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# Constructing Identity Identity Construction

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CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY  
IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

by

SUSAN JEAN DOWLING

Under the Direction of Dr. Melody Milbrandt

ABSTRACT

In this art-based research study I will examine the construction of identity by creating three life size figures utilizing metaphor and symbolism. I have recorded, and analyzed the process through reflections. The artist / teacher / researcher will provide conclusions based on art production and self-reflection.

INDEX WORDS: Art-based research, Constructing identity, Metaphor, Symbolism, Self-reflection

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY  
IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

by

SUSAN JEAN DOWLING

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

of

Master of Art Education

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

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2011

CONSTRUCTING IDENTITY  
INDENTITY CONSTRUCTION

by

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## **DEDICATION**

To my husband, Tommy, I will always cherish your support and encouragement. To my children, Allycia, T.J. and Ashley you are always in my heart. To my parents Jean and Bernard Brennan, thank you for buying me all those crayons.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Terms of the Study*

Identity construction is an integral component of the human species. It has been researched and explored through many different venues. For centuries artists have expressed their personal or projected identity of self and society through the means of visual representation using a vast array of mediums and techniques. Many artists utilize the theme of identity consciously in their art, creating a visual self-examination of the past, present and future. While other artist may unconsciously incorporate personal matters and experiences within their art.

Constructing identity literally involves life experiences, relationships and connections, a solid mental or emotional stamp on a human. Constructing identity figuratively involves metaphorical or symbolical representation of thoughts or emotions in an expressive way, creating a conceptual visual representation. Through the act of art production, creation and construction, artists simultaneously produce, create and construct their identity.

#### *Need for the Study*

The exploration of identity through art provides a tangible source of expression. Identity is linked to racial and cultural heritage, sexual preference and issues of gender, age, and social class. Early socialization and the enduring force of expectations also shape one's identity from family, friends and community. Some aspects of our identity are constructed for us while other aspects we construct

ourselves. Sometimes we quietly hide parts of our identity and other times we loudly project it. People and institutions around us may have rigid ideas about who we are and how we should express ourselves. They often attempt to channel or block personal expression, and even promote their own versions of acceptable and non-acceptable behavior. They go as far as having their own versions of non-conformity. The expression of individual identity is all too often discouraged, misinterpreted, and unrewarded. Art is a means to explore identity, to celebrate and promote self-expression and its diversity. Through this expression dialogue is created that speaks to community, acceptance, and the safeguards that are necessary for expressing individual identity in a society.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

In what ways might I develop images of personal identity in my art? In what ways might I develop insight into my identity in my artwork?

Through my artistic research and artmaking, I visually articulate the concept of identity explored through my vision and personal experiences with my students. I created three life size silhouette figures representing student/cultural identity through my reflective interpretation establishing distinctive conceptual differences portrayed in each figure. Although this body of artwork intent is to be viewed as a series of sculptures, I believe each figure will be strong enough to solely sustain individual concepts.

I achieved a deeper, more meaningful connection with my students. My ultimate desire for using the method of art-based research was to create a greater

personal attentiveness to individuality. Exploring the concept of identity construction through art has enhanced my own desirable personal traits of acceptance, tolerance and respect for all people and beliefs. It has given me the opportunity to reflect on my own cultural and personal identity. This transition impacts my relationship with my students, colleagues, friends and family.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### *Theories of the Construction of Identity*

The Merriam-Webster's Dictionary (2011) defines identity in the following terms: "The set of behavioral or personal characteristics by which an individual is recognizable as a member of a group. The distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity; individuality,"(p.245). The linguistic interpretations of identity are succinct and easily understood. These traits are readily apparent on the surface of all individuals we interact with in our daily lives, but research indicates the construction of identity is much more complicated and convoluted than the simple definition in Webster's Dictionary. Vygotsky (1978) viewed the "self" as a complex emergent phenomenon continually produced in and by individuals in their interchanges with others and with the culturally transformed material world. His writings reflect ideas about sociogenetic formation of self, in the ways in which social interaction, mediated by symbolic forms, provided crucial resources and ever present constraints for self-making. Eric Erikson's (1979) notion of constructing identity not only reflects a culminating summary of past life but also an ongoing construction created as the basis for future meaningful adult life. He proclaims identity's function is future oriented it is developed through life stages; successful orientation produces specific personality traits, which are changing and building upon experiences.

British historian, philosopher of history, and aesthetician, R.G. Collingwood (1938) wrote,

The finished work of art must be re-created in the mind of its viewer for it to function as a work of art. The viewer, in turn, collaborates with the artist in imaginatively reconstructing the artist's emotive and imaginative expression. Thus, art is collaboration between artist and viewer. The viewer is not a passive receptor of the artist's emotion, but an active participant in creation. (p. 234)

For Collingwood (1938), the artist is required to transform feelings into communicative expressions. "Through the process of making art and putting their feelings into physical form, artists come to better know themselves," (Collingwood, p.79). Reaching a deeper understanding of self directly correlates to the construction of identity. Every piece of artwork provides a new canvas, so to speak, to create depth and breadth to an artist personal character, in turn constructing identity. This notion can be expanded beyond self to include culture, race, gender and religious.

Author Terry Barrett (2008) examines the similarities and differences of Expressionism and Cognitivism theories in his book, *Why Is This Art*. He suggests the Expressionist theory neatly sets off art from science. The theory is in some version comprehensive, according to philosopher R.G. Collingwood's *Principles of Art* (1938), theory about art as the artistic process, the process of creating the relationship between the artist, the work of art, and the audience. Art is about the realm of emotions; this expression is visual articulated through the process of art. In turn this facilitates individuals to express personal emotion through art revealing personal identity. Identity construction is recreated with each piece of art work, evaluated, reevaluated, examined, reexamined, constantly changing by way of the

artists personal experiences. Expressionism suggests that art brings up feelings such as love or hate. It draws upon artist's experiences that have strong feelings and have different ways of looking at the world (Barrett, 2008). Cognitivism relates to expressionism but is a more recent art theory. It tells us that art truly gives us knowledge that otherwise would not be expressed through words. Art is a special way of knowing the world. Expressing emotions reveal an artist's identity, exposing these traits to the viewer presents a unique aesthetic experience resonating in their view of the world, providing a visceral exchange of personal identity, positive or negative.

