



MELISSA SPITZ

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT

JAN. 30 - APRIL 29, 2018





SCAD: The University for Creative Careers

The Savannah College of Art and Design is a private, nonprofit, accredited university, offering more than 100 academic degree programs in more than 40 majors across its locations in Atlanta and Savannah, Georgia; Hong Kong; Lacoste, France; and online via SCAD eLearning.

With more than 37,000 alumni worldwide, SCAD demonstrates an exceptional education and unparalleled career preparation. The diverse student body, consisting of nearly 14,000, comes from across the U.S. and more than 100 countries worldwide. Each student is nurtured and motivated by a faculty of nearly 700 professors with extraordinary academic credentials and valuable professional experience. These professors emphasize learning through individual attention in an inspiring university environment. The innovative SCAD curriculum is enhanced by advanced professional-level technology, equipment and learning resources, and has garnered acclaim from respected organizations and publications, including 3D World, American Institute of Architects, Businessweek, DesignIntelligence, U.S. News & World Report and the Los Angeles Times.

For more information, visit scad.edu.

Cover Image: **Melissa Spitz**, *Pool Day*, 2015, archival inkjet print, 1 of 5 +2AP. Courtesy of the artist.

About the Artist

SCAD alumna Melissa Spitz (M.F.A., photography, 2014) records the struggles and complexities of her mother's life, and their tumultuous relationship, through photography. *You Have Nothing to Worry About* features Spitz's mother, who struggles with mental illness and substance abuse, in moments of sorrow, joy, boredom, chaos and pain in an ongoing project spanning eight years of documentation. The artist uncompromisingly confronts viewers with moments typically reserved for private space, revealing an honest and complex depiction of the human spirit.

The exhibition includes works hung salon style to form a narrative that chronicles glimpses of her mother's life, including her lounging poolside, her cigarette-burned blanket, bins of pills and a bruised arm. Spitz's choice

to explore this relationship publicly on Instagram served a vital role. The social media platform has given her a means to test the boundaries of mother and daughter, by posting images from the project alongside screenshots of text messages and iPhone images.

Melissa Spitz earned an M.F.A. in photography from SCAD and a B.F.A. from the University of Missouri – Columbia. Spitz was recently named *TIME's* Instagram Photographer of the Year for 2017.

You Have Nothing to Worry About is curated by Ben Tollefson, assistant curator of SCAD exhibitions.

About the Curriculum Guide

SCAD curriculum guides provide learning opportunities that fulfill the requirements of national education standards and are designed for use within the museum's exhibition spaces and in classrooms. The guides enhance understanding of art and design through investigations that reveal relevant personal, historical and cultural connections while promoting cross-disciplinary links necessary for today's innovative careers.

Recognizing the guides' overall design excellence and ingenuity, the American Alliance of Museums' Museum Publications Design Competition twice awarded SCAD curriculum guides first place in the education category, in 2015 and 2016, as well as honorable mentions for the guides

accompanying *Threads of History: Two Hundred Years of Fashion* and the 2016 SCAD deFINE ART exhibitions.

This Melissa Spitz guide examines the social impact of documentary photography through activities that explore her intimate approach to mental illness. Spitz's work forms the basis for activities that investigate how art impacts lives through shared experience and public advocacy.

SCAD gives special thanks to the Coca-Cola Bottling Company UNITED, Inc. for its generous support of SCAD's award-winning curriculum guides.

Educational standards are listed on page 6.

Highlighted glossary terms are found on page 7.

Additional learning resources are located in the Curriculum Connections section on page 7.

1 Analyze context and impact

Grades 6-8



The last time Dad remembers Mom being 'normal', 1996, found photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

The subject of Melissa Spitz's ongoing documentary photography project is her mother, Deborah, who has been diagnosed with a range of mental illnesses. Spitz was recently chosen as *TIME*'s Instagram Photographer of the Year (@nothing_to_worry_about) in recognition of her photographic journal of life with her mother and the online support community her work has inspired.

