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THE FULL PICTURE: AN AUDIOVISUAL EXHIBITION

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Introduction

Sounds and images are closely tied together. In everyday life, we are constantly seeing and hearing, combining these sensory inputs to form thoughts and observations, recognize patterns, elicit feelings, and ultimately understand the world around us. Without sound, an image loses context. Without an image, a sound loses context. What is seen and what is heard are constantly reacting to each other and eliciting reactions in us. What I have explored in the creation of my thesis project is how exactly these relationships affect visual and auditory media. I believe that these elements of design work together to create a full scope of understanding, and I have used that to my advantage in creating a multifaceted body of work that is best experienced in tandem, one part informing the other.

In his book, *Sinister Resonance*, David Toop elaborates on the intricacies of the relationship between sounds and images. He mentions “beginning to listen to visual media . . . I could suddenly hear the grass growing, or the inner thoughts of a stranger” (Toop XIII). This is to say that visual media also contains the sense triggers of audio, that the image of an object can also conjure the sound of an object. This is because they are not entirely separate things, but two points on the spectrum of perception. He provides an example in describing the relationship between Henri Matisse’s painting *Music* and Debussy’s musical composition *Prelude a l’apres-midi d’un faune, la flute de pan* (Toop 11). The music is meant to be an auditory representation of the environment of the painting, which is precisely what my body of thesis work is meant to do.

It is with these ideas in mind that I have completed a creative project to fulfill the requirements of my senior thesis, entitled *The Full Picture: An Audiovisual Exhibition*. In this

project, I have recorded an EP consisting of five songs of my creation and performances, in addition to the creation of five pieces of visual art that serve as companions to each song on the EP. In the introductory statement displayed at the beginning of my gallery show, I state:

“This collection of artworks is based on an EP I’ve written, called “coralilly.” I invite you to listen while you observe, because although both bodies of work are self-sufficient and don’t require each other to be understood, they are informed by each other. They serve as two halves of a whole, points and counterpoints. They reference each other, and make sense of each other.” (Fitch)

This statement reflects the goals and purpose of my thesis work, which I will explain throughout this essay by citing previous scholarship on the subject, other artists, bodies of work that have inspired me, and by providing descriptions of my processes. This project is meant to move the boundaries between what is strictly visual and what is strictly audio and what value can be found in the space between.

Influences and Theoretical Background

In this section, I will discuss artists and artistic works that inspired the creation of my thesis. The first artist who has continually given me ideas and inspiration for my craft is Adrienne Lenker. Lenker is a virtuoso guitarist, lyricist, solo artist, and front person of the acclaimed indie band Big Thief. The piece of her catalog that I find the most igniting is her 2020 solo album *songs* and its accompanying release *instrumentals* (Lenker). This is an album recorded in the throes of a breakup, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the desire to capture the intimacy of a room. Lenker fled New York City in the wake of the global lockdown to the Berkshire Mountains, staying in a remote cabin where she and her producer Phil Weinrobe

recorded the album. In the words of Weinrobe in an interview published by the New York Times, ““You can hear the birds go by, and you hear the squeak of the fingerboard, and the sound bouncing off the walls”” on each track of the album, and space is effectively created through a simple recording setup in this way (Petrusich).

There are many techniques that producers and artists use to make an album sound good. There are numerous plugins, microphones, preamps, consoles, amplifiers, pedals, and other effects that will give a sound an edge that draws in a listener in a way that a raw audio file might not. *Songs* does not seek to do this; rather it seeks to invoke in the mind of the listener the environment that Lenker inhabits and sings to. By listening to the recording, and through the employment of various natural and spatial elements of sonic image, one feels as though they are in the room with her as she serenades.

Although Lenker is working purely in the audio space, as it is a sound recording, there is such emphasis on small details of the environment in both the lyrics and the recording. This allows the listener to be present with the songs and invokes the sense of sight and even smell or touch. One can hear windchimes and imagine the sensation of a gentle breeze as the guitar floats by, or the scratching of pine needles and feel their prickling touch, or see the vivid scenes in songs like “anything” in which the character is “Hanging your jeans with a clothespin/Skin still wet still on my skin/Mango in your mouth juice drippin’/Shoulder of your shirt sleeve slippin’” (Lenker).

