

# THE COLLISION OF PLANES: IMPRESSIONS OF LAUREN CUNNINGHAM'S STUDIO

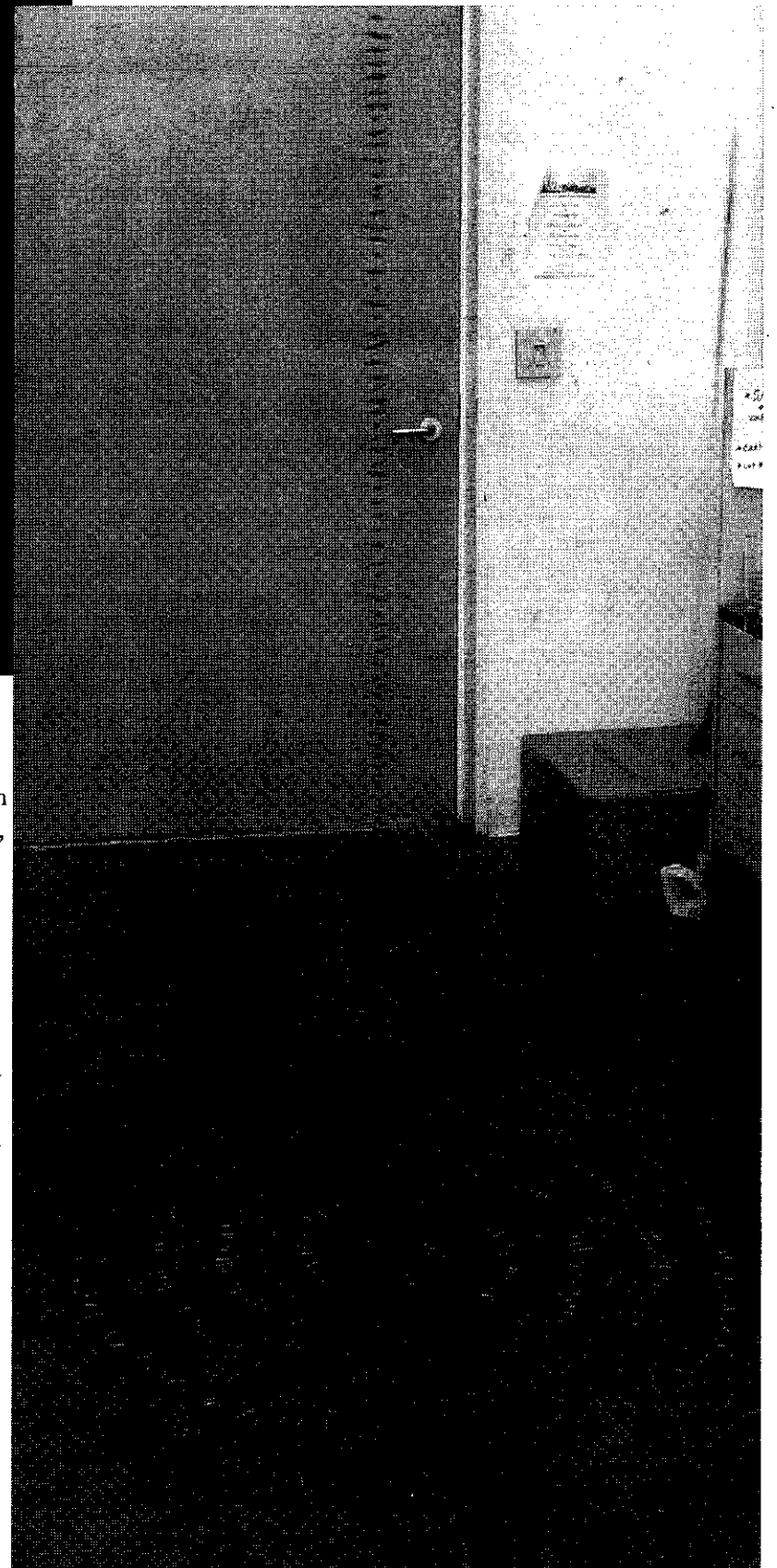
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as photographed from her installation entitled "When is a Fork not a Fork?"

## SCENE FROM THE YOUNGER SCULPTOR'S LIFE

— Conservative high school art show sponsored by the local country club. Artist removes name badge, pretends not to be artist while Anne Fayette Kennels-Worth smirks at "glob" made of panty hose. Artist incognito second guesses decision to follow third-choice sculpture class into the benefit art show. Overhears talk about "not-art."



## ON THE NATURE OF DIMENSIONS AND TRANSFORMATION

—"I always start by modifying the material to create a new form. Then I repeat the new form hundreds or thousands of times until it becomes a cell or a unit in a larger structure. For me, understanding comes through repetition. Like studying via writing or saying information over, and over again, I understand the material by working with it over and over again."

After talking with Lauren Cunningham about her artwork, the verb *transform* resonates, specifically as applicable to process of translating a material into meta-material and two dimensions into three.

