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Home Is Where the Morphine Is

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Home is Where the Morphine Is

By

Morgan Sierra

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

In

Studio Art

Installation

Minnesota State University, Mankato

Mankato, Minnesota

May 2018

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Home Is Where the Morphine Is

Master of Arts Exhibition: Morgan Sierra

This thesis has been examined and approved by the following members of the student's committee.

Advisor/ Chair, Liz Miller

Committee Member, Curt Germundson

Committee Member, John Paul

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Thesis Overview

The thesis exhibition I create will be an installation that is centered around a fictional narrative starring a vivacious mental patient, and containing the people, places, and things in which she interacts with in her life at the hospital. As the audience moves through the gallery, they are immersed into the main character's world, seeing and analyzing the rooms and objects through the eyes and mind of the protagonist. The confidence in which the patient speaks of her environment could lead spectators to believe that her experiences in the hospital are an irrefutable truth. It is only after closely looking at clues hidden within the work, that the viewer begins to realize that the mind that is directing them, may not be in touch with reality. Begging the question of whether the viewer sees reality, or the vibrant hallucination of an unwell young woman.

In my work I touch on themes such as contrast and color representation. I enjoy toeing the line between making work that is equally beautiful and intriguing to look at, while also peculiar (and to some, deterring) in content. Using bright colors and fine details, viewers are encouraged to approach the work and engage with it. At the same time, however, the environment within the work reflects an experience that is, to say the least, less than pleasant. A padded cell made to contain unstable patients in mental turmoil with bright yellow walls and matching, dainty furniture. The contrast between the delightful colors and decoration, in such an eerie, unexpected place, creates a pulling and pushing of audience attention.

I also use colors to represent certain characters, emotions, and to add unity to the work. The color yellow symbolizes not only the cheerful main character, but is a visual representation of happiness, healing, and overall positivity. The fictional main character associates yellow with feeling better, and imagines the color into people, places, and things that make her happy or excited. Things such as the color of the pills that she is given, or the walls of her room. On the contrary, the color black represents illness, and negativity. The color white is used a neutral middle ground, alluding to cleanliness and brightness, while not being overpowering.