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INVOCATION

By

Shae Taylor Goodlett
B.A., Bellarmine University, 2017

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Fine Arts
in Studio Art and Design

Hite Art Institute
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2020

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A Thesis Approved on

April 26, 2020

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DEDICATION

To my Mammaw

Margaret Ann Seymour

and

To my loving parents

Roger Goodlett

Sherry Goodlett

Who have taught the most important truths are those that can not be seen.

ABSTRACT

INVOCATION

Shae Goodlett

April 8, 2020

The research of this thesis is concerned with the investigation of various approaches to religious theory; specifically, the observable analysis of performed ritualistic procedures and their theoretical anticipated effects. Through the examination of the illusory characteristics of the interaction of color and light I am able to draw analogous correlations between art making and ritualistic action. By enacting optical illusion as metaphor for ritual presence, I compare rational and empirical methods of observation. This analysis examines the discrepancy of physical fact and physic effect in that illusion employs physically observable means to render an intangible (non-material) physic effect. Such observances challenge notions of factual knowledge as it pertains to a physical reality.

The intangible existence brought about by illusion is recognized and perceived though it is not physically present. It is regarded as fact. It is for this reason that I conclude in this thesis that so-called verifiable fact, as it pertains to individual experience and the acquisition of knowledge, consist of more than empirical observation. Instead, it

is coupled with creativity, fantasy, and imagination - all of which are cognitive processes influenced by thought, experience, and sensory perception.

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ARTIST STATEMENT

Invocation is a series of meditative line drawings that conjure an intangible presence by exercising the illusory characteristics of light and color interaction.

Over the course of history analytical theory and empirical research have further polarized into two sharply contrasting ideological positions. Theoretical research aims to describe the theory which explains certain occurrences, to where empirical research relies on practical application of verifiable observation. To make an analogous comparison, religion proposes theoretical conclusions to speculated phenomena whereas science tends to engage physical evidence observable to the senses. Sociological studies of ceremonial ritual, such as those conducted by Emile Durkheim, however, have suggested that religion and other spiritual orientation may be observably experienced through participation.

The drawings in this body of work enact ritualistic performance as process in order to invoke visual phenomena that is perceptually observable. *Invocation* uses optical effect as a metaphor for spiritual presence, engaging universal theoretical themes found in ceremonial ritual.

My own spiritual affiliation as a Christian has a direct and relevant correlation to this artistic investigation. The dedication to precise execution of design within the work, for example, is attributed to God's assumed nature of perfection in Judeo-Christianity.

The use of geometric abstraction is also intentional in that, form and shape are arrived at logically- they are consistent and their conclusions can be replicated. The depiction of the divine through geometry is a notion that transcends Christianity. In this particular body of work, I employ this theme in order to capture and replicate the essence of the divine.

Invocation engages perceptually verifiable means (geometry, color, light) to conceptualize speculated phenomena. Through illusion, my drawings exhibit the presence of the non tangible made manifest in sensory empirical form in order to confront the aforementioned methods of accessing knowledge. Can theoretical knowledge be directly observed and experienced? Does something have to be thoroughly understood to be “real”? *Invocation* addresses these issues through the investigation of ritual, divinity, and perception.

INTRODUCTION

Invocation visually enacts research of various approaches to religious theory; specifically, the analysis of performed ritualistic procedures and their anticipated effects. Defining and categorizing the world into divinity and secularity is a notion that transcends a single faith practice. For the practicing spiritualist, the entities are irreducible in nature and coexist simultaneously (Durkheim, 16). This presumption acknowledges the presence of the metaphysical and further defines the boundary between terrestrial and spiritual entities. Religion functions as a form of mediation between the two classifications, thus operating as a means of understanding reality. My work performs and exemplifies universal religious approaches to such attempts of communion. The optical effects within the drawings act as a metaphor for conjuring the visual presence of an otherwise non-empirical existence.

In Christianity, this division is absolute in that the congregation is made up of imperfect beings worshiping a perfect God. The notion of inherent sin within my own understanding and interpretation of the Christian faith prohibits the possibility of human divinity, reiterating the distinct separation between God and Human, or the sacred and the profane (“Original Sin”). Here, the theology of incarnation is imperative to the under

standing of this separation. Jesus, was the incarnation, or the embodiment, of God's word and spirit made flesh ("Incarnation"). Christ assumed a human existence in order to act as humankind's covenant representative (Wellum, 2016). He was simultaneously human and divine - a sacred deity that took on a second nature (human nature) of body and soul (flesh) free from the flaw of sin (New Living Translation, Phil. 2:6-8). Because sin entered into the world through human error (Gen. 3:12), it needed to be removed by a human. Jesus took on humanity in order to mend the separation between divinity and mankind.

Contrary to concept of inherent sin, Judeo-Christian tradition suggests that all of humanity is reflective of God's image (New Living Translation, Gen. 1: 27). This presumption assumes similarities between mortal beings and an infinite God. Such a theory necessitates a catalyst for transcendence of the ephemeral body. In Christianity, the soul/spirit performs this function and possesses the ability to draw near to the divine through ritual.

The ritualistic performance of Christian baptism serves as an example. Water exists as a symbolic collective representation of many Christian sociabilities. Very literally, being submerged in water represents the washing away of sins that divides God from his people. Submergence and emergence also act as a metaphor for death and resurrection ("Baptism"). Ritual provides the scenario in which communion with the divine is possible. Another example of this can be seen where acknowledging and participating in the Eucharist represents unification with Christ through the consumption of consecrated bread and wine ("Communion").

Through the physicality of my work, I aim to perform and demonstrate a similar ritual. In my geometric abstractions, the repetitive action of line drawing induces a meditative state which enables the potential for revelation, reconciliation, and communion with the divine. This is similar to the recitation of the Rosary in Catholicism, as the line work holds a corresponding cadence (“Rosary). In my practice, the performance of ritual is executed in an effort to commune with God. Visually, I am attempting to create an experiential optical sensation that references the presence of the divine/non-physical manifested through the effort of ritual.

Color, pattern, and intricacy are critical to the success of rendering the aforementioned optical effects. The investigation of the relationship of color and its effect on individuals is significant both technically and conceptually. The success of the optical phenomena found within the drawings is dependent on the understanding of color interaction as explained by acclaimed 20th century artist and academic Josef Albers. In utilizing theorized optical effects such as the phantom color phenomena, among others, I am questioning whether or not something has to be thoroughly understood to be verified as fact. If something is inexplicably perceived does it lose validity?

Although the application of color in my work is intentional in its effects and symbolism, I acknowledge that the perception of color and its meanings are culturally, religiously, and personally relative. Furthermore, the experience of phenomena within the work is also individual. Notable art theorist and perceptual psychologist Rudolf Arnheim speaks to this matter most eloquently when writing,

No one will ever be sure that his neighbor sees a particular color exactly the same way he himself does. We can only compare color relations, and even that raises problems. One can ask subjects to group colors that belong together or to match a certain nuance with an identical sample. Such procedures can avoid any reference to color names, but we cannot assume that different persons of similar background, let alone members of different cultures, have the same standards for what they consider "alike" or "the same" or "different." Within these limits, however, it is safe to state that color perception is the same for people of different ages, different backgrounds, or different cultures (Arnheim, 330).

