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cold lapse

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cold lapse

by

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Thesis

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cold lapse

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cold lapse addresses the abstract notions of time and loss while conveying the value of observing the present. The postmodern view of time, the grid's vernacular, and the aesthetics of postminimalism are my foundation for communicating time's passage and its consequential sensations of absence. The duration of a slow drip, the cycle of breath and the sequential motion of a hand folding paper each mark passing moments. By observing these signs the phenomenon of time may be appreciated. Care and ephemerality in the work require the viewer's sensitivity when encountering and witnessing it, much like the demands of observing the present. The tension between the materials themselves and their overtly aestheticized display demonstrates my desire for control over the uncontrollable. The uncontrollable is synonymous with the work's continuous themes: time and its value, and loss and its inevitability.

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Introduction

“The artist’s role in society is to observe real life and report on it poetically, if the movement of materials are sure and honest the work becomes a beautiful gesture” Tom Marioni

Tom Marioni emerged in the 1970’s as a conceptual artist known for his social approaches to art. Instead of looking for forms in things, he chose to pay attention to forms that already occur in every-day life situations for his artistic inspiration. This quote holds relevance for my artistic practice, which is invested in developing an imaginative and elegant response to observations on life.

“One of the primary functions of a scientist or an artist is to explore and expand the concepts of reality. The artists who have proven most valuable to their society have done so by posing new questions rather than asserting answers.”¹ Throughout my graduate career the questions that dictate my studio practice have expanded and contracted; now focusing on an investigation into the experience of time.

Pre-agriculture humans had little interest in time. With tool making and agriculture came an awareness of metric time; humans quickly learned to break years into seasons then months, weeks and days. The mathematical organization of time progressed; clocks were created by the Church in the 14th century and perfected by Galileo and Christian Huygens in the 17th.² This marked the early stages of the modernist view of time as linear; moving forward alongside evolution and progression. The postmodern view frames time as having no definite beginning or end but rather cycling continuously and eternally in “an illusion of a perpetual present”³. This

¹ William V. Dunning, *The Roots of Postmodernism* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. 1995), 275.

² Ibid. 262

³ Ibid. 192.

directly aligns with the mythological view of time, in which all time already exists and is laid out as a timescape; the past existing with the present⁴. As humans we inevitably have awareness of a past, but it exists alongside the present potentially manifesting as sensations of loss, absence or longing. Within the experience of time, my art seeks to visually convey this absence. By framing time within the postmodern view and drawing from postminimal aesthetic and concepts of the grid I am able to address the abstract notion of time and loss in my art.

This paper will trace the trajectory of my practice by first examining my thesis exhibition, *cold lapse*. I will then expand to the larger concepts and artistic movements that have informed my development, point out the critical discussion that is relevant to my work, and align myself within this conversation. Time, the grid, and postminimalist theory will be discussed in relation to my own work and artistic influences.

Time's passage leaves the sensation of loss; *cold lapse* is my metaphor for this experience. *cold* because of the bleakness that forms and *lapse* because of the gap that remains. Through an environment of a viewer's quiet reception *cold lapse* intends to evoke the passage of time while eloquently conveying the value in observing the present.

Background

As all artists do, I make art about what I question and what I observe. Observing the present was ingrained in me from an early age. As the middle child of four I was always watching, viewing my older siblings for guidance and my younger one as a caretaker. I believe this is when my observational skills first took shape. Later, I was influenced by my mother's

⁴ Bernard Evslin, *Greeks Bearing Gifts* (New York: Four Winds Press. 1971), 273.

studies of Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharishi, a Hindu prophet whose philosophies emphasized seeking a connection with Self through silent observation. His statement, *silence can also be conversation*, is one that my mother shared with me and continues to be relevant in my life. As a young adult, I worked for many years on organic farms. In this role, the cycles of days dictated my livelihood and labor while I silently observed nature. It was rewarding and formative and solidified my fascination with nature's cycles, human health and physical place.

