Matters of Airing

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Graduate Program in Visual Arts  
A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Master of Fine Arts  
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MATTERS OF AIRING

(Thesis format: Integrated Article)

by

Tegan Moore

Graduate Program in Visual Arts

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
The University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

This thesis dossier combines a writing practice component in the form of an article response to an exhibition, a comprehensive artist statement, and a documentation section. Part One: Helen Marten’s Whiteness offers a critique of artist Helen Marten’s exhibition No borders in a wok that can’t be crossed. Its main questions evaluate the exhibition’s cultural provocations and analyze assertions made by a “post internet” generation in an art context. These issues are presented as contributing factors in the content of Marten’s work, its representations, and modes of authorship. Part Two: Comprehensive Artist Statement, expands on my artistic concerns with specific materials and processes that can destabilize engagement with interior space and its contingent systems. It does this through an examination of haptic aesthetics, processes of intactness, and through a logic of reversals exemplified through sculpture, installation, and video. Key questions ask: How do we engage in an awareness of the systems, objects, and materials that produce comfort in interior space? Can an aesthetic engagement lead to new forms of awareness and criticality of how these conditions are operating in the built environment? These questions are presented as visual problems, expanding the research through my practice as a visual artist. Chapter Three: In Practice presents a streamlined visual document of works installed for exhibition or critique over a two-year period.

KEY WORDS

Visual arts, sculpture, video, architecture, interiors, haptic perception, air conditioning, climate, weather, materials, domestic
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PART ONE


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Photo by Brad Isaacs
INTRODUCTION

The three sections of this document, *Matters of Airing*, are structured for Western’s Visual Arts MFA Dossier Stream, thus each section is tethered accordingly for different types of art writing and documentation practices. The document, together with the exhibition, *A Negentropic Promise* held at DNA Art Space in London, Ontario from August 23 2014 – September 27, 2014, form my research progression over a two-year period.

Part One and Part Two tackle separate topics that require different arguments of investigation. Despite this difference, both activate processes of defamiliarization through critique of the familiar, the assumed, or the “norm”. The texts have a common supporting thread which draws on the work of scholar Sara Ahmed, whose arguments on the process of reorienting ourselves in domestic and institutional realms is particularly valuable.

Part One, *Helen Marten’s Whiteness*, is a review of the exhibition *No borders in a wok that can’t be crossed*, by artist Helen Marten at The Centre for Curatorial Studies at Bard College. The exhibition took place from June 22, 2013 - September 22, 2013. Marten is a British artist working with sculpture and digital animation, and this was her first museum exhibition in North America. My intention to review this particular exhibition as both writing practice and as form of research for my own work drew on connections between my own in-practice interests and Marten’s work, namely, the haptic as a quality of domestic space, and tactility as it is transmitted though digital interfaces. However, though I did find some interesting shared aesthetic sensibilities, the subsequent review
responds to issues of content and language present in the exhibition and textual support. It’s main argument critiques Marten’s failure to acknowledge “whiteness” as a racially charged term, while luxuriantly putting it on display. Using the support of prominent cultural theorists and numerous examples of assertions made by a “post internet” generation, the review challenges the universality of images and alludes to a larger issue of structural racism and white privilege.

Part Two outlines the material and theoretical workings of my studio practice and research methods. Along with documentation in Part Three: In Practice, it expands on my developing methods of construction and design clarifying how it draws influence from fields outside the visual arts. Most notably, for the paper and the exhibition, my involvement in the demolition phase of a full-scale house at The Insurance Research Lab for Better Homes, in London, Ontario, has been particularly productive in applying new methods to my artistic concerns. The chapter expands the concerns of my work into a proposal which argues that climate is both a domestic and intimately political issue. I question how weather and climate control are consumed and mitigated, and the role of materiality and interior atmosphere therein. I make this proposal through Jennifer Fisher’s “haptic aesthetics”, Steven Conner’s “logic of reversals” and Brian Massumi’s “techniques of relation” as supporting material. As a comprehensive artist statement, I examine 4 major projects, Dissipative Durables (2012), Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’: Discontinued (2013), Co-venting (2013) and Better Homes Diagrams (2014) as primary examples throughout the text.
PART ONE: HELEN MARTEN’S WHITENESS

In a widely circulated self-published article, “The Image-Object Post Internet,” artist Artie Vierkant describes how networked culture has changed the way we see objects, through a filter of their representation as images. Digitally savvy artists are translating the mediated flatness of digital images into physical form, leaving an aura of this translation still intact. This may present new issues in painting, sculpture, photography, or collage; how content is situated only around the newest layers of its history, yet it runs the risk of inadvertently disregarding the cultural significance inherent to that content. Though this can productively generate non-linear representations that rebel against “fixed” notions of history, this position should be aware of the implications of vaguely used and abstracted racial or ethnic terms and imagery. In Vierkant’s manifesto-like statement, image-objects are “built with an intention of universality, or created with a reverence for either venue of [physical or digital] transmission,” resulting in “a constellation of formal-aesthetic quotations, self-aware of its art context.” While some artists are using this form of representation critically and with a technical prowess, others indulge in available cultural content like an aesthetic aperitif. Curators too can are praising artists’ interpretations and appropriations of web-based material, as a hot topic that effectively universalizes content without calling its apparent new freedoms into question.

http://jstchillin.org/artie/vierkant.html Post-internet Art is a term credited to artist/curator Marisa Olson to refer to a trend in art produced by artists who grew up with the rise of the internet. This differs from “net-art” that exists only online, and new media art where both form and content is rooted in new technologies. This work materializes as traditional art objects like painting and sculpture created with a consideration of internet enabled technological networks and interfaces.
No borders in a wok that can’t be crossed, (Plate 1.1) an exhibition at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College, was the first solo exhibition for London-based artist Helen Marten in an American museum. The exhibition was up during one of upstate New York's stickier heat waves, causing sweat to dissipate almost instantly upon entering the institutional chill of the museum, leaving a salty film on the face of any parched visitor. This is my experience, feeling an immediate evaporation of sweat and noticing my own white skin while reading the exhibition’s press release. For an exhibition of meticulously composed sculpture, digital animation, collage, and prints with a title that begs for some clarification, the press release/didactic text hardly positions the title’s reference to a self-determined cultural effortlessness. One passage reads: “Image is continually tripped up by language, by a deliberateness of error that postures with all the concrete certainty of cultural recognizability.”  

The statement goes on to praise Marten for her fresh nonchalant style and speed of delivery, while noting her impressive exhibition history for an artist in her mid-twenties. The content of Marten’s “deliberate errors” makes loose cultural associations, while her exploration of what she can move around and what she can touch critiques consumer culture through a quasi-fetishistic assemblage.

