STAMPS
SCHOOL OF ART & DESIGN
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

DRAWN TO DEATH

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Candidate, MFA
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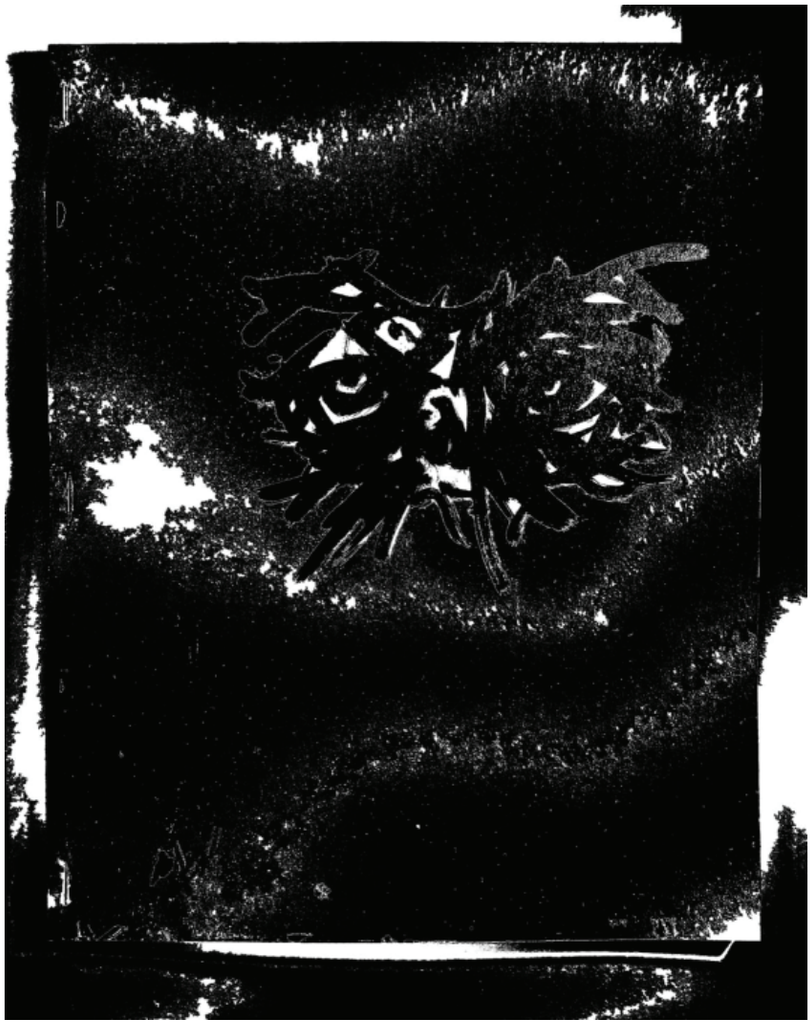
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Drawn to Death

Jessie Karlsberger, 2024

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Abstract

Throughout this document I will situate my art practice within the study of semiotics, phenomenology of perception, and the philosophical implications of material art-practice. In order to articulate how images can embody the interruptions between perception and thought, I look to the fundamental interactions between paper, drawing, and comics to examine ambiguity within visual perception. Interruption and attention are embedded in drawing and comics, which alter our understanding of images in different contexts. and I will provide examples throughout of how these factors inform my drawing practice (and art practice more generally).

Keywords

Drawing, comics, paper, perception, amodal perception, amodal completion, modal completion, blind-contour, self-portrait, book-arts, collage, grids, repetition.

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To Jim Cogswell, Phoebe Gloeckner, and Janum Sethi - Thank you.

Thank you for remaining calm in the face of my uncertainty. My work is my heart, and all three of you have in different ways, and on many occasions blocked my sensitive bleeding heart from the cold. Arriving with knowledge that I was without, and the patience to hear me as I reflected back at you in an attempt to organize my search for meaning.

In your company I feel as though the work that I do has meaning.

Thank you for looking with me into the blank paper, and reminding me to draw and communicate without fear of failure.

To David Chung, thank you also for reminding me that however much I am drawing... there can, and should, be room for more.

To my cohort... You are the most caring, intelligent, and dedicated people I know. Had it not been for your huge hearts and stalwart commitment to your work, at times I may have given up. Thank you for listening with patience and being yourselves the entire time.

Preface



Reflecting on the Reality of the Situation

A Note to the Reader *(That's You!)*

I have been tasked with articulating the meaning behind (or within) a desire that I consider to be an innate drive from within myself – to draw and paint.

Although this search has intensified, it is one that existed prior to my arrival, and will continue beyond my exiting.

The writing, drawings, paintings, and comics that follow were created to reframe my understanding of my relationship to paper, the comic cell, and the influence their coexistence exerts on the reception and production of images.

Within the context of this document the term 'drawing' should be understood as encompassing the act of painting, as I see my approach to these methods of making within my practice to be one in the same.

i was talking to a moth
the other evening
he was trying to break into
an electric light bulb
and fry himself on the wires

why do you fellows
pull this stunt i asked him
because it is the conventional
thing for moths or why
if that had been an uncovered
candle instead of an electric
light bulb you would
now be a small unsightly cinder
have you no sense

plenty of it he answered
but at times we get tired
of using it
we get bored with the routine
and crave beauty
and excitement
fire is beautiful
and we know that if we get
too close it will kill us
but what does that matter
it is better to be happy
for a moment
and be burned up with beauty
than to live a long time
and be bored all the while
so we wad all our life up
into one little roll
and then we shoot the roll
that is what life is for
it is better to be a part of beauty
for one instant and then cease to
exist than to exist forever
and never be a part of beauty
our attitude toward life
is come easy go easy
we are like human beings
used to be before they became
too civilized to enjoy themselves

and before i could argue him
out of his philosophy
he went and immolated himself
on a patent cigar lighter
i do not agree with him
myself i would rather have
half the happiness and twice
the longevity

but at the same time i wish
there was something i wanted
as badly as he wanted to fry himself

Excerpt from *the lives and times of archy and mehitabel*, Don Marquis 1950

Thoughts on Paper

A blank sheet of paper sits on a table; it is passive in its blankness, yet active in the potential to contain as much information as I can fit inside of it. However, even in the smallest of handwriting, only so many words will fit onto a page before my handwriting begins to overlap and obscure the intended message. This interdependency of the medium's physical form and its generally accepted use precedes any level of conscious effort toward clarity of a written message.

Paper does not end at its edges. It makes an imperceptible left turn behind itself, hiding behind its own back – becoming the back only when I recognize that the side I cannot see is facing away from me. I position myself in front of the paper. This is how a piece of paper gets its face – by being observed by my face. Face to face, back-to-back, a problem to be solved by attending to my own perceptions.

There will always come a point where I must flip the page over to continue; after that, I approach a tipping point between clarity and obscurity. There is only so much room on a blank page, I must consider the boundaries of both my intent and the page – contemplating the best path forward. In this way, the blank page for me becomes a symbol of intent.

A viewer's presence gives the blank page a function – and what occurs within the boundaries of, or within an image on the page is a largely subjective experience. Perhaps this says more about intent than it does limitation. But the articulation of a drawing's reception by the viewer is inextricably linked to what they attend to, and the process of making is intrinsically linked to the artist's experiences and beliefs.

As a visual artist, this makes the search for meaning in images precarious; pinpointing the intersection of image, interpretation, and belief is a dubious task. It seems that intent and reception are simultaneously bound and separated by a gap. One that language struggles to bridge.

I believe that this is the power of images: they exist in an experiential gap between individuals that, through the immediacy of visual perception, breaks free of the incantations of verbal and written language that tethers them to the past.

Throughout this document I will situate my art practice within the study of semiotics, phenomenology of perception, and the philosophical implications of material art-practice. In order to articulate how images can embody the interruptions between perception and thought I look to the fundamental interactions between paper, drawing, and comics to examine ambiguity within visual perception. Interruption and attention are embedded in drawing and comics, which alter our understanding of images in different contexts. and I will provide examples throughout of how these factors inform my drawing practice (and art practice more generally).

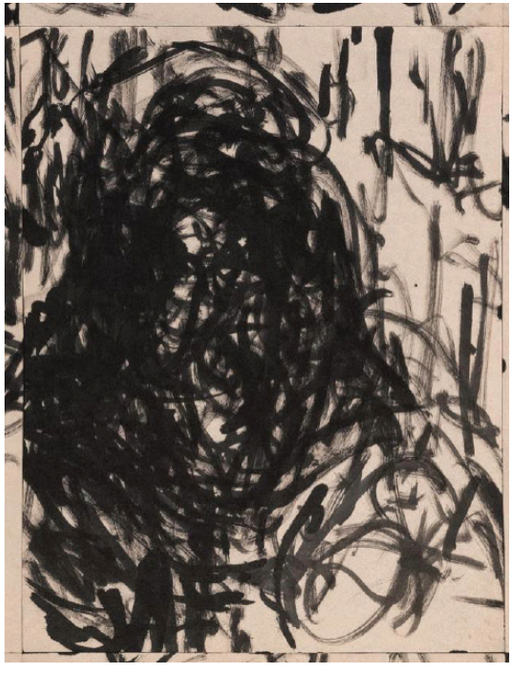


Fig. 1 Blind Contour Self-Portrait, 2024

The Comic Cell and The Blank Page

(Hyperpages)

I became interested in comics by frequenting used bookstores in search of poetry chapbooks and self-published magazines. To find them, I would scan the shelves looking for tiny gaps between larger books. These gaps were indicators that what I was looking for *could* be there, based on what I know about their scale and page-count.

When placed on a shelf with hundreds of other books, books of this kind (often thin, and staple-bound) are given away by the gap they produce. This act of looking in this case was an embodied practice of searching for meaning in the gaps between more visible factors. What one finds hidden between other books is often put there on purpose. Whether the act of being hidden is due to their physical properties, or because of their subversive content is often only clear once they are noticed.

Perhaps inevitably, the realization set in that I was quickly entering an exploration not of comics, but of the effect the foundational properties of a 'comic'.

