

Rachel Apthorp
Artist Statement

993/1000*

My work examines the relationship between gender and society, the lack of agency possessed by women's bodies, and the impact of trauma on those bodies. Comprised of object making, painting, installation and photography, my practice establishes a visual language for such ineffable ideas.

Influenced by abject and feminist art practices, I use found textiles and other domestic and medical materials to evoke those environments. Repeated use of bedsheets, pantyhose, bandages, wallpaper and acrylic house paint reinforces ideas of domesticity and the body. Physically manipulating these intimate materials, as well as traditional and pedestrian "art materials," gives agency and allows me to reconstruct, reclaim, and bear witness to a fraught personal history.

I fabricate amorphous figures and dysfunctional facsimiles of bodies to acknowledge debilitating struggles with depression and dissociation. Misshapen sculptural forms function as tragic stand-ins for violated bodies, while bright, playful colors allude to the naivety of childhood; yellow signifies illness, and pinks and blues identify gender binaries. While the vibrant colors seduce the viewer, further investigation provokes a sense of unease. Lifeless representations of bodies contextualized within a saturated palette create unsettling psychological scenarios.

*For every 1,000 rapes, 993 will go unpunished (<https://www.rainn.org/about-sexual-assault>).