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Senior Projects Spring 2016

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

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Spring 2016

## What We Say to Ourselves in the Dark

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## **I AM SCARED TO SHOW THESE WORKS.**

I am not one to welcome confrontation. I am normally only this honest with myself, for my own eyes, and I rarely say things of this nature to others unless we're both drunk and the thing might be ignored in the morning. But when faced with the question, "What is the part of myself that I am not allowing into my work?", I answered with a full-throated yell. And here are the results: a surprisingly and terrifyingly honest and intimate body of work that explores concepts such as body image, queerness, acceptance, love, loneliness, intimacy, bravery, embarrassment, self-love, identity, personal boundaries, and empowerment. Beginning as an exploration of the kinship between religious iconography and personal identity, this work grew into something more deeply personal than anything I've ever made before. My work has focused on self-portraiture for years, but this might be the most expansive, multi-faceted, and accurate self portrait I've ever made. To be this pointedly and purposely cavalier with my body and my words, with little regard to their reception, is liberating.

This body of work finds its roots in religious art and iconography. The figural aspects of my work are based in the work of the Italian Renaissance, while the colors, patterns, and symbols are borrowed from Islamic and Jewish artistic traditions. What speaks to me about religious art, and religious art of the Italian Renaissance variety, is that art was used as a way to create and enforce morals - through a painting, an artist could show the good, the bad, who deserved glorification, which actions were laudable... By using societally-recognizable tropes, symbols, and compositions, artists of that time could create a notion of the divine that was told strictly through visual media, and that notion could be known and understood by everyone. I used many of these tropes throughout my work so that they could lend their authority in order to elevate things that would otherwise remain unseen and unsaid. This is not a body of work about self-glorification in any way, but about taking mundane and intimate things and elevating them into something that has the right to be seen and shared; something that has merit and importance and a type of sacredness as well.

At the heart of this body of work is the desperate need for honesty, both with and about the self and with and about others. It's an attempt to use art to connect with others, and to connect with myself. Much like the work of Jenny Holzer and Frida Kahlo, two of this project's biggest inspirations, it is when the truly personal intertwines with the artistic that work with resounding universal meanings are created. And while I am not saying that the work in this project can speak to the experiences of anyone other than myself, it is my hope that by baring so much of myself to the judging external eye, others can find some comfort in knowing that they are not alone.

# ***I AM SCARED TO SHOW THESE WORKS***

## WHICH ARE

- a surprisingly and terrifyingly honest and intimate body of work that explores concepts such as body image, queerness, acceptance, love, loneliness, intimacy, bravery, embarrassment, self-love, identity, personal boundaries, and empowerment
  - an investigation into the kinship between religious iconography and personal identity
    - something more deeply personal than anything I've ever made before
    - an attempt to use art to connect with others, and to connect with myself
- about taking mundane and intimate things and elevating them into something that has the right to be seen and shared, that has merit and importance and sacredness
- my hope that by baring so much of myself to the judging external eye, others can find some comfort in knowing that they are not alone



i may be tiny compared to the universe  
but i think that whoever is in charge

of the mountains of brass, i am for you

WHAT WE  
TO OURSELVES  
IN







I DARE YOU TO LOOK AWAY



ENOUGH IS A DEROGATORY WORD



I WILL NOT APOLOGIZE FOR MY AMPLE



I DARE YOU TO LOOK AWAY



ENOUGH IS A DEROGATORY WORD



I WILL NOT APOLOGIZE FOR MY AMPLE



I DARE YOU TO LOOK AWAY



ENOUGH IS A DEROGATORY WORD



I WILL NOT APOLOGIZE FOR MY AMPLE



WHAT  
IS IT THAT  
PEOPLE SEE  
WHEN THEY  
LOOK AT ME? DO  
THEY SEE  
THE SAME  
BODY THAT  
I DO? THE  
SAME  
PERSON?  
THE SAME  
FLESH?

FLESH IS  
FLESH  
REGARDLESS  
OF  
PACKAGING

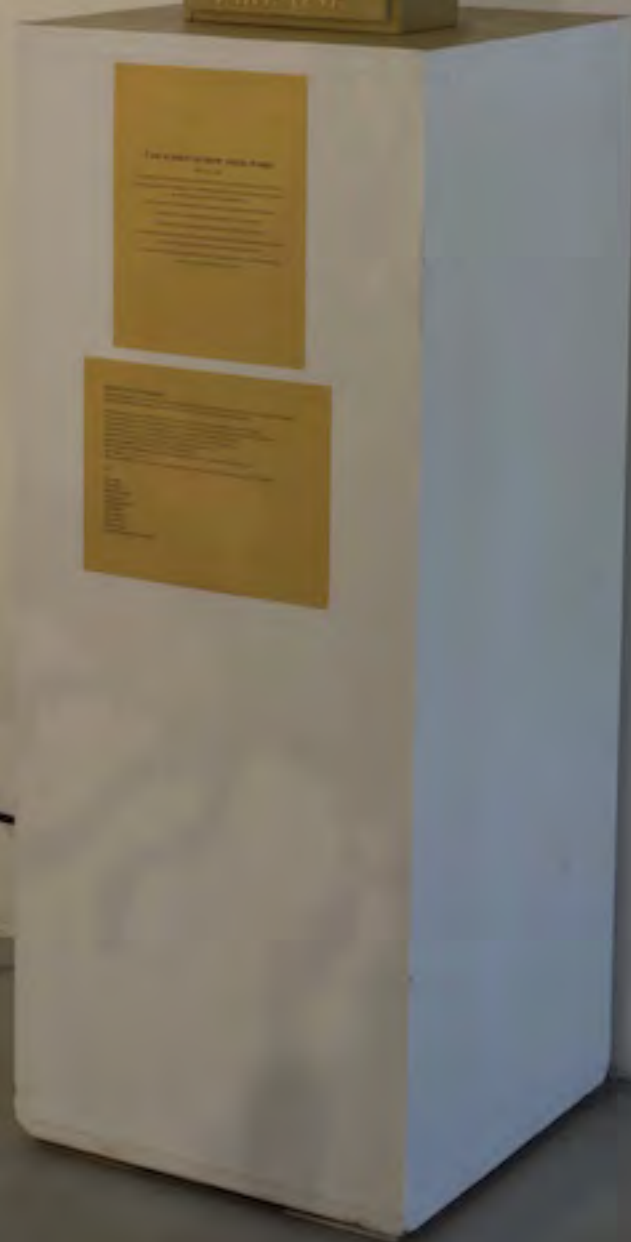








*WHAT WE SAY  
TO OURSELVES  
IN THE DARK*



THIS IS  
A  
PORTRAIT OF  
THE ARTIST  
AS A PUZZLE  
TO BE SOLVED

TRY AND CONNECT THE DOTS











