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Foundation of Our Former Houses

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Foundations of Our Former Houses

Jeanne Ciravolo

B.F.A., University of Miami, 1987

A Project Statement

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts
at the
University of Connecticut
2019

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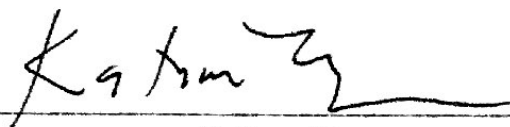
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Master of Fine Arts Project Statement

Foundations of Our Former Houses

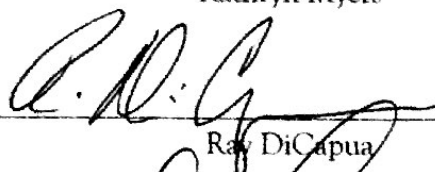
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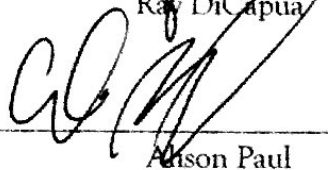
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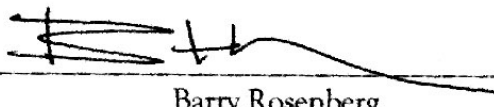
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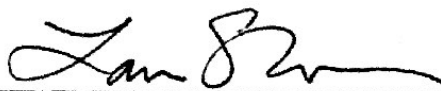
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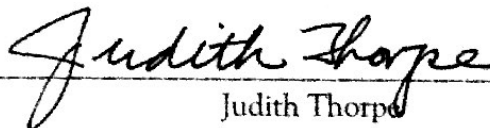
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Preface: Origins

The women who raised me crowd into my work as actor, witness, and vision. As a child I was told their harrowing stories, and those of other women in my family. I also witnessed domestic violence and its aftermath in the home of my stepfather. The women are, by turns, imperiled or powerful, and their stories full of perseverance, illness, shame, and loss. I looked to them for lessons on how to navigate the confusing and sometimes dangerous world. I was observant and often escaped into drawing.

As a young adult working towards a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Drawing, I also considered becoming a fiction writer. In all my creative writing classes the professors repeated Mark Twain's dictum: "Write what you know."¹ The stories I wrote, featured female protagonists, and were full of evocative visual description and complex characterization, for which my professors complimented me. But there was a big problem with my stories: I could not get my characters to do anything.

I found my way to make work that satisfied me, right after college, in the three years I studied with Harvey Dinnerstein at the Art Students' League in New York City. I became completely devoted to drawing and painting from observation. I reveled in its order, discipline, and promise to reveal truths about the person I was studying. Though I could not know the intimate details of my subjects' lives, I could record the details of their physical presence through

¹ Twain, Mark, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn*, 1876.

focusing on shape, and the quality of light upon form and color. Again, I found I had a gift for detail and expression.

When I moved out of New York, I found a sense of fulfillment in creating commissioned portraits. Since I had two young children, my first commissions were from people I met on playgrounds and at school who became friends. It was work that was meaningful and which, when completed, was met with happy tears and smiles. I focused on establishing myself as a portrait artist, gaining recognition for my work through competitions, and developing a body of judicial and professional portraits that are held in public and private collections.

I also led figure drawing and portrait groups to satisfy my need to work from life and delve into more personal subject matter. I developed deep relationships with my female models over a period of years. The stories of their lives were compelling to me; they were the rich underpinnings of my portraits of them. But my paintings only hinted at their narratives. I depicted them alone, against solid and simple backgrounds. I was not sure how to create settings for them or move them out into the world.

I arrived at UConn, for the Master in Fine Arts program, with a need to develop my artistic practice. I was unsure what my work was going to look like or how I was going to accomplish it. I needed to get my characters out of their static positions and develop their plots. That story follows this preface.

