The Home, Memory, and Materialism Explored Through Landscape

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The Home, Memory, and Materialism Explored Through Landscape

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Abstract

Moving from Arizona two years ago meant editing down my possessions to fit in the back of a pickup truck that my best friend, two cats, and I shared for three days. I have been moving on average about once a year since I was fourteen. This nomadic lifestyle meant constantly having to get rid of things that felt unimportant and insignificant. Certain things, however, have survived the moves. Throughout my nomadic lifestyle, the bedroom became a curated space for possessions put on display, showcasing the importing things I own. In my travels, landscape and house became equally important in defining what “home” means to me.

My thesis work explores memories through the lenses of the bedroom, landscape and material possessions. In my work, memory, immersion, and installation are one, where the viewer is enveloped. Viewers enter a bedroom space with objects on the walls, piles of clothes scattered about the floor, onto which a video of saguaro cactus blooms overlaying the streets and mountains I always passed by around the Phoenix Valley is projected. The piles are my old clothes that have been stowed away in garbage bags waiting to be thrown out. Now they are cast in iron, permanent and transformed, their shadows becoming mountains looming over my vision of home. The viewer’s body supplements and change the shadows; the installation in a constant state of fluctuation. Personal possessions cast in bronze sit atop bleached oak shelves, becoming moments of clarity amidst the installation as individual memories within those objects.

Together, these objects are permanent impermanence, my bedroom always moving, my possessions locked in iron and bronze. The installation of everyday objects that have been transformed into more precious and permanent copies, set in an ephemeral and cerebral bedroom, creates a transitory space that embodies the ever changing state of the mind and the memories swimming within.
Thank You

I would like to thank my family, without their continual support of my passion and career I would not have gotten this far. Next, my most amazing mentor, Elizabeth Kronfield. Every day you have given me your support, advice, and constant reassurance when I was sure things were going to fall apart. “Go big or go home”, and I went big, but not without all of your help. Then of course, Matt Wicker. Your endless knowledge on everything helped me become more precise on my work, especially when you would laugh at my “math” skills. My committee members Denton Crawford and Clifford Wun, without your guidance my thesis show wouldn’t have evolved to the state that it is now. Kyle Blalock, there are no words for you. Almost three years ago you and I packed up our things in the back of your pickup truck ready to head out for the journey of our lives. My sculpture family, Bri, Maddy, Matt, you guys always have my back and lend a hand whenever you can, and most importantly can put a smile on my face when everything else is going to hell. I seriously cannot thank everyone enough for all the help you have given me and I am so glad to be surround by such amazing people.

Thank you.
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Introduction

The concept of material possession became important to me when I began moving after my parent’s divorce. The process of giving up possessions solidified the changes that were happening and in turn, caused an attachment to objects. This made it apparent how life was changing for me, and how much I wanted to hold on to my previous life. Part of my identity had been lost along with the comfort of an almost obsessively curated personal space. I still hold onto various possessions that serve as reminders of memories growing up and as different markers of experiences in my life. Recreating my room in a dreamlike transference from object to landscape presents this idea of memories attached to material possessions. The memories are embedded in the objects, but they are not always clear, and often transform themselves into a cluster of segments blurring and blending together into an incoherent form; piles of clothes transforming into a topography reminiscent of the Arizona desert, yet still describing the constant state of disorder that is found in the bedroom. Bronze versions of possessions are strategically placed throughout the space, representing small moments of clarity in a surreal space. Through multi-layered processes of creation, I am able to recall the memory associated with the sculptures.

Focusing on creating an installation and an environment, rather than focusing on individual pedestal pieces, leads to creating a place. Exploring the idea of the bedroom and the references of home manifested into sculptures that mimic the original personal objects. By using recognizable items I want the viewer to relate to the work despite my personal history and attachment. By combining many similar objects into one sculpture I will transform the work into an abstracted form of a landscape, bringing the outside desert scenery to the inside of the bedroom topography. By casting materials in iron and bronze I want to bring in the historical context of the material to the conversation and use it to express the visceral intimacy of the
bedroom and add a sense of permanence. Using the original objects, such as clothes and various trinkets for sculptures, serves as a direct translation that leads the viewer into the surreal sculptures in the installation. Going from the bedroom environment to the desert of Arizona is important in addressing the home and the heavy ties that I have to my home state. Incorporating loosely interpreted representations of the mountain ranges creates the valley that the Phoenix metropolitan area is nestled in. My thesis show is a multi-media installation depicting the importance of memory through objects from the bedroom that morphs into the landscape of the Arizonan desert.
Section I: Context
**Background**

