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Perplexions: Perceptions, Plexi and Prose

Amy B. Nelson

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PERPLEXIONS: PERCEPTIONS, PLEXI AND PROSE

by

AMY NELSON

(Under the Direction of Jeff P. Garland)

ABSTRACT

An understanding of our world is unique to each individual and their experiences. While experiences are often shared, we all process them according to our own schema. Through exploration into the multiple facets of plexiglass, my work examines trauma, loss and its lasting effect on a person's memory of the past, present and perception of the future. These experiences can cause an abrupt shift in personal schema and reshape one's perception of the world. Through the combination of visual and linguistic stimuli, my trauma-informed work can be a catalyst for my viewers to discuss what they are experiencing and why. This can encourage self-reflection, leading to a better understanding of one another and our varying perspectives.

INDEX WORDS: Plexiglass, Acrylic sheet, Plastic, Monofilament, Plastic, Materiality, Transparency, Installation, Sculpture, Grief, Grieving, Perceptions, Perspective, Schema

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by

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS

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Electronic Version Approved:
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DEDICATION

In loving memory of Howard Nelson, Michael Nelson, Robert McDonald, Margret Nelson and Mary Stewart.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Through manipulating and layering transparent plexiglass, my work explores trauma, loss and its lasting effect on a person's memory of the past, present and their perception of the future. These types of experiences shape our understanding of the world around us. This idea of the brain's neural plasticity, “the ability of the nervous system to change in response to experience or environmental stimulation,” is the nucleus for my ideas .(APA Dictionary While we may share most of life’s experiences with others, we are constantly adjusting and fitting life moments into our own personal schema, the data organization systems within our brains that shape our understanding of the world around us. (APA Dictionary) In *A Model of Mourning: Change in Schemas of Self and Other*, Mardi J. Horowitz outlines the grieving process and discusses the effects of each stage of the mourning process. Horowitz describes a mental reshuffling that happens after trauma and loss that alter how we perceive the world after the event and the internal responses that coincide with it. (Horowitz) Humans tend to assume their beliefs, morals and memories are rigid and strong, but in reality, they are quite pliable and subject to change given the right circumstances. This is why there are often differing perspectives on the significance of historical events or why eyewitness accounts of the same event can be contradictory. Each individual person comes to an event with their unique lens, and they will remember and recall the moment through the same lens. Why do we see what we see?

This contradictory recollection is something the materiality of my work enhances. The qualities of the mixed media used in my work possess a richness that contributes to the contextual meaning of each piece. Language and plexiglass are my primary materials for their innate mirroring of the self in their qualities. Through this combination of visual and linguistic stimuli, my

work can be a catalyst for my viewers to discuss what they are seeing and why. This can encourage self-reflection, lead to a better understanding of one another and our varying perspectives.

CHAPTER 2

INTENT: EXPERIENCES

Humans share most of their experiences, some with family and friends and others with strangers in passing. Experiences themselves are not unique. However, the way in which we process and apply significance to the events internally varies person to person. In a family dynamic, there are many shared experiences. Your applied significance to a shared memory may be more than any other family member, and they might not even remember it happening. With strangers, one will likely never hear how they describe the shared experience, but their retellings will not match up. They will each be retelling from their own perspective. A person might tell a story of poor customer service at a store, and the service worker might describe the same event as having to deal with an unreasonable customer in their retelling. Global wars and conflicts are another great example of this. Each country involved will recount the war in their history books in the perspective of how it affected them and their people. No matter what parts of life are shared, no two worldviews or perceptions will ever match completely.