Discoveries

In my first semester, the special topics class was Animation with Alison Paul. I needed to find the arc of a story to animate. The one that I knew best and needed to tell was based on my experience of being a witness to violence. Professor Paul introduced me to the work of William Kentridge and encouraged and supported me in my struggle to express this experience through animation. Seeing my drawings move through the process of an erasure animation was revelatory and cathartic. The only still image was the last image, the end result of many drawings, each drawn and photographed, then adjusted or erased to get to the next drawing, the next photograph, and the next point in the story. Animation took me through the story to the other side of it. The process of animation revealed in-between images and content that I could not access by simply depicting an idea in one static drawing. This idea of layering and fragments began to appear in my creative practice (Figure 1).

Another pivotal experience occurred in my second semester, in Deborah Dancy's Experimental Drawing class. Through readings and visual responses to readings, we were challenged to engage with the act of drawing as a destination. Drawing could be manifested through performance, ephemeral works, or through non-traditional materials. I explored process through sweeping a broom filled with graphite on paper in timed gestures. In another assignment, I worked blindfolded while making gestural marks with ink. I became interested in the material results and effects of my actions and enjoyed this freedom from the direct portrayal of the human figure. I was interested in how my actions represented the figure in the work.

When I returned to the recognizable figure as a subject, I wanted to undermine my habitual way of working. I wanted to find a way for process and the sense of discovery, that I had experienced in Experimental Drawing, to enter my work. I was also interested in the layering and fragmentation I had encountered in Animation. I created large drawings that I cut up and recombined. In *Specter* (Figure 2), I used my photographs of Tessa, one of the models I became close to while running the portrait group, as a reference for the main figure. I added two other figures sitting at a table with her, a window with a fluttering curtain in the background, and collaged older drawing fragments to create, what at first was meant to be, her hair. The collaged pieces grew into a large shape that became menacing and important for me to retain. I realized the image had become too complicated and required dismantling. When I removed the other two figures and table, I felt the reference to a domestic setting was lost, so I painted the shadow of a small table and tea cup directly on the wall adjacent to the now cut out figure. I added a white cut out shape of a suburban house to the upper left-hand corner, letting it droop to create a real shadow, to relate to the painted shadow silhouette. The completed piece presented a figure in a moment of contemplation, overshadowed by the visible manifestation of a disturbing memory.

Process drawing, animation, and collage altered my understanding of how content can emerge. I discovered that a powerful image can be accessed through isolating a frame of an erasure animation. The abutment, or layering, of abstract gestures from old drawings can create an unforeseen aspect of character or place.



Figure 1. *Unfolding*, Charcoal on paper, 26 x 20 in.



Figure 2. *Specter*, Mixed media collage, 84 x 66 x 18 in.

Explorations of Form

When I returned to working with narrative and representational figuration in the large drawings, I found my work repeatedly located in ideas of the body, and the experiences of women within a domestic setting. *Visitor* (Figure 3) was constructed, like *Specter*, from parts of drawings taped together, with areas cut out, erased, and obliterated. I created other large collaged drawings trying to open up the development of content to go beyond my preconceived notions. I experienced this surprise of content most successfully in creating *Specter* and *Visitor*. Though I am still interested in both images, especially *Visitor*, as an image that expresses deeply felt emotions relating to illness and trauma, I felt that the result of the cutting and collaging of drawings was too static and needed to be opened up.

I had enough previous experience with monotype to realize its potential to provide unexpected effects, so I began to experiment in the printshop. I was still working monochromatically because color seemed like it would be a complication. Working with ink offered the luxurious feel I had associated with working with paint and missed experiencing. Creating an image with ink on a plexiglass plate was an uncertain affair. So much time was spent manipulating the ink without knowing exactly what would appear on the paper after going through the press. The experience of pressing ink onto paper would become vitally important to me when I returned to painting.

