



Perspicience
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Introduction

Current Thoughts

For a very long time, I've been interested in the act of looking – one of my first words was “look,” which became my way of sharing with others what I was seeing. Now, I hope that my artwork brings to the viewer that same sense of wonder about the environment that has captivated me for so long. My current body of work consists of photographic collages that manipulate the subject by deconstructing it, calling attention to two types of vision: the way the camera lens sees and the way the human eye sees. By dismantling what we would normally consider a “whole” image into small parts and removing parts from the whole, the fixed nature of the image is deconstructed and the conventional nature of the photograph is destroyed.

To understand my work, it is important to realize that the view captured through the camera's lens is unlike natural eyesight. The camera is monocular (single lens) and thus creates a flatter viewing experience. Human eyesight, however, is stereoscopic (the synthesis two vantage points) and is therefore a 3D experience. The camera lens, unlike human sight, often creates varying degrees of distortion such as occurs with the fish eye effect of a wide angle lens. Additionally, while a camera's depth of field is fixed, making some areas out of focus, the human eye automatically refocuses and therefore everything appears in focus. Finally, while the camera's field of vision is always contained within a frame, the peripheral nature of human vision means we never experience a containing edge, making seeing appear continuous as we pan from point to point.

People have grown too accustomed to photographic seeing, passively accepting photographs as an accurate depiction of the world. My collages bring our attention to the differences between these two types of seeing by going against the notions of the conventional photograph through splitting a complete image into smaller parts and removing some parts completely. Multiple snapshots placed on top of one another repeatedly impose the rectangular frame, breaking apart single elements in the landscape. The subtle distortion created by the lens that is usually unnoticeable in a single large image is magnified because of its frequent occurrence in a single landscape. It becomes the reason why adjacent images don't perfectly match up; depending on my location, the depth of field, and the object in focus, lens distortion contributes to the lack of perfect continuity between images. The viewer is able to recognize that the collage of images goes beyond the flatness of a single snapshot, but does not quite reflect how people actually view the world. During the process of shooting, I focus on small sections of an environment and move through it as I photograph. Photographing parts of a landscape and then collaging them together allows the scenes to be much more dynamic: the accumulation of distinct images, not a static whole image, interrupts the continuity of seeing.

Adding sculptural depth to my collaged parts furthers this interruption in that the alignment of individual pieces change when the viewer's point of view changes. The viewer is forced to actively make connections between photographs: for example, a linear element may be more continuous when viewing from the side of the work rather than the front. Physically projecting the image into space forces the viewer to interact with it, rather than passively glance at it like they might a conventional photograph. By dismantling and layering the

images, I force my audience to actively reconstitute wholes from multiple parts, thus making them reexamine the familiar. The viewer is either forced to find and create connections between these areas, using their past experience with such familiar locations and imaginations to fill in these areas or they recognize their inability to fill in these areas, encouraging them to view the world in a more active manner.

The places I choose to photograph attract me because they are unexceptional and are usually ones we take for granted. This calls attention to views that usually appear singular and seamless. An overpass that is about being one fluid, continuous sweep but I reimage it as broken down into parts, forcing the viewer to take a second look. I have been greatly influenced by David Hockney's ideas about displaying the ordinary to ultimately transform how we view the world. Like Hockney, I too hope that my work will be used to make people see the world more vividly: leading people from merely accepting the things around them to actively *looking* at the world in which they lived. I want them to stop dismissing environments because of their familiarity and instead search within them for that which makes them unique.

Definitions

Definitions taken from dictionary.com and edited for personal use or created based on context in the SMP

Actively Looking

n. Examining and inquisitively exploring the world; not passively looking or ignoring the world.

Act of Looking

n. The physical act of seeing the world, both active and passive, reflexive and deliberate.

Camera's Eye

n. The view seen through a camera; meant to distinguish seeing through a single lens and the resulting flatness and linear perspective in photographs when compared to the world.

Linear Perspective

n. A mathematical system for representing three-dimensional objects and space on a two-dimensional surface by means of intersecting lines that are drawn vertically and horizontally and that radiate from one point on a horizon line as perceived by a viewer imagined in an arbitrarily fixed position.

Perspicience

n. 1. The act of looking sharply.

Viewer's Eye

n. The view we see when using both eyes to see: stereoscopic vision. Perspective, flatness and edges do not exist because we are constantly shifting our view.

Part I: The Beginning: The Formation Period

Initial Intentions

Time seems to be a common theme in my work and I want to figure out how to successfully address this through still and motion photography. In the past, I realize that I've kind of been all over the place in addressing this issue and do so in a roundabout way: instead of addressing time directly, I've looked at it as a secondary issue or simply a byproduct of my work. For the first six weeks of my SMP, my main goal is to get to the point where I successfully address the passage of time through the use of still and time-lapse video photography. By the end of this six week period, I want to have begun seriously working on creating art that involves my focus for this semester. I also want to have the vast majority of my research done for this semester: source artists and their methods of dealing with such an abstract idea. I most importantly need to look at 2D artists (specifically those who work with photography and videography) to see how they embody or symbolize time in their work. So far, the work of artists like David Hockney and David Crawford are very inspirational to me. I also think it would be a good idea to look at what scholars through the ages think about the issue of time to help me further develop my own ideas about time and ultimately, incorporate those ideas into my final work.

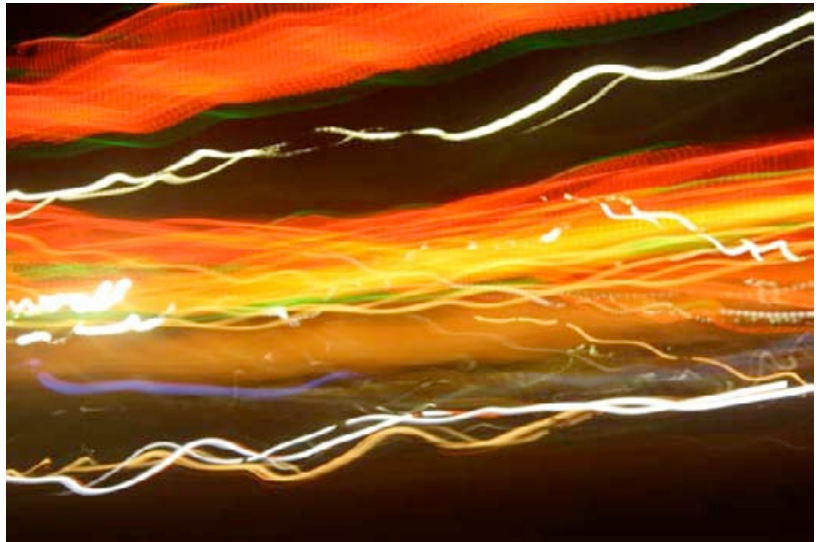
I want to incorporate the idea of the act of looking into my work, which is why I think the concept of fracturing time is the most relevant to my interests. To express this idea, I want to create work that replicates our experience in looking at a subject and place my audience in the role of the primary observer. My main idea to combine time and the act of looking is to create a time-lapse film that forces the viewer to look in a linear fashion but also create a supplementary still composite image from images from the film (in the style of Hockney) that allows the viewer to look at the work on their own terms.

