

My Place  
In the  
Natural World:  
Looking at Repichnia Trace Fossils



Kat Eisenberg, *Wandering Repichnia Fossil*, concrete, 24" x 43" x 3"

Kat Eisenberg

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Introduction  
November 2012

We often look for reason in the world, for a cause. We demand to know *why*. The *why* can become an obsession. Why do we search for the answer and is there always an answer? I am interested in our human desire to know everything in relation to ourselves. We are human and perceive the world through human perspective. I am curious as to what happens when we are presented with a mark or presence, but not the origin. What we cannot see frightens us, because it is the unknown. These imprints or traces are the remains of something that once was, and perhaps still is. The imprints are in front of us, and we are presented with an object as a trace, a shadow of a being. We can relate these imprints to animals and objects we see everyday, and as our visual vocabulary lends itself to identifying the origin, we are creating it through our human perception. We end up creating what we imagine to be the origin based on our individual experiences

Summer 2012

I Make Art Statement  
August 2012

I make art. I make art objects. I make art because my head is exploding if I don't. For me, art is a portal to not only my mind, but my every being. The entire act of creation and mark making is more than just the aesthetic. There is emotion and drive behind art making.

I love making my mark in space, because for me, it becomes a manifestation. I think of my art as communicating through creating, and opening portals.

Drawing is something I have always loved. There is something raw and satisfying about the hard and solid mark making.

Narrative has always been important. Working on the abstract with a basing in history or reality is something I have always been interested in. I like to play and stretch reality, or what we expect.

WHY?  
Summer 2012

I make art to express myself. I make art to reach out to others. I draw because my head is exploding. I make art to open a portal to my mind. I make art because I need to. I make art to evoke feeling. I make art because I always have. I make art because I love mark making. I make art to directly affect the medium I make art because that is how I communicate; I make art because I have to. I make art to open a door to the fantastical. I make art to experiment with a stretched reality. I make art to make my dreams come to life.

I make art for art's sake.

I am art.

We are all art.

I make art to prove my existence and place in the world.

I make art to make my mark.

I make good art. I make bad art. I make constructions. I make art BECAUSE.

I make art to shock people.

I make art to make people think.

I make art to manifest. I make art to make others react.

I want to impact. I want to scare. I want to induce feelings. I want to motivate. I want to make art. I make art to change people's preconceived notions.

One of the real questions is why do we look/go towards art? What makes people drawn towards it. Can art objects exist without an audience? I make art for my audience sometimes. I am my audience. So are you. Why do I want to be an artist? I love art. Making art brings me joy. It makes me feel. It is a necessity. I consume, digest, and expel it. It is like food.

July 2012

These next two lists are general lists that I used as a starting point for getting my ideas out there. I literally made lists of everything I like and don't like.

Altered reality  
The psychedelic

### **What I like**

The color green  
When people open up  
Anything green!  
Knowledge  
Words  
Vocabulary  
Dinosaurs  
Lord of the Rings  
The truth  
When something "seems" ugly but is beautiful  
Honesty  
The number 6  
Hexagons  
Awareness of yourself in the world  
Oatmeal raisin cookies  
Stuffing  
Textiles  
Fabric  
Rocks  
Individuals  
My ethnicity  
The weird  
Charcoal  
People who appreciate art  
Animals!  
Watercolors  
Literacy  
Sea creatures  
Music  
Dreams

### **What I Hate**

Ignorance  
The truth  
Math  
Touch screens  
Pollution  
Cilantro  
The sound ketchup makes when coming out of the bottle  
Petty people  
Bees  
Heights  
Conservativeness  
Twilight  
When people lose their inner child  
The narrow-minded  
Skunk smell.  
Pastels  
Fracking  
Exploitations  
Liars!  
Manipulative people  
Red and green together when it is not  
Christmas  
Failure  
Being alone  
Forks scratching plates  
Milk  
Stepping in cat vomit

# Marathon



Marathon statement  
September 19, 2012

The marathon is me. It is not so much a style or just one way I like to create art. I used the prompts to inspire myself, and to *extend* myself. I tried new things, I tried looking at other ways to do things, and I tried looking at all the ways other people do things.

My work was taken in a new direction. Instead of coming up with an idea, and then executing it I was faced with a prompt right at the beginning. I had to get over the idea that I might not like all the work I created, and that not all of them were going to be the most successful. I had preconceived notions of what I liked, and what I had fun doing. I was very tight at the beginning of the marathon.

Some of the most interesting works are ones that look nothing like my other works. The “fold it” prompt was the first I had fun doing. I took a small sheet of canvas and folded and mashed it until it had a cool shape, nailing it into the wall as I went. It wasn’t figural. I used whatever color I wanted. I love the outcome. It was something so new and I enjoyed doing something in the moment. A good portion of my works were done “in the moment” and they are very different, yet explore all different sides of me.

