My work seeks to celebrate common institutional and domestic architecture by focusing on the details. I am particularly interested in the domestic interior decorating strategies of suburbia. I incorporate the use of items including contact paper, lace, and linens to transform ordinary surfaces. I explore both two and three-dimensional space with these decorative and everyday materials alongside reproductions created through collage and photography. Some works employ video documentation of the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction associated with each work to reveal its possibilities and my decision-making. The written portion of my thesis work will describe my work and process in detail. I will also examine the notion of authenticity and the influence of my own memories and the work of artists such as Richard Tuttle and Sarah Sze.
FROM THE BACKYARD TO BERLIN:
A STUDY OF THE OVERLOOKED EVERYDAY

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................................. 1

Works ................................................................................................................................. 1
The Original and the Copy ............................................................................................... 6
Memory & Nostalgia ....................................................................................................... 9
Drawing into Sculpture ................................................................................................. 13
The Everyday ................................................................................................................ 15
The Studio ..................................................................................................................... 17
Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 19

BIBLIOGRAPHY ............................................................................................................... 21

CATALOGUE OF IMAGES ............................................................................................... 22
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

My work seeks to celebrate common institutional and domestic architecture by focusing on and utilizing often overlooked details. I am particularly interested in the domestic interior decorating strategies of suburban homeowners and I incorporate items including contact paper, lace, and linens to transform ordinary surfaces. I represent these everyday objects through both craft and fine art materials to create relatable simulacra. I photograph and manipulate these representations and the larger installations they create to construct new works that explore both two and three-dimensional space. The playful process of each work mimics the viewing process as viewers make sense of the artificial and the real, the two and three-dimensional worlds. I am also interested in ways the usual private studio process and progress can be shared publicly and engage the viewer. Along with photographic evidence, some works employ video documentation of the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction associated with each work to reveal my decision-making as I explore different possibilities. These stop-motion videos are projected to interact with physical sculptural pieces on the wall. This furthers the confusion between what is real and imagined.

Works

In the summer of 2012 I spent a few weeks in Berlin, Kassel and Prague. In Berlin, I toured the oldest film studio in the world, Babelsberg, and was particularly struck by walking the street set of the German television soap opera, Gute Zeiten, Schlechte
Zeiten (Good Times, Bad Times). By this time in my visit, I had become more familiar with the city’s landscape and it felt both strange and comforting to be in a starkly artificial representation of it.

My installation, Navigating Berlin (2012) at the University of North Carolina’s Gatewood Gallery, was a reaction to this experience. Navigating Berlin directly referenced architectural elements seen in Berlin, explored two and three dimensional space as well as artificial representations of actual, recognizable things. My use of bright pink PVC pipes mimicked the much larger and complicated pipe configurations I noticed during my travels. When I first encountered them near a museum I thought these boldly colored pipes were sculptural works. After some research I discovered they were functional. Berlin has high ground water and in order to pour foundations for new construction, this water needs to be drained to the nearest river or canal. The strange twists and turns of the pipes are not odd formal choices of an artist either. This keeps the pipes from freezing in cold winters. In addition to their striking visual appearance and striking formal qualities, I found the pipes to be a strong symbol of reconstruction after years of war and destruction.

Along with pink pipes, Navigating Berlin included orange construction tape, cones, rocks, tape, sticks, plastic wrapping, and bungee cords. A broom, propped against the wall, served as the installation boundary. Unused, excess elements like rocks and tape were piled underneath the broom’s bristles as evidence of process. These elements were chosen to represent architectural and reconstruction symbols, like the pipes, and to also explore the use of two and three-dimensional space. The existing walls of the gallery and two smaller constructed walls were painted in warped geometric planes. The floor was sectioned off as well into geometric shapes of wood grain contact
paper, carpet, rocks, and tape. String further fractured the space between the wall and floor by crisscrossing and weaving through the space like the pipes. The use of space and planes in this way alludes to deconstructivist architecture. “The intentional violation of the cube (The Museum of Modern Art, 1)” in architecture was celebrated in 1988 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York with the exhibition Deconstructivist Architecture. The work of seven architects including Frank Gehry, were chosen to show architecture’s recognition of “the imperfectability of the modern world” and the “pleasures of unease (1).” Perfection and harmony were no longer the goal and this was proven with the use of diagonals, arcs and warped planes. Similarly, this imperfection of construction was on display in Germany and a key reason behind the addition of these geometric planes to my own work. The pipes were the boldest symbol, but the re-routing caused by construction zones marked with cones and rubble also fractured our frequent walks around the city.

