

ENLARGED TO SHOW TEXTURE

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Ella Weber

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ENLARGED TO SHOW TEXTURE

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ABSTRACT

Enlarged to Show Texture is an exhibition that utilizes video, sound, installation, and print media to activate the viewer's senses as a means to investigate the surface and depth of an idealistic image. This work simultaneously celebrates and critiques the fabricated happiness and artificiality pervasive in our society, while drawing relationships between the everyday rituals, consumerism, religion and sexuality.

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INTRODUCTION

The title, *Enlarged to Show Texture*, is taken from the fine print printed on many consumer food packages in which the image on the box is enlarged and therefore deceiving, as its appearance tends to be more appealing than the reality found inside. Through print, video, sound and installation I explore the tension between the outer surface of an idealistic image and the inner reality of one's identity. By engaging the viewer's senses, I investigate the physical surface and psychological depth of sprinkles and household products in relation to the mind and body. This work is intended to be both seductive and grotesque as it reveals and conceals the enlarged texture or depth of idealism. In regards to this show, texture is equated with depth and reality. Image or surface is equated with superficiality and artificiality. By elevating and enlarging the generic product for the viewer, I question what the image points to beyond the surface of humor and absurdity-and into the texture of the sublime.

As a child I recall sitting down for breakfast numerous times, staring at the idealized image printed on the cereal box, in relation to the soggy bowl of reality in front of me. At an early age I was fascinated with the disconnect between desire and fulfillment in advertising. The divide between a presented image and reality never seemed to align.

Transitioning into adulthood, I have become obsessed and repulsed by the superficial realism of our consumer driven and self seeking culture that encompasses my daily routine, as I too fall for the deceptions of a mere image while desiring happiness and meaning in my life. More often than not, our society masks the realities of life with overconsumption, superficiality, humor, entertainment, and positivity. In his book *Against Happiness*, Eric G. Wilson writes, "Driven by a desire for happiness, at the expense of sadness, bolstered by capitalistic seeing

and virtual reality, obsessed with abstraction and delusion, most of us are walking around half blind. By worshipping happiness I blind myself to the planet.” (Wilson, 2008)

The work in this exhibition simultaneously celebrates and critiques the fabricated happiness pervasive in our society in relation to desire and image. *Enlarged to Show Texture* is a personal attempt to place my identity from childhood to the present within the context of consumerism, the everyday, religion and sexuality, while searching for substance amidst the trivial and artificial.

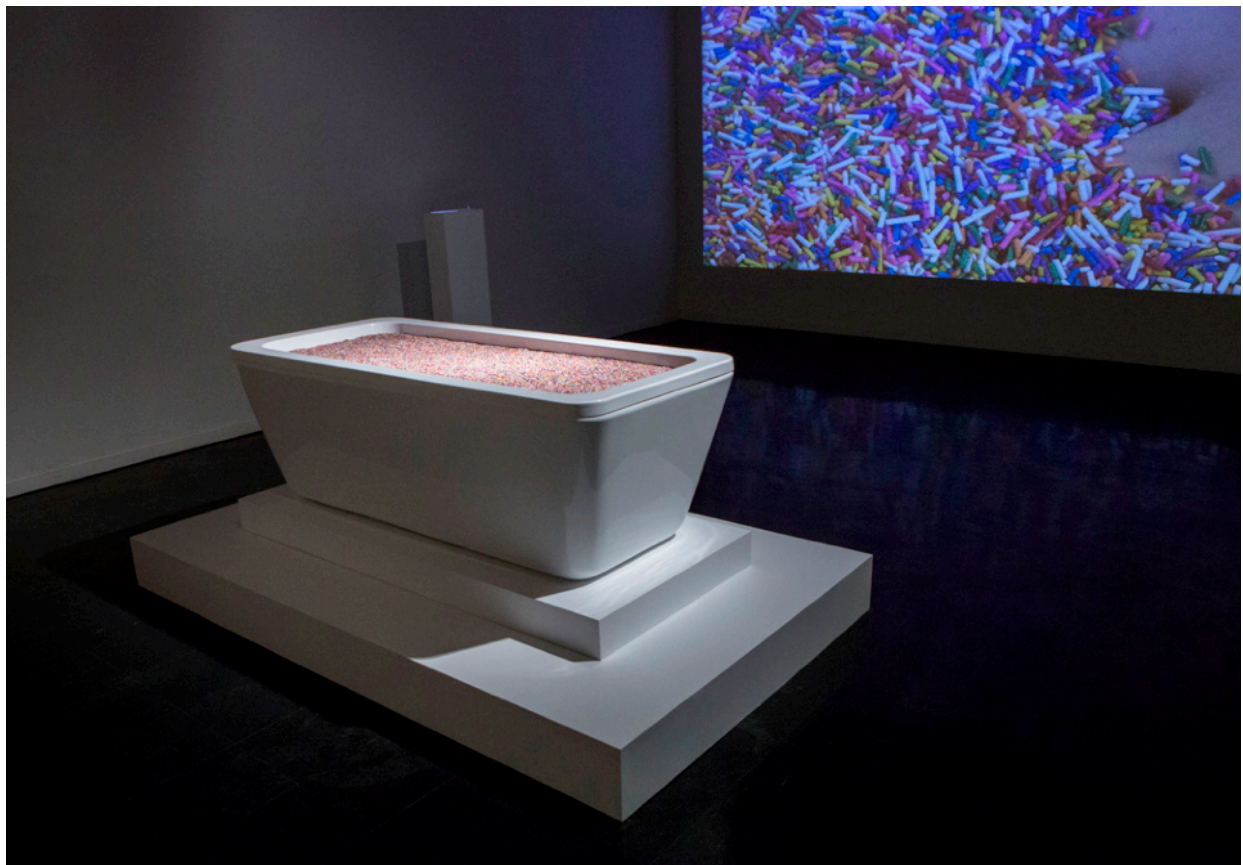


Figure 1. *Enlarged to Show Texture*, Installation Shot, 2015

OVERVIEW OF THE INSTALLATION

The exhibition encompasses the mind and body of the viewer. By igniting the viewer's senses through motion, sound, and colorful visuals, the viewer is left to desire the sense of taste and touch, to desire reality.

