Morgan Trowbridge-Pross

FURSCA

Summer 2020

End of Summer Report

This summer had to have been one of the most difficult times in my life that I’ve had to endure. Between COVID-19 Shutting down the entire world, personal mental health, and a family fallout I will say I am happy to have been able to participate in this summer's FURSCA. I have been blessed with the opportunity to use my creativity to not only express myself, but to find coping mechanisms within creating my artwork.

The intent of this project was not supposed to take the route of being about mental health. Originally the project was to be based on finding comfort within my identity, specifically the struggles I’ve faced as living as a [Male-to-Female] Transgender Man. I had made the attempt originally to go forward with this project. I was first tasked at the beginning of my FURSCA study by my professor Ashley Feagin to completely separate myself from my mechanical knowledge of my camera and put all of my focus on trying to tell a story through images. I was taking 100+ images per week and practicing this idea of storytelling through imagery. It was successful, although my intent of telling stories of personal identity was not showing. My phone images were telling a story of the chaos of my personal living space and showing my entrapment within my life and my mental health.

I was not taking care of myself and it was starting to affect my work ethic and I was becoming burnt out very quick. After a discussion with Professor Feagin, she had advised me to cut down what I was doing and try to work from the ground up. After this I had seeked therapeutic help based on Professor Feagins recommendations.

After a bad start to the first few weeks of my FURSCA project, I came to the conclusion that my work would be a project based off of a series of self exploration based projects on the topics of the current state of my mental health. These projects include photo manipulations of myself to convey the instability I feel in my life. I had started a project based off of augmented pieces or glitched portraits of myself. These projects are currently labeled as “Untitled” until I decide to either give this series of images a title or leave them without.

Although this project went down a completely different path than I had anticipated, It turned out to benefit me and serve a great importance towards myself as an artist and for preserving my mental health. Creating these images are therapeutic for me. They allow me to share my story without having to explain how I am feeling, because often I find it difficult to put my emotions to words. It also serves as a coping mechanism for me to heal and learn more about myself and my mental health. Creating these works have given me hope within my journey as an artist and have paved a path for me for my future endeavors. Without FURSCA and the funding I had received I do not know where I would be in my journey as an artist.

Moving forward with this project I will be participating in the 2021 Elkins R. Isaac Student Research Symposium to present and share what I have accomplished over this summer’s FURSCA research. I will also be submitting these projects and explorations to the 2021 Senior Art Show. Eventually I’d like to submit these pieces to graduate schools and artists in residence programs.

Lastly, I want to give thanks to the endowment that I was blessed to have received from the Harriet E. Elgin, '36' Endowed Fellowship. I’m extremely grateful to have been able to receive this endowment and to be able create work through the funds I have been given.