I have always been interested in the idea of memory represented through personal possessions found in the home. This started for me in my undergraduate career at Arizona State University in the culmination of my first solo show *Parasitic Agglomeration*. This body of work focused on the decay of objects and the stories left behind that the finder imposed onto the discarded pieces. Unknown to me at the time was the more personal genesis of the work that would lead to the path of my research. During my education I was able to explore a variety of media from cast metals, plastic, kinetic, sound, and installation art. Having a variety of skills is important to me in order to traverse through multiple materials best suited to convey my ideas. The work cannot be forced into a material, rather the material has to work for the art. Sticking to a singular material does not enable me to convey the concepts that I want. By using certain materials such as bronze for its preciousness, or video to portray home, it gives a more well-rounded insight to the ideas.

I have a fascination with decaying materials left behind in abandoned homes. This is the opposite of what I experienced growing up in Phoenix, a new metropolitan city. This interest was cultivated through my travel to Europe, specifically visiting my extended family in Bavaria, Germany since I was an infant. Seeing Munich and the tiny farming towns that my family lived in instilled this idea of rich ancient history of place. It is something that has constantly stayed with me. In my junior year I was able to study abroad at the University of the Arts, London in England. Being able to live in such an old city refueled that interest with old abandoned homes, seeing the overgrowth of vines and plants start to retake over these places that once were homes. The summer of my Senior year I then did a residency program at the Scottish Sculpture Workshop in Lumsden, Aberdeenshire, Scotland as part of the US/UK Iron Symposium.
Scottish Sculpture Workshop is located in the Highlands of Scotland in a town with a population of about two hundred people. Scotland has freedom to roam; where travelers can move throughout the land uninhibited by property lines. The Workshop was surrounded with farmlands that had old Bothies (farmhouses) I would visit that were falling apart, overgrown, and sometimes had old belongings that had been left behind. I wondered what those stories were of those objects. I came back to Arizona with fresh ideas and found objects from car boot (trunk) sales and antique shops that informed the creation of my senior show.

This need for material possessions has always been an important part of my life. In my childhood home there were shelves upon shelves throughout the house filled with tchotchkes. There were objects from my parents’ travels, things passed down to them from their parents, my mom’s collection of Hummels, their record collection, and my sister’s and my own collections. In a sense we were hoarders, always having this need for more things, wanting to collect more. They were mementos, personal curations that showcased who were, or what we were interested in. Then when I was thirteen my parents divorced. This is hard on any child, and for me it was no exception. This was the starting point of the reoccurring event of moving, and the continuous process of packing and unpacking. My mom, sister, and I stayed in my childhood home for a few years after that, with my sister and I going back and forth from my mom’s house to my dad’s, packing up a few things, and a continuous attempt of making it feel like a home. Around when I was sixteen it came to the point of moving for both parents. My dad moved farther away into a larger house, and my mom moved a few miles away from my childhood home into a smaller house. I had to abandon about half of my things, picking and choosing what was important to me, and subconsciously it was this act of growing up. I was only a few years away from college and it was this sense that it was time to let go of things from my childhood. When
it was time to go to college I moved twice every year, back and forth from the dorms and then moving into apartment after apartment. I had to choose the objects that kept making the moves and I could never get settled in. Finally, I made the biggest move of my life, going to graduate school. I packed up my things into the back of a truck that I shared with my best friend, essentially having about six boxes of belongings and moved across the country. Becoming so removed from the environment that I have lived in my whole life, the landscape of the east coast was so fascinating to me. The bright sunlight in Arizona gave everything this washed out quality to it, and it was such a stark change to be surrounded by vivid green. Dealing with temperature changes was another enormous transition that I still am not used to. I no longer have dry heat and mild winters. Now I have humid summers and bone-chilling winters. Dealing with those things and the emotional aspects to moving I found the source for my thesis.