In the museum’s entry vestibule there is a dimmed space with a projected CGI video animation. The slick computer generated imagery in the video is accompanied by lavender plush cut carpeting that lines the room and artificial foliage that is strewn sparingly on the ground. The connecting rooms are littered with sculptures that look like custom domestic furnishings such as laser-cut steel welcome mats, CNC routed Formica

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2 Press Release, No borders in a wok that can’t be crossed, CCS Bard.
folding screens, and a corrugated aluminum fireplace. Each sculpture is adorned with bits of things you might find between the couch cushions: wood shavings, elbow macaroni, lighters, key chains, peanuts, matches, steel wool, and rolled-up pages from magazines.

A chilling seamlessness emits from *Hot Frost* (Plate 1.2), a series of pastel-coloured relief sculptures cast of Corian, a synthetic material used to make smooth pore-less countertops. Flat slabs are shaped into ease-edged profiles of oversized male heads with wide-brimmed hats, protruding beards, and spectacles. The series closely resembles colonial style silhouette portraiture, a motif in contemporary art linked to the established oeuvre of Kara Walker. Walker’s cut paper silhouettes and recent monumental work *A Subtlety* are situated in a specific history of racial violence and white hegemony embedded in American culture. Her vehement politics contrast Marten’s tendency to fleetingly dabble with racial stigmas. Marten’s work seems to have subversive undertones but her language around the work is obscure, and avoids any suggestion of possible colonialist critique. In a published conversation with curator Beatrix Ruf, Marten offers a cryptic suggestion typical of her rambling circumlocution: “I am also thinking about density and the paradox of emptiness in obscenity. I want to get to a place of violence, where the work needs to be on the nervier side of collapse, so the metaphor of dieting and food is a convoluted way to imagine the consequences of posture in a space where reductive strategies could be played in relation to whiteness and the ideas of elegance it

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3 The formal title of the piece is *A Subtlety: Or the Marvelous Sugar Baby, an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant*. The work is installed in the derelict Domino Sugar Refinery in Williamsburg, NY from May 10 – July 06, 2014.
entails.” This is one example of the artist stripping powerful language of its meaning and connotation; in this instance, the term “whiteness” seems to be positioned racially, but no effort is made to clarify its relationship to “elegance” or “violence”. The interview ends here, and makes one wonder how such an ambiguous statement evades further questions and instead contributes to the artist’s success and celebration by ambitious critically-minded curators and educational venues like CCS Bard.

Critiquing whiteness through the politics of pastiche, cultural theorist Richard Dyer has problematized the imitation of the formal qualities of cultural production. Eclectic bricolage and cultural pastiche that imitates forms still carries the history and the social place occupied by those forms at any given time. In Dyer's account, “these cannot just be shaken off, leaving a pure form that anyone can use as they like.” Scholar Sara Ahmed has challenged this tendency more explicitly as a “phenomenology of whiteness”: an ease through which white bodies extend themselves onto objects and how they move around them. In her deft scholarship which defamiliarizes how bodies are orientated in the domestic and the social, “spaces are lived as being comfortable as they allow bodies to fit in; the surfaces of social space are already impressed upon by the shape of such bodies.” Recognizing whiteness as intrinsic in the construction of spatial properties also entails an acknowledgement of the space it occupies. This is a challenge to institutions as much as to individuals who occupy any social space in this case the art museum, where innate structural racism is largely unexamined. In Marten’s case, equating the whiteness of a

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bread roll or the gallery wall with the whiteness of skin, is not only a mystifying position, but one which uses culturally loaded terminology and is under no pressure to address these ambiguous uses.

Another work in Marten’s exhibition titled *A face the same colour as your desk* (Plate 1.3), presents a series of quaint desk-like forms. A variety of objects hang off or sit on the desks: Nivea cream, toilet paper rolls, handmade collared shirts, artificial Jade branches, and pens attached on strings from rods of rebar. Bits of trash, bottle caps, and cigarette packs are wedged under the desk bases as stabilizers. A viewer encounters *A face the same colour as your desk* in six iterations, a repetition that resonates with a nauseating confidence. The iron desks are powder coated white with that gloss of a fresh product, yet the structures remain rickety, unbalanced, and cluttered. The works suggests a very human and existential uneasiness with the colour of one’s own skin, in this case, a whiteness that is suggested here in the title and colour of the desks. Marten alludes to race as a literal manifestation, but the work cloaks itself further with casual references, and any suggestion of engaging with racial tension through visual language, ends up emptied out in the process.

The post-internet hyper-eclecticism described earlier is most alive in Marten’s translation from sculpture to digital animation. The CGI image quality, style, and design coalesce seamlessly in the space of sculptural works. The animation has the formal capacity to appear tactile, making represented objects seem more believable than the real thing. Among other artists working with physical-digital translations, is Camille Henrot, whose
Grosse Fatigue (2013) is a frenetically paced interrogation of anthropologic collections. Henrot’s video unpacks layers of visual material taken from the internet and the Museum of Anthropology’s collection through opening and closing windows on a computer interface. Her work seeks to make visible: issues of alterity, human responsibility, and colonialist legacies. It is clear that Henrot addresses these issues as a white artist and she recognizes the fraught uneasiness of that position. Marten is also interested in error and mistranslation, yet this materializes though vaguely ironic gestures jumbled with sincere indulgence, an ease that resembles sprezzatura of the Rococo period. Marten’s Orchids, or a hemispherical bottom (Plate 1.4) is an installation of sculpture and a projected digital animation. The animation depicts floating scenes of errant groupings of objects, caricatures, and an overzealous male voiceover, buoyantly discussing the eroticism of excess.

Artist and philosopher Marina Gržinić, has observed a capitalist neo-colonial attitude of borderless ease in which “the only thing that is impossible is impossibility as such,” and demands to know its origin: “Whose dream? Whose mobility? Whose impossibility?” Marten’s sense of freedom is by no means a rogue attitude. Dutch artist Martijn Hendriks wrote a self-reflexive text in 2012, stating that he and his colleagues “prefer to free art of

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7 Henrot’s Grosse Fatigue and Marten’s Orchids, or a hemispherical bottom were both shown at Encyclopedic Palace, an exhibition curated by Massimiliano Gioni at the 2013 Venice Biennale.
8 Sprezzatura is a term specific to Baroque and Rococo art that could be described as “studied nonchalance” or use of informal representations as a way to reinforce positions of power.
9 Marina Gržinić, “Drawing a Border” (Reartikulacij, 3 of 3), e-flux journal no. 2, January 2009. Full quote: “In an atmosphere of such cheerful celebration of a world without borders, it becomes necessary to advance another thesis or logic—we need borders more than ever. How is this possible? The answer is very simple: to establish a border means to present, to incorporate, to take a clear political stance, to ask for a political act, to draw a line of division that can rearticulate this new world that seems to be without borders—in which the only thing that seems impossible is impossibility as such. Is this the realization of a dream? If so, then whose dream? Whose mobility? Whose impossibility?”
the demand to proclaim its legitimacy beforehand.” 10 This declaration also implies and justifies a way of making art that frees itself from the responsibility of taking a position of authorship, while remaining inextricably tied to market values.