Additionally, I want to begin looking at galleries that fit my interests where I can possibly display my work and be further supported so I don't spend this year intensely making art only to go nowhere with it. I intend to try to make a living as an artist after graduation (at least part time) and I think this is a crucial step in getting to that point. I intend to apply myself early and, by the end of the first six weeks, at least be in the process of sending some of my earlier work to small and local galleries. I think this will be a good jumping off point and even if my work gets rejected, I'll be able to learn what galleries are looking for and find a better fit for myself.

Previous Work: Independent Study and Summer Work



Untitled, 2011, silver gelatin print, 8"x10"



Ode to Saraband, 2011, inkjet on watercolor paper, 11"x14"



Life's But a Walking Shadow, 2011, photographic C-print, 10"x12"



Aygir, 2011, photographic C-print, 10"x12"

Initial Interview: Exploration of Intentions and Work

Questions posed by Kaitlyn Olszewski

What was your first memorable art experience and how is it relevant to what you are doing now?

When I was about 4, my parents enrolled me in an art class at a local art museum because I showed “promise”. Every Saturday morning, my dad would drive me to the museum, we’d look around at the art for half an hour or so and then he’d walk me to my class. We mostly focused on drawing in the class – up until then I had only really worked with crayons and colored pencils, typical little kid stuff. I got to explore working with other mediums – pastels, charcoal, pen and ink, oil pastels – and I also started experimenting with those different media. We would draw different subjects too – sometimes we’d draw from our imagination, other times we’d go out into the museum and do little studies of the work there. The class really made me interested in exploring different media, which is really what I’m doing now. I’ve gone between painting, sculpture, photography and now video all in the span of about 5 or so years. I think it’s important for me to find the right medium to accurately get across what I’m trying to say.

Who is your favorite artist and why?

Georgia O’Keeffe – not only did she make some awesome art, but she was also a pioneer during her time. Her work is so calming and peaceful to me. I actually got to go out to her home in Abiquiu, NM a couple years ago and it was so inspiring to be in the spaces where she lived and worked and to see the same landscape that she was painting from; not much has changed out there. I love the way she manipulates oil paint to make really clean, vibrant paintings and I love her various perspective on the subjects she paints. Her subjects seem both broad and small at the same time and her paintings have such a calming, ethereal quality to them. She was also really important to women artists – she established a place for herself as a significant figure in art and carved out a place for us in the male-dominated art world.

What artist or type of art do you dislike the most and why?

My least favorite art is art that doesn’t generate a response from its audience. Work that pays no attention to its viewers seems selfish and useless to me – I don’t see any rationale in creating work that doesn’t try to have some impact on some outside viewer. I think the art that best fits in this category is “abstract expressionist” work, like the drip paintings of Jackson Pollock that are mostly process-oriented – once the work is finished, the artist moves on to something new and the painting is essentially left to do whatever, whether it has an impact on others or not. I’m not really big on elitist work either, meaning, work that requires the viewer to have an art background in order to fully appreciate them. It’s frustrating to me when artists attempt to convey these big ideas in the most obscure ways – nobody really understands them except for the artist and I personally don’t think that we as artists should be going in that direction.

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

The most inspiring thing to me is other artwork. It allows me to see how other people view the world and how they interpret it in their own work. It also gives me an idea of what

approaches are successful and which are not, which is also important. I also agree with the belief that there is no truly “new” art; everything that will ever be done has already been done before, the most you can do is add your own view to whatever idea and create it in a way that you feel most successfully conveys this idea. I like to build my own ideas from other artwork – instead of simply being a passive viewer, I form my own ideas from this other work based on my own experiences and later create work from this buildup of ideas. I’m also inspired by the world around me because it has a huge influence on my work – without the world I would have no subject matter for my work. A lot of my work deals with nature and the idea of the natural – I think that nature in and of itself is art.

What draws you to the medium and materials you work in?

I’m not super picky about what medium I work in in the sense that I don’t feel like I have to specialize in a single medium. I think it’s more important to pick a medium to go with the concept, not the other way around. Right now I’m working with video because I’m interested in the idea of time and I feel like video is the most effective way for me to explore it. I have found in the past that the media I like the most are ones that allow me to get really physically involved with a work, like sculpture or wet darkroom photography. I really like having something tangible as I’m working, not just as a finished product. I’ve been struggling a little lately with working completely digitally because I don’t have some type of art object in my hand, just the tools to create. All I’ve wanted to do lately is making something that requires me to physically handle raw materials. I think that no matter what medium I work in, I’ll always have to go back to something that is immediately tangible so I can satisfy that desire.

What, in your mind, makes a work of art successful?

The most successful work of art is one that can convey its concept and generate a response from the viewer(s). I feel that work that is accessible to the general public is the most successful because its able to reach the most people but work that is obscure is not. For example, I recently went to the Tate Gallery in London where a sculpture by Joseph Bueys was on display. The people I was with looked at it for a split second, said “I don’t get it,” and moved on to the next room. This upset me, not because they didn’t try to understand the work, but because they felt that the piece wasn’t speaking to them. Work that requires the viewer to have a background in art theory is elitist – I feel that an artist shouldn’t expect the viewer to come with a detailed knowledge of everything, just a general knowledge of the world. I like to work a lot with the familiar and turn it into something unfamiliar, that way, the viewer can recognize the subject matter, bring their own experiences to it and see my own experiences with it. I feel like doing this allows my work to speak to people and generates a response that is something other than “I don’t get it.”

What motivates you to make art?

Myself, my parents and the world around me. I motivate myself through the fact that I wouldn’t rather be doing anything else. I love making things and I know that to get to the point where I eventually want to be, I have to keep moving full speed towards my goals. My parents have always supported me in my art – when I came to St. Mary’s, I was a bio major and when I switched, they had two responses: “Well, that’s no surprise” and “I want you to

do whatever makes you happy.” They’ve encouraged me from a young age to do whatever makes me happy and have always really supported my artmaking even if they don’t understand what I’m doing. The world inspires me to make art because I want to change how the people who live in it interact with it, mostly in the way they perceive the world. I also find beauty in the little things, especially nature. I love going on walks and trying to look at things differently and use that in my work.

How is your art a response to the world you live in?

In my art, I like to work with the norm of the world and try to reshape how people view the world and their day-to-day activities. For example, a few years ago I did a piece where I went on a walk around campus and took photos not only of my walk but also on things that people normally just ignored, like bottles along the side of the road or ants working. My goal was to get people to change how they moved through the world: rather than just moving from point A to point B, I wanted them to stop and experience the things in between. That kind of goes along with what I’m doing now – in my videos, rather than showing a strictly linear forward motion, I try to replicate how people actually view the world around them or how I want them to view it. I’m trying to accomplish this by moving the camera to wherever I look naturally – whatever catches my attention becomes part of the final piece.

Ideally, where do you see yourself in five years? How is art part of that?

