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DAMES, DOILIES, & DIVORCE

By

Tenille Novinger
B.F.A., Maryville University of St. Louis, 2005

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Fine Art
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2012

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A Thesis Approved on
April 24, 2012

By the following Thesis Committee:

Gabrielle Mayer

Thesis Director

John Whitesell

Annette Allen

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father:

Michael W. Novinger

whose love and support is constant

and friendship is invaluable.

I will always try to make you proud.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Annette Allen, Professor Gabrielle Mayer, and Professor John Whitesell for serving as my thesis committee. I promise to continue my artist journey with rigor and I will constantly strive to impress you all. Thank you for your support, your wisdom, and most importantly, your friendship. John, I am glad and thankful we were both farm kids; we will always be different from the others.

Special thank you to friends and family for their constant support and unconditional love. Laura Howard, thank you for being such a dear friend whose advice and opinions I trust completely and will always value. Your help in the studio is always appreciated. Patty Guardiola, I am grateful for your editing powers, your intelligence, and your kindness. I look forward to our next project together and I thank you for spending so much of your time with me. Judy Henson, thank you for taking me in as part of your family, and always offering your help and advice. To Zaida Novinger, I thank you for your constant encouragement, love, and for always believing in me. To Michael Novinger, thank you for always seeking my fashion advice and please remember; education is not only about learning, it also cultivates your soul.

You can never be overdressed or overeducated. —Oscar Wilde

ABSTRACT

DAMES, DOILIES, & DIVORCE

Tenille Novinger

April 24, 2012

My work focuses on repurposing historic images and feminine objects to create a contemporary dialogue about the traditions of courtship, marriage and divorce. The use of textiles and feminine objects such as doilies, lace, slips and wallpaper serve as the visual foundation of my work. I am interested in how these objects, often combined with selected texts, create metaphors regarding relationships. Courtship, marriage and divorce are the three potential steps of a relationship. This thesis is arranged into three chapters: materials, themes, and influences found within my studio research and subsequent MA in Studio Arts Exhibition, *Dames, Doilies, & Divorce*.

Chapter One explains the use of materials throughout my work. Because I am a mixed media/collage artist, the materials I choose, have a direct impact on my work visually and conceptually. Throughout this chapter I will explain the importance and use of lace, wallpaper samples, selected text, historic images, and other feminine/masculine materials. For example, by veiling materials such as lace and lingerie-like fabrics, I am creating a sense of allure and desire. Layering of gender specific materials also assist in the visual exploration of courtship, marriage, and divorce.

Chapter Two explores themes of relationships. Courtship, marriage, and divorce are the three main themes represented within my work. By using specific materials, I am creating metaphors of these stages; and often selected materials and themes will overlap within the body of work. In exploring these areas, I am examining the traditions and realities that are the foundation of any relationship.

Chapter Three pertains to influences. I will focus on how other artists, time periods, and genres of art inspire my work. Because I have a background in both graphic design and art history, I believe elements from these areas filter into my current work. I am highly influenced by images of the past, specifically the Rococo Period and the 1960's. For example, William Hogarth's *Marriage-A-La-Mode* series of paintings serve as a rich historical reference and I have extracted his figures from the paintings in order to explore different concepts of marriage such as: the settlement, the inspection (separate lives), and infidelity. Another example is found within *The Progression Series*, in which I utilized found images taken from 1960's *LIFE* magazines.

Within *Dames, Doilies, & Divorce*, I believe the importance of materials, themes, and influences all rely on each other in order to be successful. Traces of this can be found both conceptually and visually in my work. I am questioning the traditions of courtship, marriage and divorce, but I am also interested in how they are repurposed as a contemporary dialogue about relationships.

FOREWORD

Six months ago, the beginning of creating my current body of work, *Dames, Doilies, & Divorce*, I fought the idea of projecting an autobiographical series. I felt the work wasn't supposed to be about me because of my lingering fear of being ridiculed by people observing my beliefs about relationships in my art. The initial goal was to create pieces of work with feminine objects I thought would be engaging to the viewer from a female viewpoint. I was in denial about my feelings and ideas regarding the subject of relationships; courtship, marriage and divorce. This body of work is indeed about me, and my experiences, and is an honest collection of thoughts, feelings, observations, and experiences, which I no longer desire to keep hidden.

Fundamentally, color and pattern are the two design elements I deem as high priority in the visual impact of my work. Different areas of art – graphic design, studio, art history, and fashion – have also influenced my aesthetic, and hints of these disciplines are apparent throughout my work. My main goal as an artist however is to construct intellectual and visual dialogues, utilizing found materials, images from pop culture, and historic images.

Within my thesis I have chosen to talk this series by organizing it into three different stages of relationships: courtship, marriage and divorce. Throughout the process of creating this body of work, it became evident that many of the pieces reflect

concepts relating to more than one stage, and could overlap into more than one of these categories. While I am approaching these subjects in a historical manner it is how they relate to myself, and my beliefs that is most important. Through my interpretation, I ask the viewer to question these traditions as manifested in this work.

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CHAPTER 1: MATERIALS

Utilizing materials around me; materials that were personal and had meaning such as panty hose, lace cut out of discarded skirts and blouses, and fabric from an old bed sheet was my approach to my work. It was a method for me to include myself, as a woman, and a connection to my subject. It became clear that this transition into mixed media or collage was the path to follow in order to continue making art. Collage, the gluing or attaching of different materials together became a thoughtful, easy way to portray ideas I had stored away in my mind.¹ Currently the consistent reoccurring materials in my work are laces, wallpaper, doilies, beads, and historic images from magazines and books.

