

Master of Fine Arts Thesis

Deft Perception
Allusions of Reality

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Introduction/Deft Perception: Allusions of Reality

In our encounter with our surroundings, we construct a reality through a collaboration of our senses and our brains' processing of information. Knowledge of our world is accumulated through experience, which is mediated through belief and expectation. We learn to trust our perceptions as truth and allow the process of translating exterior phenomenon, which constantly informs and reassures our perceived reality, to fade from consciousness. Occasionally, when this truth is challenged, such as in the case of illusion, our trust falters. We become cognizant of our personal archives of knowledge and the malleability and subjectivity of each of our constructed realities.

Each of our senses plays a role in understanding space and objects. We learn to anticipate spatial and temporal relationships through the interaction of visual, auditory, and vestibular processes. Representation is an attempt to emulate reality, and when encountering a representation of a space or an object, we use the same experiential knowledge from our perceived realities to make sense of the depiction. Through projection of our experiential knowledge, we can understand a range of likeness beginning at a mere suggestion of form or space. In the case of pictorial representation, we interpret a depiction in relation to our experienced reality using vision alone. So, if we understand both reality and representation through vision and experiential knowledge, how does our encounter with actuality compare to our encounter with representation?

In my work, I am playing with the boundary between perceived reality and representation in order to question the reality that we assume as truth. By working with ceramics, paper, and photography, I examine the idea of constructed reality through material, allusion, and representation. Each piece provides an opportunity for

interpretation, which can either support or challenge archives of experiential knowledge. Multiple layers of information make it difficult to immediately decide which characteristics are the most important or truthful, thus creating tension within and between each of the objects and representations. The process of perception slows down as the viewer makes value judgments by measuring the current apprehension against her experience, expectations, and beliefs. When the process of perception is slowed down and given conscious attention, we have the opportunity to consider the delicacy and individuality of our constructed realities and assumed truths.

The Cognitive and The Phenomenal: Aspects of Visual Perception

There are two aspects of visual perception that are agreed upon by many accounts: the phenomenal and the cognitive. The cognitive aspect can be discerned from the phenomenal aspect when there is any judgment made based on previous knowledge of the perceiver. Such judgments can be as simple as the identification of an object or its function, and as complex as relating the visual stimuli to specific events or memories. The phenomenal aspect of perception can be described as any trait that is logically immediate and perceived through the senses. For example, colors and shapes can be understood experientially, as sensations or impressions.

While these two aspects can be separated through definition, it is difficult or impossible to separate them in practice. Somatic processes mediate both cognitive and phenomenal aspects of visual perception, which means that knowledge about visual stimuli cannot be gained without sensual experience. Also, once any knowledge is gained of this information, it becomes nearly impossible to see a shape, color, or situation

as purely sensational.¹ However, by having a consciousness and intention to our looking and interaction with space and objects, it is feasible to move one aspect of perception, either cognitive or phenomenal, to the forefront of our experience. Martin Seel states that attempting to separate the two aspects of perception causes “a conceptual incommensurability... first, from a *simultaneous* reception of various aspects of the object and, second, from a consideration of their *momentary* appearance.”² While it is possible to give preference to one type of looking over another, it is the combination of these different factors in visual perception that leads us to our overall understanding of objects, space, and the interface between the two.

The melding of both cognitive and phenomenal processes of visual perception is important in my work, because it prompts the comparison between new experience and learned relationships. I present the work to be perceived phenomenally by the senses through the use of light and arrangement. The viewer also perceives the work cognitively through the projection of her accumulated knowledge from previous experiences, objects, and relationships. In addition to recalling information from the viewer’s previous encounters, each piece continuously adds to her personal archive of knowledge, which instantaneously begins to inform the current apprehension (and so, future experiences). Thus, the intertwined and circuitous act of perception evolves from primary encounter, to measured comparison, to understood information, to truth, and back continuously. The work in *Deft Perception* encourages and emphasizes this process through the use of repeated visual qualities and overlapping subject matter.

