FUN LOVING HARD WORKING PEOPLE

A Thesis
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ABSTRACT

A wooden peg, a vertical sheet of plywood, a mallet on each side of the plywood, a place to stand on each side. The task: *Hammer a peg.*

I begin with the question, "how do people spend time interacting or associating?" In general terms based on my observation and personal experience, I conclude that people interact more freely through work and play-to complete a task. At a bus stop, in an elevator, waiting in line, we rarely connect without a task to complete. In response to events such as these, I create artwork that takes the form of material objects and time-based situations.

I am compelled to create artwork that reflects or perplexes the tone of personal relationships as well as public interaction. At the conceptual foundation of my art making is the meeting or passing of strangers, acquaintances, friends, family and intimate relationships. I am interested in the potential of questioning and becoming more aware of how these relationships function and how they are sustained.

I engage with a participant or audience by interacting or presenting myself with an object/prop/sculpture in an attempt to complete a task. Tasks usually have quantifiable ends that justify the means. In this light, the proposed end result of my task-involved artwork (*hammering a peg back and forth* for example) is conventionally unnecessary or unreasonable. Therefore, the artwork posits that the interpersonal existence becomes the
substantial end. Where's the artwork? Being present is where it's at.

The artwork that I create and art work that I do overlaps the worlds of art and everyday life. I use the contexts of both worlds to discuss my work and analyze my self.
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VITA

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INTRODUCTION

This essay is a collection of writing on my artwork, including notes on personal memories and dreams, as well as streams of consciousness, and lists of ideas, objects, and people. Also included are appropriated quotes, reproductions of drawings. The fragments of this collection and their juxtaposition to one another provide the ingredients for a casually directed narrative about my artwork, my character, and my situation: my artwork as a physical illustration of ideas and immaterial processes, my character as an introverted and extroverted being and my situation as absenting or permitting such being within and with direction of time and space/of a series of moments and a specific place.

This essay, however full of complete and confident thoughtfulness, functions by being ultimately incomplete and graced with doubt. Although the terminology and concepts I use to discuss my work are not definitive or absolute, they are not arbitrary. Opportunity for debate and question by way of well crafted and considered indecision and ambiguity and/or utilization of coincidence is a concept of the work.

Philosopher Maurice-Merleau Ponty:

The body’s animation is not the assemblage or juxtaposition of its parts. Nor is it a question of a mind or spirit coming down from somewhere else into an automaton; this would still suppose that the body itself is without an inside and without a "self." There is a human body when, between the seeing and the seen, between touching and the touched, between one eye and the other, between hand
and hand, a blending of some sort takes place - when the spark is lit between sensing and the sensible, lighting the fire that will not stop burning until some accident of the body will undo what no accident would have sufficed to do (Primacy, 163).

I question the surface and depth of self: my own, that of others and the difference between.
CHAPTER 1

THE BEGINNING

Motivation

Early in my first year of graduate school I couldn’t figure out what to do in my studio. I ended up spending a lot of time in the halls, in the office, on the front steps and in other’s studios and classrooms. I had no motivation or fascination with being alone in a studio to paint. Just wasn’t for me at the time. I covered my walls with old and new, good and bad ideas-- built myself a walk-in sketchbook, then left it alone most of the time. I went down to the Belmont building to make a salad with Alison Knowles and drink beer with Tom Marioni. I was there for the Wexner Center’s Work Ethic Show. The Belmont building was at one time a casket factory. That show was more full of questions than answers. I asked myself, “What am I doing when I’m doing what I think I want to be doing?” I came up with this answer: helping people work and inventing games to play to pass time. I noticed that I had been content and at times inspired and fascinated by working and playing with others.

How do people experience each other? People play. People work.

What is play? What is work?

How do I discover this question as an artwork and work of art?

How and to whom do I ask?

Does my question exist within and outside the construct of an art language?

Does my question relate to distinction and similarity?

Is symmetry, both instrumentally and methodically, a means to establish simplicity?

What is the importance of simplicity?

Is my application of simplicity paradoxical?

Do I propose a fluid recognition of art, artifact, metaphor, abstraction, representation, and authenticity?

What is the ephemeral result of my examination?

I have a collection of experience, observation, documentation, invention, and creation concerning play; many of which involve materials and processes traditionally noticed as artistic. [Otherwise] I have chosen to use a creative/artistic process to better understand my interest in how people experience each other.

