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I LOVE IT WHEN YOU MAKE ME COFFEE IN THE MORNING.

By

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B.F.A. University of Southern Maine, 2017

A THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

(in Intermedia)

The Graduate School

The University of Maine

August 2020

Advisory Committee:

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I LOVE IT WHEN YOU MAKE ME COFFEE IN THE MORNING.

By Rachel Elizabeth Church

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Susan Lynn Smith

An Abstract of the Thesis Presented
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Master of Fine Arts
(in Intermedia)
August 2020

This written thesis explains the “how” and “why” of my art practice as it stands in August 2020, as well as to situate my work among other artists and overlapping non-art fields. This practice is presented in the form of a cookbook memoir titled *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning.*, which includes recipes cooked by three generations of men in my family, with a narrative from their wives.

In this book, I am examining material culture, particularly food, recipes, and cookbooks, to explore issues of gender and domesticity. I am looking to scholars in the fields of history and folklore to understand how cookbooks have been used to create community, to create or preserve a cultural feminine ideal, and provide first-hand documentations of women’s lives. Drawing on that history coupled with my creative practice as an intermedial artist and book artist, I am following in the tradition of feminist ethnography and autoethnography by starting from my own story and family history to honor the care and labor in home food preparation and normalize non-traditional gender roles in the home. Through my authority as an artist, I am designating this cookbook as art, and thus worthy of contemplation, but still retaining its utilitarian purpose as an intermedial object residing in the overlapping but distinct areas of art and life. In this, I create the opportunity for shared understanding with my audience through narrative, emotional triggers, multi-sensory experience, and recipe as instruction set.

The medium of artist's book has additional value in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, as through a book I can distribute my art into people's domestic space when COVID-19 has prevented me from having people experience my version of a domestic space in a gallery setting. And as the pandemic has led to many people cooking more at home, this work is also timely in its ability to create connection with others through cooking and narrative when we must be physically apart.

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SECTION ONE

INTRODUCTION

Food brings people together. It communicates who we are, where we come from, and what we value. The documentation of that through cookbooks has historically been used to create community (Snell), to create or preserve a cultural feminine ideal (Theophano 6), and give us some of the only first-hand documentations of women's lives in certain time periods and cultures (Snell; Theophano; Tye). As both an intermedial artist and book artist, I am drawing on that history in my creative practice, starting from my own story and family history, to both honor the care and labor in home food preparation, and to normalize non-traditional gender roles in the home. I do this by utilizing my authority as an artist to designate objects, concepts, and actions as art by metamorphosis, residing in the intermedial space between art and life, and by creating shared understanding with my audience through narrative, multi-sensory experience, and recipe as instructions set, explored in "Section Two." This practice is presented in "Section Five" in the form of a cookbook memoir titled *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning.*, which includes recipes cooked by three generations of men in my family, with an introductory paragraph for each section in the words of their wives.

SECTION TWO

CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

What is art and why make it?

Jacques Maquet in *Introduction to Aesthetic Anthropology* explains that humans interact with objects in one of three ways: acting, cognition, and contemplation (*Aesthetic Anthropology* 13). He defines the “contemplation of objects reached through the senses (and particularly audition and vision)” as aesthetic awareness (15). Another term Maquet uses is “aesthetic locus.” “An aesthetic locus is the area [in a culture] where aesthetic sensibility and concern are intensified and where, consequently, the aesthetic form of the object is granted priority even if it’s instrumental functions have to suffer” (73). For example, in sixteenth century Japanese culture, the tea ceremony and its components, including gardening, pottery, and interior design, were an aesthetic locus (30). In western culture, the aesthetic locus are the objects he refers to as art objects (73). He states that art objects, particularly in western societies, “are supposed to stimulate aesthetic awareness better than other artifacts and even to sustain aesthetic contemplation” (15).

From an anthropological point of view, Maquet defines an art object by its relationship to the special commercial networks, i.e., art markets (Maquet, *Aesthetic Anthropology* 9), and the greater societal networks, which include art markets, art schools, museums, journals, etc. (59). He states that any “objects belonging to that network are art objects” (9). It is a minority of art market gatekeepers, which include museum curators, art critics, and art dealers (12), and the artists/producers, who determine what is or is not an art object, which as explained previously are objects set aside “to be looked at” (as in this essay, he focuses specifically on visual aesthetic awareness) for the purpose of contemplation.

Maquet explains that in contemporary societies, some art objects are created with the purpose of being art objects, which he calls art by destination. Other art objects were not created primarily for their aesthetic value, but were selected by the art market after the fact as something now “to be looked at” (Maquet, *Aesthetic Anthropology* 10), losing its original utilitarian purpose. These objects are art by metamorphosis. This correlates with the traditional western practice of an art market gatekeeper taking a utilitarian object, such as a pottery vessel, and placing it in a museum setting where it no longer functions as a vessel, but instead an art object to be looked at and contemplated.

But, in the tradition of intermedia that I draw from in my own practice, that boundary is more fluid. Dick Higgins, considered to be the founder of intermedia when in 1965 he used the term “to describe artwork that made use of structural continuities between the arts” (Higgins, 59), states that the Fluxus Event “suggests a location between the general idea of art media and those of life media” (63). Hannah Higgins, in her article “Intermedial Perception or Fluxing Across the Sensory,” believes that this statement is to be applied more broadly to intermedial art in general, and is “referring to the fact that two domains overlap, but remain distinct areas” (63). This is the view I take in my own practice, particularly in my thesis work described in “Section Five” of this paper, as I am declaring an object as an art object and still have it retain its utilitarian purpose.

Ellen Dissanayake’s “Art as a Human Behavior: Toward an Ethological View of Art.” is complementary Maquet’s *Introduction to Aesthetic Anthropology*. She states that the reason humans make art is “to make [something] special” (Dissanayake). This is something I have intuitively felt for a long time, but until now not seen written by someone with authority in their field. She explains that art activities, both in creating and appreciating, are related to ritual and play in that they are elevating something as outside and above everyday utilitarian activities/objects (Dissanayake). This means that through metamorphosis, I, as an artist with privilege as a participant in the art market, can designate a non-art object as art, such as a sewing bobbin, a recipe card, or a tomato sandwich, thus declaring it an

object for contemplation and making it special. From my understanding of ritual and play presented in Dissanayake's article, I believe that the ability to designate something as art by metamorphosis goes beyond Maquet's focus of the visual object to also include an act, experience, or concept, such as brewing a cup of coffee.

What is the point of considering material culture?

One term used to describe objects created by humans is "material culture." In "Truth of Material Culture: History or Fiction?", Jules David Prown looks at the role of objects, which he calls artifacts, in cultural research. Artifacts are defined as "objects made or modified by humans" (Prown 2), and "Material Culture is just what it says it is - the manifestation of culture through material production" (1). He argues that artifacts are useful in studying a culture, society, or time period, compared to language-based study, because "a society is generally less self-conscious about what it makes, especially utilitarian objects such as houses, furniture, and pots, than what it says or does" (5). Additionally, Prown thinks of artifacts as historical events, as they happened (were created) in the past, but that they have an advantage over other events because they can be re-experienced today (2-3). For example, one learns something different from using a recipe card from the past versus reading or hearing about a meal.

This brings up the question: should art (specifically art by destination as defined by Jacques Maquet in *Introduction to Aesthetic Anthropology*) be considered artifact? One argument is that because art is communication, like writing, it is therefore self-conscious and made with a specific intent and message in mind. However, Prown argues that "because material culturists are interested in objects as an expression of belief and because art is specifically material that is expressive of belief, it would be absurd to exclude Art from material culture" (Prown 6). This article supports my use of material object, both as inspiration for art by destination and by designating an object as art through metamorphosis, to tell a story or learn something about a culture, society, or person. "[T]he study of material culture is the

study of materials to understand culture, to discover their beliefs - the values, ideas, attitudes, and assumptions - of a particular community of society at a given time” (1). An example of this is how the social structure, attitude towards women and women’s work, cultural taste, health information, and commercial branding in specific communities in the past can be understood by looking a cookbooks they produced (Snell), which will be explored further in the paper. An example in my own work includes my 2017 series *passed down*, where I used sewing objects, in concert with interviews, to explore the relationship with sewing over three generations of my family.



Figure 1 - photos from *passed down* series

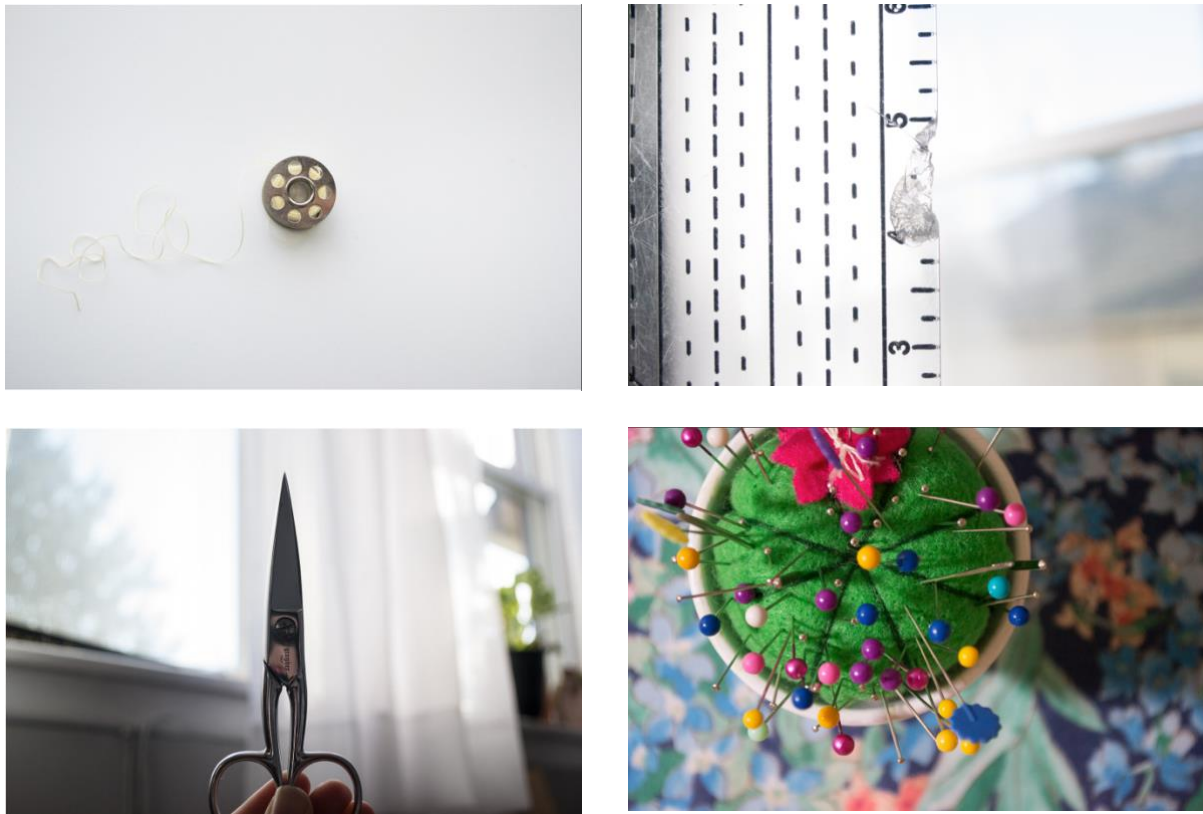


Figure 2 – additional photos from *passed down* series

In regard to the use of objects in art, I need to consider not only my ability to make meaning by destination or metamorphosis, but also understand how the context I put my objects in affects the meaning. Alyson Peabody point this out in her article “Art History Taught Me That Semiotics Is Everywhere.” In this article, she uses Joseph Kosuth’s *One and Three Chairs* (1965) as her example. She emphasizes two points; “Meaning [of an object] is applied based on the environment around the object or changed by a user’s intentions,” and that “Kosuth used the museum to frame the three representations so that we could contemplate the meaning of his work, as well as the meaning of



Figure 3 - *One and Three Chairs* by Joseph Kosuth - source: <http://usmfreepress.org/2019/04/01/art-history-taught-me-that-semiotics-is-everywhere/>

our own world. How we understand objects has cultural relevance and subconscious implications” (Peabody). Jacque Maquet backs up her point in “Objects as Instruments, Objects as Signs”, by showing that objects can also serve as symbols which have specific meanings in certain cultures. He explains that the meaning of an object will change when the audience changes, and that to fully understand it in the context of the people who created it requires some knowledge of the circumstance and culture it was made in (Maquet, “Objects”). This is important to consider both when looking at objects for research purposes, and in what context I choose to present my art objects.

