

ABSTRACT

With Salivating Tongues We Gaze Lustingly at Sugar, Salt, and Fat

by

Amber D. Watts

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Director of Thesis: Beth Blake

School of Art and Design: Painting and Drawing

This is a report of a thesis to complete the Master of Fine Arts Degree at East Carolina University. The body of work presented is the result of research and creative activity which addresses a number of food-related issues. I investigate the idea that most Americans are only vaguely knowledgeable of the food chain which sustains us. Through the construction of mixed media art objects, I question and critique capitalist food production, advertising and consumption.

With Salivating Tongues We Gaze Lustingly at Sugar, Salt, and Fat

A Thesis

Presented To the Faculty of the School of Art and Design

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts in Art

by

Amber D. Watts

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Amber D. Watts

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF THESIS:

Beth Blake, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Scott Eagle, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Dan Elliott, MFA

COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Gerald Weckesser, MFA

DIRECTOR OF THE
SCHOOL OF ART AND DESIGN:

Michael H. Drought, MFA

DEAN OF THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL:

Paul J. Gemperline, PhD

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis body of work, first of all, to my awesome parents, Ronald Burnie Watts and Terry Atkinson Watts. They are the wild people who welcomed me into this world with the greeting “Hey Vern”, stuck a bow to my hairless head with Scotch Tape, and then told me to “Boar-hog-get-it”. I would not be the person I am today without you two. Thank you. I also dedicate this work to my son, Remy Cox (who was my first true love), and to my best friend, Damon Hood (who has been by my side through the good, the bad, and the ugly). Thank you.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
LIST OF PLATES	viii
INTRODUCTION: CRITIQUING FOOD SYSTEMS THROUGH THE CREATION OF ART OBJECTS	1
BIOGRAPHICAL RELEVANCIES: MY CONTEXT IN SOCIETY	2
FOOD: WHO CARES?	4
ART AND FOOD TOPICS: THEIR CLOSE REALATIONSHIP THROUGHOUT HISTORY	6
A BRIEF HISTORY: COLLAGE AND ASSEMBLAGE TECHNIQUE	17
CREATIVE PROCESS: THINKING THROUGH MAKING USING INTUITION AND LOGICAL REASONING	24
TEXT: WRITTEN LANGUAGE AS AN ADDITIONAL ART MEDIUM	28
MY WORK AND INDUSTRIAL FOOD PRODUCTION: SATISFYING THE MASSES	32
FOOD ADVERTISING IN THE 21 ST CENTURY: THEY KNOW US BETTER THAN WE KNOW OURSELVES	36
CONSUMPTION: HUMANS AS TEMPORAL BEINGS	40
CONCLUSION AND OUTCOMES	44
ADDITIONAL IMAGES OF THESIS WORK	46
REFERENCES	71

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Grocery isle in a <i>Dollar Store</i> retail store	2
2. <i>Deer Hunt</i> , Çatal Höyük, Turkey, ca. 5750 BCE	7
3. <i>Still Life with Peaches</i> , Herculaneum, Italy, ca. 62-79 CE.	8
4. Jan Davidszoon de Heem, <i>Still Life with Fruit and Ham</i> .1643	8
5. Wayne Thiebaud. <i>Five Hot dogs</i> . 1964	10
6. Claes Oldenburg. <i>Floor Cake</i> . 1962	11
7. Rirkrit Tiravanija. <i>Free</i> .1992	11
8. Jennifer Rubell. <i>Padded Cell</i> . 2010	14
9. Hiedi Cody. <i>Duh</i> , ed. 1 of 3. 2014	14
10. Georges Braque. <i>Still Life with Tenora</i> . 1913	17
11. Romare Bearden. <i>The Woodshed</i> . 1969	18
12. Wangechi Mutu. <i>Adult Female Sexual Organs</i> . 2005	18
13. Marcel Duchamp. <i>Bicycle Wheel</i> . 1913	22
14. Joseph Cornell. <i>The Hotel Eden</i> . 1945	22
15. Michelle Reader. <i>Seven Wasted Men</i> . 2006	23
16. Barbara Kruger. <i>You Are Not Yourself</i> . 1984	28
17. Arby's <i>Meatcraft</i> advertisement. 2015	36
18. Louise Bourgeois. <i>He Disappeared into Complete Silence</i> . 1947.....	41

LIST OF PLATES

Plates	Page
1. <i>What Is This Stuff (Without The Abstractions Of Product Branding)?</i>	12
2. <i>Our Hunter Gatherer Chemistry Finds Comfort In This World Of Endless Products</i>	15
3. <i>Gourmet Frozen Dinner For Two Because You Deserve A Taste Of The Good Life</i>	20
4. Installation view of artist's studio in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University	26
5. <i>Wholesome Intentions Warped By The Capitalist Mind</i>	30
6. Detail of <i>Illusions Galore</i> text	31
7. <i>Bowing To Earl Butz's Cheap Food Revolution Since The 1970s</i>	34
8. <i>The Point of Meat Craft Is To Eat A Cow, A Pig, A Turkey, A Fish, And A Chicken All In One Bite</i>	38
9. Detail, <i>Feeding Time: A Confession And Reflection Of My Foodstuff Consumption For Seven Days</i>	42
10. Alternate View, <i>Wholesome Intentions Warped By The Capitalist Mind</i>	46
11. Detail 1, <i>Wholesome Intentions Warped By The Capitalist Mind</i>	47
12. Detail 2, <i>Wholesome Intentions Warped By The Capitalist Mind</i>	47
13. Detail 2 from the illustrated book, <i>Feeding Time: A Confession And Reflection Of My Foodstuff Consumption For Seven Days</i>	48
14. Detail 3 from the illustrated book, <i>Feeding Time: A Confession And Reflection Of My Foodstuff Consumption For Seven Days</i>	49
15. <i>Record Of Many People Working On The Same Problem By Continuously Rearranging Ideas</i>	50
16. Detail, <i>Record Of Many People Working On The Same Problem By Continuously Rearranging Ideas</i>	50

17. <i>Plastic Chairs And Cell Phones Couldn't Save Us, So We Resorted To Ridiculous Growls And Flailing Arms</i>	51
18. <i>Detail, Plastic Chairs And Cell Phones Couldn't Save Us, So We Resorted To Ridiculous Growls And Flailing Arms</i>	51
19. <i>Someone Told Me Fried Eggrolls Are Healthy Because They Have Vegetables Inside. Really?!</i>	52
20. <i>Detail 1, Someone Told Me Fried Eggrolls Are Healthy Because They Have Vegetables Inside. Really?!</i>	53
21. <i>Detail 2, Someone Told Me Fried Eggrolls Are Healthy Because They Have Vegetables Inside. Really?!</i>	53
22. <i>Absurdities From Childhood When We Believed Peaches Were Peaches And Apples Were Apples</i>	54
23. <i>Choosing Sides With Growling Insides</i>	55
24. <i>True Living ® Is Not Truth In Living</i>	56
25. <i>Country Bacon (With Imitation Bacon And Artificial Colors And Flavors)</i>	57
26. <i>The Children Were Horrified To Learn That Food Comes From The Dirt</i>	58
27. <i>In High Demand: Pressed Meat With Butane And Scraps Of Things</i>	59
28. <i>Instant Gratification For The Self Because They Say You Deserve It</i>	60
29. <i>Ahhh! This Is Dinner?</i>	61
30. <i>Roll The Die To See What I Will Have For Dinner</i>	62
31. <i>Cheese Head In The Sand</i>	63
32. <i>I'm Pretty Sure Margarine Is Not The Answer</i>	64
33. <i>The Point Of Mine Craft Is For Steve To Survive Using Natural Resources</i>	65
34. <i>Installation view of text on gallery wall</i>	66

35. Alternate View, <i>What Is This Stuff (Without The Abstractions Of Product Branding)?</i>	66
36. Installation view 1 of artist's studio in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University	67
37. Installation view 2 of artist's studio in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University	67
38. Installation view of thesis exhibit on left and artist's studio on right, in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University	68
39. Installation view of thesis exhibit in Wellington B. Gray Gallery At East Carolina University	69
40. Mixed media object created by visitors in artist's studio space. Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University	70

Plates photographed by Amber D Watts and Damon Hood.
All plates are images of thesis work by Amber D Watts (except Plate 40).

INTRODUCTION: CRITIQUING FOOD SYSTEMS THROUGH THE CREATION OF ART OBJECTS

It goes without saying, but we all eat. Food consumption is a necessary act which sustains both plants and animals. It is at once universal, personal, and cultural and is intricately linked to every facet of our lives. For most of human history, we functioned as hunter gatherers; for thousands of years after that, we depended on agriculture. In the twenty first century, a mere blip in time in the grand scheme of things, The Industrial Food Chain prevails. As its name suggests, this chain feeds massive amounts of people. It involves the production of food at a factory farm, its travel to a packing plant, then to a grocery store, and finally, a kitchen table. Humans are more detached from food than ever before. What we choose to eat and how we choose to eat it is in many ways an extension of our relationship to nature and to one another. The future of the human species is contingent on the way we choose to carry out this relationship.

Through research and creative activity culminating in my Master of Fine Arts thesis work, I have investigated the idea that we are living in a time when most Americans know very little about something as fundamental as the food that sustains our being. I construct mixed media assemblage artworks in order to grapple with, and critique The Industrial Food Chain in the United States. My aim is to sift through clues which may lead me to a better understanding of how to live a meaningful life in a society of *Just-Add-Water-Instant-Artificial Blueberry Biscuit Mix*. The work is the result of this sifting. It is a poetic expression of my learning about capitalist methods of food production, advertising, and consumption, as it relates to my own life and those around me.

BIOGRAPHICAL RELEVANCIES: MY CONTEXT IN SOCIETY

I am passionate about the topic of food because of my sociocultural identifiers. My life is lived through the lenses of an American (raised in the South), Caucasian female whose childhood spans the 1980's and 1990's (a key decade for the birth and rapid growth of High Fructose Corn Syrup, Genetically Modified Foods, and the Fast Food Industry) (Crister 18). The lenses I wear also include being the oldest of three daughters, the mother of a boy, a feminist, a consumer of goods and ideas, a producer of waste, an artist, a student, and a teacher. I was raised in the small conservative town of Hudson, North Carolina, located at the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. My family is part of the working class, making a living through furniture, textile mill, and food service industries. I was the first from my immediate family to attend Community College, and then the first to attend University.