## Marathon Prompts

1. Listen to a song on repeat. Make art listening only to that song.
2. Create something your parents would hate.
3. Fold it



Kat Eisenberg, *Fold It*, Acrylic Paint on Canvas, 4"x4"

4. Create physical limitation for yourself.



Kat Eisenberg, *Painted with Mouth*, Acrylic, 4"x6"

5. Go to Wikipedia.com and hit "random article"
6. Draw with one continuous line
7. A work of art inspired by another discipline
8. Draw something from memory
9. Chinese food.
10. Something that hangs
11. Repetition
12. Dr. Seuss



Kat Eisenberg, *Dr. Seuss*, Acrylic, 3.5"x24"

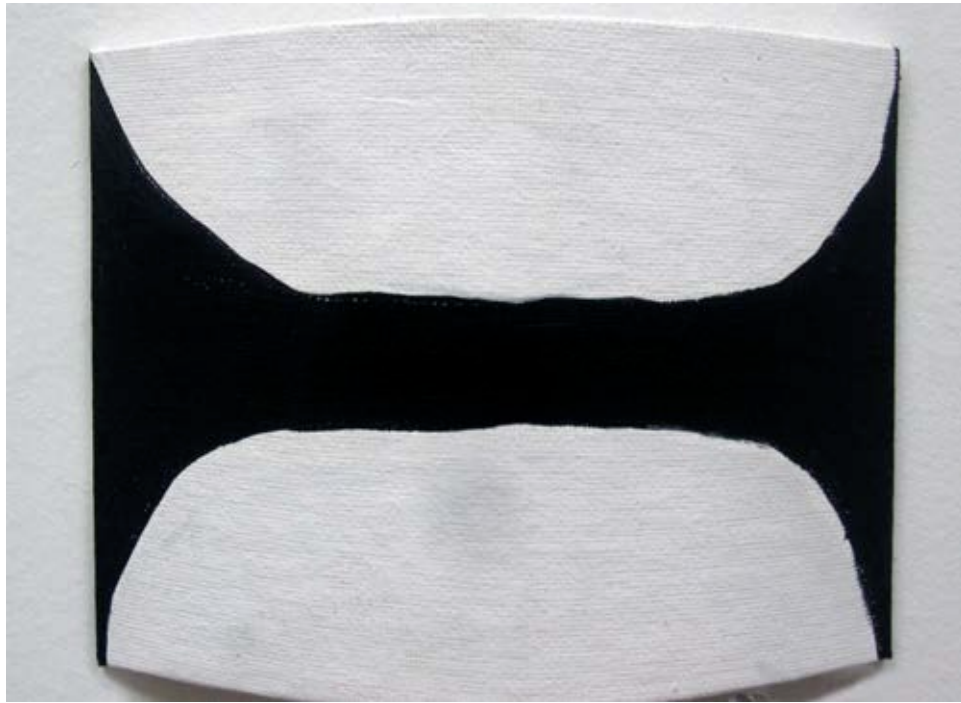
13. Open a book [with pictures] and flip to a random page and put your finger on a random picture and make art about it.
14. Choose a movie title and make a work of art inspired by title itself



Kat Eisenberg, *Kingdom of Heaven*, Acrylic on Wood, 9”x 6”

15. Draw air
16. 30 minute drawing
17. Inspired by a song provided by someone else.

18. Something that bends



Kat Eisenberg, *Something that Bends*, Acrylic, 4"x6"

19. Create art on a paper supplied by a fellow SMP student



Kat Eisenberg, *Daddy Long Legs*, Colored Pencil, 22"x 30"



Kat Eisenberg, *Daddy Long Legs close-up*, Colored Pencil

20. Paint something at a scale it is not normally found at

September 2012  
Post Pecha Kucha

After the Pecha Kucha, I realized how much viewpoint was important to me. It was mentioned that photography might become important, because of the way I photographed my work at interesting angles. Sue felt that I was illustrating with photography.

I am interested in the details and in looking at the world in a different way. I realized that I specifically was interested in the natural world. I was focusing on bugs and leaves, and some of the smaller things in life. I want to eventually start playing with scale.

I also realized that I often start by looking at my surroundings. I am constantly aware. I love going outside and just watching my Pecha Kucha, many of the images were of the outside.

Post Marathon  
October 2012

After the marathon, we were to create one work as an extension of one of the prompts. I expanded on my drawing of the Daddy Long Legs, and came up with this somewhat three-dimensional piece.



Kat Eisenberg, *Legs*, Colored Pencil, Ink and Paper, 38"x 50"



