

A NATURAL CIRCUS

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Fine Arts in the department of Furniture Design of the Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

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This is a book based simply on observation, not fact. If you are solely interested in an overly factual account I suggest you look elsewhere. But, if you are at all curious about the grays that lie inbetween opposing facts and the irrational, intuitive decisions made by designers, then please do enjoy.



TO TAYLOR HORTON

It is fairly odd that I am dedicating this book to a human rather than a material, but I'd like to ask my materials to forgive me. See, whilst I have dedicated a portion of my life to listening to matter, Taylor remains the only matter that truly matters. For me he happens to be a man just like a million other men, and I had no need of him and he had no need of me, either. But, we have tamed one another and now need each other. See, Day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute I learn more about what sets him apart from the rest. My knowledge of him grows in detail and I have chosen to learn him for many years to come.

If my materials still can't quite understand let me explain it in a different light. He has the strength of steel, the flexibility of silicone, the honesty of resin, the soft embrace of a mother mold, the beauty of wood, and the heat of curing concrete.

TO TAYLOR HORTON
The only matter that matters.

ˆ Taken on January 7, 2017 in Miami, Florida.

Abstract

I've come to the conclusion that I have no interest in controlling and manipulating matter to my own heart's content. I'm rather bored of rigidly perfect geometries and sentiments. Rather than controlling materials I allow them to do as they please. I capture their moment of revelation, and allow them to speak for themselves. I realize this process of making demotes me from creator to conduit, but I've noted that the materials have a far more unique and intelligent message than I could ever imagine.

So, I listen to matter. Matter has one very good friend, the center of the earth; and the forces that attract them to one another are gravity and decay. As designers we have made enemies of these two forces. What if we treated these foes as friends and allowed the materials to do as they wish rather than forcing them to be star crossed lovers? I once believed that to be a good designer you had to be the master of texture, I know now that great design doesn't require unyielding control but a respect for the materials.

My process doesn't just consist of reuniting material relationships it also deals in the magic of my own intuition. My decisions on how to sculpt matter are led by a balance between listening to materials, and by adhering to my own intuition, which is the ability to understand something immediately without the need for any conscious reasoning. It allows for the hands to inform the mind. When I think of myself as a designer the term funambulist comes to mind. A Funambulist is what people in Ancient Rome called a tightrope walker. Adrenaline coursing, senses heightened, a quiet mind, intuition is necessary, a fated path, a focus on journey rather than destination, balance tested, and gravity respected.

How do I tame gravity?

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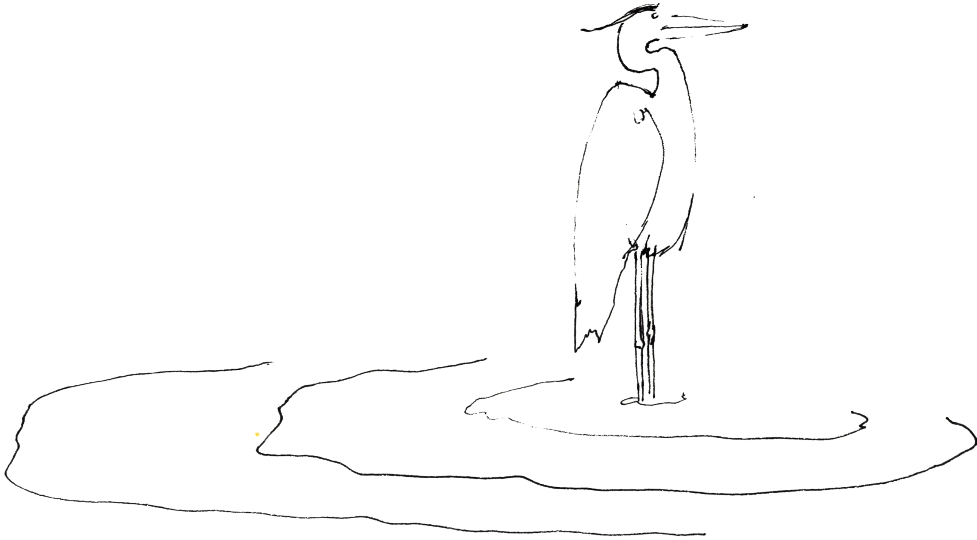
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Chapter 1

I am composing a natural circus; constantly scouting material talent and showcasing their mastery of gravity and submission to decay.

(These are thoughts about the title, thought of by myself and other humans. All photos in this book were taken at or between my home and the Metcalf shop (I have grown quite fond of the various paths that lie inbetween).)



A small area where the mangroves clear. A circular opening in the entangled legs of these salt water plants. Still water. Small fish. I'm in the filter of the ocean. Only entrance is climbing. Large waxy leaves remove the salt from the water through their underbellies. **SALT LEAVES!** One lick and sit still. So still the blue heron perches beside you and sees you as environment rather than stranger.

Is he seeing me then?

"What a flamingo teaches a child... is that gravity is not just a limitation, but also a possible partner in an intriguing potentially joyful game."

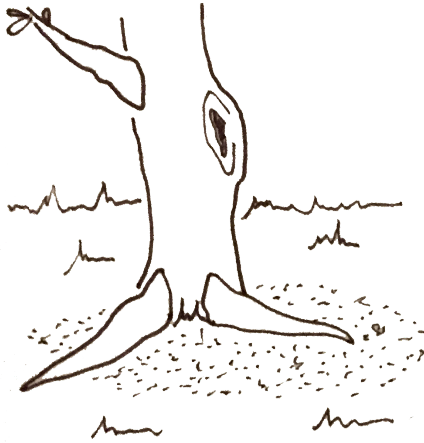
John Burnside



Spring flowers falling with the breeze. Natural confetti adds color to the colorless wind. The death of the flowers are commemorated by the bass and drums. Flowers are reanimated by dancing on the drums. There's a full fledged flower ceremony, but everyone is focused on the band.

◁ Tulip petals cast in resin using a latex balloon as a mold.





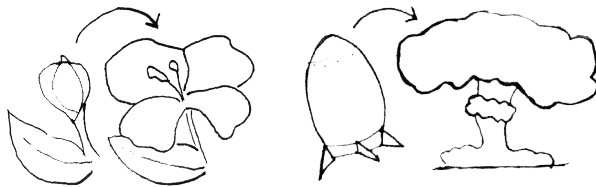
I like flowers better when they begin to wilt and fall off the trees.
Shadows look better in color.

< Flowers dried and then dipped in silicone and resin.

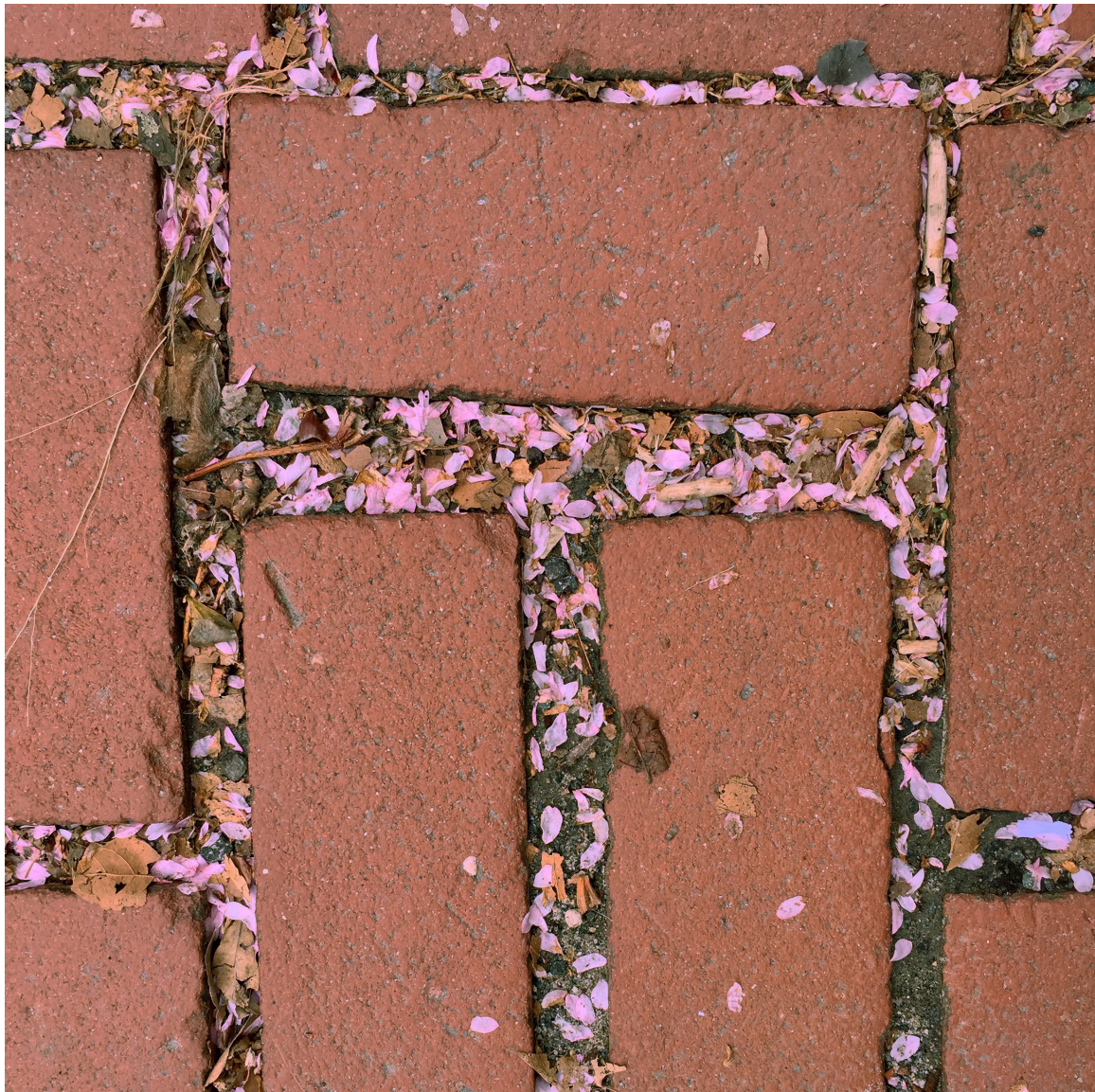


Loose pink petals indicate the low points around my house and the direction of the wind. These two factors create the sweetest soft pink ponds I've ever seen. Well, I guess according to scale they're more like puddles. They even make curbs more beautiful.





