

Statement:

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. 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.

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.

Caitlin Applegate

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Drawing from personal history and an empathetic reaction to others, I use the figure as a vehicle for expression. As an intuitive learner, I process experience physically, even when it is not my own. This reaction to life drives me to point out beauty in unexpected places, using my own body as a filter. Through the distorted eyes of self-perception, I use a mirror to discover the human form in my work and, as a result, the work hovers around the edges of self-portraiture; it depicts life in the feminine form. Although I identify personally with each of these figures, I aim to point out what is universal and essentially human in us all.

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. Whether we try to hide our fat with our arms, change the sculpture of our natural form with tricks of the wardrobe, chew at our cuticles, or dress ourselves as the opposite sex, we all try to disappear a part of ourselves, and in the act, point that very thing out.

The human body is our first language, we are experts at decoding subtle gestural clues long before we are capable of verbal communication. We understand one another through our relationship with our own bodies. As a result, we place ourselves in one another's shoes so that we might gain some insight into our own lives. I use this habit to appeal to a universal audience by depicting specific beings in common circumstances. Because we are articulate by nature in the language of the human form, I use the body as a multidimensional foundation to build upon. My sculptures are physical manifestations of the range of emotional states we visit each day. The work extends beyond the corporal, into the examination of the complexity of human interaction.

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The simplification, and therefore exaggeration of gesture allows me to communicate defensive posture, or a lifetime of unconscious discomfort. Reds and pinks are used to point out long use, flushed skin and the heat of embarrassment, while greens and purples peek out in the corners of eyes and crevices of skin to suggest a life lived in self doubt.

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, 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, and we love scars that are stretched and erased by time, the minutia of a chipped front tooth, the mark of events left on the body. 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. The push and pull, the forgiving, the denial, and the place where history blurs the line between individuals; one cannot be seen without the suggestion of the other.

Emotion, thought and memory reside inside the core of our bodies, and are marked inside like the rings of a tree. While we wear some of this on the surface, in the curvature of the spine or the slump of the shoulders, the transfer of ideas comes through those parts that interact most with our physical environment: the skin, the hands, the face, and the feet. The wisdom and subtlety with which these parts are able to speak allow my figures to be eloquent in their frozen narrative. Skin allows for the patina of time; the stain of a life lived. The record of my own touch is added to the work as part of the collection of elements that describes the individual history of each piece. The hands and face are the tools used to communicate the most, while the feet determine our contact with the earth, and dictate our posture. Posture is one way we identify each other from a distance, it describes who we are and how we approach the world.

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