

Critical frame

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Between reading books, papers and articles, watching documentaries and attending talks, lectures and seminars, there has always been one source that inspired me the most (and became a catalyst to the exploration mentioned above).

An exhibition.

At the Postwar Modern at Barbican, I was lucky enough to discover an excellent work by Mary Martin - *Spiral Movement* which was a breakthrough in my thinking.

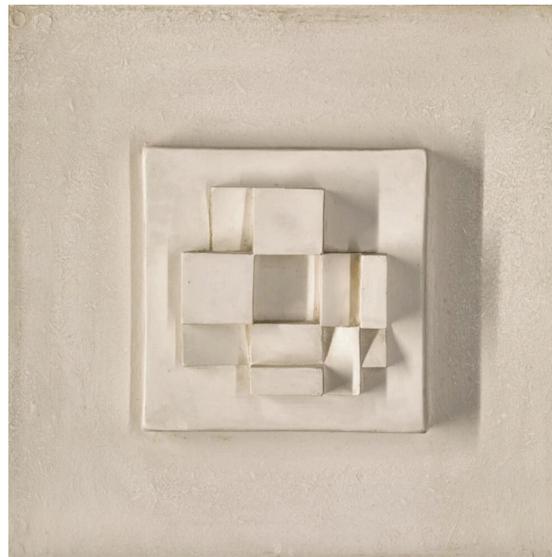


Figure 1: Mary Martin 'Spiral Movement' (1951)

Placing sculptures in the frame like a painting made me start to consider the existence of one medium in another, crossing boundaries, stimulating differently, and expanding thinking about how the medium can exist and ways of presenting.

On these grounds, I started to rethink my photography as only the image in the frame. I began to ponder its existence in other mediums but also situate it on the border of two or a few.

Spiral Movement - extraordinarily simple yet complicated, communicating with me on many different levels was the beginning of something new, a shift of perspective.

I could not stop thinking about how it crossed the disciplines with such ease, and it made me contemplate how much more you can express with the minimal approach, something I have been practising for years.

As a true believer and practitioner of less is more and imagination (and some equipment) over expensive tools inaccessible to so many, this work resonated with me from the moment I experienced it.

Naturally, I dove into reading about Martin and found more things in common.

Her words from Kenneth Martin & Mary Martin: *Constructed Works* (2007:79), resonate with my approach in every way

‘That is to say that one commences with a single cell or unit, a logical process of growth is applied and [...] the whole, or the effect, is unforeseen until the work is complete.’

I work in a very organic way that is based on collaboration with chance. I am looking for and finding compositions rather than assembling them, constructing them as a collaborator, a treasure seeker, and not completely in control. That element of the unknown is what makes me feel excited creating an immersive experience of connecting with the environment. Most of all, I trust in the process and allow things to happen through the exploration of materials.

Alongside the discovery of this extraordinary artist, I was lucky enough to study Fine Art while on exchange in Spain. One of my favourite subjects there - sculpture, allowed me to explore the side of me I did not know existed. Fuelled by months of insightful lectures (that I half understood as they were in Spanish) and extensive investigation of materials, I began to look at my photographs in a different light.

All of a sudden, they began to ask me to be something else, be something more than an image, to give them another life and materiality.

Out of these events, a concept was born, exploring photography as an object and its potential to exist as one in the form of three-dimensional sculptures.

I wondered how I could prolong the life of my image, breathe new life into it and liberate it from being 'just' an image. There is so much more potential to it. I started seeing an image not as the end product but as a beginning.

Allowing them to exist through other art forms is the way to achieve that vision.

I believe it is substantial to give photographs the extended life they deserve, to rethink what photography is and to ask questions about what it might be.

Building on that, during this project, I explored different art forms (mainly sculpture but also 3D printing) and a variety of materials that allowed me to materialise some of my photographs into sculptures: working with concrete, wood, laser cutting, copper wire, steel, frame making, soldering and more, and continued to take analogue photographs with the sculptural properties of my images in mind.

I choose the analogue approach because it is material, and for me, analogue is about appreciating, embracing and thriving on the process, not just the final results. That applies to the sculpture, it is something I can put my hands on, feel the material and texture, enjoying and connecting with it.

This way of working is important to me as I believe that good things, magical things, happen when working organically and from immersion in the process. This approach allows something from deep within, subconscious channelling to come through, activates a voice loud enough to become a material thing, to become an art, as Richard Serra - another noteworthy inspiration put it:

'So I think, works of art engage, possibly, an internal memory bank that isn't linear, and it can make you see the outside reality in that way, also. Like, you probably see the world in ways that you would not have seen if those artists had not existed.'

With a focus on creating a flow state, collaborating with chance, wabi-sabi and inclusivity at heart, I created interactive sculptures to reach a wider audience.

The materiality of the sculptures is paramount to me. I want the viewer to have a sensational visual and sensory experience. I want to convey the emotion I had when taking this photograph and the feeling of this building.

As to the second sculpture, I chose the laser cut and magnet method to allow the freedom to move the elements and deconstruct and play with an image. Like a puzzle, but in reverse, we are not putting things together to create a preconceived image - we are rearranging and deconstructing what is already there to produce something new.

Art has a powerful impact on human lives, and it pains me that it can be so exclusive. My dream is to exhibit extensively from Gallery spaces to universally accessible, hence my intention to recreate my analogue photography in different forms, from sculpture and painting to street art like murals and street exhibitions.

Bibliography

Martin, S; Davies, C. (2007) *Kenneth Martin & Mary Martin: Constructed works*. London: Camden Arts Centre.

Richard Serra Answers: Why Make Art? *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art*. (2012) [Online video] Available through YouTube. [Accessed 05/05/24] https://youtu.be/mWoiAf_qMA4

References for images

Figure 1: Martin, M. (1951) *Spiral Movement*'. Available at <https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2019/made-in-britain/mary-martin-spiral-movement> [Accessed 05/05/24]