

Through the AOV fellowship I plan to immerse my art practice in the world of multidisciplinary work. Through video performance, lighting, audio sounds, writing, animation and structural sculpture elements I desire to manipulate and bring attention to our human relationship to our senses.

One major goal I have is to create an enclosed environment that viewers are able to enter. Since this work is heavily influenced by my personal experience as an individual with a progressive and profound hearing loss I am drawn to the idea of asking viewers to enter the material manifestation of my experience. By walking into the room I have created, viewers are also entering my personal experience. Inside this enclosed environment I would like to have two monitors facing each other. The monitors are built into tall, square pillars the height of a human. One of the monitors shows my own face and I am engaged in conversation with the other monitor who is an amorphous animation similar to the abstract paintings I have been creating for the past five years. Is this form “sound”? How does one have a conversation with “sound”? It “speaks” back to me in its own language, and I seem to understand it. I tell it stories. It vibrates when it “talks”. The form has a cadence reminiscent of language, it spits out words and parts of words. It even seems to manipulate the light in the room. It also keeps me company and poses questions for me to answer. Sometimes I understand it and sometimes I don’t. Is the form “me”? I even direct my questions at the viewers in the room, trying to figure it out.

Another project goal is to present a video of myself telling a story without sound, or with limited sound similar to my video “Wha_ i_ I _old you a __ory in a language I _an _ear”, and ask viewers to write down what they think the story is about. This would force viewers to engage in the daunting task of lipreading, which is the main tool I use when engaged in verbal communication.

One aspect of video performance that really excites me is its ability to reach a wide audience through the web. We all peruse youtube, facebook, instagram, blogs, tumblr and vimeo on a regular basis and I plan on using these platforms to document my work and reach a broad audience.

In order to create this work I will need assistance from a sound and video engineer. I have already started working with animation but will most likely require some assistance from someone with animation experience in order to create the amorphous form that is based on my two-dimensional paintings. I will also need help from a carpenter to create the enclosed environment and the two structures that house the monitors. I may also need to rely on the knowledge of an electrician or lighting engineer throughout the project. Many of the aspects that will be required to produce this project are things that I already have experience in (videography, woodworking, animation) but I know that this is an ambitious project and I would benefit from the aid of professionals as the need arises.

Through this work I hope to engage viewers in experiences that force them to question their own relationship to their senses and also their relationship to language and communication. By presenting my own experience in a raw and simple way I hope to bring awareness to the ways we communicate that are not verbal or audial. I also hope to expose viewers to a way of being in the world that is probably very different from their own.

Through my latest multidisciplinary work I am exploring the ways in which our senses alter our experience and perception of the world. I'm especially interested in how we use the intersection of our senses to communicate. I'm approaching this as an individual who is medically, although not culturally, deaf. My long, slow progression into deafness started when I was six years old and culminated in 2003 when I decided to undergo a cochlear implant surgery which carved away at some of my skull bone and muscle and placed a bionic computer-ear into the smallest crevices beyond my eardrum. I find that my definition of "language" and "communication" is something that has been continuously shifting and is directly tied to my own ability to navigate these concepts as someone with a disability.

My interest in participating in AOV is dually faceted - first of all, this is new work for me. I've been working full time as a two dimensional painter since 2010 and this is my first, long awaited, venture into multidisciplinary work. Through my paintings over the past five years I have explored my relationship to my self and my senses, but because I work intuitively, and am informed by process, my paintings don't focus on a direct message that I am trying to get across to my viewers. I'm excited by the prospect of creating powerful work with an intentional outcome and look forward to being more involved in the concepts that my viewers are exposed to. Secondly, I readily welcome the fellowship aspect of AOV and know that my work would benefit from a mentor with more experience in the field of multidisciplinary work. This fellowship will hopefully allow me to work with sound and video engineers as well as a carpenter in order to produce high quality work that is part visual, part audial, part story telling, part sculpture in order to address and agitate preconceived notions about human senses.

1.

Title : Wha_ i_ I _old you a __ory in a language I _an _ear

Date : 2015 Medium : Video Performance

Link : <https://vimeo.com/116583674>

Description : This is a video of myself reciting something that I wrote. First I recite my writing in my “normal” voice. Second I recite the same writing but I verbalize only the parts of each word that I am actually able to hear. For me both versions of this writing’s recital sound the same.

2.

Title : Script for “Wha_ i_ I _old you a __ory in a language I _an _ear”

Date : 2014 Medium : Writing, drawing

Link : <http://elementsunheard.blogspot.com/2015/01/title-script-for-wha-i-i-old-you-ory-in.html>

Description : This is the script I used to memorize the second recital of the poem from “Wha_ i_ I _old you a __ory in a language I _an _ear”. It helped me shave off the parts of each word that I’m unable to hear, such as “s”, “th”, “f”, “ch”, “sh”, “k”, “t”, “v”. I also thought it contained a nice visual component and it helped me decide to leave these sounds out of the video’s title.

3.

Title : The Body Listens, concept image

Date : 2015 Medium : Will be a Video Performance

Link : <http://elementsunheard.blogspot.com/2015/01/the-body-listens.html>

Description: This is a concept image for a new video project I’d like to complete with assistance from AOV. “The Body Listens” will be composed of two large screens projecting images of different parts of my face. I often find myself staring at people’s mouths when they are speaking so that I can read their lips. On numerous occasions this has made several people uncomfortable and awkward so I’ve trained my eyes to quickly move around to different parts of a person’s face when they are talking to me. This video will focus on the movements of specific parts of my face when I am concentrating on what someone is saying.

