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Overtones

Kassandra Morlan
University of Iowa

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OVERTONES

by

Kassandra Morlan

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for graduation with Honors in the Art, Studio

Sue Hettmansperger
Thesis Mentor

Spring 2018

All requirements for graduation with Honors in the
Art, Studio have been completed.

Kee Ho Yuen
Art, Studio Honors Advisor

OVERTONES

Kassandra Morlan

Spring 2018

Sue Hettmansperger

School of Art and Art History

Skin fascinates me. Skin can display stress, health, emotions, beauty, and identity. My honors focused on researching skin, choosing different topics pertaining to skin, and creating painted imagery. I chose to create oil paintings to explore new ways of applying color.

My research about stress and health of skin and my research into color, began simultaneously. I researched artists who were using skin as a topic or uniquely. Most of the unique art I found were sculptures that would abnormally mold the skin. Skin became a design or a malleable material. I also researched various colors in skin and medical pictures for references of conditions I wished to portray. I used 10 by 10 inch canvases, to create the small images. My painting process built up the paintings at the same time, starting with underpaintings of Venetian Red. I started with one color palette of skin colors. Some of the colors from the first painting would be used subsequently, to connect the images. Though, connected, I wanted each one to be unique in emotion and color. I would choose certain palettes based on a body part or based on race. For darker skin tones, I utilized bluish, yellow, and white colors. I played with color schemes, even unnatural skin colors like dark blue or green skin. I varied sources of light and worked with shadow and depth until it seemed right.

For the research and the painting process, I found great inspiration for color and skin from artists like Lucian Freud and Jonathan Yeo. My biggest struggle was using close-up parts of the human body and defining their planes. Researching the individual medical pictures of body parts helped understand how the skin lays on muscles, veins, and tendons. I used many different skin conditions like acne, flushing, oiliness, goosebumps, dry skin and wrinkles. I personally have the genetic condition called Keratosis Pilaris and I embrace it. Through this research project, I hoped to not only learn more about internal influences on our external canvas, skin, but also about painting skin. I wanted to show the beauty not typically beautiful skin conditions, as well as how some people really embrace their skin. I learned more about the possibilities of painting skin and in the future, I will explore more ideas about different emotions through skin colors. I will paint different emotional issues through portrait and color.