

Fuseform



Bonnie Collura

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Bonnie Collura / Bonnie Collura Studio

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front cover:

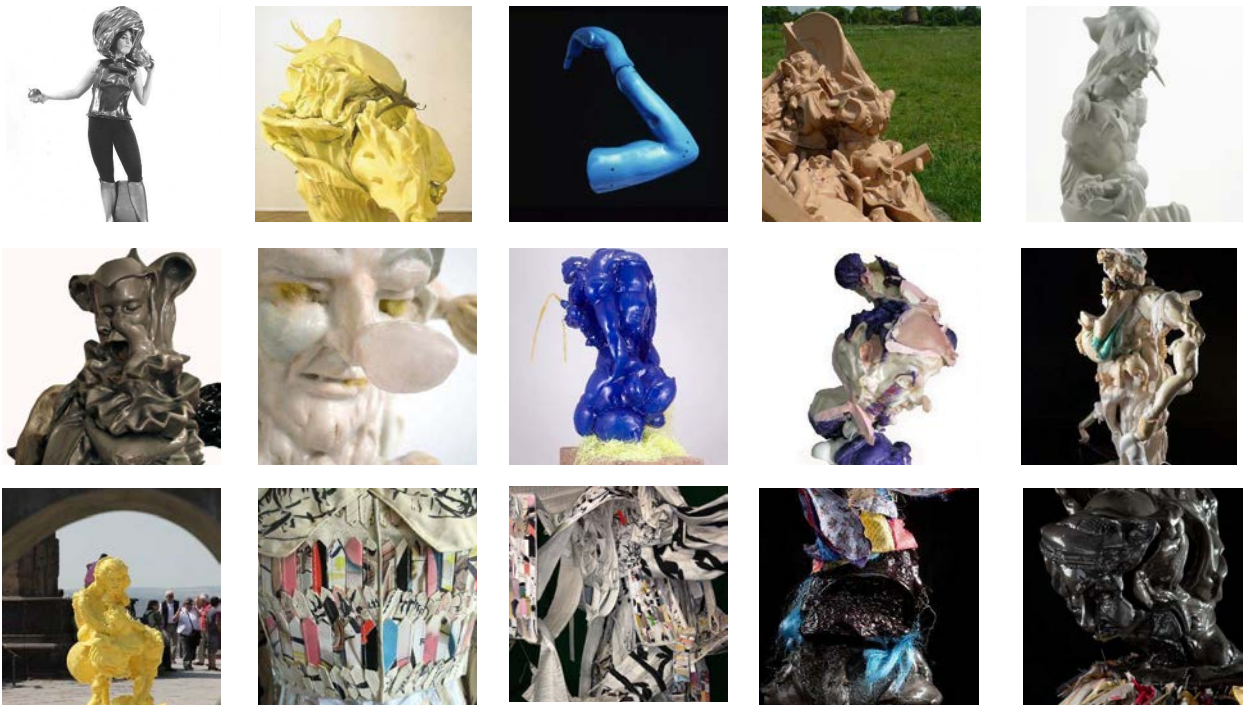
Prince II (detail: Abraham Lincoln), 2011
steel, wood, foam, cardboard, wax, urethane
foam, tinted plaster, balloon skin

back cover:

Diagram for The Prince Project



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What does it mean when things merge together? Heavily invested in making, my sculptures no longer only represent a fusion, but coax forth a collusion; collapse; conceal; reveal; rupture; resuscitation. When the key turns in the studio door I become part director, part fabricator, and part weird scientist.

Slip sliding between these roles, I work from a patch-work of signifiers, physical material, and cultural references questioning hierarchies often presumed in art history, pop culture, politics and consumerism. While cross-pollinating these points of reference in three dimensions, lush detail and curvilinear form is used to lure one into a state of "overflow". Each angle of my sculptures has a job to do: to pose questions and conclusions while a body turns in space. When this occurs, the viewer becomes essential in the gap between parts, as they collaborate to produce meaning.

To effectively capture circulation around a sculpture, emotional connectedness is key. Cast referential elements are imbedded into finitely crafted surfaces to get a form that is simultaneously relatable and alien. While figurative sculpture in the 21st century is often considered redundant or obsolete, it fascinates me how we continue to fetishize the human body. Using the figure as a sculptural platform is purposeful, as it allows me to probe into a larger body (cultural, commercial, social, spiritual) while morphing between the statuary and the systemic.

"Perhaps the metamorphosis that most challenges the maker consciously to maintain form is the 'domain shift'. This phrase- my coinage- refers to how a tool initially used for one purpose can be applied to another task, or how the principle guiding one practice can be applied to quite another activity. Type forms develop within, as it were, one country; domain shifts reach across borders. The ancient potter's experience of metamorphosis lay in the internal development of a type-form; to it, we might contrast weaving, the craft first celebrated in the hymn to Hephaestus; this was a craft that traveled across domains.

The archaic household loom consisted simply of two upright poles across which lay a beam. Threads, made taught by weights below, hung from this beam; the weaver worked across, starting at the top, continually pushing the horizontal threads upward to tighten the cloth. 'Weave closely, make good cloth, with many woof- threads in a short length of warp.', the historian Hesiod counseled. The cloth, tight at right angles, will then have a shapely form.