FLOWERS ARE NATURAL EXPLOSIONS



Pink petal piles, from my window I can see just
how far these sweet pink petals have traveled. I
see small piles scattered throughout the block.
They've made it past barriers and fences into
lawns, porches, car ports, curbs, sewers, cat
bowls, small cracks and potholes.



Freshly grown grass is sweet and soft despite triangular edges. It's feathery and friendly. It invites you to sit, roll, play, and sleep; and then it gets longer and in my opinion more beautiful. It sounds more soothing, its movements become more exaggerated, and its brush more inhabitable. But this is the point we've decided it must be cut. I'm not sure why we've made this decision. By cutting we revert this wild beautiful habitat to a controlled uneventful plane. This perfect system we can control. I think it's pretty terrible, but I guess snake visibility is a plus. Also the square edges that come from the rough cut lawn mowers make the grass very uncomfortable to sit on.

◁ Blue Thistle casted in resin.



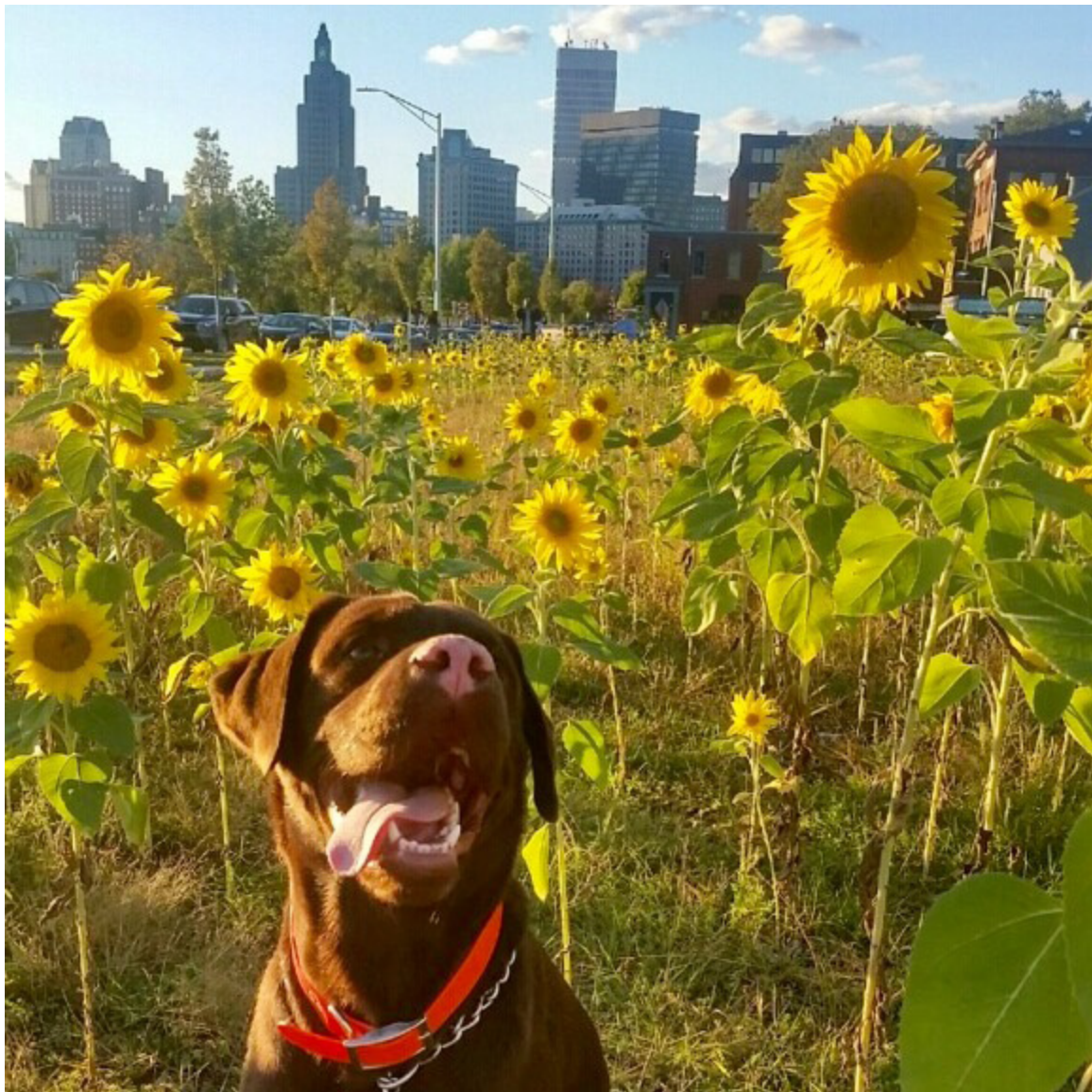
◁ WINTER WHITE

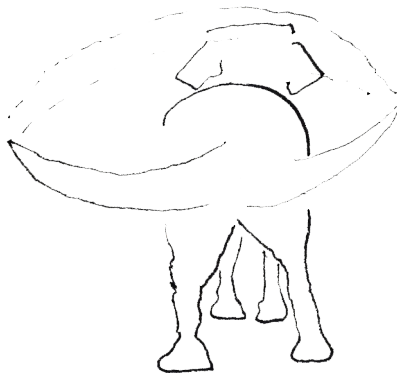
(These were taken one week apart in April of 2017. The location is somewhere between my apartment and the Metcalf woodshop. I often take notice of talented natural phenomena on my brief walks to school.)

◁ SPRING WHITE



The wind has this awesome ability to make things come to life. On my walk to school I notice the branches wave at me and the leaves chatter amongst themselves. The grass gently dances and the loose leaves and flower petals swirl as I pass. Even my hair and clothes come to life as I walk to class.





DOGS, THE CONQUERORS OF OPTIMISM.



Old trees have this rich and beautiful bark. Deep creases, mold, mushrooms, and evidence of missing branches. I wish I could see the people who planted them next to them. Would they camouflage each other? Have they accrued the same amount of wisdom and history?

◁ This tree is from Miami, Florida my original home.

Chapter 2

To learn something is to tame it and be tamed by it.



"What does tamed mean?" "It's often something that's been too often neglected. It means, to create ties. For me you're a little boy just like a hundred thousand other little boys and I have no need of you. For you I'm only a fox like a hundred thousand other foxes and you have no need of me, either. But if you tame me we'll need each other. I'll know the sound of footsteps that will be different from all the rest. The only things you learn are the things you tame."

Antoine De Saint-Exupery



HOME. Home has Taylor and Tin. The bay window and some alcohol also helps. I meditate in my living room. Drink tea by the window and watch the world outside. My dog is optimism. He's always happy despite everything else. Home is safe. I don't have to be anybody or anything. Often the infinite thoughts come from overthinking what others think about me. At home I don't have to worry about that.



MORNING. My eyes are shut and my body is warm and relaxed. I feel a tap on my shoulder. Taylor, my husband, wakes me in the kindest way he knows how. My body begs to be rushed to the bathroom. Relief. Brush my teeth. Minty smell wakes me further. Splash water in my eyes, my vision clears, then pat dry with a towel.

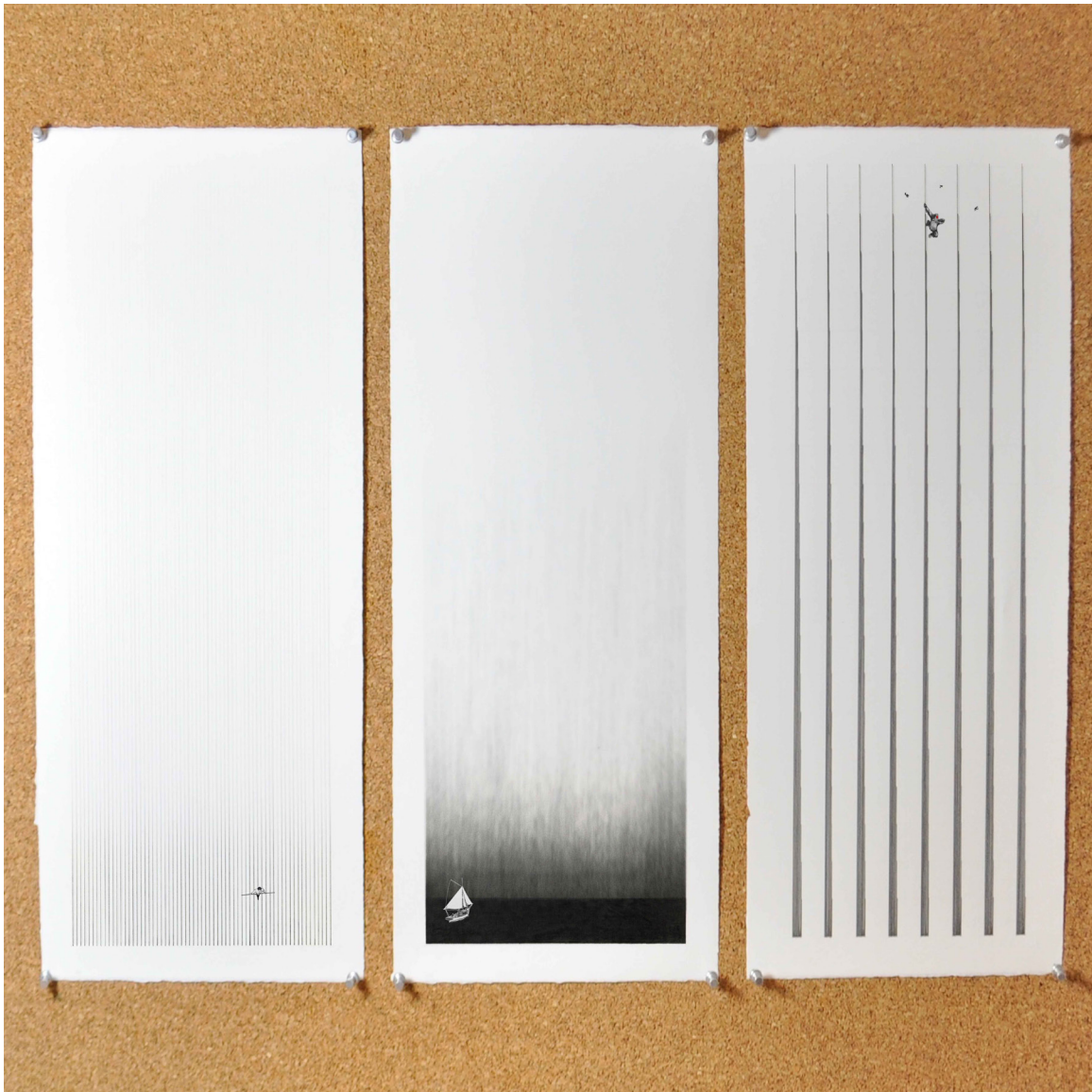
AFTERNOON. My muscles are tight and influx. My mind is scheduling the remainder of the day in the most efficient way. My breathing is rapid and consistent. I miss Taylor and Tin as company. I'm focusing on my task, and enjoying the craft.

