

1. When was the first photo you took that made you realize “this is art”?



*I haven't made a photo yet that I have said "this is art" to. I made this photograph of my friends Colleen, Alex, and Ashley during a summer where I would take my 35mm with us everywhere. I remember this photo as it was a week before we were starting school again, and everything about this day felt calm and surreal. Contrary to that, we all got into a small car crash and just like that summer was over. I am happy I have a landmark from this day, and a photo that reflected the atmosphere of what that day felt like.*

2. What was the first photo “project” you worked on, personal or assigned? What did it teach you?



*During sophomore year, I felt like I was in a huge rut and doubted my decision to study photography. Trying to get into the technical format of learning 4x5 was hard, but photographing with no intention was even harder. My professor Kathy Landeros, then suggested for me to continue to photograph my friends. Though I am mostly experimenting with self portraiture now, I never stopped making work about my friends. Growing up, I always felt the closest people in my life have been my friends, and when I began to photograph them, it made our relationship felt even more special as it allowed me to spend more time and articulate things I was thinking about while making the work. At the same time I was thinking about the fear I had about no longer being a teenager. I was reflecting a lot on change. I was photographing the change in nature as a passage of time, and my sister who was 16 and in the prime of her teens. We grew up practically in different towns, with different people, most of our lives, and were different in many ways. Most people thought we were only childs. Pop culture- despite having very different taste was one of the only things we could talk about, despite having the same parents.*

3. What led you to come to MassArt and get a degree in photo?

*My high school art teacher encouraged me to leave our small town, and art was the only thing that felt right to me. I did not have any photographic experience until I was placed in a photo elective as a freshman. I was awful at photography, and didn't understand it. I think part of me even hated it. When the class was over, I strangely missed photography, and that winter break when I went home I took a 35mm camera I had gotten as a gift when I was 16, but never used, out with my friends and just photographed everything. Months later, I developed the film, and was just happy to have results. The process became a lot more natural and I felt myself wanting to learn more about it. I followed my heart stupidly, and decided to major in photography.*

4. Could you discuss two people who changed the way you thought about art?

*Two bodies of work I learned about early in that I think about often are Hustlers by DiCorcia and The Ballad of Sexual Dependency by Goldin. I immediately fell in love with the images, but especially loved the way each artist spoke about their work. I always had trouble talking about my feelings, and being vulnerable growing up. There is a rawness from their work that I always try to carry on my own.*

5. What did you learn while working on your thesis about the way you make work?

*I really enjoyed creating my thesis work, as it was the first time where I didn't feel restricted. I was constantly experimenting with what mediums I was using, and the way I wanted my images to exist. I worked organically, and in turn I felt like I was allowing my thoughts to roam wild as well. My work was changing just as fast as my life was. In the end I felt like I ended up with a body of work that was very interpersonal, and diaristic.*

6. What do you hope the audience experiences when they look at your art?

*I am always making work based on experiences where I am overwhelmed by emotion and sensory. I am often examining themes such as memory, ephemerality, but*

*fear and vulnerability at the same time. I try to make photos as if they were diary entries.*



*For example, during the time of this self portrait I was exhausted and fearful from drinking and using to the point where I would black out on my bathroom floor. I felt like my body was not mine, and I experienced myself as if I was not myself. It is info like this that is not necessarily important for the viewer to know, but for me as a maker to know. There is a strange, and almost sad quality to this image that exists. I felt like I was vanishing. By creating work that reflects my own vulnerability, I hope for viewers to be encouraged to look into their own.*

7. Do you think you'll always be a photographer in some way, shape, or form?

*Most definitely!*

8. What do you do when you're going through an art block?

*I spend time with friends. I am lucky to have people in my life who are able to speak to me about my personal life, and my photo life- though now they are pretty much intertwined. I also go back to my favorite movies and short films, and try and submerge myself into finding music and writing just to make sure my gears are always grinding in one way or another.*

9. If you could space and time travel to anywhere at any time to take pictures (without altering the space time continuum of course), where and when you would go and what materials you would bring?

*This is hard. I think some of the most influential works for me were made between the 70s-90s. For example, Ana Mendieta's Silueta, the short films of Rose Lowder, Gus Van Sant's My Own Private Idaho, the work of Mapplethorpe, and just the wide range of music- I mostly just had wish I was around to experience the coming out of these art pieces and artist. However, politically those times were awful, and as a*

*woman of color I can't say I would prosper in those times. (Not that things are much better now)*

10. What advice would you give to students about to start their thesis?

*Try everything, be honest, and don't be apologetic for being yourself.*