Though perceptual experience and association vary from viewer, culture, and

background, visual stimulus proves to be more or less comparable. To reiterate Arnheim, while its impossible to know whether or not a viewer perceives the colors of a work as the artist intended, it can confidently be anticipated that red, for example, can be perceived as red and blue can be perceived as blue, barring any visual impairments such as colorblindness. The same can be observed in the optical phenomena of my drawings wherein the mysterious hue emitted via illusory effects may be experienced regardless of subtly brought about by personal background. This assumption is critical to the visual and conceptual comprehension of *Invocation*. The perception of these sensations is first experienced individually and then acknowledged and verified communally.

The same is true in spiritual practice. Though ritual is typically performed in the context of a collective congregation, its outcomes are first received independently. To reference the previous example of communion the blood and body of Christ is consumed individually. Through this act the participant first cognitively recalls the life of Christ relative to their own knowledge and experience. This notion is applicable to the perception of divine in that the nature, concept, and attributes of God vary from person-to-person. Similarly, in his study of the interaction of color, Albers suggests that the recollection and

perception of color is also relative (Albers, 8). Color and its interactions are observed singularly. The effects summoned through my work reference a similar theme. The colors and pattern prompt a reaction within the viewer that they observe individually. In the case of color vibration, for example, colors are specifically oriented to prompt a specific effect, however, the perception of that effect varies from person-to-person due to relative personal histories. This is similar to how the perception of God varies from one person to the other in a ritual/spiritual setting. This essay will cite examples from an array of faith practices such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Hinduism in order to draw parallel comparisons to the spirituality of color, shape, and form as they apply to the practice art making.

Although the sensations in my work are illusory and thus not physically present, they are nonetheless real. In a similar way, this inquiry parallels religious experience. When someone claims spiritual revelation, is God actually present or is the experience an emotional realization influenced by their own individual truths of sacrality? Does something have to be physically present to be real or verified as fact? For both the spiritualist and the secularist viewer, I hope these questions are contemplated upon viewing my work.

CHAPTER I

PERCEPTUAL ELEMENTS

Color

The physical properties of certain colors greatly influence the way a viewer experiences a particular work. Individuals experience light as having three main characteristics: color, intensity (brightness), and saturation. Color depends on the wavelength to where intensity of a color is related to the amount of light emitted. Warm colors, such as yellow and red, tend to approach the spectator while cool colors, such as blue and purple, seem to retreat. Warm colors possess longer wavelengths resulting in higher amplitudes. Amplitude is the measurement of oscillates, the distance between peaks and troughs of a wavelength (Kitaoka, Gyoba, Sakurai, 2006). This measurement results in the brightness of a specific hue. The higher oscillates of red, orange, and yellow waves result in a higher color intensity, provoking a more immediate visual response in the viewer. The presence of a warm color is more immediately realized.

The interaction of certain color combinations render various optical sensations. For example, placing a highly saturated red next to a dark blue results in what is known as phantom color wherein the orientation of specific hues stretch beyond their physical

boundaries causing illusory color sensations on adjacent neutral surfaces. In the given example, the illusion of yellow or purple may be conjured. This comes as a result of the juxtaposition of colors that possess opposite kinetic properties whereas red holds a longer less frequent wavelength than blue. Here, a sort of anomaly occurs that deviates from the viewers recollection of what is physically present. Two tangible colors are arranged in a manner that form the apparition of a third element that can be perceived but not materially accounted for. By arranging the colors on a homogenous surface a mist or haze begins to linearly emanate across the picture plane. While it is scientifically clear how phantoms are generated and reproduced, the explanation for their perception is still speculated. One theory suggests phantom color, or phantom illusion, comes as a result of completion phenomenon (Kitaoka, Gyoba, Sakurai, 2006). This study assumes that the illusory effects are product of perceptual transparency (247), which is the brains desire to see the surface behind the occluding pattern.

To make an analogous comparison to the recurring theme of faith as it pertains to religion and spiritualism, one can observe that religion and surface completion seek to achieve a similar objective. In the given example of the phantom illusion, research suggests that a partially obstructed image or pattern is perceptually filled in behind the occluding surface to aid in visual short term memory (Lee & Vecera, 2005). In my drawing *Phantom Glow* (Figure 1), the haze is perceived by the viewer due to the reflection and refraction of opposing lightwaves emitted by the red and blue pattern. The excessive exchange of light obstructs the underlying paper surface, prompting the viewer's mind to fill-in what lies beneath the occluding design. This results in the perception of the non

tangible color presence. In the same way, religion acts as a method of understanding a complex reality and attempts to discern what transcends physical existence/presence. Similar to the aforementioned illusory effect, religion and spiritualism suggest perceptual non tangible conclusions to speculate what transcends a material reality. The phantom illusion, in both art and science, is an example of a phenomenon that is empirically experienced but theoretically explained. This is contrary to the approach of most modern science which relies on empirical understanding-a experientially observable comprehension of reality. The phantom illusion, however, is observable and experiential, but unexplainable as to why the mind perceives such optical ghosts.

Josef Albers

From its first publication Josef Albers' *Interaction of Color* was groundbreaking in the way people thought about seeing. In his studies, the German born artist demonstrated the dynamically unpredictable nature of color by producing complex optical effects using relatively simple means (Dunne, 2012). In his *Homage to the Square* series, the artist unwaveringly attends the geometric form of a square to investigate various optical phenomena of color and to exhibit the illusion of spacial planes on a two dimensional surface. It is difficult not to attribute this geometric abstraction to the modernist movement popular at time of Albers initial studies. However, I would argue that the use of such geometric simplicity and employment of optical sensation ascribes to a spiritualism found in the artist's work.

First, the exercise of analyzing color behavior and results attained demonstrates a contradiction of physical fact. To site Albers directly from the introduction of the *Interac-*

tion of Color he writes, “Practical exercises demonstrate through color deception (illusion) the relativity and instability of color. And experience teaches that in visual perception there is a discrepancy between physical fact and psychic effect” (Albers, 2). Here, Albers acknowledges the discrepancy of fact that is rendered through his work causing viewers to question their previous notions of the properties of a particular color.

Take simultaneous contrast for example, where one and the same color is made to appear as two different colors. This phenomenon achieved when two large areas of color are placed on adjacent surfaces (Figure 2). Though the initial color is the same it appears different depending on the surface on which it is placed. Such occurrence prompts viewers to reflect upon otherwise fixed notion of fact. The effect is optically present and experienced but challenges what the viewer formerly knew to be true. Albers emphasizes this point by writing, “What counts here-first and last- is not so called knowledge of so-called facts, but vision- seeing. Seeing here implies Schauen and is coupled with fantasy, with imagination” (2). Here, Albers suggests that knowledge transcends the concept of empirical observation; that facts exist outside of materiality. Though the property of something may evade tangibility or explanation, its effects are nevertheless perceived and experienced. This corresponds to a spiritual disposition as many faith practices are constructed upon unmitigated belief in a non-physical existence. While my drawings and Albers’ studies seem rather analytical at initial glance, they both acknowledge a similar philosophy: that seeing, experience, and fact perception (as in knowledge) transcend a material existence.

