

GHOSTS:  
Perception, Painting and the Index

by

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## ABSTRACT

How does one form a meaningful, generative understanding of the one's surroundings in contemporary society? Currently, social media and portable electronics appear to serve widely as methods of filtering and segmenting the world around us into easily consumable portions. What is at stake in this kind of mediation and what role can visual art take in encouraging the formulation of knowledge based on primary, rather than prescribed, modes of perception?

This paper examines the potential of primary experience in daily life and the hypothesis that modes of perception normally associated with the appreciation of art can be made use of in the context of daily life. Through using established methods of representation, such as painting, to reframe normally unremarkable entities as valuable art objects, the artwork discussed aims to transfer ways of looking at art into the realm of daily life. This fracturing of perceptual conventions is strengthened through the use of the index as a tool of conceptual expansion, directly connecting art objects with the subjects they represent and the processes with which they were made.

Working from the pedagogical theories of Joseph Albers, and Rosalind Krauss' writing on the index and the flatbed picture plane, this research attempts to lay a pathway for the continuation of an investigation of direct perception as a tool of knowledge production. My research is placed in relation to the work of Gerald Ferguson, Ellsworth Kelly and William Anastasi. In looking at the artwork that I have produced over the course of the Emily Carr University of Art + Design Master of Applied Art program, this document is a record of a variety of attempts to trigger the modification of customary patterns of comprehension and the generation of more intimate understandings of our immediate surroundings.

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## INTRODUCTION

This paper attempts to identify three main elements of my practice and substantiate them in relation to contemporary critical dialogues and artistic practices. These elements are: the investigation of perception as a tool of social change, the use of painting as a strategic gesture, and the use of the index as a method of conceptually extending the work of art outside the space of the gallery. I do not believe that this paper describes the entire scope of my practice, but am confident that it highlights methods and methodologies that are foundational to my processes of art making. The core elements of my practice are topics that have been and continue to be extensively debated within discourses of art, and I anticipate the depth of these discussions continuing to propel my future investigations.

The research trajectory that I have embarked upon over the course of the Master of Applied Arts program at Emily Carr University of Art + Design is part of a larger arc of investigation that I can trace to some of my earliest artistic impulses. I believe that the development of my work over time has reflected my maturation as an artist and as an individual. In this way, despite appearing at times to eschew direct personal associations, I consider my work to be deeply rooted in concerns of identity and authorship.

It is in relation to these concerns that I have decided to investigate visual perception as a subject that is integral to the daily experience of most people. As an artist, I think the capacity to freely perceive things through experience unmediated by socially prescribed meanings is invaluable to one's relationship with the world. In a culture that increasingly prioritizes the virtual and the didactic, I am interested in focusing on the importance of perception at a fundamental level and the potential mining of daily experience for aesthetic value. This investigation of perception is what continues to motivate my practice and I hope to share, with the viewers of my work, the freedoms of perception that I associate with being an artist.



Figure #1     *Nando's Flame-Grilled Chicken*, 2015  
84" x 78"  
Oil on acrylic tinted canvas

## EXPERIENCE + PERCEPTION

It has become routine, in my practice, to pan the contents of my daily experience for potential subject matter. Over time I have recognized a pattern in this routine that sheds light on the core of my artistic methodology. Although it is usually trivial objects or situations that capture my interest, I often recognize these items having had prior registration in my consciousness. Whether it happens to be a sidewalk block or a roll of toilet paper, it is not an element of novelty that I identify in my perception of them, but a particular form to which I have become especially habituated. In this way, I do not imagine that I possess a unique ability to perceive these objects, but instead that I have the ability to recognize the potential aesthetic value of experiences that are commonplace and normally disregarded.

*Nando's Flame Grilled Chicken* (fig. 1) is a painting that measures eighty-four by seventy-eight inches, featuring eight small circular forms of varying colour arranged on a uniformly grey canvas. The globular painted shapes constellate in the upper left side of the painting, drawing the eye between them as if tracing the circumference of a larger form. This ghosted shape creates a swooping gesture that activates a series of relations which push against the boundaries of the rectangular canvas. This painting is characteristic of my practice as a whole, in that it is fundamentally based in a process of representation. Although it may not necessarily be recognizable as such, *Nando's Flame Grilled Chicken* is a depiction of an object that I have encountered, and a representation of the accompanying moment of its perception.