¹ See Appendix One: *Discussion of Visual Perception: Martin Seel’s Red Ball*

² Martin Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2005), 27.

Projected Experiential Knowledge: Paper as Subject

My use of paper as a subject and not as a material illustrates the process of projecting experiential knowledge into situations. For example, the thin porcelain panels are reminiscent of paper in their flatness, whiteness, and proportional, rectangular format. The grayscale image on the face of each panel is a recording of what a piece of paper once was: creased, puckered, crumpled, or folded. However, no paper is actually present, and the panels possess physical traits quite separate than those of a piece of paper. The ceramic is rigid, and stacked and leaned against the walls of the gallery. If it were to be bent or creased, it would shatter, crack, or break. Although the edge of the panel is thin for a slab of porcelain, it is too thick to accurately mimic a piece of paper. It is curious how much the format of the panel and the depicted image of paper recall the actual material of paper when the material presence of the ceramic is more substantial and verifiable. In fact, the only reason that the viewer relates the panels to paper at all is through her projection of knowledge about paper as a material. A projection this clear and assured is possible because of the general familiarity with paper in everyday encounters. The materiality of a crumpled piece of blank paper is more immediately familiar than a thin flat ceramic panel with an image of crumpled paper on its surface.

When viewing these pieces, the viewer must contemplate the discrepancies between what is expected of a piece of paper and the ceramic object that is actually being presented. Because of the fluidness of the process of perception, this discrepancy does not take long to assuage, and the experience is quickly logged into the archive of experiential knowledge. The process is slowed down long enough for the viewer to call attention to it and feel a momentary breach of trust in her personal constructed reality.

Time: Changing Viewpoint and the Active Role of the Perceiver

Time is an important factor in perceptual experiences, which Seel recognizes by using the words *simultaneous* and *momentary* in describing a visual encounter.³ Maurice Merleau-Ponty also discusses the significance that time plays in visual perception through the concepts of viewpoint and temporality.⁴ He states, “Our relationship to space is not that of a pure disembodied subject to a distant object but rather that of a being which dwells in space relating to its natural habitat.”⁵ This position emphasizes the importance of the body’s presence as not only a vehicle for absorbing sensual phenomenon and transporting it to the brain for translation into information, but as a participant within the explored space as well. This mobility of the body commands an ever-changing perspective within space in respect to the passing of time. With a fluid viewpoint, there is no clear edge between object and space. As the perceiver’s viewpoint changes, surfaces wrap around bends, and corners seamlessly blend with the simultaneous existence of other objects. Color and light act to both define an object’s physiognomy and blend objects and space together.

The field of pyramids accentuates the viewer’s active role as a moving participant through the space. Forty-nine porcelain pyramids are arranged in a square grid that stands about fifteen inches tall. The field of white pyramids softly reflects light in a way that they appear to be glowing. This sort of light remains flat on the surface of the forms and causes a grayscale that is lightest at the piece’s farthest point. As the viewer comes

³ See Appendix Two: *Time: Simultaneous and Momentary Perception*

⁴ See Appendix Three: *Merleau-Ponty: Temporality and Changing Viewpoint in Painting*

⁵ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 55.

closer to the grid, the frontal view of the pyramids as triangular slowly gives way to reveal their square bases, which was previously only evidenced by the square grid format of the arrangement. As the viewer circles the arrangement, the points of the pyramids ebb and flow from up close to farther away. The grayscale shifts with the movement of the viewer indicating that the effect is a momentary and situational function of the light, and not an inherent feature of the material. The viewer can control and change what she sees based on her movement.