Looking back I see that these farms significantly informed my artistic process and aesthetic. I have always enjoyed order and logic. As a child my favorite toys were puzzles. After toiling over them for hours, instead of retuning the pieces to their box I would meticulously glue them together so my accomplishment could be preserved. The idea of taking all those pieces apart after I worked so hard to make sense of them was absurd to me; I wanted to order them and keep this order as my own. For similar reasons farming made sense; it is a living puzzle. The farm requires logic, science, math, creative problem solving, planning, goals, and labor that result in visible progress. A season begins with a plan; the land is a grid that is subdivided into fields, which are further divided into beds and then rows along which crops are planted. When determining where to plant many factors must be considered: soil composition, last year's harvest, pest management, cover cropping. It becomes a puzzle fitting each crop in to the correct field where it will thrive. Every day starts with a list of short and long-term projects that are delegated to the crew-members and checked off one by one. At the end of the day, the collective can look back and observe their accomplishments. When I began farming I had no idea where it would lead me, but I had a sense that it was important so I continued to move forward.

At that time, I was also witnessing my mother's ongoing illness and eventual death from cancer, which was followed shortly by my father's sudden death. Although these events are now in the past, I feel it is relevant to honor them because they constantly remind me life is mostly unexpected and to always take time to appreciate and observe the present. The silent observation required to cultivate a piece of land, the silent observation of witnessing an ill loved one and the silent observation of real life that artists practice have brought me to focus on the theme of time in my art.

In my work, I am invested in bringing to view the passage of time, which inevitably leaves the sensation of loss and absence. In the text *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies* the prominent Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman wrote "There is hardly a thought more offensive than death; or, rather, of the inevitability of dying"⁵. I am quite aware of this reality and am not inserting the topic of loss in avoidance of discussing death and its potential offensiveness. I am using the topic of loss to address my awareness of time, which is the result of witnessing death. When I reflect on loss in my own life, absence is the term that best describes my current experience. It is not tragic or jarring, although at one time it was; it is now a cool, minimal gap. The memories have faded, the every day has returned; the wound has healed and what is left is a muted scar. Because this is how I view loss and because of my value for silent observation, I employ a muted palette, and minimal aesthetic in my work. Elegance and carefulness are also evident, requiring the viewer's sensitivity when encountering and witnessing it, much like the demands of observing the present. My choice to overtly aestheticize the work is

⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992), 12.

a demonstration of my desire for order, logic and control over the uncontrollable. The uncontrollable is synonymous with the continuous themes present here: time and its value, and loss and its inevitability.

The *cold lapse* Exhibition

cold lapse was installed in The Gallery of Visual Arts at the University of Montana from March 10th - 25th, 2016. The exhibition is in direct dialogue with the underlying themes of my work and represents a search to elegantly convey the value of time and observing the present. My intention is to synthesize craft and form with concept in a gallery exhibition creating an environment of quiet reception that evokes the passage of time for its viewer. This work is also in direct conversation with the postmodern view of time, which emphasizes its existence in a cycle of eternal presence rather than the modernist linear view⁶. The show is comprised of three pieces that each emulate a characteristic of time: cycle, duration or sequence.

The cycles of breath, days, moon phases and seasons produce experiences of cyclical time. My interest in nature and its cycles was established first as a child observing my father in his garden and then while working on farms myself. Quietly witnessing seasons pass in this format was incredibly rewarding and reassuring since cycles continue and there is comfort in knowing things will return.

In the piece *cold lapse*, an ellipse screen-printed in a gradation of values, repeats on elongated pieces of paper to visually convey time's cycles. The repeating ellipse, the vertical gradation, the rectangular paper, and the arrangement of the prints collectively hint to inhalation

⁶ William Dunning, *The Roots of Postmodernism* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1995), 260.



Fig 1, 2: *cold lapse*, 2016, screenprint, 10' x 14'
 photo credit: Sarah Moore

and exhalation. The ellipse form is a direct reference to cycles. The orbits of most planets in our solar system follow an ellipse with the Sun at the center; the same is true for the moons that orbit these planets. The vertical gradation of shades of blue from light to dark create a depth that mimics the expansion and contraction of a lung with an inhale and exhale; this is further exaggerated by the vertically oriented rectangular paper, the form of which relates to that of a lung. *cold lapse* is composed of ninety individual prints arranged in a grid about 10' x 14' in scale

and tucked into a large alcove on the south wall of the gallery. The piece extends beyond the viewer's sight and cascades onto the floor, offering a sense of expanse. This sense of expanse relates back to the recurring nature of cycles and time's apparent endlessness.

