

Rachel McDonald
SMP I & II

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Summer Work

Museum Visits

BMA June/28/13 in Baltimore MD

Exhibition: Max Weber

- The Bathers 1909
- Max Weber was taught by Henri Matisse and was in the social circle with Pablo Picasso
- Work itself: o Figures resembled elements of cubism and futurism o Very blotted colors o There seemed to be a theme of orange/blue compliments in his work
Other artists seen (with interest)
- Walead Beshty o Bright abstracted colors featured
- Henri Matisse (Purple Robe & Anemones 1937) o Incredible use of color and composition o Thick contour lines throughout works o Bold colors
- Juan Gris (The Painter's Window 1925)
- Piet Mondrian (Composition V 1927)
- Ernst Ludwig Kirchner
- Max Pechstein
- Alberto Giacometti **AVAM Baltimore Maryland July/23/13**
- My favorite part of this trip was literally the gift shop which had some of the most unique touchable creative "thingys" – as I don't know if classifying them as gifts would be correct
- Robert Benson
- Emily Duffy o Bra ball- interesting choice in medium for sure o I'd like to experiment more with various mediums
- Christine McCormick o Used a paint brush with 2-3 hairs to accomplish the look of Pointism o Animals, women, old cigar boxes as subjects
- James Franklin Snodgrass

Walters Art Gallery August/29/2013 Baltimore MD

18th-19th century

- Prosper Merimee (French 1803-1870) o Made a bunch of creepy water color like paintings of strange female- resembling figures in tutus
- Mariano Jose Maria Bernado Fortuny y Carbo (Spanish 1838-1874) o An Ecclesiastic
§§ Love the use of colors, and the brush strokes are beautifully done
- Mainly orange, browns, pinks
- Paul Gavarni (French 1847-1851) o The barmaid o Reminds me of Latrec works o Very light and airy with pastel colors dominating
- Manet o The Café-Concert (1879) §§ Deep blues and browns with saturated oranges
Japan & Korea
- I absolutely LOVE the patterns and colors used o Often blues, browns, blacks, golds, warm green hues

- Ashiyuki (Japanese 1814-1833) o Arashi Kitsusaburo II Attacks Fujikawa
 - Ogawa Shomin (Japanese 1847-1891)
- o Flat surface o People are depicted blue o There is no separation of space o Yellow is a very prominent color used o Figures and objects are completely outlined with a brown or black color

Denver Museum of Art August/17/2013 in Denver CO

Rothko Exhibit

- Saw the evolution of Rothko's works from abstract expressionism to fields of color
- Sacrificial Moment 1945 o Strong dominance centered o Warm tones
- Hierarchical Birds 1944 o Peaches, mint green, earthy brown o "sea fantasy"
- All of Rothko's paintings feature bands of color even in the early years
- Triad of colors **Other artists of interest**
- Jackson Pollock
- Milton Avery (girl with Cello) o Influenced by Matisse o Simplified & flat surface
- Robert Motherwell o Brown study o Expanse of color few lines to divide up the surface o **Instinctive/intuitive process
- William Bazotes o Influenced by Picasso
- Judy Pfaff o Victoria Regia 2000
- Chuck Close o Rug: 4 years to achieve significant effect on textiles such as silks and linens
- Elaine de Kooning o Expressive energy & emotion **MICA exhibition Baltimore Maryland (during Artscape 2013), Creative Alliance Gallery for August 2013**

• Unable to take notes so I have only memory Artists peaked my interest:

Robert Motherwell:

- Surrealist
 - Automatic paintings o Borrowed ideas from Mark Rothko & Andre Breton
 - Psychic automatism represented the pure state of thought o Functioning of thought by the absence of control exercised/ reason is exempt from any thought also no moral concern Rothko "There was always automatic drawings under those large forms" Vincent Van Gogh & Edward Munch • Expressionists
- o Charged with emotional and spiritual vision of the world o Discovery of one's self and voice o "landscapes of the soul" o distorted shapes/exaggerated colors o amplify emotional significance

Fritz Bleyl Karl Schmidt-Rottlaff Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

- germ expressionism
- inspiration from fauvism and primitive art
- skews perception and perspective Erich Heckel Emile Nolde Auguste Macke
- adoption of primitive art as raw style that subverts traditions of establishment
- relationship between spiritual and supernatural
- primitive art has certain purity that sets apart from materialism and corruption of time
- Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944)
- moves from depiction of realistic forms into spiritual realism of abstraction
- largely influenced by music Paul Klee
- abstracted use of color
- express musical idea Henri Matisse • fauvist Max Beckmann Max Ernst Oskar

ARTIST STATEMENTS **(in chronological order)**

100-word artist statement (pre-SMP)

My artistic interests are largely influenced by the feelings and thoughts of the unconscious, rather than dictations of the higher thought processes. The early works of Mark Rothko, in which conscious thought is ignored through the use of automatism, borrows this idea. I have found that the process is more important than the end result; thus the production of an art piece is largely reflective of the individual's "soul". Altering the relationship between the intangible mental state and the artist's connection to his/her physical surroundings is something I would like to explore further. This will be achieved through manipulation of my own mental state by changing the complexities of my environment.

Artist Statement #2

I began this SMP feeling that I my artwork required deep conceptual content in order to be valid within the art world. However, I found that when I actively tried to put deep meanings into my artworks, the enjoyment of making the artwork was lost. In order to follow a discernable direction, I first need to figure out how to "let go" and make artwork for the sake of making artwork that I enjoy. Speaking with art factuality members during my open studio, I learned that in addition to color, I have a profound love for mark making. My marathon work demonstrated that I often produced too many paintings in a single piece of artwork. How do I avoid this from occurring? For midterm, I am currently working on addressing this question. I am working larger and looking at artworks created by Esteban Vicente and Gerhard Richter for inspiration. Although art supplies are limited financially, I have discussed with others of good alternative options for going "big." My current goal is to find harmony in my artwork by focusing on compositional balance through the use of color and mark making. In this way, I hope that the viewer's visual field is completely occupied by an enriched visual experience that touches his/her heart.

Post-Intention Mid term statement

The critique during midterm provided me with constructive feedback in regards to my artistic direction. The artwork made my Hans Hoffman reveals similar artistic explorations that mimic my own. Interestingly, Hofmann and I have similar backgrounds in the natural sciences, which I felt connected our systematic approaches of creating. Hofmann distinguishes his artwork through his mastery of creating spatial illusion via

color-color interactions on a 2D surface. The color relationships of his abstract pieces add a “push-pull” quality. His artwork is often geometrically dominated with large blocks of opposing colors contributing to the illusion of depth and volume. After doing further research on Hofmann, I was able to identify that “spatial illusion” through color relationships is largely my goal. Secondary to the “push-pull” effect, I hope to achieve emotional significance in my artwork that has the capability of transforming the viewer’s mood, as well as my own during the process of creation.

The contemporary artist, Katherine Harvey, was mentioned on the SMP group Facebook page. Her artwork immediately captured my interests. Harvey is an explorer of the arts, covering installations to acrylic paintings that appear to emit a sense of light and atmosphere. The artworks are abstractions of “moving” and “dancing” colors. She, like Hofmann, has acquired a depth in abstraction using a different strategy; however, her artistic strategy is largely different from my own and I am having a more difficult time understanding her process. I am ambivalent on exiting my comfort zone of geometry and experimented with artworks that are more “freeing” in the way that Harvey does.

Additionally to referring to artists such as Katherine Harvey and Hans Hofmann, I plan on experimenting more with my own artworks in regards to scale. One problem that I need to overcome is finding a surface that is large enough for my goals. As mentioned earlier, I hope to include emotional impact in my artworks. I feel that in order to do this, I need to produce an art object large enough to span the periphery of the viewers’ visual field. The picture plane limits the viewer from being totally immersed in an “abstract world” of colors and emotion. Thus, I need to find a way in which I can create a total immersion while still using materials that are available to me. My goal is to create many paintings over the course of the next few weeks- but choose only *one* for the gallery. This painting has to be representative of a total body. The use of one artwork is important to be because, I would rather the viewer spend more time immersing themselves in one “world” rather than diluting their immersion by spreading their attention over multiple “worlds”.

