

Huber, Chloe

“Untitled”

aka “Unhinged”

Faculty Mentor: Steven Enfield, Theatre Media Arts

I worked as the production designer on the senior film project “Unhinged.” The story follows Phillip who paints in the bathroom. He is a man of few words and enjoys the isolation. With a closed door at his back, Mary waits with an ultimatum. She’ll return the key to his apartment if he doesn’t open up the door and talk about their relationship. But Phillip has a deadline. In a matter of mere hours, he will face his toughest critics during perhaps the most difficult night of his artistic career. Yet Mary can’t wait for him any longer, she would rather not feel second to his art. Thus she closes the door to both the apartment and their relationship. To make matters worse, the anxiety of the moment plagues Phillip with self doubt as he envisions the spectators of his work, whose opinions range from animosity to indifference. Who can possibly paint with a heckler over one’s shoulder? Upon achieving the solitude he yearns for, the desolation proves unbearable. He must face the fact, Mary is gone, and without greater effort he cannot be both an artist and a boyfriend. The will to paint has left him. Ironically in his moment of anger, he achieves his greatest realization – he must paint to show his love.

Stylistically, “Unhinged” excites the mind; it is an unusual story, thought provoking, and visually moving. As a filmmaker, “Unhinged” resonates for three distinct reasons: an intriguing allegory, an emotional connection, and spiritual associations.

The connection between Phillip, his art, and audience is a reflection of the relationship between the filmmaker, film, and viewer. The painting functions as a metaphor for the film, both ironically entitled “Unhinged.” Characters within the film argue that the painting is simple and monochromatic, yet one can easily argue that the characters are also simple and monochromatic. Phillip, the typical artist, Mary, the typical muse are all clearly and purposefully archetypal characters. Though both are deceptively simple, the film and the fictional painting elicit strong reactions by virtue of their simplicity and inherent ambiguity. The viewers of Phillip’s art disagree if the painting is simple and immature or whether it is deliberate and thoughtful, just as the film’s audience might be divided as to the meaning of the film. Through this parallel, the viewer participates in the same introspective experience as the gallery patrons in the film.

Phillip’s artistic genius is not in the painting itself, but rather in the reaction created among the patrons. Both the painting and the film are seemingly ambiguous and therefore require discussion to interpret. However, there are no clear answers, just a necessity for discussion. The most striking of which is the perpetual dilemma of balancing family and a life dedicated to art. This struggle emerges as the theme within “Unhinged.”

“Every great work of art has two faces, one toward its own time and one toward the future, toward eternity.” (Daniel Barenboim) Art revolves around a spirit of creation and thus carries with it an inherent parallel connection to the eternal and the idea of a God. Our struggles to

understand and find meaning within great works of art often parallel our equally great efforts to comprehend and become acquainted with a God.

Your incredible contribution to the film gave us the opportunity to create a film that has both meaning and artistic integrity. Since completing the project we have received high praise for the acting, art design and theme of the film. All of which could not be accomplished without your grant. When we began this project I don't believe we understood some of the difficulties that we would face. In order to increase our educational experience we endeavored to accomplish tasks that were never attempted by any other senior project before. Our primary location was an apartment, which we constructed on a sound stage. Both the materials for the construction and stage were outside of our budget until we received the funding from your grant.

