Deconstruction in nature

Joseph Tarantelli
Deconstruction In Nature
by
Joseph D. Tarantelli
24 May 2013
Thesis Approval

**Thesis Title:** Deconstruction In Nature  
**Thesis Author:** Joseph D. Tarantelli

**Chief Advisor:** Tom Lightfoot

**Associate Advisor:** Alan Singer

**Associate Advisor:** Keith Howard

**Department Chairperson:** Carole Woodlock
Abstract:

This paper describes the development of the artwork I created for my Thesis exhibition for an MFA in Fine Arts Studio at Rochester Institute of Technology.

My initial inspiration to create came from the landscape. After finding a local scene that showed the growth of life in nature, I would paint the scene outside, or inside using a photo reference. In the winter of 2010, I used warm brown under paintings to contrast the subsequent layers of paint needed to depict the cold climate.

As I painted, I worked to convey a unique interpretation of nature. The palette knife allowed me to show rough scratch marks on my canvases, while my mediums let me paint large, thick brushstrokes on my surfaces. The relationship between the weathered scratch marks and the fresh paint created contrast on my surfaces. Documenting my pieces as they progressed became important because it let me see the processes I used.

I explored and experimented with different media, searching for the best way to express my ideas about nature. In addition to painting, printmaking and video became important methods of expression for me. My documentation evolved into video pieces that took my paintings apart in order to give viewers information about what went into the painting.

Over time, my artwork became more abstract. My new research inspired me to express nature using bolder gestures than before. I thought the break down of imagery was more truthful to nature than suggesting recognizable imagery. Because I witnessed several changes in nature that reinforced this idea, my pieces became less realistic.

One of my paintings became the subject of a documentary video. Almost every time I painted on this surface, I recorded what I did with a video camera. The painting and video were based on my feelings about my projects, my research and my reactions to the seasons.

The finished video was projected next to the painting at my Thesis show. These two pieces were accompanied by my latest paintings and prints. During the reception, a performance titled Transient Being was previewed. This was a collaboration between myself, performer Alaina Olivieri and choreographer Eran Hanlon. Eran was the artistic director for Alaina, who danced in front of my projected video with moves that related to the theme.
Table of Contents:

List of Illustrations, Page III
Introduction, Page 1
Section I: Context, Page 3
Chapter 1: Early Influences, Page 3
Chapter 2: My Inspiration, Page 6
Section II: Evolution, Page 13
Chapter 3: Printmaking Process, Page 13
Chapter 4: Deconstruction in Video, Page 17
Section III: The Thesis Body of Work, Page 21
Chapter 5: Deconstruction in Paintings, Page 28
Chapter 6: Deconstruction in Prints, Page 38
Conclusion, Page 44
Appendix: Information about Scraped Ink 1 and Scraped Ink 2, Page 50
Bibliography, Page 50
List of Illustrations:

1. “The building overlooking High Falls near the gorge wall is in the so-called failure zone” (Sharp). Image Provided by the City of Rochester, Page 1
2. Paul Cézanne, Mont Sainte-Victoire, Page 4
3. River 2 Underpainting, Page 5
4. River 2, Page 6
5. Tom Thomson, The Jack Pine, Page 7
6. Tom Thomson, The West Wind, Page 9
7. Mendon Ponds 1 Underpainting 1, Page 10
8. Mendon Ponds 1 Underpainting 2, Page 11
9. Mendon Ponds 1, Page 12
10. Mendon Woods, Page 13
11. Woods Print 1, Page 15
12. Woods Print 2, Page 16
13. Woods Print 3, Page 16
14. Henry Grosinsky, Lynda Benglis, Fling, Dribble, and Drip, Page 19
15. Stills from the video The Deconstruction of a Triptych, Page 20
16. Fall Winter Spring Underpainting 1, Page 22
17. Fall Winter Spring Underpainting 2, Page 23
18. Fall Winter Spring Underpainting 3, Page 23
19. Piet Mondrian, Evening, Page 24
20. Piet Mondrian, Gray Tree, Page 25
21. Piet Mondrian, Flowering Apple Tree, Page 26
22. Piet Mondrian, Tableau no. 2 / Composition no. V, Page 27
23. Piet Mondrian, Composition with Red, Blue, and Yellow, Page 28
24. Fall Deconstruction Underpainting, Page 29
25. Fall Deconstruction, Page 29
26. Fall Winter Spring Underpainting 4, Page 30
27. Fall Winter Spring Underpainting 5, Page 30
28. Fall Winter Spring, Page 33
29. *Tree Losing Leaves Underpainting 1*, Page 34
30. *Tree Losing Leaves Underpainting 2*, Page 35
31. *Tree Losing Leaves Underpainting 3*, Page 35
32. *Tree Losing Leaves*, Page 36
33. *Deconstruction In Nature Underpainting*, Page 37
34. *Deconstruction In Nature*, Page 38
35. *Scraped Ink 1*, Page 39
36. *Scraped Ink 2*, Page 40
37. *Scraped Paint 1*, Page 41
38. *Scraped Paint 2*, Page 42
39. *Scraped Paint 3*, Page 43
40. *Paint Fragments 2*, Page 44
41. Installation view of the exhibition, “Deconstruction In Nature,” Page 46
42. Eran Hanlon, Stills from the video *Transient Being (Excerpts)*. Director Eran Hanlon. Performer Alaina Olivieri, Page 48
Introduction:

In the natural world, decomposition allows growth to take place. Decomposition is the process that breaks down matter into simpler forms and it occurs when organic life forms die. The potential for showing the balance between decomposition and growth is limitless because they are opposites that fuel each other. The goal of my Thesis is to express the deconstruction of manmade forms by nature through my choice of Abstract Expressionism.

Wikipedia defines the deconstruction of a building as "the selective dismantlement of building components, specifically for re-use, recycling, and waste management." I believe decomposition deals with the break down of a life form's structure, while deconstruction is a breakdown of a structure by life forms. Abstract Expressionism's deconstruction of traditional painted imagery let a new beauty emerge. I think that working in an Abstract Expressionist way is perfect for presenting the tearing down of manmade forms. I am continuing the change that this movement set in motion over half a century ago with my paintings, prints and videos.

As far as manmade forms go, the appearance of a building that has been decaying is more fascinating than a new one to me. An example of this is the building on top of the gorge near High Falls in Rochester, NY, which needs to be demolished because it was overtaken by nature.

“The building overlooking High Falls near the gorge wall is in the so-called failure zone”
(Sharp).
A quote from Brian Sharp on Democrat And Chronicle.com illustrates this story: “Having concluded they cannot stabilize an eroding gorge wall near the Upper Falls, city officials say they also cannot save a historic site and building perched on the precipice” (Sharp, Democrat and Chronicle.com). This building was the initial inspiration for this Thesis. Just as nature modifies and covers buildings, it is more truthful to nature to obscure an image than to create an obvious picture, so I rework and change the imagery I produce to keep it visually fresh. When I am changing what is obviously an Abstract Expressionist inspired painting, I am faced with constant questions about what is natural, what is manmade, what is original and what needs to be reworked.