**Influences**

Clothes have been used as a representation of memory for a few artists. Ann Hamilton utilized workers clothes to invoke the history of American Labor in *Blue Indigo*. The massive size of the clothing pile confronts the viewer while still invoking memory. The pile shows the process of accumulation and while based in different concepts I use my clothes in the same way. Showing mass and multitude in a need for material possession I wanted to create an overwhelming feeling. Hamilton has been able to do that as she continuously creates large scale installations that captivate the viewer. Even while showing mass her installations continuously have a calming feature, whether through someone erasing text from a book, or fabric moving gently. The calming nature invites the viewer to not only come into the work but to stay and linger. That is an important aspect to me, having the viewer able to enjoy the space much like the
viewers do in *The Event of a Thread*. This piece was located in an old train station where viewers swung on swings with strings attached that moved a giant piece of cloth that cut the space in half. Viewers laid underneath the cloth in a peaceful state and I wanted to have my video have the same effect.

Shinique Smith works with materials and possessions that we consume and discard. She was my first insight to creating clothing towers utilizing mass and scale to develop the concept. Her *Bale Variant* sculpture series are much more sterile and packaged than what I wanted to portray. Using twine, she creates massive rectangular towers to overwhelm the viewer with our tendency to discard. Her sculptural work is visually constructive, everything is tied together to keep it all from falling apart. The act of creating a tower evokes the same feeling of mass as Ann Hamilton’s work.

Mike Kelley’s work constantly deals with memories of childhood. His use of found objects such as stuffed animals or imagery from his high school yearbook allows the viewer to be able to connect personally while still keeping concepts from his own history. His agglomeration of stuffed animals in *More Love Hours Then Can Ever Be Repaid* and *Deodorized Central Mass with Satellites* began the train of thought of combining objects together to show the morphing of memories being recalled. His use of personal objects to convey memory was something that I wanted to explore myself in my work, but for me it was important to have the object have a sense of permanence that old stuffed animals do not have.

My use of multiple materials is not the first of its kind. Installation art became the doorway to sculptural freedom, able to combine old and new techniques and the idea of creating an environment rather than a singular piece. From creating a mirrored room filled with lights,
exact replicas of a home, to a ship filled with kinetic, sound and light pieces, it was a new way to invite viewers into the work, a different level of understanding.

Louise Bourgeois’ *Cells* and bronze castings introduced me to combining traditional sculpture techniques into installations. Invoking memories from her childhood, she creates an environment for the viewer to experience. The *Cells* had the viewer take both a voyeuristic role when they were not allowed in, and an immersive role when they were. Bourgeois had a refinement to her technical skills that has pushed me to be a better sculptor over the years. The *Cells* instantly created a room, and in her piece *Red Room* she did exactly that. It created a sense of home even though the room was filled with seemingly random red objects, although important to her and reinforced through the use of color. I wanted to use that sense of importance, and how she lets the piece determine the material is should be created in.

Tom Sachs has continuously cast mundane objects into bronze. He brings those objects to a level of importance through the historical context of the bronze. Making one to one copies does not trick the viewer into what they are seeing and lets the material speak for the work. Sachs began using cast bronze in his installations like *Tea Ceremony*. Using the bronze castings to create focus points in the installation, he places the bronze next to cardboard and insulation foam sculptures. These mundane materials become elevated because of the bronze. This approach to installation combined common and rarified materials and had the ability to create a story line, and influenced my use of a variety of materials. I wanted to take it step further though and bring it more into a contemporary realm by adding technology to my installation.

Matthew Barney’s *River of Fundament* has changed his usual choice of Vaseline and self-lubricating plastic to cast metal to pair with his film. He explores cast bronze and iron for its materiality rather than its historical context. Like me, he wants to illuminate the preciousness of
the sculptures by using bronze and the use of iron with its ties to the blue collar world. They work to supplement the film rather than to take over with the majority of the sculptures being exhibited in galleries and museums stemming directly from the film itself. *Boat of Ra* utilizes wood, cast, bronze, gold plated bronze, resin-bonded sand, and steel to form the upside down wooden frame of the top of a house, cast bronze rope trail ahead, dropped to the floor mid pull. The rope being cast in bronze draws the viewer’s attention to what is important as well as making connections to the film. He has waited to use bronze because of its historical context until he thought the work needed it. These bronze elements act as focal points in the pieces and elevate the object that was cast, much like what I have in my work.

