

OUT OF ORDER: AN EXEGESIS of CONCEALMENT

by

Kimberley White

A thesis exhibition presented to OCAD University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts

in

Interdisciplinary Art, Media and Design (IAMD)

The Red Head Gallery, December 19-24, 2016

Toronto, Ontario, Canada, December, 2016

© Kimberley White, 2017

Author's Declaration Page

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I authorize OCAD University to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

I further authorize OCAD University to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Signature _____

Abstract

Out of Order: An Exegesis of Concealment

Master of Fine Arts, 2016

Kimberley White

Interdisciplinary Art, Media and Design, OCAD University

This MFA thesis consists of a body of research-based studio work, an exhibition of selected studio works combining variations of writing, painting, sculpture and installation, and a supporting written document. Combined, this interdisciplinary thesis project questions the conditions, limitations and violence of order and ordering practices. Drawing on histories of institutionalization and postmodernist considerations of time, space and place, this work critically navigates the tensions between discipline and transgression, concealment and transparency, excess and restraint. The pieces in this collection, including the written document, work together to trouble the boundaries of order, and consider what it means, or if it is possible to have meaning, out of order.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to the faculty and students in the IAMD program at OCAD University, and to my friends, colleagues and students in the interdisciplinary Department of Social Science at York University. In different ways I have learned lessons from all of you. In particular I give thanks to the members of my MFA Thesis Committee, Michelle Forsyth and Andrea Fatona for giving me permission to play in the outer margins of order. I hope to know both of these fabulous women for years to come. I thank my very good friend Amanda Glasbeek for her intelligence, humour, encouragement and support at every turn, far surpassing any test of friendship. My sincere thanks also to Phil Maurais and Rowan Kelly for their skill, assistance and patience in helping the final exhibition come together as well as it did. I am grateful to the members of The Red Head Gallery in Toronto for generously allowing me to use their beautiful space to showcase my thesis work. I also thank the additional members of my Examining Committee, John Armstrong and Linda Carreiro for their thoughtful engagement with the written text in particular, and for leaving me with much to think in the next stages of my practice. Finally, I reserve my deepest gratitude for my partner, Paul Tonin, and our daughter, Sadie Tonin White, for taking this journey with me (through all the messiness, good and bad) and for continuing to love me anyway.

Table of Contents

Author's Declaration.....	i
Abstract.....	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of Images	v
<i>PreText</i>	1
ORDERING an INTERVENTION.....	8
IN WHAT FOLLOWS.....	10
ON THE PROBLEM OF ORIGINS AND INFLUENCES.....	14
IN PRAISE OF MESSY METHODOLOGY!.....	29
TOWARD A CULTURE OF CONCEALMENT.....	38
ON DISCIPLINE.....	48
POSITION, DISPOSITION and TRANSPOSITION.....	54
FURTHER REVELATIONS on/through CONCEALMENT.....	59
ON THE SURFACE.....	63
ON [the problem of] EXCESS.....	67
HEALING PROCESSES	76
ABSOLUTE CONCEALMENT.....	80
TEXT on TEXT.....	81
CALL[ed] TO ORDER.....	83
<i>AfterWords</i>	85
Bibliography.....	96
Appendix A: Description & Documentation of Exhibited Artworks.....	102

List of Images

Image 1.	Know Way In	103
Image 2.	Thick Time Erases History.....	104
Image 3.	Beneath The Surface.....	105
Image 4.	Text on Text: Surface Treatment.....	106
Image 5.	On [and on] Discipline.....	107
Image 6.	Let Me Tell You The Secrets That Brought Me To This Place.....	108
Image 7.	Absolute Concealment.....	109

PreText

This preface provides both a context and a justification for the creative text that follows. It is offered with the understanding that interpreting creative works, be they written or visual, depends in part on knowing something about the circumstances and conditions in which they were created. How, though, to interpret this PreText, as well as the creative text that follows, is, of course, up to the reader.

*The title of this MFA thesis project is *Out of Order*, and the following written document entitled, *Out of Order: An Exegesis of Concealment*, is an integral part of the larger project. As a creative output, it is best read alongside, and in conversation with, the other creative outputs based on my studio practice. Collectively, the works that comprise *Out of Order* question the conditions, limitations and violence of order and ordering practices including privileged forms of knowledge and knowledge production. My thinking and theorizing about the how different forms of knowledge work to define and discipline human experience and expression is heavily informed by the postmodernist writings of Maurice Blanchot, Rosi Braidotti, Michel Foucault and Jacques Rancière. In particular I reference those facets of their work that pay attention to language as a way to challenge and disrupt dominant structures and sensibilities of social order.*

From this theoretical location, I intuitively combine aspects of writing, painting, sculpture and installation to critically analyse¹ the histories and practices of institutionalization; the aesthetic formation of institutions as sites of power and discipline; as well as the poetics of time, space and place. In doing so, this interdisciplinary project troubles the boundaries of order – often navigating the tensions between discipline and transgression, concealment and transparency, excess and restraint. Effectuated through a practice of research creation that is at once experimental, material-based, process-driven, conceptually conceived, narratively structured, and both theoretically and experientially grounded, I consider what it means, or if it is possible to have meaning, out of order.

Methodologically,² this project can perhaps best be situated within the new “species” of qualitative research referred to by Laurel Richardson as “CAP [creative analytical processes] ethnographies” (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005, p. 960). This “label,” asserts Richardson, can include any work created whereby “the author has moved outside conventional social scientific writing,” and where “the practices that produce CAP ethnographies are both creative and analytical.” This approach is likewise grounded in poststructuralist/postmodernist claims of uncertainty, and by extension, theorizations on representation, difference, knowledge production, social order, emotion and identity, such as those posed by

¹ I use the terminology of *critical analysis* to account for the various and varied ways through which we come to study and realize the conditions of a particular knowledge or set of knowledges.

² I consider *methodology* to be a composite of method and theory, where these cannot be imagined (particularly in interdisciplinary works) as discrete entities.

Blanchot, Braidotti, Foucault, Rancière and others, and including psychoanalytic considerations, such as Ruth Ronan's work on aesthetics and anxiety (2009). In linking "language, subjectivity, social organization and power," CAP ethnographies display "the writing process and the writing product as deeply intertwined; both are privileged." In other words, this approach locates the constitutive nature of language at the centre of all social reality and meaning-making (Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005, pp. 961 and 962).³ Such a messy, yet highly nuanced, approach as CAP ethnographies is well suited to research that is geared toward investigating complex ideas and processes, largely in part because it keeps up more precisely with the rhythms and off-beats of everyday life, living and learning.

Interspersed throughout the first sections, or episodes, of the document that follows, I indicate the means through which I endeavored to produce a meaningful piece of writing that is not a traditional academic paper; that reveals and embodies the often-concealed messiness and emotion of process-based research creation; and that transgresses the disciplined and disciplinary boundaries of knowledge production, aesthetics, time and position. While I was surely playful with the structure and ordering of the text – borrowing from literary devices such as repetition, and the use of generative techniques such as

³ Richardson includes the following categories of diverse creative/analytical practices as examples of CAP ethnographies: "auto-ethnography, fiction, poetry, drama, readers' theatre, writing stories, aphorisms, layered texts, comedy, satire, allegory, visual texts, hyper texts, museum displays, choreographed findings, and performance pieces..."

*cut ups and expository writing*⁴ – I also endeavored to fulfill the institutional purpose of the written thesis document as an *exegesis*,⁵ though from the margins of the thesis guidelines.

The document that follows does therefore, in and over time, reveal episodically and out of order the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of my MFA thesis research. And through juxtaposing my explications on studio practice, critical reflection and scholarly analysis, matters of creative process are layered and combine with matters of knowledge production in a way that does not privilege one over the other. In this way, I share Elizabeth St. Pierre’s sentiment that through opening up the concept of writing, we are able to “use it as a method of inquiry, a condition of possibility for producing different knowledge and producing knowledge differently” (2005, p. 969). In order to produce the document that follows, I transcribed handwritten episodes of thick description, personal reflection and theoretical analysis taken from the volumes of studio notes, journal entries and research notes generated over the duration of my time in the IAMD program. The transcribed text segments were then transposed (re-ordered) within broad interconnected themes as they were revealed; themes such as excess, origins, discipline and concealment.

⁴ Elizabeth Adams St. Pierre describes expository writing as a method of inquiry and discovery: “a tracing of thought already thought, as a transparent reflection of the known and the real – writing as representation, as repetition.” She argues that, “it is important to interrogate whatever limits we have imposed on the concept *method* lest we diminish its possibilities in knowledge production.” See Richardson and St. Pierre, 2005, p. 969.

⁵ I use the term *exegesis* loosely, to account for the various processes of interpretation, exposition, investigation and explication that were undertaken in this close study of the conditions of order, in particular the condition of concealment.

At the start, I was not set on explicating a specific theme or topic, rather I was focused on documenting the creative processes undertaken to ask questions about the paradoxical conditions of order to see what themes would emerge in the process. While questions of order and disorder have long preoccupied my academic research, it has only been through the making of the thesis (through combining artistic practice, writing about artistic practice, and the practice of writing as a method of research) that I am now beginning to understand how concealment functions as a condition of both order and disorder. These new understandings have caused me to reconnect with and reflect upon some of my past research on subjects such as madness, law, culture, science and representation. But more importantly, this line of inquiry has brought about a depth of personal reflection I was not entirely prepared for, while also generating a number of potential questions for future creative research on concealment as a concept, as an ordering practice, and as a cultural process. As the practice of writing gradually worked to synthesize processes of data collection, critical analysis and reflection –often making accidental and fortuitous connections similar to what Deleuze and Guattari (1987) referred to as “rhizomatic work” – certain life experiences that I once imagined as outside of my research were suddenly unleashed within it.

Further, it was through the incorporation of non-linear, dynamic, creative writing that this project has allowed me to regain some of the optimism, indeed enthusiasm, for interdisciplinarity that I had previously lost. By re-organizing the

situational limitations of my research, and by creating new and different conditions for transgressing disciplinary boundaries, I have found ways to liberate my research. Subsequently, this has translated into experimentations with new pedagogical approaches in both my graduate and undergraduate teaching in socio-legal studies that draw directly from CAP ethnographies and critical visual methodologies more generally.

The decision to produce an imbedded experimental piece of writing in place of a traditional stand-alone thesis paper came in the spring of 2016, at a point when/where a number of realizations and positions intersected. As an academic trained in the discipline of science and interdisciplinary social sciences, I had for some time felt choked by the restraints of research protocol, academic culture, and the success of my own self-discipline. As an artist, I came to realize the immense importance of writing within my artistic practice, and as a research method. As a complex being, I was increasingly unable to hold any distinction between the political and the personal; between research objectivity and emotional experience; and between myself as an academic and myself as an artist. Given that much of the studio work at that formative moment was in one way or another considering the nature of transgression, I realized the written requirement for the thesis, too, needed to embody a transgressive gesture in order for the project to come together as a whole, and for me to feel wholly in the project.

I have been reminded in the making of this thesis that it is necessary to step outside of scripts, regulations, and expectations in order to get somewhere new, and that, sometimes, it makes the most sense to follow procedures incorrectly. In this spirit, I have produced an anti-thesis, which is at once reflexive and analytical, and where I am simultaneously positioned as researcher, research instrument, and research subject. It represents my journey both in and out of order, through which, in the end, I come to realize that these are one in the same. It is in this same spirit that I invite the reader to share in my journey – with an open mind, with a sense of play and humour, and without conjecture; in other words, I invite the reader to approach what follows both in and out of order.

'Habits' are a socially enforced and thereby 'legal' type of addiction. They are cumulated toxins which by sheer uncreative repetition engender forms of behavior that can be socially accepted as 'normal' or even 'natural'. The undue credit that is granted to the accumulation of habits lends exaggerated authority to past experiences. ... Against the traditional definition of this discipline in terms of cognitive mastery and normative power, I want to call for a radical scrambling of its codes [Braidotti, 2006, p. 9].

ORDERING an INTERVENTION

As I write this, I have no idea where it will go or how it will conclude. I've been in an intellectual gridlock for well over a year. While my studio practice thrives, I have struggled to find the right words; the right structure; and the right conceptual or methodological frameworks to best articulate, locate and render intelligible the five artistic works that I currently imagine will comprise my final thesis exhibition, and which this document is meant to support.

As I write this, all five works sit, *waiting*, at different states of completion. *Waiting* for me to catch up. I know intuitively, in my flesh and bones, what issues this body of work speaks to; the questions that have been revealed in the process of making; and the demands it has made of me to be truthful, and brave. In different ways, and to different degrees of discomfort, this work connects that which is deeply personal, with that which is fundamentally political. This pleases me, although navigating between the personal and the political has often smudged the lines of both. Lines that I

myself have carefully drawn, defended, and redrawn countless times over the last three decades.

As I write this, I realize that I am undergoing a significant transformation without an established end plan, other than to find a way out of Order, in a way that is not reducible to Madness. I get occasional glimpses of how this might be possible – how I might translate art into research and research into art to the extent that it manifests as genuine. I have surveyed numerous texts on visual methodologies, practice-lead research, research-based practice, art as research, artography, art as way of seeing, art as a way of knowing, and so on [Briggs, 2009; Gee, 2000; Irwin, 2004; Leavy, 2009 and 2011; McNiff, 2013; Rose, 2012; Sullivan, 2010].

In each of these, I am both struck and disappointed by the deference to social science research and the scientific method.

As I write this, I am more aware than ever that no matter how many boundaries I rub up against [“boundary friction” as Veale [2014] calls it] or where my trespassing tendencies take me, I am still bound. Within the academic institution, I am bound by the terms, traditions and the disciplines of research that I have willingly subscribed to. I came to art school in search of something that was epistemologically different from my academic training, and I therefore resist submitting my thoughts, ideas, and accounts of my artistic work to any paradigm that reproduces

scientific or social scientific order. And yet, I don't think I know how to write in any other way. This is the impasse at which I have arrived – I fear I don't know any other way.

As I write this, I am profoundly aware of how the paradox that has presented itself to me – that I don't know any other way – simultaneously reveals a desire know. How can *knowing* be anything other than a way of ordering – a way of making sense.

As I write this, I can see no way *out of Order*.

IN WHAT FOLLOWS

One must just write, in uncertainty and in necessity.
[Blanchot, 1986, p. 11]

In what follows, I aim to produce what I think is a meaningful piece of writing that is not a traditional academic paper. At least not in its structure and order. I will, though, attempt throughout, as the process reveals itself, to direct my reflections and writings to align with the substantive institutional requirements as expected to fulfill its purpose as an exegesis. But, an exegesis of/on what, exactly? Thus, I will articulate clearly my objectives and the questions this work raises; I will consider at relevant points of interventions the theoretical underpinnings of the work;

the processes and methodologies undertaken will be elaborated and reflected upon in some detail; and, the creative outcomes will be explicated.