Wall Text (Artist Statement #3)

I am interested in exploring the relationship between color and space with each painting that I make. The action of making a painting is a meditative, personal experience that is translated into a painted object that I hope provokes an emotional experience for the viewer. To me, color is the medium that molds the tangible space in which we perceive and interact with. Through manipulation of color relationships, a painting may not be limited to the space of the picture plane. As a consequence of the “push pull effect,” a spatial rhythm is established in which blocks of color become energized and colors appear to pulsate forward and backward. In this way, only with the viewer’s active participation does the painted object move, breathe, and become alive.

The process of painting is a highly meditative experience for me. The construction of the painting involves a systematic approach in which colors are repeatedly layered over a geometrically dominated composition. I begin with one color and proceed to choose subsequent colors based off of the original base color. I continue to place one color at a time until the painting appears visually cohesive. In this way, all

color choices are rhythmic and intimately related to one another as a reflection of my own emotional expression.

Post Exhibit Review Statement (most recent)

My artwork has experienced a dramatic transformation over the course of fall semester. I feel that after this experience I have a determined direction and I find myself better able to articulate my goals. Currently, I am focused on how the process of creating artwork dictates the final product. My critique revealed to me that my artwork is reflective of “decoration.” However, I have no intention to create decorative artwork. The images that I am creating are the product of an incredibly intimate process between the paints, the surface, and me. Although not a direct written language, my artwork is analogous to pages from a person’s diary. I have no intention for my dairy pages to be placed on someone’s wall because they match someone’s furniture well. Nor do I wish my artworks to be created for the wall on a Doctor’s office or made as decorations to fill the shelves of TJ Max. The pulsating colors are a direct expression of who I am as a person, and how my current experiences are translated into a visual language. The color relationships and forms have changed throughout the semester because my own emotional state is constantly in flux with my personal struggles. I have always gravitated towards art because I can release my frustrations, sadness, joy, and excitement in an image that only I can truly understand and in the absence of outsider judgment. I am a shy person who has difficulty opening up to people- so, I reveal myself through my artwork. I find showing my paintings incredibly exposing and somewhat uncomfortable because of this. Personally, I find highly optically active colors to be stimulating during the artistic process; thus, my final product happens to be representative of that optical movement. Secondary to my own expression, I enjoy the spatial illusion that combinations of colors create.

For the second semester of SMP, I plan on working larger. Additionally, I would like to take more time out dedicated to color mixing. During SMP I, I did very little color mixing because part of my process involved layering colors to reveal new colors. However, the process of mixing colors is somewhat meditative in its own respect as well as informative of color understanding. More then anything, I hope I am able to better articulate what my artwork is truly about without being afraid of peoples’ judgments.

Annotative bibliography (10 sources)

**Bailey , A. (2012). *Contemporary Abstract Expressionist Painter: Amandea Bailey*. Retrieved November 2013, from Anabdea Bailey:
<http://amadeabailey.com>**

The website provides the biography and artist statement of contemporary artist, Amedea Bailey. The biography describes her life and how her life experience of working in many African countries has influenced the concept and construction of her artwork. Like myself, many of her inspirations are derived from a feeling of connectedness with nature. I find this inspiring because she has delved into various different media in order to achieve the same "natural concepts." However, unlike my artwork, her artwork possesses a sociocultural statement. My artwork is more about formal elements and self-expression rather than a form of communication for strong political commentary.

Brooks, R. A. (2010). *Fields of color: The theory that escaped Einstein*. New York: 302-328.

Fields of Color was especially helpful to me in regards to my own scientific conquest in uniting the art world with the natural sciences. Both fields are intimately related. The reading elaborates on the similarities and differences. Additionally, the reading provides a scientific explanation for the neurobiological perception of color as well as the physical representation that is color. The book provides a very systematic approach that provides the reader with a biological understanding of how color is perceived and how particular colors can be amplified depending on other color-color interactions.

This book took a while for me to go through due to the elevated language consistent with physical sciences. However, I found the book very helpful for my understanding of how color can be systematically placed in order to create illusions based off of the neurobiological and physical science components that involved color perception. For example, the colors yellow and blue are often considered more "active" colors because these colors appear as if they are moving outwards or inwards. When mixed together to form green, the colors negate the other's "movement" illusion. Thus, green becomes static. Green, blue, and yellow are well matched when placed in careful accordance on the picture plane. Placement of color has an imperative aspect to how color functions to stimulate particular neural connections of the brain. Overall, the reading was incredibly helpful to me because of it's ability to unite two fields that are of equal importance to one another in regards to color perception.

Dickey, T. (2011). *Color Creates light: Studies with Hans Hofmann*. Boston: Trillster Books.

Color Creates light by Dickey presents an argument by Hoffman on how art was used to change the world before mass media become the prominent means of informational transference. Additionally, the book provides the reader with many written visual teachings that was used by Hoffman. The book discusses the life of Hans Hoffman (1880-1966) and how Hoffman taught many art students through his visual writings. Hofmann believed that art could generate “forces of creation equivalent to forces of the physical world”. This idea describes how value and the cost of a painting can be skewed.

I was unable to read the entire book; however, I read many of the more important aspects of the book in regards to my own work. Most helpful were names of artists that were taught or strongly affected by the teachings of Hofmann. Some of those artists include: William Ronald, Don Jarvis, and Margaret Peterson. Overall, the historical approach and social issues regarding the meaning of art, I found to be least helpful. The best part about the readings was the quotes presented by Hans Hoffman. I would find it helpful to pin some of these quotes on my studio wall as both inspiration and directional purpose in regards to where I would like my SMP to go. Some of the most helpful quotes that pertain to my own artworks include:

- “In nature, light creates the color. In the picture, color creates the light.
- Every art expression is rooted fundamentally in the personality and temperament of the artist.
- Color is a plastic means of creating intervals... color harmonics produced by special relationships, or tensions.
- We differentiate now between formal tensions and color tensions, just as we differentiate in music between counterpoint and harmony.”

Gibson, A. (1988). *Abstract Expressionism's Evasion of Language*. *Art Journal*, 47 (3), 208-2214.

Abstract Expressionism's Evasion of Language speaks about the nature of visual language in abstract expressionism. Many of abstract expressionists were viewed as “Artists' refusal to chart the meaning of their work as elitist...” This existed mainly due to the language barrier between the elitist and “lower” socioeconomic classes. In order to “understand” abstract expression, an individual must have the ability to criticize or articulate the genre of visual arts because there was no easily identifiable image. Part of the reason abstract artworks is so difficult to understand is because language is a limiting factor in general. Words simply cannot do justice an idea that

is not of “this” world. Interestingly, many abstract expressionistic artists such as Irving Sandler, T.J. Clark, and Serge Guilbaut, had a sociocultural idea in mind.

I found this article to be exceptionally dense; however, very eye opening in regards to an area of art that I have developed a profound intrigue for. My artwork has always been about “not having any particular *meaning*.” Interestingly, I seemed to have been attracted to an area where there certainly *is* meaning and purpose. Identifying those meanings, however, is an “abstract” concept due to the nature of the artwork; thus, the artwork is particularly difficult to understand and explain. Although I have identified the formal elements that I am trying to better understand in my current work, I am reluctant to understand why I am attracted to those particular elements. For example, why a square? Why is my process so systemic and important to me? Perhaps the reason I cannot answer these questions lies with my limited vocabulary/language available to describe such abstractions. Overall, this reading has improved my general understanding of how abstract expressionism functions in the world.