The cloth join of warp and woof shifted domains to the mortise and tenon joint in shipbuilding. In this joint, two pieces of wood are locked together, the end of one cut into the side of the other, the two pieces of wood sometimes pinned together, sometimes cut obliquely so that no pin is needed. The mortise and tenon joint is a way of weaving wood; both weaver and carpenter concentrate on making tight, right-angle joints".

excerpt from *The Craftsman* by Richard Sennett

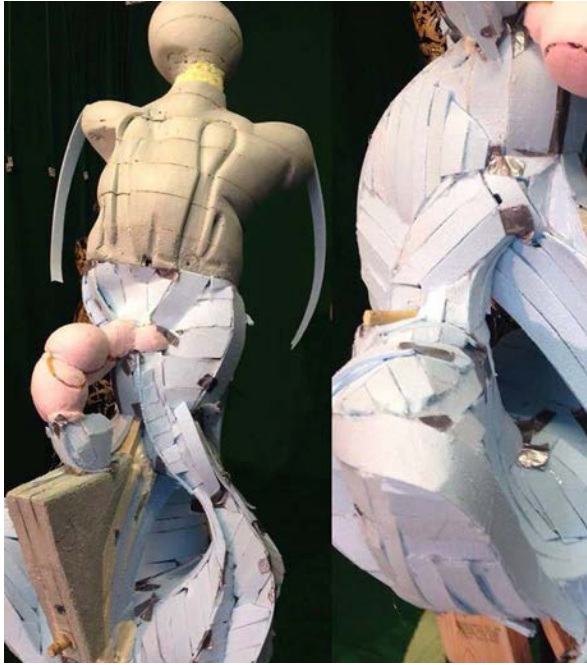
early work

When I was in undergraduate school, I was heavily invested in welding as a building method. I would spend many hours after classes making work from heat formed and welded steel rods. I was so absorbed by welding that one of my professors took me aside and said it may be a good idea to start experimenting in different materials. His concern was that I would not be able to get welding equipment post- graduation and may become creatively paralyzed. In his mind, it was better to invent a philosophy of making that may benefit from certain ways of building, but was not defined by them.

I took these words to heart and started examining local lumber stores for what I could transport easily. I liked the colors of polystyrene foam boards (an insulation board used in-between studs and sheets of drywall). I decided to apply the logic of bending steel onto the polystyrene. I would rip the board into very thin strips on a bandsaw and pressed each length firmly with my fingers to make them suppler. While I could not join foam strips by welding them, I could tape and hot glue them to create an initial bond. This was similar to building a hull for a ship, as it allowed for broad curves with a hollow interior.

This is how most of my early work was started. It provided a cost effective way to create voluminous surfaces that looked as if they had been poured from a soft-serve ice cream machine.

foam strip building process



Abductor Red, 1999 Dallas Museum



Guardian Blue, 1999 Basilico Fine Arts



White, 1999 Basilico Fine Arts





Chain Reaction, 2000

original to-scale model: foam, paper, glue, cast plaster, aqua resin

final version: cast fiberglass resin, auto body paint



permanent collection:
Kunstwegen, Nordhorn, Germany

flexible mold making

Fairy tales and cartoons inspired much of my early work, as the ways we willingly accept contortions on a cartoon body seem curious to me. In celluloid, radical or exaggerated movements emanating from a character's skin often help viewer's empathize with the subject's inner emotion. Writhing or splitting cartoon bodies can momentarily turn into personified musical instruments, as cartoon personalities are often edited to sync up to an accompanying audio score. Many fairy tales, such as the famous Grimm, are demented, dark and ludicrous. Over time, these tale's brutality has receded into the shadow of more polite filmic interpretations.

Carving foam allows for broad curves and squishy forms. It is perfect for celluloid references. As I was showing my early work, I noticed that many reviews focused on specific fairy tale princess characters. I wondered if the all-foam structure was boxing the work into a "princess only" conversation. At this time, I decided it would be good to get a higher resolution in the work than foam carving could provide, and I began to teach myself how to model in oil-based clay.

Outdoor work such as *Chain Reaction* (page 8-9) and *Snowman* (page 12) had weather stable conditions unlike any other work that I had exhibited indoors. It was necessary to figure out how to make outdoor commissions hold up to heat, snow and ice. This fabrication need was dovetailing with my desire to pivot the work from an all-cartoon conversation and fold in more specified figural representation. These two factors introduced what would become a critical part of my building process- flexible mold making. The to-scale prototype for *Chain Reaction* was made in my (then) Brooklyn studio, using foam, paper, glue and the start of simple one-part rubber molds to cast higher detailed sections, such as faces and hands. A fabrication shop in NYC molded the prototype and cast it in fiberglass resin. It was installed in Nordhorn, Germany in 2000. It remains there today.

This material transformation jumpstarted a complex conversation in my work about its' archival properties and overall stability. "*To mold or not to mold?*" seemed to be the constant nagging question.

At this point, I needed to decide whether archival work was important to me. If so, the choices seemed to be: either make the curvature of the future work simpler (to decrease outside fabrication costs), or learn how to mold and cast on my own. I chose the latter. After much money and a *very* long learning curve, molding form has now become synonymous in my studio to collaging in paper. While I do make rubber molds in the round off a form, I do not necessarily cast the totality of a rubber mold. I may cast a small section or make multiple casts of one side of a mold and then assemble post cast. Flexible mold making allows me to approach joining casts similar to grafting and has increased the complexity of the work's overall surface quality significantly.



