Georgia State University ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University

Art and Design Theses

Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design

5-9-2015

Saving Face

Lane Ketner

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art_design_theses

Recommended Citation

Ketner, Lane, "Saving Face." Thesis, Georgia State University, 2015. https://scholarworks.gsu.edu/art_design_theses/179

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design at ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Art and Design Theses by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ Georgia State University. For more information, please contact scholarworks@gsu.edu.

SAVING FACE

by

LANE KETNER

Under the Direction of Craig Drennen, MFA

ABSTRACT

Saving Face is an exhibition of portrait imagery of famous or infamous figures created through drawing, painting, writing, and assemblage. It is a formal exploration of portraiture that also attempts to reconsider cultural personas by presenting them in new form. The act of creating art work through multiple approaches presents different modes of expression, potentially raising additional interpretations of the subject. Often, the public images formed of these subjects are based on singular events portrayed by the power of mass media. Saving Face is an attempt to artistically question these narrow and limited viewpoints, and raise considerations that may differ from mass perception. These alternative forms are intended to create a space for expanded perception of the subjects.

INDEX WORDS: Perception, Form, Portrait, Spectacle, Face, Saving Face

SAVING FACE

by

LANE KETNER

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2015

Copyright by Lane Benjamin Ketner 2015

SAVING FACE

by

LANE KETNER

Committee Chair: Mr. Craig Drennen

Committee: Mr. Craig Dongoski

Mr. Joseph Peragine

Electronic Version Approved:

Office of Graduate Studies

College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

May 2015

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my daughter Alexa Jihae Ketner.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis committee specifically. Thank you, Craig Drennen, Joe Peragine, and Craig Dongoski. It is a pleasure to know and work with you. I would also like to thank Kojo Griffin, Pam Longobardi, Joe Camoosa, Jay Ketner, my parents, and the faculty and staff at the Welch School of Art and Design.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A (CKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
LI	IST OF FIGURES	vii
1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	BACKGROUND	2
3	FACE	4
4	INFLUENCE	6
5	CONCEPTION AND ICONS	10
6	PROCESS	13
7	CONCLUSIONS	17
RI	EFERENCES	18

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Martin Kippenberger, <i>Untitled</i> , pencil, ink, marker on paper, 11.5" x 8", 1990.
Courtesy Metro Pictures.
Figure 2.1 Martin Kippenberger, <i>Peter Sculptures</i> , installation, dimensions vary. Courtesy of
Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Photo by Brian Forrest
Figure 3.1 Elizabeth Peyton, Keith Richards, Colored Pencil, 2004 (detail). Photograph:
Elixabeth Peyton/Phaidon Press. 2
Figure 4.1 Andy Warhol, <i>Marilyn Diptych</i> , Acrylic Paint on Canvas, 2054 x 1448, 1962.
Courtesy of Tate Collection. 22
Figure 5.1 Lane Ketner, <i>Double Hemingway</i> , Mixed Media Assemblage, Dimensions vary, 2014
Figure 6.1 <i>Double Hemingway</i> , Installation view.
Figure 7.1 Double Hemingway (detail)
Figure 8.1 On Kawara, <i>Today Series, "Tuesday"</i> , Acrylic on canvas with two newspapers, 61" x
89", 1978. Courtesy of Art Institute of Chicago.
Figure 9.1 Lane Ketner, Calendar One, 35" x 44.5", Charcoal and chalk on paper, 2014
Figure 10.1 Lane Ketner, <i>Calendar Two</i> , 35" x 44.5", Charcoal and chalk on paper, 2015 28
Figure 11.1 Lane Ketner, Calendar Three, Charcoal and chalk on paper, 2015
Figure 12.1 Lane Ketner, <i>Key</i> , Ink and charcoal on paper, 22.5" x 26.75", 2015
Figure 13.1 Lane Ketner, <i>Portrait of Johnny Cash</i> , Gesso on stretched fabric, 48" x 48", 2015. 32

Figure 14.1 Lane Ketner, <i>Johnny Carson Anti-Curmudgeon</i> , Acrylic on stretched fabric, 48" x		
48", 2015		
Figure 15.1 Lane Ketner, <i>Portrait of Phil Spector</i> , Mixed Media Assemblage, Dimensions vary,		
2014		
Figure 16.1 Lane Ketner, <i>Pink Geisha</i> , Mixed Media Assemblage, 10" x 26", 2014 34		
Figure 17.1 Lane Ketner, <i>Geisha</i> , Acrylic on stretched fabric, 10.75" x 11.75", 2014		
Figure 18.1 Saving Face, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery,		
2015		
Figure 19.1 Saving Face, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery,		
2015. (right)		
Figure 20.1 Saving Face, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery,		
2015. (left)		
Figure 21.1 Saving Face, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery,		
2015		
Figure 22.1 Saving Face, Calendar One, Two, and Three with Key, Installation view, Ernest G.		
Welch School of Art and Design Gallery, 2015.		

