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HOPR

Introduction

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I. Introduction

The English language is a complex beast. We as English speakers use it daily without thought, deftly navigating between double meanings, sarcastic comments, jokes, riddles, homophones, synonyms, et cetera. As an artist, I am interested in making things visible. What are words? They are clearly a specific vibration in the air. These glyphs on this page are words, but what else? Many words fill in for something visual, an object, an action, a descriptive quality, etc. Making words visible is not a new idea. People have been doing it for thousands of years by way of the rebus. My thesis project sets out to explore the possibilities of coupling the visual identity of words with the virtual minefield we constantly navigate in misunderstood language.

Puns have been around since the beginnings of language. The Chinese, Romans, William Shakespeare, poets of the 1900s...they all used puns. The first record of the word 'Pun' in the English language is from 1644. (Sayers 55) There are several types of puns, all with slightly different functions. Words that sound the same or similar create homonymic puns, words that look similar create homographic puns, and visual puns are often used in logos. Puns are funny because they trick people into thinking one way, and then surprise them. "The audience needs to attribute to the communicator the intention to transmit a different message," says Manuel

Padilla Cruz, and I think that unexpected moment is perceived as humor. I will try to use all of these types of puns when creating the work for my thesis.

II. Literature Review

My artistic style has grown and changed throughout my life. It is, and will continue changing as I live out my life. To choose even a few of my main influences is an incredibly difficult problem. The current art movement is considered "Artistic Pluralism," which involves multicultural perspectives and cross-culture dimensions (Caldwell, Dake 2009). With the internet and the access we have with it, artists today can work with whatever style they choose and find a market for it. Pluralism gives artists freedom they haven't had before. Everything I have ever seen has influenced me, either positively or negatively. That being said, I know where some of my influence comes from. As a member of deviantart.com, I see pieces of work from artists all over the world every day. Deviantart is an online artist community where people share their work. Many of these artists work with pen tablets, which allow them to paint digitally in programs like Adobe Photoshop. Some of the users of deviantart whose work influenced me positively are (and these are usernames) Selma-todorova, blinck, peter-d, RHADS, and Andantonius. There are many others. Peter-d is a traditional artist, who does not paint with digital mediums. He works with pens and creates incredibly detailed ink drawings. I saw his work and wanted to try my hand at it, and now it is one of my favorite mediums to use. The rest of those users all paint digitally in a variety of subject matters. As far as traditional art

goes, I enjoy a lot of surrealist work such as Salvador Dali and Frida Kahlo. Of course I love Renaissance artwork, there's nothing like the control over lighting they had.

There are themes in art that I think helped me develop this topic. I really enjoy satirical art work. My advisor showed me the art of Barbara Kruger, where she puts bold, declarative type over images, discussing pop culture and who we are as a society. There is a lot of art that almost has a sarcastic tone to it. I think that taking a pun and reforging it out of what it means and into its literal form makes it a joke. That kind of humor is what I need and I see it often in art. Art is one of the most important things to me and I look at it daily.

The main question then is how I came across this topic. I am constantly bouncing ideas around for future art pieces in my head. Ideas come to me often, and I write them down or sketch them out. That is what happened with this idea. I was reading an article online and I read "I found it humorous." It triggered an image for me—switching 'humorous' for 'humerus,' the bone. I started thinking of puns like that, and a few other ideas kicked around too. In all of the artwork I've seen, both in person and online, I have never seen any work involving puns like that. I did some research and was able to find a few pieces online by various artists relating to puns, but there was no series of works all under that topic anywhere I could find. I intend to add that to the art world.

IV. Audiences

Puns are funny. Not the most high brow comedy in the world, but a pun can garner a chuckle at least. Those coming to my show will be of course the typical art show crowd of Bemidji, English/Creative & Professional Writing Students, and of course general audiences as

well. I hope to be in the newly refurbished and moved Talley Gallery, and will hope to attract walk-in traffic from the first floor of Bridgeman Hall.

