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Portrayal

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Portrayal

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Art

by

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Bachelor of Fine Art, Studio Art, 2002

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is in addition to my thesis series, Portrayal, a group of selected photographs. In this essay I outline the contents and developments of the series of photographs by the same name. It includes information on the artistic techniques employed, concepts and considerations taken into account when making the photographs including the relationship with and presentation of the subject, the exhibition of the photographs, and influences on the specific composition and tone of the photographs.

The images in Portrayal are not candid or objective views. Each is constructed based upon the negotiations with the subject and represent an edited view of the subject. Portrayal provides a unique examination of a cross section of a specific group of artists all connected geographically. This structure made it possible for a group of viewers to interact with each other both as subjects and as part of the selected piece of the art community.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my fellow artist friends for their endless inspiration. Special thanks goes to my partner in life, Emily Lawson, my grandparents (Granny and Ben), and my sister Kara.

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I. Introduction

My work as a photographer began with a Polaroid camera. The Polaroid camera needed no instruction and allowed me to practice composition without the worries of an aperture, ISO, or shutter speed. It froze the comings and goings of the people and world that surrounded me. The images were informal and intimate snapshots of mostly young artist, friends whose identities, along with mine, began to emerge through the influence of the artists we watched and the art to which we were exposed. I constantly recorded our lives and accumulated our histories. These collections and experiences from years ago later informed my work as I hungered again for the details of artists' lives within their environments. My images were no longer intimate snapshots, but conceived and executed portraits.

My process of becoming a fine art photographer began to take shape with the realization that I wanted to be recognized as a professional artist, not just a commercial photographer. I wanted to find a way to create art that would encourage an audience to engage for a longer amount of time with my work. So I began my *Habitat* series of photographs in an effort to explore the lives of people through elaborate orchestrations of the possessions and space that constitute their everyday environment. Employing centuries-old compositional devices, my theatrically conceived portraits transcend the quotidian familiarity of the personal belongings and spaces they depict, casting my subjects as both intimately vulnerable and heroic. Through my creative direction, I showcase my subjects' lives in a way I feel tells the story of who they are and shows how I see them, always giving my audience the most information possible.

The *Habitats* series images are inspired directly by earlier artistic achievements in portraiture. Medieval portraiture is valued for its ability to express an individual's social

status, religious convictions, or political position through the inclusion of details of their clothing, heraldry, or other objects related to them. The goal of medieval portraiture was to present a subject, not merely in that particular moment in time, but as the person wished to be remembered through the ages.³

With the *Habitat* series, the subjects initiate the composition through choosing objects they want to be seen with in their portraits. Each subject is encouraged to select objects representative of his or her individual identity. I suggest other objects from their environment to add to the pictures. Using this negotiated and edited selection of possessions, I construct the final set and composition of the photograph.

Habitats take the accepted conventions of formal portrait compositions from art history. A triangular composition, a hallmark of Renaissance painting, is another device that I use in my environmental portraits. The compositional triangle became a “well-understood convention by the second half of the fifteenth century. These paintings required the artist to manage the arrangement and attitudes of the figures in a distinctive way unlike that of a triptych or polyptych.”⁴ This composition technique leads the eye rhythmically and symmetrically throughout the entire image. The lighting in my environmental photographs is influenced by my love of tenebrism in Baroque paintings, especially those of Caravaggio. Renaissance portraits are more naturalistic than those of the medieval period, and portrayed more realistic looking subjects, but also used places and objects to define identity. I have been very influenced by the Arnolfini Wedding Portrait (Figure 1), which contains rich drapery, elegant clothing and furniture, and somewhat mysterious objects. My *Habitat, 2315 South Summit* (Figure 2), is a direct allusion to Jan Van Eyck's painting. It also has elegant clothing and furniture and the sitters hold hands in a pose similar to the Arnolfini Wedding sitters. In the background of

³ "Faces of Power and Piety (Getty Center Exhibitions)," The Getty, last modified August 2008, http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/power_piety/.

