THE PRODUCTION AND SPECTACLE OF MEANING: CONCEPTS FOR LANGUAGE AND ART AS ELEMENTS OF VISUAL LITERACY

A Thesis

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ABSTRACT

My art has always been about the function of how images construct a dialogue in the pictorial plane. I pursue art not so much to see pictures, but more to understand visual thinking, while resistant to the notion that one should accept the visual experience without reconciling its impact. The inherent qualities in visual information often culminate in how these elements of a spectacle play out in the viewer’s psychology. My images usually entail a verbal co-efficient matched against other conventions or variables associated with language games. I try to assist the function of meaning in order to reveal duplicity in how as viewers we co-opt and identify with specific visual forms, particularly through works that express ideas with the manipulation and collage of words and letters. By unfolding the basic enterprise of words and letters as pictorial elements, I can re-shape and re-define new meaning. Often the analysis and structure of my work provides the hypothesis and goal of my research.

I believe seeing the form and materiality of any object a viewer may find in the path of his or her gaze can itself be a moment for skeptical reflection. The visual presence of different objects and images that surround each of us represents an
endless interconnected chain of associations that each individual will engage with at some level in order to find meaning. The ideas of discovery and definability that connect our own perceptions to our world also become the actions responsible for an innate type of critical reading. Our understanding of certain objects and images has different symbolic values, because each person may cultivate an appreciation for particular things in her and his own way. So in some respect, to know and to have an idea about an object or image can also be a form of dependency. This familiarity sustains how each of us may interact in our everyday experiences, while becoming woven into a plurality of habitual meanings and routines.
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract ................................................................. ii
Acknowledgements ....................................................... iv
Vita ........................................................................ v
List of Figures ........................................................... vii

Chapters:

1. Images in dialogue .................................................... 1
2. The production and spectacle of meaning ......................... 9
3. Text / handwriting / typography ..................................... 10
4. Signatures of motion / velocity stills ............................. 16
5. Splashes / paint drips ................................................. 20
6. Untitled / unframed .................................................. 24
7. The process of printing ............................................... 30
8. Conclusion: the phenomenological constant .................... 32

Bibliography ............................................................... 33
LIST OF FIGURES

Figures:

Figure 1.1 Compassion '02 .................................................... 3
Figure 1.2 Glove '03. ............................................................... 3
Figure 1.3 Glove detail ............................................................ 3
Figure 1.4 Glove '03 ............................................................... 4
Figure 1.5 Archivist Glove '04 ................................................... 4
Figure 3.1 Keyhole Text '03 .................................................... 11
Figure 3.2 Self-Portrait '03 ...................................................... 13
Figure 4.1 Motion Construct 1 '02 ............................................ 16
Figure 4.2 Motion Construct 2 '02 ............................................ 16
Figure 4.3 Metro / Metrology '04 ............................................ 18
Figure 4.4 Cascade '04 ........................................................... 18
Figure 4.5 Velocity Still '03 ...................................................... 19
Figure 5.1 Spatter Lens 1 '04 .................................................. 20
Figure 5.2 Spatter Lens 2 '04 .................................................. 20
Figure 6.1 Black Canvas, Zippers, Xerox Copies, Collage Lithographs '02 .................................................. 25
Figure 6.2 Death of an ism '04 .................................................. 28
CHAPTER I

IMAGES IN DIALOGUE

My interest in an art has always been about the function of how images construct a dialogue in the pictorial plane. I have pursued an art not so much to see pictures, but more to understand visual thinking. I am resistant to the notion that one should accept the visual experience without reconciling its impact. The inherent qualities in visual information often culminate in how these elements of a spectacle play out in the viewer's psychology. These discourses have a maieutic function; these discourses transport cultural objects into existence by naming, defining and delimiting the objects' field of operation. Those linguistic practices and institutions that produce the knowledge claims are usually associated with a disseminated power within which we exist socially. In my work, I want to emphasize how discursive formations may play out in the viewer's psychology.

In my art, I can see the anthropology of the present and attempt to create a way to discuss the meaning of an object's cultural value or how this value has become enhanced or diminished through history. The value of the image and object is always on the verge of being lost in history because language use is constantly shifting, therefore so is meaning and the objects once associated with these former meanings. Because the images and subjects within art represent
cultural and global artifacts, each one is tied to humanity like a language that is always retelling and unfolding in a dialogue of a cultural past and present. In this respect, I find it comparable that words and images share a similar history. Both serve to the representative function of transmitting a cultural communiqué that informs a historical record.

