

THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

M.F.A. Graduating Paper

A Written Accompaniment to the Thesis Exhibition:

THE STUDIO, THE STAGE, THE SALON

by

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Abstract

The Studio. The Stage. The Salon, are dramatized sets that represent a synthesis of the work I have researched and produced throughout the M.F.A. program. The multiplicity of my art making practice and the existential identity of culture and self informs the production of meaning attributed to each piece. The common theoretical thread of embodiment establishes an open pattern of thought for each setting, and structures the methodological framework for this analysis.

I am making theoretical inquiries into: ethnology and embodiment; alchemy and mysticism; philosophies of art, beauty and the aesthetic encounter; mirror images and self-representation; the art of seeing, working and knowing; art as object, subject and agent; semiotics; and positions for, open and against interpretation. I suspect that there is not one theory or category such as modernism, feminism or surrealism that weaves through my work but a blend of models that shifts with each piece. I'm a Romantic at heart -- "I know this much is true"¹ -- yet current readings and critiques are questioning this construct and it's what I don't know that drives me the most.

I consider The Studio. The Stage. The Salon to be three different settings or worlds in which the discussion incurred alternates between maker and audience, the *signifier* and

¹ Wally Lamb, I KNOW THIS MUCH IS TRUE (New York: Regan Books Harper Collins Publishers, Inc., 1998). By chance I passed by this novel in the summer of 1998 and in the same way that the art work of Eva Hesse can be said to have influenced my style of art, so too has Wally Lamb's ways with words affected my creative writing style.

signified. There are *signs* of content dribbled everywhere as I embrace my identity to embody a theme. I use poetry in my writing to imply and conceal content in the same way that I layer and scratch away at the paint. In *The Studio*, I discuss both content and process as it relates to the multiplicity of my work and the intuitive *free play* with materials, marks and styles. *The Stage* is a chapter that unravels the layers in my work as historical, spiritual and poetic characters submerged in a game of personal myth and intellectualized tag. The actors and objects are presented in two divergent scenes: The Production of Meaning and The Meaning of Production. Finally, *The Salon* is reserved for the specific analysis of the thesis work shown at the Nickle Arts Museum.

Acknowledgments

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To Kent and Dave
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Introduction

The Studio, The Stage, The Salon,

On the painter's palette waits a stroke of red

Silence sweeps the floor...

...stroke the flesh... reveal the truth...

...crawl into the folds...

...the gateway to beauty - classical, idealized beauty...

find the pearl and paint it red.

The walls; arched by tranquil shadows, contain the crowd

stiffly starched, black panoply - with rigid and frigid glares

some want in, some want out and others quietly wait.

Will red meet the flesh???

stroke the flesh, reveal the truth, the lonely naked truth

and stain it red... Move in deeper, penetrate the paint

its all about pain, and the fiber that strokes the flesh

the muscle that molds the flesh

the mind that paints it red

the eyes that see the truth... and later find a corner

record the moment, record the red.

The artist finds (her) place, in front and behind,

crucified on the wall - where it all begins and ends

the fabric and the flesh;

the studio, the stage, the salon...

the invited guests;

still waiting for the Michelin guide to render their world in cadmium red.²

² Cindy Thachek, Inside Courbet's Studio and The Metapicture Behind His Seven Years (excerpt from an essay written for Art 499, Uof C, 1996), p. 1; simplified, revised and performed during a presentation of self, Visiting Artist Lecture Series, Nickle Arts Museum, 1997).

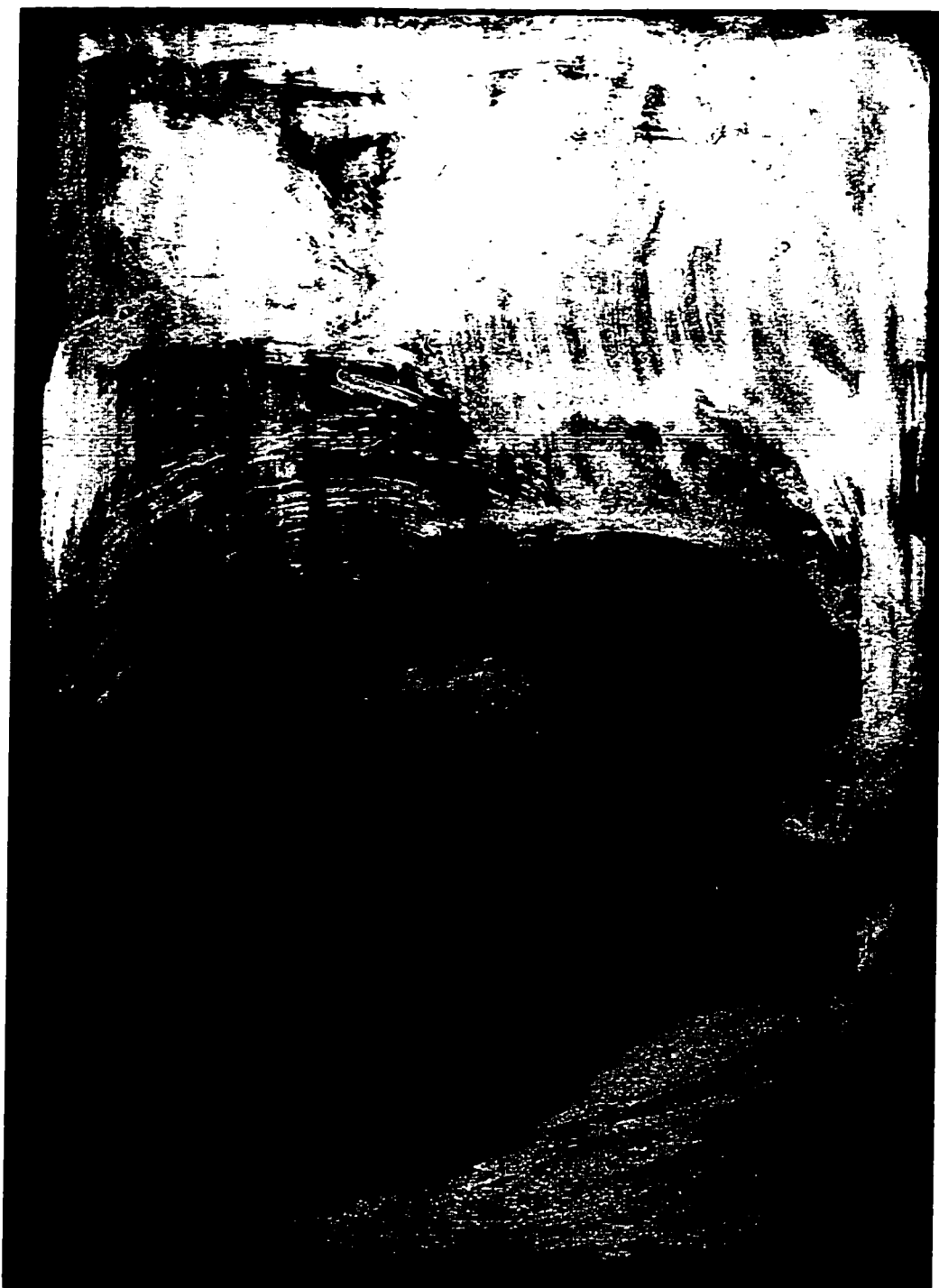


Figure 1. Thachek, Red Stroke, September 1997. Mixed media on paper, 40" x 60".

Chapter 1: *The Studio*

Inside the Walls and Layered with Skins

I am an artist, a teacher, a mother and a wife -- a musician, a singer, a dancer -- a writer, avid reader, community volunteer, gallery board member, company director, dog groomer, gardener, cosmetician, seamstress, letter carrier, homemaker, house designer/builder, and rather decent cook -- a wanna be songwriter, composer, education software developer; and experienced advisor, sister, daughter, student and friend... . In a world of multiple roles I find both balance and peace of mind in my cluttered, unpretentious place entitled, *The Studio*.

The Studio is my space -- a retreat for meditative, impulsive and creative behaviors. An environment that nurtures, exhausts and demands excellence in production and performance of self. The self to the self and the self to the other self. That is, the one that we think we know but are always seeking to meet. And just when we meet our self (or our other self) we discover an allegorical, metaphysical or entirely new self. I am fascinated by every detail of the self, not in a Freudian analytical sense, as I agree that soft relativism self-destructs³, but in a compound or binary read of the layers within: The superimposed layers that are transcended, revealed or worn away with time. Everything about the self is a layer -- inside the skin and out. Some layers are transparent, others blurred by knowledge, and still more are consumed, engulfed or obscured by a shift in identity. Defining myself as an artist means discovering those alterations or shifts that

³ Charles Taylor, The Malaise of Modernity, (Concord, Ontario: House of Anansi Press Ltd., 1991), P. 37.

make me different from everyone else and what the significance of these differences mean. This is not always easy because even the more apparently fixed layers are in a constant state of flux. The studio is the experimental ground for the performance of self that precedes the layers in my work (Figure 2).

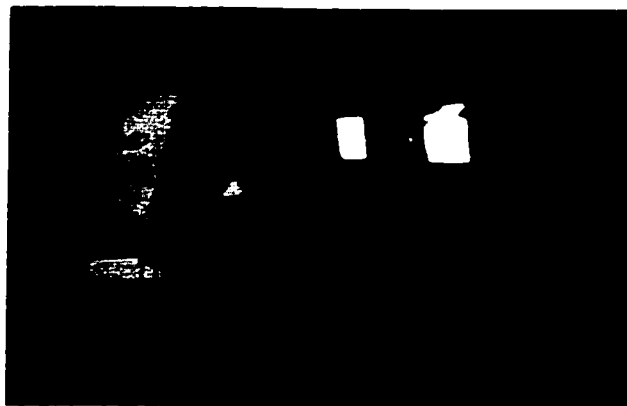


Figure 2. Installation of Data: Video Projected Self Portrait, 1998. Still images of self.

There are essentially three physical spaces where I produce: in my shared studio at the UofC, in the studio above my garage at home, and on the dock or deck at Shell Lake, Saskatchewan. The work reciprocates the environment to the degree that external stimuli are transcribed by internal themes. It is a play between inner and outer identity fields. When I paint outdoors I react to external elements in nature and when indoors I engage in the psychological processes of imagination and mind (Figure 3 & 4).



Figure 3. Studio on Dock, 1993.



Figure 4. University Studio, 1995.

The studio fluctuates as a mind set and is something I tote around. As an artist on the road with charcoal, paper, canvas and paint, or as researcher with a notepad, camera, camcorder, or laptop -- I embrace both traditional and technological tools to render ideas.

I am curious about the idea of art. Where others are interested in debating and negating a definition of art, I accept it as a circumstance in life. I am well educated on different theories ranging from Platonic to semiotic views but it is the individuality, multiplicity and multilinear reads that interest me the most. While interviewing art students for my Art 603 research project, Sociology and Art: The Art Student -- Are We a Social Stereotype? I was interested in observing “the degree to which pre-determined ideas on creativity and art are set and maintained in the development and education of artists. ... To get at the core of my research I compiled a list of questions designed to entice cliché responses to questions about art. I invited students from various levels in their art program to respond to the questions in whatever way they chose. I stated my intention to use the data in an installation and encouraged quick intuitive responses. When designing the questions I considered the possibility that participants would see them as mundane, redundant or rhetorical but was surprised by the level of imagination and serious verbal and written output I received.”⁴ Gathering and installing the research data was so much fun that I forgot all about social stereotypes and trying to define the idea of art (Figure 5). In my studio I don’t think about what makes Fine Art fine or if art reflects life -- I just work hard and I make lots of stuff.

⁴ Mixed media demonstrations and workshops done while instructing at the UofC 1998, as a clinician for the Calgary Separate School Centre 1998/99, and at the Calgary Teacher’s Convention 1999.

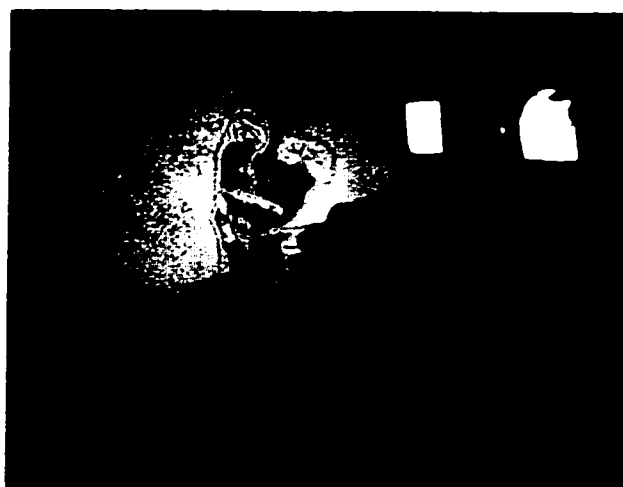


Figure 5. Thachek, Installation of Data: Video Self Portrait, Filtered and Screened, 1998.⁵

The studio is a podium for making, demonstrating and teaching. I love presenting at workshops with mixed media a la carte or performing as an artist with a loaded table top and smorgasbord of stuff. There is nothing like a studio atmosphere in flux, contouring content to pour its way into visual matter that is as diverse as the overlay of material methods used (Figure 6). I push both serious and silly issues in my work.



Figure 6. The Table Top Studio, 1997.

⁵ Thachek, The Art Student: Are We a Social Stereotype? An Installation of Data, 1998, p. 3 in summary notes. In conducting interviews for this research project, the video camera became my studio. The footage was used in a mainstage and sideshow production that layered an institutional ingestion of art within a surreal living room scene. The production was surrounded by a floating river of toys and allowed the viewer to enter the scene, sit down and watch the show.

It is admirable for an artist to produce work (from gesture and/or crypt) that will visually and intellectually, musically or lyrically, imaginatively or emotionally -- speak for itself.⁶

My behavior in *the studio* alternates within a system of binaries such as: chaos and order (as in organic and structured forms), horizontal to vertical (paintings transcended from the floor to the wall), convergence/divergence (activating two dimensional and three dimensional space), looseness/tightness (freeplay and control), macro/micro (texture and detail), additive/subtractive, black and/or/in white (working with ink and “The Way of the Brush”).⁷ In addition to the infinite layers of my working and living, the transcendence of the unknown or spiritual to the sublime is a parallel that dichotomizes meaning. This may seem like an exhaustive list, but as an experienced student operating within the parameters of a terminal degree, I choose to take learning risks. In a previous artist statement I wrote:

A linear read of my work is a dizzy nightmare; made more remote by a method that is bent and bound to a code of obsessive desires. Each twist of rope or shred of canvas comes from a gut impulse to satisfy an aggressive compulsion to work. This feeds my creative energy -- sometimes favorably and other times not. The layering of content compounded by many applications of paint, accounts for the agitated marks of the surface texture. I resolve this ‘overloading’ tendency by working on many projects simultaneously. Concurrently, I compile a large body of work in a short expanse of time. I enjoy the process of making art and a shift in identity and meaning is inevitable with every work.⁸ (Figure 7).

⁶ Artist/Research Statement, 1997.

⁷ The Way of the Brush: Calligraphy Workshop with Chin-Shek Lam, 1985 and Water Color Workshop with Jack Wise., 1986.

⁸ Thachek, Mine is a Jagged Path, 1998.



Figure 7. Figured on Red, is a painting that was exhibited above a black leather couch in the mezzanine gallery, 1995. It hung on the Little Gallery wall for the first few days of my Painting and Print show in May 1996. It was edited out because it needed a couch. The gallery wall was an inappropriate context for the delicate content of the work. It now has a comfortable home above an old beat up couch and it hangs as one of the strongest and most memorable paintings I have so far produced.

This painting provides a vital turning point in my discovery of the layers within the self. Layers of persona, and insecurities with presentation -- still not sure if I could trust what was being pulled out from my can of paint. I had just spent several years in the desert, isolated from teaching, and submerged into my role as mother-wife. I began an educational software development company on the side to validate my retreat from a working career. It was a brief affair with technology and one that still sits in the back of my mind (buried deep in the folds). However, I recall waking up one morning and with my thoughts screaming out loud, I declared, "I am not Walt Disney and the school my son is going to sucks!" Thus begins the story of my journey back.

The personal, historical voice behind *Figured on Red* mirrors an important scholarly trend among feminist, theorist, anthropologist, sociologist and other scientific fields: In a world that is infatuated with technology and communication media, and at a time when interdisciplinary studies serves as a model in education, I agree with ... “Levi-Stauss’s observation that academic attention seems to become focused on phenomena precisely when they are ending... (and that) ...we are seeing ‘the end of one kind of body and the beginning of another kind of body’ ”.⁹ In other words, as Csordas explains, our body is no longer accepted as a fixed, brute fact of nature or a:

... material entity subject to the empirical rules of biological science, existing prior to the mutability and flux of cultural change and diversity and characterized by unchangeable inner necessities. The new body that has begun to be identified... ‘...has a history’ in that it behaves in new ways at particular historical moments (Bynum 1989: 171), and that the body should be understood not as a constant amidst flux but as an epitome of that flux (A. Frank 1991: 40).¹⁰

This analogy that the body has a history and is the epitome of flux is an enormous theoretical framework for analyzing my work. My history predicates my existence of being-in-the-world and transcends my intuitive freeplay with content and matter from the studio to the stage. Everything I do is already there -- a performance waiting to be seen (Figure 8).

⁹ Thomas J. Csordas, Embodiment and Experience The existential ground of culture and self () , p. 1.

¹⁰ Csordas, pp. 1-2.



Figure 8. Dancers, University of Western Sydney, 1999.

My process for making art is similar to a historian's account of the past or an inventor's experiment for the future. Both are bridging gaps in time and call upon events and objects to trigger their work¹¹

Following the production of several mixed media works I begin a process of sorting and synthesizing. To determine a direction for the work, I engage in a conversation with the work, as maker and viewer, performer and observer. This is very similar to a researcher's method in field work observations, only the data compiled is my own. At this point, I reconcile the intuitive with intention, searching for an underlying structure or pattern that will unveil a cohesive story or event. I am very much aware of the fluid nature of my cycle and have accepted that not everything made is ready for show. But in the making, I have recorded the moment by performing a mark (Figure 9). The studio is a sketchbook filled with ideas.

