

Shift 7



Foreword by
Micah Lexier

Jenna Crook
DRPT

David Aaron Cohen
DPRT

Brooke Wayne
DRPT

Claire Scherzinger
DRPT

Jordan Maddox
Noah Schienman
ENVR

Vuk Dragojevic
INTM

Asuka Michihiro
MAAD

Layne Hinton
INTM

Mike Goldby
INTM

Jessica Tai
PHOT

Ibrahim Abusitta
PHOT

Raymond Salaber
PHOT

Sona Safai-Sooreh
SCIN

Stephanie Flowers
SCIN

Iris Karuna
PRNT

DRPT Drawing and Painting
ENVR Environmental Design
MAAD Material art and Design
INTM Integrated Media

PHOT Photography
SCIN Sculpture and Installation
PRNT Printmaking

Shift: Exchanges

Foreword
Micah Lexier
with **Michael Dumontier**

Editors
Caroline MacFarlane
and **Vanessa Nicholas**

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Give and Take

While some exchanges are obvious transactions, there are others that may go unnoticed. We are interested in exchanges both quantifiable and indistinguishable, particularly within the context of an institution. An art and design university facilitates a number of such exchanges, both material and immaterial. *Shift: Exchanges* aims to make these interactions apparent by presenting the work of sixteen students—from various programs within OCAD University—produced during the 2012–2013 academic year.

While the work in this book speaks of direct exchanges, such as the process of construction using unconventional materials, or a program facilitating long-distance collaboration between students at institutions abroad, they also generate a larger conversation about context and community. By presenting the works in several formats, we encourage multiple interpretations of each piece based on its surroundings. Certain arrangements provide the reader with

comparisons that are strictly visual, while others include full text and supplementary images. Proximity fosters exchange, building a narrative sequence that connects disparate practices and reveals new relationships between the works.

Seeing as exchange and collaboration are closely tied, we wanted to invite someone whose work embodies these ideas to contribute our foreword. From students, to writers, to fellow artists, Micah Lexier works with a wide range of individuals in his practice, creating work that straddles the boundaries of art and design and encourages dialogue in both its creation and its reception. The sequence of images which follows his foreword were collected in collaboration with artist Michael Dumontier, and are a perfect preface to our anthology of student works.

—Ansel Schmidt and Emma Novotny

Call Ampersand Response

Michael Dumontier
and Micah Lexier

Making Art with a Friend

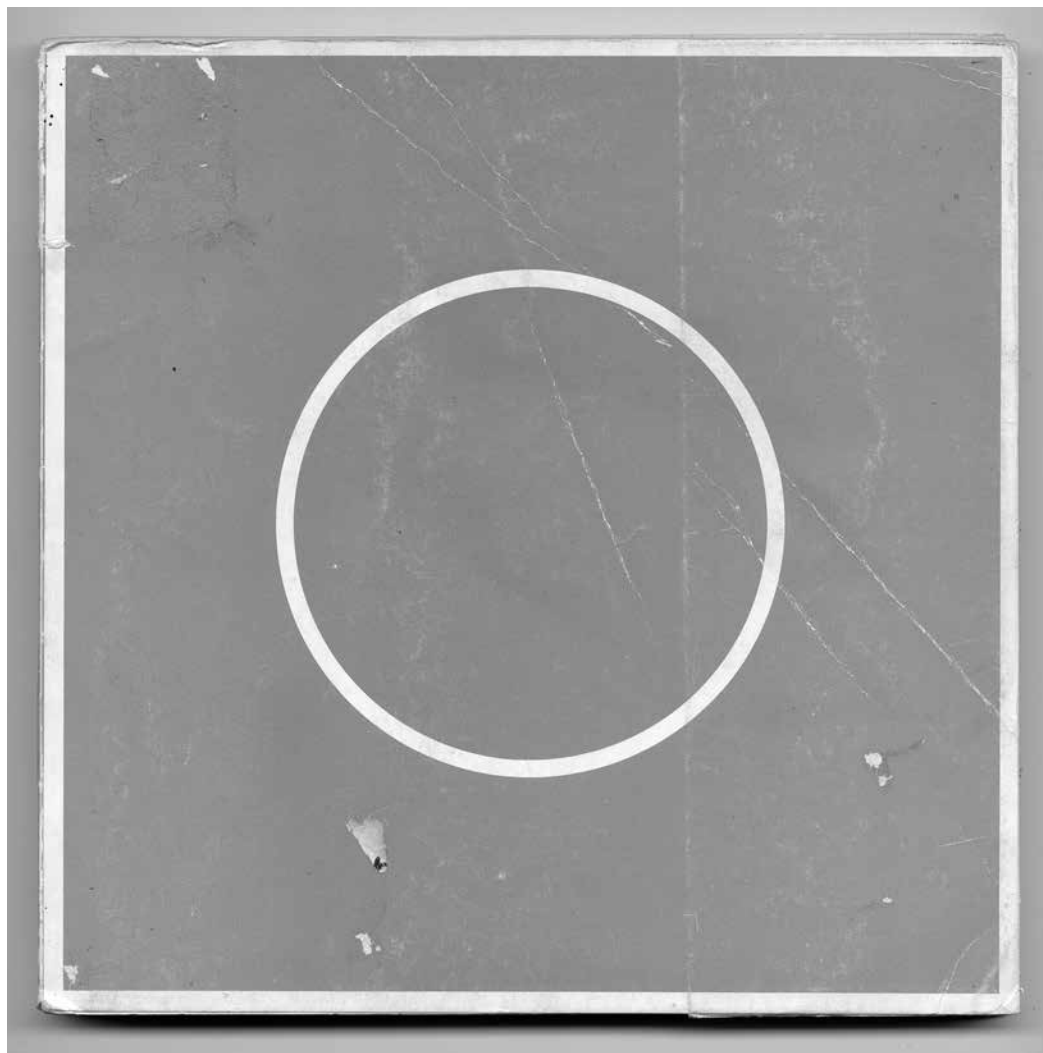
Friendship is the meaning of life. At least, it's my definition of the meaning of life. And I have found that most things in life are a lot more fun if you do them with someone else, including making art. Because of this, I have taken every opportunity to collaborate with others—with my family, with members of the general public, with my friend's kids, with writers, and most often, with other visual artists.

One of my favourite collaborations is an ongoing image exchange with the Winnipeg-based artist, Michael Dumontier. Since March 2011, we have been playing a game of sending scanned images back and forth to each other via email. We set ourselves some ground rules—we had to have the object or image in our collection (in other words, we could not go searching for images online) and we were not allowed to alter the image in anyway other than to crop it to a rectangle. It was as simple as that.

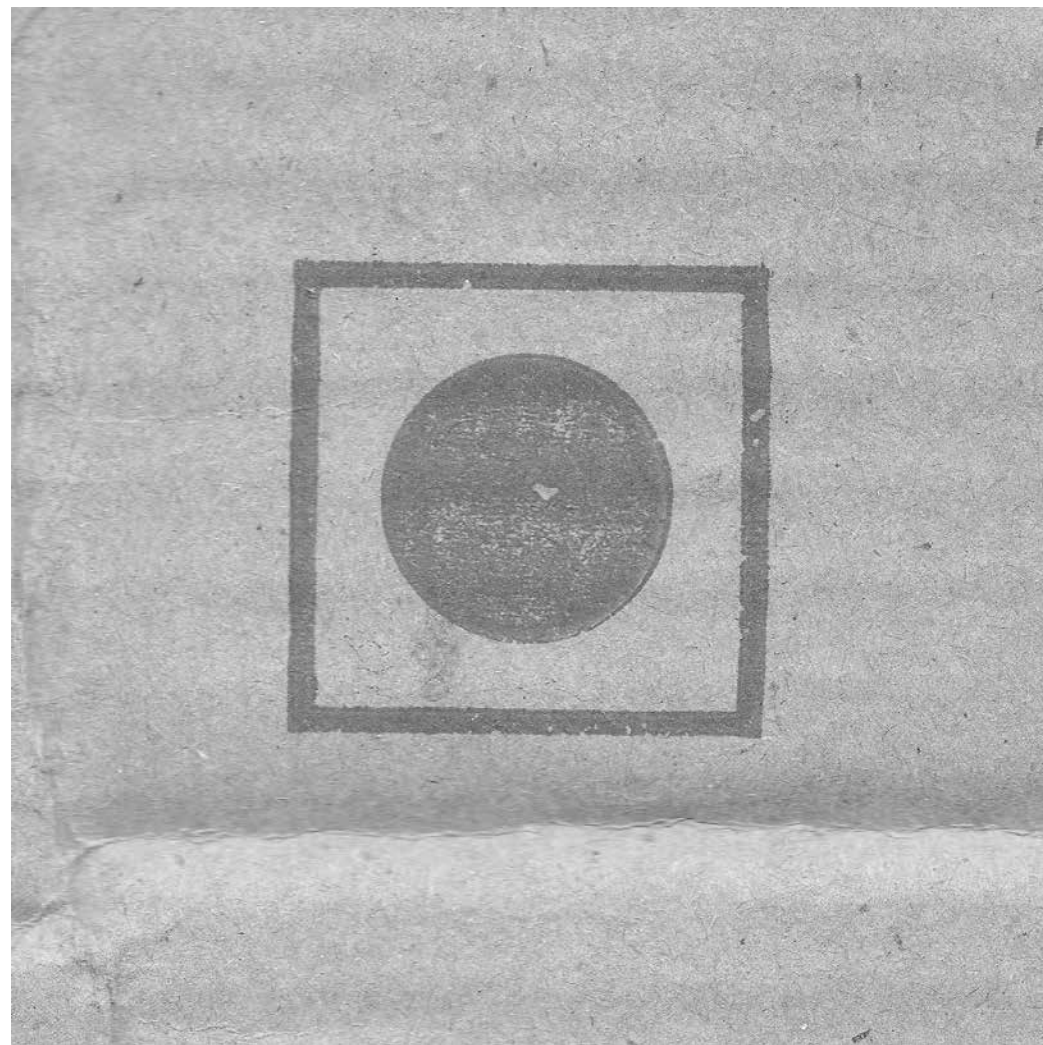
Our starting point for this collaboration was an image of a circle on a rectangle, and we decided that the game would end when we made our way back to another circle on a rectangle. That happened on our 60th exchange. But we were enjoying the process so much that we decided to keep going until we came around to another circle on a rectangle. That second circle on a rectangle happened on the 98th exchange and those first 98 exchanges became a book, which was published in 2012 by Nieves and Artexte.

The images that follow on the next few pages are a continuation of the collaboration, which has been ongoing since the publication of that book. We have yet to make it to our third circle on a rectangle, but we're working on it.

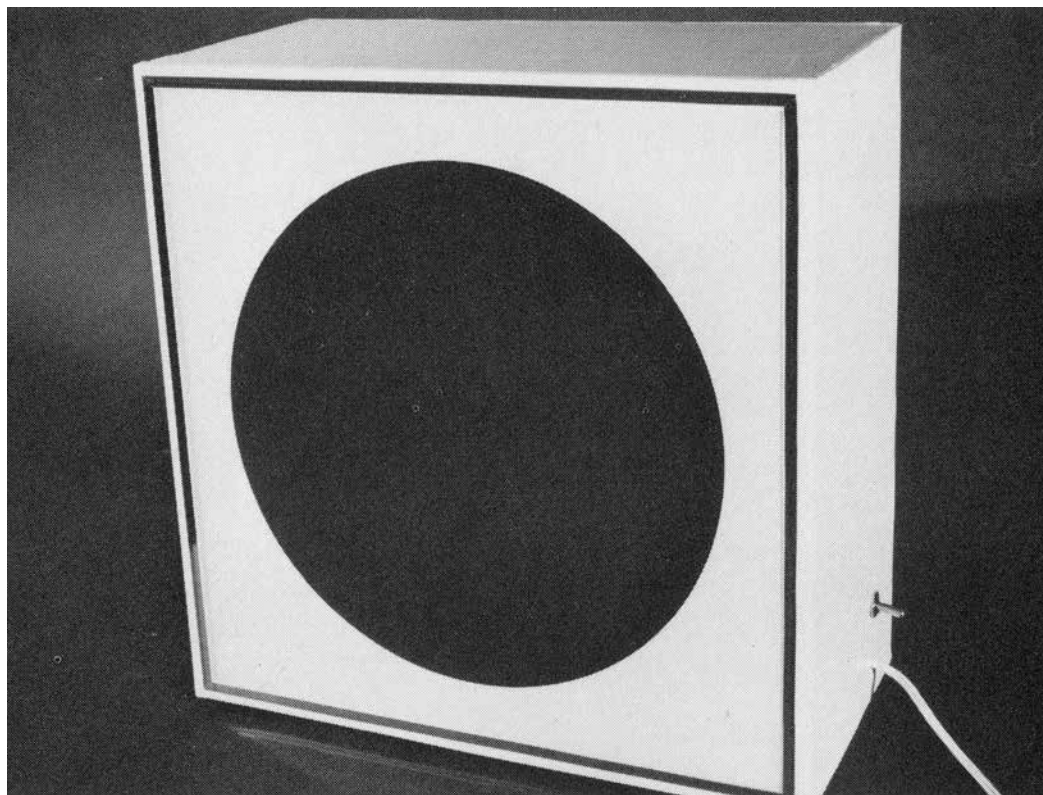
—Micah Lexier



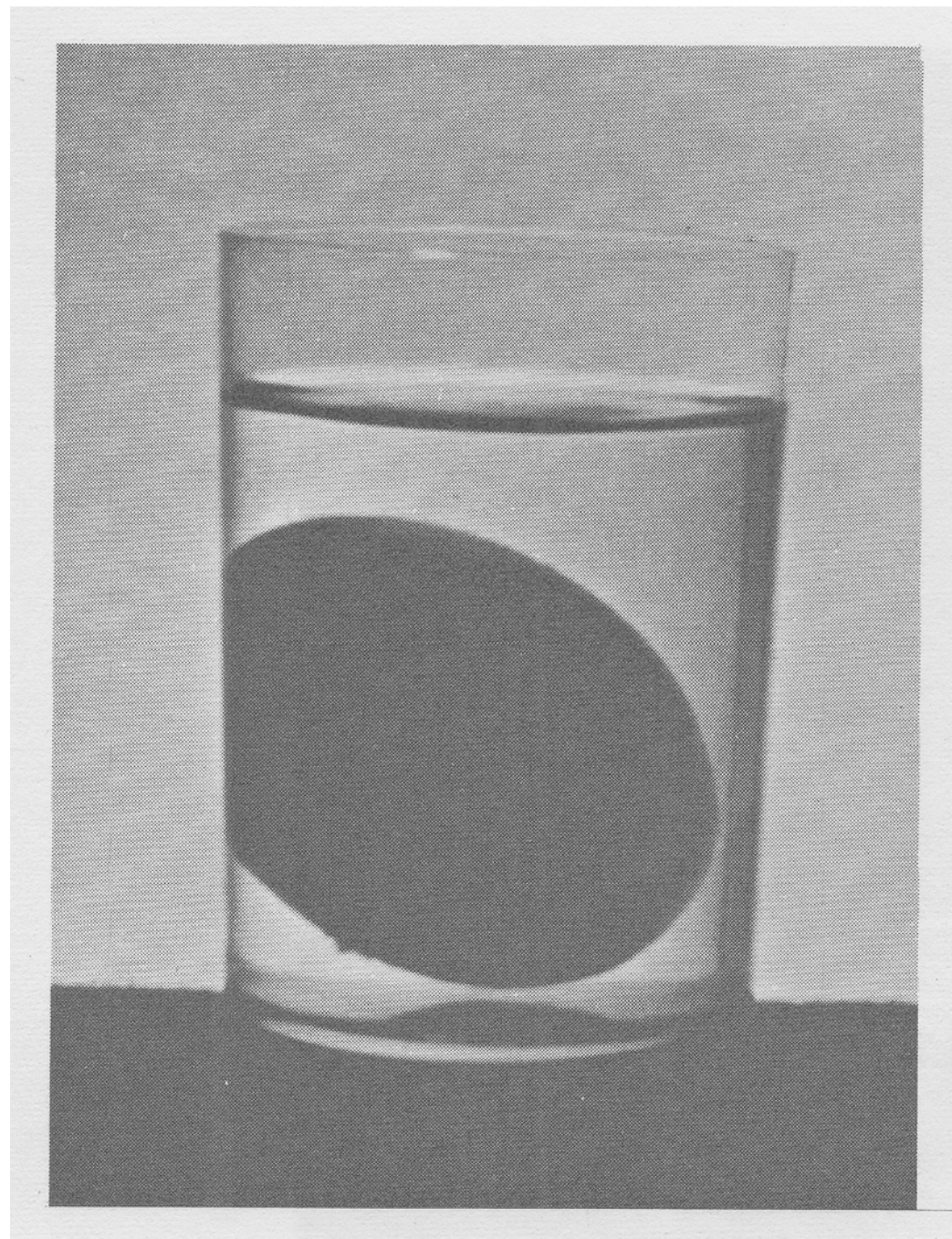
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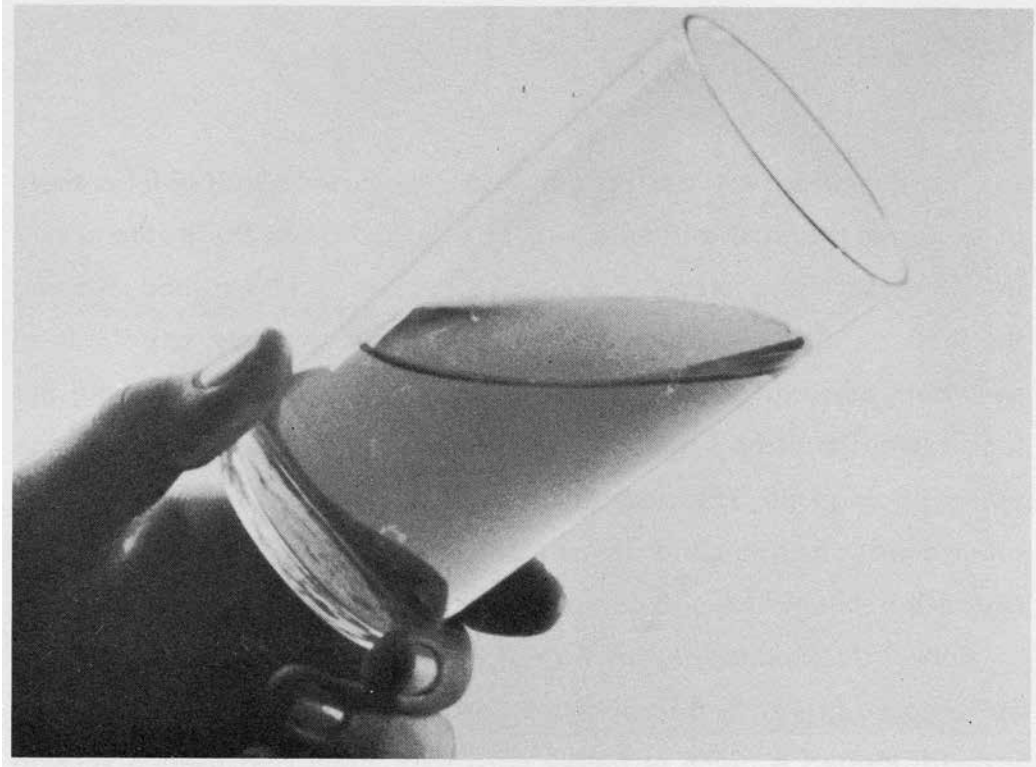
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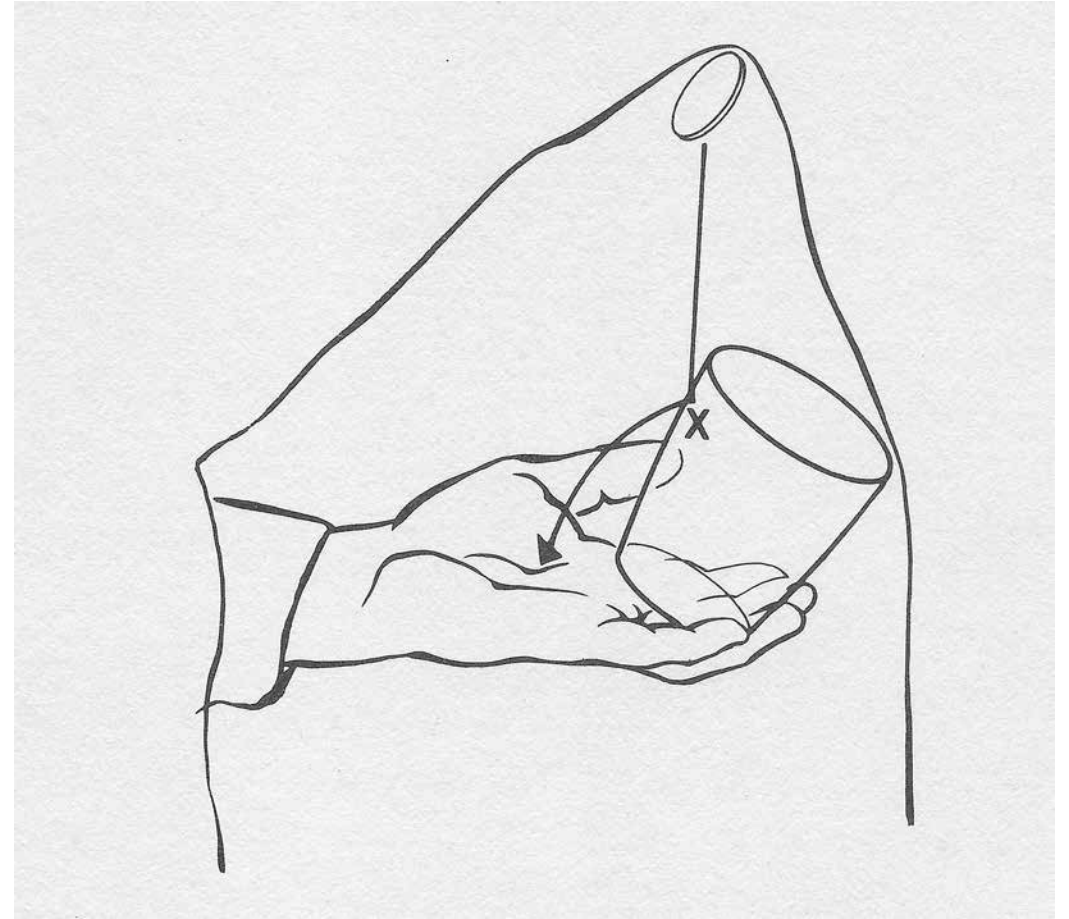
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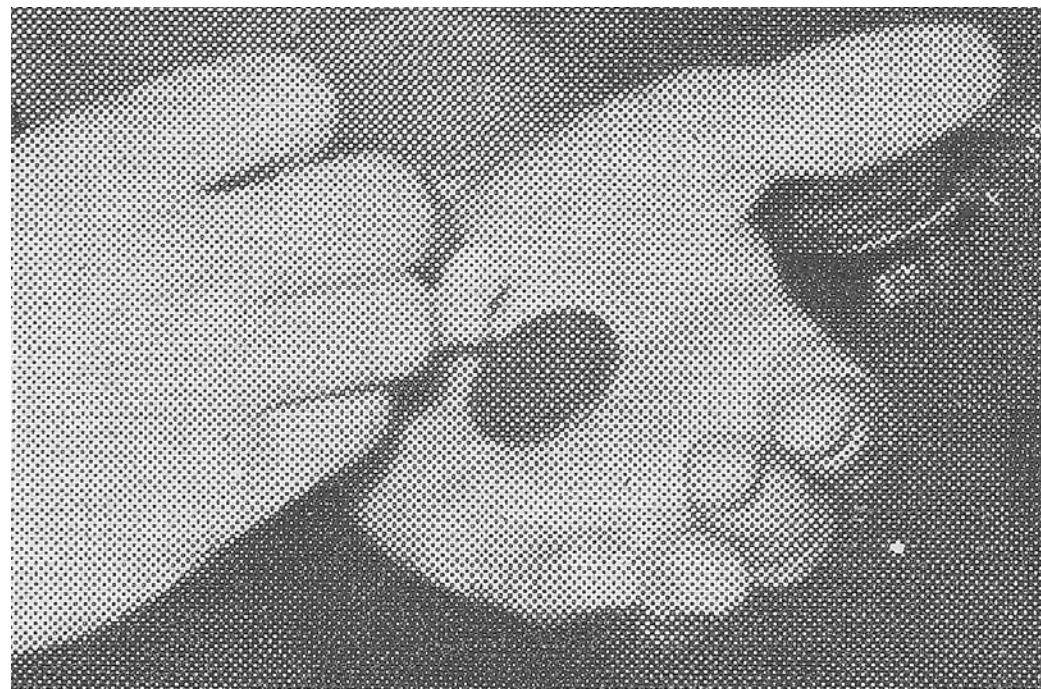
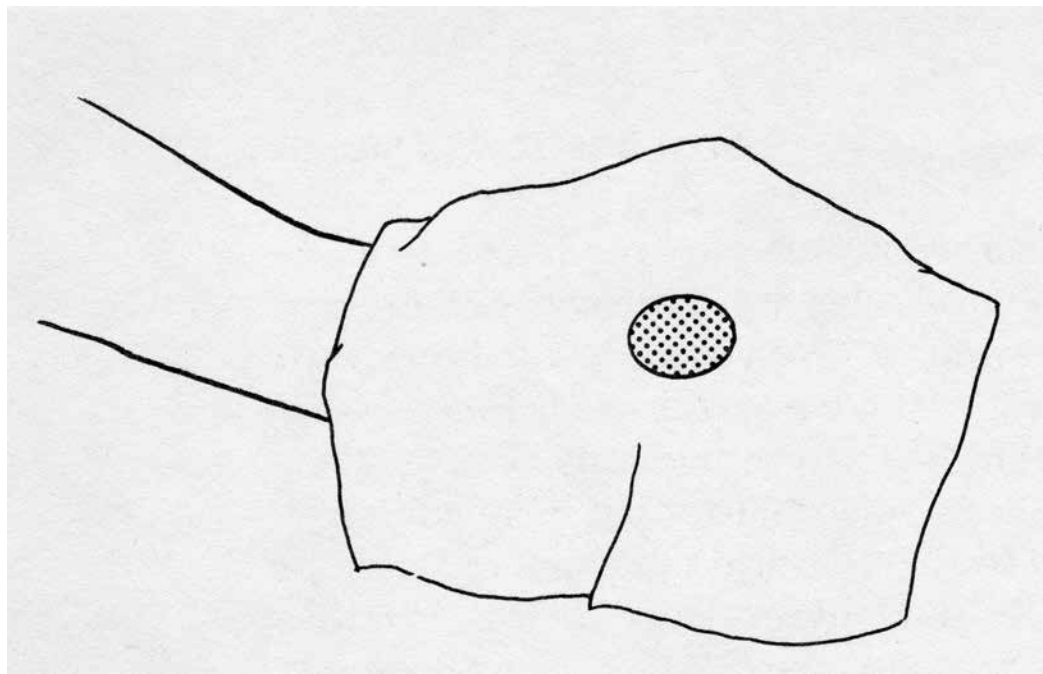
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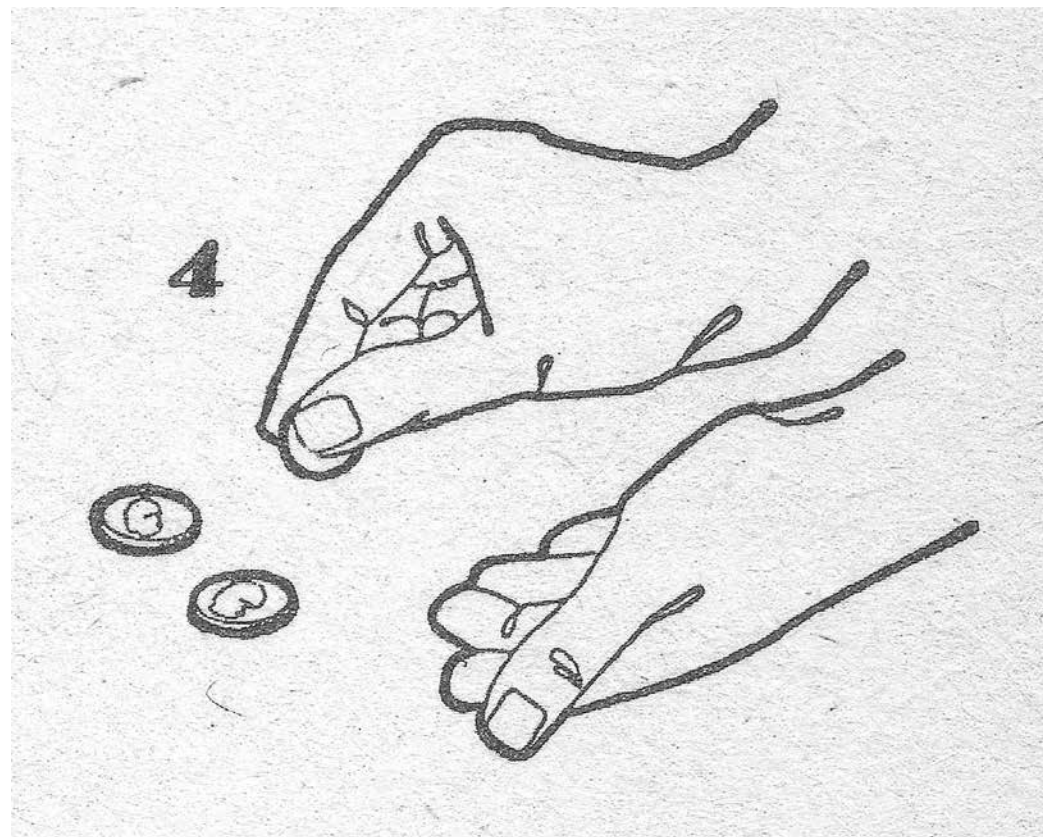