Shape

Through the minimalist compositional structure of *Homage to the Square* Albers is able to demonstrate the illusive quality of color in the most basic, unwavering terms. This is similar to a scientific analysis that divorces itself from any symbolism that alludes to anything other than the subject of investigation. A square can be analyzed as a regular, non-complex, geometric structure constructed of four right-angles. The shape is often used to delineate specific areas of space. This can be seen more casually in the form of land plots, architectural blueprints, and graphs in order to articulate a reserved area of occupancy. The squares within Albers' series performs a similar function: each square reserves a designated area for a single color. In the words of the artist, "To me a square has a seat. It sits" (Holloway, Weil, and Albers, 1970). Albers' geometric format is juxtaposed by the animated colors which occupy his compositions. The kinetic property that color possesses is in direct opposition to the fixation of the square. In analyzing the two components, the viewer is able to observe that the square boundaries between colors become diffuse and disappear (Holloway, Weil, and Albers, 1970). The colors transcend their boundaries and permeate their surrounding surface. They lose their individual identity bound within right-angles and become immersed in the interactivity of adjacent hues.

It is important to note that the square is the space in which this activity takes place. It is an area in which such phenomena maybe accessed and observed. This notion holds a spiritual correlation as quadrilaterals have been portrayed symbolically in various forms of religious art. The basic geometric structure of a mandala, for example, is a circle inside of a square. Like Albers' the formation is comprised of two opposing forms: a cir-

cle inside of a square. The mandala act as an object of ritualistic worship often observed in Tibetan-Buddhism. It exists simultaneously as an visual depiction of cosmology as well as a ritual performance where religious powers maybe obtained (Ellingson-Waugh, 1974). The ceremony consists of a labor-intensive process where monks fill the basic concentric shapes with an intricate symbolic sand mosaic. These symbols reflect sentiments and beliefs of the Buddhist tradition. Such construction and symbolism is analogous to my work. The intense physicality of my process is a ritualistic attempt at perfection to access divinity.

According to Buddhist Studies scholar Ter Ellingson-Waugh, the square of the mandala acts as the “structure in which symbols may be inserted to analyze relationships of similarity and equivalence” (Ellingson-Waugh, 1974). Here, the use of the square is resemblant to Albers’ series as both use the shape as a structure to observe correlating relationships. They also exhibit a duality of function as both exist as a work of art and method of examination. Mandalas explore a spiritual examination where as Albers’ squares are concerned with the investigation of perceptual sensation.

Invocation possesses similar motives. Like Albers’, I am using geometric forms to analyze color relations and prompt optical sensations to evoke the illusory properties of color. Though the format of the work of my exhibition differ from that of *Homage to the Square* the results of my inquire are not compromised do unto the fact that every square is a rectangle. Therefore, I am able to make the same observations logically, symbolically, and visually. In resemblance to the mandala, to acknowledge the previous example, I am placing various symbolic geometric forms inside of the rectangular constructions to

prompt a visual and spiritual reaction. This pattern-making, like the mandala, is ritualistic in that, I am attempting to achieve perfection in order to emulate the essence of the divine. In doing so, through the repetition of form and color, I am able to, like Albers, invoke and observe the itinerant presence of color.

Space

It is now important to acknowledge the significance of space and spacial orientation as it pertains to the drawings of *Invocation*. There are countless example to reference the use of visual stimulus to effect the perception of a particular space. This notion transcends color and light as form can also be used to influence an individual's experience of a designated area. To reference the Catholic Church again, architecture plays a pivotal role in articulating spiritual realities to visitors. Architecture utilizes forms and symbols understandable to the human conscious to convey ideas of an intangible realm. The recurring use of symbolic numbers such as three, seven and twelve, for example, appear consistently in the construction of classical sacred architecture. These numerals take form in pillars, pews, and windows of the church but are also present in mosaics and other objects of worship within the space. Director and Associate Professor at the Liturgical Institute of Mundelein Seminary in the Archdiocese of Chicago, Denis McNamara, reiterates the purpose of this approach in an article written for the "Sacred Architecture Journal" publication. He writes,

As the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us, liturgy "is woven from signs and symbols" that make up the rites we know (CCC, 1145), and because liturgical architecture is part of the rite, it also bears sign and symbol value. Although every

“style” of architecture signifies something, certain kinds of architecture, like certain homilies, relay their messages more clearly. Classicism is a way of making buildings that signify clearly, that is, use the medium of architecture to convey otherwise invisible ideas. Proper churches are built to signify theological realities like the presence of the Christian community, the importance of the Church in civic life, and the presence of the full liturgical assembly: the Trinity, the angels, saints, souls in purgatory, etc. Liturgical art and architecture is therefore properly called sacramental in the broad sense of the term, since it makes invisible theological realities knowable to our senses” (McNamara, 2020).

The majority of these symbolic references can be found within the Christian Bible in the book of Revelation. Here, a more literal description of Heaven is given to St. John by his angelic host, one of which being the actual dimensions of the particular space. “¹⁵ The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod made of gold to measure the city, its gates, and its wall. ¹⁶ The city was built in a square, and its length was equal to its width. The angel measured the city with the rod. The city was 1,500 miles long, 1,500 miles wide, and 1,500 miles high” (New Living Translation, Rev. 21:15-16). These measurements result in the formation of a perfect square as the passage goes on to describes the concentricity of the space. The symmetry described in the passage is manifested throughout liturgic architecture in effort to imitate this spiritual reality. Form and symbol are used for their transformative quality. The perceptual conscious becomes more susceptible to transcendence when situated in a space that reflects divinity.

The recounted dimensional description is reflected in the design of some of the most iconic cathedrals in the world. Though the account of the measurements is more closely related to the arrangement of earlier temples and synagogues (Figure 3), the fundamental design of concentric squares and rectangles can be seen in later renditions of

European Gothic cathedrals. In both examples the altar of sacrifice and Holy of Holies exist as squares within the larger rectangle that is the Holy Place.

Though Joseph Albers' color investigations are often regarded for their contribution to the progression of abstraction, it is hard to ignore the compositional similarity that his work holds to the architectural floor plan of such holy places. Albers' *Homage to the Square* series analytically, and almost obsessively, explores the interaction of color combinations using a similar format. Though the minimalism found in the work can be attributed to the artist's inextricable link to modernity, the interaction of color found within the concentric forms can also be regarded as spiritually driven. Albers' Foundation director, Nicholas Fox Weber, describes the artist's spiritual interest when writing, "He was reverential about the mysteries and wonders of existence, the holiness he found in earthly life" (Fox Weber, 2012). Similar to the construction of sacred spaces, Albers' utilizes the vernacular of abstraction to visually articulate unseen realities. His exploration of color over fifty years can be seen as sacramental as his *Homage to the Square* translates the coexistence of divinity in a physical reality.

