FLUX
SIGNÉ STUART
JAN 20 - JUNE 20, 2023
HODGES GALLERY

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
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Exhibition Statement

*Flux* alludes to natural and manmade networks from rivers, neural pathways, and quantum fields to systems of transportation and communications—everything interconnected and in flux. My visual vocabulary emphasizes line: single lines emerging from material; low relief line patterns forming flux fields and networks of relationships. Recent cut paper works, drawing/sculpture hybrids, generally consist of two or more overlapping panels hung away from the wall to create shadows. The cut paper works have evolved into achromatic works, unintentionally referencing the unified field theory of everything.

Light is an auxiliary medium, creating subtle and The field of consciousness contains everything known and unknown. The known is in the space and time of here and now. Artists and scientists use their observations and languages of metaphor and mathematics to move this threshold. Creativity, imagination, and desire continuously move the threshold between the known and unknown. Stones seem to be still and solid, yet on the quantum level of reality, the atomic particles of stones are in constant motion (flux) and there is considerable space between the moving atoms... a paradox between what we see and what is.

The artworks in *FLUX* reflect this paradox. Each piece is a visual metaphor of stillness in motion.

My making process relies on both intuition and intellect, juggles the uncertainties between concepts of order and chaos and acknowledges paradox and relativity. It is a process of experimentation and negotiation between ideas and materials, mimicking the ways consciousness combines and recombines subatomic particles into diverse forms of matter and energy: This becoming That.

— Signe Stuart

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Stones seem to be still and solid, yet on the quantum level of reality, the atomic particles of stones are in constant motion (flux) and there is considerable space between the moving atoms... a paradox between what we see and what is. The artworks in FLUX reflect this paradox. They are visual metaphors of stillness in motion.

When I’m working in the studio, there is an ongoing negotiation between ideas and materials with intuition and improvisation playing a big role. My process involves reconstructing paper into fields of diverse linear patterns that form textured topographies. These patterns and textures are embedded in and emerge from a matrix of paper, graphite, and acrylic. Color is spare because the natural white paper surfaces are the most reflective as light moves across the surfaces. The cutout paper pieces are drawing/low-relief sculpture hybrids, revealing space behind the surface. This allows for complex and dramatic plays of light and shadow on the wall and adds to the sensation of movement. Other works incorporate folding, adding a dimension that references interior space. I view my single panel works as objects and my multiple and overlapping paneled pieces as events in a space-time continuum.

Pattern systems are my visual metaphors for flux. They allude to natural and manmade networks in nature and culture from rivers and vascular systems to patterns of connectivity between individuals and communities like communication and transportation. Everything is interconnected, evolving, and changing. I want my artworks to resonate with viewers and move them toward seeing everything in the universe as a consequence of endless shape shifting, combining, and recombining.

— Signe Stuart

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
ART/SCIENCE

What is the nature of Nature? Why are things the way they are? What existed before matter and energy, before space and time, before the Big Bang?

I think consciousness IS before everything. It is the a priori creative principle; the logic and pulse of creation and destruction, the driver of evolution. Consciousness might be an infinite electromagnetic field vibrating within and beyond space and time. Matter and energy, always in flux, are manifestations of consciousness.

The field of consciousness contains everything known and unknown. The known is in the space and time of here and now. Creativity, imagination, and desire continuously move the threshold between the known and unknown. Artists and scientists use their observations and languages of metaphor and mathematics to move this threshold.

The questions of why things are the way they are have inspired me to spend my life investigating them. I make art in order to see what my answers to these questions look like.

My making process relies on both intuition and intellect, juggles the uncertainties between concepts of order and chaos and acknowledges paradox and relativity. It is a process of experimentation and negotiation between ideas and materials, mimicking the ways consciousness combines and recombines subatomic particles into diverse forms of matter and energy: This becoming That. My sewn canvas paintings, works on paper and scroll paintings reflect these quantum events.

— Signe Stuart

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Beginning in the early 1960s, Signe Stuart’s professional career has now spanned more than 65 years. Her approach to art making has always relied on experimentation and rule breaking. Using the materials and form of painting, she breaks away from the standard rectangle and concepts of framing. For the artist, a sheet of paper is a metaphorical slice of time and space, a context in which to construct ideas about the connections and intersections of consciousness with matter and energy.

