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DISPLACEMENT: A RECKONING OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS:
CURATORIAL PRACTICE FOLLOWING ARTIST PRAXIS

BY:

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B.F.A. Murray State University, 2010

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of the
College of Arts and Sciences of the University of Louisville
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of

Master of Arts
in Art (C) and Art History Critical and Curatorial Studies

Department of Fine Arts
University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky

May 2015

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DISPLACEMENT: A RECKONING OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS:
CURATORIAL PRAXIS FOLLOWING STUDIO PRACTICE

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A Thesis Approved on

April 8, 2015

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Michael Boesl,
without whom my achievements would have seldom been realized.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the selfless dedication of my fearless leader, John P. Begley, whose mentoring, spirit, and general enthusiasm for this line of work are far beyond admirable. The opportunity to work for and to work with John has been the experience of a lifetime and I look forward to upholding the honor of having been his student with great pride.

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ABSTRACT

DISPLACEMENT: A RECKONING OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS: CURATORIAL PRAXIS FOLLOWING ARTIST PRACTICE

Stacey Reason

April 8, 2015

By utilizing the flexibility and sensitivity of the curatorial role through possibilities of collaboration and reaction between artist and curator, curating has the potential to explore territories previously reserved for the artist's studio. The exhibition *Displacement, A Reckoning of Internal Affairs* was a two-part curatorial project that demonstrated parallels in studio praxis and curatorial process. It was born out of a reaction to and consideration of the increasingly globalized art world, and an application of the multi-layered driving forces inherent to contemporaneity on a local scale. It was developed using a delicate mixture of planning and intuitive response. It models an approach to exhibition-making that relies on methods typically used in visual artists' studio production.

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INTRODUCTION

Displacement: A Reckoning of Internal Affairs was a curatorial project that began with an interest in examining the pervasive phenomenon of the displacement of artists and art throughout the art market in the increasingly globalized art world. Artists and cultural producers alike constantly move around the globe in an effort to participate in the expansive territory the art market has claimed.¹ The historic attractions to participate in art centers like Paris or New York City, or pressures from institutions that limit content and barriers of entry, have led artists and curators to constantly relocate themselves into a different city or different venue, often creating new paradigms of practice and conduct, in order to participate in – or manipulate – the trajectory of art discourses.

These pressures create a condition that is a characteristic of contemporaneity. This condition is distinguishable by being simultaneously diverse and ambiguous, due to the constant displacement of ideas, artists, and objects. As a result, artists have increasingly responded in their practice by what they produce and how they work in order to address the idea and affects of displacement, both

¹ See references to this phenomenon in articles such as “How to Make It in the Art World,” a collaborative list of advice compiled by writers contributing to *New York Magazine* (<http://nymag.com/arts/art/rules/reject-the-market-2012-4/>), and the exponential growth of online markets like Artsy that fuel consumerism through cultivating demand for the art world, explained by Jessica Backus in her piece for the site “Where is the Art World?” (<https://www.artsy.net/post/collecting-where-is-the-art-world>).

physically and mentally. In working with artists both as a trained studio artist and as a curator, I have observed the handling of displacement in the physical form and conceptual content of recently produced artwork. This topic has become a constant in contemporary art production, whether intentionally or not. In an effort to quantify this contemporary condition and its application to artists and art making, Michael Hardt explores the reflexivity of the term *partage*, and offers this definition of artistic production: “artistic practices simultaneously disclose in the visual fields what we share and operate divisions within the visual and partitions between the visible and invisible.”² In other words, art has the distinct ability to represent a part of perceived experience by borrowing visual language that simultaneously communicates an idea while manipulating our perception. This function of art allows it to bridge both seen and unseen, and therefore operates as evidence of displacement.

Partage is by definition a condition of being both shared and divisive, a predicament of contemporaneity that *Displacement: A Reckoning of Internal Affairs* attempts to address. The artists and artworks in this two-part exhibition were selected to address ideas central to this definition of partage. Identification of place, personal identity, feelings of belonging or not, physical and metaphysical experience within a system, and internal tensions are all facets that can be linked to the definition of partage. Through the selected artworks and in the context of this exhibition, these ideas coagulate to form an embodiment of “displacement,” which I define in this context as an experienced or perceptual shift in response to the idea of

² Michael Hardt, "Production and Distribution of the Common," in *The Art Biennial as a Global Phenomenon : Strategies in Neo-political Times* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2009), 21.

partage. “Displacement” thus served as the central term used to describe the condition that all of these ideas are situated against and ontologically tethered to in this curatorial project.

The title of the exhibition was developed to reflect these manifestations and uses the idea of partage to provide the intellectual understanding for how the term “displacement” is used. “Displacement” became the central term to describe the ideas surfacing as the project evolved, and thus served as the exhibition title. The exhibition subtitle “A Reckoning of Internal Affairs” was intended to further articulate the practice of the selected artists and to give form to the collective handling and understanding of “displacement” as represented by the selected works. Additionally, the subtitle served two functions: 1) as a phrase, it spoke to the overall exhibition content and clarified the context in relation to “displacement,” and 2) when broken down into two sections, the subtitle represented the content of this two-part exhibition as two individual expressions. Thus, “Part One: A Reckoning” described the featured work that was selected specifically for its overt handling of “displacement,” whether by an artist’s attempt to define the social and cultural phenomenon or a representation of its physical attributes. “Part Two: Of Internal Affairs” elicited a focus on the psychological and metaphysical effects of “displacement.”

While planning and intention set this project in motion, the process in which it was formed and the role of the curator was defined by a sensitivity to the shifting parts and a flexibility to react to changing elements in the development process. Studio visits and conversations with artists brought to light insights that were a direct

result of this collaborative approach, which guided the project. As a practical definition, the curatorial process undertaken here can be explained as paralleling that of a studio artist. Beginning with a broad set of interests, the studio artist conducts conceptual and material research to develop a language in which to address the idea. Through experimentation, ideas and processes are developed and refined to gain a synchronicity of form and concept until a resolution is reached between the two. The outcome is seldom pre-determined, but rather develops in light of dialogue and exchange with materials, colleagues, site, and context.

The development of *Displacement: A Reckoning of Internal Affairs* was an exercise in curatorial practice that responded and adapted to the many changing conditions, people and ideas involved. Planning for this project began a year in advance, with an original thesis that addressed a general interest in the shared and divided narrative of contemporary art that reflected the very different geographical settings of the two exhibition locations that had already been secured – the first part of the exhibition was held at the Huff Gallery at Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky, March 6 – April 13, 2014; the second part of the exhibition was held at the New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art in New Harmony, Indiana, April 18 – May 30, 2014. These venues are two dramatically different settings: one urban and the other rural, one academic and the other alternative. The two diametric locations were the catalyst in thought to explore the idea of partage.

This exhibition as a whole – from its physical structure down to each individual work – embodied a displaced nature. The two-part exhibition design was meant to impose upon the viewer the effects of displacement, literally by expecting

the viewer to attend both exhibition locations, and theoretically as each viewer was forced to consider the consequence, sacrifice, and imposition of the dilemma of displacement. The purpose for this design was not to stage an exhibition that was inconvenient for the viewer, but to present an opportunity that mimics the contemporary pressures of the artist confronting displacement. It was also an experiment in the kinds of dialectic outcomes that can arise when such a rudimentary question—the decision whether to see both parts of the exhibition—is presented. Such questions prompted were: “What does the second part of the exhibition have that is not in the first? Will I be missing the big picture if I only visit one part of the exhibition? Is it important to see both parts?”

The selection of artwork for each part of this two-part exhibition was carefully chosen to create two exhibition situations with their own independent statements that also relied on the context of the partnered show to complete the conceptual framework. Both parts—both statements—were in conversation with each other, echoing in scale and content. However, the break in time and space created a bridge to cross, both physically and mentally, emphasizing the separation and displacement of the two. They confronted the idea of partage by being diametrically opposite in specific content and context, while relying on each other to express a singular, holistic concept of the exhibition, thus disclose a divided and shared experience.

As a trained studio artist, I am familiar with methods of art production. My experience in the studio influenced my perspective and approach to curatorial practice by being cognoscente to material manipulation and concept development.

With this exhibition project, I followed a process of research, idea development, critical review, responsive adjustments, and reactions to conditions that typified my studio practice. The process of constant re-adjustments and sensitivity to content changes – practical process of studio work – became the model for my curatorial method during development and installation of *Displacement: A Reckoning of Internal Affairs*.

CHAPTER I

DEVELOPMENT OF CURATORIAL PRACTICE

The curatorial project that developed into *Displacement* began as an exploration of dichotomies due to the diametric difference in the two galleries that were reserved to hold this exhibition: the Huff Gallery at Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky and the New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art in New Harmony, Indiana. Leading with the exploration of these two spaces, the content was driven by the presented juxtaposition when putting the two in dialogue. The Huff Gallery, located in the South Broadway neighborhood of downtown Louisville, reflected the urban landscape in which it was located. New Harmony Gallery resembled an oasis of stimulated cultural activity within the sleepy aura of its historic river town.

Considering the differences in these two sites, the focus of the exhibition concept evolved into two distinct ideas. At this time, still in the beginning stages of idea development, research was taking place on the effects of globalization and the movement of artists and art within the larger art world context.³ Pressures on artists to relocate, and pressures for global art world players to enter new places, laid the groundwork for understanding the affects of partage and what would later be identified as displacement.

Initially, *Displacement* began with the selection of two artists, Allison Wiles and Ezra Kellerman, currently living and working in Louisville who were in the middle of creating new bodies of work. The shifts in content development and material experimentation that both of these artists were investigating presented a point of departure to build an exhibition. Several studio visits over the course of three months allowed in depth discussion about their ideas and monitoring of their studio progress.

These conversations laid the groundwork for the concept development of the exhibition. Initial interests coalesced around ideas of “similarities in differences” and “relationships between opposing forces.” Allison Wiles, a former photographer, was exploring earth materials that she gathered during her daily trail runs. As a training athlete, she used this time of solitude to consider her impact on the ground and its impact on

Allison Wiles, study of materials

³ Gustavo Grandal Montero, “Biennialization? What biennialization?: the documentation of biennials and other recurrent exhibitions,” *Art Libraries Journal* 37, no. 1 (2012): 13.

her. The focus on nature was an effort to have a blank slate as she departed from her undergraduate body of work of figural photographs that focused on gesture and identity. This “return to nature” created a relevant theoretical bridge between the two disparate exhibition locations, connecting the urban and rural landscapes by the artist’s intentional displacement.

The second artist selected, Ezra Kellerman, came after a studio visit and soon after meeting with Wiles. A sculptor making work broadly related to theories of habit, extraterrestrial postulation, and the innovation of tools, Kellerman’s work contrasted starkly with Wile’s experiential exploratory projects. His sculptural fabrications often analyzed technology – everything from electronic speakers to the aerodynamics of sails – through alternative forms. The central theme in his current work considered the development of tools as the primary moment when man became human (homo sapiens), and it explored the impact of innovation in general, according to Kellerman’s artist statement.

On the surface, these two artists seemed to have bodies of work that were setting up a nature versus technology dialog, and by extension, urban development versus rural habitation which created a relationship with the two exhibition sites. The juxtaposition of Wiles’ physical impact on the earth and Kellerman’s consideration of innovation and technologies set up the initial framework for the interest in dichotomies.

