

## Washington University in St. Louis Washington University Open Scholarship

---

Graduate School of Art Theses

Graduate School of Art

---

Spring 5-17-2018

# If My Grandmother Had Wheels She'd Be A Trolley Car: The Accumulation of Objects, Encounters and The Passage of Time

Sara Weininger  
[sara.weininger@wustl.edu](mailto:sara.weininger@wustl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: [https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/samfox\\_art\\_etds](https://openscholarship.wustl.edu/samfox_art_etds)

 Part of the [Art and Design Commons](#), [Art Practice Commons](#), [Fine Arts Commons](#), [Philosophy Commons](#), and the [Psychology Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Weininger, Sara, "If My Grandmother Had Wheels She'd Be A Trolley Car: The Accumulation of Objects, Encounters and The Passage of Time" (2018). *Graduate School of Art Theses*. ETD 106. <https://doi.org/10.7936/K7QC02XG>.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School of Art at Washington University Open Scholarship. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate School of Art Theses by an authorized administrator of Washington University Open Scholarship. For more information, please contact [digital@wumail.wustl.edu](mailto:digital@wumail.wustl.edu).

Washington University in St. Louis  
Graduate School of Art

If My Grandmother Had Wheels She'd Be A Trolley Car:  
The Accumulation of Objects, Encounters and The Passage of Time

Sara Weininger

A thesis presented to the Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts of Washington University  
in St. Louis in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts

Graduate Committee:  
Heather Bennett  
Lisa Bulawsky  
Buzz Spector  
Jessica Baran  
Carl Craver

## Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Abstract .....  | 3  |
| Pre-Ramble .....  | 4  |
| Words to Consider .....   | 5  |
| Maybe I Want to Sit at the Dork Table: The New York Studio School, Dana Schutz, Lisa Yuskavage and the Unreliability of Recognition ..... | 5  |
| Talking to Louise Bourgeois .....   | 10 |
| The Impossibility of a Still Life .....   | 12 |
| Bagel Philosophy .....  | 15 |
| Tchk Tchk Tchk .....  | 21 |
| Bearly .....  | 24 |
| Patti Smith, Susan Rothenberg, Failing Better .....   | 25 |
| More Seats at the Dork Table: Sara Weininger, Amy Sillman, Richard Tuttle .....   | 26 |
| The Superposition of Objects and The Narrative Self .....   | 29 |
| Joan Mitchell Riding a Painting While Painting a Bike .....   | 32 |
| Da Bronx .....  | 35 |
| Lamp Meets Hat .....  | 36 |
| What Falls Out of One Thing Grows on Something Else .....   | 38 |
| Coffee Cup Sleeves .....  | 40 |
| If My Grandmother Had Wheels She'd Be a Trolley Car .....   | 43 |
| Bibliography .....  | 45 |

## **Abstract**

The house is the structure. Within the house are rooms, spaces, hallways and corners. In those live the objects. The objects live on surfaces, surfaces that much like the previous layers, are made up of many things, most certainly not one thing. A static object may hold a series of other objects, spaces and events. A static object may also embody the passage of time. Though one may try to hold the object at a constant, that is to slow or even bring a halt to its motion, this task is near impossible.

Bird Box House, Bear Box Dresser, Lamp Hat, Macaroni Light Tears, Dresser, Ginger Ale Bottle, Wine Bottle, Beer Bottle, Medicine Bottle, Bagel

These objects are anything but singular. They hold many things at once. They are superpositions of everyday objects.

My accumulating marks attempt to take a physical account for this motion, the passage of time. When the object begins to grow hair, fur or feathers, in the moment of the drawing, the painting, the bird box, the object, time stands still...*bearly*.

## Pre-Ramble

*“Searching rather earnestly for something I don’t quite know already, a kind of questioning machine, endlessly discontent. I would say that form is the shape of my discontent, and that what interests me is how form can match that feeling or condition – of funny, homely, lonely, ill-fitting, strange, clumsy things that feel right. In other words, a form that tries to find itself outside of what is already okay.”<sup>1</sup>*

*-Amy Sillman*

Over the past few months, I have worked in earnest to construct a well-researched and thoughtful thesis document. I see it much like I see the work in my studio, as a thing that possesses its own internal logic within which it grows and changes; and in a certain object sense, it lives and breathes.

There are stages, nonlinear ones

It is always about paint though

the materials used to make a painting

wood from Home Depot, scraps from the wood shop

The canvas I prefer is Unprimed Cotton Duck #10 because I like the feel of it

when gesso is applied a specific way with the palette knife

or the blade of the scissors that turn it into hair fur or feathers

the painting materials mix too with drawing and observation

a prolonged observation of objects

so long in fact that time begins to reveal itself

these are objects I live with, have lived with and are at times separated by many degrees of

drawings and paintings

but be certain that I've seen them, observed them

I've given these objects ample time to absorb their surroundings

I drink a coffee because I need to be awake

and also, it's a habit

then I put it down, take my morning medication out of the tiny orange bottle and then it sits next to the coffee and the empty salsa jar.

This is a chase. I chase my thoughts in overlapping circles. My work is a document of it.

---

### **Words to consider:**

Somethingness- presence

Tchk Tchk Tchk – The sound my art makes (sometimes)

Bagely – Possessing bagel-like characteristics

Bearly – 1. The proper name for the sculpture that is simultaneously bear, box and dresser drawers 2. Possessing bear-like characteristics 3. Almost but not quite

Lamp Hat (informal: lamp hat) — an object that is part lamp, part New York Yankees hat

Bagel Philosophy– The concept of a presence surrounding an absence where the absence holds a great deal of significance

Superposition—for the purposes of this work it is when my objects overlap each other and exist within the same space and time. Ex: Bearly is a superposition of bear, box, and dresser.

---

### **Maybe I Want to Sit at the Dork Table: The New York Studio School, Dana Schutz, Lisa Yuskavage and the Unreliability of Recognition.**

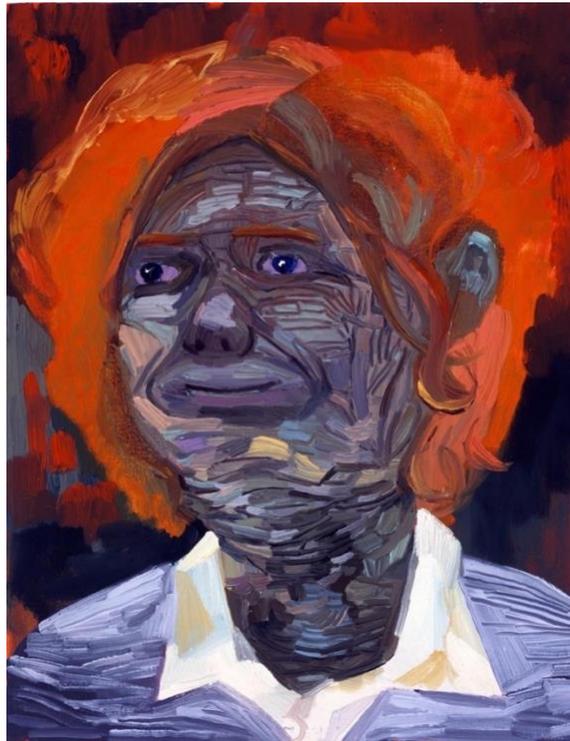
I met Dana Schutz for the first time in July of 2012. I was participating in the drawing marathon with Graham Nickson at the New York Studio School and living at my aunt's house in Boerum Hill, Brooklyn. I had just watched a talk that Dana Schutz gave at Boston University on YouTube. Critiques for the drawing marathon ran late and to avoid waking my young cousins by clunking around the kitchen, I opted for a slice of pizza around the corner from their house. Slice

in charcoal covered hand, I continued down the block. I quickly became aware of two figures walking a short distance behind me down the same block. I heard some words like “canvas” and “studio” and my ears perked up. Then I saw the curly hair and there was an oddly familiar voice that I recognized from the YouTube talk. I hurried not so casually to the end of the block and waited for them to catch up to me. When they finally did I spoke: “Hi, um, you're Dana Schutz, right?” (I had her exhibition catalogue from her solo show at The Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University in my canvas bag.) I told her how I was on my way back to my aunt’s house in the neighborhood, the reason I had charcoal all over my face and hands, that I was a rising senior at Brandeis majoring in studio art and that I was a painter. We talked briefly about how cool it was to have a museum right next to the art studios and to be able to walk over and look at her work steps away from a Phillip Guston and a Robert Rauschenberg. Eventually I stopped talking and I apologized for interrupting her. She smiled, laughed and was flattered that I recognized her. She offered me some words of encouragement about being an artist and we parted ways.