We develop these perceptions as we are presented with new information. When someone's understanding of the world is challenged, they have to account for it. Perhaps, the new information will act as confirmation bias and solidify already held beliefs. (APA Dictionary) On the other hand, when information is extremely contradictory to what we know, we will need to assess our beliefs and decide what to do with the new information. Much like the glare on a sheet of plexiglass over a photo, once we notice it, we have to either live with it or make a change if it is too bothersome. Death and traumatic events are dealt with in similar ways. We are forced to make sense of what has happened. In a *Model of Mourning*, Mardi Horowitz discusses how the initial news of death affects personal schema:

The term 'working model' applies to a transient schema derived from both perception and enduring schemas. It is based heavily on immediate perceptions of external reality, although schemas organize (and potentially distort) that perception. An enduring schema of a role relationship model is less situationally dependent. It is activated by inner wishes. *Thus we may infer that the mind unconsciously compares the working role-relationship model and the enduring role-relationship model. If they do not match, intense emotions may arise, serving to motivate either plans for correcting the mismatch or defensive avoidance to reduce recognition of it.* (Horowitz)

Losing someone close to us or living through a traumatic event impacts our perception of its reality. It divides time into two: before the event occurs and after it. These events take time to process as it is an overwhelming load of new information as Horowitz describes:

Death of a loved one leads to too many implications to fully process in a short time. The mind unconsciously retains important memories for later processing. After a traumatic event the mind codes these memories not only in the computational unconscious, but also in a warded off dynamic unconscious. (Horowitz)

Our brain defensively documents everything. The information lingers inside your brain and resurfaces as you go through the grieving process. As you seek out a new normal in the time after the event, you form a new schema that includes the experience. A new lens is created for us to filter the past, present and future through.

CHAPTER 3

PROCESS: MATERIALS

In my work, my plexiglass is used throughout and becomes a visual representation of this altered lens we view our past and present through. Plexiglass is my primary material due to its innate mirroring of self. It is resilient yet breakable; transparent and rigid yet plastic and distorting at times. Like humans, plexiglass can be easily manipulated. It can be transparent or opaque. It is familiar and all around us but usually goes unnoticed. Through my layering and manipulation, the transparent plexiglass causes the viewer's field of vision to be distorted, functioning as invisible layers of experiences that accumulate on a person's schema.



Figure 1: Nelson, Amy "Untitled" Oil on layered Plexiglass, Paper pulp

Plexiglass' ability to alter viewer perception has always been present in my work. My early painted plexiglass pieces (Figure 1) were using it as a substrate and for its ability to create deep perceived space within a shadow box. Spaced sheets of plexiglass were set at different intervals to create depth within the environment created in my shadow boxes. This combination of painting techniques and spacing altered the viewer's perspective but in a way that focused primarily on the subject without considering its materiality.

Plexiglass' ability to affect our perceptions while being translucent may be the most exciting thing about it. My early work took away transparency by painting on top of the plexiglass. It was being exploited for its invisibility in the same way it is in its traditional roles. This material often gets relegated to the role of protective layer or for its "invisibility." It covers works of art, photos or documents. It is a germ barrier at service counters. It is meant to exist in an in-between space of existence without distracting.

In my current body of work, this quality is celebrated. Plexiglass is used for the impact its transparency has on the space around it. Whether it is through dying, etching or molding, the plexiglass maintains its transparency. It becomes a tangible representation of human experiences. We go out into the world, learn and grow. We develop beliefs and biases based on our experiences. The experiences we have built up like invisible layers and affect our perceptions in both obvious and sometimes unapparent ways. Plexiglass plays a similar role in my work. It is skewing what is seen and understood both in subtle and overt ways.

The majority of my work consists of stitching the plexiglass together using monofilament. Sewing or stitching are mending processes for clothes or for humans. In both cases, they are used to put pieces together, create something new or heal. In my work, the technique is used for the same reasons. It is connecting fragments to create a new whole.

Like plexiglass, the monofilament or fishing line I use to stitch my pieces together is traditionally heralded for its invisibility. When used in actual fishing, the line must be hidden, so the fish doesn't see it, while also strong enough to maintain contact between the fish and your rod. Our neural connections function similarly. They are invisible, but they need to be there for us to function and make sense of day-to-day life. The brain is constantly connecting knowledge and experience, filling in memory gaps and sorting out where new information fits. In my work,

monofilament connects pieces of plexiglass, forming physical pathways between data sets and the information that gets filled in when we cannot recollect the complete memory.

