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Dig, Spin, Repeat

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DIG, SPIN, REPEAT

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Masters of Fine Arts

in

The School of Art

by
Brittany Anne Sievers
B.A, DePauw University, 2013
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PREFACE

I am interested in endless labor.

I am interested in space and spatial relations.

I am interested in room scaled objects.

I am interested in minimalistic aesthetics.

I am interested in the materiality of an object.

I am interested in tactility of material.

I am interested in human touch.

I am interested in noticing.

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ABSTRACT

Dig, Spin, Repeat, is a body of process based installation objects that uses minimalistic aesthetics placed strategically in the gallery to highlight the architecture of the room. By connecting these unique architectural elements, the work aims to achieve mindfulness similar to the research of Ellen Langer: encouraging active observation. Drawing from my background in sports and factory work, I create multiple repetitive forms out of hand-spun yarn and sourced clay. The room-sized installation objects produced from these raw materials explore the value of staying in the present moment for both the viewer and myself.

Dig, Spin, Repeat

Introduction

Dig, Spin, Repeat is an exhibition that utilizes minimalistic aesthetics to heighten the viewer's awareness of space and their physical presence. In the main gallery, the placement of these objects attempt a curving flow through the gallery and create a subtle connection to the audience through their room-sized scale. The installation objects subtly influence the typical walking path of a gallery around the perimeter and instead force the viewer into through the middle of the gallery. As the viewers flow through the space, he or she finds different relationships between the pieces and finds changes in their perception of space. A ceramic piece in the hallway utilizes the linear space and attempts to reconnect the wall through the obstructions of doors. These two main elements construct *Dig, Spin, Repeat*. From this point on, this paper will describe the visual elements of the show, define key terms, and discuss influences and my process. From there, I will continue to explain the conceptual motives behind this body of work, provide a context of previous artists and art movements that align with this work, and explore the possibilities of the next step.

Aesthetics

In the main gallery, the show is comprised of three major installation objects. The gallery's architectural details became essential during the planning and installation of these pieces. I wanted to accentuate areas that had previously gone unnoticed to myself as well as disturbing the square feeling of the gallery.

Ascend

The weight of my hand.
The weight of wool,
denser once it's yarn.
A spin, altering.
My hand, the yarn,
slumping with fatigue.



Figure 1 Brittany Sievers, *Ascend*, 2017

As the audience walk up the stairs of the Firehouse gallery and into the main room, you are greeted by *Ascend* (see Figure 1). Aesthetically, yarn connects the two dominate columns in the space. Since each piece of yarn is the same length, the tautness of the yarn slackens as it moves up the column; the weight of the yarn becomes visually apparent. The light on the piece allows the yarn to glow, giving the piece a type of shimmering sensation. This shimmer is due to the altering qualities of each individual strand. Wool roving twisted loosely provides pockets of thicker pillowy sections. On the left pillar, each string is tied three inches apart until six feet up the column where it is tied every inch and a half until it reaches ten feet. On the right pillar the strings come together at ten feet. This attachment allows the opportunity for each audience member to get at eye level with the work and thoroughly examine its material quality. The piece

also blocks off a straight path into the gallery forcing the audience to curve around the piece, which leads them to *Swoop*.



Figure 2 Brittany Sievers, *Shadow of Ascend*, 2017

Swoop
Spinning
to produce.
Spinning
to maintain.
Spinning
to impact.



Figure 3 Brittany Sievers, *Swoop*, 2017

Proceeding to the right, *Swoop* (see Figure 2) fills an area of the wall between two doors. Each string is seamlessly attached to the wall as well as the floor utilizing gravity to create a gentle curve from the weight of the yarn. This hand-spun yarn installation object consists of two hundred and twelve strings set at every half inch, which creates a visual curtain. This spacing choice, provides for the densest of the three objects when compared to *Ascend* and *Twist*. Viewing straight on, shadows projected on the wall to create a visual illusion with the string; as you stare at this piece longer, it gets harder to decipher which lines are yarn and which are shadows. From the front the piece appears as one plane created from many lines, but if approached from the entrance door, the audience can see the depth the strings create from being individually hung in the space. Again approaching this piece from the side breaks the visual illusion of the shadows and allows the viewer to really observe the differences in the quality of

the line. By reaching out into the open floor, the viewer is then coaxed toward the middle of the gallery.



