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Crushing Caution

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CRUSHING CAUTION

by

Lindsey Day

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 Aaron Holz

Lincoln, Nebraska

April, 2019

CRUSHING CAUTION

Lindsey Day, M.F.A.

University of Nebraska, 2019

Adviser: Aaron Holz

I am preoccupied with the nuances of ordinary risk. I view this not as paranoia, but as prudence. To live without fear is a privilege, to be arrested by it is paralyzing. I often encounter two competing ideologies, two lenses, through which risk is evaluated. The first lens is for the victim, the person being crushed by, or blinded from, cautiousness. They see life as something happening to them, and avoid active risk-taking. The second lens is held by the person dominating apprehension, taking action in spite of consequence. I am inclined to find and maintain a balance of these divergent outlooks, as I routinely compare and contrast my exposure to danger, harm, and loss, with respect to my environment.

In the public domain, I am directed by the forces of a universal, non-verbal system. I must stop when the light turns red, yield to strangers, stay within the painted lines, and succumb to the ceaseless editions of road construction. *Crushing Caution* is composed using imagery of construction, traffic control and barricade objects, and road navigation symbols. Pedestrians and drivers habitually react to the shapes, colors, and forms of these objects as they serve as warning against danger. Orange, yellow, red, and

anything neon, stand out in nature; they vibrate against the cool blues, greens, and browns of the sky and land. Even without the pulse of human traffic, landscapes move and speak within their structure, color, and sign language.

Through painting and drawing, I appreciate and challenge the modern landscape for its formal energy and rich implications. I insert myself into a system of my own fabrication, playing the role of a contractor, an urban planner, a material contributor and a liberal performer. In the controlled environment of my studio, I am the sole conductor of risk and defender of caution. Oil paint and brush are tools for representation, and oil stick and bar are tools for abstraction. Capricious marks fused with reserved observation functions to isolate the imagery from reality. This combination of tactile expression is where I find productive balance.

I paint and collage on wood panel substrate for its durability. The surface is resilient to a wide variety of materials, as well as aggressive scraping and scratching techniques. From start to finish, there is no universal methodology or formula within my process. I am constantly taking risks with color, scale, medium, and assemblage. This allows each painting to inform me just as I inform the painting. Chaos becomes an anticipated, and even desired, mechanism for discovery and growth. The painting, *Crushing Caution*, on which my thesis was built, is a result of this process. I painted and drew chaotically, anxiously applying colors, textures and shapes to exaggerate the

omnipresence of unpredictable hazard. Traffic cones and caution tape that usually serve to guide our actions are presented in disarray, a warning of unknown cause and effect.

Flower Flags is a drama painting. It presents a dense curbside plant under the influence of urban development. The large, green leaves are punctuated by cautionary red marker flags. In much the same way that a red rose blooms from a thorny stem, these utility flags illuminate the electricity being placed in the ground. Why not consider and accept both scenarios as beautiful allegory of life?

The works in *Crushing Caution* are symbolic; the colors and forms manifest warning, but the active threat has been removed. They instigate both fear and thrill of the unknown. They advocate for vigilance and embrace chaos. Each piece becomes its own object of caution, a permanent icon of inherent risk.

Stacked

Oil, oil pastel and poplar on panel

59.5" x 15"

2019



Roundabout

Oil and oil pastel on panel

59.5" x 30"

2019



Flower Flags
Oil and oil pastel on panel
30" x 59.5"
2019



Crushing Caution
Oil and oil pastel on panel
59.5" x 59.5"
2019



Self Sufficient

Oil, oil pastel, colored pencil,
graphite, chalk pastel, acrylic,
and magazine on mountel paper
17.25" x 17.25"
2019



Holy Hole!
Oil on panel
40.5" x 29.75"
2018



Highway Gothic

Acrylic, ink and oil pastel on
mounted paper

9.75" x 8"

2019



Saint Louis Languish

Oil on panel

45.75" x 46.75"

2017



The Neighbors Have Left

Oil on panel

18" x 23.5"

2018



Construction Ahead
Chalk pastel and oil pastel
on mounted paper
8.5" x 11"
2019



Crushing Caution

April 1 – 5, 2019

Eisentrager – Howard Gallery
University of Nebraska – Lincoln
Richards Hall | West Gallery

Friday, April 5

Public Lecture | 5PM | Brace Hall RM 206

Closing Reception | 6-8PM | Eisentrager–Howard Gallery









