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The Artist's Diary

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The Artist's Diary

Senior Project Submitted to
The Division of Art History and Visual Culture
of Bard College

by
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Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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Dedication

To my brilliant and supportive parents; Lisa and James Gilroy for cultivating and nurturing an intellectually stimulating and wonderful home where my interests and passions were constantly embraced.

To my other half, Talulah Marie Gilroy for guiding me through this tumultuous and beautiful world with excitement, curiosity, and immense love.

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Introduction

The diary is an inherently ambiguous, and loaded medium, which is solely dependent on its creator. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the diary as "a record of events, transactions, or observations kept daily or at frequent intervals;"¹ a journal provided by the same source is defined as, "a record of experiences, ideas, or reflections kept regularly for private use."² Both definitions deal with the substance found within the diary/journal, but the definition of the diary neglects the private intentions of the writer while the latter definition disregards the element of time. Philippe Legeune is the founding father on the methodology of the diary. I will utilize his established rules on the practice and apply them to two female artists. He speaks of the diary as if it's the author's partner, and holds agency, "[it] sculpts life as it happens and takes up the challenge of time."³

My senior project sprouted from an art history class that I took in my junior year called "Deconstructing the Museum," taught by the brilliant Susan Merriam. Due to Covid, we had to conceptually curate a show on anything that didn't fit in the classical canon of art history. I chose to look at journals of my friends who didn't identify as artists. I wanted to elevate the non-artist journal. I didn't and still don't think you have to label yourself as an artist to create a beautiful compilation of work that has historical value, visual aesthetic pleasure, and of course reflective personal work, and much more. Despite the inseparable and intimate relationship between the product and the creator, every diary that has been marked and worked in, has valuable aesthetic and intellectual content regardless of the diarist. However, for my senior project I have decided to look at the artist's journal or notebook, so I could focus on visual analysis. I am conducting

¹ Merriam-Webster, s.v. "Diary (n.)," accessed May 2, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diary>.

² Merriam-Webster, s.v. "Journal (n.)," accessed May 2, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/diary>.

³ Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (Honolulu: University Of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 173.

case studies on two female artist's journals which hold potent personal information, including idiosyncrasies of the creator, drafts of work, and information on the political climate across the 20th century. I am approaching the two artists chronologically; Frida Kahlo who lived during the first half of the 20th century and Arissa Odawara, a contemporary creator.

I am looking at Frida Kahlo's vibrant journal which she kept for the last ten years of her life; it naturally has the tainted lens of documenting one's deterioration. Kahlo lived from 1907 to 1954 predominately in Mexico City. She was a Mexican Painter, radical political figure, and an eclectic character. Kahlo's diary is filled with a range of content; from poems and letters, to phantasmagorical scenes, diagrams, collages, iconography, and everything in between.

I will then be analyzing the prolific, contemporary artist Arissa Odawara's *My Diary*⁴ which was published in 2021. Odawara was born in Tokyo in 1979, she is a living artist who produces constantly. Odawara currently resides in the suburbs of Tokyo and works across several mediums such as collage, ceramics, drawing, and painting.

This exploration on the content found in these two women's artist's journals/notebooks will be guided by Philippe Lejeune's compilation *On Diary*,⁵ which was originally published in 1989. The text was republished in 2009 with the addition of two essays; one by Julie Rak called, *Dialogue With The Future: Philippe Lejeune's Method and Theory Of Diary*⁶ and the other, Jeremy D. Popkin's *Philippe Lejeune, Explorer Of The Diary*.⁷ Lejeune is a French essayist and professor who focuses on autobiographical literature. In the composition of Lejeune's lifetime work, he defines a methodology of journal keeping, he reflects and comments on previous works

⁴ Arisa Odawara, *My Diary*, Printed by Colour Code and Handbound by Eunice Luk and Lisa Yatar MacDonald, 2021, Translated by Masahiro Takahashi.

⁵ Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary*, (2009).

⁶ Julie Rak, "Dialogue with the Future: Philippe Lejeune's Method and Theory of Diary," in *On Diary* (Honolulu: University Of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

⁷ Jeremy Popkin, "Philippe Lejeune, Explorer Of The Diary," in *On Diary* (Honolulu: University Of Hawai'i Press, 2009).

and his life, and speaks of these records in poetic, intimate language as well as in established fact. Furthermore, Lejeune explores the inherent idiosyncrasies of this reflective activity and ultimately solidifies the declared, fluid world of journal keeping.

The objective of this thesis is to dissect and understand Lejeune's systematic theories on journaling and apply his methods to these two female artist's diaries. Additionally, analyze the resemblance as well as the differences found in the content concocted within the journal pages to their publicly displayed art; attributing illustrious credit to the diary and its potency as a medium.

Philippe Lejeune: The Methodology of Diaries

Philippe Lejeune was a passionate, persistent researcher and academic who made his life long prerogative to become the connoisseur on diary habits. In this chapter we will dissect the diary as an artistic and academic medium in terms of Lejeune. We will look at how the journal came into existence, question its function, explore the different kinds of diaries, and lastly what the journal provides for its companion. However, we must keep at the forefront of our minds that Lejeune was a French academic who was focused on France. This formulation of knowledge will be the foundation for analyzing the two artists' journals. The book *On Diary*⁸ by Phillippe Lejeune is an interesting genre of text for it holds reproductions of previous works by Lejeune where he revises and comments on previous claims. It is some form of a conclusion, a tribute to his niche; an annotated yet, finalized book. The book also holds two profound prefaces on Lejeune. The first piece is by Jeremy D. Popkin, a historian, who wrote *Philippe Lejeune, Explorer Of The Diary*.⁹ The second introduction was written by Julie Rak, an author who focuses on autobiography, she wrote *Dialogue with the Future: Philippe Lejeune's Method and Theory of Diary*.¹⁰ This composite is the quintessential scholarly source on diaries.

In Julie Rak's *Dialogue with the Future: Philippe Lejeune's Method and Theory of Diary* as a contemporary author she leads us into a familiar field of *modern day* where she discusses not only the idiosyncrasies of journal keeping practices but of Lejeune's too, as he was a prolific journaler himself. She delves deep into the mysticism of the companionship between the journal and its author.

⁸ Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (2009).

⁹ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," (2009).

¹⁰ Rak, "Dialogue with the Future" (2009).

In Popkin's article *Philippe Lejeune, Explorer Of The Diary*¹¹ he analyzes Lejeune's works and highlights his major discoveries. Popkin shares the layout of the conglomeration, *On Diary*¹², of Lejeune's individually published pieces. The book essentially covers three territories; the origins of the journal and Lejeune's personal discovery of the medium, then the "theoretical questions raised by diaries,"¹³ and lastly, Lejeune's studies, on specific kinds of diaries, and the categorization of journals. Popkin begins by equating Lejeune to an "explorer," and aligns his academic career to a journey. He shares insight on who Lejeune was, Popkin wrote, "...Lejeune cannot resist the lure of territories that have not been mapped, where rumor says the game is plentiful and no rules have been imposed."¹⁴ Therefore, Lejeune embarked on the unbeknownst waters of autobiographical writing.

In the volume *The Practice of The Private Journal: Chronicle of an Investigation (1986-1998)*¹⁵, included in the facsimile, Lejeune refers to it as an "auto-bibliography;"¹⁶ in which, Lejeune expounds his original motivations and ultimately the story of this intellectual journey. He was born in August 1938 in Paris, France. From the age of fifteen to roughly the age of twenty-five Lejeune kept a personal journal, but as he matured and became employed as a teacher and researcher he abandoned the practice and instead turned to another mode of personal writing, the autobiography. He wasn't originally attracted to the act of diary-keeping as much as he was to the technique of the autobiography. The first half of his scholarly career was devoted to the "unknown terrain of autobiographical writing"¹⁷ where he simultaneously founded an alternative path for literary studies and popularized the genre through publishing "six or seven

¹¹ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," (2009).

¹² Lejeune, *On Diary*, (2009).

¹³ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," 6.

¹⁴ Popkin, *Explorer of the Diary*, 1.

¹⁵ Lejeune, *On Diary*.

¹⁶ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 29.

¹⁷ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," 1.

books."¹⁸ Lejeune discarded the study of diaries to such an extreme that at one point in his research Lejeune actually put the two forms in conflict to elevate the autobiography as a genre. He admits, "...as a result, from 1969 to 1986, I threw myself into the study, and the practice, of the autobiography *against* the journal."¹⁹ As he originally, associated the diary with adolescence and the autobiography with maturity and adequate for publishing. Lejeune along with his colleagues considered this work as intellectually inept, but through the world of autobiography he discovered his unit of people and founded the "Association pour l'Autobiographie (APA)"²⁰ in 1977. The organization was made up of more than 500 members and published a journal three times a year mainly focusing on autobiographical works, while also holding work-parties across France and in Geneva, Switzerland. Concerning the shift away from autobiographical work Popkin asked, speaking on Lejeune's character, "...did it become too settled, too organized, too tame for Lejeune?"²¹ Or was this explorer just ready for his next adventure? The autobiography is a close relative of the diary. Applicable to autobiography and the diary, for both the author is the source of the subject matter while also being the inextricable subject.

It isn't solidified what caused this change, but the personal discovery of "Claude Mauriac's *Le Temps immobile: fifty years of private diaries*, published by Mauriac in ten or so volumes between 1974 and 1988"²² provided Lejeune some form of an answer to his dilemma concerning personal modes of writing, because in 1986 he began to keep a journal again. Lejeune wasn't a pedagogy who was static in his discoveries and through his own act of keeping a diary he "pushed the boundaries of conventional scholarship by presenting his research in the form of the 'research diary' that recorded the development of his project and his ongoing

¹⁸ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 30.

¹⁹ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 29.

²⁰ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 39.

²¹ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," 1.

²² Lejeune, *On Diary*, 30.

reactions to the material he was studying.”²³ Lejeune valued change which allowed for this continuous project. Lejeune abandoned the world of autobiography and "...was headed for the land of the diary,"²⁴ despite the genre being labeled as "primitive,"²⁵ narcissistic and overall, "...a region of arid, barren landscapes, devoid of aesthetically satisfying monuments."²⁶ Lejeune speaks from his own experiences about reactivating the practice, he found it to be "...a very immediate form of writing and marked by distress.”²⁷ Lejeune shares the many limitations in analyzing and ethically drawing conclusions on diaries as an academic.

As Lejeune re-entered the domain of the diary as a literary scholar he naturally was curious on what the diary as a medium could provide and its history. For Lejeune diary writing is “the process of creating personal narrative within scholarship...this exploration is also an act of love.”²⁸ He declares "...everything began in January 1987”²⁹ with a debate between him and a friend where he claimed his infamous hypothesis that "...the practice of journal writing is linked to the rise in school attendance among adolescents and that the enforcement of primary and secondary education and an increasing tendency to stay on at school contributed to the spread of the practice of the diary, rather than to its disappearance.”³⁰ Interested in the *ordinary* individual's journal he ran into several issues. But, Lejeune persisted and set out on an academic journey where he distributed questionnaires, conducted interviews, and later studied found archives. In France, he dissected the mysterious world of journaling, piecing together an exercise which can be practiced universally.

²³ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," 3.

²⁴ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," 1.

²⁵ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," 1.

²⁶ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," 1.

²⁷ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 29.

²⁸ Rak, "Dialogue with the Future," 16.

²⁹ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 33.

³⁰ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 33.

Inherently Lejeune was interested in the origins of journaling: of his self-imposed vocation. Lejeune uses the act of running a business and documenting transactions as a parallel to the custom of journal-keeping. He wrote, "...accounting serves two purposes: an internal purpose (business management based on full and accurate information) and an external purpose (to stand as evidence in the event of a dispute)."³¹ This definition of accounting in terms of business is applicable to journaling. The diary is where one reports their findings "accurate information," at least in the mind of the author, and it can serve as "evidence," confirmation for the author and whoever the author shares their writings with. Lejeune delves into the history of institutional documentation and how naturally every community does such whether in the form of documenting "deeds, laws, regulations, and decisions,"³² or simply publishing a daily newspaper. Lejeune wrote, "...in French, the same name ('journal') was used for both while in other languages the vocabulary was differentiated ('diary' versus 'newspaper' in English)."³³ Lejeune isn't referring to the direct translation of journal meaning newspaper in French, he is aligning the two because the newspaper was a source of birth for journals. He labels these forms of joint information as "collective journals."³⁴ Popkin and Lejeune are in agreement that the development of the diary depended on the collective acknowledgement of time as an entity of measurement. Congenitally the mechanical clock brought an emergence of new thought on oneself; how they constitute their days and allowing meaning to be attached to specific dates.

