At the End of the Spectrum Next to Orange and Opposite Violet

Kathleen Sharp

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AT THE END OF THE SPECTRUM NEXT TO ORANGE AND OPPOSITE OF VIOLET

by

KATHLEEN SHARP

Under the Direction of Constance Thalken, MFA

ABSTRACT

Photography is an unstable medium, the repercussions of technological advancement are constantly redefining its capabilities. As an artist working in this medium, I have often found myself wrapped up in existential reflection over my work’s place within the discipline. With At the End of the Spectrum Next to Orange and Opposite Violet, I have narrowed my interests to focus on the phenomenon of light and the manipulation of color. I am creating work committed to the conceptual foundation that light constitutes the experience of a color. I have been working monochromatically to create images and videos in order to explore this idea of color as an experience. Throughout this document my research has opened a new way of thinking about the interactions of light, color, and the viewer.

INDEX WORDS: Color, Red, Space, Photography Installation
AT THE END OF THE SPECTRUM NEXT TO ORANGE AND OPPOSITE VIOLET

by

KATHLEEN SHARP

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2017
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by

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August 2017
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Kenneth MacMurray. Without you I would never have achieved what I have. Your faith in me pushed me to continue my work when I felt that it was futile, and allowed my confidence to grow. Your support, your patience, and your (literal) strength allowed for my vision to be realized. And most importantly, for your ability to uncurl me when I just want to lie in a ball. I love you.

And to David Crito Bowie, who sleeps in my studio.
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1 INTRODUCTION

Photographs bore me,
tired compositions,
tired frames,
and tired processes that I once enjoyed.

Like most photographers, my love and interest in the medium began at a young age. The first interactions with images that I intimately remember are with my grandparents’ family albums. It’s through these that I learned the family history, where I saw my grandfather with a full head of hair, and where I realized the facial similarities between my father’s mother and myself. For many years, I used photography to document my life. I was allowed disposable cameras for special occasions. These were the first cameras I ever used, and I used them to take poorly composed images of myself and my friends to prove that we did things and that they were fun. Was summer camp fun? I have no idea, but according to the photographs, it must have been. When I was a bit older and my parents could see that the disposable camera wasn’t really doing it for me anymore I graduated to digital point and shoot. I LOVED that thing. I took so many images of myself and others doing idiotic things and I would spend hours and hours manipulating the colors and saturation of my images until they looked like something from a Dr. Seuss book.

I suppose I did not really consider photography a serious part of my life until college. My father gifted me his old Nikon SLR and I began to teach myself about film. I was hooked. I finally picked a major and began taking photography courses. I was so excited by the introduction of different types of films, of alternative processes, honestly any process was
exciting to me. I was constantly in the dark room, I felt it was a medium that I would never get tired of. That I would always be finding new processes or subjects to explore.

I became enamored with the historical hand printing processes, gum bichromate specifically. I even continued to use this process right up to Graduate School, most of my portfolio for admission were gum prints. I enjoyed the tradition that came with process, I was always eager to see what each new layer of color would do to the image, and I prized the handmade image above all.

I don’t know what exactly changed my mind about photography. But sometime during Graduate Studies it did, where all the photographs I had created and known grew to bore me. I can’t pin point it to a day, but little by little, my thoughts and views surrounding the medium began to change. I started to question something that I had never questioned before. I started to question my process to the point where I realized I would have to change it, if I wanted to feel satisfied within the medium once again.
1.1 The “Mean Reds”

The “mean reds” is a term coined by Truman Capote. It’s referring to a state of hyperanxiety, one that he describes as a sudden overwhelming feeling of fear, without the knowledge of why you're afraid or what you're afraid of. Sometime during the latter half of my first year at Graduate School certain feelings of existential fear grew within me. It was the first time I ever felt this toward photography, and more specifically, my place within the medium. With more and more theory being introduced coupled with the urge to produce, I felt an almost paralyzing amount of anxiety that began to lead to my disillusionment with photography and my own desire to create new work.