left: *Snowman* 2002- permanent collections: Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN & Koln Skulpture Park, Cologne Germany



right: *Rebel Angel II*, 2011
this work is a great example of grafting several casts and disparate materials in one overall work



expanded foam covered in wax



print coat urethane rubber



Mary (2010) oil based clay prototype



Mary (2010) post molding
(nine hydrostone shells)



fuse form basket head



clay head- mouse



foam is messy



silicone over
Doc/Pride/Humility



graft casting clay casts from
old molds to make new forms



Barrel of Monkey Arm, 1999
cast fiberglass resin, autobody paint



Study for Lincoln, 2006
cast aqua resin, plastic, epoxy sculpt, wax, wool



Death of the Virgin II , 2011
steel, expandable foam, cast hydrostone, plastic, wax, silver



Skywalker, 2002
graft cast epoxy putty, aluminum paint, aluminum, wood, felt



Death of the Virgin II, 2011 image credit: Cody Goddard



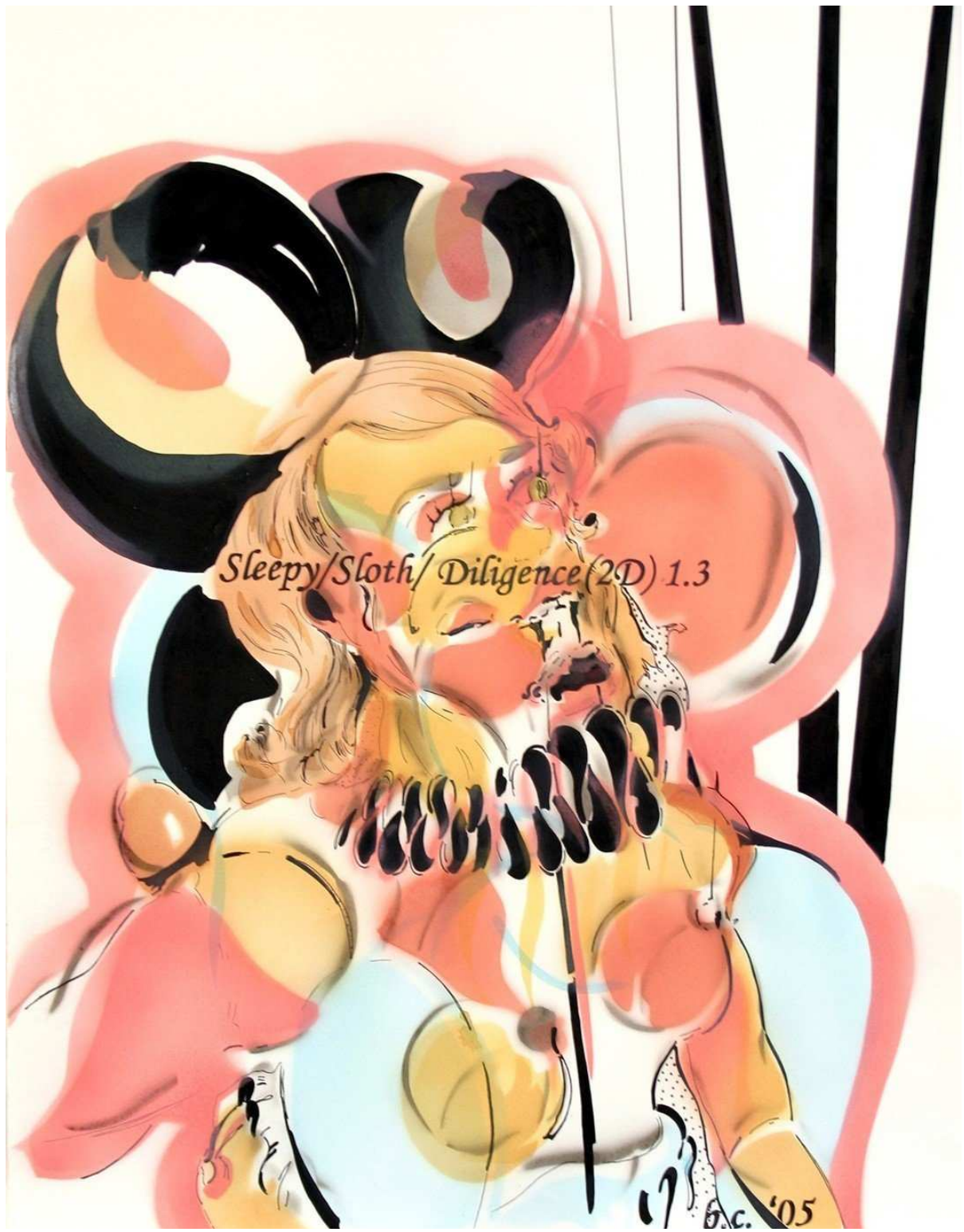
Mary, 2010 image credit: Denis Collura nine graft-cast hydrostone shells

line

During a studio visit, a curator once told me: "you sculpt your drawings and draw your sculptures". I am not sure if this is true, but both have parallel construction processes. Mashing lines and references in two-dimensions is far easier than in three-dimensions. For this reason, I enjoy drawing and find I often want my sculptures to reflect their liquidity. While I don't make sculptures directly from the characters I draw, the drawings lend to a sensibility of how I want the connections in my sculptures to look or feel. Mashing parts is easy, but getting disparate parts to collide/fuse/bend together *while also* forming into an identity requires skill. Drawing helps flesh this identity out.

