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Master of fine arts thesis

Douglas Ross Degges
University of Iowa

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MASTER OF FINE ARTS THESIS

by

Douglas Ross Degges

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Master of Fine Arts
degree in Art in the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2012

Thesis Supervisor: Professor John Dilg

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER'S THESIS

This is to certify that the Master's thesis of

Douglas Ross Degges

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Master of Fine Arts degree in Art at the May 2012 graduation.

Thesis Committee: _____

John Dilg, Thesis Supervisor

David Dunlap

Anita Jung

John Freyer

*To my parents, Lee and Ellen, and to my brother, Allen.
Thank you for teaching me that there are so many ways to see
this great world. And to Hamlett Dobbins, thank you
for showing me the way here.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my family and friends for their support and encouragement over these past three years (listed in no particular order):

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OLD MAN STUDY GROUP AND THE CORACLE DRAWING CLUB

In the course of studying painting for the past three years at the University of Iowa, I have found collaborating with other artists to be a great way for me to try on different hats. Two of these collaborations in particular, The Old Man Study Group with Hamlett Dobbins (Memphis, TN) and The Coracle Drawing Club with David Dunlap (Iowa City, IA), have given me the license and opportunity to pretend to be someone else. These collaborative projects have asked me to consider, and at times adopt, even if only for a moment, the interests and concerns of another maker. A few months into these two projects, I noticed that the work I was making on my own, in the isolation of my own studio, was suddenly open to the world's innovations, and not just my own. At the beginning of my first Spring semester in Iowa, I began using GPS devices, digital cameras, and image editing software in hopes of finding the same kind of play and pleasure that came so easily with collaboration. Previously, there were times when the initial idea, or provocation, would be lost to the labor that I thought was required for my paintings. The following works are from both collaborative projects, and mark, at least to my eyes, a turning point in my painting practice.



