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Stretch, Weight, Relaxed, Proud, Twisted

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Abstract

I created "Stretch, Weight, Relaxed, Proud, Twisted" for the show "Perceive Me". For this show, 48 artists collaborated to create representations with and of the artist Kristine Schomaker. In her artwork, Kristine confronts and deals with body image as related to her struggles with an eating disorder she suffers from.

Keywords

art, 3D-Printing, Sculpture, Body Image, Health and Wellness, Mental Health, 3D Design, Art and Design

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Stretch, Weight, Relaxed, Proud, Twisted

Jesse W. Standlea

I created “Stretch, Weight, Relaxed, Proud, Twisted for the show “Perceive Me”. For this show, 48 artists collaborated to create representations with and of the artist Kristine Schomaker. In her artwork, Kristine confronts and deals with body image as related to her struggles with an eating disorder she suffers from. When I first found out about the project I wanted to participate because I was so proud to see Kristine Schomaker’s courage in putting herself out there in such a vulnerable way. For my piece, I interviewed her and asked her how she was feeling about the project. I wanted to visualize these feelings by having her pose in positions that demonstrated how she felt. I used a 3D scanner to capture these poses in 1 to 1 scale and I printed them out using a 3D printer, so the result is like a still 3D image of her pose. The poses are mostly self-explanatory, stretch came from stretches she was doing. It was the way that she would start to exercise and was key to her developing health and wellness routines. Her physical ‘weight’ was the source for a lot of her stresses but there was also an unseen weight of the world holding her down. Relaxed, was a feeling that came from sharing this project, that in doing so the weight was, even if temporarily, lifted. She was ‘proud’ of herself in doing this project and there was a self-esteem boost from that. ‘Twisted’ were her emotions that she was proud of accepting her self-image, yet she was conflicted because she still struggles to stick with a healthy lifestyle. She deeply wants a healthier life but is conflicted because her eating disorder challenges her every day. I wanted the piece to physically reflect what she was experiencing mentally and emotionally, and I think I captured some important moments of her successes and struggles.

People are and have been struggling with a number of different afflictions that mentally weigh them down, far before the pandemic. My school psychologist is fond of saying that everyone is on the mental health spectrum and that your mental health state can fluctuate positively and negatively no matter who you are. Unfortunately for many these issues have become more pronounced and have negatively affected them during this time. As an artist and educator, I think a lot about my students. What mental health effects will result from this time and what role will I play in supporting them, all while my colleagues and I are not immune to the effects. While teaching online I saw art become a real need in my students. I noticed that art had changed from something that was nice to have in their day to something that they personally required to have in their day

I am hopeful as people more openly talk about mental health and it becomes more socially acceptable to have these much-needed conversations. I have especially noticed creative professionals becoming more vocal as they are more open to talking about their own struggles. People like Kristine Schomaker who are willing to make their art about their personal struggle and people like Octavia Bromell, who talked about using illustration to deal with anxiety and depression in her session at Adobe Max, titled “ A Joyful Everyday”. Octavia's method of drawing things that bring you joy for 5mins a day is so simple, yet profoundly impactful. 5 mins of creative time for yourself, has become highly valued in my classes and my own art. There is really something to the low stakes nature of this activity, and telling yourself that this is just for you. Attending Adobe's conference this presentation hit home for me as something I could use with my

students and something, I could do for myself. I lost one of the dearest people in my life during this time and it makes the message to talk about what's going on with our mental wellness a personal message as I have been dealing with the effects of a friend who took his own life. It saddens me that he was not able to talk about what he was suffering through and I desperately wish that he had more tools to deal with his mental well-being. For me spending time reflecting, drawing, and finding ways to express myself has helped me through the grieving process. In dealing with the personal loss I have felt firsthand the difference in wanting to and needing to do my art daily. In fact, health and wellness have moved to the forefront of my thinking as I continue to need to make art every day even if it's only a low stakes 5-minute drawing. As I think about the best possible ways to help others, I think sharing my experiences and the stories of people whose courage I have been inspired by is a good place to start.



Group 1-2

Jesse W. Standlea



Proud

Jesse W. Standlea



Weight

Jesse W. Standlea



Twisted

Jesse W. Standlea