Hylomorphs

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A Thesis Submitted To The Faculty Of Graduate Studies In Partial Fulfilment Of The Requirements For The Degree Of Master of Fine Arts

Graduate Program in Visual Arts

York University

Toronto, Ontario

June 2016

Abstract:

Art making is dependent on the processes by which the works are made and the choices of the artist orient the experience of both viewer and artist alike. This support paper accompanies the exhibition “Hylomorphs” and serves as an auto-ethnology of making. In working with materials in a direct and tactile fashion I explore the dispositional role of objects in spaces as well as New Materialist approaches to the non-human and Material Agency. By working in a slow and engaged manner I respond to the push of the materials to forge a collaborative process between artist and material.

Dedication:

To Marie-Chantal, Onyx, and Maël.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank Brandon Vickerd, Nell Tenhaaf, and Natasha Myers for their help and support as my committee. Zeke Moores for the hours of conversation and help. Chris Preece for acting as both assistant and muscle in equal measures. Joel Wengel and Roch Smith for organizing the chaos and keeping the studio running.

I would also like to thank and give credit to Michael Jenkin, Enas AlTarawneh, Jaspal Singh, Robert Codd-Downey, Shreyansh Jain, and Masoud Hoveidar Sefid for their hard work and dedication getting the robotics and vision components of “Stone” running. Their expertise has been invaluable. A special thankyou to Matthew Oliskew for resolving a critical hardware issue with the robotics.

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“Hylomorphs” Exhibition Plan and Drivers

My thesis exhibition “Hylomorphs” is comprised of three sites, each of which contains a branch of the work I developed through my MFA research. Consisting of three sculptures/installations, “Cloud”, “Timber” and “Stone” that are linked by similar processes and ideologies, the thesis research embodies materiality, affect, and potential, which binds them into a unified exhibition. I am interested in how, as an artist, I can work with materials in a direct and tactile manner and in so doing respond to the affective push back that the materials generate when being worked with. The research, discussions, and reading conducted during the MFA at York University has identified different theorists to help articulate why and how I make the work that I do. The labour of working is framed here within the context that Sarah Ahmed refers to as orientation in her paper “Orientations Matter”:

> Orientations shape the corporeal substance of bodies and whatever occupies space. Orientations affect how subjects and objects take shape in the way that they do. The writer writes, and the labour of writing shapes the writers body. … Orientations are about how matter surfaces by being directed in one way or another (Ahmed 235).

Ahmed frames orientation as a deliberate and reciprocal process in which both the creator and their medium impose change, form and structure upon one another. It resonates with my practice and how I direct my attention; my process of working allows me to respond to the resonance of the material. Working shapes not only the material for sculpture, but I am changed by the process as well. I am strengthened by the work, my hand grows surer, I learn more about my materials with each sculpture and it allows a wider range of articulation.

I choose the materials for each work through a process of intuitive leaps triggered by the vibrancy of the materials then I analyse the results looking for additional resonances. Some of the potency of material that resonates with me is rooted in visceral reactions, similar to the reactions found in theories of New Materialism. Jane Bennett describes this as "Thing-Power" in her book *Vibrant Matter*:

> Glove, pollen, rat, cap, stick. As I encountered these items, they shimmied back and forth between debris and thing – between, on the one hand, stuff to ignore, except insofar as it betokened human activity (the workman's efforts, the litterer's toss, the rat-poisoner's success), and, on the other hand, stuff that commanded attention in its own right, as existents in excess of their association with human meanings, habits, or projects. In the second moment, stuff exhibited it's thing-power: it issued a call, even if I did not understand what it was saying. At the very least, it provoked affects in me: I was repelled by the dead (or was it merely sleeping?) rat and dismayed by the litter, but I also felt something else: a nameless awareness of the impossible singularity of **that** rat, **that** configuration of pollen, **that** otherwise utterly banal, mass-produced plastic water-bottle cap (Bennett 4).

The engagement Bennett describes in relating to the objects she found in the gutter articulates the focus that is brought to objects in the right arrangement and context. She highlights the inherent lively nature of inanimate objects. I often feel them reach out to pull on different kinds of associations that I am carrying, the vibrancy of the objects generating a refocusing of attention, or a re-orientation that steers a deeper exploration of experience of things and places. The process and the resulting works, are part of an ongoing dialogue in which the

underpinning responsiveness of New Materialism is put into practice: the “Things” I focus my attentions on are not abstract concepts but concrete and tactile entities. The fabrication of my sculpture is time consuming, allowing the pushback between material and labour to go back and forth many times over the evolution of each sculpture. Throughout the process I am also trying to predict how the resulting form will affect the viewing public as they experience the works, I want to carry some of the wonder I encounter while working and bring it to the audience. The works presented in “Hylomorphs” are the result of my attempts to carry these dialogues into the public sphere in an affective manner, where they can be felt and lived by anyone regardless of inculcation in art and academia.

The choice to divide the works into three spaces arose in part from the large scale and in part from the very specific needs that each work has for display, which cannot be accommodated in any single room gallery. In an ideal mounting of “Hylomorphs” “Stone” would be installed outside of an exhibition in pedestrian space to interact with both art viewers and the public, “Timber” would be in an entrance hall of sorts that could be either public or incorporated into the gallery but acts as a transition space between busy public space and the more intimate space to come, Cloud would be in a chamber that provides a quieter more contemplative space.

“Timber” was mounted in the Special Projects Gallery and was composed of three sculptures. Each sculpture is made from the trunk of a felled Ash tree that was dead or dying through the effects of the Emerald Ash Borer. The sculptures vary in height from 7’ 8” to nearly 9’ depending on the aspects of the individual trunks used in their construction. Each tree stands on a custom cast metal base with a rounded bottom that allows each tree to rock when pushed or bumped, and to fall if handled too roughly. The smallest tree, with numerous pierced knot

holes was placed in line with the window of the gallery and somewhat to the right of the door and slightly closer to the east wall. In the main gallery space the largest tree was near the back, and closer to the south-west wall of the gallery stood the mid-sized tree; the space directly across from the entrance was reserved for signage. The window in Special Projects Gallery was critical to the exhibition, providing a longer view on approach than a closed gallery does, an experience not unlike walking up to the edge of a forest. The sight of the whole installation when approaching the gallery primed the observer with the broader image of the work, showcasing how the objects physically related to one another before they related to the viewer's body.