⁴ Rebecca Zorach, *The Passionate Triangle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 71.

2315 South Summit, behind the right shoulder of the bride, is a print of *The Arnolfini Wedding*, giving even those without prior knowledge of the painting a clear and direct reference to the earlier piece.

The time I spent working on the *Habitat* series enabled me to come into my own identity as an artist. *Portrayal* is the evolution of that knowledge. *Portrayal* is a collection of those habitat portraits that assess an artist's identity by examining the relationship between the artist's work and artist's public and private self.

Portrayal consists of large format environmental photographs that survey the relationship between an artist and his or her artwork and studio processes. Additionally, the photographs are a record of a performance by an artist within his or her studio or personal spaces that directly express elements of the artist's personality. This presentation of an artist's psychology as presented in *Portrayal* offers the viewer a narrative to decipher a visual record of an artist at work and the opportunity to understand the subjects presented in the photographs personally and apart from the commonly accepted perception of an individual artist solely based upon their careers and art work. The relationship between these artists-as-subjects within a relatively small regional community of artists and myself predicates collaboration similar to that of other photographers who have focused on a specific community.

II. *Portrayal*

A. Description of the Process of Making *Portrayal*

Portrayal focuses on presenting artists' identities, specifically the closely held personal life that is often latent in the artists' professional work and studio environment, but many times neither included overtly in their art nor largely understood within the

public's perception of that individual artist (Figure 3). The requirements to create the photographs were access to each artist's physical, personal spaces and studio, access to the artist's family and close friends, and collaboration between artist and subject to craft the scene. Through extensive conversations we reached a mutual consent as to how to represent each subject and his or her environment.

Portrayal also caused reexamination of relationships within a small community of artists in one specific geographic region: central and northwest Arkansas. In the photographs, the relationship between the artist as subject and me, an artist in the same small community, was very important. This is important because every artist in *Portrayal* is associated with the University, and I expected that many in the audience would have prior knowledge of each *Portrayal* artist's work. It was an opportunity to make art including the community and displayed for the community. There was a desire on the part of each subject involved to present a more intimate view of the struggles of an artist in the region, the struggle and success within his or her own career phase and phase of life. The images in *Portrayal* are not candid or objective views. Each is constructed based upon the negotiations with the subject and represent an edited view of the subject.

B. Specific Description of the Process with one *Portrayal* Subject: Kevin Arnold

Kevin Arnold: Painter, 44 x 66 inches, is a portrait of Arnold who was an art instructor in the Department of Art at the University of Arkansas at the time of this shoot. A graduate of the Rhode Island School of Design and twice featured in *New American Paintings*,⁵ he is one this region's most recognized contemporary painters. Arnold has

⁵ *New American Paintings*, no. 100 (June 2012).

been a personal friend for several years and I understand his goals and techniques as a painter and was familiar with his personal narrative.

As an instructor of figure drawing, Arnold is familiar with a wide range of traditional poses for the figure based upon examples from the history of art. Kevin wanted his imagery to have aspects of his current body of work and states in *New American Paintings*:

My paintings carry the weight of domestic disconnect through the unsentimental depiction of generic, mass-produced objects. The unnoticed, utilitarian things that facilitate our day-to-day existence—plain cardboard boxes, air vents, metal chairs, folding tables, vinyl office furniture—are presented in a deadpan, almost existential manner in order to question our sense of the familiar and the quality of our attention to our surroundings.⁵

Arriving at his studio, I was confronted with the subject of one of Arnold's recent large paintings: a dirty mattress. Having seen the completed painting of the mattress on display before my visit and knowing the lengthy process of painting such a large canvas, I knew that this object had been something Arnold had absorbed visually and physically for months in the studio. There was already an intimate relationship between the artist and this object, and the object alluded to much more within the artist's personal life. Using the mattress as a metaphor, featuring it in the foreground, provided much of this insight readily for the viewer.