¹¹ Thachek, Artist Statement, 1998. p.1.

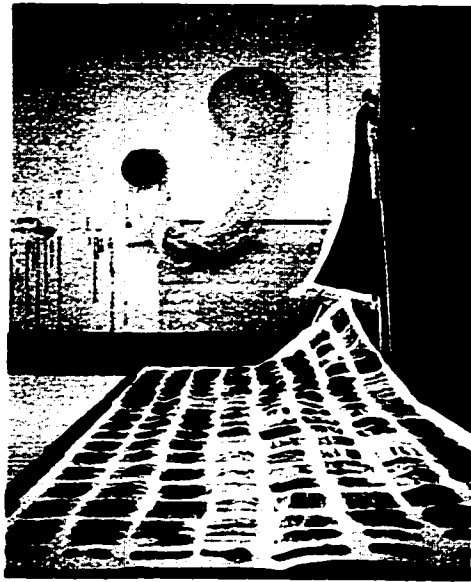


Figure 9. Floor Study, studio at University of Western Sydney, 1999. After participating in a dance class I completed the mark making floor study above. This work was finished when I returned home. It was cut into smaller compositions, coated with graphite and hangs on the walls in my MFA exhibition.

I have taken advantage of the “Little Gallery” as a learning gallery and a place to *stage* my studio work. A piece entitled Color and Content is a solid example of the layered historical self that was conceived in a variety of studio situations: Hotel Espano, Barcelona, Spain; around the fire pit, Shell Lake, Saskatchewan; as an artist statement on paper napkins, Starbucks Coffee Shop, Oakland, California; under the hot Desert Sun, Phoenix, Arizona; behind the counter as a cosmetician for Christian Dior; and in the open studio space while a BFA student, UofC. It was finally staged in the Little Gallery at the UofC and traveled to the Snelgrove Gallery at UofS (Figure 10).

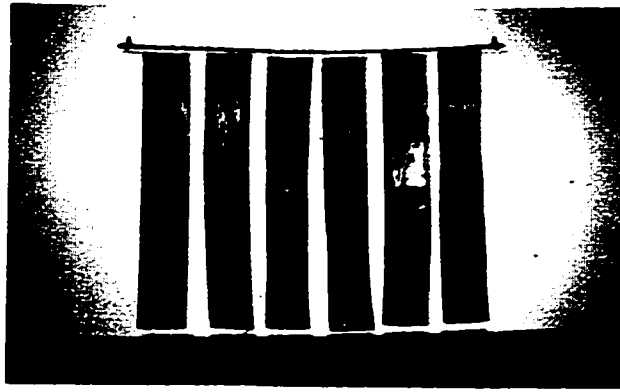


Figure 10. Color and Content, 1996, is a representation of the balance between inner and outer tension. It is a play with color; to enhance the meditative moments with the passages in time.

The Studio is my artistic space of being-in-the-world -- to experience, process and make art. It is where the ontological meets the phenomenological, making sense from no sense, and nonsense from sense.¹² Where the dual, plural and multiple layers of culture and self are grounded in the human body and experienced only through the embodied nature of the mind (Figure 11).

¹² Thachek, *Installation of Data*, Art 603 research notes, 1998.



Figure 11. Bowl of Rocks, detail of University of Calgary studio installation, 1995.

It was at a workshop with Jack Wise where I consciously and unconsciously discovered how to see. After spending 2 1/2 hours meditating over a rock, I saw an image that inspired me to paint. I did not paint the image, rather I absorbed the image, and have carried it with me ever since. Ten years later I am still reflecting on that rock and seeing beauty with pain and life with death. My life has a pattern of forging ahead and then spiraling back.¹³ (Figure 12).

¹³ Thachek, Artist Statement, 1997.



Figure 12. The Etched Goddess. Layered, Shredded and Stitched. 1996.

Chapter 2: *The Stage*

The Stage is where the embodied character emerges as an entity in space, a tracing or subtle hint of a path. If there is a way to reconcile the intuitive with intention, the stage is where I analyze its conception and effect. On stage, there are signs of content for the signifier to become signified in an arena of critical discourse. Take for example, another Little Gallery show entitled, Another Layer, (March, 1998). It featured new work by Laurel Johannesson, Janusz Malinowski and myself. When the gallery doors opened Monday morning an MFA colleague hurried to tell me, “Wow, Cindy -- I didn’t know that you could paint!” That comment, delivered as a compliment, baffled me. I knew that this person visited my studio space almost every day and had seen the paintings emerge. Why now, when removed from the studio set, am I considered as one who can paint? As opposed to what, one who can’t paint, or one who doesn’t paint? But, I do paint and if I can, I paint everyday. Even when I install content, I paint (be-it from an empty can of fluid material, it is still, in my mind, a full can of paint). What changed in that transition of the painting from the studio to the stage?

Little did everyone know that while hanging the show I had a table top and room full of stuff down in the gallery with me. My studio was there. I labored the time away, trying to get an installation to work. All weekend I resisted the inevitable -- that I would leave with only a trace of a few paintings left behind. In the end I conformed with the other players on the stage and eagerly waited to gauge the performance of our show (Figure 13).

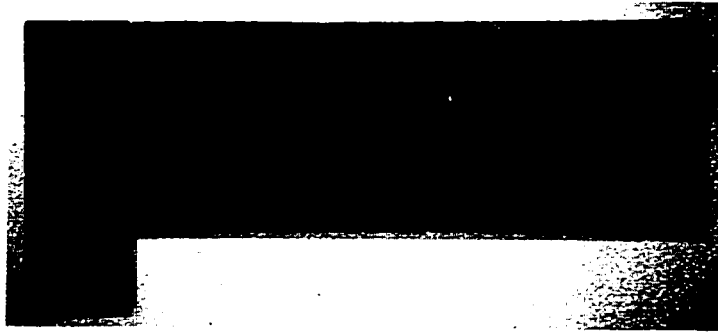


Figure 13. Figured in Skin, 4' x 11', 1997 - 98.

Figured in Skin is one of the two works that made it onto the wall. Intended as a quiet read, it made a monumental mark. It reconciled the organic with structure, gave order to chaos and content to color. Like the large piece of canvas pulled from the roll, the figure studies done on tissue and layered within, stretch across the height, width and depth of the surface. And inside the work are small pockets of *body sketches*, left open to reveal about being -- the other-inside of my pours -- the under-rereading of the work -- the stain with the pigment and ink -- and the fluid cycle, patterned and formed to conform by the way of the brush. The figure studies, each one unique unto itself, converge on the canvas to signify the mass, lost in the mass, bound in the pour, but to speak, and reroute/rethink... my notes:

and (Peter)
 about the tissue
 getting close
 to skin
 like material
 the analogy of skin
 human structure and skeleton structure (*the figure*)
 with trace of footprints (*the body*)

across the skin (*the mind*)
 and the tight structure (*stretched skin*)
 (*of object???*) of geometry¹⁴

Heidegger (1977 letter on Humanism In Basic Writings) delineates -- the mind/body/soul/person. He condemns the error of biologism that consists in merely adding the mind or soul to the human body considered as an animal organism.¹⁵



Figure 14. Figured in Skin, detail.

... (*an end*) or a *beginning*?

am I, more definitively

making paintings

*(more) painting than before -- a step to get somewhere else,*¹⁶

¹⁴ Committee Meeting, March, 1998

¹⁵ Csordas, p. 269.

¹⁶ Committee Meeting, March, 1998

Merleau-Ponty (Being in the World) condemns the error of treating the social as an object instead of recognizing that our bodies carry the social about inseparably with us before any objectification.¹⁷

and (Jed)
 so much more
 formal than before
 the work, the rectangular,
 rigidity of the form
 a degree of architect (in stuff)
 frieze-like quality (of things)
(define things)
 the in-between two things
 two skins
 layered and in the round
 the corner
 and Monet around
 and the notion of scale
 the viewer walking between two layers of skin, wedged in skins
 two circular shapes that curve around the walls...¹⁸

Phenomenological fusion of what is heard and said ... auditory hallucination and intentional utterance... deeper significance of the apparently irrelevant ingestion -- a glimpse of the lived, embodied experience.¹⁹

similar other
(Carol) --
relationship of walls
as ~ similar
significant others,
as ~ similar

¹⁷ Csordas, p. 270 & 287

¹⁸ Committee Meeting, March, 1998

¹⁹ Csordas, pp. 269-289.

mentor of other

of process

internally, interwoven, with others

the wall tightened up (working and knowing)

connected and

gave structure to other

The ethnological, phenomenological and hermeneutic of other²⁰

Embodiment is "... the methodological standpoint in which bodily experience is understood to be the existential ground of culture and self, and therefor a valuable starting point for their analysis." (Csordas, 1990, 1993, 1994, p. 269) Csordas advances a cultural phenomenology that begins with embodiment and looks at the relationship of embodiment and biology, and the identification of this phenomenological starting point in preobjective or prereflective experience.²¹

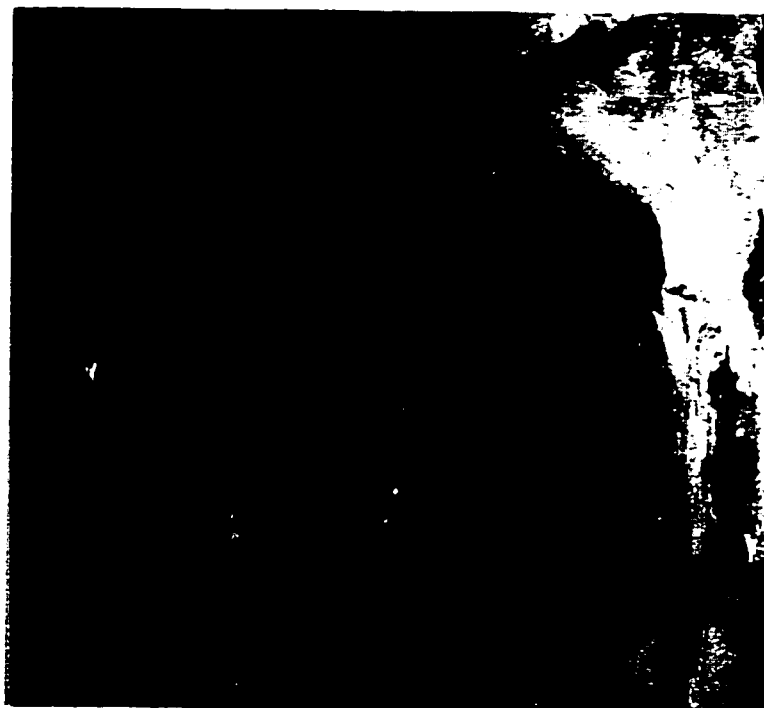


Figure 15. Figured on the Edge, 7' x 7', 1997 - 98.

(and)Pierre

do the reflections bother me²²

²⁰ Committee Meeting, March, 1998

²¹ Csordas, pp. 1-12.

²² Committee Meeting, March, 1998

Haraway (1991), on feminist theory views the body as an agent, not a resource ... therefor not just a cultural overlay on a biological substrate (Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature)²³

(Jim)

how do I feel about the surface

the figure and nature

foreign to the environment

reoccurring ???

separate ?

similar marks ~ conscious...

anti-brush (embodied brush)

the wetness, the squeegee

or all in one

a womb? ²⁴

Both biology and culture are forms of objectification or representation... Embodiment is an experiential understanding of being in the world.²⁵

and (Ray)

- history establishes precedents (of mark making traces)

excavations - description - time in history

- when plastic was being laid down -- not the horizontal trace of history but the vertical

-- the vertical trace of history vs. the horizontal,

the translucency of the layers

I talk about binaries the vertical and horizontal

about horizontal modeling

the relation is formal... screens that would emphasize the architectonic

clarity for using the square canvas²⁶

²³ Csordas, pp. 2, 3, 22 & 287.

²⁴ Committee Meeting, March, 1998

²⁵ Csordas, pp. 3 & 48-56.

²⁶ Committee Meeting, March, 1998

The body has a history and is as much a cultural phenomenon as it is a biological entity -- The body is passing through a critical historical moment... an opportunity to reformulate theories of culture, self and experience, with the body as center of analysis -- will the body continue to persist as a central analytic theme? Is interest in the body an intellectual fad?²⁷



Figure 16. Figured on the Edge, detail.

(Jed)

the binary of

the macro and micro.. the notion of scale²⁸

Verbosity is an adaptive strategy that spontaneously emerges from a preobjective bodily synthesis. Religious experience is a strategy of the self in need of a powerful idiom for orientation in the world.²⁹

(Ray), if there's a lot of texture
can't put on a detail smaller than the smallest amount of texture

the relation of micro/macro is dictated by that,

may not be footprints

²⁷ Csordas, pp. 5 & 27-47.

²⁸ Committee Meeting, March, 1998

²⁹ Csordas, p. 287 & Chapter 12, pp. 289-269.

series of undefined textures

a severe way of looking, looks beyond the intention³⁰

Struggle to normalize and cultural relativism as against biological relativism, against pathologization of religious experience and on behalf of sensibility and meaning for bizarre irrational behavior.³¹

(Peter)... speaking of other

the spatial dimensions from within are flat on horizontal -- the figure is vertical

related to the totality on the floor -- working horizontally on the floor

the gravity of the medium when working flat; the weight of the gravity then on the wall

the weight is changed dramatically... taking the object and putting it on the wall

removed, from one dimension to another

both spiritual and confrontational (the blue one) working on it as if it's vertical again --

does this compromise the spiritual metamorphosis... the figure now in the space

reflecting pool on the floor -- the pulling out³²

Maligning influences to the form of witchcraft -- religious and mystical experiences are normal consequences of spontaneous biogenic stimulation of temporal lobe structures.³³

(Jed)

the act of transformation

is important

and dynamic in the transformation

³⁰ Committee Meeting, March, 1998.

³¹ Csordas, p. 285-288.

³² Committee Meeting, March, 1998

³³ Csordas, p. 286.

need control of space -- screens³⁴

Foucault's wake of - complexity within the body. Not a constant rather an epitome of flux. A performing self of appearance, display, and impression management. A fluid course through life rather than a fixed life cycle. Spiritual salvation of body transferred to enhanced health and marketable self.³⁵



Figure 17. Figured on the Edge, detail.

(conversation leaves the stage and continues upstairs... in my studio...)

Jim: The stretched paintings have a great depth and therefor a sense of objectness because of the depth. The conceptual jump with the surfaces on the diptych is too great, not really there.

The body's existential ubiquity -- the postmodern proliferation begs the essential question of whether there is any such thing as the body -- whether the body is and is more than the sum of its topics -- the paradoxical truth is that indeterminacy is the essential characteristic of embodiment.³⁶

³⁴ Committee Meeting, March, 1998

³⁵ Csordas, Chapter 2, pp. 48-55.

³⁶ Csordas, Introduction, pp. 1-21.

Peter: Connects the skeletal relationships between figure and stretcher -- the cross braces -- taking that and putting it on the wall adds another dimension -- taking it out of original context, adds a transference that relates to the support on the wall. Leaving it on the floor might be too literal, taking away from the transference of the effect -- the ambiguity of moving it up.

Jed: These things are more like experiments get off the stretcher bar and do what you want.

Peter: Find your own concept of painting on or of or off the wall.

“So instrumental reason comes to us as its own rich moral background. It has by no means simply been powered by an overdeveloped *libido dominandi*.”³⁷

Cindy: *(instrumental efficacy, merges with disengaged reasoning as an ideal bracketed on the social plane) the labor in the work, the ghost in the work, existence left in the work. Peering into something -- out -- the space in-between where Romanticism meets Formalism-- where the structure disappears to reappear and the layers meet the grid in a theatrical contrast of articulate debates -- feminism poured over masculine structures -- but said who owns the intimacy of the size and who sizes the intimacy of the work -- image to image as room to room -- patterns familiar spaces, occupied picture planes of the topographical views, architectural site and identification with the site -- open a window, -- reaching over land, under land and in-between... everywhere is nowhere and the argument, circles the history of modernism as a postmodern pour.*³⁸

Fact: “We are embodied agents, living in dialogical conditions, inhabiting time in a specifically human way, that is, making sense of our lives as a story that connects the past from which we have come to our future projects.”³⁹

³⁷ Taylor. p. 105.

³⁸ Thachek, A conversation with Tina, seminar notes, 1999.

³⁹ Taylor, p. 105 - 106.



Figure 18. Spanish Street Scene, paper studies of a narrow street, Barcelona, Spain, 1992.

And so for a brief moment my studio work was staged and discussed in the guise of the salon. As I listened to the committee members chant in open discourse of the work, I became more aware of my position within the work. During this critique, I gauged myself as performer, balancing the inner form of language as projected thoughts on the paintings and in turn received their concentrated views of the show. It was the most amazing thing -- to be sitting as part of the group but defined as different from the group and knowing that I had never had so much attention directed towards my ideas. It was good, constructive, informative and challenging input. My committee was in full regalia -- empowered by a position of knowing their role -- and I was comfortable and eager to grasp the tentacles of their muse. I knew in those moments that I was both shedding and shaping my gut.

Human labor out-builds soft relativism and emphasis on location is an interpretive grounding that solidifies an embodied standpoint with self. Having successfully concealed and revealed content, the paintings transformed from subject to object to agent: from the horizontal rendering within a gravitational pull on the studio floor; to the vertical displacement weighted on the gallery wall; and to the final read -- a quiet statement of all the layers in-between. The body imaged with both desire and pain and the ritual of spiritual healing slipped into ethnographic form. Like the figure on the edge contemplating the swell in a wave (figure 15), I was left in the wake of committee comments, to apotheosize an epistemology. At the end of the meeting I closed the doors, sat down on my favorite chair and retreated into my research and work. There was six months left until I staged my next show.

