

COOKIES GO STALE. FORTUNES ARE FOREVER.

By

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Cookies go stale. Fortunes are forever.

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Dedicated to my family.

VITA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 “COOKIES GO STALE. FORTUNES ARE FOREVER.,” MFA THESIS EXHIBITION
MOUDY GALLERY, TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, FORT WORTH, TX

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2012 “TRANSMISSION,” FORT WORTH CONTEMPORARY ARTS, FORT WORTH, TX
“BRIDGED,” QUALITY IRONWORKS BUILDING, DALLAS, TX
- 2011 “ART IN THE METROPLEX,” MOUDY GALLERY, TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, FORT WORTH, TX
JUROR: TOBY KAMPS, CURATOR OF MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY ART, MENIL COLLECTION
“3RD ANNUAL SMU/TCU EXHIBITION,” MERCEDES-BENZ FINANCIAL SERVICES, FORT WORTH, TX
“TRANSMISSIONS,” FORT WORTH CONTEMPORARY ARTS, FORT WORTH, TX
“THE HAND THAT FEEDS ME: TCU/MFA/500X,” 500X GALLERY, DALLAS, TX
- 2010 “WEIRD IT UP!,” THE (CON)TEMPORARY ART SPACE, CHICAGO, IL
- 2009 “HYPOTHETICAL PLANETS,” BETTY RYMER GALLERY, SAIC, CHICAGO, IL
“MEET MEAT TRAIN - ART ON TRACK,” CTA ORANGE LINE TRAIN CAR, CHICAGO, IL

COLLABORATIONS

- 2012 “HANDS ON AN ART BODY,” HOMECOMING! COMMITTEE, OLIVER FRANCIS GALLERY, DALLAS, TX
- 2011 “LAUNCH PARTY,” HOMECOMING! COMMITTEE, 2525 WEISENBERGER STREET, FORT WORTH, TX

CURATORIAL EXPERIENCE

- 2011 “THE HAND THAT FEEDS ME: TCU/MFA/500X,” 500X GALLERY, DALLAS, TX
CO-CURATOR: GREGORY RUPPE

GRANTS/FELLOWSHIPS/AWARDS

- 2010 GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP – FULL TUITION, TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, FORT WORTH, TX
- 2009 ENRICHMENT SCHOLARSHIP, THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL
SAIC GRANT, THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, CHICAGO, IL

EDUCATION

- 2012 TEXAS CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY (TCU), FORT WORTH, TX
MASTERS IN FINE ARTS CANDIDATE (SCULPTURE)
- 2010 THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO (SAIC), CHICAGO, IL
PRIOR DEGREE PROGRAM (SCULPTURE)
- 2008 SCHOOL OF VISUAL ARTS (SVA), NEW YORK, NY
CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN (RISD), PROVIDENCE, RI
SUMMER STUDIES
- 2006 GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, WASHINGTON, DC
BACHELOR OF ARTS (ENGLISH)
- 2003 HAMILTON COLLEGE, CLINTON, NY
BACHELOR OF ARTS COURSEWORK

BIBLIOGRAPHY & PUBLICATIONS

- 2012 “TCU GRADUATE STUDENTS MAKE LAST STAND,” FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM, 04/08
“WILLIAM EGGLESTON,” *COLOR PICTURES* EXHIBITION CATALOGUE
“ANN STAUTBERG,” *COLOR PICTURES* EXHIBITION CATALOGUE
CO-AUTHOR: DEVON NOWLIN

Cookies go stale. Fortunes are forever.

Perception is not a science of the world, it is not even an act, a deliberate taking up of a position; it is the background from which all acts stand out, and is presupposed by them. The world is not an object... it is the natural setting of, and field for, all my thoughts and all my explicit perceptions. Truth does not 'inhabit' only 'the inner man', or more accurately, there is no inner man, man is in the world, and only in the world does he know himself.¹

—Maurice Merleau-Ponty

The works in my thesis exhibition *Cookies go stale. Fortunes are forever.*, developed from my interest in physical and psychological location and how it influences a conception of self-identity. My inquiry has shown me that locating oneself is a function of external referentiality. The relationship of the physical and mental body to outside referents, both corporeal and abstract, such as time, is the relational basis for how we view and locate ourselves (and others) in the world. The focus for me is not, as it might be for phenomenologists and psychoanalysts, a question of origination—an understanding of the self, or the perception of that which is outside the self, be it tangible or intangible to various degrees—but rather, the manner in which they perpetuate each other in a state of continuous flux and feedback.

My investigation seeks, in the creation of indexical objects, to produce a cognizance in the viewer of this continuous dialogue through his perception of a momentarily reified intersection between themselves, the work, and divergent elements of space, time, and physical and cultural location, or what Douglas Crimp refers to as the

¹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), xi-xii.

“coordinates of perception.”² The instance of the viewer’s confrontation with the physical object heightens “one’s awareness of oneself existing in the same space ... establishing relationships as he apprehends the object from various positions and under varying conditions of light and spatial context.”³ In this sense, the art object acts as a phenomenological pivot point that dialectally informs a perception of one’s current location and in turn positions the viewer’s understanding of self in relation to the other.

This line of inquiry presented in the exhibition started by utilizing and manipulating mirrors to induce a consciousness of these types of mental constructions. When interrupted by text or symbols, or forced to interact with other materials, these objects and their reflective surfaces are redirected from their association with a utilitarian object found in every home, the mirror, to raise issues of the border between reality and illusion, flatness and volume, and the mental documentation of space and self-perception. As much as this redirection or shift of awareness exposes the malleability of the mirror object, it simultaneously makes viewers self-conscious and cognizant of the dominant role his unique perspective plays in the formation of their distinct identity and self-awareness. This kind of self-consciousness recalls psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s identification of the “mirror stage,” established in infancy between the ages of six and eighteen months:

For the total form of his body, by which the subject anticipates the maturation of his power in a mirage [the mirror reflection], is given to him only as a gestalt, that

² Douglas Crimp, “Redefining Site Specificity,” in *Richard Serra*, ed. Hal Foster (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2000), 149.

