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## Repetition and the Power of Simplicity

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Repetition and the Power of Simplicity

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts  
in  
Fine Arts

by  
Peter Barnitz

B.F.A. Loyola University of New Orleans, 2004

May, 2011

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Illustrations .....	v
Abstract .....	vii
The Power of Simplicity Through Repetition.....	1
Art Against the Machines .....	9
Exploration of Light and Material .....	17
Sculpture: Stacking Series .....	21
Communication Through Text, Math, and Information .....	32
Art and Science .....	38
Conclusion .....	44
Bibliography .....	41
Vita.....	43

## TABLE OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1: “Dissection of Space” .....	2
Illustration 2: “Sunrise to Sunset” .....	4
Illustration 3: Mark Tobey, “The Advance of History” .....	5
Illustration 4: “Patterns Within Patterns #2” .....	5
Illustration 4a: Detail- “Patterns Within Patterns #2” .....	6
Illustration 5: “Patterns Within Patterns #3” .....	6
Illustration 5a: Detail- “Patterns Within Patterns #3” .....	7
Illustration 6: “Patterns Within Patterns #4” .....	7
Illustration 7: “Healing” .....	9
Illustration 7a: Detail- “Healing” (Blue/White) .....	9
Illustration 8: Detail- “True Dissection of Space” .....	11
Illustration 9: Detail- “Circles” .....	12
Illustration 10: Agnes Martin, “Untitled”, 1998 .....	13
Illustration 11: “Past” .....	13
Illustration 12: Detail- “Present” .....	14
Illustration 13: “Future” .....	14
Illustration 14: “Diagonal Dissection, Squares” .....	15
Illustration 15: “Lines Through the Center” .....	16
Illustration 16: “Fire Dissection” .....	17
Illustration 16a: Detail- “Fire Dissection” .....	17
Illustration 17: Detail- “Moment of Revelation” .....	18
Illustration 17a: “Moment of Revelation” .....	19
Illustration 18: “Filter” .....	20
Illustration 18a: Detail- “Filter” .....	20
Illustration 19: “Tension Points” (Lights off) .....	21
Illustration 19a: “Tension Points” (Lights on) .....	21
Illustration 20: Tom Friedman, “Untitled” .....	23
Illustration 21: “Diving Forward” .....	24
Illustration 21a: Detail- “Diving Forward” .....	24
Illustration 21b: Detail- “Diving Forward” .....	25
Illustration 22: “2+3+1= Steps to My Level” .....	26
Illustration 22a: Detail- “2+3+1= Steps to My Level” .....	26
Illustration 23: “Positive” .....	27
Illustration 24: “Negative” .....	28
Illustration 25: Robert Morris, “Untitled”, 1965 .....	28
Illustration 26: “10 Feet Tall” .....	30
Illustration 26a: Detail- “10 Feet Tall” .....	31
Illustration 27: “Self Portrait” .....	32
Illustration 27a: Detail- “Self Portrait” .....	33
Illustration 27b: Detail- “Self Portrait” .....	33
Illustration 28: “1,2,3,4,5” .....	34

Illustration 28a: Detail- “1,2,3,4,5” .....	35
Illustration 29: Tom Friedman, “Untitled”, 1990 .....	35
Illustration 30: “Thoughts” .....	36
Illustration 30a: Detail- “Thoughts” .....	37
Illustration 31: “Alpha Pyramid”. “Alpha Pyramid Sculpture” .....	38
Illustration 31a: Detail- “Alpha Pyramid” .....	38
Illustration 31b: Detail- “Alpha Pyramid Sculpture” .....	39
Illustration 31c: Detail- Alpha Pyramid Language” .....	39
Illustration 32: “Dick, Jane, and Baby” .....	40
Illustration 33: Detail- “Stem Cell, DNA Experiment” .....	41
Illustration 33a: “Stem Cell, DNA Experiment” .....	42
Illustration 33b: Detail- “Stem Cell, DNA Experiment” (Sculpture) .....	42
Illustration 33c: Detail- “Stem Cell, DNA Experiment” (Installation View) .....	43

## **ABSTRACT**

My art consists of the repetition of patterns, shapes, numbers, text, and found objects that communicate concepts in language, science, and math as art. My work addresses aesthetic and formal aspects of the art itself and embraces the process and experience of creating. I use repetition of lines and shapes to create a complex mass of infinite amounts of shapes, which create what I regard as a peaceful gathering of energy. These patterns can be freely interpreted as the co-dependency between everything in existence, which contributes to the changing balance of life. Similar to my patterns, my sculptures fuse several layers of found objects to form a larger structure with the intention of creating a new meaning and life of those objects. The wide variety of subject matter in my artwork stems from a continuous and honest investigation into our constantly changing world.

Minimalism, Sculpture, Abstract Expressionism, Art, Zen, Basketball, Simplicity, Repetition, Energy, Balance, Out of Space and Time, Healing, Stacking, Light, Exploration of Materials, Experience of Creating, Art Against the Machines



## THE POWER OF SIMPLICITY THROUGH REPETITION

The power of simplicity through repetition is a significant theme throughout the work I create. The most complex blueprints and organisms in the universe can be broken down into basic elements, which are the building blocks of the world in which we live. Through the use of my mark-making, I simplify those elements to create neutral experiences intended to generate both thoughtful and thoughtless contemplations, which correspond to a sense of harmony with the world and oneself. This simplification reveals the ideas of the escape from space and time, Zen, meditation, juxtaposed, superimposed, minimalism, a-focal art, science, and art of the human hand.<sup>1</sup>

My web pattern is a visual portrayal of the idea of doing without thinking, which is similar to the surrealist idea of automatic drawing but engages a learned progression of the mind to hand coordination, through the practice and rhythm, at a moment in time. For example, the motion offense in basketball is a never ending continuation where the whole team is constantly moving in unison, all reacting and relating to one another based on where the ball is on the court and how the defense reacts.<sup>2</sup> Through practice, repetition and discipline, this movement becomes automatic, and the team reacts without thinking, always knowing where their teammates are located. Similar to what is taught in the practice of tai chi and Zen, my triangle pattern is the outcome of the whole mind and body working in harmony.<sup>3</sup> These web patterns are created within a single session of non-stop painting, where decisions of what line goes where,

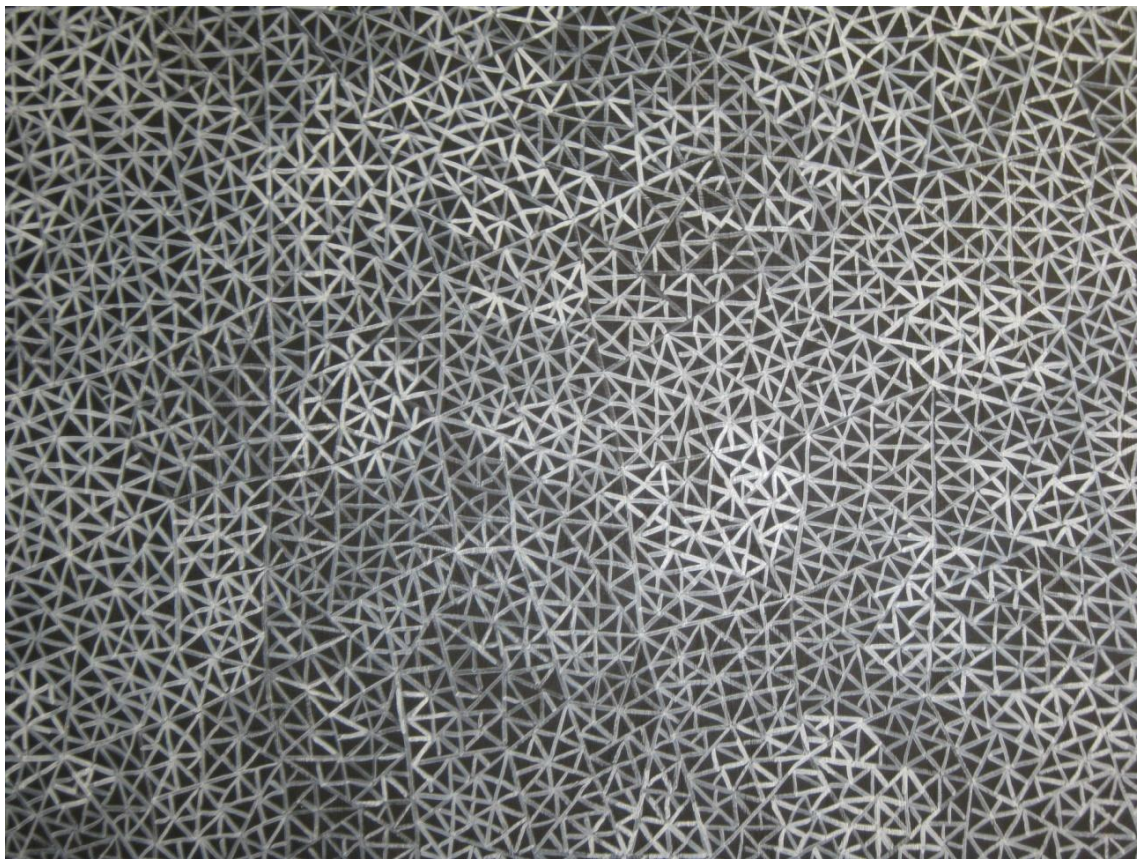
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<sup>1</sup> Miller, Danny. "The Architecture of Simplicity", The Academy of Management Review, Vol.18, No. 1, (January, 1993), pp. 116-138.