*No borders in a wok that can’t be crossed*, may be capable of exuding some critical value if Helen Marten’s whiteness was more than an abstract inflection. The whiteness of her position under the institutional umbrella of the art museum is so normalized that it remains undetected. Considering the content of Marten’s work, in light of her own proclamations, and the written support of curators, recognizing this position should be crucial for an artist with her success. Doing so would radicalize the terms she has already put to use, complicating and politicizing the tempered coolness of her formalized objects. The rub here is that Marten’s predominantly white Western European and American audience might not be so quick to indulge and invest, if they felt at all implicated or prompted to consider their racialized position as manifested through their objects and dialogues.

PLATES FOR PART ONE

PLATE 1.1 Helen Marten, No borders in a wok that can’t be crossed, 2013, Installation image, CCS Bard, Annandale-on-Hudson, New York.

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
PLATE 1.2 Helen Marten, *Hot Frost (lime ice)*, 2012, Cast Corian, matchboxes, and putty glued matches.
PLATE 1.3  Helen Marten, *A face the same color as your desk*, 2012, Welded radial bent powder coated steel, stitched fabric, cacti fruit, grinded rebar, plastic string, wood, pen, cardboard, and trash.
This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

PLATE 1.4  Helen Marten, *Orchids, or a hemispherical bottom*, 2013.
Digital video 19:24 min
PART TWO: COMPREHENSIVE ARTIST STATEMENT

Introduction

“Air itself can be kept indefinitely definitive if it is sheltered in a dwelling. It is, then, technically encircled, separated from itself as an open expanse, and abstracted from the comings-and-goings both within it and without.”¹¹

A sudden awareness of the explicitness of air enclosed in a building can not only destabilize our innate preference for it to be invisible, but can also destabilize how we encounter the non-visible workings of the structure which encloses it. What critical value might be derived from an artistic, visual response to interior atmospheres, specifically those responses which address air as the material through which we experience objects and surfaces, and by extension architecture and the body? This paper considers conditioned spatial and social conceptions of air as an element of atmosphere in built/constructed space. It attempts to raise the stakes of air’s properties, namely its weight, temperature, and relationships to colours and surfaces of solid objects.¹² Through this, I propose that climate is both a domestic and intimately political issue, one that is fully mobilized with haptic perception.

¹² Jean Baudrillard, *A System of Objects*, (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1968), 31-67. In this text, Baudrillard’s critiques of consumer culture are presented in an encyclopedic categorization of objects, responding to the rise of global capitalism. One section discusses “‘structures of atmosphere’ concerning colours, substance, volume, space, mobilizing all these elements simultaneously.” I here refer to atmosphere as a multi-dimensional term referring to both local air perceptible in physical space, and a pervading mood of a place or situation.
This paper expands my research through my practice, by making visual issues out of contingent and invisible essentials of the built environment. My work in sculpture, installation, and video reflects on built space through qualities and properties of materials and technical operations that promote both the consumption and mitigation of the weather. I use the term atmosphere to illustrate an intersection of weather, a physical entity and interior space, a subjective force. I find this intersection most compelling as its elements meet on either side of a wall and as controlled amounts of weather moves through interiors along peripheries. Thus, the material involved in processes of air handling and weatherproofing can be opened up in studio work (engagements with material and creative methods of making) and fieldwork (engagements with site-specific projects in other fields). Weather is present in interior space as much as exterior; in both respects it is highly constructed in the public consciousness and affected by institutional infrastructure and tactics of consumerism. Key questions emerge throughout this text: How do we engage in an awareness of the systems, objects and materials that produce comfort in interior space? I will propose that people have become naturalized to a set of synthetic conditions that are highly fragile yet, on a quotidian level, function as an autonomous force requiring scant conscious engagement from its users. In light of this, can an aesthetic engagement lead to new forms of awareness and criticality of how these conditions are operating in built space? This thesis will consider how my own work is charged by an adjacent position to this caveat.

The sections that follow will define “haptic aesthetics” as a working method for addressing how my work is operating to: complicate perceptions that are “of the interior”
or “of the exterior,” consider the relativity of what it means to feel comfortable, apply a visibility to non-visible aspects of built space, and draw on the imbalance involved in what architecture commands from us. My research is informed by art history, architectural theory, social geography, philosophy, design, and applied engineering. This paper takes shape over four sections and I use my own work as my primary examples. The first section entitled “Conditions” outlines some key terms through which I consider the perception of atmosphere, and lays the groundwork for a potential agency of a haptic aesthetics. It maps out theoretical conditions that might enable this agency, via an act of artistic production and presentation. “Intactness” introduces my approach to materials and sculpture as one informed by manufacturing and design, and positions the intact as part of a counterintuitive studio process. “Quietness” locates my own position in an art historical context and also proposes quietness as tactic for artistic access and intervention. The concluding section entitled “A Negentropic Promise” focuses on the relationship of objects with the environment as an active engagement whereby each exposes aspects of the other. It considers the potential of the political force that resonates in an artistic investigation into feeling one’s atmospheric pressures.

**Conditions**

In *Relational Sense: Toward a Haptic Aesthetics* Jennifer Fisher describes haptic perception as, “the energies and volitions involved in sensing space: its temperature, presences, pressure, and resonances.”13 This description of haptic knowledge focuses on intrinsic forces in the body’s perception of space and the materials that make up its

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13 Jennifer Fisher, “Relational Sense: Toward a Haptic Aesthetics,” *Parachute Contemporary Art Magazine* (July – September 1997): 5. “In this sense, it is the affective touch, a plane of feeling distinct from actual physical contact.”
volumes and surfaces. These empirical sensations are not only physical and tactile, they also inform how vision transfers action, object, or image into a physical sensation like a chill, frisson, or faintness. Visual transmission as felt contact works against traditional notions of aesthetic experience as passive and distanced. A haptic aesthetics can operate as an alternative to a purely visual aesthetics, emphasizing embodied engagement and spatial awareness.