Dana Schutz (b. 1976) *Crapping, Braiding and Whistling* 2009 oil on canvas 58 x 76 in<sup>2</sup>

What draws me to Schutz's work is her recognition of the non-singularity of people, things and ideas. Schutz says about her paintings "I definitely like the fact that they could be at the beginning of something or at the end."<sup>3</sup> She points out two opposing ideas, "the beginning" and "the end," calling attention to the ability of a painting to depict each concept simultaneously. There is no beginning without an end and no end without a beginning. She holds two ideas close together that are in most senses seen to be at a great distance. Schutz's work also contends with the "slippage between something being very actual and imaginary."<sup>4</sup> She demonstrates in her work the potential of paint to hold conflicting disparate realities constant. Pushing further the idea that in a painting, things can be both up and down, dark and light. That individuals can be both human and pachyderm, and that we have the potential to crap, braid and whistle all at the same time.



Dana Schutz *Self Portrait as a Pachyderm* 2005 oil on canvas 23 x 18 in<sup>5</sup>

The following April, only a few months later, when I was home for spring break, I went to a talk Dana Schutz gave at the New York Studio School. I asked a question about her work and then approached her afterward. She remembered me from the night I approached her in Brooklyn. Shortly after returning to school I was attending the post- baccalaureate show. I was enjoying myself having assisted a couple of other students in opening a bottle of wine with a drill. A woman approached me saying that I looked familiar to her but that she could not immediately place me. We talked a little bit trying to figure it out and then realized that we were both at the Dana Schutz talk a couple weeks prior. She remembered that I had asked an intriguing question. I proceeded of course to tell this woman how much I loved Dana Schutz's paintings and how we have one right here at the museum. I told her the story of how I stopped Dana Schutz in the street in Brooklyn while I was working at the New York Studio School and how I wouldn't have recognized her had I not just watched the talk she gave. The woman was completely captivated and even noted how unusual it is for visual artists to be recognized in person. I enthusiastically agreed. I started to realize through my peripheral vision that throughout my conversation with this woman, that a bunch of my professors were cackling and it seemed to be focused in my direction. I didn't think much of it. After a few more minutes of conversation, the woman had to leave and she walked out of the gallery followed by the director of The Rose Art Museum at the time. That is when the people around me really started to laugh and I had to beg someone to tell me why. Finally, my sculpture professor told me that I had been talking to Lisa Yuskavage for twenty minutes. It was a lengthy conversation patting myself on the back for recognizing a visual artist in person. I wasted no time putting down my drink and bolted out of the gallery to the parking lot yelling at the top of my lungs in Lisa Yuskavage's direction "I know who you are!" I

finally caught up with her and we had a good laugh at my expense. She really did have to go, but not before we took a picture together with her giving me bunny ears.



Me and Lisa Yuskavage 2013

The next morning, I went into work at the Rose Art Museum where I was a gallery guide. I could hear buzzing in the office about some student who chased after Lisa Yuskavage in the parking lot outside the post-baccalaureate show. Then I saw Lisa walk out of the office. I approached her and apologized if I had startled her the night before. I told her that all my friends think I am “such a dork” and she asked me to walk her upstairs to her cab. I walked her to her cab and then she said: “You are a dork, but it’s cool I’m a dork too, I just have a nicer jacket.”

It is difficult for me to separate out how I make work in the studio and the way that I walk around in the world. My artistic pursuit involves engaging the present, finding things and digging for their underlying meaning. I have come to understand that while certain things have qualities about them that seem fixed, they also possess qualities that are not immediately revealed on the surface and how often there is such unreliability in recognition.

The conversation of “who are you looking at?” and “what are your influences?” involves much more than a laundry list of people. There can be formal qualities that may match up and that is certainly useful. These are concrete indicators which are important in contextualizing oneself and one’s work in the conversation of contemporary art. However, the way I see myself among artists is precisely that, among artists. I have felt most a part of the contemporary art community when I, due to my own clumsiness, have encountered and engaged in conversation with other artists.

The professor leading my studio seminar during my senior year at Brandeis introduced me Yuskavage’s paintings. Her paintings, though vastly different from my own, challenged my previous understanding of figure painting. Our initial meeting was through painting, a product of the medium’s underlying communicative capabilities. Our second meeting was a face-to-face interaction. While our work is certainly individual, real life interactions with artists are acknowledgements that we are all to a certain extent in pursuit of the same thing. I see myself in the lineage of artists that have come before me like Giorgio Morandi, Philip Guston, and Louise Bourgeois as well as in the company of fellow contemporary artists. For these reasons, I proudly seat myself at the dork table.

### **Talking to Louise Bourgeois**

I made a recording while visiting Hauser and Wirth in Los Angeles while speaking to my friend and fellow artist Janie Stamm about fellow artist Louise Bourgeois. When I played the recording back, I could hear a conversation between three artists. All three are in the room talking to each other, while only two are speaking out loud.



Louise Bourgeois close up photograph I took from *The Red Sky* at Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles

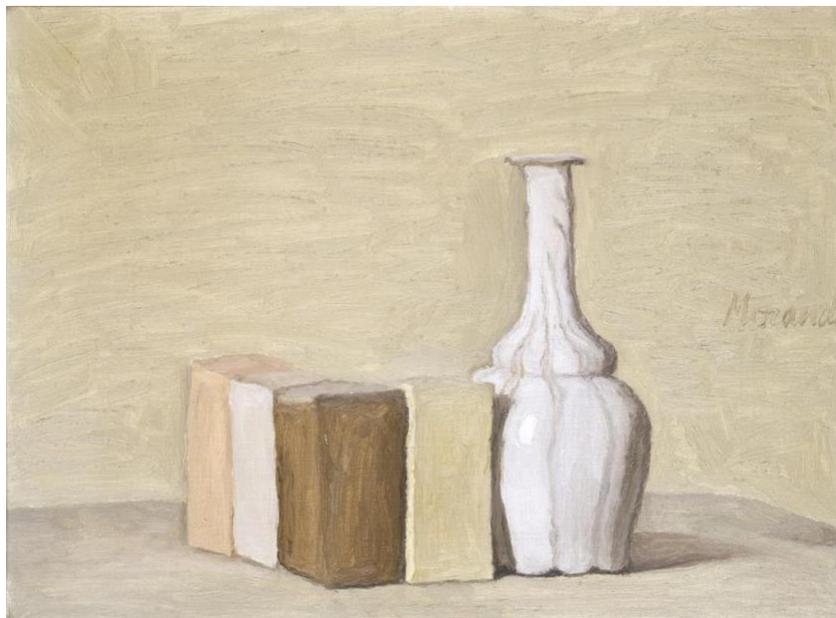
One can enter a room filled with the work of another artist and sense the thread that holds her in place within one's own artistic lineage. There is something about seeing artwork in real life, visually bumping into it, walking into a room and feeling something, having an experience that lets me know I am working with this person, sitting at their table, we're talking about something, I am an artist, she's an artist and I have never met her but I can feel her. When I am in the studio, I am talking to her and when I am in front of her work she is talking to me.

Divided up throughout the pieces in a specific portion of the gallery are the following words written by Louise Bourgeois:

"I cannot help this need in the morning  
this need to grow  
minuscules éléments  
géométrique circulaire pattern  
repeated indéfiniment  
expressing the fear not to be"

There is an urgency with which my work is made. Which is why I can understand “this need” Bourgeois speaks of. To be specific, I have a need to see as many iterations as I can possibly draw. I accumulate things, coffee cups, objects that I live among. I cut them up, paint them and piece them back together. I too make marks, repeat them but I wonder about Bourgeois’ “fear not to be.” I observe that time is constantly in motion. For me, it is about accounting for the passage of time through the language of painting, to keep time in paint, maybe to hold time still or perhaps also to persist along with it.