When I first saw a Yayoi Kusama sculpture it was at the Phoenix Art Museum where *You Who Are Getting Obliterated in the Dancing Swarm of Fireflies* is in the permanent collection. It was such a stark change to what I was used to seeing at museums and galleries. Instead of seeing a painting on a wall or sculpture on a pedestal, here was a room where the viewer is immersed in the work. I carried this concept with me when I started making sculpture. I wanted to create environments and have the viewer experience something similar to my actions. Kusama’s work has the ability to draw in the viewer and surround them with the internal visions that she deals with. She overpowers the viewer with the repetition of dots but the work still has a calmness to it.

Technology has always been an important aspect to my work. Having a computer since I was five and helping my dad fix and build computers instilled a curiosity and a need to explore technology. In my mind it keeps sculpture fresh and is a different challenge compared to the process of mold making and casting that is in traditional sculpture. Video work has the same demand of process as I meticulously layer video on video until its original form is no longer
recognizable. It started for me in appropriated/found video art. Nam June Paik as a founder of video art, first brought in techniques of editing pre-existing videos into a completely new form by isolating and editing the video to its final convoluted form. This led the way for the evolution of video art. Paik’s way of changing pre-existing videos influenced my style of video editing, combining found and self-recorded videos so then the originals are no longer recognizable.
Section II: Evolution
Observations

My work has always centered on home and memory. There were many evolutions of trying to create a cohesive installation and body of work to truly represented that. I have always wanted found objects to either morph or blend together to become this assemblage of memories. It has been important to me to have the finished sculptures be direct replicas from the found objects using different mold making processes. The multi-layered techniques allow for me to process the memories that are part of the object. I go through creating rubber molds of each object, and from there a variety of materials can be made from it. Most often I would create a wax version that I then can cast into iron, bronze or glass. Glass and bronze continued as strong materials, but the iron castings often were problematic in that they continuously miscast, and they struggled to fit into my body of work and concept.

The first variations of my iron castings were trying to figure out the importance of my personal objects which led to mountainous forms that kept reemerging. They were these angular textured castings with fragments of objects like Sly the Beanie Baby™, and the cuckoo clock. Texture was important in a way of conveying landscape that was reminiscent of the Arizona desert. It started to convey this idea of memory and the process of recalling, which is always fragmented, mixed, and ideas muddled together. But as I progressed the pieces started feeling too heavy handed and not aesthetically what I wanted for my final work.

These small iron forms became maquettes for larger fiberglass pieces. I originally wanted to create large scale versions of the iron castings. The ideas seemed forced however, and material identity with form confused, so these were put aside to give me time to think. The fiberglass pieces eventually made it into my thesis show as an armature for the clothes piles while a different large scale iron casting was created.
Landscape

Mountains became a core idea that I needed to convey in dealing with memories of home. Phoenix is the Valley of the Sun and anywhere that you look there are mountain ranges that are constantly surrounding you. These forms transformed the most during the creation of my thesis. Starting with the iron and fiberglass, I knew I wanted to start creating an interactive part to my installation since that always has been an important aspect for my work. This started folding into the mountain scape in a few different variations before the final objects displayed in my thesis. Some explorations of mountains resulted in etched square foam forms painted in colors representing a desert palette. I wanted the viewer to be able to play with the blocks and change the formation of the whole, thinking of the ever changing landscape and memories of childhood play. This however fell short of the depth of the ideas I wanted to convey. I also started creating wooden mountains that I would organize in a way that the shadows created a mountain peak outline. Once again I felt that this was a piece that did not have a forward direction with my work and tended to look more like teepee frames rather than abstract mountain shapes. I kept feeling stuck and hitting dead ends in the idea of conveying mountains, but with each iteration I came closer to the final form of clothes.

Clothes

Clothes as a material or subject matter did not make its way into my work until the summer before my last year. What started as a halfhearted joke that I should just use the piles of my clothing that are constantly strewn about my room for my sculptures actually became a key point in my thesis. “Why not cast the clothes in iron,” became a question that took root and grew into the main sculptures in my installation. I did two small test castings of the iron piles and
instantly knew that was the method I wanted to use. It was the mountainous shape and form I had been searching for and the perfect transition from the bedroom to landscape. The next problem came with how to present the real clothing as well. I wanted the iron castings, but I also wanted to have the soft fabric element to balance out the hardness of the iron. At the time it seemed important that I try to transform the clothes somehow and that led to a series of tests using plastic and paint to unify all the different articles of clothing. It became apparent that the materiality of the actual clothes was a necessary element and the transformation needed to be abandoned.

