HIRSCH FARM PROJECT, AN ARTS-BASED THINK TANK 1990-2000

A large, red barn in the unglaciated, driftless area of southwestern Wisconsin. An isolated coral atoll in the Tuamotus in the South Pacific. Terraced fields and dried rice paddies in the Pokhara Valley of Nepal. The clean and security-fashioned city/state of Singapore. The dusty, winding

roads of Kathmandu.
The calm of a contemporary art museum. More than sixty interdisciplinary participants.
Ten publications.
A three-season sculptural pavilion with meeting area, kitchen, dining rooms, four lavatories, and sleeping space for five.

Together, these elements constitute the physical and geographical parameters of the Hirsch Farm Project, an arts-based think tank.

Started as an interdisciplinary ten-year experiment in conversation, conservation and contemporary art, Hirsch Farm Project's curatorial goal was to foster greater dialogue in a time of growing conservatism by supporting the work and ideas of creative practitioners in the arts, sciences and humanities. Hirsch Farm Project provided a generous and unique forum, annually inviting between six and ten participants to share their ideas during a week of intensive isolated conversation. It should be known that these meetings were intentionally private, and, by design, no transcripts were made of the conversations between the participants. The single record for each project is a publication. These books act as the official documents representing the ideas which were developed immediately following each meeting.

Hirsch Farm Project:
Titles, date
Location
Participants
Publication

Mud, or How Can Social and Local Histories Be Used As Methods Of Conservation?
Hirsch Farm Project, WI, **1991**. With Mark Dion, Kate Ericson, Mel Ziegler, Dan Peterman, Gail Rothchild, Milenko Matanovic, Robert Horwich. Sixty pages, b/w images and texts. Designed with Michael Thibodeau (ACD Award)

Pressure On The Public
Hirsch Farm Project, Wi, **1992**. With William Schefferine, Patricia Phillips, Meredeth Turshen, Laura Emrick, Amy Hauft, Jorge Pardo, Wolfgang Staehle and Maureen Sherlock. Eighty-eight pages, 24 color plates. Designed with Michael Thibodeau

NonSpectacle and the Limitations of Popular Opinion
Hirsch Farm Project, WI, **1993**. With Dennis Adams, Helen Molesworth, Pae White, Rick Valicenti, Jane Whicher, Sarah Seager and Anna Novakov. Ninety pages, 37 color plates and 17 b&w pages. Design concept: Mitchell Kane (ACD Award)

Optimism
Hirsch Farm Project, WI, **1994**. With Stephan Dillemuth, Jason Simon, Rhonda Lieberman, Diana Thater, J. Morgan Puett, Joe Scanlan.Sixty-eight pages, Four color hardcover, one color plate, 30 b/w illustrations, garment pattern supplement.Design concept: Mitchell Kane

Conviviality: Flirtation, Displeasure and the Hospitable in the Visual Arts
Hirsch Farm Project, WI, **1995**. With Joshua Decter, Stephan Prina, Lee Paterson, Skall, William B. Brahm, Laurent Joubert, François Claire Prodhon.
One hundred twenty-four pages, hardcover. (ACD Award)

Tahiti: Contemporary Art In An Age Of Uncertainty
Hirsch Farm Project, Wisconsin/Rangiroa, **1996**. With John Currin, Judy Bamber, Mariko Mori, Alexis Rockman, Gregory Green. Thirty-two pages, color, hardcover. Design Mitchell Kane

Untitled (World Tour)
Hirsch Farm Project, Singapore/Katmandu/Pokhara, Nepal **1997**. With Elizabeth Peyton, Lincoln Tobier, Vincent Fecteau, Sharon Lockhart, Ben Kinmont. Capacity bound, Thirty-two pages, color. Design: Mitchell Kane

Now: Speculative Environment, Theme Song and Wisconsin Open House
Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago. **1998**. Four color posters, offset with interview by Amada Cruz/Mitchell Kane. Design: Mitchell Kane. HFP Compact Disc with lyrics by Mitchell Kane and music by Mayo Thompson.

The Compleat
Hirsch Farm Project Book **1999**.
Essays by Hannah Higgins, Tobey Crockett, Mitchell Kane and Laurie Winter
One hundred twenty pages, 32 four color illustrations, perfect bound. Design: Mitchell Kane

Tt: a working meeting to develop a hybrid product
Morocco, **2000**. With Matthew Ritchie, Peter Lunenfeld, Michael Grey, and Mitchell Kane
Forty-eight pages, perfect bound, full color. Design: Mitchell Kane

Conversation&
Conservation&
&Speculation
&People
&Geography

COMPLEAT

I have been sitting here with books piled a mile high around me for what seems like days. The match was supposed to come easily. Glom on an aesthetic, a political framework, and an appropriate conceptual apparatus to the Hirsch Farm Project. Make it mean something. Make it matter. From the outset, these publications have come to me as a group: they register as one object despite my knowledge of their spanning the better part of a decade. I am compelled to make connections between them as opposed to taking each as a discrete object. And so, myriad meanings evolve as patterns in a web of delicately spun, spider's silk, reaching across publications. For a time, the patterns are obfuscated by my own reluctance to part with recent art history.

The Hirsch Farm Project has a foot in Conceptual Art, right? Mitchell Kane, the project's director, is a conceptual artist who hails from Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. He works in words and images: Just do the concept art thing. As a context that produces publications, the Hirsch Farm Project has neo-conceptual elements, deconstructive linguistic aspects, and a sense of geography that links it to the history of site specific work. But this does little to demarcate what is unique to the Hirsch Farm Project, what makes it special and why, what it offers at the level of human experience and what can be learned from it. Thus, to academicize it, meaning to evaluate it within existing standards of which it partakes, may not be what really matters about the Hirsch Farm Project in the long run.

In his book, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, Hans Robert Jauss, the German philosopher and student of (the better known) Hans-Georg Gadamer, describes in historic terms the difficulty this work presents me with: "The distance between the actual first perception of a work and its virtual significance or put another way, the resistance that the new work poses to the expectations of its first audience, can be so great that it requires a long process of reception to gather in that which was unexpected and unusable within the first horizon,"[1] the horizon being the cumulative effect of all expectations brought by the viewer. While Jauss can be faulted for a certain historical determinacy wherein a later audience evolves beyond their limiting expectations and eventually gets it "right," his remainders (those things that are "unexpected and unusable") suggest that compelling work necessitates systematically looking at those parts of experience that don't yet make sense. In the case of the Hirsch

Farm Project, the "unexpected and unusable" parts, those things that set it apart from the neo-conceptual, deconstructive and academic practices, seem to lie deep within the project. So, like a wanderer who finds the path has disappeared, I tread cautiously. These ruminations on the Hirsch Farm Project begin here – with what I don't yet understand about it.

I have been here before and responded the same way: to date, most of my writing has concerned Fluxus, the intermedia, performance and object multiples group commonly associated with the 1960s. It is no doubt because of the interesting connections that can be made between these two artistic formations that I was invited to write on the Hirsch Farm Project. Specifically, as social contexts that produce life-based creative work, both the Hirsch Farm Project and Fluxus are located where the everyday messiness of life and the high aims of Art overlap. Both beg questions regarding the nature of the experience itself (is there any single thing or attitude that unites the experiences of these groups of participants, or are we looking at a mere hodgepodge of idiosyncratic reminiscence?).