Time's expansiveness is also present in the piece *silence: time and distance* as well as the characteristic of duration. *silence: time & distance* consists of two 6' x 8" x 10' sculptures; each sculpture with one hundred and thirty-four taut acrylic lines connecting nearly identical top and bottom panels. The two rows of line on the top panel converge to enter one row of holes along a slit-like drain along the trough shaped base. Drips of honey traverse these lines and then



collect in the trough below. It is important that the honey does not spill over the sides and create chaos but rather gather and pool. The collection of bead like drops on the line reflects the light and although their presence is almost not there, once noticed the drips are captivating. The aesthetic of this piece, like the others, is minimal, which adds to the exhibition's atmosphere of quietude. Honey was selected to drip down the lines because it is an organic material with its own lifespan. *silence: time & distance* is an ephemeral piece that quietly references duration.

The title of this piece was inspired by the philosophies of John Cage. This avant-garde composer of the 1950's was well known for his intuitive approaches to sound making and his investment in silence. *4' 33"*, *The Silent Piece*, was John Cage's most famous creation. Around the time of making it, Cage stated that, "Silence cannot be heard in terms of pitch or harmony: it is heard in terms of time and length."⁷ This poetic

Fig 3, 4, 5: *silence:time & distance*, 2016, wood, acrylic line, honey, 12' x 16" x 10' photo credit: Sarah Moore

⁷ John Cage, *Defense of Satie* (Praeger Publishers, 1970), 81.



Fig 6: *traces* (excerpt), 2016, monotype embossed print, 30" x 40"



Fig 7: *silence: time & distance* and *traces*, (install view)
photo credit: Sarah Moore

statement about the experience of time explains Cage's investment in witnessing the present. Silence becomes a form of conversation if allowed the time and length required.

The quietude and starkness of the exhibition's third piece, *traces*, is

emphasized by its juxtaposition with *silence: time & distance*. These monotype embossed prints were created by a single piece of paper being folded into smaller pieces until it was barely visible. An embossment was taken at

each stage of the folding process. The twenty resulting prints are displayed on the west and north walls of the gallery as the piece *traces*. This print series possesses an existential relationship to the actual object and functions as an indexical sign of the folding paper action.

In Rosiland Kraus's "Notes on the Index part I" she describes the role of linguistic signs in 1970's art. The index is part of this aesthetic language that links marks or traces to a particular cause. The cause is to what they refer, the object they signify: footprints, cast shadows and medical symptoms are all indices⁸. The action that is being signified is relevant because it mimics the nervous gesture of folding paper or crumpling a napkin that someone may take on while waiting for time to pass. "The indexical sign may involve abstraction or may be heavily mimetic, but it is distinguished by the fact that the signifier retains at least something of the existential 'having-been-thereness' of that which is signified."⁹ The 'having-been-thereness' of the *traces* series becomes an index for that which cannot be represented. The gesture of folding paper captured in this piece and the work's starkness signifies the anxious silence that is present in the everyday experience of time and the loss that time's passage leaves.

traces is installed in a linear and sequential arrangement. The order of sequence and the clear beginning and end align with the modernist concept that views time as linear and history as progression and improvement over the past.¹⁰ Although I do not view time in this format I choose to install this piece linearly to emphasize the diminishing shape, a visual communication of absence and ultimately loss. *traces* is ordered in sequence even though the actual folding was automatic; this demonstrates a use of aesthetics to display a desire for control over the uncontrollable. This piece is in conversation with the other two, which convey time's infinite

⁸ Rosilan Krauss, "Notes on the Index I," *October*, vol. 3 (1977): 74.

⁹ Joan Gibbons, *Contemporary Art and Memory: Images of Recollection and Remembrance* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 35.

¹⁰ Jean Robertson and Craig McDaniel, *Themes of Contemporary Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 119.

qualities.

The three components of *cold lapse* visually communicate my impression of time's value and its corresponding sensation of absence. Absence is present in the work's stark minimal palette and the removal of any overtly visible hand. The hand is replaced by precise mechanical ordering within each piece. This gridded ordering represents a response to that which cannot be controlled; executing order and logic is a way to make sense of the incomprehensible. Demonstrating this through my art has importance since many of the themes addressed here are of that which cannot be controlled.