In my practice I choose to represent experiences from my daily interaction with the world that provide me with a sense of visual intrigue or aesthetic conviction.<sup>1</sup> The degree of visual engagement that these experiences provoke, for me, seems uniquely tied to the experience of viewing a work of art. In this way, I feel that the

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<sup>1</sup> The term conviction is used here in reference to its use in Michael Fried's *Art and Objecthood*. Conviction is understood in this text to be the ability of a painting to assert its own quality through establishing a relationship to historical precedent (10).



challenging of common assumptions and understandings that art often elicits, can be approached through the recognition of these seemingly unremarkable experiences. Through engaging with the formal qualities of the object that *Nando's Flame Grilled Chicken* depicts, I believe I am able to construct a much more valuable relationship with it than I would have otherwise.

The interrogation of day-to-day perception as a generative tool for developing more substantial understandings of the world is not an uncommon pursuit among artists. One example of this tendency can be seen in the practice of Joseph Albers, a German artist and educator born in 1888. Immigrating to the United States in the 1930's Albers brought teaching methods and philosophies from the Bauhaus where he had taught fundamentals of drawing and painting (Diaz, 5).

Central to Albers' pedagogical theory is the practice of 'direct seeing', which he believes can challenge and potentially transform the nature of one's relationship with the world. Albers believes that improving and questioning one's visual awareness can overcome the socially constructed meanings we have become accustomed to assigning things. Rather than reaching an aesthetic end in itself, he considers art an epistemological project which, through drawing attention to common understandings of the world, encourages people to modify their customary patterns of comprehension (Diaz, 7).

The concept of bettering one's relationship with the world through altering modes of perception can also be seen in the work of John Dewey, an American philosopher and pragmatist (Luddy). In his book *Art as Experience*, Dewey examines regular experience and situates it in relation to the function of a work of art. He describes the separation he sees between complete and incomplete experiences, and how our expectations and intentions derail our train of experience, causing it to become sporadic and unresolved.



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Figure #2

Josef Albers

*Interlinear N 65*, 1962

Lithograph

18" x 23"

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“Oftentimes, however, the experience had is inchoate. Things are experienced, but not in such a way that they are composed into *an* experience. There is distraction and dispersion; what we observe and what we think, what we desire and what we get, are at odds with each other. We put our hands to the plow and turn back; we start and then we stop, not because the experience has reached the end for the sake of which it was initiated but because of extraneous interruptions or of inner lethargy.” (Dewey 35)

It is suggested here that experiential value is constructed through the nature of our interaction with the world, rather than being latent in the objects we experience, and therefore, to gain a more complete understanding of a subject we must put effort into experiencing it fully. This theory corresponds to the way that Albers imagines ‘direct seeing’ enabling the production of fuller, more critical ways of understanding the world, and also relates to how I envision the function of the generative moments of perception that my work depicts.

In looking at Dewey and Albers, I can identify the core of my interest in perception and the generative potential of experience as mediated through art. I am interested in creating artworks that not only depict past experiences, but stimulate future experiences outside the art gallery. I hope to show that a significant aspect of art and ‘aesthetic conviction’ lies in individual perception and that it is possible to transform one’s relationship with the world through recognizing this. Although my ambition in this regard is similar to both Dewey and Albers’ there is a key difference to which I would like to draw attention.

Both Dewey and Albers suggest a positive correlation between effort and experiential value. As one’s focus and commitment to interrogating perception increases, so does their ability to generate valuable experiences and understandings. While I do not wish to suggest that this is *not* the case, I believe that at times the inverse can also be true. Many of the experiences that lead me to engage with objects for their aesthetic potential are ones that I have difficulty describing as the product of effort in the typical sense. Often fatigue or disinterest has provided the stimulus for me to change my mode of perception, in a similar

manner to states of heightened focus or attention. The reason I find this engaging is because it allows an alternative route of change, counter to the somewhat hierarchical model that Dewey and Albers present. For them, an individual must improve their abilities of perception in order to gain a fuller experience of something. I propose that the same change in value of experience can occur through an inversion of this idea, involving a simplification or distillation of perception. This may be something that is implicit in practices like Albers', but I feel compelled to extract it for the way in which it ruptures the binary between those aware of tools like 'direct seeing', and those who may not be informed of such concepts. Acknowledging the potential of a reductive approach to an elemental form of perception suggests to me that it may be something that occurs within everyone already, and, rather than having to be taught, its recognition might simply need to be triggered.