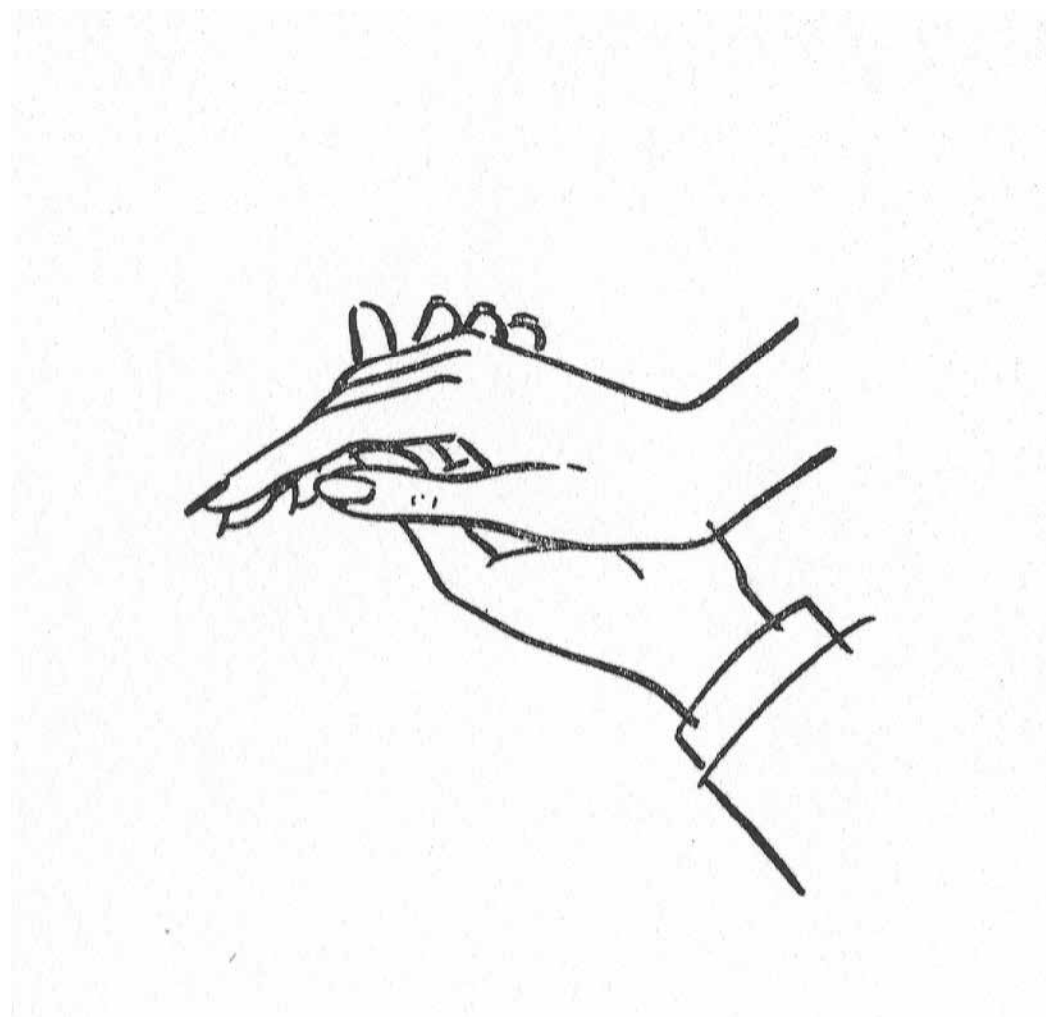
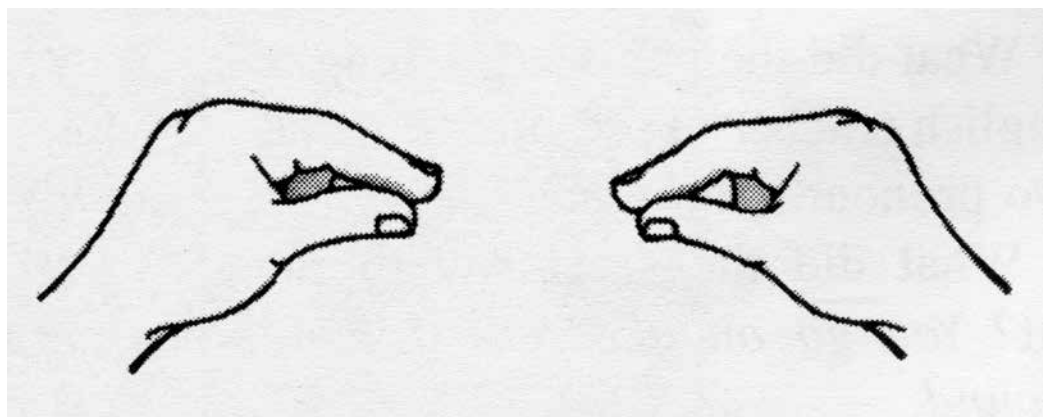
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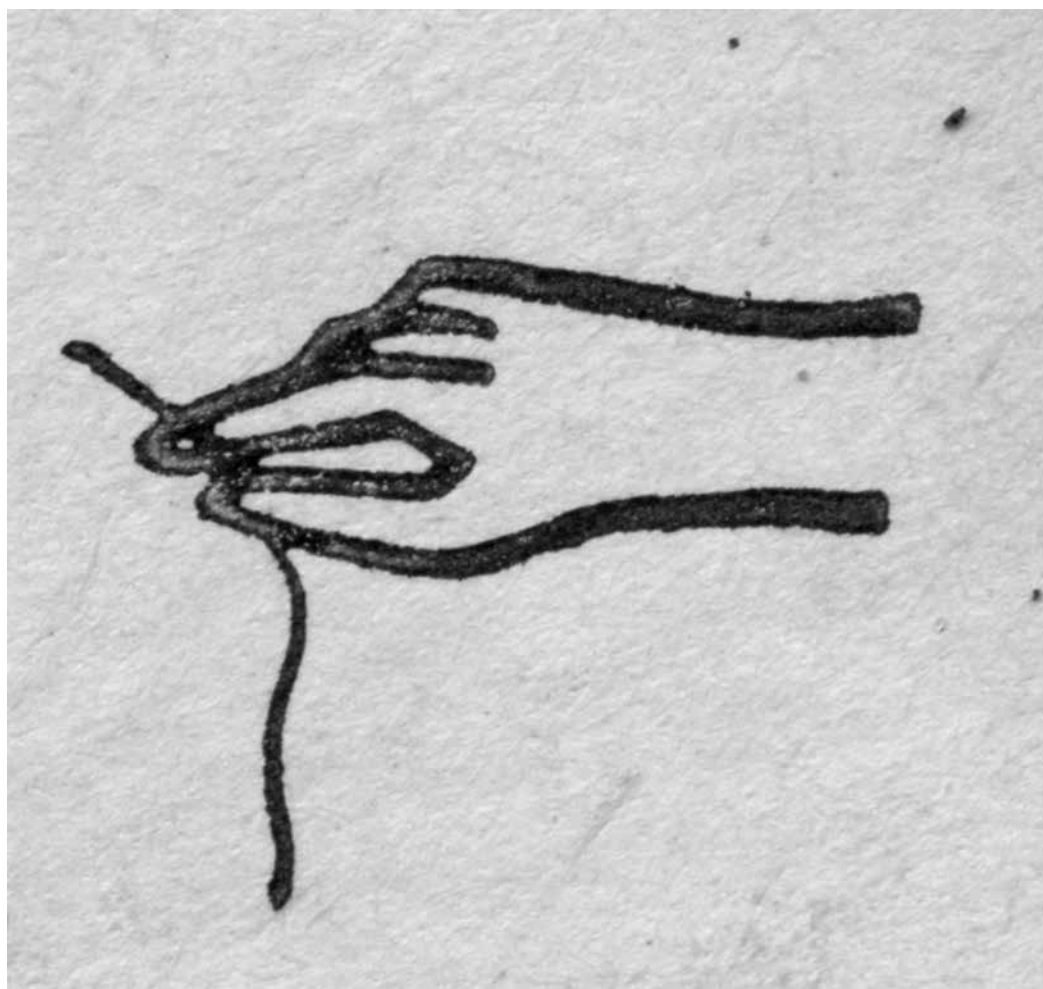


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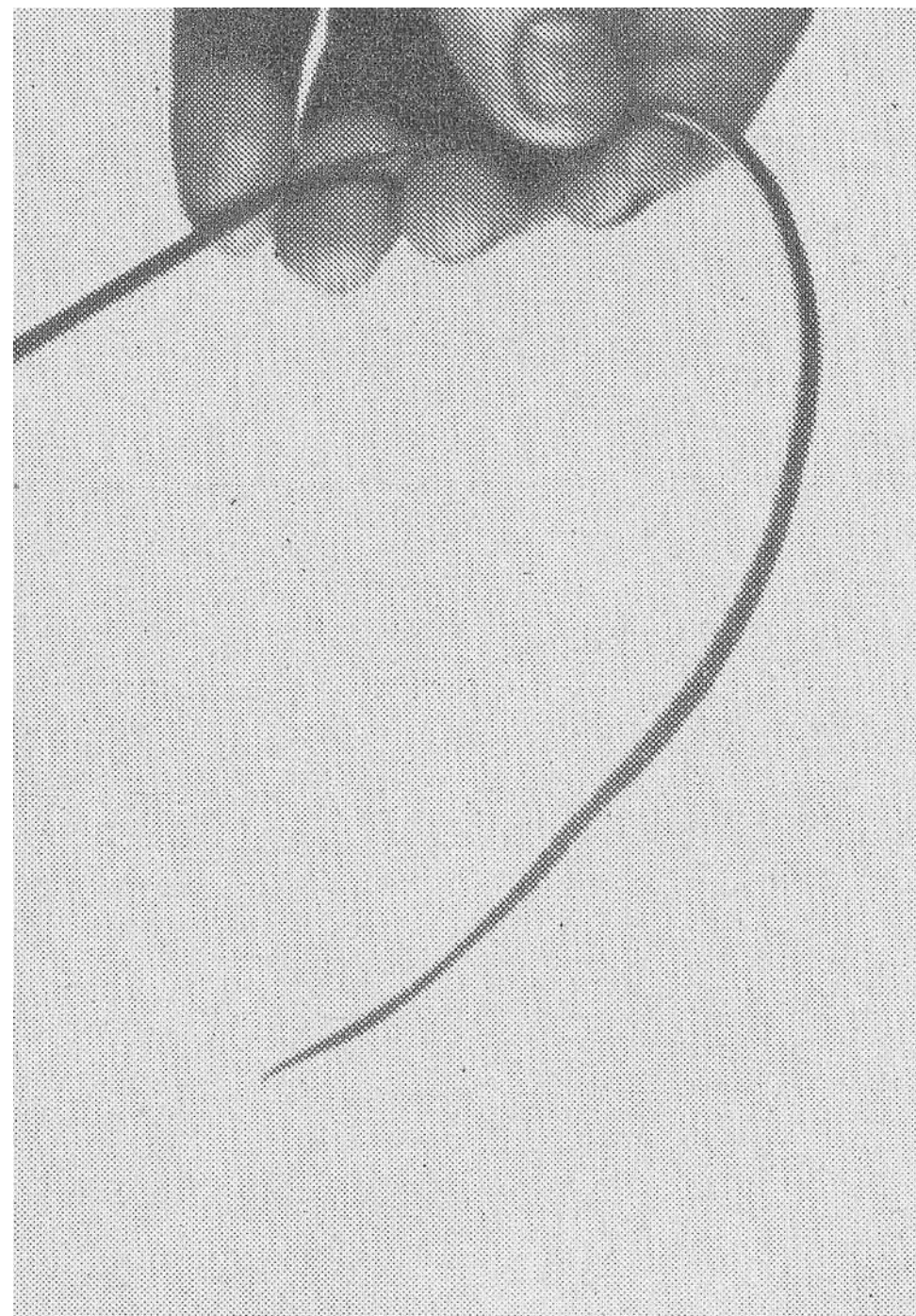




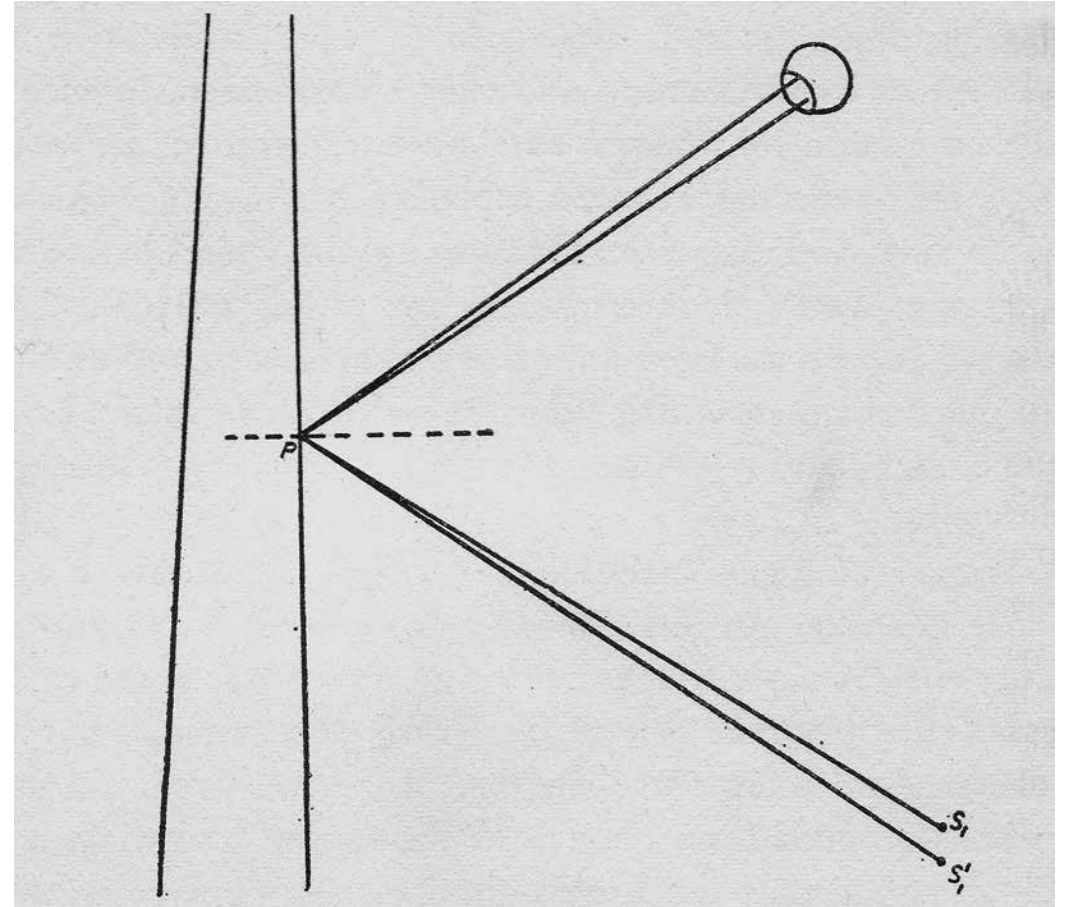
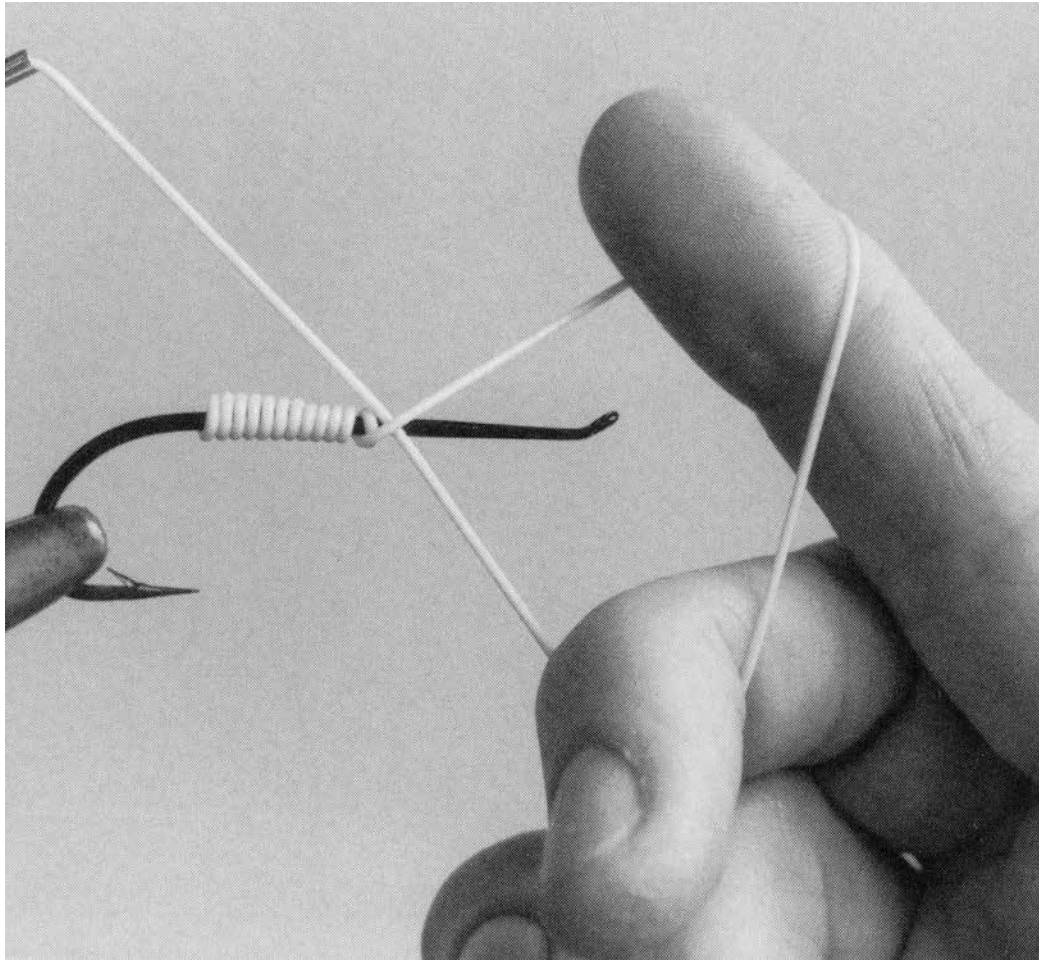


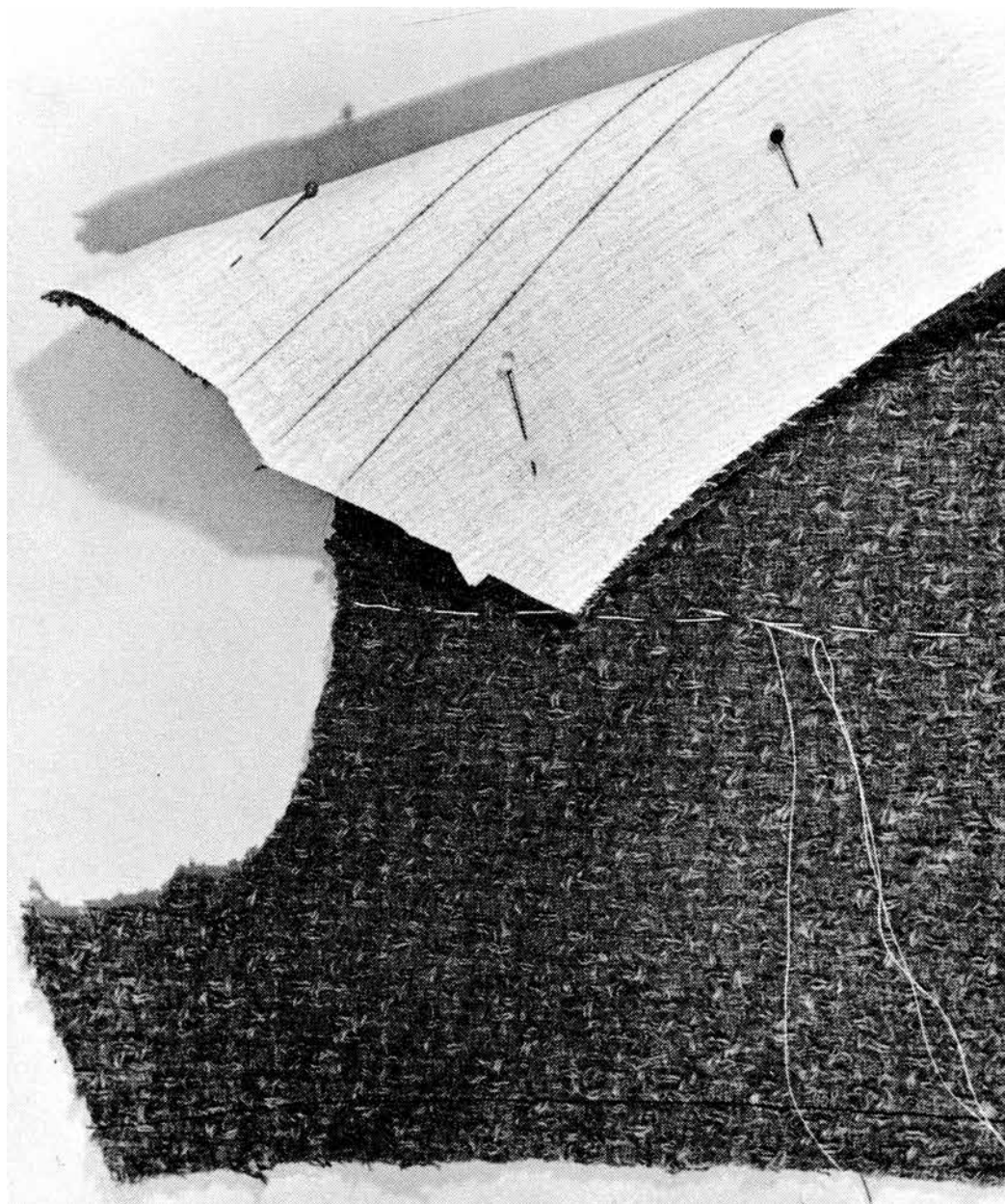


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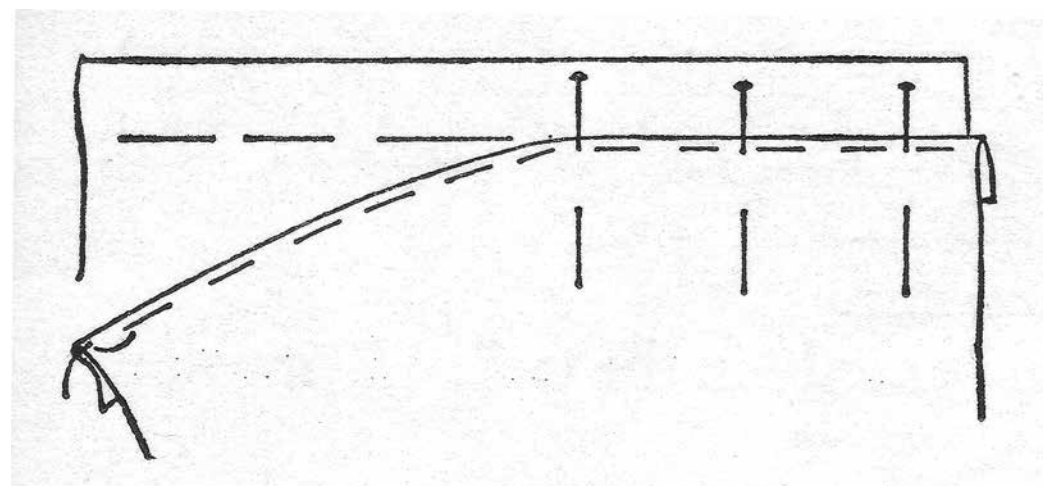