The central piece of the installation is a bathtub filled with 40 gallons of rainbow sprinkles elevated on a two-tiered white platform. The viewer is confronted with the sugary smell of sprinkles wafting from the tub. Because the sprinkles are smoothed over, the surface appears flat, leaving the viewer to question whether or not the sprinkles are real, or rather, a mere image of sprinkles.

The bathtub is not only a container for the sprinkles, but also a container for my body bathing in these sprinkles, which was filmed, and then projected on the north wall. This large-scale video runs for the duration of 14 minutes on continuous loop to symbolize the repetition of the every day, the continual cycle of desire and fulfillment within consumerism, religion and sexuality. Baudrillard explains the intertwining of projected screens and the mental screens of our brains.

“Because they operate in indefinite continuity in a superficial indistinction between subject and object, interior and exterior, question and answer, event and image—a contiguity that can only be solved in a loop, simulating the mathematical figure for infinity.” (Baudrillard, 1988)

The projection's size engulfs the viewer as it encompasses the majority of the 15-foot

wall. While getting lost in the mesmerizing motion of flesh and sprinkles, the viewer begins to imagine what it feels like to bathe in sprinkles. Due to the control I had framing each scene, I am able to present a deceptive image far from reality. Although it might appear appealing, bathing in sprinkles was far from fulfilling. The sprinkles were cold, irritated my bare skin, and traveled up my nose, into my ears and mouth, leaving me sick to my stomach. Unlike water, I had to manually bury myself to make it appear as if I was comfortably covered in sprinkles.

Each frame is intentionally enlarged to only reveal fragments of my body, and thus appear digitally manipulated or collaged. For example in one segment, I transition from my leg to a magnified finger, leaving the viewer to question the reality of scale.

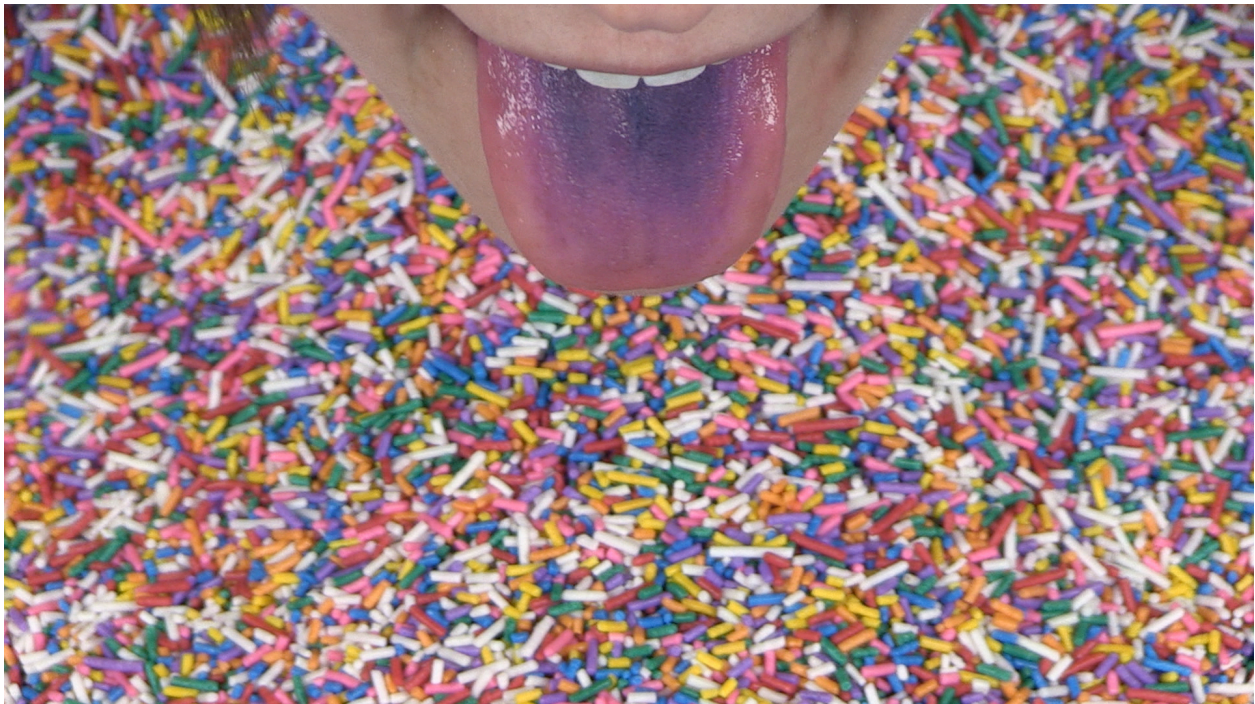


Figure 2. *Enlarged to Show Texture*, Video Still, Dimensions Variable, 2015

The sound component of the video is inescapable upon entering the gallery. The repetitive motion of digging my hands through the sprinkles, mimic the waves of an ocean. This sound is relaxing, meditative, and mesmerizing. Although the motion of sprinkles, reflect the

sound of nature, in reality, the sound is artificially made, referencing only an image of water. In addition to the resonating echoes of water, abrupt sounds of chewing, spitting, lip smacking, gargling and slapping bring the viewer back to reality, in an attempt to disrupt the idealized image. This duality of mesmerizing and grotesque create a balance of unsettling tension for the viewer.