I first used the concept of a glove as a material object in a kinetic sculpture, *Compassion*, 2002. I chose to use latex gloves in this work because I could inflate each glove with air. The inflated gloves in this particular context resemble outstretched hands that are dexterous but compassionate and actually humorous in their three dimensional form. Ultimately it is the layering effect I wanted to achieve; the glove itself as artifact also becomes the symbol of a concealed or protected hand. I also link the latex glove to the analytic mind, denoting the person who may wear this type of glove: a surgeon, scientist, researcher or archivist. Each of these professions are committed to the controlled exploration and analysis of a selected object of study. I believe I aligned the latex glove with this type of analytic mind because it reflects my own concerns regarding my curiosity for information. I have entered many of my art compositions through a type of conceptual puzzle that involves a sort of exacting activity with the use of language and form. The images and objects I create usually entail a verbal co-efficient matched against other conventions or variables associated with language games. It is often the analysis and structure of my work that provides the hypothesis and goal of my art research.
In 2003, I made a linocut of a latex glove, which represents a natural progression of my own artistic and analytic concerns. The two dimensional image I cut away from the linoleum block is a close study of light, structure and visual thought. Each incised element contributes to the glove's architectonic form, which is superimposed over the seamless model of the actual latex glove. By utilizing the pronounced material limits of linoleum block as a dense and rigid
medium, I produced a different set of symbolic codes in the representation of this *Glove*. The linear marks do not resemble paint strokes or pencil lines; instead they are incised marks designating the cutting tool. The resulting codes alter the description of the object, offering an aura of the nature of how this glove exists as an object that is weighted down by the signifiers of traditional relief printing. However, for each version, that of the actual latex glove and the linocut, both still adhere to this premise: for each representation of the glove there is the hidden presence of a hand.

![Figure 1.4 Glove '03](image)

![Figure 1.5 Archivist Glove '04](image)

The latex glove is a semi-transparent second skin, whereas the two gloves shown above share a pronounced architecture and more closely resemble a gauntlet. The latex design offers the user more flexibility and greater access to tactile sensations. When I saw the latex glove, I immediately thought of scientific,
medical, forensic and technological research. These fields utilize this type of
glove for handling things like delicate machinery or human organs, for performing
an autopsy or constructing computer chips. When this close fitting glove is
necessary, there is often the demand for safe guards and to some extent,
protection for the human hand and the objects that are being studied or
manufactured. For me, these divided functions provided by any glove became
an integrated necessity for the purpose of critical examinations and technological
material development. This pellicle separates the flesh of the human hand, once
instrumental in these processes, now concealed and protected so as to not
interfere or contaminate our search for measurable truth.

I was fascinated with tracing how and why this glove is appropriate as a
tool for scientific investigations. I also thought about the layers of meaning that
surround the idea and image of a glove. It is through this process of recognition
involved in defining a glove that I believe knowing/seeing the form and materiality
of this object (and any other object a viewer may find in the path of his or her
gaze) is itself a moment for skeptical reflection. The ideas of discovery and
definability that connect our own perceptions to our world also become the
actions responsible for an innate type of critical reading. The visual presence of
different objects and images that surround each of us represents an endless
interconnected chain of associations that each individual will engage with at
some level in order to find meaning.

Therefore the image of a glove is also the function of a glove. Our
understanding of certain objects and images has different symbolic values,
because each person may cultivate an appreciation for particular things in her and his own way. So in some respect, to know and to have an idea about an object or image can also be a form of dependency. This familiarity sustains how each of us may interact in our everyday experiences, while becoming woven into a plurality of habitual meanings and routines.

If all gloves represent an article of clothing used for the concealment and protection of an unseen hand, then a glove can also be subdivided into different meanings of various glove types. Thus meaning for a glove, and the hand it conceals, corresponds to the function of each glove signifying information about its own intended use. That is, each glove describes a specific relationship to the hand it conceals and protects. Therefore, if the glove is a sign, it too can function like language and reside within a convention of signifiers that describes something not immediately present. Words are most notorious and widely used for this same process of describing physical things and relationships not presented before us, but communicated through an accepted convention of meaningful mediation.