Work Hard, Play Hard, Think Inside And Outside The Box

I spent late nights playing guitar and drums in my studio. I worked long weekends in the gallery, and turned an office across the hall from my studio into half of an experimental space for showing and creating artwork and ideas—the other half of this space was anything outside of this space that was relatively close.

The Box: Inside and Outside Room 469 Hopkins Hall

- A physical web-based system of communication to create art while not only acknowledging, but also depending on our physical existence and capabilities.
• A practical and unique interpretation of the practice of art happening inside and outside of a traditional institution.

• Ending to some extent capitalist and competitive aims by using individualism as a means to collaborative and communal ends.

• Identifying art as a way of living; an experience itself, not necessarily the interpretations of such.

• Extending beyond, but also incorporating the traditional methods of making and observing art.

• Challenging the concept and definition of submitting artwork.

The role of space and people:

There will be two different spaces and two types of participants, all with distinct and dynamic roles. One space will be The Box, room 469 Hopkins Hall. The second space will be away from The Box and will change with each new show/installation. The Host will also change each show. Guests will be the second type of participant.

The Box:

1) Serve as a starting point; a launch pad for exploration toward and about a specific and practical location to be named “X.” Practical meaning within a realistic, available, safe, and efficient distance from The Box considering time and finances.

2) Exist thereafter as a physical “website” with an accumulation of links; a multi-dimensional message board of aesthetic interpretations, relative information, and documentation.
3) All mediums and methods are encouraged- two-dimensional, installation, writing, performance, time-based audio and visual media, non-art.

The X:

1) A destination chosen by the host based on an observation in a public space. The observation may be of a moment, a continuous phenomenon, or an object. Furthermore, the observation may be of any sense, (i.e., sight, sound, touch, and... taste,) and form.

2) In this case, the location X is simply a location or object within the realm of public access and is not to be used as a traditional public outlet. Therefore, those visiting the site should not alter the space or object beyond that of typical public involvement.

3) Just as the initial observation at the X by the host of the everyday, visiting the X is a psychological and physical experience of being within a public space rather than a predetermined site of public art.

The Host:

1) The Host may be one or more people who choose the destination X. Choosing the X should not be a contrived decision. As the host, use this opportunity to share a genuine observation. Any merit and success of the X is not necessarily a direct result of the complexity of the observation.

2) Of importance is the Host's initial communication of the X's location in relation to The Box, and the continual involvement with guests as equals in creating and observing both inside and outside The Box. The host will assume the role of a
guest, reacting to their own original observation and the collection of other
guest's interpretations using any appropriate and available medium or method.

3) It could be that by choosing a specific site as the X, the Host has some control
over the involvement and conceptual and aesthetic elements of the Box. Being
aware of these issues may be helpful, but depending on them may largely be
irrelevant considering the unpredictability of participation.

The Guest:

1) Initially, the Guest will visit The Box to learn of the X and observe the space of
The Box, which may or may not have been affected by other guests. Anytime
after, the Guest will visit the X

2) While at the X, a Guest could be sharing the observation originally identified with
the Host. It may also be the case that the guest will be imagining a past moment
experienced by the Host. A third scenario may be for the guest to personally
psychologically connect to the X.

3) After experiencing the X, the Guest is encouraged to further participate in the
creative process and web of communication by affecting The Box. As previously
stated, all mediums and methods are encouraged. This participation may
represent any result of having experienced the observations and creations of
others and their adjacent identifications with inside and outside The Box.
Additional Ideas/Comments

- Clearly define a time when documentation will take place.
- Consider a way to record those who have visited/participated.
- How will the people know to visit?
CHAPTER 2

THE MIDDLE

Dogs, Babies And The Weather

Before coming to Graduate School, My girlfriend and I created a children’s picture book titled Middle. The story was about two different beings from two different worlds. Each had it's own toy and way to play. The worlds collide and a new way to play is worked out. The original watercolor paintings of this book were a small portion of ideas that covered my studio walls. I could use the book to consider personal relationships and on a different day ponder the foreign relations of countries at war.

I notice that barriers are sometimes also the means for connection. So are dogs, and babies and the weather.

It is important for me to describe my work in very basic terms because the methods and materials and compositions I use are not arbitrary and offer conceptual direction. Also, in most cases, the elements I use to create are minimal and utilitarian in function and appearance; therefore, the interpretation at an aesthetic level is brief, economic, familiar, and elegant. The meaning of the work is an extension of the aesthetic and physical interpretation and involvement. The meaning is formed in the thought process that may occur while considering or participating in the work. The specific method of creating an aesthetic and physical situation is my invitation for a viewer
or participant to conceptually surpass the immediate encounter with the objects/situations while confidently recognizing the encounter as straightforward; a very real experience that does not depend on a different set of beliefs—as would a landscape painting be seen as a landscape through a window, instead of paint on canvas. Maybe it is art and non-art simultaneously.