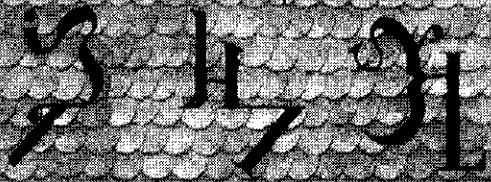
Here, materials undergo transformation for strictly aesthetic purposes. A head is cocked side on the floor, waiting for more layers of plastic to transform the plastic into a striking resemblance of guillotine-art for the stage.

Here materials undergo transformation as an act of creation: a rose is a rose is a rose is a rose: in a visual art technique that resembles Gertrude Stein's repeti-

tion of what were with the material to get at the more than *rose* (an artistic evocation), a cascade of pencils multiplied becomes an intersection of two planes. See "Dispoint Cascade" at right.

And to question "dimension": rows of not-holes (paper dots from hole puncher) almost seamlessly align to form something like paper, painted calligraphy strikes, letter inspired, form something like words. Even piece of paper has three dimensions.

Here is the shadow of a sculpture on the studio wall and tangible acrylic sculpture to an even newer canvassed world.★

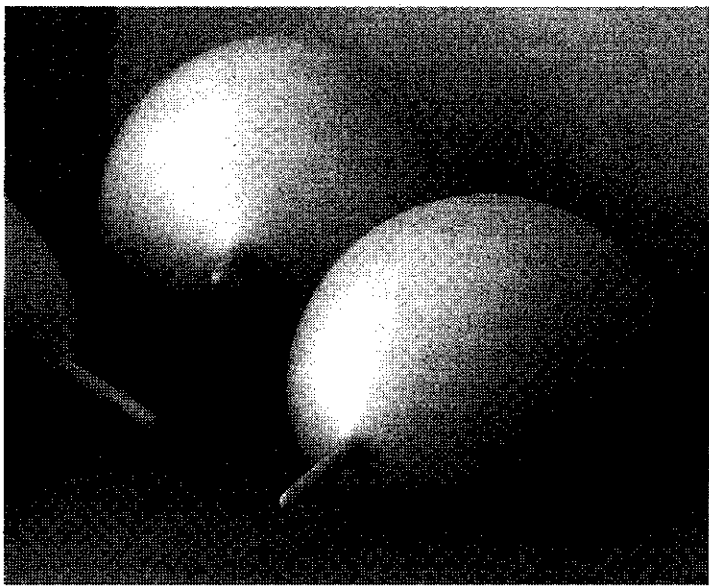


# WORDS FROM A SCULPTOR'S "BABY MANIFESTO"

lauren cunningham

## *Listening to material*

A successful sculpture lets the material speak. The material will speak a fundamental premise. For example, an artist says, "I want to make a sculpture about hunger." Then he begins gluing bagels into a tower. Although the resulting sculpture may communicate "hunger" to the artist, the viewer may not perceive that. This is because the sculpture is not true to the material (bagels). The bagel's voice has been muffled by the artist's ego.

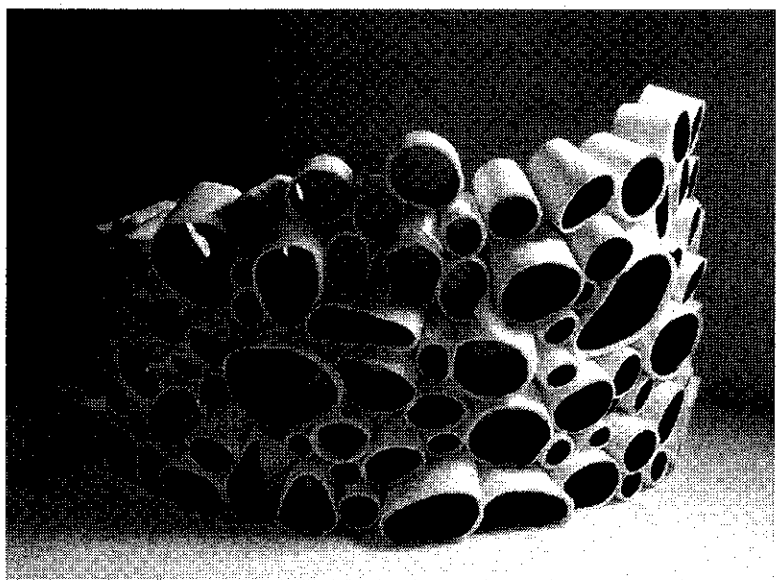


"Balloons," plaster

## *On the labor of a thousand multiples*

I believe that artwork should be the result of labor. Artists like working with their hands, so labor should not be a problem for us. What for an artist is natural and pleasurable may seem to another person like work.

