
Sarah Morejohn – Eugene, Oregon

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Briefly describe the work you do.

My work focuses on making a world through an accumulations of marks. I create meditative drawings on paper that simultaneously forms and explores the place of an invented creature or landscape. I am influenced by the relationship of an individual part to the whole, patterns in nature, topophilia (the love of place), and organizational processes in biology.

The drawing process for me is like that of wandering: with each mark of ink I am lost to the path I am making. Each drawing on a piece of paper becomes a place as the marks grow and morph to form complex structures that are reminiscent of landscapes. This wandering process of drawing leads me to familiar and strange places; referential and invented; to eroticism and longing.

From 2011- 2012 I made a series of work called “Pink Swells” that explored creature-like forms and the possibility of a narrative through the variations of form and culmination of drawings. Currently my work still addresses this idea, however I am more interested in pushing the forms into landscapes.

At what point in your life did you want to become an artist?

That is hard to say...I think I always did, I just wasn't too concerned what that meant.

Tell us a little about your background and how that influences you as an artist?

Growing up in small town (Oakland, Oregon: population 800) gave me the privilege of complete quietness and boredom. My mom that kicked my brother and I outside to play no matter what kind of weather, which gave us time to be inventive with our imaginations. We would make up stories and maps of the surround areas. There were always trees, fields, and muddy creeks to jump into; there was time to watch a snail emerge from his shell or spider make its web. That was instrumental in developing my creativity.

Another main influence comes from my grandpa. He made intricate scientific illustrations. That rubbed off on me, however in a completely different way.



What types of conceptual concerns are present in your work? How do those relate to the specific process(es) or media you use?

My interest lies in the transformative process of becoming lost. When I take walks in a forest I become lost in the details of twigs, rocks, leaves, pine needles, etc. I feel at home with the familiarity of these things and yet see the nuance of each individual piece. The big picture concepts follow that feeling.

During my BFA I made a conscious decision to create a drawing process that followed the mark making scientific illustration technique stippling. It was partly a nostalgia for my grandpa and it also fitted what I was trying to think about. I was just introduced and very interested in Neo-minimalism and process art. Processes fully interest me...to focus intently on minuscule decisions holds the key to my understanding, or that I don't understand; that it is far more than I could imagine.

We once heard Chuck Close say he did not believe in being inspired, rather in working hard everyday. What motivates you in your studio practice?

I am busy with a couple other jobs besides art: as a volunteer coordinator and a web designer. So at the end of the day it comes down to a deep need; a hand-over-the-pen-and-no-one-gets-hurt need.

I believe in inspiration and I know its important to let it branch out in different ways. Recently I have become quite interested in physics and biology. A few months ago I was invited to visit with professor at the University of Oregon who is a pioneer of zebrafish genetics. We had an informative conversation about developing bone structure in zebrafish larva and I was also able to look at some

fish under a microscope. It was quite thought provoking and I could not wait to back to the studio.

Agnes Martin described art making in her writings as an adventure of the mind. I am think of my practice this way. If I thought of it as hard work I would be going about things wrong



What artists living or non-living influence your work?

Agnes Martin, Louise Despont, Terry Winters, Paul Klee, Giorgio Morandi, Nasreen Mohamedi, Sheila Makhijani, Daniel Zeller, Frances Richardson, Laura Vandenburg, Ryan Sarah Murphy, and Victoria Haven.

When you are not making art what types of activities and interests do you engage in?

I am an avid bicyclist, hiker, and reader. Last year my partner and I went on a 100 mile backpacking trip on the Olympic Peninsula. It was very inspiring since we walked through so many different environments. Right now I'm reading *Always Coming Home* by Ursula K. Le Guin which imagines a world of differing human

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About



Sarah is inspired by natural environments. She earned a B.S.

in Environmental Studies from the University of Oregon in 2011. She is currently engaged in a process of wandering to rectify internal and external worlds. She is currently in Eugene, OR and currently lives in Eugene.



In the Studio

sarahmorejohn.com

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