Invocation exemplifies corresponding ideologies found in the spirituality of Albers' art as well as the previously denoted spiritual dwellings. The seven drawings I have created for the exhibition behave similarly to sacred architectural components. Ornamented ceilings, decorated windows, and tiled mosaics are not holy in themselves but instead reflect the essence of the spiritual realm, increasing the probability of transcendence of mind and spirit. The exhibiting of the drawings does not make the gallery a holy

space, however, it provides the opportunity and circumstance in which such enlightenment may be achieved.

Light

The concept of Light holds a variety of meanings both literally and symbolically. In essence, color is light. This is of great importance in regard to the work of *Invocation* being that I employ color, its properties, and visual phenomena so explicitly. Light enables the optical perceptions of such sensations.

Natural light occurs and occupies space independently. It possesses an autonomous physical presence that can be experienced even by those who are visually impaired. A study conducted by The University of Montreal concluded that areas of the brain in blind subjects were stimulated when exposed to blue light (Brummelen, 2014). The notion that light possesses a physical presence suggests that it transcends optical perception and may be detected intuitively.

In addition to the literal function and understanding of light as it pertains to my body of work is the inextricable symbolism associated with it. Light has often been cross-culturally acknowledged metaphorically as divine. In the Old Testament of the Christian Bible, for example, God creates light and acknowledges as “good.” (Genesis 1:3) The presence of light, then, is inherently associated with goodness due unto the fact that it came from God. In Hinduism, light serves as a symbol of purity of mind. When the mind is pure it, like light, reveals objects of knowledge accurately to the individual-self (Shipman, 2017). In the Jewish tradition the association between light and goodness persist as light acts as a metaphor for Torah, mitzvot (good deed), and the human soul

(Berkun, 2003). Jewish Proverb teaches, "A mitzvah is a candle, and the Torah is light" (Proverbs 6:23) and "A candle of God is the soul of man" (Proverbs 20:27).

There is a recurring theme in each of the aforementioned examples. Light is enabling in nature as it reveals the unknown and offers a sense of clarity both literally and symbolically. It presents knowledge to its onlooker. The new Conservative chumash, *Etz Hayim*, offers insight into such spiritual metaphor: "Why has light been such a favorite symbol of God? Perhaps because light itself cannot be seen. We become aware of its presence when it enables us to see other things." (Etz Hayim Commentary, p. 503)." In the same way, through the optical sensations projected by the drawings in this exhibition, light manifests itself to the viewer as they become aware of the perceived intangible presence. As the passage suggests, light itself (in the form of ultraviolet light rays) cannot be seen, but the individual becomes aware of its presence through the perception of optical effects reflected in the work. To make an analogous spiritual comparison, God cannot be seen however his presence is reviled through ritual and ceremonial practice.

Invocation draws attention to the presence light possesses. It is a presence that is not only seen through the phantoms and optical effects generated in my work but one that is also perceived physically. As light dances across and behind each drawing we are made aware of its inhabitancy that transcends the picture plane. Such revelation that contradicts materiality creates a sense of self awareness, self reflection, and contemplatively assesses one's own visual memory. This meditative observation is seemingly spiritual, as the viewer looks inward for a better understanding of self to reach a higher level of consciousness.

The way in which the work is curated and exhibited plays an integral role in establishing a contemplative environment. Displayed under subdued lighting, the gallery begins to resemble the interior spaces of temples, cathedrals, mosques, and other holy places. Examples of this can be seen in the stained glass windows of Catholic cathedrals and intricate Islamic mosques. These architectural components are constructed to elevate the potential for divine revelation through spiritual agency.

A similar endeavor is attempted by contemporary artist James Turrell who uses the presence of light in a particular environment to create a reflective space. For Turrell, his work is intended to investigate a sense of presence of space, or, “that physical feeling and power that space can give” (Turrell, 2020). My drawings and Turrell’s environments express the same sentiment. What is conjured with light in Turrell’s work is achieved two dimensionally in mine, as elements are composed to conjure a presence, almost an entity, that can be experienced. In addition to the use of natural light, which the artists employs in a number of his pieces, Turrell is also known for creating large-scale atmospheric installations. In his *Ganzfelds* series (Figure 3), for example, Turrell demonstrates light’s ability to completely alter/eliminate depth perception. “Ganzfelds is a German word used to describe the phenomenon of the total loss of depth perception as in the experience of a white-out” (Turrell, 2011). Using light to distort/dissolve the contours of the room, Turrell creates a sense of endlessness in which the viewer is unable to identify the spatial limits of a particular space (Museum Frieder Burda, 2018). This is similar to the way in which Alber’s colors seem to defy the boundaries of the square. Turrell’s viewers are then left to contemplate themselves in relation to infinite essence that occupies his spaces.

Invocation evokes a similar response. Turrell uses the illusory characteristics of natural and artificial light to attain an individual and communal experience. In the same way, my images' interactions conjure phantom colors and other optical effects which are not physically present, but nonetheless real and communally experienced. They are individually perceived and the illusion is communally acknowledged.

Each of my drawings in the exhibition are backlit with artificial light creating an aura around the work. The symbolic use of emanating light has been used throughout art history to denote a subject's divinity and/or illuminate the work's protagonist. In regard to Spiritualist beliefs, each living thing possesses an aura embodying distinctive spiritual characteristics and is an essential part of an individual ("Aura"). Analogously, the aura of my drawings acknowledge the relative optical phantoms that emit from each piece. For this reason, each aura is a different color as they are correlative to the optical sensation that occurs within the picture plane. For example, the aura of the drawing "Psalter" is purple, because it references the color vibration prompted when placing a sheet of red paper on top of a sheet of blue paper. The result is a purple haze generated near the contours of where the two surfaces meet.

A more poetic analysis of the work can be made when examining the Greek definition of the word aura that translates as breath ("Aura"). This is an important observation because, like light (in the form of waves), breath is an unseen element essential to an individual's existence. Breath and breathing indicate life and the existing presence of an individual, entity, or other. Through optical illusion and the employment of artificial light the series of drawings in *Invocation* become animated. The light and aura of the work ac-

knowledges the existing intangible occupant of each drawing. It is the breath of the work itself that lets the viewer know that it's alive.

CHAPTER II

SPIRITUALISM

The optical effects of my drawings exhibit an inextricable spiritual characteristic of color and light. This suggests that color is no longer an inanimate entity but, instead, something that can be felt and experienced. Abstract painter Wassily Kandinsky wrote extensively on the topic of spirituality in artwork and suggests that “Religion, in the sense of awe, is present in all true art” (Kandinsky, 1912). Much like the disassociation between religion and science, art and religion hold a similar stigma in regard to modernism. The prevailing historic narrative recalls Western abstraction and nonfigurative representation as a product of a formalist movement that rejected any symbolic association. However, the famous 1986 Los Angeles County exhibition “The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985” challenges this assumption by displaying works of abstraction by spiritual artists that predate the formalist movement (Heartney, 2020). Paintings by Hilma af Klint, Mondrian, and Kandinsky among other renown artists, dispute this misunderstanding by exhibiting a keen interest in the spiritual within their work.