# Midterm

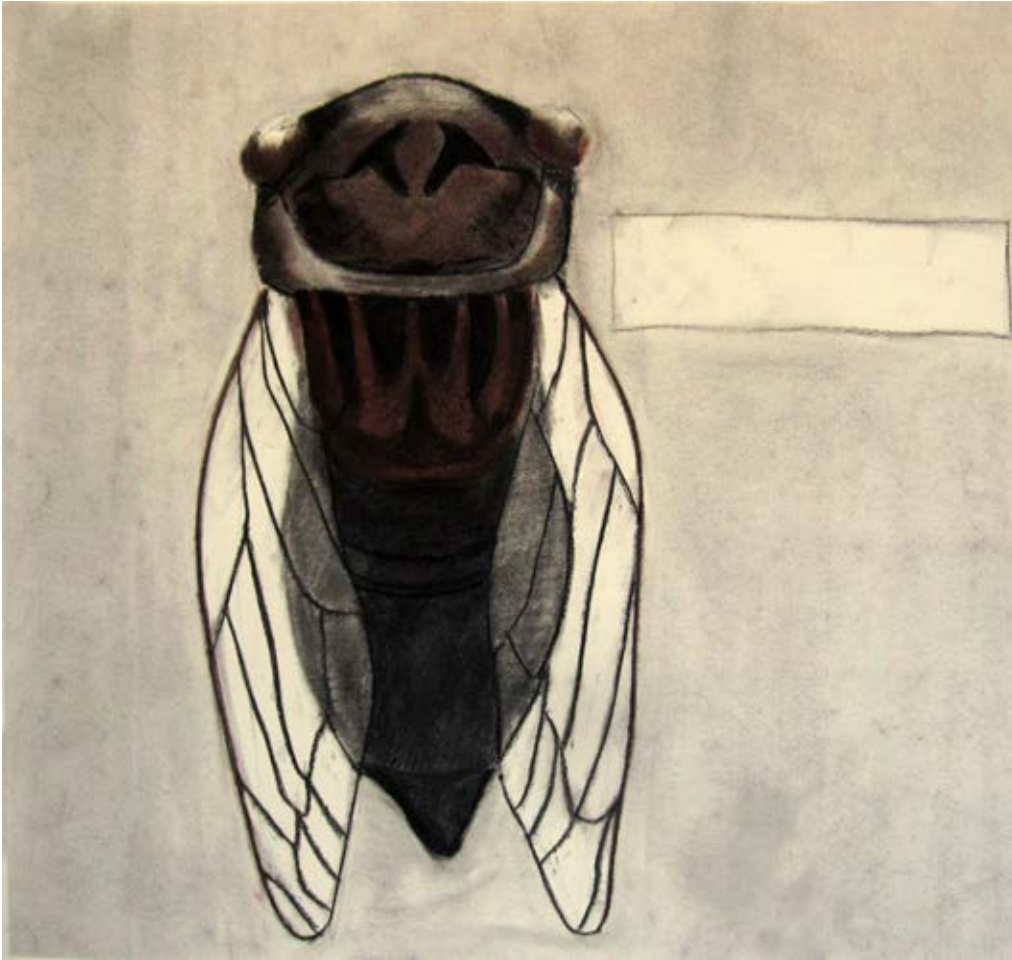
In Progress Review  
October 1 2012

The work that I put out for the midterm in progress critique was work that I was quite satisfied with. I felt not as if they were necessarily finished, but I didn't think I could exhaust them anymore. I wanted to continue the idea of the cicada eventually, and I wanted to move towards casting.

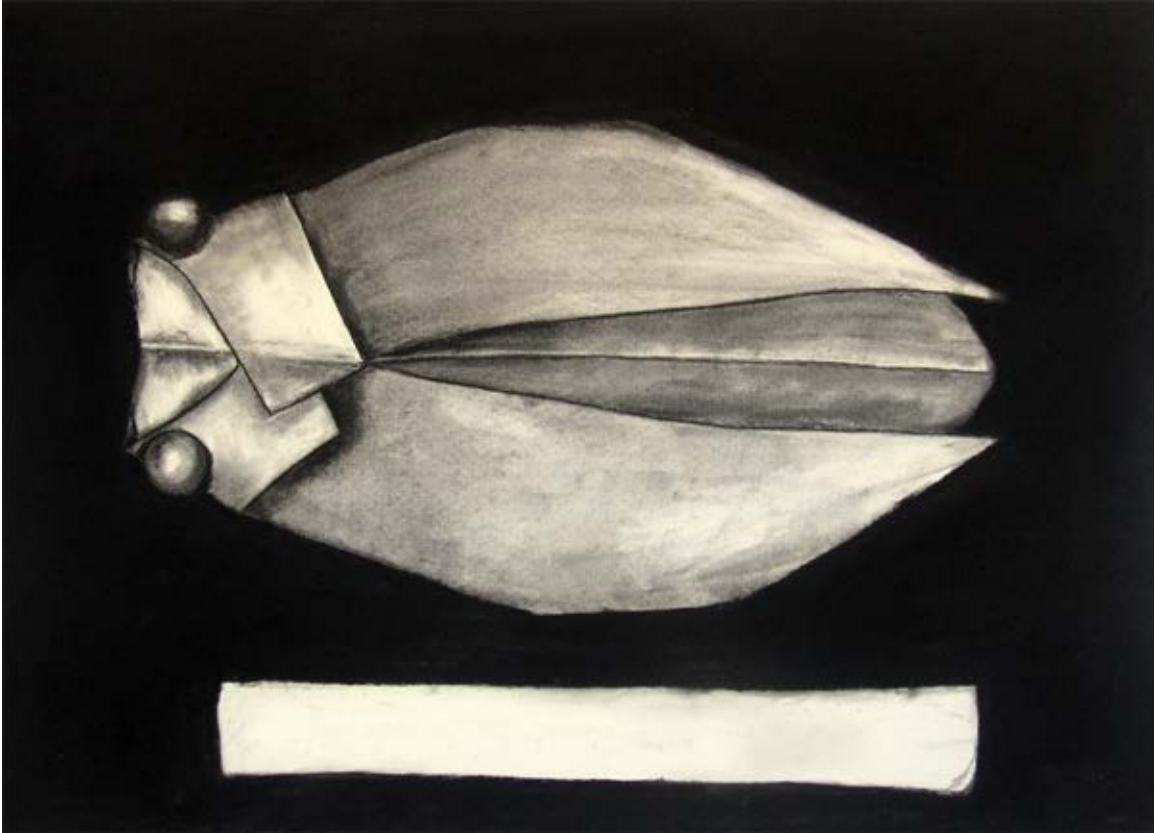
When I heard the comments, I became intrigued as to how I could expand my work. There was something else I could explore. I realized from this that I do not think far enough, and I need to let myself extend my thoughts.

I also received a lot of interesting feedback about the real cicada among the fake ones. Is this necessary? Which brings back the point of extending the idea. What other ways would I extend this? I'm not entirely sure if I am 100 % invested in this idea at this point, however.