In what follows, I will not default to compartmentalizing the features of the research process into tidy sections, even though it has been difficult, at times extremely, to imagine research outside of the structure dictated by academia in general, and social science in particular. I have been especially unsettled by the prospect of re/producing a *thesis* paper, to a particular affect and effect, which is intended to support a body of artistic works that interrogate the dialectical relations between Order and Transgression, as well as the processes that work to maintain them. I am therefore compelled to create some kind of internal *coherence* to this work through the production of a complementary text that is itself a challenge to ordering practices [paradox intended].

In what follows, I will lay bare the messiness [the untidiness, the disorderliness, the serendipity and the problematic excess] of knowledge-production through a process-driven artistic practice in order [through a different order] to bring attention to the ways in which the tyranny of the social scientific method functions to discipline the production of knowledge by concealing its messiness and failures behind a *curtain* of discursive traditions, institutional expectations, and desires for measurable, integrated and relatable outcomes.

In what follows, I will try *not* to conceal or forcefully contain the overlapping and interspersed practices of free-writing, personal reflection and close textual [visual, material and written] analysis that have been integral to my process as a researcher, writer and visual artist. Through this approach, my work often reveals itself in fragments, iterations, repetitions and utterances that, when taken out of linear [and thus, narrative] time, might or might *not* build up to something with shape and substance. Questions are often left open, and findings contingent, because the concepts and issues I continue to be interested in are messy – thick with layers of complexity, contradiction and cracks. As I aim to bring this MFA thesis project to a state of completion, I also become complicit in reproducing the very order I want to step outside of.

It what follows, I hope to make apparent that the works comprising this project, the creative outcomes, including this written component, did not emerge as discrete works. Each work overlaps, is informed by, and challenges, each of the others as they speak to different aspects of the larger themes that emerge. Collectively – conversationally – this work represents my research, my ruminations, my utterances, my labour, and parts of my being. These are not conversational threads that can be easily teased apart, and it would be disingenuous to try and do so. Though at times it may be productive to focus more intently on one particular theme or another, even as the particulars can only be examined in partial light.

At other times, conversations may run parallel to each other and are not easily integrated – though, I know, they are *one in the same*.

In what follows, I try to position myself at the *margins* of Order, if not always successfully, to search outside [to exceed] the conventions of time and narrative for new possibilities and insights. From this *position* I experiment with *juxtaposition*, narrative structure, temporality, the sequence and form of text in a way that replicates and resonates with the processes undertaken in my studio work. They are *one in the same*. I look beneath, look back, look beside, look between, and look beyond. I do not commit to a linear concept of time, rather, the *episodes* herein have been taken out of time – transposed and reborn through new alignments and time relations, where points in time become layered thick, and fold back onto/into itself. This allows for a reimagining of relationships between the past and present, the personal and political, Order and Disorder. In this endeavor I have been strongly influenced [liberated] by Maurice Blanchot’s project in *The Writing of the Disaster* [1986]. Also, Georges Perec [1978] and Nicholson Baker [1986], who both demonstrate that stories can be told differently.

In what follows, I propose a transgressive gesture – imagined outside the confines of the instructive, institutional “Guidelines for the Preparation of a Thesis.” It cannot be done any other way. Such an assertion of excess presupposes any transgressive gesture.

ON THE PROBLEM OF ORIGINS AND INFLUENCES

The lyricism of marginality may find inspiration in the image of the “outlaw”, the great social nomad, who prowls on the confines of a docile, frightened order [Foucault, 1977, p. 300].

I left my home in Northern Ontario before completing my final year of high school and moved to Toronto. It felt urgent – an act of both bravery and necessity. But I wonder if actions taken under conditions of necessity can be also considered brave. The city offered unknown possibilities. Transposed to this new location, I was transformed.

In order to ground myself, and also free myself, I found work in private and public establishments, most of which I would not have been invited into otherwise. I saw privilege and desired privilege, but not that version of it. I did not desire to live as they lived. I only desired to be able to move through the world as freely as I imagined they moved.

I lived alone, but not always *on* my own. I liked the quiet. I studied art as much as I could afford to, drawing and painting, mostly. I began to write things down. In doing so, I tried to understand my many secrets, and the things that brought me to this place.

+++

As I write this, I can't easily locate my artistic practice within the broader traditions of specific artistic disciplines. I somehow think that is what others should do anyway. Similar to the practice of academic writing, it is not the scholar who decides what impact her research has had on a particular field or discipline, it is up to the gate-keepers of that field to validate its significance and signal its effects, if any, through the standard disciplinary practices of reviewing and referencing. I don't always know where the boundaries are, so is it meaningful to say that I have transgressed disciplinary boundaries with agency or intention? Is intentionality antithetical to intuition? I was surprised to learn that painting and sculpture are different disciplines. And that art disciplines have languages of their own – exclusive, as all language is. I see all of the visual arts as part of the same discursive formation – to borrow from Foucault, as condensed by Stuart Hall:

1. A discourse which is characteristic of the state, or conditions, of knowledge at a particular time and place will typically *appear simultaneously across many other texts, settings, and practices in the same time and place.*

2. Sometimes, *Discursive formations* occur when several discursive events refer to the same object, support the same strategy or political pattern, and promote the same institutional or administrative style [2013, p. 32-34] [*My Italics*].

MORE ON FOUCAULT: I have been influenced by French philosophy more than I am immediately willing to admit. Foucault more than most. He contributed to, and in some ways revolutionized the academic study of culture and society, sexuality, punishment and penalty, the liberal state,

institutions, classical ethics, language, psychiatry, representation, art and aesthetics.

He was interested in the order of things and the history of ideas as manifested in the everyday; in practices and processes; in systems of knowledge; knowledge as power, where power is dynamic, relational, insidious, diffuse, negotiable and productive.

He was interested in how knowledge is produced *through* transformations and shifts, and in the techniques [technologies] used to negotiate multiple and competing power relations.

He was interested in how discourses [see above] intertwine, overlap and are generated in and through transformational processes.

He was interested in the ways in which we are implicated in our own discipline – and the disciplining of others.

His work revealed to me deep historical, geographic and discursive *alignments* between ordering systems, such as law and science, and the bodies that are subjectified, or subjugated [using Butler's term], through these systems – the Criminal, the Poor, the Mad. In *Discipline and Punish* [1977], Foucault asks:

Is it surprising that the cellular prison, with its regular chronologies, forced labour, its authorities of surveillance and registration, its experts in normality, who continue and multiply the functions of the judge, should have become the modern instrument of penalty? Is it surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons? [p. 228].

He also wrote about different forms of confinement – including pharmaceutical confinement and ideological confinement.

+++

There were no books in the houses I grew up in. I don't remember reading as a child. My grandparents collected the *Readers Digest* and *National Geographic*. I would read the jokes ["Laughter is the Best Medicine"] and cut out pictures of animals for school projects. I was fascinated by the koala bear and the platypus, and questioned if they were real. Photos could be doctored to perform tricks on the eye, like the deceptive special effects on television that my grandmother was convinced were achieved with mirrors. It was a way to make sense of things that did not immediately appear natural to me.

As I write this, it occurs to me that these were not the typical origins for an academic career – a life in isolation, without books. Yet somehow I found my way. In a similar roundabout way I realize that my current artistic practice is not informed by the works of other artists but rather, as a researcher, I have been primarily informed by what I read. To be clear, this

is *not* an apology. It just is. There are different ways to come to artistic practice. Mine is through scholarly research. No doubt as I become more grounded in the field of contemporary art practice, in particular interdisciplinary visual art practices, my influences will change and expand such that my research, and what I read, will simultaneously be informed by the histories and practices of particular art movements and the works of particular artists. This is the future I imagine, and the terrain I am still learning. For instance, I am beginning to understand the significance and implications of process-based arts (including writing) as both a movement and a method of inquiry. But as I write this I can only speak now from where I currently stand.

+++

Reading is anguish, and this is because any text, however important, or amusing, or interesting it may be [and the more engaging it seems to be], is empty – at bottom it doesn't exist; you have to cross an abyss, and if you do not jump, you do not comprehend [Blanchot, 1986, p. 10].

MOSTLY I READ: I read a lot. I read out of Order. I read across subjects and fields of knowledge. I read self-help books. I rarely feel compelled to read a text in its entirety. I do not typically read typical fiction, but count everything as fiction. As I write this, I am reading, intermittently and without commitment, the following texts [in no particular order other than how they appear stacked on my writing table from the bottom to top]:

- + Paul Schimmel [Ed]. [2011]. *Destroy the picture: Painting the void: 1949-1962: Exposition, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, MOCA.*
- + *Cmagazine* 131. [Autumn 2016]. Contemporary Art & Criticism. [On Experimental Pedagogies]
- + *Philosophy Now*. [August/September 2016] Issue 116. [On Existentialism]
- + Georges Perec. [1978]. *Life, a user's manual*. Boston: D.R. Godine.
- + Nicholson Baker. [1986]. *The mezzanine: A novel*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- + Maurice Blanchot. [1986]. *The writing of the disaster*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- + Dean Young. [2010]. *The Art of Recklessness: Poetry as Assertive Force and Contradiction*. Minneapolis USA: Graywolf Press.
- + David Batchelor. [2000]. *Chromophobia*. London UK: Reaktion Books Ltd.
- + Rosi Braidotti. [2006]. *Transpositions: On nomadic ethics*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- + Judith Butler. [1990]. *Gender Trouble*. New York and London: Routledge.
- + Michael Prior. [2016]. *Model Disciple*. Montreal: Véhicule Press. [Poetry]
- + Leonard Koren. [2008]. *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Poets & Philosophers*. Point Reyes USA: Imperfect Publishing.
- + Maggie Berg and Barbara Seeber. [2016] *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- + Ruth Ronen. [2009]. *Aesthetics of Anxiety*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- + Erica Lehrer et al [Eds.]. [2011]. *Curating Difficult Knowledge*. New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- + Mark Manson. [2016]. *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*. New York: Harper Collins. [Self-help]

- + Julia Skelly. [2015]. Alternative Paths: Mapping Addiction in Contemporary Art by Landon Mackenzie, Rebecca Belmore, Manasie Akpaliapic, and Ron Noganosh. *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 49:2.

+++

OTHER recent POINTS OF REFERENCE, having varying degrees of influence, include:

Abu-Orf, H. [1997]. Fear of Difference: 'space of risk' and anxiety in violence settings. *Planning Theory*, 12:2, 158-172.

Ahmed, S. [2004]. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge.

Arnold, J. S. [2007]. *Practice led research: A dynamic way to knowledge*. Camberwell, Vic: Rock View Press.

Barthes, R., & Lavers, A. [1972]. *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.

Biggs, I. [2009]. *Art as research: Creative practice and academic authority: A project-based examination of the politics of art-led research in a doctoral context*. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.

Bourdieu, P., Tran. Nice, R. [1984]. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Braidotti, R. [2010]. Powers of affirmation: Response to Lisa Baraitser, Patrick Hanafin and Clare Hemmings. *Subjectivity* 3, 140-148. doi:10.1057/sub.2010.10.

- + [2006b]Affirmation versus Vulnerability: On Contemporary Ethical Debates. Originally published in *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 10:1, Spring, p. 235-254. PDF accessed online Oct 20, 2016, p. 1-18.

Bruno, G. [2014]. *Surface: Matters of aesthetics, materiality, and media*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Buck-Morss, S. [1992]. Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered. *October*, 62, 3-41.

Cammett, J.M. [1967]. *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism*. California: Stanford University Press.

- Childers, J. W. [2005]. Foreign Matter: Imperial Filth. In W. Cohen and R. Johnson [Eds.], *Filth: Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life* [pp. 201-221] Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cresswell, T. [1996]. *In Place / Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- De Beauvoir, S. [1948, 1976]. *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. New York: Citadel Press.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. [1987] Introduction: Rhizome. In B. Massumi [Trans.] *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* [pp. 3-35] Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. [2011]. *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California, London, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Dikovitskaya, M. [2005]. *Visual culture: The study of the visual after the cultural turn*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Douglas, M. [1966]. *Purity and Danger*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Douzinas, C. and Nead, L. [Eds.] [1999]. *Law and the Image: The Authority of Art and the Aesthetics of Law*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ettinger, B. [2006]. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Friedlander, J. [2008]. *Feminine Look: Sexuation, Spectatorship, Subversion*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Foster, H. [Ed.] [1983]. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Seattle: Bay Press.
- Foucault, M. [1972]. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- + [1973]. *Madness and civilization; a history of insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Vintage Books.
 - + [2001]. *The order of things*. London: Routledge.
 - + [1980]. *The history of sexuality, Volume I: An introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.
 - + [1977]. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. London: Penguin Books.

- Gee, K. [2000]. *Visual arts as a way of knowing*. York, Me.: Stenhouse.
- Goonewardena, K. [2005]. The Urban Sensorium: Space, Ideology and the Aestheticization of Politics. *Antipode*, 37:1, 46-71.
- Gregg, M. and Gregory J. S. [Eds.] [2010]. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Hall, S. [2013]. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage in association with the Open University.
- Hamlin, C. [2005]. Good and Intimate Filth. In W. Cohen and R. Johnson [Eds.], *Filth: Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life* [pp. 3-25]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Horvath, A., Thomassen, B., and Wydra, H. [2015]. *Breaking Boundaries: Varieties of Liminality*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Irwin, R. L., & Cosson, A. D. [2004]. *A/r/tography: Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.
- Jenks, C. [2003]. *Transgression*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kester, G. H. [1997]. Aesthetics after the End of Art: An Interview with Susan Buck-Morss. *Art Journal* 56:1, 38-45.
- Kolnai, A. [2004]. *On Disgust*. Chicago: Open Court.
- Kristeva, J. [1982]. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kupinse, W. [2005]. The Indian Subject of Colonial Hygiene. In W. Cohen and R. Johnson [Eds.], *Filth: Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life* [pp. 250-276]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Lapham, L.H. [2014]. Captain Clock. *Lapham's Quarterly: Time*, VII:4. Accessed Nov. 19, 2016 at: <http://www.laphamsquarterly.org/time/captain-clock>
- Latour, B. [2005]. *Reassembling the Social*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Leavy, P. [2009]. *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. New York: Guilford Press.
- + [2011]. *Essentials of transdisciplinary research: Using problem-centered methodologies*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

- McGinn, C. [2011]. *The Meaning of Disgust*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McNiff, S. [Ed.] [2013]. *Art as research: Opportunities and challenges*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Menninghaus, W. [2003]. *Disgust: Theory and History of a Strong Sensation*. Albany, SUNY Press.
- Molderings, H. [2010]. *Duchamp and the Aesthetics of Chance: Art as Experiment*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Mukherji, S. [Ed.] [2013]. *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*. New York: Anthem Press.
- Neocleous, M. [2011]. Security as Pacification. In M. Neocleous. and G.S. Rigakos [Eds.], *Anti-Security* [p. 23-56]. Ottawa: Red Quill Books.
- O'Neill, M. and Lizzie S. [2012]. *Transgressive Imaginations: Crime, Deviance and Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rancière, J. [2006] *The Politics of Aesthetics*. New York: Versa Press.
- + [2007]. *The Future of the Image*. London and New York: Versa Press.
 - + [2009]. *The Emancipated Spectator*. London and Brooklyn: Verso.
- Renfrew, A. [2015]. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. New York: Routledge.
- Richardson, L. and St. Pierre, E. A. [2005] Writing: A Method of Inquiry. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln [Eds.] *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd Edition* [pp. 995-978] California, London, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Ronen, R. [2014]. *Art Before the Law*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Rose, G. [2012]. *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials*. London: SAGE.
- Serres, M., with Latour, B. [1995]. *Conversations on Science, Culture and Time*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Sullivan, G. [2010]. *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Arts*. California: Sage Publications.

