

Master of Fine Arts Thesis

Object Architect

Landscape Survey 1

Lea Griggs

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Lea Griggs, MFA

Abject Architect: Landscape Survey 1

Landscape Survey is a research method for understanding the visible features of a given field, through a range of allied non-invasive analytical techniques. Visible features are often considered in terms of their aesthetic appeal, and Landscape Survey as a research method can be applied at different scales and resolutions.

Landscape Survey combines two strands of investigation: studio investigation and desk-based research. Studio investigation is directed at the physical creative process while desk-based research establishes context. The “Survey” involves the study of a wide range of features, including man-made features such as artworks, pieces, ruined structures, and managed growth, but also natural creative and artistic phenomena. The “Survey” has a broad chronological scope and can be applied to large or small areas but always relies upon the principles of careful observation and analysis of aesthetic evidence of all types and periods.

Landscape Survey Strategies may include but are not limited to:

- Aesthetic survey to provide aid in interpreting a given field’s aesthetic
- Thematic surveys to understand a theme and record earlier activity within the theme in the form of deserted structures and aesthetic vestiges
- Aesthetic survey to record extinct and lost features and identify past phases in the given fields development
- Integration of the given field’s features into aesthetic formats, including creative writing and photographic output

Landscape Survey results can be provided as raw or processed data, as CAD drawings, sculptures, paintings, site specific installations, or various other formats. Additional work may be carried out with documentary research and written criticism to provide a full analysis and interpretation which may lead to a publication or further exhibitions.

This exhibition, Landscape Survey 1, provides various types of creative techniques to investigate, identify, analyze, record and interpret the aesthetic landscape.

Interpretation is essential in providing the knowledge and understanding required for making effective decisions.

Aesthetic features may include but are not limited to:

- Object Identity Relationship – personal and cultural identity establishment
- Neutrality – removal of distinction in application and origin
- Digital Progression – immateriality and spirituality
- Hand Touch Phenomenon – presence and permanence

Architect: Lea McCormick Griggs

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Abject Architect

Impetus:

Abject Architect Landscape Survey is implemented to accurately take measure of the aesthetic landscape and its key features to question their effectiveness on establishing “real significant change.”

The origin of perspective towards self-identity is often the datum for “real significant change.” Object identity relationships are a key proponent of this “Survey”. A transition in personal and cultural perspective in turn affects the origins of reason and truth. Identity is often perceived by the origins of reason and truth and a change in this origin additionally marks a change in perceptions of self. Investigating personal and cultural interactions with key aesthetic features within the given field will act as a case study for explaining the shift in origin, which will provide insight into the significance that these interactions have on personal identity.

Technique:

Abject Architect is a design make process that adopts a theory of the minimum effort to sustain an understanding that recognizes the potential for “real significant change” through the analytical investigation of a given field of study and its key features.

Landscape Survey is conducted with various research tools for understanding the features of an area, often considered in terms of their aesthetic appeal, through a

range of allied non-invasive analytical techniques, which can be applied at different scales and resolutions. It underpins conservation, protection and interpretation.

Landscape Survey combines two strands of investigation: studio investigation and desk-based research. Studio investigation is directed at the creative process while desk-based research establishes context. This investigation involves the study of a wide range of features, including man-made features such as artworks, pieces, ruined structures and managed growth, but also natural creative and artistic phenomena.

Landscape Survey as applied through Object Architect has a broad chronological scope and can be applied to large or small aesthetic areas but always relies upon the principles of careful observation and analysis of aesthetic evidence of all types and periods.

Exhibition:

This exhibition Landscape Survey 1 of the given field offers creative techniques to investigate, identify, analyze, record and interpret the aesthetic landscape.

Interpretation is essential in providing the knowledge and understanding required for making effective decisions towards real significant change.

The provided writings, source material, and objects are specimens as related to the execution of the various types of research methods on specific features within the field.

Prominent aesthetic features of the given field as listed but not limited to:

- Object Identity Relationship – personal and cultural identity establishment
- Neutrality – removal of distinction through application and origin
- Digital Progression – immateriality and spirituality
- Hand Touch Phenomenon – presence and permanence
- The Universal – theoretical forms and ideal truths
- Extracting the Self – personal investment related to content
- Internal Doubt – significance or a creator
- A Progression of Theft – ownership removal
- Flattening – hierarchical removal
- Topia – u and dystopian ideology in application

Terms

Given Field – the term given field is used regarding the field of study which is ceramics arts. Ceramics arts has a wide variety of key features in its aesthetic landscape. The very nature of the field is flexible, expansive, and commonly left undefined.

Aesthetic Landscape – any given field will contain an aesthetic landscape. The aesthetic landscape is not flexible expansive and undefined. It is defined through the qualities and relationships of its distinct key features.

Key Features- any given aesthetic landscape will contain key features. The key features refer to the specific qualities that one feature contains that other features do not. These key features are independent of each other but often in relation.

Real Significant Change – “a truly radical change is self-relating: it changes the very coordinates by means of which we measure change. In other words, a true change sets its own standard: it can only be measured by criteria that result from it.”¹ It is only through this self-relating that real significant change can occur.

Real significant change can also be measured in the change established through the proofing of the intended outcome and the impact the intended outcome has achieved. This is not a measure of completing a task but rather a measure of what the completed task achieves.

¹ Slavoy Zizek, Less T Zizek, Slavoy. *Less than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (Verso, 2013), 520.

And Then Nothing – the counterpoint to Real Significant Change is the “and then nothing” exemplified by false change that yields no reestablishment of coordinates for real significant change to be developed. This term is used for the realization of false perceptions of change and the impact of intended outcomes.

Reason² – this is an active principle, it does not reach truth after toil and time but departs from the truth because it finds the truth within itself. This reason is the ground, the principle of all knowledge for all knowledge bears reference to reality and existence.³

Truth⁴ – “Desire: Drive = Truth: Knowledge”⁵

Internal Datum – the origin and point of reference that reason and truth are established from in the modern personal perspective.

Craft⁶ – as defined is not the typical use of the term in relation to the field. An ethical development through skill related to natural laws (support, contain, cover), material hierarchy, tradition, and assimilation through material and its handling.

Art⁷ – as defined is not the typical use of the term in relation to the field. A perception of cultural wealth related to cultural laws, progression, perception as the gaze, assimilation through aesthetic, and material declassification.

² Noun 1. A cause, explanation, or justification for an action or event. 2. The power of the mind to think, understand, and form judgements by a process of logic.

³ David Hume, *The Philosophical Works of David Hume, vol. 1 (Treatise of Human Nature Part 1)*[1828] 798.

⁴ Noun 1. The quality of state of being true. That which is true or in accordance with fact or reality. A fact or belief that is accepted as true.

⁵ Desire: Drive = Truth: Knowledge (4,19,2017). <http://www.lacan.com/zizek-desire.htm>.

⁶ Noun 1. an activity involving skill in making things by hand. "the craft of bookbinding" 2. a boat or ship. "sailing craft" Verb 1. exercise skill in making (something).

Design⁸ – as defined is not the typical use of the term in relation to the field. A series of actions under constraint related to creation, ideation, and creativity.

Theft⁹ – as defined is not the typical use of the term in relation to the field. A method of use that falls outside of typical cultural or personal appreciation of stealing. This is dependent own having been established ownership.

Ownership¹⁰ - as defined is in fact like the use of the term in relation to the field. A method of use, state, or act that falls inside the typical cultural or personal appreciation of possession.

Morality¹¹ – as defined there is little true application for morality in a sense of right or wrong within the arts due to the subjective nature of art and its non-ability to proof the expressed subjective opinions. This is reinforced by ideas of inclusivity towards exterior opinions and their appeal over facts.

Features

Object Identity Relationships¹²

⁷ Noun **1.** the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power. **2.** the various branches of creative activity, such as painting, music, literature, and dance.

⁸ Noun **1.** a plan or drawing produced to show the look and function or workings of a building, garment, or other object before it is built or made. **2.** purpose, planning, or intention that exists or is thought to exist behind an action, fact, or material object. Verb **1.** decide upon the look and functioning of (a building, garment, or other object), typically by making a detailed drawing of it.

⁹Noun **1.** the action or crime of stealing.

¹⁰ Noun **1.** the act, state, or right of possessing something.

¹¹ Noun **1.** principles concerning the distinction between right and wrong or good and bad behavior. a particular system of values and principles of conduct, especially one held by a specified person or society. the extent to which an action is right or wrong.

¹² (The obvious reading is that people use objects to help create personal and cultural identities, even if that means abandoning a previous identity based on a different set of objects. Yet the identity relationship toward the object can be negative, can serve to destroy personal and cultural identity and also the idea can be thought this way – you can have a relationship with your identity that “forces” or “demands” that your relationship with objects change to suit the shift in how you relate to your (self) identity

1. Personal identity is often established through the objects consumed and produced. Supporting a personal identity through objects establishes a false support structure.
2. Cultural identity is often established through the objects consumed and produced. Supporting a cultural identity through objects established a false support structure.