Goodman, C. (1986). *Hans Hoffman: Modern Masters*. University of Michigan: Abbeville Press, Incorporated.

This particular reading was less informative for me in regards to information in the text; rather, the book was filled with rich images of the work created by Hofmann through his lifetime. A conglomeration of styles including fauves, cubism, and expressionism inspired many of Hofmann’s artworks. Each image created was inspiring to me in my own artwork. In fact, I attempted to directly emulate Hofmann’s “push-pull” theory. However, unlike Hofmann, I tend to use a different tonal range; thus, when I attempted to use contrast as Hofmann did, the signature in my paintings was completely lost. I realize now that I need to stick with the elements that are not “forced”; but rather come to be more naturally. Additionally, I find myself more attracted to images that utilize transparent layers as a form of making new colors, rather than using a mixed color straight off of the palette.

Harvey, K. (2013). *Biography of Katherine Harvey*. Retrieved 11 2013, from Katherine Harvey: <http://www.katherineharvey.com>

Katherine Harvey is a contemporary artist that constructs incredible installations and paintings. She is interested in salvaging found materials and reconstructed the materials into subject matter pertaining to “carnival light.” Harvey uses diverse range of materials ranging from acrylic paints to found objects; however, regardless of her material, she is able to achieve a sense of wholeness in the body of her work. After looking extensively through her artworks listed on the website, she certainly has a distinct color palate that is often composed of primary colors complimented by 2-3 secondary colors. Overall, I found distinguishing her concept difficult. She seems to be developing her own ideas *with* the innate direction that her artwork moves.

Like Harvey, my own artwork is evolving with me in that I identify features and structures that are recurrent throughout my body of artwork. Like my own

artwork, Harvey seems to be focusing on the formal elements first. The concept is determined from those unified common elements of a body of artwork.

Johannissen, E. R. (2001-2009). *Abstract paintings on canvas, board and paper. Contemporary art by Swedish painter based in Sweden and England.* Retrieved November 2013, from Eva Ryn Johannissen: <http://www.evaryn.com>

“My work is seldom abstracted from anything specific in the material world, although they often contain references to landscape, townscape, and other memories from my experience. Above all, I use emotive colour, abstract shapes and surface texture to create visual metaphors for contemporary life” (Eva Ryn Johannissen). Ryn uses her own associations to inspire the creations of her work. Rather than focusing on “impressions of the material world,” Johannissen’s artwork delves into “expressing emotions and inner states of the mind.” I realize that the expressionism is largely based off the statements that Johannissen listed. However, their simplicity was refreshing in regards to my own understanding. She introduces the idea of “non-objective mindscapes” in which elements in every painting are in equilibrium between abstraction *and* representation.

Many of the artworks of Eva Ryn Johannissen are *incredibly* inspiring just viewing the rich color combinations that she uses. Her colors have a profound effect on my own mind’s state; I want so badly for my own artwork to render the same ability. I don’t feel that I have completely achieved the ability to create “mood” and “atmosphere” in my paintings. When I view Johannissen’s artwork, I see that one color (and one color only) dominates nearly all of the picture plane. She uses a limited color palate to achieve her mastering of mood manipulation. The color palate is something that I need to control in my own artwork if I wish to successfully create “spatial illusion” as well as “expression.”

Kennick, W. E. (1961). *Art and the Ineffable. The Journal of Philosophy, 58 (12), 309-3020.*

“There is probably no conviction more deeply rooted in modern aesthetics than this, the works of art express what cannot be expressed in ordinary discourse.” This reading went into depth of the philosophical understanding that is vital to the life of abstract expressionism. As the previous reading discussed the language barrier that isolates expressionism, this reading discusses the language that innately exists within this type of artwork. Expressionism is a language in which “feelings and emotions” are at the forefront, exposed in their rawest form. “The reason for this ineffability is not that the ideas to be expressed are too high, too spiritual, or too anything-else, but that the forms of feelings and the forms of discursive expression are logically incommensurate, so that any exact concepts or feeling and emotion cannot be projected into the logical form of literal language.” In this way, I feel that abstract expressionism is an outlet that provides both the artist and the viewer the potential to connect spiritually. “If all feelings could be named, if all meanings could be adequately expressed by words, if the forms of feeling and the forms of discursive

expression were logically commensurate, then there would be no reason for works of art to exist at all, works of art would not exist, and there is no reason for their existence, and we do not have need for them.”

Of all the readings thus far, this reading has been the most helpful. Oftentimes, I find a need for “logical” and “systemic” that likely stems back from my need to place everything in a category as is often employed by the “scientific method.” However, unlike science, art is not limited by boundaries. Expressionistic artwork is the ticket to allowing an individual to go anywhere they want (so to speak). This reading was truly inspiring because I for once, I feel like what I am doing is something of true importance in my life.

Ogar, S. (2007). *Color as a Field: American Painting 2950-2975*. New York: American Foundation of Arts.

This book provided me with a diverse range of artists that have their primary focus on color relationships. All of the artists were considered to be “post-painterly abstraction.” The artists utilized a more “autographic” use of paint. Honestly, most of the text was not very helpful regards to my own artwork. I’m less interested in the history of publicity of individual artists. I enjoyed the images overall.

Wechsler, J., Betancourt, M., & Craven, D. (2010). *Ary Stillman: From Impressionism to Abstract Expressionism*. Merrell Publishers.

The book includes excerpts of art historians and critics that parallel with an artist who is developing his expression of identity in conjunction with his heritage. The book goes over philosophically ideas that are congruent with Stillman’s artwork. Stillman’s entire biography was nearly outlined in the text of the book. Stillman’s artwork developed during the Nazi Regime. The entire book was not particularly helpful to me. I thought that it might be interesting to follow an artist through his journey in a book would be helpful; however, the tone of the text was incredibly boring.

ARTISTS TALKS

Brock Rough: Why videogame criticism is hard

I will begin this paper with the reader knowing that I had no clue with what the artist/philosopher, Brock Rough, was trying to say during his talk on videogame criticism. This is mainly because I have not the slightest idea of how the study of philosophy works. He introduced all of the philosophical concepts into his presentation nicely; however, it was difficult to learn and remember different terminology all in a 45-minute time block. Brock spoke about interactive fictions and artworks that allow the viewers to differentiate between fictional truths and actual existence. He mentions that prop generators of fictional truths (by virtue of their nature of existence) make propositions fictional. From my limited understanding, the quote means that we have particular associations with objects of reality that are all interconnected. In a painting of a woman, a viewer will assume (as a fictional truth) that the woman has veins and warm blood within those veins (even though the viewer doesn't really *know* this as certain). This allows the fantastical world constructed by the artist in a videogame to become more real to the viewer even though the world is completely fictional. He led into the idea of what games of make-believe do to fictional perspective. Through fictional perspectives the viewer is exposed to both primary and implied truths. For example, unicorns don't actually exist in real life; however, as viewers we have constructed truths concerning what a unicorn represents and looks like. Unicorns are typically white and they must always have a corn centered on their forehead. Through legends and myths, we have constructed a fictional character with both primary and implied truths. Videogames construct the same kind of world in which the viewer comes to understand a character as having particular features that are defining to that character. This is mainly the information that I acquired from the talk. I found the presentation extremely confusing.

Beehive Collective

The method in which the beehive collective group created their artwork is one of a kind. Every visual moment of the graphics tells a story through the use of carefully constructed black and white drawings. In the Mesoamerica Resiste piece the stories have both political and social significance in regards to the people of Mesoamerica and the World. I enjoyed the fact that the artists were able to channel their own passion of fueling World change through their effective use of the images.

The Beehive Collective artists travel to countries of Mesoamerica and immerse themselves in the culture by living within a community of people native to the area. Here, the artists' graphics as utilized as educational devices in order to spread information to people who might not normally have access to such worldly affairs. Both groups leave an impression on the other group- and this impression on the artist group ultimately altered the course in which the Beehive Collective's artwork ran. Many individual stories from the Mesoamerican people are included in the Mesoamerica Resiste graphic piece. I found

this inspiring in that the project had a collaborative aspect that strengthens the message of the Beehive Collective artists.