For the art in *Dames, Doilies, & Divorce* I include materials that have mainly been purchased or donated to me, not necessarily objects from my own personal collection. Materials that have been donated by friends and family hold a special sentiment to me. In some ways this has changed the meaning of my work in that my pieces are no longer about specific people I have encountered, but rather focused on the subject of relationships. Regardless of where the material comes from, it is very important to me that it is repurposed, not new.

¹ For a more in depth definition of collage consult: Ralph Mayer: A Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1969), 83-84.

Part of the excitement and process of making my art is the “hunt” or “excursion” to track down other materials. When searching for these materials, I am conscious of their history and the stories they contribute due to their second hand nature. Their stories may not be apparent within the work but the materials contribute in some subtle way to the stories of the pieces I am constructing. The wallpaper in the pieces titled *The Progression Series* (Image 1, page 25), was donated by a longtime friend Amy Wilson. She recently purchased her first house and in the attic she found numerous rolls of wallpaper the previous owners had abandoned. Her kitchen walls still display the wallpaper, which now serves as the background of this triptych. If I had to date the wallpaper, I would guess it is from the 1960’s and I can only imagine what types of stories the kitchen has furnished throughout the years. By veiling the wallpaper with lace, text, human hair and imagery, I am forming my own story about the males and females portrayed within this piece.

The materials I choose for my work are primarily female based but the male voice is not entirely lost or overlooked. The male voice is represented in fabric selection, imagery, text, and the “traditional” male role in a relationship. *BrideGroom* (Image 2, page 26) uses masculine fabrics as the background. The pinstripe and houndstooth fabrics are reminiscent of a man’s suit contrasting against the doilies and black lace, which evoke the feminine. This dichotomy of male and female is visually apparent specifically within *BrideGroom* because of these textiles. Image 3, page 27 is a close-up of the bride focusing on the navy with cream pinstripe contrasting with the tan colored doilie, while Image 4, page 28 is a detail representing the groom with houndstooth patterned fabric and white doilie. A detail of both works of art within the series makes

the male vs. female opposition of the textile and the voice even more evident. It was also important for me that the male voice is just as strong as the female voice, much like an ideal relationship. Realistically both voices are never equal in a relationship, but it is crucial neither voice is entirely lost. The groom side of the diptych also displays the male voice in the selected text “I’m glad my wife divorced me” which is in opposition to the smiling couple. The image of the happy couple peeking through the black lace and the color choice of this lace was intentional. I interpret the image of the couple in two ways: this is a husband and wife or a husband and his mistress. Either way the black, seductive lace signifies his appetite for desire. Another example of the use of black lace is found in the middle panel (Image 5, page 29) within *The Progression Series*. This example utilizes the black lace to show desire but also reflects the idea of infidelity, which is also indicated by three samples of human hair, each from a different woman.²

Floral and female in nature, lace is an essential material in my art, and based on color alone, it can evoke different emotions and thoughts. For example, I think of white lace as virginal while black lace hints at seduction and sex. The color alone can change the meaning and interpretation of the work. Although lingerie and lace are not exactly the same in my work we should approach them as having similar meaning. *An Intimate Affair*³ by Jill Fields best sums up the explanation of black lingerie:

“The meaning of black lingerie changed over time and location. Changes in fashion and style, new trends in mourning etiquette, shifts in gendered and racialized understandings of female sexuality, and the full development of mass

² The three individuals who donated their hair for *The Progression Series* are Laura Howard, Maggie Shriner, and Rachel Hagan

³Fields, Jill. *An Intimate Affair: Women, Lingerie, and Sexuality*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2007.

production and consumption of women's clothing all helped identify black lingerie as overtly sensual and worn as a sexual invitation."⁴

In her book *The Identification of Lace*, Pat Earnshaw briefly touches on the history of lace.⁵ She explains that lace began in the sixteenth century as decoration on hand woven linens and it was predominantly made in Venice, France and Spain.⁶ Lace used to be made by highly skilled women who were taught and trained in the trade, but today lace along with other numerous textiles has become manufactured by machines. *Legacy of Lace*, another book that covers the history, identification, and preservation of lace, references lace historically as a status symbol.⁷ We don't usually think of lace in this way, but the hours it takes to make lace by hand very much indicates it would be a valuable commodity. I think of lace as being very feminine and lovely, but in Europe lace was also worn by men.⁸

Referring back to lace as a status symbol, it was not only used as a form of decoration within the home, on women and men's clothing but also within the church for communion linens, altar cloths and ceremonial garments.⁹ Lace was a prized possession of the aristocracy because of the heavy taxes Europeans placed on silver, jewels, gold, and silks and lace.¹⁰ In the early 1900's lace became less appreciated and was used within fashion and decoration. Fast forward to the 1960's and there was a revival in the

⁴ Jill Fields, *An Intimate Affair* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2007), 172.

⁵ Pat Earnshaw, *The Identification of Lace* (Shire Publications Ltd)

⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁷ Kathleen Warnich and Shirley Nilsson, *Legacy of Lace* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1988)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

appreciation of lace. “Doilies, table linens, and collars, which had been stored away when they went out of style, have been rediscovered and are being appreciated for their beauty and craftsmanship.”¹¹

I appreciate lace in a historical sense and while I use it in a traditional manner in some projects I think of lace as being a powerful vehicle for enticing sexual desires and fantasy. When I think of lace, I associate it with lingerie and other forms of fashion you don’t necessarily show everyone, only the chosen. It is a metaphor for intimacy between two people. Lace is somewhat transparent if nothing is sewn underneath or attached. It creates curiosity, sparks interest, and leaves just enough for the imagination. *Bleeding Trousseau* (Image 6, page 30) is a more traditional portrayal of lace whereas my project titled *52 Reasons* (Image 7, page 31) is about creating desire, touch, and allure. Two different projects, two entirely different approaches to interpreting lace.