On the opposing wall hang three digitally printed white towels adhered to panels similar in size to that of a typical bathroom towel. Because the towels were scanned at high resolutions, the minute subtleties of their texture are enlarged. Their soft wrinkles begin to resemble ripples in water or sand. The prints function as physical objects, yet appear soft to the touch, amplifying the duality between reality and artificiality, between functionality and symbolism.

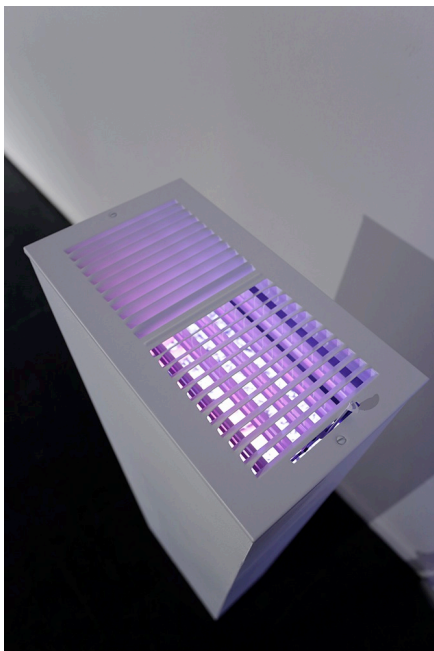


Figure 3. *Clean Hands*, Blu-ray player, Pico Projector, vent, pedestal, 50"x13.75"x7.75", 2015

Similar to the placement of a vent in a home, near the edge of the wall, stands a 50" tall white pedestal topped with a ventilation cover. Just as the viewer must look downward into the tub, so too, they must look inside the opening of the vent in order to view a small video projection. The video is a short two and half minute looping depiction of my hands massaging shags of flesh colored carpet. As I slowly pour water and sprinkles, my hands and carpet are stained purple. The act of looking inward and downward, is a metaphor for looking beneath the surface of an image, an attempt at self reflection in which the stains

point to a dirtier reality, hidden within the outer image of cleanliness and idealized perfection.

The final element of the exhibition located near the entry of the gallery is a commercially produced large coffee table book. This book acts as a store catalogue, bathtub reading material, and a religious book of liturgy. It is 76 pages of scanned images showcasing mundane carpet textures with various food particle stains. In between the images are six poems that I wrote, allowing the viewer to further read into the conceptual intentions of the exhibition. Words and images work together as a vital role in communication and meaning in consumerism, daily life, and religion.



Figure 4. *Enlarged To Show Texture*, Hardcover Book, 12"x 12", 76 pages, 2015

Carpet Spills

Sinking into the shallowness
of my carpeted being, stretched
wall to wall
digging under the tightly knit shags
and curls of woven desires intertwined
with synthetic hopes and dreams
of past polyester plush

my self reflection sustain
stained textures enlarged
soaked densely through
the seams of manufactured rest

I'm tugging at contentment
Dispensing smoothness down my throat
spilling sauce, ooze on accident
then dust off crumbs and sweat

I question my mark
mere threshold
the reality covered
dripping beneath my deceptive look
Please vacuum and digest
the excess
of my optimistic disdain

Weber, Ella. *Carpet Spills*, poem, 2015

Although each component in the exhibition relates to my identity within everyday rituals, consumerism, religion and sexuality, together they work as a whole to draw parallels between each category, creating an immersive and stimulating experience for the viewer. Just as shopping, taking a bath, worshiping, and engaging in sexual activity is a common personal experience, likewise, *Enlarged to Show Texture* is intended to be a personal experience in which the viewer can relate to, both bodily and psychologically via external means.

