
Senior Projects Spring 2023

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

Spring 2023

endure

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Bard College

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endure

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of the Arts
of Bard College

by
James Toomey

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

May 2023

The work is tubular: fistulous, circulatory.

It starts out as a body and obscures into something sprawling and replicating, perhaps cancerous.

Some parts are handmade paper. I begin with a pulp and strip it in water, then pour it into thin sheets— it dries practically weightless. It shrivels and shrinks and clings to itself, tenderly. It leaves caverns inside.

The work withers how I might expect skin to act when it is no longer living. I was sixteen when I held my father while he died. When I peel away my paper sheets, it is how I imagine it might feel to pull skin off of muscle.

I do not create something absent of life— it quivers, it drips, it hums. Hardened and crusted tendons and sinews shake within it. It murmurs to me as I walk by.

Do I seek the work, or does the work seek me?

I practiced on silicone skin before suturing the sculpture. The needle breaks through the surface and carries the suture behind— it is a violent act that eventually supports the form.

When my dog died in first grade, I played a board game with her body. I dressed her in a sweatshirt and moved her limbs and the game pieces alike, which were equally cold and stiff. I pull a nervous system of embedded motors through the tubes, and it trembles.

I restrain my work and direct it where I want it to travel with heavy, rusted steel. It holds the work, splays it apart, and then surrenders it to fall.

I obscure the body, kill it, bring it back to life.

It waits. It is expecting.

Against decay, it endures.

ENDURE

JAMIE TOOMEY

OPENING MAY 6 3-6
ON VIEW MAY 6-20

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