

BECKY IP
SAM MOGELONSKY
MARK STEBBINS

MAKING SPLOH-EM

MAKING METHODS: BECKY IP, SAM MOGELONSKY, AND MARK STEBBINS

MAKING METHODS

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THE ROBERT McLAUGHLIN GALLERY

JUDITH & NORMAN ALIX ART GALLERY

MAKING METHODS



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BECKY IP
SAM MOGELONSKY
MARK STEBBINS

Curated by Linda Jansma

THE ROBERT McLAUGHLIN GALLERY, OSHAWA
JUDITH & NORMAN ALIX ART GALLERY, SARNIA

MAKING METHODS: Becky Ip, Sam Mogelonsky, and Mark Stebbins

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| THE ROBERT McLAUGHLIN GALLERY 72 Queen Street, Civic Centre Oshawa, Ontario L1H 3Z3 www.rmg.on.ca | JUDITH & NORMAN ALIX ART GALLERY, SARNIA 147 Lochiel Street Sarnia, Ontario N7T 0B4 www.jnaag.ca |
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Introduction | Acknowledgements

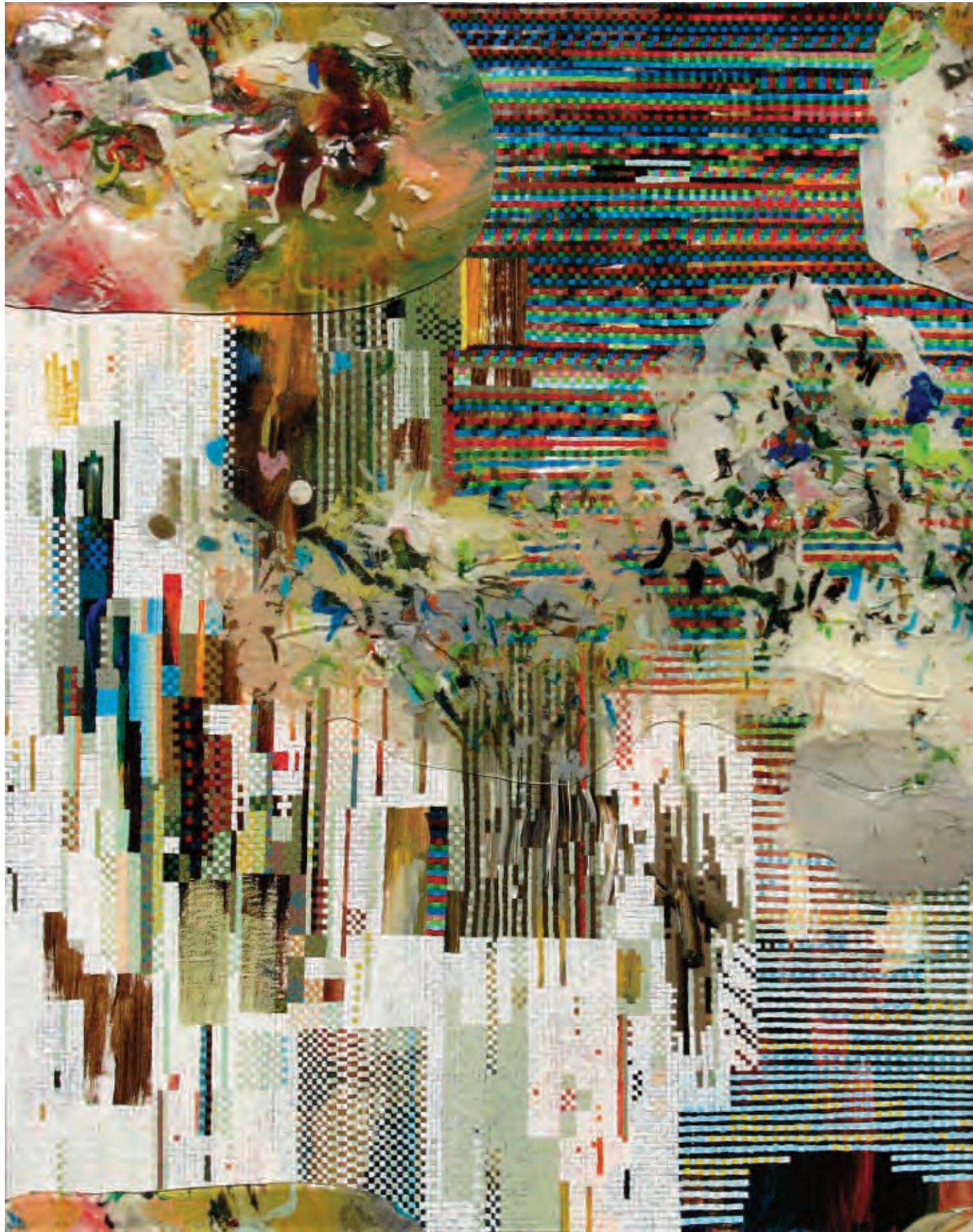
The exhibition *Making Methods* is a collaborative venture between The Robert McLaughlin Gallery and the Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery in Sarnia. The opportunity for institutions to partner is an important component in providing multiple perspectives to our audiences. Similarly, the purpose of any group exhibition is to draw parallels or create linkage between diverse artists and artistic practices. To the casual observer, the artists shown in *Making Methods* do not instantly relate. But in the capable hands of curator Linda Jansma and guest writer Darryn Doull, we are asked to consider the work of Becky Ip, Sam Mogelonsky, and Mark Stebbins in both methodology and output, placing equal emphasis on both aspects. As each artist's creative narrative is revealed in the following essays, we begin to see the common threads emerge. Both curators have invited us to sit front row in the creative process to consider three separate and distinct artistic practices. Each artist is connected to another by the commitment to their craft, and surety in the ability to navigate both materials and motivations in meaningful ways. Perhaps disarmingly, we see elements of chance, logic, fixation and randomness all coming together and becoming the critical ingredients in the evolution of creating something new and perhaps not originally imagined. Both essays act as curious and appreciative guides for the viewer, providing a port of access into the physical as well as emotional process of making art. We thank Becky Ip, Sam Mogelonsky, and Mark Stebbins for sharing their work in this forum.

We acknowledge with thanks the support of The City of Oshawa, the County of Lambton, the Ontario Arts Council, and The Canada Council for the Arts.

GABRIELLE PEACOCK
Chief Executive Officer
The Robert McLaughlin Gallery

LISA DANIELS
Curator/Director
Judith & Norman Alix Art Gallery

SAM MOGELONSKY
Canopy [DETAIL] 2013
digital print on Alu-Dibond, 1/5
90 x 90 cm



MARK STEBBINS

Orts 2012
acrylic paint/ink on panel
35.6 x 27.9 cm

LINDA JANSMA

Beneath the Surface

In December 2012, Mark Stebbins forwarded four jpegs of one of his paintings, each representing a different stage of that work’s completion. The slides were labeled 3-, 5-, and 10- *process* with the final being labeled FINAL. In general, an artist obviously has a process by which she or he produces their work. The “type” of process, the verb that precedes the noun, is what compelled me to connect three seemingly disparate artists in one exhibition: a painter, filmmaker/installation artist, and sculptor who all, to some degree, regard the act of making things as important to their practices.

Craft is more usefully conceived as a process[...] Craft only exists in motion. It is a way of doing things, not a classification of objects, institutions or people.¹

To continue with the grammatical exercise: while “craft” as noun is essentially work that can be seen to reference itself, Becky Ip’s, Mark Stebbin’s and Sam Mogelonsky’s practices explore various subjects beyond the works’ formal qualities, making the “crafting” of their work more than the sum of the labour that went into its production. But that word—craft—still carries negative connotations when associated with “fine” art. Douglas Coupland, in a 2012 address at the Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C., speaks of the crafted object: “In an ever-flattening world of downloaded non-physical experiences, the crafted object is in the ascendant, and ultimately might prove to be the trunk of the tree that gives rise to the next dominant wave of modern art.”² There is a particular considered engagement with material and attitude towards production and repetition that underlies each of these artistic practices. Process alone, of course, does not make for compelling art and in the following paragraphs the work of these three Toronto-based, emerging artists will be examined for what lies beneath the surface.

There is a certain irony in the fact that Mark Stebbins’ meticulously rendered drawings and paintings are ultimately about information malfunctions and errors. Stebbins deals with issues that are particular to our time—the accumulation of data and corrupted files, as well as storage systems, the relationship between, and translation of, various media, such as analogue versus digital media—yet speaks to labour-intensive craft practices such as textiles, knitting, and embroidery and how they are painstakingly converted into paint and ink.

¹ Glenn Admason, *Thinking Through Craft* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2007), 3, 4.

² Douglas Coupland, “On Craft,” manuscript of an address to the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian, Washington, D.C., 10 January, 2012. I am grateful to the author for providing a copy of this manuscript.

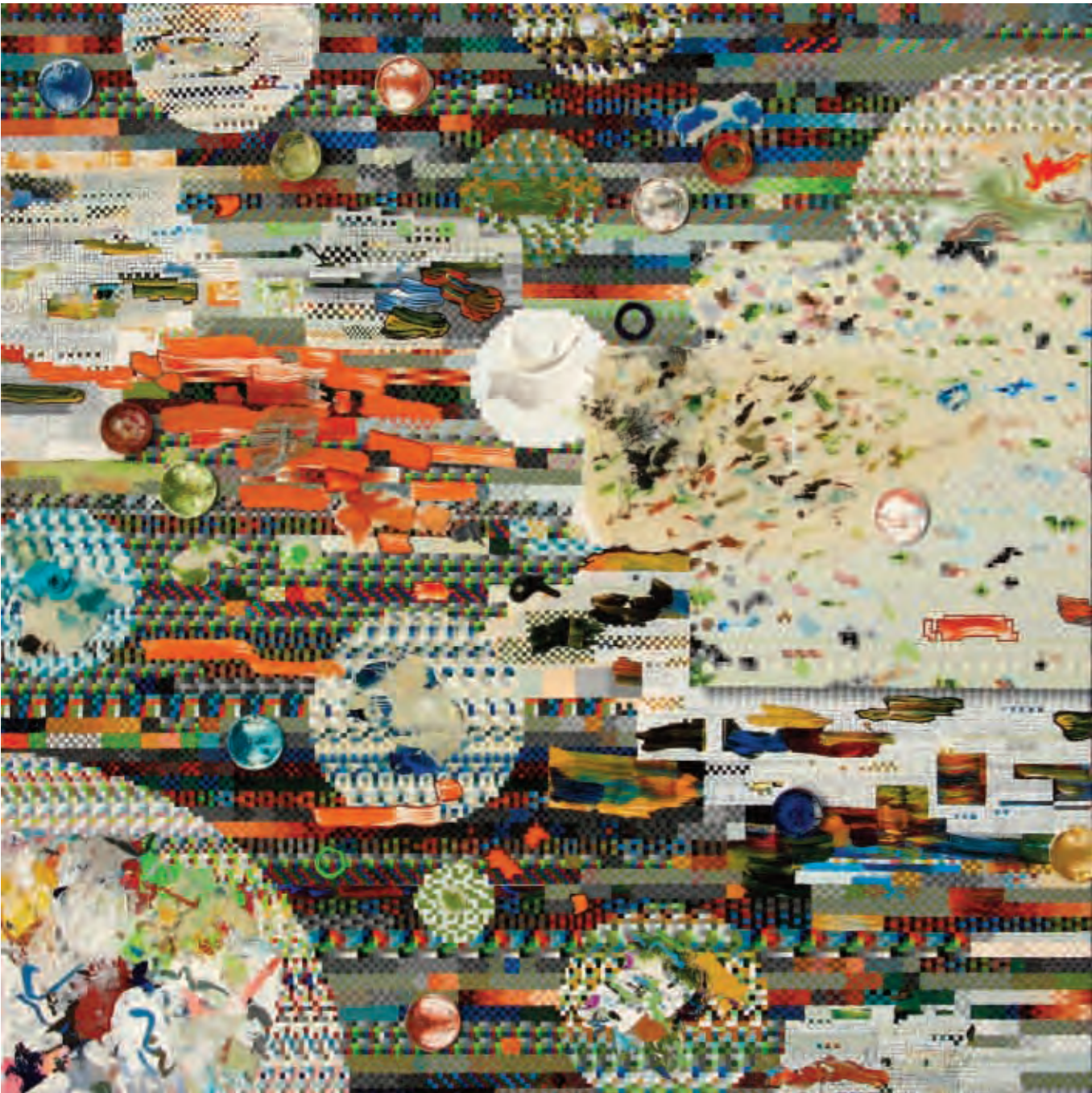
Time comes into play in a subtle way in his practice. Not unlike conceptual artist Kelly Mark, who literally punches in and out of her studio each day to mark the labour that she puts into her work, Stebbins tracks the amount of time taken for each of his paintings, similar to an assistant in a craft studio who must take note of their time. This speaks to Stebbins' practice and the working method that is at its core where high and low art are on a level playing field within his paintings.