To attain knowledge, add things everyday. To attain wisdom, remove things everyday. (Lao-tse in the Tao te Ching)

For the duration of spring and summer 1998, I worked on bits and pieces; throwing out paintings here and there and sorting ideas into files and words into journals.⁴⁰ I collected books and stuffed my shelves with research and poured several projects onto the floor. My role as Vice President at The New Gallery escalated -- I was now the full time acting President along with chairperson of meetings. I took this position seriously, meeting monthly, weekly and sometimes daily with New Gallery affiliates. I spent hours on the phone with Past President, Jeff Viner and other gallery and board members

⁴⁰ Research notes, see Appendix A. These notes are included in this support paper as an indicator of the type of research I've done. After consulting with Dr. C. MacDonnell in early January, 1999, I decided to let my writing reflect the way I work in my studio -- always collecting, internalizing, using and storing stuff away for a later date. Well composed thoughts into words are as interesting to me as an old object that finds a new life.

conferring about the state of the arts and the direction of The New Gallery. As we talked about its future and history I reflected on my own:⁴¹



Figure 19. Story Telling, 1997.

Jeff came to the University and had lunch with me early that fall. He was feeling good and was eager to resume his presidency on the board. We spent time on campus talking about family, books, life and art. Jeff had a dream that his hands were bound to his chest and stained red. He was trying to sing but no sounds were coming out. In his dream I became his voice. We planned to do a performance together in the Little Gallery that acted out this dream. I would bind his hands to his chest in a beautiful red satin scarf and he would sit on my stool that was smothered with fake flowers. I was going to sit on an empty can of paint and teach Jeff how to sing. He told me he could not sing and I told him that he could and we would start by locating a single tone that his voice could perform.

⁴¹ Thachek, excerpts from Art 599 essays mingled with telephone conversations with Jeff Viner, 1996 to 1998.

A few months later, while in Los Angeles spending the weekend with my husband and son, I was woken by a dream. In it I was singing this crazy country song. For as long as I can remember I have never woken up singing a song before (and I don't ever listen to country music). It was a rather magical dream where I played a dual role; I saw myself sitting both within the dream along side Jeff singing One Day At a Time and also as an outside observer -- floating around the room using my minds eye to scan the space. I saw everyone there that Jeff knew and we were having a big party in honor of his miraculous recovery from his terminal decease. He stood up, throwing his cane away as we sang and then gave everyone some pizza. As he walked around the table distributing the extra large boxes of what seemed like an endless variety of pizza toppings, I saw a wall of wooden cubby holes or lockers -- they were made of wood and each section contained something that I couldn't quite see -- I had this feeling that I'd been in that room before -- it felt like home only different. As I continued to float around the room the wall of cubby holes got longer and the sound of everyone singing got louder. So loud that I jumped out of bed and woke up.

When I returned to Calgary the next day there was a message on my machine that Jeff's condition had worsened and he slipped into a coma from which he never recovered. I did not know that Jeff was a huge country music and Johnny Cash fan. I saw him one last time in the hospital before his life support was shut down and I told him I caught his dream. I teased him for not sending me a better song. One day at a time and country roads will never be the same again. As I gazed down at his body I could not help but feel he was in control of his destiny. The bed he was on was beautiful -- it gently moved him every so often and it comforted me to know he was at least getting a good massage. My

mind began to drift and I thought about the time I picked him up to go out and get a good bed. His was so worn out and he knew that he'd be spending more and more time just laying around. The person he was purchasing it from was not home and so we left that day with an empty truck. We picked up a good cup of coffee instead. The nurse came back to his room and announced that they were going to try to give him some food. His bed rotated again and in that moment I thought I saw him smile (Figure 20).



Figure 20. The Poppy and a Dream, 1997.

Scene One: The Production Of Meaning
(featuring journal and essay excerpts from Art 499 and Art 599)

Layer One: Pouring Thoughts From An Empty Can Of Paint

*She holds it close to her heart, (a) paint. in meaning
 (b) can. of content
 (c) Gender. of other
 (d) the myth*

words before seeing? meaning without sight?

*(a) fabric ...
 where buried deep in the (b) folds... silence softly speaks
 (c) pearls...
 (d) studio.....*

*as it ripples to the foreground, the conch reveals its' flesh
 manifested by synthetic realities...
 the fiber that
 strokes
 the
 flesh.*

After the baby-sitting years, Cindy entered the work force. She cleaned toilets at the NDP Headquarters (that lasted 1 day); cleared tables at the Army & Navy Cafeteria (that went on for 2 days); shampooed hair at a beauty salon and managed to barely make it through the summer.

Mind over body, mind over matter/matter of mind+body under-mind+mind=other eye?

*Other-eye the image
 image of idea - idea of image = image as eye, body as sight*

*image and body and idea ~ Pear, peer, pier 49
 appearances are ideas of mind
 minds with sight
 mind the beauty and mind the truth.
 Mind of manner and manner of mind.*

Situate the mind to see present and past -- past the present to present the remote.

Layer Two -- The Virtual Reality of a Stool

When Cindy 16 a long and fairly lucrative career was begun sorting mail at the Post Office. Perched on her stool, night after night, she moved mail through her hands at record breaking speed. It was a race both for herself and against the clock. A race that also freed her thoughts; to a place where she now returns; to contemplate on the stool once more.

(a) *black in white*
On the painters palette waits a stroke of (b) *red*
 (c) *past or present*
 (d) *the clock*

Silence sweeps the floor...
...stroke the flesh...reveal the truth...

(a) *caress it gently, then*
find the pearl and (b) *paint it. red*
 (c) *stain it. red*
 (d) *record the moment, record the red*
 (e) *save it for later.*

find item number 8 - then paint it red
real red - vaginal red - where it all begins and ends.

the production of meaning
...the language of red...
Cadmium, alizarin and ver-millions of reds

and out

Find a stool -- sit on the stool -- use the stool
feel it as an object - an entity in space
a mimesis; a simulated mimesis; an imitation or not
a simulacrum or a sign -- a tension of text

(a) *read the sign*
then get off and (b) *contemplate its beauty*
 (c) *give your brain a good.....?*
 (d) *proceed to the sublime...*

Layer 3: What do you do with an empty can of paint?

Contemplate for the moment the pectoral area as a declension of the self in a state of pensive emptiness where all words breath into an open vertebrae -- a sound -- that echoes through thin layers of the forgotten can of paint. What color is flavored today? And if any breast will do, can it be stitched and mended in a log house pattern or is it still in vogue to be tapered without a back. If the pad is a push for discomforting the rib then why is the nipple left to sweat it out between blue suede shoes and triple-meat pizza pops? Does Richard Simmons ever give up? Comprehensive or not ... there's only a "...fat chance in a slim world for anyone who's not a Willendorph fan."⁴² So, what does Christian Dior say to that -- when the cosmopolitan gal runs out of masking tape bras or Cindy Sherman dilapidates a pair of silicon breasts -- those poor breasts, forever jellied, forever young. What kind of now-ism is this goddess in anyway?

Consuming culture in a left brained fraction of fictitious allegorical faults to reclaim a body that was never found on Mars because, and I quote, "Women are from Venus", is an attempt to continue the dissenting replica of over-engaged interactions with Freudian models, and failing to acknowledge that if: nature and man can never be friends;^{43 44} then; ... what does this say of universal truth? If unguided evolution leads to moral regression and social failure (as this statement does not suggest) then what do the do-it-yourself kits of the conceptualized artists mean to a viewer that neither constructs or accepts an undetermined notion of a virtual world? What is their position in the sliding signifier and

⁴² Thachek, quote in essays for, Art 201 ~1984, Art 599, 1997 and Art 603, 1998.

⁴³ Roland N. Stromberg, "Darwin and the Victorian Crisis of Faith", European Intellectual History Since 1789, p. 119.

⁴⁴ John Grey, Men are from Mars and Women are from Venus (NY: Harper Perennial, 1992).

is it possible that the borders and perimeters are so thoroughly saturated with repetitive ideas that the mere use of this term is abused?

And so it follows that in order to determine the slide of the pivoting point, we must first question the paragon of the stool: that is, the process of producing meaning to begin a search on edification is simply a fantastic riddle in a theoretical territory that divorces the maker/artist from the user/viewer. Whether seated at opposite ends of a linear read or mimicking the path of a boomerang in flight; in this hypothesis the two can never be in union because there is no universal truth that defines the position of either and neither of the sum of the above. The universal truth is in a virtual world where desire is rooted with gravity and even an anthropologist on mars has yet to determine the weight of the pull. If Desire = Gravity, then X is @ 8. Why eight, and what does this have to do with an empty can of paint?

Scene 2: The Meaning of Production

Layer 4: The Concept of Item Eight

Since an empty can of paint has absolutely nothing and conversely, everything, in common with the phenomenal and noumenal qualities of a stool, item eight can be considered as a postmodern pour of color and content onto the surface of an imaginary layer of teleological thoughts. That layer is the pivotal point of the stool. And any realized explanation of objects such as stools can be rejected by one or accepted by another because within their original production of meaning -- there is no depth, only surface.⁴⁵ It follows that an object such as a stool can be everything and anything that the user desires it to be and my favorite stool is an empty can of paint.

The point of intersection with the surface of a stool realizes the enigmatic and utopic functions of the mind as a reaction with the body on this site. In a previous essay I explained that,... “The stool, when in use, forces the body to support the mind, sometimes comfortably and sometimes not. The stool is often placed on a pedestal; sometimes intentionally and sometimes not. As an object it can remain stationary or have parts that spin around. When you sit on a stool you can become *part* of the stool - but you can never *be* the stool. And so, the stool is never completely understood. It can be considered logically and scientifically as a unified mass of energy, or, aesthetically and imaginatively as an object for critical thought.” (The Infinite Choices Of Item Eight, 1997, pp. 4-5).

⁴⁵ Paul Woodrow, lecture notes on Dick Hebdige, “Staking Out the Posts”, 1997.

Look at the image in figure 1: Is it a picture of; (a) *a stool*
 (b) *an object*
 (c) *a work of art*
 (d) *all or none of the above*

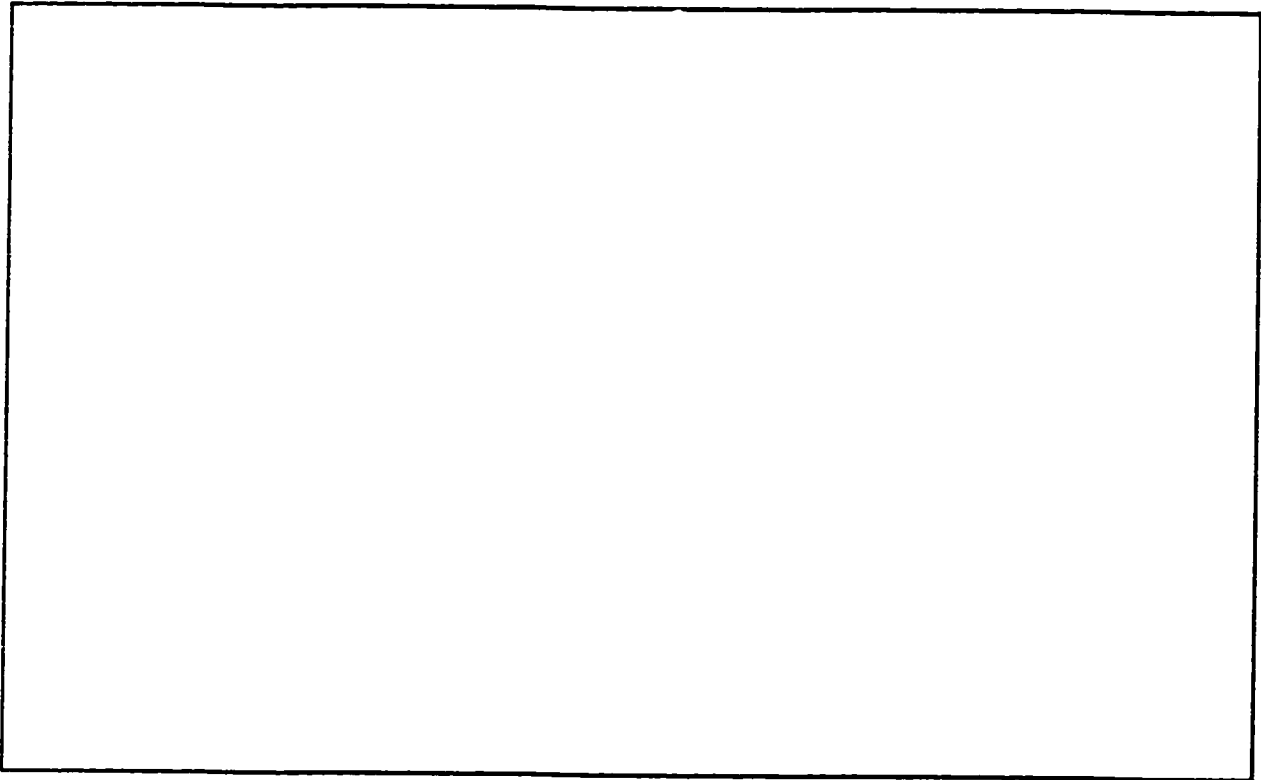


Figure 21: “Untitled”, by Cindy Thachek. Mixed content applied with mouse movement onto computer screen, April, 1997.

Within this illustration no image is saved for the viewer to read but does that deny that the performance of the art left a trace of the artist’s body on the screen? Can we still consider this performance as art? Who’s to say that there is nothing there, and that if there is something there, can it be categorized as a gesturally performed mark? Furthermore, whose or what memory is perceiving the mark -- maker or user, computer or mouse, printer or print out? Can you accept that you are not looking at the original art that the maker made because you did not see the original performance of the mark -- can we still call this art?

The analogy of the stool and construction of its image in figure one can be revisited to include the category of *(e) other* -- an acknowledgment of Mandella's Eye.⁴⁶ The inclusion of this *other* field allows the image in figure one to be realized as a virtually real concept. The question of existence is in the construction of objects as identity feeders onto imaginary subjects that exist in our mind. Where the illusion is rooted in the function of our brain and how it responds to the body (as an entity in space or in a sensorial moment), it is measured at different levels of awareness. This infers that the gap between artist and viewer is made even greater by the presence of a virtual real field. It follows that alienation resides with existence in the virtual world because no two experiences can be the same; nor can any form of identity react to subjectivity the same; and likewise, the relevant function of objects is a questionable entity within a language based labeling system of signs that are superficially interpreted as the same. My favorite stool is an empty can of paint, predicated by the accepted existence of, decidedly, red.

with my thoughts fading

I question the sublime

contemplate it

and consider

(a) what is real (b) what I see (c) I don't really know (d) what I know

(e) what I think I know

I still type

I've returned to my stool once more

⁴⁶ P. Woodrow, Art 599 class lecture, April, 1997.

to think about red

real red

red.

(the goddess may now enter the stage)

The Offering: Building a Shrine for the Goddess

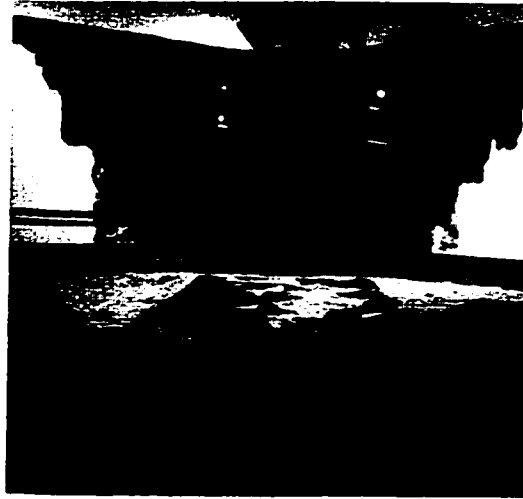


Figure 22. The Offering, 1996.

The Offering is an ongoing installation that began in December 1995. It is a reflection on the creation and destruction of life. Poppies symbolize the fertile aspect of nature and zippers represent the struggle to conceive. The creation of a fertility goddess using shredded canvas, pink hankies, fake flowers, thumb tacks and a zipper, led to an investigation of ancient classical myths. This influence is combined with African rituals and sympathetic magic in an attempt to please the goddess. By offering her objects of unknown status and labors of meticulous thoughts, the artist frees her imagination to engage in a variety of art making activities. A large body of work has resulted from the original source that blends the disciplines of painting, print-making, sculpture, and drawing. It has also been a springboard for other installed ideas such as, "*Miss Dior*", (exhibited in the Little Gallery in Jan. 97 for the A.S.L. group show entitled, *Bedlam*).



Figure 23. Guardian Figure, Left detail of The Offering installation, 1996.



Figure 24. Miss Dior, detail of wall installation, tissue and mirror, 1996.

Layer 5: Characters on Stage -- Miss, Ms. and Mrs. Dior

'Judgments of Beauty' and the 'Experience of the Sublime'

(art 599 essay excerpt)

The aesthetic experience can be described as that exhilarating moment when the viewer is drawn into an effortless attraction to a work of art. That reaction can be defined as a response to an inherent beauty; a well established term in both past and present art aesthetic philosophies; or, as an experience of the sublime; an admittedly ongoing concern that involves the euphoric sensibility existing beyond the limitations of imagination. The thrust of this layer is to discuss the judgmentally beautiful philosophy at a grass-roots level to determine its effect and/or distinction with the experience of the sublime.

A breakthrough in art appreciation occurred near the end of the 18th century. This is due in large part to the critical documents written by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). A brief review of Kant's Critique of Judgment will help to illustrate the power of the imagination and its relationship to art aesthetics. In addition it will serve as a springboard of critical ideas to help bridge the gap between imagination and the sublime.

In the Critique of Judgment (1790), Kant contends that there are three separate realms of knowledge. He distinguishes between the:

'...phenomenal as opposed to the noumenal...' aspects of knowledge. The phenomenal is the '...knowledge of appearances, not of substance. ... It relates to the properties of things, not to the "thing in itself". Science which is useful knowledge, deals with the world of appearances, the phenomenal world. Religion is intuitive and deals with the realm of substantive reality.'

