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Artist Statement

During the first few months of classes at Parsons, I remember feeling overwhelmed by the contrast between my previous academic conditioning and the new, more open-ended style of college assignments. In the beginning, I was often puzzled by class projects and wondered what guidelines or parameters I was expected to follow. Though I often asked my professors to clarify, I would still walk away feeling unclear and anxious about the work. I would think to myself, “How do I do anything when these assignments are so darn vague!” It was comforting, however, to see other classmates in the same boat, unused to this degree of creative freedom while still being expected to incorporate ideas from class discussion into their work. One of the first assigned projects was a full scale self-portrait for Studio as well as a Seminar writing assignment on specific parts of our body. I took to the writing easily, and began to take risks, becoming increasingly personal with my work. It was unlike me to share this amount with others, especially being in a new environment with all these fresh faces. Yet, somehow I felt ready, ready to share who I really was and parts of my past with others and I think that's what made my transition here so smooth, both academically and socially.

I find it easy to step back now and see a pattern, or related themes, throughout all of my work. Each piece of art I created reveals an intimate, personal side of myself, whether it's expressed through tone, digital media, a focus on the body, or my past. I'm letting you in on a

secret: all these little bits and pieces of me are expressed through my digital media photography. My personal, photographic style I hope is as individual as my fingerprints; like all artists I tend towards a certain palette, composition, use of lighting, and personal subject matter that intrigues me. In fact, for a peer project I collaborated to make an intimate film. Our idea was inspired by an Andy Warhol movie where he shot himself sitting and eating food. Though eating may seem the most mundane, daily task, it is a necessary ritual all humans engage in. This concept of a universal human action that still reveals individual preference, fascinated me as the subject of a film. Yes, we all eat but it's how we eat that burger and what condiments we dip our fries into which reveals our personal identity and unique characteristics.

I wanted to find an elegant and simple style of filmmaking to convey this concept. With this in mind, we recorded our three group members showering and brushing their teeth--a daily ritual shot in black and white. Each still was collaged separately so the viewer could not tell whose arm was whose. This air of mystery combined with close ups of the face, back, upper chest, and neck, exposed a side of all of us that only we see this intimately every day. This film shoot was a little out of my comfort zone, but I still ran with it and the result of this risk was a beautiful product. It was an interesting concept-- to reveal ourselves to the viewer without seeming to be aware of being watched. There was certainly a voyeuristic element to the way we shot this. As I worked on the project, I noted moments of synchronicity between Studio and Seminar work. I felt that overall each project I worked on inspired me and also seemed to consistently correlate to themes of intimacy and the observation of emotions.

My work is similar to poetry, layering ideas and implying my message. As Walt Whitman said in his famous poem "Song of Myself:" "Have you felt so proud to get at the

meaning of poems?" I want my audience to feel that same elation when a new idea emerges from my work and they get it. For example, the image I drew for my self-portrait in studio was the merging, or layering, of two homes: a 1920's style house where I was raised and a red brick apartment building circa 1930 where my best friend's family embraced me like a second daughter. The homes overlap and a tree breaks metaphorically through the roof of the first home to unite with the second. Though the childhood home is shattered in one place the tree still holds both homes together. My drawing style for this project could be considered whimsical, with an almost musical, or fairytale-like enchantment similar to an illustration in a children's book--the kind that seems to come to life the more a child stares at it.

Just as poems often use an extended metaphor that connects the whole work, I continued to explore the concept of memory in another artistic piece where each body part was linked to the memory of a key person in my life. Overall, I am pleased with my projects and stepping back from them at the end of the term suddenly see the various themes I am drawn to: the power of memory to shape our growth and intimacy in our daily routine. I also realize more fully that my goal as an artist is to push against social constructs and dive into the things that are often considered taboo. Why do we have to keep hushed about issues both natural and constructed? I want my work to show that being intimate and personal doesn't mean you are weak, on the contrary, it actually makes one stronger! And just because we are told not to speak about certain things in order to fit within social norms, that does not mean we should not ask questions. I believe one of the worst things a person can be in this world is incapable of curiosity--to never question or doubt the things we're told. When did we start accepting the answers instead of asking questions? When did we stop demanding like a child, with every ounce of our being, for

our questions to be answered as well as thoroughly listened to and understood? I have truly begun the process of climbing the ladder, rung by rung, project by project, onwards and upwards towards my goal--to become a memorable artist, photographer, and designer who leaves a unique stamp upon the world.