

Thesis Symposium
Script

I have a developing interest in collection. It stems from an idea that material is an intimate reflection of ourselves as subjects-- inferring a power of curiosity, memory, and communication.

[simone talking: "...these are from the Oregon coast, and it was actually only one day that I got all of them all at once...]

By curating a space to revisit collected material, we can retroactively engage with past processes of thinking and making, in turn offering a space to learn and develop from experience in our home-spaces. Walter Benjamin describes the relationship of his library,

"Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories. More than that: the chance, the fate, that suffuses the past before my eyes are conspicuously present in the accustomed confusion of these books" Walter Benjamin

Benjamin's experience of collection describes an attempt to make sense of a chaotic relationship of varied forms of material knowledge.

My urge to collect is an attempt to preserve moments of learning that would otherwise absorb into a formless mass-- for knowledge is found in many material possessions that can induce reflexivity and connection.

My project *The Act of Collecting* works as a platform to superimpose various collection practices. It takes the form of a handbook in which I have included essays, anecdotes, drawings, objects, and prompts.

Collecting various types of material knowledge performs as a protection mechanism; a way to look at ourselves and ground our memories in a somatic means. To mindfully collect objects is an experiment with nesting methods, identity, and a reflection of needs and priorities.

Protecting yourself through collection is to form facets of identity around our memories through preservation and care of our surroundings.

[krista talking: "...caring for all my plants together makes me feel very calm, my room just feels like a very special and intimate place..."

Collection as a practice has informed my art making in a multifaceted way, reshaping my relationship with process and reiteration.

My chosen pieces act as documentation of intellectual engagement, to track the successive nature of academic material. To collect is to archive works that have marked pivotal shifts in understanding the self as a subject, language as ominously controlling, and art-making as a means of analysis of social conditions.

My collection includes a writing practice that surfaces the personal as political. Allowing a space to ask questions like, what makes a present body? How do we deem when bodies are worthy or unworthy of rest? And an epiphytal moment that through a relief of irritability comes a gift of patience.

My ceramic piece, *the Act of Collecting*, explores collection in real-time. To retroactively collect objects of importance is to take time to search through infamous "junk drawers" and find the things that have followed you for years. This piece acts as a hub for collectibles, a space to juxtapose various memories and play with identity.

Donald
Kuspit,

"...children use toys to make the transition from subjectivity to objectivity, whereas adults use 'the toy of the work of art to make the transition back to the interior reality he or she tends to forget in his or her dealings with exterior reality.'...there is very little in modern society, apart from art, that encourages us to become subjective."

I love the potential of objects as a conduit for playfulness, for discovery, for testimony.

To interact with a objects of importance gives the subject the power of manipulation; making the collector a learner through the act itself—for intimate interaction infers space for appreciation, caution, questioning, and to inevitably to see the self through the a rhizomatic means of connection.

What we choose to collect is a reflection of what we want to remember-- A resurgence of affections through mementos.

Through curation of functional and aesthetic objects, we can develop an intimate understanding of the individual, or a grander scale inspection of our social conditions.

Curation is a position of narration-- creating the possibility of philosophical exploration through telling stories tied to material objects.

And now, what we choose to interact with will inevitably reflect our current experience as the past.

A lifestyle as a “forever student” can be rooted in this collection and curation, prioritizing an appreciation for process and challenge.

Opportunities revealed through our self-developed curriculum offers a space for teaching and learning to exist coterminously, actively critiquing an authoritative relationship between teacher and student. To become a teacher-student hybrid creates a safe space for challenging our contemporary means of systematic educating.

Audre Lorde says,

“...teaching is a survival technique... that’s the only way real teaching, real learning, happens.” (Lorde and Rich, 719).

I find it important to make the invisible aspects of my knowledge collection visible.

To have a collection is a reason to share-- to disseminate knowledge as a political act. Art making through collecting can take various forms.

These personal archives encourage creation and criticality rather than memorization and absorption. In my final words, there is a generative potential for discussion within art making that can be led by the stories of our collections.