Despite having a mother and father with notably solid work ethics, my family has been no stranger to financial instabilities. For most of my early life I believed that selecting

the lowest priced products meant one was a smart shopper (see fig. 1). A grocery store trip was the perfect time to exercise a learned expertise at finding all the cheapest items. Whoever could find the best deal the fastest was praised as being the cleverest consumer. Food was purchased based on low-price first and



Figure 1. Grocery isle in a *Dollar Store* retail store.

food quality second; the definition of quality used loosely. We were clearly making choices based on sociocultural factors.

Becoming a parent, as well as witnessing loved ones experience diet-related chronic illness and disease has moved me to consider food in a different way. Conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, irritable bowel syndrome, and neuropathy perpetuates itself among my loved ones. I struggle with a chemical addiction to sugar that affects my daily routine and eating habits. Sugar addiction studies on lab rats show that sugar has the same effects on brain receptors as heroin or cocaine (MacPherson). I am aware that excess sugar consumption can lead to diabetes and obesity, yet I consume it anyway. On a broader scale, in the United States, poor food choices are the number one reason for diet related disease, with obesity ranking number three (Global). The preceding biographical narrative has inspired my investigation of food culture.

FOOD: WHO CARES?

The ingestion of sustenance permeates every aspect of our being on a daily basis, regardless of the time and culture we are born into. In the book, *The Omnivores Dilemma*, Professor Michael Pollan writes about the complexities of humans and their food:

“...humans take part in a food chain, and our place in that food chain, or web, determines to a considerable extent what kind of creature we are. The fact of our omnivorousness has done much to shape our nature, both body (we possess the omnicompetent teeth and jaws of the omnivore, equally well suited to tearing meat and grinding seeds) and soul. Our prodigious powers of observation and memory, as well as our curious and experimental stance toward the natural world, owe much to the biological fact of omnivorousness. So do the various adaptations we've evolved to defeat the defenses of other creatures so that we might eat them, including our skills at hunting and cooking with fire. Some philosophers have argued that the very open-endedness of human appetite is responsible for both our savagery and civility, since a creature that could conceive of eating anything (including, notably, other humans) stands in the particular need of ethical rules, manners, and rituals. We are not only what we eat, but how we eat, too.”

Pollan refers to the biological aspects of food consumption, but also to the culture which surrounds that activity. Eating is a social act that is both influenced by and has influence over culture. It is imperative that we become aware of where our food comes from, how

it is prepared, and how we eat it, because if not, we risk losing control of the fundamental elements of our own existence.

ART AND FOOD TOPICS: THEIR CLOSE RELATIONSHIP THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Humans are famously makers of objects and ideas. Our ability and desire to create has been one of the propelling forces in the survival and evolution of our species. In fact, the creation of stone tools by early humans 2.6 million years ago allowed for easier acquisition of food, resulting in increased success for the human species (Shipman). Our story of survival throughout time has depended on our ability to creatively solve problems. The creation of art involves imagination, or combining play with critical thinking in order to understand and generate new meaning. Using imagination helps one to understand and predict situations which have not yet occurred, using the knowledge of previous interactions to inform new potential circumstances (Connery 11). *Making* is part of what it means to be human, and has been for millennia.

Cave paintings from the Paleolithic Period are among the oldest creative works that demonstrate some relationship between art and food (Gardner 7). Prehistorians have classified the imagery found inside caves like Maros (Indonesia), Lascaux (France), and Chauvet (France), as consisting of humans, animals, and signs (Morphy 21). Today there is still much speculation concerning the precise meaning or purpose of the images—some up to 40,000 years old—found in caves all over the world. Because most of the paintings from Paleolithic times are of animals that would have been too large or too difficult to hunt, it is thought that the images were primarily part of cultural rituals that involved magic or mythological stories (Morphy 21). Nevertheless, some of the depictions of animals like deer and salmon were commonly hunted and eaten at the geographical time and location of the paintings.

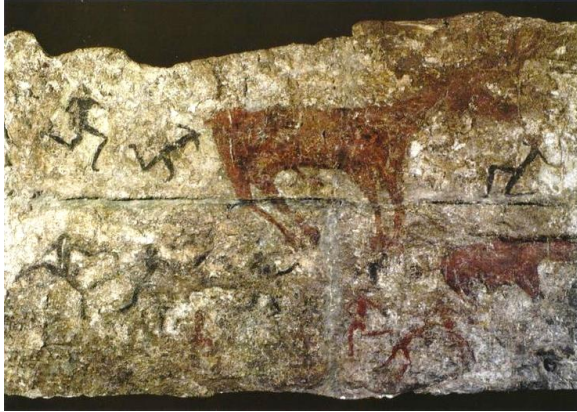


Figure 2. *Deer Hunt*, Detail of a wall painting from Level III, Çatal Höyük, Turkey, ca. 5750 BCE. Museum of Anatolian Civilization, Ankara.

Later, in the Neolithic Period, hunting scenes were carefully painted on the walls of Çatal Höyük (see fig. 2). This site, located on the central Anatolian plateau in Turkey (6500-5000 BCE), was one of the first urban settlements that included planned structural houses (Gardner 12). Excavators have called the rooms at Çatal Höyük shrines because of the richly painted walls (Gardner 12). The walls were covered with white plaster and then images were applied with brushes (Gardner 12). Unlike the hypotheses about the purpose of cave paintings, Neolithic works such as the *Deer Hunt* clearly represent the importance of hunting to the civilization at Çatal Höyük. The image is a representation of a community-based action (hunting) that will eventually lead to a meal.

Ancient Romans depicted images of food on vessels, in mosaics, and in paintings (see fig. 3). This wall painting from the Fourth Style in Roman Art shows the artist's interest in a naturalistic portrayal of light and shadow as it falls on its fleshy subject, the peach (Gardner 184). In the seventeenth century, images of bountiful food and drink were popularly used in European genre paintings (Genre) (see fig. 4). At the time, paintings of food were meant to teach moral lessons about life and death, while displaying the technical skill of the artist (Genre). These food still-lives are about the ideas of *vanitas*



Figure 3. *Still Life with Peaches*, detail of a Fourth Style wall painting, from Herculaneum, Italy, ca. 62-79 CE. Approx. 1' 2" x 1' 1". Museo Nazionale, Naples.



Figure 4. Jan Davidszoon de Heem, *Still Life with Fruit and Ham*. 1643. Oil on canvas, 31 x 40 " (79.2 x 102.5 cm).

and memento mori, which is meant as a reminder of human mortality (Glossary). Food items such as a partially peeled lemon, or a bowl of grapes in the composition carried symbolism that referenced both the beauty and the brevity of life. Metaphors about the temporal nature of life were further illuminated in images of beautifully rotting food.

In 1932, Italian Futurist artist Filippo Marinetti released a cookbook (not meant to be an art object) detailing his position on food and cooking (Politics). He included statements about his views on human labor and machines. He also denounced the frequent use of pasta in Italian dishes. As mundane as a cookbook may sound, Marinetti saw the book as a political tool that could change society. His view was that "all sustenance should come from pills [vitamins], freeing up food to be the raw material of art,

preferably to be consumed while listening to the soothing hum of an airplane engine” (Futurist).

In the United States, starting in the 1960's there was an emergence of artists who were making art either with food or about food. In many cases, artists were leading societal critiques. Allan Kaprow and participants built and then destroyed a brick wall (in close proximity to the Berlin Wall) to make a political statement. They used bread and jam for the mortar (Kaprow 269). The “happening” was meant to point out that the Berlin Wall was an *idea* of separation. Deiter Roth used raw foods like chocolate and cheese to make sculptures and drawings (Multiples). Many of his food works were intended to rot over time, as a metaphor to the temporality of human life. Daniel Spoerri created his *snare-pictures*, meaning picture-traps. These works are objects found in chance positions, like tables with partially consumed food and drink, which he glued to the same tabletop on which they were found (Daniel). Spoerri would make a topographical diagram of the objects and arrangement, often writing about the objects in detail. His works are semi-autobiographical with a focus on chance situations, relationships with friends, and travel. Gordon Matta-Clark started an artist-run restaurant in SoHo (Waxman). It functioned as a business as well as an artistic endeavor, aimed at bringing life to a culturally desolate (at the time) street corner in NY.

American POP artists Andy Warhol and Wayne Thiebaud explored food as one of the obsessions of capitalist mass culture. One may recall images of Warhol's renowned Campbell's Soup Cans which referenced the realm of commercial advertising by using repetition and uniformity as design strategies. Warhol's painter counterpart, Thiebaud, is known for creating colorful paintings of attractively organized pastries and cakes, among



Figure 5. Wayne Thiebaud. *Five Hot dogs*. 1964. Oil on Canvas, 18 x 24" (46 x 61 cm).

other things from everyday life (see fig. 5). When asked why he chose to paint mundane subjects such as desserts, shoes and gumballs, he responded: "...it seems to me that it's easy to overlook what we spend our majority of time doing, and that's an intimate association with everyday things: putting on our shoes, tying our ties, eating our breakfast, cooking our meals, washing our dishes"

(Interview). Thiebaud's paintings focus on the formal elements of art, while managing to maintain a connection to everyday life. Through their works, Warhol and Thiebaud playfully point out the aspects of mass culture which they find interesting.

The monumental *soft sculptures* of Claes Oldenburg present a more pessimistic view of American consumer culture (see fig. 6). He created everyday objects out of mixed media materials, including a giant cake and a giant burger, which were emblematic of the American experience. His interpretation of food and consumerism is in stark contrast to the beautiful images of Wayne Theibaud. According to some critics, Oldenburg's Floor Cake is a "sloppy, drooling, and disorderly" image of the pastries that bountifully filled the cases in New York bakeries at the time (Varnedoe 12). Oldenburg would continue this critique of consumer culture throughout his career. He is famous for setting up and running a store (which was actually his studio space for artmaking) in New York. He named his store/studio *The Street*. In a 1985 interview, Oldenburg speaks about *The*



Figure 6. Claes Oldenburg. *Floor Cake*. 1962. Synthetic polymer paint and latex on canvas filled with foam rubber and cardboard boxes, 58 3/8" x 9' 6 1/4" x 58 3/8" (148.2 x 290.2 x 148.2 cm).

Street as a critique of consumer culture and a statement about the commercialization of art. People would go into his store/studio and purchase a regular loaf of bread for 99 dollars just because Oldenburg told them it was sculpture (Oldenburg 36).