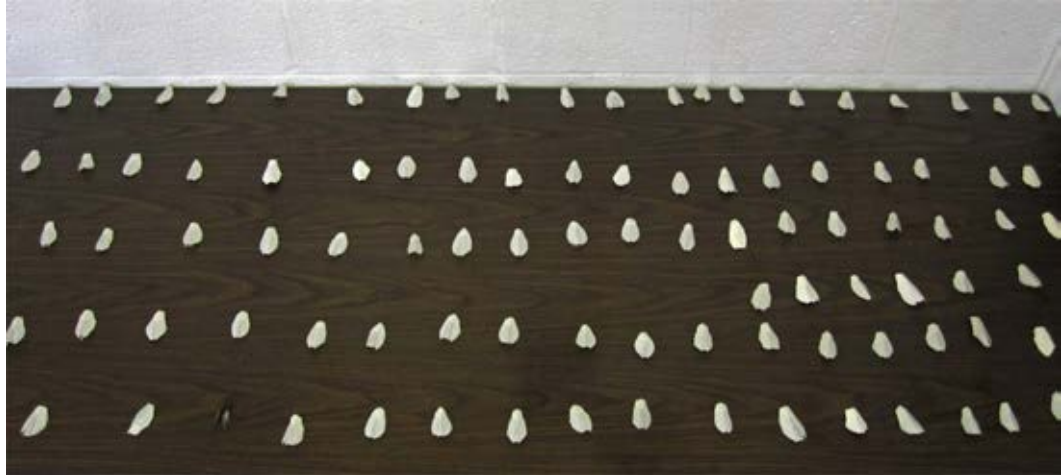
Midterm Work  
October 2012



Kat Eisenberg, *Real Specimen?*, Charcoal and conté crayon, 24"x24"



Kat Eisenberg, Specimen, Charcoal, 22 X 30"



Kat Eisenberg, *100 Cicadas*, paper



Kat Eisenberg, *100 Cicadas Close-up*, paper,



Kat Eisenberg, *100 Cicadas Close-up*, paper



Kat Eisenberg, *Specimens*, paper



Kat Eisenberg, concept drawing, Watercolor, 8”X11”



Kat Eisenberg, concept drawing, Watercolor 8”x 11”



Kat Eisenberg, concept drawing, Watercolor, 8" x 11"



Kat Eisenberg, *Aquatic Form*, Plastic and wire, 14"x 12"





Kat Eisenberg, *Aquatic Form inside view*, Plastic and wire



Kat Eisenberg, *Doll Form*, Plastic, wire, latex and silicone, 65"x14"



Kat Eisenberg, *Doll Form Front view*, Plastic, wire, latex and silicone



Kat Eisenberg, *Doll Form Close-up*, Plastic, wire, latex and silicone

Midterm Review Statement  
October 15 2012

For my midterm review I created these strange dolls that evolved from a scientific photograph to a child's weird imagination. I wanted to create small creatures on a larger scale. As I was making these, I felt I was creating these strange toys because of the way I was forced to interact.

Hearing my art talked about for about half an hour was a very interesting experience. It is almost impossible to absorb everything. One thing in particular stood out, that I had never even thought of. I was hanging up my pieces when I realized that when hung as a group, white dominates. When there wasn't white, there was black and translucency.

I think I was sort of ambivalent about the whole review in the beginning because I had exhausted my relationship with my work so much. I still feel that I need distance from the pieces. I do not like the product, but it helped me realize a lot about my intentions. I know that I want to almost move towards the abstract.

I still have this giant block, but I think there are many directions in which I could go. I think what interested me most was then the faculty asked me what I meant by *representation* and what the word itself meant. I often have found myself to mean one thing and to slap a label on it.

There are definitely many ideas, and I think the faculty could sense that I needed to sort my ideas out. I had a lot of ideas in my head, which exploded with all of the talk about my work. Once it was out there, it almost began to speak for itself. The midterm review definitely made me realize what I did *not* want to do. Through the creation of objects, I became interested in what the beings *weren't*. I want to look towards impressions now. I think that is where I am headed.

## Post-Midterm Critique Thoughts

October 2012

It wasn't until after the Midterm critique that I realized what I was doing. One thing that was mentioned was that I am working in white and black, but edging on the side of using more white.

I knew that I had struggled with materials, and honestly, I had very low expectations of my work and wanted to distance myself from it as much as possible. One thing I took away was that I am not ready to do that level of installation work. I need to consider a lot more about how to install my work and create an interactive environment, or even an environment in general.

I had a lot of unresolved issues, and Lisa pointed out that my materials were still screaming packaging material or plastic. This is exactly what I did not want. I did learn from this, and I clearly know that these are not the materials I am going to use, but I realized why I picked them. I wanted something white or transparent that could be transformed, but I didn't allow myself to stretch my limits.

Studio Visit With Catherine O'Connell  
October 17 2012

Talking with Catherine was refreshing after the review. I thought that she had main a lot of artists for me to look at, especially female sculptures. Catherine seemed very interested in the *doll* idea, and referred me to a lot of artists that deal with *stuff*.

She helped me realize that maybe I was interested in something not quite so literal, which is where I got the idea of impressions, I almost like a fossil, which is what I am totally interested in. I thought this was a helpful insight, especially when she has never seen ay of my previous work.

She thought that my interest towards bugs and towards myself when I was younger was something worth looking into. I was also very into fossils and rocks as a child, which is where I am looking towards next.

Artists that she suggested I look at:  
Nina Katchadorian  
Mark Dion  
Louise Bourgeois

# Artist Talks

Matthew Fishel  
September 19, 2012

When I was on my way to Matthew Fishel's talk, I knew he was coming multiple times this year, so I didn't prepare much for his talk. I knew he went to St. Mary's, and I was surprised to find out the number of years that he spent in between undergrad and grad school.

