

Arlie Wood

Artist Interview: Lily Taylor

Date: April 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021

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*When did you become interested in art?*

I have always been interested in art. I noticed I was drawn to art as early as elementary school. Of course, you have art courses as part of the rounds throughout elementary, jr. high, and high school and art was always my favorite. I think it was towards the end of middle school when there were more elective options, and everyone got to pick which electives they wanted to take, and I always chose art when I got the choice.

*Do you remember when you first started gravitating towards photography as a medium?*

It wasn't until high school. I really was not interested in photography when I signed up for my first class. It only happened because I had an extremely mean drawing teacher when I was a freshman in high school. So, I was looking for other art classes that I could take. That is when I discovered a photography course was offered and I signed up. My dad was actually a photographer, and he had a camera I could use for the class. I ended up really enjoying that class and I have not gone back since. I have continued to work with other mediums too like watercolor and painting, but photography, photoshop, and digital manipulations have really been my main focus and priority since high school.

*Did your dad working in photography influence you at all to continue to pursue photography or the arts in general?*

Both of my parents work in the art world. My dad did photography for a while, and had a studio, and my mom was a costume designer. Now, both of my parents have transitioned into art teaching. My mom always wanted me to be a photojournalist, so she was happy when I decided to continue to pursue photography. However, I really have been the main person to motivate myself to pursue the arts.

*Are there any other activities or hobbies that you are passionate about?*

There was a moment in high school when I was strongly considering becoming a choir director. I really have a passion for singing in a choir. I have always liked the challenge of music and trying to get it perfect. But I took a hard look at what my current choir director was doing at the time and she had a lot of jobs that I was not interested in. Like for example, finding the music and trying to form a complete concert and managing a budget. I just decided it was best to continue choir as a hobby and pursue a career in art.

My love of nature is another big part of me. Ever since my sister and I were young my parents have taken us on camping trips. We would go to several National Parks, and go hiking and do several other outdoor activities. That is when I discovered my love for trees. It is such a weird thing to have passions for, but I love trees. They make me feel at peace.

*Do you see any influence that nature has on your work?*

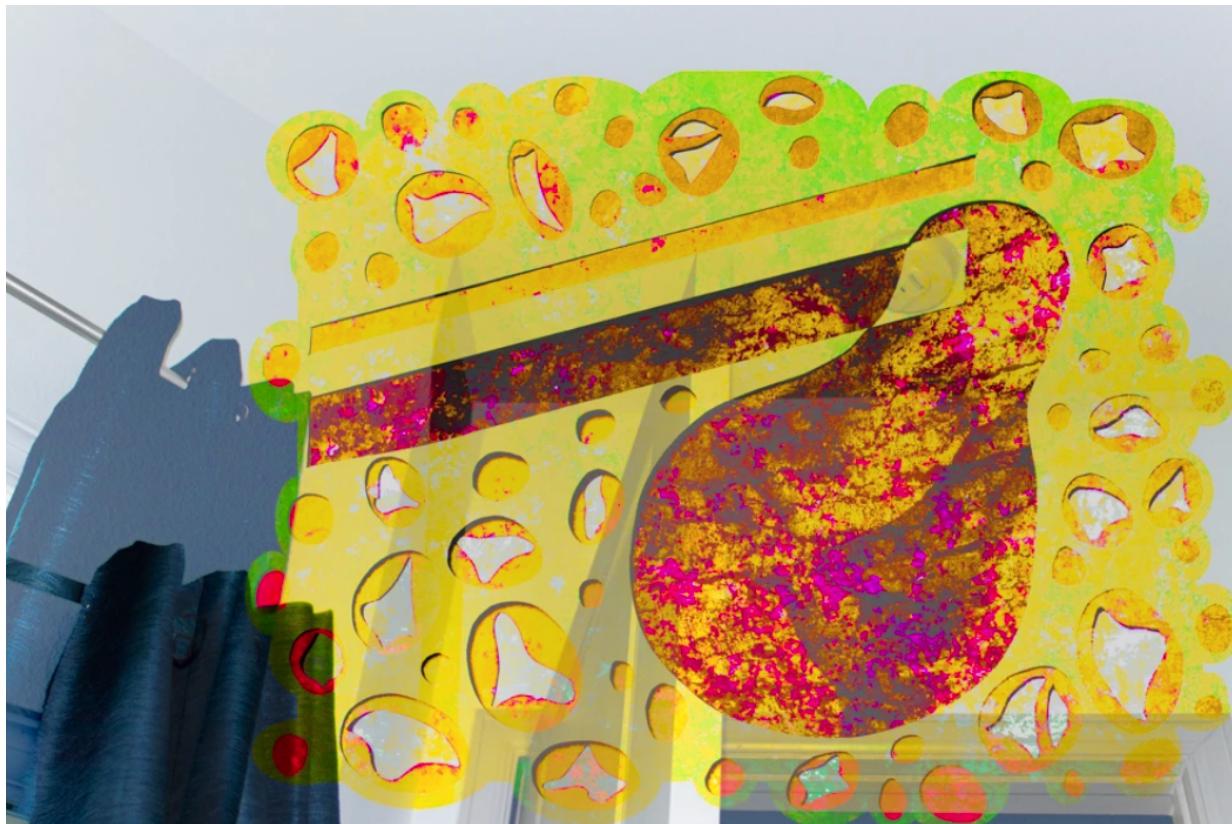
When I first started shooting it was just nature photography. You know the simple flowers, leaves, and trees. I still shoot hundreds of photos like that on every trip that I go on, but more

