Hotten (thot)

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A PROJECT IN LIEU OF THESIS PRESENTED TO THE COLLEGE OF THE ARTS
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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Abstract

A SUMMARY OF PROJECT IN LIEU OF THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF FINE ARTS

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Hotten(thot) features a collection of collages and sculptures that reference the objectification of Black women in the history of scientific illustration. Eighteenth and Nineteenth century medical records show a pattern of exploitation of Black bodies in the service of medical research. Bodies were dissected, hyper-sexualized, misdiagnosed and mistreated to further medical studies that are still significant today. Historical scientific illustrations of the bodies of Black females depict features of their bodies as highly sexualized as well as devoid of beauty. I autonomously utilize and riff off of this exploitation to present a new history. By addressing the horrific historical truths behind this scientific degradation, I claim ownership over my own bodily exposure. The body, once demeaned and shamed is now celebrated and exalted. Through the ownership of sexuality and beauty, I evolve the scientific framework that has oppressed Black females throughout history.
Acknowledgements

Figure 1. Mom
   // Thank you for always challenging my perspective. You can make me see the good in any tough situation, even when I'm being stubborn. Thank you for all of the times you’ve calmed me down on the phone and told me everything is going to be alright. Everything is alright, because of you.

Figure 2. Chloe Rager
   // You inspire me. Thank you for the brainstorming, the life advice and the dancing. You are so intelligent, and I appreciate you so much for always being there to share your knowledge with me.

Figure 3. Leslie Gamble
   // Thank you for opening my eyes to the inequalities female artists have faced and continue to face. You encourage me to find my voice and you expand my mind further than I thought possible. You are the kind of educator that changes the world.

Figures 4 & 5. Lisa and Bethany
   // You two are everything I could have asked for in a committee. You push me forward, you motivate me to make better work, and you care about me as a human being. Thank you.
Acquiring The #BlackGirlMagic

Empowerment isn’t something you just stumble upon, it’s something you have to work for. It wasn’t until my time spent at graduate school that I actually accepted my Blackness as a positive aspect of myself (throughout this paper, I will capitalize the B in Black to emphasize the empowerment and importance the race has often lacked due to societal oppression). I grew up in a town called Celebration in Orlando, Florida, which had a majority Caucasian population. I mention this because although my childhood was pleasant and privileged, I never felt like I really belonged. My friends and I looked up to celebrities like Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera so consequently my ideas of beauty never included Black beauty. I used all kinds of chemicals to keep my hair straight, tried to stay out of the sun to avoid getting darker, avoided stereotypical foods like watermelon and fried chicken just so I could avoid being ‘black.’

Living in Celebration was like living in a bubble. In fact, we often referred to it as such. The Disney-made town was pristine. Your grass had to be a certain height, everyone’s mailbox was the same, and we all rode around on Segways, Nevs, and electric scooters. There was a certain sense of continuity that we had to exist within. Being one of the only Black families that lived in the community seemed like a glitch in the system. While I never experienced any hate
crimes or blatant racism, I unknowingly tolerated many micro-aggressions. I say unknowingly, because at the time I didn’t consider myself to be Black. So anything that was said or done to me didn’t actually offend me. Only now do I look back on those experiences and think “oh wow, that was messed up.”

Both peers and strangers would tell me that I spoke well for a ‘Black girl,’ that I was pretty for a ‘Black girl,’ that I was smart for a ‘Black girl,’ and many people even insisted that I wasn’t even Black because of my privileged upbringing. Due to this language, I grew up thinking that being Black must be bad. In my mind, Blackness was inferior, and I decided to disassociate myself with anything regarding stereotypical Blackness. I went as far as to jump in when my friends made racial slurs, celebrate the confederate flag, and feel good when they nicknamed me Oreo. I had a negatively constructed notion of what it meant to be Black, and only now do I realize how much this impacted my perception of self.

