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I was interested in a study abroad program with the School of Social Work in Berlin and Amsterdam because it focused on engaging with various communities to learn about community enhancement art projects, non-profit sex work organizations, and juvenile justice. I wished to better understand social policies and racial issues present in the U.S. to produce effective work that makes allow audience to reconsider their views. From examining juvenile prison systems in Berlin, refugee organizations in Amsterdam, I became more aware of socioeconomic issues that relate to immigration and low-income residents.

After learning about how different social welfare regimes facilitate their citizens, I discovered that reality is a social construction and that we normalize certain actions through policies and the media. Community places the concept of truth and normality and because of this individuals working for social change makes an impact by redefining these concepts. I discovered that values are dependent on the environment and that ideals are social constructions. Such instances of self-discoveries made me realize how powerful social work can be, whether it'd be through media and education. From this learning, I chose Photography as a medium to learn and develop as an artist because truth does exists in visual representations.

Gaining this critical eye influenced my work. I progressed from being unaware of societal norms and constructions to constantly questioning systematic policies. I tackled these problems in *Ninety-Nine: Eyes Eat The Soul*, which is about the objectification of women in the Media and the displacement of Asian community. Detroit Connections was another learning experience, as I continued to visit Detroit and learn about its community by visiting community gardens, the Heidelberg Project, galleries, concert venues. I created a video with a group of Film students called *Dreams of Detroit*, which is about my awareness for its issue of gentrification and disconnect between the people of Detroit and those trying to transform Detroit for monetary gain.

Photography has been a constant medium for me to represent and critique social issues. I wish to continue expanding notion of Photography to spectators while incorporating narratives related to intimacy, sexuality, and memories.

Selected Works

1. *Ninety-Nine: Eyes Eat The Soul, 40 in x 40 in, 2016*



What do eyes truly reveal?

Are these eyes accurate representation of the struggles women had to overcome in history?

Where am I placed in society when my sexuality has been constantly objectified?

If women are objectified, devalued, and represented by a male's point of view, but asian women are not even represented in such perspectives, what is my value as an Asian woman?

In critiquing notable films, sexist remarks are ignored because of their contributions. By doing so, the media asserts the notion that women should be devalued. I compiled a list of 100 films, combining lists of top films to watch created by directors, critics and film enthusiasts.

2. *Keep Ya Head Up*, 17 in x 22 in 2016



Reality is a subjective construction as people have different perceptions. There is a clear transparency between memory and reality. *Keep Ya Head Up* is a series of visual poetry representing bits and pieces of my personal experiences.

3. *Dreams of Detroit*, 2015 Finalist for Detroit Free Press Student Documentary Contest 2015

* Video available on www.vimeo.com/soonjuk



Detroit is more than issues of poverty, re-segregation, and gentrification. I wished to capture the sense of community in Detroit as well as hope for a better future. This piece includes a narration of one of my close friend's poem who grew up in Detroit.

4. *Loss*, 2014

*Video Installation link: <https://youtu.be/1NVvVBCErGQ>

In *Loss*, I wished to re-define Photography by incorporating video clips and casting them to collages made from found images. Do these photographs and montage accurately depict their struggle and conflicts in that exact moment? All Photographs, whether it be advertisements or intimate ones for family members, are skewed and constructed by the photographer.