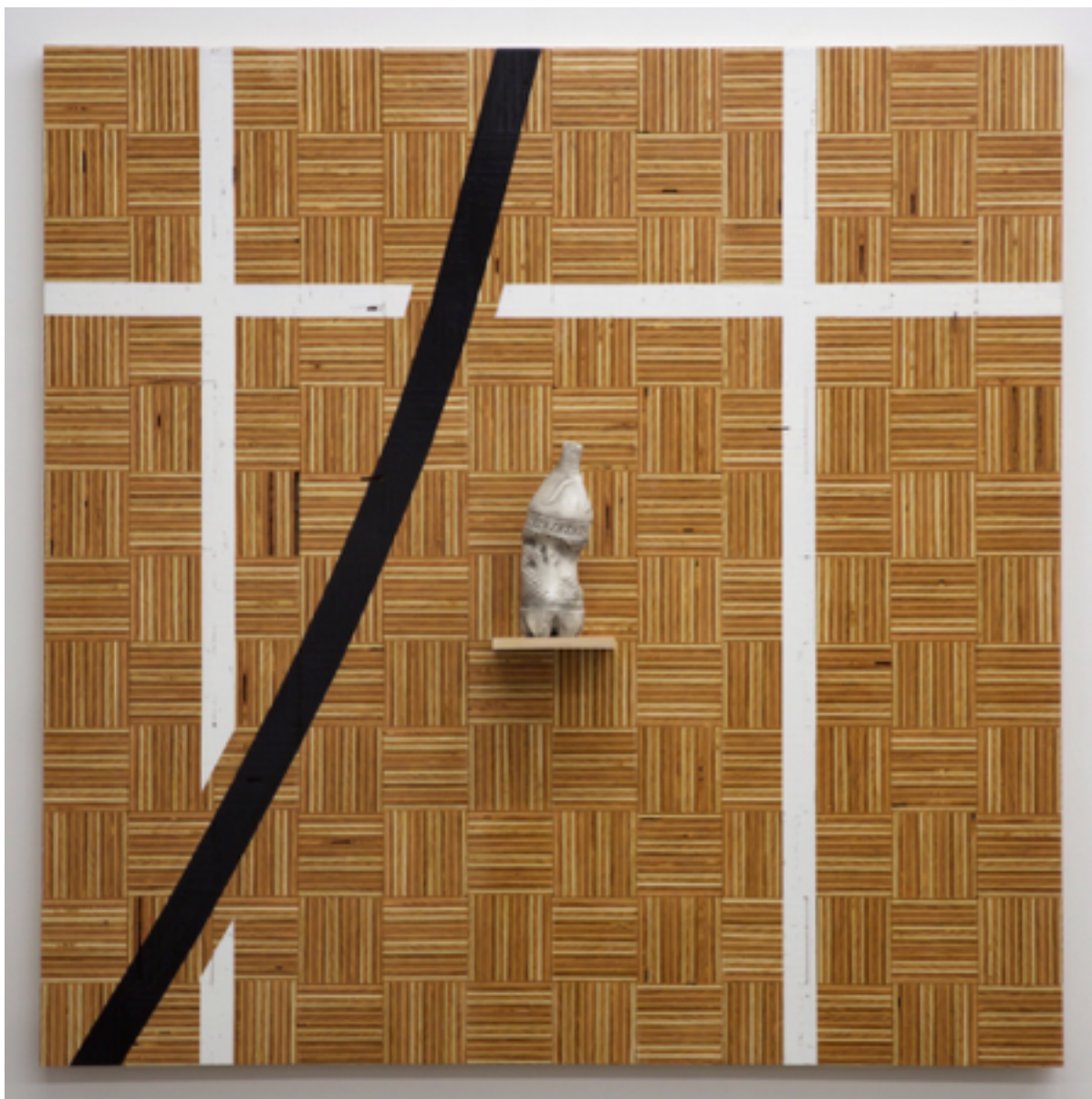


Figure #3     *Elixir #1*, 2015  
44"x44"  
Plaster, Soot, Maple Shelf, 3/4" Plywood, Varnish, Enamel

## PAINTING AS CONTEXT

Acknowledging the drive to stimulate or trigger a certain kind of reaction with my work, each of the methods that I choose to employ can be discussed in relation to their envisioned communicative function. Although the hypothetical nature of such speculation must be recognized, I believe there is significant value in the discussion of these ideas. I will begin my discussion of methods with my use of painting, as the broadest and most identifiable feature of my work.