1 INTRODUCTION

Saving Face is an exhibition of portrait imagery of famous or infamous figures created through drawing, painting, writing, and assemblage. It is a formal exploration of portraiture that also attempts to reconsider cultural personas by presenting them in new form. The act of creating art work through multiple approaches presents different modes of expression, potentially raising additional interpretations of the subject. Often, the public images formed of these subjects are based on singular events portrayed by the power of mass media. Saving Face is an attempt to artistically question these narrow and limited viewpoints, and raise considerations that may differ from mass perception. These alternative forms are intended to create a space for expanded perception of the subjects.

2 BACKGROUND

I have been drawing in various forms most of my life. However, I did not become seriously interested in art until the later part of my senior year in high school when I discovered realistic drawing. This initial interest in drawing led me to study art as an undergrad at Kennesaw State University. The autonomy that art offers struck me as unique and wonderful from my very early days in undergrad. Feedback, influence, and input exist, and are valuable, but at the end of the day, it is all entirely up to the artist as to what they create or do not create. I cannot think of any other field with this much autonomy. Since 1996 I have made art consistently on my own both inside and outside of school. I continued working in various forms of drawing, painting, and collage. My work prior to graduate school ranged from realistic drawing and painting, abstract painting, and collage painting. However, upon reflection, my practice was loose and constantly changing with the only focus on continuing to work. My work habits prior to my entry into graduate school were consistent, but the artwork itself was not. In hindsight, much of this effort seemed futile. However, Barry Schwabsky's article *Permission to Fail* states, "if you make art in ways that other artists would have considered disposable exercises – Wittgensteinian ladders to be tossed aside once ascended – then you are getting somewhere with your art." ¹ After undergraduate, I approached art making as continual exercises in experimentation that I felt I must try. I believe I worked this way because I felt like in order to be an authentic artist, I must pay my dues and try to experiment with as many different ways of working as possible. This broadened my range of work, and created a portfolio of very diverse and risky work. That way of working helped me eventually have the ability to edit and impose constraints that are valuable for my thesis work. The thesis process taught me what making a focused body of work is about,

¹ Barry Schwabsky, *Permission to Fail – MFA's aren't the problem: it's artists being content with what they know.* (The Nation. February 10, 2014).

but I don't think I could have created this work without years of rigorous, but marginally successful failures. I now feel more free, but found freedom within focused constraints.

3 FACE

I am interested in cultural icons and biographies. I am interested in the controversial, famous, and infamous. I am not interested in these people because of their fame. I am interested in them because of their stories and impact. The difference between icons and the lesser known is that celebrity icons often have profound societal impact. There are many people out in the world who are not known publicly that may be just as interesting. There is something fascinating about provocative people at the top of their field. They matter for better or worse. Writers may spend years studying and writing a biography on one person because that person is not ordinary. While studying their biographies or publicity, it becomes clear that icons stories often involve great risk taking, controversy, or loss. With public notoriety comes mass perception. This paper will attempt to argue and explain why the works in my exhibition question media perception as complete reality and may save face on some levels. The works attempt to save face by elevating these subjects to the space of an art gallery and presenting them in new forms. Sarah Rosenberg defines the concept of face as follows:

Face is a multi-faceted term, and its meaning is inextricably linked with culture and other terms such as honor and its opposite, humiliation. *Saving face* or *giving face* has different levels of importance, depending on the culture or society with which one is dealing. Perhaps the most familiar term to many is "*saving face*," which we understand simply to mean not being disrespectful to others in public, or taking preventive actions so that we will not appear to *lose face* in the eyes of others. Some will immediately associate the term "face" with Sino-Japanese cultures, but it would be a mistake to think that those are the only cases where face issues are important.²

_

² Rosenberg, Sarah. "Face." Beyond Intractability. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess. Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted: February 2004. http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/face

In American culture, we tend to desire the tabloids or like to see celebrities humiliated. Even though I agree with Rosenberg that face is not only important in the east, it has been my personal experience, living in between Korean and American culture, that we certainly do not hold the concept of face as being as important. I believe giving face and saving face are important concepts to a healthier society because it inserts a degree of social discretion and healthy non-invasive space when dealing with others. I find American tabloid culture, and media to be sometimes cruel, and often strange. My artistic intent is to elevate and reconsider these iconic celebrity subjects and embrace the polarization and extremity in beliefs, attitudes, or actions their images provoke.