Making bold brushstrokes while painting, like Jackson Pollock (1912 – 1956), allows me to express the color of the natural world. After that, using the palette knife and large brushstrokes, I can remove and cover up a previous layer of paint. Reworking a piece, as nature would rework a manmade building’s outside, leaves the original with more beauty than what it had before.

Reworking imagery also occurs while I am making prints. The various techniques offered by printmaking make it possible for me to heighten visual abstraction to give me more creative options. By printing a plate at each stage of development, the viewer can see the transformation that images go through. This unique method of working yields a one-of-a-kind series of contemporary prints.

While creating paintings and prints, I document the progressions. This video documentation transmits the development, transformation and deconstruction of an image. Displayed properly, it articulates how the acts of painting and printmaking let a new beauty emerge, just as the death and deconstruction in nature itself makes way for new growth and beauty. Similar to how Andy Goldsworthy (1956 -) communicates the ways nature visually changes, my videos express the change I have witnessed in my research.

In nature, the deconstruction of preexisting forms allows for new growth. New growth associated with what used to be, the old and experienced, contains beauty. By removing the recognizable manmade forms from my pieces I let new forms and new beauty emerge.
Section I: Context:

Chapter 1: Early Influences

People are part of nature. By appreciating the beauty of the natural world, people gain knowledge of themselves. Creations by people are influenced and affected by nature, which is a constant, flowing energy.

My initial inspiration to appreciate nature came from landscape painters. European artists such as Claude Monet (1840 – 1926) and Paul Cézanne (1839 - 1906) created Impressionist paintings of the landscape. I found that their paintings expressed a universal truth in nature. To me, this truth is that beauty in the world should be celebrated and respected by people, so we can connect not only to our world, but also to each other. Impressionism was their tool for capturing their immediate reactions to their surroundings. Monet used brushstrokes of pure color, which were all visible at a close distance. As the viewer moved further away, these individual brushstrokes blended into a unified surface. Many Abstract Expressionist painters thought Monet’s paintings of water lilies were a precursor to their own artwork.

Cézanne was aware of, and sought to give permanence to, Monet's Impressionism. In the book *Paul Cézanne* by Ulrike Becks-Malorny, the author quotes Cézanne:

Impressionism, what does it mean? It is the optical mixing of colours, do you understand? The colours are broken down on the canvas and reassembled by the eye. We had to go through that. Monet’s *Falaises* will always be a wonderful series of pictures, and so will a hundred other works by him … He has painted the gleaming iris of the earth. He has painted water… But now we need to give a firmness, a framework, to the evanescence of all things, and to these pictures by Monet (Becks-Malorny 72)

Throughout his life he painted and as his life progressed, he grew closer to the nature he admired. As he aged, his interest became clearer. The painter's favorite subject, Mont Sainte-Victoire, became the focus of several of his canvases. Similar to the mountain itself, his paintings are an established structure. This series of mountain paintings was built upon the strong foundation of Cézanne’s life and experience. Although they are of the same subject, no two paintings in this series are exactly the same.

If one were to take a picture of the mountain every day, weather and changes in seasons
would show change all around the structure. This mountain, although part of nature, would remain unchanged; acting as a constant with life flowing all around it. The mountain may be thought of as a camera, using paint to describe Cézanne; the life form who was fascinated with it.

Mont Sainte-Victoire itself is incapable of change, due to the relatively slow speed at which mountains transform. Through his series, we can see that Cézanne and all people are capable of change because people are living parts of nature. Cézanne inspired me with his ability to express the landscape uniquely, showing a universal truth in nature.

As a part of nature, I became fascinated with the trees, ponds and parks that existed around me. With paint as my descriptive tool, I captured what I saw on canvases using brushstrokes. As I observed the natural world around me, I looked for scenes that showed a flow of life in nature. During the winter, the flow of life became obstructed visually by the climate. Piles of snow covered the ground and trees lost their leaves, which eliminated the need to express a lot of green.

In late 2010, I started my winter landscapes. By exploring the landscape, I could photograph scenery that showed growth and life in nature. This was more difficult during the winter than in other seasons because of how limited the vegetation in the landscape is when it is
cold. Part of my goal became how to show life was still strong even when the living conditions became more difficult.

After photographing a location, I would bring the image inside. There, I would start the painting based on the photographic reference. I had to choose a palette that represented the climate of winter. There were not many warm colors in the scene I was describing, so by starting the whole painting with shades of brown, I could use them as a first coat that would contrast the subtle winter color that would eventually be needed on the canvas.

A painting that is based on a local river in my hometown is a perfect example of this process. It started with a photograph of trees growing by the river in the winter. I felt that the image of the large vertical trees with the long horizontally flowing river showed how life grows naturally using the resources supplied by the world, even in a climate that is cold and harsh.

I believe the process reflects the winter. The warm colors used for the underpainting represent the warmth of life. This warmth would eventually be covered by a second coat of paint. The rich dark areas were filled with brushstrokes used to show clusters of trees and flowing water. The energy used to make them is reflected in the visual result.

Following the brown underpainting, a cool palette was necessary to convey the current state of the winter. Light white blues were mixed for the bright snow, while shadow areas were painted with a light violet to create an atmosphere. The background trees were painted in with
blue brushstrokes. This color was used for the background to separate it from the foreground. For the area closest to the viewer, I mixed more brown colors to paint over the very orange brown that was first used for the trees in the underpainting.

The new brown variations I mixed for the second coat on the trees ranged from dark reds to grays. After the trees were covered with the new coat, I used the palette knife to scratch into the fresh paint, which revealed the original warm brown underpainting. This rough texture for the trees gave them more life and contrasted the smooth light blue areas of snow. This is an early example of how additive and reductive use of paint relates to the theme of deconstruction in nature.

*River 2, 18" x 24" Oil on Canvas*

**Chapter 2: My Inspiration**

Around this time, my research led me to seek out the landscape painters who were part of The Group of Seven. My quest to paint the winter landscape showed me how Canadian painters saw the winter landscape nearly 100 years ago. I learned that The Group of Seven was a group of 20th century Canadian artists who believed Canada should develop a unique approach to art. Their vision was to define Canada as different from anywhere else and their paintings helped Canada discover its identity.

Tom Thomson (1877 - 1917) was a Canadian painter who was not part of The Group, but
he drew inspiration from and painted with the group. The European style of painting was inappropriate for the Canadian landscape and like The Group, Thomson and his paintings were totally Canadian.

His work became the visual national anthem. His pieces, according to David P. Silcox in *The Group of Seven and Tom Thomson*: "are the visual equivalent of a national anthem, for they have come to represent the spirit of the whole country" (Silcox 50). Thomson's *The Jack Pine* (1916 - 1917) is iconoclastic and Thomson saw the Canadian landscape in a completely new way. This painting had an absolute meaning; without it, The Group and Thomson's vision would not have been represented.

The rugged terrain and cold winters of Canada made existence for living things harsh and being able to survive in that environment was a major accomplishment. Thomson painted the resilience of life and its power to stand up to any conditions by depicting a lone tree against the elements. Standing alone in this painting is The Jack Pine.

![The Jack Pine](File:Jackpine.jpeg)


The Jack Pine is in the foreground. Thomson combined this strong image of an isolated
tree with a painterly background. By showing the large brushstrokes of the sky behind the tree, he surrounded the life form visually. This related to how The Jack Pine had to stand up to the elements moving around in the real world.

