise overlooked. For instance, artist Jenny Saville speaks with passion in regards to her large-scale paintings, noting, "I like to convey the feeling that you can hold the paint marks and travel into the paint as you



Figure 7 | Jenny Saville, *Reverse*. 2002

approach the surface. It gives me the possibility to work in both an abstract and figurative way.”²⁸ She uses a large scale (84x96 in.) to strategically bring the subject, “Within reach and makes them more tactile.”²⁹ In other words, she gives the illusion that the viewer could touch the surface and feel the texture of skin.

Another technique of scale is to have the viewer below the eye level of the piece. This decision automatically situates the viewer in a specific physical position to the work. Standing below eye level gives the viewer the sense of being small in comparison to the drawing, and further insists upon the overwhelming presence of the drawing. I work at a monumental scale to emphasize and glorify the model’s presence. The portraits are intended to be observed from both close-up and afar. When viewing the drawing at a distance, the viewer is able to take in the work as a whole. However, the meticulously rendered detail naturally draws the viewer in, letting the viewer ‘step-in’ to the portrait. Once the viewer has approached the drawing, they can notice both the representational and non-representational marks. The viewer imitates the dance that I do with the work by mimicking the back and forth creation of the piece.

I begin the drawn aspect of the portrait by sketching the portrait onto paper, measuring along the way to keep composition in mind. I consistently start the portrait with the left eye; I had not noticed this tendency until a colleague pointed it out to me. This is similar to how Freud works, stating that when painting he is, “radiating outwards from a central point rather than working all over the canvas.”³⁰ This starting point made sense as I am right handed, but also because I feel like it acts as an anchoring spot on the page.

From this starting point, my process leads to a hyperrealistic exaggeration and unique interpretation of detail not found in the photograph. I treat the beginning of a drawing similarly to the beginning of a painting by creating a layer of under drawing section by section on the page. When I complete a section of the under drawing, I immediately begin the framework for detail, building up gradients, tones, and volume. I then shift the method I apply the drawing medium to leave marks specific to its nature; I

²⁸ Jenny Saville and John Richardson, Jenny Saville: Continuum (New York: Gagolian Gallery, 2012), 4.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 4.

³⁰ Sarah Howgate and Lucian Freud, Lucian Freud Portraits (Yale University Press, 2012) 17.

try to allow the mark making of the drawing utensil to exist upon the top most layer of texture and detail.

Afterwards, I build layer upon layer this way and alternate between layers of drawing and layers of erasure. I finish each section with two finely detailed layers – one of drawn and one of erased detail.

Compositionally, I include the face, neck, and a tapered amount of the chest. I have chosen to create portraits that allude to sculpted busts, which historically denoted people of great significance. This further suggests the monumentality of the portraits and signifies their importance to me as subjects. I choose to use the slightly off-white tone of paper to be what solely fills the background. This too, I feel, produces the feeling of *quiet* in the work, as the figure appears to be floating and encapsulated in a vast, unassuming, white emptiness. The white space gives the viewer a place for their eyes to rest, but the detail of the work brings the viewer back into the drawing. Additionally, the white background area permits a sense of calm that surrounds the otherwise confrontational gaze.

When I believe that I have completed a drawing, and before I spray it with a fixative to permanently adhere the powder, I allow the work to remain hung in the studio and I spend weeks, if not months, passively observing the portrait. This is for a couple reasons: I spend time looking at each ‘finished’ piece and allow myself to make additions and subtractions; I leave it up to compare new work to older work, and I let the older work influence a newer piece. This ensures the series’ consistency within the details and the marks I make.

While mark making, I am subconsciously projecting traits of myself into the work; not physical attributes, but little characteristics that allude to who I am: a patient, yet meticulous and detail-orientated lover of control. Even though my physical appearance is not present in the drawings, these characteristics are. You can see and feel my presence in the detailed markings I emphasize to make the portrait impactful.