I intend for the surface of the work to be both a door and a symbol of a door. Both a door that you physically walk through to be somewhere specific, and a door that allows you to remember other doors, and invent new doors—remember other places and times and imagine new places and times. If my work were a door, it would be a door that you could conceptually and physically step through and be somewhere totally different and precisely were you stepped from at the same time.

Below is a list of things and activities, moments and situations that fascinate me. I relate them to personal and universal issues of character and communication.

- Thumb wrestling
- Hand slap game
- Crack an egg on your head
- Stitch your hand
- Cats cradle
- Frisbee
- Catch
- Apple toss into spoke
- Garage sale Olympics
- Lip balm tower
- Ropes course challenges
- African kids body painting ritual
- Imitating someone who seems to be more comfortable or knowledgeable
- Waiting at a bus stop, elevator, in line
- Talking with homeless people
- Making a movie
- Skipping stones
- Improvisation
Visit My Site

The way that people interact seems to be progressively more canned—Campbell’s soup for the hungry soul. We’re all chicken—watered down and salty.

While observing my own and other’s interactions, I notice or speculate a shift in the definitions/understanding/standards of immediacy and directness. Newly defined interfaces, meeting points, barriers, and rendezvous are shaping peoples personalities, characteristics, and image.

I’m curious of technological “advancements” that change the way work is conducted, money is made, people and hours are managed, and free time is earned. Are people more and more alone or independent or alienated? How is the near constant accessibility and availability of people changing expectations of public and private relationships; of working time and leisure time? Holidays and vacations have depended on a break or distance from the physical and real time connection to work or routine. I wonder if this break is less possible and in a way disappearing as technology allows for the work and routine to be less specific in terms of time and space. It seems that we are being sold the idea of more free time (time for recreation and relaxation or playing). What’s the difference between work being anytime anywhere and work being all the time everywhere?

We should work on meeting up sometime, maybe at my place.

We should work on meeting up some time, maybe on Myspace.
Where Is Albert Einstein?

I was a teenager, a young adult, sitting alone on the porch of my family's house. Three black Lincolns with tinted windows turned into the driveway and parked over the homemade half-court for playing basketball. Two men opened the front doors of the nearest car. One stood at the side of the car, the other approached me. The man showed me the identification of a government agent. He was not rude or upset, but very matter of fact in tone. He asked to speak with Chad Kessler. I was caught off guard, surprised the crew was at the right household let alone speaking to the person they were looking for. Without further explanation, I was told that I was involved in a very serious matter, and that I would learn of details later. As for that moment, time was of the essence and my utmost cooperation was necessary. The air of emergency defied my ability to rationalize. The man requested that I come with him immediately. He turned and walked away from me. I had nothing to do but follow the black suited man back to the car. The other agent held open the door to the back seat. I had nothing to do but climb in. Three doors shut as I quietly faced my own reflection, a glass screen that separated the back and front interior of the car. The cars backed out of the driveway. One pulled ahead, a second dropped back, and the car I was in fell in the middle. I rode in the back seat relatively calmly. We drove for what seemed to be a very long distance in a short amount of time.

Early off, the racing image out my window became unfamiliar. We were somewhere in the mountains. As the road, a network of curves and hairpin turns, grew steeper and narrower, our pace slowed. The road ended. Out my window I could see the base of a three-story concrete building built into the side of the mountain. Along the
outside was a staircase that led to what appeared to be a sunroom or greenhouse on the roof. It was early spring and there were a lot of budding trees. Everything looked healthy.

The face that originally asked to speak with me appeared in the rear view mirror as the divide between us lowered. The man explained the highly confidential matter. The body, the mind, of Albert Einstein was being kept alive at all costs by the United States Government. His impressive yet failing wellness was a result of the most sophisticated life support unit and experimental medicine in the world. Einstein recently won a legal battle that would allow his now frail life to end. He requested to see me before he passed. I was escorted up the stairs. As I entered a door there was an argument, a lot of fussing about the need for me to suit up before the encounter. It was determined the risk of infecting a weak immune system was irrelevant.

