Hello
my name is

ON MY MIND +

IN MY ROOM!

Count Your Blessings

BY: ADA

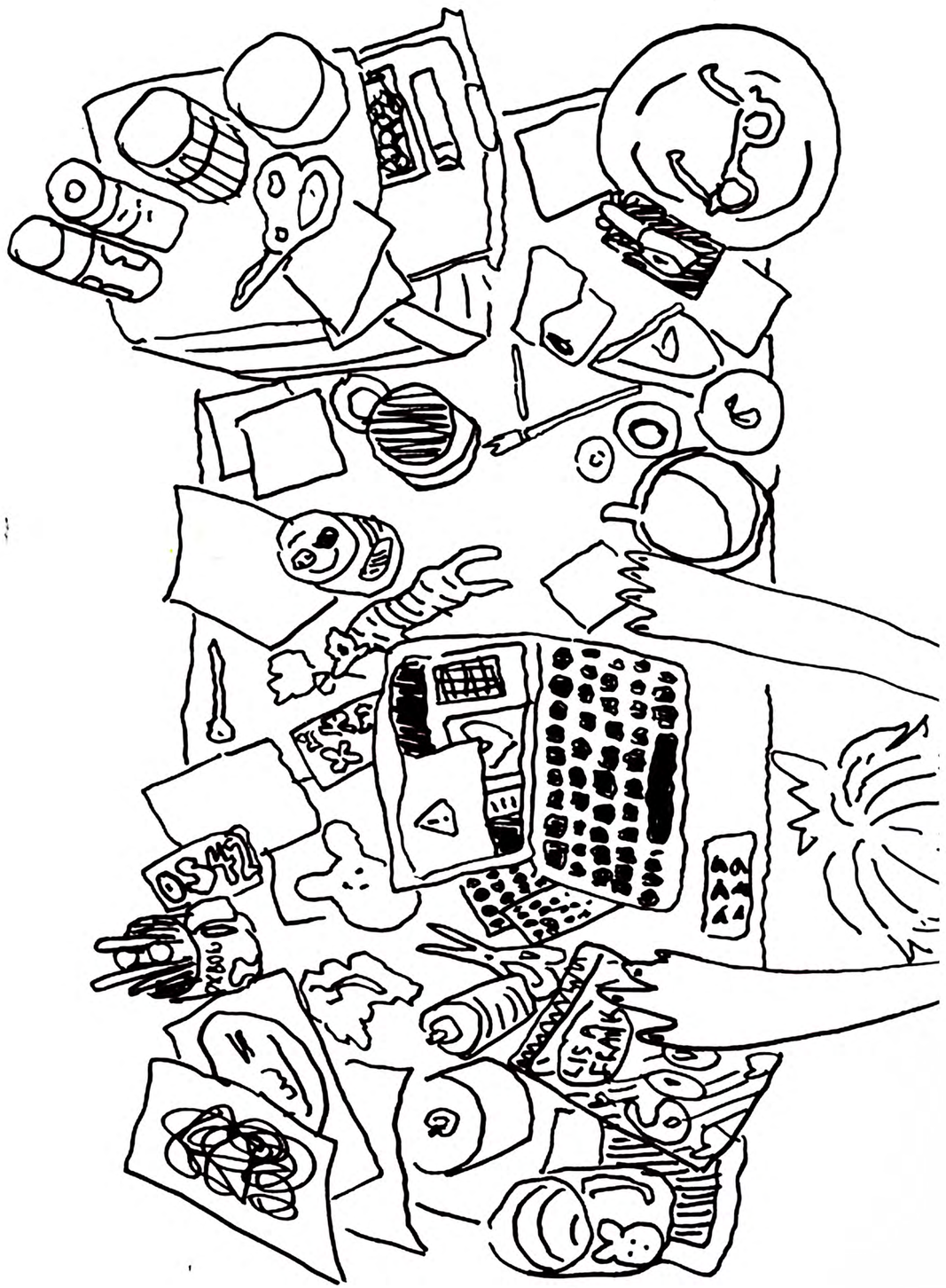
flex light

This project is an investigation into why some people have stronger connections to material than others, what draws them to certain objects, why people collect and hoard, and how they project their identities into these objects. So I tried to treat the objects like parts of a person and give them the respect and dignity of their very own portrait. As a collector myself,I've always wondered why I'm drawn to weird little trinkets, garage sales, and bins of free stuff on sidewalks. Everyone collects in their own right, and it's important to think about why you do.