Imagine the introduction of a simple shape into the situation of a blank piece of paper: the drawn shape of

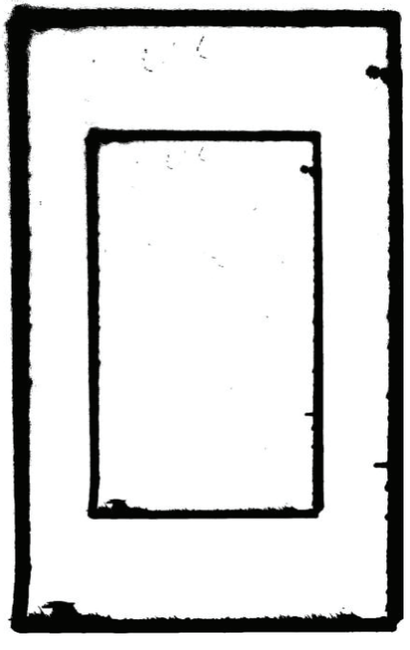


Fig. 2 Hyperpage / Diagram of Comic Cell on Paper

a rectangle – or comic cell. By mimicking the paper's contour, yet existing within the paper's physical confines, the drawn cell takes on a secondary and imagined physicality. While the boundary of the cell visually echoes that of the paper's, thus referring immediately to it, its presence begins to suggest the possibility of an entirely new theoretical understanding of 'space'. The cell exists within the cultural and physical context of 'paper' and at the same time, surpasses what paper is capable of on its own. Here we find a kind of simultaneous presence of visual content through the embodiment of form (paper), the phenomenology of which is interchangeable and fluid. (Based in belief and attention)

The idea set forth here is that by existing on, in the image of, and despite the original, the comic panel simultaneously utilizes and subverts the limitations of its context: *paper*, thus, allowing for an entirely new understanding of 'space' which exists primarily in concept, and points out the lack of the 'real' in a culturally understood object.

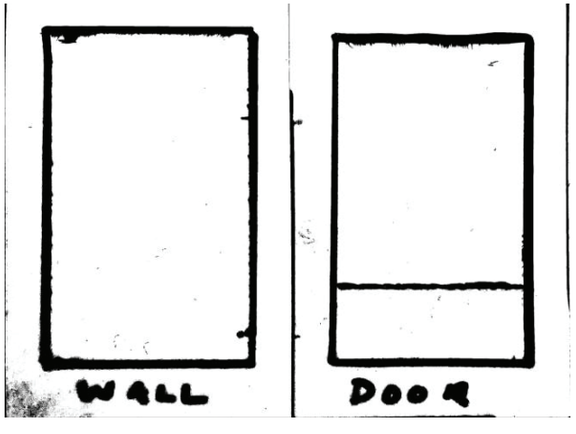


Fig. 3, Hyperpage as wall (left), " as door (right)

Through addition of minimal lines and shapes (seen above), the comic cell's spatial implications begin shifting from barrier to doorway – from a mimetic solid surface, to a portal through which the mind can enter. These relatively slight changes in visual content either imply the possibility of movement *through* the piece of paper to a new space by virtue of an invented doorway, or (equally perplexingly) halts passage via the secondary piece of paper on which to begin drawing again.

Though I had been drawing the diagrams shown above for some time to try and make sense of the comic cell, the realization of the importance of the blank page became salient for me through the work of Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*. This text led me to think of the comic cell as a secondary version of the page itself, and that through their coexistence can be observed a different understanding of how both elements function. The page and the cell become inseparably linked and altered – producing a visual scenario in which the intent of the artist is accepted as a completely new and invisible kind of experiential reality.

I began referring to a single cell on a page as a *Hyperpage*.

In his 1988 treatise "Simulacra and Simulation", Jean Baudrillard defines what he refers to as the "Procession of Simulacra": a sequence of events through which meaning production is irrevocably warped and disconnected from reality through the ever-increasing acceleration and reproduction of culture through mediation. Baudrillard claims that this series of interactions between media and reception has led to a cultural moment where we can no longer rely on the assumption that a sign is equivalent to the real

event or object it represents, but rather arises from the disconnection from the real, becoming a simulacrum.[1]

Baudrillard refers to the Iconoclasts, and their rejection of depictions of God using icons as a tool for worship. The power of images to illuminate the absence of reality, through the meaning that we attribute to them, can be seen in this example, because icons do not attempt to *represent* God through a likeness, but instead simulate God's existence.

For Baudrillard, images exist as a mechanism for unveiling the process of simulation, which results in a distancing from the 'real'. In this way, because the frame mimics the boundaries of the paper it becomes an imitation of the paper, or a "... reflection of reality."[2] In doing so, the frame becomes a new kind of 'thing': an infinitely replicable space, which, because it exists both on, and because of the shape of 'paper', draws the viewer's attention away from accepted notions of physical reality. In Baudrillard's terms "...masks and perverts a basic reality."[3] Once entirely independent of the reality of the paper, the form of the comic cell can then justify the existence of other cells, understood now within the context of this independent and infinitely replicable *idea* of space. This new form, in Baudrillard's order "... Masks the absence of basic reality..." and "...bears no relation to any reality whatsoever: it is its own pure simulacrum.[4]

Through the *Hyperpage*, it is as though the imagination is looking at itself, unbothered by reality

1 Baudrillard, Jean, and Mark Poster. *Jean Baudrillard: Selected Writings*. Stanford University Press, 2001.,2
2 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 170
3 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 170
4 Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, 170

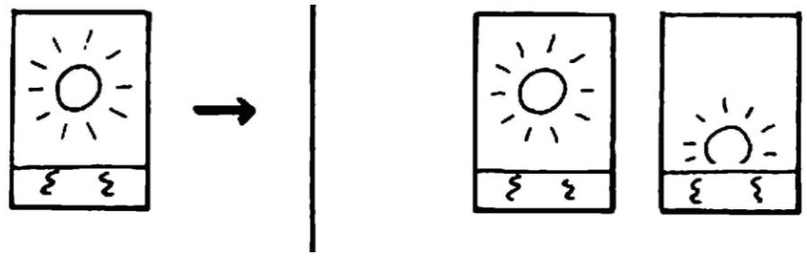


Fig. 4 Detail from Understanding Comics (The Invisible Art), Scott McCloud, 1993

and willing to oscillate between perceptual states. Much like the attention shifts in daily perception, changing the way we understand the visual world – reflecting to us the immovable nothingness from which ideas spring, and at the same time showing off this unique ability through formal simplicity.

Through the *hyperpage* we begin to move away from the physical limitation of what the cell imitates. I see this as a kind of embodied fiction from which we crave and expect resolution, which keeps us looking and suspends this hyperreality over time. The formal limitations of the medium give us just enough information to accept the artist's intent as occurring in real time. Furthermore, a comic's seriality (both in repetition of the cell, and issue-to-issue) prompts the desire for more in those who would wish to keep reading.

A cliff-hanger at the end, and the promise of meaning along the way.

Above is a detail from Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics (The Invisible Art)*. This sequential image illustrates that when two cells are placed in proximity to one another – the grounds for visual comparison are set. As viewers, we search for similarities and differences between these isolated images. In McCloud's example the similarity provided by the

artist is the horizon line. A stable factor signaling that the sun that is in different positions is moving within the same space, just at a different time. The things we know about the sun (that it exists above the horizon, and falls below it later in the day), allow us to compare our beliefs about time and space to what we are seeing – getting an expected result. The comic cell keeps us guessing as to what is behind, through, before, and after it. The sequence of cells ends when there is no more space on the paper, prompting the viewer to turn the page.

But because of the *hyperpage's* ambiguous status as a wall/door, we as onlookers must constantly reassess the wall/door status each time the eye moves from cell to cell to determine whether we are outside or inside. Through this ambiguity, the imagination can accept the simultaneity of its being: an opening to indeterminate space. When put into a sequence – the structure of the imagination made visible and active through suspended need for reinspection of spatial status. A comic cell is not unlike a physical doorway experienced in an architectural space. When a doorway is encountered in everyday life, we are confronted with the implication that something lies beyond a threshold. At the same time, if it is indeed a floating piece of imagined paper, what effect does the desire to know what is hiding just out of sight have on the perception of images?

A *Hyperpage* performs simultaneous likeness/ subversion (acting as a doorway and wall) of the paper's physical characteristics (as a solid object) in plain sight, from the surface of the paper itself, via a drawn border (which is expected to exist on paper) However in either example, we begin to move away from the physical limitation of what the cell imitates.

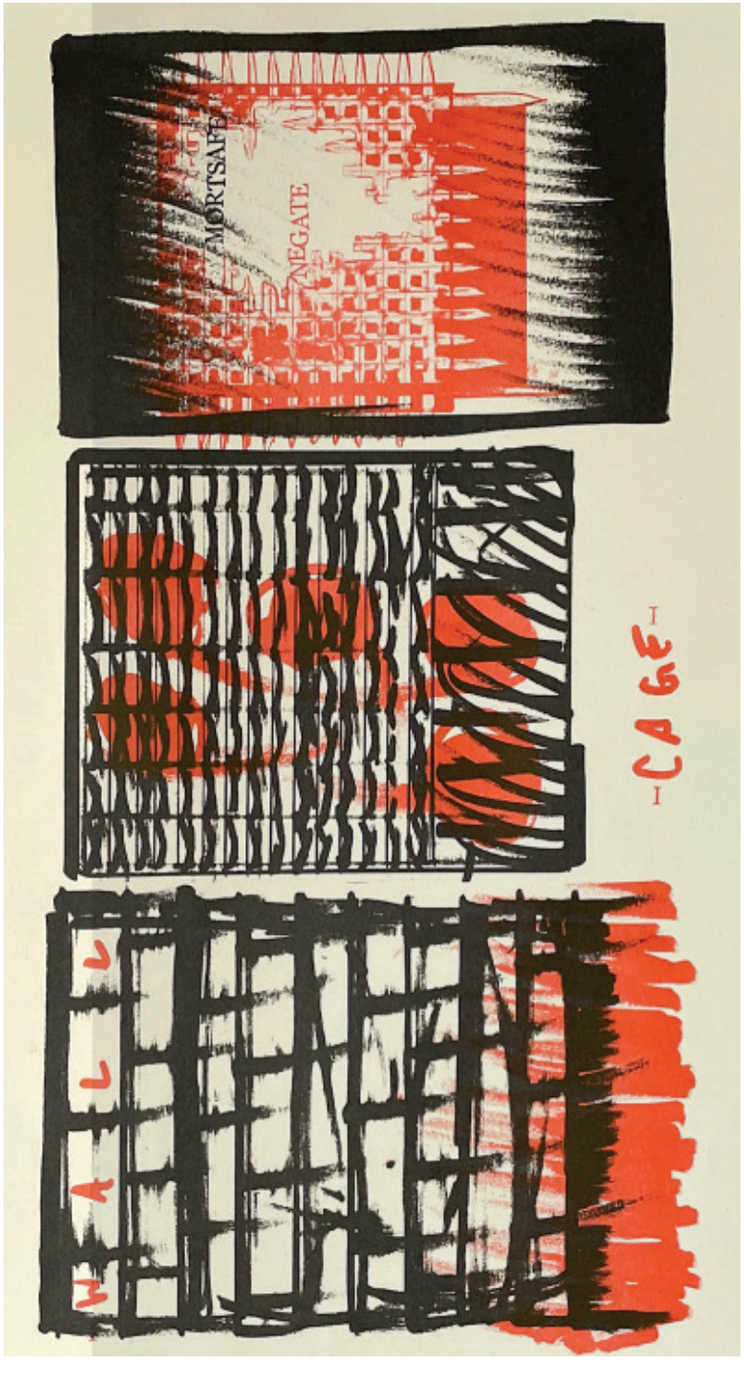


Fig. 5, "Negate the Mortsafe", Risograph Print, 2023

Drawing in the Cell

(Looking Intently to See Something That Isn't There)



Fig. 6, "Shock!", charcoal, gouache, and pastel on mdf, 2022

My first works explored the comic as a format for painting. The introduction of a series of comic cells onto the mdf was an effort to begin engaging with sequential images. Previously I had worked in gouache and ink on a single canvas, building marks until the surface became so chaotic that I resorted to sanding away the surface to start over without losing my composition. Each time I reached a point in the process where I was no longer able to see the next move, sanding was a way of keeping *just enough* visual information to hopefully see new forms.