I walked up to a bed covered by a glass dome. It looked like a sea worthy casket or a giant incubator. Lying there, he could barely utter a sound let alone speak. He became anxious and motioned for a pen. His excited will to move was restricted by his own weakness. Cords and tubes, soon to be useless, extended from his body—mostly wrapped in white blankets. He grasped a pen with all his might and began marking a message on a pad that rested on his stomach in a way that even he couldn’t see his own marks. He drew a stick figure. Then again, a stick figure along the side of the first. He repeated this obsessively. A chain link of stick figures filled the page.

That disposition or state of feeling with regard to a person which (arising from recognition of attractive qualities, from instincts of natural relationship, or from sympathy) manifests itself in solicitude for the
welfare of the object, and usually also in delight in his or her presence and
desire for his or her approval; warm affection, attachment (Love Def. 1.a.).

Love. This is what my work is about. Family, public interaction, character.
Character of love. Character in the term of how one self relates to the world through and
up against physical and psychic barriers and interfaces. I have learned of this concept by
observation and personal experience. I have used these techniques to help define how I
represent this concept. I listen to rock music, folk music, jazz. I watch football fans,
people at bars and dance clubs, people at the bus stop. I question my dissatisfaction in my
daily life experiences and my experiences in an art world. I notice a condition that I
cannot expect to fully comprehend and form a notion that something is not being said,
that something is missing. I propose that love is missing. Yes, this is a general and
subjective thing or idea.

Love is a mystery. Mysteries are real. I know that love is not hate, not
complacency, not apathy, not depression, not discrimination, not fear. Therefore, no
matter how general and mysterious, love is worthy of pursuit. How does one pursue love
if it is not definite? I propose that one could pursue love by being without the factors that
do not necessarily but because of the state of society instigate or allow for hate, fear,
depression, segregation, etc... further more, by being within a simple and minimally
defined situation that sustains the necessary attention to notice the absence of undesirable
concepts and situations. Even if the creation of a new or unfamiliar way to be does not
fulfill the greatest notions of love, the slate may be cleared and the map to the possibility
of any level of love may be unfolded and redrawn to expose the possibilities of new
relationships and love careers along side and passing in and around the careers of business, and pathways of institutionalized spirituality, government and education.
CHAPTER 3

BEFORE THE BEGINNING

I Heart NY, Worn Shoes, And Homesick Blues

I was at Kent State University and questioned what art is. It was during this time, that I began to link up my own creativity with the things in museums, slide shows, galleries, films, concerts, and performances. These things I considered art. I had always been creative, thought I wanted to be an artist, and thought I’d learn how to make some masterpieces. Make my creativity official. I loved the language of art. Graphic design. Line, shape, color, value, texture. These terms housed the potential to speak about anything I knew and everything I could imagine wanting to know.

These basic terms of understanding everything, I had in a safe prepackaged world; a very small and young isolated perception of the art world. This was perfect. At the time, this world was different than real life and, by contrast, was within my control. I knew what to do within a studio. There were things/events I didn’t know what to do with. Actually, looking back, I didn’t think anything needed done with them. Goofing around, hanging out, killin time, for me usually involved building, inventing, making noise, writing, making up games or challenges, finding ways to have more fun working. I would take things apart to see how they worked as it was and could work differently. My dad had a shop full of tools, wood scraps, and machinery—an old garage door motor, parts for
plumbing, nail guns, old bicycles, kitchen appliances, radios and tape players, were objects for reconstruction.

We had a basement that had an old pool table, a homemade ping-pong table, a hand me down dart board, a big mirror for my sister to perform in front of. A home made poker table, a sewing machine, record player, a regular encyclopedia, and an encyclopedia of art and craft making. My mom was an art teacher. I knew her as mom first, then Laura, then teacher. I think she’s more of an artist than any of these… or maybe because of all these. My dad is an artist too. He used his breadth of knowledge and experience to learn and teach about building and rebuilding… railroad cars, houses, glass windows and mirrors, and the body- every bone and muscle. Most of all, Brad used his knowledge to help and relate to his family, everyone he met, himself.

As art work an artwork or the work of an artist sinks below an immediately apparent surface, a new specification of life emerges. Milan Knizak, a Czech artist who became known as “Head of Fluxus East” comments on a shift of understanding art in his writing, Aktual University: Ten Lessons. “Art, understood as a collection of specialized professions, is ceasing to function. Art, as a visible, tangible, reality perceivable by the senses is ceasing to exist.”