Figure 1. *Old Man Study Group 1*, acrylic on panel, 12" x 10", 2011

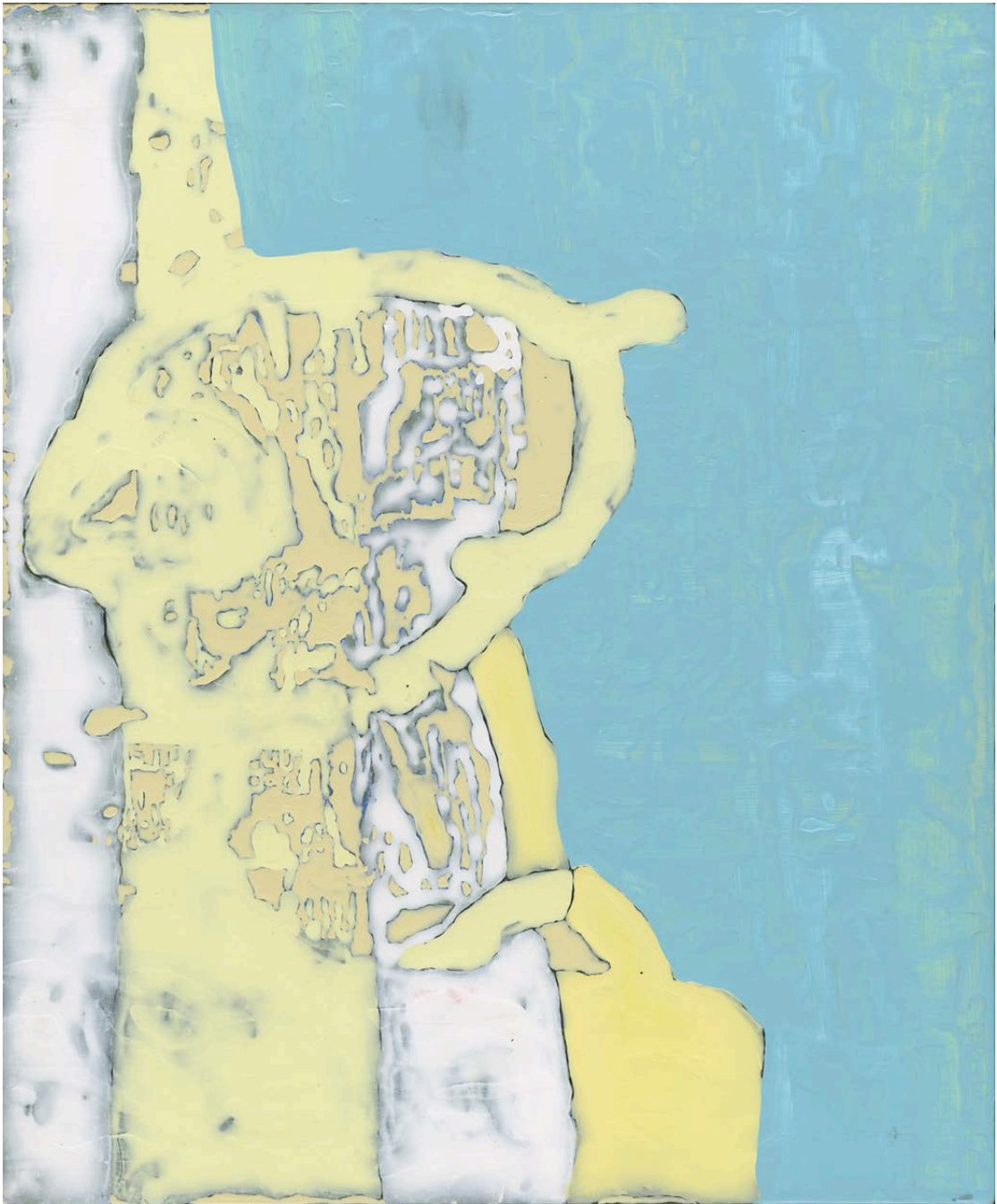


Figure 2. *Old Man Study Group 2*, acrylic on panel, 12" x 10", 2011

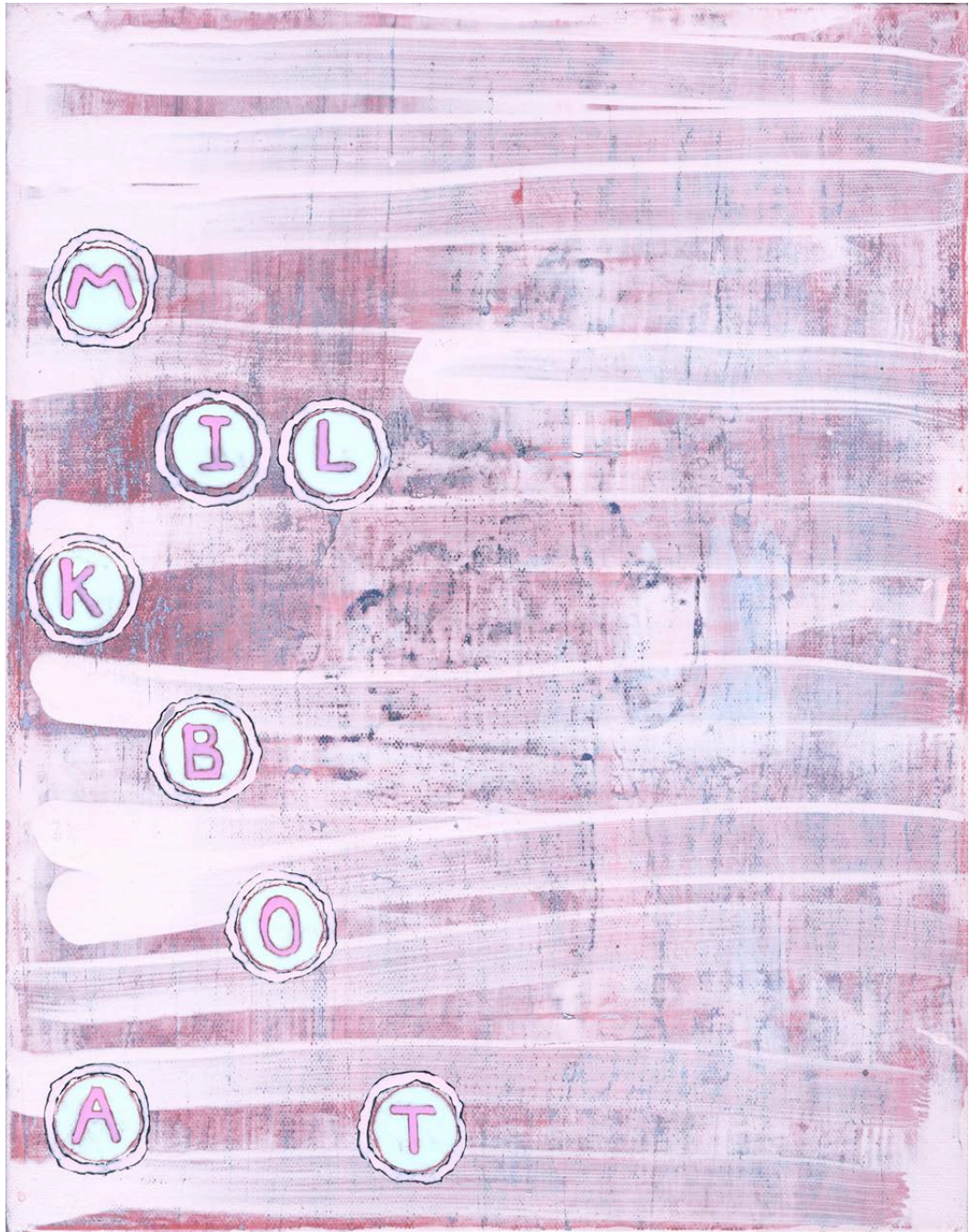