I felt that a lot of what I was seeing was similar, I wanted to see something new. Thanks to theorist like Guy Debord and Walter Benjamin, I was engulfed with thoughts of the futility of originality all while trying to create something unique. I grew determined the only path forward was to challenge the idea of photography in as different a way as I ever had before.
2 A CHANGE OF PROCESS

I began anew by introducing myself to studio practice. There have been more and more photographers gravitating to this way of working. Barbara Kasten, who’s work gave me comfort, is a prime example. (Figure 2.1) I found her way of thinking about the medium refreshing, even though she has been working this way since the 80’s. She discusses her need to go back to working more basically within photography, that she felt she had learned too much. “There seems to be a need to identify subject matter and its place in the world. But that’s one of the reasons that I make the work that I do, so that there is no recognizable subject and no representational value.” She has pioneered this type of work.

I too began to feel that perhaps I knew too much, especially regarding process. I felt that I was always thinking about how I would create the work and not the subject or why I was making the work. It was always centered around the process of creation, the importance or purpose, for me, was always that. I needed a change and I wasn’t sure where to begin. I was dissatisfied with my work in graduate school up to this point. I tried so many different avenues and nothing was quite right. I took absurd monochromatic portraits of my friends with their faces wrapped in tin foil (Figure 2.2), I made gum bichromate prints from images of prisms (Figure 2.3), and I even tried to start a documentary practice based on the apartment complex & community where I was living (Figure 2.4).

After much reflection of the work I was making, it was clear to me that the one thing they all shared was a desire to work in my own space. The tin foil heads were only interesting because of the way the light interacted with the tin foil to create new colors and forms. The only thing I was getting from the gum bichromate prints was the chance to work with my hands again in a studio/darkroom practice. And the documentary series was really reiterating
the fact that I wasn’t a documentary photographer, that the outside world wasn’t interesting to me anymore. The failure of these three bodies of work, pushed me to begin a studio practice. One that would allow me to reduce my focus to light and the way it interacts with specific objects, and would allow me to create compositions and build the subjects I was photographing with my hands. It allowed me to begin to create my own reality, since I had lost interest in my actual one.

I viewed this way of working as a reductive process. For myself, it was about going back to the basics of photography with the intention of looking at it from different angles. I constrained myself to focusing only on light and its interactions with specific materials, in hope to find a greater understanding of the elements of light, color and form.
Figure 2.1 Barbara Kasten, *Construct NYC 11*, 1982, Cibachrome, 40 x 30 in.
Figure 2.2 Kathleen Sharp, *Brad Tin Foil*, 2014, Archival Pigment Print, 12 x 18 in.
Figure 2.3 Kathleen Sharp, Untitled (Prism Series), 2015, Gum Bichromate Print 4 x 6 in.
Figure 2.4 Kathleen Sharp, Untitled (25 Bradley Street), 2015, Archival Pigment Print, 20 x 13 in.
2.1 The Performance

I wanted to begin a reductive studio practice, to take on a “deconstructivist” interest in photography. Taking it apart and focusing on light specifically and the ways in which it constitutes color and form. I began very basically with an interest in optics, choosing to work with prisms to refract light. I would construct different cube like structures and place the prism or prisms inside. Then the outside would be covered in differing colored gels. Once illuminated, the prisms and gels would react with the light and create new colors and forms that existed only while the light lasted. At this time, I was only interested in working with natural light. I had a studio set up outside and I would chase the sunlight. It constricted my way of working. Depending on weather or time of day I would get different results. (Figure 2.5)

Working this way allowed me to construct compositions with my hands, allowing that sense of accomplishment that alternative processes had once given me, the satisfaction of building with one’s hands. As time progressed, my studio practice began to evolve. Where at first I was working with abstracting an actual prism, I was now interested in creating a sense of environment or space within a composition constructed of prisms. The images lost a sense of subject and formalism. It was at this time that I moved indoors and began working with studio lights. I found that having to work around the schedule of the sun was too limiting. I wanted to have more control over my lighting and the times that I could work. I no longer wanted to chase sunlight and leave the interactions up to nature, I wanted to create my own. (Figure 2.6)

The current iteration of my studio practice, and perhaps the one I intend to keep, started with the discovery of colored plexiglass. This new material allowed me to remove
the use of colored gels and prisms. It allowed my work to move away from the realm of representational work, and pushed it further into a new place. I was now able to construct my compositions with only this one material. I could create three dimensional constructions and the idea of space in my work began to really change. (Figure 2.7)

Contemporary Photographer, Eileen Quinlan, has described her work as documents of a private performance, staged only for the camera. (Figure 2.8) I think about this idea of “performance, staged only for the camera” when I am working. My process is similar. I construct the objects and spaces that are represented in my images and videos. They are never meant to be seen outside of that. To me, the setup and things outside of the frame are not meant to be seen by others. The performance begins as soon as I turn on the lights. It changes everything, and the structures I have built become something else. There are suddenly new colors and forms in the environments constructed. And once the light is extinguished, those disappear.

