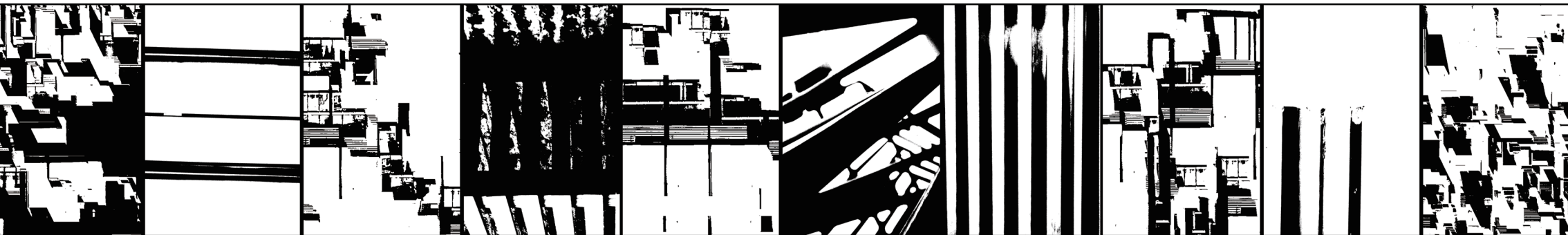


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# PETER GREGORIO

## - The Many Worlds Interpretation -



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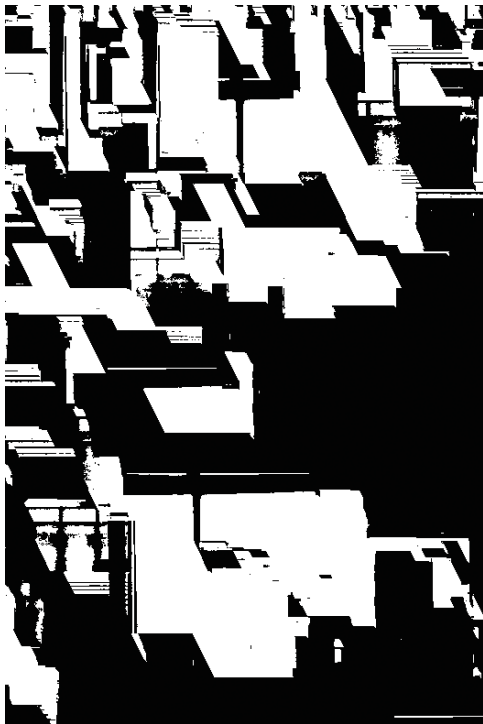
The Many Worlds Interpretation  
Oct 06th to Nov 23rd 2011  
Opening reception | Oct 06th

Curated by Soyeon(Sylvia) Kim  
Design by Mokyoung Gu

**ArtGate Gallery**  
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New York, NY 10001  
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## Statement

Peter Gregorio works in large-scale painting, print, video, photography, installation, and performance, creating pieces and experiences that remix given architecture with new cultural landscapes and contemporary ideas in cosmology. In working to conceptualize information theory and connect forms of interdisciplinary knowledge through artistic practice, Gregorio uses conversations with Theoretical Cosmologists, Science Fiction Writers, and Experimental Musicians, as research for his most recent and ongoing body of work. 'As we approach the merger of human cognition and technology, we near the epoch of a great paradigm shift.' His work considers positing this merger in the context of visual art, from both personal and universal vantage points. Gregorio's recent projects refer to the scientific concept of "The Singularity" — the point when technology and human intelligence merge — where technologically designed intelligence surpasses the biological. With painting, he collapses three-dimensional space into a flattened reticle of vaguely navigable territory, referencing computer manipulation and theories in cosmology to map the nuances of a dystopian landscape.



