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The Anxiety of Presenting Identity

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ART SUBMISSION

The Anxiety of Presenting Identity

Savannah Fleming

Faculty Mentors:

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Department of Art, Art History and Design

University of North Florida

Artist Statement

Within this piece, I intended to create a visual display that alluded to the chaos, complexities, and anxiety of explaining identity, especially when your identity does not fit within the strict expectations of normal. In recent years I have begun to grapple with creating representation for Queer and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) within the historical canon created by a white cis-gendered male viewpoint that dominates art history textbooks. While working with these subjects, I found at the core of my work, I wanted to present the complexities of identity, representation, and the desire for acceptance.

Usually, when I approach a new piece of work, I envision an image and deconstruct it to be thoroughly planned out. This planning makes the process and final product more predictable, but identity is not predictable. The expression of identity is not predictable. The silhouetted hand forms have become a sort of repetitive visual icon within my work. These detached hands, reaching out, grabbing, presenting, or explaining, is recurring throughout the larger whole of my work. I use hands to visually create emphasis, show direction, express emotion, and allude to something more in the emptiness that they reach for. In this piece, they are presented in synchronized and unsynchronized chaos, desperately reaching for, presenting, and redirecting the viewers' eyes to orbs of focus.

Explaining your identity is hard enough without having to support and validate it to others. I believe identity is too fluid, complex, and ever-changing; to truly express to anyone. However, if you are Queer or sit outside the current structured frames of recognized identities, they will always ask you to explain and validate. When they ask, the battle of how much to say begins.



Savannah Fleming
The Anxiety of Presenting Identity, 2021
Screenprint Installation
31"x 42.5"



Savannah Fleming
The Anxiety of Presenting Identity, 2021 (Close Up)
Screenprint Installation
31"x 42.5"