To stimulate the connections my viewers are making, my work is titled using limited words that can have a variety of connotations or correlations with the work. Semantics allow words to have multiple meanings and their combination with other words can create even more possibilities. This open-ended titling loosely directs my viewer while allowing them to use their own memories and experiences to determine what the words mean in relation to what they are viewing. This then allows my titles to become yet another layer through which my viewers now must process the visual stimuli.

Placement and lighting contribute to the interpretation of my work. When considering placement, I consider how the viewer will come to it. For example, in *Episodic* and *Stalactite*, the placement of them on the wall alludes to the moments when you recall a memory at an odd time. It just pops up in an unexpected way. Lighting in my work is either an internal or external component. This choice is made depending on how I want the light to function in each piece. External lighting is used to create glares and shadows that add to the manipulation of the viewer's ability to distinguish the physical object from the space. Internal lighting is used to draw the viewer in, skew perception and create shadows within the work instead of the space around it.

CHAPTER 4

THEORY

Even where plexiglass is traditionally used in everyday life and is supposed to be invisible, it is still distorting our perceptions. According to the American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology, perceptions are defined as:

The process or result of becoming aware of objects, relationships, and events by means of the senses, which includes such activities as recognizing, observing, and discriminating. These activities enable organisms to organize and interpret the stimuli received into meaningful knowledge and to act in a coordinated manner. (APA Dictionary)

A glare on the plexiglass covering a photo is altering our perception of the photo. The muffled voices of people on either side of a plexiglass divide at a service counter is distorting our perception of the service worker's voice. For a material heralded for its invisibility, plexiglass is always making itself known through the distortion of our senses.

One of the more popular artists to use plexiglass, Donald Judd, used it for its intrinsic qualities. In an interview with John Coplans he speaks about his use of plexiglass in a way that implies he used it for its invisibility, he stated:

The use of plexiglass exposes the interior, so the volume is opened up... It's fairly logical to open it up so the interior can be viewed. It makes it less mysterious, less ambiguous.
(Coplans)



Figure 2: Judd, Donald “Untitled, 1966” Stainless steel and amber plexiglass (Judd)

Even though Judd was intending to make his interior spaces seen using plexiglass and therefore less ambiguous, he really has done the opposite. For example, in his work “Untitled, 1966,” (Figure 2) he used a tinted plexiglass. This choice has altered the reality of that interior space, creating more ambiguity because the viewer assumes that they know the interior of that space. However, they are understanding it through a filter. In one of Judd’s more popular writings, *Specific Objects*, he writes about the new work of the minimalists describing what it is doing differently from past artworks:

Three dimensions are real space. That gets rid of the problem of illusionism and of literal space, space in and around marks and colors – which is riddance of one of the salient and most objectionable relics of European art. (Judd)

His choice to use tinted, transparent plexiglass in his work creates an illusion. He created a physical space in and around his mark; the tinted plexiglass being that mark. We do not often recognize our

perceptions or what is affecting them. Judd too missed what his materials really were doing to our perceptions of the space within the cubes.

My work understands this aspect of the material that was overlooked by Judd. In “Specific Objects,” he writes about the nature of industrial materials. That they are what they are. You cannot change their nature (Judd). However, the human component of producing plexiglass is forgotten. Plexiglass is man-made. At some point, someone added color to the plexiglass to get the various colors. Through my personal dying techniques, I am able to alter the color of the plexiglass without layering onto the surface. Its “nature,” in Juddian terms, is still intact.