Similar to those who were conducting the *Happenings* and performances of the 60s and 70s, international artist Rirkrit Tiravanija

focuses on creating an action or idea rather than a finished art object or image (see fig. 7). In his pivotal piece, titled *Untitled-Free* from 1992, Tiravanija uses food to question art, its function, the role of artist and viewer, and the role of the art gallery/museum

(Museum). 303 Gallery in New York hosted the piece in which Tiravanija cooked traditional Thai Food and served it to unsuspecting gallery visitors. The would-be art viewers then sat down to eat and converse with those around them, therefore becoming part of the artwork. This piece presents us with a work of relational aesthetics. "The



Figure 7. Rirkrit Tiravanija. *Free*. 1992. Rirkrit Tiravanija serves Thai food to visitors at 303 Gallery, NY.

possibility of relational art (an art taking as its theoretical horizon the realm of human interactions and its social context, rather than the assertion of an independent and private symbolic space), points to a radical upheaval of the aesthetic, cultural and political goals introduced by modern art" (Bourriaud 14). Like Tiravanija, I am interested in the possibilities of art as a way to make a positive impact on people.

My piece titled *What Is This Stuff (Without The Abstractions Of Branding)?* is an interactive food project aimed at encouraging critical thinking in the viewers (see plate 1). Gallery-goers are presented with dozens of brown paper lunch bags containing popular food items. The bags are sealed shut at the top, so participants do not know for sure



Plate 1. Amber D Watts. *What Is This Stuff (Without The Abstractions Of Product Branding)?*. 2016. Installation view, Inkjet-printed brown paper lunch bags with various food items inside, Dimensions of installation variable.

what food is inside until the bag is opened. The list of product ingredients is printed on the outside of each bag, corresponding to the food inside. Some ingredient lists are so long that they fill the entire front and back of the bag, while others have just a few ingredients. Product and brand names are intentionally omitted. People may choose a bag from the shelf, open it, and eat (or choose not to eat) the food inside.

One goal of this project is to encourage critical thinking about food choices and ingredients. In a recent interview, Urban Agriculture Specialist Maurice Small spoke with me about some of the food issues he sees during his work with communities. Small suggests that the most impactful problem with people's diets and health is the consumption of processed foods. The paper bag piece addresses the issue of processed foods in an informative way by asking the participants to do some of the thinking and questioning. It is about coming face to face with the amount of mystery-ingredients we blindly consume. Product branding is pointed out as an abstraction of, and distraction from, the facts. Participants are challenged to figure out what they are going to find inside when they open their bag. Many times, the contents are not guessable from reading the ingredients list alone. This project is a way for me to experiment with relational aesthetics, making a bridge to link art with life. One outcome of the project is that participants may take a similar approach in critical thinking at the grocery store. This work is about learning and sharing information and creating a dialogue.

Today, and possibly more now than ever before, food is an immensely important topic for investigation and criticism. Food is explored as an object of desire and punishment in the interactive installation titled, *Padded Cell* (see fig. 8). American artist Jennifer Rubell created a freestanding room lined on the inside with over a thousand



Figure 8. Jennifer Rubell. *Padded Cell*. 2010. Basic building materials, cotton candy, Plexiglas window and light bulb, 96 " x 72" (243.8 x 182.9 cm). Photo by Joseph Michael Lopez.

cones of pink cotton candy. It has one door with a Plexiglas window and one bare light hanging in the center of the room. The title and form of the piece alludes to a place of institutional solitary confinement. Viewers were allowed to enter the space and eat the cotton candy. Rubell suggests that sometimes pleasure has a dark side and there may be a price to pay (Rubell). It brings to mind the easy accessibility of sugar in US

food culture and the correlating prevalence of diabetes among children and adults.

Contemporary American artist Heidi Cody uses the tools of product advertising, logos and branding to create tongue in cheek images and objects (see fig. 9). Food

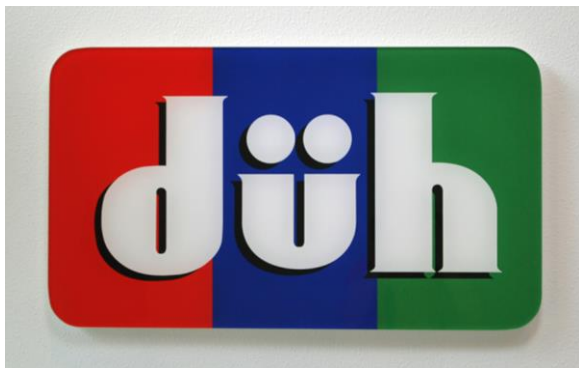


Figure 9. Heidi Cody. *Duh*, ed. 1 of 3. 2014. Reverse Painted Plexi-glas, 18 x 30 " (45.7 x 76.2 cm).

marketing and ownership is a new important component to food topics in art because foods are now being patented, or owned by corporations. Her finished works are intended to encourage critical thinking in the viewer (Cody). In her work titled *Duh*, she pokes fun at the viewer for recognizing the classic *Jif* peanut butter design. She is encouraging us to

question why certain brands and products are so familiar to us, and what the implications of this familiarity may be. While creating my thesis work, I experimented with using package design as a way to communicate a critique of food marketing.

My work titled, *Our Hunter Gatherer Chemistry Finds Comfort In This World Of Endless Products*, is part of my research on fabrication techniques and experimental materials (see plate 2). It is not part of the final thesis body, but it is relevant in comparison to Cody's work. My concept was to address the fact that companies in the food industry hire scientists to conduct studies on the most addicting combinations of sugar, salt, and fat (Moss 19). This fact is masked by the distractions of heavily designed packaging. For this work, I fabricated three boxes out of Plexiglas and filled with them with high fructose corn syrup, iodized salt, and corn oil. Scale for the boxes is based on the typical measurements of a cereal box. I designed the product labels and used a laser etcher to



Plate 2. Amber D Watts. *Our Hunter Gatherer Chemistry Finds Comfort In This World Of Endless Products*. 2015 (work no longer exists as seen here). Fabricated Plexiglas boxes, Pancake Syrup, Iodized Salt, and Corn Oil, 12 x 8 x 3" (30.48 x 20.32 x 7.62 cm).

engrave the designs into the Plexiglas. The transparent boxes suggest that I am attempting to reveal something that is hidden. The final object is meant to allude to the dark side of our food chain. As one can see from the history presented in the above section, there is a rich lineage of artists who create objects, images, and actions relating to food.

A BRIEF HISTORY: COLLAGE AND ASSEMBLAGE TECHNIQUE

Materials and processes used to create this thesis body of work has precedence in the history of collage and assemblage. Like any technique or invention, collage and assemblage came about slowly over time as result of the cultural circumstances of time and place. The Industrial Revolution was a key factor in the development of both techniques. Capabilities of mass reproduction via machines meant that a wide range of printed material and objects were readily accessible to people in Europe and The United States (Holstein). Much like humans have always done, artists at the time were influenced by their changing environment, and used material elements from it to seek some understanding of the world around them.

In the context of art, *collage* refers to a technique in which separate pieces of a material, usually paper, are pasted together to form a different image (see fig. 10). The term was coined in the early 20th century by European Modern artists Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso (Greenberg). Braque and Picasso both attached mass produced magazine pages and newspaper clippings to their paintings as a way to add subject matter and design elements into their images, not concerning themselves with mirroring naturalistic scenes from life. Braque and Picasso were not the first in history to use



Figure 10. Georges Braque. *Still Life with Tenora*. 1913. Cut-and-pasted printed and painted paper, charcoal, chalk, and pencil on gessoed canvas, 37 1/2 x 47 3/8" (95.2 x 120.3 cm).

the collage technique; it was used in 12th Century China to decorate objects such as windows, boxes, and lanterns (History). Nevertheless, collage was widely understood by Western fine art audiences as a risky and innovative, or avant-garde technique.

Later, in the mid-20th century, North Carolina born Romare Bearden became known for his work with collage (see fig. 11). He used images from mass media to create narratives. Bearden was an African-American artist who presented works about the character and conscience of black American life (Wilson). He challenged the idea that fine art was transcendent of culture by rendering scenes of mundane activities from everyday life. Bearden takes an ad in the weekly newspaper, for example, something one might read and spill coffee on, and says it has a place in the art museum.



Figure 11. Romare Bearden. *The Woodshed*. 1969. Cut and pasted printed and colored papers, photostats, cloth, graphite, and sprayed ink on Masonite, 40 1/2 x 50 1/2" (102.9 x 128.3 cm).



Figure 12. Wangechi Mutu. *Adult Female Sexual Organs, Detail*. 2005. Packing Tape, Fur, Collage on Found Medical Illustration Paper, 18 x 12" (45.7 x 30.5 cm).

Today, collage is scarcely considered a new or innovative technique. It is often taught in academic art courses as an element of mixed media art making processes. It is characteristically used with other 2D media such as painting or drawing. Contemporary Kenyan born artist Wangechi Mutu uses the collage technique to explore gender and racial identity (see fig. 12). The visually compelling and thought provoking images that Mutu creates are rendered within a specific sociocultural context. As an article on the London Saatchi Gallery's website explains:

In *Adult Female Sexual Organs*, Mutu uses a Victorian medical diagram as a base: an archetype of biased anthropology and sexual repression. The head is a caricatured mask – made of packing tape, its material makes reference to bandages, migration, and cheap 'quick-fix' solutions. Mutu portrays the inner and outer ideals of self with physical attributes clipped from lifestyle magazines: the woman's face being a racial distortion, her mind occupied by a prototypical white model.

Drawing from the aesthetics of traditional African crafts, Mutu engages in her own form of storytelling; her works document the contemporary myth-making of endangered cultural heritage.

The materials she works with are significant to the meaning of the finished pieces. In work that has more conceptual leanings, materials are usually chosen based on their importance to the understanding of the work. The collage technique often uses mass produced imagery from media, therefore lending itself to topics of multiplicity, consumerism, and mass culture.



Plate 3. Amber D Watts. *Gourmet Frozen Dinner For Two Because You Deserve A Taste Of The Good Life*. 2014. Mixed Media on Panel, 14 x 11" (35.56 x 27.94 cm).

