

Not Yet Corpses, Still We Rot
Sarah St. Arnold

I created a series of paintings around the basic question of identity: Who am I? In creating my pieces, I explored the process of reducing what can be identified as a person and taking away key identity markers — the eyes and mouth. It is an autopsy of the psyche. I used the abstraction of shape, line, composition, and color theory to represent the human condition. I stayed away from realistic portraiture first, because human beings are far from perfect and should not always be represented in such an idealized way. Second, because I wanted to explore the inner self rather than the outer self. Third, because I wanted to leave plenty of room for subjectivity for the viewer to see what/who they want. The two landscapes I included in my work represent portraits of memories, and, also, it is a moment of silence away from all the eyes watching you. We all carry around our own baggage — key elements that define your identity. As an artist I cannot separate the elements that make me who I am, and my work. The quick brush strokes, the thick layering of paint, the usage of quotes, the dizzying array of color all speak for me. My studies in philosophy are also a major influence in understanding people and art. I particularly want to mention Descartes' famous quote "I think, therefore I am." This is the one true thing that people do, we think. So, my goal of this body of work is to leave you thinking. Why do we put so much emphasis on the eyes and mouth that when they are absent, it is shocking? Do we have an identity if we cannot remember our memories? As humans, we are given the privilege of abstract thought; as a result, it is our duty to think abstractly. This is my senior show and the exploration of the human condition.

(Song title is a quote from Dirt and Roses by "Rise Against")