

Glossolalia: The Map Is Not The Territory
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in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of the Master of Fine Arts in
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Artist Statement:

My curiosity as a maker began with interests in collecting as a physical diaristic activity (painting), writing for the visual structure of language (drawing), and watching my grandmother sew and quilt (painting). From these, I developed an ontological interest in looking at my experience in the world as a composition of fragments. I see in terms of groupings and categories. I am a compulsive counter, so collections are a way of seeing that reduces the impulse to take inventory.

Furthermore, collecting, ordering and categorizing are efforts to hold on, lament, and work against the corrosion of time. Firmly rooted and dependent on a kind of everydayness, I approach the macro through the micro. I am interested in how these groupings are held together. Coherence relies on an internal system of relational order, and by definition, a system is something to be looked at and studied. In psychology, language is defined as a system containing combinatorial symbols that are used recursively, meaning they repeat in a self-similar way so that the whole is similar in shape to the parts. I approach painting in these terms, somewhere between the recursive and idiomatic. In her 1979 text *Sculpture in the Expanded Field*, Rosalind Krauss expanded the definition of sculpture and offered terms for an expanded definition of painting as well. They are *uniqueness* and *reproducibility*.¹ I have used these conditions to create my own definition of painting that includes the symbolic, idiomatic, and autopoietic.

My paintings move between forms in a regenerative studio process as my practice pivots on a system of tillage. After applying numerous layers of oil to panel, I carve paint away revealing a surface complexity that is slowly built through nuanced repetition. The harvested chips of paint are the seeds for new work. And, the graft from one painting morphs into the next, as a body in the act of becoming; it is both dying and procreating. Every painting carries with it the history of all previous paintings, as ghosts are continually reborn for sacrifice. Gestures are excavated and catalogued in a studio archive. This archive is the intermediary between the making and unmaking actions, a tangible word bank of utterances. The studio is a continuous site of cultivation and a poetic pursuit in erosive defiance.

For the Modernists, formlessness meant loss; the figure passed into the ground like the individual into death. For the Postmodernist, a negation of form meant a declaration against permanence and virtuosity, while remaining a bridge between the everyday and the ideal.² Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois defined the formless or *informe* as an operation – the shedding of cultivated behaviors toward the libidinal, primal, and instinctual.³ A decade later, David Joselit names a shift in forms *transitive painting*. Joselit posits that “the rhetoric of modern painting (the allover field, the monochrome and OP)” is used to demonstrate the transitive behavior of objects as they circulate through abstract networks.⁴ As a fan of

¹ Krauss, Rosalind. “Sculpture in the Expanded Field.” *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. ed. Hal Foster. New Press: CA, 2002.

² Rubinstein, Raphael. “Provisional Painting.” *Art in America*. May 2009.

³ Bois, Yve-Alain and Rosalind E. Krauss. *Formless: A User's Guide*. Zone: NY, 1997.

⁴ Joselit, David. “Painting Beside Itself.” *October*. Fall 2009.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty and his writings on the reflexive corporeal experience of perception, I am interested in how the individual phenomenological experience is reified (according to Marx) and studied as an object moving through its system of production. In *Unpacking My Library*, Walter Benjamin describes this same movement from the private to the common as a function of collecting. The collector is a link in the network of an object's biography, and the collection locks "individual items within a magic circle."⁵ What holds this magic circle together? James Elkins compares the reciprocity of looking to a fragmented web, stating, "coherence itself remains unanalyzable."⁶ My studio is an experiment into the ways in which collections of paint cohere. My finished paintings are the punctuation in a sequence of metamorphic studio rituals. They are grounded in a primal, pared-down aesthetic that reflects my sense of the world as an ensemble of repetitions and variations of our habits and habitations. They are earthly but unnatural, bodily but defiled. As a product of their environment, they are about how where you come from can become you are. Like the evidence of terroir in wine or tomatoes, each painting reveals its relationship with place as a tangible lens for impermanence. Instead of plenty, the carved marks begin to represent division.