My favorite part about their methodology was the idea of a “mind map.” The mind map produces interconnectivity between the separate drawings/forms of a single graphic piece. The first term (the “umbrella” term) is connected to various related terms that “pop into the artists’ minds”. Those related terms are then surrounded by more words (and so on and so on). This creates the “mind map” in which all terms are interconnected with every other term. The artists translate the terms into images. These images end up making the whole of a piece that include a sense flowing interconnectivity. This process is inspiring to me in that it is a form of visually organizing thoughts that might be helpful for my own artistic process. The entire mind map process is collaborative between both the artists and the native individuals of Mesoamerica. In this way, the mind map entwines everyone’s story. This mind map is something that I would like to explore in regards to my own artistic thoughts.

Overall, both of our artwork processes are different in the central focus. The Beehive Collective artworks act as propaganda in order to inspire social change among populations of the world. However, my artwork is highly expressive and unique to me as an individual. I have no desire to promote social change through my style of artwork.

Artist Talk: Natalie Jeremijenko

Natalie Jeremijenko utilizes her artistic background in the planning and production of unique engineering projects focused on promoting environmental health in daily life. The impact of climate change on human health is a central theme of all of her engineering and artistic endeavors. She believes that public space can be shaped as to promote environmental awareness in which the inhabitants participate in the artwork that she creates. Jeremijenko and I share one similarity in our artistic endeavors. Both of us are attempting to combine two different areas of study. Jeremijenko constructs engineering projects that are made possible through an artistic thought process. I am attempting to find unity between my biological influences and art. Additionally, she is largely inspired in designing things based off of natural systems. I am constantly looking for unique color relationships found throughout nature as inspiration for my own abstract expressionistic artworks.

Both of our artworks are vastly different in the method of production. As mentioned earlier, Jeremijenko is interested in participation of the inhabitants in order to “complete” an art piece/engineering project. Her artistic goals are to advance social change in order to promote a healthier environment as well as a healthy people. My artwork, however, is centrally focused on the individual. The subject matter is highly expressive and personal. My artwork is not meant to advance social change; but rather a device to improve my own psyche through the meditative properties of paintings.

INTERVIEW(s)

by Charles Wacker

1 What first inspired you to make art? What about art has always stayed with you?

It's difficult to mark any particular inspiration that led me to my pathway in art; rather, I have found that art serves as more of a "need" to express myself visually. However, my main inspiration at the current moment is referencing seemingly strange color combinations that occur in nature.

2 Have you always been a painter? Are you interested in any other mediums?

After taking the SMCM introduction to painting about 3 years ago; I discovered I had a profound love for all paints. Any free time I had was devoted to a medium that I hadn't previously known much about. In general, I find all media interesting- I especially find the experience pleasant to incorporate a regular everyday object into an image so that that object is unrecognizable and beautiful.

3 Are you interested in art therapy?

I come to the belief that all self-expression is a type of self-therapy for everyone. For a career, I don't have any interest in art therapy.

4 Which works did you like from the marathon? Why?

I liked the artworks that had the most variation in marks. I'm trying to find a good balance between translucency and opacity, and I felt that my yellow "map" artwork was most successful at accomplishing this.

5 Which works did you dislike and why?

I disliked all of the works that were on the brown paper. The surface felt very wrong because it kept crippling up like someone spilt his or her drink on it. My mark making consequently suffered. In addition, these works felt somewhat forced.

6 You mentioned that the works you consider unsuccessful "felt forced," can you elaborate? When did the works begin to feel forced?

My artworks felt forced when I felt disconnected with what I was doing. I was trying to automatically make something that was under too much conscious control. Letting go of this control is very difficult for me to do.

7 What are you more drawn to? Geometric shapes or natural patterns?

I like a happy combination of both. I think it's especially interesting when a composition is geometrically dominant with few organic shapes. This way, the natural patterns stand out more.

8 What is the biggest you have ever worked?

I once did a 3x5 foot painting, which was very difficult because of material availability, and the amount of time required to finish something of that size.

9 What does color do for you? Is this something that you take from observation?

Color is an emotional experience. I always find it interesting that different artists seem to use the same color schemes over and over again- and I think that is saying something about the nature of color and human individuality. I think my color choices are inspired by observation (like a transparent bright purple shadow against opaque bright orange bricks), but there is definitely individual preference as well. Certain color choices evoke different feelings for sure.

10 Do you work from observation/ pictures/ memory? What does this do for you?

I honestly love working from observation and memory. I find that observation, personally, limits my creative choices because I am too focused on getting everything I see in perfect proportion and accurate coloring. Painting from pictures is really difficult because these paintings just feel flat to me- they have less emotional significance for me. Memory is my favorite because I feel I have limitless possibilities. My own personal intangible world within me can be better transferred onto a tangible surface. In this way, I get more self expression out of my system which I find very satisfying.

Rachel McDonald Interview 2

1. Acknowledging that you may not have fully resolved your plans for SMP, how do you feel about your work thus far in SMP 1? What did you take from the review with the Art Faculty?

I feel just ok about it because I don't feel like I have achieved the full effect that I want yet. I kind of want more visual tension; that is a trial and error ordeal, and that takes a while to make it happen. From the review, I got that I need to stick with one idea and that being Hans Hoffman's push or pull. I researched him online after the critique; I like his ideas and writing. It was so much diverse stuff that was suggested, everyone had his or her own subjective ideas. But the biggest thing I got was about sticking with one specific idea.

2. After the first review, have you come to any now conclusions about the direction of your art practice? What, in your opinion are the strengths and weaknesses of your work?

In terms of practice, since I tend to work on paintings very quickly, I tend to overwork them. I set up a structure where I am surrounded by many surfaces so I can pick them up and put them down as I please. My strengths are: composition, I think. I think I am strong with color but I don't think that I am at the point that I want to be at with color. My weaknesses are: thinking about the work in a bigger picture. I really don't have any other reasons for doing this other than enjoyment. I also overwork things to a point where I can't save them.

3. What sort of work (be it exercises, research, or new pieces) has emerged since the critique?

Looking at different art sources in contemporary art, Hans Hoffman. I have been looking online at what inspires me on a pure visual basis, because that seems to inspire me more. (Rachel was working on a red and blue series when I walked in)

4. During the critique, it was mentioned that you make a variety of creative choices that sit on a wide spectrum of what we define as abstraction. It is possible to trace these decisions back to specific artists?

Hans Hoffman,

5. Are you continuing the practice of "binge painting" or have you organized a more regular painting practice?

I really have slowed down and become more regular. Taking the time is helping me create the effect that I want. Painting on a regular, daily basis has changed my color choices because I can look at a piece with fresh eyes.

6. What sort of choices are you considering for the future in terms of both scale and ground?

If I had it my way, I would go huge but materials are decided by what is available. Ideally I want to fill the peripheral vision with this color experience. I would love to work on big canvases, smooth surface, lighter, easier to transport.

7. Do you feel like you "overwork" paintings? What is the determinant point where you know a painting is done, and how do you deal with the obstacle?

Yes. I feel like it is done when it is “acceptable to look at” and sometimes I have to force myself to think this.

8. Are you still considering painting as “a hobby”? How exactly does pressure play a role in this decision?

Yeah, I don’t think I could ever do it as a career. It would take something I love to do and make it a job. I just want to paint when I feel inspired, if I feel forced, it kills my motivation.

9. Space or Surface?

For the time being, definitely space. I guess the whole surface thing is for another project.

10. Are you interested in limiting your color palette? How will this choice affect the feel of your works?

I have tried to limit my palette as an exercise, just to see if it appears more cohesive. I think it can still be cohesive with an abundance of color variation.