³ Robert Morris, “Notes on Sculpture, Part 2,” in *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Gregory Battcock (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 232.

is, in an exteriority in which ... this gestalt ... symbolizes the *I*'s mental permanence, at the same as it prefigures its alienating destination.⁴

In essence, the reflected image of the face or body is the mind's means of representing a mental and physical identity of its as constructed by the other.

To me, the source of this conceptualization of art's function lies not in the visual arts but in literature. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818) and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) were my earliest encounter with it. In both these works, characters (the Creature in *Frankenstein* and Dorian and his painted portrait in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*) have mirror-like attributes, which simultaneously animates them and sets them in opposition to the society they in fact reflect.⁵ The Creature in Shelley's novel, once it is given life by its creator, is initially innocent and in some cases even altruistic, anonymously helping a family living isolated in the woods with their chores and saving a young girl from drowning. Despite these acts, its hideous appearance causes those it aids to react with fear and anger, so that, in time, the Creature seeks vengeance against its creator, whom it views as responsible for its misfortunes and as the personification of a society that has rejected it.

Like *Frankenstein*'s Creature, Dorian Gray is originally naïve and malleable. While he poses for his painted portrait, he is made aware of his beauty through the praises of others, and wishes for his appearance to be preserved as the portrait ages. Once he realizes that his desire has been fulfilled he begins to live a hedonistic and morally

⁴ Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the *I* Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2006), 76.

⁵ I feel comfortable calling the eponymous portrait a character in Wilde's novel due to the central role it takes in the narrative, along with the sentient qualities it develops as the story progresses.

corrupt lifestyle. Over the course of the next eighteen years, Dorian's external appearance remains the same while his painted image slowly becomes more ugly and disfigured, a reflection of his increasing moral and emotional bankruptcy. The eponymous portrait serves as an exterior projection of Dorian's decadent personality, and therefore a representation of his true form, but also as a mirror of the morally and emotionally bankrupt society in which he lives. The society that the Creature and Dorian Gray reflect is one of their immediate and contemporaneous surroundings, and is one in which the reader implicitly participates.

The beginnings of my own artistic discourse with these ideas began with an outdoor installation that never came to completion. The piece, which was shown in process to some of my peers at the time, involved several tall mirrors, positioned upright, and angled in an attempt to mask the reflection of a central mirror that they surrounded. When it was shown in its incomplete form, with some of the mirrors placed as I intended for the final unrealized installation, my (limited) audience remarked on the self-consciousness it elicited in them. It exposed the intimacy of viewing one's own reflection in the company of others. I later learned that this recalled and reinforced a dichotomy Lacan describes as occurring at the end of the mirror stage in childhood development in which the child begins to see his identity in relation to other individuals:

It is this moment [the end of the mirror stage] that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge [*savoir*] into being mediated by the other's desire, constitutes its objects in an abstract equivalence due to competition from other people, and turns the *I* into an apparatus to which every instinctual pressure constitutes a danger, even if it corresponds to a natural maturation process. The very normalization of this maturation is henceforth dependent in man on cultural intervention....⁶

⁶ Lacan, 79.

I wanted to pursue this idea in conjunction with an exploration of spatial perspective that had previously been addressed in my work.

I was interested in the transitory nature of physical spatial perception, especially that of linear perspective, and how it could generate psychological resonance in the viewer by linking it with their memories of similar spaces. Spatial experience is unavoidably temporary because our assimilation of its form changes with every movement. Minimal artist Robert Morris similarly explains the relationship between the viewer and the viewed object:

For it is the viewer who changes the shape constantly by his change in position relative to the work.... The major aesthetic terms are not in but dependent upon this autonomous object and exist as unfixed variables that find their specific definition in the particular space and light and physical viewpoint of the spectator.⁷

This conception of the viewer's reception of space coalesces with the necessarily fleeting nature of the mirror image and the passage of time in *Half of Your Life is Behind You* (2010-11), included in *Cookies go stale. Fortunes are forever*.

Hung on the wall at eye-level, the piece consists of a horizontal door mirror, with the text of the title etched in uppercase letters across the glass surface. The etched text, which is frosted and unreflective compared to the rest of the mirrored plane, is depressed slightly from the face of the glass. Mounted on an aluminum armature that is recessed from the edge of the mirror, it appears to float about an inch from the surface of the wall (Plate 1).

The text, "HALF OF YOUR LIFE IS BEHIND YOU," that interrupts the mirror plane also supports it, reinforcing the mirror's function as reflective of its spatial and

⁷ Morris, 234.

temporal context. The piece operates on two spatial levels: the text alludes to the frontal manner in which it is primarily viewed, while the mirror reflects the space in which it is displayed, reflecting its physical surroundings. As animals with binocular vision, human beings have a field of vision that is primarily frontal: we perceive space as it is laid out in front of us, but that is only a portion of the space we inhabit; we ignore the space behind us. Depending on the relative position of the viewer, the mirror has the ability to reveal the unseen portion of the viewer's spatial context nearly in its entirety; the text alludes to our presuppositions about the visual perception of space. While this occurs in a literal way, the intrinsic heteromorphic properties of the mirror are also implicit. The piece is also subject to the context in which it is shown. Thus, it is essentially site-specific, a specificity that is incorporated in the work along with the location of the viewer. Just as the piece is in a state of perceptual transformation, so is the viewer, whose temporal existence is alluded to by the text.

