

Rochester Institute of Technology

RIT Digital Institutional Repository

Theses

2005

An Investigation of the Dynamics of Human Metamorphosis Triggered by Perception and Environment

Stacey Parker

Follow this and additional works at: <https://repository.rit.edu/theses>

Recommended Citation

Parker, Stacey, "An Investigation of the Dynamics of Human Metamorphosis Triggered by Perception and Environment" (2005). Thesis. Rochester Institute of Technology. Accessed from

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the RIT Libraries. For more information, please contact repository@rit.edu.

Rochester Institute of Technology

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
The College of Imaging Arts and Sciences
In Candidacy for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

**An Investigation of the Dynamics of
Human Metamorphosis Triggered by
Perception and Environment**

by

Stacey Parker

August 20, 2005

Approvals

Chief Advisor Bruce Sodervick
(Please type)

(Signature)

Date: _____

Associate Advisor Thomas R. Lightfoot
(Please type)

(Signature)

Date: _____

Associate Advisor Eileen Feeny Bushnell
(Please type)

(Signature)

Date: _____

Department Chairperson Don Arday
(Please type)

(Signature)

Date: _____

Thesis Reproduction Permission Statement:

A signed and dated "Thesis Reproduction Permission" statement must be included on or after the title page and signature approval page.

I understand that I must submit a print copy of my thesis or dissertation to the RIT Archives, per current RIT guidelines for the completion of my degree. I hereby grant to the Rochester Institute of Technology and its agents the non-exclusive license to archive and make accessible my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media in perpetuity. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation.

Print Reproduction Permission Granted:

I, _____, hereby **grant permission** to the Rochester Institute of Technology to reproduce my print thesis or dissertation in whole or in part. Any reproduction will not be for commercial use or profit.
Signature of Author: _____ Date: _____

Print Reproduction Permission Denied:

I, Stacey Parker, hereby **deny permission** to the RIT Library of the Rochester Institute of Technology to reproduce my print thesis or dissertation in whole or in part.
Signature of Author: Stacey Parker Date: _____

Inclusion in the RIT Digital Media Library Electronic Thesis & Dissertation (ETD) Archive

I, _____, additionally grant to the Rochester Institute of Technology Digital Media Library (RIT DML) the non-exclusive license to archive and provide electronic access to my thesis or dissertation in whole or in part in all forms of media in perpetuity.

I understand that my work, in addition to its bibliographic record and abstract, will be available to the world-wide community of scholars and researchers through the RIT DML. I retain all other ownership rights to the copyright of the thesis or dissertation. I also retain the right to use in future works (such as articles or books) all or part of this thesis or dissertation. I am aware that the Rochester Institute of Technology does not require registration of copyright for ETDs.

I hereby certify that, if appropriate, I have obtained and attached written permission statements from the owners of each third party copyrighted matter to be included in my thesis or dissertation. I certify that the version I submitted is the same as that approved by my committee.

Signature of Author: _____ Date: _____

Frances Chinnock
Staff Assistant
School of Art
(585)475-7562
(585)475-6447 Fax

Table of Contents	Page #
I. Title Page	I
II. Signature Page	II
III. Table of Contents	1
IV. Introduction	2
I. Thesis	2
II. Transformation from Idea to Concept	3
V. Internal and External Forces	8
VI. Exhibition Work	10
I. Bagging Metamorphosis (Bag Series)	10
II. The Person is Gone (Glass Series)	16
III. A More Involving Experience (Installation)	19
VII. Installation	21
VIII. Looking Back-Looking Forward (Conclusion)	23
IX. Body of Work	25
X. Bibliography	42

The Thesis

I intended to explore and translate into image and form human reactions to their environment. It was my desire to investigate the dynamic interactions of the internal and external forces that define who and what we are. Using visual, three-dimensional forms, I experimented with sculptural components such as figurative and abstract forms and interwoven spaces.

Psychologist Eric Erickson's work on personal identity talks about the complex process of individuality formation. Erickson defined the formation of identity as "a process located in the core of the individual and yet also in the core of his communal culture." He also referred "to the integrative and complex relationship between the inner self (all inner aspects and internal interplay of the self) and the outer world (self as it relates and contends with the external world)."¹ Taking this idea, I broke my concept down into two distinct elements. The human element became the internal forces while the environment became the external force.