The journey towards loving myself has taken a long time. I can finally declare, with no self-hatred in my heart, that I am a Black woman. I’ve grown into my skin. This realization was such an epiphany that it immediately manifested itself in my art making. I began to investigate my own body like I was learning about it for the first time. Additionally, I learned aspects of Black history that I had previously tried to distance myself from. This exploration of self, and history of self, is evident in my thesis work.
Hottentot Venus

The crux of my research began with the Hottentot Venus. Harriet A. Washington, author of *Medical Apartheid*, delves into the history of the Hottentot Venus. The Hottentot Venus was a Khoi woman named Saartjie Baartman who was born in 1789 and spent the majority of her life as a spectacle, “made to stand naked at parties of the wealthy and to impersonate a chained animal” where people “paid a shilling a head to gape and shout vulgarities” (Washington 84).

Saartjie Baartman was brought to Europe in 1810 by a man named Dr. William Dunlop and upon her arrival, she quickly became an “object of unbridled medical curiosity” (Washington 83). Khoi women were known to have a large buttocks that was medically referred to as steatopygia (Washington 83). This physical feature attributed to their hyper-sexualization. Although these women were dehumanized for their voluptuous figures, the obsession surrounding their bodies was a clear denial of the sexual attraction towards them. Washington states that “Baartman embodied not only the boundary between man and animal but also the lure of the bestial, the base, and grotesquely hyper-sexual” (Washington 84).

Even in postmortem, Baartman was not safe from torment. A French zoologist and physiologist named Baron Georges Cuvier “cast Baartman’s body in plaster in 1817, pre-
served her brain, vulva and anus in glass jars, then stripped the flesh from her skeleton and hung it on display in Paris Musée de l’Homme”(Washington 85). Cuvier’s treatment of Baartman’s body was inhumane due to the fact she was treated like a specimen rather than a human. The fetishization of Black bodies stimulated the grotesque curiosity that made many women fall victim to experimentation. This act of dissection, and making the private public, is a theme that is woven throughout my exhibition.

Baartman had no choice in the display of her body, which prompted me to expose the history of her treatment while repossessing power over the unjust scientific exploration. Baartman’s dissected body was wrongly defined as animalistic, void of beauty, and hyper-sexual. Alternatively, my thesis exhibition, *Hotten(thot)*, rewrites the narrative and liberates the Black female body from these negative falsehoods. Through the use of subtle hints of glitter, lyrics from sexually empowered women, soft fabrics, *Hotten(thot)* elevates my Black body from the history of the scientific despair that surrounds it.

Wangechi Mutu is an artist that also utilizes the medical exploitation of Black women in her collage work. Mutu collages on top of illustrations from medical texts and uses images of pornography, glitter, and hair, among other materials and subjects to create grotesque sexualized creatures. In the article “Like Blood of Blossom: Wangechi Mutu’s Resistant Harvests,” author Sarah Jane Cervenak explains that Mutu’s work is a space where the “black female therapeutic reassemblage coalesces with an ugly learning of medical knowledge industries’ promiscuous reliance on the nineteenth-century slave plantation as a zone of racialized, sexualized, epistemological harvesting”(Cervenak, 396). One of Mutu’s works, titled *Ectopic Pregnancy*, features a collage of fragmented body parts that together make up an abstracted face. The dismemberment of
the body functions as “not just a discharge of black life but the recovery of its right to disassemble, to undo, and work through” (Cervenak, 397).

Like Mutu, my work uses the Black body to confront the violence of the medical history that surrounds it. I splice and divide the photos of my body then arrange them into balanced compositions that are modeled after layouts specific to scientific textbooks. I have the authority to disrupt the whole of the form as well as the creative authorship to organize the segments onto the paper. Although I continue the barbarity of dissection visually to reveal the history of the medical atrocities that Black bodies have faced, I add elements of materiality that heighten the beauty of the forms. Through adding these elements, not only do I uncover the history of unjust medical exploration on Black females, but I shift the narrative towards a positive perspective on the Black female body.

James Marion Sims

A second medical case that impacted my work was the surgical cruelty performed on a group of slave women by James Marion Sims, the founder of gynecology. Sims gained popularity by trying to cure vesicovaginal fistula, which involved the tear between the vagina, bladder and rectum cause by difficult childbirth (Washington 63). This complication wasn’t just specific to Blacks, but affected all women of this time period. However, it was much easier for Black women to suffer infections from these tears due to the conditions of their slave dwellings. Sims was able to acquire a “total of eleven women slaves with vesicovaginal fistula from their masters.
by promising to lodge, board, and treat them, and he built a spartan wooden building, where he conducted surgical experiments on them for the next four years” (Washington 64).