Physical and psychological transformation in human beings occurs gradually, over time. It is abstract, like the passage of time itself, which can be quantified, but is perceptually elusive. One cannot sense or feel the change from one moment to the next; rather its progression is only apparent upon thoughtful contemplation. And yet, like this experience of reality and oneself, "the experience of the work necessarily exists in time."⁸ The object changes because the viewer changes, not just in his physical location, as already mentioned, but also in his physical and psychological constitution. The text perceptually highlights this by combining with the mirror to confront the viewer with his own physical image, which is subject to the passage of time. In a quantifiable sense,

⁸ Morris, 234.

whether or not half of the viewer's life has passed when he experiences the piece is irrelevant, since, as Robert Smithson observed, his perception of time over the course of his lifetime is variable:

Timelessness is found in the lapsed moments of perception, in the common pause that breaks apart into a sandstorm of pauses ... the mirror itself is not subject to duration, because it is an ongoing abstraction that is always available and timeless. The reflections on the other hand, are fleeting instances that evade measure.⁹

The addition of paint and paint flakes to the surface in a later version of *Half of Your Life is Behind You*, 2011-12, and the version included in the exhibition, was intended to generate the moments Smithson describes (Plates 2 & 3). The red and chrome spray paint partially obscures the mirror and text, demanding a physical and temporal investment from the viewer in order to distinguish the different types of marks on its surface. Perception of the work becomes more varied and is dependent on the viewer's proximity to it in the space; it has to be read up-close for the text to be distinguished from the painted areas, forcing the reflective qualities of the mirror onto the participant. A temporal investment is required to make the phrase legible from its enamel camouflage. The paint flakes that have been scraped from the area of the text are precipitously suspended in place by a sheet of glass clamped to the mirror. The process of scraping the paint is recorded in the compressed piles of tiny chips, which serve as markers of perceptual moments, resonant memories that linger in a mental consciousness they comprise.

A similar approach to reflexive spatial awareness—the viewer's enhanced awareness of his location in space—is evident in *Untitled*, 2012 (Plate 4). Consisting of a

⁹ Robert Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 121-122.

twenty-eight inch high block of concrete, which is bisected by a two-by-two foot plate glass mirror, *Untitled* rests directly on the gallery floor, where it reflects the legs and feet of the viewer (and other visitors) in the mirror. This piece creates a disorienting experience mentally, through the forced integration of its dichotomous materials, and physically, through its occupation of physical space within the gallery.

Historically, the two historically serve opposite functions. Concrete is utilitarian and modest, a structural building material that is rigid in its physical makeup and form. The mirror is superficial, a material with an identity that is solely formed by its context, fragile and brittle. Yet, as these materials coexist, their qualities begin to inform one another, in doing so, their natures are revealed.

Bisecting the concrete block, and forced to fully exist in the three-dimensional space it reflects, the mirror's illusionistic properties are both secure and vulnerable. In its bisection of the concrete form, the mirror reflects the front half of its counterpart. When the viewer approaches the piece from an angle, this reflection appears to be the back half of the concrete form and the mirror appears a pane of transparent glass, thereby reinforcing the mirror's illusionistic properties. Simultaneously, the concrete forces the dissociation of the mirror from the wall, and requires it to contend with three-dimensional space. The mirror is no longer analogous to the window, but to the plane. It now has a back; one that is covered with paint that is as matte as the front is reflective. For the viewer who circles the piece, the side of the mirror constitutes a perceptual edge that questions the mirror's objective veracity.

In the same spirit, the presence of the mirror reinforces and subverts the solidity of the concrete. The concrete block holds the mirror in place with firmness that operates

only in one direction. In their conjoined form, the mirror is subservient to the will of the concrete; were the piece to be move, the concrete would dictate the movements of the mirror, any attempt to make the inverse happen would result in the shattering of the mirror. This also means that when they were separate materials, it was the concrete that was malleable and had to take form around the mirror plane, adapting to its physical presence.

The concrete and the mirror in *Untitled* are examples of Hegelian dialectic in action; thesis and antithesis is found in both materials. The reflexive awareness for the other within *Untitled* serves as metaphor to the reflexive spatial awareness the viewer performs in relationship to the piece itself by which he able to contextualize himself by its presence.

The viewer's perception of his temporal and spatial context is further explored in *Representation Triptych* and *A Clear Case of Representation* (both 2011) (Plates 5 & 6, respectively), by questioning the structure of the vehicle for this perception: the mirror image. While it is clear that the constantly changing reflection in the mirror is a function of the viewer's spatial relationship to it, I was initially suspicious of the objective veracity of the reflected image. This veracity is undermined because the mirror plane is essentially pictorial, a two-dimensional representation of a three-dimensional space. The viewer cannot see himself in the mirror the way others see him in three-dimensional space, therefore the reflected image of himself is a product of his own subjective perception; an *imago*, an idealized mental image of the self, in physical form.¹⁰ This specular form, to again quote Lacan, lies at the threshold of the visible and mental

¹⁰ "imago," Def. 2, *Merriam-Webster.com*, Merriam-Webster (2012).
<<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/imago>>

world.¹¹ Both works address the nature of this boundary by repeating and permeating the mirror plane etched with the word “representation.”

In *Representation Triptych*, this occurs with three nearly identical mirror-faced lightboxes (the only visual variation is with the cord on the right-most box) etched with the word “representation” in block-letters that are transparent enough for light from inside the boxes to pass through and illuminate the text. The cord connects the boxes from left to right, reiterating the eye’s reading movement from left to right. The repetition of the word on three identical but separate mirrors that repeatedly reflect the viewer’s image undermines the truthfulness of what he perceives.