In the process of helping a friend close her business and move I was given a few wallpaper sample books. Knowing that I would utilize the wallpaper in my art I chose samples based purely on my personal aesthetic of color and pattern. Many of these samples have been used within *Dames, Doilies, & Divorce*. In many of my artworks the wallpaper samples serves not only as the background or source of aesthetic, but also as a tool for layering. Often I use the wallpaper samples directly but another way of utilizing them has been scanning them and dropping the opacity and printing on transparencies. This makes it possible to layer many samples in order to create additional, more complicated textures and patterns.

¹¹ Ibid., 9.

In her book *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration*, Gill Saunders writes about the function of wallpaper, its history, and “how it has been considered the poor relation of the decorative arts.”¹² She also states that wallpaper is easy to replace and it is always pretending to be something else.¹³ At first glance wallpaper appears to be something other than just paper, perhaps a mural or tapestry. Wallpaper can also be seen as a lens used to decipher gender, social class and age. I am not focusing on the wallpaper within the setting of a home or personal interior space but rather as a material element that can support a visual dialog about gender and relationships in an aesthetic matter. I have chosen French toile wallpaper in red and yellow palettes as the background and silkscreened my adaptation of William Hogarth’s six painting series *Marriage-A-La-Mode*.¹⁴ Papering the wall behind this series emphasizes the overt visual and stylization of the Rococo Period. Image 8, page 31 is a gallery shot of the final installation showing both the papered wall and framed prints while image 9, page 32 depicts Hogarth’s *Marriage-A-La-Mode* as a complete series.

¹² Gill Saunders, *Wallpaper in Interior Decoration* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 2002), 8.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Marriage-A-La-Mode* c. 1742-43 by William Hogarth is a six series painting which first started as engravings. Robert L.S. Cowley’s book titled *Hogarth’s Marriage-A-La-Mode*, has served as excellent resource material. The images of Hogarth’s series used in my image list are taken from this book.

CHAPTER II : THEMES

Courtship

The artwork within the exhibition *Dames, Doilies, & Divorce* deals with relationships, specifically the stages within a relationship: courtship, marriage, and divorce. When I think of courtship, words that come to mind are: game, hunt, conquest, play, and desire. More modern or clinical words for courtship would be dating or mate selection.

The subject of dating, or courtship has changed throughout history but the end goal has always been closely related. Courtship is more of an old-fashioned expression that suggests the end product is marriage; whereas dating is a more modern term with a varied outcome. Dating could perhaps end in marriage but there is more emphasis on the process of getting to know a potential partner. I believe courtship is an appropriate term to use while explaining my work because much of the materials, like the term, are old-fashioned.

A comparison of *A History of Courting* and *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth Century*, creates an interesting juxtaposition while supporting my art in a theoretical manner.¹⁵ One book references time periods I have not personally

¹⁵ E.S. Turner, *A History of Courting* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1955)
Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988)

experienced, but have only read about, and the other is a more modern book on courtship within twentieth century America.

A History of Courting was written in 1954 and throughout his book, E.S. Turner explains the progress of courting, reviews how mates fascinate one another, and “shows how the manner of wooing has adjusted itself to changing conceptions of love.”¹⁶ He also expresses that courtship starts first in Nature and within the animal kingdom.¹⁷ Courtship in general is a very romantic subject, and the way Turner presents it is also from a romanticized point of view because of the words chosen throughout the book, historical periods referenced, and the examples of poets/poetry selected. Turner references philosophers such as La Rochefoucauld, and poets such as Ovid while discussing courtship throughout different time periods.

In her book *From Front Porch to Back Seat: Courtship in Twentieth-Century America*, Beth Bailey writes about courtship in America based on a “traditional” system between the dates of 1920-1965.¹⁸ Bailey states, “in the midst of such dissatisfactions and real problems, we find a valorization of the past.”¹⁹ The past must be referenced when talking about courtship specifically because it is the first stage of a relationship. Another important factor to keep in mind within the subject of courtship is the idea of private vs. public. Bailey opines, “in twentieth-century America, courtship became more and more a private act conducted in the public world.”²⁰ This is true especially if you look at pop culture, within the realm of celebrities and especially reality television. There

¹⁶ E.S. Turner, *A History of Courting* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co. Inc., 1955), 11.

¹⁷ Ibid., 12.

¹⁸ Beth L. Bailey, *From Front Porch to Back Seat* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988), 3.

¹⁹ Ibid., 2.

²⁰ Ibid., 3.

seems to be an overwhelming obsession with televising and writing about the dirty details of someone's life, a prime example would be the numerous gossip magazines in the checkout line at the grocery store.

When I was young, I remember watching the television show called *Love Connection*, which aired from 1983 to 1999.²¹ *Love Connection* was based on a 1965 show called *The Dating Game* and even today we now have shows that are similar with *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette*. In the 1990's MTV also had a version of a dating show called *Singled Out*. The premise of these shows is for "contestants" to go on a date with selected males and females to see if there is a connection and potential for marriage. The selection process of finding a mate has turned into a public entertainment forum. Narissra Punyanunt-Carter's article about reality shows viewers' TV-based perceptions of love, features studies on the effects of media on men vs. women.²² Although these shows are somewhat scripted, the males and females provided do fit a certain criteria of attractiveness. The ladies chosen in my work, *12 Options* (Image 10, page 33), were specifically chosen based on personal criteria I thought was attractive, and then enhanced with wallpaper selections. Image 11, page 34 is a detail of one portrait, and is also my favorite lady out of the twelve options.