In this more recent work, I continued using this sanding technique, all the previous states become a kind of transparency. Showing bits and pieces of a timeline. This method allowed me to keep the most fundamental compositional elements.

However, the criteria for my first drawings were that they would begin with the act of drawing three cells on the surface of a board, then proceed with a series of successive marks made in response to what I saw at the time as intuition. I now believe these marks were



Fig. 7, "The Back of the Word Bubble", 2023

made from, and possibly within my imagination before they ever reached the substrate.

My thinking was that once the first mark was made, the panels and the mark would begin to exert an influence on one another, building together simultaneously to shape the composition of each. By superimposing my painting practice into the format of comics, I was trying to understand how the comic strip functions at its core and began deconstructing how ideas of temporality, both in the process of making and in reception, were functioning in my practice.

For me the comic cell held up a metaphysical mirror back at the drawing, like leaving a note for oneself as a reminder that the edges of the cell are not where the possibilities end. This should not be misinterpreted as a desire for control. It is in my mind the opposite: subversion of the existential fear that is in all associations projected onto 'the blank page' that brings with it the weight of producing meaning through one's every move.

In short, through the introduction of a series of three cells, my imagination could see itself developing the image again. This method gave me not only three chances to 'get it right', but in the spirit of the comics format allowed me at the same time to explore ideas of drawing as an act of narrative exploration.

As if before the blank page was a wall, and the panels provided openings through which to begin showing itself. I now understand this as an interaction between my own preconceptions about drawing on a rectangle and all that comes with it, and the affect having more than one chance at resolution has on my imagination in regard to moving forward without the fear of failure.

Despite the introduction of three new blank pages to be afraid of, the limitation of 'three', within the limitation of 'page', was a creative opening. To remind myself that all the fear tied up with meaning, images, and paper is after all, in my head. I responded in kind, whispering back to the surface, "... none of that is real, remember? I have made you again, three times within yourself."

The perception of time passing that comics signal depends on what one attends to within that structure. Cells can be experienced as individual moments, regardless of the artist's intention for them to connect. This is more a matter of the reader's willingness to find narrative than it is the efficacy of the artist's efforts to portray one. Associations between cells help to shape reception, and the visual language of comics provides a framework within which the reader can attend or not. In that way, comics clue us into how we prioritize experiences differently moment-to-moment, both between cells, and between individuals.

By working in this format, I was deconstructing my visual priorities into a timeline, and the drawings became rooted in a back-and-forth of drawing and reacting to the previous mark. At the same time, the images expanded within the three-segment universe where narrative no longer had a beginning or end. With every drawing decision the narrative shifted, and I could respond to the interaction of time and composition simultaneously.

If my mark-making began veering toward obfuscation of the yet-to-be figures, this would quickly dissolve into uncertainty. In this way, the marks in these drawings could be compared to an accumulation of too many words on a page – but without the referential quality of written language. It was as if I were constructing the

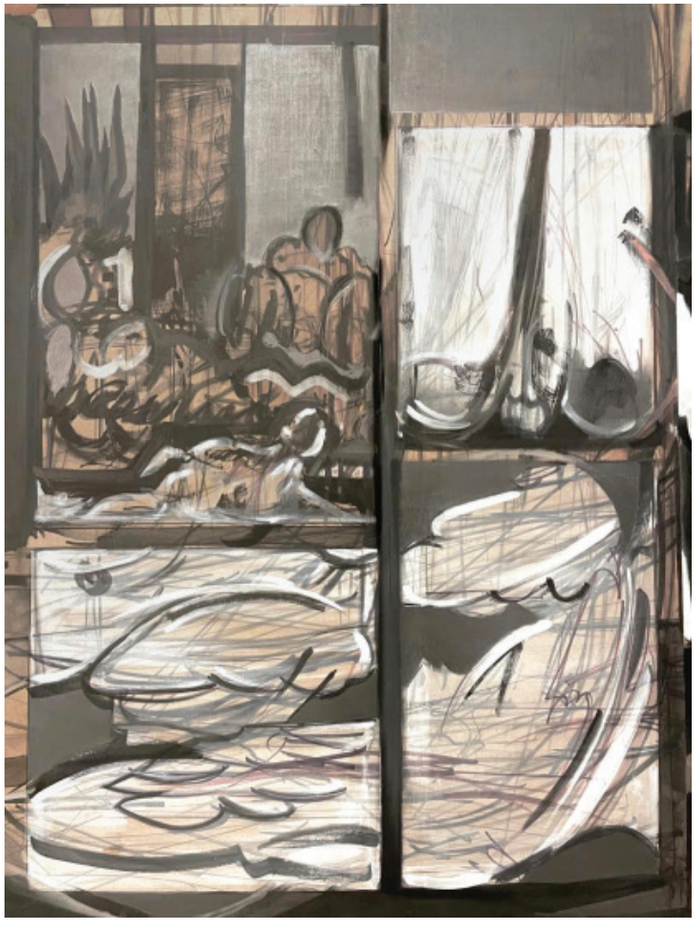


Fig. 8, Untitled Comic 2, graphite, gouache, marker, and chalk on mdf

meaning of each letter with every mark, which if done out of order would result in gibberish.

What I was learning was that there seemed to be a threshold of visual information. On one side: the image becomes too solid – locking in representation and killing my desire to search. On the other side – the search would result in so much accumulation or errant crossover between marks that I could no longer see connections.



Fig. 9, Process shot of Sudden Interruption (left), final drawing (right), 2023

In chasing an image with no reference but itself, each time a drawing begins, there is an acknowledgment that it may never be finished. At least not in my lifetime. Yet somehow each new mark either stabilizes or supports the emergence of some unknown end. I am not searching for resolution of the whole image. Rather, each mark is a balancing act of my attention at any given moment. The search for meaning in this process of reaction is key to my method of drawing.

By stretching out my mark making into segments, I spread my search for the figure out over three 'surfaces', rather than one. Working in comic form helped decrease the risk of reaching a chaotic point that caused me to lose track of the drawing's direction.

Drawing from the imagination leaves open the question of where the images are truly coming from. Formal training in painting and drawing teaches us that any attempt to reproduce the experience of perception through the medium of drawing is doomed to become an approximation of experience. Lines build to describe a form, and looking back and forth is an attempt to guide that approximation toward something that is recognizable by others.

These drawings led me to wonder: If I am drawing from my imagination, what was I approximating? Was this process also doomed to be not only a facsimile of thought, but an accumulation of reactions that were ultimately up to the viewer to interpret as 'accurate' or 'inaccurate' despite being made from no direct reference? Or even worse, was I opening myself to have my memories and inner thoughts evaluated by my ability to accurately represent myself? To understand the implications of this possibly inevitable disconnect, I began researching the phenomenology of perception.



Fig. 10, Process shot of "Sudden Interruption", 2023

In his paper *Perception and the Imagination: amodal perception as mental imagery*, Bence Nanay provides readers with this diagram to illustrate the mind's ability to 'fill in' visual information where no visual stimuli are present. This is a process known as *modal completion*.[5] This is the process by which the mind 'fills in' missing visual information using surrounding queues. Above we see a triangle form in the negative space in the center of the image. This example was of particular interest to me because it speaks to my process of working from the imagination.

With these comic cell drawings, I was not only responding to the borders of each cell, but between marks I imagined the connections between them. When I look at this triangle, I can feel the same parts of my mind and eyes activate as when I am looking at an unfinished drawing; attempting to guide my decision making process toward a recognizable image.

5 Nanay, Bence. "Perception and Imagination: Amodal Perception as Mental Imagery." *Philosophical Studies: An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition* 150, no. 2 (2010): 239–54. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40856553.

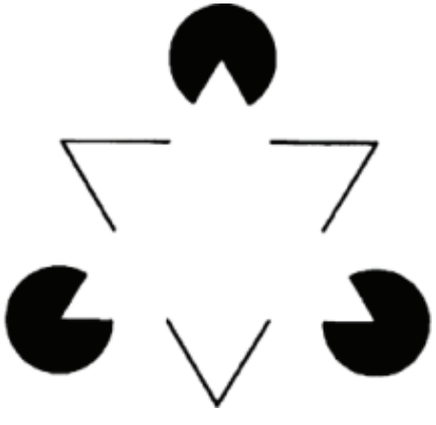


Fig. 11, The Kanizsa Triangle, Nanay 2010

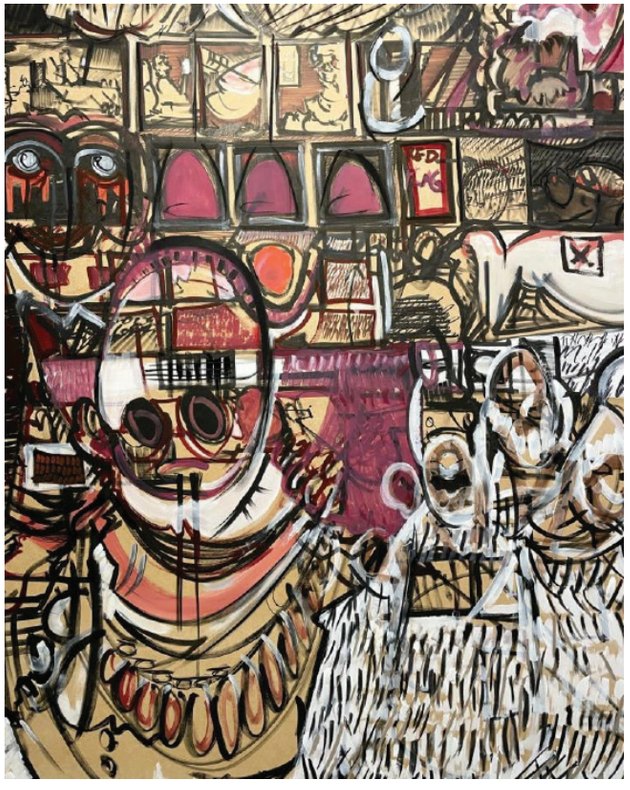


Fig. 12, Detail from "Two Panels", ink, gouache, charcoal, and pastel on mdf

Here, time is conveyed through accumulation of marks, and the repetition of the rectangle becomes a direct reference to the format of comics. The figures became cartoon-like, gestures toward simplicity of form through the chaos of repetition.

