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Elegant Defense

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ELEGANT DEFENSE

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

Heather Thompson

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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My thesis exhibition, *Elegant Defense*, researches the human need to protect our unconscious emotions by creating physical barriers through the use of body adornment. The exhibition focuses on emotional defenses that people unconsciously create as protective devices. When confronted, the viewers and/ or the wearers of such adornments become conscious of their own barriers. This interaction becomes relevant for the viewer on both a visual and emotional level. Concentrating on its wearability as it reflects the variability of the human psyche through the use of materiality; the jewelry engages both the viewer and the wearer in exploring humanity's unconscious desire to protect what must remain hidden in our psyches. While examining the wearability of jewelry and questioning the traditions, the jewelry of Marjorie Schick, Rachele Thiewes and Sharon Church support the importance of scale, identity, and the interaction of jewelry as site specific to the body in my work.