

DAYDREAMS OF A DAYDREAMER

BY

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Introduction

"What is most truly human about man, what is perhaps his greatest gift derived from evolution and perhaps his greatest resource in his mastery of the environment and of himself, is his capacity for fantasy."

-Jerome Singer

The mind is inherently restless. Fifteen to 50 percent of our days consist of daydreaming. Research has found that daydreaming is our minds default mode. It brings us not only unforeseen hours of virtual pleasure and joy, guilt and anxiety, but it also helps generate our sense of self and may even be a key to consciousness.

"Daydreams of a Daydreamer" is an investigation of my hopes, aspirations and desires. Often we daydream about a better life, making resolutions to our current circumstances, yet there is always tension because we bind our daydreaming to unchangeable characteristics our realities. Having been brought up in an extremely religious environment and recently "coming out of the closet" there is a continuing urge in my life to resolve these opposing cultures. Though I no longer practice my former religion, I am learning to make peace with how it shapes who I am.

Concrete and crochet represent perceived characteristics of these two cultures. Respectively they characterize our physical needs and carnal desires, and our need for spiritual well being. The materials mended into each sculpture are a way of mediating between the two. This mending in my art is a way of healing. However, these works also take on more somber tensions that reminiscent of confinement.

Within the process of life molding and casting I drew out physical depictions of needs, wants and desires. I cast figure in fragments in order to pinpoint areas of tension and relaxation.

All the casts were from the male figure as a form of self-investigation. The repetitive action of crocheting served a rhythmic motion that provided me with ample time to daydream. Crocheting became a form of busy work that let my mind drift and sift through various thoughts. The crochet also served as a spiritual signifier. It flows covers and embeds itself within the figure. But at the same time it can be distinctive from the body, resonating my thoughts on how spirituality seems to support us, give us hope and weave in and out of our lives.

Themes and Surroundings

Within my work, there are a variety of themes: aspiration, apprehension, bondage and resolution. I see these ideas as different functioning components in my work. Aspirations relate more to the pose of the figure. These figures are frontal and the limbs are open and accepting as if aspiring to be in a more graceful state. Apprehension comes as seclusion and isolation in that the figures turn away from the viewer, weary of what might be expected of them or banished to a solitary place. Bondage surfaces in work such that the figures become limited in their pose due to the restraints of the crochet and suspenders. Resolution can be found in the extension of the body as it exerts itself beyond its known existence. These themes find themselves in multiple pieces and create deeper meaning for my work.

With each figure and the themes they convey I tried to create distinct environments. Sculptural objects are often stationary and isolated. Without a home, or a devoted place, they become objects with no value. My work extends beyond that placement and identity of objects. The environments created for the work are devised from the places I go to think and daydream. These places include the sauna, my bed, and broad stretches of grass. I decided to incorporate

hints of these surroundings. (For example the smaller sauna benches to help support many of the pieces, pillows to cradle others and grass to open up the figure.)

On Process

My work has always been process driven. I enjoy getting into the thick of material exploration, letting it influence my work conceptually and contextually.

The crochet worked into the pieces the summer before my thesis year started. I was bored at work, a telemarketing job, and needed something to keep my fingers busy. I had drawn other phone operators and created T-pin art on the wall of my cubicle but needed something that would produce a tangible object, so I started to crochet. I secretly crocheted little unmentionables that could be easily packed away. They were simple yet flirty. I had been inspired by *Naughty Needles Knittings* by a New York come Kansan artist Nikol Lohr. I was impressed by her insertion of a domestic process into a burlesque environment, and so I used my own skills in crocheting to fashion a men's own unmentionable. I wanted to create work based on the fetishization of crochet. This work spurred forward into my thesis work.

Crochet not only served as a way of up-playing fetish into my work, but also delved into my ideas about daydreams and fantasy. The nature of repetitious action can either become a bodily behavioral reinforcement, or assist in containing bodily actions that encourages mental musing and contemplation or daydreaming.

Because I linked crocheting with the act of daydreaming, I feel there is a connection between crocheting and the spiritual. Within my religious upbringing there was a clear distinction between objects of the world and the intangibles of the spirit. Things of the world were taught to me as being unnecessary wants and desires based on instant gratification; while

things of the spirit were based on timelessness, things that were virtuous and praiseworthy. I see crochet with this timelessness, it seems effortless yet demonstrates hours upon hours of work.

Concrete has also been an important part of my work process. Mold making fascinates me as does any material that can be used in mold making. The porous nature of concrete and my ability to form it freely while still moist has greatly helped create this work. It has allowed me to investigate the body as a shell, and given me the chance to then investigate and work with the inner side of the shell. I was also able to introduce color to the work by dyeing the material.

Another very important part of my process has been working with figure models. I have been insistent that my models be gay men, because I am gay and my work is self-investigatory. I have also included molds of my body in the show. I have found that I highly value the life molding process and my interaction with the models. As many life-molding sessions have included rich conversation. By sharing personal narratives, opportunities occur for me to learn more about myself through the lives of others. In turn the models learn about my creative work, dreams, and hopes. With that comes a deeper connection beyond that of artist and model that helps inform future work. It is also ingrained in the life of the resulting form.