The deinstallation of Navigating Berlin became as integral to my practice as the construction. I photographed the deinstallation of the work. Just as the broom sweepings were important to show evidence of the installation process, these photographs documented the work’s disassembly. Temporary and bound for the trash, crumbled contact paper, tangled string, and balls of painter’s tape were made permanent with the camera. Like the conscious choice of painting Berlin’s pipes pink instead of a more neutral grey or brown, I choose not to hide this part of the process. I printed these photos to use them alongside some of the actual three-dimensional materials to collaged directly to the wall of my studio.

While Navigating Berlin responded to a specific place outside of the gallery, 127 McIver Street: a place for everything and everything in its place (2013), responded to the
actual installation site-- celebrating and calling attention to the everyday objects and details of the creative writing center at UNCG, which is located in a former home. I began by photographing the domestic architectural and interior decorative elements. I photographed as well as patterns from the front room’s large rug, fireplace bricks, and hardwood floors. Architectural hardware and decorative objects like door hinges and plant baskets were reimagined with traditional and nontraditional art materials like tin foil, glitter, plastic and wood. Photographs and sculptural elements were assembled together on the wall, one thing visually leading to another, cascading from the top right of the mantel up to the ceiling. This initiated a dialogue with the viewer and the space’s architecture and decorations.

The playful process that the McIver Street installation encourages visual connections between the artificial and the real, the two-dimensional and the three-dimensional world. Along with the larger collaged areas, subtle elements were scattered throughout the room size installation. Added artificial vents, pipes and baskets further confused realities, questioning viewer’s expectations of the domestic space. These quieter moments furthered the dialogue with the viewer asking them to carefully examine a space they might otherwise overlook.

Like the deconstruction process of Navigating Berlin, I wanted the deinstallation of 127 McIver Street to be as playful as the installation. The elements were assembled carefully-- one formal choice led to another, and possibilities were explored and pondered. The map-like paths created by this process were reminiscent of the overt complication in a Rube Goldberg machine. I strove to an underlying logic to the work’s formal construction clear. The static design this active process created begged to be given life. In order to shed light onto this logic, the deinstall process was photographed
as elements were rearranged and manipulated into new configurations, with all eventually disappearing. This series of photographs were used in succession to create a stop-motion animation.

As I moved from 127 McIver Street back to my studio, I continued documenting the construction of “wall works,” using photographed elements from both the newly explored domestic space and my own personal landmarks like my childhood home. These stop-motion animations contain both still images--as collage materials appear, disappear, and reappear; and live action--accidental segments of fabric quivering, photographs falling and contact paper curling as time passed.

Animation makes ephemeral works permanent. By projecting these flat videos onto three dimensional wall collages, a confusion of realities occurs. The light illuminates iridescent papers and tubing. The projected image is fragmented by wood and foam protruding from the wall and textured by wrinkled fabric. This process of reimagining and reworking mimics the rebuilding of the architecture of Berlin. The strange groundwater pipes could not be ignored and their bright colors seemed to celebrate this reconstruction. *Thrown off*, an installation of two stop-motion video projected over an installation, will be displayed as part of my thesis work at the Weatherspoon Art Museum. The intersecting videos interact with actual materials from the video like wire and netting. A 3-foot wall angled from the gallery wall further fractures the videos. These videos do not hide the decisions and accidents that led to what is shown. The polished finished construction is not the only step displayed and ensures that my work is never finished. Using what I learned from as well as photo documentation of the process during installation, I will react and respond to previous works to create future pieces and new ideas.
The Original and the Copy