Objects Process Identity

1. Personal identity is often established through the processes and techniques utilized in the production of objects. Supporting a personal or cultural identity through the processes and techniques utilized in the production of objects establishes a false support structure.

On Neutrality¹³

1. A complete removal of distinction is necessary for true neutrality to be obtained this is a theoretical perfection that may not be obtainable but can be striven towards.
2. Application of function is a common means of distinction. A removal of cultural designated status uses is necessary for true function to be achieved.

which occurs in a highly volatile and amorphous way precisely because the relationship toward(self) identity can be totally immaterial and “simply” cranial – in your own head – creates a lifespan for the object dependent on the human observer who in a more permanent and yet immaterial way can appeal to fleeting objects as a source of strength or weakness in the ongoing struggle of your(no “your”) (self) identity.

¹³ origin seems the most “non-neutral” origins are almost by definition unique – except in one context – when origins are lost, are forgotten by history/time – an unknown origin is almost by definition universal) All this working from the principle that knowledge is unique (and therefore flawed when compared to the all-encompassing knowledge of God) and ignorance universal (In Eden it was the tree of knowledge which we ate from (not the tree of Life) knowledge is the original sin, mankind as first created by God is naturally ignorant (at least in regards to good and evil) – kind of Medieval Catholic outlook St. Augustine maybe good source also the heretic John Huss during the Schism and Antipope era.

Once true function is achieved physical material limitation are the only application or functional constraint.

3. The origin or relation to time is a common means of distinction. A removal of these factors is necessary for true neutrality to be achieved.

The Universal

1. The universal or totality as a form and idea is often rejected due to the inability for it to be materially or physically achieved. This does not mean it is not of use.
2. Just because something is not achievable does not mean it is not beneficial to pursue.

Extracting the self

3. The extraction of self - of "I" - identity is necessary for true neutrality to be achieved.
4. This also applies to personal, cultural, structural and hierarchical identity systems as well.

Digital Progression¹⁴

1. The neutrality of digital design and fabrication processes give insight to the capabilities of neutrality within object production. Digital methods are close to being without origin or specific time signatures.

¹⁴ Available in two ways – the progression of technology in general through time, year-in-year-out, and the progression of the “digital product” as it traverses the screen and software (also through time – as experienced by the producer of the digital “object” - that which is made material through his “hand – touch” relationship with input devices (keyboards, “mice”) Is the “spirit” of a CAD drawing human or mechanistic?

2. Immateriality or non-material specific, is a key factor in digital methods.

Digital methods can be implemented ubiquitously.

The Hand Touch

1. The hand made and the significance of personal touch as displayed in objects is a fetish culture. The implication that a residue of physical presence documented in the creation of an object can establish mutuality between people is not dependent on the condition of the object, it is dependent on the people that mutuality is established through.

Internal Doubt

2. As the origins for reason and truth have migrated to the inward cavity the doubt of the internal origin has grown as well. This self-doubt or doubt of individualism in relation to larger social structures is represented with several case studies.
3. It is most evident with personal identity and law, technology and law, and larger economic and cultural structures in relation to identity.

A Progression of Theft

1. There are no boundaries for which theft can be substantiated in artistic circumstances. The process utilized to define artistic theft has only broadened the spectrum of use outside of artistic theft leaving all ideas of originality or personal and cultural ownership at question.

2. This is exemplified by Richard Prince, who-wore-it-better.tumblr.com¹⁵ and many other instances.
3. To only support oneself is flawed, you must also support, to control, those around you.¹⁶

Flattening

1. The flattening of hierarchical systems and their relation to human interaction is key. This is achieved through neutrality to establish an “unmediated human interaction”
2. This is achieved through the interaction, application and recognition of hierarchical systems.

Topia¹⁷

1. Utopia¹⁸ is the preferred false landscape
2. Dystopia¹⁹ is the current veiled landscape
3. Topia²⁰ is the unachievable true landscape

¹⁵ Who wore it better is an ongoing visual research project presenting association and common practices in contemporary art. This platform was created to promote formal and conceptual dialogue over originality.

¹⁶ “The true ethical test is not only the readiness to save the victims, but also - even more, perhaps - the ruthless dedication to annihilating those who made them victims.” - [Slavoj Žižek](https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/2340358.Slavoj_i_ek) (4/17/2017)
https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/2340358.Slavoj_i_ek.

¹⁷ Keep in mind – there really is no such thing as a utopia. Utopias are the condition of possibility for dystopias. For example, from “The Matrix” - Smith tells Lawrence Fishburne that “entire crops” (of humans) were lost when they initially attempted to make the Matrix a paradise, a utopia. Smith goes on to explain that they were forced to create the Matrix in a way that exposed humanity to foulness, pain, and misery. This dystopia within the Matrix was only possible after there was a failed utopian project. All utopias function as the conditions of possibility for dystopias. The form and content of a utopia will inform the form and content of the subsequent dystopia. If you want relatively brief, but masterful visions of dystopia go to Isaac Asimov's short stories or the genre of science fiction more broadly.

¹⁸ Noun 1. an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect. The word was first used in the book *Utopia* (1516) by Sir Thomas More.

¹⁹ Noun 1. an imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one.

²⁰ etymonline.com. The word *topos* has an unknown origin.

Spirituality and Immateriality

1. Spirituality is essence. It is persistent, it never arrives nor departs. The very reason for its persistence is because it is an idea.²¹
2. Immateriality is non - appearance.²²

Exhibition Case Study

The works completed for this exhibition are born from questioning the creative making practice. By establishing a doubt, I hope to inspire a new perspective on the impact creative practices have. This study has been established over years of personal participation and research towards creative practices and art making. I have specifically studied within the fine arts, craft, sculpture, film, ceramics, glass, and woodworking, digital design, and fabrication. I have experienced and reflected on the impact creative practices have made in my personal narrative and witnessed the impact creative practices have made in the narratives of others. In the following

²¹ Transubstantiation- the host (bread) and wine literally become the flesh and blood of Christ

²² Just because something is immaterial does not make it spiritual-is this true? The spiritual must be immaterial (outside of miracles) but what can be immaterial and not spiritual?

writing the completed works are interpreted through a personally distinct lens. The subjectivity of others will undoubtedly establish interpretation on their own terms.

The exhibition is a broad approach to the field of ceramics paired with works that are more specific to my personal narrative, perceptions, and inclinations. The works completed and ideas that stem from them are focused towards ceramic arts but should not be limited to this specific medium and field of study. Establishing a framework of working and thinking that is applicable beyond medium specific constraints is critical. This framework of thinking and working is hopefully applicable beyond creative practices and applicable towards a variety of aspects of life.

I hope to establish a clear understanding of the connections and distinctions between two areas; objects of value and objects of no value. The concept of value applies to a variety of areas such as material, technical application, ownership, and creative value. The establishment of the proximity between the two value areas, those objects having types of value and objects without types of value, allows the viewer to question the nature and significance that the different objects and their connections and distinctions have.

I am not sure if the work establishes clear footing for the establishment of content or narratives beyond the questioning of the connections and distinctions between value areas and our relation to them. If there is a possible resolve to the line of questioning I believe it will be found in the space between the skilled handling of material and the digital-spiritual-immaterial. Again, not in any of the singular areas but rather in the

navigation between such areas.²³ It is neither the baseline of faith in making, nor the doubt that can pull farfetched ideas against that baseline, but rather the motion between doubt and faith that will establish resolve beyond just questioning.

In my experience, there has been great value given to the creation and ownership of such objects as heirlooms, craft objects, art objects, and other significant or creative objects of value. In my experience, this significance has revealed itself as inherently flawed or untruthful. Great significance has been given to the “Self” or “Individual” within creative endeavors, this also seems flawed. These flaws have slowly revealed themselves with time and experience.

I entered creative practice as a means of improving the very real circumstances of my life. I have continued to pursue creative practice with the support of family and friends and my own dedication to improving myself. A slow realization of diminishing returns and has come to be. The further my creative practice has developed “legitimacy” the stronger my personal doubt has grown for the very structure of which designates that “legitimacy”. Nietzsche sounded against the Idols; the farther my creativity reaches out, the hollower the sounding becomes.