4.

Title : Element XI

Date : 2014 Medium : Acrylic and Ink on Panel, 10” x 10”

Link : <http://elementsunheard.blogspot.com/2015/01/title-element-xi-date-2014-medium.html>

Description : This is an example of one of my recent mixed media paintings. I would like to use this style of painting to create the “amorphous animation” in the enclosed environment I propose to create if selected for AOV. Since this painting was part of a series of paintings about my relationship to my body and my senses it does contain certain elements that could be identified as “muscles” or “sound waves” or “cells”. This connection is exactly why I’m excited to use it in the work I propose to make.

5.

Title : Element LVIII

Date: 2014 Medium : Acrylic and Ink on Panel, 12” x 24”

Link : <http://elementsunheard.blogspot.com/2015/01/element-lviii.html>

Description : This particular piece comes from the a show I received a MN State Arts Board Artist Initiative grant to complete entitled “Elements Unheard”. My artist statement for that body of work discusses how I am conducting a visual investigation of my senses and how my body experiences these senses. I ask “what does sound look like?” “How does it move through my body?” “How do my senses attach themselves to each other and mix up?”

6.

Title : Mazarine Tessitura

Date : 2014 Medium : Acrylic on Canvas, 36” x 48”

Link : <http://elementsunheard.blogspot.com/2015/01/mazarine-tessitura.html>

Description : This is also a piece of artwork from my show “Elements Unheard”. I love the colors in this piece and the scale. I can’t help but relate it to my body when I stand in front of it because it is almost as large as my body. I also like the title which is a reference to the intersection of our senses as it draws from both music and color terminology.

BIOGRAPHY

Liza Sylvestre holds a BA in Fine Art from the University of Minnesota. Her art practice started in Miami, FL where she lived for over six years before returning to her home city of Minneapolis. Sylvestre's work has been shown nationally in many cities including Miami, FL, Berkeley, CA and Portsmouth, NH. She recently completed a 25 piece commission for the 4 star James Hotel on Miami Beach and one of her paintings is now part of the permanent collection of the Rochester Museum of Fine Art in New Hampshire. Sylvestre is the co-founder of Creating Language Through Arts, an educational arts residency that focuses on using art as a means of communication when there are language barriers present due to hearing loss. In 2014 she was awarded both an Artist Initiative and Arts Learning grant from the MN State Arts Board.

Education

2006 University of Minnesota, Minneapolis MN / B.A. Fine Art

Exhibitions

2015

Public Functionary, Minneapolis MN (upcoming Fall 2015)

The Phipps Center, Hudson WI (upcoming September 2015)

Enormous Tiny Art 18. Nahcotta, Portsmouth NH (upcoming September 2015)

2014

Enormous Tiny Art 16. Nahcotta, Portsmouth NH

SOLO SHOW - *Elements Unheard*. MacRostie Art Center, Grand Rapids MN

Ned Evans, Carly Glovinski, Liza Sylvestre. Nahcotta, Portsmouth NH

2013

Enormous Tiny Art 14. Nahcotta, Portsmouth NH

Mammoth & Co. Victoria BC, Canada

Gallery 360, Minneapolis MN

2012

The Collector, Berkeley CA

Gallery 360, Minneapolis MN

Natural Curiosities. Miami International Airport, Miami FL

Coil. BuySomeDamnArt.com, Brooklyn NY

This and That. Art Center of South Florida. Miami FL

2011

Recently Acquired. Audrey Love Gallery, Miami FL

2010

Small Works. The Swenson Gallery, Miami FL

Lucky You. Audrey Love Gallery, Miami FL

Books. The Swenson Gallery, Miami FL

Crossroads. Sea Change Gallery, Portland OR

Collections, Commissions & Awards & Recognitions

2014

MN State Arts Board Panelist - Artist Initiative

MN State Arts Board Grantee - Artist Initiative

MN State Arts Board Grantee - Arts Learning

2012

The James Hotel, Miami FL - 25 commissioned paintings

Rochester Museum of Fine Art, Rochester NH - permanent collection

Residencies

The Fountainhead Studios, Miami FL. April 2011-August 2011

The Bakehouse Art Complex, Miami FL. March 2010-March 2011

Publications & Interviews

Designmilk.com - 12/15/14 - design-milk.com/intricate-organic-artwork-liza-sylvestre/

City Pages Art Blog - 5/15/14 - blogs.citypages.com/dressingroom/2014/05/meet_the_art-a-whirl_artist_liza_sylvestre.php/

City Pages "A List" - 12/7/13

MN Original television feature - air date 11/24/13 - www.mnoriginal.org/episode/429-david-bowen-nicholas-david/lizasylvestre/

Therawbook.com - 6/11/13 - <http://www.therawbook.com/2013/06/11/liza/>

Yen - the winter issue 2012 (Australian Publication)

Arthound.com - <http://arthound.com/2012/01/artist-painter-liza-sylvestre>

Booooooom.com - <http://www.booooooom.com/2012/01/11/artist-painter-liza-sylvestre/>

File-magazine.com - <http://file-magazine.com/citylikeyou/profiles/liza-sylvestre>

FFFFound.com - ffffound.com/image/b5248cc8ca9527cda1a9e47fec39c5f03fd77fc5?c=9097113

Budget

\$3500 - supplies, fees for video and sound engineers

\$1500 - artist compensation

Timeline

March 2015 to May 2015 - Planning and prep work

June 2015 to November 2015 - animation, shoot necessary video, edit

December 2015 to February 2016 - construction, more editing, finalize sound and video components, set up at Soap Factory.