In 1936, Walter Benjamin wrote the essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* and examined “the nineteenth-century dispute as to the artistic value of painting versus photography.” This centered on a supposed loss of aura that came with the ease and accessibility of mechanical reproduction. Authenticity is put into question, as the art object is no longer confined to being defined as one of a kind. Authenticity is examined in a variety of ways in the portable, traveling exhibition *In Deed: Certificates of Authenticity in Art*. The show and its curators, Susan Hapgood and Cornelia Lauf made a stop at The Weatherspoon Art Museum in early 2013. While Benjamin wrote of the possible elevation of painting over photography because it was an original and could not be copied, the exhibition visually explores the notion that it is up to the artist to authenticate a work. This is no better illustrated than by one work in the show: a simple typed letter signed by Robert Rauschenberg declares “THIS IS A PORTRAIT OF IRIS CLERT IF I SAY SO.”

This exhibition is unique in that none of the displayed letters and certificates could be considered originals. All are scanned digitally into high-resolution .pdf files that can be printed by the host institution for display. As a result the objects are much more accessible and has allowed the exhibition to travel internationally with unprecedented ease. The aura of these pieces, which are presented in the gallery as works of art unto themselves, is not diminished because the viewer knows these pieces are copies. Insofar as it matters, care has been taken and the proper technology has been used in order to make these copies as close to the original as possible. Rauschenberg’s words are no less powerful in the scan than they would be fresh from the typewriter. Although Benjamin would argue that its aura is lost through the copying process, he saw the
potential of these technologies in the 1930s and now technology is even more advanced. An aura can be alluded to and a moment or time’s passage can be captured in a copy. Roland Barthes spoke of photographic evidence of time in his book Camera Lucida. Photography not only represents its referent, it represents the referent’s existence. The photographed figure has been in the photographed setting because it is all captured on film.

Photographs prove the existence of the real. As Roland Barthes grieved his recently diseased mother, he began a search through family photographs for truth- one image that embodied his mother’s identity. For the author, truth was found in a childhood photo of his mother taken before Barthes was born. This snapshot allowed him to rediscover his mother. Copies can reveal the identity of the original. There was fluidity between the woman that Barthes knew well and the photographed girl. Barthes proclaimed “all I look like is other photographs of myself, and this to infinity (Barthes, 102).” A copy of a copy.

The Museum of Modern Art examined this through the lens of the photography of sculpture in their 2010 exhibition, The Original Copy. Since photography’s invention and through digital manipulation artists have worked with photography to reinvent an image. While artists depend on photography to document sculpture for their records and websites, the artists in this exhibition used such documentation to make wholly autonomous finished works.

I use digital photography as a means to achieve a believable trompe lœil. Elements are presented in this way to be familiar and recognizable, although perspective and combinations are unreal. New media’s immediacy also expands the possibilities for reconstructions and construction of works. What started as a way to document
installations and deinstallations for my own records is now displayed in order to make
the temporary permanent and to share my process with the viewer. A precarious
construction slowly falling from the wall on which it was placed or a top-heavy stack
bound to crumble to the floor is captured in real time. As I work, I am able to take
photographic documentation of a “wall collage’s” current state. I can quickly upload,
print, and add these photos to the construction, echoing the referent found elsewhere in
the work. These photos are often manipulated with strategic subtractions or pasted
additions in order to differentiate from the original.

As I move the referent further from the original by taking photographs of
sculptures, debris and other photos, I am also commenting on these technologies. The
constant recycling and abundance of imagery mimics how information is shared via the
Internet and how we experience the digital world. A Google search of a painting yields
thousands of similar results with a variety of croppings and color settings, but this search
engine makes works of art are more accessible. What was once inaccessible due to
geographical distance can be instantly consumed after a simple search as the Internet
can be used to experience the world. There is still something missing- the “aura” that
Benjamin wrote of- diminished by the distance between viewer and object. By placing
the original and photograph within the same work and erasing that distance, my work
enters this conversation.

