

THESIS

SURFACES OF GROWTH AND DECAY, BEAUTY AND REPULSION:  
ADDRESSING THE ABJECT AND THE SUBLIME THROUGH DRAWINGS OF THE  
NATURAL WORLD

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## ABSTRACT

### SURFACES OF GROWTH AND DECAY, BEAUTY AND REPULSION: ADDRESSING THE ABJECT AND THE SUBLIME THROUGH DRAWINGS OF THE NATURAL WORLD

My artwork has largely been influenced by my understanding of the natural world as being in constant flux. Through my drawings I explore natural life processes that are both beautiful and destructive, addressing growth and decay. I seek to present a visual and sensory experience that generates emotions of awe and imagination, but also challenges and confronts idealized views about life and natural processes. My intentions are similar with those of abjection, which occurs when that which is normally ignored, unacknowledged, or uncomfortable is exposed. I work with tensions between beauty and ugliness in my artworks in order to address these ideas.

My drawings work on a microscopic and macroscopic scale, which addresses relationships between intimacy and distance. I work with fine detail on large pieces of paper, so the drawings are viewed both from up close and from afar. At a distance the drawings look like organic formations or topographies, but up close, the detail and volume of marks become prominent. Obsessive accumulation is also important; the multitude of various marks cannot be counted or comprehended, which references the notion of the sublime. The various elements of the drawings work together to create the feeling of an amorphous entity in the midst of uncertainty and change.

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Every organism struggles through life to grow, to survive, to heal, and to interact with multitudes of other life forms or organisms. I view the natural world as being in constant flux, with concurrent processes of growth, multiplication, mutation, and entropy that are perpetually transforming the landscape of seen and unseen phenomena. Through my work and drawing process I interpret various stages of propagating and deteriorating forms—a moment in an indefinite process of giving and taking. My aim is to call attention to these simultaneously beautiful and destructive processes, which, although contradictory, work simultaneously and alongside one another.

The recognition or realization of these processes prompts a consideration about growth and decay in all things, including, through the result of interpretation, our own selves. Existing in a physical world, nothing, or no one, is immutable or immune to change – all things must alter and perish. Despite our best efforts, we are confronted with the awareness that our bodies will undergo change, that we will battle illness, will endure the loss of loved ones, and will someday die and lose our bodies. Yet organic matter does not simply turn to dust and disappear, but generates new forms. A carcass, for example, provides assistance to a host of organisms and feeds new growth in the midst of decay.

My drawings indicate both pleasant and unpleasant aspects of existence by mimicking life processes. Included are various elements inspired by the natural world, placed together to create a community of form that appears to exist in a state of flux like the community of life. For visual



references I consider forms of all types and of all sizes, from the minute to the immense, viewed under a microscope, with the naked eye, or from an aerial viewpoint. I look at a variety of growths such as molds, slimes, and bacteria, or patterns in lava, water waves, glaciers, and rock formations, and also bodily wounds and discharges such as blood, pus, and scabs. Each drawing incorporates forms that feel healthy or thriving, with those that feel diseased or destructive. The latter details that feel diseased or destructive call to mind unpleasant thoughts or experiences that are not often talked about. The discomfort with such thoughts is brought about by the uncertainty of living and the fear of illness and death. Disease threatens our very existence. We repulse from open wounds, vomit, and other sickening expulsions from inside the body. We learn to find the fluffy growth that destroys a once fresh and healthy food disgusting. It must be quickly discarded. Everyone is familiar with these unsettling experiences. Yet despite their unpleasantness, we are curiously drawn to them.

The peculiar relationship between repulsion and desire is acknowledged in Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, which aims to question identity and to blur boundaries. This occurs when that which is normally ignored, unacknowledged, or uncomfortable is exposed, breaking socially constructed norms and resulting in a breakdown of meaning. The simultaneous repulsion and curiosity at the sight of an open wound or of rotting food is a symptom of abjection. A visceral reaction coupled with societal boundaries tells us to turn away, but, possessing inquisitive minds, we turn back to re-examine, only to be disgusted once more. However, when the theory of abjection is interpreted through the arts, often in the form of "abject art," the viewer is no longer able to turn away so quickly, but is compelled to stay, to examine, to question. It is with a prolonged interaction with the abject that the viewer may begin to question preconceived ideas about boundaries and identities.

While Kristeva uses degraded materials, bodily fluids, and dismembered limbs or corpses to make a point, she also maintains that these materials do not fully define abjection: “It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules.”<sup>1</sup> While repulsion to these things is a natural reaction, Kristeva considers oppositional binaries, such as dirty and clean, good and evil, beautiful and ugly, to be problematic because they create divisions in society. We should not confuse that which prompts uncomfortable reactions with that which is inherently evil. Homosexual couples, menstruating women, AIDS or cancer patients, for example, all suffer as a result of socially constructed boundaries. The argument is not meant to desensitize people to shocking or unpleasant things, but rather to call attention to the negative associations that we attach to them, to the tendency to label things positively or negatively, to lump things in one category or another.

