

Grace Schwarz - Artist Statement

My work is a series of investigations and confrontations about what constitutes my everyday: Technology, Christianity, Baseball, Gender, and Sexuality. My work generates discussions about how each of these things interfaces with my physical and mental self. By using such metaphors as dimensionality and materiality that we know of: The way 2, 3, and 4-dimensional theories co-exist, negate, and reinforce each other are major influences of my decision making of my materials. I explore the use of insects, religion, sports, and building construction as representational artifacts to allow my work to follow multiple threads that dissect family dynamics, our constantly shifting society, and my own physicality. The symbolism that arises from this approach is generative of the way that I question where and who I am in the process of creation.

To be perceived is to be humiliated, to be expressive is humiliating, to be “myself” is humiliating, at least to someone like me who has been constantly questioning the structures their life has been built upon since the beginning. My work is not a means to an end, but an attempt at grasping the reflection and growth that arises in my own identity and my practice. I work mainly with video and performance, oftentimes using this very technology to further the content of my work. In pieces such as *PITFALL PITFLAL ITFLLAP PFALLTI FALIPTL [2020]*, *Museum No. 2001-21, teléfono móvil (italicized) [2019]*, and *M /F Roulette [2020]*, the very nature of the computer becomes the deliverer of my work. An AI reading out a collection of free-writings on lost memories or the mindless cycling of a role-playing game (RPG) I’ve designed to be non-functional, both are attempts at creating simultaneous irony and inclusion. I work with technology as a collaborator and as an artist, using the dimensionality of mediums to communicate what I cannot when making work that doesn’t involve me as the direct subject. Though, “my direct self” can also reference the insects, masks, collage, and my own family members I use as tools in many of my works. They are tools to facilitate survival; Many of these manifestations are reflective of my instinct to refuse and accept different aspects of my identity in order to gain control of how I am perceived by others. Oftentimes, it is through manipulation or dehumanization that I can connect with the more “off-limits” part of my identity (gender, sexuality), expending my mental assets to the point they bleed into the physical world. As I critique gender, family traditions, and the rigidity of Christianity, extensions and re-imaginings of “the self” can all manifest. Though, they bring about more questions for myself that I then have to work through on the next upcoming project in an endless cycle of reflection, critique, then creation.

In another piece, *WRLD_SERIES_ARCHIVE002 [2019]*, a high-energy announcer commentates the ins and outs of my life, as if it was all a high-stakes baseball game. I began to understand the emphasis of performance and the public space as a means to involve myself more personally in my work when this soundscape on failure, family opinions, and gender existentialism played at a light-hearted club festival at my university. The need to involve my physical body or to exploit my mental state by reliving experiences in various interpretations stems from the frustration and desperation I face over my own identity. My process then in turn affects me as much as I aim for it to affect my audience, operating as a bridge between my past self and the current world, it creates the current me.

In works such as *Temporary Shelter [2020]*, *ME/HE/SHE [2020]*, and *PITFALL PITFLAL ITFLLAP PFALLTI FALIPTL [2020]*, I use my body, physically in one and mentally in the other, to confront relationships, memory, and introspection. I am employing methods of performance at the sake of, and for the sake of, my own self. My work becomes my findings as well as my questions. In many ways, the physicality of my process can be seen as a means to re-contextualize my own identity, a forceful approach to reflection, or sometimes instead a desperate attempt at connection or observation.