Like Fluxus, the Hirsch Farm Project gets its dimensions from the multiplicity of human experience itself. Specifically, the publications and the imaginary participation in the project by people like me (who have heard about these groups conducting discussions off in Wisconsin somewhere or on the other side of the globe) have a certain ability to link each person to reality through physical, tactile, visual, aural and, occasionally, olfactory means. As something that produces connective tissue linking people to the multi-dimensional world around them, the Hirsch Farm Project is not an inert fact or thing that can be studied or structured according to any one way of making sense: as conceptual art, as book art objects, as anti-art, etc. The concrete character of the publications and the geography (as objects produced through a highly specific sense of location) make servitude to these configurations experientially misguided.

Witness the repetition of detailed photographs of the Hirsch Farm locale sprinkled throughout *Mud, or How Can Social and Local Histories be Used as Methods of Conservation?* (1991). The "proposals for projects concerned with public art, the environment, and community" presented in this publication range from intermittent, detailed photographs of the splintered wood of the barn and logs, to cheese made out of DDT contaminated dairy products, to cave sanctuaries.[2] All of these are rich with a sense of the *genius of the place*, a landscape term that I mean here to suggest the specificity of the place and the geography, aesthetic experiences and memories that were evoked by Wisconsin. It is my opinion that the most interest-

ing aspects of the publications are those that offer up a specific encounter with the *genius of the place*, be it Wisconsin or later, Tahiti and Asia. That reality exists *a priori* the interpretive frameworks that designate this project as Conceptual Art or Post Structuralist Philosophy. This may seem hopelessly naive in the sophisticated discursive climate of the moment, but also, I think, true.

Clearly, the project's lack of conformity to one attitude, way of making art or pictorial framework poses certain problems for the mainstream museological-cum-Art Historical paradigm of art in the European/American West. Both traditions (the museological and the Art Historical) were born of the same moment in history, the middle 18th century. This historical narrative begins with the archaeological context of interest in ancient art that dates to the discovery of Herculaneum in 1738, and then Paestum and Pompeii. By the 1760s, the villa of Cardinal Albani in Rome had become a meeting place for artists and intellectuals from all over Europe interested in understanding Classical cultures in order to experience "greatness through example" for their own. This phrase is attributed to Johann Joachim Winkelmann, whom Albani's patronage supported in the form of assignation of the position of Superintendent of Antiquities in Rome. Winkelmann's first book, *History of Ancient Art* (1764), set the tone for the specialized discipline of Art History as a sequence of stylistic transformations. Anton Raphael Meng's watershed painting "Parnassus" was painted for the same Cardinal Albani's villa and can be interpreted as a virtual manifesto of Winkelmann's ideal of classicism presented in that book: as self-contained gesture, grace, beauty without distorting passions, and a calm alertness that is the model of a perfect human soul.

Karl Schinkel's Altes Museum, built in Berlin, Germany between 1824 and 1830, is the first public museum built as such. It adapts Winkelmann's model in the sequencing of rooms designating historic styles such that the visitor marches through an apparently seamless historical time-line of art. This formation no doubt had meaning for the Germans, it spoke in rational terms against the excesses of the French (the French Baroque, the French Monarchy, the Napoleonic wars, etc.). However, the paradigm of art established in the 18th century, while challenged variably along the way (Romanticism comes to mind), still structures the dominant model for what art is and how it renews itself as a practice. Art objects, according to this model, belong in special vaults called museums: they belong together, isolated as art objects in that vault, and, since they are organized according to a stylistic system, they share a visu-

al affinity (as opposed to one based on common use, sentiment or any other mode of affiliation). Clearly, as multiple objects without obvious coherence, the Hirsch Farm Project publications propose an alternative to the art of accumulation, linear progression and removal from the order of things. The point is that the publications and objects produced within the Hirsch Farm Project matrix are part of a body of work that offers experiences as art that are not easily restored to that system.

A broader definition of art is in order. The category 'art' must be extended into the realm of life lived in the larger sense normally reserved for ethnographic studies (for example, describing a decorated spear as an expression of art for a small scale society in Africa). Ellen Dissanayake is a scholar of cave paintings who has tried to come to terms with this irksome question. Along the way, she has developed this principle of specialness as something that all art produced by all peoples has in common. Her findings are startling: she asserts that the production of art is a biological imperative which, like language, is produced universally though it differs both in form and function from language. Her study is based on three characteristics of art that transcend individual practices or cultural norms and thus expand the category of art in an ethnographic manner that is appropriate to the Hirsch Farm Project.

The first characteristic is that the arts are ubiquitous. Although no one art is found in every society, or to the same degree in every society, there is found universally in every human group, that exists today, or is known to have existed [some form of art] .... Second, we observe, that in most human societies the arts are integral to many activities of life and not to be omitted .... Third, the arts are sources of pleasure. Nature does not generally leave advantageous behavior to chance; instead, it makes many kinds of advantageous behavior pleasurable.[3]

On close examination, the expanded activities of the Hirsch Farm Project have moved beyond Wisconsin to include Tahiti and Asia, and within this global context in fields and gardens, kitchens and bathrooms, planes, hotels, and museums: this is why the publications contain so many references to the geography. Art exists, at least potentially, everywhere that artists and initiates can be found – which is virtually in the crevices and museums alike the world over. As the outgrowth of diverse experiences, the Hirsch Farm Project proposals are programmatically open-ended and as such belong in museums as well as anywhere a publication can be found. Finally, the complex category of pleasure (which can include controlled instances of pain in the Sublime mode) includes pleasure of explo-

ration in modes that create a rich sense of belonging: this final category could include everything from the enjoyment of food, to the prick of a pin, from an image of violence or sweet social realism, to a personal letter. In Dissanayake's account, this tripartite framework of ubiquity, integration and pleasure becomes bound up in the deceptively simple term "special."

In *Making Special: Toward a Behavior of Art*, Dissanayake defines pleasure as a biobehavioral necessity to the human condition. After a rich description of how play and ritual interact in various contexts, Dissanayake makes this startling statement:

[A]rt makes use of out-of-context elements, redirecting the ordinary elements (e.g., colors, sounds, words) into a configuration in which they become more than ordinary .... Reality is converted from its usual unremarkable state — in which we take it or its components for granted — to a significant or specially experienced reality in which the components, by their emphasis or combination, or juxtaposition, acquire a metareality.[4]

The intensive study of objects that might normally be unremarkable at a farm in Wisconsin or an island in the South Pacific indeed generates this metareality; however, this reality need not be structured according to one model of analysis. She continues:

Of necessity missing a qualitative program for evaluating art, this framework does permit for aesthetics. Acts of masturbating or carving oneself up in themselves are not artistic activities; performed deliberately for aesthetic reasons, out of context, "made special" by the occasion and making the occasion special and extraordinary, they are.[5]

If these publications have some means of 'making special,' this does not mean that they do so absent of contexts (specialness is certainly defined by person and context). Certainly, skills of choice, production or dissemination are valued differently from one context to another, which is what spares Dissanayake's account the accusation of a leveling universalism. Thus, from the point of view of a context privileging abstract conceptualism, many of the Hirsch Farm participants can be described as yearning for the real, for experience, and for primariness. What's more, even where participants have chosen representational models, a visceral sense of tactility and experience is intentionally evoked. It is indisputable, then, that work on the Hirsch Farm Project model is art in precisely the ethnographic way that Dissanayake describes all art.

In *The Selective Value of Making Special*, Dissanayake locates

key aspects of cultural survival in the practice of making special, where humans demarcate things that matter to them in meaningful ways. In my view of contemporary society, especially as an academic weaned on critical thinking, I sense that this aspect of the Hirsch Farm Project, more common in the global world than in the Euro-American Art Historical trajectory, offers tools for negotiating the impasse of this moment – how do I feel myself a part of a world out there? How do I know myself to exist in that world? What is my responsibility to it? How do I survive in it?

