Decline, Decay, And Degeneration: Channeling A Capacity To Discover Truth

In Destruction

Thesis

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By

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Abstract

This work explores a research methodology bound by glimpses into sensual realities as seen through the eyes of the artist. Much attention has been paid to creating a mirrored existence between art and life, allowing personal philosophies to infiltrate the subsequent research. The goal is to develop a working regimen that promotes full immersion in the here and now, accepting any and all truths, no matter how impossible, tragic, painful or beautiful they present themselves. Communication with the real world, particularly used tire dealers, ice sculptors and butchers, has yielded an art form void of traditional media, one rooted in experimentation and ephemeral, everyday materiality.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to the scope of humanity, whose immersion falls short of its capacity for tragedy.
Acknowledgments

A sincere debt of gratitude to Bable for her enduring support and patience.

My thesis committee of great women who elicited honest and inspired work.

Chris, Rob, The Peezler, Birdman, Greg and Trey—the ice guys, and everyone—(thing) I’ve interacted with over the past two years.

Friedrich Nietzsche.

My loving family.
Vita

2004.................................B.S. Electronic Media, Kent State University
2000..........................Euclid High School
2009........MFA Exhibition: Begged Borrowed and Stolen, Urban Arts Space
2009..........................Do, Skylab
2008..........................BBQ, Clean Space
2008..........................Shift F-11, Hopkins Hall Gallery
2007..........................RotWylder, Wexner Center for the Arts
2006..........................Wisconsin, Garfield Artworks
2005..........................Jerk, Front Room Gallery

Fields of Study

Major Field: Art
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Introduction: A Portrait In Memory

*In dreams.* Art started in the fever dream; this vision of mangled steel, smoke and blood slowly permeating the holiday snow bank alongside Interstate 90 east in Cleveland.
I awoke suddenly, trembling sweaty, cheeks stained with salty dried crust and eyes burning. My mother was stirring, vomiting in the bathtub. I knew it had happened. My old man knelt on the blue living room carpet, staring blankly towards the light dancing on the surface of our above-ground swimming pool.

Colleen was dead.

My dream unfolded in real-time. The Chrysler spinning, sliding across the freeway, down into the embankment, yellow safety barrels exploding into the Christmas Eve night. The vision of tragedy once confined to the nightmare had become my reality.

It’s this, the unexplainable prophecy that has grounded a part of my artistic practice. The blurring of dream into reality still startles me and my work draws on this, the desire to expose truth, however painful or beautiful it may present itself. The dream, or conception, finds a way to manifest itself,
allowing the unconscious mind to consciously awaken and face the natural order that is life.

Illustration 1. Fire—Kent, OH. Photo by Rachel Thomas.
Climbing the hillside in the navy blue Suburban truck, the anticipatory tension of reaching the summit was deafening. Weaving up the incline, beautiful vistas of a dead Ohio landscape flooded the truck’s windows. Dead skies and black trees radiated off the mid-February horizon. Modest log homes were amplified by thick smoke reaching up into the atmosphere from brick chimneys. Continuing upwards along the icy dirt path, 18-wheel tractor trailers conspicuously rolled downhill. And as the truck rounded the last turn and was spit out atop the land heap, a sense of unimaginable, beautiful danger spread out across the landscape.

The smell, a rotting and wretched stench. Immense shudders of movement—seagulls littering the entire field of view. Harsh, metallic grinding of machinery reverberated more deeply.

This, the frozen garbage-mountain—a modern day landfill.

Years upon years of societal waste stacked one layer at time is responsible for the turgid landscape. The decomposing matter and it’s conversion into explosive methane flares illuminate a greater function of this system.

The landfill is a collection, accumulation and release point for the unconsciousness of humanity. Items deemed dirty, unusable, toxic or ultimately termed ‘waste’, live second lives at the landfill. Here they are reintroduced into the environment and allowed to intermingle with other items considered to be cultural detritus. At this point, the refuse operates outside
the scope of human awareness, in the form of an inconspicuous hillside
where it left to degenerate.

Illustration 2. A landfill compactor on a skyline of waste. Photo courtesy of
*Joke Bands, Video and Death Metal.* Screaming into the microphone at four a.m. in a friend’s basement. Collecting found thrift store and educational videos, 16mm films and documenting daily happenings in my life. Witnessing some long-hair dudes shred guitars and create walls of noise in a beer-soaked, smoky bar-turned-venue with volume levels and speakers penetrating. These are the moments I consider to be my art experiences. Experiences reliant on noticing and being fully immersed in life for art; turning these seemingly mundane activities on their heads.

