

Nature & Captivity

Fall 2010 SMP



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Table of Contents



Section	Page No.
Foreword	4
Definitions and Parameters	5
Previous Studies – Summer 2010	8
Initial Intention Statement	9
Interview Part 1	10
Post-Critique Writing - In Progress Critique 1	13
First Studio Visit	15
Post-Critique Writing - Mid-Term Critique	16
Post-Critique Writing - In Progress Critique 2	19
Interview Part 2	21
Second Studio Visit	24
Art Event Analysis	26
Annotated Bibliography	29
Future Research List	35



Table of Illustrations



Plate No.	Page No.
Plate 1	5
Plate 2	8
Plate 3	8
Plate 4	12
Plate 5	12
Plate 6	13
Plate 7	15
Plate 8	16
Plate 9	19
Plate 10	20
Plate 11	24
Plate 12	25



Foreword

The human impulse to capture and categorize in an effort to better understand the world in which we live is an instinct that cannot be ignored. It enters into all of our interactions with the natural world. This unavoidable connection that we have with nature is evoked through our need to control and discover. The landscape that we find ourselves surrounded by is too large in scope for us to handle—the thought is too sublime. We fear this feeling of insignificance in the world and strive to avoid it—often through the minimizing of nature’s scope. We mark the earth with our human hand in an attempt to literally leave our mark. We also try to understand the world through our own use of language or the creation of orders to define what we experience.

Over the course of my attempts to depict nature and its wonder, I have continually shrunk, organized, and defined my subject. This was not my initial intent. I believe that it occurred unconsciously, an expression of my human need to do so. I realized that creating an artwork based on nature was, in itself, a way of possessing it. For a time, I continued to meander on this path, struggling to create work that could evoke the same sublime feeling I knew from my own experience. Yet, the work was never completely successful because I always obstructed this sense of transcendence with my attempt to create and contain the organic. Eventually, I realized that I had to acknowledge this downfall if I was to ever understand it. There was a period where I stopped making artwork and just spent time thinking about what I was attempting to do, what was actually happening, and what I wanted to pursue in the future. The result of this contemplation was the recognition of my own need to control nature, the same need that humanity has demonstrated for centuries in an attempt to better explain what we do not understand. I have since embraced this uncontrollable desire to control and capture nature and I am using it in the forefront of my investigations into the natural world. The following writings explain the process through which I have come to these conclusions and illustrate the journey of my research, thoughts, and artwork in my studies of nature in relation to the human spirit.



Definitions and Parameters

The following words defined and directed my research and experiences. I am defining them here to provide understanding and insight to my writings and artwork. A definition is given and is followed by the words significance to my personal work.¹

sub·lime: *adj* \sə-'blīm\ *a* : lofty, grand, or exalted in thought, expression, or manner *b* : of outstanding spiritual, intellectual, or moral worth *c* : tending to inspire awe usually because of elevated quality (as of beauty, nobility, or grandeur) or transcendent excellence

“If...we call anything...without qualification, absolutely, and in every respect (beyond all comparison) great, that is to say, sublime, we soon perceive that...it is a greatness comparable to itself alone. Hence...the sublime is not to be looked for in the things of nature, but in our own ideas.” –Immanuel Kant²



Plate 1, Zion National Park, View from Angels Landing, 2007

My interest in the sublime originally developed from my experiences with nature. From playing in the woods and the creek by my home to scrambling along granite boulders on the Maine coastline, to hiking along trails in national parks, all the way to the top of Angel’s Landing in Zion National Park, the feeling of the sublimity in the land was something I was awed by. I was determined to express how the land could evoke this overwhelming sensation. As I explored the meaning of sublime, it became apparent that the location of the sublime is not actually in the view, but in the thought that the view evokes. As Kant states, it is our ideas that are sublime. We are sublime. It is through this

idea that I have come to believe that we possess nature in an attempt to understand what we cannot when we are distracted by the sublime thoughts that develop from untouched, majestic nature. To counteract this feeling of being out of control, we remove the source that evokes the sublime so that we can maintain our authority.

cap·ti·vate: *verb* \ˈkɑp-tə-,vāt\ transitive verb 1 *archaic* : SEIZE, CAPTURE 2: to influence and dominate by some special charm, art, or trait and with an irresistible appeal

This word is important because both of its definitions are relevant to my thoughts on nature. I was at first only concerned with the typical use of this word, that is, the “appeal” and awe that I felt nature emitted to everyone. It is my later work that explores the idea of “capturing” that which we

¹ All dictionary style definitions were found at Merriam-Webster Online, <http://www.m-w.com>.

² Andrew Wilton and Tim Barringer, *American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States 1820-1880* (New Jersey: Princeton, 2002), 13.

are interested by. I think the use of these two meanings for the same word is an eloquent summation of my artwork over the past semester.

study: *noun* \ 'stə-dē\ 1: a state of contemplation : REVERIE 2*a* : application of the mental faculties to the acquisition of knowledge *b* : such application in a particular field or to a specific subject *c* : careful or extended consideration *d* (1) : a careful examination or analysis of a phenomenon, development, or question (2) : the published report of such a study 3: a building or room devoted to study or literary pursuits 4: PURPOSE, INTENT 5*a* : a branch or department of learning : SUBJECT — often used in plural *b* : the activity or work of a student *c* : an object of study or deliberation *d* : something attracting close attention or examination

All of the possibilities of this word work with my concept of collecting nature. The idea of carefully observing and devoting oneself to a topic, the idea of creating a space in a home for this examination, the idea of spending time and close attention to a topic—these are all ideas that I am considering in the creation of my work. It goes beyond this, though, to the genuine pleasure that occurs through serious study. This ultimately leads to the visual pleasure that occurs through a scientific aesthetic and the observation of environments on a minimized or simplified scale.

graphic: *adj* \ 'gra-fik\ 1*a* : of or relating to the pictorial arts; *also* : PICTORIAL *b* : of, relating to, or involving such reproductive methods as those of engraving, etching, lithography, photography, serigraphy, and woodcut *c* : of or relating to the art of printing *d* : relating or according to graphics 2: formed by writing, drawing, or engraving 3*usually graphic a* : marked by clear lifelike or vividly realistic description *b* : vividly or plainly shown or described 4*usually graphical* : of, relating to, or represented by a graph 5: of or relating to the written or printed word or the symbols or devices used in writing or printing to represent sound or convey meaning

The use of a graphic style is a way to further control the organic in my work. It clearly presents my work as created by the human hand. There is also something to be said for the clarity that this style gives my viewers. They can easily understand images even if they are abstract because there is a clean, simplified sterility to my artwork. This works within the scientific aesthetic because it is also designed for easy and quick understanding.

print: *noun* \ 'print\ 1*a* : a mark made by pressure : IMPRESSION *b* : something impressed with a print or formed in a mold *c* : FINGERPRINT 2*a* : printed state or form *b* : the printing industry 3*a* : PRINTED MATTER *b plural* : printed publications 4: printed letters : TYPE 5*a* (1) : a copy made by printing (2) : a reproduction of an original work of art (as a painting) made by a photomechanical process (3) : an original work of art (as a woodcut, etching, or lithograph) intended for graphic reproduction and produced by or under the supervision of the artist who designed it *b* : cloth with a pattern or figured design applied by printing; *also* : an article of such cloth *c* : a photographic or motion-picture copy; *especially* : one made from a negative

The medium I work in is printmaking, specifically relief printing. The medium choice is directly related to my use of the graphic in my work. It also develops from my connecting to nature with my work. Through my observations of nature, I have connected with the process of growth and decay, of subtractive and additive. I find this aspect of nature to emulate the printing process as I carve away on the plate, and add ink to paper. There are many stages along the printing process that emulate the various stages of nature's whittling away and thriving expansion.

col·lect: *verb* \kə-'lekt\ transitive verb *1 a* : to bring together into one body or place *b* : to gather or exact from a number of persons or sources *c* : to gather an accumulation of (objects) especially as a hobby *2*: INFER, DEDUCE *3*: to gain or regain control of *4*: to claim as due and receive payment for *5*: to get and bring with one; *specifically* : PICK UP

The idea of collect is vital to my idea of controlling nature, indeed to “regain control” of is one of the definitions for this word. That is precisely the power I am attributing to the idea of collection. It is all about the idea of collecting nature as something that can be controlled, easily handled, and added to over time. The aspect of bringing together as a whole is another part of “collecting” that I am interested in. How the different parts of my work can become understood as a whole, an entity unto itself. I view each work as a layer to a collection that is added to and accumulate into a bigger concept.