Painting is a core element of my practice. Serving as a historical context and providing my work with a formal vocabulary, painting is intimately tied to the entirety of my production as an artist regardless of the media I choose to employ. I resist the idea, however, that my work contributes directly to a contemporary discussion of painting, and would like to suggest that it instead engages with the history of the medium as an element of strategic contextualization. This relationship with painting can be illustrated through looking at the work *Elixir #1* (fig. 3).

*Elixir #1* is a wall hanging panel that measures forty-four inches in both height and width. It is composed of a series of square tiles created from the end grain of three-quarter inch plywood, that alternate in orientation creating a checkered grid. This panel, which is finished to a high gloss, features four painted lines which run vertically and horizontally across its surface. One thick black line curves gently against the grid while the remaining three are thin, straight and white. In the centre of *Elixir #1* there is a small wooden shelf which supports a plaster cast of a partially melted plastic water-bottle. The bottle's contorted shape creates a rupture in the regularity of the grid, and relates to the similarly grid-denying black line.

In the same way as Nando's Flame Grilled Chicken, *Elixir #1* is a depiction of a found object whose original context has been supplanted by that of painting. The original object is transformed, through the act of representation and placement within a specific architectural setting, into an object that is in dialogue with the history of painting. This method of using the context of painting resembles the

“situative strategic” model of painting described by critic Jan Verwoert in his 2005 essay “Why are Conceptual Artists Painting Again? Because They Think its a Good Idea.” Verwoert suggests that the singular conceptual gesture of early conceptual art must extend its function today as a “strategic intervention into the history of art” (Why Are...). Through this relational understanding of the conceptual gesture it can be seen that contemporary paintings exist conceptually as interventions, strategically engaging with histories that inject existing dialogues into the work. It is in this way that I see my works like *Elixir #1* functioning as paintings, using the context of the medium to suggest particular meanings and readings of the work.

In the case of *Elixir #1*, the particular cropping of a multi-purpose gymnasium floor may draw associations to Piet Mondrian and Barnett Newman, or more general histories of hard-edge abstraction. This network of associations tends to induce a particular mode of perception, based in historical reflection and aesthetic contemplation that I believe is accessible to many, if not most, viewers of the work. As I suggested previously, in relation to Albers and Dewey's models of generative experience, this mode of perception may be comparable to the kind of absentminded gaze that often accompanies a disassociation with ones surroundings. I am interested in the these two modes of looking and the potential of creating a short-circuit between them that might translate elements of one into the context of the other. What is the potential for the aimless stare of the idle mind to be transformed, through some method of visual priming, into a gaze of aesthetic contemplation. Although the concept that an artwork might have an identifiable function runs the risk of underestimating both the work and the viewer, the idea interests me, and I believe it is integral to a discussion of the role of painting in my work.

One artwork by William Anastasi uses the context of painting in the way that I am attempting to describe. *West Wall*, *Dwan Main Gallery* (fig. 4), is a scaled down depiction of the wall on which it hangs, displaying the placement of various plugs and ventilation openings that appear directly behind it. Through harnessing the context of the gallery space and the kind of perception that paintings invoke, *West*

*Wall* generates an alternative reading of an existing subject. Brian O'Doherty comments in his book *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of The Gallery Space*: “For me, at least, [Anastasi’s work] had a particular after-effect; when the paintings came down, the wall became a kind of ready-made mural and so changed every show in the space thereafter” (34). It can be seen here that through using the context of painting, Anastasi is able to channel a certain way of looking and trigger an altered perception of a subject, even in the absence of the work.

This is comparable to the way that I imagine Nando’s Flame Grilled Chicken and Elixir #1 affecting future perceptions of their respective subjects. Without necessarily prescribing exactly how a sidewalk or a gymnasium might be understood, I see these works simply encouraging the possibility that things in in one’s environment can be understood through the perspective of painting.



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Figure #4 William Anastasi  
*West Wall, Dwan Main Gallery, 1967*  
 Screenprint on canvas  
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## INDEX AS REPRESENTATION

In looking at the employment of painting in my work as a strategic framework, the preceding section began to expose aspects of my practice's underlying methodology. One aspect of this methodology is that the methods that I employ in the production of my work tend to be chosen for their unique capacities of communication. In the use of painting, this is through drawing upon an existing infrastructure of historic and aesthetic reflection to inform a new way of approaching everyday experience. The index, is another significant method that I employ in my work for its unique communicative abilities, specifically its ability to represent subjects in a particularly direct manner.