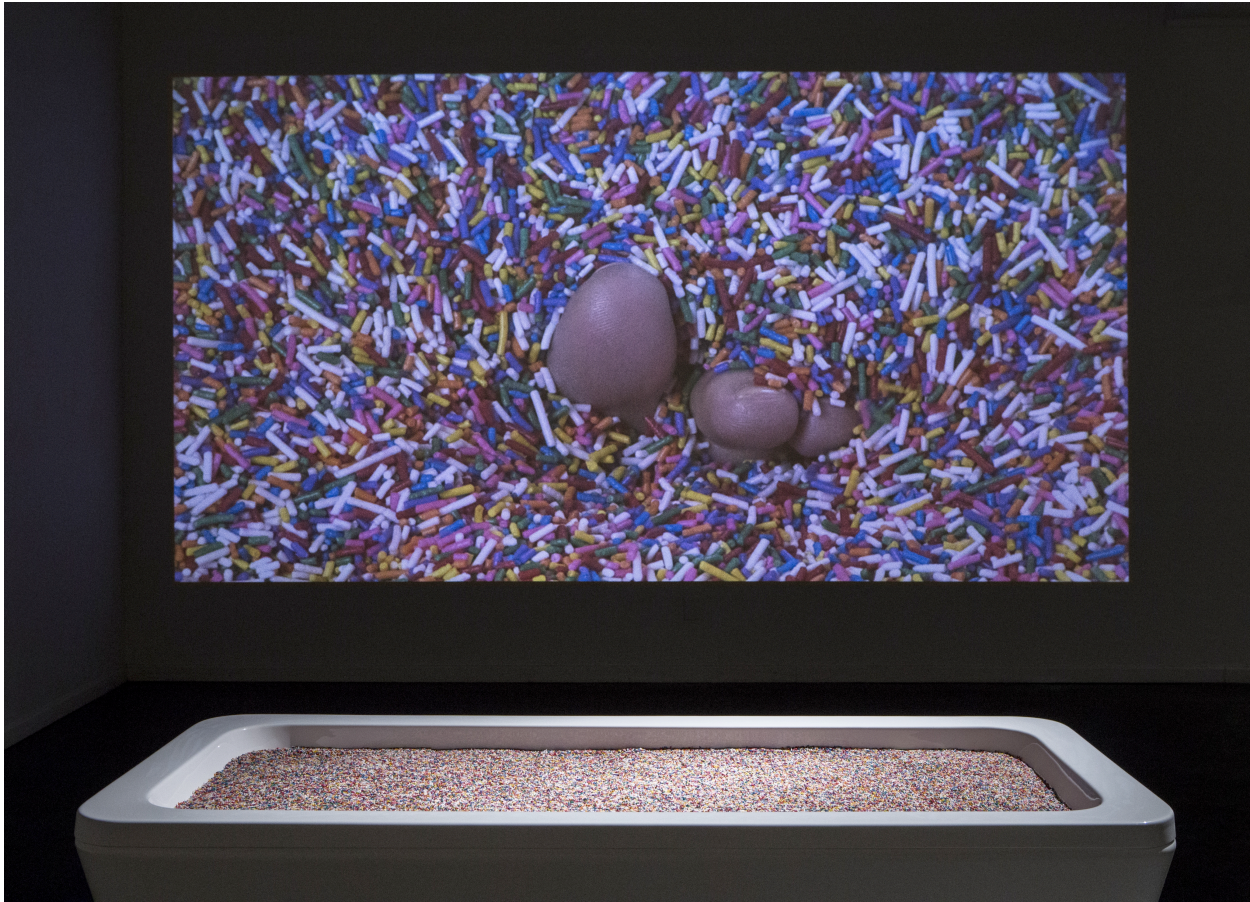


Figure 5. *Enlarged to Show Texture*, Installation Shot, 2015

CONSUMERISM

“Buying is much more American than thinking.”-Andy Warhol (Warhol, 1975)

As I become consumed by consumption, my identity is continually conflicted between the superficial façade of our consumer society and the desire to grasp a deeper reality beyond the empty promises of advertisement. In his book *Simulations*, Baudrillard writes, “What society seeks through production, and overproduction, is the restoration of the real, which escapes it.” (Baudrillard, 1983) Consumerism, although necessary for economic purposes, provokes a narcissistic and individualistic mindset, that when taken too far can resemble a pseudo religion and sense of identity obsessed with finding happiness or meaning, grounded in

materialism. As Barbara Kruger famously proclaimed in one of her works, “I shop, therefore I am.” (Kruger, 1987)

As a consumer and former employee at many retail stores, I’ve become infatuated with the presentation of products in relation to the consumer’s experience. Consumers walk, browse, buy objects, make connections, and compare as a quest for efficient spending toward the pursuit of happiness, or at the very least a good deal. Through this search, a sense of desire is ignited, fueling a lack of contentment and a need for more icons of happiness and desire. “Happiness, is the absolute reference of the consumer society: it is the strict equivalent of salvation,” (Baudrillard, 1998) This constant quest for products reflects my daily routine of a continuous attempt to browse for, construct meaning and consume real satisfaction.

Therefore I employ mass produced products within my work as a means to connect with the common American. For the production of *Enlarged To Show Texture*, I purchased a variety of manufactured products, including an Ove Décor freestanding bathtub, Threshold towels from Target, a generic household vent cover from Home Depot, and 40 gallons of rainbow sprinkles from Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt. Not only did I consume products for the installation, but I was consumed by the products, specifically, sprinkles. By filming myself bathing in sprinkles, while simultaneously eating handfuls of them, I become overwhelmed with the artificial and temporary positivity of consumerism that continually absorbs my everyday.

Although the majority of the video is mesmerizing and playful, the middle section is intended to reveal a layer closer to reality. Here the camera is zoomed in on my mouth from above, while I stuff sprinkles down my throat. Fully aware that I am being watched, I attempt to chew the sprinkles for the duration of 5 minutes, but inevitably spit them out. Since the food

coloring of the rainbow sprinkles mix with my saliva, the aftermath is a dark purple, thick liquid substance. Too much sugar makes one sick.