In *A Clear Case of the Representation*, the silver that gives a mirror its reflective quality is removed in certain areas, leaving a plane that is partially reflective and partially transparent. A second mirror is positioned a few inches behind the front of the piece. As exterior light passes through the transparent sections of the front mirror, which include the etched text, it projects these shapes onto the face of the back mirror, which, as a reflective surface reflects them onto the back of the front mirror. This process of removing the silver from sections of the front mirror left the silver, typically covered in a protective paint on the back of the mirror, exposed and therefore reflective as well. Thus an infinite regression of the imagery on the front mirror transpires. Except for structural elements holding the mirrors in place, the piece is open on four sides, disclosing the machination of this cycle of reflections. In doing so, it becomes anti-illusionistic, exposing the illusionistic qualities of the *imago* for what is truly is.

¹¹ Lacan, 77.

The light that illuminates and penetrates the mirrors in both works influence the quality of their surfaces, just as the viewer's mental constructions determine what he sees in his reflection. At the same time, repetition serves not to reinforce, but to fragment the viewer's understanding of his own image, while the text, "representation," refers to the image's intrinsic nature as a mental construct of his psyche. It is only at this point of fragmentation that the self can be understood as composed from apperceptive engagement with others, through which an individual's identity is constructed. This can only occur after a type of submission, a surrender to the idea of an identity composed exclusively of external referents and relationships. Submission in this sense is not meant in a strictly negative sense, but rather in terms of an acceptance, or mental reconciliation, to this concept. This idea is addressed formally in *Representation Triptych* and *A Clear Case of Representation* by using twelve-by-twelve inch mirrors. These small-scale mirrors limit the reflective field and are installed slightly below eye level (for the average viewer); in order to see his own reflection, he must therefore bend slightly, reminiscent of a deferential bow, a sign of respect and this submission. The idea of submission was investigated further with *The Emperor's New Clothes*, 2012 (Plate 7).

The title of the work is taken from the Hans Christian Andersen story in which a vain emperor hires two swindlers to make him a new suit. The swindlers promise the emperor a suit made from the finest fabric, one of such quality that it is invisible to anyone who is unfit for their position in life, or just ignorant. Worried of appearing so, the emperor praises the fabric's quality although he sees nothing. When the swindlers claim the suit is finished, they pretend to dress him, and the emperor leaves to march in a procession before his subjects. They all play along with the ruse for fear of their own

ignorance, or insulting the emperor, until a child exclaims that the emperor is naked; the rest of the crowd joins in. The emperor knows he has been tricked, but continues the procession out of pride; he vows to never again be so vain.

The piece consists of a five-foot by three-foot mirror mounted similarly to *Half of Your Life is Behind You*, to make it appear as if it floats off the wall. A thick layer of chrome spray paint has been applied onto the surface. The paint terminates with a misted edge meeting the left, right and bottom edges of the mirror in which the surface of the mirror is only partially covered. The same effect is present at the top edge of the paint, but it occurs approximately a foot-and-a-half below the top edge of the mirror; directly below that, where the paint is still thick on the surface, the word “Fealty” has been stenciled out of the paint in scripted letters, exposing the reflective surface underneath. This composition allows the viewer, as he faces the work, to see his head, from the neck up, fully reflected in the mirror, while the rest of his body is more faintly reflected in the chrome paint. The text is present just below the level of his neck.

This piece focuses on the mix of these three compositional and material elements to explore the idea of submission as referenced in *Representation Triptych* and *A Clear Case of Representation*. As the viewer stands in front of *The Emperor’s New Clothes*, the piece mutes, but does not completely eliminate the reflection of his body, which appears rendered as a muted reflection. This is the area of his physical body the viewer has first-hand perceptual experience with—he can see it through his own eyes. This creates a sharp contrast to the reflectivity of the exposed mirror, which presents the viewer with the image of his head, the region of his body he knows only through second-hand perceptual experience, in a nearly disembodied manner.

The piece inverts the conventions of the viewer's experience of seeing his own image. It gives primacy to the areas of the viewer's body with which he has only second-hand experience. In doing so it emphasizes the primacy of external perceptual sources, or the other, on the viewer's conception of himself, as described earlier occurs when he is faced with his image in a mirror. "Fealty," describes "a feudal tenant's or vassal's sworn loyalty to a lord."¹² It defines the submissive relationship of the viewer's identity (the vassal) to the other (the lord). What keeps this relationship open however, is that although the viewer resigns to locate himself in terms of the other, when this other is another viewer (a person, and not an object), the viewer becomes a point of external referentiality for his other, and the two identities become reflexive of each other. The recognition of the simultaneous duality of identity prompted my investigation with regard to reflective materiality in *Untitled Diptych*, 2012 (Plates 8 & 9).

Comprising of two black boxes, approximately three-by-three feet each and about a foot in depth, at right angles from each other on the gallery wall, *Untitled Diptych* incorporates symbols and materials of what as a culture we can designate as tropes of nature and of artificiality. By placing the two elements adjacent to each other, I was interested less in how they are oppositional to each other, and more in how they substantiate, or are incorporated into each other. This is clearest in the work through the use of symbols and of light.¹³

¹² "fealty (noun)," *New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2nd ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

¹³ For ease of reference, I will designate them "the left box" and "the right box," the way the viewer would see them were he standing in front of the work at the center point of the work.

In the most straightforward way, the imagery on both of the boxes suggests this duplicity. On the left, etched through the silver of the mirror on the face of the box, is a series of concentric dashed-line circles articulated with vertical and horizontal axes. Together, the form of these circles and lines references the shape of a target, or a radar screen. This image is illuminated by fluorescent light from within the box. These are elements that are artificial, which is not to say they are fake; it is more accurate perhaps to say that they are non-natural, or synthetic in some way. They are a product of human intervention, but could not be produced without the use of exterior tools or logic.

The right box faces the natural light emanating from the windows of the gallery. On its front, slightly recessed from a thick plane of chrome spray paint, is a black spiral that expands clockwise from the lower-center of the square face until it touches the top edge and terminates near the top right corner. These elements can be more closely associated with nature or with a hand-made quality, both in the spiral that is found in the course of natural growth of shells and plants and the gestural application of the chrome paint on the face of the box. I think it is important to note that these associations both on the left and on the right are not exact, nor are they intended to be—they leave room for interpretation on the part of the viewer.

