

# Perception, Location, Interaction

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## **Abstract**

My thesis work examines ideas around the stereotypical conditions of the Post-Modern existence – alienation, over-stimulation, the loss of one's ability to differentiate between the external and internal worlds in their own life, and the increasingly grey area between what is global and what is local.

Through the development of this work I looked to a number of influences and inspirations. Visually, I looked to the games of Gabriel Orozco, the paintings of Julie Mehretu, a video piece by Miranda July, and Franz Masereel's *The City*. I found resonating ideas in the work of Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, Zygmunt Bauman's *Liquid Modernity* series, and Jorge Luis Borges' "Library of Babel" and "Garden of Forking Paths."

This paper traces the development of my work exploring the presence of bodies and the space they take up or inhabit from a large-scale print that references the cosmos and the viewer's place in it; a screen printed booklet of "symbolized" diagrams that center on the way humans perceive and take in information; to a re-appropriated game that directly engages the viewer in the gallery to draw their attention to how they navigate social space and perhaps challenge assumptions of individual and community responsibility.



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## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

This thesis traces my trajectory at The University of the Arts over the last two years -- what I have attempted, learned, and now work towards as an artist. My decision to attend graduate school came several years after receiving my undergraduate degree in 2004 from Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon. I had moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 2007 and quickly found connections in the printmaking community there. I began volunteering at Artists Image Resource (AIR), an artist run nonprofit printmaking studio. My time at AIR gave me the opportunity to become a better screen printer and introduced me to letterpress printing. Through my connections at AIR I also began branching into teaching and occasionally showing art in various venues around town. The most important aspect of my time in Pittsburgh was finding opportunities to use my BFA in professional settings. I began searching for ways to gain exposure and opportunities as a working artist. After four years in Pittsburgh, working and teaching at AIR, making art in my free time -- it became obvious to me that graduate school should be the next step in the advancement of my artistic practice.

My work while attending the University of the Arts has examined ideas around the stereotypical conditions of the Post-Modern existence – alienation, over-stimulation, and the loss of one's ability to differentiate between the external and internal worlds in a person's life. This has led to work concerning the dualities present in an individual's

existence: how distinctly unique our lives are and, at the same time, universal. I find this work particularly relevant to contemporary culture because we, as humans, must find new ways to navigate the spaces between increasingly grey areas of what is local and what is global.

Conceptually this has led to research in many areas: architecture studies such as *Learning from Las Vegas* or Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, sociological studies by Zygmunt Bauman (his *Liquid Modernity* series), and specific works of fiction such as Jorge Luis Borges' "Library of Babel" and "Garden of Forking Paths." I have also found many points of inspiration from philosopher Slavoj Žižek and others when discussing individual responsibility in increasingly global communal spaces or situations (*Examined Life*).

Visually, I have worked with a number of approaches. I began by using the process of overprinting screenprinted images to create an effect of overstimulation. Now I have reversed my approach. I am distilling my images in an attempt to find ways to "symbolicize" them, making new archetypal images. Typically this work has centered on the ways humans perceive and take in information. This line of work will be discussed in chapter three - *Things We Know But Cannot See: An Instructional Pamphlet*.

A second approach has been to work with ideas of scale - specifically, the cosmos. I created images using salt contact printed onto chemically coated paper. I had great

luck in creating these starscapes; a range of different kinds of dots created from salt and chemical that reference a physical fore-, mid-, and background. There is something fantastical about these images – the ethereal nature of the exposed image, the quality of the paper, and physical size of the complete piece. Most importantly, this work allows the viewer to imagine the infinite in the miniature or the macro in the micro. I have called this work *Location In Space - You, Me, We* and it will be discussed in chapter four.

Finally, I have also worked with the re-appropriation of the popular game, Jenga. Unlike the other pieces in this paper, this game directly engages the viewer and their sense of social space and engagement. My work *Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga*, discussed in chapter two, questions the role of the artist, what art is, and how we choose to interact with it. This chapter will consider why or why not this line of my practice fits into the Relational Aesthetic model, an art movement championed by Nicolas Bourriaud in the late 1990's that typically activates social settings or spaces in the creation of work (Bourriaud).

Ultimately, this paper will show how all three pieces deal with the presence of a physical body or bodies and the space(s) they take up or inhabit. The use of different media helps to show different sides to these ideas and allows for a wide range of interpretation from a viewer.

## **Chapter Two**

### ***Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga***

#### **Introduction**

As an undergraduate art student I was able to fully explore my interests in radical politics. As a result I spent a lot time asking not how to live my art, but, instead, how to live my politics. The decisions I made moved my artistic practice towards Social Engagement work, printmaking, or otherwise working with common and cheap materials.

My reintroduction into an art school atmosphere several years later, brought with it many things but one important element was the art critique. While not conscious of it at the time, how I directed and manufactured critiques would later become an important tool for me in developing my thesis work. Realizing the utility of impartial critique gained through access to a community of artists inspired me to broaden my professional practice as well. What began in my first year as building connections to studios, various community groups, and other like-minded artists, has developed sustainable opportunities that will fulfill my need for creative dialog and critique in the future.

My piece *Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga* is a re-appropriation of the popular game, Jenga. Unlike other work presented in my thesis exhibition, this game

directly engages the viewer and their sense of social space and engagement. *Where We Put Down* questions the role of the artist, what art is, and how we choose to interact with it.

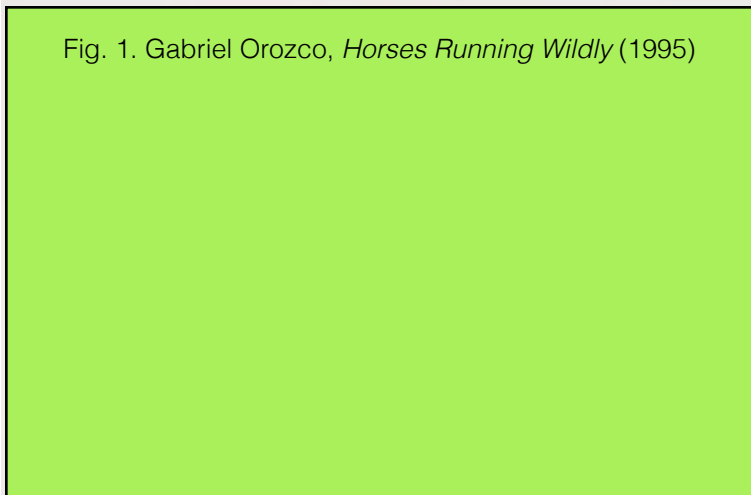
## Influences

I recently discovered the work of Gabriel Orozco. His oeuvre employs a wide range of media: installations, drawings, photographs, sculptures and more. For purposes of this paper, I will focus on his work that deals with the appropriation of various games such as *Horses Running Endlessly* and *Ping-Pond Table*.

*Horses Running Endlessly* (1995)(Fig. 1) is a re-appropriation of the classic chess board game. Three separate variations exist: the most commonly documented version shows a board that is four times the size of a regular board, is comprised of four different colored squares on it, and is presented with knights as the only playing pieces (also in four different colors).