This active role is especially emphasized when paired with the large image installed as wallpaper, which pictures a similar scene, but from a fixed vantage point that is not actually achievable by the viewer. The source photograph used to create the large image of the wallpaper was captured from a viewpoint directly above a similar field of pyramids, causing the square base of the pyramids to be the most obvious shape of the composition. Each of the squares is crossed with the edges of the pyramids and dotted with their points, which protruded directly toward the camera lens. However, only one of the points in the motif is directly in the center of its square. Each of the other points wanders away from the middle, farther and farther with each step away from the center. The fixed perspective of the camera can only center one of the pyramids. Since the source image repeats in the wallpaper, the fixed vantage point appears many times. Even though the image is stagnant in comparison to the physical field of pyramids, it still suggests the possibility of multiple or changing viewpoints within the image.

As the source image is digitally manipulated through cutting, repeating, rotating, and reflecting, it creates layers of pattern. The layers shift and change based on the viewer's proximity to the piece. From across the gallery, the image appears as broad

stripes of grays and whites. As the viewer gets closer to the piece, the grid of the pyramids becomes evident. Finally, the individual pyramids are recognized as the building blocks for the whole pattern. Once they are recognized, they are instantaneously likened to the physical ceramic pyramids within the space. The change in the image and the recognition that occurs based on the viewer's proximity to the piece highlights her active role as a moving participant through time and space. Because the image is installed as wallpaper with the photographs and panels on top of it, this experience is secondary to the other pieces. The vastness of the image field and the information that it depicts dissipates into the background of the experience, while continuously informing the apprehension of the rest of the work.

The Paradox of Pictorial Representation

The viewer's changing position in space and her proximity to a piece influences the way she perceives both physical objects and images. However, it is important to discuss how the experience elicited by viewing pictorial representations changes from the experience of apprehending three-dimensional objects, which exist within the viewer's space through direct interaction. Pictorial representations, such as paintings, impose a paradox of viewing in which the perceiver is aware of the painting's simultaneous categorization as two distinctive objects of perception. Firstly, the painting can be seen as an object within the viewer's actual space. With this type of existence, the surface of the painting is opaque, and the characteristics of material, such as texture, can be recognized. Secondly, the surface of the painting is seen as transparent, and the depicted space is comprehended. For this mode of perception to be set in place, the viewer must

voluntarily suspend disbelief, and project her accumulated knowledge of her learned reality into the space of the picture. Scale, occlusion, color, light, and other denotations of space within the picture plane may not comply with the viewer's space outside the frame. The projection of the viewer is crucial, for if it does not occur, the space within the picture plane will never become apparent.

The frame is a key factor in experiencing a painting or other pictorial representation as two-fold. It plays an important role within both the space of the viewer (painting as object) and within the picture plane (depicted space). The frame acts to separate the two spaces and characterize them. Evelyn Leblanc-Roberge says, "The frame is not only defined by some tangible, tactile structure, but also by a theoretical concept of space. Therefore, what is left out is also what determines the frame."⁶ The apparentness of the frame completes the paradox of painting in which two distinct spaces can be understood simultaneously. Instead of calling the depiction of pictorial space in this case an illusion, allusion is a more appropriate term. Soltis defines the difference in terms as follows: "[Allusions] are visual situations which are *suggestive* but not *deceptive*."⁷ The fact that the viewer is aware of the painting's existence as an object means that she is never deceived by its depiction of space as reality.

The material and object presence of the photographs and leaning ceramic panels therefore function as allusion, and not illusion. Although many effects similar to those

⁶ Evelyn Leblanc-Roberge, "In the Aquariums, Behind the Doors" (MFA thesis, Alfred University, 2011), 22.

⁷ Jonas F. Soltis, *Seeing, Knowing, and Believing: a Study of the Language of Visual Perception* (Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company Inc, 1966), 137-138.

used in trompe l'oeil painting⁸ are employed, such as low depth and little temporal relevance in the images, there are clues that lead the viewer away from complete illusion and trickery. While images on the front surface of the leaning panels may be understood as paper at first, that interpretation does not last long. The hard, stiff, and permanent materiality of the ceramic is readily available and quickly dispels the reading of the panels as paper. Besides the panels' rigidity, their edges are the most telling feature of material. Also, no attempt is made to emulate the lighting situation of the gallery within the images. The strength or subtlety of contrast in each panel varies, and no consistent or dependable simulated light source is used among the panels within the space. Each of these features gives the ceramic materiality a more truthful presence than the representational image of crumpled paper on its surface.