Kant introduces the noumenal realm as the '...transcendental reason that is in our minds, and enables us to make sense of our world. ... Phenomenal, scientific knowledge is exact but superficial. Noumenal, spiritual knowledge is profound but we can never reach it. ... In giving autonomy to the realm of art...', Kant suggests that '...beauty is not in the object, as classicism claimed, it is in the eye of the beholder. The standards that determine what we regard as beautiful are in our minds, a given or a priori part of our intellectual equipment.'⁴⁷

Kant also differentiates between judgments of feeling and judgments of intellect. When he responds to an object, he reacts to it through the pleasure he feels and no amount of intellectual "...grounds of proof..." can change that experience.⁴⁸ For Kant there is a distinction between logical thought, which can be empirically supported, and beautiful thought, which is tastefully perceived in an object by the viewer. He suggests that:

The knowledge of science or logical thought belongs in the '...sensible world of appearances' whereas, '...the concept of Freedom, which is the realm of self-imposed rational principals...' belongs in the '...supersensible world of realities...'.⁴⁹

Applying his theory to art means that we have to make aesthetic judgments based on the amount of pleasure a work gives us. The more intense our pleasure, the more aesthetically good we can judge it to be. The more immediate our pleasure, the purer our judgment is. This is due to the fact the empirical ground of logic hasn't coerced our judgment of taste.⁵⁰ In other words, we can't let our logical thoughts, personal opinions or our tastes, get in the way of our reaction with art. To do this we have to remain disinterested and ask only -- is it beautiful -- and not - what it means. Any meaning will

⁴⁷ Roland Stromberg, European Intellectual History Since 1789 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1994), pp. 25-26.

⁴⁸ Harold Osborne, Aesthetics and Art Theory An Historical Introduction (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1968) p. 175.

⁴⁹ Osborne, pp. 172-173.

⁵⁰ Osborne, p. 176.

immediately associate it with a concept and that means we are making a logical judgment, not an aesthetic one.

So, to find the *good* in art we must first find its pleasure and by approaching it with disinterest we can free our mind from logical and tasteful thoughts. With an open mind, and an unbiased awareness let us now attach this imaginative free-play to works of art. In 1933, Miro executed a painting titled *Painting*,⁵¹ which can serve as a working model for our disinterested observation. First, the title gives no hint or clue about the content of the work. That should help us to not impose any biased content or values of taste onto the work. Now, looking at figure 2, ask yourself - *Is it Beautiful?* - and - *Does it give pleasure?* Play inside the image for awhile and let your imagination take over. Resist the urge to ask - what does it mean - and see where your imagination takes you.



Figure 25. Miro, *Painting*, 1933.

⁵¹ The Glenbow Museum catalogue, Four Modern Masters: De Chirico, Ernst, Magritte, and Miro (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1981) p. 79.

In Kant's theory, the function of the mind must override any objective entity of the work. Were you allowed to apply disinterest when you looked at this image? Did you feel any sense of pleasure?

When we are looking at Miro's *Painting*, a variance in our judgment of its beauty may be linked to matters of taste. What I say is beautiful may not be true for someone else. However, Kant believed that there was some degree of judgmental universality that can be reached. The key lies in the state of disinterest experienced by the viewer. If you can give up your self interest or ego then your mind is left pure and free - in a state of *pulchritudo varge*. When you allow your personal bias to enter into your freeplay for pleasure, then you are in a self interested state of *pulchritudo adheens*. You have allowed your aesthetic judgment to be polluted by your impure observations.

There are both advantages and limitations to Kant's theory of judgmental beauty but his significant input into art aesthetics should not be undermined. By isolating *art as object* from *art as experience* he opened a gateway to the chambers of our imagination. This shift of emphasis from outside the mind to inside the mind opens as a passageway into the sublime. Consider now, figure 3. This is a painting by Magritte entitled, Le Grande Style.⁵² We can hypothetically view this work with total disinterest in an unbiased state of *pulchritudo varge*. Perhaps we can even come to universal agreement via shared amounts of pleasure and call it *good art*. However, by allowing our logical thoughts and impure biases to enter our observations, our pleasure from this image is greatly enhanced.

⁵² The Glenbow Museum catalogue, Four Modern Masters: De Chirico, Ernst, Magritte, and Miro (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1981) p. 79.

When our mind works as one unit, the play between what we know and what we feel can enhance the aesthetic experience. Recognizing that the weight of the world contradicts the fragility of the vine empowers the viewer to merge their logical and illogical or empirical and subliminal thoughts.

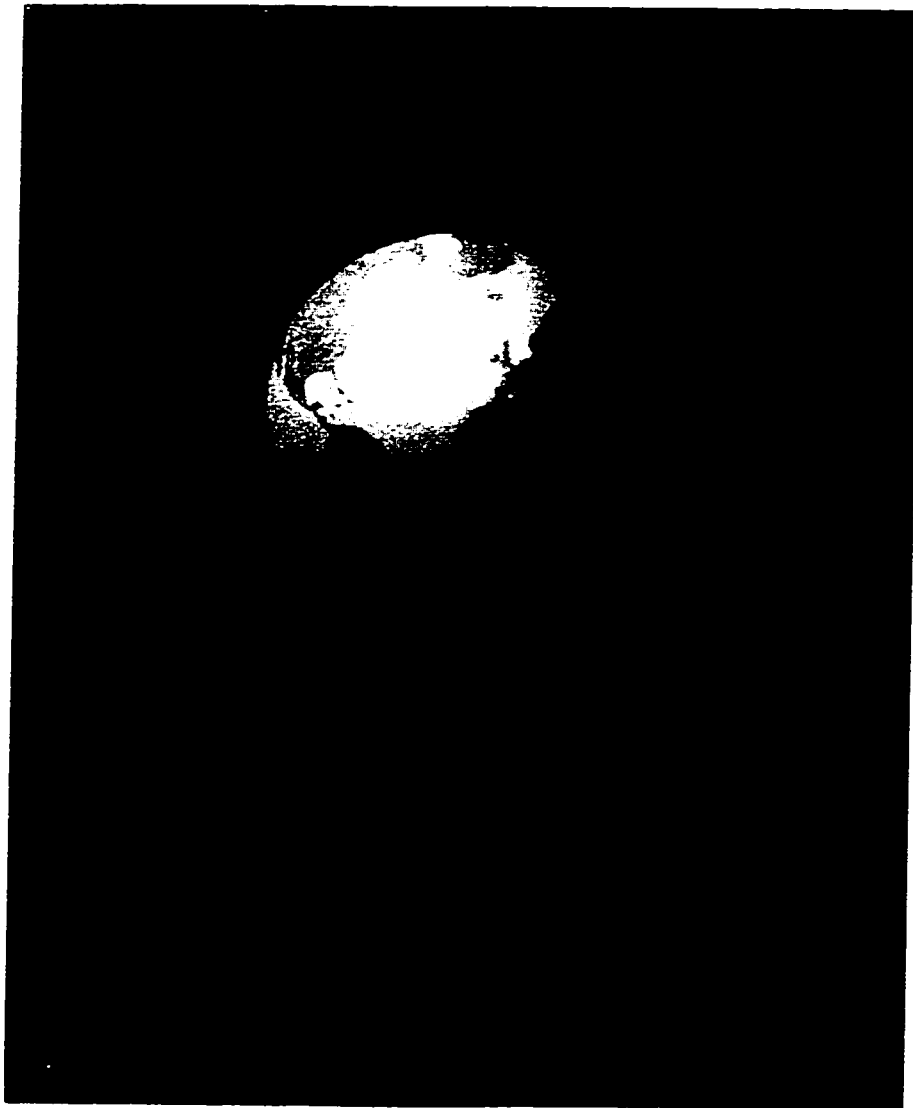


Figure 26. Magritte, Le Grande Style, 1951.

The major contrast between looking at art from a subliminal as compared to a beautiful point of view is in the application of the mind. When we find beauty using Kant's methodology, our imagination is limited by our initial objectivity. This is an excellent starting point to activate our creative play, but the aesthetic experience does not have to end there. As Paul Woodrow explains, "when you come across something as magnificent as the Grand Canyon it is virtually and visually impossible to take it all in." There is more to the experience and more to the world than our imagination and understanding can perceive. This transcendental state can be so overwhelming that it excites you for no reason. It is beyond reason, but we need to think about reason in order to experience it. This is the world of the sublime.⁵³

Kant did not ignore this idea.. The world of the sublime is similar to the concept of the noumenal realm. Kant explains this as the place where spiritual knowledge and morals or ethics are contained. Since this domain cannot be reasoned, he also believed that it could never be reached. He focused much of his thoughts in this realm towards criticizing the religious "...proofs of God's existence...". He did this by scientifically reasoning the facts of physical nature.⁵⁴

The concept of reason is what can be defined as the springboard to the sublime. Nature becomes the very tool for art to activate this transcendental jump. The subliminal world contradicts what we know by what we see. It can only be experienced in our mind. ... To contradict what we know - with what we see - what - we see - and what - is real ...

⁵³ Paul Woodrow, Art 599 Lecture, 1996.

⁵⁴ Stromberg, p. 26.

Layer Six: Closer to defining what is real?

In 1996 I began working on a series of studies with the female model. There was one model in particular that reoccurred in my paintings, drawings, sculptures and prints. I became very interested in the energy and conversations that transpired during study sessions with this model. The sculpture class was dominated by female students ranging in ages between 20 and 65. Our conversations naturally drifted in all areas relating to femininity such as motherhood, hormones, boyfriends, husbands, dancing, art, etc... We talked about anything and everything and over the span of two courses began to know each other quite well. It was one of those three dimensional days while working on an enlarged didactic study of one minute part of the human form that connects the story of my current work.



Figure 27. Figure study, 1996.

Although it would take another year to realize the significance of that study, I had a sense that it was more than a surface modeling of abdominal skin. It began as a wood structure built for strength to hold the weight of the clay. To that crumpled bits of newspaper and styrofoam members were attached and bound in place with chicken wire, staples and nails. I began massaging the clay onto the form and over the next few days the study grew to include part of the right thigh and left breast (as per my gaze). This was a quick study done in a couple of classes (as were most of the assignments) but unlike others, I tucked it away in my studio and forgot about it for awhile. By 1998 the left breast had completely fallen off and was used as a mold for casting coffee, sawdust, and birdseed breasts. The torso was breastless and became a container for all of the stories that women have shared with me over the years. Sometimes I think that my work speaks in many voices through several layers that take time to sort themselves out. During that year I documented its creation, decay and transformation into a work that contextualized content into the viewing space. It is a deliberate play between what is real and what is fake -- a merging of stories, myths and perceptions manifested and categorized by the selection of materials used and summarized as follows:

tHE oFFERING: INSIDE tHE wALL

...tHE fIGURE,
tHE wIRE AND tHE mETALpLATE;
tHE pOPPY tHE zIPPER tHE fLOWERfAKE;
sTYRO-bREASTED -- georOCK, cRYSTAL-fOOL;

sAWDUST, gARBAGE AND gARBAGEbAGS -- sHOES AND sOILEDrAGS
tHE mIRROR AND tHE sKIN; pAINTED, pLASTERED AND bURLAPwRAPPED ANDbEDS
pILLOWsandpLUGS bIRDSSEED WITH bUGSNEEDLES AND pEARLIZED pINSsTTItCHED sKIN -
kNOTTED rOPEStANGLED tHREaDS,
-- poRED -- layerRED -- wiRED --

dREAMSrIPPING pAIN AND pLEASURE mORE sEEDS;
mORE rOCKS WITH pLASTIC bEAD
pLAY gOLF oR
-- fREEZE --
dIPtOE ontABLEspREAD

sHEthegODdessOFSPRiNG, wHO soON POP-hAT
 OR'rockcrAZytHELadYONoRANGEsHAGruG;
 AND oFFER nONE...⁵⁵



Figure 28. Goddess of Spring, detail, 1997.

⁵⁵ Thachek, BFA Graduating Exhibition Catalogue, p.39, 1997.

Layer Seven: Personal Authenticity and the Incomplete Project

The potency of a myth when it merges with life has always ruffled my sixth sense. Sometimes it's like a tightrope (being in between two skins) and at other moments it's a rare chance to add a little humor to life. I think that pantyhose filled with birdseed is one of my silliest creations yet. They are really fun to do and they make me laugh. They are filled with so much irony and I take them so seriously, but in the end they are just another mark on the wall, a thought that was poured on the floor during one of those long working nights when I discovered that my bag of birdseed had both holes and bugs. I needed another container for seeds and oddly enough, a pair of pantyhose was within easy reach.

They are what they are, pantyhose woven with synthetic fibers and affixed with silky secrets of the no name brand that drape onto and around the gallery wall. In this simple state it is interesting to gauge viewer reaction to the work. They made their first appearance in a show entitled Phone Sex (Little Gallery, November 1998) which featured new work by Ted Hiebert and myself. They pulled people in; challenging both their visual-tactile and logical-moral selves. I think their impact was best summed up by Nikko Sinclair who wrote, "This is the best use of panty hose I've seen yet!"⁵⁶

I admit that at times I enjoy diving into a pair of silky nudes but when it is part of your job description to wear a pair every day, it gets a bit suffocating. I use synthetic and plastic in my work to emphasize this point. They remind me of the days that used to end behind a counter selling two hundred dollar bottles of hope in a one ounce jar. Vanity does have a price.

⁵⁶ Little Gallery Comment Book, November, 1998.

So too does art -- my research on Mark Rothko taught me the poignancy of having too much of nothing as defined by something that both is and isn't there.⁵⁷ My thesis exhibition is an installation of two walls that curve and form a path. As I gaze at the structure, I am in awe at how it absorbs and mirrors my life. It was not until I had acquired my temporary studio location (300 level painting open space, U of C) that I could actually assemble and walk in-between the two walls. As I paced through the structure, Rothko once again hit me like a rock -- or, rather a georock. My universe was defined and all the components were there waiting for my labor to bring the bits and pieces to order. It was day one in this space and I had only 28 more to get it ready for show. Grasping nothing, no standing, keep walking -- ideas, images and mind.

In, around and on these walls I have realized my own ambitions as a merging, sorting and synthesizing of everything I define myself to be. They are the visual transformation that acknowledges a presence of those that came before, the influences of everyone with me now, and an open corridor suggestive of what still may follow. From a bird's eye view, or when I'm up on the ladder I can see all four ends of the walls as well as the breast molds, drawings, paintings and other studio things that clutter this space. Everything, that is in and out of its place, I can locate with a different eye. The multiplicity of my art making practice coincides with the unity in the walls.

I considered Ray Arnatt's words when he visited one day; he reminded me that this is still just the lay out in preparation for the actual installation space and whatever I do to the form inside or out, the structure is solid and in an ordered unity and that would not

⁵⁷ Thachek, research essay, installation and slide presentation, Art 601, 1997.

diminish through the random acts of my work. I know that when these walls make their way to The Nickle Arts Museum that the open floor and higher ceiling will impart a different flow to their form. But it is the effect of light that concerns me the most and this is particularly problematic as I try to resolve the interior space. It is a risk I have to be ready for but is out of immediate control.

Don Sucha came over from the Nickle and helped me to visualize what the light might do to the interior walls. I have to be ready to soften the shadows if the light cast is too rigid. I know that tissue left loosely bound will filter the light down, but as I thumbnail it onto the grid structure I see that it works better to be tightly adhered to the form. Conceptually speaking, it is a skin like material that has been stretched over a skeletal form. A visual tension softened by the impact of knowing it is paper over wood. With only two days to install the show I know I have to be well prepared.

Within a few days wanderers started to trickle in as word spread that my walls were up. The reactions overwhelmed me and gave me energy to keep working -- I funneled their enthusiasm into the gestures of the work. The meaning of production and the production of meaning, in my studio, go hand in hand. One night Ted and Wendy (MFA colleagues and friends) dropped by and invited me out for a bite to eat. It had already been a twelve hour day and I was two days behind schedule on the outer graphite wall. I declined, as there were four empty panels down on the floor and each one was still taking 4 to 6 hours to do. Then Ted mentioned a nice cold beer and I don't even really like beer but I said, "OK give me a half hour to clean up." An hour and a half later I showed up and announced my graphite walls were done. I celebrated and had two beer that night.

The outer side of the graphite walls will be the first that the viewer sees when they enter The Nickle Arts Museum. It entertains me to try to figure out which hand mark is right from left or to find the spot upon which my body fell when an uncovered patch of hardboard was too far of a stretch (better to let my panty hose do that). (Figure 29).

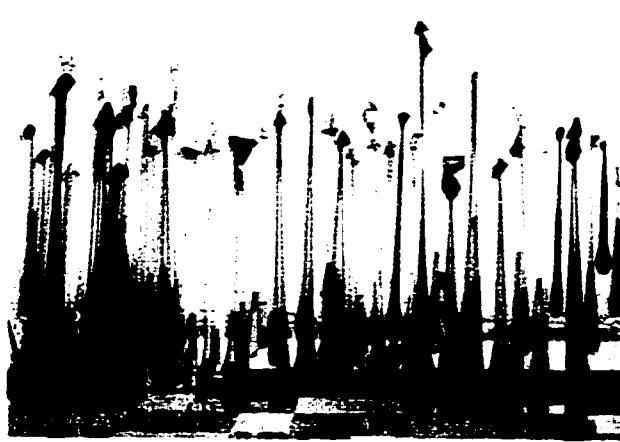


Figure 29. Phone Sex, detail of pantyhose, 1998.

Layer Eight: Item Eight

In March 1999, I was part of a student exchange between the University of Calgary and University of Western Sydney, Nepean campus (UWSN). During the five weeks that I was away I did everything I could to produce work and was rewarded in the end with a show at the Maling Gallery, Casula Power House along with Ted Hiebert and Duncan MacKenzie (two exchange colleagues also from the U of C). For this show, (The Constantly Revolving Door, 1999) I left behind a box of 75 pairs of panty hose filled with bird seed and a closet hanging structure wired together to support their weight. My installation instructions were simple; hang them wherever they fit -- on the structure, on the wall, from the ceiling or on the floor. I have not yet seen images from this show but I am told that they make a powerful presence; flanking the entrance and enhancing the tightness within the gallery walls. At the end of the show, some of the artists I met will take the pantyhose home or back to the university where the bird seed will be scattered around a pond that is on the campus and designated as a protected bird reserve. This pleases me very much, particularly since I brought back a show from a group of art students at UWSN who call themselves Endangered Species. (Figure 30).

