Click, click saddle up see you on the moon then
Alyssa Miserendino

Documents submitted to the Faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Master of Fine Arts in the Department of Art, 2016

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ARTIST STATEMENT

My practice of art making begins by investigating connections between people. The formal departure, from this investigation, uses the mediums of photography, sculpture, installation, language, video and audio.

Often I am researching human connection in an illogical manner. I am investigating in a non-judgmental means, while being human, fallible, and judgmental. What does the language or logic of the irreconcilable look and sound like? This is what I imagine in a physical sense. This is the artwork I create and the space I occupy – a space of paradox.

To be in a state of paradox means to rest in a space of self-contradiction. It is an irrational place, where we recognize the possibility of conflicting ideas at the same time. This is not about existing as an “either/or,” but rather about the existence of contradiction. Paradox is what makes us human – we are evil; we are good. I’m interested in propositions such as this.

I believe we exist in an Age of Empathy, past the Age of Faith and Age of Reason. The importance of connection becomes a means for survival. All of our activity is one of embodied experience – the participation with another person cannot be detached.

According to the social theorist Jeremy Rifkin, empathy and empathic expression is intrinsic to our development of the self. Our selfhood requires us to reflect on and interact with others in order to connect. The self and other go hand in hand in this development. Part of our cognitive development depends on our ability to mimic our parents, or anyone for that matter. There is an emotional importance in mimicry. Psychologist Martin L. Hoffman suggests that, “Mimicry is probably a hard-wired neurologically based empathy-arousing mechanism whose two steps, imitation and feedback, are directed by commands from the central nervous system.”

This self-reflexive or self-referential mode of human cognitive operation required to see, hear, and understand another human being is the spark that initiates my work. The mirror, glass, language, photographs and lenses operate as formal elements in harmony with this concept of perception. The mirror is a medium for mimicry. Glass is an element we often look through to another. Language can resolve into multiple meanings. Lenses distort phenomenological experiences. The camera functions as a paradoxical device, at once capturing the perspective of the photographer and mirroring back the perspective of the subject. These mediums are a means to my continued exploration of human connection.

Alyssa Miserendino, April 20, 2016

1 Jeremy Rifkin, The Empathic Civilization (Penguin Group, 2009) 144.
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Alyssa Miserendino
Studio experimentation using string and pushpins to visually explore ideas of communication and connection
Approximately 1,600 photographic prints from family archive
1798 origin
AESTHETIC
from German Ästhetisch or French esthétique, both from Greek aisthetikos:
"sensitive, perceptive,"

1909 translation
Einfühlung (German) → Empathy (English)
translation of Greek empatheia "passion, state of emotion," from assimilated form of en "in" + pathos "feeling"

Ein = "in"
Fühlung = "feeling"
Click, click saddle up see you on the moon then (installation view)

Interrogation mirror, 2016 - site specific installation 35’ x 10’ (unique) – outside view
Click, click saddle up see you on the moon then (installation view)

Interrogation mirror, 2016 - site specific installation 35’ x 10’ (unique) – inside view
Click, click saddle up see you on the moon then (installation view), 2016
Click, click saddle up see you on the moon the moon then (installation view)
One-way conversation, 2015 - re-engineered Amphenol phone with sound, individual chair and side table. (unique)
Not taken, 2016 - sculpture of approximately 5,000 photos from the artist’s family archive. (unique)
Not taken, 2016 - sculpture of approximately 5,000 photos from the artist’s family archive. (unique) detail
Circles, 1970
De Wain Valentine
Photography courtesy of the 2015 De Wain Valentine/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

Opposite of White – x.1, 2008
Portrait of an Image (with Isabelle Huppert), 2008
Roni Horn
Photography courtesy of Xavier Hufkens

Black Square XVII, 2015
Taryn Simon
Photography courtesy tarynsimon.com

Lost for Words, 1991
Jane Mulfinger
Photography courtesy janemulfinger.com
Photo: AFP/Getty

Cloud Gate, 2004. Millennium Park, Chicago
Photo: Peter J. Schulz, City of Chicago

Sky Mirror, 2006. Presented by Tumi at Rockefeller Center
Photo: Seong Kwon Photography

Hexagon Mirror, 2013
Photo credit scmp.com


Different ways one can imagine the color red
Alyssa Miserendino

Influenced by personal relationships and self-expressed form, Alyssa Miserendino delves into human psychology and explores a pathway to the human psyche and its intricacies through photography. Miserendino’s work often involves themes such as family, memory, and the relationship between the two. Her work often examines the dynamics of her own family through photographs of herself and her children. Her work is characterized by a sense of intimacy and vulnerability, often revealing the complexity of familial relationships.

What we didn’t hear, 2016
What we didn’t hear, 2016
(detail)
What we didn’t hear, 2016
(detail)
A Technical Report on the Nature of
MOVEMENT PATTERNING, THE
BRAIN and DECISION-MAKING

With gratitude to
Vladimir Putin,
The President of Russia
For helping us understand ......

Prepared by Brenda Cersons,
For the Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense
January 2008

The views expressed in this report are those of the author and do not reflect the official view, policy, or position of the Department of Defense or the United States Government.

2008 report on Putin, prepared for the Office of the Secretary of Defense
A First-Rate Madness

Uncovering the Links Between Leadership and Mental Illness

Nassir Ghaemi
Engraving test where emulsion is half separated from its paper backing.