NIGHT. The day is ending. There is a bit of sadness for the things I was unable to accomplish. The morning and night routine are fairly similar. My to-do list haunts me, but the release of my muscles eventually transfers to my mind and I eventually fall asleep.



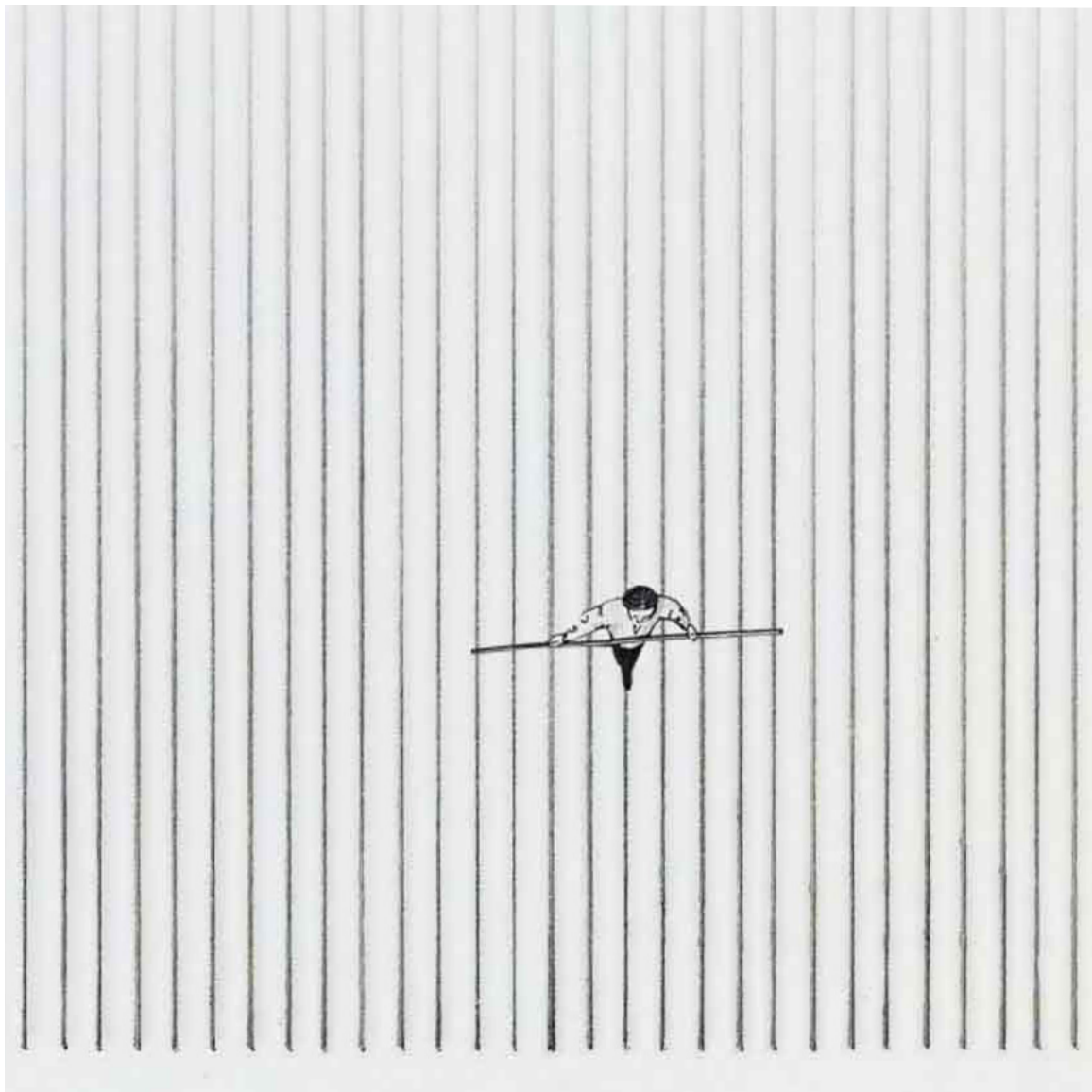
"You have to be very patient. Say nothing ... language is the source of misunderstandings. Return at the same time every day. If you come at any old time, I'll never know when I should prepare my heart... there must be rites. A rite is the fact that one day is different from the other days, one hour from the other hours. One sees clearly only with the heart. Anything essential is invisible to the eyes."

Antoine De Saint-Exupery



Capture something to learn it, observe it,
and nurture it. Not to drain it of resources
and profit from it.

◁ These drawings are studies of how to
create gradients solely using lines and
the natural properties of the graphite
material. I used methods such as applying
pressure then releasing at the end of the
line, sharpening the pencil to a point then
allowing the point to dull, making a large
bar of graphite and pulling the graphite
up from it with a cotton swab, and a
compilation of lines that then get longer
incrementally. I later added characters to
the graphite drawings. With the addition
of these characters, one human, one
object, and one creature, the drawings
then became LINEAR LANDSCAPES.



Humans tend to do this fairly odd and silly thing. They take things like trees, mountains, and sand and transform them into lines and planes. Humans take things in nature and simplify them to a degree in which they can understand it. No other creature on this planet needs this level of reduction or illusion of control. They draw these lines and planes on a computer which is an idealistic, superficial, and platonic landscape. Basically entirely void of natural forces, materiality, and context. Now these drawings can show an extraordinary display of control and perfection but, also gives the human the illusion and over inflated ego of a CREATOR. With this blown up sense of self the human begins their journey to

bring their drawing out of the cyber world and onto the earth.

When it comes time to draw in the world they realize the materials are more stubborn than the mouse, trackpad, or stylus they grew accustomed to. Lines and planes in the world sag, rust, break, grow mold, bend, chip, wear, discolor, tear, leak, age, and eventually decay. Materials have needs. Often as humans we think our needs supersede those of the various creatures and landscapes of this planet. But the damage is done. There is no use in reprimanding the humans or trying to change their bad habits. I'll just ask them to listen to nature. See they have cut, melted, and extracted hundreds and thousands of lines and planes in various materials such as wood, glass, plastic, and metal. The things humans can't understand is that each of these lines and planes are entirely unique. Maybe one end is heavier than the other, or more likely to bend here rather than there. Humans please listen to what these materials are saying. Whilst you have clothed them in identical uniforms each is speaking a uniquely different dialect in the language of tactility. In the end a mutual respect between world and human simply leads to a happier existence for both on this planet. Humans don't be afraid to be tamed by nature. The loss of control and vulnerability opens the door to freedom, compassion, and understanding.





Chapter 3

A dramatic irony ensues where the materials are the well-informed audience and the humans have not yet fully grasped the implied narrative.

The house is alive. Open the windows.
Move the chair. Clean the stove. Do the
laundry. Shut the curtains. Do the dishes.
Run the water. Turn on the heater. Run
the fan. Turn the lights on. Turn the
lights off. Sweep the floors. Mop the
floors. Unlock the door. Make the bed.
Fold the clothes. Pay the bills. Go to
bed and then start again in the morning.
This is how to animate your house.

Do objects have personalities? Do
they have life?... Yes, yes they do.