My intentions are similar with those of abjection, however, my work is not driven by the theory itself. Instead, abjection allows me to talk about the work and my ideas concretely. I want to deal with perceptions of good and bad, as related to health and disease, life and death, and growth and decay, in the natural world. Due to our particular sensitivity to it, the body is often employed within abjection; we hold up expectations about hygiene, and acceptable/unacceptable behaviors, and fear illness, injury, and death. Expanding on Georges Bataille’s description of abjection as an attack on metaphors and the act of substitution, thinker Denis Hollier notes, “if you die, you die; you can’t have a substitute.” Thus, the object is that which is a risk to the irreplaceable body.<sup>2</sup> Health is valued, illness and death are feared, and the pain associated with illness and death is also cast to the shadows.

There are dual functions to all of life’s processes, which are both good and bad. The absence of finality in our lives is disconcerting because we can never know our future, or our fate.

But it can be reassuring at the same time--it means that things are guaranteed to change, that a painful moment will pass, or a wrong can be made right. The very nature of existence is to be undetermined, unresolved, and unsettled. The drawings are meant to be ambiguous in form and meaning, to present a moment where the outcome is unclear. The drawings include both bright and sickly colored forms, shiny oozing areas, and lacerated fields, which establish relationships between constructive and destructive organisms and processes. Will the threatening growths on the page continue to spread and take over like a cancer, or will they heal and fall away, like a scab, if ignored for long enough.

Our experience with the natural world, from the minutest of forms to the greatest, can be tumultuous. Critic John Berger describes the natural world as “energy and struggle. It is what exists without any promise. If it can be thought of by man as an arena, a setting, it has to be thought of as one which lends itself as much to evil as to good. Its energy is fearsomely indifferent.”<sup>3</sup> We think of the natural world as fragile and humanity as strong, but Berger points to the fragility of all life, and especially to the fragility of humanity’s existence. We are subject to the power of the natural world, to its sublime quality. We cannot separate ourselves from it nor can we control it, as we so often try to do. Yet conceding to its power means recognizing that everything is at risk, including our own lives. It does not only represent physical death, it represents the risk of emotional turmoil, the risk of loss, the risk of being weakened or destroyed. It represents the loss of human dignity that we have so painstakingly constructed.

However, despite its fearsome power, the natural world can also generate peace and beauty. Berger argues that, “it is within this bleak natural context that beauty is encountered, and the encounter is by its nature sudden and unpredictable. The gale blows itself out, the sea changes from the color of grey shit to aquamarine...However it is encountered, beauty is always an

exception, always *in despite of*. This is why it moves us.”<sup>4</sup> Berger’s description of beauty in nature is inextricably linked with ugliness in nature. The two are always connected, and they inherently define one another in their opposition. Although, like previously discussed binaries, it is easy to label beauty as good, and ugliness as bad, the two necessarily contribute to one another. Beauty can be found in the worst of moments, and ugliness in the best of moments. Like the comfort that a recently passed loved one, who, after days, weeks, or months of suffering, is finally free of the pain; or a vision of the deadly cancer cells that are so visually striking; and even that unpleasant thought at a gorgeous wedding that, sadly, the union might not last. Further, beauty is also fleeting – a stunning cloud formation seen from an airplane, for instance, is moving because it is a singular event. The moment is filled with both joy and pain. Such experiences with beauty and ugliness produce feelings of ambivalence, because they confuse the notion that equates beautiful and ugly with good and bad.

I am attracted to artists that are able to strike an interesting balance between attraction and repulsion, beauty and ugliness. Artist David Altmejd deals with these themes, along with the theme of growth and decay, in his sculptures [Fig. 1 & 2], which are made by combining various materials, including taxidermy animals, plaster casts of body parts, mirrors, and crystals. Altmejd focuses on contrasts between the seductive and the grotesque in his work, stating, “I feel that the only interesting way I can express beauty is by showing what contrasts with it.”<sup>5</sup> While the sculptures often depict grotesque or decaying things, his intention is not to be morbid, but to situate the environments. Altmejd is interested more in the growth that happens following a disaster, rather than the disaster itself.<sup>6</sup> He uses the tension between contrasting forms to generate energy and meaning, and to create environments or anthropomorphic forms that feel as though

they breathe.<sup>7</sup> Altmejd wants to leave the viewer with the impression that the sculpture is living and growing, and that, “if you went away and came back a week later, it would look different.”<sup>8</sup>

