

In Flux

By

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Abstract

“In Flux” was an exploration of how energy affects and harmonizes with matter. These works were influenced by the unification of many elements into a whole, as seen in the flow of nature, dance, religion, and society as a whole. The initial materials I used were chosen based on their plasticity to quickly illustrate how tension and gravity shaped them. They were then rendered rigid with fiberglass and pigmented resin to freeze and emphasize my discoveries. Finally, the works were arranged in the gallery to create a sense of the underlying concept of unifying multiple elements into a balanced and harmonious composition.

In Flux

Jacob Burmood

As a child, I spent my free hours walking along a creek that had carved its way through a wooded area. All the forces that governed the path of the stream also governed the rocks, vegetation and creatures that surrounded it, and though their reaction to these forces differed, they remain related. Becoming part of the interwoven complexities that worked in conjunction gave a sense of deep harmony and simplicity, and is the basis of my inspiration.

I became aware of the unification of elements coming together and moving as one in many of my past experiences...the Pentecostal church I was raised in, as the Holy Spirit descended; the intuition and alignment with an opponent's actions during a martial arts spar—necessary to find advantage; the dancer moving in concert with light, music and sound at a rave; even society at large, with all its flaws, constantly seeking to perfect itself. Balance is not struck merely by eliminating discord, but by harmonizing with it.

Being raised in a religious home, the idea of an unadulterated, inexplicable and conscious force guides my search for an alignment of dynamism with inert matter into a dance between the two that demonstrates grace and balance. Harmony reflects an underlying order that composes individual elements into a unified whole that move as one. To me, this is god. This spiritual quest of discovering the concomitant nature of material and energy is deeply rooted in the same stuff of religion, and comes from a need to understand the machinations we are subject to in a way that applies to and elevates everyday life.

As I grew older, I became interested in martial arts. Over the course of my teenage years, I practiced several forms. It instilled a deep relationship of awareness to environment with body and

movement. The muscle memory of this practice paired with the strongest influence of my work: dance and rave culture.

The genre of dance at these events was a smooth and fluid movement known as “Liquid.” One hand followed the other to creating gestalt spheres that morphed and to flowed to the rhythm. Done with glow-sticks in a darkened room, it created ephemeral forms that pulsated to the music in a synesthetic illustration of the movement of sound. The connection between martial arts and dance fused into a transformative kata that allowed me to weave into the elements of light, sound and communal grace of these temporal utopias. The crowd moved as one. It was an almost identical experience to the ones I had as a child in a Pentecostal church when the Holy Spirit descended onto the congregation.

As the event drew to a close, the music stopped and the lights came on, separating the people from the dynamic unification of music, and from each other. With a strong desire to bring something of the experience back, I often went home alone to draw, trying to recapture what had escaped us. The lines I drew mimicked the undulations of dance and became the basis for the sculptures I made as an undergraduate. The studio became my sanctuary. I entered the process of forming, filing and sanding with religious fervor until each sculpture reached a state of refinement and permanence necessary to demonstrate and capture that massive and ephemeral communion.

As an artist, I create forms through multiple layers of process and material to discover an underlying order that unifies elements and forces as they converge. The initial material I choose, such as wire, screen or cloth, is plastic and given to immediate change—much like water. The process of its manipulation is not just driven by the pull of my subconscious—that gravity created by the collection of past experience, but also through new revelation given by the constant natural forces that affect us all.



“Laminations I (4' x 2 ½' x 2') and Laminations II (5 ½' x 3 ½' x 4'). Aluminum screen, fiberglass, pigmented resin. 2013.

The armatures of “Laminations I and II” began as a series of actions to change the flat plane of the aluminum screen into three-dimensional forms. By pinning, twisting, and stretching aluminum screen, inherent tensions created potential energy that visually flowed through the entire form. This unification of distinct movements into one resolution was further developed with layers of pigmented resin, obscuring the underlying material while emphasizing its movement and flow of transformation. These layers of color darken and lighten to parallel the convolutions of the form. Grinding through these layers revealed an accident of process—an organic pattern that showed a visual rhyme scheme between the verses of form and surface while showing the process of build-up and removal. This process allowed for the discovery and illustration of the relationship between cause and effect.



“New Wings.” Aluminum screen, fiberglass, pigmented resin, cloth. 5’ x 5 ½’ x 3’. 2013.

The introduction of cloth to the aforementioned method of manipulating aluminum screen led to “New Wings,” and became pivotal in this body of work. The sinuous nature of the screen armature became an anchor. It held and shaped the cloth from its initial drape to points of suspension. Gravity, tension and the materiality of the cloth became the final authorities defining this structure. It embodies “In Flux,” as an evolutionary step, and the seamless marriage of two separate materials and processes into one.



“Lifting the Veil.” Cloth, resin. Dimensions variable. 2013.

“Lifting the Veil” examined the same issues with different material. It began as a series of experiments of cloth dipped in resin to investigate the effect of weight on drape. This became a more direct way to explore my relationship with material while working in concert with the inescapable force of gravity. The resin set and created relics of the process, no longer affected by the forces that shaped them. Finally, they were arranged into a unified composition to illustrate on a larger scale how tension and gravity shaped the individual elements.



“In Flux” Installation Shot 2013

Finally, the works were arranged in the gallery to create a sense of the underlying concept of unifying multiple elements into a balanced and harmonious composition. “Laminations I and II” were placed across from each other to create a balance between the two. “New Wings” was placed in the center foreground to signify its link between the two ways of working. Finally, “Lifting the Veil” extended up the center of the wall in elevation of this new way of working.