Previous Studies: Original Foundation from Summer 2010

Here I will discuss some of the ideas I originally entered into the SMP with along with what I worked on over the summer. I will discuss my interest in color and abstraction as it pertains most to this work and will explain the beginning of my semester.

This summer I attended Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Isle, Maine. For the past few years, I have returned to nature as a source in my artwork and I was greatly inspired by the landscape of Maine. I continued to abstract shapes, patterns, and colors from nature. I was interested in using the same imagery with different color choices to evoke different moments in the landscape. In *Yellow Print* I was responding to a meadow I visited at sunset that was down the road from the school. The colors from *Blue Print* were taken from the cold Atlantic that surrounded the Island. I was learning a new printmaking medium and I was excited by the new process. I made many prints, all of which were one of a kind monoprints.



Plate 2, *Yellow Print*, Gelatin Monoprint, 2010



Plate 3, *Blue Print*, Gelatin Monoprint, 2010

It was my intention to carry these ideas of abstracting and patterning organic shapes and the use of color to change the relationship viewers have with my work into the beginning work of my SMP. I wanted to focus on nature and my interpretation of it through memory and abstraction. The following writing is my intention statement from the beginning of the semester dealing with the ideas and work from the summer.

Initial Intention Statement: Original Parameters for Nature Study

There are many things I want to accomplish within the first six weeks of working on my SMP. I plan to explore, practice and perfect new printmaking techniques. My intention for the first few weeks of school is to work on multiple projects at once. I hope that I can set a stricter focus after working on various, diverse projects. Within this, I also want to explore new variations that I can make with my prints by layering mediums, plates, textures, and color. By doing this, I intend to push my art from falling into the mundane or the usual. I expect for many of these techniques I attempt to not turn out well or the way I intended. It is my hope to learn from these experiments; to find something that does work. I will also be exploring the different ways I make marks, the accumulation of those marks and whether or not they communicate what I want. To better understand this, I am going to be thinking about what is it about nature that I am attempting to express. I want to look at my interests in nature, but also what I am choosing to show. I want to consider how my work is similar and different from landscape artists and from abstract artists. I intend to research color in both nature and in art because I plan on using color to contextually place my abstractions in a viewer's mind.

I plan to focus on pattern and positive negative spaces within those patterns. I am not defining pattern as a strict repetition of shapes, but the repeating of forms, light, or color in nature. I am considering each pattern to be related but also individual. In this way, I plan to develop my own set of imagery and pattern that is derivative of nature. I will focus on form, line, and color to best express this imagery because it is through those three things that I best understand what I see in nature.

I intend to research artists and their artworks, as well as outside sources dealing with nature and attitudes toward it. I feel that by learning about other attitudes towards nature, I can better understand my own and address it within my artwork. My ultimate goal for the first six weeks is to create work and perform research so that I can understand the heart of what I am choosing to express and why.



Interview Part 1: Exploration of Intentions and Work

Questions conducted by Alyson Moore and Tara Hutton

What inspires you? What are some of the sources, both within art and outside of art that you turn to?

I am inspired by little things that get my attention throughout the day. Little things like the way a shadow falls across a walkway or two colors that appear next to each other that you wouldn't expect. Of course I look at patterns and repeating shapes and forms, especially where light is involved. I source from nature all the time. It is an easy place to take visual information from because I have always been so spellbound by it. My own memories are also a place that I retrieve information from to create my work. I think that returning to places in nature through my memory can be more informative than an actual, physical revisit to the place. Although, that said, I think that actually experiencing places is important or I wouldn't have the memories to go off of in the first place. Within art I source from strong female artists like Bridget Riley and Georgia O'Keeffe because of their careful consideration to color, form, and abstraction.

How important is self-expression to your art making? In what way does 'self' enter your artwork?

I think that self-expression is important to my work for the fact that I am creating and making these works and ideas from myself. Of course I am a part of everything I make, though I try to make it not be overly apparent. My self-expression isn't indulgent. My need to make art isn't just for me but for others. I am interested in making work for people to enjoy universally. I stay away from autobiographical content because I don't want my artwork to be about me. I don't even find it necessary for a viewer to 'get' my work as long as they enjoy it. I want to make artwork that is accepted by those versed in art but I am also concerned with the rest of the population being able to enjoy what I create. I think that is why I look at nature, because it something I feel that everyone can respond and connect to.

How does your choice of medium(s) affect your work and contribute to its meaning?

Hmmm... I think my use of printmaking is a good way for me to remove my 'self' from my work. Working in relief takes my hand as an artist completely out of the work, allowing me to just create rich surfaces and visual experiences for my viewer. They can think about the print and what it makes them remember or connect to, not about me. Printing also allows me to layer continuously. The overlap of colors in a print has an amazing sense of depth that is lost in digital works. The ability to physically layer plates also allows for me to layer meaning and subjects within one artwork which creates another sense of depth. And that's all to mention that I consider myself a printmaker. I think in prints, and backwards. When you mesh with a medium, I think you need to follow it.

Is your work ultimately more about your process or about the final product? Why do you feel that way?

I don't know how I could do printmaking and not be more concerned with process than product [laughs]. As I just mentioned layering is an important thing to me when creating a work of art and that layering is really about process. You can track the making of a work just by looking at it. Even though my hand as an artist is hidden, you can still see it everywhere based on what is layered on top, or cut away, etc. A lot of times I work intuitively and without an exact plan in my mind for a final product, but instead I let it evolve along the way. I don't need to have an amazing final piece to know that what I am making *is* art, because the process itself is an art form...a ritual even.

Does the context in which your artwork is displayed affect your artistic choices? How might you address this in the upcoming fall exhibition?

The display of my artwork is something I don't usually think about, I mean, it is always my last concern. I know that I am thinking of making big works of art and that means piecing things together, but I'll be honest and say I don't necessarily have a solution for that yet. I think I am going to learn a lot about display for this fall exhibition and maybe down the road my artistic choices will change, but not now.

What is your first memory connecting you to art? Do you think it is important to what you are doing today and how?

I know I have previous connections to art than the one that is most prominent in my mind right now, but I can reflect on it and see it as important. I was working on a collage in art class in what was probably 4th or 5th grade. I was working on making an image of a turtle but my heart wasn't in it and I decided to start over. I ended up making a simple, understated collage that was really all about color. I painted the colors I needed and then cut the papers into the forms of an apple and a worm. It wasn't groundbreaking but I remember it was entered into a county art show. It was probably my first experience of showing work to people other than my mom and dad [laughs]. But I know that the use of color is still prominent in my work, as is working on things that I am captivated by. Plus collage is something that I return to again and again as a way to create work.

How do you measure the success of your artwork?

Well, a lot of my measuring for success is gauged academically, like grades, critiques and entry into the student art show. I know that this only stands while I am attending school so I have begun to look at a new way to measure my success going off of the standards I have learned from critiques. So I guess I really measure my success by how well others can enjoy my work because in the end, I want people to be able to respond in some way. I want them to have some sort of emotional or intellectual interaction with my artwork. They don't have to understand it, though that would certainly be more successful if they did. I think that indifference is probably my best measure for failure. If people don't care about what I am making then there isn't a purpose in me creating it.

