

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

**DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln**

---

Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative Activity,  
School of Art, Art History and Design

Art, Art History and Design, School of

---

5-2017

## Two-faced and Vulnerable

Stephanie Wright

*University of Nebraska-Lincoln, circa1991us@gmail.com*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/artstudents>



Part of the [Fine Arts Commons](#), and the [Printmaking Commons](#)

---

Wright, Stephanie, "Two-faced and Vulnerable" (2017). *Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative Activity, School of Art, Art History and Design*. 118.

<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/artstudents/118>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Art, Art History and Design, School of at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative Activity, School of Art, Art History and Design by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

TWO-FACED AND VULNERABLE

By

Stephanie Wright

A THESIS

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Karen Kunc

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2017

## TWO-FACED AND VULNERABLE

Stephanie Wright, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2017

Advisor: Karen Kunc

A helpless calf suspended by a balloon. A dog attempting to focus through a set of blinders. Vultures circling over an abandoned bed. The situations in which these animals find themselves might seem, at first glance, quirky or ambiguous. But we can easily empathize with their perceivable state. Through fables, myths, religion, everyday interaction, and animal husbandry, we have made animals and emotions recognizable metaphors for humankind. These animals address broader human experience; certainly the notions of “human nature” and culture are themselves human constructs. We self-consciously work to define our existence through the separation of the concept of “society” from “nature.”

The animals in my work perform, unhappily, for the viewer. Like hand puppets, they are stand-ins that allow me to talk about living with fear, social anxiety and disenchantment. I’m uncomfortable and dissatisfied. I’m afraid to have kids. I’m afraid to be the boss. I’m afraid to be a teacher and I’m afraid to be a lover. I’m afraid to compete. I’m afraid to play the game. But it’s all I have and I’m afraid to be alone.

The act of drawing becomes a reflexive coping mechanism. It’s a way of illustrating in-the-moment feelings and reactions to everyday interactions that I am unable to rationalize. I’m not talking about something logical, but something tangible;

visceral. It manifests in its own form; an anxious being that exists beyond me-- a whole other animal, justifying itself; refusing to be alone and all in my head.

The anxious, wavering line of drypoint, the stuttering repetition of figure and indecisive movement of limbs combine to indicate that the subject's performance is unfocused, degrading and falling apart from the inside. The performers lose their sense of individual identity and worth as they fail to uphold the perceived function that society poses on them. Unable to communicate through words, the true state of their emotions reveals itself through their physical form. They are exposed, two-faced and vulnerable, gritted teeth and all.

My most natural aesthetic in printmaking is an unelevated presentation of an elevated, sophisticated line. It begins with a relationship to the drawing. The act of sketching, drafting, and editing a figure on paper brings forth multiple positions, multiple expressions, multiple communicative states, that suspend the figure in a state of indecision; of ultimate potential with an inability to become one definable thing. This makes drawing a perfect medium to convey the dualities of emotion.

Alternatively, the sophistication that comes with the finality of the printed form implies a notion of confidence and justification. The trepidation and indecision of drafting within my drawing in combination with their final printed state convey a turbulent state of decision and indecision; knowing and the unknowable. A feeling that the subject, even in its most focused and confident state, is complicated.

Through both the content of my work and the process of its creation, I work through my anxieties. Like early cave paintings or images stretched on animal skins, bare



impressions on paper are an unassuming form of human communication and reveal a truth about our self-awareness. My work stands as a signal to others that we are here, living in the moment and we are not alone in our questioning.





## IMAGE LIST



01

*Pariah Dog*  
Drypoint on Western Paper  
74 x 34.5 "  
2017



01 (detail)





02

*It Helps and It Hurts*  
Drypoint on Western Paper  
81 x 31 "  
2017



02 (detail)





03

*Guilt*  
Drypoint on Western Paper  
105 x 46 "  
2017





03 (detail)