Dissanayake's next book, *Homo Aestheticus*, answers these questions in some detail. Her central thesis is that art is "an inherited behavioral tendency to act in a certain way in certain circumstances, which during the evolution of our species helped us to survive."[6] It is possible to extrapolate from her theory a sense of how the Hirsch Farm Project might be a model for survival in terms of what our current culture lacks, that is, what the Hirsch Farm Project offers in place of a culture that may not be helping 'us to survive.' She continues:

While "special" might seem too imprecise and naively simple, or suggest mere decoration, it easily encompasses an array of what is done in making the arts that is generally different from making nonarts: embellishing, exaggerating, patterning, juxtaposing, shaping and transforming .... Special also denotes a positive factor of care and concern that is absent from the other words. It thus suggests that the *special object or activity appeals to emotional as well as perceptual and cognitive factors that is, to all aspects of our mental functioning* ....[7]

It follows, then, that making special is a function of the rich interplay of mental functions that includes human emotion, perception and cognition, and that the pleasure afforded by art (in the ethnographic and broad sense) provides insights into these interactions that prime them for our human survival. In a radical departure from most psychologizing accounts of art in culture, this means that art is not necessarily a byproduct of trauma (infantile or otherwise), though it may be for a specific individual or culture. Rather, art is a connective tissue within the individual and a culture and is necessary for its survival. This is in stark contrast to party-political or politically correct activist formations for artistic practice.

Dissanayake is critical of contemporary culture: "Caring deeply about vital things is out of fashion, and, in any case, who has the time (or allows the time) to care and to mark one's caring?"[8] Then she states:

Human history has demonstrated that people can endure surprising amounts of hardship and suffering – conditions that usually elicit a serious and religious attitude toward life. Whether people are as well equipped to thrive under conditions of unprecedented leisure, comfort, and plenty is a question that is being tested on a large scale in our present circumstances: the answer does not appear to be promising.[9]

From this statement, I take her sense of caring to heart. Also, caring does not necessarily translate into a dower attitude of earnestness since she allows for play and ritual within an art context. Rather, caring denotes what becomes "special" in a book, a painting, a meal, a joke, a poem or a film.

This folding together of 'real life' elements and artistic experiences takes many forms among the Hirsch Farm Project participants. As a whole, the publications contain proposals, both realized and not, that are based in all five senses: sound, smell, taste, sight and touch both independently and synaesthetically (across senses). While each has a visual component – they can be seen and are sometimes beautiful – these proposals are not exclusively visual. Rather, they are experiential in a broader sense, specifically a multi-sense, which makes them particularly mismatched to the primarily visual paradigm of art historical thinking which is still dominated by the concept of pictorial style (or, its opposites anti-style and social analysis). To explore the Hirsch Farm Project practice as a whole, then, is to break with the idea that art is primarily visual, that media specific identifications of artistic practices for individuals and groups are meaningful, and that one mode of expression is appropriate to one sensate form such as visual art or heard music.

The multi-sensory aspect of the Hirsch Farm Project publications exemplifies what David Michael Levin describes as a multi-sensory modality of knowledge called "ontological thinking." Ontology is a branch of metaphysics dealing with the "nature of being" or primary substance as a whole. "Ontological thinking," in Levin's sense, implies a directive to incorporate a greater sense of being into one's sense of self than the visual paradigm of truth (that originates with the Italian Renaissance or scientific rationalism) can produce. Levin says as much when he writes:

'Overcoming' metaphysics means overcoming the metaphysical misunderstanding of the being of the human body. It means overcoming our

deep-seated guilt and shame, flaming into a terrible *hatred* of the body. The history of mind/body dualism and the history of the subject/object dualism are two symptomatic manifestations of a violent, nihilistic rage at the very heart of our metaphysics .... Ontological thinking is radically different: it engages us in the opening wholeness of our being, and 'takes place' as much in the life of our feet and hands and eyes as it does in our head, our brains, or our 'mind.'[10]

The expanded field of ontological thought encompasses both visual and multi-sensorial experiences in ways that reinforce a connectedness to the world as a whole through the specific attributes of a given sensation and the ability of these attributes to connect to the world directly through its contiguous relationship to the perceiver. Levin quotes from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*, continuing his argument:

To have senses, sight for example, is to possess that general setting, that framework of potential, visual-type relations with the help of which we are able to take up any visual grouping. To have a body is to possess a universal setting, a schema of all types of perceptual unfolding and of all those inter-sensory correspondences which lie beyond the segment of the world which we are actually perceiving.[11]

In other words, vision itself communicates what we already see in "any visual grouping" whereas the multiple "types of perceptual unfolding," of which the whole body is capable, "possess a universal setting." Multi-sensory awareness thus expands the "setting" of human experience many-fold. As a form of art that engenders this multiple experience, the Hirsch Farm Project can be said to form multiple pathways toward "ontological knowledge" and the expanded "setting of human experience." It is the expansion of this greater human experience which I take to be the ultimate goal of the Hirsch Farm Project. Levin describes this as becoming "more fully human" which, far from being predicated on the often criticized universalizing tendencies of humanist knowledge, is richly culturally determined. Experience is both universal and individual.

What follows is a phenomenology, or in-depth description of the sensory-cognitive units, that can be combined to form the Hirsch Farm Project experience. First, I will explore vision with a group of proposals from several different publications that express a range of possible visceral encounters, beginning with Diana Thater's "Fifteen-

Minute Film Sequence" in *Optimism* (1994).

Thater's proposal consists largely of landscape shots and sky which evoke geography specific memories in the viewer, images, cognitive frameworks, and physical sensations all at once. This is what experience means in the literal sense. Some sections are often dark and murky, sometimes in and out of focus. There is a "hero" viewing scenes from nature: a beautiful vista, a rainbow, a field, a tunnel, a forest, a sky. The glorious pastoral scenes are tempered by the difficulty of viewing the film itself. What is seen is incomplete, but its incompleteness is made rich with the details that may (or may not) be provided by a viewer. We see at once the inability of the optical nerve to register the darkened frames and a concurrent enrichment of the visual experience as a result. The viewer experiences the limitations both of the visible (what is seen in the world) and of the science of optics (how humans see these things). There is no tangible object that corresponds to the meandering forms that inhabit the dark recesses of the film, nor an objective framework that will determine the precise form the ghost shapes will take. In this manner, Thater's film creates an optical experience that lies beyond the realm of the visible, where visible refers to an objective world of things that can be perceived or observed by the eye.

An optical experience that lies beyond the realm of the visible initially seems self-contradictory in at least two ways: How can something that is not visible be seen? And, secondly, how can this "not visible" experience be shared? Or, put differently, how can two people both see something that is not objectively there? Since viewers/readers of this proposal are not (presumably) hallucinating either collectively or individually, the answer, it seems to me, lies in rethinking the either/or logic that generates the idea that if something is not visible objectively, it does not exist, or cannot be seen. Seeing the non-visible would put certain stress on the common parlance that "seeing is believing" or "I'll know it when I see it," for this simultaneously optical and non-visible experience would shift belief from the primary sense of sight toward something else like "feeling is believing" or "I'll know it when I experience it."