What about making art intimidates you?

What *doesn't* intimidate me about making art? I mean, what a difficult field to put myself in. Art is unlike any other discipline. You are really putting yourself on the line because artwork is part of the artist. Not to mention the fact that everyone immediately second guesses your ability to succeed when they discover that you're an artist. A person can only handle so many 'starving artist' jokes, you know? [laughs] That can be a lot of pressure to live up to, to prove people wrong. I think I am most intimidated for after college and trying to get involved in the art world. You hear such terrible things about it... You also hear about people graduating and just forgetting about their artwork. Making art is a part of me and I am honestly concerned that I could lose that. Art can be a terrifying field if you let it be, but I think the point is to defy all of that and carry on.

If you could have your portrait done by anyone who would it be and why?

This almost feels like the most difficult question to me...uh...if I was vain enough I might say Andy Warhol [laughs]. Actually though, I think I might pick Eric Carle, you know the children's book illustrator that works in the collages of painted paper. I think that would be brilliant! I can see a lot in common with his work and my own, but it would be fun to see the simple, whimsical version of myself in colorful washes and collaged paper. He isn't necessarily an artist working in the fine arts, but I think he is successful. Plus, I think his work is probably some of the first art I paid attention to as a child. It leads back to the first artwork I remember making. I am sure I was thinking of Carle when I made that artwork whether I realized it or not.



Plate 4, Linoleum Print

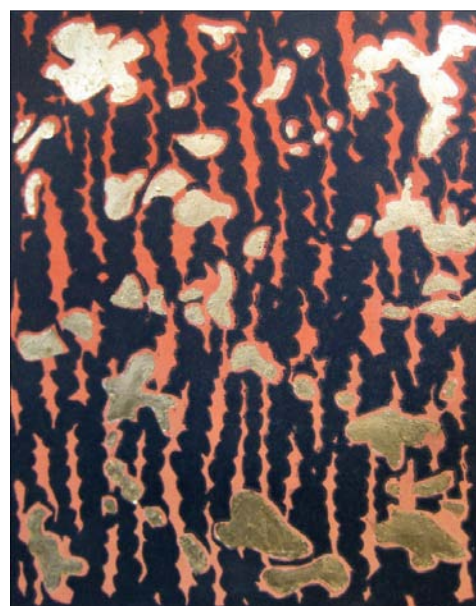


Plate 5, Linoleum Print with Gold Leaf

Post Critique Writings: Progress Critique 1

Response:

After hanging my work, I wasn't happy with what I had made. My three pieces felt disparate and stagnant. They weren't going anywhere within the picture plane or towards my next project. I have been at a loss as to where to go next. Anxious for the critique, I chose to sit back more and listen to responses to gauge how viewers would react to my work. The responses mirrored my own feelings: the work had no movement; the process isn't necessarily aiding the work; the size and formatting of the work doesn't make sense; there wasn't a lot of impact.

One of the positive responses to my work was my use of color. There was also approval of my use of nonrepresentational colors or my stepping away from local color. I think this will lead me into more play with highly saturated tones and using them to develop or negate natural colorings from my sources. Another issue that was raised is that my work should be larger and that the way it has been framed in prevents it from expanding. My work should and needs to be expansive, especially in relation to the idea of nature.

I think that I now need to research my source artists and inspiration more heavily. I need to make more preliminary works before creating a piece and know what I am doing before I begin to make a final work. I did not work on these last pieces with a plan in mind; I worked arbitrarily. I also abandoned my more movement filled line work and it was missed. I am going to return to my usual way of creating and I also hope that this will lead to more comfort in creating my work. Working on my last projects felt forced, not intuitive like I have come to expect in my art making.



Plate 6, Paper Cut

Intention Statement:

I create abstract art that is derivative of landscapes I have visited. The landscapes I use as my sources are places I have experienced and felt a resonance with. I have travelled to national parks out west multiple times, and none have intrigued me more than the three that make up the Grand Staircase: Bryce Canyon, Zion Canyon, and Grand Canyon. It is in these places that I have experienced the meaning of the sublime through the curving and undulating stripes of the Navajo sandstone. I am connecting the idea of the sublime in historical landscape paintings (the overwhelming, encompassing, emotional feeling that nature evokes in the human spirit) to my own experience in the landscape and to the overwhelming experience that pattern and art can create.

My main goal in my artwork is to recreate the sensation that the southwestern landscape makes me feel. When I hike up the canyon wall, I am impressed by the bright and smoky colors of the stone. The warm canyon wall against the deep, cool sky is the most brilliant pairing of color I have ever seen. The place feels enormous and expansive. I feel small against it, and yet I too feel expansive in this space. The movement of the canyon swells and sweeps vertically and horizontally, pushing past my periphery and into infinity. I am overwhelmed with emotion and I want to capture this in my artwork for others to feel.

I want my work to overwhelm. I want big responses from my viewer as they become submerged in the landscape that is my artwork. I want them to be stirred by the work. My artwork will have a presence in the room; it will be a place for the eye to linger like the view of a panoramic vista. My use of color will be a main cause for these responses to be created within my viewer. Saturated hues taken straight from my experiences with nature will attract the eye of my viewer, possibly even causing strain as they take in all of the chromatic, valued goodness of my pigments.

My artwork will be large, dwarfing my viewers and letting them feel the presence of the work. The size will create an experience that allows the viewer to feel as though they have entered a landscape of color and shape. The work will feel expansive, just like the landscape sources from my vacations that I will work from are expansive and infinite. There will be a lot of movement in my work so that the artwork will feel alive. There will be volume and depth within my work that will be created through the movement of my linear forms. The movement and depth created will push beyond the borders, increasing the feeling of expansion in my work.



First Studio Visit with Karley Klopfenstein: prior to mid-term critique

Karley Klopfenstein met with me this evening to discuss my artwork thus far in the semester. We first looked at my work still hanging up from the critique and she analyzed it with fresh eyes. She commented on how confined the work felt because of the linoleum block's size and also the print's framed border of paper. She was interested in my cut paper piece as a potential step in a process, but not an end. She referred to it as a stencil and wants me to continue to use it as such. She also commented that it does not feel as though I am experimenting enough and that I need to break out of what I am doing. This is something that I have been told repeatedly; that printing isn't the right choice for what I am attempting to do, but I do want to use printmaking. I recognize that this isn't necessarily a good reason for printing, but I do think that there is something about the quality of a print that I can only get through printmaking. I also agree with what Karley and everyone else has been stating about being confined to the press. I am certainly feeling it and am looking for new solutions.

After discussing my old work, Karley and I looked at and discussed my new ideas about combining the idea of the sublime and pattern. Karley agreed that I need to scale up my work to have it begin to match with my intentions. She recommended that I look into the works of the Hudson River Valley School and consider the way that they used the sublime in their landscapes. I told her that the idea of using the sublime came to me while looking at those very landscapes from early American history in my American art history class. Karley noted that I have a great sense of color and that I was doing good things with my heavily saturated hues and their combinations. This was good to hear



Plate 7, Preliminary Sketch from visit

because I have been more or less working intuitively with color. I am planning on progressing with my work from the point I am at now. I received positive feedback on my new direction and I think the big thing is to just start working on it. I am excited about my new idea which I wasn't with my past works. I am also thinking about things more carefully instead of just going for quantity.