Valverde, M. [2012] *Everyday Law on the Streets: City Governance in an Age of Diversity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- + [2015] *Chronoptes of Law: Jurisdiction, Scale and Governance*. New York and London: Routledge.

Veale, T. [2014] Running with Scissors: Cut-Ups, Boundary Friction and Creative Reuse. In L. Lamontagne and E. Plaza [Eds.], *ICCBR, LNCS 8765* [pp. 3-16] Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

Virilio, P. [2003]. *Art and Fear*. Translated by Julie Rose. London: Continuum.

Watson, W. [2015]. The Beauty Question. <http://watsonsketches.com/the-beauty-question/>.

Wetherell, M. [2012]. *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*. London: Sage Publications.

White, K. [2012]. The Aesthetic of Mad Spaces: Policing the Public Image of Graffiti and 'Mental Illness' in Canada. In L. C. Rubin [Ed.], *Mental Illness and Popular Media: Essays on the Representations of Disorder*. NC: McFarland & Company.

- + [2009]. *Negotiating Responsibility: Law, Murder and States of Mind*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

Young, A. [2005]. *Judging the Image: art, value, law*. London and New York: Routledge.

Zizek, S. [2008]. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador.

+++

I have also studied, in books, long before I realized I had the privilege to visit art galleries and museums, the works and lives of artists [mostly painters] including, Jean Michel Basquiat, Edvard Munch, Egon Schiele, Francis Bacon, Marlene Dumas, Sally Mann, Paul Cezanne, Amedeo Modigliani, and various street/graffiti artists. I have been as interested in

how artists think, work and live as in what they produce. Particularly over the last two decades, I have looked to the lives and work habits of artists and writers as a way to feel less crazy. It sometimes works.

I am increasingly affected by work that combines the material and the conceptual. Bracha Ettinger [2006], for instance, combines feminist psychoanalysis, text and images [painting, print making, photography] to study the concept of “fragilization”; Anne Hamilton’s use of scale, repetition and labour to affect a space; Meghan Price’s wire drawings; and Linda Sormin’s experiments with material [ceramic] fragility. In different ways, these artists’ practices are ‘transgressive,’ though, not as simplistically as the ‘shock’ art of the 1990s [exemplified by the YBAs].

I have studied Basquiat more than others, for as long as I can remember, and refer back to his work when I need to be reminded that *art*, while not always intended as a political gesture by everyone, *is always political* nevertheless. Although I did not find this to be a terribly original declaration when Ai Weiwei made it popular a few years ago, I did buy the t-shirt. I have studied and copied Basquiat’s colour palette; his techniques of layering blocks of colour to create new spaces within a painting; the way he reveals only clues of the gestures and stories that lie beneath; and his works on found objects such as doors. I appeal to his use of text, sampling and cut-up techniques, and in particular his multiple and simultaneous points of reference and influence – serendipitous rather than formal and

systematic. His work for me manifests collected and concurrent knowledges pulled from music, pop-culture, literature, science, race politics, history, memory and bodily experiences.

These are techniques [methodologies] that I have honed for many years and now form the basis of my approach to research, writing and studio practice.

I was first introduced to cut-up techniques when I stumbled upon the writings of William Burroughs and Hunter S. Thompson [a technique which I later learned was originated by French, Romanian Dadaist Tristan Tzara in the early 1900s]. More recently, however, the practice of mixing multiple sources of inspiration to generate creative tension, or “boundary friction,” has enjoyed resurgence as a problem-solving strategy in computer technology.

Creative producers are masters of ambiguity. They make the most of the ambiguity in their inputs, and induce ambiguity in their outputs to foster indeterminism and the emergence of new, unexpected meanings. The cut-up technique is designed to unleash the latent ambiguity in an otherwise business-as-usual text. ... *When the cut-up technique is applied to a linear text, the text is segmented into short strands of contiguous words that do not necessarily respect either phrase or sentence boundaries.* These strands are then randomly recombined, to form a new text that uses the same words in different linear juxtapositions, to facilitate – if one charitably overlooks the inevitable bad grammar and illogical punctuation – very different global interpretations. Gysin originally applied the technique to layers of newsprint, which he sliced into linguistic chunks with a razor, and Burroughs later extended the technique to audio tapes. In principle, any linear source of information, from text to audio to video and even DNA, can be sliced and re-spliced using the

cut-up technique *to deliberately subvert familiar patterns and spontaneously suggest new meaning*. Note, however, that the cut-up technique does not actually create new meanings, and is “*merely generative*” in the purest sense [Veale, 2014, p.3 and p.7] [*My italics*].

+++

AS I WRITE THIS: *My artistic practice is at once experimental, material-based, process-driven, conceptually conceived, narratively structured, and both theoretically and experientially informed. More intuitive than intentional, I exploit the generative value of juxtaposing intellectual inquiry with artistic inquiry, which, when taken together, produce an interdisciplinary practice of research creation.*

+++

While running lopsided with my portfolio down a subway platform, flailing, like a sputtering kite on a too-short string in the wind being pushed through the tunnel by the next train, I made a decision. It was 1986. I had been paying attention to students riding public transit, with their tidy compact backpacks, filled with stitched compartments for easy organization, reading books that could be held in one hand while standing, keeping themselves steady in the jostling vehicle with the other. I imagined what they were reading by the titles of books and could sometimes glimpse a few lines of text by looking sideways or over a shoulder. I knew these

books were not written for me, and felt a swirl of embarrassment in my stomach when someone caught me looking. I made a decision to start reading books.

Back then, people only read books or newspapers on transit. I was curious to know what everyone was reading *about*, but more so I was curious about the function that reading seemed to serve people in transit. It appeared to me that the more transfixed the reader, the more effective was the protective shield that text seemed to offer. Her transfixed-ness made her disappear, yet still be seen. Oblivious to the chaos happening all around her. Could everyone see this magic being performed? Did everyone except me know that text could conjure erasure? Today, I feel nauseated when I try to read on transit. And I hide the titles of my books so that no one will pass judgment while looking over my shoulder.

I entered the university for the first time in 1988. I was 22. I wanted to study science because I thought it was *worth* more than the arts. I thought it might make *me* worth more. Science has structure and rules, and it would be hard because I did not know anything about science. I would have to be very disciplined. Between school and work, I would have time for little else, especially painting and free-writing. As a drop out and runaway, I have always been certain that it was only by stealth, trickery and disguise [and other various means of concealment] that I was able to cross the threshold and enter this gated territory.

I have since made a career of trespassing and transposing. I now understand that trespassing [transgressing] is necessary for acts of transposition and transformation. The work of Rosi Braidotti, an Italian/Australian feminist postmodern theorist and contemporary philosopher [heavily influenced by Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault and Donna Haraway], has helped me think about the productive potential of transpositions. I have extrapolated this idea as follows:

TRANSPOSITION: A process whereby *some thing* is relocated, and made new. In its relocation the thing is aligned with, and put into juxtaposition with, things previously existing in that location. The transposed thing is thus transformed, but so is the location into which it has been newly imbedded. A newly formed status of relationality emerges to produce new knowledge [I will return to this].

IN PRAISE OF MESSY METHODOLOGY!

According to Patricia Leavy [borrowing from Newell's "model"] multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary "exist on a continuum of increasing interaction and integration between disciplines" [2011, p.18]. In a Neo-Liberal era, where universities are businesses, and businesses are preoccupied with measures of performance and performances of measureables, with productivity, accountability and outcomes, academic disciplines falling broadly under the social sciences

and humanities have become more aware of how they overlap and relate to each other, and how they are [or are not] distinct from each other. For a while, this realization that the boundaries between our fields of study could be transgressed and blurred was a really good thing. Interestingly, sadly, the language of inter- and trans-disciplinarity does not fit comfortably within the corporate university model in the same way traditional disciplines do. This concerns me because as knowledge-boundaries are increasingly protected and policed, the possibilities for creative interdisciplinarity innovation, transgression, within the university are quashed in favor of corporate organizational governance.

Interdisciplinarity is described as messy [in the derogatory sense], because the boundaries are not well defined and the methodologies are flexible, blended, permeable, intuitive, appropriated and adaptable. The only way I know how to respond to this kind of critique is to further expand and exalt the possibilities and the inherent messiness of interdisciplinarity through ever-wider transgressive gestures. Indeed, the process of crafting interdisciplinarity work can at times feel and appear difficult, confusing, unsettling, disruptive, and untidy: Out of order. But I argue it is precisely such confrontations with disorder [with mess] that our will to order is revealed, and thus we begin to form new alignments to bring about coherence. In this way, new information can emerge.

+++

As I write this, I am not sure if I am more concerned with the conditions of Order or the conditions of Dis-order, assuming there is anything distinct about these conditions at all, beyond the aesthetical and dialectical relations we assign to each as a way to recognize, organize, regulate and police the boundaries as if they are distinct realms. Here I borrow Jacques Rancière's notion of 'policing' in *The Politics of Aesthetics* [2004, p. 13] as a practice that protects and enforces a dominant aesthetic order.

States of Order and Disorder, reified [in the West] through a desire for *coherence* and *know-ability*, can be both pleasurable and uncomfortable, depending on the influence and confluence of other conditions. Both Order and Disorder can produce paralysis. Both can liberate. Both *define* – mutually constitutive in their forced opposition. A state of Anxiety, for instance, under certain conditions, can bring about pleasure and or discomfort. In her work on the *Aesthetics of Anxiety* [2008], literary theorist, Ruth Ronen, closely examines the dialectics of pleasure and displeasure in relation to anxiety. Responding to the Kantian aesthetic categories of pleasure, beauty and the sublime, Ronen uses psychoanalytic thought to put anxiety at the core of all aesthetic experience. According to Ronen:

[A]nxiety in aesthetics involves a displeasure that transcends the pleasure principle and is not simply to be perceived as the opposite of pleasure. Hence, anxiety relates to a displeasure intimately tied to possibilities of satisfaction and enjoyment. Furthermore, by indicating that the anxiety fundamental to psychic experience constitutes the basis of *aesthetic experience*, the aesthetics of anxiety views aesthetic experience as being a

distinct kind of experience to which human subjects are given. [pp. 7-8]

As I write this, I question the rampant disciplining of the ambiguous, often uncomfortable and anxiety-producing space between Order and Disorder, which I think is not really a 'space' at all, but rather a highly structured system of rules designed to make sense of things as either in or out of Order. If Ronan is correct, then it is at that moment of discomfort, when anxiety is triggered, that experience is registered.

+++

There are significant challenges to the prospect of making sense of messy processes and complex phenomena. These are challenges that *interdisciplinarity*, in all its ambitiously flexible and disobedient forms, is supposed to rise to. However, the promise of interdisciplinarity can only be realized if we passionately resist the desire to dogmatize. It may be that I have been wrong in my righteous championing of the need, nature, and necessity of interdisciplinary research over the years. I have insisted that, in the end, although disciplinary boundaries must be transgressed in the interests of innovation, the aim of the researcher is to bring *coherence* to her final output. To ensure that all disciplinary crossovers are smoothed over, and that all the transgressive gestures that constitute the practice of interdisciplinarity in the first place are concealed in order to bring to the surface, to reveal, the newly formed integrated whole that is the final product. "Good interdisciplinary research looks like a blanket, not a quilt."

This is a descriptive I coined and have used in my teaching practice for over 15 years. Now I am re-thinking that adage.

As I write this, I appreciate that there is not necessarily consensus on what interdisciplinary means, or looks like. I therefore do not see the productive value in attempting to discipline the boundaries of interdisciplinarity, as the trend seems to be going. What I have always thought of as interdisciplinarity may be, for others, more in line with what is sometimes loosely described as transdisciplinary. While my argument may in the end be that neither is satisfactory, it is worth revisiting some of the up-to-the-minute ways in which various academic *models of knowledge-building* are put into motion. I also wonder about the will-to-knowledge-build in the absence of knowledge. Knowledge-building, to me, implies that we can simply bring together [juxtapose] pre-existing knowledges to form new knowledge. But I am more interested in the *origins* of knowledge production, even as I know that origin stories are problematic.

How do we make knowledge where none previously existed? Or, does it not appear to exist only because we have not yet forced upon it, or forced it into, some recognizable state of Order? Where previously disparate and unrelated conditions are brought *into Order as Knowledge*.

These questions about the nature of Order and Disorder, and the innovative possibilities that are generated through interdisciplinarity [juxtaposing social and visual research] have emerged for me in different

ways over the past three years. Indeed, my interest in coming to OCAD to pursue an interdisciplinary MFA was with this integrated 'blanket' imagery in mind. I wanted to combine my academic research with my studio practice to produce some coherent, new form of knowledge.

I once imagined interdisciplinarity to be a transgressive approach to research. I'm not sure it is. It may just bring us back to Order. It may be substantively different. But it is *Order all the same*.

+++

THE ART OF RESTRAINT: to resist the desire to re-order according to expectations and traditions. I want to be good, really. That's the problem.

+++

In the studio, through material experimentation, I am grappling with a paradox internal to the structure of Transgression, which I believe is similar to the internal structure that maintains the false dichotomy of Order|Disorder. I'm not sure if thinking about it dialectically gets us much further. How can we get outside of these structures in order to study them? This question collapses in on itself, in that it *reflexively* presumes that the only way to make sense of Order is through Order.

Instead, then, can we think of Transgression as a location, a condition, a state or a site, without prescribing it an origin? Or movement?

+++

I have been thinking, researching and writing about the precarious conditions of Order and Disorder – the spaces, places, temporalities and practices that are designed to distinguish one from the other, and the tensions and anxieties that arise when certain conditions or sensibilities of Order are breached. There is much critical writing dispersed across many academic fields on themes related to the states of Order and Disorder, and points of Ambiguity and Transgression that lie in-between [See for example: Abu-Orf, 1997; Braidotti, 2006, 2010; Butler, 1990; Childers, 2005; Cresswell, 1986; De Beauvoir, 1948, 1976; Douglas, 1966; Ettinger, 2006; Foucault, 2001; Horvath et al, 2015; Jenks, 2003; Latour, 2005; Mukherji, 2013; Serres and Latour, 1995; Valverde, 2012, 2015; White, 2012; and Young, 2005]. In my own career I have written about our collective understandings of Transgression and the Transgressed [how we know it/them, how we experience it/them, and what we do about it/them] always with the requisite amount of ethical distance and feigned academic objectivity.

At different points in time I have studied and taught university courses on subjects relating to the social/historical/legal/political construction and

experiences of myriad Othered people and problematized bodies: the Criminalized, the Racialized, the Institutionalized, the Medicalized, the generally Subjugated and Disenfranchised.