The power of sound and amplifier imagery, creating music for jokes rather than success and making meaning out of some stranger’s discarded home video recordings was and is a way of informing my process. At the time, this was not art at all, but merely a navigation and reinterpretation of those events and instances that formed my environment and experience.

There was always creation happening, for better or worse, among myself and those around me, my friends. We’d feed off each other, collaborating on ways to make the time and actions around us more interesting.

This was life.

A video of a women giving birth set to industrial electronic music. All-night missions to garbage-pick disposed household items and stage a living room on a friend’s front lawn.
The document video of a deer being dressed, layered with digital distortion behind two friends making experimental noise.

I find the most invigorating ideas in a moldy basement, a dark intoxicated backstage room, imagining that a faded graffiti mark on a rock says “Jesus is ‘lard’ instead of ‘lord’”, or listening to an answering machine tape found at a thrift store.

We lived and breathed art, we just didn’t know it, or care to. Admitting to oneself that he is an artist forces the notion that there must now be a set of standards in the making of art; standards that we were no doubt rebelling against.

Part One: Dissonance

I wanted to go to Steve’s Used Tires. Steve, I presume, said he’d sell me all the tires I wanted for $.01. “Hell, I have to pay to get the junk tires outta here,” he said. This place sounded amazing considering my quest for used tires. I didn’t exactly understand why I wanted tires; all I knew was that I did. Maybe it was the mobility they embodied. Maybe it was that they were a nuisance to get rid of and caused problems for landfills. I just loved the idea of stinking, gross tires. The used up materiality fascinated me.

I have no car and don’t believe in them until I need one. Anyways, my friend Sonya agreed to take me to Steve’s with her tires and truck to pick up the corroded, blown-out tires I desired. When I got there, Steve, again I presume, greasily shook my hand and walked me to the back of the shop. Loads of decrepit tires were stacked six-high against a wooden fence. He told me to pull the truck around back and load up whatever I wanted.

Wow, I thought. This is great.

Truck tires, car tires, all crusted out; wires protruding and oil-caked.
We loaded fourteen tires, as that’s all that would fit, into the back of Sonya’s
truck and headed back to the studio.

I lumped the tires together in a pile.
I covered the pile in a clear plastic drop cloth.
I put a disco ball inside the pile to watch the mirrored light bounce off the dead rubber.
I covered the pile with 2’ x 4’ strips of sod.

I then thought about what was really important. I loved the used up, disposed tire. It smells. It is greasy. It is dead. It is readily available. The tire is no longer in the state of existence it was meant for; it is no longer mobile. This tool for transporting humans and freight through space had to now carry my ideas about waste, toxicity and process.

Tires move in parallel to the earth. The opposite then, I thought, was to return them to their state of storage, or uselessness; that being a vertical stack. In this configuration they are immobilized, compounding one upon the other, challenging gravity and balance. This stacking of the tires soon reaches too high, forming a column towering ominously above me and then collapsing on itself.

This is it, I thought. They need to be stacked just as I saw them at Steve’s. But now, the stack must reach fourteen tires high. It needs to be unwieldy, on the verge of toppling and destroying itself.
All of the work I had put in prior to this: the piles, the disco light, the sod, all of these were distractions for what was important, but proved to enlighten a process rooted in failure. These failed attempts opened the road to discovery and truth. I no longer had to dictate or change the material with technical control; the tires spoke for themselves at Steve’s. They are gas, oil, rubber, steel wire, fumes, tread; they should not be anything but what they are.

Ten minutes into stacking the tires and watching them fall, I knew the work was ‘finished’. Dissonance was the stack. It was the collapse. It was the immobility now left to gravity and natural disorder. It was the stinking fumes.

