

Rosa Loveszy

## **Meandering Progression**

Drawing and Painting Thesis

2019

Rosa Loveszy

Painting and Drawing Thesis

May 19, 2019

## Meandering Progression

Observation of interior organic forms and microscopic environments inspired my interest the correlation between macro and microstructures in the universe. The flow of movement and material in natural settings, whether large or small, develop similar patterns over time. How can we identify regularities caused by liquid moving through matter?

Using a methodology inspired by organic shapes and systems of growth, the intrinsic properties of encaustic medium and steel allow for the paint and construction to reflect patterns of natural progress. Patterns found in nature that are visible in everyday life informs my intellectual and creative process. I consistently look for ways to make complex structures out of simple building blocks. This search has led me to peer through a microscope and observe the small shapes that coalesce to construct the world as we know it.

An integral part of my studio practice is not only the physical creation of art, or its formal properties, but the intellectual stimulation that comes from broadening my understanding of the universe. Consistently I am overwhelmed by the breadth of the knowledge and information available to aid our understanding of life. Through my research on growth patterns in the natural world, I have discovered exciting visuals that recently have been captured by modern scientific instruments. Looking through a microscope, I have been intrigued by the ability of a lens to reveal environments invisible to the naked eye. Depending on the lens we can observe a vast landscape of the growth patterns.

Thumbing through the Arthus-Bertrand, Yann. *Earth from Space*, 2013, I was intrigued by the way water carved through the landscape. Gravitational forces can move a liquid through a landscape-altering the terrain over time. When observed closely the blood vessels in the human body share features of waterways on earth. I observed connections between various types of water systems, both macroscopic and microscopic. It became apparent that liquid flows through matter carving out similar paths due to its natural properties. This simple visual connection was intriguing and spurred me to continue my visual research searching for images of water systems and images of the human vascular system. When visual details become simplified through abstraction the human brain is able to pay closer attention to patterns and similarities emphasizing the fundamental element of shape. Abstracting the human and earthly vascular system was a way to integrate the two subjects and further the complex visual language of this body of work.



Fig. 1

Not all spaces known to exist can be seen with the naked eye or experienced physically. "Systems of connection" was developed to demonstrate an invisible layer of the natural world.

Through abstraction I wanted highlight the similarities between microscopic landscapes and landscapes seen from space. Experimenting with materials that use gravity to move, encaustic paints in their liquid state, without coercion continuously yielded varied results. I was developing a painting methodology in the studio that produced imagery referencing cosmic and geologic events. In the past, while conducting scientific research, I worked with high powered microscopes and 3D x-ray scanners. By revealing the world beyond the scope of the naked eye, the technology opened up a whole new world of form. These images informed my image making process.

The work I make is an attempt capture the essence and demonstrating order and chaos. Combining automated precision tools such as laser cutters and 3d printers in combination additive material processes that can make space for an unplanned and unanticipated outcome. When embarking on the initial steps for this series of art pieces I made sure to have all of my elements ready. Like an alchemist in her laboratory I combined, separated, and manipulated each element of the encaustic monotypes. The process would occasionally devolve into an old-style movie scene where the detective would have new paper clipping strewn across the floor looking for connections. Similarly, the elements of each painting were hidden in plain sight, waiting to be discovered.

The nature of this process is contradictory to my usual studio practice where everything is planned before many steps are taken in the production. This less structured way of working was a method to integrate natural processes and growth like reaction in the studio. Each edition to the painting or welded structures was based on the shape or length of the piece laid in the previous step. Growth in nature is like a game of Jenga, each piece is laid atop the other building a tower block by block. I do not wish to impose a logic on the viewer; however, I want them to develop an understanding of the concept

through observation slowly. In all of my critiques throughout my thesis year the viewers have read the work as dealing with natural phenomena, juxtapositions, and incorporation of art and science.