In my studio, I began looking for nontraditional surfaces to work with, which related to the domestic sphere. I began to draw on, cut, and alter mattress pads. I was interested in the mattress pads as substrates for their references to the human body, and their scale, subtle patterns and thickness. Through my experience in Experimental Drawing, I was able to understand these

acts of alteration, staining, and sewing as ways of engaging drawing. In the mattress pads, I explored concepts of love/violence, and loneliness. In *Soft Cover* (Figure 4) the mattress pad locates the setting in which violence occurs. In *Soft Cover II* (Figure 5) the substrate is a field for the image of a woman's body to appear, it becomes a relic holding the imprint and residue of her body.

I also began stitching images on kitchen towels. Kitchen towels interested me as objects that reference domestic tasks traditionally performed by women. They also promised to serve as small discrete locations to explore fragments of imagery. I started by considering the pattern on the cloth and focused on suggesting a bit of narrative through drawing, stitching, plucking, or collaging materials to the fabric. The kitchen towels, with their patterns and history of use, as evidenced by stains, tears, and bleach marks, became the surfaces I ultimately preferred for my experimental drawings. They specifically referred to my memories of my grandmother who was always working in the kitchen. I remember a kitchen towel that she did not use, but hung on the wall as art, which pictured labeled varieties of tomatoes.

While working on the kitchen towels I began to feel as if I was inhabiting characters. I was reminded of my long past experiences creating fictional characters, how they existed outside of myself and had their independent demands. It was an odd feeling of channeling a point of view that was not my own, but that was insistent and demanding. The images asserted themselves as I considered each piece of fabric. *Desire* and *Denial II* (Figures 6 and 7) refer to complex experiences of female sexuality. *Woman, Sewn Up* and *Small* (Figures 8, 9 and 14) speak to the experience of abuse and shame. *Numinous* (Figure 10) is the work in the series which represents a respite, a moment of peace.

My kitchen towels are relics, held up and presented, for others to see as evidence. As peculiar and altered objects they allude to pain, repair, over-heated emotions, failure, and obsessive and repetitive acts. When I combined a group of the towels together, they presented a varied and complex narrative through an accumulation of visual effect, a partial and idiosyncratic story of raw feeling through flawed stitching. I am interested in how combining the existing domestic object, laden with associations and the drawn, inscribed, or sewn image, locates and magnifies the narrative of my female characters.



Figure 3. *Visitor*, Mixed media collage on paper, 52 x 50 in.



Figure 4. *Soft Cover*, Charcoal on mattress pad, 78 x 40 in



Figure 5. *Soft Cover II*, Mixed media on mattress pad, 78 x 40 in.



Figure 6. *Desire*, Charcoal on kitchen towel, 25 x 17 in.



Figure 7. *Denial II*, Mixed media on kitchen towel, 25 x 16 in.



Figure 8. *Woman*, Mixed media on kitchen towel, 25 x 16 in.



Figure 9. *Sewn Up*, Stitching on kitchen towel, 25 x 16 in.



Figure 10. *Numinous*, Mixed media on kitchen towel, 25 x 16 in.

Art history and Influences

Since early childhood I have been interested in looking at paintings and drawings. My mother's library was full of art books which I would often pull down and study. As an undergraduate I enrolled in art history courses, and as a painter studying in New York and working within traditional modes of representation, I visited museums to see many of the works I knew from books. While living in Connecticut, creating commissioned portraits and working from life, I continued to refer to my favorite "old masters," and began to look for contemporary artists working with the figure to guide me in developing my work.

The visits to art fairs and private collections in the graduate seminars exposed me to a wide variety of contemporary art practice that changed my taste in contemporary visual art. I found that some of the artists I used to look to for inspiration before graduate school were no longer as interesting to me. Figurative works by Euan Uglow and Jerome Witkin had become, in the case of Uglow, too coldly academic, as if the people he paints are objects. Witkins' work feels dramatically over described. Works by contemporary figurative painters such as Tim Kennedy, Scott Noel, Phillip Geiger, and Eve Mansdorf, seem an exercise in visual replication, lacking a point of view. Other favorites: Lucien Freud and Neo Rauch, remain influential as artists whose work, deep in the flesh or the psyche, represents an idiosyncratic and enigmatic point of view.

