

COME IF YOU WANT

by

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Bachelor of Fine Arts, 2016  
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Submitted to the faculty Graduate Division College of Fine Arts Texas Christian  
University in partial fulfillments of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

May, 2019

COME IF YOU WANT

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Dedicated to Mum, Dad, Verity, Doug and Boo.

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## VITA

Bella Jones was born 13th, May 1994 in Stockport, Greater Manchester, U.K to Sandra Smith and Stephen Jones. She earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree with a concentration in Sculpture and Time-Based Media at Manchester Metropolitan University in 2016.

In August 2016 she started her Graduate Assistantship in Studio Art with a concentration in Painting at Texas Christian University. Alongside her graduate studies she worked as a gallery assistant at Fort Worth Contemporary Art and Moudy Gallery from 2016-2017, as a teaching assistant of 2D Design and Color from 2017-2018 and was an instructor of record for 2D Design and Color from 2018-2019.

## ABSTRACT

*Come If You Want* is a Thesis exhibition that is an exploration of the body and sexuality in relation to gender politics. The exhibition includes large and small scale paintings and a projected animation. As the title suggests the show is both an invitation and guidance of the viewer's interaction with the topic of sex. The show uses taboo imagery in a sophomoric way to amuse the viewer and bridge the gap between their uncomfortableness and understanding of human desire.

## COME IF YOU WANT

My artistic practice and resulting artwork explores societal narratives and understanding of the body and sexuality. Throughout history the topic of sexuality is usually centered on the concept of power, placed and posits in a binary system of two genders. Although contemporary dialogue surrounding gender and sex has grown more expansive over the last few decades, certain body parts are sexualized. Therefore, they become censored, for example the female nipple. There is always a sense of uncomfortableness and shame when discussing sexuality and intimacy in a public setting. In my art I am interested in removing sexuality from this perception of shame and placing it into a realm of desire and play. Instead of portraying the stereotypical power dynamic of a sexually aggressive male and a sexually passive female or the reverse of these roles, I portray and frame my subjects interaction as focused on pleasure and playfulness. Looking at sexuality from an inquisitive standpoint, the imagery I use presents sex as a sensual yet humorous endeavor in an unapologetic manner.

In the following text I will discuss my artistic practice and process, historical and theoretical references that have helped define and shape my art. I will give the reader a description of the thesis exhibition, *Come If You Want*, which was held in the Moudy Gallery at TCU and explain how certain aesthetic choices visually communicate my conceptual ideas.

My artwork has an obsessive, highly detailed doodle-like aesthetic. These cartoonish stylization of figures expand to all mediums I work in. Motifs, situations, and characters are repeated and exist in a variety of mediums, creating different access points for the viewer to interact with my work. My visual and conceptual research behind my artwork stems from a variety of sources, including cartoons from my childhood, contemporary female artists and references to art history.

A clear art historical reference is predominantly featured as the centerpiece of my thesis exhibition. The painting *Sisters* (PLATE 1), which hung in the middle of Moudy gallery, is inspired by the painting, *Gabrielle d'Estrées et une de ses sœurs* (PLATE 2), by an

unknown artist of the School of Fontainebleau circa 1594. This painting features two women in a bathtub. One woman is reaching out to the other woman and pinching her nipple. Upon initially seeing this painting I thought it was depicting two lesbians having a sexual encounter, which would be revolutionary for the time and place this artwork was created. The story behind this piece is that the two women are sisters, one being the pregnant mistress of King Henry IV of France.<sup>1</sup> Instead of the artwork being about female sexuality, the meaning and narrative is centered around a man. As John Berger writes, “To be born a woman is to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men”<sup>2</sup>. The nudity of the female figures is ultimately for the pleasure and enjoyment of the male gaze and not for the women’s own enjoyment. As Carol Mulvey states,

“In a world of sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/ male and passive/ female. The determining male gaze projects is phantasy on to the female figure who is styled accordingly.”<sup>3</sup>

In my painting *Sisters* I wanted to remove the male figure from the meaning of the piece and portray this image from a female perspective. I wanted to make a painting that resembled the initial message I got from the artwork, that being two women placed in a situation where they can explore themselves and each other’s bodies freely. I titled my painting *Sisters*, in homage to the title and the relation of the two women in the original painting. It also refers to the common saying, “scissor sisters” which is a widely known slang term meaning lesbians. The original 16th century painting had the two women situated in a cozy and sensual environment as they appear in a bathtub framed by a curtain of red fabric. This overall composition makes the painting feel like the viewer is peering into another realm, a realm of female sensuality. In my thesis exhibition I recreated this framing and feeling of stepping into a feminine environment by placing the painting directly across from the animation and seating area. The audience is invited

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<sup>1</sup> Vincent, Pomarède. “Work Gabrielle d'Estrées and One of Her Sisters Department of Paintings: French painting”. *Louvre*, <https://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/gabrielle-d-estrees-and-one-her-sisters>

<sup>2</sup> John Berger. “Ways of Seeing”. (London: Penguin: 2008), 46

<sup>3</sup> Laura Mulvey. “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”. *Screen*, vol. 16, (1975), 11

to lounge on the beanbags, that are placed in the center of the space and be surrounded by the bodily erotic imagery in the exhibition. (PLATE 3)

The seating area and imagery in the animation all correlate with one another as the depictions of the breasts becomes the main focus in all the works. My animation however was greatly inspired by my love of cartoons, particularly *Æon Flux*, which was an animated series that originally aired on MTV from 1991-1995. The show involved characters with distorted bodies performing actions and sequences with heavy sadomasochistic overtones. The initial episodes were short and excluded speaking or having any clear sense of a narrative. The main character often died at the end of each episode only to regenerate in the next episode without any explanation. This non-linear, non-verbal format interested me as the emphasis on paying attention to visual cues and facial expressions was necessary to decipher the plot. Body language becomes the main language available for the viewer. Wanting to recreate this use of bodily actions and expressions I excluded language from my work and replace it with ambiguous bodily noises, meant to unnerve and entice the audience. The loop, lack of plot and speech in my animation, gives off a hypnotic feel.

*Æon Flux* had a distinctive style in the way the figures were depicted. Both male and female characters had elongated limbs and torsos and their bodies would twist and bend in unnatural positions. Particularly famous scenes from the show included close up shots of eyes moving around the screen and tongues interlocking (PLATE 4). Similar to my work, these segmented moments of bodily interaction create a more visceral response from the audience. Instead of a whole body which the viewer can gaze at from a distance, the close-up shots generate a more assertive inescapable depiction of the body and sexual scenarios that places the viewer in the middle.

Although I enjoy the raw and powerful sexual aura of the lead female character, the creator of *Æon Flux*, Peter Chung, was depicting sexuality from a more masculine perspective. The show displayed a sadomasochistic side to human sexuality, where sex was linked to violence and power. The color palette from the show was dark and muted, giving the cartoon a very moody feel. In my work I was aiming for a more feminine

aesthetic and to display sexuality from a more whimsical and lighthearted standpoint. I based my color palette from cartoons like the *The Powerpuff Girls*. This program was made during a similar time period however it was featured on Cartoon Network so the target audience was children and not adults. This meant that the female superheroes were tough, but the violence was toned down and there were no sexual themes or depictions. Vibrant flat areas of color were heavily used and there was an overall cutesy style (PLATE 5). This captured the innocence and femininity of the young female characters.