Time

When discussing time, I feel it is important to note the desert landscape of Southwestern North America. Before moving to Montana, I lived in a small town in the high desert of Northern New Mexico, which was a stark contrast from my upbringing in New England. The climate of the desert was a completely different notion, and I was struck by how in this landscape time became something physical more than mathematical through the vast expanses and ancient rock formations. Its vistas go on forever, and the land's surface often appears stark, like humans have never walked on it before. Alongside my fascination with the desert and its ability to physically communicate time arose an interest in the American Land Art movement of the 1960's.

The open spaces of North America's West became popular venues for Land Artists. This movement began partially in response to the 1960's culture in the United States and as a progression of postmodernism. It developed alongside the rise of environmentalism and awareness of the land's potential susceptibility to catastrophes heightened by the Cold War era.

This postmodern approach took art out of the static gallery and into the landscape where it could be fully experienced through multiple senses and at a monumental scale. In this regard, it was also a response to the modern tradition that associates artwork with only one sense – sight¹¹.

Of the many Land Art works, I am particularly drawn to Nancy Holt's *Sun Tunnels* because of its direct association with concepts of time and place. In Utah's Great Basin Desert these four concrete tubes, each eighteen feet long with a diameter of nine feet, are placed on the desert floor, configured as an open X. The diameter, length and distance between the tunnels is based on the proportions of what can be seen of the sky and land, as well as how long the sun can be seen rising and setting on the solstices. Holes drilled through the tubes' surfaces align with the constellations – Draco, Perseus, Columba, and Capricorn. These function as a sort of compass “challenging the viewers' expectations of an artwork as stable, while giving them the tools to



Fig 8: Nancy Holt, *Sun Tunnels*, 1976, concrete, each 9' x 18'
photo credit: Tyler Nansen

orient and locate themselves in space.”¹² Coincidentally, because of the earth's natural shifting these tunnels will inevitably fall out of alignment and the compass will eventually fail. The piece is ephemeral, an additional remainder that time

¹¹ Robin Clark, *Phenomenal, California Light, Space, Surface* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 81.

¹² Antonia Rigaud. “Disorienting Geographies: Land Art and the American Myth of Discovery,” *Miranda*. vol. 6 (2012): 5

is indeed abstract. When speaking about the landscape that the *Sun Tunnels* are located in Holt describes it as “being on this planet, rotating in space, in universal time.”¹³ Because of the heightened awareness of physical place the desert setting offers Holt is able to give her viewers the experience of time as an abstract notion. Experiencing Holt’s work and the vast desert



Fig 9: *The Best of All Choices*, 2015, wood, sugar, spoons, audio, dimensions variable

landscape of North America’s Southwest has prompted me to investigate time’s abstract qualities and to consider space and scale my own work.

The piece of my work that first marked an investigation of space and time was *The Best of All Choices*, which was installed in the School of Art’s Student Gallery in February of 2015. The piece consisted of two approximately human scale tables upon which an ordered grid of spoons was placed on top of a layer of carefully groomed sugar. In the space, an audio track of a voice reciting chess

¹³ Nancy Holt, “Sun Tunnels,” *Art Forum*, vol. 15 (1977): 34.

coordinates at random...B7, A4, F2... looped continuously. The intention of the ordered spoons, the meticulously groomed sugar and the spoken coordinates was to collectively create a space in which the passage of time and control were overtly displayed. Spoons, sugar, and dining room like tables were selected for their reference to the domestic: a setting where time is spent and control may be demonstrated through a desire to order a home or relationships. The aesthetic of *The Best of All Choices* was intentionally stark and minimal, a delineation of the absence that is present in a domestic space after loss.

The Best of All Choices demonstrated time's postmodernity. Time's cyclical but fragmented qualities was narrated through the audio of looping coordinates that lacked any order, sequence or logic. The gridded spoons functioned in a similar way. The groomed sugar that almost falls off the table's edge is precarious, ephemeral and tactile; leading the viewer to notions of temporality. This piece aligns with a postminimal aesthetic and utilizes the grid; features that have surfaced in other works of mine.