PART TWO: Theoretical Persuasion

The portraits in *Other Self*, as aforementioned, are inspired by mother's words, *you are whom you hang around with*, and this statement instilled familial value in me at a young age. The theoretical exploration of relationships in Part Two hinges on the ontology of relations. In moments of introspection, the viewer becomes "...immersed in relational action."³¹ Relationships, as explained in the article *Taking Practice Seriously: Toward A Relational Ontology* by psychologist Brent D. Slife, exist when there are strong connections between people, and they form a shared being and a mutual constitution.³² These relationships are kept strong by the 'practice' of mutual interaction, and therefore the "...basic contention of a relational ontology is simply that the relations between entities are ontologically more fundamental than the entities themselves."³³ In other words, the metaphysical status between people is what keeps them bound together. Furthermore, constructed relationships forever exist and depend on how people are related to one other.³⁴ In the following section, I will discuss how viewing my portraits may be shaped by prior relationships and how the experience of relationships may dictate the meaning for the viewer.

³¹ Kenneth J. Gergen, "Relational Being: A Brief Introduction," Journal of Constructivist Psychology. 24 (2011): 281.

³² Brent D. Slife, "Taking Practice Seriously: Toward a Relational Ontology," Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psy. 24-2 (2004): 159.

³³ Wesley J. Wildman, "An Introduction To Relational Ontology." The Trinity and an Entangled World: Relationality in Physical Science and Theology. Ed. John Polkinghorne. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010) 55.

³⁴ Brent D. Slife, "Taking Practice Seriously: Toward a Relational Ontology," Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psy. 24-2 (2004): 159.

Phenomenology | Personal Perspective

“Perception is not a simple reception of information; rather, it involves an interpretation, which frequently changes according to context.”³⁵

In my drawing, I signify experience through a first person perspective that informs the viewer as to how I perceive the model. I use the theory of phenomenology to understand *why* I am compelled to create these portraits, not to dictate how I approach making them.

Phenomenology is the study of human experiences and structures of consciousness, and the way that things and people present themselves to us in and through such experiences from a first person perspective.³⁶ In accordance with my practice, I examine my personal experience of others.

Furthermore, I am observing the notions of both subjectivity (the exploration of the self) and intersubjectivity (the exploration of the relationship between self and others) as expressed in phenomenology.³⁷ Subjectively, I am creating drawings that explore myself. Intersubjectively, I am examining myself through the context of my subjects. I examine myself by way of how others perceive me, what their memory is of me, and their feelings toward our relationship. This specific and individual way of viewing the model is how I interpret and uniquely emphasize the features of their model, allowing the viewer to perceive how I see the people close to me. For example, the freckles in the piece *Brother(Matt)* not as apparent when I took the photograph as it was taken in the winter. I remember him most when camping in the days of summer, when his face is smattered with freckles. I exaggerated their appearance to give the viewer insight into how I perceive my brother.

³⁵ Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, *The Phenomenological Mind* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013) 8.

³⁶ Shaun Gallagher, *Phenomenology*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) 44-60.

³⁷ Roger Frie, *Subjectivity and Intersubjectivity in Modern Philosophy and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Roman & Littlefield Publishers, INC., 1997) 1.



Figure 8 | *Brother(Matt)* 2014

The creative process in itself is a phenomenological experience. The artwork created is unique to the years spent honing my specific skillset and practice. The way in which I mark-make is based upon experimentation and repetition until it works for the drawing and gives the viewer detailed information about the model. The drawing begins with observation and evolves into interpretation where I manipulate the materials to uniquely draw the portrait. Each step requires my first-person observations, thereby making the work specific to me. It would be impossible for someone to replicate my drawings, as they cannot possibly share my experience of observation and drawing. When Saville talks of her painting practice, she notes that, “Even though you’re looking

for precision, you can't calculate what will happen; it's not an algorithm."³⁸ No one is able to work exactly as I do, as everyone is unique in the way they leave their mark on the page. By the act of drawing, my experience of the model is intentionally translated onto paper, allowing people who do not know the model an opportunity to see them from my perspective.

