Double Splinters

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Double Splinters

by

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of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract

Awareness of matters outside oneself can be heightened by a repetitive task, one that requires a meditative focus on the rudimentary of movement. The construction of a line is a projection from a fixed point that creates a multiplicity of lines, synapses, and connective fabric in the mind that project outward to any possible or arbitrary point. When assembling our reality, our eyes operate as the mediators of such points, drawing in visual clues to the world around us. Sight is composed from the movement of light particles alongside of individual and collective memories that construct what is.

Introduction

I strive to create a latent buzz through marks composed of gradient colors that fold and weave into larger organic structures. Often scratchy, wavy, or impastoed, these marks reveal the process of their making. In order to arrive at a set of solidified compositional units, the image is formed out of repetitive gestures that accumulate into structural masses. This way, the painting’s logic is made apparent by tracing the mark or line around the surface. The systems within my painting are constructed through observing and interpreting the exterior world. Objects that surround my immediate environment, a detail of a shell, a rock, or the tip of a cactus emerging from within itself, often seep into my visual references as subconscious characters. Zooming in on small life forms and meditating on their complexity draws from a history of nature photography found in the work of Karl Blossfeldt.
I lift a sense of movement of form based on the organic structures of my surroundings. An arrangement of color and light is then applied in a way that defies tonal naturalism. Further simplification of these elements is embodied in painted tubes or channels that reference yet are fictionalized parts of the outside world. Instead of viewing a direct reference from the observable world, the viewer is asked to suspend his/her disbelief in viewing a two-dimensional illusion in order to see the painting anew, as a mimetic object that carries with it a history of making imbued with a physical and psychological history.

The narrative of abstraction largely operates within a latent state. When viewing a painting without associations to the outside world, painting can be seen as something rather simple——a set of pigments on a surface. Narrowing one’s lens to see beyond the pictorial illusion allows a greater focus on the material construction. When the painted surface is read at an intimate scale, the material aspects of the larger whole are more visible. This relieves the transformative responsibility of pigment, and in turn, allows us to see what painting is and can
become. Similar established beliefs parallel the study of atom behavior. To reduce an element to a single unit does not limit its potential, instead it allows for an infinitude of possibilities. As physicist and philosopher Karen Barad explains in her essay “What Is the Measure of Nothingness? Infinity, Virtuality, Justice:”

Infinity and nothingness are not the termination points defining a line. Infinity and nothingness are infinitely threaded through one another so that every infinitesimal bit of one always already contains the other. ¹

Theoretical investigations between science and art inform my practice. An applicable understanding of physics reflects my experience as a painter. I do not intend to directly apply such theory, yet the mental loops necessary in understanding intangible elements and behaviors of our surrounding world allow my work to carve out a space of possibilities for what is, and what if. Similar parallels can be found in the writings of Agnes Martin, whose also used reducible elements in her work to grasp at what she would refer to as “a larger truth.” In her essay “Beauty Is the Mystery of Life,” she writes about exploring indefinable features of her practice:

It is commonly thought that everything that is can be put into words. But there is a wide range of emotional response that we make that cannot be put into words. We are so used to making these emotional responses that

we are not consciously aware of them until they are represented in artwork. 2

Emotive responses within my work are apparent in the improvised nature of my process. As I construct an image, there is never a definite structure or sketch, but the forms within the composition grow, mutate, and evolve with each mark. I rely on the slippage of seemingly dualistic systems, between thought and action, internal/imagination and external/world. It is in this state, or rather; lack of permanence one may traverse between states that allow for my paintings to be created. Often such mental condition couples with a pliable language consistent with prose and allusion. This allows vaguely lucid comparisons, denies linearity in narrative in favor of internal, psychological reflections where memories resurface in a perpetual recalibration of the narrator.

