



FIVE  
MINUTES

Five Minutes

CP

# Five Minutes

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University of Oregon  
Department of Art  
2014-15 Lecture Series

Interviews with Visiting Artists

by

Masters of Fine Art Candidates

CP

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## Editor's Introduction

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The interviews collected in this publication were conducted by Department of Art MFA Candidates, in conversation with invited lecturers. The initiative is called *5 minutes* and is a brief interview format, designed to occur fluidly during an invited lecturer's visit. *5 Minutes* was conceived of as a way to research, engage and share threads of discourse between MFA Candidates, invited lecturers, and the University community at large. The interviews themselves took place in a variety of locations, each recorded on a small handheld digital audio recorder. The recorded interviews were then transcribed, edited, and finally collected into this small volume.

-Christopher Michlig

10 . 9 . 2014

## Jessica Jackson Hutchins

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Mandy Hampton: How did working and exhibiting in Europe change your practice?

Jessica Jackson Hutchins: It changed it quite a bit. I often say about my work that I make it out of the stuff in the room, so changing the room itself changes the work a lot. And since when I got there I didn't know the language or how to get the same materials, I started using different materials and I had to find different places to do ceramics. All of that caused a lot of changes. That's when I started making canvases for instance. Also my perspective changed. Getting out of the Pacific Northwest, which is a small cultural scene, and thinking about history.

MH: Much of your work includes couches or plush chairs. Are there specific reasons for those kinds of objects in your work?

JJH: To be honest that started because that was in the room. I was looking at it. I was leading a more domestic life. A bunch of furniture was delivered to me when my dad was cleaning out his house and I was looking at the stuff which had nostalgia from my life and I was like, "I don't want to live with this." Also just formal things - looking at my grand piano, looking at it day in and day out because I'm living with it. It just seemed like a good art object. Once the formal concerns had been triggered, the conceptual

things are kind of innate to that. They are like bodies, like plants. I've made a lot of work about plants. And a lot of work about just thing-ness. Objects just having a sort of banality of being themselves in the room, which is an important part of my vocabulary.

AH: In what ways does gender influence your work?

JJH: Just really in that I am a woman, and especially as a mother now, making work, pursuing public work. Meaning just work that is in the public realm. As a professional, as a political act. My work and my life are so intertwined, all those aspects of my gender and sexuality. I'm a straight woman. I have kids. All of that is part of the work. I do consider myself a feminist, of course. I think considering work from those angles is really valuable. I know that I am a role model to some extent for women who want to be mothers and are artists and women that are mothers and want to be artists.

MH: You talk a lot about language and specifically the comma. Do these things still influence your work?

JJH: I think a lot about language and literature. I come from a humanities literary background and art history and human history and epic literature and religion. Religion influences my work a lot more than some concept of the avant-garde or addressing the market. That just doesn't move me. What moves me is relationship to life and our place in history. I think a lot about parts of speech and how objects behave. I think of pedestals as conjunctions or prepositions. Like "and, but, because". That space is how the noun becomes framed as a contemplative object instead of just an object in the world. I think about wanting certain objects to be read more like verbs. Paintings feel more like text to me. And I think they actually operate like that. It's not such a unique perspective. You tend to read things that are paintings and feel things that are sculptures. Especially when they're on couches. So I'm interested in that and the differences between those two.

10 . 16 . 2014

## Jane Lackey

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Jessie Rose Vala: I am drawn to the discussion in your *Neurosphere* and *Pavilions* work about the magnetic attractions of the body in relation to political action. Could you speak more to the relationship of political action and the body?

Jane Lackey: I was interested in the uprising of the monks in Burma. What happened there was an uprising. It came as quite a surprise and it was a very physical thing. There was a march and instead of having their bowls upright, which they usually do, they turned them the other way. A whole lot of people who were bystanders joined in. Partially, I am always interested in things that are somewhat invisible to us, but that that we can track some other way. That is why I often get thrown into the category of mapping and with the uprising in Burma, I was just interested in how it all was coordinated. It seems that it was more than just the uprising. There was also the coordination of where they walked and how they walked, so there was a combination of something political and something that was very physical that was manifested in a very striking way.

JRV: I was really interested in your writing about it. In the very beginning you talk about something on a cellular level and that invisibility struck me. Were you thinking of an internal response with the cells or maybe to violence or uprising? I am curious about these possible invisible relationships in your work.

JL: If you look back at past work I have always been interested in what is underneath the skin, in the body and what it looks like and how it manifests itself in the outer world. So sometimes I think about political action and reaction as almost a synapse, like one nerve ending getting really agitated and having some kind of very physical response to that. I also do a lot of exercise and things that are very focused on the body, so that has been a part of my work for a long time. I don't think we can really separate the inside and the outside. So I always think that things may start outside but then they work their way in and respond through the body.