Memory | Inextricably Intertwined

*We are constantly borrowing from and building upon other people's lives, images, histories and things. And what in fact shapes and constitutes our individual experiences and histories is this borrowing – a negotiation between ourselves and other selves, representations and things. This process of negotiation entails the reciprocal animation of each: a dialectical process wherein we give and take from each other, effecting each other's histories as they effect ours.*³⁹

Memories that we have of each other tend to be fueled by emotion and I believe they influence one's inner self. The physical construction of my memory of others and their memories of me is an expression of who I am. To be influenced by someone is a negotiation – the viewer is choosing how much the portrait influences their perception and how this will shape the landscape of the viewers existence. The memories of the people in the series represent a segment of my life, and the portraits act as brackets, framing this personal period in time. From the documentation of others, I am able to form a representation of myself. The notion of memory is intertwined with lived experience.

Memory has continually been a common thread in my practice. In past series, it would take shape in the form of others recalling their own memories to me or myself

³⁸ Jenny Saville and John Richardson, Jenny Saville: Continuum (New York: Gagolian Gallery, 2012) 11.

³⁹ Beth Seaton, "Sensing the Here After: Photography, Memory and Intuition," Technologies of Intuition, ed. Jennifer Fisher (Toronto: YYY Books, 2006) 187.

recalling my own memories. In the case of *Other Self*, both the model and my memories are present; the model expresses their memory of our relationship on their face, while I subconsciously project my memory of them onto their portrait. I find the concept of memory fascinating, and would agree with essayist Marcel Proust's theory that memory has "An emotional rather than an intellectually organized base" and that our memory is an important factor that shapes who we are.⁴⁰ This shaping takes place both psychologically and socially. What we choose to remember and seek to repress shapes our personal landscape and subsequently how we recall our lives:

I think we do create our own past, as, quite frankly, our memories are not accurate, and we should never think that our memories are an accurate account of where we've been and what we've done. ...Every time we recall those memories I think we embellish them or we may do other things with them, but we shouldn't ever think that our memories are an accurate sum of who we are. They're in part a sum of who we'd like to be; they're part of what others would like us to be; because the other thing we should remember is just as memories are all interconnected, we're all interdependent, and so even though I think of my memories as this complex collection that makes me, my memories are not insulated from the world. My memories are deeply affected by all the people around me who have memories of some of the same events.⁴¹

Memories are not something that *belong* to you. Memories *are* you – *you are your memories*. Memories exist between people and anchor each other together through their connectedness. Memories that are a part of me are very much a part of someone else also affected by them, and bonds are formed when there are more anchors and memories to tie two people together; eventually people become inextricably intertwined. For instance, I retain memories of others that I am or have been close to more vividly than other memories I have. In particular, I grew up to be close to my family and a few close friends. Deep bonds were formed; bonds where I still feel connected to these people even if it has been years since I last saw them.

I understand both drawing and memory to be acts of intimate preservation; when a moment occurs and becomes an engrained memory it is usually due to its personal

⁴⁰ Joan Gibbons, Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007) 3.

⁴¹ Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 'Hit Delete'. *Ideas*. N.p., 2014. Web. 6 Oct. 2014.

significance to us, increasing the likelihood of subsequent vivid recollection. This parallels my process – when drawing my models, I slow down to patiently take in every detail about them and intimately commit them to my memory in a new way. The process is relaxing for me, allowing a break from the busy environment of Toronto, graduate school, and life, and recovers,

“A mode of contemplation outside the universe of simulation and fast-speed information ... to claim some anchoring space in a world of puzzling and often threatening heterogeneity, non synchronicity and information overload.”⁴²