<sup>2</sup> Beal, Suzanne. "Visual Friction: Drew Daly", Sculpture, Vol. 29, No. 6, (July/August 2010), pp. 40-43.

<sup>3</sup> Graves, David, C. "Art and the Zen Master's Tea Pot: The Role of Aesthetics in the Institutional Theory of Art", The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, Vol. 60, No. 4, (Autumn,2002), pp.341-352.

become similar to breathing. Humans do not think about breathing, the body does it on its own. I consider the web patterns to be a visual representation of concentration, patience, poise and the human spirit. These repetitive ideas were ingrained in my everyday activities at a very young age, especially through practice and preparation in athletics, all the way through my collegiate basketball career and into my art discipline.

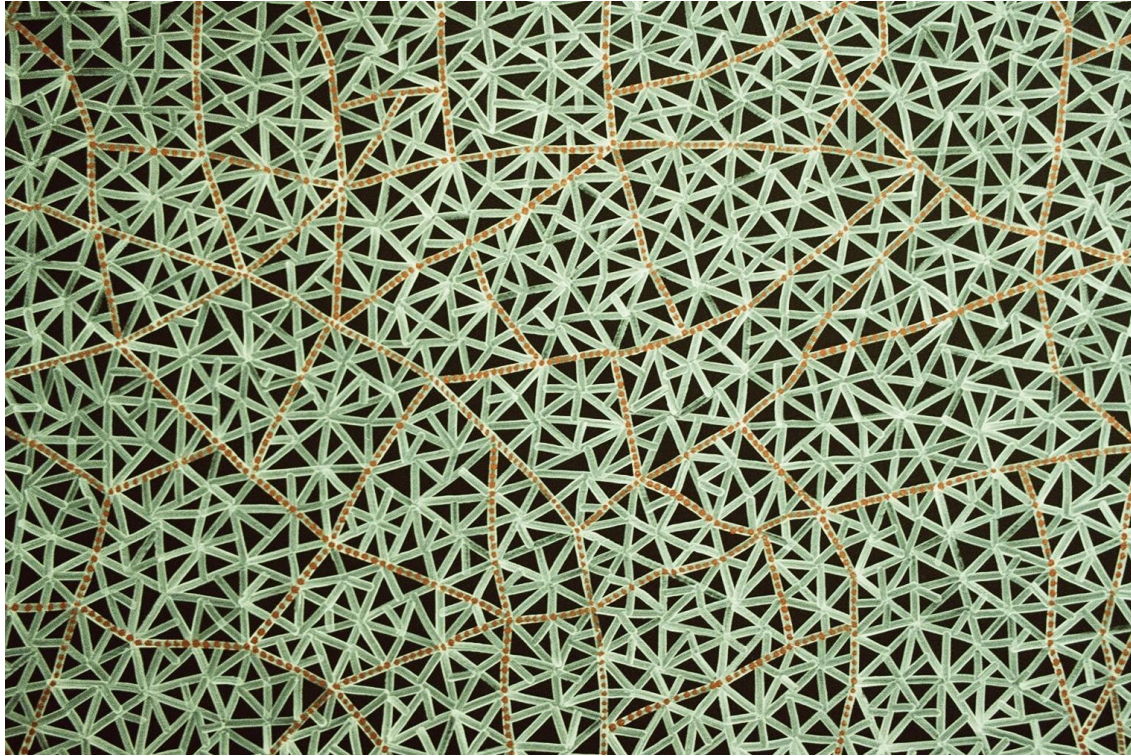


**Illustration 1: Detail: “Dissection of Space”, 2010, acrylic on canvas, 24x24**

The idea of juxtaposition and superimposition of patterns guided me to the development of the first of many paintings of this nature. The simple triangle pattern using rhythmic brush strokes on a large scale canvas, combined with the copper colored overlying dot pattern, creates an intentionally tranquil painting. It is Abstract Expressionism united with Australian Aborigines paintings, where the celebration of the process of painting collides with the spiritual, meditative goal.<sup>4</sup> The combination of simple repetitive dots and brush strokes, are intended to create an intricate web of seemingly infinite space. The contrast between the metallic copper paint on top of the white brush stroke web pattern, trigger a unique recipe of shapes within the painting that enhances a sense of tranquility or excitement, depending on the individual. The idea of patterns within patterns exposes the development of a second inspiration in the process involving the web pattern in reaction to a second overlying pattern, signifying the interpretation of the unconscious and acceptance of life. The second overlying dot pattern is a deliberate revealing of the automatic natural web pattern that suggests both a rhythmic beat, as well as, a guide to what can be seen within the pattern through my eyes.

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<sup>4</sup> Stockstad, Marilyn. Art History. Abrams Press/New York, 1999, pp. (906-907), (1112-1122).



**Illustration 2: Detail: “Sunrise to Sunset” 2008, 36x72, acrylic on panel**

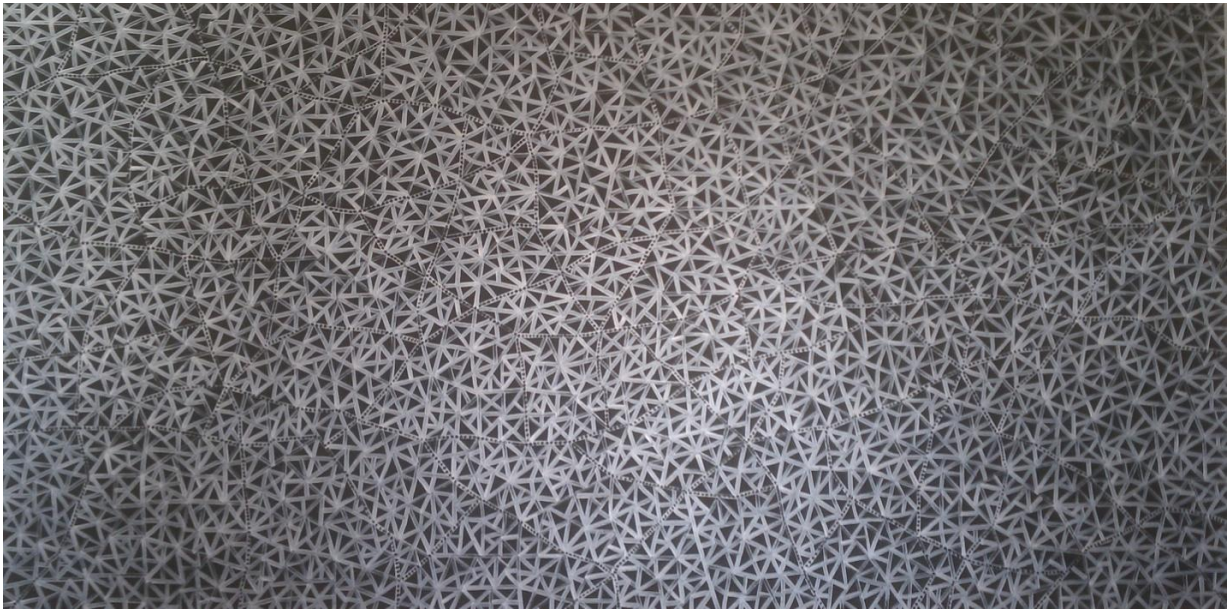
Further investigation of the idea generated a whole arena of pattern and mark-making. This inspiration not only focuses on the original idea, but on different color theories and elements added to the process. “Patterns Within Patterns #2” involves a process of a black layer of paint, followed by a white pearl web pattern, and a black dot pattern overlay. The combination of these values encourage a contemplative, tranquil, balanced and relaxed response, where the viewer is engulfed in a cloud of networks, persuading the viewer to allow their eyes to explore the surface.<sup>5</sup> Similar to my web pattern paintings, Mark Tobey’s paintings and drawings, such as “*The Advance of History*”, focuses on meditation and the interpretation of space.