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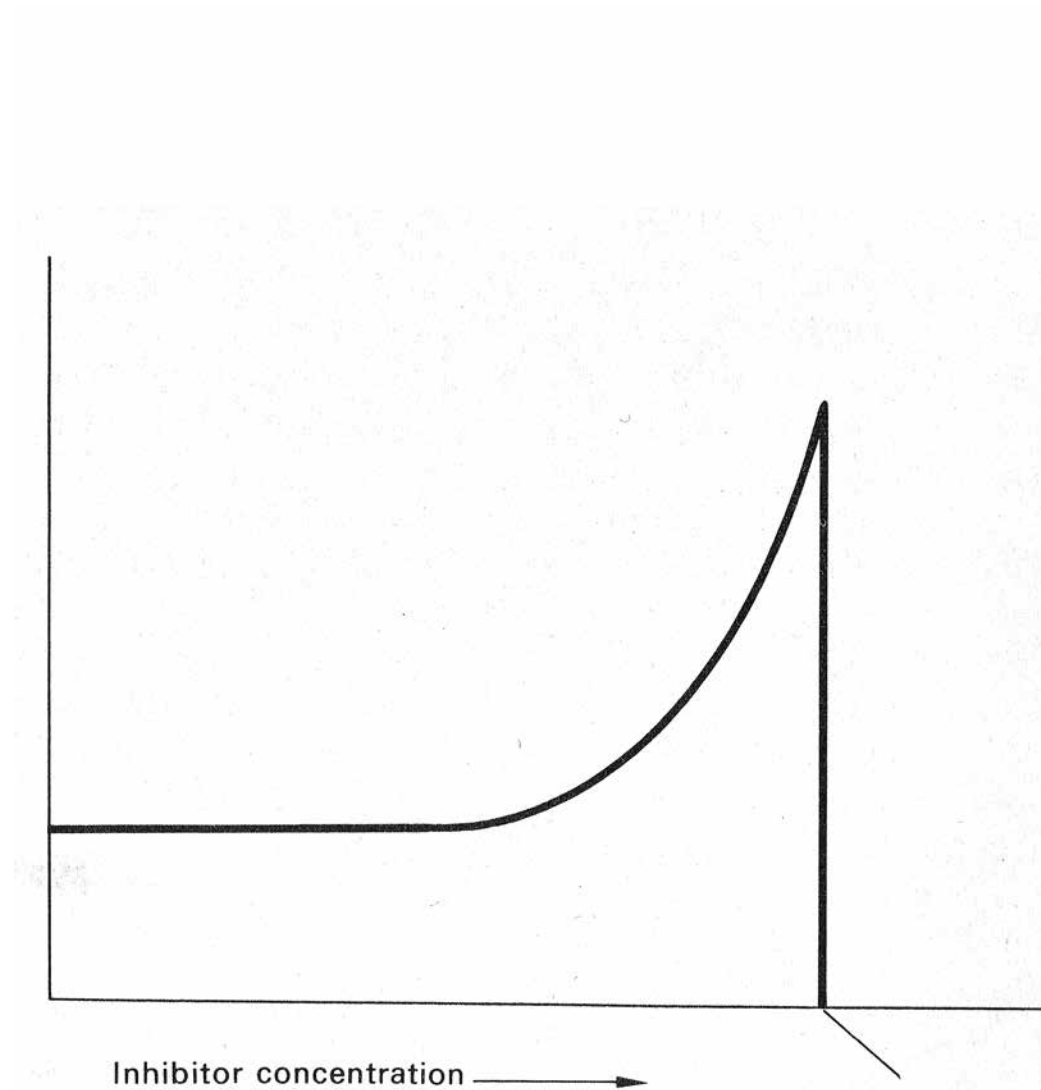
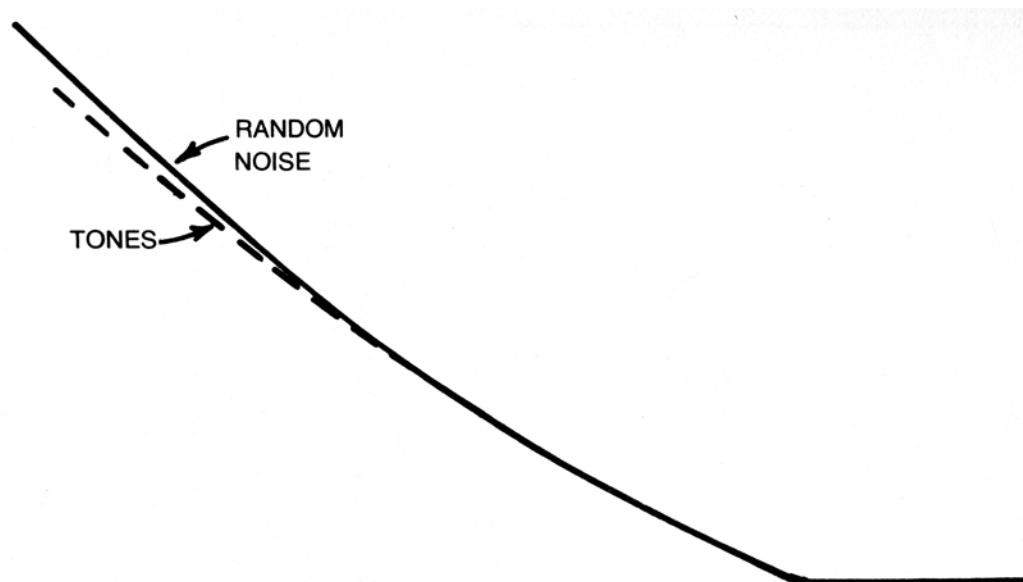


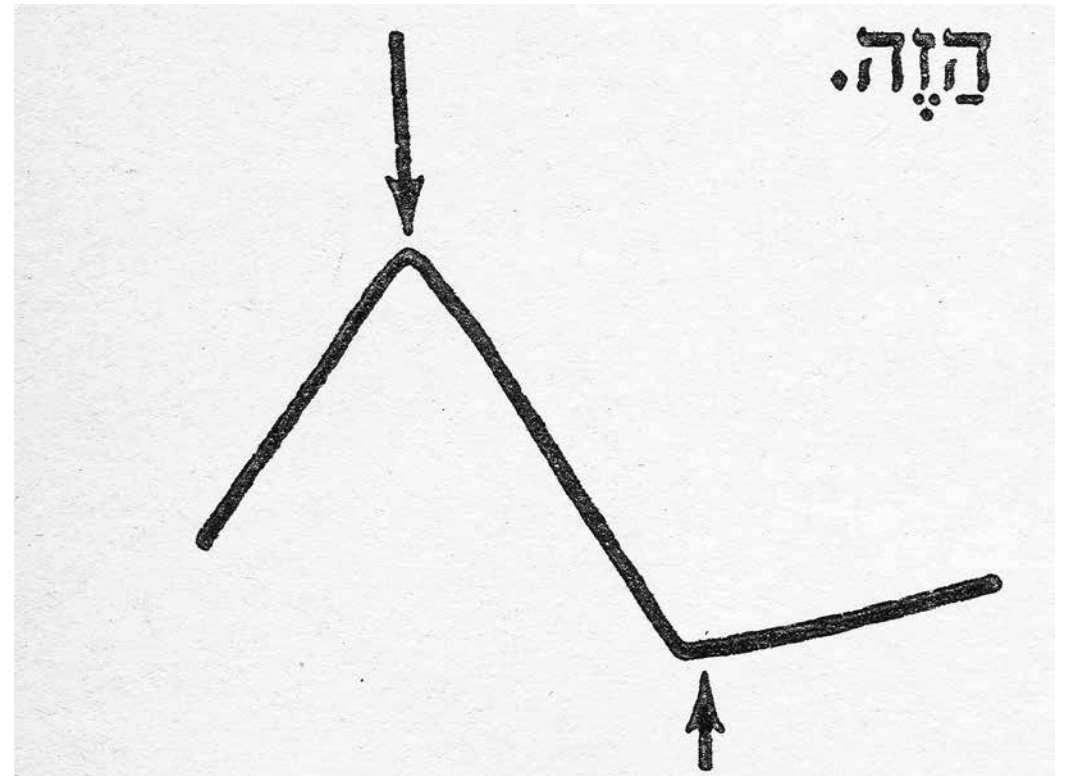
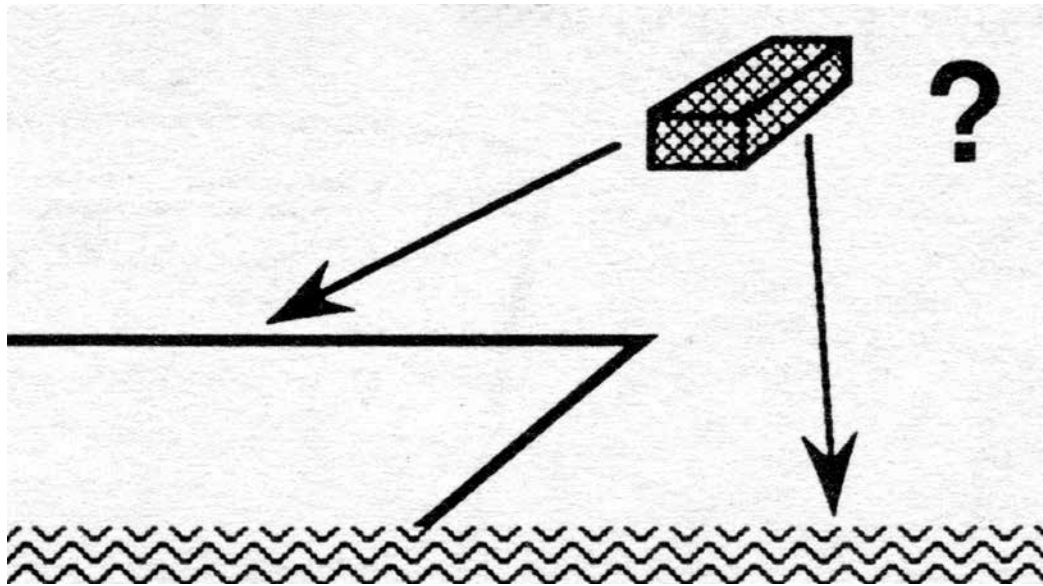


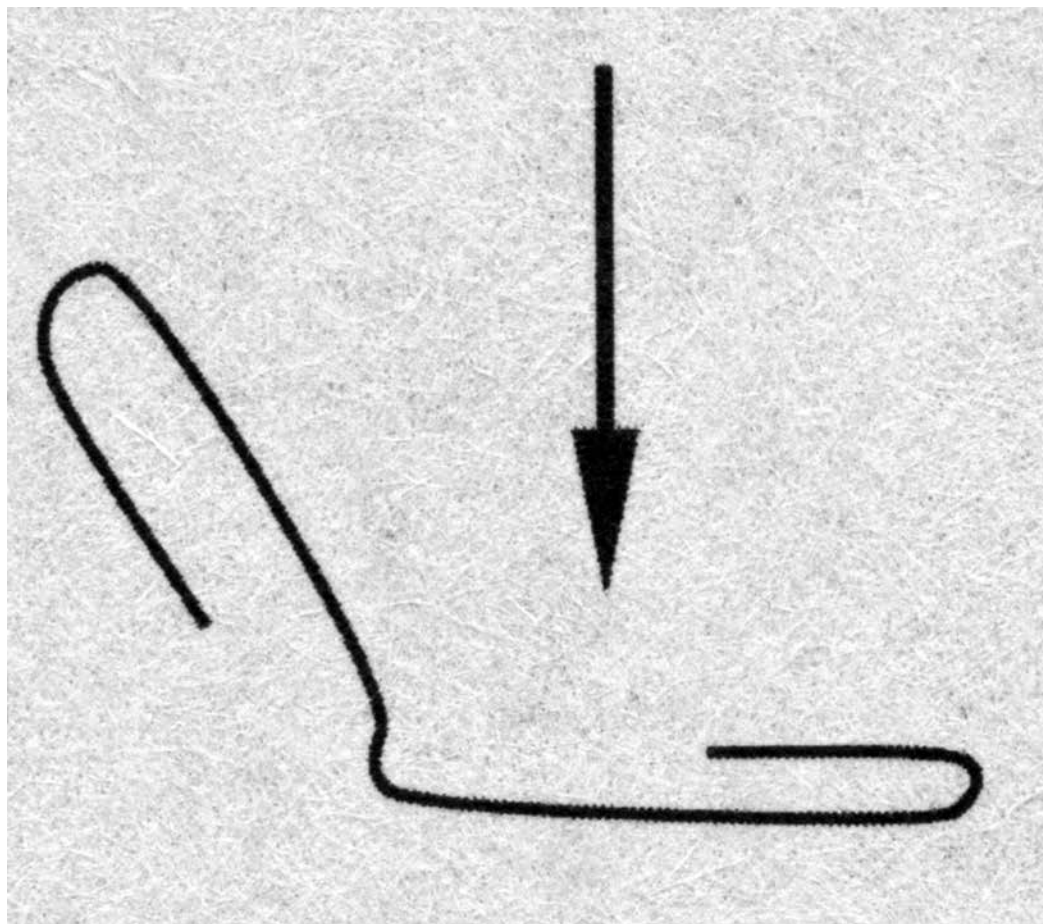
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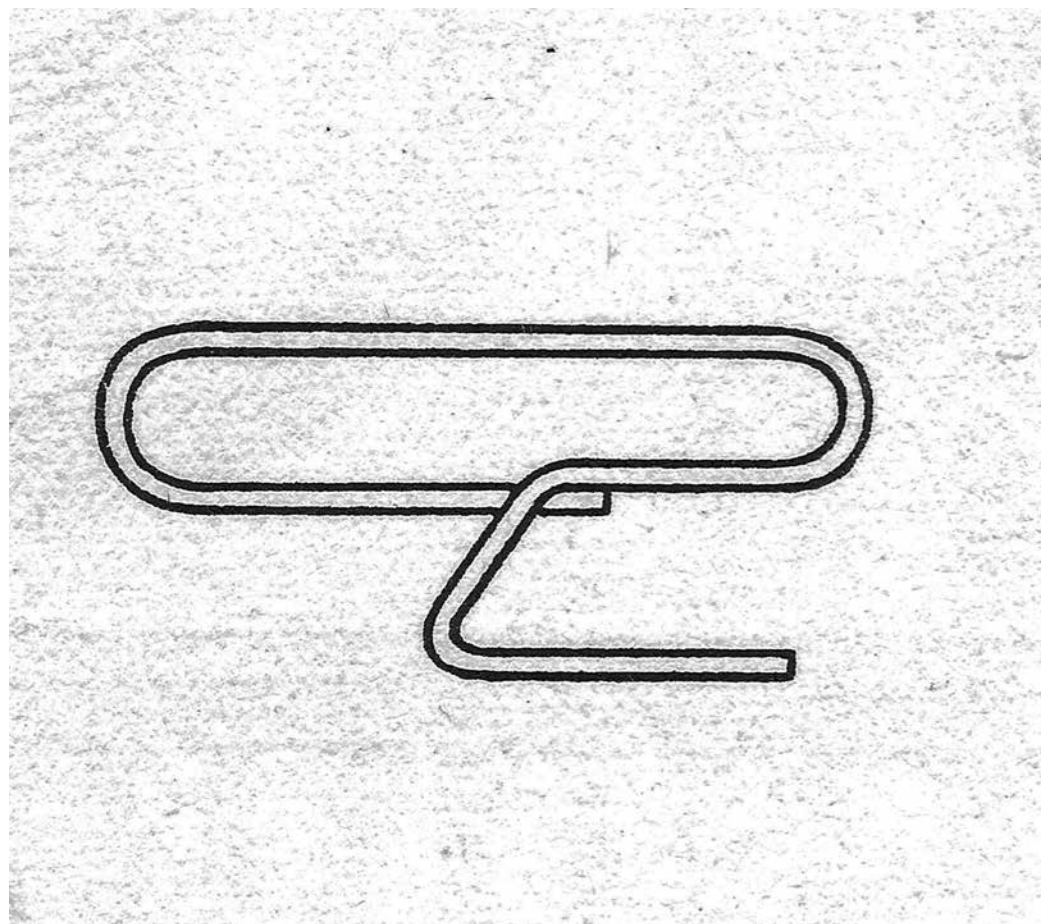
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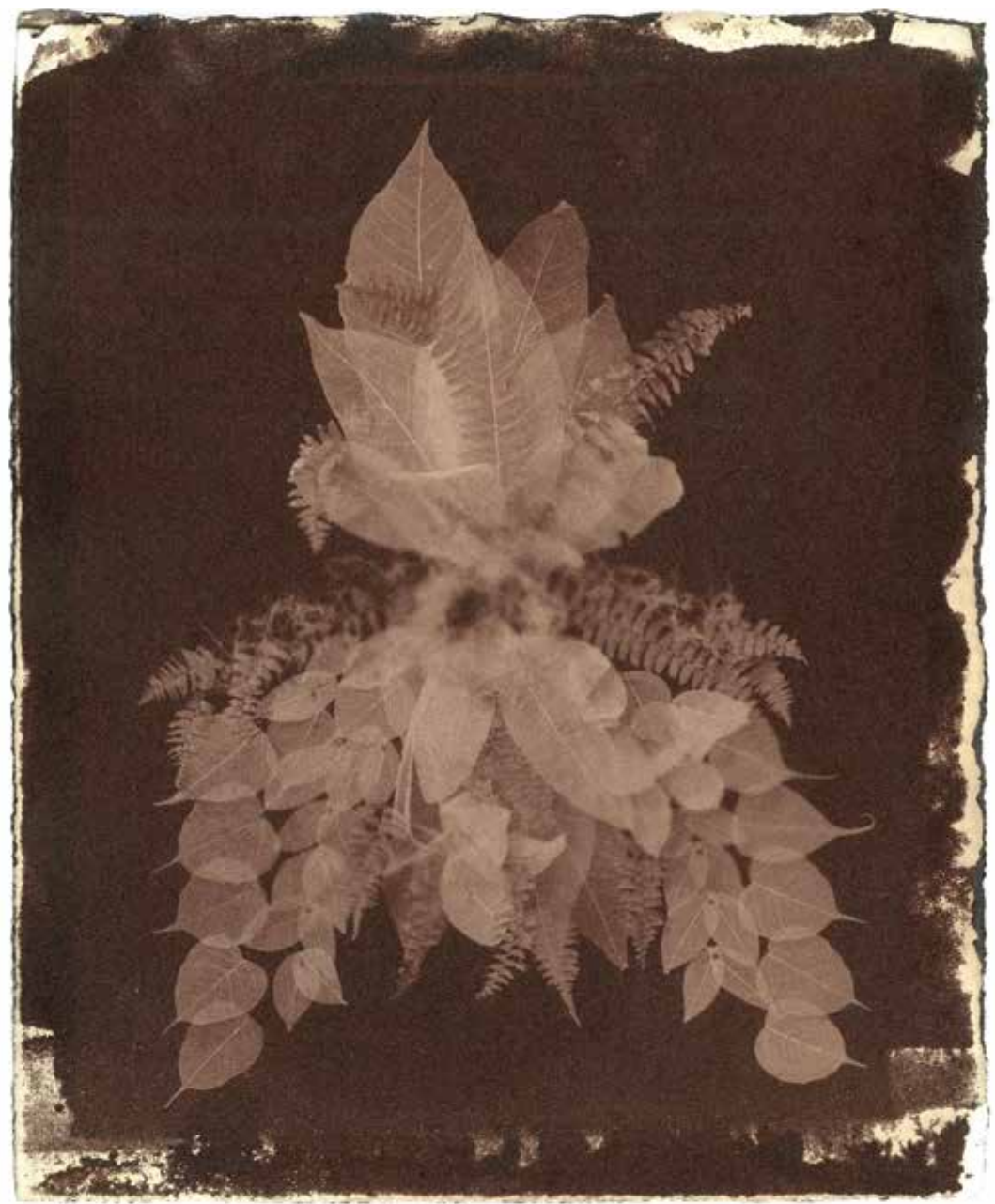
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Shift: Exchanges











Stephanie Flowers



Jenna Crook



Mike Goldby



Ibrahim Abusitta





September 7, 2012

Today is the last day of the workshop at Oulanka so Riikka, Tiina, and I got up this morning at 4 AM to finish our piece for the presentation this afternoon. We brought Michael's camera to shoot with. Riku's glass encasing had been left in the forest all night from yesterday's shoot and we set it up above this stump that we'd agreed to photograph. We took a few photographs, moved some shrubs and branches out of the frame, and got the shot. I tried to lift the glass, and broke it. Tiina looked pissed off, perhaps because it was 5 AM when we finished, but probably because I had left our site without helping to clean up. Oops.

Claire Scherzinger is an artist and writer based in Toronto. She has a degree in Drawing and Painting with a minor in Creative Writing from OCAD University. Her current practice combines elements of drawing with painting and

sculpture. She has shown her work in many Toronto venues, and is currently preparing to exhibit new work at the Gladstone Hotel's upcoming Come Up To My Room event.

Cracking Shells of Modernism

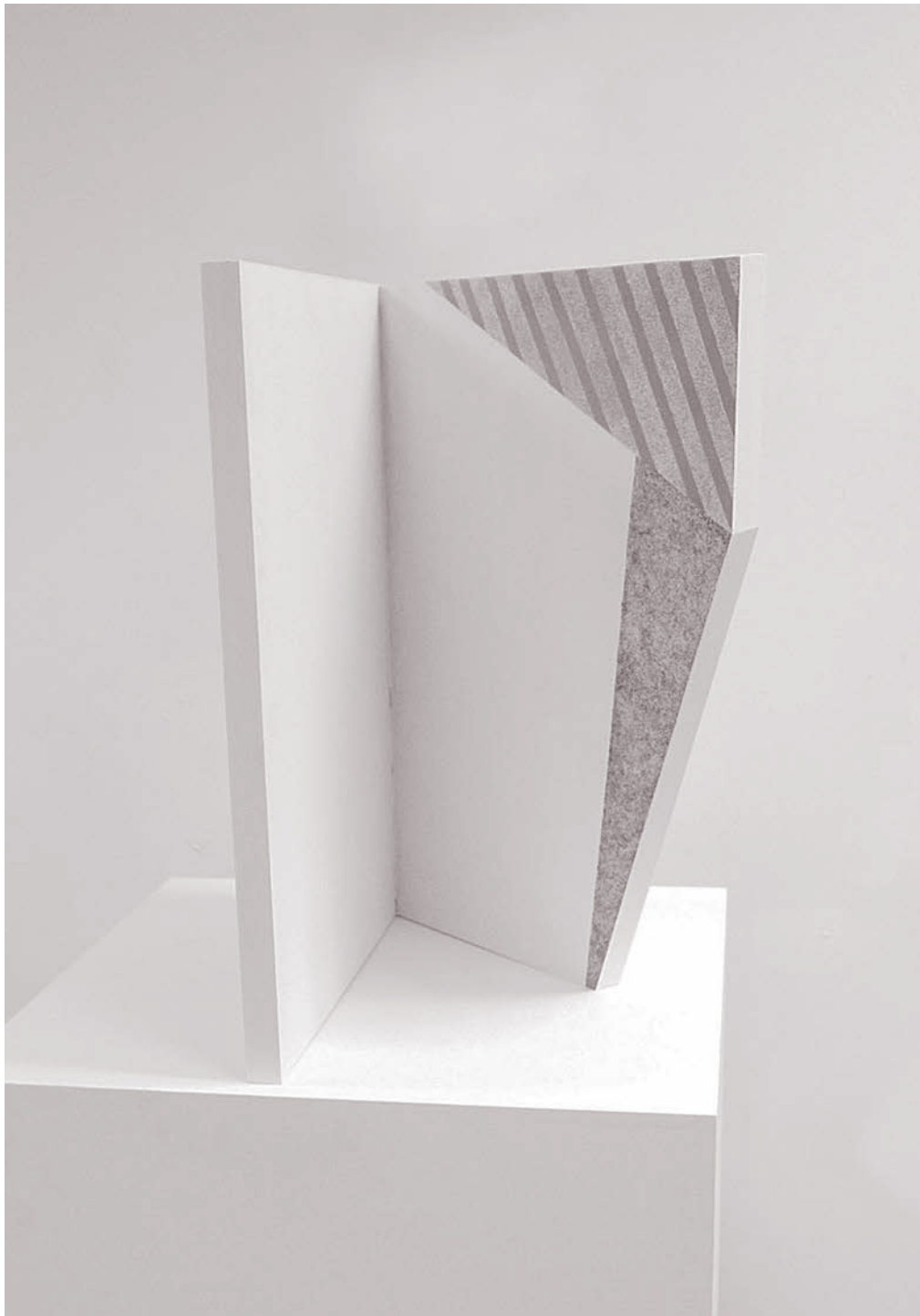
Claire Scherzinger



I begin a drawing by designing geometric shapes and spaces. In tandem, I construct hard-angled blocks out of wood—these are then painted “gallery white,” with selected planes painted in colour. The blocks inform the subject matter of my drawings as the drawings inform the blocks. Viewers are left to engage with the multi-dimensionality of the work as they walk around the installation.

My work examines the dimensionality of drawing through a departure from the 2-D image. The third dimension is explored through the translation of visual information

between the wood blocks and the minimalist pointillism drawings. The blocks actualize the space represented by the drawings, while the dots and lines in the drawings reveal the skeleton of solid matter. In combination, these blocks and drawings perpetuate the relevancy of contemporary drawing through interdisciplinary methodologies.



An exchange, whether it is a conversation or a physical trading of objects, always has a foundation. Following that, a transformation happens. A critique, for example, is an exciting, critical conversation that is practiced at many educational institutions. I've found that having this conversation with professors and students is what pushes my work to progress.

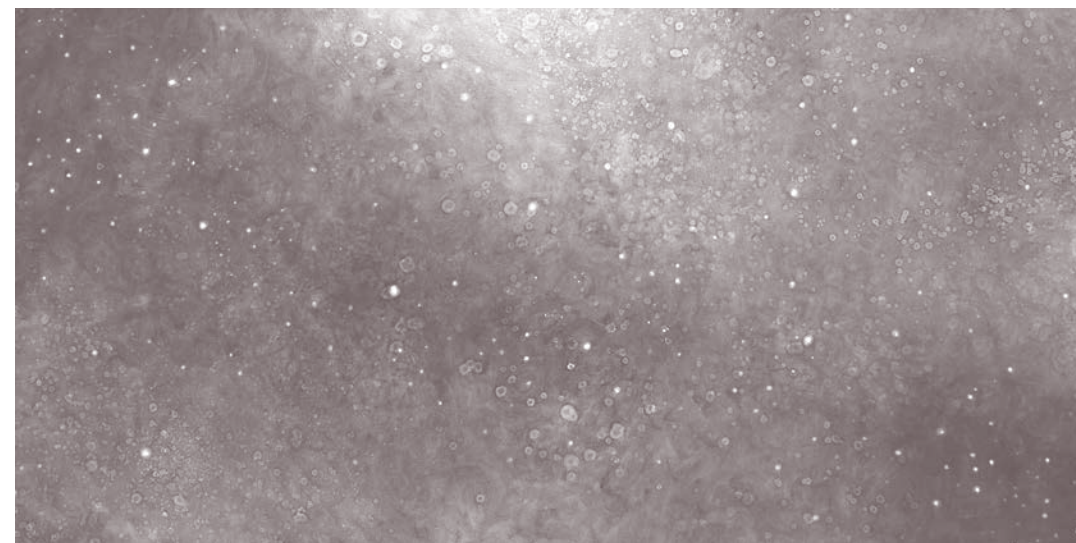


Brooke Wayne is a Toronto-based artist and writer from Thornhill, Ontario. She graduated from the Drawing and Painting program at OCAD University with a

minor in English. Wayne has recently exhibited her work at Project Gallery in Toronto and at the Mercedes Benz Financial Services Gallery in Mississauga.