Post-Critique Writing: Mid-Term Critique



Plate 8, *Canyon Horizons*, Collaged Prints, Fall 2010

Larger Topics and Main Critiques Referenced in Work:

The graphic or organizational quality of my artwork was discussed in regards to my natural, organic source. Colby discussed how my work is clearly not about the messiness of nature, and that there is a very graphic, linear quality to my work. The organization of the layers was discussed as being somewhat successful. The lower right third was considered more interesting because it is more volumetric. Joe liked the yellow line because he felt it was controlling the whole piece, though he didn't like it as much when he knew it was segments put together, just like the other sections. In a sense, this control worked against the sublime I wanted. My strict edges were also a method of control or organization that worked against the piece.

Another topic that was important to the understanding of my collage was the format and scale of the work and pieces. Billy did not like the size of the pieces I used to collage with in regards to the overall size of the work. He felt like they were too large and that the smaller pieces would increase the feeling of sublime. Heather seemed to say that the scale of my work is in-between and that the wall should eat it up or my work should eat up the wall; otherwise my intention of alluding to the sublime will not work. The fact that my work was on paper bothered many faculty members, they also did not like the edge of the paper. Working directly onto a substrate was recommended as the curling of the paper edge went against the graphic quality I was after.

The sublime was a large component of my work but it did not come across. Indeed, it was stated that my work is at odds with itself. Many people expressed interest in the little moments within the piece, and the whole, but that this did not come across as sublime. They also did not think that I had gone large enough for this idea to become apparent. Heather did not see an idea of vastness in my work and suggested for me to consider the wall when working on my next piece. Billy said that using

smaller collage pieces would make the work more about the sublime, though if I had I feel that the lines I so carefully printed would have been obliterated and I wanted them to be a main part of the work. There was only one reference to another artist during my critique and it was to Frederic Edwin Church and his use of sublime in his landscape paintings.

The issue of printmaking as my medium was discussed fairly rigorously. Everyone seemed to think that the prints themselves make no difference to the work. Many other mediums were offered up as alternatives, including tape and digital. The use of collage itself wasn't really discussed but it seemed that it wasn't successful and that I should consider another alternative.

The landscape or horizon line of the piece was recognized as an experiment, but overall everyone would have preferred the work better if I had not included any sky or horizon. They felt blocked into considering it as a landscape and also thought that the rectangle shape was too driven by that. It was suggested that the work be cut at the horizon line and allow that to just be the line. Carrie did say that working in landscapes is fine if that is what I want to do. My own interest though is not in landscapes but in the pattern itself.

My use of color was discussed minimally considering how much of the work is about the color. It was mentioned in afterthoughts, such as I really like the blue here, or when discussing what the yellow line does for the piece, no one mentioned that it occurred because I purposefully chose that yellow. Colby mentioned how the smaller prints seemed to be about using toxic colors versus organic patterns. Though I see all of the colors I use in nature, it is just that they are often heightened or overly saturated in my work. I would like to discuss color more in my next critique.

Response and Reflection to the Critique:

Overall, the critique has not helped me decide where to go next. The collage piece I made had a decent response to it, yet the work did not express what I wanted it to. The piece was not successful based upon what I was attempting to convey. Yet I do not know exactly what it is that needs to be changed. While, once again, questioning my medium, I wonder if I should stop trying to go large and just work within the available scale of the press. I realize that I feel more tied to printmaking than I do my subject matter. I realize that the subject matter I am using is one that is prevalent in my previous work, but that I have never done within the medium of printmaking before. Perhaps this has been my issue. Colby discussed how my work is graphic and that it is at odds with nature in a way because of this. I do not find the graphic quality to be at odds with the medium, so perhaps this is something for me to consider. Carrie has suggested that I work ideas out with prints, but then develop another way to recreate what I learned from the printing with another medium.

The scale of my work was unsuccessful. I was told it needed to be bigger or smaller or the pieces I cut within the space should be smaller. The idea of thinking of the piece to the whole is important to the idea of the sublime, and it is something to consider if I carry on with collage. I wonder if the idea of the sublime is something I can get across with cut paper at all.

I have now experimented with the use of landscape which was decided to hold back the work. I can now focus on overall pattern because chances are it won't matter to my viewer and that is what I am truthfully interested in. The most interest in my work was the bottom right hand third, the easiest portion to work on. I wonder if pulling away from the idea of sublime and simply working on these smaller, volumetric color pieces would be satisfying enough for a viewer, as well as me.

Intention Statement for Future Work:

After the previous critique, I felt that I had a direct sense of where I was going. After midterm critique, I feel lost and I am questioning both my medium and subject matter. I am confused as to where to go next. With decisions that need to be made, I find myself scratching my head. What am I actually interested in? Where should my work go next? I feel as though I have been trying too hard to put meaning into my work in an attempt to give my viewer something. Yet, I feel that focusing on color, form, and pattern can create works that are still interesting to a viewer. After all, those are the artworks that I am interested in viewing when I go to a museum.

I plan on scaling back my work, but layering it more. I plan on drawing and printing and making surfaces that my viewer will have to excavate with their eyes. I continually say that my work is about process, so I want that to become a forefront of what my viewer sees in my work. By layering, the process becomes apparent and a viewer can see what I did at what point within a single piece. I have been careful in how much I layer, but I think now is the time for me to go overboard. I want to plunge into complicated pieces and see how much is too much and how much is just enough.

I plan to focus more on reading about art and collecting ideas than I have in the past. I think looking at other artwork is the only way for me to understand how to convey what I find important in saying with my artwork. I also think that I should work on multiple ideas or styles of creating work at one time so that next critique I will have options. I can either pull from multiple works afterwards or stay with the most successful piece. By only presenting one work for midterm, I feel like I have backed myself into a corner that I don't necessarily want to find myself.

I am going to work on making more sketches and preliminary work that I can experiment with so that my experimentation is done before I make a final work. In this way, I am hoping to receive feedback on the ideas I actually hold interest in, not the things I was questioning when making the work. I plan on exploring with these brainstorm what I actually want to be said by my work, because if I don't know then no one else will either.



Post-Critique Writing: In Progress Critique 2

Response:

I had been looking forward to the critique because I was presenting new ideas within my artwork and also new ways to express these notions. I had shifted my focus on nature considerably so that I am now considering our (humanity's) relationship with nature and our need to narrow it in scope as a way to understand it; our inclination to categorize and contain what we see. In response to this I had made two prints and a terrarium, my first stretch into sculpturally translating a concept. My larger artwork, the print of the tree stump as a wound, held within the frame of white paper was



Plate 9, *Section*, Linocut and Gouache

considered the most successful of my two prints. It fully considered my concept and the mark of man on the natural subject was apparent. My connection of subject matter to medium was also viewed as a conceptual match. My terrarium is viewed in connection with the prints and the idea that I had started to develop was pushed further in the critique to have multiple containers that connect with my prints, such as an oversized portion of moss to be compared to the living moss in the jar. I am going to continue looking at my concept of captivity and ways to examine the natural. I also will consider the form that prints take in regards to my ideas and the edge of the paper.

Intention Statement:

The word “captivate” has two meanings: one is to be held in fascination by an irresistible charm; the other meaning is to capture. This word, with its two definitions, is defining of how I view humanities relationship with nature. We, as people, hold a desire to understand nature and to observe it, but this desire is often at nature's expense. In order to observe the natural we often disturb it and take it down in scope, categorizing and ultimately placing it into captivity. This scientific approach of observation, the collecting, cataloging, and capturing elements of nature is my focus in conjunction to the fear and intense emotion that the sublime can evoke. The scale of what we view in relation to our bodies is a deciding factor in how we as a viewer are comfortable in relation to what we are viewing. I am interested in playing with this scale and scope difference that can be placed upon a viewer's body. I intend to manipulate this by presenting my own samples of captured nature in relation to large scale prints that focus on the same subject. I will also investigate

how the subtractive method of printmaking I use relates to the subtraction of nature that occurs through investigation. It isn't an intention of mine to make a statement about our methods of observing and understanding nature, but to place the ideas in front of the viewer. Many situations that I present nature in will feel usual, but others will make a viewer question their relationship to what they are seeing. It is my intention to have viewers consider their personal connection or relationship with nature.