Our graduate seminar trip to the Cathy Wilkes exhibition (Figure 11) which included sculptures of assembled or singular downtrodden people, arrangements of detritus, domestic objects, and hazy atmospheric paintings hung at a child's height, hummed with emotion and

subjectivity.² I realize that my stitched kitchen towel *Visible* (Figure 12) with its emotionally direct gaze, contorted pose, and reference to the domestic relates to Wilkes' work.

Similarly, I felt a moment of recognition upon seeing a collage by Kiki Smith in a private collection in New York. (Figure 13). Her collaged drawings, glued together to create one large piece, included repeated images of female genitalia and doilies. I had begun using doily patterns in my work. My grandmother and great grandmother had crocheted many of them, which I inherited. As a girl in my grandmother's house, they were unremarkable. They sat on tables, sideboards, and the arms and backs of upholstered furniture. I have come to see them as representative of the body and as protection from the body. Their excessive ornamentation prettifies and obscures. My stitched kitchen towel *Small* (Figure 14) is an example of my work that incorporates a reference to this womanly craft in relation to the female body. Another example, an acrylic and collage painting on drop cloth, entitled *Virile* (Figure 15) incorporates netting and a paper doily in an abstracted depiction of a female torso.

² Kathy Wilkes, MOMA P.S. 1, 2018



Figure 11. Kathy Wilkes, *Untitled*



Figure 12. *Visible*, Mixed media on kitchen towel, 23 x 15 in.



Figure 13. Kiki Smith, *Untitled*



Figure 14. *Small, Mixed Media on kitchen towel, 23 x 17 in.*



Figure 15. *Virile*, Mixed media collage on drop cloth, 53 x 41 in.

Transition to Painting

At the end of my second year of graduate studies I took stock. I was encouraged by how far I had come from representational portraiture. I was interested in continuing with my experimental drawings on kitchen towels, but painting was a big question mark. I considered myself a painter, yet in two years I had not done much painting. In my experience, important and transformative work is seen in hindsight. My work on kitchen towels, which have become an important part of my thesis project, entered my studio as part of a group of domestic objects, with which I experimented, that included disposable aluminum pans, shower curtains and mattress pads. Only later would I realize the importance of the towels, as connected to my grandmother and her storytelling.

It was the end of the semester and the beginning of summer, a time to try things out, free from academic stricture. I made a very bad painting. In a haste to destroy it, I turned it upside down and obliterated the offending parts with swaths of mostly warm gray paint, creating the bulky form of a woman's nude torso. At a certain point I picked up a piece of painted paper from the floor and collaged it to the figure, hoping to alleviate all the sameness of the paint. The piece of collage interjected unforeseen content and a direction to follow to complete the work, which I titled *State of Nature* (Figure 16). At this time, I also created *Kiss* (Figure 17). It is a work on paper that began with the idea of an affectionate embrace, but instead became an image of forced intimacy. The surface of the work shows the struggle of its construction, including the pressing of paint, collage and its removal, and obliterations with gesso, to get at the final image. The result is a jarring and somewhat violent image. *State of Nature* and *Kiss* contain the first steps toward my current painting practice.

On a trip to New York City in May 2018, I visited the Met Breuer to see *Raw Nerve*, a selective survey of Leon Golub's work. Though I knew about Golub's work generally, I had never seen it in person or knew anything about his working processes. Viewing the work was an important moment of recognition. As I viewed the large, unstretched paintings, I understood how his rough and brutal marks related and were important to my work.

