6-2015

Light Sensitive

Andrew Thompson
CSUSB, thompsonautomatic@gmail.com

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd

Part of the Fine Arts Commons, Interdisciplinary Arts and Media Commons, Photography Commons, and the Sculpture Commons

Recommended Citation
Thompson, Andrew, "Light Sensitive" (2015). Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations. 245.
https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/245

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Graduate Studies at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.
Andrew K. Thompson Master's Project

My therapist regularly speaks about befriending my “shadow-self”, the shamed little boy that feels guilt unnecessarily; that self-sabotages and carries an inner darkness like a burden. This exhibition is my effort to spotlight this shadow-self and to expose it to see him as he is: as a harmless irrational child.

*Light Sensitive* consists of a collection of color photographs, two sound sculptures, and three brief video ruminations. The three videos, *Drowning my fears, I need to dig up my Father*, and *A dream defined only by adventure* collectively meditate on fears. Each clip lays bare anxieties that range from personal to universal in an effort to purge myself of negative emotions. The first video, *Drowning my fears*, began as a suggested project with a therapeutic purpose. It exposed personal unrest pushed to the periphery and gave them a voice, allowing them to be heard and processed. *I need to dig up my Father* and *A dream defined only by adventure* followed shortly after. While each was difficult to produce they are vital tools in confronting my own personal fears.

Directly across from the videos are six body length color photograms titled *Shadow Icons*. A photogram occurs when a solid object is placed on light sensitive paper and the paper is exposed with light. I traced my body with the light of a cell phone to make these photograms. Each distorted self-portrait provides minimal identifying markings including perhaps a hand or two, maybe a curled lock of hair, and definitely a torso and a pair of legs. They are not portraits in the traditional sense because they do not describe my appearance; instead they quite literally allow my tumultuous shadow-self to reveal its form.

Flanking the *Shadow Icons* and the videos are two sculptures from which sound continuously emanates. Incorporating a light sensitive photo-resistor and an Arduino, both
sculptures perpetually pulsate an abstract clamor that is in reaction to its environment. As daylight turns dark or as a viewer passes near, the din of each sculpture changes pitch creating a tense auxiliary soundtrack for fears to emerge.

Expanding from the center of the Dutton Family Gallery are color photographs and chromogenic prints that have been heavily manipulated both physically and chemically. The related series Penetrating the Veil and Lashings are entirely abstract results of chemical assaults upon photographic medium. The process involved in creating the Penetrating the Veil prints consists of liberally dowsing each sheet of folded and exposed paper with bleach. As a result the silver halides and dyes become dislodged and smear across the image plane creating an uncanny spatial depth. Similarly, the Lashings incorporate bleach on exposed chromogenic paper but the chemical is applied in a more violent fashion. Strips of canvas scraps were assembled together to mimic a cat o’ nine tails whip which is soaked in bleach and then used to belt the photographic paper. The results of these processes are abstract images that are equally poetic and polemic.

Acid Rain veers closer to traditional photography with the inclusion of a photographic image. A one-story building surrounded by trees and power lines that have been printed bright pink and outlined with a sewing machine. The structure is reinforced with sewn elements but still erodes under the effects of chemical alteration. The location of the building doesn’t matter as much as what the image of the building represents; the degradation of tradition and the fear of man-made weather disaster.

Blue Respect and Green Respect finalize the exhibition on an upbeat note. The color blue is associated with calm, caring, and intuitive sensitivity while green is associated with balance, growth and leading to a change. Both images have heartstrings exploding forth from the picture plane and the word ‘Respect’ outlined with machine stitch. These prints are an acknowledgement
and an acceptance of the shadow-self that once resided in the dark periphery of my psyche, that emerged burning red and tumultuous but subsided once exposed.

The exhibition *Light Sensitive* is as much about photography as it is about biography. I have used a medium that is known to serve as a mute witness to outer-world reality to express inner turmoil. I have reconfigured the function of photographic materials to serve as expressive devices for abstract and tacit emotions.

---

**Lashing #1, 2015**  
Chemically altered chromogenic paper  
30 x 40 inch (76.2 x 101.6 cm)
Acid Rain, 2015
Chemically altered chromogenic paper and thread
27 x 34 inch (68.58 x 86.36 cm)

PTV 3D #2, 2015
Chemically altered chromogenic paper, thread, photo-resistor, Arduino and speakers
16 x 24 x 14 inch (40.64 x 60.96 x 35.56 cm)
I'm afraid I will never be able to have a meaningful family & relationship.

I'm afraid I will continue to go weight & become unhealthy.

I'm afraid I will never be able to control my body & give up on me.

I need to dig up my Father, 2014 – 2015
Single channel video
Dimensions vary

Drowning my fears, 2014 – 2015
Single channel video
Dimensions vary
A dream defined only by adventure, 2014 – 2015
Single channel video
Dimensions vary
Shadow Icons #1, 2015
Color photogram
80 x 30 inch (203.2 x 76.2 cm)
Shadow Icons #2, 2015
Color photogram
80 x 30 inch (203.2 x 76.2 cm)
Shadow Icons #3, 2015
Color photograms
80 x 30 inch (203.2 x 76.2 cm)
Shadow Icons #4, 2015
Color photogram
80 x 30 inch (203.2 x 76.2 cm)
Shadow Icons #5, 2015
Color photograms
80 x 30 inch (203.2 x 76.2 cm)
Shadow Icons #6, 2015
Color photogram
80 x 30 inch (203.2 x 76.2 cm)
Acid Rain 3D #1, 2015
Chemically altered chromogenic paper, thread, photo-resistors, Arduino and speaker
28 x 32 x 10 inch (71.12 x 81.28 x 25.4 cm)

Bleeding Trees, 2015
Chemically altered chromogenic paper and thread
7.5 x 9.5 inch (19.05 x 24.13 cm)
Penetrating the Veil #131, 2013
Chemically altered chromogenic paper
40 x 30 inch (101.6 x 76.2 cm)
Blue Respect, 2013 – 2015
Chromogenic paper and thread
20 x 16 inch (50.8 x 40.64 cm)
Green Respect, 2013 – 2014
Chromogenic paper and thread
20 x 16 inch (50.8 x 40.64 cm)