Figure 4 Brittany Sievers, Shadow of Swoop, 2017

Twist

A combination
of fibers. Spiraled,
amid skin cells.
My cells.
Entwined.



Figure 5 Brittany Sievers, *Twist*, 2017

The back two thirds of the gallery open to *Twist* (see Figure 3), the open and airiest installation object. Only using eleven, doubled up lines, this piece accentuates the only undisturbed wall in the gallery. Attached to the frame of the gallery window, yarn is strung every ten inches. Each line of yarn then extends the length of the gallery to the other side where it creates a horizontal line on the crown molding. A simple switch from an initial vertical plane to a horizontal creates a twisting plane in the space. The shadows from *Ascend* curl around to lead the viewer's eye to the left side of *Twist*, where it attaches to the wall. The light here makes the left side glow and dissipates as *Twist* reaches through the gallery. On the right side, connected to the window, this luminosity reappears. If the audience curls around the piece, they notice the gentle

curve that forms from this twisting plane.



Figure 6 Brittany Sievers, *Backside of Twist*, 2017

In conjunction with the main gallery *Ceramic Strand* (see figure 4) inhabits the hallway. A six-inch band of ceramic multiples, hung at the height of the light switch, spans the wall. It connects the fragmented wall through implied plane and creates a horizon line through the obstructing doors. Each individual module fills the gap between my pointer and middle finger, and then has a slight twist to it. The formation of these modules in a line and their individual twisting motions alludes to the hand-spun yarn in the main gallery. Visually this piece is similar to the yarn as it plays with shadows. The shadows below accentuate the texture formed by the modules and soften the harsh lines of the board. This distortion and color variance encourages close observation.