*View Spitz's Instagram posts, then compare this online encounter to your museum gallery experience. Describe the effect these different viewing **contexts** have on your responses to the photographs.*

Melissa Spitz, "I fell down and broke my jaw," 2012, archival inkjet print, 1 of 5 +2AP. Courtesy of the artist.



“The work with my mother functions as a conversation; it is irrational and chaotic on one side of the lens, and once it is transposed through the camera it becomes a tangible object that can be better understood.”

Melissa Spitz

Spitz's series, begun in 2009, now includes over 5,000 photographs. She has called these images "diaristic documents." Like a written diary, her photographs record intimate moments, providing a focal point for conversations that helped her begin the process of understanding mental illness, and that now help others.

Examine Spitz's images, discuss them with your friends and describe their impact. What were your previous views on mental illness? How do these intimate family portraits contribute to or alter your understanding?

2 Promote awareness

High School



Melissa Spitz, *Morning at the Sink*, 2012, archival inkjet print, 1 of 5 +2AP. Courtesy of the artist.

Understand Emotion

Learn about the role of empathy and design in the creation of inclusive communities.
vimeo.com/1456596771

The title of Melissa Spitz's ongoing photographic project, *You Have Nothing to Worry About*, comes from an encouraging note her brother left for their mentally ill mother. For Spitz, this phrase has an added significance.

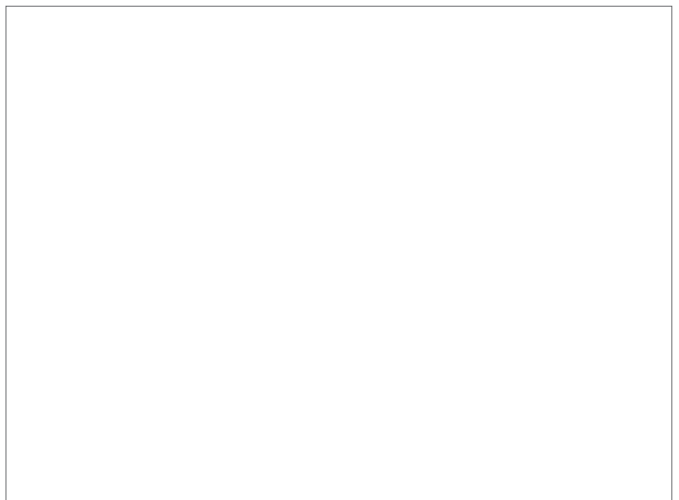
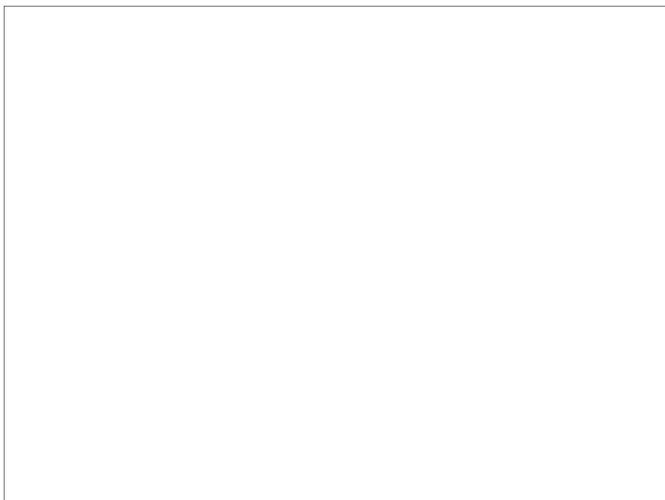
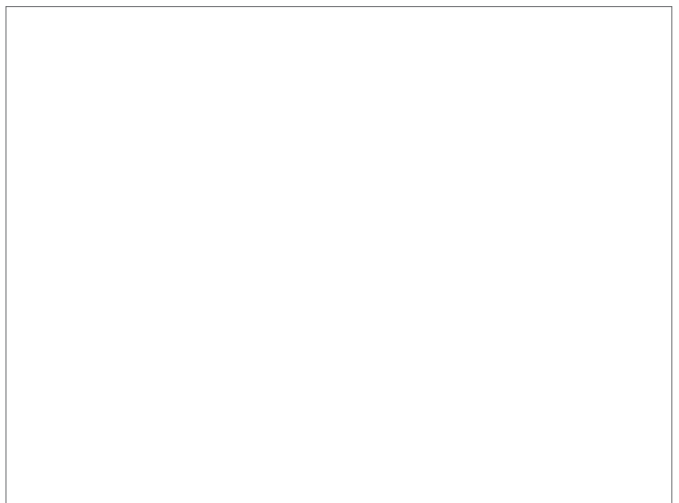
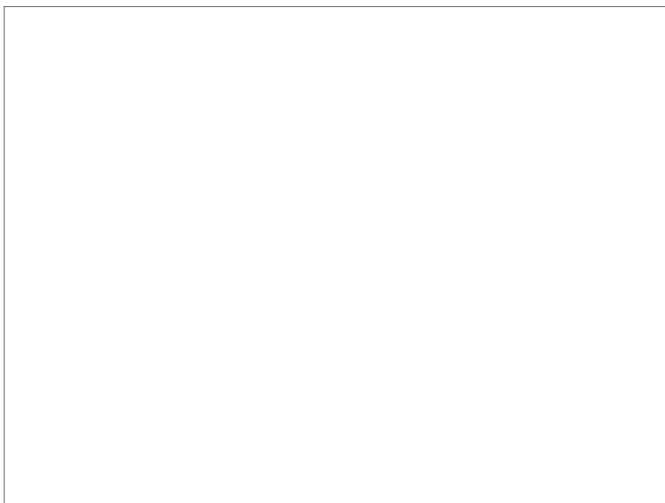
“With mental illness being such a hush-hush issue, having nothing to worry about when discussing it seemed appropriate.” Melissa Spitz