The worlds and spaces I create in my works offer a similar filtered experience to
the Google search. The imagery I am using is rooted in the familiar, but is organized to
seem unreal. These illusions are enhanced by the technology used to recreate the
images. By showing the reproductions alongside the reference, any hierarchy is lost in
this confusion between the two- the two-dimensional and three-dimensional space, the
real and the artificial, the original and the copy. I present and repeat accessible and common patterns, materials and forms in sometimes overwhelming compositions. The viewer is bombarded with imagery and sorts through the referents to find what is real—whether it be an attachment to a personal memory or the original found within the work. While the confusion between the real and the referent may be short-lived by determining what is two-dimensional and three-dimensional, the imagery of the domestic may recall memories of the viewer’s own domestic experiences and possessions. My own experiences become universal and my own possessions become stand-ins for other’s heirlooms or domestic necessities.

**Memory & Nostalgia**

For the past few years my parents have been on the hunt for an oddly sized piece of antique stained glass for a window in their recently purchased townhouse. It seemed like an impossible task after many failed visits to several antique stores over the years, but my father finally stumbled upon the perfect solution. While surfing the Internet he found a quick and inexpensive fix, a 24 X 36 inch textured window film printed with a realistic magnolia stained glass pattern. The product was ordered and arrived at their doorstep. In ten minutes the film was cut and adhered to the window and the room was transformed. My childhood home had similar ornamentation. Boring shelves and bathroom countertops were livened up with contact papers mimicking marble and wood grain. Simple couches and tables were embellished with handmade quilts and heirloom linens.

This interior decorating aesthetic has influenced my work, especially with my decorative material choices. My two dimensional collages are assembled with both
handmade and machine made paper. Sculptural wall collages also represent a range of aesthetic tastes. Purchased lumber is juxtaposed with printed scans and cardboard recreations. Contact paper mimics both natural materials like wood and luxurious ones like marble. This interaction of the real and artificial, expensive and cheap flattens hierarchy, reminiscent of the way that the labor-intensive quilt elevated my family's inexpensive couch.

Collections of materials and architectural references become the “tool kit” from which I make my work. This kit is composed of small, individualized fragments, which I can combine and dismantle into assemblages, collages, and sculptures. The process of playful construction I’ve retained since childhood has been formalized in my studio practice in the act of assembling, disassembling and reassembling these fragments. My backyard fort structures, using simple household materials and discarded items from the neighborhood, became an elaborate dream house in my mind. I imagined my uncle’s construction sites were imagined to be castles to play tag in. The possibilities were open and this openness has continued to be a motivating factor in my work. My sculptural explorations utilize a similar resourcefulness with the choice of everyday items for materials. Like the fort, the architecture created in my works is elevated through inventiveness and care. I still see this potential for the extraordinary in ordinary spaces that surround me and encourage the viewer to see this in the everyday through my work. The imagined space has roots in the familiar so as to be instantly recognizable, but at the same time it is unreal and impossible.

Imagined spaces became a reality during childhood vacations. My grandfather lived in Florida and we met him at Disney World four times when I was a girl. We always met at Epcot’s geodesic dome and proceeded to the World Showcase. Here, we were
able to conveniently “globe hop” by simply following the path around the man-made lagoon. In an afternoon, my ten-year-old view of the world expanded. I saw the architecture, tasted the food and met the “citizens” of these “nine nations.” The showcase provided a utopian model of the world. These selective interpretations were comfortable and the environment was friendly. The architectural facades of plastic boulders and painted bricks were reminiscent of the decals that decorated surfaces back home. This experience also ensured that my time in Germany and Prague this summer, which was my first trip out of the country, would not feel like my first journey outside the states. These representations at Disney World and in movies and television shaped my understanding of the world.

