

“How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist”

By: Brynn Higgins-Stirrup

BFA Honors, Art History Minor, Queen's University, Kingston Ontario, 2013

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Master of Fine Arts

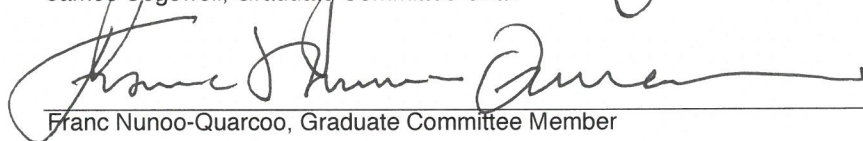
Penny W. Stamps School of Art and Design
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

April 17, 2018

Approved by:


James Cogswell, Graduate Committee Chair

April 17, 2018


Franc Nunoo-Quarcoo, Graduate Committee Member

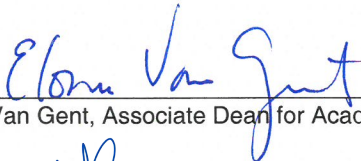
April 17, 2018


Celeste Brusati, Graduate Committee Member

4-17, 2018


Osman Khan, Director MFA Graduate Program

Osman Khan, Director MFA Graduate Program


Elona Van Gent, Associate Dean for Academic Programs

Elona Van Gent, Associate Dean for Academic Programs

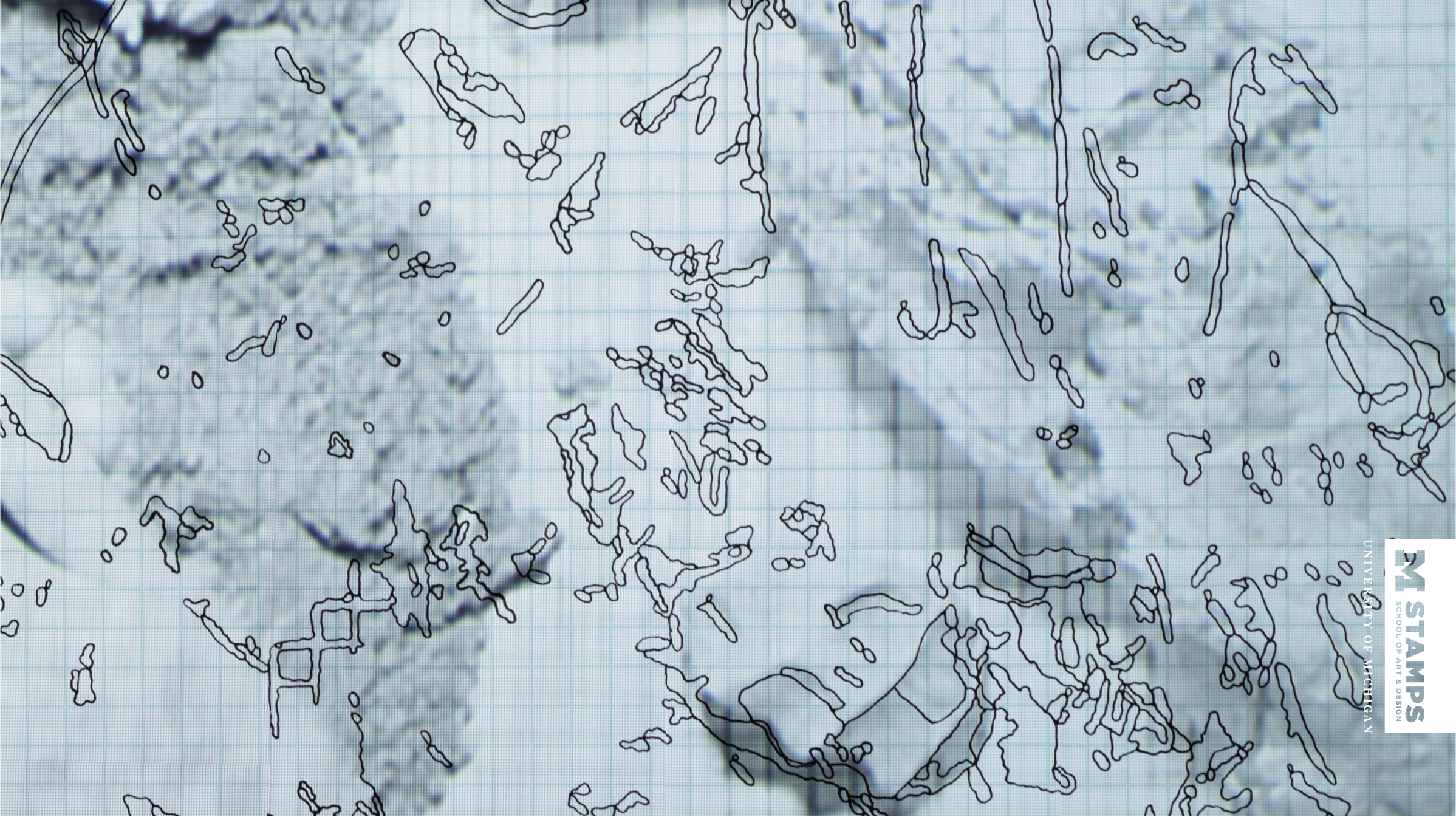

Gunalan Nadarajan, Dean, Stamps School of Art and Design

Gunalan Nadarajan, Dean, Stamps School of Art and Design

Date Degree Conferred: April 26, 2018



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



Brynn Higgins-Stirrup MFA '18

How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist

Brynn Higgins-Stirrup

Candidate, MFA
University of Michigan
Spring 2018



UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist

Brynn Higgins-Stirrup

Candidate, MFA
University of Michigan
Spring 2018

Acknowledgements

This work has been supported and shaped by the meaningful conversation and intellectual engagement of many voices. I am deeply thankful for the words of Celeste Brusati, David Chung, Osman Khan, Jennifer Metsker, Rebekah Modrak, Maria Phillips and Sherri Smith during my time here. I am most grateful to Jim Cogswell and Franc Nunoo-Quarcoo whose commitment to my work and understanding I will not forget — and to my fellow students who have taught me as much as anyone else.

Contents

Abstract	VI
Keywords	VII
Introduction	8
Contextual Discussion of Work	12
Methodology	40
Conclusion	68
Works Cited	72

Abstract

“How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist” combines drawing, sculpture, photography and video to document traces of embodied making, problem-solving and play. These traces offer a quiet invitation — calling attention to the role of process, its materials and inherent value, in our perceptions and knowledge. Drawing on acts of drawing, mapping and diagramming, the works excavate the body’s internal and external landscapes, its exercises and instruments. This exhibition and its documents act as an intimate record of moments of embodiment and thought in order to bring attention to the complex and tenuous nature of knowing a thing.

Keywords

Knowledge, epistemology, phenomenology, embodiment, drawing, mapping, diagramming, excavation, process, play.



INTRODUCTION



Looking, Thinking and Knowing

My creative practice arises from a continued commitment to learning to see. For me, this work began what feels like a long time ago, with learning how to draw, or perhaps, unlearning to make marks. As a child I would work at still-life scenes, vases of tulips and stacks of bananas, set out on the kitchen table, trying to tease a likeness out of the things I saw. I would sit down in front of these succulent objects for endless


days and I would begin my looking by drawing a grid. It was sized in inches, and sat across the surface of a cream-colored pad of water-color paper. With the pipe-cleaners provided, I would twist up a grid of matching size to hold up to my vases of tulips and stacks of bananas, using this instrument to map the locations of line and color existing in the world, through my eyes and onto my cream-colored, gridded plane. Once the outline had been finished, these gridded marks would be carefully erased, their faint memories to be covered up by small splotches of alizarin crimson, hunter green and yellow ochre. I would continue to fill in my own tenuous forms, as required, until I had made the thing and mapped the world into something I could hold within my own small hands.

This memory presents a particular framing of the world, that is, the world within a frame. It is a constrained and screened view, aimed at the organization and construction of the world into an image. These screens exist in many forms, but most often they are grids. Grids and lines, exercises and instruments, all aimed at learning to see and know things with greater authority at the risk of less subtlety. Over the years, as I continued drawing, I eventually came to consider those softly surfaced grids much more than any image that came after them. To me, those grids became the lens, the method and the inquiry, representative of the crucial importance of being attentive to the processes and instruments we use to learn, to think, to see and to know what is seen.

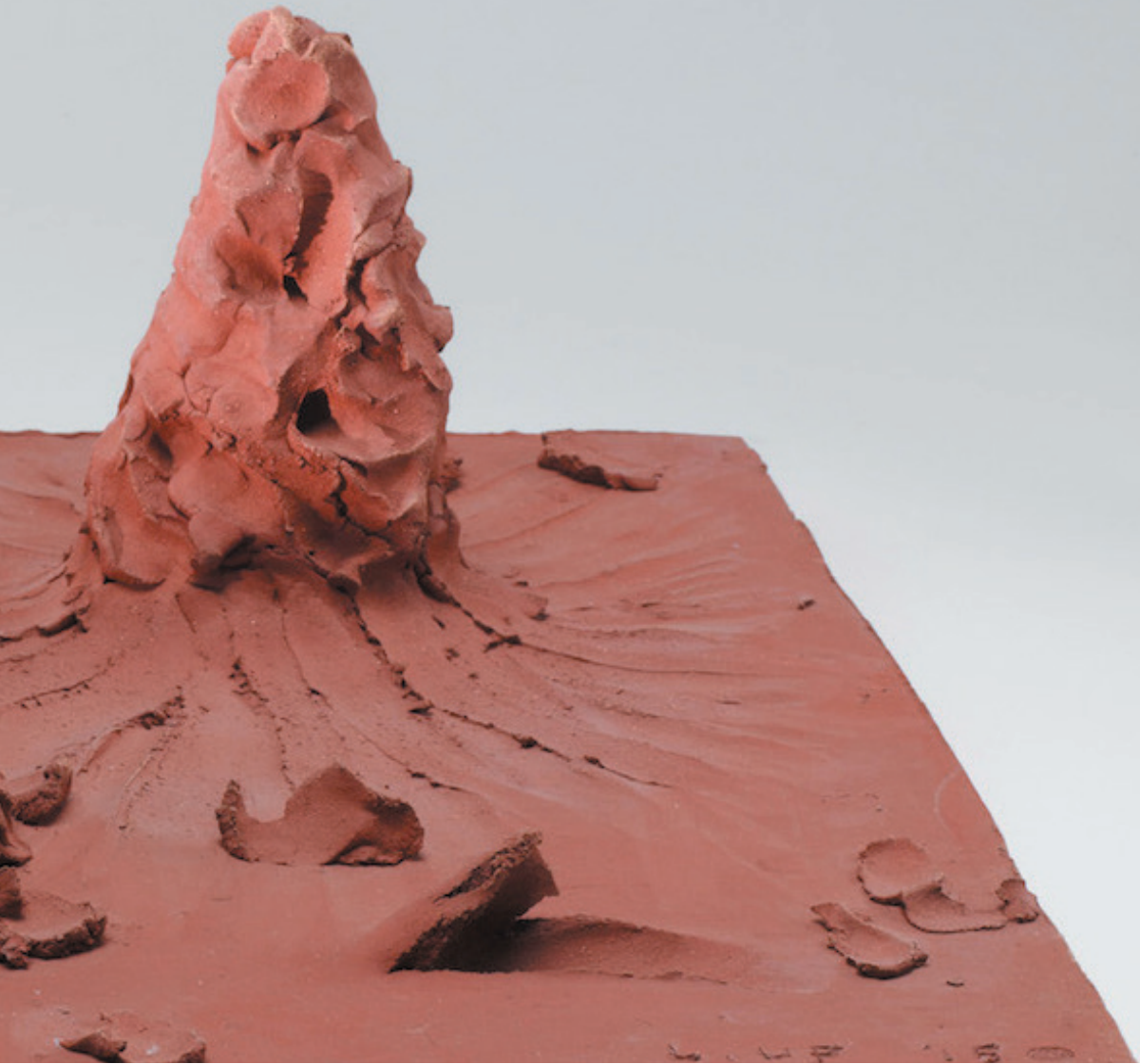
My thesis work seeks to investigate and visualize this relationship between ourselves, our processes and our knowledge of the world. It reexamines our assumptions regarding objective approaches to knowledge and reimagines knowing as a playful, complex, processual, intellectual and embodied thing. It reasserts the value of process and attends to its often embodied and subjective nature. My research, my methods and my manifested works ask several questions. Is it possible to locate a balance between subjective and objective knowing, in order

to understand them as interwoven and equally valuable processes of knowing? How can we understand and assert acts of making, specifically drawing, as a generative process integral to knowing? Finally, how do processes of drawing, mapping and diagramming — the systems and tools we use to visualize and excavate the world around us — inform the content they represent? How do they teach us how to see?

The following chapters will address my thesis work “How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist” through philosophical, historical and creative contexts. It will discuss the relationship between the related fields of epistemology, pragmatism and phenomenology in relationship to processes of knowing, using the grid, the hand and drawing as instantiations of this conversation. It will also describe the methods used within my studio practice to investigate my ideas. Here, I will discuss my material choices, my use of the body in my work and the role of processes of drawing, mapping and diagramming and play. Then I will move to describe the major works manifested for my thesis exhibition through these processes. The conclusion will provide insight into the resulting discoveries that came through the making of this work.