Clearly, something that is not visible can be seen, as shown here, even though what is seen is not a physical object. Rather, what is seen here is produced by optical fatigue – though there are other causes of non-visible visions.[12] Experientially, then, this sequence initiates a visual experience (the pastoral narrative and the ghosts, or a mix of these) that is radically distinct from what is shown (just the landscapes). The viewer is ultimately watching the boundary of his or her own visual capacity – her own limits as a seeing person –

in response to an "outside" stimulus. Thus, by generating an experience that is neither primarily subjective nor objective, this film makes the traditional object-subject duality obsolete – the floating "image" occurs between what is shown (celluloid) and the apparatus of perception (the retinal screen at the back of the human eye).[13] What's more, in terms of the second part of the inherent contradiction named above (that a non-visible, optical experience can be shared), this experience is shared among subjects since the viewer, a human subject, shares some degree of physiological, experiential or *ecological* commonality with another viewer. The film results in optical fatigue because of its physical characteristics and, by extension, because of how it works physiologically. This is true regardless of how responses to the dark segments differ from specific viewer to viewer.

It is fair to say, then, that Thater's film mitigates against the premise that all experience is mediated by clearly delineated senders and/or receivers of information – as is often the case in the Western Idealist Philosophical tradition's account of human experience.[14] In other words, the film's most striking effect is the primary nature of the experience it affords – an experience which is, strictly speaking, experientially self-reflexive (the eye seeing itself see "in here" in terms of the fractal patterns that generate the ghosts) and not necessarily mediated across a subject/object divide (the eye as the core of a person watching a movie "out there"). This is not to say that the experience of watching the film is completely and absolutely primary in every regard. As J.L. Austin points out, the issue is more complex:

One of the most important points to grasp is that these two terms, 'sense data' and 'material things,' live by taking in each other's washing – what is spurious is not one term of the pair, but the antithesis itself.[15]

This primary aspect, conversely, can be shared among viewers as each experiences this intimate realm as it is shared with a group – that is, as the primary experience yields to secondary knowledge or discourse. Thus, it would be a mistake to interpret this primary experience as isolating and overly-individualistic. Rather, the reverse is true. Primary experience, whether sight, touch, sound or scent creates a sense of shared experience and belonging through the directness of the experience itself as well as through the (more obvious) social interactions and verbal comparisons that might follow.

Mitchell Kane's written epilogue to *Optimism* (1994) is explicit about the relationship between a highly specific sense of geogra-

phy, visual effects and the rupture of this philosophical duality: "This work ... is something recognizable, sharing a familiar physical and psychological space that challenges the whereabouts of the viewer in awkward, friendly, or confrontational ways." (60) On a page adjacent to the epilogue, he offers three photographs of places where people work and live (Paris, Maine and England) and a neon orange rectangle. The photographs are distinctly ordinary. In each case, it is difficult to imagine from where the picture was taken: the viewer seems to hover over a boatyard in Maine, what look like chemical tanks from an airport in Paris, and a sidewalk in Salford outside of Manchester in England. In his own words, these are "awkward" studies that serve to remind the viewer (or me at least) of how disembodied vision can become. If this point is unclear in the three photographs themselves, it is made explicit through the introduction of the jarring, orange rectangle at the lower left, if the page is turned horizontally so that the photographs are oriented correctly. Against the black and white photographs, the orange glares mercilessly, the viewer's eye struggles to take in the entire page, only to be shuttled almost recklessly between the options of the photographs and the rectangle. Optimism? The visual evidence here leans more toward iconoclasty – the destruction of normative vision.

This visual awkwardness has profound implications that are specifically foregrounded in the 1998 project *Now: Speculative Environment, Theme Song, and Wisconsin Open House*. The project consists of three parts: a museum gallery where the room is tilted off its right-angle axis by a sloping floor and the space is compressed by its planar elevation; a theme song (unironically grateful for our attendance) connected to the exhibition which moves among keys and song styles; and an open house that is held some four hours from where these events are located. Together, these elements create a spatial and auditory vertigo that seems to contradict the basic rules of spatial consistency and musical harmony established by mainstream architecture and music.

In terms that resonate with the spatial awkwardness and multisituational aspects of Kane's photos and *Now*, Paul Virilio presents a framework that is based on the model of perspective that resulted from the disembodied gaze of the Italian Renaissance. Perspective is "the nodule in which the modeling of vision would develop and, with it, all possible standardization of ways of seeing."[16] From Virilio's point of view, the disintegration of the controlling gaze in art makes all connective visions (both optical and social) impossible. Consequently, according to this iconoclastic formula, the disharmony and conflict inherent in Kane's photographs and *Now* represent chaos and disintegration because they lie beyond the field of scopic unity provided by perspective art and photography.

Unlike Virilio's singular and authoritarian framework (which essentially locates the model of vision in the lens), Robert Romanyshyn suggests a broader, more inclusive path by integrating the eye within the body. In *Technology as Symptom and Dream*, Romanyshyn describes the model of vision in terms phenomenologically identical to Virilio's: "When the world is viewed through a window, the world is well on the way to becoming an object of vision."[17] However, Romanyshyn goes a step further: "a profound difference remains between this objective body of knowledge created in distance from oneself, and one's living body, between the body which one has and the body which one is."[18] In Romanyshyn's account, the embodied conception of vision allows for a cultural space, or opening, for that ever indomitable "body that is" lived. The social aspect of the Hirsch Farm Project attests to the vitality of this line of thought.

By extension, through embodying the eye experientially, these projects have a performative aspect vis-a-vis the viewer. Performance scholar, Kristine Stiles, has worked with this idea most deeply.[19] Although she was writing on Fluxus, her terms bear directly on this discussion:

[T]he body, in addition to its role as subject, is itself presented as an object. Together, subject and object create a changing and interrelated perceptual field for the investigation between actions, language, objects and sounds.[20]

By radically representing the awkward space lived and worked in by people as fundamentally uninhabitable both physically and visually, Kane's epilogue images and *Now* locate the eye within the human body, with all of its motility and sentience: the optimism of these proposals lies in the affirmation of other possibilities.

A totally different visual approach occurs in Kane's glorious "Himalayas in Yarn" in *World Tour* (1997). These sumptuous yellow, red and white disappearing yarn balls visually invoke a sense of touch. At sharp focus, each individual thread is shown to overlap its neighbor, the waffle-like spaces that structure the weave seem to beg a gentle probe. Printed brightly at first, and then throughout as fading metallic purple prints, the lasting impact of the first image remains as a tactile invitation, even while the balls slowly fade to white.

This is a haptic image – meaning an image based on a "system of perception based on contact values"[21] or touch. Haptic images tend to occur in shallow space and place emphasis on the sur-

face textures or outlines of things in order to emphasize touch. Trompe-l'oeil ("trick the eye") images are haptic in this sense: the viewer is tempted to pull back a half-drawn curtain or to flick away an insect that is not there.[22] This urge to touch becomes a troubling encounter, especially in museums, as the surrogate reality of the represented yarn flickers with an odd sense that it is printed of the stuff from which yarn is made.[23] To look closely, to touch, and to imagine the object as actually presented instead of represented, the yarn (like the details of wood and bark in Mud) bespeaks a focus on multi-sensory experience – in this case touch.

Two other proposals that work within primarily haptic modalities are of particular interest because they were developed by non-art participants: architect William W. Braham's untitled essay and images in *Conviviality: Flirtation, Displeasure and the Hospitable in the Visual Arts* (1995); and public health specialist Meredeth Turshen's "The Professional Sphere of Influence" in *Pressure on the Public* (1992). Braham's text consists of a collection of quotations, historical photographs and modern designs that attempt to develop an integrated, yet flexible, architecture of difference. In his own words "Habit, habitats and inhabitants are bound together in the 'net of imagination,'" which for Braham is rooted in three images that begin the piece: a humble, close-up photograph of the utilitarian fisherman's knot, a diagram and an image of the knot felt by inquiring fingers. Similarly, Turshen's proposal (summarizing the ideas generated from her presentation on how different disciplines and professionals deal with their respective "publics") is accompanied by small facsimiles of her notes. The reproductions are remarkable for their diagramming of a thought process and materialization of that process in a graphic mode. The modest scraps are truly fascinating for their material aspect (they look like they might blow away!) as well as their apparent direct link to the author.

