

13. Gil Spears

Artist Statement:

I approach painting as a form of research or a sequence of essays. My orientation to painting comes out of my interest in cinematic language. Through painting, I hope to explore ideas of deep time, geological time, and bodily vulnerability and protection—where the human body is seen as a relay between natural and artificial environments. Formally, I use the painterly vocabulary of the line (as oppose to the plane) to build an iconography adequate to the visualization of neural processes as impacted by technology—machine-assisted viewing, digital image archiving, and emergent three-dimensional imaging all inform the deployment of perspective in painting.

In moving from painting to video, I hope to draw a connection between my interest in topology and geology and my interest in cinema—which is to say, to try to break down the language of cinema to its “archaeological” components. In cinema or media studies, the moving image is understood as three different technological paradigms (the camera obscura, the persistence of vision, and photography) historically “superimposed” on one another. The notion of “deep time” remains important to me here: the way in which various patterns of intelligibility are superimposed upon one another and effect the abstract historical structure of our understanding—the idea of a previously lost or obscured sequence of overlain topologies that precede and undergird one’s experience of mind and body

My more recent video work aims to explicitly translate textual and historical research into essayistic, associative imagery. An ongoing research project on “corporations,” broadly understood, informs my study of the relationship between secularized religious concepts (“corporate personality”), economic concepts (the metaphysical idea of perpetual growth), and forms of group identity (the institution and the iconography of church and state).

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