Cosmic & Microscopic

Brooke Wayne



Space is big. You just won't believe how vastly, hugely, mind-bogglingly big it is. I mean, you may think it's a long way down the road to the chemist's, but that's just peanuts to space.

Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*¹

We shall not cease from exploration, and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.

TS Eliot, *Four Quartets*²

Astronomy, biology, chemistry, physics, planets, stars, nebulae, and galaxies: I explore these subjects daily through readings, digital videos and images, social media, and stargazing. My passion for science fiction has led me here, and working on my thesis has allowed me to satisfy the related childlike wonder inside of me. I start my paintings by looking at astronomical photographs. I then merge or isolate details of these images in order to further abstract them. My work thus challenges the viewer's perception of scale. My paintings also

incorporate my imagination. The *Cosmic & Microscopic* series is abstract and therefore allows for multiple interpretations from the viewer.

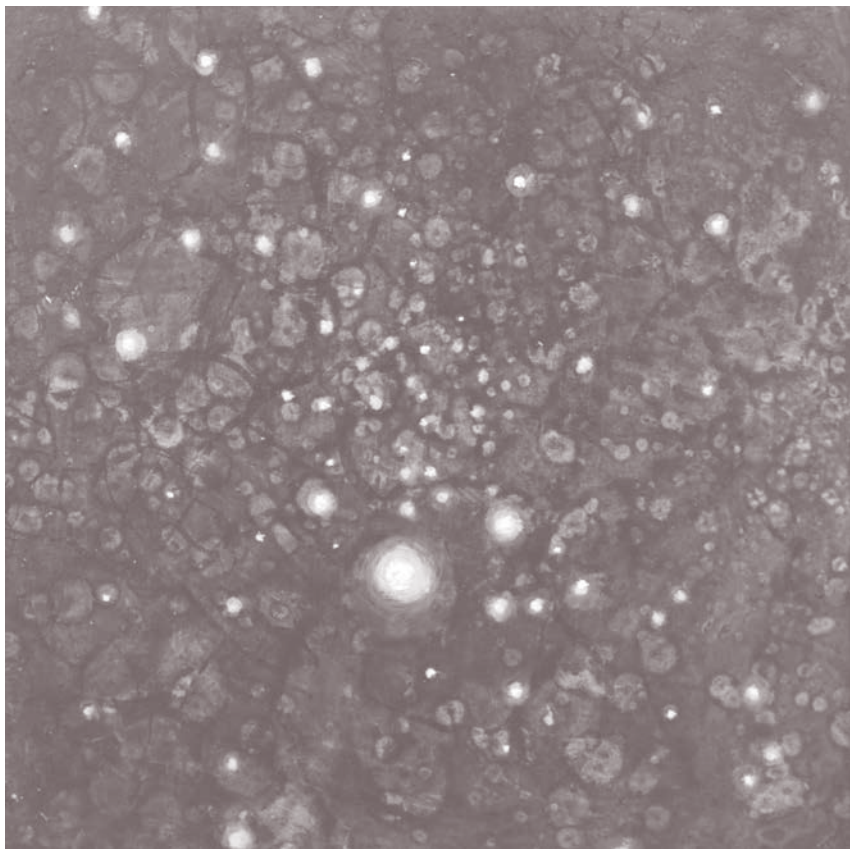
Douglas Crimp's essay, 'The End of Painting,' has profoundly influenced my practice. Crimp has helped me consider how I might incorporate discussions of subversion, appropriation, quotation, duplication, and plurality into my work. In his essay, Crimp writes, "the essence of painting is being redefined not as a narrow, arid, and reductive anti-illusionism, but as a rich, varied capacity to birth new images into an old world."³ In my own work, I translate astronomical photographs taken by NASA into original paintings, which are entirely new images. NASA's photographs are scientific and referential. They spark my imagination and creativity, and help me reassess my notions of reality and fantasy.

The *sublime* is present in *Cosmic & Microscopic*, as it's my aim to overwhelm the viewer. To achieve this, I've looked to Vija Celmins's work. Her paintings and

1. Douglas Adams. *A Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. London: Pan Books, 2009. 63.

2. Eliot, T.S. *Four Quartets*. Boston: Harcourt. 1943.

3. Douglas Crimp. 'The End of Painting', *Art World Follies*, Spring 1981: 69-86.

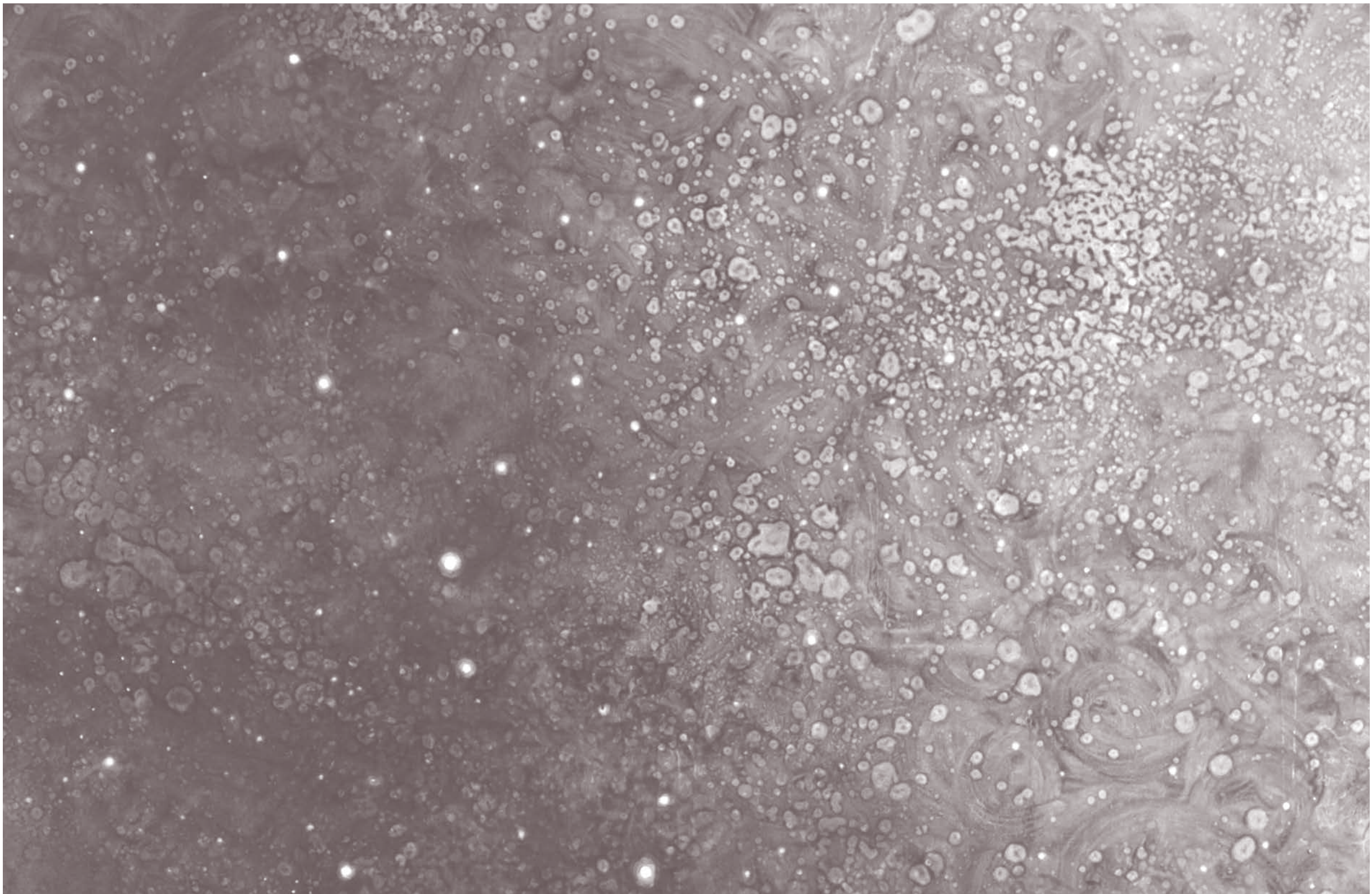


photographs lack points of reference for the viewer. They're detailed close-ups of oceans and night skies in varying scales. The result is an absence of ground, which creates disorientation due to the lack of true scale. I have adopted Celmin's approach, eliminating scale and reference points, in order to absorb and confuse the viewer. Contrastingly, I leave drip marks on the edges of my canvas to point to the painting's construction. This reminds the viewer that they're looking at objects, paintings. The series can therefore be read as fractals, images of space that can be read at two scale extremes.

My use of colour and swirling brushstrokes creates a sense of depth and motion. Static images of outer space come to life with fluid swirls, splashes and haloes that contradict the darkness of space. Given that the *Cosmic & Microscopic* series functions on multiple levels of scale, it challenges viewers to determine what they see: Is it outer space, underwater, or microscopic? My thesis has allowed me to explore the relationship between science and art, and to explore space and the universe with my paintbrush.

In making this particular body of work, I met regularly with my advisor, Vladimir Spicanovic. I always looked forward to our conversations since he has a depth of knowledge and sound advice concerning the building of contemporary creative methodologies. These moments of conversation, are really defining moments for me in the creative process. I want my work





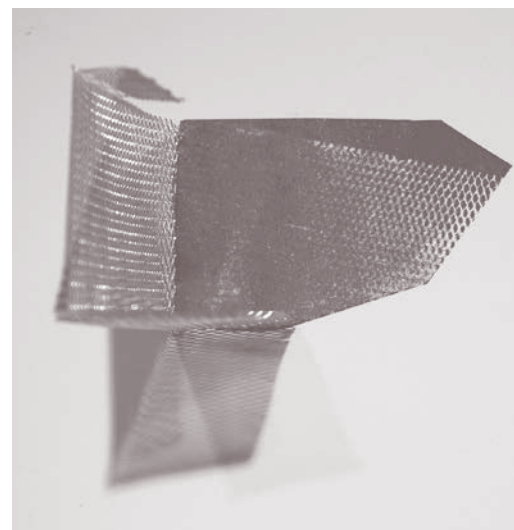
Layne Hinton is a multi-disciplinary artist from Eldon, Ontario. Her practice, which includes installation, video, performance, sculpture, drawing, and printmaking, explores notions of light and shadow. She recently graduated from OCAD University with a degree in Integrated Media and a minor in Printmaking. She has also studied at L'École

Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts in Paris and completed a residency at the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg, Russia. While at OCAD U, Hinton received the InterAccess Award, an OCAD U Printmaking Award, the International Education Opportunity Scholarship and an OCAD U Faculty Film/Video Scholarship. Hinton is currently based in Toronto,

where she works as a curator and coordinator for Art Spin. Hinton's work has been exhibited at the Art Gallery of Ontario, YYZ Artist's Outlet, L'École des Beaux Arts (Paris), Hazelton Lanes, and The Gladstone Hotel. She has had solo exhibitions at the SOHO Lobby Gallery and at InterAccess Electronic Media Arts Centre.

Beyond a Shadow of a Form

Layne Marley Hinton



My work combines elements of cinema, sculpture, and installation. I use home-made projection devices to explore ideas of light, shadow, and materiality and am particularly interested in the exchange that happens between a form and its shadow. The cinematic aspect of my work is what Jonathan Walley describes in his essay 'The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema' (2003) as art that recognizes "cinematic properties outside the standard film apparatus."¹ The essence of cinema is, after all, a combination of light, time, and space.

My installations consider space, form, and the people who encounter them. They are works that invite their viewers to conduct operations, move, and immerse themselves in them. My work requires time from its viewer, the viewer must consider both the projecting device and

the shadowy images it casts on the walls. As they observe these components, the viewer's body may interrupt the projections; this action casts the silhouette of their body onto the screen, while the image is projected onto their body.

Our ideas about light and shadow, particularly from an art history standpoint, originate with Pliny and Plato. In Pliny's text *Natural History*, XXXV he attributes the origin of both painting and sculpture to a shadow, which begins with a young girl tracing the shadow (a *skiagraphica*) of her true love's profile on a wall. Later the girl's father fills in the painting with clay to make a three-dimensional representation of the profile; and so sculpting began.²

Plato's 'Allegory of the Cave' from *The Republic* connects the origin of knowledge to our relationship with light and shadow.³ In his allegory, prisoners are chained in a cave. Their lives are spent watching the shadows cast on the wall facing them, without ever seeing the original forms that are creating these shadows. The prisoners believe that the shadows are reality, when in fact, the true reality is outside the walls of the cave. Plato infers that shadows represent illusion and deception, and light represents "true" knowledge. This correlation between light, truth, and knowledge has often been referred to as the "invisible medium" throughout the history of Western thought, whereas a shadow was understood as a form of concealment or absence.⁴

I, on the other hand, believe shadow to be the opposite of this concept of absenteeism because of its relationship to corporeality. We are quite familiar with our

1. Walley, Jonathan. 'The Material of Film and the Idea of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-Garde Film.' *October*. Vol. 103. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003. 15-30.

2. Stoichita, Victor I. *A Short History of the Shadow*. London: Reaktion, 1997. 11.

3. Plato. *The Republic*. Ed. H. D. P. Lee Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964.

4. Vasseleu, Cathryn. 'Introduction.' *Textures of Light: Vision and Touch in Irigaray, Levinas and Merleau-Ponty*. Taylor & Francis, 1998. 3-20. 3.

own shadows, and while their dark mark at our feet may mean a *lack* of light, they also represent the presence of our bodies. Anything with material substance casts a shadow, even translucent materials that may lack weight and opacity. The shadow can be an indicator of this, if something has a solid shadow or an uneven one, it exposes the materiality of a form.

In 1927 psychologist and philosopher Jean Piaget conducted a study in Paris of children's responses to the origins of a shadow. He refers to four stages in children's perceptions of the shadow. At approximately age five a child recognizes a shadow as an entity and attributes it to an object's opaqueness. At first the child believes the shadow somehow emanates *from* the object, later to recognize that it is external. At around age nine the shadow becomes "synonymous with the absence of light" for the child.⁵ Regardless of concerns, which have been raised about this early study, Piaget's discussions with young children demonstrate an early perception of the shadow as a trace of presence rather than an absence (of light).

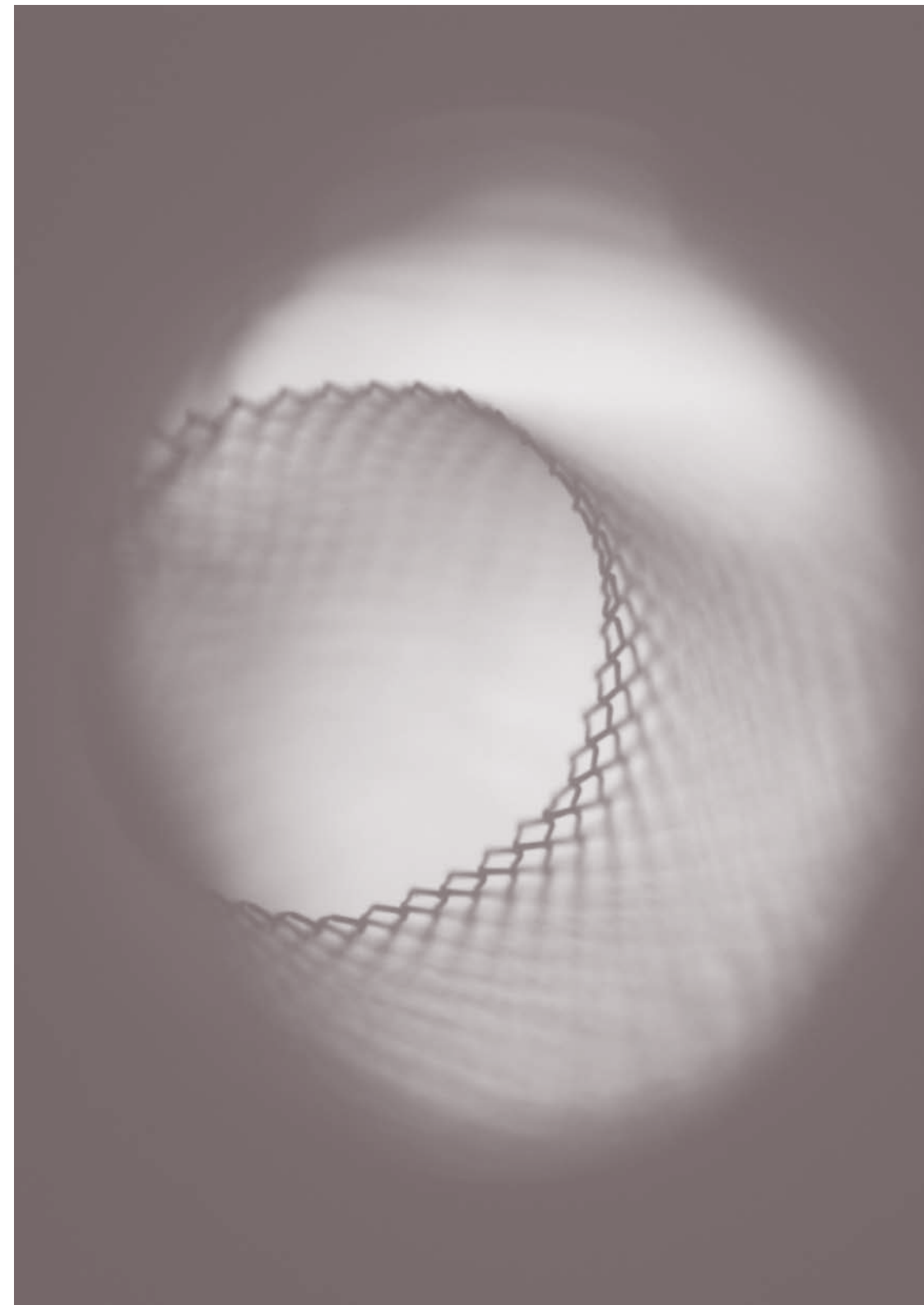
The artist Christian Boltanski discusses, in an exhibition catalogue, his reasons for being intrigued by a shadow's presence and absence in reference to his 1984 installation piece *Les Ombres (The Shadows)*.⁶ He was looking to create something smaller, a work he could fit in his pocket and travel with, so he began to consider the portability of a shadow. Shadows can be large and spatial, yet with their innate ephemerality, they can also "disappear in a flash: as soon as the reflector is turned off or the candle extinguished, there is nothing there any longer."⁷

The installation consists of a small circle in the centre of the room containing some wire and paper figures, a fan and two lights. The lights cast shadows of the fluttering figures onto the walls of the gallery. It was the perfect solution for him to create a large work that could also be packed up in a small box. Boltanski acknowledges the ephemeral quality of a shadow, yet still calls it a "thing" as if he could pick up a shadow by his fingers, fold it, and tuck it away.⁸

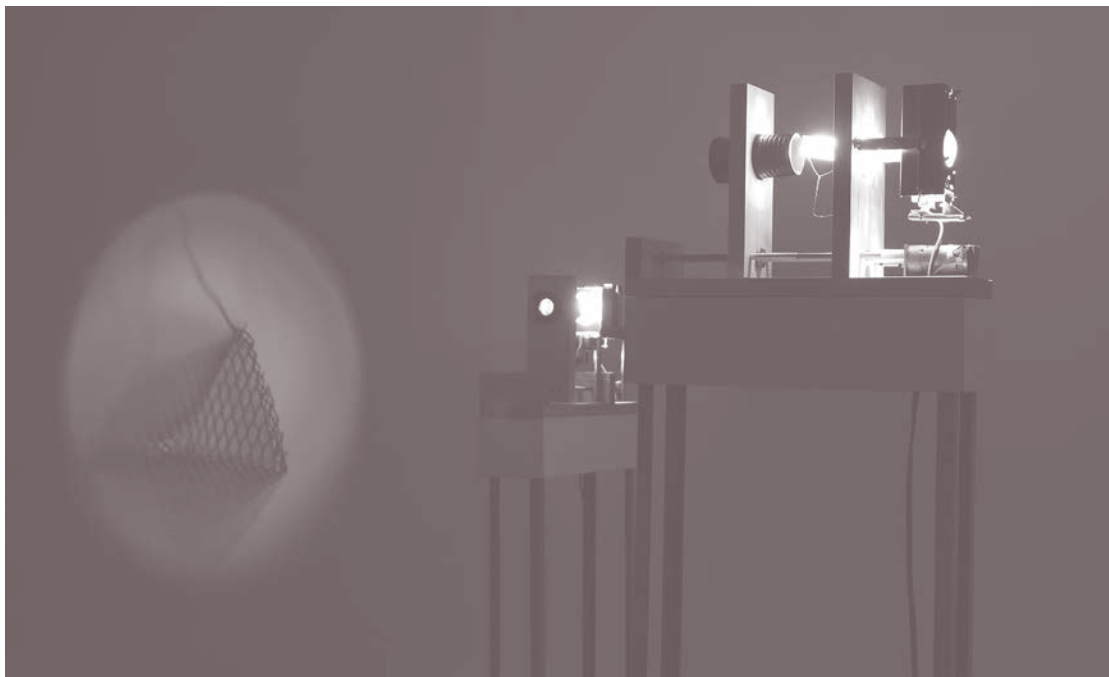
This thought reminded me of an experience I had when I was thirteen years old and I played the role of Peter Pan in a community production of the classic story. My mom, also an artist, made all of the props, sets, and costumes. One day she pulled out a thin black cloth and asked me to lie down on it. With a piece of chalk, she traced around my body and cut out a limp, flimsy shape—exactly my size. This was to be my shadow in the play—a key prop for the scene in which Peter loses his shadow. I have kept that little shadow. The notion of possessing it and the idea of being able to hold onto something so supposedly ephemeral, intrigues me. Like Boltanski, I want to fold my shadow up and keep it in a small space, and then pull it out in order to reveal something larger.

This project, *Beyond a Shadow of a Form*, began when I inserted a crumpled 16mm filmstrip into my slide projector and racked the focus knob back and forth. The resulting image was a beautiful time-based projection of the filmstrip, where the parts in focus shifted as the knob turned. When a flat image (a slide) is replaced with a three-dimensional object (like a ball of film), the focus can be shifted *through*

to spark a conversation, so I believe that it also needs to start with one. • As an artist, writer and problem solver, I'm always involved in some kind of exchange with others: academic research, painting collaborations, and writing workshop groups etc. I owe the success of these exchanges to OCAD University, where I was given the opportunity to build and maintain



Beyond a Shadow of a Form



the object, from one end to the other if the object is translucent. This accidental discovery led to my current exploration of projecting images made from three-dimensional forms.

There are several key components to *Beyond a Shadow of a Form*. There are the projection apparatuses that stand freely in the space. These apparatuses function technically to cast shadows, as well as to occupy space with a sense of autonomy. The projectors, finished in wood with visible metal mechanics, recall early magic lanterns and projection technology. Secondly the automated and mechanical movements within the apparatuses provide a soundtrack to the work. Then there are the projections themselves seen on the outer surfaces of the room; they

are somewhat ghostly in their presence. Finally, there are the three-dimensional forms that are the material source for the cast shadows made from a thin wire mesh.

The shadows in my work are just as important, if not more so, than the objects that cast them. This relationship between the solid three-dimensional object and its two-dimensional projected shadow is central to my work. The shadow is a copy, yet the copy takes precedence for me, diminishing the original.

The projected image lies somewhere in the space between the still and moving image. Its own sense of movement is intermediary, a liminal pause between a state of stillness and a full state of motion. The nature of any black and white projected shadow seems to also “evoke the



stillness and other time of photography.”⁹ This nested movement lies not only in the projected image, but also in the mechanical movements of the apparatuses. Looping motors, gears and switches hum in the space with their subtle yet constant movement.

When we consider the temporal nature of the image-making apparatus, as well as light and the space of the installation, the work assumes certain cinematic qualities. Considering the position of André Bazin, who believes cinema is a conceptual phenomenon rather than a set of materials, we can contemplate Johnathan Walley’s notions of time, light, and space as the essential components of cinema.¹⁰ Walley writes “any art work that traded in these elements—light and time—could be considered ‘cinema,’ even if it was not film.”¹¹ My work is a

camera-less film. If the projected image is reminiscent of a photogram (which is also made by shadows) and has motion, does that not liken it to cinema?

Following this line of thought, we can see that artists of the Expanded Cinema movement of the 1960’s and 1970’s were motivated by similar interests. These artists used the projected image to “measure, document, abstract, reflect, and transform the parameters of physical space.”¹² They inverted the image-making apparatus, and often rejected film entirely or pointed to the materiality of the film itself. Working with the essence of cinema, many of these artists used light and shadow as their mediums. I gravitate, in particular, to Anthony McCall’s minimal, abstract cinematic exploration of light, time, and space.

relationships with like-minded peers. My friendships, my writing and my artistic practice, as well as the multicultural city of Toronto, has augmented my ability to communicate more effectively as an artist. • Exchange requires a minimum of two parts. The two parts each take their turn in the role of giver and receiver, but ultimately end up being both combined.

5. Stoichita, Victor I. *A Short History of the Shadow*. London: Reaktion Books, 1997. 29.
6. Boltanski, Christian. *Inventar*. Hamburg: Hamburger Kunsthalle, 1991. 73-5.
7. Stoichita, 201.
8. Boltanski, 73-5.

9. Iles, Chrissie. ‘Between the Still and Moving Image’ *Into the Light: The Projected Image in American Art, 1964-1977*. New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2001. 33-65. 57.
10. Bazin, André. ‘The Myth of Total Cinema.’ 2012. *What Is Cinema?* Vol. 1. London: University of California, 1967. 17-22. 18.
11. Walley, Jonathan. ‘The Material of Film and the Idea

of Cinema: Contrasting Practices in Sixties and Seventies Avant-Garde Film.’ *October*. Vol. 103. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003. 16.
12. Iles, 33.