It is perverse to think of these structures in terms of abstraction, which is resistant to narrative, but I think life is sequential and also very abstract. Titled after the Pentecostal practice of speaking in tongues, *Glossolalia* offered painting not as a recitation but an affirmation, not a vehicle or metaphor but the object itself. My grandmother frequently spoke in tongues; I believe this was a catalyst for me to consider spirituality as a kind of abstract space, one that exists along a somatic axis made up of bodily compulsions and unintelligible language. It conditioned me as a magical thinker; the work does not face inward as self-expression or outward as compression but sits in the middle and negotiates the strangeness of experience, while acknowledging the studio practice is a model or map and not the territory itself.

My studio mantra is stillness through motion. Visible in unsettled surfaces and textures sensitive to the body, my work approximates the abstract spaces of neurosis, spirituality, and loss.

⁵ Benjamin, Walter. "Unpacking My Library." *Illuminations*. Fontana: London, 1973.

⁶ Elkins, James. *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing*. Mariner, 1997.

Slides from thesis presentation PowerPoint:

Glossolalia:

The Map Is Not The Territory

K. Mixon





untitled, corner painting with detail (2010)
oil, 72x72x72"



Unstacked IV (2010), oil on panel, 102x111x10"



Rag Rug I (2012), used hand wipes, 72" round



Sue Willie Seltzer, *Housetop* (1955), 80x76"



Lillie Mae Pettway, *Housetop* (1965), 77x65"



El Anatsui, *Earth's Skin* (2007), aluminum and copper wire, 177x394"



Elana Herzog, *Untitled 2006 (The Peacock)*
cotton chenille bedspread, metal staples,
drywall, paint, 106x86x4"



untitled, column (2012-2013)
acrylic latex, 72x12x10"



untitled (2013), archival pigment print, 20x16"



untitled (2013), archival pigment print, 28x20"



untitled (2013), archival pigment print, 20x28"



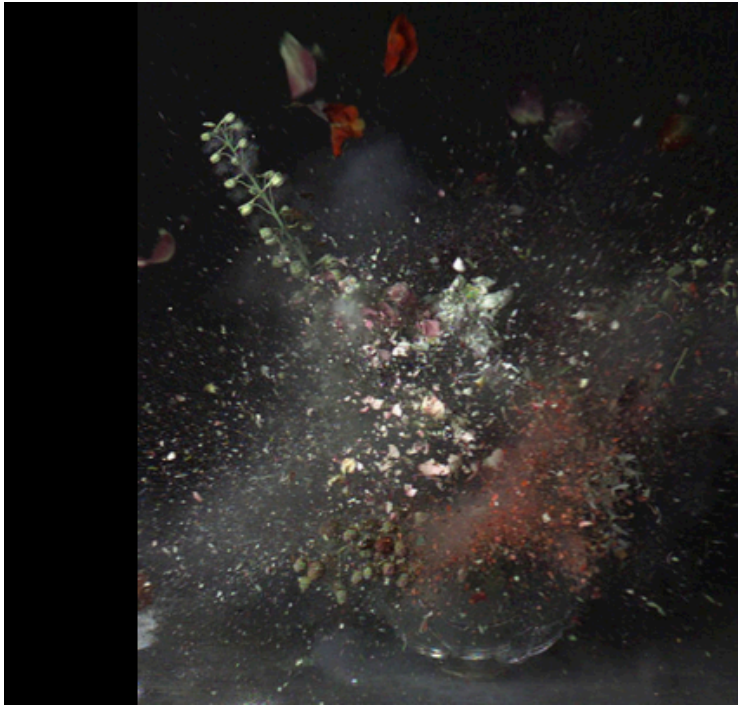
untitled (2013), archival pigment print, 20x28"



