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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

TRANSFORMING PERSONAL NARRATIVE THROUGH THE ART OF DOLLS: AN  
ARTS-BASED INQUIRY INTO THE POWER OF HEURISTIC EXPANSION

Written Explanation of the Thesis  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Master of Arts

Kelly Ann Martinez

College of Performing and Visual Art  
School of Art and Design

August 2016

This Thesis by: Kelly Ann Martinez

Entitled: *Transforming Personal Narrative through the Art of Dolls: An Arts-Based Inquiry into the Power of Heuristic Expansion*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in  
College of Performing and Visual Arts in School of Art and Design, Program of Art and  
Design

Accepted by the Committee:

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Connie K. Stewart, Ph.D. Chair

---

Donna Goodwin, Ph.D. Co-Chair

## **ABSTRACT**

Martinez, Kelly Ann. *Transforming Personal Narrative through the Art of Dolls: An Arts-Based Inquiry into the Power of Heuristic Expansion*. Unpublished Master of Arts Thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2016.

The basis of this arts-based research project was to explore the importance of personal narrative and integration of new thought through doll making. Through the exploration of the history of dolls, a new understanding of the importance of narrative, visual culture, material culture, and pop culture arose. The body of work presented considers this redefining of personal narrative through the creation, documentation, and reflection of doll making, over the course of six months. It is through the dolls and accompanying narratives that recognition of a shift in conceptualization occurs.

The research methods used were A/R/Tography and apprenticeship with the Professional Doll Makers Art Guild, through which the extrapolation of new ways of thinking emerged. Contemporary doll artists inspire, and echo the importance of narrative within the production of their artwork. I strive to discover the world of a doll maker through the eyes of a researcher while integrating narrative and redefining my personal narrative through development of new realizations.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The decision was sudden, but the commitment was solid. In the journey of pursuing my Master degree and conducting research, I have had the support of many individuals.

It was 2014, as I sat in the living room of my father, Robert Kelly Shafer, and step-mother, Sylvie LeClerc-Shafer, while visiting them in Canada. We were discussing my desires to find a Master's program to enroll in. In the course of my 10 day vacation, I researched schools and programs, and made a decision to apply to the Graduate School at the University of Northern Colorado. I recall my step-mother stating that it was so amazing to see the process of me just considering graduate school to the commitment and decision to apply. They have both been a constant resource of support in this decision.

In the fall of 2015, halfway through the program, I made the decision to join the Professional Doll Makers Art Guild Apprenticeship and was assigned Leigh Jordan as my personal mentor. Leigh has been a guiding light in my growth as an artist. Without her direction and suggestions my work would not have grown. The Guild has been a home for my doll making experience and I am glad that they are there for others like myself.

I have had the privilege of communicating with Master doll artists: Leigh Jordan, Renata Jansen, Joe MacPhale, Mark Dennis, and Jack Johnston. All of which have graciously given permission to use images of their work herein.

Family and friends have sat idly by while I committed myself fully to the process. They would welcome me into the fold when I was able to participate and eagerly anticipated the updates on how I was progressing. Their patience and support has given me the space to follow this pursuit. My brother, Joseph Lawrence Shafer, has provided inspiration and reflection for my study. He has always been a guiding force in my life. I thank him for being the individual he is and for being supportive throughout the past year.

There is one individual without which I do not know that I would have completed this adventure, who has been by my side every day, William Adrian Thompson, my partner in life. He provided me space to work, took on extra responsibility, questioned me when I felt I had the answers, pushed me when I wanted to give up, and listened to countless hours of me talking about dolls and discussing new information and how it affected my perceptions of reality. His support and love was paramount to my success.

Thank you, to all of you who have been there to help me through this adventure.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES .....	x
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Rationale.....	6
Background and Context.....	13
Research Questions .....	14
Definition of Terms.....	14
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE .....	16
A History of Dolls and the Consumer.....	16
Visual, Material, and Popular Culture.....	17
Dolls and the World of a Contemporary Doll Maker.....	21
The Art of Contemporary Doll Maker Jack Johnston.....	24
Tying It All Together .....	26
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGIES .....	28
A/R/Tography.....	28
Apprenticeship .....	29
Procedures and Timeline.....	31
Data Collection.....	32



Limitations .....	33
CHAPTER IV: DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS .....	34
Fashion Doll Construction .....	34
Fashion doll reflections.....	37
Olivia Rayne’s story. ....	39
PDMAG Challenge Leprechaun Construction.....	40
Leprechaun reflections.....	45
Keenan’s story. ....	47
Fairy Construction.....	48
Fairy reflections. ....	50
Glorianna Ceara’s story. ....	52
Baby Doll Construction.....	53
Baby doll reflections. ....	57
Madison Leigh’s story. ....	59
Child Representative Doll Construction .....	60
Child representative doll reflections. ....	65
Andy’s story.....	67
Overall Reflections on Doll Making .....	68
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS .....	70
The Internal Narrative Struggle.....	70

The Importance of Process .....	72
Apprenticeship in the Arts.....	73
Next Steps .....	75
As an artist. ....	75
As a researcher.....	76
As a teacher.....	77
Final Thoughts.....	78
REFERENCES .....	80
APPENDIX A.....	85
APPENDIX B.....	89

## TABLE OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1.</b> Me with my dolls.....	2
<b>Figure 2.</b> My second ArtDoll. ....	4
<b>Figure 3.</b> <i>Duet</i> by Renata Jansen.....	13
<b>Figure 4.</b> <i>Sisters</i> by Mark Dennis.....	21
<b>Figure 5.</b> <i>Tristan</i> by Joe MacPhale .....	22
<b>Figure 6.</b> Inside of <i>Marilyn Monroe</i> automaton.....	23
<b>Figure 7.</b> <i>Teddy Bear Maker</i> by Jack Johnston.....	25
<b>Figure 8.</b> <i>Jack Frost</i> by Leigh Jordan .....	30
<b>Figure 9.</b> BJD chest, torso and head WIP. ....	35
<b>Figure 10.</b> BJD legs and wig WIP.....	36
<b>Figure 11.</b> Finished BJD. ....	36
<b>Figure 12.</b> Pattern pieces of shirt for BJD.....	37
<b>Figure 13.</b> <i>Olivia Rayne</i> .....	39
<b>Figure 14.</b> Leprechaun image provided by PDMAG.....	40
<b>Figure 15.</b> Example of feedback form a mentor. ....	41
<b>Figure 16.</b> Results of the PDMAG Challenge.....	41
<b>Figure 17.</b> Leprechaun head WIP. ....	42
<b>Figure 18.</b> Armatures for the leprechaun. ....	43
<b>Figure 19.</b> Leprechaun vest.....	44

<b>Figure 20.</b> Base for leprechaun. ....	45
<b>Figure 21.</b> <i>Keenan Ainsley Kavanagh</i> .....	47
<b>Figure 22.</b> Series baking the fairy. ....	49
<b>Figure 23.</b> Photoshop aided proportion.....	49
<b>Figure 24.</b> Fairy hair options.....	51
<b>Figure 25.</b> <i>Glorianna Ceara</i> .....	52
<b>Figure 26.</b> Baby doll head progression. ....	54
<b>Figure 27.</b> Polymer clay slumping .....	55
<b>Figure 28.</b> WIP embedded hair. ....	55
<b>Figure 29.</b> WIP glued hair.....	56
<b>Figure 30.</b> Baby doll accessories.....	57
<b>Figure 31.</b> <i>Madison Leigh</i> .....	59
<b>Figure 32.</b> My brother. ....	60
<b>Figure 33.</b> Child BJD pattern. ....	61
<b>Figure 34.</b> Prep work for BJD.....	62
<b>Figure 35.</b> Child head WIP. ....	63
<b>Figure 36.</b> WIP feet.....	63
<b>Figure 37.</b> Completed male child BJD.....	64
<b>Figure 38.</b> <i>Andy</i> .....	67

## **CHAPTER I**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Dolls. What is it about miniaturized caricatures of people that draw me to them? I think back to my years growing up. I recollect having a fascination with fairies, trolls, and unicorns, all sort of fantasy creatures. I remember one of the first baby dolls I got, a Strawberry Shortcake Baby Doll, complete with the stroller. She blew strawberry kisses when you squeezed her tummy. I remember having Barbies, oh the Barbies I had!

I also remember loving Legos and cars. My brother and I would often play together. We would play “orphanage” with my dolls, while having to protect the orphans from the evil people who wanted to steal them and sell them into slavery. We used his water guns, play swords, and even made traps to catch the bad guys and protect those “orphans.” The dolls served an important part of both of our development. However, it is especially true for myself, as it was rare to see me without one of these treasured toys (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1.** Me with my dolls.



*Figure 1.* Me with my Holly Hobby doll (top left). Me with my Rainbow Bright doll (middle left). Me with my Strawberry Shortcake doll (bottom left). Me with a baby doll (right).

Not only would I play with dolls, but I enjoyed making dolls and their clothing as a child. I fashioned new clothes for Barbie, a new jumpsuit or fancy dress. I even tried my hand at sewing my own rag doll. I made the doll, but tired of the process of applying the hair and discarded the project.

As I got older, my dolls still held a place in my heart. But there came a time when I no longer played with them. They were a time-honored collectable. As a pre-teen, I would dress up my Barbies and arrange them in a display on my shelves. Not just standing there, but rather posed in an action scene, as if time had frozen them there. One such tableau showed Barbie getting ready for her wedding, with all her friends helping her to get dressed. Like many young girls, I dreamed of that day, so Barbie was the vessel

to put my future dream of the ideal event into visible form. Time moved on and at some point, these treasures found their way into boxes.

So what is it about dolls? Where did this fascination come from? I think there is a nugget of truth that the book series and television show entitled “The Littles” probably had an impact on my relationship with the dolls. The Littles were small creatures, with mouse-like features that lived in a house with The Biggs (humans). The Littles befriend the children of the family. The idea of small human-like creatures living in my house thrilled me. I loved the show, the books, and I even had the paper-doll collection. I just seem to like things in miniature.

Popular culture has impacted my life in the world of dolls. As I read more in depth studies, I am learning just how much of an impact it has had. For example, the Strawberry Shortcake baby doll is a direct link to pop culture. As the show grew in popularity, my affinity for the characters also grew. I played out the stories of the T.V. show with that doll. I also adapted my own stories. No matter the doll, my stories often involved the theme of rescuing a character from some “evil” threat, usually G.I. Joe.

As an adult, I did not think there was much room for dolls and toys in my life, yet I began “playing” Warhammer, which is a game of strategy that involves pewter miniatures that you paint. I do not think I ever actually played the game, I just collected and painted the miniatures. They sat idle on my shelves collected dust. Then I moved to collecting and displaying angel figurines. These figurines filled the void of lost childhood innocence as I was forced to grow up quickly due to the loss of my mother at the age of twelve. Even today I look at dolls with a sense of longing for simpler, happier times.

Eventually, I discovered an ArtDoll. ArtDoll is a term used by the artist Jack Johnston that describes “fine art figurative multi-media sculpture” (J. Johnston, personal communication, June 24, 2016). I could not believe there was such a thing as a fine art, one of a kind, doll! I jumped at the opportunity to learn about this process, to take classes, and to explore the world of doll making.

**Figure 2.** My second ArtDoll.



*Figure 2.* My second ArtDoll, created at the Professional Class with Jack Johnston, 2010, polymer clay, 18”

The very first class I took with Johnston was inspiring. He was very supportive and said I had a natural talent for it, even offered a full scholarship to his professional class, which eventually happened (see Figure 2). I enjoyed working with clay and I loved



sewing and the costume design, they are passionate hobbies of mine. All of these elements played into the creation of an ArtDoll.

I like to believe that my quiet demeanor invites the observations needed to really “see” things, particularly people. As an observer, I have grown accustomed to sitting quietly, listening and watching, in order to be fully present and aware. This personality trait has afforded me an opportunity to really study people and notice small differences in their hands, a scar above the left eye that makes them unique, or notice the pain in their eyes, even though they are smiling, and identify the subtle nuances of their demeanor through body language. All of these observations give me the opportunity to dig deeper into my creations of dolls. My own doll creations are a conglomeration of different concepts and techniques. I create based on reality, but also through a utopian fantasy realm of my own design.

Johnston has become an inspiration, not only because of his skill, but also because he found a way to make a living doing what he enjoys. He makes incredible ArtDolls, teaches classes, and sells supplies to other artists. I want to find a way to do the same. I dream of expressing my own ideas in the form of sculpted people and creatures, the process of bringing to life a figure, and finding homes for my pieces with those who will appreciate my time and skill.

Since my first introduction to this concept in 2005, I have continuously wanted to pursue studying and creating dolls. Prior to the start of this research project and since working with Johnston, I had made two 18-inch ArtDolls, which I feel is not nearly enough! My passion and excitement for doll making has grown to include the experience of making 2-inch tall fairies for my friends at the Renaissance Festival. To help me on

this endeavor, I joined the Professional Doll Makers Art Guild (PDMAG) as an apprentice in August of 2015.

According to the PDMAG, the guild was founded by Jack Johnston to help bring the world of One Of A Kind (OOAK) doll sculpting to a larger audience. The guild helps aspiring artists to become professionals. Artists benefit from a large group of like-minded individuals to provide resources such as artistic advice, critical feedback, marketing strategies, and exhibition opportunities all the while contributing to the growing world of OOAK sculptors in the world of doll making (2015). It is my hope that the guidance and direction from my mentor will help me to develop as a doll artisan.

Creating a small, materials-based “person” that can be completely imaginary, or based in reality, to characterize and miniaturize our world by taking parts of it, scaling it down to preserve and maintain a sense of childhood innocence in a fantastical diorama intrigues and inspires me. Ultimately, it is the creative stories and imagination concerning dolls that I love.

### **Rationale**

I am an art educator that taught at a low-income, K-8 public school. I taught seven 40-minute classes a day, with class sizes being between 14 students and 36 students, depending on the grade level. In addition to teaching art, I oversaw the school’s attendance team and climate and culture team. I often took on additional responsibilities such as after-school tutoring programs for math and reading. “Being a teacher, like being a parent, is a difficult and arduous responsibility. It bestows innocent love while demanding a conscious commitment to serve” (Light, 1996, p. 85). My days and nights were full of the concerns and worries of a teacher who cares deeply about her students.

How can I best serve them? How do I engage them? Will this new project work? What went wrong with this lesson? Why was this child late to school again? Can I find a way to reach this child? Oh, I need to grade those papers. When will I get time to change out the displays? It is 8 p.m., why am I still at work? The list goes on.

The lens of an educator has provided me insight to begin questioning the meaning behind art making: What does art teach children? What are the benefits behind art education? There are so many answers to these questions and so many different viewpoints that synthesizing them could take a lifetime.