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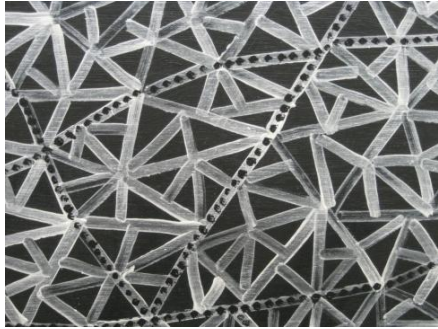
<sup>5</sup> Tobey, Mark. “Japanese Traditions and American Art”, College Art Journal, Vol. 18, No. 1, (Autumn, 1958), pp.20-24.



**Illustration 3: Mark Tobey, “The Advance of History”, 1964**



**Illustration 4: “Patterns Within Patterns #2” 2009, acrylic on panel, 48x96**



**Illustration 4a: Detail- “Patterns Within Patterns #2” 2009**

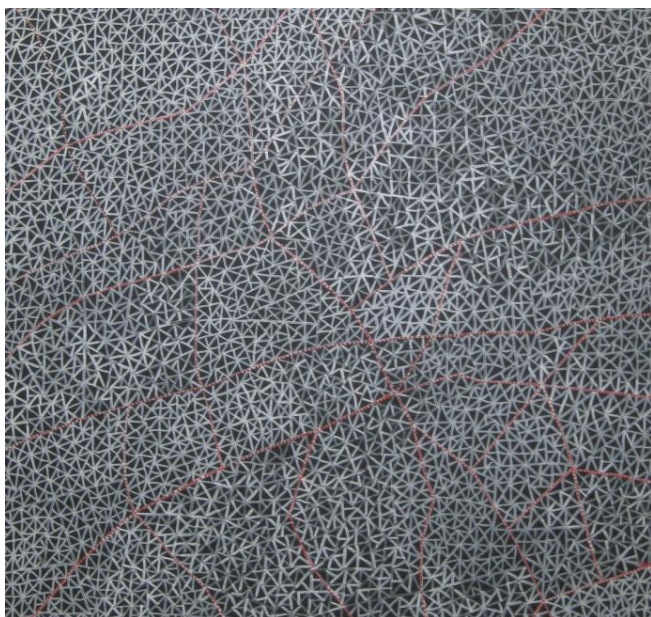
*“Pattern Within Patterns #3” 2009*, reveals the rhythmic dot-web pattern on a grander scale. An 8 x 8 foot panel allows the viewer to be completely engulfed by the patterns, encompassing a visually consuming experience, where the space between thoughts is brought to light. In contrast to the large scale painting, a 1/4<sup>th</sup> scale version was created to suggest the idea of the pattern representing an up-close view of a microscopic organism or a vast universe of stars.



**Illustration 5: “Patterns Within Patterns #3” 2010, acrylic on panel, 96x96**



**Illustration 5a: Detail- “Patterns Within Patterns #3”, 2010**



**Illustration 6: “Patterns Within Patterns #4” 2010, acrylic on panel, 24x24**

Pushing the pattern to another level spurred a nemesis initiative of a broken pattern and the premise of a healing process of the pattern. This process portrays a broken web pattern, followed by several layers across the entire canvas. The first layer of color is added, followed by sections of a second layer of color. Before the second layer is dry, the automatic web pattern is created by the removing of paint with a clean brush, which exposes the first layer of color. The

outcome of the overlaying of pattern creates a darker fusion between the layers and sections, similar to how a scab forms over a cut. The final layer of white sand replaced the dot pattern on the canvas. White sand represents healing, peace, and tranquility in many cultures, such as the Native American Navajo Tribes.<sup>6</sup> Besides linking the canvases together, the sand element also brings a third dimension as by relief that captures light and casts shadows. The color combinations and placement on the wall were chosen and arranged based upon psychological studies of the color theory and how color affects mood.<sup>7</sup> This specific arrangement of color in “*Healing*” 2010, relates to my individual selection of colors that both stimulate and relax the viewer, which creates a positive experience.<sup>8</sup> The color combinations depicted in “*Healing*” 2010, were chosen based on the colors of the earth and simple ideas of the color wheel combining complimentary colors, different color intensities, as well as warm and cold hues. The red/blue green undertone, represent the poisonous or radiant warning colors in nature. The blue/white undercoat symbolizes a starry night, the sky, or water. The orange/yellow panel signifies sunlight, whereas the deep green/yellow panels represent plant life. The white /black and violet/black panels portray the sand pattern disappearing and then reappearing, representing day and night and the end of the experience.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.thenativeamericantaoist.com/2009/05/navajo-sand-paintings.html>

<sup>7</sup> Gorn, Gerald, G. “Effects of Color As an Executional Cue in Advertising: They’re in the Shade”, Management Science, Vol. 43, No. 10, (Oct. 1997), pp.1387-1400.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.crystalinks.com/colors.html> “Colors and Frequencies”





**Illustration 7: “Healing “, 2010, acrylic, sand on canvas, 48 x144**



**Illustration 7a: Detail- “Healing”, (Blue/White), 2010**

## ART AGAINST THE MACHINES

With the contamination of continuous noise and the bombardment of fast flashing images caused by the explosion of technology, it is important for an artist to be aware of the many sources of technology, such as television and the internet, and be prepared to defend his work, while referencing a wide variety of subjects, in order to distinguish his work within the broadest areas. Even within the arena of art which I would describe as, “circus technology” it is important to cherish and continue to create and appreciate the works of the human hand.<sup>9</sup> “Circus technology” refers to the attack of constant computer projections consuming art world and the over-dependency of humans with computers, involving the invasion of space and time<sup>10</sup>. It is my belief that for my art work, the human hand out-weighs the attempts of computer art and the use of technological machines that mimic human works. I consider taking what I perceive as a short cut to a completion of work, without the personalness of the human hand, not only cheats the artist’s experience and growth, but also denies the communication between the individual artist and the audience for which the piece was intended. Several works from my “fingerprint” series justify the embracing of the human hand. These works were created with simple tools and materials and are intended to be the opposite of computer projection art. They are what I regard as the “art against the machines.” Minimalism, which is the idea of the simplification of line and color, including A-focal art, support my schemes of the “art against the machines.”

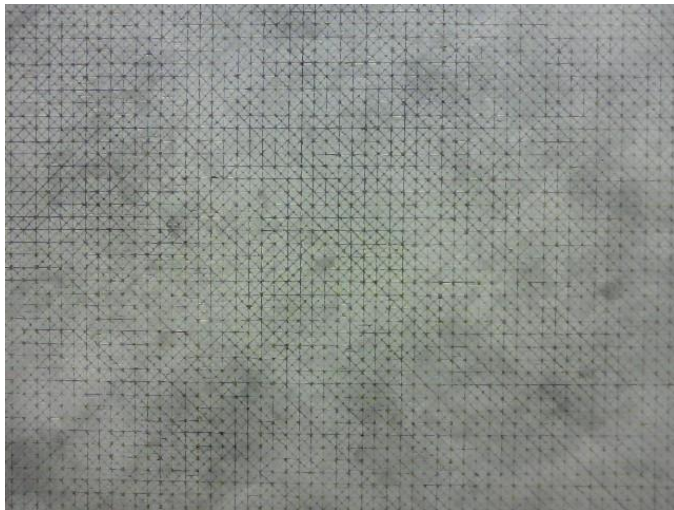
My work titled, “*Fingerprint of True Dissection*” 2009, deals with several issues of identity, geometry, symmetry, minimalism, and statistics. The lines are then broken down in

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<sup>9</sup> Wosk, Julie H. “The Impact of Technology on the Human Image in Art”, Leonardo, Vol. 19, No. 2, (1986), pp. 145-152.

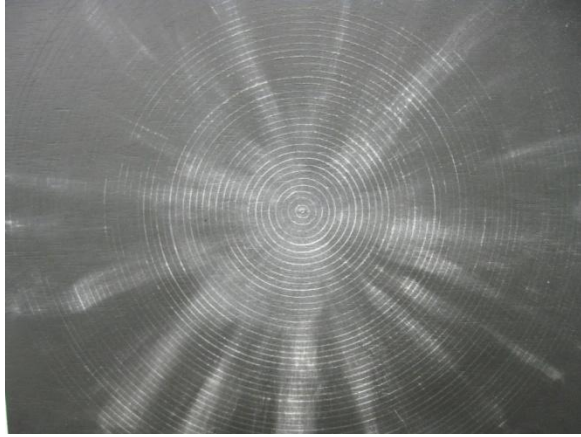
<sup>10</sup> Wren, Benjamin Lee. Zen Amongst the Magnolias, University Press of America, MD, 1999, pp. 48-49.

space within the square, which creates smaller squares and triangles. Many of my past works have been the freehand version of the dissection of space, but the use a ruler to create the lines and measurements takes it back to the true geometric division of space. After scoring the lines with a scribe, the lines were dusted with graphite powder revealing the framework, just as a criminologist would dust a finger print. Creating such a precise geometric dissection imitates the work of what a computer etching machine would have produced, but instead it was created by the precision possible with the hand. Even with the best precision of the human hand there is still human error involved. These works intentionally grip the idea of the little mistakes or happy accidents that occur through the human hand. Those interesting discoveries would not surface using exact computer programs and tools.