Fisher’s “haptic aesthetic” regards sensory experience in terms of a social and cultural unfolding through a physically felt sensation. Such experience is not simply “an apolitical formalism,” but a complex “play of agency in configurations of living, feeling, experiencing, producing, and perceiving, all of which manifest dimensions of the political.” 14 Giving agency to these “configurations of living” requires laying them out, organizing, and arranging them in order to form new relationships with new priorities. In the same text, Fisher considers Mona Hatoum’s Light at the End (Plate 2.1). This human scale iron frame consists of six vertical heating elements, all functioning and installed in a darkened gallery corner. 15 The conceptual framework for the piece is illuminated by the material itself through its formal configuration and its physical properties. The viewer is drawn to its warm glow and Minimalist-inspired form, but its inviting quality shifts when the scalding heat of its working elements is proximally felt. The installation’s physicality first as light and then as temperature generates both an apprehension and an awareness that separates viewer experience from viewer perception. Hatoum works with specific conceptual and political frameworks for constructing interventions that confront how

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bodies move through space and challenge the traditionally passive act of approaching both an artwork and its relationship within institutional power structures. It is through a specifically haptic engagement that this mobilization occurs.

This paper’s introduction expressed an interest in highlighting tensions between perceiving and overlooking infrastructural elements of interior space that regulate safety and comfort. One way I approach this tension in my work is through material interventions that work closely with the spatial-structural elements that are already in place. Working with existing parameters of a particular space is an important aspect of my process. I am currently working with the dropped ceiling (sometimes called suspended ceiling) and the space between a dropped ceiling and a structural ceiling, referred to as the plenum space. The term “plenum” defines a space full of matter, or an air-filled space.\textsuperscript{16} It is a technical term used to indicate a space that facilitates airflow, ventilation, plumbing, and the channeling of electricity in a building. \textit{Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’: Discontinued} (Plate 2.2) is an installation in a small office space incorporating a dropped ceiling and the plenum space above it. The piece uses the existing spatial and structural parameters of the ceiling as a condition for its configuration. The white mineral fibre panels, designed for fire resistance and sound absorption, are removed and replaced with translucent light diffusers of the same dimensions. Due to the thinness and oblique pattern of the “cracked ice” design these particular light diffusers are extremely fragile and brittle, prone to cracking and chipping even while on the sale shelf. Prior to

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{16} Merriam-Webster, s.v. “plenum” Definition for plenum is, “\textit{1a}: a space or all space every part of which is full of matter \textit{b}: an air-filled space in a structure; \textit{especially}: one that receives air from a blower for distribution (as in a ventilation system) \textit{3}. A quality of state of being full.”}
installation in the office space, I repair the cracks in the panels. The translucency in the panels exposes a ghosted and foggy void space above, making partially visible vital coloured wires and duct labels. The panels bulge with gravity on their weakened structure, causing the ceiling to loom in a conundrum-state: a momentarily stable threat of collapse.

Though it is a relatively unobtrusive intervention in the space, many aspects of how the room feels change significantly. Sound bounces rather than absorbs; the bowing panels hover rather than lying flat and fixed; the exposure of the plenum space reveals a dark cavity, which is counter to the bounced reflections of light on opaque white ceiling panels. The installation charges the space with new sets of commands, challenging the subdued qualities of an office space within which one expects to comfortably function. The visible and audible shifts in the space enable enhanced haptic awareness of the room, and it is through a combination of this hapticity and the disruption of materials that the viewer’s sense experience can broaden into a question of larger structural conditioning. An important aspect of haptic aesthetics is that it not just function as quality exuded by an artwork for a viewer’s observation, but also as an awareness of one’s way of being in a place. A scholar of “environmental aesthetics” and ethics, Arnold Berleant considers the spatial encounter in terms of an engagement that works against historical notions of aesthetic experience. He proposes that the “negative” aspect of a place (for instance, a site in ecological strife, a neglected architecture, or a place purposefully hidden) is critical if an aesthetic experience is to operate politically. It is a through an active

17 Arnold Berleant, “The Aesthetic in Place,” Constructing Place: Mind and Matter, ed. Sarah Menin, (New York: Routledge, 2003), 45. Berleant’s research is rooted in context and engagement as primary factors in what he terms “environmental aesthetics”.
engagement with these types of places that we might consider “not so much perception of the occurrence of aesthetic, but rather the perception of the conditions of an encounter.” Examining conditions of the encounter is integral to the work of many artists involved with installation and intervention. My own work and research is influenced by artists who have canonized art as phenomenological and architectural: Robert Smithson’s Non-sites, Gordon Matta-Clark’s architectural cut-outs, Olafur Eliasson’s experiential installations, and Robert Irwin’s perception of perception come to mind. Today, visual art that enacts the physical environment anew is embedded and even expected. My interest differs in that I attempt to grapple with the visual and felt experience of a sculptural object or installation by using the properties embedded in a material’s utility and the existing operations of its use.

The Insurance Research Lab for Better Homes is a site on the airport fields of London, Ontario. The facility was built to house controlled testing by researchers in order to simulate and study realistic real-time wind damage to full-scale structures. The facility’s aim is to improve construction techniques and standards, making communities “more resilient to natural hazards and more energy efficient.” Upon my initial encounter with the lab, its mobile steel hangar contained a full-scale brick house midway through demolition phase. Better Homes Diagrams (Plate 2.3), is a seven-minute looped and projected video shot at the IRLBH during this deconstruction phase. The video assembles scenes within the structure that explores aspects of post-domestic hapticity while responding to conditions specific to this site. Most notably, the site itself complicates

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climatic values of interior and exterior in a number of ways: the house is partially torn
down, exposing open air, inner layers of the walls, and scattered remnants of the roof; the
interior of the house and the enclosing hangar are at the same temperature as the air
outside (it is winter, so these temperatures are often well below zero); the site shows
signs of previous activity by its seasonal detritus, such as perished flies and an abundance
of summer fans. It feels simultaneously domestic, with bannisters and moulding, and
industrial, with I-beams and heat lamps. It is familiar and unfamiliar, partially abandoned
and highly technical. My own destabilized position while on site triggered responses
through small interventions that used its existing parameters and synced these with
audible and visual parallels. For instance, draft film is sucked taut to glassless windows
and a heat lamp is positioned to melt drifted snow. These gestures use my own
consciously destabilized position as a base from which to respond to objects and surfaces.
In other words, I am responding to parameters that are outside of any usual context, i.e.
the house as deconstructed laboratory. This produces an impulse to work with what I
know or recognize and at the same time opens it up to abstractions in a context that
cannot be fully identified in the video. The interventions are constructed to seem normal,
occuring for some logical reason, or to give the impression that an event has already
occurred; I am filming the after-effects. The ambient sounds of the space are layered with
familiar cinematic movements, evidence of the preparation of my installations (for
instance a fan or a heat gun), and occasionally evidence of the lab technician carrying out
his own work. As the layers of activities are presumed to be occurring, the building itself
and its surroundings make signals of technical colour and pattern that are clearly not
domestic in a traditional sense, such as the pencil grid on white walls, the yellow
strapping and caution tape, and the exposed pink and red weather proofing material. This quality of colour as signaling is especially distinct in this house/lab environment as it contrasts domestic colour as warm, cool, neutral and thus comfortable.

