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As an artist my interest closely revolves around the state of my surrounding environment- more specifically the result of the collision of the organic landscape with the rigidity and harshness of man-made materials that coincide with the expansion of industrialism. These unnatural elements, such as metal, plastic, and glass, give way to toxicity, waste, and decay- the most unsettling and intriguing side-effects of the modern condition. The accelerated rate at which ‘things’ are produced, consumed, and abandoned have created an imposing over-flow of debris- layers upon layers of the remains of materials that are resistant to deterioration. These objects hold the idea of perpetuation and permanence that both add to and starkly contrast with the natural cycle of decay in earthly matter. Photographer Bjornar Olsen has stated that “Decay is usually understood in a negative way; things are degraded and humiliated through material alteration, while the information, knowledge and memory embedded in them becomes lost along the way ..we suggest that things actually may release some of their meaning or generate a different kind of knowledge precisely through processes of decay and ruination” (Olsen). I feel that this declaration speaks to the importance of our relationship to our environment and how the process of disintegration from form to ‘nothingness’ can generate recognition of largely over-looked facets of our surroundings. Additionally, consideration of this subject can prompt the question of whether it is possible to achieve unity and balance within an environment that contains elements that hold such opposition to one another.

My work explores this concept by combining experimental methodologies with compositional structuring and controlled paint application in order to embody a collapse of formal representation; depicting the aesthetic of degeneration and reconstruction in a manner that unifies the various components as a cohesive whole. My abstract works aim at visually capturing the co-existing of the natural and unnatural by utilizing materials such as industrial paint, marble, and used engine oil to manipulate, deconstruct and rebuild- ultimately revealing a certain tactile physicality that references three-dimensionality.

The foundation of my recent paintings have become increasingly experimental; beginning with methodical pours of synthetic oils of varying viscosities on to canvas that are then recorded through a stenciling process. These markings function as a recording of the passage of time embodied by the layers of marks that industrial materials leave behind on a given surface. Additionally, they supplement the capturing of the ways in which these materials react to one another in raw and handled conditions- breaking down form to its simplest state.

Much of my process can be rooted in the writing of Yve-Alain Bois’ essay *Formless.* It touches on the rejection of modernist painting ideals in place of a visceral and metaphysical approach to painting. It explains George Bataille’s categorization of ‘*informe*’; a movement of artists working in the 1950’s-60’s such as Jackson Pollock, Robert Smithson, and Alberto Burri- who produced work that rebelled against the ingrained notion of form and content enforced by traditional painting procedures (Bois, 15-32). They believed that “Man is definitively overrun by what he creates and what little by little boundlessly destroys him. The obsessional idea of construction, the ordering of stones or of machines… Carried to an extreme, open an infinite vista of nightmares and of multiplied punishments wrought by the automatic law…” (40). Within this paradigm art is viewed through the cohesion of four operations- two of which strongly correlate with my artistic practice. Base materiality and entropy describe the importance of choosing ‘waste’ matter that functions on its own as a foundation of a work (31), and the incorporation of a deterioration of order (37) that occurs within the realm of decline of material form.

Artists that have assisted in situating my work within a contemporary frame of reference are Sam Moyer, Hugo McCloud and Ryan Sullivan. These artists parallel each other in the way that they pull inspiration from urban centers and utilize industrially manufactured material to create large-scale abstract two-dimensional works. Pattern, texture, and tactility become the result of recording repetitive experimentation with substance manipulation- forcing their viewers to re-evaluate familiar material from a contextually alternate standpoint. For instance Sullivan’s “painting leads by seduction: paint bunches up like folds in a garment, tempting you to touch it. Colorful, all over compositions depict or rusted metal but can be comfortably designated abstract” (Gartenfeld, 33). McCloud’s practice is inspired by “the rawness and decay of the urban landscape” (McCloud); combining unconventional substances such as aluminum, tar and oxidized steel plates.

My palette, chosen media and approach differs from piece to piece as exhibited in works like ‘*Oil Spill’* and ‘*Steel*’; but like the artists previously mentioned there is an underlying current of collapse and unearthing that flows through my work and unifies it in representing documentation of a current society comprised of an accumulation of excess. Because of this, it holds a certain relevance within the world contemporary art and it is a subject that I will continue to explore through future works.

**Works Cited**

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