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The act of making feeds my fascination. My drawings are meant to tap into the viewer's unconscious, often intertwining fragments of cartoon characterizations with abstract shapes and partially obscured images that evoke memory and recollection. Using techniques of fragmentation, movement, and process, my work is open-ended. My thesis consists of a body of work that borders upon figuration and abstraction and subverts the innocence of cartoon referents with a darker psychology. Every work I create adds to my knowledge of the materials. Therefore, my studio practice is based upon the accumulation of images through the physical act of creating.

INCIDENCES

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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INCIDENCES

The act of making feeds my fascination. My drawings are meant to tap into the viewer's unconscious, often intertwining fragments of cartoon characterizations with abstract shapes and partially obscured images that evoke memory and recollection. Using techniques of fragmentation, movement, and process, my work is open-ended. My thesis consists of a body of work that borders upon figuration and abstraction and subverts the innocence of cartoon referents with a darker psychology. Every work I create adds to my knowledge of the materials. Therefore, my studio practice is based upon the accumulation of images through the physical act of creating. This accretion of work is necessary for evolving a personal visual language structure I can reference while creating a dialogue between the emerging imagery and myself. I primarily use charcoal, graphite, and pastels on heavy 23"x 32" drawing paper to create my work. Experimentation fuels my process, and many times it is through discovery of the interactions of media that I find the imagery that emerges.

In my art the tools and their marks must always remain subservient to the piece as a whole. One mark should not dominate or define the piece. Rather, my intention is to create works that are constructed with an overall balance of both color and mark. If we see how a drawing is made before we perceive the life of its forms, we are seeing only materials and technique. Manipulation of tools and marks is a process without limits.

Once I start combining materials, I am in a constant state of understanding and learning; a dialogue emerges. To leave the trail of the hand is evidentiary as thought process.

Experimenting with materials and showing process through an obvious hand makes me more conscious of the contrast and the contact of the paper. Discovering the variety, the undulations, the capability, and the secrets of the tools and media are the sparks that ignite a fire of excitement as well as a flurry of making. I am enthralled with the variety of marks produced through the process of making and instrumentation. Instrumentation in drawing is defined by Bernard Chaet as, “the way in which we make particular mark with a tool—is shaped by the demands of both the desired image and our own natural handwriting” (226). By making I am gathering a feeling for the media, an awareness of their physical, sensuous, and expressive qualities. I savor the shimmering grays of the pencil, the richness of charcoal, the contradiction between the vibrancy and serenity of pastels, and the absolute fluidity of ink wash. The art of drawing is almost infinite in its expressive range and in the means that make this variety possible. The endless variety I have found in the materials is also related to the nature of the world I create in my work, where anything is possible. In the piece, *Incidentes en el mundo irracional/Incidents in the Irrational World*, cartoon fragments and strange objects can exist together in an unknown world, yet there is a vague sense of recollection to the strange environments and the objects I construct.

It is in the creation that one finds answers, solutions, questions, and more problems, and I have found the freedom to address those findings through the practice of “deep play.” I do not fear compromising the passion or intensity of my work by the inclusion of play. Author Diane Ackerman states in her book, *Deep Play*, that, “to play is to risk: to risk is to play” (7). And as she goes on to explain,

The world of play favors exuberance, license, abandon. Shenanigans are allowed, strategies can be tried, selves can be revised. In the self-enclosed world of play, there is no hunger. It is its own goal, which it reaches in a richly satisfying way... it’s a special caliber of play – deep – that leads to transcendence, creativity, and a need for the sacred. Indeed, it’s our passion for deep play that makes us the puzzling and at times resplendent beings that we are (6, 26).

I appreciate “deep play” in my studio practice. As I enter my studio it becomes as Ackerman describes, “an alternate reality with its own set of rules, values, and expectations” (20). Societal and moral demands and cultural ties are left at the door as a new sense of life is inhaled. “Deep play” can lead to creativity, imagination, creation, fascination, and understanding. Ideas are explored without fear of criticism because the studio is a secluded domain without constraints. It can become a haven for exploration and this yields a sense of freedom that is evident in the work.

I also explore the accidental as a characteristic of drawing. Initially, I use the idea of the accident to reveal the material's potential. In this case, the potential I refer to is the possible discovery of images and forms that can be elicited from the materials once they interact with the surface. Inka Essenhigh, who is an influence in my art, uses a similar method as she pours paint on surfaces and utilizes the general flat shapes as the basis for her composition and imagery. Both she and Max Ernst poured, rubbed, painted, manipulated, drew, and experimented with materials to discover their potential.

While the subconscious plays a major role in my work as I explore image through process, it is the act of finding that is the most critical component to the work. Once I begin to recognize what is happening in a piece, I begin reacting to it. As with the piece, *Cosas Curiosas/Curious Things*, I used the initial pouring and manipulation of dry material on paper to find the composition. I then evaluate the residue of the powder and react to the forms or images I see emerging. Many times the images I see within the material are intertwining fragments of cartoon characterizations with abstract shapes. The process calls for an intuitive balance between chaos and control, for the material can quickly overpower a piece visually and lead to a chaotic mess on paper. While I establish the forms I simultaneously construct the area around it using pastels, charcoal, erasers, graphite, ink, and acrylic. The end result is a layered image that balances the delicate lines of the powder and graphite with the weightier application of pastels and charcoal. Consequently, fragmentation occurs from the process. The layering of the materials over

the initial powdery images partially covers, distorts, or destroys them. The resulting fragmented and obscured forms also add to the sense of movement and urgency that emerges from the ethereal idiosyncratic space.

Curiously, as my artwork has progressed, the surrounding white space has been progressively growing as well, as one can see in *The Machine*. I have discovered through my creative process that the materials have begun to demand a sense of space around them to breathe. Therefore, I have begun to respect the white surface for its own potential energy I feel it restrains in my work; there is much energy contained within a single sheet of paper. I have begun to view the unblemished white surface of paper as a state of consciousness. It has no end or start. Once the mark is down, it becomes a documentation of thought; it becomes an act of exploring the unexplored subconscious. Mark-making becomes a demonstration of energy on paper. The retained white space is holding onto energy as well as the potential for more. I see the energy implied by the empty untouched vastness as another state of consciousness and, I am always aware that the materials can blemish the preciousness of the white.

As an artist the creation of the work, the understanding of the product, and the knowledge of how they happened intrigues me. My intent is to amass images to strengthen my visual language. By dealing with the elements through experimentation I am constantly revealing new surfaces with the media. This mixture of awareness and accident leaves for a variety of mark and endless possibilities.

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CATALOGUE

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