These "collective journals," coincide with human's intellectual evolution and another form of journals that were deemed acceptable by society, during their time, were Catholic spiritual journals from Europe written during the 16th to the 18th centuries made by religious

³¹ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 51.

³² Lejeune, *On Diary*, 51.

³³ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 300.

³⁴ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 52.

individuals. The kind of writing differs greatly across the two centuries; displaying religious shifts between the individual and God. These diaries were a part of a collective initiative, meaning their content was synonymous with the religious mores of the time; they didn't greatly differ despite the authors' individuality. Lejeune concludes this piece by stating "...the personal diary, which developed in France beginning in the late eighteenth century, does not seem to owe much to either Protestantism or the spiritual journal."³⁵ Despite the ambiguity on the exact road which led us to our modern journal-keeping practices we have some speculations on a source; but we must remember Lejeune's focus on France. As mentioned earlier the academic domain of the diary is small and Lejeune was the founding father of this niche subject. He had to work with what was accessible, which for him was France. Although his studies were central to France, Lejeune was a master in narrative nonfiction and established universally pragmatic facts. Freud founded a novel field through extensive research as did Lejeune. I ask, are Freud's discoveries and theories on the unconscious inapplicable to the rest of the world because his practices were based in Austria? I believe Lejeune's hypotheses and rules on the diary are the foundation of this intellectual matter and I will be using them to analyze two diaries born outside of France.

We have established, the diary has been used for centuries and we have delved into its history. In addition, we have also discussed two specific forms of diaries; the collective journal and the spiritual journal. Lejeune as his lifelong prerogative dissected journals and established a genre categorization pertaining to diaries. There are journals of "chronicle of events, [the] truly personal diary, [the] spiritual journal,"³⁶ the research journal, and the curated journal intended for publishing. And in the peculiar case of Lejeune, writing in journals about previous journals,

³⁵ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 76.

³⁶ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 42.

Lejeune wrote, "...[an] echo effect, since I practice the very thing I am studying, right before the readers eyes."³⁷

Tying back to my original idea discussed in the introduction. Ordinarily, and in contrast to Lejeune's entire mission; the value of the diary, through public acknowledgment, depends on the time of its creation or the author regarding their content as historical data which simultaneously provides insight on mores of the time and essentially the life of the author. Journals seen on display are given fame; they belong to historical figures or celebrated artists who hold social capital. For example, Anne Frank's heartbreaking account of living under Nazi occupation as an adolescent Jewish girl in her diary, *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*. Or Leonardo da Vinci's notebook which holds documentation that practically spans across the fascinating Renaissance man's life.³⁸ Or the fierce Anaïs Nin who was known for being an exquisite author on female erotica. Nin was a dedicated diarist who kept and published unexpurgated diaries throughout her life.

All of these journals are bountiful, and highly important in their own right, but also to the realm of journals. The artist in my mind encapsulates musicians, writers, and all the mediums included in the plastic arts. There are many journals published by artists, for example the diary of the controversial Peter Hill Beard. Peter Beard was an American photographer, writer, and masterful artist who was born January 1938 and passed away in April 2020. The *Peter Beard: Diary (From A Dead Man's Wallet: Confessions of a Bookmaker)*³⁹ with text by Kotaro Iizawa, was originally published in 1993 by Libro Port Publishing in Tokyo, Japan. Beard was an avid documenter; and his published diary is the utmost example of such. Through the variety of this

³⁷ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 318.

³⁸ "Leonardo Da Vinci's Notebook," *The British Library*, 2019, <https://doi.org/https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/leonardo-da-vinci-notebook>.

³⁹ Peter H Beard and Kōntarō Iizawa, *Diary (From A Dead Man's Wallet: Confessions of a Bookmaker)* (Tokyo: Libro Port, 1993).

textured content, the two-dimensional book almost springs off of the page into the realm of three-dimensionality. Although the journal was never displayed, through its publication it spread vastly and became an iconic signifier of the artist journal.

In Shira Wolfe's article *5 Artists Whose Diaries are as Inspiring as their Art*, as the title suggests she chooses five famous artists and presumably reveals a hidden artistic aspect of their careers and lives. Wolfe spends time with each diary and their creator; providing bibliographical information on the artist, assessing their individual diary habits, the diary's contemporary state, and where they currently can be found. Wolfe wrote, "...each person has their own unique approach to keeping a diary and tracking the experiences of their daily lives and the development of their personal processes."⁴⁰ This statement is evident within the article, when Wolfe simply shares how these artists label their own diaries. For Jack Whitten's documentations are dubbed "studio notes," and for Janice Lowry they are books of "reportage."⁴¹ One of the artists Wolfe wrote about was the celebrated Frida Kahlo, whose diary will be one of the two sources we analyze.

As I have shared, this thesis sprouted from a deep-rooted interest in the un-famous diary, the individual who writes and creates for themselves. Lejeune shared on this issue, and furthermore; the many limitations it provided in analyzing and ethically drawing conclusions on diaries as an academic. He wrote, "But how does one come by the original diaries? Archives and libraries are not well endowed with private diaries, and in any case only give access to modes of writing belonging to the past."⁴² I am in the same predicament! However, we are concerned with the artist's journal, which discussed profusely before is solely displayed or published based on

⁴⁰ Shira Wolfe. 2020. "5 Artists Whose Diaries Are as Inspiring as Their Art - Artland Magazine." Artland Magazine. April 28, 2020.

⁴¹ Wolfe, *5 Artists Whose Diaries are as Inspiring as their Art*, (2020).

⁴² Lejeune, *On Diary*, 31.

the artist's status, or presumably by an artist's request during an exhibition. Or in the rare case, which we will be dealing with, of Arisa Odawara. Odawara is an artist who first off isn't a world renowned figure and secondly, an individual who published her diary during her lifetime.

Now that we have loosely established a history for the diary, explored the realm of published diaries, and put the artist's diary at the axis. Now we will delve into Lejeune's declared rules for the diary, how to read one's diary, along with his, Rak's and Popkin's theories on the diarist, and how the diary functions as a space. Lejeune claims the diary's sole rule is that it is dated, he claims "...an isolated dated trace is a memorial rather than a diary."⁴³ Secondly, the diary is "...methodical, repetitive and obsessive."⁴⁴ He continues, stating the diary usually has a small number of markers which identify the important "problems" that pertain to the author of the diary. Lejeune wrote, "...just four letters *a*, *b*, *c*, and *d* are usually enough to flag the contents of a single diary... The diary itself may well be a narrative, but first and foremost it is a piece of music, meaning an art of repetition and variation."⁴⁵ He uses the metaphor of rhythm to describe the author's unique timing and their journal's physical compilation. When reading the diary using the metaphorical approach of rhythm one would have to first dissect the "internal morphology (themes and forms)"⁴⁶ and then compare those results to the measured time. This is the approach I plan on taking when analyzing Kahlo and Odawara's diary's. Lejeune wrote, "... no art is subject to greater or stricter constraints [than the diary]. This is a type of writing for which none of the ordinary working procedures is allowed: the diarist can neither compose nor correct. He must say the right thing on the first try."⁴⁷ In continuation, the diarist "... settles into a small number of forms of language that become 'molds' for all of his entries, and never deviates from

⁴³ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 179.

⁴⁴ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 179-180.

⁴⁵ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 180.

⁴⁶ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 180.

⁴⁷ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 182.

them.”⁴⁸ The diarist themes are extremely easy to identify for they are reiterative, as is the individual's concerned internal thoughts which they actively chose to eternalize through the solidification of writing. Furthermore, once this work of sifting is done, labeling the major signifiers to the diarist, the analyzer then must connect and build "...these results into a series.”⁴⁹ To properly assess the captured life of the diarist during the time it was written.

Shifting away from the systemization of journals and by extent the diarist, now we will discuss the enigmatic quality of the diary. Popkin flawlessly, in my opinion as a journal-keeper, describes the phenomenal essence of writing in the diary which surpasses the adequacy of my personal language. He wrote,

“...the diary exists at the margin of literature, and most diarists, would not label themselves as authors. And yet, when diarist take up their pens or sit down at their keyboards, they become indistinguishable from novelists, poets or autobiographers: they, too are performing the alchemy that transforms inchoate thoughts into words on paper or screen that can potentially shared with readers, known, and unknown, and that can confer on the person who sets them down a kind of immortality.”⁵⁰

Popkin is speaking on the ordinary person's diary, he elevates them and labels them as an uncommon breed of writer and then articulates the mysticism that occurs when writing. He then concretely claims the ultimate power of the diary; it's immortality. Although this is on the unknown diarist, it is applicable to Kahlo and Odawara's journaling customs. In addition, Rak wrote, “...understanding of diarists as other, ordinary, silent producers of culture who create their own logics of expression: diarists make secret spaces within a larger social world.”⁵¹ The diarists are concerned with themselves, and their environment. It is impossible to separate any being from the milieu of their time and place. Through this deeply reflective ritual they articulate and preserve their lives and by extension their culture. Lejeune transforms the habit

⁴⁸ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 180.

⁴⁹ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 179.

⁵⁰ Popkin, "Explorer of the Diary," 2.

⁵¹ Rak, "Dialogue with the Future," 18.

of keeping a diary into an act, "...it is a performance. Something like skiing or sailing: for your own purposes, you use the energy from a natural force that carries you along. Keeping a diary is surfing on time...He is himself caught up by the movement he is sculpting, moving along with it, emphasizing certain lines and directions, transforming this inescapable drift into a dance."⁵² This beautiful metaphor perfectly encompasses the exercise as well as the relationship between the diary and the diarist.

⁵² Lejeune, *On Diary*, 182.

Frida Kahlo's Diary Intime: The Theme of Identity

Frida Kahlo was a radical character, teacher, thinker and creator who produced a profound amount of intimate artwork and became Mexico's beloved icon. Due to the conglomeration of Kahlo's identity: being a proud Mexican woman, her sexuality, her physical limitations, her unshakable political activism, and woman of color artist; Kahlo was an intensely emotionally and physically aware individual who created feminine, political, and confiding idiomatic works which defined Mexico. My case study on Kahlo is guided by the book *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait* translated by Carlos Fuentes⁵³. Carlos Fuentes is a Mexican novelist and essayist who not only translated Kahlo's entries, but provides an introduction as well. The book also includes an essay⁵⁴ on the diary as well as commentaries on the images by Sarah M. Lowe, an art historian and author based in Brooklyn, New York. The book's dominant piece is a facsimile of Kahlo's diary, accompanied by a complete translation of the entries. The introduction by Carlos Fuentes describes Kahlo's mythical ensemble; how she is the product of her political climate and an amalgamation of the nation of Mexico. Fuentes is constantly coupling Kahlo with her "predecessor" and tumultuous lover, Diego Rivera; and furthermore is almost analyzed through Rivera's lens. In this piece, Kahlo's work is not dissected as much as she is. For Fuentes as well as the world's modern conception of Kahlo, she is aligned to Mexico. Kahlo is heavily marked by her physical ailments and is often referred to as "broken" like her "torn" Mexico. This is not only outdated language to describe her vast physical suffering, but also equates her to not the natural world, a common patriarchal trope, but to colonized Mexico. He exclaims that her diary disrupts this damaged image of her and shows,

⁵³ Carlos Fuentes, "Introduction," in *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2005).

⁵⁴ Sarah M. Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," in *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2005).

“how much more than this was in Kahlo, was Kahlo, her *Diary* now shows us: her joy, her fun, her fantastic imagination. The *Diary* is her lifeline to the world.”⁵⁵ But I ask Fuentes, was “fun,” “joy, nor her “fantastic imagination” never present in her displayed works? The diary isn't a direct reflection of the creator. Overall, Fuentes' introduction discusses the mores of Mexico at the time and how Kahlo either rejected or aided them. Kahlo kept this diary for the last ten years of her life, naturally documenting her mortality.