In my work, *Gourmet Frozen Dinner For Two Because You Deserve A Taste Of The Good Life*, I used several cut-outs from *My Essentials* Brand products as paper collage material (see plate 3). A box of frozen fish and an old doll-making book also became part of the collage for this work. Disparate visual elements come together to create an imaginary barren landscape. The aged surface texture references decay and suggests that a tough road lies ahead. Fish fillets float in the sky like clouds looming over the figures. The soft doll represents a vulnerable consumer while the Gorton's Fisherman stands in for capitalist industry. The doll grasps for the hand of the fisherman, as the wheel under them turns round and round, like mice in an experiment. When the image is read alongside the title, one may get a sense of the false promises of quick solutions. Like Wangechi Mutu, many of my pieces address social issues without being obviously political at first.

Assemblage is the three-dimensional counterpart to collage. It involves combining multiple three-dimensional objects onto a substrate to create a new form. During the early part of the 20th century, at about the same time as collage, European artists Pablo Picasso and Marcel Duchamp were using assemblage techniques to again challenge the protocol of classical painting and sculpture (see fig. 13). Duchamp is celebrated as one of the most innovative artists of his time. His work helped dramatically change the direction of art practice and theory (MoMA). Duchamp was interested in art as a way of thinking, in service of the mind, as opposed to purely “retinal art” or pretty pictures. He believed that mass produced everyday objects could be elevated to art objects by choice of the artist in order to communicate an idea. Concept as the primary focus of art was a radical notion at the time, and many people were not convinced. It

would be the 1960s before the Conceptual Art Movement would take hold and push forward in full force.

In the meantime, some artists began using everyday objects in a way that bridged Duchamp's desire for conceptual art, and fine art's desire for attractive objects. American artist Joseph Cornell used assemblage as a way to evoke memory and display poetic beauty (see fig. 14). He is known for creating



Figure 13. Marcel Duchamp. *Bicycle Wheel*. 1951 (third version, after lost original of 1913). Metal wheel mounted on painted wood stool, 51 x 25 x 16 1/2" (129.5 x 63.5 x 41.9 cm).



Figure 14. Joseph Cornell. *The Hotel Eden*. 1945. Assemblage with music box, 15 1/10 x 15 3/5 in. (38.3 x 39.7 x 12.1 cm).



Figure 15. Michelle Reader. *Seven Wasted Men*. 2006. Seven life-size figures made out of scrap wood and household waste, Lifesize.

nostalgic shadowboxes using objects picked up at thrift stores and antique markets. Like Cornell, I use objects and images to present clues to a narrative. The aged appearance of objects are meant to reference personal history and a life of experiences.

Contemporary UK artist Michelle Reader recently finished a series of life size figures made from everyday household garbage (see fig. 15). Each figure was modeled after members of the family who commissioned the piece. Reader assembled them from the actual trash that each

family member created within a two week time frame. Considering the massive amounts of *stuff* produced in the worlds growing consumer-based society, many artists have turned to making art with discarded objects. Her choice of art materials are part of her concept, and support her political statement about consumption.

CREATIVE PROCESS: THINKING THROUGH MAKING

USING INTUITION AND LOGICAL REASONING

In order to give ideas form, an artist may begin new creative work in a multitude of ways. One may begin with the knowledge of what the finished product should accomplish in the end, using sketches or mockups to guide a methodical process of making from start to finish. Other artists may begin with materials as inspiration (physical materials like paint or objects, or more ephemeral materials, like sound or movement), and make decisions based on what happens through the use of materials from moment to moment. This way of making work begins with an *unknowing* of what will emerge at the close of that creative act.

I produce creative work by embracing an idea called “Thinking through Making”. Tim Ingold, who is Professor of Anthropology at Aberdeen University, asserts that the process of improvisational art making may be more important to problem solving than the physical form the art object takes on in the end. Ingold refers to a passage in artist Paul Klee’s diary. Klee wrote that making is life, while the finished art object is death, the end. This means the process of making is the questioning, or development of ideas, while the finished art object is only a record of this process. Thinking generates knowledge and knowledge must grow from the inside out. Working from the outside in by projecting preconceived concepts onto materials may close some doors because we think we already know the answers (Ingold). But working from the inside out leaves room for discovery and the slow development of a hunch. It’s about trusting the instinct that tells us there is something out there to be questioned, and something meaningful to be learned from that inquiry.

Life experiences as well as research inform the content of my work. I combine my own (sometimes cynical) perceptions with factual information on food topics. Throughout my thought process in creating the work, there is a balancing act between the poetic beauty/grotesqueness of life and hard evidence. I recognize that while engaged in a creative act, intuitive as well as logical reasoning processes are at work, in unison. Nobel Prize winner and psychologist Daniel Kahneman explains that intuition is fast, automatic, and associative, whereas reasoning is slow, controlled, and rule governed. He states that these two modes of thinking are not necessarily separate, but function together in a complex system of interactions.

In this thesis body of work, new pieces began with a question or topic for research. Physical materials were gathered that were conceptually relevant to my enquiry. I allowed the works to develop in a way that was both concept and process driven. For example, I knew that I would create an object about “Meatcraft”, a new advertising term for Arby’s fast food restaurants. I would use a piece of Meatcraft product paraphernalia, a sandwich wrapper, in the work, but I did not know what the art object would look like in the end. I started projects and waited to see what new ideas presented themselves along the way. Since the process of making can be a way to form conclusions (and discover new questions, as is often the case), it was important to maintain an open mind while working. Possibilities for techniques and materials were always in flux, in order to broaden the potential for idea development. Paper collage, sculpture, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking, found objects, and fabricated objects were utilized in many of the works. My choice of using mixed materials reflects a willingness to develop research in unforeseen directions.

During the exhibition of this thesis body, my studio contents were removed from my normal studio space and relocated into the gallery space (see plate 4). Viewers were encouraged to enter it and explore. Gallery-goers were permitted to find various materials in the studio and make art with them in the space.



Plate 4. Amber D Watts. Installation view of artist's studio in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University. 2016.

There were no firm preconceived ideas of what one would create, because there was no previous knowledge of what materials were in the space until entering it. Making a private space public and asking the public to interact with it relates back to art as the practice of relational aesthetics. It blurs the lines between art and life. This experience also functions as a way to gain new perspectives based on my interactions with other people, and their interactions with one another.

TEXT: WRITTEN LANGUAGE AS AN ADDITIONAL ART MEDIUM

Written language plays a crucial role in my work. It is present in every piece in this thesis body. I use text the same way I use paint, paper, found objects, etc; as one of the mixed materials that helps me to convey a message through art. There is an interesting history of text and image combinations which aim to do the same. When focusing in on the twentieth century, it should be noted that, like collage, the relationship between text and art was affected by industrialization and mass culture, i.e. the production of printed material on a large scale (Hunt 178). When Picasso and Braque used the printed columns from newspapers as collage, they were simultaneously experimenting with the use of text.

One contemporary artist who successfully uses text as a major part of her work is Barbara Kruger (see fig. 16). Throughout her work, written language is used as a tool to challenge viewers on their cultural values (Hunt 222). She appropriates existing photographic images and overlays her own phrases to add content to the work that would not otherwise be there. In one of her works, Kruger uses an image of a woman



Figure 16. Barbara Kruger. *You Are Not Yourself*. 1984.

looking at herself in a broken mirror, juxtaposed with the text, *You Are Not Yourself*. The phrase confronts us with a dilemma of the self. The viewer may wonder, If I am not myself, then who am I? Kruger brings up the question of culture, and how much who we are is determined by the culture we live in. Without the use of text, this image would not have the same content. At times, text can make a work of art more accessible to an audience.

In my work titled *Wholesome Intentions Are Warped By The Capitalist Mind*, I use language to address issues with The Industrial Organic Industry (see plate 5). Industrial organic is organic on a mass scale. It is organic from the supermarket. The foods are not GMO and do not contain harmful pesticides like *Roundup*, but they are in many ways produced just the same as all the other foods which come from industrial agriculture. The fruits, vegetables, and meats sold as organic in grocery stores can just as easily have been produced on factory farms, by migrant workers, and have most likely traveled across the country to reach us (Pollan 182). For example, the organic eggs one purchases from a grocery store were most likely laid by a chicken that lived in a crowded coop with thousands of other chickens and never saw sunlight or grass. The term organic simply means that the chicken was fed organic grain. An organic tomato from the grocery store could have been picked by people working for just a few dollars a day in dangerous conditions. Industrial organic foods also use the same amount of fuel to transport as other foods.

In the upper section of this artwork, the phrase *Illusions Galore* is painted in complimentary colors of the same intensity and value (see plate 6). This technique results in an optical illusion in which the colors seem to vibrate against one another. The piece



Plate 5. Amber D Watts. *Wholesome Intentions Warped By The Capitalist Mind*. 2015. Mixed media with US currency on panel, 40 x 48 x 6" (121.9 x 101.6 cm).



Plate 6. Amber D Watts. Detail of *Illusions Galore* text. 2015. Mixed media on panel.

has a hinged panel that can be turned back and forth like a page in a book. When the page is turned one way, the viewer is presented with an idealistic image of organic farming taken from a *Cascadian Farms* Brand cereal box. Cascadian Farms is currently one of the biggest suppliers of Industrial Organic in the United States (Pollan 182).

I applied the words, *The Organic Grocery Cart*, on top of the Cascadian Farms image. This may invoke a mental picture of a grocery store cart filled with organic items. The grocery cart is a clue that the items are being produced and sold on a mass scale. One is not going to use a grocery cart to shop at a local farm. When the hinged page on the piece is turned, there is imagery showing wealthy businessmen, airplanes, trucks, and emaciated looking field workers. At the far right section of the panel, the text reads *...is Astonishingly Exotic* (referring to the organic grocery cart). The term exotic suggests that the organic product has come from a faraway land, like coffee from Peru or chocolate from Madagascar. There are images of organic foods with a list of locations from all over the country and outside of the US. Text plays an important role in our day to day lives, communicating useful information, and trying to sell us things. In the twenty first century, text and image have become part of the collage culture we live in. Incorporating this element into my work allows me to communicate with viewers in a format they are familiar with, while adding content to the work.

