

IMPACT

第九届IMPACT国际版画会议
IMPACT 9 International Printmaking Conference

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ABSTRACT

Dark energy is a theoretical repulsive force that counteracts gravity, possibly accelerating the expansion rate of the cosmos. Physicists propose that dark energy may be a new, fundamental unseen force in the universe, only observed when the universe reaches a certain size.

Contemporary creative forms are also accelerating, due to the internal energy in artists' practices that is generated by our current technology and its redefinition of perception. Like the weakening gravitational field created by dark energy, the outline of contemporary creative practice is dissolving. New ideas include interdependence, collaboration, a multi-level understanding of space and matter, working with time-based forms, and the distrust of absolutes.

Print developed as a socially kinetic development of ideas with transfers among materials and concepts. This development continues in new, porous forms, and in the evaporation of material into digital vapor. From the standpoint of a personal practice that uses evanescent forms, I will consider related concepts in the works of Christiane Baumgartner, Oscar Munoz, Suzanne Anker, and Robert Smithson, and myself.

These works occupy a position close to mine as they relate to re-defining edges, and using the unseen forces that energize a vibrant expanding contemporary art practice.

摘要

理论上,暗物质与引力相斥,可能引起宇宙的加速膨胀。物理学家认为,暗物质可能是宇宙中一种新的、基本不可见的力量,只有当宇宙膨胀到一定体积时才会被觉察。

现今技术及其对认知的重新界定生成了艺术家创作的内在能量,这催生了当代的创新形式。如同暗物质对引力场的弱化,当代创新实践整体上亦逐渐消融。相互依存、合作、对空间与物质的多层理解、以时基形式创作及对绝对事物的质疑等新的理念层出不穷。

当物质与观念的互动转化为社会理念的发展时,版画亦随之发展。这种发展以新的、渗透的形式延进,从物质形式升华到数字形式。我在创作中采用了稍纵即逝的形式,并尝试使用 Christiane Baumgartner, Oscar Munoz, Suzanne Anker, Robert Smithson 及我本人作品中相关联的理念。

他们的作品皆关乎对边沿的重新定义,在这一点上与我的作品相近,且以一种不可见的力量给正在膨胀的当代艺术实践以活力。

(翻译:赵尔卓)

*Dark Energy:**Working at the Perimeter*

暗物质:边沿之作

Deborah Cornell

狄波拉·康奈尔

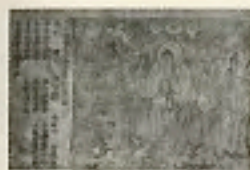


Figure 1: Oldest Chinese woodcut print, Buddhist scripture, Wu Zetian period, c.684-705 A.D.



Figure 2: Christiane Baumgartner. Left: Tryptichon 2005 woodcut. Right: Eine Sekunde 2004, 25 woodcuts.

1. INTRODUCTION & ISSUES

"What our perception presents us with...is an infinitely complex, dynamic whole envelope of the world and our being in it".- Robert Irwin¹

The contemporary understanding of space as the "envelope of the world" is changing. "Dark energy" (in the world of science) is a proposed repulsive force, counteracting gravity, and accelerating the expansion of the cosmos.² What exists at the edge of human visibility is no longer sure. Matter itself has a dark side, which appears to be transforming into a new form of energy.

This concept is one among many in contemporary physics that changes our understanding of matter and space. As technology transforms the range of human perceptions, in the world of contemporary art this new awareness is reflected in the complex practices of artists. Artists are moving away from accepted central practice toward a nebulous porous perimeter, a process that echoes the weakening gravitational field around dark matter, as a result of dark energy.

Certain important concepts in current thinking are common to many contemporary artists.

These include:

- Reframing the vision of time, a result of time compression created by the internet and time dilation enabled by digital transformations
- Awareness of "process" as inescapable, and of large patterns of change occurring simultaneously
- Transformation of space to represent things unseen, as materiality becomes deceptive
- An awareness of interdependence, and relationship, under the influence of scientific research

These concepts energize innovative artistic forms. (See Figure 1) Similar elements of innovation have been present since the origin of prints - especially in the west - and they continue today. The discipline first developed from the need for an effective movement of ideas, it advanced technically to carry the message of concept, and its processes involved elements of time and displacement in space. In the newest forms though, frequently there is an evaporation of formerly tactile material into digital vapor. This paper will touch on the porousness and transmutation of new forms and new concepts, and mapping techniques that establish our position in the world.

2. ARTISTS & WORKS

The works of artists Christiane Baumgartner, Ingrid Ledent, Oscar Munoz, Suzanne Anker, and one of my new works will connect to these issues. (See Figure 2) These artists consider a changed understanding of the world from the perspective of process and experiment - each occupies the perimeter of print practice.