Before dissecting the internal working of Kahlo's last ten years of her life; first, let's ask what isn't found in Kahlo's diary? Her diary doesn't hold her brushes and paints, her clothing, her decorated braces and cast, her relics; the cherished objects that made up Kahlo and that live in her beloved Blue House. Kahlo's diary holds a different kind of content; the interior practices of her mind in that very moment she marked the page, nonetheless this includes direct articulations as well as metaphors concerning all the previous physical objects mentioned, and more. The diary naturally has constrictions, but the mystical content found within her journal travels many worlds. Kahlo's diary is a three-dimensional object that holds 2-dimensional works. The diary is filled with an eclectic variety of content from letters, phantasmagorical scenes, diagrams of parts of the body, collages, iconographic works, and everything in between. Using Lejeune's methodology I am going to refine, label and flag the contents of the diary to its four major themes. Kahlo's diary is dominated by love, identity, and health; mental and physical. These overarching subjects are umbrellas which hold many "smaller" yet vital topics that conquer Kahlo's mind. Lejeune wrote, “...the discrete points of reference that I set down on paper hold an invisible galaxy of other memories in suspension around them. Thanks to association of ideas and allusions, their shadows and virtual existence linger for a while.”⁵⁶ I have chosen

⁵⁵ Fuentes, “Introduction,” 10.

⁵⁶ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 181.

several images from the diary that pertain to the theme of identity and directly tie them to displayed, famous paintings of Kahlo. The theme of love and health is inextricably interwoven into Kahlo's identity. I believe the work in Kahlo's journal may be the most surreal piece of all of her creations because they were done in private and done with the intention of never being displayed; she doesn't have to be the fiercely political Kahlo the world was familiar with, unless she wants to be. Essentially, the surrealist nature of the content is allowed and furthered by the inherent constitution of the "diary intime." Which Lowe explains is, "...a private record written by a woman for herself."⁵⁷

The diary begins with a beautifully embellished, potent collage that functions as a visual preface for the substance of the diary. "Painted 1916," shown on page 4 of the diary, is a heavily symbolic juxtaposition which acts as a freely composed yet finalized creation. The collage has a striking title "PINTÉ DE 1916" written in fuchsia pink and underlined in a tangerine orange; accentuating its importance. Below the declaration of the year the United States invaded Mexico is a two-dimensional memento. A horizontal, sepia, photographic portrait of Kahlo laying down. Lowe suspects the photo was "...taken by her friend Lola Alvarez Bravo."⁵⁸ The picture is framed by a decorative castle-like structure; the mystical edifice is surrounded and enhanced by detailed, teal flowers and symbols. Growing from the frame's left column is a pastel pink ribbon which acts as a collar for a jade-color bird, who is in flight, yet tied down. From the same column sprouts a live flower, which simultaneously grows little buds and holds blossomed flowers. The flourish's coloring is identical to the harnessed bird. On the bottom half of the frame the decorations cultivate a dissimilar garden. From the photograph's bottom core grows a radiant, unbound wreath of cerulean blue and canary yellow flowers. Lowe wrote, "... "Painted 1916,"

⁵⁷ Sarah M. Lowe, "Essay," in *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2005), 25.

⁵⁸ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 202.

Kahlo announces in crimson, the year she was nine—an overt prevarication proclaiming her lack of concern for “rational facts.”⁵⁹ The photograph of Kahlo divides the collage into two terrains; they are equally beautiful, yet hold different kinds of worlds. Two worlds Kahlo exists in yet, nevertheless created this identity dichotomy. Lowe continued, “...the effect is both jarring and provocative, but it is a private joke the viewer is not entitled to understand fully.”⁶⁰ The photograph of Kahlo divides the collage into two terrains; they are equally beautiful, yet hold different kinds of worlds. Two worlds Kahlo exists in yet, nevertheless created this identity dichotomy. Lowe continued, “The effect is both jarring and provocative, but it is a private joke the viewer is not entitled to understand fully.”⁶¹ Kahlo, created a metaphorical yet concise piece; leaving the viewer happily forced to be content with its visual pleasure and assumed pieces of its meaning. Roger Copeland, a professor at Oberlin College, wrote an article *Merce Cunningham and the Aesthetic of Collage*⁶² where he defines and argues that collage is a core organizational strategy. Collage can and does appear in all art forms from the 20th century, despite it being tied to the world of plastic arts it can also appear in theater and the performing arts. Copeland wrote, “...within the context of modernism, collage and its three-dimensional counterpart, assemblage, are both closely associated with the sharp disjunctions and peculiar juxtapositions of the 20th century urban experience.”⁶³ Through the medium of collage Kahlo could achieve a deeply reflective self-portrait which displays a coetaneous scene of her “urban experience” with the “sharp disjunctions” of nostalgia for pre-colonial Mexico. Legeune wrote, “...the diary is a filter. Its value lies precisely in its selectivity and discontinuities...things that are going fine or that go

⁵⁹ Lowe, “Translation of the Diary with Commentaries,” 202.

⁶⁰ Lowe, “Translation of the Diary with Commentaries,” 202.

⁶¹ Lowe, “Translation of the Diary with Commentaries,” 202.

⁶² Roger Copeland, “Merce Cunningham and the Aesthetic of Collage,” *TDR (1988-)* 46, no. 1 (2002): 11–28, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1146942>.

⁶³ Copeland, “Merce Cunningham and the Aesthetic of Collage,” 13.

without saying are left implicit. That's why a diary is rarely a self-portrait.”⁶⁴ Just like a painting isn't always a self portrait, either is the diary. This metaphor not only allows for the content found within the diary to function as art, but also the whole book. Kahlo's journal being classified as a “journal intime,”⁶⁵ or a “truly personal diary”⁶⁶ allowed Kahlo to write solely for herself. This piece is concerned with identity.

The first twenty pages of the diary are dominated by words, despite one page [plate 10] which holds a grayish-blue, symbolic, automatic drawing.⁶⁷ As one would assume, despite Kahlo being a visual artist, that the diary is filled with writing— and it definitely is. Kahlo wrote unsent letters to lovers that are bound in the diary, she transcribed old letters into the book, she practiced automatic writing and wrote a vast amount of poetry. Whether these writings are accompanied by a painting, drawing, collage, or stand on their own; Kahlo's diary is infused with lyrical phrases. Kahlo on page 9 of her diary wrote an *Untitled*⁶⁸ poem using the automatic method. Kahlo wrote:

*Passing through ostentatiously
Business heap,
Had I a curtain
dark print
noisy mocker
winged with motors
extra brilliance
dancing silhouette
suffering singing
shaded planted
subtle sting
veiled color of
the same cloudy yellow sky
bound looseness
mission of the wind
rotund.
maraca strip*

⁶⁴ Legeune, *On Diary*, 179.

⁶⁵ Lowe, “Essay,” 25.

⁶⁶ Legeune, *On Diary*, 42.

⁶⁷ Kahlo, “Untitled,” *Diary*, 10. All subsequent diary citations for Kahlo are from Sarah M. Lowe, “Translation of the Diary with Commentaries,” in *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2005).

⁶⁸ Kahlo, “Untitled” *Diary*, 9.

*curious morning
bird lemon
dark shroud
tumbling rubbish
singing footsteps
stolen on the wing
returned great birdsong,
antique garments
the coarse cells,
of the heart.
Passing through ostentatiously
Business heap,
Had I a curtain
dark print
noisy mocker
winged with motors
extra brilliance
dancing silhouette
suffering singing

subtle sting (Kahlo, 9)*

The page that holds the poem is uniformly divided into two vertical columns. The first column of the poem (lines 1-27) was written in a thin rust colored marker. The second column holds the latter half of the poem which is a repetition of the first eleven lines except, the tenth line, “shaded planted.” The concluding stanza is written in a blue, gel, fine point pen. Kahlo writes freely yet, in a disciplined script. This poem can be read as a practice of freeform word association or as mentioned earlier an automatic poem. This poem reads to me, as Kahlo’s reflection on her life as a Mexican public figure who is accepted among the “ostentatious” and maneuvers around modernized Mexico. This world she is in, this poem, is filled with oxymorons such as “bound looseness” and eery “suffering singing.” Yet one “curious morning” Kahlo witnessed a bird—perhaps the quetzal bird, an aztec symbol of good fortune and health, whose songs brought Kahlo pieces of the pre-Columbian world; the “antique garments” and “the coarse cells, of the heart” of indigenous Mexico. But, as mentioned before Kahlo concludes the poem by restating her opening lines of the modern, pretentious Mexico, after sharing her spiritual vision; highlighting Kahlo’s internal dichotomy. Lowe wrote, “...her words often appeal to the

senses because her stream—of—consciousness style favors vivid colors, a jumble of objects, and short descriptive phrases virtually without verbs.”⁶⁹ The content of the poem is in “stream—of—consciousness style” yet her syntax is invariant. This analysis of her writing is congruent to the contents and stylization of her paintings. The simultaneous exhibition of lyrical matter and methodical manner found in her writing is also displayed in Kahlo's painting *What the Water Gave Me* also sometimes referred to as *What I Saw in the Water*. The painting was done in 1938 in oil on canvas, and was displayed later that year in Kahlo's first solo exhibit held at the Julien Levy Gallery in New York City⁷⁰ The painting is now in David Filipacchi's private collection in Paris, France. The painting's core is framed by a porcelain bathtub, the tub is filled with water, the parts are fixed despite being submerged. A volcanic island stands holding a skeleton, a rope system which entraps a masked individual, a large dead quetzal bird resting on a tree, and from the erupting volcano, which is "spewing gangrene," a modern building erectly bursts out, covered in a haze of smoke. Tucked below the island stand Kahlo's parents; they are dressed in their wedding attire, and are ultimately a copied depiction⁷¹ of the two in Kahlo's painting *My Grandparents, My Parents and I*⁷² done two years prior, in 1936, in oil and tempera. They are immersed in foliage and to their left two women lay nude on a bed of soil that's tied to a flower blooming out of the water. Laying in the water is a woman strangled and entangled in the rope-system, a pre-Columbian styled dress floats away, and a sailboat is setting off. There is a conch shell-fountain rushing, and cacti growing off a rock-formation accompanying them in the water. Kahlo's upper legs are barely seen through the sheer substance, but she includes her

⁶⁹ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 203.

⁷⁰ "Frida Kahlo Biography," (2002).

⁷¹ Muller, Angelia. "Frida Kahlo: Trauma, Abjection, and Affect: Artworks: What the Water Gave Me." n.d., <https://scalar.usc.edu/works/a-critical-analysis-of-trauma-and-abjection-as-foundations-for-understanding-affect-in-selected-works-by-frida-kahlo/artworks-what-the-water-gave-me>.

⁷² Frida Kahlo, *My Grandparents, My Parents and I*, 1936, The Museum of Modern Art, https://library.artstor.org/asset/AMOMA_10312310012.

emerging feet which reflect off the water. Her mirrored toes are painted a ginger color and we see her right toe is a ripped, open wound. The spout of the tub is leaking a dirty liquid, the same color of Kahlo's nail polish and cut, into the water; poisoning the bath and its biome.

Rebecca Howland's article "An Interpretation Of Frida Kahlo's 'What The Water Gave Me,'" heavily guided by Janice Helland's article "Culture, Politics, and Identity in the Paintings of Frida Kahlo," is a piece which completes visual analysis focusing through the lens of Kahlo's emotional pain rather than her physical. Howland writes, "Kahlo purposefully inserted Aztec symbolism within her paintings to represent her longing for the renewal of pre-Columbian times, a time where Mexico had their own identity and was not controlled by other nations."⁷³ From the detailed vegetation, to the floating Tehuana dress, to the punctured quetzal bird, to the exploding volcano; the piece is filled with pre-Columbian symbolism and is an intimate window into the turbulent mind of Kahlo. She not only radically depicts female physical pain outside of Christian martyrdom, but also emotional sufferings. Angelia Muller, in her article "Frida Kahlo: Trauma, Abjection, and Affect: Artworks: What the Water Gave Me" she reveals that the painting directly refers to "... at least twelve elements from her other artworks."⁷⁴ There are not only direct reproductions of parts as mentioned before, but also allegories to previous works; such as the floating, strangled woman who resembles Kahlo in her 1932 painting *Henry Ford Hospital*⁷⁵ in which she grows, and bound to a web of painful objects. Or the industrial building in smoke which alludes to Kahlo's drawing done in 1932, *The Dream or Self-portrait, Dreaming*⁷⁶ in which a building is beginning to catch fire. The tub is filled with tortuous issues;

⁷³ Rebecca Howland, "An Interpretation of Frida Kahlo's 'What the Water Gave Me,'" The Odyssey Online, 2017, <https://www.theodysseyonline.com/interpretation-kahlo-water-gave-me>.