I intend to continue to produce relief prints focusing on aspects of nature with an emphasis on a form that relates to the idea of captivity. I also intend to create more sculptural elements of confined nature for observation—specimens—to relate to my larger printed works. It is my intention to evoke sensations of growing and diminishing connections to nature and power within my viewer. I want to explore multiple ways of categorizing nature and I want to explore the impulses we have in relation to this.



Plate 10, *Terrarium*, Glass container, soil, and moss



Interview Part 2: Articulating the Shift

Questions by Ahlyson Moore and Tara Hutton

To what extent do you want to convey concrete aspects of nature within your work? How important is it for the viewer to recognize specific aspects of nature, or is abstraction your goal?

Abstraction is not my ultimate goal. I do want there to be recognizable forms within my artwork, though I don't want my work to be viewed as realistic or figurative. I don't actually care if a viewer knows exactly what my source is, that they know whether I am looking at the surface of stone or water or tree bark. The specifics don't necessarily matter and to be honest, I might be thinking about all of those surfaces and combining them into one. I think the important thing is that whether or not a viewer can put a label on something or can express it with language, but that they understand to a certain extent why they feel like they recognize a shape or pattern. I think we can recognize things without being able to place them exactly. Like when you see someone's face from your past but you can't remember where you met them or the specifics, you just know that you recognize them. I am satisfied with a viewer having that feeling about my artwork because it gives them a touchstone for considering it further. I want to make artwork that people feel they can explore intellectually and put the pieces together even if there aren't really any pieces defined for them.

With your prints, you abstract and, to a certain extent, structure nature, something that generally is organic and growing. Why do you choose to do that? Is it related to your choice of medium?

I like the idea of considering nature, this thing that we consider to be growing at a constant rate and the idea of nature multiplying upon itself and then considering it in the idea of the subtractive. For instance, I've been looking at canyon walls which are made by the slow accumulation of layers of silt and dirt from when that land had been a sea. Then after the sea has disappeared from existence, a river cuts through the earth and carves out the canyon that we see today. All of this occurs in a timeframe that is unimaginable to me, and sometimes it is difficult to even imagine the canyon as a seafloor or as a river bank because what I see is the present state. That accumulating and then subtracting of material isn't considered at first glance. I think those ideas are much related to printmaking itself; the idea of the positive and negative spaces that are developed through the subtractive process of carving away, like the river, and the accumulation of ink onto the paper surface. I think a lot of people don't consider the process of making a print when they look at it right away, but to me that process has a lot of inherent meaning to my subject matter.

I think my use of structuring comes from this attempt to learn and understand. If I place ideas into specific spaces I hope they will be easier for me to grasp, as though I can simplify them and interpret purely through the visual and the making. I think that as gigantic and expansive as nature is, the nature of humanity is to reduce it, to prevent it from its full capabilities to overgrow and expand. Even when we attempt to revere nature and protect it, there is usually a large expense that is made on nature's part. I think that our desires to look at nature almost always come down to placing it into a sort of captivity; to restrain it and place it into a scale that we can handle. I think that is where the sublime because fascinating because it is that moment when we realize no matter how hard we

try, humanity cannot encapsulate nature into a Petri dish or zoo exhibit—it's just too overwhelming to attempt. This contradiction between the overwhelming, the vast, and the attempt to understand and explain is something I ultimately want to be expressed within my work. It doesn't just stop with the sublime because there is this need to push it and examine and organize. One way that I do organize is by expressing things graphically and I find that to also relate back to my choice of medium. Printmaking, especially relief printing, forces artwork to be bold and graphic. Expressing the organic in this bold graphic way is an enticing way to consider the relationship between us as people and the natural world that we are constantly restraining and pushing into our own parameters.

What is the role of color in your work, especially since your colors are rarely sourced from life?

My colors are sourced often from my memory, which in a way is an abstracted source from life. It's true that I don't run outside to match swatches and therefore there is a lot of wiggle room in the reality of my colors-yet I think that working from my memory allows me to articulate more than the actual local color of an object or place, but allows me to emphasize the feeling and light and space as it made me feel when I had originally been there. Color is powerful. It evokes so many ideas and feelings and thoughts, just from a single color. Even the absence of color is powerful just because it is so apparently *not* there. I am fascinated by this intensity that color can hold, the way it triggers our minds and senses, the connections we have to colors, the experiences that color can give. I feel that color is a large part of our lives but it often goes unnoticed. For the most part, everyone sees color everyday and we use it to understand our world but we often don't pay attention to it. Color is so commonplace. If anything, the use of color in my own work is to reinvigorate how we see color and recognize its influence over us. I want people to notice my choice of hues. I want them to be reminded of something because of a certain color. I want them to notice when a color seems wrong. I want them to notice what a color makes them feel emotionally. I want them to really think about why a certain color is where it is. Viewers should see it as something I have made the choice to include for an artistic purpose and that it shouldn't be discounted like color often is in our day to day.

What is the role of size and scale in your work? Do you make your images close-to life in scale?

Scale is inherent in my work. To be honest, I am still figuring out what the appropriate size is to explain the ideas I am grappling with. When I think of the sublime the obvious scale to work in is gigantic. The paintings of Yellowstone by Thomas Moran are a beautiful expression of this need to work large to encompass the vastness of the world. But once again, I am also interested in the restructuring of the sublime into something that is controlled-that is manageable. In this sense, the scale should be minimized and easy understand as an object. I think that my ideas of scale deal with what is significant and what is insignificant and how scale alters the scope of those things. The sublime is when you as a person feel so small in the world, but there are plenty of times when you also feel big or important outside of that moment of the sublime. I think I am interested in how a space can affect the significance of the same mark. How something that seemed important is suddenly stripped of its meaning. . I haven't kept things life-size because I am interested in the manipulation of what a life-size actually is. Scale is everything in my work and yet it is the hardest thing for me to deal with. Like I said, I haven't figured it out yet and I'm sure that will take me a long time to get

What aspects of nature do you want your viewer to take away from your work? The intricacy? The size? Its beauty? What is it you want them to recognize in a new way within your work?

I think more and more the aspect of nature that I am reflecting upon the most is the relationship that humans have with it. I want my viewer to understand the dynamic experience of immersing oneself in nature and one attempting to express oneself in a manmade version of nature. My work is controlled and linear, not organic and soft. It is as much about the wonder of nature as it is about the control of it; the desire to encapsulate it and admire it. I can't help but think of catching tadpoles as a little kid in the creek on the edge of my neighborhood. My friend and I would spend hours herding tadpoles, fish and the occasional crayfish into our nets and plopping them unceremoniously into buckets. There is this weird dichotomy of wanting to understand those creatures-to know about them-and to have them. We would haul them back home and watch them swim around in their small plastic-walled world. We would only return them after our parents forced us to. I don't doubt that we wouldn't have kept them until they died from swimming in circles. It's that idea of the fascination of nature and the cutting back that I want my viewer to consider. I want them to think of the potted plant sitting on their desk at home in relation to the outdoors or the laminate wood flooring that so desperately tries to recreate what nature has made. I want them to think of the idiosyncrasies of our relationship with nature. Understanding something and not understanding it in the process of attempting to.