²³ Material. How often do we say the term “seems like?” This is perhaps the most commonplace engagement with appearance. Appearance always engages us with a lack of information, not a lack of substantial (physical) existence (spirituality proper, the opposite lack, a lack of ignorance, spiritual engagements or occurrences overwhelm with an abundance of proof, for example the miracle – water into wine is an overwhelming force of proof. The only thing is spiritual events are more infrequent than appearances, obviously, but that does not make appearance spiritual) The engagement of thinking about the future is necessarily immaterial (and perhaps spiritual) but nonetheless this process accomplishes its own existence in the future because it causes objects to substantiate themselves (to currently become more themselves) because we imagine objects as themselves both currently and into the future.) These thoughts are closely tied to Heidegger’s Dasein that primarily exists in time and also Hegel’s “thesis, antithesis and synthesis” because the immateriality of the future and thoughts projected into the future participate in “portending” conditions of possibility over time. Stevens and Heidegger can throw Hegel into the future, whereas Hegel himself was always caught ever so slightly in the past. Hegel looked backward to explain the current, whereas Stevens and Heidegger looked at the current in order to predict or shape the future – but they use Hegel’s basic phenomenology nonetheless. Everyone talks about T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound – but Wallace Stevens was the best High Modernist poet to me. Also, High Modernist literature occurred contemporaneous to the Bauhaus movement in the interwar period. The Bauhaus were worried about manufacturing and art drifting apart – I think the High Modernist authors were worried about spirituality and society drifting apart)

This hollow sounding is not to be misinterpreted as a desire for the removal of faith or of creative practices. Faith is born through doubt and only established more firmly through the process of doubting. As an equation must be “proofed” (attempted to be proven wrong to completely establish correctness) my framework of thinking or faith is established through a process where artistic practices go through a similar proofing, not to iterate what is incorrect, to establish what is correct, what is Real.



Object Case Study 1. Twin Stem Vase

Physical Description - The object consists of a small white oak stand and two long necked and full bottomed single stem flower holders. The stand is nine inches in length four inches in width and two and a half inches in height. The white oak stand is quarter sawed for stability and to utilize the best aspects of the visible grain qualities of white oak. The single stem flower holders are three inches in width and depth and seven inches in height. The single stem flower holders are clear glazed

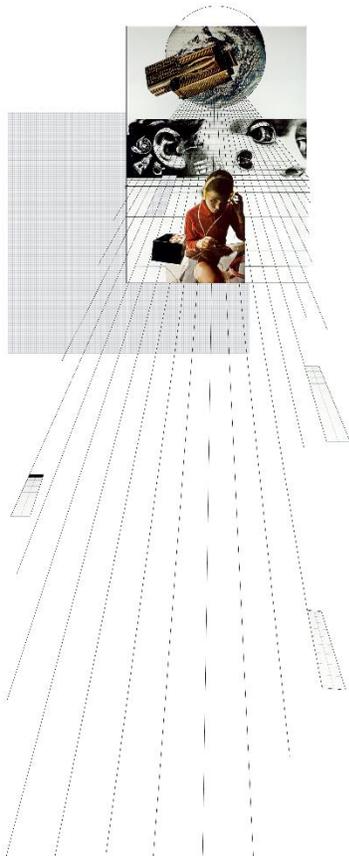
porcelain. Despite the symmetry of the form in two planes the form is frontal in orientation.

Thoughts - The *Twin Stem Vase* is the embodiment of the “and then nothing” circumstance, especially within my functional object making studio practice. This is true in the worst possible way for this work and other comparable works completed. The completed object is the closest demonstration or reflection of personal investment, ownership, concern, and all other significant gestures associated with the personal making process. The object is refined to a point where it develops autonomy, warranting a level of detail and character that is beyond my prejudice. It hungers for itself with every breath and I am the conduit in a truly spiritual sense, its virtue whispering through me and into form.

As the object is finalized it is born into this world. Additional actions establish more risk than reward. There are no floating integers to complicate the whole. I am removed as the maker, my physical mark is gone. This moment is a brief second though. Immediately after the objects entering the world a process of decay begins. Not only in a physical sense, where the object begins to take on variables that are beyond its self-government, but also in my desire of it.

For the longest time the fulfillment of my desire for a perfect object was the goal. Reaching the perfect object was enough to fulfill my desire. This is demonstrated by countless attempts and successful creations of autonomous perfect objects. Now a “different desire” is established in this object making process. My entanglement with the idea of this “different desire”, a desire of the process of desiring the perfection

itself, as the cause of desire, became clear. Finalizing the perfect objects didn't fulfill my desire because the perfect object isn't possible. As soon as a perfect physical form is finalized physical decay sets in. There is also no true autonomy within the object because the object can never truly be severed from the object's origins, i.e. myself as the maker and my own personal and cultural circumstance. A state of neurosis results with an endless chase of the idea of the cancellation of desire through the production of the impossible perfect object. With the finalization of each new object only the reality of its emptiness and limited potential is understood, a strange reflection.



Object Case Study 2. Digital Film Series

Physical Description - The video included in the Film Series are produced from 3D modeling digital space. 3D modeling software used for this *Digital Film Series* was primarily Solidworks, Rhino 3D, and Autodesk Inventor. The *Digital Film Series* is presented on a large LCD monitor with audio headsets for listening. The video that is *Digital Film Series* is played on continuous loop. The monitor is placed alongside the mass of material that is *Decend (night of this world)* creating compression of space and a sense of intimacy. The audible isolation and privacy of the headsets helps establish this.

Thoughts - The video that is *Digital Film Series* reflects the intent in the creation and handling of the objects present in the physical gallery space. The digital film is an extension of those sensibilities into a space that is limitless; expansive and finite. In some films, there is no discernable locus; a position point, or place. In other films the locus or world axis is understood. Finally, in other films there is a transition in origin. This relation to space is an interpretation of our relationship to the coordinates that allow change to be established.

The voice or narration can be identified as the Super Ego, or self-conscious. This voice is drawn from inspiration from various film narratives where a whispering of the soul is present to give further depth of understanding to the narratives and position of such characters. The specific narration is not my own in most instances but rather alterations and quotations from various films and writings that utilize this technique, emphasizing that the soul despite intimacy is a filtration of our generic influences, in this case cinema. There is an idea that the perversion of film is that it

not only “tell you what to desire but how to desire.”²⁴ I believe that the digital designs space and digital fabrication can mediate interaction and control perspective in a similar way. The films series is an exploration of the potential for media techniques and the immaterial digital scope of interaction to reflect on these limitations of interaction.



Object Case Study 3. Descend (night of this world)

Physical Description – *Descend (night of the world)* is roughly thirty feet by eighteen feet by ten feet in dimension. A human figure leads a procession of objects and materials. The figure is a shock white mannequin that is jointed to the floor at the lower thigh. The left leg and left arm are cleanly severed at their highest joint, a flat plain caps the body at these points. The following procession of objects and materials consists of things found, made, stolen, gifted, and inherited. Almost everything that can be is black through glaze, paint, stain, material and finish. The work as a whole is both shocking and accessible with clear movement and gesture.

²⁴ Slavoy Zizek, *The Perverts Guide to Cinema 1,2,3*, DVD, Directed by Sophie Fiennes. Presented by Slavoy Zizek. (2006 Netherlands) DVD

Thoughts - Inspired by classical stories of faith and desire such as the decent stories of “Dante and Beatrice” and “Orpheus and Eurydice” as well as “Lot and his wife Ado/Edith” the figure is leading an arrangement of forms and objects down.²⁵ The mannequin is my interpretation of a spiritual figure, a representation of the excess of humanity that is essential to its survival. What is unclear, like many decent stories, is the nature of this guide. Dante with his good fortune was provided Virgil, the mannequin as a neutered image of the human form is both empty of our humanity and the exact excess of our being. This is both positive and negative in my mind, the mannequin has entered a state of neutrality. The following objects are not as complex. They are unified in their black appearance and in the flow of their direction. All taking stride towards a similar fate. The hierarchy between the objects has been diminished with the intent of emphasizing this singular fate.

The overall structure of the mass is symbolic of a vessel. Raising two masts, or metal frames, the vessel is bow set with the mannequin figure and all objects and debris are moving outward and level from the wake of the downward progression. The mass is set early in the flow of the exhibition dividing the exhibition viewers between two directions. One stream will compress between the mass and the *Digital Film Series* while the other will move towards the *Twin Stem Vase*. This two streams provide opposite interactions. One interaction is of the silent form born from digital space through skilled manipulation of material, and the other interaction is an audible-visual experience in digital space through the skilled manipulation of digital material.

²⁵ Childe Roland's thoughts about his guide to The Dark Tower - “My first thought was, he lied in every word,/That hoary cripple, with malicious eye/ Askance to watch the working of his lie/On mine, and mouth scarce able to afford/Suppression of the glee, that pursed and scored/Its edge, at one more victim gained thereby.” - first stanza of Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came” Robert Browning The untrustworthy guide/narrator.



Object Case Study 4. Vestiges of Self - None Belonging

Physical Description – Vestiges of Self – None Belonging is roughly twenty-five feet by ten feet by ten feet in dimension. The work is compiled of three different 3d printed forms and their slip cast and bisque fired counterparts. One form is a small cup, another is a small tea pot, and finally a single stem vase. Diamond Surfaces acrylic sheet strips of material act as prominent features on the floor places in parallel and right angles. Three large ceramic vessels are placed in line with the third being elevated and backdropped by a mirrored privacy film. The entire work is almost completely white in color and material with small moments of metallic silver, and mirrored surface.