Since the photographs are presented in frames, the viewer is prepared to confront them within a paradox of viewing both the image and the object simultaneously. Because of the familiar format, the material qualities of the frame and photo paper could, at first, become secondary to the image presented. However, the subject and materiality of what is depicted is unclear, and requires in depth observation by the viewer. It may appear that the photographs depict crumpled paper, but upon closer inspection, which is instigated by the presence of the ceramic panels, the details indicate that the photographs were taken of ceramic panels similar to those in the space. The scale of the photographs is larger than that of the panels, which amplifies the texture of the slip particles used to make the image on the panels. The texture is similar to noise and graininess in a low quality photograph, and can be mistaken for the pixilation of digital information. However, it is evident that

⁸ See Appendix Four: *Trompe l'oeil and Illusion*

the photograph is actually in clear focus because indications of the ceramic material, such as cracks and ruptures in the surface are crisp and clear. The presence of the ceramic panels near the photographs also draws more attention to the photographs' material or object qualities. The cropping and framing of the images hides the edges of the pieces, which are the most reliable suggestion of material. Therefore, questions arise as to whether or not it is a photograph at all. Perhaps it is another ceramic panel placed in a frame instead of leaned against the wall. This question prompts a closer inspection of the material characteristics of the photographic paper, which is indeed paper, and the frame. The paradox of the photograph's existence as an object and as an image is intensified.

Photography: A History Imbued with Truth

All representation is a transcription of reality by the artist through material.⁹ Photography is not only at the agency of the artist and material, but of a mechanical process as well. Therefore, upon its advent, photography was regarded as a mechanical reproduction of reality, capturing visual phenomenon with truthful authority. The relationship that exists between a human's encounter and processing of her visual world and the recording of visual phenomenon of light in a still image is clairvoyant. This direct link between mental and analogue processing of light into readable information instills photography with a seemingly unquestionable claim to veracity. However, despite the perceived accuracy of recording due to process, it becomes evident that the "reality" that can be produced and presented in photographs is not congruent to or characteristic of the reality we experience through the visual encounter we have with our surroundings.

⁹ E.H. Gombrich, *Art and Illusion*. (Princeton, NY: Princeton University Press, 1961), 36-38.

The previous discussion of the frame and the importance of time in visual perception explains why photography, when employed as a snapshot of a singular viewpoint in time, does not record the same reality as experienced by humans as they perceive their surroundings. Lyle Rexer states, “The very idea of a still photograph is artificial and abstract, involving a severing of particular objects from the flux of forms and instants that make up the continuum of time.”¹⁰ However, this lack of fluidity in perspective and temporal experience is not the only reason that photography fails to present a reality congruent with visual perception. Like painting, photographs are highly curated through frame and the selection of subject. The authorship of the artist is also present through the manipulation of the process. It is the mechanical nature of the photographic process that has historically imbued photography as an accepted means to reproduce reality with assumed truth. This history primes the medium to conceptually analyze the very notion of reality. Utilizing the power of such assumed authority paired with traditional and contemporary techniques, photography is well positioned to explore ideas of reality, truth, lies, illusion, and perception.¹¹ “With its umbilical attachment to phenomena, the photograph becomes a medium for the investigation of both reality (observed and interiorly experienced) and representation itself.”¹²

I utilize photography as a direct comparison between representation and the reality of an actual encounter. The images present questions not only about photography’s ability to capture reality, but also of the notion of reality in general. The

¹⁰ Lyle Rexer, *The Edge of Vision: The Rise of Abstraction in Photography*. (New York: Aperture, 2009), 185.