A red clay sculpture of a landscape. The foreground is dominated by a large, textured pile of reddish-brown rocks or clumps of earth. The background shows a flat, reddish-brown surface with some faint, horizontal lines suggesting a horizon or a path. The overall color is a uniform, earthy red. The text "CONTEXTUAL DISCUSSION OF WORK" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the left side of the sculpture.

**CONTEXTUAL
DISCUSSION
OF WORK**



I. Framing Knowledge through Objectivity

“On Exactitude in Science: ...In that Empire, the Art of Cartography attained such Perfection that the map of the single Province occupied the entirety of a City, and the map of the Empire, the entirety of a Province. In time those Unconscionable Maps no longer satisfied, and the Cartographers Guilds struck up a Map of the Empire whose size was that of the Empire, and which coincided point for point with it. The following

Generations, who were not so fond of the Study of Cartography as their Forebears had been, saw that that vast Map was Useless, and not without some Pitilessness was it, that they delivered it up to the Inclemencies of the Sun and Winters. In the Deserts of the West, still today, there are Tattered Ruins of that Map, inhabited by Animals and Beggars; in all the Land there is no other Relic of the Disciplines of Geography.”

— *Jorges Luis Borges in Collected Fictions*

Epistemology is the long and circuitous path between what we can perceive and what we can know — assertions of objective and justified beliefs, stemming from “arguments flowered” and “puzzlement bloomed.”¹ It is a branch of philosophy concerned with the creation, justification, dissemination, and limits of knowledge. Epistemology is in many ways limited to a scientific, objectivist program in terms of arriving at these justifiable claims. It arrives at knowledge through rational and logical processes or objective means. As a result, epistemology often leaves out of the conversation embodied and processual perspectives on the subject with the aim of cutting a straight line towards what we can know. In the words of anthropologist Tim Ingold “the relentless dichotomizing of modern thought has, at one time or another” situated “mind against matter, with rational thought as against sensory perception, with intellect as against intuition, with science as against traditional knowledge, with male as against female, with civilization as against primitiveness, and — on a most general level — with culture as against nature.”²

The notion of objective knowledge gained dominance in the mid-nineteenth century and remained so for just over a century to eventually be replaced by pragmatism.³ Pragmatism represents a more nuanced and expansive approach to thinking about the relationship between knowledge and objective truth. It was developed by semiotician and land

surveyor Charles Sanders Peirce in the late 19th century, in response to logical positivism, the belief that eventually the production of knowledge via science would converge with an “unmediated knowledge of the universe itself.”⁴ Due to the massive changes in our understanding of the basic nature of things over the last century, epistemology shifted towards a definition of knowledge that was “always provisional and contingent”, focusing on “what things *do*, not what things *are*.”⁵ In the words of Brian Upton in the *The Aesthetic of Play*, “pragmatism rejects the idea that if we look and think hard enough we will eventually drive at an understanding of the world not merely as it seems to be, but as it truly is.”⁶ This shift from seeking knowledge of the true nature of things towards understanding their functional disposition situates process as an increasingly crucial guide to knowledge — founded on the notion that to know something is to delve into its process rather than its ‘self’.

A further complication of the epistemological paradigm is phenomenology, founded in the early twentieth century by Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, it seeks to include differing alternative methods of achieving knowledge. Phenomenology is the study of consciousness and perception, or “the appearance of things” through the senses as a potent method for accessing knowledge. For phenomenology, as our first experiences with the world are arguably always sensory, embodied experience exercises a position of particular power. In her book *Drawing as a Way of Knowing in Art and Science* Gemma Anderson cites Goethe’s notion of the human being as “the most powerful and exact instrument if we take the trouble to sufficiently refine our sensibilities.”⁷ The body is the first lens and instrument through which we come to know the world.

As disciplines, art and philosophy have often been concerned with similar challenges. Shusaku Arakawa, who was arguably both an artist and philosopher, sought to make art that questioned “the very nature of the mind that contemplates it.”⁸ This investigation of the cognitive with the tactile, and all that lies between, is an essential function of both



Figure 1. *Unhappy Readymade*, Marcel Duchamp, 1919.

making and philosophical endeavor. The work of Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins follows in a long tradition of artists, most notably Marcel Duchamp, Paul Klee and others, concerned with exercising the relationship between the rational and bodily — objective and subjective modes of knowing.⁹

A precursor to the monumentally ambitious work *Mechanism of Meaning* (1963-1971) by Arakawa and Gins is a lesser known piece by Duchamp entitled *Unhappy Readymade* (Fig. 1). This work consisted of a simple geometry textbook sent to his sister Suzanne in 1919 with instructions to hang it outside, making it vulnerable to the impending weather. The textbook used was *Euclid's Elements*.¹⁰ In this elegantly

lack of understanding of our experience of the world.”¹⁴ Philosophically, the work situates itself in phenomenology. Arakawa and Gins consider each person a “mechanism of meaning” suggesting that knowledge was not embedded within any objectivist compendium of meaning but was found through a reciprocal relationship between the body and the world (Fig. 4).¹⁵

In addition to the textbook, many artists have mined spaces of knowledge production, our museums, science labs, libraries and even the artist’s studio, for their own, sometimes circumspect, purposes (Fig. 5). Joelle Tuerlinckx, a contemporary Belgian artist and innovator of installation art is one such example. Her work has been described as “akin to following a breadcrumb trail or — perhaps more accurately — a thread.”¹⁶ Tuerlinckx reimagines these spaces of production, translating them into new and confounding constellations, softening the boundaries we, so often, situate ourselves within to establish what is knowable. In her installations, educational displays, books and diagrams are dismantled, puzzled over and put back together with a logic that remains strange, consistent and sincere. The objects within the installation shift function between tools, objects of study and the elements of a model. Her work *Glass Scale Model ‘5 stones b/n’*, exemplifies this

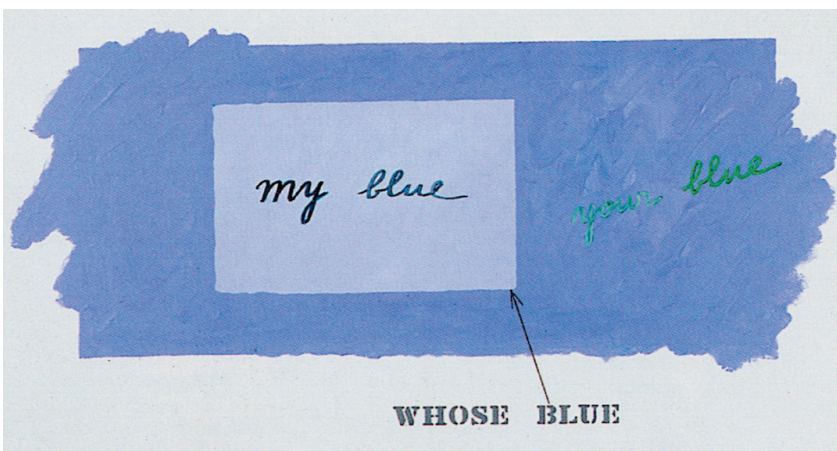


Figure 4. *Mechanism of Meaning*, Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins, 1963-1971.



Figure 5. Excerpt from *WOR(L)D(K) IN PROGRESS*, Joelle Tuerlinckx, 2014.

subjective/objective logic in both method and application (Fig. 6). Five stones sit on the surface of the table. They have been pulled from Tuerlinckx's "Fundamental Collection," a collection of stones accumulated since her childhood. Throughout Tuerlinckx's life each stone was chosen, documented through drawing and catalogued to be represented as "a personal museum of geological time," fusing the scientific with the intimate.¹⁷

Tuerlinckx is concerned most essentially with the act of translation as a process — what happens when an object or idea moves through time or space from one location or mode to another. She uses line and reproduction to highlight the space between a work's origin and its existence in the presence of a viewer. Her exhibitions often reference the spatial boundaries of her studio, translating one space to another — gridded forms and linear segments mapping out what has come before.¹⁸ In opposition to this specificity regarding their place of origin, the objects in her installations are often copies of some type. In recreating them without reference to context or scale, Tuerlinckx's manifestations are often without place. For her, the site of making is the space in which knowledge exists. Its documents are only memories of this experience.



Figure 6. Glass Scale Model '5 stones b/n', Joelle Tuerlinckx, 1979-2014.

II. Framing Knowledge through Embodiment

“To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge, of which knowledge always speaks, and in relation to which every scientific schematization is an abstract and derivative sign-language, as is geography in relation to the countryside in which we have learnt beforehand what a forest, a prairie or a river is.”

— Maurice Merleau-Ponty in *Phenomenology of Perception*

In his book, *The Spell of the Sensuous*, David Abram cites phenomenology as “the Western philosophical tradition that has most forcefully called into question the modern assumption of a single, wholly determinable, objective reality,” or a “multiplicity of the perceptual universe conceptually frozen into facts.”¹⁹ Focusing on embodiment, phenomenology does not “seek to explain the world but to describe as closely as possible the way the world makes itself evident to awareness, the way things first arise in our direct sensorial experience.”²⁰ Abram claims that our relationship to objectivity in the pursuit of knowledge has led to “a nearly complete forgetting of this living dimension in which all our endeavors are rooted” — this dimension being the world and our living bodies within it.²¹

Phenomenology classifies perception, our primary means of attaining knowledge, as participatory and embodied.²² It situates “perceived things as entities, of sensible qualities as powers, and of the sensible itself as a field of animate presences, in order to acknowledge and underscore their active, dynamic contribution to perceptual experience.”²³ As a discipline, phenomenology, like pragmatism, has come to be characterized as outside of traditional paradigms that directly correlate objectivity with knowledge.

It can be argued that “the very structures upon which reason is based emerge from our sensorimotor experiences,” from our own bodies, the skin of our hands and the soles of our feet.²⁴ In this view, embodiment is a prerequisite for the acquisition of knowledge. Phenomenology calls for a “renewed attentiveness to this perceptual dimension that underlies all our logics,” through the revitalization of our processual, embodied experience of the world.

In terms of artistic production, phenomenological thinking directly influenced a range of makers from the 1960’s onwards. A major proponent of this school of thought was Lee Ufan, a Korean painter and sculptor, who was also a leading force in the interconnected, Mono-ha or “school of things” movement in Japan. In his prolific work and writing Ufan sought to manifest “the relational structure through which things reveal their existence”, that is, to “let the world express itself by allowing ordinary objects, which are often ignored, to be set free in the vivid and expansive world of incidents.”²⁵ He did this through the use of



Figure 7. *From Point*, Lee Ufan, 1967.



Figure 8. *Relatum*, Lee Ufan, 2008.

repeated painted marks, defined by their relationship to the brush and a single dip of paint, being soaked into the canvas, and through the use of natural stones and unfinished steel which he believed to be powerful and permanent instantiations of the material world (Fig. 7).

Through this attention to “ordinary” objects and marks, Ufan sought to reassert the value of the experiential and embodied world in direct relation to the act of making through the body (Fig. 8). Crucial to his work was to “facilitate an experience apprehended through the body in which, in semiotic terms, the signifier, signified, and the referent are one and the same,” in which “the self is emptied, allowing the body-mind to be filled with, or vibrate with, the relationality of one’s immediate situation, time and place.”²⁶ This relationality between objects, mark-making, the body and the world was the primary impetus of Ufan’s creative and philosophical career. Through this work, he situated making through the body as an act of value, significant to the creation of knowledge.

Phenomenology puts its stakes in the act of describing the world. It brings to the forefront of its inquiry the body as a means of learning about and processing knowledge from the world. In his book *How Things Shape the Mind* archeologist and material engagement theorist Lambros Malafouris writes that “much of current thinking about human cognition seems to have neglected that the way we think is the property of a hybrid assemblage of brains, bodies and things.”²⁷ That, in fact “the contents of the mind are made up of the visible, audible and tactile as well as the intelligible.”²⁸

Grounded in the work of Lee Ufan and others like him, who built their conceptual framework around the relationality between the body and the material world, the work of Dutch artist Mark Manders provides a contemporary example of an artist positioning embodiment as a central subject of inquiry. In his work *Shadow Study*, which he produced in several iterations, he creates a sculpture, a physical insertion into the world, and image of the fleeting experience of resting a ceramic cup on the meat and bone of one’s upper leg (Fig. 9/10).²⁹ Manders speaks about this work saying “The first cups were human hands: folded together, they took the water out of the river. The next cups were made from things like hollow pieces of wood or folded leaves, and so on.... A few times a day there is a cup very close to my upper leg bone, and I slowly discovered that if you turn an empty cup upside down there is a shadow falling out of the cup, falling upon my leg. I wanted to keep this shadow, have it and own it, so I turned it into an image.”³⁰ In this work, the making of an image becomes a way to hold and contain the phenomenal world through the creation of a static visual image and/or art object.

In this work and in his practice at large, Manders brings attention to the everyday object, bringing forth in his work a feeling of empathy for both the body and the material world. Manders complicates this relationship between the body and the world as a means of reckoning with the complexity of meanings that exist between ourselves and

everyday objects and experiences. Through his focus on singular embodied moments, Manders collapses “the disaffected distance created by the process of objectification with the intimate personal subjectivities that once more clearly marked our relationship to the world of things beyond ourselves.”³¹ For him, objects and images are subjective, empathic experiences. Manders locates himself in quiet moments of perceptual poignancy, producing an intimacy with the worlds he encounters and creates.



Figure 9-10. *Shadow Study*, Mark Manders, 2010.