**Illustration 8: Detail- “True Dissection of Space”, 2009, 24x24**

Following the “*True Dissection of Space*” 2009, I created “*Circles*” 2009, which incorporated the same intentions dealing with the simplicity and importance of the human hand. This piece also involved the strict etching of concentric circles on a 2 x2 foot black background, revealed by white charcoal smears.



**Illustration 9: Detail: “Circles” 2009, 24x24**

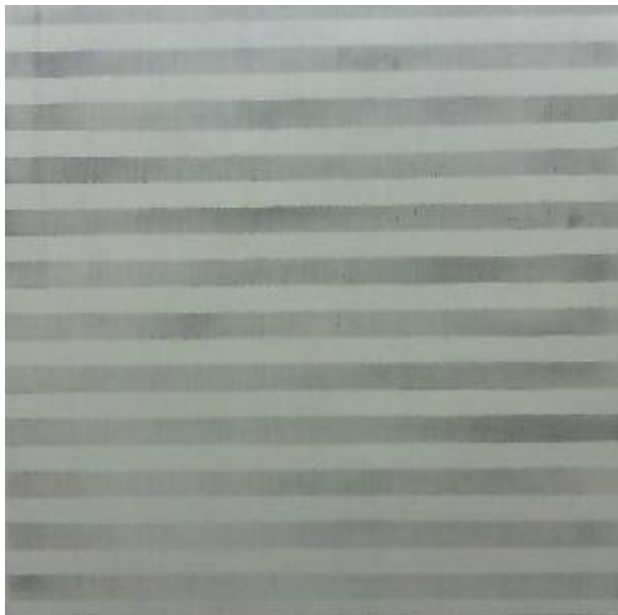
My “art against the machines” series continues with a triptych of etched patterns that portray vertical, crossed, and horizontal lines contrasted with opposite lines in charcoal. The opposite lines refer to the first layer of scored in lines in comparison to the charcoal lines. In “*Past*”, 2009, lines were scored into to a painted white panel. After taping off the horizontal lines across the vertical scored lines, the panel was then dusted with charcoal, dust and the tape was then removed. This method was repeated in “*Present*”, 2009 and “*Future*”, 2009. The triptych attempts to reveal a distinct mood of harmony, where the inspiration is captured as it was intended. In other words, the triptych reveals the inspiration behind the art, without over thinking and contaminating it with numerous ideas. This triptych is opposite Agnes Martin’s work in that she had a resistance to calculations and concepts, but similar in the way her art portrays rhythm and quiet contemplations.<sup>11</sup>

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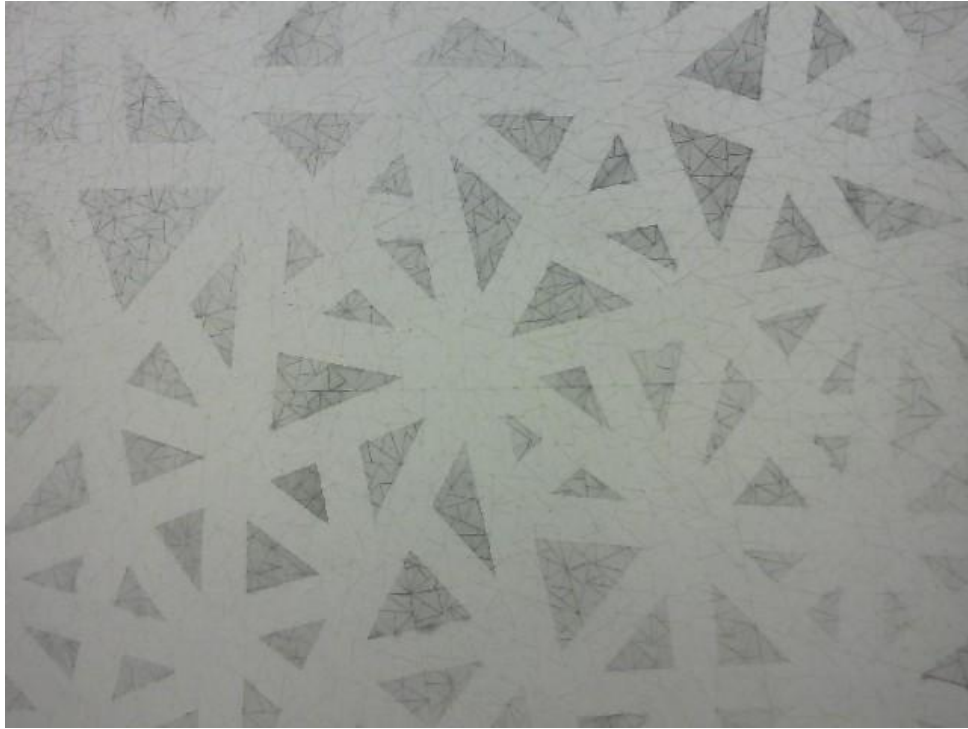
<sup>11</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-JfYjmo5OA> , Agnes Martin Interview by Chuck Smith and Sona Kuwayama.



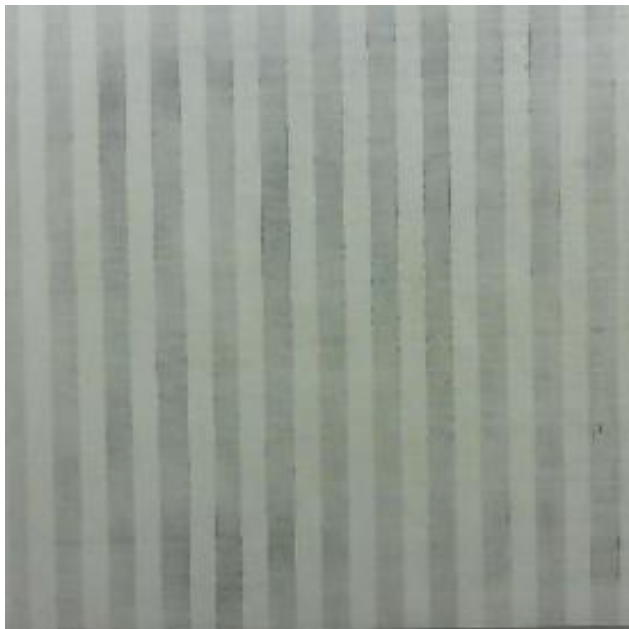
**Illustration 10: Agnes Martin, "Untitled", 1998.**



**Illustration 11: "Past", 2010**



**Illustration 12: Detail, “Present”, 2010, 24x24**



**Illustration 13: “Future”, 2010, 24x24**

The *“Past, Present, and Future” 2010* guided me to take on a series of four 2x2 foot panels involving diagonally scored lines to form a 4x4 foot panel of squares within squares. The lines were scored  $1/8^{\text{th}}$  of an inch apart from each other connecting at the center of the four panels. Those squares were then lightly brushed with charcoal dust to reveal the lines. The finished product results in a quietly contemplative piece that produces a complex mass of form and intrigue. This work continues with the theme of the embracement of the human hand and spirit.



**Illustration 14: “Diagonal Dissection/Squares”, 2010, 48x48**

The next piece continues with the process of etching into a painted panel. *“Lines Through the Center” 2010*, was developed with ideas of producing through the rawness of the process while celebrating it through a conceptual idea. The rawness of process refers to the rawness of material revealed. The repetitive striking of lines through the center of the panel caused the center point to deteriorate, revealing a center focal point. The simple process generates a complex product.



**Illustration 15: “Lines Through the Center” 2010, 24x24, acrylic on panel**

Continuing with the idea of the embracement of the rawness of material, I burned my triangle web pattern into the raw wooden panel, simplifying and dissecting the process by eliminating the brushing of the charcoal dust. *“Fire Dissection” 2010* portrays the simplest form of matter which the artwork is created and integrates the ambiguity of the pattern in relation to its cell structure. The heat gouged grooves in the panel symbolically reference the molecular



structure of life, combined with a branded reminder of vulnerability to the elements. *“Fire Dissection”* boasts an aggressively committed work ethic unified with a subtle meditative tranquility. The pain and struggle of burning each line into the wooden panel is worth the sacrifice for the final product. Work ethic involved in creating is important to me, the viewer and the work of art.



