

At

first glance, the series in this exhibition might seem disparate, having little to do with each other. However, this is not the case. They represent my attempts to triangulate an understanding of a single natural phenomenon: ice. Although ice is not the only source in the natural world for my sculptural probings, it is the dominant one and has been so for decades. Ice exhibits mind-numbing variability and variety on a visual plane, and, on a scientific one, understanding its behavior is key to understanding many other components of our world. This, and the fact that ice is made of nothing but water, cold, and light, amply qualifies it for a demanding metaphorical role. To me, it is not enough just to point out something of beauty and interest; it has to have embedded metaphorical meaning, and meaning about something that matters.

Below, I will briefly introduce the various series exhibited here. More information can be found on my website, www.art-farm.net/homeGabe.htm. First, I will mention that I am well aware that many of my titles are mouthfuls, from ancient Greek. There are several reasons for this. I care about titles—indeed I find “untitled” to be most often evidence of intellectual laziness. Greek lends itself to the creation of new words, as all my titles are. From a root word, prefixes and suffixes can be added to layer meaning. As well, it is a reference to early naturalists who were almost always classically trained. When confronted by the new and unfamiliar they often fell back on Greek and Latin to describe the unfamiliar. Theirs was a brave culture, both physically and intellectually, and they deserve our gratitude and imitation.

Rhegmalogia

“Rhegma” is Greek for “fracture,” and “logia” signifies “study of.” This series, composed of several sub-series as outlined below, consists of work intended for interior, wall-mounted display. Aluminum is generally the dominant material, both for its light weight and its subtle reaction to strong light.

Sympiesis (pushing together) is related to the phenomenon of a mountain glacier’s forcing itself into and onto an ice shelf. This can be seen in one of the polar parallax series.

Interrogation “Interrogation” appears here in the title, but it is also a lens that I use in several series where I employ scale shift, meaning that a section or sections are thought of as being zoomed in for closer scrutiny. This is related to scientific computer imaging, which has recently brought about great changes in many fields.

Euxenia (good guest) This sub-series is intended to suggest icebergs frozen into a pack. Euxenia #3 also applies “interrogation” thinking.

Treasury of the Siphnians This piece could be an imagined aerial view of pack, but it could also refer to crystals, biological cells, or other things. The reference to the treasury at Delphi (c. 525 B.C.) is primarily visual.

Euneclasteia In geology, a clast is a particle of any size, inevitably an erosional product that is deposited in a foreign environment. In Greek, “eune” is bed. This is a common term in sedimentary geology and also has many more domestic connotations.



Empurologia

A case could be made that these pieces are a subseries of Rhegmalogia, but I choose to consider them a discrete series, since they have taken on a life of their own. This work is derivative of a trip I took to the high Arctic with the Canadian Coast Guard in late autumn, as the sea began to freeze for the winter. I became captivated by the phenomenon of finger rafting in nilas, young, salty, flexible ice. When it is driven together by wind or currents, instead of rafting (where one side rides over the other) or ramparting (where edges are fragmented and driven up into “walls”), there is an alternation of which side rides over the other, similar to weaving. I found this “some for me, some for you” dynamic extremely compelling metaphorically. After much struggle, I only made sense of this artistically with the introduction of illuminated glass.

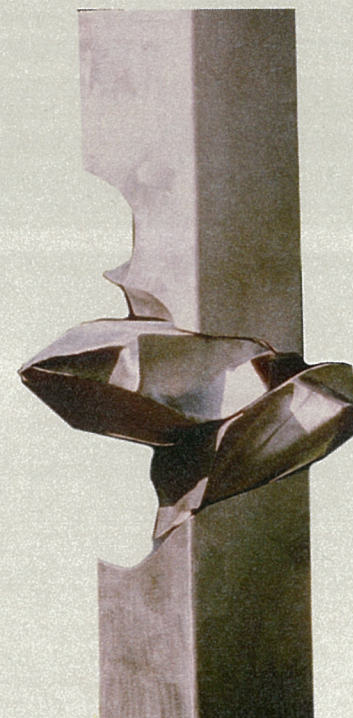


Frieze: Diasematon

Frieze is a series derivative of my having witnessed huge tabular icebergs in the Ross Sea of Antarctica. Formally, these bergs have straight top and bottom edges (the waterline), and all the articulation is on the edges, like a musical score at times hundreds of kilometers long (see leading image). Diasematon, like Interrogation, can apply to several series. It is a pattern in which each element of an array is penetrated by thin bronze sheets that align. I think of each element as a one-dimensional “data set”; it is only by synthesizing the information from the array that a picture can emerge of the structures between the “experiments.” This is relevant to all experimental science and many other spheres of endeavor.

Piesterion

Euthesauros Compositionally, series Piesterion is somewhat similar to Frieze in that parallel lines enclose most of the whole. In this case, the genesis is the ice cores drilled out of many ice formations that contain so much invaluable information. Through them, we know more about paleoclimates than we do about our own; if you don’t know where we have been, how can you surmise where we are going? All these pieces are rhomboid in section; I deem this of more interest than the actual cylinders of the cores, since there is an axis. Most members of series Piesterion are intended for outdoor display directly in the ground; these are intended for indoor display. The symbolic “cores” are supported by wood frames that are intended to evoke museum displays of perhaps a century ago, during the “heroic age” of polar exploration. The suggestion that ice might be in a museum might be a bit ham-handed, but the suggestion that the information it contains is precious is not. It is of utmost importance.



Polar Parallax

When I return from expedition, I am predictably too stunned for sculpture; as a result, I initially often turn to works on paper. When I came off The Ice in 2006, I thought that photography would be the first approach, but just blowing the photos up seemed too facile, too tech driven. Eventually, the pieces evolved to the pattern seen here, where a photo is printed on glass, and, via the magic of digital projection, a drawing is created of the same image at the same scale and is mounted 1-2 centimeters behind. Thus, the faithfulness of the photo is complemented by the humanity of the drawn mark. When the piece is strongly illuminated, there are three layers of information: the photo, the drawing, and the shadows cast on the nether surface.

These pieces have so far proved unphotographable. They are utterly dependent on our binocular vision to inform us that the drawing is behind the glass. No camera, however fine, has more than one "eye," and so cannot compute this. Stereoscopic photography exists, of course, but it cannot be applied to the Web.

Photos

In the field, I shoot in three ways. In the first, I attempt to record imagery that will be useful to my work, with great attention to lighting and composition. Second, I record aspects that might be useful to me in the studio as an archive of composition. Being shot with no regard to composition or lighting, they are not intended for display. In the third approach, images are captured for their own sake, without regard to utility to sculpture.

Sometimes these images change categories, or find membership in more than one.

Finger rafting (Empurologia) can be observed in some of these.

—Gabriel Warren, July 11, 2011



Polar



Probingqs

SCULPTURE
BY GABRIEL WARREN