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recently I have been using some of my nature photos as a tool in my Photomontages. Most of my nature photos have a lot of texture to them. When I create a photomontage incorporating my nature photos adds a layer of texture to the work.



*Overthink, 2021*

*Could you tell me more about how you make your Photomontages? Is this what you are currently working on?*

Yes, I came across the word photomontage, which is how I am describing my work now, I had been calling them collages but there is a difference between collage and photomontage. A collage is more of a spur of the moment assemblage, and a photomontage is a little more thought out and developed. Sometimes what I make is a collage because I am doing it quickly, but with other pieces I take more time to organize the work and that is when I consider the work to be a photomontage. So, it is a mixture of both of collage and photomontage, but I have been describing the work as photomontages. I make the photomontages by first creating constructions out of paper. I then take a photo of the construction that I made and upload it to photoshop. I then upload other photos that I have made to photoshop. I also will upload photos of objects that I have taken specifically for each photomontage. Like a piece of string, or a small painting I have made for a piece. Once all of this is uploaded to photoshop I then start playing with layering all the different photos. I play with the different colors and textures to create an image that recreates a visual experience I have had based on my experience with synesthesia.

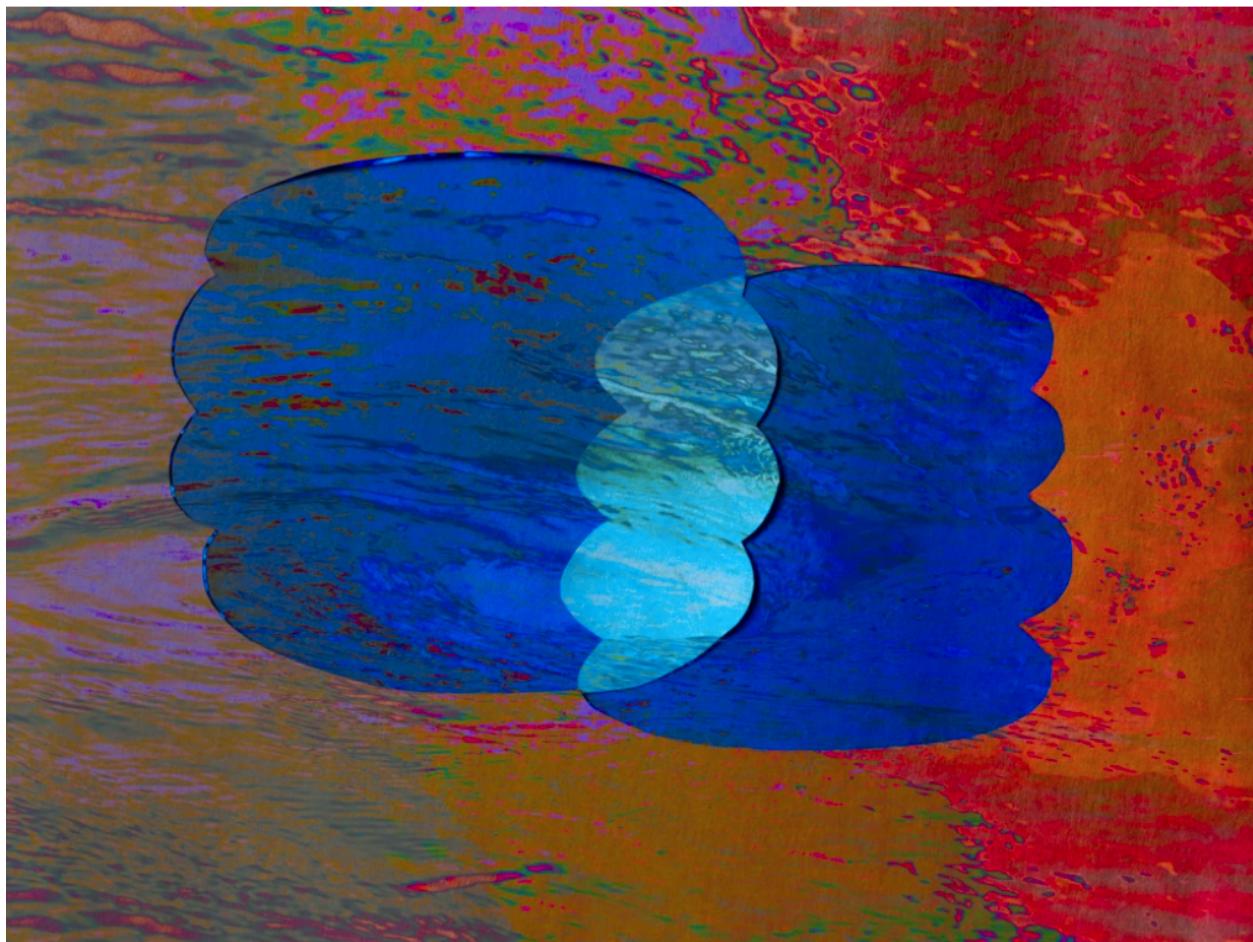
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*Can you tell me more about what Synesthesia is and how it contributes to your work?*