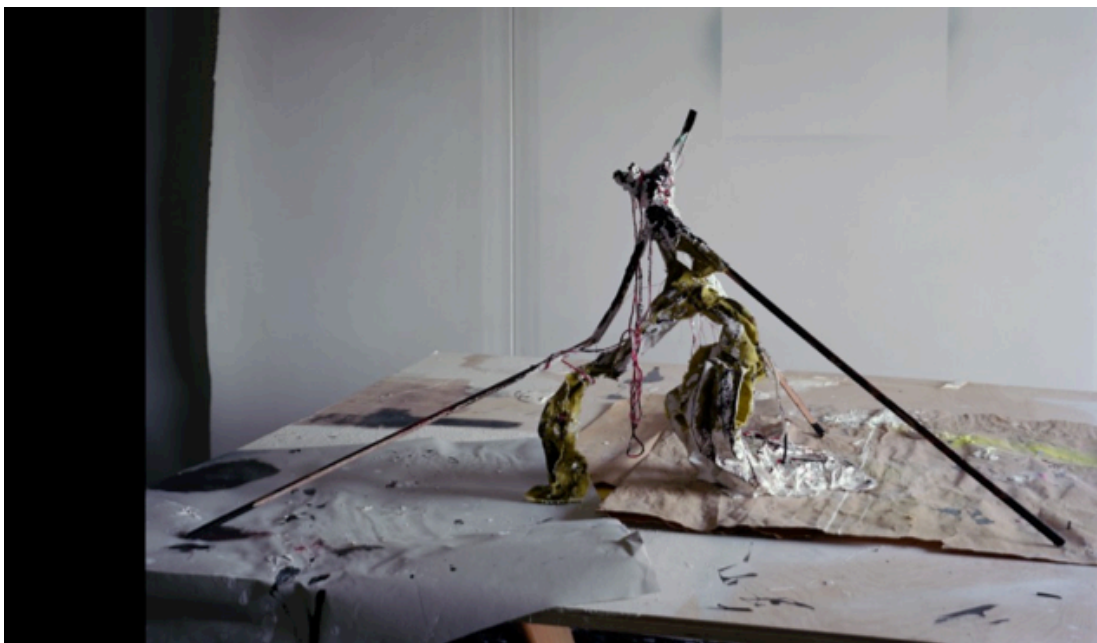
untitled (2013), archival pigment print, 20x20"



untitled (2013), archival pigment print, 20x20"



Ori Gersht, *Time after Time: Untitled 11* (2007), C-print, 15.5x11.75"



David Gilbert, *Samurai Lapdog* (2010), archival pigment print, 64x96"



David Maisel, *Library of Dust* (2005)

#2363



#1470



#1834



In my hand it is unnaturally light I, II (2014), archival pigment print, 40x40"



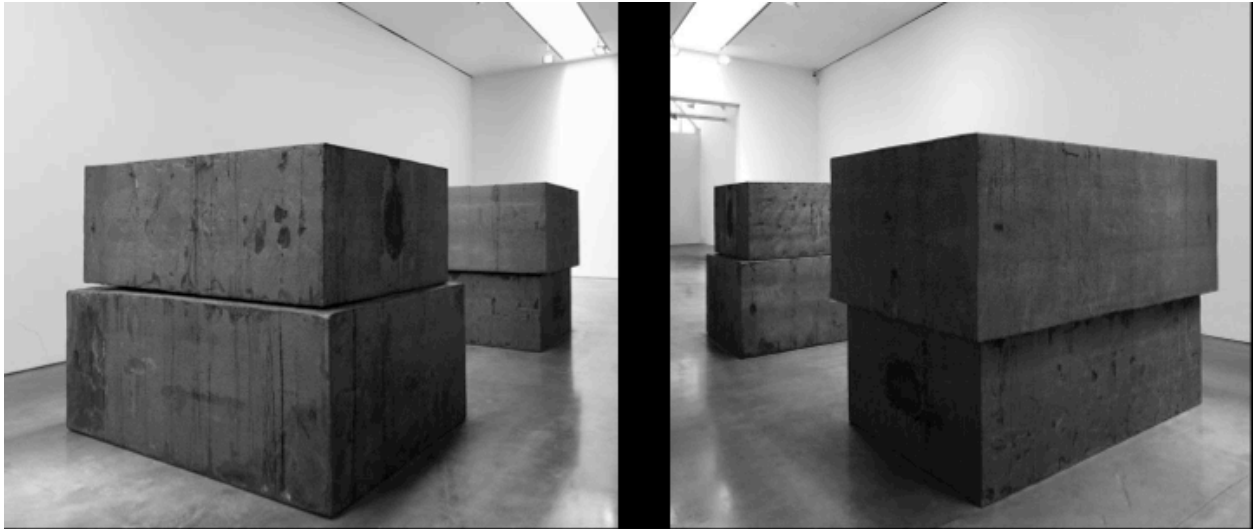
untitled (2014), oil and acrylic on panel,
steel channel base 76x36x3" / 79x50x12"



