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Clear the Kitchen Table: An Investigation of Painting and Sewing in Domestic Spaces

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Clear The Kitchen Table ^{to} 24



An Investigation of Painting and Sewing in Domestic Spaces

BY: AVA L. PETERSON

BFA THESIS EXHIBITION
DENISON UNIVERSITY

Personal Trajectory

As senior year comes to a close, I reflect on the journey I've been on. I think about concepts and ideas that have evolved from previous research areas combined with personal experiences. The train of thought that drove this senior thesis originally stemmed from an idea I had after I first applied for the BFA two years ago, but was originally too timid to try. I remember sitting in my dorm room excited, yet fearful, thinking of concepts that sparked curiosity. Most of my free time then, and honestly now, was spent consuming informational media about contemporary fashion and modern art. The combination of media I was consuming and classes in art I was taking, jump-started the daydream of what this show could become. This dream would later become this room full of interactions between painting, fashion, and sewing. It wasn't until I was given the push and built up the courage to create something authentic and new in Junior Practicum that I first attempted to piece together the foundational ideas that have inspired and informed this show. I dedicate this work to being courageous, authentic, and listening to the parts of yourself that spark little fires within you as you never know where they may go.



Fig. 1: "Grommet-Dress", Acrylic, ink, chalk pastel on unprimed canvas, 2022

These first works in Junior Practicum were the first time I began deconstructing the stretcher while thinking about the possibilities of canvas as a textile. "Grommet Dress," one out of a series of three works, features a soak-stain painting draped over a white and black stretcher frame cinched with a hand-sewn canvas belt to form the

shape of a dress. Although these are not shown in this exhibition, these works set the stage of thinking about the connections between the practices of sewing and painting as well as the possibilities of canvas to be draped and sewn.

In the spring of my Junior year, I spent four months abroad in Paris and traveled to the UK. During this time away from making, I consumed as much art as I could across all the cities I went to which has inevitably seeped into this body of work. This hunger for art surprisingly did not result in what I thought it would. I was faced with an awakening, albeit not a necessarily positive one, of the cultural differences of the hierarchies in art. Paris, as I used to think of it, was a city that the world looks at as one of the most serious and institutional cities of art. Paris has landmarks such as the Louvre and Musée d'Orsay filled with hundreds of years of the "highest" paintings and sculptures that exude hierarchies of power. The city is also known as the fashion capital of the world; however, these two prominent institutions exhibiting fashion and fine art rarely intersect within the context of exhibition spaces. When my Parisien curation studies professor asked what he thought of fashion exhibits, he quickly labeled them "pedestrian."

The aversion that other parts of the world have against fashion seen on the same level as fine arts extends even to the painted quilts made by Faith Ringgold exhibited in the Musée Picasso. Ringgold's "French Collection" of painted quilts tells the story of her time in Paris; however, despite being featured in a major art museum surrounded by traditional stretched paintings, the academic discourse around the quilts glazes over the significance of the fabrics used mainly investigating the imagery and use of text in the painted portions. This exposure of differences in art between the United States of America and Paris was part of a variety of influences that inspired my combination of painting and sewing in order to speak to the discrepancy in hierarchy.

The body of work shown here began with a series of soak-stain canvas paintings that became an integral part of the construction and message. Soak-stain painting is a mid-century Abstract Expressionist technique coined by Helen Frankenthaler. Frankenthaler's soak-stain painting uses heavily diluted paint poured over unprimed canvas fabric. When left to dry, the diluted mixture soaks into the canvas fabric wrapping in and around the fibers causing the canvas to retain most of the raw fabric's movement. The process of using highly fluid paint also relinquishes most of my control over the final effect.

This quality of soak-stain painting mixed with the large scale that I work within causes my body to play another key role. Each canvas is laid flat on the ground to minimize the effect of

gravity, but as a result, the size and position cause my whole body to engage in the application of paint. This engagement is where I began to think about the contemporary female body within early abstract movements such as Abstract Expressionism that most commonly expressed the male body or female body through the male lens.

With this established framework around my process, it allowed me to start thinking expansively about the capabilities and countless forms the canvases could take as well as how to capitalize on the woven fabric structure itself. Canvas fabric is a woven material meaning that it is composed of something called warp and weft. The warp and weft refer to the vertical fibers attached to the loom (warp) and the fibers that are woven layer by layer throughout (weft). With this in mind, I begin some of my unstretched canvas paintings by removing the weft from the warp creating a fringe edge intended to draw the viewer back to the canvas' original purpose as fabric. Through the addition of frayed edges and grommets for hanging, I started to think about my soak-stain paintings in conversation with interdisciplinary tapestries rather than traditions of painting such as imagery on a stretched 2D plane. When frayed and hung, the works become more like objects to be sculpted or manipulated.

This concept of thinking about my paintings as fabric or tapestries also extends into the content on the surface. It inevitably led me to think about fabric designs and patterns. The first pattern I heavily investigated was plaid. After my travels to Scotland with my mother, I became fascinated with their intricate and sometimes dizzying visual qualities caused by varying patterns of color in the warp and weft. It became a challenge to take inspiration from a woven pattern and attempt to replicate it with paint that in the end mimics dying processes. The woven pattern versus my painted one made evident that my process was more closely related to drawing in terms of fast-paced mark-making.

My choice of plaid was not only one of process but also enabled parts of my heritage to flow into my work. It allowed me to speak to my mother about our family tree in a way that further led to more consideration as to how I was raised. I was raised in a home with a stay-at-home mother which nowadays, or at least in the city I was born in, felt uncommon compared to my friends' family dynamics despite centuries of female domesticity. This integral part of my childhood became the subject of critical thinking regarding domestic practices in art.

As I think about my experience in a household with a stay-at-home mother at the same time as creating work that engages with textiles, I'm taken back to the years of watching and learning to sew on the kitchen counter—an experience shared

by many home sewists. Throughout the whirlwind of raising my sister and me, while taking on traditional domestic roles within the home, sewing was something creative and functional that could be worked on in short bursts. Sewing is not time-sensitive or a messy medium with globs of toxic paint lying around for children to consume; however, sharp needles are lying around that I (allegedly) ate once.