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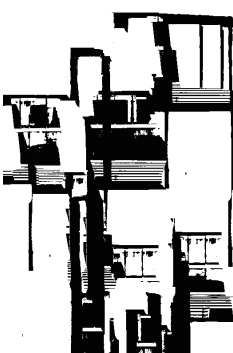
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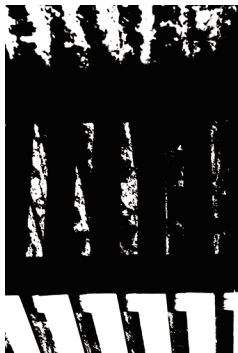
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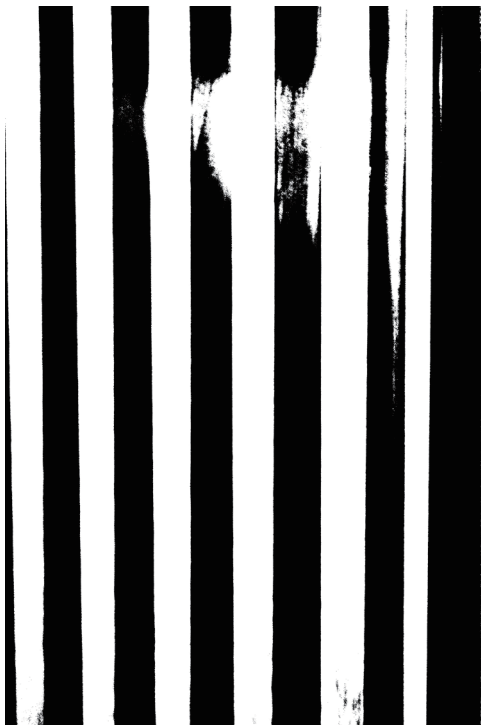
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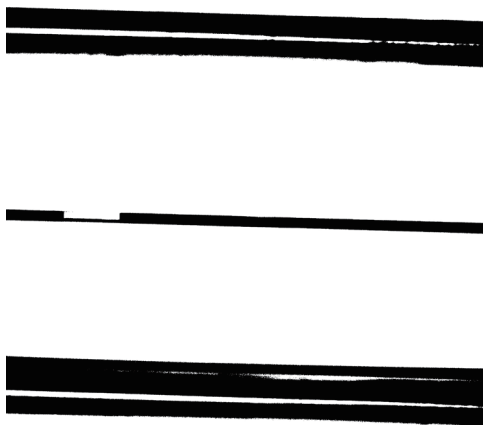
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BIPEDAL PRIMATE WITH EVOLUTIONARY DERIVED CARBON-BASED FORM

TWO INHERENT GENETIC SEXES WITH SEXUAL REPRODUCTION - CULTURAL VARIATIONS TO GENDER ROLES AND PHENOTYPE

EUKARYOTIC SPECIES WITH LIFE CYCLE SIMILAR TO OTHER PLACENTAL MAMMALS

TRANSMISSION OF RANDOMIZED TRAITS TO NEXT GENERATION OF YOUNG

LIMITED RANGE SENSE-DRIVEN PERCEPTION - EXTERIOR, TACTILE, LOCAL VISUAL / AUDITORY, OLFACTORY LOCAL, TASTE LOCAL

SIMPLE TO COMPLEX SOCIAL GROUPS WITH LEARNED BEHAVIOR SYSTEMS, INTRINSIC ALTRUISM TO RELATED SOCIAL GROUP

VOCAL, GESTURAL, WRITTEN LANGUAGE SYSTEMS WITH VARIED DATA STORAGE FORMS

BRAIN DRIVEN TOOL MANUFACTURING ABILITY TO OFFSET STATIC PHYSICAL FORMS

INGESTION OF ORGANIC MATTER FOR CELLULAR FUEL - OMNIVORE

EXTREMELY LIMITED TEMPERATURE, ATMOSPHERE, PRESSURE RANGES

LIFESPAN UP TO 122 SOLAR YEARS / PEAK AGE RANGE 16-30 UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES

SECOND STAGE SEXUAL MATURITY 9-18 YEARS

MEMORY DRIVEN EXPERIENCE DATA RECALL WITH EXTREME QUALITY DEGRADATION OVER TIME

CELLULAR AGING WITH DEATH AND ORGANISM DISASSEMBLY BY ENVIRONMENT TO MAXIMIZE TRAIT RANDOMIZATION THROUGH GENERATIONS FOR SPECIES SURVIVAL PURPOSES IN NICHEs THAT UNDERGO RADICAL CHANGES

NEURONAL MATURATION ~12 YEARS

SELF-DECEPTIVE PERSONAL REALITY MATRIX ACCEPTS INFORMATION UP TO A VARIABLE AGE - THEN REJECTS NEW INFORMATION TO PRESERVE INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY VIEW