Some of the background of this painting is vibrant. Seeing the tree in this environment makes it appear to be a black silhouette with some green used for the pine needles. The Jack Pine itself is a dark vertical shape jutting out of the ground. When looking at it closely, I can see some red and orange branches. These warm colors are little hints of life in this skeletal form.

The little warmth in this tree pushes it even further away from the cold background, especially in the part of the piece that is high behind the treetop. I can see the sky is made up of bright green and grayish blue horizontal brushstrokes; these lines contrast The Jack Pine's vertical movement.

Content relates to form in this piece. The idea The Group and Thomson sought was painted by Thomson in *The Jack Pine*. The uniqueness of the Canadian terrain removed it from any other landscape, just as the life in Thomson's piece was separated from the cold climate. Jack Pine grew despite the conditions it lived in. Thomson's painting used apparent, thick paint in a way that defined his painting style and the world he lived in.

I've seen the power of life in *The Jack Pine*, but what about the strength of the elements? Another painting titled *The West Wind* (1916 - 1917) demonstrates the artist's ability to show nature's ferocious force. Thomson showed another pine tree in this piece, but its form is not as rigid as *The Jack Pine* and it appears to be swaying in the wind.

The relationship between the foreground tree and the background in *The West Wind* is more exciting than *The Jack Pine*. This tree's trunk is not stiff and straight like *The Jack Pine*; it sways and the majority of its branches are blown to the left side of the composition.
Behind the tree, Thomson shows waves of water and clouds, which are moving due to the power of the wind. As the clouds get closer to the foreground, their white color contrasts the background sky more than the clouds in the distance. Clouds that are built out of yellow, orange and purple color combinations can be seen further away from the tree. They are constantly changing color and that inconsistency makes everything appear as if it's being swept by a powerful gust.

Thomson's surfaces were not just landscapes. The innovation in Thomson's pieces came to be because of his goal to prove that the Canadian landscape was different than any other. His paintings had a loaded message made possible by the medium. The Algonquin Park gave The Group of Seven and Tom Thomson a few of their greatest landscapes. Algonquin Park became one of Thomson's favorite places to paint between 1913 and 1917. The threshold of the North moved to the Algonquin Park tracts and so did the artists. Thomson’s love for Canada was shown in his paintings and his images signify the atmosphere and colors of Canada. Thomson died in July 1917, before The Group had a name. After his death he continued to inspire the
members of The Group of Seven. Thomson's paintings are unique and always will be.

With my new influences, I continued to paint winter landscapes. I related my findings to the winter landscape I was living in. My next paintings were based on Mendon Ponds Park in Mendon, NY; a place close to where I live that offered me several scenes to photograph.

Starting with a reference captured on location, I implemented the techniques that were used for making River 2 to paint Mendon Ponds Park. My painting titled Winter Trees (2011) depicts several trees in the foreground with a pond in the far background. I decided to create another version of this scene at a larger size.

In the second version of the landscape, I drew inspiration from Thomson's The Jack Pine. After I used brown paint to sketch my scene on the surface, I covered the sky with long, horizontal brushstrokes, which related to those I witnessed in Thomson's The Jack Pine. These large, arms length brushstrokes gave the canvas a fresh, natural moving feeling.

Mendon Ponds 1 Underpainting 1, 36” x 40”, Oil on Canvas
Based on my research, I used the palette knife to scratch the trees in the landscape to achieve contrast and atmosphere. Similar to Thomson’s *The Jack Pine*, the background of this painting consisted of a cold palette. Yellow, green, grayish blue and violet brushstrokes were used directly on top of the orange brown horizontal brushstrokes. I left a small amount of orange in between the new sky colors to hint at the warmth beneath the cold climate. Starting with yellow, I painted green and blue brushstrokes until I reached violet brushstrokes at the top to signify the atmosphere getting colder as it moved further away from the earth.

I used a thin layer of translucent paint to glaze over the trees. Covering them with a semitransparent grayish brown mixture let some of the texture from the palette knife scratches show through. This maintained the contrast between the flow of the sky and the growing life of nature.
I continued to create paintings of local landscapes during the spring of 2011. *Oak Tree Pastel* (2011) and *Oak Tree* (2011) bring the expressiveness of nature into the limbs of the historic oak tree at the end of Plains Road in Mendon. Its long branches span far in every direction and contrast a bright sky in the background. The light and bright colors in these pieces show the eminence of spring.

*Mendon Woods* (2011) is also from this time and the palette pays tribute to *Lavender Mist* (1950) by Jackson Pollock. *Lavender Mist* has an atmosphere that describes the woods in early spring very well. The American landscape paintings by Neil Welliver (1929 -2005) also inspired *Mendon Woods*. Showing trees growing and lying on the floor of the forest similar to Welliver's landscapes creates a unique atmosphere and leads the viewer into the woods.
Section II: Evolution:

Chapter 3: Printmaking Process

As I continued to progress, printmaking became a dominant area of my expertise. Taking Non-Toxic Printmaking classes with Professor Keith Howard gave me the knowledge required to express myself within this medium. 4-Color Intaglio-Type appealed to me in particular because it let me create an intaglio print based on a digital photograph.

This technique is described in Professor Howard's book titled The Contemporary Printmaker: Intaglio-Type & Acrylic Resist Etching. Using Photoshop, a full color digital photograph can be broken up into four separate channels based on Yellow, Magenta, Cyan and Black content. When these channels are combined, they mix to recreate the original full color image. These four separate channels are then printed out with black ink, using a large format inkjet printer, onto large sheets of transparency film. Once all of the transparencies are printed, they are exposed, in a UV exposure unit, to four separate ImagOn photopolymer film coated plates.

When the UV light from the exposure unit is projected to the plate, it hardens areas of the surface that contain no inkjet dot structure in the transparency, linking the polymers of the film and giving them strength. The unhardened areas are washed off the plate during a nine minute developing cycle in a 10% soda ash solution. This creates the plate by dissolving all areas of the
plate that were protected by the dot structure seen in the inkjet transparency.

After the plate comes out of the developer it is rinsed off with water and neutralized with vinegar to stop it from developing. Parts of the plate that were developed away reveal the image from the transparency. These areas have a distinct dot structure that retains ink after it has been applied to the plate. Areas that were hardened by the UV light from the exposure unit will wipe clean, retaining no ink. Each plate is hand inked with the color that relates to the transparency used to make it and then printed in the CMYK sequence to reveal a full color Intaglio-Type print.

With this knowledge, I used a digital photograph of the Mendon Woods painting as the subject for a series of prints. Photoshop let me manipulate the imagery of Mendon Woods before I separated it into four different colors. I copied the digital photograph, flipped it upside down and placed that underneath the original, creating a new image that appeared to be the woods on top of a reflection of the woods at the bottom.

My next step on the computer was to separate the new, digitally abstracted landscape into the CMYK colors necessary to make the plates. I sized these images on the computer so they would be about eighteen inches high and twenty-two inches long. With the help of a large inkjet printer, the CMYK transparencies were printed with black inkjet ink. After laminating three eighteen by twenty-two plates with ImagOn, I exposed them to the Yellow, Magenta and Cyan inkjet transparencies.