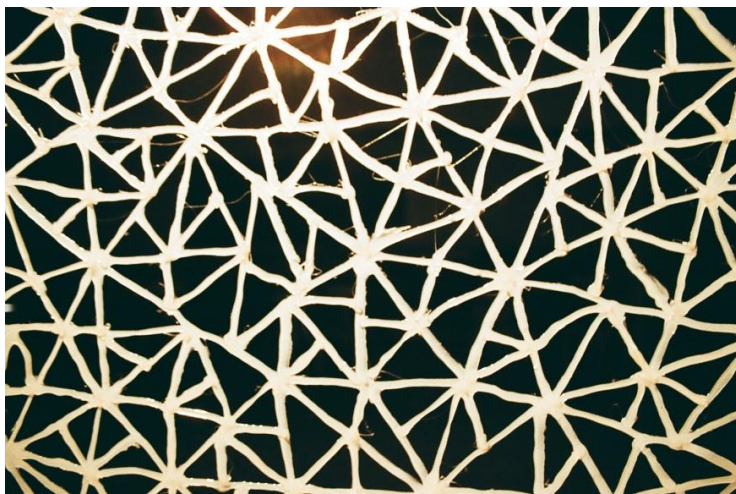
**Illustration 16: “Fire Dissection” 2010, 24x24, Burnt wooden panel**



**Illustration 16a: Detail- “Fire Dissection” 2010**

## EXPLORATION OF LIGHT AND MATERIALS

The experimentation with silicone lead me to the development of transforming my triangle-shape web into a pattern intended to establish a network that for me represents a higher level of peace and revelation. The silicone structure hangs from the ceiling, each line of silicone supporting the next, to create the illusion of a floating net form that extends ten feet across and eight feet high. Casting a spotlight on the sculpture lights up the silicone and cast a unique shadow across the floor. *“Moment of Revelation”* 2009 is attempting to capture a moment where no words can express what the eye is seeing at that moment or an instant of interaction with the sculpture that is imprinted in the memory of the viewer. The sculpture and its surrounding space create a unique sanctuary, removing the viewer out of space and time, forming a connectedness with the viewer and sculpture. The use of the silicone suspended from the ceiling references nature, for example, water, spider webs, as well as the structures of organic microscopic organisms, cells, and bone structure. Placement in the room, dramatic light and shadow all add to the peaceful glowing experience of the installation.

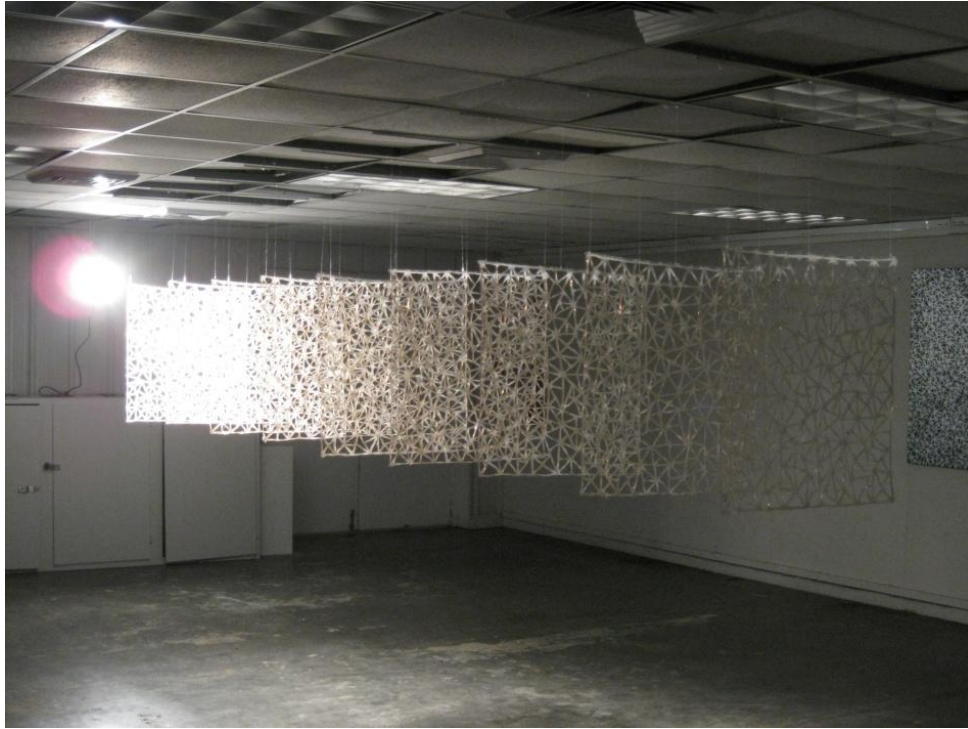


**Illustration 17: Detail- “Moment of Revelation”, 2009**

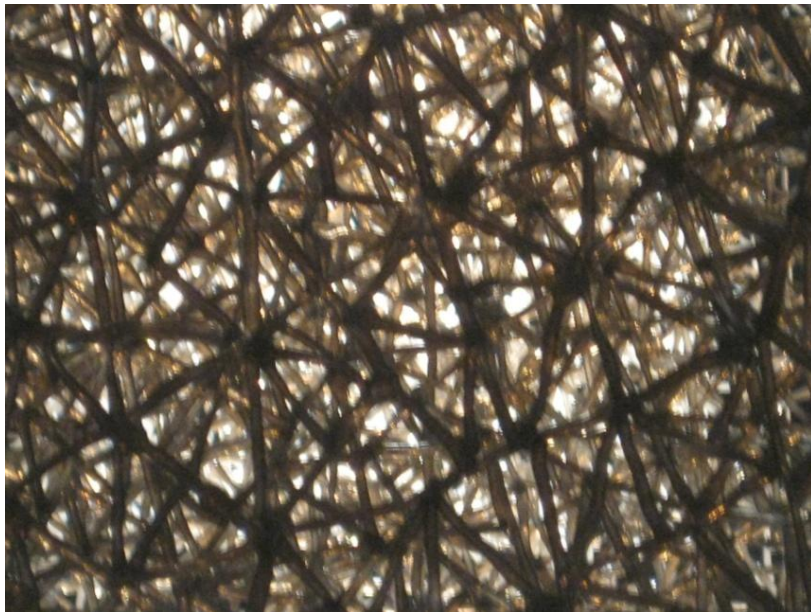


**Illustration 17a:** “Moment of Revelation”, 2009, silicone, 96 x120

My interest in “*Moment of Revelation*” 2009 lead me to a second silicone installation designed to push the idea of repetition further, focusing on the light and how it passes through the space. This installation consisted of nine parts of 24x24 inch squares separated by 24 inches, suspended head and shoulder length by monofilament. Each square depicted a different triangle-web pattern intended to fuse together when looked upon from the front. A powerful beam of light was focused through the layers casting a spectacular shadow on the opposite end. As the light travelled through each layer, the beam of light became less intense, creating a value scale. The title, “*Filter*” 2009, refers to the filtration of light as the beam passes through.

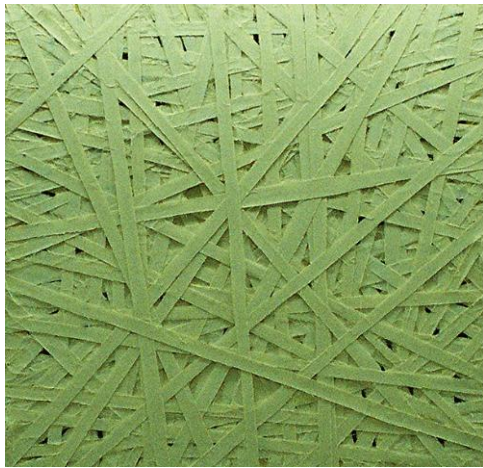


**Illustration 18: “Filter”, 2009, Dimensions Variable, silicone**

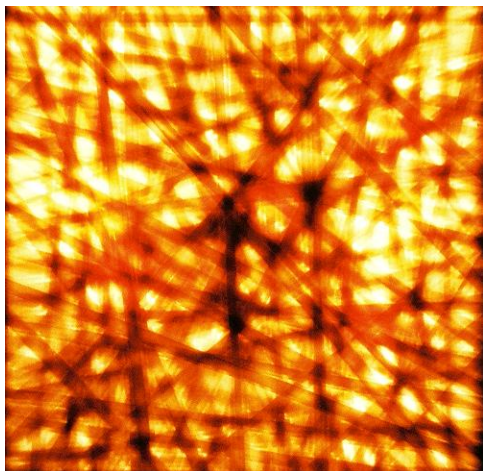


**Illustration 18a: Detail- “Filter”, 2009**

My work, titled *“Tension Points”* 2008, deals with the overlapping, layering, and intersecting of strips of raw canvas, that are illuminated from behind to emphasize the roughness of the canvas and the effects of atypical lighting. It questions how light, both obvious and obscured, can induce effects on the subject that forces a double edged response: where the audience goes back and forth between strips of canvas as objects, and contemplating the light that they release.



