

Translations, 2004- present

In a fleeting moment, a herd of horses is caught on tape, galloping across the desert toward the camera. They pause, turn right, and start off again. The filmmaker captures their sense of urgency and distraction as the herd rush onward to their new destination.

At first glance, the Translations series appears to be pure abstractions. Organic forms nest and expand into others, seed and grow from various points on the surface. The complexities of abstract forms serve to indicate a connection with something deeper. These are not the purely invented abstractions of Kandinsky, nor are they the reductive forms of Mondrian or Halley. Upon closer inspection, they resemble old, peeled paint surfaces, revealing the time-based nature of the work. Translations pull back layers of time, laying them out side by side and color by color. The time-code titles of the work further hint at the true source material for the paintings as video or film. The paintings are abrasions of time, like the rings of a tree trunk, or the striations of a ravine exposed.

One second of film is extracted and expanded into twenty-nine individual paintings. An intimacy is established between filmmaker and painter, establishing an extended and laborious process to reflect upon the filmmaker's original vision. I am acting as an interpreter, breaking down one language and reconstructing it in another, holding the sense of the structure together with my understanding of both. The film lingers, simmering underneath, informing the paintings' compositions and colors. The residue is asymmetrical, oddly cropped images, and pulled paint surfaces. Thus, the painting remarks and is marked by both mediums. Like the child's game of "telephone", something is lost and something is gained in translation. Gone is the sense of movement, and with it, the illusion of life. What remains is a sense of forms that have passed through space, that the surface of the painting, at least for a moment, was insistent on noting the world's physicality.

The Translations project is a séance of sorts; a dialogue with a ghost. The formal language of painting is used to converse with the deceased filmmaker, my grandfather. Some topics cannot be broached through words and are lost to time due to age, gender, generational gaps in understanding, and, finally, death. The artifact left to mine is the urge to create art. I try to see through the filmmaker's eyes, attempting to gain understanding of what it was he was thinking, feeling, and experiencing. The process of translating between film and painting is wish fulfillment, an attempt to establish a common thread between grandfather and granddaughter.