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It Can't Leave You The Way It Finds You

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Nobles, Kyle, "It Can't Leave You The Way It Finds You" (2018). *Theses, Dissertations, and Student Creative Activity, School of Art, Art History and Design*. 128.

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IT CAN'T LEAVE YOU THE WAY IT FINDS YOU

by

Kyle Nobles

A THESIS

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

Major: Art

Under the Supervision of Professor Francisco Souto

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2018

IT CAN'T LEAVE YOU THE WAY IT FINDS YOU

Kyle Nobles, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2018

Advisor: Francisco Souto

There's a beautiful innocence in childhood where, although the world is large and new, it feels as though your place in it and the roles that you play are stable and unchanging. In our youth, outside of extraordinary circumstances, we are unburdened by the awareness that everything and everyone is subject to radical change—including our own sense of self. As we grow older though, looking back it becomes clear that this was never the case. In a matter of years, you can change so dramatically that you did not even notice as you became an entirely new person. For me, this realization was incredibly destabilizing. I began to feel that I no longer knew who I was, and longed for the security of the identity I had previously known. This moment of discovery and the ensuing self-reflection is the driving force behind my work. I set out to find the relationship between my past and present selves, and to acquaint myself with the person I had become. The revelation that I had changed so drastically from my prior self left me feeling fragmented and no longer comfortable in my identity. I was rootless, felt alone, and longed for the comfort of nostalgia. My drawings pull from images and memories of my childhood, and juxtapose them with images of myself in my present state. They present the struggle of integrating identities that are at odds with one another, the discomfort of confronting change from the past, and the uncertainty of the future.

In its early stages, it became clear that this work needed to be made as drawings rather than in another medium. Unlike other mediums, drawing is immediate and there is

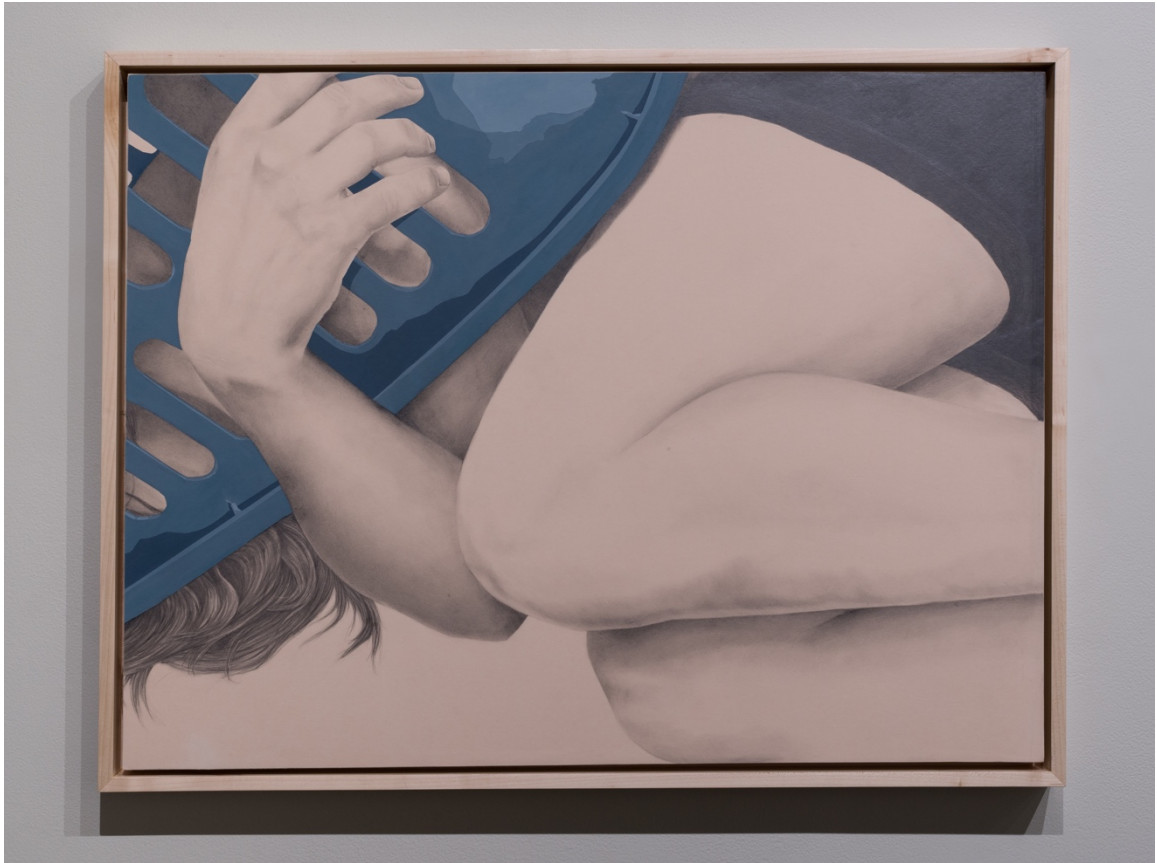
a very direct relationship between the artist and the artwork. Drawing is itself an act of discovery, one which parallels my own discovery of self. By its very nature, both technically and conceptually, this work requires time and labor which is a large part of my process. Countless hours are spent working with a piece from its conception to the final execution, and these focused tasks begin to take on meditative qualities. Through the intimate and lengthy process of recreating my image, I am symbolically pulling myself out of the ether and into being, birthing myself for a second time. As I am doing this, I am forced to pay attention to myself both as a physical subject and as a larger concept. I take into consideration each freckle, mole, fold, and crease depicting my body in as close to a non-idealized way as possible. I am not trying to flatter or denigrate myself, choosing instead to depict my form honestly and sincerely. This acknowledgement of physical imperfection echoes the acceptance of myself as a multifaceted and flawed individual. I not only have to consider my external being, but the internal as well contending with all the intricacies that build up an individual. These drawings also take into consideration the relationship that the present, in-flux self has with the more abstract and solidified past identities with which it still so longs to return to or absorb.