Metaphor and symbolism resides prominently in Expressionist and Cognitive theories, metaphoric thinking promotes creativity and self-expression. Metaphor is a symbolic transformation that occurs when one thing in its entirety denotes another thing in its entirety (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005). Through the use of symbolic representation visual metaphors shape information through vision, emotion and imagination. This representation is multifaceted concentrating sizable quantities of information at one time, allowing for greater understanding and interpretation. Visual metaphor and symbolism rely upon individual interpretation. The viewer's intuitive feelings and emotions become personalized through their life experiences, which influence their interpretation of visual images in works of art. I agree with author Rita Irwin's interpretation of metaphor in her book *A/r/tography* (2004), she suggests artists intentionally or unintentionally utilize metaphor theory in their art production and often communicate more than one meaning through their work.

### ***Artists Exploring Issues of Identity***

Many contemporary artists utilize symbolism and metaphor in their art to construct identity. Louise Bourgeois had a long career as an influential contemporary artist, her sculptures, drawings and prints provided an intimate view into the artist's life. She relies on a psychoanalytical process to produce art, interpreting her subconscious thoughts, feelings and emotion into form. Bourgeois develop a series of spider sculptures in the mid 1990's. This figure became somewhat of an obsession in the artist's work. She created the spider symbol to signify her mother, creating a metaphoric relationship between the sculptures and her unresolved feelings and hidden emotions for her Mother. Louise Bourgeois said, "The friend (the spider, why the spider?). Because my best friend was my mother and she was as intelligent, patient, clean and useful, reasonable, indispensable, as a spider. She was capable of defending herself." (quoted by Marie-Laure Bernadac, in *Louise Bourgeois*, op. cit. p.149). The immense spider figures appear in various forms and installations throughout the 1990's. This series depicts Bourgeois' past, as well as her future; through this art she constructs herself again and again refining herself and her relationships, constructing her personal identity.

Contemporary artist Kara Walker uses symbolism and metaphor to construct racial and personal identity in her art. I identify with Walker's work because of the silhouette forms, similar to my body of work developed for this art based research study. The use of silhouette can be a very compelling imagery, it objectifies and obscures, Walker's silhouette technique reduces everything to black and white. She uses large black paper, a material metaphor for stereotype (New York: Museum of

Modern Art,1999). Walker enlarges her images onto the black paper using a traditional overhead projector; I share this technique creating my silhouette figures onto wood. Most of Walker's critics seem to agree that what her art embarks upon is a metaphorical journey into the past designed to rewrite the history of oppression, which generated racist images, presenting a new history that helps Walker to understand the role of the past in her present identity. Walker excavates African American identity through her art production. Speaking to the construct of identity, Walker said, "through a process of self-discovery and historical discovery and comes out from under her oppressors and maybe doesn't become a hero, but is a hero for herself" (Walker, 1997, p.14)

The last artist I will reference is Jonathon Borofsky. I identify with this contemporary artist because his art represents a sense of global identity construct. This message or meaning is akin to my work for this art based research study. Conceptually I will speak to the oneness of humanity, utilizing individuality and uniqueness to construct identity. Borofsky's art mirrors my sentiments through the use of symbolic communication and metaphor to construct identity. Although Borofsky has had a long art career creating installation art in a gallery, evolving into public space artwork, many of his human silhouette figures grew in scale to be executed as outdoor permanent art. The *Hammering Man* is an example of this progression in his art. He made his first *Hammering Man* in 1979 it was part of an installation at the Paula Cooper Gallery. This first *Hammering Man* was cut out of plywood six feet tall, painted black, with the motorized arm to create a hammering motion. The *Hammering Man* is a symbol for the worker in all of us. The motorized



arm of the hammering man continuously swings its hammer back and forth - from the mind to the hand and back again. He explains the hammer metaphor, "We all use our minds and our hands to create our world between the mind and the hand, between there is the heart" (*Carnegie Mellon Magazine*, Spring 2002, p. 15).

Borofsky's *Man with a Briefcase* image appeared in an installation as well. "Like the *Hammering Man* it represents an archetypal worker and, like the majority of Borofsky's images, it is also a self portrait, a metaphor for the artist as worker, with Borofsky carrying his own drawing-filled briefcase" (Marshall, 1980, p.102). *Man with a Briefcase* was originally taken from a newspaper advertisement. It represents Everyman, in a sense, created in a black silhouette. (Marshall 1980) The briefcase is a symbol for the carrier of thoughts, the brain, papers and images.

Borofsky is quoted in an interview in *Art in America*,

I see myself as partly every person and vice versa. Therefore, no matter how personal I get about myself, my work is going to have meaning for somebody else. It has archetypal relevance. So, this figure is me too - the travelling salesman who goes around the world with his briefcase full of images and thoughts. The briefcase has always been a metaphor for my brain. (*Art in America*, 1981, p.164)

The artists referenced above directly relate to my artwork for this art-based research study. Each utilizes symbolic communication and metaphor to construct identity in their artwork. They require their audiences or viewers to stimulate personal conceptual stimuli to connect with their art. These contemporary artists examine and explore their personal identity construct by the process of creating art.

My interpretation based on this research of Louise Bourgeois art reveals her personal struggles in her childhood, how adulthood does not calm certain fears or emotions. She produces her art to internally reconcile her self-image, this unique experience allows artists the freedom to continue self-discovery to construct and reconstruct their identity. I would like to emulate Bourgeois technique of deep reflection, tapping into the subconscious thought processes, thinking about my thinking to develop art that will be deeply personal to me, but also create personal connects with my audience.

My artistic solution to explore and examine identity is to produce three dimensional silhouette figures, this concept evolved from another art project, which I will discuss farther later. The human figure certainly equates individuality presenting the human figure through silhouette form obscures this notion, creating an ambiguous, visceral veil of questioning to the art. This use of silhouette technique drew me to Kara Walkers work, although produced differently I identified strongly with her art. I think of my silhouette figures as a canvas to assist with the development of identity construction for each figure, in turn reflecting small glimpses of global identity or a sense of oneness.

The notion of all people being part of a larger picture or global environment is extremely relevant in today's internationally accessible world. Jonathon Borofsky's notion of oneness certainly resonated with me. His desire to represent everyman in his art inspired me to elaborate this concept to include every man, every women, every student, every gender, every race, every culture. As I produced

my art, I kept Borofsky's ideas about identity construction in my thoughts to draw upon for motivation.