Thoughts - This work is a similar compilation of materials and form to Descend (night of this world) If the objects of the previous work have a singular fate and directional movement then the objects in Vestiges of Self – None Belonging moves tri directional. A similar flattening or downward movement is present throughout the

objects. The initial form is of greatest height with all iterations flattening. This is true for all the forms except the largest hand pinched vessels. Those vessels move upwards with the largest form being elevated and backdropped. This largest vessel was the inspiration for this work. I had found several artists that were making comparable works in size material and style, and possibly content. My interest was in the origin of the content of the work and how it related to the physical form. I concluded that despite my attempt to recreate and identify the origin of the content within the work the personal narrative and significance of the author of the work greatly outweighed any of the significant physical features of the object. I could produce a million iterations of someone else's work and never truly arrive at their work. This work is placed in front of the mirrored film as a visible distortion of the object, and these perceptions. By gazing upon the form, you are inherently asked to also look past the objects to its distortion of image, your own distortion of image. The other objects in the space that are own my own identity of creative ownership are deflating from their digital origins. In this instance, it is the hand and my manipulation that has not only given birth to these forms, but also distorted them back towards their materiality. These forms remain in a bisque fired state. Bisque fired work in my interpretation remain in a state like limbo, or purgatory. These objects have not yet reached a state of resolve that warrants prosperity and they have not yet reached a state that warrants dejection.



Object Case Study 5. Image Based Idea

Physical Description – Each print is twenty inches’ by eight and a quarter inches’ with two six and nine sixteenths inches’ by eight and three quarters inches’ picture blocks per print. Three digital prints, one of a blackened steel table frame with walnut top and inserted black porcelain vase. The outside two of a blacked steel table frame with walnut top. The images are digital rendering from Solidworks with different color profiles. Laser cut into the far-right image of a blackened steel table frame with walnut top is a text that reads “The ability to accurately share an idea of physical properties is greater than the ability to accurately make the physical iterations of that idea. Before the consumer realizes disparity between the physical iteration of the image based idea they will desire the next image based idea.”

Thoughts – This work was inspired by a relationship viewed during employment. With digital design and architectural practices the rendering of objects and their potentiality was what was being sold with varying degrees of tolerance held to the physical forms that were made as iterations of the rendering – digital information. Like the blinded Gloucester in King Lear (the motif is that Gloucester could not

“see” or understand certain things until after he was blinded²⁶) I did not truly understand the relationship between physical objects and their relation to our image based (language based) desires until I was exposed to this working environment where image based ideas were the entry point and lynch pin of the commerce around and dealing directly with physical objects. The origin of language itself is not simply visual, but representational of objects – pictographs are the earliest form of symbolic communication – inextricably tying art and language together forever in the mind. Many viewers will read the statement with negativity in relation to our hungers – desires for what is deemed a shallow image based representation; craftsman alike hold dear to their ability to render in the physical real. This negativity is not the intention. The ability to control and utilize the image based idea and the desire of it is undeniable the art of what we do especially when, and always, in relation to physical iterations of those image based ideas.

²⁶ Shakespeare, William, and Stephen Orgel. 1999. *King Lear*. New York, N.Y. : Penguin Books.



Object Case Study 6. A Mountain “that Cannot Not Exist”

Physical Description – *A mountain “that Cannot Not Exist”* is roughly forty-nine inches by forty-six inches by twenty three feet in dimension. The work is a scaled representation of a pile of fecal matter built from reclaimed raw clay and paint and placed on a wooden plinth. It has a sub structure made from stacked green insulation foam board. The scaled representation of fecal matter is accompanied by a to scale ABS plastic 3D digital prototype of the original fecal matter. The original pile of fecal matter was a “fake” plastic injected representation of “real” fecal matter most similar to dog feces. The plinth is approximately forty-eight inches in width and depth and nine inches in height with the fecal mountain obtaining an additional two feet of height. The ABS plastic 3D digital prototype of the original fecal matter is approximately four inches in width, depth, and two inches in height.

Thoughts - This work was inspired by the writing of Super Studio in relation to their “single template that can be infinitely scaled”²⁷, the history of alchemy in relation to ceramic arts and its material transformations, ideas of the spiritual in relation to the immaterial. “the discovery of the mountain that unites Heaven and Earth "that cannot *not* exist”” The characters are led by the alchemist through various transformation rituals. Each carries a staff topped with the symbol of his or her planet; the alchemist carries a Sun staff, the thief carries a Moon staff, and the alchemist's assistant carries a Mercury staff. The ten journey by boat to Lotus Island in order to gain the secret of immortality from nine immortal masters who live on a holy mountain. Once on Lotus Island they are sidetracked by the Pantheon Bar, a cemetery party where people have abandoned their quest for the holy mountain and instead engage in drugs, poetry, or acts of physical prowess. Leaving the bar behind, they ascend the mountain. Each has a personal symbolic vision representing his or her worst fears and obsessions. Near the top, the thief is sent back to his "people" along with a young prostitute and an ape who have followed him from the city to the mountain. The rest confront the cloaked immortals, who are shown to be only faceless dummies. The alchemist then breaks the fourth wall with the command "Zoom back, camera!" and reveals the film apparatus (cameras, microphones, lights, and crew) just outside the frame. He instructs everyone, including the audience of the film, to leave the holy mountain: "Real life awaits us."²⁸

²⁷ Padiglione d'Arte Contemporanea. Super SuperStudio, (Silvana Editoriale S.p.A., 2016)

²⁸ The Holy Mountain (1973 film) Alejandro Jodorowsky (4/19/2017)
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holy_Mountain_\(1973_film\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Holy_Mountain_(1973_film))



Object Case Study 7. Eden (flat chested virgin)²⁹

Physical Description – *Eden (flat chested virgin)* is roughly twenty feet by ten feet by ten feet in dimension. A discarded kiln frame, a discarded mannequin, a store-bought seashell, a pile of ceramic rubble, a discarded fire pit, a discarded ceramic figure on discarded bricks, a black trash can full of rubble, a discarded ceramic head (possibly male) a trash bag with fruit drink cans.

Thoughts - Eden represents a state of ignorance of good and evil, right and wrong. As a tendency to sin in humans is the original sin represented through the fall of Adam and Eve and their gaining self-knowledge, the objects represented in the arrangement that is Eden are meant to be void of artistic self-knowledge.³⁰ They are not born from me. They have minimal to no artistic manipulation. The idea of a

²⁹I have often wondered that God commanded Adam and Eve to not eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge or Life that that act produced some sort of “knowledge of good and evil.” To live in the absence of good and evil would seem to be to live in a world without moral awareness in any form. So, the commandment of God to not do something, anything would seem to make Adam and Eve aware that there existed a prohibition, which implies that things in general could be either prohibited or not, i.e. good or evil. If God had not forbidden something would Adam and Eve have known that something could be forbidden at all? And therefore, could have looked back to when God forbid the tree eating as the reason they broke the rule. If you are unaware of a rule can you break it intentionally? If they had eaten from the tree in the absence of God saying not to, and without the serpent, wouldn't they have maintained the innocence they enjoyed in Eden? Don't do X implies right and wrong.

³⁰The voiding of self-knowledge is an impossibility especially within art. Flat chested virgin is an additional sub name to reiterate the inseparability of my own male gaze that is often only perceived in hindsight by the audience-viewer. It is also meant to allude to a female figure pre-sexual encounter or pre-self-knowledge as Eve was within the garden. This is my falsely perceived identity of “Lee-ah” the female version of myself that will never establish self-knowledge or womanhood.

vestige³¹ and Nature is exemplified. Each object is a fragment, ruin, or part that has entered a state of non-function. Similar to my interest in heirlooms and their establishment, these objects have been inversely treated. They have had no specialized care or ownership over time. Having been discarded due to a lack of desire, or incapability to perform their specific function they have become other objects.

A large interest within this work is the use of labor and how ownership changes with treatment over time. This arrangement of objects speaks to the artistic authority and its power to claim and utilize, especially within a lack of skill or intended manipulation. The viewer is confronted with objects and forms that are simply as they are. Like Nature that just is, never becoming itself because it already is itself, the objects are not meant to become but rather just be.

The conflict is the illustration of narrative through the placement of objects.

Narrative alludes to place and moral, in this case of Eden, the Fall and Exodus. This illustration of said narrative instead of truly embodying said narrative is a false concern. All objects that enter the gallery, artistic space, or our perception are a projection of narrative (mostly our own personal). This false resolve of the removal of the illustrative elements between the objects calls again on a false distinction between what is Nature and what is not, a distinction that can only and is only expressed through language. The work cannot become more natural because nature has never departed, less civilization (artistic self-knowledge) can only be removed.

³¹ Noun 1. a trace of something that is disappearing or no longer exists. 2. the smallest amount (used to emphasize the absence of something). 3. a part or organ of an organism that has become reduced or functionless in the course of evolution.

Research Case Study

Shifting Perspectives: A Historical Progression

To accurately map where our current datum regarding personal and cultural perspective is grounded, it is helpful to first take note of historical datums of personal and cultural perspective. Taken from Peter Korn's writing "for Homer... man's highest aspiration was to achieve recognition in politics and war... for Aristotle... gazing toward eternal truths... for a medieval Christian... salvation within god's cosmic order... The source of truth was external to the person."³² Korn notes an historical transition from external sources of reason and truth to an internal source exposed in modernity. Peter Korn's personal work derives from the end of the American Studio Craft Movement. With modernity, there was an inward migration of reason and truth as noted in his writing.