**Illustration 19: “Tension Points” (Lights Off) 2008, 36x36, stretched canvas strips**



**Illustration 19a: Detail- “Tension Points” (Lights On) 2008**

## SCULPTURE: STACKING SERIES

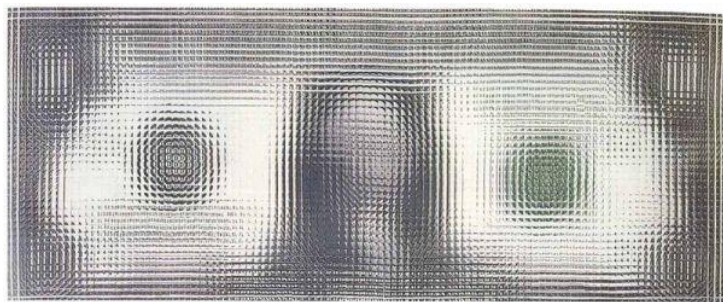
Stacking things is an everyday occurrence for most people. We stack papers, books, plates, clothes, boxes, coins, cards, wood, bricks, and so on. Taking an everyday occurrence and elevating to a high level in my art reveals a connection with the audience. Most people do not pay attention to how many things are stacked around the house or in the world. Our planet is made up of levels from the Earth's core to the crust stacked up over millions of years. Each layer supporting the next relates to the balance of world in which we live.

*"Diving Forward"*, 2010 is a self referential sculpture that operates on several levels of measurement and conceptualization. The parameters of the step- trapezoid figure references both my height and the outstretched reach of my body in a diving motion. The sculpture is the breaking down of the figure, which is represented by measurements into a simple geometric form. The height of the sculpture is equal to my height, which is 72 inches. My outstretched reach, from tippy toes to finger tips equal 84 inches. The trapezoid angle form lunging forward represents the motion of diving forward. Each panel is 16 x 96 inches. These measurements are important for the stability and engineering of the design to stand 72 inches high without a major risk of falling. The strips are held down only by gravity. No glue or nails were used in any way. It is important to reveal the impermanence of sculpture, because the world is ever changing and life moves on. In addition to the impermanence of the sculpture, a certain illusion of danger surrounds the work due to the tower of stacked layers.

The sculpture highlights a second idea of transference of meaning, from a commercial building product with labels to something new. The sculpture quietly reveals what it is and reminds the viewer of what it was before. In the process of cutting the many layers of panels for

the sculpture, I started stacking the layers in piles. As the piles got larger, the spray painted logos on the side of the bunk of plywood became distorted by stacking and cutting. This distortion was then duplicated in the process during the reconstruction of the sculpture. The intentional distortion involving the rebuilding of layers mimics the process discovered during the beginning stages of development. At the same time, the sculpture references a major contributor to minimalism and conceptual art, Tom Friedman and his altered image series involving static images of distorted cereal boxes and money, both “*Untitled*”, 1999.<sup>12</sup> Friedman’s images were reconfigured, but still recognizable, just as my sculpture reveals source of the oriented strand board, but are still disfigured.

The sculpture’s placement in a gallery changes the meaning of the material. If it were placed in a lumber yard or construction site it would lose its power. The placement and lighting are very important to the success of the work. Including the loose particles of dust that fall off during the building process add to the richness of the sculpture. The aroma of glue from the plywood adds another element for the viewer, reminding him or her of how the chips of wood were originally formed into particle plywood.



**Illustration 20: Tom Friedman, “Untitled”, 1999, Dollar Bills**

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<sup>12</sup> Cooper, Dennis. Tom Friedman. Phaidon Press/New York, 2007. pp. 27-29.



**Illustration 21: “Diving Forward” 2010, 72x96, dimensions Variable, Cut OSB**



**Illustration 21a: Detail - “Diving Forward” 2010**





**Illustration 21b: Detail- “Diving Forward” 2010**

“ $2+3+1=Steps\ to\ My\ Level$ ” 2009 is another self referential sculpture that deals with the number of  $5/16^{th}$  inch-high steps are equal to my height of 72 inches. In this case, the title informs the viewer of the height of 6 feet. This sculpture is made up of  $6\ 1/4$  inch wide cement-board and is held together only by gravity and weight. Each layer is cut  $5/16^{th}$  of an inch less than the layer underneath it, to form a triangle form, where the height is equal to the length. The idea of the steps or layers built upon each other, allows for outside interpretation of the sculpture that could reference different levels of growth, time, steps to another world, historic monuments, step pyramids, or even the steps on your front porch.



**Illustration 22; “2+3+1=Steps to My Level”, 2009, 72 inches tall, cement board**



**Illustration 22a: Detail- “2+3+1=Steps to My Level”, 2009**

A third stacked pair of sculptures titled, “Positive” and “Negative”, refers to positive and negative space of a layered step pyramids and the possibilities of form that develop out of a cube. I first cut corrugated cardboard into 24x24 inch squares and stacked them to make a cube. Then I cut a square out of each layer in the center at a 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch scale from 1/8<sup>th</sup> of inch to 24 inches, to form a step pyramid inside the cube and a free standing step pyramid. Both have a unique presence for such small scale sculptures. The two parts are just two simple stacks of cardboard, but now reveal references to other forms of the world, such as male and female body and pyramids in Egypt. The scale of the work also references artists of Minimalism, including the cubes of Robert Morris.<sup>13</sup>



**Illustration 23: “Positive” 2010, 24x24 base, cardboard**

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<sup>13</sup> Varnedoe, Kirk. “Minimalism and After”, MOMA, Vol. 4, No. 1, (Jan., 2001), pp. 2-5.



**Illustration 24: “Negative” 2010, 24x24, cardboard**



**Illustration 25: Robert Morris “Untitled”, 1965**

A fourth sculpture that involves the stacking of found objects and transfiguring their meaning through repetitive arrangement is titled, “10 Feet Tall” 2010. This sculpture is made up of 10 feet of stacked keys arranged from smallest to largest and positioned into a spiral formation. The title references the dimension of ten feet, which is important to me. “*10 Feet Tall*” 2010 references the height of a basketball goal, which is an important height to be able to

reach and exceed as a basketball player. Ten feet also holds a part in the Bible, mythology and books, describing heroes as being 10 feet tall, such as the giant, Goliath, who was slain by David. The spiral has many open meaning throughout nature such as, the universe, galaxies, snail shells, sea shells, vines, snakes, whirl pools, hurricanes, tornados, DNA, Also as different ideas in literature, for example, the downward spiral of things or as revolutions of time. The spiral is the symbol of constant motion, which I try to convey in many of my sculptures. The spiral also represents the idea of the creative process ever changing, as well as the awareness of oneself in the context of the whole. The stacked keys in a spiral formation create a conflict where the stacked, jagged, heavy metal keys are suspended off the ground by a single wire and arranged as if it were a spiral lawn ornament that one hangs from their porch. The actual weight of the suspended keys in contrast with the light feel of the sculpture creates tension. The outcome of the stacked spiral of keys has an interesting presence that is escalated by a dramatic shadow when lit properly.



**Illustration 26: “10 Feet Tall”, 2010, keys**



**Illustration 26a: Detail- “10 Feet Tall” 2010**

A fifth sculpture involving layers is a self portrait floor sculpture titled, “*Self Portrait*” 2010. This self referential sculpture highlights the profile of my body using 2 x12 inch slats of ¼ inch plywood. The 12 inch slats are equal to the length of my foot. The sculpture is arranged on the floor to convey the idea of the body of a landscape. The negative space of the profile creates a human canyon, where the viewer sees the image from above. It is a life size scale of my body intended to portray the ideas of my repetitive nature, minimalism and the power of simplicity. The sculpture depicts a fresh look at full scale human figure, broken down into 1/4<sup>th</sup> inch slats of plywood, giving the viewer an observation from above, which transforms the figure to a larger size depending on his or her perspective.