The material culture that I have been particularly focusing on for my thesis work is that of food, recipes, and cookbooks as tools for creating connection with others and investigating issues of gender and domesticity. Scholars who have done research in this field include historians Dr. Rachel Snell and Janet Theophano, and folklorist Dr. Diane Tye. Dr. Snell’s research studies cookbooks as some of the only primary documents on the culture and individual lived experience of women in the past. Her article “Favorite Recipes” specifically focuses on books produced as fundraisers by local church and community groups. Janet Theophano’s *Eat My Words: Reading Women’s Lives through the Cookbooks They Wrote* looks primarily on manuscript cookbooks, which are handwritten books of collected recipes kept by a individual woman for her own use or to eventually pass down to her daughter, instead of a printed, mass produced book. Through attributions, the recipes collected show a woman’s connections in the community. Through markups and marginalia, these books also document changing tastes, or how an individual adapts recipes for their specific needs or situation. She also discusses how cookbooks create or preserve a cultural “feminine ideal” (Theophano 6). Diane Tye’s work is of particular interests as she is studying specifically her mother’s recipe box and her memories with the recipes contained there, an autoethnographic approach similar to my own. As a book artist who is investigating gender issues through food and material culture, it is important to understand how cookbooks have been tools to

research issues of domesticity and female lives in the past, so I can build on that in my creative practice as I examine those issue today.

Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Pad Thai*, (1990) and Alison Knowles' *Identical Lunch* (1968 -) similarly both use food and art as a vehicles for connection with others (Hanley). In *Pad Thai*, "Tiravanija rejected traditional art objects altogether and instead cooked and served food for exhibition visitors" ("Rirkrit Tiravanija") in order to create a situation that would invite interaction amongst participants (Hanley). *Identical Lunch* is a series of events which Alison Knowles would invite people to have lunch where she would order the same thing, tuna on wheat with lettuce and butter, with no mayo, and soup or a glass of buttermilk, "document all the little nuances and repetitions, and to call it art" (Kennedy). In an interview with Randy Kennedy, Knowles explains, "It was about having an excuse to get to talk to people, to notice everything that happened, to pay attention" (Kennedy).



Figure 4 - installation view of *Pad Thai* at Paula Allen Gallery in New York (1990) - source: <https://www.surface-mag.com/articles/rirkrit-tiravanija-talks-politics-cooking-ceramics/>



Figure 5 - the menu for *Identical Lunch* by Alison Knowles - photo credit: Robert Caplin for The New York Times - source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/03/arts/design/03lunch.html>

More contemporarily, Conflict Kitchen takes this concept to social activism. They write on their website:

Conflict Kitchen is a restaurant that serves cuisine from countries with which the United States is in conflict. Each Conflict Kitchen iteration is augmented by events, performances, publications, and discussions that seek to expand the engagement the public has with the culture, politics, and issues at stake within the focus region. The restaurant rotates identities in relation to current geopolitical events. ("About")

Here, they are not only bringing people together with the food, but the food itself also is vehicle to learn about another person or culture and draw attention to a bigger social issue.



Figure 6 - Palestinian iteration of Conflict Kitchen - source:

<https://www.conflict-kitchen.org/2017/04/01/palestinian-iteration-opening-april-3/>

Liza Lou's *Kitchen* (1991–1996) used the subject of food and the kitchen space to honor the under-appreciated labor of women's work. Over the course of five years, she created a full-scale, 168-square-foot replica of a kitchen space entirely of glass beads ("Liza Lou"). Her use of the receptive, time-intensive, and labor-intensive traditional female craft of beading mirrors the repetition, time, and labor of the traditionally female work of preparing food for others. About this work she stated, "Here is this monument to women's work, to the labor that is uncelebrated, to the mothers and grandmothers who baked pies, and cooked and sowed but yet are never thanked, the labor that is endless" ("Liza Lou"). Something I particularly like about this work is how Lou draws attention to a gender-based injustice, which is that women's work goes underappreciated, while still honoring that work, and the care and love that goes into it.



Figure 7 - Liza Lou's *Kitchen* (1991-1996) - source: <http://whitney.org/collection/works/34855>

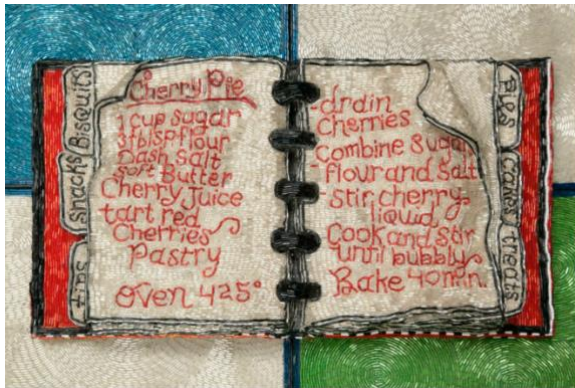


Figure 8 - details from Liza Lou's *Kitchen* (1991-1996) - source:
<http://whitney.org/collection/works/34855>

Two artworks that specifically draw from the language of cookbooks to talk about the experiences of women are *Quill and Torch: a booklet of life-recipes for women* (2017) by Ana María González Sierra and *Secret Recipes for the Modern Wife* (2007) by Nava Atlas. In the words of the artist, *Quill and Torch* is “a compilation of life recipes, based on the experience of 30 people and the women important in their lives. This booklet was made by the participants of four different workshops in Chicago” (“Quill and Torch”). The form is a collection of participant-made recipe cards. Some cards are food-related, but others are just general advice from one woman to another. The artist is drawing from the tradition of cookbooks and recipes cards being passed down through the generations of women in a

family, addressed in the previously mentioned writings of Snell, Theophano, and Tye, to facilitate the passing down of experience and advice among women in the Chicago community.



Figure 9 - *Quill and Torch: a booklet of life-recipes for women* (2017) by Ana María González Sierra –
Photo credit: Rachel Church

In regard to *Secret Recipes for the Modern Wife*, Atlas writes in her artist statement, “in this book, designed to look like a 1950s cookbook, photos of the weird food of that era are juxtaposed with a corresponding 'recipe,' which is actually a description of the universally difficult aspects of marriage: Gender Role Casserole; Cream of Guilt Soup; Soufflé of Fallen Expectations; and many more” (“Secret Recipes”). She is using the visual language of a cookbook to signify that the topic is domestic issues, but also subverting it, particularly the 1950’s imagery of the “perfect” western, white, suburban housewife,

as the “recipes” contained within address issues of a marriage that is un-perfect, and in fact potentially falling apart. There are three sections: “Recipes for accommodation,” “Recipes for trouble,” and “Recipes for disaster.”

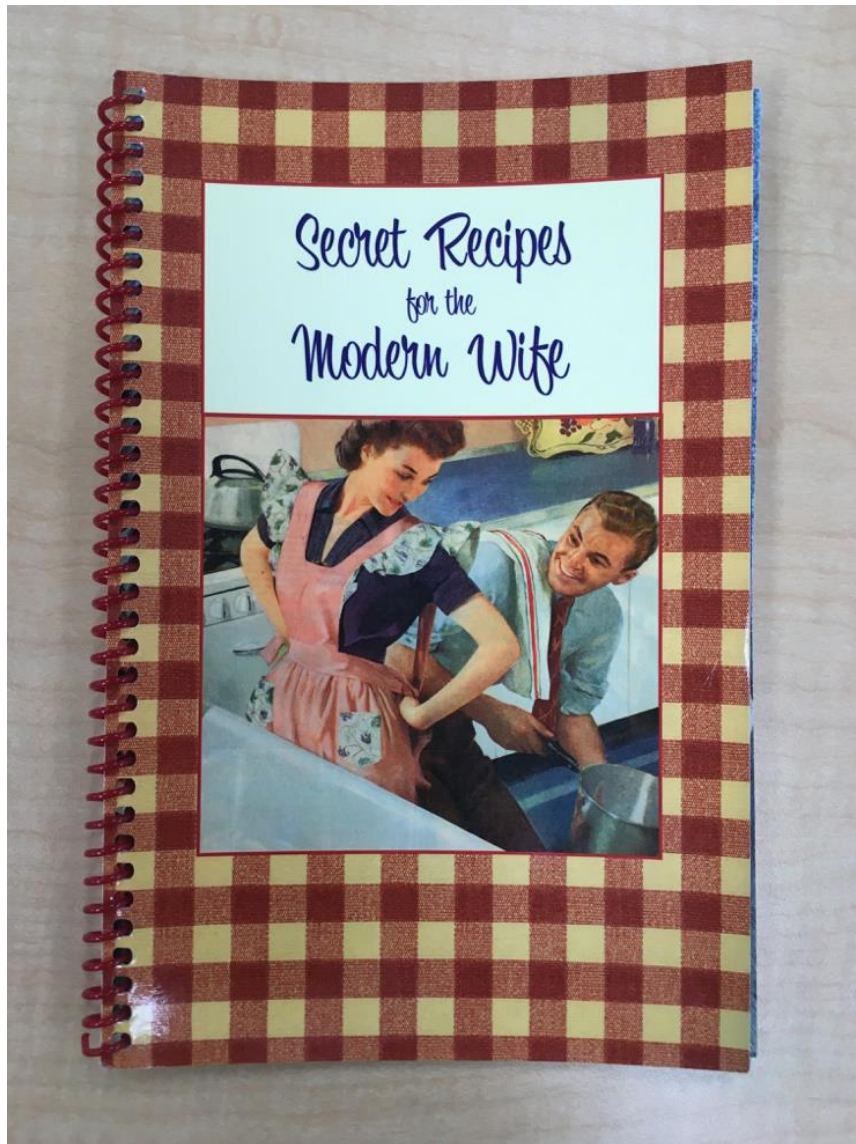


Figure 10 - *Secret Recipes for the Modern Wife* (2007) by Nava Atlas – Photo credit: Rachel Church

One reads:

Guilt Soup

Serves one frazzled family

3 small children, more or less as desired

A small pinch of time

1 large bunch mixed obligations (try a combination of work, extended family, and endless errands)

Generous grindings of guilt

Toast (see below)

Combine children in a house or apartment and stir up, losing temper every so often. Add obligations, little by little, until you realize you are overwhelmed. With a wire whisk, beat yourself into stiff peaks for taking on more than you possibly have time and recipe for. Serve with toast. (Atlas)

The page continues with a recipe for "Toast of Total Exhaustion."

Atlas is using humor and sarcasm to draw attention to issues of modern marriage, motherhood, and domesticity. She presents this with a pessimistic attitude, almost as if she is warning women that marriage, motherhood and domesticity will only lead to despair and disaster. Even in her dedication, she writes: "Dedicated to all my friends who have endured divorce, and others who may yet need to do so" (Atlas). This is where her work differs from mine, described fully in "Section Five," as my work draws attention to some of the same issues in regard to modern marriage and domesticity, but without sarcasm and pessimism, instead focusing on how couples in my family have worked through them.



Figure 11 – recipe for “Guilt Soup” & “Toast of Total Exhaustion”

Why is it important to share our stories and experience?

Another element of my practice is the sharing of experience through storytelling. "StoryTelling - Its Value and Importance" by Charlemae Rollins, published in the journal *Elementary English*, gives a brief historical introduction of storytelling as both the oldest art form and an important ritual in many cultures (Rollins 164). But on the subject of value, this article focuses only on its value as an educational tool in a school setting. Rollins explains how for young children, storytelling is a way to help build understanding about the world around them (165). I believe that this continues beyond childhood and elementary school, supported by Susanne Garvis in *Narrative constellations: Exploring lived experience in education*. Garvis argues, "human experience is a narrative phenomena that is best understood through story" (Garvis 1), and "Through the use of narrative we are able to recognize the power of subjectivity in allowing open dialogue and co-construction of meaning" (2).

Patrick Colm Hogan in his book *Affective Narratology: the Emotional Structure of Stories* explains how storytelling can elicit emotion in a reader/viewer/participant neurologically. He describes how in storytelling there can be an "emotional trigger" (Hogan 5). These connect to emotional memories, which when activated will not bring up the memory of the event which it is associated with, but instead will cause one to feel the emotion. These emotional triggers are important in how I can use stories from my own experience to connect with an audience, even if the viewer's memories of an experience differ from my own. It is in this emotion that my story and the participants stories intersect, which can lead to a shared understanding.