**Intactness**

Interior weather systems rely on the durability of structural elements to stay intact. The need to consistently handle air after its natural movement has been impeded requires a balanced set of closings and openings that rely on that natural movement while mitigating its undesirable properties. The structure that heating, ventilation, and air conditioning operate on relies on natural movement (the weather) in order to operate its synthetic movement. Air performs through venting, filtering, weatherproofing, humidifying, dehumidifying, circulating, and aerating. These terms speak of both human comfort and latent anxiety through which interior microclimates work. Contemporary artist An Te Liu incorporates the excessive intactness of air and its utility into work that “operates within the complex airspace of classification, hygiene and weightlessness.”²⁰ Over a 15 year period Liu has been exhibiting sculptural installations featuring swarms of functional air conditioners, ionizers, purifiers, and humidifiers, all running continuously in various configurations. (Plate 2.4) This excessive intactness is an overcompensation that highlights the fear associated with air quality. Controlled heating, ventilation and air conditioning must be considered in terms of a weather system. These devices are activators that depend on the movement of air —whether it be a breeze, or a change in temperature or property —to sustain a changeable state which is in turn explicitly linked

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to the objects that mediate it, regulate it, and thus materialize it. The strategies I am working with seek to get inside the unassuming exterior shell of manual and mechanical protective and purifying devices which have become the materials of air rendered as an instability: furnace filters, evaporator coils, foam insulation, vapour barriers, dust guards, and dryer sheets, to name a few. Many of these objects have a multidimensional lightness, which enables us to put our anxieties to rest. We do not see them nor do we consider them until they are broken, obsolete, or malfunctioning. For me, the materials that are discarded in this process and the properties they can embody over time are resources and a form of research for making sculpture.

*Dissipative Durables* (Plate 2.5) is a series of sculptures installed in a group on a wall and floor. The individual forms and the overall installation are intended to imitate methods of promotional display, effecting the abstracted quality of a showroom. The materials used are mostly salvaged from construction sites, alleys, scrapyards, and the riverside. When working with these exhausted materials, much of my process is an attempt to make them appear untarnished. One sculpture’s source material comprises a brick of blue marine foam that was heavily eroded by storm action and a piece of discarded Weathermate™ Housewrap fabric from a construction site. My work on these items has stripped away all signs of wear as if to propose that the material is new. In other sculptures, spun fiberglass is pressed into the coated metal spikes of a display rack, and rusty stove elements have been buffed and powder coated. In this series the dry, brittle and fragile properties of the static fiberglass are apparent, and partial abstraction and experimental application, renders them both as haptic and optic materials. The title of this cumulative work
suggests an inversion or contradiction of actions. While the thermodynamic term “dissipative” refers to an irreversible loss or dispersal of energy, “durable” is a material property associated with the promotional placement of products designed to withstand harsh or sustained exposure to weather. The action of taking something with an artificially durable composition from its position as culturally dissipated and structurally misplaced, and counterintuitively re-posing it as new material is a metaphorical tactic that renders this position somehow lighter than before.

Early in his artistic and critical practice, Robert Smithson used the term “dedifferentiation” to describe the crucial achievement of artist and artwork: they were co-participants in an embodied process of unfolding as a means for opening up new critical dialogues about humanity’s relationship to the environment. Dedifferentiation is a term Smithson started using after viewing *Spiral Jetty* from a helicopter: “Spinning off from these centers is a ‘scale of edges,’ various forces of becoming: ‘slipping out of myself, sunstroke, dizziness, ripples, vaporization,’ an arrangement of variables spilling out into surds.” Dedifferentiation is a technical term derived from cell biology. As a “reversion of specialized structures (as cells) to a more generalized or primitive condition often as a preliminary to major physiological or structural change,” it resonates with the earlier mention of “configurations of living, feeling, experiencing, producing, and perceiving” as means for mobilizing a haptic aesthetic agency. While Smithson’s approach to haptic engagement was localized in entropic fragmentation, my own approach is an embrace of restrained counterintuitive processes that can blend with an

environment, appearing to imitate some usual utility. Smithson’s weighs heavily, a necessary load that is the product of the early and formative years of environmentalism. Mine is a critique of lightness that attempts not to touch heaviness, rather it has a concern with keeping things intact, which I believe reflects the nature of my socio-cultural situation. In other words, lightness through intactness “pulls against the logic and demand of the illimitable” expansion of capitalism, a phenomenon through which many things come to mind: the gloss of an ad, the effortlessness of promotion, “the cloud”, lightweight devices, touch screens, and Styrofoam houses.  

My process uses material selection combined with imitative tactics of design as a way to get inside properties of specific materials through which atmosphere acts/functions as a mediator between person and object, a floating tension of “invisible” systems of consumption. The consumption of advertising for example, through lightness and temperature, can have a permeating effect on a subject without realization. Jean Baudrillard’s impression of the object’s imperceptible temperature and weight in the advertisement indicates a social desire for “warmth” and insists of advertisements that “they seek us out, surround us, they prove their existence to us by virtue of the profusion of ways in which they appear, by virtue of their effusiveness.” It seems that today objects, both in ads and otherwise appear by way of our pre-acceptance of their emotional

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23 Baudrillard, The System of Objects, 185-86. Preceding quote: “What advertising bestows upon objects, the quality without which they would not be what they are, is warmth. Warmth is a modern property which we have already identified as the basis of ‘atmosphere’: just as colours are hot and cold (rather than red or green); just as the ‘controlling dimension of personality’ (in an other-directed society) is the ‘warm-cold axis’; so likewise objects are hot or cold, that is to say, indifferent or hostile, or spontaneous, sincere, or communicative – in a word, they are ‘personalized’.”
manipulation. They appear virtually, instantly; in fact we assume that they will do so (Plate 2.6).

More and more, our connection to the material process of objects and their chemical compositions is out of our conception or control. Even in the advent of accessible green technology it is easy to take a passive and accepting role in this process. Sara Ahmed, a scholar in queer, feminist and cultural studies, makes an eloquent call for an ethical experience of objects. Her reinvigoration of phenomenology considers how specific histories affect an object’s coming to be in a particular space. For Ahmed, “what arrives not only depends on time but is shaped by the conditions of its arrival.”

In my work I consider how the haptic is mobilized by how we arrive at things. Even in the case of naturalized forms which “come into play as a false answer to the self-contradictory manner in which the object is experienced,” thereby enabling an “atmospheric history.”

Ahmed emphasizes the subversive potential of the “familiar” in our apprehension of objects in space. Thus our experience with proximity and “what is within reach” can never be an objective one, but an airing which is both an emotional and physical activity occurring between us and the object, behind the object, and in our own empirical and inherited histories. Inhabiting the familiar causes things to shift into a space of background action: they are there, but they exist in such a way that we do not see them.