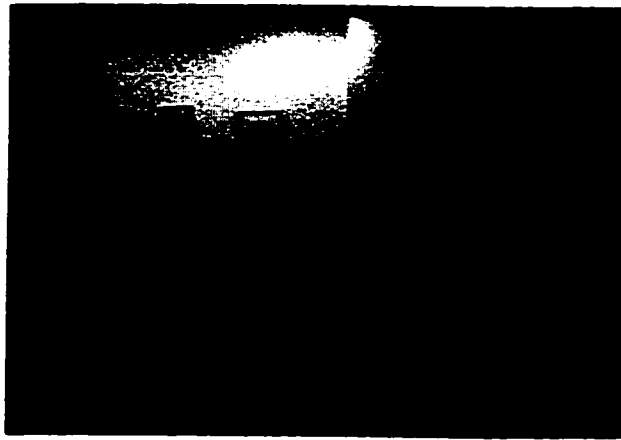


Figure 30. Endangered Species, with view of Clouds and Zippers in a Bag, work brought back from Sydney, Australia, and exhibited in the Little Gallery, UofC 1999.

While in Australia, I was isolated from my regular routine of study and hard work. At times this was tough -- but the circumstances were out of my control. I stayed right in the heart of Sydney, and it was a two hour train trip one way to get to my studio space. I spent a good four to five hours in a day just traveling back and forth. The campus cleared out around three p.m. and I was usually the only one working after five p.m. I remember thinking where does everyone go? In terms of timing, it was the beginning of their fall session and the end of my winter term and as experience tells me, it takes a while for university energy levels to get fired up. It didn't take long for me to fill my space. Duncan arrived in Sydney the next day and when I showed him where I was working he said, "Wow you did a lot in one week." I explained that I just got a place to park and that what he was seeing was only two hours of work. And while at UWSN, that is the way things were -- similar but very different.

From the moment I stepped off the plane to this very day the Australian experience seemed a bit inside out and upside down. Signs, symbols and meaning all became interesting phenomena to explore. Soon after I left the air terminal I saw a series of signs

with images of a pair of walking feet -- I assumed this was a cross walk so I pushed a button and it made this beeping/bubbling sound. When I listened to the birds in the trees they were either laughing, howling or crying. And although everything was written in English, it took me a while to figure out what Pokies are.⁵⁸

I stayed with Edwin Easydorchuck, an art studio instructor and Department Head at Newcastle University who is a good friend of David Hull's, Dean of Fine Arts, University of Western Sydney, who is an old classmate of Paul Woodrow's, Professor in art theory, art education and art studio, University of Calgary, and who first introduced me to the concept of item eight. Now I could end this explanation here but not everyone has had a class with Paul. And only a select few have teamed his theory class with a Canadian Architecture course taught by Geoffrey Simmins. At that time there also seemed to be much talk around the department about adding more writing to the BFA program. Well I got hit. It is a little blurry now but within a few months I pumped out 12 essays on top of studio work, graduating, Co-chairing the BFA exhibition, board work at The New Gallery and did I mention my son played hockey and my husband worked out of town during the week? I don't think that Paul even knows the significant contribution to my work he made when he first mentioned item eight. I recall that in the last minute before class was over he added the eighth essay item to an already established, seven item list. The class was so relieved because it was a free topic choice.

For myself item eight became an internalized concept -- a place where I could pour and store all of the incidental and unexplainable happenings related to my studies and studio work. Stuff that I did not have time to think about or did not yet understand. The

⁵⁸ Pokies are Australian for VLT's or slot machines.

corridor now established between my two walls references item eight. I use it as a space to think as I work or to visualize while I pace. And here is how my brainstorming goes to work:

I am inside the space defined by two curving walls and with the computer on my lap I contemplate and I type -- Australia offered me a lot of time to just think about stuff. I walked anywhere and everywhere from five to twenty kilometers per day. The houses in and around Petersham have some of the cutest and tiniest front yards. My Nanna Gagan had a cute front yard. My sister Laurie has an incredible garden in her back yard. Keep walking -- no standing... . Wow, the house that I stayed in on New Canterbury Drive in Sydney is located in the center of the curve in the road. I am seated at the center of the curve in between my walls. OK, Grandmother Cambridge is from Canterbury, England and Grandmother Odnokon I discovered is already on the first panel of the outside wall. Now they are both there. But I thought that these walls represented my two heredity lines -- now one wall is becoming more spiritual than the other -- what does this do to the inside space -- I need to define this space -- I need to finish this space -- I can't see the wall, I'm inside the wall -- no I can't get inside the wall -- I can only be in-between the two walls... .

This is how I talk to myself as I move myself through the work and if the answer doesn't come to me, I move on to resolve what I already know. Working on a large scale helps to direct my ideas as I define my path. I am an artist that reacts not only to internal themes but the environment I'm in as well.

My accommodation in Sydney was simple, comfortable and great. It became part of our evening ritual to share interesting conversations with a few bottles of beer or on occasion an even better bottle of Australian wine. Edwin had no television so I was uninformed about everything ranging from world events such as NATO's bombing of Serbia to the daily weather reports. He mapped my way through the taxi, transit and train systems but I had to figure out "No Standing" for myself. At night I was calmed by the pink walls of the spare bedroom where I slept -- I thought about Carol MacDonnell's old office and its new occupant Eric Cameron and wondered how fared he with pink. I thought of Virginia Woolf and "a room of one's own -- a room with a view -- a room from my view" I had recorded, in my

sketchbook before I went to sleep. Someday I will finish reading her book. Someday I will put a nice hat on these walls.⁵⁹

But this is what I know -- I need to find what I don't know -- what will I do to the inside of these walls -- what are they about? I know they need skin and so I continue to add a tissue layer of skin...

Here I was in an old historic Victorian house that had its original plastered ceiling still intact. I longed to find a chair high enough so that I could feel the texture of the plaster that loomed over me as I slept. It was sagging in some areas but Edwin was confident that it could be safely restored. The tiny single bed was the only piece of furnishing in my room so I spent a lot of time looking up. I tried to look out the window but it was mounted too high for me to see out. I saw only glimpses of the clouds that passed; I wondered who built this house and why was the window placed so high? The next morning I explored the exterior structure and noted that the kitchen, and spare bedroom and bath above it were most likely a later addition. Of course, this was an old Victorian house and they didn't have bathrooms back then.

So now I knew why the window in my room was so high -- it was probably tucked into the plans when the addition was built. And now that I am back at home and looking at my work -- I just might forget about putting my bowl on a base and keep it suspended in open space. OK, now that makes sense but I still don't know what to do to the inside:

Edwin's furnishings were sparse in every room and all objects had their place. He owned one beautiful, stainless steel pot. The yard was also quiet and calm. My evenings were mostly entertained by a cat named Oliver, whom Edwin had trained to "be-a-bear". "Come on Oliver", Edwin would say, "this is for the Olympic Gold medal -- BE-A-BEAR!!!" And so Oliver the black cat would squat on his hind paws and stretch his bodice in an upright position with his two front paws left dangling out in front -- waiting for his master to count to ten -- until he received his morsel of freshly boiled fish. (Yuk I hate fish -- how am I going to eat this big bowl of fish soup -- I'm sure I told Edwin I hate fish, or maybe that was Jed??? - I can't believe I ate that huge bowl of fish soup -- and I did not throw up --

⁵⁹ Putting on a nice hat is the influence of Gaudi's architecture when I studied in Spain, 1992.

*cooked cabbage makes me throw up -- fish soup didn't? Hmmm) --
Anyway, what an athlete, what a cat... .*

Untitled Painting, 1999 that I just think I titled was completed when I returned to Canada. It is a portrait of Edwin and his cat. Oliver is represented by black and Edwin is referenced with orange. When I visited his studio one day he was working on an orange painting entitled A New Gynecology, onto which he would collage some flattened and restructured tools that he hand builds. I think he thinks that it will cause a roar amongst feminists but it didn't do me much dandy that day (I was mostly attracted to his toy dinosaur collection since I'm a third person collector myself) -- But I kind of thought it was all right. Yes, orange is all right. Edwin is all right and now I know I can show this painting in my show.

Gee Carol -- this is starting to work -- my support paper is really helping me to figure things out -- it's fish soup -- it's inside my gut -- I paint from my gut -- I usually hate my paintings until I get them to work -- I got the fish soup to work -- I didn't throw up -- I have a pile of paintings that never worked -- I hate fish soup -- I will cut these paintings up -- they will go inside my walls -- inside my walls is inside my gut -- don't lose it, keep going, keep walking.....Rothko hits me like a rock -- inside the geo rock -- these paintings will be cut up -- when they break apart they show a different beauty -- inside the rock -- the fragments make up the whole -- the structure behind the unified whole -- make the picture smaller - - break down the mass -- go inside and show fragments -- this is about me. I don't belong on the outside wall -- I will remove my breast from the outside wall because those stories are about what is outside of me. Those are the walls that I built for the women who have given a cast of their breast to me. To educate others. Phenomenological fusion of what is heard and said -- the history, the health, the identities and all the layers in-between, merging with the walls to perform as embodied selves.

And so I decided that the original casts of the breasts would go in the show -- this is the only place they can show -- they have to tell their stories -- in a place where they won't be

regarded as something for the sake of showing something -- this is my most fragile piece -

- I have to think about it some more:

The breast can inform me about the salon -- The Nickle is not the salon -- I know that now!!! I designed these walls specifically for The Nickle. An interior space to define an interior place -- but I first thought about it outside as a path that goes into a hill...I wrote this thesis on the studio the stage the salon -- what will I do -- its not about the salon anymore -- I'm not afraid to show anymore -- It's a strong structure - it stands on its own -- support support - OK maybe it's your own salon - behind the support -- behind the walls -- I can't see there from here -- up on the ladder I see it all -- the pantyhose will flank the pillar -- the pillar meets the roof -- the birdseed the birds oh that myth ,,,,,,think Latin -- Geoffrey Simmins,,,,,, A rara avis! A rare bird. OK go home you have 224 inside squares to build plywood stretchers for. Try to do at least 60 -- the project will be incomplete but so is this path you are on.

I am in a position of knowing where I'm at in my work. My inside walls are now defined and I have taken ownership of the corridor as my space. I will be able to finish it now. Sometimes it takes a bit of thrashing things out and then settling down before the direction of my path is known.

Within a week from my return from Sydney I had my final committee review as a graduate student. There are two comments that stood out the most: The first from Ray Arnatt who suggested that everything that I needed to know was already there in my studio space: and secondly as Jim Ulrich pointed out that I should begin by selecting one thing that defined the center of my universe and potentially my installation could grow from that. I have just succeeded at getting the support paper to do just that -- support the work without overpowering the work -- I left all of the research and notes at the back -- I trusted my own acquired knowledge and followed my gut. Item eight has served me very well.

Chapter 3: *The Salon*

The title of the MFA thesis exhibition Grasping Nothing, and the distribution of gallery space at The Nickle Arts Museum, spawned the undertaking of building my own walls. It was a challenge I eagerly embraced.

Most of May was spent planning, designing and organizing events for the final show such as posters, invitations and other graduation details. I was still feeling a bit jet-lagged from my trip to Australia but was looking forward to the show. At the end of the month regular meetings with my colleagues helped to sort organizational matters out so I retreated once more into my research and work.

By early June I was in full production designing and testing ideas on the lay out for my curving walls. I had to calculate and measure the radius for the curve, decide what materials I would use in its construction and search out the right tools to complete the job. They began as a two-by-four construction that would be sheeted with drywall material. I soon realized that because of the scale, the weight would potentially be too much for me to handle on my own. I decided to build the walls using the same plywood structure that I use to support my canvas paintings. The change in design meant extra work but in the end each panel would be lighter and more manageable, measuring 4' wide x 8' tall. I also chose to use 1/8" hardboard instead of drywall which not only reduced the weight but added a more durable and bendable surface to the form. At this stage I still thought of them as a parallel set of round walls that I would use to hang my square paintings on. The concept seemed simple enough... (right).

Well, the first step to make the walls bend was to cut the radius of the curve into 140 members that would serve as the horizontal bracing's for each panel. That meant a total of 240 jigsaw cuts across the width of the plywood to obtain enough braces for 28 panels. It took me awhile to get the curve of each cut close enough to match the curve of the cut before, so that when they stacked in a pile, they would be even and flush. On some days I thought that the blade had a mind of its own and pulled out every trick in its book to deter me from my path (I eventually learned to chuckle and would just put in a new blade).

The next step involved calculating the degree of miter cut at each end of the curved members so that the vertical edges of each wall joined to conform with the radius of the round design. In other words I did not want a serpentine curve, it had to be rounded and smooth. The members for the 16 outer panels were mitered at two degrees on both ends (totaling 160 cuts) so that the length of the entire wall would not exceed 50 feet. This measurement was crucial because the walls had to fit in the space between two structural columns at The Nickle. The 12 inside walls were angled at just over one degree (120 cuts) so that it would tuck into the curve of the outer wall and leave enough of a gap (~ 5' 2") for viewers to walk in-between.

Next, the plywood was ripped through the table saw lengthwise to create the 2 3/4" vertical stiles or edges (56 pieces). These are placed on edge and the horizontal members are dry-fitted and loosely attached. Once in place, measurements are taken and four additional vertical braces are snuggled into place on each wall (112 vertical inserts). Then it is all taken apart to prepared for finishing the joints. Each joint of every member, brace and stile is then pre-cut and a Lamello biscuit is inserted. In addition, holes are pre-drilled

along the outer edges of each wall to avoid splitting the wood when it is screwed. A final check is done to make sure the wall is squared before it is glued and screwed. Then it is assembled and allowed to dry.

A 4x8 sheet of 1/8" hard board finishes one side of each wall. It was glued and nailed onto the plywood structure and allowed to set over night. Next, the nail holes were filled with liquid plastic and the edges around each wall were planed and sanded. Finally, holes were pre-drilled along the vertical edges and 5 bolts were inserted at two foot intervals to attach the walls together. The walls were now ready to stand. While setting up the walls, shims are used where the floor is uneven -- this helps to keep them level.

After five weeks of continuous labor construction of the walls was complete and the surface was ready for white gesso. The first panel of the inside wall took me several hours to do (I got a little carried away with the paint). Applying gesso to this wall changed the direction of my thesis work: this was a good thing because I realized that I wasn't just constructing a set of gallery walls rather, I was building an entirely new piece of work. I quickly loaded up my truck and in four loads transported the walls to the painting studio at the UofC.

As time in the graduate painting studio was ending my attention shifted towards the salon. I had a two year supply of paintings that were waiting to show. I began packing stuff up and loading it onto carts. The studio was ready to go.

So too was I. In my mind I had redefined the salon as a more personal and comfortable space -- an interior place not unlike that of an old Victorian home. Building

my own life size walls helped to transform the dual, plural and multiple ways of being-in-the-world and in-so-doing, solidifies an embodiment theme. This coincides nicely with all the layers in my work. In other words, I am grasping nothing by defining something.

As an installation artist, I anticipated the movement of viewers throughout the microcosms of my worlds. There had to be both order and flow to the layout of my work such that the viewer could enter into the show and become part of the work. At the same time, I had to be aware of the quiet performance and conversation that was going on with the offering bowl, the white walls and the women I built those walls for. I had a hunch that the original plan to show the white walls facing South towards the rest of the museum would be changed to face North. Once I was at the Nickle the subtlety of the light along the wall where I would hang the breasts confirmed the placement of the white walls. As a result everything else found its place.

The shadow of my Great Grandmother (who was a midwife and a healer) is fused onto the surface of the first panel along the outer graphite wall. This is an appropriate spot because her history begins the story of my walls. I have placed a window scone near the bottom of this panel to reference her memory and to honor her stories.

My external examiner, Gerry Thurston referred to the work as the “self-in-ation and self-in-action” and we discussed the pre-formed performance within the infinite spheres of a world view. I am delighted that he grasped the essence of my thesis and involved himself as an active viewer and performer in the work.

I could continue to talk about the labor, the cuts, and the curve -- the dream and the performance with Jeff; but everything that I need to know is already there. I chose to leave the ceiling and the floor alone because those are future projects and I will think about England, Spain or possibly France for that -- (or what about LA...hmmm).

By giving up the larger and more monumental walls at The Nickle, I have realized a dream and in building my own life size walls I have shared my stories with others. Figure 32 shows a glimpse of the corridor between the two walls, the sconce on the outer panel of the graphite wall, the Offering Bowl in the center of the stage area and in the far left hangs one of the two paintings that made it into The Salon.

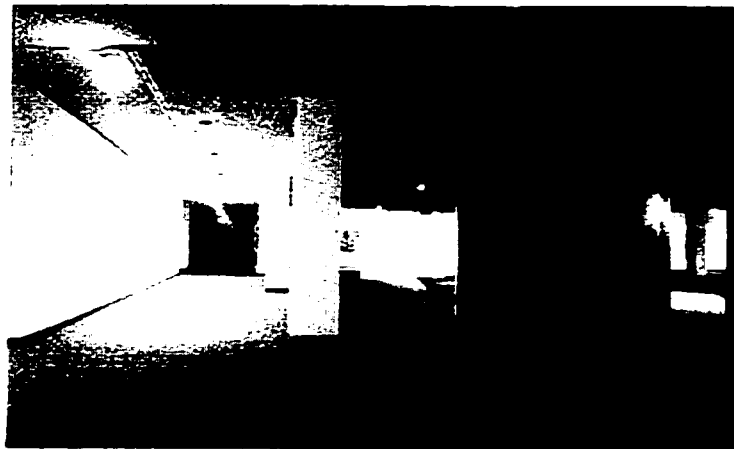


Figure 31. Thachek, Offering Walls, 1999.

Conclusion:

In the year that follows the next I will have completed this journey back and will begin my real quest to becoming something that I am not right now; I look forward to the release of institutional influence on my mind and to the control of my schedule of work once again. I feel smothered by others that need attention and demand to be the center of attraction all the time. I never want to be that young again. I don't want to be the center of attention -- I just want to be really good at what I do. I am seeking solace. I desire to leave nothing alone by grasping onto the in-betweens. That constant craving for the quiet calming motion of the heave in a wave. The stillness of an unturned rock.