One can assume that the change in scale is felt by any player of this game -- the board is larger, there are more pieces, and potentially more sides to be played.

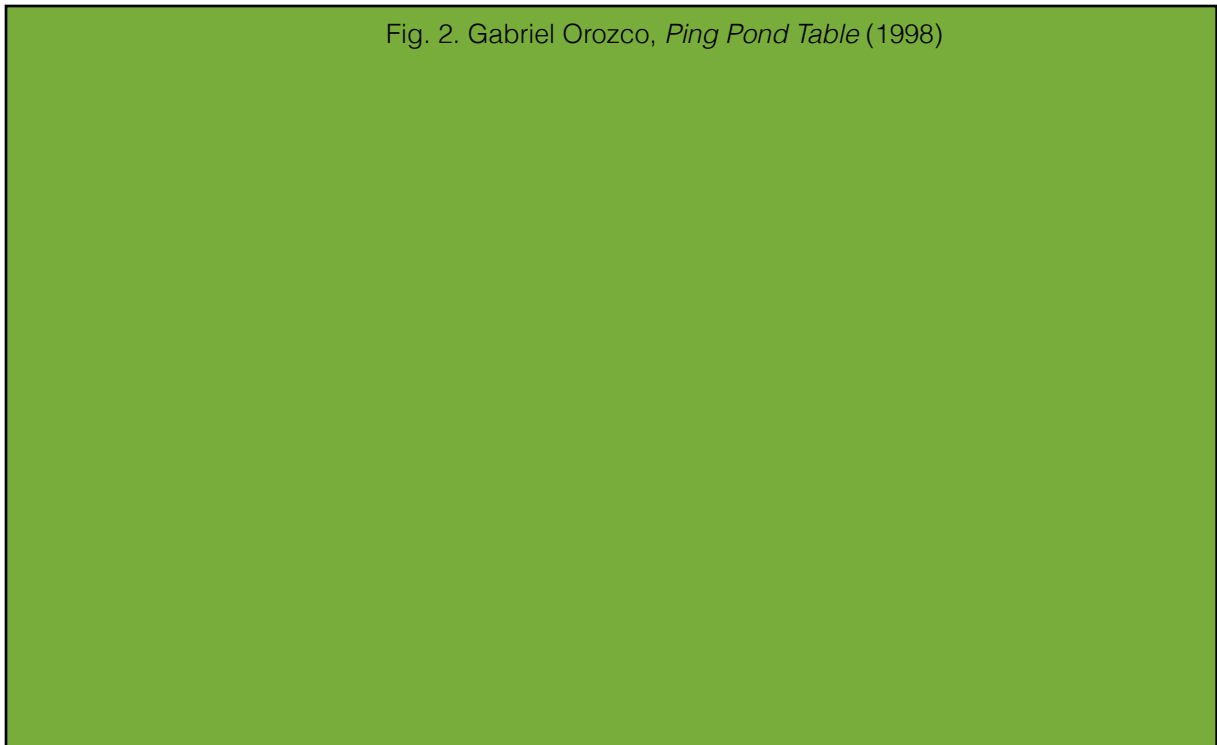
Fig. 1. Gabriel Orozco, *Horses Running Wildly* (1995)



Does this mean the pace of the game is slower or faster than a usual chess game? Any player will be struck by the pieces available -- the knight only moves in a semicircular path. This large playing field is filled with pieces moving in strange, circuitous paths perhaps even circling back upon themselves. How does one win such a game?

Another piece, *Ping-Pond Table* (1998)(Fig. 2), also takes a well known game and modifies it in very simple ways. Here there are two ping pong tables intersecting each other with a space created at their center to house a small pond - complete with lily pads. Another alteration is possibly noticed while playing: the usual ninety degree corners of the ping pong table have been rounded off, creating an almost half-circle shape that a player stands behind. How does this affect the player, physically? Does it make it easier to play ping pong? What happens when you lose a ball to the pond?

Fig. 2. Gabriel Orozco, *Ping Pond Table* (1998)





Orozco uses games because he is interested in the spaces they create. Orozco says in one interview, “What I like about games is that a game is a thing on its own. ... When it is a good game, it’s so passionate that you can really get into this world and just live in it for a moment. When it is a good game, it’s an intelligent thing, and that’s why it’s so passionate.” (Orozco) He manipulates the rules of the game because he is taking a familiar object and changing it to renew a player’s perception of it. As a result of these changes, the player is open to the game and assumptions they may make while playing.

### ***Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga***

Jenga is a game composed of fifty-four wood blocks built into a simple tower structure. The blocks are stacked in layers of three, each layer directly on top of each other and at a right angle to the previous layer. Using only one hand, a player is allowed to take a block from any layer below the top-most one and then place it on top at a right angle to the layer below it. The last player to stack a block without making the tower fall wins the game.

*Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga* (Fig. 3) is comprised of four sets of Jenga games, stained four different colors to denote different towers, placed on four separate pedestals accompanied by rules and guides for play. The rules follow similarly to traditional Jenga with one slight change: here you must transfer the block you have successfully pulled from your tower to the top of any of the other three towers.

It is noted in the rules that the pacing of any one game is not dictated by any of the other games concurrently in play and, through careful wording, that navigation of social interactions is inevitable.

The four separate towers, while in play, create situations for players to navigate, both socially and spatially. Choices that players need to make, such as which block to pull from their tower and which tower to place said block on top of, determines how they move through this space. Due to the proximity of the towers to each other, players of one tower are always aware of the physical location and movement of players at other towers.



Fig. 3. J. Pascoe, *Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga* (2013)

When not playing, the viewer can appreciate the colors of each tower, the language of the written instructions on the pedestals, the sculptural qualities of the pieces, etc. However, once they play the game they realize that there is much left open to

interpretation - What's stopping players at one tower from knocking over other player's towers (causing them to lose)? Once a tower has fallen, who is responsible for rebuilding it? Would the process of collecting blocks and rebuilding a tower cause another tower to fall? Does that matter?

Some larger questions to ask while playing *Where We Put Down* may be: What is my social responsibility in this situation? How do my actions challenge my sense of ethics, and vice versa? Do I cheer when another player loses? Finally, what happens if I choose not to play at all?

Orozco's pieces are a useful meditation for me when working on my own. It is my hope that my work will ask similar questions of any viewer-player as Orozco's does: What is my objective while playing this game? How do I win? How do I lose? When does this game end? We are both interested in the physical space created by these re-appropriated games; however, mine is more focused on the social spaces and interactions generated by play.

When first developing ideas for my thesis exhibition I often thought of the anxiety I feel when socially navigating the world around me and culture at-large. For example, I ask myself if the choice of college enrollment was a wise decision. I can work hard and try my best but, I can't really know if I will be able to find a job using my degree on the other side of graduation. These questions that have come from playing are analogous to the questions I ask myself when navigating my own anxieties and fears: How am I

going to be successful as an artist? When will these fears end? Due to the open-ended nature of play and language of the rules, players are asked similar questions of themselves, based on their personal anxieties and individual experiences while playing.