All of my drawings are similar to my sculptures in that they are made from many parts fused together. I trace from existing images, and mash those lines with my own lines or torn parts from past drawings. This 2-D Frankenstein collage is taped and placed on a large light box. Archival paper is then placed over the mishmash of drawn bits and re-traced to look more fluid. All colors are mapped out in colored pencils on the original. I trace like-colors on template paper, cut their contours out and later airbrush them in (or hand ink them in) over the cleaner fused-lined drawing. To me, this way of "building" a drawing is very similar to how I fuse different cast sections from rubber molds next to carved foam parts to create more intricate three-dimensional forms. The airbrushing of color is also similar to how I carefully airgun most of my sculptures with industrial grade auto body paints, glitters and/or lacquers.





the prince project



Dedication:
St. Sebastian

Transformation:
Jesus

Contemplation:
Lincoln

Intention/
Collaboration:
C3PO

Study for Prince Figure, 2006

(In 2005, I received a John F. Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. The below excerpt is from the grant proposal to begin what I consider a life-long project)

THE PRINCE PROJECT

A large part of my working process is research. Making connections to how Greek mythological characters or symbols repackage themselves in contemporary clothes has given me much subject matter to mold in three dimensions. Researching these often intricate, web- like connections has become a reflexive by-product of my thought process.

My ideas for *The Prince Project* have been developing for several years. At first, scraps of paper containing notes or images were filed. Eventually, these files became dense. While examining the material; I began to visualize sculptures that could create a narrative for the collected images. When gathering my thoughts for this project, it was important that the project could be interpreted on two levels: as an internal, non- linear narrative as well as a less opaque narrative which could tap into universal emotions and concerns.

While collecting disparate bits of information, I initially concentrated on the prince figure in *The Prince Project*. Why did I want to make a prince? Would he be my prince charming, my “knight in shining armor”? Would he be a prince of darkness, or of light? Would my prince be a man, many men, or no man at all? Should my prince be a woman? Could my prince be me?

As I was vacillating between all of the above possibilities, the answer eventually became obvious. He was none of the above, but all of them in their totality. Mary Shelly’s 1818 novel, *Frankenstein* has been a long-term inspiration for me. The struggle between the characters and the story’s multiple interpretations has left a lasting impression in my head. Thoughts of this story would continually creep into my studio practice. On most occasions, I would think of this story as I was literally using my hands to manifest something in three dimensions. Not surprisingly, the most obvious way I started to relate this novel to my work was through my sculpting. My sculptures are made from carved and cast parts, which are adhered together or form fitted together to make a formal and conceptual evolving whole. This process often reminded me of how the “Creation” in *Frankenstein* was sewn together from several disparate dead parts to make one monstrous body.

My studio practice is very hands on. Part of the time is spent on manual labor. Several techniques are used to get forms to fuse in this formal and conceptual cohesive whole. What conceptually guides this manual labor is often a dance between my head and my hands; time is spent grappling with various ideas and figuring how to best realize them. It is a dubious process I have come to love and protect, as my studio practice is the only place I can freely coalesce multiple points of reference into the rearrangement of thought with a new logic.

I noticed how my studio practice had become a surrogate being. Being away from it for long amounts of time was like being away from a lover or a soul mate. I began to question the idea of a soul mate. “What does one truly need to feel complete?” was the initial impetus for this project. A lover, a life’s work, a spirituality; all can help one feel complete. As a young girl, I had an imaginary friend named Susan. I would speak to her privately whenever I chose to. She was a convenient companion that popped into my life with the flick of a thought. As magically as I would make her appear, I could make her temporarily disappear. Her omnipresence gave me comfort, as I always knew I had a steadfast friend.

I decided it was time to confront how my studio practice was becoming an all encompassing imaginary friend. Similar to the making of *Frankenstein’s* creation, an artist’s studio practice can be at times magical, at other moments: it can feel monstrous. I felt it was time to speak through my sculptures with wonderment, excitement, elation, disappointment, disgust, and horror. All of these are emotions I have felt in my studio practice. I was determined to put all of these emotions into a three dimensional manifestation of a sculptural soul mate.

Similar to the Creation in Mary Shelly's novel, my Prince would also question his presence on the earth and yearn for a mate to experience true love with. My Prince figure would not be sculpted of disparate parts inspired by real men who have entered my life, but from men who had entered a non-linear narrative I had been working on (in text form and through my sculptures) for several years. My Prince is a three dimensional monstrous fusion comprised of twenty one parts from four separate men: Jesus, St. Sebastian, Abraham Lincoln, and C3PO. Together, these character's body parts converge to fit like armor on top of my body. In keeping with the spirit of my past and ongoing narrative, I will try to guide my decisions through the founding principle of this non-linear story, which is the character Snow White. I chose Snow White as the "founding father" of my narrative seven years ago for several reasons. One was that I felt she epitomized the kind of cross pollinating character I was drawn to. *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was the first feature length film released in the Disney Studios. Before that, they made seven minute short films, called Silly Symphonies. One of these Silly Symphonies was called *The Goddess of Spring*. It was the Disney Studio's version of the Greek myth of Pluto and Prosperina. This silly symphony was not commercially successful, was "canned" and put on the shelf. Unlike Prosperina, Snow White was to be the first realistically rendered woman of the Disney Studios. From the line drawing of Disney's Prosperina, Snow White was born. This birth fascinated me: A Greek myth high jumped a Germanic legend to create an American icon. To me, Snow White was the poster girl for cross pollinating symbols, legends, and different points in history. How exciting! How Blade Runner! How empowered and perfect! At this moment, Snow White became my Queen.