All of the works described thus far bring us some way toward understanding how vision operates in terms of affirming human experience. As a group, they expose the distinctions between the optical and the visual: this happens phenomenologically as in the dark spaces of Thater's film; iconically in Kane's epilogue images and *Now*; and by an almost explicit directive to touch in the haptic presentational framework of Kane's yarn pictures, Braham's knots, and Turshen's notes. Their realism negates the tradition of optical control and instead directs our attention toward a comparatively subjective experiential location which is tactile, empirical, and therefore richer experientially.

Svetlana Alpers' work on 17th century Dutch painting, *The*

Art Of Describing, supports this descriptive orientation. She describes the Northern tradition as opposed to the narrative, spatially contained tradition of the Italian Renaissance perspective, and criticizes traditional modes of Art History for allowing the latter to occlude the former.

Attention to many small things versus a few large ones; light reflected off objects versus objects modeled by light and shadow; the surface of objects, their colors and textures, dealt with rather than their placement in a single, legible space; an unframed image versus one that is clearly framed; one with no clearly situated viewer compared to one with such a viewer. The distinction follows from a hierarchical model of distinguishing between phenomena commonly referred to as primary and secondary; objects and space versus the surfaces, forms versus the textures of the world.[24]

The previously discussed Hirsch Farm Project proposals are all descriptive in Alpers' sense since they provide no clear place for the viewer, who hovers above the subject of the photos or collages: the experience is curiously like a Vermeer, the images and texts seem snatched from various locations and are therefore not "clearly framed." Thus, while I am not suggesting that the Hirsch Farm Project is a direct descendant of 17th century Dutch still lives and trompe-L'oeil images, it does share in a rich visual tradition that is distinct from that offered by the Italian model and which includes, as Alpers notes, aspects of photographic vision (the fragment, the arbitrary frame, the sense of proximity or tactile immediacy). More significantly, however, is that the works Alpers describes as 'describing' offer access to "phenomena commonly referred to as primary," whence the sense of immediacy.

The generation of primary experiences through the publications is not limited to the visual proposals. In fact, a survey of other contributions (dealing with the remaining senses both individually and in combination) demonstrates that this is a strong pattern within the publications and, by extension, a defining characteristic of the Hirsch Farm Project as a whole. The recurring emphasis on an open-ended, multi-sensory approach offers a framework for art as experience in the pragmatic sense. This occurs in many of the proposals through representations of everyday experiences as well as through hypothetical projects that in turn reflect back on the Hirsch Farm Project context.

An excellent example of a hypothetical project is Kane's introductory diagram "Host/Guest, Model of Cohabitation" in *Conviviality: Flirtation, Displeasure and the Hospitable in the Visual Arts* (1995). His humorous proposal shows immense conference tables integrated with exotic conifers, hospital gurneys and lavish plantings in "a gross exaggeration in scale of what actually transpires at the Hirsch Farm Project." By presenting the physical materials needed to "sustain a large discussion capable of achieving a specific resolution," Kane is using the Hirsch Farm Project itself as a model for the topic. He then offers a range of other possible 'convivial' locations in a series of images following the diagram: Pre-Columbian Teotihuacan, Mexico, Tatlin's tower, Le Corbusier's Domino House, etc. – all of which signify other contexts for the creative resolution of the modern problem of human cohabitation.

Creativity, then, is linked to expanded knowledge of one's environment in a general (as opposed to specialized) sense – an attitude that reverberates with a theory of education explored by Edward S. Reed in *The Necessity of Experience*.[25] Reed argues for experiential knowledge, or 'primary experience' as a counter to "the degradation of opportunities for primary experience" which "is part of daily life in our culture."[26] He continues:

> **As this is written, billions of dollars are being spent to create continent-wide information superhighways along which will flow every conceivable kind of information except one. The information being left out of these developments is, unfortunately, the most important kind: the information – termed ecological – that all human beings acquire from their environment by *looking, listening, feeling, sniffing, and tasting* (emphasis mine) – the information, in other words, that allows us to *experience things for ourselves* (sic) .... For understanding our place in the world, ecological information is thus primary, processed information secondary.**[27]

Against a mediated culture where all reality is experienced through pre-fabricated contact with mass education, television, print, radio and corporate or state controlled mass communications, other forms of cultural experience become necessary. With the Idealist and then counter-Idealist traditions, the western philosophical framework has tended to privilege a highly mediated conception of reality, where reality is mere appearance (Schopenhauer) or experience merely a springboard for the greater truth of the mind (Hegel). What needs retrieval from the Idealist tradition is the empirical basis of experience itself. More useful for ascertaining the curious power

of the Hirsch Farm Project is a comparatively old fashioned framework within the anti-Idealist tradition, that of philosophical pragmatism. *NonSpectacle and the Limitations of Popular Opinion* (1993) explicitly supports this approach by emphasizing "inventive and independent work...with a new sense of practicality" that recognizes "our ability as individuals to evaluate ideas in everyday situations." (IX) Strictly speaking, the experience is unmediated at the origin.

In the early twentieth century, philosophical pragmatism was represented by William James and John Dewey, the latter producing a theory of education based on the importance of primary knowledge.[28] The educational tools produced for his experiment, the Lab School in Chicago, consisted of containers holding objects destined for a range of explorations. It is particularly striking that the tools look like the haptic images described already, insofar as the photos repeatedly emphasize surface textures and are often organized in grids that resemble boxes. In *Art as Experience*, Dewey argues convincingly that primary experience creates social and specific relationships. He writes, "(t)he senses are organs through which the live creature participates directly in the world about him"[29] which means that primary experience has profoundly social implications.

Recently, the work of Hilary Putnam and John McDowell continues the argument in favor of primary experience.[30] Explicitly positioning himself against the Idealist tradition, Putnam contends that the isolation of ideas in the mind (in the Idealist tradition) has resulted in a catastrophe of human empathy, since empathy is only possible through an ecological identification with other people:

(T)he key assumption responsible for the disaster is that there has to be an interface between our cognitive powers and the external world — or, to put the same point differently, the idea that our cognitive powers cannot reach all the way to objects themselves.[31]

Putnam continues in terms that help us understand the Hirsch Farm Project as a conceptual apparatus that demonstrates that cognitive powers do reach all the way to objects themselves:

The natural realist holds that successful perception is just a seeing, or hearing, or feeling, etc., of things out there; and not a mere affectation of a person's subjectivity by those things.[32]

By asserting that cognition is located within an object/sensory continuum, this account mitigates against the strict division between object and subject in perceptual experience (which

includes art). Thus, primary experience and perception are multi-sensual: they occur across all sensate forms, whether sight, sound, scent, taste or touch based. The primary experiential basis of many of the Hirsch Farm Project proposals goes some way toward explaining the wide variety of appropriate responses to the work. As ecological or primary experiences, these publications "allow us to experience things for ourselves" and, in so doing, generate a mechanism for "understanding our place in the world" in Reed's terms. As individual people and members of a social body, these understandings will be both significantly different from and similar to each other.