While the figures in my drawings from this time are not always explicitly visible, their transparency allows viewers to make connections between marks – as I would while drawing them. In the absence of visual clarity, I believe these works operate like the Kanizsa Triangle, allowing the mind to see both what is – and is not presented to the eye.

Occlusion, Amodal Perception & *The Hyperpage* as Transparency

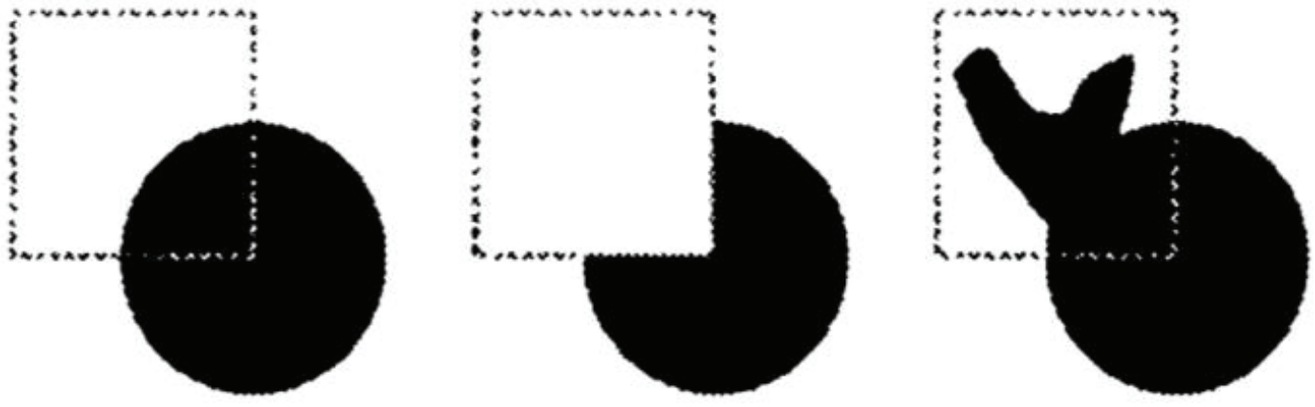


Fig. 13, Diagram of amodal completion, Nanay 2010

Occlusion is a term used to describe the process by which something is hidden from vision. When something is blocked from vision, the object doing the obstructing is performing occlusion. The perceptual experience of perceiving such a hidden object in the mind (similar to, but different from the filling in of the Kanizsa triangle) is known as amodal completion. The diagram shown above is taken from Bence Nanay's essay *Perception and the Imagination: amodal perception as mental imagery*.

In this example we see a circle that is partially occluded by a square. Although our mind fills in the occluded circle's unseen contour, and what the mind presumes to be behind the square could in fact not be what we expect.

Nanay is Professor of Philosophy Centre for Philosophical Psychology, and his work on amodal perception in this instance focuses on determining how we represent occluded objects or situations in the mind via amodal perception.

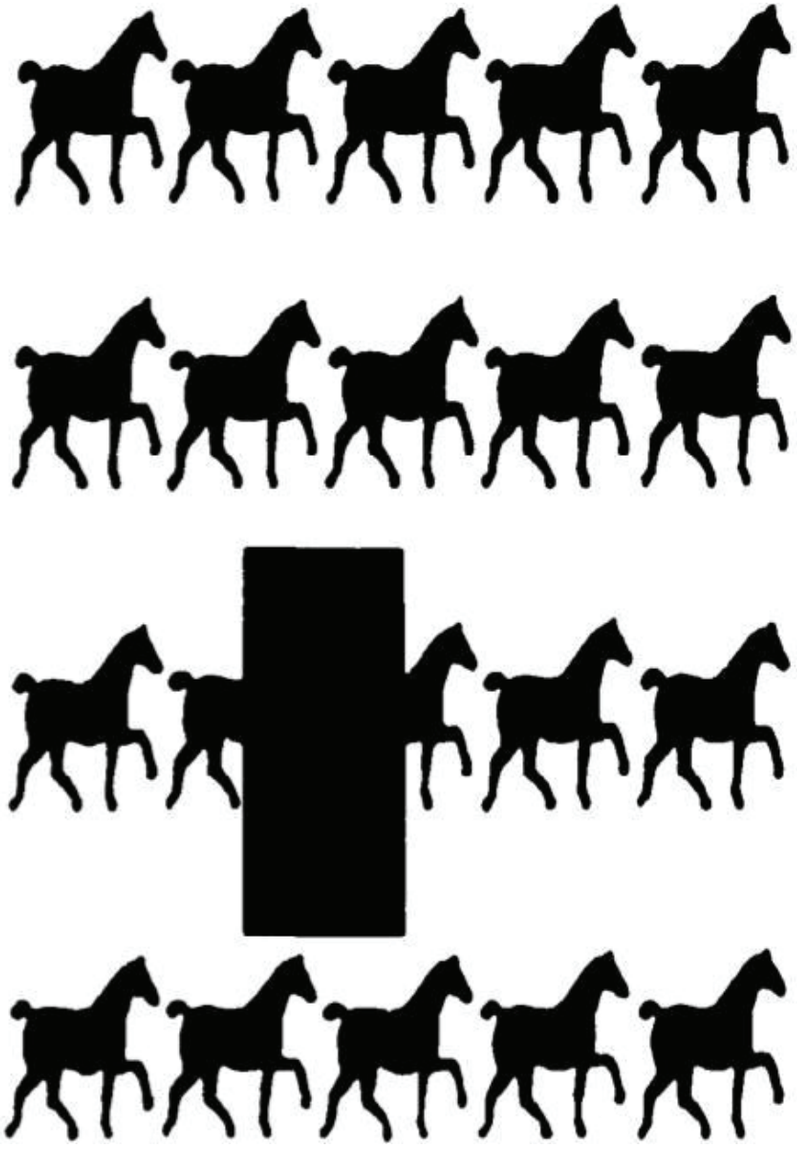


Fig. 14, The horse illusion as seen in Bence Nanay's Essay

Nanay systematically refutes other accounts of how we represent things that have no visible equivalent in the world and argues that this happens through what he refers to as mental imagery.[6] In his refutation of what he calls "the belief-account", Nanay presents another diagram, that of the horse illusion, and suggests through this that our knowledge and beliefs of an occluded object, or the visible parts of an object that is partially occluded do not function based on immediate visual context. For Nanay, 'context' here amounts to our beliefs about the object. Because the surrounding horses are entirely visible, Nanay states that by all rights we should perceive the occluded horses as individual halves of two animals. Instead, the illusion presents us with a very long horse. He goes on to suggest that this interaction between belief and amodal perception can be temporarily suspended.[7] He goes on to state that although the disconnect between what is seen and what is believed does not apply in all instances of amodal perception, even if it could, that it would only be for a short time.

For me, this idea implies an interplay or fluidity in visual perception based in what we choose to attend to in the mind at any given moment. By applying this logic to the situation of the comic cell, we can see that even through repetition the cell can maintain an ambiguous status in the mind. It tells us that it is in many places at once, subverting what we know about the function of paper.

If we place the idea of the comic cell as operating

6 Nanay. "Perception and Imagination", pg.244
7 Nanay. "Perception and Imagination", pg.244



Fig. 15, Scan of Transparencies and pages from "Next Exit II", 2023

primarily in the mind, performing an illusion (a simultaneous wall and doorway), but also an occluder of the page it inhabits by virtue of it existing as a secondary piece of paper-within-paper (thus having opacity and form in the mind), then we can imagine the *hyperpage* is doing all of these things at once. I am referring to Baudrillard's idea of icon and object coexisting, producing a new kind of experiential reality – transcendence from both source and representation.

Thus, the presence of multiple cells on a page perhaps then causes the viewer to re-encounter this conundrum repeatedly– prolonging the interplay between perception and imagination in the context of the page. Allowing one to freely drop in and out of their beliefs about how paper and the comic cell interact to convey the passage of time, or movement through space.

Now imagine that a *Hyperpage* is transparent. On a transparency, the cell occupies both front or back, neither wall nor door. It is all of these at once – swappable at any given moment both in the mind *and* in perception. Because the front/back nature of paper is no longer present, the cell now floats in indeterminate space – free of paper's occluding nature. Paper-as-transparency takes the next step in the *Hyperpages* logic: the cell imitates the physical limits of paper, and in doing so both simulates and undermines its function. Imagining this scenario as a transparency gives objective (seeing two perspectives at once) reality to the cell, and in a way, it again subverts its own illusion while still maintaining its function it is again seen as an object, from both faces, and snatched back from the imagination into the realm of the observable objects.

Here, Nanay discusses the role of amodal perception in everyday perception...

> *Almost all episodes of experience include an amodal component. For example, typically, only three sides of a non-transparent cube are visible. The other three are not... we represent them 'amodally'. The same goes for houses or of any ordinary object. We perceive the back side of any (non-transparent) object only amodally.*[8]

8 Nanay, Bence. "Perception and Imagination," pg.242

What we see and don't see – what we expect and what is true are not always stable. What I am suggesting here is that the situation of a cell on a page shows us both what we expect to see, while at the same time allowing us to opt-into a kind of fiction that is based on the unstable reality of perception. If we attend to the cell as a 'wall', then it becomes a wall. If we attend to the cell as a 'doorway', it becomes a doorway.

But my argument is that this is only possible via the cell's mimicking of the edges of the paper because it grounds this fluctuating experience in a familiar object that is as close to being front and back at the same time via its miniscule depth. In the case of the transparency the paper can no longer occlude its other face, and pushes our perception of the cell even closer to the hyperreal.

However, Imagining the paper as transparent is different from seeing it for what it is (a transparent piece of paper). These distinctions in the mind are perhaps closer than one might think.