Working with like-minded peers McCall was able to develop a method of working with projection and light in an almost sculptural manner. His medium is the light beam, rather than the flat reading of light that happens on a screen. Similar to my shadowy projections, McCall's work exists "only in the present: the moment of projection."¹³ The work tends to have sculptural concerns, addressing the architectural space itself and taking into consideration issues of scale and body.¹⁴

I was lucky enough to see McCall speak about his past work and attend an opening for *Between You and I*, an immersive installation at the Collège des Bernardins in Paris in 2011. McCall spoke about the limitations of a solid object that can only occupy a prescribed space at one time. He explained that "with a projected image, it's possible to do this impossible thing" where multiple images can occupy the same space at once.¹⁵ The same notion—that a space can be occupied with multiple things at one time—could be applied to shadow, just as easily as light. Projected images, with multiple beams of light or shadow, can all occupy the same space at once. The two-dimensional image projected is simply a cross-section of that beam. A wall intercepts the beam, creating a two-dimensional image similar to the shifting focus through my projected forms.

McCall's consideration of space and architecture is central to his practice. There are many "architectonic aspects of the multi-perspective projection installations."¹⁶ This creates a sense of environmental viewing, where focus is shifted to the outer walls of a space, to the projections. In his 1973 *Long Film for Four Projectors*, McCall

is using the entire space, cross-projecting on all four walls. Viewers' gazes are directed differently than they have been historically: rather than looking inwards at a sculpture, or directly ahead at a film, they are suddenly surrounded by an environment and must direct their attention outwards to all sides to see both the beam of projected light, as well as the images illuminating the walls.

My work seeks to reel this outward form of viewing back inwards to simultaneously have viewers focus on the object and the apparatus, as well as the projections. While McCall and I both consider our work to have elements of sculpture, mine comes largely from the projection devices and three-dimensional forms rather than from sculpting light. The viewer is invited to observe these sculptural components as well as look at the walls. The image-making device is on display, something that is often hidden in a projection booth, or perhaps overhead. The viewers then experience an element of temporality as they watch the time-based projections and actively navigate the space. As their own shadows interrupt and interact with the projections, they become aware of their own corporeal presence in the space. Viewers negotiate the space and become part of the system that they are simultaneously observing.¹⁷

Outside of the installation space, shadows play a defining role in establishing space and architectural conditions. For example, we use shadows subconsciously to help define volume and movement—to measure space. We experience the material world *through* shadow. To perceive the edges of forms as protruding or sunken we require a shadow as an indicator.



When projected, the shadows of the three-dimensional forms in *Beyond a Shadow of a Form* become distorted—seemingly inside out or somehow misshapen. The act of projecting blurs the viewers' perception of interior and exterior space and makes the boundaries and edges of the form transparent. By shifting focus through the space of this form one sees almost a cross-section of the entire object. With a nod to Cubists and their attempt to show multiple sides of an object simultaneously, the work reveals a new way of seeing that allows a form to be read closely, considered not only in terms of its sides, but where these connect, and what is its inside or outside. In a text on projection based installations and multidimensional viewing Chrissie Iles cites Merleau-Ponty's observation that "the infinite number of angles contained in a viewer's circumnavigation of an object renders that object transparent."¹⁸ This thought has resonated

with me; as the object (the source of the shadow) may become "transparent" in our multi-dimensional perspective of it, as we see every angle of it, it almost disappears. The shadow, however, remains as a trace of its materiality and presence in the space.¹⁹

While shadow and light depend on one another, praise of light has kept the shadow in darkness. Our association with shadows as absence is deeply ingrained within us. This is demonstrated in the common idiom "to keep someone in the dark"—implying that there is a *lack* of knowledge to be found in shadow. Shadows are far more complex than this, and when one begins to see their role in relation to presence rather than absence, we develop a new way of seeing space and defining volume. It is with this in mind that viewers navigate *Beyond a Shadow of a Form* and negotiate the installation space with their own shadows in tow.

13. McCall, Anthony. 'Line Describing a Cone and Related Films.' *October*. Vol. 103. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003. 42-62. 43.
14. McCall, 46.
15. McCall, Anthony. 'Anthony McCall.' *Visites D'Artistes*. École Nationale Supérieure Des Beaux Arts, Paris. 3 Feb. 2011. Lecture.

16. Iles, 33.
17. Weibel, Peter. 'Expanded Cinema, Video and Virtual Environments.' *Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary after Film*. By Jeffrey Shaw and Peter Weibel. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2003. 110-25. 117.
18. Iles, 35.

19. Casey, Edward. 'Edges and the In-between.' *PhaenEx*. Vol. 3. No. 2. 2008. 1-13. 9.

Jessica Tai is a visual artist from the San Francisco Bay Area and holds a BFA from OCAD University. Through the use of sculptural installation and antiquated photographic

processes, Jessica draws from the history of these artistic mediums in order to question the origin of their embedded values.

To Shadow a Failure

Jessica Tai



Through the application of the Nineteenth Century salt print process, an examination of photography's initial failures aims to question the medium's instilled value of permanence. Although William Henry Fox Talbot was successful in creating the first photographic images on paper beginning in 1835, it wasn't until the early 1840's that he found a method to fix them. A contemporary application of Talbot's first unsuccessful stabilization methods allows for the creation of ephemeral works, a visual conceptualization of the photographs that have since been exiled to the dark storage boxes of museums. In *To Shadow a Failure*, the use of an antiquated photographic process aims to reinterpret the historical stigma of failure through an acceptance of its material reality. Resulting are photographs as transitory as the first chemical impressions made on paper 180

years ago, subverting conventional expectations around the permanence of the art object, and calling into question the role preservation holds in the maintenance of those traditions.

Failure as Reverence, Shadow as Failure

My use of salt print techniques, which historically were deemed to be failures, allows for a reverence of the medium through the embrace of chance, accident, and flaw, elevating images previously rendered omisible. As curator Lyle Rexer notes, "The effects that entrance us today...the swirl of the background from the pour, the white skies, were a nuisance, a limitation...what they once endured out of necessity, we now employ as art."¹ Now free from the confines of being the prominent, commercially viable method of image making, the use of a historical photographic process, and acceptance of all its anomalies, allows for a place in which the merit of failure can be explored. This release from convention and prescribed mimetic function offers a regeneration of historical process photography.

Sciagraphy, the art of depicting an object through its shadow, is the first term that Talbot coined to describe his invention of the photographic medium. The title of my work, *To Shadow a Failure*, draws on the enigmatic definition of the shadow. Similar to Talbot, I viewed the shadow as open to both literal and symbolic interpretation. A shadow can mimic (to follow in the shadows), a shadow can be a lingering influence (the shadow of history), or simply an impression made on a sensitized piece of photographic paper. Talbot often employed the shadow as a symbol of impermanence,

1. Rexer, Lyle. *Photography's Antiquarian Avant-garde: The New Wave in Old Processes*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002. 81.



“the most transitory of things, the emblem of all that is fleeting and momentary.”² Despite this, the shadow was something to be captured, and through photography, made to be “fixed forever in the position which it seemed only destined for a single instant to occupy.”³ It is this belief in capturing the ephemeral that reveals the paradoxical nature of these aims. What does it mean when the desire for permanence is met with failure?

Another inquisition into the shadow is the patriarchal one cast by Talbot as well as other key figures in the birth of photography. My series of images feature discernibly gendered shadows that cast a

female figure into a history predominately inhabited by males. Through this subtle gesture, the shadow is used as a form of historical intervention.

Photograph as Epitaph

The Victorians placed heavy emphasis on the time and labor that was involved in the act of mourning. They often created elaborate phantom bouquets composed of ferns and skeleton leaves, and intricate hair weavings used for mourning jewelry. According to art historian Geoffrey Batchen, the physical time that was invested in making these objects was a direct translation of the emotional mourning period, ensuring

that the “extra handicraft means the act of remembering would be painstaking, extended through time, deliberated.”⁴ Similar to my use of historical process photography, there is a feeling that one must endure its meticulous nature to further understand or validate its usage. The ritualistic actions of the process, paired with equally fastidious content insure that, as artist Sally Mann states, “you fashion an object, you do not just take a picture. It is ceremonial.”⁵ This emphasis on material is integral in understanding my conception of a contemporary adoption of these ways of working as a form of reverence.

In *To Shadow a Failure* the images take on a likeness to the Victorian mourning card. Just as the Victorians paid their dues to the dead through a repetitive and ritualistic material act, I similarly pay homage to an obsolete process through meticulous composition and creation of the photographs and photograms. Photography is the ideal medium in which to do so. Curator Jennifer Blessing believes, “even more than a mechanism of mortification, photography as medium is a kind of medium, conjuring the spectral presence of its absent subjects.”⁶ This prompts the conception of the photograph as a site in which communion can be found between the departed and myself. This idea is illustrated in one image in particular, where the letter T (for Tai and Talbot) is created through a Victorian memorial set up.

The Photograph Eludes Capture—A Conscious Ephemerality

Applying Talbot’s original stabilization techniques ensures that the images will

fade over time, disrupting the traditional belief that representation is more lasting than subject. The conscious creation of an ephemeral artwork poses a challenge to the value of permanence, defying conventional expectations around the art object, and problematizing Talbot’s original intention of “fixing a shadow.” I am interested in the mandate of permanence that has been authoritatively instigated and perpetuated through the principles of the museum. What happens when an object with a lifespan penetrates this supposedly immortal space? Through the subversion of these conventions I am creating ephemeral works more akin to human experience. *To Shadow a Failure* destabilizes the heroism of the preserved artwork, and examines the desire for permanence sought through photography.

Installation—Contextualization Through an Institutional Framework

The series consists of eight salt prints that are made from contact printed negatives and photogrammed objects. Three photographs sit in recessed, black velvet lined boxes underneath a sheet of glass. A pendant light hangs above each plinth, reminding the viewer of the photographs’ susceptibility, and precipitating their eventual demise. In this way, the plinths function as graves, a site of mourning as the image gradually fades, transitioning photograph to epitaph. The plinth, a traditional viewing device used by museums and galleries, is paradoxically employed to preserve the ephemeral. Even within the confines of the structure, the photograph eludes capture, fundamentally contradicting the very aim of the medium and the

to float through space and are somehow traded for one another. • In my practice, there is a definite exchange, the kind that is more of a dialogue, between my sculptural projects and forms, and the shadow-based projections emanating from them. The viewer may also share an exchange with the work as they look at it, and certainly as they pass through it and

2. Schaaf, Larry J. *Records of the Dawn of Photography: Talbot's Notebooks P & Q*. England: Cambridge UP in Cooperation with the National Museum of Photography, Film & Television, 1996. 81.

3. *Ibid*

4. Dillion, Brian. 'Forget Me Not: An Interview with Geoffrey Batchen.' *Cabinet* 2004. cabinetmagazine.org.

5. Mann, Sally. *Photography's Antiquarian Avant-garde: The*

New Wave in Old Processes. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2002. 81.

6. Blessing, Jennifer. *Haunted: Contemporary Photography, Video, Performance*. New York, NY: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2010. 129.



context in which it is being presented. My work also questions the underlying politics of preservation. A wall mounted shelf exhibits five images, encased in glass and further protected with individual sheets of black velvet. This installation requires the viewer to lift the cloth, exposing the photograph to detrimental light; therefore placing the viewer into a happenstance position of power. The arbitrary identity of the viewer asks us to consider who holds and has held the authority in what is deemed worthy of preserving. The contrast of these two methods of display—one corrosive, the other sheltering—further questions the presumably impermeable space of the institution.

Paradox Reigns

If photographs, as Roland Barthes states, stage the death of a subject, then the preservation of that photograph ensures an interminable death. Stemming from Talbot's initial paradox, "to fix a shadow," my work challenges this foundational desire to fix the ephemeral through the creation of impermanent images. Transitory photographs of memorialization are destined to the same fate as the mourned. Despite the inevitable fading of the image, it is not the absence that deserves dwelling, but as the Victorians perceived through the act of their memorial creations, it is the reflection generated through the act of making.

their shadow intercepts; suddenly they are contributing to the work as well as experiencing it. • I do not view my relationship to history as a static one, but rather one deeply rooted in exchange. For me, the past opens up the possibility of collaboration, reinterpretation, even communion. • Exchange is the trajectory of information as it moves between thoughts,



To Shadow a Failure

Jordan Maddox was born in Regina, Saskatchewan and grew up in Vancouver, BC. After completing a year of Commerce at Dalhousie University, Maddox decided he'd rather study Interior Design. This decision took him to the British Columbia Institute of Technology in Vancouver. He spent two years studying interior design there before continuing his education at OCAD University, where he graduated from the Environmental Design program in 2013. Maddox currently works as a designer the Toronto interior design firm, Kantelberg & Co.

Noah Scheinman grew up in Kingston, Ontario. Prior to completing his degree in Environmental Design at OCAD University, he studied Liberal Arts at McGill University and Painting at Parsons in New York City. He currently works as a junior architect with ERA Architects in Toronto.



Lines into Planes

Jordan Maddox and
Noah Scheinman

Formwork As Object (1)

The formwork is an object. It is a complicated and considered assembly, an actor on the formal and material environment. While it lives only briefly, it continues to be felt as the powerful shape-maker and mark-scriber. The formwork is a project. It is sketched and modeled, iterated and refined. Throughout its existence, the formwork leads a double life. From the earliest stages of fabrication, on through its construction and dismantling, it holds both the promise of a finished object and its own physical qualities—weight, material, texture, posture. Even in its after-life, the formwork will persist as an object: designed, used, and wasted.



bodies and locations. Every project is a series of exchanges, a back and forth between people, technology and culture. In school, we are asked to study these relationships – to wrestle with them and consider them historically and in a contemporary sense. The hope is always to establish something of meaning – whether it is rigorously ordered, or an expression

Formwork As Object (2)

The void space surrounding the object is the legacy of the formwork. While no longer present, the formwork maintains an enduring force. As an object, it is permanent and physical, full of its own ideas and craftsmanship, joints and cycle. Like the unique character given to a cliff by the elements of wind and water, the final design object presents a history to be read. This narrative is an ever-present ghost sequence visible in the grained and textured surface of the concrete.

Instruction Manual:

1. Get Materials
 - 6 sheets plywood
 - 4 2"x4"x8'
 - 1 roll contractors paper
 - 35 bags of concrete
 - 500 screws
 - 2 buckets
 - rebar
2. Drop 5 sheets of plywood off to RP for CNC.
3. Receive the materials back from the CNC and extract components from the plywood sheets.
4. Measure the distance where the form will be built within the gallery. Measure a second time.
5. Build form, front first. Screw the first piece into the floor and then screw down into that one. Every 3 curves are the same, making 45 individual curves and 15 sets of 3.
6. Build the back.
7. Attach the back to the front with 2x4s on the side.
8. Ensure to leave enough room to knock everything off. All pieces should have an exposed edge.
9. Rent concrete mixer and concrete vibrator
10. Mix concrete, 1 bag at a time in mixer. 3 cups of water per 30kg bag is the mixture we found gave the best consistency.
11. Pour into form evenly.
12. Vibrate every 3-4 pours, knock with hammer at the same time and spontaneously throughout process.
13. Smooth out top and cover with plastic.
14. Let it cure over for 48 hours before removing form.
15. Remove form piece by piece, starting with the back and sides.
16. Clean up.
17. Light sand on edges and top surface with 40 grit and 60 grit sandpaper.

Blowout

All the things that go wrong, the unpredictable and exciting—the liquid escape and the deep weighty pressure, the imprecise edges, the fallacy of the model, and the corruption of the tool—make our eyes linger and hearts swell. It's here that we are finally pointed towards the poetic. We are no longer suspended in the abstract, we have all the information. It is a movement towards the undetailed.

Originally from Osaka, Japan, Asuka Michihiro graduated from OCAD University in 2013. She has since returned to Japan to continue her studies in material arts.

Material Metamor- phosis

Asuka Michihiro



Student Press Tell us about your work prior to your thesis project. Was your thesis project influenced by your previous interests or was it something new for you?

Asuka Michihiro I have an interest in the subject of discarded materials and thinking about how to reuse them.

Once I realized that creating art works would be [re]producing discarded materials, this influenced me to research the use of discarded materials for my thesis project. I began to think about how the artist can sustainably create and reuse in their work.

Your documentation reveals a meticulous process. How much emphasis do you place on process compared to the outcome of a final project?

From the beginning of thesis, I had focused on process more than outcome. I believe that showing the process is the primary purpose of this work.

What informed your treatment of the materials? Did you commit to a specific technique?

In my thesis work I applied few techniques to manipulate the paper and wool. There are many traditional techniques around the world that can be applied to these materials. For example, traditional paper cloth in Japan is made by weaving the paper thread. For further research I would definitely like to study such techniques to expand the potential of the materials in my own work.

How did your relationship with the project change or evolve throughout the year?

Did you have expectations about the final form of the project?

Exploring the aesthetics of discarded materials was the original subject of my thesis. However, while manipulating the discarded materials to change their impression, I realized that what I needed to change was my

own impression of these materials. A material is just a material, no matter if it was discarded or not. I realized that I had been categorizing materials in a hierarchy.

For the final form I did not have a planned presentation format, but I had intended to show the series of samples as well as the pictorial documentations. I wanted to share the aesthetics of the materials with the viewers through these forms.

How do you feel about the final outcome of your project? Do you intend to continue with this process?

I did not consider the thesis work as the final outcome of the research—rather, I considered it as one part of a process. I would like to continue researching the concept of manipulating discarded materials further in my studies.

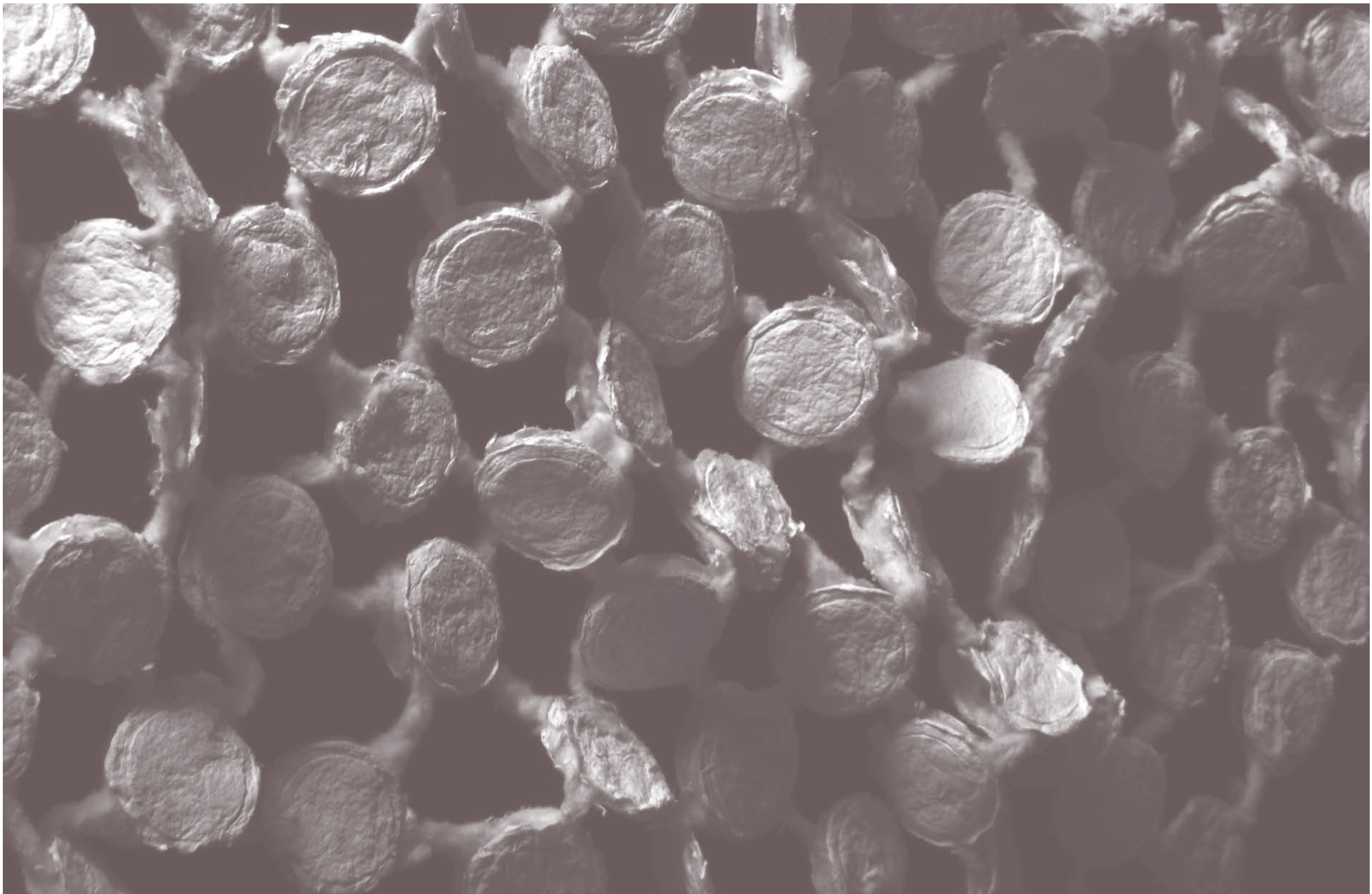


Asuka Michihiro

of chaos, we have a deep need to establish a position. This position is a collective project, and while we might pursue work according to a particular vision, it is the space between these visions where dialogue exists. Exchange is the action of this in-between, and the very matrix where meaning is made. • The exchange is a mirror to see oneself objectively. That



Material Metamorphosis

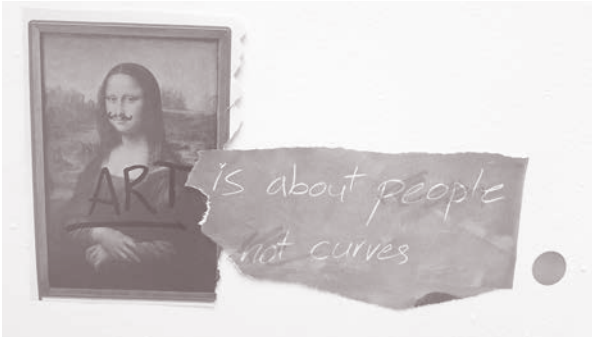
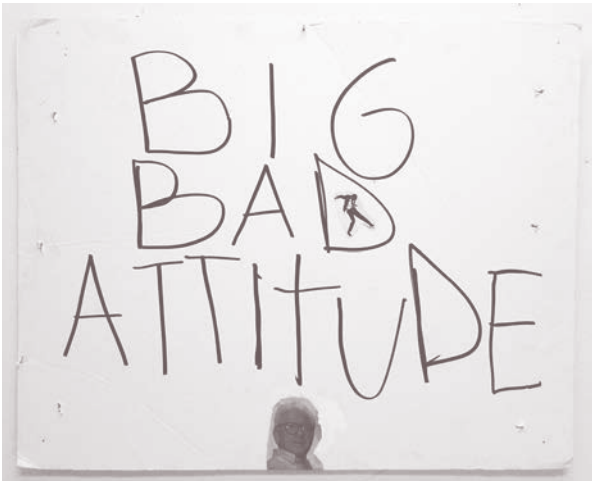


David Aaron Cohen is a Toronto-based artist, originally from Oshawa, Ontario. He attended OCAD U, majoring in Drawing and Painting while simultaneously focusing on sculpture, installation, sound, and video work.

David’s current practice has been focused on interactive and collaborative projects, exploring the creative process and the effects of setting, mentality, and materials within improvised art-making.

Gangway

David Aaron Cohen



Student Press Hi David, what are your thoughts on collaboration and how does it relate to the practice of *Gangway*?

David Aaron Cohen Collaboration is really important because... fuck. Sorry, I hate interviews.

I think what you told us the first time we sat down and talked was great. You were talking about the way that you approach your work, and how it came about.

Yeah I can do that, I’ll talk about collaboration. I think it’s really good because it forces pieces to have more of a focus, but also pushes you in

directions you’re not really expecting to go in. I find that working by myself is a completely different experience and I make very different things. When I work by myself everything is more up in the air, there’s more of a possibility that things can change in any way. When you’re working with someone else, it’s easier to accept when they change the project or whatever, especially when you’re working in an improvised context. There’s no turning back. I find that even with writing and writing proposals with other people, sometimes you over-analyze yourself and start thinking: “Oh, this should be changed

to make this more appropriate, in this way or that way...” You’re thinking almost too much about the audience. When I’m working with someone else, the dynamic is what the focus is more about.

Last time we talked you were telling us about Grad Ex, and how the context of the university influences your work. Maybe you can talk more specifically about collaboration within the institution?

Right around the time the grad show was happening I had originally wanted to do some sort of interactive thing. I think the day I did my final installation, I was talking to John Deal and he said, “You know, you should do something interactive for Grad Ex if you can because I’d love to see something like that in the painting section. We never have stuff like that.” So I wrote up this big proposal for my professors that had all the details of everything I wanted to do and I figured all this shit out. When I sent it to some of the professors, none of them were really able to say whether or not they would be willing to accept my idea. Ultimately they said, “We don’t really think we can have an interactive piece so you go home and come up with something new,” and that was really depressing. When I went back to my house and had brought all the stuff back feeling really defeated, we had a collage making session to kind of cleanse our palette, and you know, because I felt like I needed to deal with the Grad Ex thing falling apart in one day, we stole some of the posters and that’s when I made *Sad Ex* (p 8) –because to me that was really about how everyone was feeling,

everybody was frustrated. Grad Ex is a really frustrating show to be a part of and deal with, and I was kind of glad after all because that piece ended up resonating with a lot of people's experience of Grad Ex, the people who were actually in it. There was a series of pieces that had this real sense of frustration to them, and a couple of them didn't even make it in because I didn't have the balls to put them up. I thought someone might take them down.

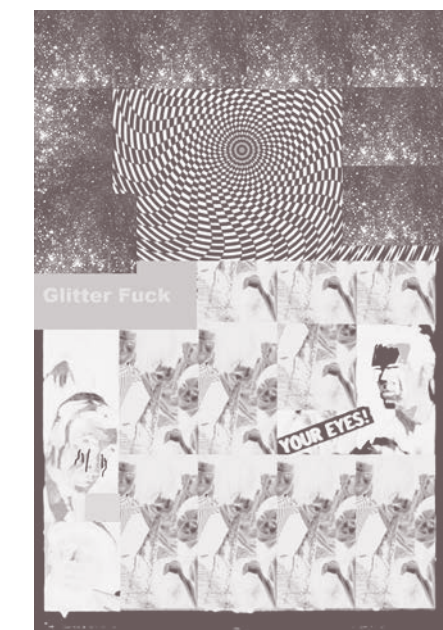
On the night of the opening, when I was walking in the main building and was still pissed off, I was telling a friend in Integrated Media about it and she said, "There's a single room in 60 McCaul that no one is using, it's a really big room, no one used it because the walls and carpet are all fucked up and disgusting." So the next day I brought in all my collage stuff and just laid it out and left an open collage room. You could just go in, and by the end of the week I think there were 80 collages in the room. So it ended up being good overall because I got to do two things and actually display some new projects in an unofficial installation.

Did you put up instructions?

Yeah, I put up a big sign with instructions that said something like: "OCAD U Grad Ex 2013 Collage party—put some shit on the wall."