MY WORK AND INDUSTRIAL FOOD PRODUCTION: SATISFYING THE MASSES

I am interested in critiquing the hidden methods that companies use in trying to attract people to certain foods on a biological level. It has been shown that the physiology of the modern human is still that of a hunter-gatherer (Mayor 485). Evolution takes place at an amazingly slow rate compared to new technologies in the world today. Brain scans verify that humans have a chemical desire and constantly seek out foods that are high in sugars, salt, and oil (Moss 22). We do so because these things occur scarcely in nature. For the hunter-gatherer they are hard to come by. In the United States today, sugar, salt, and fat is abundant. In fact, it is hard to find anything in the supermarket that does not contain some combination of these ingredients. So we fill up! In the United States, most products which formerly contained sugar now contain high fructose corn syrup (HFCS). The modern human's body reads high fructose corn syrup just like sugar, so we crave it. The problem is that HFCS is processed differently in the body, which can have negative long term effects (Parker 76).

High Fructose Corn Syrup is featured in a seemingly endless array of foods: Stovetop Stuffing, juice drinks, most sodas, most breads and baked goods, most breakfast cereals, tomato Ketchup, nutrition bars, Pop Tarts, most cough medicines, Yoplait Yogurts, frozen pizzas, baked beans, pickles, cranberry sauce, canned fruit, salad dressings, steak and BBQ sauces, Campbell's Vegetable Soup, and the list goes on. The prevalence of HFCS instigated the mixed media work titled *Bowing To Earl Butz's Cheap Food Revolution Since The 1970s* (see plate 7). This piece is centered on a popular white bread that was part of my childhood diet: *Bunny Bread*. During grocery shopping my mom would say "Ok girls, go get me the Bunny Bread, it's the one with the picture of

a bunny”. This was in the 80’s and 90’s when sugar in food products was being replaced with HFCS at breakneck speed all over the United States. Bunny bread did not go unaffected.

Through this work, I aim to point out deception in a superficially wholesome product, bread. Imagery in this work is meant to suggest the connections between bread, corn, a cartoon bunny, skeletons, money, and Earl Butz. Text in the work are clippings from my local supermarket ad. The Bunny Bread character is a central figure in this panel, looking eerily cheerful, as always. Images of corn (Genetically Modified corn to be exact) stand-in for a distant hilly landscape behind the bunny’s floating head. The skeletons in the lower right represent ill-health for consumers, while the royal figure is the power and money of corporations. The grey figure on left of the panel kneels in a worshipping position towards the bunny. It is missing one arm, and has a skeletal arm protruding from the other side of the body, foreshadowing a loss of control over one’s own body. This figure stands in for families buying into the idea of cheap food on the basis of quantity, not quality. It bows to the bunny, to low prices, and to the man named in the work’s title, Earl Butz.

Butz was the United States Secretary of Agriculture who, in the 1970s, found a way to lower food costs by insisting that sugar in products be replaced with High Fructose Corn Syrup (Crister 7). Butz was charged by President Nixon with the task of lowering prices of food for Americans. To accomplish this, Butz established government subsidies that pushed farmers to grow as much corn as possible. He famously said “get big or get out” and encouraged planting “from fencerow to fencerow” (Crister 10). His policies



Plate 7. Amber D Watts. *Bowling To Earl Butz's Cheap Food Revolution Since The 1970s*. 2015. Mixed media on panel, 14 x 13" (35.6 x 33 cm).

supported big agribusiness while leaving small farmers to wither. Because of these practices there came to be an overabundance of corn in the US, which was in turn used to make the new sweetener, HFCS (Crisler 10). Nixon's charge was met. Families began to enjoy lower prices on food, while scarcely noticing the new prevailing ingredient in their diets.

The very concept of using HFCS in place of sugar is an idea of its time and culture. Butz came up with this before the obesity epidemic, and before Genetically Modified Organisms were introduced into our food supply. If more people were aware of what is actually going on with food, and the history of how and why, they might think twice before contently gobbling that loaf of Bunny Bread. In the work, *Bowing To Earl Butz's Cheap Food Revolution Since the 1970s*, rather than narrating the afore mentioned story in a linear way, I chose to exhibit it as a collection of information. The story of HFCS is made up of intertwined networks of interactions not easily unraveled. By juxtaposing symbolic images, color, and text, I aim to present crucial pieces of the US food system puzzle, and encourage viewers to do their own research

FOOD ADVERTISING IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

THEY KNOW US BETTER THAN WE KNOW OURSELVES

Through my work, I investigate the strategies of food advertising and how they influence consumers' desire for certain products. During my afternoon commute, I notice how the text on restaurant billboards change, informing prospective customers of "2 for \$3 specials" and limited time offers. Recently, Arby's fast food chains changed their slogan from *Slicing up Freshness* to *We Got the Meats*. This change reflects a shift in their advertising strategy from quality to quantity. Instead of *Slicing Up Freshness*, Arby's now offers customers monumental piles of meats. This is where Arby's trademarked term *Meatcraft* comes in to play. The term is printed on Arby's packaging and billboards to advertise their new meat campaign (see fig. 17). I have been watching this company transformation



Figure 17. Arby's *Meatcraft* advertisement. 2015.

develop by keeping my eye on billboards and window signs. *Meatcraft* may ring a familiar bell to many families. This could be because it references the popular video game, *Minecraft*. In 2014, *Minecraft* was ranked one of the top video games of all time (*Minecraft*'s). In 2015, Arby's began advertising *Meatcraft* and *We Got the Meats*. With all the research behind corporate branding, it is not by mere coincidence that *Meatcraft* is benefiting from the success of *Minecraft*. As a mother whose child plays the game *Minecraft* and enjoys Arby's food, this advertising strategy grabs and holds my interest (but not for the reasons marketing teams had hoped for).

The small mixed media work, *The Point of Meat Craft Is To Eat A Cow, A Pig, A Turkey, A Fish, And A Chicken All In One Bite*, was inspired by my anxieties about *Meatcraft* (see plate 8). An Arby's sandwich wrapper was used as collage material in the piece. Collecting food packaging is an effective way for me to keep a record of things that are interesting or questionable. The used Arby's wrapper became the first layer of collage on the panel dedicated to *Meatcraft*.

Text was appropriated from other packages as clues which start to form a narrative. "Discover More Tastes To Love" came from a McDonalds to-go bag and "A Classic American Story" is from a box of Kraft Macaroni and Cheese. When choosing text for the works, I was searching for relationships between the words and what they are meant to do for consumers. For me, "Meatcraft" refers to contemporary pop culture in the same way as "Discover" to knowledge, "More" to abundance, "Tastes" to pleasure, "Love" to affection, "Classic" to tradition, "American" to patriotic, and "Story" to imagination. These are all such optimistic terms. What more could consumers possibly ask for in a

product? The text remains a focal point in this work, but other components add crucial information to the piece as well.

The shape of the surface combined with the image of a mouth and nose suggests a face. It is as if the viewer is experiencing another being, *Meatcraft*, face to face. Collage elements on the left and right sides of *Meatcraft* can be interpreted as a pair of closed eyes or the mouth of another figure, cut in half. Either way, it is meant to suggest entities that are only part human. Miniature plastic money adorns the upper corners of the work, alluding to the main goal in capitalist business practices of ever-increasing profits. At the top of the piece is a Santa and reindeer pick that was originally intended for decoration



Plate 8. Amber D Watts. *The Point of Meat Craft Is To Eat A Cow, A Pig, A Turkey, A Fish, And A Chicken All In One Bite*. 2014. Mixed media on panel, 6.5 x 10" (16.5 x 25.4 cm).

on a cupcake. This object stands for consumerism in a couple of ways. First, the pick itself is a cheaply manufactured object made for one time use as an embellishment, and then typically thrown away. Secondly, the idea behind the object, Christmas, is easily the most consumer oriented holiday in the United States. The title, *The Point of Meat Craft Is To Eat A Cow, A Pig, A Turkey, A Fish, And A Chicken All In One Bite*, expresses the absurdity of corporations choosing to advertise large quantities of food rather than quality of food. This work is not meant to necessarily single out Arby's, but to bring attention to advertising devices in general. There is value in recognizing the ways in which consumers are enticed to make certain decisions. With this recognition comes the ability to have more control in the choices we make.

CONSUMPTION: HUMANS AS TEMPORAL BEINGS

Through my work I have given notice not only to the ways food is made and packaged, but also to issues of consumption. After a food is produced and branded according to a companies' specifications, a customer will most likely come along and purchase it. Then the purchaser, their family, and/or friends eat the food. The food goes into a person's body and travels through the digestive system for nourishment. It is a biological fact that one's health and well-being is directly impacted by choices in diet. It can be easy to ignore the cumulative impacts of diet because changes do not happen instantaneously. Even during the time of this research, I found that making smart food choices was difficult and sometimes impossible. The constraints of everyday life can make unhealthy meal solutions tempting.

To identify my role as a participant in The Industrial Food Chain, I aimed to create a work that would honestly expose my own food choices over a period of time. First, I made a written record of everything I ate and drank for seven days. Confessing my own eating habits to myself and viewers is important because it is an admission of my part in the food system we are all wrapped up in. The record was used as part of a largescale art book measuring 26 x 40 inches when open. Its form as a book is meant to provide the viewer with an intimate experience of a self-revealing narrative. The book is large enough to be displayed on a table, but small enough to allow only about two people to view it at once. Viewers may physically touch the book to turn its pages.