These include broken digital patterns that he incorporates into his paintings with organic, intestinal shapes using a variety of acrylic paintings that are then drawn over with coloured acrylic inks. Many of these earlier works begin with a mandala shape that is reminiscent of data storage discs such as CD-ROMs or DVDs. The 2010 painting *Container* is characteristic: the work is small at 6" x 6" (15 x 15 cm), with its central image made up of delicately rendered marks in coloured inks. These simultaneously suggest cellular forms, DVDs, and handcrafted doilies which are ultimately fragmented, intimating a breakdown of information through a corruption of files, the degradation of the transition of data from one form to another.

That breakdown is more clearly defined in Stebbins' recent painting series which he refers to as glitch-alikes. A glitch is defined thus:

Mistranslations that are facilitated by a loss or breakdown in our communication signals. They are the imperfect and unexpected results of such malfunctions, which have no apparent purpose to their existence in the setting of perfect processes.³

A glitch-alike, then, is a purposeful manipulation by an artist to produce an induced failure. Inducing glitches upon a digital image often results in fragmented patterns in misaligned or shifted bands of pixels. While we have come to expect perfection in our digital world, glitch-alikes celebrate the error. *Dataset* from 2011 is something of a transitional piece. Appearing as a sun breaking the horizon, the Mandala shape that takes up the top half of the composition is reminiscent of the handcraft referred to in previous work. The bottom half, however, is made up of broken pixels interspersed with close up depictions of weavings and is one of the first paintings that Stebbins did that incorporates cut and pasted remains from his palette. What is seen in the digital world as an error or slipup is transformed into, as Stebbins notes, "a hope that in failure, something new and beautiful will emerge."⁴ He further pushes the analogy of manipulated error in the work *The Gleaners*. In it, he again combines the unintentional bi-products of his studio practice within a glitch-alike composition that produces a strange inversion. He takes the scrapings of paint and ink on his palette—the random marks left from painting and drawing—adding gel that allows the removal from the board onto the panel. This part of the composition is actually reminiscent of abstract expressionism—the "grand gesture" in miniature. Over these he lays down the glitch-like pattern by hand—an incredibly detailed, colourful pattern that is viewed as electronic error. The "expressional" aspect of the work is, in fact, random, like the true glitch, while the



³ Iman Moradi, "Introduction," in *Glitch: Designing Imperfection*, eds. Iman Moradi and Ant Scott (New York: Mark Batty Publisher, 2009), 8.

⁴ Mark Stebbins, Artist Statement, August 10, 2012.

MARK STEBBINS
The Gleaners 2012
acrylic paint/ink on panel
40.6 x 40.6 cm



BECKY IP
 Clockwise from top left:
Green Mountain 2012
 graphite on paper
 76 x 56 cm
Neura 2012
 graphite on paper
 76 x 56 cm
Partition 2012
 graphite on paper
 76 x 56 cm

components that appear digitally pixilated have been completed through the artist’s painstakingly labour-intensive practice. There’s a particular humour found in one of Stebbins’ most recent works: *Slide*. While the palette residue appears to slide digitally out of the picture plane, so too does the canvas texture: as it seemingly shifts to the right it reveals a grey and white checkered background (the background indicative of transparency or void in Photoshop and other digital image editors). Hence, the blank canvas reveals itself to be an illusion, no more than a layer above a blank digital canvas. Of course, the whole picture is illusion, or a representation... constructed out of paint and ink.

While Stebbins’ paintings draw on error as a byproduct of digital production, Becky Ip’s latest project, entitled *To cry (of birds)*, draws on the decidedly untechnologically-driven memories of ghosts. Ip sources her family’s history for imagery that references the past, tangentially familiar yet not from first-hand experience. Nat Trotman, in discussing the work of film, sound and video artists in the 2010 exhibition *Haunted*, reflects Ip’s practice:

...that encourage this field of (a)temporality, challenging the distinction between the recorded document and the live events at its origin; creating embodied spaces that exist simultaneously within two temporal frames; and using a combination of repetition and appropriation to evince an uncanny estrangement from lived reality.⁵

Ip’s project mines her father’s memories of his youngest sister Siu-Ming Ip, who tragically died at the age of 27, the artist’s age when she began the project. Diagnosed with epilepsy at a young age, Siu-Ming experienced recurrent seizures in school which frightened her classmates, isolated her, and finally led her to refuse to attend school. The condition eventually drove her to the confines of her home where she was cared for by her mother. She would become mentally and emotionally unstable and was admitted, on two occasions, to Hong Kong’s oldest psychiatric hospital, Castle Peak Hospital. She fell to her death from her bedroom window; the incident reported as an accident. Gleaned from her father’s somewhat clouded memories and recorded in audio, Ip began to piece together, and personally interpret, the life of her aunt, which allowed her, as she has written, to explore the “intergenerational threads of memory, awareness and longing that are located in the body,” as well as the “longing for the women in my family that I’ve never known.”⁶ Along with the audio, recorded in Cantonese, Ip began gathering imagery around some of her father’s stories: satellite weather maps, as Siu-Ming was preoccupied with weather; aerial photographs of Castle Peak Hospital, as well as the apartment complex where the family resided; and brain imaging scans of patients with epilepsy.

Along with archival imagery research, Ip started to draw delicate graphite works that revealed geographical locations of some of the places where events regarding her aunt occurred, swirls that represented the body and brain, and satellite weather maps that gave voice to the ghost of Siu-Ming (interestingly, these works are considered as part of the process towards the finished work and are not included in the exhibition).

⁵ Nat Trotman, “Sound Mirrors,” *Haunted: Contemporary Photography/Video/Performance* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 2010), 89-90.

⁶ Becky Ip, Artist Statement, April, 2012.

Animations were done on birch plywood sheets with acrylic paint, graphite, pencil crayon, and washi tape. These animated scenes are based on elements of the three large scale drawings, as well as original visual research material that is pinned around Ip’s studio. Shot in 16mm film because the look and grain lent themselves to the dreamier quality of the narrative, the audio of her father is added and overlaid with the artist’s, who repeats parts of the story in English. Occasional subtitles are featured as well. Interspersed are images of windows looking out from the inside—a reality of her aunt’s sheltered existence, as well as a harbinger of her final moments.

This layering of archival narratives takes the viewer from the inside of the window to the story of Rapunzel, the long-haired beauty in Grimm’s fairytale who is trapped in a tower until she is rescued by her prince. The installation component, entitled *Tower and flight*, consists of a large-scale black paper sculpture that, while symbolizing hair (particularly the artist’s and her aunt’s own hair), are reminiscent of the roots of the banyan tree that is ubiquitous in Hong Kong. While this paper installation is intuitively cut and shaped to resemble hair, it reflects Ip’s interest in paper crafts and paper cuts. There is a rich folk art quality to the work, a simplicity of material, and an opportunity, by referencing the banyan tree, to allude to the spiritual beliefs of her grandmother, and by extension, her aunt (the Buddha was believed to have achieved enlightenment under a banyan tree). Seen by some as divine, residents of Hong Kong will wish upon the tree by lighting candles and burning joss sticks to access its spiritual powers. Ip’s heavily processed work, both from a research perspective and in its labour-intensive production, is, as the artist writes: “imbued with a ghostly presence, especially in [its] material, temporal, and narrative layers.”⁷

While Ip’s project gave her the opportunity to explore the matriarchal aspect of her family’s history, Sam Mogelonsky’s studio practice stems from studies in feminist art and the repetitive process found in craft production. In his book *The Craftsman*, Richard Sennett writes:

...first [...] all skills, even the most abstract, begin as bodily practices; second, that technical understanding develops through the powers of imagination. The first argument focuses on knowledge gained in the hand through touch and movement. The argument about imagination begins by exploring language that attempts to direct and guide bodily skill.⁸

Mogelonsky sites sculptors Eva Hesse, Tara Donovan, and Liza Lou as influences: women who use, in experimental ways, everyday materials in the making of their work including beads, Scotch Tape, Styrofoam cups, and electrical wires. There is an obsessive quality to Mogelonsky’s sculptures, that, when viewed up close skirts closely with excess. But excessive in a disarming way. In recent sculptures and installations she explores form and its adornment, likening her work with the time-consuming sewing of sequins onto costumes that “dance moms” elaborately fashion for their daughters. Labour is intimately connected to creation, and on first glance, the brightly hued works in her

⁷ Email from the artist to author, December 15, 2012.

⁸ Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2008), 10.

SAM MOGELONSKY

Pin Spiral II [DETAIL] 2013

sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard), mirrored paper, silver leaf, epoxy sculpt, steel, paint

109 x 11 x 11 cm





SAM MOGELONSKY
Pin Spiral 1 2012
sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard),
mirrored paper, paint, epoxy sculpt, steel
32.5 x 9 x 9 cm

Sequined Objects series seem lighthearted, even playful. On closer inspection however, the orbs, which are carved into odd shapes, are seen to be overwhelmingly decorated and can seem linked to the absurdity of obsessive tendency. As the artist states: “there is nothing blasé or carefree about these sparkling orbs.”⁹ Indeed, there is a sense that Mogelonsky tests the limits of adornment in her work, and by extension, the nature of contemporary consumption and its tendencies towards excess.

In the sculpture included in this exhibition, Mogelonsky continues her work with sequins, but pushes structures into larger, more physically demanding forms. She uses both small and larger scale cardboard document tubes in the first and second of the three works. The remaining sequins of the series of sparkling orbs were white, and Mogelonsky decided to pin these to the exterior of the smallest tube with standard sewing pins. The result is a smooth and soothing exterior (unlike the psychedelically coloured orbs) that, on closer inspection, reveals an interior of pins, overlapping, sharp, and dangerous. The materials of the sculpture makes way for the reality of how the work was constructed, leaving the viewer to question assumptions. While the smallest tube rests in an armature on the wall and can be looked through from end to end, the middle tube is to be viewed vertically, staring down into an infinity of pins. The exterior is pinned with see-through sequins that reveal the history of the tube itself: tape ripped from its shell resulting in discolouration and a less than perfect surface. The final tube in the series takes the form and blows it up to an almost ludicrous level. The craft-based surface made up of pinned sequins is replaced with massive sonotubes studded with roofing nails. The vision of the small tube being worked on while resting on a table beside piles of pins and sequins is replaced by the drill-yielding artist who has taken the form to a level that may be difficult to equate with craft and certainly tests its limits. The series moves from the physical object to its representation in a series of photographs of the interior of the tubes that are printed on aluminum. In the sculptures, there is a marked contrast between the exterior and interior of the sculptures—a disconnect of sorts. In the photographs, the interior pins become an hallucinogenic vision, losing the sharp aggressiveness of the actual interiors. The aluminum ground softens the edges, as does the light reflecting from and off the pins, creating amoebic, otherworldly images that segue from the coloured, sequined orbs in the earlier series, and also possess something of an unearthly quality.

While Mark Stebbins’, Becky Ip’s, and Sam Mogelonsky’s work focuses on concepts of repetition, detail, and labour as a means of production, there is a different sensibility to all of their practices. While methodology may conjoin them, the resulting work has obvious individual relevance. Personal and familial memory, narratives that reveal themselves beneath the intricately painted, drawn, cut, pinned, and recorded; time either consciously or unconsciously passing as the “crafting” of their work is completed.

Linda Jansma

Senior Curator / The Robert McLaughlin Gallery

⁹ eblast, *All that Sparkles*, Red Head Gallery, Toronto, March, 2013.



Becky Ip

Becky Ip is a Toronto-based artist whose work is informed by personal narratives, fictive memories and the fabled imagination. She holds a BFA in Interdisciplinary Studies from Concordia University and has participated in residencies at The Banff Centre and Plug In ICA (Winnipeg). Her performance, print, and installation work has been presented at spaces including Para/Site Art Space (Hong Kong), K Gallery (Chengdu), Chinese Arts Centre (Manchester), and The Print Studio (Hamilton), while her film work has been presented by Pleasure Dome (Toronto), Modern Fuel (Kingston), Images Festival (Toronto), Antimatter Film Festival (Victoria), and the Ann Arbor Film Festival.