JRV: In some of your own writing about your work, you trace some of your conceptual ideas through your materials. Could you describe the space between concepts and materials in your practice?

JL: I wonder if there is a space. I think again going back to early history in my work, I was immediately attracted when I decided I wanted to be an artist to the fact that I could work in a physical medium. I didn't really know when I was a younger person. I thought of art as being painting and sculpture. I didn't realize that there was a whole world of work that could manifest itself more through the hand. Fiber is what I was attracted to immediately as a field. Well, it was really fiber and drawing. I saw those two closely aligned and then realized when you are working with materials a lot of the time you are also thinking, those materials have a history to them, a politic in them as well. They have had use and they have had meaning somewhere in the world. So a lot of time, that is where a relationship to a conceptual idea comes from in that it might be related to a material and the history of that material.

JRV: I have noticed you frequently use tape. I was curious what particularly appeals to you about that material?

JL: It's sticky (Laughing)

JRV: It is. It's wonderfully sticky!

JL: I think my work is pretty gentle in a lot of ways. I also point to things that are sticky in our relationships to the world. We just talked about politics, meanings of materials, and so it takes such a simple and easy thing that is always around the studio. I have boxes of tape. At one point I just started using it on some of the work and I realized not only is it sticky, it is also a resist to paint or to some other material that might be applied over it. It's a line so it's good for drawing. I just started using it. I was using charting tape so again this goes into mapping or graphics or a matrix of some sort that charting tape is used for. A lot of architects use it or don't use it anymore - that's the old stuff. But I like the old stuff for art materials, so that tape became something that instead of drawing a line with the pencil. I could lay out a line or place a line and that really has become a drawing for me. So that is not just tape, it is a lot of sticky material.

JRV: A question that you raise rhetorically in some of your own writing is "how do patterns allow us to contemplate perplexity and calmness?" You asked this in reference to a body of work that used textiles. You were going back in to them and tracing some circles or dots and layering them...

JL: I call those pieces that you are referring to *Common Places*, and I was thinking first of all, if you look into the history of textiles, it is a history of pattern. Different cultures have used specific patterns and specific types of patterns to an extent that you can look at a piece of cloth and know it comes from a particular place. Then you find those patterns that exist are all built on older patterns that were the first that came up in pattern all over the world. There is a kind of commonality no matter where you are, you are going to see dots, going to see stripes, or other kind of patterns from different cultures that may or may not have known about each others pattern making. So first of all they are very common and they are also very primary. They always reference a particular culture or a particular people.

JRV: Considering mapping through the lens of politics, what kind of vision of culture do you think your work projects?

JL: I think my work is a politic sometimes with the words I use - in common, common, common place. In recent work I have been dealing with books. I found out there was a type of book called a common place book that I didn't know about when I started using that particular title. This intersects with my interest in genetics and DNA and the fact that our makeup is so very close to each other. We are such a small percentage different from each other. Yet there is this vast difference and also a vast difference in our culture. Right now we are all butting heads in a certain way. So I am always - in a quiet way because I am a quiet person and the work is quiet - talking about those kinds of things. Just laying them out there and pointing to them that hopefully makes people think about them a little more deeply. I am also using materials in a way to back them up, so you could say there is a feminist politics in them by choice to begin with.



11 . 6 . 2014

## Pae White

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Sarah Mikenis: As an artist who works freely across media, do you feel engaged in one particular medium conversation more than others?

Pae White: I think the conversation that's consistent with my work is dealing with the site itself and the specificities of the architecture. Typically I'm working towards something, although more and more I'm working in the studio, but I take into account the light, the movement, the approach, the smell. All these things sort of contribute ingredients to the overall piece. That's a constant.

SM: Can you talk about the use of metallic materials in your work?

PW: That's such an interesting question. I'm using it more now and it's something I've wanted to do for quite awhile and now my tapestries are finally hitting stride with production and understating how this material works. But in terms of reflectivity, I always kind of go back to the idea, especially the use of mirrors, of a reflection being a better place. In that a reflection is a place where one presupposes something in the future, or something other than. That might be better. I just think of when I was a kid, my grandmother had a vanity that had a mirrored top and I would look down and the reflection was simply the room behind me and the ceiling, but I wanted to be in there. And I don't know why, but it's always just been this drawn out desire.

SM: That's so interesting. I love that explanation. How do you think about your work in relationship to decoration and ornamentation? As a female artist, do you speak about this relationship in terms of feminism?