**Plastic**

Plastic has been a material that I have worked with for many years. It is a quick material for rapid production. After I realized that the objects were not working with being emerging pieces in the clothes pile I decided to go a different direction and cast a multitude of objects to overwhelm the viewer. Having a singular bronze piece with ghostly plastic replicas seemed like the best way to approach this idea to make the bronze more distinct. I was also experimenting in using plastic as a hardener for the clothes as a way to get them to be more dynamic with some of the clothing defying gravity instead of just a static pile of clothes. Plastic worked for the cast possessions because the mold made them slightly matte. For the clothes it kept a shiny quality and a level of fakeness, losing the soft quality I wanted to clothes to have, just overall becoming a distraction to the clothes. Ultimately using plastic did not make it to the final installation, in lieu of other materials.
Casting objects in bronze has been something that has carried over since my beginnings as a sculptor. It was not until after working at a foundry and honing in on my mold making and wax working skills that I went from abstract forms to direct replicas of objects. Personal belongings have always had strong ties to memory. I wanted to memorialize these memories in bronze while using the historical context that bronze has to elevate the idea of preciousness. Mechanisms of display for the bronzes constantly evolved throughout the work. I have always been opposed to the idea of pedestals. It was something that was instilled in me when I first started taking sculpture, that it should be able to stand on its own rather than need a wall or pedestal when it was larger. Even when I did require the use of a pedestal I always would try to find a way other than the white wooden box we have become so used to. So displaying these bronzes on simple pedestals was out of the question. I thought about bronze as an elevated material and how I wanted to challenge this notion and use it as a material quality rather than its typical use as creating an elite object. The castings should be these moments of clarity amidst the other materials, to draw the viewer into the work. The original thought was having the objects emerge from the clothes piles cast in either bronze, plastic, or iron. Over and over again they just became lost. The objects as cast individuals displayed on shelves became the strongest point, with the bronze gleaming objects and the plastic slightly opaque castings functions as ghost replicas.

China and Porcelain

During intersession before my last semester, I travelled to the Sanbao Ceramics Institute in Jingdezhen, China. Jingdezhen is the porcelain capital of the world and this is where the
familiar blue and white porcelain pieces originated from. I have never really worked with ceramics and I could not wait to see my objects in porcelain as a new material I could fold into my thesis work. The slip casting process is almost identical to the foundry process so I felt right at home working with this material. I wanted to cover them in blue decals and create a completely new element of a historically precious material. Due to the way that I had built the slip casts and how they had to sit during firing, I was not able to glaze the pieces and they would just be high fired in the kiln. Just being high fired, the pieces came out a matte stark white and had a luscious quality to it. Having creating these, I made more when I returned to the United States, wanting to have the porcelain pieces replace some of the plastic versions. By replacing the plastic castings, the objects became more important, and the matte white became a perfect surface for the video to project on.

**Installation and Video**

One thing that has been a constant is the desire for the thesis work to be an immersive installation. I wanted the viewer to be able to traverse through this space of memory, home and landscape. Focused on making the sculptures first that would occupy the space informed how I would create the environment. The transition of the bedroom to landscape started with a desert scene on the wall for the installation. It became a straightforward attempt of painting the Arizona sunset. This painting captured the emotive quality I was looking for, but turned it into a kitschy western scene that was frankly poorly executed. Video then seemed to be the solution to create a surreal installation. I started with combining and layering found videos of sunsets and cactus blooms to create something more abstract. The first edition of the video did not feel personal enough, but it was on the right track to how I wanted it to look aesthetically. I was able
to go home to Arizona for Thanksgiving and while I was there I took videos of the landscape when I was being driven around the city. With the additions of these videos I created the final version and had to figure out how I wanted to install the piece. Then came the process of seeing how the video looked on the iron castings and the piles of clothing as well as overlapping multiple projector screens to layer the video even more. Even with the practice installations to get the main idea of how to install the work I was not able to make final decisions until the installation in the gallery to create the immersive environment from the sculptures and video projections.
Section III: The Body of Work
Resolution

