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Words Never Spoken

Mixed media

So little of the ongoings of our unconscious is ever brought to consciousness. The truth behind the majority of our emotional processing, behaviors, habits, and reactions can be so easily ignored. I wanted to use this project as an opportunity to explore the depths of who I truly am. The origin of my behavior roots from a place that I have left so unexplored. With no understanding of what was happening in my mind, emotion was nearly suffocating. I do not feel sadness; I become it. I do not get angry; I am the color red. I find comfort in knowing that no one else will ever have the same emotional experience I have. Every tear I have ever shed, every time I have felt fearful or alone, have wired me to be exactly as I am. I am a compilation of every experience I have ever had, and underneath the way I show up in this world, exists a palace of it all. For my final piece, I took a walk through my own unconscious mind. I allowed myself to stop searching for answers, and with that I began to hear what my mind so desperately has been screaming. Take a seat in your own mind and let things be; can we ever understand the depth of what we feel? Or do our emotions come from a place so deep inside of us we can never understand them? We exist in a nonsensical and coincidental state of being, so embrace it. By familiarizing yourself with your mind you are no longer in the passenger seat. By allowing everything you are and everything you have ever been to inform you, you can stop searching for answers. Take a seat in my chair and stay a while, become one with a space that consists of everything and nothing. It isn't supposed to make perfect sense, so stop looking for answers.

The Words of the Unconscious



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I. WRITER'S NOTE:

I am trapped in a world that I can never understand. I exist in a mind that goes deeper than I will ever know. I used this project as an opportunity to explore parts of my mind that I always assumed were never to be understood. Having to grasp an understanding of the emotional impact this information had on me was anything but a linear process. The unconscious processes of our minds do not demand to be understood. We have the ability to allow the invisible mental processes take place, and never wonder what is going on beneath the surface. That is why it is the most important thing to explore, ponder, and inquire about. If I choose to let the things I do not know keep me from learning deep truths, I will never be safe. Uncertainty can feel threatening and terrifying, but it can also feel infinite. There will always be an endless list of things that I do not know, and I would love to say that doesn't scare me. But the truth is, the things I do not know scare me just enough to inspire me.

II. When Words Fail

The world that exists below the surface is one that has always intrigued me. For years I have held the dream of control like a knife in my hand. A figment of violent power. To know nothing is to lose everything, but to know everything means losing myself. What do I truly control? What do any of us *really* know? Will I ever know the depth of what I feel, or speak the language of my unconscious? Allow it to make no sense, allow complete senselessness. Lose sight of a reality constraining you to a single answer solution. Uncertainty is terrifying, and expecting the unexpected is useless. I cannot control my mind, but I can become more connected to it by no longer trying. Beyond memories of childhood fears and expectations, there is a world of the unknowable. By exploring it I can become more free, more infinite, and more intentional.

III. You Are Not A Lucky Penny

The flashing lights of an emergency vehicle do not make me feel the same way a basket of puppies do. How does my mind know the difference between a warning sign, and a place of comfort? I like to play into the world in my mind that tells me I'm in control. I fuel the part of me that allows me to believe I am the decision maker, rather than a passenger driver of my mind. But by breaking that down I have found a world that once seemed anything but understandable. The unconscious mind consists of everything we never know. Below what we can access consciously, is where all of our decision making, childhood trauma, fears, shameful experiences, and selfish motives all exist. Untouched and often unexplored, the unconscious mind can decide human behavior; But so often it goes overlooked.

The simple mention of a name has the power to freeze me in place. A hint of fragrance can change the trajectory of my week. Touch me in the wrong place, and I'll flinch. Up until a few months ago I would have stuffed all of this into a cardboard box, marked it 'PTSD' and moved it to the back of my basement. Ask me now, and I'll tell you about the world that exists below the surface. Underneath my perceptions, thoughts, and memories exists a place fighting to keep me safe. Unlike anything else in the human mind, we all have our own personalized individual experience. In a way, I find comfort in knowing my trauma is safe; knowing that underneath what creates my reactions is a part of me fighting so hard to be okay. The process of bringing the unconscious to consciousness is anything but comfortable. As my body tells me to freeze, to run, to hide, I have begun to hold space for myself to also stop and think. To hear what my body and mind are so desperately trying to tell me. The cardboard box marked PTSD, that I confined my experiences to so long ago, is in no box at all. It is a web of decision making, as well as action and

emotion, combined with history and outside forces. All together my mind fights to keep me here, and even when my decisions prove to be senseless, and immediate emotional reactions cause nothing but anger and pain, my unconscious is actively working to help me be.

IV. Women Made Of Stone

In gaining a better understanding of the unconscious mind, I connected to the world of surrealism. I have grown more familiar with the ways surrealists in history had an impact on the world of psychology. I best understand art that speaks my language, and I tend to communicate in riddles. Surrealism was formed with the practice of psychoanalysis, which is most educated and informed by the unconscious. The field of psychoanalysis didn't develop overnight and it certainly was not a perfect practice, but a man named Sigmund Frued used it as a therapeutic approach to treating mental illness. Frued was often referred to as "The father of psychoanalysis," for the way his investigation of the mind impacted the world of psychology, specifically psychoanalysis¹. Surrealists produced art that reflected "a mysterious aspect of being." Our mind consists of internal conflict and desire, surrealism acts to express and evoke that truth. Surrealists reject past societal and subjective traditions in art, in order to create a real experience.