III. The Human Hand and Drawing as a Process of Knowing

“What seems to be preserved in the manifest thought and drawings are only leftovers of a process that has since moved on, turning — while thinking and drawing — to other questions and spaces. As traces they only capture what is no longer there, figures of presence and absence, at the same time. In this sense, they are witnesses, testifying to the relationship that thinking and drawing have with the untenable and unstoppable. Inscribed onto the untenable is the contradiction, the argument that turns against the argumentative, reproaching itself, correcting itself, and changing itself, in order to replace the ultimate and the correct with that which is possible.”

— *Andreas Spiegel in Drawing Now 2015*

Within phenomenology there exists a debate regarding the role the senses play in our knowledge of the world. Historically, sight and hearing, associated with greater objectivity and elasticity, were defined as above taste, smell and touch. Yet, recent endeavors in the field of embodied cognition have linked the action of the hand when writing and making to cognitive development and our capacity to know the world.³² Embodied cognition, developed by the cognitive sciences, “overcomes the traditional Platonic–Cartesian dualism” to return “dignity to the body and to the sensorial experience”.³³ This field complicates the notion of sight and touch as singular senses, suggesting the possibility that embodied experience is in fact an interwoven field of sensorial data.

In his essay “In Praise of Hands”, Henri Focillon “imbues hands with the ability to exert use and bring life to forms, describing them as thinking tools, as makers with a peculiar sense of independence.”³⁴ In this way, the hand acts as particular type of metaphorical and material linkage

between the body and the world. Merleau-Ponty defines “the hand itself as a touchable thing, and thus entirely part of the tactile world it explores.”³⁵ When we use our hands in the world and touch a thing we are in a reciprocal process of touching and being touched by the world. This revelatory notion asserts the hand as an active agent and instrument in our perceptual experience. The movement of the hand over and through the world is a ‘cognitive function’ that asserts knowledge via the hand as “an opening to the world” situating the hand as an instrument of both procedure and contemplation.³⁶ The expressive and imaginative force we associate with intellect is simply “an elaboration, or recapitulation, of a profound creativity already underway at the most immediate level of sensory perception.”³⁷

In his book, *The Art of Encounter* Lee Ufan writes, “[i]n this body, a boundary area connecting the inside and outside, the hand serves as the most forward outpost”.³⁸ For the artist, the hand is connected to parts of the outside world, including the brush, the paint, the canvas, the air, time and space. “It is an intermediary that provides experience of the world, produces thought, and leads me to unknown otherness.”³⁹ Ufan describes the hand as an intelligent tool of inherent value, its



Figure 11. *Untitled*, Lee Ufan, 2015.

marks enacting a constellation of meanings and appearances (Fig. 11). It is a “performance of nothing” through repeated “dividing and combining, raising and lowering, digging and piling, the state of the world itself is emphasized and it becomes visible.”⁴⁰

The hand is the instrument of many of the oldest and most intrinsic processes of knowing.⁴¹ Hands do many things, they manipulate, feel and point.⁴² Hands are the navigators of foundational acts such as drawing, cooking, writing and play. In thinking about drawing, John Berger wrote “every artist discovers that drawing — when it is an urgent activity is a two-way process. To draw is not only to measure and put down, it is also to receive.”⁴³ In this way drawing can be understood as a generative thing, producing its own marks and delineations, independent of the world, but in constant reciprocity with it. The attentive mark is an act of perceptive rather than purposeful production.

Drawing is of the hand and body and at the beginning of all acts of making is the mark of the hand. The mark, most often the line, is “an embodiment of duration... intrinsically dynamic and temporal.”⁴⁴ To make a mark, or draw a line, is to use your body to describe and be described; it is to trace your own gesture and leave it upon the world. “The hand carries a visual map of life, representing time as a series of interlocking paths, routes and journeys.”⁴⁵ Its gestures, both material and immaterial, “leave their own trace, enfolding into the hand the very ways of life and maneuvering of the world.”⁴⁶

In *Drawing Redefined* Jennifer R. Gross writes “Drawing makes possible a reconciliation between objective and subjective experience as the conscious experience of making art is consumed with and then transformed by process.”⁴⁷ Drawing is a process through which we come to know the world through the body, attention and time. Generally drawings represent subjects, but in making drawings and in looking at them, we become attuned to the nuanced process of seeing itself.⁴⁸ It does this because drawing puts us back in our bodies and forces us to look with decision as we observe the world, focusing on particular

aspects of its visual complexity. Drawing lives in the body, extending beyond language to play between tacit and explicit modes of knowing, creating a greater awareness of both. It is a way of thinking *through things* and is an individual practice.⁴⁹ It is self-consciously subjective in nature. By way of framing the world, drawing makes us aware of the frame itself.

Nikolaus Gansterer is a contemporary artist, working in drawing, sculpture and performance, whose work deals directly with the role of the hand as an agent of embodied intelligence and drawing as a processual act. In his practice, Gansterer creates and documents performances that aim to promote and complicate the plastic relationship between drawing and thinking. Gansterer perceives these two processes like “synonyms”, situating drawing as an active thing and moving through processes of diagramming and mapping information into delicate landscapes of white chalk traces set within a book, or upon a floor, or blackboard-cum-table (Fig. 12).⁵⁰

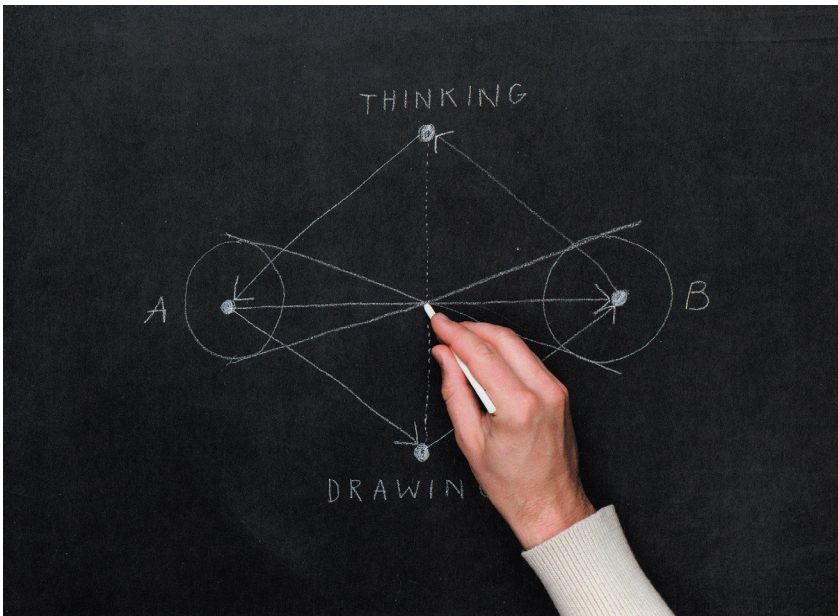


Figure 12. *Drawing a Hypothesis*, Nikolaus Gansterer, 2011.

For Gansterer, “drawing is not an end result” but rather something to be taken “seriously as activity, as verb, as a specific form of visual thinking and speaking.”⁵¹ Through his conceptually expansive projects and resulting installations, Gansterer crafts multiple character studies, narratives through which thinking and drawing processes continuously unfold. Two of his major projects on the subject are entitled “Drawing a Hypothesis” and “A Study on Minor Gestures”. “Drawing a Hypothesis” is a work based on the creation of a collaborative network aimed at tracing “the speculative potential” of diagrammatic drawing.⁵² This work began with a visual compendium sourced from Gansterer’s own drawings and exchanged with a range of artists and scientists who responded with written text. This back and forth exchange extended for a period of five years, testing the visual potential of diagrammatic drawn form, culminating in a publication exhibiting a constellation of intersections between drawing and thinking.

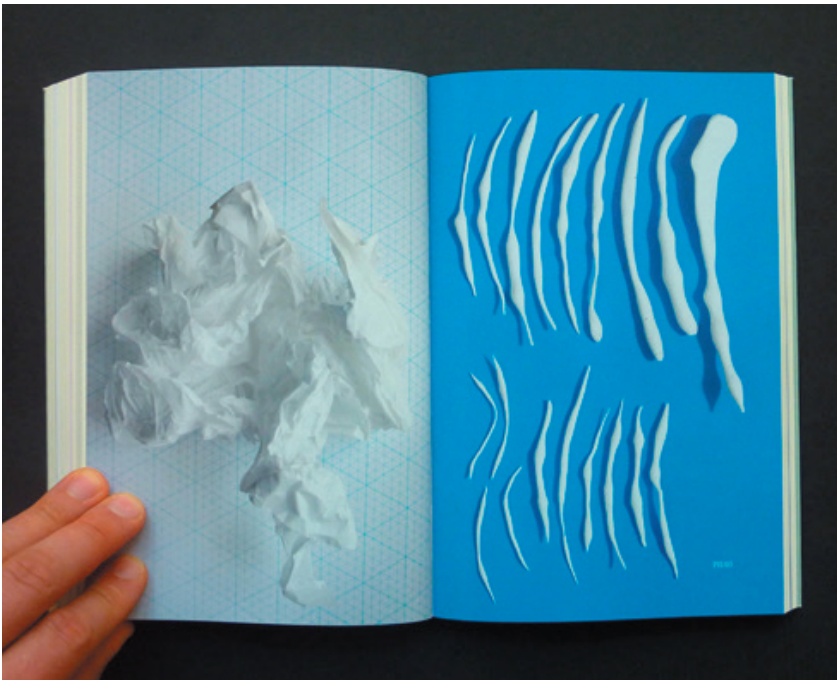


Figure 13. *Drawing a Hypothesis*, Nikolaus Gansterer, 2011.

In his recent project “A Study on Minor Gestures”, Gansterer classifies the ‘minor gesture’ as one that is “dynamic and opposes the dominant discourse from the margins,” relating to the gesture of the artist as “an invitation, an act of reaching out, a touch.”⁵³ This project was created in tandem with Erin Manning, a philosopher and dancer, who also examines the synthesis of creative action and thinking within her work. The minor gesture is concerned with potentiality over definitiveness. In this work Gansterer collects and choreographs images and objects associated with thinking and learning, children’s science projects and university lectures alike, bringing thinking and drawing together into a performed moment that inserts itself into the experienced world. This concrete gesture, in this case the gesture of the hand, differs significantly from what Gansterer calls ‘action’ in that its impetus is not goal-oriented but an instantiated demonstration of expression (Fig. 14).



Figure 14. *A Study on Minor Gestures*, Nikolaus Gansterer, 2011.

IV. The Grid

“This silence is not due simply to the extreme effectiveness of the grid as a barricade against speech, but to the protectiveness of its mesh against all intrusions from outside. No echoes of footsteps in empty rooms, no scream of birds across open skies, no rush of distant water—for the grid has collapsed the spatiality of nature onto the bounded surface of a purely cultural object. With its proscription of nature as well as of speech, the result is still more silence.”

— *Rosalind Krauss in The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*

The grid’s potency as a substrate, organizer and cultural object is long-standing and in many ways absolute. Whether present as a guiding format or a background to the plotted mark, the grid is the combined juncture of both surface and line, neither of which should be taken for granted. The grid mediates our relationship with the phenomenal world; our sensory experiences, makings and doings, places and things are defined by its overarching structure through our near constant use of it. Even our cognitive landscape has been compared to it, as in his studies of the psyche, Sigmund Freud conceived of the human mind as a grid.⁵⁴

The grid is of all visual forms defiantly omnipresent, and attendant to the grid is a robust history both in the pragmatic and aesthetic realms. The grid began with the origins of cooking, as a metal framework used to broil meat, evolving from its humble yet transformative beginnings to inform almost every aspect of human life.⁵⁵ As a device, the grid moved from a cooking aid to a tool present in acts of planning, organizing, surveying and excavating space, be it physical or ideal. Throughout its history, the grid remains present in the very structure of our places, instruments and, arguably, our minds. The grid’s power lies in ubiquity. It is “the persistence of grids” that demonstrates that “once a grid is invented, it never disappears.”⁵⁶

The dominance of the grid as a perceptual screen began with the invention of perspective drawing during the Renaissance. It was through these means — the logical, abstracted ordering of pictorial space — that “the grid slowly evolved from a device used to aid in creating an illusion of space to a system imposed upon space itself.”⁵⁷ Michel Foucault distilled the grid’s unique place in the cognitive and technological landscape in terms of its “capacity for concealing its ideological imperatives,” and as a function of “what made it so compelling as a tool for shaping human thought and behavior.”⁵⁸

In the present day the grid asserts itself not only through its relationship to picturing, but in the gridded circuit boards, screens, and invisible networks of an increasingly computational, technological world. When we picture our universe, we see it stretched across or modeled to a grid. It is through these evasive yet pervasive means that the grid has come to instantiate itself, as a contemporary mythology, a perceptual substrate and an inscriber and describer of the world.”⁵⁹

Within art-making the grid has undergone multiple aesthetic and philosophical renaissances, moving from representing absolute if invisible realities, to acting as a metaphor for social and psychological

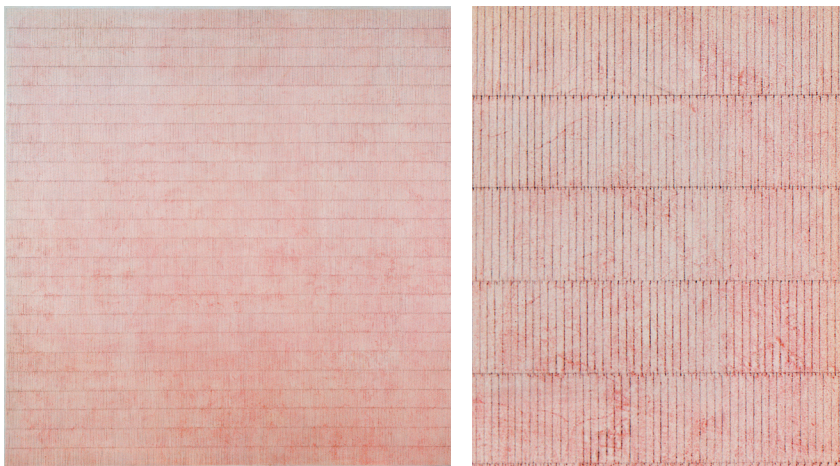


Figure 15. *Flower in the Wind*, Agnes Martin, 1963.

constraint, to promoting the grid as an aid to rationality.⁶⁰ In contrast to these movements is the work of Agnes Martin whose drawings and paintings play between the formulaic and bodily to produce emotive surfaces overflowing with the marks of the human hand.

