

ABSTRACT

Title of Thesis: SIMULTANEITY: ON URGES AND ORIGINS

Lauren Frances Evans, Masters of Fine Art, 2014

Thesis Directed By: Professor Shannon Collis, Department of Art

All creative acts can be seen as intermediary attempts to bridge the gap between the known and the unknowable. In this thesis, I discuss a number of material and immaterial interfaces (e.g., the body, holes, desire, mankind, sacred sites) – all of which concern humanity and the divided nature of our existence in space, time, and matter. Prompted by urges and the allure of origins, my creative work addresses the body as a site of irresistible paradox. Inverting the boundaries between what is and what is not, it continually draws attention to the void of longing.

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SIMULTANAEITY: ON URGES AND ORIGINS

By

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CHAPTER 1: NAVEL GAZING

What means this curious depression in the centre of the abdomen, and the corrugated knob which occupies the cavity?

Philip H. Gosse¹

URGINGS

I'm not sure where I got the idea. I'm fairly certain I hadn't seen any kids on the playground do it. I know I had been jealous of a few gifted friends who could flip their eyelids inside out, but never had I met someone who could do the same with their belly button. That would be my trick, or so I had hoped. I became obsessed with inverting my perfectly normal innie, poking and prodding in the hopes of exposing its depths. I was quite determined. Eventually my fingernails began to take little chunks of skin with them, which caused tender sores and scabs. If that weren't enough, you'd think the continuous nausea induced by my efforts would compel me to quit, but still I ensued.

Eventually that obsession faded, probably due to the onset of a new one. Next came the urge to empty every pore. Any little bump that appeared to be filled with substance got squeezed.

Bit by bit, my nose got picked and peeled away and my arms, chest, and shoulders became speckled with scratches.

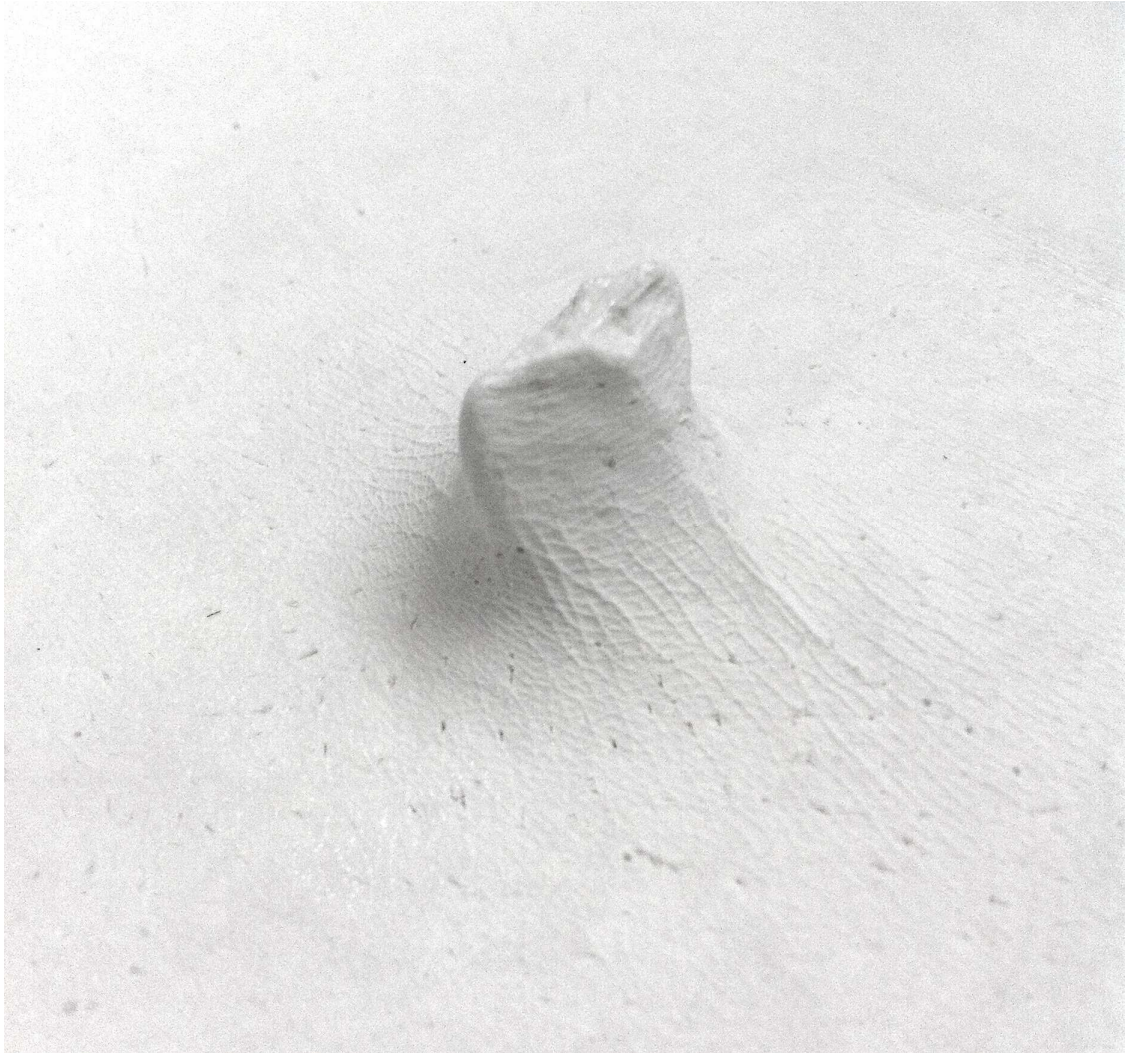


Fig. 1 – Lauren Frances Evans. Belly button casting. 2014. Plaster.

