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Do you wanna go dancing?

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts in Art

by

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Abstract

The transdisciplinary art work within *Do you wanna go dancing?* unpacks the experience and perception of my interpersonal relationships, as well as the role that touch and introspection has in my visual arts practice and everyday life. I am interested in pairing the act of looking with the sensation of touching through specific installation and arrangement of intimate imagery, ceramic fragments and frames, and manual or digitally fabricated surfaces. The negotiation of these installations orient the viewer to consider their positionality within space, as well as the extent in which distance, intimacy, and vulnerability fluctuate inside these psychological spaces.

The physical touch involved in the ceramic process not only emphasizes the marks made to reference the literal act of touching, but also the vulnerability of the material itself. Ceramic fragments and frames contain images and actions: fingerprints preserved and highlighted with glaze, photographic ceramic-decals of my body, as well as adorned shards and cracks of ceramic pieces that highlight the fragility of the ceramic process and specific details of photographs. Fabricated pedestals also contain digital iterations of touch scanned from my own fingers and posterior. The majority of these pedestals support ceramic objects (which I refer to as *viewfinders*), photographic images, and/or reflective surfaces that direct the viewer's experience of the other objects and images within the installation. The navigation of the exhibition space is like a dance, wherein the viewer can choose how and what they interact with— this physical exploration elicits a more queered nuance and consideration of the intentionality of the space, objects, and viewer.

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Acknowledgments

It is imperative for me to recognize the role and influence my mother has in my life. Though she may never accept me for who I am, I know that she loves me deeply and I am extremely fortunate to have such a strong-willed human as my mother. I cannot be angry at her for not “understanding” me and my “lifestyle”. All I can do is appreciate what she has provided me with as well as be patient with her as she has been with me— and I will continue to move forward with confidence and clarity. I am proud of my familial and cultural heritage, which I owe everything to my parents. My sister is also a vital part of my life and growth and I would not be who I am today if it were not for her and her consistent love and support.

I would also like to thank my thesis chair Mathew McConnell for his patience, kindness, and sensitivity. He always listens and always makes an effort to follow-up and help, which I find rare within academic institutions (especially in Ceramics!). Rebecca Drolen and Sean Morrissey have provided me with incredible insight, thoughtful comments, and poised critique throughout my time in graduate school, their help has helped shape me into the artist I am now. Finally, I would like to especially acknowledge Dr. Injeong Yoon for being an amazing mentor and friend. Her support and reading suggestions have expanded my understanding and grasp of language as well as visual communication more than I could ever imagine. I would not feel this confident, articulate, and ready to make more work if it were not for her brilliance.

I would like to end this affirmation by proclaiming the role of two very special and specific romantic relationships: this carnal intensity has been monumental to my growth and understanding of myself and art practice, without them my touch would be so much different.

(i-love-you)

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Introduction: Do you wanna go dancing?

Two Languages cancel each other out, suggests Barthes, beckoning on a third. Sometimes our words are few and far between, or simply ghosted. In which case the hand, although limited by the borders of skin and cartilage, can be that third language that animates where the tongue falters¹.

As shallow as it may sound, I often find myself longing for both physical and emotional attention and affection; this is true for interpersonal and, predominantly, intimate relationships. However, I know that I am terrified of romantic intimacy and desire. Being honest and vulnerable with my sexuality has been difficult, mostly due to internalized homophobia learned from a heteronormative and traditionally conservative upbringing, as well as with a struggle to understand exactly what I wanted for myself. As a queer first generation Asian American I have perpetually navigated the liminal arenas of race, gender, sexuality, and interpersonal relationships— finding the language to express the complexities of these gray areas and my positionality within them has been a challenge. It has always felt like somewhat of a dance when working through this gray area, how much do I give when I myself do not know where I stand?

Throughout graduate school and in the time leading up to my thesis exhibition, I have frequently utilized both José Esteban Muñoz' *Disidentifications* and Sara Ahmed's concept of direction, objects, and orientation in *Queer Phenomenology* to inform how I approach assembling a body of work and installation in order to understand the intuitive and encoded language referring to the experience of existing in-between. These theories have also been an integral part in the understanding of my role within current contemporary art practice and the multiple disciplines I produce visual art work in. Disidentification is an embedded term in queer theory as a way to situate oneself within and against the cultural mainstream. It has been questioned and written about by Judith Butler in *Bodies that Matter* as a misrecognition, or a

¹ Vuong, Ocean. *On Earth We're Briefly Gorgeous: a Novel*. NY, NY: Penguin Press, 2019, 33.

simultaneous seeing and failure to see desirable identifications², and expanded on by Muñoz as a recycling and rethinking of encoded meaning. I have disidentified throughout my life within my interpersonal interactions, primarily utilizing this method of identification as what Muñoz writes as a survival mechanism³. Ahmed's concept of orientation, direction, and orientation devices has led me to consider how to orient viewers in an installation space, as well as how specific objects or images could change how a piece or space is perceived. This concept has also allowed me to consider to what extent (dis)orientation or (mis)direction could be visualized, and how the idea of feeling "out of place"⁴ can be contextualized (as well as decontextualized) by both images and objects.

