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## Statement

The precursor to my current body of work was my father's cancer diagnosis in May of 2011. I took this into my artwork as a way to record my feelings at the time, and it slowly evolved into a series of work on its own. The creative process turned from an escape to a cathartic experience. Coping with life is part of our existence as humans. It is an emotional process, affecting each individual differently. The concept of "masking" the true self is something that is well known by nearly every human being. In many ways, it can be described as an elaborate act, a play of sorts; in others, a survival tactic that maintains order and control. I believe both examples of these methods of coping can have positive outcomes.

The portraits in these pieces are not meant to represent any specific person or people group, rather humanity as a whole. Therefore, the expressions of the faces of these figures are neither threatening nor inviting. They are to be viewed as pensive and introverted; facing the viewer, yet clearly not acknowledging him/her for his or her own thoughts. The patterns I use throughout the picture plane look may appear to be familiar to a viewer, but only in the way that they simply mimic the human fingerprint or loop/whorl pattern in which human hair grows. In addition to the patterning, I alter the smooth surface of the pieces with resin drips and pouring. Additionally, the patterning represents the complexities within oneself as anxieties multiply and are internalized.

When light passes through the translucent screen-printed patterns, the portrait in the layers beneath the resin is interrupted. I begin with washes of watercolor that I build up to increase color saturation. Over this, I use colored pencil to flesh out the figure's skin tone and facial details. The only other part of the body shown in this series is the neck, which I have made uniform in each individual piece to create homogeneity. Once the portrait is completed, I screen print a transparent thumbprint pattern directly onto the piece and cover the surface with a coating of clear epoxy resin. More transparent screen-printed patterns are printed in between layers of the resin, before the piece is completed. All of the pieces contain at least three layers of resin to achieve the correct amount of layering. The rest of the body is unimportant to this work as the focus is on the head. Behind the head of the figure is a colored disc. Although in art history, a flat disc behind the head of a figure was regarded as a holy symbol, its additional function is to represent a person's aura (my reasoning for including it is the latter definition). I have modified the aura to act both as a compositional element to frame the face and head, and also to obscure it.

My goal with this series of work is to make the hidden external, to depict how swallowed fears and anxieties would appear if made tangible and visible. Though it's well known that there are plenty of destructive, unhealthy, and dangerous coping strategies associated with emotional turmoil, I tend to think that there are an equal amount of positive experiences that can be gathered. It is these experiences that give us growth of character, a will to live. These are the experiences I hope to convey in my work.