Adriana Varejao, *Ruina de Charque - Coluna*
(*Column Jerked-Beek Ruin*) (2003)
oil on wood and polyurethane
93x14x12.5"



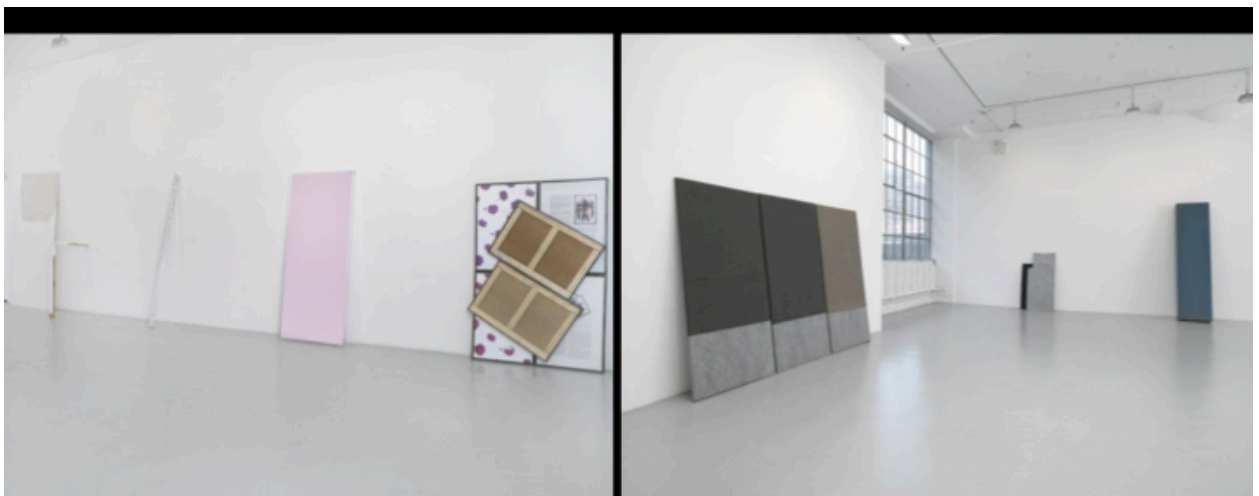
Richard Serra, *Intervals* (2013), weatherproof steel, 24 plates, 6x28x47'



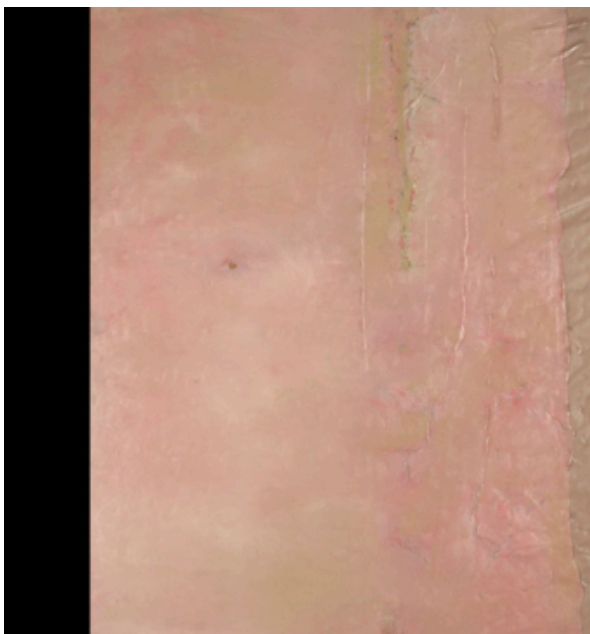
Richard Serra, *Grief and Reason (for Walter)* (2013), steel



untitled (2014), oil and acrylic on panel, 24" tall



\ (Lean) at Nicole Klagsbrun, New York (2010): Robert Gober, Richard Tuttle, Roni Horn, Mary Heilmann...