Similar to Altmejd, I am continually working with the tension between beauty and ugliness in my artworks, and I also identify with his goal to create something that carries energy and feels as though it is living. The synthetic paper I use is so white, pristine, and lifeless that I feel the need to defile it and activate the surface, as its sterile appearance is not reflective of my understanding of existence. I poke, cut, scrape, and dig into the surface to make tiny marks. As opposed to making a mark with pen or pencil on paper, this is a much more visceral process that I respond to emotionally. It is a slightly violent act – one of subtle destruction. The aggressive nature to the picking and poking and perforating is heightened by the sheer number of times the actions are repeated. In *Perforations Silently Spread* [Fig. 3], I poked at the paper daily for hours on end, for over a month, in some areas at such a high density as to break through the paper and create visible holes.

The abundant use of small, repetitive marks can be discussed with two approaches. The first addresses the impressive ability of the miniscule, as detailed by Gaston Bachelard, to open up into something great.<sup>9</sup> He explains how “every universe is enclosed in curves, every universe is concentrated in a nucleus, a spore, a dynamized center... This nucleizing nucleus is a world in itself. The miniature deploys to the dimensions of a universe.”<sup>10</sup> With the advancement in sciences that has allowed us to see the world from so many different perspectives, we can now recognize the structural similarities between forms/organisms at the microscopic level to those at the macroscopic level. Fine detail can envision things both large and small; a grouping of little dots can be interpreted as cells under a microscope, or as a cluster of stars and constellations in space.

My drawings work on a microscopic and macroscopic scale, which allows for multiple experiences and interpretations, as the ability to shift perspectives from micro to macro has become relatively smooth. Further, apart from the scientific experience of interpreting the work at a small or large scale, the drawings create an emotional response of intimacy and distance. The work, with the use of fine detail, may be looked at from afar and from up close. *Perforations Silently Spread* consists of large, medium, and small groupings of marks and stains. The marks that I make by poking at the paper for weeks are not visible from afar, but instead look like a gray cloud. It is only at a close range to the drawing that the individual marks may be discerned. The work recalls the experience of moving in close to inspect a beautiful insect or flower, the physical and emotional closeness we feel at that moment with the natural world. But it also recalls the feeling of viewing an expanse from a distance, the view from an airplane or mountaintop, and our emotional response to want to “take it all in.”

Artist Tara Donovan addresses the experiences of intimacy and distance with her large-scale installations. Donovan works with extremely large numbers of man-made materials such as scotch tape, drinking straws, plastic cups, and toothpicks. Each individual installation uses a massive quantity of a single material to create the three-dimensional works, which resemble organic forms seen in nature. *Haze* (2003) [Fig. 4] is made from over two million plastic drinking straws, stacked horizontally up the side of a wall. From afar, as the viewer approaches the installation, *Haze* looks like a shimmering, undulating wall of fog or clouds; the striking moment of realization that the piece is made entirely of straws is delayed until the last possible moment, when the viewer is standing directly in front of the work. Donovan’s installations also address the idea of the sublime. Her installations have the ability to “transform quantity into the unquantifiable, static into dynamic, prosaic into sublime.”<sup>11</sup> The experience of viewing *Haze*,

punctuated with the realization that it is made of a massive volume of straws, creates an awed and overwhelmed sensation in the viewer.

While our materials and techniques differ, I feel a connection to Donovan's use of repetition to build organic forms, and to her employment of emotional experiences of distance and intimacy. I also admire her ability to generate a sensation of the sublime. The second approach to describing the use of small, abundant, repetitive marks recalls the experience of the sublime. Immanuel Kant's mathematical sublime occurs when the mind cannot aesthetically comprehend things that appear limitless or boundless. Kant uses the example of a vast ocean or mountain range and explains that when we are in the presence of great landscapes of this kind, our imagination's become overwhelmed, as we lack the capacity to grasp the whole of what we are witnessing.<sup>12</sup> The mathematical sublime creates an unsettling and dizzying effect, between our imagination and understanding, of not knowing. At first glance, my drawings look like organic formations or topographies, then, at a closer inspection, the volume of marks becomes evident, which cannot be counted or comprehended. The smallness of the marks requires a close inspection of the work, from within inches of the surface, at which point the paper, 5ft tall and 6 ½ to 8ft wide, fills in the peripheral, maximizing the expanse of the paper, and further compounding the experience.

