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# Selecting In - Selecting Out

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# Selecting In – Selecting Out

**Melanie Moore Bermudez**

MFA Thesis Exhibition

February 21-25, 2011

Final committee meeting – February 22, 2011

Committee members – Rachel Lachowicz, David Amico and Carmine Iannaccone

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## Artist Statement

**Melanie Moore** Bermudez

The scientific process was developed as a means to understanding the world around us. It is a systematic approach to reaching the unknown, and consists of fixed and unknown variables. At the beginning of an inquiry the known variables are identified and utilized within the experiment. But working with what is known and predictable can only go so far. It is with the introduction of the unpredictable that gaps are bridged and a new lens to see is created. It is this methodology that is at the foundation of my art practice.

I see my practice as a simulation, where I can act out my own process of discovery. My materials, color, gestures and imagery are organized into systems and become my known variables. These are then used as the parameters for each investigation, or set of works. My surfaces – plexiglass and wood panel – are controlled environments where each of my experiments takes place. Everything is contained within the surface and represents a single line of inquiry, which is repeated, depending on an arbitrary, pre-determined number. However, that is as far as the control goes. Beyond that, the work is at the mercy of the environmental conditions within my studio.

Large amounts of water are added to a mixture of paint, causing the pigments to be suspended and mobile. This mixture is then poured over the surface. The volume and distance from which it is poured affects the outcome, along with the the velocity and the viscosity of the liquid. This controlled application process ends once the fluids leave the container. On the surface, the water allows for a brief window of gravity-aided movement, carrying the pigment around the space and allowing for interactions with previous layers or additional active pours placed on a trajectory for collision. The movement on the surface quickly comes to a halt and evaporation begins, a process that can take hours or days depending on atmospheric conditions. The results are always varied, and even though the process is repeated, outcomes are never identical. Through observations, modifications are often made over the course of the project to harness a more desired variant.

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The resulting paintings are the documents of these explorations. I am interested in the interaction between the systems and the results, the control and the variation, the known and the unpredictable. The intersection between them speaks to the unknown gaps in our ability to know with certainty. In viewing the final paintings, the answer is never revealed nor a new theory created: only further questions are raised and hopefully, a sense of wonderment comes into play as the frozen movement of the fluids present themselves as a snapshot of evolutionary time.

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