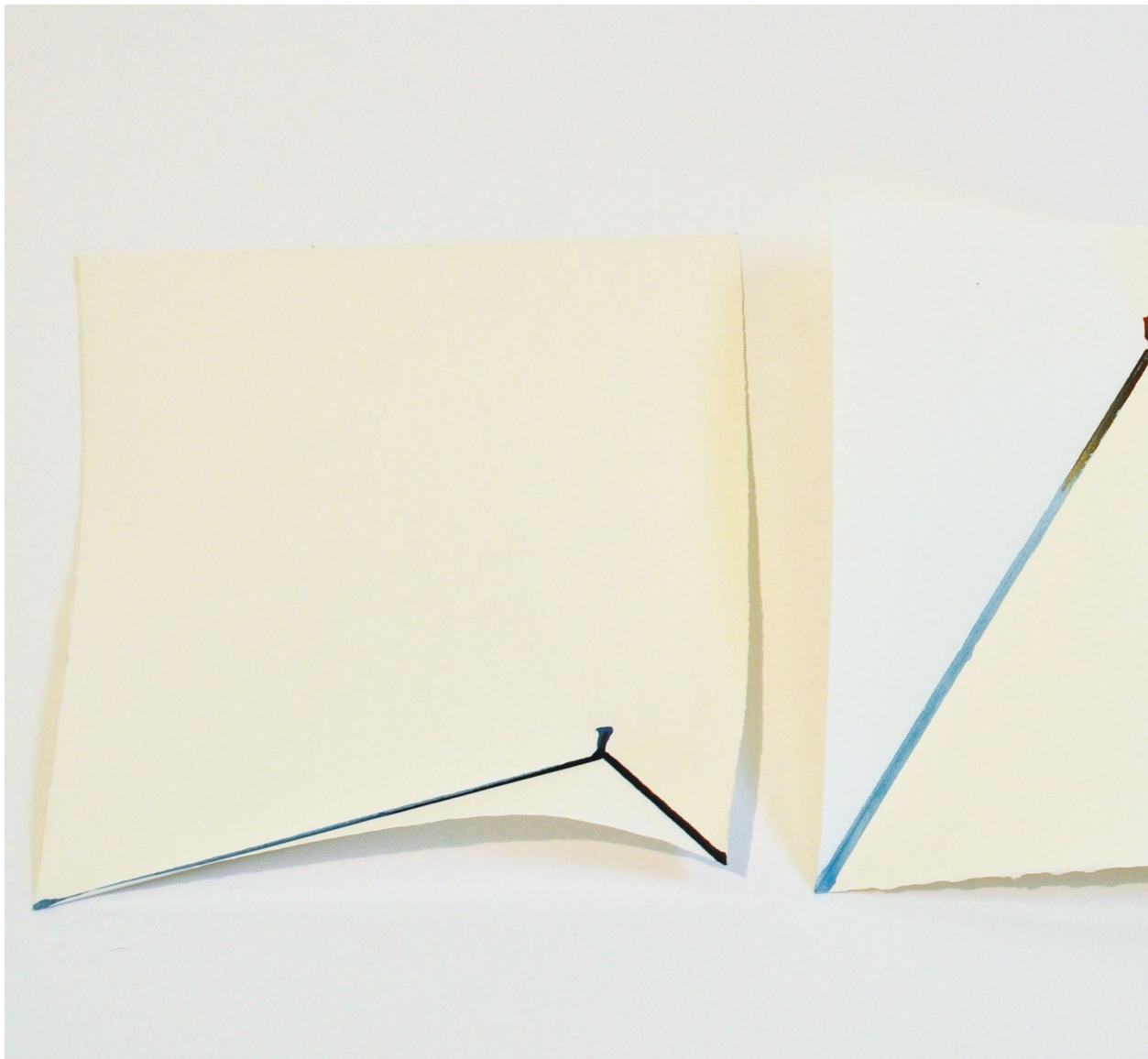


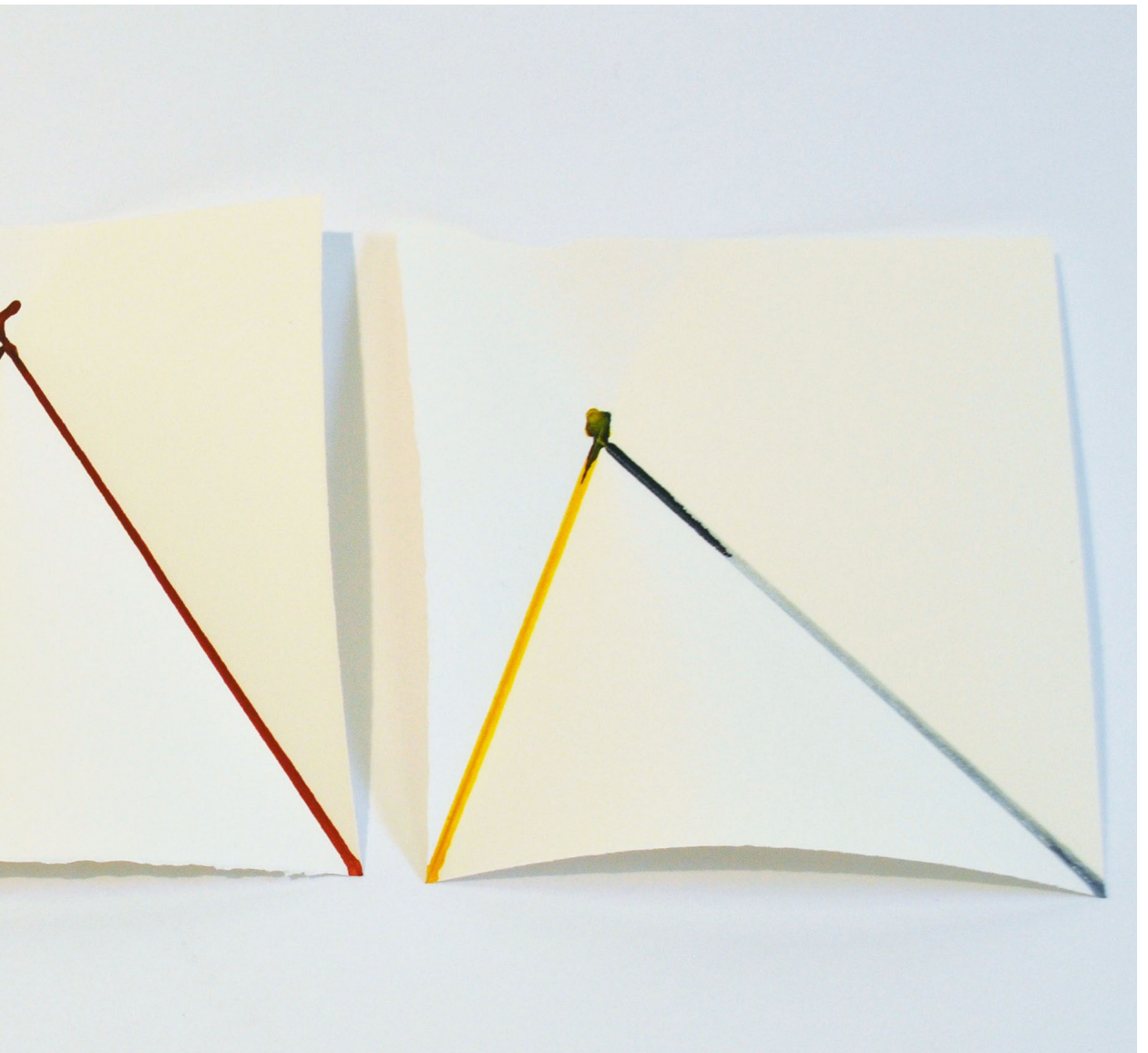
"You say to a brick, 'What do you want, brick?' And brick says to you, 'I like an arch.' And you say to brick, 'Look, I want one, too, but arches are expensive and I can use a concrete lintel.' And then you say: 'What do you think of that, brick?' Brick says: 'I like an arch.'"

Louis Kahn



◁ CASTING WATERCOLOR is a series of drawings exploring the potential of casting with a two dimensional medium. The creases act as funnels and direct the paint into a small square lined with a clear wax to prevent the material to escape and acts as a mold. Since watercolor requires a two part mixture (water + pigment) the pigment tends to settle at the bottom being the heavier of the two. So, the line is a matte and translucent color, while the point at the end acruces all of the pigment creating a solid glossy color. The point of these triangles holds the excitement of these drawings. It is the moment the two colors collide and the material holds all control through the weight of the pigments.











Staring out the left most bay window in our apartment. The curtain is slightly drawn back. The storm window is partially pulled up. Two images are before me. The top half of the window pane shows telephone lines, the roofs of nearby apartments, a cloudy day, every so often a bird quickly zooming through, and just the three top branches of the tree in front of our place. The bottom half of the window pane is all tree. Soft pink blooms are scattered amongst the branches. Greenish-gold leaves spring up after the blooms have fallen. The branches wave and the leaves shiver as the wind filters back and forth from the river. I see two shades of blue between the triangular crevices of the tree. One blue is from a freshly painted apartment and the other from a post office drop off. The flowers seem to be hanging their heads low as if they know they are nearing the end of their season. Cars wiz by and carry soft pink petals along the street. My visual focus comes back and forth between outside and the insect screen.

FUNCTIONALITY, what is your
role in my work?

Often the outcome simply exists in a state of being rather than a domesticated role. In other words, perhaps functionality does not just pertain to the human user but, the earth itself. The cow was once wild and even then was functional, but its function was to serve the earth. The human then domesticated the cow to make this creature purposeful to them. Perhaps, I'd like the materials to simply be and serve their earthly purpose, but I'd also like the humans to take notice of these materials. So, what is the best way to attract the human? FUNCTIONALITY. So, I just add small touches of functionality when the materials allow it, this seems to appease the humans and the materials.

Chapter 4

Counteract the wastrels.

(Wastrel, /'weɪstrəl/
noun;
a wasteful person.)



I like donating my hair. I let it grow out then I cut it off. I've done this four times so far. I have donated 52 inches in total in five years. I'm starting to see myself as a sheep.



We sweep 10 times a week. The mounds of dog hair are roughly the size of a Yorkie. So, Tin produces 10 small dogs a week and 520 dogs a year.

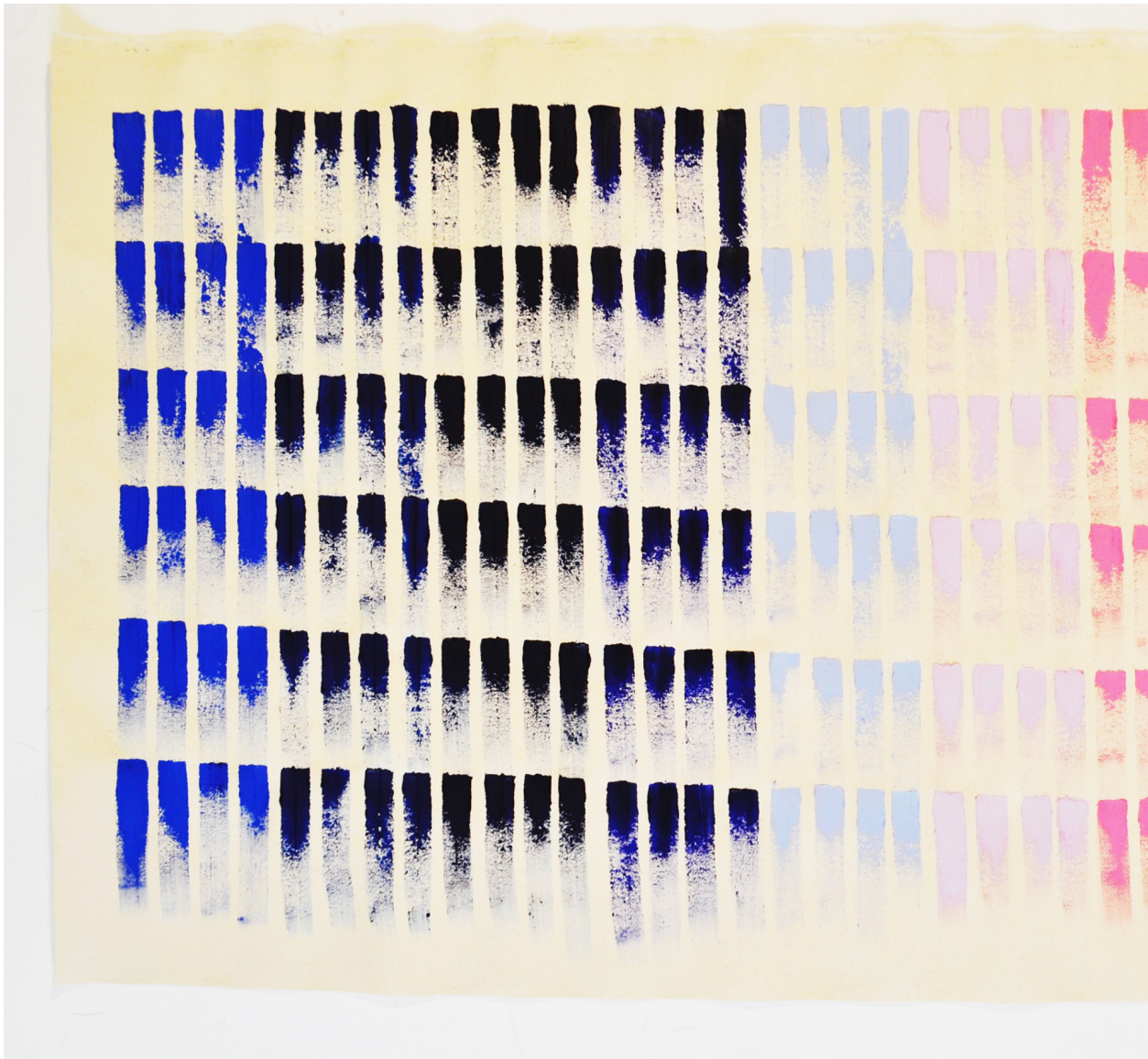
Maybe I should make a Yorkie mold...

