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Design Major
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Bullseye Boys

A controversial, feminist take on the objectification of women using pin up posters and Photoshop editing strategies.

Active art & public social experiment.



Project Description & Artist Statement

Looking back on the projects I have done in the past while attending Hanover College, I've come to realize that I tend to gravitate toward the human figure alongside controversial perspectives. I have taken on strong topics such as depression, self-hate, general self-consciousness, negative body images, racial issues, gender role conflicts, etc. This personal research as well as the beginnings of my Artist Research influenced me to want to stay with this type of work. I wanted to find something difficult to talk about, take a stance, and execute. I searched for a topic that could potentially have an intense "wow" factor in order to me to implement a sort of "exclamation point" piece of work ending my career at Hanover.

Objectification, cat-calling, aggressive sex jokes, etc. are present in the everyday life of females. The Pin Ups of the 1950s, as a specific influence, made visual, sexual objectification of the female body all too easy. Pin Ups were sexually enhanced Photoshop-style images before Photoshop really existed. So, remembering this, what happens when the target switches to men? Women have been put down, made inferior, and become the more self-conscious gender simply because of the uncomfortabilities that come with being a woman.

The process of my work slowly began to turn into a social experiment at the same time. The men in this experiment may have enjoyed the process a little too much, enhancing their senses of humor in order to mock my choices in poses and to have fun with an otherwise sensitive material, but I have to ask, why is this? Why do they have fun with something that makes their gender opposite so uncomfortable? – Because even after being objectified themselves, they still don't understand the weight of the issue. Women are more likely to be submissive or passive because of the self-consciousness resulting from objectification, whereas men have a confidence in the mocking. They are oblivious, thinking they are mocking the posters I used as examples, when I am actually mocking them and their reactions to this process. The images were created around the simple fact that these boys are completely oblivious to the symbolic, representational "bullseye" I have placed on them using my light source. Despite the humorous reactions, feminine poses, and lightened colors implemented within these photographs, my overall goal was to bring attention to the sexual objectification of one gender, using its opposite to mock and disprove its purpose.

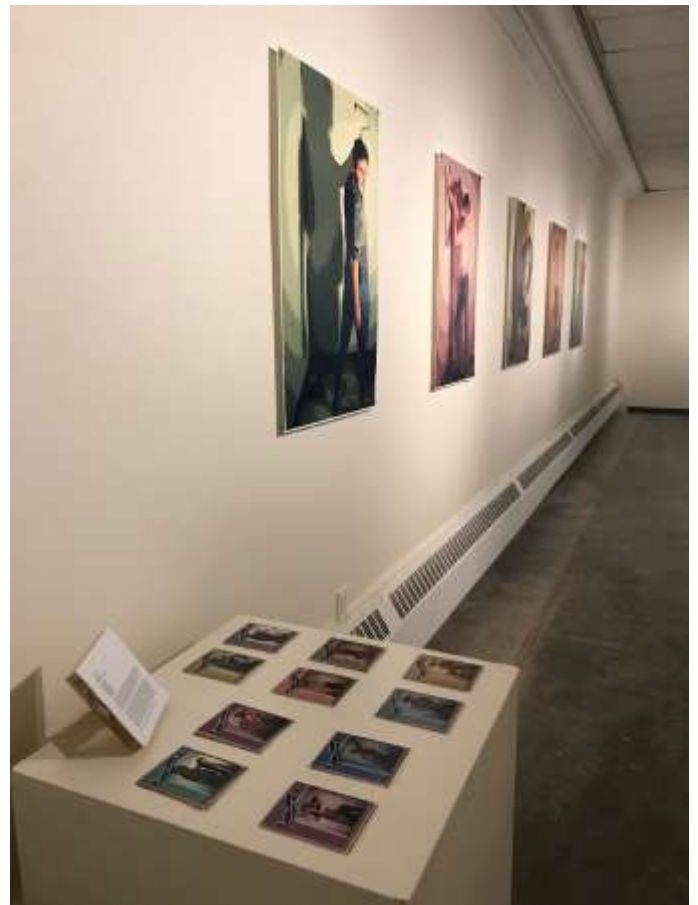
I believe I achieved this through creating a visual combination of a Norman Rockwell-"esque", sketchy style to enhance features, bringing attention to wrinkles, blemishes, etc. while using high contrasting shadows and light sources, pulling in that bullseye effect, acting like a spotlight on the models, as well as using traditional pin up, female poses with male models, giving them feminine features which creates a humorous contradiction. I also kept the 50's poster theme of smooth, bright colors and kept the titles of the individual posters vague, taking the identity away from the men pictured, emphasizing that they are simply objects on a poster.

Just one more note on objectification and why I was okay with singling out a gender... when looking up the dictionary definition of “objectification”, it says “the action of degrading someone, USUALLY A WOMAN, to the status of a mere object.”

"the objectification of women as sexual possessions"

I'd like my project to be the first step in making the definition of “objectification” NOT gender-specific.

Documentation





Painter Boy



Boy With Hammer



The Veteran



Stand and Salute



The Rookie