Others who have worked with Lenker, as well as Lenker herself, would describe her songwriting as a very unconventional and varied process. Big Thief bandmate Buck Meek describes it in the article: “She’ll hold her guitar, and she’ll start to speak in abstractions . . . just sounds and shapes. Then she emerges from that space, and slowly the words start to form into

syllables, and into the English language, and become a story, or a character, or a reflection of her own experience” (Petrusich). It is clear in these descriptions that the process of songwriting for Lenker is not logical or strategized, nor is it purely one form of expression or another. Rather, it is evidence that moving creations come from multiple places, and a multitude of sensory explorations and experiences are intertwined to create her works.

I also find inspiration in the lyrics of other indie bands like Asheville, NC’s “Wednesday.” Particularly on their latest album *Rat Saw God* and on songs like “Quarry.” Each line is a snapshot of the minutiae of everyday Midwest life with the twinge of country and the hardness of punk. Singer Karly Hartzman spins tales of “The rain rotted house on the dead end of Baytree, old bitter lady” and “Bob and Jimmy sit in the baby pool with lice in their hair” (Wednesday). Hartzman is often praised for her strikingly visual lyricism, as in an NPR music review describing how it “maps out a strip-mall ridden wasteland that feels pulled straight from the pages of *Ghost World*” (Cills).

Even in the opening track, the beginning lyric is “hot rotten grass smell.” This immediately transports the listener to the neighborhoods of America’s innards in the beating sun, the smell of old lawn trimmings populating the streets where a community once did (Wednesday). What Hartzman does so well in these songs is transport the listener to the world she is seeing and experiencing through only her words; she is able to tap into multiple senses and collective memories with her artistic choices.

The final musical influence I will discuss is iconic folk musician Joni Mitchell, whose most famous and impactful works explore the intricacies of vulnerability and personal experience in songs and storytelling. She is also known to create the artwork for her albums; and finds painting and songwriting to be intrinsically connected within the scope of her creative

process, describing herself as a “painter who writes songs” (Montagne, Mitchell). In an article written by Larissa Brumlow, she is described as ““the most innovative woman songwriter to emerge in the late 1960s, with her penchant for minor-mode melodies and texts with multilayered images”” (Brumlow 5).

This framework on self and songwriting becomes evident in the images that are seen throughout her discography, particularly on her extraordinarily famous album *Blue*. The songs on *Blue* feature scraps of memory vividly depicted in the lyrics, transporting the listener to the Grecian beaches, frozen rivers, and quiet rooms from which Mitchell drew inspiration. Specifically on the track “Carey,” Mitchell paints the picture of the life she lived while writing the song in the opening lyrics “The wind is in from Africa. Last night I couldn't sleep. . . My fingernails are filthy. I've got beach tar on my feet. And I miss my clean, white linen and my fancy French cologne” (Mitchell). The image invoked in my mind while listening is unmistakable. Through her lyricism, Mitchell is painting with words and manifesting a scene through strokes of the pen. Brumlow writes to this end that she is “conjuring up visionary landscapes of cinematic power that take the listener vicariously through the event . . . You emerge from the other side with the feeling that you've lived the event yourself and learned whatever lessons it inherently had to offer” (Brumlow 5).

These details are also what make the impact of the songs so strong. For “Carey,” the small images throughout the piece let the listener know how regretful and mournful Mitchell is to leave this life, stating “It sure is hard to leave here Carey, but it's really not my home” (Montagne, Mitchell). Mitchell later revealed in an interview with the Los Angeles Times that Carey was not aware that the song was meant for him, as a fond goodbye, until Mitchell performed it at a gathering for his birthday (Crowe). That type of tenderness seeps through her

words and her soft guitar throughout the album, much like a friend recounting a wild adventure with a tearful eye. Of her discography, it is said that “many of her songs were less formal in structure and allowed her inner thoughts and emotions to be demonstrated not only in lyrics but also in performance so that her listeners could connect with and understand her on a more personal level” (Brumlow 5). Mitchell is a truly important songwriter because she was among the first to make this type of vulnerable and touching music, which expands through the careers of songwriters like Lenker and grows to influence me.