“An unstable tone combination is a dissonance; its tension demands an onward motion to a stable chord. Thus dissonant chords are ‘active’; traditionally they have been considered harsh and have expressed pain, grief and conflict.” (Kamien, 2007)

There was tension in the stack. There was the expectant collapse. I now wanted to balance these ideas of a towering immobility and saw a can of medium grey paint. I climbed a ladder to the top of the stack, set the paint can on the highest tire and tipped it. Paint ran down the black rubber column on its own will, flowing through blown-out treads towards the floor. The line, I hoped, would be the onward motion towards stability that dissonance calls for, but the stack is still collapsing—the fumes still stinking.
The tires are as they were, but different from what they were intended. Used, broken mobility destined for the dump, an environmentally challenging commodity—the tires embody waste. The process is natural. I see *Dissonance* as a work unfolding in time, a tower approaching gravitational self-destruction, paint running freely and accumulating into a pooling mass of undesirable disorder seeking a resolve that does not exist.
Illustration 4. Dissonance. Photo by Edward Frank Ostrander.
A friend of mine, John, is a hunter. Three years ago, John tromped into my bedroom at seven a.m. and shook me awake. He lured me and my video camera into a wooded field just outside of Cleveland. We’d spend the next three hours searching for, gutting and dressing the deer he just killed.

Four months in to my graduate study I awoke suddenly at two in the morning scrambling to hold the thought. I had to get back to Cleveland to see my hunter-friend John. The idea was simple: purchase steak and drywall, shoot it with a 12 gauge shotgun.

I got to Cleveland on Friday evening and woke in my friend’s basement Saturday morning, hung-over after talking most of the night away about meat, shotguns and art. We headed to the Giant Eagle, a beautifully huge grocery store and purchased BOGO (buy one get one free) three-packs of steak. Our next stop was the gun store for shells and then the hardware store for drywall.

At this point in my research, I had become heavily interested in performance and action works. I was also finding myself fascinated with the power and
primacy of meat; its ability to invoke thoughts of life, death, consumerism and production. Meat epitomizes human engineering through high-yield beef farms and stands for all things American, where bigger is better and more is never enough.

The shotgun, then, felt like a natural progression in exploring these ideas I was entertaining. Its steel and wooden construction communicated a curious power as the loud, ever-resonating gunshot cracked across the landscape. A shotgun offers the hand-held propensity for danger and death, protection and security. This coupled with already dead meat seemed to be making connections in my work and research.

It ended up being a snowy, freezing January day in Cleveland when we headed out to execute this action of shooting raw meat. I thought about the meat as it was—primal cuts of pre-packaged steak designed for consumption. And then I wondered what it previously was—the anatomic muscle of a production steer.

The shotgun rang out, kicking back into my shoulder. Aim became integral in the performative gesture of this work. The hunter’s skill at identifying and connecting with the motionless animal suddenly became the artist’s brushstroke.

And as I shot, I felt reality. I’ve never hunted and although I didn’t necessarily
feel like a hunter staring at an animal walking into my gun-sight, I did feel a 
strange, exhilarating control over my environment. The heavy shotgun in my 
hands, recoiling hard against my body made this action an act of killing, or re-
killing. I felt an immediate affinity with the process of attaining this meat, 
beginning with the farm-raised steer, death of the animal, then on to the 
butcher’s blade and finally shrink-wrapped on Styrofoam and set in the cooler 
case.

This became the hunt. And in the hunt I was not killing for creation of food or 
clothing, but for waste. For art. For mark-making. To understand the power 
of witnessing. To see the residue of life on display.

We fired about thirty rounds of buckshot, creating beautiful holes in the meat 
and drywall. By now, both our hands were frozen from the act of shooting 
and photographing one another for evidence that this action took place. I felt 
the work was complete, and also felt it important that the documentation be 
only that—a document. The power of this work lived in the materiality, sound 
and liveliness of the event. A photograph is merely residue emergent from 
what I’m ultimately interested in: feeling the raw energy and power of live 
action and the reality it can embody. *Shooting Meat and Drywall* attempts to 
experience and communicate this.

In this work, I’m finding inspiration and pointing toward Hermann Nitsch and 
his capacity for immanence—experiencing and existing in the here and now;
seeking to be fully immersed in materiality and life; and to expose human emotional power, tragedy and resolution when language or traditional art forms fail to do so. Life today is glossed over at supermarkets, on cell phones and via simulacra. His use of real animal carcasses, organs and performance action are influential to my practice, process and beliefs about what art is and what it’s capable of.