In the framing of Nanay, transparency is a way to simultaneously imagine and observe the drawing at once, through an interplay between imagination and the external world. Like a cartoon ghost, running from a scarier, more blood-soaked, 'I-will-eat-your-skin-...' ...kind of ghost. Where once a haunted house indicated the safe place from which to remain an outside-ethereal observer of the living, suddenly becomes a maze of iron gates and weeping stone, from behind which materializes a horrifying reminder of

the inevitability of death beyond death — on a ripped piece of paper we can watch ourselves destroy our own thoughts. Hands grasping the top-two corners, pulling and splitting the representations of thoughts that speak without sound.

I began applying these ideas of occlusion and amodal perception to the situation of the *hyperpage*. I drew over two-hundred blind self-portraits of myself on overhead transparency sheets in comic-like grids using a brush and ink. In this work the need to assign a function to the transparent page was a tool for repetition, and to further embrace the blank page in its potential as a vessel, not as a source of existential fear.

Made in preparation for a printed book, the drawn on transparencies were scanned directly into the



Fig. 16, Gallery goers flipping through "Next Exit" I & II, 2023



Fig. 17, Original drawings for "Next Exit II", brush and ink on overhead transparency, 2023

Risograph machine. The Risograph is a duplicator, like a Xerox machine. It is used to make large amounts of inexpensive reproductions with a print quality similar to screen prints. The combination of seriality, and the direct analog nature of the machine's scanning bed allowed me to produce drawings knowing that I could later experiment with color layering with great speed.

In this book, time shows itself through changes in mark-making; much to do with speed and attention. Depending on the day – depending on the brush – and everything in-between, the drawings would change. These are physical limitations in my process, but spread out over many days, in the format of comics, the changes in mark-making begin to reflect changes in my attention. Transparency here takes on a new function: seriality of the page.

> *The only scenarios where we perceive, but do not perceive amodally are likely to be ones where all the objects in our visual field are fully transparent objects – something that does not happen to us very often. In every other scenario, perception necessarily implies amodal perception... In every other scenario, perception necessarily implies amodal perception. Thus, it is not possible to fully understand perception itself without understanding amodal perception.*[9]

The visual structures produced through a combination of transparency, comic cells, and drawing simultaneously unravels and reconstructs itself, in an incredibly long loop. Not infinite, but as finite as we are.

9 Nanay, Bence. "Perception and Imagination", pg. 242

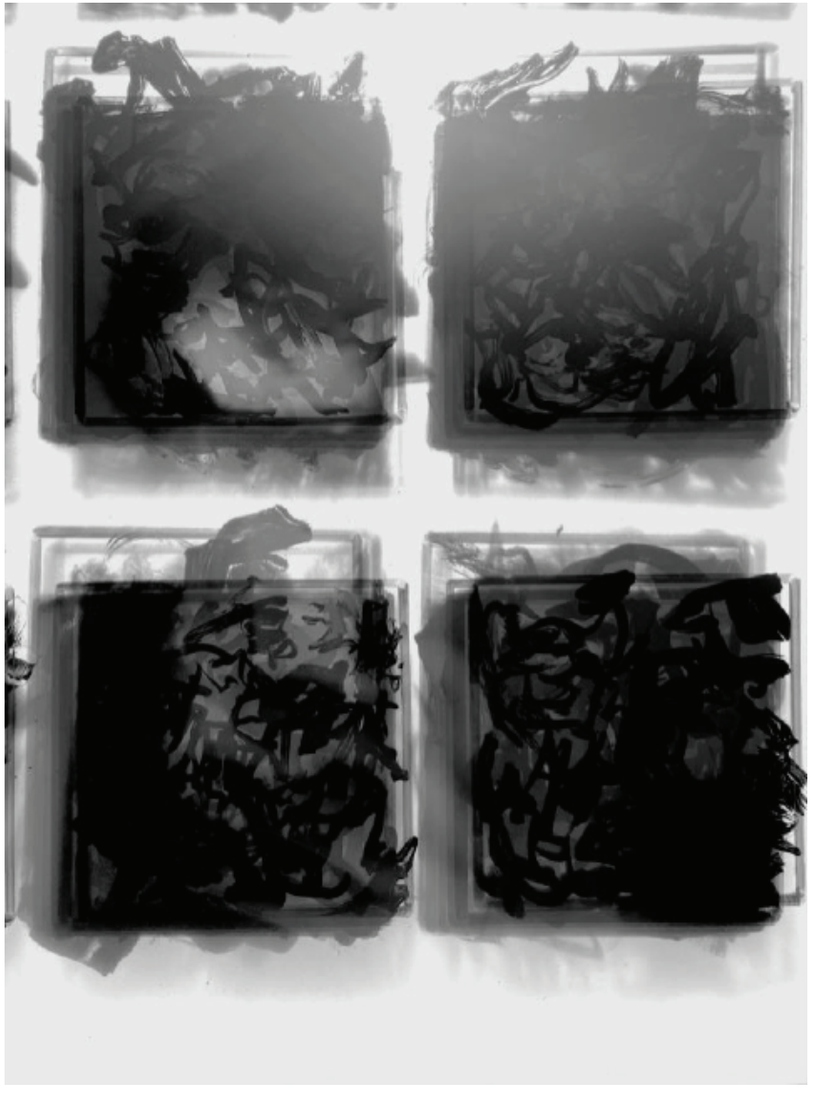


Fig. 18, Photographed stack of transparency drawings, 2023

Considering the Book

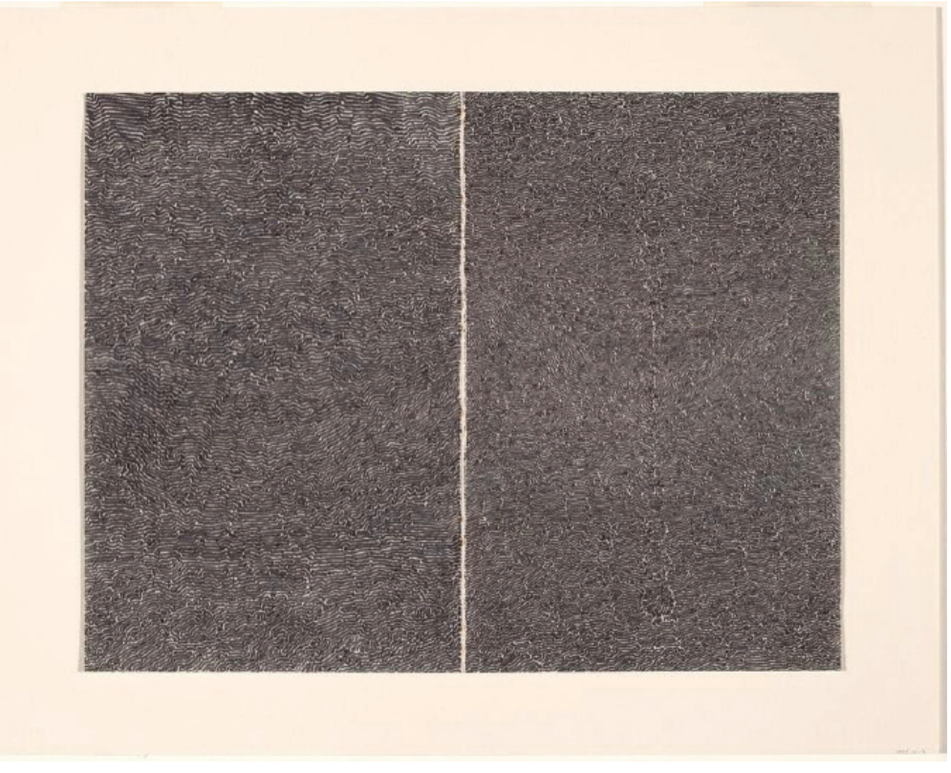


Fig. 19, "Book Pages", black felt-tipped pen on wove paper, Bruce Conner, 1967

Hyperpages often live within a secondary, more familiar physical context – books. While a book's physical structure would seem to negate this perceptual ambiguity – when the page is turned, the window illusion is certainly broken – because the *hyperpage*'s function is reliant on the page as a symbol for *potential* information, we can view each page as a new opportunity for knowledge. In books, the experience of time again becomes linear.

As a page in a book turns in the hands, time moves forward. If this book is a comic, with each page cells move also signal the passage of time in the mind. In this way, comic books possess a dual experiential character regarding the passage of time. Two stories unfolding at once.

If we accept that the pages of a book are a constructed experience of time, and that through their spatial ambiguity comic cells reveal time as one facet of time that our attention and perception, then each set of cells on a page both simulates time, and in the context of the book-object, both freeze time on the page, and allows it to proceed as each page is turned.

Perhaps this also illuminates our understanding of the blank page as a vessel for thought. Moreover, that we project our perceptions onto/into the *hyperpage*, and in fact is merely making visible a fundamental facet of time and perception that is often taken for granted.

Books – as vessels for and simulations of thought-over-time mimic in physical form the process of thinking. Afterall, written language takes the form of images, and in this context of 'book', perhaps what Baudrillard refers to as "...the murderous capacity of images..." plays out on the printed page; simultaneously rooting the experience of time and space in the moment, while also showing how moments are constructed and pieced together through the gaps between them – like comics.

How connections between moments are made, within the context of comic cells or book pages, could be said to occur through a process of comparison, using the contents of each cell to locate oneself in each scene, and the associations between cells in a larger temporal context – the book.

The work of Bruce Conner is difficult to label or pin down. He worked across mediated borders including drawing, film, photography, and synthesized amalgamations of all of these. But through his vast experimentation, evolved a kind of cohesiveness across various media. For Conner the subject is the process of drawing.

In Bruce Conner's *Book Pages*, we can see an intersection of drawing, film, and the book as a form. Two joined pieces of paper, filled to capacity with pen marks which never overlap. Here the act of drawing makes visible the accumulation of both time and mark; bound together through Conner's obsessive and methodical approach to drawing. Resulting in an image that is both a direct reference to the physical format of a book, and that expands potential readings through destabilization of signs. The gap between illusionistic 'pages' (which are also literal pages joined at their edges) allow this image to be read in several places at once.

If read as a comic, each black rectangle is a cell. But the wall/door illusion becomes ambiguous (not to mention takes the concept of *hyperpages* and somehow signals *metabook*!). If the darkened rectangles are seen as walls, they are partially dissolved – showing the page as necessary for the drawing's existence, while at the same time asserting the fluidity of visual hierarchy between the drawn image and its substrate.

