



Artist Statement Theresa Ketterer

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The term ‘walking wounded’ refers to the soldiers requiring the least medical attention in combat zones. The works in this exhibition, *Walking Wounded*, like most of my work over the past 4 years, are reminders of the strength that can come from weakness and the ability of humans to endure. Each of the drawings I create shows weaknesses, strengths, and identifiable emotions of humanity by using abstract, distorted wolves visually resembling cubism. There are two reasons for my depiction of wolves. First, the forms in the wolf’s anatomy offer numerous opportunities for abstractions by using bone structure to dissect the forms. Second, growing up my mother told me about the Sioux tribe’s nickname for the Pawnee, they were called ‘wolves’ because of their high level of endurance. My images are reminders to stay strong and endure both for myself and for viewers. I spent my four years of college, outside the classroom, seeking diagnoses and treatment for difficult to recognize conditions. Over the last four years, my work has traced my emotional and stylistic changes.

The symbols I use as aids to abstraction come from various cultures whose religious symbols have been absorbed into Neo-Paganism such as Druid and Egyptian. For most of my drawings, I write into the wolves with the Theban alphabet, used in the Middle Ages by practitioners of Ceremonial Magic, a practice that involved conjuring and controlling angels and demons. The secret alphabet was used to hide their activities from the Catholic Church. As my work develops, I incorporate more source materials, and I layer and combine these images to create more complicated images. I chose to use paper because of the way ink is absorbed by the paper and the changing color as paper ages. I use brushes to create both varying lines and soft gradations. In some works, I add color with acrylic paint that I vary between washes and opaque lines. Currently, my work is developing to include more mixed media. The layering of images, sectioning abstraction, and the gradations create a look similar to Cubism, but with a different conceptual goal. My art history specialization in 17th-century European works on paper influences my artwork in my style and material choices. Though profoundly personal, I believe viewers can find their own place in my work.

The works in this exhibition continue the themes of my larger body of work. Probably the most complex work, *Diagnosis* is a look back at the 4 emotional stages I went through adapting to my life with chronic pain. These stages (anger, hopelessness, questioning, and acceptance) are recognized by psychologists. The Rehab Institute of Chicago uses this work to illustrate the stages for children to help them identify these emotions in themselves. My most recent pieces *Caged*, *Identity*, *Wanderer*, and *Always* are the start to a new exploration of my own identity and how it changes. Until recently, I identified too closely with the wolves in my work to have a separation, but I am reaching out from this association as I begin to truly accept my illnesses as parts of me. Though *Defense* is separated by about a year from *Protection* and *Worry*, the three works share a common theme of caring for loved ones. For me, they are more about being cared for than caring for others. *Fear* was made in the same body of work with *Defense* and *Diagnosis*. It comes from a study in technical pen executed when I was studying at the Bauhaus. These 9 works come together to represent the moment when a warrior fighting her wounds is finally able to leave the battlefield.

Biography

Theresa Marie Ketterer is an artist that mixes symbols from various cultures with images of wolves in abstract works on paper. Born in San Diego, CA, she lived in Missouri for a short time and, for 13 years, called Oklahoma home. Both as an artist and an art historian, her primary focus is works on paper. She graduated from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a BFA with Emphasis in Art History, Theory, and Criticism in May 2012. She studied drawing and painting at the Bauhaus Universität-Weimar as an exchange student (2011) in Germany. Summer 2013, she assisted the draftsman at NYU’s archaeological excavation at Selinunte, Sicily. Currently, Ketterer is working on her MA in Art History at New York University Institute of Fine Arts (graduating 2014). The *Walking Wounded* is her first exhibition in New York.

I would like to thank Chrystoph Marten and Nell Eberhardt for the opportunity to exhibit my work as well as artist Linda Kraus for her support. I would like to acknowledge the band Bayside for their song “The Walking Wounded” which at times served as an anthem to my life.

“Scientists/ they couldn’t fix me/ I’m so tired of getting out of bed/ but who would want to die as a cowardly little child?/ when our time is up will we be ashamed or proud?”- Bayside, “The Walking Wounded”