Instead of exposing the Black transparency to the fourth plate, as I normally would, I placed it under a plastic plate, that had no ImagOn film on it, to use it as a guide to make a drypoint scratched image of my landscape. The drypoint plate would provide the final image with black lines that were not present in the original painting. After inking the plates, I printed them on the same piece of paper in registration.

The Yellow plate was printed first, followed by the Magenta plate. It is normal to dilute the cyan ink with a 50% transparent base to reduce its intensity in the final print. When it was time to print the Cyan plate, I did not add any transparent base medium to it. Because of this, Woods Print 1 (2012) took on an overall dark cyan hue. With this image darker than it was supposed to be, I took action to prevent the print from becoming darker by inking the fourth drypoint plate with white ink instead of black, giving Woods Print 1 light cyan outlines around all the trees. This unexpected turn of events resulted in a print that I had not intended. It was a surprise and a helpful learning experience.
My next attempt to print these plates gave me a result closer to the palette of *Mendon Woods*. I made the new cyan less dark by mixing it with transparent base medium so much more of the red warmth from the painting would show. Then, I inked the Black drypoint plate with black ink, which gave the print black, dark, crosshatched areas.
The third time I printed these plates, I substituted the black drypoint plate for a Black plate created with the Black transparency. The result gave me *Woods Print 3* (2012), which contained more solid black areas than the previous two prints in the series. This series showed me how there are multiple ways of abstracting an image through printmaking technology.
Abstracting prints can occur before and after the plates are made. On the computer, Photoshop is useful for turning a traditional picture into something new. The possibilities of abstracting a picture in Photoshop are infinite and the potential for making unique transparencies is high. Different combinations of ink while printing continue to further the abstraction of an idea by creating totally unexpected areas of color.

The growth from Mendon Woods to the Woods Prints is an early example of the shift to abstract imagery in my work. While painting, I favored Impressionism and new ways of expression over realism. I find the evidence of the hand working the material more fascinating than a smooth, seamless surface.

Something that I kept in my mind as I painted was to show the energy and freshness of the start of the piece in the finished result. An example of this are the hints of the under paintings in my winter landscapes. Documenting my pieces as they transformed let me see where the original marks on the surface were and how they were obscured in the finished result.

Through my studies, I saw that the steps I took while creating were as important as the finished results. The display of my documentation could show viewers what I did and connect them to the actions I took in the studio, creating a stronger bond between myself and my audience. Giving viewers this knowledge brings them closer to the nature that has inspired me to create, and presents them with freshness and warmth in order to rejuvenate their senses. Being able to share the knowledge of making is especially important for me, because I want to earn a living by being an art teacher.

Chapter 4: Deconstruction in Video

With this in mind, I created several video projects that showed the deconstruction of landscape imagery. I started by working on an animation based on a drawing. During the making of the drawing, I took a photograph every five minutes, in between drawing sessions, to document my progress. After I finished drawing, I used the photos and played them backwards to show the finished piece turn into a blank page.

I decided that my sketch, the processes and the documentation would be reproduced in paint on a larger scale for another animation. This new project would emulate the sketch by showing a painting of a tree disappear until even the stretcher bars were dismantled. Instead of
taking pictures every five minutes and playing them backwards, I painted every layer of this piece on clear plastic.

I first decided to cover up my painting with layers of plastic because of Willem de Kooning (1904 – 1997), who covered up his wet paintings with newspaper in order to keep them moist. By keeping his piece wet, he could continue altering instead of painting over a dry surface. This was useful information for me because I thought if I kept each layer of my painting wet, it would allow me to remove each layer and scrape away the painting in front of a recording camera for my new deconstruction video.

By painting on clear sheets of plastic and layering those, instead of opaque newspaper, I kept the previous layers visible. I thought I kept the paint wet, until the layers stuck together while I was deconstructing the original layers. These layers reminded me of the work of Lynda Benglis (1941 -) because she used paint on the floor instead of a canvas and her method of working was original. She was searching for a way to be different and definitely found a way to do it with her approach to painting. She separated herself and her pieces from accepted conventions.

In a *Frieze Magazine* article titled *Time & Tide*, Benglis is interviewed by Marina Cashdan. Cashdan mentioned how the artist turned heads with her latex pours and wax ‘paintings’ and asked Benglis: “What attracted you to these materials?” (Cashdan, Rehberg). The artist stated that: “They’ve all been used as a surface for human skin. Latex and rubber masks, wax effigies and wax in ritual. I was also interested in the fact that most of these materials derive from nature.” (Cashdan, Rehberg).

Cashdan asked Benglis if she was “inventing, or reinventing something?” (Cashdan, Rehberg). Benglis replied: “I was reinventing a process within painting; I was making my own paints with pigmented rubber and then later with pigmented polyurethane. I had this feeling that I wanted to stretch the image, to have the image confront the viewer rather than have it lie on a surface (i.e. canvas) or a board.” (Cashdan, Rehberg).
The physical manipulation of paint uses the colorful, liquid material to break free from traditional painting on canvas. De Kooning and Benglis showed how artists have to take their materials into consideration to create something original. The construction of my piece related to de Kooning’s technique because I had to slow down the natural drying time of my paint. This differs from the normal procedure of using paint: knowing it will dry. When I took the painting apart, the pieces of plastic I painted on became something other than a landscape on a canvas. When that paint comes off the canvas, as in the pieces by Benglis, the focus shifts. The materials lead and allow the artist to do something that she normally wouldn’t.
After completing the video that showed the tree painting disappear I started sketching my next idea. First, I drew a black and white sketch of a field with a shack in. I divided this sketch into three sections to make a larger triptych version of that landscape. I chose the stacked triptych format, showing more field than shack, to convey nature's resilience and interaction with people. I decided to use three canvases in this video instead of only one because it gave the viewer more information than a single canvas.

Each 22” x 32” canvas started with large yellow, orange and dark brown brushstrokes over clear pieces of plastic. After those colors were completely painted on each part of the triptych, I covered each segment with another piece of plastic. On the second piece of plastic I painted the sky blue, using dark brown for the dirt and bright yellow over the rows in the field. Once the entire field was painted, I used two more pieces of plastic to cover the top segment. This was done because there was more visible structure in the top part of this painting, so when it was time to physically deconstruct it in my video, I would appear to spend more time removing additional plastic and paint away from the area containing the shack, trees, sky, grass and field.

Stills from the video *The Deconstruction of a Triptych*
My research at this time led me to David Hockney, an English painter who was born in 1937. Wikipedia’s article on Hockney says: “he is considered one of the most influential British artists of the twentieth century.” His interest in English landscape painters and technology inspired him to work on immersive projects.

Reading the book David Hockney: A Bigger Picture, I learned that “Hockney studied with intense interest the ‘six-footers’ begun by Constable around 1818-19… shown together for the first time in Tate Britain’s Constable exhibition in 2006” (Livingstone et al. 27). Because modern technology offered Hockney abilities that Constable did not have, he set out to paint the biggest plein-air painting ever. Bigger Trees near Water is a 50 panel painting that Hockney completed in 2007.