BECKY IP

Tower and flight [DETAIL & INSTALLATION VIEW] 2013
paper, wire, binder clips, monofilament
approx. 3.9 x 1.5 x 1.5 m

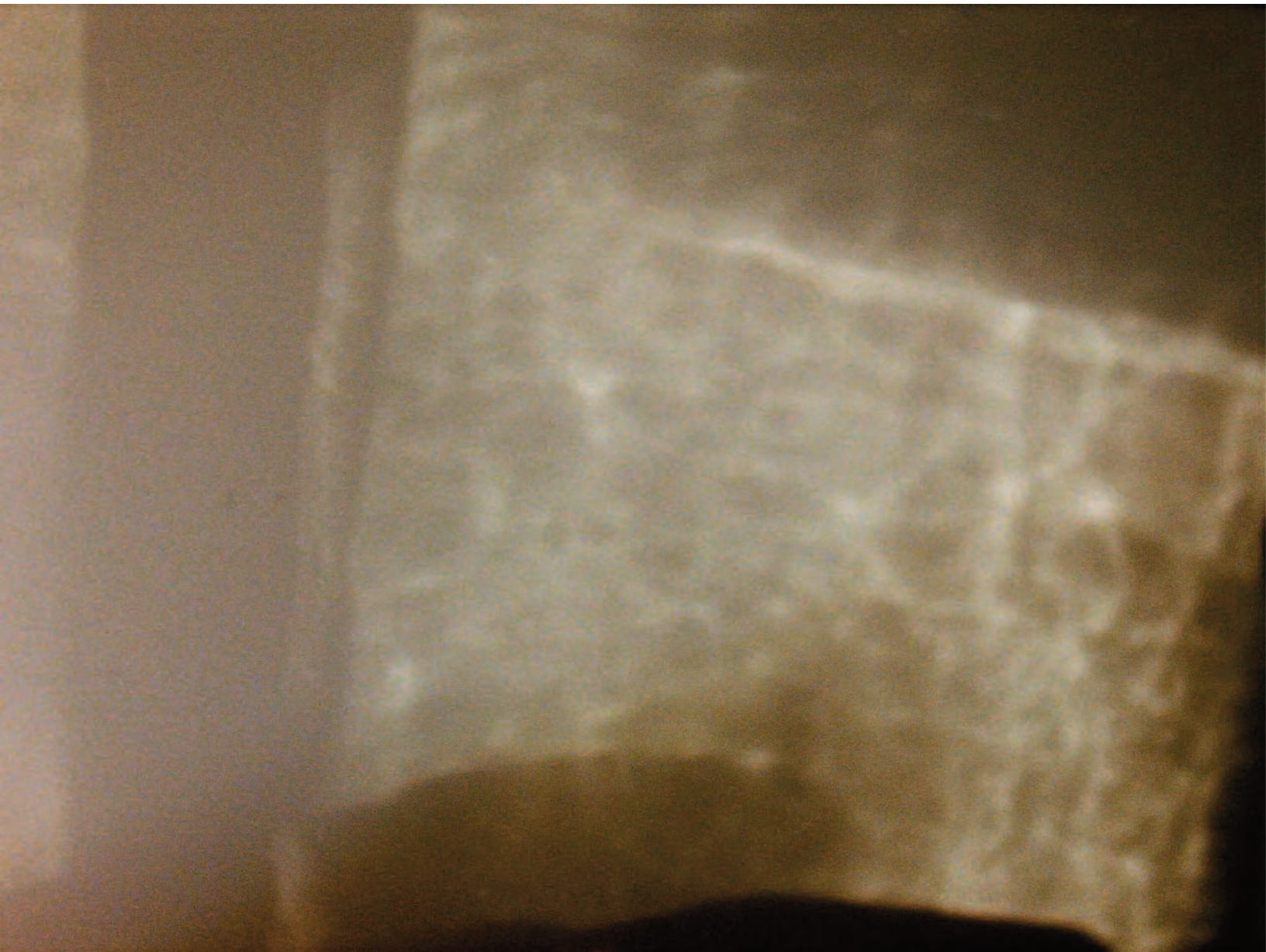






PREVIOUS PAGES LEFT & RIGHT
BECKY IP
Tower and flight [DETAILS] 2013
 paper, wire, binder clips, monofilament
 approx. 3.9 x 1.5 x 1.5 m

LEFT AND ABOVE
BECKY IP
To cry (of birds) 2013
 video stills from 16mm film on DVD
 10:27 min



BECKY IP
To cry (of birds) 2013
video stills from 16mm film on DVD
10:27 min



BECKY IP

To cry (of birds) 2013

video stills from 16mm film on DVD

10:27 min

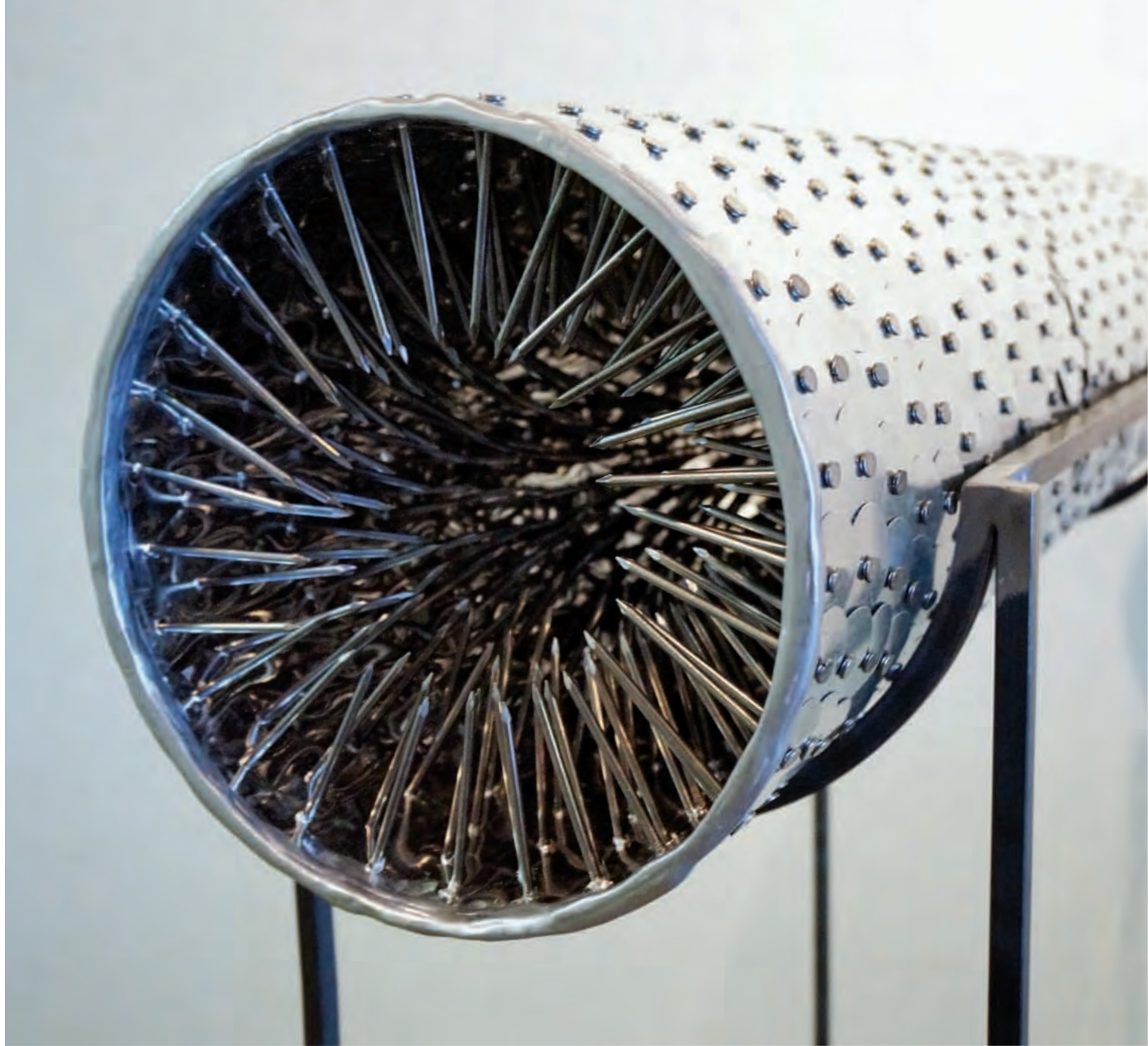
Sam Mogelonsky

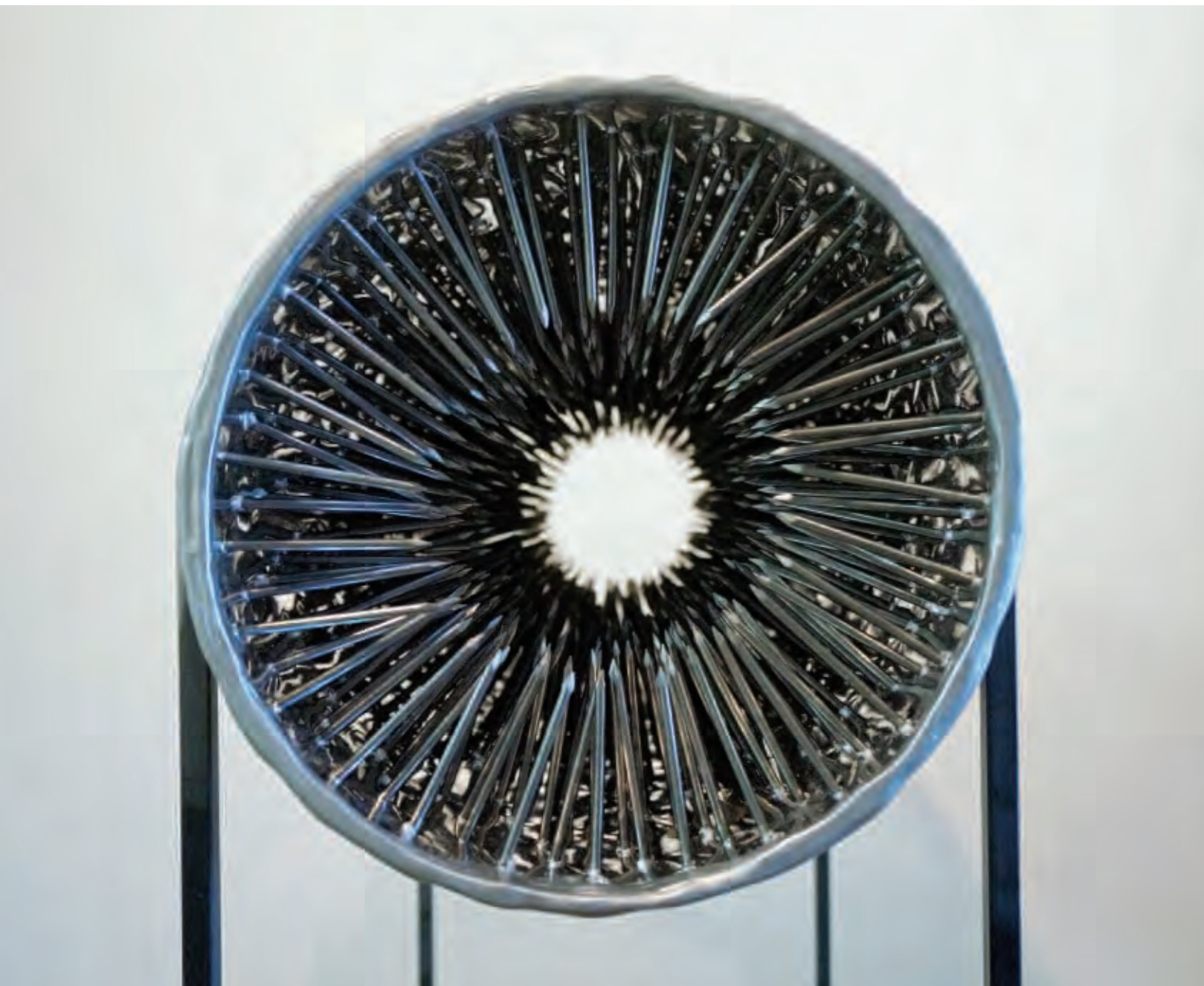
Sam Mogelonsky is a visual artist based in Toronto. Her sculptural and photographic based works explore adornment and emerge through a meticulous approach to manipulating materials into abstract forms and shapes, thereby transforming the familiar into something seductive and strange. She holds a BFAH from Queen's University (Kingston) and an MFA from Central Saint Martin's College of Art (London, UK). She has participated in international residencies at the Florence Trust (London, UK), the Château de la Napoule Art Foundation (Mandelieu de la Napoule, France) and Casa Marles (Llorenç de Penedes, Spain). She has exhibited within Canada and internationally, with recent exhibitions at The Red Head Gallery (Toronto) The Rooms Provincial Art Gallery (St. John's) and the Union Gallery (Kingston).