Upon the first release of *Blue*, it was met with criticism for being too open, and too honest. Critics wondered “Is this contagious? Do we all have to get this honest now? Save something of yourself, Joni” (Crowe). However, as people listened, time passed, and culture changed. *Blue* grew a following of converted listeners who loved seeing someone share their humanity and emotions so openly. It has since become one of the most enduring albums of all time. In those initial reviews, it is evident that although those journalists were reluctant to accept the future of songwriting, it had arrived.

Mitchell describes the inspiration for the album as an image, one from a dream she had in her fragile and self-critical state before embarking on the journey. She states “And I’m in the audience too, except I’m a clear cellophane bag of exposed human organs. Just a bag of human organs with a heart beating in the center. I felt like that. I felt exposed, like I couldn’t have people in the room witnessing me” (Crowe). This is what ties Mitchell to all the other artists previously discussed: the ability to translate images through lyrical writing and sound design in her work. The cellophane nature of a fragile young woman is seen vividly through her lyricism and imagery.

Artist and filmmaker Norman McLaren took the concept of image as a counterpart to music one step further. In his 1949 short film “Begone Dull Care,” McLaren and collaborator Evelyn Lambart paint abstract images directly onto a moving film strip to visually interpret jazz music played by the Oscar Peterson Trio (McClaren and Lambart). The result is dancing, wiggling, and brilliantly colored visuals that accompany each twist and turn of the music. Watching the film is an immersive experience; the eyes can follow what the ears are hearing and illustrate the leaping, chaotic form of the music.

I find it pertinent to note that the film begins with the same text introducing the film, its contributors, and its music in seven different languages. Although it may seem a superfluous detail at first, the filmmakers are arguing the point that music is the universal language, understood by all who experience it. When the artists illustrate their visual versions of the cues in the music, they are speaking in that universal language that is not limited by grammar or vocabulary but taps into the pure well of expression that lives within us all.

Similarly, there is a phenomenon that exists in the creation of sheet music called “graphic notation” in which musical composers will create pieces of visual art that are also readable musical scores (Hall). These scores are constantly surprising in their performance—much of them being left to the interpretation of the musicians. An example of this type of work is Roman Haubenstock-Ramati’s “Konstellationen,” which is a graphical notation composed of a series of geometric shapes that form huge peaks and valleys across a line. Upon first glance, it does not appear to be sheet music at all, but musicians from across the world perform these scores, each rendition different from the last (Hall). These scores are not rigid and fixed like other examples of classical music, but are fluid and open to interpretation, existing between design and instruction.

In my work, I explore these ideas as well. For me, art already acts as a similar medium of expression to music, creating a bridge between human emotion and the tangible world. The physical act of making a piece of art can be very intuitive, the materiality of many visual art processes can act as a meditation and release for the troubles of the mind. Much of the emotiveness and character of an artwork can be tied into the mark-making and strategic use of the medium at hand—for example, how impressionist painter Mary Cassatt would depict her subjects in an impressionist style. Utilizing the technique itself, she creates scenes akin to dreams of warm afternoons between mother and child, paying attention to her renderings of the soft glow of the sun and peaceful expressions on faces. Through these techniques, she lends the quality of memory to the image, allowing the observer to feel a nostalgic reverie through her visual translation.

Through my time at university, I have developed a connection to the various processes of printmaking for this same reason. The precise and tactile routines of creating a print embody these ideas of utilizing the process of creating a piece to add to the message of its final form. For example, utilizing the processes of hand-drawn stone lithography in conjunction with silkscreen printing can create interesting visual dynamics, and convey a broader range of concepts. A stone lithograph drawn with crayon will have a soft, delicate appearance whereas silkscreen is often clean and graphic. These elements will exist in harsh contrast, and that fact can be utilized to create tension or any number of other effects in a piece (see Fig. 1). The intrinsic natures of each process hold different significance when combined, as well as when they stand alone.