In his semiotic theory Charles S. Peirce describes the index as one of three varieties of sign, next to the icon and the symbol (Atkin). The index is described by Peirce as a sign that bears a direct physical connection to the object it signifies. Due to the primary, existential nature of the index, it brings an immediacy to the representation of a subject that is not present in other signs. This immediacy is valuable to my practice for its ability to forge stronger connections with entities outside the space of the gallery and conceptually expand the boundaries of my work.

*Grid #8* (fig. 5) is a wall hanging plaster tile measuring fifteen inches square and one inch deep. Generally remaining the off-white colouration of plaster, the piece is darkened in areas of horizontal striation where small rocks and dirt are embedded in the surface. These pebbled areas cover most of the picture with the exception of two lightly coloured strips that intersect in the centre of the work forming a crosshair or equal-armed cross. The paper-like texture of these strips is markedly different from the other more granulated areas, although under close inspection they consist of the same material and have been produced simultaneously with the process of casting.



Figure #5     *Grid #8*, 2014  
15"x15"  
Plaster cast, dirt

This work is a representation of an area of concrete sidewalk onto which two strips of masking tape have been placed. To capture an impression of the sidewalk a thick slab of plasticine is carefully pressed onto the ground and lifted away. During this process the plasticine records the texture of the weathered aggregate and picks up loose pebbles from the surface where it is not masked by tape. These particles are transferred subsequently onto the surface of *Grid #8* during the casting process, filling the plaster likenesses of the scars and divots that they originally occupied. The final piece is strikingly naturalistic, but is immediately identifiable as a representation because of the absence of colouration and apparentness of the material similarity between areas of varying texture.

In its physical process of transferring information directly from one material to another, *Grid #8* employs an indexical method of representation. This method is significant to the function of the work for its conceptual and procedural straightforwardness. It is also significant for the unique way that it situates an image of an object in relation to an observer, and the connection it forms between the space of its creation and space of the gallery.

Due to its use of the index, the representation of concrete that is *Grid #8* is not directly tethered to my subjectivity as an individual. Like a photograph, the image that is produced by this work is understood to be captured mechanically. This stands in comparison to the deliberated nature of representational drawing and painting which is deeply entangled with the conscious and unconscious actions of the artist. Unlike a photograph, however, the method of casting that this work employs produces an image that is not based in human perception whatsoever. In contrast to the way that cameras are specifically designed to imitate human physiology<sup>2</sup> *Grid #8*, while undeniably functioning as an image, does not reflect any intrinsic quality of human perception. This is significant to the way that I see

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<sup>2</sup> Through using a lens to focus reflected light into a projected image, cameras closely mimic the structure of the human eye. In this way, the images they produce must be understood in relation to human subjectivity.

the work functioning because, in the absence of implied prior human perception, I believe greater opportunity is allowed for individuals to form their own relationship with the subject.

Here, parallels can be drawn between *Grid #8*'s use of the index, the flatbed picture plane, and Rosalind Krauss' concept of cognitive differentiation.

Originating in reference to the flat surface of a printing press, the flatbed picture plane describes a wall hanging picture whose spacial field has been rotated ninety degrees (Steinberg, 27). The flatbed implies a removal of perspectival depth from a painting, as the top and bottom of the work appear equally distant from the viewer, and tends to produce an overhead or 'birds-eye' perspective. As it can be seen in *Grid #8*, the physically direct nature of the index often produces images that align with a flatbed perspective. *Nando's Flame Grilled Chicken* and *Elixir #1* both make use of the flatbed picture plane, however, neither embody its nature as completely as *Grid #8*.

Krauss suggests that the flatbed picture plane "conflates psychologicistic and formal means" to temporally distend the pictorial field ("Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism", 17). Through upending the notion that a painting should be perceived in a moment of conviction, as an absolute, she implies that an artwork engaging with the flatbed must instead be understood over a period of time.<sup>3</sup> In the case of *Grid #8* I believe that this element of time, not only refers to the time the viewer spends with the work, but also the implied time of its existence. Due to the unique materialism of the index and flatbed, Krauss suggests that the representations that use them fail to transcend the real space of the viewer, and exist in "the simultaneity of past time" ("Rauschenberg ...", 53). The conceptual distance that this connection generates is described by Krauss as an "activity of cognitive differentiation" ("Video...", 18) which requires the viewer to acknowledge the existence of a reality that is exterior to the artwork.

