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Touch

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Liz Nurenberg

Final Review Date: 11/9/10

Committee Chair: Rachel Lachowicz

Committee Members: Anne Bray, Katie Grinnan

Signer: Michael Brewster

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Artist Statement

By exploring constructs of romantic love, my current body of work flirts with awkward interactions. Hollywood is one of my main referents. For me, romantic comedy films function as a form of mythmaking. They appeal to viewers empathetically while propagating delusions about what constitutes love. While using clichés to promote ideas of perfection, these movies employ a specific set of elements and presume that true love has a specific formula. The romance that is depicted in these films speaks to fantasies that are created in one's mind and can be detached from the reality of human interaction. I work to unweave this recipe in order to play with the individual ingredients, or recombine elements with both sarcasm and sincerity.

My sculptural objects act as experience stations where viewers can form relationships both to the work and other viewers. I work to tease out and build on the inherent romantic and beautiful qualities of the chosen materials. The handmade nature of my work evokes intimacy, suggesting the presence of human effort or authorship. I use fabric to build atmosphere with its color, softness, and versatility. In my sculptures, sound acts as an inner voice, which can create a subtle sense of awkwardness. These touches come together to build a scene where interactions happen and narrative forms.

Found fabrics and remnants, with their stains and worn areas, invoke history. The history embodied in the material creates a readymade nostalgia which my work builds upon and personalizes through form, drawing, and narrative text. My drawings act as fragments or moments that the viewer can use to access their own memories, experiences, and records of understanding. When the drawings become sculptural or more three-dimensional, they ask the viewer to move around the image and provide a sense of searching. This searching is meant to entice. The viewer becomes active in their relationship with the art.

Interactivity allows me to explore intimacy, personal space, and how the body physically connects with something while confusing the line between viewers and viewed. This work allows the viewer to determine their own level of

participation under a controlled set of circumstances. The interaction can either be actual or imagined. The sculptures become props in situations that call the viewer to engage directly with another viewer.

By untangling and recomposing the myths and clichés of romance, I hope to isolate moments that can be experienced empathetically and used by the viewer to reconsider what love is. Recognizing the intimate and the awkward may allow for greater understanding of how we relate to each other.