Using this as a theoretical basis, I began to explore and translate into image and form the metamorphosis that occurs when humans interact with their environment. I employed handmade paper, steel, metals, glass, clay, wood fabric and found objects and used processes such as casting, fabrication, weaving, assemblage and carving.

¹ Mahoney, Andrew S. M.S.,L.P.C., and L.M.F.T. *Counseling the Gifted: In Search of Identity* R.W. Casselman. 2001-2005. Hostway. <http://www.hostway.com>. 3 June 2005. <http://www.counselingthegifted.com/articles/insearchofID.html>

Transformation from Idea to Concept



Propped, 1992
213.5 x 183 cm

Figure 1

The genesis of my imagery lies in my life and experiences. My work was typically figurative, using the visual language of a recognizably female form to talk about issues of body image and the social stigma placed on those who don't fit the accepted size and shape.

An artist working in the same vein who has been greatly influential is Jenny Saville. Her paintings (figure 1) are larger than life nude women who

challenge you not only with their nudity, but also with their large bodies. Dimpled legs, full breasts and a tiny head all come together in a way that confronts the viewer with the social implications of a female body that does not conform to a stereotypical cultural model. Initially my work was centered in personal issues of social rejection and negative self-image due to my own body size and experience. The subject matter, however, being so intensely personal, seemed to limit its interpretation and isolate my ideas from a more universal human experience.

When my creative exploration expanded from a comfort zone of representation imagery and narrow personal content to a broader conceptual base, other possibilities in terms of media and process became accessible. Performance, video, collaboration, installation and non-representational sculpture were opened as areas of exploration and experimentation for my work. In each of these explorations, my work in new media led

to researching different concepts. Using a woman's bathroom to create a site-specific installation (figure 2), bathroom graffiti became art. The graffiti dealt with how words define women in either a positive or negative way. The viewer had a choice as to how they wanted to be defined, by choosing which stall they would enter. It was through this piece that the environment's impact in the overall meaning of the work became important.



Bathroom Installation view, Figure 2
2004
Size varies



The Ohio Project (7), 1999

Figure 3

This bathroom installation inspired my thesis investigation, starting with how people choose to change themselves. At this time I was exposed to the artwork of Nikki Lee (figure 3). Her process of metamorphosis is captured in photos taken of her in specific environments. Her chameleon like ability to fit into any surroundings intrigued me.

Looking at the interaction between Lee and the environment, and her process of adaptation, I was able to pick out three

different elements of her work that I could apply to my own. She started with herself,

then chose and environment she wanted to work with, then went about the process of metamorphosis. In the process of applying these elements to my own work, I abstracted my working concept into three coinciding parts. First was the element of the person, second was the environment and third was the metamorphosis of the person.

With my working concept separated into these three parts, I started to work with the first element of the “person.” The Chubbies (figure 4) became an abstracted visual of the “person” element. Chubbies were essentially dolls that represented humanity in its singular form of a generic person. They had no gender, and no defining features, allowing them to be universally recognized. Using the same blueprint for their form while changing their color and size gave each one a



Chubbie, 2004
13 x 9 x 2 in

Figure 4



Getaway #2, 1994 Figure 5

different feeling, but there was no visual impact or meaning inherent in them. Looking at Tony Oursler's dolls (figure 5) with their projected faces screaming from under fallen furniture, focus on the Chubbies changed to putting the dolls into environments in the hopes that they would gain a voice. My life experiences provided the inspiration for these environments and I began to juxtapose the Chubbies with cubicles, religious

icons and even corsets. Each new environment transformed the Chubbies into a new entity. Each piece clearly stated the original idea with no possibility for interpretation or question. They were still boring, characterless and unexciting.

The Chubbie dolls and environments brought me almost to a standstill. Going back

to Lee's work again, I realized that there had to be an intimate connection between the person and the environment to fulfill the metamorphosis of the person. Frustrated with where the work was, I created the "Bagged Chubbie," (figure 6) literally connecting the environment and the person elements. Taking one of the sewn, stuffed Chubbie dolls, I wrapped it in vinyl strips and stuffed it into a clear plastic bag. The clear vinyl obscured the doll as it overlapped itself, creating a blurred image of mass. Stuffing the wrapped doll into the bag changed its shape, further abstracting its true form.