In the middle of June, I crammed six canvasses, as large as my car's hatchback would accommodate, along with some drop cloths, my kitchen towels and all my supplies, and traveled to Woodstock, New York for a month-long residency at the Byrdcliffe Guild. At Byrdcliffe I began an intense investigation of constructing and deconstructing paintings, through a combination of collage, and pressing and scraping paint. I would glue many layers of collage onto the canvas and later peel parts off, leaving a residue of the painted paper. The concept of constructing an image was familiar from the period when I was cutting and collaging parts of my process experiments to create large drawings. Pressing paint was an echo of my experience with ink in the print shop. But now I was now working in color and the collage elements were pieces of painted translucent paper.

In the library at Byrdcliffe I found a large book of work by Nancy Spero. In the evenings I would page through the book. I was interested in Spero's indirect picturing of her imagery through printmaking. I also directly related to the focus of her work, on the female experience and body, and art historical images of women, such as Sheela Na Gig (Figure 18). A Sheela Na Gig is a type of stone carving created in the eleventh or twelfth century which is found above doorways of Romanesque churches in Europe, especially Ireland. The meaning of the leering grotesque figures,

which can also appear comical, is debated. They are considered variably: as representations of female lust, as hideous and sinfully corrupt, or as fertility figures.³

I also returned to the work of Leon Golub (Figure 19). I learned that he enacted extensive physical force on his paintings, scraping and abrading them, like he was unburying images that had always existed. There were no beautiful paint strokes. In a conversation with a biographer Golub explained that his work is devoted to exploring power “... not only power, but what you might call its flip side, vulnerability.”⁴

One of the paintings I created at Byrdcliffe that summer, *Persistence of Memory* (Figure 20), I wanted to keep hidden. It depicted a seated nude woman with outlines of hands superimposed on her torso. She has her eyes closed. The outlines of the hands were painted on paper and pressed onto the canvas, in response to what I absorbed from Spero’s work. The painting felt very raw. Through showing it to a few women writers and artists at the residency, I realized it carried a powerful meaning for others. This feedback encouraged me to continue to be honest about the dark content that emerges in my work.

For relief I began *Virile* (Figure 15), a relatively light hearted collage painting on a drop cloth, again focusing on a woman’s torso. *Virile* and its counterpart, *Free*, (Figure 21) are two paintings on drop cloths which were inspired by reading *On Longing* by Susan Stewart. In her section “The Imaginary Body,” Stuart writes, “The grotesque body, as a form of the gigantic, is a body of parts...The parading of the grotesque is often the isolation and display of the exaggerated

³ The Sheela Na Gig Project, www.shelanagig.org (accessed May 1, 2019).

⁴ Marzorati, Gerald. *A Painter of Darkness: Leon Golub and Our Times*, Viking Penguin (1990), 149.

part....”⁵ *Virile* and *Free* are images that emerged from my consideration of the female body as spectacle. Again, as I was constructing these figures, I felt I was inhabiting characters. These two women, plastered right up against the picture plane, are proudly unhampered by the strictures of gender and conventions of beauty. Their bodies, splayed dynamically, twist, slide and threaten to move beyond the boundaries of the picture plane.

After my residency at Byrdcliffe, I continued to incorporate collage in my paintings on drop cloths. Most of the collaged paintings on stretched canvas, such as *Maelstrom* (Figure 22) and *Nemesis* (Figure 23), which I created during the residency, felt too densely composed and textured. They also referred too directly to traditional painting. I wanted to create paintings with more open compositions, similar to the kitchen towels. The free hanging drop cloths presented creases, and irregular seams and shapes. They allowed me to create images that could operate on a larger scale. Additionally, the drop cloths also reacted to my processes of collage with accidental puckering, bulging, and curled edges, that altered the image and animated the surface in unexpected ways. Painting on the drop cloths was promising and would reward investigation.

⁵ Stuart, Susan. *On Longing*, Duke University Press (1993), 105.



Figure 16. *State of Nature*, Acrylic and collage on canvas, 42 x 33 in.



Figure 17. *Kiss*, Mixed media collage on paper, 26 x 20 in.