TRIBAL SPECIES FORMS INTO GENOCIDAL FACTIONS THAT VIE FOR DOMINANCE, USUALLY BASED ON IRRELEVANT ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA FROM ANTIQUATED AND DYSFUNCTIONAL BELIEF SYSTEMS

INDIVIDUAL INABILITY TO REJECT RECOGNITION OF OTHER TRIBAL MEMBERS, SPECIES, IMAGINARY BEINGS, AND INORGANIC STRUCTURES AS COMPETITORS AND REJECT INSTINCTUAL AGGRESSION

INCREASINGLY COMPLEX TOOLS, CREATED TO COUNTERACT INABILITIES THREATEN TO GAIN SENTIENCE AND ELIMINATE HOMINID CONSTRUCTORS

LIFE CYCLE OF OTHER SPECIES SUGGESTS EXTINCTION BEFORE TRANSFORMATIONAL DATA EVENT RECONSTRUCTS SPECIES



QUANTUM LEVEL ACCESS TO INHERENT UNIVERSAL KNOWLEDGE - WITH ALL POSSIBLE CONTEXTUAL VARIATIONS

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PERCEPTION WITH INSTANTANEOUS DATA CORRUPTION PROTECTION

INFINITE SHIFTING SENSORY APPARATUS WITH SENSITIVITY TO EVERY STIMULI / ENERGY FORM

INSTANTANEOUS REPROGRAMMING / RESTRUCTURE OF GENETIC AND INORGANIC STRATA

PERCEPTUAL / DATA CONNECTION WITH EVERY OTHER MEMBER OF SPECIES AND THEIR TOTAL PERCEPTUAL LIVES - IF REQUIRED

VOLUNTARY COGNITIVE "AMNESIA" AS PERSONAL AND UNIFIED COLONIAL TOOL TO MAINTAIN INDIVIDUAL ORGANISM PERSPECTIVE ESPECIALLY WITH METAMORPHIC INSTANCES OF LOWER SENTIENCE COMPLEXITY THRESHOLDS

FULLY REPROGRAMMABLE LIFE CYCLES / EXPERIENCES / OBSESSIONS / EXPLORATIONS WITH ZERO CONSEQUENCES TO LATENT UNIVERSE REALITY

SENSORY EXPLORATION AND OCCUPATION OF SEVERAL PLANES SIMULTANEOUSLY OR INDEPENDENTLY - WITH OR WITHOUT INFORMATION TRANSFER

NEUTRALITY TO NON-EMERGENT SPECIES

CLANDESTINE OCCUPATION OF PERCEPTUAL APPARATUS OF NON-EMERGENT SPECIES

UNLIMITED VARIATION OF FORMS WITHIN ALLOWABLE UNIVERSAL CONSTANTS

MULTIPLE FORMS AT VARIOUS SPATIAL LOCATIONS WITH UNIFIED CONSCIOUSNESS

INABILITY TO BE COMPLETELY DESTROYED AS AN INDIVIDUAL OR SPECIES

EXISTS BEYOND DARWINIAN NORMS WITH READJUSTMENT OF UNIVERSAL VARIABLES AT WILL

POWERED BY UNLIMITED ENERGY SOURCES IN WHATEVER AMOUNTS REQUIRED - LIMITED BY AVAILABLE ENERGY IN UNIVERSE PRESENTLY OCCUPYING

EXPERIENCES TOTALITY OF VARIATIONS PARTICLES CAN ACHIEVE IN THAT PARTICULAR UNIVERSE

NON-REPRODUCTIVE - DUPLICATION CANNOT BE DEFINED AS SEXUAL AS NEW ORGANISMS EXIST AS PARENT ORGANISM, EVEN WHOLE SPECIES LINES

EACH ENTITY CAPABLE OF EXPANDING KNOWN MULTIVERSAL BOUNDARIES

# Paradigms of Singularity : Gregorio on Acceleration and Existence

By David Adam Brubaker

Today, various authors refer to a “tipping point” with regard to our global future. Concerning the growth of our technologies, some argue that we are fast approaching a point, where our scientific knowledge will create machines with a computational power to surpasses all human capacity to produce intelligence for the good of the universe. Regarding climate change, hunger and violence, some refer to a “tipping point” at which individuals -- one unique person at a time -- will create a social mass sufficient to move us from the modern paradigm of egoism, competing identities, and philosophies of materialism to a new paradigm of compassion based on care for sentient existence, inseparability of self from other, and a sense of oneness with nature. With a style the mingles the conceptual with the optical, Peter Gregorio creates a place for each of us to reflect on changes of paradigm and our well-being.

