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Artist Statement

I am an interdisciplinary artist who makes installations, performances, videos, drawings, and paintings. The glue that holds this together is my interest in the Traps of sex, race and class. My first love is the process of breaking through the two-dimensional space into the third space. It is a documentation of the movement from periphery to center; it becomes my metaphor for shifts in power, awareness and includes an ability to challenge the physical space of the viewer (the wall is always a trap as is the body).

In addition, I look to the practice of mythmaking through the eyes of the trickster. I create non-linear narratives with my images. To do so, I conflate time and space and seemingly-unrelated ideas into each of my pieces. There is playfulness, meanness, sarcasm, riddle, and sincerity, all are the tools I use to explore micro and macro narratives.

My figures are not free. Their consciousness is implied. They are altered egos, vessels, and traps. Metaphorically liquid, they shapeshift, slip, fragment. They become costume, hat, armor, vessel, instrument or mask.

My identity is hyphenated. I code-switch through multiple-consciousness constantly. My work, my process, my narratives are a result and reflection of my personal negotiations of uneven relations in contemporary society. The marginalized individual who dreams of “overcoming” learns to adapt, mimic, camouflage, and negotiate in order to successfully pull themselves up by the bootstraps. This constant shift is exhausting but also fracturing, leaving one’s sense of self, incomplete, undefined, ever-shifting.

Tactile, materiality is important. I am interested in the craft, form, and process of making. Clay is my core medium. The fragility in tandem with the longevity of the medium is enticing. The initial malleability and the chemical/mythological transformation from liquid mud to stone seduces my obsession with the material. As a painter, I painted figures trapped within the walls of the canvas. Clay allowed me to breach dimensions. I develop the dialogue in-between my choice of materials and juxtapositions are carefully considered. If I can inspire nostalgia and discomfort I am content.

My cardboard dead-fall traps are the non-figuration of core ideas present in my clay work. My Trap song, dance performance, and narrative accompany this work. Each trap is both shelter and cage. They reference all of the traps of race, sex and class, as well as the lean-to shelters created by the homeless and/or the displaced.

Three works included in this issue:

“War-Paint Sunrise”, “Misery a Ride Me” and “Redstripe” are a very new visual manifestation of my ideas on the traps of race, sex and class, as well as my exploration of the tools used to navigate, carry and circumvent these traps.

I am developing a series of non-linear narratives that further explore my use of visual metaphors and double-talk in my discussion of the tools used to navigate hostile spaces, and the advantages, and disadvantages of the constant performance of fragmented identities. Simultaneously, I want to explore, identify and organize the lexicon of visual language that appear in my work. I am also interested in analyzing my works’ abilities to tell multiple narratives simultaneously.

