



Mount

Date

2011

Primary Maker

David Kennedy Cutler

Medium

Archival inkjet on Japanese paper, data of compact disks, and pigmented cotton

Description

The artist David Kennedy Cutler's studio is located in the Greenpoint neighborhood of Brooklyn—the site of one of the largest urban oil spills in American history, which was set in motion in the nineteenth century when toxic waste left behind by multiple petroleum refineries began seeping from the soil into the adjacent Newtown Creek. (The spill was discovered only in 1978 and is still being remediated today.) Cutler's interest in the spill is driven less by the environmental disaster in its own right than by disbelief at the years of indifference on the part of workers and corporations as well as at the continued apathy or ignorance of the current residents. The related works he created partake of “a larger current in my work of struggle and conflict between the body and its mediated experience of the exterior world.” In 2008, he began photographing the oil-slick rainbows that appear atop puddles of water in Greenpoint after a storm. He considered these to be “manifestations of the unseen amalgamation of oil below.”

Since graduating from the Rhode Island School of Design in 2001,

Cutler has explored sculpture from a bodily perspective, often through the lens of technology. When invited to an artist's residency at the experimental papermaking studio Dieu Donn  in 2011, he used paper pulp to make Mount—a stalagmite-like form similar to a series of resin and Plexiglas works he created in the same year. This tall sculpture, like much of Cutler's work, refers to the human body, because the viewer cannot help but identify with it in scale. The color of the dyed paper—similar to mud in texture, prior to drying—is meant to evoke asphalt; indeed, the sculptor thought of folding a slab of pavement in half when creating the work. Film of the type used to coat compact discs imparts an iridescent effect, referencing both oil and the flecks of mica that often appear within asphalt as well as the literal layering of information so present in Cutler's work. Dieu Donn  was founded in 1976 in downtown Manhattan to introduce artists to the medium of handmade paper. In 2016, it moved to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, where it continues to offer classes to the public, publish editions, and award residencies to emerging and seasoned artists, many of whom have had no prior experience working with handmade paper. Cutler's work was included in the Wellin Museum's Spring 2016 exhibition Pure Pulp: Contemporary Artists Working in Paper at Dieu Donn  and was subsequently donated to the museum by the artist. (SOURCE: Alcauskas, INNOVATIVE APPROACHES, HONORED TRADITIONS, 2017) Created by the artist at Dieu Donn  Papermill.

Dimensions

Overall: 81 x 18 x 17 in. (205.7 x 45.7 x 43.2 cm)