These pop culture and art historical references all depicts female identity and sexuality from various perspectives. Contemporary art also plays a key role in my artistic research, particularly work by fellow female artists who deal with similar themes of sexuality and the body. Tracey Emin is a source of inspiration for my art, most notably her book *One Thousand Drawings*, in which she created a collection of one thousand drawings, etchings and mono-prints depicting memories from her personal life. Though my practice rarely revolves around my personal experiences, I enjoy Emin's diaristic approach and cynical humor. By drawing from her own life experiences, Emin takes on both the role of the artist and the muse. As Rosemary Betterson explains, "Emin insistently adopts a confessional mode in which she herself is the 'star' of her own narrative".<sup>4</sup> This honest and personal tone places her as the central figure in her art. This is a liberating form of expressing herself as a woman, as she adopts an unapologetic attitude when confronting issues of sexuality and identity in her artwork. This can be seen in her piece *Is this A Joke*, (PLATE 6), which perfectly captures sexual disappointment and frustration in a frank and sardonic way. The work has both a bittersweet and comical side to it. Her upfront nature displays an often unseen, but not uncommon vulgar side to female identity and sexuality. Where my work and Emin's work differs is the portrayal of the sexes. The female figure in Emin's work often appears lonely and lost and the male is usually whittled down to merely a phallic symbol. Though I find this portrayal accurate in some situations, especially to Emin's own experiences, in my work I present a side of male sexuality that is not so rigid and confined to the penis. Women have always been portrayed as inherently sensual beings,

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<sup>4</sup> Rosemary Betterson, "Why is my art not as good as me? Femininity, Feminism and 'Life- Drawing' in Tracey Emin's Art" in *The Art of Tracey Emin* (London; New York: Thames & Hudson,2002), 25

our sexuality is not only located in our genital region but our hair, skin, eyes, lips, ankles, wrists, hands, legs, breasts, feet and buttocks have all been deemed sexual or sexually suggestive at one time or another in the history of man, whereas male sexuality is always focused heavily on the penis. In my work the female and male characters are often ambiguous. In my recent work the focus is less on specific facets of gender and more on enjoyment and discovery of the body. When there are moments of vaginal and phallic depictions across my body of work they are placed in an equal playing field to one another.

This style of depicting male and female figures is similar to how the painter Joan Semmel deals with sexuality and the body. Semmel's work depicts the male and female nude in sexual and intimate ways. For example, the painting *Intimacy/Autonomy* (PLATE 7), displays the artist and her lover laid side by side. The angle of the image is positioned from the perspective of the female figure, looking at herself and the male. Although the usual role of the male artist and the female muse is reversed, the female does not objectify the man in return. The work is from the female's perspective; however, she is depicted nude as well, sharing this naked vulnerability with the man. As Ursula Davila-Villa, senior director at Alexander Gray Associates, states,

“That moment when she shifted that perspective to the pictorial body neck-down, it's a really important one—not only in reaffirming through the body, but it's her own body. It's the idea that she's not objectifying another body, it's her own self that's being depicted and moments of intimacy between her and her partner,”<sup>5</sup>

Though both figures are completely naked the painting does not feel overly sexualized and instead seems calm, displaying the intimate relationship the two figures share. The figures appear equal, taking on the same relaxed pose. Often Semmel's work does have explicitly sexual content for example the artwork *Flip-Flop Diptych* (PLATE 8). This diptych displays the male and female during intercourse. The woman appears on top and the man appears on the bottom, in the other half of the piece this dynamic is shown

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<sup>5</sup> “Feminist artist Joan Semmel explores female body, lust in new exhibition”, <https://www.columbiaspectator.com/arts-and-entertainment/2015/04/02/feminist-artist-joan-semmel-explores-themes-body-issues-lust/>

in reverse. I find a connection to this strategy in my work as all genders play active roles, just as they do in Semmel's art.

These references have helped shape how I depict the body, desire, and intimacy in my own work. Semmel shows the tender side to sex whilst Emin displays the longing and humor to relationships. Cartoons like *Æon Flux* proudly exhibit the rawness and utter absurdity that drives our desires. Finally, shows like *The Powerpuff Girls* capture the innocence and playfulness to femininity. I take from all these sources of conceptual and visual research to create realities where figures act out sexually suggestive scenarios in an open and fun way. This is done through the use of repeated motifs and bright colors to create a dreamscape for the viewer to be engulfed in.

In my recent work; painting and animation are the primary mediums I employ. I entice the viewer to engage with taboo subject matter in a public setting by adding decorative elements. These elements appear prominently on the edges and bleed into the front of each painting adding layering and a sense of depth to the space within each composition. My aesthetic choices also involve a bright pastel and neon color palette and cartoonish depictions of the body. The overly stylized feminine appearance confuses the viewer on first glance, they often initially focus on the decorative motifs and become lost within them. After further inspection the viewer can find moments of erotic ephemera.

Furthermore, the cartoonish style removes the timidity that a viewer would have to the sexual imagery. For example, a photograph of a pair of testicles has a totally different reaction from the viewer than a cartoon version of the same subject. This can be seen in the painting *Dangle*, (PLATE 9). The testicles in this painting are framed by decorative elements that also appear in the other paintings. The testicles are not realistically rendered and instead appear gentle, with the pastel blue coloring and the tiny squiggly lines that are meant to symbolize pubic hair. The ornate motifs and soft color palette ease the power this usually graphic image would have on the viewer. The male genitalia is removed from the common sexual hierarchy of the all-powerful phallus and supposedly dominant male libido. The viewer's reading of this image is changed and

allows them to interact with more graphic images while suspending reality. This interaction with more private areas of the body are also experienced with the paintings *Bushy* (PLATE 10) and *Cheeky* (PLATE 11). In *Bushy*, a female pubis region with public hair is centered in the middle of the painting. Often pubic hair on women is seen as unfeminine and repulsive. *Bushy* disrupts this narrative by presenting a natural female body in full glory. The squiggly lines of the pubic hairs correlate with the decorative line work on the edges of the panel. The ornamental components on the sides of the panel frame and emphasize this area of the body in a celebratory manner. Similarly, in *Cheeky*, the colorful and highly detailed imagery on the sides help to lure the viewer in and give attention to the buttocks that are painted on the front.

Layering of imagery, bright colors and decorative elements is also used in the painting *Prod* (PLATE 12). In this artwork one pink fleshy colored hand forms a circle with the index finger and thumb, while the violet hand pokes at the pink hand with its extended index finger. This sexual hand gesture is usually done by a single person in a comical and immature context. However, the way the two hands are painted two different colors suggests that this could also be depicting two people acting out this gesture. The perception of whether one hand is on top of the other is blurred as the outline of both hands overlap each other, creating a confusing and translucent sense of space. The penetrative aspect of the symbolism is therefore subverted and almost denied in this picture. Instead of an appendage entering a hole the layering baffles the eye and appears as though nothing is ever inserted. The background of this painting depicts multiple hands interacting with one another, as an assortment of sexual sign language. The background hand gestures compared to the main gesture are not as obvious upon initial glance. The viewer becomes lost in the bright yellow and mint green hues and the overload of imagery. Some of the hand gestures mimic heterosexual acts and others represent homosexual acts therefore the understanding of the main hand gesture starts to become unclear. One could read it as representing a penis entering a vagina like it would normally be understood. However, the orifice is not specific and could extend to any other aperture of the body. This ambiguity is essential to the work as it portrays multiple forms of human sexuality synonymously, making the work inclusive and presenting sexuality and gender as a fluid concept. The vagueness of the figure's

gendered identities also taps into the viewer's personal subconscious relationship with sex. For example, when a viewer only sees heterosexual scenarios it indicates their bias to that form of sexuality and lifestyle.

