Shards & Scraps: A reflection on personal connections to glass vessels and food

Sarah Ann Godfrey

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Shards & Scraps: A reflection on personal connections to glass vessels and food

by

Sarah Ann Godfrey

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Major: Integrated Visual Arts

Program of Study Committee:
Brenda Jones, Major Professor
Johnny DiBlasi
Barbara Haas

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2020
DEDICATION

To my parents who have always encouraged me to explore and continue in creative endeavors.
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ABSTRACT

The artwork in Shards & Scraps reflects on Sarah Godfrey’s personal connections to glass and food throughout her life. Her smaller paintings study the interaction of light with glass plus the physical representations of peeling fruit, while larger multi-surface paintings study repaired, and broken glass objects used in foodservice and preparation. Large-format photographs tower over viewers and broken glass installations challenge you to assess the line between beauty and danger. Through Godfrey’s education at Iowa State, her work has transformed into a reflective narrative about her connections with glass vessels, from childhood until the present. In recent years, her studio practice has changed due to personal observations of the quantity of food waste made. Within the exhibition, food transforms into a medium of expression that gives participants opportunities to be more mindful of the waste they produce in their own homes.
CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Artist’s Background

Born and raised in Omaha, NE, both of my parents had a passion for creative arts. I grew up looking at my environment as a form of art and expression, as my parents, after getting married, had transformed their front and backyard into beautiful landscaping. Throughout my childhood the interior of the house was decorated to incorporate still lifes on any surface that wasn’t readily used.

During high school I decided to attain Master’s degrees in the fields in which I wanted to work. Growing up in a creative environment impacted my search for a future profession, I wanted to provide creative outlets for others through being an art instructor at either the high school or collegiate level. I began my journey of higher learning at Creighton University in Omaha, NE, intending to double major in Fine Arts and Education, with an Art History minor.

During my first semester introductory course in education, one of the directors of the Magis Catholic Teacher Corps came to speak with our class about their Master’s degree program. The program was a two-year commitment which consisted of in-person and online classes, while teaching full time at selected Catholic schools in the Midwest. After completion of the program, graduates would receive a teaching license in the state of Nebraska, a Master’s Degree in Education, along with the possibility of a full-time job at the school they were working. I met with the directors of the program and made the decision to change my major, in order to focus solely on my Fine Arts major and Art History minor. I continued to touch base with the Magis program over the following four years, in order to ensure that I met all the application requirements.
During the final semester of my undergraduate career at Creighton University, I was accepted into the Magis program. Through Magis, I taught Art at Creighton Preparatory School, an all-boys Jesuit High School, in Omaha, NE. Over the following two years, I attended in-person and online courses while working with over 100 students per semester on Basic and Intermediate Art. Students in Basic Art were guided through lessons on basic form still lifes, skull studies, developing facial features, portraiture, human proportions, perspective, plus developing unique characters, and storytelling through a comic book cover project. In Intermediate Art, students worked on various styles of still lifes and portraiture projects through hatching techniques and oil paint.

Towards the end of my time with the Magis Program, I began looking for a university that offered a Master’s in Fine Arts degree. Iowa State University was recommended to me by a dear friend and mentor at Creighton Prep. After an impressive visit in the Fall of 2016 to meet with professors and tour the campus, I began assembling my application.

In the fall of 2017, I moved to Ames, IA, and began my journey to complete a Master’s in Fine Arts degree and after three years, I developed a body of work that reflects on my personal connections to glass and food throughout my life. Each of the works challenges viewers to assess the line between beauty and danger, plus encourages individuals to look at how food transforms into a medium of expression thus to be more mindful of the waste produced in and outside of the home.
CHAPTER 2.  JOURNEY TOWARDS SHARDS

Initial Work

In the beginning, foods were being chosen for my work based on their fragility and the glass containers were to aid in the capture of dramatic lighting. I took inspiration from past events that allowed me to identify with both the broken eggshells and the glass that contained it, connecting myself and the state I had been in during these particular events to the glass objects containing broken shells. Something that, although it contained the broken bits, was only one slip away from shattering. I found that traversing a way to talk about that experience made me feel as if eggshells were constantly surrounding the floor around me and I was on edge. So instead of focusing my energy on telling the story of my previous negative experience, I took the imagery of food and glass and pushed forward, exploring how the exciting visuals and connections I had to these subject matters individually could be brought together.

Halfway through the second semester of the Integrated Visual Arts program, I discovered Robin Antar’s Realism in Stone series from 1998, in which Antar used stone carving to create American food and designer clothing in mesmerizing detail. As I moved through her body of work, I found her use of stone materials to imitate food or food products was mesmerizing and excited me to continue working with food as a subject matter.