The Grid

The grid declares modernity through its non-decorative structure and order, but also functions as postmodern, for its infinite and non-narrative qualities. In Rosalind Krauss's 1979 article, "Grids", she describes the grid as "cheerfully schizophrenic"¹⁴. Krauss then goes on to further describe this duality naming it as "centrifugal, extending in all directions, to infinity compelling our acknowledgement in a world beyond the frame. It is also centripetal, an

¹⁴ Rosalind Krauss, "Grids," *October*, vol. 9 (1979): 60.



Fig 10: Sol LeWitt, *Distorted Cubes #2*, 2001, linocut, 35' x 42'

Source: Charles Haxthausen, "Sol LeWitt- The Well Tempered Grid." *Williams College Museum of Art*. September 2012, <http://wcma.williams.edu/exhibit/sol-lewitt-the-well-tempered-grid-2/>.

introjection of the boundaries of the world onto the interior of the work, a mapping of a space."¹⁵ I use the grid as a tool to visually communicate time's infinite, but fragmented reality. My interest in the grid's vernacular led me to seek the influence of other artists who utilize it in similar ways.

The conceptual and minimal artist

Sol LeWitt used the grid as both aesthetic

object and myth. LeWitt, who had a leading role in the Conceptual Art movement, argued that the idea is the most important aspect in a work of art. His work was fueled by concept and expansive notions about the irrelevance of the art object in comparison to the idea, but his choice element for visual communication was the ordered grid. It was both a way he could organize the world and a grammatical element through which he communicated.¹⁶ His compositions often consisted of basic shapes, colors and lines that were ordered by his own guidelines into pieces that were then executed by assistants or others. This process took on systemic methodologies that one does not have to execute their own work to be an artist, much like a composer may not perform their own music.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Charles Haxthausen, "Sol LeWitt - The Well Tempered Grid," *Williams College Museum of Art*. September 2012, <http://wcma.williams.edu/exhibit/sol-lewitt-the-well-tempered-grid-2/>.

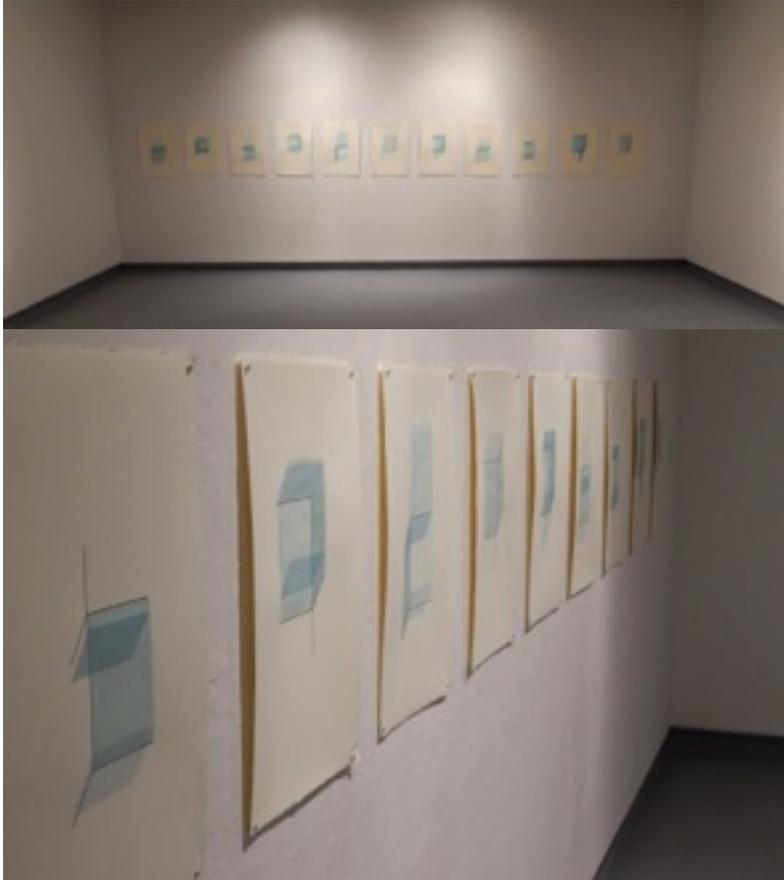


Fig 11: *Impossible Space*, 2015, screenprints, 15" x 15'

making and aesthetics exemplifies the grid's duality.