Spiritualism, as it pertains to the religious movement, believed that communication with departed souls was achievable through methods akin to religious ritual. Performed séances exhibited engagement with nonphysical entities. Similarly, In his most notable mediation on the topic *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, Kandinsky articulates his foundational argument that proposes art as a medium for communication between the artist and the viewer (Kandinsky, 1912). The drawings of *Invocation* preform a similar function as ritualistic procedure is used to manifest a non tangible presence. The works of art themselves act as a catalyst for communication between myself and the viewer as visual phenomena articulate and acknowledge this connection.

Kandinsky's observations investigate the physicality and symbolism of color through shape and form as it relates to the viewer. Similarly, my body of work is intentional in its selection of color as it references religious symbolism. The recurring use of red in Christianity references the blood of Christ. The liturgical colors of Christian liturgy are another example (Scott, 2014). These colors used in vestments and antependiums serve to underline moods appropriate to a season of the liturgical year or may highlight a special occasion. Similar to the ideology of Kandinsky, liturgical objects utilize color's metaphysical properties to express themes of an intangible/unseen reality. In the aforementioned example, a antependium, or parament, adorning an altar may reference a scene of the Last Supper. The amalgamation of symbolic color and imagery reference a time of the past which is no longer accessible. However, through the use of such objects in ritualistic liturgical worship, this scene, in theory, may be conjured and recalled. Here, the spirit of Christ may be accessed and experienced as it was during the ritual's initial perfor-

mance. Through the use of color and pattern I am attempting to create a similar scenario that alludes to the individual experience of my own personal worship. The performance of line drawing is reflective of my own attempt to commune with the divine. Color and pattern is used for its symbolic and synesthetic qualities in order to captivate the viewer, prompting their own participation in the ritual. This quality of my work draws similarities to the Rothko Chapel, a spiritual space designed by abstract visionary of the 20th Century, Mark Rothko. Here, visitors of all faith backgrounds are welcome to think, mediate, worship, and reflect in any way that suites them. The chapel houses fourteen enormous color field paintings that permeate the spaces atmosphere. Amidst reflection and meditation the artist is able to have a direct interaction with chapel visitors as the work's meaning is derived from viewer participation.

CHAPTER III

RATIONAL AND EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Empirical and rational (also referred to as theoretical) observation are two opposing methods of acquiring knowledge. Very simply because of the fact that their procedures of analysis are conflicting. Empiricism suggests that all knowledge is arrived at through sensory stimulus whereas rationalism proposes the deduction of knowledge and concepts a priori (apart from sensory experience) (Markie, 2017). Empirical observation assumes a consciously concrete understanding of knowledge in that, it maybe be physically and sensibly proven. Rational analysis, on the other hand, takes into account knowledge that is arrived at apart from sensory perception. This presumptions assumes that knowledge may be arrived at intuitively. In other words, something can be understood unconsciously, through intuition alone, and deduced to validate the proposed conclusion (Markie, 2017). Professor of Philosophy at the University of Missouri, Peter Markie, provides an insightful example in an article written for The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy. He writes, “We intuit, for example, that the number three is prime and that it is greater than two. We then deduce from this knowledge that there is a prime number greater than two. Intuition and deduction thus provide us with knowledge a priori, which

is to say knowledge gained independently of sense experience” (Markie, 2017). Similar deductive reasoning can be seen in when viewing my exhibition, *Invocation*. When viewing the work an illusion elicits a visual response that prompts the viewer to intuit an intangible essence. Upon further analysis of the work’s physical compositional components (color, pattern, material) the cause for such phenomena is rationalized. Optical illusion prompts a perceptual sensation that animates the work. The effect is an observable phenomenon unexplainable by empirical means.

In both rational and empirical analysis, knowledge is arrived at and thus validated by its means. The general conclusion of this essay and body of work can be found in the analysis of these two methods of observation and understanding. However, empirical observation is subject to the individual. This acquisition of knowledge is thus fleeting because it is experienced by one person. Rational knowledge, on the other hand, relies upon collective truths, such as the one illustrated in the previous example of the number three as a prime number. This knowledge is recognized as fact apart from physical investigation.

The aforementioned process of rational analysis is often linked to the nature of religion and spirituality in that, they both often assume the existence non observable realities. For example, the intuited existence of an eternal God maybe deduced by the unfathomable mystery of creation. In regard to Christianity, the conclusion of God’s existence is validated, and proven, through creation. The New Living Translation of the Christian Bible informs its readers, “For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the

things that have been made” (Romans 1:20). God’s existence (intuit) is rationalized through creation (deduction). This example illustrates how religion requires rational thought, thus making it a cognitive process and method of understanding reality.

This proposition corresponds to the conclusions of Emile Durkheim. In his master work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, the sociologist analyzes the rational nature of religion. The general summation of the work assumes that empirical observation is individual and thus fleeting (Durkheim, 12), whereas the rational knowledge of religion is based upon general universal principles. He writes, “At the roots of all our judgments there are a certain number of essential ideas which dominate all our intellectual life; they are what philosophers since Aristotle have called the categories of the understanding: ideas of time, space, class, number, cause, substance, personality, etc. They correspond to the most universal properties of things” (13). Because these principals are commonly acknowledged and agreed upon they then are validated and recognized in the same way as sensory experience. These principles take form in collective representations, or symbols, relative to a particular society. The power applied to these symbols is social in that, they are communally designated objects held in high regard for a specific purpose. The significance of these emblematic representations become sacred as their importance transcends individuality. Often eliciting an emotional response, collective representations communicate a cultural literacy. This can be seen in cases of nationalism where individuals unify under ideologies embodied in a nation’s flag. A spiritual example can be seen, in Judaism where the Star of David is used to symbolize God’s rule over the universe in all six geographical directions (“Star of David”). Another example is found in the use of a cross in

Christianity as it is held as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice. Because individuals place moral power upon these representations of their faith community's sociabilities, Durkheim argues that religion in itself is of a social nature.

Religion for Durkheim is therefore immensely social as societies place moral values upon material objects (225). It is important to note that these values, much like the aforementioned perception of color, are first perceived individually and then acknowledged socially. The individual recognizes the representation as it pertains to their own respective experience. Examples can be observed in Christian's acknowledgement of bread and wine as the body and blood of Christ during communion. Another can be found in Islam's recognition of geometry as a representation of the sacred. The Rub el Hizb (8 pointed star), for example, appears in the Qur'an at the end of passages and is representative of the holy book's equivalency of sections (Grabar, 1992). In both instances the individual recognizes the symbol as it pertains to their own personal experience within the social setting. To cite the previous example, during communion the participant reflects on the death of Christ and what that means for their own personal salvation as well as the salvation of the larger congregation. Speaking to the notion of collective representations Durkheim writes,

Before all, it is a system of ideas with which the individuals represent to themselves the society of which they are members, and the obscure but intimate relations which they have with it. This is its primary function; and though metaphorical and symbolic, this representation is not unfaithful. Quite on the contrary, it translates everything essential in the relations which are to be explained: for it is an eternal truth that outside of us there exists something greater than us, with which we enter into communion (Durkheim, 226).