The artworks on view help bring clarity to the complexity of our predicament. We are actively seeking, it seems, some novel cultural path that balances the facts of science with a source of spiritual guidance that is immanent and equally rooted in the value of actual life existence. Gregorio poses questions about the thoughts we rely on to guide our actions. What is the paradigm of value that we send out into the universe: intelligence or wisdom? In the hustle of scientifically engineered techno-cultures, can a person still tell the difference between the two? If wisdom is a path that satisfies a desire for contact with existence, then how do we think of existence now? Plato claims that knowledge and forms of intellectual understanding give us access to reality and existence; in modern times, we reconfigure this as the quest for scientific knowledge that enables us to turn nature into a mere pupil of our cognitive interests. But are we so enlightened that we can adhere complacently to the modern doctrine that science alone tells us what exists? Is self no more than neurological states placed in evidence by MR scans? Is the privacy of self-existence merely an illusion, since it is uncertified by rational understanding and natural science? Or can each of us can find within our own experiences some element of observable self existence that is of singular value and impossible no cognize as an event?

Gregorio awakens us both to our situation and our options, by weaving together two paradigms based on two different meanings for the term “singularity.” One definition for the term “singularity” is given in the video work, SIN (Singularity is Near) (2010 CE), which depicts a figure clothed in black, who sprays with thoughtful care “THE SINGULARITY IS NEAR.” With this graffiti, Gregorio makes a direct reference to Ray Kurzweil’s bestseller, The Singularity Is Near, When Human’s Transcend Biology (2005). Kurzweil predicts disruptive and irreversible effects on human culture by 2045, as machine intelligence grows exponentially in the very near future. The second meaning emerges from Gregorio’s statement of 2004, which he accepts as an avenue for investigating his works currently on view. He writes: “How to convey the experience of being alive, right now, in this moment? I have this need to recreate the feeling of the realization of existence. It happens, this reflection, in dark hallways, looking up at the ceiling, walking through archways, hidden places...one must be alone. Fear and awe set in. The question: This is real? Who made this? The texture, the colors...I lose sight of where I start and where the space I am contained in begins. It becomes a mirror.” The implication is clear: Gregorio observes that it is impossible for him to separate the immediacy of colors and the texture of space from his own existence. It is existence in this more intimate sense – the self witnessing of colors and space, by oneself, for oneself, and as constitutive of one’s own self (not as properties truly intelligible to the scientist but still perceived as external) -- that offers us a key to the second reading of “singularity.”

By keeping both meanings of “singularity” at the ready, the gallery visitor can develop interpretations for the lively background of SIN and also other pieces on display: the triptych Extinction Evolution (2010/11); and the painting of 0’s and 1’s, in Binary Opposition (2011). By inspecting these works in turn, we can reflect more deeply on the existence of present day life, the

capacities and limitations of scientific knowledge, and the responsibilities that each of us has for community today, subsequent generations, and this (or any other) universe.

SIN and Accelerated Growth of Machine Intelligence

The video piece SIN takes us straight to the topic of cognitive science, research on Artificial Intelligence, and the exponential acceleration in the growth of machine intelligence. This motion picture projection is a technological record of an act that appears to have political significance. The hooded figure inscribes “The Singularity is Near” with spray paint, on a wall that also serves as a background screen for a montage of scenes depicting dark, abandoned industrial environments. Once we make this reference to Kurzweil’s book, the piece is an occasion for critical reflection on the Singularity that Kurzweil foresees. Also relevant is the fact that the camera images flickering in the background montage of SIN are taken from the visible surroundings that Gregorio witness himself in walking to and from his studio. His studio is housed in an obsolete warehouse complex originally built for shipping military equipment from Brooklyn to the Great War in Europe.