The gender of my figures is often ambiguous, the characters in my work act curiously as they examine themselves and one another. My characters all play active parts. Particular body parts like hands, eyeballs, and faces are gender neutral in their roles. Similar to *Prod*, layering is also used in the paintings *Touch* (PLATE 13) and *Tickle* (PLATE 14). In each of these paintings two hands overlap one another with one always appearing only as an outline. The area of overlap alters the color of the other hand. This causes the viewer to question the actual touching that is occurring. Instead the works present to the viewer a sense of longing to touch and be touched by another or yourself. The hands enter a realm of gender ambiguity that forces the viewer to focus less of the gender identity of the figures and more on the act itself they are displaying. This again taps into the viewer's biased sexual orientation and allows them to place themselves into the work. The hand could be their own or someone they know. The two hands touching one another also could be depicting one person or two people, which is left up to the viewer's interpretation.

Often times in my work certain actions and scenes can be representations of intercourse, masturbation, or both. This can be seen in the aforementioned centerpiece of the exhibition in the painting, *Sisters*. It is the largest painting in the show at 90" x 72" and is hung in the center of the gallery, directly across from the animation and seating area. The sexual act in this painting is nonpenetrative and is instead a portrayal of foreplay, shifting the perspective from a hetero-normative viewpoint of sex and placing it into other forms of human sexuality. The figures are painted almost identical and mirror one another with their appearance and actions. As a result, the image could be read as not two people but one person mirrored, making it represent both self-stimulation as well as the copulation between two individuals.

This sense of duality appears often in the exhibition. For example, the two hands in *Prod*, the two female figures in *Sisters* and many more instances in the smaller works

such as *Double Trouble* (PLATE 15). In *Double Trouble*, two faces merge together, with one face flipped upside down. The two faces are painted different colors, one being pink and the other orange. Yet they are identical in appearance, so it is unclear whether it is representing one person or two.

Duality is explored further in my animation, *Peek-a-Boobie* (PLATE 16). The animation is a short 1 minute 20 second clip looped into 15 minute 52 seconds long video. In this video a hand sexual stimulates a penis and a female figure drips out (PLATE 17). Then a clitoris is aroused to the point where a male figure oozes out of the vaginal hole (PLATE 18). The gender harmony disrupts the usually hierarchical positioning of the gender binary and instead displays this idea of women coming from men and men coming from women. This means from both a procreational aspect but also displays the masculine and feminine components that every person can identify with regardless of sex.

The animation is paired with the beanbags in the middle of the gallery (PLATE 19). The colors of the hot and light pink beanbags and the fact that they are breast shape correlates perfectly with *Sisters* where the nipple is the main focus and the surface of the canvas is saturation in pink hues. The breasts in the animation differ from the beanbags where the viewer is invited to lounge on or the breasts in *Sisters* which the viewer can gaze at from a distance. The breasts in *Peek-a-Boobie*, look back at the viewer when the nipples are transformed into eyes (PLATE 20). This shift turns the usually sexually passive female body into an active and knowing participant to the sexual scenario she is placed in. This imagery also stems from the common phrase ‘my eyes are up here’ which is a line used often by women when a person stares at their bodies, particularly their breasts, instead of looking at them in the face during a conversation. This moment is a humorous reference within the animation to add a more lighthearted feel to the piece.

Similar to the bright color palette and decorative elements, humor is a key component to the work in my thesis exhibition. By using sophomoric humor my work presents taboo and uncomfortable notions of sex in a playful yet frank manner. The often-graphic

depiction of sexual acts that are on display become desensitized through comic relief. The work pokes fun at society and the audience's preconceived notions of what is deemed an appropriate expression of sexual urges and acts, making something usually condemned to private occurrences being put on public display. This can be seen in the previously mentioned painting *Dangle*, where a pair of blue testicles hang down from the top half of the painting and are centered in the middle of the piece. The painting is simple in its composition and symbolism. "Blue balls" is a common western slang term that means the aching sensation in the testicles when someone has an erection but fails to reach an orgasm. The viewer is presented not only with this one-dimensional joke but with an area of the male body that is less than visually appealing. This sophomoric joke softens the viewer's reaction to the work and makes them feel less repulsed and more humored by seeing this private area of the body.

Humor is also used in the painting *Ouch* (PLATE 21). A hand holds up its pinky finger, which is a gesture often used to symbolize and mock someone who has a smaller phallus. *Ouch* takes this derogatory gesture to its extreme by removing the pinky finger and replacing it with a penis dripping semen, taking away any of its subtlety. This work is not meant to mock men in anyway but present to the viewer our understanding and discovery of the male body, where supposedly size matters. This painting points out the absurdities of society, where we penalise certain body types and the male body is often scrutinized just like the female body. The dainty hand, colorful decorative elements and sensual dripping of the semen disrupts the negative connotations of the hand gesture. Instead displaying it in a more unapologetic, celebratory way, where the viewer is able to laugh at the ludicrousness of the image.

Another instance where humor is used as a visual cue is in the aforementioned painting *Prod*, where the two hands act out the universally known hand gesture that symbolises penetrative intercourse. The grandiose scale of the painting is undermined by this silly and lewd depiction. The scale forces this juvenile, symbolic gesture to be given attention and juxtaposed with other more explicit imagery in this exhibition, like a penis or vulva for example, the tone of the exhibition becomes more lighthearted and comical.

The sizeable scale of *Prod*, along with other paintings in the exhibition and the installation of the animation garners considerable attention in the gallery. Scale is an important aspect to the work in this exhibition. The paintings are either large scale (90" x 72") or (72" x 54") or small scale (7" x 6") or (6" x 8") with no in between. This dramatic shift in scale is emphasized when the two sizes of paintings are placed alongside one another (PLATE 22). This intentional pairing draws attention to the different ways the viewer interacts with the imagery. The larger scale draws more attention from the viewer upon initial sight, they are able to gain a more communal experience of looking at the painting with others in the gallery. With the larger scale the viewer can compare the size of the painting in relation to their own body therefore the experience of viewing the bigger pieces feels more overwhelming. The small-scale gives the audience a one to one intimate occurrence between themselves and the work. Scale is important to the painting *Pinchy* (PLATE 23). In this painting an index finger and thumb reach out to pinch a nipple which is located at the bottom of the painting. Compared to the large-scale painting, *Sisters*, this artwork becomes a microscopic version of the nipple pinching in seen in that painting. The viewer is able to investigate this action close-up and gain a more private experience. The background of this painting involves hands tangled and interacting with one another in a mass of bodily matter. This detail adds further imagery for the viewer to discover when they get closer to the painting.

The smaller paintings have a lot of detail that is not visible from far away consequently this invites the viewer to come closer to further investigate the image. An example of this can be seen in the painting *Eye Spy* (PLATE 24), which is 6" x 7" in size. From a distance the painting appears to be just be a depiction of an eyeball with some blue colored detailing around the sides of the panel. When the viewer gets closer the iris is revealed to contain a network of nudity, with webbing of miniature male and female nudes tangled together. The sides also contain the same imagery. Once the viewer gets close to the painting they realize that the eyeball is staring right back at them in an assertive manner. This is similar to another painting in the exhibition, *Eye Candy* (PLATE 25) where a multitude of eyes seem to follow the viewer around the gallery.