¹¹ Jennifer Neiderhauser-Schlup, “Perception, Lies and Reality” (MFA thesis, ECAL, 2012). Neiderhauser-Schlup’s MFA thesis paper investigates the position of photography in questioning the notions of reality.

¹² Rexer, *The Edge of Vision*, 195.

framed photographs depicting images of the ceramic panels exhibit a one to one assessment between the two elements. Thus contrasting their similarities and differences in subject and material. The wallpaper is also juxtaposed with the ceramic pyramids. However, the wallpaper is not just a straight recording of the pyramids within the space. The image of the wallpaper is sourced from pyramids made out of paper and digitally manipulated to repeat in a pattern. The pattern exhibits multiple points of perspective, which is akin to actual visual perception, but seems disorienting when employed in an image.

Both the images produced and the process used to make the ceramic panels are reminiscent of photography. A piece of crumpled or folded paper is directionally sprayed with various grey slips, which records the paper's topography in an image. The original puckers and creases are flattened, the paper is burned off in the firing process, and all that is left is a record of what the paper was originally. The particles of slip hit the paper like particles of light. However, the values of the white, black, and gray slips are a function of the material, and not of actual perceived light. Spraying the slip is an analogue process that also mimics painting, drawing, and printmaking, and is directly mediated by the artist and the process. The historical implications of photography allow me to question ideas of reality and perception.

Material: Truth

Images and pictorial representations exist within a paradox of viewing in which their depicted space may represent the experience of visual perception through the projection of the viewer, but it is their materiality that allows them to be perceived within the same space and time as the viewer. Typically, images are viewed as “a window to another world,” but when they develop a strong material presence, the viewer can account for their physical presence in her world more readily. This can happen when the surface of the image is interrupted, or when the picture plane is employed sculpturally through installation. In these cases, the paradox of representation is destroyed and the picture plane is left distorted or absent. Walead Beshty says, “The division between what is represented on the surface of the photograph, and the photographic material is rendered indiscrete.”¹³ By saying this, he illustrates the destruction of the paradox, because there is no longer a “window to another world.” The picture plane only exists as an object.

Hanging the framed photographs over the wallpaper and leaning the ceramic panels against the wallpaper and each other interrupts the false sense of depth in each image. The layering of the images voids the illusionary quality of the images and emphasizes the existence of the material objects in relationship to each other, the space, and the viewer. The presence of the large singular pyramids in the space also helps emphasize the materiality of the other objects. They function as a pure material sample exhibiting qualities of form, mass, and color. While they relate to the other pieces and images in the gallery, on their own, they are devoid of image.

¹³ Rexer, *The Edge of Vision*, 284.

Conclusion/ Subjective Perspective

In much of my work, I employ the picture plane as a sculptural element, thus giving it a material presence as an object within the same space as the viewer. However, by maintaining the format of the frame and using the techniques of representation, the viewer must apply her own personal experiential knowledge of reality through projection. The objects in the space challenge her constructed reality and perception because they present multiple layers of information through material and image. Which layers of information are important or truthful are not immediately clear, and therefore the processes of phenomenal and cognitive perception slow down as the viewer makes value judgments by measuring the current apprehension against experience, expectation, and belief.

During this comparison, the subjectivity of experience is emphasized. Each of us has our own individual history, which unremittingly influences our interactions and perspectives. Through experience, which is dependent on our personal, cultural, and societal positions, we construct our own unique realities. *Deft Perception* is a call for consciousness of this subjectivity, to cultivate awareness of our positions and surroundings.