Figure 18. Nancy Spero, *Sheela Na Gig at Home*



Figure 19. Leon Golub, *White Squad*



Figure 20. *Persistence of Memory*, Acrylic and collage on canvas, 42 x 36 in.



Figure 21. *Free*, Acrylic and collage on drop cloth, 53 x 41 in.



Figure 22. *Maelstrom*, Acrylic and collage on canvas, 50 x 39 in.



Figure 23. *Nemesis*, Acrylic and collage on canvas, 50 x 37 in.

Collage, Abstraction and the Importance of Process

In my current painting practice, abstraction is not an aim, but a result of the process of constructing an image through collage. My process is characterized by a combination of consciously determining aspects of my subject, and wrestling with material to discover the work's final form. I begin each piece with a specific idea of gesture, pose or setting. The specific is often represented through a drawn line. I then begin to construct the image with pieces of collage, in preparation for the appearance of the unexpected – a coherence or disturbance in concept, spatial relationships, color, or texture, that brings the work to life. In constructing the work with pieces of painted paper, I can keep my eyes open to unplanned effects and meanings that emerge. I am interested in ambiguity and open-ended narrative. Abstraction as created through process contributes to these interests.

I welcome chance into the work but consistently question surprise effects to determine whether they serve a known or developing purpose and can remain. Each series of marks must function meaningfully towards the final image. The surprise of content developing through process is exciting and has become what I look to experience in creating work. In an interview in 1992, Leon Golub spoke about opening up his imaging process in a way that resonates with my experience.

Earlier paintings were more conceptually defined and structured, now the process is seemingly more aleatoric, chancier. I frequently start with dogs. A day or two later, perhaps a figure, perhaps a slogan. The painting develops, gets revised, collaged into a form... I like it, it keeps me edgy...⁶

⁶ Procuinar, David. "Interview with Leon Golub." *Journal of Contemp. Art* (1995) (<http://www.no-art.info/golub/interview-en.html>, accessed May 2, 2019).

Collage, as a formative structure, operates in multiple ways in my work. The layers of collage function both as a reference to the body, and the formal language of painting. They are translucent layers, membranes – skins, that accrue, to construct or obscure form, or are ripped away leaving traces of their presence.

As formal elements of painting they contain completed brushstrokes, single or grouped, a visual syntax that can be located, relocated then fused to the surface. As pre-made brushstrokes they abjure an intentional gestural mark, with its art historical relationship to male power, as exemplified in Abstract Expressionism. The gestures of collage relate to a female act of repair (patching) and craft (decoupage), that are rooted in traditional ideas of the feminine. The rough and active marks that are created through my use of collage can reference violence or an extreme expression of emotion. The piecing together of the image in fragments implies the subjective and partially understood experience. It offers a method to gradually picture difficult content.

Painting

My paintings on drop cloths constitute an arrival. The large paintings contain a single body, variably positioned. In *Held* (Figure 24) the person hovers. In *Denouement* (Figure 25), she is weighted to the ground. Whether suspended or splayed into the foreground, my characters are in uncertain territory that could include both pleasure and pain, safety and vulnerability. *Denouement* contains a stitched kitchen towel. It functions as a window to a separate moment from which the figure emerges, larger in scale, her head surrounded in darkness. My painting titled *Becoming/Unbecoming* (Figure 26) began with the concept of a woman making the gesture of a curtsy. The image of a Sheela Na Gig, which I first encountered in the work of Nancy Spero, imposed itself on my mind as I was working. The grotesque figure appears in a block print on the woman's dress, in lines like text that are read as stains. *Woman II* (Figure 27) developed from my memories of Roman statues of Venus and the multiple imitations it spawned through art history (Figure 28). The *Cnidian Venus* by Praxiteles is considered to be the first example of this classical stance, referred to as the Venus pudica.⁷ As I worked, adding stains and collage, and ripping off parts, the exterior elements of the female figure began to disappear. I became interested in piecing together and constructing what was underneath the visible and traditional representation.