I interviewed Kreg Ettenger, who has a PhD in Anthropology and is Director of the Maine Folklife Center, to understand the value of storytelling from an anthropological point of view. From the Maine Folklife Center's website:

The mission of the Center is to enhance understanding of the folklife, folklore, history, and vernacular arts and culture of Maine and the Maritime Provinces. To fulfill this

mission we collect, preserve, study, and disseminate information about the region's history and traditional cultures using the methods of oral history, ethnography, and related fields. ("What We Do")

Director Ettenger discussed how ideas about authorship and bias were changing anthropology. Until very recently, the standard was that an anthropologist could only study cultures very different from their own, the idea behind that being that one could not study their own culture without bias. Now anthropology is realizing that an anthropologist always brings their own bias, unconscious or not, regardless of how foreign their subject is (Ettenger). This, along with misunderstanding or mistrust from informants, lead to inaccurate and sometimes exploitive results. Because of this new understanding, anthropology is now changing to encourage anthropologists to do research on their own culture, or work with the culture of study to give them the tools to do their own anthropological and ethnological reporting (Ettenger). My practice is heavily based in my own lived experience and family history, influenced by some of the same reasons prompting this change in anthropology on authenticity and ownership of stories.

Narrowing within the field of anthropology, my work lies under the umbrella of ethnography. Breaking the word ethnography down, we can understand it as "to describe and systematically analyze (*graphy*)... cultural experience (*ethno*)" (Ellis). Sarah Pink has written extensively on ethnography, focusing on topics relevant to my practice such as visual ethnography (Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography*), multi-sensory ethnography, and gender performativity in the domestic setting (Pink, *Home Truths*). Visual ethnography refers to both the ethnographic study of visual materials, as well as the use of visual methods in ethnography (O'Reilly). Visual ethnography has historically been discredited on the argument that a camera, with a fixed viewpoint and field of view, would not show a complete picture of the given situation and therefor was not acceptable in ethnographic research. Pink (and others she cites) recognizes that the traditionally accepted standard of written reporting from pure observation is

also coming from a specific point of view (that of the specific researcher) with a specific bias, and is therefore also incomplete. With this, she asserts that visual methods are of equal value in attempting to create a true representation (Pink, *Visual*).

In *Home Truths*, Pink pushes that idea even further, explaining how collecting information from multiple senses can be used to create a more complete picture. She cites numerous studies that show that the senses are actually not processed independently by the body and brain, but are interconnected in creating perception (Pink, *Home Truths* 11). Interestingly, this aligns with the values of intermedia and Fluxus, as presented by Hannah Higgins in her 2002 article “Intermedial Perception or Fluxing Across the Sensory”. She states, “Understanding the power of intermedia work . . . calls for a cross-modal aesthetics [sic] of all senses as based in the interactions of hearing, touch, smell, taste and sight” (Higgins, 64). Traditionally fine arts have had a hierarchy of senses; visual is above auditory, which are both above movement, taste, touch, and smell. Higgins writes, “what is learned or can be learned by one sense, such as listening, differs both biologically and culturally from what is learned by seeing, smelling, touching or tasting” (64). “The combined effect of interacting sense organs and the culture of their hosts produces the complex process we call perception” (64).

Additionally, in *Home Truths*, Pink writes, “I am not concerned with finding out the ‘truth’ about their lives at home, but with the ways they feel true to themselves through everyday sensory practices and representations that are part of these lives” (Pink, *Home Truth* 7). This statement is complementary to Beverly Skeggs’ findings on feminist ethnography. From her chapter “Feminist Ethnography” in *The Handbook of Ethnography*, Skeggs writes, “Feminist ethnography has not just produced some of the most in-depth material about women's lives but also enabled significant challenges to what comes to be counted as knowledge” (Skeggs). This is because for many years information on women’s lives, primarily residing in the private realm of the domestic setting, was not traditionally considered to be information worthy for recording in western culture, and therefore lost to history. The shift towards multi-sensory

ethnography and feminist ethnography both challenge traditional thought on what is knowledge and truth.

Within ethnography, much of the work in my practice is autoethnographical. “Autoethnography is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience” (Ellis). This correlates with Susan Garvis’ explanation of storytelling as a tool to construct meaning (Garvis). Looking back at Director Ettenger’s comments, the emergence of autoethnography also is in alignment with the changing views in anthropology on bias, in regard to the relationship between the researcher and the culture being studied. This is also why autoethnography is an important tool in feminist ethnography, as when women are not telling their own stories, the output is biased to a male perspective and patriarchal culture. Additionally, Dr. Owen Smith explains the importance of autoethnography: Autoethnography does not try to objectify the subjective but to move the research away from the traditional model in which the personal has no place.” Autoethnography is challenging how we value what’s considered private (Smith). The role of autoethnography in redefining how private and personal is valued in research and knowledge creation is aligned with both the work of Sarah Pink in *Home Truths*, and in feminist ethnography.

Part of why I work autoethnographically is that I do not want to claim ownership of other people’s experience or bring my own bias when telling another’s story. But in my practice, particularly in socially engaged works and through the emotional triggers mentioned above, I recognize that my stories do intersect with others. Amy Shuman explores the idea of story ownership in her book *Other People’s Stories: Entitlement Claims and the Critique of Empathy*, arguing that the telling of personal stories will nearly always intersect with other people’s stories, larger cultural stories, and even missing stories. She describes storytelling as a way of “accumulating, sorting, and making meaning out of experience” (Shuman 15). One way it does so is by giving order to events (15). Patrick Colm Hogan makes a similar

assertion in *Affective Narratology*. In thinking about time and physical space, Hogan explains that “our experience of the world is not uniform. It is focused on particular areas” (Hogan 30). We organize, or “encode,” time and space emotionally. “Encoding is the process whereby we select, segment (or chunk), and give preliminary structure to our experience” (31). He states that because we do not experience time and space equally, this structuring of events through storytelling creates a framework for meaning and can be used to create a shared understanding (31).

How an event is ordered in storytelling can change the meaning. “Narrative creates chronologies and invents origins, crystallizing moments in the past made to appear more significant than ongoing life in the present” (Shuman 25). This is why attention is paid to who is telling the story, and who has the right to tell the story. One suggestion is that “Individuals have firsthand knowledge that grants them a privileged position of knowers and a legitimate stake in the interpretation of their own experience” (3). This point is particularly important in the feminist movement, which uses storytelling to draw attention to the unseen aspects of a woman's existence. “Sometimes, by telling our own stories we are able to reframe experiences into new or different categories... How one narrates an experience can make all the difference in determining whether an event is accepted as normal or criticized as immoral or in characterizing people as victims or willing participants” (15).

On the other hand, Shuman also discusses what happens when a story travels beyond this individual. “Competing with this premise [of the individual with firsthand knowledge having ownership] is the historiographical view that privileges the distant knower who has perspective and, by virtue of less or different stakes in the interpretation, the possibility of objectivity” (Shuman 3). This supports the view anthropologists used regarding the previously-maintained standard of only studying cultures different from their own (Ettenger). Anthropologists argued that objectivity is required for knowledge creation, the opposite of autoethnography, which gives value to subjective knowledge creation as previously described by Dr. Owen Smith. Shuman continues, “What might be the most compelling feature of

storytelling is the possibility that its power to transfer and transform will change the meaning of the experience” (Shuman 6). In regard to story ownership, Shuman states that she does not want to argue that one is better than the other, but that they are different, and these things must be considered. Of her two statements on story travelling beyond the individual, one being the distance knower may have the ability for more objectivity and the second that a traveled story can transform experience, I see the latter being more applicable to my work as a viewer could connect with my story through an emotional trigger and have it transform for them into a different experience than my own.

Artist Lizania Cruz’s project *We the News* (2017-2018) deals directly with ownership of story, and in relationship to Shuman’s work, is strongly on the side of giving the owner of the story control over the storytelling. As part of the *Laundromat Project*, *We the News* combines artists’ books, particularly zines, and social practice to respond to “the danger of a single dislocated story” presented in traditional media. She does this with a mobile news stand filled with self-produced zines, written by immigrants telling their own stories. “Editing, design, publishing, and distribution can be forms of solidarity and empowerment” (Cruz). This power of self-publishing relates to the research of Snell, Theophano, and Tye about the lives of women; if it weren’t for the manuscript cookbooks, community cookbooks, and marginalia written by women, we would have very little information on their lives. In the case of these women, the danger isn’t the single dislocated story presented in traditional media, but that the story isn’t presented at all in media of the time, which was traditionally controlled by men.



Figure 12 - *We the News* in Miami, FL, Dec. 2018 - photo credit: Alina Rancier via Lizania Cruz -
source: urbanomnibus.net/2019/03/we-the-news/

Sophie Calle is an artist who also uses objects, autoethnography, and the intersection with the stories of others in her work. In 1981, she presented a series of text and images, both in gallery and book form, titled *The Hotel*, where she created narratives about strangers based solely on the objects found in their hotel rooms where she was working as a maid (“Sophie Calle Artist”). Similarly, in a 1980 piece *Suite Venitienne* she secretly follows strangers around, creating images, written accounts of what they did that day, and fictional stories about them (“Sophie Calle Artist”). In regard to Shuman’s writing, this work is on the opposite side of the story ownership spectrum from *We the News*. Her 1993 work *Exquisite Pain* uses text from letters and images from her own experience with the break-up of a relationship (although its validity as true is questioned) to talk about larger themes of pain and loss (“Sophie Calle Artist”). This work more closely aligns with my approach, where I present elements of my own story that have a degree of universality which connects with others, such as in my *Tomato Cheese Sandwich* performance. In that piece, I made a sandwich specific to my experience, but the audience could connect to the broader ideas of the care and labor of food preparation for others. But unlike Calle’s work, I am not exploring the interplay between fact and fiction, or surveillance.



Figure 13 – “Room 24” from Sophie Calle's *The Hotel* - source: https://www.perrotin.com/artists/Sophie_Calle/1#images

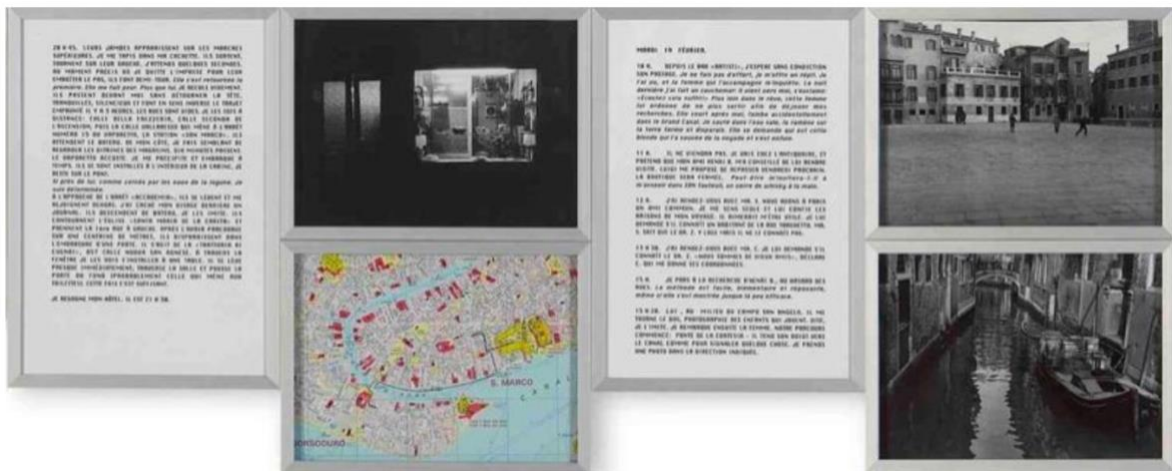


Figure 14 – Sophie Calle’s *Suite Venitienne* - source: https://www.perrotin.com/artists/Sophie_Calle/1#images



When I walked into the living room on January 11, 1956, my grandfather – my terrifying grandfather, the most forbidding person I knew – rose to his feet, which I'd never seen him do before, and said: "From now on, I will be here. I will be your father." They made me sit down. There was my mother, my stepmother, my uncle, who was wearing a dark tartan shirt in thick wool, and my aunt in a beige skirt suit. I can remember how terribly stiff my family was, while my stepmother was twisted with grief, a mountain of tears. And then I learnt that my father was not only dead but buried too. He died on my birthday, my thirteenth birthday: January 7 – a Sunday. I had fallen in love with a Russian girl at boarding school and, instead of coming back to Paris as planned, I told my father I wanted to stay on for the Orthodox Christmas. And that was when he died of a broken blood vessel. I didn't see a thing. The family thought it would be too much for me. They didn't tell me. They made an unforgivable mistake. They made the pain and problems caused by his death so very much worse. I am forty-two years old. Last year I went to see his tomb for the first time, as if it had taken me all those years to face the fact, written in stone.