Analogous comparisons can be made between my work and Durkheim's model. We are both acknowledging a similar theme: Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* was innovative in the study of Sociology as it expanded the notion of knowledge by validating the scientific investigation of religion. His theory of religion is based on the duality that exists within human beings that is both empirical and rational (. Of this he writes, "Such are the two conceptions (rational and empirical analysis) that have been pitted against each other for centuries; and if this debate seems to be eternal, it is because the arguments given are really about equivalent" (16). Humans come to knowledge both empirically (individually) and rationally (socially). The significance of Durkheim's model in my work is that it acknowledges and validates unseen/non tangible realities. Like Durkheim, I am acknowledging the non physical presence with which the viewer enters into communion when viewing the work.

The geometric compositions that fill the gallery space in my exhibition exist as collective representations that reflect ideologies of my own faith practice. As previously stated, similarities between the assumption of God's absolute and infinite quality can be observed when compared to geometric forms. Geometry is concrete and its conclusions maybe repeated. This correlates to the belief that the essence of God is steadfast and unwavering. The quality of precision embodied in my work reference the communal belief held by many religious denominations that God is perfect. Here, the pattern and mark-making found within my work are metaphoric collective representations of the characteristics of the divine. The drawings become symbolic in their abstraction as they acknowledge a presence that exists apart from the material composition. Throughout the works of

Invocation I am referencing representations of collective knowledge communicable to a variety of religious, spiritual, and social groups.

CHAPTER IV

RITUAL

Ritual is of critical importance to this exhibition in that the process of my work is conducted under ritualistic procedure. The meditative and labor-intensive physical act of organizing line, pattern, color, and shape in a composition in order to attain a desired optical effect correlates directly to the prescribed order of action of many ritualistic acts. Ritual, in many cases, exists as the means to reach a particular end. For example, one recognized objective in Christian baptism is to acknowledge the individual's absolution of sin ("Baptism"). It also exists as a symbolic reenactment of death and resurrection. Here, and in many ceremonial rites, the duality of ritual can be observed. Often, there is an objective as well as a performative element that recalls a specific moment. Another Christian example can be seen in the previously addressed ritual of Eucharistic Holy Communion. Here the sacrament exists as a memorial of Jesus Christ as the congregation reenacts the proceedings of the Last Supper in both word and action ("The Last Supper").

In his analysis of Australian Totemic societies, Emile Durkheim investigates the procedures and objective of the Intichiuma ritual of the Arunta tribe. He identifies the ob-

jective of the rites to “assure the prosperity of the animal or species serving the clan as totem” (Durkheim, 328). The ritual, which marks the Spring season through fertility of animals and vegetation is observed in effort to guarantee the continuity of the totem animal. By performing the ritual, the individuals of the clan are causing the totem to be reproduced (331). Throughout the dry season, clan members hold totemic prohibitions, forbidding the consumption of the totem plant or animal. During the Intichiuma, these prohibitions are broken as the clan partakes in a succession of ceremonious rites such as marching, fasting, silence, and blood sacrifice. Of ritual bloodshed Durkheim writes,

The Alatinja and some of his assistants sprinkle the ground with their blood; on the ground thus soaked, they trace lines in various colours, representing the different parts of the body of an emu. They kneel down around this design and chant a monotonous hymn. From the fictitious emu to which this chant is addressed, and, consequently, from the blood which has served to make it, they believe that vivifying principles go forth, which animate the embryos of the new generation, and thus prevent the species from disappearing. (337).

In this instance, blood becomes the ritual fertilizer from which totems emerge. To make a parallel comparison, blood (the blood of Christ) is the proverbial conduit Christians employ to access God, the Father. In both religions, Totemism and Christianity, blood enables communion with divinity. Another correlation between the two can be seen when comparing ceremonial feasts of both faiths. The succession of procedural rites of the Intichiuma culminate in a feast in which totemic prohibition is violated, and the totem plant/animal is eaten. Essentially, the clan eats their god in a symbolic consumption that restores order to the totem. Similarly, in Christian Communion, individuals eat the body and drink the blood of their God. This in turn, brings the community of believers together.

The rites of the Intichiuma intend to initiate reproduction of the totem animal where as Communion reaffirms the sacrifice and strengthens the community of Christ. It can be observed that in both given examples God or spiritual entity emerges through communal worship. Individual acknowledgement of sacred emblematic objects of worship, such as blood and/or symbolic consumption, contributes to the communally recognized importance of the ceremony. The ritual is experience first individually and then collectively.

Similarly, in the study of the interaction of color, Albers suggests that the recollection and perception of color is also first experienced individually (Albers, 3). Color and it's interactions are observed singularly. The effects summoned through my work reference a similar theme. The colors and pattern prompt a reaction within the viewer that they observe individually. In the case of color vibration, for example, colors are specifically oriented to prompted a specific effect, much like fixed rites of ritual are performed to elicit a particular spiritual experience.

In creating such optical sensations in my work I am confronting the viewer with an observable empirical experience. The perception of the phantom color effect is experientially observed as the selected colors and pattern result in a non-physical optical specter. The effect manifested is perceived by both eyes and mind but is not physically present. This sensation in is similar to the Invocation of God or spiritual presence conjured through ritual performance. By evoking such effects the viewer is compelled to participate in the ritual.

The interaction of colors suggests that a person is capable of seeing/experiencing more than what is empirically observable. The orientation of specific color combinations

lead viewers to read colors other than those physically present. In the same way, religious ritual establishes a similar scenario in which the perception of God, be it visible or palpable, is attainable. Much like the deliberate orientation of specific color combinations to achieve desired visual effect, ritual attends to fixed explicit procedures to generate sensations that defy material reality.

The experience of ritual in my work is relative to the participant. Much like the effects brought on by color interaction are arrived at individually, so it can be observed that a spiritual experience is initially realized by sensory stimulus. Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* accentuates the social aspect of religion and ritualistic performance, Durkheim acknowledges the importance of the individual's participation. He attributes the development of religion to the emotional aspect of communal living (44). For Durkheim, each individual of a community contributes to a set of collective societal truths. As previously mentioned, clan members abstain from interaction with those of the same totem and avoid consumption of their respective totem animal. This effort is individual but contributes to collective sociability of the clan. Totem objects are set apart and universally acknowledged as sacred (Durkheim, 231). Through ritual, interaction with these objects of divinity are permitted and individual participation becomes integral to communion with the divine and any other revelation is realized at first individually.