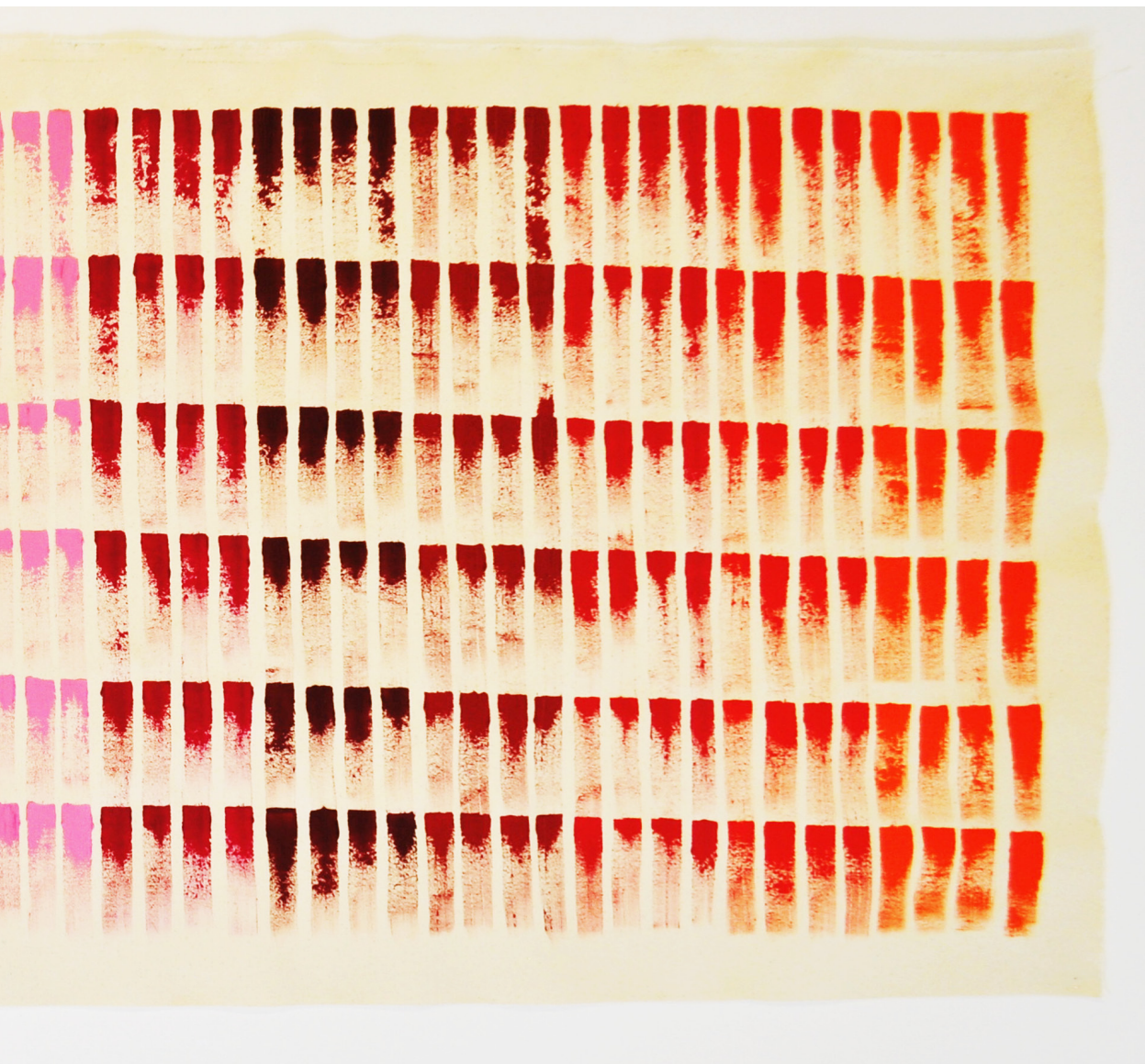


I use local, inexpensive materials, and I try to reuse any waste I can find. I often have repetitive elements in my work (since scraps tend to be small.)



STUDIO STRATA bowl is a compilation of about seven different projects. Casting requires a lot of excess material. You always want to have more material to pour than what you need to make sure your mold is filled and in case of shrinkage. So, when you cast as often as I do you tend to have a lot of spare molds lying around. Every time I have had excess material this semester I poured it into this one mold. This vessel shows the natural history and progression in my studio.







◁ I am very interested in the human fascination with lines. I often explore it through drawing , but I almost always use a ruler or some form of control. I decided to freehand this linear attempt. Orange is the start and the finish is blue. I noted that the horizontal lines stayed regular and straight, but the verticals began to skew based on my body position and line of sight. As for the brush strokes I simply loaded my brush with as much acrylic paint as I could and spread until the brush went dry. This technique created a rich texture on the canvas and minimized waste. I tried to create a palette that simply gave me the feeling of happiness.

This drawing is titled the
Hmmm... THAT'S INTERESTING.





Chapter 5

Disconnect from rational thoughts.

"Of course this is happening
inside your head, but why
on earth should that mean it
isn't real?"

Albus Dumbledore

My mind is often my worst enemy. I've learned to distrust it. The only way I knew how to design was by creating a concept, which guided me through all my decisions. But, because of my anxiety I could not design this way anymore. Trying to adhere to this carefully constructed concept drove me crazy. This process was so restricting and didn't allow for any new discovery along the way, and it only utilized one aspect of me, my mind. So, when I contracted a chronic form of anxiety and my mind was rendered useless I lost all sense of control. My architecture thesis was based on the derivation of the word Architect, which is the master of texture. So, I set out to conquer texture, but I knew I had to reach outside of architecture to learn how to deal with "real" materials. I took a sculpture class in the fall semester of my last year in architecture school. This was the first time I dealt with "real" materials. Finally, I was interacting with the materials. I was demonstrating through exemplary modeling materials and two dimensional drawings. I can't say the experience was great. All I wanted was control, and I quickly learned that it was far easier to cut planes of bass wood and claim they were concrete than to cast a slab. Despite this initial frustration, I loved working with these materials. Any moment where I could make with my hands, I did, it evaporated my constant negative thoughts. I became obsessed with texture, and materiality. Making put my mind at ease.

How can I keep making?



I have found that a repetitive process and outcome are soothing to my often troubled mind, so most of my work consist of small parts that make a whole. I have an interest in monotony and highlighting the small breaks in a seemingly cohesive pattern. Often the things I make not only have healing properties through production, but also through experience.

◁ Cuddling Concrete inside of her mother mold.



"Madness is just like gravity, all
you need is a little push."

The Joker

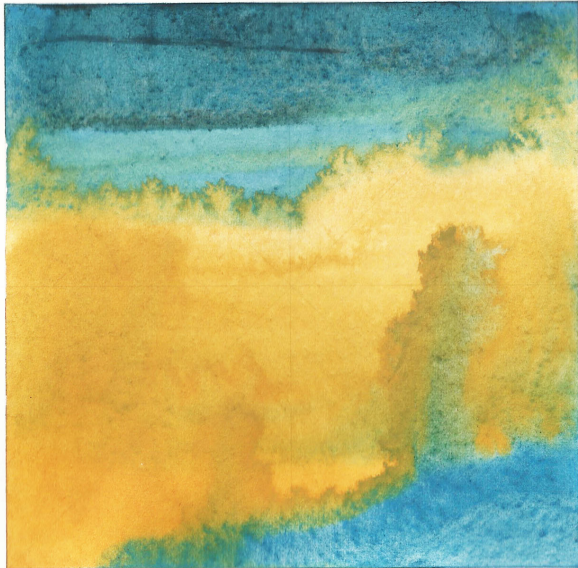
◁ Dripping resin into an acrylic tube filled with acrylic rods.

I began designing based on intuition. I
surrendered control and learned how to
listen to the materials rather than force them
to do what I want.
All I had to do was turn off my worried mind.

Before making my anxiety drowned me in constant thoughts, doubts, and an inability to make the simplest decisions. Now my mind can hardly keep up with the decisions my hands are making and my health seems to be on the road to recovery.



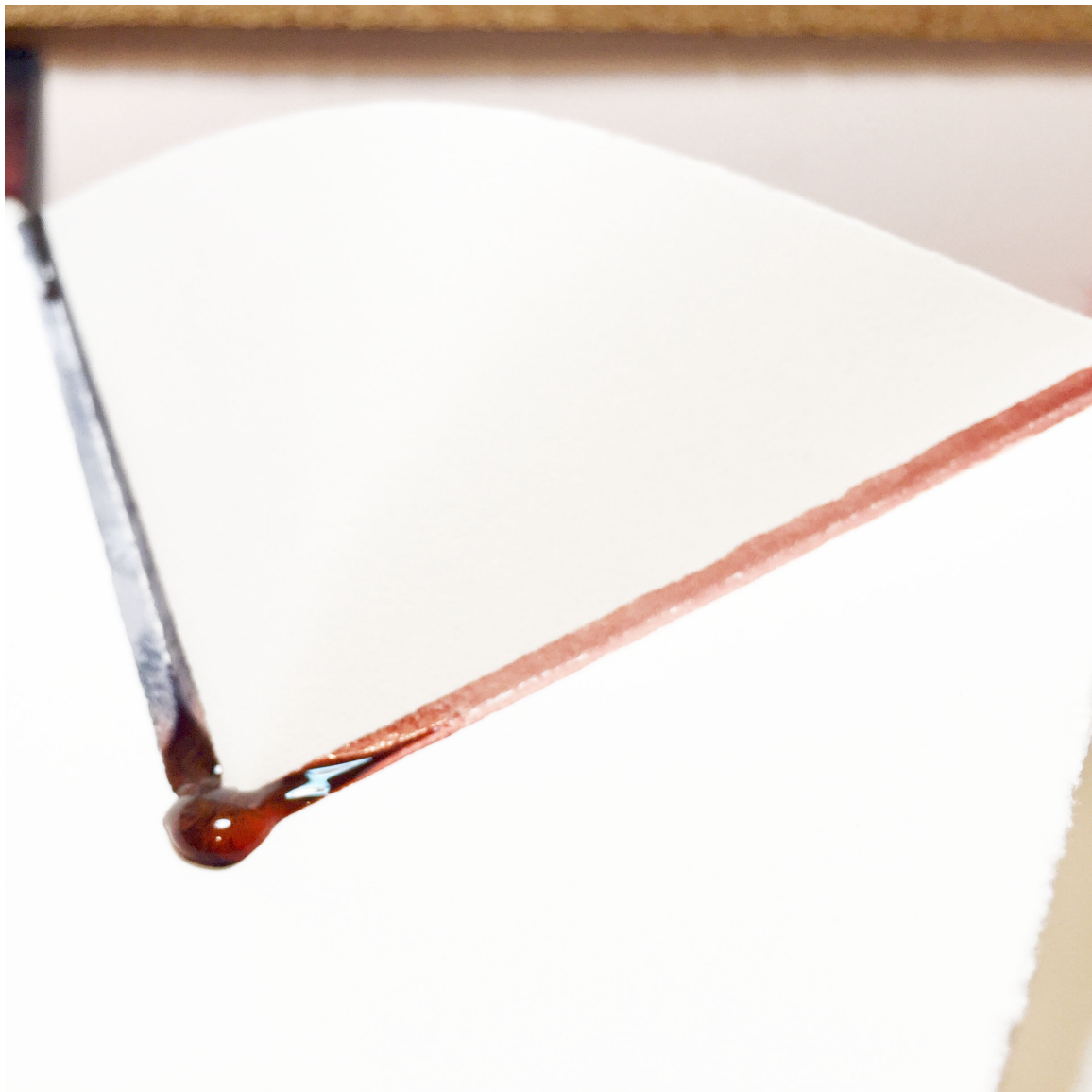
◁ This series was meant to document a quiet mind. I began each drawing by meditating for one hour and then filled in a square with color. The choice of color and form I manipulated it was entirely up to intuition. I did not expect the results to be so varied.