Situated at the back of the gallery, *Eye Candy* depicts a pair of large lavender and light turquoise eyes that are surrounded by multiple smaller eyes in a variety of different colors. Each eye faces a different direction, either looking out towards the viewer or staring at each other. In the central eyes the irises are filled with an entanglement of small bodily figures, that also appear in the other paintings in the show. The surrounding eyes are either left empty or are filled with a sexual scenario or body part. My main intention with this painting and with *Eye Spy* (PLATE 20) was explore the concept of scopophilia and understand the viewer's pleasure from looking at erotic imagery. Since *Eye Candy* is hung at the back of the gallery it is visible to the audience even before they walk into the space. The eyes follow you around the room and watch you as you explore and examine the imagery on display. Once you get closer to the painting the smaller details become clearer, making the once blurry images of cunnilingus, blowjobs, anuses and vulvas more visible. The image of the eye makes the viewer feel watched, usually this role is in reverse and the viewer is able to gaze upon an artwork freely without consequences. *Eye Candy* changes the viewer's position of looking and questions who is looking at who? Is the viewer looking at the work, or is the work looking back at the viewer? This painting along with *Eye Spy* creates a more contentious engagement with the audience where it makes the viewer question their own relationship to looking at and engaging with sexual imagery. Being stared back at by the paintings makes the viewer more aware of being looked at and therefore being in a public space when viewing this work.

Public versus private settings were considered when the exhibition was curated. The wall arrangement as a U shape in the gallery and the video being displayed in the center places all the work out in the open (PLATE 26). There are no hidden components, making the exhibition and the imagery on display feel more accessible to the viewer. The two large breast shaped bean bags are centered in the middle of the gallery in between *Sisters* and my animation *Peek-a-Boobie*. Made from light and hot pink velvet they are designed for the viewer to lounge on while they watch the video and can reflect on the other imagery in the surrounding paintings. When the audience sits on the bean bags their experience changes from passive viewer to active participant. This shift from

innocent bystander to willing partaker greatly interests me in how people navigate the gallery.

The diptych *Legs Akimbo* (PLATE 27) is hung in a particular way in order to draw further attention to the middle of the gallery and create a more symmetrical layout. Each panel of this diptych depicts a foot being held upright by a hand. This pair of works are spaced out along the righthand side wall in the gallery. One half of the diptych is hung at the front of the gallery, by the doors and other is hung on the far end of the wall, near the back of the gallery. As the title and wide spacing suggests, the paintings depict someone opening up their legs and orifice, whether that is a vagina or anus, for either penetration or oral stimulation. Once the viewer sits on the beanbags they are placing themselves right in the middle of this sexual act.

When looking at the exhibition through the gallery doors and before you enter the space the first things you witness are the loud colors of the work, the giant velvet breast-shaped bean bags and the eyeballs staring back at you from the painting *Eye Candy*. All of these elements confront and entice the viewer. Nothing is hidden or concealed. As the title of the thesis suggests, *Come If You Want*, it is up to the viewer's discretion on whether they choose to enter the gallery and investigate further. Creating a consensual relationship between myself, my work and the viewer.

Once the viewer enters the space, they can follow the line of paintings on each wall. When they reach the center of the gallery they can lounge on the beanbags and watch the animation or continue to gaze at each painting. During the opening reception and the duration of the show I witnessed many amused reactions from the public. Many viewers squirmed at certain images yet felt compelled to stay longer in the gallery. They became seduced by the work and wanted to undercover more imagery in the layers of each painting. The overall experience of the exhibition is meant to leave the viewer in a state of comfort and amusement. The colors, openness of the space, and the decorative elements display sex and the body in a celebratory way. Ultimately, the thesis exhibition and the work within it shifts the rigid dialogue that still lingers around how we talk about sex, sexuality and creates a more open and honest discussion in society.

PLATES



PLATE 1: *Sisters*, 90" x 72", sides 2" 1/2, Acrylic on canvas, 2019



PLATE 2: *Gabrielle d'Estrées et une de ses sœurs*, Artist Unknown, 38" x 49", Oil on panel, circa 1594.  
Louvre Museum, Paris, France.