### **The impossibility of a still life**



Giorgio Morandi *Still Life* oil on canvas, 12 x 16 in 1955<sup>6</sup>

There is an impossibility to a still life. I assert that the still life doesn't exist. Objects hold within them accumulated experience, experience and meaning formed by human interaction. “Before beginning a new still life painting, Morandi would arrange the objects, many of which he had already transformed by covering them with paint.”<sup>7</sup> This inclination to alter objects is a familiar

one to me. It is an attempt to slow down the movement of the object to remove it from its original function of ginger ale bottle, coffee cup, medicine bottle, the state where it continues to hold associations and specific stories. Once I paint over it, though I will not be able to hold still the movement of time, I may succeed in steering it into a different realm, one of my own paint objects. Here lies the impossibility to the still life. I use painting as a language to convey the hidden qualities of specific objects that lie beneath their surfaces.

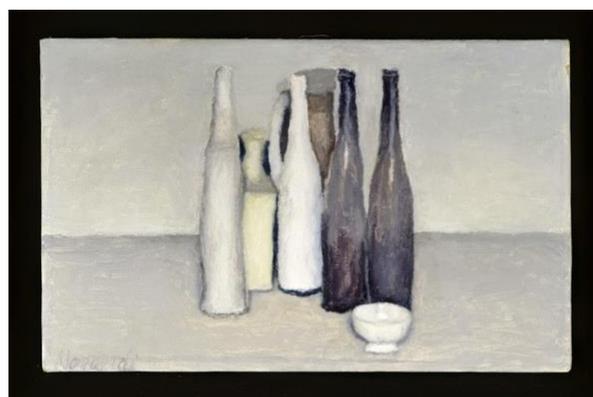
The contemporary concept of Object Oriented Ontology<sup>8</sup> personifies objects in a way that I am not completely comfortable with. It is less to me about the idea that objects are beings equal to humans but rather that because of their absorption of human experience and their active role in such experience, they begin to take on narratives among themselves and reveal many layers that perhaps mirror the composition of an individual self. “Morandi built up a repertoire of visual imagery using a vocabulary...Morandi’s renderings of these same objects would change radically. At times their identities barely discernible.”<sup>9</sup> It is, over time, repeated use, iteration after iteration, and also the alteration of these objects, that Morandi’s objects changed, and their recognizeability was challenged. Robert Irwin said “those same bottles and jars that he painted continuously...lost their identification as bottles.”<sup>10</sup> I would argue this is the case because of paint as a medium and because of Morandi’s unrelenting repetition. The objects’ meaning and very identity is shaped through the many paintings of them, both on the canvas in Morandi’s paintings, but also in the act of applying paint to the objects themselves. I want to be cautious about over-personifying paint, as this is the distinction I intend to make from Object Oriented Ontology. I do not want to give the medium itself too much credit as one has to know how to manipulate paint in order to create any significant meaning. However, I would assert that it is

through repetition and the specific use of paint as the conductor, that Morandi is able to create a language. This too, is how I create mine.



Sara Weininger (Early Version) *Shared Shelf with Morandi*, 40 x 18 x 18in 2018

With paint, Morandi creates a new identity for a wine bottle, or an empty jar. Often sitting in my studio, when I wonder about one fellow artist, my mind wanders to another. That is happening now as I write. Joan Mitchell comes to mind as I think about creating narratives among objects, creating a presence with paint, from an absence.



Giorgio Morandi, *Still Life*, oil on canvas, 10 1/16 x 15 3/4 in, 1957<sup>11</sup>

Below is excerpt from a conversation between Marion Cajori and Joan Mitchell, about light in her paintings:

In her Paris studio, Mitchell: “The window is very depressing and yet it is very beautiful, a nice light”  
Her interviewer asks: “Do you have light?”  
She responds “Not really... I don't think many painters have light”  
Joan then references photography, how people think there is light and dark in photography but really it is only “tonality.”

Tonality is a physical fact in a photograph, rather than the elusiveness that light takes on in a painting.

Mitchell further explains herself to the interviewer who seems perplexed by this notion “...that ...it isn't that there's light out the window that there is light at all.”<sup>12</sup>

The way Mitchell creates a sense of light, and Morandi a narrative through paint, leads me to conclude that there are certain limitations when it comes to explaining concepts of paint in words. This accentuates the ability of painting to call attention to the unreliability of recognition. The act of painting holds the potential to render the familiar strange, and the comfortable uncomfortable.

## **Bagel Philosophy**

The house, its rooms, the sense of a specific place, it is a site for observation. The objects and spaces that comprise the interior become containers, absorbing and holding onto experience. These objects are displaced and transformed over distance and time, documents of the passage of it. Often, we attempt to grab hold of something, keep still what is in motion only to find our efforts futile.



Sara Weinger *Feathers*, oil on canvas 56 x 70in, 2018

There is an exterior, the physical house, the structure, the frame, that which we can see. The house itself is composed of materials, wood, steel, the foundation, the plumbing, the walls, the insulation. Once inside the house there are rooms. The rooms are filled with objects. The house is made up of many things and those things too, of many things. Inside the finite object of the house, within its interior spaces, exist infinite objects and spaces. The object of the house is not singular.

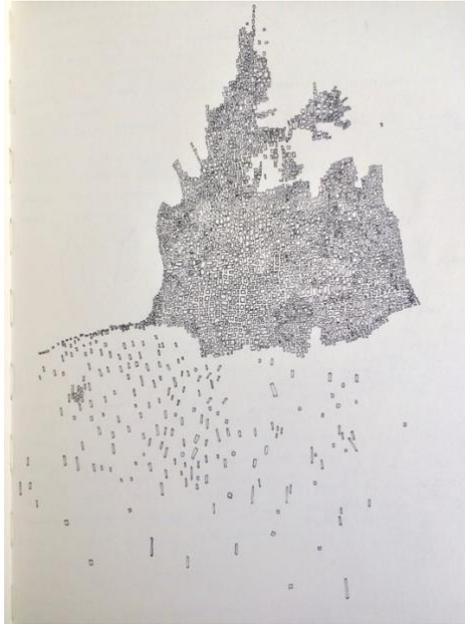


Sara Weinger, *Blonde Feathers* oil on canvas 26 x 37in 2018

One can leave an object. There is distance and time passes. The object itself can be lost and in this sense, the object is the one to leave. In the attempt to reach for this object, its form becomes variable, amorphous and malleable. The detergent bottle begins to grow feathers. It becomes increasingly difficult to bring to mind the day in February where you frantically did your laundry the night before catching an early flight. The detergent sits on the floor in the corner of your apartment where you left it next to the boxes that you collected. When you return, it has grown a feather.

I have been accumulating marks and I say it is an attempt at accounting for the passage of time. I cut up canvas into small pieces, call them feathers, and put them on boxes dressed like houses and call them bird box houses. I see clearly that paintings have fur, but what about these paintings and the drawings of rectangles with the hair or fur with the blank squares nestled inside? I realized that this is tied to the bagel philosophy of the hole in the middle, the missing pizza, the absence. I suppose I first made drawings building on this idea of accumulation. Instead of accumulating small lines as in hair, fur, feathers, the present positive forms, in my recent drawing, *Something from Nothing* 2018, I drew tiny boxes around the blank spaces on the page, very small and one next to the other. These weren't uniform by any means, but they live side by side and accumulate in the space of the paper. Whereas with the short little accumulating lines that make up feathers or fur or hair in other works, I say to myself over and over in my head while drawing "I am here in this moment, I am here in this moment" to assert presence. It is an acknowledgment of the present, it is looking at time in the face to account for its passage and perhaps to slow it down, make it more digestible or bearable. It is impossible to fully account for the passage of time and it is this impossibility that fascinates me. However, in this drawing, I was making tiny empty squares or rectangles as if to say "this is an empty space, and this is an empty

space, and this is an absence, and this is an absence” but as I saw the drawing take place in front of me, I could see that there is an impossibility in absence as well, there is almost no such thing as emptiness. By naming the nothingness and boxing it in, I make a somethingness.



Sara Weininger *Something From Nothing* pen on paper 8 x 11 3/4in 2018

Inside an MRI time is held still mostly because I have to stay still. I lie on the thing that goes into the machine and I am not supposed to move. When you walk into the room there is this rhythmic sound that comes out of the machine, it is a persistent sound, it just keeps going constantly while the machine is on. It is not loud, it's like a slow breathing metronome. When I was little, there used to be a screen that played movies during the scan so I could watch *Aristocats* or *The Lion King*, but not so much anymore. Without the distraction of cartoon animals, over time, I learned to find somethingness in the nothingness inside the machine.