Bagged Chubbie, 2004 Figure 6
20 x 6 x 4 in

Wrapping and enclosing the doll in the bag became symbolic of getting rid of



Not Yet, 1996 Figure 7
71 x 16 x 9 in

useless things or ideas. But at the same time, the resulting form became the nucleus of what the thesis was about - human metamorphosis triggered by internal and external forces. As in Eva Hesse's *Not Yet*, (figure 7), where she created suspended ambiguous forms that held the possibility of being something identifiable without giving definite detail, the environments and even the figures that had previously been a struggle, become less important. They were details that could be removed as they were implied in the imagery and came together to make a new entity.

"... we react and are defined by our environment, constantly changing to fit our surroundings and our perceptions of them..." It is in these words from my original thesis proposal that the basis of the thesis is found. In the singular sense, it

is the metamorphosis of a person affected by internal and external forces. In a more global sense, it can be related to the human condition of change and definition.

Internal and External Forces

To understand the evolution of my work and my concept, I researched human metamorphosis triggered by internal and external forces to understand what internal and external forces are. Andrew S. Mahoney's work with gifted individuals gives 12 systems that contribute to self-identity.² They encompass the internal and external forces that create who we are.

Putting each of the twelve systems into the categories of "Internal forces," and "External forces," helps us to understand what they are. Internal forces are those that occur within the individual. An individual's emotions, values and beliefs, view of self, an individual's psyche, self-esteem and self-concept are some of the internal forces. The individual generates these. External forces depending on the situation can impact them. The structure or inside core (figure 8) of my forms became a metaphor for those internal forces.



Figure 8
Internal Structure,
2004 18 x 4 x 4 in

External forces are in general those that come from the environment

Environment:

1. The circumstances or conditions that surround one; surroundings.
2. The totality of circumstances surrounding an organism or group of organisms, especially:
 - a. The combination of external physical conditions that affect and influence the growth, development, and survival of organisms
 - b. The complex of social and cultural conditions affecting the nature of an individual or community³

² Andrew S. Mahoney Mahoney, Andrew S. M.S., L.P.C., and L.M.F.T. Counseling the Gifted: 12 Systems Impacting Identity Formation R.W. Casselman. 2001-2005. Hostway. <http://www.hostway.com>. 3 June 2005. <<http://www.counselingthegifted.com/articles/insearchofID.html#sub4>>

³ Dictionary.com. 2005. Lexico Publishing Group, LLC. 1 June 2005. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=environment>>

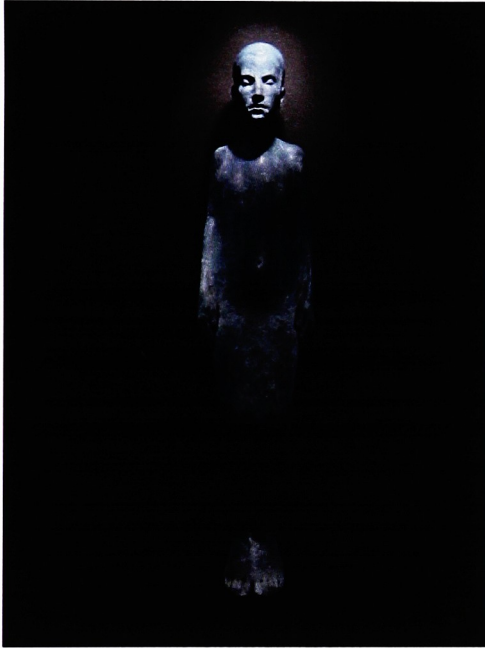
Our environment includes more than just our physical surroundings and our social and cultural conditions. It is every aspect of every sphere that we exist in such as economical, vocational, political, religious and even familial. All of these elements combine to create the environment we live in. For my thesis exploration I use a bag, or skin surface as a metaphor for the environment.

The perception one has of how he or she is viewed by others often becomes a very large part of how we form our self-identity. This defines and sometimes changes who or what we are. It is a melding of internal and external forces and therefore became a visual part of the thesis. In my thesis investigation, belts and straps, binding and wrapped cord and rope are used as a metaphor for this element of perception.

All of these elements come together to create a type of visual reality. Each separate idea is given form in relation to the others. They are combined together to create a whole that in process and image talks about the concept. As a whole, they give substance to the phenomena of human metamorphosis.