These compulsions were elevated during times of stress or anxiety. Without realizing it, I'd slip into a trance-like state and start to pick. Or pull. Or pluck. The

¹ ¹ Gosse, Philip Henry. *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot*, 1857. Woodbridge, CT: Ox Bow Press, 1998. Print. p. 289.

areas of focus shifted as I aged. At 11, I nearly tweezed out all my eyebrows. At 14 I made it my responsibility to painstakingly rid my thick blonde locks of every single split-end. Whatever the urge was, it was always mixed with a visceral tension of pleasure and guilt, of sensation and shame.



Fig. 2 – Wim Delvoye. *Sybill II*. 1999. Still from video.

At first glance it is unclear exactly what is happening in Wim Delvoye's film, *Sybill II* (see Fig. 2). It appears to show some kind of alien underwater landscape from which worm-like creatures emerge and come to life, but reactions to the film's mesmerizing qualities evolve as its subject, the skin's surface, is gradually revealed.

To this day, I still get an intense rush upon extracting a deeply clogged pore. It's surprising how many homemade versions of Delvoye's film there are on YouTube, which assures me that I'm not alone in this oddity. When I stumble upon those videos I am filled with overwhelming delight and disgust. They make me shiver. In the best and worst of ways. At the very same time.

This simultaneity of opposites is at the crux of my thesis. How is it that one may experience two contrary feelings at the very same time? Is it possible for two things to be true, yet truly in conflict with each other? I'm less interested in offering answers to these questions than I am in exploring their various modes of existence. The richness resides in this irresistible paradox wherein such alternatives collide AND coexist, where each informs the other.

CREATIVE ONTOLOGY

I've learned about myself and the world around me through embodied actions. As a child, I probed my surroundings with my fingers, curiously poking into holes and picking with them at surfaces. My work is built upon an odd mix of compulsion and reflection. Actions in the studio are initiated by impulse: thus, I am drawn to materials based on how they make me feel - in the most basic and visceral way. Formal and conceptual associations develop upon reflection as the materials in their varied arrangements become imbued with further meaning. Making, for me,

is quite revelatory: it is a means to knowledge – inner knowledge as well as knowledge of the surrounding world.

In his *Intro to Metaphysics*, Martin Heidegger expresses,

... yet we must look around us still more thoroughly and contemplate the narrower and wider sphere within which we dwell, daily and hourly, knowing and unknowing, a sphere that constantly shifts its boundaries and suddenly is broken through.²

Artistic media has a unique way of conveying that which words cannot. My work is expressive in this manner. The work I make doesn't necessarily start in my mind – its impetus is of a more congenital nature. My actions in the studio are simply an extension of the urges and impulses that have driven me since childhood. Boogers, scabs, hairballs, etc. have always intrigued me in this primal way, and an odd obsession with orifices of all kinds has haunted me for as long as I can remember. I've always been a picker, squeezer, squirter, scratcher, peeler, you name it. Naturally, these instincts have followed me into the studio and their expressions point to some aspect of my inner person, as well as the wider world of which I am part.

² Heidegger, Martin. *Heidegger's Intro to Metaphysics*. 1953. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000. Print.

There is an aspect of consciousness here – a becoming conscious of the unconscious drives or subconscious desires – which brings us back to the subject of knowledge. It is in this becoming conscious where the significance lies – this revealed “moreness” is what propels my desire to create. The physical matter of the work evokes an initial, often visceral, response, which in turn points to aspects of the immaterial human experience, such as what it means to exist or, simply to be.

Existential questions seem unavoidable when talking about creativity. Since artists are creators, we are faced with questions such as “What does it mean to bring something into existence?” and “What does it mean to be?” If ‘to create’ means ‘to bring into existence’, then it seems that artists can’t avoid these ontological inquiries.



Fig. 3 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Scrunch/Scratch*. 2013. 2 ix 4 x 2 in. Beef intestine, chewing gum, polyfil, and acrylic fingernails.

Profound thinkers have pondered these thoughts, all suggesting theses on the nature of being. My work doesn't endeavor to champion a certain philosophical agenda; rather, its goal is to investigate places wherein apparent contradictions, often concerning origins of existence, find their meeting point.

IMAGE BEARING

Russian Existentialist Nikolai Berdyaev (1874-1948) in his book *The Meaning of the Creative Act*, puts it simply: "A thing created, createdness, speaks of the

Creator.”³ There are echoes here of Genesis 1:27 which states that that a divine creator sculpted mankind in his own image.⁴

My creativity reflects aspects of my physical and psychological being, just as my very urge to create reflects a creator’s imprint on me.

Berdyayev goes on to explain that “he who creates feels himself to be not of this world... In the creative act man passes out from this world and enters another world.”⁵

There certainly is a god-like aspect to being an artist. There is a sense that the artist is the supreme being or *prime mover* of the studio, calling all the shots. But any artist can tell you there’s more to it. Some of the best things that happen in the studio are beyond the artist’s control. There is an aspect of ‘letting go’, an openness, which is crucial here – an emptying of the self. The artist is not simply a maker but also a receiver, a collaborator, and thus a co-creator, in the ongoing shaping of being.

³ Berdyayev, Nicolas. *The Meaning of the Creative Act*. Trans. Donald A. Lowrie. New York: Collier Books, 1962. Print. p. 119

⁴ “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” - Gen. 1:27. *The Holy Bible, New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan House, 2001. Print.

⁵ Berdyayev, Nicolas. *The Meaning of the Creative Act*. p. 15

CHAPTER 2: SIMULTANEOUS EXISTENCE OF INCOMPATIBLE THINGS

Our life is impossibility, absurdity. Everything we want is in contradiction with the conditions or consequences which are attached to it. It is because we ourselves are a contradiction, being creatures, being God, and infinitely other than God.

Simone Weil⁶

CLEAVAGE

“Cleavage” typically refers a certain type of crack. It is a site where two things come together, but at the same time, it is a division.