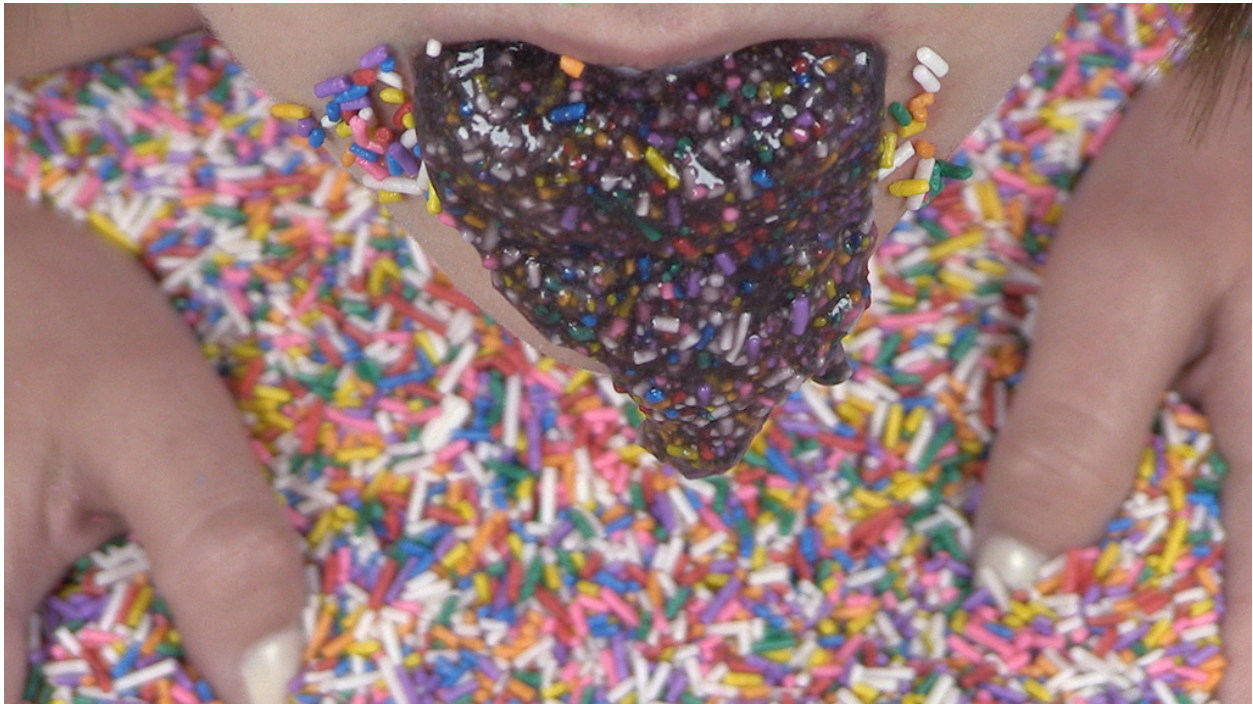


Figure 6. *Enlarged to Show Texture*, Video Still, Dimensions Variable, 2015

Retail stores often display an staggering amount of mass produced products, organized in grids and center aisle displays. If not arranged in an ordered or logical pattern, the consumer becomes disoriented, losing his or her sense of self in an overtly materialized landscape.

“Few objects today are offered alone without a context of objects which “speaks” them...Almost all shops offer a range of differentiated objects, evoking, echoing and offsetting one another...What mass communications give us, is not reality but the dizzying whirl of reality.” (Baudrillard, 1998)

For the exhibition, many initial materials and idea were edited out, prompting a minimal installation. The precise, geometric shape of the platform and other formal structures are intended to reference minimalism. These mechanically mass-produced elements employ an

emotionally blank and impersonal uniformity within the installation. The only evidence of the hand is found in the creation of the visually appealing videos. Together a dichotomy of playfulness and solemnity is instilled. This minimal organization allows the viewer to better grasp a sense of order and meaning, rather than becoming overwhelmed by the amount of colors and products. “ The less there is to look at, the more you have to look, the more you have to be *in* the picture.” (Varnedoe, 2006) This philosophy challenges the viewer to genuinely look in order to fully experience the exhibition.

Along with this, advertising presents an image of individuality with the façade of choice, when in reality the same product is being sold to millions of people. As a current employee at Orange Leaf Frozen Yogurt, I am aware of the positive presentation in conjunction with the vast amount of individualized choices. Once a customer walks in he or she is greeted with the promise of satisfaction. During my shifts the carefree music of Jack Johnson directs the mood on loop. Customers are greeted with happy hellos, and fluorescent painted walls of positivity. Children and parents alike, smile in tune to the comfort and immediacy of sweet treats. Each topping is displayed in an organized grid-like pattern. With over 40 different toppings, and thousands of yogurt combinations, the customer could easily become disillusioned if it weren't for the orderly display and inviting atmosphere.

Of all the topping options, rainbow sprinkles remain the most popular. Tempting because of their color, sweetness and childhood nostalgia, sprinkles provide instant gratification. However they are artificial, lacking both substance and nutrition. At Orange Leaf they are stored in clear gallon bins that are refilled daily. The motion that the sprinkles make when poured into these containers captivate me. Due to this activity, I wanted to transform and

enlarge this movement, hence the idea for a larger container and an enlarged video projection. The choice to use sprinkles in *Enlarged to Show Texture* was also derived from the many positive comments made during my shifts. “You can’t be sad with sprinkles!” “Sprinkles are the happiest of foods!” “Sprinkles are for winners!” By offering sprinkles as an option, I was essentially offering a universal taste of childlike happiness, of course, temporary, naive and artificial.

THE EVERYDAY RITUALS

“We can at the same time define the locus of consumption: daily life. This latter is not merely the sum of daily doings, the dimension of banality and repetition: it is a system of interpretation. Everydayness is the separation of a total praxis into a transcendent, autonomous and abstract sphere.” (Baudrillard, 1998)

Growing up in Midwest suburbia has deeply influenced my art making and identity in relation to the mundane, banal and the everyday rituals. The Suburban landscape reeks of sameness, predictability and comfort. In his book *Against Happiness*, Wilson writes about suburbia as a flight from the real:

“We are in love not with actual atmospheres but with abstract predictabilities, with security over sanctification, with smooth monotones over pied poplars. This love of bland comfort will one day ironically get us exactly what we think we want, an utterly undifferentiated wasteland where everything is exactly the same as everything else...This is a high price to pay for superficial bliss.” (Wilson, 2008)

Although I moved a dozen times throughout the Midwest, I lived the longest in

Nebraska. Its former state slogan, “The Good Life” as well as its current slogan, “Visit Nebraska, Visit Nice,” reveals the idealistic image of the Midwest and the American dream. The stereotypical Midwesterner strives to be a good person. He or she works hard and loves God, family and friends. Sentimental sayings such as *Live Laugh Love* are plastered across the living rooms of many homes. As the artist Mike Kelley noted in an early interview, “Your mom’s living room represents her ideology.” (Fialka, 2012) So too, with *Enlarged to Show Texture*, I investigate the symbolism associated with the mundane décor and rituals of suburbia while appealing to the common denominator.