When studio conversations first began, Wiles was working in a ritualistic pattern of daily runs, entering an almost trance like concentration, as often runners do. She collected artifacts and recontextualized them in the studio situated against her own projections of the action of her impact. *Trace Impact* (2014), for example, consisted of two suspended speakers facing each other at ear-level playing two different audio tracks on a continuous loop of her breath, that was recorded on a succession of trail runs, hung over two strips of dirt approximately thirty inches by twelve inches laid directly under each hanging speaker. This presentation created a place for the viewer to step in between the two speakers and dirt

to experience auditory and olfactory sensations that triggered a series of other physiological reactions, such as elevated heart rate, increased blood pressure, and ultimately disorientation as the audio tracks played on a loop and tripped over each other in constantly shifting rhythms. From my own experience of the work and through observations of viewers, this reaction proved consistent.

Kellerman, on the other hand, was focusing on constructing objects that represented technological innovation using natural materials. His interest lied in the early human inventions, such as stone tools, that harnessed physics in their construction and implementation. A suspended sculpture that mimicked a Leonardo da Vinci prototype featured an interlocking system of sails delicately stretched over thin wooden twigs and counter balanced to perfectly hang in space by a thread.

The lack of detailed discussion and image here to supplement my interest in Kellerman's work is due to the fact that his studio production was not as prolific as he expected and our initial conversation about his plans failed to come into fruition. As any curator can attest, happenstance often plays a significant role in the progress of exhibition planning. However, the dropping out of Kellerman from this project forced me to reconsider the present theoretical content and look at the ideas and conditions of contradiction in a broader context. It was at this point that I drafted the call for art and published it on the Internet, first on my personal website, then on other arts websites, local social and press media, distributed through e-blasts and other wireless distribution channels. Since I had already begun conversations with a few other artists in anticipation of needing more work, additional concepts were being discussed in the developing framework. After some mind mapping, I narrowed some broader ideas into a loose call for art that was intentionally vague.

CALL FOR ART: CURATED EXHIBITION OPPORTUNITY
Working Title/Theme: "Exploration/Interaction"

This exhibition considers these questions: How do we develop an understanding of ourselves while finding our way through life? How does our relationship to place and displacement affect us? How do we configure ourselves within the myriad of inputs due to the plugged-in-ness of our current lifestyle? How much has technology affected the way we perceive, interact, explore, and live? What does the crossover between analog and digital look like and how does it affect us?

This exhibition will focus on similarities in differences.

Urban and rural. Digital and analog. Tactile and ephemeral. Technology and infrastructure, introspection and reflection. The work will take the viewers into themselves in order to look back out onto the world. The selected artists work with several different approaches to answering the questions posed and address the similarities in differences. Some of the artists have gone into nature to find self-examined solace, into the woods and the plains, as an escape of the urban clamor. Observations about the connections made

between the two different lifestyles bring frequencies and rhythms of each end of the spectrum into the spotlight. Others have embraced the compounded sensory experience of modern life and built layers within their work. Material evidence resonates the constant seeking that we all endure in our saturated lifestyles. Other artists compound materials and visual cues to explore the humanistic terrain. Light, sound, construction, visualization, and presence will create a place for viewers to explore and interact, ultimately reflecting within themselves to find answers and interpretations of what these artists have explored and interacted with.

This was a turning point in the thematic development of *Displacement*, as the focus of the exhibition shifted from considering dichotomies to a broadened scope as the idea of “similarities in differences,” or partage, surfaced as an area of interest.

Curatorial Intervention

The process by which the exhibition was developed – a planned approach that allowed for gratuitous flexibility – follows current practices of curating. This method of curating has become a significant form of curating as the role of the artist-curator has emerged in recent exhibition practice. For example, in a recent an interview with the curator of the 2014 Gwanju Biennale, Jessica Morgan described her approach to exhibition planning as developing “naturally,” as artists and specific works seemingly gravitated to an established theme which itself came out of relative research and was intentionally left broad.⁴ Trends of this kind of open-ended exhibition development are present further back to the second Bienal de la Habana in 1986, which also broke traditional curatorial practices of artistic direction in large-scale biennial exhibitions by establishing an overall theme that “was the outcome of years of research, travel, archival work, worldwide communicating, and intense,

⁴ Louise Dablay and Helen Sumpter, “The Biennial Questionnaire: Jessica Morgan on the Gwanju Biennale,” *ArtReview Asia* 5, no. 2 (2014): 52.

continuing dialogue.”⁵ Perhaps the most iconic example, though, can be attributed to the 1969 exhibition “When Attitudes Become Form.” Curator Harold Szeeman developed the exhibition through direct engagements with artists and through a series of successive events, opportunities, and critical judgment, Szeemann established exhibition making as an art form unto itself.⁶ Terry Smith could not have stated it better: “Artworks and exhibitions have become increasingly alike.”⁷

I followed this established curatorial practice when developing *Displacement*. With my studio experience, I wanted to mimic my process of studio production by remaining flexible and sensitive to underlying synergies that surfaced throughout the process of curating. I saw exhibition planning as a malleable production that is subjective to all its dynamic and changing parts. This is central to the work of curator Hans Ulrich Obrist, who described his model of curating as follows: “Chance plays a very big role (in curating). It’s a sort of controlled chance but it’s always about how to allow chance to come into the process.”⁸

Sites of the galleries, the artists participating, the specific artworks, and the time in which the exhibition occurred affected the curatorial process. Understanding the potential in manipulating these individual factors, I channeled the role of a studio artist to manipulate the exhibition formation process away from authoritative curator

⁵ Terry Smith. *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York, NY: Independent Curators International, 2012), 117.

⁶ See a lengthy discussion about both exhibitions “When Attitudes Become Form” and “Op Losse Schroeven” in Christian Rattemeyer, *Exhibiting the new art : 'Op losse schroeven' and 'When attitudes become form' 1969* (London: Afterall, 2010).

⁷ Ibid., 132.

⁸ Hans Ulrich Obrist, “Laboratorium is the answer, what is the question?,” *TRANS* 8, (2000), 114.

to collaborative producer.⁹ In the same way artists use materials and relationships to create meaning in studio production, the curator manipulates exhibition variables to form the exhibition.

My own experience in the nuances of studio production shaped the way I think about studio practice in general. While “studio practice” is a blanket term used to identify the concept and process development of artistic production within a studio setting, it is certainly not encompassing of all practicing visual artists. However, there are basic methods and paradigms that are consistent in studio practices. For example, Mary Jane Jacobs defines studio practice as “working through an idea as a method of thinking and making.”¹⁰ This explanation focuses on the function of doing as developing that is characteristic of artistic practice. The phrase “happy accident” was a comforting mantra that shaped how I approached art making in the studio, embracing the role of chance and discovery through unintended consequences.

The curatorial process for *Displacement* mirrored that contingency of development through action. Additionally, the element of potentiality and possibility that is characteristically inherent to the site of the artist’s studio offers further insight to the parallels between studio production and exhibition curating. The exhibition *This is the Show and the Show is Many Things* (1994) relies on the potential for creation and meaning-making that is ontologically tied to the studio.¹¹ Furthermore, it

⁹ In *Thinking Contemporary Curating*, Smith discuss how exhibition projects like Fred Wilson’s “Mining the Museum” have reorganized the role and function of artist’s authoritative power into the role of curating.

¹⁰ Mary Jane Jacob and Michelle Grabner. *The Studio Reader: On The Space of Artists*. (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2010), IX.

¹¹ Jens Hoffmann, *Show Time: 50 Most Influential Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* (New York, NY: D.A.P. /Distributed Art Publishers, Inc.: 2014), 156.

symbolically transfers the authority from the museum curator to the artist, creating a constant flux of hierarchy, definition, and situation.¹² For the duration of its installation, the galleries were filled with artifacts, tools, and in-progress works taken from artist studios (re-presented by artists) and reassembled to resemble their origin: the studio. As haphazard as it was, it allowed for the participation in and exposition of creative processes through the constant production and participation by the artists and the visitors to the exhibition.

As I moved forward in planning *Displacement: A Reckoning of Internal Affairs*, strategies and practices that very much followed the studio process as explained here allowed for an organic development of the conceptual and physical nature of the exhibition. What came next relied on receptiveness to content through artists responding to the public call for art. Much like museum visitors had to find their way through the haphazardness of *This is the Show*, so too had I, the curator, needed to navigate through the dialogue that was surfacing ideas as the exhibition planning continued to develop.

¹² Adriane Searle, "This is the Show and the Show is Many Things," *Frieze* 19 (1994) http://www.frieze.com/issue/review/this_is_the_show_and_the_show_is_many_things/.

CHAPTER II

FORMING THE EXHIBITION

The call for art was intentionally ambiguous in order to elicit responses that would address a broad array of approaches to generalized subthemes, such as exploration and interaction, micro versus macro, and the term “glocal,” “a conflation of the global and the local.”¹³. By not specifying a narrowly defined and developed concept for the exhibition, the responses represented a diverse approach in content and form. The organic dissemination of the Call for Art also acted as a barometer for a loosely defined social and professional network of curators, artists, and galleries that within which I operate. Common practice for this kind of curatorial project typically uses national announcement sites and paid advertisements in online publications. But the pressure of a short time frame and the immediacy of public social media sites generated a controlled response from a proximal art network.

A total of twenty-nine artists responded to the call for art with formal submissions, and a dozen more expressed interest without committing. Of those, four artists were close colleagues with whom I had extensive working experience in

¹³ Thierry de Duve, “The Glocal and the Singuniversal” in *The Art Biennial as a Global Phenomenon : Strategies in Neo-political times* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers: 2009), 46. I first came across this term coined by de Duve after the Call for Art was published. While this term was not included in the Call for Art, the inclusion of it in my curatorial explanation is further evidence to the doing as developing studio practice approach I discussed in the previous chapter.

the studio. I was familiar with five of the artists through a secondary social network, and five others were connected to me through an extended social network. I had no experience or knowledge of the remaining artists that responded.

The Call spread following the nature of social media, from one person to another, in such speed and frequency that it was exposed to people far removed, yet still connected. The volume of responses from the manner in which the Call for Art was distributed is testimony to the power of creative networks that artists share and rely on to receive feedback for their work and stay connected to proximal artistic developments, as well as a manifestation of the effects of globalization. It was also testament to the relative presence of the subject of displacement within artists' work. Intentionally vague, the Call allowed for a high degree of interpretation on the part of the artist. The development of the central concept came out of a reaction to the undercurrents present in each of the submissions. Displacement was an idea and experience ever-present, which surfaced through the opportunity of this exhibition. Additionally, the social distance that separated the majority of the selected artists from myself – almost all of the artists were not personal connections nor located nearby -- justifiably qualifies the pool of submissions as a legitimate representation of a proximal sector of artists interested in the broad parameters on the ideas of displacement.

Once submissions for the exhibition arrived, I began conversations with the artists concerning their work and possible relationships to the overall thematic content, which still was not narrowed to the partage concept. Interestingly, I found many of the artists were relating to the effects of discontinuities, feeling torn from

one place or longing for another, discerning the underlying tensions between a digitized consumptive lifestyle and an urge to return to tangible objects, among other sub-themes. Artists submitted work that presented conflicting tensions on their memories and experiences of places, as well as tensions in mental states, emotional behaviors, and physical being. A lot of conceptual territory was covered, from an urban versus rural tension to a micro versus macro observation.