Appendix One

Discussion of Visual Perception: Martin Seel's Red Ball

The difficulty of separating the cognitive and phenomenal aspects of visual perception is clearly illustrated by Martin Seel's example of a red ball. If I try to see the ball with only the phenomenon of vision, I will see a red sphere. However, due to my past experience, I cannot help but also see that the sphere is a ball that can roll, and probably bounce, and be used to play a game of kickball.¹⁴ The perceiver can discern endless information from the ball's shape alone. The use of language also makes it impossible to separate phenomenal and cognitive aspects of perception. I see that the color of the ball is red, which is purely a phenomenal trait. However, by naming the color red, and being able to refer to its relativity to other colors, which are understood by most people, the phenomenon of color also becomes tied to the process of cognition.

While it is impossible to separate the cognitive and phenomenal aspects of perception in experience, it is possible to bring one aspect of perception to the forefront of experience. For example, when navigating, one might notice landmarks as indicators of an action to complete in order to get to a destination: turn right at the tall oak tree. Or one could be confronted by the yellow color of the same tree's leaves against the blueness of a clear fall sky, and become enthralled in the appearing of this situational phenomenon.

¹⁴ Seel, *Aesthetics of Appearing*, 26-134. The example of the red ball is used throughout Seel's book.

Appendix Two

Time: Simultaneous and Momentary Perception

Martin Seel uses the words *simultaneous* and *momentary* when discussing visual perception, which acknowledges the important role of time in such a process. As soon as an object is recognized or identified, it can be attributed with various other pieces of knowledge, which relate to the perceiver's past experience with such an object or a specific object. Depending on the perceiver's past experience, the amount of knowledge that is triggered through perception will vary. For example, my level of knowledge about the red ball¹⁵ may be limited to identifying the object as a ball that can roll and be used to play a game of kickball. However, if I own the ball, I will also know that my friend gave it to me eight years ago, and it was at that time very bouncy, but now it probably would not have enough air in it to be suitable for a game of kickball. According to Jonas S. Soltis, this excess knowledge triggered by the recognition of an object can be quantified on "a continuum from most simple to most sophisticated success in seeing."¹⁶ He calls this knowledge of expectation or embellishment. Soltis explains that, "The association described between the... levels of knowledge entering into seeing is one of order of logical precedence and no implication is made with respect to temporal precedence."¹⁷ The application of knowledge to the situation is immediate upon recognition of the object being perceived. This sort of knowledge is accumulative and durational, and can be understood to apply to the object regardless of its specific momentary presence.

¹⁵ See Appendix 1: *Discussion of Visual Perception: Martin Seel's Red Ball*

¹⁶ Soltis, *Seeing, Knowing and Believing*, 102.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

In contrast, the information gathered about a situation in which an object is placed is much more malleable and understood as momentary. The focus is placed not on accumulated knowledge, but on the interplay of all visual (and other sensory) phenomena in the situation. Returning to the example of the red ball, we see that it is in the sunshine on the green grass. A bright reflection shines on the upper left portion of the ball, and a short shadow falls to the right of it. These observations are only true of a specific moment in space and time, and are subject to constant change. “In this way, the aesthetically perceived object shows itself in a constantly transitory state. In this condition, nothing is simply just what it is; everything appears on the light of relations that, for their part, change with every change in individual appearances.”¹⁸

Appendix Three

Merleau-Ponty: Temporality and Changing Viewpoint in Painting

Merleau-Ponty clarifies the important role of the moving body and its changing perspective as an active participant in visual perception through the comparison of classical and modern painting. The perspective used in classical painting is not realistic in the sense that its fixed vantage point does not emulate the human experience of visual perception. The halting of the vantage point reflects a stagnation of time, a phenomenon never actually experienced in actual visual perception. He says, “When our gaze travels over what lies before us, at every moment we are forced to adopt a certain point of view and these successive snapshots of any given area of landscape cannot be super imposed

¹⁸ Seel 27-28.

one upon the other.”¹⁹ Rarely do we actually have our gaze set at a fixed projection to infinity. When Merleau-Ponty refers to classical painting, he is implying the use of one point perspective, which is commonly seen as a tool for depicting realism. However, through its stationary and singular viewpoint, it ignores the passage of time, and thus an important aspect of reality as it is experienced through actual visual perception.