Paper has a memory – it remembers each mark on its surface with permanence. Like people, paper, once provoked, can remember even the smallest of touches that affect its surface. In my process of drawing, powdered graphite is applied intimately layer-by-layer, re-familiarizing, reflecting and reframing the close relationships and memories I depict. The act of drawing with powdered graphite requires premeditative application – if I engrain the delicate medium too deeply into the surface it will not erase, leaving a permanent gray shadow. My relationship to the medium is shown in the drawn details; I pinch and mold the sponge in my fingers to create the correct marks, for if the powder is engrained where it is not supposed to be, unacceptable shadows emerge. Similarly, I have to be aware of the cotton swab’s longevity, for if it becomes expended, there is the risk of its paper stick leaving inerasable marks and dents on the paper, effecting later detail. Therefore, every area is planned out before the medium ever touches the paper. I constantly use an eraser to pick up rogue graphite powder to keep the pristine white background; if I let the powder rest there, it will speckle the surface, tarnishing the quiet backdrop.

This permanence reflects the engrained memories I illustrate: by creating delicate, detail-filled drawings that concern an ephemeral moment between the model and myself. I give them a sense of permanence by preserving the represented relationship. The ephemeral qualities of a moment are shared by powdered graphite; if the graphite medium is accidentally interrupted, smudged, or if a slight draft grazes the powder before it is permanently on the page, its detail disappears. However, when powdered graphite is

⁴² Joan Gibbons, Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007) 6.

sprayed with a fixative or deeply embedded into the surface of the paper, the medium will endure more permanently.



Figure 9 | *Mom(Donna)* 2015 – for scale

The monumental portrait serves as a vessel for the model and artist's memory to endure. When I draw, I feel that the more individual and accurate details I can include in the drawings, the more accurately their presence can be felt. The viewer, even without a prior relationship to the model, can observe the drawing. The image is recognized as a moment the viewer witnesses, and they can try to understand the relationship between the model and the artist: who they could be, why they are posed in such a way, or what they are emoting. The portrait is a responsive vessel, connecting with the viewer just as the model connects with the artist, and allows the audience to project whatever they will onto it; the drawings are as much receptive as they are communicative.

The intimacy found in the act of drawing permits a prolonged engagement with the subject, resulting in drawings that are a detailed documentation of the model through the record of the laborious hand. The viewer feels the intimacy that hand-made, hand-touched marks create, and they become a witness to the closeness between the model and myself. For myself, a new level of familiarity and meticulous observation of the face is achieved: during the drawing process, I zoom into the image of the model on the computer screen. This allows me to become intimately face-to-face with the model without what would normally be considered an awkward confrontation in person. The medium of photography is what allows for this encounter, an interesting occurrence considering the nature of the medium. In one way, photography allows me to get closer to the model by zooming into the image; however, I am no longer physically with the model. I rely on this distancing effect to create a stronger and more accurate understanding of the model than if I were to draw from life. This process incites me, through the consideration of abundant detail, to become both physically and psychologically closer with the model.

When observing someone, one cannot abandon all preconceived notions – memories – of the model, especially when they are a close relative. The people that I am drawing have embedded memories of myself just as I have engrained memories of them. Whether I am drawing, taking the photograph, or while they are posing, there are little idiosyncrasies that come from these engrained memories that become impossible to shake. Even when actively trying to deny the presence of memories, they simply cannot be abandoned. The notion of denying memory's presence becomes limiting, therefore expanding my work beyond the limits of phenomenological theory and into where phenomenology's essence and memory intersect: my art emerges at this intersection.