⁷⁴ Muller, "Frida Kahlo: Trauma, Abjection, and Affect."

⁷⁵ Frida Kahlo, *Henry Ford Hospital*, 1932, Museo Dolores Olmedo Patiño, https://library.artstor.org/asset/ASCHALKWIJKIG_10313990553.

⁷⁶ Frida Kahlo, *The Dream or Self-portrait, Dreaming*, 1932, Collection of Juan Rafael Coronel Rivera, https://library.artstor.org/asset/SS34871_34871_26244642.

political, personal, and cultural, which usurp the artist and have the power to drown her. All the roots and plants growing juxtaposed with the industrialization and death of pre-Columbian practices; Kahlo depicted not only her inner world but the changing exterior world. Liza Bakewell is a writer and anthropologist who specializes in Latin American and Caribbean Studies with a focus on female artists.⁷⁷ Bakewell wrote,

What the water gave Frida is knowledge of her body as landscape, but a landscape of eruptions... The bathtub's non-reflecting surface is a surface not of imaginary, not of images of the unified self, but a landscape in which conflict is portrayed and problematized. There is nothing passive about this landscape/woman—that 'being who embodies the ancient, stable elements of the universe: the earth, motherhood, virginity.'⁷⁸

Through the usage of symbolism Kahlo created a painting which holds an environment of contradictory conjunction; her world. Furthermore, this style of painting resembles her fluid, seemingly-sporadic writing. Although her writing directly favors the style of the unconscious mind her paintings potently articulate her struggles, but are fueled by symbolism and need to be pieced together in order to find answers; much like the reservoir of one's mind. Fuentes wrote, "...when she saw herself, she painted and she painted because she was alone and was the subject she knew best."⁷⁹ However, in her diary she was naturally the subject. One must imagine she was alone for the majority of the time when writing in her journal because writing in the diary is inherently a deeply personal and reflective act. In the *Diary* Kahlo not only included a diagram of her feet, but she "depicted the same foot in her most surreal painting *What the Water Gave Me*."⁸⁰ What's more introspective than revisiting an old, subjective painting? Towards the middle of Kahlo's diary she created *Huella de piés y huella de sol/ Footprints and sunprints*, a drawing

⁷⁷ Liza Bakewell, "Frida Kahlo: A Contemporary Feminist Reading," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 13, no. 3 (1993): 165–89, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3346753>.

⁷⁸ Bakewell, "A Contemporary Feminist Reading," 179.

⁷⁹ Fuentes, "Introduction," 10.

⁸⁰ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 238.

with painted embellishments on page 66. The title sits at the top of the page in muted gold with an arrow splitting the two kinds of imprints; "Huella de piés" and "Huella de sol." The arrow is done in the same hue, as well as a dotted circle, the sun, which sits below its label. There are two feet, diagonally reaching out across the page, almost in an attempt to join; resembling the iconic hands in Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam*.⁸¹ The left foot is red, small and whole in comparison to its partner which is large, and appears as a concoction of oxidized iron; bubbling and bleeding beyond its borders. Below the two limbs is a cataclysmic fire, which bursts threads of yellow, red, orange, and brown while birthing an angelic figure from within. The flames lick the distorted dark-mustard-colored right foot which gurgles, burns, and spews. The page is sporadically marked by rusted dots. Lowe commented, "Kahlo draws her right foot, the offending one, which, since at least 1932, had been plagued with trophic ulcers. The delicate outlines are overwhelmed by the splotch of color she adds, causing her foot to bulge and swell, deformed."⁸² In the painting *What the Water Gave Me*⁸³ the setting is the bathtub which is a tormenting visual psychobiography while this specifically congregates her damaged foot with fire; a poignant, direct piece on her physical pain. Lowe continued, "...here, the two feet float in space, the spots of ink read as celestial bodies, and Kahlo designates one constellation the sun. The heavenly context casts the image into the realm of myth so it comes as no surprise to see a figure in the flames, a phoenix perhaps, a sign of Kahlo's unyielding tenacity."⁸⁴ Although the drawing first appears to be a scene of horror, with the figure merging from the inferno, it shifts and functions as a piece of hope; highlighting Kahlo's persistence and strength. Fuentes wrote, "...she directly describes her own pain, it does not render her mute, her scream is articulate

⁸¹ Michelangelo, di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni, *Sistine Chapel: Creation of Adam*, (1508-1512).

⁸² Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 238.

⁸³ Kahlo, Frida *What the Water Gave Me*, 1938.

⁸⁴ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 238.

because it achieves a visible and emotional form.”⁸⁵ I completely concur, and this drawing is an ideal example of articulating one's pain. This drawing and, this revisitation to, *What the Water Gave Me*⁸⁶ are displays of Kahlo's identity which is tied to and displayed by her symbolic depiction of her dichotomized environment.

Tying Kahlo's internal works to her displayed pieces veered us off our chronological journey through the diary. In Beate Pongratz-Leisten and Karen Sonik's article *Between Cognition and Culture*⁸⁷ in which they explore the materialized or *present* divine in the “cross-cultural” context of archaic cult images, emphasizing the power of humans in their environments. When referencing Peter Carruthers' *Natural Theories of Consciousness* they provide insight on the complex workings of memory; despite the fact they are discussing the performance of the mental image when communicating with the divine it is applicable to how memory shapes the content within the diary. They wrote, "...memory works not as the ability to reproduce a text, formula, or list of items by rote learning but rather 'as a matrix of reminiscent cogitation, shuffling and collating 'things' stored in a random access memory scheme or set of schemes—a memory architecture."⁸⁸ This is in alignment with Lejuene's theory on the mechanics of the journal and how it functions as "... a filter."⁸⁹

Self-portraits are synonymous with Frida Kahlo's modern perception, and rightfully so. Briefly discussed earlier, Kahlo was a creator who was novel in expressing personal pain both physical and emotional as a woman outside of Christian martyrdom. Furthermore, although this may have been unintentionally inflicted upon her due to health issues, she was radical in her choice to be the constant subject of her paintings. Ronald J. Friis is a scholar and author of

⁸⁵ Fuentes, “Introduction,” 12.

⁸⁶ Kahlo, Frida *What the Water Gave Me*, (1938).

⁸⁷Beate Pongratz-Leisten and K. Sonik, “Between Cognition and Culture: Theorizing the Materiality of Divine Agency in Cross-Cultural Perspective,” in *The Materiality of Divine Agency* (New York: de Gruyter, 2015), 3-69.

⁸⁸ B. Pongratz-Leisten and K. Sonik "Between Cognition and Culture," 35.

⁸⁹ Legeune, *On Diary*, 179.

Spanish American literature, he is a renowned and respected intellectual who navigates between both English and Spanish literary circles and publications. In Friis' piece *The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins: Frida Kahlo and Rosario Castellanos*,⁹⁰ he analyzes the stylistic similarities between Kahlo's work to the Mexican poet Rosario Castellanos. Friis focuses on both their usage of root imagery as a symbol for union and separation and their interest in the medical world and by extension, the depiction of "broken bodies."⁹¹ Friis discovers the two constantly represent personal dichotomies and a mutual philosophy on "how to live with pain"⁹² within their work. Historically the evaluation of Kahlo's work focuses on the personal aspect. Leading academics to use the theoretical method of "author=corpus narrative"⁹³ where the analyzer compounds anecdotes and personal memories with secondary sources in an attempt to construct the utmost factual account on the artist and their work.⁹⁴ Friis uses this technique to adequately dissect Kahlo's life and work. When speaking on Kahlo's contemporary fame and image Friis wrote, "...one reason for this popularity is the fact that the majority of Kahlo's paintings are self-portraits that center on her unique facial features and enigmatic expressions."⁹⁵ Speaking on Kahlo's "unique" features and "enigmatic" visage I would just like to incorporate Daniel R. Quiles' ideas from his piece *Exhibition as Network, Network as Curator: Canonizing Art from 'Latin America*,⁹⁶ where he dissects and discusses the curatorial choice to simultaneously reinforce and reject Latin American art in the totality of the art world using the socio-cultural lens. When commenting on both the 1987 exhibition of "Art of the Fantastic: Latin America,

⁹⁰ Ronald J. Friis, "'The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins': Frida Kahlo and Rosario Castellanos," *Hispania* 87, no. 1 (2004): 53–61, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20062973>.

⁹¹ Friis, "The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins," 53.

⁹² Friis, "The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins," 53.

⁹³ Friis, "The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins," 53.

⁹⁴ Friis, "The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins," 53.

⁹⁵ Friis, "The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins," 53.

⁹⁶ Daniel R. Quiles, "Exhibition as Network, Network as Curator: Canonizing Art from 'Latin America.'" *Artl@s Bulletin* 3, no. 1 (2014): Article 7.

1920-1987," held at the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the Metropolitan Museum of Art's 1990's show "Mexico: Splendor of Thirty Centuries," Quiles states, "...one problem...lay in its close proximity to exotification or neo-primitivism—the association with certain artistic choices based on identity rather than any other factor."⁹⁷ Although Quiles' is speaking on the curatorial choice to couple modern Latin American art with religious and traditional objects from greatly different periods under the singular guise of being Latin American art, providing a generalized yet targeted signifier rather than rightfully designating works to certain regions, cultures, and time. Quiles is concerned with the dominating marker of Latin American art and its stereotypes and by extension the "identity neurosis that Latin American culture has suffered as a result of the multiplicity of its origins."⁹⁸

First off, Kahlo is an emblem of Mexico, but why? Those who truly absorb Kahlo's life's work see Kahlo oscillate between different personas; her father's daughter, an ancestor of the Tehuana woman, a passionate and tumultuous lover; but always a radical leftist and proud Mexican woman who persisted through tormenting physical disabilities. Kahlo created who she was, but she was a fluid individual and presumably battled with "identity neurosis." Kahlo's "unique facial features and enigmatic expressions"⁹⁹ were powerful parts of her physical appearance, the self crafted and the perceived, then and now. Victor Zamudio-Taylor in his piece *Frida Kahlo, Mexican Modernist*¹⁰⁰ speaks on this, "...the mythos surrounding Kahlo was in part instigated by the artist herself. Consider the persona that she fashioned over time, which is evident in photographs of the artist...and in her cultivation of a distinctive style of

⁹⁷ Quiles, "Exhibition as Network, Network as Curator," 66.

⁹⁸ Quiles, "Exhibition as Network, Network as Curator," 66.

⁹⁹ Friis, "The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins," 53.

¹⁰⁰ Hayden Herrera, Victor Zamudio-Taylor, and Elizabeth Carpenter, *Frida Kahlo: Exhibition, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, October 27, 2007 - January 20, 2008, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, February 20 - May 18, 2008, San Francisco, San Francisco Museum of Art, June 16 - September 28, 2008* (Minneapolis: Walker Art Center, 2008).

dress...pre-Columbian jewelry, and hairstyles inspired by indigenous cultures."¹⁰¹ This timeless image has transformed Kahlo into a symbol of Mexico, however there were many factors for Kahlo in shaping this image. For example survival, respect, love and politics. Kahlo's self portraits are not only her most famous works, but the majority of her known work. In the *diary* we see different kinds of self portraits than those that are displayed. Most of the portraits aren't directly of Kahlo; but of individuals and "familiar characters"¹⁰² who she aligned with such as Nefertiti, a Buddhist goddess, and Ancient cultures' statuettes creating pendant portraits. There are several vignettes of figures sprouting from automatic drawings, one in which she titled *who is this idiot?*¹⁰³ Another is on plate 50, which holds *How ugly "people" are!*¹⁰⁴ Kahlo drew an overwhelming amount of bubbles which serve as individual frames for a series of portraits. Lowe wrote, "Kahlo included one which appears to be an actual portrait, a fairly detailed image along the right edge which bears a resemblance to Rivera, Kahlo sketches various types, races, and gender, and their close proximity gives the sense of the masses."¹⁰⁵ These vast creations of free-form portraiture are what fill the diary. We also see Kahlo superimposing herself upon an individual or animal creating a hybrid, as well as drawings of anthropomorphic vessels which function as portraits.

Pertaining to Lejeune's focal observation on the diary and how it possesses an inherently repetitive nature. The most direct form of self portrait found in the diary are renditions of Kahlo's fruitful painting, *Las Dos Fridas/The Two Fridas* which was done in 1939 in oil on canvas. The subject is doubled, both Fridas sit comfortably on a green ottoman which is situated in a desolate landscape where the turbulent skies compound into the bare land. Both Fridas join hands,

¹⁰¹ Herrera, Zamudio-Taylor, and Carpenter, 15-16. From Victor Zamudio's "Frida Kahlo, Mexican Modernist." essay.