SAM MOGELONSKY

Nail Spiral 2013

sono-tube (cardboard), nails, steel, mirrored paper, paint, epoxy sculpt, silver leaf, silver enamel, aqua resin, metal washers, construction glue
1.5 x 4.2 x .3 m (installed)





ABOVE & RIGHT:

SAM MOGELONSKY

Nail Spiral [DETAILS] 2013

sono-tube (cardboard), nails, steel, mirrored paper, paint, epoxy sculpt,
silver leaf, silver enamel, aqua resin, metal washers, construction glue
1.5 x 4.2 x .3 m (installed)

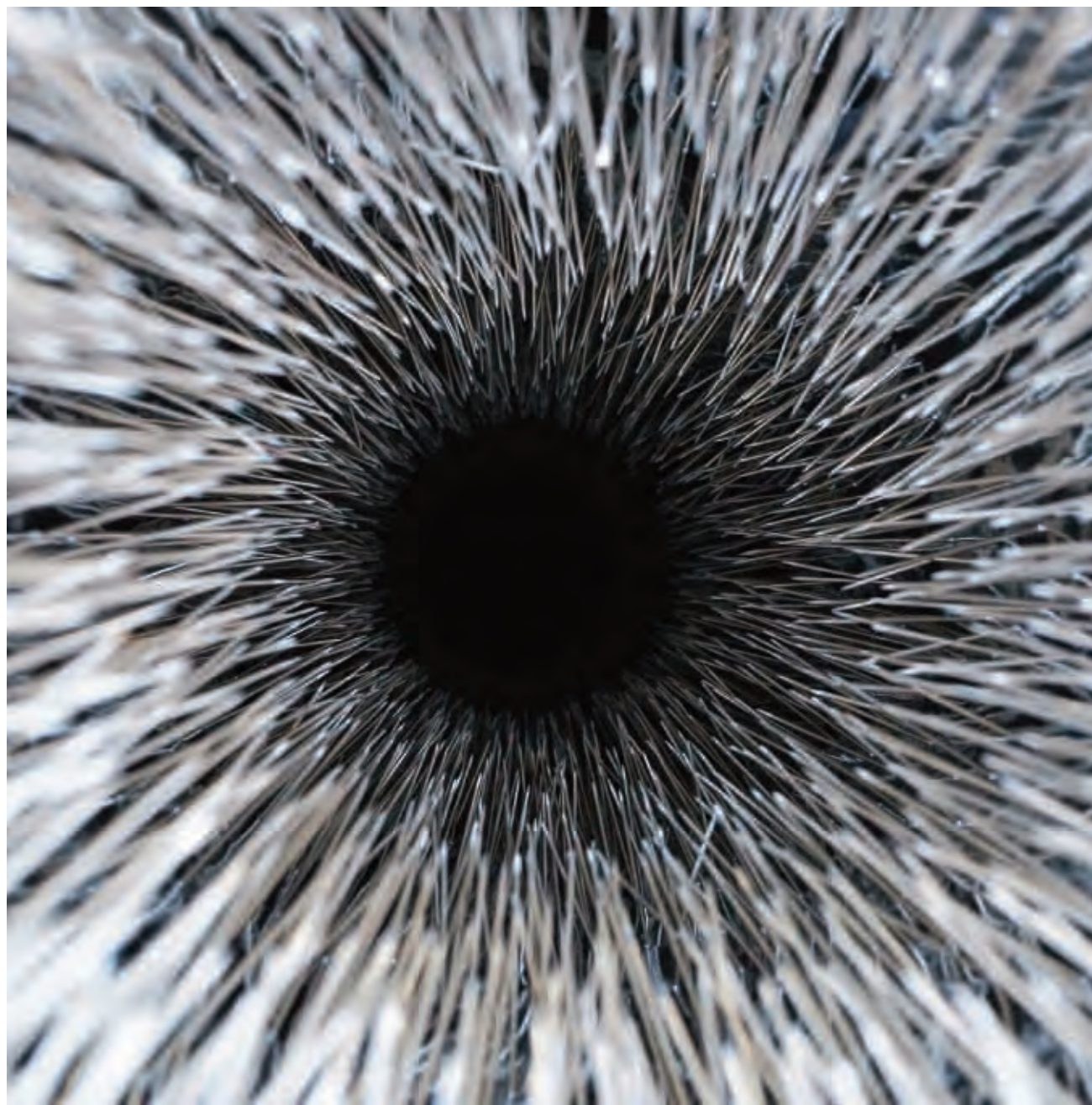
NEXT PAGE LEFT & RIGHT:

SAM MOGELONSKY

Pin Spiral II 2013

sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard),
mirrored paper, silver leaf, epoxy sculpt, steel, paint
109 x 11 x 11 cm





ABOVE:
SAM MOGELONSKY
Black Light 2013
 digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
 90 x 90 cm



RIGHT:
Pin Spiral II [DETAIL] 2013
 sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard),
 mirrored paper, silver leaf, epoxy sculpt, steel, paint
 109 x 11 x 11 cm



SAM MOGELONSKY

Installation view, clockwise from left:

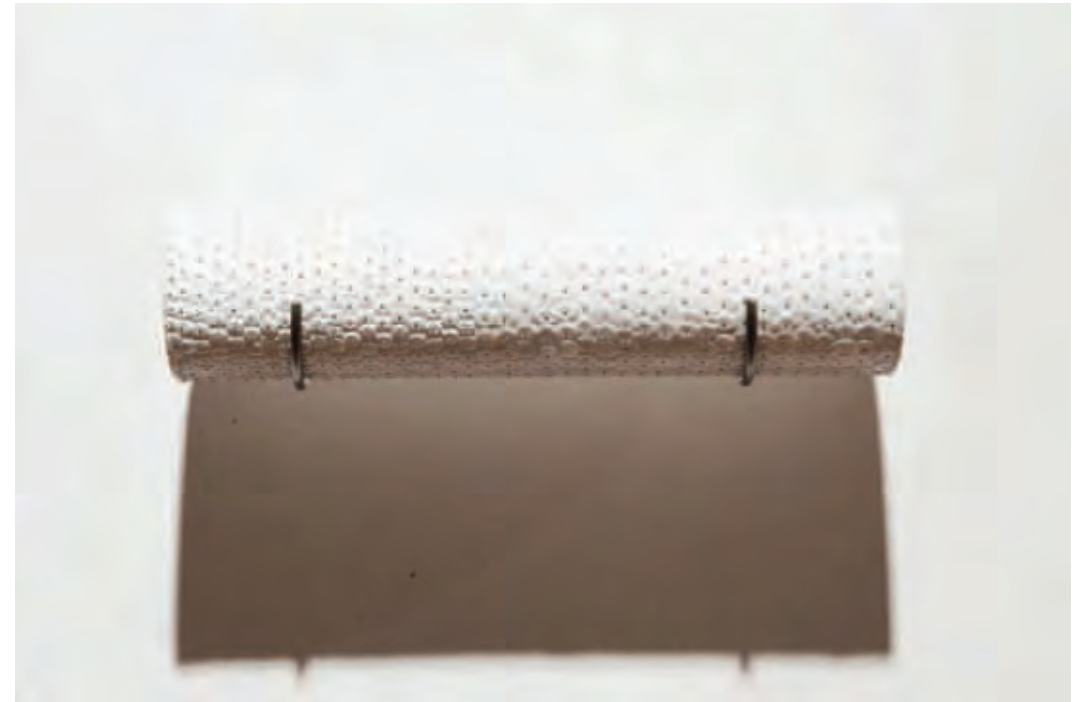
White Light 2013
digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
90 x 90 cm

Black Light 2013
digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
90 x 90 cm

Pin Spiral II 2013
sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard),
mirrored paper, silver leaf, epoxy sculpt, steel, paint
109 x 11 x 11 cm



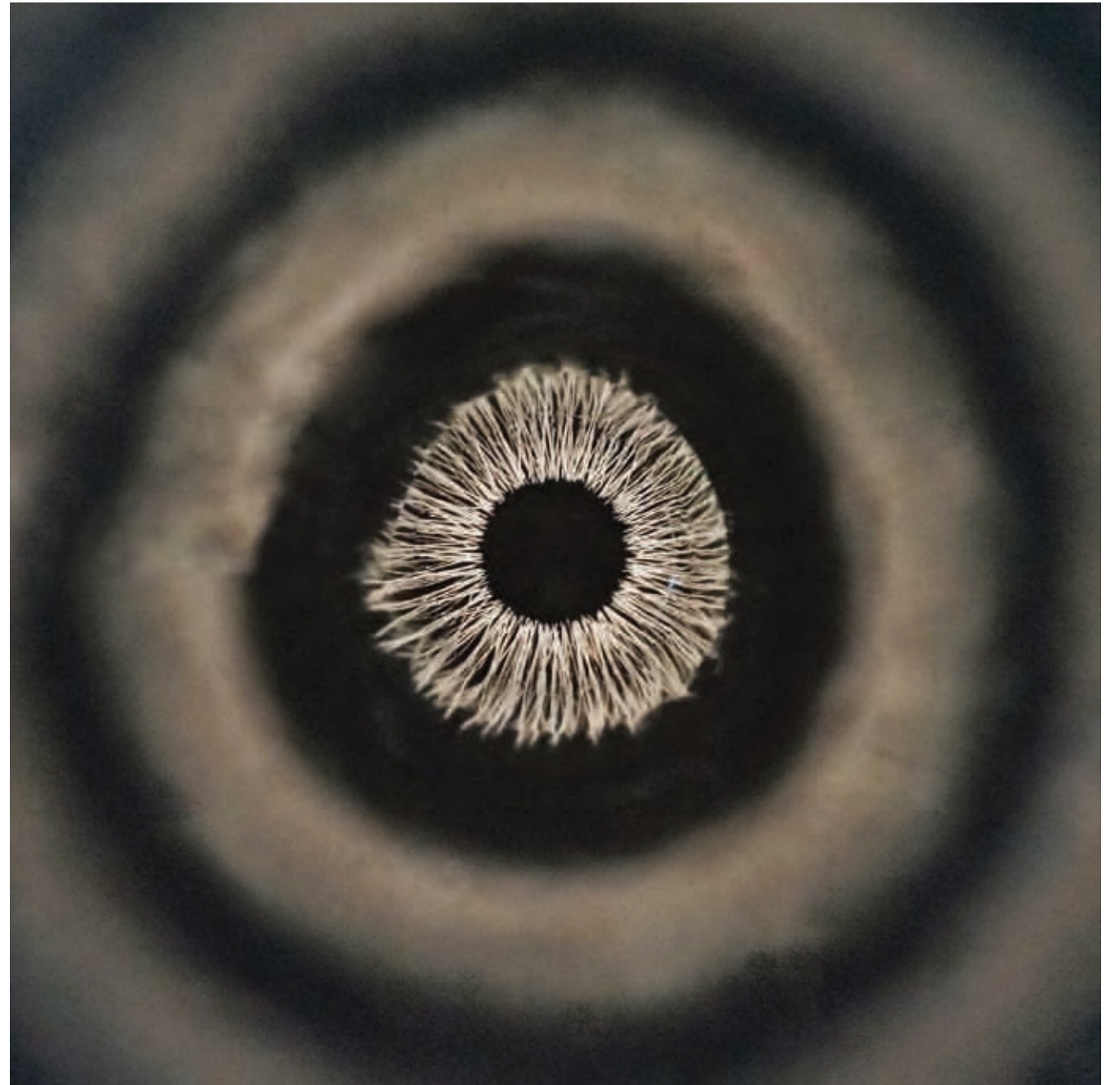
ABOVE:
SAM MOGELONSKY
White Light 2013
 digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
 90 x 90 cm



RIGHT:
Pin Spiral I 2012
 sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard),
 mirrored paper, paint, epoxy sculpt, steel
 32.5 x 9 x 9 cm



SAM MOGELONSKY
Fireworks 2013
 digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
 60 x 60 cm



SAM MOGELONSKY
Rings 2013
 digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
 60 x 60 cm



SAM MOGELONSKY
Iris 2013
 digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
 40 x 40 cm