As I write this, I am beginning to see how my research and teaching practices manifest, profoundly, in my studio practice. I can see in my studio notes reflections and repetitions of my teaching and research notes. The ideas I am coming to through my studio practice, for instance on the dialectics of concealment and excess, speak to the regulatory practice of concealing or containing the unpleasant sight of homeless and disorderly bodies on the street. Or, the washing away of anxiety-producing graffiti, which we are told is a sign of something more perilous [White, 2012].

+++

LET ME TELL YOU THE SECRETS THAT BROUGHT ME TO THIS PLACE:

As I write this, I am aware that much of what I have come to know about myself has been learned through the practice of writing. [I did not consider this to be a 'practice' until recently]. But in particular, writing. I write things on paper that I cannot speak. I write things on paper that I cannot bear to read. I write things on paper as a way to slow myself down and bring myself into Order [L-E-T-T-E-R -B-Y-L-E-T-T-E-R, and word-by-word] when I find myself overtaken by an agonizing mess of thoughts, ideas and

compulsions. I usually write as though no one will ever read what I write, but at times, I ask, what would be thought of me if this were to be read? I then begin to write my stories differently. I write in a way that is more abstract and verbose - less direct, less truthful. But my secrets are often hidden in plain sight, as subtext contained in a larger narrative structure, such that they are only partly revealed through a hard plastic outer surface, and only to those who bother to read closely. Conceptually, I think this is not different from how institutions create, structure, maintain and conceal their stories - histories - about themselves: Brick-by-brick.

+++

What is the Order of Order? Is it possible to get out of Order? These questions, to me, while seemingly rhetorical, circular, and perhaps unanswerable, are, nevertheless, in my view, still worth contemplating.

I am only speaking about Social Order in this case, which, to my thinking, closes around all other theories of order. There is no sensibility of *natural order*, for instance, without some pre-formed sensibility about the nature of order. Indeed, as I learned from Rancière's work on the politics of aesthetics [2004], *sensibility* is itself structured according to an aesthetic order - an ordering system. The same could be said for language, text, time or any other system of knowledge [law, religion, science, politics, art]. I don't presume to have worked out which of these ordering systems and/or

social structures might be considered primary, subsidiary or otherwise, nevertheless, it is useful, I think, to pay attention to the processes through which we come to privilege certain sensibilities over others relating to the nature and conditions of Order and Disorder, and to the contextual specificity of our privileging practices. In other words, how are the metaphorical bricks constructed, and then put together?

TOWARD A CULTURE OF CONCEALMENT

According to Braidotti [2010], the very structure of *ethics and morality* depends on the notion of *coherence*, which turns on the preconditions of Sameness and Order, which only acquire significance/meaning when understood in relation to Difference and Disorder. And further, that our “freedom” comes through our “awareness of limitations.”

Affirmative ethics assumes that humanity does not stem from freedom but rather that freedom is extracted out of the awareness of limitations. Affirmation is about freedom from the burden of negativity, it is about achieving freedom through the understanding of our bondage [p. 147].

This makes sense to me – the idea that freedom can only be comprehended through the awareness of limitations. She also states that:

A certain amount of pain, the knowledge about vulnerability and pain, is actually useful. It forces one to think about the actual material conditions of being interconnected and thus being in the world. It frees one from the stupidity of perfect health, and the full-blown sense of existential entitlement that comes with it. Paradoxically, it is those who have already cracked up a bit, those who have suffered pain and injury, who are better placed to take the lead in the process of ethical transformation [2006b, p. 14].

As I write this, I am smiling because I know this [want this] to be true.

Similar to how I understand that freedom comes out of knowing bondage, I understand that wisdom comes out of knowing madness.

+++

It follows then, that SOCIAL ORDER signifies, and is signified by, social cohesion, which is predicated on the basis of *Sameness*. The desire for Sameness /Cohesion /Order, necessarily produces a regime of disciplinary imperatives designed to socially and politically conceal, contain, disappear or transform those conditions that expose, or threaten to expose, states of Disorder such as transgression, fragmentation, difference, complexity, multiplicity, anxiety, contradiction, paradox, and dissention. Madness!

+++

As I write this, I am trying to work out if the notion that ‘consensus’ is in fact necessary for the achievement of cohesion, and thus Social Order.

According to neo-Marxist theorist, Antonio Gramsci, hegemonic order is itself a consequence of “predominance by consent” [consensus], founded on the presumption of a common political, intellectual, economic and moral world-view [Cammett, 1967, p. 204].

I am also trying to work out whether or not processes of *cohesion* in turn produce a *Culture of Concealment*... And whether or not a Culture of Concealment, in assuming a particular ethic and aesthetic, then produces the specific conditions for similar and subsequent kinds of knowledge production. I suppose the more interesting questions are about the *how* of things. *How* is a Culture of Concealment produced, organized, maintained, and revealed?

+++

A CULTURE OF CONCEALMENT: might be thought of as providing the conditions that produce systems of social, political and institutional structures and practices designed to conceal certain destabilizing features, such as fragmentation, fragility, cracks, ambiguity, complexity, difference, disorder, multiplicity, diversity and divergence. As these features are disavowed, concealed or contained, Order re/appears on the surface; smooth - clean - solid - white.

+++

In the studio, after a month long residency in Italy, I am beginning to explore the limits and limitations of the fresco techniques and materials I brought home from Florence. There is something very satisfying about working with plaster, mortar and raw powdered pigments. The tools of the trade; trowels, mixing containers, mortar and pestle, and hand-bound hair

brushes, inspires appreciation for the tradition and rigor of this labour-intensive process. The preparations take time, and the painting process requires a vigilant attention to the passing of time because the materials alter drastically with each minute, enabling or disabling certain kinds of surface manipulations at each stage. The surface is unforgiving. After several 'failed' iterations, trying to keep close to the discipline and techniques modeled by the fresco-master with whom I studied, yet, never achieving the desired/proper effects - I transgress the process, necessarily, in order free myself, and to make it my own.

Through transgression, I come to order. Thus, transgression, too, functions AS an ordering practice.

+++

Some phenomena, by their Histories or Hermeneutics, do not lend themselves easily to consensus, in which case we can only produce a façade - something that appears to RESEMBLE consensus. We BUILD consensus through the systematic concealment of difference and difficulty. We blur the lines that demark boundaries and divergences *in order to order*, and thus to create the comfortable states of Cohesion, Stability and Sameness. This desire for coherence also drives the practice of research. We reduce, redact and simplify difficult or contradictory knowledge [data] through practices [methods] of exclusion, inclusion, editing, footnoting,

explanation, omission, *pacification*, disappearance, disavowal, disqualification, devaluation, and theorization.

As I write this, I wonder if we can think of the desire for, and purposiveness of, ordering processes, such as coherence, as also performing the function of *pacification*? If so, then there are other processes through which pacification/order is brought about and or maintained:

Integration

Colonization

Assimilation

Beautification

Formalization

Standardization

Institutionalization

As I write this, reflecting on the nature of these ordering/pacification processes, I can see how each, in some way, functions as a *surface*, as a *symptom*, as well as a *practice* of concealment. In this way, they are both imbedded and surface features of a Culture of Concealment. For instance, we might consider the significance of Beautification, not only as a cultural concept or an aesthetic ideal, but also as a regulatory/disciplinary practice. Beautification projects – from anti-graffiti campaigns, to mental illness

anti-stigma campaigns – are designed to treat, transform, correct, or conceal violations of social and aesthetic order. [White, 2012]

+++

Sleep is a strange thing. Our bodies need it to survive yet our minds deprive us of it. ‘Mind over matter’ can be productive as well as destructive. I continue to wake up between 1:30-2:30 am feeling anxious and restless. I sit and *wait* for the fog to roll in. I continue to think about the concepts of *concealing*, *binding* and *pacifying* – both as disciplinary practices. When I am working through messy concepts, I often begin by collecting, reformulating, and playing with various definitions, theories, representations and usages, as a way to see how things line up, or imagine how things could be differently lined up.

TO PACIFY: To quell the anger, agitation or excitement. To bring peace [piece by piece] by use of threat or force. To sooth or calm.

Pacification theory, according to Mark Neocleous [2011], is an analytical approach to understanding the security-industrial complex, as well as a *civilizing process*, affected through the monopolization of organized violence. What if CIVILIZATION MAKES US ILL? How can it not, given the means through which it is achieved and maintained.

“How sad it is when a luxurious imagination is obliged in self defense to deaden its delicacy in vulgarity, and riot in things attainable that it may not have leisure to go mad after things that are not.” [John Keats, quoted in D. Young, 2010, p. 15]

Once I sleep, I will be able to synthesize [cohere] these gathered thoughts.

The fog is rolling in.

+++

In the studio, I have been wrapping and binding objects with wire. The physicality required to do this work leaves me tired and satisfied. This process is about concealment. It requires considerable labour and many repetitive movements. It does not conceal the shape of the object [at the moment I am binding a chair] rather, only the *surface* is changed. Eventually the wire overtakes the original warm wood surface of the chair and forms a new cold metal surface. The disciplinary force of binding and consuming the chair is rendered apparent on the surface of it. At the same time, the chair is not rendered invisible. Instead, the outer appearance and texture are transformed. The chair is subsumed. I can see only the shape of the chair's previous condition, now bound in and by the restraining force of metal, twisted tightly around every feature.

In the studio, as I am exploring the material effects and affects of binding with wire, I also continue to experiment with fresco techniques - layering plaster over canvas on the wall, imbedding and layering other materials

such as acrylic paint, fabric, wire and ink. The processes of layering, imbedding and binding all convey to me a sense of time and kinaesthetic performance – activating the tension between Order and Disorder by revealing the moment that one becomes the other, and they are *one in the same*.

+++

Is it possible to get Out of Order? I can't seem to let go of this question even though it seems wildly unproductive to keep asking it.

As I write this, I am considering if DISORDER is merely Order transposed? Can a certain Order be taken out of one context and put into another where it is no longer recognized as Order in its original form, instead it becomes dis-ordered through the process of transposition? Perhaps a certain Order, once transposed, only initially manifests in its new conditions as violence/dis-order. But once pacified, submitting to the new conditions in response to the processes working upon it, against it or through it – Order is reinstated. It is a new Order, but it is *order all the same*.

A. A violent order is a disorder; and
B. A great disorder is an order. These
Two things are one.

[Wallace Stevens – Connoisseur of Chaos]

+++

Braidotti [2006, 2010] contemplates ways to think about [indeed she questions whether or not it is *possible* to think about] ‘difference’ in positive terms, and as *central* to a project of social organization [to get outside of hegemonic normativity]. Such contemplation requires us to get beyond the dialectics that generate the opposing forces necessary to maintain binaries by linking difference to the notion of ‘sameness.’ For instance, can we understand constructs such as gender, race, or cultural difference outside of the straightjacket of normative hierarchy and the fatality of the reductive binary opposition? Judith Butler [1990] also challenges particularly well the compulsory order and ordering of gender and sexuality. Butler enters the discussion about gender binaries as a feminist scholar in order to question and disrupt the work that gender performs, as a moral regime and socio-political ordering system. In what is a more modest intervention, I too have entered into ongoing discussion on disciplinary knowledge and institutional structure as scholar and artist in order to question and disrupt the regimes and ordering systems within which I work.

As I write this, I realize I am asking the same question about Order and Disorder. Is it possible to imagine a structure in which these states are not simply put into opposition? Or trapped in a dialectic?

We/I seem to find comfort [which produces a degree of apathy] in structures that allow us/me to efficiently make sense of events, identities

and conditions, such as Order and Disorder, as oppositional, or at best, dialectically related. Put plainly, Order is the ideal, natural, stable state, defined primarily in relation to the absence of Disorder. We/I come to Order through the disavowal of Disorder, even as the conditions of/for Disorder are often expressed/revealed through the process of disavowal.

+++

As I write this, and begin to layer these seemingly disparate experiences, gathered up through childhood and adolescence, through academia and artistic practice, I recognize in myself a long and sustained preoccupation with the conditions of Order and Disorder. These themes have formed the foundation of my scholarly research for the past 20 years, although I would not previously have described it that way. I have always enforced a strict boundary between my personal life and my decidedly political academic research, all the while blind to it. Now, in the process of circling back to and bringing forward my artistic practice, in the context of pursuing an MFA [transformed once more] that guarded boundary between the personal and the political has been ruptured, and in doing so, is revealed. Perhaps it was always just the trickery of mirrors, performed and concealed behind a curtain, or a screen, which made possible the allusion of a boundary in the first place.

Positioned on the light side of the curtain, I was happy to be fooled. The illusion permitted me to compartmentalize, and, most importantly, to imagine an order that was of my own making.

ON DISCIPLINE

As I write this, reflecting upon my varied experiences of discipline and self-disciplinary practices, I am coming to understand that my continuous, almost ritualistic, efforts from a young age to transform myself by creating semblances of Order and Stability, have, in effect, reified the very conditions and histories I most desire to conceal. Specifically, the conditions of *shame*. I am weary from the shame of my own past positioning[s], the ongoing circumstances of which remain out of my control.

+++

Again I return to the ideas of Order and Disorder – which at this moment seem to be drifting more and more toward the margins of my work.

As I write this, I am instead preoccupied by the notion of concealment, and working out the conditions of concealment through studio experimentations with writing, layering, containing and wrapping. However, the emotional affects and effects of layering and binding

processes, using paint, plaster and other materials to create a wall-like structure/surface, was unexpected.

In the studio, I am transported through memory to a different place in time. I feel this, wholly, in the repeated acts of scribing and inscribing on the white plaster surface, beneath which are concealed the previous layers of materials and memories. My mind and body became deeply invested in the performance, remembrance and production of imbedded and layered knowledge. It is destabilizing at times. But my balance is restored as each fresh plaster layer evokes a sense of newness, healing, forgetting. This history, my history, [a culmination of past processes and gestures] is again contained and concealed beneath the hard plaster layers.

If both what is before and what is after are in this same “now,” things which happened ten thousand years ago would be simultaneous with what has happened today, and nothing would be before or after anything else. [Aristotle, quoted in Lapham, 2014]

+++

As I write this, I have pieced together that long before encountering Foucault in the mid-90s, as a graduate student of Criminology and Sociolegal Studies, I intuited some working theory about the relationship between knowledge and power.

Long before encountering Foucault, I knew in my body the violence, rigor and complexity of discipline. But I did not comprehend then the implications of knowing these things. Instead, I transfixed on the acquisition of what I imagined to be higher knowledge. I understand now that it was just different knowledge, but at the time it felt forbidden and outside of me. I imagined knowledge in a way I thought other people might imagine a need for wealth. I imagined it in a way that I had previously experienced a need for food and shelter.

