

INTERNAL STRUCTURES

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Acknowledgements

To my committee, family and friends, for their support and guidance through this process.

INTERNAL STRUCTURES

The following report maps my work in relation to the translation and transfer of physical artifacts and gestures from mundane spaces of the everyday into a personal, intimate narrative of built space. Bringing exterior public and industrial forms into a dialogue with interior domestic gestures and materials, I deal with notions of labor, repetition, measurements, and an experience of space.

My studio practice is collage based- self-generated from gathering fragments, organizing remnants and building an index of materials in the studio, which then undergo intense consideration and reformulation. Riffing on technical and conceptual concerns of the structural techniques of weaving and piecing/quilting, I actively consider how these remnants and fragments are joined together into a new structural construction. In this way I act as an architect, builder, inhabitant.

My thesis work is an installation of multiple sculptural works that engage each other in conversation through repetition of specific formal and conceptual elements. The concept of repetition is explored through stacking and arrangement to create a provisional and transitory effect in the individual pieces. Material connections also weave throughout the work and attempt to confuse the utility of material- industrial felt is used as a structure and a surface and steel as line, surface and structure. Some works continue the relationship of material and form but to different ends; the soft felt surface is simultaneously fashioned into a 'ruler' and used as 'paper' for drawing. In other instances this shifting signification is conceptual, for example, the works speak of construction both as structured, closed systems as well as fragmentary states of construction.

THE MEASURING AND MARKING OF SPACE

A long strip of black felt is cut out into a repetitive dot pattern. It is attached flush to the wall, marking the end of the installation space. There are fluctuations with the cut out shapes, some more oblong than round. The piece seems familiar, like a universal shelving system holder or a slice of pegboard turning repetitive dots into a measure of space that acts as inch marks or notches in a line. The irregularity of these dots reflects the human error in attempting to replicate a machined product. The utility of a ruler is translated into the material of felt, marked by the repetition of the hand cut dots. *Ruler* playfully points at standard systems of measurement using a tool. This is a new kind of ruler, one made for this installation; the viewer can imagine it as the keystone for the rest of works. I am imbuing the dot pattern with importance, with my own subjective set utility. Through its proximity to other lines and shapes, it is allowed to continue measuring beyond my presence in the making of the work and provide systematic information to the viewer. It recalls Mel Bochner's Measurement

Series, in which he uses the 'objective' tool of a ruler to measure space, industrial building materials and himself. Bochner states that he "slowly came to realize that these measurements are so deeply imbedded in our experience that they regulate our perception, yet remain completely invisible."¹ My piece, *Ruler*, measures my experience fixing my subjectivity as a framing agent in the everyday. *Ruler* is both a tool of construction and a construction itself.

Rulers are fundamental components in measuring systems created for purposes of comparison, context and understanding. Through identifying my own system of measurement, the subjective experience becomes systematized. I see this as continuing the history of tools of measure, in which the body acted as the tool to measure against. These measurement systems, such as a cubit equaling the length of a forearm from elbow to tip of middle finger, were not accurate or repeatable, but an immediate and intimate way to understand our relationship to space.



Along with creating my own tools and logic for construction, I explore imagery and materials sourced from the exteriors of public buildings and construction sites. *Articulated Structure no. 5 with Cuts, Vellum Slice with Steel Support, Ruler* is an installation of parts, consisting of a large chalk drawing on black felt, a steel structure which connects to the wall and creates a corner, a sheet of vellum with images, and a small 1 foot pegboard ruler leaning beside. This second ruler

¹ Mel Bochner, "Interview with Elayne Varian on March 1969", *Documents* v. 20, Spring 2001

resonates off the first felt ruler through the repetitive dot pattern that vertically fills the shape. Fragments of chain-link, plants and stairs are transferred onto the surface. This ruler leans against the wall, an object imbued with potential.



Hanging from the wall is a drawing on felt that is at once an architectural draft, a blue print, a map. The surface of the thin felt grabs the chalk lines, holding them, but also fighting against them with tiny fibrous hairs that disrupts the hard edged geometry. The white lines are faint, mapping information, intimating possible structural forms such as scaffolding or hand-rails. Part of the surface is cut away, revealing the wall behind. The cut as well as the drawn line shake with human error, exposing the hand that is constructing this new logic. I think about this gesture in a parallel manner to the way Eva Hesse used the language of industrial materials, the grid, and structure. In the book “Eva Hesse” Lucy Lippard writes that an integral part of her practice is the presence of her hand in her repetitive processes, an act that often visually breaks from mechanical perfection, which relates back to the human body and subjective experience². Through cutting and exposing, I am creating an intimate, human interaction with the structure that is informed by my own logic.



The felt drawing ground rests a margin away from a steel structure, establishing the repetition of a line which continues throughout the installation. It's material is

² Lucy Lippard, Eva Hesse. First Da Capo Press edition 1992

industrial, related to utility and labor, often found in structural building or used in reinforcing built space. The steel structure is repetitive in its form and expands the sculpture into a realm of drawing. From one view the steel bar turns flat planes into form and from another, it dissipates the form into line. The panes in the structure create a drawing in space through bisecting and dividing anything viewed in its frame. . Lippard writes of a single unit repeated acting as a pictorial device, similar to minimalist modularity, which transformed a three-dimensional form to an optical experience³. The shift from two dimensionality to three dimensionality creates a possibility for a phenomenological reading through the viewer's experience of space.