Similar to Donovan, I use synthetic materials to achieve an organic appearance in the artwork. The drawings are executed on a synthetic paper, and all textured additions to the drawings are made with acrylic mediums. Yet as is evident in Donovan's work, it is not necessary to use organic materials to create associations about the natural world. My treatment of the paper, use of marks, and application of color all contribute to the effort to transform the materials and create ambiguity about their original source. I use large sheets of paper because the size is

conducive to creating an environment in which the amorphous entities may exist. Also, it creates a need for larger fields of marks, which have an impressive impact on the viewer. By staining the paper, I am creating an environment in which the forms may exist and a surface that is already differentiated. In *Emergent Incisions* [Fig. 5] the stains to the right of the forms hint at their movement, a past history or a future potential. The drawings feel as though there is room for growth and change, and contain hints about their past or future; echoes of what has happened, or hints about what is to come.

However, none of the works are bursting or fast, but they are instead quiet and unhurried. There is a slow progression of movement and energy, which varies in greater or lesser activity. The drawings force a slowing down when looking at them, just as the drawings are evidence of the time spent making them. Neither the marks nor the stains represent quick, rapid movements – the work is executed at a slow, repetitive pace, which becomes evident in the marks on the drawings. Also, there exists a shallow three-dimensional quality, with the marks and stains inhabiting a relatively shallow space – there is no dramatic, dynamic movement to progress deep into three-dimensional space and back.

My obsessive approach to making the drawings, the repetitive digging, poking, and cutting, is critical to my working process. I enjoy the challenge of working tediously on a drawing for months. Artist Vija Celmins, known for her realistically rendered expanses of night skies, ocean surfaces, and spider webs [Fig. 6 & 7], works in a similarly meticulous and repetitive manner. She is known to spend months, and sometimes years, on each work. To make her intimately sized drawings and paintings, Celmins gradually layers charcoal or paint to darken and build the surface, or rubs it out to lighten or erase it. It is a time intensive and laborious process.<sup>13</sup> The drawing or painting becomes a layered, built up surface that holds a history of the energy she



has exerted. Celmins recounts that in the studio she enters into a method of “rigorous building.”<sup>14</sup> The image becomes more of an armature, as the process itself becomes paramount. She goes on to say “I’m really interested in that. For some reason I’m able to do that over and over again without getting bored.”<sup>15</sup> The content of Celmins’ imagery of oceans and night skies already brings to mind the sublime, but the manner they are executed in, with such intensive effort, brings into being the dizzying experience of the sublime.

Similar with Celmins’ artworks, my drawings become evidence of the hours spent working, as the time intensive and repetitive nature of the work is easily understood, and the patience it takes to work in such a way can be readily imagined. It is both painful and intriguing to witness the human effort and perseverance in the drawings. For me, the long hours spent mark making are an act of both meditation and exertion. The kinds of marks or cuts I choose to add to the drawings are influenced by the amount of energy I have to put forth – whether I feel the need to work in a meditative way, by carefully making countless marks, or if I feel the need to work aggressively, by rapidly puncturing or cutting the paper with less control. The process begins with one mark, which then travels and multiplies. It resembles stages in the progression of existence; on one hand, life begins as a single cell that continually multiplies as it forms an embryo, or on the other hand, illnesses such as cancer develop with the mutation of a single cell, which proceeds to accumulate and spread, destroying healthy cells in the process.

In addition to marking up the paper, I also use acrylic mediums, and various other materials to add texture to the surface of the drawings. In *Perforations Silently Spread*, I developed heavily textured, darkened areas, with gel medium and cotton fibers. In *Emergent Incisions*, I cut lines in the paper, and pushed a thick gel medium through the openings that ooze out onto the page. These activities, while not as visceral as the mark making, supply an

opportunity to play with new materials and to take risks. The marks and cuts, along with the acrylic additions, combine to make a diverse environment, and work together to create feelings of pleasant and unpleasant life processes. The practice of digging at and puncturing the paper degrades the surface, enacting the process of decay, while adding colored and textured areas to the paper increases the depth of the surface, enacting the process of growth.

I want to make the drawings feel as though they may come to life. The holes in the paper, and the cuts with oozing materials, hint at something beneath the surface that is being purged, or that is breaking apart the surface and creating ruptures. This creates an interesting relationship between inside and outside, what we can see and cannot see, or what we should see or should not see. Inside and outside are kept apart, when in fact they have shifting boundaries. Blood and pus are examples of bodily fluids that are supposed to be kept inside. To see fluids erupting from beneath the surface is disturbing, because it can indicate that something is wrong. Using the paper in this manner generates a subtle reference to abjection. Also, the act of altering the surface of the paper by heating, cutting, or making holes, as in *Susceptive* [Fig. 8], is a risky endeavor. It is important for me to take this risk, because there is a chance it may not work, or that it may ruin the drawing. For me, this is representational of the nature of existence and how we are unable to control outcomes, and that life is subject to chance.

