

## Sonia Pajakowski – Artist Statement

Existence is absurd. We just begin to exist until we no longer do. Sometimes the weight of existence becomes too heavy to bare, and we continue to live letting each day pass; overlooking the mundanity and allowing each trivial moment to fleet. Although the trivial and the mundane are interesting and full of strange and familiar occurrences, we keep our focus on simply existing. With regard to my experiences, I most often remember the trivial moments in my life which were my darkest hours. Whether I was embarrassed, scared, angry, hurt or just over it, these moments fueled my concepts.

I focus on themes exploring human existence with special regard to the exploration of the female condition seeing as I am a 20-something woman in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I use my perspective to explore femininity and womanhood in contexts of private settings as well as public settings. I focus on the occurrences of everyday existence and its obstacles. Everyone experiences existence differently, although as social creatures, humans make connection based on similarities in dealing with existence. I tend to take mundane concepts and try and express them with different approaches so that viewers have the opportunity to make connections.

I am not above using the mundane and the uncanny as well as humor to bring a sense of understanding to subject matter that can often seem misunderstood or overlooked. In most cases, I use humor in making social commentary. My sense of humor is critical as it is a form of critique over my experiences and opinions. In regard to my series of digital drawings including a made-up character that reflects me, I use critical humor to explore tensions between gender and space. This form of humor is used to explore tensions between gendered spaces in both my zines, *Unseen* and *Night Out*.

In my first rendition of these digital drawings I explored the private sphere of women. Initially, I found inspiration in a series of articles dealing with titles such as “things girls do in private but are embarrassed to admit.” I found these articles absurd, but honest and this fueled a zine which was eventually transformed into my graphic novel entitled, *Unseen*. *Unseen* is set in a private feminine space; where in which my character engages in many private and absurd but totally relatable activities.

In my second rendition of these digital drawings, entitled *Night Out*, I explore the tensions between public masculine spaces and private feminine spaces. The digital drawings follow my character into a typical scene of a ‘night out’. My character begins at home, a private feminine space, goes out to a bar; a public masculine space, and then ends up back at home by the end of the night. Throughout her night out, my character experiences many different trials and dilemmas that typically occur on a night out. My intention with these digital drawings is to use visual language to describe humorous situations that represent this separation of spheres and tensions between gender and space.