Figure 3. *Old Man Study Group 3*. acrylic on canvas on panel, 2010



Figure 4. *Old Man Study Group 4*, acrylic on canvas on panel, 2010

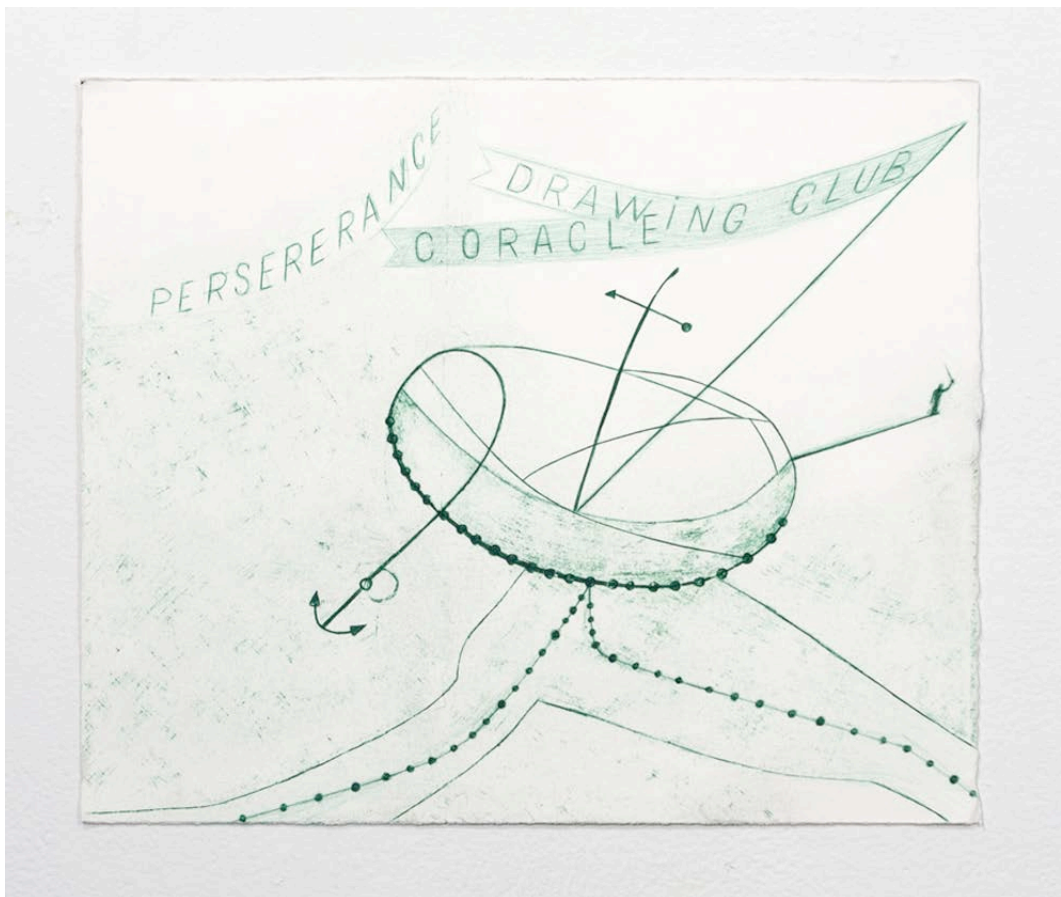