LeWitt's use of the grid has informed my work and install decisions. The screenprinted series *Impossible Space* and my piece *Iodine on Paper Part I* each marked different explorations with the grid. In *Impossible Space*, basic shapes, colors and their placements conveyed sequence and time. This piece was composed by dissecting a cube into lines, shapes, and planes. The isolated forms were then transferred onto individual screenprint screens to be printed off of in an infinite number of arrangements. By varying the arrangement and order of these elements the stability of the cube was lost and the space the forms created became disorienting. My hope was that through the deconstructed cube and the linear arrangement of the prints the themes of time and loss would surface; however, when discussing loss, there is a direct association with the

Across media the grid functioned as a generative matrix for LeWitt's ideas. Printmaking was a choice medium for LeWitt, and when considering the reproductive qualities of the print-matrix, this makes sense. The print-matrix represents order and limitations, but reproduction infers the infinite. These qualities and LeWitt's overall approach to art

human body and the ephemeral that was not present in this piece. The expansiveness I aimed to convey through the potentially infinite combinations was also not communicated. I enjoyed the



Fig 12: *Iodine on Paper Part I*, 2014, iodine, paper, 5' x 5'

order these shapes offered and their arbitrary sequence acted against modernist notions of time advancing linearly. If the series had been larger expansiveness may have been evident but at its current scale the piece was not successful.

Prior to *Impossible Space*

(Fig. 11), I made the piece *Iodine on Paper Part I*, an early venture

into using the grid for instillation purposes, which has carried through into my current practice. In this piece the random marks on each page are juxtaposed with the grid in which the piece was displayed. *Iodine on Paper Part I* is the relic of *Process and Production*, an earlier piece that executed chance and random mark making through the action of iodine dripping from a vessel onto a page. By ordering these individual pages, which stand in for the unexpected and unpredicted, into a grid demonstration of control over something that cannot be controlled was executed. The grid's appeal is that it extends in all directions, implying spatial infinity and a world beyond the frame, but it also functions as the frame, creating structure. This duality is significant as I use the grid as a metaphor for time and loss.

Postminimalism

In addition to his role in Conceptual Art, Sol LeWitt is credited for leading the Minimalist movement. This artistic movement evolved in the 1960's as a response to the intuitive and colorful works of the abstract expressionists, and as a progression of postmodernism. Minimalists reduced their calculated works to surface and materials and emphasized the work's engagement with its surrounding space. Their use of color was meant to delineate space rather than create a mood and a narrative was never present in the work.

My work overlaps with aspects of minimalism: reduced forms, a muted palette, and space. However, because I value color, hand-manipulated materials, and include narrative I align my work more closely with postminimalism. The American art critic Robert-Pincus-Witten coined the term 'postminimalism' to designate this style in 1960's contemporary art at which "an intersection where the 'rigorous external geometry' of minimalism gave way to the behavior of materials in the act of making."¹⁷ This movement goes beyond the rigid limitations of minimalism and engages color, expressive qualities, and materials that govern the character of the art object¹⁸.

The seriality and repetition present in the work of Sol Lewitt was also prominent in the work of influential postminimalist Eva Hesse. Hesse experimented with the process and change involved in serial repetition as she developed a visual vocabulary: such as balls with cords, hanging strings and boxes of impermanent materials. She wrapped or distressed these forms,

¹⁷ Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 577.

¹⁸ Ibid.

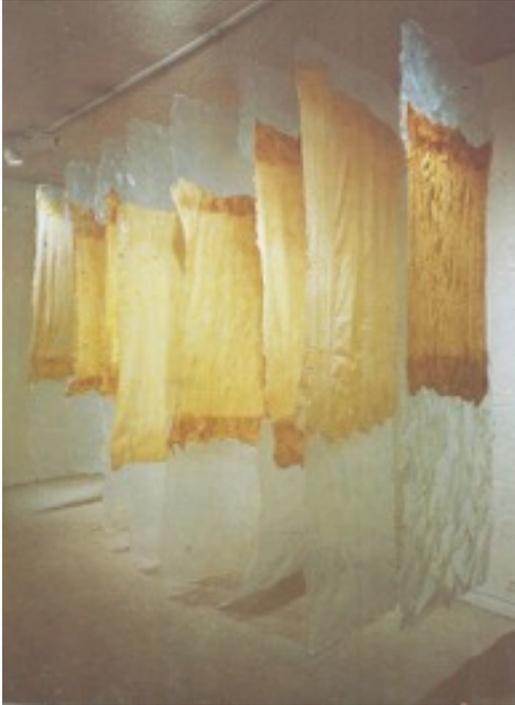


Fig 13: Eva Hesse, *Contingent*, 1968-69, Fiberglass, latex on cheese cloth
 Source: Michael Loyd, "European and American Paintings and Sculptures 1870-1970." *National Gallery of Art Australia*. 1992, <http://nga.gov.au/international/Catalogue/Detail.cfm?IRN=49353>.