Evolution of my artwork for Fall SMP:

SUMMER WORK





(some) MARATHON ARTWORKS

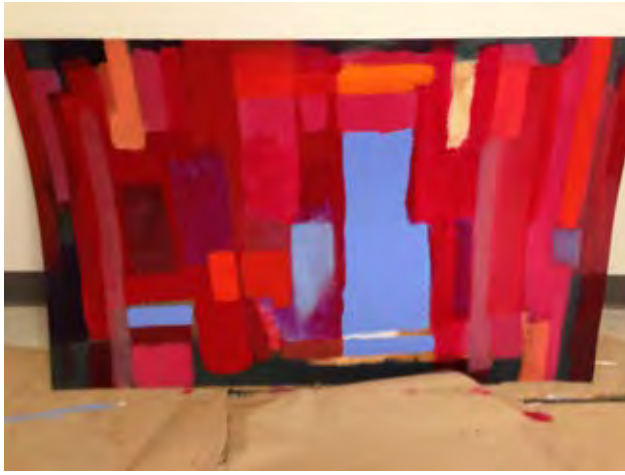




Midterm Artwork



Rhythm
Acrylic paint on chipboard
44 X 28 inches
2013



FINAL ARTWORK: SMP EXHIBIT PIECES



Composition in pink, orange, and blue
Oil paint on panel
31 X 23 inches
2013



Serenity
Oil paint on wood panel
31 X 23 inches
2013



Composition in green, yellow, and blue
Oil paint on canvas
30 X 25 inches
2013



Red on blue #1
Oil paint on panel
29 X 17 inches
2013



(Not placed in show)

VISUAL SOURCES

RABOUIN





Susan Greenbaum





whitney brune

Critical Goals & Issues:

SMPII

- **Color is my own reaction to the environment**
 - How are cultural and natural forces affecting my experience of colors? What is produced?
 - "...The guiding principle in the creation of a composition was the artist's emotional response to events of an internal nature. That feeling was the result of a combination of experiences: on one hand, those perceptions that arose from the artist's inner world; on the other, the impressions the artist received from external appearances, events, or concepts." M. Debrowski on Kandinsky
 - Creation of excitement from the tension set up between the colors and shapes
 - Innate sense of color that everyone can agree on
- **Process is like meditation- has almost hypnotizing like effects**
 - In this space time does not exist
 - Elimination of rational thought & allowing my most raw senses to dominate
 - A time for me to mentally center myself
- **Creating a space that promotes transcendence for the viewer into another world (Rothko Chapel)**
 - Larger- envelope all of our visual senses, so that we are not reminded of the barriers set up by the edges of the picture plan
- **Revealing the "internal world" of objects or events that are deeper than the readily visible**
 - External covering to everything, but everything we see is a construct of our brain's visual circuitry- can you still sense the presence of something without "depicting" that object
 - "aura" of things
 - like a memory
- **Identification of subject matter**
 - The space and the experience I have in that space represents seeing the beauty of a mundane life

Questions to be addressed

- Will limiting myself to a subject help or hinder my artistic process?
- Color choice is intuitive- but how and why am I choosing a particular pallet?
 - Associations? Current mood?
- Why am I choosing repeated geometric forms? (in particular- squares)
- Questioning the importance of the process versus the final product
- What is my inspiration (subject matter) exactly?
- Material availability?
- Are my concepts an expression of my own "spirituality?"

Final SMP Documentation: Abstract

Awareness of every detail of life is mentally taxing. My mind feels scattered. How do we provide ourselves with a mental vacation from the impetuous demands of everyday life? For me, time ceases to exist when I paint. I am no longer aware of every small distraction. My mind no longer wanders and I am not required to multitask; rather, I am focused, present, and attentive. Painting is a form of gaining a mental balance by removal of distractions.

My process *is* my subject matter. Thus, my paintings live and breathe only when I am actively engaged with their creation. The paintings come to life by building layers of unique color combinations. I methodically place strips of masking tape onto the surface of the picture plane in a linear orientation. When I remove the tape, the painting evolves into something else; it changes the way a living thing is always changing. I find that the repetitive use of the same linear shape enhances my ability to maintain focus because I am eliminating the element of choice, and purely focusing on the act of painting.

My color choices tend to be bold and optically active. They are placed into an orientation that creates visual tension through vibrational movements reminiscent of “hypnotic” images. I am unsure as to whether the visual experience is a means to enter a trance-like state of mind *or* if my own color perception is altered *due* to a trance-like state of mind.

My mind is in a constant scattered state due to the impetuous demands of everyday life. The act of painting; however, provides a temporary outlet for me. Creating artwork requires sustained focus on the present moment and the elimination of internal and external distractions. While painting, I am focused, present, and attentive. Painting is a form of gaining a mental balance by mentally removing distractions. Thus, the final product serves little purpose when compared to the process.

Indeed, the understanding of my artwork’s nature evolved from the basic sense of *needing* to create for the sake of creating. The reasons for this motivation had not yet been uncovered. My artwork’s evolution began with my interest in the emotive experience evoked by abstract expressionist paintings. Specifically, I was interested in the *act* of automaticity in which raw emotions of the artist dictates the painting’s becoming. I struggled with verbally explaining my reasons to create abstract expressionistic paintings due to the limits of our language. Visual language has no bounds, and is capable of being ubiquitously understood, even if words cannot perform an articulate explanation. W.E. Kennick explains the nature of abstract expressionism and the limits of explanation in the journal article, *Art and the Ineffable*, “The reason for this ineffability is not that the ideas to be expressed are too high, too spiritual, or too anything-else, but that the forms of feelings and the forms of discursive expression are logically incommensurate, so that any exact concepts or feeling and emotion cannot be

projected into the logical form of literal language” (Kennick, 1961). In abstract expressionism, the conscious and rational mind is meant to be disregarded, allowing for

the deeper and more emotional part of the brain to perform the creating (Gibson, 1988). As a student studying biology in conjunction to study art, I am seeking to find a balance between the rational mind and the deeper, subconscious mind. Producing artwork has always provided me with a way to remove myself from the demands of biology by releasing my personal creative spirit hidden in the deepest areas of my brain. Art provides me with relaxation of the conscious while exercising the unconscious portions of my mind. This concept of abstraction is an important aspect to the nature of my artwork and an important reasoning supporting my motivation to paint. The experience of color and its psychological effects is an important aspect to the abstract expressionist. Color choice, often personal, still maintains a myriad of culturally constructed associations and symbolism. In order to understand my own color preferences in relationship to abstract expressionism, I did extensive research on the artwork of Wassily Kandinsky who had felt strongly about the symbolic significance of color (Fingesten, 1961). The infusion of spirituality was an important aspect to the nature of Kandinsky’s abstract pieces. Kandinsky’s ideas of spirituality and color were concerned with the visual harmony constructed with matching shapes and colors appropriately (Kandinsky, 1977). For example, a triangle was most fitting with the color yellow, whereas the color blue was fitting with a circle. The ideas of Kandinsky confirmed that my color choices are completely unrelated to establishing visual harmony or spiritual significance. In fact, I am uninterested in how others perceive my color choices; rather, my color choice is an automatic reaction to my own emotional state that is most congruent with the ideas of the automatic process in abstract expressionism. In I choose my colors automatically without rationality, based off of my own intuitive color preferences.

My initial paintings were produced with the ideas of “automatism.” However, the concepts responsible for my artworks’ formal elements required further elaboration. I began to become interested in using cutout shapes that were repeatedly painted over so that only the edges of the shape appeared. The final product was entirely composed of the impressions made by that one shape. This process was attractive to me due its calming effects; however, the reasons for the calming feeling through the use of repeated structures remained obscure. My color began to take on forms reminiscent of paintings created by the abstract expressionist artist, Hans Hofmann. Hofmann was interested in the “push-pull effects” evoked by certain color combinations (Dickey, 2011). Through Hofmann’s manipulation of color relationships, a painting may not be limited to the space of the picture plane. As a consequence of the “push pull effect,” a spatial rhythm is established in which blocks of color become energized and colors appear to pulsate forward and backward (Dickey, 2011). In this way, only with the viewer’s active participation does the painted object move, breathe, and become alive. For me, color is a reaction of my past knowledge and experiences. It has only become an intuitive choosing process based off of that.

