

Malisa Van Maasdam

Thesis Statement

Dasein

Within each of us, there lies the propensity to change. Whether the change is positive or negative, seen or unseen, temporary or permanent is another affair entirely. Is the change we exact upon ourselves pretense, or are we becoming something entirely new?

What you see before you is the embodiment of German philosopher Martin Heidegger's Dasein. Dasein, German for 'existence, being,' refers to the relationship of a person to surrounding people and objects. I am challenging the notion of authenticity and exposing the disingenuous nature of our changed states. Here, I explore the interactions and relations between people and objects and the change that inevitably follows as we come into contact with difference.

I have permeated exteriors and excavated the Self that lies behind the facades we embrace during personal interactions; I have torn down what hides the Self and revealed the Platonic Truth that lies beneath our affected states; I wish to journey into the woods, into the habitual hiding place, of our existence. Through this series of portraits, I will disseminate and convey the purposeful changes of one's Self to acquiesce in certain situations and relations leaving the viewer to vacillate between perception and derision.

#### Custos/Memen:

This is an image of my Dad with cords straining from his neck connecting him to my Mother's picture at the head. My mom's piece is titled Memen, which is Latin for Memory. Custos is Latin for Guardian or Keeper. As my mom is slowly losing her memory, she is connected necessarily to my dad for the recollection of our past. The cords that bind them are rough and tangled and bisect the gallery space. This is symbolic of how we cannot escape such illnesses as Alzheimer's or dementia and cannot ignore the roughness of its presence in our lives. This disease has changed my parents' daily lives for ever, but they remain my parents as I knew them stripped of illness.

#### In the Manner of Hannah Wilke:

This piece is a portrait of a woman covered in chewing gum. It is reminiscent of the feminist theorist and artist, Hannah Wilke who photographed her cancer ridden body, covered in chewing gum. The series that Wilke creates is titled "Lesions and Labia". It reflects the physical changes of the body as it self destructs through disease and the internal struggles she encounters as a woman artist who uses herself in most of her photographic work. As she changes, does the subject change as well? This is a question that is applicable to anyone with a physically debilitating illness: as your body changes, does your Self necessarily change as well?

#### Going to Work in Tall Buildings:

This is a portrait of me in a tree, covered in dark dripping paint. The woods are where I am freest and truest and are symbolic of what I wish to do and become. The paint is symbolic of the education I have received in the last four years and what marks they have made on me. Not all have been positive. Questions of the future, work and the need to be decisive all affect who I decide to become in the next few formative years as a graduate. If I take the advice given to me and become an archetype, am I still me, or am I a prescription?

#### Ambi:

This piece is a portrait of my partner. The piece is physically fragmented in two and caged in with string. Through her professional career as a teacher, she must follow certain prescribed lifestyle decisions in public. The dichotomy between her life at work and her life outside of work leave her feeling like two separate people, all the while still entrapped inside prescribed social norms. Her fragmentation lies between the desire to reconcile the two halves of her life.

#### Affected:

Pictured here is my younger sister. She is drawn half nude with tiny nails stuck into the paper over her body. These are representative of the changes she makes to her Self for the sake or in spite of others. She appears as vulnerable as she truly is. Still young, she is susceptible to being affected by others and undergoing many changes at the behest of those who surround her. She still has yet to find herself through all of this.

#### Life After Drowning:

My cousin, a woman I never met, is pictured, here. She drown at the age of twenty one while foraging down the Mississippi. The paper is warped and the image is runny to portray the unhappy death she suffered. But through her family, I have met this woman and she lives in our memories as real as she had before she died. Upon this reflection, I wondered which woman is truest: the one that died, or the one that lives in my memory?

**Bilingual:**

This is an image of my best friend. It was from a photograph taken in Spain. I have known her for almost a decade and thought I knew everything there was to know, until I visited her in Spain. She was more at home in a foreign country than I had ever seen her in the States. She is torn between the desire to live and teach abroad and the need to remain in the States. This is represented by the transparent strip of brown down the page. She remains fragmented by her desire to be a different person in a different country.

**Institutions:**

This is a portrait of my dear friend and old professor who refuses to be pigeonholed within the restraints of collegiate politics. Her portrait is in color and separated from the background to portray her involvement with everything around her, but how she has managed to remain above it and see beyond it (institutions). She is a rebel within, using her knowledge and strength to create difference: Educated women and men who are aware of the dark corners.

**Hidden:**

This is a triptych on handmade paper with sedges and branches covering the piece. There are two forms in the piece, but are hard to find due to all that surrounds it and remains more apparent. This is how we are in nature and in the world: we are small and hidden among all that surrounds us. Who we are and how we change means nothing when swallowed up by the immensity of everything else.











WITHIN EACH OF US, THERE  
WHETHER THE CHANGE IS POSITIVE OR  
PERMANENT IS ANOTHER AFFAIR  
UPON OURSELVES PRETENSE, OR  
ENTIRELY NEW?

WHAT YOU SEE BEFORE YOU  
PHILOSOPHER MARTIN  
FOR 'EXISTENCE, BEING',  
PERSON TO SURROUNDING  
CHALLENGING THE NOTION OF  
DISINGENUOUS NATURE OF OUR  
THE INTERACTIONS AND RELATIONS  
THE CHANGE THAT INEVITABLY  
WITH DIFFERENCE.

I HAVE PERMEATED  
THAT LIES BEHIND THE FACADES  
INTERACTIONS; I HAVE TORN  
THE TRUTH THAT LIES BENEATH  
SOJOURN INTO THE WOODS,  
OF OUR EXISTENCE.

THROUGH THIS SERIES OF  
AND CONVEY THE  
SELF TO ACQUIESCE IN  
RELATIONS LEAVING  
BETWEEN PERCEPTION

LIES THE PROPENSITY TO CHANGE.  
NEGATIVE, SEEN OR UNSEEN, TEMPORARY OR  
ENTIRELY. IS THE CHANGE WE EXACT  
ARE WE BECOMING SOMETHING

IS THE EMBODIMENT OF GERMAN  
HEIDEGGER'S DASEIN. DASEIN, GERMAN  
REFERS TO THE RELATIONSHIP OF A  
PEOPLE AND OBJECTS. I AM  
AUTHENTICITY AND EXPOSING THE  
CHANGED STATES, HERE I EXPLORE  
BETWEEN PEOPLE AND OBJECTS AND  
FOLLOWS AS WE COME INTO CONTACT

EXTERIORS, AND EXCAVATED THE SELF  
WE EMBRACE DURING PERSONAL  
DOWN WHAT HIDES THE SELF AND REVEALS  
OUR AFFECTED STATES. I WISH TO  
INTO THE HABITUAL HIDING PLACE

PORTRAITS. I WILL DISEMINATE  
PURPOSEFUL CHANGES OF ONE'S  
CERTAIN SITUATIONS AND  
THE VIEWER TO VACILLATE  
AND DERISION.

*McDonald*

# DASEIN

*Recent Works on Paper*

Malisa R. VanMaasdam



