Robin Antar, Jewish Favorite, 2016,
When looking at pieces like *A Jewish Favorite*, 2016, made from Limestone, Fluorite, and Mixed-media, I saw sculptures that were heavy and strong, which greatly contrasted with the delicacy of what I portrayed in the smaller works I was developing.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, I grew up surrounded by delicate objects and developed a deep respect for these items and the artists that created them. As I moved away from the idea of referencing my negative experiences with anxiety in my work, I chose to continue with glass as a part of my subject matter due to the role it played as I grew up. Instead of utilizing eggshells to represent myself within the works, I changed the narrative to show my personal connection to the subject matter through the glass objects that were displayed.

When selecting these objects at flea markets, antique stores, or garage sales I looked for glass used to store or serve food. In particular, I looked for items similar to those my parents already owned or would want to have in their collection. However, now I am exploring the ways in which I think they are beautiful. I no longer look at glass objects as something that must be pristine and undamaged.

Interestingly enough, when my father would see pictures of glass vessels, I found in order to destroy, he would call, asking me to save one in particular for his collection. Each time I had to tell him that I had bought it for my thesis, with the intention to break it.

Looking for these glass objects has become just as interesting to me as breaking them. I love the idea of the previous owner treasuring the item in a cabinet, bringing it out for special occasions, only to have it end up in an antique store, where others base its’ worth on if it has a chip or crack in it. Having come from a family that collects breakable objects, I continue to respect glass and other breakables, finding their fragility is a portion of their beauty.
Destruction & Repair

During the summer of 2018, I purchased multiple pitchers along with a few other glass objects to explore the avenue of broken glass. Unable to break the pitchers at home, I looked for other methods and came upon a shooting range in Boone, IA. I spoke with the owner to see if he could assist me, letting him know I would help with the cleanup of the space plus collect all of the glass shards created in the process. He mentioned that since the pitchers I brought in were tempered glass they would most likely explode when shot, rather than just break, so he couldn’t promise what the outcome would be.

The first pitcher was set up on a barrel in the center of the indoor range and when clipped by a bullet it shattered. Small shards fell to the ground and a few large chunks could be found atop the barrel or near its base. We cleaned up the shards and put them into a small bag for me to bring home before examining how to move on to the second pitcher.

At the suggestion of his colleague, we applied masking tape in layers to the interior of the pitcher in an effort to hold the glass together. The owner clipped the pitcher with a bullet and with the tape as a support, it was successful! By all appearances, the pitcher was shattered, but partially intact, with few pieces falling away or turning to dust.

Upon returning home, I tested out various types of glues on the first pitcher’s shards and found that glass glue was the most
successful. With the second pitcher, I began by removing the tape, and laying out each piece from the base, so reassembly would be as smooth as possible. In total it took about four days to puzzle the glass back together, allowing for proper drying time.

After working with the shooting range, I moved away from tempered glass and began to select thinner glass and crystal objects that allow for an “easier” break when enough force is applied. To ensure that all of the glass was collected, I used cardboard boxes with tall walls reinforced by packing tape on the corners and the bottom to lower the chance of small shards sneaking out plus aid in the cleanup process. When breaking the items, I used precise hits from a hammer or gravity's assistance with dropping traditional or iron hammers onto the glass object within the box.

**Kintsukuroi**

While researching methods of putting glass objects back together, I came across Kintsukuroi, an art that became common during the late 16th to early 17th-century in Japan where an artist mends broken pottery with gold and lacquer. Kintsukuroi, translated to golden repair, is sometimes referred to as kintsugi, meaning golden seams.

In 17th-century Japan, artisans skilled in Japanese lacquer would mend broken tea bowls and other ceramic vessels used in tea ceremonies. The traditional kintsugi process uses urushi, a Japanese lacquer made from tree sap, which has been used for about 9000 years as a glue, putty, or paint by Japanese lacquer masters. This kintsugi method uses the lacquer to glue the pieces back together plus as a putty to fill
in any missing pieces. Once the lacquer was applied, it could not be removed, so the vessel, no matter the number of parts, had to be assembled all at once. The lacquer had to dry and harden over the course of a few weeks before being sanded down to be in line with the original ceramic pieces. At this point, the lacquer master would paint over the lacquer seams with gold. (Lesser, 2018)

Intrigued by this process, I looked at contemporary artists such as Bouke de Vries who uses traditional methods of kintsugi in his art. When asked by Lisa Pollman of Art Radar Journal he states, “I use the technique as a way to enhance a particular piece I’m working on. The amazing thing about kintsugi is its’ durability; whereas, other forms of restoration deteriorate, it can often lift a piece” (Pollman, 2017).