The background is “a dimly apprehended depth or fringe of indeterminate reality” that, if

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26 This notion familiar as unfamiliar is different than the Freudian notion of the uncanny. The uncanny for Freud, refers to something that is familiar and alien and thus dreadful and frightening, relating more to a person, place, or thing as it might appear in a nightmare, for example.
enabled, reveals itself as the very conditions required for technical and structural health.\textsuperscript{28} These operational underpinnings, as in the case of a building, operate with some measure of breathing room, always moving and permeating in a changeable position that is both uplifting and assertively weighted.

**Quietness**

There is a quietness to my artistic approach that works within or beneath a system of inquiry rather than challenging it outright. Artists Richard Tuttle and Michael Asher, made powerful statements with modest objects and demure actions that simultaneously challenged the grandiose art objects coming out of mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century Modernism. The quiet quality of their practice is a distinct feature of their radicalism, both affecting and exposing the fragility of not only the viewers’ expectations, but also the workings of the institutions that support them.

Richard Tuttle’s slight and fragile sculptures were radical in the 60’s and early 70’s but now they are fully embraced as essential to a Post-minimalist canon still at work today (as in Plate 2.7, *Hello, the Roses*). Tuttle’s consistently changing and explorative way of working brings a “structural presence to fragile materials and inherently unstable phenomena that otherwise verge on invisibility.”\textsuperscript{29} Drawing on this material and compositional instability rooted in the object’s invisible or otherwise provisional presence, his sculpture addresses “the moment where we feel least understanding.”\textsuperscript{30}

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 255.
find artistic influence in Tuttle’s discrete material assertiveness of the fragile, which leads me to a curiosity concerning how even well-running systems function on contingent threads of stability, as fully emblematized by Michael Asher. Asher’s interventions have worked within and against his institutional contexts, “crafted from the existing contingencies that make its presentation possible.”

He does this via architectural or infrastructural staging of inverse situations that lie within a system or condition of the gallery. Asher’s “subtraction or relocation of a priori elements” is most famously at play in his removal of the wall separating a gallery from an adjacent office/storage space (Claire Copley Gallery, 1974), and in his publishing of a covert catalogue featuring all deaccessioned artworks of the Museum of Modern Art (1979).

In *Kunsthalle Bern, 1992* (Plate 2.8), he confined all of the museum’s radiators to its foyer, connecting an extensive system of hot water piping back to each unit’s source valve in the remaining otherwise empty rooms of the building. Both Tuttle and Asher produce works that use quietness to a destabilizing effect, though with extremely different practices and sentiments about art and value.

One important feature of this quietness is the action involved in keeping something unharmed. Critic and essayist Steven Conner activates this agency through his observations of a touch that keeps things intact through “a limiting of its own action.”

The potential for such limiting of touch can be expressed through “a shyness, a reserve, a precaution,” a feeling that can be invoked through the mere appearance of the underside

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32 Ibid.
of a surface. It is this quietness through reversals that translates most directly for me in
the studio, where something is altered or changed, then changed back into an intact form,
but never recaptures its original state. In Conner’s discussion of *gleam*, he considers “an
object which shines” as capable of renewal “by having its shine restored.” Conner
considers this “a negentropic promise, and the promise of future rescindings,” by which
“the process of polishing is an undoing of the undoings of time. The very process
whereby one polishes shoes, floors or silverware enacts this complex reversibility.” A
reversibility or re-ordering is important to the haptic system. The recognition of an object
is only partially due to its form, and much more to do with the visual perception of its
surfaces, texture, dexterity, volume, and weight. When these things are altered and the
form is made familiar, haptic perception enables one to grip its contradictions. Further,
the ways of engaging other nearby and adjacent operations can also be put to task.

I examine contradictions and conditional supports of the reversals of the familiar in a
project titled *Co-venting* (Plate 2.9). This series of sculptures is supported by an existing
ventilation system and vent grills located on the Artlab Gallery walls. Each piece uses the
suction produced by the contact of materials with the intake airflow through the vent
grill. The sculptures fall off the wall or become partially disengaged every night when the
ventilation automatically shuts off. The piece is reinstalled every morning after the
system is turned on. While in operation, the quivering dryer sheets, the heightened noise,
and the suction of materials highlights the anxiousness of the restrictive cover-ups
applied to this sensitive system. It is my intent that the work renders a suspicion of

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34 Ibid.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid.
whether commands made by a building are made at its core or located on its surfaces or facades. In *Co-venting* I attempt to expose aspects of the built environment that are imperceptible by design, unknown, but very much alive and breathing. The politics of a haptic approach to interior space are rooted in the instability of the relationship between people and the buildings they inhabit. The use of the air as a support makes the air’s movement more material than before. This material investigation prompts a sensitive awareness to these aspects of built space. This work uses careful balancing of permission and stealth, operating to cooperate with the ventilation system. Since it technically blocked every intake vent in the gallery, each element was designed to also vent air so as to not set off system-wide alarms. The activation of the alarms and eventual dismantling of the work from the vents was imminent. I found this project compelling for this risk, taken with the specific task of keeping the system intact through intervening characteristics and form.

**A Negentropic Promise**

“Nothing is more disturbing than the incessant movements of what seems immobile” 37

The buildings we live in ask us to know them intimately, maintain them, and care for them; they ask us to feel safe while inside, but they do not ask us to understand their inner workings. At the Insurance Research Lab for Better Homes, the inner workings of a red brick house are visible from all vantage points. The building is exposed and has had careful eyes on it: eyes of builders, researchers, insurance companies, and the media. It is

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within this zone of exposure that my work functions with a different kind of eye. The relationship here approaches what Brian Massumi has called “techniques of relation,” generative potentials that put “the technical object and art object in the same orbit, without reducing one to the other.” 38 The technical object and the art object can coalesce in a space outside the “regulatory principles” of technical processes, while still drawing on the potentialities of those processes. 39 A diagram is a device rooted in the technical and visual. Recent projects have drawn on the potential that comes out of a diagrammatic undoing. This undoing manifests as haptic in its process. I am taking things apart by hand that are unsettling to touch or to think about touching. This kind of unsettling is specific to touch, and the taking apart that is specific to a diagram. The “haptic diagram” has been a useful model for architectural theorists interested in an alternative approach to designing and experiencing architecture, likening these engagements more in terms of an unfolding potential rather than a squaring of plans. In this way, “the intensive complexity of a space is shown in those moments that hold it apart, taking it out of itself so that it can be folded anew.” 40 The weakness of the space (which is often imperceptible) is its own potential for reframing. 41 According to Fisher, “haptic mediation occurs through the sensing of architecture and its climates” so even if we think architecture is stable we know that climate certainly is not, and this mediation can force them into cooperation. 42

Activating the haptic as a cooperative role engaged aesthetic and a diagram of potential

39 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
can help us assert new models of adaptability for consumption of materials and mediating, as opposed to mitigating, the weather.