I have learned much from my studies at university and even more from other people when they saw the walls. I will be leaving with not only an MFA degree, but with my life's work ahead of me -- it will take awhile to sort everything out:

Wendy brought in a book on Richard Serra -- wow -- he did round metal walls -- I don't know if I ever saw his work before -- but who knows over the years I've seen a lot of stuff. Ted brought in a book from the Casula Power House -- Round glass walls done by Aboriginal Artists are showing with my pantyhose right NOW -- the now-ism of things -- There is no way that I could have known about this work -- it went up after I left -- Ted was blown away when he saw my walls. I was even more amazed when he brought in a catalogue of the work. I don't know what this means yet -- its outside my understanding -- its even bigger than item eight -- or not -- because lots of houses have had, and have, round walls -- they may not be unique but that doesn't mean they aren't good. They are OK. What else... Maybe a little more about Eva Hess and maybe not.

What saves the whole world from becoming a painting? What happens after Kant? Are our lives continually being narrowed and flattened? There was a time when I really cared about asking questions. As the years pass by I find my mind is drying up -- but that could have something to do with the fact that I'm tired of going to university and tired of being over worked. I need sleep. Rationalize what is omitted. I am an experienced feminist and an art educator/teacher -- no need to discuss what I already know -- say this in the oral.

I returned to University to answer one question -- am I an artist or not? Do I have what it takes to make 'it' work? In answering these questions I discovered that the most important ingredient is not what others think of what I do but what I already knew -- hard work, determination and concentrated effort will help me to make stuff but in the end I am my best and worst critic -- another player appearing on, in and behind

The Studio, The Stage, The Salon...

I still type...

It's a long, long drive to Saskatoon --

Another Layer, Another Story, Another Time.

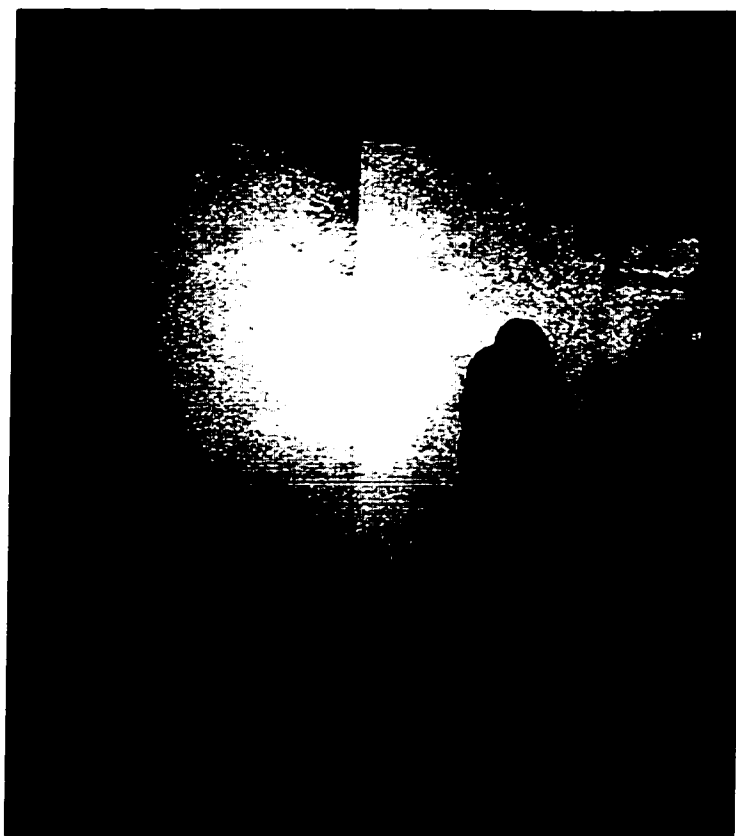


Figure 32. Thachek, view of the artist in front of white walls, 1999.

Appendix A

Research Notes

These notes are included as an indicator of the type of research that was compiled, recorded and/or absorbed during my studies. They are by no means meant to be taken as formal endnotes to this support paper. Nor is it to be assumed that they are inclusive of all the sources I consulted in preparation for my thesis work. Rather, they are intended simply to be the rough notes that I collected and tucked into this appendix to emphasize the methodological framework of this paper as a support to my studio work. The reader should consult each source before any attempt is made to appropriate ideas or quotes from these notes.

Taylor, Charles. The Malaise of Modernity. CBC Massey Lecture Series. Concord, Ont.: House of Anansi Press Ltd., 1991.

I. Three Malaise's

"I mean by this features of our contemporary culture and society that people experience as a loss or a decline, even as our civilization "develops." Sometimes people feel that some important decline has occurred during the last years or decades -- since the second World War, or the 1950s, for instance. And sometimes the loss is felt over a much longer historical period: the whole modern era from the seventeenth century is frequently seen as the time frame of decline." p 1
3 main ...themes of decline converge -- the worries -- the changes defining modernity still perplex us...

1. **Individualism** worries us even though some define it as modernism's best accomplishment -- own choices, rights. -- don't want to go give this back -- p 2
"Modern freedom was won by our breaking loose from older moral horizons. p 3. Everyone fit into part of a larger order, a cosmic order or chain of being that is a hierarchical order. The Hierarchical order is reflected in the structure of society. These orders were discredited by modernity but in so doing gave more meaning to social life (freedom from being locked into roles) but ... the disenchantment of the world -- the eagle lost its crown or matter lost its magic. Did we loose too much- the heroic order, the magic... passion... "In other words the dark side of individualism is a centring on the self, which both flattens and narrows our lives, makes them poorer in meaning, and less concerned with others or society." p 4
"People lost broader vision because they focused on their individual lives" p 4 The perennial worry of the me generation or the prevalence of narcissism and the permissiveness of society... "The sense that lives have been flattened and narrowed, and that this is connected to an abnormal and regrettable self-absorption, has returned in forms specific to contemporary culture. p 4
2. **Instrumental Reason** The disenchantment of the world effects the primacy of instrumental reason. The rationality of making efficient decisions--cost effective decisions as the most economical means to an end. No longer have to ground attention to a sacred structure -- even the once sacred animals are treated as a raw material -- instrumental reason favors each one to his own. p 5

Fear that all things will be determined by cost efficiency -- technology. has an aura of prestige -- dependency-- problem in treating patients as a whole living being with a life story or as a technical problem -- out put -- i.e. dentist office. Technology has also contributed to the "...narrowing and flattening of our lives. ...People have spoken of a loss of resonance, depth, or richness in our human surroundings" p 6 The Iron Cage (Weber) -- impersonal mechanisms of institutions to drive people to make decisions that go against humanity and good sense i.e. bureaucrat forced to implement policy of ... but not so dooming -- need change

3. **Loss of Freedom** -- politics take over due to individualism and the retreat to the private domain of self -- alienation from the public sphere pp. 8-12

II. The Inarticulate Debate -- the individualism of self-fulfillment -- retreat or "...centring on the self and a concomitant shutting out, or even unawareness, of the greater issues or concerns that transcend the self, be they religious, political, historical. -- life is therefor narrowed or flattened -- however the "...moral ideal behind self-fulfillment is that of being true to oneself, in a specifically modern understanding of that term." --Authenticity = contemporary ideal -- a picture of a better life is a moral ideal --Narcissism or Hedonism = no moral ideal. "Survivalism has taken the place of heroism as the admired quality" p 16 "So the critics of authenticity can point to the possible social and political results of each person seeking self-fulfillment." p 18 1. Authenticity is a valid ideal 2. that you can argue in reason about ideals and how practice conforms to ideals 3. that in arguing, you can make a difference

III. The Sources of Authenticity -- Descartes pioneered the idea -- individualism of disengaged rationality demands that every individual is self-responsible "But authenticity also has been in some respects in conflict with these earlier forms. It is a child of the Romantic period, which was critical of disengaged rationality and of an atomism that didn't recognize the ties of community" p 25 Morality has in a sense a voice within" p 26 ... Only now the source we have to connect with is deep in us. This is part of the massive subjective turn of the modern culture, a new form of inwardness, in which we come to think of ourselves as beings with inner depths." p26 Jean Jacques Rousseau "... frequently presents the issue of morality as that of our following a voice of nature within us." p 27 -- can be drowned by the passions of others -- salvation by recovering authentic moral contact from within ourselves -- self-determining freedom, meaning I decide what is right for me without external influence -- "Self-determining freedom demands that I break the hold of all such external impositions, and decide for myself alone, p27 Authenticity and self-determining freedom -- Kant reinterpreted this freedom as autonomy in purely moral terms and Hegel and Marx return it to the political sphere. "Herder put forward the idea that each of us has an original way of being human." p 28 Hence I am my way because of my own inner measuring and not because of an imitation to someone else. If not true to self -- miss the point of being human p 29 self-contact- innervoice--true to my own originality - true to self - and something only I can articulate and discover - by articulating I define - the modern ideal of authenticity couched by self-realization and self-fulfillment -- the background that gives moral force to the culture of authenticity p 29

IV. Inescapable Horizons --- How do we reason? can you reason with someone immersed in the culture of authenticity or soft relativism-- away

X. Against Fragmentation

"The continuing cultural struggle between different outlooks, different enframings of the key ideals of modernity, parallels on the institutional level the conflicting demands of the different but complementary ways we organize our common life: market efficiency may be dampened by collective provision through the welfare state; effective state planning may endanger individual rights; the joint operations of state and market may threaten democratic control. p. 111

"Fragmentation arises when people come to see themselves more and more atomistically, otherwise put as less bound to their fellow citizens in common projects and allegiances," pp. 112, 113

"...vicious circle... ...could also be a virtuous circle." ...Canadian Diversity, p118,119

"What our situation seems to call for is a complex, many-leveled struggle, intellectual, spiritual, and political, in which the debates in the public arena interlink with those in a host of institutional settings, like hospitals, and schools, where these disputes in turn both feed and are fed by the place of technology and the demands of authenticity, and beyond that, the shape of human life and its relation to the cosmos.

But to engage effectively in this many-faceted debate, one has to see what is great in the culture of modernity, as well as what is shallow or dangerous. As Pascal said about human beings, modernity is characterized by *grandeur* as well as by *misere*. Only a view that embraces both can give us the undistorted insight into our era that we need to rise to its greatest challenge" pp. 120, 121

Koyre, Ph.D., Leyy. D. From the Closed World To The Infinite Universe. Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1957.

"There are therefore Agents in Nature able to make the Particles of Bodies stick together by very strong Attractions. And it is the Business of experimental Philosophy to find them out." p. 213

Sir Isaak Newton, "What the space that is empty of bodies is filled with." p. 297 Chapter IX Notes. Showed that "Light is neither a communication of motion nor of a Pressure", rather ... "projected minute bodys"

Newton:

"Have not the small Particles of Bodies certain Powers, Virtues, or Forces, by which they act at a distance, not only upon the Rays of Light for reflecting, refracting, and inflicting them, but also upon another for producing a Part of the Phaenomena of Nature? For it's well known, that Bodies act one upon another by the Attractions of Gravity, Magnetism, and Electricity; and these Instances shew the Tenor and the Course of Nature, and make it not improbable but that there may be more attractive Powers than these. For Nature is very consonant and comfortable to her self." p. 209.

Csordas, Thomas J. Embodiment and Experience The existential ground of culture and self.

- boundaries of animal, human and machine -- corporeal flux and bodily transformation

- natural corporeality and divine incorporeality
- natural and supernatural bodies
- the body as a cultural phenomenon with religion offering evidence of this assertion -- therefor the relation of religious experience and embodiment
- body in pain - ethnic violence, self destruction, domestic violence, sexual violence, gangs being human as a body that can experience pain and self-alienation
- dissolution of self in torture - portrait of denatured body - the body as a threatened vehicle of human being and dignity
- add sentience and sensibility to notions of self and materiality to culture and history
- rubric, the body as object or theme of analysis... source of symbols in the discourse of cultural or religious domains.
- conditioning of the five external senses plus proprioception (our sense of being in a body and oriented in space) as well what Kant called the inner sense of intuition or sensibility. - i.e. Mauss's 1950 classic notion of bodily techniques - swimming, dancing, posture, meditation - in which the body is a tool, agent, object. **The Topical Body** - the body and... health, religion, politics, gender, self emotion, technology etc. --
- The Multiple Body** -- with as many bodies as one cares to recognize ..
- i.e. 2 bodies social and physical (Mary Douglas, 1973) - this distinction reiterates mind and body or culture and biology and differentiates between the use we make of our bodies and the way our bodies function, and emphasizes the way elements of physiology and anatomy can be taken up into the symbolic domain.
- Or... 3 bodies by Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Margaret Lock (1987) the Individual Body (the lived experience of the body as self), The Social Body (representational uses of the body as symbol of nature, society and culture) and Body Politic (regulation and control of body).
- Or... 5 bodies (John O'Neill, 1985) - **The World's Body** is a tendency to anthropomorphize the cosmos. **The Social Body** (common analogy of social institutions to bodily organs and use of bodily processes such as ingestion of food to define social categories). **The Body Politic** = models of city or country... head of state or members of the body politic. **The Consumer Body** = doubt is created with the self to sell grace, confidence spontaneity etc. by creating and commercializing bodily needs such as for sex, cigarettes, labor saving devices or cars. **The Medical Body** = the process of medicalization in which an increasing number of body processes are subject to medical control and technology.
- THIS TAKES EMBODIMENT FORGRANTED. The body as empirical thing or which their world is shaped -- What is culture -- is it not grounded in the human body? Fact - we are embodied -- then reread the classic data of ethnography where passages of human experiences are tucked away in discussions of ritual and social organization, waiting to be rediscovered. Indigenous world view of the person not as individuated but as diffused with other persons and things in a unitary sociomythic domain
- interrelated conceptual duality's of: preobjective and objectified; the conventional distinction between mind and body; derivative distinctions between culture and biology; the mental and the material; culture and practical reason; gender and sex.
- Ontological** - the distinction is embedded in our thinking -- critique of the mind/body duality. In life experiences the disappearance of the body from awareness -- the body projects outward into experience but also falls back into unexperiencable depths.
- Cartesian Dualism** -- dualist error to not acknowledge the embodied nature of mind in that the body's own structure leads to its self concealment and thus a notion of immateriality of mind and thought.

- perennial problem of subject and object -- body as the source of subjectivity and mind as the locus of objectification = mind/ subject/culture is deployed in parallel with and in contrast to body/object/biology
 - the critique of representation -- substantive and epistemological
 - to evoke rather than to represent an experience
 - the othering dualisms of mind and body, thought and language, words and things
 - radical empiricism
 - representation (fundamentally nominal - a representation) and Being in the World (fundamentally conditional - existence and lived experience) This distinction is compatible between the distinction of semiotics and phenomenology
- Semiotics** = tension between text and discourse
- Phenomenology** = tension between phenomenology proper and hermeneutics
- Language and Experience** ... language gives access to a world of experience in so far as experience comes to, or is brought to language. --- the derivative character of linguistic meaning

Jean-Francois Lyotard, The Postmodern Condition: A report on Knowledge. Theory and History of Literature, Volume 10.

Forward by. Fredric Jameson. pp. vii - xxi

Appendix: Answering the Question: What is Postmodernism? pp. 71 - 82. Translated by Regis Durand.

This is a period of slackening-I refer to the color of the times. p 71

Jurgen Habermas (everyone had recognized him) thinks that if modernity has failed, it is in allowing the totality of life to be splintered into independent specialties which are left to the narrow competence of experts, while the concrete individual experiences "desublimated meaning" and "destructured form," not as a liberation but in the mode of that immense *ennui* which Baudelaire described over a century ago." p. 72... "What Habermas requires from the arts and the experiences they provide is, in short, to bridge the gap between cognitive, ethical, and political discourses, thus opening the way to a unity of experience." - what kind of unity does he have in mind -- heterogeneous language games --p 72

"... aesthetic judgment would only be required to decide whether such or such work is in conformity with the established rules of the beautiful." p. 75

"Modernity, in whatever age it appears, cannot exist without a shattering of belief and without discovery of the "lack of reality" of reality, together with the invention of other realities." p. 77 -- lack of reality coined by Nietzsche called nihilism -- but he sees an earlier modulation of nihilism in the Kantian theme of the sublime -- in particular the aesthetic of the sublime that modern art "... finds its impetus and the logic of avant-garde's find its axioms." p. 77 The sublime sentiment which is also the sentiment of the sublime, is, according to Kant, a strong and equivocal emotion: it carries with it both pleasure and pain. Better still, in it pleasure derives from pain. -- the tradition of the subject --taste, in conceiving and presenting an object that relates to a concept gives rise to a judgment that is reflective and may be experienced as pleasure. The sublime is different, takes place when "... the imagination fails to present an object which might, if only in principle, come to match a concept. We have only an Idea of a world but no way to show an example of it. Ideas to which presentation is impossible -- and therefore give no knowledge about reality -- no formation of taste and no rising sentiment of the beautiful. -- He calls "... modern the art which devotes its "little technical expertise" (son "petite technique"), as Diderot used to

say, to present the fact that the unrepresentable exists. ... But how to make visible that there is something which cannot be seen? Kant ... shows the way... when he names "formlessness, the absence of form," as a possible index to the unrepresentable." p. 78 --a negative representation of the infinite is = abstraction "thou shalt not make graven images" (exodus) Kant sites the bible "... as the most sublime passage in the bible as it forbids all presentation of the Absolute." -- painting will negate and avoid representation and hence the aesthetic of sublime -- as in Malevitch's "white" squares -- to see by making it impossible to see -- and to please only by causing pain. Still an axiom of avante-gardes in painting, as they are still making an allusion to the unrepresentable, by presenting it. p. 78 -- legitimizing is concealing and subordination of thought to the gaze...78-79