Spitz's ultimate aspiration is that viewers of her project will come away with a greater **empathy** for those affected by mental illness and a raised awareness of the challenges their families face.

Team up with friends to identify a social change you would like to advance through art. Write a **mission statement**, then determine the visual vocabularies — the **mediums** and styles that best complement your message. With this plan in place, create an outline for a series of four works that promote awareness of your cause.

Mission: _____

Visual vocabulary: _____



EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

National Core Arts Standards

Activity 1 - Sixth through Eighth Grade

Responding 7.2

Anchor: Perceive and analyze artistic work.

6: Analyze ways that visual components and cultural associations suggested by images influence ideas, emotions and actions.

7: Analyze multiple ways that images influence specific audiences.

8: Compare and contrast contexts and media in which viewers encounter images that influence ideas, emotions and actions.

Activity 2 - High School

Creating 1.2

Anchor: Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.

HSI: Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.

HSII: Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.

HSIII: Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices, following or breaking established conventions, to plan the making of multiple works of art and design based on a theme, idea or concept.

Common Core English Language Arts Standards

Activity 1 - Sixth through Eighth Grade

**CCSS.ELA-
LITERACY.W.
6.2, 7.2, 8.2**

Text Types and Purposes: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts and information through the selection, organization and analysis of relevant content.

GLOSSARY

context *n.* The conditions within which something exists

empathy *n.* The capacity to experience another's feelings and thoughts

focal *adj.* Characterized as a center of attention and activity

medium *n.* The material used to make a work of art

mission statement *n.* A brief description of an organization's purpose

CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

Additional Resources **Article** Spitz discusses the complicated nature of her relationship with her mother. www.bustle.com/articles/183577-you-have-nothing-to-worry-about-photo-series-by-melissa-spitz-documents-how-mental-illness-can

Article Read about the qualities in Spitz's work that earned her Time's Instagram Photographer of the Year for 2017. www.time.com/instagram-photographer-of-2017-melissa-spitz