In a print series I made in the fall of 2023, *Offerings 1 & 2*, I utilized pieces of ephemera and hand-drawn renderings of items that hold sentimental value to me to make a self-portrait. By utilizing clean lines and solid shapes of screen print, I created a sense of grounding and reality in

the piece. The hand-drawn lithography elements reflect a softer, more delicate attachment to these objects. This contrast is meant to show how my innermost thoughts and feelings are an equal part of how I manifest myself in the physical world and how the attachments I form to things weave the tapestry of my identity (Fitch).



Figure 1: Fitch, Cora. Offerings 1 & 2. 2023. Stone lithograph and screenprint on paper.



Figure 2: Eno, Brian. 14 Video Paintings. 2005.

Within my thesis work, I am utilizing these concepts of visual composition in conjunction with my audio recording and music skills to create a multilayered body of work. Although *Offerings* is not a piece that was included in my show, it is one of the first iterations of me attempting this new form of intuitive composition.

There have been numerous cases of creatives weaving the audio and the visual to expand their creative practice. Musicians make music videos; filmmakers utilize scores to enforce the messages and tones of what is on screen. Artists like Brian Eno create troves of audiovisual work, designing audio soundscapes and visual images to blend in harmony, forming one solid piece. A clear example of this is Eno's film, *14 Video Paintings*, in which he creates ambient music that moves with the artwork on screen, slowly evolving into a different visual composition as the music continues.

In the film, from 20:30 to 28:47 an abstract figure changes slightly every few seconds in reaction to the music (see Fig. 2). The ambient sound is a score to which the figure carries out a dance at a snail's pace, making minute movements that sometimes can only be seen with intense focus (Eno). These video paintings are meant to exist in this multifaceted way, their captivating nature comes from the way they evolve and interact with the sound in the background. Although my pieces are still, I am trying to achieve the same goal: creating a captivating experience that integrates both of my creative outlets.

In his book *Film: A Sound Art*, Michel Chion defines the term "audio-vision," which he coined, as "the image is the conscious focus of attention but to which the sound supplies at every moment a series of effects, sensations, and meanings that often . . . are credited to the image and seem to emanate naturally from it" (Chion 469). While this term was written about film, its applications to my thesis work are strong. Chion explains here that in film, while the audience is

regarding primarily the visual spectacle, the sound design is integral to the listener's understanding of the image. For example, a horror film relies heavily on sound design to make listeners feel on edge or uncomfortable. With the correct audio, an image of a darkened hallway or an empty room can take on a menacing quality it would not otherwise have.

In the exhibition of my thesis, the audience is regarding my visual pieces of artwork with the music at the same time, much like a certain song on a film's soundtrack is ascribed to one scene. Through this relationship, someone analyzing the visual portion of my work will be informed by what I say in the lyrics, the audio effects used, or the instrumentation, even if the song is in a minor or major key. In this way, the sound is affecting the image and morphing it into a different form than it would take purely on its own. Thus, it is an example of audiovision, the core of the goal I set to accomplish with my project.

Methodology

I have been writing music for a long portion of my life. Lyrically, I have only begun to explore in earnest in the last three years, but before that, I have been deep in the world of instrumental guitar since the age of twelve. I find music to be an otherworldly expression of thoughts and feelings, a place to react to the world around me without a cloud of words. Of course, words have a meaningful place in the writing of music, but I begin the process of songwriting by sitting in silence with my acoustic guitar and feeling on the fretboard for a good place to begin. I do this without looking, and without thinking about theory. I move my fingers across the neck, exploring each point of resonance until I find a note that *feels* correct for the emotion I am trying to translate into sound. From there, I will add, subtract, shift, and bend notes

in that same intuitive fashion, walking blindly into the landscape of the song, focusing solely on what is happening within me in reaction to each step.

I often sit down to write a song because a feeling is welling up within me that cannot be expressed in words. Another stage of processing is required, a moment of silence that can be filled with the wandering experiment that flows from my mind onto the fretboard, into the air, and finally re enters my head as a resonance against my eardrums. I view composing a guitar part as an act of translation, of taking a guttural feeling from inside the body and corporealizing it. Once a sound is out in the atmosphere, it spreads, ricochets, and stretches until it has dismantled into the inaudible, but, for that brief moment of exploration, it is tangible to the senses. I use that fleeting, ephemeral nature to force myself to act intuitively on the guitar—to not think, just play.