Constructing identity through art requires a vast array of cognitive abilities. Metaphor and symbolic communication are important components in my art. My intent is to engage the viewer initially using these elements providing an opportunity to create personal meaning. Although I wish to express my thoughts, feelings and emotions, I adamantly believe the viewer is an integral participant in viewing art. I align my perspectives with Expressionist and Cognitivist theories in art, realizing these theories have multiple versions developed by theorists and critics. Expressionist theory draws upon experiences of the artist's strong feelings and different ways of looking at the world that chose to express themselves by means of their chosen medium. Cognitivism asserts that art provides knowledge of the world in unique and powerful ways and that such knowledge would be lost to us if it were presented in forms other than artistic form. While working with the theme constructing identity in my art, I wish to express my thoughts, feelings and emotions through the use of metaphor and symbolic communication. These elements will draw upon my research of identity construction, experiences and artistic presentation in the work. I hope to present a different way of looking at the world through my art, to provide the viewer with an experience to resonate with their individual responses to the work. This line of thought points to the Cognitive theory in art, the belief that works of art add to knowledge, as well as express feelings, in unique and valuable ways.

As a teacher I try to incorporate many strategies, techniques and concepts with my students. Modification and tailoring ideas is often necessary but if successfully executed the student work is quality and their process of experience unequaled. As I have learned more about contemporary artists to tried to expose my students' to more contemporary artists, contemporary art ideas and concepts that will enhance their art educational experience by motivating them to reflect on current issues pertinent to their lives, creating deeper, more meaningful art.

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

In this study my artwork explored the issue of identity. My research questions are:

In what ways might constructing portraits of my students in my art reflect their identity and my own?

In what ways does reflecting on the cultural and personal identity of my students impact my relationship with them as a teacher and my perception of myself?

In my autoethnographic study I investigated the construction of identity by creating three life size three-dimensional silhouette figures. The first figure represents the concept of identity explored through my vision and personal experiences with my students. This area of investigation provided fundamental knowledge to create strong personal connections with students and develop personal insight.

In the classroom I explored the issue of identity with my students through group discussions, individual dialogue and casual conversation presenting the opportunity to study students personal and cultural identity. I explored these traits anticipating students often unknowingly display personal identity in the art making process. Personal observations through reflection, field notes and documentation have provided the necessary foundation of this study to explore student identity through my artwork. I have explored several sub topics relating to the construction

of identity including but not limited to the gender, religious, self-image, etc. these sub-topics fall under the theme of construction of identity.

Further exploration of identity has been developed through the creation of a life size self-portrait silhouette (APPENDIX A). This art-based research has been documented using the same methodology as the student figures, detailed notes, documentation of process, and self-reflection upon completion.

An additional component to my art based research study includes a collaborative community silhouette figure (APPENDIX B.1). This figure is non-gender, life size silhouette figure, painted black on both sides. The figure was available to the community at Garrett Middle School at a fine arts event for an evening of performances and presentations. An unfinished figure was on hand at the event for attendees to participate in the creation of an additional figure. The figure was placed in the fine arts hall, leading to the reception. A table was set up with different mediums and art supplies to inspire the guests creativity. The participants were invited to paint, collage, stamp or draw onto the figure using the material available. The concept of personal identity or community identity was provided as the parameters for participation. Attendees were encouraged to express their individuality both personally and professionally, to foster the notion of expressing diversity. The audience or viewers participating in the creation the community figure/silhouette determined their own timeline to the process. This entire process or performance was documented through still photographs, video, audio and dialogue reflections.

As an artist, teacher and researcher, I use personal observations and experiences to interpret the construction of identity through metaphor and symbols in art. This notion is the catalyst to visually articulate the construction of identity. It is my experience that works of art become most meaningful for the viewer when they evoke thoughts and feelings. "Art is a human activity consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he lived through, and other people are infected by these feelings and also experience them" (Tolstoy, 1897, p. 135). Art is an ambiguous language; through the use of symbolic communication my art connects form and meaning. American philosopher Susanne Langer (1953) reflects this notion in her exploration of the mind's continuous process of meaning making, and points out that symbolism cannot be clearly and simply deciphered into factual, rational statements. She believes works of art are ways to organize our world meaningfully, through metaphoric thinking. I hope to continue to consider her ideas as I engage in my creative process.

## CHAPTER 4

### REFLECTIONS

#### *Exploring Identity as Artist*

My path of identity exploration as an artist began in the fall of 2010, while enrolled in a graduate level drawing and painting class at Georgia State University. The class was challenging and the professor required a high quality of professional artwork. This class gave me the opportunity, support and encouragement to explore identity as an artist. Prior to this experience I found it difficult to solely devote my artistic process and expression from the mindset of self. I struggled with this perception of my art, recognizing I have been stifling my creative processes in lieu of my student's assignments and projects. This experience allowed me to explore a perspective derived from personal knowledge, feelings and emotions. In retrospect I believe I developed insight into my identity through my art, transferring this concept to my students, colleagues, friends and family. This transition impacts my personal relationships by creating a stronger bond through open dialogue of identity, self-identity, perceived identity, projected identity, all interconnect to construct identity.

The body of artwork produced in this class consisted of seven life-size figures. The figures were cut out of half-inch plywood, arranged in different silhouette poses, each with an individual unique medium application, all sharing the theme of identity. Each silhouette is an exploration of identity using my art students as motivation and models. The figures are all based on actual photographs of students I have taught in my art classroom. As an art educator I often use student



photographs for my students' art projects and assignments. When students incorporate an image of themselves in their work I believe the experience creates a more meaningful art experience for students/artists and produces quality artwork.

Although this body of art was created as a series, I believe each piece can be viewed separately, as an individual work of art. I will use this section of my study to highlight, analyze and reflect on three selected life-size silhouette figures from this series. As stated earlier, each figure is a representation of students, whom I will refer to as Quinton, Jordan and Josh.

*Quinton* (APPENDIX C) was the first in the series of silhouette figures. It measures approximately 5 feet tall, cut of one half plywood, with collage application to both sides of the figure, it is free standing and portable to be viewed from both sides. This figure's pose was the most difficult to cut using a skill saw. I patiently cut small sections of the wood plane to accurately depict the pose. *Quinton's* hair braids challenged my technical skills further. I solved this problem using a drill to create a hole large enough for the skill saws blade to fit. This provided a beginning point to cut each braid individually, the braids are generally the same thickness, but vary in length to further portray the feeling of movement.

As I reflect on the production of this figure, I realize I did not have a definite plan of development until after it was cut. I believe the pose is compelling and lent itself to a unique material application style. I got feedback from my students, colleagues, friends and family displaying the raw wooden figure at home and in my classroom for a week. The general consensus revealed the intriguing aspect of the figures stance. Of course, the younger viewing audience felt an immediate

connection revealing relevant real life experiences, feelings and emotions.