A smaller work *Couple* (Figure 29), began with a drawing from life of a male and female model, she with her back to him, with his arms wrapped around her. The painting evolved into a dark conception of physical intimacy.

⁷ Venus Pudica, [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Venus pudica](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Venus_pudica) (accessed May 2, 2019).



Figure 24. *Held*, Mixed media on drop cloth, 67 x 52 in.



Figure 25. *Denouement*, Mixed media on kitchen towel and drop cloth, 54 x 66 in.



Figure 26. *Becoming/Unbecoming*, Mixed media on drop cloth, 68 x 47 in.



Figure 27. *Woman II*, Mixed Media on drop cloth, 70 x 52 in.

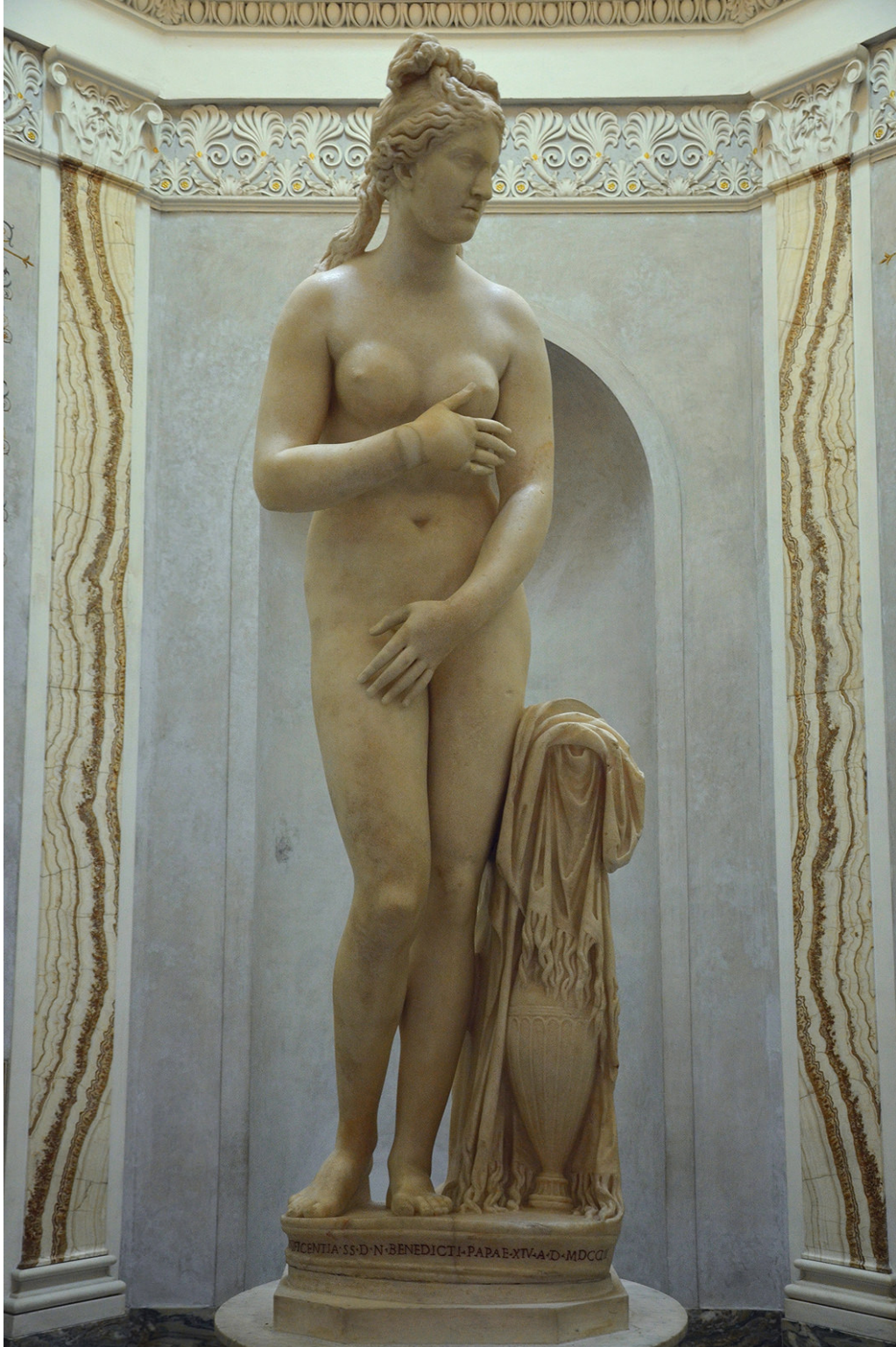


Figure 28. Capitoline Venus, Rome, Italy



Figure 29. *Couple*, Mixed media on drop cloth, 51 x 34 in.

Residing in a Place- Manifesto

I consider my work political insofar as it is personal. In creating work, I operate from a specific female experience that discounts a view of woman as universal or eternal. At the same time, I realize the possible contradiction in my association of collage with repair and craft, which could be considered stereotypically feminine. Lucy Lippard in “No Regrets” captures the complexity of these coexisting ideas.

Clearly its dangerous and it's dumb to confine people to imagined essences, to totalizing histories from which there is no escape. But it's equally dumb to throw the baby out with the bath water, to reject all subjectivity, roots and origins as mere swamps of stereotype, limitation and prejudice. The stories that define us can be liberating as well as constricting. This remains a fertile area not just of opposition but of serious possibilities.⁸

The tension between individual feminine experience and the political representation of feminism is present in my work. I intend for the viewer to glean their own subjective meaning from this juxtaposition.

Though narrative constitutes the impetus for my work, I am informed by art historical representations of women and the relation of gender to power structures, both within domestic relationships and in a larger societal context. I struggle with the complexity of constructing an image that has been interpolated and infected by the titillating modesty of the Capitoline Venus, the leering hag Sheela Na Gig, and the rape scenes of Peter Paul Rubens.