Despite her resolute use of the grid as the primary structure of her making and visual consciousness, Martin's impetus to use the grid was self-described as its own demise: "My formats are square, but the grids never are absolutely square; they are rectangles, a little bit off the square, making a sort of contradiction, a dissonance, though I didn't set out to do it that way (Fig. 15). When I cover the square surface with rectangles, it lightens the weight of the square, destroys its power."⁶¹ We can infer from Martin's approach that she, in many ways, viewed the grid with equanimity, choosing to utilize it in spite of and perhaps in response to, its associations with the objectivity of the "untroubled mind."⁶²

In her writing about her work Martin takes issue with an established view of her works as relating to embodiment and nature, citing her own works as examples of "what is not seen" and "what is known forever in the mind."⁶³ Yet, in its rendering and viewing, her work is definitively of the hand and the body. Described by Aline Chipman Brandhauer in *Agnes Martin, Works on Paper* as "heartbreakingly tactile and intimate" Martin's visual work and writing both speak to a deep connection to the intrinsic beauty present within the mind and world through the tenuous line produced by her own hand (Fig. 16).⁶⁴ Similarly to Lee Ufan — Martin's visual work and writing, both speak to a deep connection to the intrinsic beauty present in the visual, material world. Upon close inspection, Martin's hand-drawn lines perform a multiplicity of enacted movements representative of the fact that the making of lines was arguably her major subject of study for more than forty years.

Lines are inscribed into the surface of gold leaf, dotted delicately across the surface of a heavy canvas weave, pressed in between multiple coatings of milky-white gesso. As objects the paintings also

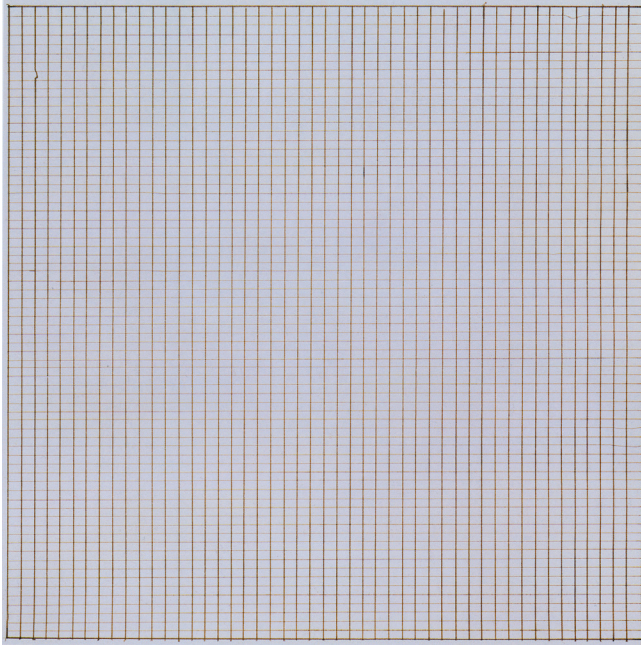


Figure 16. *Untitled*, Agnes Martin, 1990.

function in relationship to the body, moving from lines to mist-like surfaces to opaque things as the viewer moves backwards.⁶⁵ When compared with the straight line of a gridded surface, as cultural object, a “virtual icon of modernity, an index of the triumph of the rational, purposeful design over the vicissitudes of the natural world,” Martin’s line feels definitively intimate and animate.⁶⁶ If this work is indeed the visual description of a mental landscape, it is not a perspective drawing but a marked gesture of the lightest touch. In doing so, Martin creates surfaces wholly responsive to the “logic of vision inflected with the tactile.”⁶⁷

Anna Barribal is another artist whose works exist in tension between touch and vision. Barribal uses ink and graphite hatching to reveal familiar surfaces, such as brick walls, doorways and windowpanes — the grids, frames and screens of the world (Fig. 17). Through her attentive tracing of their features these omnipresent, often gridded, architec-

tures gain presence through materiality by way of their own absence.⁶⁸ Barribal's traces upon them tell of other traces — the marks and markers of time. Her work is a "discovering [of] things below the surface."⁶⁹ They are a touching of the surface of the world; touch is a requirement for the act of depiction in Barribal's work. This sensuous work promotes an expanded perception of the relationship between image and origin, drawing attention to the subliminal gridded surfaces, edges and grounds, almost always at the edge of our vision and towards the center of our minds.

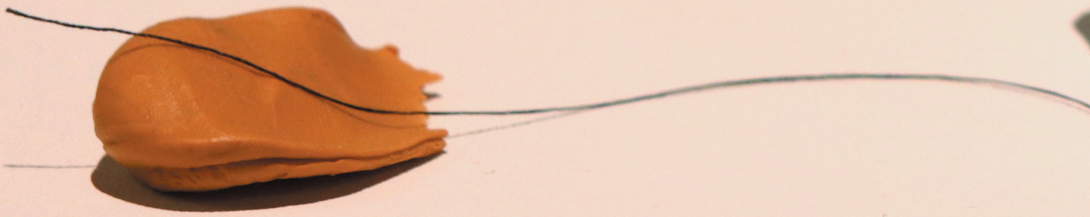


Figure 17. Mirror, Window, Wall III, Anna Barribal.

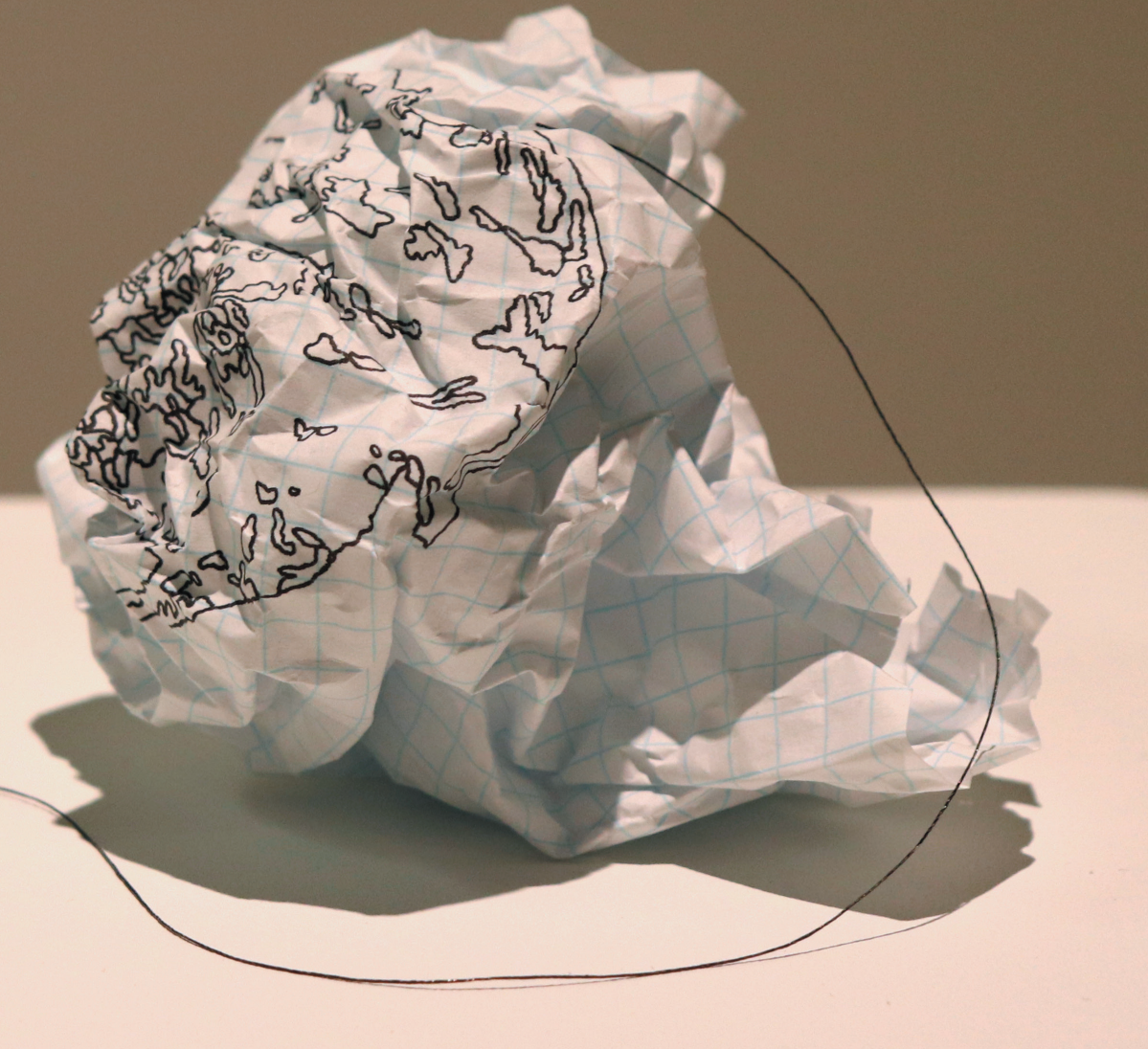
Notes for Contextual Discussion of Work

- 1 Stephen Hetherington (compiled by). *Epistemology: The Key Thinkers*, (New York: Continuum Publishers, 2012), 18.
- 2 Timothy Ingold. *Lines: A Brief History*, (London: Routledge Classics. 2016), 152.
- 3 Gemma Anderson. *Drawing as a Way of Knowing in Art and Science*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017), 16.
- 4 Brian Upton. *The Aesthetic of Play*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2015), 129.
- 5 Upton. 132/128.
- 6 Upton. 132.
- 7 Anderson. 21.
- 8 Michael Govan (organized by). *Reversible Destiny — Arakawa/Gins*, (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 1997), 9.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Michael Whittle. "Romantic Objectivism: Diagrammatic Thought in Contemporary Art" (PhD dissertation, Kyoto City University of Arts, 2015), 103.
- 11 Whittle. 104.
- 12 Govan. 9.
- 13 Whittle. 69.
- 14 Govan. 10.
- 15 Govan. 9.
- 16 Gross, Jennifer R. (edited by). *Drawing Redefined*, (New Haven: Yale University Press. 2015), 40.
- 17 Gross. 46.
- 18 Gross. 40.
- 19 David Abram. *The Spell of the Sensuous*, (New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House Inc., 1997), 40.
- 20 Abram. 35.
- 21 Abram. 41.
- 22 Lambros Malafouris. *How Things Shape the Mind - A Theory for Material Engagement*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013), 45.
- 23 Malafouris. 56.
- 24 Malafouris. 61.
- 25 Alexandra Munroe. *Lee Ufan, Marking Infinity*, (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2011), 22.
- 26 Munroe. 22.
- 27 Malafouris. 15.
- 28 Gordon Graham. *An Introduction to Aesthetics*, (London: Routledge Press. 2005), 64.
- 29 Peter Eleey. *Mark Manders, Parallel Occurrences / Documented Assignments*, (Los Angeles: Aspen Art Museum and Hammer Museum, University of California Press, 2010), 59.
- 30 Eleey, 59.
- 31 Eleey, 88.
- 32 Marta Bertolaso and Nicola Di Stephano (edited by). "The Hand, Perception, Cognition, Action" in *Studies in Applied Philosophy, Epistemology and Rational Ethics*, Vol. 38, (Basel: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 104.
- 33 Bertolaso. 109.
- 34 Higgins. 11.

- 35 Abram. 68.
- 36 Bertolaso. 100.
- 37 Abram. 49.
- 38 Munroe. 35.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 Munroe. 112.
- 41 Phillippe Van Cauteran and Martin Germann (edited by). *Drawing, The Bottom Line*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 9.
- 42 Bertolaso. 100.
- 43 Van Cauteran. 6.
- 44 Ingold. 72.
- 45 Ingold. 47.
- 46 Ingold, 47.
- 47 Gross. 13.
- 48 Anderson. 21.
- 49 Anderson. 18.
- 50 Schröder. 212.
- 51 Whittle. 128.
- 52 Nikolaus Gansterer. "Projects", <http://www.gansterer.org/>, Last modified April 7th, 2018.
- 53 Gansterer. "Projects".
- 54 Hannah B. Higgins. *The Grid Book*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009). 9.
- 55 Dan Cameron. *Living Inside the Grid*, (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art Publishing, 2003). 15.
- 56 Higgins. 7.
- 57 Cameron. 16.
- 58 Cameron. 16.
- 59 Higgins. 9.
- 60 Cameron. 16.
- 61 Herausgegeben Dieter Schwartz (edited by). *Agnes Martin, Writings*, (Hamburg: Hatje Cantz, 2005), 29.
- 62 Dieter Schwartz. 35.
- 63 Rosalind Krauss. "The / Cloud /" in *Agnes Martin by Barbara Haskell*, (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art Publishing, 1992), 157.
- 64 Aline Chipman Brandhauer. *Agnes Martin, Works on Paper*, (Santa Fe: Museum of Fine, Museum of New Mexico, 1998), 10. 65 Krauss. "The / Cloud /". 158.
- 66 Ingold. 152.
- 67 Krauss, "The / Cloud /". 164.
- 68 Klaus Albrecht Schröder and Elsy Lahner (edited by). *Drawing Now 2015*, (Munich: Hirmer Publishers) (bilingual edition), 2015), 208.
- 69 Schröder. 208.