Setup in a corner, each box reflects the imagery of its' other. When the viewer stands in between them, he finds himself literally and metaphorically reflected in both. Rather than locate himself in one, he oscillates between them both. Receiving his identity from the other, he simultaneously acts as his other's other—his sense of location through a reflexive spatial awareness in a state of constant feedback.

Ultimately, the physical reflection found in the mirror acts a gateway for how we understand this reflexivity through the imagery, symbols, and language within culture; a concept I investigated in a general way through *The Fall*, 2011-2012 (Plate 9), and in a more specific way in the piece *Cookies go stale. Fortunes are forever*, 2011 (Plates 11 and 12).

Propped up on its pointed edge on the floor of the gallery, *The Fall* is a six-foot tall arrow painted bright red. Its physical presence and defiance of gravity is one of human proportion, as seen by its reflection in the other works in the gallery. The downward pointing arrow is a symbol that has no referent in nature; it can only emerge from the realm of culture. A symbolic locator of presence on a map in the lobby of a cultural meeting place, the physical object in the gallery not only indicates space, it occupies it in a visceral way. This occupation is an assertion of presence that is not only supported by the steel rods that fit into its point, but defined by a culture from which its identity is formed.

Cookies go stale. Fortunes are forever., is also about cultural support, but one that is more specific and ephemeral. The work involves a scientific-like display case filled with one-hundred-and-seventeen fortunes from Chinese fortune cookies pinned to a fabric background and arranged in a grid. The fortunes are small pieces of white paper with either black, blue, or red text that are grouped together by color to spell out “LIES.” A word choice that might appear didactic, it partially performs a task that enables the viewer to decide whether or not he wants to accept its proposition.

The work’s specificity lies within an American culture that for a long time has enacted its own type of feedback, constantly defining itself by its incorporation of that

which is outside itself. Like when we receive a fortune from a cookie, its ephemerality lies within the cognizance of a desire; a desire that an external reference point—a physical object, or a psychological comprehension of an abstract idea—can effect change in our sense of self.



Plate 1.

Half of Your Life is Behind You, 2010-11

Etched mirror on aluminum support

11.875 x 47.125 x 1.25"

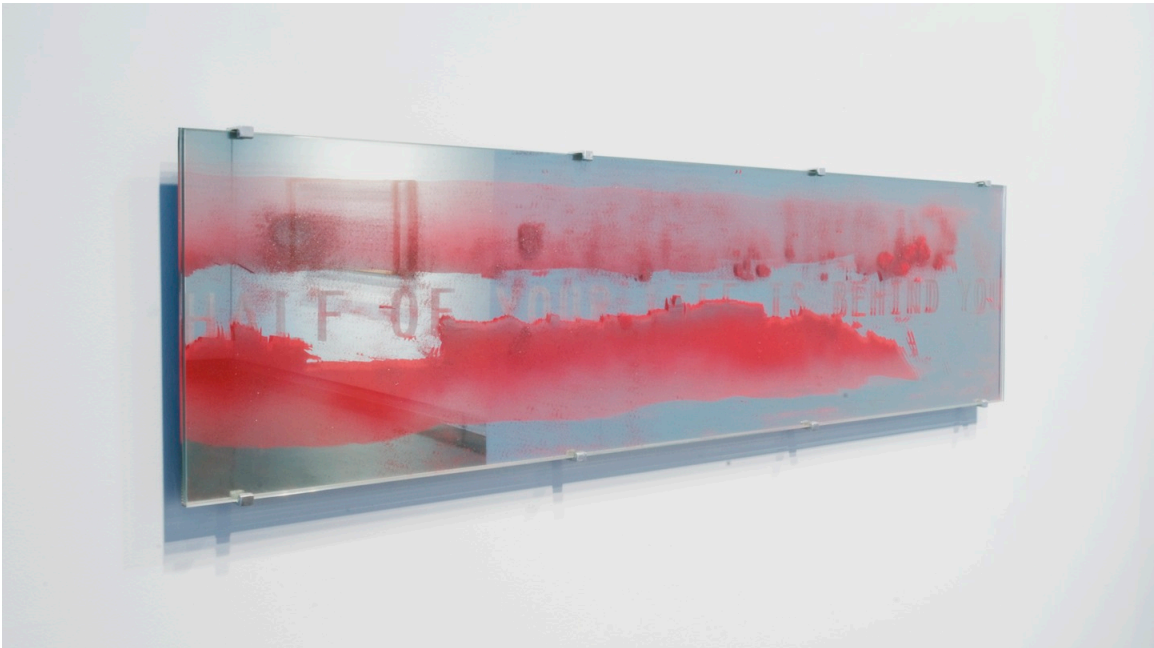


Plate 2.

Half of Your Life is Behind You (installation view), 2011-12

Etched mirror, glass, enamel paint on aluminum supports

11.875 x 47.125 x 1.625"



Plate 3.