2. Artists Slide Image: Nick Offerman, Tortus Copenhagen, Baseball Girls, Dead Dolphin. 2016, google.com

³² Korn, Peter. Why we Make Things and Why It Matters The education of a Craftsman. David R. Godine, 2013, page 89.

Look at contemporary culture, this inward migration is evident in various forms. On the positive side, there has been and continues to be a vast sense of inclusivity in cultures around the world toward the right of people to identify individually and change their identity as they desire. Most western societal structures along with individuals recognize this internal origin of truth, or perspective of self, and warrant the desired actions associated with the identity needs. On the negative, the constant need to validate and share one's self-image within the culture around you is at an all-time high. This is most evident through social media platforms. To reiterate the craft slant, there is an array of social media potters whose social media identity may be more functional and well-crafted than any of the pots they produce; Establishing that the personal identity is often constructed and sold through popular media for cultural consumption. There is an equal number of "social spoofs"³³ on this phenomenon that are equally successful at gaining leverage for improving a person's social circumstances. The method of defining identity through interiority reaches illogical extremes and noticeable shortcomings in the pursuit of reason and truth. Personal identity shifts are recognized in one fleeting moment – yet may be quickly reestablished by both the recognizer and identifier. The rate of change and the fluidity of the occurrences is what is specifically unique for the current time.

³³ This is a process of self-irony which one of the main modus operandi of everything post-modern, the ironic self-awareness of everybody seems to be a required talent to participate in post-modernism; A highly expandable concept. The spoofs are just as intentional as are the "well crafted" social media identities of "real" artists.



3. Artists Slide Image: Sam Maloof -Rocker, Adam Rogers - Hartford Lounge. 2016, google.com

As the internal datum moves farther and farther into the inner cavity of individualism, a noticeable kick-back has occurred. As previously noted with Peter Korn the American Studio Craft Movement was founded within a cultural tide moving toward an internal search for reason and truth through the personal creation of craft objects. This is most evident in the type of work created by Sam Maloof in furniture and Peter Volkos in ceramics, along with various craftsman. Their identity was formed by the spiritual pursuit of an isolated craft studio practice where in which they would work through a medium to better understand themselves and the world at large. Currently many craft practices are stepping away from that perspective. Today a craftsman is just as likely to collaborate with other designers, manufacturing facilities, as well as craftsman. Outsourcing has become a normalcy, and in some instances “craftsman” have more in common with purist designers who never directly labor with material. This change in craft is made available by any number of resources for fabrication, rapid prototyping, and creation.

Historically speaking though, Maloof and William Morris, or even Peter Voulkos, were not so much different from the modern craftsman. Glenn Adamson's Craft Reader provides an entry point into debunking the myth of Morris and Maloof's business practices. They ran small cottage industry businesses not much different than an ordinary company while selling an ideal of individual handmade quality craft products. To put it bluntly, what they made and how they made it often was drastically not what they preached. But this is only a small point in the relationship.

What is more significant is that people today may not feel the same desire to sell or preach an internal source of creativity and ownership. This is the shifting perspective. In the past, the internal datum was the value marker but, today a doubt for that origin and its inherent value is becoming visible. The shift away from the pursuit of the internal datum and its relation to truth and reason can be seen in the transparency that artists have towards outsourcing, designing, collaborating, working with industry, and pursuing social goals that are larger than their own self-fulfillment. There is no desire to conceal the business practice and in many cases the studio is branded as just that - a business practice. The identity of the individual artist is replaced with a brand name that caters to the market and larger social issues largely ignoring the historical origin of reason and truth. By dropping the internal, soul-searching significance of personal ownership and creation of craft objects an irony develops in the newly found relationship that craft gains with utility, quality, affordability, function, and the production of better objects in general. A potential

revitalization of craft ideals is possible through the shifting perspective of the significance of the internal datum in relation to the creation of these objects.

This still does not fully answer the question why there is a shift away from the internal datum of reason and truth. Korn notes that the economic times have changed. The financial differences between isolated studio pursuits in comparison to collaborative pursuits can be drastically different. This is another serious consideration. I think there are other sources to explore.



4. Artists Slide Image: Takashi Murakami – Louis Vuitton Bag, Macbook pro. 2016, google.com

Objects Reinforcing Identity (possible dystopia)

Having provided a brief historical context on the origin of reason and truth in relation to identity, and a context on how that origin is affecting perceptions toward craft objects, it is beneficial to discuss examples of objects reinforcing identity.

Hopefully this will allow a better understanding of why there currently is a shift away from the internal datum of reason and truth and changing object identity

relationships. Objects reinforcing identity are what I consider the current topia, or what I call the cultural landscape, and are how most objects are used.

It is obvious that consumerism or materialism utilizes the object identity relationship to its fullest potential. I am referring specifically to all of the negative social impact and feelings associated with the typical idea of consumerism.

Consumerism can best be demonstrated by the apple computer, and contrasted by the work of artist Takashi Murakami. Apple computers are utilized as a social status indicator rather than for their computing potential. Nonetheless, the computer works beautifully as a consumer object for people that would like to fit in and express their superior buying power.

The artist Takashi Murakami strategically navigates this phenomenon. His super flat work both enters into the consumerism and cute culture while depicting narratives of consumerism's exact flaws and uncontrollable nature. Murakami's work is both participating and negating consumerism.

These objects reinforce identity through distinction. An Apple computer is not a PC, and a Maloof rocker is not an Ikea rocker. The level of distinction can ultimately add up to the specificity of identity. More levels of intricate distinction necessarily equate to more identifiable specificity. The words you use to describe the object inform not only the identity of the object but also restricts or expands how you can find self-identity when interacting with the given object. Some general benchmarks for levels of distinction include things like value, time (old or new) materiality, made or owned, etc. etc. This list may be endless and considered at infinitely large and small scales.



5. Artists Slide Image: Klein Reid Prime Collection, Stock Ghost Spoof. 2016, google.com

Not all object identity relationships are established through consumerism and ownership. The production³⁴ of objects can be as strong, if not stronger, in the object identity relationship. But just as social media platforms celebrate the projection of a curated self-image, in many cases the identity associated with the production of objects is equally self-curated. This example brings the historical case of Maloof and Morris to contemporary times, with identity through the production of objects as a sales pitch, they may be called object process identities. A ceramics studio may insist on branding their identity as handmade, without ever asking why handmade is good, addressing hand made by whom, or in some cases even hand making the work. The object process identity can be equally constructed and false. This can also apply to how culture at large associates the identity that you choose to have, i.e. the studio potter identity constantly being referenced to the film “Ghost”.

³⁴ Marxism – the means of production itself is owned.



6. Artists Slide Image: Lea Griggs - Presence, Stock - Peter Korn Style Bench. 2016, google.com

Within the object process identity (the identity established through the production process there is a somewhat unique function in woodworking. It is common practice to make a furniture piece in the style or identifiable aesthetic of a previous maker and thereby pay homage to them. It is meant to reinforce the identity of the current maker and the previous maker through the technical feats achieved by the current maker. The most notable type of referencing like this is that of James Krenov style chest on stand. This interaction and referencing is something I find unique to furniture making. Most studio craftsmen strive for this type of aesthetic identity with refined functional forms that can stand recognition and use from generation to generation. This paying homage marks the height of the object process identity and a unique perspective on how objects can inform identities.



7. Single Stem Vase: Twins. Single Stem Vase. Lea Griggs. 2016



8. Film Still, Pulp fiction Quentin Tarantino. 1994, Miramax, A Band Apart, Jersey Films

Heirlooms are a unique type of object identity system. Outside of objects manufactured with consumerism as an intent, with designed obsolescence in mind, most objects are in one way or another assumed by the consumer to strive toward some of the qualities heirlooms possess. Most heirlooms have material value, craftsmanship, cultural worth, this would be for example the Queen of England's Royal Crown Jewels of England so to speak. Most heirlooms have the exact opposite value of this material and skill oriented value. A favorite example from popular

media is “Butch the boxer” in Quentin Tarentino’s film “*Pulp Fiction*” and his father’s broken watch. This object has no real material value of any kind. Other than the personal value established through Butch and his need for the object, it is trash. With this heirloom memory, personal narrative and ultimately identity are at stake. The watch allows “Butch” to place himself back in time with historical significance, it reaffirms who he currently is, and as shown in the film “*Pulp Fiction*” he cannot go forward in life without the object. This is an exaggerated example of the power, function, and role of object identity relationships, and the relationships ability to alter and direct a person’s life. It is also quite delusional, unhealthy and a problematic behavior as embodied in the possibly fatal circumstances within the film.³⁵



9. Artists Slide Image: SuperStudio compilation. 2016, google.com

³⁵ The watch is what made Butch help out Marsellus Wallace – or rather the virtues that the watch represents- he could not leave “a man behind” even if it was a man who was out to kill him – Butch realized that only through the legacy of the watch. A positive example of the behavior.