METHODOLOGY



I. Material Choices

My creative practice centers around the investigation of the material world through sight and touch: paper, photographs, modeling clays, ink, chalk, soil, fabric, flour and thread. I use materials associated with places of making and the production of knowledge — landscapes, libraries, laboratories, museums and the artist's studio. These materials are transformative agents in processes of art making, educational



Figure 18. Excerpt from "How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist", 2018.

exercises, archeological excavations and scientific experiments, as well as less straightforward modes of this productivity, such as cooking and alchemy.

Paper, in its many forms holds sway over my practice; inside its reams and sheets there exists an entire universe of knowledge, through its endless potentiality for production (Fig. 18). Graph paper and gridded drawings take multiple material forms within the work, existing both as forgotten grounds and as subjects of study to be considered through the robust imaginations of drawing. The photographic image and video are used as methods for holding and containing the trace of embodied moments in static form. Powders of delicately sifted chalk, flour and soil become topological fields waiting to be mapped. These substances exist in a tenuous transition between the trace they have manifested

and the moment they will be swept away by the lightest touch of the winds, rains or hands of the world.

Along with these associative aspects, my material choices have evolved through employment. I continue to use the same two types of graph paper over the course of two years. Every drawn surface in my recent work is made with the same technical pen. This commitment to these particular instruments and materials, over long periods of time, allows me to become closer to them. To seek out their intimacies by tracing and manipulating them. Each component is treated attentively; carefully gridded lines are drawn, threads connect one material moment to another and small clay forms created from the memory of the body lie still and carefully placed. The aim of this method is to not just become aware of my materials, as instruments, but to begin to consider that a reciprocal relationship exists between them, myself as a maker and the world.

II. The Use of the Body

My use of the body is centered around asserting it as a vehicle for learning about the world. Through acts of touch, I can test the capabilities and limitations of my body and extend my awareness to excavate the material. My body is the site in which embodiment begins, manifesting most often between my hands and things touched. In my making practice, the hands are a means of knowing materials and being known by them as a method of attending to the complex subjectivity of the phenomenal world.

Many of the forms in the exhibition are direct transfers and manipulations from my teeth, gums, ears, nails and the skin of my hands — the shapes of my fingers and thumbs (Fig. 19). The surfaces and materials I work with become close to me through touch and I imprint myself upon them as a means of creation. All marks made with attentiveness and



Figure 19. Excerpt from “How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist”, 2018.

through the body are acts of drawing. The landscape of small imprints made by the spiderwebbed surface of skin is a drawing. Like all drawings, these marks are the memories of an embodied process. In them lives a tension between the capturing of experience, lines drawn and marks made. Mark-making does not act only as a representation and documentation of gesture but as an enactive mode of “sense-making.”⁷⁰ Defined as a processual enactment, the act of drawing goes beyond denoting information to instantiating it, bringing it into the material world through the mark of the hand.⁷¹

III. Drawing as an Attentive and Generative Act

In *Drawn to that Moment* John Berger writes “the drawn image contains the experience of looking... A drawing slowly questions an event’s appearance and in doing so reminds us that appearances are always a construction within a history.”⁷² In the studio, the work evolves through an exercising of what drawing can be — generative, playful, scientific,

embodied, thoughtful and intuitive. I can trace a line from what already exists or construct a new form. I can use my body to make marks or I can use the instruments at hand. For me, drawing encapsulates all attentive marks, not just the drawing of a line but also the stretching of a thread, the kneading of clay and dough and the clenching of a fist. Most essential to my method, in terms of drawing procedures, are the interrelated processes of mapping and diagramming.

Mapping is the construction of a visual reality through tracing, surveying or modeling, whose goal is to communicate the understanding of a space, either physical or ideal. In my own work I do this most often by tracing what is already present in the world, drawing new lines to

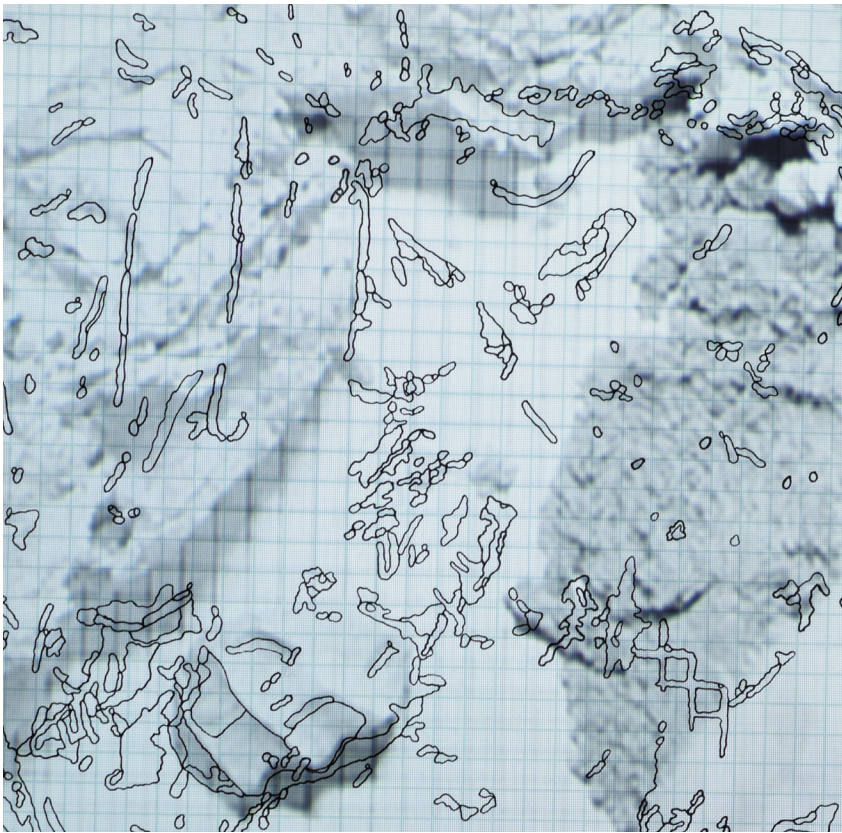


Figure 20. Still from *Companion (To Touch and be Touched by the World)*, 2018.

reanimate and traverse sheets of graph paper and printed photographs (Fig. 20). Mapping explores the variety of ways in which we represent the world — real, imagined and in flux — through looking and drawing. A map is a form of spatial diagramming. Diagrams are visual models which “not only present, but actively work on concepts to order and re-order structures of thought.”⁷³ Drawing maps and diagrams is a long-standing and essential mode of processing, producing and communicating knowledge. These modes are an embodied “practice of figuring, defiguring, refiguring and prefiguring.”⁷⁴

Within my own practice, I focus on the processual elements of mapping and diagramming over the representation of their results. When I create works through acts of surveying and modeling I view the manifested artworks as traces of processes which “ceaselessly unfold through contingent,... reflexive and playful practices.”⁷⁵ These manifestations are not “coherent” and “stable” representations of the world, they are negotiators, “they precede and produce the territory they purportedly represent.”⁷⁶

Through these processes I excavate the things themselves, working between object and image or testing the limitations of the single, untouched sheet of graph paper, drawn line or photograph. In one iteration, I create a diagram for the past and future of a photograph. In other instances I use processes of mapping and diagramming within a more playful and intimate mode. For example, I choose a set of materials or objects, create a scene or topology, and set to mapping them through tracing changes in their color, scale or type. These images and objects carry the appearance of objective knowledge, but in fact, it is knowledge of a different type — playful, processual and subjective (Fig. 21).

In art-making, these processes are loosened from the limitations of hypothesis to become imaginative in their purpose. They become expansive and elastic attempts at making sense through making in playful yet sincere ways. In my thesis work, the acts of mapping and diagram-



Figure 21. Excerpt from "How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist", 2018.

ming situate themselves on strange topologies, considering the minutia of the material and gestural world. This is done with no intention beyond a continued commitment to learning to see, to understanding the relationship between process and end-result. Drawing blurs the lines between objective and subjective worlds, asserting the value and the complexity of processes of knowing as, perhaps, the only sure things.

IV. Play and Openness

In the studio, play is a method for testing the boundaries of things and exercising materials and processes. Play contains “a delicate balance between knowledge and uncertainty.”⁷⁷ To be playful is to be productive without being purposeful. It allows processes to evolve in expansive ways, free from the constraints of necessary goals. Intrinsic in its value, play does not require a purpose beyond itself. Although play can be goal-oriented, its rules and boundaries are different than everyday life.⁷⁸ In play there is space to think and feel differently. Within constraints that are known to be imagined and are entered into conscientiously, there is freedom. This ability to think and feel differently through play is why it remains a method integral to my work. It allows me to explore processes of making and drawing while remaining focused on the process itself in order to consider it more deeply.

To use the materials and processes of knowledge production such as paper, mapping and diagramming playfully is to take them outside of their regular contexts, to understand them in new and imaginative ways, to turn objectivity on its head through the subtle use of the hand, rearranging it as a potentially contingent and tenuous thing. As an experience, play simulates our “process of knowing of the world in microcosm.”⁷⁹ It asserts method over result, looking at “what things do, not what they *are*.”⁸⁰ In this imaginative realm play allows for new ways for me to look at and think about the screens of the world, the materials before me and processes I employ.

Play is also incorporated into the manifested work's relationship with the viewer. Although finished, much of my work remains intentionally ambiguous in content and unfixed in its materiality. Delicate threads, crumpled paper, silk and powdered soil respond to the lightest touch. Drawing is used to create complex constellations of layered but mysterious information manifesting an imagined universe of articulated line (Fig. 22).⁸¹ This notion of openness is crucial to Umberto Eco's definition of "open work" which uses ambiguity and saturation of content to destabilize information rather than assert a particular representation of the world through art-making. It invites the viewer to "accept the challenge posed by this open message and to fill the invisible form by his or her own codes."⁸² This task is completed in the form of subjective, interpretive mental play for the process to come full circle.⁸³

My aim for this openness is for the work's meaning to remain unfixed, so that this process itself can come into focus more clearly. This sense of openness is perhaps even more peculiar when shared via the aesthetics of mapping and diagramming, so often associated with a clarity of communication and purpose. The art work becomes a potential ground for "the construction and erosion of literal meaning," tempting new discoveries and asserting themselves as things to be solved.⁸⁴



Figure 22. Excerpt from *Extraneous Matter*, 2018.

Notes for Methodology

70 Malafouris. 18.

71 Malafouris. 97.

72 Van Cauteran. 233.

73 Whittle. 11.

74 Whittle. 14.

75 Robert Kitchin, Justin Gleeson and Martin Dodge, "Unfolding mapping practices: a new epistemology for cartography", *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (2013): 480. Accessed December 7th, 2016, doi:10.1111/j.1475-5661.2012.00540.x

76 Kitchin. 481.

77 Upton. 10.

78 Upton. 14.

79 Upton. 144.

80 Upton. 128.

81 Van Cauteran. 12.

82 Whittle. 106.

83 Upton. 259.

84 Whittle. 106.



DESCRIPTION OF WORK



My thesis work consists of four major components: a mid-scale floor-sculpture, a video projected onto a drawing, a digitally printed, soft-bound book and a sculptural installation consisting of six table-top works. The exhibition's title "*How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist*" originates in the tradition of koans, statements created in order to provoke doubt regarding the nature of reality through paradox.⁸⁵ To clench one's fist is a gesture of decisiveness, but it is also an action of holding something precious — an instrument for use

or a particularly elusive idea. For this work “*How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist*” is a koan that acts as both a set of instructions and a question to be asked.

I. Troubling the Field

Troubling the Field is the first piece the viewer encounters when entering the exhibition. It is a floor sculpture-cum-ground work which forms a floating topology. Reminiscent of shadowed museum dioramas, the sculpture sets up a ground that integrates the material fields of archeology and surveying, places of soil sifting and excavation, with a mathematical plane of delineated lines, threaded connections and models for things to be made real (Fig. 23). Here, mapping is referenced in both its ideal and embodied forms. Its tools — chalk, line and thread — lie dormant, becoming landscape. These forms of knowing a site become the site itself.