Objects offer a literal physical extension of ourselves. We don't necessarily buy things because we want what they can do, but because we want it to contribute to our sense of self. Take, for example, a gun. The gun has the ability to shoot, without we wouldn't be able to. But what we really want is to say that we can now kill, not necessarily the gun. The line between the object and yourself is blurred. You can pull the trigger on your gun as easily as extending your leg, you have total control over it. The object and it's capacity for doing is now directly a part of yourself. Jean-Paul Sartre philosophizes that because of this, the only way to know who you are is to examine what you have.

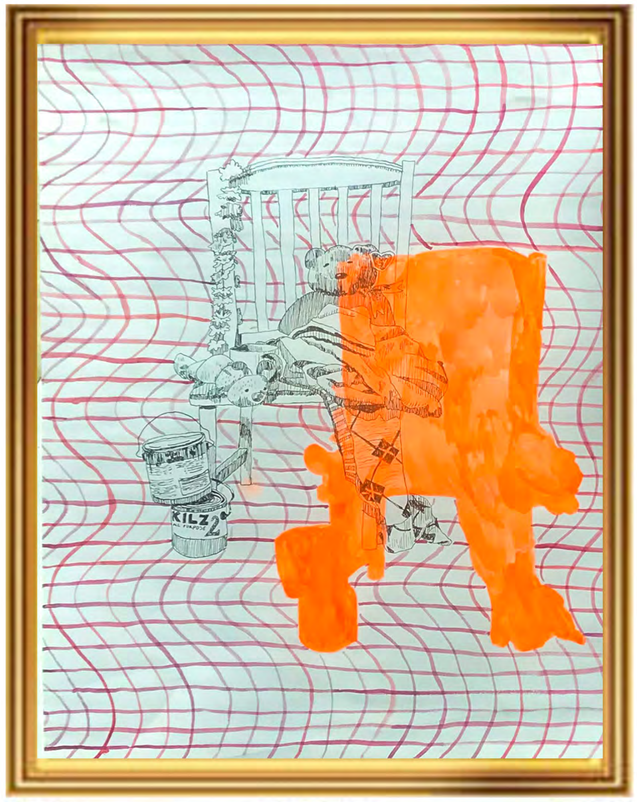
Objects are also an eternal reassurance of self, with the capacity to ground people in a concrete sense of living. Like in teenage years when you are tasked with forming an identity, you differentiate yourself outwardly first to develop a sense of independence and individuality. "Valued material possessions. . . act as signs of the self that are essential in their own right for its continued cultivation, and hence the world of meaning that we create for ourselves, and that creates our selves, ex- tends literally into the objective surroundings" (Rochberg-Helton). Objects are outside vessels for the inside! When we acciquire objects we are either consciously or unconsciously curating an image of ourselves that we want everyone in the world to see. People cling more to things when their way of life has been drastically disrupted or when someone feels disconnected. For example, in the California Paradise fires a lot people lost that sense of self. Objects with huge sentimental value were gone. "All the pictures were gone, all the keepsakes, all the memories, all the family photos. Everything was just annihilated. This one little piece of metal was able to survive that inferno — and we can do it, too. This ring just has a different story now. It'll get passed on to my kids," Heather Thornewood, a woman who lost her home in the fires. If objects are understood to be an extension of a person, then the loss of an object is comparable to the loss of a vital part of that person.

The trouble is our society places enormous weight in the worth of possesions. The more expensive or current things are the most desirable, leading people into never-ending pits of spending too much, owning too much, and wasteful despair. But, there's two sides of materialism that are worth exploring and defining. On one hand there's consuming for appereances' sake, matieralism in a traditional sense. This might be someone who thinks material objects will bring them happiness or success. They see objects as indicators of the traits that are desirable to them. Then there is a lesser-known matieralism, consuming for your own sake. Buying something not to fullfill your own happiness or to provide some external reward but because you see it as a part of yourself. This type of matieraism is less conspicuous, seeks meaning, and values the relationship between the person and the object. In focusing on the act of buying, you can treat it like a hobby instead of a mundane means to an end. You can make a game of garage sale hunting and craigslist scrolling and ebay bidding. You give meaning and importance to an overlooked, but ever-important act. You make sure your every purchase aligns with your personal image. You might make more enviromentally conscious descions, if you consider yourself an enviromentally conscious person. You wouldn't buy something to convince others of your status or wealth. The things you own are collector's items and symbolic or sentimental and mirrors of you. It's important, now more than ever, to care too much about what you own. About where it came from, about why you like it so much, and how you relate to it. If done properly, matieralism can be beneficial and result in more conscious, and intrinsically rewarding consumerism.