In order to come to a synthesis of the various voices interjecting into the project, an intense distilling period took place. Each submission was meticulously examined: from the casual email correspondence to the formalized artist statements, I documented and analyzed every word and idea. My consideration of each submission began with an examination of the artist statement provided, in order to create a point of reference connecting my own understanding to the perspective of the artist. I made note of key terms that were used to describe the conceptual and material intentions of each artist, as well as documented my own theoretical response to the ideas being presented through the artist's words. This process of reading and responding allowed for the digestion of each perspective individually before considering the relationship to the overall project. After this stage of introduction to the individual artists, I used the filtered information to look at the documentation of the art object and attempted to assimilate what was written with my own reading of the art presented. At this point, a curatorial analysis was developed to both support and challenge the synthesis between artist voice and autonomous object.

Defining Studio Art Production

Artistic production at its most basic proceedings follows a process of idea development, conceptual materialization, and production experimentation. Whether this work is done in a formal studio setting or occurs in an alternative form, producing art objects and art practices begins with an interest or an idea followed by a period of experimentation and problem solving to best suit the artist's intentions. The artist as author must make assertions and clarify his or her own intentions in a critical process that aligns artistic production with communicating ideas and concepts. Studio art educational programs are structured around this production practice, and give emphasis to developing coherent concepts that are measurable in their ability to communicate and present the intended ideas. The final step in this model requires the artist to reflect on the art object through an unbiased lens, unpacking the individual elements and investigating the potential for areas of improvement, further development, or reconsideration altogether. This definition of studio art practice is supported by my own experience in working with artists and working in the studio.

A case study on this method of art production closely examines the relationship to process that can impact creative development. Deborah Ann Bright conducted research on a model that incorporated the reflective practice theory into personal artistic production.¹⁴ Especially when facilitated through a mediator (most often an instructor or mentor) and the application of tools (such as a sketchbook or idea boards), reflective practices significantly enhanced the participants in art-

¹⁴ Deborah Ann Bright, "Facilitative Reflective Practices in Art-Making: Identifying Elements and Influences," *International Journal of the Arts in Society* 6, no. 5 (2012): 77.

making by participating in measurable idea development¹⁵. Participants of Bright's study were instructed to maintain journals of their ideas and encouraged to rely on visual sketches over text to convey and record their conceptual development. The role of these journals allowed for facilitated discussion of the developmental stages in their individual art-making, and further functioned as a record for the facilitator to discuss influences and emerging content in their individual creative work.

The result of this study concluded with a measurable rate of success in terms of idea development and translation of concept to product through the process of reflective practice, much like the documentation process that I appropriated in curating this exhibition. Communications through email and phone calls were taking place during the submission phase, which allowed for a similar facilitated discussion on idea development. As the submissions were received, reactionary notes, critical reviews, and questions were noted and later re-addressed to facilitate the creative development of the exhibition. Under general conceptual guides that were set in place from the beginning through the call for art, the content of the exhibition emerged through a collaborative, reflective curatorial approach.

Collaborative Dialogue between Curator, Artist, and Object

Displacement: A Reckoning of Internal Affairs came into fruition by straying away from the traditional hierarchic position of the curator and embracing the opportunity for dialogue with the various voices of the project—that of the curator, of the artist, and of the artworks as autonomous objects. These three positions worked

¹⁵ Bright, "Facilitative Reflective Practice," 77.

together in concert, constantly changing the course of the project as new artists and artworks were added to the exhibition inventory and conversations developed the ideological framework for the exhibition. The identification of partage as a central idea, and later developing the two sub-themes that would serve as guides in planning the two parts, did not occur until late in the planning stages.

Traditionally, the curator has authority that has been awarded to the title by a long tradition of object care-taking and stewardship of knowledge that developed into an autonomous voice and independent position. The curator thus turns art and gallery into conversation, bridging the two, creating synergies that were not obvious nor previously focused, not only through coordination of time and placement, but also through context and subject development, through intention and by creating a situation.

This attitude of curatorship allows a constant flow of communication and idea exchange: between the artist and the curator, the curator and the artworks, and the artworks and the artists. For *Displacement*, I employed a specific curatorial paradigm to define my practice when approaching this project. This paradigm is best understood by placing the three points of contributions into a constant non-hierarchical flow that collaboratively influence each other to form the exhibition. This communication model, configured as a circle with alternating directions of information flow, connects each position allowing continuous and simultaneous contribution to the evolution of the exhibition.

Figure 1: Curatorial Communication Model

The exhibition (represented in the model as the inner circle) is thus produced through dialog between the three voices: the curator, the artists, and the art objects. These voices react to each other through constant exchange and assertion of ideas. Each of the three points represent an established position represented in the exhibition that is both subjective to imposed ideas, yet restricted by its limits to outside forces. The lines connecting the three points represent the channel of communication and flow of information.

In this model, the curator initiates conversation by arranging the logistical details of the exhibition – where, when, budget – and then forms an invitation to participate in the exhibition development process. The Call for Art served as this invitation and was the point where the curator started the flow of information by establishing some content and context. The entrance of artists into the model is signified by either their organic response to the Call for Art or a direct solicitation by the curator. Artworks come into and out of the cycle based on the availability for exhibition and coherency of the object to the conversation developing, sometimes participating in the exhibition whether or not they were ultimately selected for display.

The communication channels flow in both directions, allowing a constant dialog to develop around the introduction of new ideas and new objects. The curator is not an authoritarian voice, but rather remains sensitive and responsive to the other voices. In this respect, the curator neither projects his or her own interpretation onto the object nor relies on the artist to define the role of their artwork in the exhibition, but rather mediates between the two.

Outside of this framework and exhibition context, the artists create work on their own accord following their interest and personal motivations. Entering into this structure allows the artists to bring their productions into dialog with the curator and participate in the overall development of the exhibition. Conversations with the curator create opportunities for the artist to look at their work through the lens of the exhibition context. The artist enters into the model by introducing works following their intentions and making connections to the exhibition. Uniquely, though, this

open channel of communication allows for a the curator to work with the artist in developing a curated role and thus has some influence on the presentation of the work.

One specific example in *Displacement* of how this communication channel between the artist, the curator, and the art object has influenced the experience of an artwork is the inclusion and presentation of *Digi Affine* (2012). The artist,

Rebecca Norton, submitted images of a series of paintings that used constructed imagery from a digital

composition of affine

transformations using

algorithms randomly

generated by the

Internet. Interested in the

inclusion of the Internet

as a modifying force of

the exhibition, I inquired

about including the digital projection as its own work allowing an element of constant

reinvention through mathematical manipulations and to create an external

connection with the global digital network. Additionally, I suggested an alternative

display by projecting the moving image onto the floor space at the entrance of the

gallery. Through an email chain exchanging these ideas, the artist reconsidered the

role of this algorithm in her work as a thread of influence, as well as its function as

mathematical explanations of spatial relationships on a two-dimensional plane that occupies a different orientation than that of her other two-dimensional work.

Presented on the floor, the projected image activated the gallery entrance, forcing visitors to walk through the moving space, thereby priming the exhibition experience with a visual stimulation. The colorful movement rapidly changing was energetic in its randomness and presented an illusionary instability as colorful shapes moved about the frame intermittently. The viewer was displaced from the normative space of the stairwell into the charged atmosphere of the gallery from the onset of the first step, which leads to the function of the third point of this framework: the art object.

The art object is conceived and controlled by the artist during production, after which it becomes inherently subject to external influences, such as context and placement. When the viewer enters into the gallery, these three elements – context, placement and viewer – create an exhibition situation. The curator can harness this situation to present alternative narratives by suggesting association between objects and controlling the characteristics of its placement, such as sequence and chronology for the viewer to follow. The material and presentation of the works speak independently of the artist, a characteristic that developed after the shifting of

authorial voice from the artist to the object.¹⁶ Because of this ability – of the work to carry a voice independent of the artist – the curator has the opportunity to manipulate the potentiality of the work separate from the artist’s intention, thus creating the channel from the object to the curator.

I was interesting in engaging with artists in a similar way that artists engage with each other in the studio setting. During production, art is seldom defined by its intentions and remains in a malleable stage of discussion and adjustment. This period of time when the artist is working in the studio is characterized as a generative period of research and experimentation – both in form and in content. As a curator, I attempted to bring that spirit of discovery and meaning making by doing rather than by planning, and thus allowed the artist and artworks to influence my own understanding of the ideas and goals of the exhibition project. Thus, the exhibition project became the artwork itself, allowing me to participate equally in the production of *Displacement* as the other two influencing points on the curatorial communication model.

Defining The Exhibition Concept

By utilizing this communication model and remaining sensitive to the potentials in collaboration between the artists, I identified several lines of

Christina Zeurcher, *Flight Archive #10*, digital collage, 2013, exhibited in *Displacement: Part One: A Reckoning*

¹⁶ See Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author,” in *Image-Music-Text*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977).

Jenny Bolhofner, *Paper Satellites (triptych)*, atlas, vellum, thread, glue, natural objects, graphite, 2013, exhibited in *Displacement: Part One: A Reckoning*.

conceptual topics within the presented work that can be summarized by the idea of partage and represented by the term displacement. The development of this central theme came out of a collaborative conversation that employed this curatorial communication model. These artists, through many different material and conceptual choices, were presenting

reactions to a feeling of being divided and shared, pressures from a globalized culture, and perpetual displacement that is inherent in the contemporary condition. At this point, I progressed with research and analysis on the idea of partage, conducted constant communication with the artists, and reconsidered all of the presented works to form the final exhibition inventories.

Among the many different definitions and interpretations of displacement, one perspective is manifested through the onset of globalization and the condition that is experienced both consciously and unconsciously triggered by, among many other things, a cultural shift to living within a digital network where ideas and images are instantly disseminated independent of their source. This separation from the

Ryan Feeney, *Obscene Sunset #17*, digital c-print, 2012, exhibited in *Displacement: Part Two: Of Internal Affairs*

production site blurs the notion of origin, increasingly causing dislocation and displacement. Considering the Internet and its effect on how we consume images and information, David Joselit identifies “aesthetic and political struggles of modernity” as how we experience, whether consciously or not, “the dislocation of images from any particular site, and their insertion in networks where they are characterized by motion, either potential or actual, and are capable of changing format – of experiencing cascading chains of relocation and remediation.”¹⁷

Another interpretation of the condition of displacement considers the position or perspective of how we think. “If the central terms in thinking about [relative] position are the global and the local,” says Hyungmin Pai, “perhaps the most important idea is that knowledge is a function of place.”¹⁸ Tying back in placement as a way to understand dislocation returns the conversation to displacement. “There is always the pull between the force of a consistent theoretical structure,” Pai continues, “and the specific realities of place.”¹⁹ Miwon Kwon identifies this tension by poignantly acknowledging the way in which participants in the art world tend to measure success by the accrual of frequent flyer miles,²⁰ as if distance can act as a placeholder for accomplishment. The notion of travel as a delineator of success extenuates the contemporary condition, further exemplified by Lucy Lippard’s

¹⁷ David Joselit, *After Art* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 14.

¹⁸ Hyungmin Pai, “In and Out of the Local.” In *Art and Globalization*, ed. James Elkins Zhivka, Valiavicharska, Alice Kim (University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 219.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004), 138.

Brandon Harder, *Vitruvian Block (firmitas, utilitas, venustas)*, cinder block, marble, gold leaf, 2014, exhibited in both exhibition parts.

Andrew Cozzens, *Archimedes Is Laughing At You*, steel, water, motion sensor, time, 2014, exhibited both exhibition parts.

perspective of considering a “sense of place” actually being a “sense of displacement.”²¹

The arrival at the exhibition concept came about through constant exchange described by the curatorial communication model. As I looked closely again and again at the submissions, and through conversations with the artists, I synthesized an idea that identified a

theme that was at the core of what this selection of artists were grappling with: an inevitable handling of the many manifestations and conditions of displacement.