David Toop argues that “sound may not excel in certainty until shaped with precision in certain forms of music, both possess metaphors of all that is not solid: emotions, atmosphere, sensuality, passions of all kinds . . .” (Toop 25). This is to say that there is a commonality between ambient sound and music: both provide context to an environment. In the case of random sound, it creates a sense of environment based on what is heard. It is possible to contextualize where one is in space through sounds alone: if there are overlapping conversations, chairs squeaking, and glasses clinking, one can presume to be in a bar or restaurant. The sounds are lively and energetic. If there is a gentle breeze rustling through branches, a babbling creek, and birdsong, one can presume to be outside enjoying a nice sunny day. These sounds suggest a feeling of peace and stillness. Without sight, all of this is still possible.

In the world of music, these same feelings can be achieved through choices of notes. It is known that major chords will create a happier, jauntier atmosphere to a song, while minor chords

will lend a more melancholic tone to a piece. Of course, this is not always the case, as there are numerous songs with melancholic chords and happy lyrics, and vice versa.

For this EP, I wanted to translate my feelings of growth, happiness, residual sadness, and the repercussions of trauma, along with my journey into self-acceptance in the light of a difficult few years. I found myself avoiding the literal, however, in my process of writing. For example, in “sink into,” I use images of a broken down truck in the driveway of my childhood home, weeds, dark rooms, and the fear of missing out to detail the feeling of purposelessness that haunted me for several years during the unrest of the pandemic, a tumultuous personal life, and the directionless nature of a young woman’s early twenties. I never outright say “I am grappling with feelings of isolation,” I say “Show up to a dark room, I guess it doesn’t matter to you/Didn’t have to drive home cryin’.” I never say “I feel like I’m losing my ambition.” I say, “I don’t know what to do with myself/That truck sinks into the weeds, it’ll never ever sell” (Fitch).

When my mother first heard that song, she asked me if I was okay. It was not because I told the listener in simple terms that I had struggled a lot recently; it was because I had effectively taken that feeling and made it tangible to an audience. Through the open string droning, melancholic sound of the instruments, and the choice of images within the lyrics, I created a scene in the audience’s mind. I was able to let them see a side of me that I cannot talk about plainly but that I can encrypt into song.

At the beginning of my creative process for my thesis work, I had already written each song before selecting the EP’s track list. I chose my songs based on what I felt had the strongest visual language, as well as what I was most proud of. As this was my debut record, I wanted to curate it carefully to not only fulfill the needs of my thesis project but accurately represent

myself. A debut album is an opportunity for an artist to situate themselves in their genre, and I did not want to take that opportunity lightly.

These songs were “golf course grass,” “entertain you,” “sink into,” “a better word,” and “the pond” (Fitch). These were all songs that I felt represented the full spectrum of my songwriting abilities. My writing is often journal-like and confessional. I wanted to include much of that in this record while also highlighting my more detailed and poetic side. I also wanted to branch out in arrangement, adding drums, bass, pedal steel, and backing vocals to songs that I had written and traditionally performed on solo guitar.

The first step of any recording process is pre-production. This means choosing songs, building a timeline, deciding on arrangements, finding collaborators, developing a recording strategy, and having a clear plan for post-production as well. I worked with Professor Eddie Ashworth for the first half of my thesis year while I recorded the music, and he served as the executive producer for my project. In the beginning, we had regular meetings to discuss all the facets of the work listed above. I benefited tremendously from his expertise and his willingness to push me in a more ambitious direction for my debut. We decided on a full band arrangement for “golf course grass,” “sink into,” and “the pond,” with more stripped-down compositions for “entertain you” and “a better word.” These decisions reflected the spirit of each song. I wanted to be careful to avoid over or under-producing the record so that it was a strong body of work but did not stray too far from the soft atmosphere of my solo performances.

It was then time to gather performers. I already performed a rendition of “sink into” with another project among friends; thus, I asked the drummer of that group, Weston Nern, to track percussion on my EP. I also wanted a flavor of traditional country and folk instrumentation, so I contacted my longtime friend and multi-instrumentalist Harper Reese to play pedal steel. With

this group, we began meeting to practice. In these practices, I would direct their performance to reflect how I wanted the final product to sound; however, I had very few notes to give them. I had chosen my performers very well.