Unlike Walt Disney's repressed and puritanical packaging of this character, my version of Snow White represents a foundation of strength, a generator of multiple signifiers, and an ever-present reminder of change, as she was built within an ever evolving, morphing filmic process. She has always been a silent partner in the studio for me. As I am now the Creator of this three dimensional fusion, it seemed fitting my Prince would long for my object of desire. In part of Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein*, the Creation is alone in a wooded area and spies upon a family. He watches all members of the family, and observes how deeply they care for one another. He looks as the wife and husband show passion to each other and he yearns to experience these feelings. My Prince longs for these feelings of completeness as well. As the narrative of *The Prince Project* unfolds, it is clear the Prince is only in a position to objectify these feelings, and not experience them directly. As such, he likens love with another transient experience that he observes humans interacting with: spirituality. In this metaphor, he equates finding true love with spiritual aspiration. He perceives Snow White as the epitome of physical and spiritual experiences, and sees her as his key to an ultimate transient state. When he attains her love; he believes that he will be forever happy. When he attains her love; he believes he will feel complete. When he attains her love; he feels he will have transformed his monstrous physical existence. Like the alchemical myth, he believes through her love, his transformation will be complete; he will turn from lead (the sullied garment of the soul) into gold (perfection).

The Prince figure is only one character in *The Prince Project*. There are four parts that define *The Prince Project* as a whole: *Dust, Seven, Wicked, and White Light*. In its totality, *The Prince Project* is a non-linear narrative based on the Prince's thoughts, longings and desires for humanness and its associations with spirituality, love, loss, idealism, and realism. It shows a path from creating life for the protection of one's race (the legend of the Golem), creating life for one's ego (the novel of *Frankenstein*) to creating life for scientific advancement and human betterment (cloning and computer simulation), and ultimately, creating life for love (heightened experience). As is every aspect of my studio practice, the character's content in *The Prince Project* is initiated by a highly specified source. Often, but not always, this source is personal. It is my hope that *The Prince Project* will transcend my personal impetus and reflect external feelings felt on many levels by many people: feelings of our collective hope, heartbreak, and history.





DUST mines from the Legend of the Golem, and is comprised of three main figural sculptures that cue the characters of the Mahral and his two assistants. Together these sculptures' combined contortions reflect the undulating energy that the Mahral and his assistants summon to give shape from shapelessness. They are inspired by these nine words:

- 1- Atta
- 2- B'ra
- 3- Golem
- 4- Dovek ha-chomer
- 5- V'sigzor
- 6- Zeidim
- 7- Visigzor Zaidim
- 8- Chaval
- 9- Torei

roughly translated:

"You create a Golem by adhering clay together from the earth. He will command. He will protect and reward human beings. He will pass judgment on wicked people through his actions. They will feel this through the agony of their pain".



Wicked is a segment of *The Prince Project* and will consist of a sculpture, video, and performance. A choreographed dance accompanies a soundtrack called *Spillover*, and will be performed by myself.

When exhibited, the video of the edited performance will face the Prince figure. This alignment is purposeful in its separation as it represents two things that were designed to be together, but inevitably will never sync up.

The image to the left shows the core body of the Prince figure. It was made simply from cardboard and household insulation foam. Its interior is hollow, so I can fit inside of it.

The skins for the Prince figure will get fused onto this core body to flesh out four different characters. They are:
C3PO,
St. Sebastian,
Abraham Lincoln
&
Jesus.

The thread that unites these characters/individuals is that through their service to a country, community or cause-- they have been left with an identifiable hole through their body.

SEVEN is a part of *The Prince Project* that follows *Wicked*. In *Wicked*, the Prince figure is introduced to the audience as a monstrous fusion. SEVEN becomes the formal and mental landscape in which this character begins to learn about life

SEVEN is a multi-part installation that can be divided into three categories:

SEVEN drawings
SEVEN balloons
SEVEN sculptures

Each category takes cues from the number seven and its uncanny reappearance in legend, religion, mysticism, and contemporary narrative. Each SEVEN character is a triad made up of a vice, a virtue, and a dwarf from *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*.

This meld of characters is used to create formal complexity as well as to create a psychological and visual "flip-flop" within the viewer. As I get older, I find it very difficult not to see the old woman in the perceptual illusion drawing "Young Girl/Old Woman". In this way, the SEVEN triads try to peel and reveal the viewer's predisposition of what a benevolent or malevolent persona may be associated with.

The **SEVEN** characters are:

Doc/Pride/Humility
Grumpy/Wrath/Patience
Sleepy/Sloth/Diligence
Dopey/Greed/Liberality
Bashful/Lust/Chastity
Happy/Gluttony/Abstinence
Sneezy/Envy/Kindness



Young Girl/Old Woman (perceptual illusion drawing)



*Bashful/Lust/Chastity
2005
hand and airbrushed inks on paper*



Doc/Pride/Humility, 2011 Ehrenbreitstein Fortress, Koblenz, Germany

This piece was part of *BUGA 2011*, an annual horticultural show in Koblenz, Germany that invites architects, landscape architects and artists to make work that respond to the Rhine River. A corresponding show celebrating Hans Arp was being exhibited in January, 2012 at the Arp Museum called *Biomorph! Hans Arp in Dialogue with Current Artistic Positions*. I was asked to show *Death of the Virgin II* (page 16) for the museum show. To help celebrate Hans Arp, one artist was featured besides Hans Arp on the Ehrenbreitstein Fortress location of the *BUGA* exhibition. *Doc/Pride/Humility* was created for the fortress and installed along side Hans Arp's 1960 work, *Dance Finery in Motion* (the piece that this image was taken through).