A contranym is a word with multiple meanings, one of which is defined as the reverse of one of its other meanings. Simultaneously a homograph (another word of the same spelling) and an antonym (a word with the opposite meaning), the contranym goes by many names, including “auto-antonym,” “antagonym,” “enantiodrome,” “self-antonym,” “antilogy” and “Janus word” (from the Roman god of beginnings and endings, often depicted with two faces looking in opposite directions).⁷

⁶ Weil, Simone. *Gravity and Grace*. p. 26.

⁷ “Janus opened and closed all things. He sat, not only on the confines of the earth, but also at the gates of heaven. Air, sea, and land were in the hollow of his hands. The world moved on its hinges at his command.” – quoted by: Murray, Alexander Stuart. *Manual of Mythology*, 1873. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Web. 17 Feb. 2014.



Janus.

Fig. 3 – image from: Murray, Alexander Stuart. *Manual of Mythology*, 1873. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. Web. 17 Feb. 2014.

The verb “to cleave” is a fitting example. It can be defined in two distinct ways: on one hand, it can mean to split or sever, as with a cleaver; however, on the other hand, it means to hold fast to or to adhere. Our English word “cleave” thus suggests both a joining and a separation.



Fig. 5 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Cleave*. 2013. 3.5 x 1 in. False eyelashes on paper.

Mystic philosopher Simone Weil (1909-1943) gives this paradox a name: *metaxu*.⁸ The Greek word *metaxu* is translated as *between* and was first used by Plato to refer to the dynamic exchange of abstract ideas and the material world. Modern and contemporary philosophers, such as Weil, have developed this word into a theory of intermediaries.

She explains, “Two prisoners whose cells adjoin communicate with each other by knocking on the wall. The wall is the thing which separates them but also it is their means of communication... Every separation is a link.”⁹

Like the contranym, Weil’s symbolic wall represents an irresistible simultaneity of conflict and cohesion. She describes our world as a “closed door”. Though it is a barrier, it is also the way through.

Summing up her thoughts on *metaxu*, Weil points to the dual nature of mankind – “Simultaneous existence of incompatible things in the soul’s bearing; balance which leans both ways at once.”¹⁰

⁸ Weil, Simone. *Gravity and Grace*. p. 200.

⁹ Weil, Simone. *Gravity and Grace*. p. 200.

¹⁰ Weil, Simone. *Gravity and Grace*. p. 155

MAN, THE MIDDLE

Simone Weil describes the human being as analogous to a plant. The roots of the plant get their nourishment from the ground while the leaves get theirs from the sun. When balanced, the whole plant is nourished from two sources: above and below. In the same way, mankind acts as an intermediary, a metaxu.

Nikolai Berdyaev also posits mankind at this crux, suggesting, “Man is the meeting-point of two worlds.”¹¹ He explains, “What a strange being – divided and of double meaning, having the form of a king and that of a slave, a being at once free and in chains, powerful and weak... All deep thinkers have felt this.”¹²

Man is the pinnacle of creation, yet he is bound to the laws of nature. Man is mortal, finite, though he feels himself to be not of this world. In him there is the seemingly irrational void of longing. Blaise Pascal described this yearning as an “infinite abyss” which “can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object.”¹³ Kierkegaard, the father of existentialism, considers this “the ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think.”¹⁴

¹¹ Berdyaev, Nicolas. *The Meaning of the Creative Act*. p. 58.

¹² Berdyaev, Nicolas. *The Meaning of the Creative Act*. p. 59.

¹³ Pascal, Blaise. *Pascal's Pensées*. 1669. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 2006. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 16 April 2014. p.114.

¹⁴ Kierkegaard, Søren. *Philosophical Fragments*, 1844. Trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985. Print. p. 37.

Desire is at the center of this liminal space of the metaxu; it is where the struggle between our finiteness and infinitude is fought. Echoing Berdyaev, contemporary philosopher, William Desmond expresses that as humans, we are not only *in* the middle, but we indeed *are* this middle.¹⁵

SPIRAL OF DESIRE

Desire itself is insatiable. Its end is impossible, asserts Weil, because it “destroys the object”.¹⁶

William Desmond explains, in his book *Desire, Dialectic, and Otherness*,

Desire desires everything, but it also desires this thing. It springs up in the tense space between limitation and transcendence. Its determinate gratification is merely a prelude to a deeper indeterminate restlessness. And the moment it possesses the particular thing is the moment it is dispossessed of the merely finite and its odyssey into the infinite is instituted.¹⁷

¹⁵ Desmond, William. *Desire, Dialectic, and Otherness: An Essay on Origins*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1987. Print. p. 27.

¹⁶ Weil, Simone. *Gravity and Grace*. p. 147.

¹⁷ Desmond, William. *Desire, Dialectic, and Otherness: An Essay on Origins*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1987. Print. p. 25.

“But what a spiral man’s being represents!”¹⁸



Fig. 6 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Decreation, III*. 2014. 3 x 3 in. Collage on paper.

Desmond continues, “At its best, however, desire exhibits an equilibrium between finiteness and infinitude, allowing a dialectical interplay and tension between the

¹⁸ Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. 1958. Trans. Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994. Print. p. 214.

determinate and the indeterminate, the specific and the ambiguous, the grounded and the originaive, the open and the whole.”¹⁹

Likewise, it is amidst this equilibrium of desire wherein my work is situated. The objects and images I create tend to possess a certain familiar ambiguity, reluctant desire, and comfortable tension – though non-representational, the work is often evocative of multiple conflicting, yet coexisting, associations. My hope is that this tension may be sensed, upon encountering the work, even if it can’t always be clearly articulated. Inverting the boundaries between what is and what is not, the work continually draws attention to the insistent void of longing.

FLESH IN, FLESH OUT

Despite how transcendent human desire may seem, we cannot begin to separate it from the human body; the two are entirely wrapped up in one another. In the human body, material and metaphor meet.