Further personal information about Arnold that influenced the composition of the scene was my knowledge of his physical and emotional depletion as a painter in that phase of his career. Previous statements to me had illustrated his feeling of having sacrificed too much to succeed as a painter, giving too much time to the craft, and feeling the return was an under appreciation of his work. This feeling of being bound to painting, as a sharecropper is bound the land and its owner, became expressed through an

idea presented by Arnold, that of plastic-wrapping him to the mattress. The artist then is fully bound to his subject in a visual representation of the painter's unspoken consciousness thoughts.

From my first imagining of the scene for Kevin I knew I wanted him to appear in his underwear only. We also we invited a female model to appear in the background, with paint on her thighs and the backs of her arms (Figure 3). Directly relating my view of the artist with the overarching view "artist-as-sex-symbol" that the composition evokes. The image used for the print was the first image that I captured during our time together. The allusion to the Deposition (Figure 4) is obvious and intentional. Using Kevin wrapped onto the mattress as the central figure of the cross, the cruciform composition is reinforced with the painting of the mattress in the background behind his right shoulder and the actual mattress he painted positioned behind his left shoulder. Visually the crucifixion is vivified with staining similar to stigmata on the hands. The remaining studio materials in the image are carefully arranged throughout the room to reinforce the triangular composition to return the viewer's eye to the central figure repeatedly while examining the narrative scene.

The next image I created was *Luke Knox, Installation Artist*, 14 x 22 inches. Knox was a coworker of mine at a local Fayetteville coffee shop. He was also a featured artist of sUGAR gallery when I directed the space. Luke was immediately a stand out character to me in all of our interactions. He embodies the handsome aloof artist adored by the women around him. We discussed positioning him in a hanging posture first with a menacing group of females ready to eat him or tear at him, driven by their lust or intrigue. But once the shoot commenced it was clear

that Luke is just truly loved by his admirers, so in turn, I surrounded Luke on all sides by four girls armed with weapons: deer horns, a torch, an axe, and a machete (FIGURE 5). Their faces show determination and focus, they represent his tribe of impassioned women willing to fight for their charismatic, sexy leader, channeling the Charles Manson cult movement of the 1960's, not against him.

Ben Edwards: Ceramicist, 44 x 66 inches, is an elaborate image that includes fire, motion, and a challenging lighting scenario (Figure 6). Edwards and I are friends and while discussing the scene for this piece Ben confided an internal struggle in his life to overcome his innate homosexuality in his desire for a traditional family life. We decided to address this conflict within the piece. In the image he throws a painting into a roaring fire fed by the flames of several other works of art. He stands on his ceramic pieces from his MFA exhibit several years prior. His pregnant wife and three children watch Edwards and look at the viewer, studying the situation. After several discussions Edwards suggested that we capture him destroying his art because he no longer needs or creates it. He stated that providing for his family was his number one priority and art making was no longer important. Edwards stands shirtless in the photo and I used a high contrast sidelight to make him appear more masculine as a powerful provider for his family. In contrast Edward's pose exerts a feminine stance and his hand in his pocket draws your eye towards his genital area. He wanted to the viewer to question his sexuality since he himself questions it.

Joanne Jones: Photographer, 30x 40 inches, took more than one session to capture (Figure 7). In order to get at the heart of my work I depend on a natural

vulnerability and connection I get when I am alone with the subject. Jones and I had little in common and even less of a rapport when I went to the shoot. It was a great lesson for me to learn to navigate uncomfortable situations and how to continue to work with the subject to get to that space. It was Jones' last year after teaching two-dimensional design and photography at the University of Arkansas for a quarter of a century. The first time I shot Jones I saw her workspace and learned that she was a fantastic painter and had a vast collection of photographs. Through my interactions with her as my supervisor in the darkroom and two-dimensional design instructor, I learned that while she could be very sweet she has a very feisty side and is a person who photographs nature and travels all over the region. I decided to represent the physical and biting side of Jones that very few saw at the University of Arkansas. I went to Jones' studio three different times, and the first two times the resulting portraits were still and lacked any intensity. On the third try she wanted to pose with a pair of antique boxing gloves that belonged to her father. She wore the gloves during the shoot, slicing uppercuts into the air and bouncing around like a true boxer. I chose a mid-action shot where she gazed intensely into the camera. The piece became an homage to a woman who preceded me in my field of photography. While the portrait was a challenge to capture, the process was satisfying.