PW: No, not at all. In terms of decoration and ornament, I just feel like that's territory to be explored. It's like looking at a bed and there are assumptions about a bed and there might be assumptions about decoration that could be pulled apart. So for me it's never superfluous. It's always got some other kind of maybe structural question or psychological exploration or something like that, or something that needs to be broken apart. So there's always a reason, I guess, when there is something that might be perceived as ornamental.

SM: Can you talk about how scale operates in your work?

PW: Yeah, you know it's funny because my studio is very small and I work in kind of a two-car garage. We have some sort of off-sight production, but it's also very dysfunctional. You can't go anywhere without knocking something over. So I wonder if that kind of space is fertile territory for bigger production. It's like getting outside of that. And that if I had the perfect studio, my production might be compromised. If I had the best north light or huge wall space, I might not want to work that way. And also it's typically a response to the site, but I also like this idea of taking something, like when I'm doing a large tapestry, taking something really sort of in terms of the big picture that might seem inconsequential, like a shift in light or a little bit of depth, and monumentalizing it. This stuff for me is important. Like this little tonal shift can change everything. It's celebrating the smallness of those small events into something very large.

SM: Finally, can you talk about the role of experimentation and chance in your work?

PW: I always am leaving room for improvisation because that's inevitable and I always find that if I really plan to have something be exact, I will never ever get that. And if I did get something I really

expected, I'm usually disappointed. When I work with fabricators, I have a tolerance for interpretation. I have a tolerance for mistakes and things that might be broken because I think that adds richness. Experimentation is sometimes in a surprise and the tolerance for surprise.

11 . 13 . 2014

## Zoe Crosher

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Krista Heinitz: What are you currently inspired by?

Zoe Crosher: I am currently inspired by, well actually, there are so many things! There is one right now - I'm doing this thing called the *Fainting Club*. I just got an email about starting a TV story. There is going to be a cookbook. I've been trying to think about the feminist question of why there is no "Old Girls Club" which is at the root of the whole project. I don't necessarily propose it in that way. I've been inspired by the lady who wrote *How to Cook a Wolf*, MFK Fisher. She wrote this beautiful book. I've been thinking a lot of people who have been inspired by food, talking about food in an artistic way, so she has been really inspirational for me right now.

KH: Anything you are reading, listening to, looking at that is fueling your making?

ZC: I'm reading a lot of John Fontaine in whatever slight spare time I have. I do a lot of reading about Los Angeles. I've been avoiding art theory reading. I haven't even opened an Art Forum for the past 6 months. I've been trying to find true inspiration. I think a lot about the imaginary Los Angeles, so that means I think a lot about how it is represented. Joan Didion is a huge inspiration. Eve Babbitts is a huge inspiration. A lot of my practice has been about trying to rediscover and reemerge Eve Babbitts out from hiding. There was a movie called *Play It As It Lays* that Joan Didion actually wrote the

screenplay for. And I had been trying to see it forever because its not really widely available. And there's a good reason for it because it's a terrible movie. Its really like Joan Didion does not translate in narrative cinema. But what was incredibly inspiring about that was the cinematographer Jordan Cronenweth, he is the guy that shot *Blade Runner*. So he did this before *Blade Runner* and you can see the way he was shooting Los Angeles, which I found incredibly inspiring. I watch movies with a friend of mine named Stephanie Nelson who's a writer. We are going to watch *A Star Is Born*, the 70's version. So I've been looking at how Los Angeles looks at itself. That inspires me. That gets me going.

KH: Can you speak about the importance in collecting in your work?

ZC: Wait, do you know about my collecting?

KH: I researched you a little bit.

ZC: (Laughing) Do you know about this thing called *The Relational Collector*?

KH: Tell me about this.

ZC: It's funny that you brought this up! I believe in bartering. I barter for fashion, jewelry, my groceries. There is this awesome guy in Santa Monica who does a weekly fruit and veg box. Anyway, there's this lady called Amy Thoner who is a curator and she is going to start doing a residency in Mexico City. She just started a project called *The Relational Collector*. She is interested in looking at people who are like me that collect out of love and who are not normal collectors. Because I'm a total art addict and my entire house is filled from top to bottom with art that I've bartered and bought over the years. I've recently transitioned into buying, to support younger emerging artists. I'm a little addicted, like every single space is covered by art. So that's funny that you brought that up!

KH: How does failure inspire your work?

ZC: Failure doesn't inspire my work. Life is ups and downs so I have to remember that there have been some incredible beautiful high points, and then I just get out of a deeply desperate low point where my gallery went bankrupt. It took me 9 months to get my work out of storage and I had to hire 2 incredibly big art bankruptcy lawyers. It's a reminder that there is a balance. And there are ups and downs and that the downs do end. So that's not inspiring, but it helps me get through the hard times!

KH: What do you find inspiring about the process of re-working and reconstructing?