A huge sycamore that is in 30 of the 50 canvases dominates this piece. After Hockney completed an individual panel, his assistant would take a photograph of it and use it to make a computer mosaic. “Soon after it was exhibited, the artist donated both this 50-part canvas and two actual-size colour-inkjet replicas of it to the Tate, so that it could be displayed [for] future generations in the form of a walk-in installation that immerses the spectator” (Livingstone et al. 29).

Recently, Hockney has made unique videos that use nine cameras. He says: “Why nine cameras? What can they do that one can’t? Well, they can make a bigger picture for a start, a more intense picture for the viewer to scan” (Hockney et al. 270). A series of films done with several cameras was shown on multiple screens at The Royal Academy for the “David Hockney: A Bigger Picture” exhibition.

One of Hockney's films shows a slow drive through nature. It is a video that combines segments taken from different seasons. As the viewer is led down the path, the seasons change and the landscape transitions from being pleasant to snowy. Because it was taken with multiple cameras and shown on multiple screens, it becomes very immersive and enjoyable. I found Hockney's appreciation for nature, unique methods of expression and goal to connect with viewers by giving them more to look at similar to my own interests in art.

Section III: The Thesis Body of Work

I continued to create video projects and in the fall of 2012 I began a project based on my
idea of expressing deconstruction in nature. My piece, which would eventually be titled *Fall Winter Spring* (2013), was based on a building at the top of a gorge near High Falls. I painted on canvas in front of a recording camera to document my progress.

I started painting in an Abstract Expressionist way in the fall of 2012 because my project related to Abstract Expressionism. I was looking at Jackson Pollock, and observed that his way of painting broke down recognizable imagery. His deconstruction of traditional imagery reminded me of a building being reclaimed by nature. In *Jackson Pollock*, Leonhard Emmerling talks about Pollock veiling his imagery, which led him to create the poured drip paintings. I think breaking down recognizable imagery relates to the break down of structures in nature.

After painting horizontal brushstrokes at first, I splattered the paint on the canvas. By obscuring the orderly pattern of the horizontal brushstrokes, I removed the structure and replaced it with expressive paint splatters. I then mixed my paint with Wax Medium, to give it thickness, and started by using a light color.

*Fall Winter Spring Underpainting 1, 34” x 50”, Oil on Canvas*
I ran out of Wax Medium, but I decided to continue painting anyway. This was a mistake because my painting failed! The light brown and black I used was too runny and it ran down and dripped all over the surface, giving the painting a quality I did not want. My solution for that problem was to do what Pollock did. I put the painting on the floor and painted on it, so there was no chance for any running or dripping down.
As I moved more into abstraction I became fascinated with Piet Mondrian (1872 - 1944). Mondrian is an example of an artist who transitioned from representational to abstract imagery in his tree series, which I saw on http://www.wetcanvas.com/forums/showthread.php?p=13886071. His first piece in this series was of an obvious tree. Over time, from 1908 to 1930, his paintings became abstract, which I believe shows an evolution in expression.

Piet Mondrian, *Gray Tree*, 1911-1912, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Hague, The, South Holland, Netherlands, ARTstor : AMCADIG_10310847664
Chapter 5: Deconstruction in Paintings

Another painting from the fall of 2012 is *Fall Deconstruction* (2012). This piece was based on the same idea as *Fall Winter Spring*, but it was carried out in a different way. Rather than using large brushstrokes to paint the colors of nature, I flicked the bristles from a paint-covered brush to create splatters and dots of color on the surface.
Fall Deconstruction was created on a black surface, and the color of the splatters contrasted with the dark background. By using a unique approach I created a surface that evoked pointillism. On this surface, the solid colors from the fall version of Fall Winter Spring were broken down, deconstructing the shapes.

Fall Deconstruction Underpainting, 32” x 52”, Oil on Canvas

Fall Deconstruction, 32” x 52”, Oil on Canvas
In the winter of 2012 - 2013, I continued creating paintings that revisited and changed my ideas from the fall of 2012. These pictures show the transformations that Fall Winter Spring went through. Fall Winter Spring Underpainting 4 is what it looked like at the end of the fall. The building's deterioration was the initial inspiration for this painting, but it was ultimately influenced by the changes I witnessed directly in nature. The warm palette was used to represent
the changing color of leaves.

Since this painting was influenced by my reactions to the seasons, I had to think of a different way to continue it in the winter. The colder climate required me to transition to a different type of imagery. An artist who inspired me to use different imagery for the next season was Mondrian.

His shift towards cubist abstraction represented a focus on thought and structure over the natural world. I related his shift to the change people go through during the seasons. People spend more time with structure and thought in the winter than in the fall because the harsh winters make people do more inside. Their interaction with the natural world is limited.

I also read about Mondrian in the book *The Painter's Mind* by Romare Bearden and Carl Holty, which explained Mondrian's feelings about nature. A quote from this book says: "In his youth, Mondrian was something of a nature worshipper but he was later horrified by the idea of its seductiveness, and came to fear its power as a detriment to man" (Bearden, Holty 178). The book continued to say how Mondrian’s: "principal was similar to that of the mystic Meister Eckhart, who wrote, ‘Above all, let thought be free, for it alone stands above nature’" (Bearden, Holty 178).

I created a sketch before changing my canvas and, in my sketch, I left expressive abstract imagery on the left and transitioned to cubist imagery on the right. Using a triptych format I would show the fall on the left, the winter in the middle, and the spring on the right.

Laying things out this way would create a narrative from left to right about the changing seasons. This visually shows people's shift from the fall, where things are warmer, to the winter, where structures such as buildings become more important. I felt that Mondrian's principal was exactly what I was looking for during the winter.

Instead of painting expressively with splatters as I did in the fall, I began to paint white, green and blue rectangular shapes with white, blue and black outlines. These started small on the right and became larger in the center, although I did leave some parts of the fall painting untouched in the center and right parts of the painting to enhance the narrative. Recording the changes I made on it gave me material to add to the end of my video project from the fall.

Because I intended to use this piece in my spring Thesis exhibit, I needed to show a representation of the spring before the actual season arrived. To do this, I continued the center rectangle outlines into the right side, making more rectangles. Instead of using blue or black, I
used shades of green for these lines because it is a color of the new growth in the spring. I filled these new rectangles on the right with red, which contrasted the less vibrant colors I used for the winter segment. The painting and the video based on it have become a visual record of my feelings about the changing seasons, my own paintings and my research. Both were given the title *Fall Winter Spring*.

I studied the artist Georgia O'Keeffe (1887 – 1986) in the winter of 2012 - 2013. Over time, O'Keeffe transitioned from depicting naturalistic imagery and structured cities to desert landscapes. I think these changes happened because of her travels in life. The book titled *Georgia O'Keeffe* by Britta Benke illustrates this change through her pieces.

The author states: "Georgia O'Keeffe's art was always an immediate response to her environment"(Benke 31). While living in New York City, she created several paintings of skyscrapers, including *Shelton Hotel, New York, No.1* (1926). This painting shows the enormous presence of a man made creation. Even though the natural world is still seen in the light on the windows and the background sky, the skyscraper dominates the piece.