Observing this immediate bond provided motivation to personally research the hip-hop and rap movement further. Research consisted of viewing music videos, investigating individual hip-hop personalities on the Internet and purchasing magazines and printed material specifically created for the hip-hop generation.

I immediately embraced the printed material. It provided countless images representing the hip hop culture. The high gloss magazine photographs create an interesting contrast to the grainy tabloid pictures. I began cutting out these images from various printed sources, some photos were cropped close specifically cutting out a shape, and some were larger pieces, representing color or implied texture. I developed the figure in sections laying down the imagery specifically and intentionally applying the photographs to the wood using glue. This collage technique worked well offering the ability to overlap and juxtapose imagery in an interesting fashion.

The figures pose and photo collage symbolizes the influence of hip-hop culture has on today's adolescents. *Quinton* represents a visual metaphor depicting this sub group of construction identity through social commonalities and interests. "People develop selves in relation to social identities and cultural persona and in their name perform and (re)create the activities meaningful to those worlds" (Wertsch, 1985, p.83). He represents my vision and personal experiences of the quintessential contemporary rap influenced student. I had the definite identity I wanted to explore with this figure the pose was deliberate and the identity specific.

The college technique further depicts the influence of visual culture on today's youth that motivates them to readily identify with a group. Vygotsky believes this concept helps us to understand how people come to be able to organize themselves in the name of an identity. This visual representation is a comment on the influence visual culture has in identity construction.

*Josh* (APPENDIX D) is based on a spontaneous photograph of an eighth-grade student I taught in my advanced art class. It measures approximately five feet three inches tall, using half-inch plywood, attached to a base to be viewed from various vantage points. The pose is compelling to me because I think it represents a typical teenager. I think viewers can relate to this image based on the familiarity of the stance. The pose depicts the student holding up a peace symbol with his fingers. The peace symbol is a contemporary pop culture/visual culture iconic symbol that was immortalized in the 1960's with the hippie movement and Vietnam War peace protests, then developing into a modern Hip Hop pose emulated globally. The immediate recognizable symbol draws the viewer in, wanting to explore the image further. I covered the silhouette figure with local and regional area maps because I wanted to represent my student's regional identity.

This regional identity is specific to Josh. He is a third generation south Cobb resident, his parents, grandparents and extended family all have strong ties to the area. This regional identity inspired me to use local and state maps in conjunction with the figure. Josh's local ties have become somewhat of an anomaly to this area and school environment. Unfortunately this particular area of south Cobb has become very transient over the past decade. In retrospect, I think I wanted to

celebrate this aspect of deep roots and community ties. Personally I think this community-based identity creates a positive influence in student's lives. This sense of belonging or familiarity translates to identity construction, creating another layer of identity for students, staff, community members and self.

*Josh* represents a symbol for all my middle school students, but his pose metaphorically depicts global recognition. I created this figure to be placed on a stand; I felt this was important to read the map for different viewpoints. This element allows the viewer to engage with the artwork closely to discover regional areas towns, cities and streets, hopefully creating a personal connection to the art.

*Jordan* (APPENDIX E) a female eighth grade student chose this pose for a student self-portrait project. This silhouette stands approximately five feet tall, cut out of half-inch plywood, painted black using acrylic paint. The pose is interesting due to the figure's somewhat upward gaze of the silhouette and the position of the hands. The slight head arch conveys a possible looking toward the heavens or up toward a spiritual enlightenment. I chose this particular photograph because it looks like she's looking for something or someone in a spiritual nature. The hands further convey this message, one hand is turned in toward herself and the other is turned out, almost reaching for something or someone. The placement of the hands further solidifies the spiritual nature of the pose. The right hand is turned in toward her body to represent inner peace or strength, the left hand is turned out, almost reaching yet still close to the body. The reaching symbolizes the desire to seek a greater truth, to allow experiences to unfold, believing in a faithful path. A

metaphoric adolescent stance possibly searching for truth and seek identity in the relationship to it.

The hands and gaze are emphasized by the placement of the mirror material applied to this area. The jagged pieces of mirror are arranged to create a new image reflecting identity by persuading the viewer to look into the glass to see their own reflection. The mirrored pieces are juxtaposed symbolizing the connection of experiences creating personal identity. Each piece a metaphor for an experience, placed next to another experience, layered atop of the next experience. The placement of each piece is essential and deliberate to complete the artwork, each section constructing identity, symbolic of all teenagers' experiences.

The final student inspired life-size figure in my art-based research study was difficult to develop. It required much internal reflection and daily observation of my students, requiring me to consciously contemplate the role of artist. As an art educator I believe my natural thought processes follows the path of instructor wanting to share knowledge, skills and techniques with my students.

I resisted the instinct to utilize my advanced eighth grade students to inspire this last student study. Our student/teacher relationship has developed into a very strong connection over the course of this annual class. I know them all very well, their personalities, strengths and weaknesses. I intentionally choose a student that I have observed from a distance. Although having this sixth grade student in my art class for one nine week quarter, I really never developed a close relationship with her. In my experience this is typical for sixth grade because the classes are large and the students are relatively new to the middle school environment.

To shift my mind-set to reflect and document this final student inspired life-size silhouette figure I will take the roll of artist. I will refer to this student as Zion. (APPENDIX F) She is a female, sixth grade student at a middle school in south Cobb County School District. She intrigued me from the moment I met her. She is beautiful and confident, seemingly different from most of the typical female students at this middle school. She carries herself with a strong sense of worth and awareness. I soon came to discover these initial feelings and emotions of mine to be accurate not only from our classroom interactions, but through her interpretive dance performances.

She is a dancer at my schools newly developed dance program. Her elegance and movements on staged resonated with me. Her seemingly natural motion to the music displaying a graceful self-assurance projected to the audience. I took several photographs of the group as they preformed focusing mainly on Zion. As I struggled with this art-based student inspired figure, I found myself revisiting the photographs often. I decided to use Zion's photographs and dance routine as motivation for this final student life size silhouette figure.

*Zion's* dance pose is a metaphor for all teenagers delicate dance between childhood and adulthood when they formulate identity. It represents different moves and motions necessary to push forward through struggles, celebrations, disappoints and delights. The figures upward out stretched arm, turned in leg, pedestal stance illustrates a body reaching in all directions. Allowing for direction change in mid stride, compensating for new experience, adjusting, gaining balance again to retain stability and remain balanced in life. All these actions are necessary

in life to develop and learn, different paths your body physically or emotionally sustains to acquire true balance essential for all to discover or gain.