What does SIN suggest about Kurzweil’s claim that the destiny of human civilization is a Singularity in which our non-biological technologies vastly exceed us in what we deem the best human traits? Kurzweil states: with the arrival of the Singularity, “information processes– computation – will ultimately drive everything.” He predicts the reverse engineering of the human brain – seeing inside, modeling and understanding the operations of our thinking - to extend such principles into even more powerful computational technologies. Machine intelligence will become more powerful than the capacity of human brains, because machines combine the pattern-recognition powers of human intelligence with the memory, sharing ability, and accuracy of machines. Speedy and with fewer errors! What then of the figure dressed in black (Gregorio himself)? Maybe proponents of Kurzweil’s message could regard the figure as a person who dares to know and act on the information that free-reason based on human biology is obsolete! Perhaps it takes courage to proclaim that intelligence is the ultimate good and that decision-making is best left to self-determining machines. Is the message, then, that alienating spaces witnessed today will be replaced by something better, once management is turned over to machines?

Gregorio’s SIN also works as advanced warning against a path of danger, on which the Singularity, in Kurzweil’s sense, may devalue self-sentient existence in favor of productive machines that maximize knowledge. Will data-driven computations of economic growth become our standard for well-being? Perhaps the montage in SIN is a dream-like warning of dystopia, where existence as sentient persons actually live it personally loses all value for the authorities of the Singularity? If one recalls that the montage in Sin consists of camera images of Gregorio’s actual passage through moss-lined remnant of a military-industrial complex, then the message may be that management by scientific understanding and exponential growth in our technologies will not, by themselves, the acceleration of industrialized warfare and violence. Could the lesson be that the modern values of free-reason and the maximization of intelligence are themselves out of date as guides to the chief and ultimate good? Our need is for a global ethic based on a more powerful motive, alongside respect for freedom, so that we can act more directly to secure a minimal level of health and life for individuals, regardless of their nationality or proximity to us. For me, the mysterious figure references the environmental activists who startled officials at the World Trade Organization meetings in Seattle, during 1999. This confirms SIN’s success in bringing contemporary ethical concerns to our attention. For as Peter Singer argues convincingly and clearly in One World, the Ethics of Globalization (2002), the Appellate Body that interprets WTO rules has in some cases allowed economic growth and free trade to trump other values important to member countries, such as environmental protection and animal welfare. That subsequent willingness of WTO ministers to consider other values, including also the rights of workers making products, underscores the importance of the issues Gregorio selects.

Singularity of Existence: Images and Uniqueness

With the triptych Extinction Evolution, Gregorio juxtaposes the two singularities once again. In this case, the proportion and design of the panels create interesting references to classic and contemporary art works. In conversation, Gregorio notes that he intends the format to remind viewers of religious narratives told temporally first with the left side-panel, then the central event, and finally the future outcome on the right. The triptych style is reminiscent of Hieronymus Bosch’s Garden of Earthly Delights (c.



SIN (Singularity is Near)\_2010 Digital Video 2:20 minutes

1510), which takes the theme of material existence and ultimate well-being as a theme. The non-objective character of the central panel points to the triptych-like configurations of Mark Rothko's paintings inside the interdenominational Chapel, in Houston, Texas. The viewer can easily connect the side-panels, both filled with information bearing language, with the work of Joseph Kosuth and other Conceptual artists, who take an interest in science and communications systems. Indeed, in his book *Beyond Modern Sculpture* (1968), Jack Burnham argues that art works based on information systems can contribute to a new utopian society. He envisions the abandonment of traditional aesthetic concerns of volume and presence, in favor of dematerialized patterns of information that serve to control and automate our lives!

It is the contrast between the side panels and the central area of indeterminacy that makes Gregorio's triptych relevant to our predicament with science and spiritual balance. The center panel seems at first to resemble non-representational painting and its techniques, yet it is the product of an unusual process that gives it's a special role as a symbol. Gregorio creates the center panel in several stages: first he takes a multitude of separate photos of the atrium and interior architecture of the building outside his studio door; next, these images are photo- shopped into a 2-D collage of different points of view. The resulting collage is projected on to a canvas already covered with adhesive-backed paper. After tracing and cutting out lines and shapes, he applies three layers of transparent polymer medium to the exposed areas. Finally, the raised areas layered with polymer receive black paint. Despite the abstract character, the final image is a whole containing traces of different visual perspectives that originate with a physical location to which Gregorio is a frequent eye witness. Since the composition of the main panel contains no recognizable objects to create cognitive distraction in the gallery visitor, it is the field as a whole – the texture and the colors that are emphasized.