The general illumination of the gallery was somewhat dim with each sculpture lit from above to highlight the textures of the sculptures, particularly the tooled surfaces inside the trunks. The placement of the trees in relation to each other was designed with an eye to maximizing the chances that viewers will accidentally contact a tree while attempting to get a longer look at another. The viewers were invited to push the trees and put them in motion by gallery attendants who were also encouraged to demonstrate the movement of the sculptures at unexpected times. Each tree is able to tilt to a point where it appears to be on the verge of falling and viewer reactions can be quite dramatic and it is possible to knock the trees over. The potential of collapse is ever present and somewhat unpredictable, as each tree has a different range of motion, when one of the trees was pushed over it suffered minor damage. This means that the viewer must negotiate with each member of timber on an individual basis to see how far they are willing to make it travel.

“Cloud” was located in the Gales Gallery, which required the occlusion of light from one of the glass doors with opaque signage. The illumination in the gallery cycled over the course of 20 minutes, as custom lighting circuitry faded the gallery lights in and out in. Near the centre of the gallery sat a carved marble cloud that appears to be seated precariously atop a haphazard construction of sticks cast in aluminum. Under full illumination the rich surface of the marble and intricate textures of the armature were the dominant visual. Contained within the carved cloud is a microprocessor and an array of high powered LED chips so intermittent flashes of light can be seen in flickering from within the marble in specific places. As the light dims the materiality of the marble became less prevalent, and the flashes of light take the focus as the surface of the armature became a vehicle to refract that light. The pattern of illumination is randomized by an algorithm that is programmed to emulate the intensity of a thunderstorm. The combined carved hollow and striations in the marble create a sense of insubstantial depth in the translucent stone.

“Stone” was located in the rotunda of Vari Hall as the work necessitates a pedestrian space with at least modest traffic and regular re-visitation by pedestrian commuters. The work was a large quarry block of limestone roughly 5’ x 3’ x 3’ which appears to sit on the ground within the rotunda. The block is hollow and rests upon an armature that houses a dual drive robot. The work was intended to be wirelessly connected to an array of cameras that analyse the movements of the pedestrians throughout the space in real time. Custom software designed by Enas AlTarawneh (a graduate student at the Lassonde School of Engineering) and Michael Jenkin (Head of the Robotics and Vision Lab at York University) identifies the desire paths (preferred paths of human travel) that criss-cross the space, and instructs the robot hidden

within the quarry block to move to intersect the desire path. As the project progressed Enas had to step back from the work due to unrelated health concerns, Robert Codd-Downey (PhD Candidate in Engineering), Massoud Hoveidar Sefid (Masters Candidate in Engineering), and Shreyansh Jain Jeetmal (Undergraduate student in Engineering) become involved in the continued development of the work. The technical requirements are extremely sensitive and are still progressing after the presentation of “Hylomorphs”. The movements of the robot are controlled so that the block should only travel a couple of metres per hour, with the goal of keeping the robot’s movements as imperceptible as possible to the viewer while they are in the space. The intention is that the power of the work be evident when the viewer passes through the space regularly to see that the huge block is in constant, albeit slow motion. “Stone”’s realization as part of this exhibition was incomplete. The software and hardware were still being developed and tested right up until the day the work was installed and key portions of it did not work. The inclusion of the work in its current state was an important step in the development of my practice, as without this kind of public, and lengthy test it is impossible to identify many of the stresses that the mechanism is subject to. The mounting of “Stone” also let me see how the public and the object interact with each other, so that I can continue to develop the work. “Stone” had to be shut down after 3.5 hours when an odour from the robot gave us concerns that the device might be burning.

Trajectory of my practice:

Throughout my life I have always been a person who likes to get my hands dirty and engage directly with materials and the labour of manipulating them. My interaction with them however was always rooted in my inherent reactions to the natural qualities of a given material, and in

how they respond to my subsequent actions. When I built sandcastles as a child it was not by compressing sand into buckets as a mold but by running a slurry of sand through my fingers to build up stalagmites into Gaudi-esque spires. When in my teens, I would break rocks as it allowed me to be the first person to see the internal structure of that particular rock. Polished stones and interesting pieces of driftwood inevitably found their way into my pockets like little treasures.

There is an old saying amongst paddlers that a wilderness canoeist needs only two things to be successful: a strong back and a weak memory, I have found the same is also true of material sculpture. I learned to paddle at 3, by thirteen I was taking excursions into the Canadian Shield for weeks at a time. Between 1993 and 2014 I spent the equivalent of over a year on trips. The culture of wilderness canoe tripping circles is to struggle to experience beauty, the effort expended in reaching a location only adds to the sense of wonder at the sights you see. This outlook has shaped my work habits and work ethics into a willingness to labour long and hard for the results I want in my sculptures.

My travels took me into the heart of an ancient landscape that is rarely traveled today, country where I felt the “dominance of man” implied by our built environment and our ability to contort the world to our convenience by building is laid bare as a myth we crafted to comfort ourselves in the face of an overwhelmingly vast world. I could wander outside the city and see the world as a place where we are no more dominant than we are aloof from its processes of renewal and decay. I have never felt so small and vulnerable as I have in the grip of a set of rapids, or walking under the canopy of a truly untouched boreal forest. This was not the transcendental experience of the divine illustrated by Henry David Thoreau (Cronon), but rather as an

affirmation that I was a part of an enormous world in process of "becoming." Here, my vulnerability is dictated by my unimportance within the greater whole articulated by William Connolly in "Materialities of Experience":

> By **immanence** I mean a philosophy of becoming in which the universe is not dependent on a higher power. It is reducible to neither mechanistic materialism, dualism, theo-teleology nor the absent God of minimal Theology. It concurs with the last three philosophies that there is more to reality than actuality. But that "more" is not given by a robust or minimal God (Connolly 178).

I am continually trying to come to terms with the way in which my surroundings have an agency, trajectory and timeline that are oblivious to me and my desires. In this passage Connolly captures my atheist perspective of an overwhelming presence not of a single entity, but a presence that is the combined affect of thousands of actors. The broad world neither tests **me**, nor seeks to challenge **me**, but is totally indifferent to my individual existence. My belief in the absence of a higher power guiding the world and preparing a place for humanity helps me accept that there is no inherent hierarchy of things, only that which I construct. The agency of the backcountry that so dwarfs me is not crafted for me in the biblical sense, it is something that I am merely part of. I am only more important than the trees, rocks, and moose because I choose to believe that. The experience of being an insignificant part of the world is one that has become central to my art practice and to my interpretation of New Materialism, the agency of things does not rely on me.

