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STATEMENT OF ART AND DESIGN RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The majority of my physical work places figurative elements in minimally derived constructs and is usually presented to the viewer within the context of an installation format and is ephemeral in nature. The body is a vessel. The idea that without the spirit the body is essentially empty is ancient, however, since my own work with cadavers (which in contrast to the live, model is vacant), this concept has remained central within my practice. We are carried through life in fragile containers of skin and bone that are eternally connected with the surrounding environment.

My early work dealt solely with this issue of body as vessel, but with my personal explorations into architecture and minimalism, I began to see body structures as another type of vessel. With Minimalism, the sign/signifier message behind the artwork is reduced to the point that meaning can only be derived from the interaction of the viewer's body with the work. Robert Morris's "Passageway," for example, guides viewers down an ever narrowing hallway that has no exit. In this piece the subject matter is not the structure of the passage or the wood it is made from, nor is it a 're-presentation' of a hallway. The subject matter is the viewers' experience of compression inside the vessel of the hallway. It is my own desire to cause the viewers' experience to become part of the final work that has led me to create pieces in the same scale as the human body and to work within installation/environmental formats, which require the viewer to physically explore the piece and potentially collaborate in its content.

In most of my recent work, I either bring a created figural element into found natural constructs or I bring elements of nature into the gallery to interact with a body form. This work began when I moved from the open, grand space of Montana to the congested, industrial location of Trenton, New Jersey. I was seeking the spiritual fullness that I formerly got when I stepped out the door. If I did not find this experience within myself, I would have to live without that sensation. So I started creating it in my work and I started installing my work into public spaces. The very first of these was a wax and fabric back that was bound to a large tree for a period of one week. In this body of work, I am placing minimally derived figural elements natural settings in such a way that nature affects their forms and thereby becomes a co-creator of the image. The work is no long just about the body or just about the environment, but the relationship between the two creating not just landscapes but bodyscapes. This work is resulting in experiments with time-lapse photography and video. This outdoor work influences my installations and recently I have begun to exhibit my photographs of these works along with smaller constructions in spaces where a full-blown installation would not be permitted.

In addition to my visual and conceptual research, I also have been working with 3d printing technology for several years now. I believe that 3D printing/rapid prototyping/additive manufacturing and CNC technologies are one of the most important technologies developed since the first invention of metal casting. Much of my work involves cast metal. The process of developing a form, creating a mold, manipulation of the molded form and then production of a final casting is very similar to the work layout of with additive manufacturing technologies. In a digitally based process an original form is created – either physically then digitally scanned or just created using computer software. The form is then manipulated digitally and then the final product is "printed." The primary difference here is that the digital tools that remove limitations on form and size that sculptors face with most approaches to form making. The speed and lack of constraints found in most common construction process have the potential to lead to advances in the language of shape making.

Digital form making is a process that leads readily to collaboration and has resulted in my working with a number of artists and scientists, especially my primary collaborations with the faculty at the University of Washington as well as secondary collaborations with faculty at Arizona State and UC Berkley. It is easy to send a file across the country and have someone edit the work then pass it on for further development. This way of working I believe will call into question thoughts about completeness and ownership much in the way digital technology has changed the music scene. Digital technology will potentially cause a paradigm shift in the way that we think about art and design.