De Vries uses this technique to mend early Chinese pottery and build elaborate sculptures of birds and flowers from found pieces of ceramics which caught my eye for their beauty and mimicry of life.

Prior to the Spring 2020 semester beginning, I found a kintsugi kit that would allow me to mimic the process used by Japanese lacquer masters with a mixture of epoxy and gold dust. After waiting for slightly warmer weather so that the process could be done with proper ventilation, I selected multiple glass vessels of varying thicknesses from my collection of unbroken items and prepared a space in which to break them. The glass objects
were broken one at a time, then placed on a tray individually to ensure smaller shards did not get misplaced.

The process of using the epoxy and gold powder was similar to the traditional kintsugi process where one must figure out how the pieces fit together before assembling. The major differences between the kit I used, and the traditional process was that the gold powder was mixed into the epoxy before applying to the pieces. The epoxy cured far more quickly than the Japanese masters techniques with lacquer. Although my first attempt came out messier than planned, the four other glass objects I used for this process were successful. Through using kintsukuroi, the flaws and imperfections of each vessel were highlighted in addition to creating an even stronger, more beautiful work of art.

![Kintsukuroi Bowl after break and after repair.](image)

**Cracked, Partially Repaired, and Unrepaired**

Over the past two years I have collected a large number of glass vessels that are used for food presentation or storage. There are few that still remain unbroken, as I have been continually adding to my collection of shards. The few that do remain intact are bottles, which I have found
break in a manner which is not particularly useful for my art. Due to the strength in the glass at the base and neck of the vessel, only the central portions of bottles will break apart, leaving the entire bottle neck and base intact. Rarely do they split unless a large force is applied, which I do not prefer, as their large form and distinct appearance can be distracting within the composition.

With earlier projects, I would break and reassemble the vessels with glass glue entirely. However, as I began to think about the exhibition, I became interested in partially repairing the objects, leaving some shards separate, allowing a potentially functional glass vessel to be merely a dangerous piece of decor. When photography and scanography came into my practice I began leaving the vessels unrepaiired in order to utilize the shards within the images created.
CHAPTER 3. JOURNEY TOWARDS IMAGERY AND SCRAPS

Painting

After high school, I predominantly worked in oil paint, as I enjoyed the vibrancy of the colors and the slower drying time of the medium. When I first got to Iowa State, due to monetary restrictions, my surfaces were dependent on what I already owned or could make and I used my collection of watercolors and inks, rather than purchasing new tubes of acrylic or oil paint. With my subject matter being reliant on the surfaces being used and not wanting to spend money on more gesso boards or canvases, I turned to a non-traditional surface - playing cards. While working on these smaller surfaces with subject matters of environments and creature creations, I began to listen to and watch videos about cooking including Binging with Babis, Bon Appetit, and documentaries about food. Through my excitement in watching these shows and films I became inspired to transition back into working with food as the subjects within my compositions.

During my second semester, I began to work with oil paint again, developing slightly larger compositions of hands peeling or cutting fruit and eggs within glass jars. I was interested in the time and the movements that went into taking apart fruit, by representing the relationship between the hands, the food item, and how it was being prepared for consumption. As stated earlier, the eggshells within glass jars were representative of events in which I was able to identify with both the glass object and the broken shells it contained. My processes in making each of these works was meticulous, looking for the best composition in a mirror, and later, video when fruit is being taken apart by hands or a knife. I would make multiple sketches to find successful compositions that would be developed later with paint on gesso board. With these
pieces, I was looking to represent the beauty of sunlight caught in glass and how it interacts with broken eggshells.

As the semester came to a close, after discussions with professors and fellow students, I became interested in moving towards larger formats. I began exploring compositions in which I could identify myself with the glass vessels. Over the summer, I used the partially repaired pitcher to develop a still life as a reference for *Cracked Lemons*. The still life existed in my apartment for over a week so I could observe how the sun came through my West facing window to interact with the reassembled pitcher.

The still life was photographed in order to have a reference for any light I questioned while painting. After using the still life for sketches and photographs, I began assessing the surfaces I owned that could be used in the creation of a strong composition in a larger format. I took four 24” x 36” linen canvases and puzzled them together to support the composition without being rectangular in shape. By combining the four panels into one, visual cuts were made within the pitcher, creating more tension than was already present in the composition.