While living in the city I am surrounded by the constructions of people, built to smooth our world. For years scholars like Bertrand Russell have stated “speech, fire, agriculture, tools, and largescale co-operation.” (Russell, 15) have distinguished us from other animals. Cities, many would argue, are the pinnacle of what these tools can achieve on a massive scale. The control we assert over the landscape and the spaces that we occupy in building our cities, towns and villages creates a powerful and comforting sense of stability. Like a bowerbird’s decorated nest, or the bog created by a beaver dam, all of the things that any creature builds are still subject to natural processes and begin to decay as soon as they are completed. I used to relate time to the scale that seems most situationally appropriate, minutes, days, hours dominated my life. Through my work I have become more interested in longer spans of time, and how change takes place incrementally. I have started to notice change and decay that always escaped me, erosion of concrete, shoots of plants displacing stones. The incremental and insidious changes wrought by time and natural processes seem beneath the radar of daily life. The notice that the broader world will take of my passage is also of interest to me as the whole of humanity barely registered in geological terms until the industrial era. This inspires me to try and craft a lens through which to showcase incremental, and subtle changes in the familiar objects and places that surround us.

The complimentary time spent between these two different but inter-related landscapes gave me an appreciation of the forms, colours, textures and patterns that make up the landscape of Canada. I have also sought to pay closer attention to the nature of my materials and to be more responsive to the potential in the objects and materials around me. This relationship to potential has evolved into an exploratory art making process wherein the material and I are

working in a collaborative process. Working on a piece reveals information about the material, which in turn influences how I continue in creating the form. Giuseppe Penone has successfully

Figure 1

engaged in this relationship, specifically in his works with trees and timber. It is a very respectful approach to the material history that he engages with in works like “Repeating the Forrest”(1980-2014)(Nasher Sculpture Centre), as he exposes the younger tree within a sawn timber or creates a window into a tree trunk ”Cedro di Versailles”(2004). I admire the way he connects with the past tree in the timber. In many of my works before “Hylomorphs” I explicitly showcased some of the same history of my materials by working with the grain and pattern of the stone, showcasing fossils found within, and using simulated erosion. While no longer the primary focus of my work, it is still very much a part of some of the sculptures.

Considering my tactile and experiential methods, my undergraduate studies provided a conceptual depth and counter point to my previous experience. Sharon Alward, a professor

under whom I studied, was a performance artist who was particularly interested in the conceptual art of the late 60's and 70's. I was encouraged to consider the communicative implications of the materials I was choosing, and to delve into subject matter into which I was personally invested. The works that we were directed to for inspiration were prominent Conceptual artists such as Chris Burden, Vito Acconci, Joseph Beuys, and Hans Haacke among others. I was fascinated by the manner in which they would engage in social and political discourse through their art work but the rough, deskilled aesthetic was alienating. While I recognize the importance of the Conceptual art movement I am deeply ambivalent about the way in which it changed the public relationship with art. The pointed engagement with social issues and the challenging questions Conceptual art asked about the role of art in society were quite valuable, but the pursuit of deliberately shocking aesthetics also had a profound effect on who was engaging in the conversation of the work. Rather than viewing beauty as diminishing the intellectual value of the work, as many conceptual artists profess, I see it as an entry point to the work. The type of beauty that interests me taps into an innate desire for proximity to objects and spaces, a sense of compositional balance and fullness of being in my creations. I am particularly interested in how an object can inspire the desire to touch it and how a well-made work of art can be experienced on a visceral level. I draw from the western tradition of fine finish, as well as incorporating my interpretation of Japanese traditions embracing flaws and transience in aesthetics. The results typically incorporate the natural imperfections of my materials and juxtapose them with seamless finish in others parts of the work. When a work of art is beautiful, it can draw in an audience who are not already looking for meaning in art. Once people are engaged with the sculpture, the conversation with the artwork can naturally

progress for the individual viewer. I choose to use beauty in my sculptures as I feel that it removes a barrier to the artwork for viewers who are not part of the art world. The depth to which they then engage with the theory, poetry, and subject matter of the work is then open for as deep a relationship as the individual viewer chooses.

My thesis exhibition “Hylomorphs” is a continuation of a long and complicated relationship between the human and non-human that I have been exploring but I am also interested in engaging with a broader audience than the one that specifically chooses to go to galleries. Works such as “The Gates” by Christo and Jeanne-Claude fascinated me, in 2004 I traveled from Winnipeg to New York specifically to see the exhibition. The experience of being there was so much more than any documentation could capture, being surrounded by the work, listening to the rippling fabric as gusts of wind played across the gates in succession. The immersive quality of such massive art installations was breathtaking, but the ephemerality of a 2 week exhibition began to feel too disposable to work with my own process. I wanted to move towards similar immersive affect, but create works that were to be lived with long term.

In the early periods of my research I would frequently frame the conversation in which my work was engaged as relating to “Nature” and “Urban/Industrial”, however I now question the entire concept of nature as a separate entity. As my work progresses it has become apparent that this is a false binary of natural and human constructions, my research now grapples to bridge that construct into a singular cohesive whole in my work. As is apparent in this paper I am still struggling with how to verbally articulate that singularity, but I feel that the work does a much cleaner job of expressing the united whole where the untouched surfaces sit comfortably beside highly finished portions and simulated nature. Much of this support paper is a fleshing

out of my process and the methodology I use to explore both my concepts and my fabrication. It is also important to look at these works through the lens of public art. While both “Cloud” and “Timber” can function inside of a gallery setting, “Stone” cannot, it requires pedestrian commuter traffic to realize its full potential and I prefer to have a large portion of the audience unaware at first that the block is art and not just an architectural accent. All three of the components of “Hylomorphs” would be equally at home in public to some capacity and I frequently think of the works in terms of how it will be both perceived and interacted with by the viewer. There is an elegance to placing art into a context where the viewer is not expecting art, letting the work become part of daily life instead of a cloistered refuge from the drudgery of life. I like to think that in this manner the art must provide its own preciousness or value instead of letting value be implied by the gallery context. Stepping into public space however also brings into play many new and often uncontrollable factors that feed and jeopardize the success of the work. Behavior of the public can be unpredictable and the wear on the work is much higher. The risk of failure, in both material fabrication and in concept is both exciting and necessary for the type of work that I am striving to create.

To create sculpture I make assumptions and educated guesses of how my materials and the eventual viewers of the work will react to my interventions. Each of the three projects in my thesis works began with specific assumptions of material agency, affect, potential, and a vision of enticing aesthetic resolution. The development of each work is a discovery period where materials and design are re-assessed in an effort to help each one reach beyond its component parts. What I work towards in each sculpture is the use of form and material to encourage

specific assumptions in the viewers, it helps to push the viewer into action and encourages the viewer to push back.