Through artificial representation, my architectural and decorative surroundings are represented in a similar way the television sound stage presented the streets of Berlin and Disney World presented the world cultures at Epcot. In his essay Precession of Simulacra (1981), Jean Beudrillard suggests that Disneyland’s popularity comes from providing an imaginary world that has “miniaturized the pleasure of real America (Beudrillard, 460).” Reflecting and “miniaturizing” cultures blur the distinction between the real world and the imagined. Where Beudrillard was skeptical, I look at the spectacle of Disney Parks as a celebration of our surroundings. Although the experience is filtered for a very specific audience, it provides a specific visual enthusiasm that I hope to achieve with my work. My experience in the unreal world of the Disney Parks fed my need to make ordinary things extraordinary. I wish to showcase these simple pleasures that I remember so fondly and continue to marvel at.

The imaginary world of animated cartoons I watched in my childhood has also found its way into my artistic practice. I could always see the influence of animation in
my bright and enthusiastic color choices, but more recently there has been a more direct connection with the use of stop-motion animation in video. I find a similar tension within animated spaces and the space of my work. There is no better example of this spatial illusion and confusion than in Chuck Jones’ *Looney Tunes* and Wile E. Coyote’s pursuit of the Road Runner. Here the coyote paints the side of a rock so that it appears to be a cave entrance. When the roadrunner approaches, the two-dimensional mirage becomes the three-dimensional opening and he safely continues on his way. This confusion of space happens in the animated world and in my work.

As in the fictive world of Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner, my work employs actual physical objects alongside the references. As I combine these materials and they enter real space, the viewer is asked to look a bit closer. What appears to recede is flat. What seems to be a two by four is cardboard. What is perceived to be an actual shadow is painted. I originally became interested in this tension during a visit to Chicago’s Museum of Contemporary Art in 2006 to view the retrospective *The Art of Richard Tuttle*. I was able to participate in an installation of the artist’s wire pieces from the 1970s. The works consisted of three lines mimicking each other— one of wire, one drawn, and one shadow. Each of Tuttle’s pieces celebrates the importance of both sculpture and drawing by simultaneously existing in real and illusionary space. Differentiating between the graphite and cast shadow line invites a closer look. Tuttle references the shadow with the graphite, but differentiation is difficult at first glance.

To me, Tuttle’s wirework is a more sophisticated, but similar challenge to the space that I viewed in the Wile E. Coyote and Roadrunner cartoons. The simplified settings of the animated world look inviting and familiar by referencing the architecture and domestic spaces in which we exist. Photographic materials alongside actual and
mimicked materials allow my work to have varying degrees of realism. I have created my own rules for perspective by studying and skewing it based on the real world. This allows the viewer to relate forms or architecture to references in their own lives, much like how animation, through anthropomorphism and familiar settings, allows the viewer to feel sympathy for an absurd coyote.

**Drawing into Sculpture**

Richard Tuttle’s body of work, most notably his wire pieces, utilizes the language of both sculpture and drawing. I also see the importance of both within my own practice. My work with spatial illusion within a collaged two-dimensional space on paper has led to the investigation of actual space with more sculptural works directly on the wall. While the works on paper reference architectural, ephemeral, and craft materials, works on the wall explore three-dimensional space by utilizing these materials alongside two-dimensional representation such as photographs and drawings.

I consider these “wall works” to be an extension of the language of drawing and collage. The study of the Support/Surface group (1960-70s) and contemporary artists like Sarah Sze and Jessica Stockholder has expanded my definition of drawing and collage through their notions of what can be used to create a work.