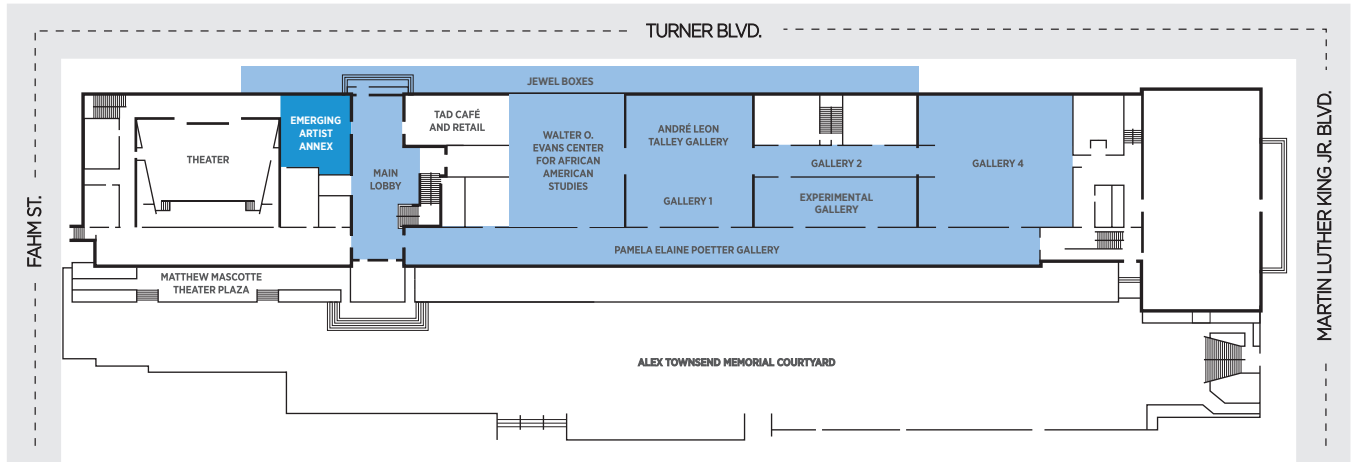
Slideshow This collection of images includes Spitz's first portrait of her mother, taken in 2009, plus 26 more from the following six years. www.dazeddigital.com/photography/gallery/related/20214/you-have-nothing-to-worry-about-project

Quotes p. 3 Spitz, Melissa. "You have nothing to worry about." Dissertation, Savannah College of Art and Design, 2014.

p. 4 Dimmitt, Melanie. "#MYSTORY." *Collective Hub*, 13 Nov. 2015. collectivehub.com/2015/11/mystory. Accessed 30 Jan. 2018.

MUSEUM MAPS

SCAD Museum of Art



Main Level

- Galleries
- Featured exhibition



SCAD de:FINEART 2018 EXHIBITIONS

SAVANNAH EXHIBITIONS

SCAD Museum of Art // 601 Turner Blvd.

No Access • Tom Burr

Dec. 14, 2017 – Sept. 17, 2018

Fade Into Black • Pia Camil

Jan. 25 – July 15, 2018

LIVESTRONG Savannah • Christopher Chiappa

Feb. 1 – July 1, 2018

Two Works • Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller

Feb. 13 – July 18, 2018

Sedimental • Tom Burr

Feb. 15 – Aug. 26, 2018

Moving Mountains • Yang Fudong

Feb. 20 – July 8, 2018

To-Day, February 20th • Mariana Castillo Deball

Feb. 20 – Aug. 5, 2018

Huh • Lily van der Stokker

Feb. 20 – Aug. 19, 2018

I did it again • Paola Pivi

Feb. 20 – Aug. 19, 2018

Testing the Name • Toyin Ojih Odutola

Feb. 20 – Sept. 9, 2018

SAVANNAH GALLERY EXHIBITIONS

This Land Is Your Land • Group Exhibition

Jan. 19 – Feb. 25, 2018

Alexander Hall Gallery // 668 Indian St.

Alter Ego • Group Exhibition

Jan. 25 – March 31, 2018

Gutstein Gallery // 201 E. Broughton St.

