“A Simpler Time”

In 2013, I stumbled upon a 1930’s instructional guide for women. The poster explains how four different hair-bow placements signify four different desires regarding relationships. A bow on the right side of the head was for a woman “deeply in love;” a bow on the left meant a woman was “going steady.” A woman “out to get herself a man” was instructed to wear a bow on the top of her head and one “not interested in men” on the back.

In 2014 I redid the poster using myself as the model. Using these images, I created profiles on dating apps and websites. For each site I used a specific bow style corresponding to the general intent of each platform. The image “deeply in love” I placed on eHarmony, “going steady” on OKcupid, “out to get herself a man” on tinder, and “not interested in men” on SeekingArrangement- a sugar daddy website.

During the course of the project responses varied due to the dating platform they were posted on, region of the United States, and popular internet hashtags and social media accounts.

I am interested in the socialization of subtle sexual expression and the expectation placed on women to passively engage in their desires, while men freely express their desires through overt action and direct communication. The language of objectification has altered due to the mediums in which men and women express their desires but the nature of objectification remains firmly in place.