If seen as doorways the negative space produced by Conner's avoidance of overlapping marks can be read as static, or small amounts of light coming from

no direction. In his article *Poetry in Motion*, John Yau discusses Conner's contemporaneous work in the media of drawing and light. He argues that Conner was unique in his pursuit of 'light' in drawing, and that these felt-tip marker drawings are the result of a medium that allowed for unbroken improvisation – allowing Conner to continuously respond to the previous mark without interruption.[10] He discusses the implications of Conner's approach...

> *The fundamental question that Conner addresses in the drawing is how to draw something and nothing at the same time. Could drawing be freed, as painting had already been, from the burden of representation and description?...*[11]

Yau argues that Conner utilizes the commercial medium of the felt-tip pen like the work of Abstract Expressionist Jackson Pollock's work allowed the medium to show itself for what it physically is.

> *By transforming a central issue of abstraction into a domain that is unmistakably his... rather than a means of pointing at something else, Conner's use of these commercial instruments challenges accepted definitions of drawing... (making the drawings) hybrids that resist categorization.*[12]

In Conner's *Book Pages*, the drawing becomes an indexical symbol for Conner's presence, and simultaneously references the experience of time that the book form conjures. The accumulation of marks that never touch present us with an opportunity to confront the fluidity of perception, but also to reflect how what a viewer attends to in an image can shape how it is received.

Yau points to Conner's use of the felt-tip pen to describe both the artist's affinity for permanence-of-

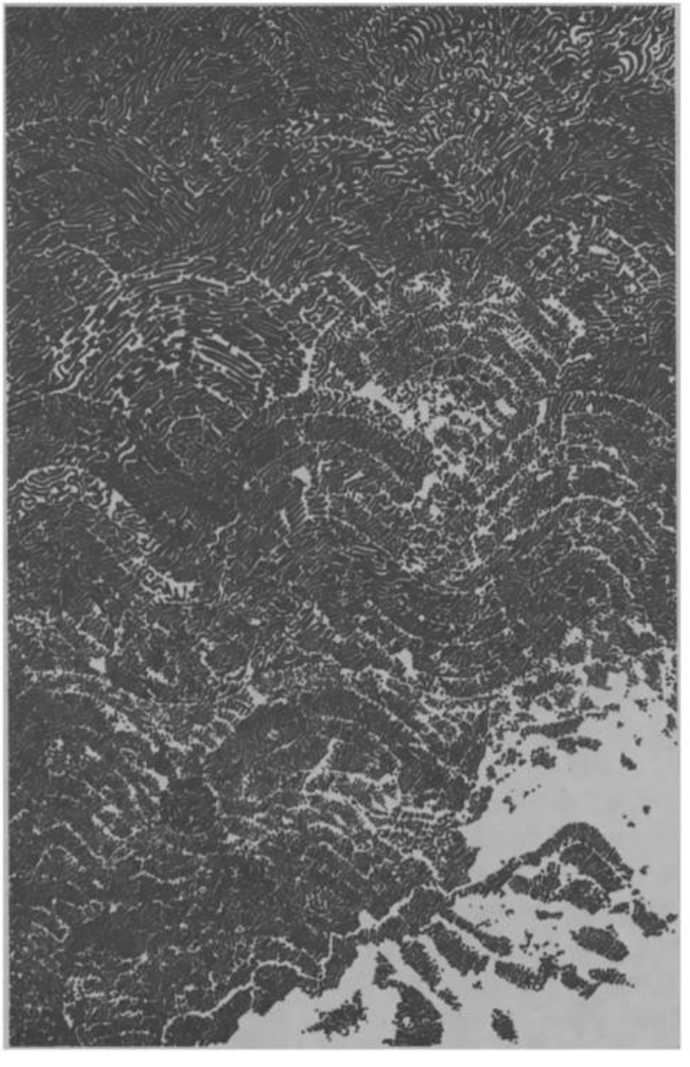


Fig. 20, "Book One", #2 of 15 offset lithographs on Rives BKF, 1970-71

10 Yau, John. "Poetry in Motion", The American Poetry Review , JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2005, Vol. 34, No. 1 (JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2005), 35-38

11 Yau, John. "Poetry in Motion", 35-38

12 Yau, John. "Poetry in Motion", 35-38

mark, and experimentation with media that was novel at the time. In these meticulous drawings, there is no going back. Yet the minuscule shapes and lines avoid overlap at all costs. When they presumably do meet, they again mutate and become just another large shape. This kind of reactive mark-making results in an image that is both resolute in its unity, and sly in its construction. Although which of these characteristics came first is almost impossible to discern. Speaking about composition, here Conner references the "container" not as a limitation but as a formal choice which guides the drawing.

> *If you have a container everything is formal within the container if you define the limitations for it. I feel that the activity inside of those drawings is as chaotic and as controlled as any of the assemblages or sculptures or movies or other works that I've been involved in. When I work on the drawings they aren't finished drawings. They are changing all the time. The drawing is a new drawing with every line and mark I made.*[13]

When reproducing his drawings as offset lithographs, Conner went to great lengths to ensure that the prints possessed the same surface characteristics as the originals. His desire was to recapture the quality of a permanent marker on the paper's surface, the way it becomes one with the paper. (Risograph prints)

Conner's obsessive approach to drawing, paper, and how the two interact indicates a desire to reproduce the medium specificity delivered by his own hand in materials that otherwise signal a conceit to something

13 Yau, "Poetry in Motion", 35

outside of one's control. In my own work, although I see the aesthetics of the surface as being tied to an image, mechanical reproduction is for me an opportunity to allow the image itself to mutate, often results in a change-for-the-better.

Yau likens Conner's methods to a "...sustained improvisation", in which the artist's focus is entirely on the act of drawing.[14] Interruption for me is crucial to my understanding of my own process. I identify deeply with Conner's cyclical ideas about his drawings changing with every mark, but his use of interruption manifests in the mark itself, not in his attention. In fact, his moving away from pen and ink to the felt-tipped pen was made to avoid interruption in the act of drawing.

In my drawings, interruption often makes salient what comes next. In the case of my earlier works (discussed in the section titled Drawing in the Comic Cell), I was relying on the interruption of marks to help me make connections between them. In *Not Looking* and *Next Exit*, by not looking at the drawing – the interruption was between my subject (myself in the mirror) and the paper. In both of these pieces repetition became a way for moments in time to accumulate, and allow both myself and the viewer to make connections between. Records of the interaction between my hand and eyes over time, building into an index of 'self', through drawing, and discernible only through the interplay of similarity and difference between moments.

In a short essay *Charles Schulz's Preliminary Drawings*, cartoonist Chris Ware describes Charles Schulz's sketches on notebook paper. The iconic work of

14 Yau, "Poetry in Motion", 35



Fig. 21, First drawing from Next Exit, brush and ink on overhead transparency, 2023

Charles Schultz permeates popular culture. Charlie Brown is a character that has come to represent angst, dissatisfaction, and chronic misunderstanding. How a simple line drawing in the shape of an almost-bald young boy can come to represent such complex emotional states, speaks to both the power of icons and the fundamentally human nature of cartooning.

In these quick sketches, the forms of now-well-known characters take squishy forms that barely resemble the crisp pen and nib versions that were seen published in his newspapers. Seen out of the context of Ware's essay, it is quite possible that the resemblance would go unrecognized. Ware points out that despite these drawings' rough nature, once the characters are pointed out, it is impossible to unsee them.

> *Anyone who's ever tried to draw Charlie Brown finds out immediately what an impossible task it is; he always comes out looking so* wrong, *a lurid joke, like someone dressed up at a costume party. Even if you think, after repeated attempts, that you've 'got it', and then you look over at one of Schulz's actual drawings to compare—only then do you see how far off you still really are. In the hands of any other artist... one has the uneasy feeling of watching animated corpses.*[15]

Ware attributes this quality of Schulz's scribbles to spontaneity and repetition. In a way this is a metaphor for the impossibility of reversing the influence of the artist's hand. Even if the connection is only discernible once someone points it out, like with Conner's work,

15 Ware, Chris. "McSweeney's Quarterly Concern. An Assorted Sampler of North American Comic Drawings, Strips, and Illustrated Stories, Etc." Book. San Francisco: McSweeney's Quarterly, 2004., 66-68

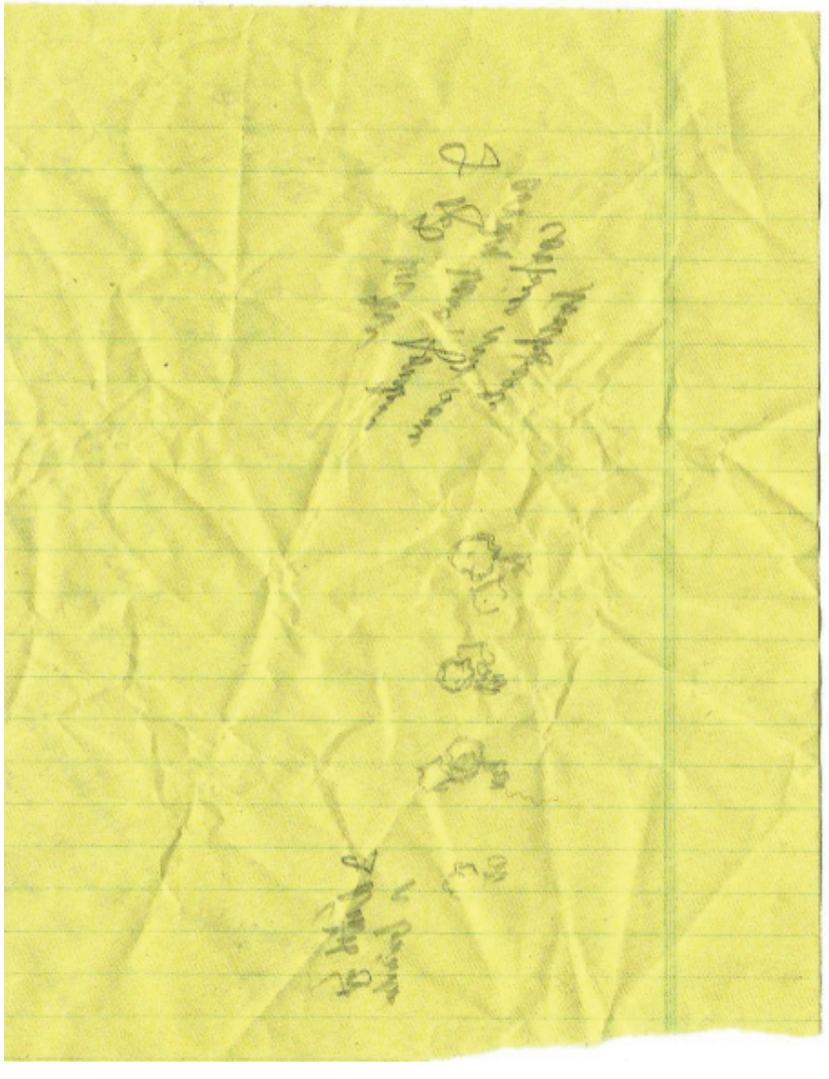


Fig. 22, Charles Schulz's sketches on notebook paper, August 8th, 1999

the fact that there is no going back seems tied to both the individual, and the medium.