Ideally, in five years, I would love to be a professional artist, like somewhere along the lines of where Sally Mann is now – I want my own studio space where I can work on things that are relevant to me, not just commission work. I really want to be able to support myself full time with artmaking – I don’t want to have to rely on getting a job in a gallery or as an art teacher to be able to survive. More importantly, I want to have my work in the sphere of public awareness. Without an audience, my work isn’t really complete. Like I said before, my final goal is always to change how people interact with the world they live in and I can’t accomplish that without an audience. I want to have work both in and outside of the gallery space. I feel like that having work outside of a space traditionally designated for art viewing, my work will be able to reach more people.

In Progress Critique 1: The Work

Source Artists: Janet Cardiff, David Hockney, Gordon Matta-Clark



Still from Time Lapse 2, 2011, incomplete video work, runtime 1:22 minutes



Collage Series 1, Untitled #1, 2011, photographic collage on watercolor paper

Critique Reflections: In Progress Critique I

In my work with the passage of time/place/the act of looking, the aspect of it that needs the most revision is my video piece. One of my goals was to put the viewer in my place but because the viewer is denied my exact experience (one of the problems with speeding up time) and a disconnect is created between me and the viewer. I still think there can be a connection made because of the familiarity of the locations I choose – a river, a country road – even if the viewer hasn't been in those specific locations or on the exact route I chose, they can still identify with the place through their own experiences. I was given the suggestion that instead of focusing on an exact route, I focus on certain aspects to give a sense of place or environment. Lisa also mentioned that she still wanted me to experiment with actual video and fragmenting time by removing certain frames and speeding up or slowing down various clips. She also brought up the fact that my work is less focused on the location and more based on how we maneuver through space. The strongest aspects of my work were my photo collages – it recalls to the viewer the act of looking and physically moving the head in order to see. They also deal with the frame of reference – what seeing really is, what we place importance on and the sensory experience of natural looking. From here, I think I need to experiment some with actual video and explore other ways of expressing time, place and looking. I think I need to experiment a lot with different media and look at different artists who bring time and place to the viewer, like Janet Cardiff and Paul Chan.

Revised Intention Statement: My original intention was to focus specifically on photography and time-lapse video as a way of fracturing and conveying the passage of time and the act of looking, but I feel like I need to explore other means of expressing time as a supplement to these media. I'm kind of struggling with working in purely digital form – I want to create something immediately tangible that requires me to work with my hands and basic materials. I think that allowing myself to work in a more tangible media will also help me to focus more on my digital video work. Stemming from this desire, I've become really interested in terrariums and tunnel books as a way of capturing time and place in a controlled space and shaping how the audience views these places. I also want to continue to make photo collages so I need to think about how I'm going to unify all the elements that I want to explore.

I'm still looking at how different scholars approach the issue of looking and at the scientific study of looking to help me understand how natural looking works and how I can use that to my advantage in shaping how people view my work. I'm inspired by Paul Chan's piece *The 7 Lights* and I want to explore how I can incorporate his ideas of the suggestion of place through shadows into my own work. I think that moving from portraying actual place to suggested place will be helpful in conveying the importance of the idea of the act of looking over the idea of a certain location – hopefully it will shift the focus of my work more in the direction of the idea of looking.

Over the next couple weeks, I want to explore other methods of expressing time, place and looking (specifically terrariums and tunnel books) and continue to refine my approach to these themes in video and photo collages. I also want to figure out a link between all these elements – maybe I'll record the changes in my terrarium through video or create a photo collage that shows how one might look at the terrarium or book. By mid term, I want to have

at least 2 additional photo collages plus another video that relates to the collages, although I'm not sure if I want to create a video that depicts an actual location, I think I want the subject of my video to be a little broader so it can relate to a wider audience.

Studio Visit: Ying Li

During Ying Li's studio visit, we talked a lot about my use of time-lapse video. Ying thought that what I was currently doing didn't really fit with my photo collages and terrarium idea. She said that what I was showing in my video was too broad and tour-like and that I needed to think more about the rhythm of time and how I was showing that in my video work. Rather than timing each frame equally, she suggested that I devote more time to certain aspects to better represent how we naturally look. She gave a metaphor of music: some notes are long but some are short and my video should reflect this idea. She mentioned that because my video showed too much of the "trip" idea and didn't really reflect the photo collages, that maybe I should focus my video more on the subject of the collages – instead of creating a completely separate photo collage, I should build that series of photos into a time-lapse video. She really liked my idea of creating terrariums that contain elements of the places that are depicted in my photos to bring the environment to the viewer. She said that each little element was its own world and that I should focus on that in my photos. She thought that I should focus on the details in my work and that, unlike my initial video which, she said, is like a college promotion video, I should create my own "tour" of where I would go and show that to the viewer.

Ying suggested that I look at Anselm Kiefer as a source, especially his works that examine the cycle of life, like *The Secret Life of Plants*. Ying said that he collages both organic material, like plant matter, and man made materials, like shards of glass, on photographs in order to transform the photos into a place of decay and rebirth. One of his works that could serve as an influence is *Next Year in Jerusalem*, an exhibition that displays a series of vitrines that contain various objects and are juxtaposed with Kiefer's landscape paintings.

Her ideas were really insightful to me about how someone who hasn't been there from the conception of my ideas would view my work, especially with her thoughts about the disjunction between the subject of the video and the subject of the photo collages. I think from this point, I'm going to follow her advice and experiment with creating photo collages as my main piece, with terrariums and a short time lapse of the photo collage subject to supplement it.

Part II: Post Midterm: The Fluidity of Concepts

Midterm Critique: The Work

Source Artists: David Hockney, Paula Hayes, Robert Smithson, Anselm Kiefer



Collage Series 1, Untitled #1, 2011, photographic collage on watercolor paper with organic materials in terrariums



Detail from Untitled #1, 2011, organic materials



Collage Series 1, Untitled #2, 2011, photographic collage on watercolor paper with organic materials in terrariums



Collage Series 1, Untitled #3, 2011, photographic collage on watercolor paper with organic materials in terrariums



Detail from Untitled #3, 2011, organic materials

Critique Reflections: Midterm Critique and Process Assessment

Critique Response: Of all the issues discussed, I think my main issue is dealing with the difference between what I think I'm addressing and portraying versus how people are actually understanding my work. I need to really analyze my work to figure out why it's not doing what I want it to do and what I can do to fix that. I don't know if it's the biggest issue in my work, but the comments about the "habitual looking" in my work bother me the most. While it actually was what I was trying to address in my work, if it comes across as familiar and boring, then my work is obviously not doing what I want it to. I feel that if I do what was suggested to avoid that (work in an unfamiliar place and shoot in a way that doesn't replicate how I would naturally look), then I'm completely going against the basis of my work, but I'm not really sure of any other direction I can go with my work. It is also clear to me from the critique that I really need to figure out if the terrariums and the collages are working together in the best way possible to portray my ideas. I also need to think about the presence of the white space around my collages and how it affects the actual work. I need to figure out the best way to utilize that negative space, whether by leaving it as it is, filling it with something, or eliminating it altogether.