+++

STEPPING OUTSIDE OF THE 'THESIS' [but not really going anywhere]:

As I write this, I feel as though the work of re/producing an/other academic thesis is going to undo me. I can now only see the exercise of academic writing as an exercise in concealment. I am ashamed to admit that I find the prospect and experience profoundly uninteresting. I am bored. Not arrogantly or disrespectfully so [I get it], but sadly so. There must be some other way than what has been institutionally prescribed:

“In writing a thesis students must conform to accepted standards in organizing and presenting their data clearly and logically.” [OCAD U *Open Guidelines for the Preparation of the Thesis*, p. 10]

- Text and illustrative material must be clear and error free
- Only paper of high quality as defined herein may be used
- For the standard format, each page must use margins as defined herein
- Standards acceptable to Library and Archives Canada must be met... [p. 11]

“The type of font, font size, footnote/reference method, paginations, margins and any other aspects of production are to be consistent throughout the thesis.”

2.2.2 Order of Items

Title Page [required]

...

Author’s Declaration [required]

Abstract [required]

Acknowledgements [optional]

Dedication [optional]

Table of Contents [required]

...

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 3 to n: Body of the Thesis, including methodology and research design, presentation of results

Chapter “n”: Results

Chapter n + 1: Summary, Implications, Recommendations for future research, conclusions

Bibliography [required] [p. 13]

While not a particular criticism of OCAD, I was surprised to find that the criteria for this written component so precisely mapped onto a traditional social science thesis. I am all too familiar with disciplinary [pacifying] criteria and conventions about how to write, prepare and present a proper academic thesis – by the numbers. These are typically laid out in laborious detail as institutional ‘guidelines.’ There are also specific benchmarks that must be met as one undertakes academic research:

- + How to contextualize the work?
- + What is the work informed by, and what does it inform?
- + How to position myself in the work?
- + How to contain the work? What will be the methodological and theoretical frameworks?
- + What to privilege within the work? And Why?
- + What to omit?
- + What will be the social impact, or broader implications of the work? [There ought to be social impact, or at the very least... relevance]
- + What are my research questions?
- + How to respond to the ‘So What?’ question.

- + What is my process?

Do I write about my process, or is my process in the writing?

Some of the more predictable [measurable] outcomes and defining features of a well-formulated [formulaic] thesis paper:

- + The messiness and complexity must be completely smoothed over - theorized - concealed.
- + The contradictions and paradoxes inherent in any social phenomenon are reasoned or explained - concealed.
- + The false starts, dead ends, and mistakes are reasoned and therefore disappeared from the final product in favor of a compelling narrative arc - concealed.
- + The goal is to present a polished [clean, with errors removed], clearly articulated [reductive, artifact of concealment], finished [resolved, coherent, in order] product that meets all the required standard criteria of an acceptable thesis -- and does not violate academic convention or sensibilities, whatsoever.

Fuck That.

POSITION, DISPOSITION and TRANSPOSITION

Growing up in the rural North, I found myself submerged in the numbingly complex conditions of addiction, violence and poverty with people who cycled in and out of prisons, foster programs, shelters, juvenile detention centers, detox centers and hospitals. I have been a subject of and subjected to many forms of state sponsored institutional interventions. Some welcomed. Some not. Of these many institutional regimes designed for both discipline and protection – delivered with different degrees of force, purpose, and success – none have shaped, disciplined or punished me more than the insidious regime of domesticity.

+++

As I write this, I begin to understand why questions of positionality have tended to throw me into crisis, to the extent that I have veered away from research subjects that cut too close to my own memories. The move from studying neurosciences as an undergraduate, to the interdisciplinary social sciences [criminology and socio-legal studies] at the graduate level was jarring, but again, transformative. I would unintentionally come to know my own history through studying the history of recognizable others at a safe scholarly distance. For years I conducted research in the National Archives of Canada, located in Ottawa, trying to unearth the processes of capital punishment and the ways through which criminal responsibility was negotiated in cases involving people sentenced to death for murder

[White: 2008]. I read about the natural “tendencies” of certain “types” of disorderly people: those living in conditions of “squalor”; “Half-breeds” and “Vagrants”; “Drunkards” and “Degenerates.” I recognized these stories – they formed the layers of my own. However, at no time during this immersive research process did I make this connection. This connection has only recently been revealed to me through my studio practice.

As I write this, I realize that I am at all times aware of my position and how I am positioned. Yet, I have not been inclined to accept a singular position, or to position myself. I have learned that the question of positionality is taken up differently in academic research than it is in artistic practice [respecting that the line between these two realms is, for me, no longer solid]. As a social science researcher, my subjective location is typically concealed by disciplinary practices of methodology and academic tradition. Except for perhaps ‘new’ ethnographic approaches adapted from anthropology, which, after becoming self-conscious of the inherent cultural relativism in anthropological practices, claim to be all about the position of the researcher. But not really. The researcher is still expected to remain at arms length from the subjects she researches. This is not the case in artistic practice, however, where an artist’s position is explicitly central to the work. This will be obvious to some artists, but I’m still learning. As I now work out the significance and implications of positioning myself [at least partly] as a practitioner of research creation, navigating the creative and intellectual spaces within and between these worlds, I am for the first

time feeling comfortable with the precarious [not necessarily deterministic] meanings of one's position[s].

As I write this, about one month before I become the age of 50, I am not so concerned with how most people see me. There is indeed freedom in the realization of limitations. For how can we hope to transgress limits if we do not first realize them?

+++

In the studio, I begin with three swatches of untreated canvas [24 x 24 in], stretched flat and stapled to a wall surface that was first covered with a plastic tarp. The plastic tarp was initially intended to provide a protective barrier between the wall and the canvas, but as the work progressed, the tarp became an integral part of the work itself. The swatches are positioned side-by-side, roughly at [my] eye level. I prepared the base layer by mixing a simple mortar of two-parts plaster and one-part fine sand, in the style of traditional fresco painting, and applied the mortar evenly to the canvas surface using a metal trowel.

Once the base layer was dry, I began to build up the surface with thick layers of wet mortar, acrylic paint and plaster [without sand] using either a trowel, pallet knife, or pouring. I allow these materials to mix when they are wet, and to transgress the threshold of the canvas onto the plastic

sheet, such that over time, the edges of the canvas become completely overtaken [consumed] by layers of plaster and paint. I also allowed paint to run off the canvas plane and down the plastic sheet to the floor, accumulating as ribbons of excess. In order to build up the thickness of the surface, I allow drying time in between applications of paint, plaster, and other materials such as burlap, mesh wire, string, layers of text inscribed into the damp plaster surface, or written with ink on the hard dry surface of white plaster. Some layers may dry for several hours, other times several days. Often I sand the dry surfaces by hand with sand paper before applying the next layer. In doing so, the rough 'stucco' bits of plaster fall away and imbedded paint and inscriptions are again exposed with more sanding, now forming an integral part of the more freshly applied *surface treatment*. This provides a sort of historical or archival quality to the work in that as layers beneath the surface come through and are revealed, they serve to recall earlier stages of thought and production.

+++

In the studio, what has emerged over the past several months through the process of making material works intended to interrogate the conditions of Order and Transgression, are in fact more interesting questions about the conditions of CONCEALMENT. More specifically, it has been through the process of *writing* about my studio explorations - the layering of plaster, mortar, metal, paint, text, fabric, hair - that a working theory about the

conditions [and purposiveness] of concealment was revealed. These observations have now been further translated into new material and intellectual inquiries on the nature and significance of issues such as: *imbedded knowledge; material history; the surface as a mediated space; time as thickness; excess and the limits of concealment; fragmentation and cracks; and the productive function of cracks as liminal spaces*. There is a lot to follow-up on here, some of which will form the basis of future projects.

The potential for material exploration to get us beyond the comfort and confinement of words, also causes me to question the status, the primacy, of the written text. Words become secondary in this process, in that they are marshaled forward only in order to talk about, or make sense of, particular experiences and material effects. In this way, I have gleaned new insight through artistic practice, which might then inform/transform other theoretical and material considerations. What can the experimental combining, juxtaposing and manipulating of materials reveal about the stability of all manner of ubiquitous cultural concepts, social phenomena, or conditions that work to define human experience?

+++

In the studio, I have come to realize the potential of practice-based research to produce [or disrupt] both social and self-knowledge. And as I write this, I am confident in my excitement about what might come next.

FURTHER REVELATIONS on/through CONCEALMENT

As the layers begin to emphasize the three-dimensionality of the surface structure, I began to experiment with embedding other soft and hard materials such as wire, wood and burlap. I inscribe text and symbols on dry surfaces with oil-based Sharpie markers in red, black and silver, as well as India ink. I also cut and carve into damp surfaces using carving tools, a palette knife, fork, and my hands. On occasion I also pull out embedded materials, leaving open 'wounds' and revealing previously concealed layers. The process of layering plaster, paint and markings is repeated until I reach a point in the process where I feel compelled to conceal the violent markings and defacement of the work. It conjures up shame. But really, what doesn't?

+++

As I write this, I am looking for some narrative structure to make bring about coherence ... to fit it into some larger discursive formation as a way to imbue [overlay] meaning. But nothing comes.

Writing is per se already [it is still] violence: the rupture there is in each fragment, the break, the splitting, the tearing of the shred – acute singularity, steely point. And yet this combat is, for patience, debate. The name wears away, the fragment fragments, erodes. Passivity passes away patiently, lost stakes [Blanchot, 1986, p.46]

Layering, covering over, altering surfaces, rendering the disorderly orderly through practices of concealment, then, fucking up the clean surface with gouges, text, violent interventions, incoherent markings, then, conceal the damage with thick, healing, plaster.

...Waiting

Erasing

...Waiting

Fixing

...Waiting

Erasing

...Forgetting

I've been thinking about the importance of TIME in my work; but not in the linear Western sense, where time is monochromic – advancing, durational, non-repeating. Time is a way to structure events, a form of currency or a commodity.

Time Spent

Time Wasted

Time Saved

Working Overtime

Doing Time

Time In

Lost Time

Making Time

Found Time

Polychromatic time is more of a point, or position in time. This works better.

A moment in Time

A location in Time

When the Time is right

Time is documented, and therefore reveals itself, in the plaster works.

Thick time. Time thickens. Time hardens. Hard time. Time limits:

The mind, according to Spinoza, strives to make itself into a unity in temporal as well as spatial terms. In doing so, it needs to accept its complex nature and thus accept internal complexities and differentiations. Setting limits to this internal complexity is the ethics of sustainability. Time itself sets some limits, in so far as it organizes experience in a sequence of past, present and future, thus limiting the complexities and the proliferation of associations by the memory and the imagination [in Braidotti, 2006, p. 237].

+++

In the studio, the fresco experiments are feeling more like sculptural paintings. They generate a relational engagement between the material and the conceptual processes of concealment in a way that has the potential to expand and trouble our understandings about broader cultural practices and meanings of concealment. In particular I am interested to see whether or not visual research might begin to reveal patterns across aesthetic, individual, social, political and institutional practices of concealment that when combined might be thought of a 'culture of concealment.' I've come to this before – it is too big of an idea to work out in the context of this project. There is scholarly work relating to the concepts of erasure and veiling as well as writing on the history of secrets and lies, that I can use to ground this work academically, and also to open up possible new areas of artistic investigation.

As I write this, I notice that much of my current thinking on concealment is keeping me rooted in a reflexive practice, contemplating things I have known, but not understood.

+++

It has taken me a long while to let go [or realize that I should let go] of my initial questions about the conditions of Order and Transgression, and to instead follow the questions that are being asked of me through my studio work, where lines of questioning are knotted up, layered and bound. These

are more productive questions, I think. Questioning the functionality and affect of concealment, I am finding, implicates both the personal and the political. I can no longer keep them separate. They are *one in the same*.

ON THE SURFACE

Central to the conditions of concealment, I propose, is the functionality of the Surface. We create and maintain surfaces that can be read in a particular way – the surface tells a particular story, in accordance to a particular *distribution of sensibility*. [Rancière, 2004] The surface helps constitute a sensibility and authority of coherence by concealing that which lies beneath. It is not that what lies beneath is in any way ‘truer’ than what seen on the surface. *Un-truths may be concealed as easily as truths*.

A surface is created – it is a mediated space formed at the interface of an inner and outer force.

A surface transmits – it carries certain messages or meanings, while concealing others.

In the studio, I question the qualities of WHITENESS. The whiteness of the plaster surfaces – as a wall or a screen – is significant. Whiteness, as a surface, carries the power to conceal, to whitewash. The Whiteness of the

plaster, to me, conveys an institutional aesthetic and a sense of social privilege. There will of course be other readings of the white surface, for instance as a site of potential, or as simply a blank space – empty. But for me, this space is not empty. It is imbued with power. The White surface mediates between what can be seen and what cannot. Between light and dark. What is revealed and what is imagined. It implies Purity, Empire, Space, RESTRAINT. This makes me think of the work of Mary Douglas, in particular her book on *Purity and Danger* [1966]. Also, David Batchelor’s account of “white” in his book on *Chromophobia*:

There is a kind of white that is more than white, and this was that kind of white. There is a kind of white that repels everything that is inferior to it, and that is almost everything. This was that kind of white. There is a kind of white that is not created by bleach but that itself is bleach. This was that kind of white. This white was aggressively white. It did its work on everything around it, and nothing escaped [Batchelor, 2000, p. 10].

Privilege serves to conceal, and concealment is a privilege. To be able to render yourself ‘unseen’ is a condition of power, whereas to be rendered unseen is a condition of force. A violence. It can signal agency, and sometimes fixedness. It can provide a protective surface, and sometimes a prison. It can liberate, and it can confine.

+++

Destroy The Picture: Painting the Void, 1949-1962 [Schimmel, 2012]: This book has me appreciating destruction as a mode of production. I am

especially taken by the work of Italian painter and sculpture, Alberto Burri. His career as an artist was fuelled by his experiences as a physician and prisoner of war in an American prison camp during World War II. His work is marked, literally and figuratively, by experiences of violence and trauma. After the war, and influenced by Dada and Surrealism, Burri's work pushed the limits of painting through the use of a variety of materials and experimentation with large scale wall reliefs that combined sculpture and painting. In the late 1940s to mid 1950s, Burri began to investigate the properties of non-traditional materials such as burlap, wood, tar, plastic, pumice, PVC and fabrics. Some of these materials I have incorporated into my own wall works and hanging pieces. I have been particularly influenced by the idea of his "cracked" paintings. Using different materials to achieve large cracked surfaces, I have expanded upon some of these Burri's techniques in my studio practice.

As I write this, I am coming to understand that destruction is in a dialectical relationship with creation – where the liminal space between creation and destruction is not simply a void, but a space of potential. When breached, it reveals the evidence [traces] of a prior state, as well as the conditions for what will become. Tangential to these ideas, Giuliana Bruno [2014] uses the work of Jacques Rancière to talk about the surface as a partition that mediates by acting as a material configuration of how the visible meets the thinkable. Burri was also interested in the function of the surface as both an idea and a kind of materiality.

In the studio, having now been through several iterations of the fresco experiments, I sense they have morphed into more ‘formal’ investigations that challenge the status of *flatness* as a condition of the ‘painting’ as well as the threshold of the picture plane. However, I am finding that this work also forces a kind of confrontation with the past. Positioned at eye-level, the work has become conversational; embodiments of my dis-located and re-collected history. It’s too personal now. I find myself deeply affected and at times unable to engage. While the acts of layering, destroying, concealing, waiting, writing, concealing, destroying, began as material experimentation, it has transformed [maybe transgressed], through gestures of repetition, time and impulse, into a formal inquiry into my own practices of concealment.

