

*LEVELS &
VISUAL
REWARDS*

MITCHELL KANE, 2009

*“THERE IS MORE THAT WE DON’T KNOW,
THEN WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW”*

In the field of bio-diversity and speciation, in both deep ocean and rain forest eco-systems, there is this idea: as our technology advances we are more able to search and research environments, which were once distant and out of reach to human understanding. That we are only now recognizing the vastness of our own limitations for understanding the complexity of the physical world, means we either have a lot of catching-up to do in order to catalog, collect, and interpret the roles and relationships of new found species, or it's just too late. I would expand this analogy to include visual culture as well.

Our engagement with visual things is complicated. Visual things are seen much the same way as they have been for a half century. We have grown accustomed to observing with great interest any and all nuances as they relate to others intentions and our own expectations. Right now, meaning, i.e., visual and emotive appreciation, relates directly to cultural identification allowing social proclivity to rule the discourse of cultural hegemony.

This project suggests our specific daily use of media, primarily internet technology and electronic gaming, has been aesthetically and behaviorally influential in the visual arts in ways not yet comprehended.



*PLURALISM WAS AN ACCIDENT. IT CAME ABOUT THROUGH THE
ATTRITION OF VISION, AND THROUGH THE EMANCIPATION OF
OUR OTHER SENSES.*

We have always been sensory creatures, but during the last ten, twenty, forty years, visual sensation has been compromised by an uncompromising interest in the construction of meaning based on identity, representation, and social space. In this model, language trumps visual sensation. If the visual is no longer important, I would simple ask, how has our need for observation and interpretation changed, and how does it currently behave?

Basically, as we observe, we move about things – objects, information, relationships -- through a process of building experience up level by level. This movement or leveling happens multi-directionally, i.e. across, upon, inverted, conflated, etc. What's so interesting about leveling is that it has a built-in reward function, which it shares with most interactive sites or games or art. This base reward is the acquisition, or satisfaction, of getting to another level or to the next space. We are all potentially predisposed to this condition through the ubiquitous presence and use and behavior with technology.

CULTURE, LIKE NATURE, IS A MULTI-SENSORY EXPERIENCE.

As we perform, our whole body is involved in the process of creativity. There is no separation between the senses. As we desire, our whole body gets into the act. But, what we get in return for playing?: a good feeling, altruism, satisfaction, monetary exchange, gratitude, ego, or a neuro-chemical rush? In the last ten years, the role of the player has dramatically changed, and these subsequent changes extend into all of our relationships, boosting our expectations and experience in a multiplicity of ways.



EXAMPLE: CLUBPENGUIN.COM AND EHARMONY.COM: WHERE DO WE RESIDE, AND HOW DO WE MOVE THROUGH SPACE?

In these two scenarios, clubpenguin.com and eHarmony.com share similar activity functions with many interactive narratives -- where spatial levels are achieved when actions become rewarded (valuation or coins for participation to buy goods for your penguin or in eHarmony access is provided to a potential partner in the form of questions).

How is the viewer compensated for their effort?

Clubpenguin.com and eHarmony.com are different animals. The two sites differ in numerous areas -- children versus adults, visual versus language, objects versus relationship. The reward is based on accomplishments achieved through proficiency: no matter the rudimentary nature of the tasks. Getting from one level to the next is the thrill and emotive connection to the process.

Clubpenguin builds familiarity with the environment through the use of valuation and acquisition. You buy stuff to decorate your igloo, clothing, props and property. Your movement from one area to another is effortless. The visual movement of a penguin is clunky and repetitive.

eHarmony provides tools for building relationships as it brings familiarity with strangers through a series of questions. Twenty-nine to start (profile), three suggested question, or you can write your own, wait for a response, then respond. The other person has an option to ask three questions. At any point in this sequence of exchange the relationship, which is simply constructed out of words, can be terminated. The visual component at this level does not exist, but is strictly formed in the imagination of commonality, desire, and the chase. There is no visual component, besides, a photograph(s).