Conclusion

To say I have come to a conclusion through the investigation of this work seems impossible. By exploring subjects relating to my daydreams, hopes and aspirations I've only that there is more to research. Material processes have also raised the same call to duty, that I must learn more and delve deeper into the possibilities of these resources. However, I do feel a greater sense of resolve in my life. My life hasn't been the easiest, and I have trials and tribulations comparatively equal to others. By making this work I have been able to confront

some of these personal issues. I know I may never be able to make perfect peace with the conflicting aspects of my life, but now I have a way of working toward a certain tranquility and wholeness. As for viewers I hope they can look at these flights of fancy and discover within themselves where their daydreams take them. Understanding daydreams may seem like fickle territory but it's through understanding what we desire that we can turn them into realities.

Images



Fig. 1 (Upper) "Of Wandering Gazes and Meandering Eyes"
(Lower) "Once Upon a Tethered Yearning"



Fig. 2 "Sunshine Mango"



Fig. 3 "Of Wandering Eyes and Meandering Gazes"



Fig. 4 (Lower Left) "Once Upon a Tethered Yearning"
(Center Right) "Sunshine Mango"



Fig. 5 (Upper Left) "Once Upon a Tethered Yearning
(Upper Center) "Of Wandering Eyes and Meandering Gazes"
(Upper Right) "Sunshine Mango"
(Lower Right) "Alternate Altar Boy"



Fig. 6 (Left to Right) "Faint Fate"
"Daydreams of Men with Long Legs"
"He Told Me Not to Say"



Fig. 7 "I'm Fine"



Fig. 8 "Suspend Me Tight, Like This!"



Fig. 9 (Left to Right) "I'm Fine"
"Caught Up in the Moment"
"Suspend Me Tight, Like This"



Fig. 10 (Left to Right) "Faint Fate"
"Salvation by Marination"
"He Told Me Not to Say"



Fig. 11 "Salvation by Marination"



Fig. 12 "Faint Fate"



Fig. 13

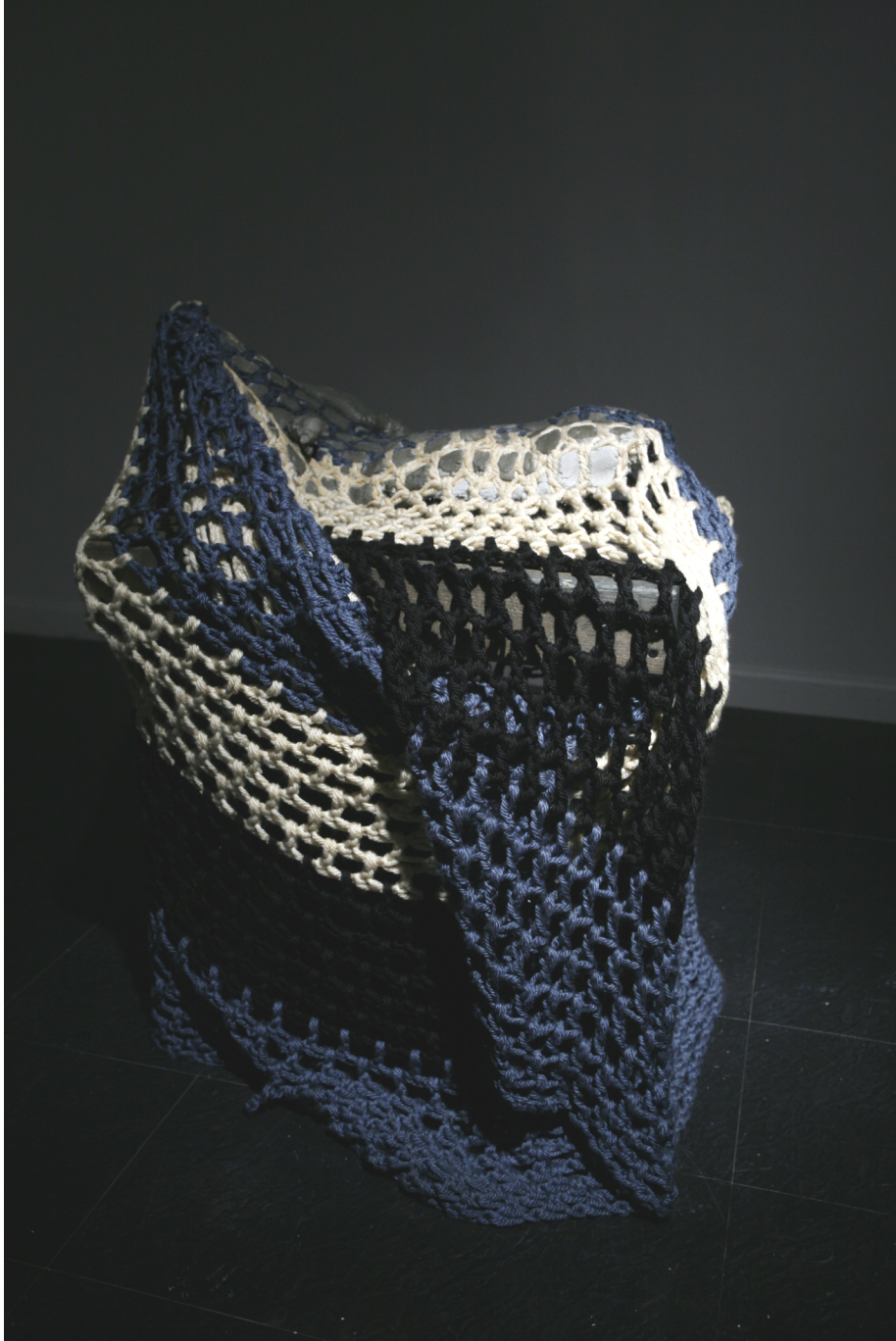


Fig. 14 "He Told Me Not to Say"



Fig. 15

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