For this reason, staining the paper is an important aspect to my practice. The synthetic paper that I use is non-absorbent, which allows me to wipe off the washes of dried ink. What is left is a stain, or ghost image, of what had previously been. Although not as risky as breaking the surface of the paper, I use the spills to relinquish control, as most of my practice is highly detailed and restrained. I stain the paper with ink washes, but I never know where the ink will pool, how the multiple colors will mix, what will be left when I wipe the dried ink away. It is a process of

discovery that yields unpredictable results. Even when I try to do something intentionally with the spills, I find it will not cooperate as I anticipated or wanted.

The dried ink washes are often very beautiful, but I choose to wipe them away because I am searching for a beauty that requires struggle. Since beauty is tempered with ugliness, I aesthetically want to use both. To achieve this, my color palette tends towards neutral colors, as seen in *Emergent Incisions*, which consists primarily of browns and grays, with brighter, vibrant colors used in limited yet striking amounts. The combination of colors helps to create both pleasurable and unsettling experiences and confuses what is good or bad. Depending on the color used, a form can feel as though it has become infected, or as though it is in the process of healing, or it could feel as though different organisms exist alongside or amid each other. A sickly green or yellow creates a very different reaction than a light blue or forest green. Often, the colors of the stains relate with the ink held in the marks and textured areas, echoing a movement and energy throughout the drawings.

The pieces generate a relationship of giving and taking, which is also an important factor in life. This determines how life functions, and how life survives. Organisms are constantly giving of themselves and taking for themselves in support of their life and the life of the surrounding ecosystem. Sometimes the process can be violent, like when a predator catches its prey, but sometimes it can be harmless, or even beneficial, as when a bee takes pollen from a flower to make honey, simultaneously pollinating that flower. It can also be self-destructive, like the way cancer cells grow and multiply, then eventually kill the body. All of the various elements of the drawings work together to create the feeling of a living, changing organism. With the high density of marks, underlying areas of stains, and protruding forms, the drawings vacillate between being inviting and unsettling. This produces visceral reactions to the work and elicits a dialogue about

the relationship of these propagating and deteriorating forms. I want to leave some questions unanswered, so the full outcome remains undetermined. Will the holes in the paper grow larger and expand, have they been cauterized, will they heal? While there may be crisis or repulsion, the outcome is uncertain – the drawings are neither hopeful nor despondent, as the possibility is open for either restorative or damaging change.

In my artwork I present a sensory experience that generates emotions of awe and imagination, but also challenges and confronts idealized views about life and natural processes. I work with tensions between beauty and ugliness in my artworks in order to address the abject, which is normally ignored, unacknowledged, or uncomfortable. The mass of small marks and perforations, combined with larger areas of stains, create fluctuations between the miniscule and the immense when viewed from up close or at a distance. The forms in the drawings remain somewhat ambiguous, and feel as though they are in the midst of development, uncertainty, and change. Ultimately, I seek generate surfaces of both beautiful and destructive to reflect processes of existence that transform the landscape of seen and unseen phenomena.



**Figure 1**

David Altmejd, *The Vessel*, 2011

Plexiglas, chain, plaster, wood, thread, wire, acrylic paint, epoxy resin, epoxy clay, acrylic gel, granular medium, quartz, pyrite, assorted minerals, adhesive, wire, pins, needles; 102 1/2 X 244 X 86 1/2 in, <http://www.art21.org/images/david-altmejd/the-vessel-2011>, a. 2/18/13



**Figure 2**

David Altmejd, *The Giant 2*, 2007

Foam, resin, paint, wood, glass, mirror, Plexiglas, silicone, taxidermy birds and animals, synthetic plants, pinecones, horse hair, burlap, chains, wire, feathers, quartz, pyrite, other minerals, jewelry, beads, glitter, 100 X 168 X 92 in, <http://www.andrearosengallery.com/artists/david-altmejd/> a. 2/19/13

