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Jane Gillespie Pryor MFA Thesis Statement

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Jane Gillespie Pryor
MFA Thesis Exhibition

Claremont Graduate University
Artist Statement

My work highlights the ways we arrange ourselves in relationship to other human beings. People care for one another by means of touch, the proximity of bodies revealing the nature of our relationships. The forms within my sculptures and photographs rely on each other, necessitating one another's existence to hold together physically. The components of my works are dependant, unable to support themselves on their own. This vulnerability is important to me. It creates a possibility for exchange and a complexity of emotions.

My works also embody an ethos of impulsive, over-the-top generosity. They involve dressing up, putting on, acting out. In this way they are naïve, sincere and brave, perhaps even to the point of being idiotic. They function in the manner of flowers and handwritten notes, which do not add to the receiver's wealth or become a possession to keep over time. Flowers are not for the stomach, but for the eyes and nose. They are consumed visually. Then they die and are discarded.

Wire and plastic create the armatures and the skins of my works, facilitating change between inside and out. Mutable, the wire and plastic are both flexible and unstable. Similar to the human body, they maintain a delicacy and strength. I think of hair—fairly useless adornment that holds our complete DNA. I also think of skin, rough and elastic, keeping all our parts together and yet penetrable, easily bruised, and weathered.

When our bodies are damaged they are repaired by means of casts and bandages. Legs, torsos, necks, are wrapped in sterile fabrics; steel plates are sometimes inserted and screws drilled in. In the case of the dead, we bury, burn, wash, wrap, dress, and anoint—approaching death with brevity and embarrassment, longing and repulsion. These physical actions and the accompanying emotions form the logic that underlies the ways I manipulate materials, overlaying, draping, injecting, bending, twisting, and so on.

My work is persistent and impermanent. It balances somewhere between the playfulness of bubble-gum elasticity and the grotesqueness of disemboweled intestines. The forms are risky, trying to achieve something, attempting to be realized, or make themselves known. They hang down from the ceiling, appearing as bodies ungrounded, without a center, precariously caught in odd predicaments. Barely holding it together, the works are at once pathetic and endearing, absurd and sad, alive and dead.