Each glove in turn is a tool that conceals and protects an unseen hand with meaning inscribed onto the fabric of the glove itself. These versions of the same glove offer meanings that may differ in respect to whom may use such a glove. But all versions symbolize the hand that each conceals and thus symbolize the double function of protection for the one who wears the glove and for the objects handled by these gloves.
In *The Archivist’s Glove*, this glove is surrounded by a visual collection of images, images of objects I have actually cataloged as possible subjects for future art work. Specific elements of this collage form enhanced dialogues that activate these elements, for instance: the propeller is activated as a symbol of mechanical motion; the sphere is activated as a symbol of the perfection of mathematical science; the x/y is activated as a symbol of genetic code. The x/y represents the chromosome formation encapsulating the DNA sequence responsible for gender traits in humans. The manifestation of these elements is governed by the activity of the glove, generating various dialogues that correspond to an archivist’s or scientist’s assignment to discover, identify, catalogue and collect humanity’s material “progress,” most notably for the human record.

My glove variations, much like the notion of language, become conventions that convey meaning through a process that involves a visual reading. Because of a subtle difference between language conventions and images employed to describe or indicate types of meaning, certain images and words are dependent upon their structures and their embellishment in order for the viewer/reader to perform communication acts. In the same way the image of my glove hides the hand, yet still eludes to a type of hand that may reside beneath, words that are used to describe a landscape actually hide the scenery but impose the symbol of this space. It is not that the hand ever disappears completely but instead becomes a hand under different constraints and different ideas. How I describe and carve out a glove and how I approach the practice of
art as a visual language are one in the same. Both actions are integrated in a material dialogue and made visible as an impression of process. Each is a significant component in my participation as a studio artist.

The function of perception and its connection to meaning is an overarching concept in how and why I make art. The study of appearances in art is also the study and practice of types of visual communication and language. As a philosophical rationale, this idea can be connected to Wittgenstein's statement that "language is its use." The idea of meaning is a generative and productive use of signs and not just the scribbling of words, but it is rather the multiplicity of all symbolic conventions activated in the mind of the reader/viewer.
CHAPTER 2

THE PRODUCTION AND SPECTACLE OF MEANING

The interchangeable relation of images and objects that share operations associated with linguistic authority are numerous. Symbols, signs and icons, for instance, always keep the company of the words that each describes or declares. It is because of this inseparable reciprocation of meaning and interpretation that words follow images and objects. Through my observation and execution of printed material, I have put into practice how these systems coordinate images and objects within language use as a visual practice or game. I try to assist the function of meaning in order to reveal duplicity in how, as viewers, we co-opt and identify with specific visual forms.

Through this pursuit, I have delved into philosophy, science, history and psychology in an effort to continue my investigation and study of visual meaning as it is connected to visual representation in and out of the pictorial plane. I refer to this pursuit as an investigation on the production and spectacle of meaning generated through the use of signs and language games. Because my work is a construct occupied by words and images, this research also serves as the principle theoretical framework behind my production as an artist.
CHAPTER 3

TEXT / HANDWRITING / TYPOGRAPHY

Through the use of text and my handwriting samples, I have developed certain lithographs and collages because their use engages human awareness. Most people can write; all writers read. With handwriting, I am employing a type of scrawl and scribble derivative of both art and language. Works, such as Keyhole, Keyhole Text and Self-Portrait, address my concerns with the application of cognition and meaning that can be conveyed through a visual structure. These works are examples of text or my handwriting rescaled and reproduced through photo mechanics. I then manipulate the composite collage to form a textual image. These images offer meaning as they render ideas anchored and related to the structure of formal typography and written language.

In these works, I have tried to express ideas through the manipulation and collage of words and letters. By unfolding the basic enterprise of words and letters as pictorial elements, I can re-shape and re-define new meaning.

Keyhole Text exemplifies how the restrictive form of the keyhole first documents meaning because the keyhole confines the viewer to the experience of looking inward at what is behind the keyhole. This form positions the viewer to
become a perceptual key or to “look in,” simultaneously confining the viewer to the clandestine activity of voyeur. *Keyhole Text* regulates this activity by becoming a type of window that will only enable a limited view; the form incites scrutiny upon the pretense of what is normally hidden. Interestingly enough, what is also excluded from the outside perimeter of the keyhole is necessary to its overall organization.