Figure 5. *Coracle Drawing Club 1*. 4-color BIC pen on paper, 2011

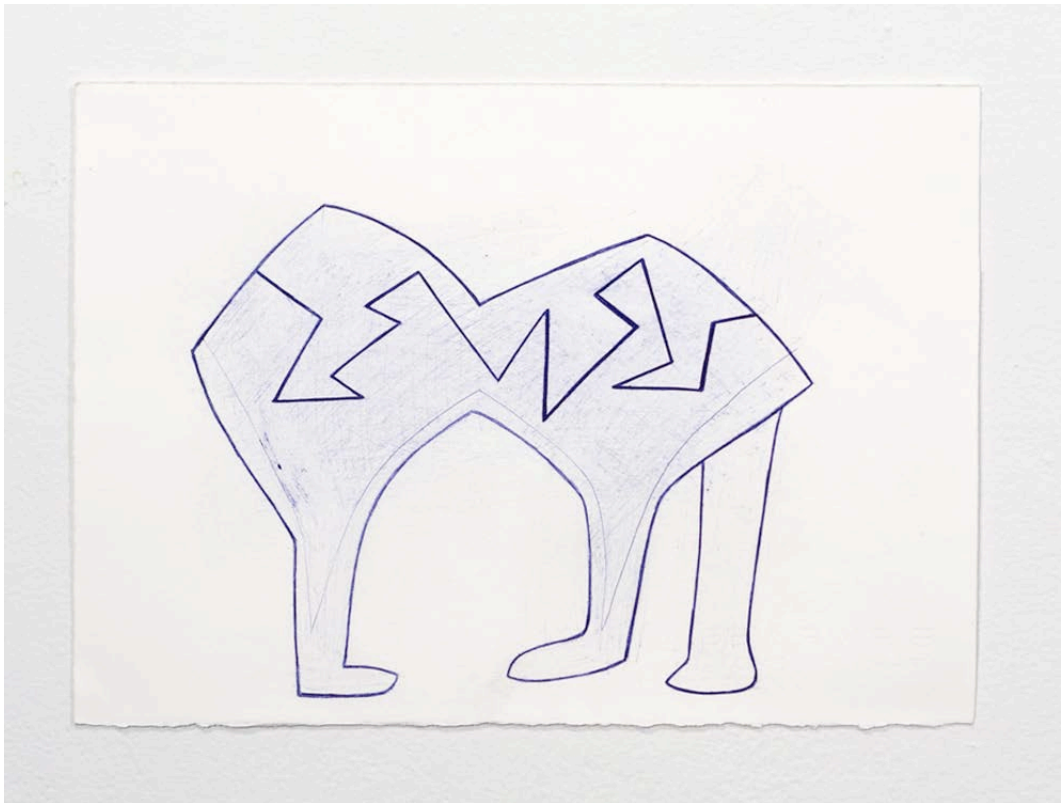


Figure 6. *Coracle Drawing Club 2*. 4-color BIC pen on paper, 2011



Figure 7. *Coracle Drawing Club 3*. acrylic on paper, 2010



Figure 8. *Coracle Drawing Club 4*. acrylic on paper, 2010



Figure 9. *Coracle Drawing Club 5*. 4-color BIC pen on paper, 2012



Figure 10. *Coracle Drawing Club 6 (in progress)*. 4-color BIC pen on paper, 2012