Prior to graduate school, the work I made focused primarily on my relationship with my Korean mother, specifically with her reinforcement of traditional and gendered expectations. I made cakes and ice cream out of ceramics to simultaneously memorialize and push-back against these traditional standards, I viewed these permanent desserts as coded objects that both concealed and celebrated my identity. Creating and adorning these objects in multiple layers of colorfully dense glaze and other materials has led to a penchant of arrangement, collage, and play with visual perception and space that is currently a very important part of my studio practice. Within graduate school I began to utilize photography to capture images of the landscape and cropped shots of my intimate partner(s) as well as myself. Embracing the control and language of photography changed the way I viewed objects and the act of looking. It also changed how I worked with and used ceramics as a material: I started focusing more on the image and therefore the clay work became more physically flat, but also more concentrated on

² Butler, Judith. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York; London: Routledge, 1993, p.219

³ Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015

⁴ Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007. p.10

the surface and containment of images. Incorporating ceramics, mark making, photography, and installation is my main goal in this thesis exhibition. It has been something I have been considering throughout graduate school, including all of its push-back, time, and labor. Despite these challenges, I believe that working within all of these different mediums and concepts has provided me with new insight into new ways of making and considering my intent within the studio as well as the institutional spaces I occupy. I think it's also important to note that the ideas and work within *Do you wanna go dancing?* is in itself a work in progress, and by no means is this thesis an answer or conclusion.

Fragments, Vulnerability

There can be a deep sense of pain and betrayal whenever a fired ceramic object comes out of the kiln not whole and in pieces. The craft and time required to create these objects can aid in this emotional attachment, and it can be argued that there is an emphasis in the value of a finely crafted object within institutions. These educational institutions include and are not limited to museums, universities, workshops, community studios, or histories. An example of a nicely packaged final product in ceramics is seen in historical mending techniques such as *Kintsugi*, the Japanese repair technique which celebrates breakage as part of an object's history.⁵ The cracks are typically repaired with gold or other metallic powder, which elevates the break and history of the object both in terms of aesthetics and value. While this aesthetic method is poetic and has its place in ceramic history, I find it to be frustrating that it has become canon whenever talking about solutions to fragmented or broken ceramic objects. I am curious if there are other methods or processes of mending that can aid in the visual consideration of something broken, and what that means to the maker along with the viewer.

Almost all of the flat ceramic pieces I made for this exhibition cracked or fell apart during the process of making. There was a lot of problem solving involved in this process, along with a lot of restructuring to the way I approached and thought about the material. It made me release any sense of deep attachment and expectation of what the piece should look like, and instead focus on what is happening in the moment. This became very important because it made me reconsider the baggage I carried from my traditional ceramic education: Why do we care so much about finely crafted objects? Why is there so much emphasis on the seamless and slick? Not to say that these are negatives in a final product, but they are still questions that I consider

⁵ Richman-Abdou, Kelly. "Kintsugi: The Centuries-Old Art of Repairing Broken Pottery with Gold." *My Modern Met*, September 9, 2019. <https://mymodernmet.com/kintsugi-kintsukuroi/>. Date accessed: 3/21/2020.

when in the studio or viewing art. Since I had all of these broken pieces, the next step was to figure out how to incorporate the fragments with photography and mark making.

I thought a lot about the comparison of the composer Schumann to Barthes in the introduction of *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*, which writes that the composer's most exciting work comes from the eccentric fragments that seem to lack an argument as well as defy the traditional and gender-binary rules of classical music⁶. These fragments are what made me reconsider what composers and writers could be considered "queer" in their approach towards their practice, but also what I could literally do with these fragments within my own work. How could I attempt to answer the questions I posed earlier about finely crafted objects and these fragments? Especially since I am still decorating and making these fragments as beautiful as a piece that did not break. The fragments and their process of becoming also reflects how intimacy and vulnerability has become increasingly important for me, both in the way that intimacy operates for individuals, but also in its reception and vulnerability to exposure. The intimate relationships I am in also had an influence on the way that I approached my studio practice and how I orient my thoughts and desires.

⁶ Barthes, Roland. *A Lover's Discourse: Fragments*. New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 2010.

Locating Oneself

As mentioned before, *Queer Phenomenology* lays out a foundation for how I analyze orientation and my positionality as a queer transnational artist, as well as how that structures my thought process within the studio and during installation. Within my own experience from a family of migrants (a migrant subject⁷) I have always thought about how I orient and inhabit spaces. I have never truly felt at home in one place, I am always either “too White” or “too Asian” depending on who I am with, and I have not felt any connection to the cultural history and legacies of my Korean and European ancestry. This disconnection extends to the geographic locations that I have lived in, the definition of “home” is mercurial, it changes depending on where I live. This liminality is addressed within the writings of Homi Bhabha:

We find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction, in the ‘beyond’: an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the words *au-dela* - here and there, on all sides, *fort/da*, hither and thither, back and forth.⁸

This quote also addresses the idea of disorientation and disturbance of direction, and I believe that relates to acts of resistance against normativity and colonial histories. I think that my existence as a mixed-race or *hybrid* is one example of disorientation in relation to identity. I also believe that the way I approach making and reconsidering ceramics and other materials to relate to this concept. I hesitate with using the term hybridity to describe my identity because of its indexical and oppressive history of capturing and collecting the identities of those who are non-white. However, the term still embodies the fragmented and complex identities and lived

⁷ Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007. p. 10

⁸ Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

experience that go beyond normative definitions of race, sexuality, and gender⁹. I think that the term hybrid can be used as a resistance to normativity by still existing with it. The in-betweenness that I have experienced is one that I want to visualize within my work because it can show those who are unaware of the possibilities of existing within a gray area the potentiality of non-normative thinking.