Judd chose to leave his works untitled like many artists choose to do. Titles and their role in visual art has been an area of contention for some time. My work relies heavily on associations made between language and visual stimuli. “The Influence of Titles on How Paintings Are Seen” by Margery B. Franklin, Robert C. Becklen and Charlotte L. Doyle performed a study to find out how titles would affect interpretation of art works. They asked three main questions:

First, do titles affect the interpretive reading of paintings, as reflected in how images with different titles are described by participants? Second, do titles affect the spatial organization of images, as reflected in patterns of pointing? Third, are there identifiably different ways in which image and title are brought into relationship? (Franklin)

They found that the interpretation of images was different based on title and that there were a variety of ways the title was correlated based on the individual viewing them. The titles did not seem to alter how the viewer’s eyes moved around the painting. This means that written language and composition tactics work hand in hand in visual art.

In my own work, my titles act as a symbolic signifier, something that refers to certain meanings or definitions agreed upon in a culture. In regards to my titles, American English text that refers to the various definitions associated with the word. The physical works shift from symbolic signifiers, iconic signifiers, look like what they signify, and sometimes indexical signifiers, contain traces of the signified. The viewer is then able to conclude what is being signified when the piece is read as a whole. The various ways a person might correlate the title and work leads to multiple interpretations bringing awareness to our differing perspectives.

The way in which I combine my work and title aligns with Guy Debord's ideas in his essay *Methods of Detournement*. In his essay, he talks about the ways in which detournement can be achieved. Detournement is about creating new relationships and meaning when you combine two elements that are not clearly related. He focuses on the use of language and titles in combination with images and objects to create situations that reframe understanding (Debord). The act of viewing, moving through and around my work allows my viewers to experience the work and form their understanding of the pieces.

CHAPTER 5

THE WORK

Fleeting Wisps (Figure 3) is the epitome of my intentions, materiality, and theory. It addresses the overwhelming nature of illness and eventual loss in the present and its effects on the recollection of associated memories. The loss becomes the lens you look back on the past with. In this piece, I created a large-scale portrait of my brother taken well into his illness. The photo was etched on transparent plexiglass squares then hand-dyed to create a colored image. The squares are connected with monofilament in a way that allows them to twist and turn, obscuring the portrait and not allowing it to be whole again. The portrait acts as a curtain blocking the view of the objects behind it.