## **Development**

My work has often fallen somewhere between performance and installation, self-conscious and politicized. I want viewers to interact with my work, add to it, or take something away from it (sometimes literally). My history with radical politics as well as social work has led to an interest in creating work that is often open-ended, allowing the viewer to make their own conclusions. I am not interested in telling anyone the answers to the questions my work asks, nor am I interested in leading anyone down a path I have 'built' for them (Rancière in Bishop, 92). I am interested in offering opportunities for inquiry through the lens of my art and artistic practice.

What initially drew me to this line of inquiry was my exploration of social anxiety and alienation. I discovered the work of Melvin Seeman ("Social Alienation," Wikipedia) and his model of alienation that included six elements: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, social isolation, and self-estrangement. Seeman later added cultural estrangement as a classification to this model. These levels of alienation gave me ways to help identify why social interactions facilitated in works discussed previously are so important to me. In other words, because many of us in contemporary society feel

many or all the various levels of alienation, it is easier to interact with other people in severely mediated ways, i.e. through the internet. Similar to Orozco's games, I am interested in reintroducing social interactions to my viewers.

Changing the rules of Jenga in simple ways allows for a range of interpretations involving the rules of action and reaction, possible amorphous community or communal ties, and anxiety in the face of a plethora of choices available to the individual. At the most basic level, I see this re-appropriated Jenga game as a metaphor for living life in contemporary society. As you play this game, you become aware of the spread of options or choices before you. Similar to a decision diagram, one choice made will lead to another set of choices, which will lead to another set, etc. Like the character in Borges' "The Garden of Forking Paths," you can't really know where the path you choose today will lead you tomorrow. Inevitably, you must decide and hope the choice you make (the block pulled from your tower) will lead to an agreeable future and not an unpleasant one.

As the playing of Jenga can be a very social activity, I wanted to maintain that aspect despite any changes I would make in my re-appropriation of it. In fact, as my original interests stem from social anxiety, I wanted to find a way to make the act of playing raise various questions and quandries for the players.

I arrived at these choices through much deliberation -- figuring out different variations and staging 'game nights' with willing classmates to work out any issues that may

arise. *Where We Put Down*, as it is now, was developed largely through play -- while in action, I was able to witness and engage with my classmates while interacting with the game. (Fig. 4.)



Fig. 4. J. Pascoe., *Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga* (2013)

I learned that staging my work as a way of generating critique from my peers is invaluable to the development of my work, especially when elements of social interaction are present. Not only does it allow me to observe how people may or may not interact with my art before I install it in any final form but it also gives me the opportunity to try out variations of my ideas - letting me cut the variations that don't work as a method of finding the ones that do.

## Conclusion

Is my work part of the Relational Aesthetic model? According to Bourriaud, yes. This work is trying to “achieve modest connections, open up (One or two) obstructed passages, and connect levels of reality kept apart from one another.” (Bourriaud, 8.) Present in this piece are the modest connections of potential strangers meeting for the first time while playing my game, play prompts questions that may be hard to answer for any one participant, and connections of spheres of reality for a brief amount of time (playing common games in a rarified gallery space).

While I often feel distrustful of artists working within a Relational Aesthetic model as defined by Bourriaud - I also have to acknowledge a debt of experience to them. My conflict arises with work made in this context, work made with social interaction or participation in mind, because I question whether the viewer-participant walking away was ever greatly affected. Or did they simply have a really great meal in a gallery one time?

Claire Bishop in *Participation* shares similar feelings when she talks of “addressing the sense of unrealized political potential in the work Bourriaud describes,” and how “a subsequent generation of artists have begun to engage more directly with specific social constituencies, and to intervene critically in participatory forms of mass media entertainment.” (Bishop, 11-13.)

I can't claim that this piece will provide any of the impact that I fail to see in work by other artists falling under the umbrella of Relational Aesthetics, such as much of the work done by Miranda July or Harrell Fletcher. Regardless, I know I will continue to explore working in this rubric as a form of performative, experimental, and social art work.

*Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga* is a game that allows the viewer-player to navigate an interactive social setting in ways that, perhaps, challenge their assumptions of individual or community obligation and responsibility. The abstract and open-ended nature of play allows for the viewer-player to reference their own lived experience in order to make their own conclusions or decisions on the work.



## Chapter Three

### Things We Know But Cannot See - An Instructional Pamphlet

#### Introduction

My second semester at the University of the Arts was largely spent in preparation for and then responding to the work I created for my first Works In Progress show (Fig. 5). I was looking into topics such as alienation, estrangement, and overstimulation. This interest sprung from my introduction to the phenomenon of horror vacui, the fear of empty spaces (Roger, Ch. 2 and Rexer, 21-24). Typically, this presents itself in art as work that is void of blank or white spaces.

Using screen printing as a primary method, I created pieces that were overprinted on both sides of a piece of paper. I would print layers and layers of images until the piece looked finished. Images were taken from the definitions of words I didn't know on Dictionary.com. For a final installation, I took the overprinted images, cut out areas from each print I didn't think were successful, and affixed them as a mass onto the



Fig. 5. J. Pascoe, Works In Progress Show - Detail (2012).

gallery wall. I then went through and painted with white or ochre paint across all the hung images -- whiting out areas, painting paths between two areas, or highlighting details I thought were interesting.

While the process of creating this work was exhilarating, the critical response was not what I had anticipated. Constructive criticism from peers, mentors, and outside critics was enthusiastic but unsure as to overall content or what the base ideas were for the work. In fact, criticism was so consistent in these areas that I decided I had to reevaluate my methodologies.

If what I had thought was interesting or strong in my work was unclear to so many viewers then, perhaps, there was a miscommunication of ideas. While I wasn't able to utilize the critique as fully as I could have, this was the first time I realized that I could in the future take a more pro-active stance in my critiques. By staging them in certain ways to find answers to my artistic questions, I could create a testing ground for my work.

### ***Things We Know But Cannot See - An Instructional Pamphlet***

My starting point for the *Things We Know But Cannot See - An Instructional Pamphlet* was the surplus of images created for my first year Works In Progress show. I took a number of pieces left over from this show and highlighted several image areas I saw as important. I traced over these important areas, trying to mesh the disparate images

from the original source, distilling the images. In effect, I took a print with up to six or seven layers and created a single layer drawing from it. The results were interesting - it yielded imagery similar to what I wanted in my Works In Progress show, but gave me something that was easier to read visually.

Following this method, I worked from several other left-over images. Eventually, I moved from working with my old prints to building images of contour line figures in various spaces or configurations inspired from pictures of different sized crowds of people.