In a 1998 article, “Supports/Surfaces”, Mick Finch examines practices that redefine painting in terms of sculpture and space. He links contemporary works like Stockholder’s spatial assemblages of items such as plastic tubs to proposed roots in the Support/Surface group’s exploration. The group’s members deconstructed painting materials in three-dimensional space. Some dealt with canvas untraditionally by staining, wrinkling and bleaching. Others were more concerned with the medium’s sculptural
elements such as the wooden stretcher. Member Bernard Pages deconstructed painting by carefully organizing piles of various materials and showed this as a finished work. The square space of a painting enters real space in Pages’ work *Le tas de gravier* (1969). A small square chain link fence serves as a boundary for a pile of pebbles and its shape mimics the two dimensional picture plane in three dimensions. However, the square is broken as the pebbles escape through the fence’s gaps.

Finch writes of the work of these artists and how, although originally unpopular, they have risen to prominence as their celebrated successors like Stockholder and Sze continue to stretch the boundaries of painting and drawing. While the Support/Surface group thoroughly dissected painting and its materials, contemporary artists seem to approach assembling a mixed material work on a wall, floor or corner of a three dimensional space much as they would a two dimensional canvas or sheet of paper. The construction of these works effect how they are viewed. When viewing installations such as Stockholder’s, one moves through the work much like one would a painting in space. Finch writes in response to Stockholder’s work at *Young Americans 2* at the Saatchi Gallery in London (1998):

> As one moves around and within one of her installations there is a sense that a series of frames are determining the encounter. Stuff becomes dematerialized due to undeniable compositional forces that lead the viewer through a range of ‘picturesque’ encounters. Each meeting marks a slow unfolding of the environment she has created, the full knowledge of which is obscured in any single position. Movement around a piece amounts to building up a picture of its totality through an experience of it (Finch, 1).

Stockholder’s “framed” moments slowly build together and guide the viewer throughout the room. This way of experiencing the work also reveals an underlying logic to the work even if it is not completely clear what that may be. I am approaching space in
a similar way, hoping the viewer will make connections between separate works or elements within a work, moving throughout my installations like one does with a board game or map. Whether the viewer physically moves through a space to areas I have highlighted as in *127 McIver Street* or moves through a wall collage only with their eyes, I hope the audience shares in my playful process.

The development of my work is deeply rooted in two dimensions. During my undergraduate studies, as my paintings began to incorporate printmaking and my drawing were joined by collage elements, I began to realize that I was limiting myself in defining my work. The works were architectural and the act of cutting, pasting and building with these materials was very sculptural. I began to question the use of the rectangle or paper as the support. Now, sculptures that once served as still lifes to be drawn from are making appearances either physically or photographically in my current compositions. By using these materials, I hope to still stress the importance of painting and drawing and their influence on the resulting works.

**The Everyday**

Synthetic cubists, like Pablo Picasso and George Braque, began addressing popular culture and everyday textures and patterns in their works through the use of collage. Braque began to collage patterns printed on oilcloth found at hardware stores in lieu of the pattern drawn in graphite. Picasso’s work *Still Life with Chair Caning* (1912) combined oil painting with actual chair caning. The entire oval canvas is edged in brown rope. The addition of cut and pasted cultural references like musical scores, newspaper, and advertisements began to replace or interact with painted versions. By collaging
these materials within “high” art paintings, the “lower” everyday items became just as important to the work.

The synthetic cubists’ embrace and use of what had long been considered “low-art” influences and elements in the “high arts” is similar to the architectural studies outlined in 1977’s *Learning from Las Vegas* by Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown and Steven Izenour. The work began in 1968, when the authors, other professors, and students at the Yale School of Art and Architecture began to survey the Las Vegas strip, highlighting its importance to the history of architecture. This academic analysis of neon signs and gaudy casinos made these once disregarded forms important in terms of architecture. I also study common architectural forms in my own work. My strategies are similar to what Venturi, Scott Brown, and Izenour deemed “decorated sheds” or architectural “ducks” in part II of their study, *Ugly and Ordinary Architecture or the Decorated Shed*. “Decorated sheds” was coined to describe cheap, ordinary buildings that were transformed or redefined by embellishments like flashing signs and bold patterns. The term “ducks” directly referenced an architectural anomaly; a giant concrete duck designed to capture the eye of passing motorists to stop and purchase duck eggs. These structures serve as both ornament and signpost of the building’s function. These terms “decorated shed” may also be applied to both the interior and exterior decorating techniques I was surrounded by growing up in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio. “Ducks” describe monuments I visited, such as, the world’s largest basket just a short road trip away from my hometown.