¹⁰² Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 223.

¹⁰³ Kahlo, "who is this idiot?" in *Diary*, 81, (1947).

¹⁰⁴ Kahlo, "How ugly "people" are!" in *Diary*, 50, (1944-1947).

¹⁰⁵ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 229.

connecting one another, and gaze directly at the viewer. Both Fridas have their hearts exposed, furthermore both organs are done in a classic anatomical illustration style; yet they differ. For the Frida on the right, reveals heart valves, atriums, and overall is a more detailed medical diagram whereas Frida on the left's bare heart is shown, but protected by strong palpatory muscles. The two are further connected by the raw heart strings, which allude to Kahlo's symbolic usage of roots. Friis harnesses Hayden Herrera's analysis, who has done the most authoritative work on Kahlo. Friis wrote, "...Herrera sees Kahlo's use of roots as a symbol of her unfulfilled desire to carry a pregnancy term but they also serve the more practical and visual purpose of connecting figures in her paintings."¹⁰⁶ I believe that these veins function in the same way as Kahlo's roots do; they have a "practical visual purpose" while also symbolic of her unfulfilled dreams. The heart strings wrap around left Frida's right arm, and hide behind right Frida's European-style ensemble, peeking out from her left arm and ending at the cameo of Diego as a child. By connecting *left* frida's *right* arm with the veins, and *rightside* Frida's *left* arm they signify how interchangeable the two subjects are; epitomizing Frida's identity neurosis.¹⁰⁷ Frida on the left, whose heart is shielded, is dressed in her Tehuana dress summoning her Mexican native heritage. Frida on the right, whose heart is more exposed, is dressed in the costume of an "old fashioned fiancée"¹⁰⁸ devoted to Rivera. Right Frida is cast in a light shadow, but both have bright red lipstick on, and have their hair braided and coiled, resting upon their heads. In the book *Frida Kahlo: National Homage 1907-2007*¹⁰⁹ by Salomon Grimberg, James Oles, Carlos Fuentes, and Raquel Tibol they provide an in-depth analysis on Frida's life and paintings using the author=corpus narrative method. In Raquel Tibol's article *The Two Fridas* she claims this prolific

¹⁰⁶ Friis, "The Fury and the Mire of Human Veins," 55.

¹⁰⁷ Quiles, "Exhibition as Network, Network as Curator," 66.

¹⁰⁸ Salomon Grimberg, James Oles, Carlos Fuentes, Raquel Tibol, and Frida Kahlo. *Frida Kahlo: National Homage 1907-2007* (Regal Printing Limited, 2007). From Raquel Tibol's essay "The Two Fridas," 203.

¹⁰⁹ Grimberg, Oles, Fuentes, Tibol, and Kahlo, *Frida Kahlo: National Homage 1907-2007*.

painting sprouted from the fusion of emotional agony and "unexpected professional incentives."¹¹⁰ The first is a response to Rivera's unexplained order of divorce, and the latter, the proposition to participate in the 1940's *International Surrealist Exhibition* held in Mexico City at the Galería de Arte Mexicano. Yet Tibol states, "the dimension of *The Two Fridas* were determined not so much by its content as by the intention to participate in the International Surrealism Exhibition."¹¹¹ Kahlo originally intended to present four paintings, but then decided to exhibit two large paintings with the deliberate intention to stand out. However, that does not belittle the heavy symbolism presented in this piece, as well as her other works. Tibol writes,

...the Frida on the left is...this *novia* [who] is capable of bleeding for a lost love, a weakness for the real Frida, the one on the right, would not permit herself, for Diego...he will never succeed in destroying or diminishing a devotion positively embedded in her being...the real Frida therefore holds in her left hand a cameo containing an authentic photograph of Diego."¹¹²

Kahlo masterfully and repeatedly displays her dichotomies. This painting deals with her identity dichotomy and by extension, her love for Rivera which is deeply entangled in Kahlo's self-perceived as well as the projected image of her. Whitney Chadwick commented on this work in her piece *The Muse as Artist*,¹¹³ she wrote, "...in this portrait Rivera has disappeared from Kahlo's life; she is accompanied by herself and holds only mementos of their life together"¹¹⁴ This beautifully summarizes the heartbreaking reality of Kahlo.

The diary's utmost present form of self-portraiture is a nostalgic return to *Las Dos Fridas/The Two Fridas*.¹¹⁵ On plate 52 of the diary Kahlo draws, in marker and pencil, a version of *Las Dos Fridas*, with an accompanying text. One head holds two faces and rests upon the

¹¹⁰ Grimberg, Oles, Fuentes, Tibol, and Kahlo, *Frida Kahlo: National Homage 1907-2007*, 200.

¹¹¹ Grimberg, Oles, Fuentes, Tibol, and Kahlo, *Frida Kahlo: National Homage 1907-2007*, 203.

¹¹² Grimberg, Oles, Fuentes, Tibol, and Kahlo, *Frida Kahlo: National Homage 1907-2007*, 203.

¹¹³ Whitney Chadwick, "The Muse as Artist," in *Women Artists and the Surrealist Movement* (S.L.: Thames & Hudson, 2021).

¹¹⁴ Chadwick "The Muse as Artist," 88.

¹¹⁵ Frida Kahlo, *Las Dos Fridas/The Two Fridas*, 1939, Museo De Arte Moderno.

other head. The elevated head is dominated by sea greens and grays while the other is made up of soft purples and coral hues. The colors aren't strictly separated; they are sewn throughout the piece. The top head holds two skillfully drawn faces; one is done in a quarter profile, and the other in a traditional portrait form. The head is hugged by a tight braid, which serves as a border for the whole portrait. The quarter profile portrait is masterful and complete whereas its joint companion feeds off its host. One eye is drawn parallel to the complete face's left eye whereas the mouth and nose are drawn independently, but the two share an ear. Essentially, the dependent face has shifted downwards a couple degrees, making the "whole" face almost function as a double-exposed photograph that reveals Frida's third eye. This is furthered through the retracing of the face in a red marker, highlighting certain features. The bottom portrait holds a focused face, which looks directly at the viewer. Stylistically it is drawn differently, this face was executed with firm intention making thick and rougher lines. The left eye is green and disrupted by a brown thread, whereas the right eye is red and intact. Kahlo drew a full face with all features present and undistributed; a mouth, nose, the two eyes, and Kahlo's unibrow. In the first head which holds the double-exposed portrait both faces have eyebrows yet neither of them have Kahlo's unibrow which is synonymous with her identity. However, the head in which they rest upon does. Through blending space by adjoining colors Kahlo simultaneously executed a surreal self-portrait regarding her identity while also expanding her solidified visual definition shown in displayed pieces. The accompanying text was written in a golden brown colored marker over the drawing, and elaborates on my previous claim. It reads:

*two, it's no use.
moon....dreadful
and alone banal....isn't it?
superficial— don't you think?
I desire clearly
break it!*

In this prose, Kahlo grapples with her identity neurosis, her self-imposed and perceived image. She is passionate in disputing her internal dichotomy through charged language. Kahlo uses "dreadful," "banal," and "superficial" to describe the feeling of existing as one being who is split into two. She concludes the prose with the clear exclamation "break it!" Revealing her true desire to be one whole, or something more. Lowe wrote, "...the floating face above appears as a material emanation of thought for the figure below, which vaguely resembles Kahlo herself."¹¹⁶ This is undoubtedly a self-portrait of Kahlo and furthermore an adaptation of *Las Dos Fridas*¹¹⁷ where she displays three Fridas; one an amalgamation of two and the second a bearer of the first. Rak wrote, "...diaries do not present consistent pictures of a life: they show an identity in process, even as they are part of the process itself of creating identity, day after day."¹¹⁸ Identity is presumably a major theme in every diary and since the diary is a practice, or in Lejeune's terminology a "performance,"¹¹⁹ the author inherently progresses and reveals themselves the more they write. Again, the diary is a repetitive practice not direct mimicry; naturally, Kahlo not only revisited her subjective painting, but transformed it to pertain to and reflect her thoughts in that very moment.

Established earlier, the self-portraits found in her diary are adaptations of *Las Dos Fridas*.¹²⁰ They appear in the diary as visual renditions and literary reiterations. Plates 100 and 101 are again a variation of the painting but in the form of pendant portraits on anthropomorphic vases.¹²¹ Each portrait is designated to their own page, instead of being superimposed upon one another, but they definitely function and appear as a pair. The two titles further this connection

¹¹⁶ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 230.

¹¹⁷ Frida Kahlo, *Las Dos Fridas/The Two Fridas*, 1939, Museo De Arte Moderno.

¹¹⁸ Rak, "Dialogue with the Future," 24.

¹¹⁹ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 182.

¹²⁰ Frida Kahlo, *Las Dos Fridas/The Two Fridas*, 1939, Museo De Arte Moderno.

¹²¹ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 253.

Plate 100 is titled *DON'T COME CRYING TO ME!*¹²² And plate 101 title responds, *YES, I COME CRYING TO YOU.*¹²³ Both Fridas have on red lipstick, the defining characteristic, which alludes to her "lost youth and wasted womanliness."¹²⁴ Lowe claims, "...the tears are literal, referring to her immediate physical pain," while also symbolic of the Madonna of Sorrows as well as the Mexican legend of La Llorona.¹²⁵ The Madonna of Sorrows is the depiction of Mary at the foot of the Cross. The myth of La Llorona is popular across Latin America and different versions of the tale circulate. The defining variation of the weeping woman is a heartbroken mother who drowned her children and then proceeded to kill herself, her wraith resides by river and haunts the night.¹²⁶ Through coupling her portraits with writing Kahlo clearly articulated and displayed her identity neurosis.

Plate 49¹²⁷ is reminiscent of *Las Dos Fridas*¹²⁸ however it aligns more to Frida's 1932 painting *My Birth*¹²⁹ in which Kahlo displays self-creation. We see two major themes which amalgamate making Kahlo's identity. One, the self-creation shown in *My Birth* and second her split identity displayed in *Las Dos Fridas*. In the diary we see constant replications referring to the regeneration and then the splitting of herself. These two topics rightfully exist independently in displayed works, but simultaneously, in the diary they don't because they make up her identity.

Plate 82 through plate 85, in Kahlo's words tell the "ORIGIN OF THE TWO FRIDAS."¹³⁰ Below the title Kahlo shares that this is an intimate memory from her childhood, presumably only shareable in the diary space. In detail it tells of her escape through her

¹²² Frida Kahlo, *DON'T COME CRYING TO ME!*, 1944-54, in *Diary*.

¹²³ Frida Kahlo, *YES, I COME CRYING TO YOU*, 1944-54, in *Diary*.

¹²⁴ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 253.

¹²⁵ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 253.

¹²⁶ National Museum of American History. n.d. "Muñeca de La Llorona." National Museum of American History. https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1170907.

¹²⁷ Frida Kahlo, *Plate 49*, 1944-54, in *Diary*.

¹²⁸ Frida Kahlo, *Las Dos Fridas/The Two Fridas*, 1939, Museo De Arte Moderno.

¹²⁹ Frida Kahlo, *My Birth*, 1932, Modern Latin American Art.

¹³⁰ Frida Kahlo. *Plate 82* in *Diary* (1944-54).

childhood window where she would draw a door on the glass and enter an imaginary world. In this world Kahlo's "imaginary friend always waited"¹³¹ for her. They would play and Kahlo would share her "secret problems,"¹³² and when Kahlo would return back through the doorway she would erase her entryway and proceed to revel in her adventures. There are three and a half pages of writing and then an accompanying drawing which optimizes the magical realm for her. Kahlo concludes the entry by writing,

Alone with my great happiness with the very vivid memory of the little girl. It has been 34 years since I lived that magical friendship and every time I remember it it comes alive and grows more and more inside my world.
PINZÓN 1950. Frida Kahlo

LAS
DOS
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Allende 52

Lejeune wrote, "...a diary is a place where you're not afraid to make spelling mistakes or be stupid.... many people put on a suit and tie to write about their private lives. But you and I wear our old bedroom slippers and don't give a hoot."¹³³ Since Kahlo's journal is classified as a "journal intime,"¹³⁴ and furthermore written in the last 10 years of her life, this quote is directly applicable to Kahlo. The majority of the diary's content is self-inquisitive and includes visitations to her past yet unfiltered. This kind of focused, reflective, and confidential work can only take place in the private diary. Through looking at the theme of identity across the journal and displayed works; we see how Kahlo was an infinite being who was everchanging yet never wavered from her personal politics and truth. She had the extraordinary gift to draw connections between herself and the world, she possessed the virtue of patience and reflective aptitude, and

¹³¹ Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 245.