As I moved forward in working with multiple panels I explored working with my own recipes as part of the subject matter. During this time, I had recently finished putting together my Dutch Apple Pie recipe. I had also recently purchased a glass bowl that was thin with no details or etching. After
pouring the Dutch Apple Pie filling into the bowl I set up a camera to document how the glass broke when struck by a hammer.

With video and a few pictures to document how the filling moved over the course of time for future reference, I used the broken still life for sketches to look at how to set up the multiple panels. Through these initial sketches I chose to mount gesso boards atop one another, in an effort to create more dimension for the viewers as they observed the subject matter of the artwork.

Recently, while bringing all of my works home to organize for the exhibition, I realized that an illustration of creature creation from my first semester drawing course at Iowa State has parallels to the multiple surface works that came almost a year later in my painting practice.

As I continued looking at ways in which to work with multiple surface paintings, I found myself craving more dimension, yet struggling to produce the effect I desired.

**Photography & Scanography**

Christine Carr introduced me to scanography in the fall of 2018, where I discovered that the Epson scanner was able to pick up some phenomenal detail of the items you set atop it. It began with a project in which I took inspiration from a poem titled, *If You Knew* by Ellen Base. The poem talked about how important your last moments with a person are, as they could be gone any day.
For my images, I borrowed various small items from classmates' pockets and backpacks to develop compositions capable of acting as a portrait of the last items a person touched. I was in awe of the detail present in the images, from dust particles to minor wear in a particular object from age and weathering.

For the final project in the course, I got to choose any process we had learned about during the semester, and I decided to extend my painting subject matter of glass and food into the photography course. One integral element to my project was to find ways in which to protect the scanner from food particles and broken glass. Of the materials I tested, Saran wrap and plexiglass were not successful, as they became a distraction in the overall composition or took away from the detail of the subject matter. I found that Durlar, a polyester film that is a mix between mylar and acetate, was the best way to both protect the scanner surface plus allow the food and glass to keep all their fine details.

Lost Memories series, 2018
While developing my first few works in scanography, all of the food that was used had to be thrown away, whether it was because the food had glass embedded in it or had been destroyed to the point of inedibility; it was out too long, got too dry, etc. A majority of these first scans were using store-bought baked goods, since I wanted that I could easily access that could tear apart and create trails of crumbs or pieces, large and small. I also utilized my own leftovers from meals, exploring how various foods came across through the scanography process.

While working with these items, I found myself drawn to the stark contrast of colors with the black background that displayed micro textures of dust and particles of the food throughout the composition. Through utilizing my personal leftovers and purchasing baked goods, I found that particular foods, although delicious in appearance under normal circumstances, fell flat or became unappetizing under the harsh light of a scanner. Foods or meals that had brown in them or a sauce did not appear appetizing, instead, it became a flat mass with little to no value plus textures that were not appealing to the eye or stomach.

At the beginning of Spring 2019, I reflected on my hyper-awareness of the quantity of food waste I made when using store-bought items. At the end of each scanning session with glass, all of the food had gone into the trash. I became not only concerned for what was being wasted by my creative process, but how I personally was contributing.
to the food waste problem within the United States. With the new semester, I began working with individual ingredients in order to allow their textures and colors to speak for themselves amongst the shards of glass, while also keeping in mind the waste I would be producing.

The initial scans worked with the subject matter of honey. With a flick of the wrist, jewel-like structures were created among larger strands of honey. Over and under the glass, they reflected light between one another creating a visual maze to explore. From there I looked at major ingredients used in recipes I’ve worked with during my culinary journey in life. I predominantly worked with raw fruits and vegetables due to the vibrant colors and interesting textures they portrayed when torn and cut apart.

After inquiries from professors and fellow classmates to make the printing scans larger, I made a 3’x9’ print of multiple heads of garlic that had been ripped apart. The image took over an hour to print and I was awestruck. Small details that would have been missed had the image been in a smaller
format, captured my eye. Within the image, a clove of garlic was the size of my face and particles from the shell of the head looked like large clumps of snow falling in the night sky. The varied color on the garlic created a beautiful contrast with the black background, allowing my eyes to move through the piece, exploring in and around the cloves.

While continuing to work with raw ingredients, I recognized that food was still being wasted at the end of my sessions in the photography studio. I began to wander the halls at the College of Design after a photo session offering unharmed produce to students and professors as well as changing my meal planning at home to incorporate ingredients that were within the images, but had not touched the shards of glass. Moving forward with new glass objects and food subject matter, I began to look at a topic I felt needed to be discussed -- food waste.