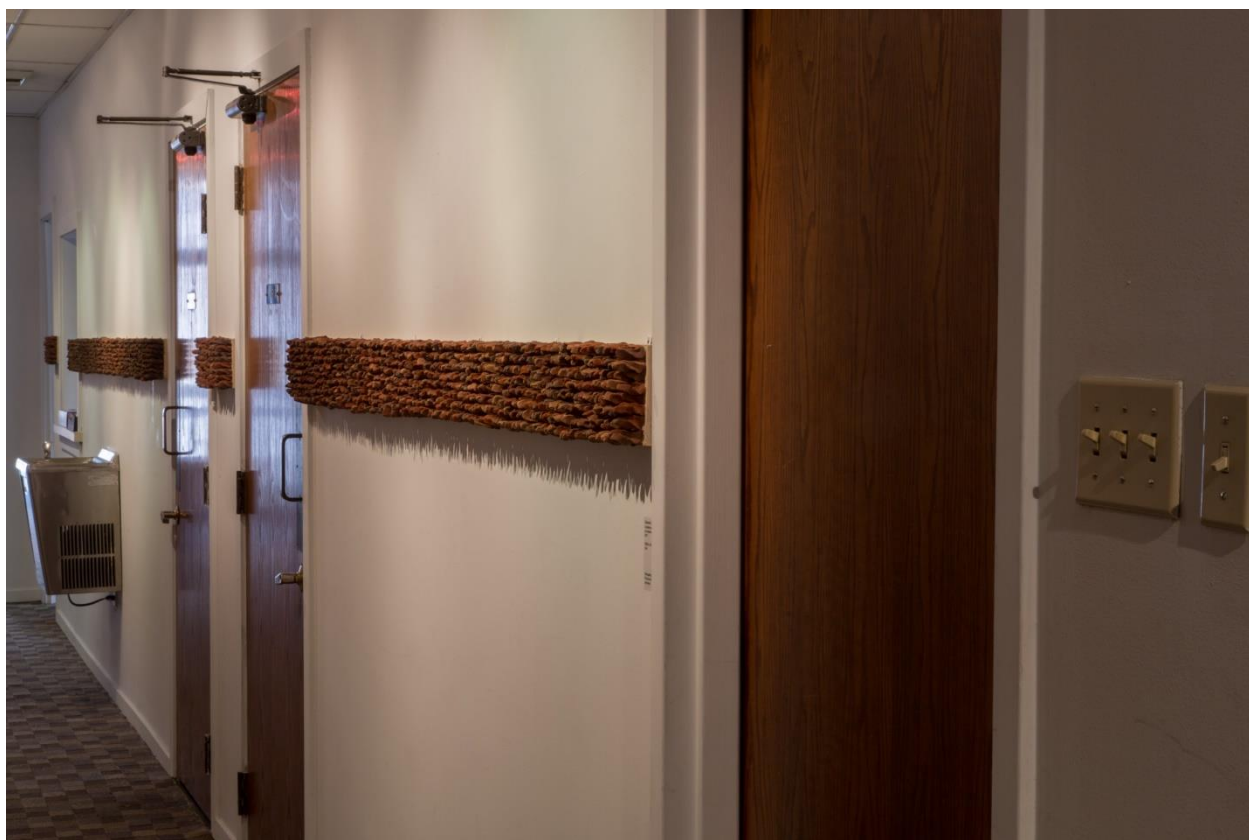


Figure 7 Brittany Sievers, Ceramic Strand, 2017



Figure 8 Brittany Sievers, Detail of Ceramic Strand, 2017

Installation Objects

Singularly, these works are installation objects and are thought of as such. While this show could be classified as an installation as a whole since the audience's flow is considered throughout the space, each individual piece is not considered an installation.

By looking at what characteristics sculptures and installations possess, respectively, I can clarify the term installation objects. Sculptures are objects placed within a room that may not have a direct connection with the room or space that surrounds it or even the other sculptures in the room. The word sculpture does not encompass these pieces since the objects in *Dig, Spin, Repeat* are site specific: they respond to the room, the audience, and the other pieces in the gallery. The term installation does not fully represent the individual work, emphasis on individual.

Installations as art historian Julie H. Reiss suggests have two criteria: that the work is site specific and that it includes viewer participation.¹ Each piece is site specific, but does not itself contain viewer participation. This places the work somewhere between sculpture and an installation. Each of these become site specific objects to visually explore rather than an overwhelming experience. They become installation objects.

These objects begin to engage with the audience in scale and space. Since their size is dictated by the space of the gallery, the sculptures will highlight the spatial relations of the room.

The installation objects will fill walls or frame the space that they interact with.

In the Firehouse Gallery, the size of these pieces and their placement in the gallery create a certain flow that determines how the audience moves through the space. The way each piece takes up space encourages more lateral movements throughout the space giving it a feeling that it is longer than the actual dimensions and encourages exploration to new points in the space.

¹ Reiss, Julie H. *From Margin to Center the Spaces of Installation Art*.

These characteristics give the illusion of an installation, however, these objects are not dependent on each other, but are rather dependent on the space they inhabit. They do not need each other to be viewed at full capacity.

In order to put these installation objects on display in another space or gallery, they must be rescaled to fit that specific space. The importance is not that the pieces remain the same size, but have the same use: filling a wall, connecting architecture, and highlighting unique characteristics. The pieces create the illusion of immediacy. Each installation object gives the feeling that they were created specifically for the space, in the space.

Concept

The objective of these installation objects is to make the audience become aware of the present moment. This is accomplished by subtle visual details, emphasizing gesture, materiality, and space. Ellen Langer, a social psychologist, studies this type of awareness that leads to mindfulness. In a radio interview titled the *Science of Mindlessness and Mindfulness*, Langer explores Mindfulness not as a meditative practice, but as just being present: “the simple act of actively noticing.”² Langer categorizes actively noticing as something you must be aware of. She continues to say that you cannot decide to be ‘present’. Being present isn’t a decision to be made rather it’s an active commitment. This commitment is to finding characteristics that didn’t stand out previously in a space or situation and taking note of what is happening around you. Langer’s example encourages individuals to go home and notice five new things about your roommate or partner, and she asserts doing this will help keep the relationship fresh.³ Actively noticing has increased happiness, made individuals feel younger, and promoted a healthy lifestyle.

² Tippett, Krista. *Science of Mindlessness and Mindfulness*.

³ Tippett, Krista. *Science of Mindlessness and Mindfulness*.