Displacement is a complex phenomenon that can be translated into many different contexts, ultimately describing when we experience a shift. These shifts happen on many levels and in varying degrees creating a constant flux of conditions that affect our physical, psychological and emotional situations. It is the state of having been removed from a place, of

migration and nomadism. It is the Newtonian physics of a force applied to an object. It is Freudian theory explaining subconscious reaction to cover a traumatic

²¹ Lucy Lippard “Longing and Belonging” in *Longing and belonging : from the faraway nearby* (SITE Santa Fe, 1996), 108.

event. It is David Joselit's separation of images from their source. It is Miwon Kwon's measurement of success by the amount we travel. It is Lucy Lippard's identifying our sense of displacement. Through all of the different applications and explanations of displacement, the characteristic of subjectivity remains a constant. We are constantly subject to our surroundings and the forces that are exerted upon us. Our perceptions and our reactions, and the way we carry our experiences of displacement – in one form or another – through life.

Dividing the Exhibition Into Two Parts

As I worked through the process of forming the exhibition concept, two distinct characteristics emerged in the content and formal presentations of the collection of work: 1) an effort to address or define the affects of displacement in physical forms or conceptual terms, and 2) a reconciliation between the effects of displacement as a metaphysical experience, including subconscious ramifications, and an attempt to define that lived experience. Some of the work helped explain both of these tendencies, while others more clearly represented one.

The title of the exhibition was a late realization. *Displacement: A Reckoning of Internal Affairs* as a statement describes a condition that is experienced and implies a reconciliation of struggle. “*Displacement*” is the title, “*A Reckoning of Internal Affairs*” is the subtitle. The subtitle is divided into two segments which represents the two galleries and two parts of the whole project: “Displacement, Part One: A Reckoning” and “Displacement, Part Two: Of Internal Affairs.” As if separated by a

semicolon, the two subtitles operate independently of each other while also relying on the completed statement to resolve the exhibition concept.

CHAPTER III

EXHIBITION ARCHITECTURE AND THE CATALOG

Choreographing the sequence of individual art works within the chronological structure of a two-part exhibition proved to be an exercise of critical analysis, interpretation, and experimentation. My experience with exhibition installation proved a basis for understanding sequencing and context, and I wanted to create the most inviting and provoking experience for viewers. Approaching the group exhibition structure as a collaborative process allowed for a kind of crowd sourcing. Michael Foucault distinguished a particular connection that people make in an exhibition space where they can formulate their own definitions and understanding of what is being presented.²² Contemporary exhibition spaces, specifically those within institutions like an art museum or, in this case, a University, cultivate a unique potential to function as a heterotopic situation where many voices contribute to the formulation of an idealized space that reflects social structures in that context.²³

Relying on this characteristic of the gallery, paired with a reflexive curatorial position, I organized the art works using an exploratory method of trial and analysis, much like the typical studio praxis, that ultimately produced two independent

²² Michael Foucault, "Alternative Social Experience in the Spaces of Contemporary Art," in *Somewhere better than this place* exh. cat., Cincinnati: Contemporary Arts Center, 2003, 19.

²³ *Ibid.*, 20.

exhibition situations under one encompassing title. The initial selection of works for the whole project reflected a general conversational interest of the individual components to the bigger topic in question. The title “*Displacement*” evolved into a highly subjective and flexible idea, which came to be through a consortium of voices.

After the general selection for the whole exhibition was complete, the task was then to create the framework for the two individual exhibitions. To visualize the works and the potential mapping of each gallery, I laid out printed thumbnail images of each individual work on large floor

plans of each space. I was paying attention to details such as conceptual topics, materials, physical form and medium to group them into themes that create an independent exhibition situation, yet relied on each other to complete the

curatorial intention. Looking at the works this way allowed for a clear and concentrated look at content and form. Under the two subtitles representing each part of the exhibition, I sorted the material to form two conceptual frames that could function independently of each other as a complete ideological framework, yet remain dependently linked in order to complete the overall exhibition statement.

Since some of the selected works communicated effectively both sub-themes in the two exhibition sections, they offered a clear linking of ideas and served the overall exhibition architecture by being present in both parts. Starting with these selections in place, the remaining thumbnail images were then grouped into two

piles, further defining the thematic and conceptual grounds of the exhibition, both figuratively and literally, as it was necessary for the two groups to communicate effectively within the two individual gallery spaces.

The artists that were chosen participated in building a theoretical and physical framework for thinking about displacement, similar, for example, to the conceptual development of relational geography where immense proliferation of practices and global events, such as biennials, paired with increased mandatory mobility compounds a displaced mentality.²⁴ This exhibition attempts to implement a process of interlocution as a dialogical practice that relies on collaborative responding, “on agitating the edges of paradigms and on raising external points of view” as put by Irit Rogoff, to address and understand how we experience displacement.²⁵ Collectively, the works in both parts of the exhibition defined the phenomenon of displacement in relation to their individual handling and understanding of place, further connecting the two locations within the exhibition format.

Part One: A Reckoning, Huff Gallery, Louisville, Kentucky

The Huff Gallery at Spalding University provided a suitable backdrop for exploring the idea of “displacement” as a term, a condition, and an experience. Situated in the basement of a University Library was foretelling to the kind of exploratory meaning-making that took place among the works selected for “Part One: A Reckoning.”

²⁴ Irit Rogoff, "Cosmo Local." In *The Art Biennial as a Global Phenomenon : Strategies in Neo-political times*, 44-53. Vol. 16. Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2009, 12.

²⁵ Irit Rogoff, "FREE," *E-Flux*, 14 (2010): 9.

Entrants into the gallery were met with a graphic projection of moving geometric shapes. The placement of Rebecca Norton's *Digi Affine* (2014) instantly activated the gallery, priming visitors to explore a changing environment. Having to physically pass through the work—walk under the suspended projector—broke the precedents of “look but don’t touch” by literally forcing the viewer to enter into the space and not merely be present.

After entering the gallery, Gregory Scott Cook's *ABOVE/BELOW: The Ballad of Floyd Collins* (2013) was the second artwork encountered.

Its uprightness faced people as they came in, as if greeting or confronting visitors. The integration of digital media with a nostalgic speaker at eye level created awareness of the shared space with the viewer. The speaker, reminiscent of a decades-old intercom, was playing an audio track of field-

recorded sound in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky and sample audio recorded during the melt-off of snow in Lincoln, Nebraska just audible enough to be heard and draw the listener closer to the face of the speaker. The audio never fully integrates, looping its ambiguous and displaced anxiety as the two tracks attempt to find a synergy.

The progression of the exhibition layout from these two works at the entrance of the gallery space was not forcibly dictated by the architectural elements of the gallery, nor was a traffic flow clearly defined by the objects. This ambiguity

intentionally reinforced the exhibition catalog to function as a map by featuring short bodies of text in the form of an informal dialogue between the viewer and the object. The content of the exhibition catalog was arranged by page, whereas a separate loose

page for each included artist and their represented works. The physical design of the catalog further enforced decision-making on the viewer's part, as the individual pages were not bound to the spine of the cover, leaving each page free to be rearranged in any sequence. As an exercise of chance mixed with piqued personal interest, the openness and flexibility of the exhibition layout was reinforced by the function of the catalog as a tool to guide experience and interpretation.

The Function of the Exhibition Catalog as Curatorial Element

The catalog was a primary component of the exhibition design and architecture. It was designed and produced to allow visitors to move freely about the gallery at their own pace, finding their way to points of interest. The cover of the

catalog was a folder that wrapped around the individual pages. Because the catalog was not bound in a traditional book format, the pages could be sorted or singled out at the discretion of the viewer. I witnessed visitors being highly engaged with the

catalog, rearranging the sequential order and choosing “favorites,” as if the pages were trading cards. The scale of the catalog – a three-inch square -- was essential to its perceived preciousness and adaptability.

In addition to the curatorial essay which explained the exhibition’s conceptual grounds, each artist was represented by an individual page that featured on one side an image of every work included in either part of the exhibition and on the other side a statement clarifying three things: the artist’s intent, the curatorial connection, and a physical reference to the art object – the three points on the curatorial communication model. By synching these three voices into one unified body of text, any reader had the necessary information to understand the situation of the object and its contribution to the overall exhibition concept. I carefully use the term “situation” here to specify that the writing in the catalog addresses the integration of the art object into this specific exhibition scenario; it is not necessarily a true reading of the object separate from this context, nor should it be considered a full understanding of the capacity of each individual work by the artist’s intention, which is always conditional given a

particular exhibition site – and therefore always displaced. The catalog and all of its information contained were intended to offer a helpful unpacking of the curatorial process and conceptual framework, which was arrived at using the curatorial communication model (fig. 1, p. 22).

Inventories of the two exhibition venues separated the catalog into two sections, and allowed anyone the opportunity to at the very least have a guide to what each part of the whole exhibition project featured. It also offered the only “completed” view of the exhibition. The catalog therefore supplemented the exhibition experience by allowing visitors to understand the entire exhibition context, even if they only visited one venue. For the duration of Part One, this provided incentive to visit Part Two, offering the promise of a resolve to the presented objectives. In Part Two, the catalog provided a retroactive contribution of the artworks and ideas, connecting the two separate entities into one overarching exhibition. In this way, even if an artwork was not physically present, it still contributed to the overall conversation and development of the exhibition context and curatorial situation. Harald Szeemann also used the catalog as a tool to guide the exhibition content by featuring work that was not physical present in the gallery. The seminal “When Attitudes Become Form” exhibition catalog was supplemented with additional artists and works that “expand[ed] the framework and reach of the exhibition” without being physically present.²⁶

The division of the work between the two parts reinforced the merging and displacing of content, of being homogeneous on the one hand, and

²⁶ Christian Rattemeyer, *Exhibiting the New Art : ‘Op Losse Schroeven’ and ‘When Attitudes Become Form’ 1969*, (London: Afterall, 2010), 54.

compartmentalized on the other. The catalog assisted in decoding these synergies that were constructed by formatting the exhibition in this way. Additionally, the grouping of artworks in the printed catalog was arranged by artist, not by which part the work was featured. This arrangement allowed for the reader to understand how the entire exhibition was thought to be an individual project, and then witnessed in two distinct chronological moments.

Part Two: Of Internal Affairs: New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, New Harmony, Indiana

Part Two of this exhibition opened one week after the closing of Part One, leaving a manageable distance in time and space – 132 miles – between the two galleries. In order to complete the exhibition circuit, visitors would be required in some point of their viewership to travel. The purpose of this exhibition design was not one of imposed inconvenience, but of propositional questions in the situational variables that prompted viewers to consider their own action of participation to make the exhibition a whole again by their decision to see (or not to see) both parts. The mechanics of transferring the responsibility of exhibition construction to the viewers is similar to Hans Ulrich Obrist's on-going theoretical exhibition "Do It." This project solely utilizes written instructions contributed by artists that are then posed to individuals, thus transferring the authority and responsibility of the exhibition's

creation onto the viewer and thereby adapting the role of the viewer to be an active participant rather than a passive observer.²⁷

The decision for the viewer to travel from the first exhibition site to the second creates a dilemma that affects the experience whether or not the viewer chooses to see both parts. Travel has many affects on perception, including shifting perspectives, physical disposition, and elapsed time. These variables inherently affected the reception of the two parts of this exhibition, further imposing the experience of displacement onto the viewer. The viewer then becomes part of the project by literally living out that which is being addressed through the chosen art works and by the exhibition design.

