INSIDE OUT

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INSIDE OUT

by

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A THESIS

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The intersection, or in some cases, collision between public and private lives, provides a place to peer through the cracks in the mask we put on for one another each day. A glimpse of this fleeting relaxation of boundaries helps us see one another for what we really are. Alone or in intimate groups, my sculptures describe the vulnerability and insecurity most of us feel beneath our perceived exteriors. I look at the ways in which we define ourselves for others, at the awkwardness found there, and at what happens when that pretense is stripped away. Despite attempts to clothe and ornament or build the insulating walls of societal perception, we are in essence naked in front of one another. We squirm when that veil is too thin, when the inside leaks to the outside. Through subtle distortion of form, exaggerated gesture and an emotional color palette, my work emphasizes those parts of our bodies we are individually most conscious of. I enlarge or shrink sections of the body to emphasize the awkwardness many of us feel in our own skin. Whether we try to hide our fat with our arms, change the sculpture of our natural form with tricks of the wardrobe, or chew at our cuticles, we all try to disappear a part of ourselves, and in the act, point that very thing out.

Because of the energy spent on lying to ourselves and to one another, it is a relief to find a respite. When we are intimate with someone, a mother, a lover, a sibling, or a friend, we allow our humanness to show. There are agreements that we enter into in these relationships, and because of a level of trust, we are allowed to look beyond the facade. We learn to see the subtle
shifts in the landscape of one another’s bodies. This intimacy is how we lay claim on one another, take pride in the time spent, take the other for granted. Through psychological spacing between figures in a room, or the inclination of one head toward another, I suggest the long conversation that develops in these relationships.

Ranging from life-size to half life-size, the scale of my work brings up feelings of isolation, distance, intimacy, voyeurism, and empathy. When placed together, the scale variation in these figures also functions as a means to describe the distribution of power that can play within a group. A large and otherwise imposing figure may diminish when confronted with a group of small, whispering women. The viewer is an integral part of this narrative. I allow for some ambiguity to occur in the interaction between pieces so that the one may supply her own story, or relate his own experience. These figures are placed within environments that dictate the relationship the viewer has with a piece. Some work is confrontational in size, blatant nakedness, or placement, while others ask the viewer to physically adjust altitude in order to interact in a more intimate manner. Surrounded by objects that allude to the everyday: a chair, a rug, or separated with a section of floor tiles, these figures exist in a reality parallel to our own. Just as a novel asks us to suspend truth in order that we may enter into a new one through the eyes of the author, I ask the viewer to travel the terrain of these women and leave the gallery behind.