

*Momentary Arrest:
Semiopaque Instants in the Works of Liza Eurich
and Tegan Moore*

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Inside it is clean and orderly, both clear and semi-clear. Objects are aligned with intention, careful and very still. Inside this space is also a paradox. It is a space that is both simple and complex, manufactured and organic. It is inside-out. A synthesis of the “real-world” stripped bare: revealing forms that fail to be adaptive in function. Inside it celebrates both clarity and confusion. It is a whitescape where shadows, if present, only lightly grey a surface with extreme subtlety.

In 1951, the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein tirelessly mulled over the opacity of whiteness during the last months of his life in Vienna. Incomplete manuscripts were later found on his desk following this time and published in English in *Remarks On Colour*, where he puzzled over the use of language to describe colour, the inadequacy of its descriptions. In his notes he was mainly preoccupied with the question, “Why can’t we imagine a transparent white?” It has been widely speculated that in order for something to be transparent all incident light must be able to pass through, whereas a white surface tends to cause incident light to scatter. It is therefore a contradiction for something to be both transparent and white. Wittgenstein was not satisfied with the simplicity of this theory though conceded that the more white shifted towards transparency, the less white it became. Wittgenstein also puzzled over whether a mirror can be considered both white and transparent since its shared property with white is its high reflectiveness.

The dark slate grey characteristic of a mirror’s backside demonstrates the mirror is in protest, refusing to show your reflection. It silently indicates the process of its making in its title, One hundred and eight degrees, as it reflects an unseen section of the wall. It is neither white, nor transparent so the speculation ends.

In *Semiopaque* white and transparency is used to tarry with modes of deception. At times we can see through a surface where in others we are stopped short. In some instances the cloudiness of a semi-transparent surface settles our attention on the surface itself: and it being cloudy prevents our ability to perceive a certain depth.

Interiors of a Hollow Core is made of corrugated polycarbonate which allows us to look at, in and through the structure of a wall and its central doorway. An audio emitted from a sprawling shape, resembling a large insect, produces sounds like a rhythmic rush of waves: an ebb and flow caused by the deliberate movement of pushing insulation. The rush of air being pushed out and the friction of many small threads emits a language based on the relationship between hand, air and material. It is both elusive and quiet, a barely discernible breathing in and out. An audible but unfeeling breeze.

The use of material in *Semiopaque* also brings an awareness of the outside, inside. There is reference to “interior-weather” systems and the geologic matter embedded in building materials. Another aspect of inside-out, or perhaps outside-in comes into play.

A structure, a Freestanding rack: one addition, seems structurally sturdy but visually fragile, with slots to hide things. Even then, the plastic bag resting on top cannot go without notice. It's not clutter-as-display (as has been the case in the presentation of many ready-mades) but the means to store-clutter-as-display. The mould of a plastic bag resting on top, achieves a very convincing mimicry of the real thing. It is folded and hidden, not in the slots built for storage, but in the obliterating effects of its whiteness.

Plastic, we know, is a byproduct of oil; and oil, we also know, is a resource that starts wars. The plastics industry, amidst this, pushes to yield efficient, economical products, increasingly stripped of source material. “Like a spoon of sugar blown into a cloud of cotton candy, a single drop of oil can be blown into shelves upon shelves of plastic artifacts.” Alain Renais, in his film, *Le chant de la styrène* (The Song of Styrene, 1958) speculates that “Perhaps petroleum comes from tiny planktons? These questions have controversial origins.” And then, through “compound mutation: (it becomes) a product to purchase at your nearby location.” Or in this case, handed to you as a sack holding your purchase.

Particle Preserver hangs in a sealed bag hollowed at its centre, and presumably housing billions of particles of dusty debris captured by its threads.

In 1920 dust had also been actively preserved, so to speak, in Marcel Duchamp’s *Large Glass* (1920). In his New York studio Duchamp scribbled an open invitation for dust to gather on the large pane with a note that read “Dust breeding: To be respected.” He later cleaned and left deliberate patches of dust so as to add another level of coloration, that in turn became “quarantined” between glass. In this case, we might not only think of what the filter captures in its attempt to purify, but that the filter is also made up of threads of glass and silica spun together with the compression and manufacture of volcanic rock, quartz, sand, etc. In this process, both dust and earthly elements are preserved as domestic and geologic scales of time. But this is not to dismiss the time it takes itself to disintegrate, if even ever fully, back into the earth.

A series of nesting plexi-glass frames similarly could act as a preserve for an unseen microscopic world, *Encasing*. Their formation demonstrates a bisection of a core that is calculated and manufactured. It is another method to “hide” clutter—though entirely visible. Again we see this resistance to preform convincingly in *Underlay-vent*. The reference to a gridded ventilation system, removed from its function, is again made visible. Manufacturing “indoor-weather” systems has allowed for a certain relinquishment of dependancy on the environment, from the drastic or uncomfortable climatic conditions outside.

When thinking about the word “transparency”, an honesty is alluded to - that nothing is being kept hidden. If we can see through something clearly, does that speak to a certain truth, where deceit is more in line with a solid surface? *Semiopaque* is both honest and deceitful, revealing and concealing, in control through its reticence, and lacking control in its failure to perform given its implied purpose. However, in this interior world a crossover begins to take shape when one considers the synthetic building materials in relation to the natural world. It demonstrates through contradictions in perception, materiality, and manufacture the ability and inability to restrict sight, bringing attention to processes of control through a quiet disdain of function.

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