Christiane Baumgartner is a German printmaker/videographer who works with the time-based perception of the human eye. Tryptichon is a sequence of large woodcuts, taken from a passage of video. Inspired by the visual play of sequenced images, her interest is in the temporal transformation that occurs within the electronic frames of moving media. Her prints

¹ Robert Irwin, p. 10

² http://hubblesite.org/hubble_discoveries/dark_energy/06-what_is_dark_energy.php

³ <http://www.premiecombat.it/ingrid-ledent-68216>

develop miniscule changes of position that differentiate progressive moments of perception and movement.

In *Eine Sekunde*, Baumgartner used video taken from a moving vehicle. Since the human eye sees more than the brain can perceive, the whole is more than its perceived parts. She isolated one second of material into its separate 25 frames and then made one independent exact woodcut from each frame creating a rhythmically divided device for depicting time within material.

Baumgartner's fascination with the subtle transformations of time and movement are echoed in the experiments of Ingrid Ledent, professor of lithography at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp. (Figure 3) Ledent is known for her elegant perfection of lithography using hand drawn images based on the delicate textures of human skin. In recent works, lithographs occur alongside digital and time-based forms that follow her thoughts about the experience of time. Her lithographs are often overprinted with reiterated gestures to imply process.

In the installation *Mindstream of Consciousness*, sculptural elements re-frame the 2D surface to a 3D space connecting to the viewer. Her use of video projection transforms the static surface of the paper to a deceptive, moving non-narrative cadence. Her non-referential forms dissolve and shift visually.

She says: "Process influences the content and the content influences the process." She continues: "Time, since it is also... a process, is the basic theme in my work. Emerging out of the manner in which I experience time, I highlight what can not be interpreted as concrete, within measurable time... This is a foundation for my images, a non-transparent, archaic tissue of frequently recurring forms."³

The shifting quality of these works is echoed in the work of Oscar Munoz. (Figure 4.) He is concerned with transformation and process, and especially the distrust of absolutes of reality, as both image and matter disintegrate over time in his work. The idea that perception is unstable, mutable and multi-level recalls the tenets of phenomenology, which studied perception and the constitution of meaning in human experience (See Merleau-Ponty).⁴

Munoz, a Colombian artist, uses media including photography, printmaking, drawing, installation, video and sculpture. In printmaking, he revises traditional technical and conceptual methods to purposely challenge materiality. Emphasizing the transitory nature of human existence, Munoz dissolves image, oscillating between presence and absence. *Narcissi in process* is a set of silkscreened self-portraits printed in charcoal pigment floated onto the surface of water in shallow pans, lined with paper. As the water slowly evaporates, the pigment settles onto the paper creating a variation of the original image, each altered slightly by time and physics.⁵

In *Aliento*, images screened onto mirrors become visible only when viewers breathe on them. The images are young Colombians proclaimed "disappeared" by their government. As the condensation fades, so do the images. The viewers see themselves reflected with another. Munoz suggests that the moment of encounter reveals hidden dimensions.⁶

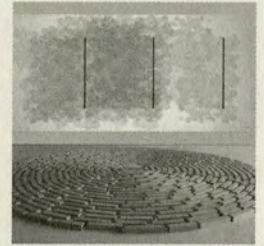


Figure 3: Ingrid Ledent, *Mindstream of Consciousness* 2006
Lithography and video-projection



Figure 4: Oscar Munoz Left:
Narcissi en proceso (Narcissi in Process), 2010 (series 1994, ongoing) Screen-printed charcoal powder on water. Right:
Aliento, (Respiration), 1996-2002 Mirror, silkscreen

4 See Maurice Merleau-Ponty, phenomenological philosopher. Merleau-Ponty was strongly influenced by Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger.

5 <http://www.philagrafika2010.org/artist/oscar-mu%C3%B1oz> (Accessed July 5, 2015)

6 Amanda Jane Graham, <http://lap.sagepub.com/content/early/2011/12/15/0094582X11431807>



Figure 5: Robert Smithson, Film still from the film *Spiral Jetty*

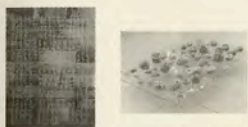


Figure 6: Suzanne Anker Left: *Symbolic Species 2000* Silk-screen and pigment on frosted Mylar 24 x 36".