Figure 15 – “Day 77” of Sophie Calle’s *Exquisite Pain* - source: www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-artwork-changed-life-sophie-calles-exquisite-pain



Figure 16 - image from *Tomato & Cheese Sandwich* performance

As my work explores issues of gender and female experience, I more often follow the history of the feminist movement in regard to story authorship in that the owner of the story has the privilege to tell it, hence a reason I primarily work autoethnographically. But, in regard to my thesis project and specifically the *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*. cookbook, research into stories beyond my own was necessary, as the stories of my grandmother and mother directly inform and intersect my own stories of food, gender, and domesticity. I interviewed my grandmother and mother on their stories and memories on these topics, intertwining them with my own memories but using their words directly quoted as much as possible.

My grandmother, a pastor's wife, worked in a legal office from her late teens into her 70's, which was not the norm in the 1960's when she had three little children. My mother remembers her father making most of the meals when she was a young. These were the days when schoolkids would go home for lunch, and his office was next door to the house, so he would make lunch for her and her

friends (Church). On the topic of dinner, my grandmother stated, “He got home at four and I got home [from work] at five so it made sense that he cooked, because otherwise I’d be in the kitchen all night” (Merrill). Additionally, he liked to cook and she did not, something I didn’t even realize until she was in her 70’s and after my grandfather’s death. I have memories of both my grandparents cooking, but as I look back, I see that cooking was more fun for him, and that joy influenced the recipes I included in his chapter of my cookbook, described fully in “Section Five.”

My mother’s story has many similarities to my own. Like myself, she went back to school for her master’s degree, traveling over two hours each way from home. In her case, it was from our home in Waterville, Maine, to Boston University where she had a full scholarship, often spending two to three nights away a week. A difference in our scenarios is that while my schooling took me away from my husband during the week, my mom was also away from her children. My dad, along with neighbors and folks from church, took care of me and my two younger siblings while still working 10-hour days at a local machine shop. In an interview, which I quote in *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*, my mother told me:

At first it was really, really difficult. My first semester I was down there I had of sense of guilt, because you kids were four, six, and eight, I believe. I had a lot of guilt feeling like I was supposed to be home taking care of you guys, rather than being down in Boston. But then, as those three years went on, that sense of guilt transitioned to a sense of accomplishment: that I’d been able to do both grad school and raise kids... with the help of other people like your father, and your grandparents, and Margaret [an older woman from our church]. (Church)

I have fond memories of this time; of the foods that my dad would make for us and the special days that my mom would bring us to Boston to come to class with her, after which we would go to the toy store or get a cinnamon bagel at the train station. After she finished school, my parents both

continued to share cooking and domestic duties, depending on their work schedules and preferences. Because of this, and watching my grandfather cook, it didn't occur to me that it wasn't the norm for men to cook until I was an adult. And so, in my thesis work I am using autoethnographic storytelling, combined with the ritual of food preparation, to highlight men sharing in domestic duties as something that should be normalized. This allowed me to grow up seeing women working in careers they value and achieving higher education as also normal.

SECTION THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND NATURE OF INTERMEDIAL PRACTICE

My process happens in three stages: data collection; analyzation; and presentation. The art-making can happen during any of those three phases, depending on the specifics of the project. The methods I use for data collection include photography, audio recording, video, writing, drawing, reading, formal interviews, and informal conversations. Sometimes the unaltered data collected in those forms becomes the work or a part of the work directly, particularly information collected in photographs, audio and video recordings, drawings, or writing.

For analyzing my information, I use drawing, writing, printmaking, bookmaking, diagrams, traditional craft, food, digital editing software, and talking about the ideas and information with others. This is when I am trying to understand the data and the idea. Sometimes this happens during the art-making process of the piece, and other times in the preparation and planning for making the piece. In the latter, the art making happens in the presentation stage and includes some of the same methods, such as printmaking, bookmaking, craft, and digital tools. Additionally, I also employ my understanding of space, sequence, scale, pacing, and narrative in my presentation, whether I am creating an image, an experience or performance, crafting an artist's book, hanging photographs, or assembling an installation.

My intermedia education has encouraged me to explore additional media beyond those I have traditionally worked with (printmaking and books arts), allowing me to find the best way to mix my medium and my message to communicate what it is I am trying to say. I also think more critically about the media that I have traditionally worked in, and better understand why I worked that way. I have not abandoned those mediums, but instead have a better understanding of how I use them, why I use them, and when to use them.

In the presentation of my work, I also I think about how with my place of privilege as an artist I can use the language of the art world in combination with the everyday world, mixing and matching elements, to convey my message. Just as I am not abandoning the media I worked in when I started the Intermedia program, I am not abandoning the language of the traditional art world, but thinking about how and when to use those elements in my presentation. Presentation in a frame or a gallery setting can send a signal to the audience to pay attention in a different way than when something is presented in a kitchen, in cluing the viewer that the object or concept is intended for contemplation. Both are valid, and in my practice I am intentionally combining and moving back and forth between elements of the traditional art world and of quotidian life. This goes beyond Jacques Maquet's definition of art by metamorphism, as he believes that when an object is designated by an art market gatekeeper as an art object, it loses its original utilitarian purpose (*Aesthetic Anthropology* 10). In my intermedia practice, where I as the artist am the gatekeeper, I am stating that the object (or ritual or concept) can be both an art object and still retain its utilitarian purpose.

My research questions start from my own experience, using that as the point of view to understand something in culture. In my presentation of work, I translate what I've learned during my autoethnographic research in such a way that it allows an entry point for the audience to experience the work from their point of view. I do this by finding a balance of how much of my personal experience needs to be presented to create the emotion, but not so specific that others cannot relate. This distilling down to the essential elements applies to all aspects of my presentation of work, as I believe it enhances the clarity of my message. Additionally, this is why craftsmanship is also important in the presentation of my work, as poor craftsmanship (unless it is supporting to the message) can be distracting from the concept I am trying to convey.

SECTION FOUR

PORTFOLIO

untitled digital photography, 2017



Figure 17 - untitled digital photography

This was one of the very first pieces I made in the MFA program. It was a departure for me in that I used my own body in the work, and was a risk both in doing something more performative and allowing others to see my imperfections and struggles going into this program. By showing myself writing the words in the first panel, I acknowledge that I am the source of these feelings, but yet I am still trapped with them in the box. In the third and fourth panel, I show that I am taking steps to get myself out by cutting a hole to the outside, which is a hopeful image.

untitled paper wedding dress, a collaboration with Farrin Hanson, screen print on paper dress with laser prints, 2018



Figure 18 - untitled paper wedding dress, a collaboration with Farrin Hanson

This piece was made for an exhibit at the USM Art Gallery titled *Recollections: A Shared Memory Art Experience*. The size 14 wedding dress is made entirely of paper and glue. The paper screen printed with collected wedding memories in white ink. We put a call out to friends, family, and on social media

asking for wedding photos and memories, both good and bad. Printing them on the dress represents a collective memory that influences our idea of what a wedding and marriage are today. Once incorporated in the dress, it is no longer possible to read the entire text of any given memory. This is fitting, as a memory is never a complete picture of an event and will change and be distorted over time. That the dress is made of paper speaks to the fragility and ephemeral nature of these memories and relationships.



Figure 19 - detail of dress construction, highlighting text of collected memories

First Year of Grad School, Fall 2017, artist book with collagraph and slipcase, 2018



Figure 20 - *First Year of Grad School, Fall 2017*

This is a record of my first semester of graduate school as documented by the straw wrappers that accumulated in my car during my commute. They were turned into collagraph plates, which I printed then assembled into an accordion book. I also made a slipcover bound in a Dunkin Donuts bag pulled out from under my driver's seat. I chose collagraph for this project as printing plates are made using the actual objects, creating a print which is a direct representation of the object. This is a process that turns everyday objects, even trash in this case, into the art object. I am not trying to hide the fact that they are straw wrappers. This medium supports the idea that these discarded items can be symbols for something greater, in this case the effort and achievement from my first semester of graduate school.



Figure 21 - interior of *First Year of Grad School, Fall 2017*

evidence, charcoal on gessoed paper, 2018



Figure 22 - drawing #1 from *evidence*

These two charcoal drawings were made during a summer course at the University of Southern Maine. Here I choose to highlight the dirty dishes and discarded napkins of a tablespace as evidence of the shared experience between those who were at the table, similar to how the straw wrappers represented my graduate school semester in the precious work. This work is in the tradition of Daniel Spoerri's "snare-pictures," which he describes as "objects found in chance positions, in order or disorder (on tables, in boxes, drawers, etc.) are fixed ('snared') as they are" (Cleary). His most known "snare-pictures" are of the remains of meals eaten with individuals. His book, *Topographie Anécdotée* du Hasard (An Anecdoted Topography of Chance)*, takes his snare-pictures a step further, "in which he

mapped all the objects located on his table at a particular moment, describing each with his personal recollections evoked by the object” (Cleary). In his work, he is pointing out how these objects act as evidence of an event between himself and the individual with whom he shared the meal. In my work, I am not focusing on the memories from the specific objects in the scene, but how the overall scene of these meal remnants is evidence of the interactions, and taking it a step further the relationship, between myself and the individual I shared the meal with.

This relates to my mother’s philosophy regarding communion. For context, she is a United Methodist pastor in a rural Maine community, and communion is a ritual of sharing bread and wine (grape juice in the United Methodist denomination) to act as a reminder of the body and blood of Christ sacrificed for people’s sins during the crucifixion. In many congregations, the pastor or priest would cover the remains of the bread and wine or grape juice with a cloth after the communion ritual. My mother does not, and I have heard her give the reasoning for this many Sunday morning in church; because the crumbs, torn bread, and spilled juice are evidence that something has happened, and thus should not be hidden. This has stuck with me, and very much was in mind when I was thinking about documenting the remains of a meal as evidence of the event, and relationship of the people who partook in that event.

Moving forward, food becomes an important component to my work for its ability to bring people together for a shared experience, and as a symbol representing relationships, values, and history.



Figure 23 - - drawing #2 from *evidence*

***Dwelley Pond Chanterelles*, artist book with inkjet and woodblock prints, 2018**



Figure 24 - *Dwelley Pond Chanterelles*

This book was made as part of Walter Tisdale's Printmaking and Book Arts course. The text was written while in residence at Baxter State Park and documents a hike where I found a large quantity of chanterelle mushrooms, right after the ranger at the campground I was staying at taught me how to identify them. It is capturing a memory, a food experience, and the connection made with that ranger. For the illustrations, I combined old and new technologies. I used the laser cutter to make woodblocks from scans from my Baxter State Park sketchbook, then printed them on a Vandercook printing press. Combining these technologies allowed me to take advantage of the preciseness of the laser cutter, and ease of registration of the letterpress to easily print my two-color images.

***This is Where We Used to Live*, installed inkjet photographs and cardboard boxes, 2018**



Figure 25 – photo from *This is Where We Used to Live*

This piece was a response to selling and moving out of my first house. I took photos of the process of moving and the empty rooms, which were digitally printed and installed in the APPE Space. The five photos on the larger wall were all of empty rooms. These were purposefully devoid of anything personal to my story, as I wanted the viewer to be able to put their own belongings and memories into the space, or their own feelings of sadness and loss around leaving a home. The title, *This is Where We Used to Live*, helps to prompt this.

On the smaller wall were two more intimate images of the moving process, the box of carefully wrapped object and the wedding photo in a storage unit. These are more about what it feels like to pack up a home and a life. As these images were installed just around the corner, they could not be viewed

at the same time as the other five, creating some physical separation to mirror a separation in content. The wedding photo, which was not fully visible, was the only personal item in the piece, which I feel is just the right amount of personal to create emotion, without being so personal that the audience cannot relate. This is a key understanding I took away from this piece; my ability to connect to others and create emotion using my own story when it has been curated to leave an opening for the audience to experience it from their own story.