Specific pieces of material were frequently the catalyst that inspire my works. Each material is inseparable from the work that incorporates it, the material qualities dictated important components of the composition and play a large roll in how the feel of the sculpture can be conveyed. The materiality is integral to each sculpture which cannot be reproduced in another fashion without losing the vibrancy that brings it to life. There is a certain preciousness to the way in which I consider the things I make, I am showcasing things that I think have value, objects that I feel have been overlooked. My choices to include more traditional materials like cast bronze and marble become indicators of the value I place in the other materials that make up the work. The history of craftsmanship which I bring to my works speaks volumes about how much attention I feel the subject deserves. Put plainly, stand up a log and you have a log, place it on custom cast and well finished bronze and you have an object that has been tended to and revered, the difference is immediately apparent on a visceral level.

The progression of the fabrication becomes inseparable from the conceptual development of the work. I do not treat design and fabrication as independent stages of art-making but rather a unified simultaneous process, I am not trying to impose my vision on my materials but rather to collaborate with the material to make something that is from both of us. The end results are bound in a collaborative process between material, artist, and the specialists who have participated in processing the materials and in the making of the work. While I claim authorship of the works I acknowledge that it would be impossible to realize any of them without the expertise and the input of many highly skilled people.

Cloud

My conversations with people about works in marble invariably begin around a limited set of foci. Most people are aware of marble as a material, but most often it has been invested with an air of weight, solidity, and permanence in the popular imagination. There is a rich and entrenched history to marble, conjuring images of aged figures frozen in athletic or heroic poses on display in stuffy museums in all of their unchanging glory, but there is also enormous potential of fragility and transience of stone that I am trying to tap into. My work with marble as a still living material has shown me the incredible vibrancy inherent in the stone. Marble has a fluidity and subtractive malleability that becomes apparent as it is worked with. When the working stops the resultant sculptures can often be quite fragile, and the stone returns to the realm of natural change, which is continuous and inevitable: the passage of time puts the work in a state of vibrating and competing dispositional potential. Keller Easterling outlines the potency of disposition and potential in her article *Disposition:*

> Disposition remains as a potential or tendency until activated, but it is present even in the absence of an event. Sometimes such an action cannot be recorded, not because it is a 'ghostly happening, but because it is not a happening at all.' He (Gilbert Ryle) used the example of a glass that was brittle, an attribute that was not in evidence unless the glass was shattered. He writes that to 'possess a dispositional property is not to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change; it is to be bound or liable to be in a particular state, or to undergo a particular change, when a particular condition is realized.' It is a 'hypothetical proposition' about the glass different from an event or

> ‘episode.’ The disposition cannot be proven as a definite ‘occurrence’ or what we might consider to be a definitive and singular piece of evidence (Easterling 253).

Disposition and potential are closely linked but there is a subtle difference for me, potential can be created through context, while disposition is something which is innate to the material or form. I rely on disposition encourage a particular set of assumptions in the viewer about what the work will and will not do. A stone block is disposed to be static, even permanent, random internal illumination disrupts that assumption. Stone is expected to be heavy then placing it on a precarious armature implies the potential of collapse, the continued failure of the work to do so creates a cognitive dissonance for the viewer. The undermining of expectations communicated by disposition and potential are critical tools in the conceptualization and execution of my work.

The vibrancy, changeability, and fragility of the material as well as the potential luminosity discovered through my previous works is what the “Cloud” experiment is designed to engage. To prepare, I needed to understand how a cloud forms and behaves during certain weather patterns. I studied several different clouds and eventually settled on “cumulonimbus” clouds as the most appropriate for the sculpture. Weeks were spent looking at storm clouds in person, in photographs, and online. I then executed several drawings to better understand the interplay of shadow that gives a cloud its billowing effect. Only after this period of study and preparation did I feel I was ready to address the marble with at least a basic understanding of “Cloudness.”

The first stage of the experiment was to craft the object and hollow it out to the point of translucence. I decided it would be safest to establish the exterior form of the cloud before emptying it so that the profile will be familiar during the riskier work. I let the pattern of the schist veins play a guiding role in the form; there was not really a fixed formula, just a reflexive sense of what should be recessed. The whole process was an interesting exercise in balance between my understanding of the natural forms of cumulonimbus clouds, the form suggested by the pattern in the marble, and the need for enough internal space to manoeuver tools in the interior of the marble in the next stage when the marble is hollowed out.

Figure 2

After a rough carving of the initial cloud form it seemed to lack elegance, and had to be reworked to give the cloud a greater sense of life. The initial form was bulkier and blockier than

I was comfortable with (see fig 2). It pushed the cloud towards an art deco reference of bulky heroics, which in my opinion is too kitsch and clumsy. The inelegance made the work look overly solid and massive, which flew in the face of my intention to undermine the general preconception of stone as weighty and permanent. I suppose that it would have been fine to use the stone in a different state, rougher and blockier, to make the eventual floatation more incongruous and menacing, but this would have strayed into territory like a scaled down version of Michael Heizer's artwork installed at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art "Levitated Mass"(2012). Heizer created a work where the discomfort and implied menace are tangible elements of the work. I also find that the very obvious structural supports, that look like engineered structural supports make the work operate like a lintel across the cut, rather than a levitating stone. My vision for the cloud works more with a revelatory quality that comes from the marble's failure to comply with expectations. I wanted the sculpted form to seem natural when suspended precariously above the ground, and for the stone to act subversively on the viewer's perception until they are close enough to recognize the material. The gravity defying nature of it creates a sense of wonder. The affect I am striving for is rooted in the tacit sense of potential where the expected tendency of the object and space inherently imply an action, so that the sculpture exists perpetually on the brink of a change without ever completing the motion. The way in which I want the viewers move around the work is perceptibly changed because of that precarity, tiptoeing so as not to be the one to induce collapse.

Figure 3

Once the outside form was defined, the laborious process of hollowing out the form could begin. The earliest stages of opening the main column was relatively straight forward and accomplished swiftly, when carving out the closed space I quickly lost the ability to see what I was doing due to the dust. The only true measure I have of thickness is the translucence of the marble so I would grind and cut, evacuate the dust, and then look for the glow of daylight to show me if I was getting close to the thickness required. I had to be prepared for the distinct possibility that I would pierce the cloud inadvertently and was constantly considering the implication of an uncontrolled opening in the form.

The process of emptying the stone is delicate, labourious, and above all slow. Any impatience risks blowing through the stone, so the process instead becomes meditative. Week after week was spent rubbing the surface of the sculpture to create a uniform finish. I chose a lustrous surface of 120 grit sandpaper as the final finish in order to showcase the crystalline structure and translucence. High polish on the marble would have spoken of plastic and countertops in a manner that would be distracting to from the tactile and cloud-like aspects of the stone. The marble of the cloud needs to invite touch, this is a desire that gallery convention tells the viewer they must resist. Hopefully this tactile desire will manifest in the viewers being drawn into close examination of the cloud.