Making Love–Love Making

Brad and Laura worked together to make some pretty incredible things. My sister is one of them. At first, Sarah was a new thing in my world. I wasn’t sure what she was. The first time I saw her I bit her on the nose and soon learned she was more like me than anything I had known. The competitiveness while growing up made this difficult to see
as clearly as I did the most disorienting day of my life. I had my sister as a best friend the
day Mom and Dad were done. They didn’t die, but the “and” did. Fuckin Bullshit. It gets
more complex.

Being in love is a fulfilling situation. Anything just out of love is a foolish feeling,
a clumsy stumble, a walk with one foot bare and the other in the fitting shoe of a
senseless soul.

We met at the Met. We waited in line for entry tags. I acted politely--happy to see
her. I hid that I thought she was stunningly attractive, comfortably charming, familiar and
mysterious at once. Lovable, I wondered. Big thoughts, small talk, slow walk. I was
playing it smooth. She didn’t know a lot about art--made me feel smart. We spent most of
our time looking at artwork. She did know what she liked and didn’t like. I envied her
simple and sure-footed responses and wonder if I was missing this point of perspective.
At one point we sat on a bench in the center of a gallery and chose an artwork to be in a
room of whatever house we would imagine owning in the future. She proposed this little
game in a way that I figured we should be imagining different houses and probably
different paintings... I wondered more about what type of houses we were both
imagineing and if I could live in either or both of them. Before I knew it, the day was
over. I remembered looking at paintings and sculptures and talking about things I had
read in a book or heard in a classroom. I regretted going to the Met that day. I should
have gone to the park, sat across from her and said nothing--find out what would become
of that. I didn’t want to be at the museum that day; I just wanted to be with her in what I
thought would be a comfortable or impressive place.
There Is Nothing You Can Make That Can’t Be Made.

The Beatles said it.

What is necessary and what is needed? Here is a good way to approach the things I make and do. When I ask the question, “what is necessary?” I look at everything I have and wonder what I don’t need. When I ask the question, “what is needed?” I look at everything I have and wonder what is missing. By approaching the making and doing of things and actions in this manner, brevity and subtlety follow as a method for answering. I have, in a way, too many things that I would like to make and/or think about. To decide on some attainable direction I step back from a world of art making and look at the immediate world around me. My family, friends, close relationships, strangers, myself alone. This holds for me the meaning of my being. When considering my own death, I think about all that would be lost. Every thought, idea, revelation, perspective, that I have not yet found a way or used my energy to communicate to others. This process leads to a highly anxious state; I image what psychologists label as depressive disorder, a feeling of “impending doom.” It’s a tricky thought process, to take a look at the infinite potential of a single mind. It’s tricky to me because it is one of the most truthful perspectives I have felt. On the other hand, it is ineffective and not sustainable. The flipside to all of this is that my ideas are not my own. What I have is a collection of other experiences. I don’t even know what I’m writing about or where this is going. I’m trying to figure out what it is that I do and translate that process of making and thinking into the form of writing… a system of symbols that can be interpreted by another person. It’s difficult to be working in a system that does not depend on the same system of symbols. My symbols, to some extent may not be received as symbols at all. They just are what they are. And if they are
interpreted as symbols, there is no definite code as to what type of meaning may be derived from their context. Fuck, I don’t know, I’m interested. No, I love. I love and hate the way I associate with people on a daily basis. I feel like we are living in a dumbed down world. We are not content. We always want more. Bigger stuff, more information, more friends. I am taking a leap here and speaking for most people, more than just myself. We need learn how appreciate less more often.

There is something going on in this world that is very exciting. It’s a stewing accumulation--repressed feelings, emotions, insecurities, and inspirations…. it’s on the way up to the surface. It’s not going to be a revolution–it’s not against anything. This is fucking bullshit. I don’t want to say anything because that is the success of my work. The success of my work is that it cannot be completely categorized and I believe greatly in what it can do and does do. And I fear that it will not do what it can if I begin to label it. I don’t want to know what it is exactly, and if I do, I want that to by my opinion that I keep to myself—at least for now. I don’t know what to do. I don’t know what to do.

**Mirror Drawing**

The mirror drawing is a way of drawing based on the necessity of someone else being there. It is simple as that. I set up some rules to follow. No talking. Try to replicate the marks of the other person as though it was your own marks in a mirror. Decide on a leader before beginning. Don’t talk during the process of drawing. The drawing is complete when both people stop drawing. It is helpful to have a place to sit or stand, a surface to work on, a surface (paper) to draw on, and something to draw with. I usually
have the paper folded or torn in half. Both get a job done. They make some kind of a middle. That’s all.