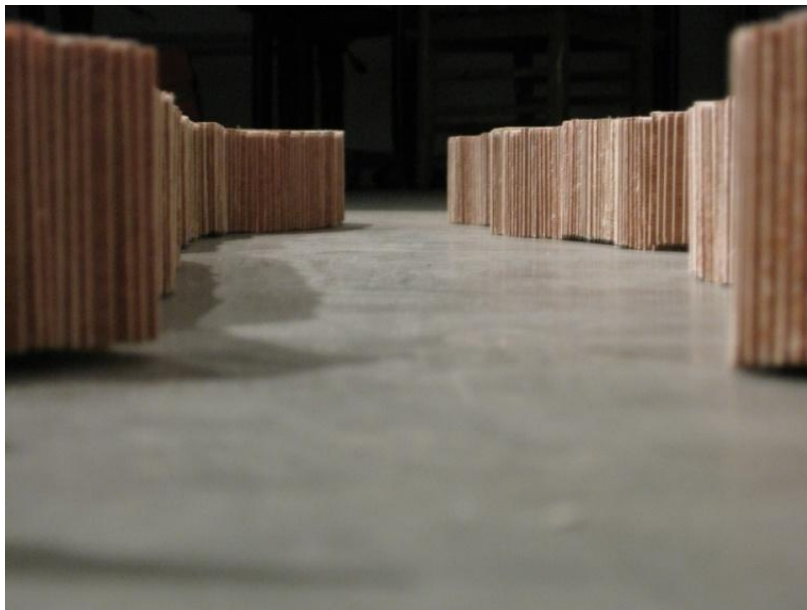


**Illustration 27: "Self Portrait" 2010, plywood layers**





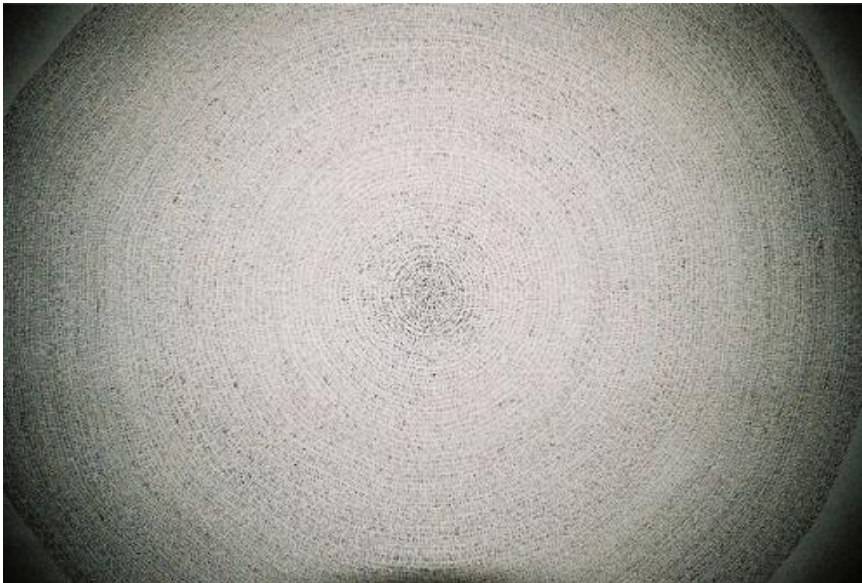
**Illustration 27a: Detail- “Self Portrait” 2010**



**Illustration 27b: Detail- “Self Portrait” 2010**

## Communication through Text, Math, Information

One of the most challenging and tedious pieces to create was “12345”, 2008. This piece investigates determination, as well as discovering patterns within patterns. Writing out every number from 1,2,3,4,5 to 12,345 reveals the never ending pattern that goes on and on. The simple materials used in my art work are important in contrast to the heavy conceptual base. Similar to Tom Friedman’s “Untitled”1990, where he wrote his name over and over in the same spiral pattern till the pen ran out of ink.<sup>14</sup> Although he is one of my biggest influences in art, 12345 starts in the center and continues on out in a circle to represent the infinite amount of numbers, whereas his piece spiraled inward to the end. The circle stops at 12,345, but the spiral-circle form created implies the never ending pattern.



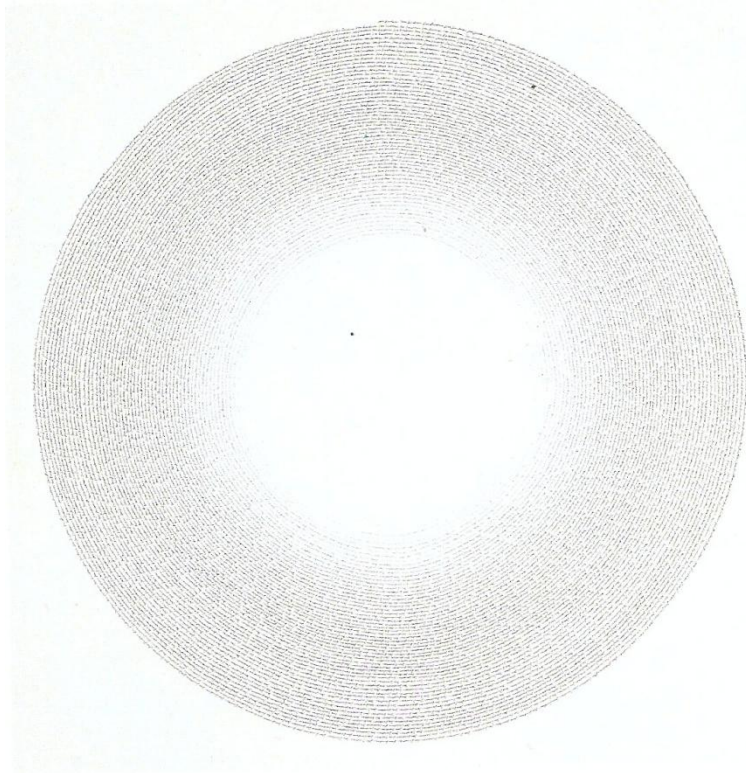
**Illustration 28: “1,2,3,4,5” 2008, Ink on canvas, 48x48**

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<sup>14</sup> Cooper, Dennis. Tom Friedman. Phaidon Press, New York, 2007. pp.15



**Illustration 28a: Detail- “1,2,3,4,5” 2008**



**Illustration 29: Tom Friedman “Untitled”, 1990**

*“Thoughts”* 2008, examines the connection between the artist’s brain and the artist’s hand, thinking before doing. Thoughts run through the brain often before the hand can finish reacting. By the time my thought is transmitted to the hand to be written, a new thought is already in the mind and the hand cannot catch up.<sup>15</sup> The illegible thoughts on canvas signify the meaningless thoughts that clutter the mind. These thoughts distract the mind and decay the inner self. The outcome reveals a peaceful consistent static of thousands of thoughts visually displayed.



**Illustration 30: “Thoughts” 2008, Ink on Canvas**

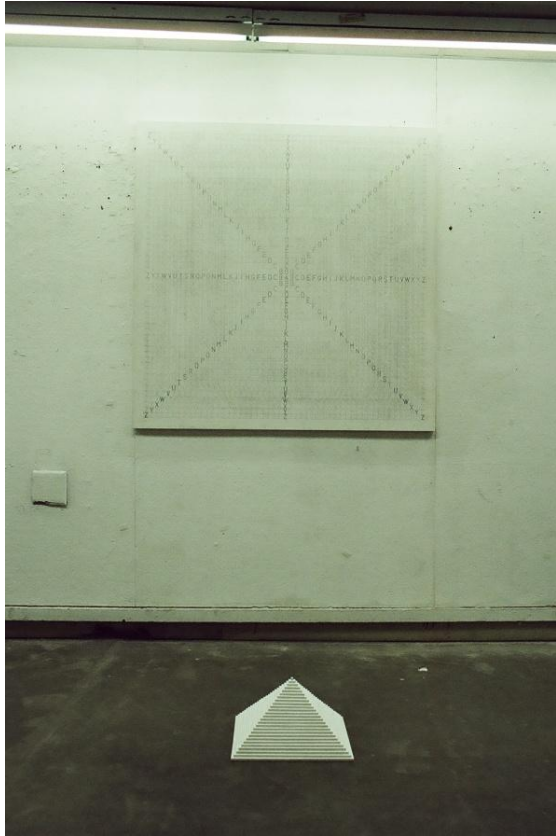
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<sup>15</sup> Miall, R.C. “A Painter's Eye Movements: A Study of Eye and Hand Movement during Portrait Drawing”, Leonardo, Vol 34, No. 1 (2001), pp 35-40.