As it is uncomfortable, it is necessary. As it is destructive, it is productive.

In the studio, I am listening to the surface of the plaster – the transgressive frescoes. As I am layering text on the plaster I am reminded of Alison Young’s chapter “Written on the Skin of the City” in her book, *Judging the Image: Art, Value, Law* [2005]. These feel like swatches of stiff leather, made of built up layers of plaster, paint, fabric, paper and text. The text is written free-hand with paint, Sharpie, or carved into the plaster/skin. It combines the act or experience of writing with painting – using the tools and materials of and for building walls [mortar, plaster, cement, paint]. All

of these materials take time to cure and strengthen, and to become resilient to external forces. Time can be empty, wasted, like waiting. Or the waiting, imbedding within the process, can be productive.

ON [the problem of] EXCESS

As I write this, I continued to question the relationship between Concealment and Exposure by exploring the surface as a liminal space, a transitional/transgressive space. I am increasingly interested in the potential of the ‘excess’ – that which could not, or would not, be concealed. It was a lucky accident that when I pulled the first plaster piece [a 2 inch thick slab] off the wall, and the ‘excess’ paint that had run off the deeper layers of plaster and down the wall to the floor, came with it, transgressing the originally intended boundaries of the work, but more interestingly, revealing and maintaining its connectedness to the interior structures/layers and past gestures. The history of the work is revealed in the excess. Or, the work functions as an archive of past processes, and excesses.

+++

And what of EXCESS? In *The Writing of the Disaster*, French writer, philosopher and literary theorist, Maurice Blanchot considers the nature of the “secret” as a form of restraint, as well as a form of excess; where the secret is “always in *excess* of everything said.”

To keep a secret — to refrain from saying some particular thing — presupposes that one could say it. This is nothing remarkable: it is merely a rather unpleasant kind of restraint. — Even so, it does relate to the question of the secret in general: to the fact [it is no fact] of wondering whether the secret is not linked to there being still something left to say when all is said; it does suggest Saying [with its glorious capital], always in *excess* of everything said. — *The not-apparent in the whole when it is totally manifest; that which withdraws, hides in the demand that all be disclosed; the dark of the clearing or the error of truth itself.* — The un-knowledge after absolute knowledge which does not, precisely, allow us to conceive of any ‘after.’ [Blanchot, 1986, p. 137] [*My Italics*]

In the studio, I am preparing to build an assemblage of 100 transparent bricks [give or take] — made to the exact dimensions of bricks that formed the inner-cell walls of the Old Don Jail — each contain crumpled and twisted pages, on which I have written, typed, sketched, and/or painted. This work investigates the relationship between containment, concealment, and the stories we carefully construct as individuals, as political beings, and as collectives within a given cultural space. As I construct each brick, insert the scribed or painted secret — now permanently confined within the bricks — I feel some relief that the secret is safely contained; some shame for revealing that I have secrets in the first place; and although the contents are only partly concealed, each brick, with its hard protective outer surface, challenges our Western desire to *see* and thus to *know*. With texts or images contained and only partly seeable, each secret is also vulnerable and at risk of being known. This is how I feel every time I enter a room. Or speak. This is why I write.

+++

What cannot be concealed, is rendered excess. We mostly consider excess a problem.

+++

As I write this, I am reflecting on my interest in the Don Jail, going back to earlier days at graduate school, and my PhD work on the case files of individuals sentenced to death in Canada between 1920-1950. To understand the broader context, I spent much time researching the socio-legal practice of capital punishment in Canada. Death sentences could be read and understood over time with some degree of predictability because the entire judicial processes can be traced through archival documents, thanks to the open access available to verbatim trial transcripts from this period. In studying the transcripts, I learned that not everyone sentenced to death was executed. Indeed, only about half of those sentenced to death actually had their sentences carried out. These final decisions, the in-chambers conversations that would determine life or death, were conducted behind closed doors, hidden from public scrutiny. And the processes that governed these decisions were even less transparent. There are no transcripts, or reports. I was left to piece together bits of evidence found in boxes of files that would allow me make some kind of interpretive leap regarding the circumstances that may have lead to a final decision to execute someone, or not.

[I recall that there is quite a lot written by legal historians about the spectacle of capital punishment, as a form of transparent justice, which is lost, concealed, as prisons became private spaces.]

The Don Jail was the site of the last execution in Canada, a double execution in 1961, I think. Capital punishment was officially abolished in Canada in 1976. I am always surprised in my classes by how many students think we still have capital punishment. Or, that we SHOULD still have it. These are the same students who are unable to imagine a society without prisons, even as they know that prisons represent social failure.

+++

This work has quite unexpectedly brought me to thinking more carefully about the dynamic relationship between time and space, and for which I am finding the work of Russian literary theorist, Mikhail Bakhtin really useful. In particular, his work on *intertextuality* [the relational and constitutive nature of text and speech acts] and the *chronotope* [how the spatial and temporal dimensions of life and governance affect each other] [Renfrew, 2015].

Bakhtin employs the analytical tools of intertextuality and the chronotope to the study of literature, in particular the novel, but it has also been useful

for thinking about time and space in my studio work. Bakhtin writes about the *intrinsic connectedness of spatial and temporal relationships*, where time and space are not taken as separate dimensions to be considered one after the other. He observed that: "... Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history." [Quoted in Valverde, 2012, p. 15]

In the studio, through the performance of repetitive techniques, such as layering [including the layering of text], concealing and imbedding, I begin to question and reflect upon how institutions [like surfaces] function as both liminal and mediated spaces in the transformation of disorderly bodies into ordered subjects. This is suggesting new ways for me to think about concepts such as time and excess. For instance, I am now thinking about how time functions, and perhaps thickens rather than passes, in certain contexts – what does it mean to serve, or do, time? And how do we consider the *excess* – that which cannot be concealed, contained or brought into order?

+++

As I write this, and as my studio work proceeds, I sense that the scope and scale of my envisioned project in some ways exceeds the parameters in which I am currently working. This is an interesting realization to come to in the midst of making work that currently questions the problem of

Excess; the nature and structure of excess; how excess functions and manifests; how we respond to or experience excess; and how excess is often constructed as dangerous [such as in forms of violence or transgression] or indulgent [such as in the forms of lust or gluttony]. What is the relationship between and across manifestations of Excess and Restraint [containment]; Order and Disorder? Batchelor [2000] offers some clues for analysing excess in relation to interiority and exteriority:

After all, there can't be many places like this interior which was home only to the very few things that had submitted to its harsh regime. And those few things were, in effect, sealed off from the unwanted and uncertain contingencies of the world outside. No exchange, no seepage, no spillage. Rather: isolation, confinement. But this shutting-off began to speak more and more about what it excluded that what it contained. [p. 21]

+++

CONCEALING [integrating] THE EXCESS:

In the studio, over several months of making the fresco pieces [which might be titled "Time Reveals Itself" or... "History Reveals Itself" or... some other combined reference to time and history] I have been challenged by certain materials that prove difficult to conceal, refusing to integrate into the hard, layered plaster structure. Numerous attempts to imbed pieces of steel mesh and wire did not behave as expected. The metal objects failed to submit to the layering process, and did not integrate into the plaster structure. Unlike the paint and fabric layers that fused to form the core body of the structure – transgressing only at the outer perimeters of the

frame to expose traces of earlier stages of the process while maintaining some essential connectedness to the interiority of the structure – the steel wire and mesh materials seemed to repel, or be repelled by, the structure, falling away at first contact. In order to secure the metal in place long enough to be able to work over and conceal [even if not to fully integrate] within the structure, I used reinforcements and restraints [staples or nails]. The plaster and mortar alone could not adequately grip the cold, slick, hard surface of the metal.

The properties of the metal material did not yield to the time thickened strength and density of the fixed plaster material. It remained separate, exterior, distinct, integrity in tact. Although, it reluctantly morphs to the shape of the structure it is forced to comply with. its resistance to become part of the structure, this material became a problem to the larger project of concealment. While the plaster sometimes managed to hold [temporarily] smaller fragments of mesh or wire, the plaster paint and fabric could not ‘get into’ and take hold of the material. Even if the wire is concealed for a time, the process of cutting into, and exposing the inner layers again exposes the wire and often cause it to break away from the plaster structure.

As I write this, I can only think of processes of institutionalization in similar terms. A means of forced confinement and concealment intended to

contain the excess – the unruly, and the resilient. *This is the violence of Order.*

As I write this, I observe parallels between the behaviour of studio materials – the challenge to fully imbed and integrate hard materials into the plaster structure – and the behaviour of ‘hardened’ individuals brought into institutional structures designed to integrate, transform or discipline. Both require strategies of force and restraint to be rendered ‘fixed.’ *This is the violence of Order.*

Observing and writing about the material discord and disobedience of the wire caused me to contemplate more carefully *the problem of excess* on a larger social and political scale, and how to materially represent the embodiment of excess – BODIES OF EXCESS.

+++

In the studio, while I continue to experiment with fresco techniques and processes of concealment and imbedded material/knowledge, I have also been experimenting with the creation of large wire forms that are suggestive of human figures, but not immediately so. They can also be read as manifestations [affects] of chaos, anxiety, complexity, entanglement. The interior and exterior are mediated only through an imagined, transparent ‘skin’ holding the shape of the structure. The structure is

entirely visible – nothing is concealed. Raw, steel wire is coiled, twisted, bent and shaped using only my body and a single pair of pliers. Working in 300-foot lengths of steel industrial construction wire - a dark grey alloy of iron and carbon. Steel is often used as a symbol, or embodiment, of both physical and mental strength and stability. Where the wire comes into contact with my gloved hands or clothing, the dark oil wipes off producing a lighter grey sheen [polish] on the surface of the wire. This causes variations in the reflection of light off the surface of the wire structure. The wire is strong, but bends with a degree of force, and then holding its shape even under some weight. To form the curves, I wrap the wire around my body, my legs, arms, hands and fingers. After freeing myself from the wire wrappings, I build up the structure by compacting and interweaving the wire formations, twisting segments together using my hands and pliers. It is difficult to locate the centre.

As I write this, it occurs to me that this work *IS excess – in its entirety*.

As I write this, I am reminded of entwined narrative threads: the convoluted nature of memories, time [spirals, loops, infinite, non-linear, folding in on itself...] and the distance between, or proximity of, one narrative to another; the puncturing, or occupying, of an empty space with some story. Some version of truth, but not a truth always. Only a truth in the context of a specific space/time.

In the studio, I am experiencing something very uncomfortably edifying about wrapping myself in wire, becoming consumed by excess. It makes me recall, somewhere UNDER MY SKIN, experiences of the many disciplinary practices I was subjected to as a child. And other stories I know, but can't easily recall, about being bound to a chair in the dark. I've convinced myself in my mind's memories that body's memories are wrong -that it was someone else.

HEALING PROCESSES

As I write this, it is the middle of the night. I am awake, and my body hurts from working in the studio. My feet, ankles, back - everything hurts. I ordered something on the Internet yesterday that is supposed to make me feel younger, on a cellular level. That will be nice if it's true. But if the pain is psychosomatic what will it do, really? Maybe only a placebo can work on psychosomatic symptoms. The success of a placebo effect requires the absolute concealment of its actual ineffectiveness.

+++

THIS IS MY PROCESS: I seem to move in slow motion, interspersed with sporadic gestures. Momentum never lasts for very long at one time. I never feel as though I am getting very far. Except when I get tired of waiting and make a big leap. So I can feel something else. I wait a lot. I hold my breath. Waiting. In some suspended liminal state; in-between, becoming,

transfixed, transforming, frozen with anxiety. I can feel it everywhere in my body at once: between the base of my neck where my collar bones meet, down to my pubic bones; in my face - jaw and cheeks; deep in my chest. I find it hard to breathe, as if I'm not getting enough air into my body. Sometimes when I'm falling asleep I startle because I am not breathing. WHY DO I HOLD MY BREATH? And what am I waiting for? This is what liminality feels like. It is like holding in breath while at the same time the mind is flooded with half complete thoughts and a sense of urgency. Waiting to know what to do. To decide? To be told? To be forced? For it to be too late? These are all uncomfortable states and conditions. Yet, I can't seem to come up for air. I just hang in the balance. Between light and dark.

+++

In the studio, working with plaster and paint in a way that no longer resembles fresco, bring forward ideas of fragility, fragmentation and disorder. If I force it to bend while the surface is still damp, the plaster cracks. But once straightened and made flat again, the cracks close and become almost undetectable - the surface heals. The cracks are there, but held closed, concealed under the insistence of the hardened surface and the affect of its whiteness.

A CRACK:

A break

The onset of something – maybe sickness

A breach in the integrity of a thing

An altered state of the surface

Fragility is revealed

Truth is revealed

Fragmentation

All the stories have that been scribed on/into the surface, are carefully concealed. Bandaged. Casted. Cosmetically treated. Removed. Fixed. Beautified. The surface is treated; altered, re-made, appropriated, in order to transform its appearance and meaning – to render it intelligible, reformed and white-washed. What lies beneath becomes abject. Or, perhaps the abject becomes what lies beneath. That which lies beneath is able to be isolated, forgotten, erased and forgiven. Like forced apologies that are delivered [without shame] at the outcome of state sponsored “truth and reconciliation” projects. A white-washing [erasure] of a different kind.

+++

In the studio, I carefully plaster over the rough surface, filling in all the SURFACE WOUNDS: gouges, cuts, slices and cracks, and covering over all of the imbedded materials that continued to peek through the surface as testament to their vital material role at a previous time in the process [I am recalling Burri’s work]. Once the layers of historical processes and

artifacts are completely concealed, I begin to question: *What is more important, that which is concealed, or that something is concealed?* This is an important distinction. How does the surface, smooth and white, function in relation to what lies beneath? I am beginning to sense that WHAT is imbedded is important. Like secret memories, lies or shame – things we conceal in order to not disrupt our desired, smooth, outer surface. A memory can only be a memory if it is taken out of context. It is different than an experience. It is made, removed, remade and re-membered. Each time a memory is re-membered, it becomes integrated into a different temporal or experiential layer.

In the process of making a series of artistic works that in different ways interrogate the nature of Concealment – *through* a sustained exploration of the conditions of Order, and *through* the performance of concealment – I find myself recalling, revealing, and remarking certain memories. Sometimes these are written onto, or imbedded into, plaster surfaces; or written onto paper and then submerged under water until the structure weakens and disintegrates; or sketched onto paper, contorted, obscured, and confined in clear plastic bricks. Reveal, conceal. Reveal, conceal. Reveal, conceal. I find there is more satisfaction in the act of concealing than revealing, but only because I know that something is concealed. The concealed artifacts become subtext. Sub-text. Submerged text. And whatever occupies the surface, prevails.