ZC: I'm completely obsessed with iterations I don't think of it as reworking, but more as focusing the way I think history functions and the memory functions. It's the re-remembrance of the last time you remembered it. Every iteration becomes a new interpretation. I think repetition is really important. Also, having rethinking, re-envisioning. Iterative, and things that shift over time, so that's hugely important. I think it's realistic. I think the notion of any singular history is total bunk. History is dynamic. People don't talk about that, but history shifts, moves, changes and it is an acknowledgment of that process of changing. And it also acknowledges the person who is changing the history. Because they change.

KH: Talk about the role that travel plays in your work.

ZC: Travel is hugely important. I love coming to Eugene. I haven't been here before. I love seeing new places. I look at travel as an opportunity to be in an in-between space, a liminal space, a space that is not defined, a space that there is a structure to the engagement as a conceptual art practice. You have a series of rules, things that structure your movement through space, but that's demanding but completely allowing at the same time. So I love travel because I can forget where I am and there's the promise of the new. And I can always just not get back on that plane again, just not go home. There's always that promise of the escape.

KH: You are loving the rain?

ZC: Yes, I'm loving the rain! I've been telling people, it hasn't rained in LA in 9 months!

KH: You are getting the petrichor, the smell of the earth!

ZC: I love it! I didn't know it had a name. I truthfully would, if I could, live in a hotel. I could just travel, I think.

KH: I think about your work with the windows and billboards and you are bringing it to people that are traveling that are in that space.

ZC: Yes, it is all about that. The process of the billboards is trying to formalize or bring intention to this fantasy of going west, moving through the space going west, but then when you actually do it, it's a whole different thing.

11 . 20 . 2014

## Rico Gatson

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Rachel Widomski: In your lecture description, you referred to “Hollywood perceptions”. Can you expand upon this influence in your work.

Rico Gatson: There’s a small series of films that I made that are taken directly from films. These works were early and I will talk about them tonight, but I am always thinking about the way that racism is represented in a film or interpreted through Hollywood films in particular. So yeah, race, identity, class and in some instances, it’s all of it. One of the things I am interested in is trying to tease out specific things without being too specific.

RW: Things that maybe reappear consistently?

RG: Maybe the most obvious would be the D.W. Griffith film *The Birth of A Nation*. There are very literal representations of issues pertaining to race and identity in a general yet specific sense.

RW: There are several works, particularly the *Digital Double Cross* from 2006 and the latter 2011 riot paintings that appear to evolve from each other. Do you consider these relationships symbiotic or is it an evolution of the work?

RG: Inherent to the work is an attempt to pull from history, specifically American history, so in that sense there is a connection. Fire

is something that in the case of the *Digital Double Cross* - a cross burning - is specific to the works that I was doing at the time of that piece. Again related back to the Griffith film, obviously the plan is on display pretty prominently. Fire is in a general sense energy, but always seems to connote the riots in LA, specifically Watts.

RW: Visually they look similar. I had it up on my computer and had glanced at it and thought it was the video for a moment, but it was one of the paintings. To me they mirrored each other.

RG: Yeah, again I don’t want to make this too simple or reduce it too much, but yeah there is something with the fire. Fire is a motif that’s come up. There are earlier prints that I won’t be showing tonight where I made a fire in a grill and shot it, photographed the fire and created stills that became C-prints. So I’m literally sort of taking from this very specific thing in this culture and I’m trying to expand it into something larger. Fire is both pretty and destructive and it is energy. So it’s a very layered thing that I’m attempting to do, but it doesn’t always - I don’t feel - come off in that way. Whenever you say “Ku Klux Klan,” it’s very loaded. Or “riot” - they are very loaded subjects. But I see all the work as one. It’s all connected in my head even if stylistically or materially they are not the same. One’s a photograph, one’s a painting, one’s a video, so on and so forth. But it’s all connected, for me.

RW: The use of glitter in your works has been attributed to communicating an abstracted representation of hair. Is your adoption of glitter based in conception, materiality, or both?

RG: I think both. The association of hair was maybe more subconscious. I believe that’s also at work more often than not and came after the fact. I’m also really interested for whatever reason in making things in wood. It has occurred that I’ve used recycled material - wood - saved it from the dumpster and made things. Some of those things I’ll talk about tonight. Again, it’s about trying to bring materials that are slated for the dumpster or low/high. With glitter I was just interested in the craft part of it. It looks low but I was also sort of thinking about, especially with the glitter that I had been us-

ing - heavy flake, black, shiny - it makes a reference to the cosmos. I started using the glitter in 2009 for a show, *Dark Matter*. So I was literally thinking about space but then again it's such a crafty, low material. You know, it's glitter, not space dust or something. Not like something you can order from NASA. I like that play. So I did some things that were actually glittery and shimmery and actually referenced the stars, but then I started to mute the glitter and that's when it started to look like hair. I would paint over the glitter, eliminating any shimmer. Then it became like hair, but then it also looks like grip tape for skateboards, and so on and so forth. But I like the hair connection. I embrace that and I think I must have talked about it somewhere.