An ongoing struggle in the development of this sculpture has been the armature to support the marble as I wanted to raise the cloud up to near eyelevel of the average viewer. The completed sculpture should project an aura of lightness that belies the marble object, and have a sense of precariousness that seems to verge on collapse. The required rickety framework was achieved by taking one of my early attempts, turning it on its head and adding braces until solid (See fig 4). I remade many of the sticks, breaking them to length instead of sawing to enhance the sense of makeshift design. I was in part drawn to scaffolding like structure because it implies both construction/fabrication, but it also embodies impermanence. Scaffolding is always used as a means to an ends, something that facilitates but is ultimately disposable. The broken sticks underscore the implied disposability, the whole armature is in many ways at odds with the preciousness of materials of the marble cloud. The use of cast aluminum and high degree of

chasing on the armature challenges that interpretation leaving the viewer to consider the relationship of the material and the subject matter.

Figure 4

With the cloud perched atop the armature in near darkness, the marble appears somewhat weightless. As the light flickers and moves within the surface there is an aura of calm, and the cloud does not seem to be stone, but a tenuous and changing mass. As the external lights brighten the form seems solidify into stone, the internal lighting become almost invisible. The incongruence of the cloud's precarious perch and the preciousness of the marble is at odds with the rough appearance of the cast aluminum armature. The sculpture is a riot of contradictions that have coalesced into tense but alluring whole.

The reverberation between stone substance and weightless object operates in conversation with some works by Toronto artist Meghan Price, especially her sculpture "Body Rock" (n.d.)

(Fig 5, Price) wherein she uses a similar illusion of flying stone. Prices work in graphite on stitched paper uses the simulated surfaces and textures of stone on paper to add an impossible weight to the work. Price's work inspires a sense of wonder that is both disconcerting and alluring. Price also engages in a rougher aesthetic in some of her works, such as "Metamorphic," (n.d.) (Price) where the stitched paper has an exposed wooden armature that converses with questions of craftsmanship in a similar way to my work.

Figure 5

“Cloud” projects an indeterminate materiality that invites touch: there is a need to verify what you are looking at that can only be answered by the fingers, which in turn draws the audience close. The smooth, cool surface of the cloud can only be marble, while the hard, cold armature has none of the tactile warmth of the wood it resembles.

Timber

Shortly after my arrival at York University the Facilities staff started bringing large logs down to the sculpture courtyard and dropping them off. The collection kept growing and a pile of timber rose outside the studio. The trees were felled on campus as the result of an infestation of Emerald Ash Borer that is currently ravaging eastern North America. In fact, to my understanding, every Ash tree on campus was being taken down due the inexorable nature of the insect's progression. The Ash Borer is believed to have arrived in Detroit, Michigan in the early 2000's and has spread rapidly throughout southern Ontario. This tale was particularly resonant for me as a former Winnipegger, The City of Winnipeg has the largest urban elm forest in the world and has been actively fighting a losing battle with Dutch Elm Disease since the mid 70's. Invasive foreign species and conversations about their effects are common place and seem to have less of the traumatic dramatization that goes along with the newness of this current infestation in Ontario. The sight of all of the mature trunks lying on the ground was disturbing, as they had gone from vibrant living things to become static commodities waiting for processing. In repose they had lost something vital of their sense of presence and individuality. The difference between tree and log pile was stark, but there was a material resonance in the tableaux it created, and it was striking with how the debris pile oscillated with the image of living tree. I immediately wanted to see some of them returned to an upright position, allowing them to regain something of their agency, but standing a log back up merely creates a memorial to the tree. It conjures images of the 20th century tombstones provided through Modern Woodmen of the World, wherein trunks and stumps were carved of granite to commemorate the dead. I wanted to create something that would give a new sense of life to

these objects instead of showcasing their absence of life. It was also important that I not stray into a reanimation of the tree, like some ghastly marionette. Rather, it was better to focus on the creation of something new that amalgamates all of the actors on the tree during both life and death into something vibrant and if possible playful.

I started with the premise that an Ash tree trunk standing on a seemingly precarious base (which has been counterweighted to be self-righting) will invite engagement with the object. The act of touch (rarely permissible in art contexts) creates a nuanced interaction, as it encourages close examination of surface and promotes a tactile experience of the artwork.

Figure 6

The first log I chose to sculpt was based off of the pattern left on its surface by the Emerald Ash Borer (see fig. 6). The markings are typically meandering lines that wind like a prairie river along the cambium of the tree. The marks on this particular log were so dense that they took on a quality more akin to a written page in some indecipherable language than that of sparse cartography. I wanted to preserve the surface for use in the sculpture so I would have to work from the inside. Using steel wedges, hard wood wedges, and a large maul, I began splitting the log at the most prominent checking on the bottom end of the trunk. As the wedge drove into the end grain of the wood the existing crack began to run up the length of the tree. This tree must have been standing dead for some time, as the trunk split more cleanly that I had anticipated, requiring only the occasional driving of a hardwood wedge into the side of the crack leaving some modest indentations.

While it split fairly quickly compared to working with large stones, the act of splitting the wood was still an enormous exertion. It is this extremely physical act that I now realize is one of the major draws of sculpture for me. I feel like a complete being when using all of my capabilities in concert and trying to simultaneously expand my capacities. There is a euphoric state that sweeps over me as I complete the rough tasks in sculpting, and I am left constantly chasing that contentment in other stages of the work. My body becomes a tool that is specifically oriented to the work it does, and my mind begins to gain insight into the process and rigours of the type of making I choose to focus on. Sara Ahmed describes this interplay in “Orientations Matter”:

> The object leaves its impression: the action, as an intending as well as tending toward the object, shapes my body in this way and that. The work of repetition is not neutral work, it orients the body in some ways rather than others (Ahmed 246).

Ahmed's theory enters my practice in a tangible manner, the more I work, the more responsively I am able to work. As my fitness increases I tire more slowly, and can work more sensitively with greater attention to my materials. I have come to crave the exertion and adrenaline rush of carving and I take enormous satisfaction watching the dramatic changes which take place in the early carving of my wood and stone works. Part of the urge to work on a large scale is directly related to the adrenaline that comes with hard heavy work, and the satisfaction of completion. Through orientation to my work, my body becomes attuned to the labour, my mind sharpens to the process allowing an economy of movement to make me more efficient in my gestures.

Once the log was split I first tried to do the bulk removal of wood by fretting across the log with a chainsaw and hammering out half discs from the core of the trunk. Cutting the log is a delicate operation. Each cut is a risk: cut too shallow and the fret will not break, cut too deep and the saw leaves a slit in the log. When I started hollowing out the logs it was nerve racking, but after the first blow out I realized that while I would prefer to minimize the number of perforations, the cuts would be integrated nicely into the work as the sole geometric counterpoints of form.