Stuart has been in at nearly thirty solo museum exhibits including such venues as the South Dakota Art Museum (where a career retrospective is planned for later 2023-24), the Roswell Museum and Art Center (Roswell NM), the Sheldon Art Museum (Lincoln, NE), the North Dakota Museum of Art (Grand Forks, ND) the American Swedish Museum (Minneapolis, MN), the Nordic Heritage Museum (Seattle, WA), Northern Arizona University Art Museum (Flagstaff, AZ), the Plains Art Museum (Fargo, ND), the Sioux City Art Center (Sioux City Iowa), and the Montgomery Museum of Art (Montgomery, AL), among others. One of Stuart’s 60-foot-wide abstract narrative scroll paintings, Onomatopoeia, was the subject of a musical piece by composer Jonathan Chenette which premiered with a performance at the Albuquerque Art Museum in 2019 in conjunction with the exhibition, Crossing Boundaries: Synesthesia in American Art.

Stuart has received numerous awards including an NEA Painting Fellowship, two NEA mural commissions, a South Dakota Arts Council Artists Fellowship, and a New Mexico Experimental Glass Workshop Fellowship.
Interactive Prompt

Signe Stuart uses cut paper to create her incredible sculptural pieces. Inspired by the idea that things are always in Flux and changing with the world around us, create your own cut paper piece and move it around various light sources to create unique shadows. Pay attention to the way the mood and emotion of the piece shifts in different kinds of light.

To create a cut paper piece similar to Signe Stuart's, draw intersecting lines on a piece of paper, then selectively cut out the shapes made by the lines. Try crumpling the paper or creating a 3D object with some tape before lighting it from various angles.
Behind the Scenes
Installation Images

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Works in the Exhibit

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart
*KORE 2*, 2018
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
68.5” by 28.5”
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart
*KORE 3*, 2018
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
64” by 28”
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart

*DOUBLE KORE*, 2019
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
67” by 37”
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart
$GLACIER\ 1$, 2017/2018
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
22" by 52" (2 panels)
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart

GLACIER 2, 2017/2018
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
20” by 67”
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
**Signe Stuart**

*WAVE 1, 2017/2018*

Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper

21” by 64”

Courtesy of the artist

**Photography by Danny Cassese**
Signe Stuart

*ENFOLD 1*, 2018

Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper

16” by 22.5”

Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart

ENFOLD 2, 2018
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
10.5” by 11”
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart

*ENFOLD 3, 2018*

Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper

14” by 12.5”

Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart

*FLUXWALL 1, 2019*

Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
69” by 97” (5 panels)

Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
**Signe Stuart**  
*FLUXWALL 2, 2019/2020*  
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper  
66” by 115” (6 panels)  
Courtesy of the artist

**Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell**
Signe Stuart

*FLUXWAVE*, 2019
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
37” by 125’ (4 panels)
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart

*INFLUX*, 2021

Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper

55" by 89" (5 panels)

Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart

SCATTER, 2021/2022
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
72” by 70” (7 panels)
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
Signe Stuart

MOVING OUT, 2022
Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper
66” by 77” (3 panels)
Courtesy of the artist

Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell
**Signe Stuart**

*Sphinx, 2022*

Acrylic/graphite on cut mulberry paper

63” by 67” (2 panels & 1 strip)

Courtesy of the artist

**Photography by Andrew and Anjula Caldwell**
Additional Resources

Signe Stuart Website

ARTnews — Signe Stuart

Southwest Contemporary — Distilled Presence: Minimalist Works by Dana Newmann, Signe Stuart, and Judy Tuwaletstiwa

Pasatiempo — Line by line ... by line: Artist Signe Stuart

Cassilhaus — Signe Stuart

South Dakota State University — Stuart Artist-in-Residence

Wikipedia — Signe Margaret Stuart

Signe Stuart | For the Time Being

South Dakota State University — Joseph & Signe Stuart Papers
THANK YOU

FROM THE TURCHIN CENTER FOR THE VISUAL ARTS

The Turchin Center for the Visual Arts at Appalachian State University engages visitors from the university, community, nation and beyond in creating unique experiences through dynamic and accessible exhibition, education, outreach and collection programs. These programs inspire and support a lifelong engagement with the visual arts and create opportunities for participants to learn more about themselves and the world around them.

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