Half of Your Life is Behind You (installation view), 2011-12

Etched mirror, glass, enamel paint on aluminum supports

11.875 x 47.125 x 1.625"



Plate 4.
Untitled, 2012
Concrete, mirror
28 x 24 x 14"

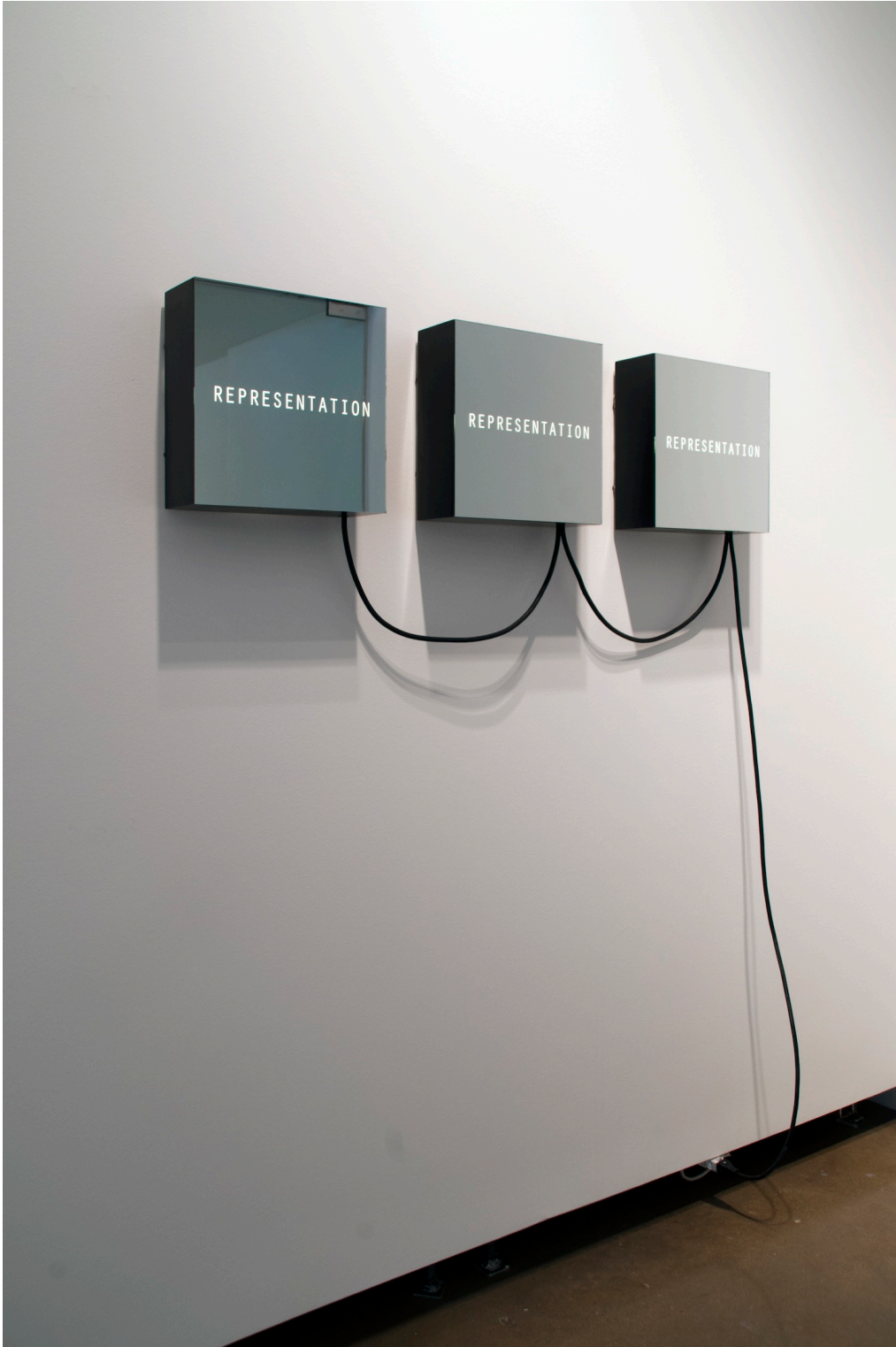


Plate 5.

Representation Triptych, 2011

Etched mirrors, wood, mirrors, latex paint, fluorescent lights, electrical wire

66 x 46 x 4.25"



Plate 6.

A Clear Case of Representation, 2011
Etched mirror, wood, mirror, latex paint
13.25 x 13.25 x 4"



Plate 7.

The Emperor's New Clothes, 2012

Mirror, chrome enamel paint on aluminum support

60 x 36 x 1.25"