Growing up in Ohio, these absurd landmarks added excitement and humor to an otherwise flat and monotonous road trip through the fields and flatland of the mid-west. Andy Sturdevant noted similar experiences in his essay, “You’re Not Nowhere!”
Visualizing the Heartland Vernacular,” which accompanied the recent traveling exhibition born at the Walker Art Museum, *The Spectacular of Vernacular*. These landmarks help establish these “Nowheres” as “Somewheres.” He states “If we are lucky, we can catch glimpses of the raucous, ramshackle, and glorious-in-spite-of-itself artifacts they (Midwesterners) leave behind, before it is all torn down and made into a distantly familiar but still-new Somewhere once again (Sturdevant, 116).” The constant recycling and rebuilding of this important, often ridiculous, imagery is something I admire. Exhibitions such as *The Spectacular of Vernacular* champion the importance of the everyday in order to define a culture.

I have also noticed the acceptance of popular culture reference and influence in contemporary artists I have both studied and studied with. While at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, I worked with members of The Chicago Imagists, a group formed in the late 1960s. Their instructor, Ray Yoshida, encouraged this group to embrace the influence of popular culture in their own work and they in turn taught me to do the same. Highly influential instructors I worked with at SAIC, like Karl Wirsum and Phil Hanson, championed the use of these references in their own works. Wirsum’s colorful figures reference toys and comics. His characters are often created as a reaction to language like wordplay and puns and found patterns, such as the plaid featured on Scotch brand tape. Philip Hanson utilizes vibrant colors and patterns reminiscent of cartoons to contemporize appropriated text from sources such as Emily Dickinson and William Shakespeare.

**The Studio**

While a student in Chicago, I was also able to tour the former home of the late Chicago Imagist, Roger Brown, several times. Brown’s home displays a curated
collection of his own paintings and his references; including eclectic artifacts purchased at flea markets, the work of outsider artists and his colleagues, comics, circus banners, and advertisements. The collection gives visitors a rare glimpse inside the working mind of an artist. Connections between pop culture references and his work are apparent.

Brown’s signature silhouette-filled skyscraper windows tell separate interconnected stories on one canvas much like a comic. *Kissin’ Cousins* (1990), a painting examining his own genealogy and distant relation to Elvis, utilizes the simplified, graphic quality of his collected banners and advertisements to easily convey the information.

Contemporary artists like Trenton Doyle Hancock have followed in the Imagist’s footsteps creating a narrative influenced by his childhood obsessions that includes cartoons, comics and toys. I was able to view Hancock’s traveling exhibition *WE DONE ALL WE COULD AND NONE OF IT’S GOOD*, when it made a 2012 stop at the Weatherspoon Art Museum in Greensboro, North Carolina. The exhibition shows the importance of the artist’s use of these popular culture references by exhibiting a selection from Hancock’s collections of vintage toys, 80s records and amateur thrift store paintings. Both Hancock’s and Brown’s collections give a fascinating look at what is fueling their work. Like Francis Bacon’s preserved studio in Dublin and Henry Darger’s recreated studio in Chicago, evidence of the thought process behind a work is integral to understanding and relating to an artist’s practice. These clues help put work into a context that is familiar to the viewer.

Not only does Hancock give us a peek at what exactly he is surrounding himself with, he is directly referencing his process by utilizing studio evidence usually discarded or hidden. In several of his works he “lifts the curtain” by gluing the dried paint circle from the bottom of a jar or the price tagged packaging of a paintbrush directly on the
canvas. During the 2008 Whitney Biennial, Corin Hewitt took this idea even further, setting up a studio within the gallery space for his work, *Seed Stage*. Through slits in the corner of the constructed workshop in the middle of the gallery, viewers were able to see Hewitt at work. Hewitt created still lifes with found, purchased and created materials, which were then photographed. Successful works were framed and showcased on the gallery walls surrounding the temporary studio. The techniques and vocabulary involved in art making are usually only known to the artist and those associated with artistic institutions. By opening up the corners of his workspace, he is opening up that artistic world to the public. The photographs placed on the museum walls are not products of a secretive studio practice. Everything was made on site in clear view.