The Surface is invested with symbolic meaning. It offers a means through which to explore a utopian belief that art has the capacity to positively transform human consciousness. As I occasionally embedded random 'artifacts' including text, raw burlap and wire, the artifacts became consumed in layers over time. As I began to cut and carve into the Surface with blades and other sharp tools, the interior is violently exposed. The ease with which I am able to expose deeper layers was very much the effect of time - meaning how dry/hard/thick the outer surface was. These repeated assaults on the Surface, and consequent exposure of the interior, could sometimes generate a sense of sadness, anxiety or discomfort. And sometimes, the feelings of relief and pleasure bring a deep sense of healing.

ABSOLUTE CONCEALMENT

CONCEALMENT: A process whereby imbedded knowledge or objects are rendered out of sight, hidden, and not known.

Is it possible to achieve *absolute concealment*? I've asked this before. What would absolute concealment look like? This line of questioning raises yet MORE questions: Is it more interesting, or productive, to try and understand what is beneath the surface - to investigate what/how it *conceals*? Or, is it more interesting to consider the surface itself - to investigate what/how it *reveals*?

+++

TRANSPARENCY AS ABSOLUTE CONCEALMENT: Perhaps we can think of transparency *as* a form of absolute concealment. The more that is brought to the surface and made visible, the more we believe that everything is on the surface and *can* be seen, the more we might come to believe that absolutely nothing is concealed.

Absolute Concealment requires the belief that nothing is concealed.

A reverse placebo effect.

TEXT on TEXT

WATER/TEXT: In the summers of 2015 and 2016, I made a number of short videos in Northern Ontario, which capture the effects of rushing water over submerged rag paper on which I had written with ink. These experiments brought me to again consider the functionality of the surface as a mediated space between inner and outer, between the visible and the imagined. This was the starting point for another series of projections that questioned the function and treatment of surfaces. I also continue to work with fresco techniques and materials, moving to a larger scale, and experimenting with thickness. The water experiment informed how I am thinking about the surfaces of the wall pieces – and larger hanging curtain-style pieces, also as sites of concealment and mediation – which has further evolved into a more ambitious exploration of the relationship between

concealment, exposure and excess, and the effects of layering different kinds of material and projected surfaces.

+++

The very definition of what *is* TEXT, the various *meanings* and *forms* of TEXT, the *reading* of TEXT, and readings *as* TEXT; these and other such lines of inquiry have been rigorously taken up by scholars for centuries, but are also inculcated in everyday social practices – stripped of jargon. Western culture is a TEXT-ed and TEXT-ured culture. TEXT, broadly defined, is the dominant vehicle for assertions of power [be it in the form of religious TEXT, law, or propaganda – if these are different] and privileged claims to knowledge [expertise]. Which of these, if any, do not come to be understood, framed, ORDERED, through TEXT?

Science

Art

Politics

Law

Religion

Race

Gender/sexuality

Ethics

Violence

Time
Policy
Morality
Space and place
Sport
Economics
Design
Disciplines and professions
Trans/inter-disciplinarity
Poetry
Rights
Criminality
Madness
Beauty
...Order

CALL[ed] TO ORDER

In what follows, I begin, with some reluctance and a bit of compromise, the work of integration. Through close observation, documentation and reflection, I now *know* how to bring the material lessons learned in the studio into a more scholarly form of critical analysis, and thick description. Likewise, I now *know*, with a greater degree of confidence and without apology, the value of the lessons I have learned in academia. These sites of knowledge, the artistic and the scholarly, have all along informed each

other, but only through the practice of writing out of order have I come to know they are *one in the same*.

And just like that, I come to Order. An Order of my own making, but Order, nonetheless.

AfterWords

As I write this, I am still finding my way. And yet, I have also arrived at a critical point in my journey. These brief AfterWords, written after my thesis defence and exhibition, are intended to address and begin to unpack, if not necessarily answer, some of the important questions that emerged during the final stages of this thesis project. In particular I revisit the questions of positioning and influence with greater distance, but still through a critical lens, in order to articulate what and how this work contributes both to the interdisciplinary visual arts and the interdisciplinary social sciences. I also provide some descriptive commentary and photo documentation of the exhibition itself, making explicit the ways in which the theoretical underpinnings of the thesis can be seen operating in each of the seven (as opposed to five as originally planned) artworks as they were shown. While this is in part a reflexive exercise, my considerations are much more directed toward the next stages of my artistic and research practices. Like the PreText that set out the intentions and context for the creative text at the beginning of this document, this final section is also presented in a different visual format in order to distinguish it from the core text.

Given the persistent themes that run throughout both the written and studio-based works that comprise this thesis project (ordering systems, disciplinary practices, concealment and the academization (if this is a word) of art as research), it seems important to be transparent regarding the revisions to

this text that were requested by the Thesis Examination Committee. Therefore, I reproduce the full statement of conditions below with the utmost respect, and for the productive purpose of orienting the discussion that follows.

Dear Kimberley White,

Congratulations on passing your defence. The condition attached to the passing evaluation is that your text be revised according to eight recommendations:

1. Proofreading the thesis document to correct typos, grammatical errors, and in particular the misspelling of authors' and artists' names.
2. Using a single style of citation and reference, and making it consistent throughout.
3. Defining key terms to the thesis, with citations to the appropriate theory, in particular 'messiness' and 'exegesis'.
4. Grounding your work in relation to several key artists relevant to the work exhibited: Eric Cameron, Judith Scott, Liz Magor. In particular, elaborating upon the link between their work and your practice.
5. Using a more academic style of quotation, i.e., one that identifies the author, provides information about the quote's original context, and follows up with a consolidation of your interpretation of the quote and a connection to your thesis argument.
6. Elaborating upon and integrating the theory more substantively to your thesis argument and artworks, i.e., making a more explicit connection between the theory and how you see it operating in the art exhibited in the show.
7. Adding photo documentation of the actual artworks in your show.
8. Adding a conclusion with several components: a description and commentary on the works in the show; a more explicit rendering of how 'the personal' operates in the works; an analysis of how your work is situated in the history of process-based art, and how your work builds upon and extends that practice; an articulation of what you see as the overall contribution of your work and thesis.

...

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

To address the above recommendations, I borrow an approach used by Foucault in the concluding chapter of his book The Archaeology of Knowledge, in which he answers to several important questions and critiques of his work, while at the same time challenging the architecture of the discourses themselves (Foucault, 1972, pp. 199-211).

I will not spend time here addressing recommendations one (1) through three (3) because they have been dealt with in the body of the text. However, in doing so, and as much as possible, I have endeavored to keep the decidedly counter-academic character of the creative text intact, as it was originally submitted. In what follows, I primarily take up recommendations four (4) through six (6), many aspects of which overlap with the recommendations outlined in point eight (8). The descriptive commentary and photo documentation of the final works exhibited as requested in point seven (7) is compiled in the Appendix.

It is difficult in the context of this project to not bring at least some attention to the obvious tensions between the explicit requests to bring this document into a certain type of academic formation, and the fundamental challenge that my work brings to precisely such a formation.⁶ As well, it is difficult to resolve the most reasonable request that I locate myself (via my work)

⁶ While there has been a general request to structure this written thesis according to a certain kind of academic formation, I note that there is more than one kind of academic writing, including the writing and presentation of works by several cultural and literary theorists, in particular, Maurice Blanchot, who I indicate at the start as a key inspiration for the format taken in the text. What seems to be exclusively privileged in this instance is the authority of a particular social science formation. Following Foucault, Braidotti and others referenced within, the social science formation, like any standardized formation, is, at its foundation, a disciplinary technique.

within certain art disciplines and traditions, and in relation to the works of particular artists (keeping separate for the time being the question of influence), with my own request to not be so positioned. To speak once again through the words of Foucault, this time from the introductory chapter of The Archaeology of Knowledge:

What, do you imagine that I would take so much trouble and so much pleasure in writing, do you think that I would keep so persistently to my task, if I were not preparing – with a rather shaky hand – a labyrinth into which I can venture, in which I can move my discourse, opening up underground passages, forcing it to go far from itself, finding overhangs that reduce and deform its itinerary, in which I can lose myself and appear at last to eyes that I will never have to meet again. I am no doubt not the only one who writes in order to have no face. Do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same: leave it to our bureaucrats and our police to see that our papers are in order. At least spare us their morality when we write (p. 17).

So it is in the interest of keeping persistently to my task of transgressing certain habits and conventions of hardened disciplinary practices – to move, venture and transpose – that I resist constructing myself as a stable self/identity to satisfy the appearance that I have my papers in order. That said, the studio-based and written works that comprise this thesis project now provide a starting point for me to begin thinking about key conversations and debates within established contemporary arts movements that might directly and indirectly inform my ongoing research and emerging art practice.

In addition to the artists I considered in the body of the creative text (Burri and Basquiat for instance), the work of artists such as Eric Cameron (thick painting), Judith Scott (binding and wrapping of objects) and Liz Magor

(multimedia sculpture referencing boundaries, layers, history, memory and subjectivity), have been identified as particularly relevant to the work I exhibited. Indeed, Eric Cameron's process paintings, some involving thousands of layers of acrylic gesso brushed onto found objects, resonate with the experimental and ritualistic processes I continue to use in layering plaster over surfaces, as well as the repetitive wrapping of a chair with wire.

In a 1983 interview with Canadian painter, writer and curator Cliff Eyland, Cameron reflects on the moment, during the spring of 1979, when he began layering paint on household objects, including food. In describing the transformative process of methodically painting 2986 layers of gesso on a lettuce, Cameron muses on how, over time, the lettuce had ceased to be a lettuce; both by virtue of the fact that it had no doubt disintegrated within the paint casting, and also because as the paint layers thickened it had "superseded that base totally and become something whose forms have to do with the way paint itself grows..." (Eyland, 1983). I see a parallel here to my own reflections documented during the making of my fresco works, in particular the exhibited piece titled, "Thick Time Erases History." In the preceding creative text, I compiled my considerations of various transformative processes in relation to questions about concealment and excess. As I gradually built up layers of plaster, paint, text and other imbedded materials over time, the frescoes thickened and took on an archival quality as well as more sculptural characteristics. Each new layer concealed [erased] the layers, gestures and stories that came before it – beneath a hardened, white surface.

However, both the rough edges of the otherwise smooth surface, and the layered streams of paint running down from the interior of the fresco, allow the viewer to glean evidence of what lies beneath. What is revealed in the excess allows viewers to consider the effects and conditions of different forms of time: that which flows in a linear direction, and that which accumulates and thickens.

In an article that appeared in Canadian Art magazine, artist and writer Gary Michael Dault (2010) describes Cameron's thick paintings as epic works of slow "accretion" that may begin as paintings, but "inevitably evolve into something more like sculptures." Dault also quotes Cameron's own ruminations on his thick paintings as "growing in ways I could neither predict nor control, and demanding of me that I respond to the transformations of the strangely organic character they presented by repeatedly modifying my own way of addressing them." This description very nicely captures my own experience of learning to relinquish control in the early stages of my experimentations with fresco, and the subsequent shift that letting go allowed in my relationship with the work. It was a slow, hard turn, but I recall very clearly the realization that I had assumed the position of responder rather than director. As I learn more Cameron's practice, I also feel a certain degree of kinship on a personal level. Specifically, I appreciate what appears to be a steady movement and progression in his work over many practiced years as an artist, teacher and writer, which Dault observes as an "accumulated account" of "increasingly purposeful reflection and concurrent analysis."

In quite different ways, I also note particular affiliations with the artistic practice of Judith Scott (1943-2005), who used primarily fiber and found objects to create her three dimensional forms. Having grown up in an institutional setting for people with disabilities, Scott's work is commonly positioned as Outsider Art. However, this says more about how Outsider Artists are positioned (defined, exhibited and responded to) by those claiming a certain expertise within and about the art world (outside of the production of the work), than it does about the artist and her artwork.⁷ It is the transformative and process based qualities of Scott's work that I most align with. Scott used a variety of materials (pieces of yarn, fabric, paper) to wrap common objects to a result that would render the original shape of some objects completely transformed and unrecognizable, while others would remain distinguishable as objects.

One of the works I exhibited, titled "On [and on] Discipline," consists of a found chair tightly wrapped with layers of steel wire. From a distance, the chair looks as though it could be wrapped in soft black yarn. It is only on closer inspection that the binding material is seen to be metal. Yet, the chair is at all times clearly identified as a chair. As this work remains in progress, it will be interesting to see if, or how, the chair will be read with thicker and thicker applications of wire binding. Will its shape of the chair as an object be concealed, disappeared, in the process of becoming engulfed in the metal? What will it

⁷ I would like to thank Jenna Reid, whose ongoing PhD work in Critical Disability Studies at York University has helped me view Outsider Art paradigms through a more critical and historically grounded perspective.

become? Can transformative/transgressive processes transcend the recognition of material forms and functions to the realm of the conceptual?

Scott's work also raises a number of political questions similar to my own. I share with Scott a similar experience (though under different conditions) of being positioned as an outsider. Scott was positioned as an Outsider Artist because she was, and was seen, as an artist with a disability. I have been positioned as an outsider in numerous ways for being without certain abilities or sensibilities. I have made clear throughout this work that I resist being positioned for the purpose of keeping a certain order. Our propensity to position artists, as well as academics, comes with lasting implications. For this reason, I do not lay claim to any stable (or trendy) identity formation that will render me fixed as a certain kind of person, and therefore define my work as a certain kind of work, thus limiting the set of discourses through which I, and my work, will be read and subsequently situated.

For Scott, being classified as an Outsider Artist, because she was an artist with a disability, limited (or predetermined) the fields within which her work has been, and continues to be, located. From my preliminary survey of Scott's practice, it seems to rarely be discussed outside of her experiences of disability. For instance, in a book edited by Morris and Higgs (2014), titled, Judith Scott: bound and unbound, her work tends to be described as erratic, instinctive, innate, natural and apolitical. I have not yet seen any example of writing about her work that does not mention her disability.

Looking to Liz Magor's artistic practice, I am inspired on a number of levels. Most significantly at this time her work encourages me to continue thinking openly about the direction of my research and artistic practices more generally, but also to continue trusting my impulse toward movement, change, interdisciplinarity and transgressive processes. The exhibitions of Magor's work that I find most interesting (having only viewed them online at this point) are those that juxtapose a range of works using completely different materials and processes and take on drastically different visual forms. This is well demonstrated in a recent exhibition titled "Habitude" held at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal (June 22-Sept 5, 2016). Works that seem disparate, when seen in proximity, convey a consistency in the kinds of concerns they address. Concerns about the body and memory, about time and death, about production and deterioration, about uncertainty.

This is not unlike the approach I took to curating my final thesis exhibition. I followed my inner-sense that while the works I have created over the last couple of years crossed genres as well as disciplines, they are all in different ways about the same thing. It was not until I had the opportunity to see the work together that I fully appreciated this. It also made me realize what was missing. For instance, the piece titled "Know Way In," a door consumed in text fragments, was brought into the exhibition space at the last minute because I realized it was in fact the entryway into the rest of the work. Following the thesis defence, a few other modifications were made: the titles of the works were handwritten on the

gallery wall; the piece titled “Beneath the Surface,” was added; and the books were piled underneath the chair, which was originally titled just “Discipline.” So, the process of making and transforming goes on as I continue to experiment with what these works say to me, to the viewer, and to each other as they are brought into proximity.