Fig.2



My obsession with understanding growth in nature -- began the process with the idea of scale and growth. This piece is a fusion between painting medium and metal fabrication. Initially, I designed for a small space with a low ceiling. In the exhibition of this series, the space I

received for the Samuel Dorsky Museum of Art, Chandler Gallery exhibition, was greatly larger than initially anticipated. I received the north west corner of the main gallery including much of the east facing wall. A total of nine individual pieces hung in the second MFA Thesis show taking place on May 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

A total of nine individual pieces hung in the MFA Thesis 2 show. The work was placed in the back-right corner of the main area of the Dorsky Museums Chandler Gallery. The flat works were on the wall and the steel sculpture hung off-center 10 feet from the back wall, allowing for space to perambulate around the sculpture and in front of the paintings.

The layout of the works from left to right began with the diptych, *NAME HERE*, near the center of the gallery was as seen in figure 1. Further to the right was a twelve-foot gap in wall pieces, this clear space was the backdrop of the hanging sculpture *Natural Growth*. To the right of the clear wall space was a grouping of five encaustic paintings, *Wandering Matter 1- 7*. These works ranged in sizes all within a range of 12"x18." *Shifting Dimension*, the largest encaustic painting in the show, 32" x 46," hung

independently in the south facing wall. The size of the painting gave it presence in a space with few other distractions.

All the works were grouped based on formal and conceptual elements. *Wandering Matter 1&2* were made to accompany each other. Light weight Gampi paper is used on both pieces so they can react

Fig.3



similarly, to the flow of air in the environment. The air movement in the gallery would lift the paper lightly changing the color and opacity as the distance between the two layers changed as air passed through the piece. Using Gampi in the encaustic monotyping process the light weight and transparent qualities were maintained. All other additional papers were added to alter the viewing of the Gampi layer. Both backed by darker monotypes on mid weight Kozo paper, this alters the viewers perception of the color and transparency. On the left, *Wandering Matter 1* has two strips of dipped newsprint paper limiting the movement of the Gampi layer underneath. Water will flow along in large bodies until, for various reasons, must adjust because of a blockage of terrain change. The two works demonstrate how similar materials react when there is something impeding its desired flow.

Fig.4



Fig. 5



Fig.6

This installation of wandering matter is only a small fraction of the works produced in the series. Installing this show, space restrictions had a large impact on the number of paintings hung. When editing work out of the show many of the final decisions were based on formal elements. Wandering Matter 3-7 to the right back corner of the gallery were grouped according to how each piece could support the other conceptually and compositionally. This set of pieces had the most “representational” elements directly referencing existing bodies of water and blood vessels leading to the heart. *Wandering Matter (WM) No. 3* is the most overtly topographic, gradient of yellow ochre to sienna infused magenta with subtle grays working its way in remind the viewer of the water system in a desert landscape. To the right, *WM No. 4* has no laser cut components. This composition has characteristic elements developed by the material properties of the wax and the way the paper was gently removed from the puddle of hot wax. Proceeding to the right, *WM No. 5* elicits the most reaction among viewers, everyone views the dark colored center

shape as something different. This image is based on a photograph of blood vessels that resemble the flow of water in a river system, the least