Langer started testing her hypothesis of this mindfulness with different studies on choice. She conducted a study with the elderly in a nursing home that split up the residences into two different groups. Half were encouraged to make choices similar to the choices they would make twenty years early. The other half were told the nurses would help them with anything they needed. The results held that the group that was actively making his or her own choices had twice as many people living 18 months longer than in the group that relied on the nurses.⁴ This ability to choose and continue to be present rather than taken care of provided longer lives.

Langer emphasizes that being present and mindful isn't something you can just tell a person to do. It's a choice made specifically by the individual.⁵ While the majority of her writing and research is on the outcomes of this behavior, I am interested in creating a work that spurs this mindful behavior from the viewer. *Dig, Spin, Repeat*, provides a visual platform for the audience to become mindful in the Langer sense; to actively notice details.

Beyond Langer, the ability to focus in the present and avoid mindwandering has similar effects on humans. Matt Killingsworth, Ph.D, studied the effects of mindwandering on happiness. He defines mindwandering as thinking about something else that isn't the immediate task that a person is working on.⁶ He launched an app that would send notifications randomly during the day to ask what the person had been doing the moment before, how did they feel, and if they were thinking about something other than what they were doing. It would clarify if their mindwandering ideas were pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. The results showed that no matter what the person was thinking about, they were less happy than if they were presently focused.⁷ Even though we have this ability to multi-task, to think about the upcoming meeting, last year's

⁴ Langer, Ellen. *Mindfulness Forward and Back*.

⁵ Tippet, Krista. *Science of Mindlessness and Mindfulness*.

⁶ Killingsworth, Matt. *Want to be Happier? Stay in the Moment*.

⁷ Killingsworth, Matt. *Want to be Happier? Stay in the Moment*.

vacation, or what your friend was doing, it makes us significantly less content. There is a proven value to practice mindfulness.

Using a Langer approach in my work, getting the audience to notice, provides a platform for them to stay in the present. This state of awareness halts mindwandering and allows the viewer to remain in a state of optimal pleasure.

Process

The material becomes crucial with this concept. I am drawn to materials that have a tactile quality to them and interested in the direct human touch placed on these materials. During my undergraduate studies, I made clay for classes as a ceramic technician. We bought dry materials, and mixed large 200 pound batches of earthenware. The consistency of this material captivated me. Starting with two large buckets of slip that oozed around your hand, adding in dry, refined material, and matching just the right amount of water. There was a recipe to follow, but every batch was different. Being present and aware of what the clay looked like at different times became the most important sign if the clay was on track. There were times I had to add more dry ingredients or water, or maybe just let it mix longer. Mixing clay is a balancing act.

These mixed batches seemed like the Betty Crocker version of clay: rip and pour, mix until combined. I began thinking. *Isn't clay just dirt? Isn't this dirt more readably available than ordering bags of yellow art, red art, and grog?*

During my time at LSU, I began to dig my own clay and process it. I found an area where a road cut into the side of a hill that exposed clay and excavated the dirt off of it. Bringing it back to my studio, I added water to create a slip and filtered it through two wire screens in order to detach the clay from roots, rock, bugs, and other foreign objects embedded in the dirt. The silky slip was then poured out to dry and turn into malleable clay.

Expanding from just clay, I searched for another material that has similar properties, the tactile ability, the evidence of hand, and the availability to be closely sourced. I also began to use thread in different installations to present these ceramic pieces. This processed thread from Walmart seemed to lack something necessary when put next to the clay I had created with mindful labor. I started to consider what steps were necessary to relate store bought thread to the dug ceramic modules.

These searches led me to wool. I produced yarn from wool roving using a drop spindle. Spinning, creating a bond that is difficult to break, combines the fibers of the wool. I spin each section of yarn moving up a few inches at a time until I have a couple feet to wrap around the base of the spindle then repeat. Once the base of the spindle is full, I wrap the seventy foot long piece of yarn around a hanger to soak in hot water in order for the twist to set and rewrap the yarn looping around a hook to dry.

Instead of this yarn becoming a side component to the clay, I was interested in the quality of each piece of yarn the same way I am fascinated with slip oozing through my hand. Spinning the wool by hand provided for irregularities, especially in the beginning of this process and learning a new skill. Some wool strands stuck out and the wool went from tightly wound lines to soft fluffy sections. It became almost like a drawing to me, with the thin and thickness creating movement through a singular line. As I progressed, I learned how to intentionally add in these fluffier sections and exploit the quality of something hand spun rather than made mechanically or on a wheel.