It is important to note that religious and spiritual ritual of any kind is multivalent, intentionally engaging multiple elements. Religious psychologist Halina Grzymala-Moszczyńska sites three levels that ritual operates on in her contribution to the *Archive*

for the Psychology of Religion: “form, meaning, and purpose” (157). In ceremonial ritual, for example, the terrestrial conscious attempts to cognitively recognize the presence of a visually absent entity or temporarily satisfy a spiritual objective. In Catholic Mass, for example, the recitation of mantras and incantations are used as invocation of the Holy Spirit. This can be analyzed using Moszczyńska’s model: the form of this particular ritual is prayer; meaning can be derived from the interpretation of the form, prayer, which exists as an object of worship and summoning of the divine deity; purpose is relative to the form of ritual. Prayer is multidimensional and serves multiple purposes. The Lord’s Prayer, for example, requests provision, protection, forgiveness, and guidance¹. These processional efforts, or cues, all contribute to temporarily satisfying an individual’s spiritual convictions. My body of work can be analyzed using the same model where form of ritual is embodied in a drawing; meaning is created through the symbiotic relationship between myself, the artist who performs the ritual, and the viewer who interprets my intentionality; purpose is found in viewer participation and engagement of the work as optical illusion acts as a metaphor for spiritual presence.

Invocation uses geometric abstraction as metaphor for universally recognized notions of divinity. In executing these patterns through a labor-intensive process I am able to attain illusory optical sensations that are individually experienced and communally recognized much like ritual procession.

¹ Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy. May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. And don’t let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one (Matthew 6:9-13).

Durkheim's conclusions and analysis of ritual within totemism is critical to this body of work. His meditation of individual sacrifice and revelation manifested through ritual parallels to the artistic processes and spirituality of my drawings. Very simply, the individual discipline of my process results in a nonmaterial, or spiritual, experience. According to Durkheim, individuals of totemic societies deem objects of their environment sacred (231). While my work exhibits the performance of a specific ritual, the art itself is not sacred. However, as the artist of this body of work I am leading individuals to experience the phenomena conjured through my drawings. Though a Catholic prays the Rosary, the beads of the object are not in themselves holy. Instead they are used as a conduit to communicate with the sacred. Coordinating the artwork throughout the gallery I am establishing an environment that acknowledges a spiritual reality that transcends physical presence. Here, individuals are able to experience the nonmaterial/spiritual.

CHAPTER V

DOUBT

The notion of doubt is prevalent throughout this body of work. Phantom color, after imaging, simultaneous contrast, and color vibration challenge what is physically present within the drawings. The work is an assemblage of colored ink on paper, however, a third, and separate, element occupies the composition. The visual effect produces a presence within the drawing separate from what the viewer knows to be physically true. Albers' *Interaction of Color* proposes that color is intrinsically deceptive. My work exhibits these sensations of doubt and invites the viewer to decipher their own perception of truth as it relates to their own reality.

Albers' theory suggests that color is relative and possesses the ability to interact, forming a reciprocal relationship in which one's visible properties influence the other. This mutual reaction results in phenomena which affect the perception of a color's visual properties. Such a sensation elicits a feeling of doubt within a viewer in regard to their own recollection of a color's physical property. Furthermore, one's sensory awareness, as it relates to the physical world, is challenged.

In addition to visual-doubt, there also exists an element of spiritual doubt throughout my work. This, however, is not to be confused with the classical Christian notion of theological doubt which questions God's existence or providence. It is instead a spiritual doubt of my own ability and confidence. The intricacy and awareness of precision in regard to execution of design is of paramount importance. Visually, I am creating abstract representations of the divine, comprised of sacred geometric forms traditionally associated with the symbolic portrayal of God (unbroken lines, triads, fractals, concentric forms). Working with the assumption that God is perfect, by attempting to depict God I am actively participating in the performance of an impossible task. My inherent imperfection as a human prohibits me from achieving the level of precision required to accurately portray a perfect entity. There then, also, exists the doubt of ritual provision. This is the notion that my inability to render perfection results in the futility/failure of ritualistic performance.

Doubt, as it relates to the work of my exhibition *Invocation*, exists in my own futile attempt to imitate the preposed perfection of God/divine. For example, even though I use a straight-edge or stencil to create a cut or pattern imperfection will still prevail. This is due to the fact that joint coordination and muscle control account for subtle movements that cause the hand to twitch and compromise the fluidity of the line, pattern, or cut (Dier, 2015). In order to prove the absolute perfection of a line, the path would have to submit to same precise measurement at the particle level to the molecular level (Payne, 2019). Thus, perfection is limited by the constraint of my physical nature.

Art making is a process of problem solving relative to artist, their medium, and subject matter. Arranging a composition, choosing an appropriate medium to best suite subject matter, and execution of procedure all serve as examples of the cognitive decision making of an artist. Doubt and uncertainty are often associated with finding solutions to these complex issues. There is always the possibility that the decision made is the wrong one ultimately compromising the work itself. This anxiety of failure persist throughout my processes more than any other emotion.

Similar endeavors have been undertaken by notable artists throughout history such as formalist painter Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) who attempted to achieve complete compositional balance and equilibrium. In doing so, the artist's work strives to "make visible those embedded truths that defy direct observation and empiricism" (Keane, 2020). Art historian Rosalind Krause recalls Mondrian's spiritually emblematic use of the grid as attempt "to represent properties of materials or perception while also responding to a higher, spiritual call. "The grid's mythic power," Krauss asserts, "is that it makes us able to think we are dealing with materialism (or sometimes science, or logic) while at the same time it provides us with a release into belief (or illusion, or fiction)" (Blessing, 2020) (figure 4). In this regard, Mondrian and I embark on a similar artistic conquest: To achieve an unattainable compositional faultlessness in order to reveal observable spiritual realities.

Doubt, whether personal or spiritual, is a quality of humanity. Questions of doubt are derived from everyday life experiences and failure. While doubt directly confronts faith, exploring these questions can prove to be a constructive exercise in truth seeking.

In attempting the impossible task emulating perfection, I am navigating difficult questions of my own personal faith.

The given examples of doubt that I experience when creating my work are metaphoric for the spiritual doubt that exists in religion. In my understanding of Christianity, for example, the concept of inherent sin suggests that humans are born into sin, out of sin, and establishes the division between God and human-kind. Therefore, humans practicing Christianity are imperfect beings in pursuit of a perfect God. The endeavor is on going even in it's futility. I would assert that it gives the individual's life meaning. And though people fail time and time again, the hope of one day achieving salvation (freedom from sin/ flaw) in order to commune with the divine acts as a motivating factor. This is analogous to my work. Though failure is immanent and doubt persists, the possibility of creating and visually communicating something truly faultless encourages one to continue obstinately.

CONCLUSION

As previously mentioned, Durkheim suggests that religion is cognitive and therefore a method of processing and understanding the physical world. In spiritual circles, these realities are individually experienced and communally recognized. Though many principles of faith defy direct observation and empiricism, they are nonetheless real to the participating individuals and accessible through ritual. The work of my exhibition, *Invocation*, communicates a similar sentiment as illusion conjures optical sensations that are intangible but experientially perceived. The effects are accessible to those participating in the viewing of the exhibition much like the spiritual energy of a ritual may be experienced by those engaging in its precessional rites.