Mike Kelley’s retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam influenced me to include video as a major component of *Enlarged to Show Texture*. I was impressed with Kelley’s ability to subvert popular culture and the banality of the everyday by activating multiple mediums, from drawing to sculpture. I was particularly drawn to his video and sound installation, *Day is Done*, which disrupts common everyday rituals and routines. His choice of video and sound confronted my whole body, both internally and externally. Another artist that influenced my decision to create a video is Shana Moulton. “Her practice investigates the relationship between American consumer culture and the New Age movement, highlighting consumerism’s influence on wellness and spiritual fulfillment.” (Moss, 2015) She primarily uses her body in her videos to engage the viewer. Both artists made me rethink the use of my body and interaction with the viewer through the medium of video.

Similarly, Mika Rottenberg talks about manifesting the internal through video in a 2010 interview in BOMB magazine.

“We’re all trapped inside this box we call our body. I’m interested in cinema’s quest to

represent internal things visually. In porn films, the “money shot” is a way to represent the material evidence of male pleasure. What would be the other ways you could visualize desire or pleasure? I thought about emotional architecture and the emotional space that video allows. Often in cinema, there’s no separation between internal thought and the external manifestation. It’s about this attempt to translate a sensation.” (Rottenberg, 2010)



Figure 7. *Enlarged to Show Texture*, Installation Shot, 2015

Throughout the monotonous motions of my everyday routine I am increasingly aware of repetitive small talk. Daily conversations revert to trivial formalities of ritual, lacking substance or depth. According to these small conversations everyone is “good.” “The persistent intoning of “I’m fine,” “I’m fine” pushes down the gloom.” (Wilson, 2008)

Small talk

I bite into an English muffin dipped in butter
on a stick hardened like a DQ dilly bar.
Ma'am is this product gluten free and fat free
How do you stay so thin?

Jack Johnson interrupts
I force another smile
I wish my teeth were whiter
blowing pink bubbles of positivity
Dumping sprinkles on other kids dreams
Yes definitely, we are better off together

How's it going?
Oh pretty good
I'm doing good
I'm good
A little tired but good
Its good
Its going good
It's all good
I'm good.

Scrolling down
Into a purse full of cellophane
Fluorescent happiness clamped to a cage
Making banana pancakes while
Suppressing reality until it's all just
Surface mist

Weber, Ella. *Small Talk*, poem, 2015

“Positivity is not so much our condition or our mood as it is part of our ideology, the way we explain the world and think we ought to function within it. That ideology is positive thinking.” (Ehrenreich, 2010) The use of the repetitive motion of bathing in Sprinkles speaks to this artificial happiness. According to Baudrillard, “The fascination of senseless repetition is already present in the abstraction of the journey.” (Baudrillard, 1998) Daily tasks, under the

realm of fabricated happiness, become so monotonous that I start to question if there is anything more substantial to life.

In the context of *Enlarged to Show Texture*, I expand upon the every day ritual of taking a bath. In order to present the best representation of ourselves we either shower or bathe on a daily basis. We wake up, undress, shower, wash our face, exfoliate our skin, shampoo our hair, shave, and dry off, only to get dirty again and repeat the ritual. For this exhibition I was specifically interested in the ritual of bathing, due to its connotations with relaxation, meditation, and immersive qualities. Whereas water cleanses, shows us our reflection, quenches our thirst, and sustains our well being, sprinkles do not. However, since the bathtub in the exhibition is filled with sprinkles, it distorts a true reflection. By using sprinkles as a metaphor, I investigate how our culture desires objects that do not always satisfy, and so the cycle continues.



Figure 8. *Enlarged to Show Texture*, Video Still, Dimensions Variable, 2015

THE GOOD LIFE WELCOMES ME

(Loosely according to psalm 23)

You make me lie down in generic carpet
You lead me beside tiled aisles
You refresh my indebted soul

Give us our daily bread I pray
That'll be 2.15 with tax

But I donate an extra dollar to pay my dues,
To fight disease, to stomp out diabetes
To raise awareness, to save the children
To symbolically adopt a tiger
To support the troops
To feed the hungry

Never admitting out loud
I don't fully understand how walking cures cancer
Nevertheless, You refresh

The GPS guides me in paths of accuracy
My mother texts me safety and love
As I drive 5 above
Through the valleys of strip malls
And shadows of cautionary billboards

I will fear no discomfort
For Nebraska is nice
Suburban sameness surrounds
Your smiles and nods
They comfort me

Weber, Ella. *The Good Life*, poem, 2015

RELIGION

Throughout my life, my identity has largely been consumed by religion, and my spiritual journey of belief in pursuit of the truth. My father is a retired minister. My mother is a pharmacist. Both occupations foster the health of one's earthly life. Growing up, my mother's

occupation promoted bodily health, while my father's occupation stressed a spiritual health for today and the after life. Together they influenced me to value life in terms of the body and mind, both science and religion coexisting.

Although each mode of thinking provided and promoted good health, I was aware of the dualities associated with them. Within the realm of pharmaceuticals are addictions, abuse and overdoses, stemming from an obsession with the desire to not feel pain, or reality. "Despite Americans reputation of a positive people, Americans account for 2/3 of the global market for antidepressants, which also happens to be the most commonly prescribed drug in America." (Ehrenreich, 2010) Likewise in religion, sin, guilt, self-righteousness, legalism and hypocrisy are coexisting elements with love, forgiveness, selflessness and grace.