Frankly, it is not unlike the everything bagel.

The positive space, the machine itself, we will call that the bagel. That rounded machine gets loud and can make some serious noise, let's call that the everything. But the whole thing is a waste of time if I don't stay still. I, in case it wasn't already apparent, am the defining characteristic of the bagel, the space in the center.

They usually last about 30 minutes give or take. When I was younger it took longer because I was a squirmy kid who didn't like sitting still and every time I moved they had to start over.

There is great care and preparation to ensure that my head is completely still for the duration of the scan. Pillows of assorted shapes and sizes are wedged in at various angles beneath my back and head and I am given ear plugs. There is a ritual to the whole thing. There has to be. Though in my mind I've shmushed it into a long poetic bagely metaphor, it is a medical procedure. The scan begins and with it, the noise. I wish at this point I could insert sound but I can't. If you ask me in person I'd be glad to demonstrate. "ker clunk ker clunk ker clunk, ner ner"

*Noise is at once everything and nothing.*

Time is held still inside. I am held still inside the machine full of noise and movement. It will keep roaring while I lie there motionless. The machine is held still inside the building filled with comings and goings of patients and doctors in endless rooms within hallways and floors piled one on top of the next. The hospital building is set still in the surrounding chaos of the city full of activity. I settle in for the scan. I think of what I will order when I meet my friend for sushi after this. My mind wanders a little, what is she doing right now? She isn't sitting still. She's moving

around her apartment, baking banana bread, sending emails, doing laundry. I suddenly focus my mind to the present “ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ner-ker-clunk-ker-clunk-ker-clunk!” Amidst the cacophony I start to hear words and little phrases made by the sounds. “i-knew-you-were-trouble-when-you-walked-in-i-knew-you-were-trouble-when-you-walked-in” and suddenly Taylor Swift has made it into the mess of sound. Then every word I think up fits into the rhythm. “do-i-want-spicy-tuna-or-sal-mon-avo-cado?” but now I’m singing it in my head like the Taylor Swift song mixed with sushi and the rhythm of the noise. I sink in and begin to focus so closely on the individual sounds and group them up in different ways. “To a Taoist , Nothing is something, and Something—at least the sort of thing that many consider to be important —is really nothing at all.”<sup>13</sup>



Sara Weininger, *The Wise Bagel is Everything* 28 x 24in, 2017

At my last MRI a few months ago the technician asked me if I wanted to listen to Pandora Radio during the scan. It was a fairly new technological addition. I entertained the possibility for a

moment, frantically scanning my mind for a station that I could commit to for 45 minutes. Then I had the technician remove the earphones and replace them with my familiar sound softening earplugs. Audiologically speaking, the addition of music to the scan would upset the equilibrium of the bagel. To continue the above analogy adding Pandora would be like adding caraway seeds to an everything bagel. It works for some people, but for others (like myself), it becomes a distraction that is ultimately beside the point. The extraneous noise would somehow fill the hole in the middle. It is a bagel not a bialy.

## **Tchk Tchk Tchk**

*Sitting still in the midst of a city that moves endlessly.*

Below are excerpts from *Of Being Numerous* by George Oppen<sup>14</sup> :

“So spoke of the existence of things,  
An unmanageable pantheon...

A populace flows  
Thru the city.

This is a language, therefore, of New York”

We are pressed, pressed on each other,

We will be told at once  
Of anything that happens

The shuffling of a crowd is nothing—well, nothing but the many that we are, but nothing.”

I have been asked: Why does it have to be a New York Yankees hat? There are a number of reasons, but the most salient, it is the embodiment of home.

Norwegian author Lise Gunderson relates: “Relaxed, I lean back. I am listening to the same music over and over... It's a kind of home... No recurrence of feeling can be exactly the same, only similar, repeated. But similarity and repetition is good enough,”<sup>15</sup> I repeat drawings of my New York Yankees hat over and over perhaps to shed a little light on it as an object, to try and understand it more. I do not wear the exact same hat that I wore as a five year old, but it is certainly similar. I listen to the rhythm the tchk tchks tchks that happen in my mind as well as when the pen hits the paper to form the fabric that will become the clasp in the back, and the embroidery of the ever essential superimposed “N” on “Y” on the front. The New York Yankees hat is an embodiment of home, a home where nothing is singular. Where a “shuffling crowd is nothing—well, nothing but the many.”<sup>16</sup>

There was a situation where I had requested of someone that they “please pass me my ginger ale” and they misheard me and thought I had asked for “my Cinderella.” Ruminating for a while on the moment, I wonder why they did? How absurd I thought it was at the time. Today, I am fascinated. Through the movement and displacement of certain sounds and the rhythm of the word in time it becomes clear that the ginger ale is not singular. Its non-singularity is rooted in the way the word sounds and its audio proximity to many other things. Perception shifts, blends, and branches out in a mind where there is an urgency to perceive and understand an object in all its parts.



Meret Oppenheim, *Object*, fur covered cup saucer and spoon, cup 4 3/8" (10.9 cm) in diameter; saucer 9 3/8" (23.7 cm) in diameter; spoon 8" (20.2 cm) long, overall height 2 7/8" (7.3 cm)  
1936<sup>17</sup>

W. J. T. Mitchell asserts that “painting is likened to a shedding of feathers and the smearing of shit and the principal function of the eye is to overflow with tears....there are not purely visual media because there is no such thing as pure visual perception in the first place.”<sup>18</sup> My lamp hats shed feathers to the tune of “tchk tchk tchks” and Meret Oppenheim’s cup grows fur at a different speed with a wholly different frequency of sound altogether. This takes us back to the discussion of “ginger ale.” Oppenheim’s cup is not a functional one. Because the cup grows fur, it takes on the narrative of a creature, a living thing. As far as I am concerned, it is visual ginger ale, and thus begs the question: what sound does a furry cup make?

## Bearly



Sara Weinger *Bearly*, cardboard, acrylic, canvas (When Closed): 43.5 x 30 x 28in (When Open) : 43.5 x 15 x 56in

Bearly,

The bear that is barely there

a set of dresser drawers

a box that contains nothing but also many things.

Bearly is the bear that's barely there. Looking at an object for a sustained period of time, it begins to move, even breathe. Objects take on a life of their own. Bearly is both dresser and bear. At the same time, Bearly is neither dresser nor bear. Bearly visually wanders back and forth and between, all the while owning the material identity of cardboard box. Bearly is impermanent.

*"Something is growing within, changing the outside form, becoming itself"*<sup>19</sup>- William Kentridge

Oliver Sacks talks about this idea of hallucination as a perception rather than a figment of imagination. Hallucinations activate the same areas in the brain as visual perceptions, different still from those connected to imagination. However temporary, hallucinations are true.

I am using the language of painting to account for the passage of time. It starts within a painting language of canvas, stretchers, oil paint, gesso. I attempt to stretch definitions of painting.

Painting can happen on objects themselves, an allusion to their impermanence. How they are arranged in the studio in the process of making is constantly changing. All aspects of the work from tiny pen drawings to little bird boxes and the large oil paintings are considered with the same significance. They are individual works but they all exist in relationship to one another; in fact their existence depends on it. There is an internal logic to the characters that weaves a visual narrative which is relational and nothing is fixed. Within the works' internal logic it lives and breathes.

### **Patti Smith, Susan Rothenberg, Failing Better**

After watching the ART21 video in which Susan Rothenberg says that she wasn't aiming to find beauty in her work but rather “some kind of truth about some kind of thing,”<sup>20</sup> I came to the conclusion that I too was looking for “some kind of truth about some kind of thing.” I am under no pretense however, that I am to find some large truth laid out clearly for me somewhere at the end of a painting because neither do I feel like any of my paintings are ever finished nor that there is some ultimate truth to be found. I also don't think that Susan Rothenberg thinks that she is going to find that hard and fast truth either. Just “some kind of truth” that through my own

work I try to bring to the surface but have come to understand while it is certainly present, it is elusive, just barely there.

Searching for a specific truth at the end of a painting is not unlike looking for a lost valuable possession. Although you might not find the object, a sense of purpose may be found during the search. Patti Smith recalls unwittingly losing a coat given to her by a dear friend. “Lost things, they claw through the membranes, attempting to summon our attention through an indecipherable mayday. Words tumble in helpless disorder. The dead speak. We have forgotten how to listen. Have you seen my coat? It is black and absent of detail, with frayed sleeves and a tattered hem. Have you seen my coat?”<sup>21</sup> The meaning lies in the path of the object you lost, and the encounters and associations it holds.