According to Elliot Eisner (2002) “What the arts teach is influenced by both what and how something is taught. That is, the arts, like other fields, can be taught in different ways for different ends” (p. 70). Depending on the end goal, there are a variety of ways to reach it. There are always multiple paths to reach a desired outcome, some may lead more directly than others. One of the outcomes that Eisner discusses in the chapter “What the Arts Teach and How it Shows” from *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, is the understanding and use of relationships. This attention to relationships could be equated to the creation of the composition and the details that make it up. It could relate to the use of the elements of art and principles of design. Another outcome that Eisner suggests is the use of materials as a medium, he states, “If a material is to be used as a medium, techniques for working with the material must be developed” (Eisner, 2002, p. 80).

Jo Alice Leeds (1986) creates a list of components in “Teaching and the Reasons for Making Art.” These components consist of art-making activities, materials and tools of art, elements of design, and principles of design and composition (Leeds). These components are a simplified way of looking at what could be the sole use of curriculum

development in an art classroom. Sadly, these components are often the basis of curriculum development, and Leeds challenges us to look beyond the oversimplification of the arts. Leeds goes on to proclaim:

We can assume that if we take such lists and add them up like so many parts of a whole, we will come up with the sum total of what art is all about. That, of course, is an absurd assumption. (p. 18)

What else could we add to broaden the minds of our youth?

Eisner (2002) gives us yet another example of an outcome of art in discussing the use of aesthetics, defining aesthetic as the “emotional tone and process of being engaged in a work of art” (p. 81). Here it is argued that the purpose of art is to create based on emotions. Jensen (2001) also finds that art is tied to emotions stating “Making and observing visual art seems to enhance our ability to elicit and even mediate our emotional responses” (p. 57). Eisner (2002) sums up these concepts in stating:

Artistry consists of having an idea worth expressing, the imaginative ability needed to conceive of how, the technical skills needed to work effectively with some material, and the sensibilities needed to make the delicate adjustments that will give the forms the moving qualities that the best of them possess. (p. 81)

The precision work that Eisner describes is something that I have applied in my own classroom, but not to my own artwork. In the midst of educating our children in the world of art, I have found that making time for my own art has suffered. Students would ask if I was an artist, and I would struggle with this question. Although I see the daily routine of teaching my students to engage in art making and navigating personal meaning, I did not experience the deeply rooted personal reward of actually making a piece of art. This impacted my emotional well-being and desire to continue teaching. I kept feeling as though all my creativity was going to my students and that I was draining what little I had left. I needed an opportunity to create and an opportunity to explore, just for me.

After much reflection and thought, I decided to continue my work with dolls. I am passionate about their purposes and the processes of creating them that it seemed a natural progression. I wanted something I could explore deeper, something I could question. But it is not just about the dolls, it is about the stories.

I find myself looking intensely at the concept of narrative, its purpose, and how it applies to the world of dolls. Olsen states that narrative is “critical to our humanity” (1998, p. 165). Through story-telling we pass on knowledge, and through story-making we develop creativity. Olsen (1998) continues:

Today when we share experiences with family members or friends around the dinner table, a campfire, or the office water cooler; when we recall family events for grandchildren to appreciate, read bedtime stories, or look through family photo albums; when we share events or insights with strangers via the Internet; when we volunteer to participate on radio or television talk shows; even when we are called as witness in a court of law – we are telling stories. (p. 165)

Stories are so much a part of everyday life that we rarely separate and identify them for what they are. Narrative serves as a conduit for understanding and exploring the world around us, and children are no exception. The importance of using narrative and how children can grow through the use of it can be found in the research of Brent Wilson and Marjorie Wilson (2010). In the chapter titled “And What Happens Next? Telling Stories Through Drawing” the authors explore the use of narrative by children. They discuss and demonstrate the ability of children to tell story through imagery. They foster a developmental process of children telling stories in a non-linear format, as a single image, which progresses to a more advanced story-board, linear format. The Wilsons organized the foci and interests of children’s graphic stories into categories. These categories are origins, growth, quest, trials, creation, failure and success, fulfillment of wishes and natural processes (Wilson & Wilson, 2010). The ability to create these stories

gives children a boost in self-confidence in their creativity, as story-telling is another form of expression. Their research clearly demonstrates the need for working with children to develop this talent. They imbue the importance of narrative as a way to connect with others.

A strong example of narrative working in the midst of a society to build relationships and connections can be found in the world of manga, a Japanese style of drawing in popular culture. In the chapter entitled “Learning to Draw: Cultural Aspects of Graphic Development” Brent Wilson and Marjorie Wilson (2010) explore this world. Children in Japan are exposed to manga, as well as academic art. The Wilsons state “Manga characters seem to represent how the Japanese people see themselves” (p. 74). The use of manga by Japanese children in drawing stories opens a world to them that other children in other societies do not have. Further, the Wilsons (2010) posit:

Through the appropriation and creation of their own manga characters, they grasp dimensions of human cognition and emotion, pay collective, albeit largely unconscious, attention to the ways Japanese people might be and behave, and grasp the significance of what it means to act as an individual within a conforming society. (p. 75)

These manga figures give them a form of symbolism that is unique to the Japanese people, a form of language and narrative that they speak as a society, passed down through generations. This idea echoes Eisner’s (2002) point concerning arts language and community relationships:

Becoming socialized within a culture means acquiring these frames, for they allow you to join and participate in a discourse community, where discourse refers to the sharing of any form in which meaning is encoded and can be decoded. Common frames make a shared way of life possible. (p. 85)

Defining shared symbolism has aided the Japanese people in communicating efficiently through art and narrative.

In “Harvey Shows the Way: Narrative in Children’s Art” by Julia Kellman (1995), the author takes a different look at the purpose of child narrative art. Kellman (1995) derives the purpose of childhood narrative as art as “invention, communication, and as a method of solving problems” (p. 18). She poses examples in which each artwork that the children made were shared with others. Sharing builds relationships and relationships build community. Kellman (1995) also summarizes from an interview conducted by National Public Radio with Fred Rogers from *Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood*, stating “The small intensely activated space between himself and each child in his audience is, for him, a sacred space of deep purpose, moral responsibility, and intense communication which is constructed through the continuing narrative of the imaginary neighborhood” (p. 22). Similarly, Roger’s “sacred space” resonates with Dissanayake’s (1988) concept of “making special” (p. 44).

The connection with narrative and Dissanayake (1988) “making special” is one of being part of the community. The historical argument that Dissanayake (1988) puts forth is that this concept is a way of making oneself a part of the tribe. Connecting tribe as community could be stated as ability to connect with community through arts as a way of making that connection, of taking the time to really value the experience. Narrative is an “important and effective way for people of all ages and all cultures to order, reflect upon, and make sense of their life experiences” (Olsen, 1998, p. 165). It is a way to contribute to the whole, to be a part of community.

Dolls open the doorway for children to create narrative and explore adult roles. These objects serve children as “props to their imagination and fantasy” (Elkind, 2007,

p.24). While many people associate the term doll with a child's play thing, they are so much more, according to Korinchak (2015):

A doll can be hard to define. Although an image may come into one's head right away on hearing the word, when we try to pin down what actually makes a doll versus a toy or a figurine or a sculpture, we run into challenges. (p. 5)

These objects, whatever we personally define them as, appear to be innately linked to narrative. Witt (2004), quotes artist Mo'a Romig-Boyles, in *Contemporary American Doll Artists and Their Dolls*, "To me, dolls are natural storytellers. They touch a chord in me that runs straight to my childhood" (p. 59). There is a link between dolls and the innocence and narrative of youth. "Dolls as objects of our creative imagination, will, if we let them, take us to play again in the house of our childhood past and perhaps bestow upon us a future we hadn't imagined" (Light, 1996, p. 11). These creations beg to be exalted in story. Romig-Boyles (as cited in Witt, 2004) explores more in depth the relationship between herself, dolls and narrative, asserting:

I have always used dolls to tell a story with or to tell a story about. It came so naturally to me that I did not know this when I started making dolls. Sometimes the stories I tell with my dolls are very obvious and at other times they ask the viewer to create their own stories. (p. 66)

Dolls are a natural conduit for narrative. Whether a doll is a child's play thing, a collectable, or a creation from someone's life experience or imagination, they are transformative in the narratives that envelop their existence.

The return to creating dolls will benefit me as I reassert myself as an artist, and develop meaningful narrative in association with my art work. The interpersonal connections that dolls provide to share our stories is of benefit to everyone. Renata Jansen's piece reminds me that we all have a story to tell, and these artifacts seem to create the perfect forum for us to do that (see Figure 3).



**Figure 3.** *Duet* by Renata Jansen



*Figure 3. Duet*, by Renata Jansen, 2016, polymer clay, 11'' x 12'' From <http://www.renatajansen.co.uk/gallery/exotique/duetII.asp>. Copyright by Renata Jansen. Reprinted with permission.

These miniature people give rise to the concept of identity. As a society dolls continue to be identifiable in some way. This brings forth a myriad of personal connections that we want to share, thus engaging us in narrative through the doll.

### **Background and Context**

My studio-based research project consisted of making five dolls, reflecting on my process with a blog, and a visual culture analysis of the commercial making and marketing of dolls. Self-exploration of my art and tying my narrative to the creation of dolls consisted of working in my own studio space – a basement office where I can work on my projects, read and explore meaning, and post to my blog. The blog

(<https://qidarablog.wordpress.com/>) served as a site for me to document and explore my thoughts and experiences in making of the dolls, as well as, the questions that came from my research. I attempted to write in the blog a minimum of twice a week to parse my thoughts and experiences. I added photographs to the blog to document my progression and process of making dolls (see Appendix A for a sample entry).

The discussion and stories that come forth when talking about dolls has a social implication. The dolls I produce will serve as a conduit for deeper discussion and exploration of social conflict. I have selected four archetypes of dolls to produce: female fashion, male child, baby, and two fantasy characters.

### **Research Questions**

After delving into the world of doll history, I began to wonder about my desires to create them. I had found information contrary to what I believed and it made me question the reality I thought I was in. Not only had my personal narrative been disrupted, but I questioned the role of society in that disruption. Therefore the following two research questions will be considered.

- How does doll making reflect my integration of personal narrative and new information?
- How has pop and visual culture influenced the creation of dolls and the societal narratives produced from them?

### **Definition of Terms**

ArtDoll: Fine art figurative multi-media sculpture (J. Johnston, personal communication, June 24, 2016).

BJD: Ball Jointed Doll, a doll constructed with moveable ball joints.

Doll: A replica of a person, often associated as a play-thing for children.

- Baby doll: A doll that represents a baby, traditionally a companion for a child.
- Child doll: A doll that represents a child and a child's features.
- Fantasy doll: A fictitious character that may have roots in reality or be of its own reality.
- Fashion doll: A doll that is dressed in popular and current clothing, traditionally an adult advertisement.

Material Culture: "a descriptor of any and all human-constructed or human mediated objects, forms, or expressions, manifested consciously or unconsciously through culturally acquired behaviors" (Bolin & Blandy, 2003, p.249).

Narrative: Sharing of story, spoken or written.

OOAK: One Of A Kind.

PDMAG: Professional Doll Makers Art Guild.

PLC: Program Length Commercial, animated series intended to sell product.

Pop Culture: The current and popular mainstream images of a culture.

Visual Culture: The visual images of a culture. "Use of the term *Visual Culture* inherently provides context for the visual arts in its effects and points to the connections between popular and fine arts forms" (Freedman, 2003, p. 1, emphasis in original).

WIP: Work In Progress, images of handmade dolls that may show the process of making the doll.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Are dolls art? To a consumer, the answer may be that it is just a toy. To a visual or material culture study they may serve as a place to evaluate gender roles. To a storyteller they may be a character. To a doll maker, the answer is a resounding yes. This chapter will explore the world of dolls on their own.

#### **A History of Dolls and the Consumer**

Dolls have been around in some form for a very long time. They served many functions from religious figurines, to fashion illustrations, to adult amusement, to a child's play-thing, etc. In searching the history of dolls, there are two specific examples of dolls that caught my attention: fashion and fine art dolls. Each of these types of dolls has an interesting development to what we consider them today.

The first, fashion dolls, began as an item used to advertise the latest fashions. In 1391, the aristocratic French court would dress a small women's figure in the latest fashion and send it to the English. This continued through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Often the dolls would be discarded when the doll no longer served a purpose (Cross, 1997; King, 1977). As the world continued to develop, so did the evolution of the concept of the fashion doll.

During the Victorian era, a shift in the value of play and children's needs began. Here, we see the emergence of a fashion doll made for children. These dolls were

expensive, and only the middle-class could afford them (Cross, 1997). As we progressed into the twentieth century, there are so many factors that impacted the development of the doll; a continued effort to construct children's play time, industrialization, new materials, affordability, media, toy manufacturers, and even toy stores. One of the most successful manufacturers of these dolls was Mattel, founded in 1945 (Cross, 1997). Barbie is undoubtedly one of the most recognized fashion dolls in existence. In 1993, the average American girl owned eight Barbies (Cross, 1997). This is a dynamic shift from a century before when a child was lucky to have a single doll.

During the 1900's, there was a divergence from fashion dolls. While fashion dolls were still present, another type of doll took the forefront. These dolls, called New Kid dolls, portrayed a child as opposed to an adult (Cross, 1997). This concept has continued to be present through the modern day, the most popular and recognizable would be the American Girl Dolls.

Then there are the dolls that we might consider a work of art. These dolls were not meant for play, rather they are intended to be an admired artifact upon a shelf. "A recurring phenomenon throughout the history of dolls has been a fashionable taste for doll-like figures among adults" (King, 1977, p. 547). The fashion doll began this way, and over time became a child's plaything that perpetuates consumerism. However, there is a growing movement among contemporary doll artists that reinvigorates the concept of dolls as art.

### **Visual, Material, and Popular Culture**

The development over time of what a doll is, its purpose and production, can all be tied directly to visual culture and narrative. The Victorian Era opened the door to

child's play. As we moved into the modern age of radio and television, a dramatic shift occurred in the way dolls were advertised and sold. But the introduction of media and marketing caused an explosion of consumerism in the world of toys.

As I researched the history of dolls, I became increasingly aware and concerned with the marketing of dolls. There is a dynamic change that occurs as toy manufacturers began to market to children, and I was alarmed at how it had affected me as a consumer and a child. Every day we are bombarded by images. Images from television, the internet, advertisements, magazines, t-shirts, toys, and the list goes on. Visual and material culture studies give us a way to break down these images. Visual culture is, simply put, everything we can see. It is "all that is humanly formed and sensed through vision or visualization and shapes the way we live our lives" (Freedman, 2003, p. 1). Meaning that everything we see is visual culture, whether or not we are aware of how it shapes our lives. Studies into the arena of visual culture begin to dissect these influences in order to develop a more critical awareness of our everyday lived-in environments.