Part Three: When Power Becomes Gracious And Descends Into The Visible,
Such Descent I Call Beauty

I saw my cousin get married in the summer of 2008. It was a traditional Catholic ceremony, and no expense was spared on the reception held at a private, upscale country club. The joint was beautiful, though over-classed, but I was not complaining about the free drinks. And then about three Budweisers into the party, I saw my final thesis work. It revealed itself in the likeness of bride and groom, standing four feet tall on a buffet table, melting away. I snapped a picture of the ice sculpture for the sketchbook and hit the dance-floor with my uncle.

Five months later, while waiting for a sphere to render in a 3-D modeling program, everything felt simulated. The computing power of the human mind was taken over by technology, trapped in the computer. The need and desire to break from polygonal meshes towards the tangible—the sensual—the real—never felt more crucial.

Up to this point in my graduate study, meat was my main choice of working medium and would need to remain that way for the final thesis exhibition. Powerful and intense performance actions, deafening and debilitating sound,
violent human interaction and spectacle unfolding in time were the means and foundation of my artistic practice. I felt the desire to break slightly from the power of artists hand towards a power in the natural order of materiality.

I remember hanging out in my cold, heatless studio one day, flipping through old sketchbook ideas and imagery, when I crossed the photo of the happy couple melting at the reception. Removed from the celebratory situation, I thought it both beautiful and tragic, this moment of wedlock bliss, frozen, but inevitably left to disintegrate into a puddle of what once was.

Ice. I wanted to use ice. For what, I was unsure. I thought its mixture of power and vulnerability to be interesting and worth exploring. A huge block of frozen time, imminently destined for destruction on account of the natural order of exposure to environmental elements. Moments following this consideration of melting ice, and a few pages deeper into my sketchbook, I stumbled across an image of the butcher’s diagram. The vision came suddenly and the work seemed to organically discover itself. The only thing left to do was to figure out how to see this idea through to reality.

The next few months consisted of hanging out with butchers and ice sculptors; probing them for information that would both compliment my research and make real the vision of my project.
My first contact was with Bob at Schuman’s Meats, a small, family-run butcher shop in Columbus, Ohio. Bob (or Bob the Butcher as I would come to know him), was a mild mannered, serious-type of guy, but with a humor that somehow made perfect sense for a butcher to have. As we talked, he dressed hand-picked steaks for customers, custom cutting and trimming off fat to their likeness. He talked about his experience in commercial industries such as franchised, big-box grocery stores and how local butcher practices
differed, specifically mentioning meat quality. “You know when Kroger has meat on special discount? Well, chances are that particular meat sat unrefrigerated on a loading dock or is just passing its F.D.A. expiration date.”

I was lucky enough to be invited into the meat locker as a delivery was coming in. Huge sides of locally grown, swinging beef carcasses were floating off a box truck and onto meat hooks in Bob’s cooler. I was amazed at the sheer size of these animals, ready to be butchered down into primal cuts for consumption.

These processes of delivery, butchery and distribution are the basis of a meat industry whose system fascinates me. From hanging carcasses to the display case, what was once a field steer groomed for production, now broken down into that butcher’s diagram in my sketchbook became real. This system of death for consumption is veiled to most of humanity, where McDonalds cheeseburgers and shrink-wrapped T-bones are the only residual most people are exposed to and understand. We are shielded, or choose not to wonder about the source of such protein-rich foods, a fact that I hoped to uncover and make visible through this work. Life (or death), on display, working to confront an audience’s notions of food, fascination and art.

Beyond the meat, ice and its harvest into art was more a technical issue the work needed to address. A bit of internet searching and cold-calling ice sculptors was all it took to find two guys who not only agreed to take this
project on with me, but were excited to do so. It was Greg and Trey at Rock On Ice Productions in Columbus who would end up being my go-to guys, harvesting and delivering the 300 lb. ice blocks, and making this work possible.

Now that I had nailed down sources for the meat and ice, I needed to work out the logistics on how to display the work. It would require some sort of apparatus capable of supporting 300 lbs. and a container to collect the melt water that would develop over time. Many ideas were entertained, one being a stainless steel table with a separate drip pan to catch the water. This seemed like a convenient idea to me, obvious and to the point. I mocked up some sketches and was moderately happy with the solution but felt it took the piece too much towards a dinner setting or offering ceremony. This structure presented the work too safely, set up on a clinical, stainless table-top, suspended with no connection to the ground. This was not going to work.