Expanding on this active attention to detail, Langer also suggests, “Mindfulness seems to leave its imprint in the products of our labor.”⁸ For me, an example of this is Grandma’s

⁸ Langer, Ellen. Mindfulness Forward and Back.

Christmas cookies. She hand mixes each ingredient, knows the proportions of ingredients by look, and they come out delicious. If you try to duplicate this recipe, it never tastes the same. It isn't just love that grandma's baking into the cookies, it is mindfulness, and the imprint of her hand. We notice when things are done with this precise effort. Langer used another example of music in her chapter *Mindfulness Forward and Back* in *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Mindfulness*. When musicians put their own spin on the music they play rather than following directly from the page, the audience responds in a more positive and likeable way. It becomes mindful labor.⁹

By spinning each inch of yarn with a drop spindle and processing the clay by hand, I embody this practice of mindful labor. The dedicated labor heightens the distinguishable mindfulness. It's like grandma's cookies; there is something better about a visible mark of the hand and obvious dedicated labor.

Paralleling the way I work with material with the Langer approach, my material itself also effects human satisfaction and explores its value. There are studies to show that working with the raw natural material has a positive impact on individuals. Christopher Lowry, an associate professor at the University of Colorado Boulder, conducted a study with a team of researchers to find out if dirt had the capabilities of antidepressants. Lowey found that dirt can prevent or treat "stress-related psychiatric disorders characterized by elevated inflammation, such as major depressive disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder."¹⁰ As a living, breathing organism we crave to be around or in connection with green spaces. Lowey continues, "It now seems that the most likely explanation for the health benefits of exposure to farms, dogs in the

⁹ Langer, Ellen. *Mindfulness Forward and Back*.

¹⁰ Brones, Anna. *Does Dirt Make You Happy?*.

home, and green space is that the natural environment (including the animals in it) is a resource that provides organisms as we need them.”¹¹ Clay and wool are two basic materials that have the ability to provide this necessity that can lead to human well-being. Connecting to the environment, outdoors, and nature provide a necessary human need, and we crave that.

Byproduct of Environment

Growing up in a rural town in Indiana between a corn field and another corn field has directly impacted this work. For me, the Midwest has a habit of filling. Farmers fill areas with crops, factories workers fill shelves with products, and basketball players fill hoops with basketballs. Constantly driving past these fields filled with corn and soybeans has given me a visual vocabulary of organized chaos. When you are in the middle of a corn field, it is impossible to tell where you are and it’s easy to get lost, but as you drive by you can distinctly tell the organization of rows. This type of messy organization is apparent in my ceramic installation objects.

Working in a book binding and furniture factory throughout school has provided me with the tools to endlessly create. An order ends but another one immediately follows. I took pleasure in backing up the next station, by binding so many books that they couldn’t keep up. I created a game out of this and challenged myself to continue to produce. This competitive nature comes from a background in any sport that was offered in my small Midwest town.

I played softball, soccer, tennis, basketball, dance, volleyball, gymnastics, and track and field throughout my youth. I was pretty bad at most of it, but being on teams that never cut members fostered my drive to continuously improve. The quality of these things didn’t matter; it just needed to be completed.

¹¹ Brones, Anna. *Does Dirt Make You Happy?*.

While it's easy to get caught up in the mass of objects, I found myself wondering about the student who was going to learn algebra out of the book that I just bound. I thought about my sweat accumulating on the floor on the base line of the basketball court and wondered how much would end up there before the next sprint. I stared out of the car window every trip to the city and fell into wonderment about how much corn was out there. And what was its purpose? The Midwest nurtured my curiosity for noticing. Its monotony drove me to look harder and deeper into my surroundings.

In all of these activities, I had questions: questions of how objects connected to people and where binding the book fell into that. I continue to question in my life and aim for my work to present questions to my audience. In order to evoke a sense of curiosity through my work, I keep the materials and installations simple, not wanting to visually overwhelm the audience, but to instead give the audience a way in. By ushering the audience in to the work, the piece seeks to be inclusive. This inclusivity then provides a platform for the audience to question, to be curious, and notice the mindful labor before them.