This search may involve undulating moments of success and failure. In the studio it manifests itself in reference to the work. In one second you think you are on to something and the work is great, yet in the next it is as good as garbage. In her essay *Shit happens*<sup>22</sup> Amy Sillman cites Samuel Beckett’s *Worstward Ho*. “All of old. Nothing else ever. Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better.”<sup>23</sup> Perhaps the solution is to keep searching and failing to find the thing you think you are looking for. Maybe the truth or the ultimate purpose, as Beckett puts it, is just finding new and better ways to fail.

## **More Seats at the Dork Table: Sara Weininger, Amy Sillman, Richard Tuttle**

“Searching rather earnestly for something I don’t quite know already, a kind of questioning machine, endlessly discontent. I would say that form is the shape of my discontent, and that what interests me is how form can match that feeling or condition – of funny, homely, lonely, ill-fitting, strange, clumsy things that feel right. In other words, a form that tries to find itself outside of what is already okay. Awkwardness is the name I would give this quality, this thing that is both familiar and unfamiliar.”<sup>24</sup>

I am in the search for some kind of something, while painting. I think the trick of the whole thing is in the “discontent.” We’re never supposed to actually find it. Susan Rothenberg talks about the search for some kind of truth about some kind of thing and Amy Sillman talks about the search for awkwardness.



Amy Sillman, *Drawer*, oil on canvas, 84" x 90", 2010<sup>25</sup>

### *Awkwardness*

An email I sent to Amy Sillman January 14th 2014:

“Subject: Thank you Amy Sillman for restoring my faith in artmaking.

Hi Amy,

My name is Sara. I am the rather short girl that was wearing the green hat with the pom pom the size of my face, that stopped you on the street in front of the Phillips Collection in DC about a week or so ago. I was with my friend who was much taller and frankly a little embarrassed by my insistence on interrupting your afternoon. I apologize if I startled you.

I actually started writing this before I ended up seeing you which is why I felt so bold as to walk up to you in the street. I just graduated with a bachelors degree in psychology and studio art. I am currently doing a postbacc year in painting in Boston. I hit kind of a rough patch in my studio about two months ago and haven't been able to shake it. I had to leave my work for two months to have a couple of unexpected surgeries. My ability to work during this period was greatly diminished by the influence of really strong pain meds, and just pure exhaustion. I am no stranger to the world of medical interruptions, in fact I usually try and apply it toward my work. This time i'm struggling with that part.

I got back to the Boston area a couple weeks ago (I was in New York, where I am from originally). I dutifully spent hours in my studio staring at the two months untouched work making silly drawings (which I should know are never silly, because making them is the most important thing). It still feels pretty awful sitting in there its almost like the first time I used oils and felt awkward and afraid but kind of also like I can paint anything I want which in some sense is even scarier. Everyone I talk to says its completely normal but I really don't know what that means, or even how that is supposed to make me feel.

I tend to approach drawings and paintings like I did when I was little. That seems to be how to get closest to some kind of a truth in whatever it is I'm doing. Like I said previously I'm no stranger to medical interruptions. When I was little I would hear adults talking about important stuff and I knew it was about me and something serious and what not, but I just sat on the floor with crayons and construction paper and that's how I made my first drawings. I try to apply the same concept today without naming too much. But I feel like the path from my brain to my gut is like scrambled eggs. And according to my old trusty cognitive neuroscience textbook, that's not normal. Maybe I just need to make some scrambled eggs?

In any case, I don't mean to babble on and on. I just wanted to let you know that I went to see your show at the ICA. And I really can't say that it straightened out much of what is stated in the above ramblings. However, it reminded me of the certain inexplicable power art can hold. When I was sitting in front of your paintings, I could feel the presence of a process, a struggle, a piecing together of something kind of ungraspable but totally understandable on a different plane of thinking. I don't have much of a direct point to make, but I just hope my work will someday prompt a young artist to write an email to me saying how much of a visceral impact my visual language had on them.

Thanks so much and have a Happy New Year :)  
All the best,

Sara"

Her response on January 19th 2014:

"dear Sara,  
thank you for sending your heartfelt note, and thank you for approaching me in DC! it was incredibly sweet of you. i really appreciated how much it meant to you....i once followed Richard Tuttle around at the Met while he looked at art, with a friend, we were mesmerized by watching him look at stuff. It was terrible, really, we were spying on him. I'd rather that you came up to me, than followed me around w/o saying something! So i appreciated your tapping me on the shoulder.

I wish you great luck w/ your work, and I hope you keep on making whatever weird scrambled strange works you feel like making.

Try to always remember to be kick-ass. It's kind of a lonely life but it can work out, if you really put your all into it.

XXX

amy”

It is real life engagement with other artists that grounds me in the contemporary art community. Acknowledgement of the human individual behind the process of artmaking is an essential part of my continued pursuit of creating meaningful work. New circles and connections are constantly being created and creative thoughts exchanged. There is now a thread that ties me and my friend together with Amy Sillman, her friend and Richard Tuttle.

### **The Superposition of Objects and The Narrative Self**

Schrödinger’s Cat. There is a cat in a box with a mechanism in place that has a 50% chance of killing the cat in an hour. At the end of an hour, over the passage of time, the reality that consists of the dead cat is superimposed upon the reality that has a live cat.<sup>26</sup> The cat is both dead and alive. Physicist Richard Muller explains this idea that “the act of opening the box and looking in constitutes a measurement...and you are left with only one reality not a superposition of the two.”<sup>27</sup> Superposition is created over time.

What is most fascinating to me is the ambiguity surrounding the idea of measurement and what it requires. “Couldn’t the cat tell?... does it require a person?...the answer to all these questions is “*we don’t know.*”<sup>28</sup> This ambiguity allows the cat to remain both dead and alive. This uncertainty of measurement allows for the existence of my Bird Box House-Bear Box Dresser- Lamp Hat-Macaroni Light Tears-Dresser- Ginger Ale Bottle-Wine Bottle- Beer Bottle-Medicine Bottle-Bagel.

Contemporary philosopher Marya Schechtman's *Stories, Lives, and Basic Survival: A Refinement and Defense of the Narrative View*, speaks about a spectrum on which narrative theorists may fall.<sup>29</sup> She identifies weak, medium, and strong perspectives of narrative theory. Weak narrative view asserts "that a person's narrative must somehow operate to impact his current experience. According to this understanding a person's narrative need not be in any way accessible to consciousness in order for her to be said to have a self-narrative." The medium narrative view "requires that a person be able, at least sometimes, to become conscious of her narrative and make it explicit." Strong narrative view states "that in order to have a narrative in the relevant sense, a person must actively and consciously undertake to understand and live her life in narrative form." These concepts are the basis of her paper in which she argues for a more nuanced perspective which most closely resembles the medium narrative view. It is an approach that is neither vague nor explicit and in my opinion is best characterized by the questions she poses rather than any answer she provides.

Schechtman asks: "What are *things* that give us a sense of self that are not necessarily episodic memories?" I ask: What are the things that indicate the passage of time? The same object might remain, but it changes only slightly by the feathers. When I speak of the passage of time and how my interest lies in accounting for it, there is an implication of the self. There is no sense or perspective of the passage of time without it. Therefore, I am interested in what happens when I move "sense of passage of time" in place of "sense of self" or even use them interchangeably.

Artist Haim Steinbach notes “it is not really the objects that compose this portrait but the discourses that attach to them, and those discourses are always plural.”<sup>30</sup> Dwelling for a time on this notion that there are “things” that accumulate to form the self has led me to understand that perhaps naming these things in the context of the composition of the self is not so simple.

The house is the structure. Within the house are rooms, spaces, hallways, and corners. In those, live the objects. The objects live on surfaces, surfaces which much like the previous layers, are made up of many things, most certainly not one thing.

A static object may hold a series of other objects, spaces and events. A static object may also embody the passage of time. Though one may try to hold the object at a constant, that is to slow or even bring a halt to its motion, this task is near impossible.

These objects are anything but singular. They hold many things at once. They are superpositions of everyday objects.