My goal was to expose a direct link between the animal carcass and its subsequent depletion according to the melting ice. The process needed to be raw and primal, contrasting the sexy, crystal clear ice and the inevitable waste of meat, food and life. It became imperative that the materiality supporting this work needed to reflect these ideas.

On recommendation by my friend Julie, I headed to Research Alloys, a steel scrap yard, hoping at the very least to find inspiration for a display platform or
material that might compliment the works’ goals. I can remember cruising around the yard early one foggy, rainy morning a few weeks prior to the thesis exhibition installation date. This being the first time I’d been to a steel yard, I was captivated. Mountains of used broken steel piled up all around me. Huge machines clanking and crushing silver debris. This was like a landfill for industrial steel detritus, hidden behind a chain link fence in the middle of the city. Some of the rawest dudes I’ve seen to date were maneuvering forklifts around the lot, moving everything from full sheets of stainless steel, to busted-up engines, to bins of crumpled steel undesirables.

And then I saw it; a beautiful, industrial-green form sticking diagonally from a pile of steel as if it were emerging from the apocalypse. The vision for the work was instantly completed, as I could see my piece sitting atop this wheeled-bin, melting into it. It was the perfect solution: a system that would both support the ice and serve to contain the melt water. It’s rusted, sickly green rectangular structure was reminiscent of a garbage dumpster, echoing the ideas of waste, primacy, rawness and power I wanted to communicate.

The work would end up consisting of five, 300 lb. blocks of ice, each containing a Chuck, Rib and Bottom Round steak stuck in frozen suspension within the ice. Each week, one ice block would be delivered and installed in the gallery space on a black, steel grate sitting on the green bin. Lasting approximately three days, the ice was constantly changing states as it
performed its imminent melting process. It would be allowed to completely
disintegrate, leaving only the three primal cuts of meat exposed and on view.

An ambient, throbbing audio element accompanied the installation, aiming to
amplify the connection between the severed carcass and the melting
process. The sound resonated throughout the entire exhibition space as a
self-contained feedback loop that embodied power, time and reality.

I discovered this sound work while bumbling around my studio, experimenting
with various electronics, instruments, effect pedals and amplifiers. As I ran
cassette tapes and guitars into effects, I found ways of achieving attractive
sounds that worked well with the planned installation. One problem, though,
was that I had no idea how to trace this process of experimentation that lead
up to the emerging sounds. I get so easily lost in plugging and un-plugging
components and building layers of texture, that in order to utilize any resulting
sound, it must be captured live. Now, this is fine if the work calls for recorded
media, but for the particular piece, I was interested in a less direct sound
generator. I had no intention to expose a sound source such as tape, disc,
mp3 or any other traditional form of playback.

I began thinking about the ice and the inherent absence of ice at moments
during the run of the exhibition. It struck me that there were going to be times
when visitors were only going to experience the sound and a green bin, void
of any melting process. Knowing this, I wanted the sound to be just as
ephemeral and powerful as the ice, operating without direct user input.

Illustration 7. Feedbacker. Photo by Edward Frank Ostrander.

Weeks went by and various audio experimentations kept yielding powerful and interesting sound, but ultimately failed. I’m not sure at what point I recognized it, but the idle hum of the amplifier caught my ear. I followed the cable from the amplifiers input, into one effect pedal, then out into the next pedal. From this pedal, the cable ran about twenty ft. and lay next to a guitar, waiting for insertion to complete the signal. As I listened to the undulating
hum of the amp, I thought more deeply about this cable chain that was absent of the traditional sound generator.

Absence. The absence of an input in direct relation to the absence of the ice became apparent. The sound held a dramatic presence despite its lack of a generative source, a sound that came from the environmental conditions of a space and the inherent electrical current flowing through a half-connected cable. The work would be fully-realized when an additional cable was added to loop this open-line input, forcing the empty signal to feed back on itself and develop rich harmonics of noise as it encountered further processing and distortion.

Now, with sound working to explore absence and waste in the overall installation, I wondered about how to take the work even further. The accumulation of water called for my weekly presence and maintenance of the work. Recalling ideas embodied in the landfill and determining that the meat was ultimately going to be wasted, I wanted to create more viewer speculation about the process. How could I develop a strategy that would extend the life of the meat, water and noise?