RW: Yes, it came up in the research I did. I thought that it was a nice read on the material.

RG: Yes. So it's like a mashing up of the two. So in the case of those riot paintings, it's another layer. Glitter is the texture, so there is another reading I think, or is hopefully in there. It's best experienced in person. I think you miss a lot in the reproductions. Especially in those paintings because we have to photograph those. The light changes it. They are much uglier as reproductions than they are in person.

RW: I think the texture is something that you lose in a photo as well as the subtleties that happen in person.

RG: Yeah, the subtlety. Plus, the colors are not as vivid as they are in person.

RW: Do you utilize abstraction of politically loaded symbols as a degradation of their sociopolitical attributes, as a dismantling of power?

RG: No, I just think I'm interested in abstraction. That's a tricky question to answer because I like to take license. It's definitely not a degradation. It's to heighten. It's like when you obscure, like a Baldessari dot painting. So I think that I try to utilize it in a way

that functions that way and brings more attention to the image, especially when I combine two at the same time. I'm not super consistent in how I approach the making, I must admit. So some things are purely abstract and other things have content. But I like that switch. I like the flip might be a better way to put it -between - and the play inherent in that. You'll take a piece that has something very explicit and then another piece and the only thing that connects them is that they're all made by the same person. Perhaps two sides of the same person. Did I just say that I have a split personality?  
[Laughing]

Edit that out! Cut that out. Abstraction is just a tool. What is purely abstract? The Pollock drip paintings - are those? I don't think so. The formation of that work I think came out of his early work that was more representational. Those aspects, you never get away from that. You're never free of what you're thinking about. Pork Chops for dinner tonight. [laughing]

That's probably not the best characterization.

RW: Do you want to talk about the last question?

RG: Why not, I'm always telling my students to be courageous.

RW: The images coming out of Ferguson, Missouri jolt me back to the trauma of viewing the Rodney King video on the television and subsequent images of the LA riots. How are you currently responding to this unrest in your work? Is it coming into play?

RG: To be honest, I was on the road this summer and not able to fully process what was happening with all of that in real time so I haven't and I've just been extremely busy. Which isn't to imply I'm ignorant of what went down, I just didn't watch a lot. I think that by the time that I was able to kind of think about it a little bit, it was at some crazy over saturated point. On vacation at my in-law's home I saw some scenes and footage, because we don't have cable, of what just seemed like a complete circus, but I just couldn't take it in or process it because it just felt really unnecessarily sensational.

I sort of just shut it off. It's just a product of the times and all of the ways that information is disseminated, which is really sad. Plus the Trayvon Martin year anniversary was just prior to that. I haven't and I don't know that I will respond to it. I make this work that I'll talk tonight about - these drawings, collages - that are really simple but people seem to like them a lot - so that's a good thing - of prominent figures, mostly African American, that come from entertainment and other areas of interest to me. But there's only certain energies that I can take on. Don't hold me to this. Whitney Houston, for instance. Certain figures are too loaded and maybe it's too soon. Maybe she's a poor example. Martin Luther King is another figure. Some are too ubiquitous. I like to go for something a little more subtle even if they're really famous. So Ferguson is just, it's too loaded. It's too recent. For instance I've done work about Emmett Till. There is something about the distance, the history in some cases, that works better. The LA riots are media saturated and too recent. I'm not just making work, hopefully, about just these events, these flashpoint in history. Hopefully there is something deeper, some underlying, supporting stuff that's less accessible.

1 . 15 . 2015

## Meg Cranston

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Chelsea Couch: You entered graduate school after studying anthropology and sociology. What developed that led you to California in pursuit of an MFA?

Meg Cranston: After college, I lived in New York for a couple of years. I'd always written fiction and sometimes thought it would be easier to just make the thing visually rather than write it in language. I knew I probably didn't want to continue in anthropology because even though it's super broad, for me it wasn't broad enough. I wanted the broadest possible field, so I guess those two things. I started thinking, "well, maybe I should go to art school," which I had never really thought before. I went to CalArts because, well one, I'd known someone who'd gone there. And two, this is kind of a funny story, I got the catalogue from Yale and it didn't have any pictures. It seemed real stuffy like my undergraduate college was and I said, "I had enough of that," you know? That kind of East-Coasty stuff. So, I just decided to go to CalArts and it ended up being a good decision.