In novels such as Clarisse Lispector’s *Near to the Wild Heart*, the self is in a constant state of dissolution, folding into and escaping from her thoughts. The perceived world is described in heightened detail. Constructing narratives centered on psychological experiences can be read like expanded field theory, applying subjectivity to a seemingly concrete practice. In *The Elements of Color* (1970), Johannes Itten not only argues for results derived from the scientifically-rooted phenomenon of color and light theory, but constantly reflects these color theories in the subjective, rather, allowing for the viewer’s experience to become the driving factor in the act of seeing. Fourteen years later, Donna Haraway

2 Martin, Agnes. *Beauty is the Mystery of Life.* [http://www.austincc.edu/noel/writings/Beauty%20Is%20the%20Mystery%20of%20Life.pdf](http://www.austincc.edu/noel/writings/Beauty%20Is%20the%20Mystery%20of%20Life.pdf). 3
expands this field of subjectivity to reveal the bias and gendered histories of certain epistemic practices. She allows for a varied and nuanced view of the potential of the human experience that is hybridized, genderless, yet fused with the technologies we inhabit. Such perspectives, although perhaps not always conscious, influence and drive our experience of object creation and the ways we navigate through the world, visualize and negotiate visual stimulus.

Process

An awareness of the interrelations between scientific belief structures and the ways in which I engage with my physical surroundings, adjusting to the changing environment and technologies play a determining role in my engagement with a two-dimensional surface. My paintings reflect this by isolating components of observable reality from my surrounding landscape and employing certain systems of rendering form, light, and movement to re-create fictionalized environments. In essence, these paintings act as theoretical technology that is infinitely malleable.

By working sequentially, I allow the chromatic and compositional decisions made in one painting to inform the following painting. Often times I will focus on a specific movement of a shape and repeat, alter, enlarge, or scale down to construct a similar movement on the proceeding canvas. This builds a history around specific movements, becoming a series of stochastic dances from one surface to the next. In a similar manner of working, Lee Lozano’s series of wave paintings from the mid 1970’s captured her physical energy and were intended to
be a display of external physical energies. She insisted on an uninterrupted endurance of working, which instilled a specificity of time recorded into the image. The final work is considered a tension between "A private experience of production vs. public reception."³ The private experience of making is not apparent yet can be inferred through the slowness of reveal in her works.

There is an inherent musicality to the rhythm of my making that creates vibratory patterns and dissonant sequencing in the repetitions of line in my compositions. In nature, stridulation is an occurrence defined as “the act of producing sound, usually by rubbing two body parts together.”⁴ In my painting Juggling there is a tension between the right and left hemisphere of the painting. The palette is a deep orange made luminous through interwoven green lines. However, as each tubular structure meets in the middle, there seems to be an exchange of energy, creating oval waves that interrupt the rhythm. These areas of dissonance, where the pattern breaks to create a secondary formation, are constructed in effort to create a visual sense of a bodily sound.

⁴ “Stridulation.” Insect Wings- Amateur Entomologists’ Society (AES), www.amentsoc.org/insects/glossary/terms/stridulation
The phenomenology of light, and therefore, color, determines the structural shapes of my work. My palettes are designed to evoke movement of emerging and fragmenting patterns. They are largely built around split complementary colors that fade into greys as they become closer to one another. This creates an illusion of volume as it descends into deeper space. For example in *Squeeze* (Fig. 3), there are two palettes at play. One imbues a harmonious gestalt to the images, and another is subtler, only revealing its chromatic shifts after the viewer’s eyes have already adjusted to the immediate gestalt of the primary palette. This visual undulation creates depth through the hint of a space within the secondary palette as a way to infer at an area beyond the immediate spatial layout.
The colors I am attracted to reference either warm or cool environments, often alluding to bodily temperature sensations of heat and tension, or placidity and pleasure. Xylor Jane’s work parallels my interest in sonic syncopations and color associations. However, her work adheres directly to the grid. There is a much more direct emphasis on a mechanized sense of time as well as a digitized color palate she refers to as “Prismatic Color”.

My work is simultaneously an acceptance of and ejection from a completely mechanical, screen-oriented perception. The organic nature of my compositions point to a bodily association that becomes earth-bound through the use of warm oranges, greens, greys and browns.

These color choices become essential to narrate corporeal movement, as they shift in light, hue, and intensity while they follow the form within the composition. In Entry Point (Fig. 4), the color relationships lack a definite adherence to the observable realities governing laws. Instead, I substitute direct observation for some of Johannas Itten’s theoretical concepts. This is most

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apparent in my use of chromatic temperature to create the appearance of simultaneous contrast. Throughout *Entry Point* (Fig. 4), red-oranges emerge in space as vibrant and distinct. As the form shifts between volumetric frequencies, green-blue split-complementary threads obstruct the chromatic harmony. Once these forms appear to rotate into the distance, the colors then become closer in properties, shifting from chromatic recognition into a distant grey-purple crevice. In Itten’s research, even the most rigorous color theory sanctions the inherent subjectivity of the maker. He claims that: “When agent and effect do not coincide, we have a discordant, dynamic, unreal, and fugitive expression. It is this power of material and chromatic realities to generate unreal vibrations that affords the artist “his” opportunity to express the ineffable.”