V. Procedures

I want to take puns, plays on words, double meanings, etc and turn them from audible or readable terms and distill them into a purely visual form. For example, one piece I will be including in my show will be looking at the phrase "Oh dear God!" That phrase makes perfect sense, but what if you misunderstood 'dear' as 'deer'. And so we have "O Deer God," easily transferable to an image. According to Annarita Guidi, who studies puns in all languages, "Such manipulation consists of an exploitation of phonetic processes ordinarily involved in language, which can be reduced to four basic categories: addition, deletion, substitution, and inversion." (Guidi 345) These are techniques I'll use to describe the puns visually. Furthermore, while researching I found several articles providing information on how useful puns are as teaching methods. Kristin Lems defines three types of puns to teach with: sound-alike puns, look-alike puns, and close-sounding puns. People get intimidated by art and they say they don't understand it. Perhaps my art show will provide an easy to understand, gentle introduction to art using puns as a teaching method. These are the themes that I plan on discussing with my artworks.

At the show, I will have the drawings framed. I plan not to display the titles of the work, so that the viewers can try and reason out what pun I'm playing with on their own. I will be designing a book with photographs of my work to be placed at the desk of the gallery for a list of the answers.

I am currently working on work for the show. I have compiled a list of works to be completed. The show will be done for spring semester of 2016, hopefully running alongside the portfolio presentation of the design side of my degree.