CC: Your works seem largely autobiographical, pulling from your universe, either a global occurrence or some past personal experience. How do you decide what to reveal to the public and what remains private?

MC: Actually, not that much of my work is autobiographical. I don't really know why people say that. There is one piece that I think you're going to ask about that is kind of autobiographical. I used myself as data just because it was handy. In terms of what to reveal, I really don't have any limits on that. I don't care, you know? I don't see myself as an artist that is primarily dealing with biography. I like other people's biographies a lot.

CC: You've said that in your work, language often precedes. Could you speak to how language came to play such a tremendous role in your practice?

MC: I started as a writer and I still write and I'm still very influenced by writers. So what I meant by that quote is that sometimes I'll think of the title of the work or the exhibition in advance of making the work. So that's just a way to start, you know? I'll write something down to see if it's possible to do that. I guess this is kind of autobiographical - I did do a performance that was called *Women Who Would Play Me If I Paid Them*. I hired actresses to play me. But again, it was just because it was convenient. I was dealing a lot with actresses in LA, but in that case I wrote that phrase before I really had the piece worked out.

CC: In *Keep Same Over*, you displayed all of your belongings in a gallery and stated your interest in discovering the size of Meg Cranston. How do you consider space upon showing works - not in regard to dimensions, but embodiment. Do you ask, "what is the size of this piece?"

MC: Well, I've done few pieces where the size is not pre-determined. The size is as big as it has to be not because I'm trying to achieve some quality, but rather because I have some quantity that needs to be shown. So quantity is a quality. I think it's very difficult to decide how big something should be. Big is an abstraction. Things are only big in relationship to something else, right? The self is an abstraction, so how do you represent the self? Well, you have to give it some kind of dimension. So I thought, one dimension could be all of my stuff laid out on the ground in one layer. And



then so I would be, you know, that piece I think was like twenty by twenty feet. Somebody else would be, I don't know, Kim Kardashian, several football fields. And I think those things matter, that you can look at a city skyline and say, "what's the tallest building?", and that's an issue of size and scale, right? So a lot of times the tallest building is an insurance company building because that's a very important part of our culture, whereas another time the tallest building would have been a cathedral.

CC: Concerning *Keep It Simple, Keep It Fresh*, you spoke to the use of forecasted colors by the Pantone Corporation. Did you feel that you were extending this controlled color environment?

MC: Yes. I was interested in the question "what color are you going to choose?" This can be a very difficult question for an artist because most of us, we like every color. We love all colors. There's no bad color, at least that's the way I feel. So for me, choosing is a big issue, having to choose. So I do sometimes work with received choices. That's one of them. Their color totalitarianism I guess is bad and it does exist, but it exists in other societies as well, not by corporations but by other cultural controls. It's not true now, but it would have been true a hundred years ago that if you were a widowed woman you would wear black. Right? That was control. Or you wouldn't wear a certain color after a certain time. I'm interested in color history, maybe color archaeology.

1 . 22 . 2015

## Audra Woloweic

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Andrew Oslover: You often use sound or rudimentary building materials in your work. Could you talk about your decision making process in choosing these types of materials over others?

Audra Woloweic: I think I'm interested in everyday materials or found materials because they are very accessible. They are not precious. There is a lot of possibility to transform those materials into something totally different. For example, plastic bags. I am interested in that they are disposable and overlooked, but they have these very interesting human qualities. How can I draw attention to that? With the 2x4s, they are normally hidden inside of architecture as support structures, so the sound that I combined with those materials was a type of sound that I felt was in the process of becoming or being exposed in some way. I linked this material with this sound in the hopes of developing a more interesting experience.

AO: In looking at your language based works, for example *Pocket Cloud* and *Music of the City is Free*, I was really curious about how silence or the absence of sound during reading becomes part of your work and whether these are important aspects of your work or just a byproduct?

AW: It is very important. I think about the absence of sound and language often and I think there is a lot of content and meaning

that is generated through absence and through the spaces in between words and sounds.

AO: Can you expand on your interest in collaborative work?

AW: I enjoy collaboration a lot. It is this idea of inviting people into the work and asking people to participate and take part, but not necessarily in a group activity, because I think my work rarely results in a group activity, but maybe this idea of creating a start of something and then being able to hand it off to a different person to interpret, alter, change and put back into the world as something else is something that I am really interested in.

AO: How has working through the lens of theoretical physics changed your approach?

AW: I was in a physics lab for a month and the thing that stood out to me and became content for the work is actually not understanding and being in an environment whose language is either difficult to navigate or translate or even find an entry point into. I started paying attention to the error in communication and misreading. Taking the language of physics and making it human in a way by misreading. I created this postcard series of physics formulas with blank spaces and then handed them off to writers and artists to fill out, which became another participatory thing, but in general it was an act of misreading while trying to locate the human in a particular space.