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Once I have decided on a loosely conceived compositional sketch, I work intuitively, reacting and responding to each line. Simplification of certain elemental components of my painting shifts from one canvas to another. My use

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of a linear mark provides an efficient means in communicating form, gesture, and movement, constructing and defining the image. This is most apparent in the series of smaller paintings, *Juggling (Fig. 2)*, *Crosshairs (Fig. 5)*, and *Inwards* (Fig. 6) where the only defining mark used to create bulbous interlocking forms is an imperfectly drawn line. These imperfections are essential to the organic nature of the larger structures within the composition. The scale of the work is narrow in order for the image to seem squeezed into and desiring escape from the pictorial surface. The immediate appearance of the composition is one of shallow depth, yet seems infinite when considering the boundaries of the surface that compact the chosen composition. This achieves a visual effect of pixilation or atomization, transferring the most rudimentary components of objects and zooming in to the point where they seize to exist as fully identifiable or wholly solid.

Karen Barad describes the correlation of seeing space between boundaries, “Nothingness is not absence, but the infinite plentitude of openness.”
She writes, “Here infinities are not mere mathematical idealizations, but incarnate marks of in/determinacy”\(^7\)

Barad establishes her notion as nothingness in a similar sense, as nothingness is not the antithesis of thingness, it is nothingness that is fluid in it’s resistance to identification, and in a sense, nothingness that is most open to possibilities to become.

In order to construct my work around sensations that can be felt but not necessarily seen, I use sound as a material that allows for transformative flexibility. I began to think of sound as form that relates to, yet defies logic of the visual world. Vibrating and recurring shapes formed by sonic patterning create painted gestures that slowly distort as they bounce and flow between areas of the painting’s surface. This creates a tension between movement and stasis. In composer Meredith Monk’s expansive practice, she reveals the human voice as a transformative medium. She uses sound to explore movement and composition.

There is a resonance between Monk’s investigations into the human voice as a mediator for a shape-shifting medium, and the ways a painting can capture felt sensations. Within my surfaces, echoing biomorphic forms replicate physical movements like breathing, speaking, and dancing. Areas of texture and flat color overlap to heighten the visual sensation of disassociation. Color is applied by observing light as it moves through intricate spatial planes. From one line to the

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next, areas are slowly built up in a succession that arrives at form, just as a
simple gesture such as drawing a line embodies potential to become anything.

Clarisse Lispector reflects on line and succession portrayed through the
character Joanna in *Near to the Wild Heart*, claiming, “Eternity was succession.”
And that “The utmost beauty was to be found in succession, that movement
explained form.” Regarding the process of constructing linearity, Lispector notes
“the imagination grasped and possessed the future of the present, while the body
was there at the beginning of the road, living at another pace, blind to the
experience of the spirit.” Here Lispector records the temporal aspect of creation,
how in the process there is a split between one’s state of making, and a
projection into the assumed realization of the marks. This suspension of time
exemplified in Lispector’s quote is not only psychological, but a deeply physical
experience, as if the mind anticipates the body to the same degree the body
anticipates the mind. By constructing spaces that combine figurative elements
with and landscape, I intentionally immerse the self into a fictionalized space.
Physical gestures, scale, and pacing of mark, make malleable the internal
functions of one’s body, as the eye is lead through the surface, capturing the
sensation of time.

The emphasis on physical interaction in my work is evidenced through an
insistence on the hand-made. This is made apparent as the hand-made gesture
mimics, yet fails to create a completely mechanical mark. The imprint of my

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hand, however slight, is integral to these paintings as it embodies experience and time. The tangibility of the processes’ history is dissolved into the surface, reappearing in the gestalt of the final image. Although there is a connection between my work and nature and/or the outside world, I intentionally avoid creating forms that are directly representational of the physiological. Denying or obstructing a literal read of my work creates images abstracted from easy recognition.

The lack of an identifiable figurative element or a concrete, traditional sense of space within my work parallels Tomma Abt's painting Zebe (Fig. 7) There is a shared desire to “keep every part of the painting engaged in some ambiguous connectedness.”