Throughout my spiritual journey, I never desired to use Christianity as a coping mechanism to help me suppress reality. If I was going to place my trust in God and truly believe in the profound claims of the Bible, I only wanted to do so because I firmly believe it to be the ultimate truth. It has been important for me to not just know *what* I believe but *why* I believe. However, I quickly realized how mainstream America has water downed Christianity, presenting it as a therapeutic self-help guide to achieve a rich earthly life. In many evangelical churches, Christianity no longer is primarily about God, but about man. Sermons become less and less Biblical, small groups feel more like therapy sessions, and church services resemble concerts.

"Often resembling motivational speeches the sermons are generally about how to live a successful life-or Jesus meets the power of positive thinking. They are encouraging, upbeat and usually follow on the heels of a music and video presentation."(Ehrenreich, 2010) As an avid music lover I have attended countless concerts and festivals. Through moving visuals on

screens, lighting, and sound, the audience is fully engaged. People dance, raise their arms, and connect with the artist and crowd surrounding them. If taken out of context many of these concerts resemble contemporary worship services. By using video, sound and installation I wanted to capture these experiences within this exhibition.

Unlike the awe inspiring designs of cathedrals, many churches now meet in school gymnasiums, auditoriums or living rooms. Believing in Jesus equates to swallowing a pill in order to make one feel better. God is sentimentalized into happy clichés, as he is smiling down upon the world. The American trivialization of religion has aided to the commercialization of religion, devoid of beauty and sacredness.

“You’re just as likely to hear the words “market share” and “branding” in church staff meetings these days as you are in any corporate office. Mega churches such as Saddleback in Lake Forest, Calif., and Lakewood in Houston have entire marketing departments devoted to enticing new members.” (Evans, 2015) Joel Osteen, pastor of Lakewood mega church in Houston, has written many national sellers, such as *Your Best Life Now*, and *Become a Better You*. “Even God plays only a supporting role, and by no means an indispensable one...Gone is the mystery and awe; he has been reduced to a kind of majordomo or personal assistant.” (Ehrenreich, 2010) With a lack of substance and depth, Religion for many has become part of a social construct, something that is held onto for the sake of tradition, status, and being a “good” citizen. Fabricated religion, like consumerism sells an image, devoid of substance and truth.

For the installation in *Enlarged to Show Texture*, the design of the platform is meant to reference a church altar or stage. Due to its heightened prominence, resting below a 30-foot

ceiling, and dim lit spotlights, I hope to awaken a sense of awe and reverence. Simultaneously, by elevating something as ordinary as a bathtub, I attempt to draw relationships between the everyday and the divine. The shape of the tub and reference to water signifies the ritual of baptism. Whereas taking a bath cleanses the physical body, baptism uses water symbolically to cleanse one spiritually through external means.

The decision to hang three towels is to symbolize the trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit while acting as stand-ins for church like banners or stained glass windows. Yet they also function as everyday towels hung in bathrooms. Like many of the elements in *Enlarged to Show Texture*, the towels are white and spotless in order to symbolize the purity and divine qualities immersive in religion. As soon as the towels are used to dry off, over time they will become dirty and stained, suggesting sin and a sense of guilt, in need of cleansing.

Because the viewer is not allowed to touch the sprinkles, this creates a stronger desire to do so. In the Biblical account of Adam and Eve, God commanded them to not take from the tree of good and evil. This of course, with the temptation of the serpent, stirred a rebellious desire to eat and take from the lone tree that was off limits. Desiring to touch and feel the sprinkles, symbolizes the desire for reality, the desire to dig beneath the surface, whether it is good for us or not.



Figure 9. *Enlarged to Show Texture*, Installation Shot, 2015

SEXUALITY

“In the consumer package, there is one object finer, more precious and more dazzling than any other...that object is the body...It is to this extent that the body, particularly the female body...constitutes itself as an object that is the equivalent to the other sexless and functional objects purveyed in advertising” (Baudrillard, 1998)

The video in *Enlarged to Show Texture* intentionally uses my naked body. In advertising and consumerism it is universally acknowledged that sex sells. Rainbow sprinkles are eye candy

and generally loved. Therefore, Combining sprinkles and a naked woman, provokes a sexual and lustful appetite for both candy and the flesh. Because the video blends, enlarges and crops each frame to blur the boundaries between flesh and sprinkles, it equates the body to candy. My naked body is also enlarged to reference art's historic relationship to the female figure in relation to the male gaze. However, by intentionally not revealing my complete nakedness, I create a sense of desire, not fully allowing the viewer to satisfy their potentially unspoken desires. Often the desire is more appealing than the reality.

My earliest childhood memory is sitting on my grandparents' steps, praying to God to take me back up to heaven to change me into a boy. I desperately wanted to be a boy throughout my early childhood into Jr. high. Although this might have just been a phase, it made me overtly aware of the stereotypes within gender. It took a long time for me to grow into my femininity, as boys began to want more than friendships. For the video in *Enlarged to Show Texture*, I primarily wanted to use myself as the subject since my appearance is closer to that of a child than a 27-year old adult. Because of this, the video depicts a surreal tension of childlike innocence, humor and sexualized adulthood. With the use of childlike rainbow sprinkles in combination with the seductive appeal of female nudity, I aim to create an uncomfortable and unsettling experience for the viewer that questions both the weight and triviality of sex in American culture.