From a young age, my mother would sew Halloween costumes, bags, and everyday clothes. I saw her enjoying the medium, and so she taught me at home as well as put my sister and me in classes at the local fabric shop, Sew To Speak. This small fabric shop was the first time I experienced a wide variety of fabrics and patterns that I still vividly remember today, and was a place geared towards domestic sewing and craft. It became a place of community for (primarily) women who enjoyed the hobby. My mom and I still go there semi-frequently as the women working there have essentially seen me grow up.



Selection of Works

These experiences have directly influenced the types of forms that are shown within this exhibition from large-scale quilt block patterns to wearable garments. The first quilt-inspired piece titled, "Pinwheel Quilt: #1," takes a soak-stain painting (two by two-yard square) painted in the radial square striped pattern then cut into triangles and rearranged to create a composition reminiscent of the pinwheel block pattern. The quilt block patterns



Fig. 2: "Pinwheel Quilt: #1", sewn acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2023

only emerge as a result of reverse engineering what parts of the pattern must differ in shade for the pattern to come to life.

As I continued this process, I experimented by changing the pattern of the painting as well as the quilt block reference. The result of this artistic experiment can be seen through the difference between "Pinwheel Quilt: #1" and "Pinwheel Quilt: #2." These first two pinwheel block works demonstrate the variety of outcomes that can be achieved through differing pattern processes. The first happened purely by chance, or a "what if," by breaking from my previous plaid tendency. The second pattern presented more challenges. "Pinwheel Quilt: #2" started with a radial multi-colored pattern with a singular square stripe. The problem arose when planning how to cut and rearrange the pieces to create the pinwheel pattern as the original colors did not have enough contrast which caused me to go back and add in, on half of the painting, a darker shade. This original struggle to reproduce a similar type of result aided in refining a successful process. From this point on, I've used printed images of the painting that I cut into triangles and squares and play with until I find successful patterns that, when moved, let the quilt block emerge.

The next quilt block pattern that I focused on was the Ohio star block. Given that I have lived in Ohio my whole life and my mom was born here too, I

wanted to use a pattern that has specific ties to my life story. This block proved more challenging than the pinwheel because there were more triangles involved, although this allowed for more instances of chance to seep into my works. Chance has played a large role in my painting practice; however, the beginning of this process was very controlled. I reverse-engineered the pattern and determined that the middle section must have a higher contrast than the rest of the painting. After fraying the edges, painting, cutting the squares into their respective triangles, and moving them into the Ohio star block pattern I was then able to sew.



Fig. 3: "Pinwheel Quilt: #2", sewn acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2023

Something that came up in the process of making "Pinwheel Quilt: #1 & #2" was the ability to play with the direction of the stripes and frayed edges. Some may look at the final product that is not always a perfect square with edges that match up as a mistake, but in fact, it's an intentional decision to give the viewer insight into what the original painting may have looked like. I want the viewer to play a similar role as I did while reverse engineering the quilt block. These "misshapen" canvases also speak to the process and challenges of sewing as well as the way in which these works were constructed.

Another example of chance coming into play in the final sewn product is "Ohio Star Quilt: #2."



Fig. 4: "Ohio Star Quilt: #1", sewn acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2023

While the pattern was the same as the previous Ohio star piece except for its color, the final shape of the canvas changed greatly. The first produced an even shorter gap in the center row, but the second resulted in a staircase effect. This difference was caused by the simple choice to switch the orientation of the frayed edges. When placed together, these traditional quilt block patterns created within a painting showcase both the technique and practice of quilting, but also of chance, geometry, and abstraction. They utilize traditions of painting yet push their boundaries to elevate and equalize traditions of sewing as shown within a gallery setting.



Fig. 6: "Argyle Dress", Sewn acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2023

This show in addition to the quilted works, also exhibits wearable paintings. Each of these garments was constructed from multiple yards of soak stain painting by hand and then cut and sewn. I see these works not as just a painting off the wall or just a garment. I see them as an interdisciplinary object that can be both painting and fashion. On each side of painting or fashion, these works challenge the

viewer's typical notion of what the medium can be. On the painting side, these works are taken off the wall and placed on the body in a way that is three-dimensional and has the opportunity to leave the gallery setting. On the fashion side, these garments are constructed from canvas fabric, a material most commonly used for utilitarian purposes, and use acrylic paint instead of fabric dye.

Amongst the garments on display, I have investigated how to portray quintessential textile patterns that I have engaged with in everyday life for decades. These patterns include the stripe, plaid, argyle, gingham, and floral chintz. Each one of these patterns was chosen due to their approachability within fashion. They're patterns that you or anyone you know probably have somewhere in their closet or have had at one point in their life. I challenged myself by attempting to replicate these, often woven or block printed, textiles with paint resulting in a loose interpretation that almost "cartoonifies" or exaggerates the original motif. The patterns at times, due to scale, are so exaggerated that they take on new aesthetics that abstract the



Fig. 5: "Ohio Star Quilt: #2", sewn acrylic and ink on unprimed canvas, 2023

original when cut and sewn. In addition, I chose these classic patterns fabricated in paint as a way to further create ties from painting to sewing and textile design for the viewer. By using mid-century abstract-expressionist techniques to abstract textile designs, it effectively blurs the line between textile design and painting.

Each one of these garments is made to fit on my own body. While dressmaking in the typical commercial fashion sense is used to fit the masses, I wanted each of these garments to directly fit and rely on my body as a key piece of the work. This was a deliberate choice to insert my body, in the literal sense, into the canon of painting.

Throughout the history of painting, women's bodies have become objectified through the use of our bodies as the subjects for the male gaze and this has then been exacerbated by the predominantly male-dominated art industry (Starr, 9). By injecting my body into the fabric of these works through my eye as a woman, I actively combat the objectification of the female body. Each dress also deliberately incorporates self-photography. The act of the self-portrait in conjunction with these garments on my body in front of a combination of other 2-D paintings further injects my body, the female body, into the canon of painting and fine arts. The set of studio photos activates the wall-hung paintings by taking them out of the gallery, just as the dresses have been, and allows them to become a sculptural, textile object within the photo.