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profileadvisor™ ... We'll make you

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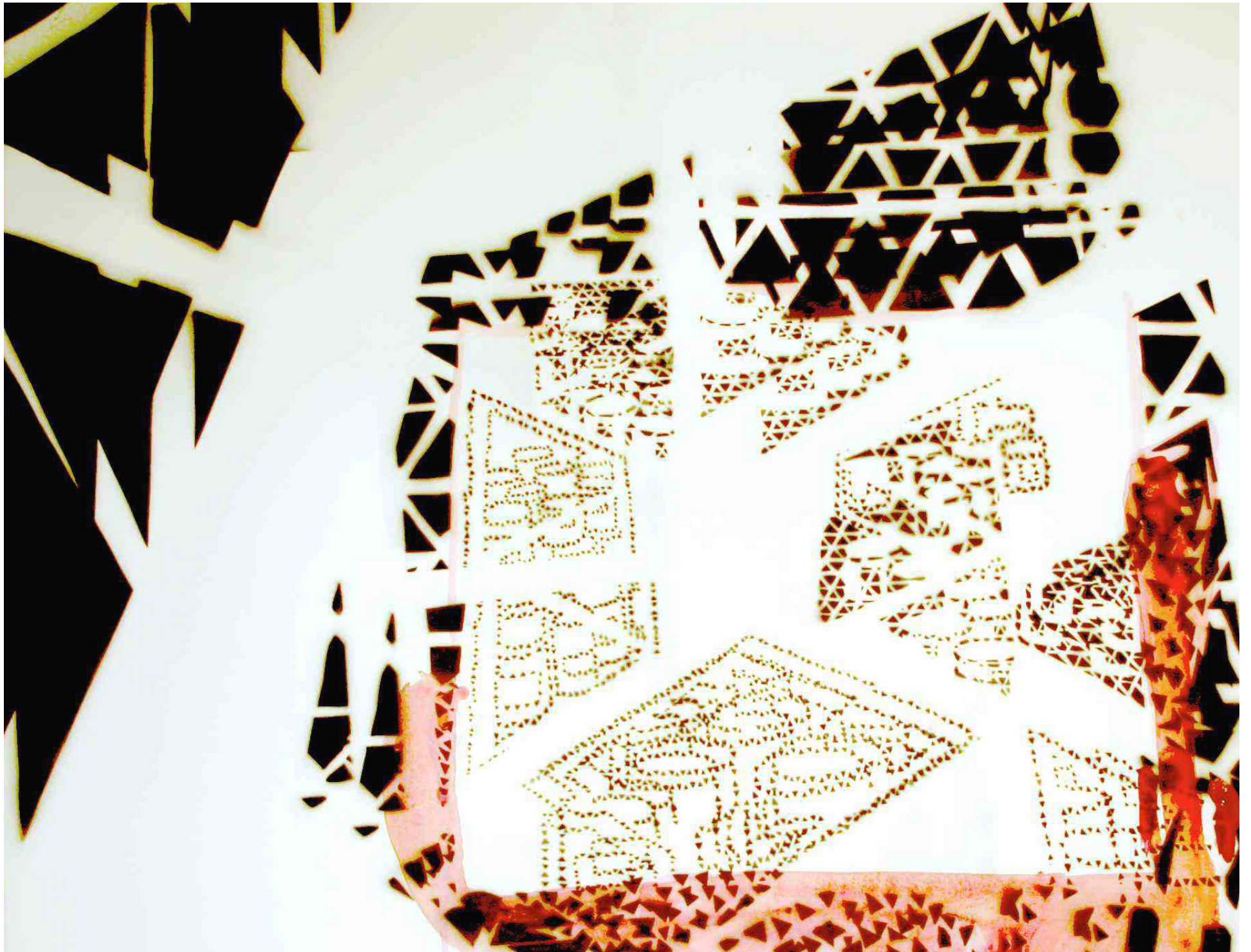
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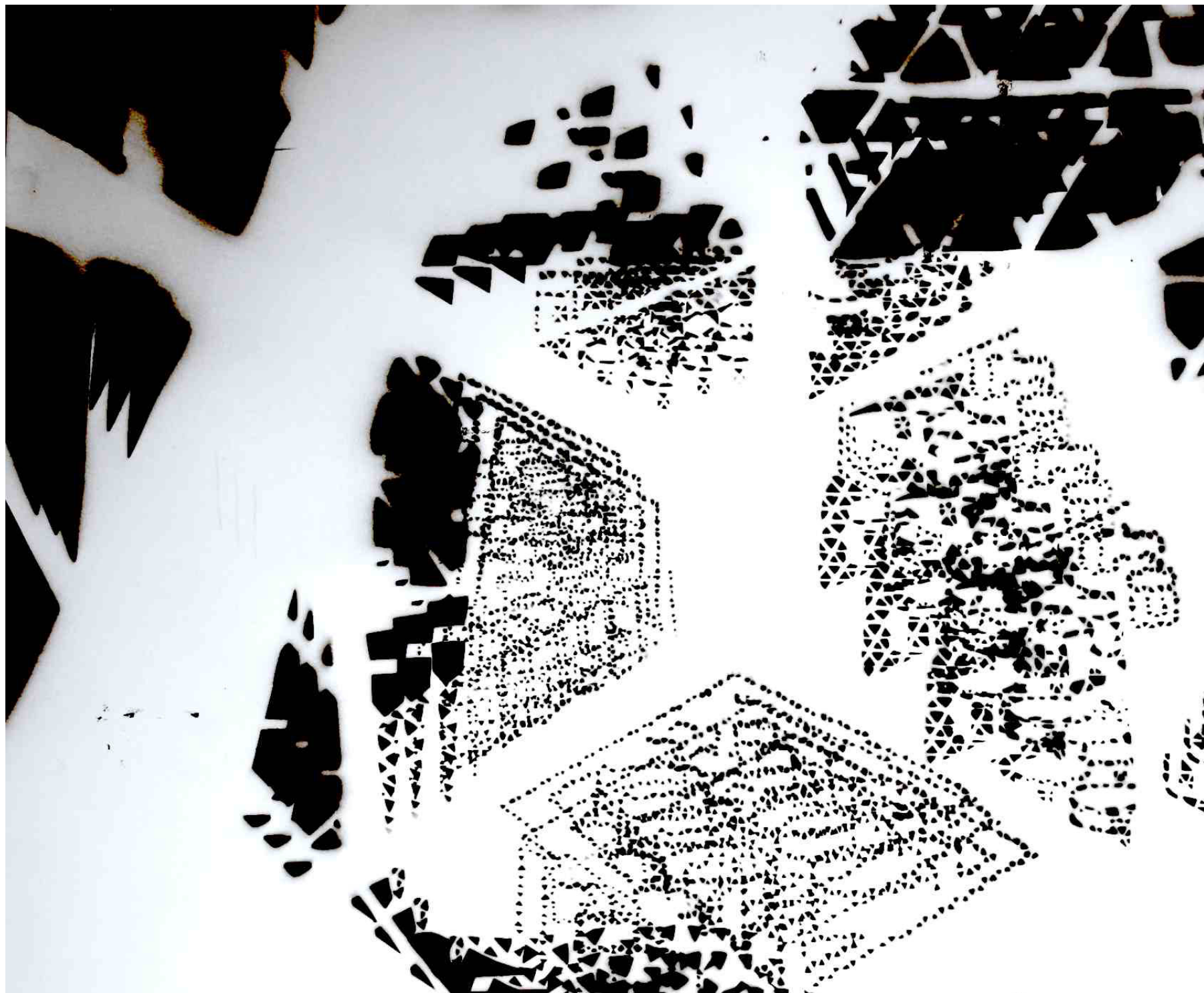
[Introductory Information](#)

We tend to focus on what we most want in a partner. However, it may eve
the list of items below and select **Ten** qualities that you **can't stand** to hav

Use this as an opportunity to learn a little more about yourself, and really

Traits





LEVELLING: SKIPPING THROUGH SPACE:
TAFT GREEN FROM AN EXCERPTED CONVERSATION.