Habermas confuses Kantian sublime with Freudian sublimation

Postmodern is part of the modern and everything that is received if only yesterday must be suspected. -- an acceleration of generations that precipitate themselves -- i.e. Cezanne challenges the space of the impressionists, Picasso and Braque challenge Cezanne and Duchamp breaks the presupposition that one must paint or be a cubist. "A work can become modern only if it is first postmodern. Postmodernism thus understood is not modernism at its end but in the nascent state, and this state is constant." "... modernity takes place in the withdrawal of the real and according to the sublime relation between the presentable and the conceivable, it is possible, within this relation, to distinguish two modes (to use the musicians language). Emphasis on powerlessness of the faculty of presentation, on the nostalgia for the presence felt by the human subject, ..." or humanity and the will that is still there regardless -- emphasis place rather on the faculty to conceive on its inhumanity p. 79 In our understanding of things, human sensibility or imagination may not match what it conceives. -- new rules, new games as a result of -- emphasis placed on the increase of being, i.e. an infinite nuance in the distinction between say, Picasso and Duchamp -- What is allusion? The price of allusion is the identity of consciousness. "Proust calls forth the unrepresentable by means of a language unaltered in its syntax and vocabulary and of a writing which in many of its operators still belongs in the genre of novelistic narration. The literary institution, ... is admittedly subverted in that the hero is no longer a character but the inner consciousness of time, and in that the diegetic diachrony, is here put in question because of the narrative voice. Nevertheless, the unity of the book -- the odyssey of that consciousness, even if it is deferred from chapter to chapter, is not seriously challenged: the identity of the writing itself throughout the labyrinth of the interminable narration is enough to connote such unity, which has been compared to that of *The Phenomenology of Mind*." p. 80 "Joyce allows the unrepresentable to become perceptible in his writing itself, in the signifier. The whole range of available narrative and even the stylistic operators is put into play without concern for the unity of the whole, and new operators are tried. The grammar and vocabulary of literary language are no longer accepted as given; rather, they appear as academic forms, as rituals originating in piety (as Nietzsche said) which prevent the unrepresentable from being put forward." pp. 80-81 Here then lies the difference: modern aesthetics is an aesthetic of the sublime, though a nostalgic one. It allows the unrepresentable to be put forward only as the missing contents; but the form, because of its recognizable consistency, continues to offer the reader or viewer matter of solace and pleasure. Yet these sentiments do not constitute the real sublime which is an intrinsic combination of pleasure and pain: the pleasure that reason should exceed all presentation, the pain that imagination or sensibility should not be equal to the concept. p. 81 "the postmodern would be that which, in the modern, puts forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself; that which denies itself the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for

the unattainable that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. --The rules of the work are what the work is looking for -- hence the characters of an event that come too late for the author. Their realization begins before the work and hence post modern as a paradox of the future. "Finally it must be clear that it is our business not to supply reality but to invent allusions to the conceivable which cannot be presented." p. 81. "... and that only transcendental illusion (that of Hegel) can hope to totalize them into a real unity. But Kant also new that the price to pay for such an illusion is terror." p 81 ... "The answer is : Let us wage a war on totality; let us be witness to the unrepresentable; let us activate the differences and save the honor of the name." p. 82 and I say What Name???

forward: Fredric Jameson, pp. vii - xxi

crisis (Habermas)post (Lyotard)

Lyotard's paradigms of the new views of scientific research -- the status of science and technology, of technocracy and the control of knowledge and information today radical break, the society of the spectacle, consumer society, media society, bureaucratic society of controlled consumption, postindustrial society, crisis of representation -- "...in which an essentially realistic epistemology, which conceives of representation as the reproduction, for subjectivity, of an objectivity that lies outside it-- projects a mirror theory of knowledge and art, whose fundamental evaluative categories are those of adequacy, accuracy, and Truth itself." p viii Lyotard saves the coherence of research and experiment by "... recasting its now seemingly non- or postreferential "epistemology" in terms of linguistics, and in particular of theories of the performative (J. L. Austin), for which the justification of scientific work is not to produce an adequate model or replication of some outside reality, but rather simply to produce *more* work, to generate new and fresh ... statements, to make you have "new ideas", ... or best of all to "make it new"... . p. ix

return to pragmatics, to the analysis of language situations and games p XI check... rel of trixters-- postmodernism returns to the state it tries to diagnose through the narrative arguments -- Lyotard's differentiation between story telling and scientific abstraction - consumption of the past in narratives and hoarding of the knowledge. Where does culture fit in? positioned post modernism as a cyclical moment

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History. Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.

"The play of power in the production of alternative narratives begins with the joint creation of facts and sources for at least two reasons. First, facts are never meaningless: indeed, they become facts only because they matter in some sense, however minimal. Second, facts are not created equal: the production of traces is always also the creation of silences. Some occurrences are noted from the start; others are not. Some are engraved in individual or collective bodies; others are not. Some leave physical markers; others do not. What happened leaves traces, some of which are quite concrete—buildings, dead bodies, censuses, monuments, diaries, political boundaries—that limit the range and significance of any historical narrative. This is one of many reasons why not any fiction can pass for history: the materiality of the socio-historical process (historicity 1) sets the stage for future historical narratives (historicity 2).

The materiality of this first moment is so obvious that some of us take it for granted. It does not imply that facts are meaningless objects waiting to be discovered under some timeless seal but rather, more modestly, that history begins with bodies and artifacts: living brains, fossils, texts, buildings.

The bigger the material mass, the more easily it entraps us: mass graves and pyramids bring history closer while they make us feel small. a castle, a fort, a battlefield, a church, all these things bigger than we that we infuse with reality of past lives, seem to speak of an immensity of which we know little except that we are part of it. Too solid to be unmarked, too conspicuous to be candid, they embody ambiguities of history. They give us the power to touch, but not to hold it firmly in our hands--hence the mystery of their battered walls. We suspect that their concreteness hides secrets so deep that no revelation may fully dissipate their silences. We imagine the lives under the mortar, but how do we recognize the end of a bottomless silence?" pp. 29, 30.

History between truth and fiction, p 6

"Only in that present can we be true or false to the past we chose to acknowledge.

If authenticity belongs to the present, academic historians--and quite a few philosophers--may have lured themselves into a corner. The traditions of the guild, reinforced by a positivist philosophy of history, forbid academic historians to position themselves regarding the present. A fetishism of the facts, premised on an antiquated model of the natural sciences, still dominates history and other social sciences. It reinforces the view that any conscious positioning should be rejected as ideological. Thus, the historian's position is officially unmarked: it is that of the nonhistorical observer." p 151.

"The more historians wrote about past worlds, the more The Past became real as a separate world. But as various crises of our times impinge upon identities thought to be long established or silent, we move closer to the era when professional historians will have to position themselves more clearly alone write history for them." p. 152.

"We now know that narratives are made of silences, not all of which are deliberate or even perceptible as such within the time of their production. We also know that the present is itself no clearer than the past." pp. 152, 153.

"Any search for eternity condemns us to the impossible choice between fiction and positivist truth, between nihilism and fundamentalism, which are two sides of the same coin. As we move through the end of the millennium, it will be increasingly tempting to seek salvation by faith alone, now that most deeds seem to have failed.

but we may want to keep in mind that deeds and words are not as distinguishable as we often presume. History does not belong to only its narrators, professional or amateur. While some of us debate what history is or was, others take it in their own hands." p. 153.

Notes

1 The Power of the Story

1 Theories of history that have generated so many debates, models, and schools of thought since at least the early nineteenth century have been the object of a number of studies, anthologies, and summaries. ... My trust here is that too many conceptualizations of history tend to privilege one side of historicity over the other; that most debates about the nature of history, in turn, spring from one or another version of this one-sidedness; and that this one-sidedness itself is possible because most theories of history are built without much attention to the process of production of specific historical narratives." p. 157.

**Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History.
Boston: Beacon Press, 1995.**

Chapter Twelve: A womb of his own: male Renaissance poets in the female body.
Katharine Eisaman Maus

“While disputing a phallocratic connection between virility and good writing, these critics share the important assumption that writers naturally imagine their creativity in terms of their own bodies, their own genders. The analogies are essentially celebratory, or at least positive ones. Men think of their literary creativity as a form of sexual potency because they value both attributes, even though a Lacanian distinction between penis and phallus may complicate the relationship between bodies and processes of signification. Women, heroically asserting the importance of culturally undervalued female experiences, must redeem both their bodies and their creative energies for themselves, if they are not to succumb to neurosis or bad faith.” p. 266.

“Were it not so, it would fall out impossible, that her monthly course should flow, or she have milke to preserve the child nine moneths in her bellie, and two years after it is born: but that same would soone wast and consume. p. 5

By contrast, bodily heat and dryness are qualities associated with indeed constitutive of maleness. They are also, not coincidentally, the qualities associated with intellectual exertion generally, and imaginative in particular: p 268

To think that a woman can be hot and drie, or endowed with wit and abilitie conformable to these two qualities, is a very great error: because if the seed of which she was formed, had been hot and drie in their domination, she should have borne a man, and not a woman...She was by God created cold and moist, which temperature, is necessarie to make a woman fruitfull and apt for childbirth, but an enemy to knowledge.

What makes women fertile - what makes them *women* - also makes them stupid. p 269

“The woman’s body, then, incarnates some of the particular privileges and paradoxes of Renaissance subjectivity. On the one hand she is constituted as something preeminently *seen*; the paradigmatic focus, as numerous feminist writers have pointed out, of the male gaze. At the same time her interior “difference,” her lack of visibility, can become a topos of a *resistance* to scrutiny, of an inner truth not susceptible to discovery or manipulation from the outside.

The garment or the cover of the mind
The human soul is: of the soul, the spirit
The proper robe is: of the spirit, the blood:
And of the blood, the body is the shroud. (v.v. 170-3)

The body is elaborately insulated by layers of increasingly material substance - soul, spirit, blood, body - which provides necessary shelter for the true, vulnerable center of human identity, even while precluding any direct communion between the interior subject and exterior objects. Perhaps, then, the womb is another of those small enclosed spaces in which so many seventeenth-century poets discover their poetic identity and freedom: like Donne’s little room, Carew’s hidden garden, Lovelace’s prison cell. The clearly bounded and delimited body is the space of freedom.” pp. 273 - 274.

“The female interior encloses experiences unappropriable by an observer: adultery, orgasm, and so forth are both unseeable and possible. This dilemma, essentially a version of the “problems of other minds,” produces the paradoxes or oxymorons of antifeminist rhetoric: women’s silence conceals their true thoughts, women talk too much; women are inscrutable, women disclose everything.

“The appeal of the woman’s body, for a man who wants a subjective refuge, is the way it is closed upon itself, the way her interiority is protected by opaque bodily perimeters. But

as an emblem of a "closed" subjectivity, the female body is defective insofar as it is penetrable, insofar as it is, in fact a sort of paradigm of penetrability.¹⁷ p. 274.

"The act of poetic creation seems to require a reference to an inside even as that inside is being externalized, as the difference between inside and outside is transgressed or annihilated. But this pregnancy is without impregnation. At the end of the first sonnet of Astrophil and Stella, Astrophil's pregnancy is revealed to be essentially self-generated: something comes out, but nothing came in." p. 275.

McDowell, John. Mind And World. Cambridge, Massachusetts & London: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Lecture I. Concepts and Intuition pp. 3-23.

"Thoughts without content are empty" Kant pp. 3-4 *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Macmillan, London, 1929), A51/B75. p. 3 ... "For a thought to be empty would be for there to be nothing that one thinks when one thinks it; that is, for it to lack what I am calling "representational content". ...Now when Kant says that thoughts without content are empty, he is not merely affirming a tautology: "without content" is not just another wording for "empty", as it would be if "content" simply meant "representational content". ... (and the other half of Kant's remark) "intuitions without concepts are blind." ...So the picture is this: the fact that thoughts are not empty, the fact that thoughts have representational content, emerges out of an interplay of concepts and intuitions. "Content" in Davidson's dualism corresponds to intuitions, bits of experiential intake, understood in terms of a dualistic conception of this interplay." pp. 3-4.

"What we wanted to conceive as exercises of concepts threaten to degenerate into moves in a self-contained game. And that deprives us of the very idea that they are exercises of concepts. Suijing empirical beliefs to the reasons for them is not a self-contained game." p 5. "So in order to form an observational concept, a subject would have to abstract out the right element in the presented multiplicity." p. 7. "The idea is that empirical substance is transmitted from the ground level to empirical concepts that are further removed from immediate experience, with the transmission running along channels constituted by the inferential linkages that hold a system of concepts together." p. 2.

intuition = experiential intake of the given state that already has conceptual content. p. 9
 "...connect inner experience with conceptual capacities, so as to think about "inner sense" in parallel with "outer sense" ... p. 22 "in order to escape the oscillation, we need a conception of experiences as states or occurrences that are passive but reflect conceptual capacities, capacities that belong to spontaneity, in operation. p 23

no to wrap the matter up p 22

Lecture II. The Unboundedness of the Conceptual pp. 24-45

the oscillation of two sides -- one that divorces thought from reality through coherence and "...on the other side a vain appeal to the Given, in the sense of bare presences that are supposed to constitute the ultimate grounds of empirical judgments. "...suggested that in order to escape oscillation, we need to recognize that experiences themselves are states or occurrences that inextricably combine receptivity and spontaneity." ... "so experiences can intelligibly stand in rational relations to our exercises of the freedom that is implicit in the idea of spontaneity." p. 24

objects on the score of reality because "...we need rational constraints on thinking and judging, from a reality external to them, if we are to make sense of them as bearing on a reality outside thought at all." p. 25

Is the myth of the given hopeless?

"...the need for external constraint. is met by the fact that experiences are receptivity in operations." Therefore we can take in how things are by combining reception and spontaneity because how things are is independent of one's thinking. "*That things are thus and so* is the content of experience, and it can also be the content of the judgment ... if the subject decides to take the experience at face value." p. 26.

experiences are the layout of reality -- the nature of the perceptible world -- and things are thus and so.

I think that reality exists as a passive experience to self that acknowledges the such and such as the case of the this and so.

color -- if being and seeing red and looking red are intelligible only in terms of each other. it becomes a mystery for anyone to break into this circle. Color as an inner experience rather than a property of an external object ... color figures in the content of experience. pp. 31-32

thinking does not stop short of facts 33

thoughts without intuition would be empty p. 34

making sense of the world from the activity of our experiences impinged on the senses there is no outer boundary around the sphere of conceptualizing

opaque thinkers p34 to make my conceptual contents available to the viewer

a sideways-on picture? ... "When the specific character of her thinking starts to come into view for us, we are not filling in blanks in a pre-existing sideways-on picture of how her thought bears on the world, but coming to share with her a standpoint *within* a system of concepts, a standpoint from which we can join her in directing a shared attention at the world, without needing to break out through a boundary that encloses the system of concepts.11" pp. 35-36

outer experience as awareness of something objective

the whole thinkable world is independent of experience

"If we restrict ourselves to the standpoint of experience itself, what we find in Kant is precisely the picture I have been recommending: a picture in which reality is not located outside a boundary that encloses the conceptual sphere. It is no accident that I have been able to put what I am urging in Kantian terms. The fact that experience involves receptivity ensures the required constraint from outside thinking and judging. But since the deliverances of receptivity already draw on capacities that belong to spontaneity, we can coherently suppose that the constraint is rational; that is how the picture avoids the pitfall of the Given." p. 41. "but the transcendental perspective embeds this potentially liberating picture within a peculiar version of the sideways-on view I mentioned earlier ..., with the space of concepts circumscribed and something--the supersensible in this version, not the ordinary empirical world--outside its outer boundary. ... Once the supersensible is in the picture, its radical independence of our thinking tends to present itself as no more than the independence any genuine reality must have. ... We are asked to suppose that the fundamental structure of the empirical world is somehow a product of subjectivity, in interaction with supersensible reality, which as soon as it is in the picture, strikes up as the seat of true objectivity. But how can the empirical world be genuinely independent of us, if we are partly responsible for its fundamental structure? It does not help to be told that it is only transcendentially speaking that the fundamental structure of the empirical world is of our making. 17. Barry Strouds, "The Disappearing 'We' " symposium, commenting on a paper by Jonathan Lear. p.42

"Crediting our experience with ordinary empirical passivity meets our need: it ensures that when we invoke spontaneity in connection with the employment of concepts in empirical thinking, we do not condemn ourselves to representing empirical thinking as rationally

unconstrained, a frictionless spinning in a void. p. 42. Kant points to the way to escape the myth of the given in an obligation to be alive with responsibility .. "...the Given is a brute effect of the world, not something justified by it" p. 42 "The world itself must exert a rational constraint on our thinking." p. 42 ...

"If it were not for the transcendental framework, we could credit Kant with a clear formulation of that insight." ... (this is how Macdowell interprets Kant's) "...almost explicit claim that thoughts without intuitions would be empty. The idea of a faculty of spontaneity is the idea of something that empowers us to take charge of our lives. Kant points to the way... "we can hold that empirical inquiry is a region of our lives in which we exercise a responsible freedom, and not let that thought threaten to dislodge our grip on the requirement that empirical thinking be under constraint from the world itself. But the transcendental framework forces a qualification." p. 43

"I think it has to be admitted that the effect of the transcendental framework is to make Kant's philosophy idealistic in the sense I have been considering." p. 44 Kant "... recognizes a reality outside the sphere of the conceptual", and so it follows that if ... "we abstract from the role of the supersensible in Kant's thinking, we are left with a picture in which reality is not located outside a boundary that encloses the conceptual. ... (and therefor) ... such a picture does not slight the independence of reality. The picture is not offensive to common sense, but precisely protective of it." p. 44

Absolute idealism rejects the idea that conceptual realms have an outer boundary ... rhetoric of that philosophy. "Consider, for instance, this remark of Hegel's: "In thinking, I *am free*, because I am not in an *other*." p. 44 -- "...the conceptual is unbounded; there is nothing outside it."

content of experience is conceptual p. 45

Lecture III. Non-conceptual Content

to avoid oscillation, accept that empirical knowledge is a co-operation between sensibility and understanding (as Kant conceives) "Experiences are impressions made by the world on our senses, products of receptivity; but those impressions themselves already have conceptual content." p. 46 Because:

Evans: The informational states which a subject acquires through perception are *non-conceptual*, or *non-conceptualized*. ... Moves content from one state of non to the other of conceptual. pp. 47-48. the information system -- gathers info on the world through perceptions or our senses -- receive info through transmission or communication, testimony -- and retain info through time or memory. ... a more primitive way than spontaneity p. 48

"... it is essential to conceptual capacities that they belong to spontaneity, that is, to a faculty that is exercised in actively self-critical control of what one thinks, in the light of deliverances of experiences." p. 49.

all creatures feel pain -- the inner sense of the outer experience
the freedom of the notion of spontaneity

"Human beings mature into being at home in the space of reasons or, what comes to the same thing, living their lives in the world; we can make sense of that by noting that the language into which a human being is first initiated stands over against her as a prior embodiment of mindedness, of the possibility of an orientation to the world." p. 125.