All of these garments also remain entirely functional for me as a result of them fitting my own body. The functionality of the garments was an important aspect that I wanted my work to retain. I could have just as easily created sculpture-like garments pinned to the wall, but instead, I wanted these dresses to have the option to live outside the walls of the gallery. Functionality in art is something that often faces criticism and typically is why fashion is often excluded from the "fine arts." In my eyes, the functionality of the garment fitting to the contours of my body, also allows the garment to inhabit public spaces which makes the "painting" portion of it more accessible to a broader audience. From receiving feedback and observing interactions of viewers with these garments I noticed that the garments received a different type of inspection. When looking at a work of art on the wall, you are observing the object on a flat surface contained in a blank wall; whereas, the garments allow the viewer to think beyond the gallery. They allow the viewer to imagine themselves in the artwork or in what way they'd style it. It allows the viewer with a wardrobe to engage

with an object that they engage with every day but in a new context.

The inspiration for these garments, such as the "Rose Dress," stems from my experience of dressmaking within my home, not an atelier. Within the vacuum of the fashion industry, there seemingly is a

hierarchy in construction with fast-fashion at the bottom and haute-couture at the top. In turn, this leaves home-made items somewhere in the middle or not in it at all due to domestic sewing's lack of mass profit. I am a consumer of fashion as most people are, but dressmaking within the home feels quite different but should not be confused with less than. Sewing at home becomes more intimate, slower, creative, and purposeful.

Within my own home, garment making was used as a pastime, but also as a way for my mother to express her care and consideration of what my sister and I were wearing whether that be for school or Halloween. It may have also been a way to have quality clothes at a time when we struggled financially during the 2008 recession. Despite the multitude of reasons why my mother, and later I, started sewing clothes, creating these items became an escape. It, like any other art form, allows the sewist to fully immerse themselves in their creations. The garment becomes something that you can put on but also can have control over every detail (something so rare in our unpredictable world).

Sewing also became a way for me to engage in the generational tradition of learning to sew from our mothers or women in our families. I think about the summer of 2020

the height of the COVID lockdown when I spent countless hours a day learning new dressmaking techniques with my mom over my shoulder eager to give me tips. After I had finished a green gingham dress with a big 70s-style lapel, my mom dug through a storage bin and pulled out a blue chambray wrap skirt. This little skirt seemed quite timeless and like something I'd wear. My mom then told me that she had made this wrap skirt



Fig. 7: "Rose Dress" Sewn Acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2023



Fig. 8: "Green Plaid Dress" Sewn Acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2023

Influences

While sewing in my work represents the

personal, painting represents the historical. Painting has always been the main core of my practice— even from the very start of my artmaking when I only made realistic portraits. From years of consuming information about numerous movements and key artists, one thing that always stood out to me is the human need to question, re-imagine, and respond to cultural events. My practice adheres to this principle, and I'm influenced by many artists who do the same.

The primary art movement that has continued to influence my work is Abstract Expressionism ever since I learned about it from

reading Amy Sillman's "Ab-Ex and Disco Balls" article. When thinking about the significance or effect of the Abstract Expressionism movement, I am most influenced by, as Sillman puts it, its "gender essentialism". Sillman so metaphorically states:

"How is it that, despite the complexity of AbEx, its reputation has boiled down to the worst kind of gender essentialism? Its detractors would have it that the whole kit and caboodle is nothing but bad politics steel-welded around a chassis of machismo— that the paint stroke, the very use of the arm, is equivalent to a phallic spurt, to Pollock whipping out his dick and pissing in Peggy Guggenheim's fireplace" (Sillman)

This notion of the acclaimed (male) painters from this time exuded a macho style of painting left room for artists, including myself, spanning the past 50 years, to use it, chop it up, and critique it thus turning the movements' theological origins into something new and inclusionary. In terms of my work, I paint in an Abstract Expressionist method called soak-stain painting inspired by Helen Frankenthaler as mentioned previously. Frankenthaler's method as well as the aura of other female painters of the movement as written about in Mary Gabriel's *Ninth Street Women: Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, and Helen Frankenthaler: Five Painters and the Movement That Changed Modern Art* influenced my ideological approach to abstraction. These women's stories were so often intertwined with their husband's success. While all of these women were key figures in the movement, their work continued to be excluded from the canon until recently. Biographical novels such as *Ninth Street Women* and exhibitions at institutions highlighting this gap aim to re-potion their work back within the

narrative. As for my practice, it is not as if I feel that there's still a gap to be filled in contemporary female abstraction, but I feel that their stories deserve to be honored and their processes to be reinterpreted in a modern context.

The works shown here diverge from the theory of Clement Greenberg's "Modernist Painting" in which he believes that painting should not rely on any outside subjects besides the paint itself. However, I'm not sure I believe his statement or believe it to remain true in our current political and social climate. As mentioned before, the human need to question and reimagine as a result of current events is something that I believe is historically true within art and is true within

my generation's culture. Art created by my generation, a generation born around 9/11, who grew up in a recession, and lived through a pandemic, is no different. As much as the women of the Abstract Expressionist movement may have pushed against their identity influencing their work during their time, I believe it almost impossible for the subject to be fully excluded from the painting. If the subject is not in the direct visual plane, the subject is in the movement of the brush or tool, the mixing of the color, and the use of the eye. My sewn paintings inject my experiences with my mother, memories of colors and patterns, and my physical body into the canvas. The experiences and my identity are the factors

that contribute to the outcome and questions posed by my work.

Another artist previously left out of the narrative around Abstract Expressionism due to his color, was Sam Gilliam. His use of watery abstraction has influenced my style, but his draped paintings have left a lasting impact on my approach to paintings outside the confines of the stretcher. These draped paintings drew me in because of their sculptural, yet fluid feeling along with their connections to draped fabric. These works never feel constrained, they always retain movement which is something that I try to always make note of when deciding the installation of my work. One piece directly influenced by the draped works is "Bed Pelmet" which takes the structure of a draped bed pelmet or fabric headboard and applies it to a patterned-soak stain painting gathered and hung from a wood pole and removed from the bedroom into a gal-



Fig. 9: "Bed Pelmet" Sewn Acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2024

lery.