Lastly in the set-up there was a pile of actual moving boxes, the bottom two sealed up and the top left open. In that open box were smaller photos of the actual process of moving; cleaning out cupboards, checking drawers, taking down picture hooks, vacuuming, etc. It was mostly hidden, only seen by those who took the effort to look in the box, similar to the mostly unseen labor of moving.



Figure 26 - photos of installation



Figure 27 - detail of installation



Figure 28 – photo presented in installation



Figure 29 - photo presented in installation



Figure 30 - photo presented in installation

Tomato & Cheese Sandwich, performance with bread, mayonnaise, tomato, cheese, and audio, 2018



Figure 31 - image from *Tomato & Cheese Sandwich* performance

This piece was my first performative work. Participants were invited to come to my studio, where I made them a tomato and cheese sandwich while they listened to an audio piece, which is available online at <https://youtu.be/JHaHAQnGUjw>. In that audio, an older woman describes the people who made that sandwich for her years ago. That woman is my grandmother, but the participants did not necessarily know this, nor did they need to in order to experience the work. This piece drew on things I learned in *This is Where We Used to Live*, as I balanced the personal and the universal to connect and elicit emotion for my audience. This piece also draws on the care and the labor involved in feeding others, which is often unseen and mostly falls on women.

Tomato Cheese Open Faced Sandwich, inkjet postcards with inserts, 2018

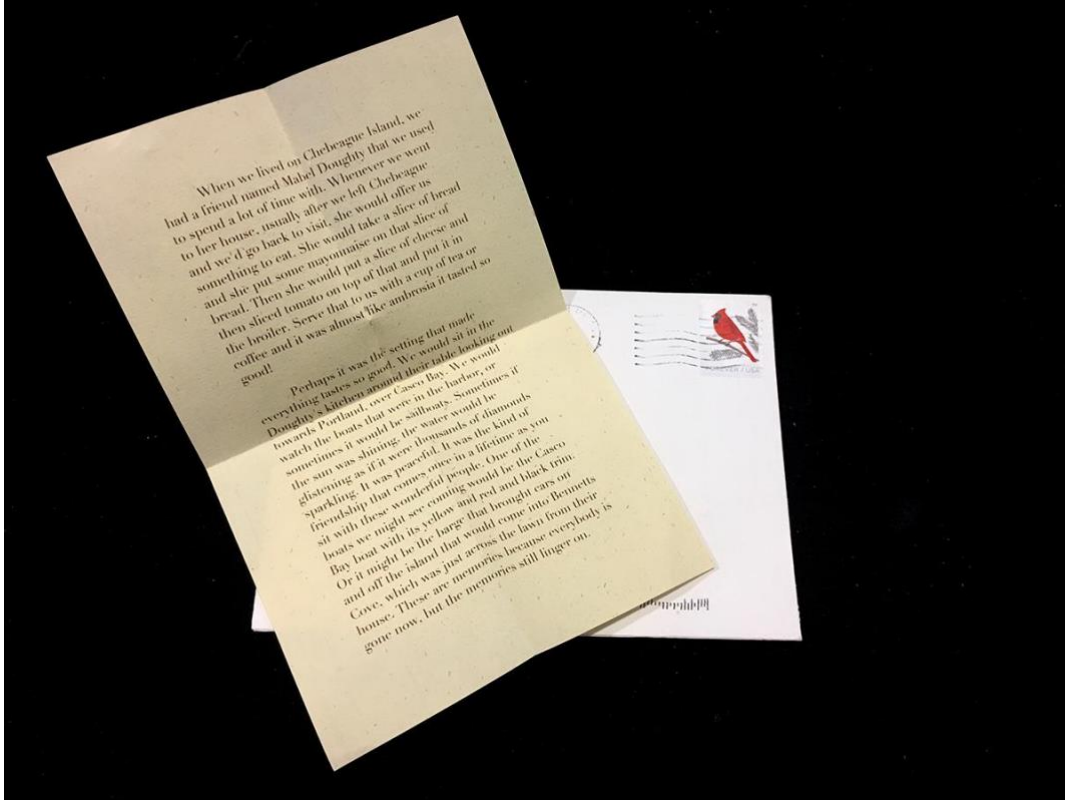


Figure 32 - *Tomato Cheese Open Faced Sandwich*

In this piece I explored the same content of the Tomato & Cheese Sandwich performance in a different way. This time, instead of inviting people into my space, I brought the sandwich into their homes via mail art. I created postcards using the sandwich instructions written in my grandmother's handwriting. The postcards were constructed to have a pocket, which held the transcript of the audio piece from the performance, with some additional text from the interview that I had to leave out of the original audio. Because this was mostly mailed to people who had experienced the performance version, I was worried that this would not have as much impact as it would with a fresh audience. I was completely wrong, as people said this actually was a great companion piece that reinforced the experience they had in the performance.

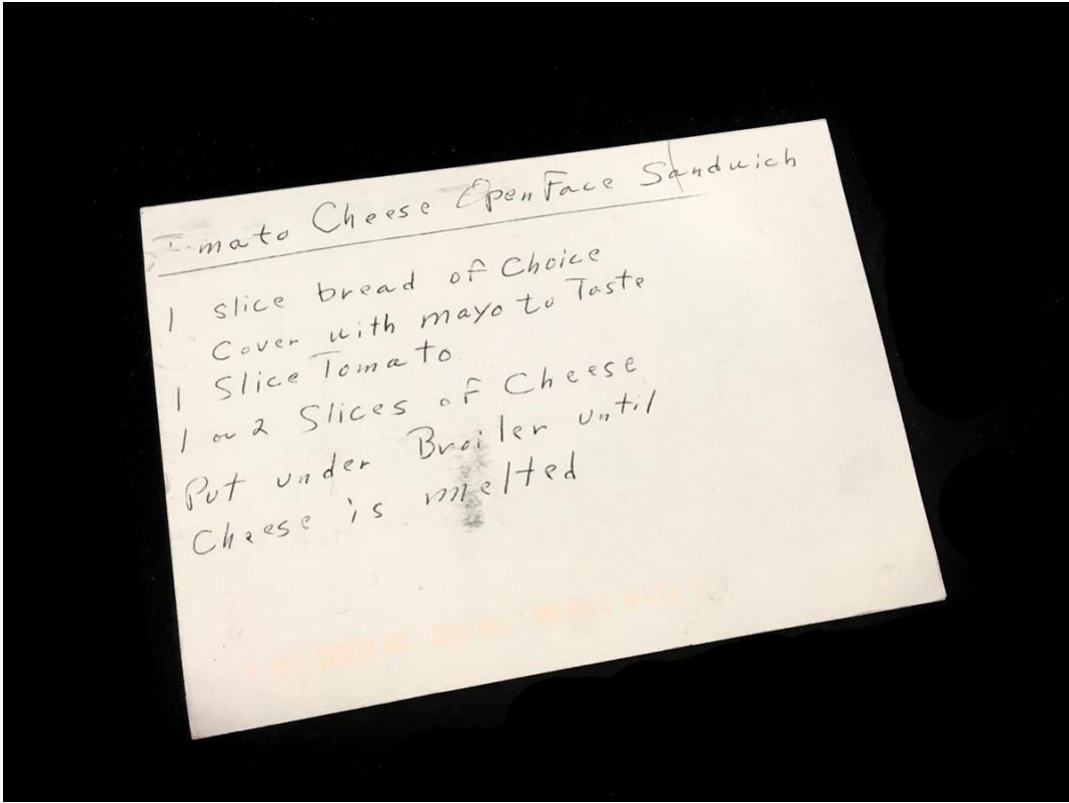


Figure 33 - detail of postcard front after traveling through the postal service

Mabel and Beverly and Liza and Rachel, glass beads, cotton fabric, thread, & fiberfill, 2018



Figure 34 - *Mabel and Beverly and Liza and Rachel*

Drawing from Liza Lou's *Kitchen* (1991–1996), this piece uses the labor-intensive, traditionally female craft of beading to mirror the labor and care in the traditionally female work of preparing food for others, a labor that is mostly unseen and underappreciated. Here, like Liza, I am honoring it by turning it into an object of beauty, where the labor of creating the artwork is highly noticeable and on full display. In fact, in this piece I deliberately left parts unfinished and included the tools of making (needle, thread, and unsewn beads) to draw attention to the careful, time-consuming, handmade process. In the title, I am also recognizing and honoring the connection food has between generations,

particularly for women, which for some may not have been a job they chose, but an expectation of their gender and measure of their value in society.

An Education for Girls in 2018, installation, 2018

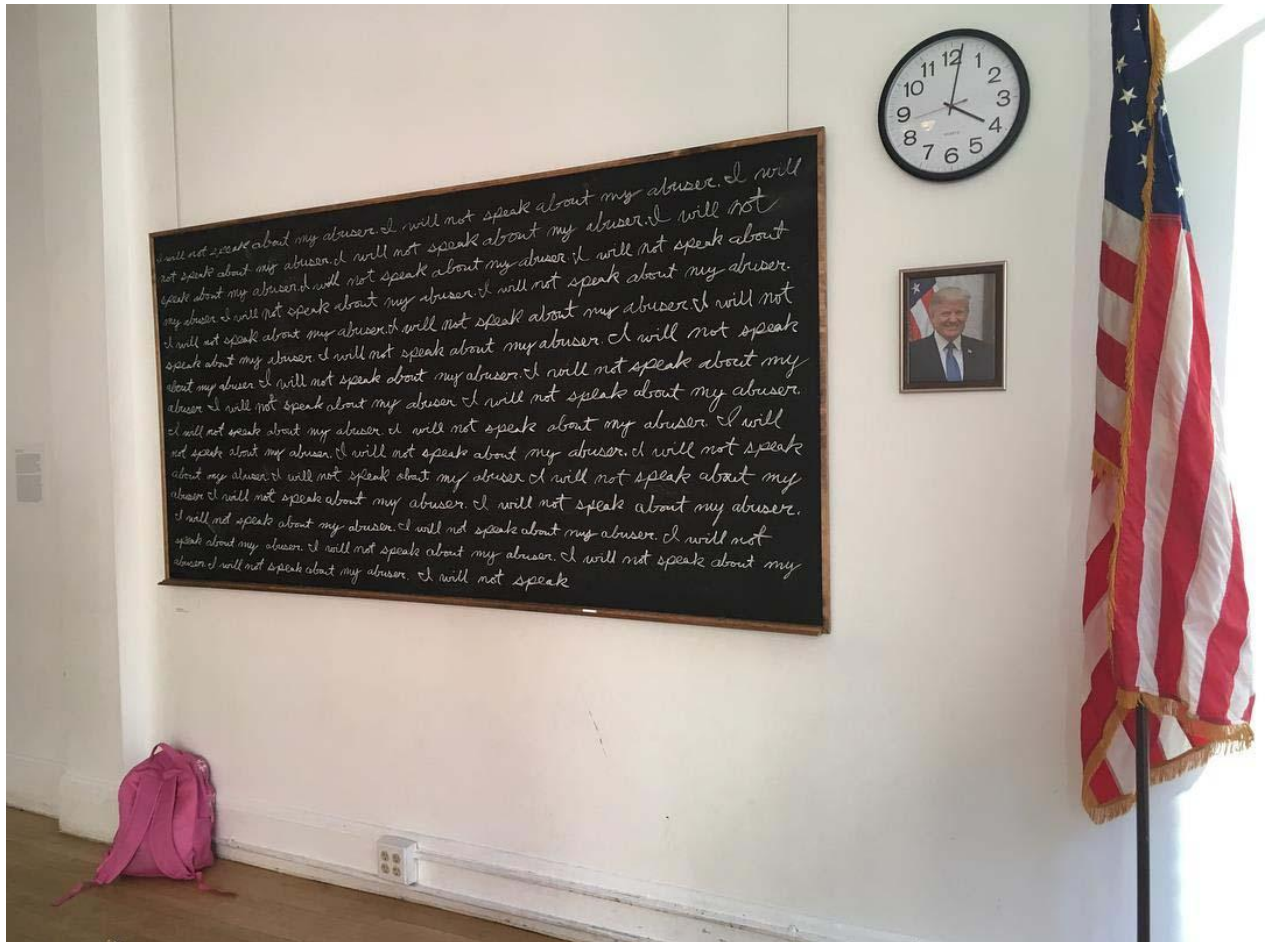


Figure 35 - *An Education for Girls in 2018*

This installation is a direct response to the treatment of Christine Blasey Ford and the confirmation of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court, as well as the behavior of Donald Trump towards women that goes without repercussions, while his accusers get death threats. This is teaching girls that there is no benefit to speaking up about sexual abuse. It tells them that like these women, they will be humiliated, and their safety further threatened while their accusers face no repercussions. In these cases of Kavanaugh and Trump, not only were there no repercussions, but they still were given some of the highest seats of power in our country. While my work is not usually so political, through the

same process of distilling down to the absolute necessary elements that I employ in my previous works, I was able to create a balance of personal vs. universal to make my statement on this political topic.