Wax (2014), oil and acrylic on panel, 30x24"



Grit (2014), oil and acrylic on panel, 30x24"



Lint, gasoline, matchstick (after Jeanann Verlee)
2014, oil and acrylic on panel, 28x20"



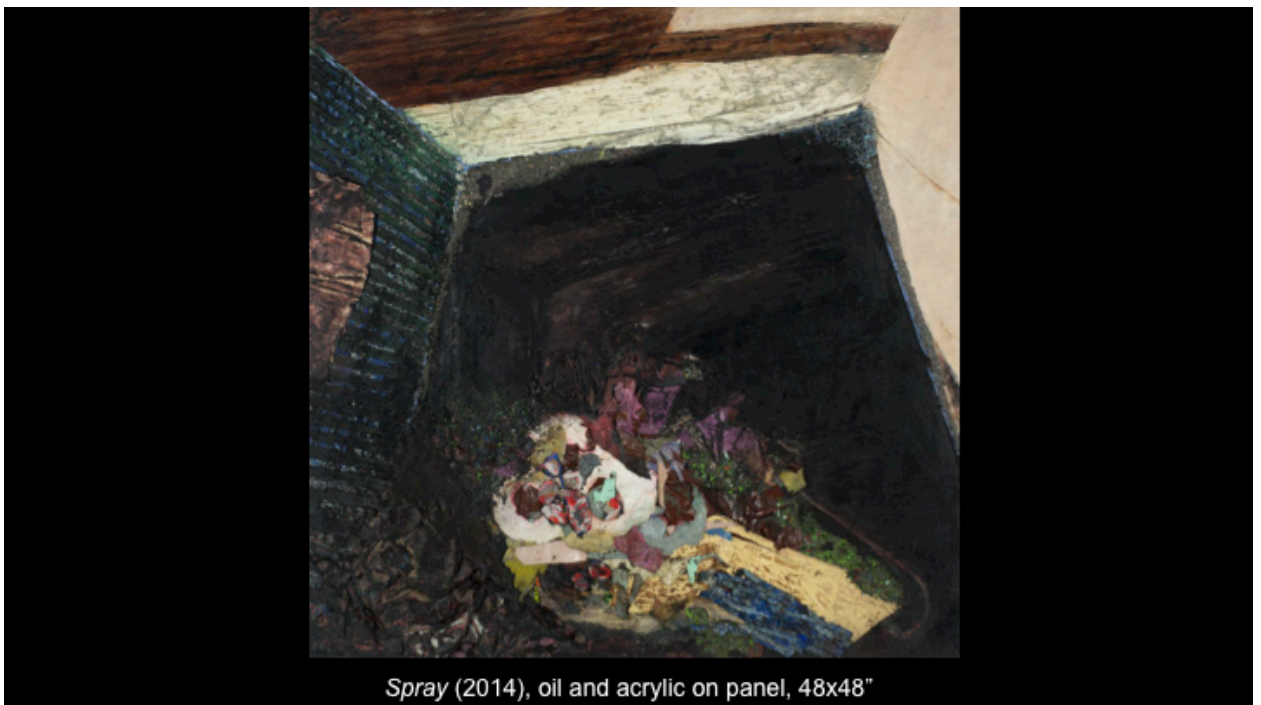
Wafer (2014), oil and acrylic on panel, 20x20"