Yes, Synesthesia is a cross wiring of the senses where people associate certain colors or textures to specific letters and numbers. So, for me all the letters in the alphabet have certain colors that I associate with them. They are always the same and they are unique to me. Other people who have synesthesia associate different letters with different colors. I also occasionally associate textures to certain letters and numbers. So, what I have been doing with my art is recreating a synesthetic experience I have had at some point in my life. I have also been recreating emotions that I have had visually. I have been trying to take all of my internal feelings and make them into art.



Vibration, 2021

*Is there an artist who has influenced your work?*

Van Gough has always influenced me as an artist. I have been a fan of his work for as long as I can remember. He has inspired me and a lot of my work. There are some theory's that he may have had synesthesia or some sort of visual phenomenon. I definitely sense that in his work. That is probably why I am so drawn to it.

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*How do you feel about the overall impact of technology in your work?*

I think I take it for granted. It's not that I'm necessarily drawn to technology. It is just a tool photographer's use in today's world. It's interesting because I don't necessarily want to encourage people to look at their screens more, but then I'm doing that so its kind of hypocritical of me. I'm spending hours online working on an image that is potentially going to be viewed on a screen. Is there a way to do it in the darkroom, of course? It would take a lot of more time, but its possible. Either way it's still just making work. If I, did it in the dark room that would just take longer and that would be less time for me to be outside enjoying nature. I make art with today's current technology and its fine.



*Th., 2020*

*How do you plan to work in the art world?*

That is probably the question that I am least prepared for. I have never been very ambitious. I've always just wanted to pursue art and that's what I'm doing. I know I want to have a family and live somewhere with trees and be doing what I love. So, I am working on turning what I love

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into a tangible thing. It is easy to say I want to do something that I love but turning it into something tangible is what is hard. Really anything I get to do that is related to photography will make me happy. Eventually I see myself in education, after I explore the photography field and I am ready to settle down somewhere and start a family. I think I would be happy teaching an art class in a grade school. I have thought a little about teaching college courses on photography, but as of now I am still not sure yet. It is something that will unfold with time.

*Is there anything coming up that you are excited about?*

I have been working on a book for my thesis one class that I am excited to finish. Just having a physical book is super cool to me. Especially because I haven't printed anything in a while, because of covid everything has been digital. So just having a physical object that I designed with my work in it and printed is very exciting for me. The title of the book is *Alignment* and in it are some of the photomontages I have recently made. I am also in a group exhibition that is opening on May 1<sup>st</sup>. The title of the exhibition is *Inter/Other*, and it is about the human experience. It is the first exhibition that I have been featured in so that is also very exciting.