Sarah Norsworthy: Painter, 44 x 66 inches, is the portrait a painter who focuses on still lifes of objects she finds in the ground or in dumpsters (Figure 8). Norsworthy is a quirky gutter-punk girl with a quaint studio that is packed with found items. While discussing the photo shoot, she suggested that I should capture her digging in the ground next to her studio. I love the physical act of the painter

digging and bringing new life to thrown away and forgotten objects. Norsworthy wanted to wear a “trash” dress she made from bubble wrap. I shot her at sunset next to her studio with objects found in her studio and several of her paintings in the background. I asked her to dig into the ground and then look up as if I had just walked up and startled her while she was looking for her precious objects. I photographed through the bushes, imparting a voyeuristic viewpoint. The scene and process proved successful and this continues to be one of my favorite pieces of the series.

Kris Johnson: Photographer, 44 x 66 inches, may be the most successful image in *Portrayal* (Figure 9). I met Kris at a photography workshop in Fayetteville many years ago. Kris was eager to learn all he could from me, and I teased him about being my shadow on campus while I was in grad school. I had never met anyone obsessed with photography as Johnson. He reminded me of my younger self. You would never see Johnson without a camera around his neck, sometimes more than one. He suggested I shoot his portrait in his darkroom at his grandparent’s lake house in Bella Vista, Arkansas. I was unhappy with the appearance of the darkroom and I was familiar with the lake the house on, having seen Johnson print many images of the lake in the darkroom at school. So for the shoot I asked Johnson to wear almost all of the cameras he owns around his neck with the lake in the background. The image I captured was serendipitous thanks to a halo created by a sun flare. To me this halo represented my feelings for Johnson as a truly sweet, innocent young man. I used three lights to help delete the high contrast created behind him by the sun.

Rory Austin: Graphic Illustrator, 30 x 40 inches, is a portrait of my sister-in-law who is a prolific artist. Rory is always in her studio; she produces more work in a day than many artists produce in months. With as much time as she spends in her studio Austin has developed her own eclectic sense of who she is as a person. It was important that I captured Rory in her studio space, but I also wanted to express her as a piece of her own work. In a sense she has become her work. *Austin's portrait* was shot through the window into her home studio (Figure 10) at dusk with lights both inside and outside of her studio as she worked on a painting of a childlike mermaid—her obsession. In the image she runs her hand through her hair, which she grows long and dyes red to personify a mermaid. She suggested we wet her hair so it looked as though she had just come out of the ocean. There was also a lucky moment when her curious cat looked into the window wondering what her mermaid owner was doing. I am pleased with the outcome of this piece as is Rory who sees herself immortalized in her seafaring body.

Justin Bolle: Photographer, 30 x 40 inches, is a portrait of one of my closest friends during the busiest time of graduate school (Figure 11). Over a period of time, I watched him slowly come out of the closet and transform into a gay artist. Early on during this process he did not know many gay men, but wanted to photograph them for his art, finding his models on craigslist. Bolle and I discussed photographing him in his studio as he shot a very homoerotic photograph. Bolle went to great measures to help me capture this idea. He borrowed lighting equipment from his boss, found a model, dressed and put makeup on the model, and made a thorn crown for the model to wear just for this portrait. I wanted to make sure Bolle's art was hanging

on the wall behind the male model as a reference to his work. Justin's portrait illustrates an amplified view into his own process of creating photographs.