Entrance into the gallery and to the second part of this two-part exhibition was again affected by a work that presented a designated space through which visitors were required to walk through, thus priming the viewer mentally and physically to the exhibition situation. *Trace Impact* (2014) was comprised of two black box speakers suspended from the ceiling by wire, about twenty-four inches apart, over two twelve-by-thirty-six-inch flat swatches of dirt, emitting the sound of a pre-recorded audio track of the artist's breath while running trails in Cherokee Park, Louisville, Kentucky. The space between the speakers and the dirt was just big enough for one person to stand and listen to the conflicting overlay of audio tracks, with undulating intensities of breath. Similar to the physiological imposition that *Digi-Affine* projected onto the viewer in *Part One: A Reckoning*, *Trace Impact* also interjected the viewers

²⁷ Hans Ulrich Obrist, "Do It: the exhibition between actualization and virtualization, repetition and difference." E-flux archives, accessed on November 26, 2014, http://www.e-flux.com/projects/do_it/itinerary/itinerary.html.

physiological affect by eliciting a natural bodily response—increased heart rate and blood pressure—that was caused by hearing heavy breathing.

Part Two: Of Internal Affairs was an exhibition segment that considered the metaphysical ramifications of displacement in a multitude of manifestations. The physical priming set by the experience of *Trace Impact* allowed viewers to enter the space with heightened perception caused by the physiological shifts. The exhibition layout of Part Two was an open floor plan that utilized more of the towering wall space than the center of the room. Many of the works were monumental in scale, reaching up to ten feet tall once installed on the wall, taking advantage of the historical building architecture.

The New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art is housed in a building that is part of the historical Main Street district. It features fourteen-foot exposed ceilings with floor to ceiling windows on the façade. The three remaining walls that enclose the exhibition space extend back in a narrow stretch of rectangular space, differing dramatically from physical characteristics of the Huff Gallery at Spalding University. This separation of space, both by distance, time, and architectural design, created a clear transformation for the exhibition, extending the displacement metaphor one more way. The appearance of a eight selected art works that were already featured in *Part One: A Reckoning* created the connection to the whole project that was needed to avoid complete separation, as well as to further the explication of the idea of partage being a condition of both shared and divisive. Andrew Cozzen's *Archimedes is Laughing At You* (2014), for example, was featured in both part one and part two of *Displacement*. This work provided a literal example of displacement

because of its clever play on the physical displacement of water by a motion-triggered motor that lowered a steel box into an acrylic box filled to the rim with water. Ian Shelly's *Upon This Rock We Shall Install* (2013) contributed to both parts, first as a literally displaced object (a house) that suspends off kilter on the side of a brick and second as a representation of mental anguish that comes from being a place that doesn't feel like home.

The tone of *Part Two: Of Internal Affairs* was created through the monumental scale, abstraction of images and manipulation of materials. Keith Linton's *Untitled* (2013), for example, was an oversize canvas ripped and repaired with materials taken from construction sites and domestic renovations. The seemingly haphazard application of paint and epoxy loomed over the viewer and borders a kind of tension and resurrection of materials that we are familiar with because of their appearance in our domestic spaces yet appear alienated by their assemblage on the canvas. There is a delicate disaster to the form; its inherent displacement is both comforting and unsettling.

While the physical distance between the two exhibitions was manageable – about two hours by car – the psychological distance created the biggest impasse. Both locations bare a strikingly contradictory personality and therefore have different attractions. Louisville is the metropolitan aggregation, with its gritty downtown streets and airplane traffic. The Huff Gallery is an academic institution. New Harmony is a quaint hidden gem that is embedded with historical context often reduced to a snapshot of its 19th century log cabins. The New Harmony Gallery was founded as

an alternative art space as part of the movement in the 70s against institutionalization of art.

There was also a time barrier since the two exhibitions did not occur concurrently, but rather sequentially. The visitor to the first exhibition, especially if the attendance was during the opening reception, was forced to wait at least a full six weeks before the second part even opened its doors, or twelve weeks for the closing reception – one more “displacement.”

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

A great group exhibition...invites us to explore a seemingly newly discovered territory of art that contains within it more than we can hold in our heads at any one moment. – Ralph Rogoff²⁸

In Terry Smith's book *Thinking Contemporary Curating* he accurately states, "artworks and exhibitions have become increasingly alike" due to the increased role and creative authority of the curator in exhibition making.²⁹ I agree whole-heartedly with this statement and believe that it is represented in the curatorial model that guided this exhibition project. He proposed that the current curatorial practice has

evolved into such close relationship and bears similar production processes with artists that the two roles may soon no longer be clearly separable.³⁰ Mirroring the increasingly globalized life that permeates the art world, curatorial

practice has become an interconnected process of collaborative work that is

²⁸ Ralph Rogoff, "You Talking to Me? On curating group shows that give you a chance to join the group," in *What Makes a Great Exhibition*, ed. Paula Marincola (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Exhibitions Initiative, 2006), 42.

²⁹ Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating*, (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012), 132.

³⁰ Smith, *Thinking*, 137.

receptive to the nuances of exhibition making within the contemporary moment. Jens Hoffman described this sentiment perfectly when he writes: “group exhibitions have become the vehicles for creative expression authored by curators.”³¹ Curatorial authority allows for the curator to coordinate the placement and place of artworks within the exhibition context. Consequently, the curatorial role that I embraced takes this postulation one step further to enter into conversation with the artists (and the art objects) in order to level the playing field.

This method of curating proved to be both rewarding and challenging. The development of the conceptual content of the exhibition was simultaneously directing and being directed by the conversations being held with the artists about the inclusion of their work. The challenge this presented affected the ability of in-depth research or consideration of the overall exhibition concept. Yet, because it was not clearly defined, there was ample opportunity to allow for alternative interpretations of the exhibition content. Similarly, the addition or exclusion of artworks proved to be an exercise in following intuition rather than preconceived planning.

By remaining sensitive to the idiosyncrasies of art production, and drawing on the experience of my own art making practices, I worked in a manner that encouraged and supported the artists involved, while challenging them to position themselves and their work a certain way within the context of this exhibition. The curatorial method of engaging in multi-layered conversation with artists and the artworks left room for creative opportunities further supports by Ralph Rogoff's

³¹ Jens Hoffamn, *Show Time: The 50 Most Influential Exhibitions of Contemporary Art* (Los Angeles: Distributed Art Publishers, 2014), 14.

description of group exhibition projects. The dynamic quality of its potential connections “brings things together in stimulating and unpredictable combinations.”³²

The success of the exhibition was measured informally by the level of interest generated through the attendance to the exhibition, and the surrounding contributors, including the artists, gallery directors, University faculty and staff, students, and the public media. The catalog supplemented the exhibition, not only as a tool for viewers, but also as a continuing manifestation and documentation of the project. Its interactive quality mirrored some of the tactics embedded in the exhibition, and facilitated a simulation of the viewing experience in a traditionally mediated way.

With every curatorial project, the hope of dialogue surrounding the objects, themes, and context of the exhibition is certainly a core desire and intended outcome of the many hours of work it takes to plan such an event. However, with *Displacement*, the dialogue – both internal and external – was a direct facet of the exhibition. It was my intention to create an exhibition experience that would provoke crucial critical dialogue to unpack the many variables, both in physical form and in conceptual formulation. In my own observation, I found the reactions from visitors to be impassioned as they were eager to attempt to unpack the many layers of ideologies presented in the whole exhibition project. The challenging exhibition architecture proved to be fascinating as an idea, but rarely did any visitor attend both locations. While some may consider this fact to be an indication of design failure, I see it as an attribution of success of the exhibition structure. The life of the exhibition

³² Ralph Rogoff, “You Talking to Me?,” 44.

was instead manifested through the constant dialogue among viewers attempting to reconcile their own understanding of displacement with the selected artworks' propositions of the idea. By this standard, the exhibition was successful in evoking displacement on many levels.

Installation view, *Displacement: Part One: A Reckoning*.

In conclusion, working with the curatorial communication model (see fig. 1, p. 22) laid out in this paper was both an unfolding of potentials and a challenging limitation. Much of the art world operates in this grey area that exists between planned preparedness and constant fluctuation, a sweet spot of infuriating

complexity that is both infinitely expanding and limiting at the same time – another manifestation of the idea of partage. This crux of contingency produced dynamic results. It is in this liminal space that the capacity

for meaning making and connectivity is at its greatest. The challenge is to access this space, to facilitate the agility of intuition through curatorial decision making that opens up dialog while avoiding complete collapse due to the lack

Installation view, *Displacement: Part Two: Of Internal Affairs*.

of a formal structure. At certain moments during this project, impending possibility of complete dissolution seemed immanently close, beginning with the two original artists, for example, becoming obstacles rather than answers.

Mary Kelly describes the significance of current exhibition making practices as “a crucial intersection of discourses, practices, and sites which define the institutions of art,” and “it is exactly here, within this inter-textual, inter-discursive network that the work of art is produced as text.”³³ If the function of exhibitions invariably produces a situation in which art objects can be experienced, analyzed, and written about, and ultimately canonized into the arc of art historical memory, then exhibitions created in a way that is congruent with the production of the art in the first place will be more truly representative of the nature of art-making. The presented curatorial communication model allows for a collaborative production environment – similar to studio practice – that creates a situation in which art (and artists and curators) can be understood more inclusively and as a whole not made of parts but as an amalgamation of voices.

³³ Mary Kelly, “Re-viewing Modernist Criticism,” *Screen* 22, no. 3 (1981), 58.

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APPENDIX A – WORKS CITED

WORKS CITED

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APPENDIX B – EXHIBIT DEVELOPMENT

i. Floorplan and Inventory Part 1: A Reckoning

Huff Gallery at Spalding University, Louisville, Kentucky

Displacement, Part One: A Reckoning, March 7 - April 13, 2014, Huff Gallery, Louisville, KY

Ian Shelly	<i>Upon this rock we shall install.</i>
Brandon Harder	<i>Vitruvian Block (firmitas, utilitas, venustas)</i>
Shawn Marshall	<i>Stop Time For a Moment</i> <i>Floating Azure</i>
Rebecca Norton	<i>Digi Affine</i>
Ashley Brossart	<i>Portrait of a Place, 3rd & Breckinridge St.</i>
Alli Wiles	<i>Kentucky Sweats</i> <i>Sweat Cultures</i> <i>Tracks</i> <i>Topo Examination</i>
Jennifer Bolhofner	<i>Paper Satellites (triptych)</i>
Tommy Taylor	<i>Magazine</i>
Christine Zuercher	<i>Flight Archive #2</i> <i>Flight Archive #4</i> <i>Flight Archive #10</i> <i>Flight Archive #17</i> <i>Flight Archive #18</i>
Megan Kocisak	<i>To Find in this place, hide in this space</i>
Maria Zaikina	<i>Landschaft Mit Haus</i>
Alice Pixley Young	<i>This Distance</i>
Gregory Scott Cook	<i>SINGER</i> <i>ABOVE/BELOW: the ballad of Floyd Collins</i>
Adrienne Miller	<i>Suburban Encroachment</i> <i>Faculty Construction</i> <i>Flood Plain</i> <i>The Fire</i>
Andrew Cozzens	<i>Archimedes Is Laughing At You</i>

ii. Floorplan and Inventory Part 1: A Reckoning

Displacement, Part Two: Of Internal Affairs, April 19 - May 30, 2014, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, New Harmony, IN