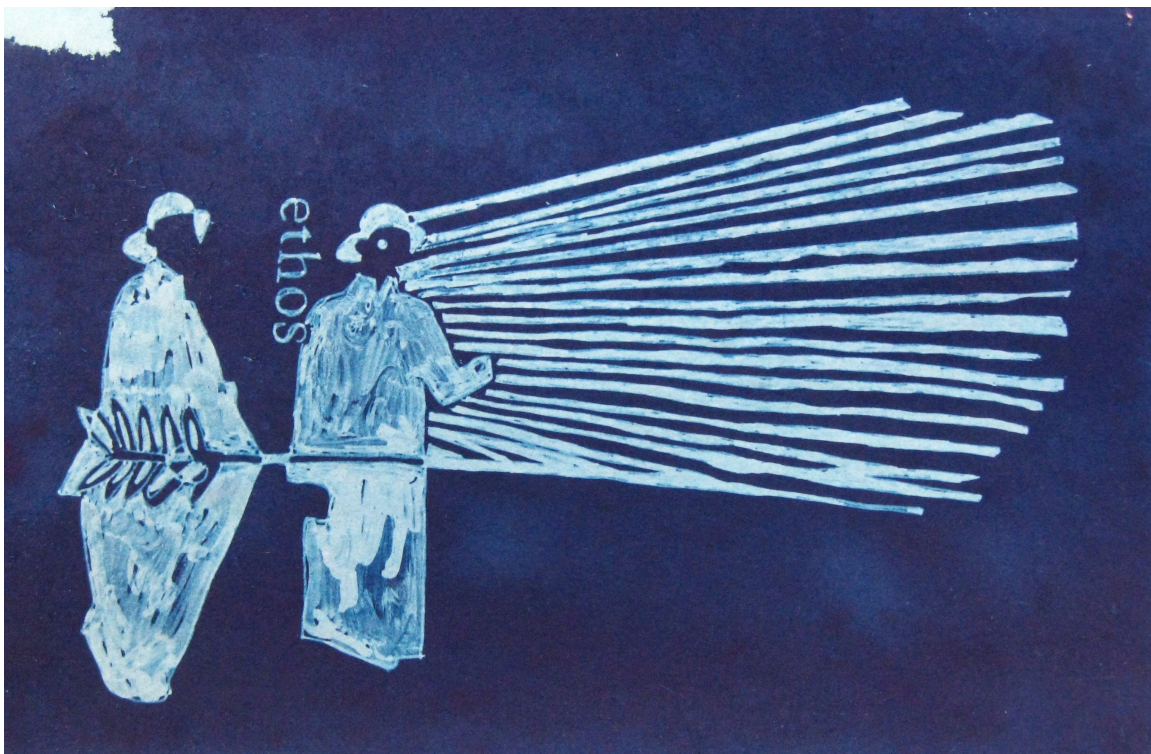


Fig. 6. J. Pascoe, *ethos* (2012)

Much of this work developed in the elective class Beginning Non-Silver Photography. It was an undergraduate class filled with, surprisingly, a large number of Illustration majors. These students helped me to feel comfortable developing and printing hand

drawn images rather than working from film negatives. This class proved very useful for the development of my thesis work as it was where I first revisited the images used in my first Works In Progress and began distilling them (Fig. 6). These images were later to become inspiration for the creation of *Things We Know*.

My work in the Non-Silver class became almost the entire bulk of my second year Work In Progress show. This show, in contrast to the first, yielded responses that were much more aligned with my intentions. When other people talked with me about these pieces, they often touched on the ideas and thoughts I had wished to convey. I believe my ideas were clearer in this show because I had reworked my imagery into these distilled versions, making them much more abstract than before, allowing for freedom of interpretation by the viewer. I also tried very hard to practice restraint when choosing what to hang and what not to hang. I began consciously to remind myself of the motto, "Less is more." Hanging fewer pieces, allowing them to breathe helped. I still printed a fairly large number of images and prints but edited out a large portion of them. In essence, the tactic of distilling or simplifying my images for greater success proved useful when hanging them as well.

My longstanding interest in printmaking also greatly informed the development of *Things We Know*. The ability to make work that is accessible to many people is very important to me. These interests have led me to look at the book format as a vehicle for my work. Specifically, the picture-book format.

For these reasons, screen printing has become a favored medium of mine. Offset lithography has also become a source of interest for me with continued access to The Borowsky Center for Publication Arts while attending the University of the Arts. I like these processes because an artist can create negatives using a wide range of techniques, allowing for a wide range of artistic possibility and comfort with materials. These two choices are able to quickly produce large edition sizes as well.

In a method that is accessible to people from around the world, I am interested in showing the connections between one person and another. *Things We Know* (Fig. 7) shows the rich interior life of one person, many people, and people in a crowd. Visually, the images literally depict the energy physical bodies put out into the world around us. I want to show these kinds of intangible things we know are there but cannot see.

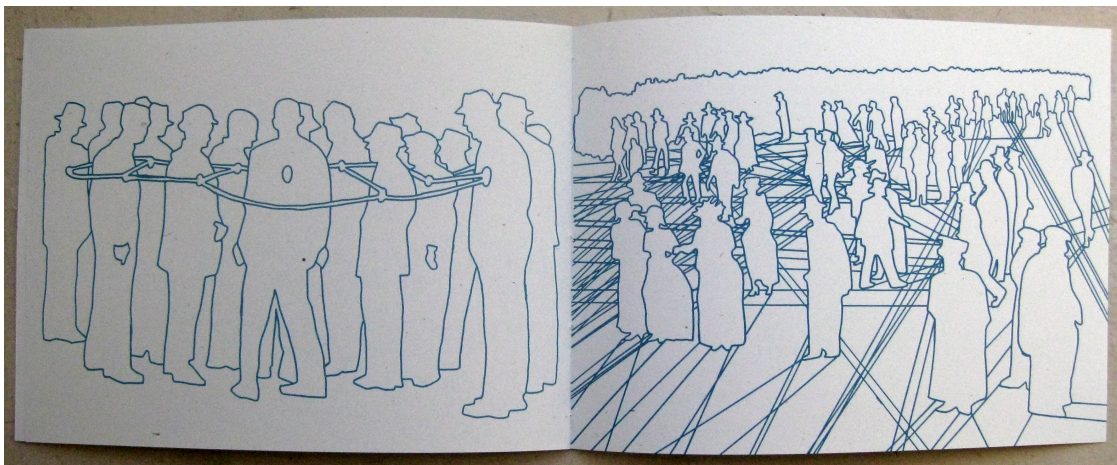


Fig. 7. J. Pascoe, *Things We Know But Cannot See - An Instructional Pamphlet Detail* (2013)

When thinking about the ever-growing grey areas between what is local and what is global, I ask myself how to show a story line or arc in pictures, without words. Would these images translate in other countries? Could anyone read this story? Living in a



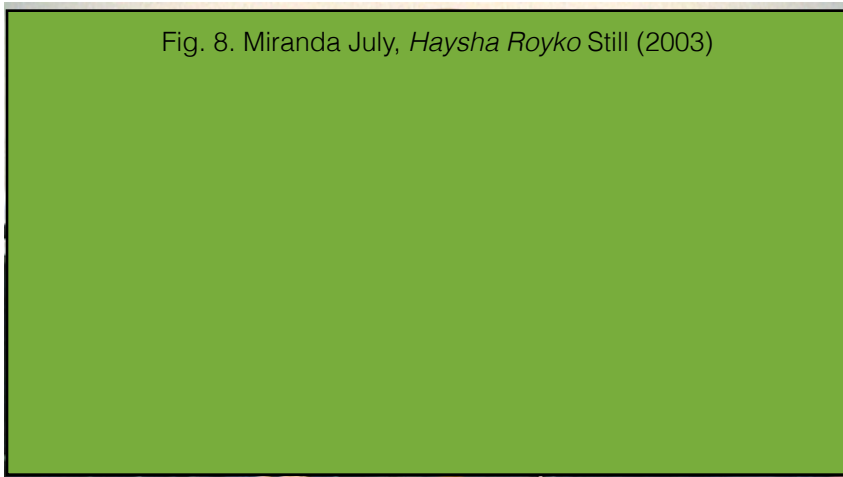
world where more frequently we encounter evidence of a global sensibility rather than a local one (Bauman, *Liquid Times*, Chapter 1), I am interested in creating work that is accessible to other people regardless of what languages they do or don't speak.