White Light is a multi genre project that will include stylized video documentation of my body performing physical interpretations of St. Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* in a garment called *Armor for White Light*. This work was made over the course of two years (July 2012- August 2014) and is a ten layer, custom made garment sewn from muslin and patterned exclusively for my body.

Intricate line patterns were traced onto the muslin from former drawings. These tracings were scribed in pencil onto the muslin, filled with black ink and sewn over with white threads. Rectangular paper textures encrust sections of these muslin pieces, their shape and position inspired by samurai warrior armor. These small "nuggets" are cut and sewn onto the muslin, and represent the past 10 years of my finished, colored drawings. Bursting with airbrushed color and intricate line, these small pieces compel the viewer closer to the garment. The bold black inked lines can be perceived easily when one is standing farther away.

As my body engages with the airbrushed paper and drawn lines on the cloth, layers fold into undulating surfaces in space creating an animated picture. In this way, my body's movements both fill up the interior space of the garment and choreograph the curvature of the garment's folds. While I have sculpted aspects of a morphing skin in previous static work, this will be the first instance where my actual body becomes a sculptural tool to create a final form's movement.

Capturing how my body performs inside the fabric form to create an animated picture will be documented through the use of video. Through video editing, the representation of any visible parts of my body or face will recede while the folding forms will take center stage. My intention in *White Light* is to project the video on a series of figurative soft and hard formed sculptures. My hope is that the projected movements of the fabric will appear to slide side-to-side on a static surface. When doing so, *Armor for White Light's* aura will pulse and bleed over undulating sculptural form.

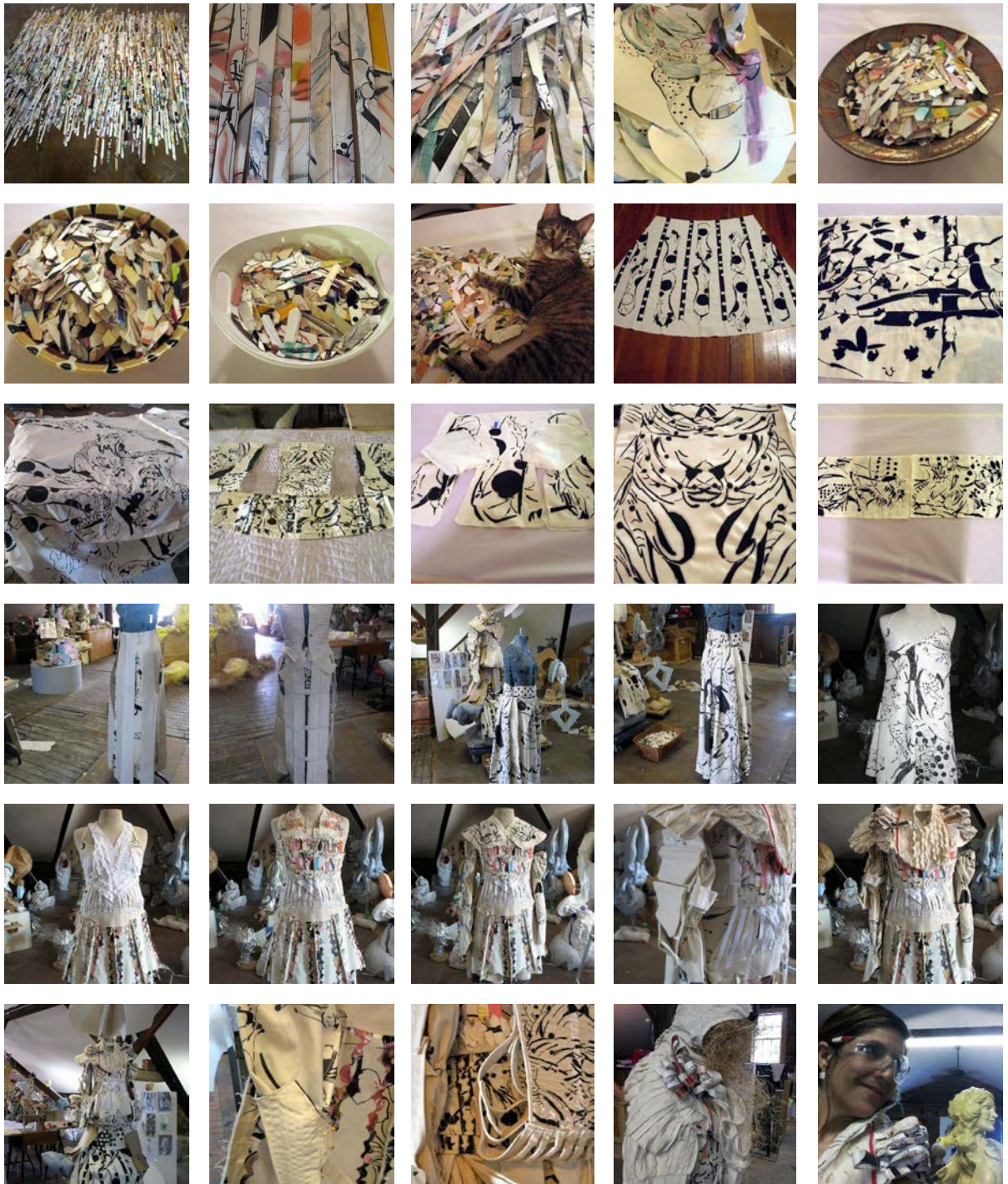


Mount: Armor to White Light
steel, dress form, collaged drawings, laminating resin
(shown with shoulder straps)

