

eXact-O!

Concept

The idea for this project emerged from rather mundane conversations about preferred types of blades used for cutting paper. Debating the merits of the various manufacturers of what is eponymously known as the Xacto blade, we found that as a group our work was connected in several interesting ways. First, we all agreed that the Xacto™ blades were in fact the worst, chipping easily and losing their point after only a few minutes of cutting. We also talked about the precision we required, the need for clean lines, and the concentration and somewhat obsessive quality of doing this kind of work. Over time, we began to see a common thread in all our work.

There is a transformation that takes place that is central to our various practices. The act of cutting alters the materials into something unexpected, revealing hidden qualities and creating new possibilities. It is an essentially reductive act, emphasizing the structure that remains at the end of the process. As the title of this proposal - "eXactO!" implies, the work is made possible by the tool, but it is the precise use of the tool that is important. There is no erasing a mistake; each cut must be exact, the resulting buildup of marks creating an elaborate whole that can literally fall apart with one slip of the blade. In this accumulation of marks, in the reduction of the whole, there is an inherent understanding of the process that is clear to the viewer; an acknowledgement of the concentration involved, the evidence of the artists' hand that imbues the work with a significance that stands in contrast with the simplicity of the material.

Installation is another important aspect of the work; the transformation of the materials is done specifically in relationship to the space it will occupy. The installation in the gallery would be done to reinforce the ideas explored in the work.

For Marina Shterenberg cutting performs two functions. The cut paper screens of her interiors, which exist as both installations and photographs, allow her to explore possibilities in architecture and space that are impossible in the 'real' world. The panels that divide the viewer from the invented interiors are also cut in ways that both invite the viewer and obscure the created space. In the gallery, a panel wall would be installed through which the viewer can see into the various maquettes suggesting a Utopian space.

Annie Vought is dedicated to precise translations of hand-written letters, both personal and found correspondence, into cut paper installations. The cutting is a way of focusing on the text - an elaborate investigation into the strange properties of writing: the penmanship and word choice that ultimately leads to a contemplation of both the limits and beauty of language. Installed directly on the gallery wall, each letter floating inches from the wall accentuates the sculptural quality of the words, allowing the viewer to examine the care it took to render each letter in relationship to what is actually being said; exposing the ways we express ourselves to each other.

Charlene Tan's practice involves the transformation of materials in surprising ways. Her work explores perception both in terms of how the viewer reacts to the way she changes the materials,

as well as the ways their imagination can affect what they see. Her cut paper installations convert the space into shapes of light and shadow; the way light interacts with the paper creates a rich surface that is at once difficult to penetrate as it is transparent.

Jesse Houlding's work is about what is allowed to pass through the paper; an exploration into the properties of light. By cutting small slits into large sheets of paper, the paper becomes a template for revealing aspects of natural phenomena. Inspired by physics such as the 'double-slit' experiment, his practice attempts to capture both a sense awe of the physical world and our inability to fully comprehend what we see.

Taken together, we believe that the conversation that has been taking place in the studio can continue in the gallery, inviting the viewer to explore the transformative possibilities of a simple tool.

Exhibition Description

Marina Shterenberg's "Improbable Architecture" is comprised of (4) 4'x10' canvas panels which connect to make a single wall. The panels are connected to the gallery wall on one side and to a 5th panel which forms a 90 degree angle to the 4 connected panels. Inside the wall are various small constructed spaces that are visible through slits in the canvas panels. The installation requires electrical outlets for the lights that illuminate the interior spaces. Ideally the area in front of the panels is dimmed.

In addition, large (36"x40") framed C-Prints depicting views of the constructed spaces will be shown next to the installation piece.

Annie Vought's installation consists of installing text onto the wall using pushpins. Each installation is different based on the location – but the general idea is to have 25' area in which the letters are installed. This installation works best on a white, smooth drywall wall.

Charlene Tan's "White Light" installation starts on the ceiling and is affixed using fishing line and push pins. The piece then descends, connecting to the architectural components in installation space. The ultimate size is a function of the space and viewing angles.

The "Protective Blue" series are installed using special wall mounts that set the work about an inch from the wall. The wall mounts are screwed into the wall and require no special installation.

Jesse Houlding's "Energy Field" is installed on the ceiling using hooks and a rope-pulley system to raise the paper. The width is 10 feet, and the length is variable depending on the available space – but would not exceed 20 feet.

The "Light Field" is installed in a window and is also variable dimension depending on the size of the window and surrounding walls. Ideally the "Light Field" would be illuminated at night at viewable from outside of the venue.