PLATE 3: Installation shot

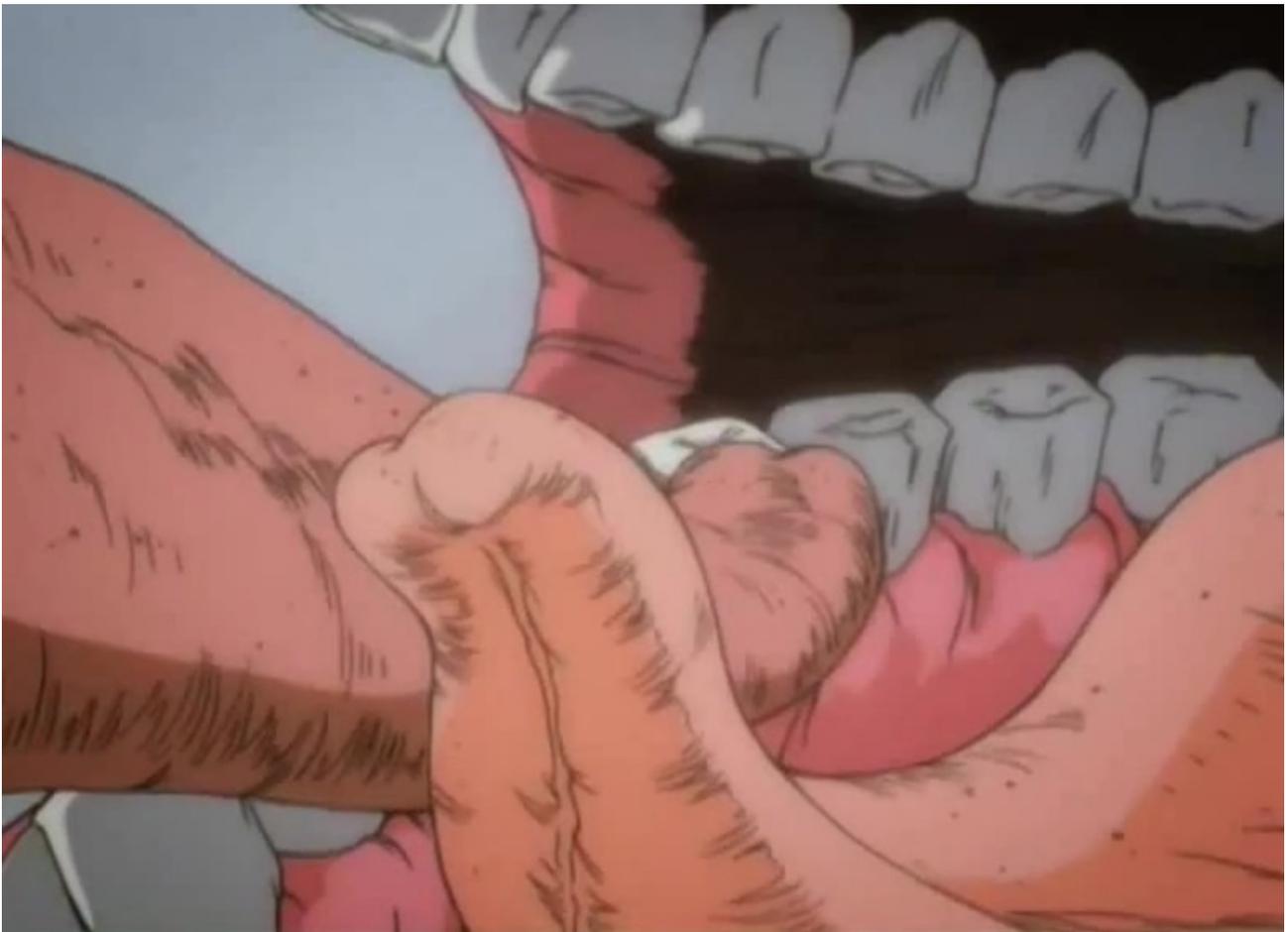


PLATE 4: *Aeon Flux*, Peter Chung, Season 2, Episode 1 *Gravity*, 3:16, 1992

URL: <https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/320951910921935843/?lp=true>



PLATE 5: *The Powerpuff Girls*, Opening/ Ending credits, 1998-2004

URL:<https://trollnarede.wordpress.com/page/23/>

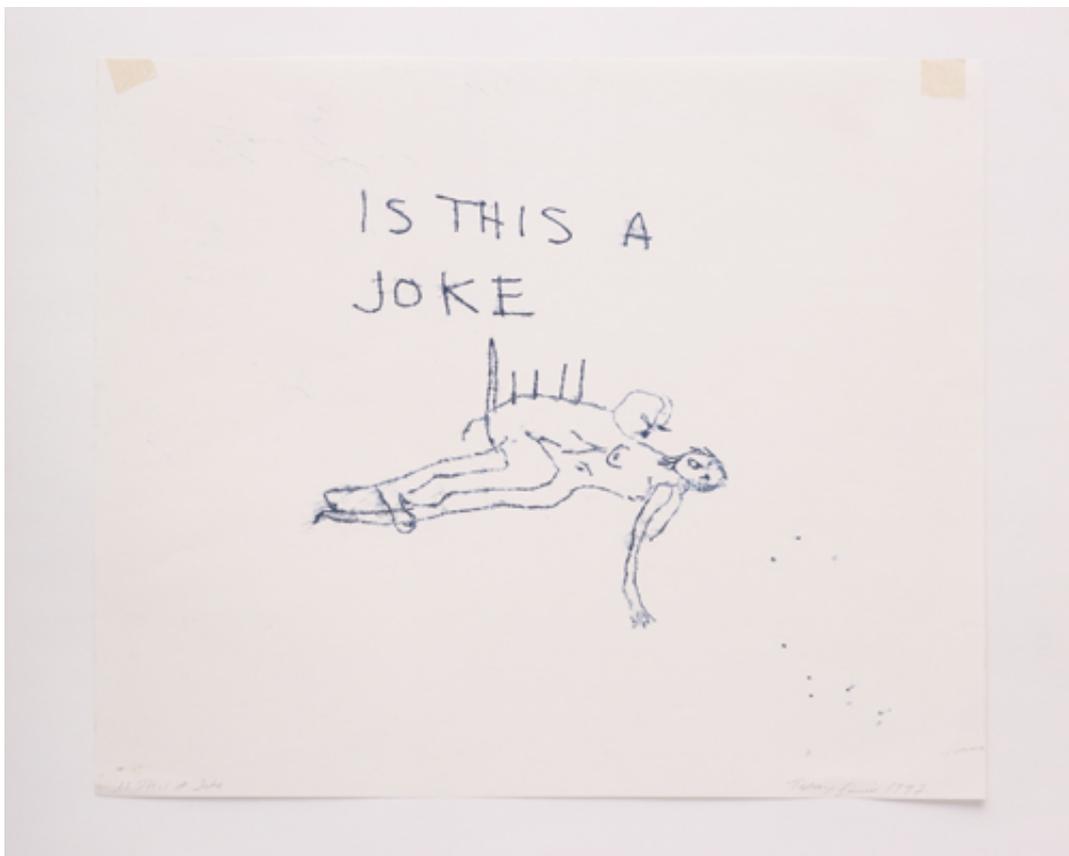


PLATE 6: *Is this A Joke*, Tracey Emin, 16" 15/16 x 20" 1/8, Monoprint, 1997

URL:<https://www.studiointernational.com/images/articles/e/emin-drawings/>



PLATE 7: *Intimacy/Autonomy*, Joan Semmel, 50" x 98", Oil on canvas, 1974  
Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, U.S.A



PLATE 8: *Flip-Flop Diptych*, Joan Semmel, Oil on canvas, each panel 68" x 68", 1971  
URL: <http://www.joansemmel.com/ftp.joansemmel.com/paintings/Pages/erotic.html#1>

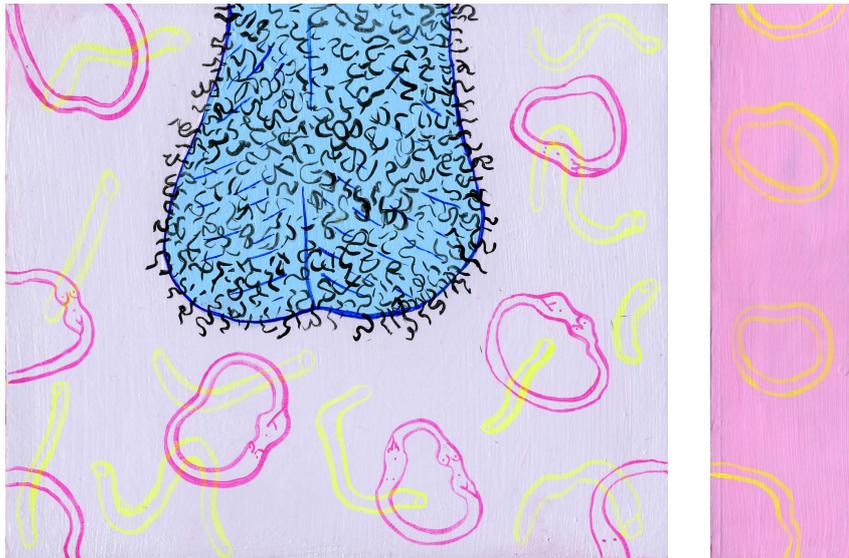


PLATE 9: *Dangle*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019

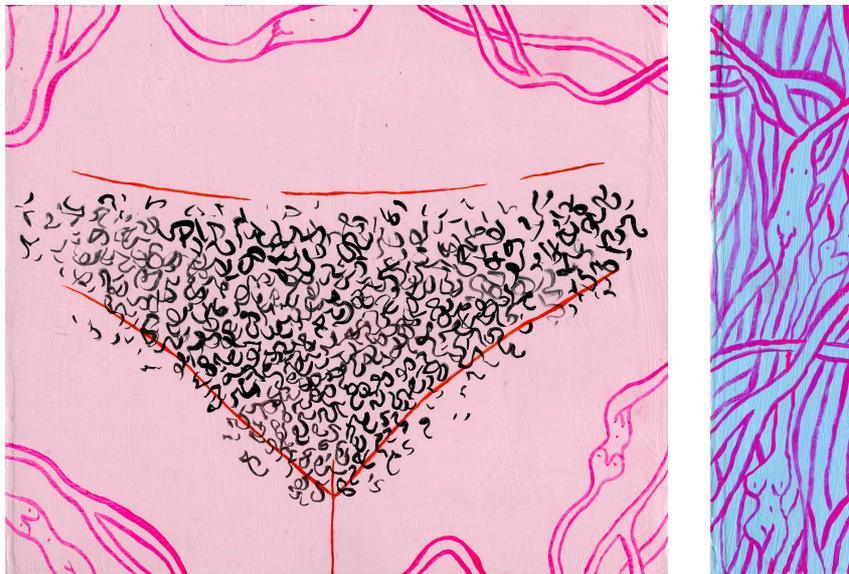


PLATE 10: *Bushy*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019



PLATE 11: *Cheeky*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019



PLATE 12: *Prod*, 72" x 54", sides 2" 1/2, Acrylic on canvas, 2018



PLATE 13: *Touch*, 7" x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019



PLATE 14: *Tickle*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019



PLATE 15: *Double Trouble*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019