**Food Waste**

In my search for more information on food waste, I came across an article that utilized an image by Robert Clark and Jenna Turner in October of 2014 for National Geographic. The purpose of the image was to give viewers an idea of how much food on average an American family of four wastes, which adds up to 1,160 pounds of uneaten food, annually. The Waldt family of New Jersey, seen in the image, opened up their home at 6 am the day before the photoshoot for produce, meat, and food items to be stored until the following day when the shoot would occur.
All of the food within the image was donated to a nonprofit, except for the pig, which the family kept, roasting at a later date.

It is important to note that food waste is what occurs once the item is in the hands of retailers, food services and even ourselves, the consumer. Some of the food is wasted because it does not meet the standards set for that particular item for the USDA, such as shape, size, or color. In some cases, it is because a product has reached its best before or best-by dates, both of which can be confusing for consumers. Food waste also includes items that are non-edible, which are food parts that you typically would discard during your food prep such as eggshells, animal bones, and fruit pits.

Food Loss is the food that is lost before consumers purchase it. Meaning that something happened between the time a seed was planted to when the item is brought to the seller. This can mean that it had a pre-harvest problem, such as pests, rough handling, improper storage or even damage during transit. It is important to note that infrastructures of communities play a role in these losses, as it could be due to pricing, market or even legal frameworks.

When food is lost or wasted, all the resources that went into producing, processing, packaging, and transporting that food is wasted too. This means that the huge amounts of chemicals, energy, fertilizer, land, and 25% of all freshwater in the U.S., which is used to produce food, is money going down the drain. Overall, a third of the food produced in the world is lost or wasted annually, which is roughly 1.3 billion tons. This number includes both industrial and developing countries and monetarily equals about $680 billion dollars (Food Waste FAQs).
In the Fall of 2019, I enrolled in a Food Science and Nutrition course titled Global Nutrition along with a graduate seminar on Food Waste. Within these two courses, I had the opportunity to learn more about food waste in the United States and world, as well as ways to help lower my personal impact. In both courses we talked about the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals which are “the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. These goals address the global challenges we face, including those related to poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice. The 17 Goals are all interconnected, and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve them all by 2030” (United Nations, 2016).

By visiting the United Nations website for the Sustainable Development Goals, you can learn about what has been done each year to reach the goals the UN has set and ways that you can help to make an impact.

While scanning and printing images, I began looking into food waste in relation to art, seeing how other artists were bringing light to a topic that affects the entire world. These artists guided me in exploring more research related to food waste made by individuals, families, restaurants and larger chain stores.
Aliza Eliazarov, a photographer, works with food collected from dumpsters to reimagine works of 17th-century Dutch masters, in her series *Waste Not*. The project began in 2011, when she was assigned a story for Earth Day by a local paper to follow a freegan. A freegan is an individual who does not follow a traditional consumerist lifestyle and instead seeks to help the environment by reducing waste, especially by retrieving and using discarded foods and other goods. The individual she followed dumpster-dived at a market across from the Columbia University campus and used some of the rescued food on the sidewalk to educate passersby on waste.

Eliazarov was intrigued by the number of people who would stop to talk about their confusion as to why a baguette or apple were thrown away, which led the way into discussions about issues on food waste.

Using the freegan directories, she learned in 2011, Eliazarov intercepts food shortly after it is taken to the curb from grocery stores, bakeries and the like prior to garbage collection, then gives the food two new uses. The first is the subject matter of her tableau and the second is for her own personal consumption.

**Three-Dimensional Experimentation**

While developing images on a scanner and through painting, I also became interested in exploring more expressionist and three-dimensional styles of painting. I began with oil paint in a
thinner impasto style, developing textures of garlic cloves and looking at still lifes of fruits. While working in the impasto style, I transitioned from using brushes into palette knives, allowing the paint to show its’ own texture rather than the bristles of the brush. Expressive, quick strokes represented the form of the food, rather than my previous style of painting that represented textures through colors.

As I continued developing impasto paintings, I found that the three-dimensional visuals I wanted to create would be too expensive with oil paint plus take up more space for drying than I had available to me. In my experiments to find a three-dimensional material that would sate my craving for more apparent three dimensionality, I began with plaster. But sadly, due to the vulnerability of the material, most of my tests did not last very long, as they would chip, or break while being moved or painted. From plaster, I transitioned into working with acrylic and painting mediums in a thicker impasto style atop overlapping surfaces. Sadly, the acrylic paint and mediums were lacking in texture and form after drying so I began the process of incorporating actual drapery onto the surface. With the drapery attached, the dimensions and appearance I was looking for was present, but the top half of the composition no longer supported the overall appearance due to clashing textures and visuals.

