

I am immensely grateful for the semester-long sabbatical leave of absence I received for the Fall of 2019, during which I did exactly what I said I would: I danced, I wrote, I painted. The sabbatical leave afforded me time to immerse myself fully in creative pursuits in three distinct, yet related avenues—performing, writing, and painting—that have informed my recent curricular achievement (creating and coordinating the multi-disciplinary Second Year Research & Creative Experience, designing and teaching its Theater Arts & Dance seminar, THAR 273) and administrative service (chairing the departments of Arts & Art History during academic year 2018-2019, and Theater Arts & Dance in Spring 2020).

Performing

During my sabbatical semester, I continued to practice dance, taking various classes around the Bay area, including Professor Daley's advanced contemporary technique right here at SSU, attending contact improvisation jams and workshops. I continued to facilitate the monthly West Marin Contact Improvisation Jam at the Dance Palace in Point Reyes Station, and I expanded my collaboration with Katerina Eriksson, a familiar Bay Area dance figure, teacher of improvisational dance in Europe and the US, member and co-founder of Swedish improvisation ensemble Floke. While we started working together on "Project Pause" in May 2018, further time was needed to conceive, rehearse, and perform the physical theater piece produced as *Fall*, at SAFEhouse, October 17, 2019, for the abridged version, and November 3rd at Stage Werx, for the full version, both in San Francisco. The sabbatical allowed me to attend weekly rehearsals, and host and organize retreats necessary to bring the project to temporary completion. *Fall*, a physical theater piece inspired, made, and performed by women, remains but one manifestation of "Project Pause", and while no other performance is currently scheduled, the plan is to continue to create new components, and to keep performing them as live installations/performances in various public venues.

Painting

What started in the fall of 2018 as a series of paintings inspired by the colors shared by my two countries of citizenship, France and the United States of America—Blue, White, and Red—evolved in an exploration of identity across boundaries and borders in a time of fire and melting ice. While enrolled in an independent study in painting with professor Claudia Morales at the SRJC, I had occasion to revisit an old favorite still life discovered in the summer of 2015, when studying with Professor Wess. I stumbled upon two old favorite objects that had fascinated me then, except this time I found myself exploring a surprising sideline, which shaped my interrogation of the three national colors into the figuration of a hybrid construction made of inanimate objects—a seamstress form, a cow skull and horns, fabric, feathers, antlers, and gourd. In its emphasis on remnants of once living creatures and man made objects of covering and constriction, the figure draws attention to the flesh inhabiting negative spaces and speaks of empty models most expressive of the colors of our time. I am still working off this inspiring figure. Having completed three single paintings of various sizes ranging from 20x20 to 36x24, one diptych (two 18x24), I just now started #12 of a series of 25 12x12 paintings meant to be displayed together, either closely juxtaposed in a compact 5'2"x5'2"x5, or any other configuration. Each represents a detail of one of the bigger

paintings, and I am allowing these details to evolve on their own, as they become the focus of a single composite piece. When exhibited, I wish for the project to be interactive, with the viewer able to change both configuration and order of the 25 pieces in the display; I imagine that the compact configuration would be the one hung on one wall of the venue, preferably facing its counterpoint, *Adrift in a Time of Fire*, a 5x5 wood panel, with the interactive modality best played out with a monitor and keyboard allowing viewers to manipulate possibilities and find out something about themselves in the process. *The Color Between* is a current working title for this composite.

Writing

The writing component of the creative sabbatical project is the most complicated, as it comprises several threads, which intersect and, so far, call for being weaved together into a single, complex set of narratives about identity building. One thread, temporarily entitled *Legacies*, tells about the women in my family, what kind of models they provided or did not, the migrations they went through, willingly or not, and how these affected them, and me, now of dual citizenship in a time of global anxiety and questioning of the notion of nationality. Another thread, of a more directly autobiographical nature, documents and explores the artistic process as I experience it coming out of years of repression, issues and habits of survival. A third strand consists of a series of short pieces, in prose and in verse, forming an interesting and sometimes dissonant song, not unlike the hybrid figure explored and exploded in painting. While I have written extensively in all three directions, I am still very much experimenting with ways to weave these threads together in a fashion that I would find satisfying. It is unclear whether or not I will manage to piece them all together, or have to settle for several different projects. I need more time to experiment.

In the mean time, these three pursuits have in common a commitment to a voice that did not find its full range in strictly scholarly work, a fascination for composite creatures and creations, a preoccupation with growth and mortality at the individual and global levels, the need to pause and leave marks in time for others to take in, a desire to live and give to the fullest of my abilities. All aspects of this multi-faceted and flexible project reflect my increasing interest over the years in various artistic practices and their intersections, most recently illustrated in my innovative work in multi-disciplinary curricular design. I am confident that my sabbatical explorations will lead to more innovations, and if I am lucky and brave, a publishable product. I believe SSU will benefit from my success, as I return inspired to continue to be of service in designing outside the box curriculum and multidisciplinary ventures at the intersection of the arts and other disciplines.