I came to a lot of realizations from his talk. I loved his created scenes. I am not a huge, huge fan of photography, but I absolutely loved his movie stills. There was something so eerie and wonderful about his space scene. I love the fact that this was a constructed place and scene, yet it felt like it could exist. I think that I would like to experiment with constructing spaces at some point.

I loved his outside scenes especially. The photographs from the outside were so quiet and empty. In the emptiness, there was some sort of presence that I could sense. I think the mystery is what draws me to these works. I absolutely loved the one he showed me where you could clearly tell that there was plywood and insulation foam. I don't think that detracted at all.

The idea of model making really inspired me, because during the Pecha Kucha it was suggested that scale was a theme of my mindset right now. I thought his talk made me really see into the mind of an artist. He talked about his process of going about his education, and how he worked when he wasn't in school.

I thought it was especially interesting that Matthew Fishel used to be a painter, because I can still see much of his painterly skills and methods in his work, even though he uses a different medium. I loved being able to hear his whole story. I think it was extremely beneficial, especially because he was directly in our shoes, and a lot of us can definitely relate to him.

Catherine O'Connell  
September 26, 2012

As soon as I saw Catherine O'Connell's paintings, I fell in love with them. There was a certain materiality that she had with the paint and the colors. The fact that she is an emerging artist really struck me, and I think spoke to all of us in SMP.

I had no idea that she was into sculpture, but I think that her work in 3 dimensions adds something extra. I loved her sculptures that dealt with accumulation. She spoke about how she collected these items and even used parts from her older sculptures. I found this to be very intriguing; almost as she were giving life to her other sculptures.

She caught my attention when she mentioned that she was briefly fighting the stigma of being a female artist. Her one piece she showed, which she referred to as ugly, was this sculpture that reminded me of road kill. I never got the "cutesy female artist" vibe from any of her work, but the fact that she directly dealt with that intrigued me, like making a statement about what her work is *not*.

I thought it was refreshing to see someone who struggled and showed a lot of her work, what she was happy with and what she was not. I could see her development as a young artist and see what she struggled with, and her correlations between sculpture and painting inspired me.



Colby Caldwell  
October 22, 2012

Colby is a professor that I have never had or talked to, so it was a very interesting experience to hear him talk about his work. One thing that really struck me, was that he addressed the environment. He mentioned Jackson Pollock, because his work shifted when Pollock changed locations. This directly applies to me at this time in my life, and at a time where I am moving around and finding a place to settle.

Colby's shotgun shells fascinated me. He took many photographs of the same objects, which were a sort of remnants themselves. I am moving towards remnants or imprints, I thought this was an interesting take.

# Interviews

Interview Part 1  
October 10 2012  
Leah Moreno Interviews Kat Eisenberg

**Moreno (LM):** So we've all got common interview questions, and I figure it might not be all that exciting, but we'll get on into it: What kinds of things about art-making practice are really mysterious to you?

**Eisenberg (KE):** I guess just the process of how I come up with ideas, or how people come up with ideas, I mean I know how it happens, but I feel that with some really great ideas, I just have no idea where they are birthed from. Or how I grab them in my mind, if that makes sense? Like how you grab onto which ideas are better than others.

It's sort of mysterious to me.

**LM:** I feel you there on that one. Jumping from there, what's the worst fear you have about your own work?

**KE:** I think the worst fear would be that no one would ever see it. Some work that I do has stronger messages, underlying messages, that I guess that if no one saw it, then I wouldn't be able to share that particular message with anyone, and it would get kind of lost?

**LM:** What was the last person or thing you were afraid of

**KE:** [laughs] I had a really weird experience when I was hiking in the woods. We were walking by this tree and then there's just all this like... grey, ashy stuff on the ground, beneath the tree, and on the tree there- I couldn't tell if it was alive or like a plant? There were these weird, little... it was like mold, it was like fuzzy white things that were like moving in the wind, and I had no idea if it was like a plant or an animal, and that freaked me out.

So I'm going to say "that!" Being unsure of whether something was alive or not, that was pretty terrifying for me.

**LM:** A little alien though even, right?

**KE:** That really freaked me out.

**LM:** This is kind of going in a nice order... so what kind of natural occurrences do you find inspiring? I mean we know you do a lot of things with *insects*.

**KE:** I like cicadas, I like when, bugs like shed their skins, or their exoskeletons. Or like when snakes shed. So I guess I am drawn towards the transformation also, metamorphosis, like butterflies, frogs... that's always kind of interesting I think...

certain kinds of larvae look drastically different when they grow up, they become something totally different.

**LM:** Do you think your work is aligned with Order or Chaos? And why?

**KE:** I have... no idea about what to say for this question.

Maybe chaos? I don't really see myself setting out some kind of order, I don't... I'm not a very orderly person in general, I don't really have strict rules for anything, I mean I suppose there are rules for my art, I don't really... necessarily know them at the beginning though.

**LM:** I find this answer kind of surprising, just because, for instance, your installation of the cicadas- is very gridded and ordered.

**KE:** Yeah actually, I mean that's not where I wanted to go, so I feel like "chaos" maybe, at this point....

**LM:** So that was an instance of order, but you prefer chaos?

**KE:** Actually I didn't even really think of that, but that is pretty ordered. I think... I feel like my art is maybe more like a balance of order and chaos? I sort of want things on both spectrums. The contrast, I think, between that is something that I enjoy, so maybe a bit of both.