Rosalind Krauss writes of this as sequences of viewing in a critical essay on Agnes Martin's paintings. She states that "first there is a close-to reading" in which the work's details of materiality are exposed by close proximity to the paint. Then comes a 'moving back' from the work, where "ambiguities of illusion take over from the earlier materiality of surface." Lastly comes a third step, a "fully distant, more objective vantage on the work⁴". I consider this framework of viewing as a model for viewing the chalk drawing on the felt. From across the gallery it appears as a black shape with a linear cutout, an empty surface. A closer look will reveal thin lines, ranging in sharpness from a blurred stroke to a firmer white line. The drawn structure is revealed now, with references to scaffolding, a home, hand-rails. Closer scrutiny reveals the surface texture becoming more visible as well as the interaction of chalk and felt, scissors and edge.

In the work *Pieced Spatial Construction with Bound Supports*, I continue my subjective constructions with a collage made up of mundane urban imagery, cut into pieces and recombined. It is put together in a quilterly logic, drawing from the compositional strategies of an improvisation quilt which extends from the center and builds toward the edge in rows. This collage is constructed from small remnants of photographed space which get recombined into larger structures. Quilting is a structural technique that contains an interior systematic logic. It is often connected to the space of the body, worked upon in the lap of the maker, stitched, cut, quilted through. The fabric of a quilt is inseparable from the body, especially in its 'finished' state as something meant to cover or protect from cold. *Pieced Spatial Construction with Bound Supports* uses the structural means of quilt making but disrupts the function and aesthetics of surface. Concrete, broken steel railings, roughly textured stairs and a fenced sky are recombined into a new composition, that moves the imagery from its functional meaning to build an unorthodox patchwork of relationships with the body.

³ Lucy Lippard, *Eva Hesse*. First Da Capo Press edition 1992

⁴ Rosalind Krauss, *Bachelors*, October, The MIT Press 1999



The black frame is part of the quilted system. It is a structure and support for the image as well as a repetitious linear element in the installation. A pile of wrapped, bound felt acts as an additional supporting component. Stacked underneath the frame and elevating it off the floor, they stand in as bricks, sandbags against a rising river, or as something to hold, trapped and tied tightly.

STACK / SKIN / LINE

Stacks have been instrumental in the way I think about building layers of viewing as well as physical layering of materials and objects. In the piece *Stack*, a tied bundle is created from a textile that has been pounded on stone, abrading the knit structure and transferring an image of a stone ground upon itself. This transfer process embeds the cloth with a new structure, not woven and repetitive, but referencing an organic pattern of a stone walkway. It is a textural, structural transfer technique that also acts as a translation of stone. The surface perforations are a repeated element in this installation, occurring as tears in fabric, cut dots in felt, drill holes in metal. In this object they act as a window to the interior material, as well as reference the process of making.



The material, scale and position of the bundle allude to the body in its soft stuffed form, and its readiness to be picked up and carried in the arms. It is a belly, an armful, a head. This object contrasts its surrounding objects, in its undeniable corporeality. Stacked atop folded felt the form relates back to everyday provisional spaces where materials are haphazardly stacked waiting to be used or put away. The gesture of a stack connects to the gesture of the leaners, both situations of objects in waiting, charged with potential. The materiality of this piece connects to a concept of labor, specifically pointing to the labor of a home as well as the transitory nature of not having a home.



Leaning against the wall, near the floor based cloth stack, are two steel forms entitled *Raking Shores*. One is angle iron, bent. An image transfer acts as a skin on the surface, embedded photographic information, pixel and grey scale tone. The imagery collages railing and stairs, fragments of external architecture, as a translation of built space. The transfer acts similarly to the cloth bundle, though instead of surface perforations that degrade the surface structure, it builds onto it with a subtle second skin. The way the piece leans against the wall borrows a gesture commonly used in construction sites as provisional support structures. It is used to hold up walls being built, providing structure, adding an angled line against a flat plane. Next to it is a black steel square bar, with dot perforations and scuffed surface. Reflective silver material radiates from the perforations, drawing the viewer's gaze to a more intimate distance, activating the phenomenological sequence of viewing.



Continuing my subjective exploration of construction systems through the assembly of accumulated shapes and lines is the piece *Sequence of Construction*. The materials are plastic mesh with cut notches, paper printed with a faux marble image, a square stock steel post with a base of a cut corner of black steel, and a thin slice of vellum with magazine paper. On the ground is a bent steel flat bar that borrows its scale from other forms throughout the installation. Here materials switch halfway; the steel ends halfway and the exact line is replicated by a strip of felt. Almost the same color as the steel, the switch of materials creates an empathetic gesture to finish the rectangle. This construction of felt and steel acts as a framing agent for the materials beyond it, lining up at some edges while viewed and falling away when the viewer

continues around. This arrangement of materials is fragmentary, layered and connecting through edge but still separate. The title of the piece, *Sequence of Construction*, is a type of architectural plan drawing which steps through the processes for building a structure. It details the construction operations necessary for building including pouring slabs, framing walls, etc. Through borrowing this language, I am able to imbue the distilled formal arrangement of shape and line into a space of potentiality.



Throughout this body of work, I am exploring the language of construction and structure along with my intimate experience with the built environment. Through cutting, folding, binding, collecting, piecing, stacking, building, and arranging my hand is intimately imprinted upon all these materials. A resonance of scale, measurement, color, and material echo throughout the space, shifting between objective and subjective considerations. Through the process of translation and transfers, materials and actions overlap, acting as a new constructed system with internal logic that contains layers of viewing and stratas of meaning.

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