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In Her Wonderland

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My work is about discovery: an exploration of colors, patterns and the language of paint. By working from objects of femininity such as makeup and clothing, I am investigating how illusion functions in society as well as how it functions in the simplistic sense of handling paint. I am intrigued by how paint can be manipulated to create a reality, but a reality that is only a surface quality. I am fascinated with the appeal of beauty and illusion. While some are absolutely disgusted with society's standards of a woman's obligation towards her appearance, others find it a magnificent treat to play with makeup, clothes and jewelry. I have deliberately chosen to work with colors and patterns that evoke a sense of playfulness. My paintings and drawings salute the nature of dressing up, reflecting the delight one finds in sequined slippers, satin dresses, and gold high-heeled shoes.

By communicating through paint, my thesis will respond to the exuberance I encounter when strolling through a department store's cosmetic department, leafing through pearls and diamonds tucked away in a jewelry box, or drowning in a sea of party dresses. I argue that women spend hours deliberating over fashion and appearance not because society demands a woman's aesthetic perfection, but simply because they love it. Trying on outfits with friends, spending afternoons shopping, or applying makeup together can be both satisfying and relationship-building for women. In *Her Wonderland* explores how the language of paint can be used to portray ornamentation and illusion in a positive light: women enjoy makeup and clothing immensely, which makes these items such huge components of the feminine society.

Through the manipulation of oil paint, I am in search of a visual solution of how to represent the familiar in a contemporary way: how to shed new light on objects we associate with the feminine or the ornate. By varying painting techniques, I am working to create a tension between areas of receding illusionistic space and areas where energetic patterning compresses the picture plane. Some moments in the work are painted with a sensitivity for detail that requires the viewer to slow down and inspect. Simultaneously, as one form merges into the next, subtle areas transition into areas where the viewer's senses are overloaded with gestural brushstrokes, the physicality of the paint, and direct use of color. With this transition, I hope to allow the work to depart from object specificity towards abstraction. The paintings and drawings encourage the viewer to enter a fictional world that is a very real celebration of femininity.

My work references Francesca Di Mattio, Jessica Stockholder, Tracy Miller, Wayne Thiebaud, Lisa Yuskavage, Audrey Flack, and Pia Fries.