I have recently gone through a divorce. American males tend to lose a great deal of face whether deserved or not during divorces. I think I specifically came to this work by an understanding and empathy with some of the subjects through failed experiences in my own life. Children with divorced parents who live a nomadic early childhood often are different from those who come from traditional two parent households. It is my opinion, they often understand shortcomings, tolerance, and are not overly confident. My own life experiences are similar to that. I have guilt about being divorced. My daughter is being raised by two separate parents, even though she is loved immensely that is not the ideal situation for her. I felt an extreme amount of criticism from all angles after this experience. That is why I became drawn to tainted or polarizing subjects. Some criticism may be valid, but other forms of losing face may be spread through gossip, group think, and different forms of gang stalking or slander often perpetrated by those who have had less than challenging life experiences.

4 INFLUENCE

There are several artists with whom I feel I share common ground or who have influenced me. Martin Kippenberger, Elizabeth Peyton, and Andy Warhol are artists that I consider influences. Kippenberger is a prolific artist who worked in many different forms. His scope of work spans drawing, painting, sculpture, assemblage, and installations. However, I am most interested in his hotel stationary drawings. These drawings are a series of works that are executed on stationary he collected from hotels around the world. He stayed at some, but not all of the hotels whose stationary he used. He would collect the stationary and make the drawings later. I am interested in these drawings for two reasons. First, although most are well rendered, there sometimes appears to be a calculated off-ness or inaccuracy to many of the works. These imperfections may occur in the form of inaccurate proportions or exaggerated features. Second, I am interested in these works because they are rendered on a paper substrate intended for notation instead of art. An example of these drawings is Kippenberger's untitled self-portrait (Fig. 1.1) Similar to Kippenberger, I am interested in non-traditional surfaces such as printed fabric or found objects that are used as substrates in my work. In Kippenberger's case, these surfaces serve as an irrationally drawn souvenir or momenta for the places he visited. However, the surface has a more complex context in Kippenberger's work than merely recording a travel. Stanford Art Historian Pamela Lee believes the relationship of the substrate in the hotel stationary drawings has to do with the timing being simultaneous with Kippenberger's creation of the *Peter Sculptures*. The Peter Sculptures are an installation project that included forty-five objects. A Peter

Sculpture installation is shown as (Fig. 2.1). Lee describes the *Peter Sculptures* by stating,

The show was formally called "Peter. Die russische Stellung" (Peter: The Russian position), a reference to the jumbled exhibition methods of St. Petersburg's Hermitage Museum. Drawing from the display bases produced by Kippenberger's assistant, artist Michael Krebber, the elements comprising the cycle were heterogeneous ramshackle constructions that did not so much play with the conventions of traditional sculpture as the modes of display that prop up such objects.³

Lee argues, since the stationary drawings were created at the same time, they are not simply relics of travels, but collected imagery challenging conventional drawing or form. She states, "For what makes these drawings compelling is not merely their status as individual documents (does it matter whether Kippenberger ever really stayed at Howard Johnson?), but their ever-generative seriality, confirmed and reinforced by the ubiquity of their ground." ⁴ Figure 1.1 shows an example of a self-portrait Kippenberger created as part of the hotel series utilizing stationary as the substrate. Lee continues by stating, "As is the case with the *Peter Sculptures*, the substrate assumes principle import in this work, not the individual drawing as such; and it is from this condition alone that the "series" derives its semantic currency." ⁵ For me, the surfaces are intended to capture personality traits or associative colors intended to express the subject's essence. But, my pieces with fabric or found object substrates take a different form than just drawing. This process

³ Ann Goldstein and Pamela M. Lee, *Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective*. (The MIT Press, 2009), 194.

⁴ Ibid., 204.