Ian Shelly	<i>Upon this rock we shall install.</i>
Brandon Harder	<i>Vitruvian Block (firmitas, utilitas, venustas)</i>
Shawn Marshall	<i>Horizon Fade</i>
Rebecca Norton	<i>A Little Blue</i>
	<i>Flutter</i>
	<i>One with the Crowd (3)</i>
	<i>One With the Crowd (4)</i>
	<i>Hot Mess</i>
Matthew Loeser	<i>Untitled (delusion of space)</i>
	<i>Untitled (delusion of space)</i>
Ashley Brossart	<i>Portrait of a Place, 3rd & Breckinridge St.</i>
Alli Wiles	<i>Trace Impact</i>
Mark Keffer	<i>Workings</i>
	<i>Don't Be Yourself</i>
	<i>I Love What You Call You</i>
Tommy Taylor	<i>Paper</i>
	<i>Wood and Resin</i>
Megan Kocisak	<i>This Is Worse Than It Seems</i>
	<i>A Pansy-Ass Box of Whoop-Ass</i>
Maria Zaikina	<i>Landschaft Mit Haus</i>
Keith Linton	<i>Untitled</i>
Alice Pixley Young	<i>Remembering/Un-remembering</i>
Gregory Scott Cook	<i>238,857</i>
	<i>Not Sleeping</i>
Andrew Cozzens	<i>Archimedes Is Laughing At You</i>
Ryan Feeney	<i>Obscene Landscape #17</i>
	<i>Obscebe Landscape #18</i>
Adrienne Miller	<i>Landscape As A Stage, Study 1</i>

APPENDIX C – EXHIBITION DOCUMENTATION

i. Installation Part One: A Reckoning, Huff Gallery, Spalding University, Louisville, Kentucky

Figure 1 – Installation View

Figure 2 – Maria Zaikina (video), *Lanschaft Mit Haus* (2009)

Figure 3 – Installation View

Figure 4 – Installation View

Figure 5 – Christine Zuercher, *Flight Archive #10* (2013)

Figure 6 – Allison Wiles, *Sweat Cultures* (2014)

Figure 7 – Allison Wiles, *Tracks* (2014)

Figure 8 – Alice Pixley Young, *This Distance* (2013)

Figure 9 – Shawn Marshall, *Stop Time for a Moment* (2014)

Figure 10 – Shawn Marshall, *Floating Azure* (2014)

Figure 11 – Gregory Scott Cook, *SINGER* (2013)

Figure 12 – Gregory Scott Cook
ABOVE/BELOW: the ballad of Floyd Collins (2013)

Figure 13 – Jennifer Bolhofner, *Paper Satellites* (2013)

Figure 14 – Andrew Cozzens, *Archimedes Is Laughing At You* (2014)

Figure 15 – Allison Wiles, *Kentucky Sweats* (2014)

Figure 16 – Installation View

Figure 17 – Ian Shelly, *Upon this rock we shall install.* (2013)

Figure 18 – Megan Kociscak, *To find in this place, hide in this space* (2013)

Figure 19 – Ashley Brossart, *Portrait of a Place* (2014)

Figure 20 – Allison Wiles, *Sweat Cultures* (2014)

Figure 21 – Brandon Harder, *Vitruvian Block (firmitas, utilitas, venustas)* (2014)

Figure 22 – Rebecca Norton, *Digi Affine* (2012)

Figure 23 – Installation View

Figure 24 – Adrienne Miller, *Faculty Constructions* (2013)

Figure 25 – Installation View

ii. Installation Part Two: Of Internal Affairs, Huff Gallery, Spalding University, Louisville, Kentucky

Figure 26 – Installation View

Figure 27 – Ashley Brossart, *Portrait of a Place, 3rd & Breckinridge* (2014)

Figure 28 – Installation View

Figure 29 – Megan Kocisak, *This Is Worse Than It Seems, A Pansy-Ass Box of Whoop-Ass* (2014)

Figure 30 – Keith Linton, *Untitled* (2013)

Figure 31 – Matthew Loeser, *Untitled (delusion of space)* (2014)

Figure 31 – Gregory Scott Cook, *238,857* (2013)

Figure 32 – Alice Pixley Young, *Remembering/Un-remembering* (2013)

Figure 33 – Ryan Feeney, *Obscene Sunset #17, Obscene Sunset #18* (2012)

Figure 34 – Adrienne Miller, *Landscape As A Stage, Study 1* (2014)

Figure 35 – Mark Keffer, *Workings* (2013)

Figure 36 – Mark Keffer, *Don't Be Yourself* (2013)

Figure 37 – Mark Keffer, *I Love What You Call You* (2013)

Figure 38 – Tommy Taylor, *Wood and Resin and Paper* (2010)

Figure 39 – Installation View

Figure 40 – Shawn Marshall, *Horizon Fade* (2014)

Figure 41 – Installation View

APPENDIX D – PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

I. Press Release

PRESS RELEASE

Huff Gallery at Spalding University

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 17, 2014

Contact Info:

Joyce Ogden, Gallery Director

502-873-4436

jogden@spalding.edu

Unconventional art exhibition starts at Huff Gallery and continues in New Harmony, IN

A graduate student's thesis project spans the region exploring displacement in and of artworks.

LOUISVILLE, KY - University of Louisville Graduate Student Stacey Reason has tackled a major curatorial project as part of her Master's Thesis, titled "Displacement: A Reckoning of Internal Affairs." Interested in challenging conventional gallery practices, Reason has arranged for one art show to be in two places. The first location, the Huff Gallery at Spalding University located in the heart of Louisville, will exhibit a selection of works from 18 artists that address the phenomena of displacement. The title of part one is "Of Reckoning," and visitors to the gallery can expect to find art from visual artists that have researched and developed a body of work addressing the physical and emotional changes we experience through literal displacement, like a big move to a different city for school or a career. Topographical maps and video projections presenting passing landscapes create a conversation about how a place and displacement affects us. "Part two" will leave the urban center and head toward New Harmony, Indiana at the New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art. This part of the exhibition, titled "Of Internal Affairs," will go deeper into a psychological territory with art that addresses the effects of displacement on a metaphysical level. Geometric compositions and art using sound that longs for a place will evoke a contemplative experience in the quiet and secluded setting of New Harmony.

"I want to consider how place can affect our experience using the format of an art exhibition as my medium for looking. As a curator, I'm interested in challenging the traditional art-viewing practice by introducing factors like time and distance to the equation. Visitors to the first show will have to deal with the anticipation of the second part, and those that only go to New Harmony will be left wondering what has already elapsed. It's a kind of experiment that I hope will engage people. And, of course, to prompt questions and introspection."

Reason holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Drawing from Murray State University, and has lived and worked in Louisville since 2011. She is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Curatorial Studies and Masters of Public Administration in Non-Profit Management. She works part-time at Spalding University as a gallery assistant, and has previously taught university courses in studio art in addition to having played an instrumental role in the development of the artists group called the Louisville Artists Syndicate.

The Huff Gallery is located in the Spalding Library, 853 Library Lane, between Fourth and Third Streets and Breckinridge and York Streets. The gallery is open Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday and Saturday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; and Sunday, noon to 7 p.m. For information contact Joyce Ogden at (502) 873-4436 or e-mail jogden@spalding.edu.

Spalding University offers an innovative schedule of seven six-week sessions per year, allowing students to earn a bachelor's degree at their own pace. Spalding has graduate, undergraduate and accelerated programs with majors in accounting, fine art, business, creative writing, communication, education, humanities, natural science, nursing, occupational therapy, psychology, social sciences and social work.

851 South Fourth Street
Louisville, Kentucky 40203
502-873-4436 / 800-896-8941
www.spalding.edu

####

University Communications

New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art will host Displacement part two: Of Internal Affairs

The University of Southern Indiana's New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art will host *Displacement part two: Of Internal Affairs*, an exhibition curated by Stacey Reason, through Friday, May 30, when a closing reception will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. The exhibition and reception are free and open to the public.

The exhibition is a collaboration between the University of Louisville's Hite Institute, Spaulding University's Huff Gallery, and the New Harmony Gallery. The exhibition is Reason's thesis project for the Hite Institute's combined M.A./M.P.A. of Curatorial Studies and Nonprofit Management with components at both the Huff Gallery and the New Harmony Gallery.

Reason utilizes the concept of displacement as unifying context for the selected works and spaces represented in this project. Works in the exhibition represent a wide range of materials and methodologies realized by diverse spectrum of artists. Ranging from student to professional art, the selection includes a good sample of Midwestern artists, but also draws work from as far away as Russia.

"The artists represented in this exhibition explore – and on occasion create – the condition of displacement using traditional fine art mediums as well as progressive, experimental, and unexpected materials and presentations," Reason said. "The work featured includes an interactive sculpture, a crowd-sourced photography project, digitally and manually layered images, complex geometric shapes in paintings and projections, sound installations, collected samplings both real and fictitious and observations of place and hypothetical spaces."

Displacement part one: A Reckoning was at the Huff Gallery in Louisville, Kentucky, through April 13. Reason notes that the movement of the show from one venue to the next reinforces the conceptual framework and becomes an active element of the project.

"The exhibition itself is subjected to displacement, as it occurs in two places, breaking the confines of the traditional gallery paradigm," Reason said. "The two places – Louisville, Kentucky, and New Harmony, Indiana – are diametrically dissimilar in characteristics and force a consideration of the affects a place can have on an experience, such as viewing an exhibition."

Reason holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in drawing from Murray State University, and has lived and worked in Louisville since 2011. She is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Curatorial Studies and Masters of Public Administration in Non-Profit Management. She works at Spaulding University as a gallery assistant, and has taught university courses in studio art in addition to having played an instrumental role in the development of the artists group called the Louisville Artists Syndicate.

The New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art is an outreach partner of the University of Southern Indiana. The gallery is located at 506 Main Street in New Harmony, Indiana. Regular hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday and noon to 4 p.m. Sunday. For more information, call 812-682-3156 or go to www.usi.edu/nhgallery.

ii. Email Announcement

Displacement: A Reckoning Of Internal Affairs

A two part exhibition that looks at displacement
Curated by Stacey Reason, MA/MPA Candidate

Displacement is a complex phenomenon that can be translated into many different contexts to ultimately describe when we experience a shift. These shifts happen on many levels and in varying degrees creating a constant flux of conditions that affect our physical, psychological, and emotional situations. Scientists define displacement through the physical exchange of molecules that occur when one substance exerts force on another. Psychologists use displacement to define an unconscious defense mechanism we use to block traumatic events. Through all the different applications and uses of displacement, the characteristic of subjectivity remains a constant. We are constantly subjective to our surroundings, our perceptions, our reactions and the way we carry experiences of displacement in one way or another through life.

An attempt at understanding the subtle to obvious shifts we experience through factors of displacement is addressed in the work of Displacement, A Reckoning Of Internal Affairs. The artists represented in this exhibition explore – and on occasion create – the condition of displacement using traditional fine art mediums as well as progressive, experimental, and unexpected materials and presentations. The work featured includes an interactive sculpture, a crowd-sourced photography project, digitally and manually layered images, complex geometric shapes in paintings and projections, sound installations, collected samplings both real and fictitious, and observations of place and hypothetical spaces. They evoke everything from discomfort to nostalgia, recognition to disfigurement. - Stacey Reason

PART ONE

A Reckoning, March 7 - April 13, 2014, Huff Gallery at Spalding University, Louisville, KY

PART TWO

Of Internal Affairs, April 18 - May 30, 2014, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, New Harmony, IN

RECEPTIONS:

Huff Gallery at Spalding University: Friday, March 7, 6-8 p.m.

New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art: Friday, May 30, 6-8 p.m.