Mike Davis Gutiérrez: Sculptor, 30 x 40 inches, was created outside of Mike's large studio that he shared with local sculptor Hank Kaminsky (Figure 12). Gutiérrez and I attended the University of Central Arkansas together as undergraduates. I have always considered him a very hard worker; more often than not, he is covered head to toe with rock dust from his work in stone. Mike enjoys working with large slabs of limestone. This is a very physical process and I wanted to show Mike working hard grinding away at a stone. His wife Sonia's bike sits in the background of the photo and to this day she always mentions how she feels a part of Mike's *Portrayal* because of this.

Robert Lemming: Sculptor, 30 x 40 inches, was shot in Robert's studio in Huntsville, Arkansas (Figure 12). Before beginning the shoot, I showed him examples of how I imagined him posed, for example: *Self Portrait of Capt. Thomas Smith*, (circa 1670s) and *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768) by Joseph Wright, showing off his intricate work as if he were scientist. I am not personally close to Lemming in any way, but was drawn to him physically and could not ignore his striking resemblance to images of Jesus. I was eager to work on this piece and had a good outline for the setup before I got to his space. Lemming is surrounded in his tight studio by works in progress molded and formed from hot glue, polyurethane, plastic tubes, and industrial foam, and a myriad of materials that he repurposes into large-scale sculptures. Two flowers made of hot glue, stoic and once majestic, hung as deflated sculpture in the background, remnants from Robert's BFA

show. These tall sculptures stood by each of Robert's shoulders drawing the perfect triangle composition, a high-powered strobe light behind him to give a Christ-like illumination to the background.

The last two *Portrayals* I shot were *Sam King: Artist* and *Stephanie Pierce: Painter*, both 14 x22 inches. I was feeling finished with *Portrayal* but I felt that the series needed two more images. It was Sam King, who I know from my hometown, Fort Smith, and from the University of Arkansas' Art Department, who conceptualized his shoot by surrounding himself in his studio with paint tubes, paintings, music equipment, and some whiskey (Figure 13). He was in the process of training his puppy and one technique he had learned about was holding canine's upside-down to show human dominance. He wanted his pose to be holding his puppy in this position while glaring into the camera.

Stephanie Pierce's portrait was the end point for *Portrayal*. Pierce is a painting instructor at the University of Arkansas, whose painting style and concepts I wanted to mimic. Pierce states that her paintings are "an attempt to glimpse transitional moments of time and light." I shot her in different light scenarios but always kept her in the same area of her studio. I then shot several images and layered them on top of each other in Photoshop. Pierce was skeptical when I explained my plan to mimic her paintings in photographic portrait, but when she viewed the portrait for the first time she was pleased and felt that my portrait recreated the essence of her paintings. I felt like that was a great moment on which to end the *Portrayal* series (Figure 14). With this final piece a new system was born and with that a new series. *Layers*, my new series of work, is an amalgam of

learning how to collect as much information possible from a subject and present it in a painterly way.

C. *Portrayal* Exhibition

The subject in an artwork, especially in portraiture, is often unknown to the viewer. The subject is usually something or someone the audience learns about through the image presented, rarely experiencing its actual presence for better examination. I took this opportunity to give the viewer another layer of experience. Not only are they able to connect with the way I experience artists in their space, but they are able to experience the subjects in the same real time space as the art. All of the subjects presented in *Portrayal* were in attendance at the exhibition's opening reception. This offered viewers the rare opportunity to assess the reality of a subject compared side-by-side with his or her constructed imagery. (Figure 16) To record this moment, the subjects were photographed in front of or beside their portraits in the gallery as others watched.

The exhibition included twelve images of different twelve artists (Appendix 1, Exhibition Checklist for *Portrayal*). For this exhibit I developed the layout and completed the installation of the photographs myself within the University of Arkansas Fine Arts Center Gallery. The larger photographs were 44 inches by x 66 inches and ranged in size to as small as 14 inches by 22 inches. (Figure 15). The gallery is, for some of the subjects including Kevin Arnold, located within their place of employment. This dynamic is central to the full realization of the goal of the *Portrayal* series: to reexamine in a public arena the artist's public vs. private persona.