I'm trying to remember if we saw that, where in 60 McCaul was it?

It only got set up a good part of the way through the second day... [60 McCaul] is a weird building, a lot of people forget that it's even part of the



show. I don't think I would have been able to do something like that in the main building because they're sending so many people through. I was discussing with some of the faculty and some of them were asking me, "Are you sure this is a good context for this [interactive and collaborative work]?" And I was saying, "Are you insane?" Thousands of people come through here [OCAD U] and most of them don't actually make art. At every other show it's only artists there... I mean, weird things are going to happen.

It's surprising there aren't more interactive pieces, I guess that's the nature of the show, but it's a good opportunity.

I don't know if I really answered your question...

I think you did, and it speaks to why your work stood out to us. Should we go on to the next question? I think we can start to talk about *Gangway* now that we've framed your relationship with collaboration and collage.

Well *Gangway*, it's this art concept. It's like a style, it's a way of working or thinking, it's kind of an art philosophy. I feel strange about the fact that it has a name because I always feel in one way it's as if I'm trying to say I invented this way of making art, but I don't think it's anything that didn't exist before. I started to realize at a certain point in the year that it was one of those weird concepts that you just talk about with your close friends. We just started naming them because I thought that giving them names would solidify them in the real



world in a way. So I started to name concepts and *Gangway* was this big one that encompassed all of the other terms and ideas that were being used around the work that was happening in the studio.

I think that the biggest concept behind it all is a discourse between curation and creation as these two entities. You switch between them and they always kind of mix with each other, but still keeping a focus and awareness of the different elements. When I say it's this switch between curation and creation, a back and forth, I think of the steps leading up to work in the way that I set up the parameters within which I work. It's like I'm curating the possibilities of work. I guess a good example is when I have an art party or launch party, by choosing what the space is and

what the start materials are and what colours of tape or paint there are in the room, it's going to majorly affect what people are going to be making. If you throw in certain types of magazines or really powerful subject matter, sometimes there will be a certain type of subject matter that people will grasp onto, and it will kind of become the theme of the whole party. But within that context a lot of the artists involved work completely freely. There's no side context or theme that people are going to work on, it just kind of happens. Then afterwards it's a different process of curation, you go through and find the stuff that really emphasizes the kind of vibes that were going on at the party and the things people were talking about the most. I try to keep an awareness of those things and keep them separate,

and I feel like that's a pretty cool concept in *Gangway*, one of the most central concepts—just making work that you're able to enjoy and that resonates with you, and not letting too much get in the way of that.

So, you've told us where your application of *Gangway* originates from, but I think you also told us that *Gangway* was actually a term used for something else?

It's actually used for a lot of things. If you look at Google, there's a bunch of things named *Gangway*, including this really bad hip hop song (it's the first thing that will come up so you can check it out) but I think the actual definition is a clear path through a crowded space, like in an auditorium when they keep the aisles clear so you can walk through

is a one of the process to understand others' and own subjects. Since I am seeing myself objective when I interchanging the ideas, asking myself that why and what is the personal reaction by reflections of other ideas. Comparing and translating subjects are always happens while distilling and digesting ideas. Operating this process allows projecting the outline



them. To me that's kind of related to clearing your mind when making art. It comes back to that idea of the creation process and trying to keep that [process] really open and improvised, not worrying about all the other thoughts going on in your head. But the real reason we picked the term was, I think we were in lecture on thesis day and one of the professors just somehow kept using the term in different ways. After the lecture when we were hanging out in the studio and making work it was brought up: "I've never heard the term *Gangway* used before, it's a really weird word." I think someone made a piece that was just this black and white photo of an alleyway or something and wrote "Gangway" in black paint across it, and it just kind of stuck as the name. I loved this piece, it was ripped out of a book, it was this strange thing, so simple, this picture with one word

written across it. It was impulsive and it came out of that ridiculous conversation we were having. After that we just started calling things *Gangway*.

I think we addressed this earlier, but it's not the first time that work like this has been done. Are there other art practices that engage collage, such as Dada, that influenced *Gangway*?

I rarely make work that was inspired by a specific artist. I just kind of keep myself somewhat aware that all these things are effecting it [*Gangway*], like Dada and Surrealism and Fluxus. Fluxus is interesting because that was about creating something that wasn't a piece of artwork, but only existed to facilitate more artwork. I think that's kind of what my studio space became. I left it as this open space where I stored my finished paintings in the corner, but in the space

I tell everybody, "Anything that's in this square you can do anything you want with." There are always strange things changing. I go in every day and people will donate stuff or take things away, so it became this weird space to facilitate those strange art interactions that happen at a place like OCAD. And being in thesis studios all the time I was exposed to all these strange interactions going on between people that wouldn't happen anywhere else. I was interested in making a space for that, so my studio kind of became this installation that facilitated other art happening, in a completely open way.

So it's about the process, but then the final product is also a part of the process in that it kind of passes its message on?

Yeah, and well, Paul Butler is obvious [as a reference]... Interestingly

enough I didn't know about him until thesis year, when I was telling someone about my whole concept, that we were having art making parties my studio space, and then someone was like: "Oh yeah, you should check this guy out." A lot of people hate it when that happens, when you find someone doing something similar to you, but I really enjoy it.

Can you tell us more about his [Butler's] work?

He does a lot of work that kind of involves this movement between actually making art and curation as part of the art. He does lots of interactive things, like collage parties. One of his most famous projects is this touring studio space where anyone can basically come and make art. There would be more focused ones where a bunch of artists that he knows go

off into the woods or hang out in his room for five days straight or something. Some of the collage parties would go on for a week at a time I think—you're just locked in a warehouse and on day five you're thinking, "What do we do now?" I just love the whole concept behind that.

The next thing we were wondering about was the significance of the medium in *Gangway*, because there is a digital aspect to some of the work.

I think collage has become what I call what I do just because it kind of encompasses all mediums. Anything with a blend of mediums kind of becomes collage, and I feel like nowadays more and more people, almost everybody, are multidisciplinary artists to some extent—even people who don't "do" art. When you say collage people will instantly

think of cut out paper stuff, but to me it's kind of become more of a term that encompasses everything. The importance of that too, maybe, is the freedom it allows, because I always try to figure out what materials and mediums I can use that will allow the most freedom. I don't have money or a big studio, but my work has always been flexible.

Tell us about what's next, do you have a plan for where you're going?

I'd really like to do some more interactive work. I think being away from OCAD, one of the things I miss is that [at OCAD U] there's always artists wandering around that I can rope in, and say: "hey guys, I'm doing something fun if you want to come over here and be a part of it." Now it's a little harder to do that, I'm just making work at home. I have

of my subject as well as my self. Therefore, Exchange means to me the process of translation and comparison between subject and myself. Exchanging the idea encourages me to build own concept solidly. • Art is always a series of exchanges. I'm constantly interested in the effect of my materials, surroundings, emotions, etc. on myself, my process, and the



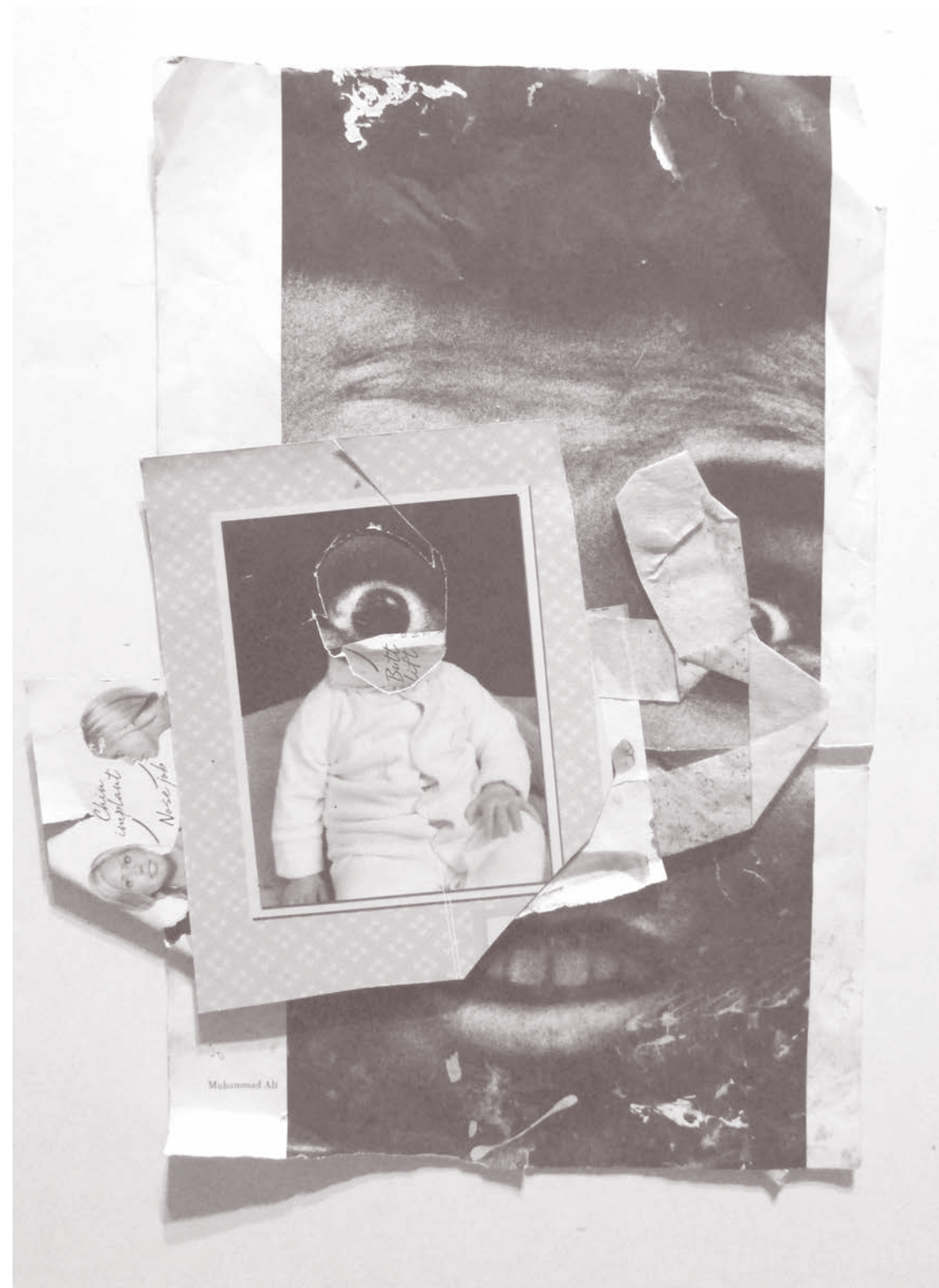
a single giant painting on my walls that's just "the painting" and it goes on forever. Anyone who comes over is allowed to do whatever they want to it, so its aesthetic is changing all the time. It's really interesting when I meet someone who hasn't worked on it before—they'll add something to it that completely changes what other people are going to do or the way I've been thinking about it. The other day someone came over and used some rope and tied a bunch of rope around it, and attached the rope to all the push pins holding up the other collages on the walls making this sort of frame for it. It's starting to go beyond just being a painting and becoming a kind of installation. It will probably go back to being a painting at some point, which is interesting for me because I can see it and photograph it every so often. It's weird because sometimes you'll get a bunch of sessions where you can see that

people are building off of the aesthetic that was previously there and will work towards a certain type of aesthetic. I've seen it go through dozens of changes where it will become a landscape thing or it will become super abstract, and then there will be a session where somebody's like, "Fuck this," and completely destroys the aesthetic in order to force it into a new place. I'm interested in seeing how many times you can do that with a piece, how far you can take it, because when you're at the seventh or eighth point, when you've got to find a resolution, that's a really weird place that most people don't usually get to. My feelings about the piece are just so strange at that point, like beyond what they are about most other things that I'm working on.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Actually yeah, that reminded me of one aspect of, like, what collage is. I think the great thing about collage is that it keeps you not only reacting to the work you're doing and that other people are doing but also the materials, because collage is almost an awareness to what those materials mean. When you're looking through magazines or even if you're on the Internet looking for an image, you can't just render it as what you want. You kind of have to take what you're given, and I think that one of the great things about collage, especially in a social setting, is seeing how ridiculous pictures start a conversation that really changes the direction you're going. Collages are often great conversation starters and then those conversations end up going way too far and ending up somewhere really weird and horrible.

results. To me, this is one of the most interesting parts of making art - and, through an awareness of these exchanges, is how I learn the most about my own ideas and modes of thinking. • Making art gives ideas physical form and allows an artist to work through them in the real world, where they can be affected by outside elements and reacted to by other



Gangway

Iris Karuna is a visual artist, arts educator, and writer, originally hailing from Hamilton, Ontario. She is a graduate of the OCAD University BFA Printmaking program, and currently teaches children's art classes at the

Avenue Road Arts School in Toronto. Her artistic practice explores the intersections between interpersonal relationships and cultural phenomena, referencing songs, stories, social media, and pseudoscience. Working

primarily with lithography, screen print, collage, and photography, Karuna also maintains an active written practice, and recently published a poetry collection titled *Aries Pisces Cusp Baby* (2013).

Narrating the Human Condition: (Missed) Connections

Iris Karuna



too

When I die,
publish my photo in the newspaper.
I want everyone I
talked with on OkCupid,
who didn't even know my name,
to remember me.

I loved them too,
for an instant.

Student Press In your work you frequently reference social media platforms such as OK Cupid and Twitter. What is the significance of these to your work?

Iris Karuna Twitter and OkCupid are part of the world we currently inhabit. While I could likely write on similar topics without referencing social media, the contemporaneity of my work depends partially on its references, and there is a certain amount of honesty that I believe would be lost without those references

You incorporate text speak and other informal languages in your work, is this also a means of conveying a contemporary context?

It's not entirely about contemporary context. I think partly that the informal language in my poetry is designed to confront readers with the role social media has come to play in contemporary interpersonal relationships. One of David Foster Wallace's characters in *Infinite Jest* suggests that a misspelled tattoo is designed

“primarily to repel,” and I do think that I am interested in making readers overcome the language I use in order to discover the message. I'll suggest also that this parallels the way a person sometimes needs to read between the lines when communicating via social media.

How do you feel about the effect digital media has, or does not have, on intimacy?

I think that social/digital media (“the Internet” in general) has shifted a lot of the ways in which intimacy is expressed and actualized. It has become increasingly acceptable to express a desire for intimacy through social media, but in my opinion, social media only facilitates actual intimacy in theory.

Social media comes with a convenient sense of distance, and it's easy to function “at a remove” when building relationships through social media. On the other hand, that distance creates a “safe” space for learning to communicate certain kinds of sensitive information, which leads me to believe it is most useful as a learning environment for IRL relationships.

Your work is highly personal and conveys that digital disconnect you mentioned. How do you hope the viewer will interact with it?

In conversation, we tend to relate to others by responding with similar stories (“Oh man, that's like when I...”). With visual art, and with writing, it's hard to create an environment where a true exchange can take place. But I think that the directness

and vulnerability of my thesis work aims to get readers/viewers to let their guard down, and to explore their own thoughts on relating and communicating, even if it may be difficult for those thoughts to make their way back to me.

Considering that vulnerability and the trust you seem to put in the viewer by disclosing such personal narratives, what is the ideal platform or space for your work?

I would like, in the future, to be able to read my work publicly in an environment that promotes discussion. I think most of my visual work functions well in a gallery environment, but it is presumptuous to expect an audience to commit to reading a book while visiting a gallery, and I have had problems with theft when displaying books in the past. I intend also, with my next book (out March 2014!), to do some online readings, perhaps through Spreecast or a similar forum. This would likely help to promote discussion and exchange as well.

Those methods of digital communication would be fitting considering the themes we've discussed in your work.

I'm certainly hoping we're both right about that!

Is the content of your upcoming book similar to your thesis work?

The content of my upcoming book is less technologically oriented, at this point, but is definitely equally concerned with relationships.

good at

I have a line on my OkCupid profile about nihilism. It says that I am 'good at' using my nihilistic tendencies for your benefit. It says that I am an 'optimistic nihilist' and fills my inbox with endless questions disputing 'how on earth' I am expecting to benefit from so much cynicism. life is inherently meaningless but nihilism is not only a bi-product of existential crisis: it lets these vulnerabilities bleed out without consequence and transfuses my discovery of meaninglessness into something with purpose. nihilism is paradoxical: it implies that in developing my cynicism I will discover how to believe ~*

people. Few artists fully understand their ideas before they start making something. By making an idea or concept physical, it takes on its own presence beyond you. Its no longer something that's only a part of your consciousness. The process becomes a constant exchange between you and that idea/object/word/sketch/etc. Sometimes you struggle with it and



subterfuge

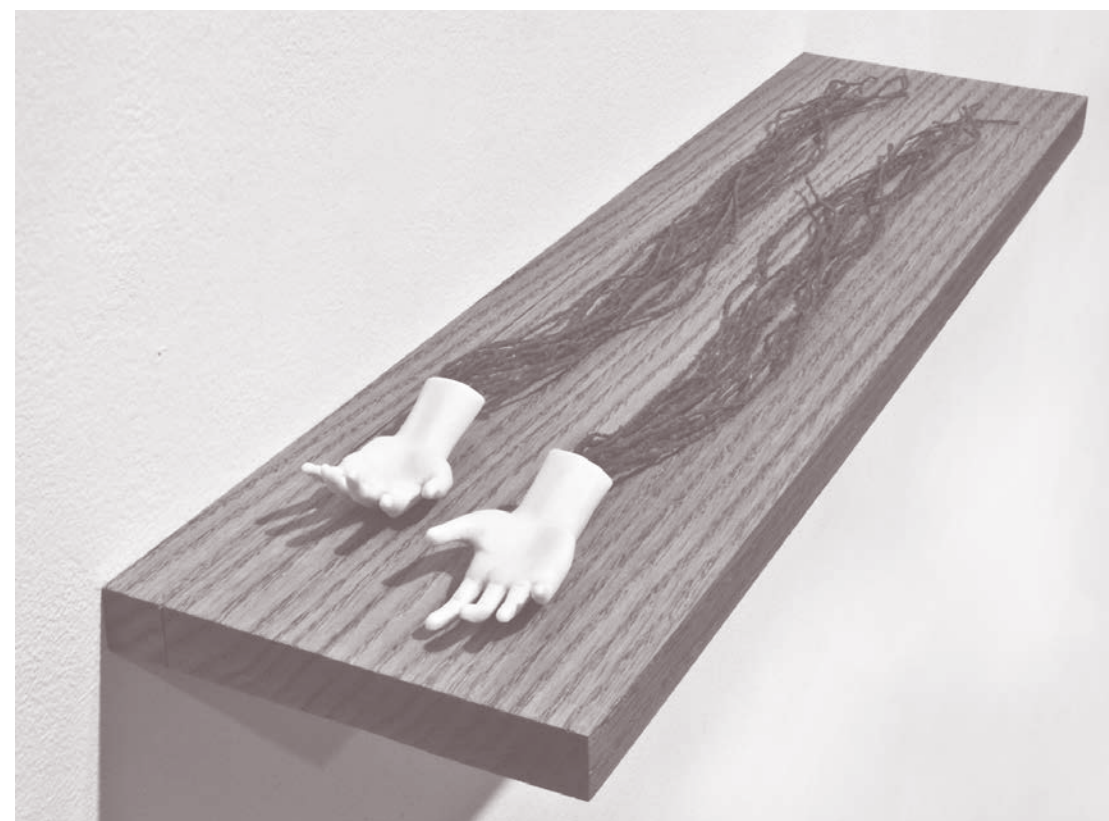
Somebody wrote something on the internet: same old, same old, same old. This one said: 'you become mysterious on purpose then you stay that way then you become sad and empty by mistake.' It struck a chord or something. Maybe. I never wanted to keep to myself. But I am afraid, maybe - 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks.' I am not old yet. I am not a dog (I don't think). But these patterns repeat, maybe - these cycles don't miss a beat. I learned the definition of 'subterfuge' today. I don't want this word in my vocabulary. I don't want this thought in my mind. I already do enough thinking for all of us, I don't need a second brain in my guts telling me I might be wrong in some other way. I never wanted to keep to myself. but I am afraid, maybe, and I am trying, maybe, to share my thoughts with you.

culp

Oh Pisces, temper me. Make me soft and sweet and unselfish - oh make me fish-ish - I am too fiery. Remind me of sympathy. I can burn my own kindness with my own flame so dilute me with your wavering. Oh Pisces, temper me. I am sunlight magnified but make me burn slow like incense: languidly.

Stephanie Flowers is from Newmarket, Ontario. She received her BFA from OCAD University in Sculpture and Installation, with a minor in Material Art and Design. Flowers works primarily in porcelain and she is inspired by the scientific body. She seeks to translate the body's

poetic and grotesque qualities into new forms that are uncanny and yet somehow familiar. Recent awards include the Ian Carr-Harris Science in Culture Award and the Emanuel Hahn Award. She currently lives and works in Toronto.



Borders / Bodies

Stephanie Flowers

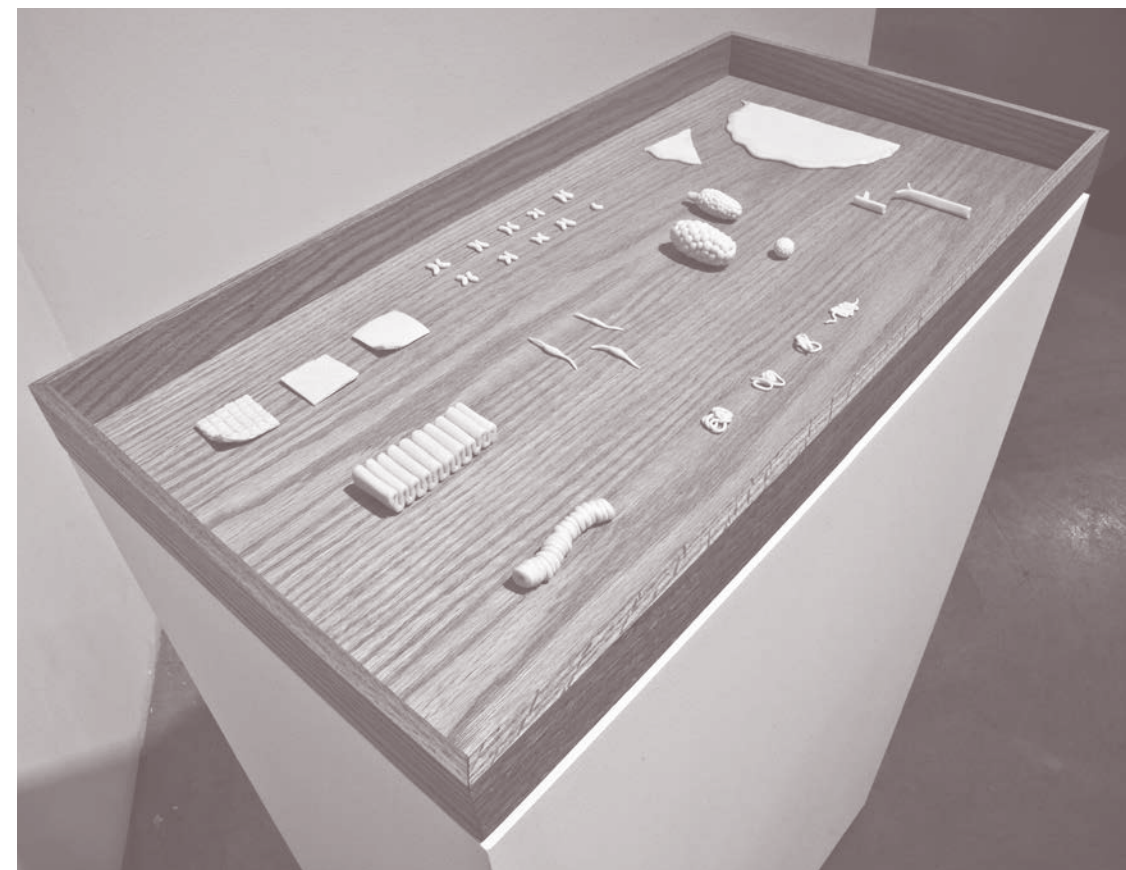
My work stems from my relationship to the human body, which I find to be simultaneously fascinating and terrifying. I engage with this tension by approaching the uncomfortable qualities of the body's terrain to create new narratives. As a means of coping with the complex realities of our internal landscapes; my work reinterprets the cells, atoms, and organs that make up our bodies into more minimalistic, paired down forms. I reference modes of scientific presentation to question the typical head-to-toe vertical approach to medical knowledge, which displays the body in approachable compartments.

Our idea that bodies are seamlessly contained vessels is threatened when confronted with the abject nature of the dissected body. Susan Stewart states in her book *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* that "distance creates physical perfection and idealization" and that "the body is always depicted towards exaggeration."¹ In my work, I address shifts in scale to explore the notion that the more closely one examines the body, the more foreign and distant it becomes. Challenging accurate proportions, I exaggerate the tension between the distance and scale of the

1. Susan Stewart. *On Longing: Narrative of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1993.



sometimes you're inspired by things you find in it or learn from it. Art, itself, is a forum for exchange of ideas. Artists often make work that comes from a desire for extension/rejection of another work or concept. When working collaboratively there's always sharing of skills, techniques, ideas, opinions, and influences between people, which allows a project to move



form in question, as scientific devices so often do. It is here that we find a grey area where the mechanisms originally invented to promote understanding (X-rays, MEG, fMRIs, model specimens, diagrams etc.) actually distance us from our bodies, because the images they provide are so different than the way we see ourselves. Perhaps we desire this detachment so that reality becomes more accessible, and we can ignore what is beyond our control or perceptions. Distance removes context and beauty replaces horror.

We are taught to think about our bodies objectively and yet our experience of them is entirely subjective. As Sian Ede states in *Art and Science*, “we so sensuously inhabit our own bodies that it is hard to see them as systems of knowledge even in the purified area of the laboratory or operating table.”² My project explores the sensate body through various tactile mediums and in doing so returns to an intimacy and reinterpretation of the bodies on display.

2. Sian Ede. *Art and Science*. New York: I.B.Tauris & Co, 2005.

Jenna Crook is a Toronto-based artist whose work explores the relationship between digital culture and the identity of painting. The resulting images combine a physical and digital aesthetic,

using paint as a gateway to translate virtual experiences into physical realities. She graduated from OCAD University's Drawing and Painting program in 2013.

Top Eight

Jenna Crook



As our existence becomes increasingly defined by digital culture, the lines between physical and virtual reality become progressively blurred. Virtual experiences present a whole new set of possibilities for new artistic languages and aesthetics. In a recent article titled 'The Digital Divide,' Claire Bishop asks, "How many [artists] really confront the question of what it means to think, see, and filter affect through the digital? How many *thematize* this, or reflect deeply on how we experience, and are altered by, the digitization of our existence?"¹

I strive to celebrate the world of digital media through painting, a medium that could be viewed as the antithesis of digital culture. By combining digital influences and processes with a traditional medium and physical gesture, my work operates as a gateway, connecting the opposing aesthetics.