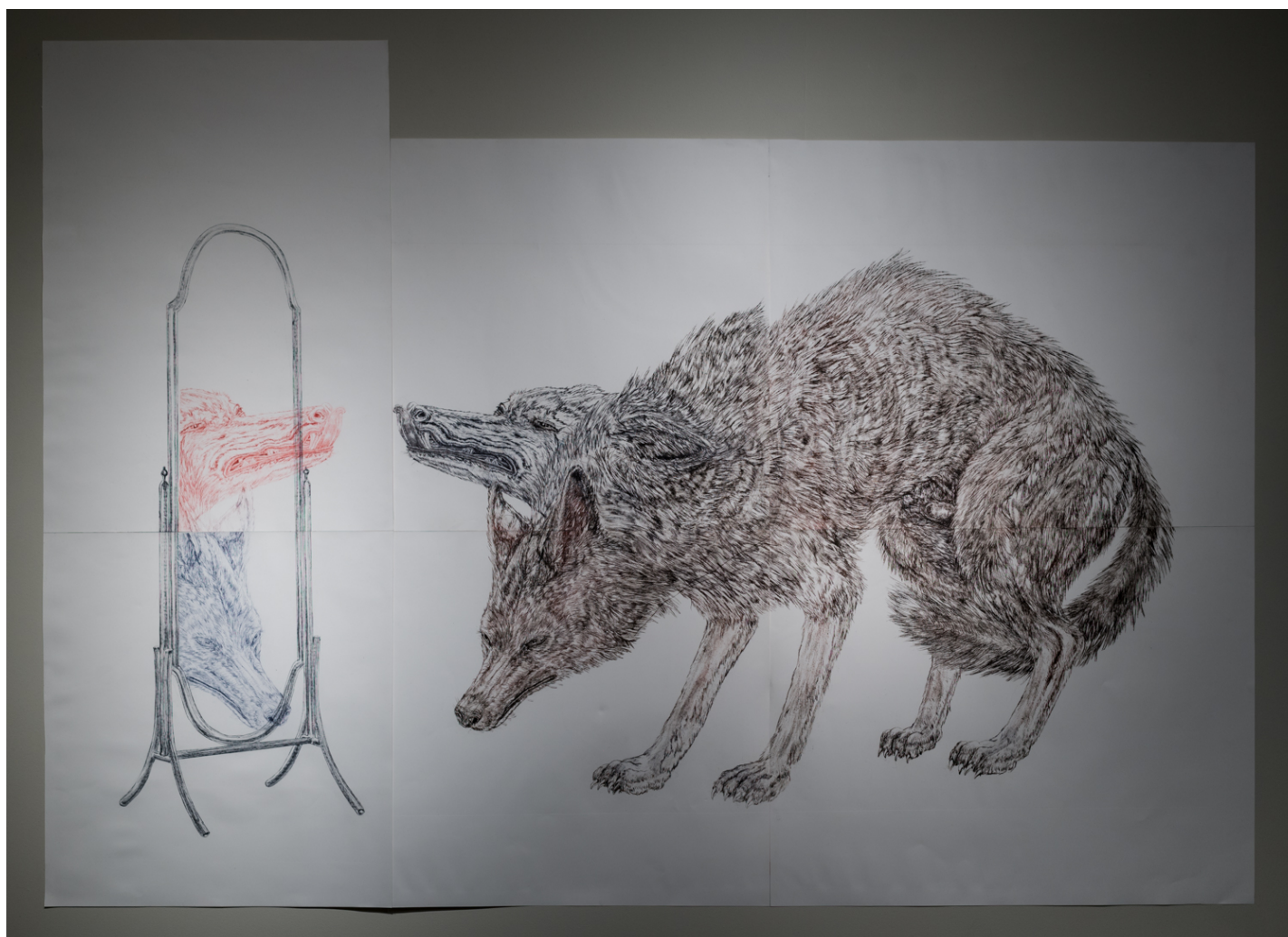
04

*She*  
Drypoint on Western Paper  
60 x 52 "  
2017



04 (detail)





05

*Omega*  
Drypoint on Western Paper  
102 x 72 "  
2017



05 (detail)



06

*Lucy*  
Drypoint on Western Paper  
92 x 87 "  
2017





06 (detail)



07

*Waiting*  
 Drypoint on Western Paper  
 87 x 53 "  
 2017



07 (detail)