I contemplated the necessary art materials to visual articulate an accurate depiction of Zion's identity. I wanted to illustrate the steadfast nature of her demeanor, while incorporating the soft, delicate, graceful motion of dance. The firm yet pliable quality of sheet metal provided an excellent solution to communicate this expression. The material is applied to symbolize the dancers skirt section of her costume. The sheet metal panel is cut into triangle shapes using snips, round at the top to remove the sharp angle. Each side of the figure has approximately twenty-five triangular shaped pieces attached by a small screw, allowing for each piece to be anchored secured. Individual attention is given to each piece of sheet metal to create a feeling of fluidity generating an interesting contrast using the rigid yet pliable material.

The reflective silver sheet metal pieces illuminate the black-silhouetted figure creating color contrast. This push and pull or juxtaposition of elements continues with the use of tool fabric placed between the sheet metal pieces. The fine mesh of the tool fabric softens the metal pieces while still creating a reflective quality through the netted material. The multi colored tool fabric is mirrored on the top portion of the figure using acrylic paint. The blending technique symbolizes the top portion of the dancers costume. This technique further illustrates motion creating a blurring effect.

This figure was originally designed to incorporate a kinetic element. The figure was initially mounted on a Lazy-Susan turntable to create a spinning motion

when turned. Unfortunately the figure was too heavy and the turntable did not provide enough stability for the figure to rotate. My solution to this dilemma was to add casters to the bottom of the round platform; it does enable the figure to move but is not what I originally envisioned. Artist must make compensations as they create and work through the process of art production. Although struggling with some challenges, I believe this figure is a successful piece of art. *Zion* provided a venue for me to investigate identity construction in art. I believe I captured the essence of this students' persona through visual representation utilizing metaphor and symbolism from my perspective as an artist.

As I continue in the realm of reflection through the lens of artist, I will explore the artistic process of creating a self-portrait life size silhouette figure. Scrutinizing self-identity is a deeply reflective process; it requires analytical thinking, investigating many domains of past-lived experiences, present consciousness and future desires. Incorporating all these aspects into a visual representation is challenging to say the least. I began the process by reviewing photographs of myself; forty-eight years of pictures can be overwhelming.

A friend helped take several full body portrait photographs of me. I wanted to keep the pose simply, something that represented me in real time, in a current situation. I decided to use a frontal view, one hand in my jeans pocket the other holding my glasses. I thought this would be a great beginning to begin my portrait. As I enlarged the pose and transferred on to the plywood I made a conscious effort to think about my thinking, reflect and process how I was going to accomplish a successful piece of art.



Working through the production process of cutting wood I was thinking about all the photographs I reviewed for initial inspiration, they became an integral part of my self-identity portrait. I experimented using several different applications of the photographs, I wanted to photo transfer the pictures on to the wood using wintergreen oil, but this processes was unsuccessful. Using small pieces of plywood I applied the photographs in several different ways using mixed media techniques to no avail. As I worked with the photographs I began think about shapes and how confined the photographic image is reduced to a simply rectangle. I took my scissors to the copied photos to create different shapes, squares, circles, triangles and organic. Intrigued by this method, I thought it maybe interesting to repeat these shapes into the plywood depicting my silhouette.

The shapes are a metaphor representing conformity and expression in my life. The geometric shapes are precise, stable, predictable and reliable. The organic shapes are creative, artistic, expressive and imaginative. The cut out shapes symbolize adaptation to the surroundings, the ability to see the environment through the figure, wherever the figure is placed it becomes part of that space. Metaphorically representing flexibility and to acclimate intuitively in your surroundings.

The photographs repeat the cut out shapes similar to puzzle pieces this was intentional to symbolize pieces or parts of life, they are all connected and each piece is important, they are all interlocking. This connection is essential to construct self-identity; all past experiences make up who you are now. The photographs depict one moment in time, but all these moments become part of your identity. Some of

the pictures are raised slight off the figures surface; this variety creates a sense of layering. Layering of experiences, days, months, years, construct identity. This self-portrait art based study allowed me to reflect on my own identity to discover traits and personal triumphs and mishaps. It revealed how art can examine self-identity and identity construction, while constructing identity.

The final figure I will discuss through the artist viewpoint is *Community* (APPENDIX B.2) This figure was available to community stakeholders as an interactive art activity during a middle school's fine arts night. The attendees were all encouraged to participate in expressing their creativity and personal identity. The figure is approximately five feet four inches tall, cut out of one half-inch plywood and painted with black acrylic paint on both sides. *Community* has two separate interpretations of artwork using the central theme of identity construction. Side one was created by multiple community members of the south Cobb area, regional affiliated with the middle school's fine arts event. The members included community leaders, Cobb County School District supervisors, school staff, parents and students in attendance. The parameters given to the participants at the event were established by monitoring assistances and myself. Participates' were asked to create a section or add an artistic interpretation expressing their identity. The limitations of the participates artistic expression were restricted by time and available art supplies and materials.

*Community's* side one is a successful endeavor establishing a multi artist work of art. This portion of the evenings' event had about sixty people in attendance, approximately half that number participated in the art activity. People

engaged with the art supplies eager to leave their mark of identity on the figure. Most folks really thought about their contribution utilizing the materials in the best possible way. Attention was given to color, shape and space selection based on personal preference or existing designs. I think it is an accurate visual representation of the community and symbolizes the uniqueness of the attendees.

*Community's* side two is my artistic interpretation of the same community members. It is created using a gesture style of painting confining the color scheme to skin tone colors. I chose these colors deliberately to illustrate the multi cultural identities of the community represented at the event. I used the gestural style because I wanted the feeling to be loose, a metaphor to express the blending of different people moving through the evening events as an entity. Each an individual but together a force, with a common agenda to celebrate the arts. The figure is non-gender specific, it symbolizes all people, the flesh appearing through the black silhouette casting a ghost-like affect to the piece. The ambiguity of side two provides an interesting contrast to side one, offering two solutions to visually articulate identity construction.

As I conclude this portion of analysis through an artist viewpoint I must reiterate several clear and unwavering personal perspectives. As an artist, I believe I perceive the world through a visual stance. Executing the art portion of this art based research study required successful use of metaphor and symbolism to represent thoughts, feelings and emotions creating a connection to the viewing audience. As an artist I utilized the theme of identity consciously in my art, creating a visual self-examination of the past, present and future. Constructing identity

literally involves life experiences, relationships and connections, a solid mental or emotional stamp on a human. Constructing identity figuratively involves metaphorical or symbolical representation of thoughts or emotions in an expressive way, creating a conceptual visual representation. Through the act of art production, creation and construction, artists simultaneously produce, create and construct their identity.

