

Sabbatical Report
Fall 2015
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During my Fall 2015 sabbatical, my goal was to gain new skills in weaving and build a new body of work that is conceptually based using contemporary approaches to drawing and installation. This time proved to be fruitful with the quantity of work produced but also gave me time to reflect and develop new concepts. I was revitalized artistically as well as academically.

My first opportunity was an invitational 4-person exhibit at Meramec Contemporary Gallery on the campus of St. Louis Community College-Meramec in St. Louis, MO during the month of September 2015. For this exhibit I created a new series of large contemporary drawing/installations. This exhibition was in conjunction with the Innovations in Textile Conference in St. Louis, MO. I was able to attend this conference where many noteworthy speakers and exhibitions explored contemporary fiber arts. Two additional art works were chosen for a group and juried exhibition during this conference, titled Fiber Focus held at Art St. Louis gallery.

During my time in the St. Louis area I had the opportunity to provide two community art experiences to adults with mental and physical disabilities. Students from St. Louis Community college assisted me on my visit to Sarah Care, a daycare facility for adults with special needs. Later in the month I held a weaving experience at an assisted living community of St. Louis ARC. In the last 15 years outreach and community service has been an important part of my research and creativity. During my sabbatical I made a new goal for myself. Every time I have an exhibition I will provide an art experience to individuals who are underserved in the arts.

It is within this month of research, installation and outreach that I initially started to explore the concept of meditation and drawing. The physical acts of spinning and drawing were always meditative to me. But I was curious about how meditation could help improve my mindfulness to all activities including my art. I contacted Dr. Gene Rice and asked if he would like to collaborate on an Undergraduate Research Project with me in the spring of 2016. We were awarded an URE grant and have just started this project with 9 undergraduate students and 6 faculty/staff/graduate students.

In October I attended the Surface Design Association Conference in Gatlinburg, TN. This conference not only explored fiber artwork, but the theme of lectures, workshops and discussions was Social Practices. Social Practices is a new term for community themed artwork, giving back to the community and raising up individuals who are underserved or under recognized. It was nice to make my community a little larger with like-minded and passionate artists and educators.

After many months of activity and traveling the end of my sabbatical presented me with a grand honor. My drawing, "Centering 2" was accepted into an international exhibition called "We All Draw: Thinking Drawings". This exhibition was displayed in London, England and a curator from The Drawing Center in NYC awarded my drawing a CHOICE award. To be chosen for this exhibition was a huge honor, but to be the only participant from the United States to get this recognition was a great way to end my sabbatical.

During this past semester I participated in two faculty exhibitions and an alumni showcase. I applied to many grants and exhibitions and explored new weaving techniques at my loom. My sabbatical exhibition is scheduled in the Moss Thorns Gallery during the Fall Gallery Walk in August of 2016.

I am very thankful for this time because it allowed me time to focus on my art as well as the importance of this work in my teaching. I have reorganized the curriculum and developed new projects for my drawing classes. These courses have a new focus on contemporary drawing and research components.