1 . 29 . 2015

## Ken Lum

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Anya Dikareva: What is your ideal breakfast?

Ken Lum: My ideal breakfast is a Japanese breakfast. A bit of nato, which is fermented soybeans, a little bit of salted fish, some rice, some pickles, miso soup, which is another savory fermented food. Maybe a steamed scrambled egg and some black sesame and some seaweed. And that's it!

AD: What is a typical day in the studio?

KL: When I get to the studio - we have kids, so sometimes it's hard to get there - typically I sit at the computer about half the time. That's just the reality because I have assistants and some of the assistants don't live in the same city, so there are some conference calls and so on. And then I work on some drawings for a while. And then I might make some more models. Other times I might just sit around and read a book. When I started about 10 years ago in art, I was always very physical. I built everything myself. But as I get more advanced in my career, I don't have to build it myself anymore. But I still do all the drawings myself. So that's a pretty typical day.

AD: It seems like your relationship with Vancouver drove a lot of the work you were doing at the time. How has your move to Philadelphia change things?

KL: When I lived in Vancouver I was interested in ways I could theorize the city. Vancouver is a slightly generic city. Many of the ads for American companies are actually shot in Vancouver precisely because it has this generic look. All the car ads are done in Vancouver. They sometimes layer in other buildings from other places, just Photoshopped in somehow. I've also lived in other cities as well. Now in Philadelphia, I am theorizing the city in a similar way. I'm involved in an art festival there, as well as on many levels at City Hall. The work I did for the Whitney Biennial was about Philadelphia.

AD: How do you like to kick back and relax?

KL: I'm very dull. I like going to a park with my son and my wife. We usually go out for dinner at an Asian place since they tolerate kids running around a bit better than a more refined restaurant. I did that before we had kids, but not so much anymore. We don't own a TV so we watch everything off a laptop, so maybe we'll rent a movie on Amazon Prime. No iPod, no stereo. My wife plays the piano. It's super quiet, which sometimes drives our friends, who might stay and visit us for a few days, a little bit crazy.

AD: There is a time capsule getting assembled that will be opened in 10,000 years. What is your contribution?

KL: My contribution to a time capsule? In 10,000 years?

AD: Yes, and it might not even get opened by humans. Well, we don't know. I guess the question is, what do you want a future audience to take away from your work?

KL: Right. Oh that's a different question than the time capsule. Write that my work reflected something true about the time I lived in and conveyed some of the complexity about the age in which I was around.

AD: Anything specific?

KL: No, because art is metaphoric. Nothing specific.

AD: Some of your pieces that are public have a lot of humor in them. Has there ever been any misunderstandings about your work because of a different cultural context?

KL: No, I've never had that problem. Sometimes the humor is dark and so some people may feel uncomfortable laughing at it, but they recognize that it's quite dark. I think there is a lucidity to my work which might at first glance appear to be the level it stays at, but I hope that if my audience gave it some attention they would see some deeper layers.

2 . 19 . 2015

## Taraneh Hemami

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Krista Heinitz: Last night, during your question and answer session of your lecture, someone asked you to talk about your material and process choices. You mentioned how they were connecting to gender and memory. Can you talk more about that?

Taraneh Hemami: I have a series of work that uses the hand in the process and specifically beading is something that I have used in several projects to replicate a most wanted poster that was beaded with the help of a large number of people that came together. So the aspect of bringing the community together to create something was a part of it. But it also connected to carpet making and that is a very feminine practice in Iran. Often the designs are the exclusive right of the men and the labor ends up being women. And it connects in that way for me, but also it connects with my memory of community gatherings, usually women around a table, preparing for cooking, often meaning going through a labor intensive process. It is actually a space for conversations, and intimate story telling that happens around the table. I felt that I missed out on most of that in my adult life and so I've made several projects that have that at its core.

KH: Cultivating that community, that space?

TH: Yes. That comes into it. The beading, especially that series I showed last night which are the *Heroes Martyrs Legends* portraits, they are also connected to rosaries, and especially because I'm rep-

licating something, I have to count and recount, do and redo. Each strand is made separately, so each strand becomes a rosary, the count and recount, over and over again. So it becomes a ritual in itself. And that was very important, especially because I was using images of people that were executed, so it had this very heavy presence - these images, trying to replace them, knowing the history behind it. So that prayer became the physical connection to it.