Figure 3.1 Keyhole Text '03
The keyhole defines and confines the rules that legislate a viewer's position by subordinating and assisting the importance of the text. Handwritten, partial and crossed-out text alludes to a whole text that is only available behind the keyhole so that this reading as a differential relation becomes an acknowledgement of what is excluded from vision. Yet the obscured text entices the viewer to solve the mystery of how "order in chaos" can depict the real. This figure, just like the mass mediated messages we now interpret daily, presents personal, partial and obscured meanings with which to select from the puzzle of possible outcomes. In this work, I strive to illustrate how there is a hierarchical reading in which visual meaning takes place through various layers, structures and order; we have become socialized to perceive our surroundings and most visual matter as a pattern of messages to decipher.

In my work, I pursue this method of organizing compositions because it is similar to playing language games. Established rules of grammar and how one reads determines how each viewer will play with meanings in order to resolve the puzzle and to find the answer. Even if the answer is nonsensical, much like the poetic existence of the Jabberwocky, it can still be defined by the rules that govern its poetic puzzle. Although the contents of the Keyhole Text are largely handwritten, they would not normally be found inside of a keyhole. This interposing insignia upon thoughts, then thoughts upon insignia, becomes the manifestation of a new aesthetic reality. Understanding this process of reciprocity through communication will always invite play and is, for my own sake, a degree towards personal insight.
By changing the nature of knowledge into a game, I intend an enthusiasm for play and experimentation that is inherent to my search for artistic knowledge.

Figure 3.2 Self-Portrait ’03

For me, the self-portrait is literally an emblematic or symbolic concept of self. The subject in this image, the typographical structure presented in the lowercase \( \text{i} \), closely resembles font specifications for American Typewriter. The \( \text{i} \) is a visually coded, figurative element that performs as a linguistic sign. First and foremost, the letter \( \text{i} \) is the layer that ultimately designates the content of the work’s subject if one reads the self-portrait as a hierarchical collection of signs. So, if the viewer/reader recognizes the formal typography at the bottom of the lowercase \( \text{i} \) and the unique typography of my handwriting above, the game has begun. Because these two separate constructions are conjoined through an
imposed structural process encouraging the viewer/reader to assemble the Ī, the
viewer recognizes the figure of the shape. To complete this puzzle or play this
game, the rules one must follow are determined by the act of reading, but then
over-determined by the act of viewing this piece as art. Therefore the dot and the
post of the Ī are delivered within a context already occupied by the forms tied to
cultural literacy. Completing this form is a communicative act.
In a sense, I am responding to a socialized perception of the self-conveyed by
language as symbol. The lower case Ī is a pictorial and linguistic representation
of the "one" individual self. The self-portrait is also representative of a
multilayered narrative, constructed like a block of effects and percepts. The
lower case Ī and the simulation of photo-mechanical imagery represents a
composition that is sutured like a composite of graphic signifiers. This
arrangement of visual information also performs like a block of effects and
percepts. Each item viewed separately displays its own pictorial signature and
represents the following blocks of effects: The lower case Ī and handwriting form
a unit of typographical letter and layout; the water simulates photographic
imagery with its high contrasting bold graphic design principles; the background
is constructed with a lattice of beams and consecutive ledges, one stacked upon
another, forming an almost monolithic architectonic subdivision of space.

The resulting composition is an organized space one would associate with
a picture to be re-ciphered, a subject to be read. The intentional use of limited
color, except for the symbolic purple ı interconnects conscripted devices to encapsulate this self-portrait as a visual document recoded as portraiture. I am illustrating that I am connected to everyone else through language as a transposed identity. In this way the lower case ı symbolizes the individual encased in the language of culture. The ı is a symbolic transaction of hegemony except for the subjective use of color and the handwriting samples that form the text ball.