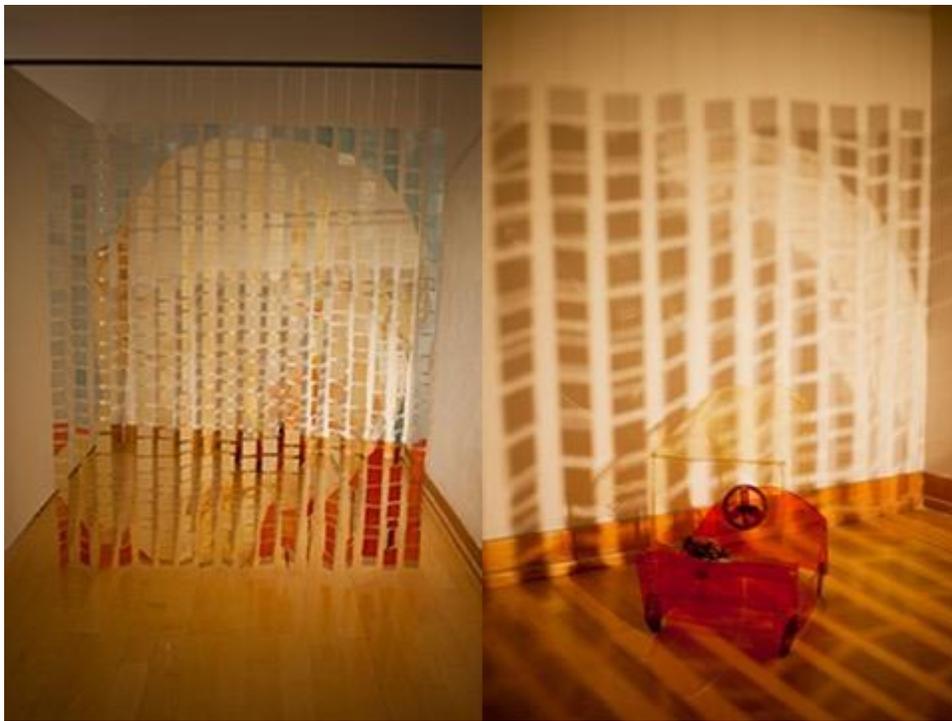


Figure 3: Nelson, Amy "Fleeting Wisps" Hand-dyed Plexiglass, Monofilament, Photographs

Behind the portrait is a red and yellow Little Tykes car made of transparent plexiglass. It is very translucent and becomes a sketch of the memory of this toy car. In the trunk of the car is a

pair of binoculars made of plexiglass. Both objects are stitched together with monofilament to try to remake these objects from childhood. Along with the binoculars in the trunk are photos of my childhood. The photos are placed under the binoculars with the tiny end toward the images. The binoculars being a portal to look back. The portrait on the curtain is lightly coloring the space in which the objects sit, showing how loss can affect our recollections of the past, whether tangible photos or memories attached to objects. The placement of the piece in a space that does not allow the viewer to step back to take the whole thing in is to demonstrate how imposing loss is and how hard it can be to get perspective on grief. My viewers are able to feel the frustration of not being able to gain the view they would like of the portrait. The title, *Fleeting Wisps*, refers to our time on this earth, the longevity of memory, and the way in which we recollect memories. As my viewers experience the work and pass through the portrait, they get to experience the tinted space that is the lingering effect of the loss, and the objects that act as iconic and symbolic signifiers of children's toys and of a past time.



Figure 4: Nelson, Amy "Episodic" Plexiglass, Monofilament, Vinyl Print

Episodic (Figure 4) and *Stalactite* (Figure 5) deal with the lens that grief creates and the glare of death that affects it. The experience of viewing them is similar to how it feels when your new schema reassesses the past with the added knowledge of the loss. In *Episodic*, I was exploring episodic memories and how time distorts our retained information of our past, especially after losing someone. Drawing on my personal experiences, I was thinking about a specific time with my now deceased brother at a pizza place he took me to

when I was a teenager. I cannot remember all the details due to time, but I can recall sitting in the booth, the atmosphere and the fun. Now that he has passed, this moment is a cherished memory that pops up in my mind often even though I cannot recall it completely. To convey this lack of clarity and longing for the details to my viewer, I printed a photo of a restaurant booth on a translucent vinyl allowing light to pass through and almost illuminate it. The print is mounted on matte plexiglass that was cut into the shape of my brother's tumor, as cancer is what reframed the memory for myself and makes me wish I could remember more of it. Overtop of the print are transparent plexiglass laser cut to the shape of Acute Myeloid Leukemia cancer cells, which was what took my brother from me, and circular cutouts are taken from the cells as unobscured windows to the print. The pieces were then glued and stitched together with monofilament becoming a calloused shell obscuring the image behind it. The work was then formed and mounted in a low corner of the room, as if it were growing out of it. This was to represent it being stuck in my brain and popping up in my mind when I least expect it. Titling the work, *Episodic*, allowed viewers to use any of the multiple definitions of the word to understand what they were looking at. As my viewers look at my piece, the glare and layering of the plexiglass makes it difficult to see the photo acting like the lens of grief. The viewer gets to experience the same sensation of not quite being able to recall the fine details of a moment as they cannot see the fine details of the image behind the plexiglass.