It is similar in scale and design to some of Louise Bourgeois' illustrated books (see fig. 18). Bourgeois is primarily known as a sculptor, but created many drawings,

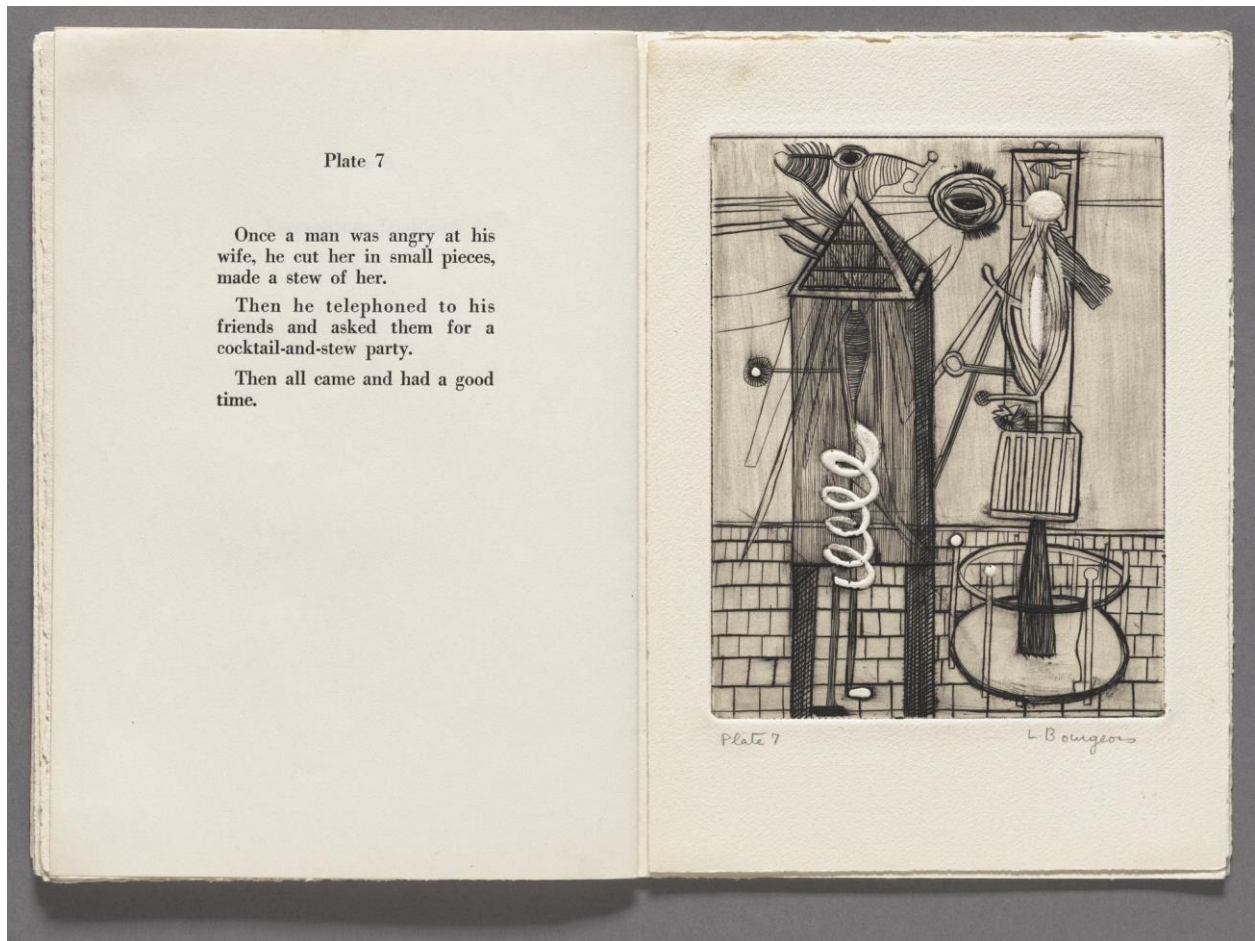


Figure 18. Louise Bourgeois. *Untitled, plate 7 of 9*, from the illustrated book, *He Disappeared into Complete Silence*. 1947. Engraving and drypoint, plate: 6 15/16 x 5 7/16" (17.7 x 13.8cm); page: 9 15/16 x 6 15/16" (25.3 x 17.7 cm) Publisher: Gemor Press, New York. Printer: The artist at Atelier 17, New York.

prints, and large books as part of her artistic practice in the mid to late twentieth century. (Miriam). Making art books allowed her to pursue an interest in creative writing while continuing to make images. In my work, titled *Feeding Time: A Confession And Reflection Of My Foodstuff Consumption For Seven Days*, there is a linear narrative that addresses some of the questions I encountered during my process of research (see plate 9). The text of the book begins with a description of approaching food problems in an analytical

way, by looking at statistical data. It addresses my fear about humans eating from the Industrial Food Chain and brings up the point that humans are animals. Then the narrative presents the reader/viewer with the realities of my life as a white southern mom

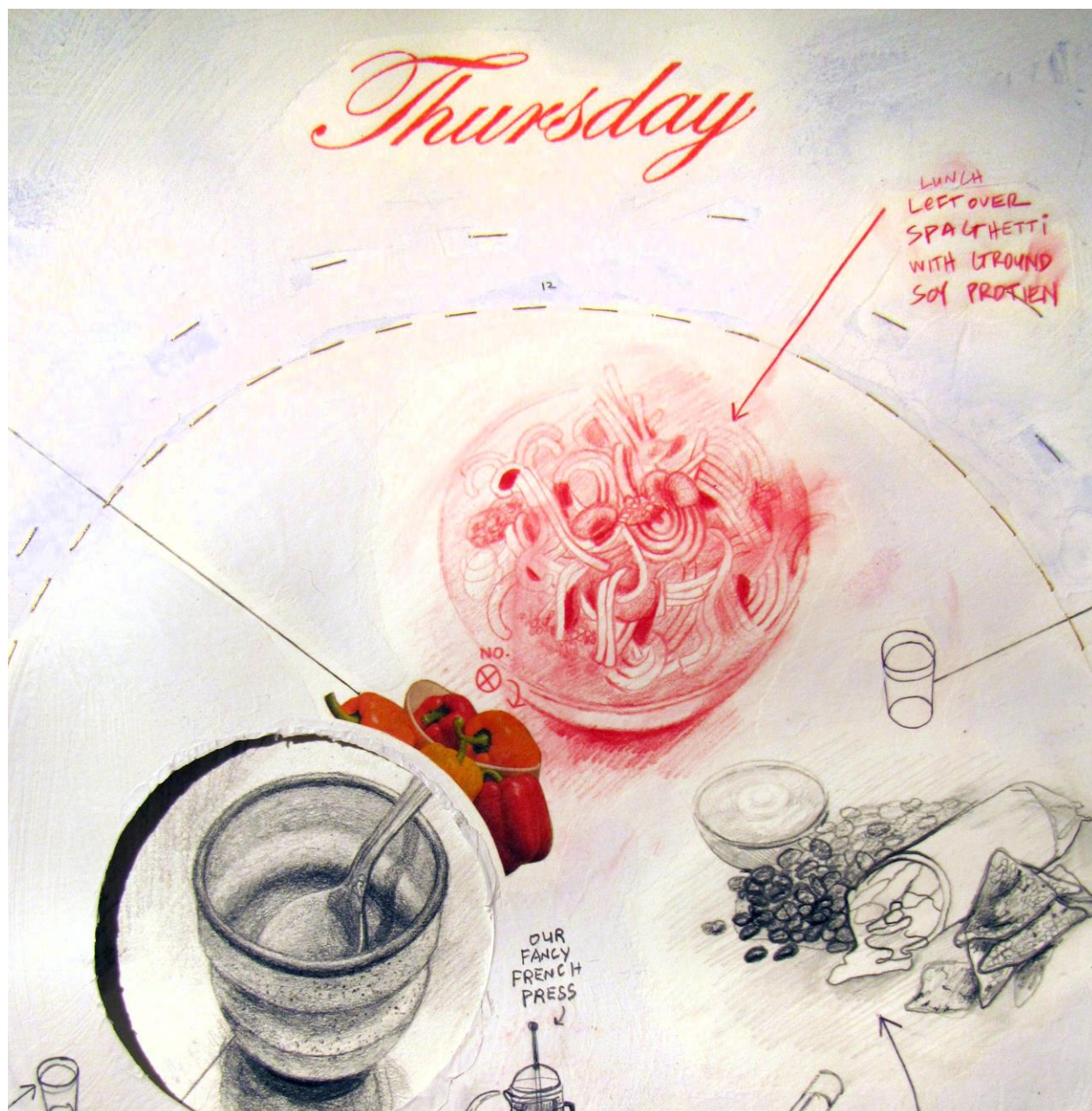


Plate 9. Amber D Watts. Detail, *Feeding Time: A Confession And Reflection Of My Foodstuff Consumption For Seven Days*. 2016. Mixed media on primed paper, Open book 24 x 40" (61 x 101.6 cm).

living in the year 2016. The narrative touches on issues like the lack of time to grow my own food and my dissatisfaction with grocery store shopping.

The main body of text is supplemented by images and handwritten descriptions of the foods I ate Monday through Sunday. Some pages reveal a fairly healthy diet, while others expose the consumption of processed foods. Some days I had no dinner at all, but consumed multiple servings of alcohol instead. At the close of the book, my dissatisfaction with our industrialized food system is made clear. Something must be done to make positive change, even if that *something* is not yet known. The book concludes with a collage of my handwritten notes. The notes are evidence of my brainstorming for solutions. The very last page of the book does not proclaim *The End*, but instead reads, *The Beginning*.

CONCLUSION AND OUTCOMES

This thesis body of work began with an interest in common misconceptions about food. My research focused on the downfalls of The Industrial Food Chain in order to result in work that makes some difference in the world. Upon starting the work, it was immediately apparent that food issues are not isolated or compartmentalized in any way. To study food is to study everything. My research has just barely touched on a few of the issues. The difficulty in my sorting out the intricacies of our food system exemplifies my concerns about food: that most people know so little about something they cannot biologically live without.

Research for this creative activity started with the most evident problems, like the dangers of fast food and processed foods. This led me to the issues with added chemicals, genetically modified organisms, the obesity epidemic, migrant workers, and animals in factory farms. The ways that food production is connected to water contamination, global warming, and cancer is disturbing. My assumption that buying organic and gardening could save people from the Industrial Food Chain was grossly inaccurate. Every aspect of our lives has been deeply affected by capitalist methodologies.

My future research and creative activity will focus on addressing and reaching a specific audience. Because this work is meant for display in an art gallery or museum, there are potential limitations in my message. The work only reaches those people who choose to go into the gallery. A greater number and cross section of people may be reached if my work was brought out into communities in a way that is free and not intimidating. Taking the work out of the gallery and into a public space will help remove

many of the stifling protocols of the art gallery. This may mean creating new pieces that are public interactive works.

Humans have always created images and objects in order to learn, grow, share, and survive. Through the creation of this thesis body, I have learned that it *is* possible to live a dignified life in a society of *Just-Add-Water-Instant-Artificial Blueberry Biscuit Mix*. We cannot change the past that has lead up to the ways we produce, advertise, and consume food; but we can aim to make positive change for the future.

ADDITIONAL IMAGES OF THESIS WORK



Plate 10. Amber D Watts. *Wholesome Intentions Warped By The Capitalist Mind*. 2015. Mixed media with US currency, 40 x 48 x 6" (121.9 x 101.6 cm).



Top: Plate 11. Amber D Watts. Detail 1, *Wholesome Intentions Warped By The Capitalist Mind*.
Bottom: Plate 12. Amber D Watts. Detail 2, *Wholesome Intentions Warped By The Capitalist Mind*.