Although color relationships are an imperative feature of my artwork, my personal gain of enjoyment during the act of producing the art piece is far more important to me. I came to the understanding that my process was in fact my subject matter mid-way

through my St. Mary's Project. The reason why I initially chose repeated structures presented in optically active combinations was because doing so provided me with sustained focus and the elimination of choice. In order to emphasize removal of choice and control, I constructed a detailed set of rules to follow prior to creating the artwork. In this way, I didn't have to attend to decisions in regards to how the art piece would be constructed as I did so.

While creating this particular art project, I learned what is necessary for me to maintain single pointed concentration. To me, painting is a form of "tunnel vision" allowing for the clearing of the mind. My approach to painting is consistent with the ideas of mediation. I find direct therapeutic benefits to both the mind and body after I have had a successful session painting. A successful painting is not how satisfied I am with the finished product. In fact, the finished product does not hold a strong importance to me at all. A painting is alive in the moments that make up its creation. I deem a successful painting if time ceased to exist during the process and if the painting provided me with a sense of calmness upon finishing a particular session.

I became increasingly interested in the artwork made by Agnes Martin due to her emphasis of process. Martin produces artworks composed of light color washes and thin graphite lines that are precisely and lightly drawn onto the surface (Anfam, 1993). Her process was very contemplative, evoking the senses of calmness, softness, and peacefulness. Her graphite lines were somewhat out-of-this world. Martin states that making art is intuitive and it is not the artist actively attempting to pull out particular emotions. Rather, it is solely reliant on the viewer's response. Martin, my creating artwork is my form of mediation. It is what provides me with emotional release as I am communicating my "inner-self" that cannot be represented any other way. Like Martin, I am interested in "emptying my mind" and freeing myself from the constant distractions that plague everyday life. Agnes Martin quote, "when I think of art, I think of beauty. Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not in the eye, it is in the mind." For me, beauty is a purpose for producing artwork. I find beauty in the process rather than the finished product. So unlike Martin, I feel that a painting becomes alive, it breathes, only during the moments of creation.

The excess information that my mind must take in and process can lead to mental exhaustion. This information often requires me to make small but accumulating decisions. I did not have to endure the experience of having the need to go back and rework a painting because of a potentially "bad" decision. My highly systematic rule set provided me with very little choice in the creation of the painting.

My most recent artwork demonstrates my emphasis on process. In order to eliminate distraction and choice, I decided to first make a set of rules to be followed as illustrated below. The artwork is constructed of 50 individual 180X180 mm paintings on wood panel. I chose the perfect square as the picture plane of the artwork because the square facilitates to my 2:1 ratio presentation of the final piece very well. I began the art piece by first toning each wood panel individually with cool and warm hued colors in approximately equal proportions. Next, I placed ten individual toned panels in front of

me and flanked acrylic paints beside me. Masking tape was uniformly placed in the same direction, as straight as possible, onto the surface of the ten chosen wood panels. I chose one paint color and applied the paint onto the open spaces lying adjacent to the taped portion of the panel. After the paint drying process was completed, I removed the previous layer of tape and placed new tape onto the panel's surface in the same methods as described above. The process was repeated until multiple layers of color overlapped on top one another. I considered a painting complete when the optical busyness appeared adequate. Thus, some paintings are far more complex than others. This process was repeated five times to total the production of 50 individual panels making up one complete artwork. The final product was composed of a size ratio of 2:1: 10 columns: 5 rows composed of perfectly square paintings. Upon the completion, I had to organize the 50 paintings into one unified piece of artwork. Rules, once again, became an important aspect to my determining the relative positions of the individual paintings. Although I have deemphasized the importance of the final product to a great degree, I wanted to create a painting that provided the viewers with an understanding of my process. I placed the paintings of high optical activity directly adjacent to low optical activity paintings. Additionally, I avoided placing paintings composed of similar color schemes next to one another. A primarily green painting, for example, was surrounded by highly different color schemed paintings.

An important aspect to my process of my final art piece was the removal of the tape. Considering that I painted the entire "free spaces" being the areas that the tape untouched, I was completely unaware of how the actual color combination would result upon the tapes removal. The act of removing the actual tape provided me with a sense of excitement and surprise. Even if the color combination did not necessarily look "right," my rules prevented me from going back to fix it. Rather, I would repeat the process with an entirely new color as an addition to the already established color scheme. In this way, the painting would be completed only when another additional color supported the other colors enough that I could consider the painting visually pleasing. There was no set rule to this. Additionally, placing the masking tape at differing intervals provided me with some experimentation in regards to the design of optically active color combinations. Thin rectangular structures that were adjacent to thicker rectangular structures resulted in higher optical activity. I learned this after removal of the tape of many paintings. Each individual painting was comprised of an interesting composition as a result of differing placements of the tape. Thin shapes appear to recede back into the back of the painting while the thicker and bolder shapes moved

forward. The visual stimulation as a result of the color orientation and choices provided me with the interest needed to sustain and support my focus on the present moment.

My color choices in my most recent artwork were bold and optically active. They are placed into an orientation that creates visual tension through vibrational movements reminiscent of “hypnotic” images. I am unsure as to whether the visual experience is a means to enter a trance-like state of mind *or* if my own color perception is altered *due* to a trance-like state of mind. Scientific studies have suggested that color perception is altered during states of hypnosis. The brain processes color differently

based off of one’s state of mind. Therefore, color choice may be a consequence of my hyper-focused state of mind while painting.

When I consider the final product, I feel that it is important to create a work that best facilitates the experience of mediation and hypnosis because this helps sustain focus and eliminate distraction. When the visual field is completely occupied by the painting(s), objects in the periphery are removed, thus enhancing the experience of color interactions by the viewer. However, in order to keep myself focused, it is important to constantly introduce novel paintings. Thus, by making 50 individual paintings and combining them into one, I am still able to always remain focused.

Source-to-self essay

Agnes Martin

Agnes Martin was a creature of habit. She enjoyed having a particular set of unwritten “rules.” For example, Martin’s artwork is exclusively geometric throughout her artistic career. She used canvases that were always square. Martin used 2 coats of gesso, and *only* 2 coats of gesso. She began her day with creating artwork, early in the morning. The list of her habits could go on and on. I feel that habit is a defining characteristic of my own artwork. Stresses of life are often a result of having to make too many choices. My process is centered on decreasing stress and thus decreasing choice. Routine, like Martin, is an integral aspect of my own artistic process. Having a set routine provides me with a sense of stability and balance by removing potential choices that would otherwise have to be made. Therefore, for my final SMP project, I have literally written a set of rules to follow during the process. These rules are congruent with my interests. Small square wood panels are being processed in a very distinct pattern. So far, the enjoyment and focus that I get out of my process has been enhanced. I am better able to focus on the colors, paint placement, and overall composition with more intuitive senses.