The end installation created for my thesis stayed parallel to my initial proposal and was able to mature to create a stronger body of work. I was able to create an immersive installation that showcased my ideas on memory, home, and landscape. Through many variations of trial and error I was left with a body of work that I am satisfied with in technical skill and concept. The installation was in a closed off space in the Bevier Gallery, where I was able create a surreal environment using multiple projectors and the sculptures I had made for the installation. The videos developed an old home video quality through the graininess created from the layering as they perfectly fitted onto the moveable walls which created an idea of a screen. Within the space clothes piles sat spaced out on the floor around an eight foot cast iron and black clothes pile with the top reflecting back the video from three sides, like a snow capped peak. Along one wall a meticulously organized grid of forty bleached oak shelves held bronze and porcelain castings of the knick-knacks and succulents that I had cast. The bronze cacti stood out as darker forms in contrast to the white porcelain which became just another surface for the video projection to play on. Outside the walled off space four iron castings of clothes were strewn about acting as a lead in for the viewer to enter the installation and expanded the space that I was given. All of the aspects in the installation followed what I had set out to do in my proposal. The only part that I felt had drastically changed and got edited was the blending and combining of all of the different objects into one form as my original ideas were conveyed. The video aspect had also not gone as I planned since the space was not big enough to put the projector as far back as I needed to to envelop the space. The openness of the gallery and the moveable walls did not create the enclosure of a room. However, I was able to keep with a solid concept but let the work change and evolve as needed to create a stronger body of work.
Critical Elements

Casting objects in iron, bronze, and porcelain transforms them from the impermanent to permanent. Clothes fade and unravel, plants die, toys become worn, and bones break down. However, when transformed into this permanent material, for me, it keeps them alive, precious, and displays importance to the viewer. Bronze and porcelain are these elevated materials used throughout history as a way to immortalize something. Great monuments are cast in bronze, and both porcelain and bronze have been expensive materials for the elite throughout history. I wanted to carry that history into the contemporary art world and utilize it for showcasing my own personal memories tied within that object, using traditional finishes for bronze and porcelain. For bronze, a black patina done with liver of sulfur with brushed back highlights, or a green patina of cupric nitrate that mimics what usually happens naturally to bronze over time served this function while with porcelain a high fired unglazed matte white, or a blue and white glaze that is found in traditional porcelain pieces referred to the history of materiality. Along one of the walls of the installation forty bleached oak shelves I placed meticulously spaced and organized with cacti, succulents, deer skulls, Beanie Babies™, cat figurines, and care bears cast in bronze and porcelain with a glow and reflection of the video projected over them, blending and receding, with only their shadows becoming defining features on the wall. Each one of these objects is special to me and remind me of home. They hold memories and the repetition of each object signifies the multitude of memories that are carried with them.

Iron is an innately hard material. It is dark and cold and one often thinks of skillets and bathtubs rather than art. This blue collar material starkly contrasts the richness that bronze and porcelain carry. Yet, it still exudes permanence and immortality. I wanted to take the soft material of my clothes and transform them to something more than just the typical mess found on
my floor. I found that these piles of clothes started creating a landscape in my bedroom, much like the mountain ranges that surround the Valley of Phoenix. When cast in metal and confined to one uniform color, the clothes start to look more like a textured mound rather than their original form. It is only on closer inspection that the viewer starts to see the folds of the fabric or the buttons of pants that then reveal the iron casting for what it is. These heavy castings are like memorials to what I have had to leave behind each time I move. Even with this dark presence iron has, I wanted to create a lightness to it and a way to contemporize this low brow material. Just like the bronze and porcelain, I projected on the castings, letting the wire brushed surface reflect back the video. By treating all the cast metal the same it equalizes the importance of the casting. This challenges the typical material hierarchy that is found in the art world.

One can easily find this hierarchy when you enter an art museum. Sculptures are typically bronze, marble, porcelain, perched on a gleaming white pedestal. Mimicked after reality, they are direct reflections of the usual human figure or animal. Contemporary art museums today have a much different take than that of our predecessors exhibiting pieces incorporating found objects, fabric, steel, sounds, and blinking lights. The white cube of the gallery has given way to full room installations where the viewer is immersed in an environment rather than looking at an art pieces on a pedestal or wall. I wanted to approach installation in a different way. I wanted to mix low-brow and high-brow materials together into one cohesive installation. Bronze would be used for its aesthetics as a material rather the historical context it carries with it. I wanted to elevate the humble materials of clothes and iron, to be able to sit beside the shining porcelain and bronze, all as one piece.