Although the side panels use letters to convey information about the capacities of humans and machines as systems of intelligence, the center is a visible whole that embeds layers of images corresponding to actual events, noticeable by any individual who wishes to take a look. The center is dematerialized, in the sense, since it defeats attempts to perceive particular patterns of measurable dimension. Gregorio is keenly interested in the effect of the center panel on the individual viewer watching from the gallery space. Though it retains links with systems of information, this work is also quite optical. It questions, invites, awakens and perhaps displays the point of view – the opening upon the world – that belongs to the unique person who takes a look within

singular self-existence. The panels of textual definitions and the pictorial image invite comparison with the posted definition of "chair" and the photo of a chair, in Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* (1965). But the third item marks the difference. Kosuth adds a visible chair that is materially real in measurable space; by contrast, Gregorio seems to triangulate text and photo image with the observation of self-existence that the viewer witnesses within an actual look at the panels. The painting entitled *Binary Opposition* is especially intriguing for its success in joining features of both Conceptual and Optical movements in art. On the one hand, this newly made painting displays the computational language of binary coding in a way that reiterates the interest of conceptual artists in the austere patterns of systems information over aesthetic presence or natural beautiful; on the other, Gregorio chooses to shift the rows of white O's and 1's just enough so that the repetition of units opens up a counter-rhythm of spaces and shapes on the black background. The conjunction of white and black shapes brings about a slight optical vibration, due to the principle of simultaneous contrast. All this brings *Binary Opposition* into conversation with the shimmers and optical vibrations of Bridget Riley's great paintings of her early black and white period, such as *Movement in Squares* (1961), *Current* (1964), and *Shiver* (1964). Riley writes quite explicitly that her early work with units of black and white arose from her effort to show something of absolute value. She writes that it is the artist's task to address the need for some novel moral principle with roots in observances of nature. In a sense, her paintings of optical vibration work as an answer to modern thinkers who claim that everything that exists is of relative value only. Her clear intention at the time was to destabilize perception and gestalt patterns, for the purpose of conveying pre-perceptual stabilities evident to the eye.

Gregorio's work suggests that the look given by the gallery visitor, or by himself as singular artist, helps bring to consciousness self existence as present within a place of its own. This result calls for interrogation of existence as the individual person lives it, even if the outcome is noticing some element within experience that is a non-event and unintelligible to the working scientist on duty. While it is always necessary to keep in mind the danger of transforming living existence in mere information, Gregorio continues to explore for benefits of technological growth. Kurzweil describe the role of science in reverse engineering the brain to accelerate the growth of computation by machine, but perhaps we should study recent advances in neuroscience to reverse engineer materialist philosophies so that we arrive at novel thoughts of self as rooted in an observable but interior embodiment inaccessible to others. As it happens, Antonio Damasio's book *Self Comes to Mind* (2010) suggests that intelligence and cognitive activity centered in the cerebral cortex are not the only regions of the brain that contribute to consciousness. For Damasio, the ultimate question is the development of "a self capable of operating as a witness." It seems that the brain stem shows signs of a foundational protoself that produces primordial feelings connected to portals of the bodily senses and sheer existence. The senses convey contact with existence, prior to perception and cognition of determinate objects. Perhaps the primordial feelings that Gregorio has in conjunction with the texture of space and colors are indeed genuine and authentic, because they are a by-product of the observation of sheer existence that is associated with MR scans of the brain stem? Using Damasio's terms, we may say that Gregorio seeks to awaken the gallery visitor to the foundational protoself connected to the interior of the body and "sheer existence."

Perhaps it is not the emergence of intelligence and powers of computation that makes life worth living. Filling the universe with the principle that intelligence is the greatest good may inhibit well-being here on our corner that is Earth. Instead, maybe consciousness in relation to self-sentient existence – without regard to computation by intelligence – opens the way for each of us to think of a life worth living. By thinking of one's own senses not as open windows on an exterior world but as textured screens, each may acquire a covert (i.e. pre-cognitive) awareness of existence in the present and thus a motivation for life management. One's desire to live is not due simply to some "will" attributed to all the cells of one's own body; nor can it be attributed any longer merely to some instinct for perpetuating the species. The individual person has the capacity to develop an awareness of pre-intellectual existence and thoughts of its value, by means of the protoself discussed by Damasio.