Her piece titled *Pink Dish and Green Leaves* (1928) represents the differences between the natural world and the man made city. The author says: "Two leaves lie forlornly in a dish, the last relics of organic form within an otherwise rigorously geometric architecture. In an urban landscape in which trees and plants have vanished, everyday objects must preserve the memory of nature"(Benke 49). This shows the importance of an organic form in an inorganic world.

Later in her life the artist lived in New Mexico. O'Keeffe's discoveries found in the desert landscape became the subjects for her pieces. O'Keeffe's *D.H. Lawrence Pine Tree* (1929) uniquely shows a tree in this setting.

*D.H. Lawrence Pine Tree* provides contrast to her skyscraper canvases. The pine tree fills the surface similar to how a skyscraper would, but instead of being uniform and structural, its branches fill the surface organically. Another one of her paintings from the desert titled *Summer Days* (1936) shows a deer skull floating above the desert landscape.

O'Keeffe filled her desert canvases with organic subject matter. These surfaces celebrate the natural world differently than her city scenes. Compared with *Pink Dish and Green Leaves*, *Summer Days* shows a more expressive foreground/background relationship. She used antlers to show a freer organic growth, rather than emphasizing large man made structures.

I believe that her paintings show how people's environments influence their lives. The
change in her imagery was made possible by different atmospheres. O'Keeffe's changing surroundings let her create art that showed the various ways nature thrives in the world. I relate to O'Keeffe because with my *Fall Winter Spring* painting and video, I also dealt with how to express different imagery for changing scenery.

An artist who has a stronger relationship with video documentation is Gerhard Richter (1932 -). In his painting video, he uses a knife and large tools to change his canvas. His actions alter the surface of his piece and they are captured in the video. I believe that the element of change is important and it makes the video interesting. The last segments of my video show the middle and right side being changed for the winter and spring, respectively.

![Fall Winter Spring](image)

*Fall Winter Spring, 34” x 50”, Oil on Canvas*

My next painting started as a piece based on the early fall version of *Fall Winter Spring*. Because my changes transformed *Fall Winter Spring*, I decided that a new piece should be made that stayed true to the original idea. It started as a basic remake of the first piece, but as I continued to paint, I made some changes that were not part of the original.

The biggest change was the use of paint scrapings. My studio was filled with paint fragments that were scraped off *Fall Winter Spring* with a palette knife to change it from fall to winter. This left several paint chip piles and instead of throwing these away, I attached them to the new painting using glue I made from Wax Medium and Walnut Alkyd. I directly connected the paint of the original to the new surface, which gave the fragments new life on the new
canvas. This idea of fresh growth made me think of how life grows, so I created root shapes with the scrapings.

Combining these scrapings and mashing them together into root shapes resulted in gray textured additions to the new work. My next step was to paint the entire surface over again using yellow paint. This left the texture of the scrapings without the gray color. Having a fresh, light yellow coat let me work my way to darker colors. Because this painting was based on an idea from the fall, other warm colors such as orange and red were splattered over the surface.
As they were, the roots were small and they did not have a large impact on the overall surface. That is why I decided to use a large brush to turn them into a big tree on the left side. Being next to the splatters on the right, the tree transformed into abstract imagery, relating to how the representational to abstract change affected my paintings. Due to the drastic changes that happened to this surface, the title for it became: *Tree Losing Leaves* (2013).
My last painting from the winter of 2012 - 2013 started with long, horizontal yellow brushstrokes over the whole surface. This first step was followed by a coat of orange, in order to create a warm underpainting. After that, these warm brushstrokes were mostly covered with colors I used for a landscape's sky. This captured a colorful flow of paint that represented the flow of life in nature.

My research led me to Jasper Johns. In the book titled *Jasper Johns* by Barbara Hess, I saw a picture of one of his paintings that had canvas stretcher bars attached to the surface. The artist did this to deal with the normally unresolved part of the painting: the back. I attached stretcher bars to the surface of my canvas after seeing this because I thought that the structure of the painting, the stretcher bars, could fit in with my theme of deconstruction in nature.

I continued to paint all of the brushstrokes that I had covered the canvas with on and over the stretcher bars. Doing this obscured the structure of the stretcher bars and allowed me to further veil their recognizable rectangular shape. As I was covering the wooden bars with the paint layers from the canvas, I gathered more paint fragments and started filling the inner area with them by using the glue mixture to attach them directly on top of the brushstrokes. Doing this let me enhance the message of the piece; it gave the work contrast between the outside and the inside.
This piece took on the name of my Thesis, *Deconstruction In Nature* (2013). I believe it is deserving of this title because it embodies that phrase literally. The deconstructed paint pieces inside the natural, painted wood symbolically show the painting as an object.
Chapter 6: Deconstruction in Prints

I also included prints in my Thesis show. This series of prints relates to the processes I used. Taking photographs at each stage of development proved to be a useful resource for my documentation as well as my development. *Scraped Ink 1* (2013) and *Scraped Ink 2* (2013) are based on a photograph that I took of an inked plate. The photo was taken after I scraped the ink onto the plate by hand. While removing the excess ink to prepare it for printing, I photographed it to capture its unique image.

*Scraped Ink 1* and *Scraped Ink 2* are very similar, but their differences signify the importance of color. *Scraped Ink 1*, with its bold colors, is more about the presence of life. The vibrancy of the ink brings attention to the form.
This shape shows peaks and canyons of ink, which were applied and removed with a card. The areas of less ink show more of the plate. Within these areas, detailed imagery that was developed into the photographed plate can be seen retaining ink.

Areas of excess ink show remnants of the fluid still conforming to the direction of the gestures used to apply it. These gestures are enhanced by the glowing warm colors of *Scraped Ink 1*. *Scraped Ink 2* takes the idea of using less ink to the next level.

The reprinting of the leftover ink created an image that manipulated the structure of *Scraped Ink 1*. This relates to life cycles in nature. The fresh, vibrant color of *Scraped Ink 1* shows the youth and energy of the image; colorful and new. The lack of this freshness in *Scraped Ink 2* reflects the age, the experience and the changes that took place during its making.
*Scraped Ink 2, 24" x 36", 4-Color Intaglio-Type Print*

*Scraped Ink 2* is the version of *Scraped Ink* that people seem to relate to the best. It is not a fresh, new image, but one that was built on the experience of the original. It connects to the past with hints of color while becoming a new structure. It has none of the glowing color that is found in the original print. Instead, it is more organic, speaking to the connection and experience life forms share over time. Since *Scraped Ink 1* is more about the presence of life, *Scraped Ink 2* becomes a rendition of the absence of life due to the fact that nature has run its course with the idea, leaving only remains of what used to be. The original idea can be thought of as a structure. By exploring what was left from the first attempt at *Scraped Ink*, a new beauty emerged.

My next prints continued to show scraped material. The next material was the large amounts of paint chips and fragments that had accumulated in my studio. After gathering these colorful particles into a large pile, I took several close up photographs of them, before attaching them to other paintings. These photographs were as colorful as the paint itself. They represented the remains from the act of deconstructing my paintings and carried with them the significance
of the aged and the weathered.