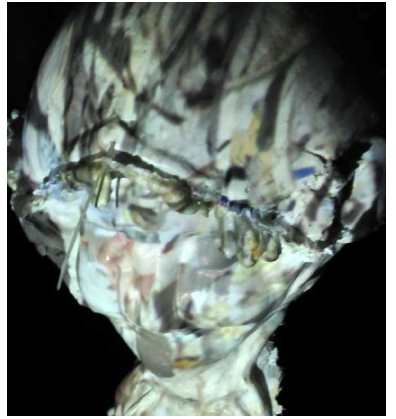


A

Armor to White Light, 2012-2014







Wearing Armor to White Light, 2014



photo credit: Eric Margusity



imperceptible rupture

Imperceptible Rupture is a series of nine abstracted portraits made of collaged casts from a decade of flexible rubber mold imprints. Inspired by Yaka Masks of the Yaka Tribe in the Democratic Republic of Congo and samurai warrior armor, *Imperceptible Rupture* cues interior and exterior skins that contain a metaphorical or spiritual agency, similar to the way many ceremonial masks and other specialized prosthetics for the body imbue to their wearer.

There are nine busts to the *Imperceptible Rupture* series. They are entitled: *Homecoming, Secret Society, Dutch Girl, Warrior Mask, A More Perfect Union, Folded Mouse, Pluto, Matriarch* and *Seven Pointed*. They are all hollow shelled forms, and challenge both molding and casting skills due to their intricate curvature.

The fabrication of the first six forms has been supported by a 2014 Penn State Institute for the Arts and Humanities Research Grant. The remaining three busts of *Imperceptible Rupture* (*Pluto, Matriarch* and *Seven Pointed*) are currently underway in the studio.



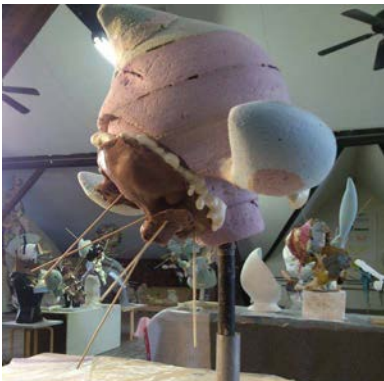
collage-
magazines & art history books



collage-
monster clay & found materials



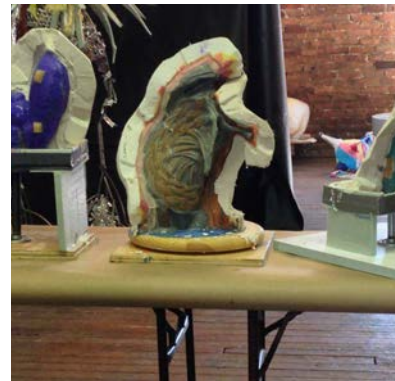
three *Imperceptible Rupture*
prototypes being made



mashing foam and casts
happens regularly now



"pinning" several clay casts
in position with wood skewers



plating urethane rubber with
mother mold shells



rubber & mother molds to all
Imperceptible Rupture busts



A More Perfect Union cast in
aquaresin



Dutch Girl cast in aquaresin





Imperceptible Rupture: A More Perfect Union, 2014
image credit: Cody Goddard



Imperceptible Rupture: Dutch Girl, 2014
image credit: Cody Goddard



Imperceptible Rupture: Homecoming



Imperceptible Rupture: Secret Society Mas



Imperceptible Rupture: Dutch Girl



Imperceptible Rupture: Warrior Mask



Imperceptible Rupture: A More Perfect Union



Imperceptible Rupture: Folded Mouse

today

I currently live in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, which is about 3.5 hours from New York City (my former home of 10 years). I hold a tenured professor position at The Pennsylvania State University. While my studio location is now more remote than it used to be in Brooklyn, the cost of living in Central PA allows for me to have an extremely large workspace as well as apply for research funding through the University. The last four years have been vibrant ones in my studio. I have fabricated, shipped and installed *Doc/Pride/Humility* in Koblenz, Germany and have been invited to participate in numerous group shows (domestic and international). I also have been steadily working on two time-intensive projects, *White Light* and *Imperceptible Rupture*. Both these projects have been supported by research grants from Penn State University College of Arts and Architecture.

Through this catalog, I hope to show a sturdy arch of development—from my work's early fragile stages to a current mature and knowing practice. Their connecting tissue is an unwavering dedication to the studio. I have spent much time and cost figuring out how to build what I wish to say to the world through my sculptures. Through this investment, I have learned why it is essential for me to continually interject my studio practice with wonderment and invention.

I am privileged to work with many hard working art students. One recently asked me if having the parts to *The Prince Project* mapped out so clearly will make me not want to make them in the future. It was a great question, as it made me reflect on the difference between reference and process. The references in *The Prince Project* are clear. As my Guggenheim statement mentions, they represent a robust and earnest research period. However, the process in which I may shape these references into three dimensional form is not necessarily clear.

When I received Guggenheim funding to make the Prince figure to *The Prince Project*, I dove into making life size manifestations of its' quaternity: Jesus, St. Sebastian, C3PO and Abraham Lincoln (page 26). My goal was to make a composite shell sculpture that was grand and beautiful. I never did make the Prince figure as I thought I would in 2005. While I am very happy with the molds I made, I never mashed their casts into one monstrous form. Something did not feel right.

