Hanna S

“Art is just what I’m passionate about. It’s internal and external perception all rolled into images. I love it!”

Hanna is an only child who grew up in Saint Louis Park, Minnesota. Both of her parents are artists and have influenced her a lot. Her Dad paints and Mom her works in publishing but dabbles in a lot of different art mediums in her spare time, and as a family they go to art galleries and museums frequently. This past summer Hanna attended a pre-college program for darkroom photography, art history, and digital photography in San Francisco, and she found this experience incredibly motivating.

Hanna has been interested in art since 5th grade but says, “I didn't find something I was really good at until I started taking pictures in a photo intro class in middle school. Then I heard about Perpich in 8th grade and I was originally going to be applying in Lit, but then I found the camera and that changed my life and so I decided to come here and study photo instead.”

At the time we interviewed, Hanna was really looking forward to attending Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD) for photography for college. She laughs and says, “If I could live in the darkroom, I would, but every once in a while I like to explore opportunities to learn other mediums, so I’m looking forward to the comprehensive program at MCAD. She is also looking forward to further developing her conceptual base with the general academic program there. “My inspiration comes from all over the place, so I like to feed my mind by studying lots of things,” she says.

Hanna has a very confident demeanor and is very articulate. She has considered herself an artist ever since she would draw 6-legged cats as a Kindergartener. She
recalls, “It's always been something I've been drawn to. School hasn't really meant anything to me when art isn't involved.”

Through studying art Hanna has learned how to explore her interests. “I get to open doors and check things out and decide if I’m going to go in or not. I’ve learned how to show what I think to the world and to push myself, direct myself. I’ve also learned how to explain and portray my thought processes,” she states. “I feel like my life with art is metaphor in action. I can dream up ideas and metaphorical relationships and then I can not only explore inspiration through the creative process and act on it, but I can explain it too. It's really empowering.”

Through studying art Hanna has also learned how to make narrative images that highlight details of a scene for the viewer that might otherwise get overlooked. The self-portrait, *Waiting*, that Hanna submitted for exhibition exemplifies this in particular. The photo depicts the back view of a woman’s neck and shoulders framed elegantly by the draping scoop neck of her white t-shirt and her loosely upswept hair. In creating this portrait using lighting, focus, contrast and framing, Hanna captured part of her subject’s body that would likely not be given much attention normally. Thus, as a portrait it is slightly unconventional, but it is also engaging as we, the audience, can’t see the woman’s face. Therefore we are left to question what her face physically looks like. Yet by capturing this image on film instead of creating a facial shot, one can see and come to appreciate that there is quiet, simple beauty from this point of view that is worth examining that perhaps is very unique to this woman. Thus, Hanna has highlighted details of the scene and her subject for the audience that are unique but might normally be ignored.
Lastly, Hanna finds a certain freedom when making art, and goes on to state, “When I’m creating, there's no time, no pressure, no worries, it's just about me and the process and the project and the message. Art is just what I’m most passionate about. It’s internal and external perception all rolled into images. I love it and when I’m in the flow everything else just fades away, and that’s really freeing and even inspiring in it’s own rite.”
Hanna S

*neck cuff*

mediums: wool yarn, handmade silver button

This portrait of Hanna was inspired by her reflective personality. She communicates her perceptions about all she encounters primarily through photography. When working, she organically and intuitively captures many, close-up images of a chance or constructed scene in addition to capturing the whole of it. Then, in the darkroom, she reflects on the whole scene and what she wishes to share about it with her audience and she chooses specific, detailed images to develop that highlight nuances of the scene and/or her subject that are unique but might normally be overlooked.

Thus, in creating this scrumble crocheted neck cuff I wanted to play with the idea of conveying perceptions of a whole through assembly of smaller parts. I created the small, organically-shaped, detailed and intricate crochet pieces then assembled them to create one larger, functional garment. Many of the crocheted shapes and forms are hyperbolic, meaning that they were created by allowing the yarn to curl or fold in on itself in a circular pattern at a high rate of turn. These crochet forms in particular are symbolic of Hanna’s reflective and introspective nature. The handmade silver button with the word “Perception” metaphorically connects the beginning and end of my symbolic bigger narrative and signifies the place where Hanna’s new perceptions can emerge through this process of reflection. I hope that when wearing this piece Hanna will be reminded that her way of collecting sets of images from a whole scene, and of
taking scenes apart and re-assembling them as a form of reflective, artistic inquiry is a powerful way to create new pathways of seeing.

Waiting

photograph

medium: silver gelatin print

Hanna K. Stoehr

The film for Waiting was shot, processed and printed by hand. Hand processing is a huge part of my photographic practice, and what personalizes my art. I spend hours in the darkroom perfecting the development time of each print, balancing the contrast to fit the image or image series.

I like to shoot portraiture that does not include facial detail, leaving the subject ambiguous, without definite identity. Waiting allows the viewers to create their own ideas about the subject, while also considering a photo that has been completely crafted and composed by me. This photo was also taken to point out and focus on aspects of the body that are not traditionally mentioned or thought of as beautiful, but can become so when given proper light.

This photo captures who I am as an artist because it captures who I am as a person. Hand processing is the closest form of meditation I know. It relaxes me, it awes me, and excites me each time I step into the darkroom. I feel as thought I am more of a person when I am creating photos like this in the darkroom.