Later, I created the printmaking plates necessary to make prints of the paint scraping photos. The first print in this series, *Scraped Paint 1* (2013), is a large 4-Color Intaglio-Type version of one of my photographs. I did not manipulate the colors of the scrapings on the computer in order to let the original color of the paint come through in the result.

*Scraped Paint 1*, 24" x 36", 4 Color Intaglio-Type Print

After printing *Scraped Paint 1*, I printed the residue left on the plates on a different paper. I did not know it then, but the print made from the residue would become *Scraped Paint 3* (2013). After printing the ink residue, I washed the plates clean with soap and water.
With these clean plates, I started a new print on a fresh piece of paper. *Scraped Paint 2* (2013) began by printing the yellow plate from the previous print with yellow ink. Next, I mixed up the order of the inks being printed to achieve a different result. When I printed the Magenta plate, I used a bright blue ink that contained transparent base medium and white ink. When I printed the Cyan plate, I used magenta ink. Finally, I printed the Black plate with black ink to complete *Scraped Paint 2*.

*Scraped Paint 2*, 24” x 36”, 4 Color Intaglio-Type Print

This print appears to be much more red than the precursor to it. It continues to abstract the idea from *Scraped Paint 1* with new colors. Repeating what I did with the unclean plates from *Scraped Paint 1*, I printed all the residue from the *Scraped Paint 2* plates onto the paper that became *Scraped Paint 3*. The result was a new image created from the remains of the first two prints. This relates to the idea of using paint scrapings again after they are taken off the painting. It speaks to how structures are altered and aged by nature, similar to the *Scraped Ink* prints.
*Scraped Paint 3, 24" x 36", 4 Color Intaglio-Type Print*

*Paint Fragments 2* (2013) is the 6th and final print in my Thesis body of work. It earned the name *Paint Fragments 2* because it was actually made using the ink residue from *Paint Fragments 1* (2013), a print that does not appear in my Thesis. Different from the earlier *Scraped Paint* prints, this originated from a different photograph that underwent slight color adjustments in Photoshop before being crafted into new plates. Because of the adjustments, *Paint Fragments 1* had very saturated color. The softer *Paint Fragments 2* does not contain contrasting colors that loudly smash against each other, but soft blended shades that cascade over the scraped paint forms quietly.
Combined with the prints of *Scraped Ink*, the *Scraped Paint* prints relate to the layers and the new life found in nature. As layers of material were added to and removed from my pieces, the actions were reflected in the visual results. Covering or removing a layer of paint or ink connects the viewer to a structure. This happens to manmade forms in nature, by removing the structure from the natural world, nature lets a new life form take the place from what used to be there.

**Conclusion:**

My installation of my Thesis show connected my ideas through the arrangement of my pieces. The part of my exhibit that was set up first was the area dedicated to prints that were hung inside a space set up with moveable walls in close proximity. When the viewers entered that area, they were surrounded by prints.
The *Scraped Ink* prints were hanging next to each other, opposite the prints based on paint scrapings. When one walked into the print space, they saw, from left to right, *Scraped Ink 1*, *Scraped Ink 2*, *Scraped Paint 1*, *Scraped Paint 2*, *Scraped Paint 3* and *Paint Fragments 2*. Beginning with *Scraped Ink 1*, the viewer saw the progression I made with my series of prints.

The *Scraped Ink* and *Scraped Paint* prints relate to the process of making. The *Scraped Paint* prints are close-up looks at scrapings, and that material may not be noticed at first glance. Looking closely, I noticed that what happens in the studio is not very different than what happens in nature. Documentation went from examining the painting at different points of completion to looking at the world immediately outside of the painting.

This focus on material connects with my paintings. As the viewer stepped outside the print area, they saw the actual paint scrapings that the prints were based on. What happens when I create inherently pays tribute to the natural world. Paint falling off the canvas may be associated with leaves falling off the trees as the seasons change. *Tree Losing Leaves* is an illustration of my transition from representational imagery to abstract art. Other than that, there are very few recognizable forms in the work.

*Fall Deconstruction* was on the wall outside the print area. This painting was based on the same idea as *Fall Winter Spring* and the two surfaces showed different pictures of a structure. I believe that painting multiple canvases based on the same subject or idea relates to Cézanne's series of mountain paintings. The manipulation and the refinement of an idea is a force of nature practiced by artists. Sometimes, continuing to examine an idea after it has been expressed manipulates an idea and an artist for the better.

The painting titled *Deconstruction In Nature* is an important piece for me. This surface is representative of my Thesis, similar to how *The Jack Pine* is a representative of life in nature. Instead of a tree standing alone against the elements, as in Thomson's *The Jack Pine*, my paint surface is the subject. I depicted paint, weathered by nature.

The paint particles in the stretcher bar contrast the brushstrokes. The fresh, bright colors of the outside are the opposite of the fragments, which contain a mixture of mashed up color. The long, arms length brushstrokes on the outside that are inspired by nature also contrast the tiny forms of the fragments. This painting was made possible by the scraping done on my other surfaces, such as *Fall Winter Spring*.

*Fall Winter Spring* was hanging next to the video behind the print area, underneath an
overhang. Light bulbs were removed from the ceiling above the video, which provided extra darkness for it. The video was projected in order to give the viewer a larger image.

![Installation view of the exhibition, “Deconstruction In Nature.” 4 March 2013 through 20 March 2013.](image)

Having the video play at a large size was ideal for a few reasons. Giving a viewer a larger image was one of Hockney's goals because it gives the viewer more to connect with, creating an immersive experience. For this exhibit, I pushed the projector as far back as I could to achieve the largest result. The large size was also ideal for a performer who came opening night.

In January of 2013, I contacted performing artist Eran Hanlon with an idea. I was interested in having a dancer perform in front of my video project displayed with a projector. Eran is renowned for his art. He is featured in the winter 2013 issue of *Metropolitan: A Publication of the Arts & Cultural Council for Greater Rochester*. His photograph titled *The Arc Between Two Deaths* graces the cover. Inside, the article *Member Showcase 2012 Jurors’ Awards* celebrates Eran’s photography, which won Best In Show in the *Four Artists* exhibit, held in January of 2013 at The Gallery at the Arts & Cultural Council.

The article provides Eran’s background: “A native of New England, Eran David P. Hanlon is a Rochester-based freelance artist. He holds an MFA in dance from the Ohio State
University where he focused his studies in performance technique, choreography, pedagogy, media/technology and crossing disciplinary lines” (Metropolitan, 15). The article also provides information from Eran, who discusses his investigation of visual concepts within “richly layered environments” (Metropolitan, 15) that frequently involve live performance. The artist states: “I continue to explore the dark and often disturbing recesses of the human experience and exploit my findings. I am truly fascinated in the full scope of human emotion and capturing those ephemeral yet profound moments of full bodily integration and enlightenment.” (Metropolitan, 15).

Eran was interested in my idea of having a performance and he decided to be the choreographer for the project. Our collaboration, titled Transient Being, previewed during the opening reception of my Thesis exhibition on Friday, March 8th, 2013 at 5:30pm in the Bevier Gallery at Rochester Institute of Technology. This dance piece was directed by Eran and performed by Alaina Olivieri. It was a meaningful addition to the projection Fall Winter Spring.