I believe that the terms “queer” and “queerness” can be difficult to understand and desired to be pinned down, especially with the uninformed, popular circulation of these words within social media as well as in its emergence in identity politics both within and outside of institutional spaces. I define “queer” here as a spatial term (as with orientation): a state of being out of place and disoriented in the landscape of white heteronormativity. I think that being queer is not about finding a singular answer or one’s “true self” in regards to identity, but rather a process of residing in off-center spaces and of remaining lost, which is the best way to potentially reach new worlds of possibility. Sara Ahmed writes about resistance to normativity as perversion, another spatial term used within queer theory defined as the willful determination to counter or go against orthodoxy, but also to what is wayward and thus “*turned away* from what is right, good and proper”¹⁰. Also, in relation to a migrant identity and making work, negotiating the intersections of race, sexuality, and migration in multiple geographic locations allow for even more potentiality in making work and understanding its relationship to culture and cultural production. I relate this concept to my own practice in how I do not use materials in a “traditional” way. As touched upon previously, my art education has been primarily focused on the emphasis of ceramics and how that has informed my understanding of how hand-made

⁹ Muñoz, José Esteban. *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015, 32.

¹⁰ Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007, 78.

objects interact with human bodies and space. I am not claiming to be a student who is “queering” ceramics or photography, but I believe that by operating outside of traditional methods of making and presentation, as well as using my personal experience within my studio practice, I am able to better understand what disorientation and disidentification within space means when posed with and against legacies established by institutions. Gopinath states in *Unruly Visions*: “It is in these practices that we can locate different imaginings of queer, racialized, migrant desire and sociality that refuse and refute the lures of recognition, inclusion, and legitimacy that frame conventional articulations of success and ‘making it.’”¹¹ I think that being more open to expanding conversations within institutions, specifically ones such as ceramics, is very important for the future of the field and the awareness of the potential of considering what exists outside of the normative. I believe this is very important for the future of the field as well as in how we approach complex subjects such as identity or considering audience and intent.

Work related to locating oneself (otherwise known as the navigation of gray areas) within identity and art practice are present in the works of Rachel de Joode and Jennie Jieun Lee. Rachel de Joode’s inhibited integration of photography, ceramics, and installation has been a source of inspiration for me. She focuses intensively on mark making and taking detailed photographs of these marks. Zoomed in, rich, lively colors and texture from paint and other tactile materials are cut out into abstract shapes and mounted onto wood or foam. These strange, flat objects are then either suspended on ceramic wall hooks as well as wood or steel rods. They are strange to look at and some are close to the scale of a human body, eliciting somewhat of an empathetic response. Ceramics here imitate the squishy and bodily feeling that the material and

¹¹ Gopinath, Gayatri. *Unruly Visions: the Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, 61.

color palette has, all of the parts come together within the exhibition space to create an immersive environment (figure 1). On the other hand, Jennie Jieun Lee primarily uses painting in addition to ceramics in the form of busts and glazed scraps, to create luscious and densely colored paintings and sculptures. Her ceramic busts are highly decorated with marks from her hand and tools, and the glaze covers the surface like candy. The pink and reds on the surface paired with the human bust could potentially give off a very violent impression, rather, her ceramic busts read as elegant and a lot like three dimensional paintings (figure 2). I am very drawn to the mark-making she does on these figures, and how this translates into her current paintings (figure 3). The collage of all of these elements creates a two dimensional surface that is visually enticing and alludes to her interest in the perception of facial recognition— the abstraction of the shapes and colors create a visual tension that makes the eyes dance. As I continue my studio practice I want to find new ways of collaging or assembling disparate parts of ceramics, photography, and mark making together. Not only does it engage with all of my interests in material, I believe it continues to expand upon the idea of locating oneself and disidentifying within gray areas.

Distance

The distance I am interested in visualizing is again informed by what Gopinath refers to as Queer diasporic aesthetics. These aesthetic practices of a queer diaspora negotiate a potential imaginary of what space and time mean¹². Both spatial and temporal categories are rooted within queer theory: it challenges normative and historically patriarchal history of what diaspora and nation means, and how we orient ourselves with looking back at that history. I believe this is very important not just within a studio practice, but also in how we approach art education. In order to better locate oneself within space(s), Ahmed refers to the concept of “orientation devices”¹³ as objects or tools to orient oneself. She uses the example of the table as an orientation device for herself as a writer, as well as for philosophers. Not only does the table act as a physical orientation device that can literally direct you within a hypothetically darkened but familiar room, but it is also conceptually related to the possibility of using the table as a known object that reorients oneself within new and/or unknown spaces. Orientation devices are also meant to direct away from the normative, and to open up the consideration of what non-normative possibilities exist. I believe that these orientation devices can exist in many different forms, and within my thesis exhibition these have manifested themselves in forms of frames, tiles, and viewfinders that look at or reflect. This type of physical distance references the idea of using the gallery space as one where the viewer cannot necessarily touch the orientation devices, but rather look and engage with their bodies.