As if the conditions weren't sinister enough, the experiments on the women ensued without the administration of anesthesia. One cannot even begin to imagine the pain endured from the surgeries. Sims chose to abrade “the edges of the vaginal tears every time he attempted to repair an opening” then “closed them with sutures” (Washington 65). The doctors that were assisting Sims helped by holding down the women, but they left because they could no longer stand the shrieks (Washington 65). After the doctors withdrew from the experiment, the slave women were forced to restrain each other.

Unfortunately, this is only one of countless torturous experiments that were performed on Black bodies. Even Sims himself carried out other terrifying experiments, including operating on
children, to write his medical journals. Although we accept these practices and benefit from them, the truth behind them often goes unacknowledged. A copious amount of the medical knowledge we accept today is deeply rooted in non-consenting Black Americans. The Tuskegee Experiments and human radiation experiments are just a few of the significant medical betrayals conducted. The African-Americans in the Tuskegee Experiments were tricked into believing they were receiving care for syphilis, while the human radiation experiments were performed on African-Americans under the guise of medical care. *Hotten(thot)* brings a small part of this concealed narrative to the forefront, further unveiling the private and making it public.

The plaster vulvas from the exhibition contrast with Sims’ treatment of his victims. These sculptural components are fragmented, but placed in a line to be viewed continuously. The viewers eye travels down the line of sixty-nine sculptures as if it were a timeline of stories to be told. In spite of the fact that the vulvas match the color of the gallery wall, they are glossy, hence subtly coming forth from the flat surface. The luster of the finish also helps demonstrate the sensuality of the vulva, mimicking moisture. In addition, the clitoris and inner labia are coated with a fine glitter, further exalting the beauty of the form. By making the dismembered vulvas alluring, I offer an altered connotation of dissection that alludes to pleasure rather than
torture. I can’t take away the pain of my ancestors, but I can subvert the framework that op-
pressed them.

Artist as Scientist

My collage practice is all about investigation, as I am continually looking for materials that correlate with other materials. Collage allows for play. It is a perpetual process of decision making. I am constantly developing relationships between color, form and shape to emphasize the relationship between body, sensuality, dissection, the grotesque and the beautiful. I act as scientist when I cut (or dissect) the photos of my body and I often utilize forceps to place the small cut-outs into place. Graphite drawings of the antique gynecological tools are incorporated into some of the collages to further ground the work in the medical realm. A few collages are stitched into, replicating sutures. My work space is organized, and cut outs are stacked and placed in their designated categories. Like an operation table, I ensure that everything is clean and has its place. The sterility of the work space is vital to my role as scientist. The way in which the collages are produced, and the aesthetic choices involved, all aid to the scientific mod-
el.

The installation of the collages also contributes to the experience of scientific investiga-
tion. The majority of the collages are held up with small silver pins, and a few collages are mounted onto clipboards. The small pins do not only reference dissection, but they also help generate the delicacy of material, hence allowing the viewer to take a cautious role as an authen-
tic observer of medical content. The arrangement of the collages on the wall is organized, but offset. There is always something for the viewer to examine or explore. Small resin casts of my hair appear, encapsulated with glitter. Black and white photos of my body are abstracted to resemble radiological scans. Magnifying glasses that are mounted to the wall close in on hair, a wisdom tooth, and selected collage cut outs. This collection of collages, photos, and sculptures work together to create an experience that fosters examination.

Similar to the work of Hanne Darboven, who often displays in a wall-to-wall grid of small works, the collages in Hotten(thot) also fill the gallery wall in a grid-like fashion. Darboven’s piece titled Evolution Leibniz, includes texts from encyclopedias, photographs of objects, and small toy figures. In a review from Artforum International, author Frances Richard states that “walking around in her daunting archive of composition-as-explanation, the visitor is
Playing with Conventions

Racists have historically looked to medical models to legitimize the position of racial hierarchy. The Eurocentric viewpoint cemented itself as superior by condemning Black people through a falsified scientific lens. Sander Gilman, author of “Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late Nineteenth-Century Art, Medicine, and Literature,” expands upon how scientific conventions were used to dehumanize Blacks. Gilman conveys that “medicine offers an especially interesting source of conventions since we do tend to give medical conventions special “scientific” status as opposed to the “subjective” status of the aesthetic conventions” (Gilman 205). When medical fallacies were produced against Black people, it was accepted as true because of the scientific context.