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<sup>3</sup> This bears a similarity to the element of 'theatricality' in literal (minimal) art that Michael Fried condemned, where a work exists as a series of dynamic relationships between the art object, gallery space and viewer over time ("Art and Objecthood", 4).

In this way, *Grid #8* cannot be said to exist solely as a discrete art object, but must also be viewed in the context of its relationship with the outside world. This is the aspect of the index and the flatbed that I find engaging for the way it implies a passage from the gallery space to the space of daily experience.

The use of the index and the flatbed picture plane to forge connections between common, overlooked objects and the space of the gallery can be seen to a great extent in the work of Gerald Ferguson. An American painter born in 1937, Ferguson uses unprimed canvas, black enamel paint and the process of frottage almost exclusively in his practice. Produced by placing objects underneath a loose canvas and applying paint with a roller from above, his paintings are titled to reflect the objects that they represent (Lipson, “120 Seconds...”).

*150' Hose* (fig.5) features a concentration of regularly curved arcs strewn over the surface of the canvas creating a web of pictorial density that could be likened to a Jackson Pollock painting. Frottaged with black enamel, the painted marks are identifiable as indices of loosely coiled hose, but conceal any concrete understanding of their subject. When in the presence of the work, one cannot be unaware of the physical reality of the material that has been used and the process of representation to which they have been subjected.

It can be seen, in looking at *150' Hose*, that the context of painting ties the work to histories of formal abstraction while the flatbed picture plane and use of the index anchor the experience of the work in relation to the real world. Through provoking an awareness of objects that exist outside the gallery while simultaneously stimulating a gaze of aesthetic contemplation, *150' Hose* channels an awareness of form and quality from the gallery into the rest of the world. I believe that this parallels Krauss' idea of temporal distention through cognitive differentiation as well as the way that I imagine the conceptual extension of *Grid #8* outside the space of the gallery.



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Figure #6      Gerald Ferguson  
                  *150' Hose*, 2000  
                  48"x60"  
                  Enamel on canvas  
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## GHOSTS

Although it has been suggested that the index is employed in my work for its ability to resist the emulation of perception, this appears to conflict with the previously discussed idea that my work is directly representative of specific personal experiences. This apparent contradiction in my thinking was considered while formulating the plan for my final thesis exhibition in March 2016. My aim with this show was to produce a body of work that would tie some of the divergent strands of my practice into a cohesive experience.

The product of this consideration is a body of paintings titled *Ghosts* (fig.6) that is composed of nine four by four foot plywood panels that are presented as wall hanging artworks. Each panel features three rectangular holes in its surface which are produced through a sequence of rudimentary processes. The openings are created in a half-sheet of three-quarter inch plywood through making a series of cuts with a hand saw. Large sections are cut away from each panel and replaced after the removal of a small five by four inch area from the corner. The work is then mounted on the wall with one screw in each corner and painted the colour of the gallery wall. The series must be repainted for every subsequent installation.

While the process of creating each work in *Ghosts* is almost identical, there is one major element that differs between the production of each piece: the placement of the rectangular holes. Out of innumerable possible variations, I elect compositions that I find to be visually engaging. These decisions tend to relate to how effectively the composition occupies the surface of the square support. While any combination of three shapes forms some kind of dynamic visual interaction, I choose compositions that deliver a certain economy of means in the way they occupy territory. In other words compositions that fill the largest area of the painting with compelling tensions tend to generate a stronger sense of aesthetic conviction. The reduced nature and relative homogeneity of *Ghosts* emphasizes the differences between each composition and encourages reflective comparisons among the series.