⁵ Ibid., 204.

shares some similar conceptual concerns by employing non-traditional presentation methods and materials as the *Peter Sculptures*. Also, the use of non-traditional substrates and three dimensional floor pieces developed simultaneously while making a serial series of drawings similarly to Lee's theory on the evolution of both Kippenberger's stationary drawings and the *Peter Sculptures*. There is a similar use of form and presentation I feel I share with Kippenberger, but my intent is not questioning institutional display methods or commodification as he may have been exploring in the *Peter Sculptures*. My intent is to create portraits in various forms that force the viewer to view these figures in a new way. I differ from Kippenberger in subject and intent, but not in approach or process.

Elizabeth Peyton is an artist whose drawings interest me. Peyton often renders celebrities of present and past. In my eyes, they do raise a sense of quiet nostalgia. She often renders pop icons such as Kurt Cobain or Keith Richards such as (Fig. 3.1). She draws them in colored pencils in an empathetic and loose style that employs a good amount of artistic economy. She has the ability to render just enough information. I do employ a degree of economy through medium, scale, and approach. Peyton says a lot using very little. Enrique Juncosa states the following regarding Peyton's work, "Her approach to painting and drawing, drawing, photography, and print making is deeply rooted in her surroundings and readings." I share a common approach with Peyton by identifying and choosing subjects through what I read or receive from my surroundings, in this case, being mass media. However, where Peyton tends to only make representational portraits, I produce both representational and non-representational work.

⁶ Enrique Juncosa, *Elizabeth Petyon: Reading and Writing*. (Irish Museum of Art, 2009), 105.

Andy Warhol's celebrity portraits also interest me. Although his approach is primarily silk screen with photographic images, there are aspects to Warhol himself that serve the purposes of this paper well. Warhol's celebrity portraits are repetitive. I repeat the same drawing methods and scale eighty-four times in this exhibition. My intent repeating similar images is to intensify the effect on the viewer with a large quantity of handmade works. Although he would often repeat the same image, with different printed colors and values (Fig. 4.1), I repeat multiple subjects within the same medium, substrate, and overall theme. Similarly to Warhol, my interest in subjects stems from research or news regarding the subject. For example, according to Eric Shanes, "Warhol was prompted to embark upon his series of paintings of Marilyn Monroe by news of the actress's suicide on 4 August 1962." Her death prompted the artist to utilize her imagery in his work. Even though I work smaller, it's similar because after learning about a subject I begin making work about them. However, I do not employ the complexity or scale that Warhol uses and as he distances himself, I bring the subject to a closer more intimate space. I prefer the drawn image in all its humility. This is important to me because I tend to be somewhat shy and quiet, therefore; the small scale drawing tactic is merely a reflection of some aspects of my personality. The act of creating small hand drawn images of celebrities is counter to the spectacle. The Spectacle is described by Guy Debord, in his Situationalist book, *The Society of the Spectacle*, as a media creation or exaggeration of increasing influence and power. Specifically, he states:

⁷ Eric Shanes, Warhol: Life and Master Works. (Parkstone Press, Ltd., 2004), 118.

In societies where modern conditions of production prevail, all of life presents itself as an immense accumulation of *spectacles*. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation. The images detached from every aspect of life can no longer be reestablished. Reality considered *partially* unfolds, in its own general unity, as a pseudo-world *apart*, an object of mere contemplation. The specialization of images of the world is completed in the world of autonomous image, where the liar has lied to himself. The spectacle in general, as the concrete inversion of life, is autonomous movement of the non-living. 8

While Warhol creates a spectacle of sorts, my work presents an alternative. Through modest approach and tainted subject matter, I invert the spectacle. The portraits serve as a departure point for me to grapple with less plastic and superficial issues such as morality, conviction, and gender nature. I achieve this by creating forms that counter the large, glossy, and slick celebrity portrait which Warhol utilizes. Additionally, the drawings humanize the subjects because they are not completely accurate, but rendered empathetically and delicately. Through scale, materials, and drawing style I counter the spectacle by creating quiet and loving portraits.