I utilize the same frame of thought, but in opposition, rather, to uplift the Black body. In place of medical descriptions, I use lyrics from Black female artists that are related to their sexuality. While the labels look like they are perhaps literal interpretations of the image, when the viewer gets closer and reads the text, they are confronted with the lyrics. Incorporating the pop
The lyrics that helped me reach self-acceptance now act as descriptors for my body.

My fabricated documents have the presence of realism. Only when the viewer investigates the work closely can they discover how I have played with the medical model. In conjunction with the lyrics as descriptors, I also use photos of fabric and fibers to act as skin or hair. These materials assist in comparing my body to elements of sensuality and play.

The Museum of Jurassic Technology, located in Los Angeles, also explores the boundaries between the real and the fake. This museum contains objects that are “invented but seem true” and others that “are true but seem invented” (Rothstein). Edward Rothstein, author of the New York Times article titled “Where Outlandish Meets Landish”, writes that the museum uses
the idea of a museum to “inspire wonder not just at the objects (real or invented) but at the nature of museums themselves, the way they select items from the world and allow us to recognize them as strange and wonderful” (Rothstein). Hotten(thot) similarly uses the medical model to evoke an environment in which is rooted in the legitimacy of scientific knowledge. The viewer innately wants to accept the information as factual. By playing with scientific conventions and adding my own narrative, I expose the authenticity of historical conventions that negatively portrayed Black bodies.

The Autonomous Nude

In Lynda Nead’s book, The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality, she discusses how the female body has been framed throughout art history and how depictions of female nudity continue to flux between the erotic and the pornographic. Historical paintings of the female nude, specifically of the neoclassical era, have served to contain and control the sexuality of the female body. Such paintings functioned purely to titillate male viewers and often illustrated a loss of autonomy in the female subject. These women are portrayed as passive, and as object, to be molded like putty to a man’s visual desire.

Nead states that for a woman “to reclaim the female body means to challenge the authority of patriarchal boundaries - boundaries of gender and identity, between art and obscenity, the permissible and the forbidden”(Nead 107). Prevalent female artists from the Second Wave Feminist Movement worked to challenge the frame of the historical female nude. The shift of the gaze from distant to confronting the viewer, the autonomy of posture, the satire of historical
ideals, role reversal, and the play on dominant visual systems are prevalent techniques that feminist artists use to altar this frame. Through remodeling this archetype, they alter the private realm of the female body to a public realm by depicting themselves in an authentic and unashamed fashion.

My work also challenges this historical framework. In my collages, the first realm of control lies within the photographs of my body. Unlike the posed women illustrated in neoclassical paintings, I have authority over how I choose to position myself. After governing my decided pose, I take my own photographs. I manage the lens in which my body is captured, further emphasizing the autonomy of the imagery. The second sphere of control lies within how the collages are cut and placed onto the paper. Nead explains that the “power is constituted both through the production of knowledge concerning the body and through self-regulation, through the individual exercising control over the self” (Nead 10). I have the authority over my own manipulation, what parts of the body are emphasized, and which parts are abstracted.

Lisa Farrington also addresses this issue in her article titled “Reinventing Herself: The Black Female Nude”. Farrington states that Black female artists “have discovered ways to re-make and re-present their own naked images free from patriarchal and imperial associations and, as makers of their own bodies, they have created commanding exemplars, not of the “other” but of the “self”” (Farrington 22). *Hotten(thot)* is in line with this methodology because the work is an authentic and vulnerable view of my body that has not been controlled or altered by the patriarchal frame.
In the beginning of this paper, I discussed my journey towards Black girl magic, but here I will go into detail of what this magic entails. This popular hashtag was started by a woman named CaShawn Thompson in 2013 and it is “used for just about everything that shows positive images of black women”(Thomas). For me, this magic began with paying attention to black female music artists such as Beyoncé, Rihanna and Nicki Minaj. I became engaged with how they capitalized on the shape of their bodies and how they had no shame when referring to their sexual prowess. From seeing the beauty within these women, I started to see the beauty within myself. I can’t even count how many times I’ve watched Nicki Minaj’s music video titled “Anaconda”, or Rihanna’s “Stay”. I would watch just to find common features between their bodies and mine like full lips, thick thighs and round butts. If the rest of the world found these women beautiful, maybe I could be beautiful too.