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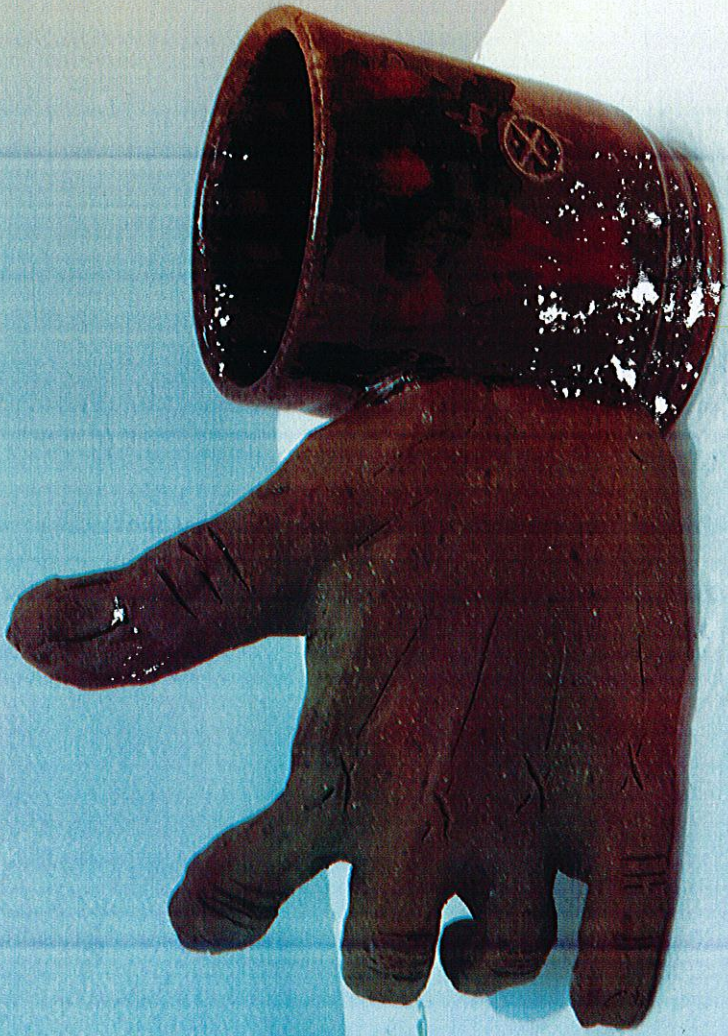
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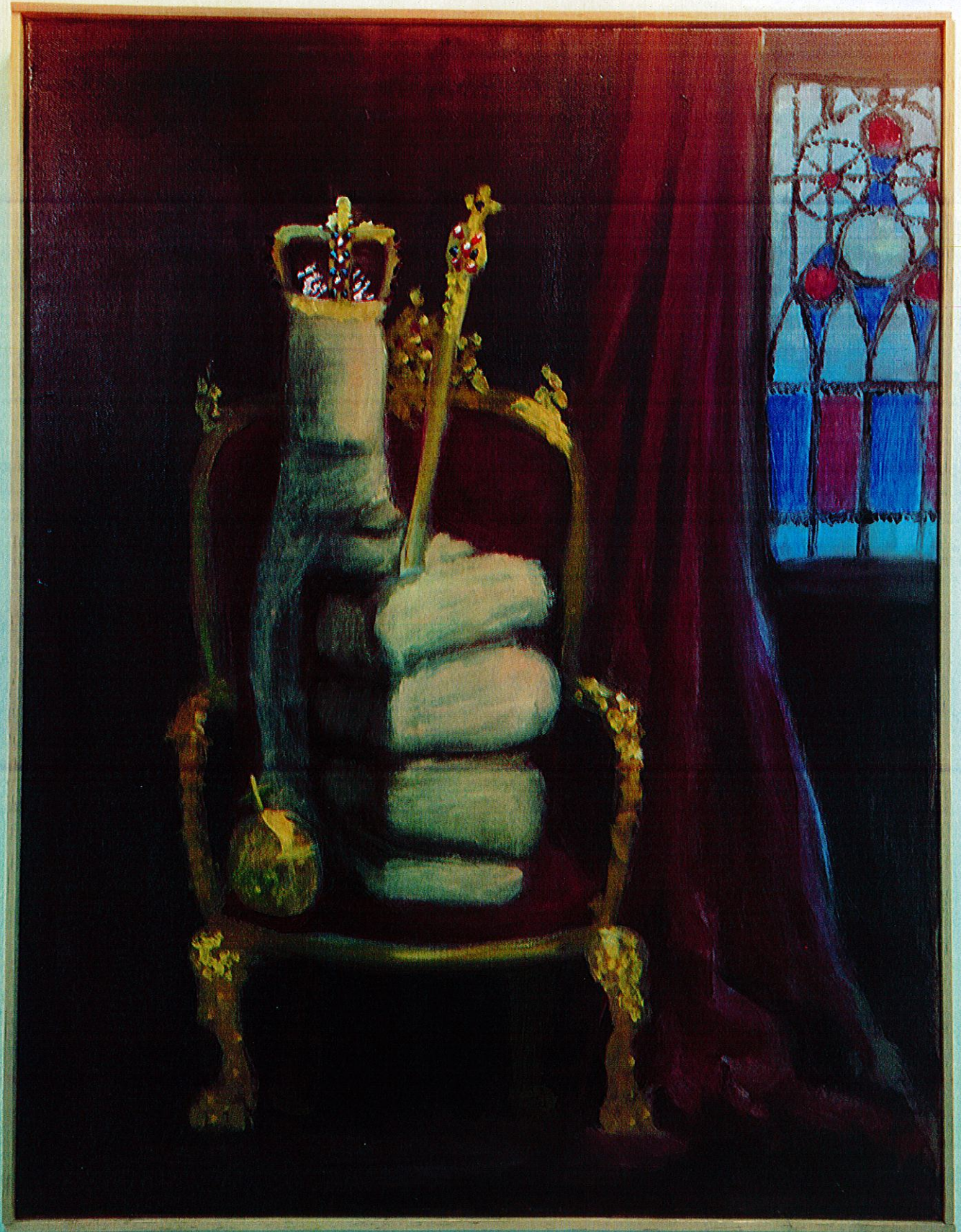


