

On My Way: The Texture of Memory

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Abstract

This project reflects my interest in describing personal experiences through scenes of traffic and driving. It is also an extension of my consideration of textures and how they relate to the surface I use, particularly when making my own canvases at a larger size. The subdued colors contribute to the mood and provoke interest in the subject matter, while the varying texture is an aesthetic choice and an expressive mark making technique. This article is an introspective look on how the meanings of my paintings have developed.

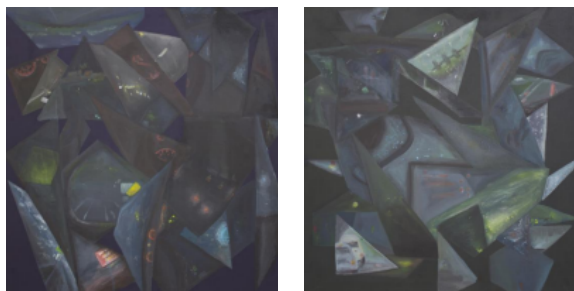
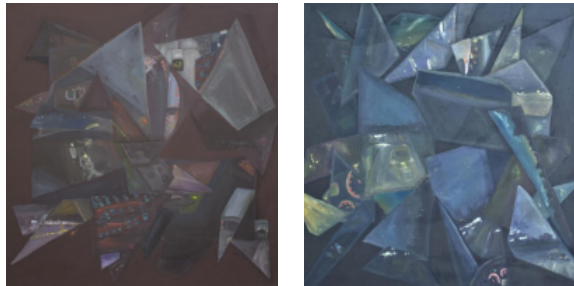
The work I am presenting is an extension of previous explorations in similar subject matter with varying surface size and texture considerations. There is significance in the physical attributes of the paintings in showing my personal improvement as an artist. I have grown in the confidence of my marks as seen in the thickening textures of the paintings, and I have gotten more comfortable in my own style, noted by the muted color palette. Although I personally appreciate the work as a record of my artistic development, the emotion others feel through observation of my work is the most affirming sign that these paintings are meaningful.

I spend a lot of time in my car. I've been commuting since my first year at Millersville, and as I head into my senior year in the fall, I am amazed by how much time it adds up to. I drive to work, I drive to school, I drive to work again, I drive to the

grocery store, I drive to the gas station, I drive home. The idea for these paintings, however, did not originate on any of these drives. I spent many weekends driving to visit a long-term relationship which, upon ending, sparked the dark and broken images in the original series. After this, the imagery was about the feeling of driving on busy roads and highways surrounded by other people, yet still alone.

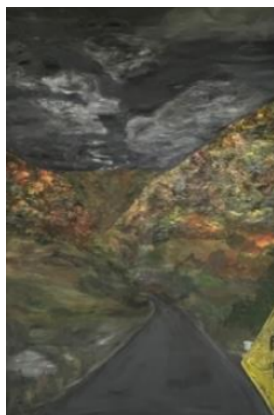
The first exploration of traffic and driving was a series inspired by the shapes of cubism and very departed from a physical place and time, more representative of a feeling. I had intended to start in acrylic and later add textured marks with oil. As I worked, I became more invested in the colors and the fragmentation of images, and instead the finished works are acrylic and lack the texture I was originally interested in. From these original four paintings came

numerous thumbnails, mini paintings, explorations of texture and increasing size all while my relationship to driving and these memories deepened and changed.



The original driving series, acrylic on canvas, 2021

The presented works, acrylic and oil on canvas and wooden board, 2021-22.



The presented works are my final series plus two additional works developed during my third painting class. I was interested in working larger, painting thicker, and continuing my darkened tones. I started my work in acrylic, first coating the entire canvas in a layer of black, then mapping out what I wanted to depict. Then I began varying thickness by layering oil paint on areas I wanted to pull forward and stopping at different points in the process on different areas of the painting. I began with a brush using thinned oil paint, then regular oil paint. Next, I used a palette knife to apply paint, then straight from the tube and moving it around on the canvas for more texture. Finally, I used the tube as the way of controlling the paint itself and not further manipulating it once applied.

When I look at these paintings now, I am reminded of both the experiences that inspired them and the way I have changed since then along with my evolving works. The theme of driving continues to be a way of expression as I already have new work emerging relating to the topic. This focus develops and changes every time I return to it with new outlooks, and always more miles.