Reduction for Unmediated Human Interaction: An alternate utopia

Having given case studies for the current system of object interactions with identity, entertaining alternative perspectives on the interactions and how they might be achieved is beneficial. To enter into these alternative systems of object interactions is like entering a state of disbelief to better perceive a more perfect future; a Utopia. “Utopia is an imagined community or society that possesses highly desirable qualities.”³⁶ Once we fully entertain these alternative landscapes, hopefully new perspectives will be gained and reveal the flaws of the current object interactions, therefore allowing truth to be established.

An Italian design group named SuperStudio will be the first alternative. They conclude that the desired qualities of the utopia will be achieved through what they call “unmediated human interaction.”³⁷ The premise is to remove all structures or systems that mediate human interaction; cities, labor, objects, social structures. All necessary objects go through a process of reduction of role, interaction, and use to be reconstructed for noninterference with pure human interaction. This is to be established through neutrality. A complete removal of distinction, specificity in time, and interaction. SuperStudio’s case study for this goal was a new material to the world called “laminare”. Laminare had no specific interaction, material quality, appearance, and to the world was completely new and without longstanding history. This lack of origin and history was established through its immediate bountiful production.

³⁶ Utopia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utopia> 12/6/2016,

³⁷ Padiglione d’Arte Contemporanea. Super SuperStudio, (Silvana Editoriale S.p.A., 2016) page 57

SuperStudio’s conclusions are outlandish and farfetched, but the fears and inspirations for their dreaming seem very real and grounded. The basic fear was the notion that “all design objects fell terribly short of resolving any real-world problems and that ultimately were integrated into a capitalist power structure”³⁸. Objects can serve human existence but they currently falsely do so having been mediated or perverted by economic power structures. A pure, more beneficial, unmediated human interaction is only hindered.

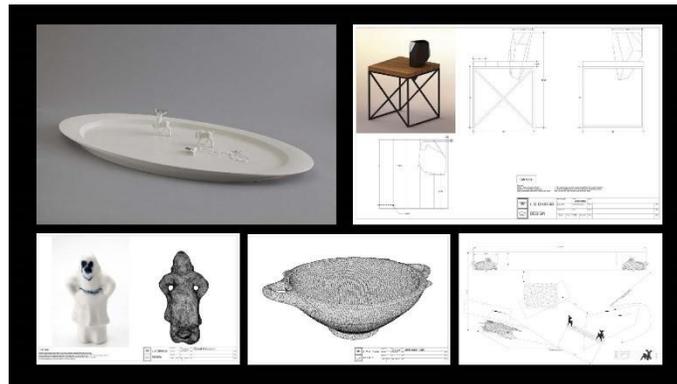


10. Artists Slide Image: Bauhaus Compilation. 2016, google.com

SuperStudio was not the only group that sought to redefine how objects impacted identity, they are not the only ones who sought a universal neutrality for a purer human interaction. The International style of architecture with the Bauhaus movement is another example of a group trying to establish this relationship. “Thus, the Bauhaus style, also known as the International Style, was marked by the absence of ornamentation and by harmony between the function of an object or a building

³⁸ Padiglione d’Arte Contemporanea. Super SuperStudio, (Silvana Editoriale S.p.A., 2016) page 57

and its design.”³⁹ Having grown to a brief prominence at the end of World War I the International Style was greatly informed by the clashing of specific cultures. In response they sought an aesthetic that was universal in origin and based on a purer interaction and function for humanity. Culturally specific or identity reinforcing material, techniques, and ornament were stripped from their facades and interiors in order to gain a more neutral or international aesthetic. SuperStudio based their aspirations on a more philosophical approach while the Bauhaus built buildings, furniture and objects.



11. Work Compilation. Lea Griggs, 2016

Jumping forward to the current time, looking at digital processes of design and fabrication allows a process that establishes new perspectives on how making and owning objects relates to identity. Digital design and fabrication is breaking down barriers between object process identities, an identity formed through the production process of an object, and establishing new universals and aspects of neutrality for the impacts objects have on identity. Digital design and fabrication are

³⁹ Dystopia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bauhaus> 12/6/2016

applicable in all materials and processes. It is truly a “post medium condition”⁴⁰ and is helping establish an “essence”⁴¹ of creativity and production. With culturally specific ornament in mind, cnc-cusping, or the texture left behind in most artistic uses of the technology, is a true international style. A non-culturally specific ornament that is universal in origin and application. Following Bauhaus thought, digital design and production provides greater functionality as well, allowing intended functions to be realized more quickly, more cost effectively and at greater precision. Most importantly is the fact that digital design and fabrication is crossing lines between distinct disciplines and allowing for more collaboration to be made. The wood worker is now capable of ceramics, the metal worker is now capable of plastic injection, the designer is now capable of skilled material handling. Digital design and fabrication, a less technically bound production process, allows previous medium and process specific identities to be shed to obtain more fluid personal and cultural identities.



12. Poster Art, Logans Run Michael Anderson. 1973, Warner Bros.

⁴⁰ Kraus, Rosalind. *A Voyage on the North Sea Art in the Age of the Post Medium Condition*. Thames and Hudson, 1999

⁴¹ Kraus, Rosalind. *A Voyage on the North Sea Art in the Age of the Post Medium Condition*. Thames and Hudson, 1999

Conclusive: Utopia vs Dystopia

Dystopia “An imagined place or state in which everything is unpleasant or bad, typically a totalitarian or environmentally degraded one.”⁴² Often in dystopian and utopian narratives there is a false utopia that is being lived or experienced, a blindness to a totalitarian or degraded environment.⁴³ An event that creates a paradigm shift allows the realization of the dystopia and the struggle for a real topia ensues. This is the plot line to “Logan’s Run” and like many other utopian, dystopian films. Culturally, dystopia is depicted more frequently. “We prefer to be shepherds of monsters...Because we know that our terrible monsters are only made of smoke...”⁴⁴ This raising of dystopia is cathartic while providing distraction from true fears of the real.

Posing the current object identity relationships and internal datum of reason and truth as a possible unrealized dystopia, against the idealized states of neutrality and unmediated human interaction as utopia; it is therefore critical to look at examples that help establish a shift in perspective which permits a true understanding of the proposed unrealized dystopia allowing real significant change to be established.

⁴² <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dystopia> (12/6/2016)

⁴³ All dystopias result from a failed utopia which by definition are “no place” and represent the conditions of possibility for a particular dystopia.

⁴⁴ Padiglione d’Arte Contemporanea. Super SuperStudio, (Silvana Editoriale S.p.A., 2016) page 129



13. Radical Softness Lora Mathis, Rose Quarts and Serenity Pantone. 2016,

<http://www.lokidesign.net/journal/2016/2/22/the-propaganda-of-pantone-colour-and-subcultural-sublimation>

The narrative of the art movement known as “Seapunk”, a utopian theme and its destruction, is a great example of revealing the dystopian potential of object identity relationships or in this case “aesthetic” identity relationships. The movement known as “Seapunk” based their identity on an aesthetic range instead of physical objects. Essentially, as gained by the reading Kevin Lo’s posted article *The Propaganda of Pantone: Color and Subcultural Sublimation*, the sub culture art movement known as “Seapunk” embodied a whole range of feminist ideals and others on the cultural periphery who associated with an aesthetic identity. Pantone is redefining and stripping the “Seapunk” aesthetic away from its original cultural content. The concerning fact in this matter is the rate at which it has happened. Cultural appropriation is not anything new, or blatant theft for that matter, but this stripping of content has happened exceedingly fast. As soon as “Seapunk” started to become artistically grounded in its aesthetic identity Pantone began the process of redefining “Seapunks” aesthetic identity.



14. Artists Slide Image: Richard Prince compilation. 2016, google.com

To return to the object identity relationship, an even more blatant example of an object identity being stripped of its ownership is the progression of theft associated with Richard Prince's work. Although never successfully sued for his appropriation, theft has been a major side story to his work. First with the appropriation of popular media and photography, secondly through fellow artistic photography, and finally Prince's use of appropriation is clear through the social media photography on Instagram. True to his previous works, a character has been reestablished or managed through photography to establish new narratives. The stripping of identity or ownership of the characters Prince chooses has progressed from acceptable to cultural outrage. The monetary relationship in Prince's work also seems peculiar. Identity re management seems only problematic when a clear and evident loss of revenue is present - when disparity in monetary values is revealed.



15. Artists Slide Image: Urs Fischer, Toms Sachs, Sterling Ruby, Francesca Dimattio compilation. 2016, google.com

Between the Fine Arts versus Ceramic Crafts fields another identity shift is happening. The objects, materials, and processes traditionally identified with ceramic practice are being “liberated” from their previously cultural specific identity and are being re managed by contemporary artists. The works of fine art sculptors Urs Fischer (often faux ceramics that are really bronze) Sterling Ruby, Tom Sachs, and painter Francesca Demattio, all re define the object process identity. Though all of them have made and are making ceramics work by theme, material, and process, none have entered the identity of ceramicist; deciding to remain in the traditionally elevated realm of fine art sculpture and painting.