Bagging Metamorphosis

In this body of work, metamorphosis occurred to the structure or the inside core of form. The form was inspired by Andrew Barton's figurative work *Blue Legs Bent* (figure



Blue Legs Bent, 2005
58 cm

Figure 9

9) which had figurative elements while still being abstract overall. Constructed with chicken wire, bent, twisted and skinned with batting, the form that was created became a three dimensional representation of a "person."

By removing all the details that would have defined it as male, female, him or her, it became a visual synonym for human. It is in the details or lack thereof that the viewer is guided to recognize the individual pieces as being possibly human or not.

It is in the possibilities of this form that connections can be made to the works of Munoz as well. Munoz's *Conversation Piece* (figure 10) figures are recognizable as human due to the details that the artist chose to keep, but remain abstract enough because of the details removed to allow them to move beyond a person and become a comment on the human condition.

The bags further abstract these forms and create an environment. Utilitarian in purpose, a bag is meant to hold and carry items specific to its size and shape. It can also contain and hide those items thereby creating an air of mystery. Used in this work as a metaphor for environment, the bags begin to define the visual forms, hiding most of

the detail of the inner structure within their own body. In hiding detail, they also serve to accentuate a few specific details that act as focus points for the finished form. The few specific features that are allowed to emerge allow the viewer more intimate access to the figures. Frances Bagley (figures 11) uses fabric in a

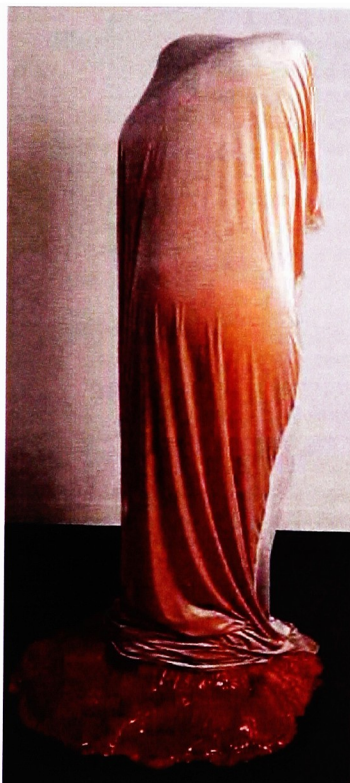


Conversation Piece II-III, 1991
52 x 24 x 24 in

Figure 10

similar way, draping it over her Styrofoam

forms to create work that becomes more about what it could be than what it is. The



The Age of Bronze, 2001 Fig 11
80 x 40 x 55 in

fabric changes the form underneath, just as our environment changes what we are.

Calming Unsanctioned Perceptions, (figure 12, page 25) was the first of the “Bagged” figures explored. Bringing the detail of binding from *Bagged Chubbie* (figure 6) to the outside of the piece in the form of straps create a third visual layer that is intended as a symbol for the impact that others perception of us has on who and what we are. The three physical layers of structure, bag and binding, correspond with internal and environment forces, and other’s perception of us.

Each element is defined and dependent on the others.

Coming together they create the whole form.

Because this is a process, ever changing and always different, many experimental

works are necessary. Magdalene Abakanowicz's works in multiples and it is only through the repetition of the basic form, the revisiting of an idea over and over again that the full meaning can thoroughly be explored. Abakanowicz's different series vary from groupings of three to five figurative pieces to works that include one hundred or more pieces. My "Bagged" series consists of six pieces, each having differences in detail, color and material. There is a commonality in their form, construction and process that links them. Abakanowicz's burlap and bronze figures all differ in small details in size, texture and material (figures 13, 14). They can be exhibited individually,



Plecy, 1976-79

Figure 13



Androgyn III, 1985
48 x 22 x 64 in

Figure 14

just as the individual "bags" can be, but together; they emphasize each other and offer a larger statement about humanity.

The visual language from *Calming Unsanctioned Perceptions* continues to be refined in *Uncomfortable Restrictions* (figure 15, page 26) and *Living in Someone Else's Life* (figure 16, page 27). The use of scale makes these two pieces more intimate than their larger counterparts. Along with scale, the color, texture and binding of the fabric all contribute to create a metamorphosis in the final form. *Uncomfortable Restrictions* uses

color and texture to begin a narrative for the viewer like the figures in *Three Horizontals* (figure 17). Louise Bourgeois uses the pink color of her fabric and the rough and torn texture to give her figures a raw, used feeling.