The fact that Schulz's preliminary drawings are done on notebook paper reinforces the connection to impermanence and disposability of anything that is not intended for print and seen by the artist as simply practice. Although in this case Schulz wasn't intending to 'draw' Charlie Brown the way he would for publication, even in their roughest form these sketches still possess the character's features. Ware argues that this is a transcendent quality of cartooning, but Innumerable repetition in an 'attempt' to conjure the character must play a role, and that the cast of *Peanuts* are manifestations of facets of Schulz's personality, embodying characteristics of the man himself.

Drawing through repetition, whether it is with the intent to make cartoon characters or accumulations of line and shape (if there is a difference between the two acts), could be said to take on qualities of the artist.



Fig. 23, Charles Schulz's sketches on notebook paper, March 7th, 1999

Blind Contours & Self Portraits

Just as Charles Schulz's scribbles can still be identified as his iconic characters by virtue of repetition and association with his hand, perhaps through repeated attempts to capture *something*, regardless of subject matter, we could see this as engaging in a form of self-portraiture – even when realism and representation are already out the window.

Immediacy and accessibility to the subject (myself), and my interest in the phenomenology serve as the origin of another series of blind contour self-portraits.



Fig. 24, Detail from "Not Looking" (Panel One), ink and brush on newsprint, 2024



Fig. 25, Panel One of "Not Looking", brush and ink drawings on news-print, hand-mounted on mdf, 2023

Over the course of several weeks, I repeatedly drew myself on pink construction paper and newsprint pads, looking at myself in a mirror – glancing at the drawing only to ensure that the brush was indeed making contact with the paper. Occasionally my attention would fail me, and my eyes would flit to the drawing's surface when reloading the brush with ink.

Initially, I employed this method to escape the endless cognitive strain of inventing images solely from my imagination within the abyss of the blank page. Before I had attempted this through the introduction of the comic cell. The move to comics as a format was made to spread out my efforts over several rectangles, allowing the gaps between images to produce meaning through their proximity and association.

What I discovered through the comic-cell format lived more within the realm of concepts: cells evoke and signal characteristics of time and perception that position images somewhere between surface and the imagination. Through repetition of the cell, time plays out through comparisons between moments.

In this work, the aim was to create a situation where my mind could gather bits and pieces of information over time – stretching out the experience of looking in a search for similarities and differences between drawings. I forced myself to move along with the understanding that my goal was not to capture myself in every detail on every page, but with the belief that through repetition – something about myself might be revealed.

I suspended my disbelief that drawing is a futile act and continued.

Just as my skull hides from me, the very organs that allow me to see, the act of not looking at the drawing is a kind of objection to the presumption that anything I would have done *while looking* would be any closer to being 'representational'. I am looking, just not at the image of the image of self on the paper.

By focusing my self-portraits on the head, the small scale of the drawings allowed me to draw more frequently, taking the mirror with me rather than drawing in the same location with each iteration. I used cheap materials, drawing on newsprint and construction paper. This material choice was a reference to entropy over time, and the futility of capturing the self through drawing, but also refers to the materials used to improve one's practice with little risk or permanence.

My face became the subject to which I had constant access, and repetition instead became a means of scrutinizing my attention over time through drawing. A key part of my method was to shift my glance around constantly, making marks where my eyes land.

Process of (And Thoughts On) *Not Looking:*

In blind contour, my visual attention toward the scene was uninterrupted by the oscillation between subject and recording (except for when I am reloading the brush).

Attention shifts within my surroundings – rather than between scene and page – rarely breaking from what I am observing entirely.

The new mode of decision making is deciding not to look.

By not looking, I do not linger on how my intentions will be received through my hand, and less time is lost in justifying the next gesture.

Every moment I hesitate to draw, I am reminded that I have stopped drawing. And for what? Certainly not to check for accuracy…

What I am attending to is my attention to the scene before me that I am drawing.

When this occurs, I recenter my attention to what I am looking at, and I continue tracing what I see – in these moments I look closer.

This method alleviates the regret of failed plans and pointless comparisons, and starting anew becomes less painful. It is a new beginning rather than attempting to capture an experience that could not be reproduced in the first place.[16]

16 It should be noted that when I was developing what I am now calling the *modal completion* drawing method, I was making in relative isolation. Any judgements about reception were made with me as the only audience.

In these self-portraits I am using seriality to capture multiple aspects of the same scene, and leaving a record in ink of how the object of attention changes over time.

Working on disposable materials often used by those learning to draw, and without the limitation of compositional decision-making, I could proceed without the fear of failure paralyzing my ability to make images.

I forced myself to move along with the understanding that my goal was not to capture myself in every detail on every page, but with the belief that through repetition – something about myself might be revealed.

I was suspending my disbelief that drawing is a futile act and continued.

The fact that the drawings are not identical is proof that when my visual attention was interrupted by wandering thought, the conscious decision to snap back to perception resulted in a new cycle of looking. Every instance came with attention to new facets of my face.

Eventually I would look back to the drawing terminating the 'blind' contour experience. This was far more often than not, the end of that iteration. Unfortunately from this point onward, I return to the misery of formal judgments.

In an effort to expand the opportunity for multiplicity of readings of these drawings, soon the source of the 'what if?' is no longer limited to a single blank page, but in the act of placing the pages into a grid.

Grids & Reception

In his essay *Representationalism and the Determinacy of Visual Content*, Dr. Ben Bronner of George Washington University discusses the grid regarding visual attention.[17] He makes reference to the 3x3 grid as a way to illustrate that shifts in attention (in regard to vision), can effect the content of images without the external source of visual information being altered.

17 Bronner, Ben (2015). Representationalism and the determinacy of visual content. *Philosophical Psychology* 28 (2): 2

In the diagram on the following page, if vision is fixed on the square in the center of the grid, we can shift our attention freely between the groupings indicated in mauve. This ability to change the character of our visual experience based on what we attend to, without changing the eye's placement or the content we are seeing, points to the fluidity of perception.

The drawings shown on the pages 68-69 begin pointing out the fluidity of perception, using the absence of the gutter to confuse perception by presenting drawings that are a record of many

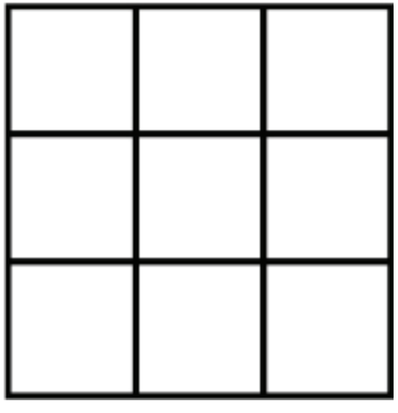


Fig. 26, 3x3 Grid,Bronner 2015

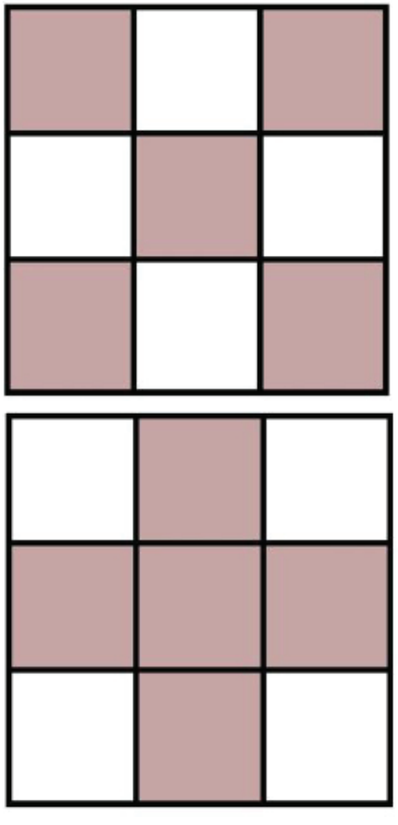


Fig. 27, 3x3 Altered Grid, Bronner 2015

moments as one. Whereas in comics, the gutter is produced by the boundaries of each cell, here the gutter is removed, requiring close inspection of the surface in order to discern the physical boundary of each page.

Although I was not looking at each drawing while making it, I would feel or sense the brush approaching the paper's edge. Through many repetitions, I developed a reflexive response to know when I was no longer making marks. If we take these large panels in the context of Nickle's grid, the butting of the paper's edges begins to emphasize the negative space, formed by my avoidance of the paper's edge.

I placed visual 'keys' in the lower left hand corner of the grouping, which were made by allowing my eye to move back and forth between the drawing and my surroundings; in an effort to capture what I was seeing in a more representational manner. Through these keys, the viewer is given an entry into the surrounding chaos – able to begin the 'seek-and-find' activity between cells, and search for moments of clarity or recognition.

While the final form of these drawings is put into the a grid-like structure of comics, they are, at least in formal terms, inversions of the 'gutter'; the gap between cells that produces isolated moments. When butted against one another, these grids present the act of drawing over time, like frames in a comic or film – but what is preserved is the record of my shifting attention in the act of observing myself, rather than indicating a changing scene or narrative.

When put into grids each drawing indicates that what is missing might be found somewhere else. Rather than



Fig. 28, "Self-Portrait Grid One", brush and Ink on paper, 2023



Fig. 29, "Self-Portrait Grid Two", brush and Ink on paper, 2023



Fig. 30, Keys from "Self-Portrait Grids" One & Two

building up like a painting – where each mark risks obscuring those previous, here the mind can gather bits and pieces – stretching the experience of looking in a search for similarities and differences. The grid presents the act of drawing over time, like frames in a comic or film. But what is preserved is the record of my shifting attention in the act of observing myself, rather than a changing scene.

In *Not Looking* (fig, 31), I recorded myself through repetitive blind-portraits in brush and ink. These drawings were also made in preparation for a book; to be drawn, scanned into the Risograph duplicator, and printed in black. The drawings were scanned in an analog fashion directly from the originals to the Risograph before mounting them to the mdf.

In these grids, the drawings are placed in chronological order (top-left to bottom right as one might read text). The chronological structure of the book form is intended to draw attention to the timeline of events on the wall, while eliciting a physical act of looking found in traditional life-drawing: glancing back and forth between page and subject to establish order.

