Morgan Pross

FURSCA 2019

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FURSCA 2019: End of Summer Report

 My FURSCA project this past summer was surrounded by photography. My intended goal was to research and educate others on the math and science that is involved in photography. The first thing I did was I created a YouTube channel ([LINK](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPnjtCpUXwk7eGTHbKDyLyw?view_as=subscriber)) where I would post my videos diaries, tutorials and tips to share from my FURSCA project. The overall goal was to expand on my knowledge of the physics, math, and science that goes into photography and then sharing that knowledge and educating others.

 My first project that I assigned to myself was learning about reflections. Which specular reflections are Mirror-like Images that rely on reflection from a precise angle. Specular reflection happens when light rays bounce from off from the smooth surface at the exact angle that they hit. I

was able to perfect two bodies of work that involved specular reflections.

 Just around the time I finished up with specular reflections I was prompted with a new task from my advising professor, Ashley Feagin. I had shared in a meeting with ashley that I’ve been struggling with self confidence and self acceptance. She strongly advised that I started to focus on making myself the subject, in hopes that I could find that self confidence that I was missing. Ashley suggested that I put a pause on my original idea of subject matter (aka models) and to continue working as both photographer and subject while still continuing to explore lighting and lighting physics.

 Most of my self confidence issues were created because of my issues with Identity. Identity has always been something I have struggled with. I am an FTM (Female to Male) Transman. Especially with growing up in a very conservative household, I struggled more because I felt pressured to conform to the norms of a female, which created a lot of issues with my confidence. I was uncomfortable with this lifestyle but I also withheld anger because I was in denial of my true identity. I wasn’t able to come to terms with my true identity until the end of my freshman year of high school when I took that risk and started my transitioning. I am now post HRT (Hormone Replacement Therapy), meaning I’ve been taking testosterone injections for a little over a year now. I do still struggle a lot with gender dysphoria, only because I still haven’t gotten top surgery so I have to bind my chest. Binding is quite a painful process because daily I have to wear a very tight tank top with non-stretch material just to hide my chest.

 Throughout this process, I found a new sense of confidence in myself. I noticed I was a lot less hesitant to engage in a lot of activities that I normally avoid. I also found myself to be more social than I normally are. With all this new found confidence I was able to curate a good amount of photos.

This project has potentially laid down the path of a potential focus of my own art. When switching my focus over to self portraiture, I discovered that I could focus on making myself and my growth the subject of my art. This is important because I’ve been struggling to stick with a focus for my photography, and my goal was to have an idea of what I wanted to do with my photos before my Junior Review with the Art Department. I believe now that I have found that focus. I hope to be able to continue this focus throughout my career and building a portfolio for graduate school and beyond.

My intended plans after the completion of this 2019 FURSCA work period is to hopefully continue this project onto FURSCA 2020. The only difference is that I want to focus on Identity and finding the comforts in my identity. I do want to write a department thesis my senior year on finding my identity through self portraiture.

Personally I can say, this FURSCA project has unexpectedly improved my way of life. I entered this summer with no sense of self appreciation or confidence in myself. I have left this summer with a sense of hope, and more importantly, I have left with self confidence. I never expected my project to turn out the way it did. Although, I am very glad it had the outcome that it did. I’ve noticed a large difference in my mood and overall confidence.