The demolition of the lab house, which is partially witnessed in *Better Homes Diagrams*, could be compared more accurately to a deconstruction, as it is taken down piecemeal by the lab’s technician. This diagrammatic activity is necessitated by the lab’s process of examination, making even the deconstruction a resilient operation, thus opening it up to creative action. The motivation behind the video began as a desire to provide a space in which to imagine and assemble an abstract scenario, one that was at once familiar (as domestic) and unfamiliar (as laboratory), as well as fragile (continuously being disassembled). Yet through this process the constructed scenarios move through and blend these contextual layers, in effect, destratifying them. The domestic becomes the fragile, the laboratory is disassembled, and the familiar is the unfamiliar. According to Massumi, art can be effectively political in “push[ing] further to the indeterminate but relationally potentialized fringes of existing situations, beyond the limits of current framings or regulatory principles.”

*Better Homes Diagrams*, and the body of work in the exhibition *A Negentropic Promise* break up the space of naturalization, opening up synthetic material conditions to their own workings.

It is through this destratifying that the “conditions of an encounter,” a reverse logic of intactness, and a working method of quietness become most active as they manifest in my artistic practice. It can open up our expectations of the stability of structures and

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materials, and counter our expectations of weather as either with us or against us, but rather as a volatile force with which we have a complex relationship.
PLATES FOR PART TWO

Angle iron frame, six electric heating elements

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
PLATE 2.2a  Tegan Moore, *Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’: Discontinued*, 2013.
Fluorescent light diffuser panels, existing t-bar suspension grid

PLATE 2.2b  Tegan Moore, *Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’: Discontinued*, 2013.
Fluorescent light diffuser panels, existing t-bar suspension grid

PLATE 2.4  An Te Liu, *Cloud*, 2008
Air purifiers, ionizers, sterilizers, washers, humidifiers, ozone air cleaners; 136 units running continuously.

This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
PLATE 2.5  Tegan Moore, *Dissipative Durables*, Installation view, 2012.
Product promo and application details: “Rigicore P is a rigid foam made by using the PVC structural foam scraps or recycled core materials with the foamable adhesive through a special process. To reuse the waste of the composites is a remarkable step for protecting the environment. The foam product is an excellent core material for structural sandwich composites. It has excellent flame retardant behavior, high chemical resistance, light weight, and good heat insulation behavior. Also it has superior sound absorption and excellent mechanical behaviors. It has been widely used in the construction and building field.”
This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions.

PLATE 2.7  Richard Tuttle, *Hello, the Roses* 7, 2011-2012.
This image has been removed due to copyright restrictions.
PLATE 2.9a  Tegan Moore, *Co-venting (Part 1 of 4)*, 2013. Polystyrene, used dryer sheets, intake vent
PLATE 2.9b  Tegan Moore, *Co-venting (Part 2 of 4)*, 2013. Foam crust, mud, sponges, intake vent
PART THREE: IN PRACTICE - DOCUMENTATION OF KEY WORKS
This section outlines a chronological document of each body of work contributing to a research progression from September 2012 – April 2014. Selected documentation is streamlined to show a compaction of studio production and research methods over a two-year period.

*Dissipative Durables*, December 2012 – ongoing.

Materials: marine foam, housewrap, spun fiberglass, powder coated welded pencil rod, ladder hooks, powder coated stove elements, powder coated display rack, polyethylene mesh, vinyl mesh.

*Dissipative Durables* is an ongoing series of sculptures made from found material and readymade objects. In each sculpture’s handcrafted construction imitates an industrial pattern, using the repetition of corrugation, tiling, metal grates, and stove elements. The work’s presentation draws on techniques of promotion and display, while at the same time the materials salvaged history undermines those techniques’ foundation on the new and sterile. This series of work opened up into an investigation into the programmed identities of colour, especially in technical fields and construction, but also advertising. It further provoked questions of aesthetics having qualities that are political.

Dissipative Durables
Marine foam, housewrap.
102 x 122 x 56 cm

Dissipative Durables
Spun fiberglass, ladder hooks, pencil rod.
89 x 52 x 15 cm
Dissipative Durables (detail), 2012.
Spun fiberglass, powder coated pencil rod.

Display rack, spun fiberglass, ladder hooks.
89 x 52 x 15 cm
Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’: Discontinued, April 2013.

Materials: fluorescent light diffuser panels, packing tape

Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’: Discontinued an installation in a small office space with a drop ceiling. Existing mineral fibre panels (designed for fire resistance and sound absorption), were removed and replaced with translucent light diffusers of the same dimensions. The light diffusers are discards or are recently discontinued due to their easily cracking and chipping surface. Prior to installation in the office space, the cracks in the panels were repaired. The translucency in the panels exposed a dark foggy plenum space above, showing the fuzzy contours of coloured wires and duct labels.
Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’ Discontinued (details), 2013.
Diffuser panels, packing tape
Pre-fume Packaging and Series of Slowed Flows, April 2013.

Materials: fiberglass, plastic sleeve, cable, Gutter guard, j-cloths, Scotchguard™, water.

This presentation of work consists of two main elements. Pre-fume Packaging hangs from the ceiling by a telephone cord and a hole in a large clear plastic bag. A sheet of replacement furnace filter fiberglass was cut up delicately in an industrial inspired pattern, leaving large triangular gaps in the material. It was then folded and stuffed into a cellophane bag and sealed. Series of Slowed Flows is displayed on a long wall. A line-up of perforated gutter guards interconnected by 15-foot strips made from j-cloths, formed a shelf-like structure. One intact j-cloth was sprayed with 5 layers of scotch guard, and displayed also like a shelf with droplets of water beading off the top-side of the folded cloth.
Gutter guard, j-cloths, Scotchguard™, water.
Dimensions variable

Series of Slowed Flows (detail), 2013.
J-cloth, Scotchguard™, water.

Materials: polyethylene foam crust, mud, sponges, polystyrene, used dryer sheets, polypropylene dust guard, car bumper, fibreglass reinforcement, foam from air conditioner, shelf lining film.

As included in exhibition:

**Note for evening viewing:**

This 4-part piece titled Co-venting relies on the ventilation system in order to be actively on display. The work uses the suction of air through each intake vent as a gravitational support.