The most difficult part of the recording process was scheduling. As a student in my final year, I had a complex schedule, as did my collaborators. Additionally, Reese was relocating to another city at the time of these sessions, which we had to schedule around. We managed to secure several dates in the Radio Television Building's recording studio, in which Ashworth was primarily facilitating the recording process so I could focus on my performances. I recorded the acoustic guitar and lead vocal track for "a better word" in one session, then arranged a secondary session for the guitar overdubs and piano. "Entertain you" was done in a single session, excluding the background vocals. I then arranged a session with Nern for us to track the lead vocals, acoustic guitar, and drums for "sink into," "golf course grass," and "the pond" live.

For this live session, we set up a stereo pair of microphones for the acoustic and a Mojave MA-301fet for vocals in an isolation booth, in the same fashion as the previous sessions, with drums in the main room of the studio. Because of the bleed that would occur between the guitar and vocal microphones, I needed to deliver at least one solid take of each song to minimize the need for editing. Nern and I were able to hear each other's performances through personal headphone mixers through which we were also fed a click track. This method of tracking allowed us to be rhythmically connected and establish a solid base recording on which I could add other instrumentation. There was enough roughness from the live recording strategy that the performances felt natural and less staged, but because of the click track, they were still solidly in time.

From there, I rented equipment from the university's Equipment Room to finish the recordings in my home. I utilized the same microphone I had recorded the other vocals with to remain consistent and tracked the bass by directly inputting it into the Focusrite Scarlett 2i2. We had recorded everything thus far using the Logic DAW, or digital audio workstation, and this home session was no different. With this small home studio, I recorded bass guitar and background vocals for each song that did not already have them. I would sit on my bedroom floor for hours perfecting each take, and it felt meditative to do so. I was able to ruminate on each song, to find the essence of their meanings through long hours of work.

One of my signatures as a musician is multiple layered vocal tracks in which I harmonize with myself. My voice is an integral piece of my musical arrangements, which is where my inspiration from artists mentioned above like Joni Mitchell truly stands out. I recorded approximately four harmony tracks for each song, which I accomplished by running through the song several times without recording to get a sense of what lyrics I felt needed the emphasis of multiple voices or which parts of the instrumentation I could give more depth with abstract vocalizations. I would then record the harmony immediately followed by a "double" take in which I would sing the same notes again to make the vocal line stand out in the mix.

I then sent the tracks that required additional instrumentation to Reese for him to record remotely and send back to me. After receiving those files, the tracking process was finished, and post-production began. Post-production is the process of making recordings ready for release as well as doing all of the necessary filing work to make the release happen. This includes mixing, mastering, submitting to distributors, registering with a Performing Rights Organization, filing for copyright, creating album art, and promoting the upcoming release. Ashworth would provide me sample mixes through each phase of the process, which I would provide feedback on. These

included adjustments of levels, uses of effects, and edits. While this process was in full swing, I began work on the visual part of my audiovisual project, consulting with Charles Linscott as my thesis advisor for the latter half of the year.

The goal of the art exhibition was to give my EP more depth as a project than a music recording endeavor. Of course, the focus of my studies was audio production, but I developed a passion for the visual arts as a central piece of my identity as a musical artist throughout that time as well. I began the ideation process for my art pieces at the beginning of this spring semester, while Linscott and I discussed timelines for the completion of each piece as well as reserving a gallery space, and continuing work on post-production of the music.

I primarily worked in the university's printmaking studios over the semester, drawing on the feedback of my thesis director as well as fellow students in critiques to hone each piece to its final form. I worked intuitively to compose each piece, often starting with one central element that I would build a landscape around. This type of composition works well for printmaking, as prints are often divided into layers out of necessity in the first place. This contrasts with mediums like painting or drawing, in which the piece is always evolving as a whole.

For example, the visual piece for "entertain you" began with an illustration of a ballet dancer in an arabesque pose that I did in my sketchbook. I thought it reflected many of the sentiments of the song, of the feeling of performing in everyday life. I turned it into a transparency which I then exposed onto a photolithographic plate, developed the emulsion coating to reveal the design, and printed it in the lithography studio at the university.