5 CONCEPTION AND ICONS

Over the years, I have watched and read many biographies of famous and infamous American personalities ranging from Phil Spector, Henry Hill, Richard Pryor, Chris Farley, J.D. Salinger, John Belushi, and many others. For example, more recently I read *Wiseguy* by Nicholas Peleggi which is the biography of Henry Hill. Contemporary

⁸ Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*. (Accessed 10/5/2014). 1-2. http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/16

biographies exist as an aspect of the spectacle in which we live. According to Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle* section 29, he states,

The spectacle originates in the loss of the unity of the world, and the gigantic expansion of the modern spectacle expresses the totality of this loss: the abstraction of all specific labor and the general abstraction of the entirety of production are perfectly rendered in the spectacle, whose mode of being concrete is precisely abstraction. In the spectacle, one part of the world represents itself to the world and is superior to it. The spectacle is nothing more than the common language of this separation. What binds the spectators together is no more than an irreversible relation at the very center which maintains their isolation. The spectacle reunites the separate, but reunites it as separate.

It is specifically Dubord's statement regarding the binding of spectators that is particularly relevant to my work. Biographies and icons create a spectacular area to explore when contemporary life for the ordinary masses may be arguably bleak requiring constant stimulation from the spectacle. In other words, the masses separation from icons and their lives makes celebrities all the more interesting and we are reunited with them through biographies or media. The separation and unification of the spectator and the icon is important to my work because I am separated greatly from these subjects, yet can also relate on some levels. I am separated from my subjects physically, and do not have access to them. But, I am reunited with them through study and creating work. I am close to their image, but far from them. My work lives and is created in this in between space.

I am interested in celebrity icons because often with their success and notoriety comes a willingness not only to take great risks, but to have a faith and bravery that most

_

⁹ Ibid., 29.

of us do not have. Although I have taken many risks in my life, I have not even come close to succeeding at the level these people have. Also, these people are attractive because many of them must have become very lucky on some levels regardless of how talented, brilliant, or hard working they are. I think all of us want some part of their lives whether it be their skills, success, or lifestyle. Maybe, acknowledging one's own mediocrity is a painful plight and the spectacle is more interesting. As an artist, I am not interested in judging. I am interested in exploring. In 1975, Kenneth Anger wrote the book *Hollywood Babylon* as tell all slander and tabloid publication intended for the Hollywood elite to lose face. The book starts with tales from the early twentieth century and concludes in the sixties. Anger describes slanderous tabloid culture in the context of an exposed and published Hollywood list, and birth of a new type of gossip by stating:

In 1952, the movie capital had not entirely recovered from the Billy Bennett Affair when a little magazine, published in New York, appeared on newsstands all over the country. This new offspring of yellow journalism soon became the talk of the town and *Confidential* acquired a reputation as the worst kind of rag – but everyone read it anyway. Its motto was, "Tell the Facts and Name the Names." Scandal sheets were nothing new. There had been successful professional gossipmongers for decades including the viscious Westbrook Peglar, malicious Walter Winchell, that holy terror Elsa Maxwell and of course Tinsel Town's own innuendo specialists, Hedda and Louella. But Perfidious *Confidential* carried things further than any of the rumormongers had done, went into greater detail and did not hesistate to affirm the stories it published were a faithful account of the facts. ¹⁰

What Anger is describing above is the escalation of the extremity of the spectacle. The truth may or may not be told accurately, but the masses necessity for sensation and stimulation from the spectacle is requiring more sensational and outrageous gossip or stories. Extremity of face loss is the goal. I am working in between this space. I admit the desire to have an extraordinary

¹⁰ Anger, Kenneth, *Hollywood Babylon*. (Straight Arrow Books, San Francisco, 1975.) 259.

life, but am not interested debasing those who do. One potential and unintended outcome of my work might be the viewer perceiving the work as visual gossip or tabloid image exploitation. However, that interpretation does two things, first, it reinforces the power of the spectacle versus further and more honest interpretations of questioning mass media. Second, it may reveal the viewer's desire for the spectacle versus an open-ness to the forms as alternatives. This can be interpreted as artistic miscommunication. However, if one really pays attention to how the work is rendered, writing content, and formal presentation, I do not think I am miscommunicating.