¹³² Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," 246.

¹³³ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 175.

¹³⁴ Lowe, "Essay," 25.

overall was a caring, creative genius. The role the journal played for Kahlo was a tool of deep contemplation on her past and her present state. In continuation, the diary being written in the last ten years of her life provides a specific lens through which Kahlo assesses her physical deterioration; something she coped with her whole life yet was an inescapable, progressing, decline which conquered her mind and by extent, the journal.

Arisa Odawara's Published Diary: The Art of Documenting Interactions

Arisa Odawara is an artist who produces abundantly across different mediums and with no classical artistic training. Odawara shared with me that she simply draws because she likes it. She graduated from an architectural school, but "chose to paint."¹³⁵ Odawara also runs a space for artists in Gakugeidaigaku, Tokyo called 'Junbicyu.'¹³⁶ I thankfully came across Odawara's work when looking through the website of the brilliant, non-profit, artist organization Printed Matter¹³⁷ in search of a modern, published diary. I found a gem which led me to embark on a rare and extraordinary quest on dissecting the workings presented in Odawara's *My Diary*.¹³⁸ Odawara in this moment is not a famed, worldwide creator, therefore, there is close to no information on her in Western databases. However that does not diminish her works at all; in fact it is a defining comment on the current Western art world's lack of proper inclusivity. While scavenging for predetermined analysis on Odawara to serve as a foundation for this project, I met a dead end. I simply had Printed Matter's¹³⁹ blurbs on the two books they sold of hers and luckily her website, which supplied contact information. This was simultaneously discouraging while also exciting because it opened a door for uninterrupted communication between Odawara and myself. Most of the personal information pertaining to Odawara within this piece is directly from our correspondence.

Although I did utilize any form of information I can get my hands on, a major source has been Odawara's three instagram pages. One is her overall defining platform simply called *arisaodawara*.¹⁴⁰ The other two are designated to specific crafts; the first is her pottery page

¹³⁵ Email with Author, 2022.

¹³⁶ Arisa Odawara, *My Diary*,

¹³⁷ "Printed Matter," (2019).

¹³⁸ Odawara, *My Diary*, 2021

¹³⁹ "Printed Matter," (2019).

¹⁴⁰ Arisa Odawara, *Arisaodawara* (instagram). 2013.

entitled *pottery_arisaodawara*,¹⁴¹ the other is assigned to her embroidery which she labels as soft drawings, the page is titled as *sd_arisaodawara*.¹⁴² In an email exchange Odawara shared that,

...only a few drawings are open to the public. When I finish drawing, I sensuously judge whether I think it's okay to put it on Instagram. As for the booklet, the number of publications is limited, so there is a consciousness that people who are interested in the work should see it rather than open it to anyone. After all, I am an artist.¹⁴³

This emphasizes the intimate practice of journal keeping for Odawara additionally, it not only reveals a part of her mental process for publication of the booklet and through instagram, but solidifies her core platform for displaying works. Across the three pages she posts nearly everyday, allowing me to not only observe her habits and curation, but the way in which she harnesses this platform as an artist in the 21st century. Odawara in ways did not use this media outlet as a "personal page," but transformed it into her defining occupational façade.

Additionally, the practice of not just having an instagram page but, aestheticizing, curating, and nurturing it can align to the act of creating the published journal. It has a date which encapsulates whatever content you desire to project into the world at that moment. The true published journal author for Lejeune is one who "...would be publishing (on paper) a personal periodical whose sole subject is the author's interests or experiences." In Odawara's physical publications as well as her instagram; the content she shares firstly, is "sensuously judged," using her moral compass and at her demand and secondly, it is limited "...only a few drawings are open to the public."

Thirdly, as we will see in *My Diary*,¹⁴⁴ Odawara's paintings aren't warped to satisfy anyone else, they are true products of the practice of the diary yet, they innately cause interest within and provide immense pleasure to the viewer.

¹⁴¹ Arisa, Odawara. *Pottery_arisaodawara* (instagram, 2020).

¹⁴² Arisa, Odawara. *Sd_arisaodawara* (instagram, 2018).

¹⁴³ Email with Author, 2022.

¹⁴⁴ Arisa Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

Although we are analyzing 2D works found in *My Diary*¹⁴⁵ through analysis we will innately travel to the realm of ceramics and the textile domain of embroidery. In continuation, I will also relate pieces within the diary to her other published books such as Odawara's 2015 compilation, *my fictitious diary 5*¹⁴⁶ and her 2019 publication *My Drawings*.¹⁴⁷ Odawara's *my fictitious diary 5*¹⁴⁸ is one booklet from a serial compilation entitled *My Fictitious Diary*.¹⁴⁹ Odawara started to mentally manifest this project in 2008 and it serves as a prelude for *My Diary*.¹⁵⁰ The recurring journals hold drawings done roughly across one month. The 5th issue holds watercolors made from March 30th to April 21st 2015. Odawara's *My Drawings*¹⁵¹ is a paper book binded by classic staples, there were 100 copies published by Nieves. They hold black and white drawings done from 2009 to 2019 and there is no blurb. Odawara shared with me that she documents "... events such as one day event, fragments of my behavior, the scenery I saw for a moment, and my delusion on 18.2×25.7cm paper with watercolors like keeping a diary every day."¹⁵² In my second email to Odawara I wrote about how she labeled these published visual books "diaries" and that content plus her habitual practices align with those of journal keeping. So I asked, how do you feel about publishing your internal workings? Can you tell me about that process? Odawara wrote:

Making something is created in the process of living every day, so I wanted to capture what I thought about something in my life and the images I saw at that time in one drawing. It was only that day, so I dated it and called it a diary.

¹⁴⁵ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

¹⁴⁶ Odawara, *My Fictitious Diary*, (2015).

¹⁴⁷ Arisa Odawara, *My Drawings* (Zürich: Nieves, 2019).

¹⁴⁸ Odawara, *my fictitious diary 5*, (2015).

¹⁴⁹ Odawara, *My Fictitious Diary*, (2015).

¹⁵⁰ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

¹⁵¹ Odawara, *My Drawings*, (2019).

¹⁵² Email with Author, 2022.

My father died when I was 6 years old and I have various memories of spending time with him, but it was only in my brain. It may have been the beginning of this book that I traced that memory as a drawing.¹⁵³

Here, Odawara explained why she entitled her book a diary furthermore, she shares an intimate fact about herself which not only bleeds into the diary's content, but may have generated the project.

Lejeune's research is defined by the writing aspect of it, because he is a literary scholar and Odawara's work pertains to the visual realm. Yet, they can be seen alongside one another because Odawara not only declared her journal as a diary through titling it as such, but through her practice in which *My Diary*¹⁵⁴ was born from is correct in terms of Lejeune's established methodology. Rak in her piece¹⁵⁵ reiterates Lejeune's discoveries. She wrote, "...Lejeune says that 'a diary is not only a text: it is a behavior, a way of life, of which the text is merely a trace or by-product.'¹⁵⁶ This directly articulates Odawara's practice and is in agreement with Lejeune's idea of how the diary is an act. When observing the evolution of the diary Lejeune established the journal possesses a continuous and discontinuous nature. He wrote,

...what happens when my notebook is filled up and falls back into discontinuity, while my life and my writing continue? How do you mourn a notebook that, once it is finished ceases to be the image of a whole and becomes...once again discontinuous."¹⁵⁷

Of course Lejeune was passionate and obsessive over every aspect of the diary. However, Odawara is proof that one can produce a series of "discontinuous" works in order to remake the whole through her compilation *My Fictitious Diary*.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Email with Author, 2022.

¹⁵⁴ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

¹⁵⁵ Rak, *On Diary*, (2009).

¹⁵⁶ Rak, "Dialogue with the Future," 22.

¹⁵⁷ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 176.

¹⁵⁸ Odawara, *My Fictitious Diary*, (2015).

Again, Lejeune is dealing with the literary realm and Odawara is consumed by the visual world. A diary inherently holds connotations of privacy and for Lejeune it is unjust to the practice to write a diary with the intention of being published. However, in Odawara's explanation of her diary it not only reveals her fragmented process, but that her intention of creation wasn't directly for publication. Furthermore, it allows us to appreciate how Odawara as an artist harnessed her natural daily practice to produce and publish a visual diary. In the Chapter *The Continuous and The Discontinuous*¹⁵⁹ Lejeune is grappling with the private journal and declares there are two kinds of diarists, one who writes in a book (the continuous), and the other who documents loosely, across different papers (the discontinuous). He wrote, "...this notebook—sewn, glued, stapled or bound with spiral wires...operates at the level of the fantasy that Paul Ricoeur calls 'narrative identity': it promises some minimal measure of unity."¹⁶⁰ Through Odawara piecing together her individual works done on paper and composing a book she provides a form of narrative identity. However, as discussed previously Lejeune established that the continuous diary possesses discontinuous qualities simply through entries, fragmented writing, and the ending of the book; which applies to Odawara. Lejeune continues, "... each entry is a microorganism caught up in a discontinuous whole...one follows another according to the order of the calendar and the clock, a continuum by which their discontinuities and irregularities can be gauged."¹⁶¹ Through Odawara dating her individual pieces, and then designating them to one book, she allows one to "gauge" her discontinuity.

*My Diary*¹⁶² by Arisa Odawara was published in 2021 through Slow Editions,¹⁶³ an independent publication company created in 2014 by artist Eunice Luk. The book was

¹⁵⁹ Lejeune, *On Diary*, (2009).

¹⁶⁰ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 170.

¹⁶¹ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 178.

¹⁶² Email with Author, 2022.

¹⁶³ Luk, "Slow Editions," (2021).

handbound by Eunice Luk and Lisa Yatar MacDonald and Masahiro Takahashi translated the sole poem presented. It is currently in an online group show hosted by the collection croisée gallery¹⁶⁴ which is a "member" of the Bordeaux Art Contemporain.¹⁶⁵ As we did with Kahlo, I will highlight and identify the main themes found in Odawara's visual journal. In *My Diary*¹⁶⁶ Odawara paints and draws seemingly-ordinary scenes from her daily life, intrinsically documenting her external world, her community, as well as her internal world, her "delusions."¹⁶⁷ She depicts momentary shots of people fishing and camping, working out, at appointments, in the grocery store, gardening and working with the earth, and many more beautiful, supposedly mundane situations. Yet, dispersed throughout the book Odawara slips in paintings of spiritual or mystical experiences. Through juxtaposing paintings of everyday life with magical or extraterrestrial encounters she is normalizing the supernatural; which exhibits how Odawara lives in the plane which exists between the "real world" and the paranormal realm. In the published diary, two or more subjects are almost always present; which is the most dominant theme found in her works. However, on the rare occasion that one individual is depicted they are occupied by their task at hand, and are ultimately interacting with their environment. This reveals how Odawara is interested in interactions between people and their setting. I will analyze Odawara's pieces where people engage with others or their surroundings.

The book takes the form of a rectangle and its cover art, two paintings, function almost as one piece. The cover is a scene set in a blank, infinite world where a man and woman cut and pick green fruit from a ripe tree. The woman is placed on a fruitful ground which grows flowers and plants, but the man is not. The woman is dressed in red hued patterned clothing and holds a

¹⁶⁴ "Collection Croisée." 2019-2022. Collection Croisée. <https://www.collectioncroisee.com/en/>.

¹⁶⁵ "Home - Bordeaux Art Contemporain - Contemporary Art in Bordeaux" n.d.

¹⁶⁶ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

¹⁶⁷ Email with Author, 2022.

teal pair of scissors. The man is eating the green vegetation, presumably from their newly picked harvest, and wears a hollow ensemble; his clothing is constructed by a fine blue paintbrush and is filled in by the white page. They reflect each other's physicality; both of them are grasping for the branch while their other arm's are raised and reside near their faces. The back cover is again set in a white landscape where a man and woman interact with one another and their environment. The greenery is dispersed across the foreground, the two are occupied by the same sprouting tree and its spawn. The man is dressed in a flannel-like shirt and wears pants which again, are filled by the blank space. He has just picked an abundant amount of the fruit, which is in the process of falling off the branch and onto him. The woman is dressed in a textured blue shirt and an orange skirt, her legs are empty, absorbing the whiteness of the paper. She holds their fresh crop, and laughs at the man who's soon to be showered in the fruit. The cover art serves as a prelude for the content presented internally; Odawara avails the empty space a blank page provides, and documents refined scenes of ordinary life. The cover art is reproduced in the book on pages 30 and 31; the content is nearly identical and they also function as a set.