Taft Green utilizes a method of engineering a type of spatial field by manipulating a series of models, which frequently collapses a three-dimensional space within two-dimensional space. This fracturing of unidentifiable space is built out of variable levels of visual information. The overall surface may be seen as pattern, but the subtle layering of shallow spaces atop one another reveals a visual experience with a curious middle zone focus.

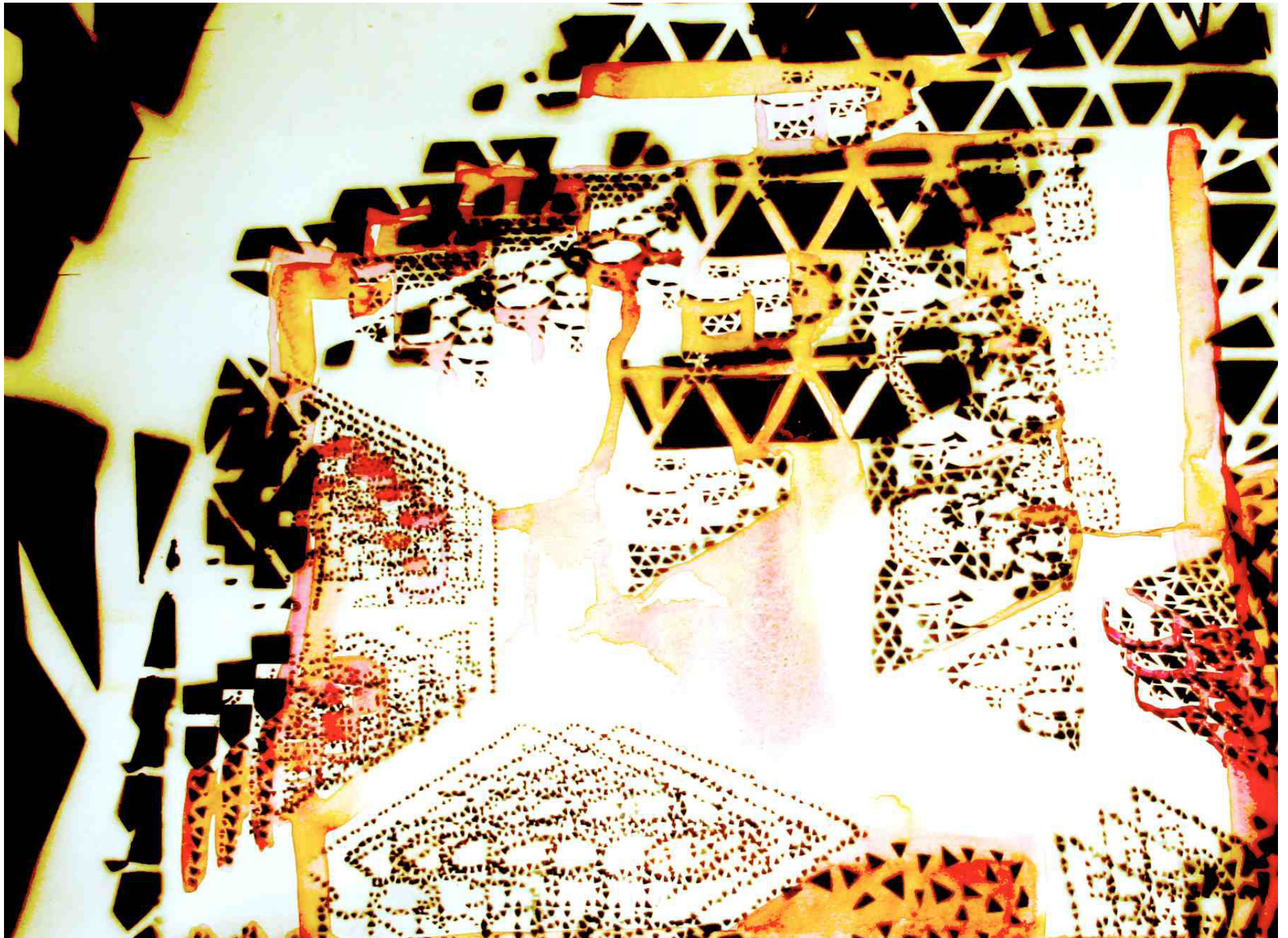
Mitchell Kane: How would you describe the spaces your images inhabit?