I wanted these drawn images to show literal representations of many of the ideas and feelings that I've been working with for my thesis exhibition - alienation, social estrangement, and social interaction. The use of contour line figures allowed me to show people as individuals and at the same time anonymous. Through use of lines - ray lines, connecting lines, star burst lines, or lines of sight I have tried to show various social or emotional situations that happen commonly every day: walking in public, waiting in line, taking up space in a public situation, etc. *Things We Know* is the most literal example of my work showing various physical bodies and the spaces they inhabit.

## **Influences**

Miranda July addressed a similar idea in her 2003 short video piece, *Haysha Royko* (Fig. 8). At almost four minutes in length, it shows the physical space taken up by three people in an airport lounge. While shifting in their seats uncomfortably, fields of transparent colors are seen coming from each figure. These fields move about the screen, at times overlapping, moving towards or away from each other. These fields are the visual depictions of the mental space taken up by the three travelers. This idea is shown when one person moves closer to another, makes noise, or otherwise calls

attention to themselves - the fields of the other people visibly react by shifting away



from this person.

These fields are visual depictions of things we cannot see and these travelers are unwilling to give voice to; their physical and social discomfort.

The video leads me to wonder just how much of our mental space (or health) is changed or compromised by other people and the mental and physical space they take up. Like July's video, *Things We Know* shows intangible things that we are all affected by - here, social connections or disfunction.

In attempting to depict such situations, I looked at a number of other visual references, often schematics manuals. Such images are produced to show rules or steps needed to be taken by the reader in simple, clear images. Many times these manuals show detailed, complicated processes in a small amount of space and, often, without any accompanying text. I am specifically interested in images from the Architectural Graphic Standards that show a body's range of motion (and ability) in a particular physical space, showing any architect how to construct this future space to accommodate for movement. Similar to these images and July's video, I am trying to

find ways to depict a singular body's range of physical motion, its range of mental space, and how these

interact with other forces.

One particular image

found in the Architectural

Graphic Standards that I

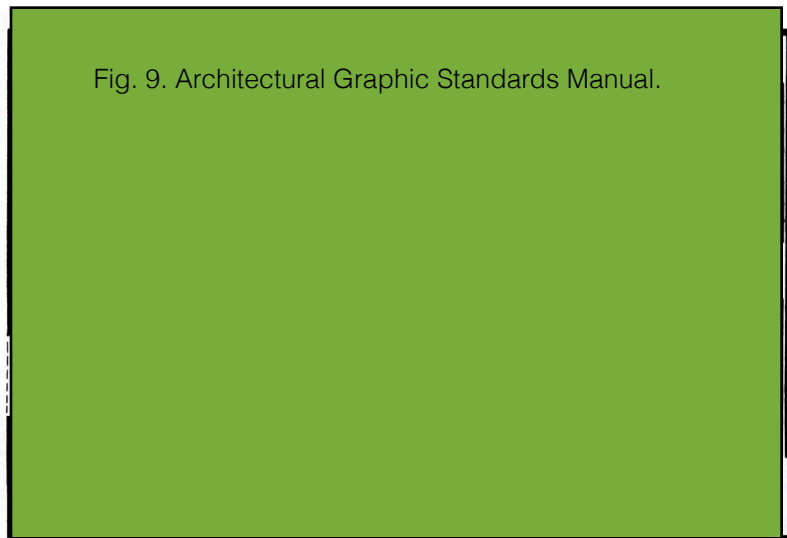
find fascinating is the

depiction and distinction

of a body's range of

space: intimate, personal,

distant personal, and public (Fig. 9).



I have also looked to the work of Frans Masereel because he was able to create specific worlds through simple sequencing of vignettted images. The way he chose to depict his subject is similar to how I try to create my images: specific and general, anonymous and identifiable. The topics he chose to explore were broad yet specific to the average, everyday man: the plight of the proletariat and the experience of living in a large urban area are two such examples.

His work in *The City* (Fig. 10) is of particular interest to me because it is a series of images depicting urban life in all of its beauty, horror, and variety. His collection of graphic, wood cut images can be read sequentially, but it quickly becomes apparent that it may also be flipped through at random. I find I return to this book over and over



again. I know what is in it, the images are easy to understand, yet I keep turning the



Fig. 10. Frans Masereel, *The City* (1925)

pages to look again. The vignette style of the book, the breadth of the moments chosen to represent city living, and the simple quality of the images have turned this work into a meditation for me. I am not gleaning any one specific, direct parable from this collection. Instead, I am left open to ruminate on the nature of urban living, the qualities inherent there, and the denizens of such a space. I am able to relate my own lived (urban) experiences to the images depicted by Masereel.

While not directly inspired by *The City*, and earlier project of mine *DifferDefer* explored themes of alienation following the journey of a half-man half-stork character through a chaotic urban area. The use of a picture book format, hand drawn images, and offset lithography made *DifferDefer* a direct influence on how I developed *Things We Know*.

Though shorter in length than *The City*, at only twelve pages, *Things We Know* functions similarly. Like Masereel, I have set parameters to my book: his being urban

dwelling, mine social connection. I want the viewer to be able to relate their own lived experiences to the various social interactions depicted in my pamphlet. Similar to July's video, *Things We Know* represents something invisible or intangible in an obvious, spatial way. Much like *Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga*, this collection of images prompts the viewer to think about social connections in the world at-large via their own physical, mental, and social interactions.

The drawings in *Things We Know* also bare an aesthetic resemblance to diagrams, outlines of figures in various sized groupings of people. At times the figures may be filled in with solid color, other times with a single star burst starting at their center and ending at the perimeter of their form. In some images there are lines connecting one figure to the next, perhaps showing momentary or lasting alliances. In other images there are lines at varying lengths coming from where a viewer may place a figure's eyes, perhaps showing that figure's depth of perception. While the line of these forms are contour - showing that this figure may be wearing a dress, that a figure may have big hair, or be carrying something - it never shows identifying marks. These figures are somewhere in between identifiable and anonymous. I use the contour line showing a body's physical boundary to reveal that body's social and mental space.