An institutional identity shift is at play within the craft world. The traditional pillars within the craft ethos such as galleries, museums, and educational institutions are now shifting from historical or traditional ideas of what craft was to new contemporary focuses. This transition in focus can be marked by the American Craft Museums change of name to the Museum of Art and Design (MAD), the Portland Museum of Craft closure, The Renwick Museums new renovation and statement of

intent,⁴⁵ and the push for new digital design and fabrication facilities and curriculum across craft academic institutions at large. This has left traditional craft makers at large asking who is supporting them and to what ends. Bruce Metcalf notes he “...can only conclude that craft constitutes a different class of objects and spring from a different set of values and a separate historical consciousness. These differences are essential to craft, and they are in peril of being lost.” Metcalf is correct in thinking that there are distinctions that are essential to craft as an identity system and how it operates. Without the ability to properly self-manage, and prevent others from re managing the distinctions of the craft identity system, it is in peril of being lost.

The true peril here is not the fact that the essential distinctions that form an identity system are being lost or shifting, but rather that we so strongly cling to distinctions, as created through objects and aesthetics, to form and reinforce our personal identities. As realized by the narratives presented objects, processes, aesthetics and other forms of distinction are malleable to whatever the strongest economic power structure is, leaving individuals who cling to such systems at serious risk of losing the distinctions that are essential to their identity and how it operates. The significance previously given to the reinforcement and establishment of personal identity through the production and ownership of objects is slowly being shed. The internal datum for the pursuit of reason and truth is slowly revealing itself as incapable of establishing true personal fulfillment. This revealing provides new perspectives towards a better horizon. A horizon where class structures, distinctions, gratuitous false

⁴⁵ https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/13/arts/design/smithsonians-renwick-gallery-reopens-with-a-new-focus.html?_r=0

individualism, and object fetishes are flattened, allowing a purer human interaction to be achieved.

Additional Features

Typical Structures

1. Any identifiable personal or cultural identity structure immediately establishes a level of distinction that strives toward the exclusion of values it does not wish to sustain.
2. It is assumed that an artist falls outside of typical structures and is permitted to take on non-typical stances. This is not true. For the most part, the more structured, identifiable or regular your art or identity can be, the more palatable you are as an artist. It is recommended that only small strides in any single direction be made to maintain connections to precedence while pushing forward.

3. This is recommended not only for the economic realities of your work but also for the social stability it may offer; birds of a feather.
4. Shifts in the typical structure can be achieved, but they are rarely the cause of an individual or small group, but rather a result of the larger structure's need or giving way.

The Artist Statement

1. Typically used to gain insight to the work of an artist and provide framing for appropriate interpretation. The statement is often not present or specifically catered to desired needs to allow the most open interpretation of the work possible. To define the work is to place limitations and to restrict access, this is not the goal. The goal is to inspire and raise further questions without establishing limitations or definite answers that may further implicate.

The Piece

1. Is a creation representing ongoing investigations that exhibit technical inquiries with the studio practice that reflect how a person thinks, moves, and understands the world.
2. Often referred to as "this piece" or "the piece" is a jargon that the art world and other academic settings have instituted in the place of words like art, object, performance, etc. etc.

The Process

1. Is a term used to describe any sequence of actions that take place in

relation to the creation of a “piece.”

2. Process is given additional significance in artistic practices because it is often not considered a means to an end.

The Studio

1. Is a space of ongoing investigation that exhibits technical and conceptual inquiries which reflect how a person thinks, moves, and understands.
2. Commonly romanticized or taken on as an extension of a person’s being or identity, the studio is often just the opposite.

On Process Oriented Knowledge

1. It is appreciated and assumed valuable to proceed with process oriented knowledge. This is not to be confused with cumulative experience and skill that removes risk from process oriented work. This is not what is meant.
2. What is meant is a pursuit of an unknown or a true adventure. To know the goal and outcome in the pursuit of an unknown is considered a detriment to the insight or perception that is gained through the process.
3. This tie back to the studio is not necessarily representative of the artist's identity but rather an “ongoing investigation” of self.
4. It is better to raise additional questions at the culmination than to provide a conclusive answer to continue the process and not provide limitations.

On Outcome Oriented Knowledge.

1. Setting goals or outcome oriented processes is often deemed less creatively engaging.
2. Outcome oriented knowledge is against sight and language based perceptions of making. In outcome oriented knowledge the final product has the only bearing of significance and the process and methods of the objects establishment are secondary.

On Depth

1. Depth of specific research is assumed to be the only measure for achieving knowledge
2. Shallow or surface information is assumed not relevant
3. Knowledge is not an accurate reflection of society. As information, has become more accessible at a faster rate, knowledge has decreased and reference culture has grown establishing a lack of depth.
4. This is despite small sections of specialization that maintain depth at the expense of breadth.

On Personal Investment

1. Personal investment ownership is expected and assumed between an artist and their piece or work of art. As one assumes that someone with an undesirable job is not personally invested in their work, the opposite is assumed within creative endeavors. This is often false.

2. Personal investment is strictly determined by the person with little to no effect from the task at hand.
3. Without personal investment, a person's objective knowledge of empirical information and its implementation is not valued. To accurately perform the necessary task at hand is not enough, you must be personally invested.

Emotional vs Empirical Appeal

1. A mountain of empirical evidence or facts doesn't compare against a sliver of emotional connection.
2. This is true for a variety of systems including art.
3. The current moment is always the moment where facts are available at the highest rate.
4. Individualism and many other contemporary thoughts has made empirical information subordinate to emotional conditions.⁴⁶

On Fulfillment

1. It is not moral to pursue one's fulfillment at the expense of others.
2. This has little application for artistic practices because they typically operate outside of and are not subject to moral standards of judgment, this is an appeal.
3. So too is it immoral for any person to restrain any given person from their

⁴⁶ This is a potentially tricky statement because a priori the human condition represents the "conditions of possibility" from which facts in general come into existence as they are discovered, implemented and disbanded by human effort. Emphasis is then place on "seem" for interpretation.

fulfillment if it be precisely to the restraining persons' expense.⁴⁷

On Measure

1. Measurements or levels of discernment are often overlooked and neglected. There are three main components to measure as listed below.
2. Precision - precision is the repeatability of a measurement under a single level of tolerance. Precision is not right or wrong it is only repetition at a set tolerance.
3. Accuracy - accuracy is establishing a measurement under a range of Tolerance - Once something has fallen inside or outside the set range it is subject to being accurate or inaccurate. There is no set level of precision necessary within the range.
4. Tolerance is the increment of measure used to identify precision and accuracy.
5. Tolerance is the subjective variable. Precision and Accuracy can only be disputed at a given level of tolerance.

On Skill and Craft

1. Skill and Craft are often treated synonymously and thereby misused. Craft remains undefined in its state of being and can therefore be interpreted flexibly. This undefined state is commonly interpreted as being advantageous but often proves to be the exact opposite.

⁴⁷ This was a hallmark of Western morality- sacrifice for the sake of fulfillment.

On Technology and Deskilling

4. Technology and deskilling are paired in relation to each other. You cannot pursue forward progression without also substantiating its reversal and opposite. This is a positive negative relation.
5. This substantiation only occurs historically. It presents itself only in the past, not in the present, and surely not in the future.
6. Technology is positive while deskilling is negative. This doesn't always apply within the arts.
7. Artistic practices often pursue a revitalization of the primitive self⁴⁸ to seek out a form of honesty that is inherently false. Artistic practices also often pursue a negation of the forward progression that is technology or to subvert its use while benefitting from its current moment. This is also a negative or false process that is nonetheless growing.⁴⁹

On Sight

1. Sight and perception often outweigh physical capability.
2. How you can interpret what is made is often more significant than what you can make.

On Language

⁴⁸ See primitivism and anarcho-primitivism

⁴⁹ "If we allow nonsense to be promulgated in our schools we do a disservice to our children and we are guaranteeing they will fall behind in a competitive world that depends upon a skilled workforce that's able to understand and manipulate technology and science"- Lawrence Krauss Big Think.com. Often pseudo intellectual pursuits or personal perspectives are pursued in the place of science and technology, a similar disservice.

1. Language, or how you make audible and intelligible your Sight and perception often outweighs physical capability
2. How you write and speak about what is made is often more significant than what you can make.

The Reference

1. A means to establish context and additional information.
2. This technique can apply in a variety of artistic techniques, from implementing specific stylistic choices, appropriations, assemblages, and digital copying to direct theft.
3. The ability to accurately reference can add exponential credibility to the Sight and language abilities of any given artist, which again outweighs the physical capability.

On Content

1. The Content is the subjective interpretation of information through personal and cultural lenses.
2. There is little to no inherent content in any given piece. Only inherent information is present, and inherent information only establishes content through its interpretation.