In terms of contemporary art I have admired, appreciated, and been informed by the work of Felix Gonzalez Torres, Nairy Baghramian, and Julia Phillips for quite some time now; this is especially true in their ability to scrutinize political and social systems as well as ask questions

¹² Gopinath, Gayatri. *Unruly Visions: the Aesthetic Practices of Queer Diaspora*. Durham: Duke University Press, 6.

¹³ Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

regarding context and production within contemporary art practices. These works also engage with a sort of distance, within physical space, through objects, and also conceptually. I would argue that Felix Gonzalez Torres relational and minimal sculptures and images of intimate locations are orientation devices within themselves. They suggest a way to look away from the normative, and to consider what queer nuance exists within those spaces through a pile of candy, string of light bulbs, or an image of the impression of heads on a pair of pillows (among other conceptual ideas including ephemerality and consumption). Nairy Baghramian's work uses a variety of industrial materials that deconstruct the human body and combine this deconstruction with language and aesthetic choices used within design or history. There are abstracted, lumpy, and shiny bodily forms that are suspended from wires or help within cavities of other sculptures. They are simultaneously fragile but strong in their presence within the exhibition space (figure 4). Baghramian's work plays with the idea of distance with the tension of material, fragility, and strength of the sculptures themselves. To end the references of contemporary artists utilizing the concept of distance is Julia Phillips, whose erotic, politically-charged, and mostly minimal ceramic work has been a constant influence on me. I am particularly drawn to the *Witness I-III* series (figure 5) due to the audience interaction as well as the deeper meaning behind the suspended ceramic forms. The forms are a literal reference to the human body: the partial construction and open-view of the head, neck, and shoulders, as well as a pair of lungs. The area where the mouth would be is a microphone in which a viewer can shout into, only to have their voice reverberated and distorted back. This possibility of sound is only enhanced by the floor which is covered in gravel, causing the space to generate noise as you move around. The lungs directly correlate to the notion that they are the source of the voice and of enunciation. Everything Julia Phillips does also has a purposeful reference to issues in identity and power

structures, and within *Witness I-III* they are able to touch on the idea of testimony and articulation. Who is the enunciator and who has enunciated, and what is their role within this relationship? There is so much to consider here in regards to power structures and theory, but Julia Phillips is able to encapsulate these concepts into three tightly packed ceramic figures within a space with gravel.

Events, Looking

Photography as a medium has a problematic history of oppression through archives that were meant to document and separate those that are not white. It also has the potential to be an affective tool that can highlight the existence of identities that operate outside of the normative mainstream. Within my own work I am interested in how images can become haptic in their perception, this is done through the aforementioned use of ceramic objects paired with images. Tina Campt refers to the haptic qualities of images through comparing it with quietness. The haptic encounter of a photograph, or listening to an image¹⁴, involves the awareness of our senses to the affective frequencies that a photograph can register. This reconsideration of how to view an image relates back to the considering of queer diasporic aesthetics as it makes us rethink how and why we look at image the way we do. Another way to think about this way of viewing is reiterated in Barthe's *Camera Lucida*, in which he writes about the *punctum* and *studium*. The *punctum* is the prickle one feels when looking at an image and a specific detail catches their attention. Whereas the *studium* is the everyday action of looking at an image, we encounter this whenever we view an image¹⁵. I want to continue to use photographs that engage with the *punctum* as well as the quiet that Campt talks about in her book. I think that considering this new way of looking is applied to both the way I think about taking photographs as well as how I install work. I want to engage in a new way of thinking about how images play a role in directing and orienting viewers within space. I call the moments of viewing photographs, images, or objects within an exhibition, as well as the action of photographing or being photographed as events. It involves the act of stopping, looking, and consideration of intent.

¹⁴ Campt, Tina Marie. *Listening to Images*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

¹⁵ Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. New York: Hill and Wang, 1980.

“Looking” itself is a loaded term in contemporary gay culture, especially within the use of dating apps such as Grindr and Scruff, just to name a few. There is a strange sense of curiosity and voyeurism, impressions of conquest and dominance, as well as the fear of intimacy and vulnerability— or lack thereof. However, looking itself is also a formal action used within literally looking at visual art, which can also be argued to involve underlying tones of conquest and dominance (also very applicable to gay culture). The act of looking is something that I find both fascinating and terrifying, both related closely to previous concepts of vulnerability and intimacy, as well as encountering the *punctum* and the *studium*. The artist Wolfgang Tilmann’s engages with the concepts of looking, as well as vulnerability, in his extensive photographic practice. He focuses not only on intimate and exposed subject matter, the way he installs the photographs can be considered non-traditional (figure 6). Photographs hang off of binder clips and no frame, while others are nicely framed, and nothing is measured to be eye-leveled or traditionally centered on the wall. They all read as an expansive, collaged series of photographs that encapsulate the exhibition space and make the viewer consider the sensual and conceptual nuance that is within the photographs themselves, as well as the specific way they are arranged.