Art Influences

There is an obvious comparison between my work and the minimalist movement of the 60s. Minimalism's use of fundamental forms organized in straight lines began to put less emphasis on the object and more on the viewer, the space, and viewer's interaction with both the object and space.

Dig, Spin, Repeat embodies the spatial relationships in Minimalism. Minimalist installations achieved a similar sensation. Robert Morris's *Untitled (Three L-Beams)* works in this way. Three beams are placed in the space but are oriented differently which heightens the audience's relationship to them, the relationship they have with the room, and the way the

audience walks around the space. However, we find that the material and form of these pieces become less important than the objects themselves. For my work, creating a show where both are equally important provides a softer space, a more welcoming environment.

Another Minimalist artist, Fred Sandback, worked with room spatial relationship and also highlights the space contained in his thread work. His work may be one of the most minimal, depicted with only a line instead of a plane or object. But yarn, with its fuzzy edges, lacks the shine that most minimalist are drawn to. Sandback's material choice separates itself from the previously discussed *Untitled (Three L-Beams)* and builds off of this spatial exploration. This material adjustment provides a bridge from my work and other minimalists.



Figure 9 Fred Sandback, *Untitled (Sculpture Study, Two-part Standing Construction)*, ca. 1978/2007

Standing in front of a Sandback (see Figure 5) this year at the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth provided some great insight to my own work. *Untitled (Sculpture Study, Two-part*

Standing Construction), is at the center of a room in the gallery. It's simply two black rectangles perpendicular to each other. This visual simplicity is heightened by the complexity it brings. As I watched museumgoers interact with it, they mimicked the plane as if it held glass, they jumped through to break this plane, or even walked the length of the yarn. It was one of the most interactive pieces in the museum. The black yarn lines highlighted the five black lines for lighting tracks on the ceiling. The size of the piece gave the room a claustrophobic feel and pushed the viewers to the wall if they wanted to visually take it all in. All this was done by a three-dimensional line in space. We can see Fred Sandback's thoughts on space from this excerpt of a 2002 interview in Marfa, Texas.

Verna

Would you say the exhibition space becomes part of the work?

Sandback

Absolutely. It's my good fortune and my bad fortune to have the boundaries not stop there.

Stockebrand

Do you interpret the space?

Sandback

Not in a conceptually guided way. It's not a narrative device about space; it's just how you share the space. You've got to compromise.¹²

It is clear that our approaches to our work is related. The considerations of the space is imperative. While Sandback doesn't specifically reference architecture in the space, the size of the space and its orientation influence his final product. At the Museum of Modern of Fort Worth, these choices were clear. The black yarn began to reference the black lighting tracks on the ceiling and the central placement in the room created a specific flow through the space; there was a type of spiral movement. First, the audience began to move around it, but was soon sucked into the empty plane by the natural urge to stick their hand through. I have a similar consideration to the space. For me, it is more apparent. Thinking of these works as installation

¹² Govan, Michael, Stockebrand, Marianne and Verna, Gianfranco. *Conversation with Fred Sandback*.

objects that need to be specifically tailored to a space put these spatial considerations and connections to the architecture of the room in the forefront. This difference in the spatial choice is accentuated in the conceptual identity of the work.

Visually *Dig, Spin, Repeat* aligns with minimalism, however, conceptually my work is quite different. The quality of material the minimalists used could be achieved from commercial products; these artists used readily available and easily purchased items such as steel, wood, and brick. Time and investment are needed to create my materials as well as a direct connection to the Earth, the ability to record hand and gesture, and the ability to source the material myself. For me, these choices create work that feels more accessible. Most Minimalist art works, on the other hand, utilizes heavily polished items and precisely cut boxes to create an industrial energy around the work. In my opinion, this work holds a feeling of elitism since it gained even more momentum when the artist self-promoted by writing art reviews about each other's work. It became an incestuous movement that was self-congratulatory. While I borrow visual components of this time, I hope to avoid an arrogant atmosphere around my work.