which she called "schemas" acts she described as "making time" and "perceiving time"¹⁹. Her forms grew out of process, and she used repetition for exaggeration and to demonstrate absurdity. In her piece *Contingent*, eight panels of cheesecloth dipped in rubber and manipulated by hand are displayed in a sequence. Although fundamentally the same, each has its own slight variations and collectively demonstrate repetition, and time. Hesse's intuitive work, paired with Sol

LeWitt's, has been a source of influence as I investigate various ways to represent time visually. Researching the attention to sequence LeWitt used and the materiality and spontaneity Hesse embraced has helped me inform my artistic practice and concepts.

In my earlier referenced piece *Process and Production*, iodine dripped from a plastic bottle onto a stack of paper for a finite amount of time. I choose iodine because of its reference to medicine and its abject appearance, which I associate with loss. The piece outwardly displayed the durational aspect of time; the iodine dripped from the bottle and as it dripped a mark was left on the paper below, subsequently the bottle's fluid levels decreased. *Process and Production* demonstrated a finite action with unpredictable results, which I expanded into a metaphor for the unexpected, unknown, and loss.

¹⁹ Mignon Nixon, *The October Files* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), 182.



Fig 14: *Process and Production*, 2014, iodine, plastic, paper, dimensions variable

Postminimalism possesses a duality similar to that of the grid. Art critic Lucy Lippard has stressed that minimalism and its aesthetic order “was in fact also an ‘anti-order’, a rejection of the ‘Cartesian composed order’ in favor of the disorder or lack of order involved in matter-of-fact repetitions and progressions.”²⁰ Lippard came to this conclusion after curating *Evocative Abstraction* at New York’s Fishbach Gallery in 1966 in response to the process-based works evolving from the then emerging postminimal vein. The exhibition, which included works by Eva Hesse, was described as “idiosyncratic, pervasive, sensuous and evocative”²¹. Considering the timing of Lippard’s statement reflecting on minimalism in the wake of this pivotal postminimal exhibit, postminimalism can also be considered a

response to order and anti-order. Postminimalism is more overt in its expression, displaying logic and non-logic by allowing materials to dictate form as opposed to the minimalists who choose to express this absurdity with matter-of-fact repetition and progressions. This order and anti-order duality is evident in my work as well as in the previously discussed topics of the grid and time.

²⁰ Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 577.

²¹ Ibid.

Conclusion

“The artist’s role in society is to observe real life and report on it poetically”²²

I return to this quote by Tom Marioni, because of its impact and relevance to my studio practice. The act of observing and responding poetically brings into focus the critical significance of my work. Marioni’s response was to pull forms from everyday life situations for his art making. I choose to respond and abstract my observations and questions imaginatively and elegantly, these observations began with my personal experiences and have expanded into broad concepts. By investigating the postmodern view of time and engaging with the aesthetics of the grid and postminimalism I am able to communicate about time’s passage and the absence that it exists alongside. As William Dunning stated in his influential text *The Roots of Postmodernism* “One of the primary roles of an artist or scientist is to explore and expand the concepts of reality”, by bringing something as abstract as time into view I am engaging with Dunning’s definition.

Silence becomes a form of conversation if it is allowed the time and length that is required. The quietude I adopt in my work intends to accomplish this. As an artist I am developing a poetic vocabulary of forms, materials and colors that report my thoughts about the value of silent observation and witnessing time’s passage. Moving forward I intend to continue to communicate through this visual language, synthesizing new ways to imagine and understand the phenomenon of time and the human condition of absence.

²² “Tom Marioni,” *Crown Point Press*. March 2016, <http://www.crownpoint.com/artists/marioni>.

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