**LM:** Maybe it's something to think about even a little

**KE:** Yeah, actually, now that I'm thinking about that.... [laughs]

**LM:** But it sounded also, at the beginning of this question, you were saying more that you didn't want to set out with an ordered plan. And in that sense it's chaotic, but at the same time you don't necessarily want only chaos to reign?

**KE:** Yeah... I'm not actively going for chaos or order.

**LM:** That's fair-neither am I, myself [laugh Do you prefer tactile or visual art-making?

**KE:** I like making things that are tactile, and experiencing tactile things in general. I like tactile, because it brings [the work] into another dimension . Actually what I'm working with now-I had a break-through last night. [The work] is going to be more tactile I guess?

I think things that are more in-your-face-that leap out at you and sort of force you to interact with them-I am more drawn to. I think there is something to be said, about holding something, and just touching something-  
-like a whole other sense. I like the idea of like the visceral, and things that you can really just get your hands into.

**LM:** So...

**KE:** I'm [definitely thinking] tactile.

**LM:** Who is your, uh, your role model, or an artist that you admire the most?

**KE:** I feel like the artist[s] that I admire the most, or some of the artists aren't necessarily people I draw influence from in work, I like a lot of artists, like Frida Kahlo, and Picasso, and even like Chuck Close, sort of artists that have overcome a lot of struggles in their lives. You know, like Picasso's friend killing himself himself, and Frida Kahlo's horrible accident, and Chuck Close's seizure, which left him paralyzed. I think that adds a dimension so I admire them. I admire artists that use their life in their work.

**LM:** Then the next question is: What do you and your role models have in common, then?

**KE:** Actually I was going mention another artist, I really like her: Ana Mendieta, she's really cool, I don't know if you're familiar with her....

**LM:** I do know her.

**KE:** Her work about identity, and I think in some ways my art is sort of about identity. Even like the bugs, I do a lot of creatures, and I think that can be extended to, our place on Earth. And I think eventually I'd like to delve into, like, myself- getting to myself through all of this, so. I guess we do have a little in common. I'd like to- I'd like to go in that direction, so.

**LM:** In the cases of Ana Mendieta, Frida Kahlo, Picasso, and how you were discussing them, it seems like you're interested in art carrying with it where you've been as an artist?

**KE:** Yes, definitely.

**LM:** All right, so you want your identity to read strongly.

**KE:** Which sounds kind of weird with the work I've been doing, but yeah, I do.

**LM:** In some ways, just focusing on bugs is a very... is a very "you" thing  
Not a lot of people do cicadas.

**KE:** That's true....

**LM:** Um. But it is, I guess, something to keep in mind. When you work, do you love the process, or the result more?

**KE:** I think it depends, but I think with some of my successful works I've enjoyed the process a lot, and then through the process, when I get to the end result, whenever I see that, I am strongly reminded of the process.

I do like process works a lot, though, especially works created directly with my hands, especially tactile things. I think repetition of making things or folding, like with the cicadas, folding them over and over again was so much... I don't want to say "fun," but I was in like a "mode." I knew what I was doing, and it was- it was very sort of mechanical, but I think I enjoyed that a lot.

**LM:** It has a way of investing "you" in it, right?

**KE:** Yeah... and then all the I spent on it [laughs]

**LM:** Final question, my favorite: What do you draw, or make, when no one's looking?

**KE:** I think... I do a lot more people! When no one's looking I guess, which is really weird, my work is definitely more figural. I'll draw people that I know, or, I don't know, characters: if I ever read a book or something. I did this a lot when I was younger.

I always just drew characters. Characters from my books, and movies, I guess mainly people. I don't like showing my figural work that is very people-oriented, I don't know why. I don't really have a reason for it. I draw people and and probably maybe more narrative about my life sort of like what I don't want people to know about me.

Interview Part 2  
November 2012  
Leah Moreno Interviews Kat Eisenberg

**LM:** From where I've been standing, it seems like you have strong scientific leanings; I gather this from your jellyfish works at the beginning of the semester (inspired by scientific findings), the neatly arranged cicadas at midterm, and now the footprint works that are reminiscent of fossils. Is it something you consciously focus on in your artwork, or is it an interest that you can't get away from?

**KE:** I think I have always had a strong curiosity towards the natural world. I always loved museums as a child, and bugs and lizards and every sort of creature. Science is fascinating to me, because it is all around us- we can't escape it!

**LM:** Would you say, then, that you ally yourself more with the Romantics of the nineteenth century, regarding nature with awe, or with biologists, who want to know nature more rigorously from a factual perspective? And are facts more important, or the feelings they may produce?

**KE:** I love them! I find it interesting to look back, because knowledge of facts was so different. DNA wasn't even discovered until the 50's. I think this "awe" can only be enhanced by the facts-which evoke a certain feeling. Which is how I think it works.

We know so much about our world at this point, that we think nothing can shock us. But plenty of new discoveries happen! We can't know everything.

**LM:** So which came first? The chicken or the egg? By that, and I'm referring to your current work- Did the creature come first, or the idea of capturing a footprint of *something*?

**KE:** Well the idea of capturing something came first- the overall idea I'd say. I wanted to work originally with *cubichnia* fossils, basically those spirals and swirls you see when an organism was in soft sediment, and usually resting organisms, like a starfish. I liked this idea, but then I thought about actual footprints, I created a creature, based on *archaeopteryx*, which is considered to be the link between dinosaurs and birds. I wanted the feet to be bird-like, so somewhat recognizable to the viewer.