Process Assessment: Production-wise, I feel like I'm proceeding at a good rate, though I wish I could work through the issues in my work faster. I feel like I'm definitely struggling to articulate my ideas in a way that people can understand my work without me having to explain it. I also have a bunch of formal issues that I need to work out, specifically, the use of white space in my photo collages and relationship between the collages and the terrariums. I almost feel as if I'm making work just to have something to occupy my time with, rather than making work that successfully represents my ideas. I think that right now, I really just need to sit down with the work that I've done so far and really analyze it. It's so much different seeing it in its mostly final form as opposed to composing the collage in Photoshop and trying to theorize how it would work with a terrarium.

Revised Intentions

As the semester has progressed, I've become less interested in time and become more focused on place and the act of looking. I think that at the beginning of the semester, I was mostly interested in time because I was trying to create a link between the SMP work I wanted to do and the work I had done previously, but now, the idea of time has sort of become just a side product of the work I'm producing. I'm mostly interested in the act of looking and how we react to different spaces, so in order to do that, I feel that I need to explore other spaces in the context that I've been working in. Before I begin creating new work, I feel that I really need to analyze the work that I've already done and figure out why I choose particular places and how that impacts the final work as well as impacting how I approach the composition of the collage and the construction of the terrarium that accompanies it.

The critique left me pretty unsure of the direction I want to head in next, whether I want to keep going down the path I'm currently on and try to reconfigure how I approach my creative process, or if I want to go in a different direction that follows some of the suggestions made during my critique and see how that plays into my current ideas. Like I said earlier, I'm having kind of an internal struggle of exploring various options presented to me in my critique but also wanting to stay true to my original ideas. While it's important to me to stay close to my initial thoughts, I don't want to end up inadvertently hindering myself or the development of my ideas. As I move forward, I think the most important thing to my creative process at the moment is to thoroughly examine my motives behind my art: why I'm interested in the act of looking, why I choose the places that become my subjects, my need and desire to create immediately tangible objects, and if what I'm currently doing is the most effective way of portraying my ideas. Only after that do I think I can begin creating new work, whether it is the same as the work I'm producing now, or something completely different.

Studio Visit: Chris Saah

After the midterm critique, I was still feeling unsure of what direction I should take to progress in my artmaking, so I asked visiting photography professor Chris Saah to visit my studio and discuss my work from midterm. He was able to give me some very helpful feedback about what worked and what didn't work in the context of my ideas and was able to give me ideas that pushed me into making my work more focused.

We discussed three aspects of my work that really seemed relevant to where I needed to go: the terrariums, the issue of the presence of white space that I had been struggling with for the better part of the semester, and the individual images. He said that for him, the terrariums came already pre-loaded with meaning. They brought him back to his childhood where it was common to create small environments in plastic containers for found animals, like insects or salamanders. This comment made me realize that perhaps the terrariums really weren't working as I wanted them to, that while they were interesting, they weren't conveying the ideas that I was trying to impose on them.

We also talked about the issue of the white space in my work. Because seeing the white space as imposing on or framing the photographs was a shared response at the midterm critique, I feared that the white space was becoming an integral part of my work, when to me, the white space didn't matter at all. We discussed some ideas about how to make the white space less significant, whether I should choose a more neutral background, such as gray, or whether I should remove the white space altogether. I had been toying with the idea of completely removing the white frame, but I felt that removing it from my current work would not have been a practical choice.

The last issue in my work that we discussed was the individual images: why in some areas of the whole collage, they blended together so that it seemed like a single image, whereas in other areas, the individual images were very distinct from each other. Chris asked me why I chose to either blend or differentiate the images and what I thought it did for the collage as a whole. I didn't really have an answer for him other than an instinctual feeling about it, but it's definitely something I'll continue pondering.

Chris also recommended that I look at a few contemporary artists: Richard MacDonald, a MICA graduate and photographer who is interested in issues of perspective, and John Pfahl, a photographer who alters landscapes as he is photographing them as opposed to altering the images later.

Post Midterm Interview

Questions posed by Kaitlyn Olszewski

How has your process changed over this semester? How has it stayed the same?

Before SMP, I never did as much conceptual work. I created work to portray whatever idea I had and then moved onto my next project, never really giving my work much thought after I finished it. SMP has forced me to keep going back to “finished” work to identify my motives behind it and edit and re-edit my future ideas that stem from previous work. I’ve been doing a lot more research too. I was always familiar with the saying “there’s nothing new in art,” but I never really realized how true that was until I really started seeing my own ideas talked about by other artists decades ago. My work has stayed the same through its connection to nature. My work has always had some element of the outdoors; it’s impossible to go through any of my past work without seeing trees or rivers or whatever. I’ve always had a pretty steady interest in nature, partly because of its comforting familiarity and partly because of its uncontrollable qualities.

What is your connection to nature and how does that play a role in your artwork?

I’ve always considered myself an “explorer” type: I grew up kind of in the middle of nowhere so I spent a lot of time wandering around outside. I was just so interested in the world around me – because it was outside of structured indoor spaces (my house, classrooms, whatever), I felt like anything could happen in these spaces. I still identify with that, that because these spaces don’t rely on human interference for change, literally anything can happen out there. That’s why nature is so fascinating to me. When I shoot these places, I capture a lot of different moments, like cars passing, or the light changing. I hope that these little changes become apparent to the viewer and that they realize that there’s a lot more to these environments than just what I saw. I haven’t completely conveyed the “anything can happen” idea completely in these works, but I think that if people are encouraged by my collages to become active lookers in their own environments, they’ll realize that on their own.

What is one suggestion or comment you received at the mid-term critique that has stuck with you and been a driving force in your subsequent decisions? How has this manifested in your work?

A couple of things really stuck with me. Someone made a comment that because I was actually trying to replicate how people saw, it made the work insignificant and boring, which I think have been due in part to the fact that before midterm, I was struggling to really pin down my ideas and was still exploring this idea of the photocollage. Someone also mentioned that my work had a very constructed quality to it: I was manipulating the spaces into how I wanted them to be viewed. Lastly, the idea of the contrast between the camera’s eye and the

viewer's eye was discussed. I've been trying to move the features of my work from being unexciting by really embracing the idea of manipulating environments. I think I've been pretty successful so far: in my collage of the overpass, because of my proximity and my construction methods, the overpass essentially bulges out towards the viewer. You get the sense that obviously, a camera took it, but it doesn't have the flat quality that typical landscape photographs have.

How has your concept of the act of looking changed over the semester? What, if anything, has remained the same?

At the beginning of the semester, I was really interested in the actual act of looking, for some reason I thought that trying to replicate it would be the most interesting thing in the world. I'm not so interested in that anymore, but rather, how we see, how the camera records that, the conflict between those, and using that conflict to encourage the viewer to actively look at the world around them, not just continue through life as a passive viewer. I've realized that it's not effective to use the camera as a tool to replicate looking because there are so many little variables and features to our own eyesight. The one thing that's really stayed the same is my identification with one of David Hockney's ideas: that the work should be used as an attempt to make people see more vividly. In one of his interviews with Paul Joyce, he said that his collages lead the viewer back into a relationship with the world: rather than merely accepting the things around them, people start actually *looking*.

What role do you think the camera plays in the act of looking? In what ways does it enhance the experience and in what ways might it hinder the experience?