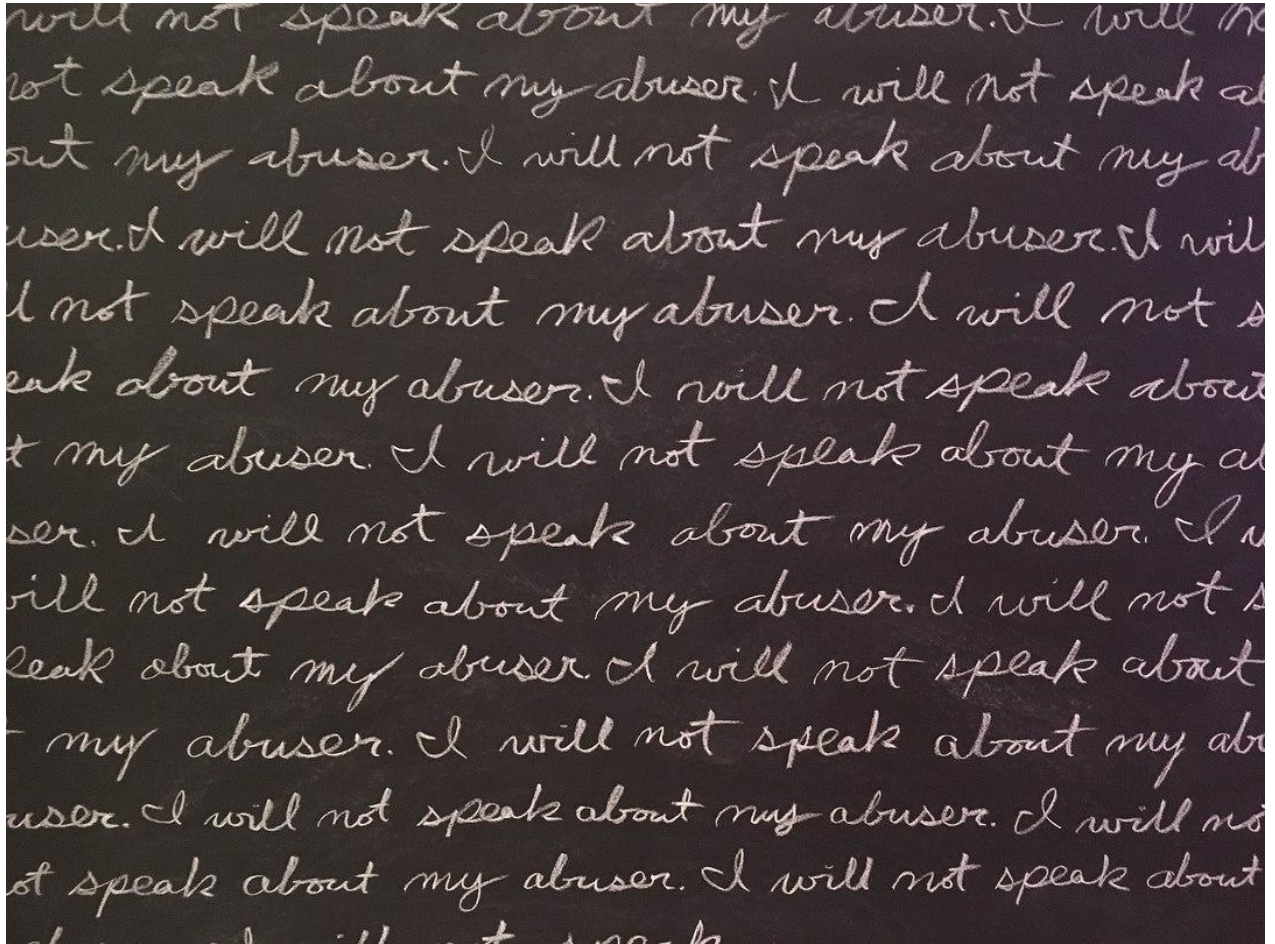


Figure 36 - detail of chalkboard text

Everyone Has Something to Share, socially engaged collaboration with Anna Martin, Arturo Camacho, Aylah Ireland, Anna Soul, Rachel Church, Susan Bryant, & Susan Smith, 2019



Figure 37 - *Everyone Has Something to Share*

Everyone Has Something to Share is a socially engaged project that creates a gathering space with room for conversation. Using conversation starters and small chat spaces, *Everyone has Something to Share* invites participants to have a positive exchange with anyone from friends to strangers, sharing memories, skill sets or impactful moments in order to generate new experiences and content in the world.

Little Rachel in Italy & France, self-portrait paper doll, 2019



Figure 38 – a daily outfit from *Little Rachel in Italy & France*

This is the third iteration of my self-portrait paper dolls. In the past, Little Rachel would play “dress up”, putting on clothing, identities, and lives that were not necessarily mine. In this iteration, she was entirely representational of me. This version was made during a University of Southern Maine summer course where we spent a week in residence at a farm in Tuscany. From there I continued on a trip to Venice and Nice, France with my husband. Each morning of the trip, I would make Little Rachel’s outfit, which matched whatever I was wearing that day. Little Rachel would participate in the day’s activities with me and was documented on Instagram. She is very playful in this iteration, which creates an easy entry point for my audience. People following her on Instagram were engaging in art without really realizing it, which allowed me to engage a broader audience. Like some of my other works, she is talking about identity and experience in a way that allows room for other to participate.



Figure 39 - examples of posts of *Little Rachel* on *Instagram*

cook/share, interactive exchange, 2019



Figure 40 - *cook/share*

For *cook/share*, I put out a call for recipes on 3x5 cards. Some people gave me old cards from their own recipe boxes and some re-wrote me recipes that they currently make on a regular basis. In this phase of the piece, I mailed back to these participants a recipe card of a food that I make, this being the first round of recipe exchange.

In the exhibit, I included these cards, as well as blank cards and pens, with the instructions: Write a recipe on a blank card. Leave it in the recipe box for someone to discover. Take a new recipe home. This is a way to share food knowledge in a gallery setting, and by doing so connect to another person, a stranger. Food is a vehicle to connect with one another. It can communicate who we are,

where we come from, and what we value. By placing this exchange in a gallery setting, I am signaling to the viewer to consider this act as art and contemplate its meaning beyond its utilitarian purpose.



Figure 41 - examples of recipe cards received in call



Figure 42 - examples recipe cards mailed back to participants



Figure 43 - participation in exchange

kit for showing you care #1, inkjet-printed cards, box, bread, mayonnaise, cucumber, & peeler, 2020



Figure 44 - outside detail of *kit for showing you care #1*

Based on the kit multiples of the Fluxus movement, this open edition kit draws from a special preparation of cucumber sandwich that my grandfather would make for me. With this kit, participants are given the tools and instructions needed to recreate that sandwich for another as an expression of care. It uses the tradition of the kit multiple to elevate the act of making a sandwich for another into performative art, drawing attention to the value and labor of making food for others.



Figure 45 - interior detail



Figure 46 - interior detail

cook/share book, artist's book kit, 2020



Figure 47 - outside packaging of *cook/share book*

Like with the *Tomato & Cheese Sandwich* performance and *Tomato Cheese Open Faced Sandwich* mail art (both 2018), I flipped the gallery to home setting of *cook/share* (2019), with *cook/share book*, an interactive artist book kit. These small envelopes include a set of book covers, 5 digitally reproduced recipe cards selected at random from the original *cook/share* project, 1 book ring, 1

blank recipe card, 1 pre-prepaid return envelope, and instructions on how to assemble your book, as well as to send a recipe back to continue the project. The recipes received will be used in future iterations of both *cook/share* and *cook/share book*, intertwining the interactivity of this work in gallery setting and via mail art.



Figure 48 - unassembled kit



Figure 49 - assembled book

COVID-19 Disruption Mask, paper, thread and bias tape, 2020 & Make-Your-Own COVID-19 Disruption Mask, digital PDF download, 2020



Figure 50 - COVID-19 Disruption Mask

This piece was created as a way for me to try to manifest in an object the disruption I was feeling due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This version is paper, so not functional as a mask, but instead functional as a conceptual piece. As a digital multiple, I created an instruction sheet for anyone to create a symbol of how the pandemic has disrupted them, using paper that represents what has been disrupted. The instructions act as a way for the viewer to access my story, but adapt it to make it relevant to their experience.

COVID-19 Disruption Mask



What you need:

- 1 sheet of paperwork now obsolete or disrupted by COVID-19 (Such as course a syllabus, wedding invitation, or vacation plans...)
- 2 yards double-fold bias tape
- scissors
- sewing machine
- thread

Figure 51 - page 1 of *Make-Your-Own COVID-19 Disruption Mask*

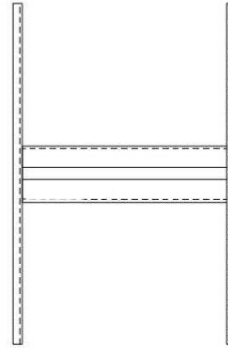
COVID-19 Disruption Mask

Directions:

1. Cut sheet of paper to 8.5" x 5.5".
2. Fold $\frac{1}{4}$ " along long edge, towards the backside of paper. Stitch down with sewing machine. Repeat on other long edge.
3. Fold two pleats (accordions) running lengthwise



4. Sandwich short edge of paper into bias binding, about half-way along bias binding. Stitch down entire length of bias tape to close tape and secure paper into ties. Repeat on other short edge.



Note: This is an artwork and NOT for PPE purposes. Paper is not recommended by the CDC for face coverings. For recommendations and more information on use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19 visit:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>

Figure 52 - page 2 of *Make-Your-Own COVID-19 Disruption Mask*

thesis timeline paperwork, which I was able to cut up and create into my masks. The masks were then packaged and have all been delivered to each member in my cohort.



Figure 54 - additional view of mask



Figure 55 - full edition of 6



2020 Intermedia MFA

COVID-19 MASK

for Third Year Students

INTERMEDIA MFA
University of Maine

Definition: It is your responsibility to meet all deadlines, to the Without Borders exhibition, to be held the have up to five member Membership on your co

Figure 56 – packaging

SECTION FIVE

PRESENTATION OF THESIS WORK, DOCUMENTATION AND CONCLUSION

Drawing from what I learned in work such as *Tomato & Cheese Sandwich* (2018) and *cooks/share* (2019), for the presentation of my thesis work I had planned to blend what is art and what is quotidian by creating a kitchen space in the gallery. Here participants could have a cup of tea or coffee, sit and look through a cookbook, participate in an exchange, and talk with others. To create this space, I was able to get a couple of pieces of the countertop from my parents' home where I grew up, and was designing a wallpaper to help define a more intimate domestic space within the larger gallery. With this installation, I was following in the tradition of Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Pad Thai* (1990) in bringing the act of feeding others into the gallery setting to declare that act as art, thus using the gatekeeper roles of artist and gallery space to make this interaction art by metamorphosis (Maquet, *Aesthetic Anthropology* 10, 12 & 59). "Tiravanija's work tees up situations that invite participants to interact with one another" (Hanley). This was a goal of my kitchen space, to create a situation that would invite participants to interact with each other when multiple people are present (such as during the opening), or facilitated through the sharing of stories and recipes through interactive recipe card and cookbook works, such as an iteration of *cooks/share*, when multiple people aren't there. My installation would have differed from Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Pad Thai* (1990) with the creation of the kitchen space in the gallery setting, which specifically brings up issues of domesticity and gender, as traditionally the kitchen has been a gendered space of female domestic labor.