Lyric Philosophy | Individual Experience

*The capacity to recognize other beings' gestures for what they are – expressions of experience like our own- is the capacity to experience meaningful coincidence of context[.]*⁴³

Considering I create my work with the introspective experience in mind, I began to consider different philosophies of experience. While researching lyric philosophy, the way I observed art became clearer to me. Philosopher and poet Jan Zwicky created lyric philosophy to theoretically forgo notions of a logical, analytical viewpoint and give way to an *experiential* perspective. Although Zwicky does not provide a concise definition of lyric philosophy, I understand it to be as follows based upon her essay, *Lyric, Narrative Memory*:

Lyric philosophy understands something as a moment without the imposition of logical or temporal order upon its experience. As discussed in Zwicky's essay, *Lyric, Narrative, Memory*, this philosophy is concerned with the affect of the moment, not why this affect takes place.⁴⁴ Lyrical experience understands details as a whole, singular gesture, and it allows for attentiveness to experience a moment within its own context.

When lyrically experiencing artwork, the viewer accepts themselves as witnesses to a moment the artwork presents before them. Words, though they may be present, are not relied upon for meaning. Therefore, the lyrical experience is an attentive witness to a moment and resists questions of narrative.

This leads me to the lyrical paradigm's contrasting classification of experience: the narrative. The *narrative* strives to understand experiences in context and seeks to make order in the details presented. The small informs the large, and is further informed by our desire for integrity and shared experience. It dissects detail to analytically examine

⁴³ Jan Zwicky, "What Is Lyric Philosophy? And Introduction," *Common Knowledge* 20:1 (2013): 21.

⁴⁴ Jan Zwicky, "Lyric, Narrative, Memory," *A Ragged Pen: Essays on Poetry & Memory*, ed. Robert Finley, Patrick Friesen, Aislinn Hunter, Anne Simpson and Jan Zwicky (Kentville: Gaspereau Press, 2006) 93-100.

a moment in context to its past, present and future. Experience and knowledge is projected onto a moment in order to logically understand it.⁴⁵

Narrative experience can exist unaccompanied or it may weave in and out of lyrical experience, giving context to a particular encounter. Personally, I am not apt to *immediately* consider the narrative; I only begin to notice work narratively once a narrative is pointed out to me or I spend considerable time with a work.

There is a natural curiosity to see artwork and impose a narrative onto it. The construction of an explanation is a narrative's main concern. Within the narrative, the viewer assigns context to art in order to establish answers: Who is being depicted?; What time period is this?; What is happening?; Where is it?; etc. A narrative experience can demonstrate both logical and temporal sequences. Similar to lyrical thought, narrative is, "One of the ways that humans render experience."⁴⁶ The details in the portraits could encourage a non-linear analytical response, such as age, gender, ethnicity, etc. Each viewer individually experiences the portraits and will arrive at an individual 'answer' or observation.

I believe *lyric* and *narrative*, though separated when defining experience, can intersect in the process of creating the work. The idea for *Other Self* is based upon both schools of thought: lyrically, my models are people who are close to me as I am drawn to a close observational process. This results in the mimicking of unique details that accurately depict my memory of them. I have to be drawn to a person's appearance to be able to execute a drawing effectively, so when I consider a potential models' suitability, I wait for a gut feeling to inform me if they will fit or not. However, the concept of the series itself is where the narrative emerges. Narratively, I am choosing from a small possibility of prearranged people who are close to me. I am also considering the portraits in context to the other models in the series by assessing what is aesthetically pleasing.

As soon as I start drawing, for the most part, I work lyrically: I am drawing in the moment and allowing my thoughts to concentrate on creating the work one small section at a time. When drawing a particular facial feature, I do not actively think of drawing it

⁴⁵ Jan Zwicky, "Lyric, Narrative, Memory," *A Ragged Pen: Essays on Poetry & Memory*, ed. Robert Finley, Patrick Friesen, Aislinn Hunter, Anne Simpson and Jan Zwicky (Kentville: Gaspereau Press, 2006) 93-100.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 96.

for what it is. Instead, I think of the features as abstract shapes, lines and shades in order to pay more attention to mark making rather than duplication. However, narratively, I cannot help but think of my relationships to my models. Certain areas of the face evoke certain memories within me, causing inevitable reminiscence – this can be seen in *Nana(Helen)*. While drawing her left eye, I was constantly reminded about the



Figure 10 | Nana(Helen) 2015

stroke she had on her seventy-fifth birthday, as permanent damage was left behind. When her eye emerged on the page and I noticed it was lower than her right, and initially I thought I had measured incorrectly. Then, once her stroke came to mind, I recalled the reason for its irregularity and could not help but ruminate on that particular day.