It was at this point that I started to work with three dimensional surfaces. I collected flower arranging foam to carve food that could be incorporated into installations within the gallery. Due to how easily the foam would break on smaller 3D projects I was developing and the particulates it gave off while carving, I began looking at wood carving techniques and where I could purchase the various equipment necessary to begin. Using carving tools and a dremel, I
began to develop representations of food. I learned from my mistakes on the first few carvings and continued until a small representation of a pear came forward from the material. I worked on the small curved fruit for months, finessing details and recalling my inspiration a few years earlier from Robin Antar. The large sizes of her representations of food, once again contrasted with the pear that was no taller than my pinky finger. Although I had continued with glass for a different reason than its fragility, I had somehow come full circle, in making smaller works of art.

The gallery space had constantly been in the forefront of my mind when I was thinking of ways to incorporate the glass shards and objects, I have worked with during my Thesis without them being a hazard to guests.

Glass items present with artwork would be on pedestals next to paintings allowing visitors to walk around them and observe how the object was completely or partially repaired, in comparison to the work they were displayed in. Vessels rebuilt with the Kintsukuroi technique would be on their own solitary pedestal, in order to emphasize the flaws and imperfections highlighted by the golden seams. Glass shards made in the breaking process that could not fit back into their original vessels, due to size or an explosion would be arranged into a still life positioned in the front windows of the gallery to catch the eyes of passersby and ensure that small wandering hands don’t reach up to touch the sharp shiny shards.

The final installation is to be a representation of my personal experience working with and developing recipes I have used since I began cooking food. Within the installation there was a desk with my personal cookbook, along with an example of how I rewrite a recipe in

![Wooden Pear with Shards, 2020](image-url)
preparation for cooking. Small glass dishes containing materials used to hold up future recipes along with smaller shards of glass sat amongst the pages and books. Spices were spilled over the pages to give the impression that a cook had stepped away from the pages to grab another ingredient or check on the dish. Behind the table, on the wall was a collection of recipes from magazines and food blogs that are soon to be tried and added to my personal cookbooks, after corrections, notes, and detailed instructions have been recorded.'
CHAPTER 4. SHARDS & SCRAPS EXHIBITION

Safety

As mentioned in the previous chapter, from the time I decided broken glass would be present during the exhibition throughout the gallery, I wanted to ensure that any person who came into the space was safe. Whether that be from the art or themselves. I was most worried about younger visitors who might grab at something and be cut by the glass or that a pedestal would get bumped and shards would scatter over the floor.

In order to compensate for my worries, I planned for the largest of the installations of glass to be placed on the raised portion of the larger window. By doing this it would lower the likelihood of guests setting something down atop the still life like a plate or hand, plus younger children would not have shards of glass within arm’s reach.

I continued to study the space and look at how people gathered and moved through the gallery looking for adequate locations to place the pedestals for my repaired glass vessels.

Reception

With food being such an important part of my life, I was keen on ensuring that the reception would be a memorable gathering for those who were able to participate. In the Summer of 2019, I began looking at ways I could incorporate a performance aspect to the reception that involves the visitors. This idea came to me after looking at Jennifer Rubell’s one night only show and feast for the 2010 Brooklyn Ball, “Icons” at the Brooklyn Museum. Within the show Rubell provided for the guests, four Marcel Duchamp–inspired Champagne fountains, eight “drinking paintings” in homage to Jackson Pollock, and a twenty-foot-tall piñata in the shape of Andy
Warhol’s head. Which broke apart to serve
dessert — packaged foods like Hostess Sno
Balls (Saltz, 2010).

After looking at Jennifer Rubell’s
works, I became interested in looking at the
thesis reception as an interactive
experience which would be both eco-friendly and produce minimal-to-zero waste. Through these
interactions, I aimed to elevate the awareness of food waste produced by making visitors become
more intentional about what they chose to
put on their plates.

The menu would direct the performance, beginning with savory bites then transition to
desserts for the remainder of the reception. Participants were to be encouraged to view their
plates as canvases, any cutlery as palette knives, napkins as erasers, and cups as water dishes,
thus transforming their food into a work of art and the tableware and utensils as tools. Each
participant would be encouraged to paint their name on their canvas with a brush and fruit juice
concentrate, in order to encourage them to use only one of each item, but also to see if claiming
the tools would influence how they interacted with the space and food.