STACEY REASON holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Drawing from Murray State University, and has lived and worked in Louisville since 2011. She is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Curatorial Studies and Masters of Public Administration in Non-Profit Management. She works part-time at Spalding University as a gallery assistant, and has previously taught university courses in studio art in addition to having played an instrumental role in the development of the artists group called the Louisville Artists Syndicate.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Stacey Reason: staceyreason.com/displacement

Huff Gallery at Spalding University: spalding.edu/huff-gallery

Joyce Ogden, Gallery Director at Huff Gallery, JOgden@spalding.edu, [502-873-4436](tel:502-873-4436)

Huff Gallery on Facebook!

facebook.com/HuffGallery

iii. Curator's Talk

LUNCH WITH A CURATOR: STACEY REASON

Thursday, April 10, 11:40 am
At Huff Gallery

Stacey Reason will be sharing some insight to her curatorial process for the current Huff Gallery Exhibition *Displacement, Part One: A Reckoning*. Bring your lunch and join us for a quick casual conversation in the Gallery.

Displacement, Part One: A Reckoning
will be on display through April 13.

For more information:
@ staceyreason.com/displacement
@ spalding.edu/about-spalding/huff-gallery
@ facebook.com/HuffGallery

iv. ARTx FM Radio Interview

Home About Links

Posted on **April 16, 2014** [← Previous](#) [Next →](#)

April 11th, 2014 – Maria Zaikina “LANDSCHAFT MIT HAUS”

This week Keith Waits spoke with artist and curator Stacey Reason. Listen below for our music pairings and a discussion of how art in galleries is changing and evolving.

05:54

▶ 00:00 00:00 ◀

▶ 00:00 00:00 ◀

Stacey Reason is an artist and curator working in Louisville. Currently she is a candidate for a Master of Arts, Curatorial Studies, and Master of Public Administration, Nonprofit Management at the University of Louisville. She holds a BFA from Murray State University, where she was Magna Cum Laude. Her two-part thesis exhibition *A Reckoning of Internal Affairs* began at the Huff Gallery at Spalding University in March and will continue at and April 18 – May 30, 2014, New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art, New Harmony, IN.

CURRICULUM VITA

NAME: Stacey Reason

ADDRESS: 539 Rawlings Street
Louisville, Kentucky, 40217
USA

DOB: Dallas, Texas – July 21, 1987

EDUCATION & TRAINING:

M.A./M.P.A., Curatorial Studies and Nonprofit Management
University of Louisville
2012 – 2015

Internship
Huff Gallery at Spalding University
2012 – 2015

Internship
Center for Nonprofit Excellence
2014

A1 German Language Certificate
Universität Passau
2011

B.F.A., Drawing
Murray State University, Magna Cum Laude
2005 – 2010

AWARDS: Dean's Citation Nominee
University of Louisville
2015

Graduate Research Assistant
University of Louisville
2014 – 2015

Graduate Teaching Experience
University of Louisville
2013 – 2014

Allan R. Hite Scholarship
University of Louisville
2012
Hope, Endeavor, and Achievement Scholarship
Murray State University
2010, 2009

Breazeale Fellowship
Murray State University
2009

Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activity Grant
Murray State University
2009

Erica Hillary Hope Small Memorial Art Scholarship
Murray State University
2008

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES: Associations of Academic Museums and Galleries
Student Member since 2012

Alpha Chi National College Honors Society
Member since 2010

INVITED PRESENTATIONS: 2015 Social Equity Leadership Conference

EXHIBITION CATALOG

Of Internal Affairs

New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art
18 April - 30 May, 2014
Reception: Friday, 30 May, 6-8 p.m.

Ashley Brossart, *Portrait of a Place*, 3rd & Brockbridge St.
Gregory Scott Cook, 238.857 // Not Sleeping
Andrew Cozzens, *Archimedes Is Laughing At You*
Ryan Feeney, *Obscene Sunset #18* // *Obscene Sunset #17*
Mark Keffler, *Workings* // *I Don't Be Yourself* // *I Love What You Call You*
Megan Kocisak, *This Is Worse Than It Seems* // *A Pussy-Ass Box of Whooop-Ass*
Keith Linton, *Untitled*
Matthew Looser, *Untitled (delusion of space)*
Adam Miller, *Landshaft At A Stage, Study 1*
Adam Miller, *Landshaft At A Stage, Study 2*
Rebecca Norton, *A Little Blue / Flutter* // *One with the Crowd* (3) *One With the Crowd* (4) // *Hot Mes*
Ian Shelly, *Upon this rock we shall install*
Tommy Taylor, *Paper* // *Wood and Rain*
Alice Piskey Young, *Remembering/Un-remembering*
Maria Zaikina, *Landshaft Miti Haus*

UL
HITE ART
INSTITUTE

staceyreason.com/displacement

Displacement

A Reckoning Of Internal Affairs

A Reckoning
Huff Gallery at Spaulding University Inventory
7 March - 13 April, 2014
Reception: Friday, 7 March, 6-8 p.m.

Jennifer Balchout, *Paper Satellites* (triplych)
Ashley Brossart, *Portrait of a Place*, 3rd & Brockbridge St.
Gregory Scott Cook, *SINGER* // *ABOVE/BELOW: the ballad of Floyd Collins*
Andrew Cozzens, *Archimedes Is Laughing At You*
Brandon Harder, *Vivivian Black* (frimities, utlitas, venutasa)
Megan Kocisak, *To Find in this place, hide in this space*
Shawn Marshall, *Stop Time for a Moment* // *Floating Azure*
Adam Miller, *Saltwater Encroachment* // *Facial Construction* // *Archimedes Is Laughing At You*
Rebecca Norton, *Die Affine*
Ian Shelly, *Upon this rock we shall install*
Alli Wiles, *Kentucky Swears* // *Sweet Cultures* // *Tracks* // *Topo Examination*
Alice Piskey Young, *This Distance*
Maria Zaikina, *Landshaft Miti Haus*
Christine Zauscher, *Flight Archive #2* // *Flight Archive #4* // *Flight Archive #10* // *Flight Archive #17* // *Night Archive #18*

Displacement: A Reckoning Of Internal Affairs

Displacement is a complex phenomenon that can be translated into many different contexts to ultimately describe when we experience a shift. These shifts happen on many levels and in varying degrees creating a constant flux of conditions that affect our physical, psychological, and emotional situations. Scientists define displacement through the physical exchange of molecules that occur when one substance exerts force on another. Psychologists use displacement to define an unconscious defense mechanism we use to block traumatic events. Through all the different applications and uses of displacement, the characteristic of subjectivity remains a constant. We are constantly subject to our surroundings, our perceptions, our reactions and the way we carry experiences of displacement in one way or another through life.

An attempt at understanding the subtle to obvious shifts we experience through factors of displacement is addressed in the work of *Displacement, A Reckoning Of Internal Affairs*. The artists represented in this exhibition explore—and on occasion create—the condition of displacement using

traditional fine art mediums as well as progressive, experimental, and unexpected materials and presentations. The work featured includes an interactive sculpture, a crowd-sourced photography project, digitally and manually layered images, complex geometric shapes in paintings and projections, sound installations, collected sampling both real and fictitious, and observations of place and hypothetical spaces. They evoke everything from discomfort to nostalgia, recognition to disorientation.

The exhibition itself is subjected to displacement, as it occurs in two places, breaking the confines of the traditional gallery paradigm. The two places – Louisville, KY and New Harmony, IN – are diametrically dissimilar in characteristics. The two locations force a consideration of the affect a place can have on an experience. Viewing an exhibition, *The Relationship to each place offers conversational points to the context of the work within the gallery.* The Huff Gallery at Spaulding University in Louisville, with the subtitle *A Reckoning*, features work that is a more succinct attempt at addressing an understanding of displacement itself, and how it directly manifests itself to

us and in us. *A Reckoning* describes how we cope, react, address, and define displacement. Immediately following the closing of the first part of the exhibition the second part with the subtitle *Of Internal Affairs* opens at the New Harmony Gallery of Contemporary Art. The gallery sits at the heart of a secluded, protected village founded as a Utopian society in the mid-1800's. The setting alone evokes a feeling of displacement, as a delightfully eerie sensation is unavoidable when you enter this time capsule of a township. The work featured in *Of Internal Affairs* focuses on the psychological and metaphysical effects of displacement.

Considered as a totality, *Displacement, A Reckoning Of Internal Affairs* is a challenging experience of exploration and interaction through the platform of an art exhibition that can take us out of ourselves and into the world and back into ourselves again. The exhibition as a whole raises questions about how we observe and cope with aspects of displacement through a myriad of shifting variables and influences. While many of the selected artists may not have considered displacement as a central theme in their oeuvre, the dialogue created by their participation in this exhibition is proof that the phenomenon of displacement is

omnipresent, unavoidable, and a powerful condition that provides both waking and subconscious life.

It is not surprising that notions of displacement are so readily conceivable. Countless historical precedents exist within this topic, as complex as Freudian displacement theory and as elementary as Galileo's infamous bath discovery. The work in this show ranges in tone from playful to serious, observational to speculative, overt to abstract. The artists collect, layer, diffuse, and project, all methods of displacing the viewer from their normal vision of the world, in efforts to carry out their conceptual motivations. The resulting compilation creates an opportunity for us to consider and reflect on aspects of displacement both measurable and intangible through quiet contemplation and actual physical travel presented by this two-part exhibition. - SR

Paper Satellites (triptych), atlas, vellum, thread, glue, natural objects, graphite, 2013

If you have ever made a move to a place that is drastically different than the place you are leaving, there are obvious shifts that are immediately felt. Especially if that new place is a tiny island in the middle of the ocean. Leaving the midwest, leaving a location that is surrounded by hundreds of miles in every direction by land, open land, farm land, wooded land, and arriving to an inland that is only 200 square miles can certainly impose on our metrics for understanding space and place. Distance becomes completely subjective. Maps are operating on a much smaller scale. The idea of proximity and shared borders, the idea of a “neighbor,” suddenly becomes a forced relationship or a lost ideal. This artist confronts displacement head on by subjecting maps to a reassimilation and thereby exposing their subjectivity to culturally, mathematically, and territorially established boundaries.

Jenny Bolhofner

Portrait of a Place, 3rd & Breckinridge St., mixed media, 2014

This project is crowd-sourced, set up by the artist as a contribution to this exhibition and to the community. It is a tool to collectively produce a portrait of a place. The process is an amalgamation of multiple perspectives, a collaborative effort to defining a specific place, and place within a place, a location, a point of reference. There is an understanding of movement and tension, as the different pictures taken may overlap or resituate within a single frame. Voices are both passive and active. This project creates an outsourced narrative, a constant shifting and changing depending on who is doing the looking. Understanding the subjective nature of perception, observation, perspective, and portraiture, it is an effort to engage the community to collaborate on creating a definition for place.

Ashley Brossart

238,857, hand-built looping cassette tape, modified transmitter, meteorite, world radio, 2012

SINGER, hand-printed and populated circuit, helping hands, sewing box, scotch tape, sewing bobbin, rusty nail, harp tuner, piano wire, aluminum, 2012

ABOVE/BELOW: the ballad of Floyd Collins, Audio - 2'03"

∞- Programmatically altered field recorded sound, hand-built electronics/amplifier/cabinet, 2013

Not Sleeping, Audio - 2'30" ∞- Programmatically altered field-recorded sound, hand-built electronics/amplifier/cabinet, 2013

Distance and time can create a lot of tension between our experiences of places and our relationships to them. These works coagulate a series of collected sounds and projections of the surroundings which they came from and resituate them next to each other and in a different context all together. There are layers of condensed sensory information being put into one outlet -- a speaker box, a piano string, a meteorite. In isolation, these objects can seem foreign and disconnected, but their existence comes out of compiled sources of information: the piano string sings out a disconnected yet harmonious 60hz, the speaker emits layered audio from Mammoth Cave over melting snow and a thunderstorm inside of a birdhouse, and finally a connection with the celestials is created by the help of a meteorite transmitted through a radio.