The works that are shown here, similar to how Giliam's draped paintings operate beyond the stretcher, also make me think about the striped works by Daniel Buren. Buren has created a vast portfolio of paintings using the simple pattern of the stripe because of his daily encounters with the pattern at French markets. I was fortunate enough to see the installation titled, "Murs de Peintures," at the



Fig. 10: "Murs de Peintures"; Daniel Buren

Musée d'Art Moderne. Experiencing this installation of paintings along with listening to video interviews with Buren himself, opened my eyes to new ways of thinking about painting outside of the plane of the painting. When asked by the interviewer, Bernard Blistene, to comment on the idea that Buren's works extend virtually beyond the painting itself, Buren comments,

"Yes, that is to say, that it is a desire, and a desire, to say, that is a little naive of course, but to show what it wants to do is to get out of this space. What happens outside of the space? In fact, that was the next step, and only at that moment I dare to say that it was no longer a painting, and what it became is something that works directly with the wall... It is really now the wall which is the medium."

This concept that the wall becomes the medium not necessarily the painting expanded my thinking around what I consider my works to be. Are they painting because they use paint? Are they drawing? How exactly do I fit my works into a category? If I had to shove it in one, I would at first say painting, but in all actuality, I believe most of my works act more like drawings and possibly even sculptures. The method in which I paint uses decisive mark-making. I do not draw out pencil lines or patterns on the surface before adding paint. I draw with the brush.

Although my approach seems like drawing at times, my work also intimately intersects with the tradition of sewing and textile design. This intersection of mediums led me to find inspiration in the French painter, textile, and fashion designer, Sonia Delaunay. Her work and ideas seem to mimic mine, but one hundred years before me. Delaunay was a Parisian avant-garde painter of the early twentieth century as well as a key figure in abstract painting. While her works stand on their own, she is often spoken of in tandem with her partner Robert Delaunay who also worked within abstraction. Sonia's artistic practice resonated with mine as she, while beginning in painting, found a breakthrough in her practice when she sewed a patchwork blanket for her newborn son. This exercise of maternal care, so similar to my own mother's experience, marked an entry into her painterly, geometric garments and painted textiles as mine did (Jørgensen). Looking at images of her work and reading about her story stuck out to me as it was so different from the experience that I had in Paris. Her work helped me build my confidence in the work I create. I expand on her practice through the lens of someone living one hundred years after the majority of her work was created. While most things culturally have shifted, I find it interesting that her entry into sewing in her practice echoed mine. This further reinforced my desire to think about the matriarchal passing of art practices.

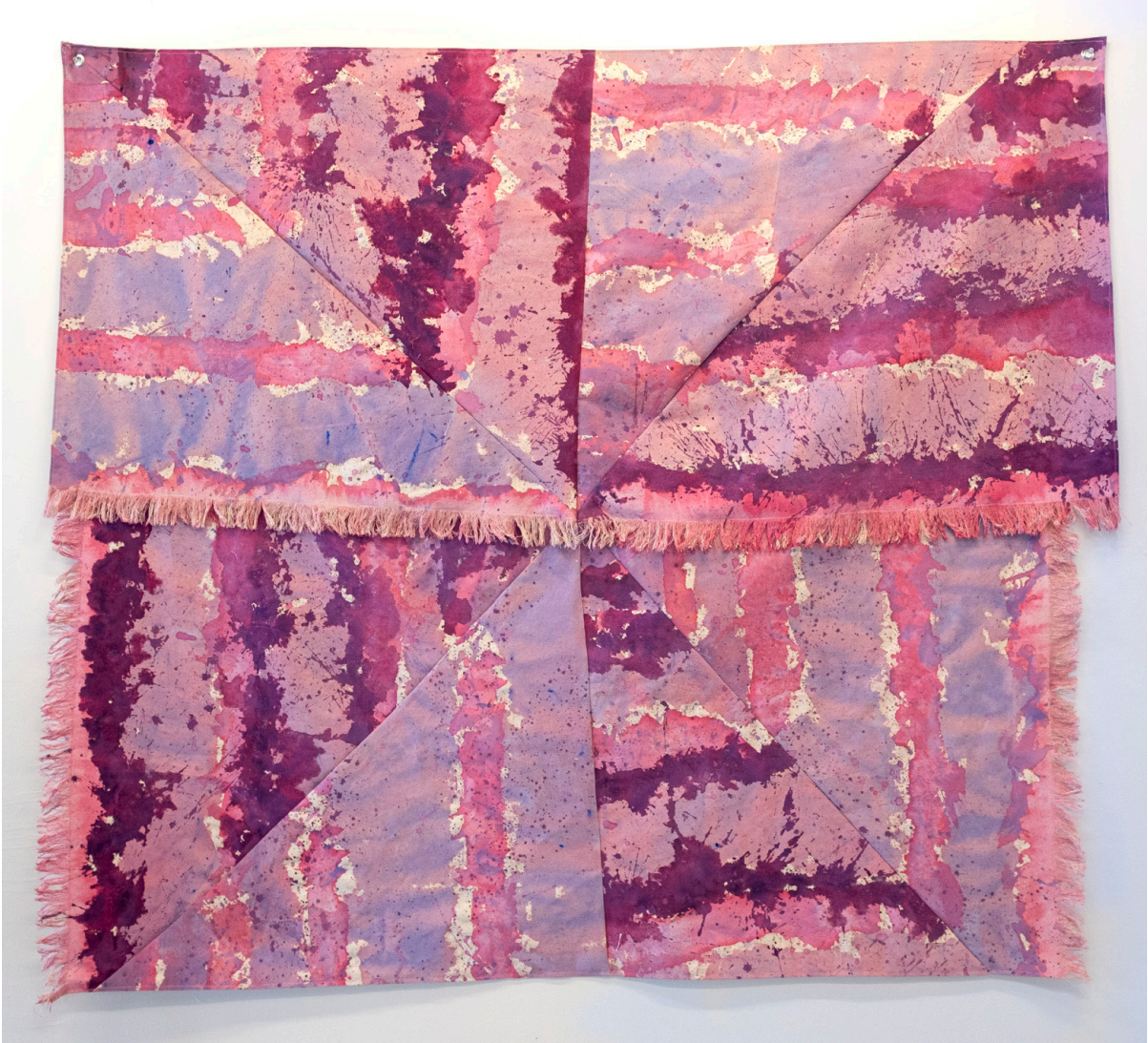
The key difference that I see between the Parisien culture of the early 1900s and our current culture is how clothing is constructed, and consumed, and fashion's relationship with the "fine arts." Within Sonia's work, the "art" of it, or the abstract theory, behind the garments seemed to take the lead; however, in the past 50-60 years, hyper-consumerism has taken over. There seems to be a heightened sense of separation between ready-to-wear for the masses and fashion as an art form due to the cumulative \$1.5 trillion the fashion industry produced in 2020 (McCartney, 144). The garments made out of paintings I've made bring back that symbiotic relationship between art and fashion. In my mind, there should be no separation between the two fields at the core of what each does. Fashion and garments use the body and the ever-personal aspects of our identities informed by our surroundings and cultural events in the same way that abstract paintings often do. They are two means to one end.