Mate selection these days has become even more popular due to easy access of travel, entertainment, and with the world of technology. While for many generations people have advertised themselves in newspaper classified ads and through dating agencies, there is now a wide array of websites, from eHarmony and Match.com, to the

²¹ <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0170968/>

²² Narissra Maria Punyanunt-Carter, "Love on Television: Reality Perception Differences Between Men and Women." *North American Journal of Psychology* Vol. 8 Issue 2 (2006): 269-276.

more specific Christian Mingles, that promises access to large pools of potential mates. Their advertisements and promotions of supposed success stories guarantee that users will find love – for a subscription fee. Match.com claims that “one in five relationships start online” and according to the eHarmony website “on average 542 people get married every day in the United States because of eHarmony, that accounts for nearly 5% of new U.S. marriages.”²³

The subject of mate selection is displayed specifically within my works titled *52 Reasons* and *12 Options*. What appeals to me are works of art that encourage the viewer to interact with them visually, mentally, and tactilely. Image 12, page 34 shows the interaction between the art and the viewer. The piece *52 Reasons* consists of fifty-two, 3 by 5-inch panels of Plexiglass, arranged in a grid fashion and displayed on mounted white ledges. I have coated the side that the viewer first approaches with lacey and semi-transparent fabrics, reminiscent of lingerie. These fabrics tease at thoughts of naughtiness and lure the viewer to touch the cards. *52 Reasons*, out of my entire body of work, puts the most emphasis on sparking desire.

On the reverse of the fabric-coated side of the cards, I have printed selected words that could be descriptive of a relationship, or a mate. The words are applied so that, when viewed from the fabric side, the letters peek through the lace or fabric. Some of the text is obscured by the fabric, prompting the viewer to interact with the cards. Since the words on the reverse of the cards appear backward, viewers have the option of using the handheld mirrors. This allows the viewer to be able to read the word reflected in the

²³ <http://www.eharmony.com/home/>
<http://www.match.com/index.aspx>

mirror when holding the artwork. The mirror provides a tool for reflection and interaction, similar to how we use different tools and mechanisms to analyze and describe our relationship partners.

Another part of this project is the personalized playing cards (Image 13, page 34). I selected four laces in different colors - black, purple, red, and teal - in order to symbolize the four suits in a deck of cards. I had the decks of cards manufactured to be sold at my exhibition opening. These decks of cards are metaphors for dating and serve as reference to playing the dating game.

12 Options is similar to *52 Reasons* in that they are both about selection as well as dealing with mates. Visually both are displayed in a grid-like manner. *12 Options* is made up of twelve 8x10 female portraits, printed on transparencies and layered with various wallpaper samples, some in their original form and others scanned and printed on transparencies. The female portraits are images taken from 1960s issues of Playboy and Esquire magazines. It was important to me that the female images come from men's entertainment magazines as a way of incorporating the male perspective, voice, or gaze.

Layering of numerous transparencies per portrait is a metaphor for the female. It is a way to visually describe layers of the woman, and is a representation of the individual woman depicted. Based on real women, I envision the ladies in the portraits as having layers of emotions, intellect, beauty, and personality. A female viewer may have a much different experience with this piece than a male viewer. A female viewer might select her favorite portrait based on whom she looks like or whom she wishes she looked like. Whereas a male viewer may select the woman he would like to have sexual

relations with, not a long-term relationship. Both interpretations are based solely on looks, initial attractiveness, or “love-at-first-site.”

There are twelve women depicted in this project, which is a reference to the number of months and can be compared to the notion of calendar girls or pin-up girls.²⁴ I wanted the viewer to have the option of looking at this piece as a whole or individually. These ladies could represent potential mates, dates, or friends; a dating pool situation. A modern day comparison could be taken from the television show *The Bachelor* or *The Bachelorette*.²⁵ At the end of each episode the bachelor/bachelorette must hand out roses representing whom they have selected to make it to the next round. While he/she is contemplating whom they want to keep on the show (as potential mates), they gaze at 8x10 portraits of the contestants while explaining their choices.

Marriage

The subject and history of marriage is long, complex, and interesting. This is evident in *Love, Sex, and Marriage Through the Ages*.²⁶ Bernard Murstein explores the topic of marriage in depth by circulating through many cultures and time periods. The time periods I do reference in my work regarding marriage that are of specific visual interest to me, are the Rococo period and the 1960's.

²⁴ Charles G. Martignette and Louis K. Meisel, *The Great American Pin-Up*, (London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Paris and Tokyo: Taschen, 2004)

²⁵ Full episodes of each of these shows are viewable online.