One such study, looks at utilizing children's toys to reconstruct a narrative. In Olga Ivashkevish's (2015) study "Engaging a Prosumer: Preservice Teachers Interrogate Popular Toys Through Stop-Motion Animation," adults were asked to utilize a child's toy and create a narrative that altered the toy's meaning. Through "recontextualization, narrative disruption, and parody" (p. 42) individuals dissected the intended meaning of selected toys and successfully transformed it. As these subjects transformed children's toys, the art dolls transform our concept of what we think of as a mere toy.

In "Engaging Advertisements: Looking for Meaning In and Through Art Education," Kevin Tavin (2002) delves into the world of advertising. He discusses the

role advertisements play in our daily lives. Looking at how this piece of visual culture not only sells products, but “help shape, and often limit, perceptions of reality” (Tavin, 2015, p. 38). Dolls are no exception. Today’s world is full of marketing strategies that dictate the *purpose* of dolls.

You-Jin Lee conducted a study entitled, “Build-A-Bear Workshop: Its Aesthetic and Ideology” to look at how the popular toy store Build-A-Bear utilizes specific aesthetic features to influence its consumers. Lee examined how the choice of color, layout of the store, even the appeal to sentimentality affected consumers. She concludes her study stating that the use of these aesthetics “can serve as a means of reinforcing ideologies without consumers realizing it” (Lee, 2008, p. 23).

All three of these studies are good examples of what can be done when looking into visual culture. Visual culture studies examine everyday objects that pervade our lives and how they influence us and inform us. An alternative category for looking at the everyday could be found in material culture. Paul Bolin and Doug Blandy (2003) state, “*Material Culture* is a term that is broad-based in its meaning and application, and describes all human-made and modified forms, objects, and expressions manifested in the past and in our contemporary world” (p. 249, emphasis in original). This orientation focuses on the doll as an artifact rather than the packaging or advertisements.

Both material culture and visual culture studies are a means to examine our everyday influences that accrue over time. They provide a context to delve deeper and to evaluate and assess in order to develop a more critical understanding of our everyday lives. “Visual artifact exploration can serve as a starting point for the examination of popular culture” (Sanders-Bustle, 2008, p. 13).

Visual and material culture are especially important as an artist, as they infiltrate our lives, sometimes without our awareness. I was not aware of the impact that the daily images of the world had on my personal narrative. As an artist, I had never considered the relationship between my own narrative and the culture in which I was raised. “Art is a form of social production and the creation of a work of art is only part of the product; it is the viewer that completes the work and what is produced is social relationship” (Freedman, 2003, p. 4). Throughout my research I began to develop an understanding of its importance in developing who I am today.

During the Victorian Era a shift in purpose occurred, replacing skill development with play, there was a consumer consequence that manufacturers were quick to pick up on. The most dynamic example is that of the Program Length Commercial (PLC). Examples of PLCs are G.I. Joe, Care Bears and Strawberry Shortcake (Cross, 1997). These pop culture shows were nothing more than a marketing strategy to get children to request, or buy for themselves, the toys associated with the stories. “Children have become conduits from the consumer marketplace into the household, the link between advertisers and the family purse” (Schor, 2004, p. 11). When I discovered this link, I was devastated. I loved my Strawberry Shortcake doll and the animated television show that ran during the early 1980’s. To know that it was a marketing manipulation towards children made me question my pursuit of dolls and narrative. These dolls are more than just the manipulation. They provided the child consumer an artifact that fostered their own creative narratives and imaginative play.



## Dolls and the World of a Contemporary Doll Maker

The contemporary doll maker searches for something different. These dolls are not necessarily play things, although they sometimes can be. ArtDolls are, for the most part, works of art that are carefully hand crafted by individuals. They are a form of storytelling for many of the artists, and a form of self-expression appreciated by those who collect their work. I discuss several doll maker's unique contributions to the world of dolls, their differing intentions, and reasons for making them. Mark Dennis and Joe MacPhale create One Of A Kind (OOAK) dolls.

**Figure 4.** *Sisters* by Mark Dennis



*Figure 4. Sisters*, by Mark Dennis, 2015, polymer clay, 30” From <https://www.Facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.816182761751868.1073741887.152079241495560&type=3>. Copyright by Mark Dennis. Reprinted with permission.

Mark Dennis has a background in “theater art, mythology, literature, and even landscape design” (Weissler, 2012, p. 12.) Each of these areas show through in his work,

through the creation of his characters, costuming, and the crafting of the scene. *Sisters* (see Figure 4) is made of polymer clay and heat-shaped acrylic (Dennis, 2015). This example epitomizes his desire to carefully craft characters which appear to be in motion. By 2012, he had sculpted over 400 dolls, in a variety of materials, cake fondant, wood, bronze, resin, and polymer clay. He strives to learn from each sculpture, and uses the mistakes he makes to push himself to a new level. Dennis states, “As artists we are striving to tell a story with this one moment of time we can capture and translate into sculpture” (Weissler, 2012, p. 12). His stories range in purpose, some of social history, others of his own metamorphoses (Dennis, 2016).

**Figure 5.** *Tristan* by Joe MacPhale



*Figure 5. Tristan*, by Joe MacPhale, 2015, hand cast resin, 20” From personal communication. Copyright by Joe MacPhale. Reprinted with permission.

Joe MacPhale is an artist whose work take the concept of “doll” to a new level by making Ball Jointed Dolls (BJD). These dolls can be posed and move as if they were human. *Tristan*, (see Figure 5) is an example of one of his double Ball Jointed Dolls. The

doll has 21 points of articulation. Everything is carefully crafted by the artist, even the eyes (J. MacPhale, personal communication, June 26, 2016). MacPhale’s technique of sculpting a BJD using polymer clay, then casting it in resin is a meticulous and exact process. I had the privilege of taking an online course with him in 2013. My abilities at the time were not up to the standards of making such a creation. His methods are intense and precise, many of his works take a year or longer to complete.

MacPhale often adds an element of “audio-animatronics” to his some of his works (Weissler, 2010). The inner mechanisms for MacPhale’s *Marilyn Monroe* automaton (see Figure 6) create a complex system of mechanical, yet life-like movement, allowing this doll to move her arms and legs. The doll even has an electronic mechanism which makes the doll blink continuously, mimicking the frequency of an adult woman. While many mainstream dolls may also have some form of automation, these are not intended to be played with but rather to be viewed and admired.

**Figure 6.** Inside of *Marilyn Monroe* automaton.



*Figure 6.* Inside of *Marilyn Monroe* automaton leg (left and middle). Inside the back of the automaton, displaying the solid brass mechanism that makes her move (right). By Joe MacPhale, 2016, resin, 19” From personal communication. Copyright by Joe MacPhale. Reprinted with permission.

Each of these doll makers has his own style, yet both of them are deeply rooted in story. The two artists have a way of creating and contributing to the art world of dolls.

The world of an artist is one of creation, revelation, and modification. We are always looking for the next inspiration. Leeds (1998) concludes:

Art is the formal expression of experience, and the visual arts express experience through the invention of visual images. Art is a way of thinking visually and of communicating that thought. Through art we explore natural and social worlds around us and the inner world of our psychic lives as well. (p. 19)

### **The Art of Contemporary Doll Maker Jack Johnston**

The last doll artist I examine is Jack Johnston. Johnston's works are an example of artistic innovation, story-telling, marketability, and dedication. He has worked for over 25 years developing and creating ArtDolls. While the first documentable occurrence of the term ArtDoll comes from an advertisement by Schoenhut in 1915 (King, 1977, p. 219), Johnston's successful application of ArtDoll to a work of fine art that is in fact a doll has stuck with him. Johnston states:

Telling stories through art became my passion, and selling my art became the measure of my success. I have written six sculpting books, produced twelve films, and am the founder and owner of the ProSculpt Company, and of the Professional Doll Makers Art Guild. (Korinchak, 2015, p. 56)

Even though Johnston had success, he began unemployed in 1990, at which point he had to figure out a way to support his family. He realized, while sculpting with a piece of clay, that he was quite good at it. So he thought he would try his hand at making dolls and selling them. In the first year, he produced 214 dolls and sold them all (Johnston, 2015). He continues as an artist and now teaches others; I have been fortunate to experience three separate classes with Johnston.

The dolls themselves are a conglomeration of techniques. The head, hands, and feet are hand sculpted using a polymer clay. The hands require a wire armature. The feet

and head also require resin armatures. These are attached to a wire skeleton armature that has a soft body stocking surrounding it. The stocking is stuffed and sewn to create definition. The finishing touches are the costumes that are hand sewn and the accessories, which may be found objects or handmade. Sometimes these pieces are accompanied by a tableau which completes the story of the character (see Figure 7). The overall effect is a character sculpture, an OOAK doll, typically inspiring a characterized miniature person.

**Figure 7.** *Teddy Bear Maker* by Jack Johnston



*Figure 7. Teddy Bear Maker* by Jack Johnston, 2003, polymer clay, furniture handmade by Jack Johnston, 18” From <http://www.artdollguild.com/johnston--jack-.html>. Copyright by Jack Johnston. Reprinted with permission.

The overall aesthetics of ArtDolls convey human-inspired character. Johnston's skill to create lifelike representations is phenomenal as each of his works are intricate and very polished resulting in a professional ArtDoll. Each one is a representation of a real or imagined person, since they are well thought out, well-constructed and vibrant with life.

### **Tying It All Together**

In my research, I seek to explain why dolls create intense narratives. Every time I have a conversation about dolls, the stories flow from others without reservation. From the perspectives of visual and material culture, I examine the influences of dolls as a form of art, while trying to resolve my own doll making style and process.

Dolls render such powerful exploration. In "Living Dolls," Jennie O'Keefe (2004) describes her work as self-portraits. She elicits the response of "giving the gift of herself" (p. 11). Her dolls are an example of a "miniature theater" in which her players take the stage (Pučiliauskaitė, 2004, p. 12). Her works tell their own story of the artist, the character, and the consumer. My own exploration of doll making has been full of the inspiration of original narrative that brings to life the miniature form of a doll. Additionally, Moniques Richard's (2007) article, "Engaging 'Looking-Glass' Youth in Art through the Visual Narratives of the Transforming Self in Popular Culture," discusses a study conducted in Denmark in which children utilized paper dolls to explore gender and species transformations. They employed various outfits to explore different roles without fear of being ostracized by their peers. These dolls gave the children an avenue to look into their own identity and to alter it accordingly. Ivashkevich (2015) also explores the role of "gender boundaries and stereotypes" (p. 43). These transformations allow

individuals to express curiosity. The dolls provide a way to seek alternative realities in which an individual's own narrative can be expressed.

Through narrative, visual culture and material culture, I am interested in exploring how dolls can be the driving force behind my own artmaking. Through continued exploration of my own work, I will strive to understand the underlying meaning behind these "innocent toys" and the stories that drive conversations, which resonates with Walling's (2005) statement, "Art provides the currency of ideas" (p. 1).

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **METHODOLOGIES**

In this study, I will use two different approaches, that of A/R/Tography and as an apprentice in an art guild. The two approaches allow for me to assess through different lenses my development as an individual in relation to doll making and the integration of new information into my personal narrative.

#### **A/R/Tography**

The overall design approach of my research is in A/R/Tography. A/R/Tography is an integration of three modes of thinking and being; artist, researcher, teacher. As an artist, I am exploring the ideas behind my own doll making by producing work. As a researcher, I am learning and finding information about dolls, visual culture, material culture, and narrative. I am taking these areas of study and applying them to my work as an artist. As a teacher, I am looking for ways to connect what I am doing as an artist and a researcher to my classroom and exploring the idea of teaching adults about doll making. Each of these is a part of my exploration and are integrated and intertwined within my existence. I feel that Irwin (2004) sums up the beauty of A/R/Tography by elucidating:

A/R/T not only recognizes the roles individuals must play, it also affords all of us an imaginative turn as we come to understand that the processes and products involved in creating works of art, whether they are objects of professional performances, are the most exemplary forms or integrating knowing, doing, and making. The processes and products are aesthetic experiences unto themselves because they integrate three (or possibly more) forms of thought. (p. 30)



## **Apprenticeship**

The Professional Doll Makers Art Guild (PDMAG) offers an apprenticeship program. This program is relatively new. It pairs new and aspiring doll makers with a master doll maker depending on the individual's interest. There are three categories they work with: fantasy, baby, and character. The new apprentice chooses one of the categories and the guild finds a match for you to work under. Because the mentors and apprentices are scattered around the globe, most communication is via email or Facebook. (For an example conversation with my mentor, see Appendix B). The guild has a Facebook page in which the apprentices and mentors belong. Here, the apprentices share their work and get critiques from all of the master artists.

My joining of the PDMAG Academy (apprenticeship) was a choice to help me through the process of this research. As Griffiths and Woolf (2009) so succinctly explain:

There is a long tradition that the arts—like other creative practices—are taught through some system of apprenticeship, in which beginners join an expert, and gradually learn to become experts in their own right, through observation and practice in increasingly complex activities. (p.559)

The apprenticeship is a place where I can learn from a master artisan to better my craft. I choose to work with a master artist in the area of fantasy dolls. I was placed with my mentor, Leigh Jordan, who lives in Derby, England, and has completed works in all three categories, but specializes in fantasy (see Figure 8). Due to the fact that we are separated by extreme distance, the use of email and social media to communicate, has been the only way this program could be successful.

**Figure 8.** *Jack Frost* by Leigh Jordan



*Figure 8. Jack Frost* by Leigh Jordan, 2012, polymer clay, 10” From <http://www.windowofthesoul.co.uk/jack-frost>. Copyright by Leigh Jordan. Reprinted with permission.

When I am in need of help from Leigh, I write her a quick message. I often include photos of my work in the messages, so that she can visually assess the work. She is quick to respond and offer helpful tips and tricks of the trade. She will include ideas for resources, guiding directions on how to advance with my pieces, and always a positive word or two to keep me encouraged (see Appendix B).

## Procedures and Timeline

Through the apprenticeship, I have completed a variety of dolls including a ball jointed fashion doll, a leprechaun fantasy doll, a fairy fantasy doll, a baby doll, and one male child-representative doll. Each doll posed its own set of challenges for me, as the artist. The apprenticeship was of great importance.

Each doll has been hand sculpted using polymer clay for, at least, the head, hands, and feet. Inside each of these is an armature, varying in material from aluminum foil, resin, or brass tubing and wire. The clay is added and tools are used to sculpt the pieces. Polymer clay must be baked in an oven to cure the clay, and is often painted after it is cured. The bodies are either hand sculpted using polymer clay or a soft body stocking. Depending on the technique used for the doll, there may be a wire or brass tubing armature inside. These varying techniques allowed me to explore the construction of the dolls in depth.