I still want to make a mash of four disparate men, yet today-- it's equally important that the form address the pathos of wanting to cloak oneself in the skin of a presumed “ideal mate”. While I now possess the skill to fabricate the Prince figure casts to be true hollow shells, their totality would still read as hard forms to the viewer. At this point in my life, it is important that the Prince figure translate primarily as an empty shell and less of the portraits of the above referenced men. Their references will still be in the work, yet the tenor of how they will present themselves in the round to a viewer has shifted in prominence.

Soon I will begin a textile that will mash the representations of Jesus, C3PO, Abraham Lincoln, and St. Sebastian in fabric form. It is my hope that my future Prince figure will feel grand and have much visual beauty. However, being made of fabric will allow its' form to literally contort, curve and hang in ways that the hard casts will not allow. *The Prince Project* essentially questions what it means to have a life-counterpart, and if that meaning has a fixed identity, form or answer. Creating a grand- scaled Prince textile (in figural form) seems more fitting to the versatility of this questioning.

In this instance, the Prince's references have not changed. What has evolved is how I visualize the viewer's emotional response to the forms. Perhaps this reflects a benefit of the last seven years in Central PA, as time and distance has given me the opportunity to experiment; revise; and reconsider.

Other works have begun in the studio that continue to push my interest in mashing disparate elements. Having spent two years making *Armor for White Light*, fabric is a new source of inspiration. I am interested in seeing if I can make hard-shelled surfaces pierced with soft sculptures. I envision that these soft forms will serve as interior linings as well as voluminous surfaces in their own right.

Questions that consume my studio mind right now are:

How far could soft forms be pulled from the insides of hard interiors?

Will the fabric droop down or poof out?

Can I successfully make *Armor for White Light*'s lines and patterns move so they negate the linear order of my body?

Will real basket sections fused to cast basket sections "work" in a finished piece?

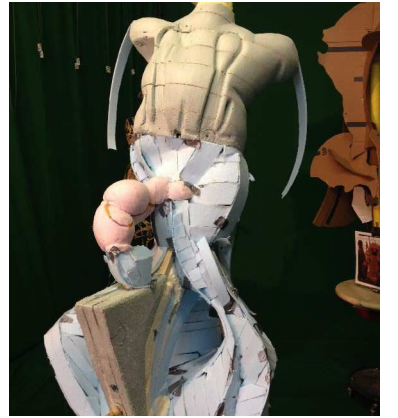
Should the Prince figure be woven in four different colored cloths as one large mashed form?

While I have worked tremendously hard to figure out how to make my sculpture bend and contort in weather stable and archival materials, my interest in the studio is not to keep rolling out the same recipe. Every day in the studio now means having two feet purposely in disparate ground. One-foot lands in familiar territory- this is the terrain of the work and technique I have mastered over the last 20 years. The other foot lands in the non-visible space that my undergrad professor asked me to search for many years ago—the philosophical space of making.

“What to make today?” is a good-enough question. Yet, “How to make what to make?” is the *preferred* question I wish to ask everyday in my studio. This question allows me to be both master and beginner, to own what I have worked so hard to learn, yet be confident enough to let that knowledge slip away when necessary.

Once this question occurs, the fun part ensues. This is the engaged spirit of:

“lets begin”.



Bonnie Collura Studio: July, 2015



acknowledgement:

the term, "fused form" was described in relation the to work, *Skywalker* (2002) by Greg Lynn in his catalog essay, *Intricacy*.

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contact information, current CV and more images can be found at:

www.bonniecollura.com



Bonnie Collura received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1994 and her Masters of Fine Arts degree from Yale University in 1996. She is the recipient of a 1997 Emerging Artist Award from the Aldrich Museum of Contemporary Art, a 2005 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship, a 2010 MacDowell Colony Fellowship, and has received five research grants from Penn State University, including a 2010 Stuckeman Endowment for Design Computing. In 2003, Collura was nominated as a Rolex Protégé and her work was nominated in 2010 for a prestigious United States Artists Fellowship. Collura's sculptures, drawings, and installations have been exhibited in major galleries and museums in the United States, France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, and India and are included in several national and international collections. Ms. Collura's work has been reviewed in *The New York Times*, *Art Forum*, *Art in America*, *Art News*, *Sculpture Magazine*, *BOMB* magazine, *Beautiful Decay*, *Time Out New York*, *Up & Coming: The Emerging Art Scene in New York*, and several other print and on-line publications.

Collura is currently an Associate Professor at Penn State University, teaching in the Sculpture Department. Prior to her appointment at Penn State, she has taught at Yale University, Columbia University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Rhode Island School of Design, Tyler School of Art, University of the Arts, and Parsons The New School for Design.



FOUNDATION



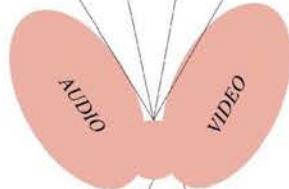
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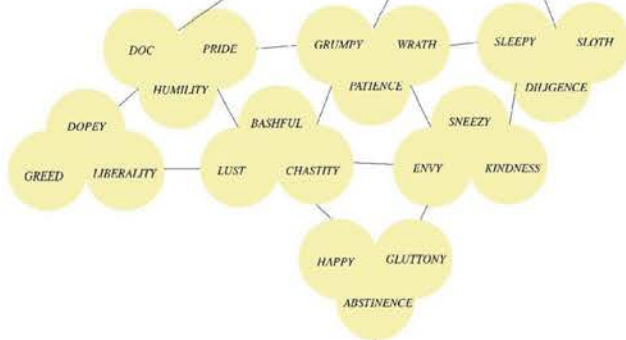
WICKED



SPILLOVER



SEVEN



WHITE LIGHT