I experienced a moment of recognition when I read Australian figurative artist Helen Johnson's thoughts on painting. “I am interested in the complexities, loadings and problems of

⁸ Lippard, Lucy. “No Regrets.” *Art in America* (2017) (<https://www.artinamericamagazine.com/news-features/magazines/from-the-archives-no-regrets/>, accessed May 2, 2019).

painting as devices for producing meaning today... I am not interested in using painting to defend itself, make statements or draw conclusions, but to open spaces for reflective thought....”⁹

I work from memory, sketches, life drawings, newspaper and my own photographs. Making painting is an ongoing engagement in producing images that speak to the human condition in a historical language, that is familiar to me through education and from long experience. My textile works represent engagement in experimental forms of drawing and a conceptual visualization of female experience.

⁹ Higgle, Jennifer. “Eight Painters on Painting.” (2013) (<https://frieze.com/article/8-painters-painting>, accessed May 2, 2019)

A Step

My work originates in drawing. Some is constructed as painting and strains toward dimensionality, as it buckles, and curls away from the wall. Other work is quiet: stitched, stained, plucked, and softly insistent. The women who constitute my characters are born in details of family history and altered through the process of picturing them. There are now multiple possibilities for their development in drawing, painting and story. There are rooms and worlds to settle into. *Step* (Figure 30) presents the legs of a nude woman located in a light and colorful space. Though she is physically flawed she is moving toward the viewer and out of the picture plane. When I began to create the image, I was thinking of a line from “A Room of One’s Own” by Virginia Wolfe, “It is strange how a scrap of poetry works in the mind and makes the legs move in time to it along the road.”¹⁰ I consider *Step* my hopeful picture. As such it seems a fitting image with which to pause my story.

¹⁰ Woolfe, Virginia. “A Room of One’s Own.” (1929).



Figure 30. *Step*, Mixed media collage on drop cloth, 52 x 34 in.

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