

Shirley Wegner

Workspace Program 2008-09

Artist's statement

My process at Dieu Donn  began with an idea to create collages as part of my series *Studies for Construction Sites and Ruins*, which explores the ambiguity between construction and destruction sites. As I began my residency, I realized that the way I approached paper was slowly shifting away from working *on* paper to working *with* paper; in other words, paper was no longer a blank sheet onto which the image was mounted, but rather it became a pliable and sculptural material in and of itself. Working through the challenges offered in the residency was extremely important to my practice. It taught me to let go of any preconceptions I may have had, and to embrace the endless possibilities that lie in the process of papermaking.

Tractor Traces is an installation made of hundreds of paper forms in different sizes and colors. Unlike the imprinted traces of tractor tracks, these cast traces shift from negative to positive, from an indentation to a relief. To create the piece, I first sculpted the traces individually and created a large mold. Each of the traces was then cast into the mold by layering, pressing, and compressing the paper pulp. As the work evolved, color was introduced, and I arrived at the four earth tones in this installation.

Tractor Traces was inspired by an earlier installation where the traces were cast in ceramic and suspended in midair to form a skeleton-like shape. The installation at Dieu Donn  offers an allusion to drawing, as the empty wall replaces the paper and allows paper itself to exist as a three dimensional mark. *Tractor Traces* recreates an imprint of signs left in a desolate landscape. In its fragility and vulnerability, it allows for the harsh image of the tractor to resurface and to coexist with the soft trail it left behind. It is left to the viewer to tread the fine line between a site of construction and a landscape of demolition.

My thanks to Steven Orlando, Creative Projects Director, and to interns Jose Estevez, Caitlin Everett, Andree Ferdinand, Julia Goodman, and Tatiana Kronberg.

– Shirley Wegner

About the artist

Shirley Wegner was born in Tel Aviv, Israel, and lives and works in New York. She received a Master of Fine Arts from Yale University School of Arts in 2002. In 2009, she was a recipient of the Islip Art Museum Winter Studio Program Residency. In 2010 she will have a solo exhibition at Habres+Partner Gallery, Vienna. Wegner has had numerous national and international solo and group exhibitions, including: On Landscape, Gray, and



Top: Detail of *Tractor Traces*, 2009, cast cotton handmade paper installed on gallery wall. Dimensions variable.

Bottom: The artist, far right, with studio intern Tatiana Kronberg and collaborator Steve Orlando, with an early version of *Tractor Traces*.

Other Geographies, 2007, a solo exhibition at Museum Goch in Germany; Gray Area, at Habres + Partner Gallery, Vienna (2007); Inbetween, Zwischenraum, Düsseldorf (2007); Aqua Art Miami, Habers + Partner Gallery, Miami (2007); Connected, Altes Museum, Mönchengladbach, Germany (2006); a video projected at Close Connections, Art Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum (2006). Wegner's work is in the collections of several museums and foundations, including: Goch Museum, Germany, Tel Aviv Museum of Art, and the collection of the City of Mönchengladbach, Germany.

About the Workspace Program

Established in 1990, the Workspace Program offers six annual residencies to New York State emerging artists to create new work in handmade paper. The program seeks to encourage emerging artists to explore the creative possibilities of handmade paper, develop this art form, and promote the Workspace artists through exhibitions of their work produced at Dieu Donné, as well as through print and digital format. For more information about the Workspace Program, or to learn how to apply, visit www.dieudonne.org.

Support

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