I think of the camera as having multiple personalities. It can be a recording device – you go on a family vacation or a football game or a party and you take your camera so you can document what happened and look back on those memories later. But in my work, I try to take it one step further and use it as a way of manipulating the space around me and use the photographs to portray something that is more than just a memory. I think cameras are very useful tools in actively looking: just the possibilities of using photography as a tool to depict things in a new way take things beyond mere documentation, not to mention the variety of cameras and lenses that are able to manipulate the subject. I think it's important to note that the use of the camera allows people to recognize my presence – because it's a photograph, that means that I was actually there. The camera is hindering because of the flat qualities of the images it produces – your memory might come back by looking at a photograph, but for someone who wasn't present when it was taken, they would never understand your experience.

Part III: Source Art: Venturing Outside the SMP Bubble

Source Artist: David Hockney *Photographic Collages and 'Joiners'*

David Hockney is an English artist whose work in painting and photography has dealt largely with human vision and how what we see is translated through art. Between 1970 and 1986, Hockney experimented with what he called “joiners,” photo collages that explore issues of perspective and looking. Hockney’s joiners began from his dislike of photographs taken with wide-angle lenses because he felt they were distorted. When creating a painting, he shot a series of Polaroid images and glued them together in order to remove this distortion, and noticed that the composite images created a composition of their own.

Hockney was extremely interested in Cubism because of the idea of seeing everything –



David Hockney, *Sitting in the Rock Garden at the Ryoanji Temple, Kyoto, 1983*, photographic collage, dimensions unknown

it’s about how people perceived the physical world rather than abstraction. He tried to apply this to his photo collages. He said that with photography, he was trying to bring people closer to the truth of how we see things: everything is in focus, but we don’t see everything at once. He stated that “Cubism was total vision: it was about two eyes and the way we see things,”¹ and believed that the major flaw of photography was that it is one-eyed.

Hockney first created his photo collages through single-point perspective, that is, he remained in one place while shooting the collage, but later began moving around in order to shift the viewer’s perspective of space and effectively create time in the photograph. Hockney thought that a single one-point photograph encouraged the idea that it was representative of the sense of the world that objects are separate from the viewer. “Joiners,” on the other hand, depicted many perspectives within one image and are thus closer to actual experience. This is because the physical act of shooting the photos for the collage involved

Hockney moving around in his environment, creating a complex and more involved relationship with it and with the viewer.

Hockney said that “the joiners lead you back to a relationship with the world: you start to look again at what’s around you rather than merely accepting it.”² He thought that it was

¹ Hockney, David, and Paul Joyce. *Hockney on Photography: Conversations with Paul Joyce*. New York: Harmony, 1988. 25.

² Hockney, David, and Paul Joyce. *Hockney on Photography: Conversations with Paul Joyce*. New York: Harmony, 1988. 61.

impossible to see the entirety of the collage at once – the viewer’s eye was forced to move around the work, creating a sense of time with the viewer. For example, with the use of the camera, he could depict one person and 6 feet and the viewer would be aware that they were viewing the same pair of feet three times. He also thought that this photographic work was more successful than painting because it allowed him to attempt to make people see more vividly. Hockney also thought that the edges of the photos brought clarity to the work. He said that by cutting edges, it became unclear what was being photographed and why it was being cut out. He believed that it was important to show how you took the photograph and how the photos got put together – the collages showed movement of the artist both during shooting and in the decisions of compiling the photos.

Hockney’s photographic collages and his ideas about looking at the world have served as great inspiration for my own work. While I’m not interested in exactly the same subject matter (a great many of his collages are of people moving over a period of time), I feel that by understanding Hockney’s ideas and techniques, I can apply those to my own work. I have

already begun by creating photographic collages, but my work hasn’t been as free as Hockney’s. For example, in my work, the majority of the edges of the photographs are perfectly vertical or horizontal, while in Hockney’s work, he isn’t concerned with orienting his photos in this way. He is instead concerned with how the subjects and lines instead the photographs connect to each other. Additionally, Hockney moves while shooting, creating images that mess with space. For instance, in his collage *Pearblossom Highway*, 11-18th April 1986, Hockney moved



David Hockney, *Pearblossom Highway*, April 11-18, 1986, Chromogenic prints mounted on paper honeycomb panel, 47 x 46 1/2 in.

forward and backward through the space in order to essentially bring the viewer’s eye closer to different areas of the scene, as well as moving laterally through space in order to remove perspective. While I have been moving while shooting, I have only been moving laterally through space or pivoting in one spot, which hasn’t allowed me to remove that perspective or move the viewer through the place I’m shooting.

I find Hockney’s ideas about seeing interesting as well. His statements about the camera as one-eyed really resonate with me because that point was brought up during my midterm critique: if I’m trying to explore the act of looking and how we see things, then why I am I using the camera as a means to do that if the camera isn’t like our eyes? I think the answer to it is another one of Hockney’s ideas: that “the photograph can shock us more than the painting because people know the photographer was there.”³ I also really identify with his

³ Hockney, David, and Paul Joyce. *Hockney on Photography: Conversations with Paul Joyce*. New York: Harmony, 1988. 89.

idea about using these photographs to manipulate how people see the world. I've always tried to do this with my photography and the fact that Hockney was trying to accomplish the same thing is really encouraging to me.

Source Artist: Robert Smithson *Nonsites*

Robert Smithson was an earthworks artist. He frequently utilized non-traditional art making materials such as mirrors, maps, and specific sites in the landscape in order to produce his sculptures, photographs, and drawings. One of Smithson's major goals in artmaking was transcending the boundaries of traditional art categories by going beyond the creation of actual objects through viewing his work as an ongoing process that engaged with both the materiality of resources and abstract ideas surrounding the materials.⁴

One of Smithson's major areas of focus was his works he dubbed "non-sites." He juxtaposed containers of materials taken from the sites against photographs of the site. He saw the photograph as a way of focusing on the site and the containers as a fragment of the site. The non-sites began as a result of Smithson's interest in juxtaposing refined materials against their raw source matter because it "set up a dialogue between interior exhibition space and exterior sites."⁵ The concept for non-sites consisted of two elements: the non-site and the site. Smithson described the non-sites as "functioning as a mirror and the site functioning as a reflection."⁶ His idea was that there was a central focus to the non-site (the reference to the specific site), but when the viewer experienced the site, they were left without any sort of focus.