I then built on this composition, playing with several ideas in the process. I created multiple variations of a screen-printed clown ruff in various colors, presenting different arrangements at each critique throughout the semester. The piece evolved steadily with my

continued experimentation and feedback, ultimately landing in the form it achieved in my gallery showing. One piece of feedback I received in a critique was if I was going to present these artworks as a series, they should have a uniting factor beyond sharing a visual style. I chose to do this through a signature color: a deep burgundy. It is strategically placed in each piece and acts as a glue that binds them together when viewed on the same wall. It is the color that my name is written in on the cover of my EP, and I felt it was a strong and eye-catching choice. I elaborate on the content and process of each piece in the artist statements, included below as a caption to the images of my final pieces (see figures 3 through 8).



*Figure 3. Fitch, Cora. "golf course grass/growing on me"
CMYK silkscreen print, gouache paint on Stonehenge
& French paper. 22" x 30". 2024.*

"This is a song about experiencing and pondering big, cosmic things like love and death and the passage of time while going to work, paying rent, and generally existing in the mundane. I represent this in the artwork with the grasping hands being overgrown with grass (a nod to the title), overtaken by the unknowable forces of time and nature, with the

hope that the small connections we make in our lives leave remnants behind us.” (Fitch)



Figure 4. Fitch, Cora. “entertain you/one night only”. Silkscreen print, photolithographic print on French & Stonehenge paper. 13.5” x 16.5”. 2024.

“This is a song about putting on a persona, and struggling with the thought of being truly understood. Having struggled with anxiety and identity for a long period of my life, I wanted to translate the feeling of being watched, scrutinized, and generally the sentiment of the song’s refrain “who you are is never gonna be enough”, into the visual. I do this through performance iconography: curtains, a dancer in a stiff, practiced pose, and clown attire, arranged in a circular pattern to represent the cyclical nature of these types of anxieties.” (Fitch)



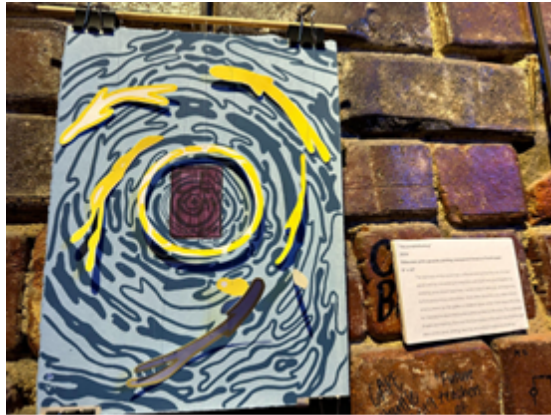
Figure 5. Fitch, Cora. “sink into/remnants”.
Silkscreen print on Stonehenge paper 12” x 14”. 2024.

“This piece is a balance of literal representation of symbolism in my lyrics and metaphorical symbolism reflecting the overall sentiment of the song. I took the newspaper and the phrase “who can I explain to” directly from my own writing, while the overlain photo of my little brother on an old truck of my father’s serves to reinforce the nostalgic, mourning tone of the song. I am reflecting on the present, and feeling a yearning for the simplicity of the past. The antique armchair is inviting and soft, a place to sink into and think of all that was and could have been.” (Fitch)



Figure 6. Fitch, Cora. “a better word/warm surroundings”
Acrylic on canvas.
24” x 24”. 2024.

“This painting is a product of intuitive experimentation. I began with trying to visualize the colors of the song, building a soft underlayer of blended oranges and pinks. I was trying to depict the warm feeling of letting a guard down, and contrast it with detailed imagery from the song to enforce that concept. I painted a wrinkled, discarded t-shirt and arranged it as the focal point of the composition, hidden slightly behind a hand of playing cards as a last layer of protection from being known. The song speaks of small details of a person that enamors you, and makes one want to find a better word than love.” (Fitch)



*Figure 7. Fitch, Cora. “the pond/reflecting”.
Silkscreen print, gouache painting, transparent thread
on French paper. 9” x 12”. 2024.*

“The last track of the record has a different feeling than the rest. It is fast paced and fun, scrambling to keep time with itself and glued together by rambling lyrics about happiness. I wrote it about letting go, and beginning to find pieces of joy everywhere. I think often about the way water reflects a hot summer sun like glitter or shattered glass when I think about this song, so I decided to depict that as the central symbol to this song. The suspended shapes are meant to flow over the blue ripples in the same way that the light does on the pond: drifting, dancing, and without a tether to anything.” (Fitch)



Figure 8. Fitch, Cora. The Full Picture. Series of Artworks. April 2024, Athens, Ohio.

