Three (or Infinite) Lenses: Translucent Still Life I

A pair of folded sunglasses sits on a table in front of a round crystal clock with roman numerals and a bottle of capsules. The base of the clock and the bottom of the pill bottle can be seen through the top of the sunglasses. Part of the pill bottle label can be seen: "Lith. . .300. . . ."

The artist defines a lens as a device that transforms the user's experience in some way and designates a focus. The drawing prompts the viewer's contemplation of lenses on three different levels (three lenses of interpretation). First, on a literal level, the drawing includes three translucent objects that serve as lenses. The textures of the clock, the bottle, and the sunglasses create a proliferation of lenses refracting the viewer's focus in numerous directions. On this literal level, the lenses interact with one another so that the viewer has multiple views. For example, the sunglasses influence the experience of viewing part of the clock and part of the bottle, and hence, the view of some of the pills.

On a second level, the three objects prompt the viewer to contemplate the ways in which the objects function as metaphorical lenses. Time, represented by the clock, has served as a lens shifting the artist's experience of disability and disablement as well as designating different focuses. The disability studies perspective that nondisabled folks are "not presently disabled" draws on the the lens of time to frame experience. Moreover, by problematizing the nondisabled/disabled binary, disability studies theorists point out that someone can be concurrently disabled and (en)abled in various ways, proliferating the lenses of time in the present moment. The other two items are personally significant to the artist. Moods, and thus mood stabilizing medication, serve as lenses that affect the artist's experience of the world. The third object, sunglasses, enables certain experiences of the world during migraines. Just as on the literal level the lenses interact with one another, on the metaphorical level, the lenses are experienced in ways that interact. For example, the experience of migraine can prompt shifts in mood and shifts in mood can influence the experience of migraine. Both can influence one's experience of time.

On a third level, disability studies itself serves as a lens through which to view the drawing. Simi Linton (1998) has noted that disability studies "is a prism through which one can gain a broader understanding of society and human experience" (p. 118).

Reference:

Linton, S. (1998). *Claiming Disability: Knowledge and Identity.* New York, NY: University Press.