OK SO THIS IS MY DESK RIGHT NOW AS I'M MAKING THIS ZINE. LET'S DISSECT THIS MESS + REVEAL SOME DEEPLY PERSONAL TRUTHS ABOUT MY SUBCONSCIOUS. I'LL START WITH THE FOUR OLD COFFEE CUPS ON IT. HORRIFYING. UNFORTUNELY FOR ME THIS JUST SCREAMS STRESS. COUPLED WITH THE SEVERAL SHEETS OF "FAIL DRAWINGS" THIS DESK IS PAINTING A PICTURE OF SOMEONE STRUGGLING TO COMPLETE AN ART ASSIGNMENT.

BUT YOU MAY BE WONDERING WHY THERE IS SO MUCH STUFF ON MY DESK IN THE FIRST PLACE. ALLOW ME TO EXPLAIN SOME ITEMS + WHY THEY ARE WHERE THEY ARE. FIRSTLY, WE HAVE A PEEP KEYCHAIN THAT MY MOM GOT ME FOR EASTER. I'VE BEEN MEANING TO PUT ON MY BACKPACK BUT MY BACKPACK IS IN MY CAR SO I HAVEN'T GOTTEN AROUND TO GETTING IT AND EVERYTHING. NEXT UP WE HAVE A PLASTIC TIGER WITH A FAKE ROSE HOTGLUED IN IT'S MOUTH. THIS IS A REMNANT OF A BOARDING ART SCHOOL EXPERIENCE CUT TRAGICALLY SHORT BY A GLOBAL PANDEMIC. IT WAS A VALENTINES GIFT, THE ROSE ONCE A SYMBOL OF LOVE IS NOW A SYMBOL OF MOURNING. FINALLY, YOU CAN SPOT A LAVENDER AROMA-THERAPY CANDLE. IT IS FOR DE-STRESSING AND IT IS NOT WORKING. I HAVE A COLLECTION OF CANDLES GROWING IN MY HOUSE BECAUSE OF THE ALLURE OF CANDLE SECTIONS IN STORES. THEY A CALMING OASIS IN THE TYPICALLY OVERWHELMING ATMOSPHERE OF RETAIL STORES. PERHAPS I AM SUBCONSIOSLY TRYING TO RECREATE THIS OASIS?



bibliography

Belk, Russell. "Possessions and the Extended Self." OUP Academic, Oxford University Press, 1 Sept. 1988, academic.oup.com/jcr/article/15/2/139/1841428.

Davies, Hunter. "Hunter Davies' Guide to Becoming a Collector." The Guardian, Guardian News and Media, 7 Nov. 2014, www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/nov/07/hunter-davies-guide-becoming-collector.

Habe-Evans, Mito. "Everything You Own In A Photo: A Look At Our Worldly Possessions." NPR, NPR, 10 Aug. 2010, www.npr.org/sections/pictureshow/2010/08/10/129113632/picturingpossessions.

Jarrett, Christian. "The Psychology of Stuff and Things." The Psychology of Stuff and Things | The Psychologist, thepsychologist.bps.org.uk/volume-26/edition-8/psychology-stuff-and-things.

Nosowitz, Dan. "Private Eyes Tell Us About Digging Through People's Trash." Atlas Obscura, Atlas Obscura, 18 Mar. 2016, www.atlasobscura.com/articles/private-eyes-tells-us-about-digging-through-peoples-trash.

Reed, Americus, et al. "Identity-Based Consumer Behavior." International Journal of Research in Marketing, North-Holland, 18 Sept. 2012, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0167811612000663?via%3Dihub.

Rizzo, Meredith. "Objects That Matter: Memories Of Paradise." NPR, NPR, 28 Dec. 2019, www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/12/28/790714449/objects-that-matter-memories-of-paradise.

Vedantam, Shankar, et al. "I Buy, Therefore I Am: How Brands Become Part Of Who We Are." NPR, NPR, 1 July 2019, www.npr.org/2019/06/28/736942500/i-buy-therefore-i-am-how-brands-become-part-of-who-we-are.