Like desire, man’s flesh can also be considered a *metaxu*, or a *between*. Skin is a barrier, denoting interior from exterior (subject from object), yet it’s full of its own physical intricacies, hollows and bumps that muddle those very distinctions.

“The skin communicates between the body and the outside world in a variety of

¹⁹ Desmond, William. *Desire, Dialectic, and Otherness: An Essay on Origins*. p. 73.

ways, serving as an intermediary, and interface, between the two realms.”²⁰ As our primary sense organ, the flesh literally carries us into the world, and at the same time it is the means through which we come to know and understand the world around us.

My work addresses the flesh as a tangible metaphor – the body as a site of irresistible paradox. The sculptural process of casting finds its significance here: the body simultaneously functions as mold and molded, container and contained, while shifts in scale work to further this ambiguity. Though I will continually stress that this fascination with the body (and its holes) is ultimately a primal and ontological one, I can’t deny the fact that the orifices and protrusions in my work become imbued with a certain psycho-sexuality.

Our very existence depends on filling two small holes in our nose with air. We exhale and inhale rhythmically, and yet the space remains empty of any tangible substance. But it is also true that human life begins with the penetration of a hole.

“In man’s sexuality we perceive the metaphysical roots of his being. Sex is the meeting-point of two worlds in the human organism”²¹ as well as “the point of contact between man and the cosmos, microcosm and macrocosm.”²²

²⁰ Elkins, James. *Pictures of the Body: Pain and Metamorphosis*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999. Print. p. 46.

²¹ Berdyaev, Nicolas. *The Meaning of the Creative Act*. p. 169.

²² Berdyaev, Nicolas. *The Meaning of the Creative Act*. p. 171.

Physical (finite) union offers us a momentary glimpse of metaphysical (infinite) wholeness, or, at very least, a potential for such.

Jean Paul Sartre speaks of this mystical plenitude in terms of metamorphosis.

To plug a hole is to transform the empty into the full, and thereby, magically, to create material possessing all the features of the holed substance... The child who sticks his finger into a hole in the ground becomes one with the ground which he plugs; he transforms himself into earth by his finger.²³

²³ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *War Diaries: Notebooks From a Phoney War*. 1940. Trans. Quintin Hoare. London: Verso Editions, 1984. Print. p. 151.

CHAPTER III: UMBILICUS

The artwork itself might be said to exhibit a rich middle between sheer incompleteness and absolute closure, reflecting the very tension in desire... Art is a unity of imitation and creation. As imitation it reveals our ability to liken ourselves to all things other than ourselves. As creation, it gives expression to our own originaive power. Thus it testifies to both our originaive being and our participation in being other than ourselves. It is witness to a kind of open wholeness, a world rich in inexhaustible meaning, yet never entirely closed in on itself.

William Desmond²⁴

CHILDLIKE CURIOSITY

Alone in the bathtub, at 2 years of age, my little lungs shrieked, “*Mommy!*” Running around the corner quite alarmed, she responded with motherly concern “What is it honey? Is everything okay?” With great delight I exclaimed, “Mommy, guess what? My finger fits *just* perfect in my bottom-hole!”

Rather than shatter my discovery with shame or disapproval, my mother, after catching her breath and suppressing a giggle, coolly replied, “Oh, isn’t that something? Well just make sure you don’t stick anything else up there, okay sweetie?”

²⁴ Desmond, William. *Desire, Dialectic, and Otherness: An Essay on Origins*. p. 82.

CULT OF THE HOLE

Upon encountering my work, it is admittedly quite natural to assign a Freudian interpretation – to see all the holes as sexual holes or to attribute the urges and impulses to subconscious libidinal desires. I'm not wholly opposed to an impression of this kind, but this alone would be much too reductive and narrow. From the onset, viewers have cited the sensual nature of my creations, from “womb-like” installations (see Fig. 8) to humorous collages of fingers poking into holes (see Fig. 7); however, I have stressed, and will continue to stress, what I believe to be of a pre-sexual concern. My research is motivated by an existential philosophy of holes, which is rooted in an ontological (i.e., origins-oriented) desire to fill voids.



Fig. 7 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Parts and Holes*. 2012. 12 x 9 in. each. Collage on paper.

While psychoanalysis may suggest that all holes, especially for the child, are “symbolic anuses which attract him as a function of that kinship”²⁵ – I align myself with Sartre in wondering “whether the anus is not, in the child, an object of lust [simply] because it is a hole.”²⁶ He so adamantly asserts, “the cult of the hole is anterior to that of the anus... it is initially pre-sexual: in other words, that it contains sexuality in the undifferentiated state that extends beyond it.”²⁷

²⁵ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *War Diaries: Notebooks From a Phoney War*. p. 149.

²⁶ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *War Diaries: Notebooks From a Phoney War*. p. 149.

²⁷ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *War Diaries: Notebooks From a Phoney War*. p. 149.



Fig. 8 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Concravity*. 2011. 10 x 10 x 12 ft. Cardboard, fiberglass insulation, and polyurethane.

It is in this vein of reasoning that I find the critical concept that all things physical, in some manner, point to the metaphysical. Man functions as a microcosm, continually shimmering of the beyond; the very material of our bodies provides glimpses of the immaterial experience of being. Man is matter, but he is unlike all matter in that he has a desire to know from whence he came.

ADAM'S NAVEL

Now let us return our gaze to the navel: a central hole (or some variation thereof) shared by all. Physically, this curious depression marks our physical link to the past as well as our individual existence apart from it. The navel is the first mark that life leaves upon our bodies. Unique as a fingerprint, it is a scar that points to our origins.

There has been much debate in some fundamentalist circles as to whether or not Adam, the so-called “first man”, had a navel. Many creationists have argued that a divine creator literally sculpted our first ancestors, claiming that Adam (as well as Eve) would have no need for a belly button simply because he had no mother.