I think a lot about the kind of line I am making while drawing these images, the subtleties of form I could hope to convey through properly placed squiggles or curves. I look to artists that work graphically such as Jaime and Gilbert Hernandez (Hernandez, 502). How do they show entire worlds with simple black and white lines? I

think about the subtleties of form and line work and the spaces they imply. For example, the contour implies a fully formed figure. I don't need to draw facial features, the viewer knows they are there.

Because of my interest in viewer interaction, my political history, and current enrollment in a book arts program, I decided to create *Things We Know* as an editioned pamphlet. Offset lithography seemed an appropriate choice as it would quickly yield enough prints for a large edition size. Creating this piece as a give-away is important because it allows for wide dissemination of my ideas. It also creates a different kind of connection between myself and the reader: besides reading the pamphlet in the impersonal gallery, the reader can take it away for further perusal in other, more personal, environments.

My development as an artist using offset lithography came from my experience during my third semester while enrolled in Book Production. I see this class as a culmination of all the time I have spent interning at the Borowsky Center for the Publishing Arts learning about the process of offset lithography. I began my internship due to my interest in working with machines but also to learn how to produce the large print editions typically associated with offset lithography.

Book Production was a high stress class that required me to go through the entire process of developing a story idea, conceptually mapping it out, creating the images and type treatment, prepping my work as prepress files, sending my files out for film,

ordering bulk amounts of paper for printing, developing my offset litho plates, and then assembling my finished product after being printed by the Master printer. One major change for me was that the Master printer stepped aside and let me attempt to print my edition. It was exciting to know that my hard work the previous year was the only reason why this was allowed to happen and, also, extremely humbling to see how much I still had to learn. It was a combination of all this work and my time interning that has allowed me greater comfort in the process, paving the way for the creating of *Things We Know*.

*Things We Know* has been the first offset litho project where I finally felt familiar with the offset litho options available to me. While I still have far to go, I finally feel comfortable with the process enough to start making strong work.

## **Conclusion**

*Things We Know But Cannot See - An Instructional Pamphlet* (Fig. 11) offers the viewer the opportunity to form conclusions based on their own lived experiences through the abstract or anonymous images found in the pamphlet. In a work that does not directly physically engage the viewer, such as *Where We Lay Down What We Pick Up - Jenga* does, I believe this more abstract language pushes the viewer towards similar mental states achieved in more interactive work. In other words, my abstract images allow the viewer to arrive at conclusions based on their own lives similarly to how the physicality

of socially engaging pieces prompt a viewer to challenge their assumptions in and of this world.

While *Where We Put Down* may prompt questions for players about the immediate social obligations or responsibilities initiated through play, I hope the images in *What We Know* prompt similar questions through the possibility of viewers identifying with the situations found in the pamphlet. The anonymity of the figures allow viewers to refer to their own experiences and substitute their own stories in place of mine.

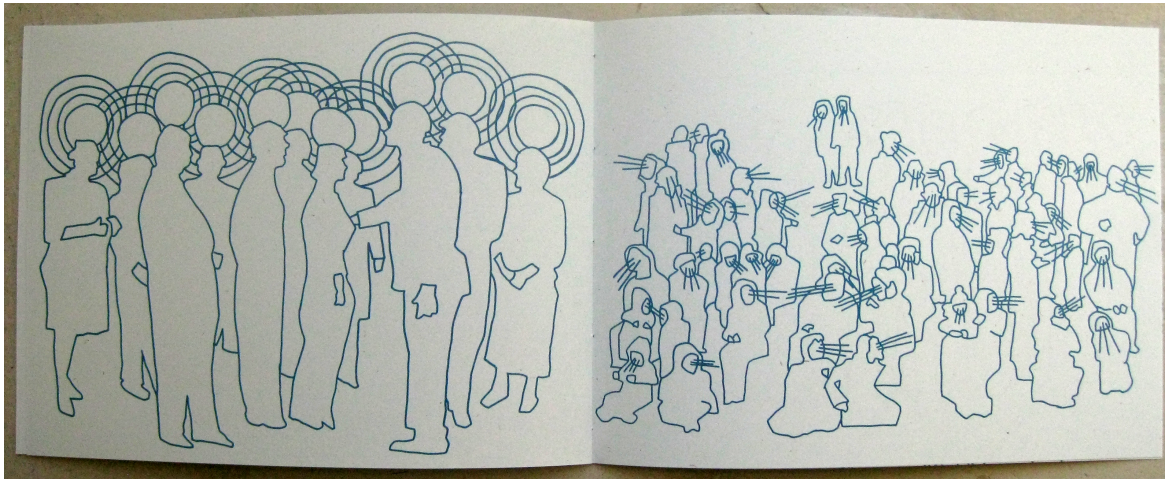


Fig. 11. J. Pascoe, *Things We Know But Cannot See - An Instructional Pamphlet Detail* (2013)

## Chapter Four

### *Location In Space - You, Me, We*

#### Introduction

To attempt, at least once, every technique taught in my Beginning Non-Silver Photography class, I scrambled to find something to expose under our sunlamp. Typically the sunlamp is used to expose three dimensional objects on top of chemically coated paper. Encouraged by some of my classmates' experimentations with viscous fluids (such as ketchup), I coated some paper with Vandyke Brown solution, poured some salt on the coated paper, and exposed it under the sunlamp (Fig. 12). I immediately fell in love with the results and was set on the path towards eventually creating my piece *Location in Space - You, Me, We*.



Fig. 12. J. Pascoe, Test Print (2012)

Rather than a more collectively experienced piece such as *Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga*, *Location in Space* speaks more to the individual experience. It



allows the viewer to find themselves in the piece and place themselves in a context they wish to see -- as an individual or part of a greater whole.

### ***Location In Space - You, Me, We***

With *Location In Space* I have abandoned line work, like in *Things We Know But Cannot See - An Instructional Pamphlet*, for Vandyke Brown solution. *Location in Space* (Fig. 13) is a roll of mulberry paper roughly 38 inches wide by 35 feet long. The entire roll has been hand coated with Vandyke Brown solution, an early photographic process that, once coated, allows paper to become UV light sensitive. After coating the roll in swaths of chemical at varying sizes (always 38" in width but I varied lengths to avoid creating distracting regularity in the lines created while painting on the chemistry) I laid



Fig. 13. J. Pascoe, *Location In Space - You, Me, We* (2013)

down the coated section, threw table and kosher salt across the coated area, and exposed it all under a sunlamp. I tried to randomize the amounts and placement of salt on the coated paper to create as much variance as possible.

Instead of drawing lines on paper, here I created dots, the image left by salt exposed on chemically treated paper. These dots in turn created paths, fields, and spaces of various shades of browns and greys. These bodies of dots and color fields move across the space of the paper, bound only by the width of that particular section of Vandyke Brown I painted and exposed. They form abstract bodies moving in space.