The quilting was also another process that made a lot of sense. A lot of quilts made in Iran are traditional female products that are produced mostly in the northern part of Iran - around the Caspian Sea. So the events that it's referencing also happened in a village in the northern side of Iran, around the Caspian Sea, which is why the material ended up being a quilt. It's a replica of a map of Iran with that area highlighted and there are veins that are supposed to be blood that go across the country. That was an important event in the 70s and it did spread all across the country. So it's painful, you know, it's a painful memory. But the comfort of a quilt alters that and changes it, memorializes it in a different way.

KH: So the viewer having a memory of what a quilt is, even though it was on the wall, they can imagine wrapping it around themselves?

TH: I have also shown it folded, having it available for people to open it and it's small enough to wrap around themselves. It has a comforting feeling. Most of the people who were killed in that incident were men and I was thinking about grieving mothers, so the process I imagined it would go through went into the making of it.

KH: What does a typical day look like for you?

TH: Hah! I do not have a typical day! I usually run after deadlines. I have too many things on my plate usually. You could say I'm a night owl, so a typical day doesn't start till a little bit later.

KH: Do you find yourself going to the studio everyday?

TH: That is such a sad question. [Laughs]

KH: You mentioned how your studio practice has changed.

TH: On the organizing side, because I do a lot of curating, for the last few projects, I've had to run after money, writing grants. Also I'm working a lot digitally, so a lot is happening behind a computer. So that has completely changed my practice, but also I think because my studio is so far away from my home, that's probably why my practice has changed. So it's the other way around as well. My studio is about an hour away and not in the best area of town, so I only have limited time to work there. So what happens is I do most of my work at home, bringing things back home to work on. My studio sadly sits there, waiting for me, calling me. [Laughing]

KH: How do you kick back?

TH: Hanging out with friends. I know what my friends like to do. I usually hang out with them. They do a lot of karaoke and dancing and stuff, but I'm hardly able to make most of that. I'm trying to be better and not work all the time because it's a problem. At least since the beginning of the year I've been a little bit better for leaving time for family and friends. So I feel a little better. The last few weekends I actually had friends over and we were able to kick back.

KH: Its interesting because it comes back to the idea of cultivating community, the nightly bazaars. Forcing yourself to open your doors, have someone over.

TH: Exactly, It's really needed. I totally understand that is needed. But I'm guilty for not leaving room.

4 . 28 . 2015

## Casey Reas

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Mary Morgan: What is a normal day in the studio like for you?

CR: There is no normal day in my studio. They're all different. Sometimes I'm in the middle of production and making things, looking at print samples, comparing computers. Other days, my favorite days, are when I have the day to myself to think and test and make. Those days involve a lot of writing code. Yeah, a mixture of all those things.

MM: In your lecture you focused on projects made in the past two years and it was a considerable amount of work. When working at that pace, how do you go about distinguishing successful ideas, projects from things that might not be working? How do you keep projects and ideas from bleeding together?

CR: This relates back to the nonstandard day in the studio. I tend to work on a body of work for some weeks or months at a time and then I tend to shift to another. I don't often intersect things and so when I come back to something I typically have new ideas about it and think about it in new, different ways. That's how things stay separated. I don't have a typical place to start with a work either. Lately projects have begun with ideas about media and mass media and I've worked a lot with found television imagery and I've been working a lot with photojournalism and photography. I start making really quickly. I react to things I like to think through doing

as opposed to thinking and then doing the thing and so I produce constantly then evaluate visually, giving myself time to think over them.

CR: And I can be pretty ruthless about getting rid of a few weeks of work if I don't feel its going in a direction that's productive.

MM: A couple of months have passed since you spoke here, I was wondering how you've approached your background music (to the lecture) in talks since then?

CR: So, as you know that was the first time I had done that, and I took it even further the next time I spoke at the University of Michigan a few weeks later. I prepared a few different pieces of music for different projects, so I basically found music I thought was specifically relevant to different projects and then had the Steve Reich playing interspersed in between. In the end, some of that worked really well and other pieces that didn't work as well. It's still an ongoing experiment. What I have been doing is writing music and composing specifically for the works and that was always the outcome. Through these tests I've learned a lot about how things relate to each other and I'm now proceeding with working on sound for the works.

MM: Are you realizing that these sound pieces/compositions aren't working as you're giving a lecture- like as you're talking?

CR: Oh! No no no, they all worked really well together as a lecture and performance technique. I think the thing that didn't work about it the most wasn't how the sound and image worked together. It was that in the end, I felt fine using the Steve Reich music, but for one piece in Michigan I showed it with a piece of music by Ryoji Ikeda and I just felt like that music was too contemporary and he's too much of a contemporary of mine that it didn't feel right to be using that music within the context of my work at a talk. That was uncomfortable, so I'm not going to do that again, but at the moment we are composing new sound for those pieces.

MM: That seems like an interesting and exciting undertaking. Last question- do you pronounce it GIF or GIF?

CR: GIF