<http://abc.go.com/shows/the-bachelor>

<http://abc.go.com/shows/the-bachelorette>

²⁶ Bernard Murstein, *Love, Sex, and Marriage Through the Ages*, (New York: Springer Publishing Co., 1974)

Marriage, as a tradition, makes me feel anxious and smothered even though it does have positive points such as security and stability. Listening to the same old stories, feelings of obligation, and basing life altering decisions on another person; these are conditions I question. Why do people get married? Is it because we are taught it is the right thing to do by society, our friends, and our family? Do we finally reach a point where we have found someone who mildly entertains, therefore we settle? Or perhaps it is for financial stability. In *Mandra*, a short story by Anais Nin, her character Mary says “she was running away from her husband. She had married him only to be protected.”²⁷ Simone De Beauvoir writes in the very first sentence of her chapter about marriage: “Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society.”²⁸

From images of adoring brides, to actual wedding dresses, my approach is to make the viewer think about the traditions of marriage and question them. In *Bleeding Trousseau* (Image 6, page 30), I am exploring the ideas of darkness and lightness within a marriage. The dress is displayed on a mannequin and has a black, anatomical heart silkscreened on the chest with red threads loosely hanging. Initially there were pearls embroidered on the dress, which have been substituted with black beads to represent the replacement of innocence. The black beads and black heart can be seen in detail provided by Image 14, page 35. Specifically for the opening of my thesis show the dress hem was placed in a vat of ink (Image 15, page 35). Throughout the evening the ink rose up the fabric, darkness overtaking of the whiteness of the dress. The ink’s progression

²⁷ Anais Nin, *Little Birds* (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1979) 128.

²⁸ Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Translated and edited by H. M. Parshley. New York: Random House, 1952), 475.

symbolizes the transition from the honeymoon phase to the real heaviness of a long-term commitment.

I envision the dress as not having negative or cynical thoughts regarding marriage. It is a way to show that in the beginning, during the honeymoon phase, it is light and fun, possessing cleanliness. However, as life gets messy and the marriage encounters obstacles it may not stay as pure as the white dress. I think the darkness spreading and possibly overtaking the marriage suggests the erosion of a relationship. The inky darkness is a metaphor of the possible persuasion of negative thoughts and actions such as infidelities and depression. Very often we try to wash our lives free of these issues but no matter how hard we try there will always be stains and residues.

Bleeding Trousseau is more conceptual compared to my traditional silkscreened prints of *Scenes from a Marriage*. Taken from William Hogarth's *Marriage-A-La-Mode* series, this is a modern adaptation on how I view a historically valued series. This is one of my favorite paintings and what I like most regarding the Rococo Period is the frivolity and over-the-top culture that these painters capture. The paintings are narratives about social class, and tell us much about how these people conducted their everyday lives. They also offer insight as to how the wealthy class were only interested in spending money, and were either ignorant of or chose to ignore the political unrest and unhappy lower classes that were threatening revolution. Aesthetically, the most appealing aspects of the Rococo style are ladies' dresses and attire, and the decoration of interior spaces.

Hogarth was a master biographer, storyteller, and artist. I also relate to him because he was both a painter and a printmaker.²⁹

Hogarth's *Marriage-A-La-Mode*, as well as numerous other paintings, teaches us about sex, stages of marriage, and high culture. For easier reference and comparison of Hogarth's series to mine, Image 16, pages 36-37 shows both versions side by side. For the *Scenes from a Marriage* series I extracted the figures from each painting separating them from their interior space and surroundings. Iconography plays a blarge role in Hogarth's series but for my interpretation I wanted to simplify his images and silkscreen the figures over toile wallpaper samples. The six selected wallpapers that act as background for the abstracted figures are very sexual in appearance. The samples transform into bilateral symmetrical grounds suggest Rorschach tests and contain vaginal and phallic looking images that can be tied to Hogarth's play on gender.

The prints are framed in ornate gold frames to play on the original context of how these paintings would be originally displayed in the parlor of a wealthy aristocrat. Salon style was the popular way to display framed paintings of this time, and it is even evident within the interior scenes of Hogarth's original *Marriage-A-La-Mode* series, specifically in *The Marriage Settlement* and *The Tete a Tete*. For a modern approach for the display of this series, I chose to hang them in a row to create a single grid, as opposed to Salon style. Shown as a series the progression of the story behind their marriage is more apparent.

²⁹ Cowley, page 3, In 1713, Hogarth began his career as a silver engraver but because he found the craft too tedious and restrictive to his imagination, he did not finish his apprenticeship.

A more in depth description of this series can be found in Robert Cowley's *Hogarth's Marriage-A-La-Mode*.³⁰ At the beginning of the narrative, *The Marriage Settlement* is taking place. The negotiation of the dowry is being processed among the family. Fathers of the bride and groom are present and while one examines the settlement the other receives money from the dowry. Throughout Hogarth's paintings are images of iconography such as the family tree displayed on the scroll of paper held by one male.

The Tete a Tete is the second painting and the couple is shown after a night of partying. She was playing cards the night before and he was off partaking in his own merrymaking. In the third painting, *The Inspection*, Cowley describes it as being the first of two paintings showing the separate lives of the couple. The narrative is about Lord Squanderfield taking a trip to the quack doctor, and the young girl is presumably his young mistress. *The Toilette*, the fourth painting, depicts numerous figures and many changes between the couple have taken place. The couple has had a baby and the old Earl has passed away making the couple a Lady and Lord. They have also dropped part of their name and are now known as Lord and Lady Squander. This is the first painting where we see the couple actually interacting with each other. They are gazing at each other, which is a far cry from *The Bagnio*. In the final painting of the series, *The Lady's Death*, Lady Squander has just committed suicide because she found out her lover had been executed.