### ***Exploring Identity as Teacher***

Exploring identity as a teacher requires a necessary mind shift in perspectives. Although I find it difficult to compartmentalize each sub topic it is essential to organize my art based research study in this fashion. My passion for the visual arts drives my art teaching I believe this exuberance spills onto my art room floor, my students' have know choice but to step in it, metaphorically speaking. Reflecting back to the methodology section of this paper, I asked the question, "In what ways does reflecting on the cultural and personal identity of my students impact my relationship with them as a teacher?"

Providing a venue for students to investigate their personal identity through the visual arts offers a unique opportunity for students. I believe offering these experiences creates an immediate connection to build a strong teacher/student relationship. Encouraging young people to explore their inner feelings and emotions can often be challenging, I believe students create quality artwork when they have a personal connection and investment in their art.

My success in the art classroom relies strongly on the ability to engage students in the process of art making. Stressing the fact that there is no one right

answer to a project or assignment. All answers, thoughts or solutions to a project are built upon individual life experiences. Each student sees the world differently based on their past experiences, exploring this individuality reveals personal identity. Art provides a showcase to visually display this reflective thought process providing insight to identity construction.

As a teacher I urge students to respond to their intuition as they develop art. I relay upon this attribute often in my artwork for example *Zion* the student inspired figure for this study. As I mentioned earlier in this paper, I struggled finding motivation. Consciously reflecting on the thinking process enlightens ideas and concepts often overlooked or ignored. Metaphorically *Zion* represents an adolescent's dance of life, my personal interruption of a middle school students struggles, challenges and successes. "Everything you create is a representation of something else; in this case, everything you create is enriched by metaphor." (Thorp, 2003, p. 157). Assisting students to process thoughts, critically reflect on there thinking process and to be able to articulate their meaning or conclusions develop identity construction based on personal perception. "A large part of understanding is the search for appropriate personal metaphor that make sense of our lives" (Lakoff, 1980, p.233) The more we understand metaphor, the more we understand ourselves, constructing identity.

Transitioning abstract thoughts, ideas and concepts to tangible visual representation is a difficult task. In my experience middle school students need

specific parameters. When not afforded this boundary students will likely struggle to begin assignments, floundering in frustration. I often incorporate photographic images of students to develop lessons and projects this element creates a parameter to provide self-motivation. Teachers often need to support students as they resolve issues of self- image during the middle school years, altering or adjusting the image successfully resolves this issue.

I often use self-portraits as a source for students to explore identity construction in the visual arts utilizing photographic images. For example, creating a silhouette image from a posed photograph provides an intriguing sense of ambiguity for students. In my experience students readily accept and embrace this indistinctiveness as a venue to express themselves visually. It provides a strong personal connection to their art while casting a veil of uncertainty to the viewers. As an art teacher, I believe introducing this approach of self-portrait to students enables them to express their vulnerabilities expounding upon this vague interpretation, encouraging the audience to engage with their art.

While investigating identity construction for this art-based research I developed a portraiture lesson for my seventh grade middle school students. I took digital head shots of each student to use as reference to create a self-portrait. Initially many students reacted adversely to the photographic portion of the project, a relatively typical response for many middle school students, displaying their insecurities of self-image. I settled the apprehension by explaining that the photograph is going to be used as a plan or guide for their self-portrait. The students

and I quickly realized the importance of the individual student poses. How the pictures captured their classmates' identities, revealing familiar and unfamiliar qualities. As I reflect on this assignment and the experiences shared in the art classroom, I realize I unknowingly forced my students to reflect on their own identities through this project.

I utilized several photographic methods to create my self-portrait figure. I believe in sharing my artwork with my students it allows them to observe a side of my identity outside the daily classroom experiences. How I incorporate art into my life, it shows them my vulnerabilities and personal expression. These qualities reflect my identity and how I use art to explore my identity. As a result of this art-based study I am consciously engaging in dialogue to foster a deeper connection with my students. Students feel comfortable to reveal their true personalities in the classroom environment and their art. Providing surroundings that are safe, acceptable and encouraging permits students the ability to explore their identity and construct identity through the visual arts.

As an art education teacher, I find the roll of medium introduction and technical skillfulness extremely satisfying. I believe it a necessary component of the classroom experience for students, to extend beyond the art classroom to include faculty, parents and community members. This practice was executed successfully through the production of the Community silhouette figure (APPENDIX B.1)

Video documentation, photographs and audio recordings provided data to support the activity engagement of the community members. The information

indicates similar findings that I experience in the art room on a daily basis. Of course it is necessary to mention this activity was voluntary unlike art education class. Approximately 30 people participated in the figure production; half the attendees eagerly approached the material table anxious to leave their mark.

The community figure (APPENDIX B.1) was inspired by this arts-based research study. It developed as an additional life size figure to perform a documented research art activity. The community figure was an art activity developed to coincide with my middle schools night of the arts program. This event showcased several fine arts classes at my school, including band, orchestra, chorus, dance and visual arts. As the evenings guests are welcomed at the school by selected student ushers and guided down the red carpet to the dining area located in the media center.

The red-carpeted hallway is located in the fine arts wing of the school. As guests arrive they are met with a student art exhibit showcasing the finest pieces of artwork gather throughout the year displayed on the walls of the hallway. In addition to the student art, I displayed my series of figures developed in my Georgia State University graduate level drawing and painting class. The completed figures provided motivation and inspiration for the attendees to participate in the creation of the community figure.

A table was setup in the corner of the hallway with art materials to produce the community figure. The figure is cut out of half-inch plywood, painted black using acrylic paint. The gender is non-specific to allow for ambiguity. The art material



consisted of various colored acrylic paints, brushes, stamps, paint pens, stickers and sharpie markers. The evening's theme was international diversity, reflecting identity and identity construction on a local, regional, national and global level, representing the many ethnicities and nationalities enrolled in the school and involved within the community.

Prior to the public communities participation, several teachers and students placed their mark on the figure. My thought was this would ease the fears or reluctance of the guests of being the first to participate. In retrospect this was a good idea, it encouraged folks to add their own personal piece of art to the figure. They sorted through the various art supplies available to carefully choose the exact representation reflecting their identity. As I reviewed the video documentation it was apparent that several participants added on to existing art, they seemed more comfortable joining on then creating their own. Other contributors chose to sign their name although a seemingly simple act, reveals much about individual identity.