The subject matter of my work is intangible. *Invocation* employs the illusory characteristics of color and light to investigate the experiential perception of a generated nonphysical presence. This is parallel to how religion enacts ritual and objects of worship to invoke celestial communion. In both scenarios intuition is accepted as a valid form of knowledge that requires no conscious reasoning. The existence of an intangible force is recognized and perceived though it is not physically present. It is regarded as fact. It is for this reason that I conclude that so-called verifiable fact, as it pertains to individual ex-

perience and the acquisition of knowledge, consist of more than empirical observation. Instead, it is coupled with creativity, fantasy, and imagination - all of which are cognitive processes influenced by thought, experience, and sensory perception. The optical phantoms of my work are not physically present but are nonetheless real to the viewer experiencing them. Their presence is cognitively intuited and sensorially observable making them real to the viewer. Light, color, and pattern operate as incantation in order to demonstrate such realities.

An invocation, in regard to religion and spirituality, is the act of petitioning for guidance or revelation through prayer, meditation, or ritual act. My exhibition, and the works in it, function as a space of contemplation in which a viewer may expand individual notions of knowledge, fact, and personal reality. As the awareness of the presence of light only comes when it provides guidance from the obscurities of the dark, so knowledge comes about with the inquiry of the unfamiliar and unknown.

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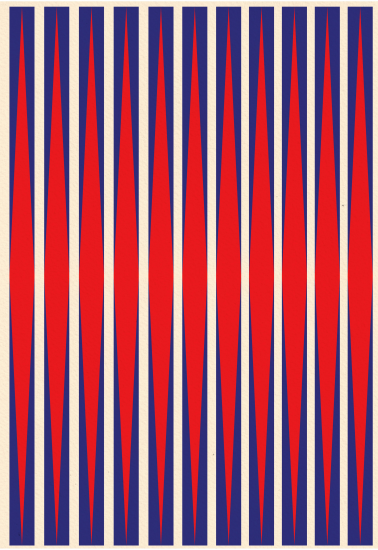
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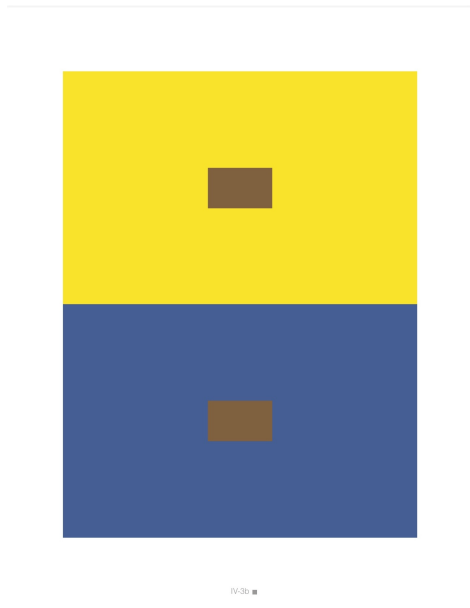
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APPENDIX: A LIST OF FIGURES

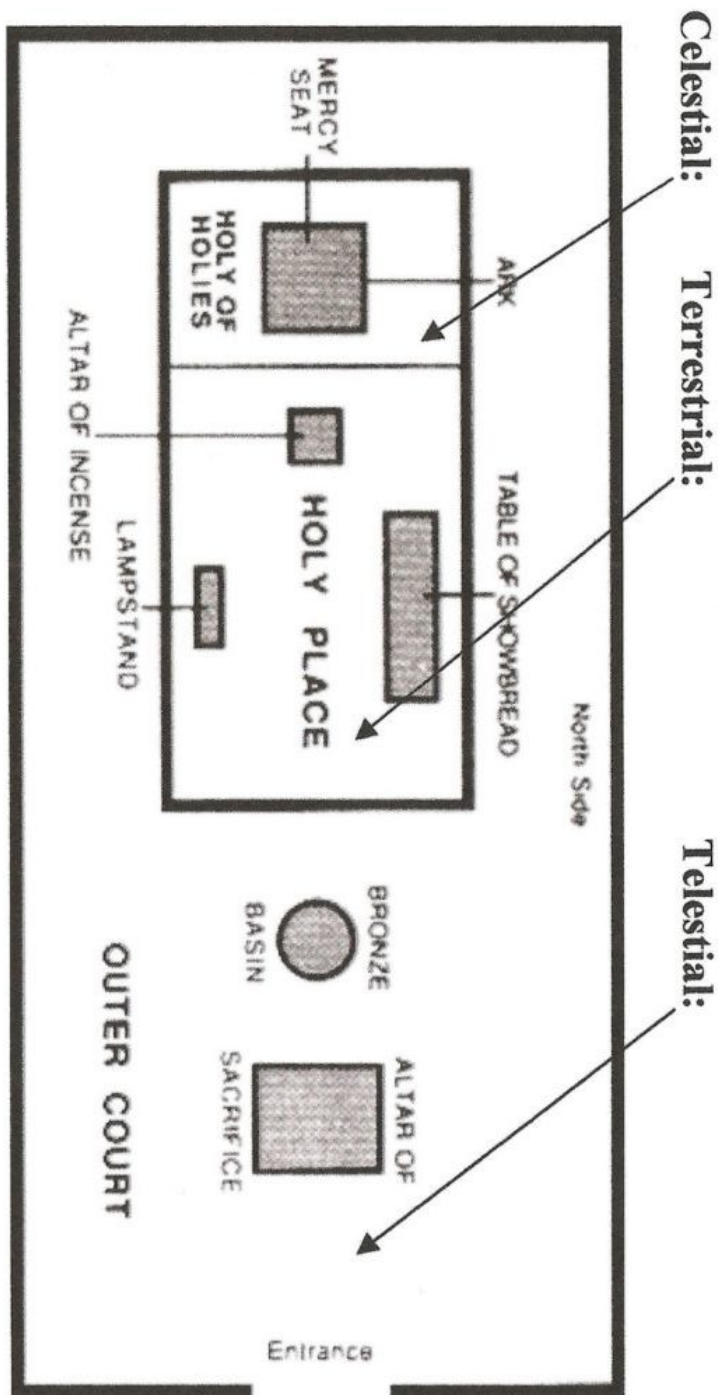
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1. *Phantom Glow*, enamel on wood panel, 2019.



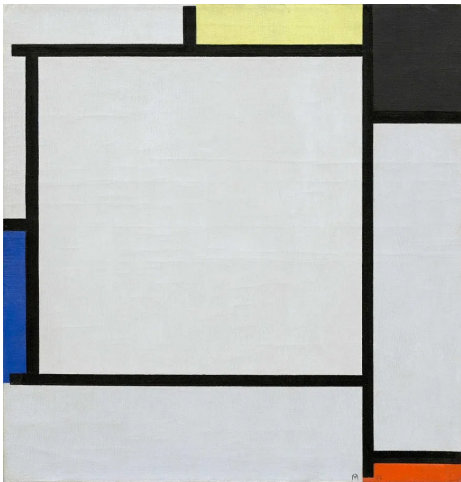
2. Illustration of simultaneous contrast from Albers' *Interaction of Color*, screen print on paper, 1963.



3. Holy of Holies Diagram. <https://www.deilataylor.com/kingdom-of-god-and-holy-of-holies/>



4. James Turrell, *AMRTA*, 2011. Work from the Ganzfeld series



5. Piet Mondrian, *Tableau 2*, oil on canvas, 1922

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