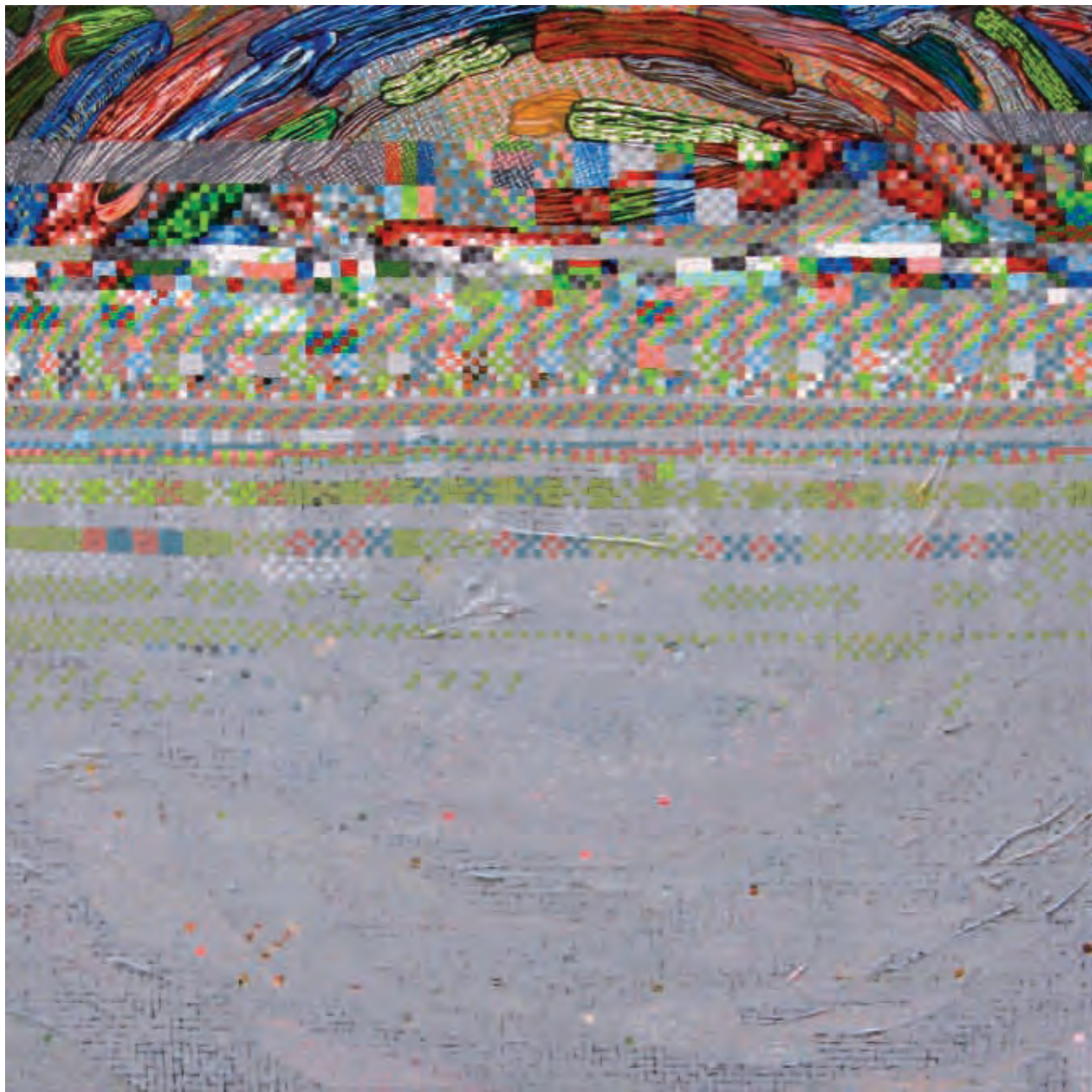
SAM MOGELONSKY
Double Vision 2013
 digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
 60 x 60 cm

Mark Stebbins

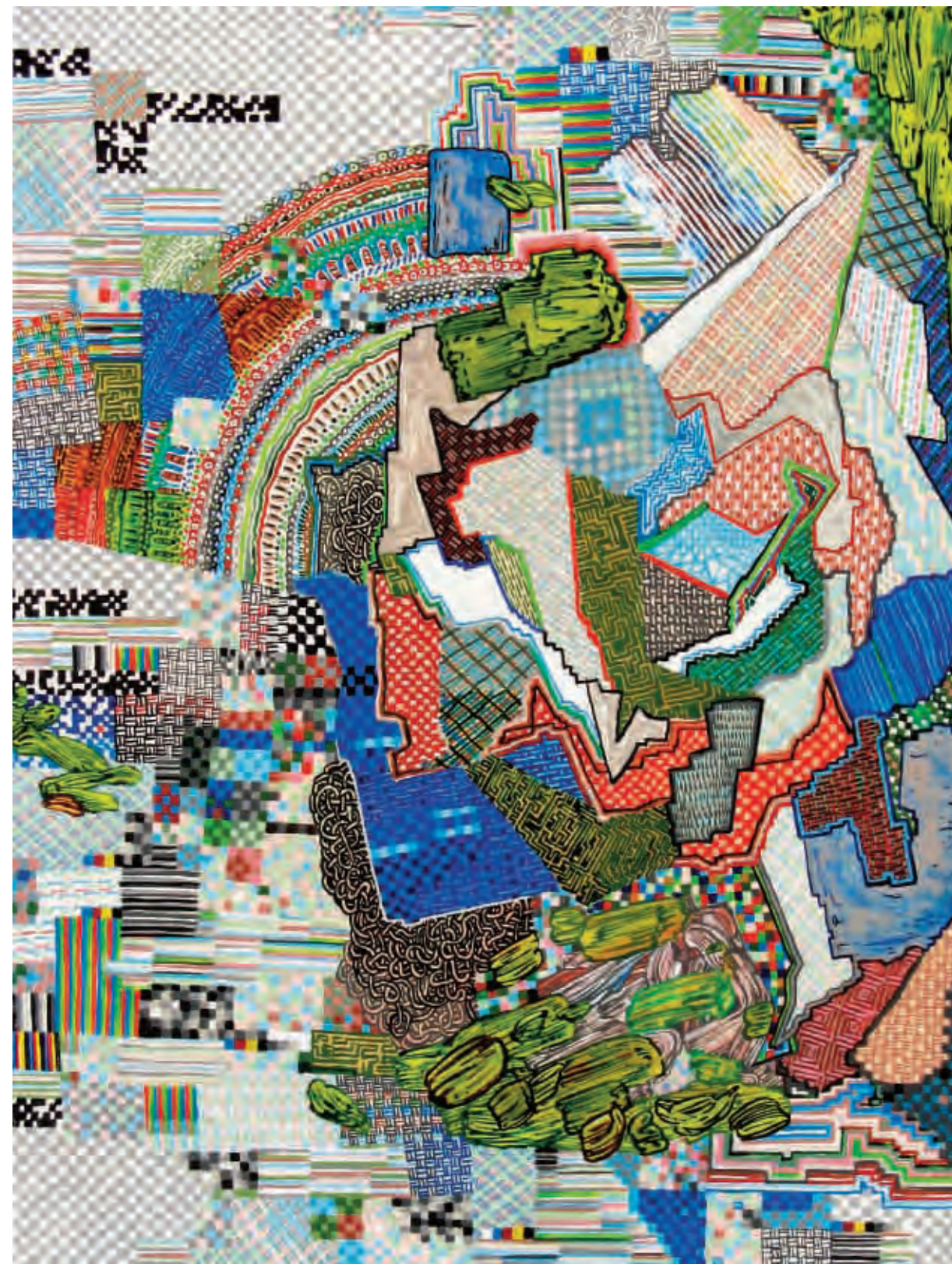
Mark Stebbins is a visual artist based in Toronto. Working in acrylic paint and ink, he creates dense, abstract compositions that combine references to the domains of craft, fine art and digital imaging. He has exhibited across Canada and internationally. Recent solo exhibitions include *Geullich* (2013) at Galerie PICI, Seoul, co-hosted by the Embassy of Canada to Korea, *Glitch-alikes* (2012) at Galerie BAC, Montreal, and *Lacunae* (2010) at Edward Day Gallery, Toronto. Awards include Honourable Mention in the RBC Canadian Painting Competition (2010), Best in Exhibition and Best in Drawing at the Toronto Outdoor Art Exhibition (2010), Halifax Mayor’s Award of Distinction in Contemporary Visual Arts (2009) and Visual Arts Nova Scotia’s Emerging Artist of the Year (2009). Stebbins’ work is featured in Canadian and international collections, including the Canada Council Art Bank, RBC Royal Bank of Canada and the Halifax Regional Municipality. He holds a BFA from the University of Western Ontario and an LL.B. from Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University.

MARK STEBBINS
Amalgam 2011
acrylic paint/ink on panel
40.6 x 40.6 cm

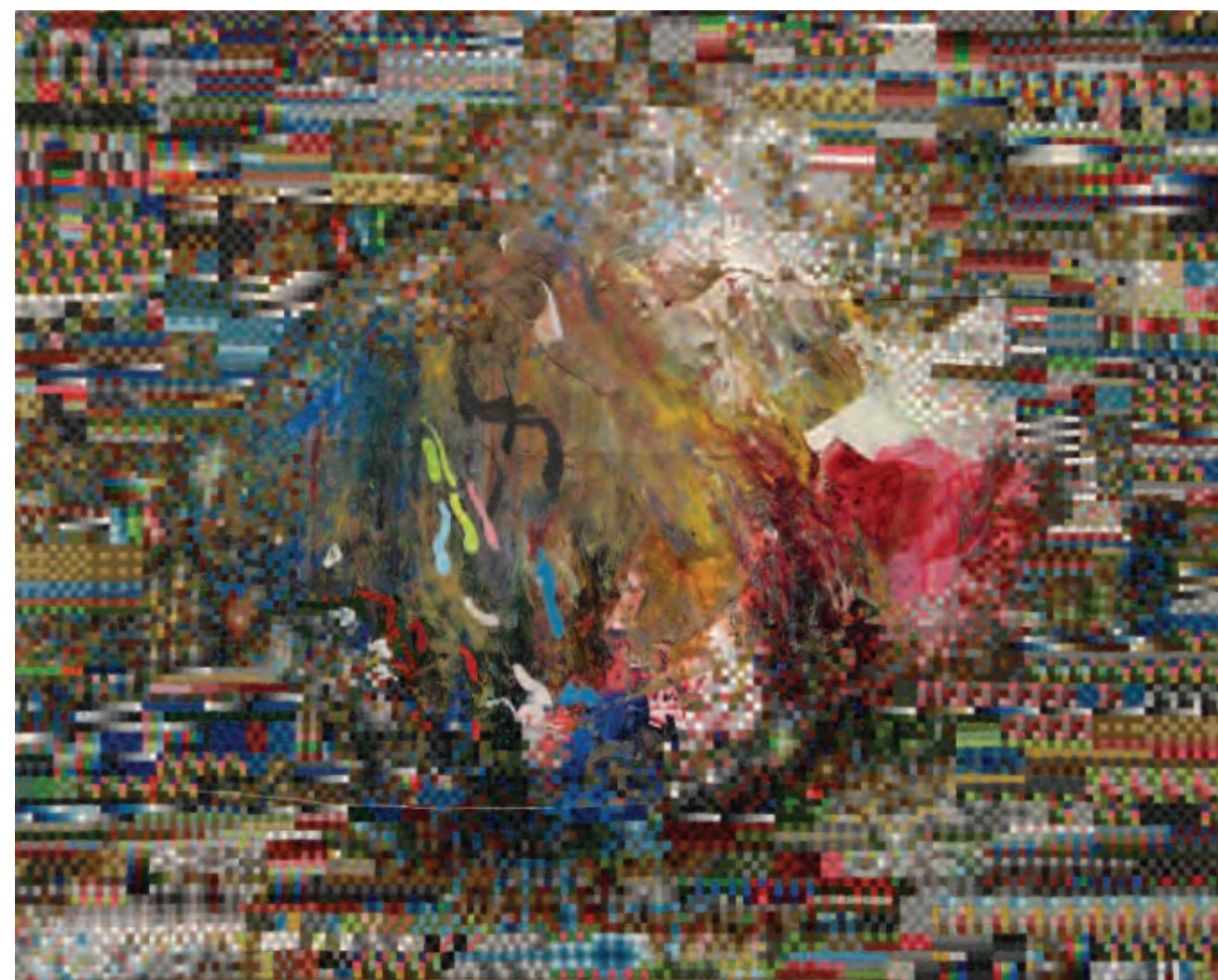




ABOVE:
MARK STEBBINS
Lacuna 2 2012
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 25.4 x 25.4 cm



RIGHT:
MARK STEBBINS
Omnibus 2011
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 20.3 x 15.2 cm



ABOVE:

MARK STEBBINS

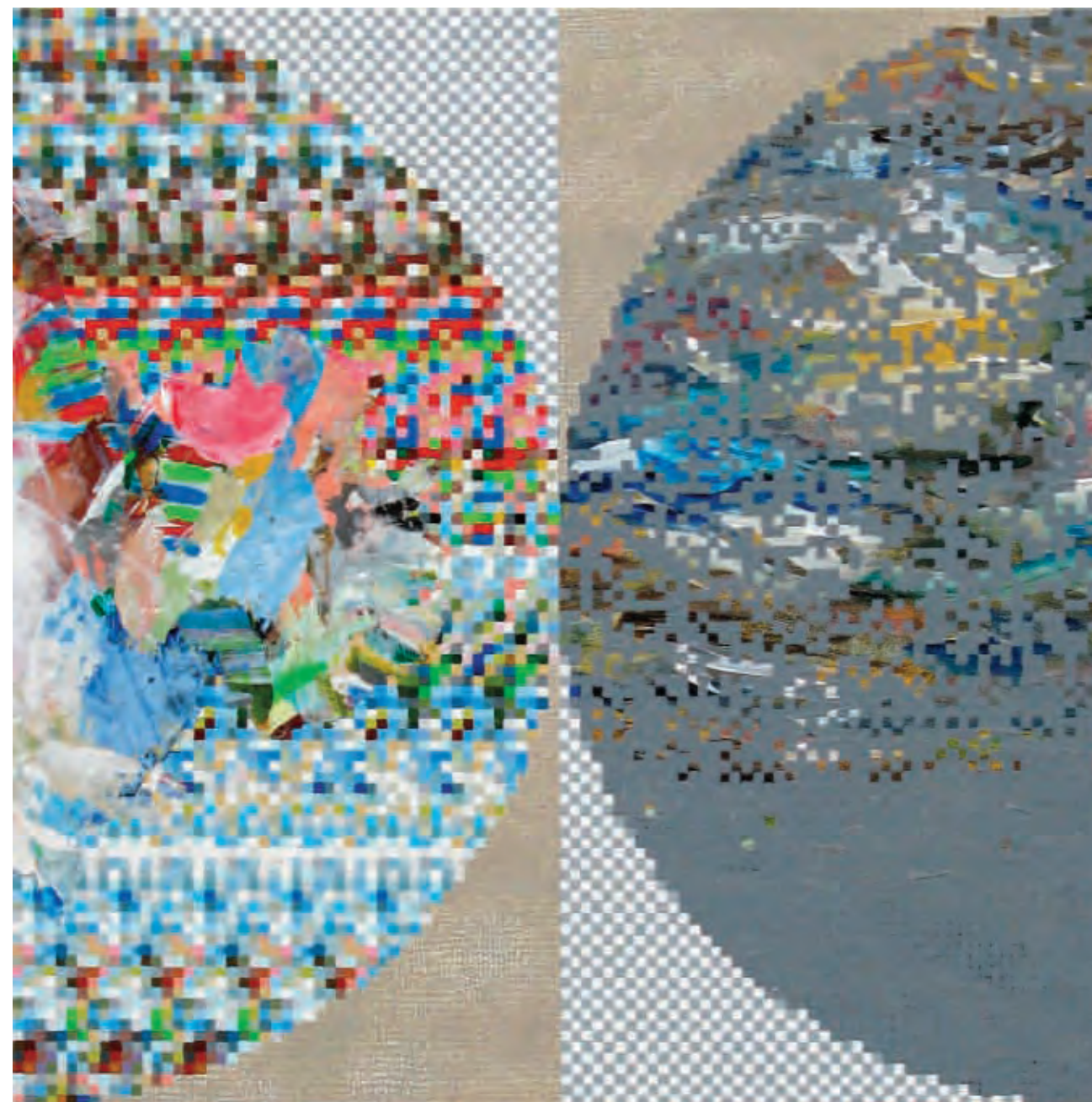
Glitch-alike 2011
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 20.3 x 25.4 cm

LEFT:

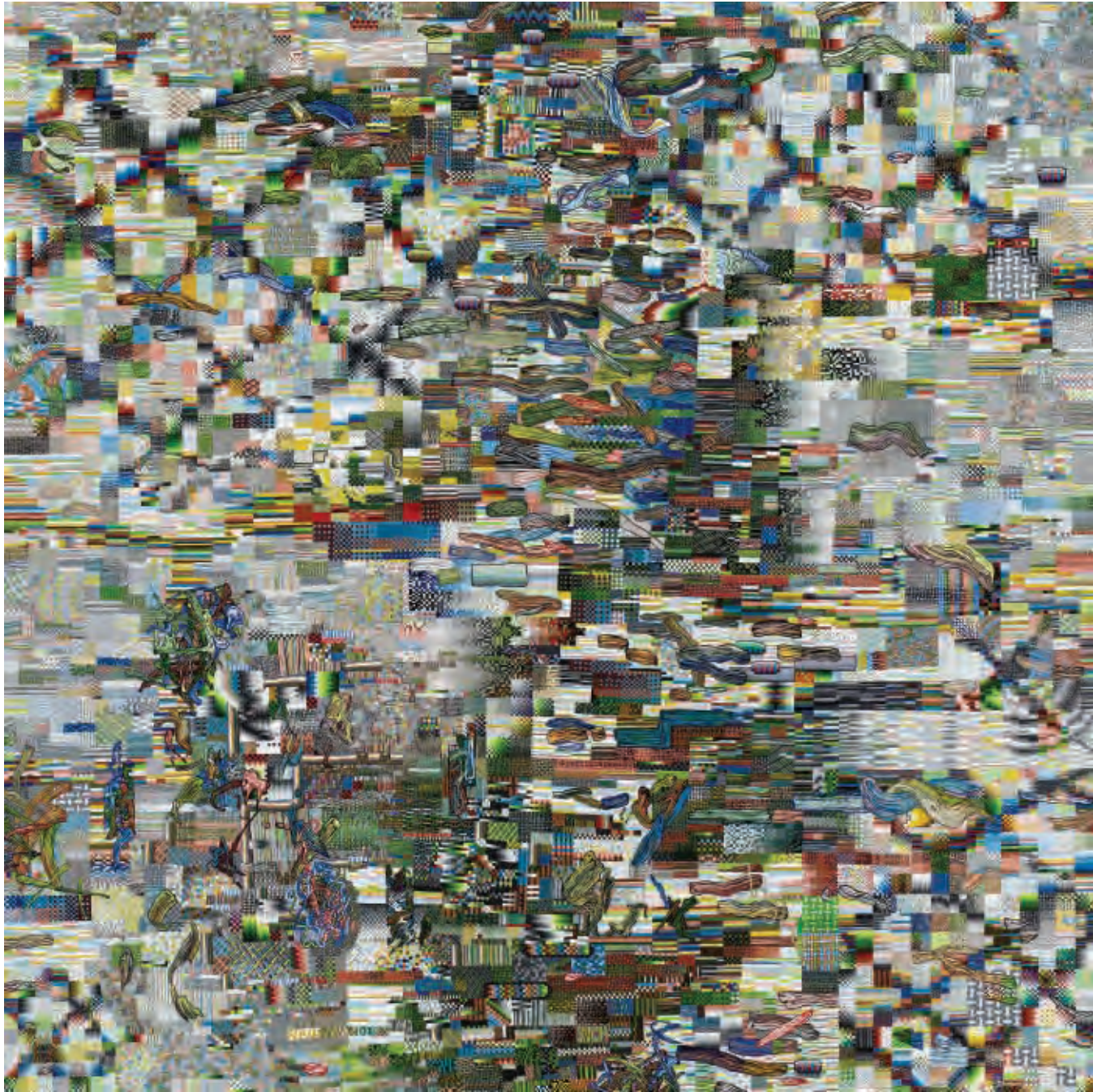
Lost Cloud 2013
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 25.4 x 20.3 cm



ABOVE:
MARK STEBBINS
Mnemonic Device 2012
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 22.9 x 30.5 cm

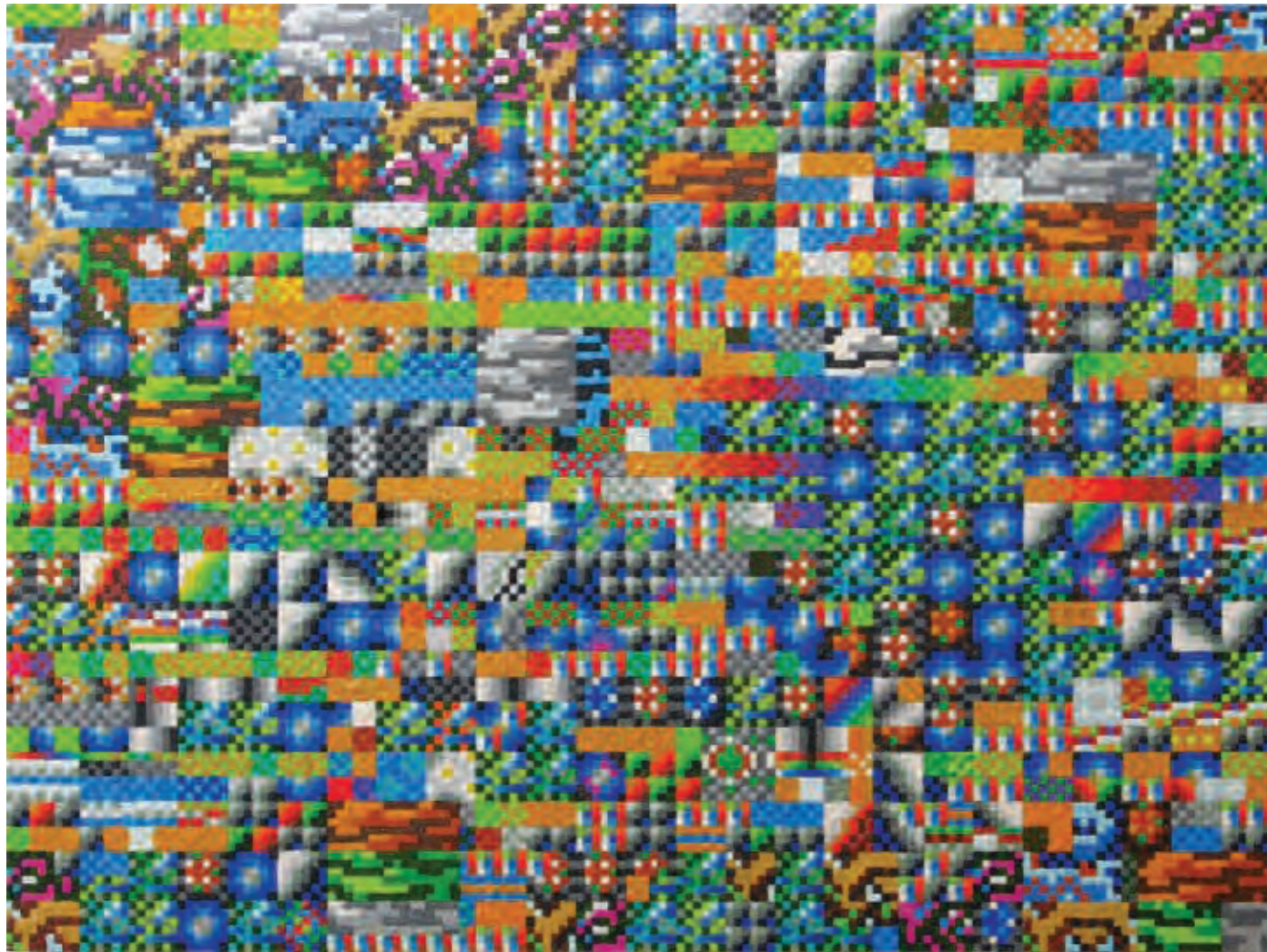


RIGHT:
Give And Take 2013
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 20.3 x 20.3 cm



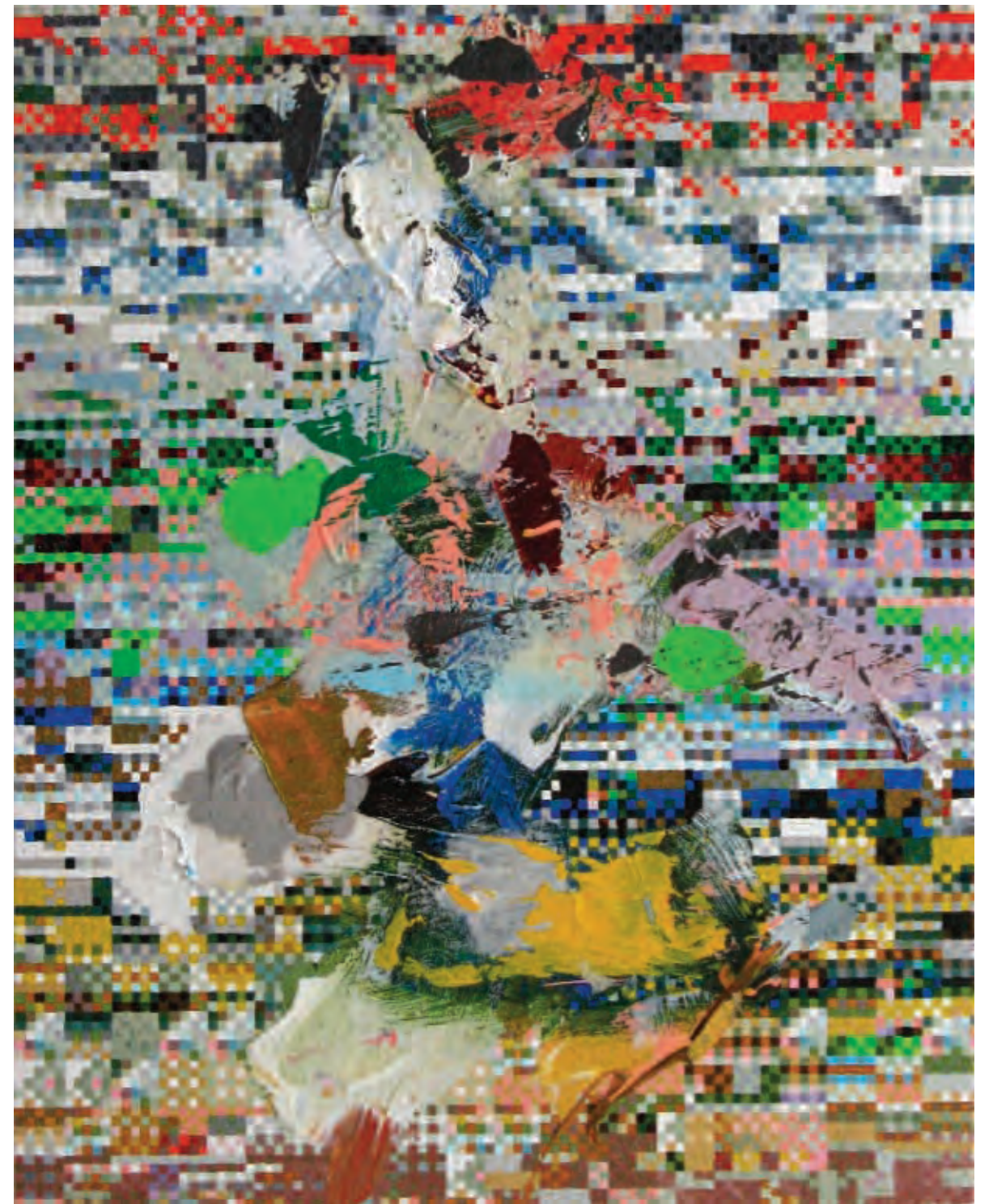
ABOVE:
MARK STEBBINS
Glitch-alike 3 2012
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 30.5 x 40.6 cm