Right: *Biota 2011 Porcelain*, silver-leaf rapid prototype figurines; Size and format variable



Figure 7: Deborah Cornell, *Wind Driven* (sound by Richard Cornell) Left: Still Image. Right: As installed Vimeo link: <https://vimeo.com/114947442>

The understanding that disparate moments in time can connect was forecast by a much earlier artist Robert Smithson, active in the early 70's, also working at the innovative perimeter of his time. Smithson was a visionary, keenly aware of the complexity of process, of crossovers in time and material, and especially of complex dependent relationships. (Figure 5)

Smithson wrote: "The strata of the Earth is a jumbled museum. Embedded in the sediment is a text which contains limits and boundaries which evade the rational order, and social structures which confine art...when one scans the ruined sites of prehistory, one sees a heap of wrecked maps that upsets our present art historical limits."⁷

Smithson's most famous earthwork *Spiral Jetty* was actually extensive – it comprised videos, essays and a set of collaged printed images of the jetty, juxtaposed with images he saw as being of parallel importance - including salt crystals and dinosaurs.⁸ Smithson's intense interest in parallel relationships was based on volumes of far reaching information, much of it scientific in origin. Since that time, the widespread supremacy of science has developed, influencing new artists and substantiating Smithson's conviction that large patterned relationships among forms of matter are of great importance. The world of science informs many new media, such as electronic arts, 3D prototyping and lasers. Recent discoveries in genetic engineering and nanotechnology reinforce an emphasis on the interactions of forms.

Suzanne Anker is a visual artist and theorist working between art and biological science. Founder of the Nature and Technology BioArt Lab at the School of Visual Arts NY, she works in many media - digital sculpture, installation, large-scale photography, and plants grown under LED lights. (Figure 6)

Works such as *Symbolic Species* and *Biota* question the edge where technology transforms nature or vice versa, and what happens when tactile experience becomes digital units. Anker has said that "the sign becomes an abbreviated blueprint of cultural code summarizing the materialization of ideas into visual form."⁹ She writes "Art, as a practice which employs all other disciplines as its subject matter, is currently embracing science as a way to expand its lexicon. These images and objects...carry untold stories and become catalysts for further inventive processes."¹⁰

Recently, attention has gathered most effectively around hybrid forms, mixed practices, and cross-disciplinary connections. The viewpoints that pervade all this work resonate closely with my own.

I work from the standpoint of a personal practice that uses evanescent forms. (Figure 7.) I involve the large empty spaces that surround the human sphere of action. The properties of matter have become magnified (as in the theory of dark energy) and at the same time microscopic (as in string theory) making it difficult to visualize what is really occurring.

My work incorporates genetic issues, climatic diagramming, biological edges, and the patterns of cultural expression – with sources in technology and research. I use digital process as a coded language that enables mutability and transience. Digital art forms occupy an insubstantial invisible space that can suggest layered realities and an awareness of the complexity

7 Robert Smithson in Holt, Nancy (Ed.), p.177

8 Lawrence Alloway notes in his essay "Site/Nonsite," that Smithson "acknowledged complexity and contradiction as a working condition." <http://www.robertsmithson.com/introduction/introduction.htm#02>

9 Jennifer Eberbach, <http://www.jenthewriter.info/suzanneanker.html>

10 Suzanne Anker, <http://www.interalliamag.org/articles/suzanne-anker/>

surrounding us. My recent work includes collaborations with artists, scientists and musicians, using digital print, time-based media, and electronic and performed sound.

A recent collaboration, "Wind Driven", is a 9-minute video and concert performance, commissioned by *Boston Musica Viva*, a cutting-edge contemporary music ensemble. My collaborator, composer Richard Cornell, wrote the concert performance score. In using both visual and aural platforms, we find both parallels and divergences in process and in approach.

Wind Driven focuses the idea of interlocking natural systems and cultural histories that control our present moment. Many - such as climate - are in transition, and indicate profound impending changes. (Figure 8) A recurring image is a graph of atmospheric pressure, showing the forces that drive the air and sea, cultures, and even cellular life. Another image is the triangle, a symbol of caution, and also other devices (directly accessed from my prints) such as water forms, genetics and archeology. Visually, the element of darkness suggests spaces that are obscured from our view.

Wind Driven's sounds include natural sources (an offshore storm, thunder in a canyon), that determine the harmonic resonances. Sonic filtering echoes various points in the video, where the video structure reflects depth and change. Emphasizing particular wavelengths by filtering, in sound or light, is a formulation of our interest in parallel process. This work is not printmaking in the sense of marks on paper, and it is far from the medium's center. It has transformed to a light-and-energy-based production. But its essence depends on a broad base of printmaking process, from actual expressive marks to a layered perception and reproducible iterations. Working on the perimeter of recognized forms is working from a space with few boundaries, and it offers both a dynamic energy and an open field of action.



Figure 8: Deborah Cornell, *Wind Driven*, Sound by Richard Cornell, Commission by Boston Musica Viva, Still images from video. Vimeo link: <https://vimeo.com/114947442>

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