Second Studio Visit with Carrie Patterson: Prior to Boyden Gallery Show

Carrie had not seen my work since the mid-term critique and was unaware of the shift in focus of my work. I explained to her my new ideas and how they have been manifesting into new prints and even conceptual sculpture work. The first comment that was presented was about my use of color. In specifically my tree rings print, she questioned why that color brown for the print. When using only two colors, she stated, I need to be sure that they are specific. Upon further reflection after the visit, I realized that I have shifted from using color from memory to using color symbolically. This I think is coming from a desire to show things in a natural color, but also to abstract it through our mental understanding and conceptions of color in relation to nature. For instance, we know that the ocean is blue and that is what we imagine in our heads. The actual variations of hue that occur in the ocean are not what we picture; we only place a symbolic blue in our mind.

We discussed multiple variations that can be done through the printing process. Carrie pointed out that I am going through the effort of cutting these linoleum plates and not printing multiples. She recommended that I explore variation in my prints and use the power of multiples in the show. Another idea for varying my prints was to make bleed prints, where the print goes off the edge of the paper. I have since decided to print multiple bleed prints of the plate I am currently working on. I showed Carrie the back of a hand printed print where the back of the paper became burnished from the rubbing against the plate. I told her I was interested in this as well and she agreed that the surface was interesting and that I could easily work with that. I have since printed a piece of paper without ink so that one side was burnished but that the other was embossed by the plate. I am interested in the subtleties of this and find it similar to my cut paper pieces and neutral toned prints. Another 'variation' that was mentioned is my exhibiting the actual plates I have cut because she found them interesting as objects themselves. This is an idea I have never previously thought of and yet it makes sense because so much of my interest in printing is the cutting of the plates. I feel that this makes sense with my interest in the process and the idea of subtraction in relation to my subject. We also talked about the tactile quality of my work, especially in regards to the plates. It was stated that this tactile quality is not present in the terrarium at all, though I feel that is a large part of the piece; to feel that closed-off sense of the captive nature.



Plate 11, Linoleum Plate



Plate 12, Linoleum Plate

Overall, my new idea made sense to Carrie. She understood my direction and she was interested in my ideas, including the terrarium. I was pleased when she mentioned that she can see several years of work ahead of me in my studio right now. I agree that there is a lot for me to explore and many directions that my artwork can develop in. I also feel, for the first time in a long time, that I am creating works that I am interested in and would be pleased to continue creating for years to come. It is pleasant to not feel as though I have exhausted all of my possibilities in one work like I did after mid-term.



Analysis of Art Events From Throughout the Semester: In sequential order

Event 1 - Karley Klopfenstein Artist Lecture

I was intrigued by Karley Klopfenstein before her lecture even began. I wanted to hear how and what a graduate of St. Mary's College of Maryland does with their art degree. I wanted to know how she was acting as an artist in the real world. Throughout the lecture, I listened closely to the path that she took. Klopfenstein attempted to attend graduate school and was dismissed from her provisional acceptance. She questioned what she was doing at grad school and how it was helping her, which are questions I am considering now. I think that I agree with her that a master's degree isn't necessary to be an artist. Her move to work at a non-profit art organization is one that I have begun to consider as well. I was interested that she left the organization because she couldn't work on her own artwork as much as she desired. Klopfenstein then wrote and received a grant which has allowed her to work on her work—while waitressing. These are the facts that I want to know as a student looking out at my future.

As far as Klopfenstein's work goes, I found many things that we share in giving importance to in our work. I was pleased with how much of an emphasis she places on research. I think that researching information and artwork is important for creating works that have meaning today. She focused on learning new techniques as well as the meaning of designs in carpets and textiles and she knew the dimensions of the bombs she modeled her "Carpet Bombs" after. The scale of her work was precise and had meaning to the work. Scale is something that I am discovering to be very important to my own work, especially because my own sources are so monumental. I also understood what Karley was saying about process being very important to her. When working in craft based art it is often because the hands on is a part of the work that can't be seen. She mentioned needing to run her hands over all of the work and to be involved in its creation. This is something that I wholeheartedly agree with and feel as I work with printmaking. Klopfenstein stated that 90% of being an artist is just the work. Being more process based, I agree and take heart in her endeavor to create her "Camouflage Tank" after two years of work.

Event 2 - Heather Harvey Artist Lecture

I enjoyed Heather Harvey's artist lecture more than most lectures that I have attended here at St. Mary's. I feel like it can become a rarity to hear an artist discuss their artwork with a strong sense of direction and clear articulation of ideas, but that is precisely how Harvey presented herself and her artwork. I know this is something I still need to work on because I have difficulty placing the appropriate words with my own artwork. Harvey had a clear interest that she has studied and can discuss in an effortless manner. If there is one thing I have taken away from this lecture it is a desire to discuss my artwork as intelligently as Harvey did.

Harvey found words to describe the things that are without words and explained her interest in “slippage,” the shifting of one meaning to another or the space in between what we know or can express and understand. In a way, I feel like this relates to the idea of the sublime that I am hoping to express in my own work. The sublime is an emotion, a feeling that I cannot describe verbally but I can express visually because it is experienced through the viewing of a landscape. I feel that if I research and reflect upon the feeling more, I can better articulate it through my artwork.

The materials that Heather used were well thought out, they had purpose. Their utility and also their aesthetic qualities are both vital in the understanding of her artwork. Perhaps my favorite piece was the pressed plaster that is formed directly onto the wall. The texture of the material is beautiful and yet it is what the wall is made out of on which it is formed. I liked the idea of building up her surface, especially after working with collage, an additive medium. The clear meaning that her work has in materials and the pressing concern of whether or not I am working in the correct medium is a big issue to me. I have wedded myself to printmaking and yet it is being questioned and stated that it is not doing what I need it to do. Heather’s work is conceptual and the medium matches the concept. She said that she didn’t train as a sculptor and yet that is the medium she has found to meet her artistic goals.

Heather’s use of the wall was another aspect of her artwork that I found important in relation to my own. When it comes to space and how one interacts within a room, I realize that my artwork has to have a large scale. Yet, having my artwork actually be the wall and not just be placed upon it would truly transform the space. Harvey’s artwork actually becomes part of the gallery and changes the way a person feels and operates in the space based upon the sculpture or forms that project into the space or the wall. Heather Harvey’s work intentionally evokes a feeling that may not have words placed upon it but can certainly be felt.

Event 3- Tenterhooks Gallery Opening

The Gallery Show for Karley Klopfenstein and Anja Marais opened under the name *Tenterhooks*; which has a double meaning that can refer to either the hooks used in the process of drying cloth or to a tense state of anxiety or suspense. Klopfenstein curated the show and chose Anja because of her focus on colonialization. Anja is from South Africa and is interested in the disconnect between people through colonization because of the racial issues and treatment by Dutch colonialists that she is descendant from. Anja also mentioned an interest in nature and natural materials. Her interest in the ocean is developed out of the idea of ownership and that it is the in-between space that no one can claim. Karley discussed her work again and did not express any new insights outside of her previous artist talk.

Karley has been working on her half-sized tank for the past two years and discussed in her lecture that she may not complete the tank in time for the show. The reason for this incompleteness of her artwork was because she was having difficulty acquiring the yarn she was using. The choice Karley

made was to exhibit the tank incomplete or “in progress” as she called it. She talked about this and stated that it was her choice despite that she didn’t have the materials she needed because the process is so important to her work that she wanted it to be emphasized by the incompleteness of the tank. I find this to be an absurd excuse. As a viewer I would not have cared if the wool was a slightly different color than the colors she used before or if the wool had been hand dyed in New Zealand. I think that process can be important but you also don’t showcase it at the expense of the concept.

I was personally most interested in this event to see the gallery opening and consider it in regards to the upcoming SMP show at the end of this semester. I was interested in how the space was used or wasn’t. I felt like Anja’s artwork used space in a functional way that allowed for the viewer to move around the work easily. Karley’s work felt like it was spaced out oddly and made me feel a little awkward as I moved around. I also thought that the larger works made more sense in the space, whereas the sketch of the tank seemed more suited to be tacked onto a studio wall than that of a gallery.