Chapter 6

In a supple that has been made firm lies a humans ability to loose their distinction between their own bodies and the materials they make contact with.



To those materials that help
me make a firm supple and so
many other oxymorons, these
are my (mostly) love notes... ›



CEMENT, you initially live in a paper bag, at least when I purchase you. Your packaged home is lined with plastic, and all together weighs about fifty pounds. I carry you home on my shoulder because it helps bare the weight. When I drop the bag you puff out of the seams. I use a box cutter to open your casing. One cut vertical and then another horizontal, and now there's an L shaped door carved out of your enclosure. It's so strange to think of you as a powder, but I guess a lot of things begin and end as dust. Four parts cement plus one part water, and just like that now your a liquid. Then I have about twenty minutes until you tense up and settle into your new state, SOLID. If I keep you moving then you won't get tight, stay loose until you figure out where you want to be. Here comes my favorite part, the POUR. You fill your mold and I tap the edges to release any trapped air. Now I wait and you change. Warm, hot, then finally you are solid. Now you are cool and you have small cavities which I believe were once bubbles. You are glossy, smooth to the touch, and contain small patches of a rough grainy texture. Heavy, damn you're heavy, sometimes I wish you weren't. I can feel the weight without carrying it. There's still evidence of the flow status you were in. Concrete, you help me to solidify my seemingly insignificant moments.



MOTHER MOLD, you are a very lovely form of casting. You provide the structure for my softer molds such as the silicone and the latex molds. You provide some form of control. The word mother describes you perfectly. Thank you for your strength and discipline.



3/8" STEEL ROD, You are strong and flexible. Often those two things don't go together but you seem to bridge them. It takes a lot of heat to weld you together because you are completely solid. Otherwise you are very easy to work with; especially with bending. Your ends need some help though, I often supply the punctuation they need. You make beautifully elegant linear patterns that have the appearance of defying gravity.



16 GAUGE STEEL, You are stubborn. You cannot be cut on the jump shear. So, I have to use the band saw, which forces vibrations all up and down my arms. It is not pleasant. I guess I can use the plasma cutter but, then I have to angle grind and clean you up. Not pleasant either. Sorry, I've never been a fan of planes which makes this difficult to say but, I don't like working with you. Let's keep our distance.



WALNUT, You happen to be my favorite, type of wood that is. You have this rich swirling chocolate aesthetic and these sweet rose undertones. You just have this visual warmth which makes you a complete natural in the home environment. Your age lines don't show decay or the sloth of age, but energy as they sway and play amongst the various shades of brown. Shaping you on the lathe is a lovely experience, especially the sanding. I can do without the walnut boogies though. Using the lathe brings you closer to the cylindrical form you once were naturally rather than the square orthogonal boards you were forced to be. On the lathe you unravel and become soft and supple. Walnut, thank you for bringing warmth and charm to my work.





When you've been sanding walnut all day
and you get home and blow your nose...
walnut boogies.



LATEX BALLOONS, you are a fickle friend. You allow these transitional materials to express themselves as liquids and still be contained enough to change into a solid. You also allow these liquids at times to pop all over me, yeah...that's not cool. But, you are also able to capture a moment of transcendence. You are an excellent mold. You are water tight, leave only one mark on the piece (a small belly button), and you leave the surface glossy and smooth. But, best of all you allow gravity to dictate form.



RESIN, you are so damn sticky! Ughh! And temperamental. I have to use gloves to work with you because you cause skin irritation. You're incredibly sensitive to temperature, like if it's too hot you get bubbles and if it's too cold you never cure. You break through just about every mold because you're such a thin liquid and your toxic smell makes you a less than desirable partner. But, once you're solid you are so much easier to work with and you are beautiful. You're never melting ice, ever frozen water, you're light emitting, and form fitting.

Thanks for that.

Chapter 7

Whilst using time as a material an alchemical process ensues and is paused in midtransformation, revealing a captured moment of revelation.



What would it look like if conversations were a colored gas?
Especially in a bar.



◁ Well, yellows and greens certainly would not work in this scenario.
Cartoons have declared these colors to be body odor (not cute).



FIVE CLOCKS EXPERIMENT goals. Five sketches with five different mediums. The only control is the page size 6-1/2" x 9". This is a study comparing graphite, acrylic, charcoal, watercolor, and ink. I am interested in learning the intuitive qualities, the stress inducing qualities, and the stress relieving qualities. I realize these are difficult things to record, but my curiosity must be satiated.



FIVE CLOCKS EXPERIMENT results. I assumed that eraseability would be a factor that induced some kind of stress relating response, but I found through the experiments that the TIME it took to finish each drawing changed the stress factor. The eraser prohibits finish until quality can be assured. The inability to finish causes stress. The eraser gave me the idea that the illusion of perfection was possible. The idea of perfection or a photo realistic drawing holds too much pressure. The two most stressfull mediums are water color and charcoal. The high stress resulted in forgetting crucial parts of the clock. The ink and watercolor fostered intuition the most, but that might be because I have the most practice in them and instict kicked in. More information can be learned from the individual oservations. >



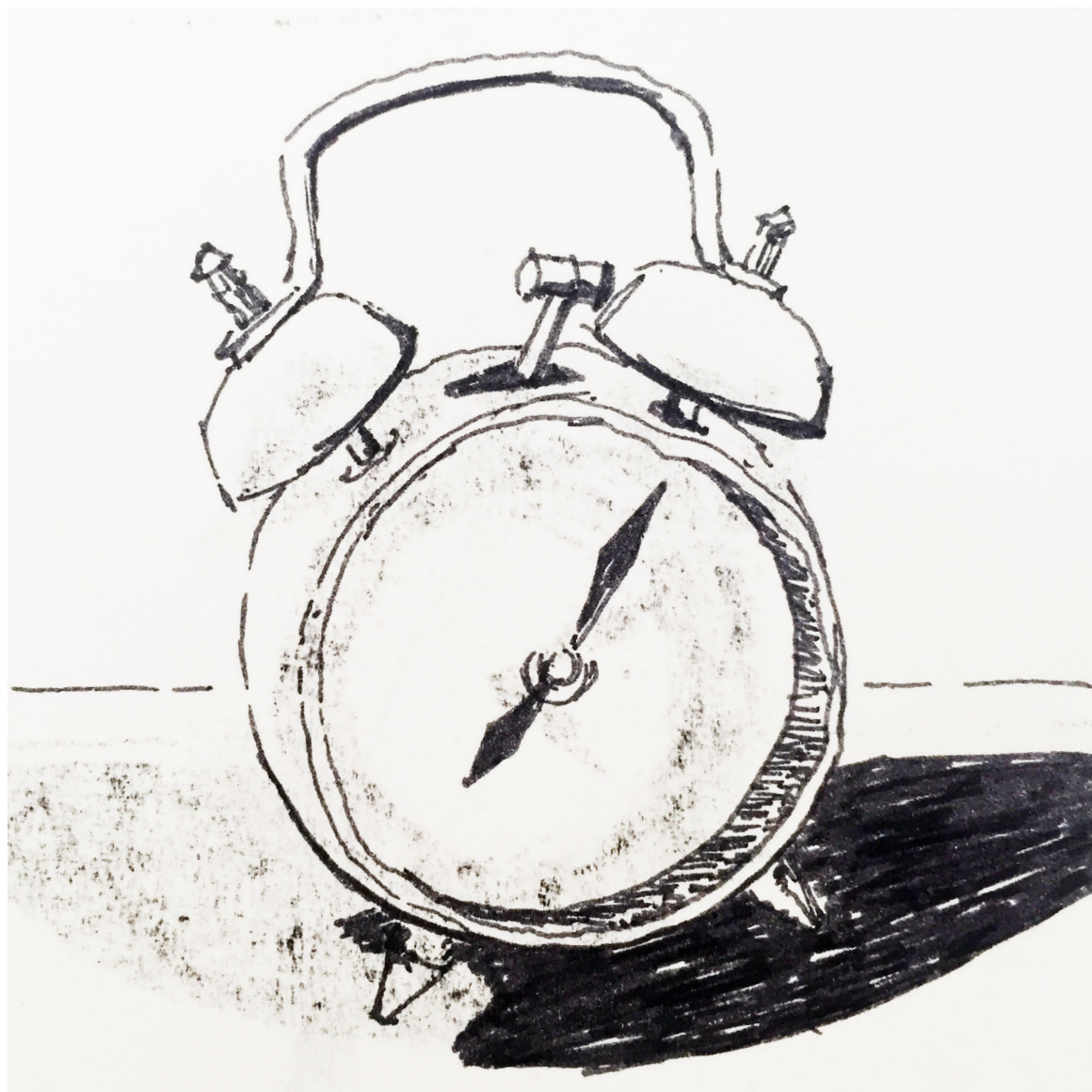
GRAPHITE 2B sketch, 30 minutes.
Restarted this drawing three times. I
was overly concerned with accuracy.
Once the overall lines were good
the shade and shadow part was very
soothing. Graphite felt so smooth on
the paper. I softly skated the pencil
across the page and created depth
and value in the drawing.