Barbara Kasten’s work is in the same realm of performance. “She fabricates, or has constructed for her, all the objects in her photographs.” When she works, it is not just a tabletop set up, but a large scale set up that she can move around in. Her performance goes beyond just turning on the lights. (Figure 2.9)

Perhaps the most important point, for me, is that her objects are “fabricated to be photographed.” The objects are not important on their own. It is not necessarily about them. It can be hard for the conversation for this type of work not to be drawn to materials or what one is actually seeing. But, for me, it is about what happens when all these elements come together with light, not about the materials themselves. It is the performance, the turning on of the light that really matters. That ability to suddenly have
something there that wasn’t before, something illusionistic and ephemeral. Something that makes you question what it is you are looking at, something that makes you question the process of photography itself.
Figure 2.5 Kathleen Sharp, Untitled (Prism Series), 2015, Archival Pigment Print, 44 x 66 in.
Figure 2.6 Kathleen Sharp, Untitled (Prism Series), 2015, Archival Pigment Print, 44 x 66 in.
Figure 2.7 Kathleen Sharp, Red No. 3, 2016, Archival Pigment Print, 24 x 36
Figure 2.8 Eileen Quinlan, Yellow Goya, 2007, UV Laminated Chromogenic Print Mounted on Sintra, 40 x 30 in.
Figure 2.9 Barbara Kasten, *Construct LB 2*, 1982, Polaroid, 8 x 10 in
2.2 Spatial Perception

My interest in space shifted as I changed my materials. In my first studio iterations space wasn’t necessarily a point of focus. There was more importance wrapped up in the forms and abstractions of the objects photographed. But as I worked through my process and it evolved, it became clearer and clearer to me that space was an important element. That it wasn’t just an environment I was constructing, but a sense of place.

Moving to working completely with plexiglass introduced a new sense of architecture to my work. (Figure 2.10) I began to really push myself to create new types of construction with each studio session. I didn’t want to be continuously photographing my material in the same way, as I had with my past work. Constricting myself to one material made me intent on pushing this material as far as I could. Not to settle for the same representations of space each time, but to challenge myself to have a range. I could create images that were very illusionistic, images that almost seemed holographic. But then on the other end, I could create images that completely flattened the three-dimensional space.

Contemporary photographer Erin O’Keefe’s work is also highly tied to architectural space. She worked for years as an architect and only recently gave it up to pursue a full-time studio practice. Her work bounces from illusionistic space to very flat two dimensional representations of space. “As a photographer, I am interested in the layer of distortion and misapprehension introduced by the camera as it translates three-dimensional form and space into two-dimensional image.” (Figures 2.11 & 2.12) O’Keefe’s work demonstrates a high level of spatial awareness, something that I strive for in my own work.

The spaces I created could not exist without the element of light. With that notion, I am constantly trying to remind viewers that what they are seeing isn’t exactly real. That even with
my flattest images, there is an element of illusion. To help reiterate that, I leave remnants of my actual environment, the place where these images are created. Viewers will see finger prints, stray hairs, or tape residue from a previous construction. All of this is left to further remind the viewer that what they are seeing isn’t reality, leaving viewers again to question what they are seeing and the truthfulness of a photograph.
Figure 2.10 Kathleen Sharp, Red No. 23, 2016, Archival Pigment Print, 24 x 36 in.
Figure 2.11 Erin O'Keefe, The Flatness #15, 2013, Archival Pigment Print, 20 x 16 in.
Figure 2.12 Erin O’Keefe, Things as They Are #41, 2016, Archival Pigment Print, 20 x 16 in.
2.3 Color as Light

Although space has become an important element of my work, color is what every decision is based around. I have become increasingly interested in the idea that color is not some innate attribute of an object, but that light constitutes our perception of color.