Placing the book across from the grouping of drawings, prompts the viewer to glance back and forth between book and drawing – mimicking the act of drawing from observation. This kind of looking was absent during the production of the drawings but is enacted during the exhibition stretching the experience out just a little further.



Fig. 31, Gallery View of "Not Looking", 2024





Fig. 32, Cover of "Next Exit", Risograph prints on pink construction paper, staple bound into a book, 2023

Pink Ghost *(Heads for the Door)*



Fig. 33, "Pink Ghost (Heads for the Door)", Risograph prints, hand-mounted to mdf, 2024

In *Pink Ghost (Heads for the Door) [PG(HFTD)]*, repetition and the grid are the result of collage. Hand-mounted Risograph prints are used to construct a large-scale comic strip using techniques from bookbinding and box-making. Over two-hundred versions of my face stare out from the wall, and become an interior space with figures, walls, and doorways.

This direct return to the comic strip takes ideas of occlusion and the filling-in of visual information

to an extreme. Where collage elements pile up and cross over, figures appear next to darkened hallway entrances made of heads. Pink walls stretch across the surface, made of faces which are obscures through the process of layering through duplication. I view the process of making my collages as a combination of perceptual factors.

When making these panels, I utilized my training as a book and box-maker. Every print is mounted by hand with PVA glue and a brush. As one wraps a portfolio box or a book cover, they must rely on senses other than sight to achieve quick and effective movement and contact with the surface. Occluded and quickly drying points of contact must be felt rather than seen. All the while knowing that the result of this act of trust in oneself will be ultimately taken in with the eyes of others.

Occlusion occurred in their making. In the act of moving paper around, I was blocking from my vision the image that already existed. This way of thinking about the act of making takes the discoveries of my comic cell drawings and pushes them further, making prints from drawings, and collages of those drawings back into comic cells at a larger scale.

While making *PG(HFTD)*, my perception of time was tied directly to the materiality of the work.

As I am drawing the originals, I am aware that what I draw with the brush and Ink will be simplified and flattened by the Risograph process. This will occlude more of the paper's surface. As the image is simplified in the process of duplication (like resolution is lost on a Xerox machine), the indicators of time that show in the originals is filled in with ink and lost in transformation.



Fig. 34, Panel One from "Pink Ghost (Heads for the Door)", Risograph prints, hand-mounted to mdf, 2024

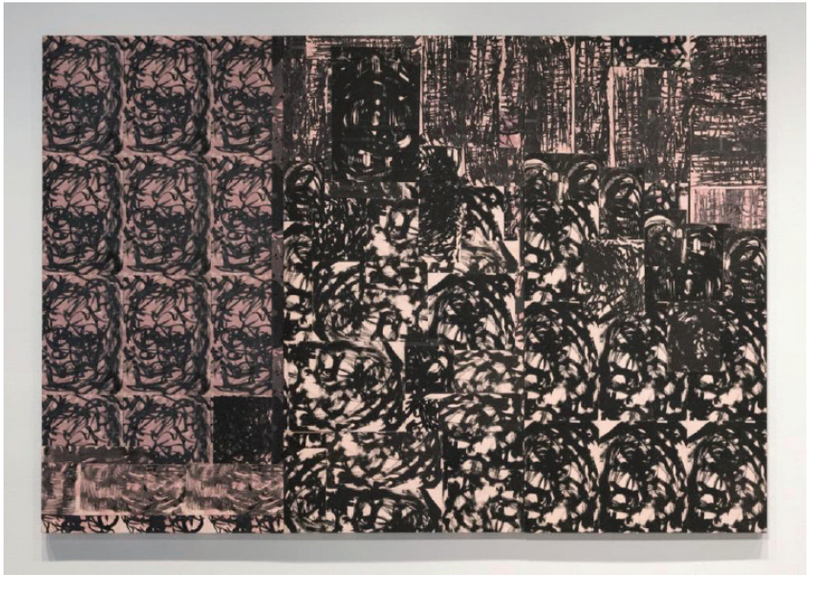


Fig. 35, "Panel Two from Pink Ghost (Heads for the Door)", Risograph prints, hand-mounted to mdf, 2023



Fig. 36, Process shot from, "Pink Ghost (Heads for the Door), 2023

When I am cutting the prints apart to mount them together, I am noticing positive and negative space in the image overlapping, occluding each other, and yet making new compositional connections. I see this as a kind of drawing also, but it occurs faster and does not flatten the image by default in my mind. I can lift sections of the drawing, slide them across one another, and make new visual connections from those that already exist.

Here I am thinking back to the Kanizsa triangle; my mind filling gaps that occurred in my previous perceptions. An extension of the act of looking, and at the drawings this time – hundreds of versions of myself at the same time. I become my own raw material, embedding indexical symbols of my hand, eyes, and ink into invented scenarios to observe, beginning the cycle again.

Conclusion:

Drawn to Death

The works in exhibition: *Drawn to Death* exhibition examine how repetition and the proximity between images inform their meaning. By placing these personal records of experience in comic-like grids, the goal is to facilitate associations between images as records of moments in time. The grid prompts a 'seek-and-find'-like activity for the viewer, stitching together isolated experiences into an erratically/intermittently unified present. The exhibition contains large-scale print collages that emulate the format of comics, self-published books and comics that are records of myself over time. Nearly four-hundred brush and ink drawings are the raw material used to produce this body of work.

Although the work is rooted in the practice of drawing from life, the aim is to prolong visual uncertainty in the viewer. This duality of experiences takes place both in the creation of the work, and on the side of reception. Through repetition of blind contour self-portraits, the work aims to expose potential gaps between perception, cognition, and sense of self.

The drawings are arranged into grids, displaying hundreds of faces (some more salient than others...). Here, the term 'faces' refers to both the paper's visible surface, as well as the images they contain. Repeated attempts to document myself and my surroundings through drawing become an exercise in entropy – seeking order in ever- increasing disorder, suggesting that perception is at its core, fraught with ambiguity. The question being posed is: Is it possible to know the truth of one's experience? Let alone reproduce it in the form of drawings?

Image making is the foundation of my practice and drives my inquiry into perception. This document research has been conducted to better understand how my perceptual experience of vision, attention, and drawing shape both my intentions and reception of my work. I am interrogating my assumption that the act of drawing can reproducing the unseen in the viewer. And that by acknowledging and embracing this uncertainty, and not attending to my drawing's appearance, the work makes visible the ambiguity of perception.



Fig. 37, "The Witch", brush and ink on paper, hand mounted to mdf, 2024

Epilogue

If I did nothing but sit and draw myself until death, would I have ever accurately represented myself? Here the word ‘ever’ denotes a finite segment of time, beginning with the act of drawing and ending upon death.

When framed as a last-ditch effort – until then, to capture the self through the act of drawing (or any other means for that matter), the search for meaning is punctuated by limitation. My effort to deflect impending nothingness is the act observing myself in the form of repetitive drawings, while death stands over my shoulder. Through drawing I say in the face of uncertainty:

If I will inevitably end, then this is what I will do until then.

In coopting the limitations of time for the sake of this illustrative metaphor, I want to emphasize that there is no escape from or solution to this grim-hypothetical scenario. Even if I were able to prolong my death indefinitely, I believe that no amount of drawing or



painting could describe exactly who I am, or accurately represent the 'reality' of my perceptions (except perhaps by accident). In this way, I think of perception as inherently untrustworthy – useful or entertaining as it may be.

This imagined scenario is meant to forefront and embrace the known-unknown of death as a metaphor for the search for meaning in an act that is arguably doomed to inaccuracy and futility.

Within this framework, I am faced with the choice to occupy an indeterminate space willingly and with curiosity, or stare blankly into the unavoidable arrival of death.

Or perhaps it possible to do both simultaneously?

In so far as it allows me to experience drawing as an act more engaging than futile, I consider myself lucky to possess the belief that drawing can be a fulfilling mode of self- expression. But belief does not account for the things we cannot see.

If what we often believe we are seeing (in this case drawings and their relationship to the comic cell) is nothing but a construction of the mind, then in a way we do not truly see them. In this case, reality is occluded by the senses in an attempt at grasping it.

– and was quite possibly never observable to begin with.

An incompatibility exists between the inside experience of reality and existence outside of the mind – the abstraction that we know and love. An invisible repulsion between the self, and the 'self' that is exists where thoughts end and the body begins imperceptibly.

I have come to understand the act of drawing as the spontaneous production of something I've never seen. When confronted with the gap between perception and thought, drawing from the imagination presents an interesting conundrum: If I am producing an image that my eyes have never seen, only to then see it, and never be able to experience it... dubious implications indeed.

Perhaps complete interconnectedness was never meant to be. Huddled between thought and the illusion of the senses, (...everything else) is my imagination.

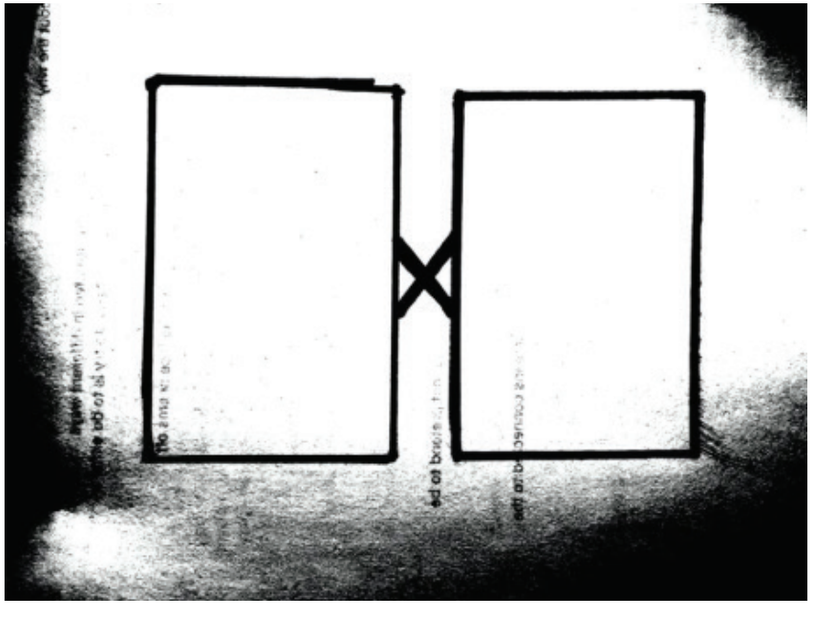


Fig. 38, "Held Up in the Gap", 2024

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