For example, the most purely multi-sensual production in a Hirsch Farm Project publication is undoubtedly J. Morgan Puett's "Hirsch Farm Coveralls" designed for *Optimism* (1994). The coveralls share a history with utopian clothing design of the politically left avant-garde, especially since they were "based on the coveralls which the workers of South Africa wear for labor and service," which implies an empathetic and communitarian sense of how clothing identifies class across cultural boundaries. Equally important, the pattern is packaged in an envelope separated from the rest of the book and can actually be made for wear ("special thanks to Butterick Pattern Company").[33] Produced as an edition and variable by size since it "comes in four sizes, adjust to fit," the coveralls are intended for multiple use. So although each pattern is essentially identical from the outside, once made, they will differ by the experience of manufacture as well as the sizing and textured differences of each unique tailoring. Thus, the tissue paper designs contain a wide range of tactile and physical elements (which are definitely part of the work): these include the inevitable pin pricks, cool shears, rustling through paper and thumping motor of the sewing machine that accompany the making of the coveralls to the unique experience of wearing the finished product. In this way, Puett's coveralls clearly locate the art experience within the realm of touch.

Another multi-sensory example is Helen Molesworth's alternately hilarious and earnest study of "The Bathroom" in *NonSpectacle and the Limitations of Popular Opinion* (1993). Molesworth asks, "Can you remember the taste of a fresh apricot, wild mint, the weight of freshly baked bread, the scent of a good cigarette, horse manure, the texture of frozen vodka, the warm seat of a recently used toilet?" (25) One theorist has described this absolute quality of tactile perception, "the fact that I can touch an object, hold it, push it, gives me a sense that there is really something there, that I am not the sport of a trick or an illusion."[34]

The information gained by touch, called cutaneous informa-

tion, is a product of a very particular kind of direct contact with the materials at hand. Apart from the lips and tongue, the index fingertip is the most sensitive cutaneous organ and is therefore well suited to the tactile aspect of these proposals. Some of their power also lies in their ability to evoke "the enquiring, learning gesture"[35] of tactile exploration. Far from an iconoclastic, destructive ideal, the coveralls and "The Bathroom" set up the potential for non-destructive knowing on the part of the user. The philosopher Martin Heidegger distinguishes use from using up in terms that may be useful here. He differentiates between the type of information gained through enquiring gesture from that gained through the "grasping" for truth associated with enlightenment philosophy. He writes:

When we handle a thing, for example, our hand must fit itself to the thing .... [U]se itself is the summons which determines that a thing be admitted to its own essence and nature, and that the use keep to it. To use something is to let it enter into its essential nature, to keep it safe in its essence.[36]

David Michael Levin also discusses this access to the essential characteristic of a thing in terms of a "careful touch, which is open to feeling what it touches and uses, gets in touch more deeply and closely than the hand which willfully grasps and clings."[37] Perhaps in not knowing how to sew (which I don't), the construction of the coveralls necessitates a careful approach, as opposed to one of "grasping and clinging," which in turn yields essential information about the object. Likewise, the sensations in Molesworth's encounters constitute an experientially based critique of the mechanization of the human body in the modern era. To my mind, this description is *not about* the sensation; as I read it, I encounter these experiences rather directly and recall how rarely I pay attention to my non-mechanized self.

Equally significant, touch is a particularly intimate sense not only because of its sensual associations but also because, of all the senses, touch is the most implicitly social – what is touched, touches back. David Michael Levin describes the social aspect of touch in socially motivated terms: "Touching presupposes our capacity to be correspondingly touched, and this primordial reciprocity calls into question our inveterate tendency to polarize the tactile field into a subject and object ...."[38] This means that cutaneous information works to eradicate the viability of a strict distinction between subject and object in Western metaphysics and phenomenology. In the words of an early writer in sense communications:

The skin serves both as receptor and transmitter of messages, some of which are culturally defined. Its acute sensitivity allows the development of such an elaborate system as Braille, but tactillism is more basic than such oddities imply and constitutes a fundamental communication form.[39]

In a manner similar to touch, smell and taste have a very strong primary or experiential basis. Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synnott link ontological thinking to a sense of sociality in their cultural history of the much neglected sense of smell. Their account contrasts the directionality of sight to the uncontainment of odor and contextualizes the ignominy of scent as a sense in terms of a social threat, while accounting for its objective power.

Furthermore, odours cannot be readily contained, they escape and cross boundaries, blending different entities into olfactory wholes. Such a sensory model can be opposed to our modern, linear world view, with its emphasis on privacy, discrete divisions, and superficial interactions.

This is not to suggest that an olfactory-minded society would be an egalitarian utopia with all members harmoniously combining into a cultural perfume. As we shall see, olfactory codes can and often do serve to divide and oppress human beings, rather than unite them. The suggestion is rather that smell has been marginalized because it is felt to threaten the abstract and impersonal regime of modernity by virtue of its radical interiority, its boundary transgressing propensities and its emotional potency. Contemporary society demands that we distance ourselves from the emotions, that social structures and divisions be seen to be objective or rational and not emotional, and that personal boundaries be respected.[40]

The radical interiority, boundary transgressing propensities and emotional potency of scent constitute its liberating, deeply personal and humanistic qualities. Thus, even where scent is seen to be culturally determined, it restricts, at least potentially, the dichotomies of the Idealist tradition, particularly that of subject and object, by virtue of its "radical interiority."

An explicit example is the second part of Molesworth's proposal in *NonSpectacle* where she turns her attention from the pleasures of the bathroom to the pleasures of food and smell. She includes a savory recipe for "Squash, Pepper, and Hominy Stew" wherein "the chili is warm and rich, the hominy nutty, and the squash sweet." (25) Significantly, the Hominy Stew is identified by a particular smell and taste, which links this radical interiority to the social ritual of eating. At the same time, odor and taste have no clear, material identity. The Hominy Stew proposal, then, is experiential both in terms of a primary experience of the normally denigrated sense of smell, and also in

terms of the deeply subjective range of responses that exposure to the various odors would invoke *within the brain*. David Howes refers to this as the "universal association between olfaction and transition"[41] by which he means ritualistic, behavioral and developmental transformations.

Physiologically, then, scent moves directly to the emotional (read irrational) point in the brain and causes profound emotional and recollective transformations in the receiver: Howes explains that "Olfactory signals are transmitted directly via the tiny hairlike cilia at the ends of the olfactory neurons into the limbic region of the brain, the core of emotions and memory."[42] There is a physiological basis, then, for the evocative effect of the Hominy Stew since the radical interiority of smell enables scent-based work to drive directly into the human brain in a manner that precisely illustrates, in Putnam's words, that our cognitive powers do indeed reach all the way to objects themselves and that perception is "not a mere affectation of a person's subjectivity by those things."[43]

Writing on ritual, Howes identifies scent with an 'intersubjective we-feeling' when he notes that "the use of incense 'provides for the senses a symbolic representation of the invisible action (communion) that is taking place.'"[44] In the use of smell, then, ritual is communalized, in part because the physiological experience is shared, but also because the transformation, while it may vary from person to person, invokes an 'intersubjective we-feeling' that is partially the result of multiplied transformations in the recipients. This is, I think, why a recipe belongs within a publication on *NonSpectacle*. The smell and taste of the stew foster a sense of community that is at once highly differentiated (by memory, association, physiology, etc.) and also deeply communal.