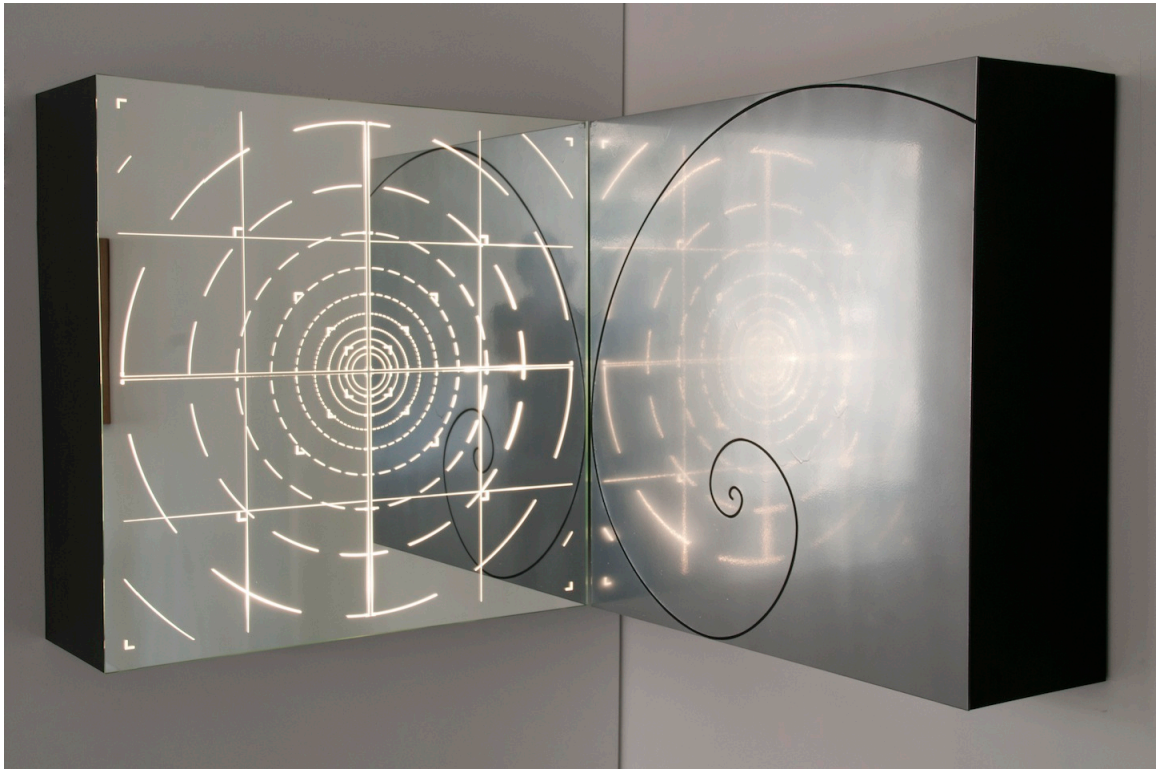


Plate 8.

Untitled Diptych, 2012

Etched mirror, wood, mirror, glass, chrome enamel and latex paint, fluorescent lights,
electrical components

Each element: 36.125 x 36.125 x 12.625"

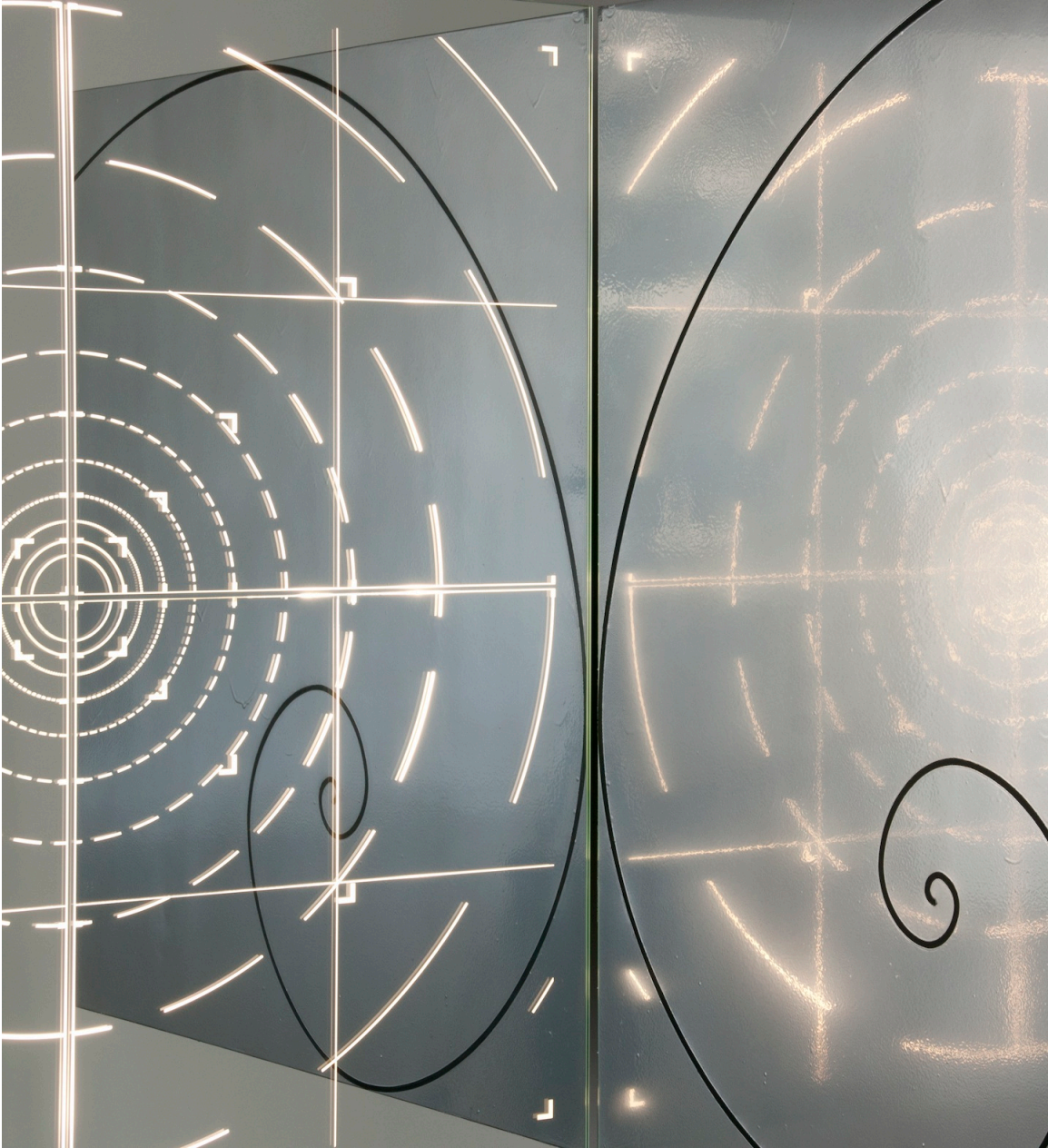


Plate 9.