A Dance

With all of the ideas of other artists, as well as the concepts of fragments, intimacy, vulnerability, locating identity, distance, events, and looking in mind, it has been an internal battle with how to create a cohesive exhibition (I feel my mind dancing at every moment). The exhibition *Do you wanna go dancing?* begins with a statement and a silk sheet. The statement is ceramic, exactly 8.5” x 11”, meant to imitate a standard sheet of printer paper. The edges and surface have been torn, bent, and pinched, the marks adorned by a glazed and flesh-like color palette repeated throughout the exhibition (figure 7). The text on the statement reads:

Do you wanna go dancing?
(this isn't a question I ask out loud)

I've been trying to look for answer within my rather than through others—
to orient myself in a direction that I can follow with confidence.

I often dance alone, and almost always in my head.
Do you know what I'm dancing to?
(i don't think you'd like it)

Touching picks up where language left off,
If there's a heaven I think it would probably look and feel like this.

(note to self)
The space in between things is not emptiness,
It is what keeps everything together.

The text that I wrote is inspired by Vietnamese-American poet Ocean Vuong's writings, as well as the considerations and ideas I had behind disidentifications and queer phenomenology. I wanted to begin the exhibition with this statement to prime the viewer to consider my intent behind the title and the exhibition. To the right of the statement is a silk sheet, with images of my bedsheets and my bare back printed in a grid formation, with my back as the main photograph on top. It is draped in a manner to accentuate the folds and flesh tone colors of my back, as well as mimic the bed sheets in the grids (figure 8). As mentioned with the statement, the sheet is first in the exhibition to hopefully prime the viewer by making them look at a gridded and squared

image that is also folded within itself. Among the beginning of the exhibition is also a ceramic box sculpture with a reflective bowl mounted on top. The bowl contains a digitally printed image of my skin, which sits in the mirrored interior and creates a pink halo. The box itself is covered in marks and negative space, except for two extensions in the back that are the negative space of my grip (figure 9). A hole is located about two feet up from the ground on one of the box surfaces, and the viewer is able to kneel and look through the hole. The hole is a nod towards a gloryhole, and inside is an image of my legs as well as a juicy golden appendage. The box itself represents more of a containment that reflects what I wrote about earlier in the introduction about my upbringing and struggle with identity, and sits at the beginning of the exhibition as the only object that has some form of vessel-like containment. To the right of the box, and the final part of the introduction of the exhibition is a large ceramic tile with a fragmented collage of my face and fingerprints covered in silver (figure 10). As with the gridded images on the silk sheet, I am interested in the act of looking and how it relates to contemporary culture and gridded images, as well as how to use ceramics in a more framed and photographic way.

The exhibition then opens up to a space that is filled with what I call viewfinders, as well as larger and small ceramic tiles and frames (figure 11). The viewfinders are derived from photographic viewfinders and tools, and are digitally and manually fabricated plywood pedestals that hold ceramic appendages. The forms of the pedestals were milled using a CNC machine in order to allow them to slot together and be in parts that aid in their mobility and are tied to the idea of fragmentation. Some of these viewfinders have reflective Mylar on them, meant to reflect on itself as well as the surrounding area. They specifically are installed in locations in which the viewer can stand and look around them in specific ways. With the idea of orientation in mind, I was curious as to how this could be done using these viewfinders and objects. The objects either

contain a reflective glaze that distorts the viewer's perception, or are open and able to be looked through— always at something else within the exhibition. An example of this is seen in figure 12, in which a viewfinder shaped like a pair of binoculars is looking at a wall of ceramic fragments and photographic images. The images on the wall are intimate images of my body, figure 13 shows an example of a close up image of my eye collaged with an image of an eyelash sitting on my skin. The image is zoomed and cropped, and I paired two ceramic shards with the image itself. The pairing of the image with the fragment comes after, and I do not directly know that the specific image will go with the shard, rather it is more of an intuitive process.

The smaller ceramic frames on the wall of the exhibition include photographic decals and marks that are meant to preserve my touch. The touch is highlighted with contrasting glaze and colors, and as mentioned before a lot of the frames are put back together in a method reminiscent of Kintsugi, without the gold (figure 14). The larger frames also embrace similar methods of mark making and framing of a photographic decal image. The larger frames are also highly reflective, in which the viewer is again distorted as they move in to view the image. The final piece that I put into the exhibition is a cast of my posterior into wood, and made into a stool/table like surface (figure 15). This piece was the hardest to work with, mostly due to the collaboration and navigation needed to accomplish the product, but also in its lack of definition. It is too large to be a stool, and even though it spins, the hardware is too flimsy to support a human body. It is also an ambiguous height that could read as a table, which could make the butt read as something that could be consumed, which is not my intention. The butt-stool sits in the middle of the exhibition space, able to be spun around and interacted with. This is something that I would like to work with more in the future, and pair it more with ceramic parts as well as photographs.