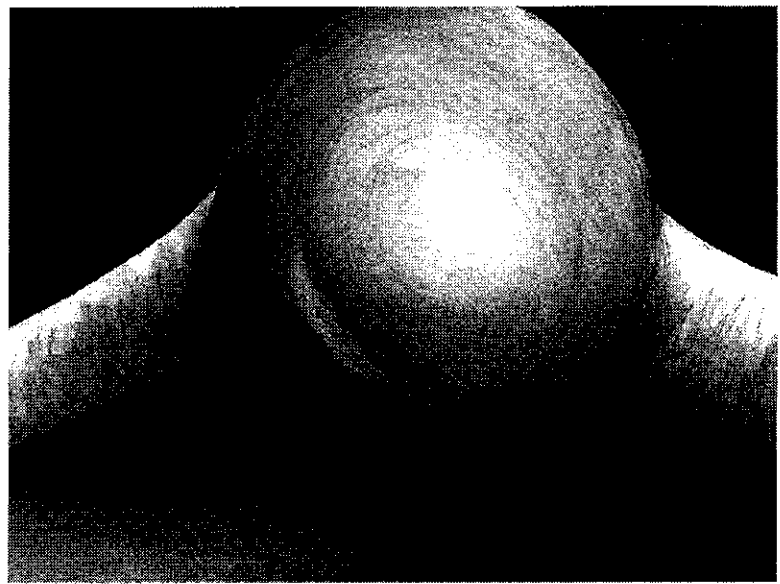
Of course I always want things to move faster, because I am excited to see the final piece. There is a low point in the process of making every sculpture in which I've been working for a long time, but the end is still so far off, and I begin to ask myself, "Why am I doing this?" But the material is giving one hundred percent, so I have to give one hundred percent, too.



"Tubules," masking tape sculpture

## *Creation reflection*

My conceptual interest is the material. However, a completed sculpture doesn't just say "combs" or "pencils," even if that was the initial inspiration. I think a lot of what a sculpture says is a reflection of me, the creator. A creation will always reflect its creator. I think the idea of non-violent aggression (towards males?) often surfaces in my work.



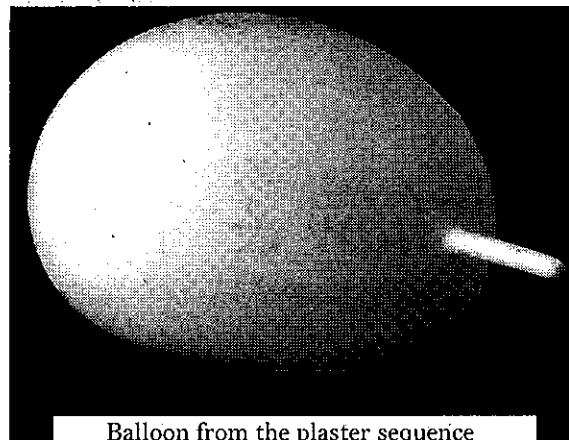
"Untitled," willow charcoal on paper

## *Pencil transcends pencil. Pencil still has limitations.*

**Inherent:** Physical limitations—the material's physical and chemical properties  
**Associative limitations, or "baggage"**—Associations between the material and all things having to do with all culture, including industry, religion, society, and the arts. Associations are man-made; they exist because society recognizes them. Also there are associations the artist has with the material, and he/she may or may not be able to overcome these associations.

**Extrinsic:** The artist's limitations—his/her aesthetic sense, conceptual interest(s), inclination and ability towards process(es), etc. **Circumstantial limitations**—the availability of the material; is it affordable? Is it easy to access?

This does not mean that in the future there will come a point in time in which no more sculptures out of a specific material can be made. As long as society exists, there will be new ways to approach all materials. However, for each individual artist, there is a finite number of possibilities for the material as a sculpture.

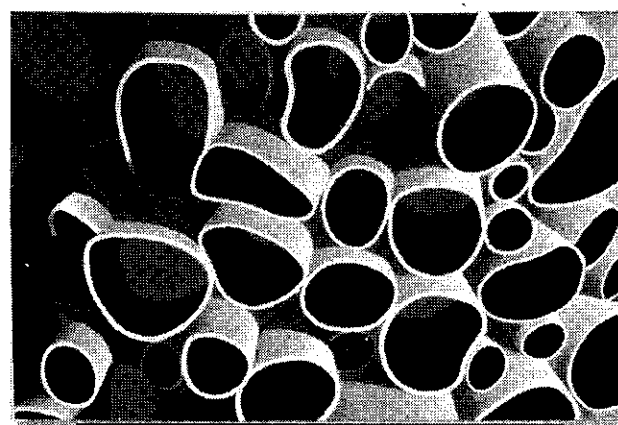


Balloon from the plaster sequence

## *Material as Thesis*

Choosing a material is like choosing a good thesis statement for a paper. You don't want your thesis to be too broad or too narrow. Similarly, you don't want a material to have too many or too few limitations.

Examples of materials that are too broad are steel and wood. These materials have unlimited possibilities—technically speaking—as well as thousands of associations. I mean, on a superficial level, a sculpture made out of steel relates to every other steel sculpture. It is hard to distinguish the voice of a material if all around it are echoes of past voices.★



"Tubules," acrylic on canvas