I was keen on trash cans not being available during the reception, instead, there would be
a pedestal near the front of the gallery for a glass bowl to sit atop a scale. This bowl would act as
the waste bin and behind the pedestal was a planned space for participants to place used
canvases, palette knives, water dishes, plus erasers as a visual reminder of the waste made during
the event.
The whole performance will encourage participants to look at catering as an individual personal experience, rather than one that is unintentional and wasteful.

**Exhibition Plan Prior to April 3, 2020**

Due to the constant changes occurring around the world, and the announcements of campuses closing due to COVID-19, the exhibition of Shards and Scraps will be installed in the gallery at Design on Main on Saturday, April 11, 2020, and uninstalled on Saturday, April 25, 2020. For the duration of the exhibition, the gallery is closed to the public, in order to aid in the CDC’s efforts to enact social distancing.

In light of these changes, I began planning for the Exhibition and its Reception to be online, by photographing the work after being installed, and uploading images to my artist website and social media to allow visitors to experience the space, from the comfort and safety of their own homes. The major change to the exhibition and reception was that the performance aspect of the exhibition would no longer be possible.

**Exhibition Plan After April 3, 2020**

Due to the constant changes occurring around the world in addition to campus closings, and states issuing laws for shelter in place due to COVID-19 the MFA Thesis Exhibition of Shards and Scraps, no longer would be taking place at the Design on Main gallery.

In order to lower the possibility of spread, the Shards and Scraps exhibition was exhibited virtually from a living space. I uploaded images of the exhibition to my website on April 14, plus provided daily posts to Instagram that tour the space and individual works until April 25, to allow for visitors to view the exhibition from the comfort of their own home. As no one would
physically be able to attend the space, I chose to host an Instagram Live reception on Friday, April 17, 2020 beginning at 6:00 pm CST.

The living space for the exhibition that I used was my own 700 square foot apartment, particularly the kitchen plus living/dining space. Over the course of five days, I transformed the space multiple times in order to have various layouts. These different layouts allowed for me to show the various mediums as a collective, including paintings, photography, and installations.
CHAPTER 5.  REFLECTION OF THE DIGITAL EXHIBITION

The exhibition took a total of three days to install and uninstall three different versions of the exhibition, paintings, photography, and photography with installations. One of the main issues I ran into was that my walls are just under 9 feet tall, so I had to change how the 3’ x 9’ photographs were displayed in the living space. This resulted in altering a quilt hanger so it could hold the photograph forward from the wall 6 inches from the ceiling and allow the bottom of the image to roll out onto the wood flooring. Various pieces of furniture I owned were incorporated into the exhibition for the installations and in order to make the space feel lived in.

In the Fall of 2019, I had begun developing a website through Wix.com, and with a domain name to match my Instagram The Art of Ms. G became the new home of the Shards & Scraps Exhibition.

Having a digital exhibition was a new experience for me, and I am very pleased with how images of the living space turned out. By having a scrolling gallery for each medium within the show visitors can stroll through the exhibition and view works individually at their own pace.

I look forward to continuing to develop art that links to the themes I have worked with over the past three years. And when thinking of venues for a future gallery exhibition I am still keeping in mind how to ensure that all who visit will be safe while they enjoy the delicious yet dangerous visuals.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A. IMPORTANCE OF GLASS

Surrounded by paintings, sculptures, seashells, and textiles, I was able to let my love for beautiful objects and appreciation for all forms of art grow. It is part of who I am. I grew up in a two-bedroom, one-story Cape Cod home built in 1926. My father purchased the home in 1971 when the siding was white, and shutters and front door were a light “hospital green”. The front yard was a bland hill of grass that faced North. From the street, a steep driveway made its way up to the detached garage and 12 shallow concrete steps led up to the top of the yard. Another three steps gave way to the front door. The backyard had two areas of grass with a slope in between the two levels, rising as it moved away from the house. The only entrance to the yard was along the driveway before the garage, with a chain-link fence surrounding the space. At the back, there was a six-foot railroad tie wall that had some grass at the top to allow for a narrow walking space.

The first two pieces of furniture in the home were a Detroit Jewel stove oven combo, that continues to be used for cooking to this day, and an upright grand piano, which my father slept next to in the living room before his bed arrived.

When my mother moved into the house in the mid-1980s, the landscaping of both the front and back yard began to transform. The hill of a front yard became a three-tier garden, with the use of railroad ties, visually tying the two outdoor spaces to one another. However, the backyard had the largest transformation. The back of the house had a wall removed and became two seven-foot windows, with a matching window door in the center, to allow the backyard and the dining room to become one. The landscaping changed to
incorporate crab apple tree, small firs, a Juniper bush, rock features, raised and lowered flower beds, and a walking path that allows visitors to walk a circle within the entire space.

