

Juicy by Olivia Faillace

Last year, I decided to take on the experience of preparing for a bikini bodybuilding competition, which took several months. During this time, I faced challenges that inspired my ideas for my thesis. Competition prep is not for the faint of heart, it requires lots of discipline and mental toughness. The hardest part for me was the diet. I have come to realize how much I love and appreciate food. I would often find myself fantasizing about eating cookies and brownies. As I would eat my fourth portion of chicken and broccoli at five o'clock, I would dream of having a plate of Mexican food. It was especially hard watching others eat pizza, ice cream, or a *juicy* hamburger and fries, that I so desired to have. I realized that food is not only necessary form of sustenance, it can strike an emotional part of us.

The goal of a bodybuilder getting ready for competition is to appeal to the judges when they are on stage. The bodybuilders want to look as *juicy* as possible. I was inspired by my experience to create a series of oil paintings, each depicting a delicious food that I so craved but could not have. My concentration in the study of oil painting allowed me to examine color and value to bring out each of my paintings' *juiciest* potential. Painting is like bodybuilding. Just as a painter uses a series of brushstrokes to build up their painting, bodybuilders use a series of specific movements to build up parts of their bodies. The stage lighting used to illuminate the contours of the competitors' bodies in the show relates to how I wanted to use the contrast of chiaroscuro, with focus on vivid color and lighting to produce my still life paintings.

The food was more often than not, hard for me to eat as part of my daily regime upon preparing for my competition. I could not help but think about what it would be like to eat a burger or plate of Mexican food instead, especially sitting down at a restaurant and enjoying it with friends or family, which I was unable to do. At each family gathering, or any time I found myself at a restaurant during my preparation, I had to order only a glass of water, and sit and watch as others enjoyed their delicious meals. My goal is for each painting in this Thesis to provoke a response that makes your mouth water; that brings up in you the same desire to enjoy the food in the painting that I experienced. Food has such an emotional appeal whether we realize it or not. We crave it. It fuels our bodies and our very lives. We need food, it is a gift we are thankful for. Food brings families and friends together.