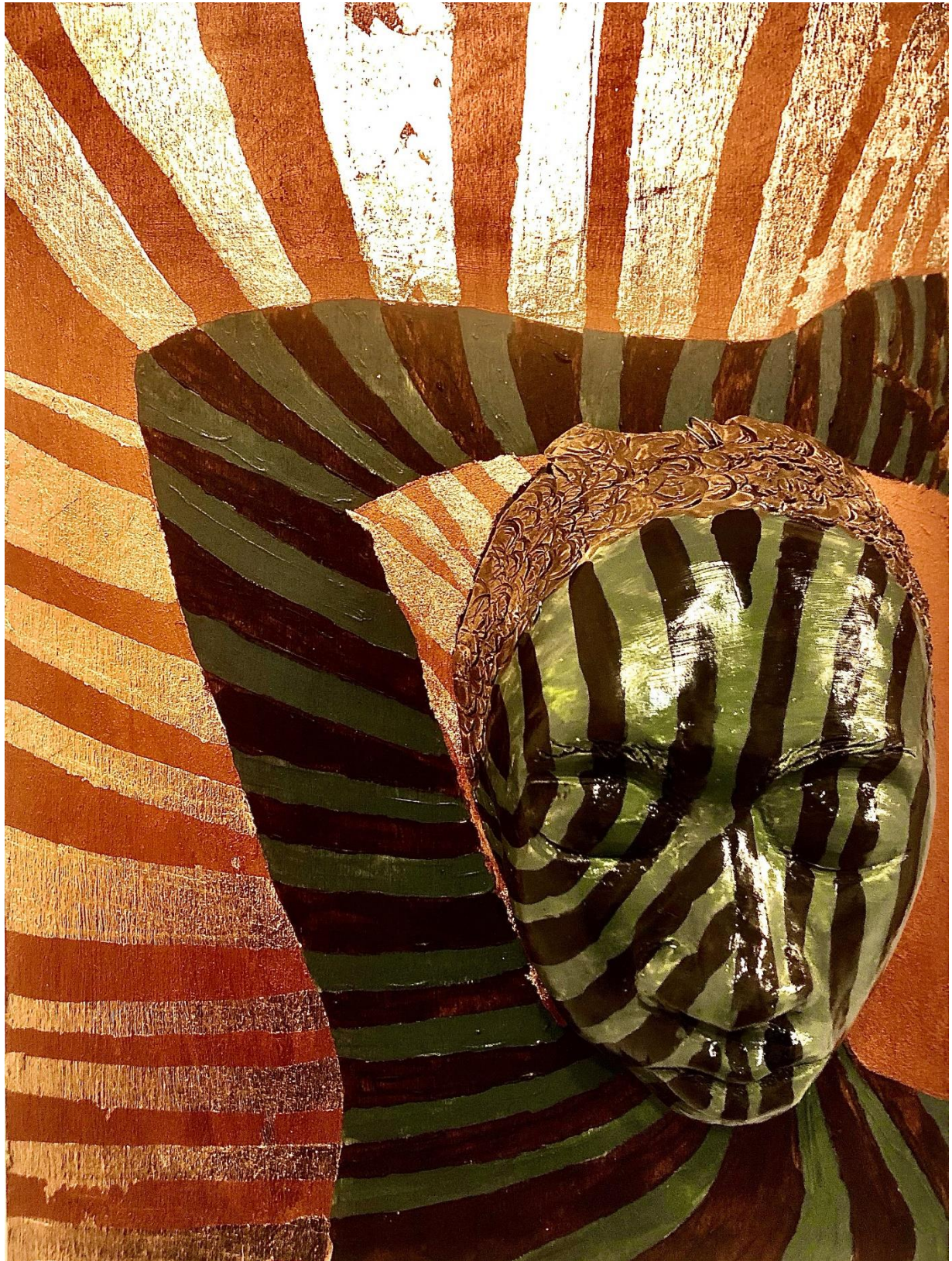
The first work, “War-Paint Sunrise” depicts a figure holding an arm above his head in a relaxed fist, fingers cropped from the composition.

Assuming that he is standing with eyes closed, the patterns on his skin radiate out like the sun. It is possible that he is in the moment of protest, of thought, of action, but it is also possible that he is resting horizontally as the light peeks through the blinds and casts these strange shadows. I am interested in the space between these possibilities.

The second work, “Misery a Ride Me” brings together several of the symbols that I have worked with over the last few years. The stripes reference the tattooing and the scarification rituals of many indigenous groups while simultaneously referencing the bars of the literal and/or figurative prisons we are placed into by a racist, sexist and classist society.

In this composition, I reference an old Jamaican saying “misery is riding me,” sadness, pressure, a sense of sorrow and helplessness are pervasive in communities that struggle. In this composition, Misery childlike sits precariously holding the golden trigger to the trap... the main character also holds it. The implication is control. Who is in control? The rope is slack, her arm is taut. There is possibility.

Thirdly, “Redstripe”, this work named obviously for the pattern and color that drips from the face of the mask like blood and reappears on the skin like prison stripes, or clown stripes, or peppermint stripes; also, think about the history of Red Stripe beer and D&G in Jamaica. [Desnoes and Geddes were the original owners, bottlers and brewers of the internationally known Red Stripe Beer Company].