Event 4- Dr. Giunta Art History Lecture

The lecture on political artwork in Argentina entitled “The Politics of Representation: Art and Human Rights in Latin America” presented by Dr. Andrea Giunta focused on contemporary artworks dealing with a political issue that occurred about 30 years in Argentina’s political past. There wasn’t much background on the past issue that Dr. Giunta was focusing on, but it was apparent that people had disappeared by the hands of the government and have never been heard from again. The way the artwork addressed this was with the ideas of presence and absence. Many of the works focused on portraits or photos of the missing people and displayed them. This is a way to continue to keep the missing people present in society. Many of the works that did this were public artworks that many people would see, some being advertisements or memorials for the missing in the newspaper. The other idea that was used was absence. Photographs were restaged 30 years later with empty places for the missing people. The obvious lack of a person in the photograph in comparison to the original picture emphasized the lack of the person’s presence. There was also a work that was very minimal and was framed pages of a telephone book that the artist added the names of 200 missing people to the list, names that won’t answer the call. The names without the numbers truly epitomized the disheartening realization of family and friends inability to communicate with the missing people.

Another issue stemming from the missing people is that many women were taken when with child. The children that the women gave birth to were taken and placed in homes of government workers. A work that dealt with this issue placed the pictures of the potential parents that disappeared next to mirrors; the assumption the artwork made was that people could compare their own appearances against the photographs to question their lineage. Dr. Giunta stated that there was also a box for

anonymous writings and tips to be placed in by visitors to the gallery space and that three people were able to find out the identities of their parents.

These works were all very conceptually based but focused on the same issue. I was interested in the idea of public works that aid a community in dealing with issues. While I do not wholly understand what the political issue is, I can understand how the artwork is used to address the issue and even help a nation grieve the loss of its own people by its own government.



Annotated Bibliography of Research

Ashton, Dore. *A Reading of Modern Art*. Revised Ed. New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

I read only the first seven chapters of Dore Ashton's art historical writings. The first few chapters focused mainly on Matisse and Bonnard, and later on Rothko and Klee. The beginning discussion on Matisse is on his "world without walls" and the connection of the interior space to the outside space of a composition (such as the aligning of a room with a horizon outside of a window). I connected to this idea of connecting the outside, natural world with an interior, or domestic, manmade space. Another issue that Ashton raises was the ability to create space in a painting through color and time and how the use of color fields in Matisse's work emphasizes the plane surface of the canvas but also creates deep space, as seen in his *The Red Studio* painting. The idea of art as progress was also expressed, which is a typical idea pertaining to modernism. Perhaps the chapter that was of most interest to me was chapter 7, "The Organic Imagination" as it focused on the use of nature, observation, and science in regards to creativity.

Balken, Debra Bricker. *Arthur Dove: A Retrospective*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997.

Debra Balken wrote this book as a catalogue to a retrospective exhibit on the work of Arthur Dove. The work is reviewed chronologically in regards to Dove's biography, starting with work from 1907 and ending in 1946. The focus of my research was applied to the later years of Dove's work, explored in the essay "New Directions: The Late Work, 1938-1946" by William C. Agee. Dove's artwork uses the natural world as a source, this being the reason I am drawn to his artwork. In his later artwork, the natural source is still apparent, but his work becomes more abstract. I find his later artwork to become more graphic and geometric, and yet still sets focus on the organic. This dynamic is one that has been rising to the surface in my own work. I am interested in how Dove uses these contrasting ideas to develop compositions that create sense of motion, another aspect that I am exploring in my own work. His work becomes more about planes than the use of line and this is done through large areas of color. Dove is a master colorist and I would be willing to study him just for this reason. I am concerned with how his work moves towards the unobjective, but can

still be sourced to nature through shape and color. He takes issue with the word abstract and never provided a clear answer on his belief in it, contradicting himself. I find Dove to be an important artist to consider the idea of the abstract, especially when using a direct source.

Garrels, Gary. Plane image: a Brice Marden retrospective. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2006.

This exhibit catalogue was created for a retrospective and therefore documents Brice Marden's work throughout his whole career as an artist. The first two essays ("Beholding Light and Experience: The Art of Brice Marden" and "Force of Myself Looking") discuss the chronology of Marden's work and also compares his work to other artists, such as Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Henri Matisse and Jasper Johns. Art history is very important to the creative process involved in Marden's work though it may not be overwhelmingly apparent through his paintings. Marden's purpose for creating art develops through a desire to create an emotional reaction in his viewers to his abstractions. "Image opens up a reflective experience—retinal and cognitive, emotional and spiritual" (page 12). The inspiration and sources of Marden's work are discussed in great detail. Landscape, travel, art, and the human figure are all various starting points for one of Marden's paintings and they are all both hidden and evident within the final piece. The emphasis on travel and nature translated into abstract work is one of my main reasons for looking at Marden's work. I am more interested in his ribbon-like paintings than his monochromes, however the subtlety of color, place, and time is important throughout all of his work. I find the importance of the human figure in Marden's work an important aspect of abstract art that is often overlooked and because of this, Marden's artwork is helping me to consider the human figure (of the viewer) in relation to landscape and my own artwork.

Henri Matisse: Drawing with Scissors, Masterpieces from the Late Years. Ed. Olivier Berggruen and Max Hollein. New York: Prestel, 2002.

My interest in Matisse's cut-outs developed from my interest in pattern and in collage. Matisse is a master of Modern art. His cut-outs were greeted with both praise and scorn. I was most interested in how the use of collaging was a process that he found to improve his artwork where painting or drawing stopped. In fact, Matisse felt that the paper cut-outs were the ultimate way for him to produce works because it was the combination of line and color. He also believed that the cut-outs merged drawing with painting and that "Instead of drawing and then applying colour, I [Matisse] draw direct with the colour" (page 53). These later works are also greatly related to the decorative arts, a connection which Matisse was quite happy with. One of my great concerns with patterning is its inherent connection to the decorative arts. While this is something, like Matisse, I don't mind on a commercial level, I do not want to create decorative arts under the guise of fine art. In other words, I do not want to present a show on purely decorative arts that are attributed mostly to beauty than concept. One important characteristic that I considered while reading this text is that Matisse's cut-outs came at the end of his career. He also did not stop painting completely. These cut-outs were not an end all to his artwork, but came at the end of a highly successful art career for which he was greatly admired and considered a master. This is a fact I am considering as I turn to collage in my patterning.

Jaffé, Hans L. C. Piet Mondrian. Norwalk, CT: The Easton Press, 1985.

This book examines the oeuvre of Piet Mondrian's art. The text describes the clear evolution that Mondrian's work takes as he develops his mantra of "always further" and begins to found ideas of abstract art, De Stijl, and Neo-Plasticism. Mondrian originally worked from nature and landscapes. Over time his work became infused with his concern of distancing his subject matter into pure abstraction with a focus on the reduction of form. De Stijl, which Mondrian helped found and wrote a book on that stated, "The new man re-creates nature in terms of what he has become himself – nature and non-nature as a balance of equivalents" (page 46) and "The cultivated man of today is gradually turning away from natural things, and his life is becoming more and more abstract" (page 34). I am interested in the overall shift of Mondrian's work from expressing things naturally and realistically to the stringent compositional style he administered in his work until his death in 1944. The shift from naturalism to pure abstraction was also done as a means to understanding, something I have become increasingly concerned with in my own artwork. I find the need for Mondrian to control nature through abstraction and to put his human experience upon nature as dovetailing with my ideas of understanding nature through containment. I am also greatly impressed with Mondrian's artwork and the rigor with which he applied his thoughts. I find him ever encouraging and inspiring as an artist. I deeply respect his commitment to his ideals and his help in the founding of abstract work.