In *Stalactite*, I was still incorporating memories of experiences with my brother but considering them specifically for their place. My brother lived in Chicago, Illinois, and we had many wonderful memories created there before he fell ill. However, this place is also where we had to watch him decline and endure the most painful treatments. While the three years of hospital stays were incredibly difficult, our family still created some amazing moments together in the hospital. In this work, Chicago served as the contextual place where the layering of these memories gradually rose to the foreground. To do this, I mounted photos of places or things that reminded me

of the good times with my brother before his illness. They were then mounted on a sheet of plexiglass laser cut into the skyline of Chicago. Fanned out over top of the prints are transparent plexiglass cut into the same skyline, etched with memories good and bad from our time in the hospital. Beneath the etched plexiglass are LEDs that illuminate the transparent pieces and add to the obscuring of the photos below. The LEDs represent that foregrounding of the painful memories while capturing the fleeting moments of beauty within them. The piece is then formed to be mounted where the wall meets the ceiling as if it were growing there. The placement and title, *Stalactite*, allude to the buildup of memory like calcium deposits in a cave. The end product creates a beauty people are drawn to, allowing them a moment to reflect on positive recollections experienced during personal loss



Figure 5: Nelson, Amy "Stalactite" Plexiglass, Photographs, LEDs

Derealization to Cohesion (Figure 6) was illustrating the seemingly new timeline you jump to after you experience loss or trauma. As you rebuild your new schema to understand the loss, you almost feel like a different person. To demonstrate this, I made identical puzzle pieces that can connect on all sides. I chose puzzle pieces as they are an easily recognized shape for my viewers to identify with and the ability to connect on all sides was to show the possibility of trauma and loss to happen at any moment in life. In the work, the puzzle pieces are connected into two paths that are separate but start off as identical forms. The difference being in the surface texture.

The bottom path is matte plexiglass and the top is more transparent. The bottom path breaks apart to join the transparent path above it, carrying its mattiness along with it. This was to show the memories of the time before the trauma or loss. The top path continues incorporating the mattiness until it becomes a solid piece without the breaks in the pieces to show the progression of grief. The lighting on the piece creates intense shadows that create even more “timelines” as people go through many experiences that create the distinct before and after. The title, *Derealization to Cohesion*, gives my viewers a direction as to interpretation of the work. Derealization is, “a state characterized by a diminished feeling of reality; that is, an alteration in the perception or cognitive characterization of external reality so that it seems strange or unreal (“This can’t be happening”), often due to trauma or stress.” (APA) Cohesion has multiple definitions that all allude to a uniting or coming together. The language used in the title describes much of what happens in the grieving process. The viewer can then apply a narrative to the arrangement of pieces on the wall.



Figure 6: Nelson, Amy "Derealization to Cohesion" Plexiglass

Anchored (Figure 7) and *Reconstructive* (Figure 8) both connect to the reframing of the past that happens after loss affects your schema. Importance is given to the mundane moments with

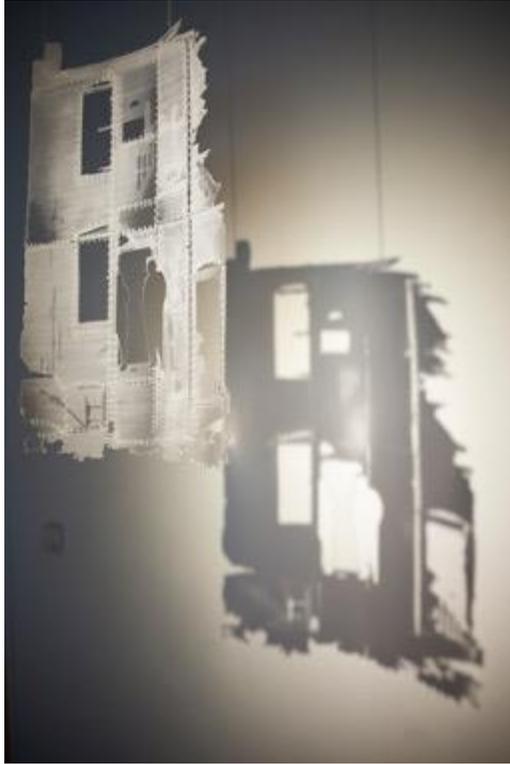
your loved one that might not have been appreciated before. *Anchored* is addressing those undocumented moments that are precious to you after loss that you want to hold onto, so you make sure to tie them to documented time and places. For me, I was specifically thinking about the night after my oldest sister's wedding. My brother was staying with me at my apartment, and when we got back from the wedding, we sat on my back porch and had our most in-depth conversation. It was the closest I had ever felt to truly knowing my brother. This was one of the last times we got to hang out just the two of us before he got sick and lost his ability to speak verbally. The interior portion of the piece is made of transparent plexiglass, stitched with monofilament to make cubes. The plexiglass is etched with photos from my sister's wedding and my apartment. The blue cubes allude to structure and foundation as they are the definitive documentation of our time spent together, but still transparent as they are documentation of snapshots of time. Photos themselves cannot always be clearly recalled.