Color has always had a role in my process, even from my gum bichromate days where layers of color would build upon themselves to create the correct exposure. My previous studio work began with a haphazard way of choosing colors. There was no order no reason to the combinations I was using, and I couldn’t intelligently discuss my choices. As I continued this work my pallet became more and more muddied. (Figure 2.13) My colors were changing and it was evident to me that if I wanted to continue to work in this nonrepresentational way, that everything I did needed to be intentional, and that included my color choices. I needed to understand color and colors. That the use of color had to be just as important as the materials I used to explore it. To quote Robert Irwin, “If I painted a wall red, it would simply be a red wall.” Meaning, my use of color cannot simply be adornment, it must be crucial to the work.

In the middle of my second year, after a rough final critique from the previous semester, I was still stuck in rut. It was suggested to me to continue working in the same manner, but to attempt to put all my focus into a specific color, and see how that would change my work. This was a major moment for me. It completely opened a new way of working and thinking.

I created a body of work, one that I believe could continue to grow, of images all of a specific color: red, and one specific material: plexiglass. I had varying opacities of this plexiglass and that offered different shades of the color. Everything in my images is made of this material, yet I noticed that although my materials were all red, I could get other colors depending on the light that I used.
Manipulating light in a studio practice is familiar to Eileen Quinlan. Her work often includes strange light patterns or bursts of colors that seem unreal. In an interview, she discussed how her studio lights do not stay still. She creates long exposures and instead of moving the camera around her object she keeps the camera in place and moves the lighting around the object. This creates those unique burst of light/color. (Figure 2.14)

I found that depending on the intensity or the type of light I was using, I would get different results. That although my materials were all the same color, I could get oranges or even violets because of the material reacting to light. (2.15 & 2.16) The blog Radio Lab that investigates the boundaries between science, philosophy, and human experience has episode on color that begins by asking the question, Is color something that exists out in the world or is it something that happens inside the mind? Meaning, does perception play a major role in how we see color? I have been exploring this and questions like this. Thinking about how easily an object’s color can change based on the lighting conditions and that light really does constitute not only the perception, but our actual experience of a color.
Figure 2.13 Kathleen Sharp, Untitled (Prism Series), 2015, Archival Inkjet Print, 44 x 30 in.
Figure 2.14 Eileen Quinlan, Night Flight #44, 2008, UV Laminated Chromogenic Print, 40 x 30 in.
Figure 2.15 Kathleen Sharp, Red No. 75, 2016, Archival Inkjet Print, 16 x 24 in.
Figure 2.16 Kathleen Sharp, Red No. 44, 2016, Archival Pigment Print, 16 x 24 in.
2.4 Red

Why Red? I often get asked this question, or why did I chose to explore red in this manner? In all honesty, I don’t have a specific reason for beginning with the color red, except that I had to start somewhere and this seemed like as good a place as any. Through my research, I saw that red and most colors have a duality to them. That there is not just one way or thinking or feeling about a color. Red has positive and negative aspects that I wanted to explore. There were obvious emotive properties to the color, but also ways of thinking and understand red as a verb, what it can do to an image and what it can possibly make us feel when confronted with it.

My research led me to creating two separate works that ideally would be presented together (in separate spaces) to give viewers an overall experience of a color. In one, my images, I would focus on the idea of seduction and illusion in spaces created to be photographed. In the other, a video projection would fill a room and explore some of the more emotive qualities of the color.

With my choice of material, one may wonder why I chose to photograph red in this way. Why not photograph the “natural” red that I can find in the world? One main reason I moved to a studio practice was a lost interest in the “real” world. This extends to my interest in the type of color I wanted to explore. I wasn’t interested in the natural reds but interested in the idea of manufactured, synthetic colors that seem to overshadow the “natural” even in my day to day life. Therefore, I chose to work with plexiglass, a highly-manufactured material that could give my images the sense of color that again reiterates that what you are looking cannot be real. The choice of material also helped to push the idea of seduction. The idea that there is an overlaying layer to what you are seeing. That there is something unnatural, that the presentation or color doesn’t exist inside, but instead it exists on top. (Figure 2.17)
Unlike Kasten or Quinlan, who are shooting large format film, I chose to explore this idea of color through digital representations of color. One may wonder why work digitally if light and color are so intricate to your practice? Again, it goes back to the type of color that I have become interested in. I don’t know that it makes sense anymore to continue studying color and light through analog processes, when so few are able to create work this way and even fewer will view work this way. For the most part, a lot of what we see are digital reproductions, or pixels on a screen. I was interested in taking my study of synthetic unnatural colors and placing it in a digital realm. In *Chromophobia*, David Batchelor discusses the differences of analog color and digital color. When discussing his views of the color chart (digital color) he says this, “It promises autonomy for color; in fact, it offers three distinct but related types of autonomy: that of each color from every other color, that of color from the dictates of color theory and that of color from the register of representation.” Where the color wheel is analog, the color chart is digital. Thus, if I really wanted to single out and study a single color, I learned that digital practice can set itself up for a more autonomous approach.