While *Uncomfortable*

Restrictions isn't torn, the red, raw meat-like color of the fabric, and the fatty texture of the piece became the conduit for emotion. Trussed up like a Christmas turkey the jute twine, wrinkles and pulls to heighten the form, while the visual tension complements the expressive potential. The



Three Horizontals, 1998
53 x 72 x 36 in

Figure 17

external force of outsider perceptions is metaphorically represented in the jute bindings emphasizing the helplessness of the form inside.

Each of the “Bagged” figures considers a moment of change in the time line of human life. My choices in material, color, texture and scale all began with a specific direction in mind, but the metaphoric abstraction of the form and removal of detail allow them to move beyond that specific comment on life.

Living in Someone Else's Life echoes rigormortis, the death of self as we try to conform to the perception of what we should be. In this instance the wax saturated fabric feels more like the skin of a corpse thereby adding to the lifeless feeling of the piece. Coiled and interconnected, the top of the piece and the rope it hangs from

represent the partnership of the perception of self and other's perceptions. The noose-like top rope echoes death again while the bottom loop becomes a surrogate for the head.

Internal Stress (figure 18, page 28) evolved from the explorations of the first three "bags." The combination of fewer straps and more implied movement of the figure introduced the idea of "Hope" into the work. Hope – that if we struggle against the outside forces that try to control who we are, we have a chance of taking some of that power for ourselves. The figure became a larger part of the complete image, pushing out and changing the final shape.

I used latex created the cocoon-like skin that needed to be thin and fragile. A connection between this work and Eva Hesse's work is clear in the choice of materials.

Using inorganic substances, Hesse was able to create allusions to human skin and organs, strongly referencing

life forces as in *Repetition*

Nineteen III (figure 19).

Pulled tight by the straps,

the latex echoed the inside

shape but where it hung

loose, it became like an

almost shed chrysalis, or

loose, hanging skin.



Repetition Nineteen III, 1968
11-13 in. dia. 19-21 in. high

Figure 19

Escaping What Binds (figure 20,21, pages 29,30) took the human metamorphosis premise of the thesis further with the added detail of clearly identifiable humanity on the

outside of the bag. As in *Internal Stress*, the underlying form seems to be struggling to get out, kicking out its feet and throwing back its head. I caused the inside to protrude through. This protrusion allowed me to express what it was and what it could be through a cast wax hand and foot that are pushing through the fabric. It is the use of recognizable detail in combination with abstracted, bag-like form that shows the inspiration of Munoz's work again. Munoz abstracted his figures, creating bulging, bound fabric bags, but created recognizably human detail in hands and faces. In the thesis work, this addition of human detail lends the piece a feeling of active metamorphosis, where as in the other pieces, the metamorphosis is only implied.

The aged look of the bag and straps is intended to give the work a sense of having been in existence for a long time – old perceptions loosely bound around a new identity. The idea of change and impermanence was heightened by the rope strung through grommets at the top of the bag.

Separately, each “bag” had it's own separate feeling and dealt with different ideas and narratives. Together they became moments in a lifetime, illustrating the dynamics of human change. The details of the belts, bindings and closings of the bag were visual synonyms for the impact that outside perceptions can have on us, how that force can bind, control and change us if we let it. The bags themselves became the environment we live in. The environment that can define who we are for a time, creating another layer of who we are around the inner core, or self, the structure upon which the metamorphosis acts.

The Person is Gone

Seeing the final form in its completed state, I questioned how important the structure, or core form was. Changing the investigation from the internal struggle implied in the “bags” to the way in which the outside appearance actually defined the forms, I became interested in the use of transparent media, specifically glass, both in terms of its physical properties and the process involved in its use

Layering, fusing and overlapping of outside appearance was the focus of *Fractured Mental State*. (figure 22, page 31) Created using fused and slumped shards of glass; it became a patchwork of surface that held emptiness. The form it was molded from was implied in the form the glass had taken, but had been removed, becoming redundant in the shadow of the new. Abstracted and empty, *Fractured Mental State* exemplified the idea that outside perception creates the image of the whole with out needing further substance.



Remnant, 2003 Figure 23
71 x 52 x 5 in

Working not only with the same material, but also with the same type of idea, Karen LaMonte’s *Remnant* (figure 23) was made from cast glass. Using the imagery of clothes, she was able to create the impression of a whole figure without literally creating a complete figure. The coat is empty, but the viewer still thinks about the person who wore it, or who might wear it.