The exterior of the piece is a laser etched photo of the back porch from my apartment broken and combined with hand etched pieces. The exterior is stitched together with monofilament. The obsessive stitching of the monofilament is used as a representation of that attempt to hold on to as much of the moment as I can. The exterior piece encompasses the interior and is to show the broken documentation of the memory and its connection to the documented memory. The piece is set up, so that the viewer can go inside the sculpture with the interior piece. This allows the viewer to experience the encompassing nature of the exterior memory. From the outside, the exterior is skewing the understanding of the interior while the interior is simultaneously tinting parts of the exterior. The title, *Anchored*, can refer to the way in which the two components interact with one another, the anchoring of memory to photo, the anchoring of memories in our brains. The lighting is exterior in this piece and meant to illuminate the exterior shell to highlight its preciousness. When my viewers come to the piece, they are pulled to it like I am drawn to this moment in time.



Figure 7: Nelson, Amy "Anchored" Plexiglass, Hand-dyed Plexiglass, Monofilament

Reconstructive is dealing with the same memory as *Anchoring*. However, in this piece, I am trying to create a documentation of us together on the porch. The piece consists of an etched photo of the back porch of my apartment that was cut into pieces and has been stitched together with monofilament. The monofilament is used to recreate the building. It is the transparent piece holding the memory together. The silhouettes of my brother and me are then cut out of the plexiglass on the porch. When the piece is lit, the absence of our forms from the plexiglass creates a shadowed outline of the figures. Even in the recreation of the moment, we are not present in the plexiglass or the shadows. The title of the piece alludes to the way in which the piece was made while also alluding to the way in which we reconstruct memory. When my viewer experiences the piece, the shadows created become the focal point over the sheet of plexiglass. They are giving importance to the shadow like I give importance to the shadow of this memory.



*Figure 8: Nelson, Amy "Reconstructive"
Plexiglass, Monofilament*



Figure 9: Nelson, Amy "Wistful Serenity" Hand-dyed Plexiglass, Monofilament, LEDs



*Figure 10: Nelson, Amy
"Wistful Serenity" Detail*

In *Wistful Serenity* (Figure 9 &10), I was thinking about the way in which time and loss affect our recollection of the past. That longing for even the memories that were not so great. Specifically, from my own experience, we went on a canoe trip for a family vacation one summer. While this sounds lovely, I think almost everyone got into an argument at some point during the trip trying to get our canoes to navigate down river. Tensions were definitely high, but looking back, with my brother gone, I would give anything to have another family argument about how to steer the canoe if we could all be together. This piece is a canoe. The sides are made out of dyed, transparent plexiglass that are stitched together with monofilament. The pieces are triangles that are meant to look like a quilt. The idea being that the edges are wrapping the memory and protecting it. The base of the canoes is made of matte, blue plexiglass. This is etched with a photo from our trip and hand dyed. They appear almost watercolor like or if you could look through the bottom of the boat to water. The base of the canoe is lit internally with LEDs. This illuminates the image and gives it an ethereal feeling. This was to highlight the new preciousness of this memory. The title is referring to the longing for serenity in these memories and finding comfort in the longing. My viewers get to experience the calm allure of this piece. They get to experience the peace found in the moment.