ACRYLIC paint sketch, 16 minutes.
Very thick brush strokes despite the size of the brush. The paint is thick and fast drying. Stroke direction and texture is very apparent. Feathery accidental strokes imply movement. I wish the drawing was bigger, the paint is too thick. I used white as an eraser and to create highlights.



CHARCOAL sketch, 8 minutes. I felt the potential for gesture in this drawing, but that potential was crushed by the size of the page. There's very little accuracy in the drawing. The charcoal's sound on the paper is this very unpleasant scratch like the two are immediately rejecting one another. Maybe I used the wrong paper? I definitely used the wrong size paper. This medium is very messy. It produces a lot of dust that gets all over my hands, I had to blow it off. The sound made me the most uncomfortable.



INK sketch, 6 minutes. Primarily a line drawing. Each line is thought about and carefully placed. Line thickness, weight, quality, direction, solid versus dotted... it's all considered. There's a strong contrast against the page. There's a concern for proportion. Ink felt very nice on the page and there was no concern for time.



WATERCOLOR sketch, 30 minutes.
Preserve the whites! Figure out the darkest dark and the lightest light. Then fill in with corresponding grays. Patience is key if you don't allow the paint to dry; then weird water spots appear on the page. Move quickly. The bead of water can't dry, but at the end of its journey soak up the water, and make sure it's dry.

Chapter 8

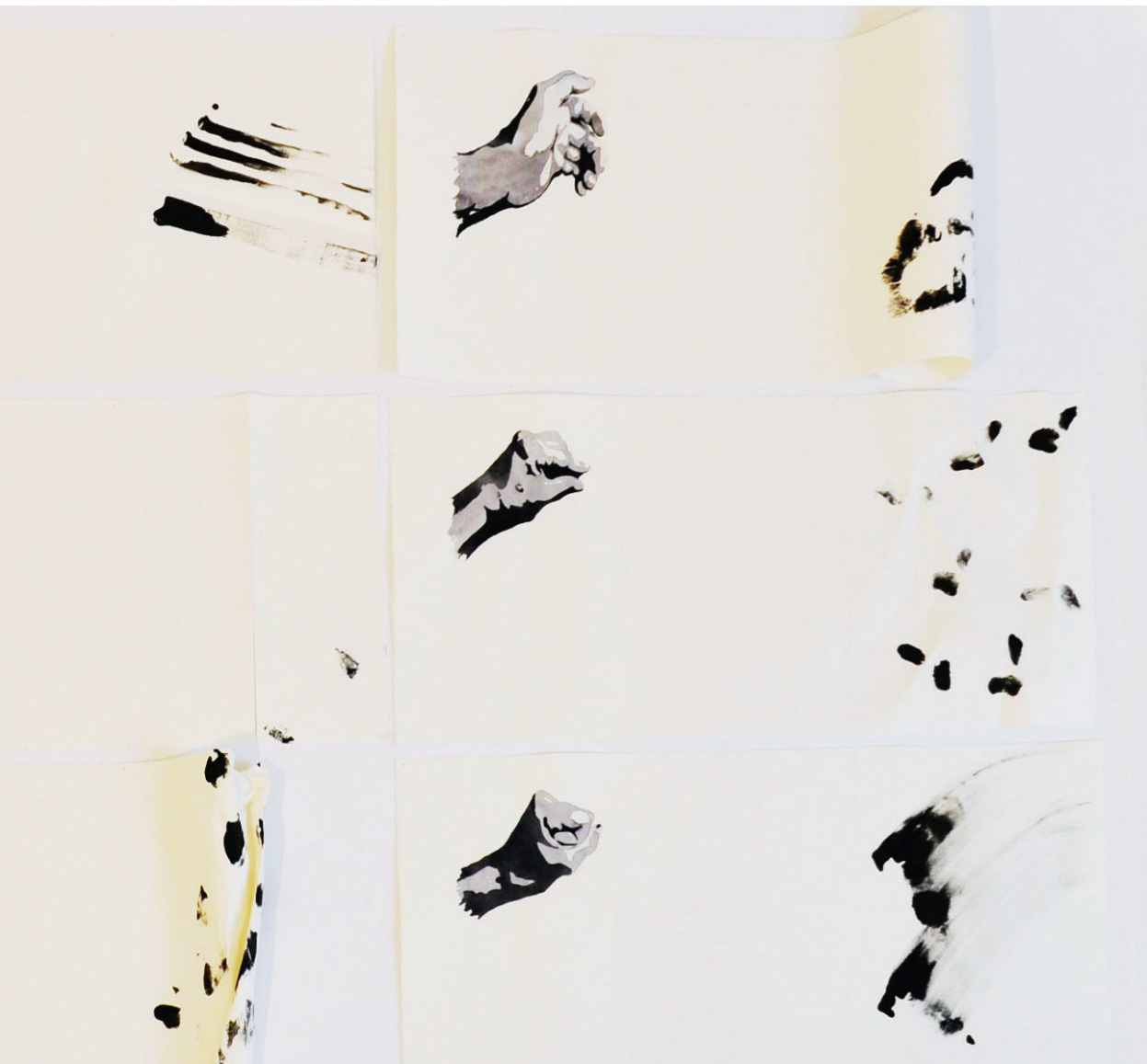
Tactility is the one language not bound by speech.



My hands began to overtake me and I welcomed a
silenced mind.

◁ This is an ALPHABET OF TACTILITY. An attempt to understand the language between my hands and my materials. These are the nine most frequent hand positions I've used in studio drawn as I see them (left of the paper) and as my materials see them (right of the paper).











"The hands inform the mind."

Richard Sennet



Experience is such a large part of my process. Substitute materials interrupt contact with my senses.

My heightened body sensitivity has inspired the majority of my decisions. I'm constantly asking my senses what they want by creating numerous iterations and looking, touching, smelling, and listening.

◁ An example of the precarious situations I often find myself in and the balancing act I perform everytime I need to weigh down a mold.

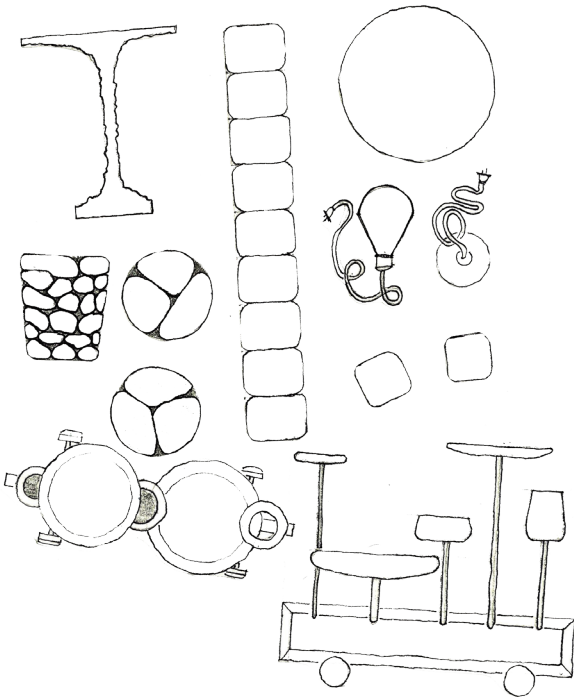


TACTILE, I believe you're meant to describe our sense of touch. Well, if that's the case you come in handy quite often. You often make many decisions for me. You're responsible for my material relationships, and for everyone's actually. But, you're unique to every person aren't you? Everyone has slightly different perceptions of their senses. So, if a person touches something I made will they understand my perception or perceive on their own accord? You evoke emotions too, don't you? How are you so persuasive? Language no hinderance in your process. You say nothing and yet everyone can understand despite different language, background, and culture. Tactile, you are the universal language of touch.

Chapter 9

I am the Funambulist...

... and this is my Natural Circus. ›

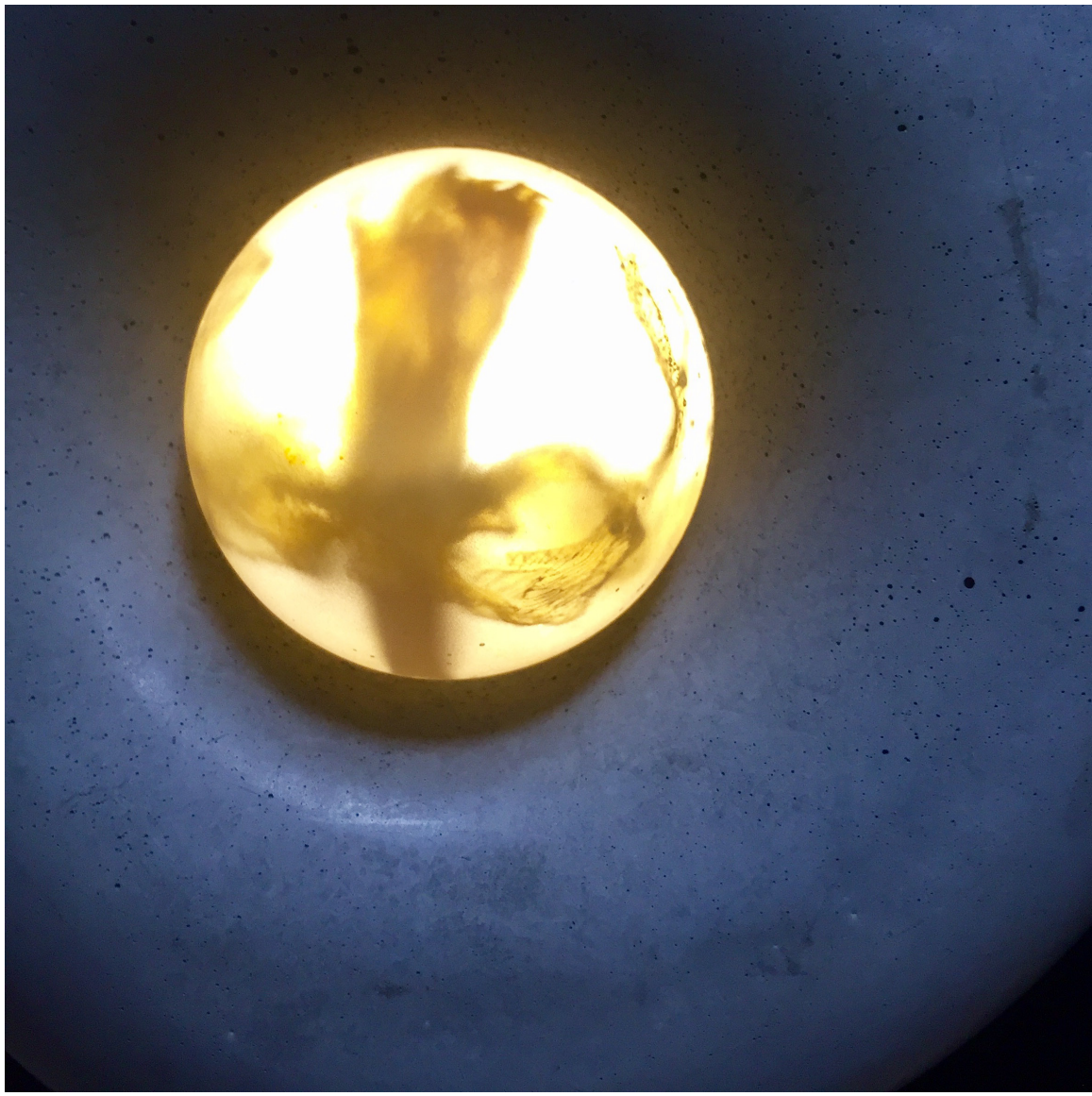








DAFFODIL DIMPLE lights. These are fidget lights for those of us who tend to tap, click, bounce, and kick when we're nervous or agitated. The yellow sphere rolls freely in its dimple soothing the itch for movement and giving the user the unique ability to touch the source of light.