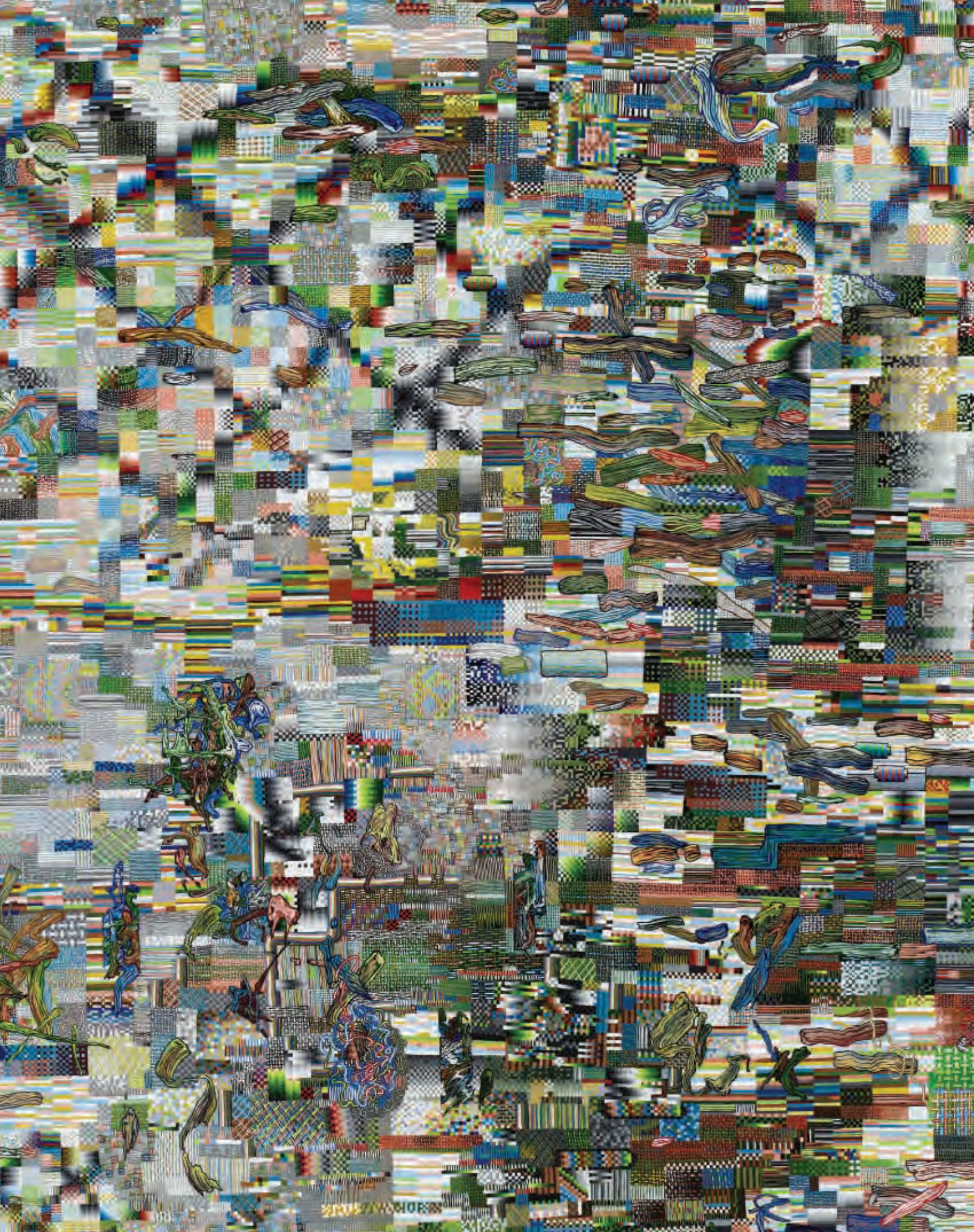
LEFT:
Confluence 2011
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 61 x 61 cm



ABOVE:
MARK STEBBINS
Archaeology 2013
 iridescent acrylic ink on panel
 22.9 x 30.5 cm

RIGHT:
Shifted Expression 2013
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 25.4 x 20.3 cm





DARRYN DOULL

Moving Forward | Infinite Loop

The work of Becky Ip, Sam Mogelonsky and Mark Stebbins

INTRODUCTION

It is a game that can immediately evoke fond memories of adolescent afternoons spent with friends and family, or of long summer days at camp. Participants are arranged in a circle. One participant generates a word or message to be whispered to the individual on their right. That individual passes on the message, in turn, until it has travelled through all of the participants. At the end of the circle, the last participant to receive the message announces to the group what they believe the message to be. Almost inevitably, the message will have undergone a drastic transformation and will bear little resemblance to the phrase initially conceived.

Known by various names, including Telephone, Operator, and Grapevine, this game seems to have been around forever. In it, the *process* of transmission is responsible for the breakdown in communication. If the basis of the game's process is a nearly inevitable failure, the heart of the game's enjoyment is about watching one meaning gradually translate into something different and new.

The three artists in *Making Methods* (Sam Mogelonsky, Mark Stebbins, and Becky Ip) have much in common with the game I'll call Telephone. Each artist explores notions of translation and absence and expresses a continually evolving appreciation for 'something new.' *Making Methods* makes obvious the intensive, laborious, and particularly detailed nature of the artists' working styles. One can appreciate the varying degrees with which each artist has used and transformed contemporary and traditional craft

practices. However, the exhibition also provides a framework within which to consider the role that process and exploration play in these works. Sam Mogelonsky, Mark Stebbins, and Becky Ip enter into the generative process with ease and excitement. Like a game of Telephone, their practice is inherently transformative and their results, unpredictable.

ESTABLISHING THE INFINITE LOOP

*To create a work of art that conveys meaning we must first study the aesthetics and potential of the media we are working with.*¹

Sam Mogelonsky's use of materials offers a good example of the Telephone loop. When first walking into her warehouse-style studio, a visitor will appreciate the breadth of Mogelonsky's investigations. Strewn around the perimeter of the main space are freshly filled shopping bags from Home Depot, the signage shop around the corner, and the bead store downtown. In these are collections of sequins, pins, and roofing nails of different gauges. Artist's proofs and a varied collection of references shore up the opposite corner of the room.

On the day I visited the studio, a white-washed approximation of a common gallery display environment occupied the centre of the studio's main space. Here, Mogelonsky had positioned a sampling of her work for us to consider, including pieces from a series called *Sequined Objects* from 2012. Sparkling and fantastic, the bedazzled objects conjure human forms.

MARK STEBBINS

Confluence [DETAIL] 2013
acrylic paint/ ink on panel
61 x 61 cm

¹ Iman Moradi, "Glitch Aesthetics" (BA Hon. thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2004), 3, http://www.oculasm.org/glitch/download/Glitch_dissertation_print_with_pics.pdf. Accessed April 15 2013.



SAM MOGELONSKY
Target Practice 2012
 foam, sequins, pins
 63.5 x 45 x 30 cm

In *Target Practice* (2012), all four limbs and the head seem to have been decommissioned from a blackened torso. The sensuous curves and the scale of the work support a reading of the object as body. I was immediately reminded of Jasper Johns’ target paintings from the late 1950’s. The image of the target brings with it an inevitable association with darts, archery, or axe throwing. The target imparts a sense of penetration and risk upon the area around it. When placed on a bodily referent, a different, more violent implication is invoked. Mogelonsky playfully limits these thoughts with the bright colouration and decorative patterning that she has applied to the targets. Tidy, alternating rows of colour speak both to the careful labour involved in creating the object and to a somewhat kitschy adornment aesthetic that Mogelonsky openly embraces.

After this explosive experience of colour, I found the next sculpture in the room particularly remarkable. Comprised solely of white sequins, *Pin Spiral I* (2012) raises the question: Where did all the colour go?

Ever pragmatic, Mogelonsky had acquired her sequins in a large assorted bag; large sequins were mixed in with small ones, and there was a wide range of colours. Though initially cost-effective, this strategy also necessitated a separating and organizing of the sequins to facilitate an effective workflow. While working on *Target Practice* and other similar sculptures, Mogelonsky felt that the white sequins did not really fit with the others. She was interested in sparkling and bedazzling the surface of these objects, and the white had a muted passivity that was too understated to co-exist with the highly reflective metallic hues of the coloured sequins. In other words, *Pin Spiral I* was white because a lot of white sequins happened to be available. *Pin Spiral II* shares a similar execution strategy. Taking the wall-based orientation of the first pin spiral and reorienting it to stand vertically on the floor, Mogelonsky chose to use all of the transparent sequins that had not been used in the previous works.

Sharing the current societal ‘instagrammatic impulse’² to take and distribute photographs, Mogelonsky found herself taking many photographs of these tubular sculptures. The sense of peace and serenity exuded from the outside of



SAM MOGELONSKY
Pin Spiral I 2012
 sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard), mirrored paper, epoxy sculpt, steel, paint
 32.5 x 9 x 9 cm

² Here, I’m referring to the rapid ascent and vast popularity of the mobile phone app “Instagram” and the behaviours it encourages in its users. Instagram allows users to easily take photographs with their phones and post them on the Internet for others to see, like and comment upon. This ease has resulted in users taking many photographs, opening the door to appreciate unexpected aesthetic opportunities and, in this case, eventually leading to nuanced photographs with a great deal of aesthetic value.

the sculptures is eradicated when looking down into their threatening, industrial cores, where the inordinate number of pins required to attach so many sequins is unveiled. Photographs of this perspective also allow an appreciation of the amount of labour and time spent on these objects, and interestingly, the apparent disconnect between the directly observable sequins on the outside and the seemingly exaggerated quantity of pins on the inside. These photographs, printed on aluminum, have an aesthetic value of their own, and have since come to be a completely new series of work opening up entirely new directions.

Just as unexpected results are generated by a game of Telephone, Mogelonsky embraces new solutions and directions as the means and process, coupled with her own curiosity, dictate. Starting with a few sculptures in dazzling colour, she was left with the white and transparent sequins, which became the next two sculptures, which in turn led to the series of photographs. What at first was sent around the Telephone circle as a colourful bodily form has come out the other end as industrial photographs printed on aluminum. The infinite loop had been established and carries on.

PLASTIC CONCRETE

Mark Stebbins’ relationship to the game Telephone lies in his decision to embed representations of failure, absences of information, and quick transitions of source material into his paintings. In these paintings, things are consistently in a tension of change and collapse.

Technological glitches and glitch aesthetics form the basis of Stebbins’ current work. A glitch in its natural form is “assumed to be the unexpected result of a [technological] malfunction ... and is a commonplace expression in computer and networks technology, meaning to slip, slide, an irregularity, or malfunction.”³ For example, sometimes a digital photograph can be corrupted through the process of transmission between two

points, resulting in an inability to open the file properly. This form of glitch has a number of different appearances, but some of the most common include a linear, repeating pattern of coloured pixels replacing a portion of the original file, or a portion of the file actually disappearing into a roughly eighteen percent grey.⁴ In natural glitches like this, the original file appears to continue in the ‘background’ while the corrupted pixels or grey absence seems to be situated in the ‘foreground’ of the image.