Hogarth's *Marriage-A-La-Mode*, really is the perfect series to depict the progression of a modern day marriage. The series is rather sad, which to me is a sort of

³⁰ Robert L.S. Cowley, *Hogarth's Marriage-A-La-Mode* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983)

pun or sarcastic remark towards how the Rococo preferred to be seen. The aristocratic, high-class society, with their big hair and fancy dresses is being painted with infidelities and suicides. In the beginning we see marriage arrangements being made by the families, in the middle we find out about their adulterous ways, and by the end the lady of the house has gone mad and has taken matters into her own hands

I find Hogarth's series full of historical value but only if you have done research will you fully understand and completely appreciate it. For my interpretation, my goal is to extract some of the information, and let the viewer come up with their story, not having to rely on research. Hogarth's version must be considered in a scholarly manner in order to fully understand the iconography, whereas *Scenes from a Marriage* is a curated collection of images taken from *Marriage-A-La-Mode*.

Divorce

Within my art the topic of divorce is the hardest to dissect and discuss. The main question I have regarding divorce is why? Boredom? Infidelity? Expectations about marriage/partners not met? Or perhaps there is no lone reason but a culmination.

According to a 2011 article in Maclean's, a study from the Vanier Institute of the Family states that the divorce rate has been stable, not rising, since before 2001.³¹ One common remark found in numerous articles related to divorce rates is that adults are waiting longer to get married and the more educated the lower the divorce rate. In a 2010 *Time* article, the following statistics are taken from research at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School:

³¹ Kate Lunau, "Young, Divorced and Stigmatized," *Maclean's*; 11/28/2011, Vol. 124 Issue 46, p53-55.

- 81% of college grads who wed in the 1980's at 26+ were still married 20 years later
- 65% of college grads under 26 when they wed in the 1980's made it that far
- 49% of high school grads under 26 when they wed in the 1980's hit their 20th anniversary

Within the same article it states, “less-educated, lower-income couples split up more often than college grads and may be doing so in higher numbers than before.”³²

Divorce, or legal separation, may happen only between the two people within the relationship but surrounding participants will pay the consequences. “Children who come from broken homes or from parents with emotional problems have a hard time in their own intimate relationships.”³³ Emotionally all parties are affected; however, they are affected in different ways. In *American Way of Divorce*, Kessler breaks these emotional steps down into numerous stages: 1) disillusionment, 2) erosion, 3) detachment all aim the person toward 4) physical separation. The stage of 5) mourning ensues. Resurrection begins when the person starts feeling the stage of 6) second adolescence. The concluding stage in the process entails 7) hard work. And “the mourning and rebirth stages vary dramatically in duration and strength.”³⁴ The word “rebirth” goes very well with the term divorce.

The two works of art within *Dames, Doilies, and Divorce* I associate with divorce are *Bleeding Trousseau* and *Revirginization*. I have already previously explained *Bleeding Trousseau*. Therefore I will explain *Revirginization* (Image 17, page 38) as it

³² Belinda Luscombe, “Divorcing by the Numbers,” *Time*; 5/24/2010, Vol. 175 Issue 20, p47.

³³ Stanley Rosner, Ph.D. *The Marriage Gap* (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1974), 152.

³⁴ Sheila Kessler, *The American Way of Divorce: Prescriptions for Change* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1975), 20.

pertains to divorce. The creamy, rich, rippled tapestry material is bound down the center with red stitching intertwined with human hair and small pearls. The obvious stitching represents something that has been broken or torn and hastily repaired. This reference to the trauma of divorce and potential for scarred healing reflects the term revirgination, a second virginity. By incorporating human hair there is also a tangible, visceral sense of the body. This work of art is by far the most visceral within *Dames, Doilies, and Divorce* and may be the most conceptual.

CHAPTER III : INFLUENCES

I am constantly inspired and influenced by the people around me, past relationships, and artists who explore gender issues. Currently the artist I am influenced by is the English artist Grayson Perry.³⁵ I can relate to his use of historical figures and the fact that he is an artist of numerous mediums such as pottery, textiles, printmaking, and collage. His work is controversial in his choice of subject matter, much of his work is highly sexually explicit with depictions of bondage and sadomasochism. With titles for his pottery such as *Piss Flaps*, *A Pattern of Bruises and Cigarette Burns*, and *Rumpleforeskin* it is evident that he causes controversy even before the viewer sees the work.

I believe he is a highly intellectual artist and I am influenced by his artwork in many ways. His exploration of gender issues is what first captured my attention but after researching him I found other connections that interested me. His mix of the old and new piques my interest and I find his portrayal of historical characters are both political and beautiful. After I had begun work on my William Hogarth series it was brought to my attention that he also had a piece of pottery depicting his interpretation of Hogarth's prints titled *Before and After*. His interpretation illustrates a motorcycle that has been

³⁵ Grayson Perry is a Turner Prize recipient, and the book titled *grayson perry* by Jacky Klein has served as inspiration throughout my final two semesters.

disassembled due to his ability to draw a disassembled motorcycle from memory.³⁶ One of my favorite pieces of his pottery is a vase with images of Jane Austen. The illustrations of the lady's dresses and outfits on this particular pot are beautiful, and reminds me of the period dresses during the Rococo. I am also interested in his thoughts regarding high art vs. craft because of his use of materials, which is also in correlation to my art. An interesting video to reference is of Perry being interviewed by The Guardian, the London newspaper, in which he expresses his view on craft regarding fine art.³⁷

Other forms of artistic inspiration for me are found in literature, fashion, movies and music. Recently I have been reading Anaïs Nin, her diaries and a book titled *A Literate Passion: Letters of Anais Nin and Henry Miller 1932-1953*.³⁸ She was a very intriguing and empowering author. In her sometimes tumultuous and insatiable letters to the writer Henry Miller, she conveys stories of a life that some of us can only daydream about, and to which others can relate. Sometimes I feel sympathetic when I read the letters between the two, sometimes I feel envious, and other times I feel inspired.