Figure 11: Nelson, Amy "Imprinted" Plexiglass

Imprinted (Figure 11) is the piece that relies most heavily on the title and object to form a narrative for my viewer. It is also the piece that demonstrates plexiglass's plasticity and rigidity. The piece is about the present, while not present, nature of loss. People leave their mark well after they are gone. We associate objects, foods, and smells with them. This piece is transparent plexiglass rods molded and knit into a blanket. It is hung in a draped manner like if it were on a sofa. On the right side, there is an indentation left in the blanket. The transparent blanket itself is a representation of a non-existent blanket. It is holding a shape recalling a past role that does not exist. It is mounted on the wall and floats above the ground further alluding to the present while not present sofa it once draped over. The indentation is the mark left by the person who used to sit there. Their impact on the object even after they are gone. The title, *Imprinted*, can have multiple meanings. It can refer to the imprinting left by people, their imprint on objects, our imprinting of meaning on objects, or my imprint left on material in making the object. The exterior lighting in this piece is an added layer of imprinting. It creates flecks of light around the piece. The shadows created create an imprint of the blanket on the space. This piece opens up a dialogue among my viewers, and they are forced to use their own imprinted knowledge to form a meaning.

CHAPTER 6

PERPLEXIONS: PERCEPTIONS, PLEXI AND PROSE

The work presented in the exhibition was set up in a way that allowed each piece to become its own experience. Through the use of dramatic lighting techniques, viewers were pulled around the space to each work. Upon entering the gallery space, the bright spot lights on *Immured* and *Anchored* illuminated the works and created sparkling glares and reflections that pulled viewers to them. Their size and monofilament attaching them to the ceiling gave them both a grandiose presence in the space. The colored light emanating from the *Residual* enticed viewers to move from the front of the gallery into the installation space.



Figure 12: Installation Photo 1

From there, viewers traversed along the back wall from *Reconstructive* to *Episodic* which each had bright spot lights creating reflections and shadows. *Stalactite* and *Wistful Serenity* were both lit internally with LEDs. These internal lights acted as a beacon for the viewers to come closer and engage with the works. As viewers turn back toward the entrance, they then see and engage with *Fleeting Wisps*. The intense light creating shadows over the space behind the exterior

component of the work fills the corner of the gallery. Moving back toward the entrance, viewers encounter *Imprinted* and *Derealization to Cohesion* both lit with bright spots creating shadows and glares in and around the works.



Figure 13: Installation Photo 2

All the works had their own title cards etched into plexiglass. They were mounted on plexiglass rods that allowed them to be away from the walls. They were positioned slightly lower than standard practice and lit so that they cast a shadow of the title card information onto the wall behind them. The title cards being made of the same material as the work gave them a place of significance, and the shadows became a representation of the multiplicity of meaning in each title.



Figure 14: Installation Photo 3

The exhibition served as a Perplexion, bringing together the audience and their perceptions, my works constructed of plexi and the titles or prose. Each piece, engaging all three components, activated my viewers personal schemas and allowed them to engage with the work and other people experiencing the works with them.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Each person has their unique lens, and it is constantly present in every experience. We are not always aware of it until we are faced with something that contradicts our understanding of the world. Like the glare on a sheet of plexiglass, once we are made aware of it, we have to reconcile with it. Death and traumatic events make us aware of this lens as they impact our understanding of reality in a significant way.

My plexiglass pieces are representations of the altered lens that I have experienced, and they become a new experience for my viewer. The plexiglass pieces alter the viewer's field of vision of the space as they move in and around them. The visual stimuli along with the language of my titles activate my viewer's personal schema. This allows them to come to their own understanding of each work. As they share and discuss the works with others, it can lead to a better understanding of those around us and demonstrate the impact of perspective on our day to day experiences and how we recall the past.

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