A person's signature is an individual expression so unique to the writer that it is identified legally as being "owned" by that single person and none other. Your signature, however, does more than identify you. It also expresses you and your individuality, your creativity. Your signature is true to yourself. In this sense, you already speak the non-verbal language of art: You are using the basic element of drawing, line, in an expressive way, unique to yourself.

(Edwards, 1979, p. 37)

The other participants needed various levels of persuasion to take part in the activity. Of course I heard the typical response of "I can't draw", much to my chagrin.

I took the responses as a challenge to encourage these folks individually, offering suggestions and assistance with medium, color and placement. Much to their surprise they enjoyed being able to include their slice of identity to the Community figure.

### ***Exploring Identity as Researcher***

Exploring identity as a researcher encompasses concepts explored through literature, analyzed in methodology and documented through reflection. This art-based study utilized these facets to compile insight into identity construction through the visual arts. Visual arts research reflects the investigative process, potentially resulting in a significantly recognizable increase of theoretical and practical knowledge. Rhonda Watrin (1999) emphasizes that art research “seizes the fullness of lived experience by describing, interpreting, creating, reconstituting and revealing meaning” p. (93). As an artist, teacher and researcher examination, description, interpretation and meaning are draw from lived experiences. These experiences inevitably construct identity.

Literary findings concur with the notion of individual exchanges and experiences construct self-identity. Vygotsky (1978) and Erikson (1946) share the belief of constant identity construct, not solely based on past life, but is future indicative as well, which are changing and building upon experiences. I believe this to be accurate based upon the journey traveled compiling this study. Relying on the reflective data collected during the course of my graduate level drawing and painting class in the fall of 2010 at Georgia State University. The professor

encouraged me to investigate my identity as an artist and a teacher and use my middle school students as inspiration. I was inspired by both current and past students I had in my art education classes. This experience allowed me to research identity construction through the visual arts, it allowed for subjective and objective interpretation with immediate feedback from the professor and classmates. This experience, though unknowing at the time, laid the initial foundation for research for this arts-based research study.

The series of life size silhouette figures provided the means to explore identity construction through the visual arts. A specific student inspired each figure, but is actually my interpretation of a more generalized adolescent. Identity represented through the use of symbolism and metaphor. Literary investigation of identity construction based on my literature review section provided a strong foundation to investigate identity construction through the visual arts. Erikson (1938) proclaims identity's function is future oriented it is developed through life stages; successful orientation produces specific personality traits, which are changing and building upon experiences. These experiences are evident from the production process creating valuable knowledge to transfer information to the subsequently figures completed in this art-based research study.

*Zion* (APPENDIX F) exemplifies this process, my research consisted of reviewing photographs of past and current students I have taught or had contact with. Reflecting upon my relationships with students, analyzing the visual data, synthesizing knowledge, making connections and communicating meaning are all

important considerations during the research process. Solidifying a metaphor that can be visual articulated was challenging, yet in retrospect intuitive. Listening and being aware of my inner voice to process thought reflectively is a vital characteristic I discovered through this process. Using artistic medium to symbolize a successfully execution of metaphor requires deep contemplation, intense exploration, inductive reasoning and divergent thinking.

I continue to use these qualities and characteristics to produce my self-portrait life-size silhouette figure (APPENDIX A). The research for this figure consisted of photographs of myself; they span my life, highlighting different ages and stages. Each photograph was manipulated to fill the surface of a shape, this art appropriation process created a new piece of artwork re-vision, re-evaluation, variation, version, and interpretation of existing images. The photographs are assembled at different heights symbolizing the layers of life's experiences depicting a metaphor of my personal journey through life. This journey or process of development directly relates to my identity construction. This imagery possesses the ability to showcase a moment in time, to capture your individuality at a particular place. Viewed as one image this piece represents a visual representation of my live, but also illustrates the point of continuous change. Identity construction is always in flux, changing and adapting to new experiences in life.

New experiences are vital in life, artists relay on this knowledge to create art. An art event at my school was motivation to produce side two of *Community* (APPENDIX B.2) My involvement with my schools staff, students, parents and

community members inspired my art for the life size community silhouette figure. Analyses and reflection of video documentation, photographs, and audio recordings of the attendees' participation in the art activity provided research to create side two of *Community*. I wanted my art to echo the people, the emotion, the excitement and celebration of the evenings' performances. To incorporate the expressive feelings of nervous enthusiasm captured in visual representation. I chose to use a gestural style of painting to metaphorically interpret this power of movement both physically and mentally. The paint is applied in a blending technique, which further enhances the feeling of movement. The color palette symbolizes different ethnicities unified to create one human being, metaphorically this non-gender appeals as global perspective reaching beyond one person, one race or one gender. An interesting contrast occurs viewing side two of *Community*. The black silhouette form is calming, still, poised in a frozen stance this enhances the gestural paint application further, this push and pull evokes the inner human turmoil encased by the calm exterior.

“Research is the discovery, developmental, restorative, evaluative function of praxis” Irwin (2004, p. 186). Artists perform research through multiple venues textual, visual, and physical production process. This multiplicity is evident as applied to the artists included in this study. Louise Bourgeois, Kara Walker and Jonathon Borofsky each have interpreted their personal lived experiences as research relevant to their art, illustrating what Irwin refers to as multiple ends. She believes a legitimate end of research can further invigorate the process. This concept is displayed in each artist solution of identity construct through their art,

the end can be multiple and there could be multiple ends. I believe my art-based study aligns with this concept both consciously and subconsciously, creating numerous interpretations to identity construction through the use of symbolism and metaphor. “Art as content, context, and intent, that is multiple identities, is compatible with research approaches that acknowledge lived experiences and multiple perspectives and see researcher’s subjectivity and historicity as integral to the study” (Irwin 2004).

## CONCLUSION

I have developed my art-based research study through documented research, art production process and analytical reflective text excavating identity construction through the utilization of symbolism and metaphor. The purpose of this study was guided by three questions:

In what ways might I develop images of personal identity in my art?

In what ways might I develop insight into my identity in my artwork?

How this transition impacts my relationship with my students, colleagues, friends and family?

I found the following quote by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) to be very helpful in understanding my creative process and my construction of identity.

We seek out personal metaphors to highlight and make coherent our own pasts, our present activities and our dreams, hopes and goals as well. A large part of self-understanding is the search for appropriate personal metaphors that make sense of our lives. Self-understanding requires unending negotiation and renegotiation of the meaning of your experience to yourself. It involves the constant construction of coherences in your life, coherences that give new meaning to old experiences. The process of self-understanding is the continual development of new life stories for yourself. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 232-233).