Once the creation of the piece is complete and the works are hung, I don't believe that the way I created the work (both lyric or narrative) plays a direct role in how the viewer experiences and connects with the artwork. I believe instead that the portraits can be seen lyrically or narratively depending on the viewer themselves. The viewer could experience the series as individual moments presented before them and allow him or herself to feel the work rather than formulate an explanation. Additionally, some may assign individual context to the work through any number of links. I do not believe that there is one way of experiencing my art; rather, I believe that due to the vast differentiations in the viewer's experiential backgrounds, the work can be seen and experienced a number of different ways.

CONCLUSION

I had never thought of myself as a realist artist; there was always something holding me back from using the term in relation to my work. I have since realized during this process that my intention is not to merely duplicate a likeness – it is to give the viewer a face and a moment to connect with, to empathize with, or to simply feel.

Empathy can be understood as the ability to understand or share the feelings of others, and can be noted as

“A form of intentionality in which one is directed towards the other’s lived experiences. ...In empathy, we experience the other directly as a person, as an intentional being whose bodily gestures and actions are expressive of his or her experiences or states of mind.”⁴⁷

The viewer can look at the art and either indulge in the moment, empathize with the model, or question what about the work is making them feel this way and why. When I look at art, I sense empathy and *feel* how the work affects me. I can indulge myself with an artwork for long periods of time by empathizing with it just the same as I can empathize with a work and yet feel the need to look away.

The drawings are about introspection – the experience, the search, and feeling out an answer in conjunction with the individual viewer. To achieve introspective moment, the use of hyperrealism constructs the representation of the model’s essence by allowing the viewer to see the crucial details as chosen and exaggerated by the artist. In addition, the practice of portraiture visually depicts and creates a series of relationships between the model, artist and viewer by presenting the portrait as an encounter. Furthermore, I use the photograph as a source for intimate details to represent the model. In addition, the details inform the viewer of not only the intricacies of the model’s physical appearance, but it also suggests to the viewer the essence of the model, or who they really are.

⁴⁷ Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi, The Phenomenological Mind (Oxford: Routledge, 2013) 203.

The viewer interprets his or her relationship with the drawings through their experiences. This quietness yields an introspective state that allows for an opportunity for the viewer to individually experience, interpret and reflect. The connection is intensified by theories such as phenomenology, by experiencing the artwork from a first-person perspective; memories, by associating their own memories with the artwork and creating their own interpretations; and lyric philosophy, by illustrating the memories between the artist and model to provoke individual memories within the viewer, producing an empathic awareness. The theoretical informs the practical, and aids in manifesting a connection for the viewer. When the viewer observes *Other Self*, the hope is that they will become more than an outsider looking at the artwork. The hyperrealistic exaggeration of detail allows the viewer to ‘step into’ the portrait and partake an essential part of its reception – creating a connection. In a moment shared between people, be it the artist and model, or the artist, model and viewer, there may be the absence of words. This quietness may not be a lonely experience; it may reflect *with-ness*, a *together-ness* or *connected-ness* without being vocalized.

Creating this series has become an emotionally involved process for me. Before these works, the models I chose had no substantial meaning for me other than they were visually interesting or their agreement to model. Now I am choosing to draw the people close to me; it has changed the way I connect and interact with the subject in the portrait, as well as the way I render their likeness. I now feel passionately involved, and when I create the pieces I am more aware of who my models are, not just their appearance. I draw without censoring – imperfections and usually unnoticed details are what give an accurate sense of who someone is. Uncensored drawing also means that I have stopped directly copying the textures of the face and, instead, allow my artistic instinct with the medium and the mark making tools to leave their impression. Instead of creating a direct representation, the way in which the medium naturally behaves achieves hyperrealism. Rather than solely attaining likeness, the *act* of drawing has therefore become the focus.