Martin claims that her geometric shapes are “anti-nature” with the logic that these shapes do not exist in the natural world. The trunk of a tree is never a straight line. Just like a person could never actually draw a truly straight line. Separating nature from her artwork is an important aspect to Martin’s concept. Her earlier work capitalizes on the ideas of perfection. She claims that perfection exists only in the mind. In regards to her artwork, Martin states, “make us aware of perfection in the mind. The Greeks knew that in the *mind* you *can* draw a perfect circle, but that you can’t really draw a perfect circle.” Therefore, her artwork is a reaction to these ideas of perfection. Interestingly, using a graphite pen she hand drew the grid structure in an imperfect way (without the use of mechanical tools). While viewing her artwork, she appears to have captured perfection. She claims this is a construct of the viewers’ mind. My artwork rejects the idea of perfection. I agree that perfection is only possible within our inner self. However, I do not think artwork should be based off of the pursuit of perfection. I thought this concept was relevant to my own concepts because I am trying to understand why I am so uninterested in the final product. Could I just be lying to myself to avoid the implications of an imperfect final product? If I exclusively care only for my process, than the finished product loses any potential significance. The need to achieve a state of perfection is therefore irrelevant. I feel free to enjoy my process when I do not have to consider the small details that might have brought my final product closer to a state of perfection. Additionally, nearing the ideals of perfection requires the right choices. As I have previously discussed, I fear choice because it adds additional stress. Perhaps the stress exists in the first place because I am constantly attempting to be better, to be closer to the perfect ideal. Honestly, these are just speculations; however, they are helping understand why the final product has lost such value to me. I am tired of trying to reach that ideal.

The concept of happiness and recognition is emphasized in later work produced by Agnes Martin. The pursuit to happiness is a common feature of both of Martin and my artwork. Martin rejected the idea of her artwork representing anything of this world. However, she did attempt to project her happiness onto her paintings. I too feel that my paintings are a reaction of my own happiness which is why I value my process to the degree that I do (and why I reject the caring about the final product). I produce the most successful work (the best experience in regards to process) when I find myself happy. My happiness is a reaction to my identity based off of my friends, family, activities, location, and life in general. Therefore, like Martin, my paintings are closely associated with the environment that I am occupying even though my paintings are not direct depictions. The influences of my emotional state are reflected on my artwork. Unlike Martin, my artwork has no deep conceptual basis. By having to consider incorporation of concept, the enjoyment of painting for the sake of painting is removed. Painting is a selfish act for me in that I do it because I genuinely enjoy expressing myself through the paint medium. How my paintings are later interpreted is irrelevant. This idea essentially removes importance to the final product.

When you look at an Agnes Martin artwork, you would likely take notice of the sensitivity and the delicate aura of her paintings. Martin's process was contemplative, which is reflective on the viewers' visual experience of her artwork. The act of painting is intuitive and she does not consciously try to evoke particular emotions. I have trouble understanding how one can be so concept based, yet make artwork "intuitively." I feel that concept requires conscious and rational effort. When I attempt to infuse my artwork with deep conceptual context, I am infusing my process with rationality. Rationality kills the happiness I acquire from my process. Regardless, my artwork does have similar qualities to Martin's artwork. My process is both intuitive and routine. The routine helps guide my intuition. Without routine, choices tangle my thoughts, and my intuition becomes stuck in mind mud.

Annotative bibliography on readings of/by Agnes Martin

1. Cotter, Holland. "Agnes Martin." Art Journal 57.3 (1998): 77-80.

Agnes Martin appears to be a creature of habit as her process was highly disciplined and based off of routine. For 25 years, she performed the same routine when producing a painting. First, her paintings always were the same size (6' X 6' or 5' x 5') and she began with applying 2 layers of gesso to the canvas. She added a thin acrylic water wash. With a ruler, she drew light grey lines in a horizontal orientation. Although her color schemes differed from painting to painting, the overall style remained consistent. I find that my striving to paint is similar to Agnes Martin in that I enjoy routine and order. My current SMP project depends on my the "rules" that I have set up for in order to push my process to become more routine. However, my purpose is quite different from Agnes Martin. Martin's inspiration is derived from a "a vision of a finished product" in her mind. However, this is not the case for me. My finished product is my least concerning factor of my artwork. For me, the process is the most significant aspect of painting. I would agree with Martin's creating artwork requiring alone time. I too, enjoy working alone. Martin states "make us aware of perfection in the mind. The Greeks knew that in the mind you can draw a perfect circle, but that you can't really draw a perfect circle. Everyone has a vision of perfection, don't you think? A housewife wants to have a perfect home." I have never considered a strong desire for perfection serving as inspiration to make artwork. However, after reading Martin's words, perfection to me may play a role in my artwork. I do not yet know how; however, I am aware of my obsession for perfection in all other areas of my life. The idealistic goals are often incapable of being met; therefore, it would make sense that I remove the finished product as being an important factor to my artwork and rather embrace the process, where imperfections can be made without consequence. Essentially, I am lowering my own expectations for myself by enjoying the present moment of creating.

2. Tuttle, Richard. "Occasion of Her Ninetieth Birthday." American Art 16.3 (2002): 92-95.

The reading describes the writer's appreciation of Agnes Martin's artwork for the transcendental qualities that it holds. Agnes Martin was not at all concerned about representation; her images were not meant to recall the New Mexican landscape in anyway. Rather, her artwork was an attempt to "bridge the gap between looking and seeing." Objectivity of the material world is easily looked upon, but the deeper existential qualities of non-objectivity require *seeing*. Her artwork is composed of lines, which directly separates her artwork from the natural world. I would have to disagree with my use of line acting to separate my artwork from nature. In strange ways, I feel that my artwork does represent the natural world; however, I am unclear on how this can be. Perhaps my artwork's connection to nature exists due to nature providing me happiness, and thus inspiring me to produce more artwork. In this sense, I could agree with Agnes Martin. According to the writings, she attempted to portray her happiness

through her artwork. She painted the qualities of herself that were so closely associated with her New Mexican identity: She loved the landscape and the activities that one could do on such a beautiful landscape. In that way, our paintings have similar qualities. Agnes Martin's paintings prior to 1967 were based off of perfection and perception, separating them from the world. However, after 1974, her paintings evolved to become more representative of happiness and recognition, providing grounding to this world. I would agree that my paintings are less about perfection as the final product is of no concern to me in an attempt to avoid having to fit the standards of perfection and acceptance. I am freer to enjoy my artwork by disregarding my care for the final product.

3. Rembert, P. Virginia. "Agnes Martin/Paintings and Writings by Arne Glimcher." Woman's Art Journal 24.1 (2003): 53.

Agnes Martin produced art in New Mexico because the landscape and light of the landscape fulfilled her. According to the reading, she was searching for a "transcendent beauty." My artwork, as described above, is not necessarily about nature. However, nature facilitates my happiness, which fuels my desire to paint. Therefore, nature is in some way a contributing factor to my own creative process. If I feel unhappy, I tend to be repulsed by painting because painting for me is so dependent upon the enjoyment of the process. How might one enjoy something when they are so deeply unhappy? I am unsure as to how my artwork fits into the term "transcendent beauty." My artwork is not focused upon the beauty that it provides others; but rather the beauty that it provides me during the process.

**4. Cavna, Michael. Agnes Martin: To celebrate the great painter, Google Doodle offers meditative muted beauty. 22 March 2014. 22 March 2014
<<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/comic-riffs/wp/2014/03/22/agnes-martin-to-celebrate-the-great-painter-google-doodle-offers-meditative-muted-beauty/>>.**

I read this article in the Washington Post, as it was a reaction to Google's front-page doodle of an Agnes Martin piece. The term "emotional mediation" struck me. This term provides a sense of overlapping interest between Martin and myself. I feel that meditation exists in many forms and trying to differentiate the types of meditation has been difficult to articulate. I consider dissecting a leech ganglion a form of mediation; however, different than the mediation occurring in response to creating artwork. Like Martin, my creating artwork is my form of mediation. It is what provides me with emotional release as I am communicating my "inner-self" that cannot be represented any other way. Like Martin, I am interested in "emptying my mind" and freeing myself from the constant distractions that plague everyday life. Agnes Martin quote, "when I think of art, I think of beauty. Beauty is the mystery of life. It is not in the eye, it is in the mind." For me, beauty is a purpose for producing artwork. I find beauty in the process rather than the finished product. So unlike Martin, I feel that a painting becomes alive, it

breathes, only during the moments of creation.