Taft Green: For me, negotiating an image is approaching an image as if it were readable. I am interested in an image as a tool for thinking about degrees of abstraction or interpretation. Viewers are going to negotiate the image with their own set of assumptions. The images, of which I am most interested, are of responsive or interpretive mental representation, images that are temporally based and use spatial designation to mark territory in thought. My negotiation of the image has to do with thinking or interpreting a relative image, which is at its core, is concerned with a duration based processes of interpretation.

MK: Are your images to be seen individually or as a group?

TG: The images will be in two different formats, one in which three different images will be collaged together to make three alternate collages, making 27 collages, then all 81 images will be in a coffee table book format flip book, which will be reproduced in a series of 9

MK: I guess what I meant to say, what happens differently when the images are seen individually or in a group, how do they translate and build upon the initial experience?



TG: I am not sure what you mean by initial experience. I would change the term translate to interpret. Yes, there are codes at work, but I am interested where and how those codes resonate in different systems of association. Bad form, for instance, is something I am interested in understanding as a structure and mechanism. Likewise, small associations and responses lead to larger implications. So to answer the question, I am interested in how building association, via the repetition of certain assumed constants, and the ephemeral differences, in more quickly rendered structures adjusts to changing conditions. Thus, the building and interpreting is just out of control: even though, if the process is repeated enough something will inevitably appear.

MK: I'm interested in the issue of space your process suggests. Your visual space is built in a rather conventional manner, but something seems mysteriously awry. The work is built on levels, sort of like a three-dimensional chessboard, where everything is simultaneously visible, but until your brain acclimates to the structures, it's difficult to configure a position from which to participate. So within your spatial configurations, how do you think the viewer negotiates your imagery?

TG: The viewer will always recognize something in any image, be it representational, perceptual, or associative, in terms of preferences. I am interested in what can be deemed successful, beyond good or bad. It is not a question of what the image depicts, so much as where the image registers in terms of a perception of space taking time via a kind of attunement, or slowing the process down of attributing meaning to an image.

MK: Your drawings appear pictorially elusive. The space you are describing is unknown, and I would go so far as to say, unknowable. Through our conversations you have mentioned an elaborate iconography — coffee, tables, napkins, etc — which are no longer visually tangible, correct? How important is it that the viewer can recognize your imagery?

TG: Not very important. “An image built is always different than one imagined.” There are mechanisms in any image, which suggests alternate spaces, and thus a temporal remove in presence. Call it absorption, activation, or displacement, or any other kind of transfer, it is the process of remove, resonance, and the resultant interpretations and negotiations, which I find interesting. This is also where the middle ground becomes important to my production. The middle ground is a space of attenuation and adjustment: where we adjust to our surroundings. Where does the structure reside? If there is an answer to my work it is in dialogue, and in intelligence founded on interaction, quick decisions, small ideas, resilient memories, immediate perceptions, which lead to reverberated adjustments.

SCANNING: SCANNING AND SURVEYING AN ENTIRE TOPOGRAPHICAL SITUATION: WITH KATIE GRINNAN FROM EXCERPTED QUESTIONS.