The organization of the gallery show was the second priority. I decided on The Union's downstairs gallery space in Athens, as I felt it reflected the sentiment of my thesis work well. The Union is a part of the tapestry of my career as an artist. I have given many performances and grown in multitudes as a person and a musician through those performances. The decision of how to best present the full body of work went through many phases. Originally, I was going to have several sets of headphones attached to devices that housed my music, but logistically I was unsure if I could procure the right equipment or if the space I displayed in would be able to house said technology. I then considered having the music playing through speakers in the gallery space, but similarly, that technology would have to be feasibly operated in the space and would either have to play on a loop or be a strictly scheduled walkthrough experience that would limit how many people could attend and understand the full picture.

Ultimately, I decided to include a scannable QR code at the beginning of the show, which linked to a page housing multiple venues to access my music, including Spotify and Apple

Music. I also encouraged viewers to bring devices and headphones with which to observe in a self-contained way. This eliminated the technology problems within the space and allowed for more experimentation and individually tailored experiences for attendees. I set the show date for April 14, 2024—the date that my record would be released.

Reflection of Process

There are several things I would have changed in this process if allowed to do this project again. Initially, I might have approached the process of creating the body of work differently, experimenting with creating them in tandem. I might have tried to create purely abstract art while listening to my music or make music based on the preexisting art of my design.

In the gallery space, while the QR code was a success, it did limit the accessibility of the exhibition. To experience it to the fullest, gallery viewers would have to have a subscription to a streaming service, as well as access to both a mobile phone and a pair of headphones. In this way, I had inadvertently placed my work behind a paywall, which I would endeavor to avoid on a second attempt at this type of curation.

Additionally, I would have devoted more time to creating a promotion cycle for the record, as so much of today's music business is based on the strength of an artist's marketing and publicity. I may have tried to include a music video as a visual piece in my exhibition, or created exclusive content related to the release that could only be obtained at the exhibition to encourage attendance.

I also would have approached my pre-production strategy differently, scheduling recording sessions as soon as I could with the other musicians to avoid the timing delays I

experienced in the remote recording process. Had I budgeted my time differently, the final versions of my EP's track list could have been finished with ample time before release day. With that extra time, I could have released several tracks in advance as singles and generated other promotional content before the release.

Overall, however, I find this body of work to be a beautiful reflection of my skills as a creative. I find both aspects of my artistry to be represented equally and feel it is a great introduction to who I am as an artist for those who know me as well as those who do not. I put tremendous effort into the success of this project and feel that it is evident in the quality of work presented at the final exhibition. I received kind feedback from friends and strangers alike who attended the show, and from their testimony, it appears that my goals of creating an immersive experience were realized.

Conclusion

The Full Picture reflects the pieces of my creative identity and how they fit together. I am a musician, and I am an artist, but those two things are not exclusive. They are intrinsically intertwined and are often pieces of a larger whole that comprise the work of a creative. The world of media is often divided and subdivided into numerous categories, while at its core, it is all a method of human expression. All art is a manifestation of an inner conversation, which could be about anything.

In my case, the conversation is about what I hear and see in myself—what I feel I need to translate from a feeling, and from there how those feelings translate into form. It is about the lines that exist between the physical world and the inner world of the mind, in which emotions

and deep thoughts influence all that we do in the physical world. In his glossary for *Film: A Sound Art*, Chion describes what he calls “audio-visiogenic effects,” or “effects created by the association of sounds and images” (Chion 468). These are the effects created by *The Full Picture*—not just an exploration of the effects of music or visual art but of the interactions they share.

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