This inquiry heighten my awareness to the importance of the art-making activity, it made it possible for me to delve into aspects of self that I cannot describe adequately with words (Irwin, 2004). The power of artistic representations is that it “can occur on multiple levels, engaging multiple senses, producing a more visceral impact than does textual prose and hence eliciting greater intellectual/emotional response” (Kondo, 1995, p. 62). This process of profound inquiry allowed me to examine aspects of myself that are so deeply part of my psyche that tapping them for introspection requires a special awareness. I discovered the physical act of art making assisted me to bring innermost thoughts and personal perspectives to the surface for examination. This insight into my identity through my artwork provided an instinctual point of departure, the words developed later, during the reflective process.

By reflecting on my multiple roles as artist/teacher/researcher through the investigation of identity construction in this art-based research study, I am content that the results that reflect my experiences. I believe my identity of self has evolved to trust my instinctual inner voice, to create, understand, accept and examine concepts fully without hesitation or trepidation. Fully immersing myself in the research process provided a deep level of contemplation, intense exploration, inductive reasoning and divergent thinking. My perspective as artist/teacher has been enhanced from consciously thinking through the role of researcher. I believe this experience will permeate both personally and professionally.

This transition impacts my relationship with my students, colleagues, friends and family by way of achieving greater understanding of self and others. Through



the process of sharing my artwork with my students and colleagues it allows them to observe a side of my identity outside the daily classroom experiences.

Incorporating art into my life shows friends and family my vulnerabilities and personal expression. These qualities reflect my identity and how I use art to explore identity. This dialogue fosters a deeper connection with my students, colleagues, friends and family. Consequently as result of this study, I believe my students feel more comfortable to reveal their true personalities in the classroom environment and their art. Providing surroundings that are safe, acceptable and encouraging permits students the ability to explore their identity and construct identity through the visual arts. "Images allow us to make statements that cannot be made by words" (Posser, 1998, p. 104). I feel I have achieved a deeper understanding, tolerance and personal awareness studying the concept of identity constructing through the visual arts. These experiences inevitably positively affect my relationships with my students, colleagues, friends and family.

I believe this self-knowledge about my identity will impact my teaching in multiple areas. It has afforded me the opportunity to investigate my personal views about myself personal and professionally. Exploring these internal feelings, emotions, ideas and concepts will resonate within my thoughts. Remaining close to the surface to influence my actions or reactions as a teacher. This self-analysis through this art-based study has allowed me the opportunity to share this knowledge with my students. I strongly recommend for teacher's to share their personal art with students. Teaching the concept of identity construction through the visual arts generates both cultural and self-knowledge for both teacher and

learner (Irwin 2004).

I would strongly recommend art educators to create works of art that help examine the relationship of identity in the art classroom. My personal experience demonstrates the learner connects to their art in a deeper, more meaningful way, in turn creating and producing quality artwork. Art can provide a venue for student's to investigate their thoughts, emotions and inner personal identity visually articulating their own experiences or life story. This communication will demonstrate a deeper understanding of themselves and others. "The roles of art are to help us understand ourselves and others and to engage with another in the process of making, receiving, and embracing important meanings that are carried through the elegance of aesthetic form" (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2005, p. 232).

Examining personal identity through the visual arts benefits student self-awareness. This conscious reflection permeates beyond self to allow students to except and build relationships with others. This bond must expand to all people, rather than just people who look like us or live by us. To embrace the concept of shared beliefs of ones own identity and to accept multiple identity perspectives, using visual representation. Students should be given the opportunity to explore issues concerning self in art education. This encouragement affords students to immerse themselves in real life interests and concerns. Exploring these issues relevant to their life and personal story can lead to a personal transformation, thus identity construction.

I believe art education should include aspects of self-identity in the visual arts curriculum. This area of exploration benefits art education by providing the

opportunity for students to reflect on self-concerning issues and current real life student interests. This self discover aligned with material application and skill-building techniques produces quality art representing identity construction.

The idea is to critically examine the ideas, feelings, and forms of others to find meaning and as stimulus for students' own creative expression. Education must not only transmit culture but also provide alternative views of the world and strengthen the will to explore them. (Anderson & Milbrandt, 2004, p. 231).

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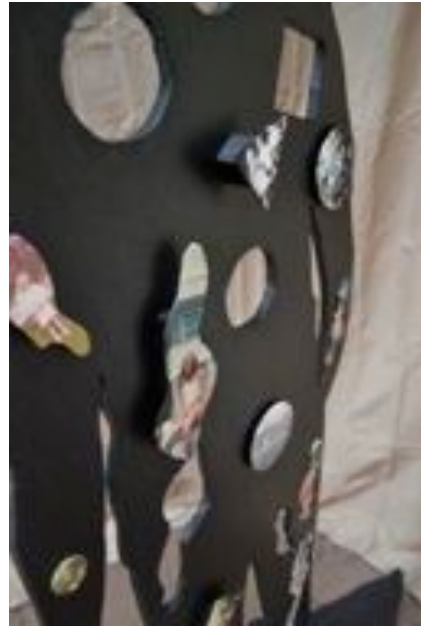
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## APPENDIX A



Susan Dowling, *Self Portrait*, 2011. Mixed media on wood, 5 ft 7 in x 2 ft x 18 in. Atlanta, Georgia.

## APPENDIX B



B.1 Susan Dowling, *Community*, 2011. Mixed media on wood, 5 ft 4 1/2 in x 3 ft 6 in x 12 in. Atlanta, Georgia.



B.2 Susan Dowling, *Community*, 2011. Acrylic on wood, 5 ft 4 1/2 in x 3 ft 6 in x 12 in. Atlanta, Georgia.

## APPENDIX C



Susan Dowling, *Quinton*, 2010. Collage on wood, 4 ft 7in x 3 ft 6 in. x ½ in. Atlanta, Georgia.



## APPENDIX D



Susan Dowling, *Josh*, 2010. Mixed media on wood, 5 ft 5 in x 2 ft 8 in. x 1ft 4in.  
Atlanta, Georgia.

## APPENDIX E



Susan Dowling, *Jordan*, 2010. Mixed media on wood, 5 ft 3 in x 2 ft 3 in. x ½ in.  
Atlanta, Georgia.

## APPENDIX F



Susan Dowling, *Zion*, 2011. Mixed media on wood, 5 ft 5 1/2 in x 2 ft x 2 ft. Atlanta, Georgia.