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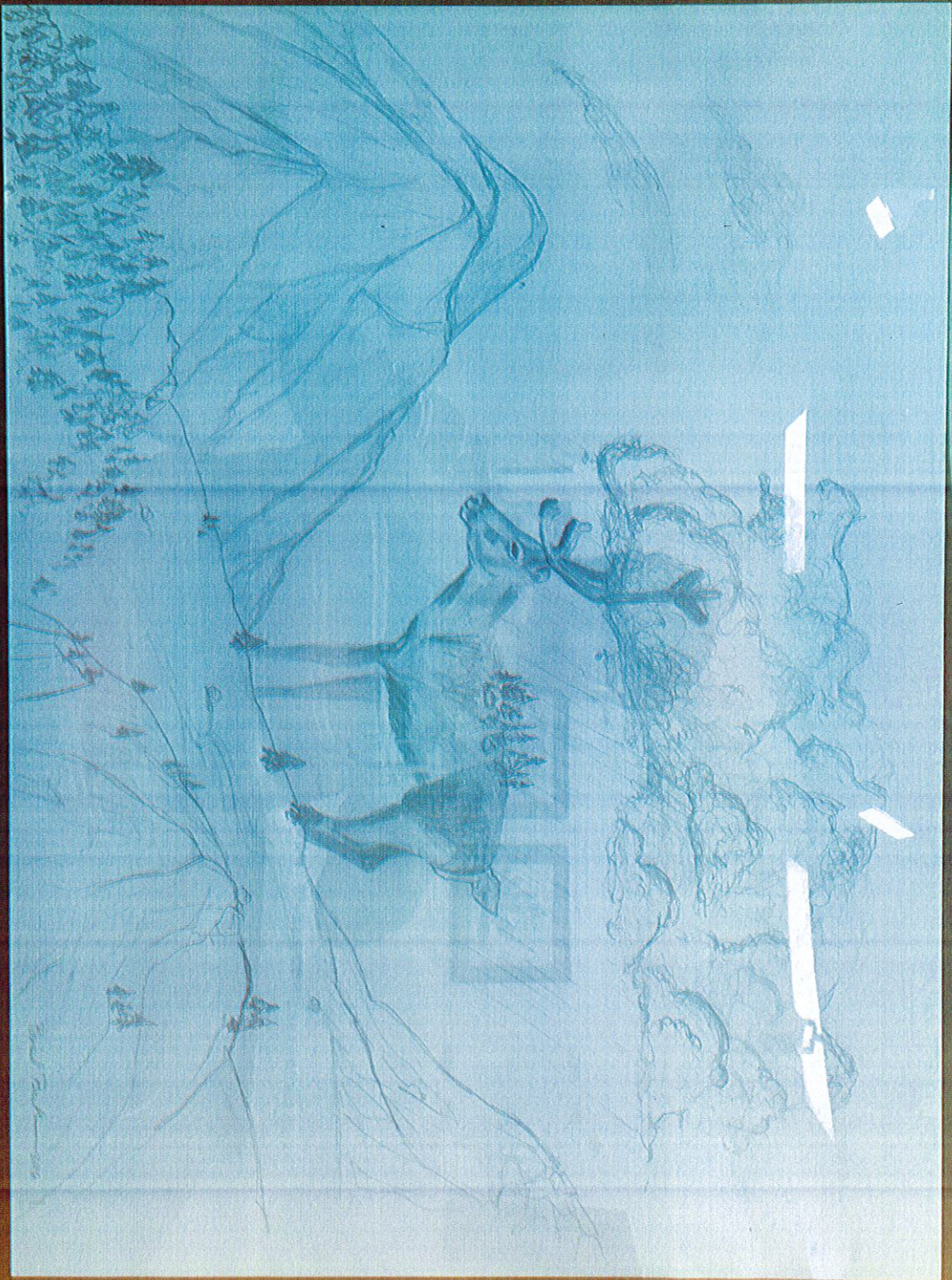
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DIGITAL PAINT PRINT



BERNARDINI, ANTONIO
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