By presenting primary knowledge through representations of everyday experiences, the coveralls, "The Bathroom" and the Hominy Stew offer a productive open-endedness that clearly allows for multiple realizations.[45] Commenting on Heidegger, David Michael Levin makes a distinction between the relationship to knowledge suggested by rationalizing modes of vision, and that produced by "openness to Being" which is, I think, what some of the most remarkable proposals evoke.

The 'metaphysics of presence' is rooted in such vision, an observation or contemplation that is immobile and impassive, *untouched* and unmoved by what it sees . . . the visual Gestalt, reduced to the subject-object relationship, tends to be and often is, driven by the will to power.[46]

Significantly, for Heidegger, the ideal sensation for "openness

of Being" is the ear – as identified with speech, listening and music which, as David Michael Levin points out, is comparatively interactive and communicative. Except for Bill Schefferine's proposal in *Pressure on the Public* (1992) to install a "human scale, stand alone system of public address in a valley" that can be "programmed by anyone who wishes to contribute," there has been no explicitly sound-based production associated with these publications. That is until the 1998 Hirsch Farm Project *Now: Speculative Environment, Theme Song and Wisconsin Open House*. In the theme song, music has been introduced as a super-candid vehicle of communication. It is fitting as a final product for the Hirsch Farm Project since Levin points out that listening may be central to a new epistemological order.

Informed by an interactive and receptive normativity, listening generates a very different episteme and ontology – a very different metaphysics. Today, moreover, it is becoming increasingly clear that we need the ethics and politics of a communicative rationality. Thus, I submit, the paradigm shift in question here could represent a truly progressive, emancipatory development of our historical potential.[47]

In conclusion, I submit that the Hirsch Farm Project, as an idea about small scale discursive interaction and probing of pressing topics, offers this culture (the European/American high art mainstream) materials useful in Levin's emancipatory sense. The consistently open-ended, experiential function of some of the most exceptional contributions in the publications produces distinctly primary experiences that invite concretism, or material knowledge by multisensory and performance means.[48] This is why the Hirsch Farm Project is worthy of reflection. It "matters" because it has the capacity to offer ontological knowledge that biobehaviorally connects people to a real world and to each other in a meaningful expansion of a person's ecological and social sense of belonging to a group.

Of course, the Hirsch Farm Project is considerably more complex than this simplistic framework might indicate. Although the Hirsch Farm Project operates in a world of primary significance and presence, it is simultaneously strongly grounded in an art context. Obviously. Mitchell Kane (whose presence is pervasive) and the majority of participants are, after all, visual artists. This is true even though a variety of non-art professionals such as architects, historians, lawyers, conservationists, and scientists have participated. In the publications, there may occasionally be minimal transformation

of an object or daily action, or a maximal transformation of one: several proposals even consist of rather traditional paintings![49] In this manner, some of the Hirsch Farm Project participants are clearly making something 'real' in a speculative context that includes art. As such, the value of a given proposal is located in some near or far connection to *painterly* conventions in particular and re-presentational strategies that range across media in general.[50] Thus, the proper interpretation of primary experience as an art form both means something and comes from a social and art cultural context.

However, far from retreating into a world of artistic habit, where the participants would forever produce pseudo-scientific, mainstream conceptual art, almost every one of them moves between the contexts of more overtly primary or empirical modes and more clearly 'artistic' media and intermedia formations. Thus, the Hirsch Farm Project is definitely *not* a context of practice that is defined as *exclusively* empirical. Rather, the greater goal of the Hirsch Farm Project seems to be the more modest proposal: There is real value in real things, knowledge and experience derive from these things and there are implications for this within the context of Art as well as culture generally. In a world dominated by special effects in commercial photography, film, and television, the dual aspect of the Hirsch Farm Project that locates it within a space of real experience and within an art context simultaneously is timely.

Jungian psychologist James Hillman supports this approach by arguing for a radically connected locus for art in his description of the Objet Trouve (the real object as in Duchamp's *Readymades* and Warhol's *Brillo Box*):

Ordinary things come alive, become metaphors, have humor. No longer just Kmart and throwaway .... Rusty girders, or the ruins of an old car, that's right. It makes me see things that are animated. So I don't think art is guilty for the neglect of anima mundi. With the objet trouve, it rescued and made use of discarded materials.[51]

For "things to come alive," a certain degree of unpredictability must be admitted into their status as living. This does not mean that one shouldn't try to understand things, explore them, consider them deeply, etc. It does mean that the objet trouve, which for my purposes resonates with the haptic and real-life aspects of my favorite Hirsch Farm Project proposals, extends toward a vital sense of contextual play that promotes greater awareness and connection to a world "out there." This is in keeping with Hillman's indictment of psychoanalysis as overly separated from the world of the analysand (patient).[52] The interplay of senses in the Hirsch Farm Project publications can be seen, then, not only as a political negation of the

Western Idealist tradition and rigid artistic categories, but also as a radical intervention in survival itself. The project's malleability to rationalizing schemes of all kinds, as indicated by the intentional lack of a unified pictorial style or media specific practice (both within and across publications), merely testifies to its experiential breadth.

Equally significant is the open-ended social and practical framework of the Hirsch Farm Project. Clearly, as director/curator, Mitchell Kane has been instrumental in shaping the direction of the project itself and the publications (he has contributed to and designed every single one of them). However, once the conceptual seed is planted, Kane intervenes only as a passive presence both during the meetings and in the development of proposals – allowing for and actively encouraging differing values, senses of purpose, ideologies, and artistic approaches. This non-interventionist orientation helps explain the tremendous variation in the quality of the proposals. However, within the context of the project, the weaker or less interesting proposals help balance and enrich the more intellectually and experientially provocative work. Qualitative unevenness is a necessary and commendable outgrowth of this commitment to diversity, a commitment that goes a long way toward fostering inventiveness. These qualities are exactly the reasons why the Hirsch Farm Project can appropriately be described as a sort of freeform think tank.[53]

In *The Leader as Martial Artist*, Arnold Mindell argues for a deep democracy, where tolerance and close listening to multiple voices of experience and orientation provide a uniquely contentious but rich and necessary framework for the survival of all humans in the ever shrinking, global world.[54] In the unceasing perpetuation of multiple perspectives, it is right to describe the Hirsch Farm Project's approach as a model for deep democracy, this despite the anxieties, feuds and tensions that accompany the due consideration of someone else's perspective. I am not talking about a happy pluralism that melts down into a "to each his own" passivity. Instead, deep democracy is fractured at the root but held together with a common respect for differences. Mandell asks: "Could we develop something that was more exciting than war and also more sustainable than peace?"[55] I don't know, but we can try.

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FOOTNOTES

[1]Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. T. Bahti. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 35.

[2]Refer to "Store(Cheese)" by artist Dan Peterman, and "Archaeological Cavern Sanctuary" by archaeologist Robert Boszhardt, primate specialist Robert Horwich, and environmentalist Daniel Arnold.

[3]Ellen Dissanayake, *What is Art For?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988), p. 6.

[4]Ibid., p. 90 and p. 95.

[5]Ibid., p. 101.

[6]Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aestheticus* (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 38.

[7]Ibid., p. 54. Emphasis mine.

[8]Ibid., p. 63.

[9]Ibid.

[10]David Michael Levin, *The Body's Recollection of Being* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985), p. 56. His emphasis.

[11]Ibid., p. 145. Quote is taken from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 326.

[12]I have in mind ghosts, dreams, hallucinations of all kinds, images caused by eye malfunctions, mirages, magic and games of illusion.

[13]All artistic experience occurs in this interstitial space, but is seldom described in such hermeneutical terms.