D. Camera Equipment and Digital Developing Processes Used for *Portrayal*

Portrayal began as simple documentation of close to twenty different artists in their respective studios. I Photoshopped each image in a very simplistic manner by color correcting the temperature per image, sharpened the edges, and adjusted the levels (lightness and darkness). The images were nice, technically correct photographs, desaturated and printed on Epson Matte 11"x17" photo paper.

I photographed a second round of selected artists who interested me most from the first series for what would become the final *Portrayal* series. I used a Canon 7d, standard digital Single Lens Reflex camera. When color processing I used a cool tone as opposed to a warm tone because I wanted a cinematic feel. I used a mixture of hot lights and strobes to light each scene, again to obtain my goal of a cinematic feel. The cinematic feel was heightened during editing as I almost always chose the image in mid-motion. After editing down to twelve *Portrayals* I Photoshopped each image, sharpened the edges and adjusted the levels, and added lens flares and vignette to add a dramatic presentation to each image. I printed my large scale photographs onto Epson Matte Paper: four *Portrayals* at 44"x 66," five at 30"x44," and three at 14"x22." Because of what I learned about presentation in Chicago at the Society of Photographic Education Combined Caucus Exhibit, where my images were lost due to poor presentation and black frames, which absorbed the illumination of color from each print, for *Portrayal* I chose to float the images in white frames to maintain the saturation. The presentation fit perfectly within the space at the University of Arkansas' Fine Art Gallery.

III. Visual Art Influences and Inspirations Leading to the Development of and

Contained Within the Series *Portrayal*

Sally Mann's photographs in *Immediate Family*⁶ and *At Twelve: Portraits of Young Women*⁷ are informative to my approach to photography. Mann documents real events, but fictionalizes them through staging. I have connected with this approach since my beginning as a photographer. She expresses this point below. When writing about her work Mann states:

These are photographs of my children living their lives here too. Many of these pictures are intimate, some are fictions and some are fantastic, but most are of ordinary things every mother has seen--a wet bed, a bloody nose, candy cigarettes.⁵

Her process in these series involves documenting her family in their home environment, carefully staging the images for a more narrative composition (Figure 17). The resulting images demonstrate that the “camera does not lie,” but storytelling with naturalistic images can be constructed to express several layers of meaning. I first used this approach in my original series, *Habitats*. In this series I often chose the articles that appeared in the image even though the subject owned the objects, I was the one controlling the message. This particular view continues to be scene in *Portrays*, though the artist is the subject, they may appear an extreme version of themselves or “fantastical” in some way.

Years later I was introduced to Shelby Lee Adams, an American environmental portrait photographer best known for his images of Appalachian family life. Adams showed me a different way to curate intimate photography. Until this point, like Mann, I was documenting family and people closer to me, mostly catching a candid moment with little posturing. Adams takes total control and carefully instructs his subjects on how to pose and posture. A clear depiction of that control is found in this excerpt from an interview with Adams.

Some say this is a staged photograph, implying that something is not real or false. I call my work formally posed with my subject's full corporation, seeing and

⁶ Sally Mann and Reynolds Price, *Immediate Family* (1992).

⁷ Sally Mann, *At Twelve: Portraits of Young Women* (New York, N.Y.: Aperture, 1988).

sharing Polaroid's through out the process, affirm this. I have established long term relationships with these people who do trust me. The final result is of no surprise to any involved, the picture is what everyone worked together to make.⁸

Adams is clear in the above quote that his control is not about misleading the audience, but more about a collaborative effort of the subject and the photographer to tell a story. In his image *The Hog Killing, Spring 1990* (Figure 18), in order for Adams to execute the image he needed he purchased the pig that was slaughtered by the family for this photograph because the subject family was unable to afford the animal. This is a direct example of how the artist is controlling the outcome of the subject matter. Adams exerts control over the subjects and the environments in his portraits in order to show greater truths about their lives. I was moved by Adams depiction of his experience in the making of the *Hogs Killing, Spring 1990*, because it clearly expressed depth in his process, even though it wasn't done as a documentary his work still conveys truth and important content. I have balanced my work with Adams processes in mind many times.