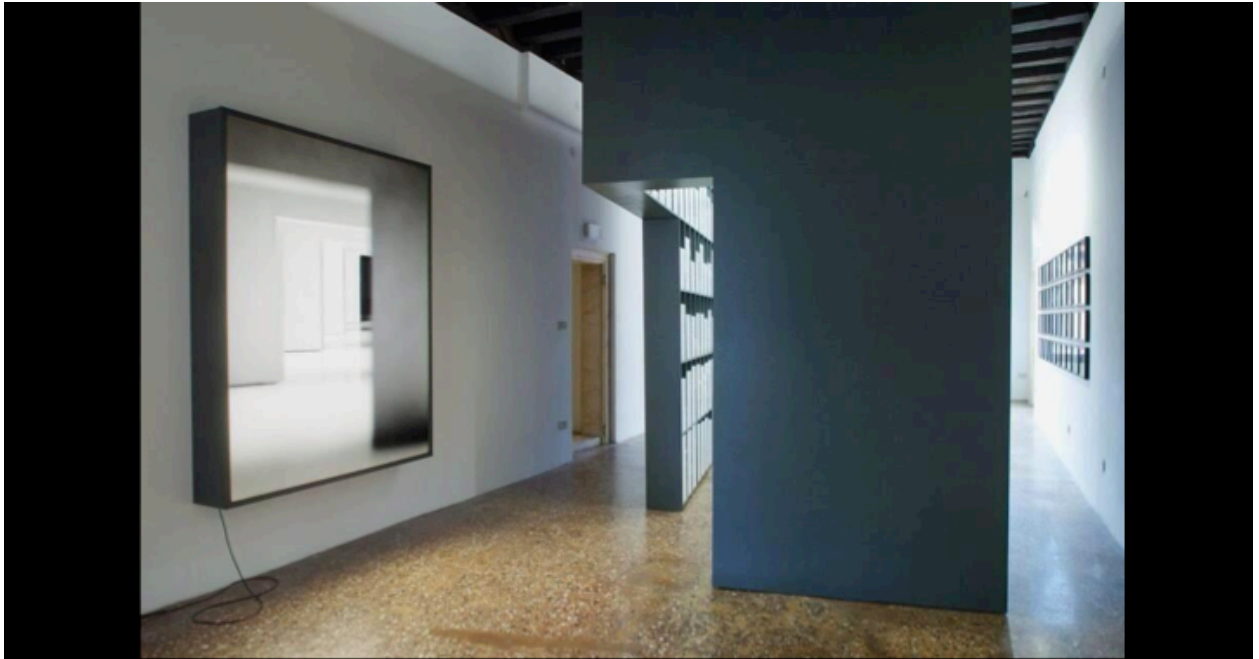
Lament (2014), oil and acrylic on panel, 48x48"



Prop (2014), oil and acrylic on panel, 48x48"



Spray (2014), oil and acrylic on panel, 48x48"

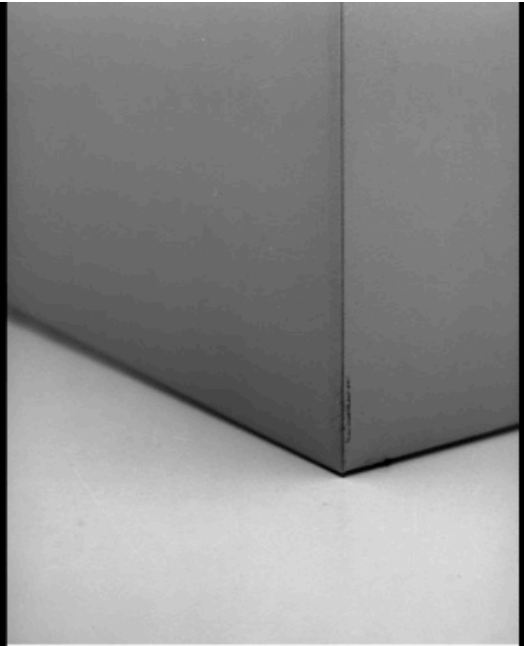


Denes Farkas, *Evident in Advance* (2013)

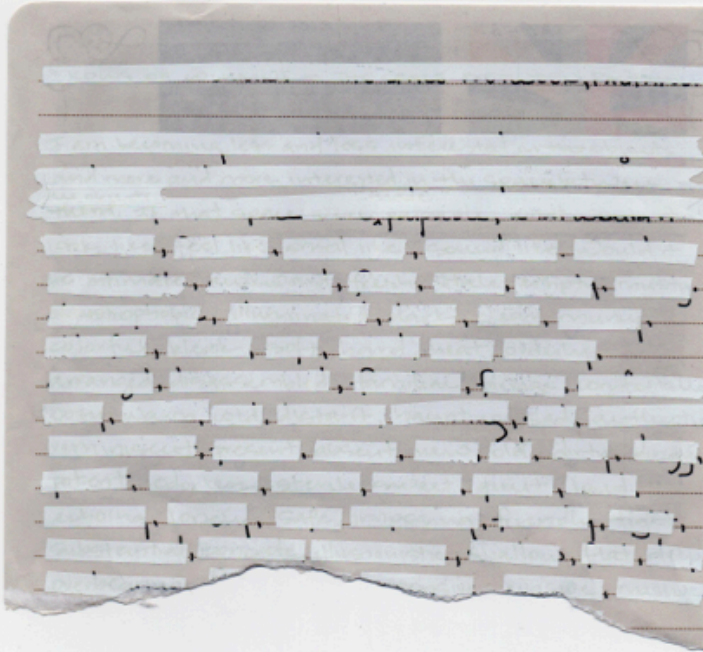




Did words deserve the primacy we gave them?