ATLANTA EXHIBITIONS

SCAD Atlanta // 1600 Peachtree St. NW

Carry the Ocean • Shine Huang

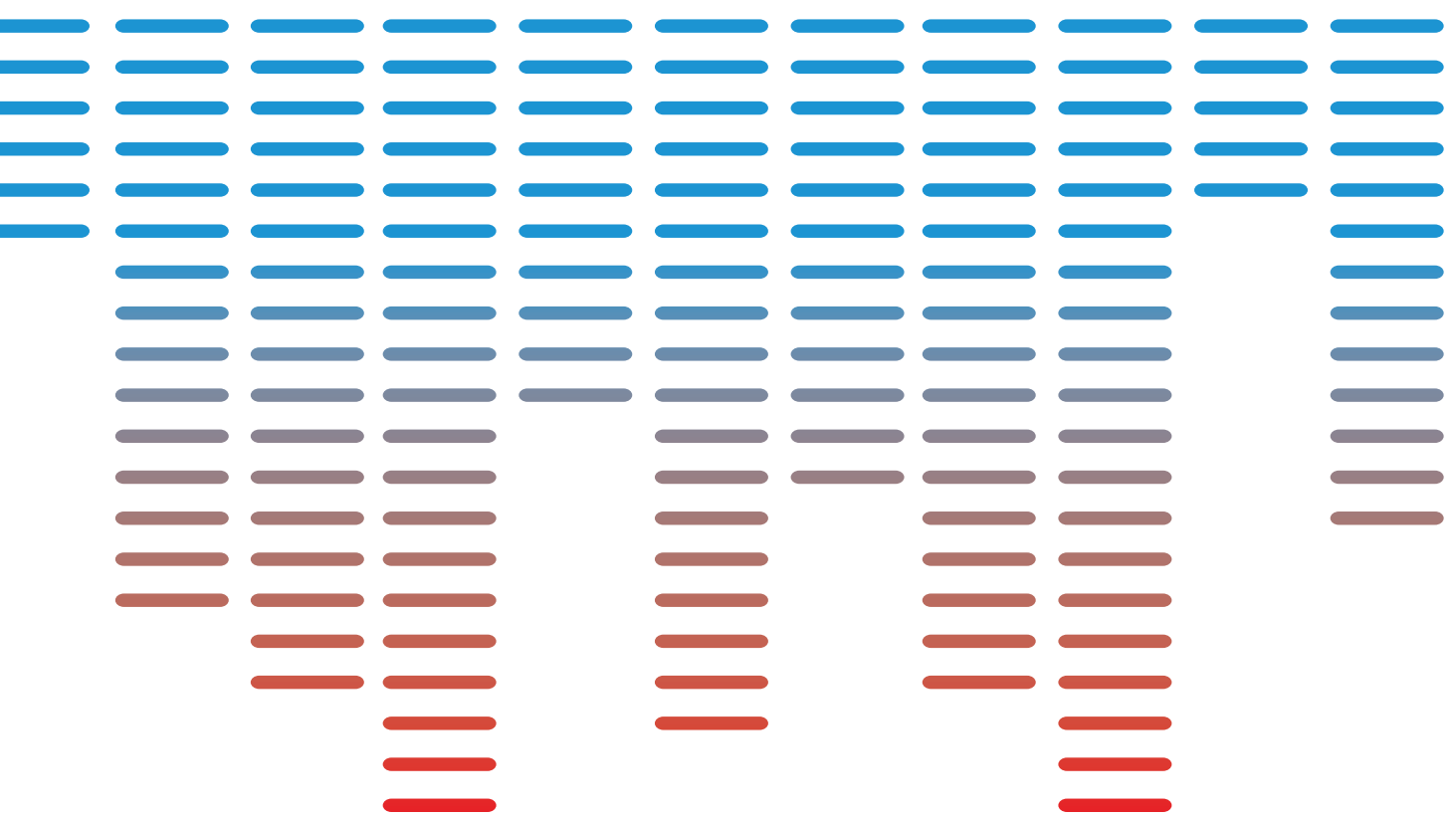
Feb. 9 – March 2, 2018

Trois Gallery

Loves • Wendy White

Feb. 20 – June 8, 2018

Gallery 1600



SCAD
MUSEUM OF ART

601 Turner Blvd.
Savannah, Georgia
912.525.7191
scadmoa.org

Support for SCAD deFINE ART 2018 has been generously provided by Ann Tenenbaum and Thomas H. Lee.