The evolution of my photography continued as I looked for varying ways to present intimate information. Once exposed to the works of Alfred Hitchcock I was quick to adapt his voyeuristic approach, specifically for my *Portrayal* series. Alfred Hitchcock pioneered the use of a camera made to move in a way that mimics a person's gaze, forcing viewers to engage in a form of voyeurism.⁹ In *Portrayal*, the photograph *Rory: Sequential Illustration*, was taken viewing the subject through a window, outside looking into the studio. *Kevin Arnold: Artist* was framed by the doorway leading into his

⁸ Huff, Steve. Last modified August 2010.

<http://www.stevhuffphoto.com/2010/08/23/featured-photographer-interview-shelby-lee-adams/>.

⁸ Bays, Jeff (December 2007). "Film Techniques of Alfred Hitchcock". *Borgus.com*. Borgus Productions. Retrieved 13 July 2010.

⁹ Arnold Newman, *Artists, Portraits from Four Decades* (Boston: New York Graphic Society, 1980), 11.

studio. In *Justin Bolle: Photographer* the photograph was taken from the point of view of a person entering the room. Each of these specific compositions, and all of the images in the Portrayal series, offer the viewer the opportunity to passively view a scene as the action is taking place.

Once Portrayal began to take shape, I became interested in the styling's of Arnold Newman. Newman is a master photographer who shot a famous series of environmental portraits, of well-known artists in the 1950's and 60's, (Figures 19 and 20).

Newman explains his motivations in his book *Artists*: "There was no question in my mind where to start--it was with the artist." Newman was front and center social in New York during this time where he was exposed to a myriad of intellects and burgeoning artists. He continues on to say, "The personality of the artist as it relates to his work and milieu has been an unbroken link in my work, a subject to which I have always returned, to rethink and reinterpret." I appreciate this explanation of his style of work and feel that it directly speaks to my intentions and motivations with Portrayal and my relationships with the artists I photograph. I respected where he went with similar subject matter. I learned that I wanted my images to be more stylized, that I didn't want to use natural light and that I wanted a more cinematic feel

Finally, the relationship and work of Susan Sontag and Annie Leibovitz has influenced me both contemplatively and aesthetically through out my entire photo and art career. Susan Sontag's writings on photography instruct me as an image-maker and embody my personal artistic narrative. A clear example of that parallel is outlined in this here where Sontag expresses her understanding of contemporary photography in this essay *Women*:

A Photograph is not an opinion. Or is it?" and "We want photography to be unmythic, full of concrete information. We are more comfortable with photographs that are ironic, unidealizing. Decorum is now understood as concealment. We expect the photographer to be bold, even insolent. We hope that subjects will be candid, or naively revealing.¹⁰

Sontag's insight is propelled and cemented by her intimate relationship with Annie Leibovitz. Leibovitz is an American portrait photographer, most notably for her work with Rolling Stone magazine. The power within that relationship has been motivating and inspirational for me. Sontag's words are seductive but Leibovitz's massive set designs and over-the-top executions of portraiture are ultimately the greatest influence on my photography. It's not Leibovitz's singular portraits that peak my interest, but her images with multiple sitters. She manages to give each person her own personality and execute a narrative within the image. Her lighting is moody and magical. I strive to setup scenes as dramatic and engrossing as hers.

III. Conclusion

Through *Portrayal*, I make the intangible processes of art-making visible by showing the juxtaposition of the artists' private inner lives with those they present to the public. I give my audience a glimpse into the inner workings of the artist and turn the audiences' gaze onto the vulnerable artist. The portraiture allows a more holistic view of the subject's life rather than a "snapshot" moment. Through my collaborations and personal relationships with the subjects I create multiple dimensions in the portraits. Only I can make these images for they are unique to my opinions and relationships to each artist. I am the artist making art by photographing artists.