In addition to the assistance I received from the PDMAG Academy and my mentor, I used a selection of books as reference material to guide my process, these include: *Fairies, Gnomes & Trolls: Create a Fantasy World in Polymer Clay* by Maureen Carlson, *Fantasy Creatures in Clay: Techniques for Sculpting Dragons, Griffins and More* by Emily Coleman, *ArtDolls: Basic Sculpting and Beyond* by Jack Johnston, *Designing the Doll: From Concept to Construction* and *Finishing the Figure* by Susanna Oroyan, *Sewing and Sculpting Dolls: Easy-To-Make Dolls from Fabric, Modeling Paste, and Polymer Clay* by Eloise Piper, and *FaeMaker: Making Fantasy Characters in Polymer Clay* by Dawn M. Schiller. Each of these books provides information on techniques, process, materials, tools, and so much more.

I began sculpting the first of the dolls in January of 2016 and concluded the last doll in June 2016. I worked on the dolls an average of 20 – 30 hours a week, and would often overlap the construction of one doll with another, so that I was never working on just one piece. I also documented my progress with photographs and journaling my experience and thoughts on my blog.

Once each doll was created, I wanted to add to the finished project through narrative. This is two-fold. First, the process, experience, and my thoughts about each doll is one narrative, tying all of these in to different aspects of my research. Secondly, I created a story for each doll. The stories tell about the character and who they are, much in the way a Program Length Commercial (PLC) does in visual culture.

### **Data Collection**

During the course of my research, I documented my progress and reflections through a blog. These entries helped me think through the process of making dolls, reflecting on the history and future of dolls and their makers, ruminating on the use of the PDMAG apprenticeship and how it has impacted my doll making, developing narratives for each of the dolls I create, and discussing how I see the world of dolls through an A/R/Tography and visual culture lens.

Additional data was collected from personal emails and the Facebook PDMAG Academy page. This data reflects the apprenticeship, the process, and my growth as an artist in utilizing this tool. In addition to the reflective blog posts, emails, and PDMAG Academy, I have the physical dolls that I have produced during this time. Each doll has a specific purpose and analysis in regards to A/R/Tography, visual culture, and narrative. The pieces themselves reflect my internal narrative, as well as, interpretations and

integrations of new knowledge. The stories that accompany the pieces reflect my own versions of societal concepts, culture, and personal reflections and memories. These elements served as resources when analyzing my driving questions: “How does doll making reflect my integration of personal narrative and new information?” and “How has pop and visual culture influenced the creation of dolls and the societal narratives produced from them?”

### **Limitations**

Since this is a self-study, I am limited by my own thought processes. I am limited by my lack of exposure, experiences, and understanding in the arena of A/R/Tography and visual culture. This may hinder the process of finding some answers as to how and why dolls, their purpose, their creation, and the stories they create have evolved both through my research and through my blog. I am also limited by my own abilities to create each type of doll I have selected. I have only ever made adult female figure dolls. The challenge of making a male character, a child, and a baby may be difficult as the proportions and facial features differ greatly from an adult woman.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS**

The following chapter is designed to share the information and process I followed in my research. There is a section dedicated to each doll. In each section I discuss the process of constructing the doll. This description is followed by a reflection on my process and implications as it relates to A/R/Tography, narrative, visual culture, material culture, or pop culture. Concluding each section with the narrative that was crafted to accompany the doll. I wrap up the chapter with an overall reflection of doll making.

#### **Fashion Doll Construction**

The Ball Jointed Doll (BJD) was begun in a class with Jack Johnston and Apryl Jensen in February 2016. This class was to learn the technique of making a BJD. The class was a three day workshop. During the course we used a pattern to guide the sizing. In class we sculpted the head, torso, chest, upper and lower arms, elbows, one upper leg, one lower leg, and a knee out of polymer clay (see Figure 9). Each piece was carefully crafted following the expertise of Jensen. The eyes are inset using polymer clay that were fashioned by Jensen prior to the class. We made a wig cap out of Tibetan lamb wool.

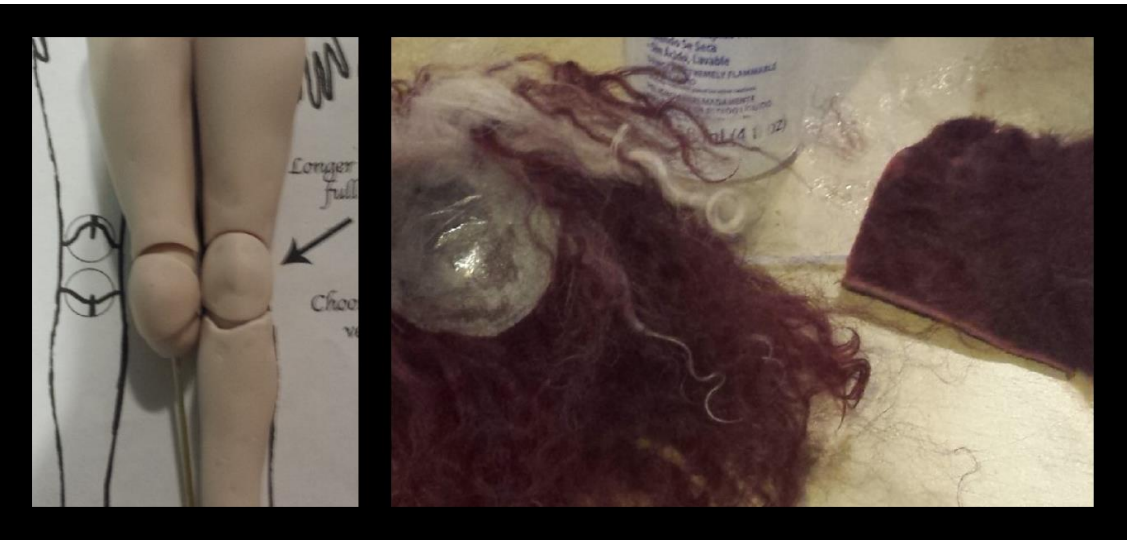
**Figure 9.** BJD chest, torso and head WIP.



*Figure 9.* Torso and chest resting together after baking (left), and head, before baking and unrefined (right).

Upon returning from class, I fashioned the other leg, hands, and feet for the doll, using the techniques I learned in class. I also remade the wig cap, using Tibetan lamb wool, tulle, and Fabric-Tac, as the first one became stretched out (see Figure 10). I used china paint to blush the piece and acrylic paint to create the eyebrows.

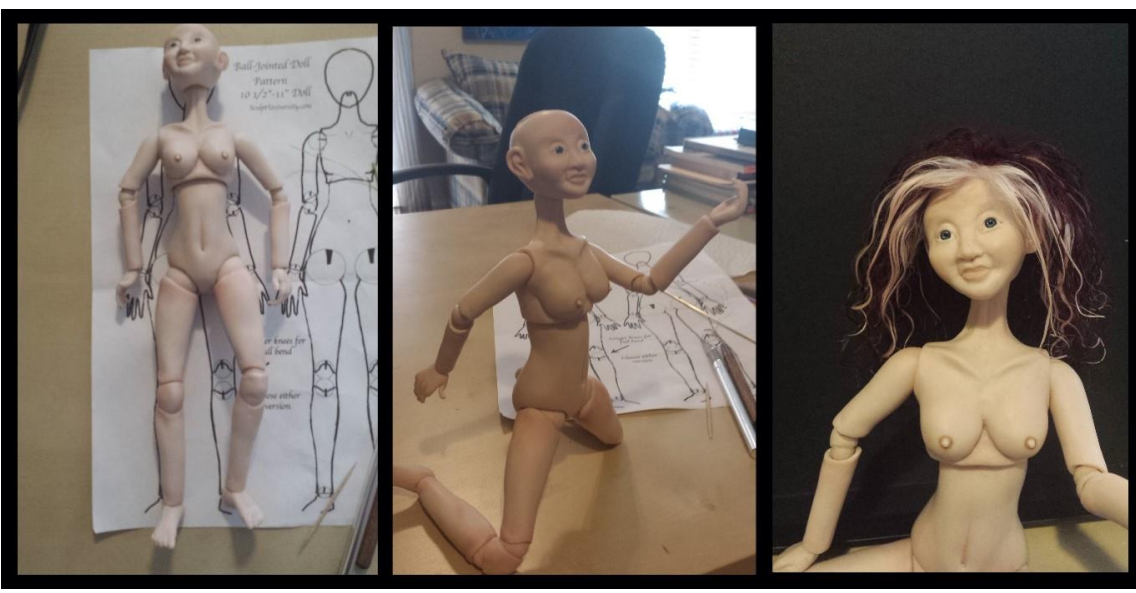
**Figure 10.** BJD legs and wig WIP.



*Figure 10.* Second leg in progress after returning from class (left). New wig cap construction in progress (right).

The piece is entirely hand sculpted, made of polymer clay, and consists of twenty separate pieces that were then strung together with elastic. The doll stands 12-inches tall and is fully poseable once strung together (see Figure 11). The construction of the doll was completed March 1, 2016; however, the clothing still needed to be fashioned.

**Figure 11.** Finished BJD.



*Figure 11.* Finished and strung BJD with pattern (left). BJD posed on knees (middle). BJD posed, sitting, with wig (right).



The clothing is functional and interchangeable. She has a button-up shirt, a pair of pants, a skirt, a formal dress, a pair of sandals, and a pair of shoes. I used Google to search for pattern pieces and scaled them using Microsoft Word. Once printed, the button-up shirt pattern pieces are pinned on the material before cutting them out (see Figure 12). Once cut out I used Fray Check to seal the edges of the material to ease the process of sewing since the material easily became tattered. The process of making tiny clothing is almost more difficult than the construction of the doll itself, and was completed April 18, 2016.

**Figure 12.** Pattern pieces of shirt for BJD.



*Figure 12.* Resized shirt pattern pieces that were laid out on material.

### **Fashion doll reflections.**

One of the things that caught my interest in this being a fashion doll was the ability to pose the doll. It also lends itself to changing of the clothing with this feature. However, this piece would not be suitable for children in today's sense of a fashion doll

as the material is fragile. As with fragile porcelain dolls, polymer clay is not a durable child's toy. This reminds me specifically of the fashion dolls of the past, those that were used to depict French aristocratic fashion.

Another point that I struggled with is that many children's fashion dolls are disproportionate and I wanted to explore the idea of a fashion doll that fits a more proportionate figure. The piece I created is not as realistic as I had hoped. She still has a disproportionate waistline and bust. As this was the first BJD I have made, I found that just learning the technique was challenging enough in a three day class, let alone trying to get the doll to possess more realistic proportions.

When I look at the world of fashion dolls, I am often displeased with the way that women are portrayed. This is in part due to the proportions and in part due to the clothing these dolls wear. So with that in mind, I was thoughtful in the construction of the clothing to represent a woman in a fashion I felt empowered women. The main outfit she has is intended to look business casual, as if she were preparing to go to work.

I have also found that a majority of fashion dolls are not representative of some popular cultural shifts. So with this piece, I opted to give her an alternative hair color. The color is a deep burgundy with pale pink highlights. I feel there is a stigma in the business world about hair color, tattoos, and piercings. This choice is a reflection of my disdain for this attitude.

The doll's accompanying story is a personal reflection and memory of teaching. While making this doll I did not know exactly where it would take me. However, after creating her and making decisions about who she was as a character, it felt a natural progression for her to become an art teacher. She became a piece that relates directly to

my identity as an individual. I too, can sometimes be seen as a little different, tattoos and piercings, outside the socially accepted norms of the idea of a professional.

**Figure 13.** *Olivia Rayne*



*Figure 13. Olivia Rayne, 2016, polymer clay, Tibetan lamb wig, clothing handmade, 12"*

### **Olivia Rayne's story (see Figure 13)**

*She was a bit nervous starting her new job at the school. She knew her abilities were going to be put to the test by the kids. Were they going to like her? Would they enjoy her class? Would they listen to her? What were they going to go home and tell their parents about this new art teacher?*

*Olivia Rayne sat quietly in her classroom, her sandal dangling off her foot. The room was decked out with colorful posters on the walls and cabinet doors. Paint buckets with colored fabric pouring out of them were suspended from the ceiling. Rainbow curtains wrapped the windows. The tables were set with buckets filled with pencils, erasers, scissor, glue and rulers. Colored pencils, markers and crayons were neatly placed in boxes on the counter. Paints and paintbrushes were sitting idly by the sink. The white board proudly proclaimed "Welcome to Art" in elaborate brightly colored letters. The start of a new school year.*

*Downstairs, she could hear the children coming in, the noise permeated the building. She stood up from her desk, and straightened her celeste skirt and floral blouse. She took in a deep breath and reminded herself that she had been chosen to be here. She was the one that the administration had selected to be the most qualified and best fit for this school. She pulled her burgundy*

*and pink curly hair into a ponytail, and with a smile, walked out of the room to see the bustling children below.*

*As she entered the cafeteria, children bounded around her, chattering with friends, excited to start the day. Parents stood by with bags of supplies, fussing over the little ones hair and tying shoes. The kindergartners waited meekly by their parents, while the older students told their friends about their summer vacations. Olivia took this all in.*

*The bell rang, and students began to file into the hallways, making their way to their classrooms. Olivia stood in the entry way giving high-fives to students as they passed. As students found their way, the hallway became less full, a quiet calm settled over the school. Olivia returned to her classroom and stood at the doorway.*

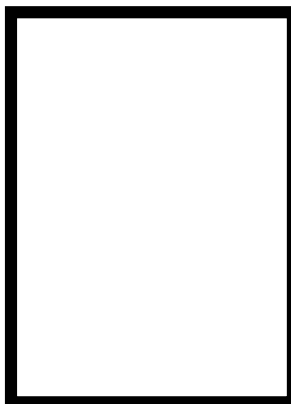
*Her first class approached, and as they entered the art room, she greeted each one, welcoming them to art. “Oohs” and “ahhs” could be heard as they found a seat. Olivia’s face beamed, this was where she belonged. She turned and entered the room, ready to begin the adventure of sharing her passion with the young minds that sat, awaiting eagerly, to meet their new teacher.*

### **PDMAG Challenge Leprechaun Construction**

The leprechaun doll was a challenge set forth by the Professional Doll Makers Art Guild (PDMAG) Academy and is what I would define as a traditional ArtDoll.

Apprentices were given an image of a leprechaun on the Facebook page (see Figure 14).

**Figure 14.** Leprechaun image provided by PDMAG.



*Figure 14.* Leprechaun image provided by PDMAG mentors for the apprentices to use as a guide in creating a leprechaun doll.

We were instructed to sculpt the image to the best of our ability and given a deadline of March 31, 2016. We could use both the group page and our individual mentors as a resource. I worked extensively with my mentor, utilizing other mentors through the PDMAG Academy Facebook page only as a backup. The guidance of the mentors helped me to create a fairly accurate representation of the image we were provided (see Figure 15).

**Figure 15.** Example of feedback from a mentor.



*Figure 15.* A mentor used the image I provided, making comments and indicating where things needed improvement.