My hope is that the portraits in *Other Self* allows for the experience of introspection where spoken language ends and where intuition, reflection and empathy begin. What I personally find in the works is a moment of quiet introspection; I am able

to reconnect with and reexamine the models while also recalling details and discovering new ones. It is my intention that the artworks produce this moment of introspection within the viewer, allowing the opportunity for recollection and connection, and a moment to pause from our elaborately entangled day-to-day lives.

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APPENDIX A

Nana(Helen)

Sunday was Nana's day. Each week, my mom would pick Nana up from her home and drive her out to the house to enjoy the day. Nana always looked forward to spending the day with her family and friends. The early afternoons consisted of my sister or myself baking treats with Nana, and the remainder of the day would be spent on the deck enjoying 'happy hour' on the gazebo. She loved to chat with family, friends and neighbours. Nana had dementia, but it did not stop her from enthusiastically nodding along and participating in conversations to the best of her ability, obviously enjoying every moment with a child-like innocence.

In November of 2013, Nana was moved into the 'home.' With each visit, I couldn't help but notice her quick disintegration. The physical signs of weight loss, loss of memory and grown out dyed hair were obvious, however during my visit on April 20th 2014, I noticed something particularly disconcerting. I explained to Nana that I wanted to take her photograph for a drawing I wanted to do. She did not want a part of this, so my boyfriend asked to take a photograph of Nana and I together; this she agreed to. When I hugged her goodbye, her embrace lasted longer than I expected. When I got back to my parents home and reviewed the photographs, I couldn't help but notice the disparity in her expression. Her eyes, which once had life and wonderment, were now blank and expressionless. Though her face tried to contort itself into the semblance of a smile, her eyes remained motionless. This expression told me more than what any words could have possibly said. Though this blank stare spoke volumes of her state there, her quietly upturned lip gave a glimpse of her old self, and that she knew that she was there with her granddaughter. But this was her smile from now on: that blank stare was how she smiled in a photo.

Nana passed away November 2014 after a long life of eighty-nine years.

She is missed dearly.

Dad(Ken)

As I have been getting older, I have been noticing things about my dad. He interacts with me differently; he no longer treats me as a child, rather someone to have an adult conversation with. When I was younger, my parents always kept their troubles to themselves, not wanting to worry their children. However, I now notice that my father from time to time will talk to me about the personal happenings in his life. Though I sense his filtration, he will occasionally express his frustrations to me. When he does, I can't help but think that perhaps we have reached a new level of trust between us. It has evolved from the initial trust that a parent gives a child to do the right thing, into a trust that a father has in his adult daughter that lets him know he raised her in his image.

I have noticed visual changes as well. I think that we create symbols of what people we know look like in our minds. Before drawing the portrait of my dad, there were certain characteristics that I assumed of him: short dark hair, bright green eyes, one dark spot on his right cheek, and a goatee. These were all signifiers of what I knew him to look like. As I drew his portrait, however, I started to notice new and significant differences. I think that the age that I visually remember my dad to be is when he was approximately forty-five; currently he is fifty-four. I've noticed his thinned hair is a mixture of grey and white, he shaved his goatee years ago, and that his stubble is a peppered white and grey. He now has many dark sunspots and far more lines and wrinkles than I remember. Furthermore, I had never noticed that one of his eyes is smaller and lower than the other, nor have I noticed how many bumps and indentations there are in his face.

Nevertheless, that is my father; all of the unique features on his face act as a map to his life thus far. He loves the outdoors, and is a handyman in his own right; his sunspots are proof of that. He loves to laugh and smile; his laugh lines are so proudly drawn on his face. He loves his family and would do anything for his children. Though over the years he has been changing, these changes only solidify him as the dad I know him to be.