In *Location In Space* you can identify singular, individual points of light or see it as whole bodies of varying shades of brown and grey. The individual points are unique, the process of creating this work yielded a wide range of results; no one point is the same. Many points in an area form into fields of color, bodies in motion. These bodies create ripples, lines, swirls of space. The bodies contain movement in the varying colors that spread across the paper: greys, tans, and chocolate browns. Because of the variations, more than any other piece I have developed, this one speaks to the individual's experience. In these points of light a viewer can identify themselves as individual or part of a larger whole. They can see different fields of color, different groups of movement through out the entire piece. This piece can function as a map like a simple, "You Are Here," locating device...if the viewer chooses to see it as such. Like looking at clouds in the sky or stars in space, a viewer could also discern a wide range of images pulled from abstract fields of color and points of light.



These unique effects were created by exposing coated paper while the chemistry was still damp. While classically the wrong way to expose a Vandyke image this is how I created such a range of colors and effects. If the chemistry is too damp the salt bleeds creating wide swaths of paper white. If the chemistry is painted too thickly, the color becomes various shades of greys and grey-browns. If the chemistry is too dry, the salt leaves a light trace of itself in the print almost like a ghost.

*Location In Space* was hung, lengthwise, around the curved wall in the Rosenwald-Wolf Gallery. Instead of lying flat against the wall, it hung out from the wall like an awning at a height of at least eight feet. The printed side faced down, creating a path like space for viewers to walk underneath. The entire roll hung loosely allowing for some areas of the piece to hang lower than others. This configuration was chosen because, with correct lighting, viewers are able to look up into the print and, while walking underneath, see areas of the paper illuminated with a soft diffused glow - giving them the opportunity for the “You Are Here” moment (Fig. 14). While looking into the paper, the paper (loose in its hanging) comes down to meet the viewer. In a way, it is a meeting of two bodies in space.



Fig. 14. J. Pascoe, *Location In Space - You, Me, We* (2013)

This meeting of bodies is important for a number of reasons. Quite literally it is a meeting of two physical bodies in space; however, the obvious difference in the bodies reminds the viewer of the presence of an other - as in the existence of something other than our own (human) physical bodies. This other, the physical presence of *Location in Space*, also reinforces the feeling of alienation or wonder in the viewer, reminding us that in the macrocosm of existence we are not alone.

## **Influences**

More than anything else I am currently working on, *Location in Space*, produces a sense of anxiety in me. Just like the character referenced in chapter one from Borge's *Garden of Forking Paths*, I understand my experiences as an individual moving through life and the steps to take to meet my immediate needs and, at the same time, see myself moving through an ever expanding global consciousness via technology that I have no idea how to navigate. Kwame Anthony Appiah in *Examined Life* talks about a similar situation in which he claims we all exist. He relates that, as humans, we are all equipped to deal with intimate social connections (our friends, family, loved ones), but have not yet found a way to deal with our global connections. He calls for solutions to this problem and sees it as a move towards cosmopolitanism. That is, he sees it as a move towards responsible global citizenship. I feel uncomfortable in these grey areas of what is local and what is global, what is my responsibility and what is not. I want acceptance to a larger global community, but I also want my individual autonomy as well.

The range of scale present in *Location In Space*, the large size of the total piece and the tiny single dot, helps me satisfy my interests in the dualities present in the lived experiences of any one person. For example: we are all individuals yet our experiences, when shared, often feel very similar to one another. One field of color made from points of light may produce anxiety in one person and a feeling of zen-like calm in another. The size of this piece allows viewers to find themselves in the work or become lost in it. This work could be a simple image of salt thrown across paper to be exposed under light in interesting ways or a bird's eye view of individual movement and social agency in space.

While uncomfortable with *Location in Space*, I am also very much drawn in by it. It is



Fig. 15. J. Pascoe, *Location In Space - You, Me, We* Detail (2013)

one of the first times I  
have found a voice  
for my anxiety and  
estrangement in such  
a breathtaking  
process and it  
fascinates me to have  
found such a  
beautiful vehicle for  
these ugly feelings

(Fig. 15). It is also one of the very rare instances I have worked abstractly. I think these

two things -- my success and the use of such an abstract process -- are very much connected.

While I view this piece as celestial in nature, I have received a wide range of responses from my peers: cave drawings, monoprints, stills from an animation, faces, and other images have all been identified in *Location in Space*. I welcome these interpretations. *Location in Space* satisfies many of the process and material interests I've mentioned previously: common materials are used, it is text free, and it is open ended.

I see the points of light and bodies of movement in my work similar to how Julie Mehretu sees the marks she makes in her paintings: as active components of her pieces, as players, as characters or social agents (Young, 29).

Similarly, while her works tend to reference more architectural spaces (Fig. 16), her paintings and *Location in Space* are abstract in order to allow a wide range of

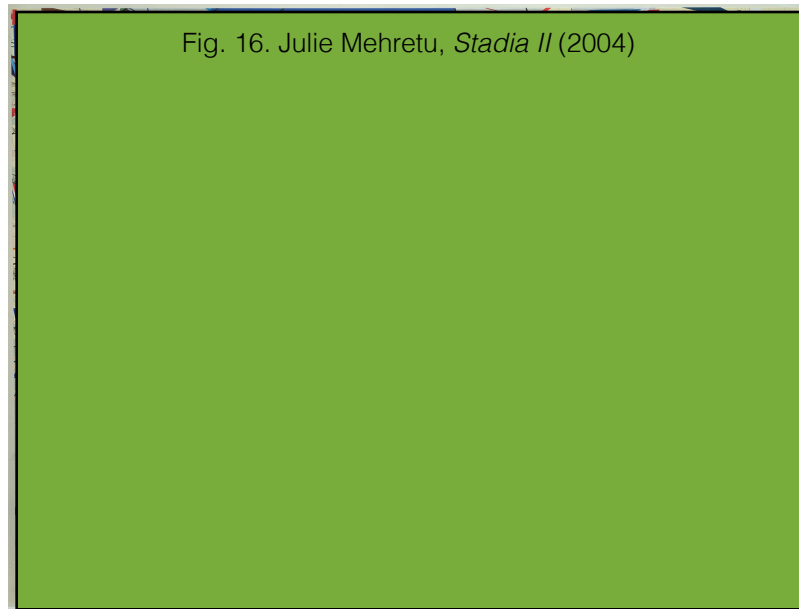


Fig. 16. Julie Mehretu, *Stadia II* (2004)

interpretation from the viewer. Unlike hers, the process I followed did not allow as much control figure to figure as Mehretu exercises over the creation of her pieces.

Since beginning this work I have looked into the history of salt. I have found some interesting philosophical work on the nature of salt, that it is a common thing and found all around us, especially in our bodies. Philosopher James Hillman talks of how salt is found in the world at-large (macrocosm) and in the microcosm of human bodies. “It is to be found in ‘Man’s blood out of the body, or man’s urine.’” “Mark well those bodies which flow forth from our bodies are salts and alums.” (Hillman in Marlan, 147-153.) He goes on to explain that it is the salt in our bodies that help signify our experiences: our sweat, blood, tears, urine, and semen. Without this signifying salt, our experiences would be without meaning and without taste, literally and figuratively. He summarizes, “Thus salt makes events sensed and felt, giving us a sense of the personal - my tears, my sweat and blood, my taste and value. ... These intensely personal experiences which give taste and flavor to events are nonetheless common to all - both mine and yet common as blood, as urine, as salt.” These ideas around the dualities of micro/macro and individual/universal are very large components of the work in *Location in Space* as well as the rest of my thesis body of work.