This challenge has allowed the apprentices to see how an image can help us to sculpt a better overall piece. It has been helpful to watch the other apprentices produce their work and see the feedback they are receiving. There were nine apprentices who participated, and each individual's piece is unique to the artist's style and skill. The completed entries of the apprentices and the outcome of the contest was published to the PDMAG Academy Facebook page (see Figure 16).

**Figure 16.** Results of the PDMAG Challenge



*Figure 16.* All entries for the PDMAG Leprechaun Challenge. Winners listed at the bottom.

I began my leprechaun at the beginning of March and completed it in by the deadline of March 31. The head was the first thing sculpted, beginning with an armature made of an aluminum foil ball. Polymer clay was added to the ball and shaped using various sculpting tools and my fingers. Being the first time I used an image to create a sculpture, as well as, the first male figure I have made, the features gave me a lot of difficulty. Once I was satisfied with the face, I cured the clay in a self-contained convection oven. The face was painted with an acrylic wash and blushed with china paints. The eyes were painted using inks and 3D lacquer for shine. The eyebrows and hair are made of alpaca roving that has been glued in place (see Figure 17).

**Figure 17.** Leprechaun head WIP.

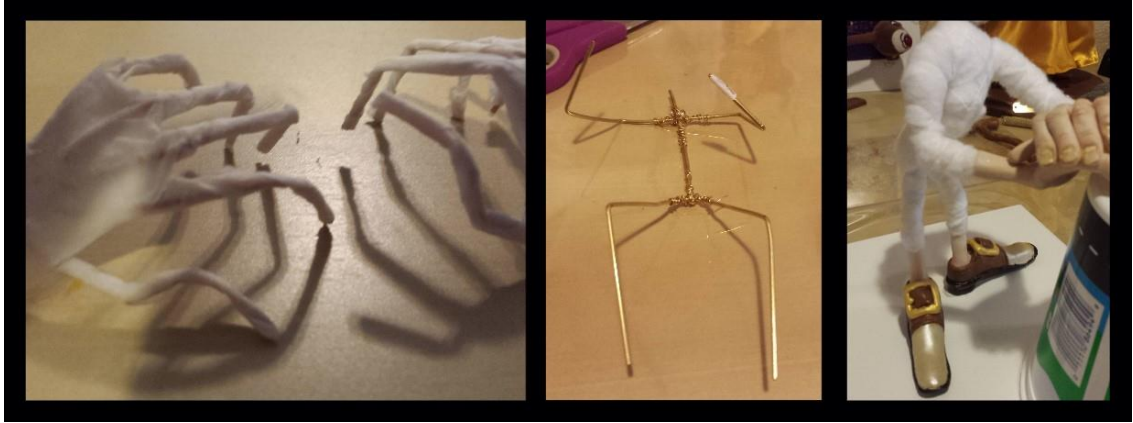


*Figure 17.* Leprechaun head before painting (left). Leprechaun head after painting (middle). Leprechaun head after application of hair (right).

The hands, feet, pipe, and cane were next. Each of these pieces house an armature constructed of brass tubing and wire. The hand armature was created with brass tube with wires extending from the tube for the fingers. The entire armature is wrapped with floral tape to ensure the clay would stick. The body armature was formed out of brass tubing.

The connecting pieces are wrapped with wire to strengthen the joints. It is then tightly wrapped with cotton batting which is held in place with thread (see Figure 18).

**Figure 18.** Armatures for the leprechaun.



*Figure 18.* Hand armatures wrapped with floral tape (left). Wire and brass tube body armature (middle). Body armature wrapped with cotton batting (right.)

When designing the costume, I searched for free patterns to create the jacket. I adapted the pattern to fit the image we had been provided by adding cuffs. The remaining costume elements, pants and vest, were designed without pattern pieces. I draped the satin fabric for the vest over the front of the leprechaun, pinning the design in place. Once I decided how the vest would be shaped on the armature, I removed the pinned piece and cut it out. Each piece was sealed with Fray Check before sewing. The vest has a collar that was created using Heat n Bond hemming tape to stiffen the material. The buttons are wood (see Figure 19). The pants are made of a cotton knit. With the exception of the jacket back and the inseam of the pants, most of this character's clothing was sewn by hand. The vest and pants were sewn in place onto the batting of the leprechaun armature. The jacket was tailor finished on the leprechaun.

**Figure 19.** Leprechaun vest.



*Figure 19.* The vest is sewn in place on the armature of the leprechaun.

The final stage was to create a base for the leprechaun to stand on. The base is a wooden plank covered with air dry clay. I pressed the leprechaun's shoes into the clay to create an indent for where he would stand. I drilled holes and added brass tubes that connect with those in the bottom of his shoes and the cane. I also drilled holes for the tulips and grass elements which were hot glued in place. I then added several layers of



sand with Scenic Glue, allowing them to dry completely between layers. The finishing touch is a small pile of polished stones in the front left corner. The completed scene is of a section of a meadow with tulips (see Figure 20).

**Figure 20.** Base for leprechaun.



*Figure 20.* Finished base for the leprechaun ArtDoll, decorated with sand, silk flowers, and plastic grass.

### **Leprechaun reflections.**

When we say the word “leprechaun”, we automatically identify a bearded Irish looking fellow who protects a pot of gold. The imagery of a leprechaun can range from terrifying to benevolent. They can be miniature or human in scale. They can wear a top

hat or not. They can be associated with Saint Patrick's Day. The stories that accompany this Irish folklore visual icon are usually of mischief and trickery. The imagery and history of the leprechaun may diverge from its origins, but the adaptations and narratives that pervade our lives are representative of a piece of visual culture.

As this piece was constructed for PDMAG Academy Challenge, there was a lot of things I learned. The first was that photographs or two-dimensional images can really help determine the features of a creation. This piece of knowledge helped me to realize that I would utilize images to assist in future dolls. Utilizing the images that we are surrounded by to assist me in the creation of a three-dimensional figure had not been something I had put much merit into prior to this experience.

While we had an image for replication, we were encouraged to make the leprechaun our own, through modifications. I chose to change the color of his hair. The original image had black hair. Instead, I chose to do a grey color. I found that the black looked stark, where the grey made the face of the leprechaun sweeter and gentler.

I discovered through the process of making the leprechaun, that I not only enjoy the creation of the figure, but also the scenery and accessories. This decorative element helps me to envision the story that accompanies the piece. For me, it brings the character to life. Once he was complete, and in his tableau, he spoke his name to me...Keenan Ainsley Kavanagh.

**Figure 21.** Keenan Ainsley Kavanagh



Figure 21. Keenan Ainsley Kavanagh, 2016, polymer clay with cotton batting wrapped armature, 9”

**Keenan’s story (see Figure 21).**

*The misty morning saw a light drizzle from the sky as the sun peeked over the horizon. The meadow lies calm, animals not yet stirring, even the birds are just a bit too quiet. As the raindrops fall and the sun drifts up in the sky, the water captures the light, refracting a brilliant spectrum. A rainbow forms and gently reaches toward the tulip laden ground. As the rainbow touches the Earth, a creature appears.*

*It is a small creature, hunched over a wooden walking cane. The creature looks almost human, except that his hands are disproportionately large and he stands a mere nine inches in height. He has salt and pepper hair on the top of his head and a beard to match. He is weathered and worn in the face, ancient and wise. A pipe dangles precariously in his lips, a waft of sweet smoke rising from the bowl. He is adorned in a pair of golden buckled shoes, simple trousers the color of wheat, a deep wine vest, an olive green corduroy jacket with golden brown trim, and a top hat with a clover stuck in the brim. He stands beneath the flowers surveying his surroundings.*

*An owl is nestling in for the day and lets out one last weary cry of “Who?”*

*The creature peeks his ears and listens.*

*The wind breezes through the tulips, rustling about in the grass, bringing the owl’s question to the creature, “Who?”*

*The creature smiles, “Who? Do you not recognize me?” he state in jest.*

*The sky above him gentle rumbles. The drops of rain plink down upon the meadow. The earth gives a gentle sigh.*

*“I am home, home in my meadow of tulips and sunshine.”*

*The birds begin to chatter. The dragonflies begin to buzz. The stag in the distance gives a gentle bow. The wind swirls past the creature whispering “Welcome home Keenan Ainsley Kavanagh.”*

*The leprechaun turns ever so slowly, disappearing through the tulips, purveying his domain.*

### **Fairy Construction**

The fairy is a full-body One Of A Kind (OOAK) sculpted doll. This means that the entire doll is made out of polymer clay and is not be posable like a BJD (which is also made entirely of clay). I began this doll in January, and I struggled with it every time I worked on it. I used a technique called series baking. This technique allows you to get a portion done, bake it, and then add to it (see Figure 22). I began with a wire armature and built the body and legs. I baked this before adding anything else. The arms were next. Once I created the overall body, with arms and legs, I discovered there were cracks and air bubbles in the chest, arms and shoulders. I cut out the air bubbles and sanded the piece where the cracks developed. I applied new clay that had been mixed with Translucent Liquid Sculpey (TLS). The TLS makes the clay stickier and helps to prevent air from being trapped under the new clay. I baked the piece again. I thought this process would be easier as the entirety of the figure was to be sculpted, but I found that it resulted in cracking and breaking much easier.

**Figure 22.** Series baking the fairy.



*Figure 22.* Body with hands sculpted and baked on (left). Uncured head added to figure after baking the body (right).

I struggled with creating an accurate proportional head. My mentor helped me to find tools and resources to get the head sculpted in a life-like manner, primarily utilizing Photoshop layers to see the shape of the head (see Figure 23). She demonstrated how utilizing a tool like Photoshop allows you to see where your piece is lacking, and if your proportions are in the correct place. This proved to be an invaluable bit of knowledge.

**Figure 23.** Photoshop aided proportion.



*Figure 23.* Photoshop image created by Leigh Jordan to assist in explaining proportion.

I completed the hands and feet after the rest of the sculpture was done. Once the sculpture was complete and baked, I added china paint to blush the piece, PearlEx pigment to color the eyeshadow and fingernails, and acrylic paint to paint the eyebrows. I used Tibetan lamb wool to create the hair, which is glued directly to the head.

The wings were perhaps the most challenging part of this piece. I began with a pattern drawn on paper. I cut each wire and placed it on the pattern. I then used tape to lift the entire wing off the pattern so that I could lay the Angelina Film on the pattern. Each piece of wire was removed from the tape and glued to the film. Once dry, the film was trimmed and heated with a candle to tighten the connections and bring out the color. The tops of the wings were adorned with microbeads and the entire wing covered with 3D lacquer. The process took a full two days (for a detailed description see Appendix A).

I constructed the costume with a sheer sage/metallic fabric and glued it in place, adding rhinestones as decorative elements. I made a crown using wire. I also created a rock for her to sit upon using aluminum foil, polymer clay, and spray paint. This doll was completed on April 11, 2016 and would stand 8-inches tall if she were standing.

### **Fairy reflections.**

The choice of a fairy comes from my fascination with miniature and with fantasy. The visual culture world I was exposed to as a child has greatly impacted my adoration for the world of make believe. I think somewhere inside me, the world of fairies, dragons, and elves seems real and alive. These magical and mythical creatures possess a sense of innocence and magic for me. The creation of a fairy, as if she were a real being, allowed me to express this inner world.

One of the things that made the creation of this piece unique was the use of social media for feedback. While I utilized social media for the leprechaun doll within the PDMAG Academy, here I used Facebook to get the opinion of non-sculptors. I shared photos and asked for opinions on the choice of hair color. The process went through three iterations. The first of these had five choices, but the fairy's face had not yet been

painted. I was advised to paint the face first by Jack Johnston. The second time, I showed the color choices with the face painted (see Figure 24). After a week, I tallied the votes and photographed the top two hair colors with accompanying colors for wings and clothing. This engaged the audience much more than my blog ever did. The act of enlisting others into the creative process lent itself to a community of collaboration.

**Figure 24.** Fairy hair options.



*Figure 24.* Selected options for hair color shared on Facebook for audience voting. From right to left: lime green, sunflower yellow, raspberry pink, natural red, bombshell blonde.

The accompanying narrative is an emotional response to the desires of freedom while being trapped by your own life and commitments, with a reality that we find counterintuitive to our desires. I found the declaration by Sagor (2011), “When I free myself to imagine and dream, I am no longer limited by the constraints of what is realistic; instead, I get a chance to dwell, at least momentarily, on the fantastic,” (p. 14) particularly pertinent to how I have felt over the last six months.

**Figure 25.** *Glorianna Ceara*



*Figure 25. Glorianna Ceara, 2016, polymer clay, Angelina film and wire wings, 8"*

**Glorianna Ceara’s story (see Figure 25).**

*Deep in the woods, on the edge of a babbling brook, rests a small winged being. She is enjoying sitting quietly on a rock next to the water, hair red tossed back and wings spread wide. It is a moment of solitude for this fairy. Often she is busy flittering about, caring for the mossy undergrowth within the forest. But for this moment, she can enjoy the sunlight beaming down on her face.*

*A unicorn comes to drink from the stream. The sunlight catches the fairy’s wings, as she shifts to adjust the sheer celadon scraps fashioned as a skirt, and glints flashes of red and green. The unicorn, startled, cocks his head and turns his gaze towards the fairy. Glorianna Ceara gives a gentle “coo” to reassure him. He looks at her and gives a gentle bow, then proceeds to*



*drink his fill. She watches this fellow habitant of the mystic forest for a while, and as he disembarks, she toys with the idea of leaving the forest.*

*She had never been beyond the trees, and her forest was small. She wanted to see the world beyond. Alas, to leave the forest is forbidden, no one would be there to protect the animals or trees or plants. But “Just for a minute,” she thought to herself, “just a minute cannot do any harm, can it?” A mischievous look crosses her face, as she entertained this idea.*

*A sound from the forest broke into her thoughts, and Glorianna sighed. She lifted herself from the rock, stretching her arms and legs and giving her wings a flutter. She straightened her crown, and in a moment was airborne. The forest needed her. She could not leave. She could never leave. Her home was spectacularly beautiful and like no other magical place, but it was also her prison.*

### **Baby Doll Construction**

I began this doll in May, completing her in June. I used Kellie Beckett’s DVD as an instructional guide to help create the doll. The video guides you step-by-step on the process of creating a baby’s head, arms, and legs. I started with the head, sculpting it on a resin armature, three different times. The first attempt, the lines were too hard on the face, looking much older than intended. The nose was also too wide and the head lacked enough forehead. The second head, looked much younger, but was still too defined around the mouth, and the eyes were not properly spaced. Upon trying to fix this, I messed up the entire head and decided to restart. The final attempt, resulted in a face that looked like a baby with softer lines and subtle features. Each time, the face improved becoming more and more baby like in the overall effect (see Figure 26).

