The Logic of Place

Curated by Maria Hinel

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Avenue Louise 430, 1050 Brussels

Bringing together works by Shawanda Corbett, Pam Glick, Naotaka Hiro, Emily Kraus and Brie Ruais, *The Logic of Place* considers the encounter between the artist's body and material as a site of reciprocal exchange. Stepping away from the conventional view of the non-human world as passive and inert, the works in the exhibition variously position materials as vital players in the act of making. The surface and substance of canvas or clay envelop and touch the body, responding to and inflecting its movements, hesitations, and accelerations in space.

Distinct modes of mark-making emerge throughout the exhibition, from the self-imposed logic of a gesture, to a set weight of material, to a mechanism that orients the body in close proximity to the canvas. Within these parameters, the process becomes dialogic – each action elicits a material response that, in turn, redirects the next movement. Form does not proceed from a preconceived image but unfolds progressively through the process itself. By adjusting the range of their actions, the artists make visible the intricate web of connections between bodies and objects – a kind of relational 'place' generated through their encounter.

The title of the exhibition draws on the work of the Japanese philosopher Kitarō Nishida (1870-1945) who developed a highly original system of ideas, influenced in part by his Zen practice. The idea of the 'place' (*basho*) was central to his work, advancing a relational view of the world that goes beyond the Western duality of subject and object. Instead of regarding the human being as the only active agent exerting their will upon the passive world, Nishida argued that each body is 'implaced' in a field of relations that continually co-determine one another. He writes, "Our selves exist as the self-determination of the active world in which inside is outside and outside is inside." The vitality of the world surrounding our bodies is palpable throughout the exhibition, as works spanning painting, drawing, sculpture and ceramics evince the push and pull between gesture and surface, motion and material resistance.

For Nishida, this relational field is also fundamental to self-awareness: the self comes to know itself through its encounters with what lies beyond it. The works in *The Logic of Place* similarly make bodily presence perceptible through traces of movement, scale, pressure, distance and proximity. The experience of the body emerges, therefore, not as a purely inward state, but as something continually formed at the boundary between self and the world.

Reverberating with gestural and repeated marks, now fading, now intensifying across the pictorial plane, **Emily Kraus**'s paintings reveal a cadenced exchange between bodily movement and the weave of the canvas. Evoking a musical score or patterns of wave motion, the compositions suggest the singular process of mark-making that underpins her practice. Kraus positions herself inside an apparatus of her own design, in which the fabric is looped around four poles, forming a receptive and mobile place. Rotating the canvas by hand, Kraus allows the interactions between paint and mechanism to generate the rhythmic patterns that unfold around her body. In *Untitled (Exquisite Corpse #1)* (2025), long, energetic brushstrokes criss-cross with the echoing marks, registering the choreography of improvised action and response. What emerges is a dialogue with the material that subtly unsettles the conventional distinction between the artist as active subject and her medium as passive recipient. As the artist notes, "Over the past few years I have been learning the language of the material and now I am using it to have a conversation." Working on a scale that exceeds the dimensions of her body, the artist continually negotiates the enclosed space of the looped canvas through the force and amplitude of her own movements. The works thus reveal a remarkable attunement between bodily intuition and the logic of the mechanism, making palpable the agency of objects around us.

In *Unfurling Cosmos, 130lbs* (2025) by **Brie Ruais**, channels and furrows in clay appear to flow dynamically outward from the centre, configuring into a radial form composed of fragmented, glistening petals. Employing an amount of clay equivalent to her own weight, the artist follows a predetermined process to achieve a "state of surrender." Placing herself at a fixed point, Ruais begins by pushing the material outward around her body, as far as her arms can reach. Fuelled by the endurance and rapid motions of the artist, this way of working is deeply synergistic – the material directs and extends the body from the 'inside to the outside', situating it within the place of mutual interaction. For Ruais, this mode of working opens up connections to the vibrant forces animating the surrounding world: "Engaging with an equivalent mass of clay creates a threshold where I can encounter something beyond my own corporeality. Through somatic imagining, I begin to embody other forms and forces: water in motion, plants growing, the moon in rotation. The work extends into a much larger field of experience."

Spanning ceramics, painting, performance and dance, **Shawanda Corbett**'s multimedia practice interrogates the notion of a complete body and its relations to mechanised tools that permeate our lives today, down to the pottery wheel. Each vessel, upright and opening upwards, evokes at once a human presence and the undercurrents of personal and social experiences lying beneath the surface. Titled *The Golden Era: The Foundation of the Sinnerman*, her new series of vessels and paintings on paper brings together an enquiry into Black experience in America with Corbett's direct explorations of being in the body. Drawing in part on her training with Japanese ceramicists, the artist has developed a unique mode of throwing clay that relies on one hand and centrifugal force – a process that heightens her sensitivity to clay's material properties. As she notes, "each bag of clay has its own memory so I just let the clay take the form it wants to be."

In **Pam Glick**'s paintings, continuous cursive lines coalesce into dynamic, pulsing compositions that evince the vigour and endurance of her pictorial approach. Lace-like, her intricate networks of lines seem to expand, overlap and dissolve into the fields of colour beneath. Glick begins by mapping a grid of guiding lines in pencil, establishing a loose framework for the composition. Working with the canvas laid flat on the floor, the artist constructs a ground of monochrome colour fields, before adding her signature looping marks. Positioning herself on a wheeled platform that allows her to glide across the canvas, Glick deliberately maintains close proximity to its surface. There is a distinct athleticism to this process – her all-over marks evoke automatic writing while remaining resolutely grounded in the rhythm of the body. For Glick, this way of working allows unexpected spatial relationships to emerge beyond conscious planning.

Staging the tension between haptic and visual experience, **Naotaka Hiro** explores a particular paradox of bodily perception: while the body constitutes our most immediate experience of being, much of it remains inaccessible to our own vision. Working across drawing, painting, sculpture and film, Hiro pursues this enquiry by positioning himself in direct, often physically constraining relationships with the material. In his works on board, the artist crawls beneath a suspended wooden panel, alternating between intuitive mark-making from underneath and critical observation of the surface above. The process unfolds through a continuous oscillation between what Hiro describes as the positions of actor and director, subject and object, the instinctive and the analytical. Rather than seeking to produce a faithful representation of the body, these procedures expose the limits of self-perception, allowing rhythmic sinuous forms to emerge through the discrepancy between bodily sensation and visual input. The resulting marks, abrasions and irregularities register the artist's physical presence while simultaneously pointing towards an interiority that can never be fully apprehended from the outside.

– Maria Hinel