## **Conclusion**

While developing *Location In Space*, I began manufacturing critiques to generate feedback on my thesis work. I quickly realized while working with *Location in Space* and *Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga* that I needed input from other people. I couldn’t assume I would know how people would react or interact with either

piece in a final installation, so over the course of the semester I staged several game nights. In one particular instance I hung *Location in Space* in a specific way, set up *Things We Put Down* to be played, and invited many of my colleagues to participate along with promises of beer and pizza. During this staging I didn't directly ask or inquire many things from my colleagues; I wanted to engage with the work myself as well as observe how others interacted with the different pieces. I made note of specific statements or questions made that I found resonant with my ideas and took pictures of interesting physical interactions with the pieces.

I've found that whenever I have been stuck on any of my conceptual or ideological ideas, staging these kinds of events have clarified my feelings by allowing me to witness physical, real-time interactions with my work. This tactic of creating a testing ground for my work will be something that I continue in the future.

I have also discovered how truly important having a studio space is; without my studio space at the University of the Arts I would not have been able to create *Location In Space*, much less my thesis exhibition. Having access to such a space has allowed my work-in-progress to exist in its own space. My work could exist in whatever form it needed to take, allowing me to figure out how best to present my ideas.

Taking the time, over my last semester, to develop my thesis exhibition has been an important opportunity for me because it is my first insight into how artists from previous generations were able to work with the same theme, topic, or subject for decades or

even a lifetime. Prior to this year, much of my work has been project oriented. I didn't have the time or resources to really develop ideas in such a way as to lead me to want to work with them for years afterwards - I have only had the space, time and ability to work on small, individual projects. Often my studio space was my bedroom or living room. As a result, my ability to work on my art was largely dictated by roommates, pets, and the need to keep the space open to other uses (such as eating food or doing laundry).

Having a studio space entirely devoted to my work is the only reason why I have been able to create and finish my thesis body of work. I have been able to develop, test, and explore my subjects and materials in depth without fear of impinging on the needs of other people. I have been able to let piles of work sit for days until I am able to revisit them without fear of disruption from outside sources. In many ways, I feel like developing these ideas was a gift: I will have no want for subject matter for a very long time.

Having this space and time to develop *Location In Space - You, Me, We* was especially crucial as for many reasons it was the hardest piece I developed for my thesis exhibition. I have never had the ability to work at such a large scale before and it is the first serious piece of work I have made that uses such an abstract visual language. Conceptually, it was also the hardest to tie into the other elements of my thesis.

*Location In Space - You, Me, We* allows viewers, through scale and abstract imagery, to find themselves in a physical, social, and mental space they have interpreted through their own individual experiences. It is these experiences that inform their choices when interacting with the pieces, looking up into it, walking along it, or viewing from afar.



## Chapter Five

### Conclusion

I began my time at the University of the Arts exploring themes of alienation, anxiety, estrangement and over stimulation. Initially I struggled to find ways to show these often ineffable and ephemeral emotional states of existence. Ultimately, I realized that these themes are best described in abstract and or iconic visual images that depict or imply physical (human) bodies.

These emotional states are felt physically, often making it hard to describe with words. Through abstract images, such as in *Things We Know But Cannot See: An Instructional Pamphlet*, the viewer is able to see literal depictions of physical bodies in mundane social situations. These abstract images literally show the emotional states a person could feel in these situations, but not see.

*Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga* prompts players to move their bodies into social spaces, rather than simply viewing images of bodies in space. The simple actions of this re-appropriated Jenga game requires navigation in real time of these social situations and challenges participants to acknowledge responsibility for their actions and decisions. These actions and decisions can prompt a number of emotional responses from the player, among them anxiety.

Finally, *Location In Space - You, Me, We* works with a sense of scale - from tiny dots found in the piece to the length of the entire work (thirty-five feet). The dynamics of

scale, the abstract nature of the work, and the loosely draped physical presence of the piece suggest to the viewer a body's physical presence in and connection to this world: we are part of something much greater than ourselves. It is the viewers' personal experiences with overstimulation, alienation, estrangement and other emotions that inform how they interact with the piece: walking under the pathway the piece creates, viewing it from afar, identifying images in the abstract fields of color, or seeing individual versus whole bodies of points of light.

The completion of my thesis work has led me to some startling revelations about my artistic practice. It has affirmed my interest in the use of common and accessible materials and processes and led me to adopt of abstract imagery. It is this combination that has allowed me, ultimately, to successfully convey my thoughts and ideas. Undoubtedly, the tactics I have developed in the creation of my thesis body of work will continue to inform my artistic practice for many years to come.

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## **Appendix A**

### ***Where We Put Down What We Pick Up Instructions***

(Please note: Instructions were presented with the game as a double sided, 5.5 inches by 8.5 inches sheet, printed on cardstock.)

### **Where We Put Down What We Pick Up - Jenga**

A Game for Navigating Life

Life is the sum of all your choices.

-Albert Camus

#### **Goal**

- Build as high as you can go - there's no limit to what you can do! When other towers collapse you may collect blocks from your home tower. Keep these for rebuilding when your home tower collapses.
- After your home tower crashes you can: rebuild your home tower to continue play, move to another tower for a different experience, or leave the game entirely...if you can!

#### **Setup**

- Empty the blocks onto a flat surface.
- Build your home tower by placing layers of three blocks at right angles to each other. When finished, you'll have a solid, 18-story tower that can more than double during play!

#### **Gameplay**

- Each player chooses a home tower - this is where you will pull all your blocks from. Consider your choices, you may have to share your tower with others who call it home as well.
- The player who builds the tower goes first. Play then passes to the left.

#### **On Your Turn**

-Carefully remove a block from anywhere BELOW the highest successful story. Use only one hand! Then stack the block on top of someone else's tower at right angles to the blocks just below it. Place it where and when you see fit.

### **Removing and Stacking Blocks**

-Remove and stack one block per turn.

-As play proceeds and the weight of the tower shifts, some blocks become looser than others and are easier to remove. You can touch other blocks to find a loose one - but you are responsible for the block if it is moved out of place. You must fix it (using one hand only) before touching another block. Sometimes the easiest choice is the hardest choice.

-While stacking blocks, always complete a 3-block story before starting a higher one.

-Your turn ends 10 seconds after you stack your block - or as soon as another player touches one.

-Keep removing and stacking blocks until someone topples your tower. A real pro can build a tower 36 stories high or more!

### **Game Variation - Solo Building (Privilege)**

-Build alone for practice! Can you anticipate problems before they arise?

-Carefully remove one block from any level of your home tower. Use a steady hand to stack it on top of a secondary home tower you have identified.

-Continue to remove and stack blocks to make your towers taller ... and shakier.

-How tall is too tall? Find out when the tower falls!

### **Contents**

-Four towers comprised of 54 wood blocks each. Each tower is color coded for ease in identification: brown, tan, red, and green.