[14]J.L. Austin, typical among sensory theorists who position themselves against this polarizing tradition, offers a summary of why this is so. In *Sense and Sensibilia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962 and 1979) Austin describes: "It is a curious and in some ways rather melancholy fact that the relative positions of [H.H.] Price and [A.J.] Ayer at this point turn out to be exactly the same as the relative positions of [John] Locke and [George] Berkeley, or [David] Hume and [Emmanuel] Kant. In Locke's view there are 'ideas' and also 'external objects,' in Hume's 'impressions' and also 'external objects,' in Price's view 'sense data' and also 'physical occupants;' in Berkeley's doctrine there are only ideas, in Kant's only *Vorstellungen* (things-in-themselves being not strictly relevant here), in Ayer's doctrine there are only sense-data – but Berkeley, Kant and Ayer all further agree that we can speak as if there were bodies, objects, material things."
(p. 61, parentheses mine, italics Austin's)

[15]Ibid., p. 4.

[16]Paul Virilio, *The Vision Machine* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press and London: British Film Institute, 1996), p. 15. (Original, 1988).

[17]Robert Romanyshyn, *Technology as Symptom and Dream* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 33.

[18]Ibid., p. 173.

[19]Stiles develops her idea and use of the term 'performative' from J. L. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), see Stiles footnote #7, p. 96. Stiles adapts from Austin's sense of the performative, which is largely concerned with how words actually do things, to include a comparatively wide range of activities and experiences that connect thoughts with acts. This elasticity should be contrasted to the stiff, causal conception of the term as it is used by many scholars devolving from Austin's text. Particularly confined to its linguistic sense is Judith Butler's *Excitable Speech* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

[20]Ibid., p. 65.

[21]Robert Witkin, *Art & Social Structure* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 1995), p. 64.

[22]Support for this association of haptic experience and trompe-L'oeil painting can be found in, among other places, Paul J. Staiti, "Illusion, Trompe l'oeil, and the Perils of Viewership," in *William M. Harnett*, ed. by Doreen Bolger, Marc Simpson and John Wilmerding, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art and Abrams, Inc., 1992). Staiti writes, "[V]iewing begins with a distanced, genteel, dispassionate sighting of an entire painting: the entire ensemble of objects in it, their shapes, formal pattern, and position in a shallow space. Response is held in check at first, but it leads to a more proximate, lively, and, finally, more troubled encounter with surrogate reality." (p. 38).

[23]In particular, one effect of trompe-L'oeil resonates with my experience of the yarn. Ibid., p. 32. "As signifiers of indeterminate signification, anxiously indicating both object and representation, these items were so deceptively painted that viewers were impelled to abandon the etiquette of passive spectatorship by actively moving near the picture or even touching it in an effort to determine what it was they were seeing."

[24]Svetlana Alpers, *The Art of Describing: Dutch Art in the Seventeenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 44.

[25]Edward S. Reed, *The Necessity of Experience* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), p. 2.

[26]Defenders of the idea of primary experience include historic and contemporary figures: among these are William Morris, Hannah Arendt, Lewis Mumford, Harry Braverman, and Christopher Lasch.

[27]Ibid., p. 2.

[28]John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (1938). Reprinted in *The Later Works of John Dewey*, vol. 13 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988). See also, John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch and Co., 1934). See also, William James, Essays in *Radical Empiricism* (1912).

[29]Dewey, *Art as Experience*, p. 22.

[30]Hilary Putnam, *Pragmatism: An Open Question* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1995). See also Hilary Putnam, *Renewing Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992). John McDowell, *Mind and World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994).

[31]Putnam, "The Dewey Lectures, 1994: Sense, Nonsense, and the Senses: An Inquiry into the Powers of the Human Mind," *Journal of Philosophy* 91, No. 9 (1994): pp. 445-511.

[32]Ibid., p. 454.

[33]Stephen Prina (a 1995 Hirsch Farm Project participant) produced the coveralls to use in a performance piece two years later in Germany.

[34]W. Ivins, *Art and Geometry — A Study in Space Intuitions* (New York: Dover, 1964), p.4.

[35]Levin, p. 126.

[36]Martin Heidegger, *What is Called Thinking?* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), p. 187. Quoted in Levin, p. 127.

[37]Ibid., p. 128.

[38]Levin, p. 129.

[39]Lawrence K. Frank, "Tactile Communication" in *Explorations in Communication*, Edmund Carpenter and Marshall McLuhan, ed., (Boston: Beacon Press, 1960), p. 4.

[40]Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synnott, Introduction, in *Aroma: The Cultural History of Smell*, edited by Constance Classen, David Howes and Anthony Synnott (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 4-5.

[41]David Howes, "Olfaction and Transition," in *The Varieties of Sensory Experience: A Sourcebook in the Anthropology of the Senses* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), p. 128.

[42]Ibid., p. 132.

[43]Putnam, p. 454.

[44]Howes, p. 134. Howes citing G.P. Largey and D.R. Watson, "The Sociology of Odors," in *American Journal of Sociology* 77, 1972, p. 1031.

[45]Two other particularly open-ended proposals are in *Optimism* (1994): Christian Philipp Müller's three excursions to local points of interest in Wisconsin; and Stephan Dillemuth's and Jason Simon's collaborative conversation piece. Both are highly experientially based and allow for a wide range of sensory possibilities.

[46]My emphasis. This suggests that work based in the haptic is not traditional in this regard. David Michael Levin, "Decline and Fall: Ocularcentrism in Heidegger's Reading of the History of Metaphysics" in *Modernity and the Hegemony of Vision*, ed. by David Michael Levin (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 203. I am deeply indebted to Levin for the thrust of this analysis of Heidegger.

[47]Ibid., p. 212. This argument forms the basis of Levin's *The Listening Self* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989). See also Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (New York: Doubleday, 1961), pp. 109-111 and p. 123.

[48]Sometimes this is called concretism, but to avoid confusion with concrete poetry, I will call this 'mattering' henceforth.

[49]*Tahiti: Contemporary Art in an Age of Uncertainty* (1996) in particular resonates with highly conventional painterly traditions such as social realism, photo realism, and science fiction book jacket designs. Refer to John Currin, Alexis Rockman, and Judie Bamber. Other participants in this tradition are Elizabeth Peyton and Sharon Lockhart in *World Tour* (1997).

[50]For example, several of the more conceptual proposals are significant precisely because they challenge traditional accounts of representation by intentionally confusing the underlying tenets of Western illusionism. Refer to Jorge Pardo's "Nomadic Site Project" in *Pressure on the Public* (1992); Rick Valicenti's alphabet, Pae White's "By Class," and Sarah Seager's proposal in *NonSpectacle* (1993); Stephen Prina's greek anthology and Joshua Decter's "Moments on a Farm" in *Conviviality* (1995).

[51]James Hillman, "When You're Healed, Send Me a Postcard," in *Conversations Before the End of Time*, Suzi Gablik, ed., (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995), p. 189.

[52]For further reading, see James Hillman and Michael Ventura, *We've Had a Hundred Years of Psychotherapy and the World's Getting Worse* (New York: Harper Collins, 1992).

[53]This issue is discussed further on the first two pages of *NonSpectacle* (1993). Wendell Berry's call for "small farms" rich with diversity is juxtaposed against Kane's tract on jargon with a quote from Coleridge from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

[54]Arnold Mindell, *The Leader as Martial Artist: Techniques and Strategies for Resolving Conflict and Creating Community* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993). Also see Jerry Mander and Edward Goldsmith, eds., *The Case Against Global Economy: And for a Turn Toward the Local* (San Francisco: Sierra Books, 1996).

[55]Ibid., p. 4.