Robert Smithson, *Nonsite: Line of Wreckage*, Bayonne, New Jersey, 1968, Painted aluminum, broken concrete, framed map and three framed photo-panels, dimensions unknown

When speaking about his work, Smithson discussed the idea of disjunction between the site and the non-site. In an interview with Dennis Wheeler in 1970, he talked about how he established his own boundaries in terms of his own mental experience with the site, rather than by following preconceived boundaries, in order to create the non-site. He stated that the container of matter is an abstraction of the site, depicting no discrete object in which the viewer can orient themselves towards. This abstraction allowed the non-site to reference the

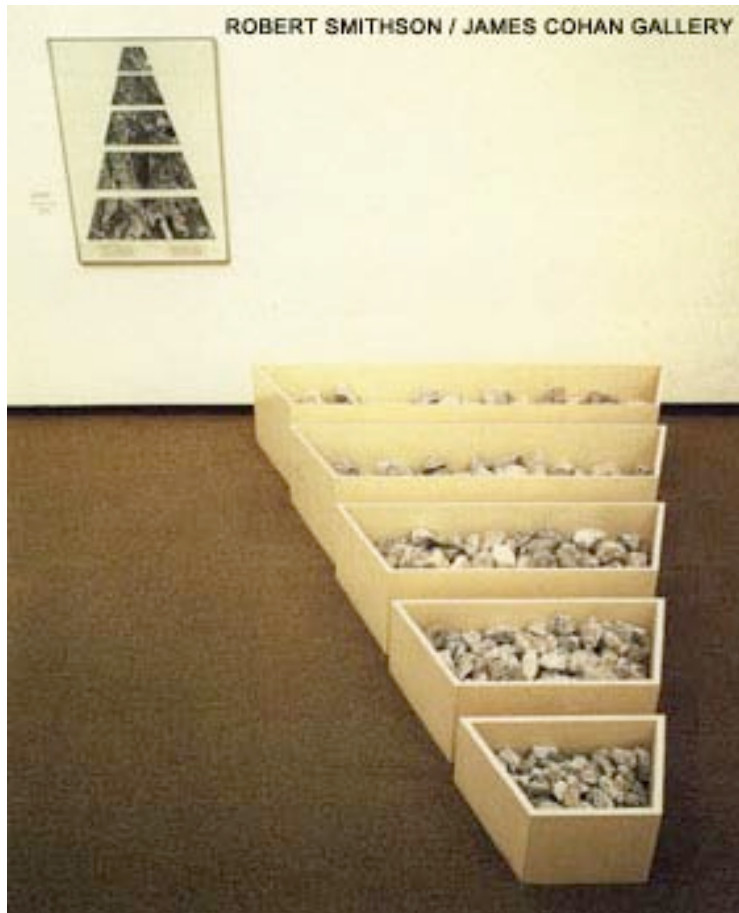
⁴ Smithson, Robert, and Jack D. Flam. "Introduction: Reading Robert Smithson." In *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. xvii.

⁵ Smithson, Robert, and Jack D. Flam. "Fragments of an Interview with Patsy Norvell (1969)." In *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 192-193.

⁶ Smithson and Flam. "Fragments of an Interview with Patsy Norvell (1969)." 192-193.

site, but left the viewer on their own. He said, “the non-site itself tends to cancel out the site. Although it’s in the physical world, it’s not there.”⁷ This is because there is a loss of connection between site and non-site so the presence of the non-site removes any fixed focus on the site.

In one of Smithson’s first non-sites, *Non-site - Franklin, New Jersey*, Smithson juxtaposed a series of trapezoidal containers of limestone with corresponding sections of an aerial map.



Robert Smithson, *A Nonsite, Franklin, New Jersey*, 1968, wood, limestone, aerial photographs, 16 1/2" x 82" x 110"

Each container referenced the proportional amount of limestone found in the corresponding area of the map. While the non-site references the site in the photograph, if a viewer was to visit the site, they would have no reference to the non-site and would thus feel the sense of loss and disconnection that Smithson desired.

While not conceptually alike, when I discovered Smithson’s non-sites, I definitely felt an association between our work because of the presentation. I find it interesting that the gallery product of the work is very similar, yet the driving force behind it is quite different. Smithson deals largely with place, while my main goal is to explore the act of looking. My work uses the containers of materials as a way of connecting the viewer to the place while Smithson used them in an opposite manner: to create a disjunction between the site and the non-site, effectively alienating the viewer from the original site. I believe the key difference is in the materials in the containers. The containers in Smithson’s work is an “abstraction” of

the site, merely referencing the overall place, while my containers work with the photographs, replicating a specific point of their contents. I do, however, feel my attitude towards the site is similar to that of Smithson’s. In a 1972 interview with Paul Cummings for the Archives of American Art, Smithson asserts his approach to selecting a site as “primordial,” selecting the site first and abstracting the non-site later. He also states his attitudes towards the work in a gallery setting, saying that while the non-site reflects the confines of the gallery, the original site is unconfined and constantly changing.⁸ My own views are similar: I select the place first,

⁷ Smithson, Robert, and Jack D. Flam. "Four Conversations Between Dennis Wheeler and Robert Smithson (1969-1970)." In *Robert Smithson, The Collected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 218.

⁸ Smithson, Robert, and Jack D. Flam. "Interview with Robert Smithson for the Archives of American Art/Smithsonian Institution." In *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. 295.

then photograph it, then finally create a terrarium that reflects the individual frames of the photo collage. I recognize, however, that I am currently struggling to portray the idea that the original site is constantly changing, a problem that I may try to solve by creating multiple photo collages of the same place at different times in order to show the place changing over time. Smithson solves this in his work by inviting the viewer to explore the original site, something that I feel is not feasible in my work.

Artist Lecture **Ying Li**

Chinese painter Ying Li's work deals with the ideas of place and time to form memory. About memory, she said that how you see places changes over time and so she tries to capture that in her paintings. She began painting during the Chinese cultural revolution in the 1960's when she was sent to work in the countryside as a young girl. She was later accepted to college where she studied oil painting because she thought that traditional Chinese ink painting was too boring. When she first immigrated to America, she painted scenes of New York City because she said she was amazed by how much light there was. Eventually, she grew homesick and changed her medium to Chinese ink painting as a way of coping with it. Additionally, she stated that she didn't want to paint sweet, happy paintings.

She spoke about the Chinese ink painting tradition and the six principles it and calligraphy are based on: spirit resonance, bone method, correspondence to object, suitability to type, division and planning, and transmission copying. These principles were established by Xie He, an art critic in 6th century China.

In 1997, Li began teaching at Haverford College in Pennsylvania and began painting outdoors because of the beautiful scenery there. She said that she painted the same subject over and over again in different weather because there was a change of palette and mood. In her work, she said that she became part of the landscape, not just a passive observer. She also stated that she began to paint a lot of water landscapes because it allowed the audience to travel through the landscape. One of her inspirations is the work of a Chinese artist who draws fish on the paper so that the canvas is transformed into water. Her work also has subject matter based in Umbria, Italy (looking out her window to the vast valley below) and in St. Mary's City (The Dove). She said she paints landscapes because it is an endless resource as a subject.

She relates her work to Chinese painting through the brush strokes: in Chinese painting, each stroke has its own life and each single stroke unifies to make a whole. She also thinks drawing is an essential process in art making – it allows ideas to come to life and is direct and matter-of-fact. She said the eraser lines in drawing are beautiful: the lines of light interact with the darkness of the charcoal.

Artist Lecture Chris Saah

Light and lens-based artist Chris Saah spoke about 3 different bodies of works: *Nightscenes*, *Displacements*, and *Untitled*. He began by speaking about how he got interested in photography. When he was still an undergrad at St. Mary's, he was very interested in film but no courses were taught on the subject so he took photography in order to gain an understanding of the mechanics. After graduation, he interned at the American Art Museum and then moved to Los Angeles to work for a production company. He got his start on *Nightscenes* in Los Angeles, taking photographs of the city after he got out of work for the day.