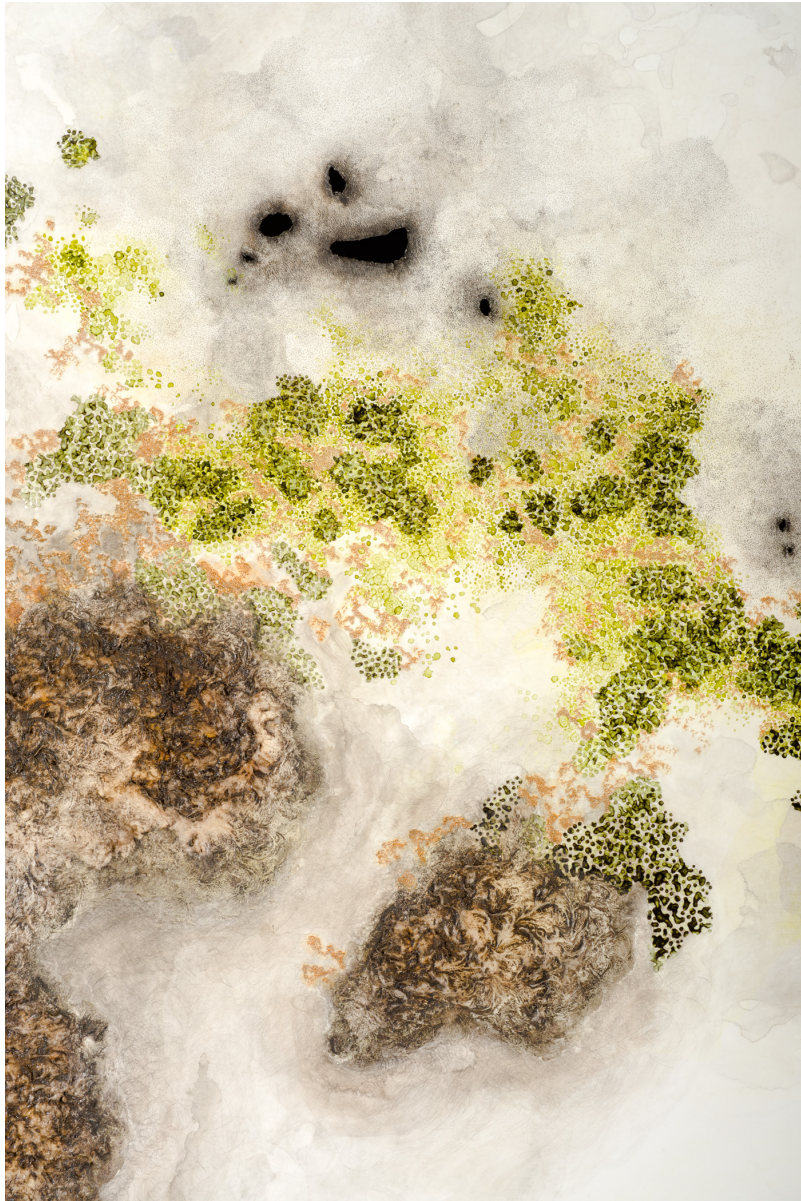




**Figure 3 (a)**

Naomi Scheck, *Perforations Silently Spread*, 2012

Gouache, watercolor, alcohol ink, acrylic gel medium, and cotton on polyester paper, 60 X 76 ½ in



**Figure 3 (b)**

Naomi Scheck, *Perforations Silently Spread* (detail), 2012

Gouache, watercolor, alcohol ink, acrylic gel medium, and cotton on polyester paper, 60 X 76 ½ in





**Figure 4 (a)**

Tara Donovan, *Haze*, 2003

Stacked Clear Plastic Drinking Straws, 12 ft 7 in X 42 ft 2 in X 7 ¾ in,

[http://www.acegallery.net/artistmenu.php?pageNum\\_ACE=1&totalRows\\_ACE=58&Artist=8#](http://www.acegallery.net/artistmenu.php?pageNum_ACE=1&totalRows_ACE=58&Artist=8#), a.  
3/25/12



**Figure 4 (b)**

Tara Donovan, *Haze* (detail), 2003

Stacked Clear Plastic Drinking Straws, 12 ft 7 in X 42 ft 2 in X 7 ¾ in,

[http://www.acegallery.net/artistmenu.php?pageNum\\_ACE=1&totalRows\\_ACE=58&Artist=8#](http://www.acegallery.net/artistmenu.php?pageNum_ACE=1&totalRows_ACE=58&Artist=8#), a.  
3/25/12



**Figure 5 (a)**

Naomi Scheck, *Emergent Incisions*, 2012

Gouache, watercolor, ink, and acrylic gel medium on polyester paper, 60 X 78 in





**Figure 5 (b)**

Naomi Scheck, *Emergent Incisions* (detail), 2012

Gouache, watercolor, ink, and acrylic gel medium on polyester paper, 60 X 78 in



**Figure 6**

Vija Celmins, *Untitled #13*, 1996

Charcoal on paper, 17 X 22 in, <http://www.art21.org/images/vija-celmins/untitled-13-1996>, a.  
2/16/13



