

Biography

Ashley Zimmer is an art education major/psychology minor with a studio specialization in painting from Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She will be graduating from the University of South Dakota in May, and will begin graduate courses at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts beginning July of 2019. Zimmer was recently accepted to Lesley's dual degree, low-residency program for Art Therapy and Mental Health Counseling, and will be working to complete those degrees for the next few years. She hopes to teach in the Sioux Falls area throughout her schooling, and will continue her current body of work simultaneously.

Her current work features a series of oil paintings that stemmed from her frustration from the recurring societal pressure of needing to conceal and constrict various parts of the human body in an indisputably uncomfortable way. She began her work by researching the constriction of her own body, expanding to women who shared the same experiences, and hopes to explore further with her work to a wider variety of body types, genders, and ethnicities.

Artist Statement

My body of work comes from a place of personal and honest frustration with the fact that it is seemingly imperative for me to wear a bra in public. There are people who may find that a bra is completely unnecessary in their wardrobe, and there are some who may need the support before their backs give out. The point is that the bra isn't always necessary. With this realization at the forefront of my brain, I began to consider positive and negative space and how this could relate to my content. My first paintings started with a zoomed in, confined composition of two different bodies. The bodies are depicted in exaggerated imagery in order to emphasize the end-of-the-day need to rip off an incredibly tight and uncomfortable undergarment. I decided to paint the undergarments as white as the gesso behind the oil layers in order to create the negative space I desired. However, I thought about how I could completely eliminate painting that space. The negative space started revealing itself as raw canvas, therefore displaying the negative to me earlier on in the painting process. This idea appealed even more to me. There was an undeniable parallel being presented: the canvas stretches and secures itself around the frame of the stretcher, much like an undergarment can be stretched and latched around a body. I wanted to leave the raw canvas exposed in a couple of different ways to display this parallel, so the canvas can be seen spilling outside of the stretcher frame and within the painting's borders. My paintings are continuing to evolve in terms of composition and content, and this series will be ongoing until I feel I have done my concept justice.