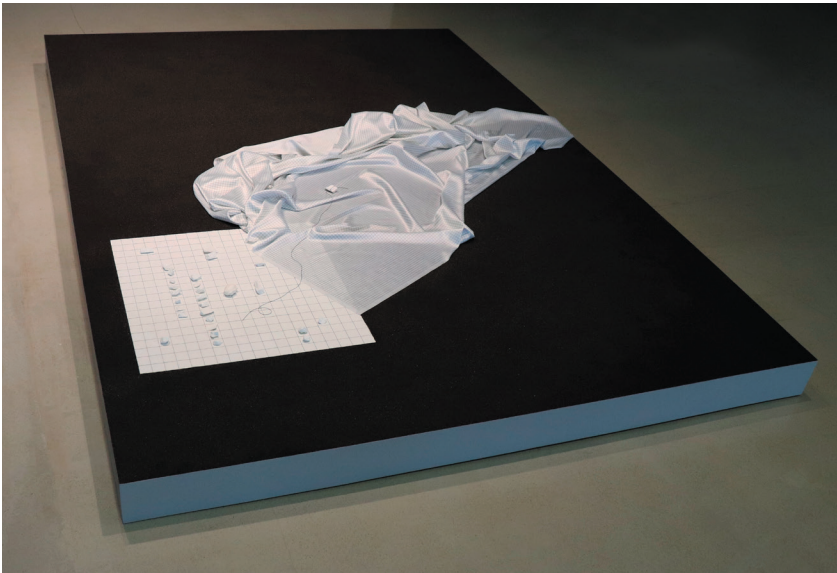


Figure 23. *Troubling the Field*, Soil, chalk, thread, silk, paint and ink, 2018.

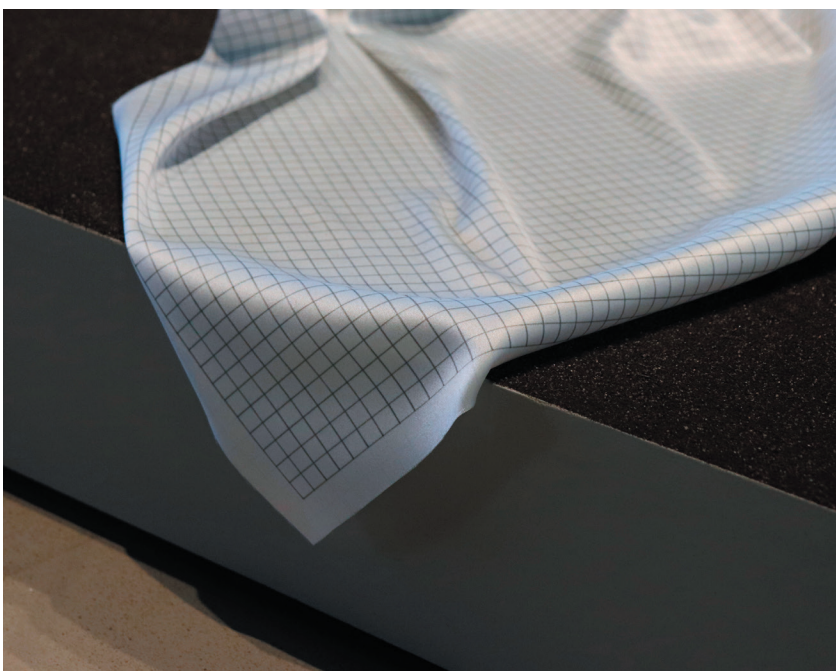
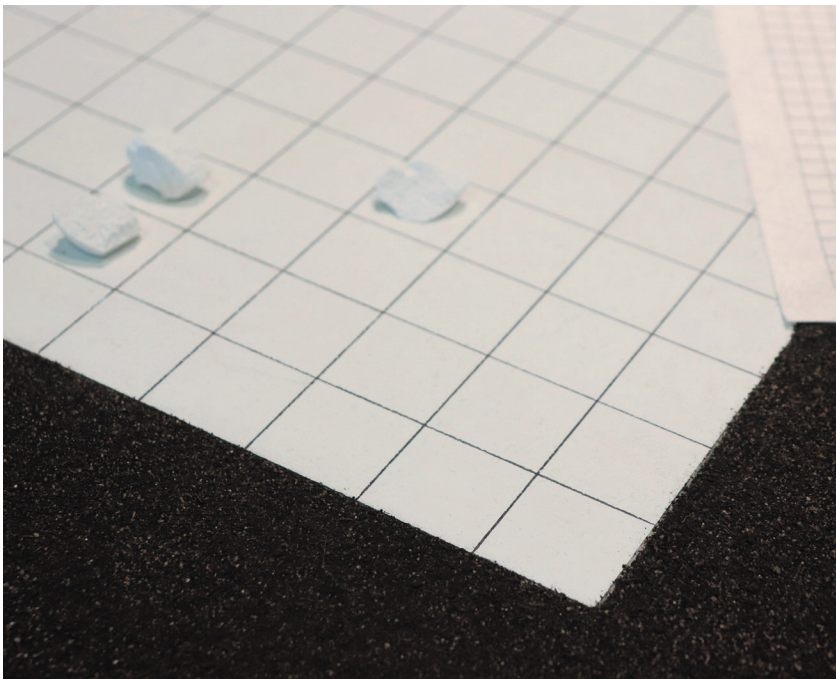


Figure 24-25. *Troubling the Field*, Soil, chalk, thread, silk, paint and ink, 2018.

At the heart of this site sits a small clay object, the interior structure of my left hand, placed upon a gridded square that references a rudimentary technique of archeological excavation (Fig. 24). From this central moment the work moves outwards to form a tenuous link between the hand's interior and its archeological findings, carefully arranged small shards of chalk and a silken, painterly plane of a world altogether immaterial (Fig. 25). These fields form a reimagined space and site of contemplation — a place of origin — be it an ideal, gridded form or the untouched surface of a field yet to be furrowed. It is a place in which multiple methods of understanding our foundations exist, both material and cerebral.

II. Companion (To Touch and be Touched by the World)

Next in the exhibition the viewer encounters *Companion (To Touch and be Touched by the World)*, an eleven minute single-channel video projected on an ink drawing on graph paper. The video visually narrates a set of processes — the investigation of materials through the conflation of drawing, baking and cleaning. Lines are made in flour, yeast is transformed into dough and the gridded surface for these actions is erased by a scrubbing sponge (Fig. 26/27). With this conflation the video brings together a spectrum of processes or ways of knowing the world into conversation with one another within one spatial, temporal moment. Through the association with the grid and the attentiveness of the hands, these everyday processes are elevated to exercises, acts of knowing in their own right. They become more than the constant companions of our lives, situating themselves as the quiet and omnipresent negotiators and sustainers in our experience.

The video flips back and forth between making and exploration with the hand as the instrument of creation (Fig. 26/27). Throughout the work,

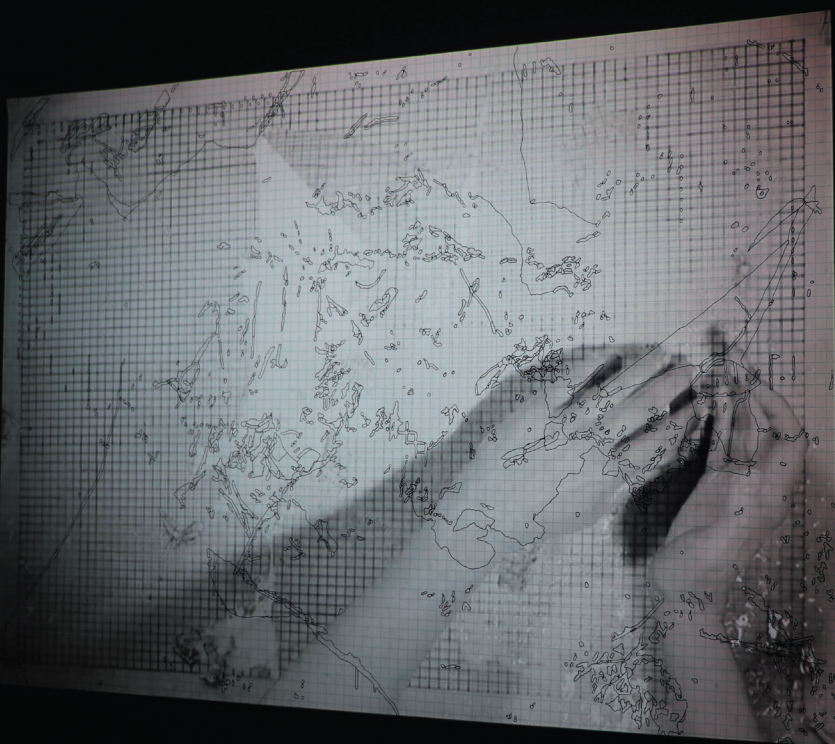
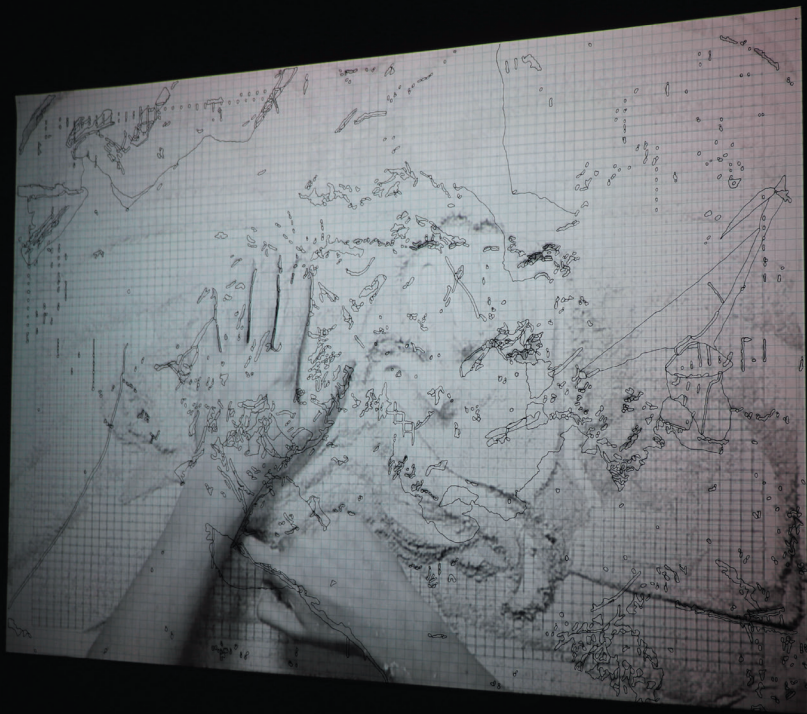


Figure 26-27.
Companion (To Touch and be Touched by the World), drawing/projection, 2018.

materials are shaped, transformed, attended to and returned to themselves, situating the act of making as something to be considered unto itself. The possibilities of these generative gestures and actions are confined within the plane of a 17" x 22" sheet of gridded graph paper, all actions existing in reference to the grid, until the moment of its erasure.

The drawing upon which *Companion* is projected instantiates a third mode of containment — the containment of the body in space and time, into moving image and photographic still. To produce the drawing, the eleven-minute video was paused at several points throughout its runtime. At each point the frozen frame was documented through the gentle tracing of shapes until a loose image was formed. These "frozen facts" are layered, accumulating to create a mass, each moment inseparable from the last. Through layering, these attempts at mapping an image are lost, their initial impetus towards information obfuscated. They only come to be fully realized in moments of synchronicity, when edges meet and masses are outlined. Through these moments of synchronicity and disjuncture, a space and a tension unfolds between the temporal, the embodied and their trace or document.

III. "How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist"

The table-top sculptures in the latter half of my exhibition remain unfixed, each substrate providing a playful approach to mapping the parameters of drawing as a generative act (Fig. 28). Wayfinding, the viewer makes their way through the space. In this work, as well as the others in the exhibition, the surface and substrate being *worked on* plays an active role in the formation of the work. "How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist" is the title of both the exhibition and this sculptural installation. In its literal translation the word koan means



Figure 28. Installation view of "How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist", 2018.

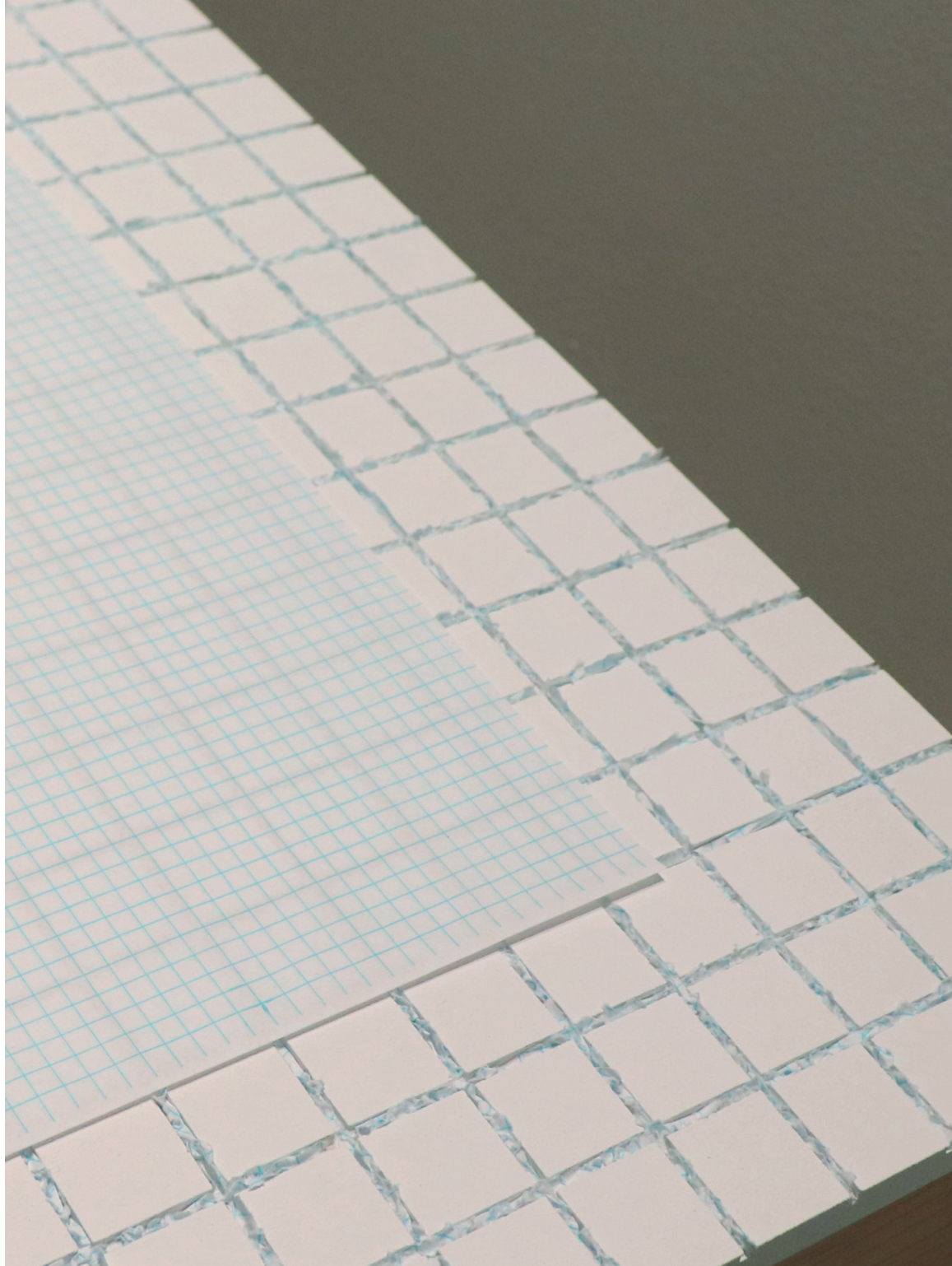


Figure 30. "How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist",graph paper, 2018.