Snapshots of Mania #1 (figure 24, page 32) and *#2* (figure 25, page 33) took that idea even further by exalting the surroundings of the figure.

Framed by luscious fabric, the sandblasted texture of the surrounding glass became something other than just glass. It took on a soft, sensual feel that seemed to cushion and support the figure inside. The cold, clear glass that delineated the abstracted figure inside stood out as different, bound by the emptiness that could be seen through the glass and the spaces in between. While they were actually taken from molds of figures in bags, the final image was so abstracted that the viewer was only aware of the surface, losing the figure within in the glory of contrasting texture.

Controlled Numbness (figure 26, page 34) blended the qualities of *Fractured Mental State* and *Snapshots of Mania*. The “bag” form was more apparent, relating the work back to the previous “Bagged” forms while the empty fused glass clearly focused the viewer’s eye onto the surface and the emptiness of what could have been a vessel. Repeatedly, the question of what is or was inside occurs. Just as the bags in the first “Bagged” forms were made to hold something, the glass here questions what it could have held. The oversized white rope highlighted the inability of the glass to hold anything of substance, as it seemed to need to be held together.

Repressed Angst, (figure 27, page 35) and *Silent Commitment* (figure 28, page 36) were created using different techniques than the other glass pieces to emphasize varied qualities in the glass. Using molds taken from small fabric “bag” forms, reproductions of the “bags” were created in clear glass. While it captured even the smallest detail of the weave of the fabric, the glass was transparent on the surface, accentuating the lack of form on the inside. The viewer looking for something inside the glass finds nothing. Nothing but more glass in contrast to LaMonte’s *Dress* series (figure 29) where the form within can be seen as a shadow, hidden in the folds and contour of the final form.

LaMonte uses the imagery of dresses in the form of a body wearing them to talk about the two skins that define the human body. While *Repressed Angst* and *Silent Commitment* focus on the outside appearance, using the clear qualities of the glass to show that there is nothing inside, focusing the viewer on the form.

Creating a form from a structure that has been removed from the completed work as I did with my cast glass works brings up the question of how important that structure is to the final image. In human terms, the question references issues that involve the importance of internal forces in the process of self-definition. This glass



Dress #8, 2003
60 x 26 x 22 in

Figure 29

series offers the possibility that the environmental forces and the perceptions of others could be more powerful in defining who and what we are by focusing the viewer on the outside form. But intrinsic with in each form is still an impression of the internal form, allowing the viewer to question where the power of definition truly lies.

A More Involving Experience

This thesis investigation involved the elements of environmental forces, internal forces and how they create who and what we are. Focusing specifically on reactions to some of those environmental forces, *Close Range Victims of Their Sawed Off Mouths* (figures 30-34, pages 37-40) became more of a narrative installation, detailing a scenario of how our environment can impact us and the reactions it can trigger.

In this work the central androgynous figure carved out of laminated wood stands silent by facing a wall of paper faces. Tall and imposing, the figure is connected back to the earlier, inner structures in the “bag” series. The only details put into the figure were those that would allow it to be recognized as human, keeping it from being defined as male, female, young or old. Established as human, but not defined, the figure’s chest cavity was filled to overflowing with raw, torn, flesh-like material. The hint of arms and hands seemed to be trying to hold or protect the material while the head looked straightforward at the wall, strong and defiant.

Overlapping, nightmare-like faces with blurred details and frayed edges made from muted colors of handmade paper create a curved wall that hides, confronts and envelopes the central wood figure. Darkened depressions where eyes should be accentuate the torn edges of the open mouths, alluding to sound. Made from paper they floated in the air, moving with the currents and taking on a spirit or memory-like quality. The allusions to confrontation inherent in the details of the wall add to the visual tension between the face of the figure, and the faces of the wall.

The curvature of the face wall and its position in front of the wood figure imply a visual connection between the two pieces. This implication creates an inner and outer space in the installation. There are different ways to view this installation. The audience can view it from the back of the wall of faces, looking in on the figure through the mouths. From this viewpoint, they become part of the outside environment; the aggressive force that is the words spoken about us by other people. Walking around the wall of accusing, hostile faces, the viewer has the opportunity to put him or herself in the place of the figure. The viewer becomes more aware of the impact that the faces, though silent, had on how they felt. It is the actions of the viewer that becomes the metaphor for human reactions and interactions with and because of their environment.