Figure 7

The thinning of the log's walls eventually carved down to the existing checking in the surface, which caused the halves to split into additional sections (see fig 7). At this stage, I needed to spend more time with the tree to get a feel for the role it could play in its new role. The tree stood for several months at this stage as I lived with it and pursued other research, allowing me to build a different body of knowledge about the object. During this period of "rest" for this piece I did continue to manipulate the segments, trying different spacing and testing the effect they had on me. By living with the material I am opening myself up to the ways that the material speaks to me, and it is important to recognize that the relationship I have with the material is reciprocal. William Connolly Quotes Merleau-Ponty:

> Thus for instance, the Nature in us must have some relation to Nature outside of us; moreover Nature outside of us must be unveiled to us by the nature that we are. . . . We are part of some Nature, and reciprocally, it is from ourselves that living beings and even space speak to us (Connolly 180).

My relationship with the natural existence of this tree and its history has only come through my own filter. There is a resonance however with something deep in my own being, the tree is inherently familiar to me, and having the tree standing in my studio was viscerally satisfying. My history with similar objects has framed the perceptions of what the tree "should" be in my eyes, which is not always in line with what the individual tree is. The time spent with the trunk standing placed the trunk into my daily routines and gave me the time to become comfortable with the tree as it is and to relax my own assumptions. Once I was familiar with **this** tree I felt prepared and attuned to work with the tree collaboratively.

By the time I was ready to make the base I had decided to build on the sense of age and solidity in this trunk by flaring the spacing at the base of the trunk and closing the gaps at the top. The exaggeration of the tree's existing taper was subtle but the effect is quite dramatic, as it makes the movement of the tree seem more incongruous even while facilitating a greater range of motion.

My research into the self-righting children's toys that had partially inspired the motion for the tree demonstrated that making the tree able to stand from recumbent would send the trunk rising with so much force that if it didn't tear itself apart it would have had the potential to seriously injure someone. I abandoned fully self-righting in favour of a more engaging and

playful object that would not have an overt sense of menace. I specifically decided not to pursue the mathematical solution to the sculpture's balance, solving the equations of leverage, weight distribution, and base curvature to get a predetermined result, in favour of a more intuitive approach to the form and movement. The form of the base was carved from the wood, then re-carved for a more regular curvature that would transition relatively smoothly from the shape of the ash log. Part of this process was the placement and carving of wedges to seat the triangular cut made by the arborist who felled the tree. Leaving the angular cut was an important gesture in preserving the mark-making of past interactions with the tree. Once the form was perfected, I took the pattern to the foundry to be sand cast in bronze.

The bronze came back from the foundry with an irregular void in the centre and the wood texture was far more pronounced than I had anticipated. Both of these elements build on the story of the object in the same manner that the arborists marks and the tracks of the ash borers, I decided to keep them. To counter balance the trunk, I melted over 100 pounds of recycled lead into the base to provide ballast. The finish is liver of sulphur patina, brushed back to provide a rich black-brown base tone with gleaming bronze highlights. The imperfections in the bronze surface are showcased by the treatment: the remnant sand texture, the wood grain, and the marks of the surface grinding all come together to create a rich and interesting surface which tells the story of its fabrication. The details also keep the base from being overpowered by the immensity of the tree above and its heavily textured exterior. I chose to minimize the gaps between the tops of the segments. Narrowing the top accentuated the taper of the trunk and helped resolve the tree form rather than pushing the form too far into the realm of contrived sculptural object.

. The tree has become even more figurative than when standing flat on the ground, lending a strong sense of presence to the sculpture. The range of motion of the tree is less than I had originally hoped in that the tree will reach its tipping point more easily than intended, but the movement is slightly irregular and the tree typically slows its sway and seems to hang alarmingly before it begins to fall. The precariousness that this manifests builds on the sculpture's intended embodiment of potential, situating the tree simultaneously in the act of both standing and falling. Viewers who are unaware of the motion component of the work always mention how it looks like the tree should move. As a singular object, it has a statuesque quality that is somewhat over precious, but the looming chance of toppling helps to temper the preciousness.

After spending some time with the tree and getting acquainted with the sculpture's presence it became clear to me that I would need more of them to bring the work to life. The lone tree had a sadness about it, a mournful quality of isolation and loss that were overpowered with the more playful elements of the work. Suspicious that a series may develop I had selected other logs for this eventuality. One tree was very large in diameter with a length of nearly 9 feet, the other was shorter and narrower than the original but had many severed branches on the surface. Now that I had established the process I was able to work much more swiftly.

The three trees create an interesting tableau. They continue to have a strangely figurative air to them that feels very approachable. People will without hesitation examine the surface of the wood from centimeters away, noses pressed close to the wood. When the trees are set in motion, unwitting viewers jump in fear that the work is falling, then their faces invariably split into broad grins and they immediately reach out to touch. There is an amazing joy for viewers

in touching the sculptures and in the manner in which they are invited to play with the works. Tactility offers an intimacy and feedback that is essential to the human experience. Through tactility, the body is no longer separated from the material.

The layering of history materially expressed in “Timber” and the fact that these sculptures are still very much trees makes their conversation with the works of Penone inevitable. In his tree sculptures, such as “Albero di 12 Metri,”(1980) (Tate) Penone carves into a beam to reveal the material history of the tree. By exposing the form of an earlier stage of the tree’s growth the commodification of the object is juxtaposed against the living plant. My process of hollowing out the tree and leaving only the outer form prioritizes the final state of the tree at the time of death, capturing the essence of what the tree had become instead of what it once was. The history of my tree is written by the accumulated form, and exposed inside and out in its final manifestation as sculpture. Both works share a reverential approach to the material, but where Penone often focuses on man’s impression on nature, I am also interested in how nature can push back. The push back of “Timber” is not an entirely physical one, it induces a visceral reaction in how play with the object predisposes audience behaviour immediately reverting them to the role of bubbly children. The drive to play with the works is the manifestation of the affective role of the sculptures, the works call to the viewer and people respond to the invitation to play.

Stone

I have always felt deeply troubled by the subservient role that is frequently ascribed to natural phenomena in heavily urbanized areas. Stones, plants, and undomesticated animals are only tolerated if they do not interfere with human desires. In our hubris, humanity casts itself as masters of our environment and move earth and stone to build our world, convinced of the permanence of our streets, avenues, and buildings. The landscape is never inert, as all of the same agencies that have historically shaped a place remain potent presences despite human intervention. The most powerful processes that affect a space operate on such a long time scale that is completely foreign to us. As time creeps on, plants crack the concrete, freeze and thaw relentlessly shift foundations, earth still heaves and subsides to its own peculiar rhythms, it is a tempo that is geological in scale and endlessly patient.