The second piece of my work with red is an immersive room filling video projection, *The Eyes of Cocaine Freaks are Often Frayed Red.* (Figure 2.18) In this projection, I have chosen to explore the origins and psychological nature of the color red. Partly influenced by a passage from Victoria Finlay’s book *Color*, in which she travels all over the world to find out how many of artists’ favorite pigments were created. In her chapter on red, she writes about a type of red pigment that was made from the blood of a pregnant moth. When first arriving at this facility, her tour guide told her to squeeze one of these moths, she then saw the blood on her hand. When taken to the actual room where this pigment is made, seeing the vast amount of these moths being killed for their blood, she was overcome by a sense of violence. I have often found that for
all of red’s attractive qualities it also has an underlying layer of anger and violence. The video projection balances a rhythm where at once there are lovely moments of this sparkling unidentified red substance. It seems to be floating and gliding in a way that makes you want to look deeper. (Figure 2.19) But then suddenly that same unknown substance will begin to change color value and grow. It grows quickly and moves quickly. It appears aggressive and at times crashes violently. (Figure 2.20) The speed of the video changes and adds to a disorienting effect. This cycle repeats, allowing for moments of calmness and reassurance before lunging back into an increasing feeling of unease.

The element of seduction resides in both pieces. The preparation of seduction, the elements that lead to illusion are often described as cosmetic. David Batchelor discusses the cosmetic in color further, “There is an ambiguity in make-up; cosmetics can often confuse, cast doubt, mask or manipulate; they can produce illusions or deceptions.” What is a seduction if not a deception, an illusion? The cosmetic in color then is something that aids this. “…intense color, even intense natural color, broke free from its moorings in nature. It flooded the eyes and disoriented the mind.” Seduction overtakes, it clouds judgement, it consumes. These effects can be frightening, but that plays into the excitement. The use of my materials, the cosmetic or artificialness of the colors, add an element of the unnatural. The purpose of these two pieces is to create an immersive and complete experience of a color. Where viewers can begin to question beyond what photography is or can be to simple things like the color red. To be able to understand that there isn’t one answer to these questions. And that perhaps fiction and reality don’t have to be mutually exclusive.
Figure 2.17 Kathleen Sharp, Red No. 6, 2016, Archival Pigment Print, 16 x 24 in.
Figure 2.18 Kathleen Sharp, Video Still from The Eyes of Cocaine Freaks are Often Frayed Red, 2016-2017, Video Projection Installation
Figure 2.19 Kathleen Sharp, Video Still from The Eyes of Cocaine Freaks are Often Frayed Red, 2016-2017, Video Projection Installation
Figure 2.20 Kathleen Sharp, Video Still from The Eyes of Cocaine Freaks are Often Frayed Red, 2016-2017, Video Projection Installation
3 PRESENTATION AND EXPERIENCE

With my process in flux, I realized that the act of taking the photographs and shooting the videos was only half the work, presentation and experience were just as important. Throughout my time in graduate school, I have had many failed presentation attempts. When working through my prism series, I experimented with scale, both large and very small, repetition, and attempting to add a sculptural element to the actual photographic print. None of these avenues felt quite right. (Figures HERE of failed installations…get off phone Thomas dean)

My move to the monochromatic work was even more difficult to satisfy. It was almost an entire semester before I actually printed any of the red images, up until then they existed only as projections. When I finally did print them, the paper failed to capture the luminosity that the screen and projections retained. To me, that loss was profound. It wasn’t until my final semester that I was able to work out the right solution for my prints. As for the video, it existed on one screen for a very long time. I toyed with different ideas of presentation, yet always with the thought that it would occupy only one wall. One night while testing my projector at home, it hit me that for the piece to do what I had intended it needed to consume the entire space.

