

ARTIST STATEMENT

MAXX SIZELER

INSTALLATION: *WORKING DRAWINGS FOR GENDER*, 2004

GENDER is the performance by which one interprets biology. It also includes the language that describes performances: such as "man," and "woman."

This work explores ideas of gender outside the generally accepted binary system of "Man" and "Woman". I am interested in going to places in the work that have no present gender definitions. These places exist in between and beyond the binaries simultaneously and the work is a place where I invent or talk about these possibilities of alternative forms of gender. I think the options for gender in general, are large, flexible, and changeable. Our present society does offer some alternatives, but generally we are tied to the binaries.

The work uses several ideas to address gender. One is architecture, as in, the architecture of the body, and of gender. For example, the use of bodybuilders, who are reconstructing or changing their bodies from a generally accepted form of the body to an alternative one. This is a physical example of a gender alternative. Architecture is also relevant as I see the work as a kind of construction or working drawing for these alternative forms of gender. I use basic drafting tools and techniques to create the work and it includes references to these tools, such as the repetitive straight lines and the use of the color yellow, identical to the color of tracing paper used by architects to work out initial ideas.

Found shoes that I have altered are used in the work to address the body and changing gender. Shoe designs hold many of society's generally accepted views of gender. Shoes themselves are emblematic of the body, and also function as a kind of pedestal. In the work the shoes morph to show change and development, growth patterns and a kind of puberty for alternative forms of gender. This is illustrated by the use of men's shoes that grow high heels.

Ideas in the work, of both, abstraction and figuration, hard-edge and organic forms, relates to the poles of the binary system of gender. The work rides the line between two polar ideas structurally and works to find a place where these ideas overlap. It has a kind of cognitive dissonance, meaning that it exists and prospers with two thought patterns that contradict each other.

Color is also used to discuss the morphing of gender. For example, in the four-panel painting, "Working Drawing for Gender," I use two colors for the body of the work. These two colors, turquoise and lavender, start out in the first panel as sole colors, as the eye travels to the next panel, some lavender is added to the turquoise, and turquoise to the lavender. In the next panel more of each is added to the other, and so on until the final panel, where the colors practically switch places. I chose turquoise because it is a form of blue, which represents "boy," and lavender, a form of pink to represent "girl". Thus as the shoes are morphing so are the colors.