Marius Watz says that digital art "is juxtaposition."² That is, the perpetual curation of unrelated and appropriated imagery, where one thing is put next to another thing to create a new understanding. Think of Tumblr, for example, where the same images are reposted hundreds of times across different blogs. The image itself does not change, but its context does. Every blog it appears on, every glitch it encounters, and every varying monitor and device it's viewed on changes its context. The user doesn't always consider the current image being reposted in relation to the last image they reposted, but the viewer will see them together (perhaps with a pop-up for single girls in their area—or perhaps not). Even if the curation of images is intentional, the conditions in which they are viewed are varying and unpredictable. In the digital sphere, images are being recontextualized on an individual basis, transformed by the way they are presented in seemingly random and varying curation with other visuals. Small image sizes, blurring, cropping, screen restrictions, file corruption, and slow loading times are all *conditions* of presentation in the virtual world, which work to define a digital aesthetic.

In *Romancing the Anti-Body*, Lynn Hershman Leeson writes about the constructed nature of identity within cyberspace. She references Howard Rheingold,

1. Claire Bishop, 'Digital Divide', *ArtForum*. artforum.com

2. Marius Watz, 'In Response To Bruce Sterling's Essay On The New Aesthetic: The Problem With Perpetual Newness', *The Creators Project*. thecreatorsproject.vice.com.



in directions it never could without that exchange. • Working as an educator, exchange is quite literally my livelihood. While technical information travels primarily from teacher to student, I have found that ongoing learning is virtually impossible without feedback from the students. In my experience – both as a student and as a teacher – it is only through a

who identified our “need to use depersonalized modes of communication in order to get personal and connect with one another.”³ Leeson relates Rheingold’s statement of depersonalized communication to the creation of a personal mask in cyberspace. Through usernames, profiles, and profile pictures, online media requires users to create a cyber-identity. Leeson argues that these online identities are masks that we create to conceal the body and liberate the voice, often resulting in an invented virtual self.⁴ These personas both escape and extend the boundaries of an individual’s identity, often revealing what they perceive to be absent in their *physical* self. Identity is inherently transient, and often partially performative; however, online, this performance of the self is taken to new heights. On the Internet, a person’s projected identity can be completely redefined—for better or worse—in a matter of seconds. In this possibility, we suddenly feel liberated to *be* ourselves. In virtual space, we can escape reality and live vicariously through our idealized digital selves.

The paintings in this series use the aesthetics of digital culture to explore the malleable profile (and self) as a subject. Each painting begins with the same image, which is then manipulated in different ways to form new painting identities. The original image is an appropriated digital file of someone many consider to be their first virtual friend: Myspace Tom. In the digital world, Tom is known as the co-founder and welcoming face of Myspace. Humanizing the website with his familiar smile, Tom was automatically your first friend after joining the website.

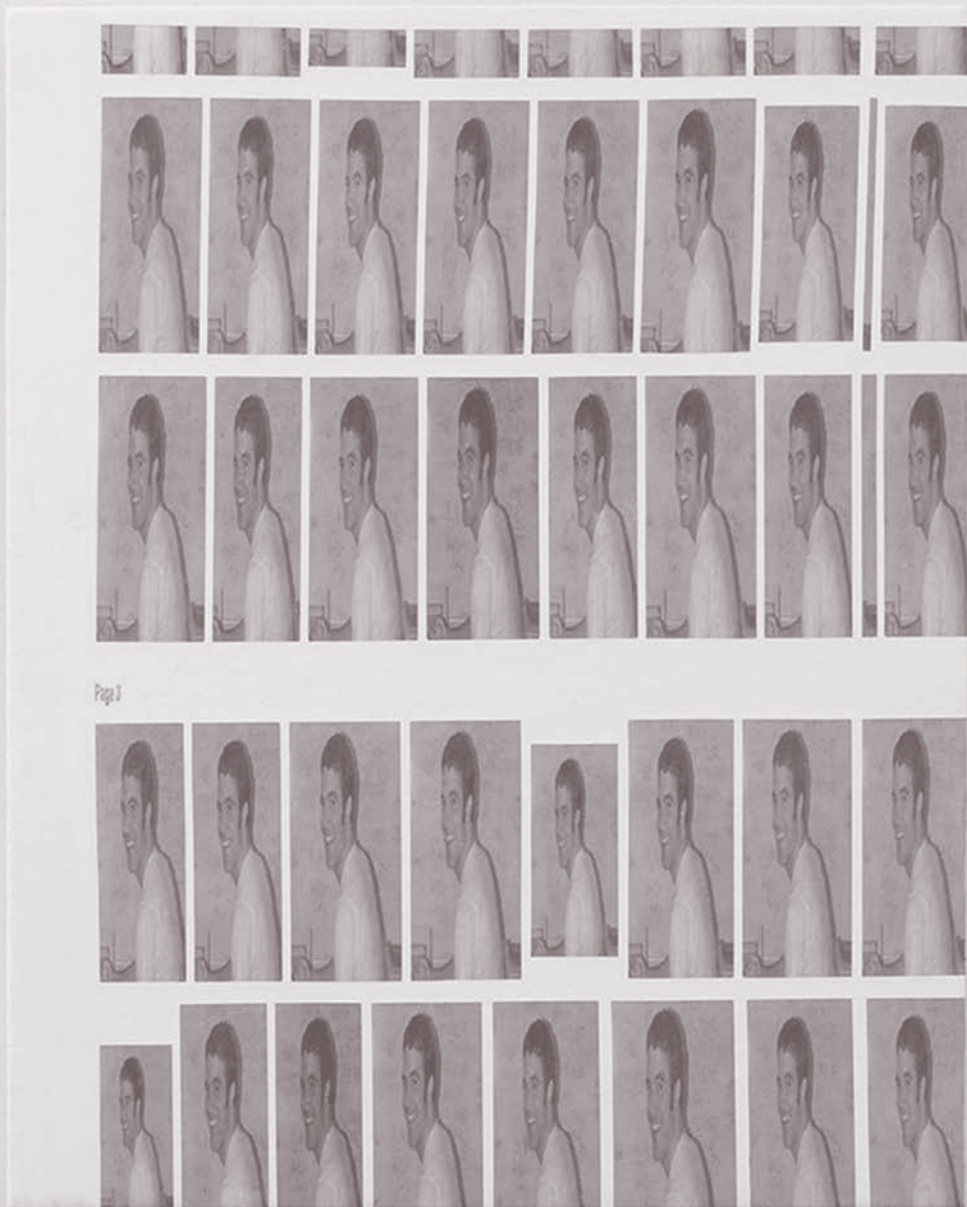
His profile picture never changed—and presumably, neither did he. I use the image of Myspace Tom in my work as a symbol of both fixed and transient identity. Because even though Tom’s virtual identity remained fixed and unchanging, he is actually a real human being whose identity has undoubtedly shifted.

My work begins to take on illusionistic qualities in response to the virtual profile’s performative nature. Paint starts to look printed, and digital prints start to look like paint. Starting with the same image for each painting enables my work to explore the limits, as well as the varying possibilities presented by virtual identity. Manipulating the image with a combination of Photoshop and oil paint, Tom becomes the performance platform for both digital and physical art practice.

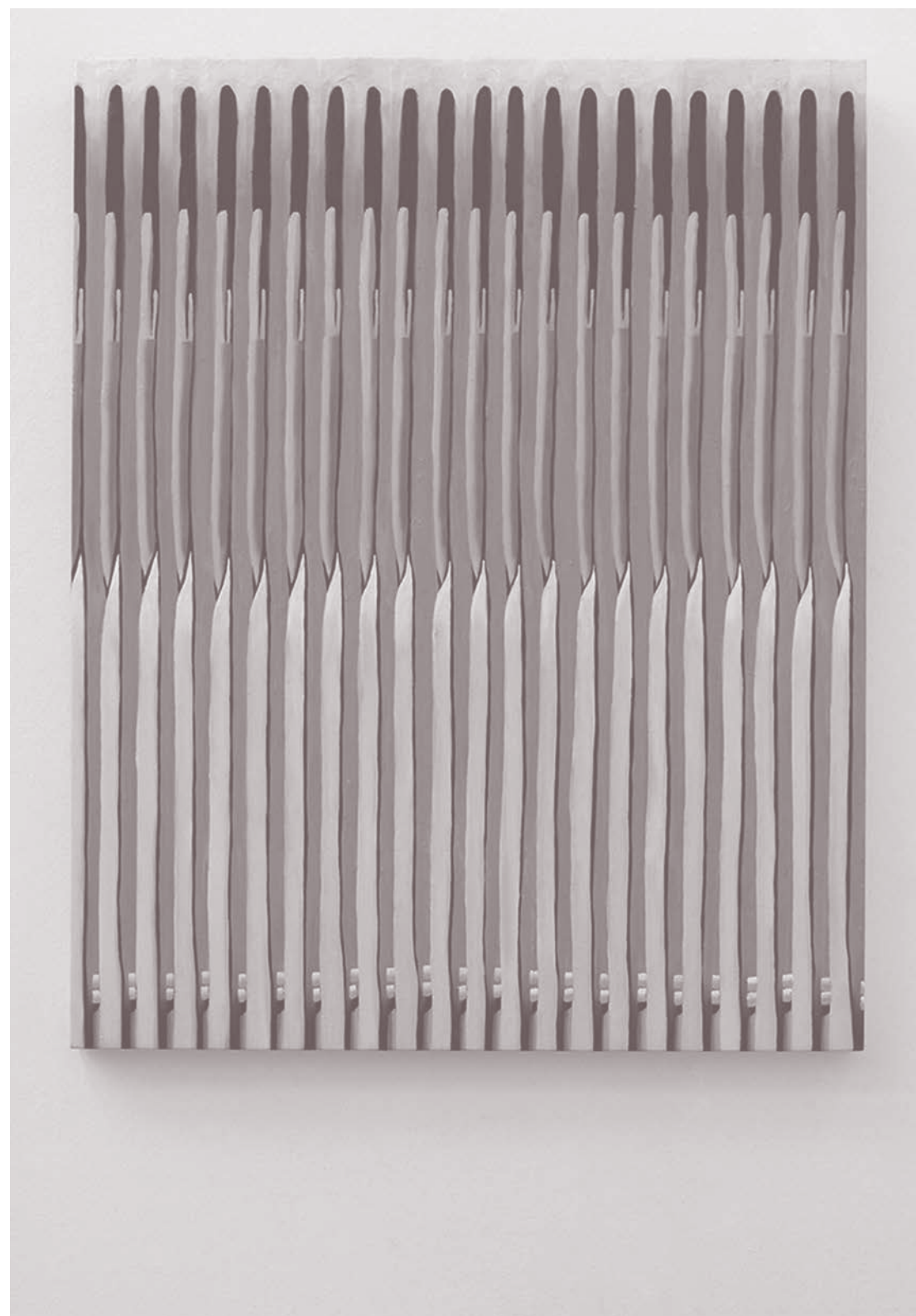
As distinctions between physical and virtual become less clear, a more complex relationship between the two realities starts to develop. This series reflects on this complex relationship, as each painting slowly becomes the updated physical profile of its digital self.

3. Lynn Herschman Leeson, “Romancing the Anti-Body: Lust and Longing in (Cyber)space,” *Critical Digital Studies*, eds. Arthur Kroker and Marilouise Kroker. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008. 72.

4. Leeson, 83.

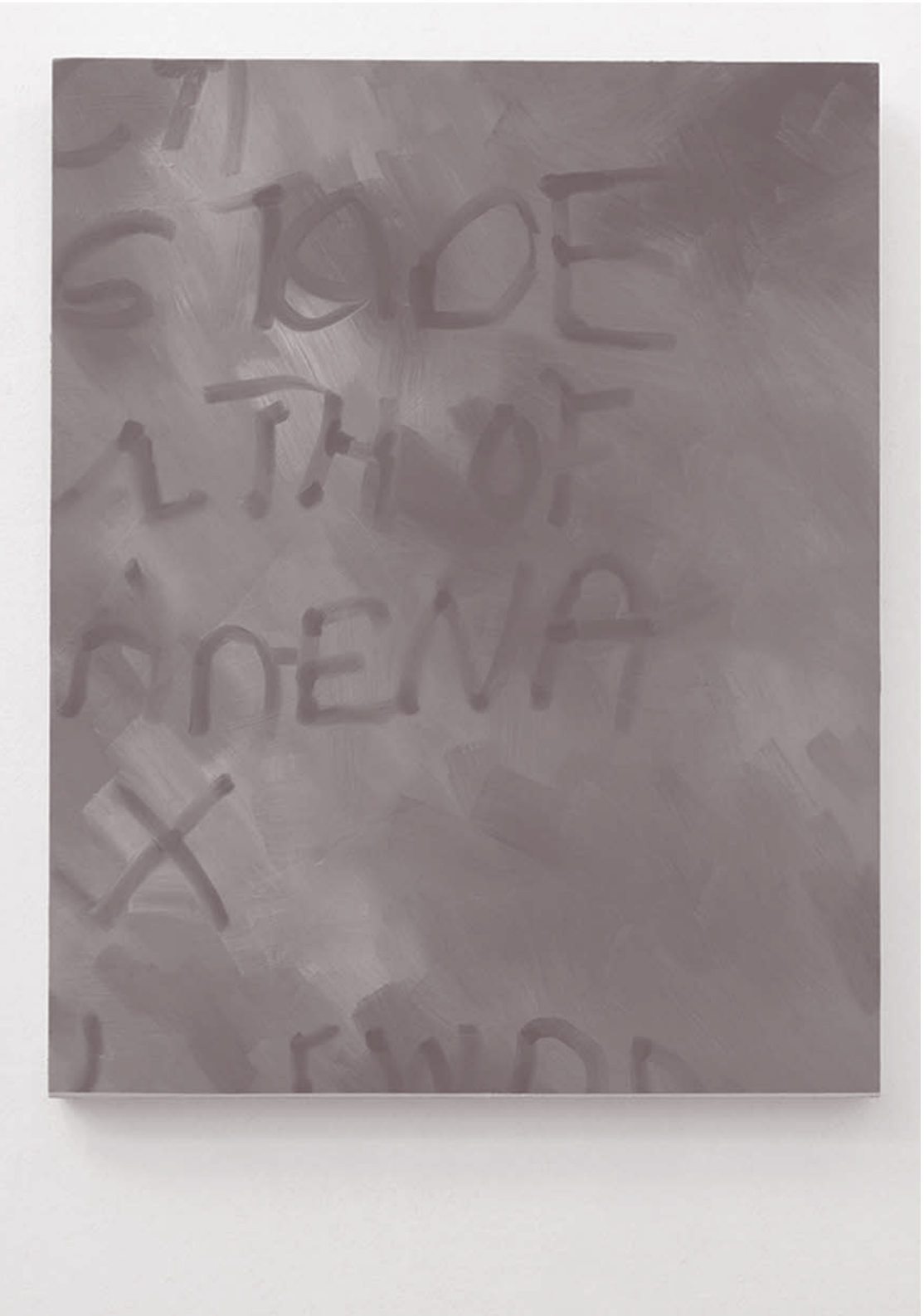


process of exchange that a student will desire to learn new information. And as a teacher, the way in which my students engage with the material ultimately determines the way in which it is taught. Communication is also a key aspect of my artistic practice. Both in writing and in visual media, my work actively classifies vulnerability as an acceptable human





trait. Ideally, my pieces serve as reminders, directing viewers toward a deeper level of (self) awareness. And ideally, my students spend their time in the classroom learning both 'hard' technical skills, such as distinguishing between relief and intaglio printing, and 'soft' interpersonal skills, such as working respectfully in a shared environment. • Exchange is



Mike Goldby is based in Toronto where he maintains a multidisciplinary artistic practice, focused on themes of self-identification and branding, trends, and strategies for representation within

social networks. He recently exhibited his first solo show at Tomorrow Gallery in Toronto. He graduated from OCAD University in 2013 and was the medal winner for Integrated Media.

Premier Life

Mike Goldby



In *Premier Life* I examine conditions and strategies for representation and personal branding in network structures. I have chosen to focus on the *connected subject*, that is, someone who is fully plugged into social networks and has made them a ubiquitous part of their everyday life: someone who constructs, maintains and disseminates a consistent web presence. *Premier Life* examines the image-making strategies that these subjects co-opt from the corporate realm. This co-option produces a condition of *prosumption*, which is the act of consuming and producing content simultaneously. The experience of interacting with others on an app like Instragram (a mobile photo sharing app) becomes a stand-in for IRL (in-real-life) interaction and ultimately a new experience on its own. Paradoxical conditions of irony and sincerity, excitement and banality, and admiration and self-loathing are all folded into this experience that ultimately amounts to the familiar quest of becoming, or more specifically, *always becoming*. The connected subject is always on the verge, moving with

the tides, and never reaching a complete stasis of idealized self-representation. The connected subject is always becoming, but never becomes.

For *Premier Life*, I examine the connected subject through the use of photography, sculptural installation and video. The photographs feature two models clad in trendy apparel, shot in a studio environment. The professional photo equipment (tripods, microphones, etc.) are evident in the frame. The blur on the vertical sides of the images are superimposed in post-production, intentionally referencing Instagram's filter feature. Always shot from behind the model, the images have a distinct behind-the-scenes quality. Accompanying the photographic work are three sculptural installations, *Vika Artur (for Jess)*, *Linjal (for Max)*, and *Vittsjö*. These works are made from mass produced Ikea furniture. Ikea's familiar visual style is a marker for the global spread of social networks. The furniture is emblazoned with lines of text that refer to the photos, and littered with spray-painted water bottles and lighters. The short sentences refer to Twitter's 140 character limit and offer up possible narratives for the images, while the spray painted consumer goods are a comment on the similarities between the personal and corporate brands. Finally, *Flashbulb Study (Max)* is a video captured during the photo shoot of one of the models in front a flashbulb. The bulb, which activates when a picture is taken, slowly illuminates the subject, as the video has been slowed to a crawl. The flash is an emblem of the connected subject's condition in relation to self-representation.



"A body" is a living breathing image that thinks while exposing itself to others." — from Reena Spaulings (2004) by Bernadette Corporation • I imagine myself going through art school. In the classroom, we share ideas, work, feedback and inspirations with our peers. After graduating, we go out into the world and share our work with viewers through galleries.

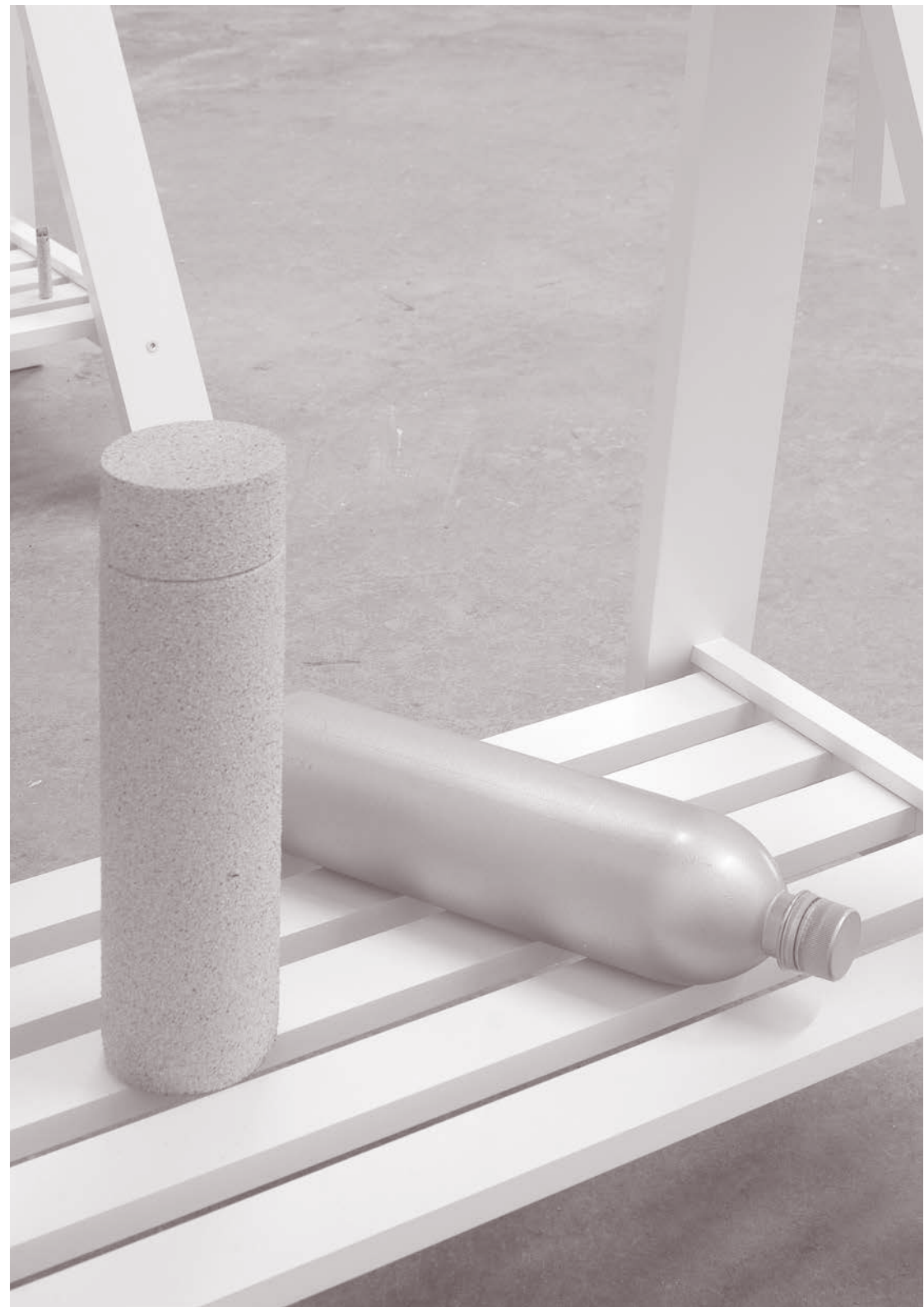






Mike Goldby

publications, fairs and events. There is a web of connections made and paths created that we become a part of. Exchange happens between artists, curators, dealers, collectors, critics, and viewers. • To me, exchange is dialogue and/or a conversation between and among. It is giving and sharing. It is collaboration. It is social media. It is not having to start



Premier Life

Ibrahim Abusitta is from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He immigrated to Canada when he was sixteen. Abusitta recently graduated from OCAD University in Photography. His current practice explores themes of cultural identity and human interaction through still and moving images.

AI Kanady

Ibrahim Abusitta



What does it mean to be an Arab? What does it mean to be Canadian? Being an artist that identifies as both Arab and Canadian, I want my work to speak to the idea of transcultural identity. I have experienced life in both the Eastern and Western worlds as I was born and raised in Saudi Arabia to Palestinian parents before moving to Canada during my teen years. I always thought of myself as a Westerner living in an Eastern land before moving to Canada; but I've continued to feel like an outsider since moving here. I have to consider that post-9/11, my demographic has been unfairly viewed as potentially dangerous. Of course, we all interpret simple signifiers to assign individuals identities. We tend to look at skin colour, clothing,

and behavior to culturally categorize others. The trouble with this stereotype-dependent process is that individuals defy such categorization. With the use of still and moving images I have created a visual narrative that takes the viewers in my shoes as an Arab-Canadian.

A male Arab living in the Middle East typically wears a *thobe*, an ankle-length garment, and a *shemagh*, a traditional headdress that is also known as a *keffiyeh*. Canadians, on the other hand, love to wear denim. The term "Canadian tuxedo," for example, describes when one wears denim from head to toe (pants, shirt, jacket, etc). I made a hybrid cultural costume by merging Arab and Canadian clothing traditions together. That is, I used old pairs of jeans to make a thobe and shemagh. I spent over twenty hours hand-stitching light, medium, and dark denim patches to make a denim-thobe.

It was winter in Canada when I began to document myself in the landscape wearing the denim-thobe. To animate the photos, I performed an action that read as stereotypically Canadian, like chopping wood, ice skating, and building a snowman.

After creating the images of myself in the romantic, Canadian landscape, I took my camera to the city streets. *The Great White* (p 86) was taken on a busy street in Toronto's financial district. I told my assistant to "Keep shooting!" In the resulting image, a car has come between me and the camera, almost taking over the entire frame; and its front windows perfectly frame me. A waving Canadian flag is reflected in the car's back windows. The idea of being at the right place at the



everything from the scratch, the spark that comes from juxtaposing existing material to create new meanings. In other words, it is looking at things from different angles. Exchange in my practice manifests itself where I explore the similarities and differences among cultures. In today's world, cultural exchange and data transition are a part of everyday life. We



right time is present in this image, thanks to the series of happy accidents that come together in the frame. This is meaningful because it parallels how I feel about where I am, geographically. I'm proud to be who I am, to have lived in the Middle East, and I embrace my culture; however, I am happy to be here now, in Canada.

Edward Said's *Orientalism* has really helped me understand the ways in which we see and label one another. The issue at hand in Said's text is the depiction of the East by the West.¹ Westerners with little knowledge or first hand experience of the East or Easterners need to be educated, informed. We have progressed as a society

since Said wrote *Orientalism*; but we haven't completely evolved beyond the dividing notion of "the Other" that he identifies.

Iraqi-American artist Wafaa Bilal is a major influence for me. *Domestic Tension*, for example, was a month-long performance for which the artist lived in a room monitored by a webcam. The webcam was attached to a paintball gun that could be fired by a web-user at any time. This project comments on the use of war drones during the Iraqi/Gulf War. After living through a simulation of warlike conditions, Bilal is able to better empathize with his countrymen living in a real life war-zone. This work is both personal and political,

1. Edward W. Said. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage, 1979.



meet people, communicate and exchange messages on regular basis. Similarly, according to Nicolas Bourriaud, art today gets shaped from a global dialogue. One idea gets connected to another idea, which then connects with many other ideas in the larger network of collaborative thought. I am curious to discover where and how this dialogue takes place, where



which is how I want my work to read. Even though I am reflecting my personal journey and private feelings about cultural identity, I cannot deny that this subject is bigger than me. I hope that my work will open new ways of thinking.

Jin-me Yoon is another artist that I looked closely at during the production of my thesis. *Souvenirs of the Self* is a series of six postcards that show Yoon in a Canadian landscape. Yoon is a Canadian citizen, born in Korea. Andrea Kunard wrote, “Yoon’s awkward stance indicates that certain places are connected with specific types of histories and identities, while others are marginalized or ignored.”² We are all

“Others” trying to be accepted without losing our “Otherness.” That is, we’re trying to embrace our difference and have it accepted as a norm.

