

INSTRUMENTATION

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“I think that if science is to overcome the disconnection with society, it needs to be better able to explain science’s greatest lesson: that for the purpose of advancing our knowledge, it is extremely important to doubt constantly and to live with uncertainty.”¹

My work can be viewed as a series of interconnected scientific investigations into translation, perception and sensation using the attributes of painting as the variables and paint as the material. What is the interrelation between corporeality, sensation and language in the construction of meaning and a sense of self? Is sensation a form of language? Can painting provide the form and substance with which to address these questions?

In this exploration I am subjecting my paintings to a variety of tests and am implicitly acknowledging the cultural view, inherited from modernism, of painting as a manifestation of the interior life of the artist and an embodiment of ideas in order to suggest a link to corporeality. However in carrying out these experiments I am deliberately adopting a skeptical frame of mind, the one of doubt and constant uncertainty mentioned in the epigraph above. The experimentation is ongoing, and the object is not reproducibility of results, but temporarily arrested procedural outcomes. In this studio/laboratory the data has been “lost” and the equation that includes variables like viscosity, temperature, slope of surface, etc was misplaced. While time is suggested by the accretion of paint down the surface, there are no records of the actual time taken for the paint to move down the canvas. The record is spotty.

The deconstructed/reconstructed assemblages that have come out of these procedures are an attempt to address the body and its interaction with the forces, internal and external that act upon it. The experimental procedures include lifting the canvas from its stretcher frame, cutting open the surface of the paintings and inserting tubes attached to paint-filled bottles into the openings. Some of the paintings I am manipulating are ones from last semester when I attempted to translate Virginia Woolf’s *The Waves* into painting and sculpture in order to explore connections between the body, sensation and language visually via an interaction with literature. How can we manage, contain and make some kind of meaning from the impingement of these forces upon us, whether that is, for example, gravity, time or an excess of emotion?

I suggest that meaning is created in ruptures, junctures and places in- between.

¹ Neil Turok, *The Universe Within: From Quantum to Cosmos; CBC Massey Lecture Series*. (Toronto: House of Anansi Press Inc, 2012), 249.