English naturalist, Philip Henry Gosse (1810-1888), raised eyebrows among this crowd with his book entitled *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot*.²⁸ His overarching hypothesis was that fossil records are not evidence for

²⁸ Gosse, Philip Henry. *Omphalos: An Attempt to Untie the Geological Knot*.

evolution, but were created to make the world seem older than it really is. The title (*omphalos*, Greek for *navel*) alludes to the belly button debate, suggesting that, though Adam would have had no need of a navel, the divine creator gave him one anyway so as to give him the appearance of having a human ancestry.

Trivial as it may be, this controversy (as well as the even greater ongoing debate between creationists and evolutionists) points to the fundamental human desire to comprehend our origins. This quest for knowledge and understanding is just another expression of Kierkegaard's "ultimate paradox" – the attempt to discover what "thought itself cannot think".²⁹ As I've said before, my work is not an attempt to find answers to these questions, but to ponder the fullness that exists *between* the alternatives.

Though literally translated as *navel*, this Greek term, *omphalos*, has, throughout history, come to refer to various symbolic centers, believed to connect the earthly and the divine. In ancient Greece, omphalos stones were used to mark what was believed to be the ancient umbilicus or "navel of the world" and were said to allow direct communication with the gods. The most famous of these was at the Oracle of Delphi (see Fig. 9).

²⁹ Kierkegaard, Søren. *Philosophical Fragments*. p. 37

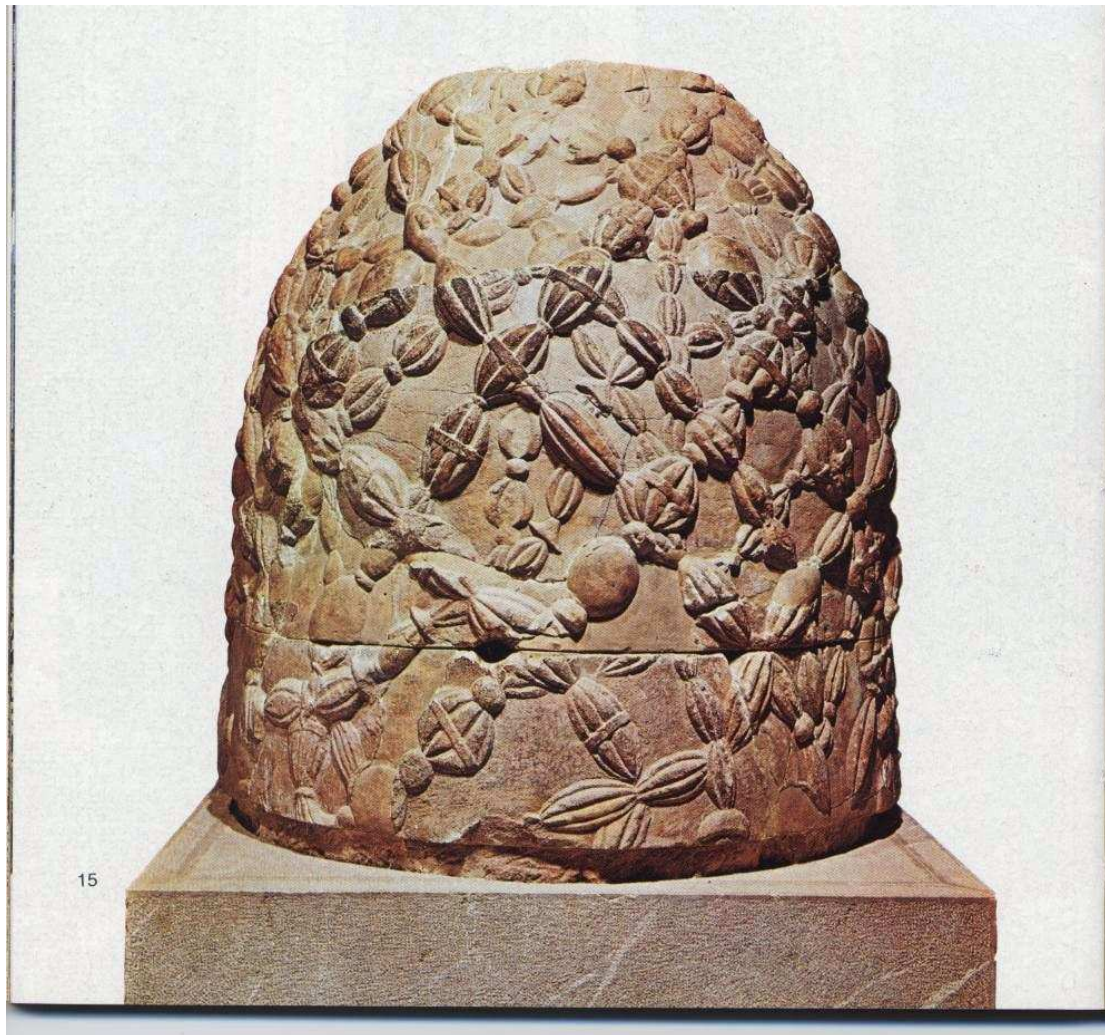


Fig. 9 – Hellenistic or Roman copy of the archaic omphalos (navel-stone) - at Delphi, Delphi Museum.

Interestingly, in Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulcher there is also an omphalos. The existence of this stone is based upon the medieval cosmology, which saw Jerusalem as the spiritual, if not geographical, center of the world.

AXIS MUNDI

Around and around, layer, by, layer, sinuous matter wraps and rises. Reaching upward toward we know not what. The tower (see Fig. 10) appears to waver at its base – poised, perhaps, to retract into itself at any moment, if not to extend itself again to greater heights.



Fig. 10 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Umbilicus Tower*. 2014. 6.5 x 3 x 3 ft. Beef intestines, plastic, cardboard, and bubble wrap.

