

“I’m an artist...I’m here to live out loud.”

Emile Zola, an 1800’s French writer and playwright is credited with this quote, and it is one that stuck with me these past few years I have been floating in postgraduate purgatory. They have been formative years no doubt; whipsawed with confusion, drenched in quarter life crisis tears, but with sheer determination nonetheless. I always thought I would simply wait one year after graduation, work and save money at the same family owned restaurant I have been with since 2010, and then head off to graduate school bright and smiling. Like a cliché movie scene, it was in the middle of putting away beer that it dawned on me – there was no way I would be ready. The realization came with great relief, and made me become conscious of the fact I needed to step back and give serious thought as to what it is I want to achieve in graduate school.

The summer before my senior year at Saint Mary’s College, I worked with Professor Krista Hoefle on a SSTAR grant – Student Independent Study and Research. This was my very first experience of independent work, one which required me to think of an original idea, pen a proposal, discuss and defend what it was I wanted to do in front of a panel of various faculty, work both independently and mutually with Prof. Hoefle, bring work into fruition without class assignment or instruction, and install the work in the campus gallery with an official opening at the start of fall semester. I cherished every moment, even the ones of doubt and frustration. I credit this time in my life as the pivotal moment I realized becoming an independent studio artist and college art professor as my ultimate ambition.

Upon reviewing work created during my later undergraduate years, along with more recent projects, I have come to find several existing themes. When I begin a new series or piece, there is a dynamic relationship between control and chance. I start with familiar images, objects, and/or figures, then transform them into something that is both visually pleasing and disquieting in either a carefully planned and structured manner, or solely dependent on chance via the nature of the chosen media. I am drawn to art that is both visually jarring yet pleasing, and aim to find this type of juxtaposing relationship within my work. I have also started exploring the use of multiple materials in my more recent endeavors, aiming to create a sort of dual conversation between the materials themselves and the observing viewer.

Reasons I wish to attend _____ for graduate school are numerous: I want to immerse myself back into an educational and artistic environment with peers that share an appreciation and dedication to art, in both its creation and theory. I want to gain a better understanding of what it is to be an independent studio artist, and know that the rigorous requirements _____ asks for will further my abilities in the developing, constructing, and editing stages of my work. Now that I have allowed myself the time after graduation to perform independently and explore new ideas, I am eager to move on to the next stage and push my work to unexplored places. While I want to continue exploring new mediums, techniques, and ideas within my practice, I also want to hone in on the core archetype that my work constitutes, and discover more of who I am as an artist. I dare to pursue a creative life doing what I love, and living out loud.