Common Thread

Isobella Rose Grubb-Kovach

Bard College, bg9701@bard.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2022

Part of the Painting Commons, and the Printmaking Commons

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License.

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcommons.bard.edu/senproj_s2022/339

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects at Bard Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Projects Spring 2022 by an authorized administrator of Bard Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@bard.edu.
Common Thread

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

by
Isobella Rose Grubb-Kovach

Annandale-on-Hudson, New York
May 2022
Acknowledgements

First, to my family: I am who I am because of you. I grew from you, like my paintings from me; you are in me and with me wherever I go, running through my veins to my heart and always on my mind.

To my friends: you have kept me alive. I am forever indebted to you, and will spend however long it takes trying to turn the mirror around, and show you how beautiful you are. You have pulled me up after my hardest falls, cleaned and brushed me off. You are my unwavering reminders that the world is a place I want to be in, and that I should be here. I carry you in my heart, and channel your light and love wherever I go.

To my teachers: we exist in spite of this institution—an existence that is sometimes exhausting but, in the end, an accomplishment. I see you balance words on your tongue, weighing their consequence, always so careful. You know they can make or break us, and I thank you for carrying that knowledge with caution. You have been my window to what I thought the “art world” was, when in reality, it’s you.

To Hazel: my other half, but fully whole. You are an anchor, a lighthouse, a machine, an enigma. I am constantly in awe of your chapped hands and your tired mind, ceaselessly working to make and mend. You have stood strong against cruel winds trying to wear you down and keep you small. I think it feels like they took something, but they didn’t; they’ve only added layers to your chrysalis and delayed your departure from it. And perhaps we can thank them for that, because during this delay you have grown so much bigger than the world. You do not need to come back to earth, it needs to come to you.

To myself: you did this yourself. You painted every stroke, hammered every nail, and hung every canvas. Let this be a reminder that you are an artist.
We are nature, and nature is everything. Our bodies reflect the patterns found in nature—our veins and cells mimic lichen and mold, roots, water, vines.

Painting does not require a message. It is independent of me, the artist; it stands on its own, a child made by my hand. It is sent out into the world alone, unaccompanied by my touch or comment, its only task to procure a visual experience, a collaboration between geometry and gesture, for those whose eyes rest upon it.

The mind is drawn to nature; we are endowed with the ability to connect our selves and experiences to the world we are a part of. To make a connection between art and nature is to remember our roots.

This work is a process. It is a series of events, each essential to and impossible without the other. Time is a moving force, within nature and within me—propelling evolution and erosion while the earth grows, morphs, expands, augments. This metamorphosis mirrors my artistic practice: we are products of our experiences, the places we go and people we love are ingrained within the layers of our skin like data within annual rings of tree growth. We internalize and project these experiences, whether conscious or not, and this work is their reflection.

Cotton is of the earth; canvas, thread, cloth, wood, paint, and water as well. I want you to see the nature in all of it—that we are and everything we create is nature. We—and everything we create—are reflections of nature, and it is in our nature as artists to replicate it.

I do not seek to disguise mimetic efforts as anything other than what they are, for doing so implies that a painting is anything more than a single plane—which is actually it's most unique quality. Multi-dimensionality in painting is a facade, and to execute it successfully my viewer must be tempted to believe it.

I use imitation to honor nature, to bring it into spaces meant to be void. Cheesecloth in itself is first an imitation of grids: leaf veins, cells. Then stretched with my hands to imitate erosion, skeletons, waterways, built-up sediment. However, it is also completely separated from nature in its creation: cotton harvested by machines, processed by machines, assembled and distributed by machines. To bring it into an organic conversation is to bring it back to its origin: a collection of cells, a product of pollination, a gift from the ground.