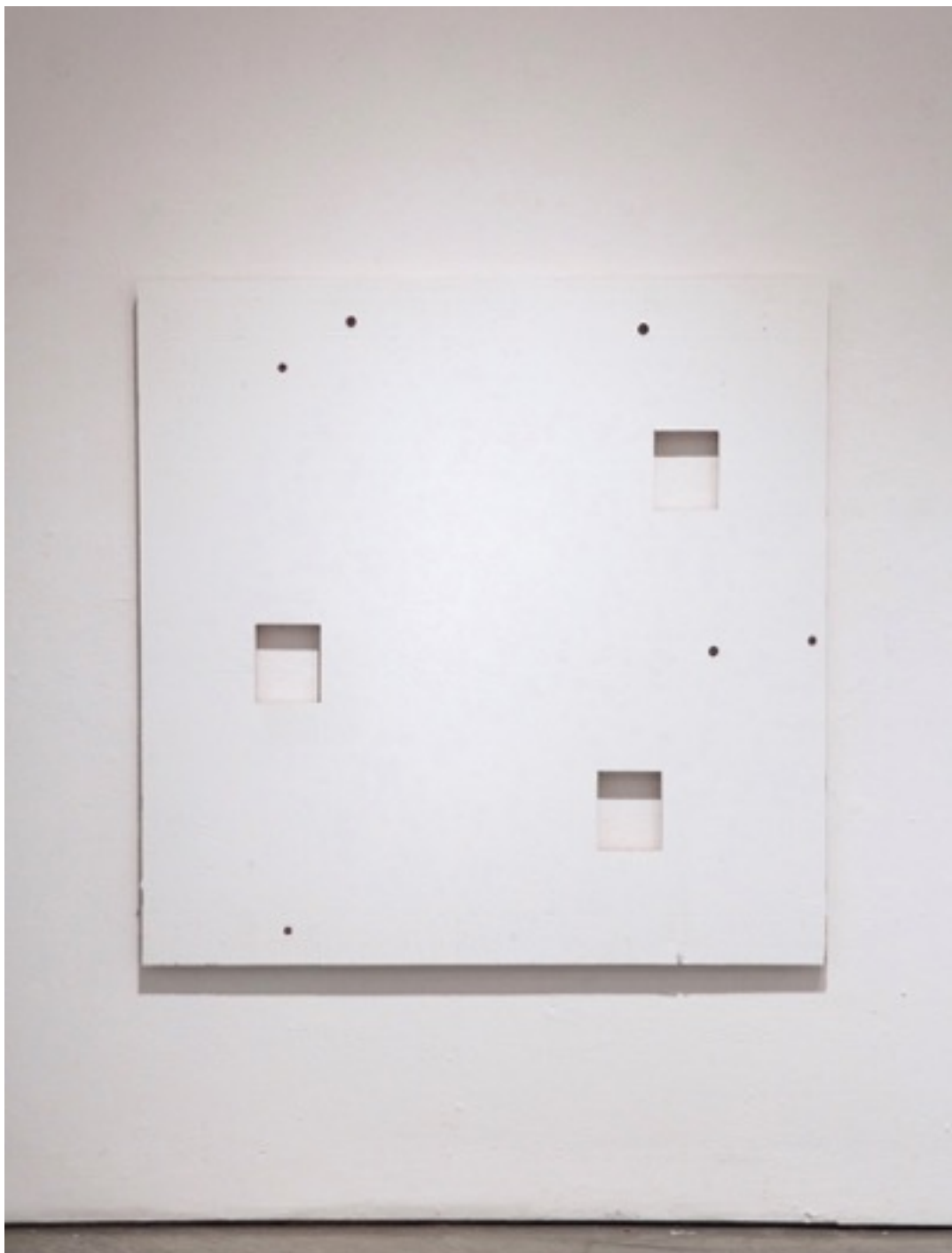


Figure #7     *Ghost #3*, 2016  
3/4" Plywood, latex paint  
48" x 48"



Like the work I have already discussed, *Ghosts* employs the methods of painting and indexical representation. They do this, however, in a way that is unique from my previous work. In looking at each of these methods, the next section will break down how I understand *Ghosts* functioning.

In comparison to *Nando's Flame-Grilled Chicken*, *Ghosts* possess little information indicating that the objects it consists of are paintings. While *Nando's Flame-Grilled Chicken* displays all the queues of a carefully painted canvas, *Ghosts* consists of crudely modified sheets of plywood, roughly painted and primitively mounted on the wall. This somewhat provisional method of signifying the context of painting suggests the work may be understood from a more material perspective. I believe that this change in perspective heightens the experience of understanding *Ghosts* as a series of paintings, because it does not allow the materiality of the work to be taken for granted. I consider this to be a successful aspect of the work, because I am interested in generating awareness of contextualizing structures such as painting.

This general questioning of artistic context through emphasizing materiality is something that I have observed in the work of Ellsworth Kelly, the American painter and sculpture born in 1923. In his *Chatham Series* of fourteen paintings, Kelly repeatedly juxtaposes two coloured rectangular panels in an inverted "L" formation, making slight alterations in size and colour with each work. Each monochrome panel is precisely painted oil on canvas, leaving absolutely no trace of the artists hand (Tempkin). The paintings become about nothing other than the relationship between colour and form, as well as the physical relationship between the viewer and the work.