A rejection of the shiny, polished sterile surfaces of repeated blocks ushered in textured objects, rough edges, and references to the body of the Post Minimalist movement. The Post Minimalist movement kicked off a lineage of women artists working in abstract minimal sculpture. Last year, The Hauser and Wirth gallery in Los Angeles focused on these artists with their show *Revolution in the Making: Abstract Sculpture by Women 1947-2016*. These women “reveal their makers inventing radically new forms and processes that privilege solo studio practice, tactility, and the idiosyncrasies of the artist's own hand.”¹³ My work expands from these women that came before. Comparatively my work, again, is conceptually different,

¹³ Hauser & Wirth. *Revolution in the Making Abstract Sculpture by Women 1947-2016*.

however, visually there are strong ties through these decades of work. From the 60s of more formalist work, to the 90s where political charge took control, abstract sculptures by women form an important lineage in art history.

Directly from this show, the work of Lygia Pape stands out as a visual reference to my body of work. *Téia I, A*, uses golden thread, nails, and lights to organize the string into plans and play with shadows against the wall. (See Figure 6) “This tender territory of gridded gold becomes a way to impart a serene and spiritual precision, like a slant of light shining through a beveled glass window.”¹⁴ Through this subtlety and corner placement, it is clear that Pape was interested in space and observation. She plays with the audience’s perception with only one continuous line, and this twist in perception the work transform from a line to a metaphor. Her gold threads have been compared to sun beams in churches and hold a powerful relationship with the audience.

¹⁴ Hauser & Wirth. *Revolution in the Making Abstract Sculpture by Women 1947-2016*.