**LM:** Where did the idea for this creature come from?

**KE:** Well, *Archaeopteryx*, and something that scientists have searched for. Sure, they found it in Germany, but wasn't this evolution happening everywhere around the globe? Who really knows what else scientists haven't found? I always wonder

that.

**LM:** Are you satisfied with the creative processes that have led to your works thus far? Are you considering changing the way you go about making work in the future?

**KE:** I think I might work less heavy. Working with heavy materials is difficult. Definitely experimenting with more materials.

I also want to just go and read more books about different organisms and plants to get inspired. I want to sort of expand my knowledge.

**LM:** Where do you see your current work going in the coming spring semester?

**KE:** I still want to work around the natural world, but I might work in color this next semester and actually creating some sort of creature or thing, rather than the trace.

I might also might consider incorporating plants into my work, because I love the earth and am very environmentally conscious and plants are often overlooked. Plants can be just as exciting as animals!



# SMP Show 1

November 2012  
Repichnia Fossils

We often look for reason in the world, for a cause. We demand to know *why*. The *why* can become an obsession. Why do we search for the answer and is there always an answer? I am interested in our human desire to know everything in relation to ourselves. We are human and perceive the world through human perspective. I am curious as to what happens when we are presented with a mark or presence, but not the origin. What we cannot see frightens us, because it is the unknown. These imprints or traces are the remains of something that once was, and perhaps still is. The imprints are in front of us, and we are presented with an object as a trace, a shadow of a being. We can relate these imprints to animals and objects we see everyday, and as our visual vocabulary lends itself to identifying the origin, we are creating it through our human perception. We end up creating what we imagine to be the origin based on our individual experiences.



Kat Eisenberg, *Wandering Repichnia Fossil*, concrete, 24" x 43" x 3"

# Annotated Bibliography

## Process/Technique

**Horodner, Stuart. *The Art Life*. N.p.: Atlanta Contemporary Art Center, 2012. Print.**

This book was the first book I bought for SMP. I think this book is definitely one of the larger motivating factors for me. This book broke down the *art life*. I felt that it covered most of what I should be concerned with. The quotes in that book were extremely inspiring to me, because they were not all visual artists, there were writers, actors, singers, celebrities. There were also some great exercises and practices that I was inspired by from this book.

**Barnet, Sylvan. *A Short Guide to Writing about Art*. Seventh ed. N.p.: Longman, 2003. Print.**

The writing portion of Art SMP terrified me the most. I can speak through art, but it is also very important to be able to write and speak *about* art. I am a horrible writer (in my opinion) and I felt like I should invest in this. It is very informative, and breaks down the writing process.

**Folger, Douglas. *Painting at the Edge of the World*. N.p.: Walker Arts Center, 2001. Print.**

*Painting at the Edge of the World* helped me to gain some visual vocabulary and insights. The visuals are fantastic; there are large color plates throughout the book, which makes me want to work in color.

## Nature

**Carson, Rachel. *The Sense of Wonder*. Illus. William Neil. N.p.: Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1990. Print.**

This is a book I have owned since I was 7 or 8 years old. It was given to me as a present, and contains photographs of nature's sublime.

My experience with these images is different. I would stare at these images of nature and wonder *how* and *why*.

There are close ups of flower and leaves you would never expect to see, and repetition and color in nature. Words cannot do this book justice. This book is entirely visual to me, and there are words, but even after owning this book for years, the pictures take precedence in my memory.

**Haeckel, Ernst, illus. *Art Forms from the Ocean*. Munich: Prestal, 2005. Print.**

The vivid illustrations of Ernst Haeckel's works fascinate me because of the time period. When he was illustrating nature, these were for the public to see,

for people to understand what these organisms look like. There was no Internet, and not everyone had a microscope. It was his job to communicate everything he could about these creatures. Heavily scaled up forms fill the pages, and the geometric nature is captivating. I referred to this when I was thinking of the shape I wanted. I wanted to work around nature, and I started looking at shapes and patterns to get inspired.

## Art

**Preble, Duane. *ARTFORMS*. New York: Harper & Row, Publisher's, Inc., 1978. Print.**

I looked at this book early on in the semester and later on. I looked at it first because I was drawn towards the title. I was interested in other people's work and muddling around for inspiration. Later on, however, I was thinking a lot about scale and objects and how literal objects should be. This book talked about many sculptors and painters, and I was looking at Claus Oldenburg as well as Tony Smith.

Frank Stella said that the only thing that can be seen is what is there in front of you. This made me stop and consider my work, especially towards the end of the semester when I started the fossil works. I was making impressions or footprints, so did it matter if I displayed the cause of them?

**Clearwater, Bonnie. *Abstract Expressions*. Florida: Lannan Museum, 1987. Print.**

I love the idea of form. There is successful form and unsuccessful form. I fell in love with Margaret Honda's barbed wire sculptures. They were hanging pieces, which formed a beehive-like structure. I am fascinated by the space up inside this structure, and am interested in hanging objects.

There is an interesting dialogue depending on how you display your piece, which I found later in the semester. I looked at how the different sculptors displayed their works, hanging, suspended, or on pedestals.

## Literature

**Kafka, Franz. *The Penal Colony: Stories and Short Pieces*. Trans. Willa Muir and Edwin Muir. New York: Schocken Books, 1948. Print.**

When I was working on the project with the cicadas, I decided to do some “bug research.” I looked towards a piece that I had read years ago, *The Metamorphosis*. I love how the author can really evoke a sense of cockroach within the reader. I love the self-exploration of the main character, Gregor Samsa. I wanted to try and evoke some of that through my cicadas – the real visceral sense of an insect. I looked at Kafka’s language and how he created a character out of the bug form that Gregor is stuck in.