Throughout the relatively short span of human history a patriarchal social model has been dominant in the overwhelming majority of recorded civilizations. This in turn has fostered an environment where western cultures put tremendous value on competitive, assertive, and outright dominant behaviour. Fritjof Capra describes our relationship to nature in “The Turning Point”:

> Excessive self-assertion manifests itself as power, control, and domination of others by force; and these are, indeed, the patterns prevalent in our society. Political and economic power is exerted by a dominant corporate class; social hierarchies are maintained along racist and sexist lines, and rape has become a central metaphor of our culture - rape of women, of minority groups, and of

> the earth herself. Our science and technology are based on the seventeenth-century belief that an understanding of nature implies domination of nature by 'man.' Combined with the mechanistic model of the universe, which also originated in the seventeenth century, and with excessive emphasis on linear thinking, this attitude has produced a technology that is unhealthy and inhuman; a technology in which the natural, organic habitat of complex human beings is replaced by a simplified, synthetic, and prefabricated environment. (Capra, 44)

“Stone” brings focus to the behaviour of dominance Capra identifies and applies the concept to the simplified spaces we have created. I would exploit the anthropocentric sense of time by introducing an inconvenient new actor into public space that moves outside of the object’s expected rate of change. Large stones are loaded with presumptions: they are heavy and ancient, they imply a permanent presences. I envisioned a monumental stone slowly interrupting the daily walking rituals of a familiar space activating the viewers with a sense of surprise and wonder, encouraging a re-examination of the relationship with the familiar space and the supremacy of human desires.

I wanted to take the assumptions about stone and turn them on their heads by having an enormous block placed into a pedestrian space and have it move to interrupt the desire paths of the public. A stone speeding madly around a plaza or rotunda would be menacing and rather silly, a creeping pace of movement below the threshold of perception is far more evocative. The slow movement would be entirely lost in a gallery setting where visits are single viewing sessions, so the optimal place to locate this work is in a public and preferably commuter space

which most individuals will pass through repeatedly and be able to notice a slow but sizeable change. To mobilize stone as an independent actor I would need to give it eyes and actuators. My early vision experiments proved that the technology, while feasible, was more sophisticated than my amateur programming could accomplish as was the algorithm to direct the robot. So I reached out to Michael Jenkin in the York University Robotics and Vision Laboratory to help realize the work.

In the initial meeting about “Stones” Michael was very excited. Typically his works are task oriented and designed to facilitate human endeavours. The idea of creating something inconvenient was quite novel and the requirements of the vision and communication system posed some interesting problems for his students to engage with.

Michael recruited Enas AlTarwaneh, a graduate student in his department, to develop a motion tracking vision system that could convert the images from multiple cameras into a map of individual movement inside of a defined space. The process of having a large portion of the work done by someone else was quite odd for me as I was almost entirely removed, I would get occasional updates and was never entirely aware of where the process was at. The testing that I was present for was always rather abstracted to me as the program was running just fine, but the visualization of the tracking was so resource intensive that the system as not able to display on the computers we were running. The fundamental principle of the system they use is comparing real time video footage to a baseline image and identifying changes. The software then isolates the changes into “Blobs” and recognizes “Blobs” of a certain size and shape as people to track their movement. The separation I have felt from the vision portion of this artwork was jarring and something I am still coming to terms with in relation to my art making.

In the future I would like to mount tests and demonstrations more regularly to be better able to understand the progression of development. The vision system is enormously complicated in how it needs to relate to space and individuals and has been reworked several times over the course of the project.

The robotic base was far more tactile and I played a somewhat greater role in testing and reconditioning the base. Michael had an old Labmate robot from the 1980's that he was willing to put towards the project. Long disused, the batteries were dead and the motor controller was antiquated. Jaspal Singh (the engineering tech) ran tests and the motors where deemed serviceable so we had a place to start from a hardware perspective.

I had a great deal of difficulty selecting the stone for this work. In this work it is vital that the sense of age and being of the stone radiate from the object and important that the stone does not look like a finely crafted object. Any hint of the stone being a precious object would completely undermine the potency that I am seeking in using something that can be neglected.

The chosen stone was an end cut block of Indiana limestone from Old World Stone Ltd. A waste product to their manufacturing of architectural blocks, it has an irregular and varied surface with partially sawn faces, deep swooping divots, large quarry marks, and remnant paint. It looks and feels like a discard, but it has a massive sense of presence. There is a gravity to the block that changes the disposition of the space: the block has one completely sawn flat surface into which the void in the stone could be sunk, lending the block a sense of solid immovability that helps to obscure the mobile nature of the work.

Keller Easterling speaks to the dispositional power of objects and spaces in her article "Disposition":

> Disposition locates activity, not in movement, but in relationship or relative position. The physical objects in spatial arrangements and infrastructure, static as they may seem to be, possess agency. While from some perspectives this verges on the oxymoronic or supernatural, some of the most familiar practical encounters with physical material and organization are typically handled with dispositional expressions. Disposition, as the unfolding relationship between potentials, resists science and codification in favor of art or practice. (Easterling 251).

In short, the way in which spaces and the objects they contain relate are read by everyone who interacts with that space. How individuals and groups navigate spaces is constantly changing based on relationships of their contents. The information booth in Vari Hall is an example of the dispositional change of a space, the building of the desks and benches have rendered the rotunda nearly inert for protests. Easterling's version of disposition relates strongly to the kind manipulation of space that this work engages, as the intervention is at odds with the original disposition of the space. The stone when introduced becomes more than a simple stone, it introduces a competing material agency and new potential. The form of the stone has an impact on what the potential of the object is, a round stone would be apt to roll creating a space predisposed to change, whereas a flat solid bottom implies immovability lending the space a sense of stability. I chose the orientation of a flat stable bottom and began to hollow it out (Fig 8).

Figure 8

Movement tests were initially not promising, as the stone would move once or twice and then the wheels would simply spin. The age of the wheels (made in the 1980's) meant that polyurethane had begun to rot. I was able to make the wheels work again by carving back the rotting polyurethane, and laminating on a layer of nitrile with polyurethane adhesive. The new rubber made it so that the robot was now able to move the block.