According to Nicolas Bourriaud, one function of the present art movement, relational aesthetics, pertains in a general sense to how dialogues systemically become an element of sociability. The image and object now occupy a different position within culture, not merely being things of elitist acquisition but as an interlocutor of resistance and visual thinking. In a sense, relational aesthetics reveal a concept of contemporary anthropology. Understanding the structural and semiotic principles behind what motivates visual meaning enables the author of images and words an analytic template to discern more clearly the impact upon those viewing, listening and reading. What I see in my work and what I can extract from history and society, both are a part of my identity. The aspect of this historical and cultural components are always simultaneously entwined in my own work, and as an artist, these components remain connected to my investigation of how culture’s phenomenological artifacts become the interposed points of reference for my artistic reasoning.
CHAPTER 4

SIGNATURES OF MOTION / VELOCITY STILLS

Most recently I am working on concepts of motion. My current subject is the visual image of movement, velocity, energy or the atomistic dissipation of a form through spaces in time. The models of these movements I render in prints and digital videos collectively represent signatures of motion. Each image is a signifier for a type of mechanized inscription that documents motion. Through this manual drawing process of dragging differing grades of lithographic medium, I have developed specific tools made of wood and canvas that work like small blades in order to compress and stretch the medium against the printing plate. This process itself reveals a simulated mechanical presence or trace of movement. Because of this action, it is indicative that these works take on a photomechanical appearance.

Each individual drag automates the shape and design of a mass produced signature. Because of our recognition of mass fabrication, these works may also resemble modern urban landscapes passed at high speed, characterized with a blurry sense of visual speed reminiscent of photographic documentation. As lithographs and drawings, they represent investigations that question the image
and site of rendered motion. The prints occupy a cultural space that demonstrates how the simulacrum of an object's reducibility through history can exist as visual language and signature of our cultural consciousness.

Figure 4.1 Motion Construct 1 '02    Figure 4.2 Motion Construct 2 '02

These images are constructed by dragging lines, dots and geometric shapes that are applied with the intention of emulating a catalogue of post-industrial surplus. Like the litter of gum wrappers, the bar code, the snowstorm of the TV screen, the hazy smudge in the photocopy, all these byproducts of mass production contribute to our vocabulary of a technological society steeped in a spectacle of debris. Written in a visual language of speed and velocity, these signatures of motion depict the industrial and post-industrial experience. Being responsible for their mechanical appearance makes them all the more interesting because each piece is produced as a drawn subject by my own hands.
Each of these signatures of motion forms a type of photo-realism that is wholly generated without photographic means. Each image also stands as a reductive fragment of motion. Recording this fragment essentially shows how the disintegrating subject also stands for an entropic artifact. It is a necessary element in my understanding of a visual vocabulary that the idea of motion produced by the convention of a signifier articulates movement as visual meaning.

Figure 4.3 Metro / Metrology 04

Figure 4.4 Cascade '04

The print, *Velocity Still*, likens itself to me as a germ of thought that was instrumental in my *drag* pieces and in the *splash* pieces I will discuss later.

*Velocity Still* combines two concepts of motion: the accelerated movement of a
structural form, the text in this case, and the random formation of the splattered paint drips. Interestingly enough, the text “Velocity Still” emphasizes a contradictory message that can only be perceived through this visual model. The paints drips clearly indicate there was once motion that has now expired. The drops illustrate the now static nature of paint dripping. It is the image of velocity in repose and halted. It also serves as an amusing message to the viewer that all of my motion/drag prints are a synthesis of this metaphor and a game that can be solved inside the puzzle of the print itself. The stillness of velocity points to the comedic truth that often times meaning is housed in a paradoxical structure.

Figure 4.5 Velocity Still ’03
CHAPTER 5

SPATTERS / PAINT DRIPS

The morphological framework of a lone paint drip exemplifies a curious lens. The paint drip describes a referential standard of visual evidence defining viscosity and liquidity, enabling the viewer to determine a true cause and affect relation that epitomizes the function of an indexical sign. Here the cataloguing of splatters is a fluid dynamic and typology of matter that display signatures governed by gravity, mass and force of their own impact. When confronted by the visual patterns of splattered paint drips, it is through the viewer’s relationship to this form of symbolic subject that each viewer is also made aware of an abstracted expression that renders an idea of action and force.
Therefore, the tiny drops of ink, paint or any other materials transformed into a liquid state suggest a mutable subject now trapped in the origins of its natural essence.

I have, in effect, used this primordial insignia of the paint drip as a lens for my visual ideas. The twofold premise utilizes the fluctuating borders of a paint drip as an abstracted frame to embed a secondary image fragment. These two layers are then combined as one image to produce a metaphor of perhaps opposing ideas, one enfolding the other.