The diary begins with an untitled poem. It reads:

*Drove my car as usual
I went to a city far away
I noticed that I forgot my surgical mask
They sold out everywhere in April
Cut my notepad
Stick the duct tape on it
Cover my mouth
I went to buy some bread
The world has become like this*

*When I was walking as usual
Everyone who passed by me stared at me
I checked if I spilled DOUTOR's lettuce hot dog mustard on my T-shirt
Finally, I realized I was not wearing a surgical mask
S if walking naked in the city
The delusion crossed my mind for a moment
My body was horrified for a moment*

*The roadside trees are dyed red day by day
Put on some more layer of clothes
Hats, gloves, high socks
More things to hide the skin
If you also put on a surgical mask
Which part of you can I see?
It's a world like this now¹⁶⁸*

In the poem Odawara grounds the reader in some of her "usual" activities; driving and walking. She then describes how her daily life is disrupted by the pandemic. As mentioned earlier, this book was published in 2021, during the middle of the still relevant pandemic. Life in some ways seems to be returning back to a new normal; but it has been a surreal, life altering, extensive experience. Odawara in her drawings displays scenes of life during the pandemic, people wearing masks, highlighting how this foreign fashion became an everyday custom. This strange and otherworldly effect that the pandemic caused is emphasized in Odawara's scenes of the supernatural in *My Diary*.¹⁶⁹

On page 10 of the visual diary Odawara did a playful painting of a couple riding a moped through the countryside. The man is focused and driving, while the woman holds onto him and rests her head; her hair is blowing in the wind. Their faces and limbs, that aren't covered in clothing, are done in pencil remaining in their original state. The clothes are done in much more detail than the couple's physiognomy. The woman is color coordinated, dressed in a coral which merges into a red and a light fuschia pink. She wears rust colored simple shoes. The man wears a blue collared shirt, pants, and what appear to be Adidas sneakers. Their setting is loosely constructed of green and brown textured strokes, yet is identifiable as a mountainous terrain. Their blue moped has some form of dimension and floats above the white foreground. The vehicle carries a detailed basket constructed of blues, browns, greens, and oranges pulled from

¹⁶⁸ Odawara, *My Diary*, 1.

¹⁶⁹ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

the foreground, the subject's attire, and the moped. Odawara adds detail inconsistently in this piece and arguably every piece in *My Diary*¹⁷⁰ which is revelatory on what the artist finds important in that moment. This directly corresponds with the practice of the diary intime; the diarist only documents what is forefront in their mind. Lejeune wrote, "...the diary is a piece of lacework or a spider web. It is apparently made up of more empty space than filled space... The discontinuous made explicit refers to an implicit continuum to which I [the diarist] alone hold the key."¹⁷¹ The meaning of the implicit continuum is unattainable however Odawara's depiction on page 10 is an explicit referral or return to this "memory." In *My Drawings*¹⁷² on page 21 Odawara painted a less detailed depiction of the same scene; a man and woman ride a levitating moped through the countryside. The couple are in the same position, detail is added to the same content, but there is no basket and the painting is stripped of its color.

The previous painting found in the *My Diary*¹⁷³ on page 10 exhibits clear interaction between two people however the theme of interaction is also displayed less concretely as seen on page 36. This painting is a depiction of the impossible; in which a man carries a larger than life rock. He walks on high grass in a white world. His body is unproportional allowing him to accomplish this absurd act; his elongated arm wraps around the rock and his right leg is removed from his body sprouting out from beneath the rock. His face is no more than a sketch, he wears a flannel patterned shirt and detailed blue and black Nike sneakers. This man is interacting with the rock and by extent his environment. In *my fictitious diary 5*¹⁷⁴ on page 25, Odawara paints the same unimaginable act of a human carrying a colossal rock. Except in this depiction there are two subjects, a man and a woman; and the woman carries the rock. The faces again, are mere

¹⁷⁰ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

¹⁷¹ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 181.

¹⁷² Odawara, *My Drawings*, (2019).

¹⁷³ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

¹⁷⁴ Odawara, *My Fictitious Diary*, (2015).

silhouettes and detail is greatly attributed to their apparel. The woman is dressed in a colorful, collared shirt with an indecipherable pattern and a simple pink skirt which stretches around the bottom of the rock. She has on hightop coral and blue sneakers and hovers above the man who is propped up watching her. His head rests in the comfortable crevice of his joint hands and he lays in a fruitful bed of grass which blossoms orange and blue circular flowers. One at first may think the rock is a metaphor for burden, however rocks are a repeated and beloved motif in Odawara's painted, ceramic, and textile works. On Odawara's pottery instagram¹⁷⁵ she makes many freestanding sculptures as well as cups and pots out of what appears to be stoneware clay. She will post photos of pieces in different stages of completion; some unfired, some painted, but not yet glazed, and of course many when they are finished. Some of her pottery is surprising as it includes a signifier of contemporary times; they are embellished with altered, whimsical capitalist company logos. For example a clay cup with a McDonald's or Amazon logo. She also includes this content in her freestanding works; making a Hello Kitty or an Emoji piece. In her ceramic creations the inclusion of her adorned rocks are usually implemented on her planter pots. Odawara will texturalize her works by adding freehand circles to her pots, alluding to the natural shapes of rocks. On September 4th, 2020 Odawara posted an unfired, free-hand pot/cup; it is hard to decipher its size. She captioned it "Delaware will keep the skin."¹⁷⁶ The pot's surface is textured exposing the artist's hand; one can see Odawara's handprints and mode of construction. At the base of the pot sits a cluster of rocks which stack upon one another; furthering the exterior's character.

Rocks are also used in Odawara's embroidered works. On her embroidery page¹⁷⁷ Odawara will post freestanding creations as well as works sewn onto a clothing item. On

¹⁷⁵ Odawara, Arisa. *Pottery_arisaodawara* (instagram, 2020).

¹⁷⁶ Odawara, *Delaware will keep the skin* (instagram, 2020).

¹⁷⁷ Odawara, Arisa. *Sd_arisaodawara* (instagram, 2018).

December 2nd of 2019 Odawara posted an image of a salt and pepper shirt embroidered with a man sitting on a rock, she captioned it "He is lost in deep thought on the rock."¹⁷⁸ The embroidered piece, as a whole, has a tan film over it. The man is in a profile position, he sits upright in a stiff posture gazing into, the bareness the shirt provides, the achromatic abyss. He has bare feet and his hands rest upon his knees. The subject naturally wears a vibrant shirt with a free motion pattern on it. Odawara attentively added toenails, fingers, hair, and a striking black eye. The rock in which he rests upon is a dark bisque colored, simple oval shape. Through Odawara's entitlement of both the pottery and embroidered shirt we can speculate on what the rock means for Odawara. The direct title, "He is lost in deep thought on the rock"¹⁷⁹ and the poetic phrase "Delaware will keep the skin"¹⁸⁰ leads me to believe that rocks are a place for contemplation, reflection, and solitude. Yet that hypothesis transforms when subjects are depicted effortlessly completing a herculean task; carrying these gigantic rocks [fig. 16 and 17]. What does the rock truly symbolize for Odawara?

Connecting Odawara's paintings from *My Diary*¹⁸¹ to her other displayed works veered us off the supernatural path. On page 13 of the *diary* Odawara depicted another scene of an individual situated in the mystical realm. This momentary capture shows a man running with a large net in the midst of catching a feminine spirit. He runs on sparse yellow and green grass in a taintless world. The man's figure is again an outline but complying to Odawara's typical manner she magnified his clothing yet not to the extent she usually does. He wears a blue T-shirt, yellow shorts, green sneakers and his body is vivified by the void of the blank page. He firmly grasps onto the brown post of the blue net. He has captured the fleeting being's feet, yet they do not

¹⁷⁸ Odawara, *He is lost in deep thought on the rock*, (instagram, 2019).

¹⁷⁹ Odawara, *He is lost in deep thought on the rock*, (instagram, 2019).

¹⁸⁰ Odawara, *Delaware will keep the skin*, (instagram, 2020).

¹⁸¹ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

appear in the net. The ghostly creature is stretched horizontally, her braids are pulled from her head outwards; guiding her travel. She is wrapped in a cocoon-like garment, her eyes and bangs are delicately drawn in pencil. This directly shows the theme of interaction; engaging with one's environment and beings from another plane.

On page 9 of *My Drawings*¹⁸² Odawara painted a rendition of this piece, however it doesn't function as a scene of the impossible. The painting, like all paintings featured in *My Drawings*¹⁸³ it is decolorized; living in the black and white domain. A man rests upon a rock drinking from a bottle, he is self-composed and undisturbed by the commotion behind him. Two women in heels occupy themselves; one interacts with the rock while the other acts upon the calm man. The middle figure is a woman with a braid who is crouched down, attempting to move the rock the man sits on. The woman to the right wears a spunky ensemble; although the color is muted it is textured. She holds the net with determination and intently begins to capture the man. The man, clearly clueless, is wanted gone by the two women; one is trying to move the rock out from under him while the other aims to catch him. Or else he is a victim of his friend's harmless play.

Unlike the painting of the man catching an ephemeral spirit found in *My Diary*¹⁸⁴ here Odawara grounds us in the human realm. *My Drawings*¹⁸⁵ was published two years prior to our main source. Considering the artist's description of her craft we may wonder if the painting of the impossible found in the *diary* is a revisitation to the documented memory displayed on 9 of Odawara's 2019 publication. Does the documentation waver between memory and delusion?

¹⁸² Odawara, *My Drawings*, (2019).

¹⁸³ Odawara, *My Drawings*, (2019).

¹⁸⁴ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

¹⁸⁵ Odawara, *My Drawings*, (2019).

Arisa Odawara is a renaissance woman; she creates in multiple mediums yet her style is persistent and unique. In this chapter we have revealed some solidified facts about the creator. Overall, when women and men are coupled they are predominately dressed in classical gendered colors. We have grounded and established Odawara's *diary* as a true journal despite being dominated by painting; and as one does in their diary she only visually articulates what is most emphatic to her in that very moment. In continuation, Odawara doesn't paint the "whole" picture. Odawara permeates specificity in the subject's clothing rather than their physicality; an emphasized marker on what Odawara is absorbed by. Furthermore, we have discussed the repetition of subject matter; Odawara utilizes the "rock" and textured garments in her 2D works as well as in her pottery and embroidery. I believe these beloved patterns displayed in her paintings naturally tie to her physical practice of sculpting and embellishing. Yet, burning questions still remain on her implicit continuum's, such as; what does the rock symbolize for Odawara?

Conclusion

In this paper we have looked at two contrasting forms of the diary; Kahlo's journal intime and Odawara's published journal and then applied Lejeune's methodology to both passionate creators. The two diaries were chosen with the intent to exhibit and highlight the different guises the diary can take. Kahlo is a famed artist and Odawara, unfortunately is not. Kahlo's diary is classified as a journal intime where as Odawara's was published by choice. Through establishing a theory on the diary postulated by Lejeune and then applying it to two distinctive compositions we have expanded the affirmed academic knowledge on this field.

In terms of Lejeune, Kahlo for the majority abided by Lejeune's. Although she did not religiously date every entry that does not belittle her diary as a personal outlet. Kahlo's diary is an example of the diary intime; a diary written for oneself with no aspiration for publication. In continuation, its classification is furthered by Kahlo writing it in the last ten years of her life. Lejeune wrote, "... a fairly large number of persons keep a diary during moments of crisis or significant periods of adulthood... a journal can be begun at any moment in one's life; in the later years of life, bereavement or retirement often trigger the practice of diary writing."¹⁸⁶ For Kahlo as the journal progresses the theme of health and reflection becomes more prominent.

In terms of Lejeune, Odawara immediately proposes a red flag through her publishing her diary's, however we have established that does not negate her intimate, reflective practice. Solidified earlier; Odawara's act, before compiling, is in agreement with Lejeune's rules. Despite the lack of scholarly information on her; we established some of Odawara's patterns.