The different possibilities explored within my work are a part of the process I would like to share. By mining studio experimentations and photographing the process (construction, deconstruction and reconstruction), this evidence of process is emphasized. The decision to place an element in a certain position does not come without trial and error. Accidents beyond my control often make certain decisions for me. The accidental movement of a string or waving in the slight breeze of a piece of paper provides dynamism to the work. The moments are important to a work’s construction and the use of projected video ensures that these typically private moments become public.

**Conclusion**

The current works to be displayed in my thesis exhibition at the Weatherspoon Art Museum address and grapple with my concerns and interests that deal with the idea of the original, memory and nostalgia, two dimensional and three dimensional space, the
everyday, and the studio. The large scale wall collages containing digital photographs and video projection continue the conversation regarding authenticity in the age of mechanical reproduction started by Walter Benjamin and currently at the forefront of the practice of artists who utilize digital means. The nostalgia of a childhood of play, cartoons, and family road trips informs the study of real space that surrounds me. My representations of domestic and institutional details reflect these studies and ensure the work has roots in the real in order to establish a connection with the viewer. I am striving for the viewer to also feel a connection to the process that created the piece. Like I did as a child, recycling and reusing common materials to create sheltered sanctuaries in my backyard, my work utilizes a similar cycle of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. Using what I learn while building, questioning, and problem solving to generate new work and ideas, will keep me busy and enthusiastic about continuing this body of work post graduation.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


CATALOGUE OF IMAGES

1. Navigating Berlin
2. Reconstruction Site
3. 127 McIver Street: a place for everything and everything in its place
4. Cover up
5. Fixer Upper
6. Living Room
7. Redo Undo
8. Bundled
9. Thrown off
Navigating Berlin

Materials: Paint, pvc pipe, broom, wood, cardboard, bungee cords, plastic, stones, contact, paper, carpet, sticks, string and tape

Approximately 15 X 35 feet

September 2012
Reconstruction Site

Materials: digital photographs, wire, plastic, cardboard, blue tape, contact paper, string, net

Approximately 32 X 34 inches

December 2012
127 McIver Street: a place for everything and everything in its place

Materials: digital photographs, fabric, foam, tape, contact paper and wall decals, tin foil, wood, string, pebbles

Approximately 25 X 20 foot room

January 2013
127 McIver Street: a place for everything and everything in its place

Materials: digital photographs, fabric, foam, tape, contact paper and wall decals, tin foil, wood, string, pebbles

Approximately 25 X 20 foot room

January 2013
Cover Up

Materials: Watercolor, paper, contact and wallpaper

22.5 X 15 inches

July 2012
Fixer Upper

Materials: digital photographs, carpet, foam, rubber, plastic, cardboard, contact and Wallpaper

Approximately 30 X 24 inches

December 2012
Living Room

Materials: digital photograph, wood, plastic table cloth, iridescent tubing, silly string, pushpins with video projection

Approximately 66 X 40 inches

March 2013
Redo Undo

Materials: wood, tinfoil, plastic, digital photographs, iridescent tubing, fabric, tape with video projection

Approximately 50 X 30 inches

February 2013
Bundled

Materials: digital photographs, contact paper, wood, glitter, plastic, painter’s tape, pushpins, charcoal, zip ties, string

Approximately 56 X 42 inches

March 2013
Thrown off

Materials: Netting, wire, decal, transparency, iridescent tubing, pushpins, tape, constructed wall, rubber basketball, and rocks with video projections

Approximately 90 X 80 inches

April 2013