the “table” or “bench” of a “magistrate” — a surface upon which to clarify what things are via how they came to be.⁸⁶ A table is a surface for activity, play, learning and knowing — a place for things to be made and lines to be drawn. Each table's dimensions are based on a different architectural drawing format from 8.5”x11” to 36”x48”, standardized sizes and gridded forms aimed at the processing and containment of ideas (Fig. 29/30). The heights of the tables also activate different ways of looking, from a range of observation levels they move between active and passive forms of encounter. The viewer encounters them in particular ways between the ground, to just below eye level.

Moments of making have been frozen into traced, photographic topologies and miniature life-forms made from the memory of the marked gesture of a hand upon material. They live in tension between embodied experience and its memory, things rethought out and made anew. They are a repository for the trace of the human hand as it moves through processes of problem solving and play (Fig. 29). The work traverses between the actions of knowing, mapping, diagramming,

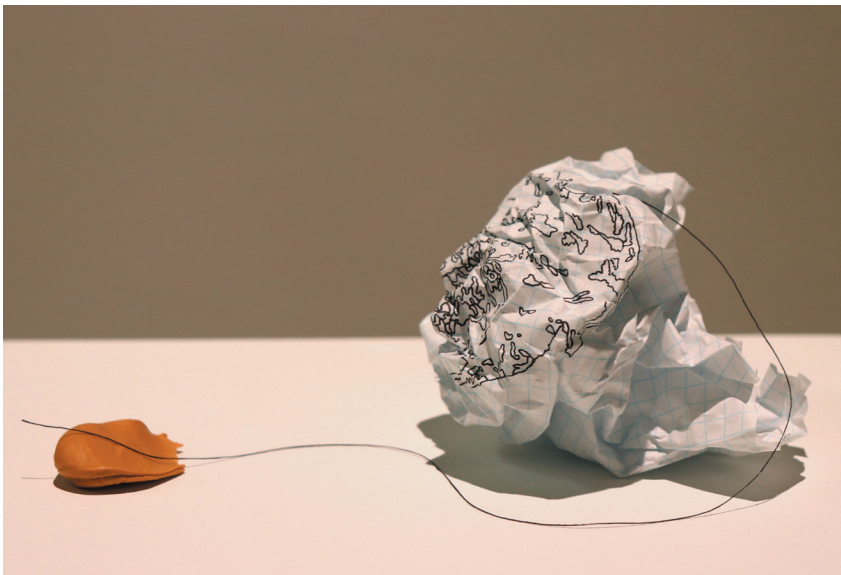


Figure 29. “How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist”, graph paper, plasticine, 2018.



Figure 31. "How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist", soil, clay, mylar, 2018.

modeling and figuring and their instruments, photographic images, drawing utensils, graph paper and clay models. Each surface excavates, manipulates and upends material and visual information in a new way to consider it from all sides, to consider its nature rather than its result (Fig. 31/32).

IV. Extraneous Matter

Sitting on a pedestal is a 12"x12" soft-bound book entitled *Extraneous Matter*. This work acts as a compendium of both process and result, as it documents the manifestation of the work through its processual evolution. Each image is constructed through the layering and juxtaposition of photographs, drawings, video stills and digital glitches (Fig. 33/34). Through its construction, it combines multiple processes of drawing, mapping and composing which shift back and forth between

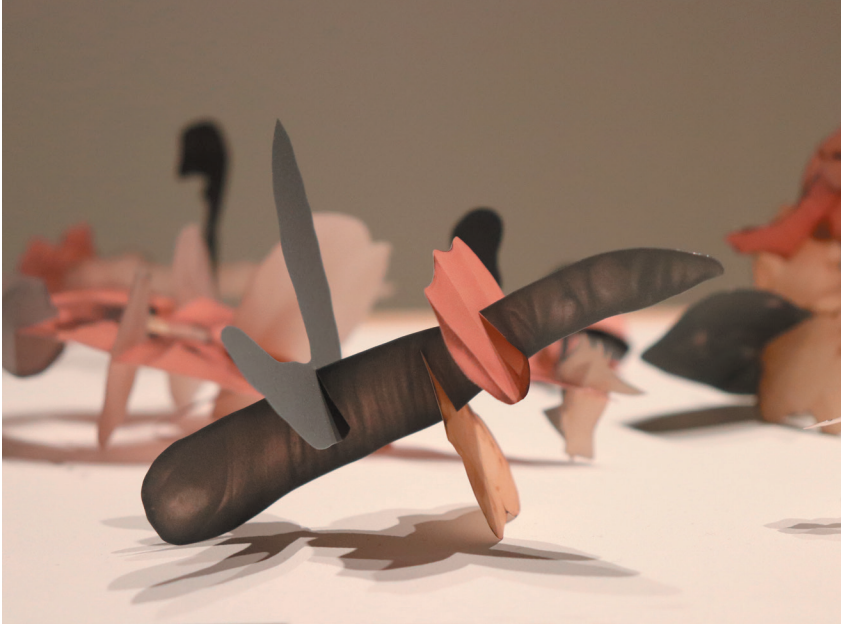


Figure 32. "How to draw a line by the clenching of a fist", soil, clay, mylar, 2018.

digital and material worlds. The pages activate a journey through confused topologies and complex constellations of information, sometimes distilled and at other times impenetrable. A bringing together of all that is extraneous — the processual glitches so often deleted, the small tracings of an assumed to be idle hand (Fig. 33/34). As this visual data is transferred into book form, it provides further opportunity for the reconfiguration and reimagining of the ways in which we hold the temporal and embodied in static form, what is retained and erased from the page. The work asserts itself as both a book, a container of and for knowledge, and a record of seemingly disjunctive narratives, highlighting the complexity and peculiarity that exists at the core of every journey towards knowing.

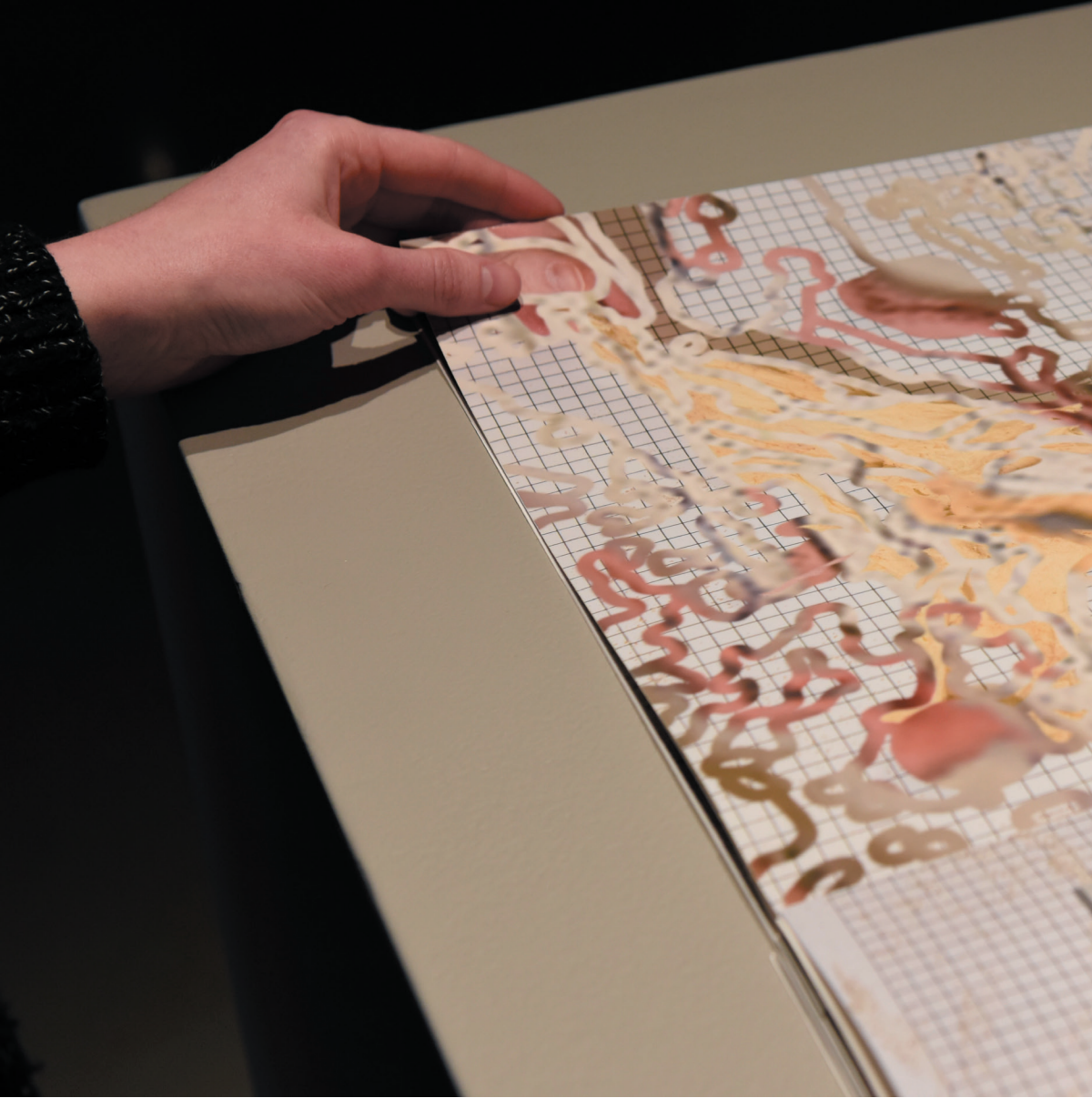
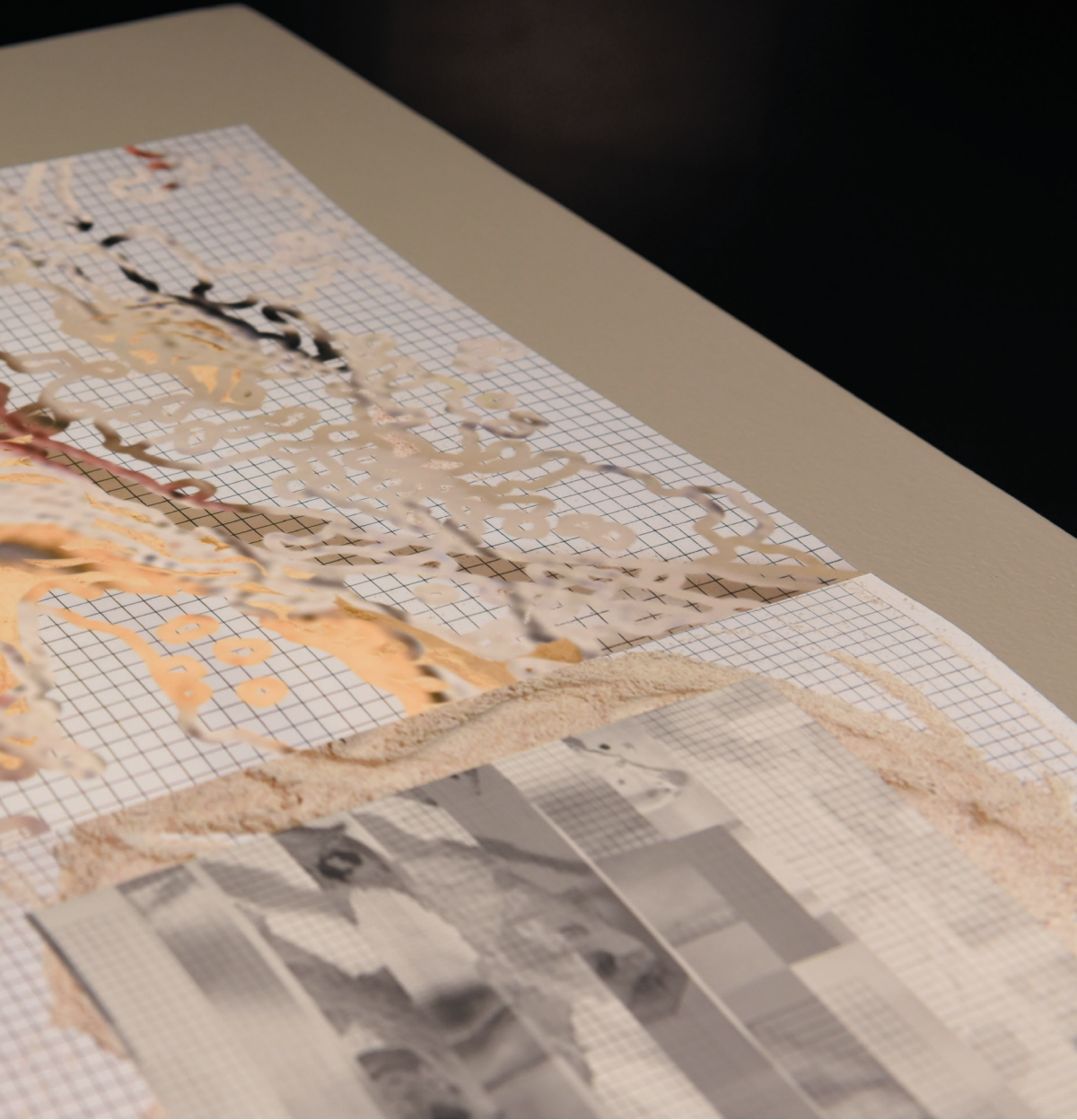


Figure 33. *Extraneous Matter*, soft-bound digital book, 2018.