As for contemporary influences on my work, the main artist of influence is Heather Jones, the textile artist who uses textiles to create geometric, quilting-inspired paintings. Similar to my experience through my mother, Heather Jones came upon her textile pieces after having children. With the frenzy of young toddlers, she felt a need to move away from painting towards a medium with less mess that could be worked on intermittently. Born in the Appalachian region surrounded by

women in her family who quilted, she notes that her quilt-inspired works are a way of honoring and remembering the women before her who could only make creative work in a limited way.

To me, Heather Jones' work struck a chord with my experience of the women in my own family. Creativity was so often limited within the home to the kitchen table. Limited and altered by their position as mothers, and by their children. From my perspective as the child of someone whose own mother worked in this way, I'm starting to see it from a different perspective. Although I do not have children of my own or know if I even want any, I can examine this experience from the perspective of someone who has been given the freedom to explore my creativity outside of the confines of the kitchen table. I've been fortunate enough to have a studio for the past two years. I've been given the freedom to create and be as messy as I want. Within these four years of college, I have given myself the freedom to be messy. To splash paint on the canvas on the floor, to take up space. After all of that messiness, I feel the need to reflect on my own life. The messiness of life, of circumstances, of family.





"Pinwheel Quilt: #1", sewn acrylic on unprimed canvas, 66" x 62", 2023







"Pinwheel Quilt: #2"; sewn acrylic on unprimed canvas, 64" x 64", 2023



"Ohio Star Quilt: #1", sewn acrylic on unprimed canvas, 68"x 64", 2023







"Ohio Star Quilt: #2, sewn acrylic and ink on unprimed canvas, 66" x 62.5", 2023



"Strawberry Shortcake " Sewn Acrylic on unprimed canvas, 60" x 89", 2024







"Bed Pelmet" Sewn Acrylic on unprimed canvas, 46" x 65", 2024



"Pillow" Sewn Acrylic on unprimed canvas, 40"x 40", 2024





"Green Plaid Dress" Sewn Acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2023