I believe my video project gave the viewer more information than the painting itself. It moved through the seasons, starting as a fall painting, changing to a winter painting and finally becoming a painting about the spring. Using the projector to show it let me display it with the actual painting. Displayed together, they related to how manmade structures are transformed by nature.

Transient Being added living beauty to Fall Winter Spring. Having Alaina's form performing in front of the projector cast some of the video on her and some on the wall behind her. Bringing Alaina into this piece obscured her with the projection.

This painting, the video and the performance show changes in an artistic expression. The painting is a traditional way of describing nature. The video expands the ideas of the painting into new territory. Combining the video with the performance becomes a new way of deconstructing traditional imagery. Her body became a living, moving canvas.

The relationship between Alaina and the projection represented people’s connection with nature. Similar to how the imagery on the canvas is a response to the changes I have witnessed, Alaina's movements transformed and interacted with the actions that occurred in the video. Eran and Alaina provided a new dimension to the products that came from my studio. I am glad to have teamed up with them for that special performance.

Following the reception, on March 20th, 2013, I met with my Thesis committee to discuss my show. Discussions with my committee, throughout my studies, have been one of my
biggest resources, and I always appreciate their time and opinions. Although my committee members, Doctor Tom Lightfoot, Professor Keith Howard and Professor Alan Singer, agreed that my pieces fulfilled the Master of Fine Arts requirement, there were a few weaknesses that we talked about. The biggest drawback was the space; Alan told me: "the space…did not do you any favors" (Alan Singer Thesis Defense). Tom reinforced this point by adding: "the biggest problem with the whole thing: the projection piece was cramped in to a space" (Tom Lightfoot Thesis Defense). This speaks to the fact that a crowd of people at the opening circled the projection, limiting the number of viewers who could see Transient Being.

Inside the crowd, the performance went as planned flawlessly. Alan, who was in the prime viewing location for part of the dance, continued to say: "I was right there when the performance was happening… it was terrific. Having just come back from New York City and seeing many… shows, [I think] it's right in tune with what's going on in the contemporary art scene right now. It's very much happening… I only wish that more people could have seen it because it was exciting" (Alan Thesis Defense). Tom also stated: "I didn't know what to expect and I was so pleased with that performance" (Tom Thesis Defense).

Keith noticed that even with the shade provided by the overhang, the performance was still overly lit. This made viewing the imagery on Alaina's body difficult at times. Keith said: "the way it was… the performance became more about the woman than your art. In a dark room, that would have been absolutely negated (the whole feeling of her dominating the scene, dominating the video)" (Keith Howard Thesis Defense). Tom asked: “In your mind, do you see it in a much darker space?” (Tom Thesis Defense), and I replied yes. I am excited about working with performance art again in the future and I want to see Transient Being appear again at other galleries.

Overall, I feel that my body of work successfully expressed deconstruction in nature. The fact that the majority of my pieces are about nature without representational imagery gives strength to my title. Decomposition in nature is the world's way of passing down the gift of life to new generations. What people witness as the deconstruction of a building may be nature's way of creating a new surface for a fresh landscape. The complete disappearance of manmade forms will never happen, because people are a living part of nature; our life and our structures adapt to the changes that the world presents to us in order to survive.

The deconstruction of traditional imagery in favor of and in search of something new, is a
sign of original life and imagery emerging from the previous century. This process has stimulated new concepts in my art. I will continue to transform the imagery and ideas on my canvases, drawings, prints and videos in the future. Collaborating with artists for a performance is also a new method of expression for me, and I would enjoy exploring it again someday.

Appendix:

Information about Scraped Ink 1 and Scraped Ink 2:

With the digital photograph on the computer, I brought the image into Photoshop. In Photoshop, I copied the original photo and manipulated the color to change the ink from being yellow to orange. I used this new image, which was identical to the original except for the color, and placed it on top of the original photo. This completely covered the first photo, so I digitally erased parts of the second image to reveal the original. Doing this with a soft edge eraser allowed me to blend the yellow ink into orange ink seamlessly on the computer.

I repeated the process of copying the original. The second time, I made the ink red and I put that on top of the orange and yellow image. By erasing parts of the red, the yellow and orange underneath it became revealed. Being able to do this let me change my first photo into a new image containing a variety of colors.

After reworking the image digitally, I made the transparencies and plates required to create a print of this picture. The Yellow plate was printed first, followed by the Magenta plate, the Cyan plate and the Black plate. This resulted in my piece titled Scraped Ink 1.

Before I cleaned the plates, I printed them again without re-inking them. Using the ink residue left on the plates, I printed yellow, red and blue. The result was less vibrant than the first image and, due to the lack of fresh ink, it was pale and faint. Because of this, I chose to re-ink the Black plate before I added it to this second print. This fresh black gave full value range to the image and the result was Scraped Ink 2.

Bibliography:

Print Non-Periodical Publications

50


**Print Periodical Publication**


**Web**


*Art Resource*. Art Resource, Inc. Web. 21 April 2013. <http://www.artres.com/C.aspx?VP3=ViewBox&amp;VBID=2UN365HEFFZZ&amp;VBDL=&amp;SMLS=1#ViewBox_VPage&amp;VBID=2UN365HEFFZZ&amp;IT=ZoomImageTemplate01_VForm&amp;IID=2UNTWA6SIN7E&amp;PN>


<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monet>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Hockney>


<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgia_O%27Keeffe>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerhard_Richter>

<http://artseverydayliving.com/blog/2012/03/arts-everyday-living-okeeffe-2/>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-MXSQdMHGsE>

“In Pictures: David Hockney at the Royal Academy.” BBC News: Entertainment & Arts. BBC. 


Knight, Christopher. "Art review: 'Lynda Benglis' at the Museum of Contemporary Art." Culture 
lynda-benglis-at-the-museum-of-contemporary-art.html>

Lydia. "Robert Rauschenberg, Erased De Kooning Drawing (1953)." the art daily with Lydia. 29 
rauchenberg-erased-de-kooning.html>


< http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lynda_Benglis >


"NOWNESS.com presents: Gerhard Richter Painting." YouTube. 7 October 2011. Web. 10 
February 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF6EluMNR14>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piet_Mondrian>


<http://www.democratandchronicle.com/article/20120828/NEWS01/308280046/Rochester%20High%20Falls%20gorge%20wall>

<http://www.moma.org/visit/index>

<http://www.gallery.ca/en/>

<http://www.moma.org/explore/multimedia/audios/278/3110>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willem_de_Kooning>

**Print Publication also made available on the Web**

<http://www.frieze.com/issue/article/time-tide/>
<http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue8/erasuregenteel.htm>

**E-mail**


Dear Joe,

When you download images via IAP/ARTstor, you enter into a license agreement with the Met. Here is a copy of the Met/IAP license that you agree to during the IAP image download process. This license should take care of any permissions you need for use of a Met IAP image in your thesis.

Many thanks,

Eileen

Eileen Sullivan
Digital Media Department
Scholars License via IAP/ARTstor
The Metropolitan Museum of Art
Email:scholars.license@metmuseum.org
Email: eileen.sullivan@metmuseum.org

**Personal Interview**


**Visual Art**