In addition to recognizing the value and necessity of further study into artists/writers within process-based art, I have also come to recognize the important history and innovative significance of process-based art practices and the Process Art movement more generally. Particularly as these practices emerged in tandem with other revolutionary movements in Western social and political thought during the 1960s, including the Situationist International (SI), all influenced by the Dada and Surrealist movements. While not consciously influential in the recent developments of my practice, I am certainly able to trace the many conceptual overlaps through cultural studies literature on transgression (for the best example see Jenks, 2003).

A number of the core principles of Process Art, including serendipity, juxtaposition, intuition, improvisation and the liberating use of materials, are very much present in my work. Not only in some of the work produced for this thesis (in particular the frescos and the core written text), but perhaps even more so in a separate series of ongoing ‘paintings’ produced outside in collaboration/conversation with winter weather. However, as an interdisciplinary artist, I do not remain singularly and absolutely committed to these specific kinds

of processes, and certainly the work I exhibited veers into conceptualism and narrative-based practices as well (which I understand could be considered process-based in a much broader interpretation).

Taking one final step back from this project (at least for the time being), I conclude these AfterWords with some speculation on the potential contribution my work makes – has made, and or will endeavor to make in the future – to the interdisciplinary visual arts, to the interdisciplinary social sciences, and, more specifically, to the creative spaces in between. For now, this is where I can most comfortably position myself as an artist/researcher – in the in-between, in both and neither.

As I write this, I see how my commitment to an ambiguous positionality (or resistance to others), as well as my deep ongoing commitment (in both substance and theory) to transgressive art, research and teaching practices, offers a meaningful engagement with, and perhaps and intervention into, a number of political conversations currently underway with respect to arts education, academia, and the role of the university more generally. In particular, this work challenges contemporary discourses of interdisciplinarity, of the increasingly academic disciplining of art as social science research, and the problematics of subject location. Going forward, I will continue to learn, advocate for, and demonstrate, the value of critical visual methodologies and the inclusion of artistic practice to extend and deepen our capacity for new knowledge production and social change – both within the university environment and beyond.

Bibliography

- Abu-Orf, H. [1997]. Fear of Difference: 'space of risk' and anxiety in violence settings. *Planning Theory*, 12:2, 158-172.
- Ahmed, S. [2004]. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge.
- Arnold, J. S. [2007]. *Practice led research: A dynamic way to knowledge*. Camberwell, Vic: Rock View Press.
- Baker, N. [1986]. *The mezzanine: A novel*. New York: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Barthes, R., & Lavers, A. [1972]. *Mythologies*. New York: Hill and Wang.
- Batchelor, D. [2000]. *Chromophobia*. London UK: Reaktion Books Ltd.
- Berg, M., and Seeber, B. [2016] *The Slow Professor: Challenging the Culture of Speed in the Academy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Biggs, I. [2009]. *Art as research: Creative practice and academic authority: A project-based examination of the politics of art-led research in a doctoral context*. Saarbrücken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller.
- Blanchot, M. [1986]. *The writing of the disaster*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Bourdieu, P., Tran. Nice, R. [1984]. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Braidotti, R. [2010]. Powers of affirmation: Response to Lisa Baraitser, Patrick Hanafin and Clare Hemmings. *Subjectivity* 3, 140-148. doi:10.1057/sub.2010.10.
- + [2006]. *Transpositions: On nomadic ethics*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
 - + [2006b]. Affirmation versus Vulnerability: On Contemporary Ethical Debates. Originally published in *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 10:1, Spring, p. 235-254. PDF accessed online Oct 20, 2016, p. 1-18.
- Bruno, G. [2014]. *Surface: Matters of aesthetics, materiality, and media*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Buck-Morss, S. [1992]. Aesthetics and Anaesthetics: Walter Benjamin's Artwork Essay Reconsidered. *October*, 62, 3-41.
- Butler, J. [1990]. *Gender Trouble*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Cmagazine* 131. [Autumn 2016].
- Cammett, J.M. [1967]. *Antonio Gramsci and the Origins of Italian Communism*. California: Stanford University Press.
- Childers, J. W. [2005]. Foreign Matter: Imperial Filth. In W. Cohen and R. Johnson [Eds.], *Filth: Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life* [pp. 201-221] Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cresswell, T. [1996]. *In Place / Out of Place: Geography, Ideology and Transgression*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dault, G. M. [2010]. Thick as a Brick: The Endless Art of Calgary's Eric Cameron. *Canadian Art*, Winter Issue, p. 125. Accessed Jan 29, 2017 at: https://canadianart.ca/features/thick_as_a_brick_eric_cameron.
- De Beauvoir, S. [1948, 1976]. *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. New York: Citadel Press.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. [1987]. Introduction: Rhizome. In B. Massumi [Trans.] *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia* [pp. 3-35] Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. [2011]. *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. California, London, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Dikovitskaya, M. [2005]. *Visual culture: The study of the visual after the cultural turn*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Douglas, M. [1966]. *Purity and Danger*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Douzinias, C. and Nead, L. [Eds.] [1999]. *Law and the Image: The Authority of Art and the Aesthetics of Law*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Eyland, C. [1983]. Interview with Eric Cameron. Accessed Jan 29, 2017 at: <https://www.umanitoba.ca/schools/art/content/galleryoneoneone/layer02.html>
- Ettinger, B. [2006]. *The Matrixial Borderspace*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- Friedlander, J. [2008]. *Feminine Look: Sexuation, Spectatorship, Subversion*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Foster, H. [Ed.] [1983]. *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. Seattle: Bay Press.
- Foucault, M. [1972]. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- + [1973]. *Madness and civilization; a history of insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Vintage Books.
 - + [2001]. *The order of things*. London: Routledge.
 - + [1980]. *The history of sexuality, Volume I: An introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.
 - + [1977]. *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. London: Penguin Books.
- Gee, K. [2000]. *Visual arts as a way of knowing*. York, Me.: Stenhouse.
- Goonewardena, K. [2005]. The Urban Sensorium: Space, Ideology and the Aestheticization of Politics. *Antipode*, 37:1, 46-71.
- Gregg, M. and Gregory J. S. [Eds.] [2010]. *The Affect Theory Reader*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Hall, S. [2013]. *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*. London: Sage in association with the Open University.
- Hamlin, C. [2005]. Good and Intimate Filth. In W. Cohen and R. Johnson [Eds.], *Filth: Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life* [pp. 3-25]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Horvath, A., Thomassen, B., and Wydra, H. [2015]. *Breaking Boundaries: Varieties of Liminality*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Irwin, R. L., & Cosson, A. D. [2004]. *A/r/tography: Rendering self through arts-based living inquiry*. Vancouver: Pacific Educational Press.
- Jenks, C. [2003]. *Transgression*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kester, G. H. [1997]. Aesthetics after the End of Art: An Interview with Susan Buck-Morss. *Art Journal* 56:1, 38-45.
- Kolnai, A. [2004]. *On Disgust*. Chicago: Open Court.

Koren, L. [2008]. *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Poets & Philosophers*. Point Reyes USA: Imperfect Publishing.

Kristeva, J. [1982]. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Kupinse, W. [2005]. The Indian Subject of Colonial Hygiene. In W. Cohen and R. Johnson [Eds.], *Filth: Dirt, Disgust and Modern Life* [pp. 250-276]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Lapham, L.H. [2014]. Captain Clock. *Lapham's Quarterly: Time*, VII:4. Accessed Nov. 19, 2016 at: <http://www.laphamsquarterly.org/time/captain-clock>

Latour, B. [2005]. *Reassembling the Social*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Leavy, P. [2009]. *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. New York: Guilford Press.

+ [2011]. *Essentials of transdisciplinary research: Using problem-centered methodologies*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Lehrer, E., et al [Eds.]. [2011]. *Curating Difficult Knowledge*. New York and London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Manson, M. [2016]. *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck*. New York: Harper Collins.

McGinn, C. [2011]. *The Meaning of Disgust*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

McNiff, S. [Ed.] [2013]. *Art as research: Opportunities and challenges*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Menninghaus, W. [2003]. *Disgust: Theory and History of a Strong Sensation*. Albany, SUNY Press.

Molderings, H. [2010]. *Duchamp and the Aesthetics of Chance: Art as Experiment*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Mukherji, S. [Ed.] [2013]. *Thinking on Thresholds: The Poetics of Transitive Spaces*. New York: Anthem Press.

Neocleous, M. [2011]. Security as Pacification. In M. Neocleous. and G.S. Rigakos [Eds.], *Anti-Security* [p. 23-56]. Ottawa: Red Quill Books.

- O'Neill, M. and Lizzie S. [2012]. *Transgressive Imaginations: Crime, Deviance and Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Perec, G. [1978]. *Life, a user's manual*. Boston: D.R. Godine.
- Philosophy Now*. [August/September 2016]. Issue 116.
- Prior, M. [2016]. *Model Desciple*. Montreal: Véhicule Press.
- Rancière, J. [2006]. *The Politics of Aesthetics*. New York: Versa Press.
- + [2007]. *The Future of the Image*. London and New York: Versa Press.
 - + [2009]. *The Emancipated Spectator*. London and Brooklyn: Verso.
- Renfrew, A. [2015]. *Mikhail Bakhtin*. New York: Routledge.
- Richardson, L. and St. Pierre, E. A. [2005] Writing: A Method of Inquiry. In N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln [Eds.] *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd Edition* [pp. 995-978] California, London, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Ronen, R. [2014]. *Art Before the Law*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- + [2009]. *Aesthetics of Anxiety*. Albany: SUNY Press.
- Rose, G. [2012]. *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials*. London: SAGE.
- Schimmel, P., [Ed.] [2011]. *Destroy the picture: Painting the void: 1949-1962: Exposition, The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, MOCA*.
- Serres, M., with Latour, B. [1995]. *Conversations on Science, Culture and Time*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Skelly, J. [2015]. Alternative Paths: Mapping Addiction in Contemporary Art by Landon Mackenzie, Rebecca Belmore, Manasie Akpaliapic, and Ron Noganosh. *Journal of Canadian Studies*, 49:2.
- Sullivan, G. [2010]. *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Arts*. California: Sage Publications.
- Valverde, M. [2012]. *Everyday Law on the Streets: City Governance in an Age of Diversity*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- + [2015]. *Chronotopes of Law: Jurisdiction, Scale and Governance*. New York and London: Routledge.

- Veale, T. [2014]. Running with Scissors: Cut-Ups, Boundary Friction and Creative Reuse. In L. Lamontagne and E. Plaza [Eds.], *ICCBR, LNCS 8765* [pp. 3-16] Switzerland: Springer International Publishing.

- Virilio, P. [2003]. *Art and Fear*. Translated by Julie Rose. London: Continuum.

- Watson, W. [2015]. The Beauty Question. <http://watsonsketches.com/the-beauty-question/>.

- Wetherell, M. [2012]. *Affect and Emotion: A New Social Science Understanding*. London: Sage Publications.

- White, K. [2012]. The Aesthetic of Mad Spaces: Policing the Public Image of Graffiti and 'Mental Illness' in Canada. In L. C. Rubin [Ed.], *Mental Illness and Popular Media: Essays on the Representations of Disorder*. NC: McFarland & Company.

- + [2009]. *Negotiating Responsibility: Law, Murder and States of Mind*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

- Young, A. [2005]. *Judging the Image: art, value, law*. London and New York: Routledge.

- Young, D. [2010]. *The Art of Recklessness: Poetry as Assertive Force and Contradiction*. Minneapolis USA: Graywolf Press.

- Zizek, S. [2008]. *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*. New York: Picador.

Appendix A:

Description & Documentation of Exhibited Artworks

Through a practice of research creation, this MFA thesis exhibition combined aspects of writing, painting, sculpture and installation to critically analyze the conditions, limitations and violence of order and ordering practices. To different degrees, these creative works are at once experimental, material based, process-driven, conceptually conceived, narratively structured and both theoretically and experientially grounded. In this interdisciplinary exhibition I draw explicitly on the histories and practices of institutionalization (including institutions of law, psychiatry, education and the domestic), as well as theoretical considerations of time, space and place, to explore the tensions between discipline and transgression, concealment and transparency, excess and restraint. The seven artworks in this collection come together to trouble the boundaries and conditions of order, and to consider what it means, or if it is possible to have meaning, out of order.

1. Know Way In, 2015

Sharpie on found door

203 x 81.3 cm

Writing is often seen as a way into knowledge, including knowledge about the self. Writing, and deference to that which is written, is also constructed as a means through which to render intelligibility and bring about order. It is in those moments when our ability to make sense of things is obstructed - when we are confronted with incoherence and excess - our will to order is often revealed.



Installation View

2. *Thick Time Erases History* [triptych], 2016

Plaster, sand, pumice, PVA, acrylic, burlap, wire, paper, ink, text and gauze on canvas

178 x 203 cm

As layers of plaster, paint, text and other imbedded materials thicken over time, these frescoes take on an archival quality. While each new layer conceals [erases] the layers and gestures that came prior, what transgresses the intelligible boundaries of the structure, and what cannot be fully concealed, provides evidence of past gestures, and the stories that lie beneath the hardened white surface. This work explicitly references processes of institutionalization and the superficial remaking of institutions as a way to erase [forgive] their violent histories.



Installation View

3. *Beneath The Surface*, 2015

Plaster, sand, pumice, PVA, acrylic, burlap, wire, paper, ink, text and gauze on canvas

What is concealed? If the white plaster surface of the adjacent wall pieces in *Thick Time Erases History* were to be stripped away, or if the interior layers were to be left exposed, the violence of each past gesture is laid bare.



Installation View



4. Text on Text [Surface Treatment], 2016

**With Rowan Kelly*

Mixed media installation

274.3 x 182.9 cm

Video fragments of text written on rag paper and submerged in rushing water are compiled, layered, and projected on the surface of cracked plaster curtains. The light that projects through the narrow opening between the curtains intermittently produces the appearance of a crack on the wall behind the curtains. Here I question the functionality of the surface as a mediated space between inner and outer, between the visible and the imagined, and between light and dark.



Installation View

5. On [and on] Discipline, 2015-2016

Books, steel wire on found chair
Dimensions variable

Sitting on, and restrained by, a precarious foundation of knowledge-based ordering systems, this installation juxtaposes various forms of social, institutional and self-disciplinary practices to explicate the inherent, and often shadowed, violence of order.



Installation View

6. *Let Me Tell You The Secrets That Brought Me To This Place*, 2016
Original Don Jail bricks, plexiglass replicas, and mixed media on paper
91.4 x 274.3 cm

The dimensions of a typical cell in Toronto's Old Don Jail was 3 feet by 9 feet. This installation invites consideration of the storied bodies confined within the walls of various institutions designed to contain dis-order.



Installation View



7. *Absolute Concealment*, 2016

Ink jet on transparency film
28 x 21.6 cm

Perhaps we can think of transparency as a form of concealment, where absolute concealment requires the belief that absolutely nothing is concealed.



Installation View