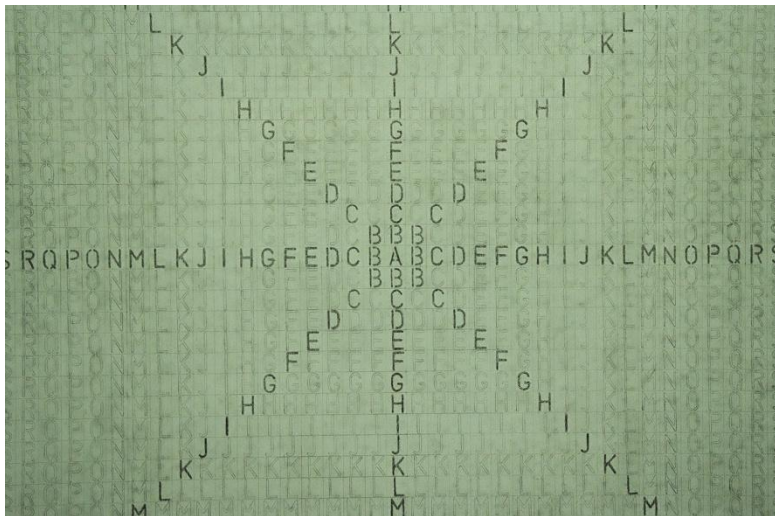


**Illustration 30a: Detail- “Thoughts” 2008**

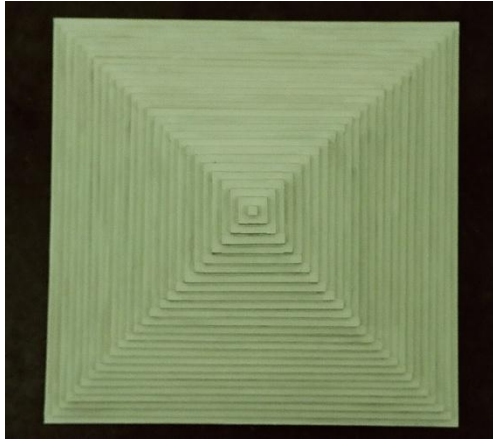
These next pieces deal with the communication of text, math, art, and sculptures. The new visual language is based on the main grid of 51 x51 cubes, which is like the Rosetta stone to the rest of the series. I wanted to make apparent the relationship between a pyramid sculpture and the wall pieces, as well as to acknowledge a relationship to the statistics and the cryptology of the new alphabet that I have created, based on the grid form. The new alphabet is created by combining the English alphabet with the 51x51 grid, generating an original symbol for the meaning of each character in the alphabet. My “Alpha Pyramid” sculpture follows the grid plan of the wall piece, where each letter represents a level of the pyramid. Based on a ¼” scale cube, the base of the pyramid contains 2,601 “z” cubes on up to the point of the pyramid, which contains one “a” cube.



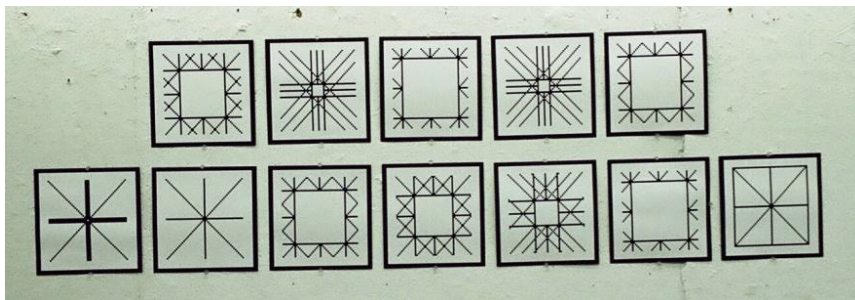
**Illustration 31: "Alpha Pyramid", 2009, pencil on panel, 48x48,  
Alpha Pyramid Sculpture, 2009, wood, dimensions variable**



**Illustration 31a: Detail- Alpha Pyramid, 2009**



**Illustration 31b: Detail- Alpha Pyramid Sculpture, 2009**



**Illustration 31c: Alpha Pyramid Visual Language”, 2009, dimensions variable**

“*Dick, Jane, Baby*”, 2009, triptych, prints, 11x14”, combines the way children traditionally learned how to read and write in the past, with the way children communicate today. It is a comment on how the current generation relies on cell phone text messaging and computers in their development, whereas children of the past, who learned through simple illustrated writings, such as “*Dick, Jane, and Baby*” by William S. Grey. The generation of the past has finally tried to catch up with the 21<sup>st</sup> century generation to stay in touch and relate to their children and grandchildren. In a way the old generation has to relearn how they read and write. The translation of text to math is a step by step instruction for those people who do not grasp the

concept of text messaging. This basic form is the alpha form of text on the phone, which has already been replaced with programs, for example “t9”, which are supposed to predict the words that you want to type based on the sequence of the letters, but always predicts the wrong word.

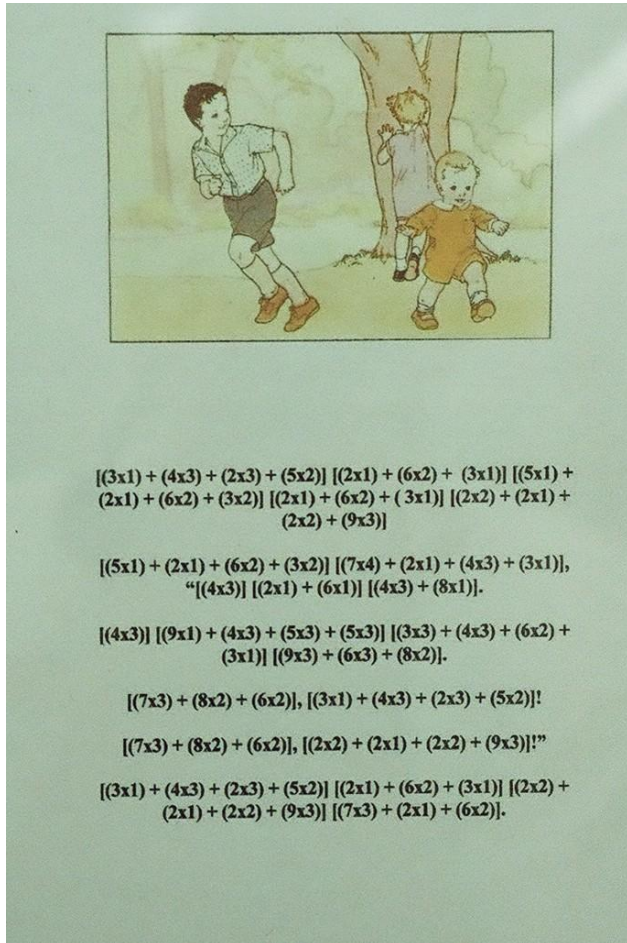


Illustration 32: “Dick, Jane, and Baby”, 2009, print



## Art and Science

This next experiment deals with several contemporary issues engaging science and art. The layered puzzles are painted black and white to emphasize the extreme views on the stem cell research. The puzzle sculptures represent the isolated DNA and stem cell code, in which the cell has the possibility of becoming anything I choose. The main idea of the project is to create distinctive structures to show new possibilities in familiar situations and create something other than what is expected. Ignoring instructions and changing what the object is intended to be, references scientists utilizing selection techniques. In the future, people will be able to pick and choose what traits their baby will have, for example, height, looks, and athleticism. In contemporary art, many artists use found objects to create installations, which give the objects a new meaning acting in unison. “*Stem Cell/ DNA Experiment*” 2009, fuses the ideas behind science and art as one. The similarities between science and art stem from a close relationship in creativity, vision, planning, and research. Just as new breakthroughs in science build upon the research of past, artist must take what has already been created and make a contribution and advancement in the field.<sup>16</sup>



**Illustration 33: Detail- “Stem Cell, DNA Experiment”, 2009**

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7lScU3nSN4> Dr. Eric Schulze, PHD. 2010 USC Commencement Speech.



**Illustration 33a: “Stem Cell, DNA Experiment”2009, wooden puzzles, 42x63**



**Illustration 33b: Detail- “Stem Cell/DNA Experiment” (Sculpture), 2009**



Illustration 33 c: Detail- Installation View, Stem Cell, DNA Experiment, 2009

## CONCLUSION

The power of simplicity through repetition is an important theme seen throughout the work I produce. My art includes the repetition of patterns, shapes, numbers, text, and found objects that communicate concepts in language, science and math as art. The simplification of line and material, reveal ideas of the escape from space and time, Zen, meditation, juxtaposed, superimposed, minimalism, a-focal art, science, and art of the human hand. Commitment and dedication from conceptualization to fabrication are qualities which I value. My creations leave behind a history of labor intensive works combined with a spiritual goal, which embody a spiritual freedom, where the mind is between thoughts and the viewer becomes disconnected from the crazy world. My work utilizes the vocations of artists of the past, while matching and exceeding the conventional styles of artwork that are currently being produced and written about by my peers. The wide variety of subject matter in my art work stems from a continuous and honest investigation into our constantly changing world.

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## VITA

Peter Barnitz was born and raised in Metairie, Louisiana. After graduating from Brother Martin High School in 1999, Mr. Barnitz attended Loyola University of New Orleans, where he earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts in 2004, with concentrations in both painting and sculpture. Mr. Barnitz also received the Loyola University Visual Arts Award in Fine Art in 2004. Along with his studies in art and psychology, Mr. Barnitz was a four year letterman and senior captain of the Loyola University Men's Basketball Team. Mr. Barnitz received a Graduate Assistantship Scholarship in 2009 from the University of New Orleans Fine Arts Department. In 2011, Mr. Barnitz earned his Master's Degree in Fine Arts from the University of New Orleans, concentrations in painting and sculpture.