

Trent Caulkins – Artist’s Statement



Untitled



Untitled



Collage- Untitled

My work in this BFA exhibition is focused on delivering information regarding BDSM and kink culture while also maintaining some artistic merit in the form of a zine and illustrations. Some may read this first line and ask themselves “Who in the world would do this for an exhibition” or even why for that matter? My main reason is that I have an interest in the culture and history of it.

I originally was exposed to the culture in media such as FX American Horror Story via the rubber man and rubber woman in their trailers, which focused on showing these all-black figures coming out of the ceiling or walls and moving in this macabre way. Then there's also television like CSI and others that piqued my interest. I learned pretty early on while creating work influenced by these visuals that I needed to explain what it is that is influencing me and why. So, I researched and in doing so I thought, why not create infographics displaying the information so that there can be visual work influenced by the culture but also information present to refer to for those that are not aware of these communities and/or want to know more.

Part of this process has been learning more about this culture that interests me while creating these infographics. Another part is making these posters have unifying elements such as color, font, and graphic elements; while also making them appear different via how I structure the information and arrange the graphic elements. By doing this I am able to create a synergy with the differences that can keep the information interesting throughout each section. Personally, I'd get bored if each one was set up the exact same way.

While these infographics are a crucial part of me explaining different parts of it, I think one of the best ways to learn about something is to hear from people involved in it. This is why at the beginning of the year I started interviewing people who have had experience in a variety of kink sub-cultures that could bring their own perspectives into the fold to create an audio documentary. I created this documentary with two goals, it must only have interviewees' voices heard and it has to be honest with very little taken out. My reasoning behind this is I personally felt that by including questions and then responses it wouldn't feel as if the audience would be hearing their story but rather a QnA and I also wanted to keep everything they said into the documentary, but I also needed to balance keeping their stories honest with what is appropriate for the audience.

The final part of my exhibition is the creative side I see in the visual identity within kink culture. I personally believe that this culture is a rich area of expression for people both with their physical bodies and with visual media such as art. To show this creative outlet I designed a zine, a sort of counter-culture self-made magazine that people have used since the 60s by using self-made or appropriated imagery. In mine, I attempt to combine digital work, photographs of traditional artwork I've made in the past, and photography combined with type elements to bring out that creative side I see.

In this work I hope that my visual interpretations and representations show clearly in the work while also giving a space for information to be learned by those interested in the topic.