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V. List of Figures

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9. Sculptor Alexander Calder in his studio, photograph by Arnold Newman
10. George Segal, with one of his works, photograph by Arnold Newman

VI. Figures (Images)



Figure 1. *Arnolfini Portrait* by Jan van Eyck.



Figure 2. Habitat: 2315 South Summit



Figure 3. *Portrayal: Kevin Arnold, Artist*



Figure 4. *Deposition* by Rogier van der Weyden



Figure 5. *Portrayal: Luke Knox, Installation Artist*



Figure 6. *Portrayal: Ben Edwards, Ceramics Artist*



Figure 7. Portrayal: Joanne, Photographer/Painter



Figure 8. Portrayal: Sarah Norsworthy, Painter



Figure 9. Portrayal: Kris Johnson: Photographer



Figure 10. Portrayal: Rory Austin: Sequential Narrative



Figure 10. *Portrayal: Justin Bolle: Photographer*



Figure 2. Installation image of the exhibition *Portrayal*



Figure 3. Installation image of the reception for the exhibition *Portrayal*



Figure 8. *Candy Cigarette*, 1989, photography by Sally Mann© Sally Mann



Figure 9. *The Hog Killing, Spring 1990*, photograph by Shelby Lee Adams, © Shelby Lee Adams

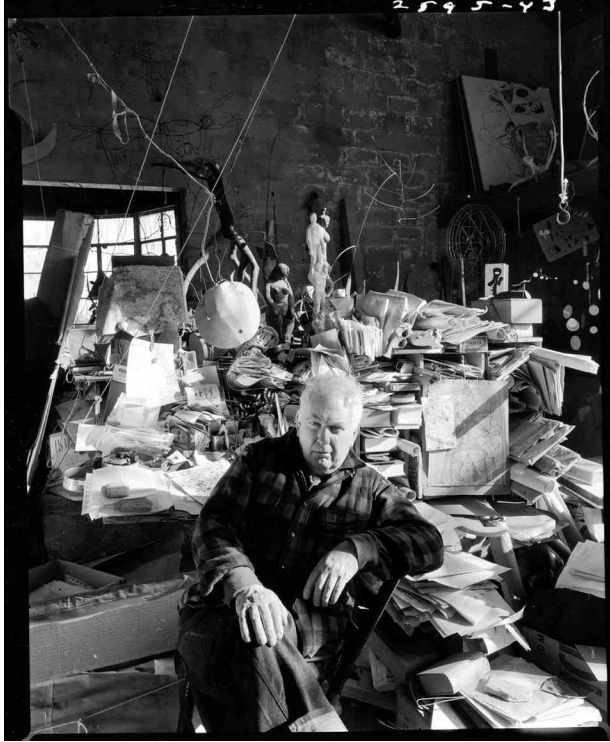


Figure 9. Sculptor Alexander Calder in his studio, 1957. © Arnold Newman



Figure 11. George Segal, with one of his works, photograph by Arnold Newman, 1964. © Arnold Newman

VII. Appendix (*Portrayal Checklist*)

1. Portrayal: Ben Edwards, Potter
44" x 66"
inkjet print
2. Portrayal: Mike Davis, Sculptor
inkjet print
30" x 44"
3. Portrayal: Kevin Arnold, Painter
44" x 66"
inkjet print
4. Portrayal: Sarah Norsworthy, Painter
44" x 66"
inkjet print
5. Portrayal: Rory Austin, Sequential Narrative
inkjet print
30" x 44"
6. Portrayal: Luke Knox, Mixed Media
inkjet print
14" x 22"
7. Portrayal: Joanne Jones, Photographer
inkjet print
30" x 44"
8. Portrayal: Justin Bolle, Photographer
inkjet print
30" x 44"
9. Portrayal: Kristoffer Johnson, Student Photographer
inkjet print
44" x 66"
10. Portrayal: Robert Lemming, Sculptor
inkjet print
30" x 44"
11. Portrayal: Stephanie Pierce, Painter
14" x 22"

inkjet print

12. Portrayal: Sam King, Painter
inkjet print
30" x 44"