Installation



Cell VII, 1998
82 x 87 x 83 in

Figure 35

With the images of Bourgeois's *Cell* series (figure 35) and Hesse's hanging work (figure 7) as inspiration, I built most of my thesis work to hang. Sculpture, being three-dimensional has the opportunity to interact with space or even create space. To speak

about human metamorphosis triggered by

internal and external forces, this work had to activate the space, involve space, and create space. Each piece was created to interact with the space around them and with each other. Strong enough visually to stand on their own in a larger space, they were still able to become a group, each a part of a larger whole as they hung together in the gallery.

Originally I had created the glass series of work to be separate from the "bags," but during installation, it became apparent that the two solid glass pieces had a visual dialogue with the "Bagged" series. The final imagery of the "Bagged" series conferred visual information to the solid glass pieces, finishing the imagery and connecting them together despite the difference in materials. I hung them close to the bags as a transition between the glass series and the larger "Bagged" series. According to Louise Bourgeois:

"People feel each other, perceive each other, turn toward or away from each other [...] fated to work together as part of an ongoing phenomenon [...] always perceiving

others and adjusting to them” –Louise Bourgeois, 1997.⁴

It was this phenomenon that was in my mind as I arranged my individual works, allowing them to be seen as a whole unit, each informing the other depending on the how the audience viewed the work.

With three ways to come into the gallery space I had to consider the flow from one piece to the other, and their relations to each other. If the viewer came in from what I considered the front of the space, they saw *Snapshot of Mania #1 and #2* first, then moved through the rest of the glass pieces to the solid glass pieces which transitioned into the “Bagged” series which then led into the installation. This way, the viewer visually traveled from abstracted forms that transitioned from unrecognizable to forms that began to have clues and possibilities as to what they could be, finally to a recognizable wood figure.

If the viewer came in from the back, they would take the journey in reverse, starting from the most recognizable and ending with the most abstract. If the viewer entered the gallery space in the middle, they would bypass the installation, and experience the “Bagged” series (figure 36, page 41) and glass pieces on their own. Each different path through the gallery space allowed for a different impression of the works individually and as a whole.

The installation of *Short Range Victim of Their Sawed Off Mouths* became a problem of space. Working with the limited space I had, it became the visual end of the journey, when it had in fact been created bit by bit as I worked on the other pieces. It became the broader view of human interaction with internal and external forces.

⁴ Schaesberg, Petrus Graf and Rainer Crone. Louise Bourgeois: The Secret of the Cells. Pg 91. Munich, London, New York: Prestel-Verlag 1998

Looking Back, Looking Forward

All together, each experiment in material and image became part of a journey that began with a question about human metamorphosis and the way in which they are triggered by internal and external forces. As evidenced by the thousands of personal websites, organized religion, cults, groups and organizations, humanity is forever searching for identity. It is that search that becomes the never-ending metamorphosis. In an attempt to understand my own journey of metamorphosis, I had to first come to an understanding of what triggers the change in who and what I am.

Breaking down all the research and personal experience into understandable terms, I realized that all the elements of life that create who and what we are can be contained in two categories: internal and external forces. While they can interact and inform each other, they are for the most part different as their titles suggest.

Using an abstracted figurative form as a metaphor for our own internal forces, I began to explore the process of change and transition in our lives and how they come to influence our sense of identity. Using the bag as a metaphor for external or environmental forces allowed me to investigate the relationship between the two forces and how they define us. It was the addition of the bindings that became a metaphor for perception; completing the visual language I was working with and making the imagery complete.

Finally coming to an understanding of the large impact that the environmental forces have on us, the wood and paper installation was an attempt to combine the three layers: 1) the environment, 2) internal forces and 3) ourselves, into a cohesive whole.

The wood figure stood for the person, its chest cavity raw and visceral, becoming internal forces. Lightly swaying, the wall of paper faces became the environment, not only our present surroundings, but also everything else that effects us. It was the viewer that became the element of perception, standing in judgement of the figure as they peered through the rough holes of the screaming faces, or huddling behind the figure, as they became the focus of those faces. Using the elements of the wall and the figure I created a space where the viewer could play either role, or both, gaining an understanding of the impact of perception and the environment, even if only at an unconscious level.

As the subject of human metamorphosis is an ongoing exploration, It will continue to be a driving force behind the work that I do and the imagery that I use. Driven by my life and current environment, the concepts I work with are intensely personal. It is through different processes, materials and imagery that my concepts become more universal, opening up to include and incorporate the greater human experience.