6 PROCESS

The process by which this work evolved is non-linear. Similar to Kippenberger, I began making three dimensional floor pieces. The first of these is *Double Hemingway* (Fig. 5.1). This is a floor installation of the author utilizing two wooden gesso primed and sanded acrylic painted panels with radius corners. There is a charcoal portrait drawing adhered to the top panel with acrylic glue and polyurethane finish. The base sits on the floor. I adhered a framed charcoal drawing of the author turned sideways to a found buffet tray. Lastly, I spray painted a broad orange acrylic band across the tray and lean it against the wall while it rests on the base. The form is not only representative of a tomb stone, but is also a form with potentially multiple interpretations relating to the sideways interrupted composition and substrates being employed. For example, the drawings are sensitively rendered and adhered to wood surfaces with a bold orange band of acrylic creating a contrast between bold and quiet or meek and proud. Also, one of the portraits is adhered sideways which disorients the viewer. The combination of delicate, bold and

wood, acrylic with conflicting portrait orientation creates a dichotomy within the form potentially expanding interpretation. These pieces are a dramatic formal shift from my previously large scale abstracted collage paintings. They were a breakthrough for me because I realized I didn't need to employ scale to create and express what I want to say. For example, two adequately drawn and arranged or assembled portraits of Hemingway employed on a small floor installed structure was sufficient. The form was sufficient because the intent is not to astonish the viewer with scale or beauty. The intent of the form is for intimate contemplation which may result in either a degree of saving face from the subject's controversial persona created from mass media or empathetic reconsideration. This was my solution to a formal and conceptual problem.

After constructing a few floor pieces, I began making the serial series of charcoal drawings mostly of subjects who interest me. This became a time based process of creating one drawing per day in addition to my typical practice of creating the assemblage portraits. This work runs parallel to On Kawara's time based work. For example, Kawara created a series of black and white date paintings he called *Todays* (Fig. 8.1). He created one painting a day almost as a declaration of existence. Olle Granath, describes them as "Self-evident actions that mark the boundary and transition from unconscious to conscious, actions that are a necessary condition for all social life." Part of my drawing process was simply to do something that day. The act of creating one drawing per day also serves as an artistic constraint that documents time and existence because of the serial and self-imposed constrained aspect to the process. I am also a father to a wonderful daughter. Being a father is a natural time constraint. The calendar

¹¹ Olle Granath and Peter Nilson, *On Kawara: Continuity / Discontinuity 1963-1979*. (Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1980), 9.

form was a solution to continuing to make the work that is important to me while managing my personal life. The form was used for practical and conceptual reasons. My process parallels Kawara, but differs partially conceptually. *Calendar One* is the first set of twenty-eight drawings I created (Fig. 9.1).

I also created a key (Fig. 12.1) for the calendar forms utilizing specific quotes from each person as a symbolic portrait. I sometimes find what the subjects have said to be an extended portrait. Beneath each quote, I added the subject's signature as another form of a portrait. The intent of these quotes are to create different perceptions of the subjects which may broaden interpretation or save face depending on the quote chosen. The subject is visually rendered through another form intended to serve as a portrait without a figurative image. This is a space where the conceptual idea of saving face plays a role in the work. I specifically made a calculated decision to have a conceptually diverse range of quotes. For example, some of the quotes are chosen because they provide an explanation from the subject for some of their key concepts or ideas. Others are very simple and literal statements. Utilizing the quotes saves face because I specifically chose quotes that either shine different light or motives on the subject by their content.

As a symbol of face, I have included various forms and images of the Geisha. I am utilizing the image of Japanese Geishas to be a figurative and symbolic image of face. They wear a mask of sorts, and they are also an example of a group who are often misperceived as more than entertainers. In actuality, Geishas are valued most for wit, charm, musical, dance abilities and thorough knowledge of traditional Japanese performance and ceremony, than purely appearance. Our western perception of them, is

not always reality. John Gallagher, in his book *Geisha*, describes the typical encounter as follows, "The atmosphere tends to have a playfully erotic edge, skillfully handled with a knowing, often teasing, and not unkind air. From there, the roads part company. The trained Geisha, of the maiko or hangyoku, is working with a range of skills in a different stratosphere from a hostess, and at best, her customers have been educated to appreciate what she's doing." The geisha are a fundamental image in this body of work because if misperceived they may cause one to lose face. In actuality, their presence is mere performance, and the name geisha translates into arts person.

Finally, I began to employ signatures as an indexical rendering of the subjects. I found handwriting, specifically name writing, to be a useful form of abstractly rendering the subjects image with their signature as written from their own hand. The index of the signature serves as an intimate and authoritative image. The intent of *Saving Face* is to open up the idea of what portraits can be and who people might be versus who we perceive them to be through the media. The signatures provide a different effect because they show an extension of the subjects personality expressed through a non-figurative, but representational form. The signatures are completely accurate due to formal necessity. One can draw a recognizable, but not completely perfect portrait of a person and still be convincing. The copied signatures must be precise or they become just a written name without revealing personality. Such an example of the signature work is *Johnny Cash* (Fig. 13.1).