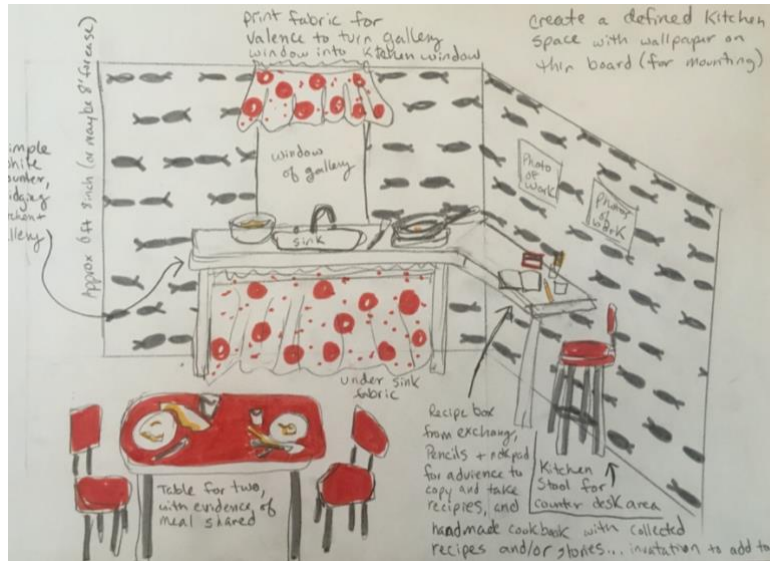


Figure 57 - sketch of an early installation design



Figure 58 - countertop for installation, removed from my parents' home



Figure 59 - digital draft of installation idea, with draft of original wallpaper design

But, with the onset of COVID-19, my plans for a gallery-based interactive kitchen space were no longer feasible. Even though I had found an alternative space that would exhibit my installation, I was not comfortable having people share food or drink, touch books and recipe cards, or have in person conversations with others in the space due to the risk of virus spread. I would have had to limit the experience to one person at a time, and it was not possible to sanitize recipe cards and books pages between each participant. The removal of these elements would completely change the attitude and message of the work to something more like a static, purely visual, museum display. Like Pink asserts in *Home Truths*, it was important that this piece engage multiple senses to create a more complete picture. “Sensory systems, the physical channels for every piece of information we have about the world, do not naturally function independent of each other physiologically or culturally” (Higgins, 64). As the input of

these multiple sense are processed collectively by the body and brain to create perception (Pink, *Home Truths* 11), this allows greater opportunity to evoke “emotional triggers” (Hogan 5) with the viewer, which can create a connection between my story and the participants’ and lead to a shared understanding. Taking away those other interactive elements and reducing the exhibit to just the visual sense does not allow the viewer to get full understanding. I determined it was not possible to present this version of my work right now, and instead put it on hold until it is safe to do so.

After three years of living out of a suitcase away from my home and my husband as I traveled back and forth to school, some weeks only getting home on the weekend, and at times only twice a month, I was suddenly living full-time at home again. This not only changed my access to space and equipment, but also my relationship to the subject matter of domesticity. I considered creating the installation in the basement of my home, where I had some blank white walls I could work with. But I realized that this would only be serving the purpose of creating documentation, and documentation of fabrication of the artwork at that, as the interaction between the work and the participants, and the participants between each other would still be lacking. Additionally, creating a domestic kitchen installation in my home (which already has a real kitchen) loses the art signifier of the gallery that I was utilizing to declare the kitchen space as art.

Because of these changes, I flipped the mix of art and life in my thesis presentation from creating a domestic space in a gallery setting, to bringing the art back to my own kitchen. I did this by cooking and focusing my attention to create my cookbook: *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*. This cookbook memoir honors the foods that three generations of men in my family cooked, and how they symbolize a shared partnership and support for their wives’ careers when that was not the norm.

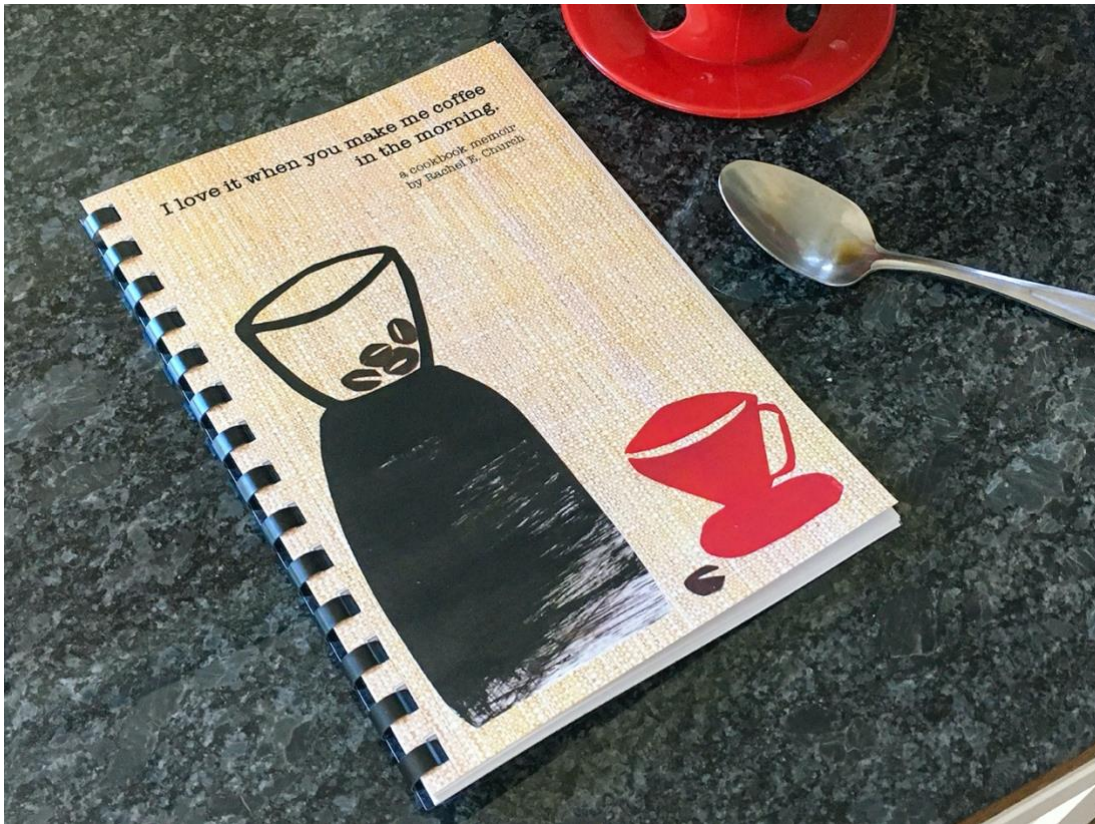


Figure 60 - cover of *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS	
TOM	
Pattie Pond Perch (for breakfast)	3
Shaved Cucumber Sandwich	6
Beef and Beans Stir Fry	7
BRIAN	
Biscuits	11
Baked Beans	12
Waffles (for dinner)	13
NEVINS	
Pour Over Coffee	17
Sweet Potato & Black Bean Tacos	18
Carbonara	20

At first it was really, really difficult. My first semester I was down there I had of sense of guilt, because you kids were four, six, and eight, I believe. I had a lot of guilt feeling like I was supposed to be home taking care of you guys, rather than being down in Boston.

But then, as those three years went on, that sense of guilt transitioned to a sense of accomplishment: that I'd been able to do both grad school and raise kids... with the help of other people like your father, and your grandparents, and Margaret Wood.

- Laura

Biscuits
Adapted from the Bakewell Cream biscuit recipe.

What you need:

- 4 cups flour
- 4 tsp. Bakewell Cream
- 2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 c. shortening
- 1 1/2 c. cold milk
- butter

1. Mix and sift dry ingredients.
2. Add shortening and cut into tiny pieces with pastry cutter.
3. Add milk. Stir quickly with a fork.
4. Turn onto a floured surface and knead 5-6 times.
5. Roll or pat to 1/4" to 3/8" thick. Cut with biscuit cutter (or drinking glass).
6. **Important:** top each biscuit with a little piece of butter.
7. Bake at 475° F for 5 minutes, then turn off the oven. Leave in the oven for an additional 5 to 10 minutes, until they're golden brown.




10
11

Figure 61 - interior pages of *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*.

The design of this book is inspired by the fundraiser cookbooks produced by church and community groups, as they were tools to bring communities together, create identity, and primarily produced by women (Snell). I wanted to call on that tradition to evoke those same ideas from the viewer. I was specifically influenced by the *Chebeague Island Cookbook*, compiled by The Ladies' Aid of the Chebeague Methodist Church, Chebeague Island, Maine, in July 1961, one year before my mother was born. My grandmother worked on the committee and did the typing, and this book was a staple in my home growing



Figure 62 - cover of *Chebeague Island Cookbook* used by my mother

up. As expected, most recipes are attributed to women of the church, but on page 40 I found the "Beef 'n Beans" recipe contributed by my grandfather, a recipe I remember him making for me as well. I chose a font reminiscent of the typewriter-produced text found in this book, hand-drawn, black and white images that can be reproduced easily on a standard copier or printer, and comb binding used by many community produced cookbooks to clue the reader that this book is self-produced (thus autoethnographic), a collection of recipes by a specific community (my family), and that it reflects something about that community.

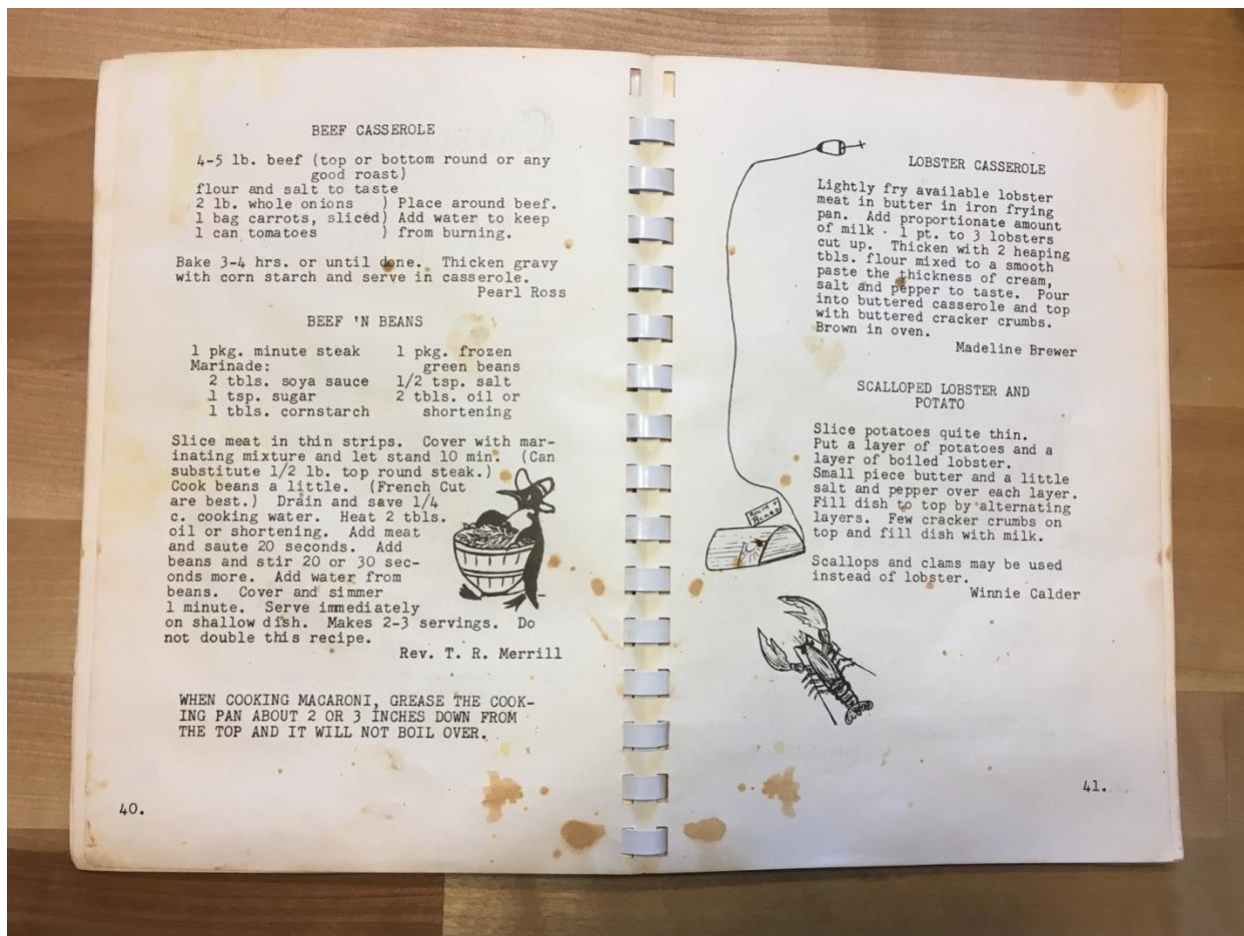


Figure 63 - page 40 & 41 of *Chebeague Island Cookbook*

I worked with family members to conduct research for this book, done in recent months through phone calls, email, and text messages due to physical distancing. I talked with my mother and my grandmother about their experiences with their husbands cooking. I asked my dad to walk me through how he makes his biscuits. My sister, who moved back with my parents when her place of employment shut down due to the pandemic, searched through the cookbook shelf at my parent's house looking for specific recipes from our childhood. And my brother and I went back and forth discussing the proper way to filet a fish. All of this, along with the cooking I am doing with my husband

at home and the sharing of recipes and food experiences digitally and through the mail, is part of my creative practice, culminating with the creation of this book.