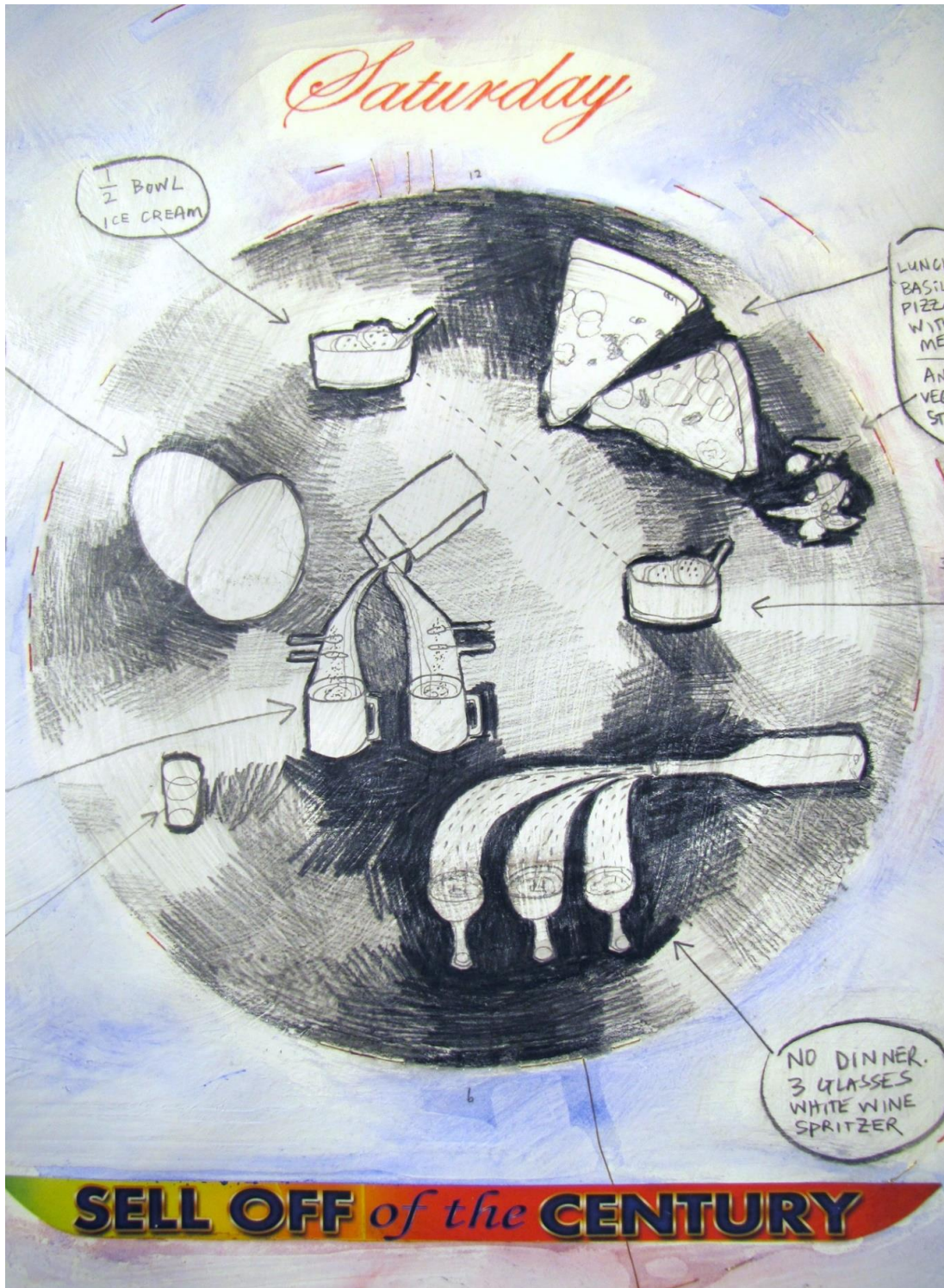
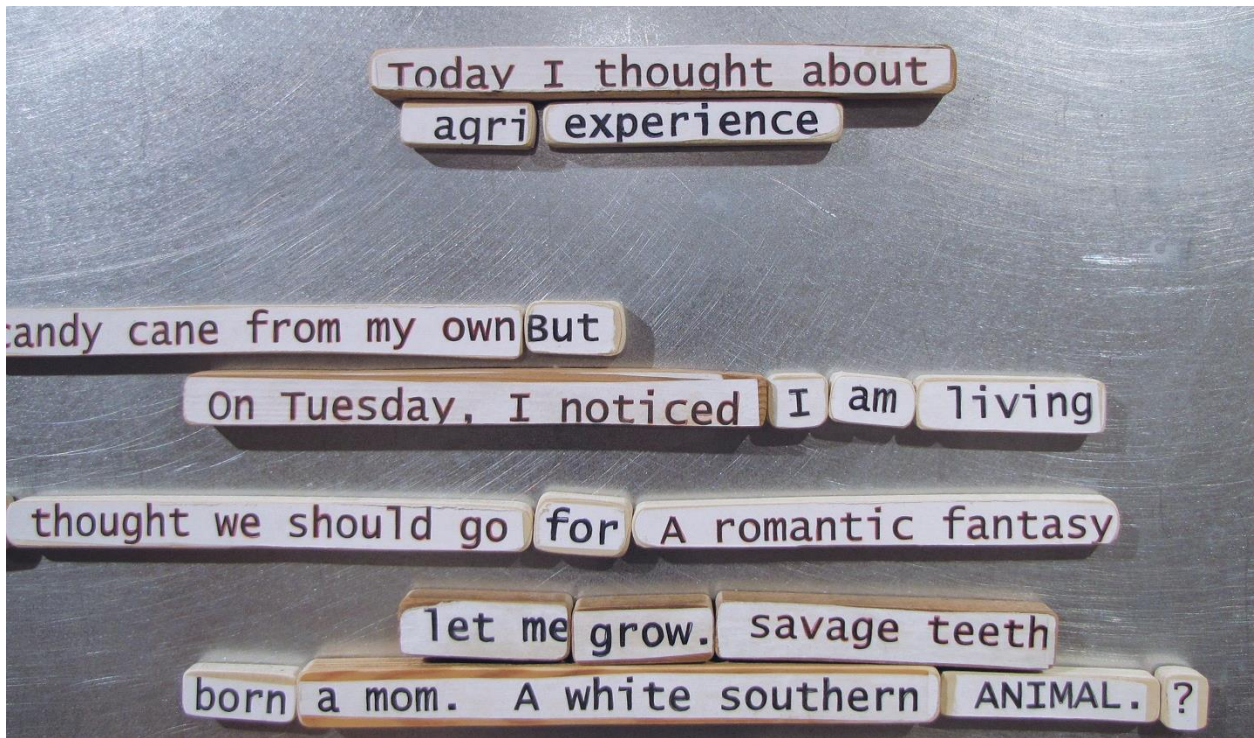
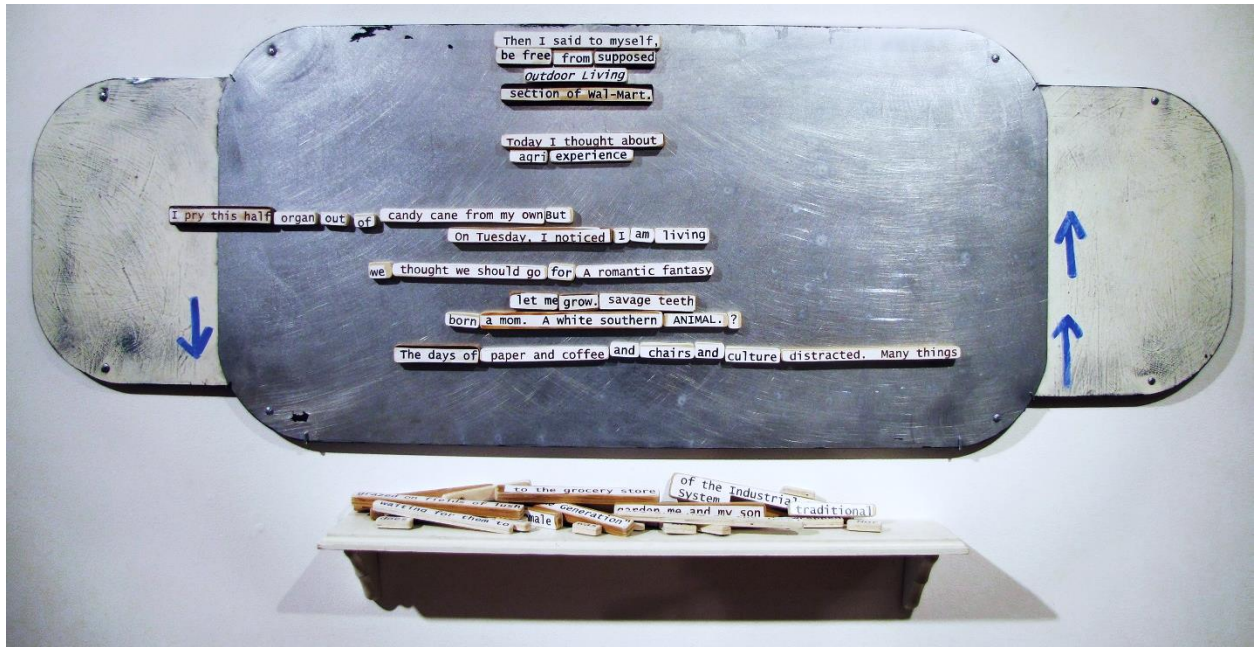


Plate 13. Amber D Watts. Detail 2 from the illustrated book, *Feeding Time: A Confession And Reflection Of My Foodstuff Consumption For Seven Days*. 2016. Mixed media on primed paper. Page is 24 x 20 " (61 x 50.8 cm).



Plate 14. Amber D Watts. Detail 3 from the illustrated book, *Feeding Time: A Confession And ... Of My Foodstuff Consumption For Seven Days*. 2016. Mixed media on primed paper. Page is 24 x 20 " (61 x 50.8 cm).



Top: Plate 15. Amber D Watts. *Record Of Many People Working On The Same Problem By Continuously Rearranging Ideas*. 2016. Mixed media on steel, 32 x 72 "(81.2 x 182.9 cm).