The Skilled Tourist

1. Many artists are skilled tourists that, rather than deeply or personally investigating a singular theme, instead travel at will between prominent themes.
2. Skilled tourists must maintain a mirage of deeper personal investment as they freely travel between prominent themes. The struggle is to not expose themselves as shallow wayfarers. The mirage is commonly maintained through an appeal to concept and thought; a line of subjectivity.

The Artist

1. The Artist is an identity type that can be embodied to glorify personal and cultural perceptions who garners the relevance of such works, pieces, or objects that are a representation of, or derived from, the pursuit of those perceptions.
2. Personal narrative and social context have as much significance to impact on artistic success, or access, then the completed works.
3. There are identity types other than the Artist that could be embodied to pursue the same goals as the Artist.⁵⁰

The Craftsman

⁵⁰ Outsider art – art produced by self-taught artist who are not part of the artistic establishment. Google. <https://www.google.com/search?q=outsider+art&oq=outsider+art&aqs=chrome..69i57j0l5.2662j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8> (4/19/2017) This identity as outsider artist was a once true historical example of the other identity capable of achieving the same goals of the Artist. This outsider identity has become common and is falsely embodied in many instances. (4/19/2017)

1. The Craftsman is an identity type that can be embodied to glorify skilled and unskilled labor, typically through a specific material or material based medium.
2. Crafting in its purest form, is a rare occasion. To intuitively interact with a material in a formative method in which personal experience and the physical limitations of a material jointly combine to discover a new form is a rarity. A potter or wood turner adventuring toward a new form is true crafting. All iterations or renditions of the form after the initial discovery is skilled labor.⁵¹
3. Most Craft instances are really instances of skilled labor.

Personal Narrative

1. In Art, Craft and other creative endeavors the significance of personal narrative and social context have grown alongside modern individualism and perceptions of the Other.
2. Asking what, why, and how are often less significant questions than the question “by whom?”
3. The Craft spectrum is not as influenced by the significance of personal narrative. Because of the appreciation of process oriented technical skill, Craft

⁵¹ See James Krenov ideals on the novice. Krenov, James. *A cabinet Makers Notebook* (Linden Publishing edition, 2000)

is supposedly indifferent to the origins of achievement in such skill and simply values skill alone.

4. Industry is especially unaffected by the significance of personal narrative. This is due to an almost explicit outcome oriented structure where, by any means necessary and by any individual necessary, industry strives toward the final product in the most beneficial and efficient way.
5. It is impossible to escape your own personal and cultural narrative. Social structures are established to define you by the distinctions established by preceding personal and cultural narratives. These social structures cut both ways, the narrative can elevate and hold down.

On Use and Function

1. These terms are often treated synonymously and are misused.
2. Howard Rissati argues this point between use, function, applied function, craft object and applied object clearly.⁵²

⁵² Heidegger might agree with the use of something is its functioning. In the sense that nothing, at least from the human perspective, presents itself as existing in a state of function until it is perceived as having a use value, and even this is not enough, because the mere imaginings of something potential functions are not equivalent to the object in the process of functioning. Many items might imply several use values while in disuse, but this notion of disuse does not imply that the item has no function, it merely observes that the item is not currently functioning. This implicating and imagining of somethings potential function and the state of disuse applies directly to art and creative practice.

3. What is more important than the obvious distinction between use and function is the “applied” aspect. This brings intent and purpose in as moral variables. Defining the problem to be solved is far more relevant and a more necessary question to be answered than the potential use of X object or how well X object functions. The intent or purpose of the function of object X is the significant question because it involves the human variable of being useful or not, and is the question that is neglected.

On Creativity

1. Creativity is mostly over rated and emptily stated as needed. Most discoveries and advancements come through skilled labor pursued over long durations of time and by successfully documented errors and anomalies.
2. Creativity is often a blanket term used when someone cannot comprehend or does not wish to understand the time and labor used to pursue a goal, or when it is obvious that little to no time or labor is necessary for the pursuit of a goal.
3. Creativity can be synonymous with other terms like inspiration, eccentricity, or uniqueness.

On Originality

1. “Originality is a condition of the obscurity of your sources” – Anonymous
2. Originality is the obscurity of your own origins.

3. There are no new ideas or stories to be told only new iterations of what we have already told.

On Nature

1. The term “Nature” is often misused or shallowly referred to.
2. The “natural (from Nature) creativity” or “naturally artistic” objects can be construed as an oxymoron. Existentialists pragmatists humanists and rationalist philosophers generally argue about nature as brutal and amoral, more like gravity than a painting. Some say Nature is beautiful because it must be and Nature is ugly because it must be. Nature rarely weighs options, it just is; this is very secular if not atheistic.

3. Hobbes, Thomas:

Human Nature = Bad

Civilization = Good

4. Rousseau, Jean-Jacques:

Human Nature = Good

Civilization = Bad

5. Two lines of thinking

- a. Humans are always already part of and cannot escape from Nature.

- b. Humanity is fundamentally different from “mere” Nature.

6. To make this even more complex by setting up a trinity, that of technology, the human, and the natural. Each of which seems to exist at times in complete

isolation and at others as inextricably linked. Nature seems to have gained (natural) legal rights as has technology. This trinity might imply a corollary trinity in the pursuit of design, art, craft – design-technology, human-artistic, Nature-craft.⁵³ I think if you replace “technology” with “art” you get what was previously referenced as the difference between Art as Natural vs Art as Human – the flower is pretty but it is just “a means to an end” – art is a (natural) human activity but that does not mean it is inherently good as per the Rousseau vs Hobbes debate.

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Technical Report:

Materials

1. Ceramic
 - a. Slip
 - b. Plaster
 - c. Reclaimed clay
 - d. Glaze
2. Wood
 - a. Walnut
 - b. White oak

- c. Plywood
 - d. 2x4
 - e. Medium Density Fiber Board
3. Steel
- a. Mild
 - b. Stainless
4. Composite
- a. Diamond Surfaces
 - b. Rich Lite
 - c. Acrylic sheet
5. Found Objects
- a. Discarded Art
 - b. Trash
 - c. Items of interest
6. Gifted Objects
- a. Trash
 - b. Gifted Art
 - c. Heirlooms
 - d. Family Objects
 - e. Mementos
7. Purchased Objects
- a. Heirloom Replacements
 - b. Stock Objects

Ceramic Technique - skilled processes

1. Casting

- a. Slip casting is a standard studio practice
- b. Plaster casting is a standard studio practice
- c. Plaster in both slip casting and form making is a standard studio practice

2. Hand Building

- a. Slab working is a standard studio practice
- b. Pinch potting is a standard studio practice
- c. Coil building is a standard studio practice

Woodworking Technique – skilled processes

1. Hand tool

- a. Hand tool working is a standard studio practice
- b. Wood Hand tools – saws, planes, chisels, marking and measure
- c. Ceramic Hand Tools – scraping cards, sure form, spray gun

2. Machine

- a. Machine working is a standard studio practice
- b. Wood Machines – CNC, planer, jointer, table saw, etc.
- c. Ceramic Machines – kilns, plaster wheel, spray booth, muller, work

tables

Digital Technique – skilled processes

1. Design

- a. Digital design process is a standard studio practice
- b. Software - Rhino, Autodesk Suit, Solidworks, Adobe Suit
- c. Design is a series of actions under constraint

2. Scanning

- a. Digital scanning is a standard studio practice
- b. 123D Catch scanning
- c. Scanning is for documentation of objects
- d. Scanning is for creation of new objects
- e. Scanning is for interpretation of all objects

3. Printing

- a. Rapid prototyping is a standard studio practice
- b. Stratasys Dimension Elite ABS printing

Process – Application of Technique

1. Application

- a. Use of traditional and untraditional processes are a standard studio practice

2. Working Hours

- a. Typical working hours are not part of the standard studio practice
- b. Labor invested in an object or piece is not equivalent to value in return

Inspirational Quotes

“The human being is the night, this empty nothing, that contains everything in its simplicity – an unending wealth of many representations, images of which none belongs to him – or which are not present”

– Hegel

“a truly radical change is self-relating: it changes the very coordinates by means of which we measure change. In other words, a true change sets its own standard: it can only be measured by criteria that result from it.”

– Žižek

“a single template that can be infinitely scaled”

– SuperStudio

“Boasting is what a boy does, who has no real effect in the world. But craftsmanship must reckon with the infallible judgment of reality, where our failures or shortcomings cannot be interpreted away.” – Mathew Crawford

“it was obvious that to continue designing furniture objects and similar household decorations was no solution to the problems of living, nor to those of life; even less was it serving to save the soul.”

– SuperStudio

“Whoever can impose their will of the opposite person wins, the other person is dejected. That humility ultimately defines who you are”

– Jordan Boroughs

“I don’t see how a man could compete with the factory as a teacher – not only the technical knowledge but the pace, the life, the energy.”

– Jack Earle

“Technology and biotechnology will be the bases for our economic future. If we allow nonsense to be promulgated in our schools we do a disservice to our children

and we are guaranteeing they will fall behind in a competitive world that depends upon a skilled workforce able to understand and manipulate technology and science.”

– Lawrence Krauss