"Argyle Dress" Sewn Acrylic on unprimed canvas, 2023









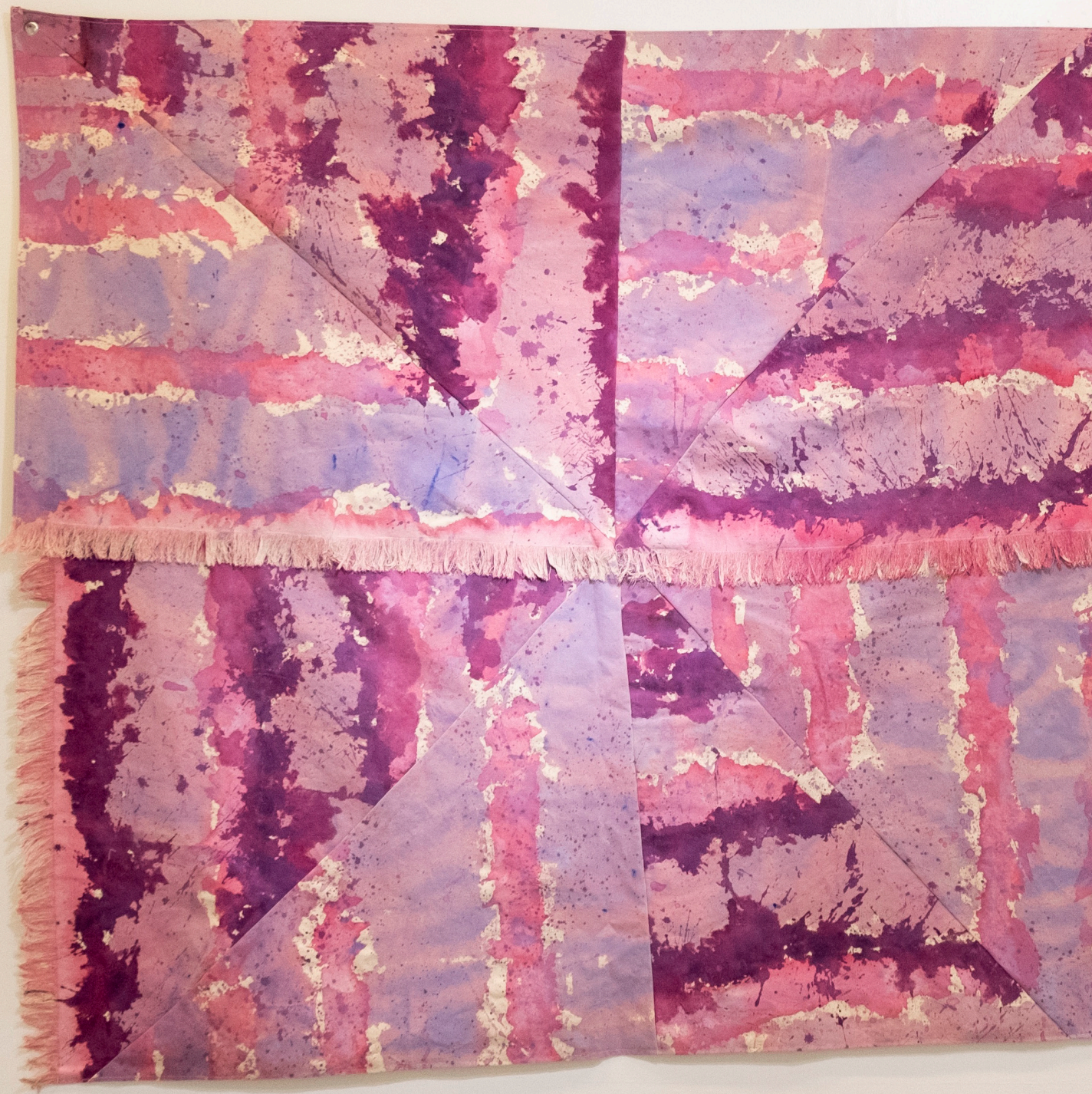
























Born in Columbus, Ohio, USA, Ava L. Peterson is an interdisciplinary artist specializing in painting, textiles, and fashion design. Peterson is based out of the Midwest in, Columbus, Ohio, and attends Denison University in Granville, Ohio where she is a BFA candidate in Studio Art. Peterson has shown her work locally in the Denison Project Space in Granville Ohio. Notable shows at the Project Space include group shows such as, “#PostForRon,” and the “Summers Arts Symposium” featuring “Warp & Weft”, a large-scale installation of painting and textile works. Peterson has also been recognized through multiple Artist Materials Grants from Denison University. Additionally, Peterson has worked with the Columbus Museum of Arts’ Summer Arts Workshop as a teaching assistant in Columbus Ohio, as well as for numerous painting courses at Denison University in Granville, Ohio. Peterson currently has a solo show in the Bryant Gallery on March 21st, 2024 titled *Clear the Kitchen Table*.

A

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EDUCATION

2024 BFA (candidate) in Visual Arts, Denison University, Granville, Ohio
(Expected graduation: May 2024)
GPA: 3.7

GRANTS AND AWARDS

2023 Beta Tau True Promise Scholarship
2023, 2022 Osborne Scholarship Finalist
2022, 2021 Dean's List

RESIDENCIES

2023 Summer Scholars Research, Competitive Summer Research Residency Program, Sponsored by Denison University, Project culminated in a large-scale painting and textile installation that was on exhibition during the Group Exhibition, Summer Scholars Symposium held at the Project Space gallery, Denison University. Granville, Ohio

EXHIBITIONS

2023 Group Exhibition, #PostForRon, Bryant Gallery, Denison University, Granville, Ohio
2023 Group Exhibition, The Bed, Project Space Gallery, Denison University, Granville, Ohio
2023 Group Exhibition, Summer Scholars Symposium, Bryant Gallery, Denison University, Granville, Ohio
2023 Collection on view Montessori House, Denison Lending Library, Denison University, Granville, Ohio
2022 Group Exhibition, Junior Studio Art Final Exhibition, Bryant Gallery, Denison University, Granville, Ohio
2022 Solo Exhibition, Down the Aisle: Billboards, Mulberry House Gallery, Denison University, Granville, Ohio

TEACHING ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE

2023, 2022 Teaching Assistant, Under Professor Keith A. Spencer, Denison University, Granville, Ohio

Fall- Introduction to Painting
Fall- Introduction to Murals
Spring- Introduction to Painting
Fall- Introduction to Painting

2022 Summer Arts Workshop Teaching Assistant, Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio

RELEVANT WORK

2023, 2022 Creative Director, Beta Tau Chapter of Kappa Alpha Theta of Denison University, Granville, Ohio
2022 Columbus Museum of Art, Summer Arts Workshop Internship, Columbus, Ohio
2022 Denison University Theater Department, Costume Shop Seamstress, Denison University, Granville, Ohio

SKILLS AND PROFICIENCIES

Painting
Proficiencies in Adobe Suite
Creative direction
Clothing construction
Sewing
Photography

Annotated Bibliography



“Abstract Art Is Political: Artist Sam Gilliam: Louisiana Channel” YouTube, 28 May

2020, youtu.be/ciN6ZPDMJV4.

In this video interview with painter, Sam Gilliam, he speaks about his work, the making, and the history behind his practice. Gilliam is a mid-century abstract expressionist painter who was known for his draped paintings in which large paintings are hung and draped on the wall or even ceiling. Gilliam’s work was left out of the Abstract Expressionist discourse for many decades due to his race, however, is now being exhibited. Gilliam’s draped paintings in how they deny the use of the stretcher have influenced my work by providing historical context of alternate ways to engage with painting.

Bain, Jessica. “Darn Right I’m a Feminist...Sew What?’ The Politics of Contemporary Home Dressmaking: Sewing, Slow Fashion, and Feminism.” *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 54, 2016, pp. 57–66., <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2015.11.001>.

This academic journal published by the University of Leicester, speaks to the feminist discourse surrounding domestic sewing and dressmaking. It is noted that within craft revivals, dressmaking has received less scholarly attention, and this article seeks to dissect why. Other scholarly opinions on identity and culture surrounding dressmaking are also discussed: “Dress and dressmaking are cultural sites where identity, place, and memory figure prominently. [For] after all, it is an activity in which women learn and teach each other skills which form their feminine identities” (Bain, 58). In my work, this article provides contextual and social background for my own dressmaking from paintings.

By. “The Radical Quilting of Rosie Lee Tompkins.” *The New York Times*, 26 June 2020, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/26/arts/design/rosie-lee-tompkins-quilts.html

This article was written for the *New York Times* detailing the life story and work of quilter Rosie Lee Tompkins. Tompkins quilts have played a significant role in fiber arts as well as serve as an example of the role quilting had played within American culture. Tompkins’ work also serves as an example of the underrepresentation of fiber arts within the broader discussion of contemporary art. As for my work, Tompkins’s “Crazy Quilts,” referring to the jazz-like patternless style of quilting, inspired garments I’ve made as well as influenced my loosened style of quilting.