I am curious about the things I see and what truth, if any, these things describe. I find this basic approach to be the best question concerning my interest in art. For me the visual experience is like a spool of images and questions never completely unwinding. There may be interrelated ideas and concepts that are exchanged in a visual process, but there is no real proof of a
visual image’s legitimacy as fact except, perhaps, for the photographic
document. The photograph carries with it an objectified sense of the real, but a
drawing or painting is obviously a subjective expression reproducing some thing
or an original object.

Because of a discrepancy between image types (paintings, prints, or
drawings), each type of mark must refer to symbolic codes of representation. To
clarify my intention about this discrepancy between image types, I suspect there
is a psychological gap in how each individual will read certain forms of visual
information. Part of this idea can be understood in the process of simulation. For
instance, I could paint a drawing to look like a drawing and vice versa. As well, I
could copy the gestures or marks that indicate the special qualities inherent in
photographs, perhaps utilizing the compression and density of light and value
that makes the photograph so real and concrete. However, these constructs still
adhere to a principle one could associate with codes. The information displayed
still must rely on visual building blocks to perform the task of becoming the thing
we think we see. This is not a new idea; there is a long history in art and artists’
attempts to synthesize reality or nature through the use of alternate media.
Therefore when I speak of this discrepancy in image types, it is the relation of
parts contained in the artifact itself and not necessarily the thing I perceive as the
artifact. In this way, I am categorizing what I see in a search to find meaning. As
I build my “catalogue,” I am creating a mental lexicon of signs that can be
associated with a process of methodological reduction. The relation of images
and objects within my gaze becomes a coordinate of images and objects that
direct, surround and inform me. I am always reading to locate myself.
CHAPTER 6

UNTITLED/ UNFRAMED

When I approached displaying my thesis work, I found I had to reconceptualize the function of the gallery. When individuals enter a gallery, they expect to see “art.” There is an assumed authority invested in the gallery or in the white rooms of a museum. This authority conjures up a state of mind where the spectator assumers the objects within these spaces represent works of art. I am indifferent to the authority invested in galleries and museums. Yet I know how to align these practices with all other social conventions that stipulate rules. I am a practitioner who reads conventions. In as much that the world is written in a multitude of differing vernaculars and symbolic vocabularies, I must depend upon the cultural text in order to converse. Therefore, I decided to forgo confining meaning by leaving all of my works untitled. I chose to break with tradition in order to encourage active participation from my viewers, giving each person a chance to formulate their own labels.

Frames dictate closure. Even if a series of the same images are placed together, the individual frames will still exclude each image from an integrated reading of all images in discourse. I chose “unframed” to facilitate and enhance
the spectators’ experience. Without the works outlined, separated and framed, a
dialogue was maintained that allowed the various pieces an identity and meaning
that converged amongst all the works. Whether inside or out of the formal
confines usually associated with the display of art, I am accustomed to seeing
the world through a lens I must share with the consequences of the “everyday”.
This nuance of verity represents the clutter and spectacle of modern life that was
echoed in this gallery setting. The only framework that exists should be in the eye
of the spectator. Thus my work is unframed and untitled, and all that it can
represent in this modest form is the truth of imagery. This perceptual “truth” is
one that is without the artifice of a border to secure an absolute meaning. I find I
need to create the art image within itself. Like my Keyhole Text, the frame is the
keyhole, the subject and largely the content. I have never come to terms with
what art is; rather I take my inspiration for creating art from an internal, interior
place where the creation of art is the subject of my art.

One thesis piece in particular exemplified my approach to how I conceive
the practice of art as an expression of dialogue. When the spectator entered the
gallery, they were faced with two black rectangular canvases, each incised with
zippers. Spilling out of the unzipped incisions, a collection of debris extracted
from the past two years of work came washing onto the floor, beckoning the
viewer to the center of the gallery. The zippered canvases manifested my
thoughts and unconscious endeavors to reach and grab the spectator. Here I
surrendered my process of thought in an action for the participant. Here, I
surrendered the articles of meaning that signify how my work comes from an
interior place and motive. Many of the pieces I extracted were written text.