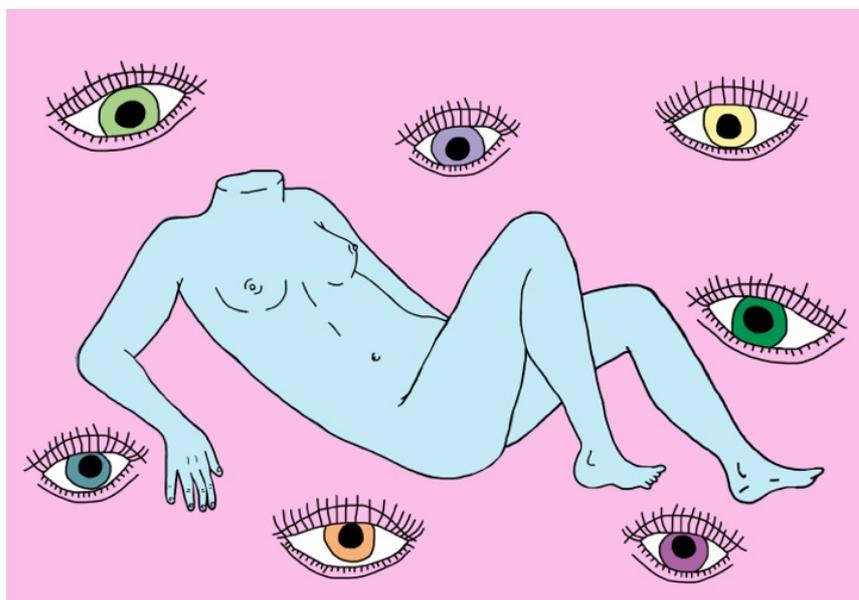


PLATE 16: Still from, *Peek-a-Boobie*, 15:52, Animation, 2018



PLATE 17: Still from, *Peek-a-Boobie*, 15:52, Animation, 2018

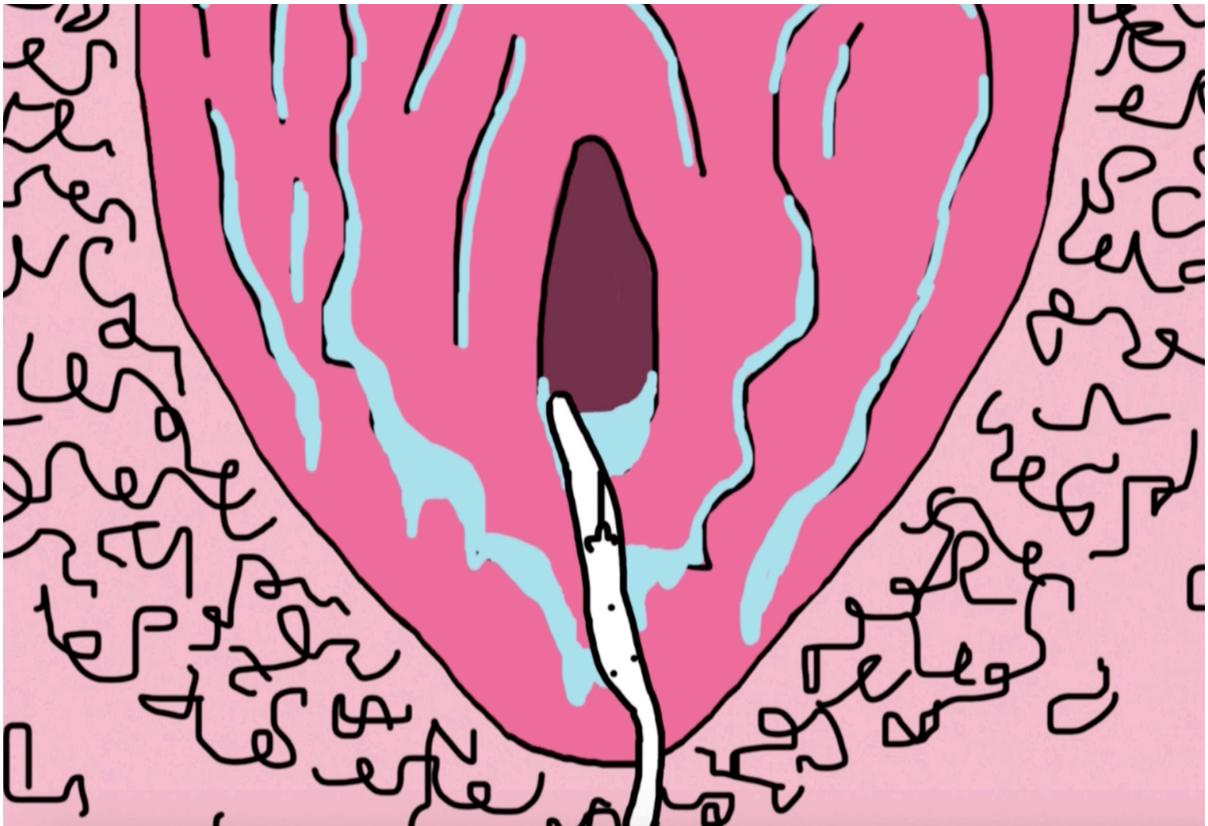


PLATE 18: Still from, *Peek-a-Boobie*, 15:52, Animation, 2018



PLATE 19: Installation shot, Moudy Gallery, 2019

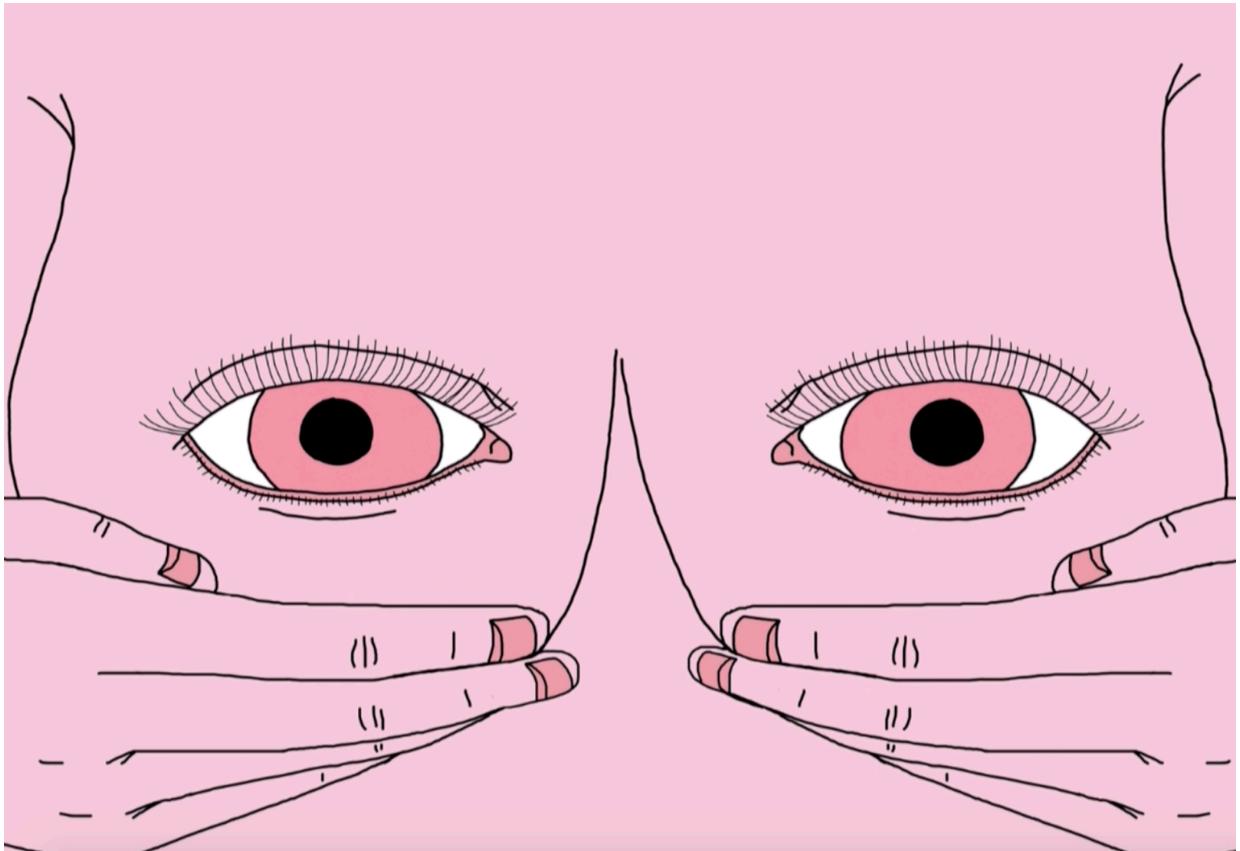


PLATE 20: Still from, *Peek-a-Boobie*, 15:52, Animation, 2018

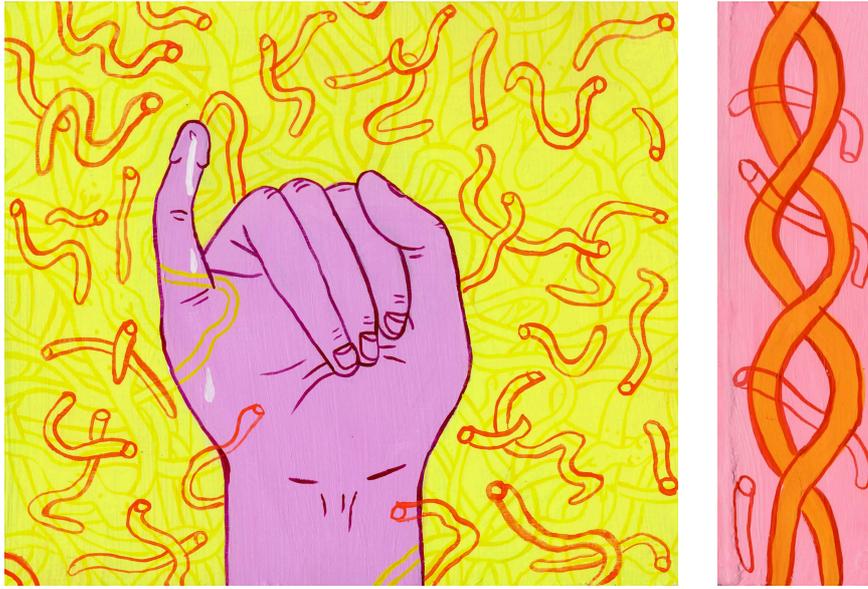


PLATE 21: *Ouch*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019