Conclusion (for now)

Making this body of work has been monumental to me and my growth as a human and artist. The concept of phenomenology, specifically the way that we experience one another as well as nuance, has become of particular interest for me. With this in mind, there are numerous possibilities about the work in *Do you wanna go dancing?* resonating with an audience, and by no means can I claim any definitive answers for these experiences. Being aware of space and ourselves is something that I find extreme importance in, and that is definitely something that I wanted to incorporate within the work. This is within the extremely personal approach to art making that I enact, as well as the intentionality of the merging of material and installation. As mentioned throughout this paper, I think it is very important to consider the ability to work with multiple materials and find alternative methods (not limited to: disrupting, dis/reorienting, resisting, finding oneself within, working with, being critical...) of approaching traditional ways of thinking and making. Fragments have become important in my practice and within the work as well— without the fragments and understanding of vulnerability I would not have been able to reach the point of sensitivity and ability to push against traditional ways of thinking within my practice, which then led to an exciting new way of making work.

As I continue my studio practice, I want to continue to explore how to document my touch into different ways of mark-making, and how that pairs with photographs and presentation within installation. I also would like to continue to hone my photography skills and work more with lighting and the contents of my photographs. The work with this exhibition is meant to communicate a lot of my desires visually and to unpack a lot of inner gut responses that I have had throughout graduate school. I know that I would like to play around more with the medium with painting as well, as the marks that I make, as well as the way I approach a form's surface, is

inherently very “painterly”. Conceptually (and physically in the studio), I have a lot to think about considering the use of negative space within my work, as well as how additive methods to making can relate back to my work and ideas. I also would like to expand upon what I have read and learned within *Queer Phenomenology* and push what I have accomplished in the viewfinders and other objects I have made for this exhibition, and to challenge what exactly orientation or queerness means and can do, especially when paired with visual art.

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Appendix: Figures



Figure 1: Rachel de Jooode, from *The Myths of the Marble*
<https://racheldejooode.com/work/the-myths-of-the-marble>



Figure 2: Jennie Jieun Lee, from *Busts*
<https://jenniejieunlee.com/busts>



Figure 3: Jennie Jieun Lee, *Poorly Wrapped Gift*, from *Paintings*
<https://jenniejieunlee.com/paintings>



Figure 4: Nairy Baghramian, *Scruff of the Neck* (UL 11, F), from Marian Goodman Gallery
<https://www.mariangoodman.com/content/feature/47/detail/artworks35931/>



Figure 5: Julia Phillips, *Witness I-III*

<http://www.juliaphillips.org/index.php/works/witness-i-iii/>

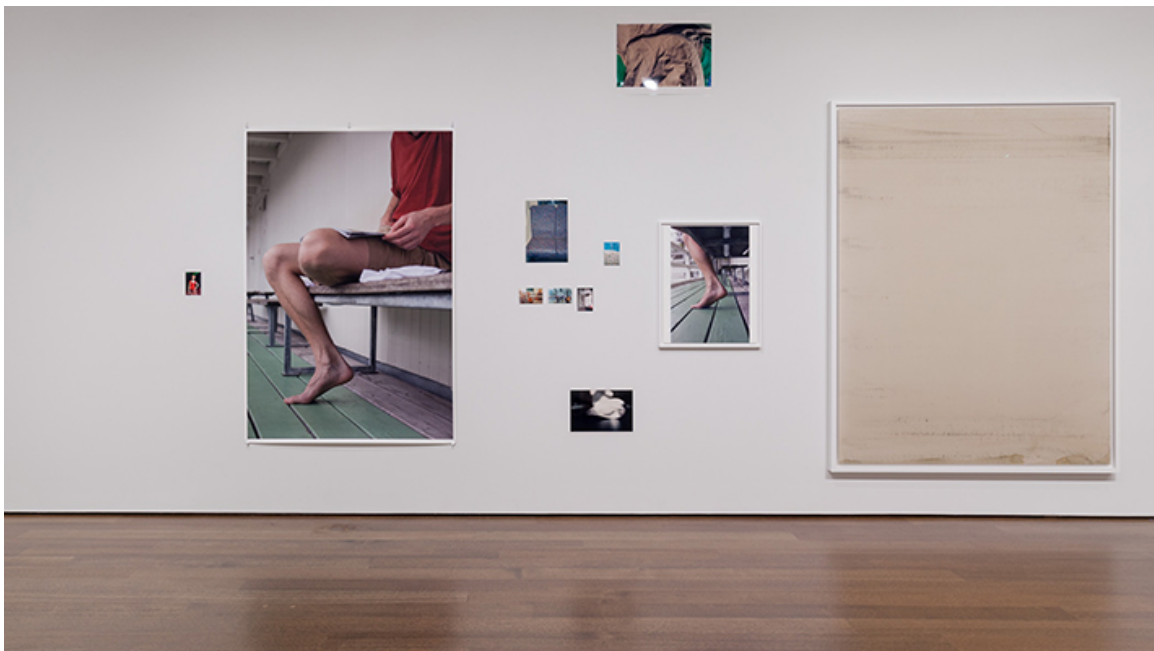


Figure 6: Wolfgang Tillmans, *Folding, Refraction, Touch—Installation for the Busch-Reisinger Museum*, 2013. <https://www.harvardartmuseums.org/article/a-conversation-with-wolfgang-tillmans>