Merleau-Ponty argues that certain modern paintings much more accurately portray the notion of time and shifting perspective, and therefore depict a more truthful embodiment of human encounter. He uses Cezanne’s still life paintings as the quintessential representation of the human experience of visual perception. At first, the multiple perspectives that Cezanne employs in his paintings may seem incorrect or nonsensical. However, they illustrate a constantly moving frame of reference. As the viewer’s eyes travel around the still life paintings, the focus is not on the entirety of the composition but on various instances of clarity. Over time, the composition can be understood more fully as an interaction with objects, space, and the viewer as a moving participant through the arrangement. Thus, the painting is converted into and represents a temporal viewing of objects in space, which is congruent to human experience. Other modern paintings achieve similar goals of creating a viewing experience that closely mimics actual encounter through time and space. Impressionist paintings blur the edges and delineations between objects and space through color. Cubism paintings illustrate not only a fluid visual experience but also hint at a haptic perception and understanding of an environment.

¹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *The World of Perception*, 53.

Appendix Four

Trompe L'oeil and Illusion

Pictorial representation can be classified as an illusion when the frame is not apparent as delineation between two spaces. Both the represented space and the actual space of the painting as an object are not seen as separate, and therefore the viewer is deceived. A common example of this type would be trompe l'oeil painting. Trompe l'oeil painting is meant to “fool the eye” by mimicking what it is representing so closely that the representation is mistaken for an actual object. Therefore, “the function of trompe l'oeil painting is presentational rather than representational.”²⁰ Many examples, such as faux finishes in architecture, forgo the frame all together thus making the deception of the viewer complete. The finishes are presented as the material they represent, and not as a representation of a material. However, many trompe l'oeil paintings utilize the format of the canvas, thus the frame. The objects depicted are usually void of temporal relevance, represented at a scale that is proportional to reality, and within a space of minimum depth. This comparison to the actual space of the viewer promotes illusion, but when the position of the viewer changes, and the painting remains the same, the illusion is destroyed. Some of the most successful trompe l'oeil paintings disguise their illusion by employing the frame and the surface of the painting as part of the equation. For example, a fly meticulously painted on the surface of a painting, or a broken pane of glass painted over the depicted space of the picture will camouflage the aspects of the illusion as separate from the pictorial space and thus as part of the space of

²⁰ Susan L. Feagin, “Presentation and Representation,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* Vol. 56, No. 3 (1988): 234.

the viewer. Such examples engage the surface of the painting in a way that addresses it as an object and places the illusory aspects outside of suspicion. The apprehension of successful trompe l'oeil painting is blended with the apprehension of actual space, thus rendering their perception as quite similar.

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Technical Report

Casting Slip

Modified from Spleth recipe in Cushing's Handbook

Grolleg	30
Custer Feldspar	18
EPK	12
OM4 Ball Clay	8
Flint	20
Pyrax	12
<hr/>	
Daravan 7	.35
Water	40

Notes:

- I use this formula for the base of all of my other formulas to make combinations of materials and methods easier.
- Fires to cone 10 with minimal movement
- Has good workability in wet state, less brittle than other casting slips

Black Slip

Grolleg	30
Custer Feldspar	18
EPK	12
OM4 Ball Clay	8
Flint	20
Pyrax	12
<hr/>	
Daravan 7	.35
Water	40
<hr/>	
Mason Stain 6600 Best Black	12

Gray Slips

- Begin with black base:
- Mix grey scales in quart containers by cutting black addition in half each time.
- Black is very saturated, so grey will remain very dark for several steps. Half a quart of black slip mixed with half a quart of white slip will be a very dark grey.
- For very light greys, start with a quart of white slip and add small amounts of black. The lightest grey I use is one quart of white slip with an addition of 5 ml black slip.
- Firing samples of each slip will give a library of shades. When choosing a grey scale for a piece, a large library will result in smooth steps and transitions.

