

Stone Series

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The increasing pervasiveness of the digital computer in all aspects of contemporary life is giving rise to many new conceptions, attitudes, and outlooks about the world. Among these are some significant shifts in how we understand nature and our place in it. From one notable perspective, nature is now to be understood as a vast digital computer, with the computation of bits of information being the fundamental force behind the phenomena we experience (including our consciousness). The implication of this view is that given the necessary technology with which to achieve it, a complete understanding of nature is possible. From another perspective, nature cannot be reduced to a machine, and no matter how sophisticated our technologies become, the inner workings of nature will forever elude our grasp. In between these two poles lies a vast array of attitudes and perspectives, each of which must take into account the unprecedented ways in which we are able to simulate nature's processes using the speed and power of our computing technologies.

For the past several years, these issues and their far-reaching ramifications have informed the direction of my artmaking practice. Of particular interest to me are two overarching questions: First, how does the "shape" of our knowledge of nature (today heavily digitally inflected) affect our psychological attitudes toward the natural world and ourselves? And second, what are the implicit yearnings that underlie our culture's current obsession with technology?

In my work, I hope to suggest (in a non-didactic and open-ended manner) some of the richness and complexity of these questions. By creating forms and configurations that evoke, in a very general sense, the mechanized work of computation while at the same time alluding to the intricate world of organic form, my aim is to achieve a kind of visual and cognitive ambiguity that moves one into a contemplative mode of awareness. Many contrasting pairs or dichotomies such as analog/digital, random/ordered, parts/wholes, and stillness/movement are invoked toward this end. The ambiguous nature of the forms is key, for I believe it is this quality, unique to art, that can generate a mode of consciousness or a way of knowing that is wholly different from our habitual approach to knowledge. If art has anything to contribute to the timely issues of today's culture, it is, as James Baldwin said of literature in his time, to "lay bare the questions that have been hidden by the answers."

In addition to collecting a wide variety of visual references culled from the iconography of computer culture, my working process involves the close observation of organic forms in their natural environment. Among the natural forms I am most interested in are cloud formations, water patterns (ripples, waves, and flow streams), botanical structures such as root systems, stems, and vines, and the bark patterns of trees. Common to all these is the conspicuousness of pattern, which we can presume to be the result of an invisible code or set of instructions that inheres in nature.

Although I have recently concentrated my efforts on making paintings, I have in the past explored a variety of media including sculpture, lithography, and site-specific installation. I am generally open to any medium that will embody the ideas that intrigue me in a uniquely meaningful way.