As a last-minute decision, I ended up preserving the melting meat cycle via jars encapsulating the process. Every week, the melted ice water and meat would be temporarily saved, each primal cut preserved in its own clear glass jar, full of bloody water. These jars were then displayed on the floor to serve
as the residual of the process. In addition to this preservation and display of the meat, I would record to magnetic tape the empty signal noise that occurred during the melting process, labeling each cassette with the date(s) the action took place. These tapes would then accompany the displayed jars of meat and melt water of which they provided the soundtrack for.

![Illustration 8. Residual Sound and Meat. Photo by Edward Frank Ostrander.](image)

This work, *When Power Becomes Gracious And Descends Into The Visible*, *Such Descent I Call Beauty*, takes its title from a passage in Friedrich Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Ideas about power, waste, immanence and art were manifesting themselves as I read Nietzsche’s writing. His view that art is bound up in a duality between the Apollinian and the Dionysian is
particularly interesting to my process. The Apollinian form manifesting itself in the plastic arts, while the Dionysian emerged from non-imagistic art such as music. Nietzsche saw these two separate tendencies in parallel, each antagonizing the other to create an art-form rooted in tragedy and composed of the Apollinian art of dreams and the Dionysian art of intoxication. My work is an exploration of this dichotomy, using materiality and process to confront our ability to collectively affirm life and discover truth in destruction.

In addition to studying and researching the writing of Nietzsche, I found inspiration from the ideas developed by Joseph Beuys and his approach to art-making as transformation and cultural channeling of pain and reality. Jannis Kounellis and the Arte Povera movement are also influential through their use of unconventional materiality and natural processes which attacked the values of cultural and political institutions. I feel a kinship to the idea that art needs to be freed from the marketplace and existing powers of structure implemented by artistic conventions.
Illustration 9. When Power Becomes Gracious And Descends Into The Visible, Such Descent I Call Beauty.  Photo by Edward Frank Ostrander.
Part Four: Revelations Towards a Future

In retrospect, the research I undertook earning the degree of graduate in fine arts really didn’t differ much from my approach to life; that being the discovery of, and fascination with, natural processes. My life experiences are the research. It is everything I touch, see, hear, smell and taste. This research is very much like that of the documentarian or ethnographic field worker. It is a conscious attempt to capture and understand social interaction and life processes as they exist. The work is only a vehicle to communicate these experiences to a larger general public.

While my research in graduate school continued to straddle my life, the format that emerged was drastically different than my previous works, which operated as video projections. Many of the ideas were under-developed prior to the graduate experience, and video seemed to be the easiest and safest way to communicate those primary thoughts. Now, though, with a less naïve approach to making, the works have moved beyond the video representation of a reality and attempt to become that reality. The use of ephemeral materiality and action are strategies I’ve garnered and employed to create real interpretations of life experiences through art. I find these processes to be much more effective in translating my ideas than a video file or image.
The future of my research and making will continue to be rooted in the realities of life. The work produced must exist as tangible actions or natural processes. I will entertain every idea conceived at four a.m. or under intoxicated circumstances. I will listen closely to friends, and strangers alike, for fascinating glimpses into their realities. All things mundane, joyous, depressing, tragic, beautiful, psychedelic, serious, humorous, boring and so on into infinity of life experience will be explored.

As our realities become more and more mediated with texting, Twitter and the interweb, we will soon reach a point where language cannot reach us anymore. We will lose the ability to articulate ourselves through any sort of real, sensual encounter. As a response, I will continue to create my work as experiences—moments that recall the tension and spectacle life has to offer. I will move from “I” to “Myself”, united with the whole and embedded in the real, searching for and revealing moments of truth, however absurd, beautiful or ugly they might present themselves.
References


Appendix: Personal Meanderings And Those Who've Said It Better

The daily commute. The world marches on, choosing the path alongside and around the mountain, as challenging it head-on would surely prove too precarious. The realizations resulting by attacking it hold too much truth. So we trudge on and around, choosing safety over peril.

Self-loathing. Discover truth in destruction. Beauty in decay. Raw muscle, violent movements and abrasive sound challenge us to interact more intimately with our world. Let us entertain the propensity for catastrophe and embrace it. Destructive narratives expose the source, creating tension and suspending rational explanation.

Who could care. Operating within the strata of tragedy and purity is choosing to not choose; to prefer nothing over something.