Fashion has always been important to me and I believe elements from this genre have carried over into my art. For example, in my latest work I have been incorporating fabric as background palettes and collaging hosiery, slips, lingerie, and female articles of clothing. My favorite fashion designer is Alexander McQueen because of his intense play on drama, exploration of the boundaries of male vs. female within fashion. I also

³⁶ Jacky Kein, *grayson perry* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2009), 192.

³⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/video/2012/apr/11/grayson-perry-crafts-video>

³⁸ Gunther Stuhlmann ed. *A Literate Passion: Letters of Anais Nin and Henry Miller 1932-1953* (San Diego, New York and London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1987)

love the fact he pushes the idea of fashion being art.³⁹ The Metropolitan Museum of Art recently showcased his fashions in a spring 2011 exhibition and the website listed below grants access to videos of his fashion shows along with selected objects.⁴⁰ The exhibition catalog titled *Alexander McQueen: Savage Beauty* serves as a constant source for inspiration for me and eye candy.⁴¹ His quote, “I like things to be modern and still have a bit of tradition. I believe in history.” serves as a strong statement on how I view art and life.⁴² His fashion shows were always unique and fantastical; watching his shows made me feel as if I was of being transported to another world. For future work I would like to push my boundaries much like he did. While I was preparing *Bleeding Trousseau*, I was thinking about Alexander McQueen and his vision of creativity.

Two exhibition catalogs that have been of great inspiration are *Lace in Translation* and *Radical Lace & Subversive Knitting*.⁴³ Both of these exhibitions deal with materials identified with craft – wood, clay, fiber, etc. The work these artists have produced within both of these exhibitions are by reflecting and pushing stereotypical boundaries that interest me. Their work is complex in technique and rich in aesthetic. Exhibition catalogs like these make me aware that limiting myself regarding materials is not an option.

³⁹ http://www.alexandermcqueen.com/alexandermcqueen/en_US

⁴⁰ <http://blog.metmuseum.org/alexandermcqueen/>

⁴¹ Andrew Bolton, *Alexander McQueen Savage Beauty* (New Haven and London: Distributed by Yale University Press, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 2011)

⁴² Ibid., 155.

⁴³ *Lace in Translation*, Curated by Hilary Jay, Carla Bednar and Nancy Packer with an essay by Matilda McQuaid (The Design Center at Philadelphia University, 2009) David Revere, *Radical Lace & Subversive Knitting* (New York: Museum of Arts & Design, 2007)

CONCLUSION

After completing my thesis exhibition *Dames, Doilies, & Divorce*, I realize this body of work is a truly a reflection of myself, and my thoughts about relationships. It became more personal than I had ever imagined it would. No longer do I feel the need to hide my ideas and questions about relationships, courtship, marriage, and divorce. The work in this exhibition became a narrative of a lifetime of thoughts about relationships manifested aesthetically. It was also a way for me to combine my love of different areas of art such as art history, graphic design, fashion and printmaking. By utilizing found feminine objects and incorporating both historical and pop images I feel that I have created a contemporary dialog about relationships and its traditions.

I believe that with this body of work I have caused the viewer to question traditional ideas about courtship, marriage and divorce. This series is not about debunking the traditions of courtship, marriage or divorce, but rather opening up a conversation about them. It was about examining and questioning these subjects in an aesthetic and open manner. It was about exploring the traditions we have been taught by society and history.

Focusing on repurposing historic images and feminine objects to create a contemporary dialog about the traditions of courtship, marriage, and divorce have given me the opportunity hone my craft as a mixed media artist. Feminine materials such as lace and found pieces of women's clothing will continue to serve as a source for creating

or evoking lust and desire. Wallpaper will continue to serve as indicators of gender, social class and age. I believe one project, *12 Options*, from my thesis exhibition *Dames, Doilies, & Divorce* will carry over into a new body of work. I am developing and researching new ways to recreate and reexamine this piece. The re-creation of this work will serve as an excellent foundation as I continue my journey as an artist who creates and constructs intellectual and visual dialogs utilizing found materials, pop culture, and historical images.

LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1 : *The Progression Series*, mixed media, 16"x20" each

Image 2 : *BrideGroom*, mixed media, 32"x32" each

Image 3 : Bride detail

Image 4 : Groom detail

Image 5 : Middle panel from *The Progression Series*

Image 6 : *Bleeding Trousseau*, vintage wedding dress, mannequin bust, black beads, thread, ink, galvanized canister

Image 7 : *52 Reasons*, 3"x5" Plexiglass cards, various lace and fabric, text

Image 8 : *Scenes from a Marriage*, wallpaper and silkscreen

Image 9 : William Hogarth's *Marriage-A-La-Mode*, six series painting

The Marriage Settlement

The Tete a Tete

The Inspection

The Toilette

The Bagnio

The Lady's Death

Image 10 : *12 Options*, wallpaper, transparencies, 8"x10" each

Image 11 : *12 Options*, Detail

Image 12 : 52 *Options* (viewer interaction)

Image 13 : 52 *More Reasons*, manufactured playing cards

Image 14 : *Bleeding Trousseau*, Detail of beads, thread and heart

Image 15 : *Bleeding Trousseau*, Detail of ink

Image 16 : Comparison of *Marriage-A-La-Mode* by William Hogarth to *Scenes from a Marriage* by Tenille Novinger

The Marriage Settlement by: William Hogarth

The Marriage Settlement by: Tenille Novinger

The Tete a Tete by: William Hogarth

The Tete a Tete by: Tenille Novinger

The Inspection by: William Hogarth

The Inspection by: Tenille Novinger

Image 16: Cont.