Gregory Scott Cook

Archimedes Is Laughing At You, steel, water, motion sensor, time, 2014

Here's a piece that reminds us of one scientific discovery that was first understood in the context of a bathtub. There is nothing more powerful than a simple experiment that so poignantly explains a physical phenomenon. A motion sensor activates this piece at the occurrence of passing people, allowing the blunt object to lower in increments into the vessel of water below. Reacting to environmental factors, the impending displacement creates tension, anticipation, and for some people anxiety for the coming spill. Once the steel comes in contact with the water, it exerts its force, and the water in turn makes its mark on the surface by way of rust.

Andrew Cozzens

Obscene Sunset #18, Digital C-Print, 2012
Obscene Sunset #17, Digital C-Print, 2012

If the best part of the most beautiful moment is displaced, what happens? Is a sunset still a sunset without the sun? Can the moment be understood or experienced regardless of a single element? These photographs force omission of significant aspects of the constructs we've created to define timely moments and idealized places. The forced relationship between the expansive scene and the black rectangular void creates tension that is felt psychologically. Disconnection through displacement of our constructed definitions of what we think is ideal and what we assume to be real is created through simple gestures that have significant effects.

van Feeney

Ryan Feeney

Vitruvian Block (firmitas, utilitas, venustas), Cinder block, marbled, gold leaf, 2014

A simple statement can be the most ideologically dense, as this piece is both physically stationary and conceptually oscillating around themes of human thought, power, and progression. Contained by the modern cornerstone material, the cinder block, the psychological tension between thought and emotion rests, both protected and preserved. The two biological units rely on the structure of the block to sustain their own structural integrity, much like industrial construction relies on this single unit as a strong and reliable foundation. The introduction of the gold leaf elevates the subject of human intelligence and emotion above innovation and place. The juxtapositioning that occurs through this forced relationship between biological and artificial, idealized and subjectified, must survive the dialectic displacement at play.

Brandon Harder

Workings, acrylic and spray paint on panel, bottle w/ pond water, found reproductions, 2013

Don't Be Yourself, acrylic and spray paint on panel, bottles w/ pond water, 2013

I Love What You Call You, acrylic and spray paint on panel, found reproductions under glass, 2013

These works consider language as a mode of understanding and interpretation of communication. Language is as subjective and relative to place as our understanding of place itself. This is anti-space, the antithesis to a location or a place having location. The opposite of understanding is ambiguity and irrationality, which is the situation of our psychological territory. It is both a void and a non-void. A reminiscence of technological design through geometric patterns, like those on a circuit board, reference a kind of language system that evolved, just as we have evolved. Specimens sit in jars waiting for scrutiny and hope to fall into some established lexicon, yet the big cosmic picture seems microscopic, further playing on the ambiguity and subjectivity of signs and language.

Mark Keffer

To Find in this place, hide in this space, oil on canvas, 2013
This Is Worse Than It Seems, oil on canvas, 2014
A Pansy-Ass Box of Whoop-Ass, oil on canvas, 2014

This work presents a psychological displacement and misalignment with a given infrastructure of structural precedents. Form, color, language, measurement, ideas, cultural framework, and individuality are all subjective and forcibly rearranged. As the production of this body of work progresses, the visual elements suffer a chaotic blow to organizational structure, freeing it into an oblivion of frenzy and liberation.

Megan Kociscak

Untitled, acrylic, studio fragments, canvas, 2013

This work borders a kind of tension and resurrection of materials that mirrors the dichotomy of place and displacement. It is also an examination of the kind of repurposed industrial aesthetic that has its own set of histories and affects referring to a waste site or neglected place. The beauty in the compounded visual layering of materials and textures creates an unfamiliar familiar, reviving a lost use and creating a new function that reconfigures the definition of beauty and pleasure and they become so blurred by the tactileness of the work.

Keith Linton

Untitled (delusion of space), graphite and charcoal, 2014

This work challenges our understanding of space, both physically defined and psychologically maintained. It addresses our territorial hold and the moments of clarity that come fleetingly between the saturated thought patterns of daily life. What does it look to try to define the psychological infrastructure which we use to create understanding and interpret the space around us and the boundaries we create for ourselves, both physically and mentally? We tend to get into routines, everything from driving to work to the sequence of turning on your computer to the way you talk with your parents when they call. I am interested in the exploration of that kind of space definition, in taking a moment -- making the opportunity -- to consider how that kind of guiding through life affects the way we live. The implied ambiguous space plays with scale and perspective, memory and infrastructure. Place and displacement.

Matthew Loeser

Floating Azure, oil on canvas, 2014
Stop Time For a Moment, oil on canvas, 2014
Horizon Fade, oil on canvas, 2014

These works are an observation of space through tactile manipulation of materials. Ambiguous visual images create atmospheric flavor rather than identification which may pin point you down to one idea or another about a single location. There is a vagrant traveling sense represented in the lost feeling of these unlocated places. But it is not a condition of being unfound, rather it is a setting free of boundaries, similar to the wide open plains taking form in these textured explorations. It is a metaphysical examination of undercurrents rather than an unfocused concentration on the physical determinants that shape how we feel and interact. This is a psychological space, a place of retreat, a place of solitude and yet also a gathering place for all that provide the opportunity to wonder.

Shawn Marshall

Suburban Encroachment, mixed media on carved birch panel, 2013

Faculty Construction, mixed media on carved birch panel, 2013

Flood Plain, mixed media on carved birch panel, 2013

The Fire, mixed media on carved birch panel, 2013

Landscape As A Stage, Study 1, monoprint, gouache, colored pencil, graphite, 2014

From the city to the Midwest plains, there is a drastic change in the allotment of space. This artist was faced with the challenge of resituating oneself in the openness of the new landscape. There is a consideration of the relationship to building structures and the immediate surrounding natural environment. Using trace images, memory of visual logs, revisiting their creation and looking at manipulation, scale, understanding, speculation, formulation, after affect, trace affect, shadows, fading ideas, etc. Static noise, visual layering, evidence of history in progression and transgression exhibit how a transfer from a technological process into a hand-drawn product can create a visual language that speaks about remains and impositions.

Adrienne Miller

Digi Affine, digital time-based imagery, 2012
A Little Blue, oil on canvas, 2010
Flutter, oil on canvas, 2011
One with the Crowd (3), oil on canvas, 2010
One With the Crowd (4), oil on canvas, 2010
Hot Mess, oil on canvas, 2011

These elementary shapes and colors are sourced from a system of mathematics called affine geometry. Differing from vector geometry where static coordinate systems are simply defined and consistently revolve around a single point of origin, affine mathematical spaces are elastic and can be manipulated, which makes this system better for understanding (mathematically) motions, trajectories and physical forces. Parallels are the primary focus and measurements of translated distances, angles, and projections are the name of the game. This series of works draws directly from generated affine situations and parallels the efforts to defining forces of energy through movement that we physically and metaphysically feel. Humanistic exuberance and ambiguity approach a betweenness through constant movement from something into itself.

Rebecca Norton

Upon this rock we shall install., brick, paper, steel, nylon,
enamel, 2013

This work pushes the boundaries of our perception by manipulating our frame of reference. Materials that we can instantly recognize seem both displaced from their original context, and simultaneously reconfigured as the foundation for a clever discover. Hidden in all materials lie secret connections to thought and process, connections that clearly play with our sense of dominance by creating miniature worlds on the bricks and concrete of our old. These materials create a new place through their displacement that speak to home, building, dominance, and resurgence. There is an alternate trajectory at work here, one that confuses the real and the unreal, the place and the not placeness of landscape and architecture.

Ian Shelly

Ian Shelly

Magazine, inkjet print and enamel, 2010
Wood and Resin, inkjet print and enamel, 2010
Paper, inkjet print and enamel, 2010

How does the constant contact we have with technology remove us from place, or, how does it connect us with place? This work is an effort to reclaim some power through manipulation of the work of machines. We are living a hybrid life, technology plus human touch. There is an inherent struggle between the technological control and the human intervention. When there is a fault in the work of machines, a glitch in the system, the product is unable to fulfill its intention, its void of meaning or function. This work is an attempt to reinstate the visceral experience of non-machine back into a machine product. And just as machines sometimes fail at their outputs, so can we be temporarily thrown off by the displacement that we experience.

my Taylo

Tommy Taylor

Kentucky Sweats, sweat, paper, ink, 2014
Sweat Cultures, glass jar, sweat, flora/fauna, dirt, ink, 2014
Tracks, poplar, chalk, china pen, dirt, heat, 2014
Topo Examination, Paper, ink, beeswax, jars, lightbox, 2014
Trace Impact, breath recordings, speaker, 2014 (not pictured)

This work explores an immersion in nature in the midst of an urban place. The subject is a focused study on the physical exertion of bodily impact on the surface of the earth and vice versa. Through ritualistic running patterns and gathering specimens along the way, this runner forms relationships to place by creating physical sustenance of biological systems by using bodily by-products as nutrients to foster new life in biological matter, ultimately creating a spiritual connection with place through the ritualistic function of running. The solitude and physical exertion pushes both physical and psychological limits, strengthening an understanding of longing, impact, placement, and escape in the middle of an urban umbrella.

Allison Wiles

This Distance, Kiln cast glass, salt, video, found object, 2013
Remembering/Un-remembering, Pâte de verre cast glass, kiln
cast glass, video, wood, 2013

There is a distinct longing for a place presented by these two works. An examination of place on top of a skewed glass surface both complicates and confuses spectatorship. The solumness of the projected images encourages an introspection and reflection on landscape and creates a longing for distance and departure. There is also woven personal history that considers our emotional attachment to location and surroundings, and how we cope with the feeling of longing and realignment when we experience a shift in placement or synergies.

Alice Pixley Scott

Landschaft Mit Haus, digital illustration video, 2009

Traveling is a complex experience. We travel to explore, we travel to feel alive, we travel to feel home, even though we are not physically located in the geographical location which we might consider our home base. The lure of the flight away or to one place comes with a set of expectations. But every experienced traveller knows that it isn't only about the destination, the process of travel is equally as transformative as the place itself. Movement is a non-place that is the backdrop for our psychological travel. A place to collect thoughts, a place to analyze, a place to get lost in and of itself.

Maria Zaikina

Flight Archive #2, digital collage, 2013
Flight Archive #4, digital collage, 2013
Flight Archive #10, digital collage, 2013
Flight Archive #17, digital collage, 2013
Flight Archive #18, digital collage, 2013

This is a study of relationship with memory and place, and how our past experiences dictate how we understand and interact with place. The assumption that history is subjective is largely at play here. There are always similarities in differences, overarches and undercurrents that connect places through the overt compilation of characteristics. These images evoke a playful rendition of speculation and travel, with flight as a fantastic experience that is unnatural yet inextricably integrated in current life (and therefore negating the possibility of displacement on some level: if all places are connected, can you ever really be displaced?) The characteristics and synergies that formulate our sense of belonging tied to a place and our definition of home are completely formulated through observation and a reckoning of the past histories to present conditions.

Christine Zuercher