The popularity of these artists began to grow within my friend group, and with that, I had white friends that tried to imitate their look. While some of their impersonations were a bit annoying, I did begin to realize I had a lot of the features that they were trying to attain. I didn’t need to go to the tanning salon, wear lip plumper, or spend hours at the gym for a bigger butt. My Blackness came au naturel. It might seem a bit pathetic that I had to wait for my features to be popularized before I could embrace myself, but when you grow up never seeing your body type and skin color as acceptable throughout media, you are brainwashed into believing your beauty isn't valued.

Now, I get excited when I see the abundance of Black women that are choosing to rock
their natural hair, when I see my natural hair products in Target, when I see more than one Black woman in a fashion catalogue, when I see Black women in positions of power, and when I see Black women win Oscars. I’m just so excited that I can finally see myself within this world.

Author Bell Hooks, investigates the gaze from a Black perspective in her book, *In Black Looks: Race and Representation*. In her critical chapter, ‘The Oppositional Gaze’, she speaks specifically to the Black female gaze in connection to cinema; however, it is still relevant to how Black women see themselves portrayed in all realms of media. Hooks writes that “black female spectators have had to develop looking relations within a cinematic context that constructs our presence as absence, that denies the “body” of the black female so as to perpetuate white supremacy and with it a phallocentric spectatorship where the woman to be looked at and desired is “white”(Hooks 118). To reiterate, Hooks is expounding on the fact that the lack of accurate and relatable Black female representation within cinema pushes the Black female out of the narrative and continues the idea that ‘other’ rather than ‘self’ is valued. Due to the fact that so much of Black female representation has felt disingenuous throughout history, it is important that my work is a true portrayal of my bodily existence.

I didn’t want to replicate the horrid medical narrative that surrounded the Hottentot Venus and the slave women from James Marion Sim’s experiments; rather, I wanted to elevate the portrayal of black bodies to express love and acceptance. Black female artists now “use new visual archetypes designed to dispel society’s resolute insistence upon their ugliness, their acquiescence, and their silence”(Farrington 22). Blackness has been subjected to degradation for centuries, and it is important, especially in our current cultural climate, to project beauty. When we
promote these ideals, we flourish in self-acceptance and henceforth become healthier human beings.

This empowerment fits within the Afrofemcentric consciousness in the visual arts which is “focused on the black woman artist exploring the distinct manner in which the latter envisions and presents black women’s realities” (Tesfagiorgis 467). This term was first introduced in 1984 by writer and educator Freida High W. Tesfagiorgis. She states that the “factor that distinguishes Afrofemcentrism in black art is the black female perspective, which insightfully enlarges and activates images of black women, celebrating heroines and documenting herstory while integrally addressing political, social and personal issues” (Tesfagiorgis 468). *Hotten(thot)* works within this concept through the glorification of my Black body, revealing historical truths, and expressing my sexuality.
The term thot is an acronym for “that hoe over there”. In pop culture, this term refers to a woman with many sexual partners, likened to a slut or whore, which are words that have been historically used to demean women for their sexuality. Claiming the framework of hyper-sexuality and subverting it towards the pleasure of sensuality is another way I take authority over the representation of my body. Although to a lesser degree, Black bodies are still over sexualized in today’s society. We still see so many instances in which Black women are attacked for their appearance and reduced to their looks alone.

For example, when Beyoncé introduced her song “Drunk in Love”, in which she sang about making love to her husband, she was highly criticized. A lot of the criticism circulated around the fact that she was a mother, and to wear revealing clothing and sing about having sex was seemingly inappropriate. The control that society still attempts to maintain over Black women’s sexuality is still very prevalent. It is important to acknowledge that this sexual control affects women of all races, however, I am focusing here on Black women because it is my lived experience.