The video piece became the catalyst for the installation, uniting every material to the same level of importance encasing the sculptures in the projection. It not only immersed the
sculptures, but the viewer as well. The sculptures in their place cast shadows on the wall creating an outline of mountain peaks. When the viewer entered the space they changed the landscape, their own shadows adding to and manipulating the mountain peaks. They became part of the memories being shown in the installation. Convoluted from the layering, it also served as a memory of a grainy home video. Bits and pieces emerged to focus yet the full picture never was concrete, only images of highway signs passing by, mountains that are flipped and readable as either peaks or part of the sky, headlights slowly flashing by as vivid reds, purples, pinks, and oranges as the sun sets. Projecting on the objects distorted the video even more, adding another layer to an already multi-layered piece. By using this final transformation, it took the work from just being another video projection on the wall, to enveloping the space and creating an environment for the viewer to be in.

**Conclusion**

I was able to push my work farther conceptually and technically and create a concept that I can continue to work on after I graduate. Not everything could go as planned, but it at least served as a learning experience of dealing with installation spaces that are less than ideal and still making the installation successful. I feel that I still need to make a stronger connection combining the personal objects on the wall with the clothing sculptures on the floor and how the wall itself is organized by using different shelf configurations or how I display the objects on the shelves. I am working with the idea of obsessiveness that develops with attachments to certain objects, portraying that in a sterile organized manner while contrasting that with the chaos of the clothes piles strewn about the floor. More experimentation is needed with different variations such as keeping the same objects in one row to create a linear timeline or groupings of shelves in
varied ways. This could lead to different clusters among the walls or even them placed randomly around the space more like how they would be set up in a bedroom.

Another shortcoming that I found was with the projections themselves. Because of the small space that I had, I was not able to have the projectors far enough back to create the immersive environment that I had originally intended. This resulted in more of a movie like quality to the projections and a voyeuristic approach from the viewer and how they interacted with the space. The piles were not covered enough by the installation and the floor was left completely unaddressed which created a disturbance in cohesiveness of the installation. This has left me thinking of different solutions to this problem of space should it arise again. Instead of just having multiple projectors coming from various sides of the installation, perhaps using a projector hanging from the ceiling so the floor becomes the screen and all of the sculptures are able to covered by the video. Other than those few things and having to deal with the space given and adapting my installation, everything had stayed to my original proposal. There were some happy accidents that happened when dealing with adapting the installation to the space. The break in between two of the movable walls created an entrance lead to the smaller iron piles being placed in front of it, picking up the bleed over of the projection that was being cast out in the main space. Because the castings were on the floor and the inevitable brightness that the gallery space naturally has, it was at night the projection became clearer. One side the casting was picking up the video reflecting it back into the space and the other half cast this shadow mountain on the floor where the casting was blocking the projection, completely showing the entire concept of the bedroom topography transforming into an outdoor landscape. The viewers in the space had their shadows cast on the wall, and because the clothing piles were only casting little peaks of shadows the viewer became the mountainscapes. The installation as a whole
exuded a peaceful quality that I was not completely expecting. Dealing with such a stressful idea of moving constantly and creating a relation to the constant mess of my room, I expected the installation to have a sense of chaos and be claustrophobic. With the video piece tying all of the aspects of my work, it turned into a meditative background visual noise, a similar experience to what I felt while being in Yayoi Kusama’s installation *You Who Are Getting Obliterated in the Dancing Swarm of Fireflies*. A space where the viewer can just sit and get lost mentally. The slow passing of cars, street signs, and mountains became memorizing and the pace perpetuated a calming effect. It became not just immersive but sensorial as well.