The University's Environmental System Control prompts an HVAC automatic shutdown during low occupancy periods of the day. Accordingly, the work may be disengaged from the vents or in an otherwise resting state as it responds to this mode of operation.
Polypropylene dust guard, car bumper, intake vent.
80 x 64 x 8 cm

Polystyrene, used dryer sheets, intake vent.
80 x 50 x 8 cm
Fiberglass, foam from discarded air conditioner, plastic shelf liner.
80 x 50 x 6 cm
Plenum Spacer, October 2013.

Materials: fluorescent light, plenum space

This piece accompanied Co-venting, also on view in the Artlab Gallery during the group exhibition, Split, Film, Filament in 2013. The removal of 3 sounding board panels in the dropped ceiling connected to the gallery’s mainspace, opened up a 30 foot high plenum space. A fluorescent light was placed above the ceiling and pointed upwards, making piping and ductwork explicitly visible as well as the massive void space. The small opening in the wall and the light attached to the otherwise dark space, alluded to a frozen state of repair or technical inquiry. This was intended to further activate the suctioned disruptions made by Co-venting.

Plenum Spacer, 2013.

Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’ with Relative Visibility, November 2013.
Materials: Fluorescent light, diffuser panels, packing tape, hanging cables, gypsum sounding panel scrap, construction scrape guard.

This piece is a continued version of *Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’: Discontinued* from earlier in 2013. In this iteration a fluorescent light is installed above translucent diffuser panels. Since it was installed in the basement of an older building (currently DNA Art Space), cables, wires, and other disengaged objects fell out or hung down during installation. Those objects become clearly visible as they emerge from cracks and rest on the top surface of the panels. In this version the cracks in the panels have increased through handling, transportation, and installation.
Cracked ‘Cracked Ice’ with Relative Visibility, 2013.
Fluorescent light, diffuser panels, gypsum sounding panel scrap
Pain Relief, April 2014.

Materials: attic rafter foam, strain cell cords

Pain Relief is a sculpture made while filming Better Homes Diagrams. The time I spent in the lab house became particularly influential as a material and visual resource. During this time I constructed a number of sculptural objects made from the scraps found in and around the lab. This is an example of one such sculpture that initiated a process of removal of material as supply for studio work. I would subsequently take back the material after working with it to install as part of the video piece. The form was made from elements of a found diagram drawn with felt marker on the wall of the house.
Pain Relief, (detail), 2014.
Attic rafter foam, strain cell cord
100 x 150 cm

Staging Series, April 2014.

This series of work was presented in an abandoned classroom in the Staging Building at Western University. This building in the low-lying river flood plain was originally built to temporarily hold overflow office and classroom space for a number of departments. Slated for impending demolition, many classrooms are now vacant. The space provided a dim, damp setting for presentation and critique, not normally ideal, but it accentuated the distal aspect of the haptic sense in that it was removed from any center of activity.

The sculptures installed here (in contrast to the bright, static Dissipative Durable series of 2012), responded to the space as a spent resource. In one sculpture, a torn piece of moisture barrier is pinned to the wall with a black, buffed, powder coated oven element. Another is a used furnace filter that has been shrink wrapped, leaning on the wall. Thin strips of insulation foam are installed like blinds, and a slow staged drip plops intermittently from the ceiling onto a stack of sponges.
Staging Series, 2014.
*Staging Series*, 2014.
Used furnace filter, shrink wrap, moisture barrier, powder coated element.
Staging Series (installation view), 2014.

"Better Homes Diagrams" is a video shot at The Insurance Research Lab for Better Homes. Through subtle interventions and cinematic devices, its abstract narrative uses a haptic sensitive method for making the domestic interior both technical and fragile.
Better Homes Diagrams (stills), 2014.
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CHAPTER ONE


CCS Bard. *Helen Marten: No borders in a wok that can't be crossed*, Exhibition text. June 22, 2013.


CHAPTER TWO


CURRICULUM VITAE

b. 1985, Toronto, ON, Canada

EDUCATION

2014 Master of Fine Arts Candidate University of Western Ontario, London, ON
2008 Bachelor of Fine Art, Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Vancouver, BC

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2015 (Forthcoming) TBA, CSA Space, Vancouver, BC
2014 A Negentropic Promise, DNA Art Space, London, ON
2010 Air Conditioning, CSA Space, Vancouver, BC
2008 Light Duty Filing for Diaphanous Supply, Zulu Art Wall, Vancouver, BC
2007 No Light Stands Alone, Helen Pitt Gallery, Vancouver, BC

TWO-PERSON EXHIBITIONS

2012 Should the Ocean Run Dry (with Helgi Kristinsson), Black Diamond Turner Valley
2010 Haptic (with Elspeth Pratt), Helen Pitt Gallery, Vancouver, BC

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2014 (Forthcoming) Corruption of Time’s Dust, 221A, Vancouver, BC
2014 Paravent, 535 First St. London, ON
2014 Every Evasion, Equinox Gallery, Vancouver, BC
2013 No Boys with Frogs, DNA Space, London, ON
2013 Split film filament, Artlab Gallery, London, ON
2013 The Kitchen, Soi Fischer, Toronto, ON
2012 De-Accessioned, Cooper Cole Gallery, Toronto, ON
2011 Faker than Faux Fur, Access Artist Run Centre, Vancouver, BC
2010 White on White, Jan Van Eyck Academie, Maastricht, Netherlands
2009 Exercises in Seeing, Queens Nails Projects, San Francisco, CA
2009 And laid him on the green. Goonies, Vancouver, BC
2008 Graduation Award Show, Winsor Gallery, Vancouver, BC
2008 Emily Carr Institute Grad Show, Charles H. Scott Gallery, Vancouver, BC
2007 The Hole World, Emergency Room Strathcona, Vancouver, BC

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE AND RESIDENCIES

2013-2014, Research Assistant, University of Western Ontario, London, ON
2013 Bike post design for the City of London, ON
2012-2013 Co-Instructor, VAS 2100 Image Explorations, University of Western Ontario
2012 Ease Down the Road, Struts Gallery and Faucet Media Arts, Sackville, NB
2010 Pouch Cove Foundation, Artist in Residence, Pouch Cove, Nfld.
2008-2009 Lawrence Eng Gallery, Gallery Assistant, Vancouver, BC
2007-2008 Helen Pitt Gallery, Student Curator, Vancouver, BC

PRINT

2014 Contribution to The Lake by Maggie Groat, Art Metropole, Toronto
2010 Haptic: Lorna Brown, Elspeth Pratt, Tegan Moore, Publication Studio, Vancouver
2009 “Our Glass”, feature in Color Magazine, Vancouver
2007 Akimbo Review of No Light Stands Alone, by Terence Dick, Online
2007 White Hot Magazine for Contemporary Art, by Tiziana La Melia, Online

AWARDS

2013-2014 Ontario Graduate Scholarship
2012-2013 University of Western Ontario Dean's Entrance Scholarship
2008 Contemporary Art Society of Vancouver Emerging Artist Award