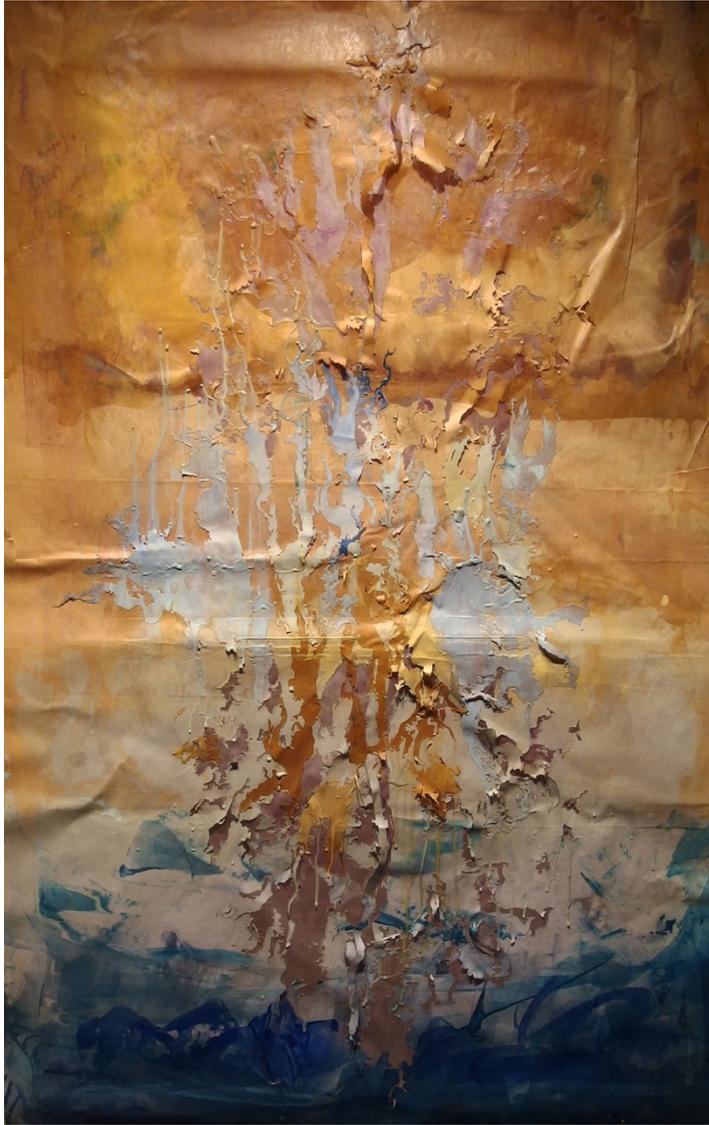
Fig.7

manipulation of the image and final cuts took place in this painting. The color relationships were based on human anatomy, the “veins” are represented with a Ultramarine Blue and Egyptian Violet paint to suggest the look of blood that has not been exposed to oxygen. Cadmium Red Medium, Quinacridone Red and Mars Red in the background are mixed with fleshy colors such as Indian Yellow, Mars Deep Yellow, and Cadmium Yellow Pale Extract. The Two fused front layers are backed with a free flowing sheet of *Kitakata* dipped in Cadmium orange and Cad Yellow Deep giving the illusion



of natural light being cast off the transparent front layers and shining through the cut out areas at the bottom. *WM No. 6* again inspired by complementary colors and the use of bright colors backing other tones to give illusion of brightness to a collection of painted layers. To the furthest right side, a book end, *WM No. 7* was made with Cadmium Red Deep a hint of Alizarin Orange and Burnt Scarlet making reference again to the tissue like colors of the human body. Backed by layers of Indigo Blue and Mars Black elude to the deep special relationship of vessels in the body and layers of underground aqueduct systems carrying clean water just below the earth’s surface. To the far right, hanging on the northwest wall facing the south is the largest of the encaustic paintings. Using newsprint completely encased in wax allows the subtle and transparent qualities to be seen by the viewer. In this painting the laser cut

elements are fused to allow for variation in the surface texture. Many of the river elements are twisted,



scrunched and bent to give a relief dimension to the surface as seen in figure 9. The nonfigurative nature of the painting has inspired viewers to see various scenes within the painting. Using the laser cut elements and the color scheme my intention was to have overt references to water with the color and certain cut shapes, combined with the layout of rivers oriented from the center going outward similar to the arrangement of blood vessels in the human body. This painting was the last of the paintings done for my thesis work and within it lies a combination of all the visual and conceptual elements working together in harmony.

Fig. 8

For some time, I have been exploring the encaustic paint medium. I continue to refer to encaustics as the primary medium for the creation of my work, encaustic paint is a mix of pigment, and damar resin. The damar resin adds rigidity to the beeswax allowing it to retain its shape after cooling. Encaustics require heat to melt and acquire its malleable quality. The paint comes in brick-like forms and is pressed gently onto a hot surface, melting the wax and pigment. Any tool used to apply the paint to a

surface must also be warm during the application. Brushes are set onto a hot plate and loosen once they have been heated. Typically, I have my working temperature set between 180- and 200-degrees Fahrenheit. The working time of encaustics is short; once



the paint cools it hardens in place and cannot be moved around unless reheated by using a hot air gun or applying a fresh hot layer of wax on top. Using the media to paint with a traditional approach yielded results that resisted the movement of light and the transparent effects. I began to explore combining various types of paper and making thin casts of the wax medium alone. The thinner the substrate the easier light could pass through.