The work lives in a liminal space, neither fully here nor there, neither truly child or truly adult, neither completely the same or completely different. This lack of a stable identity contributes to that sense of insecurity. This is reflected in the depiction of the figure's attempt to rest in various containers, but never being able to fully be concealed or return to the comfort and safety of being out of sight. My body is often folded and contorted in various uncomfortable positions, seeking to fit once again into the comfort

and familiarity of the past but finding that there is no going backwards. Beyond references to moments and objects from my youth, the images are pulled out of their specific time and place and meet in the vast non-descript space of the paper. The act of removing them from their context reflects the self-investigation occurring internally and allows the various signifiers of past and present selves to exist on equal footing, and receive equal consideration.

I am constructing a new identity, and placing it within the context of my past in an attempt to reconcile the perceived disparity between the two. Creating this work has been a process of self-realization, allowing me to take a serious look at who I am in the moment and find acceptance. I have come to realize that the self is not constant, and that the discomfort I have with change won't go away. This endeavor extends beyond my personal investigation of self, operating as a case study of the effects of change on the individual as a larger construct. Like many others, I will never be done with the work of re-evaluating and recreating my self-identity. This is innately a part of the larger human condition. But, for me, finding this mindfulness is just one step on the journey to accepting that change and by extension myself.

Image List



1. *"There's no going back"*
Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
31" x 24"
2017



Detail



2. *"Stay put"*

Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel

48 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 40 $\frac{1}{2}$ "

2017



Detail



3. *"It comes and it goes"*
Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
30 3/4" x 23"
2017



Detail



4. *"I can't pin it down"*
 Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
 30 ½" x 24"
 2018

Detail





5. *"Sometimes it's easier this way"*
 Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
 17 $\frac{3}{4}$ " x 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ " each
 2018

Detail



Detail





6. *"I keep clinging to the way things were"*
Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted to panel
23 ½" x 30 ½"
2017

Detail





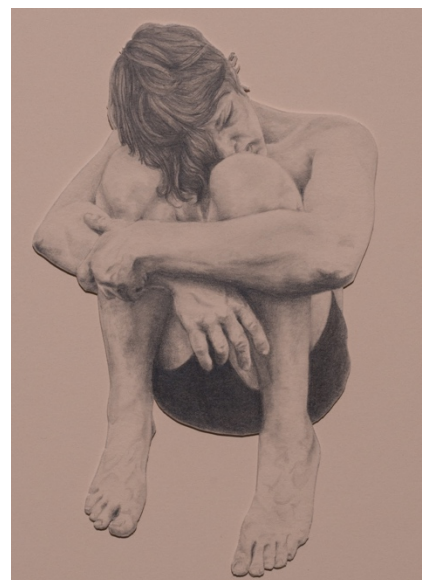
7. *"Linger here"*
 Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
 23 ½" x 30 ½"
 2018

Detail





8. *"Pause"*
 Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
 21 ½" x 47 ½"
 2018



Detail



9. *"You have to be okay"*
 Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
 23 ½" x 28 ½"
 2018

Detail





10. *"From one thing to the next"*
 Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
 11 ½" x 15 ¾"
 2018

Detail



Detail



Detail



Detail



Detail





11. *"I don't know how to let go"*
Graphite and gesso on paper, mounted on panel
28 ½" x 23 ½"
2018



Detail

Installation Shots

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The Way It Finds You

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