Body of Thesis Work



Calming Unsanctioned Perceptions, 2005
114 x 22 x 10 in

Figure 12



Uncomfortable Restrictions, 2005
26 x 5 x 6 in

Figure 15



Living in Someone Else's Life, 2005
38 x 8 x 5 in

Figure 16



Internal Stress, 2005
54 x 26 x 16 in

Figure 18



Escaping What Binds, 2005
62 x 23 x 16 in

Figure 20



Escaping What Binds (close up), 2005
62 x 23 x 16 in

Figure 21



Fractured Mental State, 2005
14 x 5 x 5 in

Figure 22



Snapshots of Mania #1, 2005
24 x 36 x 4 in

Figure 24



Snapshots of Mania #1, 2005
24 x 36 x 4 in

Figure 25



Controlled Numbness, 2005
24 x 36 x 4 in

Figure 26



Repressed Angst, 2005
12 x 5 x 4 in

Figure 27



Silent Commitment, 2005
12 x 3 x 4 in

Figure 28



Close Range Victims of Their Sawed Off Mouths (installation view), 2005
Size varies

Figure 30



Close Range Victims of Their Sawed Off Mouths (installation view, wood figure), 2005
Size varies

Figure 31



Close Range Victims of Their Sawed Off Mouths (installation view of wall)
2005, Size varies

Figure 32



Close Range Victims of Their Sawed Off Mouths (installation view of wall)
2005, Size varies

Figure 33



Close Range Victims of Their Sawed Off Mouths (installation view), 2005
Size varies

Figure 34



"Bagged" series (installation view), 2005
size varies

Figure 36

Bibliography

1. Art Fabrication Services. Glass Foundry. "Karen LaMonte" 20 April 2005.
<http://www.artfabrication.com/artist_frame_klm.htm>
2. A. I. T. News May 2003 Arts Initiative Tokyo. 25 April 2005. <http://www.a-i-t.net/news/005/ichihara_i.html>
3. Andrew Barton: Sculpture May 2005. Kulternett. 17 March 2005 <<http://kunst.no/barton>>
4. Bauer, Marilyn. "Artist Transforms Her Image For Snapshots." The Cincinnati Enquirer May 29 2003. 22 April 2005 <http://www.enquirer.com/editions/2003/05/29/tem_cacdountdown29.html>
5. Cromwell, Jim Homepage. Propped Jenny Saville 21 April 2005.
<<http://www.himcromwell.mcmail.com/indexnew.htm>>
6. "Corporal Identity - Body Language" November 14, 2003 - May 16, 2004. Museum of Arts and Design 20 April 2005.
7. Dictionary.com. 2005. Lexico Publishing Group, LLC. 1 June 2005.
<<http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=environment>>
8. Europalia 2001 Poland 2001. The Polish Culture in Europe. Adam Mickiewicz Institute. 25 April 2005.
<<http://www.europalia.pl/www.europalia.pl/en/homeo1.html>>
9. Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institute and The Art Institute of Chicago. Neal Bgnezra, Olga M. Uiso, Michael Brenson and Paul Schimmel. Juan Munoz Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001
10. Hurt, Cindy. "Frances Bagley" Absence/Presence." Sculpture Magazine December, 2004
11. Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. Louise Bourgeois: Life as Art Denmark: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 2003
12. Magdalena Abakanowicz: Androgyn III 2000-2005. The Metropolitan Museum of Art. 26 April 2005.
<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/ho/11/euwo/ho_1986.221a,b.htm>
13. Mahoney, Andrew S. M.S.,L.P.C., and L.M.F.T. Counseling the Gifted: In Search of Identity R.W. Casselman. 2001-2005. Hostway. <http://www.hostway.com>. 3 June 2005.
<<http://www.counselingthegifted.com>>
14. Rose, Barbara. Magdalena Abakanowicz New York: Harry N. Abrams Inc. 1994
15. San Francisco Museum of Art. Ed Elisabeth Sussman. Eva Hesse New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2002
16. Schaesberg, Petrus Graf and Rainer Crone. Louise Bourgeois: The Secret of the Cells Munich, London, New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1998
17. Tony Oursler/Online May 2005. Solio Hang. 25 April 2005 <<http://www.tonyoursler.com>>