MARK STEBBINS
Mnemonic Device 2012
 acrylic paint/ink on panel
 22.9 x 30.5 cm
 The original accurate reproduction of the painting is on the top. When emailing this image, which features a glitch-alike element along the lower edge, the file became corrupted, resulting in the natural glitch image at the bottom.

³ Moradi, “Glitch Aesthetics,” 3.

⁴ Photographers and other so inclined individuals will appreciate the connection between eighteen percent grey and the dependable grey card, an item used to balance a light meter in photography and cinematography.



MARK STEBBINS
Infinite Loop 2011
acrylic paint/ink on panel
20.3 x 20.3 cm

In opposition to a natural, or pure, glitch is the “glitch-alike.” A glitch-alike is “a collection of digital artefacts that resemble visual aspects of real glitches found in their original habitat.”⁵ This sets up a dichotomy of two types of artists: (i) those who actively seek out situations and technologies that are likely to produce a natural glitch, and (ii) those who glean visual artefacts of glitch aesthetics to create a mimesis of the natural glitch. Stebbins falls into the latter of these two categories. He playfully engages the world of glitch aesthetics with glitch-alike imagery that he draws by hand, inverting the viewer’s expectations regarding creative intent versus chance production, as well as the relation of foreground versus background.

In 2011, Stebbins completed *Infinite Loop*. This work summarizes many of the interests and visual languages that Stebbins has been developing over the years and continues to expand upon today. In the tech world of computers, an infinite loop, otherwise known as an “unproductive” loop, is a sequence of instructions in computer coding that results in the direction being looped endlessly, having no termination point, or being redirected to begin at the beginning again when reaching what should have been the terminus of the instruction. The title contains many layers, as many of Stebbins’ titles do, with references to computer coding, the physically looping, caricaturized brushstroke tangled in the centre of the image, and the garter stitch in the bottom left corner or the stockinette stitch in the upper right corner.

One cannot help but think about mimicry when looking at Stebbins’ paintings, whether in relation to the act of knitting or weaving, producing a likeness to glitch (in other words, a “glitch-alike”), or in the actual handling of the paints and inks. Mimicry is an interesting way to approach the initial example of the game Telephone, where each participant in the circle attempts to mimic, to the best of their ability, what they heard from the person before them. In

Infinite Loop, we see a caricaturized gestural brushstroke, both painted and drawn into a self-fulfilling infinite loop. The artist smartly incorporates many influences, including the knitting structures that impede the paint strokes’ flow, while glitches in the colouration affect the paint strokes’ appearance.

Like the game Telephone, this seemingly gestural paint stroke is changing as it goes around the loop. The meticulous labour required to create this effect and the aesthetic that emerges speak more directly to drawing and craft than to painterly expectations. It also deflates the bravado historically associated with gestural painting. As a result, Stebbins collapses the barriers between craft, contemporary and historical painting, and technologically-induced glitch aesthetics. Each source referent inspires the final product without becoming duplicitous or obsolete.

To create these works, Stebbins needs to mix many specific colours. Staying true to pixellation patterns, he ensures that colours often repeat for a certain amount of space before transitioning into a different repetition of colours, necessitating more mixing. All of this mixing occurs on a palette, resulting in a fragmentary accumulation of paint that is peeled once dry to be re-used, being stored in a binder like a provisional inventory of assorted ‘paint grafts.’ In *Glitch-alike* (2011), this dried residual paint and ink has been applied to the centre of the panel. Its central application suggests that this expressive, abstract paint is the content of the painting, partially obscured by the glitch imagery around it. These palette scrapings are residual, unintentional imagery; something that is made but is devoid of expressive intent in their creation. The scrapings retain their own layered history, but also relate to the unintentional imagery of a natural glitch. In this painting, these paint grafts seem to influence the pixels around the rest of the painting in their colouration and effect, but the pixels also seem to subsume the palette material deep into the support. The painting withholds a particular tension between

⁵ Moradi, “Glitch Aesthetics,” 3.

‘descending’ into total glitch, or ‘correcting’ back to the anticipated expressive imagery.

Where normally the painterly aspects display creative intent and digital glitches are devoid of creative intent (being a digital accident), these realms undergo a weird reversal in Stebbins’ work wherein the creative intent primarily resides in the pixellated ‘glitch-alike’ imagery. This concrete process of working with by-product paint from the palette is both economical and provisional, embodying the studio process back into the finished work of art.

Stebbins’ artistic continuum itself glitches every now and again, allowing the artist a space to retain relevance, self-awareness, and continual evolution. The paintings continue to produce leftover acrylic mixtures to be gleaned and stored, ultimately helping to shape another work in the future. A material process is again co-opted in the act of creation. This process is strikingly similar to the way Mogelonsky was able to work with her sequin stock and how the means of material consumption from previous works are able to influence works that are yet to come. A material and conceptual infinite loop emerges, adding new elements in and continually shifting with each new loop.

FEEDBACK MEMORY

*Celluloid film and gelatin prints are both synonymous with “film grain.” Film grain is a well-known quality of analogue photography and cinematography that has pride and place in the manuals of film aesthetics. If we consider the objective of film as a tool with which to capture the essence of reality in the most accurate way possible, then this imperfection inherent in the physical medium of film can be construed as a pure “glitch-alike” feature of film.*⁶

Like Stebbins, whose recent painting *Lacuna 2* (2012) expresses with its very title the themes of absence and miscommunication, Becky Ip investigates information gaps and the difficult transmission of knowledge in her work. Since 2009, she has been developing a series of works based on the story of her aunt, whom Ip never met.

Gathering patchwork traces of her aunt’s life from her father’s stories and from his memory, Ip entered into a real-life version of Telephone, where an oral history is transmitted as clearly as possible and with all intentions of being accurate and complete. There remain inevitable holes in the story, areas that are not definitively known, providing space for creativity and interpretation.

Ip works with this source material in a variety of ways. In 2009, she began researching specifics of the story. She found that, from 2005 to 2006, she had unwittingly stayed in the same apartment that her aunt had spent her last moments. This realization led to a series of drawings that were really a meandering exploration of the ideas and content that Ip had collected. Eventually these drawings inspired paintings that were used to create short animation sequences, captured with a Bolex 16mm film camera and incorporated into the film, *To cry (of birds)* (2013).

Using a Bolex camera has its own quirks and nuances that contribute to the final film footage being captured. A notable characteristic of the majority of the Bolex cameras produced since the 1930s is the spring-wound clockwork feature that provides the energy and duration for the shutter release. This process produces quick flashes of what is perceived to be white light, but is really an absence of image (as seen next page). There is a nostalgic response to the flashes of light recalling early film footage and other experimental films. This mechanical glitch is easily likened to a technological glitch, where in both cases the intended transmission of information has failed for a brief moment.

As Iman Moradi described in his dissertation *Glitch Aesthetics*, using physical film to produce either moving or still imagery introduces varying degrees of film grain.⁷ Along with the mechanically induced glitches, the actual film stock and developing process will introduce chemical glitches, causing visual information to be represented with varying degrees of accuracy. Additionally, factors unique to the developing of each segment of film stock may introduce other artefacts, such as an



ABOVE:
BECKY IP
To cry (of birds) 2013
video stills from 16mm film on DVD
10:27 min

⁶ Moradi, “Glitch Aesthetics,” 43.

⁷ Ibid.

errant hair (as seen on previous page). Instead of detracting from the transmission of information, these physical glitches in the film establish a palpable presence of history and memory.

In a technology designed to capture information as close to reality as possible, one can think of film grain as the resolution on a monitor. The finer the film grain, the less likely you are to notice the grains making up the image. The sharper your monitor is, the less likely you are to notice the rows of pixels making up the image. However, when the film grain and other mal-functions become apparent, their presence is heightened. They become a site of attention where a conflict between resolution and dissolution can occur. They continue to feed into our relationship to film as being nostalgic and blissfully imperfect.

Ip's formal process and material means of production neatly reflect her patchwork source materials, as well as the gaps and fuzziness of oral history transmission overall. Having shot the footage for the film within the confines of her apartment, she generates a sense of timelessness that lends a nomadic impression to the film, being neither specifically here nor there. Ip consciously uses technology that brings its own inherent characteristics to the creative process; what the camera takes in through the lens is inevitably different from the final result on the screen.

RANDOM ACCESS MEMORIES⁸

Sam Mogelonsky, Mark Stebbins, and Becky Ip have rich, multi-faceted practices in which notions of translation and absence play key roles. Each artist demonstrates, moreover, a continually evolving appreciation for the 'something new,' particularly when this emerges from equal parts chance and fortuitous labour. *Making Methods* provides a framework within which to consider the role that process and exploration play in each artist's respective work. Like a good round of Telephone, Mogelonsky, Stebbins, and Ip produce wholly unpredictable results. The infinite loop has been established...

⁸ In full disclosure, I took the opportunity to glean this relevant title from the Daft Punk album released on May 21, 2013.

BECKY IP

Tower and flight [DETAIL] 2013
paper, wire, binder clips, monofilament
approx. 3.9 x 1.5 x 1.5 m



List of Works

BECKY IP

To cry (of birds) 2013
16mm on DVD
10:27 min

Tower and flight 2013
paper, wire, binder clips, monofilament
approx. 3.9 x 1.5 x 1.5 m

SAM MOGELONSKY

Pin Spiral I 2012
sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard),
mirrored paper, epoxy sculpt, steel, paint
32.5 x 9 x 9 cm
Private Collection

Pin Spiral II 2013
sequins, sewing pins, document tube (cardboard),
mirrored paper, steel, epoxy sculpt, silver leaf
109 x 11 x 11 cm

Nail Spiral 2013
sono-tube (cardboard), nails, steel, mirrored
paper, paint, epoxy sculpt, silver leaf, aqua resin,
metal washers, silver enamel, construction glue
1.5 x 4.2 x .3 m (installed)

White Light 2013
digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
90 x 90 cm

Black Light 2013
digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
90 x 90 cm

Canopy 2013
digital print on Alu-Dibond 1/5
90 x 90 cm

MARK STEBBINS

Jetsam 2010
acrylic paint/ink on panel
25.4 x 25.4 cm
Private Collection

Matrices 2010
acrylic paint/ink on panel
27.9 x 35.6 cm
Private Collection

Amalgam 2011
acrylic paint/ ink on panel
40.6 x 40.6 cm
Collection of Dreyfus-Barr

Confluence 2011
acrylic paint/ink on panel
61 x 61 cm
Collection of Simon Blais

Data Bend 2011
acrylic paint/ink on panel
15.2 x 15.2 cm
Private Collection

Dataset 2011
acrylic paint/ink on panel
15.2 x 15.2 cm
Private Collection

Glitch-alike 2011
acrylic paint/ink on panel
20.3 x 25.4 cm
Private Collection

Infinite Loop 2011
acrylic paint/ink on panel
20.3 x 20.3 cm
Collection of Michele Gallant

MARK STEBBINS (cont.)

Omnibus 2011
acrylic paint/ink on panel
20.3 x 15.2 cm
Collection of Daisuke Takeya

Glitch-alike 3 2012
acrylic paint/ ink on panel
30.5 x 40.6 cm
Private Collection

Glitch-alike 4 2012
acrylic paint/ink on panel
15.2 x 15.2 cm
Private Collection

Graft 2012
acrylic paint/ink on panel
22.9 x 30.5 cm
Private Collection

Lacuna 2 2012
acrylic paint/ink on panel
25.4 x 25.4 cm
Collection of Rodrigue Paulin

Mnemonic Device 2012
acrylic paint/ink on panel
22.9 x 30.5 cm
Private Collection

Orts 2012
acrylic paint/ink on panel
35.6 x 27.9 cm
Collection of Simon Blais

The Gleaners 2012
acrylic paint/ink on panel
40.6 x 40.6 cm
Courtesy of Galerie BAC,
Bigué Art Contemporain

Archaeology 2013
iridescent acrylic ink on panel
22.9 x 30.5 cm
Private Collection

Give And Take 2013
acrylic paint/ink on panel
20.3 x 20.3 cm
Courtesy of Galerie BAC,
Bigué Art Contemporain

Lost Cloud 2013
acrylic paint/ink on panel
25.4 x 20.3 cm
Courtesy of Galerie BAC,
Bigué Art Contemporain

Shifted Expression 2013
acrylic paint/ink on panel
25.4 x 20.3 cm
Courtesy of Galerie BAC,
Bigué Art Contemporain

Slide 2013
acrylic paint/ink on panel
25.4 x 20.3 cm

Slip 2013
acrylic paint/ink on panel
25.4 x 20.3 cm
Courtesy of Galerie BAC,
Bigué Art Contemporain

Vestiges 2012-2013
acrylic paint/ink on panel
50.8 x 50.8 cm