My photographs are essentially documentation. Walking in public in my neo-traditional clothing, I assume the role of a man who is proudly displaying and announcing his Arab-Canadian heritage. Some may see this work as a fashion statement, which may be relevant if we consider issues of appropriation. Also related is the increasing use of the kaffiyah as a trendy fashionable scarf, which I have mixed feelings about. It’s nice to see so many people wearing it because it can be

2. Andrea Kunard. ‘Souvenirs of the self.’ *BackFlash Magazine*. backflash.ca. 16 September 2011.



links are made, and where data gets lost through communications. 1 Bourriaud, Nicolas. "Altermodern," *Tate Triennial*, 2009, p.2 • I was recently in an argument with my two housemates over the use of our fridge space, and the sharing of food. Our fridge real estate is limited, and cooking dinner sometimes requires a Jenga-esque approach to finding the right



read as a symbol of support or solidarity; however, I can also see it as appropriation. That is, the use of an Arab cultural symbol without an awareness or understanding of its history. In the West, I've seen many cultures adopted by the fashion industry. Aboriginal, Jamaican, Indian, and Chinese cultures have all been appropriated.

I support cultural integration, rather than assimilation. Awareness about other cultures and traditions is positive. The only thing we all have in common is our humanity. It is a cliché to say it, but we are all unique individuals; and our shared human experience is deeper and more meaningful than where we were born,

raised and lived, or our gender, sexuality, religious views, political views, etc. This project is the visual manifestation of the artists thoughts on his transcultural identity.

Special thanks: Barbara Astman, April Hickox, Nicholas Pye, Jessica Maltias, Alexandra Hickox, Solmas Baibordi, and Russell Fenton.

Sona Safaei-Sooreh is a Toronto-based interdisciplinary artist from Iran. She has a degree in Painting from Azad University in Tehran, and a degree in Sculpture and Installation from OCAD University. She has shown her work internationally, including Kunstraum Kreuzberg/Bethanien, Berlin; Cité internationale des Arts, Paris; De Bond, Brugge; DNA Projects,

Sydney; Thomas Erben Gallery, New York; Iranian Pulse at SESC Vila Mariana, Sao Paulo; and Parkingallery, Tehran. Locally, her work has been shown at Harbourfront Centre and XPACE Cultural Centre. Her work explores notions of self and otherness, language; cross-cultural communication and the institutionalization of art.

Assign- ments

Sona Safaei-Sooreh



My thesis work, *Assignments*, includes a number of projects, each considered as parts of a whole. The word “whole” is not to be interpreted as an absolute; but rather something that can change, refresh and expand. Parts and fragments are “symptom[s] of some absent totality,” or what Friedrich Schlegel calls a “lost whole.”¹ I argue that not only is whole not an absolute whole, but also it is not the lost one; rather it performs as an incomplete whole. The whole I am referring to never existed to begin with, so it cannot be lost. There is always a sense of longing for completion. I chose to write my thesis in an annotated-bibliography format in order to avoid making immovable conclusions and statements. I intended for

1. Nicolas Brown. 'Aesthetics.' The Johns Hopkins University Press: 2005. 4.

all components and materials to unravel without hierarchical orders and possibly get disturbed at any moment.

I am interested in Boris Groys' "paradox of urgency," which says that being aware of our mortality creates an anxiety that impels us to create, but also discourages us from looking to the future and making long term goals.² This, in part, explains my open-ended approach to my thesis project. I feel that I constantly create works, and when I talk about them, ideas branch out and link to other ideas. In this sense, I feel that I am caught in the present, where beginnings and ends start to blur.

In *Assignments*, academic conventions and presupposed ways of doing things—like writing an artist statement and attending openings—operate as source material. Using incongruity and parody, I poke at existing structures and tropes in the art world to bring attention to how hierarchical power structures are reinforced by the contemporary art world. Additionally, I beg the question: What are the effects of creating a common knowledge in globalization/homogenization of the culture?



Artist's Statement consists of a text piece and a video. The text features juxtaposing sentences taken from the exhibition catalogues and press releases of four major exhibitions and biennials: Tate Modern Triennial 2009, London; The Fifth Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow; São Paulo Biennial 2012, São Paulo; and ROUNDTABLE: The 9th Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju. In the video, I read these sentences in the manner of a lecturer. The viewer hears a voice that announces a sentence and then sees my reaction to this voice, which is repeating the exact same thing.

ingredient, as we have multiples of everything. Though there is an elaborate sharing system in place (most condiments are communal, but the specialty mustards are to be shared only in extreme flavour emergencies), food often goes unused and has to be thrown out. Refrigerator politics have shattered friendships and marriages — this messy subject is far too

2. Boris Groys. 'Under the Gaze of Theory.' *e-flux journal*, #35. 7.

Bibliography is meant to look like a press backdrop; however, I've replaced the corporate sponsor logos with the names of art theorists who have inspired me. The backdrop is meant to celebrate these influential artists and theorists. The names substantiate my project and situate the work within the art theory discourse promoted by academic environments. Studying Sculpture/Installation at OCAD University, I was required to become familiar with the contemporary canon and was asked to position my work within the art world: "Students should [...] practice examining contemporary artists' work and/or writings, or something equivalent in relevance, as a case study by which to understand how visual languages work."³ Last summer, I traveled to Iran and noticed artist peers there refer to the same thinkers that I was reading in Canada. One therefore sees circulation and repetition of certain texts and ideas internationally. *Bibliography* intends to draw attention to the globalization and homogenization in the contemporary canon.

complex to analyze here – and it has me thinking about my community of emerging artists and makers, and our relationship with collaboration and sharing in the creative sector. How do we effectively share resources to get over the creative, technical or financial limitations that many of us struggle with? Universities and institutions should promote an active

Gilles Deleuze
& Félix Guattari

Roland
Barthes

Nicolas Bourriaud

andrea
fraser

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

John Guillory

Michael Asher

Pierre
Bourdieu

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**andrea
fraser**

JEAN BAUDRILLARD

John Guillory

Michael Asher

Pierre
Bourdieu

Arts Associate saw four hired performers act as retail salespeople in an empty white cube space. Visitors to the space were approached by the performers or “Sales Associates” and made to feel as if they were in a retail store. The Sales Associates were selling the idea of the artwork to the viewers. Each performer started their interactions with greeting sentences, for example: “Hello, welcome. Has anybody helped you today?” They continue to explain the concept of the work to each participant.

Ongoing/Archival Artist Statement is a video recording of the changes I’ve made to my own artist statement over seven months. Viewers see six different videos play simultaneously, and each video shows me reading a different iteration of my artist statement.

and pragmatic model of collaboration, one where artists exchange tools, materials, and most importantly, each other's skills. Collaborative production creates strong creative communities with a sense of (healthy) rivalry that pushes artists to make stronger work while cross-promoting each other. The resources are available and, like the soon-to-be-expired eggs

Vuk Dragojevic is a Serbian-born, interdisciplinary artist currently living and working in Toronto. He holds a BFA from OCAD University. His recent work deals with movement and metamorphosis. He is particularly interested in how familiar

objects move in unexpected ways. Dragojevic's photography, animations, and installations have been shown in exhibitions and festivals in Canada, Italy, and the United Kingdom.

All That Is Solid

Vuk Dragojevic



Liquid Stone

From the buildings we live in to the streets, highways, and bridges we walk on, concrete makes up the armature of urban society. According to the National Building Museum in Washington, an estimated five billion cubic yards of concrete is produced per year around the world, making it the second most widely used substance on the planet after water.¹ It is the ubiquitous man-made material that serves as the foundation of the urban landscape.

When we call an idea concrete, we are referring to its infallibility, its solidity. Concrete is synonymous with stability and strength, but it begins as a flowing, pliable

substance. On a material level, I am drawn to concrete's physical properties: its texture, color, and the ways in which it breaks apart. Like most materials, it is subject to environmental stresses and degeneration. In material science, "creep" describes the slow deformation of a solid material over time due to the influence of physical stress.² "Concrete creep" is sometimes beneficial, as it relieves the tensile stresses that can lead to cracking. I am interested in the ways in which seemingly solid things become malleable or unstable, and in using these material properties as symbols for broader, conceptual signs of degeneration and collapse.

1. "Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete." *National Building Museum*. nationalbuildingmuseum.net.

2. "Concrete Technology." *Portland Cement Association*. cement.org.



Concrete's strength and versatility give it the capacity to be molded and shaped into complex, utilitarian building blocks. Examples include hydro-engineering products such as artificial reefs and pre-fabricated breakwater blocks—large, interlocking forms intended for use on coastlines to offset the force of strong waves. They look like relics of ancient, oversized board games or puzzles. The wide range of their playful shapes is evidence of concrete's protean nature.

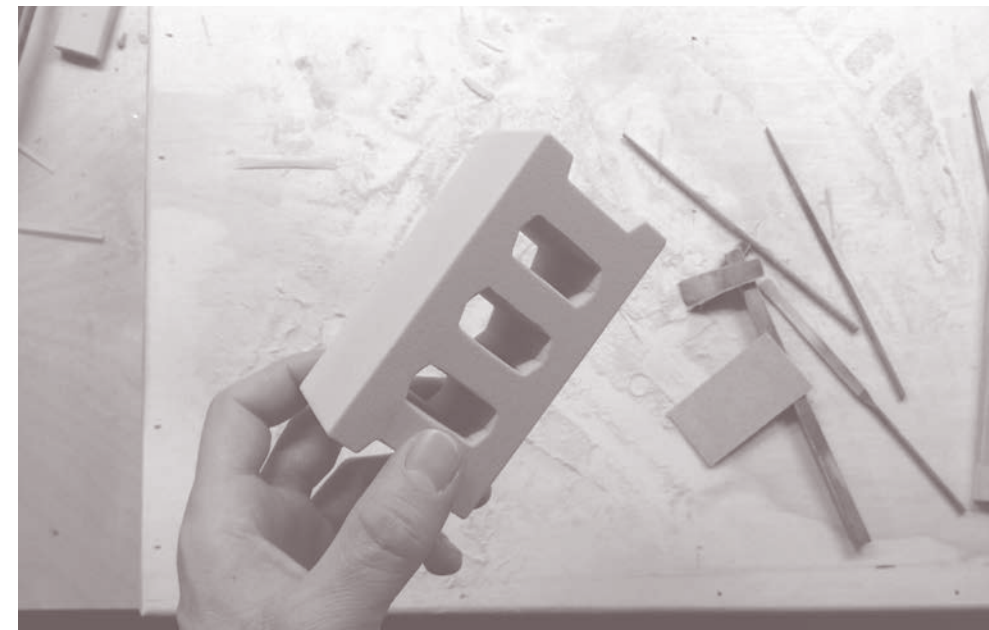
Béton Brut

Brutalism is a Modernist architectural style that was prominent from the 1950s to the mid-1970s. Buildings in this style are characterized by their spare, exposed concrete surfaces and blockish form. The appropriately named movement comes from the French term *béton brut*, meaning *raw concrete*. Brutalist architecture privileges the

Modernist values of simplicity and clarity. It is free of ornament, and embraces the functionality and rawness of building materials. Brutalist buildings are cold, heavy, and often monolithic; decades after they were built, these fortress-like structures are still criticized for their unfriendly appearance and utilitarian nature.

Though the Brutalist-style is international, I am primarily interested in how the style is manifested in post-socialist territories in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Though the style originated in Britain, it thrived in the East because it fit well with Communist political and cultural ideals. Because the relatively poor economy of this region has saved unpopular Brutalist buildings from demolition and redevelopment, they can still be seen in large numbers.

Curator Inka Schube points out that Brutalist buildings are often considered



ideologically “contaminated.”³ In her essay on the subject of post-socialist Modernism, Schube states that this architecture symbolizes “unredeemed, yet previously hopeful promises for a future in which everything would be more and more beautiful, wonderful, and better for everyone—as well as for the abuse of these promises.”⁴ My project, *I,I,I,I*, is inspired by the tension that is created between the failure of these utopian notions and the long-lasting architecture and form that survives them. Examples of this can be seen in the abundant, deserted monuments and war memorials of former Yugoslavia, which stand as reminders of the failed ideology that created them.

Monuments

Designed by sculptors and architects throughout former Yugoslavia, government-commissioned monuments were

constructed to commemorate important historical events. Built at the time of the Brutalism movement, these memorials share similar formal and aesthetic qualities to the Modernist architectural style. “Teetering on the boundary where sculpture becomes architecture,” these building-like and blockish objects are often abstracted, futuristic forms built with concrete, steel, and granite.⁵

In his photography series, *Spomenik* (2006-09), photographer Jan Kempenaers documents the abandoned monuments of this region. Kempenaers' photographs show large objects whose “abstract geometric shapes recall macro views of viruses, flower-petal goblets [and] crystals.”⁶ Some have survived the elements but some show definite signs of decay, such as disrepair and vandalism. Other monuments are almost completely destroyed—their ruins reclaimed by nature,

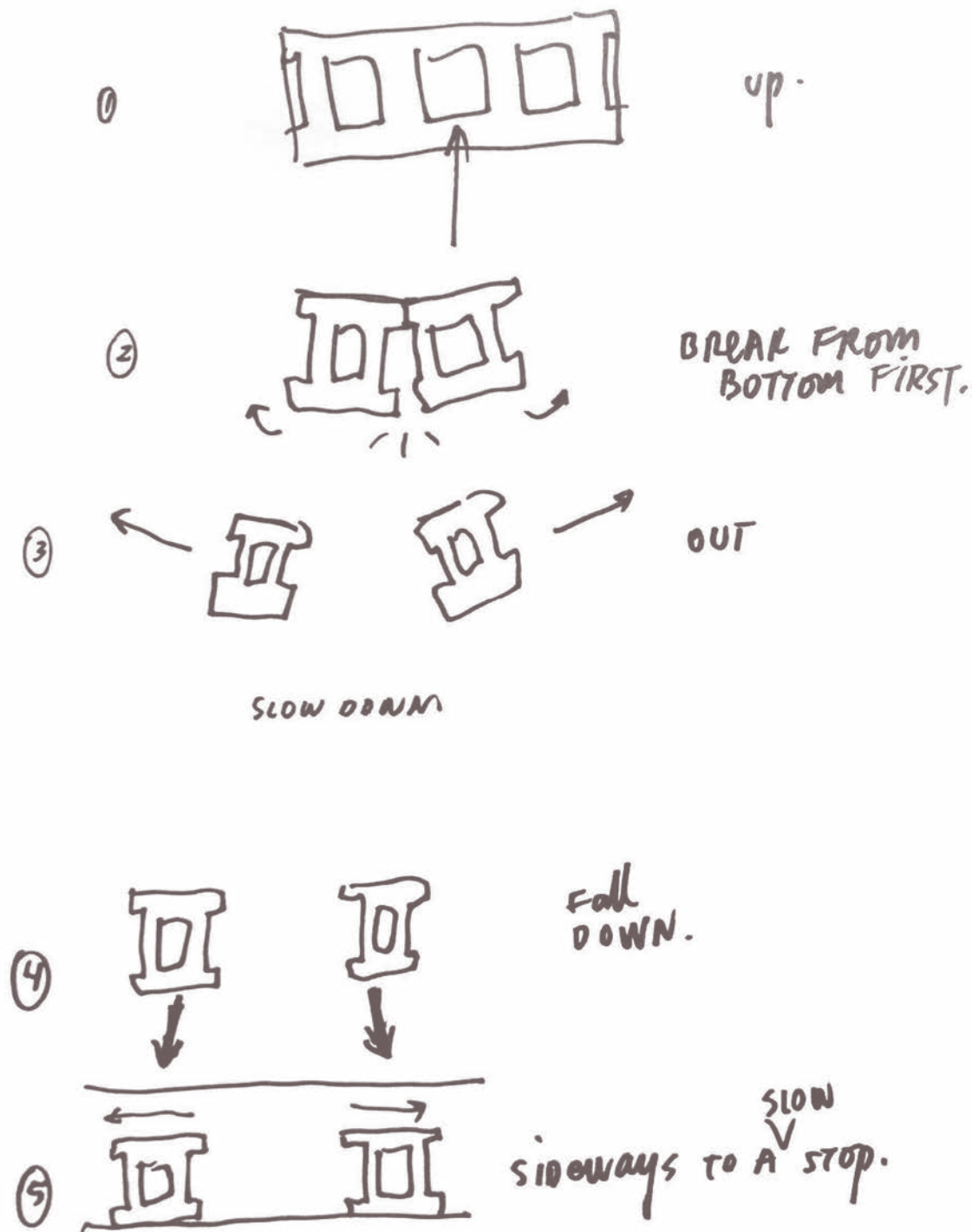
In my fridge, should be utilized. • The idea of exchange has been consistently present and recognized throughout my education. At OQAO University, I've been able to meet and collaborate with interesting artists and designers. Global community is realized through this type of exchange, and it is an important aspect of my artistic process and learning. Exchanging

3. Schube, Inka. *Roman Bezjak's Photographs of Eastern Europe*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2011.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Neutelings, Willem Jan. *Spomenik*. Amsterdam: Roma Publications, 2010. 67a.

6. *Ibid.* 66.



ideas has reciprocity that allows the artistic process to incubate and develop. Conversation is one of the most important exchanges as well, and I've learned an immeasurable amount of understanding and perspective through discussions with mentors and colleagues across many cities, including Ahmedabad, Seoul, Berlin, Tampere, Lapland and, of course,

their steel skeleton framework showing through. The monuments' symbolism "has been lost in translation as the visual landscape has changed, their signals muffled by a shifted worldview [...] what remains is pure sculpture in a desolate landscape."⁷

Form

For *I,I,I,I*, I animated a basic architectural element—a concrete cinder block—using stop-motion animation. This approach helped me explore how structures fall apart and what holds them together. Like the breakwater blocks, a cinder block possess a utilitarian quality, and speaks to the notion of the collective versus the individual. It can be seen as a singular part, but it can also be seen as part of a larger whole. A cinder block also has constructive and destructive properties: a block, or a brick can be used to build a house, or it can be used to break a window, or be thrown as a sign of protest.⁸ In my animation, the anthropomorphic movement of the inanimate object references human gestures that suggest anxiety or unease. These gestures are sometimes violent, short bursts of movement (banging one's head against a wall), and sometimes constant and slow (grinding teeth, throbbing).

I,I,I,I is a continuous loop in which a cinder block breaks into smaller and smaller pieces, each time splitting down the middle, and then merging back together into a single whole. The mathematical partitioning of the cinder block creates a child-like rhythm (one becomes two, two becomes four, etc.). A detailed miniature set was constructed to serve as a

backdrop, placing the object into a barren landscape, reminiscent of Jan Kempenaers' monument photography. This desolate environment, juxtaposed with the playful movement of the animation, gives the piece a surreal quality.

All That Is Solid

My project is ultimately about the tension between the strength and the fragility of solid structures. In *I,I,I,I*, concrete is used in both a literal, and in a symbolic way. It is used to reference architectural constructions and the ideological systems that spawned them, while pointing to the cracks of these seemingly indestructible systems. Stuck in a perpetual loop, the animated cinder block is seen in a constant state of transformation, forever falling apart. As it breaks into pieces, new forms emerge, new meanings materialize.

7. *Ibid.* 67.

8. Massumi, Brian. "Translators' Foreword: Pleasures of Philosophy." *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1987. xii.

Raymond Salaber is a lens-based artist whose practice explores themes of existentialism and nostalgia. Born in the Philippines and raised in Dubai, Salaber now lives in Toronto. He recently graduated with a degree in

Photography from OCAD University. He works in a number of analog processes, including archival black and white fiber-based silver gelatin printing, Chromogenic c-printing, and large format photography.



INTAC

Raymond Salaber

There is beauty and poetry in exchanging ideas. Many of us in art and design rely on exchanges to push our work forward. Ideas can incubate, permeate and evolve when presented to a collaborator. Collaborating is not easy. A good portion of one's education is spent working in groups, on projects that dissolve after the class presentation. Factors that contribute to bad group dynamics in art school include clashing aesthetics and differences in work habits. For artists and designers, there is also a certain level of ego that can prevent an open exchange of ideas between peers. While artists and designers proudly refuse to let their artistic and creative voice be influenced, the ego fails to notice the subconscious influences that shape our ideas every day. Exchanging ideas requires more of us, as we're both sharing ourselves and letting someone else in. One could say that any exchange is just too much effort.

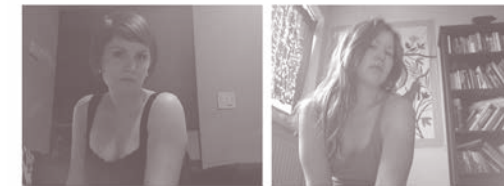
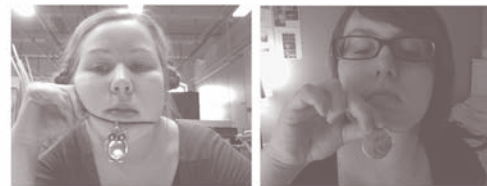
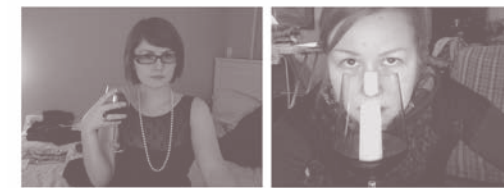
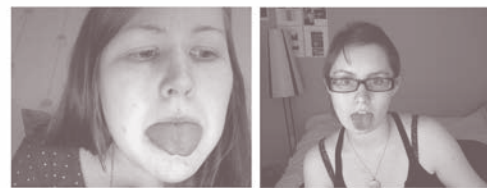
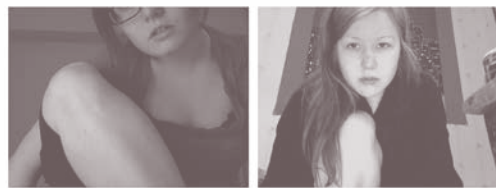
But without exchange, we'd be limited. There are so many cultures and sub-cultures to explore, but we need guides, access points. Poetic work is expansive.

Art and design is a conversation, one that's louder than we can verbalize. It materializes inner life. Artists and designers need to express their internal worlds.

In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin identifies the implications of the printing press and mass production. The invention of the printing press led to a shift in the way people valued objects.¹ With the advent of printing, text and image could be made more quickly and distributed to a wider audience in a much shorter time. Like the invention of the printing press, the shift in communication from paper to screen has changed the way we perceive the world. We are replacing watching the evening news, reading the morning paper, sampling albums at the record store, and even clothes shopping with online equivalents. The dominance of the Internet has, unexpectedly, inspired artists to return to the traditional forms of making.

Handicraft, heritage, and history have taken on new value as novelties. We perceive dated technology as warm and

1. Benjamin, Walter. Hannah Arendt, ed. *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. London: Fontana. 218-219



newer technology as cold. For example, the sound of a vinyl record is considered a warm sound and digital playback is considered a clinical, cold sound. Both serve the same purpose, but have different associations and experiential outcomes in their environments. The resurgence of interest in analog technology suggests that we want to reconnect with our humanity and that we're rejecting the sterile digital copy where we can.

What is the relevance of exchange, digital technology, and analog processes to the future of art and design education? It is naïve to claim that this type of cultural change has never happened before; but the tools we have now have opened up a plethora of possibilities hitherto unknown. OCAD University's International Art Collaborations (INTAC) program promotes the value of exchange by partnering students with institutions all over the world. The structure of this yearlong course is unlike any other class that's offered at OCAD U. In the three years that it's been offered, seven to ten students have been

admitted. Participating institutional partners include TAMK Institute in Tampere, Western Finland, Berliner Technische Kunsthochschule in Berlin, Germany, and Chung-Ang University in Seoul, South Korea.

One of the most collaboratively relevant projects was a simple exercise in communication. Two students swapped all of their photographs from Photobooth, a Mac application with which they've each made a habit of photographing themselves for more than four years. These photographs were then paired off if they were similar, and presented with the dates underneath to contrast the passage of time as well as provide context.

The project boasts more than one hundred pairs. The idea that two, far-flung students both practice the act of curating a narrative of selfies plays an important role in the success of this project. Through this dialogue, they explore inherent and natural behavior and provide a narrative that strongly relates the two artists together without previously knowing each other.

Toronto. Thanks to online communication tools, we've been able to create a network of artists and designers working towards bridging the gap of cultural distance and making work based on these cross-cultural partnerships.

The International Art Collaborations also provides opportunities to network with professionals in other fields beyond art and design. For example, INTAC connected me to a Natural Sciences workshop in the Oulanka, Finland. The workshop spanned five days and combined lessons on both photographic processes and scientific subjects.

Oulanka Cube (p 16) was based on an environmental issue. A new forestry policy in Finland rules that every branch and stump must be excavated from the ground after a clear-cut. Environmentalists argue that the forest cannot regenerate unless these branches and stumps decompose and become natural fertilizer. The value of this project lies in the skills that were exchanged. A forestry specialist was able to better communicate their ideas because an artist was able to help them visually represent them. I hope that collaborative exercises and exchanges are central to future education.

Melissa Jean Clark and Anna Knappe
The Photobooth Story
 thephotoboothstory.com (2012)

Contributors

Ibrahim Abusitta ibrahimabusitta.com ibrahimabusitta86@gmail.com	Jordan Maddox jordanmaddox.com jmaddox_86@yahoo.ca
David Aaron Cohen artdavo.com david.a.cohen0@gmail.com	Askua Michihiro cargocollective.com/askmchhr asukamichihiro@outlook.com
Jenna Crook cargocollective.com/jennacrook crookjenna@gmail.com	Sona Safaei-Sooreh sonasafaei.com sonasafaei@gmail.com
Vuk Dragojevic partialpictures.com vuk@partialpictures.com	Raymond Salaber raaaymond.tumblr.com raymondsalaber@gmail.com
Stephanie Flowers stephanieflowers.org stephanie.flowers9@gmail.com	Noah Scheinman noah.scheinman@gmail.com
Mike Goldby mikegoldby.com mikegoldby@gmail.com	Claire Scherzinger clairescherzinger.com clairescherzinger@gmail.com
Layne Hinton laynehinton.com lh@laynehinton.com	Jessica Tai jessicatai.com jessicanicoletai@gmail.com
Iris Karuna iriskaruna.com iris.karuna@gmail.com	Brooke Wayne brookewayne.com contact@brookewayne.com

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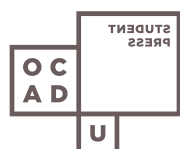
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The OCAD U Student Press serves as a platform for students to share their work and ideas while connecting them to the art and design community. The intent of the Press is to celebrate and cultivate a culture of research, dialogue, and criticism within the creative disciplines of art and design.

We have collaborated with leading members of the art and design fields, including Edward Burtynsky, Mark Kingwell, Christopher Hume, Marian Bantjes, Shannon Gerard, and Micah Lexier. In addition to being recognized for its content, the *Shift* Series has received design awards where it was featured in international design magazines such as *Coupe*, *UCDA*, *Design Edge*, and *Applied Arts*.

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Ranging from written to visual investigations, *Shift* showcases the multidisciplinary, research-based, art and design practice that takes place at OCAD U. We are interested in presenting new ideas, and most importantly, offering students an opportunity to explore topics they are passionate about.