My accumulating marks attempt to take a physical account for this motion, the passage of time. When the object begins to grow hair, fur, or feathers, in the moment of the drawing, the painting, the bird box, the object, time stands still...*bearly*

Jennifer Moxley quotes George Oppen’s poem *Of Being Numerous* indirectly in the title of her book *There Are Things We Live Among*. Inside the book the quote is completed “There are things we live among and to see them is to know ourselves”<sup>31</sup> She talks about Robinson Crusoe being

“bereft of company” however “consoled by his things...no noble savage is he, for he has his things, and therefore the need to keep accounts, to write, and to mark his existence”<sup>32</sup> He can “mark his existence,” take account for himself, for the passage of time by surrounding himself with his things. Most striking to me is the “pen and ink” and their usefulness in Crusoe’s “reflection.” The pen makes marks, simple marks, perhaps like my small accumulating tchk tchk tchks. The mark of the pen is simple, yet it is imbued with tremendous weight when it holds our presence, our existence constant.

*I am here in this moment, I am here in this moment, I am here in this moment.*

### **Joan Mitchell Riding a Painting While Painting a Bike**

When asked why she painted, Mitchell replied to biographer Marion Cajori: “...because I don’t exist anymore—it’s wonderful. I’ve always said it’s like riding a bike with no hands.” Mitchell pinpoints an absence that seems to serve her in her painting process. It is in the absence of her existence that she is best able to paint, and it is in the absence of her hand, so to speak, that she is able to ride the bike or paint the painting. Within this absence the presence of the painting comes to the surface.



Joan Mitchell *Straw* 108 1/4 x 77 3/4 inches<sup>33</sup>

To put it in terms of my work, Mitchell created the paint-bike, an approach to painting embodying the non-singularity of painting and riding a bike. To ride a bicycle without hands is objectively careless. This is true only if we consider the bike on singular terms. I am concerned with the paint bike, not a bike. The concept applied to the act of painting, that is, to paint and painting with no hands, requires that the artist handle the paint as if she is not consciously handling it at all. The poetry in the original statement comes when both bicycle riding and painting are held together at once.

To imagine a painting being made in this manner requires a superposition. Mitchell must be in full control, as she sets the parameters of the painting. Through her process Mitchell illustrates a way of seeing by creating distinctions between the rules of the outside perceivable world, the communicative capabilities of the physicality of the medium and the system of perception of the artist herself. She establishes conscious definitions within created realities, maintaining full

control and none at all. Mitchell's perception of light, the synesthetic perspective, and how it is translated into the work gives us a window into this process.

Mitchell's place in context of the period of the abstract expressionist movement can also be characterized by this concept of operating with "no hands." She redefines her place in the world of art-making. Living in Paris for the greater part of her career, Mitchell was often referred to as "sauvage" or wild. She failed to operate within seemingly understood parameters of how a woman should behave.

Mitchell also lived for a period of time in New York City and describes how she would walk her dog in Washington Square Park. She would then sit on a bench next to Ad Reinhardt while he would talk to her about his conceptual ideas. She notes how Hans Hoffman, Ad Reinhardt and other artists of that time were "nice to me because I was female, no threat to anybody." It is within this space of underestimation and her insistence on elbowing her way into what was at the time primarily a men's conversation, that Mitchell carved out her place in art history.<sup>34</sup> In a space of very low expectation perhaps she was operating within a gap, a perceived empty space, but it was precisely this space that allowed her to define herself.

## Da Bronx



Sara Weinger, *Lamp Hat*, pen on paper 2017

*There was one day in kindergarten when my teacher told us we were going on a field trip to the Bronx Zoo. I was elated because I knew that I was born in Bronx and it was a fact that I was weirdly very proud of and occasionally liked to trot out to people for no specific reason. Other silly things I held in similar regard were that my brothers who were eight and eleven years of age at the time, were yellow belts in Karate and that my next-door neighbor and I adopted a pet worm who we called Lucas that we found in the dirt under the swing-set in the backyard. When I heard where we were going to the Bronx, my tiny exuberant body could not contain itself and in my excitement to share my fun fact I eagerly and proudly announced to my class that I, Sara Arielle Weinger was born in the Bronx Zoo...*

I was born at Albert Einstein Hospital, fifteen minutes from Yankee Stadium. It makes good sense that I was born a Yankees fan, most certainly with a Yankees hat already set perfectly

lopsided on my head. Perhaps this is why when I lost all my hair when I was five years old the only logical thing to do was to cling to my Yankees hat. This very same October of 1996 the Yankees won the World Series for the first time in 18 years. Before I lost it, I liked my hair enough but mostly just took it as a given. I didn't like that after washing it I had to sit still while my mom detangled it with an itchy brush, and I especially didn't like when the woman that cut my hair insisted on twisting it into a braid. There was something deeply satisfying to me however, about the way my bangs escaped through the gap above the clasp, sprouting out of my Yankees hat when I wore it backward and how the rest of my hair billowed out the sides of it in all directions.

## **Lamp Meets Hat**



Sara Weininger *Dresser Drawer*, oil on panel, 10 x 8in 2017

I sat on the floors on many rooms when I was very little. I could hear people talking about things bigger than me. To escape these things I dug for crayons and paper in a crowded knapsack. With these, I made my first drawings.

When the dresser drawers came out,  
I could only see their faces,  
That is when the hair started to grow.

Marks can be itchy, so can Lamp Hat.

The material that makes up the hat is often indistinguishable from the material that comes out of the lamp. The life of these objects is cyclical. Tiny marks make up the exterior of the hat and yet tiny marks come out, land on the floor and become the material of the floor, some time passes, and the empty coffee cup left on the side table begins to grow these marks too, so does the dresser drawer, marks crawl up the walls of room, down the hallway and blanket the whole house. Panning closer in on the material reveals marks resembling feathers, a few steps back again reveals a bird box house.



Sara Weininger, *Green Bird Box House*, oil on canvas on cardboard, 8 x 6 x 2in, 2018

What difference would it make if over the passage of time an object grew hair fur or feathers? I find significance in the fact that feathers turn into wings and wings make birds fly.

*[ I had a weird dream where I was back there and someone was telling me how they ate a meal in that meeting room in the middle of the main hallway. Things I can remember from that room: hand sanitizer, metal sink, teal plasticky chairs maybe there were trays for eating attached. Cannot be certain about all of this, but there was one time I think that my brother came and had dinner there with me and my mom. Maybe we had pasta, spaghetti with sauce. I didn't like it, the sauce tasted sour. I'm wondering now if it was because of the chemo.]*

Pasta may look like pasta but tastes like something else.

I'm thinking of how Dana Schutz says her paintings can be both at the beginning and the end of something in terms of Lamp Hat and the many forms it takes and the innumerable drawings and paintings of it. It is never clear to me precisely what comes out and when I get close to naming it I hesitate. I consider the lamp aspect of the hat and how whatever comes from within the hat has the potential to be light.

### **What falls out of one thing grows on something else**

“A mark that remains after that which made it has passed” is the definition of the Tibetan word “shul” meaning “track...as a shul emptiness can be compared to the impression of something that used to be there.”<sup>35</sup> The word “shul” is also the Yiddish word for synagogue. An individual structure that serves as a part of a whole. Synagogues branched out across the world after the

destruction of the second temple in Israel, planting to seeds for modern Judaism. Though perhaps no two synagogues are alike they share a common source.

I have come up with many possibilities, guesses at what it is definitively that comes out of Lamp Hat. However, like Lamp Hat, it is not one thing. I thought maybe macaroni, light, tears, sprinkles or perhaps, macaroni light tear sprinkles. Maybe it is all of these things and none of them at all as is the case with *Bearly*. Poet Zbigniew Herbert says “The most beautiful is the object which does not exist...the hairs of all its lines join in one stream of light.”<sup>36</sup> What falls out of lamp hat lands in various locations much like a shul, these elusive things too share a source.

If the material that comes out of Lamp Hat makes up the material of the floors, objects and surfaces then wouldn't this material be hair, fur, feathers? And if that is the case then it seems to make the most sense to me that, these materials fall out of lamp hat. Falling is specific. It describes the event with greater detail. Patti Smith loses her coat and she says “it fell”<sup>37</sup> from her consciousness. When something is lost it doesn't disappear into nothingness, as I firmly believe there is no such thing. These things land among other things.

