IDENTITY

UAA ART491 Senior Seminar Exhibition
March 28th - April 8th 2016
INTRODUCTION

The UAA/APU Books of the year program is proud to collaborate with Senior Seminar art students on “Identity”. Their work demonstrates the ability of art to portray multiple layers of interpretation, and illustrates how learners can be actively engaged in discussion of contemporary social issues through artistic expression.

Each theme and its correlating books are selected by a faculty steering committee, and serve as the catalyst for discussion of larger issues of local and international significance.

We hope you enjoy this catalogue of outstanding images, and discuss the underlying messages with your friends.

PREFACE

Everyone must negotiate and shape their identity as they grow up, age, and adapt to fate and circumstances. The artwork presented here illustrates how each artist’s unique beliefs and experiences influence their identity and the way they view the world.
Identity

ˌɪdɛn(t)əˈdeɪ/  
noun

1. Who someone is; the name of a person
2. The qualities, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group different from others
3. The distinguishing character or personality of an individual
4. The relation established by psychological identification
When I think about my own identity, I am most intrigued by the way my environment has shaped me into who I am today. I also find the notion of identity slightly ambiguous in that who we are around one person may be entirely different than who we are around another. I am fascinated by how we form our identities not just based on who we think we are, but also on who others think we are, and who we think others believe us to be. I do not view identity as something that is always stable — it is something that can shift over time as we ourselves are changed by life experiences. These selected artworks reflect my ideas about who I am as a result of my environment and what exactly the search for identity means to me.
Define Purpose
18” x 24”
Graphite and Charcoal on Paper

Dissect
18” x 24”
Graphite and Charcoal on Paper
Intentional or not, the theme of identity always seems to unearth itself within my artwork. The Gaze and Unearthed both communicate this theme of identity, just through a different lens. The Gaze represents how a person’s identity as a whole is made up of many parts, and is much more complex than what meets the eye. Unearthed is a self-portrait illustrating the idea of finding one’s identity, and how this journey to find yourself can often feel like being lost in a maze within your own head.
The Gaze
50” x 72”
Acrylic and Oil on Canvas

Unearthed
12” x 12” x 12”
Graphite on Paper
I do not dwell on the concept of identity. With the ongoing Age of (Mis-)Information, it seems so many people are “identifying” this way and that, themselves and others. Nuance seems to be dying. Ultimately, while one can only know oneself, everyone has their own way of coming to grips with what they are. But who am I to say that?
Fleeting
24” x 44”
Mixed Media

HA
24” x 44”
Mixed Media
Trending speaks of places, people, culture and the pervading messages transmitted through language and imagery. What makes an individual? Is it personality, clothes, geography, culture, material possession? Some combination of the above? Who decides identity? Does identity evolve over time? This particular work speaks of apathy, consumerism, materialism, greed, elitism, social constructs and the continuous evolution of what the next big “IN” thing might be. What are you “Trending”? 
Trend(ing)
20” x 24”
Digital Print on Metal
My work is a release. I paint for me. My work is not for the pleasure of others. I see my pain in the other people around me. I choose to communicate it with every stroke of a pencil, and every slash of the brush. My triptych shows my audience how I struggle with myself, my identity, every day. Some days knowing exactly who I am, and others not knowing myself at all.
Triptych: Self
28” x 36”
Graphite on Paper

Triptych: Self
48” x 60”
Graphite on Paper

Triptych: Self
28” x 36”
Graphite on Paper
It is my belief that the notion of identity is unique to each individual despite the background they may associate themselves with. I have chosen to show four pieces that emphasize different struggles and subjects that may characterize one's identity. For example, while one may see a vehicle engine and question how it relates to identity, I am here to tell you that identity is not found within one’s physical attributes, but within the characteristics that define them. “One Man’s Obsession” defines a particular individual whom has spent more than twenty years of his life working to re-build this engine, and he has come to the reality that the engine defines not only his talents, but also his identity.
Struggle
18.5” x 24.5”
Charcoal on Paper

What's Your Story
18.5” x 24.5”
Graphite on Paper

One Man's Obsession
25” x 31”
Graphite on Paper

Distant Relations
9.5” x 12”
Charcoal on Paper
Marcia Varady

This battered, timeworn, and well-loved trunk contains parts and pieces of my identity. It was already a century old when I purchased this at an antique store when I was eighteen. It contains precious memories and keepsakes. This trunk, after a journey of almost fifty years together, safeguards significant life events that contribute to who I am.
Cached Identity

6’ x 4’