“Christopher Rothko - Mark Rothko and the Inner World.” YouTube, 25 Mar. 2019, youtu.be/yIG-WnSAhBs.

This talk, given by the family of Mark Rothko, and Christopher Rothko, details the life story of Rothko’s work including key influences. Christopher speaks about the nuances of Rothko’s work and how Rothko uses color as his language. Each painting has a unique and specific ambiance that the viewer feels. Rothko’s work has influenced mine in terms of color or how to layer color to create complex interactions. Something in terms of display that has stuck with me about Rothko is that he wants his works to hang lower to the

ground for the viewer to feel more immersed in the work.

Cutler, E. P., and Julien Tomasello. *Art Fashion: Collaborations and Connections Between Icons*. Chronicle Books, 2015

This book speaks about how the fine art and fashion worlds have been placed against each other with conversations about art and argues that art and fashion while having different methods, are both similar art forms. Cutler and Tomasello discuss examples in history such as the Cecil Beaton and Jackson Pollock collaborative photoshoot that received a high amount of negative feedback due to the common thought that fashion is lower than painting or fine art. This source serves to upload my argument about the conceptual side of my garments as they are an interdisciplinary object between painting and fashion.

“Daniel Buren & Bernard Blistene- Conversation.” YouTube, Mennour, 2 Feb. 2021, <https://youtu.be/US5qB0qR6Ec?si=MLpi7Rbh2s2yL60m>. Accessed 24 Sep. 2023. This recorded artist talk with painter, Daniel Buren, speaks about the philosophies behind their work. Daniel Buren is best known for his stripe paintings that were inspired by the awnings he encountered every day at the markets. Buren thinks of his paintings as an object dependent on their surroundings, leading the wall to be a medium. Buren’s thinking has inspired my design and approach to pattern due to my investigation of color and line.

Gabriel, Mary. *Ninth Street Women: Lee Krasner, Elaine de Kooning, Grace Hartigan, Joan Mitchell, and Helen Frankenthaler: Five Painters and the Movement That Changed Modern Art*. Back Bay Books, 2020.

This biographical novel tells the stories of five women painters out of the Abstract Expressionism movement who were often overlooked until recently. The book goes in-depth about the five painters’ artistic and personal lives while also speaking of the challenges faced being a woman in a dominantly male movement— multiple who were often only spoken of as the wife of the more famous painter. This source provides the historical backing for my approach to abstract painting. Within my work, I attempt to both honor these women painters and critique the movement in its original form.

Greenberg, Clement. “Modernist Painting.” *Art and Literature*, no. 4, spring 1965, pp. 6–9.

Originally published in 1960 in the journal “The Nation,” this essay explores the essence of modernist painting and its evolution from the late 19th to mid-20th century. Greenberg argues that modernist painting, particularly abstract art, is defined by its emphasis on the inherent qualities of the medium itself—such as flatness, shape, color, and texture—rather than representing external subject matter. He outlines the progression from realism to abstraction and asserts the autonomy of each art form. This essay has provided my research theoretical background for arguments made about mid-century abstract art.

Jared Kemling. “The Quilt as Personal Object.” *The Cultural Power of Personal Objects : Traditional Accounts and New Perspectives*. SUNY Press, 2021. EBSCOhost, search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=2740074&site=ehost-live

This academic journal discusses the cultural power of personal objects, and chapter eight in specific, it speaks of the quilt as personal object. This chap-

ter also speaks to the longstanding American tradition of domestic quilting along with specific types of quilts represent certain aspects of life such as death, birth, marriage, and friendship. Within my own work, this article provided historical backing of particular quilting blocks as well as upholds the conceptual nature of my quilt inspired works.

Jørgensen, Lærke Rydal, et al. *Sonia Delaunay*. Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 2022.

This book details the life and work of painter, fashion, and textile designer, Sonia Delaunay across the 60-plus years of her career. Sonia Delaunay was best known as a French abstract painter but also used her abstractions as textile designs and sewn and quilted garments. As for my work, Delaunay's work directly parallels mine as I'm creating textile designs, paintings, and garments. Delaunay's work provides a source for imagery and inspiration in patterning.

"Julie Mehretu Interview: The in-between Place." YouTube, 14 Aug. 2013, youtu.be/38uTZCU0VqQ.

In this interview with painter, Julie Mehretu, it covers conceptual insights into their work as well as key influences and broader societal connections such as war and city scapes. Mehretu is well known within abstract art, and is often referred to as one of the key contemporary abstract painters currently. Within my work, Mehretu's approach to scale has had an impact on why I work on a larger scale. They say that they work at large scales in order for the viewer, whether far away or close up and moving around the work, to perceive multiple viewpoints and frames.

McCartney, Nicola, and Jane Tynan. "Fashioning Contemporary Art: A New Interdisciplinary Aesthetics in Art-Design Collaborations." *Journal of Visual Art Practice* 20, no. 1–2 (April 3, 2021): 143–62. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14702029.2021.1940454>.

This scholarly article from the *Journal of Visual Art Practice* discusses the history and theory of visual culture behind the merging of art and fashion. It also speaks about what has and could happen due to the hyper-consumerism that emerges when art and fashion come together. The authors also pose the question of if the separation between art and fashion has anything to do with fashion's relationship to femininity. In terms of my practice, this article has provided me with in-depth theoretical knowledge of visual aesthetics and culture to support the message behind my sewn-painted garments.

Nast, Condé. "ASAP Rocky and ERL's Rule-Breaking Quilt Captured the Essence of American Fashion." *Vogue*, September 16, 2021. <https://www.vogue.com/show/asap-rocky-erl-met-gala-2021-quilt-american-fashion>.