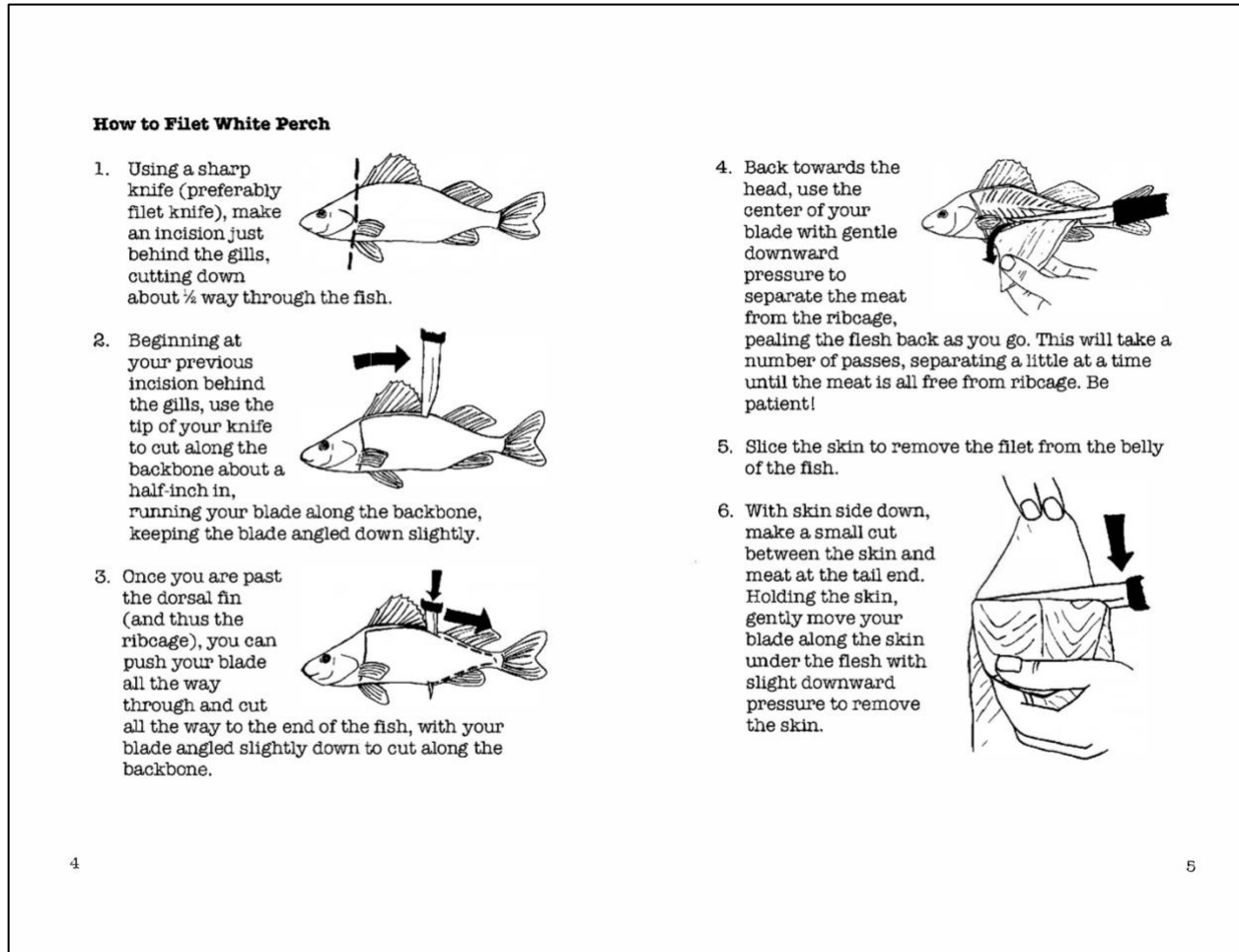


Figure 64 - page 4 & 5 of *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*. – “How to Filet a White Perch”

This book contains three chapters/sections, one for recipes made by my grandfather, one for recipes made by my father, and one for recipes made by my husband. The introduction to each section is a paragraph or two by each of their wives, (including myself), giving an insight into how this shared partnership in the home affected their lives. Each section contains three recipes, something from each meal of the day, plus one bonus set of instructions on how to filet a white perch. The recipes were selected as ones that I particularly remember that individual making for me.

My grandfather's section begins with:

Tom did most of the cooking, but he enjoyed it more. Your mother used to say at school, "I wonder what Dad's making for dinner?" and people would look at her like she was crazy. But he got home at four and I got home [from work] at five so it made sense that he cooked, because otherwise I'd be in the kitchen all night. – Beverly (Merrill)

This quote from my grandmother points out that my grandfather cooking was considered unusual at the time, with the response my mother would get when she mentioned her dad was cooking. It was considered odd by those around her, even though both parents worked, and that my grandfather liked to cook more than my grandmother did.

This cultural attitude is corroborated by Jay Mechling in his article "Boy Scouts and the Manly Art of Cooking." He looked at how cooking was presented in Boy Scout handbooks through the last century. In the 1930's and 1940's, when more women worked, the handbooks talk about a man's cooking skills being useful in the home. They encouraged boys to learn some skills in their home kitchen with their mothers, and even talk about the possibility of domestic tasks being divided by interest or skill instead of gender. After World War II, when women were culturally encouraged to move back into their gender-specific roles in the home to give the outside-the-home jobs back to men, this language disappears, and focus in the cooking sections of the handbooks is on "manly" outdoor cooking (Mechling).

I believe that my mother's choice to go back to school in the early 1990's, when she had a husband and children, was in part influenced by witnessing her own father participate equally in the childcare and domestic duties. In her experience, fathers did domestic duties and childcare, so leaving my father to do those tasks while she was at school was not foreign. This was less of a concern when making her decision than it might have been otherwise. It does not mean she did not have any concerns. In the introduction to my father's section of *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning.*, she

explains that it was still hard. She said that she still felt a sense of guilt that she was *supposed* to be at home taking care of us, but that over time that guilt was eased and turned into pride for her accomplishment of getting her master's degree while raising children, with the help of others such as my father (Church).

Because of witnessing the shared partnership in both my parent's and grandparent's relationships, I saw men doing domestic work, women working in careers they value and achieving higher education as normal. This impacted what I expected from my own partnership as an adult, especially when I decided to pursue my MFA. For context, during the last three years while I've been in graduate school, my husband and I moved twice: from selling our first home which we purchased a year after we got married, to living in a small house on Vinalhaven owned by my husband's mother while we built a house in Scarborough, which is where we are now. Not only did my husband need to pick up more domestic duties while I was traveling, studying, and working, but also additional work involved with the selling, building, and moving. Things were especially hard when we were on Vinalhaven for seven months, an island 15 miles off the coast of Rockland. The boats only run six times a day, between 7am and 3:15pm, and not at all when the weather is bad. This meant my commute averaged four hours one way, depending on the boats that day. I was taking 12 graduate credits and working 20 hours a week in Orono, so it was during this time that I would only get to be "home" two to three weekends a month. During my whole MFA career, but particularly when we were on the island, my husband had to pick up the domestic duties in part because I was not there, and also when I was home, I didn't want to spend that limited time cleaning house, doing laundry, or going to the grocery store; we would rather spend it enjoying each other's company. Additionally, I couldn't take on the mental work of having to worry about those things getting done, or the responsibility for delegating the work to him. Because of this, the food planning and preparation he did gained new value to me, and that influenced my choice in recipes I put in his section of the cookbook. I would not have been able to achieve this degree if I had

not had my partner take on a larger role in domestic duties, and seeing that modeled by my parents and grandparents made that a normal expectation for me.

In conclusion, in *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*. I am highlighting and honoring how the normalization of non-traditional gender roles in the home was passed down through three generations of women in my family, and how that shared partnership allowed the women to more easily pursue careers and education they valued. By presenting it in the language of a traditional community-produced cookbook, I am using those elements to signify that this is a document of the culture of a specific community, but subverting the traditionally female connotations by presenting the recipes of men where one might expect recipes of women, prompting the reader to rethink their expectation of gender roles.

A book is an apt format for my work at this time, as through a book I can distribute my art into people's domestic space when COVID-19 has prevented me from having people experience my version of a domestic space in a gallery setting. Book artist Brad Freeman wrote "because it exists as a portable unit, the book becomes a travelling exhibition—over its lifetime a book can insinuate itself into unforeseen [*sic*] locales" (Drucker 104). Also, as the pandemic has led to many people cooking more at home ("HUNTER: FOOD STUDY," slide 3), this work is timely in its ability to create connection with others through cooking and narrative when we must be physically apart.

In addition to distribution of physical copies of this book, *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*. is also available to view online and in an accessible, text-only version (see Attachment A). This work is also supplemented by a video made in response to the COVID-19 disruption to our exhibition of work (see Attachment A). Here I was able share my thoughts directly, along with giving the viewer a window into the daily ritual of coffee making in my home. This added media introduces the additional sense of sound and the experience of time to the work presented in my book, giving the opportunity for more complete perception of the work (Pink, *Home Truths* 11; Higgins 64).

With this cookbook, I am still able to combine elements referring to the fact that this object lives in both the art domain, signifying it as art by metamorphosis through my privilege as an artist (Maquet), *and* in the domain of the everyday by retaining its utilitarian purpose; it is still a functional cookbook. This makes both the book and the act of cooking from this book intermedial, residing in the overlapping but distinct realms of art and life (Higgins 63). Just as with *Make-Your-Own COVID-19 Disruption Mask* (2020), the participant can follow a recipe, a set of instructions, as a way to access my story, while at the same time adapting it to make it their own. This is best summarized by classmate and artist Anna Martin: “The personal is what brings all of this together, giving the reader a chance to feel like they are part of the story shared is yet another form of ‘recipe’ to follow.”



Figure 65 - video stills from *Rachel E. Church - 2020 Intermedia MFA Thesis Work*

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ATTACHMENT A

EXTERNAL LINKS TO VIEW THESIS WORK

- Online viewing of *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*. - <https://www.flipsnack.com/rachelchurch/i-love-it-when-you-make-me-coffee-in-the-morning.html>
- Accessible, text-only version of *I love it when you make me coffee in the morning*. - <https://rachelchurch.com/portfolio-2/i-love-it-when-you-make-me-coffee-in-the-morning/accessible-text-only-version-of-i-love-it-when-you-make-me-coffee-in-the-morning/>
- *Rachel E. Church - 2020 Intermedia MFA Thesis Work* video - <https://youtu.be/MmQJxPOZiP4>

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Rachel Church is an intermedial artist, book artist, and printmaker working in Maine. She earned a B.A. in Art with a concentration in Printmaking and Entrepreneurial Studies in 2009, and a B.F.A. in Studio Art with a minor in Book Arts in 2017, both from the University of Southern Maine. In 2008, she was an intern at the Engine House Press, on the island of Vinalhaven, Maine, and in 2009 she spent a year printing with the Peregrine Press in Portland, thanks to the Kate Mahoney Memorial Scholarship. More recently, she was honored to be selected as the Baxter State Park 2018 Artist in Residence. She is a current member of Running with Scissors Studios in Portland, Maine, and teaches printmaking and bookmaking workshops. Rachel is a candidate for the Master of Fine Arts in Intermedia from the University of Maine in August 2020.