In form, this work references various types of sacred architecture – ziggurats, minarets, stupas, and steeples, all reaching for the heavens. These structures are manifestations of human attempts to unite the earthly and the divine, the known and the unknown. Across cultures and religions there have been countless sites (both natural and manmade) considered to be the “navel of the world” or *axis mundi* (e.g., world axis, cosmic axis, center of the world). These symbolic centers point to various cosmological myths of origin, suggesting that the world itself was created, or initiated, from a central point.

This symbolism has its parallel in mankind himself. Just as a human belly button marks a body’s physical connection to its past AND its individual existence apart from that past, the various “navels of the world” are evidence of the fundamental human desire to know where we are headed and from whence we have come. They point to the immaterial void of longing in us all.

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My work is driven by primal urges and the ambiguous allure of origins, thus *Umbilicus Tower* (Fig. 10) is first and foremost a manifestation of urgings; its impetus was primarily material. It began as I noticed, while handling some animal intestines (talk about primal), that when bunched and inverted, the innards resembled a belly button (though Freud would likely call it an anus) and a still-attached umbilical cord. This curious depression, then, became the tip of the

tower, which now reaches beyond any viewer's level of sight. The tower grew in height as I wrapped the sinuous matter repeatedly, round and around in concentric rings - another impulse, a motif, that manifests frequently in my work.

There is something quite comforting and meditative about the predictability of a repeated act and its predetermined (but not-so-predictable) actualization. This process affirms the revelatory nature of my studio practice wherein aspects of the material/physical subject often find their parallel in an immaterial/metaphysical object. Made of actual organic conduit, *Umbilicus Tower* not only functions as a metaphor for union, sustenance, and gestation (both physically and spiritually), but its very formation (i.e., the primal urge within me to make it) points to an originative creative act that is imprinted on my being.



Fig. 11 – Lauren Frances Evans. Studio. Photo taken on 17 April, 2014.

The urge to create is an umbilicus, a *metaxu*, in itself; the very existence of such an urge reflects the nature of an original creator, and, at the same time, is an effect of the inevitable separation therefrom. Thus, all acts of making can be seen as intermediary attempts to bridge the gap between the known and the unknowable.

Metaxu is everywhere, and its manifestations abound. In this thesis, I have discussed a number of material and immaterial interfaces (e.g., the body, holes, desire, humanity, sacred sites) – all of which concern mankind and the divided nature of his existence in space, time, and matter. Even still, I have only grazed

the surface of this deep and wide expanse. The work I make is an ongoing examination of such – an endless (but not futile) pursuit of the unreachable. As I mine the depths of my person, I simultaneously climb the heights of the cosmos, continually reminded that my humanness is a microcosm. The very material of my flesh and its urges embodies the immeasurable breadth of existence.

APPENDIX

The following figures are installation images from *METAXU: an MFA exhibition*, on view at the University of Maryland's Art Gallery, May 1 – May 23, 2014. In conjunction with this thesis paper, these works showcase the culmination of 3 years of graduate study and creative research.



Fig. 12 – Lauren Frances Evans. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 13 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Umbilicus Tower*. 2014. Beef intestines, plastic, cardboard, and bubble wrap. 6.5 ft. x 3 ft. x 3 ft. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 14 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Decreation II* (detail). 2014. collage on paper. 3 x 3 in.



Fig. 15 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Decreation III, II, and VI*. 2014. collage on paper. 3 x 3 in.
20 x 20 in. mounted & framed. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 16 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Dangle*. 2013. beef intestine, fiberglass insulation, and false eyelashes. 6 x 2 x 2 in. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 17 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Dangle and Becoming (From Within to Without)*. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 18 – Lauren Frances Evans. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 19 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Becoming (From Within To Without)*. 2014. Synthetic wig hair, animal hair, water-based polyurethane, cardboard, and plaster. 3.5 x 3 x 2.5 ft. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 20 – Lauren Frances Evans. *We Can't Pull Ourselves Up To Heaven By The Hair (Samson's Foible)*. 2014. Synthetic hair extensions, fiberglass resin, pork caul fat, cardboard, and light. 8 x 2.5 x 2.5 ft. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.