¹² John Gallagher, *Geisha*. (Metro Books, New York 2003), 43.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, this exhibition is a conceptual and formal exploration of portraits that present the subject in a form that makes the viewer perceive them differently or save face. Warhol described his process for making the Marilyn Monroe images by stating, "There was no profound reason for doing the death series, no victims of their time; there was no reason for doing it all, just a surface reason." This quote illustrates the superficial nature of the media image. The photographs used in the Marilyn works bring us into the spectacle and show the commonality and closeness of the media image. In contrast, the artist Daniel Bozhkov states the following regarding his choice of subjects, "I'm drawn to subjects that are too large to see. You know how something becomes a cliché – it's been a common truth for a while, until it becomes something that's not true, it becomes a false assumption. I'm interested in the moment where there's an amnesia or opacity. When something is so visible that you stop seeing it – that's the time to pay attention." The Bozhkov quote shows the impossibility of knowing the compete reality of the subject. This is the distance. Even after reading or studying them, I will probably never meet any of the subjects. Again, I work in the space between the intimate knowing and critical distance. I chose subjects for this exhibition that are often polarizing. Some of them have lost face deservedly or not. I am interested in the artistic space that is gray. The artistic space I am interested in does not know, but desires understanding without too much conviction. I work between the closeness to and distance from the subject.

¹³ Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. (University of California Press, 1996), 343.

¹⁴ Stuart Horodner, *The Art Life: On Creativity and Career*. (Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, 2012), 58.

REFERENCES

Anger, Kenneth, Hollywood Babylon. Straight Arrow Books, San Francisco, 1975.

Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. (Accessed 10/5/2014).

http://library.nothingness.org/articles/SI/en/display/16

Gallagher, John. Geisha. Metro Books, New York 2003.

- Goldstein, Ann and Lee, Pamela M., *Martin Kippenberger: The Problem Perspective*.

 The MIT Press, 2009.
- Granath, Olle and Nilson, Peter. *On Kawara: Continuity / Discontinuity 1963-1979*.

 Moderna Museet, Stockholm, 1980.
- Horodner, Stuart. *The Art Life: On Creativity and Career*. Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, 2012.
- Juncosa, Enrique. Elizabeth Petyon: Reading and Writing. Irish Museum of Art, 2009.
- Rosenberg, Sarah. "Face." Beyond Intractability. Eds. Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess.

 Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. Posted:

 February 2004. http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/face
- Schwabsky, Barry. "Permission to Fail" MFA's aren't the problem: it's artists being content with what they know. The Nation. February 10, (2014).
- Shanes, Eric. Warhol: Life and Master Works. Parkstone Press, Ltd., 2004.
- Stiles, Kristine and Selz, Peter. *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*. University of California Press, 1996.

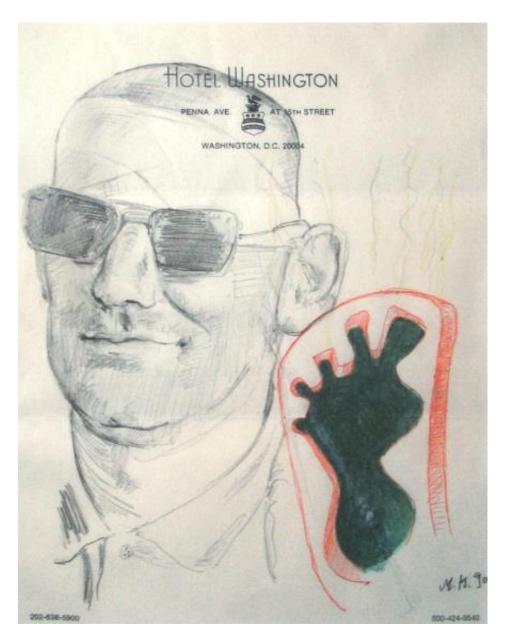


Figure 1.1 Martin Kippenberger, Untitled, pencil, ink, marker on paper, 11.5" x 8", 1990. Courtesy of Metro Pictures.