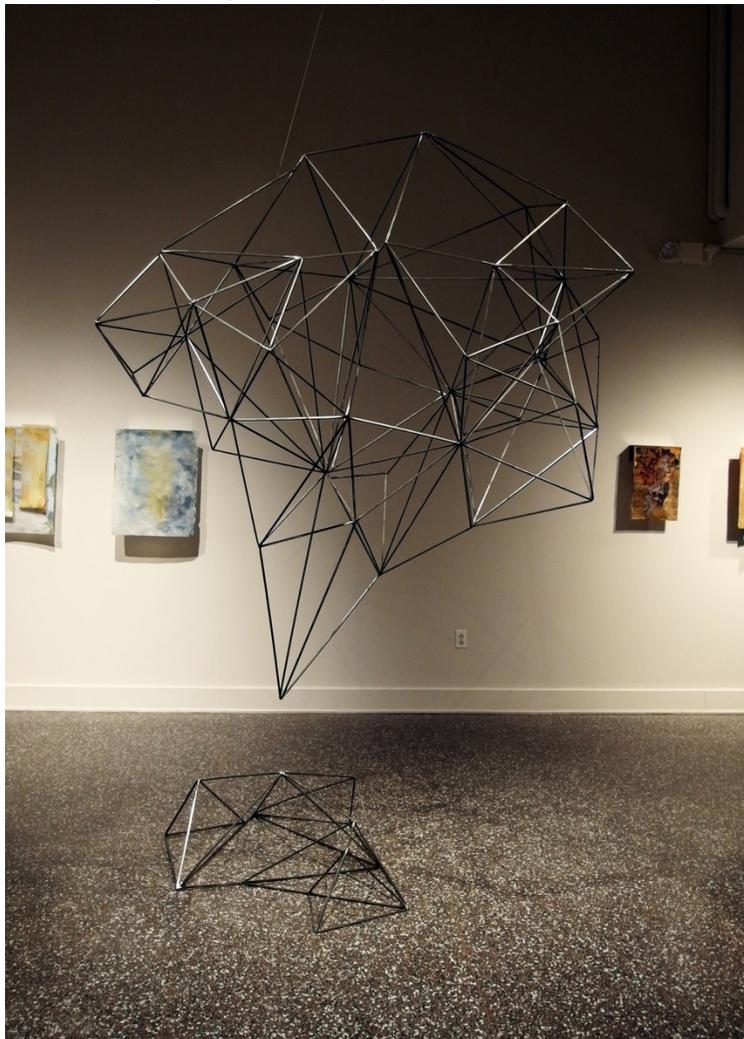
Each painting was hung four inches away from the wall suspended from the lip of an inverted L-shaped bracket. The brackets were made from 23 gage sheet metal bent in two places. Five inches to the first bend then four inches to the second, leaving a one-inch lip where the paper is attached using magnets. The rare earth magnets had a reflective sheen making them blend into the colors of the paint. The brackets were mounted using command strip, each one required at least four strips on each corner. The hanging system did not distract from the art, the paintings were able to have even more presence in the space. The way everything was lit cast shadows that ended up adding a frame-like element around the paintings.

My usual overtly methodical approach to art making was proving to be too time-consuming and too rigid for this series. Throughout the creative process, I have been learning and applying new ideas and skills. I allowed myself to make decisions based on instinct instead of adhering to a strict design; Further embodying the concept of growth in nature, building a complex structure based on a simple building

block, in this case I used the general shape of a triangle with quarter inch to three quarter inch steel square rods, continuously added to a larger structure.