In an interview between Peter Doig and Abts, she speaks of operating between categorization terminologies:

My paintings lack a direct subject – I never know if they really are abstract. I can’t totally deny that they are, at least to some extent, but I don’t feel that abstraction – or its history is my subject. I feel beyond this issue but it never seems to go away.


The concept of connectedness is also suggested through visual references to the enculturated female body as pictured by feminist modernist painters in such elements as patterning and the simplification of form into symbolic expression. The construction of imagined spaces might also be seen as a theme running through the paintings of women artists. As the relentless succession of new technologies has transformed society since the mid-19th century, so too have depictions of space in relation to the human form shifted. In *White Iris*, Georgia O'Keeffe can be seen rendering a naturalistic subject with a subtler, more naturalistic palette and a compositional dynamic that smooths boundaries between forms. Working in the same vein, the figurative elements in Judy Chicago’s *Through the Flower*, 1973 (Fig.8) favor of a closer, compact composition that uses an acrylic palette with a nearly chemical sense of light. The Californian group referred to as the “Fetish Finish Artists” redirected focus away from naturalism in favor for a slick industrial chroma. Judy Chicago distinguished herself from this largely male dominated artist group by turning to O'Keeffe as a matriarchal figure of painting. She ingrained a sense of the contemporary by employing a similar palette and smooth finish to her paintings.
as her peers, yet largely worked off the grid, favoring organic movement and unfolding compositional imagery. Artist Ken Price who also emerged from the Fetish Finish group responded to the technological industrialization by opting to use granular and layered pigments to give character to his small-scale clay anthropedes. The anthropomorphic formations of Price’s work reflect dissolution of a self into a form that is at once transcendent and simultaneously bound to the material manifestations that determine human interactions.

These historical movements exemplify how technology develops alongside of humans; shifting our perspectives on the ways we experience the external world. This connection between humans and technology is described in Donna Haraway’s *Cyborg Manifesto*. I apply aspects of Haraway’s theory through my use of paradoxical space in painting that parallels the effects of viewing a device close-up, to shifting your eye to seeing something in the distance. Here, the body/psyche merges with the exterior technology, impacting the autonomous self. I create repetitive lines that accumulate into larger masses that slowly distort as they fold into and out of spatial depths. Haraway argues in her essay about the construction of such boundaries is the apotheosis of cyborgism, as
An effort to contribute to socialist-feminist culture and theory in a post-modernist, non-naturalist mode and in the Utopian tradition of imagining a world without gender, which is perhaps a world without genesis, but maybe also a world without end.  

By embodying a mechanized, systematic process of image production, I demonstrate the hybridization between human and technology Haraway refers to. However, my work is as much a conscientious acknowledgment of a mechanized production through repetitious marks as it is a rejection seen through my emphasis touch and the hand-made elements.

**Conclusion**

Territories of production, reproduction, and imagination further link my work to the human/mechanical dichotomy. There is a pleasure inherent in my experience of making and constructing an image that lacks boundaries between concrete observation and internal, experiential. Working sequentially allows me to illustrate to a lack of originating genesis in favor for a body of work that appears to arise out of and be influenced by it's own growing and internal logic. The repetitive textures in my work serve to express interconnectedness; that everything is both endlessly divisible but also inextricably tied together. Within each consecutive line errs of repetition construct nuanced gestures, achieving an image that becomes greater than the sum of its parts.

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Schmerler, Sarah. “Xylor Jane.” *Xylor Jane, New York, At Canada*, Art in America


Accessed May 14, 2018

“Stridulation.” Insect Wings- Amateur Entomologists’ Society (AES),

List of Images in Thesis Exhibition

Theresa Daddezio
4/19/2018 - 5/05/2018
Entry Point, Oil on canvas
36” x 24” 2018

Theresa Daddezio
4/19/2018 - 5/05/2018
Double Splinters, Oil on canvas
50” x 36” 2018
Theresa Daddezio
4/19/2018- 5/05/2018
_Juggling_, 2018
Oil on canvas. 34 x 22 inches

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_Palpitation_, 2018
Oil on canvas. 74 x 60 inches
Theresa Daddezio
4/19/2018- 5/05/2018
*Heat Wiggle*, 2018
Oil on canvas. 36 x 24 inches

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*Reverse Splinters*, 2018
Oil on canvas, 50 x 34 inches
Installation Images

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Installation View

Theresa Daddezio
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Installation View