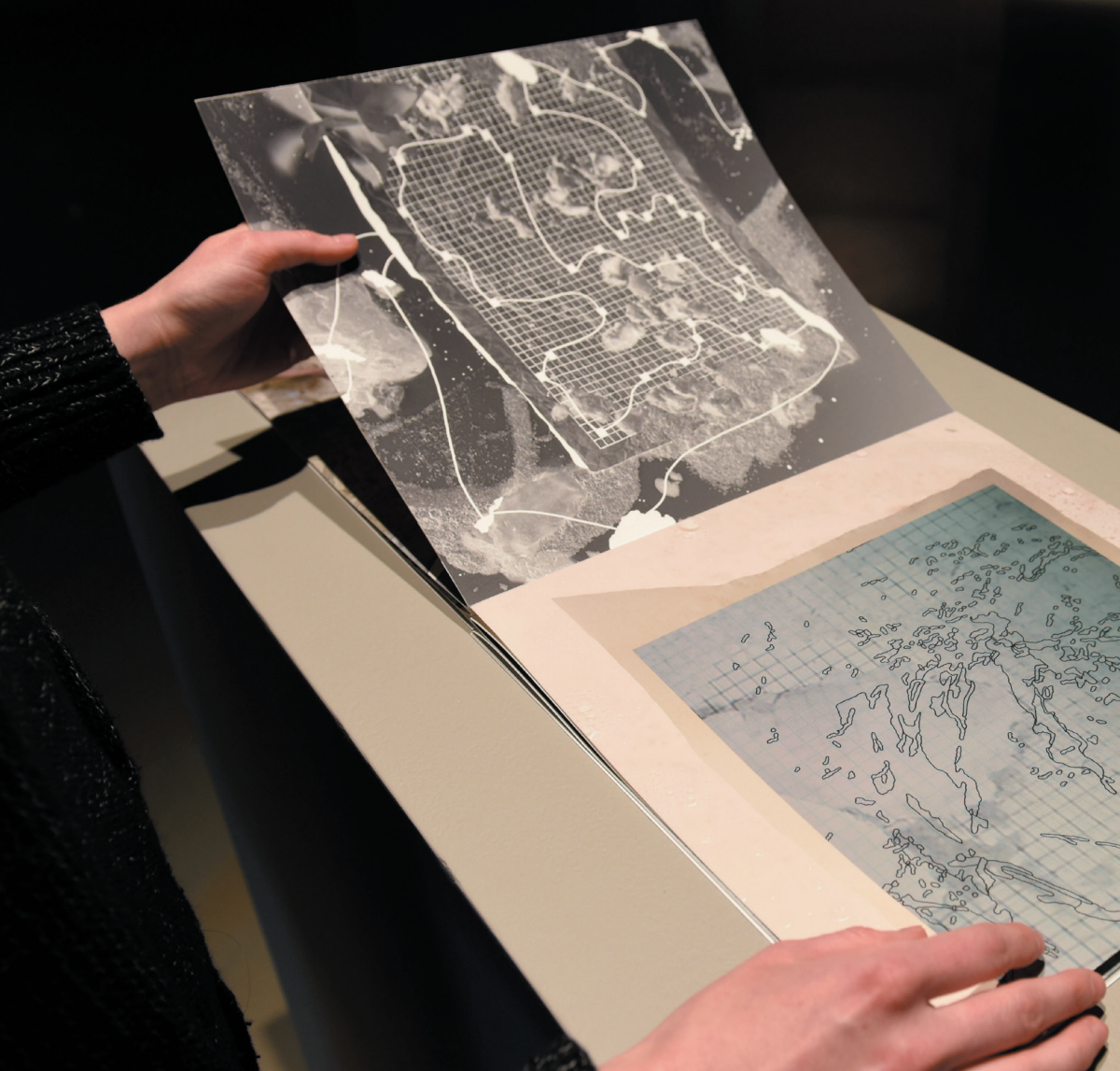
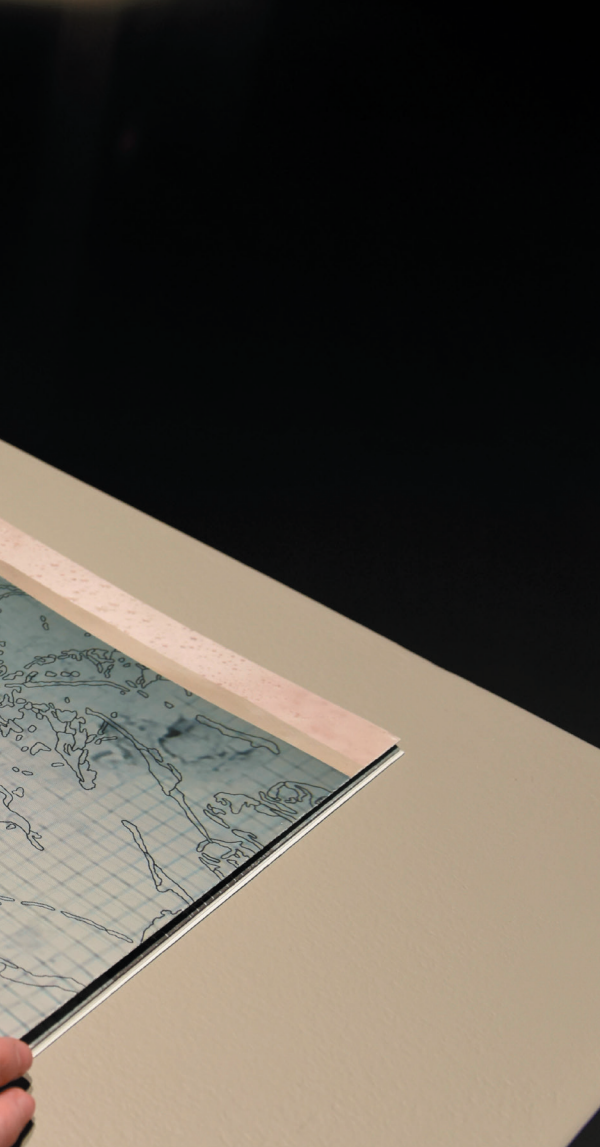


Figure 34. *Extraneous Matter*, soft-bound digital book, 2018.



Notes for Description of Work

85 Steven Heine. *Zen Koans*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 2014), 1.

86 Heine. 1.



CONCLUSION



Looking, Thinking and Knowing — Again

To return to the questions that ground my research, my methods and my manifested work. Is it possible to locate a balance between subjective and objective knowing, in order to understand them as interwoven and equally valuable processes of knowing? How can we understand and assert acts of making, specifically drawing, as a generative process integral to knowing? Finally, how do processes of drawing, mapping and

diagramming — the systems and tools we use to visualize and excavate the world around us — inform the content they represent? How do they teach us how to see?

My work and methods manifest themselves by investigating potential points of intersection between objective and subjective knowing. For me, the most fundamental point of intersection is process. Process is the informer, the movement that defines the result. I have come to situate processes of making, specifically drawing, as the cornerstone of my inquiry. Through my creative practice and research I discovered drawing as an elastic and expansive processor, player and problem-solver.

Drawing is a form of embodied knowledge that is attentive to its own subjectivity, generating its own visual frameworks of fluidity, utility and contingency. By way of framing the world, drawing makes us aware of the frame itself. Through drawing I excavated acts of mapping and diagramming as tools we use to situate ourselves within the visual world. I tested these processes of knowledge making, the materials of visual learning and my own body to test their capabilities and limitations, their potentiality and their subjectivity. The excavation of this interwoven ground between acts of drawing and my body, as frameworks which screen the visual world, has unfolded towards the discovery of a new structure through which to think about knowing. For me, knowledge is process rather than a result.

These assertions do not formulate themselves as answers, so much as provide a structure through which to speculate, imagine and consider the relationship between seeing, making and knowing with greater nuance. In this work, through playful yet attentive application, processes of drawing have been extended towards their limits. The resulting images and objects are mysterious, curious things, in constant fluctuation between being clarified and unreadable, making strange these actions and instruments so often associated with the production of what is often considered a more serious kind of knowledge. Yet, in this making

strange, there is a productivity as materials and actions are worked through, taken apart and put back together to be looked at from all sides through the hand and eye.

My work here has provided me with a deeper understanding of what it means to make marks upon the world and, in turn, what it can mean to see them and know them. Although on the surface this work may assert itself as an insular practice, I believe its investigation has far-reaching implications. To return to Goethe's notion of the human being as "the most powerful and exact instrument if we take the trouble to sufficiently refine our sensibilities."⁸⁷ For me, there is nothing so fundamental as a nuanced understanding of the complexities of knowing in a world of increasingly difficult and saturated visual content. A world in which knowledge has always been the currency of power, as well as purpose, and in which the delineating lines of visual information are more blurred than they have ever been. In this world, thinking about seeing is a necessary skill for navigating visuality in informed and thoughtful ways. This work offers an invitation to look quietly, to ask questions and to examine the world in the hopes of learning how to touch and see with subtlety.

Notes for Conclusion

87 Anderson. 21.

Works Cited

- Abram, David. *The Spell of the Sensuous*, New York: Vintage Books, A Division of Random House Inc., 1997. Print.
- Anderson, Gemma. *Drawing as a Way of Knowing in Art and Science*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2017. Print.
- Brandhauer, Aline Chipman with Harmony Hammond and Ann Wilson, *Agnes Martin, Works on Paper*, Santa Fe: Museum of Fine, Museum of New Mexico, 1998. Print.
- Bertolaso, Marta and Nicola Di Stephano (edited by). "The Hand, Perception, Cognition, Action" in *Studies in Applied Philosophy, Epistemology and Rational Ethics*, Vol. 38, Basel: Springer International Publishing, 2017. Print.
- Cameron, Dan. *Living Inside the Grid*, New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art Publishing, 2003. Print.
- Dieter Schwartz, Herausgegeben (edited by). *Agnes Martin, Writings*, Hamburg: Hatje Cantz, 2005. Print.
- Eleey, Peter and Douglas Fogle, Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson, Yasmit Raymond. *Mark Manders, Parallel Occurrences / Documented Assignments*, Los Angeles: Aspen Art Museum and Hammer Museum, University of California Press, 2010. Print.
- Gansterer, Nikolaus. "Projects", <http://www.gansterer.org/>, Last modified April 7th 2018.
- Govan, Michael (organized by). *Reversible Destiny — Arakawa/Gins*, New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 1997. Print.
- Graham, Gordon. *An Introduction to Aesthetics*, London: Routledge Press. 2005. Print.

- Gross, Jennifer R. (edited by). *Drawing Redefined*, New Haven: Yale University Press. 2015. Print.
- Heine, Steven. *Zen Koans*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press. 2014. Print.
- Hetherington, Stephen (compiled by). *Epistemology: The Key Thinkers*, New York: Continuum Publishers, 2012. Print.
- Higgins, Hannah B. *The Grid Book*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2009. Print.
- Ingold, Timothy. *Lines: A Brief History*, London: Routledge Classics. 2016. Print.
- Krauss, Rosalind E. "The / Cloud /" in *Agnes Martin* by Barbara Haskell, New York: Whitney Museum of American Art Publishing, 1992. Print.
- Krauss, Rosalind E. *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1986. Print.
- Malafouris, Lambros. *How Things Shape the Mind: A Theory of Material Engagement*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013. Print.
- Munroe, Alexandra. Lee Ufan, *Marking Infinity*, New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2011. Print.
- Schröder, Klaus Albrecht and Elsy Lahner (edited by), *Drawing Now 2015*, Munich: Hirmer Publishers (bilingual edition), 2015. Print.
- Upton, Brian. *The Aesthetic of Play*, Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2015. Print
- Van Cauteran, Phillipe and Martin Germann (edited by). *Drawing, The Bottom Line*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015. Print.
- Whittle, Michael. "Romantic Objectivism: Diagrammatic Thought in Contemporary Art" (PhD dissertation, Kyoto City University of Arts, 2015). Print.