Nightscenes consists of photographs of places that are meaningful or familiar and depict LA as in transition from Old Hollywood to the emerging corporate realm. The photographs blur the lines between these eras, only showing small clues to reveal the era. Saah also talked about the importance of light temperature to create color and thus a mood. He said that he looked to the strategies of various filmmakers to create a cinematic quality in his photographs by manipulating lenses, perspective and light. He placed the viewer at a certain vantage point to create a psychological enclosure, allowing the viewer to imagine themselves within the space. He float mounted the pieces in plexiglass and projected light onto the works to give them a very cinematic feeling. He said that mounting the photos in this way detached the photo and transformed it into its own little world.

Saah's next series of work, *Displacements*, utilized a limited color palette to reveal spaces. He stated that each image had pieces that worked and he looked to early photographers for inspiration.

His last work, *Untitled*, uses photorealistic material to reconstruct space and have the



He feels that these photographs have a kinetic energy and no reference point, allowing the

Christopher Saah, *Untitled (for Alban Berg)*, 2009,
Electro-Cinemagraph

plasticity of a painting. The photos use split point perspective to force the viewer to look down and up at the spaces at the same time. He said that each photo is fully constructed and that the places depicted do not exist in reality. Saah stated that he chose to round the edges of the photographs as a reference to early cinema and early photography that rounded the edges to crop vignetting. Each image is subtitled after their influences: various early cinematographers and photographers. He said that mounting the photos in this way detached the photo and transformed it into its own little world.

I think Saah's work in the context of my SMP is very important because we

both broach the broad topic of place and constructing places. It is interesting to me to see how Saah approaches this subject, especially how he described *Nights* as being their own little worlds.

Artist Lecture Artweek

The two events that I attended during Artweek was the screening of the film *!Women Art Revolution* and Hannah Piper Burns' artist lecture. The film *!Women Art Revolution* was directed by Lynn Hershman Leeson, compiling hundreds of hours of interviews completed over forty years into a film that provides insight into the Feminist Art movement and major developments in women's art. Leeson interviewed various artists, historians, curators and critics who contributed to this movement in the late 20th century, showing their personal significance to the advancement on women in the arts. A portion of the film is centered around the Guerrilla Girls, a group of women who challenge modern art practices. They hold art institutions such as galleries, museums and academic institutions responsible for the discrimination against not only women in art, but also against race, class and sexuality. The film built off of this idea to illustrate that the Feminist Art Movement was a jumping off point for many other minority groups in art to advance their own agendas.

Later in the week, Hannah Piper Burns presented a series of nine short films that she had either worked on or knew the people who worked on them. She stated there were many important aspects to her own film making, the most important of which is appropriation. She finds most of her inspiration from 20th century musicals because of their fluid and self evident nature, and from YouTube videos because of its "unending container" quality: you can follow links to any videos and never stop watching. Her videos mash up footage from musicals, her own text, and appropriated electronic music. She said that the hybridity of her films creates emotion and narrative, the latter of which is ultimately shaped by her own text. The hybridity also allows her films to speak to different generations of people: older generations can recognize the musical footage and younger generations can respond to the electronic music. She creates text that highlights the dissonance of nostalgia versus reality. Burns stated that the most challenging part was dealing with legal issues of appropriation, which really decides what she can and can't use in her films. She stated that she has to be very careful about what she places in her films. What is protected depends on some key things: how much appropriated content is used, how significant a portion of movie footage is to the whole (could it be mistaken for the original?), how much of the appropriated footage is altered, and profit. Burns stated that because she is not making these films for profit, she is safe from prosecution.

While neither event really relates back to my own work, it was fascinating to gain a better understanding of the Feminist Art Movement that has made my work more acceptable to the art world as well as gaining an understanding of appropriation since that is such a large issue not only in today's artmaking, but the in issues of modern content-ownership rights.

Gallery Talk

Robert Steele on *Successions: Prints by African American Artists from the Jean and Robert Steele Collection*

The gallery talk began with recognition of the Boyden Gallery's founders, the Ingersolls, who started the gallery 40 years ago. The gallery was started as a way for people to see art who didn't previously have the opportunity. It was mainly a teaching exhibition that utilized controversial exhibits to provoke thought in the students: why they did or didn't like certain pieces and what had artistic value. Jonathan Ingersoll restored many pieces for viewing (mainly by making them slightly different than the originals, for example, by slightly changing colors) and worked with students to get them internships in various galleries.

Robert Steele began the gallery talk by speaking about what a collection is and how it is developed. He talked about how successful collectors look for art with five senses: their eyes to determine what a piece is; their ears to hear lectures, artists and other collectors discuss art; their head to determine how a piece is made, what materials are used and the piece's artistic merit; and their most important sense, their heart, to determine what piece resonates with them. Collectors look for aesthetic merit, the artist's reputation, technical mastery and the piece's fit in the existing collection. For the Steele's specific collection, they have built their collection by visiting the printmaking workshops of artists, printmaking workshops supporting art, art fairs and auctions, and, most importantly, galleries who support African American artists.

The Steele's collection that is being shown consists of work by 29 African American artists, specifically printmakers. This exhibition, *Successions*, was established at the David C. Driskell Center for the Study of the Visual Arts and Culture of African Americans and the African Diaspora and The Art Gallery at the University of Maryland, College Park and has so far traveled to 15 different venues in the United States. The curatorial premise of the show is to look at three generations of African American printmakers, beginning with Robert Blackburn, who established the Printmaking Workshop in 1948 in New York.

They talked about some the pieces briefly at the end of the talk and mentioned some of the more prominent artists: Romare Bearden, Lois May Lou Jones, Faith Ringgold, Elizabeth Catlin and Frank Smith, the last of whom was part of AfriCOBRA, the African Commune of Bad Relevant Artists, which works to make African American art unique in society. They also mentioned the work *The Last Bar-B-Que*, an iconic American piece and considered one of the top 50 prints in the last century.

I wish that more time during the talk had been devoted to discussing the individual artworks – I had trouble relating to the collectors because I don't engage in that particular aspect of the art world.

Annotated Bibliography

Aumont, Jacques. *The Image*. London: British Film Institute, 1997.

The sections I read from *The Image* discuss the role of the eye, the role of the apparatus and the role of the image in the act of looking. Regarding the role of the eye, there are four types of movements the eye performs in order to see: rapid jerky movements, tracking movements, compensatory movements and drifting movements. The movements that most relate to the way I'm thinking about the act of looking are rapid jerky movements (searching) and tracking movements (slow, smooth movements that follow an object) because they are the most common movements in human eyesight and I feel like these will be the most recognizable when portraying in a visual form. The section on the role of the apparatus talked about the methods used to capture and portray an image. One thing that caught my attention was the idea that the eye and the viewer's attention can be variably directed in time, guided by implicit or explicit viewing instructions. The role of the image had only a minor part in it that related to my work: synthesized time through collage and montage. It said, "certain spatial points in the image correspond to certain points in time of the event shown," which I thought was interesting – the image shows only moments that were chosen to be portrayed, essentially building time and the image becomes its own world.

"Behind the Scenes: Paula Hayes, Nocturne of the Limax Maximus." Interview by MoMA.YouTube.com. 15 Nov. 2010. Web. 28 Sept. 2011.
<<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nu4qBg9rP18>>.