I think a lot about the similarities and differences of these two works. One centered around objects occupying a space and creating a sense of connection through their interactions. The other transforming a space into something new and unrecognizable. Where viewers get lost in the imagery, it is no longer a white room with objects occupying it, it is something new.
Figure 3.1 Kathleen Sharp, Final Critique Spring 2015 Installation View
Figure 3-2 Kathleen Sharp, Punching Bag, 2015, Archival Inkjet Print
Figure 3.3 Kathleen Sharp, Final Critique Fall 2015 Installation View
Figure 3.4 Kathleen Sharp, Creative Maladjustment Installation View, 2016
3.1 The Photographic Object

I reflect a lot on the idea of the photographic print, the traditions, the limitations. I think a lot about people that are pushing that idea. Artists like Eileen Quinlan, that constantly push the idea of the edition of the single image itself. (figures here, 3). She often will show her entire edition as one piece. She often does this with multiple images, as well. She plays with the idea of scale by placing the same image next to each other at different sizes. Her way of thinking about her images as not just images but pieces of art, have been very influential.

I too have begun to think less about my images as photographic prints and more on the side of images used to create specific pieces. I don’t have an interest in putting weight on specific images, I am more interested in how they can all work together. How they can be brought together to question the traditional view of the photographic object. Quinlan’s work pushes back against traditions where image makers create a specifically sized edition to sell through the art market. She discusses her own decision by stating, “I wanted to make it clear that my struggle didn’t end with manifesting an image, but extended to grappling with photographs as objects…I was interested in collapsing the idea of the edition by turning it into something unique.”
Figure 3.5 Eileen Quinlan, The Full Edition of Smoke & Mirrors #24A, 2006, UV Laminated Chromogenic Print Mounted on Sintra, 24 x 20 in.
Figure 3-6 Eileen Quinlan, Mono Big and Small, 2015, Chromogenic Print, 40 x 30 in. and 60 x 48 in.
Figure 3.7 Eileen Quinlan, Blue Hours, 2015, 12 Photographs each 40 x 30 in.
3.2 The Holistic Approach

For me, the realization that my work wasn’t just about the images granted me a sense of autonomy from a medium that had begun to smother me. This notion allowed me to no longer take my lack of “photo-photo” interest and output to stifle me. I found that I could create work with a sense of purpose and excitement again. Where the presentation of the work had continually failed me up until my final semester, this new way of approaching it brought new resolutions.

I now understand that my work isn’t just about the images produced. That it’s about how those images not only work together, but how they can occupy a space. How I can create specific pieces from few images or from many and create a sense of a holistic piece. That they should be viewed as part of a bigger whole, not as independent images.

I take a lot of inspiration from movements like Minimalism and Light & Space. Although, these two movements have very differing views, something connects them. I take inspiration from both, and the work of these artists has greatly influenced me. Not only through the installation of my work, but through the imagery created, and the way I think about my materials. From Robert Morris’s *L Beams* occupying the gallery space and controlling how viewers moved through it, to James Turrell’s ethereal light work, and to Frank Stella’s aim to make the paint look as good as it did in the can. I find that my interests lay somewhere in between. I am very interested to allow this influence of non-photographic work to play out through my photography practice. (Figures 3.8 and 3.9)
Figure 3.8 Robert Morris, Untitled (L Beams), 1965, Plywood, 8 x 8 x 2 feet
Figure 3.9 James Turell, Sustaining Light, 2007, Wood, Computerized Neon Setting, Glass, 62 1/4 x 46 1/2 in.
3.3 Experiential

One major difference between Minimalism and the art of the Light & Space movement was the change from emphasis on object to an emphasis on experience. No longer moving around a static object but instead to have an experiential view of a work of art. One that changed as you moved through it.

My choice of working with High Gloss Dye Sublimation prints for my thesis exhibition allowed for play between minimalist sculpture and the more experiential light & space. The way the surface of the dye sub print plays with the light and the actual gallery environment changes from view point to view point. As one moves around the gallery and the pieces, the reflections and what can be seen in each piece changes. Although they are static planes occupying a space, the surface and the imagery give the illusion that perhaps they’re not. Photographs or representations of my work do not suffice. One must view them in person to really understand the work.