I never had a formal sex education, and grew up very naïve to what sex physically was. Within the context of Christianity, sex is placed upon a pedestal, as it is valued strictly within a marriage union. It symbolizes a union between Jesus and his church as it reflects the triune union. Likewise, I live in a secular culture that preaches the opposite. I'm interested in the

clashing of secular and religious standpoints on sex, between the depth of sex within religion and the relaxed view of sex within consumerism and popular culture. On the one hand sex has symbolic value and is designed to be experienced out of love, not lust. On the other hand, casual sex, “hooking up,” and pornography is many times purely selfish, lustful and superficial. “What makes hooking up unique is that its practitioners agree that there will be no commitment, no exclusivity, no feelings,” (Ehrenreich, 2010). “Sexuality, even though it is everywhere on display, it no longer has the time to realize itself in human love-relationships. It evaporates in to the promiscuity of each passing moment, into a multiplicity of more ephemeral forms of contact.” (Baudrillard, 1998) Purely physical encounters without emotional attachments happen daily.

Throughout my young adult life I have lived among the tension of placing sex on a pedestal and viewing sex as just another mundane everyday ritual. I desire God’s approval, while simultaneously desire the attention of men. I live amidst the consequences of sexual guilt and carefree promiscuity all around me. In *Enlarged to Show Texture*, my body becomes an object of affection, less of a personalized human. The aim in this video is to playfully balance a type of childlike innocence and curiosity, with an adulthood voyeuristic awareness of sexuality.

CONCLUSION

Enlarged to Show Texture utilizes many mediums such as print, video, sound, installation, and poetry in order to engage the viewer’s senses on a holistic scale by drawing parallels between the everyday, consumerism, religion and sexuality. By reverting back to a childlike innocence of carefree happiness, I immerse myself in our sentimental culture while

bathing in rainbow sprinkles. Amidst the colorful image of positivity, I hope to also provoke a sense of grotesqueness and dissatisfaction, as I desire to cleanse myself from such artificiality in a continual loop. I inevitably drown myself in my own image of femininity, guilt, and self-worship within the present. As I continue to search for substance within reality, I am left empty and stained as I reflect upon the unsubstantial value of an idealistic image within our American culture.

My intention is to activate the bodily senses and internal depths of the viewer's mind through external means. As I carefully reveal and conceal the transitional space between surface and texture, image and reality, I aim to reflect upon my own identity from childhood to adulthood. Is my presented image a genuine depiction of my inner reality? By removing these products off the shelves and placing them into a quiet minimal space, I investigate beneath the surface of the everyday by questioning what it means to be *real*, to be human.

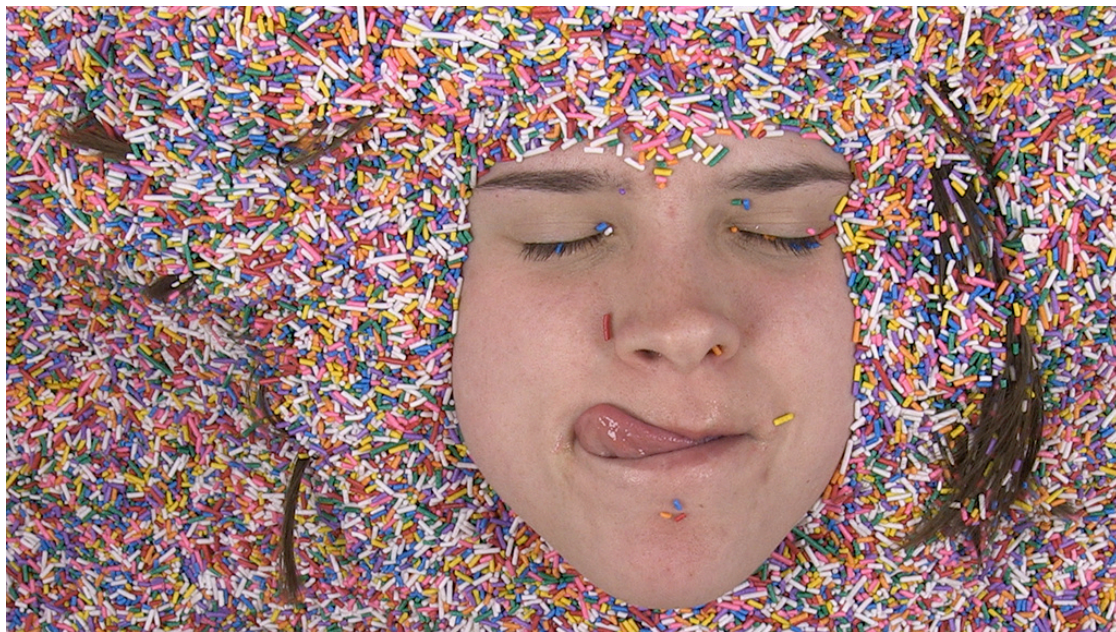


Figure 10. *Enlarged to Show Texture*, Video Still, Dimensions Variable, 2015

DIRECTIONS: APPLY, LATHER, RINSE, (REPEAT)

Step in and submerge
Pour gallons of sprinkles
down your throat
Plug the drain of the tub
Apply excessively to your skin
Squeeze your hands to
funnel the particles
through the cracks of your fingers
Splashing micro textures,
overflow

Lather yourself
in the rainbow of confection
Gently massage onto face
Exfoliating onto chest
over the lumps of your breasts
moisturize downward,
your thighs, smoothness,
revitalize your soporific pores
next your ankles
reach your feet

Rinse thoroughly
Let the sugar glaze dissolve all
colors bleed
into pools of saturation
rippling a liquid satisfaction,
removing your dirt
washed clean

Where is your reflection?

Dip your face below the surface, **on repeat**
hold your breath and sink
Relax your limbs
hydrate your desires
let your conditioned conscience
be cleansed

Weber, Ella. *Directions: Apply, Lather, Rinse, Repeat*, poem, 2015

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