## Science

**Meier, John J., ed. *Dinosaurs*. New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 2011. Print.**

I started off thinking about impressions. The first things that came to my mind were fossils. I started to research dinosaurs and tracks. I have always loved dinosaurs, because they are creatures of the past and no living person has encountered dinosaurs- and no *person* has ever encountered a dinosaur. The fact that there is so much mystery surrounding them inspired me.

I didn’t even think I’d be focusing on fossils, but this is where I wanted to start. I started researching a bit about them, and tried to focus on tracks specifically. I began reading about what fossils can tell us. I researched the link between birds and dinosaurs and was immediately intrigued. I’ve never actually researched this super thoroughly. I enjoy the tie to birds, because birds are part of our world, and this link to the ancient world is fascinating.

**Dyke, Gareth, and Gary Kaiser, eds. *Living Dinosaurs*. N.p.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. Print.**

During the Mesozoic, there is a divergence of birds, which can be seen. I was thinking of the bird species of Cassowaries. These exist today, but are, in my opinion, by far the most visually prehistoric bird today. They remind me of dinosaurs, and I was interested in the similarities. I found there to be a great number of similarities in terms of phylogeny, such as bone structure and size of limbs.

There is a strong link between our modern world and dinosaurs, which is the only link. Fossils are all that we have left. All of this information is very limited. I became more and more interested in the shadow of the past as relates to the present.

**McGowan, Christopher. *Dinosaurs, Spitfires, and Sea Dragons*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991. Print.**

I became more and more interested in the footprint aspect of fossils. I began looking towards *trace fossils* and footprints. From a footprint, one can tell how the dinosaur walked, how many toes it had, which can lead to what its diet was.

I read different scientists' accounts of finding fossils and their reactions once doing so. I was intrigued by the process one goes through when finding a new fossil. You investigate and try to figure out everything you can about this creature from the limited imprint. I want the audience to go through a similar process.

## Artists

**Baume, Nicholas, Jen Mergel, and Lawrence Weschler. *Tara Donovan*. Illus.**

**Tara**

**Donovan. N.p.: Monacelli Press, 2008. Print**

I discovered Tara Donovan a few years ago, and I fell in love with her. I love her process art, and how her materials take on an entirely new form. She is all about form, and I cannot stop staring at her masses of objects. Her fishing line pieces especially captivate me. She takes fishing line and gathers it so that it becomes very sea anemone-like. I bought this book over the summer, because she has always been one of my favorites and I was dying to see more of her work.

**Riley, Charles A. *Color Codes*. Hanover: University Press of New England, c.1995. Print.**

I looked at Robert Ryman after the midterm critique because of his use of color. He is a painter, and his paintings are white.

The author, Charles Riley, labels Ryman as a colorist. He makes that there is color in the white paintings, and that the more you stare at it, the more it leaps out. White makes the surface active and engages levels and shadows, something that pushed me in the direction of whites and grays for my work.

I've seen his work, and I wasn't expected the white to speak to me like it did. I could see the intensity of the paint, and it was much more than white.

**Guo-Qiang, Cai. *Cai Guo-Qiang*. Comp. Dana Friis-Hansen, Octavio Zaya, and Serizawa Takashi. New York: Phaidon, 2002. Print.**

Cai Guo-Qiang has always been one of those artists who takes things even farther. I looked at his *Inopportune: Stage 2* in which he has suspended tigers being assaulted with arrows in an arc. I love this piece and the emotion that it evokes. This is a more literal, because the tigers are extremely realistic, yet there is something else behind it. It is based on a story, a legend in which a man has slain a man-eating tiger and thus rescuing a village.

His smoke works also interest me. Smoke is something, which doesn't last, and it is much like my impressions in a way. Smoke is almost a shadow or a remnant. I am still looking at his work.

In a way he lays down his explosives and they create their own footprints. The explosives leave a residue behind, but you cannot see the actual gunpowder lying in clumps. I began to investigate and become more interested in his work.

**Morris, Frances, ed. *Louise Bourgeois*. New York: Rizzoli, 2008. Print.**

It was suggested that I look towards Louise Bourgeois. Her spiders are what have always loved, and I worked with spiders (daddy-long legs) earlier in the semester. Her spiders are large and imposing and are a metaphor for her mother who passed away. Her underlying themes are what attract me to her work. Her work is about trauma, and suffering, and gender roles, and memory. The powerful emotions that these spiders evoke are more than fear of an object so large and imposing. They are a narrative, and tell a story of a protective mother, but all of the protection left once she died.

**“Systems.” Prod. Susan Sollins and Susan Dowling. Episode #4. *ART 21*. Prod. Eve Moros**

**Ortega. PBS. 28 Oct. 2009. Television.**

Often the dinosaur bones are copies. I started thinking about what a copy meant. Allan McCollum used to work for the Natural History museum. He would make the casts of the bones for the museum to make money off of. he wasn't allowed to sell them to any other museum, so he used them as art. They were not the real one, but the kind people see in museums and associate with the real bones.

Related to what I am interested in, he worked with footprints. He got molds of footprints from museums. These in particular were carved out of mines, and were funny lumpy footprint like shapes. These reminded me of my pieces, and this was definitely part of my early and later process.

I also looked at his display, and found that he displayed these on white cubes, but would be best viewed from an aerial perspective.