Regardless of the extent in which the authors complied to Lejeune's rules; I classify both Odawara's *My Diary*¹⁸⁷ and Kahlo's *The Diary*¹⁸⁸ as diary's in the highest regard. In this paper we

¹⁸⁶ Lejeune, *On Diary*, 35.

¹⁸⁷ Odawara, *My Diary*, (2021).

¹⁸⁸ Kahlo, "The Diary of Frida Kahlo" (2005).

have utilized Lejeune's methodology, breaking down how the diary innately functions despite the author; how regardless of the length of the journal (continuous or discontinuous) it is undoubtedly repetitive. This is evident in the works of both Kahlo and Odawara. Both creators display the reiterative aspect of the diary through renditions of works, and their frequent usage of beloved motifs.



Fig. 1. Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1944. DIARIO DE FRIDA KAHLO: *Untitled* [plate 4] (Technique): Collage (visual works).

¹⁸⁹ Images for Kahlo's work that do not include a source notation are from Sarah M. Lowe, "Translation of the Diary with Commentaries," in *The Diary of Frida Kahlo: An Intimate Self-Portrait* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 2005). Images for Odawara's work that do not include a source notation are from *My Diary* (2021).



Fig. 2. Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1938. What the Water Gave Me. (Technique): oil painting (visual works).
[[https://library.artstor.org/asset/AIC_810032.](https://library.artstor.org/asset/AIC_810032)]



Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1944-1954. DIARIO DE FRIDA KAHLO: *Huella de piés y huella de sol/ Footprints and sunprints* [Plate 66]. (Technique): drawing (visual works).



Fig. 4. Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1939. *Las Dos Fridas/The Two Fridas*. (Technique): oil on canvas (visual works).
[https://library.artstor.org/asset/ASCHALKWIJKIG_10313992050].



Fig. 5. Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1944-1947. DIARIO DE FRIDA KAHLO: *Untitled* (Plate 52). (Technique): marker and pencil on paper (visual works).



Fig. 6. Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1944-1954. DIARIO DE FRIDA KAHLO: *DON'T COME CRYING TO ME!* (Plate 100). (Technique): marker and pencil on paper (visual works).




Fig. 7. Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1944-1954. DIARIO DE FRIDA KAHLO: *YES, I COME CRYING TO YOU* (Plate 101). (Technique): marker and pencil on paper (visual works).



Fig. 8. Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1944-1954. DIARIO DE FRIDA KAHLO: *Untitled* (Plate 49). (Technique): marker, pen and pencil on paper (visual works).

ORIGEN DE LAS DOS FRIDAS.

- Recuerdos -

Debo haber tenido seis años.
Cuando viví intensamente
la amistad imaginaria
con una niña... de mi misma edad
más o menos.
En la vidriera del ^{apartamento}
entonces era mi cuarto,
y que daba a la calle
de Alameda, sobre uno de
los primeros cristales de la ventana.
Yo echaba baho.
Yo con el dedo dibujaba
una "puerta" .
Por esa "puerta" salía en mi
imaginación, con una gran
alegría y urgencia, a través
de todo el llanto que hasta
miraba hasta llegar


a una lechería que
se llamaba PINZÓN... Por
la  de PINZÓN entra-
ba, y bajaba ^{intencionalmente} al interior
de la tierra, donde
"mi amiga imaginaria" me
esperaba siempre. No re-
uerdo su imagen ni su
color. Pero sí sé que era
alegre, se reía mucho.
Sin saridos. Era ágil,
y bailaba como si no
tuviera peso ninguno. Yo
la seguía en todos sus
movimientos y le contaba,
mientras ella bailaba,
mis problemas secretos. ¿ua-
les? No recuerdo. Pero ella

Fig. 9. Painter: Frida Kahlo (Mexican, 1907-1954). Creation date: 1950. ORIGEN DE LAS DOS FRIDAS. (Technique): marker on paper (visual works).

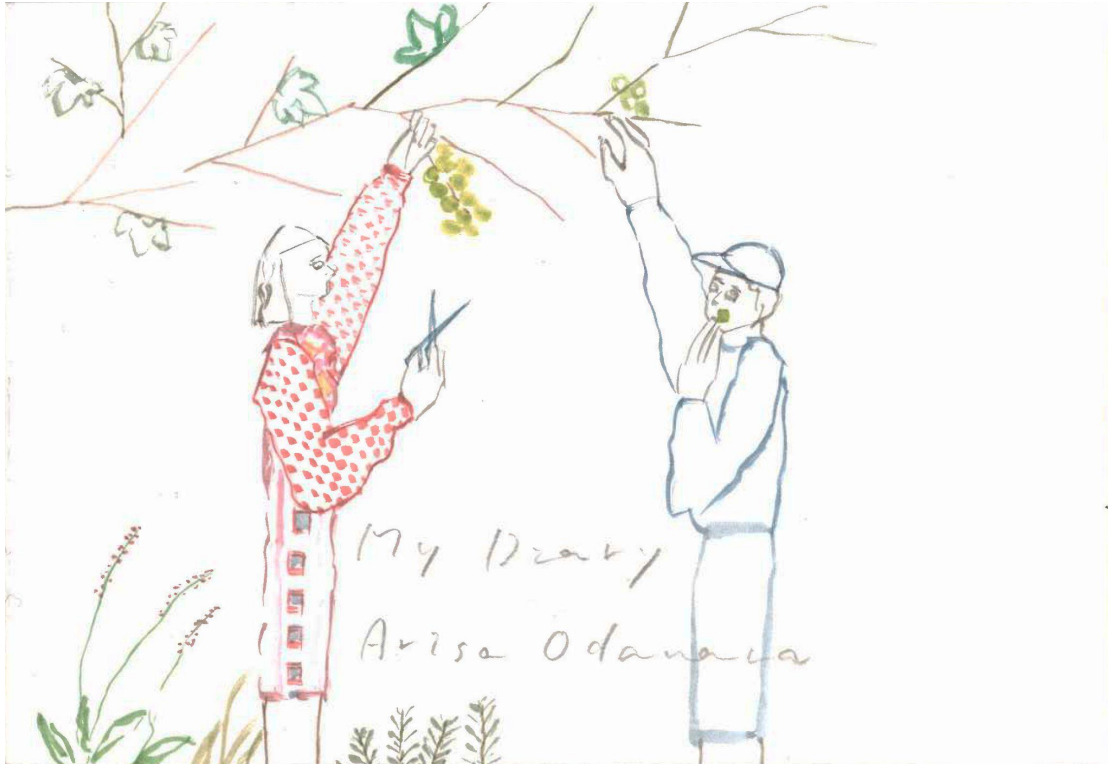


Fig. 10. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2021. *My Diary* (cover). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).



Fig. 11. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2021. *My Diary* (back cover). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).



Fig. 12. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2021. *My Diary* (page 30). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).



Fig. 13. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2021. *My Diary* (page 32). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).



Fig. 14. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2021. *My Diary* (page 10). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).



Fig. 15. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2009-2019. *My Drawings* (page 21). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).

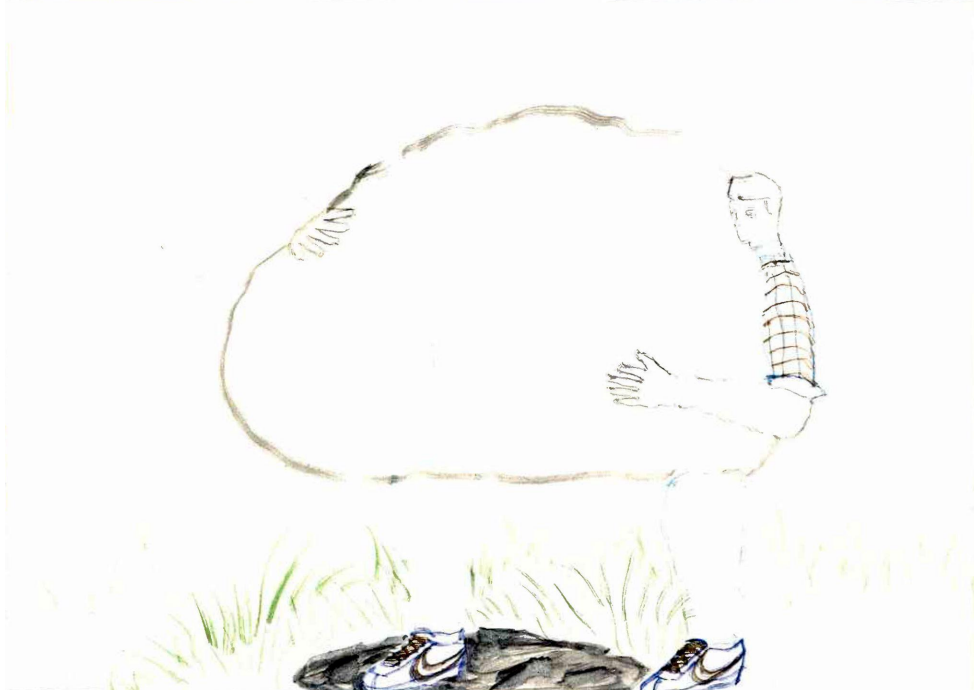


Fig. 16. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2021. *My Diary* (page 36). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).

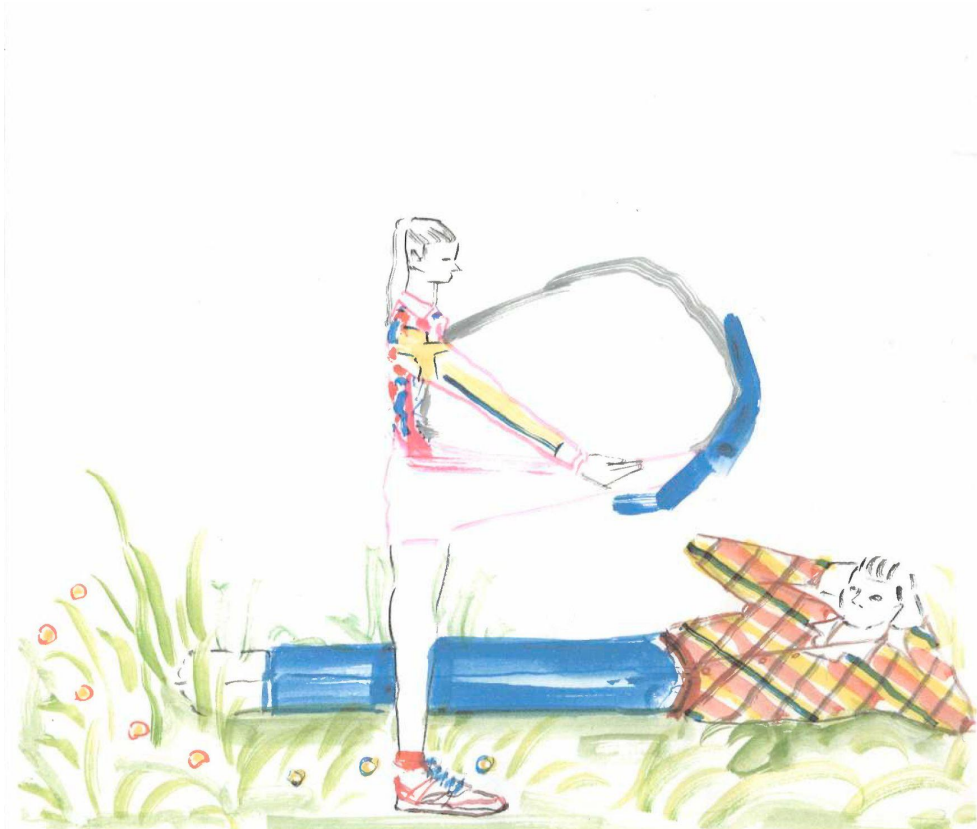


Fig. 17. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2015. *My Fictitious Diary 5* (page 25). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).



Fig. 18. Artist: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: September, 2020. *Delaware will keep the skin.* (Technique): pottery (visual works), [instagram: pottery_arisaodawara].



Fig. 19. Artist: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: December, 2019. *He is lost in deep thought on the rock.* (Technique): pottery (visual works),



Fig. 20. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2021. *My Diary* (page 13). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).



Fig. 17. Painter: Arisa Odawara (Japanese, 1979). Creation date: 2009-2019. *My Drawings* (page 9). (Technique): watercolor on paper (visual works).

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