Untitled Diptych (detail), 2012

Etched mirror, wood, mirror, glass, chrome enamel and latex paint, fluorescent lights,
electrical components

Each element: 36.125 x 36.125 x 12.625"



Plate 10.
The Fall, 2012
Wood, PVC, enamel paint, steel rods
72 x 48 x 24"

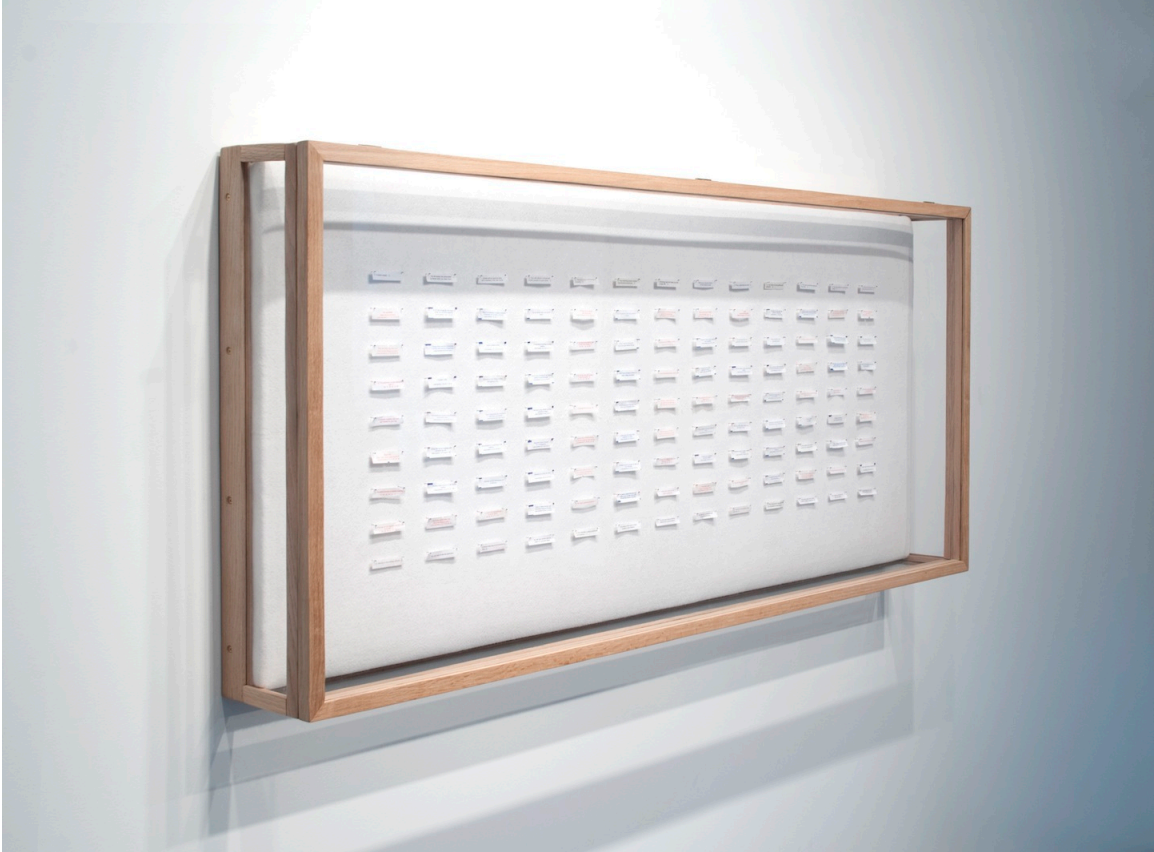


Plate 11.

Cookies go stale. Fortunes are forever., 2011

Wood, Plexiglas, fabric, fortunes, scientific pins, enamel paint, brass hardware

29.25 x 65 x 8.75

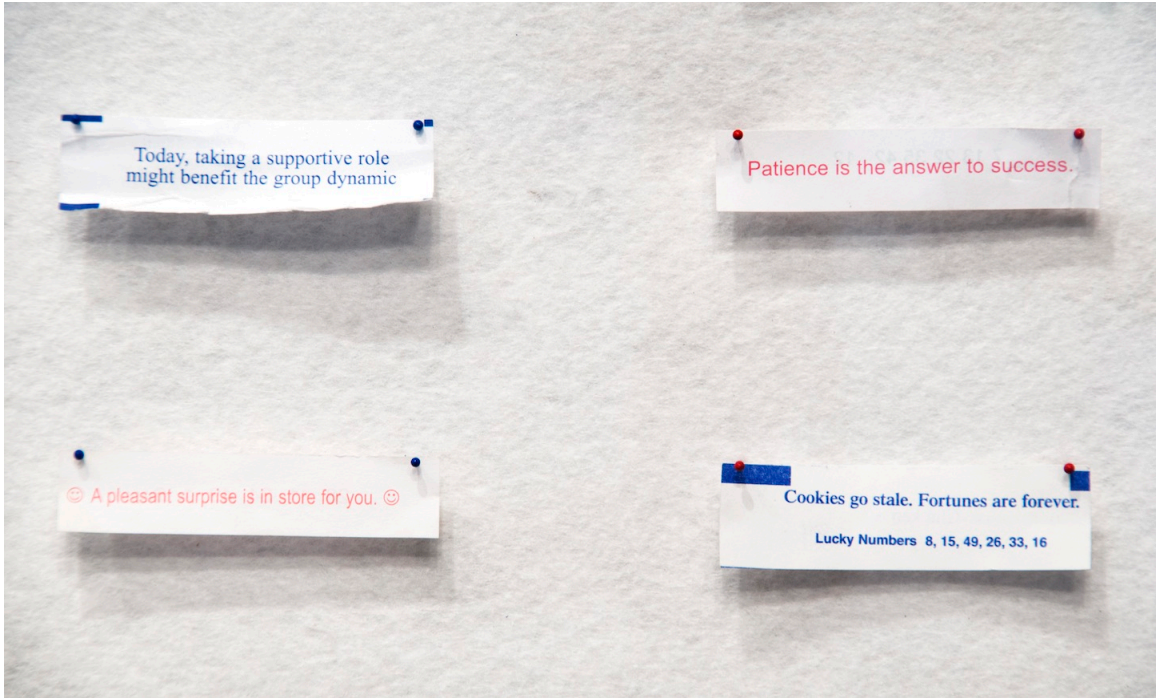


Plate 11.

Cookies go stale. Fortunes are forever. (detail), 2011

Wood, Plexiglas, fabric, fortunes, scientific pins, enamel paint, brass hardware
29.25 x 65 x 8.”