"The feature of language that really matters is rather this: that a natural language, the sort of language into which human beings are first initiated, serves as a repository of tradition, a store of historically accumulated wisdom about what is a reason for what. The tradition is subject to reflective modification by each generation that inherits it. ... But if an individual

human being is to realize her potential of taking her place in that succession, which is the same thing as acquiring a mind. the capacity to think and act intentionally. at all. the first thing that needs to happen is for her to be initiated into a tradition as it stands. p. 126.

Lecture VI. Rational and Other Animals.

Natural nature can include second nature without a threat of incoherence. p 88. Everything softens and naturalism relaxes, passive experiences slide into natural experience. p. 89
sensitivity is a natural capacity

"Kant says that thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind.

"Similarly, intentions without overt activity are idle, and movements of limbs without concepts are mere happenings, not expressions of agency." p. 89 "The parallel is this: intentional bodily actions are actualizations of our active nature in which conceptual capacities are inextricably implicated."

"The demands of reason are essentially such that a human upbringing can open a human being's eyes to them." p. 92

"Modern philosophy has taken itself to be called on to bridge the dualistic gulfs, between subject and object, thought and world. This style of approach to meaning sets out to bridge a dualism of norm and nature." p. 93 a deeper dualism -- and how to respond to it --pp. 93-94. "Phenomenalism is a good example of a philosophical construction with this traditional shape; it aims to overcome anxiety about a gap of experience and the world by constructing the world out of experience, still conceived in just the way that gives rise to anxiety. p. 94

the naturalism that disenchant nature -- social -- our natural way of being is already shaped by meaning. p. 95

Rorty's discovery that gives philosophy peace -- stay out of the constructivist grooves. p 95

Taking Kant out of his frames of conceiving experience as a story about transcendental affection of receptivity by a supersensible reality, because by acknowledging the supersensible, Kant protects Religion and morality interest. p 96 .

**Murray, Edward L., ed. Imagination and Phenomenological Psychology.
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 1987.**

Three case studies of the role of the imagination in experience leads to identifying two types -- the creative and desire types. pp. 29 - 44.

"The imaginative process takes place within the stream of conscious activity, and indeed phenomenologically is a form of consciousness. It appears and mingles with perceptions, memories, expectations, and so on." p 38. ... "Overall, it seems that the role of imagination is to bring to presence in consciousness whatever is not directly perceivable or actually given in any other way. ... Thus for the creative type, the various images he gets helps him to become clearer about his guiding idea. ... In the desire types examples, we have a different instance of presence. In each case there is sustaining of a prolonged presence that has a coherence of its own." p 38. The depth of nonconsciousness reached is not the same as in sleep

"An image is the presencing of an absent thing by consciousness, and it is a mode of consciousness not reducible to other modes." p 39

Language like more real implies the existence of not real ... when reality is confronted, the preceding incident is linked to imagination. p 40

...imagined scenes were fulfillment of desires that the perceptual environment lacked" p 41

... painter describes the images that come and flow -- "...precisely the theoretical point of the phenomenologists: to imagine is a certain way that consciousness is present to the world, and in assuming such an attitude, images in the narrow sense make their appearance." p 42.

"It is the phenomenologists who have mostly stressed the "act" dimension of consciousness but the systematic relationship between these acts and the images produced has not been worked out very well. p 42 ...In other words, just as one can move from a present perceptual experience to an act of memory in which a past perceptual act with its content can be evoked, so can one move from a present perceptual situation to an imaginative act in which an intentional act with its content is given." p 43.

"... to mount serious challenge to the hegemony of behaviorism: phenomenology and cognitivism. Though different in fundamental ways, both disputed the behaviorist conception of human existence as a passive, reactive chain of stimulus-response arcs." p 51. "...cognitivism is based on an information processing model derived from the subregion of computer science known as artificial intelligence, whereas the point of departure of phenomenology is the life-world, the world as given in mundane (ordinary, i.e., prescientific) experience. p 52. imagination is replaced by mental imagery in cognitivist approach, and imagined is replaced by imaged. p 54 The imagination, seen on the basis of this model, is likewise conceived as a moment or modality within the processing function of the mind. In this regard, the imagination is considered to aid in this overall processing function in two ways: in its relationships to pattern recognition and memory." p 53.

"Another variation is to propose that imagination is a "capacity to construct an image combining perceptual structures from internal memory with sensory features from external memory" ... Such a position holds that the imagination is "the mind's eye," and that it "is the meeting point where visual information from the external world is combined and coordinated with visual representations stored in short-term and long-term memory. ... Identifying this meeting place as the "visual vestibule," Chase and Simon go on to note that "the vestibular representation is by no means an unprocessed pictorial replica of the external world: contours are enhanced, the fovea is disproportionately represented, and there is a loss of resolution in the periphery" (Chase & Simon, 1973, p. 276 - 277) p. 55 "And just what does the symbol mean in computer science? It is the binary digit (hence the neologism "bit" of information). Such digits through on-off switches, represent information in the technical sense of a mathematical reduction of randomness by a series of binary choices between previously equally probable alternatives. Although the engineers who first formulated this concept of information in the late 1940's pointed out that it was not concerned with meaning at all (e.g., Weaver, 1949), cognitive psychologists applied it so uncritically that they now assume that the term "information" is synonymous with "knowledge" (e.g., Glass, Holyoak, & Santa, 1979, p. 2). p. 57

In computers and persons, "...symbols are taken as performing an essential function, that of "designation." p. 57

"This is the symbolic aspect, that having X (the symbol) is tantamount to having Y (the thing designated) for the purposes of process (Newell, 1980, p. 156) p. 58.

Newell contends that "the notion of symbol permeates thinking about the mind. ..."the thread through computer science and artificial intelligence has made a distinctive contribution to discovering the nature of human symbols. (Newell, 1980, p. 137) p. 58

"Thus, symbols are seen as unambiguously defined signifiers, devoid of any prethematic depth." p. 58

"The "symbols" of computer science are not symbolic in this genuinely connotative sense. Indeed, their strictly one-to-one referential quality is acknowledged by Newell and Simon ... Hence they ..." actually manipulate "signs" rather than "symbols." p. 59

"Symbolizing, in the fully human sense, emerges from within an involvement with that which is symbolized." p. 59

Cassirer -- termed symbolic pregnance to account for mutual determination or interwovenness. "Images, he argued, become "symbol" but always arise directly from the "flowing inner movement" of perceptual, affective life. ... all meaning is rooted in the stratum of effectivity and sensory stimulation and is referred back to it over and over again. ... This is the same view of symbols that phenomenologists have -- Merleau-Ponty's analysis of perceptual consciousness. p. 59

Image confused with the term imagined

3 modes of imaged -- distinguished by their differing temporal orientations...

"Remembering is and imaging of a presence given as "that which was." Its temporal orientation is toward the past. Imagining is an imaging of a presence given as "that which is as if." Its temporal orientation is toward the present. Anticipating is an imaging of a presence given as "that which may be." Its temporal orientation is toward the future." pp. 62 - 63. ... "Dreaming, for instance, would also be oriented to that which is given "as if" in the present. Another crucial question is whether all remembering and all anticipating are necessarily imaging." p. 63

Does the computer define the technology of the 20th century? Is it our cultures magnifying glass? p. 64

the computer is a product of its producer and reflects consciousness in the form of images p. 65 -- 2 themes -- control and disembodiment from interviews of computer owners and majors. Control can be gained through transparency (removal of mystery in programming) or magic (programming as transformation) p. 66

"When the body is described as the brain's "teleoperator" it is imagined as a machine.. It no longer appears as the finite, living body, but as the ever-ready, robotic appendage of a computer" p. 68.

cybernetics (technological character)-- movement of two thousand years of Western metaphysics Heidegger, 1966/1977a, pp. 374 - 77 -- technology is more than a means to an end in that it is revealing as a mode of imaging -- specifically as enframing -- the world becomes an object of calculus thought and the relation of man to that which exists diminishes -- becomes a standing reserve to process bits -- a machine -- away from the world of nature... damages the sense of relatedness to the self and to the world -- meaning fullness gets lost and meaning is derived and transformed as function -- loses the mystery, the sacred, the natural world. -- poetry becomes ambiguous information pp. 72 - 73.

conclusion -- computer is a means of figuring the consciousness -- but not to be taken literally as cognitivism does. -- consciousness is figure "as if" it were a computer

Ch. 3 Toward a Psychology of Imagination in Art and Esthetics by Tomas Proinsias O Cluanain. pp. 78 - 108.

"Perception has a geography. We can put our finger on it. Imagination, however is elusive to the touch. It evades conceptual grasp and psychological "fixings" on it in its relationships to the behaviors of creating and of appreciating works of art. Imagination is fugitive." p. 78.

metaphor of fugitive where in fluid materials i.e. gouache, the color pigment flees the pursuit of the sun's illumination. "Imagination flees our "fixing" of it as a process of

mind in relationship to other processes of mind such as perception, memory, and language." p. 78
the beginning of the phenomenological psychology of imagination for art and esthetics.

Giorgi, a. P., (1970). Psychology as a Human Science. New York: Harper and Row.
(1978). Phenomenology and Psychological research. Paper presented at Special Centennial symposium on Phenomenology and psychology, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, November 19.

"That is , behavior is always directed to some thing that is not the behavior itself, which we can best characterize it by saying that it is directed toward a situation. ...Moreover, to deal with intentionality at the level of behavior is to get involved with something that is both more and less precise than intentionality at the level of reflective consciousness." (Giorgi, 1978, p. 60).

Edward Casey: "It should be noted that the generic term "imagination" ... is not interchangeable with creative imagination. Creative imagination-- or more exactly, the creative use of imagination -- is an application or extension of imagination proper (Casey, 1976, p. xv).

"The world of art is a very special reality. To identify the imagination that goes into art as the same imagination that goes into Walter Mitty daydreams, or as visualizations of consequences of particular decisions, or as imaginings of absent friends, is to collapse two categories of different qualitative characters into a univocally defined category." p. 80.

"Similarly, with esthetic imagination one has to grant that the imagination mobilized toward collaboration with the perceptual appreciation of the significance of a work of art is essentially different from the imagination that is mobilized toward examination of a suit of clothing in consideration of its purchase, the savoring of a meat or a wine, or the evaluation of blueprint or a pattern for the construction of a house or the making of apparel. If artistic and esthetic imaginations are no more than these other imaginational activities, then there is no point to the writing of this chapter ..." p. 81

Art -- Casey refers to the guidability of the imaginings as in the control of the artist to direct it -- the unhindered use of the imagination vs. the plasticity of expressive means
painters with structure, canvas boards etc., and pigments..., as they work through their imagining with the material cannot "...arbitrarily "guide" their successive imaginings. They must come to terms with the materiality of their medium. ... "Vis-à-vis the medium, the artistic imagination must engage with its possibilities of expression and its limitations on expression." p. 82

"In the psychology of the creation of art, these facts of the artistic medium are ineluctably present to and part of the artistic process. These facts modify the "practically unlimited latitude" of the guidability of imagination. ... (which may) be found in the phase preceding actual engagement with a medium." p. 82

"Words as a medium are of much more extensive range than the range of colors and sounds and movements available to the artist, musician, dancer, and choreographer." p. 82

Casey: Since such continuity [between perception and imagination] is a familiar and even frequent phenomenon, it can hardly be regarded as an extraordinary feat of the human mind. In most instances it represents a natural and unforced extension of perceptual experience. Yet it must be emphasized that this extension is *imaginative* and not perceptual in character. A given perceptual experience is extended, by means of *another* kind of act which differs intrinsically from perception proper. This supplemental act is one of imagination, even though its function can be designated as a form of "paraperception." In its paraperceptual capacity, imagining is not only capable of linking up with preceding acts

of perceiving: it carries on their work in a different modality. qua paraperceptual. imagining is an act by which the inherent partialness of perceptual experience is momentarily suspended -- though not, of course, overcome. Through such paraperceiving, perceived and imagined components become interwoven as conjoint of a perceptual object or event which we are striving to apprehend more fully than we could by perception alone. [Casey, 1976, pp. 139-40]. p. 83.

"The mercurial and chance movements of wash as they become perceptible to the artist initiate the exploring and testing activity of a supplementary and then partnering imagination. The artistic forming of the movement, here is from a process instigated by perceptual experiences of the medium. The last sentence quoted above is particularly pertinent to the artistic process: "...perceived and imagined components become interwoven." Perceptions proposes; imagination disposes." p. 83

"The partnering of perception and imagination on the occasion of "accident" is experienced by art students and artists in general. As the turpentine wash streaks through a region of the canvas or as the brush precipitately smudges a line in a watercolor, dismay of the artist turns quickly to vigilance of the possibilities that may come from the error, of possibilities that may not only redeem the errant hand or brush, but also advance the artistic process of the work to a higher register." p. 83

on possibilizing the imagination activity in art it "...opens up an experiential domain that would not otherwise have been available either to the artist or to the spectator. This domain is one in which *everything appears as purely possible*. Within the medium-bound, spatio-temporal limits of a given work of art, the domain of the purely possible emerges whenever imagining is functioning autonomously [Casey, 1976, p. 206]. p. 84

... the domain of the purely possible mediates the medium and spatio-temporal Casey speaks of the thin autonomy - a disengaged state or mini-world where ephemerality precludes any engaged activity in the life world. and a thick autonomy which found in the concrete world of art and science p. 84 -- perhaps imaginative autonomy is the thick and medium qualified and the purely possible the thin and preceding phase to the actual making of art. pp. 84 -85.

Esthetics

"The imagined presentation of the artist exhibits a situatedness, a world, which in its creation is independent from preceding and succeeding mentions of the artist, and which is also noncontiguous to neighboring objects in the life-world. The "world" of the work of art possesses the authority of autonomy. It is to "this" that the esthete responds."..."When the esthetic imagination frees from the esthetic experience, it is no longer esthetic imagination. ... Consciousness is raised, sensitivities sharpened, and over time a sensibility is developed contributing to significant attitude formation. And from attitude, as well as from perception, behavior flows, is modified, or is inhibited. pp. 85-86

Imagination in a full autonomy is experienced thinly after the esthetic process - is active - and proceeds along with judgments of value and evaluations. Whereas a thick autonomy is where the imagination is in the receptive phase and collaborating with esthetic perception and esthetic experience. pp. 86 - 87.

"[They] are deployed in their possibilizing power in experiencing works of art. When I watch a movie or read a novel, the development of the plot at any point of termination is felt to be radically open insofar as my imagination is actively projecting possibilities pertaining to the plot's subsequent course. No matter what my specific expectations may be, and no matter how well-grounded they are, my imagining still makes room for the possibility of practically *anything happening* in the next moment of viewing or reading -- anything, that is, within the limits of conceivability demarcated by the plot itself [Casey,

1976, pp. 206-7]. this mimics the finished work of art as possibilizing imagination along the structural lines established by the artist.

Benjamin, Andrew, Cooke, Catherine & Papadakis, Andreas, eds. Deconstruction Omnibus Volume. New York: Rizzoli, 1989. Stanley Tigerman, Construction (De)Construction (Re) Construction Architectural Antinomies and a (Re)newed Beginning. pp. 256 - 259.

The (text)ture of antimony

A synthesis ([sin]*Thesis*) of continuously (un)*resolved* (op)*positions* based on the (ir)*reconcilability* of seemingly necessary inferences or conclusions (antinomy) seems (un)*likely* in an age dually devoted to either self-verification through the uses of the past, or to an (un)*conditional* indulgence in the (un)*predictability* of the future. Both strategies (dis)*locate* equally a belief in the power of the present. The resulting ambivalence elevates (dis)*junction* to a positional primacy of domination, and seems to suggest that the intrinsic quality of presence has an (un)*resolvably* slippery Janus-face that looks either backward or forward, but is so waferlike that it cannot speak meaningfully of its own time. The sound emanation from the face of the present is either Babel-like, or mute, giving way alternatively to the cacophony of the past and/or to the vast silences of the future. Simultaneously, by speaking (dis)*cordantly* of other times and places, the voice of contemporaneity is strangled. We seem (un)*able* to articulate a present paradoxically (de)*void* of the inspiration to 'blow its own horn'. p. 258.

The (Sub)Text (Super)Imposed On The (Con) Text p. 259.

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Thesis Slides For Cynthia G. T. Thachek

- Slide 1. Offering Walls. (1999) View of installation looking east.
- Slide 2. The Stage. View of artist in southeast Stage. (1999)
- Slide 3. The Stage. View of white walls in northwest stage. (1999)
- Slide 4. Offering Bowl. As located on center stage. (1999)
- Slide 5. Offering Walls. View of gallery wall and white casts of breasts as located across from The Stage. (1998 – 1999)
- Slide 6. Detail of a white breast as seen on gallery wall.
- Slide 7. The Stage. Full view of inside wall and Offering Bowl. (1999)
- Slide 8. Offering Walls. View of corridor. (1999)
- Slide 9. Offering Walls. Bird's Eye View. (1999)
- Slide 10. Offering Walls. The corridor space in-between the walls. (1999)
- Slide 11. Figure on the Edge. Installation view of the painting and the southeast corner of the Offering Walls.
- Slide 12. Thesis title wall: The Studio, The Stage, The Salon and Figured in Skin as seen in The Salon space of the installation. (1997 – 1999)
- Slide 13. The Studio: Offering Station. As seen from behind the painting, Figure on the Edge and in the northeast corner of the installation. To the left is an opening to The Salon and to the right is access to The Stage.
- Slide 14. The Studio. Detail of Offering Station
- Slide 15. Offering Walls. As viewed from The Salon and looking west.
- Slide 16. Floor Studies on Paper (Started in Australia and completed in Canada). View of detail on outer graphite wall. (1999)
- Slide 17. Offering Walls. Full view of outer graphite wall, facing north.
- Slide 18. Detail of graphite drawings on outer Offering Wall.
- Slide 19. Detail of outer Offering Wall facing east.
- Slide 20. Offering Walls and grasping nothing. As seen from the southwest corner of the gallery.