This interview with Paula Hayes gave me great insight to Hayes' inspiration. She stated that her works walk the line between real places and imagined places, which I feel my work does as well. Hayes creates tiny worlds inside her terrariums, bringing the sense of another place directly to the viewer, which I would like my work to do as well. An important aspect of her works is that the shape of the glass of the terrariums is a non-referential organic form, which I think is important because it allows the viewer to form their own associations with the work, rather than have any meaning imposed on them.

Clark, Gordon, and Gloria Moure. *Gordon Matta-Clark: Works and Collected Writings*. Barcelona: Polígrafa: 2006.

It was very helpful to me to understand another artist's way of approaching spaces and looking. This book contained a collection of interviews and documentations of his work. While Matta-Clark directly engaged and manipulated his environment, I do not. However, he documents his works in such a way that further changes the space. For example, in *Splitting*, 1974, during his documentation of the work, he photographs the area and combines those photographs to create a different space for the eye to look at. He stated that the entire work, including documentation, was about totally rethinking a space, not just through physical means but through implications as well.

Findlay, John M., and Iain D. Gilchrist. "Natural scenes and activities." In *Active Vision: The Psychology of Looking and Seeing*. London: Oxford University Press, 2003. 129-150.

Active Vision dealt with how the eye works and how we view things from a scientific standpoint. It talked a lot about our natural gaze and our points of focus. For example, humans have the tendency to look at faces over anything else and during looking, our eyes scan from important element to important element. I found this important because after reading this, I feel like my work needs to emphasize these points of focus, like in my oyster photo collage where the most extreme points of the work are individual objects.

Gagosian Gallery. *Anselm Kiefer: Next Year in Jerusalem*. Gagosian Gallery. 3 Nov. 2010. Web. 28 Sept. 2011. <http://www.gagosian.com/exhibitions/2010-11-06_anselm-kiefer/>.

The press release for Anselm Kiefer's exhibition, *Next Year in Jerusalem*, a show about the relics of Nazi occupied territory, painted a picture of the viewer's experience in the show. For this body of work, Kiefer juxtaposed glass cases containing various relics with photographs of landscapes that had been manipulated through the addition of paint and ordinary materials. I find this work very inspiring for my own ideas of juxtaposing images with containers that relate to the subject of the image. By looking to see how Kiefer successfully incorporated the two elements together, I believe I will be able to use some of his ideas to push my own work in the direction that it needs to go.

Hockney, David, and Paul Joyce. *Hockney on Photography: Conversations with Paul Joyce*. United Kingdom: Jonathan Cape, 1988.

Hockney on Photography provided further insight on the creation of David Hockney's photo collages. Hockney discusses the act of looking and how his collages work to replicate how people view the world and allow them to form their own conclusions about the photographs. This is the most useful writing on his work I've found because it really talks about his photographic work and the ideas behind them. I want to follow some of Hockney's ideas about photography, specifically his idea about how the composite images replicate looking, in my own work.

Morris, Robert. "The Present Tense of Space." *Art in America* 66 (Jan-Feb 1978): 70-81.

In this article, Morris heavily emphasized the experience and perception of space by the viewer. He argued that in "presentness," the experience of the physical space and the immediate presence are inseparable. He mentioned a few things about photography in particular that I found interesting. First, he stated that images are the past tense of reality and lead to duration, which is the "present tense of the immediate spatial experience." Second, he states that photography ignores space and time and shifts "perception away from the reality of time in art that is located in space." These statements motivated me to create photographic work that exist in the present tense. While the time of the works obviously exist in the past, the subjects still essentially exist in the present. I wanted to create a work that had more to it than just existing as a single photograph.

Pallasmaa, Juhani. "Part 1." In *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy: 2005. 15-37.

Two statements in this article really struck me: the eye is "the center point of the perceptual world" and "the omnipresence of photographs has an incalculable effect on our

ethical sensibility.” The first statement strikes me as being very true. Everything we see and how we see is shaped by our eyes: perception depends on where we are in the world. The second statement I found more interesting. It is taken from one of Susan Sontag’s writings and goes on to say “By furnishing this already crowded world with a duplicate one of images, photography makes us feel that the world is more available than it really is.” I feel that this is true, but I also feel that it is important to push past this statement to create work that is unique from the world and makes people view the real world in a different way.

Smithson, Robert, and Jack D. Flam. *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.

This book was a collection of writings about Robert Smithson’s work that included interviews, and his published and unpublished statements. I focused my reading on Smithson’s interviews about his nonsites because of their relation to my midterm work. I found it very helpful to read about his motives behind the nonsites: what Smithson was hoping to accomplish, what the nonsites meant to him, etc. What stood out to me most was his statement that the nonsites set up a dialogue between interior and exterior spaces and how the interior functions as a mirror. While I found parallels between this statement and some of my ideas at midterm, I thought it was helpful in pushing me in a new direction. I wasn’t as interested as Smithson was in the contrast between interior and exterior so I pushed myself to work towards something that was more meaningful to me.

Smithson, Robert, and Robert A. Sobieszek. *Robert Smithson: Photo Works*. Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art: 1993.

This book was a collection of Smithson’s photographic works and some writing about the works. As with *The Collected Writings*, I focused on the nonsites because of their physical similarities to my work, but after viewing a vast quantity of these nonsites, viewing them became even more instrumental in my choice to move away from this type of work.

The Photography Reader. Ed. Liz Wells. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.

I read a couple different essays in *The Photography Reader*. The first, *Five Notes for a Phenomenology of the Photographic Image*, by Hubert Damisch, discussed the role of the photograph in our world. Damisch stated that the photographic image does not belong in the natural world: it is a trace of a scene or object and thus a mere supposition of reality. I thought this was important because it holds true today: people are very aware of image manipulation and so are suspicious that any image is a true representation of whatever it depicts. Rather than the image being a true reality, it suggests an alternate reality. The next essay, *What the Eye Does Not See*, by Ossip Brik, discusses the role of the camera and argues that the camera should not imitate the human eye. It should instead take advantage of the opportunity to show worlds in unexpected viewpoints and unexpected configurations so that we expand our “ordinary optical radius of the human eye.” What I took from that goes back to the previous essay’s ideas: as a photographer, I should work to create a new world that exists within the world we know.

Zakia, Richard D. "Photography and Visual Perception." *Journal of Aesthetic Education* , 27: 4, Special Issue: Essays in Honor of Rudolf Arnheim (Winter, 1993): 67-81

This article discussed in depth the relationship of perception to photography according to the figure-ground relationships and the gestalt laws of proximity, similarity, continuation and closure and how each of these influences perception in photographic images. I found this article helpful in determining how photography is influenced by different areas of psychology. I think it was important for me to realize the psychological influences in order to better compose my collages to manipulate space and the viewer's perception.

Future Reading List

Arnheim, Rudolf. *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye*. New version, expanded and rev. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974.

Arnheim, Rudolf. *The Power of the Center: A Study of Composition in the Visual Arts*. New version. ed. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

Weschler, Lawrence, and David Hockney. *True to Life: Twenty-Five Years of Conversations with David Hockney*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008.