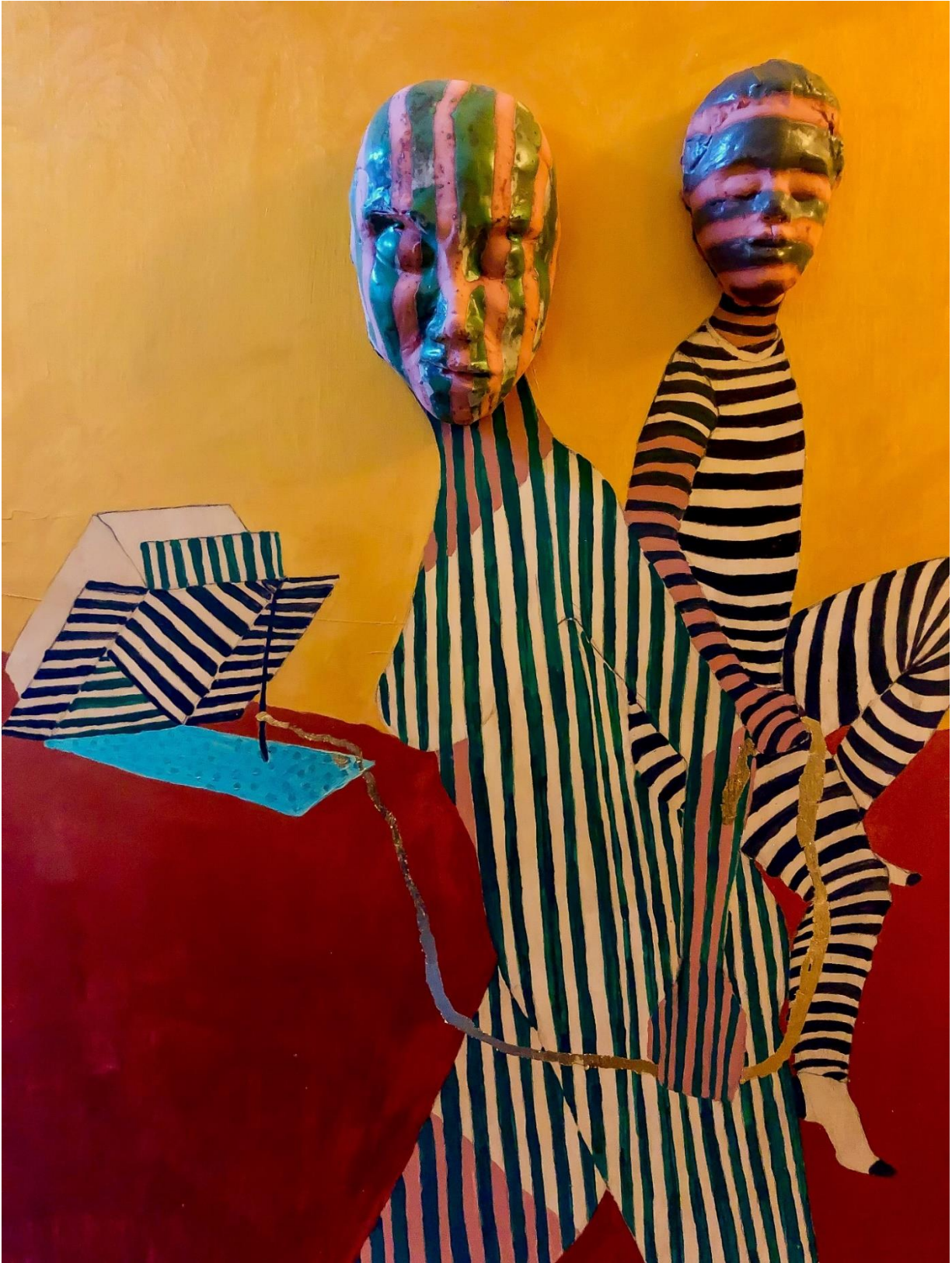


War-Paint Sunrise

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Misery a Ride Me

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Redstripe

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