Peter Schwenger's *Tears of Things* references poet Elizabeth Bishop “..objects putting the laws of identity through hoops” claiming that “Identity makes these jumps because here nothing is one thing only.”<sup>38</sup> What Schwenger says initially confused me as it can be read differently depending on how you think about it. “nothing is one thing only.” I'd say that the one thing that nothing is, is everything. Objects play with the composition of identity because they have the ability to hold many things at once. A bear is a bear, a box, and a dresser at once, at the same time it is none of

theses things. This can be applied to Patti Smith's coat as well. It too is not one thing, as it holds lived experience and associations and occupies a place in her identity in a very specific way. Objects create these individualized paths however, they also accumulate around each other as parts of a whole. Perhaps they are some of the elusive "*things*" that Marya Schechtman speaks of "that give us a sense of self that are not necessarily episodic memories."<sup>39</sup>

Elias Redstone gives an account of the physical aspects of his childhood home with great detail. Noting vivid recollection of its interior space, the way the doors open and close, how the floors sound, and the smell, he claims "it is the place itself that is fixed in my mind... I see the farmhouse not a building, but a warren of spaces that have been molded over time with their own rules of space and style."<sup>40</sup> Redstone sees simultaneously the house as "the place itself" and as a "warren of spaces." The house remains a solid structure but also a network of smaller pockets of interconnectivity that over distance and time have taken on their own spatial and material sensibility.

### **Coffee Cup Sleeves**

Artist Sophie Calle tells a story of meeting "the most intelligent man [she] had ever known" for lunch. Before the date they were to consider the question "what makes you get up in the morning?" Later on at lunch she asked him his thoughts, and he said "the smell of coffee." At the end of the meal when they had finished their coffee she took a cup with her, an object that holds the encounter, the fleeting nature of the smell of a cup of hot coffee.<sup>41</sup> The cup becomes a placeholder for a specific place and time, that being said, while it may hold remnants it no longer

holds that coffee it did on that day, the smell is gone or perhaps soured, time moves forward and the cup grows others things. Hair? fur? feathers?

Coffee cup sleeves. It is especially difficult to see these objects singularly and I think a small part of me wants to save them from the trash and I do perhaps worry whether or not the recycling is actually getting recycled. I tend to gather materials in piles. I dig through the piles to begin to make the thing, cutting and reattaching. I see the feathers repeating themselves. Are they the light from the lamp hat? Threads of fabric from the rug on the floor by my bed?

I see tchk tchk tchk's grow on the used coffee cup sleeves, the cardboard that shields my early morning grip from a hot coffee. The coffee I drink in the morning comes in a disposable cup wrapped in a sleeve and sits in yet another kind of cup holder in my car. The smell of hot coffee and cardboard in the car was made familiar to me at an age before I could drink coffee much less drive. Open the car window and the wind drives the smell around the interior and then it fragrantly flies away. I cut up the canvas into feathery pieces, attach them along the cardboard edge of the cup holder. I do the same for the row below that one and continue the process all the way down until I've made something that is almost a bird. They are the embodiment of the desire to hold something constant, to hold something still that is perpetually in motion. Not unlike the hot coffee smell in the car in the morning, eventually the coffee will cool down and the smell will dissipate and fly away. These bird-adjacent creatures might fly away too, but perhaps if I wear them around my wrist I can hold time still.

In William Kentridge's words, "The studio becomes a machine for the alteration of time."<sup>42</sup> Are they to be rounded? Or are they to be squared? These must be questions swimming

subconsciously in my mind while trimming the canvas to become the feather, the right feather at the right stage in time. The truth is, not all feathers grow the same. Sometimes the ends are squared and sometimes they are rounded. Still, the decision to cut happens in the moment of making the thing.



Sara Weininger, *Pile of Bird Adjacent Creatures*, canvas on coffee cup sleeve, various dimensions, 2018

“Strings of cables birds nests of copper, turned the world into a giant switchboard...the world was covered by a huge dented bird cage time zones.”<sup>43</sup> Kentridge uses birds to describe time in its many facets. Time is based heavily on human perception of the passage of it. The bird offers a way in which to observe time that is not linear. Kentridge talks about the wiring of cables that connect the world through time as nests and the complete network of wiring as a cage. My bird adjacent creatures depict time in a way that is not standardly linear, they are a physical embodiment of it, something that we can hold in our hands. While these feathers in other places in the work can be perceived too as fur or hair and it can come out of the lamp hat or sit on the floor or grow on a bottle, in this free standing object, it *is* time. To hold one or better yet to wear one, perhaps is to hold time still.

---

## **If my grandmother had wheels, she'd be a trolley car**

*When I was in high school I had a great math teacher. She had a response for every excuse I could think of for why I had gotten an answer wrong. The wrong answer would come after working through a seemingly never-ending word problem that consisted of many multi-variable formulas and hand drawn diagrams. I always showed my work. She looks at me incredulously as if I should have seen where I went wrong, and then shows me the answer. Undoubtedly, I dramatically land the palm of my right hand on my forehead in defeat. “But if that number had been a four, I would have been right.” She’s was ready every time, locked and loaded. And in her very distinguishable Brooklyn accent she assures me “Yeah, and if my grandmother had wheels, she’d be a trolley car.”*

“If my grandmother had wheels, she’d be a trolley car”. I think for a minute about what it actually means. Taken one way, it has an air of flippancy, for my math teacher, perhaps, some sarcasm. I prefer to take it in earnest, that it is as simple as it sounds. Even among the trappings of a long strung out math problem a single digit holds enormous weight in calculating a solution. There is a profound effect of individual, seemingly small, and insignificant parts upon the whole. Among what some might refer to as a clutter of objects in my studio, the placement of an inhaler on its side, overlooking the small clay pot with a canvas flower, creates a specific narrative one that would drastically change if something were moved out of place. In my studio, if a box has ears it’s a bear, if a box grows feathers, it becomes a bird box, and a lamp wearing a New York Yankees hat, is, without question, a lamp hat.

---

<sup>1</sup> “Shit Happens,” accessed March 19, 2018, <https://frieze.com/article/shit-happens>.