The conceptual simplicity and emphasized materiality of the *Chatham Series* suggests to me that Kelly is concerned with questioning the experience of looking. I believe that the *Chatham Series* generates an amplified awareness of looking through leveraging the context of painting in a similar way to *Ghosts*. There is another connection between Kelly's work and my own that I would like to describe

that has to do with the method of indexical representation common in my practice and the apparent lack of its use in both the *Chatham Series* and *Ghosts*.

I have previously described indexical representation as the direct physical transmission of information from one material to another. This definition is somewhat limited by its specificity, as some processes that function in similar ways may not meet all of its requirements.<sup>4</sup> I have used this definition of the index in the past to describe ways of eluding my own personal subjectivity in the production of images. The direct nature of the indexical process was valuable to me for its seemingly unconscious mode of representation.

It is possible, however, to extend the understanding of this definition so that its meaning is essentially inverted. In the same way that materials like plasticine and plaster are able to record traces of objects as they interact with them, a painting can be seen as a direct physical trace of an individual's subjectivity. Indeed, when one looks at the function of the body, there is nothing that occurs within it that cannot be reduced to a direct physical interaction. From the operation of the eye, to the neural pathways of the brain, to the mechanical limitations of a hand holding a paintbrush, each element of the body is essentially an index of another physical reality. To exclude these particular physical processes from an understanding of the index would be to undermine the basis of its own definition.

This paradoxical revelation is discussed in Isabelle Graw's text "The Value of Painting: Notes on Unspecificity and, Indexicality and Highly Valuable Quasi-persons". In this essay, Graw suggests that a contemporary definition of painting must, rather than grasping at any notion of medium specificity, define itself as an object that draws a strong connection between itself and its maker (50). In this way the subjective nature of painting can be understood as an index of an individual's agency. This is relevant to my practice, because it unites two aspects of my work

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<sup>4</sup> Paintings like *Nando's Flame-Grilled Chicken* use a grid to manually transfer photographic information onto the canvas. While this technique is not a direct physical transfer, it displays the same kind of immediacy that is present in 'truer' indexes.

that were previously difficult to reconcile: the conceptual directness of the index and the perceptual intrigue of painting based in subjectivity.

To return to Ellsworth Kelly's *Chatham Series*, one can imagine how the choices of colour, shape, and size might be seen to reflect subjective decision making as indexes of the artists agency. The reduced nature of these paintings and the elimination of all but a few variables emphasizes the differences between each work in the series and creates a strong awareness of the artist's presence. Despite appearing as immaculate art objects that betray the method of their production (with a brush), the *Chatham Series* functions as a doorway into the mind of another individual.

The way in which *Ghosts* uses the prescribed processes of sawing and painting, and limits the variables that are determined by choice is similar in function to the reduced nature of the *Chatham Series*. Through presenting varying compositions of three forms on otherwise very similar surfaces, each member of *Ghosts* becomes an indexical representation of a moment of existence directly tied to myself. In this way *Ghosts* makes use of the conceptual straightforwardness of the index, while opening the work to the presence of unmediated subjective influence. I believe that this duality is key in triggering genuine reflection on the nature of perception and aesthetic preference in the world outside the gallery.



Figure #8      *Ghosts* Installation View  
Concourse Gallery March, 2016  
Emily Carr University of Art + Design

## ENDING

The goal of my practice is to encourage the reconsideration of customary patterns of comprehension in others and in myself. With my work, I strive to generate conceptual pathways from the space of the art gallery to the space of daily life in the hope that the ways of looking associated with each context might be confused. This forging of pathways is achieved through using the context of painting to generate the particular mode of perception that is associated with the medium, while indexical methods of representation are used to conceptually breach the walls of the gallery. Joseph Albers provides a model for social change through the investigation of perception while Rosalind Krauss lays the foundation for the temporally extended nature of the index.

In looking at my final thesis work, *Ghosts*, I can identify the way in which these elements can be successfully combined in an artwork. Going beyond these factors, however, I can also identify a direct questioning of subjectivity and aesthetic decision making, something that has only been peripherally approached in previous work. The opening of more subjective influences in my work may prove to enable further investigation of aesthetic perception and the continued questioning of the customary patterns of comprehension we apply to daily life.

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