5. Hatje, Cantz. Agnes Martin Writings. Ed. Herausgegeben Von Dieter Schwarz. New York: Coverimage, 2005.

The book includes essays written by Agnes Martin's in the 1970's. I found many of her essays to be inspirational more in regards to life rather than art. First off, Agnes Martin is highly interested in obedience to the conscious mind. She considers that the mind is composed of various parts. The outside part, the "conscious mind", makes an individual aware of perfection, happiness, and sublimity. When the conscious mind tells the inner mind "yes" we are led to happiness. However, when the conscious mind tells the inner mind "no" we are led to unhappiness. Having the ability to obey the conscious mind provides us with happiness and self-acceptance. When the conscious mind tells us "no" we are left astray and are unable to see the beauty and happiness of life. She considers self-knowledge as the greatest form of wisdom. The self-knowledge is derived from the discipline to listen to the outside mind. She writes, "Until you can clear up your true identity you will be tied to a repetition of this life." Agnes Martin ties these ideas into her artwork. Her artwork is based purely off of visual perception. Literary allusions and representational references are completely absent. Happiness is the ultimate goal in her later work (where perfection comprises the earlier work). Happiness exists with the knowledge of oneself through the obedience of the outside mind. This, at least, is my understanding from one particular essay. I am thinking about how these ideas might apply to my own artwork. I have not considered the activity of rational thought to dictate my actions in creating artwork. I feel that when I over-rationalize what I am doing, I tend to lose inspiration. Inspiration for me is exclusively driven by the inner mind that is devoid of logic. I agree that the mind does require obedience to the rational mind. For example, I occasionally compare my artwork to the artwork of others, which ultimately discourages me. The rational mind tells me to not do this. When I listen to this advice, I ultimately find myself much happier. I am unsure as to the connection of these writings to my own artwork.

6. Martin, Agnes. Perfection is in the Mind: Interview with Agnes Martin Joan Simon. 1995.

Agnes Martin discussed the ideas of transcendence and abstraction. She states that our minds are capable of going beyond this world. For example, Martin talks about beauty as one of the mysteries of life. She believes that beauty is a response in our minds to perfection. She considers her paintings as nonobjective, as the horizontal lines are removed from the natural world. The fact that people are able to respond to her artwork proves the idea of transcendence from this world. Thus, according to Martin, beauty is the form of transcendence because we are seeking perfection even though perfection is not of this world. In relationship to my own artwork, I would have to disagree completely. I identify myself as scientist in addition to artist. I do agree that

beauty is synonymous with happiness. A depressed person finds no beauty in the world, because they do not find happiness. I am unsure if happiness is a reaction to beauty or vice versa. Regardless, beauty is a reaction to the very tangible world that we live in. I don't believe us capable of entering higher thought than what biology has programmed through natural selection (as a result of our environmental selective pressures). I feel that my artwork is beautiful because it is one of the truest forms of happiness to me. In that sense, I would agree with Martin.

7. Haskell, Barbara and Anna Chave. *Agnes Martin*. New York: Whitney Museum of Art, 1993.

My question prior to reading this was: how did Agnes Martin evoke a sense of contentment and happiness in her artwork? As the book discusses, her process played an important role. Agnes Martin had certain sensitivity in her artwork. The graphite lines were so precisely and lightly drawn onto the surface. Her process was very contemplative, evoking the senses of calmness, softness, and peacefulness. Most of the book included many images as described above. Her lines, as mentioned previously, were out-of-this world. Still even after reading and looking through the book, I am unsure as to how to rationalize the sensations that she is claimed brings. Martin states that making art is intuitive and it is not the artist actively attempting to pull out particular emotions. Rather, it is solely reliant on the viewer's response. After understanding Martin's process, I feel that I can relate in regards to the sensitivity.

8. Anfam, David. "Agnes Martin. New York/Milwaukee." 135 (1993): 302.

"my work is anti-nature. It is not what is seen. It is what is known forever in the mind." This quote is the running theme of Agnes Martin's artistic concepts. She is interested in the transcendental qualities of her artwork as described in my previous excerpts. I would like to better understand how she considers her process a part of her artwork. She speaks a lot about inspiration and the intuitive nature of art creating. However, is the process important to her? At present, my artwork is all about the process. Agnes Martin discusses a great deal about the effects of her artwork on the viewer. In this reading, gender becomes an important aspect regarding the artwork. Her art contains signals of "feminine code": quietness, delicacy, openness, and a hand crafted aura. However, I completely disagree with these ideas proposed by the article. I think by assigning these qualities to "females" only is rather ridiculous. Beyond my own opinion, my artwork has nothing to do with gender. Gender is nonexistent. Something I can agree with is the idea of "pictorially, emotive impressions" of her artwork and my artwork. Emotion is the defining quality that makes painting my favorite form of meditation. '

9.

Prendeville, B. (2008). The Meanings of Acts: Agnes Martin and the Making of Americans. *Oxford Art Journal*, 31 (1), 53-73.

The article discusses how the meanings of artwork in looking (at the artwork) and painting (the artwork) can be identified without having to read extensive writings regarding the particular artwork. This is something I have generally wanted to understand myself. Agnes Martin attempts to answer these questions. The geometric characteristics of the grids allow for “dissonance between the rectangle and square.” According to the article, Martin believes that the “ethos of friendship” and community contributed to the forming of the artwork. The reading was completely unhelpful. For one thing, the reading jumped different ideas without concrete connections. I want to know why her friendships and community affected the formation of her artwork for example. I feel that if a claim is made, there should be some support. I am unable to relate any of my own ideas and artwork to this reading because I was unable to acquire an adequate understanding of the meanings this reading was attempting to communicate.

Final Artist Statement

Awareness of every detail of life is mentally taxing. My mind is scattered while sitting at my desk in biology class: I notice the clock ticking, the person next to me smacking their lips while chewing gum, foot steps in the distant hallway, a door slamming in the adjacent room, all while my mind begins to daydream of the weekend, instead of focusing on that biology test in front of me. My mind feels scattered. How do we provide ourselves with a mental vacation from the impetuous demands of everyday life? For me, time ceases to exist when I paint. I am no longer aware of every small distraction. The act of creating requires sustained focus on the present moment. My mind no longer wanders and I am not required to multitask; rather, I am focused, present, and attentive. Painting is a form of gaining a mental balance by removal of distractions.

My process is my subject matter. The act of creating is far more important to me than what has already been created. Thus, my paintings live and breathe only when I am actively engaged with their creation. My process begins by laying down a single color onto the entirety of the picture plane. The paintings come to life by building layers of unique color combinations. I methodically place strips of masking tape onto the surface of the picture plane in a linear orientation. The tape is painted over, leaving the previous base layer beneath the tape untouched. When I remove the tape, the painting evolves into something else; it changes the way a living thing is always changing. The lack of control exists by the removal of the tape, which reveals an entirely new color interaction. These new color combinations are unpredictable and add an element of excitement and surprise for me. I find that the repetitive use of the same linear shape enhances my ability to maintain focus because I am eliminating the element of choice, and purely focusing on the act of painting.

My color choices tend to be bold and optically active. They are placed into an orientation that creates visual tension through vibrational movements reminiscent of “hypnotic” images. I am unsure as to whether the visual experience is a means to enter a trance-like state of mind or if my own color perception is altered due to a trance-like state of mind. Scientific studies have suggested that color perception is altered during states of hypnosis. The brain processes color differently based off of one’s state of mind. Therefore, color choice may be a consequence of my hyper-focused state of mind while painting.

When I consider the final product, I feel that it is important to create a work that best facilitates the experience of mediation and hypnosis because this helps sustain focus and eliminate distraction. Therefore, my work has recently grown to a large scale. When the visual field is completely occupied by the painting, objects occupying the periphery are removed, enhancing the experience of the color interactions.

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