SOME THINGS FROM ALONG THE WAY

The following works were made primarily in my third year of graduate school and reflect the range and playfulness found in a number of my collaborative projects. This body of work explores visual language and immediacy in painting. In the studio, I juggle two very different approaches to painting. On the one hand, I'm making traditional oil paintings where imagery is found in the activity of painting. This approach to painting, in its directness, stands in sharp contrast to my other studio practice that makes use of various digital processes. Many of these digital tools and applications appropriate my traditional paintings as source material, treating them as works in progress, and raw material to be examined and pulled apart. After a few rounds of documentation and image editing, I am left with a stack of images that are then printed on traditional substrates using a large format inkjet printer. These images, particularly when printed on canvas, become nearly indistinguishable from large washes of ink and layers of sanded paint. For each parent painting, I'll go through this documenting, editing, and printing cycle over and over again, each time moving further and further away from the original source—the oil painting that sparked the first generation of digitally produced work. In a sense my practice begins in painting and then leaves it—but not for long, as my work always seems to find its way back into the lexicon of painting. It is my hope that these paintings ask what can be made of a discrete object through conflating parts with wholes and individuals with groups.



Figure 11. *peg and upchuck 1*, oil on panel and gesso on panel, 22" x 30", 2010

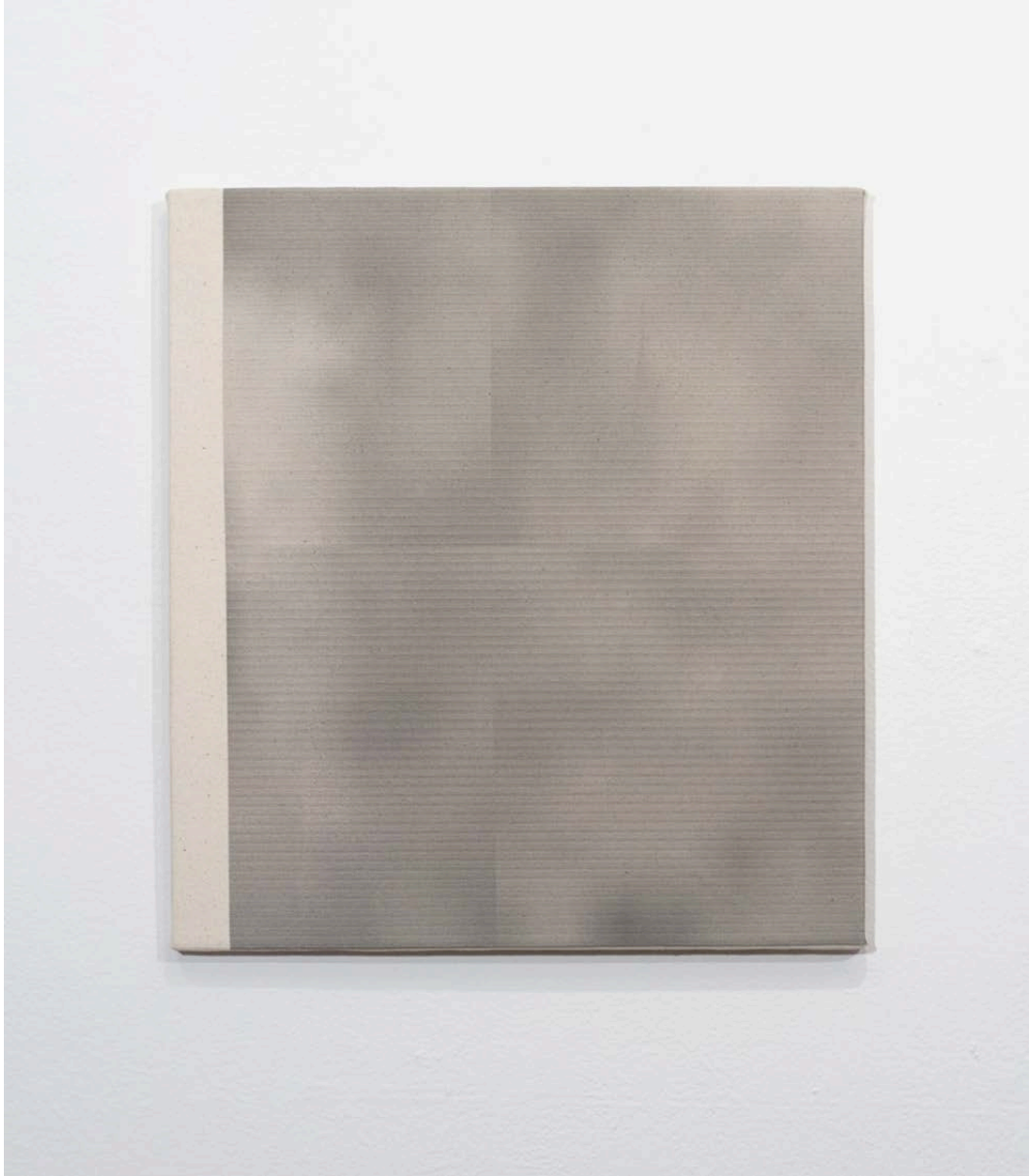


Figure 12. *from above and to the wall*, inkjet print on canvas on panel,
16" x 14.5", 2011



Figure 13. *found part*, inkjet print and acrylic on canvas on panel, 18 x 14.5", 2011



Figure 14. *pair*, inkjet print and acrylic on canvas on panel and oil on masonite, 12" x 17", 2011



Figure 15. *pair 2*, inkjet print on canvas on panel and oil on masonite, 13.5" x 21.5", 2011