Solutions used for easy mixing of small quantities:

Deflocculated Water:

Water	100
Daravan 7	10

CMC Solution:

Water (hot)	19
CMC	1

Spray-able Slip:

One quart slip, any color
20 ml CMC solution
add deflocculated water until spray-able consistency.

Notes:

-addition of CMC slows drying time of slip, and also increases its dry strength, which is useful for handling delicate thin layers.
-CMC thickens the slip so it is more difficult to spray, so adding deflocculated water thins it to the desired consistency. I usually add about 20- 30 ml per quart. I try not to vary the water content too much, but it cannot be avoided here.

Spreadable Slip (drying extender):

One quart slip, any color
30 ml CMC solution

Notes:

-For use when thick, slow drying slip is desired.

Paper Clay:

Grolleg	30
Custer Feldspar	18
EPK	12
OM4 Ball Clay	8
Flint	20
Pyrax	12
Daravan 7	.35
Water	40
Toilet paper pulp	3.5

Add additional deflocculated water

Notes:

-Mix slip separately from paper pulp first.
-Measure by weight toilet paper, soak in water to break down.
-Ring out as much excess water as possible, add pulp to slip.
-Mix in pulp adding small amounts of deflocculated water as necessary, trying not to add too much excess water. The final consistency will be much thicker than casting slip, but still a very even mixture.
-The starchiness of the toilet paper pulp and excess Daravan helps retard drying time.

Process of Image Transfer:

1. Choose gray scale to use. I typically use 3 or 5 steps.
2. Prepare paper to spray by folding, crumpling, etc. Paper must be Springhill Digital Index paper, 90lb. Tape low spots around edge to board with tape loops. Make tape tabs that are attached to the loops. The tabs serve as a way to handle the paper once it is sprayed. Touching the sprayed surface will destroy it.
3. In spray booth, spray surface of paper with a small amount of water.
4. I start with the lightest slip color and spray from an extreme and fixed angle to the surface of the paper. Once all exposed areas are covered, move on to the next slip color. Clean sprayer between colors.
5. Flip board to spray darkest color from opposite extreme angle.
6. Flip board to original position and prepare to spray with second lightest color. This time spray from a less extreme angle.
7. Repeat these steps alternating the direction of the spray and working toward the middle of the scale. Remember to think in reverse.
8. Once all colors except the middle are applied, position board so that all surfaces will be covered by spray. Cover entire surface of the paper with the middle tone.
9. At this point, the entire sheet of paper is covered and is wet. Gently peel tape tabs away from board, but leave them attached to paper. Pull each tab to flatten out the paper.
10. Apply thin layer of spreadable slip to paper. I find that using my finger is the quickest and most gentle way to do this. (Time is important because the thin layer of sprayed slip is very fragile.) This layer will help flatten the paper, bind the layers together, make them stronger, and increase working time.
11. Lay two strips of plexiglass beside the paper's edge. The thickness should be about 1/8 inch.
12. Once spreadable slip is dry enough to touch (has no sheen), pour paper clay on top of that layer. Run a ruler, or other straight edge across the plexiglass strips to distribute an even layer of paper clay across surface. A second layer may be added later to increase thickness if desired.
13. Once paper clay is dry to touch, compress with a rubber rib.
14. Sandwich clay between two sheets of drywall to flip. Once flipped, trim original paper and clay to desired size with sharp knife.
15. To dry, sandwich between drywall, and place weights on top of it overnight.
16. The next day, the paper needs to be peeled off. The sprayed slip will remain on the paper clay layer, and the design will be exposed at this step. The paper cannot be fired with the piece because it contains clay that will turn into glaze at a high temperature. Continue to dry between drywall sheets.
17. Transfer into kiln by sliding on sand.
18. Once fire to cone 10.
19. For large panels, reinforce backs with fiberglass, resin, and aluminum frames.