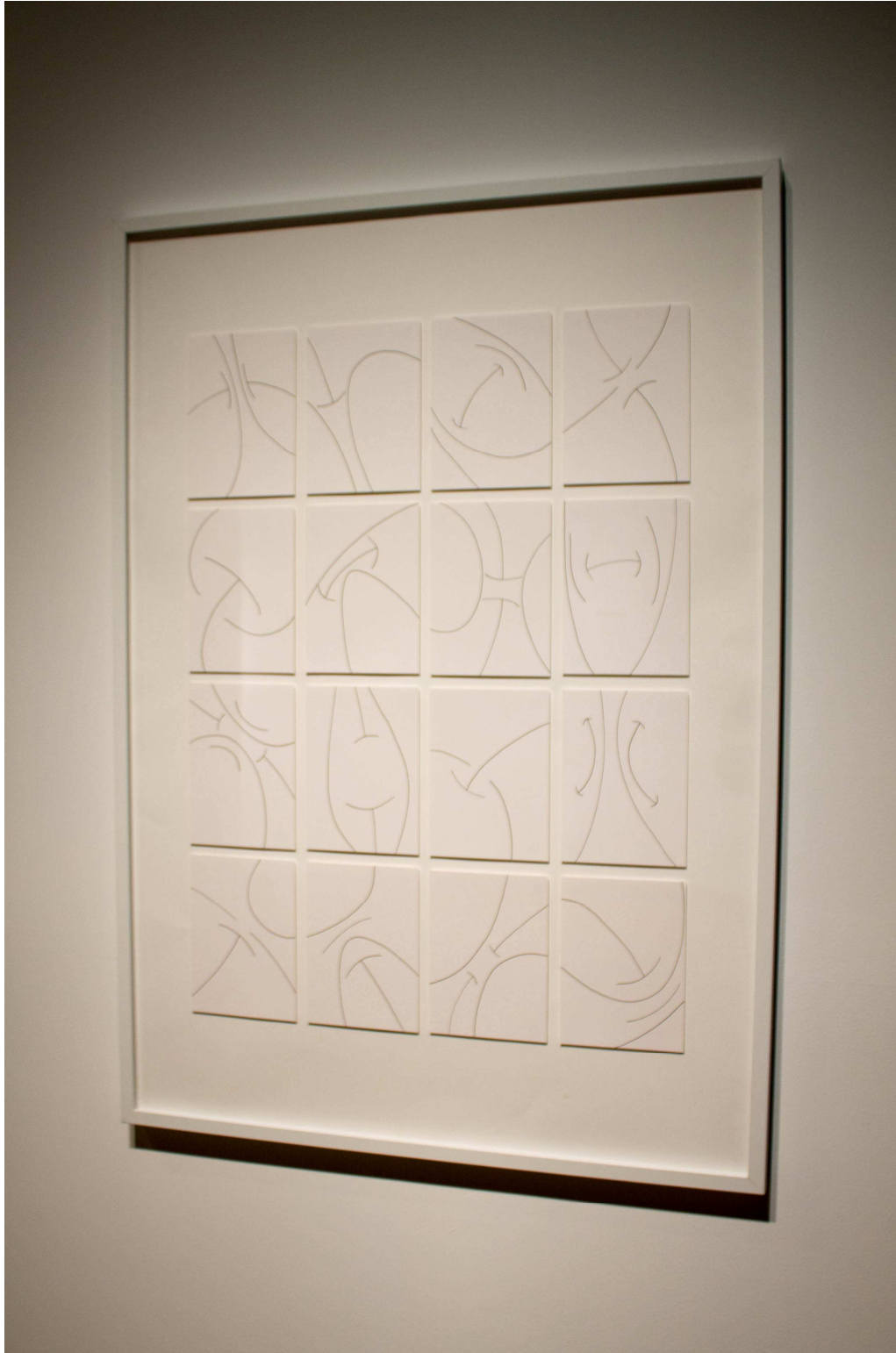


Fig. 21 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Simultaneity (Diagrams of Feeling)*, 2014. Ink on paper. 5 x 7 in. each, 27 x 39 in. mounted & framed. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.