This article featured by *Vogue* tells the story and thought behind ASAP Rocky's 2021 Met Gala, "In America: A Lexicon of Fashion," a look created by ERL (Eli Russel Linnetz). ASAP Rocky's look consisted of a tailored suit and a wearable quilt constructed from a quilt found at a thrift store. This look is specifically to the Met Gala theme as it speaks to the history America has with quilts. As for my work, this serves as inspiration and an example of traditions within sewing, such as quilting, that translate into wearable garments.

Peña, Veronica Gonzalez, director. Pat Steir: Artist. <https://www.youtube.com/>

watch?v=LepmIIC655E.

This documentary covers the life story and work of abstract painter, Pat Steir. Through interviews, studio visits, and footage of Steir at work, the film provides insight into her artistic process, inspirations, and the evolution of her distinctive style. Steir is known for her abstract paintings characterized by cascading drips and splatters of paint, often evoking natural phenomena such as waterfalls. The film explores Steir's exploration of chance and spontaneity in her practice, as well as her engagement with art history and her role as a pioneering female artist. Within my work, Pat Steir's paintings and discussions around her work relating to chance and letting the paint do what it wants, have impacted how I pour paint on my canvases. Her work has deeply influenced my approach to chance and abstraction.

"Pollock in Vogue: American Fashion and Avant-Garde Art in Cecil Beaton's 1951 Photographs." Accessed September 26, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.2752/175174109X381346>.

"Pollock in Vogue: American Fashion and Avant-Garde Art in Cecil Beaton's 1951 Photographs" explores the intersection of American fashion and avant-garde art through the lens of Cecil Beaton's iconic 1951 photographs featuring the artist Jackson Pollock. The article delves into the cultural significance of Beaton's work, shedding light on the relationship between high fashion and the avant-garde movement during the mid-20th century. This article and historical instance of fashion and painting collaborating has provided my work an example of a point in history in which there was negative feedback on painting and fashion coming together.

Ragab, Radwa. "Contemporary Clothing Design Inspired by the Diversity of Abstract Art Styles." *International Design Journal* 6, no. 4 (October 1, 2016): 367–75. <https://doi.org/10.21608/idj.2016.90844>.

This article in the *International Design Journal* researches the ways in which patterns and designs can be pulled from abstract painters such as Kandinsky, Pollock, and Mondrian. The designs inspired by these specific artists and more were then pulled together to design a wide range of fashion illustrations for wearable pieces. This study aids my research by providing background and analysis of abstract artists as well as examples of designs inspired by them.

Rosenberg, Harold. "The American Action Painters." *Reading Abstract Expressionism*, 2017, pp. 189–198, <https://doi.org/10.12987/9780300185720-026>.

Rosenberg, Harold's seminal essay "The American Action Painters" is a cornerstone in the discourse surrounding Abstract Expressionism. Published in 1952, it fundamentally reshaped the understanding of the movement, emphasizing the process and physicality of painting over representational content. This essay remains essential for scholars and enthusiasts alike, providing a deep insight into the philosophical underpinnings and artistic techniques of Abstract Expressionist painters such as Jackson Pollock and Willem de Kooning. This article has provided my work with additional historical context as this writing was a keystone in abstract expressionist theory.

Sillman, Amy. "Ab-Ex and Disco Balls: In Defense of Abstract Expressionism II." *Artforum*, Artforum, 21 Sept. 2023, www.artforum.com/features/ab-ex-and-disco-balls-in-defense-of-abstract-expressionism-ii-197674/.

This article by artist Amy Sillman articulates the nuances of a new wave of contemporary artists working within abstract expressionism. As ab-ex was

originally viewed as a machismo art movement often given the same sentiment of outdat- edness as disco, Sillman outlines how younger women and LGBTQ+ artists are reworking it to include their voices. The author, Amy Sillman, is a current contemporary artist working within this new rhetoric of thinking about ab-ex. Within my research, this artist has given me the framework to place my work in a broader context and discussion of my work in relation to the female body.

“Stanley Whitney: Rhythm and Vision | Artist Spotlight | Gagosian.” YouTube, 5 Aug. 2020, www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpapjlTPmJE.

The YouTube video titled “Stanley Whitney: Rhythm and Vision | Artist Spotlight | Gago- sian” offers an exploration into the artistic practice of Stanley Whitney. Released by Gago- sian in 2020, it provides viewers with an intimate look at Whitney’s distinctive approach to color and composition, highlighting the rhythmic quality of his abstract paintings. This video serves as an invaluable resource for art enthusiasts, offering insight into Whitney’s creative process and the conceptual framework behind his visually striking works. This video has provided primary research about Whitney’s paintings and how he thinks about colors next to each other. His approach to color has impacted the way in which I choose and speak about color.

Starr, Juliana. “Men looking at women through art: Male gaze and spectatorship in three nine- teenth-century French novels.” *Revue Frontenac* (1993): 8-32, [https://scholarworks.uno.edu/ cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=fl_facpubs](https://scholarworks.uno.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=fl_facpubs)

Starr, Juliana’s article “Men looking at women through art: Male gaze and spectatorship in three nineteenth-century French novels” published in *Revue Frontenac* in 1993, offers a critical examination of the male gaze and spectatorship within the context of three prom- inent nineteenth-century French novels. Through an interdisciplinary lens, Starr unpacks how male characters in these novels perceive and objectify female subjects, particularly through the prism of art. This insightful analysis contributes to the ongoing discourse on gender, power dynamics, and representation in literature and art, making it a significant resource for scholars interested in feminist literary criticism and cultural studies. This article has provided my work with feminist theory in order to think critically about my position as a woman in conjunction with my art.

“The New Soft Look’: Jackson Pollock, Cecil Beaton, and American Fashion in 1951.” Accessed September 26, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1179/036121181803657918>.

This publication from the *Journal of the Costume Society of America* provides an in-depth look into the Cecil Beaton and Jackson Pollock collaborative photos in which Cecil Beaton took fashion photographs of women in front of Pollock’s paintings. This source specifically describes the cultural significance of this collaboration within American society as it was an example of fashion breaking away from European standards. This source for my work provides images of this collaboration for reference when taking my own photographs of my painted designs

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