That is all. Making the middle is all. Making the middle facilitates the whole.

Is a game merely something that does not end in the attainment of some concrete gain (Knizak)?

I got lost on a drive home from New York. I drove in and out of my home state, Ohio. I couldn’t concentrate on the road signs more than the songs in my head. I was alone, but imagined I was on a road-trip with Jesus Christ. I wrote this untitled rhyme.

Last night
Jesus and I
Went for a ride
In my
Car we got real far
Played a round of golf
Shot forty under par
Shot a hole through the moon
And hit a silver spoon
The cats in the cradle
And over there’s the ladle
Not the big but the little one
Star light
Star bright
I wish I had a light bright
But if I can’t get it
Send a sit and spin
I could sit and get dizzy
Or I could get busy
With a skip it
I could spin it
Like a one leg jump rope
It don’t take two rope
It only takes one
I remember writing a short story in high school that began with a young kid getting on a bus in a town that was new to him. He knew no one there. He got on the bus and found an empty seat. He said, “Who are you?” as a way to strike up conversation with the person sitting next to him. The person answered, “I'm Jane Edwin, and who are you?” The young boy answered, “I don’t know, who are you?” Jane answered, “Well, I'm Jane. What is your name?” “Dylan,” the boy said without a thought. The boy circulated the bus striking up this same conversation, sharing names and knowing no one.

Meaning depends on the involvement of others. I use my works as a tool for interacting with other people. The situation that I create and carry out with other people does not mean any one thing. My expectation is to participate in social interactions in a slightly familiar yet unusual way. I am curious about the limitations of language, interpretation, understanding, agreement, argument, and coincidence. I am curious if all of this is a means to have company. I am curious if love exists in a form that fulfills the extent of our imagination. I am here and you are here, and that is what I am most sure of. When I say “here” I mean on earth or in the same immediate space or in a shared or combined consciousness. I mean psychologically, emotionally, present. I mean physically in the same general space and time. However, definitely not in the exact same space and time. Forming meaning overwhelms yet sustains me spiritually, emotionally, psychologically, physically. I don’t want to miss the essence of being here, with people, by becoming distracted—moving too fast or too slow, thinking too much or not enough, doing too much or not enough, wanting more or wanting less. All these seem to be the long way, the difficult way, to being content…or overwhelmed for that matter.
List In Progress

The following list is partially filled in with stream of conscious writing. The list of terms and ideas is a collection of concepts and people I use to consider my art.

Time and space

People spend time working and playing alone or with others. Play and work takes the form of thought and action.

Here and Now

Simply being, complexly conscious. Recognizing and acknowledging the people, space, material, and time we invest in, inhabit, and manipulate.

Interconnection

I don’t think people investigate, take full advantage of or appreciate the most basic similarities and subtle differences that form our personal identity and relationships.

Human Relationship

I wonder if relationships based on sexual, emotional, intellectual, cultural, religious, political, domestic, career related interests are in a general state of reserve or inhibition. I wonder how envy, threat, vulnerability, expectation, inferiority control our accessibility and will to discover others.

Interaction

The meeting of strangers’ eyes impresses me. And even more so if they say “hi” or wave. And if they smile or smile back. Or to hang out with someone you do know and not have to think about what to say or do, to just be.
Social Anxiety

The control of our comfort level is getting out of hand. It is valuable to be uncomfortable as a point of appreciating feeling comfortable, peaceful, appreciated, acknowledged, understood, accepted, loved. However, experiencing the latter group of experience should not be an anomaly or even unusual. We need to lighten up. And when I say we, I could be saying “I,” but I have doubts that I am that different than most people.

Mirror

Intending to be similar or to correspond closely in a conscious manner with the process as priority and the consequence or product being both secondary and self involved is cool.

Minimalism

For me, the use of minimal, or brief, or essential elements and visual/physical statements allow for a balance of my involvement, direction and intention with others’ participation and interpretation.

Performance

I’m never performing or I’m always performing. I may say I do performance or made a performance piece to get you in a ballpark of what it is you didn’t have the opportunity to distinguish for yourself. I enjoy participating in the events or situations I create or allow for. By removing myself from the experience, I take a back seat to the idea. I remove to some extent my identity with the experience, and allow for participation and interpretation that does not
depend on my involvement. This is an affective way for the object or task to speak for itself and perhaps a more comfortable way for people to enter or engage with the work.