While I aimed to complete the work for the presentation in Vari Hall, this iteration must be viewed as an as yet incomplete experiment due to some technical problems. As brief as the test period was, the rotunda of Vari Hall had enough foot traffic that the block was able to interact

with over 100 people. The experience of some of the viewers in the last hour of operation was changed by the presence of cameras to document the work in action. While the software was able to track the movement of individuals through the space but the path planning program was not interfacing properly with the tracking software. The movement was partially controlled by manual input to a control computer that was relayed wirelessly to the robot. From the viewer's perspective the work moved relatively slowly, pulsing forward bit by bit and slowly encroaching on where passersby had been traveling. When the movement is noticed many touch the block to see if it is indeed stone. Several people came back to see the work again, unsure if the block was really in motion. The motion was faster than I had hoped for so there will also be some alterations made to the frequency of the pulses. After several hours of operation an acrid but unidentifiable smell began to emanate from the block. Unsure of whether or not the electronics were at risk we chose to shut down the exhibition. Later examination of the robot revealed that the cyano-acrylate adhesive that had been used for some touch-ups of the wheels had overheated due to the friction and started to smell. The odour was not evidence of a major flaw and does not thus far seem to impede the function, but the smell makes it clear that the object is robotically enhanced which is a detraction.

The incremental movement and slow reveal I am after has corollary in the works of Brooklyn based artist Jonathan Schipper, specifically his "Slow Room in Motion"(n.d.) as well as "Slow Motion Car Crash"(2012) and "Slow Inevitable Death of American Muscle"(2008)(fig 9, Schipper). The distinction for me is in the nature of the relationship to the human. Schipper engages the viewer as an outsider looking in at a slow but theatrical gesture. Each of the works places the slow destruction showcased on a literal and figurative pedestal, elevating the

destruction at the same time it questions the fascinating hold that such destruction causes in western culture. Schipper invites you to the show, but you are most certainly watching the show. The gesture I hope to achieve with “Stone” is decidedly different, it is not a work that is watched, it is experienced. By occupying a public pedestrian location “Stone” is assertive and possessive of “human” space in a way that can only exist in the public realm, were this piece in the gallery, the viewer would be encountering “Stone” on its own turf. “Stone” claims its patch of ground and in so doing is explicitly claiming something that we want available to us. It is a deliberately confrontational interaction which is intended to immerse the viewer in an unstable version of a familiar space. In his work Schipper invites his audience to watch the drama unfold, rubbernecking in increments instead of all at once. Schipper does not try to conceal the mechanism by which his work is operating, particularly in his automotive works. The hydraulic pump and gearbox that drives the cars to their inevitable end can be heard whirring alongside the occasional squeal or crunch of buckling metal.

Figure 9

In the test of “Stone” my work looks to focus attention on the effect of the intervention, wherein the action is mostly perceived through the lens of how it has changed the viewers’ own experience of place. The increased speed of the movement of the rock meant that more

people became aware of the motion of the rock than I had anticipated. The work I had done to conceal the device inside of the block and to make the sensor systems as invisible as possible left people wondering how the block was moving but few were able to find an obvious solution. When technology is not understood it reads like magic, but no one believes in magic anymore so they try to “peek behind the curtain”. Curiosity becomes something of a vicious circle as people closely examine the work and try to peer underneath they draw attention to the block which makes it more likely that people will in turn focus on the block in a pointed fashion

In order to complete this sculpture I will likely need to replace the drive wheels, this will be difficult as the wheels appear to be integrated with the gearbox of the robot. I will need to cast new polyurethane onto the existing hubs. The engineers have also been working to complete the coding and perfect the communication between the software components, a paper on the vision system is being presented at a robotics conference in China in August, 2016. We hope to have a modular version of the vision system that can be deployed in a variety of spaces operational soon.

Cohesion

The three sections of “Hylomorphs” share many tactile qualities, as well as an engagement with material on a human level where perception is multifaceted. William Connolly describes perception:

> We also need to come to terms with how perception is intersensory, never fully divisible into separate sense experiences. For example, visual experience is saturated with the tactile history of the experiencing agent. The tactile and the visual are interwoven, in that my history of touching objects similar to the one in question is woven into my current vision of it.(Connolly 182)

Connolly captures the baggage that comes with perception, the anticipation of how we will experience something that we are perceiving helps to guide the experience. When I look at “Stone” I can almost feel the cool rough surface under my fingers, when looking at the armature for cloud I expect the warm feel of wood, when I place my hand against the trunks of timber I expect strong resistance to my push. Whether or not each of these experiences plays out in my interaction with the object changes my material experience. This inter-sensory nature of perception and the manner in which the vibrancy of materials in proximity combine to supersede their component parts are at the core of all of these works as each component engages multiple senses. The exhibition becomes a type of assemblage such as Jane Bennett describes in Vibrant Matter:

> Assemblages are living, throbbing confederations that are able to function despite the persistent presence of energies that confound them from within (Bennett 23)

Bennet's assemblages have always seemed very fluid and ephemeral to me, they are rooted in perception leaving them open to highly individualized experiences and personal attentions. The combined works contained in "Hylomorphs" generates contradictory pressures of what the viewer anticipates and what the viewer experiences when engaging the works. The competing energies rely on the viewer's unique experience in order to decipher their meaning of the whole. This personalized experience is a big part of why I like to make work that can be thrust in part, or in whole into the public sphere. I want people to allow their natural anticipation of the objects to play out without them having been entirely self-prepared for an "art" experience like they would be upon entering a gallery. William Connolly speaks to the role of anticipation in perception in "Materialities of Experience":

> Perception not only has multiple layers of intersensory **memory** folded into it, it is suffused with **anticipation.** This does not mean merely that you anticipate the result and then test it against the effect of experience. It means that perception expresses a set of anticipatory expectations that help to constitute what it actually becomes. (Connolly 184).

The viewer is bringing a wealth of inter-sensory memories that in turn anticipate what he/she perceives. Each work pulls at the viewer to undermine what they "know" about the material: The marble cloud floats, the tree trunks move to the touch, the stone relocates when they are

not looking. I try to bend the knowledge that the viewers brought into the exhibition, but I also leave enough elements that are what they appear to create some uncertainty. “Hylomorphs” enlivens the objects through their creation and they in turn reach out to influence the way in which the audience orientates themselves in the world as they progress through the exhibition. There are layers of actions taking place in each chamber, the works imply or overtly invite action from the viewer then the works react to that action. “Timber” and “Stone” react in movement, but the failure of “Cloud” to collapse also qualifies as an action since it is operating against its disposition.

The stories I want to tell all have common threads of attention to detail, subversive engagement, and a desire to encourage the re-examination of how we view spaces, materials, and objects. As with any truly experimental process portions of the exhibition were not yet fully successful, by mounting “Stone” with the existing flaws I was able to explore how the work communicated with a broader public. My intentions and desires as an artist blend with the changing affect generated in the exhibition space and the audience’s own history in order to build a story, but that telling is changeable with crowd and audience. The uncertainty contained therein seems appropriate to the way I create as it leaves a place in the work itself for the audience.

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