The Toilette by: William Hogarth

The Toilette by: Tenille Novinger

The Bagnio by: William Hogarth

The Bagnio by: Tenille Novinger

The Lady's Death by: William Hogarth

The Lady's Death by: Tenille Novinger

Image 17 : *Revirginization*, tapestry fabric, thread, pearls and human hair, 35"x25"

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CURRICULUM VITAE

TENILLE M. NOVINGER

2224 Payne St.
Louisville, KY 40206

314.368.9213
tenillenovinger@gmail.com

EDUCATION:

University of Louisville	06-12	Master of Art (Studio) and Graduate Course Work in Art History
Villa Dante Studio Italiano, Tropea Italy	07	Study Abroad Summer Course in Italian Language
Maryville University of St. Louis	03-05	Bachelor of Fine Art (Painting & Printmaking)
SLCC/Meramec	00-03	Associate of Graphic Design

ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Instructor

August 11 – December 11

University of Louisville

Developed lectures, in-class assignments, and other classroom activities for ARTH 250, Ancient to Medieval.

Graduate Instructor

January 08 - May 08

University of Louisville

Evaluated student presentations, research projects, and various coursework for Introduction to Art 203.

Worked with students from a variety of areas including Business, Engineering, and Biology.

Graduate Teaching Assistant

August 07 - May 08

University of Louisville

Served as an assistant to Dr. Linda M. Gigante, Greek and Roman Professor at the University. Filled in as lecturer when needed, proctored exams as well as graded exams, and assisted undergraduate students.

Visual Resources Center Lab Assistant

August 06 - May 07

University of Louisville

Helped observe, file, and organize roughly 400,000 slides from the lab which faculty and students used daily.

Interacted with professors, faculty, and students to better serve the Hite Art Institute and Department of Fine Arts.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING:

March 02 – May 10

Jefferson County Public School District, Louisville, KY
North Shelby C-1 School District, Shelbyville, MO
Palmyra R-1 School District, Palmyra, MO
Meramec Valley R-III, Pacific, MO
Harrisburg R-VII School District, Harrisburg, MO
Kirkwood R-VII, St. Louis, MO

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Accessories Designer and Consultant

Giant Peach, Louisville, KY

January 09 - Present

Create handmade custom accessories for individual clients and local independent businesses.

Manage all marketing, designed company identity and maintain blog:

<http://giantpeachislovely.blogspot.com>

Organized/participated in promotional events such as:

- 2010 Giant Peach Trunk Show, Louisville, KY
- 2010 White Horse Trading Post Show, Louisville, KY
- 2010 Buy Local Trade Show, Louisville, KY
- 2009 Holiday Boutique Show, Louisville, KY
- 2009 930 Gallery Show, Louisville, KY

Promotional Talent

November 09 - Present

Heaven Hill Distilleries, Louisville, KY

Provide consumers with product information and brand knowledge for PAMA and HPNOTIQ liquors.

Represent HHD in a professional manner at major charity events, which reflects the integrity of the company.

Account Executive

May 07 - September 10

Ashley Gallery Inc., Louisville, KY

Negotiated and analyzed all quoting and billing while organizing client reference material.

Managed marketing visuals such as logo design, packaging, and company branding.

Oversaw the production of art chosen by clients, and help direct the installation process.

Children's Gallery Activities/Directors Assistant

Foundry Art Centre, St. Charles, MO

November 04 - March 05

Created mailing lists, in-house design/production and over saw all new memberships.

Planned and instructed children's art classes, along with other activities, for the Baue Children's Gallery.

EXHIBITION RECORD: (*solo shows marked by asterisk)

2012	<i>Dames, Doilies and Divorce</i> , MA Thesis Exhibition, Louisville, KY
2012	Oregon Ink Spot Print Exchange, Eastern Oregon University
2012	International Women's Day Project, Louisville, KY
2011	Day of the Dead Exhibition, Louisville, KY
2010 - Present	Tim Faulkner Gallery, Louisville, KY
2008	Oregon State University Print Exchange
2008	Oregon Ink Spot Print Exchange, Eastern Oregon University
2007	Decked Out Art Show, Derby City Espresso, Louisville, KY
2007	Maryville University Alumni Art Show
2007	Print Zero Studios Print Exchange (exhibited in New York, Seattle, Portland, Miami, and Denmark)
2007	*Java Brewing, Louisville, KY
2005	BFA Senior Thesis Exhibit, Maryville University
2004	One Night Stand Art Show sponsored by St. Louis Art CO-OP

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:

2010-Present Events Assistant and Volunteer for Gilda's Club, Louisville, KY

2007 Committee for Biennial Symposium on Art History and Visual Culture, University of Louisville

2006 Student Assistant, Art Auction, Louisville Visual Art Association

AWARDS:

2012 Don Payton Graduate Scholarship, University of Louisville Hite Art Institute
2006 - 2008 Frederick and Elizabeth Cressman Graduate Scholarship, University of Louisville
 Hite Art Institute
2007 David Hershberg Travel Grant (Italy) Awarded by World Affairs Council of
 Kentucky/Indiana
2004 – 2005 Dean's List, Maryville University
2003 National Dean's List
2001 – 2002 Dean's List, SLCC/Meramec

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