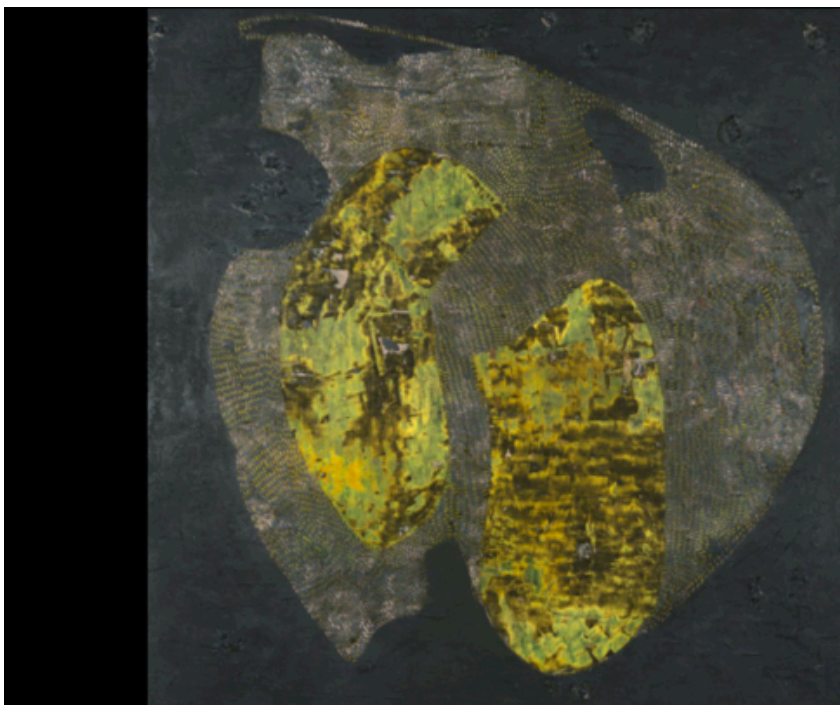
To ask questions was to be somehow sick or mischievous, not forward-looking.







Seed 1.15.1 (2015)
oil on panel, 48x48"



Seed 1.15.4 (2015)
oil on panel, 48x48"



Anonymous Tantric Paintings (1966-2004), from different parts of India



Anonymous (Sanganer), Tantric paintings, Shiva linga (2004), unspecified paint on found paper



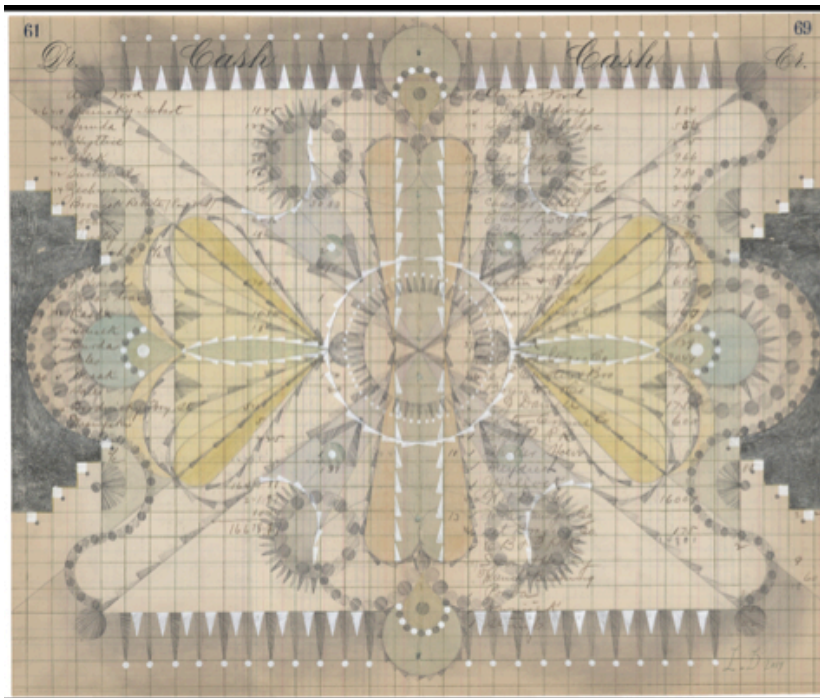
Anna Zemankova, untitled (1960s), pastel and ink on paper, 24.5x35"



