My desire to experience a direct, physical connection between the movement of my body, and material on a surface is what drives my work. My engagement with the materials and form accumulates into a unique visual language, forming its own logic and creating a landscape that is more of a state of mind than a representation of concreteness. A direct engagement with my body is a primary tool in this activity, and process is a place for ideas to emerge.

My larger works are a visual manifestation of this physicality and intent, taking form as dynamic landscapes of explosion and collision, spaces of density, dissipation and dispersal. My smaller works are created based on my physical experience of body posture, leanings, tendencies and movement, at times when I am alone or surrounded by other bodies. The representational nature of my forms allows the mind the whimsical liberty to form subjective narratives, ascribe human qualities and relationship dynamics to abstract form.

- Megan Turner

I work across media, using my drawings and paintings as digital raw material and reworking what I’ve done in the digital medium with pencil, paint and other media to create new original works. Crystallizing sensation, creating images that flow from one to another, each symbol and form repeating, changing in size and orientation, I evoke narrative, although not in the way that Bosch’s The Temptations of St. Anthony clearly depicts supernatural temptation. Instead, I seek visual onomatopoeias that echo my process of art making: cannibalising old work to create new work, warping, layering, sketching, and erasing.

- Seana McNamara

My subject is “Aunt Jemima,” a Quaker Oatmeal franchise and icon known for its pancakes and syrup product line. It is one of the oldest, well-known American food brands since it first came into existence in 1893. I take ownership of Aunt Jemima’s commercial iconography by using the brand’s image in my art. The logo’s commercial presence in our society affirms the validity of the racist stereotype known as the mammy. Indeed, Aunt Jemima is an icon of Black servitorship. Through the use of image appropriation, I intend to reveal this trademark’s historical relationship to minstrelsy. I seek to disable Aunt Jemima’s destructive capabilities in my art by illustrating a distinction between the label’s commercial Blackness and the actual quality of Blackness that Black people identify with. This act disproves the label’s depiction of authentic blackness.

- Kenyatta Oaties

I seek to engage the expectations, frustrations, and contradictions that come with the territory of the portrait. A depiction of the human face or body is unique, in that we measure our reaction to such a work by its relation-ship to our own physicality. When we experience an emotion, our whole body responds: our muscles tense, our bones realign, our facial contours change. My work seeks to make explicit those implicit transformations, by producing expressionist portraits upon the unique surfaces of individual bodies. The work is performative in the sense that I have cultivated a relationship with the model, tailoring my painting to the living, shifting move-ments of the canvas. It is static in the sense that photography has frozen only a moment of this process, turning the bodies into art objects rather than sites of artmaking. Which do you gravitate towards first – the portrait or the skin upon which it is displayed? Do these bodies strike you as simple surfaces or as complex human beings? Which is the work of art – the painted area, the whole person, or the photograph itself? Through these questions I aim to complicate and deepen our understanding of our own physicality, and evoke a tender appreciation for the textured, visceral nuances of the body itself.

- Leah Steuer

Hundreds of years of art depict women as objects-to-be-seen rather than independent human beings in their own right, a tradition that has subsequently been adopted in the popular media of film, photography, and advertising, creating an unrealistic standard that has become a monumental force in women’s perceptions of themselves. My work attempts to deconstruct these depictions: by recreating such portrayals in a format that is literally larger than life, I hope to visualize the far-reaching influence of these images; constructing women’s bodies out of magazine pages re-contextualizes them as part of a larger attitude toward women and beauty and reflects their pervasiveness in society. Although I find the media’s depictions of women intellectually problematic, I cannot deny their hold on me aesthetically, and so I have chosen to preserve their visual appeal as a way of laying bare my love-hate relationship with them. It is my hope that this contrast of beguiling beauty and overwhelming scale can help tease out the roles these images play in all our lives.

- Natalie Chung

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- Kaylie Wilson