

## Statement of Research

Heather Davis

For my studio practice, phenomena of the uncontrollable natural world, such as the tide, the wind in the leaves, or clouds passing in the sky, are recorded and then projected into, onto and through sculptural objects, composing a meditative atmosphere that translates into a contemplative experience. My work carries the intent of emphasizing value on the wild and the uncultivated in order to inspire reverence for wildness, and to preserve the absence of human control in areas of the natural world.

Sculptural objects in the installations are rough and avant-garde, some referencing disintegration, made with materials that have either synonymous or contrasting physical textures to each other, or to visual textures in the videos. Often, they are reminiscent of natural wonders such as a cumulus cloud, or the cracked earth of a dry river bed.

Translucent media, such as cloth, soap and paper, that have the capability of holding light are favored in some installations, and are paired with opaque media, such as clay, in others. Holding the light of the video in the sculpture itself allows the viewer to engage with the piece from many angles. The video lands on and passes over the sculptural object, continuing to the surface beyond, engaging the whole of the space, and shaping strong shadows that are integral to the concept of the piece.

Viewers' expectations are subverted by playing with scale and perspective. A video of a small leaf may be projected four feet tall, or the expansive tide may be cast into a small bowl. Videos may be recorded at one angle, such as directly up into the sky, and then projected at another angle, such as directly down onto the floor, so that the viewer is looking both up and down at the same time. In one piece, melted soap is poured onto a screen lying horizontally, drips through the fiber of the cloth and solidifies. The screen is then installed vertically so that these drips point out, toward the viewer. As they examine the installation, viewers are pulled close up to the piece by their own curiosity, into an intimate space.

The oscillation of the tide in looped videos creates a feeling of timelessness or circular time, while frozen drips and swirls can evoke a feeling of suspense or anticipation. Some installations are eroded over time and slowly disintegrate. In one of these, frozen sugar water melts, drops and travels in shiny rivulets down hanging strips of rice paper. Beads of sugar water warp and cockle the paper, dehydrate and become syrupy - the beads look like water, but move more slowly, again subverting the viewer's expectations - and finally hang suspended at the bottom edge in elongated drips.

When figures appear in installations, they are placed in a setting of flora, which is repeated in the hair of the figure as an indication of connectedness. As most of us live in a culture separated from nature, within these figures there is a sense of loss and of longing to be more connected to the natural world.