Throughout history, there has been an obvious interconnection between the sexual and the scientific, especially when specifically referring to Black female bodies. After Baartman’s vulva was put on display, “men of science made pilgrimages to London’s academic and medical settings to sketch, measure, and endlessly analyze her steatopygous buttocks and her extended inner labia, which they dubbed the “Hottentot apron,” or the sinus pudoris, Latin for “veil of shame””(Washinton 83). Black female genitalia was deemed scientifically inferior and was per-
ceived to be drastically different than the genitalia of White women. Yet, none of these examinations were performed on White women, so there was no verity to the scientist’s claims because they were comparing the genitalia of Black women to ideals rather than scientific evidence.

This scientific idealism sadly lead to the ‘justified’ rape of many slave women by their slave owners. No responsibility for these rapes was placed onto the slave owners, and instead it was believed that “blacks were unable to control their powerful sexual drives” and “habitually enticed white men into inappropriate sexual relationships” (Washington 45). The sexual drive towards slave women was also unjustly blamed on their “hot blooded African nature” (Washington 45). In account of this history, it is even more of a triumph for Black women to reclaim their sexuality. There is so much suffering that Black people have had to undergo to be able to reach a point where sexuality can be autonomous.
Hotten(thot) juxtaposes the hyper-sexualized history of Black women in science to the hyper-sexualization of Black women in pop culture to emphasize the existence of the continued system of oppression. Through alluding to both historical and contemporary structures with my own body, I subvert the frames and become author of a new system. The new narrative that then generates from this subversion promotes Black beauty, self-acceptance, and sexual freedom. I am grateful that I live in a time in which I can make work that not only reflects the sexual control that has affected Black women throughout history, but also work that reveals the authority I possess over my own sexuality.

The Gaze

No one knows what feminism looks like. We don’t have a clear definition that states how a female should express their sexuality. There are people that believe that a visual expression of sexuality only perpetuates the male gaze and reverts our aim for equality. I believe that asserting sexual prowess is up to the individual. My work displays authorship over my body and the enjoyment of beauty and pleasure. My ancestors were unable to have this authority, so through adopting the frame of the scientific falsehoods they faced, I can liberate them from their oppression.

The article, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema”, by Laura Mulvey, discusses the desire to look through the structure of psychoanalysis. Through examining the psychology behind looking as researched by Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, Mulvey develops a reasoning be-
hind the patriarchal gaze. Mulvey states that “in their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote to-be-looked-at-ness” (Mulvey 873). Historically, the illustration of women has been used to perpetuate the male gaze. Due to this traditional frame of looking, it is important that women adjust the structure to include their own autonomy.

By being so provocative within the work, I am able to address the viewer’s curiosity. The work is bold, and uncomfortable for some. But in providing such vulnerability, I force the viewer to see me. I provide a structure in which the viewer is invited to investigate the most private parts of myself. Having authorship over the invitation to examine is a privilege my ancestors were not granted. So the autonomous nature of this project allows me to hold the rights to the gaze. Although I do not control who gets to see the work, I get to determine what is seen.
Embracing Blackness has been a beautiful journey. With the empowerment and acceptance of my Black body, comes the pain of acknowledging the atrocities my ancestors endured. *Hotten(thot)* seeks to dismantle historical medical conventions that have created oppressive cultural structures which still exist in today’s society. In bringing to light such horrific accounts of history, I hope that we can honor the Black women that were victims to the violence as well as discontinue the hateful systems of control that continue to harm Black bodies. Through making this work, I was able to reach levels of vulnerability I never thought possible, both physically and emotionally. I hope the authenticity of the work enlightens, empowers, and inspires.
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Plate 01: *Untitled*. Collage on Paper. 2017


Plate 03: “The Hottentot Venus” Georges Cuvier, “Extraits d’observations faites sur le cadavre d’une femme connue à Paris et à Londres sous le nom de Vénus Hottentote.” 1817


Plate 05: 69, paint and glitter on plaster, 2017

Plate 06: *Exhibition View of Collages*, 2017


Biographical Sketch

Brielle Jenkins is an artist from Celebration, Florida. She attended Flagler College for her BFA and continued her studies at the University of Florida working towards an MFA in Painting and Drawing.

Brielle enjoys making tiny things in large quantities. She would like to use her meticulous skills to lead a team of creatives in the fashion industry. Besides art, Brielle enjoys spending time with her dog, dancing, eating spicy food, and practicing yoga.