The interior of the 1926 home continues to be just as elaborate as the exterior with paintings, prints, illustrations, and sculptures plus decorative still lifes that change throughout the year.

It was not until recent years when I look back over these memories of home that I realize how differently I interact with a space from others, especially when there are fragile objects
around. I grew up handling breakable objects, so I am aware of how close I can get to something in order to examine fine details without touching it. I even change how I breathe so as not to disturb the work if it is something fragile or could move with air currents.

However, the typical expressive movements of a child were not as normal, as I had to keep in mind all the objects that were around me. Walking too heavy would make glass shake and clink together, antique bells would faintly ring atop a curio cabinet, and at worst, something might fall if you bumped into the furniture it rested upon. Caution became a way that I moved through the house and interacted with the furniture and art, ensuring no opportunity arose for items to get damaged.
APPENDIX B. IMPORTANCE OF FOOD

Kitchens have always been important to me, they are a place of gathering, comfort and good memories. As a toddler, my parents would place me on the mustard brown linoleum with metal pots, pans, and wooden spoons to entertain myself; that is, until their eardrums could take no more. Around 5, a white counter with thin dark yellow marbling was my new seat to watch as either a spatula or electric hand mixer transformed a messy combination into a smooth mixture that could cascade into a pan. And as any person who isn’t afraid of raw eggs can tell you, those spatulas and beaters are the best part of “helping out” in the kitchen. The kitchen never seemed small and fit our three-person family perfectly, but as I grew older, it became a space that only two people could work in at a time or else bodies turned into bumper cars.

I never truly explored the culinary world until I was in college. I lived at home, in part due to the hefty price of dorms, but also because campus was a fifteen-minute drive away. I felt the need to contribute in some way, since I had a bit more time available than when I was in high school. But, honestly, it might also have to do with the fact I only knew how to make cold cut sandwiches, Kraft Mac, Cup-O-Noodles, and a few other things that came from a box or the freezer.

I began exploring the new frontier of professional food blogs and Pinterest, which made finding a recipe the easy part. Where it got tough, was deciphering a recipe by food bloggers who did not know how to write a complete recipe. Soon, preparing for a recipe was something I did a few days in advance. After a few months of studying recipes, I recognized when I could cook ingredients separately to speed up the cooking time and get food on the table faster.

We’re always taught in school to read the instructions before doing an assignment or section of an exam, and when it has to do with a recipe, it’s even more important. Take it from
someone who tried to make a tres leches cake in under an hour while the recipe required over two hours of chilling time. I began printing recipes from websites and blogs, reading through, rewriting each step if there was even an ounce of confusion. Then, I read it out loud as if giving a speech and double checked that all ingredients were included in the instructions.

Through this entire process, as I’m sure many others have discovered, prep times as they are presented on a recipe are blatant lies. In my mind “Prep Time” encompasses peeling, chopping, mincing, measuring, etc., basically everything you do before you put anything into a pot or a pan. So in order to become more accurate with my rewrites, I started to set timers and write down how long everything took when I cooked, no matter if I was dancing in the kitchen or talking with friends while we worked. The printed recipe, with the new instructions written alongside the old was nearby. Any time something changed, I would make note of it including if I changed the order of the instructions. Cooking sessions would end with a page covered in overlapping scribbles, arrows to aid in what directions go where, plus fingerprints the color of spices and stains from the meal itself. Ever since I began, cooking food has become a primary aspect of my life, transforming into my love language.

Looking back on my childhood, my memories do not really revolve around events. Instead, they revolve around food and the people I was with while cooking or eating. It is the flavors and smells that are most prominent, then the faces and voices of people around me. Homemade Chicken Nuggets, dipped in ranch dressing, then coated with spices and crushed cornflakes - my mom’s best magazine find. Lasagna Cupcakes, a mini lasagna cooked in a cupcake tin, not to be confused with a cake that tastes like lasagna, a hasty late-night Pinterest find, and grocery run with Akila and Emily. Honey Porter Glazed Chicken became Honey IPA Glazed Chicken, since my friend Emily and I, who knew nothing about beer at the time, grabbed...
the wrong kind of beer. Baklava is made with walnuts and pecans, rather than only one of the nuts is the only dessert Sam wants for his birthday anymore. Dutch Apple Pie, a Frankenstein recipe, where I combined three recipes together for the filling and streusel top to ensure a pie that will not collapse or leak on the plate or in the pan.