**Figure 26.** Baby doll head progression.



*Figure 26.* Three baby faces, progressing in order from first attempt (left), to second attempt (middle), to final product (right).

Once the face looked like a baby, I moved on in the instructional video to arms and legs. This process was perhaps one of the most challenging due to the fact that there is no armature. Polymer clay becomes more malleable as you work with it and the heat from your hands begins to warm the clay. The arms, from shoulder to fingertip, and legs, from thigh to toe, are each built with a single piece of clay. As I worked with the clay, the clay became so malleable, that it slumped over (see Figure 27). I became so frustrated, I knew there had to be a solution, so I tried to place the clay in the refrigerator for twenty to thirty minutes to allow it to cool back down before trying any additional work. This worked wonderfully and I was able to continue my work, pacing myself accordingly to keep the clay cool yet making progress on the doll.

**Figure 27.** Polymer clay slumping



*Figure 27.* The clay has warmed up from the heat of my hands and just flops over while attempting to make the hand.

After the clay pieces were constructed, I began creating the hair for the doll. I tried a new technique in which the hair is embedded in the clay in the head (see Figure 28). A thin layer of clay is placed on the head and the hair is pushed into the clay. However, once the piece was cured, the hair just began to fall off resulting in removal of the hair and wet sanding of the scalp to remove all of the imperfections left in the clay from the hair.

**Figure 28.** WIP embedded hair.



*Figure 28.* Pressing hair into a layer of clay (left). Top of head with all hair pressed into clay (middle). Front view with all hair pressed into clay (right).

With the unsuccessful attempt at a new technique, the head had grown in size and I decided it was best to use a technique I was familiar with (see Figure 29). I created very fine hair by cutting sections of Tibetan Lamb wool and gluing them onto a sheet of Plexiglas using Aleene's Tacky Glue. When the glue was dry, I pulled the hair off the Plexiglas and trimmed the excess glue off the end, creating hair wefts. These wefts are applied to the head using glue. Once they were all glued onto the head, I allowed it to dry and then gave the doll a haircut to better resemble a baby.

**Figure 29.** WIP glued hair.



*Figure 29.* Process of making hair wefts (left) and gluing them to the head (right).

At this point, I stuffed the body stocking with Poly-fil and a small nylon sack of glass beads for weight. The arms and legs are attached to the body via zip ties holding the stitch buttons on the individual pieces in place. Once together, the clothing could be

constructed to fit the doll. I chose a yellow gingham material, golden grosgrain ribbon, an off white lace and a sheer lining to create a dress. I used a light weight knit trimmed with the same lace to make some bloomers. I also made a small blanket using fleece and a cotton print (see Figure 30).

**Figure 30.** Baby doll accessories.



*Figure 30.* Dress, bloomers (left) and blanket (right) all sewn for the baby doll.

### **Baby doll reflections.**

While I studied and researched the history of dolls, I learned that many of the things that are being done with polymer clay dolls did not start there. In fact, almost all of them started elsewhere, composition, porcelain, rag, and even wooden dolls. Every basic technique I was learning and applying to the material of polymer clay doll construction was something that had been used for over a century in other materials.

As I worked on the baby doll I thought about antique, pre-commercial dolls and how they were made, drawing parallels to the one I was in the process of making. This doll was handcrafted. It would be a treasured item. It held the love and care of the doll maker, me. The stitch buttons used to hold the sculpted pieces in place were used in porcelain and composition dolls. The soft body is reminiscent of the Victorian Era in which playthings became increasingly important. Everything tied to the past, and then I came to a stunning realization.

I found myself realizing just how much visual culture has impacted my own art making. While I did not intend for this doll to resemble anything in particular, I found that the more it developed, the more it reminded me of my favorite doll as a child, a Strawberry Shortcake baby doll. The character from the Program Length Commercial (PLC), and the doll itself, had left an impression that found its way into the work I created. The new understanding of how our world, with the images we are exposed to, develops and shapes us as an individual was a powerful moment. I had loved this doll, and even though, as an adult, I had learned about the manipulation of the PLC, I still hold a sentimental attachment to the memory of the doll and the show. It was a melding of the love of an old memory, with the disruptive new knowledge, culminating in an acceptance and application of a redefined personal narrative.

The narrative for this doll is laid out in a poem. The visual and emotional connections to the doll are expressed in this format. It reflects on my childhood love to care for a baby doll.

**Figure 31.** *Madison Leigh*



*Figure 31. Madison Leigh, 2016, polymer clay with soft body, clothing handmade, 8"*

**Madison Leigh's story (see Figure 31).**

*Ladybugs.  
Crawling.  
In a sea of pink.  
Laid upon the floor.  
A place to lie her down.*

*Gentle folds and pudgy extremities.  
A kind smile.  
Brilliant green eyes, wide and alert.  
Soft red hair.  
A baby to be loved.*

*Sunlight.  
A brilliant shade of golden yellow.  
Woven together with the purity of white.  
Trimmed in lace.  
Adorning the tiny child.*

*Small.  
Brown.  
Furry and soft.  
Clutched close by her side.*

*Teddy to keep her safe.*

*Someone to protect.*

*Someone to teach.*

*Someone who creates wonder.*

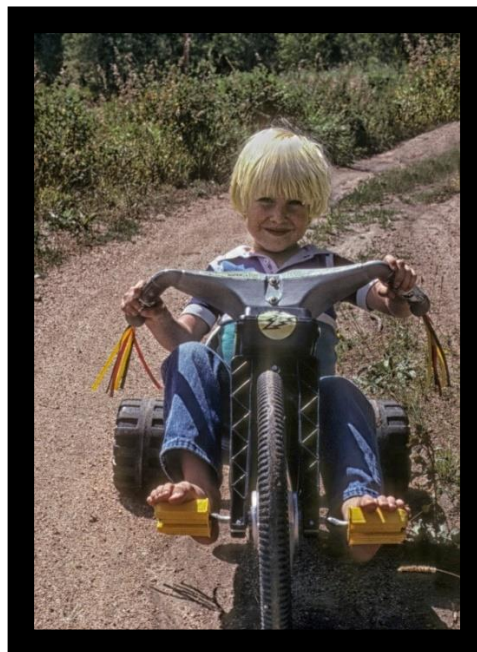
*Someone to give your heart to.*

*Little Madison Leigh.*

### **Child Representative Doll Construction**

Upon the completion of the previous dolls, I began to think on how I best wanted to create a child representative doll. I had used many techniques and processes to complete the other works, and wanted this to be the culmination of those skills. I was inspired by Joe MacPhale's *Tristan*, leading to the decision to create a male child, around the age of four, in the format of a BJD. I used an old photograph of my little brother as my model, especially for the expression (see Figure 32). The choice to use this image is hearkening back to the days before we lost our mother to cancer, his delight and innocence is exuded in this image. It is a reminder to me that we can have joy.

**Figure 32.** My brother.

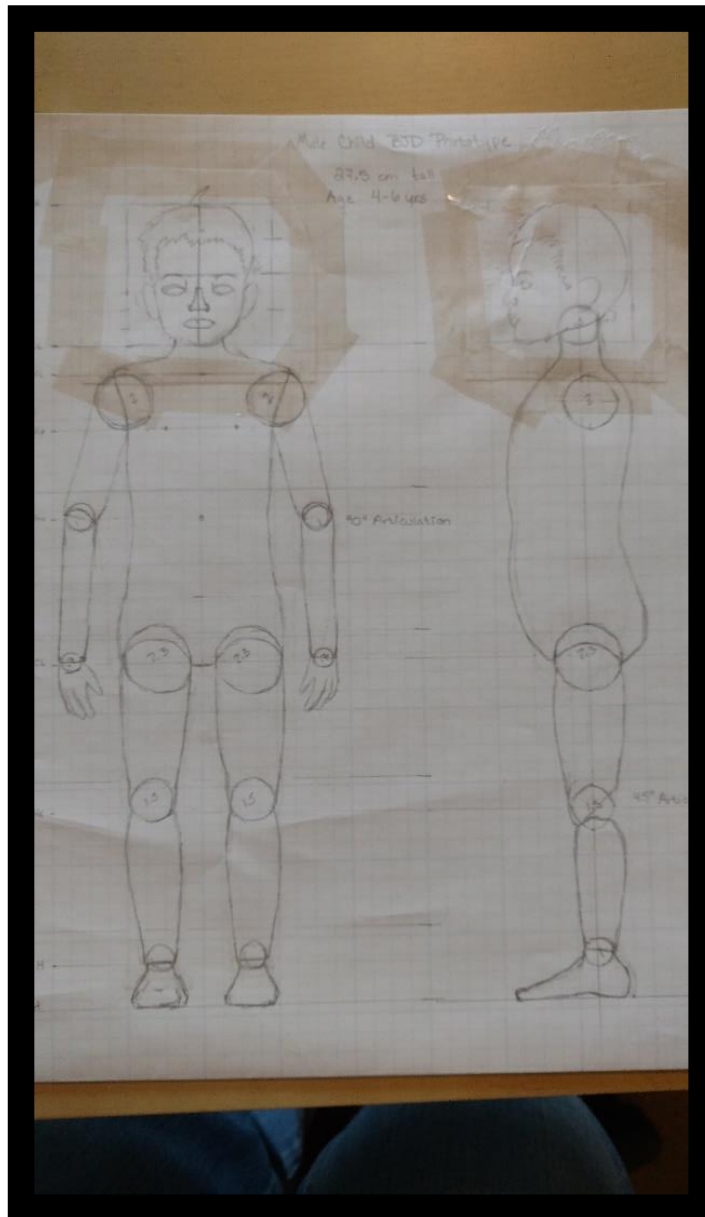


*Figure 32.* Inspirational image of my brother used to create the male child doll.



I had no pattern, as I did with the previous doll. Beginning June 3, 2016 I began the process of constructing a pattern for this doll. I used the knowledge I had about the proper proportion to draw out a rough sketch of the figure. Once the child was drawn, I indicated on the pattern where the joints were going to sit using circles drawn to represent the ball joints (see Figure 33).

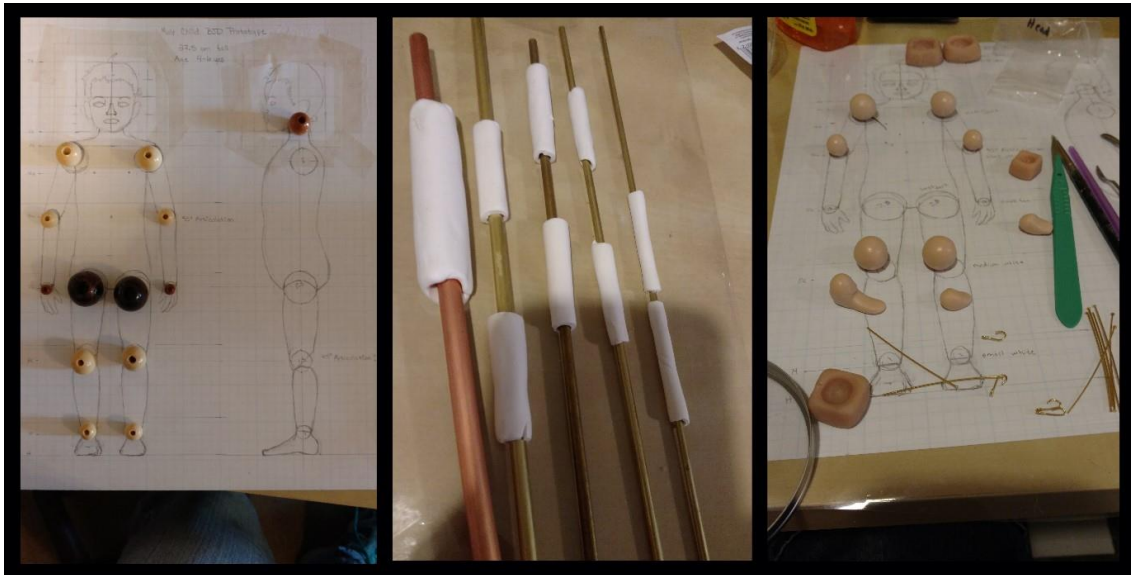
**Figure 33.** Child BJD pattern.



*Figure 33.* Pattern drawn for male child BJD, indicating joint locations and sizes.

I then did all of the preparation work. I made inner armature pieces using brass and copper tubes wrapped with a light polymer clay. I defined the size of each joint, using wooden beads. I crafted the actual ball joints using the same clay I would use for the body. I carefully measured the pieces with digital calipers to ensure they were absolutely accurate. I considered how I wanted the joints to function, deciding to implant them in one end of the socket to try to see how it impacted the movement. The planning and preparation took nearly as much time as the actual sculpting of the pieces did (see Figure 34).

**Figure 34.** Prep work for BJD.



*Figure 34.* Sizing the joints using wooden beads (left). Making inner armatures for arms, legs, and body (middle). Constructing clay ball joints (right).

I began sculpting the head on an aluminum foil ball, this is so I could eventually hollow out the head to string the piece together. The face was cute, but not quite right. This was the only portion of the doll I reached out for support within the PDMAG Academy. While the mentors were unavailable, other apprentices helped with tips and ideas to get the face the correct softness and definition of a child (see Figure 35).

**Figure 35.** Child head WIP.



*Figure 35.* Progression, from left to right, of the face as I received feedback from other apprentices of the PDMAG Academy.

The arms and legs were fashioned on a brass tube with the previously mentioned armature inside. The hands and feet were constructed using a small internal armature of a blob of clay with a hinge. Once all of the pieces were baked and ready, I used china paints to blush the pieces, using both a rosy color and a brown to add the impression of dirt, especially on the feet (see Figure 36). I painted the eyebrows using acrylic paint.

**Figure 36.** WIP feet.



*Figure 36.* The foot on the left has not been painted using china paint, while the foot on the right has to make the foot appear dirty.

When all of the pieces were blushed, it was time to string it together. This proved to be more challenging than the previous BJD. I believe the choice to make the torso and chest all one piece limited the ease of stringing. While the center of the torso/chest is hollow, there is no way to get inside and assist the wire that holds the elastic as it was threaded. While it was challenging, I persevered to get the doll together (see Figure 37). The proportions are a bit off, even with following the pattern I drew out. I can see the arms stick out too far, and the body is too defined for a child of the age of four. I chose to leave the imperfections in the doll, finding myself not concerned with exact replication and final outcome, instead focusing on the process of making the pieces. I took it as a learning experience that I could then apply to future work.

**Figure 37.** Completed male child BJD



*Figure 37.* Doll pieces have been completed and strung together. The doll is balanced and will stand without the support of a doll stand or base.

Once he was together, all that remained was to fashion a wig and some clothing. One of the things I disliked about the other BJD's wig was that it would fall off all the time. With that in mind, I made the choice to embed a magnet in the top of the head, as well as in the wig. This has proven to be a great decision, the magnets readily hold the wig in place.