Katie Grinnan makes visually loaded objects. Grinnan's objects sprawl and collect information from all of the other objects within their environment.. Her objects describe spatial relationships bases on their similarities of form, language, and materiality. The historical contortions her work exhibited maintain an associative content, which strongly suggests a internal and externalized reconnoitering of space.

MK: Katie, how important is for you that the viewer can recognize your imagery?

KG: Well there are the forms derived from imagery and then there are the images printed on the forms. In both cases there is a reference to the Mayan pyramid El Castillo at Chichen Itza which is important. In the video component of the piece "Continuum" the voice of a tour guide describes the pyramid and its relationship to the Mayan calendar and explains the shadow play of the serpent that occurs at the spring equinox to mark the agricultural cycle. I was interested in the building as a 3-D calendar and was also interested in the way that the Mayans built structures to be in sync with the rhythms of nature. This show was installed at the Schindler House on Kings Road. Although the house was built in a completely different time, Schindler's structure (I thought) shared concerns about the way a building works with its natural surroundings. In the piece Alignment, imagery of the sun, moon, and the Pleiades are pictured on the forms. The three components had to be aligned to form the sculpture. I had bought a telescope and was using it to take pictures. I started thinking about distance, space and time and the cosmos as a timekeeper. The title of the show was "Polaris," the North Star that appears to stay still from earth while all the other stars appear to revolve around it.



MK: Within your spatial forms, how do you think the viewer negotiates the space surrounding your imagery?

KG: Because of my interest in sky watching, I was really interested in point of view. When the viewer entered the Clyde Chace studio the 3 components of “Alignment” looked compressed (in astronomy terms it would be a conjunction). “Alignment” bisected the two columns of “Continuum.” As the viewer entered further the 3 components from “Alignment” begin to expand horizontally out into the space. I hoped that the viewer would notice that the “Continuum” piece referenced Brancusi’s “Endless Column” (or that it was vertical) and that the “Alignment” piece was a horizontal version of that piece. The Schindler House has vertical windows that are rhythmically spaced. Light passes through these slits at different times of day- it feels very “Star Wars” to me. The components of “Alignment” were spaced so that they would align with the windows behind it if the viewer were standing near the door by the courtyard. The video component of “Continuum” would be pierced by one of the beams of light at a certain time of day. The house acted as a timekeeper in a sense. The walls in the Chace studio are cast concrete, cracked and displaying wrinkles from the burlap. The forms in “Continuum” and “Alignment” are pulled from a mold that is buried in the adjacent courtyard with the concrete positive nearby. I hoped that the viewer would notice the similarity in the processes, if they took the tour of the house. I also wanted the viewer to notice the cracks in the walls of the house next to the ruins of the temples pictured in “Continuum.” If the viewer then walks to the courtyard to see the piece “Excavation 1,” they experience the scale shift of the pyramids that are model size next to the full-scale house. There is another view of this piece from the sleeping porch that dwarfs the pieces even more. I hoped that ideas having to do with distance space and time would surface. I also hoped that the viewer would notice the repetition occurring. Singular units split into two and three parts and then compress back. I feel like I’m not exactly answering how the viewer deals with the space around the work. It’s hard to guess what each viewer experiences.



RELIANCE ON A SINGLE STATIC OBJECT MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE
AS WE CONTINUE TO MOVE ABOUT AND TRAVEL THROUGH
INFORMATION. AS WE GET ACCUSTOMED TO EXPERIENCING
LEVELS, PLEASE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO THE REWARDS YOU
ARE REQUESTING.

IMAGES:	TAFT GREEN:	PAGES 10, 11, 13: DEF 5.6; DEF5.8; DEF 5.7
	KATIE GRINNAN:	PAGES 16, 18: INSTALLATION; CONTINUUM; CONTINUUM
	MITCHELL KANE:	PAGES 3, 6, 20: WAGON; TARP; FORM