Brother(Matt)

Matt and I have opposing views in regards to each other. When I moved away for school when I was seventeen and he was thirteen, we became closer than we had been before. We were given the opportunity to miss each other as we were no longer able to irritate each other every day.

When I finished my undergraduate studies and moved back home, I still thought of my seventeen-year-old brother as my quite-younger brother, even though he was finishing high school and figuring out what he wanted to do in life. When we would go into town together, I found myself taking care of him and knowing where he was at all times like I would have when he was thirteen.

Two years later, when Matt had moved to Mississauga to begin school and I had moved back to Toronto to pursue my master's degree, we began to get together in downtown Toronto. Though he was almost twenty years old, I still thought it my responsibility to look after him. He was, in my eyes, just a boy living in the big city who could easily get lost. However, I began to notice a shift after a few times of meeting up downtown: he thought it was his responsibility to look after me. I noticed him paying attention to my whereabouts when we met up, and asking me to call him to let him know that I got home afterwards. He began to carry things for me and would be very cautious and judgmental of the men I would date. He behaved as though he was my older brother; I know this because he looks out for me in the same way that I looked out for him. I think that in his own way he thinks of himself as my protector, just as I do with him. Though our perceptions of each other differ, our intentions are alike: one driven by the natural narrative of an older sibling, and the other by a natural instinct to look after those you hold close.

Sister(Loni)

It is difficult to share memories of my sister, as so much of what we have would only be meaningful to us.

Loni is absolutely beautiful. When visually describing her to those who have not met her, I say: picture me as a size zero with a perfect smile, adorable nose, gorgeous eyes and a personality to match. She is consistently well put together in the way she presents herself, and to top it off, she selflessly aspires to help others in her life as a nurse.

When I think about whom my sister is to me, I remember the years we shared our childhood bedroom. This room was ours – not only was it the place where our most cherished belongings resided, but also our secrets, confessions and insecurities. These conversations evolved from whispering every night in December about what Santa would be bringing us, to talking about boys as we got older, and to discussing major life decisions when I was moving out. I will always remember peering down from my top bunk to hers below. When she was younger, she would be arranging her stuffed animals at the foot of her bed just so, and as she grew older, she would be writing in her journal or falling asleep while on the phone with her long distance boyfriend at the time.

There is something similar with each of those moments however – the moment she would look at me: the wide-eyed silly smile. When she flashes this expression, I understand it to mean: I am comfortable with you, I love you, and ‘what do you want.’ To me, this face still sums up our relationship, even though it remains incommunicable to others.

Mom(Donna)

My mother is my source of tough love for every situation in life. She is a warm, loving and caring person, but also the first to set me straight when I need it.

When I was in my late teens, mom would comment that the relationship she has with me was nothing like the relationship she had with her own mother. They would not spend their days together, run errands together, or just enjoy each other's company. I cherish the relationship I have with my mom.

When I was younger, I remember asking her for help drawing. My mom is not an artist by any means, but when you are five and you cannot get something right, obviously you ask your mom. But she wouldn't help me. Not because she didn't want to, but because she wanted me to learn on my own and to be resourceful. I can remember being frustrated with her, but I can also remember the satisfaction of learning to do something myself. This taught me to be resourceful in life and not to depend on others for tasks I can do myself; I thank her for this.

When I took the photograph of my mother for this drawing, I could only describe her expression as proud. 'Proud' is a facial expression I am familiar with. My mom loves to talk about her children's accomplishments. I also see love; not only for me, but also for her entire family. Her photo was taken when the family was together on thanksgiving, and I can tell that she was radiating happiness from having her children all under the same roof. She is a mother that loves her children unconditionally, and whose main goal is to make sure that they have everything necessary in life to succeed. I would like to think that her expression was not only the look of being proud of her daughter, but also of being proud of herself. And she should be.