I knew from the onset of inspiration for this doll that I would place the doll in overalls. Of all the clothing pieces I have made, these were perhaps the easiest to construct. I was no longer worried about perfection because I wanted this child to look a bit whimsical. I wanted this child to represent a playful and carefree spirit, with no concerns for the grown-up world. The doll was completed with all of the clothing sewn on June 20, 2016.

#### **Child representative doll reflections.**

This final piece was my response to everything I had learned, through the research of techniques, history, and the apprenticeship. It was my challenge to myself to create solely on my own skill and knowledge, although I did get some guidance on the facial features. This doll is the most personal and the most rewarding.

My family has suffered many losses, experienced many trials, and through it all we have survived. The image I used of my brother, to model this doll after, reminds me of the gentle innocence of a time before the first major upset of our lives, the loss of our mother. When I think of my little brother, this is the face and spirit I love. It has been twenty-four years since she passed and it is rare to see the look of joy upon my brother's face; I miss it dearly. The playful and whimsical look of this doll pays tribute to the emotion of joy and innocence.

The doll also represents the past coming back into our future. It is a symbol of hope and love, of things that are playful. The personal connection I have with this concept, with the need for hope and love, a desire for being playful, was the driving force behind the overall design. My own life has been in veritable chaos and distress over the last 6 months. While I do not desire to get into the details, I needed a way to express the longing for happier times and a reminder that this too shall pass. This doll serves that purpose and is a daily reminder that I will find the end of this hardship in life and joy will return to my world.

When writing the accompanying narrative I looked to my childhood home for inspiration. This place was always full of magic for me, and I was fortunate to have the space to explore and develop. My brother and I were the best of friends and often played together in the woods. He was sometimes stubborn and wanted to do things himself, and I always wanted to help him. Our mother was a shining light for both of us. It is difficult to reconcile the emotional trauma after this moment of happiness, in light of our mother passing. I often reflect on how this event changed our paths in life, our development, and the people we became.

Figure 38. *Andy*

Figure 38. *Andy*, 2016, polymer clay, roving wig, handmade clothing 10”

### **Andy’s story (see Figure 38).**

*In the mountains of Colorado, a yellow ranch house sits nestled at the end of a cul-de-sac on three acres of land. The house sits quiet. Outside a woodpecker is tapping incessantly on an evergreen tree. A small spring bubbles up on the east side of the house, filling a miniature pond. Behind the house, a raspberry patch grows. Beyond the vibrant fruit lies the forest, dense and dark, with the mountain rises behind standing guard over this place. At the front of the house, on the deck, a woman sits reading a book.*

*The calm is suddenly broken by a squeal. A sound of joy jumping forth from a young boy as he barrels out of the woods running towards the raspberries, his sister close behind, as they race to get some of the delicious fruit, so ripe it is ready to fall off the bushes. As Andy and Emma reach the bushes they both pick berries and pop them into their mouths. The boy shoves a handful into the pockets of his overalls. The juices of the berries bleeding through the fabric. Once they have their fill, they meander to the spring.*

*Plopping down next to the little pond, they take off their shoes and socks, putting their feet into the cool water. The sun shines down on the children, making Andy’s golden blonde hair appear to glow under his hat. Andy reaches under the log next to the pond and retrieves an aluminum tin. “I’m gonna make something special for mommy,” he states proudly, as he digs his hands into the muddy earth next to the pond.*

*“Do you want help?” Emma asks, eyeing her little brother.*

*“No!” Andy exclaims loudly.*

*Emma giggles, “Ok,” swirling her feet in the pond and kicking some water in his direction. Andy lifts the mud into the pie pan and flattens it down. He rinses his hand in the clear water and reaches into his pocket, extracting the berries. He smashes them into the mud and looks around. He jumps up, and scurries toward a tall section of grass. Andy stands at the grass, stripping it of its seed, collecting it in his oversized cowboy hat. He bounds back and pours the seed on top. “Now to bake it.” He sets the tin on a rock nearby and returns to the spring.*

*The children play in the water for a while waiting for the pie to finish. “Ding,” Andy mimics a timer, as he jumps up “It’s done.” He runs over to the rock as Emma collects their shoes and socks. Andy picks up the tin, closing his eyes and taking a deep breath in, “Mmmm, mommy is going to love it!” They walk up the house.*

*The woman on the deck looks up from her book when she hears them approaching. When she sees them she stifles a laugh. Andy’s clothing is stained red from the berries and his hands and feet are wet and muddy, grass seed spilling from a container he is holding gingerly in his hands, and his hair is sticking wildly out from his hat. Emma’s pockets reveal that she too has berries for later, she is carrying their shoes and socks wrapped up in her arms like a baby, smiling as she comes skipping up behind her brother.*

*Andy runs toward her, proclaiming proudly, “Look Mommy! I made you a pie!”*

### **Overall Reflections on Doll Making**

In the process of becoming a doll maker, I have found some profound realizations about myself as an artist and my understanding of the world I live in. As I utilized the methodologies of A/R/Tography and apprenticeship in my research, I found how deeply intertwined these roles are in my life. I served as an artist, as a researcher, as a teacher, and as an apprentice.

Through learning new techniques, about the history of dolls, about other doll artists, I found inspiration. The inspiration led to artwork and narratives, which I shared



in my blog. My blog served as a teaching tool for others to understand the process and steps I had taken. The apprenticeship reinforced all of these roles through sharing and creating with others guiding my practice.

Doll making is not just a way for me to create, but an avenue to express personal connections and share with others. It is a form of healing and meditation. Dolls have shown me a path that allows for exploration, experience, and education that I had not considered before. It has become so much an integral part of my life, that my life without making dolls is unimaginable.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter delineates my final conclusions of the impact this study had had on redefining my personal narrative. I also present implications for future pathways within the perception of being an A/R/Tographer.

#### **The Internal Narrative Struggle**

The stories we tell and hear are an integral part of who we are. I never realized how much of an impact my personal experiences and the things I have been exposed to impact my world. I have come to a new understanding of how this process impacts me through looking at my work through the eyes of an A/R/Tographer and by digging deep into the world of visual culture, material culture, pop culture, narratives, learning, exploring, and questioning.

As I began my research, I had been appalled to learn about the concept of a Program Length Commercial (PLC). What this means was that the animated cartoons I grew up enjoying were not shows but rather twenty-minute long commercials intended to sell toys. The toy industry had learned that children could influence the spending of parents and the PLC was intended to loosen the pocket books of parents to give in to the demands of their children (Cross, 1997). It was the ripping of innocence from my mind. How could someone knowingly manipulate children through this strategy to sell toys? I was victim to this, unknowingly, until now. My Strawberry Shortcake baby doll suddenly

felt sour and bitter in my mind. The love I felt for the memory of the doll diminished. I struggled deeply with the fear of wondering if I too would do this.

I had intended to write a story with each of my dolls; was writing a story to accompany my artwork not the same thing? Ideally I wanted to sell my dolls, and if I included a story, would I be manipulating the audience the way I had been manipulated with Strawberry Shortcake? I spoke with others about my dilemma, my father, my boyfriend, my brother, friends, anyone who would listen. I wrote about it in my blog. It kept me awake at night.

It was an internal struggle come to the forefront. As I redefined who I had been to who I am now with the knowledge of the PLCs, I found a peace in knowing that my intention was not manipulation. I was not trying to sell my work or replicas of it to the mass public. My intention of providing narratives was to share an individualized creative story that brought the piece to life for others to enjoy. This resolution helped me to re-contextualize my distaste for my doll. It was a re-scripting of my own personal narrative. I loved the doll. I loved the show. This new knowledge did not change that fact. What it changed was my understanding of the intent behind the production of these items. This provided me with a new outlook on the way our society pushes ideas and concepts on children. It provided me a glimpse of a previously unrealized reality that was part of my own development as an individual.

It was still a difficult process to write the narratives. I found that even though I had found an internal resolution, I had a difficult time expressing the story in a format that did not seem to be a manipulation of the viewer. I wrote multiple stories for each doll, refining and sometimes completely eliminating them as time passed. In the end, I

am happy with the narratives I have written and no longer struggle with the idea that I was doing the same thing as a PLC. My stories are original, integral to the artwork they are inspired by, not a story to sell, but rather a story to tell.

### **The Importance of Process**

I have always been a product oriented person. The outcome is so important to me, that often the process is overlooked. However, the documentation of my process became such an essential part of my blog, that I cannot ignore this new realization. Upon reviewing my blog, almost every blog post has some explanation of what I did, how I did it, what was coming next, and my thoughts about the process (see Appendix A).

The process of making became just as important as the making itself. The recording of this process became the focus of my documentation. I would not only write about, but photograph, step-by-step what I was doing. It is as if I am trying to explain to others how they might also complete similar works. I included the problems and difficulties with what I was creating. I realized the truth in the statement “Art problems are authentic; they are some of the few problems in school for which the teacher does not know the answer” (Freedman, 2003, p.113). I was not concerned with knowing the answers, but rather with the sharing of knowledge I obtained from exploring. It was the first time I felt I was truly genuine in making and teaching art.

I also discovered that in the joy of process I let go of the desire for perfection. With the first dolls I sculpted, the fashion doll, the leprechaun, and the fairy, I was so wrapped up in the pursuit of it being perfect that most of the joy disappeared. However, when I let go of the idea of perfection, allowing myself to *discover* the process, the

following dolls became a joy to create. I found that even the imperfections were just areas of exploration for the next time and the process became an important lesson.

The realization that the process took precedence reflects within the A/R/Tography lens of my research. Not only am I an artist, but through the blogging experience, it is evident that the desire to teach is ingrained in my being (see Appendix A). It is also apparent in the research aspect, as even this becomes an element found within the blog. I am constantly adapting my perspective and creations based on the information I have learned. It is true that A/R/Tography resonates with my experience.

### **Apprenticeship in the Arts**

The practice of being an apprentice in the Professional Doll Makers Art Guild (PDMAG) has been an interesting journey. I have enjoyed the assistance of the many mentors on the Facebook page, and am appreciative of my personal mentor, Leigh Jordan. I have found that the format of an online apprenticeship has worked well for me, but others have struggled.

I met with another apprentice who lives in Denver, and she was ready to quit. She was so frustrated with feeling that she was not getting constructive criticism and wanted to just do what she wanted. We discussed the importance of doing what we enjoy, because without joy, the process becomes tedious and is no longer a desire. I definitely had my days when I frustrated and could empathize.

There is room for this program to improve, it is great in concept, but as a new apprenticeship program, the kinks have not all been worked out. This was perhaps the most frustrating part for me. I found that if I needed assistance in a timely manner, I had to plan accordingly as to who I would reach out to, whether the Academy or my personal

mentor, who is located in the United Kingdom. I found that my participation in the challenge was a letdown. The voting initially seemed unfair, and this I discussed with my mentor. I had no problem losing to the individuals who did better than me, but I had a problem with the individual who won “People’s Choice” as this was put to a vote on Facebook and it became a popularity contest. My mentor brought this to the other mentors, who agreed. The response was to award a “Mentor’s Choice” award. In addition, for future challenges, they would limit the voting to just the mentors. These are just a few of the struggles I had.

However, it is my strong conviction, that without the apprenticeship program I would not have been as successful in creating the works I did. Betts (2008) sums up the success of an apprenticeship by suggesting “Learning in this context was fundamentally a social process with interaction, collaboration, and mutual critique as standard practice” (p. 270). I would not have known how to adjust the head of my fairy, or the face of my child. I would not have had the support of an amazing mentor who continually encouraged me to try new things and push me to grow. I would not have had the community of artists who specialize in doll making to discuss problematic construction issues, conceptualize future pieces, or to ask general informative questions.

Without the apprenticeship program, I would not be where I am today, and for that I am decidedly thankful. I feel that the concept of an apprenticeship in the arts is a great idea. It gives those that are learning the ability to work under a master artist who wants to share, guide, and teach. The Facebook page was a great place of community in which the apprentices would share their work in progress, other apprentices would

encourage, and mentors would make suggestions. It was a safe space to let down your guard, to be open and vulnerable to others, and to grow as an artist.

### **Next Steps**

When I look forward to where I go from here, what all have I learned, how will I apply this to my life, I feel it is necessary to break down the world of next steps through A/R/Tography. Through the process of art making and research, I have learned much about myself and my own narrative. I had a different experience of my dolls as a child to that of researching and learning about them as an adult. I have had to reconcile this discord between the fond memories and the discovery of the toy industry's manipulation of children. I have been faced with the idea that I have been influenced more than I realized by visual, material and pop culture. I have had to reevaluate my passion for dolls and their stories. I have expanded my thinking and questioned my reality. In so doing, I have come away with a new perspective. Everything has so clearly become connected. However, it helps me to take a step back and separate, as well as, identify areas in each arena that are places for me to apply and grow this awareness.

#### **As an artist.**

It was suggested to me that I display my work in a show. I was hesitant at first, as the dolls are so very small, although that was not the only reason. I have had trepidation about sharing my work as an artist in that venue. However, I feel that presenting my work would benefit the world of the doll maker by presenting them in a fine arts realm.

I have considered how I would display them, and what I would want to include. I think that presenting the dolls themselves is not enough. I envision a display of photographs of the work in progress leading to the culmination of the finished product. I

see including blog entries and the final narrative as part of the artwork. I am also considering the potential of producing a doll in the gallery space.

In addition, I will continue with the PDMAG Apprenticeship to further my skills and development as a doll maker. This community has been a safe location to explore and develop as an artist. I will continue to work on making dolls of different ages and genre. I am partial to the fantasy creations and would like to explore that in more depth.

I would also like to participate in a Doll Show. The opportunity to be around other doll makers and showcasing our work helps to build the doll community. I had hoped to participate in the International Doll and Teddy Show in Asheville this year, but was not able to attend. I plan to go next year.

#### **As a researcher.**

Herein lies my biggest area of growth. I feel I have answered my first research question in regard to doll making reflecting my integration of personal narrative with new information. I found some answers as to the impact of pop and visual culture on the world of dolls. However, I do not feel any closer to finding out how these dolls produce such incredible narratives.

Whenever the topic of dolls arises, people have a story. The dolls themselves seem to transport people into their memories and have a desire to share. I do not know why this is. I cannot quite answer why they have such an impact, and I aspire to understand. I wonder if it is in part due to the human need to belong. We are bound together with a desire for connectedness (Light, 1996).

As a researcher, you are always learning, always questioning, if for no other reason than your own curiosity. I will continue to learn and explore dolls. I will continue



to look into the importance of process and how to apply this knowledge to a classroom. I wonder about the healing and transformation I have experienced through my work with dolls, and how this may translate to others. It is an ongoing exploration of ideas and a rewriting of my conceptualized personal narrative through expanding knowledge.