08

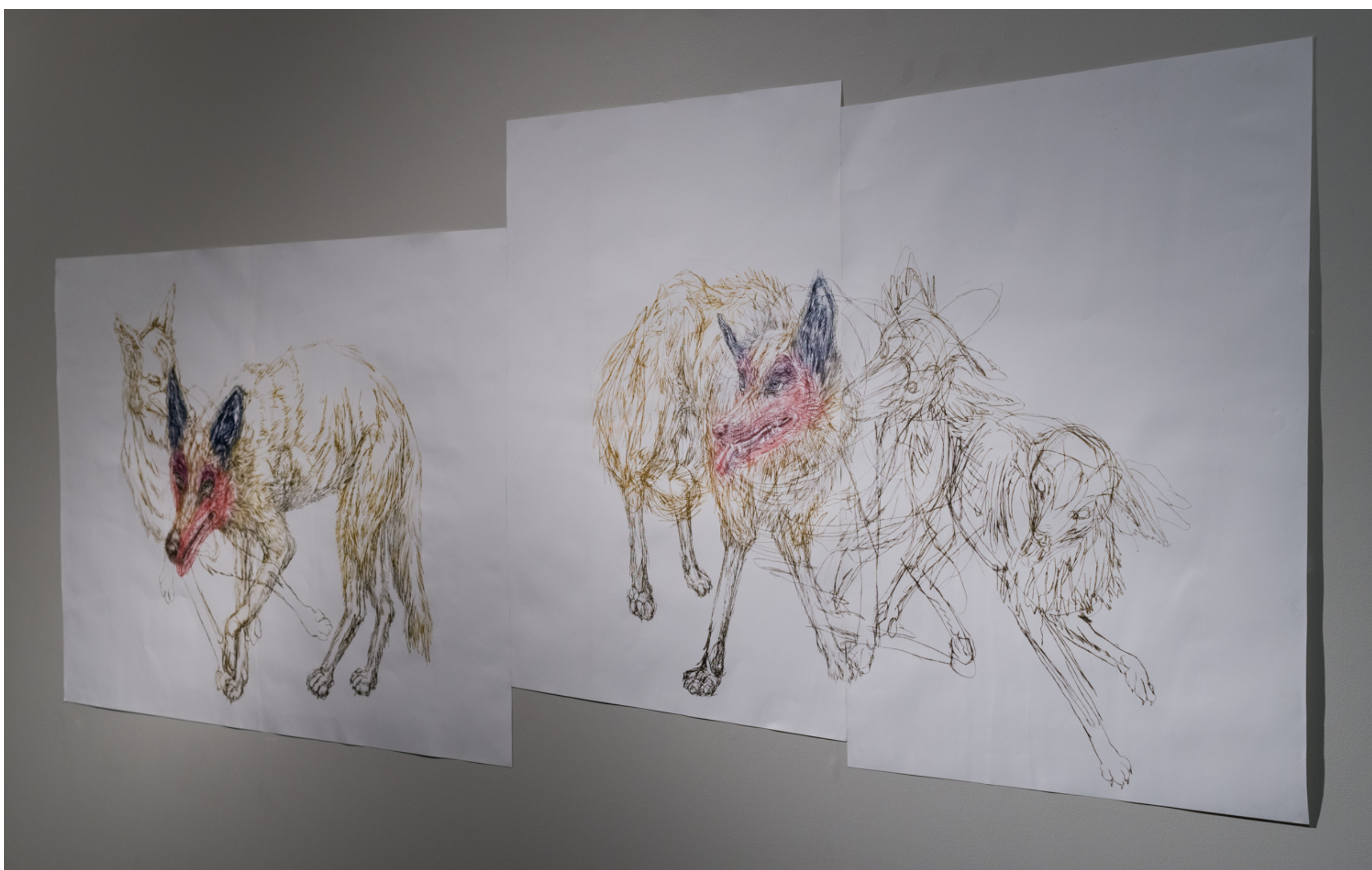
*You and I, Death*

Mixed-media Sculpture (Drypoint on Western Paper, acetate, plywood, Drypoint on Eastern Paper, graphite)

6 x 7'

2017





09

*Mimes*  
 Drypoint on Western Paper  
 130 x 41 "  
 2017



09 (detail)



EXHIBITION