PLATE 22: Installation shot, Moudy Gallery, 2019



PLATE 23: *Pinchy*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2018

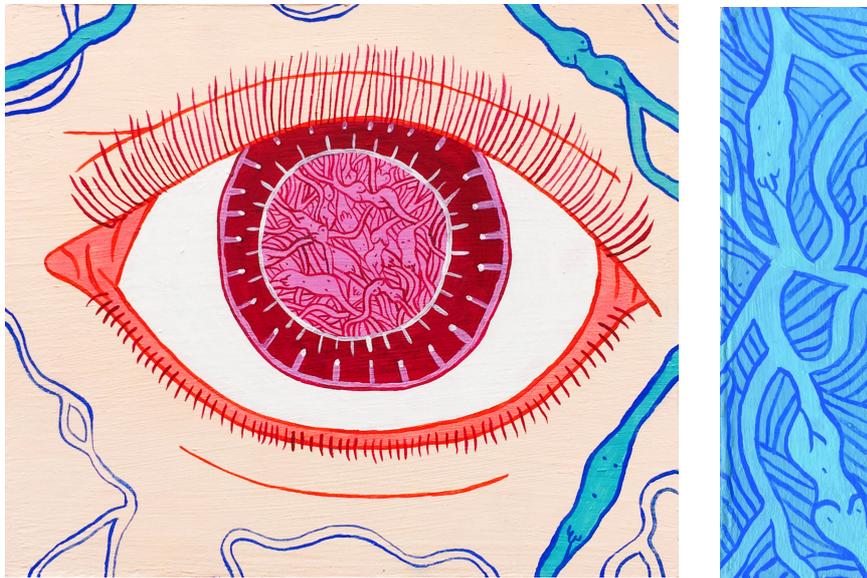


PLATE 24: *Eye Spy*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019



PLATE 25: *Eye Candy*, 72" x 54", sides 2" 1/2, Acrylic on canvas, 2019



PLATE 26: Installation shot, Moudy Gallery, 2019

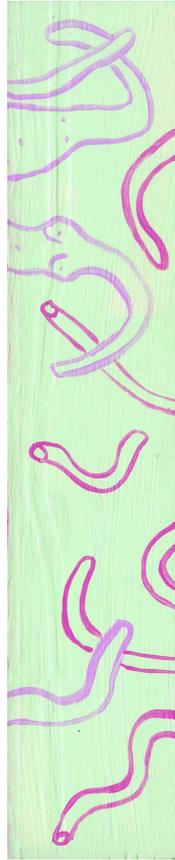


PLATE 27: *Legs Akimbo*, diptych, 6"x 8" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019