This research did however, take a sharp turn for me as I carried on the path of understanding surrealism, and the origins of psychoanalysis. It is a continuous disappointment as a young female at art school to begin researching new genres of art and see a constant theme of patriarchy appearing in my findings. To a man, a long list of men who have gained recognition for their work, may not jump out. But this is a theme I have faced since the moment I was born, and will never

¹ McLeod, S. A. (2018, April 05). *What are the most interesting ideas of Sigmund Freud?* Simply Psychology. www.simplypsychology.org/Sigmund-Freud.html

stop confronting. The lack of female acknowledgement has no excuse, and a motive to silence. Male surrealist artists also show a constant theme in history of creating blatantly misogynistic pieces, such as one done by Hans Bellmer. Bellmer sculpted a doll that highlighted solely the female bodies defining characteristics, accompanied by a collection of photographs obscuring the dolls face and emphasizing her body. This disgusting representation of a female could speak great volumes to the female experience had the message come from a female fighting for her voice. Men who speak for women diminish the power of individual feminine voice, and a theme of misogyny in art is so damaging to the overall effect it has on the viewer.

In learning about the sexist practices of Freud's research, I learned about the affirmation of female stereotypes that came as a result. As an authoritative figure in the scientific world, Freud had the power to be remembered. The word hysteric has become a word with a very flexible meaning; however in Freud's time, Hysteria was treated as a physical and mental ailment. Slowly the treatment developed more towards mental instability. All my findings agreed with one big factor; Hysteria was painted as a sex-selective disorder, affecting only those with female organs. The research and origins date all the way back to ancient Greece. Consequently, any symptom of hysteria at all was then linked to female reproductive organs. When the research traveled to male patients, any sign of stereotypical feminine behavior could be scientifically validated by hysteria. Tying all attributes of femininity to weakness and hysteria, women are left with the grueling task of continuing to love who we are.

The lack of representation and sexism are infuriating, but to clarify, I am not angry. With shaking hands I grasp onto the hope that someday, I can be furious; to be taken seriously as my mouth filled with question marks whispers what you are not ready to hear. Although Freud brought a world of knowledge and exploration to the field of psychology, he must be called out. I have

turned myself inside out to be who they want me to be. And I am not angry; Because when my words no longer speak for me, my voice goes on a waitlist that never ends. *Hysterical*. But never angry. I have to keep my cool because if you hadn't noticed, my blushed cheeks and short dress make me the object of your rejection. Where do I learn to be taken seriously? When do you learn to hear my voice? My femininity is rooted deeper inside of me than I can ever know. The depths of my connection to womanhood, and the answers to questions I was never taught to ask, already exist inside of me. The world of my unconscious empowers my ability to find a voice in a man-favoring world, and save myself before I disappear.

I am lucky enough to have been surrounded by women who speak the truth. To be told the truth is the most beautiful thing. Through the empowerment of the fearless woman who raised me, I allowed my voice to find me. I have discovered over time that creating something that didn't otherwise exist, either with my hands or with my words, I am able to express what not even my conscious mind can hear. I allow myself to pour into my writing, filling my pages with words that take the shape of an untold truth. The power of things not said goes unnoticed. There are infinite stories never written, infinite names now forgotten, infinite interactions waiting to happen. The uncertainty and unknown of it all can be maddening. To never have a full grasp—even on yourself.

Verbally, my words tend to let me down, but when I allow myself to make no sense- to have no expectations- I can create freely. Letting go of all preconceptions, I allow myself to build cities where I once turned to ash and dust.

V. Looking In A Mirror That Is Not Really There.

Finding yourself isn't really how it works.

You aren't some lucky penny on the street.

Beneath conscious conditioning and societal pressure, you are simply waiting to return to yourself.

Decisions someone once made became the foundation of your knowledge of the world around you,

so brush off the opinions of those who always seem to know better when knowing better is useless.

Let go of beliefs planted by conclusions drawn in the history of damaged, normative, and definitive story telling.

Unlearn.

Evacuate and break loose of the hands, constraining you to be anything but meaningful.

You are not lost,

so call off the search parties.

Allow yourself to come to you.

It may take time, but it certainly shouldn't take chasing.

You ask for the world and so I deliver it on a silver platter.

They ask me to perform and so that's what they get from me.

An act of smiles and nods, held together by a dress that I've outgrown.

But now I take a bow.

After being spoon fed the things I am supposed to know, the way I am meant to be, I am still hungry.

A fire burns in my stomach begging for my words to start making sense.

In searching for myself, did I lose sight of me?

I did not happen upon myself like a cute pair of boots in the window of a locked store.

In searching for myself, I fell into a pool of everything described as nothingness. Every breath touched by effortless intention.

I am surrounded by what I cannot know.

I am filled to the brim with everlasting infinites.

I am searching for an answer to a question that never really mattered.

A question you once told me I needed to ask. The importance that speech holds would not exist without the power of saying nothing at all.

As you feel the skin on your back, wake up from an eternity of sleeping on watching eyes.

Feel yourself exist and do nothing about it.

You were never really lost, so stop searching.

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