**Artist Statement**

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I hale from a small town in Vermont where my two parents Mark and Cathy Diego raised me. As a small child, I remember I would always take time out of my day to draw so that my work could be proudly displayed on the refrigerator. I eventually stopped hanging work on the fridge, but the habit of constantly drawing did not change through grade school and beyond. I started to realize that I could have potential in the arts, but as my high school basketball coach said, potential means you haven’t done anything yet. I have now completed four years at Colby-Sawyer College where I have been deeply involved in the art program. I have experience in ceramics, watercolor painting, sculpture, printmaking, a taste of acrylic painting, video production, digital media and, of course, drawing. Drawing has always been my passion. I never hesitate to work outside my realm and explore new mediums, but I will always return to it. My work is often an integration of other mediums like watercolor, collage, ink, or printmaking. If I wanted a certain type of effect, I will find a way to make it happen.

My work is often a combination of the realistic and the abstract. I will combine the physical world with the intangible to make a work of art that is dreamlike and surrealist. When I am rendering I use dry drawing materials such as charcoal, conte crayon, or graphite to illustrate tones and values that create realistic depictions of my subject matter. Using a material that is much more uncontrollable, like watercolor or printmaking, I will integrate the medium into my work. Joining different materials has always fascinated me. There are an infinite number of combinations I can try, and I never settle for one. I need to be constantly exploring.

Creating work is never easy, but it is what attracted me to being an artist. Expressing and creating abstract thought through art is one of the most beautiful things in the history of mankind. I am not trying to claim that my work is the most beautiful thing ever done, but I do have a process that helps me create. The production is five-steps: Investigation, studies, planning, execution, and reflection. The
investigation stage is where I find subject matter that I want to explore. The studies are loose mock-ups of different compositions. This is also where I experiment with materials to find out which medium would best suit my subject matter. Planning is where my final drawing begins. Light pencil marks fill the blank piece of paper and the composition is carefully laid out. This phase quickly moves in the execution of the drawing. I start to make dark and deliberate lines that bring the drawing out. This is where the drawing comes together and I get a finished piece. Once it is done I will set the drawing aside for a couple weeks and begin the reflection. Every drawing teaches me something. Failure is one of the biggest aspects to art. Perhaps the proportions of the figure are wrong, the color scheme is wrong, or the composition just isn’t strong. I have an idea of what a drawing should look like, but at times I just do not execute. I refuse to walk away from an unsuccessful piece of work without some kind of message that will help me in the future. It is out of failure that we learn. Setting the piece of work aside helps me clear my mind of the struggles that went into the piece and I can solely reflect on what I learned.

I always thought that art was the closest thing we could ever get to read someone’s mind. Art becomes a window to the inner thoughts of a person and shows the viewer how they perceive the world around them. Expressing myself has never been easy, but drawing has allowed me to communicate specific messages and feelings to the viewer. I have done multiple pieces that comment on the destruction of nature, and I believe I could draw you a picture of the environment far better then I could ever explain it. During a lecture, one of my professors said that creating art is like having a conversation with the piece and the viewer. Every line, tone, and color is new information that is communicated to others. I want to tell stories with my work; I want every person to walk away from a piece of work with a different feeling and a different perception of what a specific piece means. My piece, Acceptance, is an abstract representation of the struggles of living with a chronic illness, but I have not had one person tell me that is what it reminds them of. I have stories for the work, but I will let the viewer have their own.