Where I believe, my work moves further into the realm of experiential, is my video projection. Not only influenced by origins of the color, the presentation was heavily inspired by another of my favorite artists, Yayoi Kusama. From her net paintings to her infinity rooms, she is asking her viewers to confront their own existence. The scale of her net paintings and the environment created in her infinity rooms take us away from reality while viewing. (Figures 3.10 and 3.11) This was the aim of my video projection. To be able to create an all-consuming environment from the choice to create a full room projection. That by placing it on every surface of the room, you could not escape from the moments of unease or disorientation, without leaving the actual work. That to fully understand the piece one would have to suffer through, unable to
look away, until the calm was ushered back in. How, again, only personally being in the space could one fully witness and understand the work.
Figure 3.10 Yayoi Kusama, Infinity Nets (BCO), 2013, Acrylic on Canvas, 51 1/4 x 76 3/8 in.
Figure 3.11 Yayoi Kusama, Infinity Mirrored Room-Love Forever, 1966/1994, Wood, Mirrors, Metal and Light Bulbs
These last three years have tested me, and pushed me in ways I was not expecting. At times I felt truly lost, at others I felt the futility of creation, and at others I wanted to just give up. I am pleased to say that my time has been very beneficial. Even through all the hardships, I feel optimistic about my future within the medium for the first time in a very long time. The “mean reds” have passed, and a few weeks ago I was able to see my first vision of my work fully realized.

My Thesis exhibition, *At the End of the Spectrum Next to Orange and Opposite Violet*, was the first time I resolved the presentation of my work and felt completely satisfied. I chose to work with a juxtaposition of smaller metallic photographic prints and a group of five larger high gloss dye sublimation prints that were arranged more sculpturally around the space.

When you first enter, the large back wall is meant to draw you in. Scanning across the gridded collage, you get a sense of architectural space. You will move from very disorienting images to more grounded images, to some where you can just begin to understand the construction of the image, to others that seem to exist on another plane. The use of metallic paper allowed for an iridescent surface that reacts with the light in a subtle way. (Figure 4.1)

Directly across from the large piece is the only Dye Sub print the is hung directly and traditionally on the wall. It is meant to mirror the larger piece both in imagery and in literal presence. And as you follow the darker corners of this piece you notice how it continues onto the image below. How together they create a vignette that connects them. With the bottom image slightly skewed at an angle, you get a greater sense of disorienting depth and a
reflection of what is hung above it. (Floating wall shot and the shot with that and red 66 in it)

To the right, you see another piece similarly installed. Only the top image is now falling forward off the wall mirroring the angle of the bottom piece leaning against the wall. The two of them together create an almost funhouse like mirrored effect. And as you move around the piece an illusion of floating waxes and wanes. That play between illusion and reality continues with the other even larger pieces. (Figure 4.2 and 4.3)

Continuing down the wall is a piece constructed of two 36 x 54 inch prints that are connected at a ninety-degree angle. The two images create a sense of continuing space that can only be fully seen at certain angles. As you move around this piece and the similar one across the room. You get different reelections of the environment it is now occupying and you get a different sense of the image. At times, you can see how they work together and others you can only see one half of the piece. (Figures 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7)

The final piece is a 24 x 36-inch image that was “cut in half and bent”. It is installed on the wall in an illusionistic way. Again, it flutters between reality and illusion as you move around it, at times floating and other times resting as a shelf. (Figures 4.8, and 4.9)

All these pieces reflect one another and the space as well as the viewers in the space. It is meant to be a continuous environment that one can move through. The juxtaposition of the “paper” prints and the metal prints helps to keep my work grounded within photography, while also questioning the traditions of the print hanging on the wall. Another point that I try to further explore by allowing the pieces to rely on the wall but not to exist purely as a rectangle on a wall.
Figure 4.1 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #1, 2017
Figure 4.2 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #2, 2017
Figure 4.3 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #3, 2017
Figure 4.4 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #4, 2017
Figure 4.5 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #5, 2017
Figure 4.6 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #6, 2017
Figure 4.7 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #7, 2017
Figure 4.8 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #8, 2017
Figure 4.9 At The End Of The Spectrum Next To Orange And Opposite Violet Installation View #9, 2017
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