Through a pair of black unframed canvases, this “artistic” debris defined the

Figure 6.1 Black Canvas, Zippers, Xerox Copies, Collage & Lithographs '02
underpinning of my intent, allowing me to use visual language in order to talk and to assist my viewer in dialogue. Adding emphasis to this interior concept, the absence of meaning that exists in the black undetermined canvases perpetuates an internal investigation where all meaning comes from behind the surface of the canvas and the eyes of the viewer. Surrounding these canvases hung other works that represented very conscious attempts, on my part, to articulate visual ideas that were clear and had conscious intent.

Language is an image that resides all around us; it is like the verbal confetti that constantly infiltrates our senses. From a black canvas, visual clutter is churned out in waves, haphazardly assembled as it re-constructs our public spaces outside of the surface, or, in spite of the surface. It reminds me of the animated existence given to dead leaves caught in the wind—sweeping back and forth with unpredictable motions and direction before settling back down. Through living, I am versed in this tattered reception apprehending its arrival each and every day. Even though I am caught in the subjectivity of this circumstance, I try to puzzle together my visual conversations based on some objective notion that I can some how make it make sense.

When I begin to put these assorted pieces of visual clutter together, I also begin the process of image making. The diversity of media and visual material becomes the substratum that holds how a definition of meaning will be occupied. The collage below is representative of how dissimilar materials, patterns, styles, and techniques influence a mutual dialogue.
This is the collectivity of visual thought manifested in art. I perceive continuity in this work even though the mixed media image presented appears dislocated. For me this image imparts the over determined message of its own.
materiality as one layer. The brush strokes, colored pencil and litho crayon scribbling form another layer determining a vocabulary one could associate with abstract expressionism. The appearance of spontaneity and instantaneous use of gesture is held together and organized in a subtle scaffolding of formalistic techniques. This can be recognized through the repeated brush strokes applied in segmented vertical bands of red paint. These are contained within a tripartite of large rectangular paper planks that form a triptych sequence of image areas. Lastly, a cubistic geometry maintains how the image is perceived as a surveillance of shifting optical illusions and disappearing figures. Combined all these principles support, acknowledge and critique art history and contemporary culture. I also view this image as an essay of aesthetic thought. Whereby the contributing elements rely on the viewer’s participation to draw connections about these artifacts and their place within culture today.

For me the formal function of sight is a means for gathering critical evidence in a visual process. The past two years of producing work have brought me only a spot closer to my goal of understanding visual literacy. So when I view and make images, they belong in a category of artifacts crucial to my visual investigations. Hence, I transform these images and objects into markers that accentuate my existence by linking together a chain of visual moments, simultaneously anchored to humanity’s disparate or contiguous histories.
CHAPTER 7

THE PROCESS OF PRINTING

The printing process delivers an object that is always untitled and unframed. Through its own materiality, the print represents a formative artifact that declares authority. This transformation occurs as a unique process of coalescing ink and paper. Once the ink becomes part of the paper, the print becomes the message and the medium. One cannot be taken from the other without destroying either. It is the print itself, as untitled and unframed, which becomes the resultant object of aesthetic alchemy. The print is an acknowledgement of both forms combined as a unique object representing its own elemental quality. For me, this transformation imbues each print with a materiality that guarantees it cannot be mistaken for anything else other than a visual stamp that must be read. The visual presence associated with printed materials thereby inherits its authority as an art object. For me, the print in its purest form has already framed itself in the eye of the spectator. Here being untitled and unframed is always a necessity.

The process of printing allows for multiple permutations. The original block or plate can be printed alone or altered. This gives the printer a means to reproduce many images from the original. Understanding this principle allows for
consecutive editions to be made, and it allows for thematic investigations of an idea. The various layers of meaning that can be achieved stem from the mutability and transformative nature that are the essential standards in the printing process.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION: THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONSTANT

The preeminence of human thought is nonexistent without an articulation and a language that permits a disclosure for the presence of an idea. This defines my point of contact as an artist for how and why art is a visual language. The activity of making art is also simultaneously an act of communication. I doubt my position in this respect will ever change. The assorted tools and materials used for artistic pursuits may not embody our typical notions of language. However, when I survey the images and objects that comprise our world, I still see the dialogic certainty of interpretation and meaning. Therefore my work will always rely on some fragment taken from this understanding, because it is through this dialogic lens the visible world speaks to each of us, and this is a phenomenological constant.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