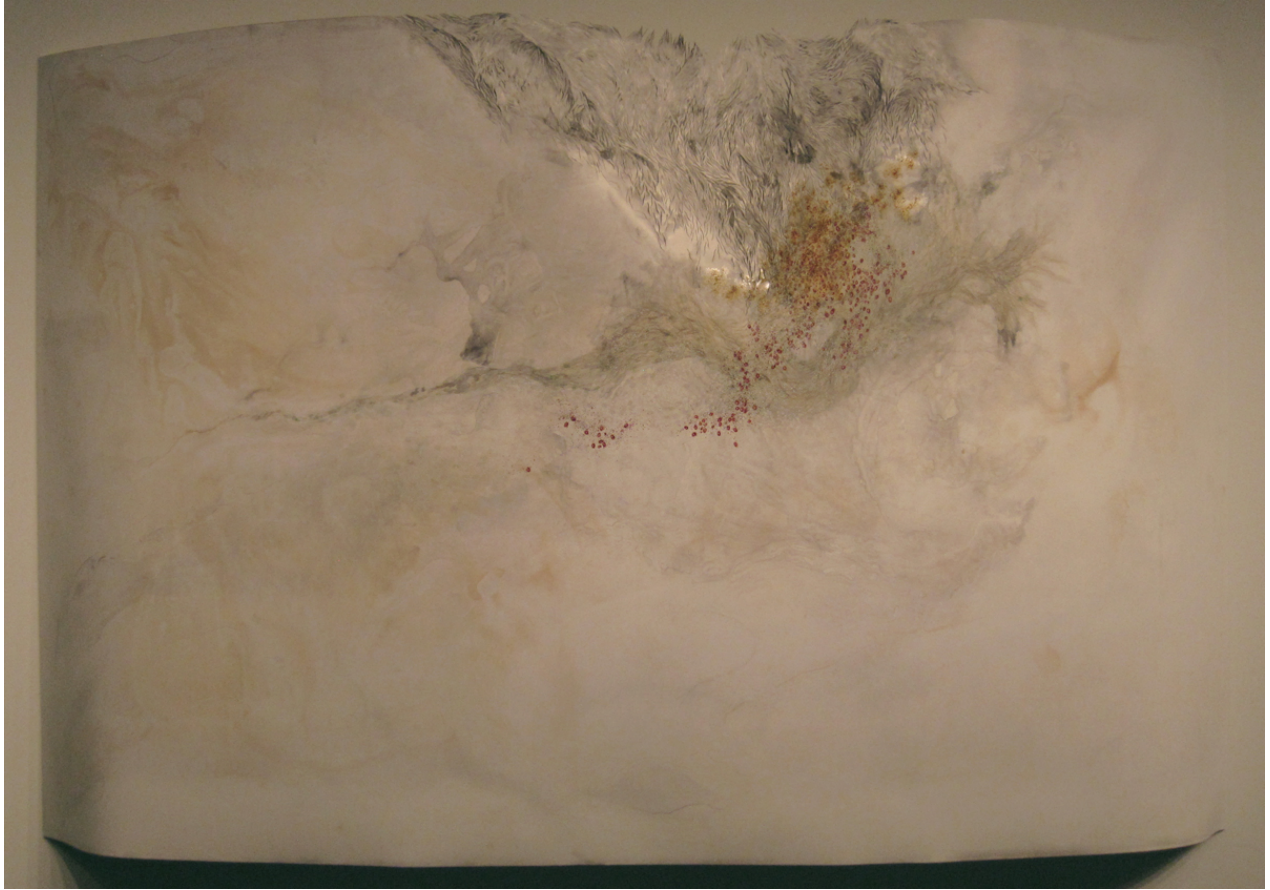


**Figure 7**

Vija Celmins, *Untitled (Big Sea #1)*, 1969

Graphite on acrylic ground on paper, 34 1/8 X 45 1/4 in,

<http://www.pbs.org/art21/images/vija-celmins/untitled-big-sea-1-1969?slideshow=1> a. 2/19/13