**As a teacher.**

When I reflect on my experience, I struggle with the idea of teacher, I prefer the word educator. I wonder if there is something I can transfer to a classroom. But the thing I keep coming back to is that teaching is ingrained in my personality. My blog is a key example of this phenomenon. I wrote to teach others, not solely to document my experience (see Appendix A).

The skills I have learned can of course be transferred to a classroom, and the understanding of shifting from product oriented to process oriented will impact my teaching. When I first read the article “Smoke and Mirrors: Art Teacher as Magician” by Nan Hathaway (2013), I was taken aback. I had been taught to teach in just the manner she was describing. I would reveal a project and give steps, but just a little at a time. Her statement, “When product trumps process, art teachers may be managing projects instead of facilitating learning” (p. 9), now resonates with me. I see the importance of process and the disservice I was doing my students. Prior to this experience, I was always about a child completing a project. Now, I will look at the process as the valuable outcome, and await anxiously to implement this idea in a classroom.

Often as an educator, I forget what it is like to be a student. I was reminded of this through the apprenticeship. I felt things were unfair in the voting for the challenge and I spoke up. I am thankful I did because the resolution felt reasonable and it made me

reflect on the competitive nature of some aspects of education. But I question if any of my own students would have done the same. After the first year of participating in the district art show, seeing one of my students crying as he was leaving because he did not win, I made a resolution. During all future district shows, I would provide all of my students, whose work was selected, with a participation certificate and sketchbook. I do not believe competition is necessarily a bad thing, but I believe proper recognition is important to build an individual's self-esteem. It is acceptable to not be the winner of a competition, but as an educator, I believe I must continue to encourage those who put forth their best effort.

I am considering the possibility of becoming a mentor in the PDMAG when I finish my apprenticeship. The apprenticeship is set for a year, and we are nearing the end of my apprenticeship as a beginner. The Academy has recently announced they will be moving some individuals into an Intermediate Academy and they will continue their apprenticeship for an additional year. However, I would love to give back to this community by helping other aspiring doll makers achieve their ambitions. I feel that the sharing of knowledge with one another is what made this community so special. I would also consider hosting a workshop or course on the construction of dolls.

### **Final Thoughts**

I set out to learn about dolls and narrative through A/R/Tography and apprenticeship. I found resonance in looking at dolls in relation to visual, material, and pop culture. What I did not expect was the intense personal experiences and connections that brought me to the conclusion of this investigation.

It was about half way through the research phase of this project that I realized a shift had occurred in my personal narrative, who I defined myself as, and what had taken precedence. I had completely engulfed the concept of being an A/R/Tographer. Without making a conscious effort to integrate these roles, I had found myself fully engaged in a new practice.

Not only had I become an artist, a researcher, and a teacher, but I could see how each of these roles was interwoven. The research led to questioning my personal narrative. My dolls were a result of the research and my personal narrative. The dolls informed new research questions and provided information that I desired to share with others as a teacher. The edification of others about my process through my blog led to the realization of the paradigm shift from product to process. This shift then spurred additional research.

At the conclusion of my inquiry, I reflected on this phenomena. As I embraced the world of dolls and doll making, for which I am passionate about, the transition to identifying and integrating these roles became effortless. I believe it is this enthusiasm that made the discovery of new concepts and practices possible. To those who wish to dive into the practice of A/R/Tography, I encourage you to find your passion and to pursue it in the form of this practice. Be open to the changes and discoveries you will make about yourself and your practice. Embrace the changes that come forth in your practice and implement them with fidelity.

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## APPENDIX A

### Sample Blog Post

Posted on April 22, 2016 on <https://wordpress.com/posts/qidarablog.wordpress.com>.

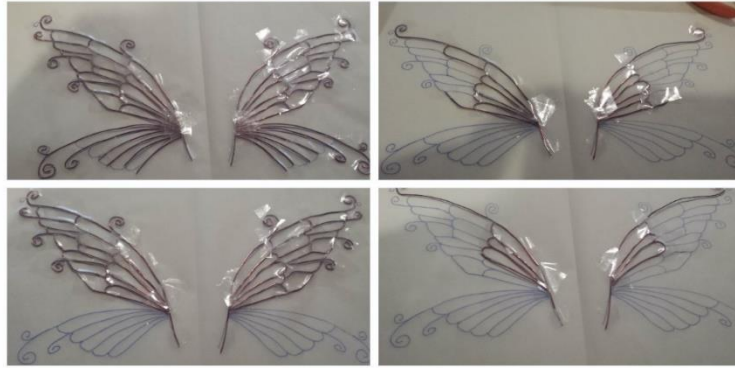
#### Wings

Wings, um, wow. I did not realize how much work I set myself up for in making a fairy. The biggest thing I learned about making wings? To make a simpler design!

So I started out with finding some images on Google for inspiration. I found two that I used. Then I laid out a sheet of tracing paper and traced over elements I liked and added some distinguishing features. Then I transferred my design to another sheet of tracing paper, this time using a pen to draw the final design. I did all that last night and was pumped to go this morning.



So here is the long and tedious part. Each of those lines I drew, well I have to cut a wire for it. So I cut and bent wire for two and a half hours this morning. In order to hold the pieces in place, I used scotch tape to hold down the ends. This way I didn't accidentally bump the paper and mess up the wires.



Once the wings were all cut out, I laid a strip of packing tape over the whole thing and peeled them off. This allowed me to use the pattern piece I made for the next step. On a side note, I added strips of packing tape to the back of the tracing paper so that it would strengthen the paper while I was removing the wire wings.



When the wire wings were removed, I took my original pattern piece and taped 2 pieces of Angelina film onto the pattern, covering the design. The color I chose was dark, so it is difficult to see in the picture, but you can see the pattern through the film.



Then I spent the next hour or so painstakingly removing a wire from the packing tape, applying a small amount of white glue and placing it in its location on the pattern.

When all the pieces were in place, I added some glue to reinforce where the wires all came together. I also used a little bit of super glue on the interior joints and to attach a couple of the swirls. I then set the wings under a couple of books while I took a break from them.



During this time, I set out to do the hair on the fairy. I started with cutting sections of the Tibetan Lamb wool and adding glue to the ends on a piece of Plexiglas. I determined that the wig cap was unnecessary and decided to just glue hair to her head. I would take a weft of hair from the Plexiglas, trim the excess glue and place the hair on her head. Occasionally adding a bit of glue if the glue on the weft wasn't sticky enough. I started with two pieces that will come down in front of her ears, then across the hairline. After three rows, I shifted to the nape of her neck and worked my way up the back of her head. I'm letting her dry completely before styling her hair, so right now she looks a little wild.



I attempted to make eyebrows, as I really don't care for painted ones. However, all of my attempts failed. I believe she is just too small and I will have to bite the bullet and paint them on.

Then it was back to the wings. I removed the wings from the template and trimmed the excess Angelina film from the wings, leaving about 1/4 inch around the edges. Using a tea light candle, I very carefully heated the film to shrink it in place. I burned the wings in a couple places, as this was the first attempt at using the stuff. And as such, I tried to mimic the burned sections with holes that naturally form when the film is heated too much. I think it turned out pretty alright. The film also tightens on the wires as it is

heated, so it forms a really smooth finish. The last thing I did was to use a crystal clear 3D lacquer to coat the wings on the side with the wires. This is two-fold, it seals the wings and it holds the wires in place.



## APPENDIX B

### Sample Conversation with PDMAG Mentor



[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/18, 5:14pm



[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/18, 5:14pm





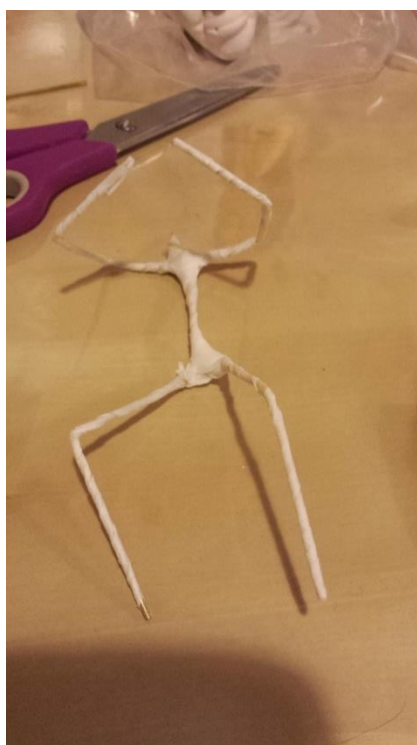
[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/18, 5:14pm



[Kelly Martinez](#)

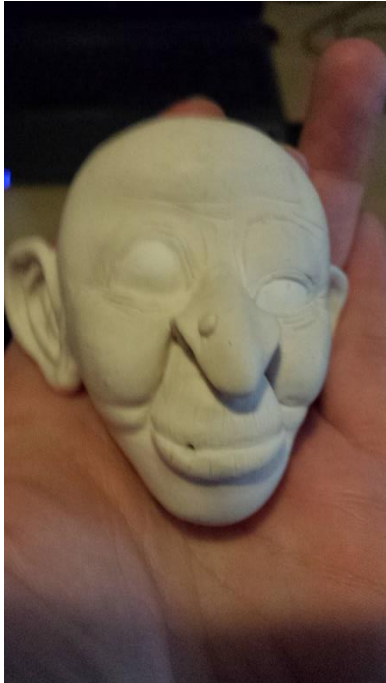
3/18, 5:14pm





[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/18, 5:15pm



[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/18, 5:15pm

Can you give me some advice on my leprechaun? I have the hands, head, and feet done. I'm working on the top hat. I have an armature I prepared for the body. Here's where I am stuck. I'm not sure how to sculpt the body and clothing. I thought about doing a soft body with fabric clothing. But either way I could use some advice. Here are images of what I have.



[Leigh Jordan](#)

3/18, 7:38pm

Oh he is looking superb. I have just come home from being out with the hubby and it's 1.40am, but I shall reply as soon as I am up in the morning. But you are doing great! 😊



[Leigh Jordan](#)

3/19, 7:05am

Hi Kelly, sorry I couldn't get back to you straight away, that's the problem with the time difference. So, first of all, can I say, as a little caricature, he is looking REALLY good! Your hands are fantastic and have you made separate nails for the fingers? And I love your shoes, like REALLY love your little shoes, with the stitching and buckle and everything, your little guy is going to be superb when he is done. Now, since you sent these, have you moved it forward any? It's really what you think you would be most comfortable with for the body. I have done both cloth and clay clothes but my work tends

to look better with cloth. Some of the others have gone for one thing or the other so I comes down to your personal choice. Do you have fabrics you could use or clay and then paint? Before you need to decide how to dress we need to get your little guy up and standing on his feet and all his bits put together. I can see you've used brass rods in the shoes, you are so advanced for a so called apprentice! Honestly you need to be so proud because you are doing so well and moving along at a speed. I know you don't think you are doing much, but we all have lives and work and families and stress, but the fact you have tried is a great accolade, some of the other apprentices haven't even started anything yet, so you are way ahead of some of the others.

Let me know where you are with him and I should now be around all weekend so will be on hand to help, and puzzle it all out with you. You've done the hard part, it can come together quite quickly now. 😊



[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/19, 9:28am

No worries about not getting back to me sooner. I had stopped working when I sent you the message. I did make separate nails for the hands! I won't have time to work on him today unfortunately. But I can take a moment to try to get him standing. I think he is going to be top heavy and I don't have a stand for him yet. I have paints for clay and I am also a seamstress. I think I want to do a fabric costume. I'm just not sure how to do the body. My previous dolls I used Jack's armature and body stocking. This one I'm not sure how to go about making the soft body. I was thinking of a technique I read about where you wrap the armature with cotton batting and then construct the clothing over that. How would you do it?



[Leigh Jordan](#)

3/19, 9:51am

Hello! Ok, I have done almost every method of constructing, but I used to work in the theatre making props for the stage. The master craftsmen would say "doesn't matter what it looks like inside so long as it looks good on the outside", and I still live by that. If you think he's going to be top heavy, what you could do is figure out where his body is going to be thickest. Let's just say his tummy and butt. You could attach clay on those parts to counter balance the weight of the head. I also use coins! If I have someone with a remarkable large nose that's going to pull him forward and have him fall and break it, I submerge coins in his butt until the weight evens out. And then cover it all with Cotton batting. Hides all the ugly workings underneath! With the cotton batting I pull it out to make long pieces, wrap them up then secure them by trying wool or string round. Your guy has a cane though, that might be the perfect tool to stop him falling forward and you won't need to balance him with anything. Once he's all together attached to the armature, try and see if the cane holds him in position. If it doesn't, you could consider attaching him to a base or weighting him. Try and see what happens and let me know how he goes.







[Leigh Jordan](#)

3/19, 9:51am



[Leigh Jordan](#)

3/19, 9:52am

This is one I've been working on, his head at that angle meant he kept falling on his nose. All down his spine is coins and clay to balance him. 😊



[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/19, 9:57am

That is a great trick! Love it! I'll give him a shot and send you a photo when I get him standing. My brass rubes in his hands are a little short and I'm not sure how to attach his head. Another question is the top hat. I started one with the clay, but it is so heavy and awkward I'm not sure I'll use it. However I'm not sure how to construct one or of another material. How did you do the top hat on your Scrooge?



[Leigh Jordan](#)

3/19, 10:05am

My Scrooge hat is clay, as was The Childcatcher, but my leprechauns are fabric. For the fabric I made a tube the size I wanted for the height of the hat, and covered it with fabric. Then I made a circle the exact size of the tube and covered that in fabric and laid it on top to make the top of the hat. Next I made a much larger circle (all out of cardboard, I forgot to mention), for the brim with a hole the size of the tube, covered it in fabric, but instead of cutting the circle out, I cut it into triangles and pushed them up inside the tube and glued them onto the tube. This was the most tricky part as they kept popping off so I pushed it into an old glue bottle that was just the right size and that held them in place while they dried. Sounds complicated but it just flows when you're actually doing it.



[Leigh Jordan](#)

3/19, 10:05am



[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/19, 10:07am

Neat. I think my hat I started is too tall, which may be why I don't like it. I'm afraid to try to trim it add it is already baked. But maybe sanding it I could get it shorter. Maybe I can try both techniques and decide which I like better.



[Leigh Jordan](#)

3/19, 10:16am

Fabric is definitely lighter in weight, but sanding the clay down will lighten it too, but give it a try and see what works best for you. And enjoy! 😊



[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/19, 1:02pm





[Kelly Martinez](#)

3/19, 1:02pm

Took a minute to try to get him put together. I broke both of my legs around the ankle while trying to get him to stand, but that should be a pretty simple fix. He's not permanently attached. And I'm still figuring out the head. But this is kind of what he looks like so far. I think the head is going to make him fall over, he is pretty carefully balanced at the moment. So I think I will definitely take your advice on weighting him. Haven't decided on a base. Now that I have him standing on his own, I'm not sure I want one.