In the beginning, I discovered unexpected obstacles when trying to sketch my forms on two dimensions to build out in 3D. It was challenging to convey the volume of space that the installation would inhabit. Using wire and hot glue, I developed models which gave me a clear idea concerning how the metal structure should fit in the space allotted to my work. I made a couple of renditions of the model; each version was able to inform my decisions while fabricating.

The steel sculpture “Systems of Growth” was hung using steel cables and mounted to the structural ceiling beams in the gallery. Of the two sculptures in the show, the first I fabricated was the floor element. Beginning with this segment helped create a reference to scale the larger hanging section. The



initial measurements of the quarter inch rods were a sized with a rough approximation based on the wire mockup. These triangles make up the small base of the floor piece. When working on the larger sculpture I wanted to allow for the structure to inform my decisions as I was working. I have been embracing the flow of artistic instinct while engaging in the creative process. The development of the large hanging sculpture began with a single triangle and each measurement and placement

Fig. 10

of succeeding rods were based on the shape and length of the welded pieces that came before.

The presentation of the work demonstrated the intended groupings. Although each group was stylistically individual, they each represented an individual element in demonstrating the idea of growth patterns and connection. The bare sheet metal and unpainted steel used in the larger sculpture were able to connect the works through material and presentation. Each piece appeared to float in the space, seemingly suspended by the air alone. The presentation of the 2D works has straight geometric edges and all the organic forms fit within the boundaries of a square or rectangle. The alignment of the works is positioned to reinforce the idea of scientific samples as they are collected in rigid geometric shapes. The wall piece aligned at the top, measuring 68" in height, instead of the conventional 60" centerline. *Shifting Dimension* was designed at a much larger scale than the other paintings and therefore was hung with the midpoint at 60." *Inorganic Growth* was hung at a height based on the associated ground piece that rested on the floor, the sculpture was hung from the ceiling beams and suspended three inches above the apex of the floor sculpture. The three-inch space between the works was able to create a tension between the ground and the ceiling. The suspension each artwork was done to create an environment that appeared frozen in time and space. As viewers perambulate through the environment they can feel as if they are experiencing a moment frozen in time.

My research and interest in the topic of cells and microbiology began with a few simple questions and a search for a deeper understanding of the worlds invisible to the naked eye. As I live in the world and interact with the observable universe, I will continue to yearn to know what invisible structures layout of sight. Regardless of the scale, natural matter takes a similar shape when arranging itself at a microscopic or astronomic level. These observations of order in nature on a grand scale lead me to conclude that there is great order in the universe. As I peer into a microscope and a whole world of form presents itself. I would like to know what it would be like to see these structures without the use of visual

aid. I will continue to create works that bring this invisible world to life on a scale that humans can interact with independent of any instruments. Our universe is full of mystery yet to be unveiled, the objects I build are intended to reveal a small part of the mysteries just beyond our reach.

## Bibliography

Dedopulos, Tim, and Darrel L. Williams. *Earth View: Extraordinary Images of Our Planet from the Landsat NASA/USG Satellites*. Carlton Books, 2018.

Arthus-Bertrand, Yann, et al. *The Earth from Space*. Thames & Hudson, 2013.

Cepelewicz, Jordana, and Quanta Magazine. "The Illuminating Geometry of Viruses." *Quanta Magazine*, [www.quantamagazine.org/the-illuminating-geometry-of-viruses-20170719/](http://www.quantamagazine.org/the-illuminating-geometry-of-viruses-20170719/).

"Vein Pattern Recognition." *Infosec Resources*, 3 May 2019, [resources.infosecinstitute.com/newest-biometric-technology-vein-pattern-recognition/#gref](http://resources.infosecinstitute.com/newest-biometric-technology-vein-pattern-recognition/#gref).

Hauet, A., et al. "Digital Mapping of Waterway Hydrodynamics, Banks, and Floodplain Using Imagery." *World Environmental and Water Resources Congress 2008*, 2008, doi:10.1061/40976(316)320.

R&F Paint Company. "Color Line." *R&F Handmade Paints*, [www.rfpaints.com/encaustic-color-line](http://www.rfpaints.com/encaustic-color-line).