ADDITIONAL PLATES



PLATE 28: *Smooch*, 7"x 6" sides 1" 1/2, Acrylic on panel, 2019



PLATE 29: Installation shot, Moudy Gallery, 2019



PLATE 30: Installation shot, Moudy Gallery, 2019

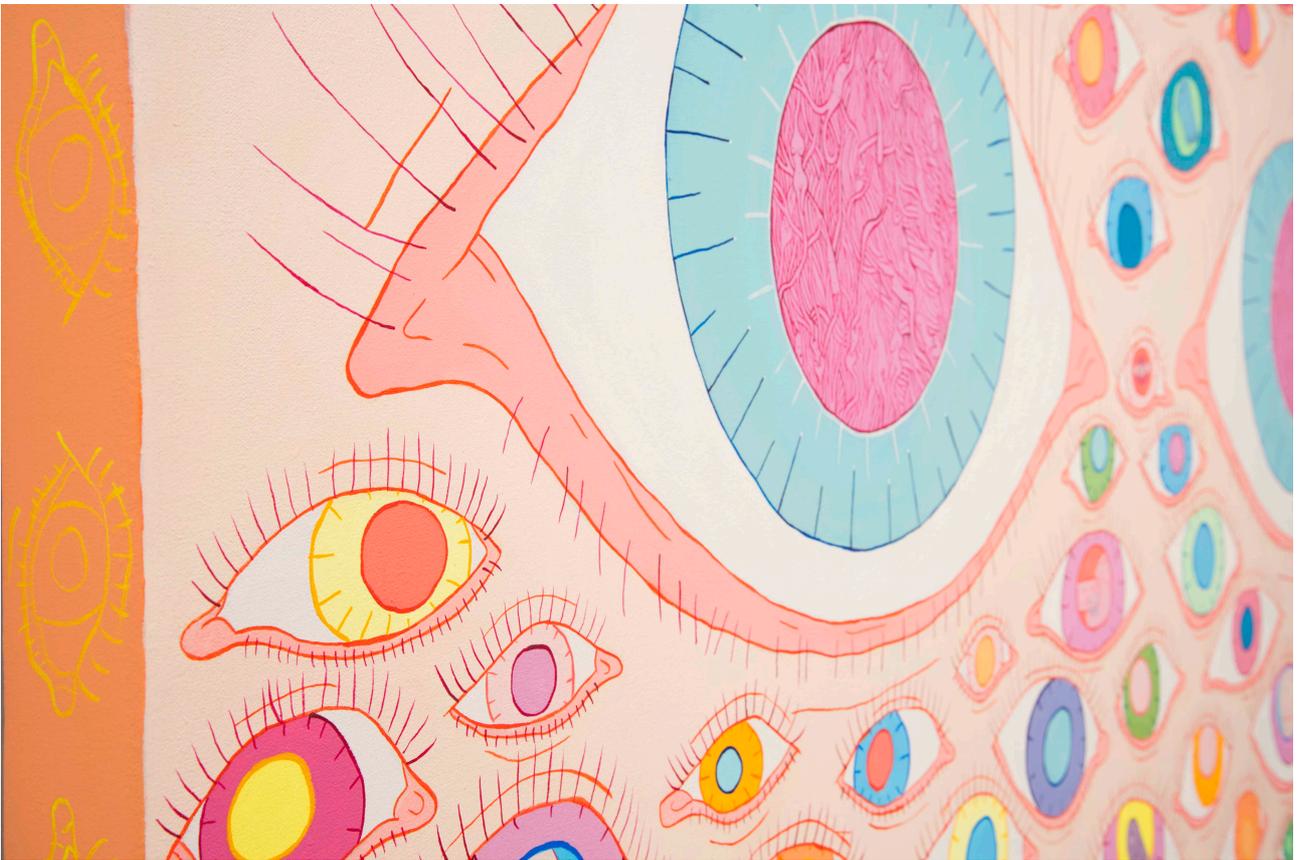


PLATE 31: Installation shot, Moudy Gallery, 2019



PLATE 32: Installation shot, Moudy Gallery, 2019

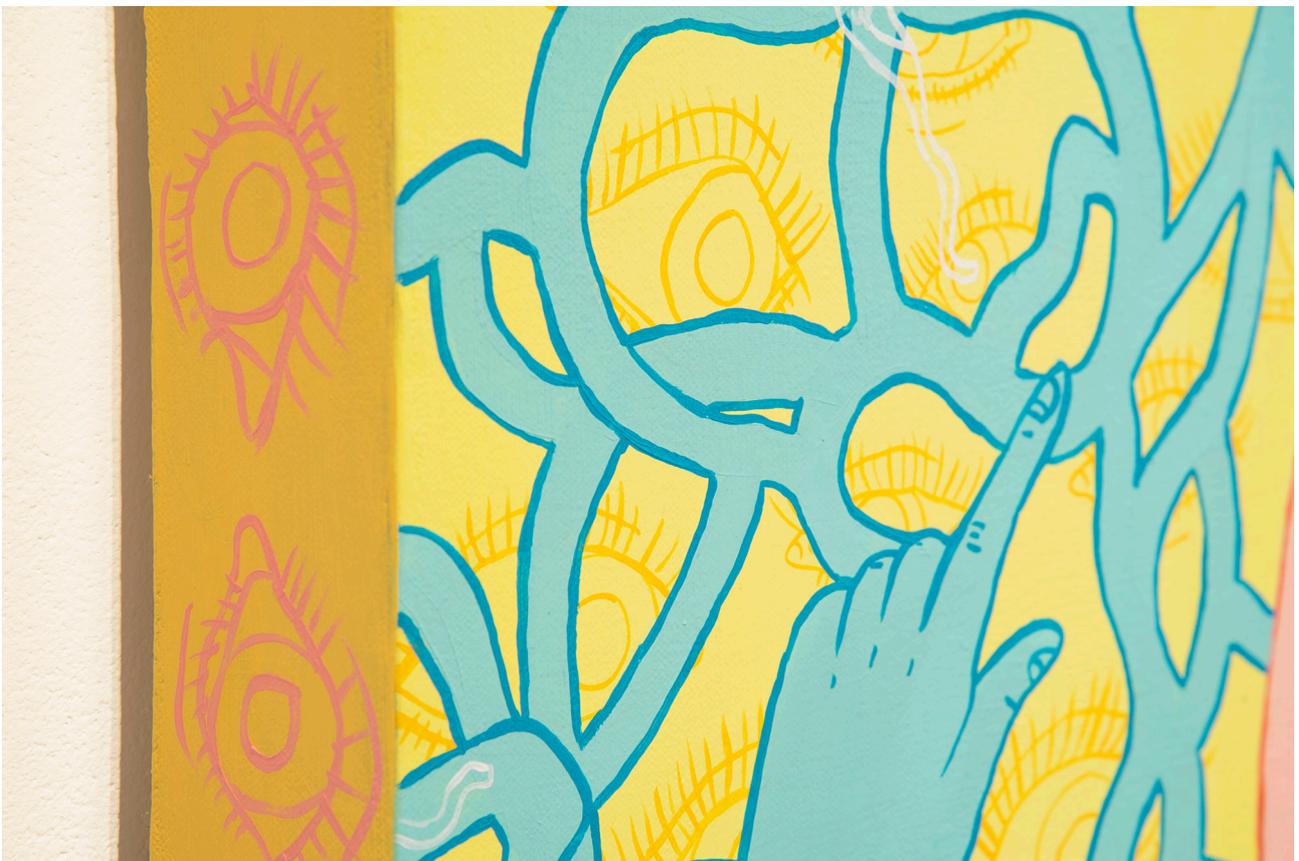


PLATE 33: Installation shot, Moudy Gallery, 2019

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