In contrast, in other instances I like being a constant participant. This allows me the gratification of an experience I would otherwise have been without. It allows me to form an identity with the object, process, and concept (simply being) I am interested in promoting. Furthermore, it allows those who observe the experience to indirectly engage or be involved in the “play/work” by empathizing with my situation.

Promotion of Self and People
Technology
Material
Form and Existence
Familiar and Unfamiliar
Meaning and Function
Concept
Aesthetics
The body
My Presence
The Everyday
In the Gallery
Situation
Youthfulness
Titling the Work
Documenting the Work
Accessibility
Work
Play
Cooperation
Collaboration
Company
Convention
The Senses
Improvisation
Sport
Skillfulness
Task
Leadership
Language
Parts and the Whole
My influences/Juxtaposition to other work

- Alien movies
- Allison Knowles
- Tom Marioni
- Morey Baden
- Joseph Beuys
- Mathew Barney
- Dance of mimicking
- Minimalism
- Conceptual art
- Construction
- Trade work
- Situationists
- Fluxus
- Alan Kaprow
- Politics
- Activism
- Chinese Portrait painter of self and other
- Gutai Group
- Aktual Group
- Beck
- Bob Dylan
- Michael Gondry

Easily Distracted By What Could Be

I am overwhelmed by the possibility of things to know. I have a distinct memory of a traumatic experience; a moment of realizing I was not going to know everything. I was in a state of panic and depression. I was embarrassed by this blind-sided realization. It should have been obvious. I stayed up late and talked with my parents, explaining my awkwardly shocking fear. I didn’t read or study a lot, so it was not an academic association of knowing I would miss. I remember seeing from a school bus window the arrow of a turn lane with skewed proportion to compensate for the perspective of a driver.
Rather than paint, it was installed as an object into fresh asphalt. How much more had I seen and not known about? This was uncomfortable for me. Almost as uncomfortable as another traumatic experience I had as a young kid.

I was walking with my dad. Just on a walk for sake of walking. This was a usual thing for our family to do. Not to go somewhere, just to walk. It was then, for no memorable reason, that I realized my dad hadn’t always been a dad. In fact, that he was once the same age as me. To imagine knowing my dad as the same age as me dismembered my way of knowing, blew apart what seemed to be a constant and familiar fabric of time. My perception came back together, and mostly the same, but not exactly. Next, I imagined being the same age as my dad. I wondered which age I would enjoy more. I asked him what his favorite age was so far. I had an overwhelming concern for the possibility that I would live the best age and then live beyond that age, or worse yet, that I had already lived what would be my favorite age. Have I already experienced the most fulfilling and successful situation of what will be my life? I’m stuck with this question. Why am I asking or concerned with it? If I don’t address it I feel like I’m missing the point. If I dwell on it I feel like I’m missing the point. There is no specific point? Then what is my motivation for direction or establishing a perspective? What matters?

From instances such as these mentioned above, I learn about my character. The experiences I describe as traumatic are a result of analyzing experiences and thoughts, and not of physical trauma, or even psychological/emotional trauma that is beyond or outside of my self in the way war, discrimination, or abuse would be. I am fascinated and overwhelmed by my thoughts, observations, and surroundings (my situation).
I acknowledge the relativity of my situation and sense of being traumatized or content with that of others who could be considered more or less privileged (socially and economically). I am curious of my ability and interest in relating to others, especially those with dramatically different life experiences. I am interested in empathizing or sympathizing with people. I question my capability to do so and increasingly doubt the affect or function this has. Still, I feel responsible for and concerned with the wellbeing of others and myself. It's difficult for me to personally separate the two.

Ray Bradbury painted the image of a green blur on my mind. Changed the way I go through life. In Fahrenheit 451 he describes the driver of a car knowing grass as a green blur.

The truth of this unconventional reality has me questioning what could become if I change my perspective... stir things up, let things settle, speed up, slow down.

Do I become that proverbial frog in a pot of warming water? I feel the need to jump out to see where we are headed, where we've been and most importantly, where we are right now.