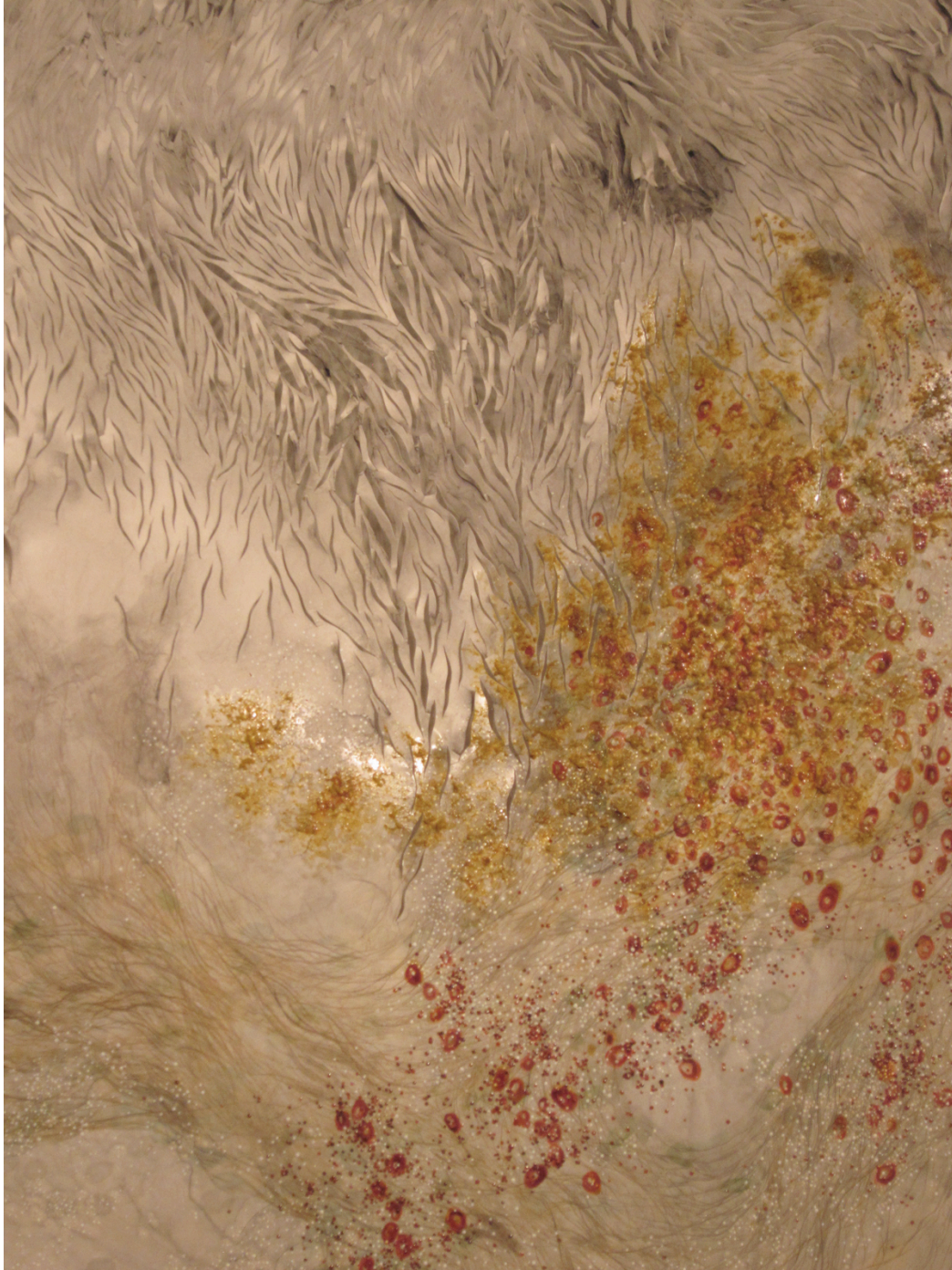


**Figure 8 (a)**

Naomi Scheck, *Susceptive*, 2013

Gouache, watercolor, ink, and acrylic gel medium on polyester paper, 60 X 97 in





**Figure 8 (b)**

Naomi Scheck, *Susceptive* (detail), 2013

Gouache, watercolor, ink, and acrylic gel medium on polyester paper, 60 X 97 in



- <sup>1</sup> Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 4.
- <sup>2</sup> Denis Hollier quoted in Hal Foster, Benjamin Buchloh, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, Denis Hollier, and Helen Molesworth, "The Politics of the Signifier II: A Conversation on the "Informe" and the Abject." *October*, vol. 67 (Winter 1994): 20.
- <sup>3</sup> John Berger, *The Sense of Sight*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 7.
- <sup>4</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>5</sup> David Altmejd quoted in Amy Michael, "Sculpture as Living Organism: A Conversation with David Altmejd." *Sculpture*, vol. 26 no. 10 (December 2007): 28.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid., 26.
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid., 25.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., 27.
- <sup>9</sup> Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space: The Classic Look at How We Experience Intimate Places.*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 155.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., 157.
- <sup>11</sup> Jen Mergel and Nicholas Baume, "Second Nature," in *Tara Donovan*. (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2008), 7.
- <sup>12</sup> Hannah Ginsborg, "Kant's Aesthetics and Teleology," The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Edward N. Zalta (ed.), 21 December 2012, (accessed January 24, 3013). <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2013/entries/kant-aesthetics/>>.
- <sup>13</sup> Briony Fer, "Night Sky #19" in *Vija Celmins*, (New York: Phaidon Press Limited, 2004), 105.
- <sup>14</sup> Vija Celmins quoted in Chuck Close, "Interview with Chuck Close (extracts), 1991" in *Vija Celmins*, (New York, Phaidon Press Limited, 2004) 131.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid.

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