Daffodil Dimple lights are SEASONAL! Daffodils are the first flowers to pop up when spring finally hits New England. The flowers are harvested, allowed to bloom, then once they begin to wilt are dried. The flowers are then casted in a clear resin and act as a filter for the light, making the light a warm and kind yellow color. Since this flower sphere can rotate within its dimple the color changes depending on the angle that the light hits the flower or the density of the petals, making each one entirely unique.











BALANCING STONES rocking meditation stool. It rest on a perfect round which allows for a free range of movement and shifts to the unique angle of each users pelvis. The seat is scaled to fit just the sit bones and allow the legs to comfortably settle on either side for balance.







"You may hate gravity, but gravity
doesn't care."

Clayton Christensen



CUDDLING CONCRETE stool. Utilizing gravity as a bonding agent, stacked stones are formed to create a structural phenomena. The appearance of solidity contrasts the dry construction nature of the piece. Cuddling Concrete is made up of twenty-seven unique pieces each contoured with the face of the weight that was pressed against it during construction, each one entirely reliant on the gravity and the nurturing cradle of the other for form, structure, and beauty.

Twenty-seven pieces held together solely by cuddling. The close knit fit is not made by insertion, that would have been too aggressive, but by nesting amongst one another. Each cuddles the next and holds one another together with a soft embrace.

This piece provides the user with the opportunity to be a maker. Each piece exists within a gradient to provide a guiding path for simple and soothing assembly and disassembly. A gradient is the bridge between two extremes and therefore a simple route to understanding. The assembly gives one a meditative peace of mind similar to that of a puzzle. Once assembled, the sole connector between stones remains cuddling. As a whole it can bear a significant amount of weight. A fully assembled piece is stable, there is no sway or cringe from the material. As a family of stones it conveys solidity. As separate entities they are quite lovely as well. The size is proportioned to be cradled in your arms. They are glossy and smooth like river rock. The touch is soothing and the weight comforting. Overall from making to finished object the experience is cuddling and the materiality is concrete.











"Architects spend an entire life
with this unreasonable idea that
you can fight against gravity."

Renzo Piano



FUNAMBULIST cart. The bar cart consists of seven separate steel rods all of different dimensions, weights, and purpose balancing on a single line. The steel rods were in fact welded in place whilst using gravity as a jig. The bent rod was balancing on the platonic steel rectangle, welded, and then flipped to create the illusion of fooling gravity; meant to portray a clever exploration of geometry, structure, and function. The walnut portions were sculpted intuitively on the lathe and finished in a food-safe and washable oil. The project consists of a restricted material pallet enforced by myself to instill a sense of responsibility in my design methods by reusing the waste of others, and to deprive our landfills in just the slightest manner. The end result boasts a balance of ecological, economical, structural, functional, and aesthetic concerns.











"I want to rock with you, all night."

Michael Jackson



A WOBBLY BALANCE light. The form is seamless and solid. One gallon of resin being suspended in a 24 inch latex balloon. Allowing gravity to act as a mold and form the resin as it wishes. The object is soft and beautiful. It urges the users embrace, caress and play.

This light has a sort of drunken rock to it. It is not a smooth rock, but one that is difficult to predict. Its uncertain movement does not cause alarm or fatigue, but a humorous jolly response. This light allows the user to touch the source of light and interact with it.





"Love is metaphysical gravity."

Richard Buckminster Fuller



SALT FUNNEL table. The process is quite simply in the name. It starts with a large barrel of loose rock salt. Then resin is poured at one point at the top. The resin being pulled by gravity flows and filters through the salt, coating each piece and adhering it to one another. Once the resin funnels its way through the entirety of the salt it hits the bottom of the barrel where it pools and spreads. This creates a flat surface for the top and then the table is flipped to create a similar surface for the bottom. Once the resin cures the barrel is pried off and all of the salt that was not touched by the resin falls off creating the natural textured portion on the leg.

Opaque, yet transparent in perspective. Salt, at an abundance, creates a stunning form. There is a combination of matte and glossy surfaces, together they create a beautiful, organic, and crystallized object.







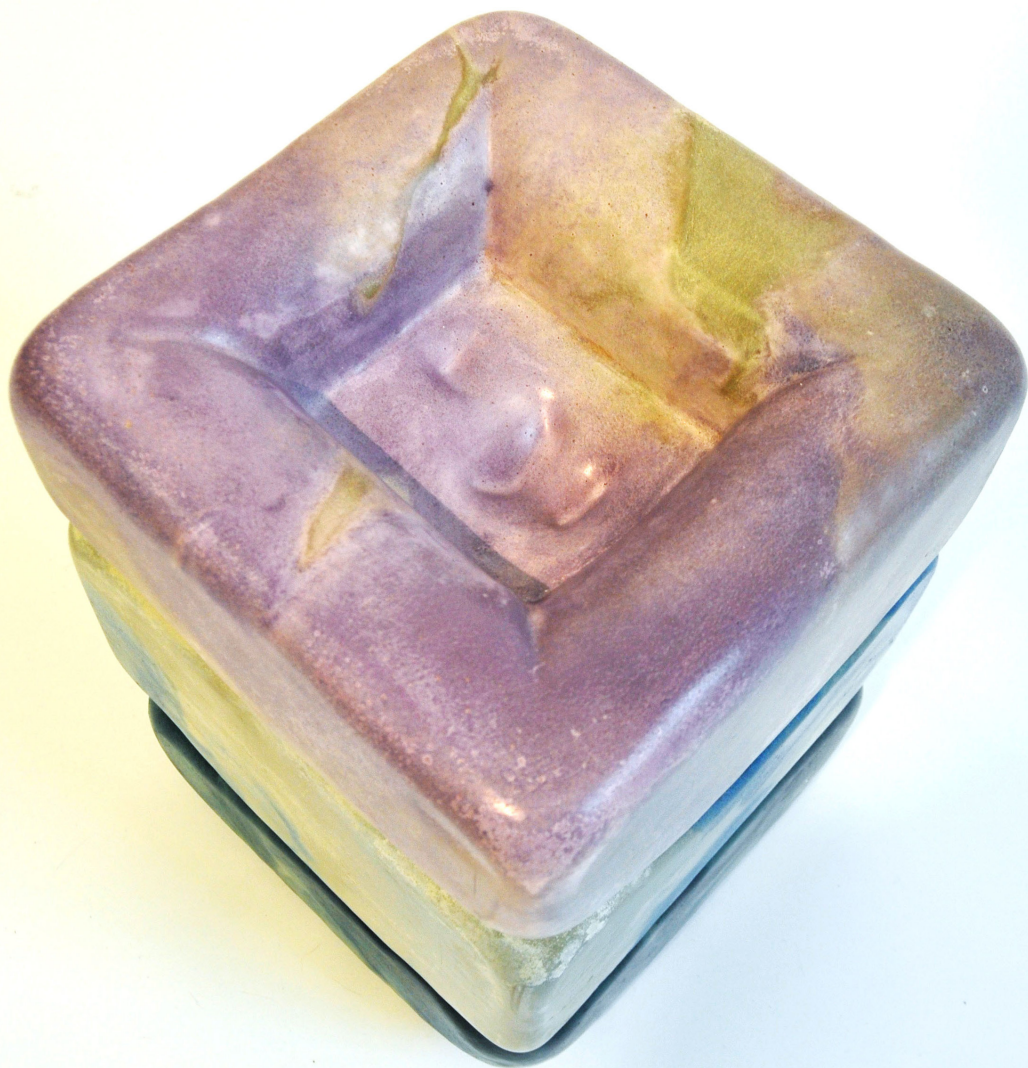
SETTLED FLUX column. I am fascinated by concrete's ability to change state; powder, liquid, solid. This piece was a focus on the liquid stage. I wanted to capture the liquid's movements from when it is poured into the mold, to how it finally settles into place. The fluid movement was catalogued through colored dyes that were not properly or evenly mixed into the concrete. The dyes were in flux with the concrete, captured how the liquids moved, and eventually settled into their final location.

This study made me think of how my life is constantly transitioning from flux to settled. Certain objects in my home began to represent these different periods of my life. I came up with 8 transitions. Each a different segment of years or a different reason for transition. There are 8 objects hidden in this column. The objects are not stored chronologically but from public (at top) to private (at bottom). The stones are very heavy so, only a very determined and burly person or team of people would be able to reach my more private objects. The colors simply signify change and the chambers for each of the objects were made specifically for each object. I have 8 objects, but 9 stones. The last and final stone acts as a vessel and a reminder for coming periods of change.













"You can't blame gravity for falling in love."

Albert Einstein

I am simply documenting a love story. As an architect I witnessed so many try and keep gravity from matter. Leaving them star crossed and unfulfilled. But, as a furniture maker, each piece I make is an epic romance starring gravity and matter. The marriage between the two comes in many forms in my work; gravity is used as a mold to allow matter to form the way she likes, gravity is used as a jig and humbles himself to appear mastered by matter, and gravity is used as a force to unite matter.

I guess I'm a romantic.

A Funambulist is what people in Ancient Rome called a tightrope walker. Adrenaline coursing, senses heightened, a quiet mind, intuition is necessary, a fated path, a focus on journey rather than destination, balance tested, and gravity respected. I am the funambulist, I have tamed gravity and been tamed by gravity myself.

Fin