Kudielka, Robert. Paul Klee: the nature of creation, works 1914-1940. Burlington: Lund Humphries, 2002.

This book was printed in conjunction with the exhibit by the same name that took place at the Hayward Gallery in London. The book focuses on different aspects of Paul Klee's work, from colour to rhythm to motion and other formal aspects. There is also an opening essay by Bridget Riley, another of my source artists, that makes the reoccurring point that Klee viewed abstraction and art, not as an end, but as a beginning, or a genesis as he would call it. My interest in Klee developed originally out of color, as addressed in the essay "Colour and I Are One: The Journey to Tunisia and the Origin of the Square Paintings". The way the colors are mixed and also placed within a composition to create a harmony (such as *New Harmony*, 1936) is of interest to me in my own work in regards to color placement and the way colors relate to each other within a composition. My main point of focus in this book was "The Central Opposition Dividual-Individual: The Formative Process Reflected in Line and Colour Divisionism". This essay explores how Klee views space as temporal and how it can be created through line and color. Layering was important to Klee's work, but giving it different effects such as growth, accumulation, or expansion, and compression or contraction. This also lends to the idea of his artwork being generative instead of a result. The layering that Klee uses takes form through shape, line, and color. He ranges from geometric line work to organic line to pointillist dots filling in the 'space' of the paper. My interest in layering patterns is similar to the relationship Klee would make between a solid block of color and a shape or dots on the same surface.

MacGregor, Neil. Bridget Riley: dialogues on art. London:Thames & Hudson, 2003.

The focus of this book on Bridget Riley is on interviews with the artist and understanding her connection to her artwork. Riley is very aware of art history and is well versed in the vocabulary used by language and the eye itself. My main interest in Riley is her interest in the eye and how it functions with her artwork. The idea of scale, rhythm, pattern, color, and movement are all inherent in her artwork. These are all ideas that I am plugging into within my own work. Riley's artwork has a clear evolution in time and she acknowledges that she isn't interested in consistency, but rather progress. I have always been fascinated by the progress of Riley's work and this also speaks to me as I am beginning to dig into my own artistic ideas and practices. Riley's work changes over from black and white, to gray, to a use of intense color. This shift to color is addressed by Riley and is developed out of visual sensations in the actual, natural world. She also began to use colors from travels. These uses of color correspond directly to my use of color in my works. The placement of colors next to each other determines hue changes, another aspect of color that I experiment with. Riley is not concerned with the immediate connection an artwork can give a viewer, but is more interested in awakening the feeling that a viewer has previously experienced what they experience in front of her paintings. That subtle pushing of sensations onto a viewer is one of my main interests in creating artwork.

Marshall, Richard D. Georgia O'Keeffe: nature and abstraction. Milan: Rizzoli International, 2007.

Georgia O'Keeffe: nature and abstraction is a catalog from the Irish Museum of Modern Art for an exhibit of the same name. The focus of the exhibit is to highlight the transformation of O'Keeffe's source of nature and landscape into abstracted compositions that are primarily created through color and form. Her work is viewed as monumental despite the smaller sizes of her canvases. This monumentality is discussed through shape, fluidity, and solidity, and her responding to actual places in the landscape. The sense of place (and sometimes the lack of it) is important in the work of O'Keeffe and to myself as I am using memories of places I have experienced. The catalog discusses how there is a mix of fact and fiction in her work as she transcribed the landscape accurately but responded freely with color, scale, and surface details. Considering this artwork in regards to my own makes sense as I strive to interpret the landscape into abstracted imagery. O'Keeffe often notes the feeling of the sublime and is quoted often within the catalogue in regards to how inspired and connected to the New Mexican land she felt.

Nordland, Gerald, Mark Lavatelli, and Charles Strong. Richard Diebenkorn in New Mexico. Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico, 2007.

Richard Diebenkorn was an artist that was recommended to me at the start of the semester. He flirts with landscape and natural form in his abstract paintings. He is often inspired by the land and experiences in the place he is in. This catalogue was a focus on Diebenkorn's work during the two year period of time he was completing his master's degree in art at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, New Mexico, from the year 1950 to 1952. The reason for focusing on this time period was to truly understand the sense of place that developed in his work when restricted to one location. A large portion of the text focuses on a biography of Diebenkorn, where it becomes apparent that he moved often to different locations across the country. I am personally interested in how the specific New Mexico landscape enters into his work through line and color because those are the two ways I am thinking of place in regards to the landscapes I am using in my own work. It

is the opinion of the authors that Diebenkorn's work reached a breakthrough at this time in his life and I used this book to explore his ideas of composition in relation to both place, natural forms, and abstraction.

Taaffe, Philip. Philip Taaffe: the life of forms: works 1980-2008. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Pub., 2008.

This book focuses on the artwork of Philip Taaffe, an avid pattern maker and reinterpreter of forms. Taaffe is the most zealous patternmaker that I have researched. His work is described as "decorative, hedonistic, enamored in the material world, yet characterized by a deep need for spirituality and transcending" (p11). His work ranges from collages made from tape to giant paintings to large mixed media collages. He uses linocut prints and collages them onto paintings to create new patterns, a process that I am interested in experimenting with after working in collage with prints. Taaffe even discusses the idea of the sublime in his work, but not in the traditional sense espoused by the Hudson River Valley School. Instead he is after a sense of sublimity that is entertaining and "delights in the face of profound uncertainty" (p17). Taaffe also spends a large amount of time preparing to make works, making stencils, printing, etc. Using all of these layers leads to rich surfaces and effects. I am involved with the idea of layering and developing rich surfaces in my own artwork. The process from which Taaffe works is improvisational and ritualistic. I am fascinated in the development of his artwork as I continue to find a process that works most effectively for my own artwork, but I too tend to work by improvisation. Taaffe is creating a world for his artwork to live in and developing his own definitions. This is something that I can imagine eventually doing with my own artwork as I distance myself more and more from my source.

Twelve Americans: Masters of Collage. Buffalo: Thorner-Sidney, 1977.

Romare Bearden, Joseph Cornell, Robert Courtright, William Dole, Arthur Dove, Lee Krasner, Robert Motherwell, Robert Rauschenberg, Ad Reinhardt, Anne Ryan, Joseph Stella, and Tom Wesselmann were the twelve artists that this collection focused on. The main purpose was to show diversity in the application of collage to art making and a diversity of approaches to collage. The text itself emphasizes this diversity but does not interpret the works that they present. The effect of this book was one of perpetuating interest in collage and how it is used as both preliminary works and final works. I became interested in the work of Joseph Cornell and how he often used objects or images relating to nature but were clearly removed from their original source or placed into an artificial "natural" environment. The work of Rauschenberg has made me consider the use of three dimensional, sculptural objects in my own work. I also became aware of how the cut edge can signal ideas; I can use this to heighten the feeling of containment and human rigidity in my own work. The grid like works of Robert Courtright would be a good example of this need to control and order objects by unnatural terms.

Wilton, Andrew, Tim Barringer. American Sublime: Landscape Painting in the United States 1820-1880. New Jersey: Princeton, 2002.

My original interest in this book was to study how landscape artists evoked the feeling of sublime in their work. As my interest changed, however, this book became even more useful as I decided what I was interested in evoking in contrast to the feeling of sublime. The essay “The Sublime in the Old World and the New” provided a definition of sublime that I had not previously considered; that is “The Sublime, on the other hand, refers to the other basic human instinct, that of self-preservation: ‘whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain or danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant with terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*, that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.’ Burke listed the main causes of the sublime: darkness, obscurity, privation, vastness, succession, magnificence, loudness, suddenness and so on” (page 13). The idea of one’s ideas as being what is sublime, and not the land that evokes those ideas is also presented in this text. These are ideas I am going to carry within my artwork and present against, as I explore the control of the sublime.



Future Research List

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