

### Curatorial Rationale

Art is a means through which people share their truths with the world; it is effective when an artist can incite an emotional response from those who experience it. My work is based on this principle. Ranging from photographs to mixed media, my body of work is the product of hours of self reflection and of channeling raw emotions into something tangible. My art is not to be viewed superficially. The pieces in this exhibition are to be experienced, criticized, and felt by the audience. This eleven piece exhibition is an exploration into the depths of my mind, and emotions. Centered around the individualistic nature of the human experience, these works address themes of grief, self acceptance, and the complexity of the human mind. I utilized digital photography to craft five photo series to visualize my personal experience with grief. I break away from the Kubler Ross model to show audiences that grief is not defined by the rigidity of scientific theories and hypotheses. Through my pieces: *Exposure*, *Astrobleme*, *Solace*, *Equanimity*, and *Cotton* I ask the audience to interpret the stories I tell whilst exposing to them the ways in which I grieve.

My visual storytelling through photography has been inspired heavily by Henri Cartier-Bresson and Paul Calhoun. By analyzing their works, I have learned the beauty and significance of photographs and monochrome. Their influence upon my work is evident in pieces like *Exposure* and *Cotton* where I utilize a similar manipulation of shadows, light, and composition to place humanity at the forefront of my photography. They taught me to document the human condition in a way that is true to me. My work comes from a place where happiness and melancholy dance hand in hand. Life has never been purely terrible or fantastic. I've come to understand that life is a balancing act and I am merely an inexperienced juggler. Rapture, much like sadness, comes in ebbs and flows. *Exposure* was inspired by my cousin's recent divorce with her partner of eight years. Their five year old son notices that his dad is no longer around but he's too afraid of saddening her to talk about it. I used these emotions and many more to guide the stories of individual series. The catalysts for my series regarding grief were the deaths of my favorite teacher and grandmother.

By offering an unfiltered look into my world, the audience will see that life is an esoteric experience in which there are no predetermined rules. My exhibition is a confined space with two walls tightly surrounding the audience. My work is hung on both sides and to experience it, one must walk through the only portal in or out of the space. The walls seem to close in on the audience as they travel further through it. At the end of the path, lies *Ruminate*. This piece questions the nature of art and borrows from the concepts of Marcel Duchamp who proposed that ideas were the basis of art, not aesthetics. *Ruminate* builds tension and establishes a sense of chaos that draws the audience's movement into the confined space. Behind *Ruminate*, my Pop art inspired piece, lies *Equanimity*. It is a collection of nine of my faces staring at the audience from the moment they enter until the moment they leave the exhibition. This furthers the tension and discomfort of the audience. My exhibition confines the audience and builds tension between them and the path to emulate the terrifying nature of the mind. The audience is overwhelmed with the size of my pieces and they are forced to be uncomfortably close to them. Upon reaching the end of the exhibition, they will have to experience my work again to exit. This furthers the idea that grief is not an ordered process and offers a glimpse of hope; no matter how dark the mind may be, there is always an escape. My audience is not a static character that merely observes. Rather, my audience becomes an integral part of my work through their analyzations and emotional responses to the stimulus provided in my exhibition. My work focuses on examining and capturing the human condition. As such, my exhibition is designed to evoke empathy.