

Audra Wolowiec

Workspace Program 2017

Wolowiec's interest in working with sound is visualized throughout her work and became an underlying process that informed the material investigations in the papermaking studio. In developing her *waveform* series, the application of water was utilized along with repeating, radial gestures that alluded to waves of sound. For this process, she made graphic representations of various sound frequencies by painting directly onto netting. This netting was laid on a sheet of paper pulp, and working with Studio Collaborator Amy Jacobs, the "blow-out" technique was used to apply pressurized water to displace the pulp surrounding the imagery. After meticulously removing the screen, the wave patterns in pulp were then laid onto a base sheet in the wet process.

Turning to the paper casting process, Wolowiec created modular cast sculptures that reference acoustic tiles used in sound recording studios. Casting pigmented pulp by hand in rubber molds, she utilized subtle shades in the pigmented pulp to alternately embolden and mute the "tone" of these objects, drawing the viewer into the material surface that invites a sonic read.



During my residency at Dieu Donné, I became fascinated by the aqueous nature of paper pulp and how this might relate to sound. The pulp, while buoyantly suspended in water, responded in wave-like patterns during the papermaking process, creating a call and response between material and movement. The atmospheric qualities of sound, how it is felt but not seen, became parallels to that of water held in the paper vats and screens. I began to research images of how sound traveled through water and came upon a series of photographs of wave interference patterns used in physics demonstrations (most famously by Berenice Abbott, from "Interference of Waves" (1958-1961), using a method she created while working at MIT for illustrating techniques in physics by exposing projections of oscillating waves onto photographic paper). Loosely translating these graphic systems through a combination of diagrams and photographs, I produced sheets of paper that attempted to capture the ephemeral phenomena. As a companion series, I cast a series of pigmented paper pulp into rubber molds taken directly from sound foam panels. These forms vary in tone, from silent to loud, further exploring a sonorous experience through resonant material forms.

It was an enormous gift to work in collaboration with Amy Jacobs—her knowledge, experience, and intuitive problem solving were invaluable during the often labor-intensive days in the papermaking studio.

-Audra Wolowiec



ABOVE: Audra Wolowiec working in the Dieu Donné studio with Amy Jacobs (top) and using water pressure in the creation of her *waveform* works (bottom).

About the Artist

Audra Wolowiec is an interdisciplinary artist whose work oscillates between sculpture, installation, text and performance with an emphasis on sound and the material qualities of language. Her poetic sound installations and experimental language scores often use the gap, space, or breath in between speech—not as forms of negation, but as complex generators of meaning.

Wolowiec’s work has been shown internationally and in the United States at MASS MoCA, Art in General, Studio 10, The Poetry Project, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Stony Brook University, and the Center for Performance Research. Featured in BOMB, Modern Painters, The New York Times, The Brooklyn Rail, CAA Journal, Sound American, and reductive journal. Residencies include Bemis Center for Contemporary Art, Complex Systems Art and Physics Residency at the University of Oregon supported by a National Science Foundation Grant and Dieu Donné. She was the inaugural Artist Educator in Residence at Dia:Beacon and currently teaches at Parsons School of Design and SUNY Purchase.
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About Dieu Donné

Dieu Donné is a leading cultural institution dedicated to serving established and emerging artists through the collaborative creation of contemporary art using the process of hand papermaking.

About the Workspace Program

Established in 1990, the Workspace Program offers annual residencies to New York State emerging artists to create new work in handmade paper. The primary goals of this program are to encourage emerging artists to explore the creative possibilities of handmade paper and to develop this art form through a process of collaboration and experimentation. The Workspace Program is presented to the public through annual exhibitions as well as through print, digital and online formats. For more information or to learn how to apply, visit www.dieudonne.org.

Support

The artistic and educational programs at Dieu Donné are made possible with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature, the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council; and Foundation support including: Lily Auchincloss Foundation, Inc., Milton & Sally Avery Arts Foundation, Inc, Bloomberg Philanthropies, The Ford Foundation - Good Neighbor Program, The Greenwich Collection Ltd., Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation, The Minnow Fund, The New York Community Trust, The O’Grady Foundation, The Partnership Fund for New York City, The Andy Warhol Foundation for Visual Arts, and the Windgate Charitable Foundation along with major individual support.

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