Bottom: Plate 16. Amber D Watts. Detail, *Record Of Many People Working On The Same Problem By Continuously Rearranging Ideas*. 2016.



Top: Plate 17. Amber D Watts. *Plastic Chairs And Cell Phones Couldn't Save Us, So We Resorted To Ridiculous Growls And Flailing Arms*. 2013. Mixed media with glitter, 25 x 48 x 8 "(63.5 x 121.9 x 20 cm).
Bottom: Plate 18. Amber D Watts. Detail, *Plastic Chairs And Cell Phones Couldn't Save Us, So We Resorted To Ridiculous Growls And Flailing Arms*.



Plate 19. Amber D Watts. *Someone Told Me Fried Eggrolls Are Healthy Because They Have Vegetables Inside. Really?!* 2013. Mixed Media on Fabric. 60 x 50 " (152.4 x 127 cm).



Top: Plate 20. Amber D Watts. Detail 1, *Someone Told Me Fried Eggrolls Are Healthy Because They Have Vegetables Inside. Really?!*

Bottom: Plate 21. Amber D Watts. Detail 2, *Someone Told Me Fried Eggrolls Are Healthy Because They Have Vegetables Inside. Really?!*



Plate 22. Amber D Watts. *Absurdities From Childhood When We Believed Peaches Were Peaches And Apples Were Apples*. 2014. Mixed media with copper, 39 x 35 x 7 " (99 x 88.9 x 17.8 cm).



Plate 23. Amber D Watts. *Choosing Sides With Growling Insides*. 2015. Mixed media with copper and found object, 60 x 36 x 25 " (152.4 x 91.4 x 63.5 cm).



Plate 24. Amber D Watts. *True Living*® Is Not Truth In Living. 2015. Mixed media and found object, 51 x 30 x 25" (129.5 x 76.2 x 63.5 cm).



Plate 25. Amber D Watts. Country Bacon (With Imitation Bacon And Artificial Colors And Flavors). 2014. Mixed media on panel, 14 x 11" (5.5 x 4.3 cm).



Plate 26. Amber D Watts. *The Children Were Horrified To Learn That Food Comes From The Dirt*. 2014. Mixed Media on Panel, 14 x 11" (5.5 x 4.3 cm).



Plate 27. Amber D Watts. *In High Demand: Pressed Meat With Butane And Scraps Of Things*. 2015. Mixed media on panel, 10 x 9 " (25.4 x 22.9 cm).



Plate 28. Amber D Watts. *Instant Gratification For The Self Because They Say You Deserve It*. 2014. Mixed media on panel, 6 x 5 " (15.2 x 12.7 cm).



Plate 29. Amber D Watts. *Ahhh! This Is Dinner?* 2014. Mixed Media on Panel, 14 x 11" (5.5 x 4.3 cm).



Plate 30. Amber D Watts. *Roll The Die To See What I Will Have For Dinner*. 2016. Mixed media on wood, 10 x 5 x 5 " (25.4 x 12.7 x 12.7 cm).



Plate 31. Amber D Watts. *Cheese Head In The Sand*. 2014. Mixed media on wood, 12 x 6 x 5 " (30.5 x 15.2 x 12.7 cm).



Plate 32. Amber D Watts. *I'm Pretty Sure Margarine Is Not The Answer*. 2014. Mixed media on panel, 14 x 6" (35.6 x 15.2 cm).

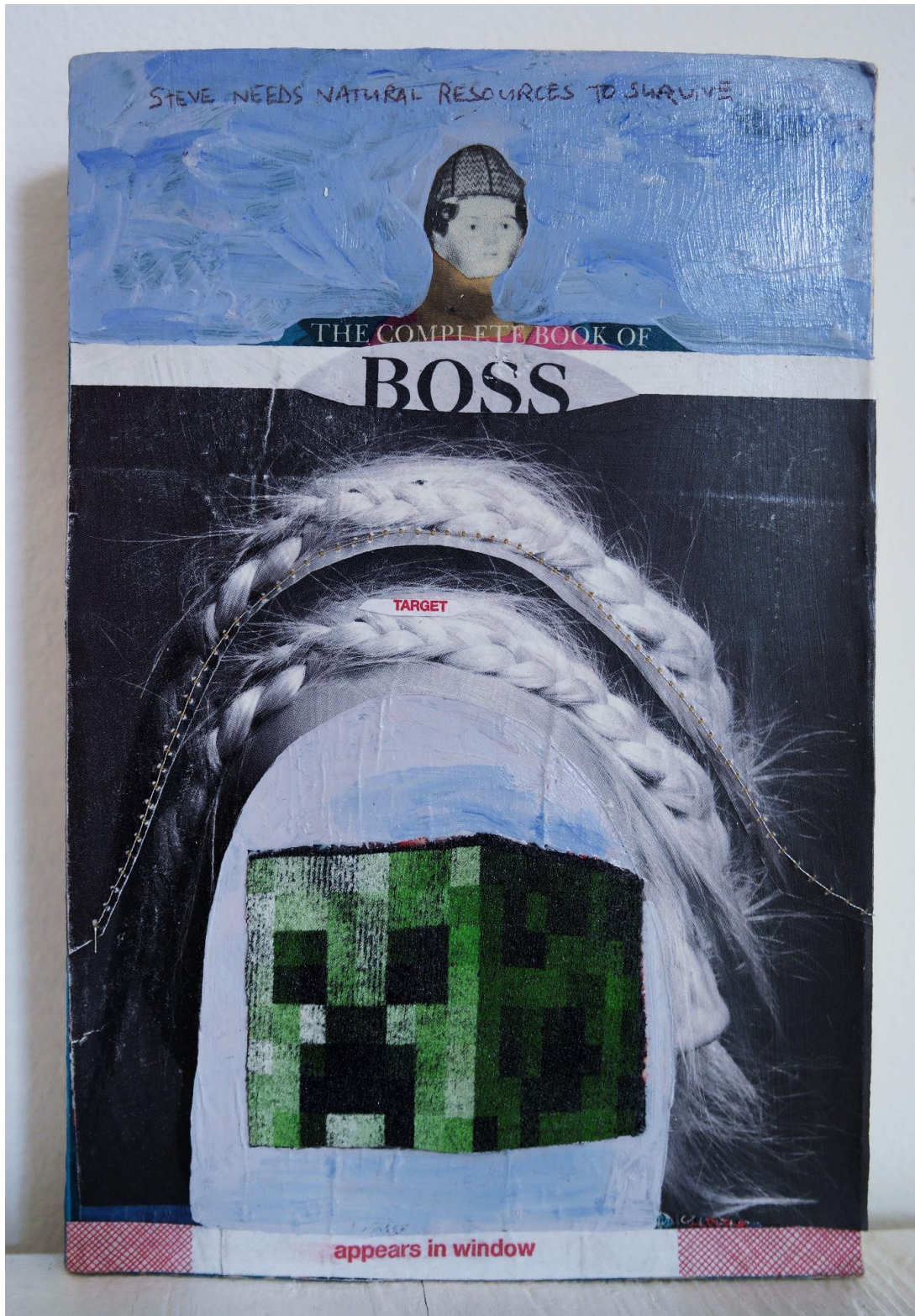
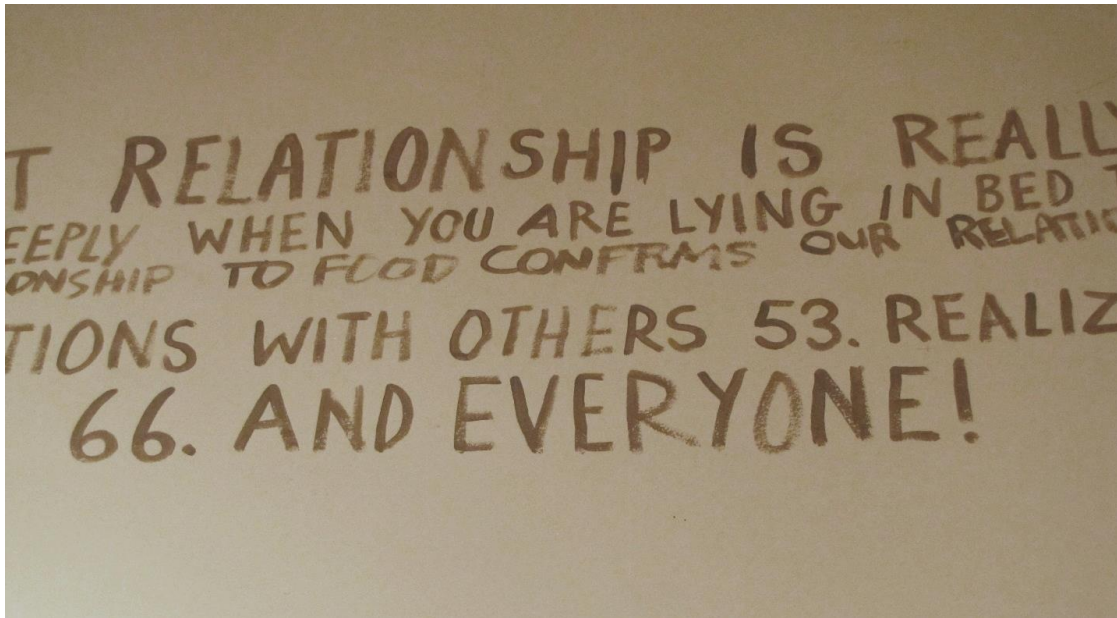


Plate 33. Amber D Watts. *The Point Of Mine Craft Is For Steve To Survive Using Natural Resources*. 2014. Mixed media on doll-making book, 10 x 8 " (25.4 x 20.3 cm).



Top: Plate 34. Amber D Watts. Installation view of text on gallery wall. 2016. Dimensions variable
Bottom: Plate 35. Amber D Watts. *What Is This Stuff (Without The Abstractions Of Product Branding)?* 2016. Paper bags with food inside, Dimensions variable.



Top: Plate 36. Amber D Watts. Installation view 1 of artist's studio in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University. 2016.

Bottom: Plate 37. Amber D Watts. Installation view 2 of artist's studio in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University. 2016.



Plate 38. Amber D Watts. Installation view of thesis exhibit on left and artist's studio on right, in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University. 2016.



Plate 39. Amber D Watts. Installation view of thesis exhibit in Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University. 2016.



Plate 40. Mixed media object created by visitors in artist's studio space. Wellington B. Gray Gallery at East Carolina University. 2016.

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