

Debra Weisberg

Minor White- *“One should not only photograph things for what they are but for what else they are.”*

Van Gogh- *“I believe that one would be thinking much more sanely if ideas came from direct contact with things rather than one’s looking at things with the aim of finding this or that idea.”*

Sarah Sze- *“The need to know what you are doing is overrated.”*

Working intuitively and embracing the unexpected is core to my practice, using a variety of materials: torn, black inked rice paper, tape, wire dipped in pulp coated in sand. The forms are twisted and layered into a highly textured whirlpool of pulsating energy. The fluidity of line, density of layering and a material presence emphasizes the visceral nature of the surface and contour. The flat expanse of wall, which supports the works, serves as a respite from their dense, energetic surfaces. The objects appear to have suddenly landed, delicately clinging to it for a brief moment, unable to be contained by the flatness of the supporting surface. They result in works that contain the expanding vitality of an explosive mass of energy struggling to hold the center still when the forces of nature prove too great.

My work is rooted in drawing, including the 3-D work. I construct my sculptures made predominantly with paper-based materials similarly to how one builds a drawing. The traces of prior decisions, the sedimentary layers of my sculptures bear the history of their creation including my missteps and remain visible in the final image. I refer to Tim Ingold’s writings on drawing as “an archive of its maker’s muscle”. I believe this process gives the artwork its authenticity and spark and most parallels nature’s phenomena where the friction between the elements and the topography of the landscape creates the contours. I have rarely placed a mark with a traditional drawing tool directly on a surface but prefer an indirect approach with the material- the paper, tape, sand /salt covered wire- mediating my gesture, my line, my glyph, to impose its will and imprint on my decisions.

To bring to reality these “unseen scapes” sometimes means hours of meanderings, a willingness to recreate work in the moment, and a collaborative approach with the materials I use which sometimes in their stubborn resistance to my hand surpasses my intentionality and even my imagination. It is the surprises that occur in the making, the materials that I can’t quite control despite my years of experience that interest me the most.