Disconception. No ideas today. No ideas when you’re healthy and organized.
Walking away from something. While walking away from something I’m finding and discovering—opening up. Feeling a heavier weight, looming in limbo. Out of control, it feels free. It’s feeling transient. It will feel finally. A reinterpretation of the work is amongst me.

On surveillance. And I watch. I am watched over.

And to say it once more. One glass of ice water with ice.

Life cycle analysis—or art. 1. Goal definition. 2. Inventory analysis. 3. Impact assessment. 4. Interpretation.

We are above you. In a landscape of hierarchical orders, one must intrinsically find substance in the mere recognition of a system of order. The idea of a system has ingrained in me, and society as a whole, an understanding of power structures designed to implement control. In rebuking this control, one must not point fingers at any one social construct, but to an overarching idea about rational thought and consequence that burdens our most primal desires. I can see this in the idea of the landfill as a looming and ever-increasing mound of power, reaching upwards into the atmosphere. The remnants of time expired are compounded and dominated by layers created above them. No more are they at the peak of prominence; instead they are reduced to ineffectual waste, calibrated to absorb the leachate of the succeeding garbage regime.
Friday Oct. 5 2007

Richard Grove - Anarchitecture - on the Verge of Collapse

Words I'm influenced by

Decay Tension
Overload Confrontation
Product Space
Consumption Decomposition
Waste

Ideas

Environment Interaction
Life Cycle Analysis - Cradle to Cradle
Meat Production
Waste & Refuge

Art imitates. “Thus far we have considered the Apollinian and its opposite, the Dionysian, as artistic energies which burst forth from nature herself, without the mediation of the human artist—energies in which nature’s art impulses are satisfied in the most immediate and direct way—first in the image world of dreams, whose completeness is not dependent upon the intellectual attitude or the artistic culture of any single being; and then as intoxicated reality, which likewise does not heed the single unit, but even seeks to destroy the individual and redeem him by a mystic feeling of oneness. With reference to these immediate art-states of nature, every artist is an ‘imitator,’ that is to say, either an Apollinian artist in dreams, or a Dionysian artist in ecstasies, or finally—as for example in Greek tragedy—at once an artist in both dreams and ecstasies; so, we may perhaps picture him sinking down in his Dionysian intoxication and mystical self-abnegation, alone and apart from the singing revelers, and we may imagine how, through Apollinian dream-inspiration, his own state, i.e., his oneness with the inmost ground of the world, is revealed to him in a symbolical dream image” (Nietzsche, 1872).

On the butcher. Without one to sever for us, might we starve to see results.

Re-valuing fear. Let yourselves be overthrown! That which is to succumb to the absurd might then be master of his own freedom. It is in what we cannot see that holds truth; so, that governance in its conspicuous nature
is honest must then be a lie, for the hand of power in its visibility strikes with warning for all to see. The birth of visible control in the form of engineering innovative leaders has resulted in the creation of new material order; that which must be seen and desired. But to firmly dispute this innovation in visibility is to thrive, and overcome fear. Self-reliance and wonder are the only stop-gaps that grant one the power of blindness.

**The moment of expectant anxiety.** A presence in tension, seeking not a moral or social judgment, but instead leaving it uncovered and striking. Attempting not to manipulate is the greatest endeavor—with it brings truth. Sit and wait and stand to see the moment reveal itself.

**On giving.** How much is there to give? Do I want to give? Instead, I choose absence.

**On waiting.** Everything is happening around us. A destination for our choices lies in land heaps; mountains of the undesirables. Waiting, still.

**On remembering.** Trying to remember if I remembered remembering.

**Sense of understanding.** The artist then seeks to make visible the invisible—or, in contrary, the visible, invisible. His sense of truth to hold in reverence the ability to not choose; that is to say, he feels at once inextricably linked to humanity. “When one speaks of humanity, the idea is fundamental
that this is something which separates and distinguishes man from nature. In reality, however, there is no such separation: ‘natural’ qualities and those called truly ‘human’ are inseparably grown together” (Nietzsche, 1872). His goal is to create not what is new, however, but to stimulate individual provocations into what is inseparably “natural” and “human”.

Response to Speculation. We must march into darkness, waging war with ourselves, in order challenge the mountain that looms above us.

That which is true. “The power to destroy a thing is the absolute control over it.” (Herbert, 1965).

On borrowing. All things exist—and I will borrow them.
Illustration 11. Words. Image from sketchbook.