- 
- <sup>2</sup> “Dana Schutz (b. 1976) , Crapping, Braiding and Whistling,” accessed April 6, 2018, [https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot\\_details.aspx?intObjectID=5895448](https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=5895448).
- <sup>3</sup> “Dana Schutz - Artists - Petzel Gallery.”p.9
- <sup>4</sup> “Dana Schutz - Artists - Petzel Gallery.”p.13
- <sup>5</sup> “Dana Schutz - Artists - Petzel Gallery,” accessed April 12, 2018, <http://www.petzels.com/artists/dana-schutz#28>.
- <sup>6</sup> Giorgio Morandi, Italian. c. 1955. Still Life. Painting. Place: The National Gallery of Art (Washington, D.C.), Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart in honor of Rusty and Nancy Powell. [http://library.artstor.org/asset/ANGAIG\\_10314021736](http://library.artstor.org/asset/ANGAIG_10314021736).
- <sup>7</sup> Janet Abramowicz, *Giorgio Morandi: The Art of Silence*, F First Edition edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
- <sup>8</sup> “What Is Object-Oriented Ontology? A Quick-and-Dirty Guide to the Philosophical Movement Sweeping the Art World.” n.d. Artspace. Accessed February 1, 2018. [http://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews\\_features/a-guide-to-object-oriented-ontology-art](http://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/a-guide-to-object-oriented-ontology-art).
- <sup>9</sup> Abramowicz, Janet. *Giorgio Morandi: The Art of Silence*. F First Edition edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.
- <sup>10</sup> Abramowicz, *Giorgio Morandi*.
- <sup>11</sup> Giorgio Morandi. 1957. Still Life. Paintings. Place: Princeton University Art Museum, <http://artmuseum.princeton.edu/>. [http://library.artstor.org/asset/APRINCETONIG\\_10313685037](http://library.artstor.org/asset/APRINCETONIG_10313685037).
- <sup>12</sup> “Amazon.Com: Joan Mitchell: Portrait of an Abstract Painter: Joan Mitchell, Marion Cajori,” accessed April 11, 2018, <https://www.amazon.com/Joan-Mitchell-Portrait-Abstract-Painter/dp/B003XIBKAU>.
- <sup>13</sup> Hoff, Benjamin. *The Tao of Pooh*. 1 edition. New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 1983.
- <sup>14</sup> Poetry Foundation, “Of Being Numerous: Sections 1-22 by George Oppen,” text/html, Poetry Foundation, March 14, 2018, <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53223/of-being-numerous-sections-1-22>.
- <sup>15</sup> Dragset, Ingar, and Michael Elmgreen. *Elmgreen & Dragset: Home Is the Place You Left*. Köln: Walther König, Köln, 2008.
- <sup>16</sup> Foundation, “Of Being Numerous.”
- <sup>17</sup> Meret Oppenheim. 1936. Object. Sculpture and Installations. [http://library.artstor.org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/LARRY\\_QUALLS\\_10310850518](http://library.artstor.org.libproxy.wustl.edu/asset/LARRY_QUALLS_10310850518).
- <sup>18</sup> W J T Mitchell, “There Are No Visual Media,” n.d., 12.
- <sup>19</sup> William Kentridge, *Six Drawing Lessons*, y First printing edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014).p.98
- <sup>20</sup> “Susan Rothenberg In,” Art21, accessed April 15, 2018, <https://art21.org/watch/art-in-the-twenty-first-century/s3/susan-rothenberg-in-memory-segment/>.
- <sup>21</sup> Smith, Patti. M train. Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2016. p.161
- <sup>22</sup> “Shit Happens,” accessed March 19, 2018, <https://frieze.com/article/shit-happens>.
- <sup>23</sup> Samuel Beckett, *Worstward Ho* (Grove Press, 1983).p.7
- <sup>24</sup> “Shit Happens.”
- <sup>25</sup> Amy Sillman. 2010. Drawer. [http://library.artstor.org/asset/AWSS35953\\_35953\\_35390576](http://library.artstor.org/asset/AWSS35953_35953_35390576).
- <sup>26</sup> Richard A. Muller, *Now: The Physics of Time*, 1 edition (W. W. Norton & Company, 2017). P.195
- <sup>27</sup> Ibid. 196
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid. 198
- <sup>29</sup> Schechtman, Marya. “Stories, Lives, and Basic Survival: A Refinement and Defense of the Narrative View.” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 60 (May 2007): 155–78. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246107000082>.
- <sup>30</sup> Peter Schwenger, *The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects*, Annotated edition edition (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2006).p.138
- <sup>31</sup> Moxley, Jennifer. *There Are Things We Live Among: Essays on the Object World*. Chicago: Flood Editions, 2012.
- <sup>32</sup> Jennifer Moxley, *There Are Things We Live Among: Essays on the Object World* (Chicago: Flood Editions, 2012).p.7
- <sup>33</sup> Joan Mitchell. 1976. Straw. Paintings. [http://library.artstor.org/asset/LARRY\\_QUALLS\\_10311781012](http://library.artstor.org/asset/LARRY_QUALLS_10311781012).
- <sup>34</sup> Joan Mitchell: Portrait of an Abstract Painter. Dir. Marion Cajori. Arthouse Films/Curiously Bright, 1993. Online. Amazon.com. Web. Oct. 2016.
- <sup>35</sup> Rebecca Solnit, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*, Reprint edition (London: Penguin Books, 2006).p.51

---

<sup>36</sup> Schwenger, *The Tears of Things*.p. 167

<sup>37</sup> Patti Smith, *M Train*, First Edition edition (New York: Knopf, 2015).

<sup>38</sup> Schwenger, *The Tears of Things*.p.147

<sup>39</sup> Marya Schechtman, “Stories, Lives, and Basic Survival: A Refinement and Defense of the Narrative View,” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 60 (May 2007): 155–78, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246107000082>.

<sup>40</sup> Elmgreen, Michael, and Ingar Dragset. Home is the place you left exhibition, 22.6.-12.10.2008, Trondheim Kunstmuseum, Norway. Köln: König, 2008.

p. 51

<sup>41</sup> Calle, Sophie. *True stories*. Arles, France: Actes sud, 2013.

p.53

<sup>42</sup> William Kentridge, *Six Drawing Lessons*, y First printing edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014). P. 91

<sup>43</sup> Kentridge, William. *Six Drawing Lessons*. Y First printing edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014. P.169

## Bibliography

Abramowicz, Janet. *Giorgio Morandi: The Art of Silence*. F First Edition edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005.

Ackerman, Jennifer. *The Genius of Birds*. Reprint edition. Penguin Books, 2017.

Bachelard, Gaston, and John R. Stilgoe. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Maria Jolas. Reprint edition. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.

Beckett, Samuel. *Worstward Ho*. 1st edition. New York : Grove Press, 1983, n.d.

Capote, Truman. “‘Master Misery’ by Truman Capote, Horizon, January 1949.” UNZ.org. Accessed February 1, 2018. <http://www.unz.org/Pub/Horizon-1949jan-00019>.

———. *Other Voices, Other Rooms*. Vintage Books, 1994.

“Dana Schutz (b. 1976) , Crapping, Braiding and Whistling.” Accessed April 6, 2018.

[https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot\\_details.aspx?intObjectID=5895448](https://www.christies.com/lotfinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=5895448).

Dragset, Ingar, and Michael Elmgreen. *Elmgreen & Dragset: Home Is the Place You Left*. Köln: Walther König, Köln, 2008.

———. *Elmgreen & Dragset: Home Is the Place You Left*. Köln: Walther König, Köln, 2008.

Epstein, Fred, and Josh Horwitz. *If I Get to Five: What Children Can Teach Us About Courage and Character*. 1st edition. Holt Paperbacks, 2004.

Farr, Ian, ed. *Memory*. London : Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2012.

Foundation, Poetry. “Of Being Numerous: Sections 1-22 by George Oppen.” Text/html. Poetry Foundation, March 14, 2018. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/53223/of-being-numerous-sections-1-22>.

Hoff, Benjamin. *The Tao of Pooh*. 1 edition. New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 1983.

Homes, A. M. *The Safety of Objects: Stories*. Reprint edition. London: Penguin Books, 2013.

Jamison, Leslie. *The Empathy Exams: Essays*. 1 edition. Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2014.

Kentridge, William. *Six Drawing Lessons*. Y First printing edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2014.

Mayer, Musa. *Night Studio: A Memoir Of Philip Guston*. 1st Da Capo Press ed edition. New York: Da Capo Press, 1997.

Mitchell, W J T. “There Are No Visual Media,” n.d., 12.

- 
- Moxley, Jennifer. *There Are Things We Live Among: Essays on the Object World*. Chicago: Flood Editions, 2012.
- Mukherjee, Siddhartha. *The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer*. Reprint edition. New York: Scribner, 2011.
- Muller, Richard A. *Now: The Physics of Time*. 1 edition. W. W. Norton & Company, 2017.
- Oliver, Mary. *Upstream: Selected Essays*. 1st Edition edition. New York: Penguin Press, 2016.
- Sacks, Oliver. *Hallucinations*. 1st edition. Waterville, Maine: Vintage, 2013.
- Schacter, Daniel L. *Searching For Memory: The Brain, The Mind, And The Past*. Reprint edition. New York: Basic Books, 1997.
- Schechtman, Marya. "Stories, Lives, and Basic Survival: A Refinement and Defense of the Narrative View." *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplements* 60 (May 2007): 155–78.  
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1358246107000082>.
- Schwenger, Peter. *The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects*. Annotated edition edition. Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2006.
- "Shit Happens." Accessed March 19, 2018. <https://frieze.com/article/shit-happens>.
- Silverstein, Shel. *The Missing Piece*. 1st edition. New York: Harper & Row, 2006.
- Smith, Patti. *Just Kids*. Reprint edition. Ecco, 2010.
- . *M Train*. First Edition edition. New York: Knopf, 2015.
- Solnit, Rebecca. *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*. Reprint edition. London: Penguin Books, 2006.
- Sontag, Susan. *Against Interpretation: And Other Essays*. 1st edition. New York, N.Y: Picador, 2001.
- . *Illness As Metaphor*. 1st edition. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978.
- . *Notes on Camp*. Penguin Books Limited, 2018.
- Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. 10 edition. Durham: Duke University Press Books, 1992.
- "What Is Object-Oriented Ontology? A Quick-and-Dirty Guide to the Philosophical Movement Sweeping the Art World." Artspace. Accessed February 1, 2018.  
[http://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews\\_features/a-guide-to-object-oriented-ontology-art](http://www.artspace.com/magazine/interviews_features/a-guide-to-object-oriented-ontology-art).