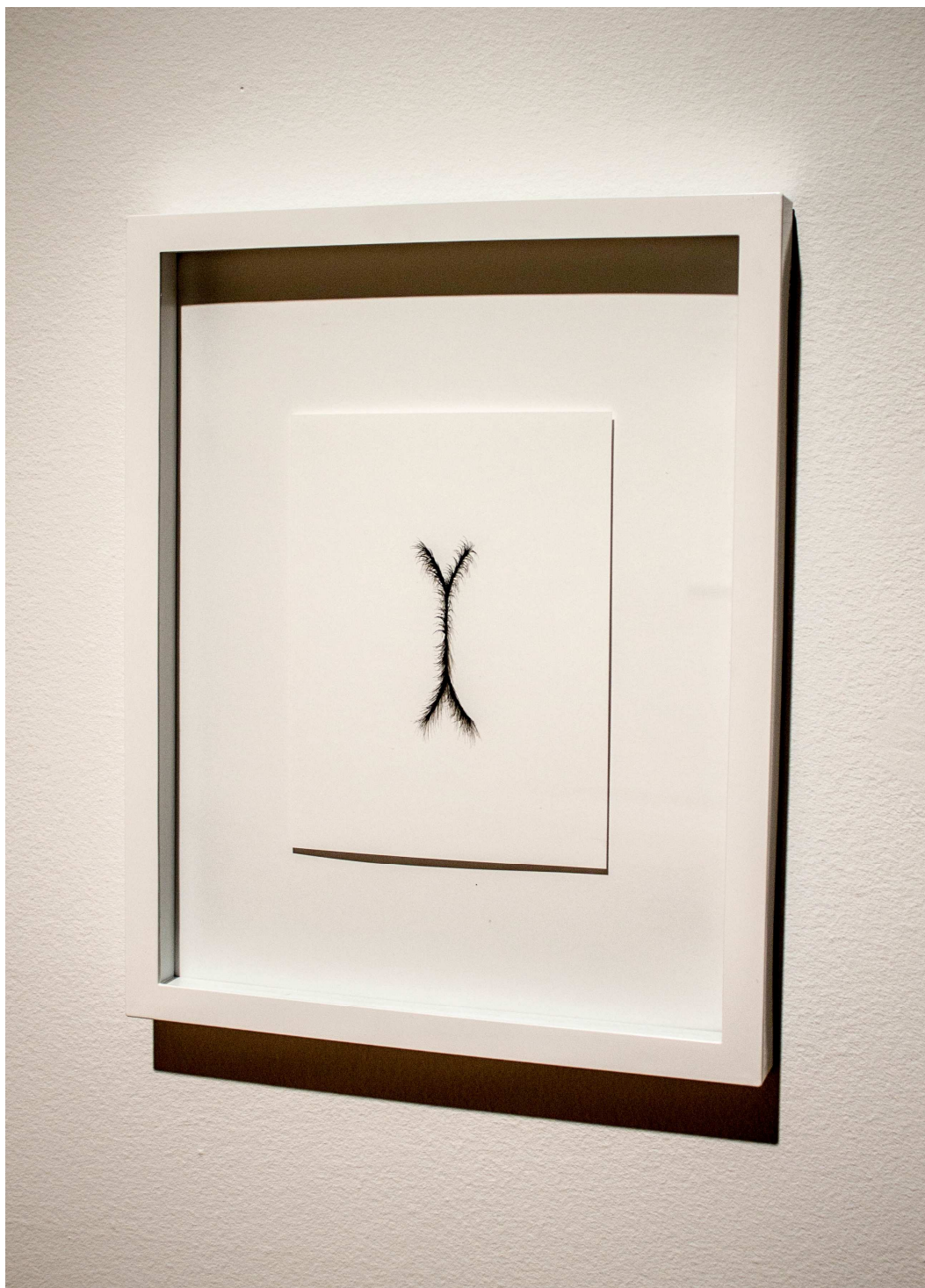


Fig. 22 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Cleave*. 2013. False eyelashes on paper. 1 x 3.5 in., 12 x 15 in. mounted & framed. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 23 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Follicle*, 2014. Human hair extensions, synthetic wig hair, hog intestines, fiberglass insulation, and pvc. 20 x 4 x 4 in. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 24 – Lauren Frances Evans. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 25 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Scrunch*. 2013. Beef intestine, chewed gum, polyfil, and acrylic nails. 2 x 4 x 2 in. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 26 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Gob*. 2014. Synthetic wig hair, hot glue, teeth, and fiberglass insulation. 3 x 4 x 4 in. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 27 – Lauren Frances Evans. *Sprout*, 2013. Synthetic wig hair, false eyelashes, and pigmented plaster navel casting. 3 x 3 x 3 in. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 28 – Lauren Frances Evans & Lauren Shea Little. *Point of Meeting*. 2014. Drywall, cast plaster enlarged body castings, pvc, and recorded sounds of artists' making processes. 10 x 16 x 3 ft. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.



Fig. 29 – Lauren Frances Evans & Lauren Shea Little. *Point of Meeting*. 2014. Drywall, cast plaster enlarged body castings, pvc, and recorded sounds of artists' making processes. 10 x 16 x 3 ft. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.

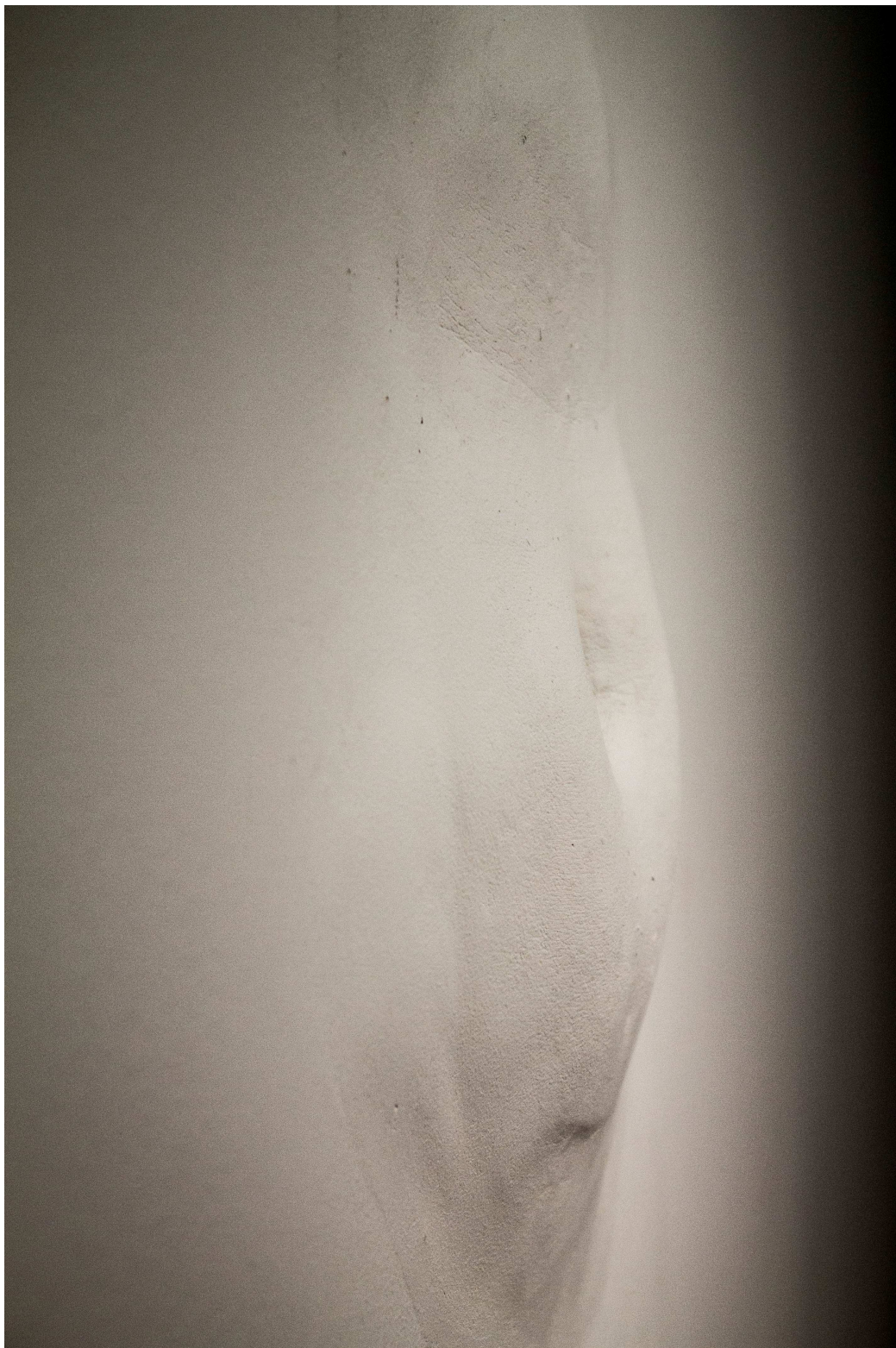


Fig. 30 – Lauren Frances Evans & Lauren Shea Little. *Point of Meeting* (detail). 2014. Drywall, cast plaster enlarged body castings, pvc, and recorded sounds of artists' making processes. 10 x 16 x 3 ft. Installation shot. *METAXU: an MFA thesis exhibition*.

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