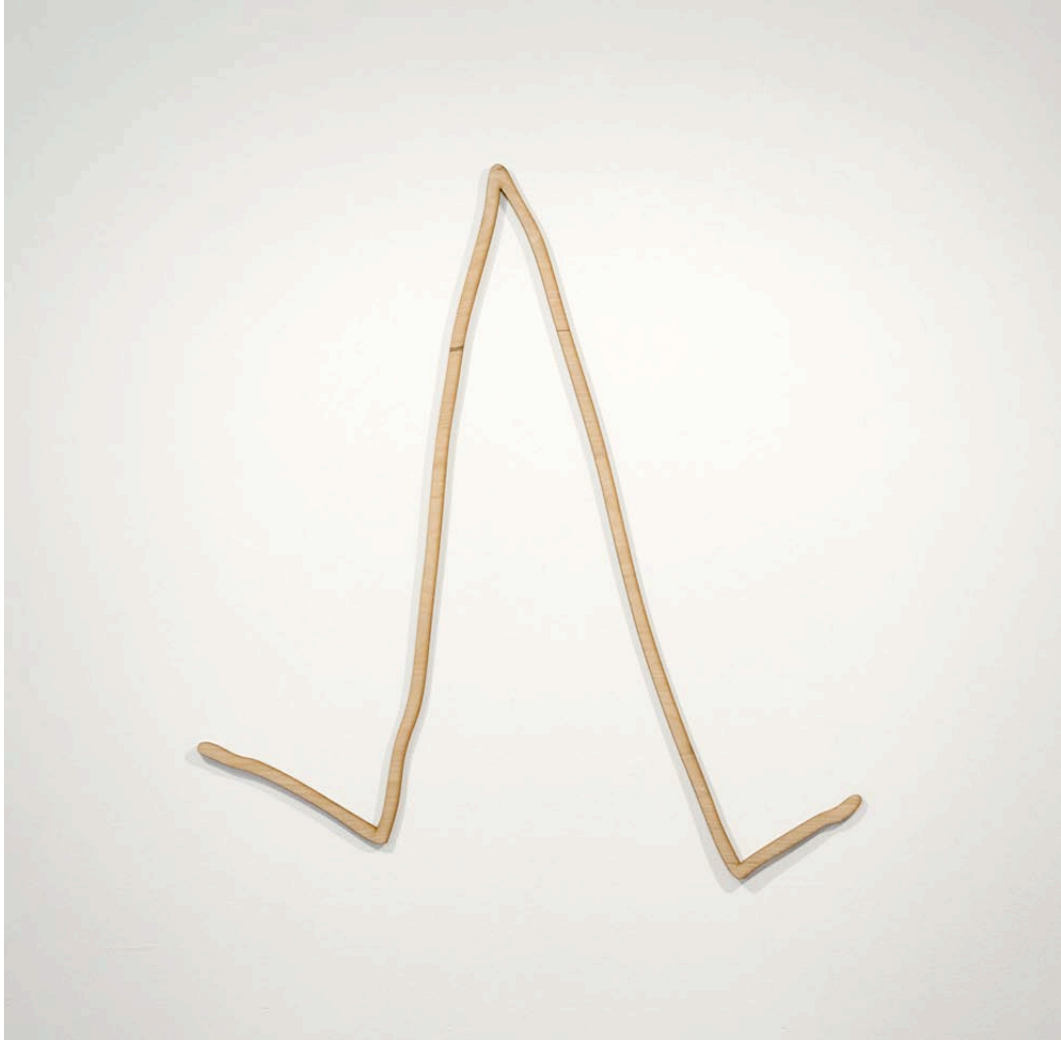


Figure 16. *a limb and a letter 3*, laser cut plywood, 28" x 24", 2011



Figure 17. *a limb and a letter 9*, laser cut plywood, 30" x 14.5", 2011

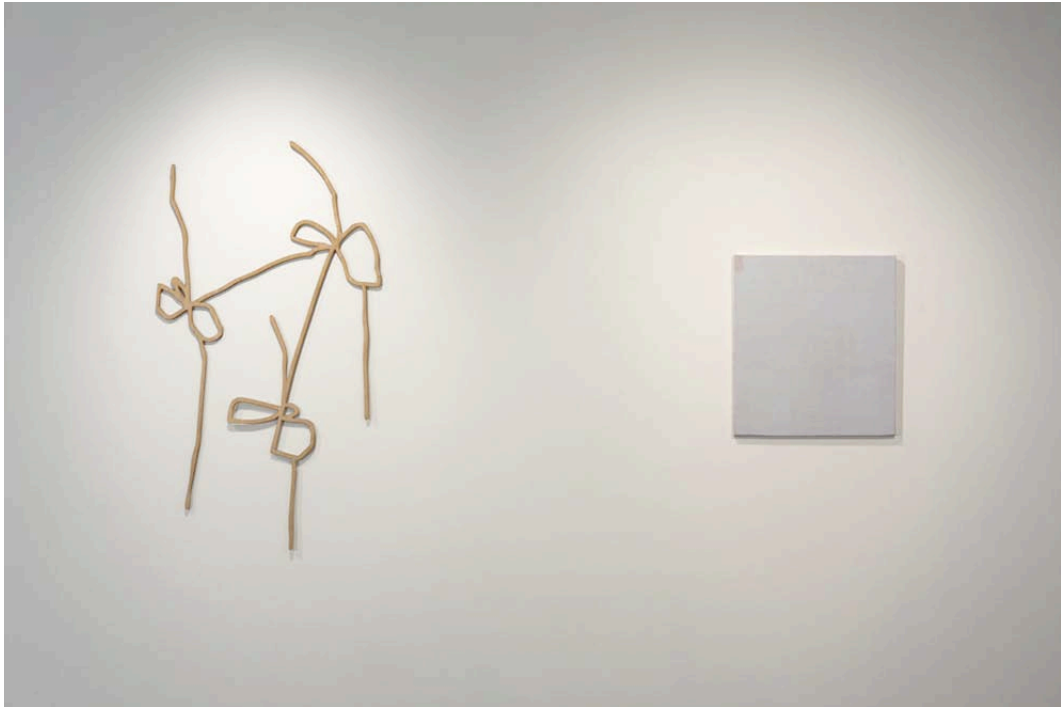


Figure 18. *a limb, a letter, and a whisper*, laser cut plywood and acrylic on canvas on panel, approx. 5' x 7', 2011