Oil on Cradleboard
The first painting is of my daughter, Gravina, at two months old. I don’t think there is a better way to express my identity than of a representation of her. She is everything that I wish to pass on in the world; she is my blood, my memory, and my love. Gravina is my identity. The second painting referenced a picture taken by my friend from Cordova of a hatchery set of a bunch of spawned out fish used for Fish&Game testing. The maintenance of a renewable resource like salmon is extremely important to my families way of living. The third painting of the “F/V Sound Quest” is the boat that I was raised on and has been a huge part of my childhood. I made my own black paint by crushing a block of charcoal and mixing it with linseed oil.
Gravina's Window
12” x 12”
Oil on Canvas

Hatchery Set
24” x 24”
Oil on Canvas

F/V Sound Quest
18” x 24”
Homemade Oil and Glass Mediums on Canvas
My art is my voice and interpretation of my emotions, thoughts, and desires. The images I create are based on personal experiences, culture, time, environment, and identity. I find that these ideas are often better perceived through painting than through words.
Untitled
30” x 40”
Oil on Canvas

The Journey
36” x 48”
Charcoal on Paper
About the Artists

Alyeska Brunke

Much of my artwork reflects upon my contemplation of life, transcendence, and the inner self. I have worked in a number of mediums including drawing, painting, photography, sculpture, hand-built ceramics, and wood carving. I enjoy using art as a therapeutic medium to express my thoughts and personal experiences as well as to try and better understand my own beliefs and ideas.

Grant Deussing

I have never really seen myself as an artist; I’m just a guy going to school in Alaska that loves to create things. I enjoy working in virtually any style and medium of art I am introduced too. Utilizing my eclectic art style, I believe I will be able to spread my art to a broader range of people, and all I really wish to achieve through my art is make a difference. As long as I am able to positively influence or inspire at least one person through my art, I consider my art successful.
Influenced by a family with a persistent artistic streak, I eke by primarily in drawing, painting, and digital mediums, though I occasionally dabble with more blatantly multi-dimensional works. The inside of heads, atmosphere, and story-weaving is what I find most appealing in art.

Every medium holds a world of possibilities, and I work in as many of them as I am able. I look for possibilities in the world around me. Who could we possibly be? What could we possibly do? How could this possibly make a difference? All themes of identity and all sliding on an ever-changing kaleidoscope of choices and possibilities. That is the way I like my world.
Growing up I have always found a release in art, and have often focused on bringing forth the realism in not only life, but in one’s interpretation. For it is my belief that reality does not live within everyday life, but within one's mindset, and what they choose to believe as reality. Through the various interpretations of my works, I believe one can come away with a new outlook on more than just the artwork itself, but perhaps on life and the everyday scenarios they face.

Joshua Swan

Raised in Seattle Washington, Joshua Swan discovered at a very young age, he has the ability to show the world things he sees in his heart and mind. Drawing his inspiration from his life experiences on the in the Seattle metropolis, Joshua often uses his work therapeutically. “Time seems to pass by unnoticed, I lose sight of the canvas as I work. All I can see is it finished. I fill in the blank spaces. When I complete a piece, I am drained, exhausted of inspiration. When the pencil is put down, and I step back, more often than not, I recall only vague fleeting flashes of working on it.”

Lisa Thayer

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About the Artists

Marcia Varady

Marica Varady was born in Indiana and later moved to Colorado. She married, raised four children and is a proud grandmother to seven grandchildren. In her sixth decade of life she enrolled at UAA to pursue a degree in Art. After graduation she plans to volunteer in various school programs to help children explore their own artistic sense. Marcia draws inspiration for her art from her experiences as wife, mother, and grandmother. Her love of traveling the world provides additional resources for her artwork. She translates these experiences in oil, encaustic and cold wax mediums.

Teal Webber

I was born and raised as a commercial fishermen in Cordova, so I get a lot of my art inspiration from this aspect of my life. I’m graduating UAA with a BA in Art, with a focus in painting, and a minor in History. After graduating I will continue being a hands on mother to my year old daughter, and paint as much as possible out of my studio. Cordovan’s really appreciate my nautical style, so living there is a good place to sell my work.
Michelle Xiao

I learned how to draw and take photographs when I was a child from my father, who was an engineer by profession but an artist inside. I enrolled in a Computer Science program at UAA before switching to Fine Arts. However, my formal training in Computer Science and Statistics helped me land several jobs in IT. I work full time as a Data Analyst but I also love to paint. I’m also interested in data trends and the visual representations of the data.
Acknowledgements

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