

**Whitney Hetrick**

*Book and Box*, 1999 and 2004

Acrylic, colored pencil, netting, wire, ball point pen, book board, book cloth

12" x 18"

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Artist Statement

12.12.05

All human beings have their individual life stories. Often these stories decide our futures and our current states of mind. As an artist, I especially feel close to my story. At age twelve, I was hit by a car while crossing a busy intersection. The automobile accident caused severe injuries to myself and emotional wounds to those involved. I suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and intense internal damage to my body. The easiest way to understand a TBI is to imagine waking up one morning and having your entire life erased. At age twelve I had to relearn basic functions: from sitting up to walking, from understanding the names of things to talking, from eating to even learning how to bathe myself.

It is interesting for me to realize that early in life while I was searching for myself and the meaning of everything that had happened, that I desperately held on to an identity of being an artist. I knew for a fact that it was who I had been before and even though my life had changed in so many ways, through art I could somehow be the same person.

Today I have recovered and am very fortunate that I was able to overcome the obstacles that were put in my path at age twelve. While the memories sometimes begin to fade, I still live with a vivid desire to understand a world that I am still learning about. This desire leaves me acknowledging my creativity as a means in relating to the outside world and confirming the things I have experienced thus far.

Possibly existence is nothing but a mere continuous flow in time. But for myself I can't help but pause and try to find a genesis in all things. I am fascinated with the beginnings and endings of things. As an artist, I have created a visual vocabulary that is reminiscent of binary code, zeros and ones, circles and lines. A personal language is created by using these elements with high contrast. Previously, my painting and drawing bodies of work have been centered around the the notion that I can not remember my life or that I will never be able to define every quality of my internal/external experience. These combinations offer continual conversations that discuss ideas and emotions that I am still dealing with.

Currently I am very interested in the content and syntax of visual language. While in college, I have studied many different areas of art: photography, video, sound, neon techniques, painting and drawing. With this variety classes, I am searching for the most suitable method to evoke movement and a passage of time throughout my work. With a specific creative gesture, I am trying to bring my paintings and drawings "to life".

My future plans involve a continuation of this investigation and discovery. In the fall I plan on attending graduate school where I wish to be surrounded by a creative and nourishing artistic environment. In my undergraduate studies, I have learned that knowledge is the product of experience and adaptation. By attending graduate school, I hope to enrich this education. As my view of the world widens and becomes stronger, I hope that my body of work will reflect this process.