Charline von Heyl, *Doublebeast* (2010)
acrylic, oil and charcoal on canvas
82x78"



Charline von Heyl, *P.* (2008)
acrylic and crayons on linen, 82x74"



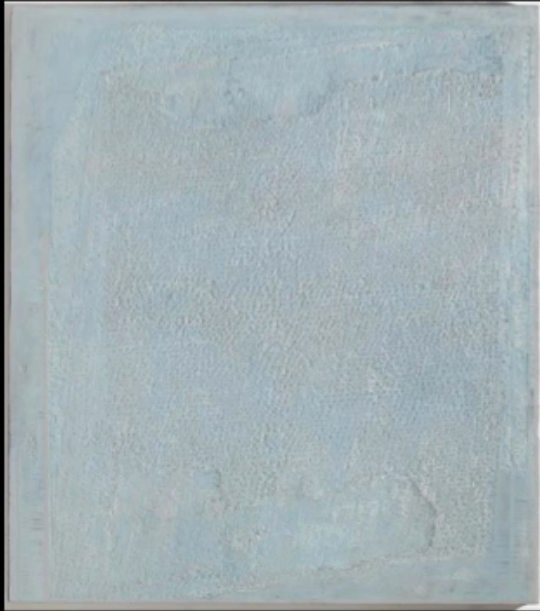
Louise Despont, *Hive Mind No. 13, Pollination* (2014), graphite, colored pencil, ink, and gold leaf on antique ledger book paper, 13.5x16.5"



Amy Feldman, *Holy Over* (2014)
acrylic on canvas, 75x75"



Amy Feldman, *Show & Tell* (2013), acrylic on canvas, 80x80"

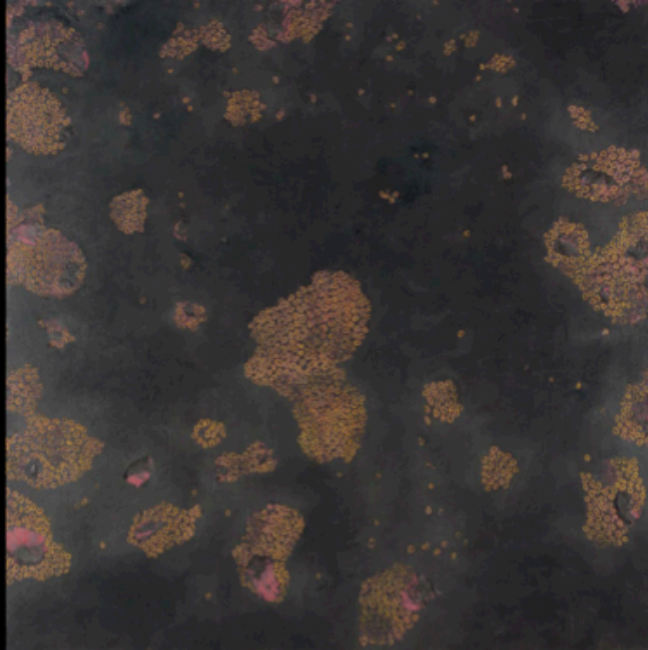


Jessica Dickinson, *Of/How* (2013)
oil on limestone polymer on panel, 54x48"



Remainder, graphite rubbings of paintings





Strain 3.15.3 (2015), oil on panel, 48x48"



Hypotheticals (2015), oil on panel, 48x48"



When the Watermelon Queen was King (2015), oil on panel, 48x48"



251K Female Acres Rerouted (2015), oil on panel, 48x48"