This much seems clear: as a living person, one does not witness sheer existence by accelerating the growth of one's neurobiological knowledge of events. Even with the next generation of MR technologies, the scientist will remain unable to observe the witnessing of sheer existence as this is lived uniquely by the person who enters the MR scanner. Therefore, it is up to the artist to articulate the point of view of singular existence that one witnesses for oneself. Peter Gregorio takes us many important steps closer to thinking about a first-person dimension of existence that goes unregistered in scientific knowledge gathered from the third-person standpoint.



ArtGate Remix Project, 2011 200 Lambda Prints on Paper, 8.5x11in x 200 images

## Biography

Peter Gregorio currently lives and works in New York City. He received an MFA in Fine Arts from the School of Visual Arts. His work has been the subject of several national and international exhibitions including The CUE Art Foundation, Participant Inc., Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, Max Protetch, and Repetti Gallery in New York; Real Art Ways, Hartford, and the Boots Contemporary Art Space in Saint Louis; Unimedia Modern, Genova, Italy, and most recently the Schaufenster Project Space in Berlin. His videos have been screened as part of Archetime at the Elizabeth Foundation; Hotch Potch, in Oslo, and London; and in the Northampton International Film Festival. Gregorio is the recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Award, the Paula Rhodes Award, and grants awarded through the Nation Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Cultural Council, the Northampton Arts Council, and the University of Massachusetts Arts Council. Gregorio is also involved as an independent curator of interdisciplinary projects that have been exhibited throughout New England and New York, previously as Director of the La Lutta Project Space in Brooklyn and currently as Founder and Editor of VECTOR Artist's Journal. He recently completed a residency at the International Studio and Curatorial Program with a sponsorship through the Joan Mitchell Foundation. He is a currently an Artist in Resident in the Chashama Studio Program.

## Artist's Acknowledgements:

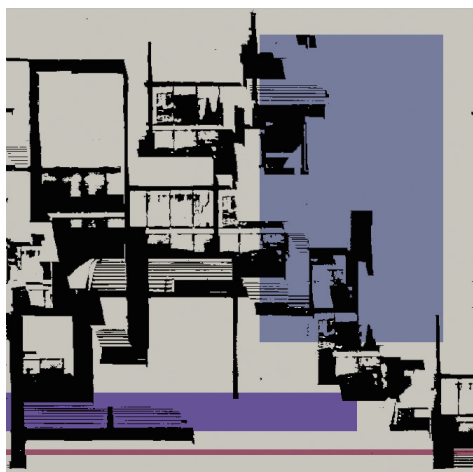
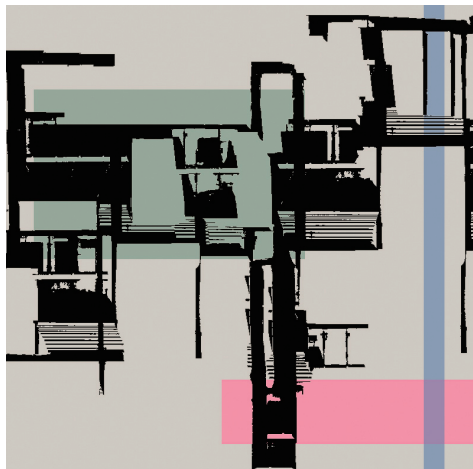
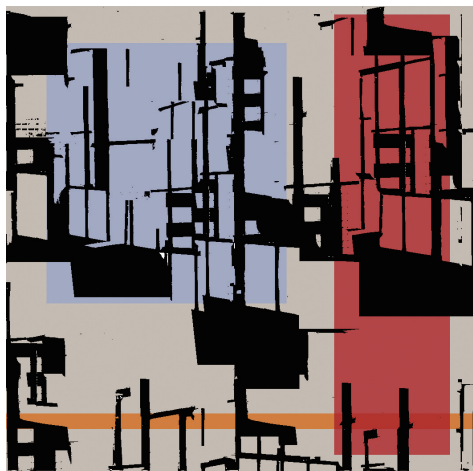
This Show Is Dedicated To My Grandmother:  
Helen Tarail, 1917-2010

Special Thanks To:  
Paul Selesko  
Christina Papanicolaou

This Would Not Be Possible Without The Help Of:  
Anthony Aguirre  
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Lastly, Thank You:  
Sylvia Kim and Vivian Huang and ArtGate Gallery for making this all possible.



Mμ2pia 01 2011 Oil on Linen 60x60in

Mμ2pia 02 2011 Oil on Linen 60x60in

Mμ2pia 03 2011 Oil on Linen 60x60in