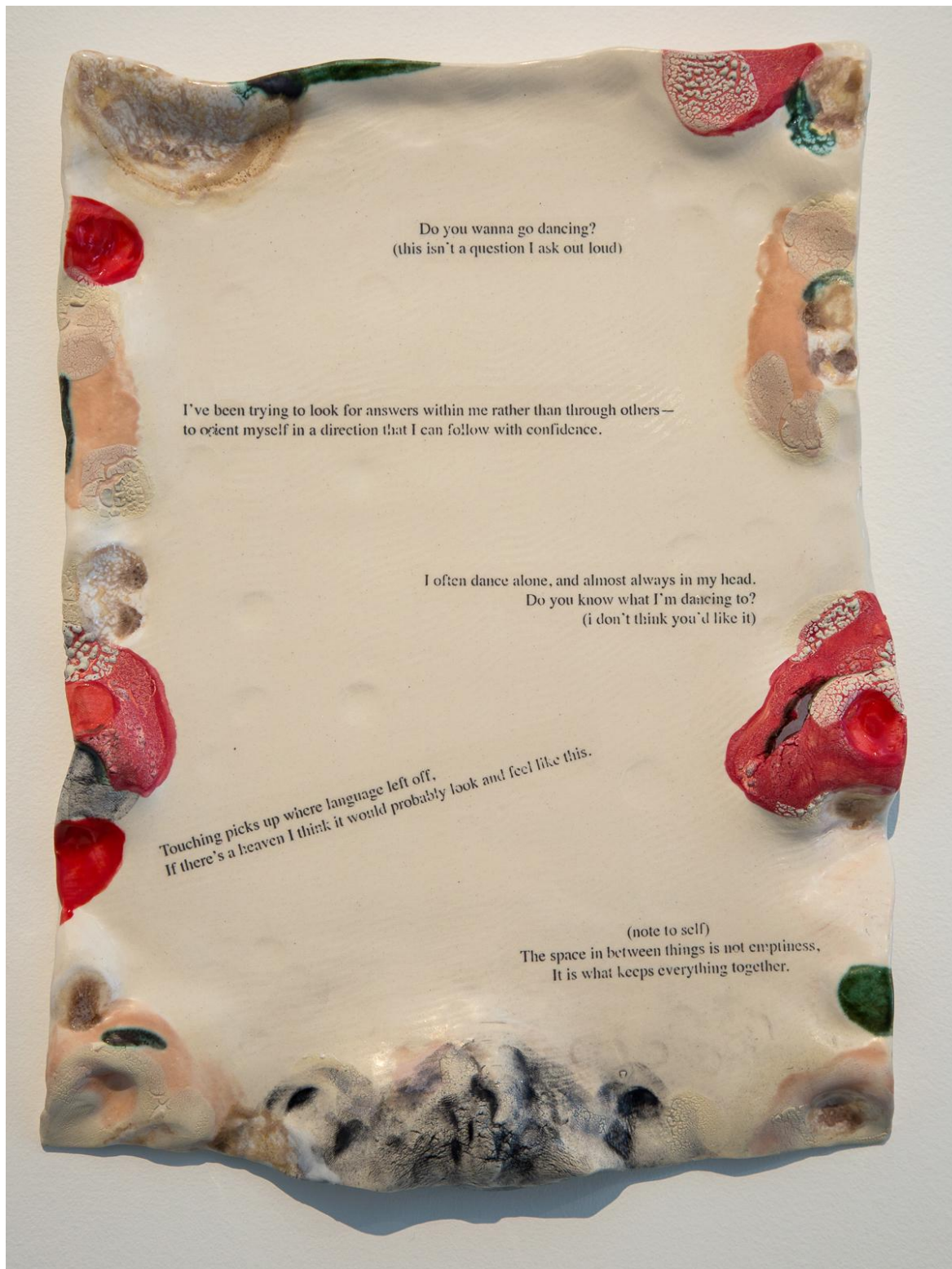


Figure 7: *Statement (for you)*, ceramics, photographic decal
Photo courtesy of artist



Figure 8: *Untitled (sheet)*, archival inkjet print on silk
Photo courtesy of artist



Figure 9: *Untitled (box)*, ceramics, archival inkjet print, photographic decal, plywood
Photo courtesy of artist



Figure 10: *What should i tell you?*, ceramic, photographic decal, polished silver
Photo courtesy of artist