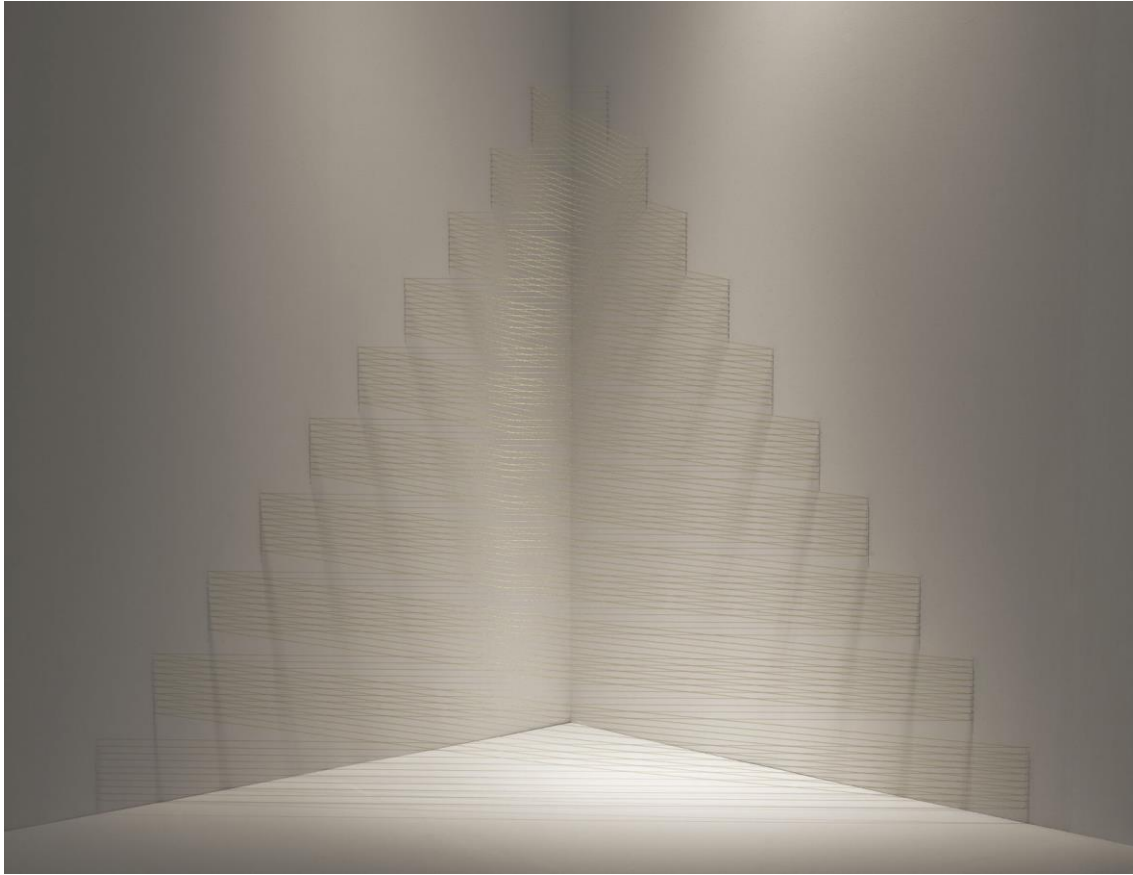


Figure 10 Lygia Pape, Tteia 1, A, 1979/1997/1999

Contemporary Artists

Wolfgang Laib, Rowland Ricketts, and Tim Gonchoroff are three contemporary artists at different stages of their careers, but all have a common thread that I aim to emulate. All of these artists, who I would consider process based, are reevaluating their surroundings and have immersed themselves into a practice that is not only apparent in their dedication but more or less requires a lifestyle change. Their art is ingrained in their lifestyle.

Wolfgang Laib's dedication and consideration to his materials, materials that can sometimes feel overlooked, is a prime example of the mindful labor that I strive to achieve in my own work. He finds value in accumulations of natural substances such as pollen, milk, and

beeswax. Laib uses ritual to highlight unnoticed materials that surround us. By using these materials, he provides an accessible visual language; we all understand these products. It's humble, Wolfgang asserts, "The work I make is very, very simple, but then it's also very, very complex. For me, the simpler the work's statement the more levels it can have."¹⁵ The more the viewer sits with the work and contemplates the labor, the more depth the work has. One can connect a circle of pollen on the floor to the tree in the meadow where it came from, to the habit of Laib collecting, to the particular placement in this gallery. His work embodies mindfulness and mindful labor. For Laib, it's not just about slowing down to observe, "but first to think about what you want for your own life, and also what you may want to change."¹⁶ His work becomes a platform for introspection.

Rowland Ricketts' work puts just as much emphasis on the process as the final installation. He grows his own indigo, utilizing a historical process of dying fabric to create large scale installations. From the beginning to its installation, process is central to his work. He has shown his work in numerous ways with the raw indigo plant to gradients of blue fabric dyed and installed on the ceiling. He plays with the level of finish in each piece, but each installation revolves around this dedicated labor.

Another process based artist, Tim Gonchoroff, takes invasive species out of the environment he walks in, boils them down, and dyes yarn from the found object. Gonchoroff, like a scientist, catalogs objects based on color and hold these objects in different vials for observation. These objects can be anything from a weed to trash that he finds. After dying the yarn, he then installs it in the gallery or creates sculptures or maps.

¹⁵ Tanguy, Sarah, *Making the Ideal Real: A Conversation with Wolfgang Laib*.

¹⁶ Tanguy, Sarah, *Making the Ideal Real: A Conversation with Wolfgang Laib*.

These artists prove that art and life are intertwined. It's not about creating this "other" object, but rather to look around and to produce something from the environment that surrounds you, whether that be pollen, your own plants, or an invasive species. The key here is to notice, to highlight, and to reinterpret. For my work, this will take the path of continued dedication to the source of these materials. Gaining access to sheep to process my own wool, continuing to dig my own clay, when available, and remaining open to other tactile materials that can provide this type of sourcing, are all necessary as I develop my practice.

Conclusion

Putting together active labor, repetitive gestures, minimalistic aesthetics, and spatial considerations creates a visual platform for the audience to notice, become mindful, and begin to generate happiness. This body of work encourages focusing on moments and small details, instead of blending everything together. From the materials used to the way these pieces are installed, this desire to focus and improve exists at every level. In a world that aims to be more efficient, my goal is to place value on mindful decisions. These installation objects reflect these choices. My hope is for the viewer to slow down, and join me in taking part of actively noticing.

Dig, Spin, Repeat started from my interest in material and developed into a body of work that explores the ability to capture an audience's present awareness. These decisions blend together ideas, from art historical references, to my own personal experience, to produce this show. I now look forward to the possibility of exploring how this mindful labor can be embodied: to become a lifestyle, not just an artistic practice. *Dig, Spin, Repeat* is a platform for both viewer and artist to expand our understanding of what encompasses us and challenge ourselves to honestly observe our surroundings.

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VITA

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