Available from: http://www.we-find-wildness.com/2010/12/martin-kippenberger/



 $Figure\ 2.1\ Martin\ Kippenberger, \textit{Peter\ Sculptures},\ installation,\ dimensions\ vary.\ Courtesy\ of\ Museum\ of\ Contemporary\ Art,\ Los\ Angeles.\ Photo\ by\ Brian\ Forrest.$

Available from: http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/features/drohojowska-philp/drohojowska-philp11-19-08_detail.asp?picnum=6



 $\label{eq:conditional} \textbf{Figure 3.1 Elizabeth Peyton}, \textbf{\textit{Keith Richards}}, \textbf{Colored Pencil, 2004 (detail)}. \textbf{Photograph: Elixabeth Peyton/Phaidon Press.}$

Available from: http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2009/apr/08/artist-elizabeth-peyton



 $Figure~4.1~Andy~Warhol, {\it Marilyn~Diptych}, Acrylic~Paint~on~Canvas, 2054~x~1448, 1962.~Courtesy~of~Tate~Collection. \\$

Available from: http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/warhol-marilyn-diptych-t03093

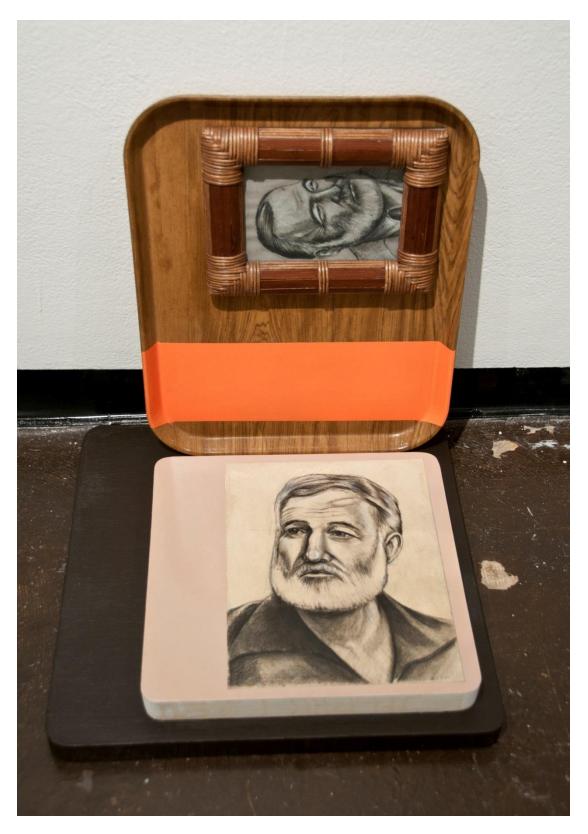


Figure 5.1 Lane Ketner, *Double Hemingway*, Mixed Media Assemblage, Dimensions vary, 2014.



Figure 6.1 Double Hemingway, Installation view.



Figure 7.1 Double Hemingway (detail).



Figure 8.1 On Kawara, *Today Series*, "*Tuesday*", Acrylic on canvas with two newspapers, 61" x 89", 1978. Courtesy of Art Institute of Chicago.

Available from:

http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/59646?search_no=1&index=0



Figure 9.1 Lane Ketner, Calendar One, 35" x 44.5", Charcoal and chalk on paper, 2014.



Figure 10.1 Lane Ketner, Calendar Two, 35" x 44.5", Charcoal and chalk on paper, 2015.



Figure 11.1 Lane Ketner, Calendar Three, Charcoal and chalk on paper, 2015.



Figure 12.1 Lane Ketner, Key, Ink and charcoal on paper, 22.5" x 26.75", 2015.



Figure 13.1 Lane Ketner, *Portrait of Johnny Cash*, Gesso on stretched fabric, 48" x 48", 2015.



Figure 14.1 Lane Ketner, Johnny Carson Anti-Curmudgeon, Acrylic on stretched fabric, 48" x 48", 2015.



Figure 15.1 Lane Ketner, *Portrait of Phil Spector*, Mixed Media Assemblage, Dimensions vary, 2014.



Figure 16.1 Lane Ketner, *Pink Geisha*, Mixed Media Assemblage, 10" x 26", 2014.



Figure 17.1 Lane Ketner, *Geisha*, Acrylic on stretched fabric, 10.75" x 11.75", 2014.



Figure 18.1 Saving Face, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery, 2015.



Figure 19.1 Saving Face, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery, 2015. (right).



Figure 20.1 Saving Face, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery, 2015. (left).



Figure 21.1 Saving Face, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery, 2015.



Figure 22.1 Saving Face, Calendar One, Two, and Three with Key, Installation view, Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design Gallery, 2015.