To me, technology is not about necessary possibility as much as it is about making even more fascinating the things and situations that are not typically associated with or dependant on new technology. We're running around cyberspace with flags in hand hoping to find a better, more fulfilling sense of home and self. Or, we're just having fun with new technology. I hope we don't forget about other ways to have fun, get work done, keep in touch, show off, disguise and advertise, remember and reinvent, share and be ourselves.
Revolution of the Reinvented Wheel

The wheel never brakes. Maybe it becomes so familiar that it goes unnoticed. It is too often taken from the back of the junk drawer, covered with fools gold, silver bells, and sexy whistles then sold back to us. In a way, I feel that we are capable of caring for our individual self and each other. We're made to think or allow ourselves to think that we are not capable or should, could, would be better if we had more. I do not have the opportunity to buy a razor with less than three blades at an overstocked big name supermarket. At a similar supermarket in a smaller town, a cashier strikes up conversation from the looks of what I'll be having for dinner. I feel that if we had less (even for a moment), we could become more ______ and see that we are okay. In a way, I feel that we are not okay because of an inability or futile will to own our organization and/or accept less in terms of material excess, and unnecessary however attractive and therefore potentially divisively implemented or passively adopted methods for obtaining mythical proportions of gratification and worth.

Rolling a ball back and forth a long plank that is supported by two pillars at each end. The pillars are three eight-inch high blocks stacked on top each other. These blocks are the same that are used in the building of foundations for houses. The plank, actually the whole set up, is similar to the set up of a masonry job. Instead of the plank being a place to hold material, it is in this case an avenue of the task of rolling a ball back and forth the length of the plank. At each end of the plank is a place to sit, a bucket turned upside down. The placement of the bucket changes its function. Instead of hauling
buckets full of gravel, and mud from place to place, the bucket is a place of rest. The space to rest material becomes a kinetic highway for the task of rolling a ball. Usually there is a beginning and end to the material on the plank. The end result is the completion of a wall, a day’s work, a day’s wages, a quantifiable end. In the case of rolling a ball back and forth, there is no definite end to the process, no quantifiable end.

What is holding attention?

Where is the art?

How do people work and play?

Hammering a peg is a task that has no quantifiable end. Not in the way we usually associate with the act of hammering. As a kid, I had a toy that involved hammering wooden pegs until they were flush with the surface. The task was sustainable because of the ability to flip the toy and begin again. On the contrary, just as sustaining the process of rolling a ball back and forth depends on someone else being there, so does this piece. There is a vertical sheet of plywood with a hole drilled in the center and fifty-eight inches high. This is an average center height of hanging and therefore viewing artwork. The hole would be a potential peephole if it were not filled. It is filled with a peg. On either side of the plywood is the space for someone to stand. On one side I stand with a wooded mallet in hand and on the other is a mallet on the floor. A participant may come and hammer the peg toward me if they wish. The object and my being there is the invitation. The participant may hammer the peg only until it is flush with the board. Then it is up to me to return the action and therefore recreate potential.
CHAPTER 4

THE END

The end is yet to come. A day from now I will be setting up a situation I have titled

*Laying on of hands*. I will climb into an over-sized casket shaped box. Lying face up, I’ll rest my head on a pillow, protect my ears, and relax. Two participants, probably close friends or relatives, will close the lid to the casket. I have constructed this lid to allow a beam of light, a current of air, a raised hand to pass from inside to outside. There is a hole in the lid—at the face. Upon closing the lid, a group will drum on the outside using their hands. Energy will be sent from them to me through the box, the casket, a boundary and pathway—interface. As the person inside, I have some control over how long the transfer of energy is sustained. By raising my hand through the opening that until now has allowed for only the passing of light and pulses of air, the group is signaled to stop. The cover is lifted, I’ll stand, climb out, and someone else will take a turn.

The only box I remember at the former casket factory was a box with the sound of its own making.

I question the surface and depth of self: my own, that of others and the difference between.
APPENDIX A

A COLLECTION OF IMAGES
Figure 1: Diagram of two people sitting across from each other at a firework spectacle
Figure 2: Diagram of two people sitting across from each other
Figure 3: Sketch, profile of *Rolling a Ball Back and Forth* and *Mirror Drawing*
Figure 4: Storyboard frame from *Middle*
Figure 5: Mirror Drawing by Chad Kessler and Christopher Westhoff
Figure 6: Sketch of impromptu game *tossing lip balm*
Figure 7: Diagram of a pet as center of attention
Figure 8: Notes and diagram after conversation drawing with Morey Baden
Figure 9: Sketch of people and objects meeting and confronting each other
Figure 10: Sketch of *Rolling a Ball Back and Forth* and a schedule
Figure 11: Sketch of two people sitting on buckets
Figure 12: Plan for *Hammering a Peg Back and Forth* at Hopkins Hall Gallery
Figure 13: Diagram of *Hammering a Peg Back and Forth*
Figure 14. Plan for Laying on of Hands
Figure 15. A phrase that gifts confidence and calm without compromising importance of analytical doubt
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