

Topographies

I find that the longer I look at something, the more it changes-- enriched by personal experience, culture, and history. Prolonged engagement, by the depiction of mesmerizing surfaces, becomes a metaphor for how cultural conflict can give way to multiple translations that embrace ambiguity and unfamiliar views. Thus, examining an exterior skin can yield interior discovery, given openness and attention. The challenges and unique insights of my experiences as an Asian-American woman drive me to create an "in-between" space to adapt to contradictory and irreconcilable aspects of the world.

Based on provocative topographies, such as satellite images of blizzards, national borders, and Venus lava flows, these paintings entangle the factual and experiential. Faithfully recorded details are reinterpreted through unpredictable technical processes, such as large-scale printmaking or scratch-board, then redefined through slow meditative re-tracing. Alternate contexts may be expressed through color, inviting unexpected, seemingly irrational associations: climate catastrophe, religious structures, medical imaging, networks of neurons, magnetic fields, werewolves, night vision surveillance cameras, snow angels, Renaissance painting. Thus, over time, "data" is in turn preserved, disrupted, reinforced, re-imagined. An accumulation of multiple views, ranging from shared to unique to irreconcilable, becomes a Rorschach test to reflect upon contemporary experience.

-Cynthia Lin, 2021

Scan/ Draw/ Scan/ Print/ Trace/ Paint

I find that the longer I look at something, the more it changes-- enriched by personal experience, culture, and history. I aspire toward multiple, ongoing translations that re-construct malleable visual "facts," in response to material, visceral, digital, and psychological events. Hyper-detailed images of skin, orifices and scars, acquired through direct computer scans of the body, become sites for excavation: a variety of approaches, including hand-drawn, digital, and lithographic techniques, alternately reinforce recognition and introduce alternative interpretation. Representational and digital structure is disrupted when these unpredictable processes are ambitiously applied to large scale. Thus gaps open-- fragmented and error-filled accumulations are re-calibrated, guided by subjective experiences--haptic, unconscious... "irrational." Concrete familiarity becomes enigma becomes poetry.

Traversing a topographical skin initially evokes familiar landscape, then deepens into sonogram, or archaeological fragment, then ancient trauma. Microscopic scrutiny enables uncomfortable intimacy to become mesmerizing meditation, then abstract expressionist language, Chinese calligraphy, or a wondrous cosmos. Hints of gender confusion, uncertain identity, and racial difference grow. Privacy and mortality become threatened, intensified by possible mis-readings of body parts, disfigurement, and violation. Picturing a vulnerable beauty inseparable from terror, the work embraces a myriad of contradictory and irreconcilable experiences

that reflect contemporary life.

-Cynthia Lin, 2017

SKIN AND SCARS

This work examines the fragility of the human condition through meticulously rendered orifices and scars. Based on computer scans, these graphite drawings both literally and figuratively scrutinize notions of the "factual," leading to reconsiderations of privacy, identity, gender, race, beauty, and mortality. Through monumental scale and devotion to the handmade, they viscerally engage conflicting experiences of discomfort and fascination. Visual observation is taken to an extreme. An almost unimaginably slow process of drawing transforms a speedily gained and often disregarded image into a meditative, expansive experience. Microscopic observations accumulate and develop into unpredictable connections. References are made to landscape, a similar skin that is subject to both interior and exterior stress. The scab drawings, in particular, aspire to Romantic sublime landscape, hopefully offering a healing for prior violations. The colossal orifices, pressed against glass, aim to convey a tension between intimacy and vastness that evokes conflicting aspects of modern life. They are vulnerable to scrutiny yet mysterious, unique yet anonymous, truthfully represented yet easily misread. Fragmentation of the body, by technology, is explored through the incorporation of both human and technological disruptions. The limits of human stillness are precisely recorded in breath condensation and twitching. Printing "failures," such as banding and pixellation, inspire new structural markmaking. These informational gaps, within a seemingly factual image, open the way for experiencing complexity, enigma, and the subjective.

-Cynthia Lin, 2010

DUST DRAWINGS: RE-SEEING THE BARELY VISIBLE

My ongoing purpose is to prolong the act of looking, to invite discovery of multiple and contradictory perceptions that unfold over time. Convincingly factual depictions of dust attract curious scrutiny that sharpens the eye, so that what initially seems random is recognized to be purposefully arranged individual calligraphy. A wonderment, inspired by miniature, evolves with continued looking, leading to other reflections of limitlessness-- the cosmos or a desert landscape, for example. An unwelcome moment, such as an encounter with uncleanliness, is lengthened and enriched through engaging details that intensify conflicting responses of seduction and repulsion. Thus time increasingly alters the experience of viewing these drawings, delivering restless reconfigurations, elusive as dust itself.

Ever-shifting perceptions drive this work, which seeks to demonstrate the enriching complexity of the transient and the irreconcilable. The entrypoint occurs at the edge of what can be seen, where the real and the illusory unaccountably intertwine, allowing the inexplicable to become

believable.

The panel drawings initially appear to be luminous empty surfaces, containing barely discernible lines that invite closer inspection. When near enough to identify these intimate marks, the viewer literally loses sight of the overall picture. The whole can only be experienced by mentally reconstructing fragments. Unique and arbitrary chronologies develop, as each individual creates the work through their own process of seeing and remembering.

-Cynthia Lin, 2002