This body of work is only the beginning to the next works I want to complete. Already I am thinking how I can further this idea of home, memory, and landscape and bring in new ideas to making. I have been accepted to be an emerging artist in residence at Salem Art Works this summer where I can begin on working on the next step in my body of work. Exploring the idea of mountainscapes and wanting to still work large, this is perfect place to allow me to do that and allow me to not get into a post-graduation slump. I want to experiment with projections outside, dealing more directly with larger sculptures and changing the landscape itself with video projections of Arizona on the greenery that is found on the east coast. The work I feel might be naturally evolving away from the knick-knacks and becoming more of a focus on landscape, since that was the turning point in my original concept for my thesis. The clothes will still be something to carry on with in different experiments of display and use of different materials, like cement, to cast in. Playing with clotheslines instead of piles has been one thought of a new direction. Using height change I can create a mountain outline, and it gives me a larger surface to project on. The final thing that has been sticking with me to explore more is the grid system. Phoenix is a grid system city and that has been a huge adjustment for me moving to the east.
coast and no longer having that. It started coming forth in the organization of the shelves, and I want to explore it more. I also have to think about scale for future works. Working large is such an extensive and team based process that I might not have the resources to be able to do so once I graduate. A simple resolution is to work small again, and I think working smaller and having the object being able to fit comfortably in your hand might be something to explore. These small sculptures could then start to tie into the grid system that I want to explore while having the ease of being able to change and reconfigure the installation. Overall I feel that I have been personally successful in creating a body of work that I want to continue to exhibit and experiment with, while being able to have developed a concept that I can continue to explore in the future.
Home
Fig. 1. Wilton, Kelly, *Pile 1*, iron, 24”x24”x30”, 2015
Fig. 2. Wilton, Kelly, *Pile I* detail, iron, 24”x24”x30”, 2015
Fig. 3. Wilton, Kelly, *Pile 1* detail, iron, 24”x24”x30”, 2015
Fig. 4. Wilton, Kelly, *Pile 1* detail, iron, 24”x24”x30”, 2015
Fig. 5. Wilton, Kelly, *Pile 2*, iron, 18”x18”x9”, 2015
Fig. 6. Wilton, Kelly, *Pile* 2 detail, iron, 18” x 18” x 9”, 2015
Fig. 7. Wilton, Kelly, *Home* installation view, iron, dimensions variable, 2016
Fig. 8. Wilton, Kelly, *Pile 3*, iron, clothes, 24”x24”x26”, 2016
Fig. 9. Wilton, Kelly, *Pile 4*, iron, clothes, 36”x24”x16”, 2016
Fig. 10. Wilton, Kelly, *Peak 1*, iron, clothes, 48”x48”x96”, 2016
Fig. 11. Wilton, Kelly, *Peak 1*, iron, clothes, 48”x48”x96”, 2016
Fig. 12. Wilton, Kelly, *Peak 1*, iron, clothes, 48”x48”x96”, 2016
Fig. 13. Wilton, Kelly, *Peak 2*, clothes, 48”x48”x84”, 2016
Fig. 14. Wilton, Kelly, *Peak 2* detail, clothes, 48”x48”x84”, 2016
Fig. 15. Wilton, Kelly, *Home* installation view, iron, dimensions variable, 2016
Fig. 16. Wilton, Kelly, *Home* installation view detail, iron, dimensions variable, 2016
Fig. 17. Wilton, Kelly, *Care Bear*, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x4”, 2016
Fig. 18. Wilton, Kelly, *Cat*, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x4”, 2016
Fig. 19. Wilton, Kelly, *Cacti 1*, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x4”, 2016
Fig. 20. Wilton, Kelly, *Cacti 3*, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x14”, 2016
Fig. 21. Wilton, Kelly, *Cacti 4*, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x6”, 2016
Fig. 22. Wilton, Kelly, *Cacti 6*, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x14”, 2016
Fig. 23. Wilton, Kelly, *Cacti 7*, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x6”, 2016
Fig. 24. Wilton, Kelly, *Cacti 9-11*, porcelain, 2”x2”x2”, 2016
Fig. 25. Wilton, Kelly, *Aloe 1*, porcelain, 4”x3”x9”, 2016
Fig. 26. Wilton, Kelly, *Aloe 4*, bronze, 9”x9”x11”, 2016
Fig. 27. Wilton, Kelly, *Succulent 1*, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x5”, 2016
Fig. 28. Wilton, Kelly, *Succulent 1* detail, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x5”, 2016
Fig. 29. Wilton, Kelly, *Sly*, bronze, 10”x5”x3”, 2015
Fig. 30. Wilton, Kelly, *Sly*, porcelain, oak, 9”x5”x3”, 2016
Fig. 31. Wilton, Kelly, Deer 1, bronze, oak, 6”x6”x15”, 2014
Fig. 32. Wilton, Kelly, *Deer 5*, porcelain, oak, 6”x6”x14”, 2016
Fig. 33. Wilton, Kelly, *Cuckoo Clock*, bronze, 8”x6”x14”, 2014
Fig. 34. Wilton, Kelly, *Agglomeration 2*, glass, oak, 6”x6”x9”, 2015