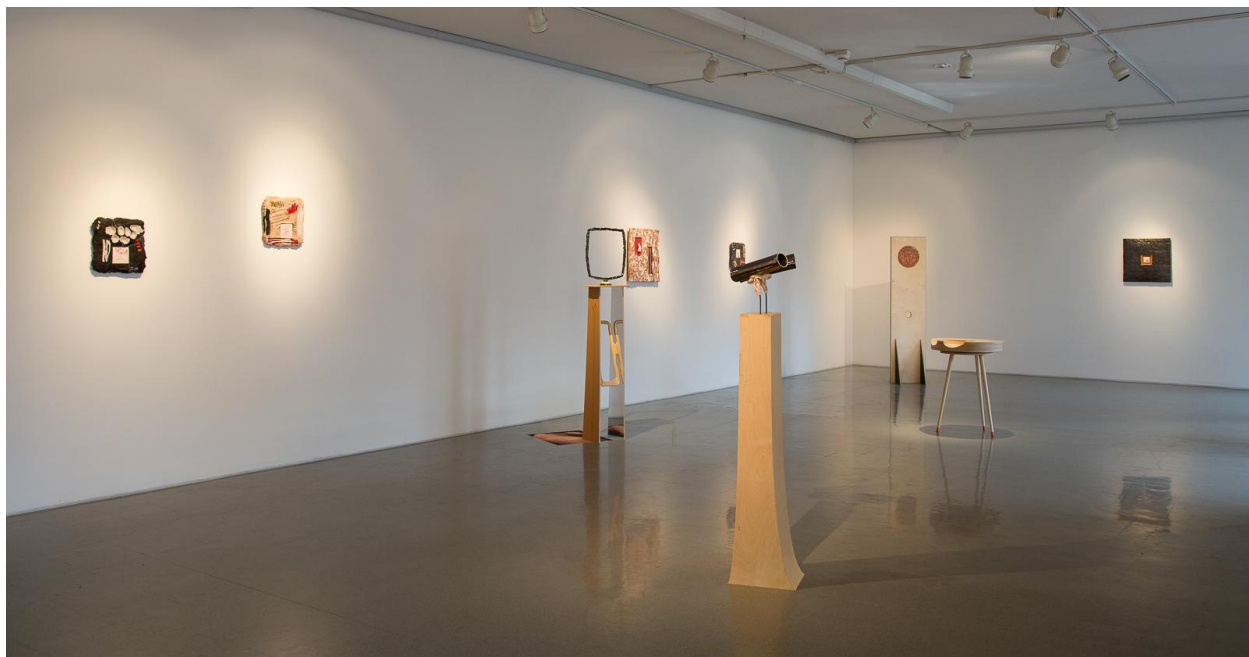


Figure 11: Installation view, *Do you wanna go dancing?*
Photo courtesy of artist

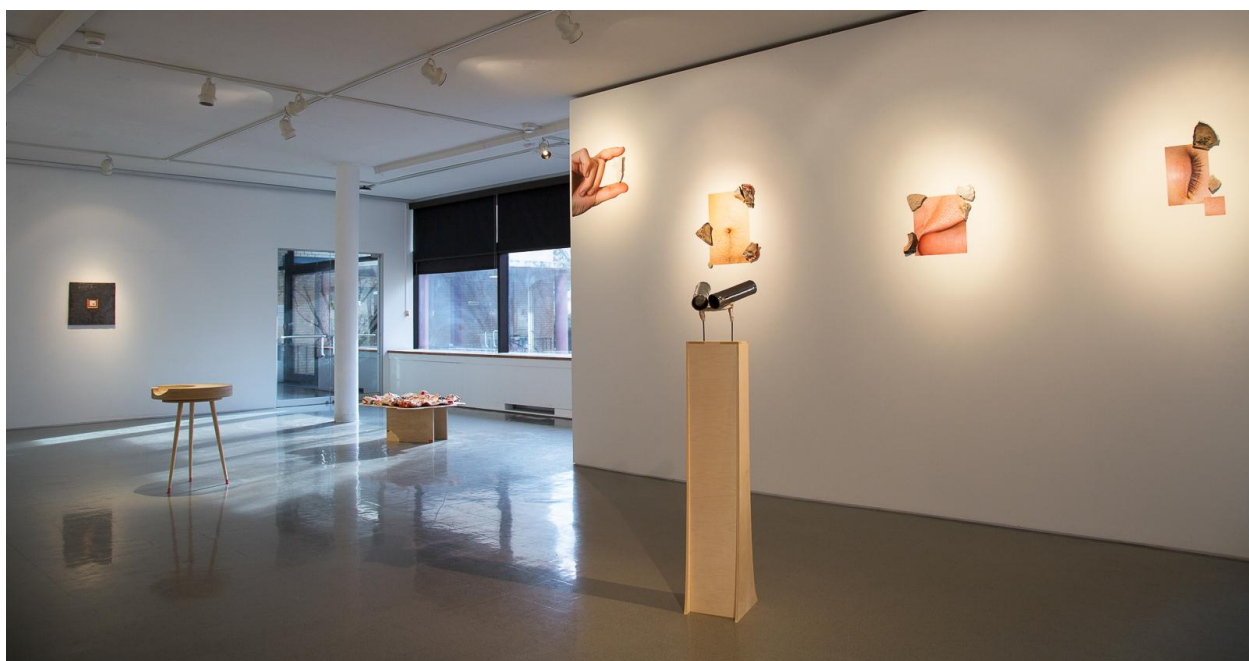


Figure 12: Installation view II, *Do you wanna go dancing?*
Photo courtesy of artist



Figure 13: detail image of *Viewfinder II and wall, (eyes wide shut)*, ceramic, archival inkjet print. Photo courtesy of artist



Figure 14: *A Feeling, Fleeting*, ceramic, photographic decal, gold luster
Photo courtesy of artist



Figure 15: *Untitled (butt stool?)*, CNC'd plywood, hardware
Photo courtesy of artist