Growth / Decay

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Growth / Decay

Art work by

Yuri Kahan
When first formulating my research plans and methods I initially sought to work towards incorporating living plant matter into sculptural forms. Through the research process, I discovered a profound interest in almost the exact opposite field: the inorganic. Ironically, I found myself watering concrete (required for concrete to properly ‘cure’) instead of the plants I had initially set out to nurture. Initially, I was unsure about the meaning of this work and the shift I had undergone as an artist. In hindsight, I see these works as a monument to the Earth as a purely celestial entity. I have chosen to (mostly) create small works, so as to instill within the viewer a feeling of smallness, of insignificance, but only when compared to the supreme power of the Earth. With these works I mean not to diminish the importance of the viewer, rather, to highlight the significance of the Earth.
Process photos and early work

- The following images detail the process that lead to my completed works. As such, these images are intended to provide insight into my creative process.
• Using 1” to 2.5” segments of rectangular ‘pipe’ I began drafting the form for one of my early works.
• Early work with moss. The goal with most of my early work was to incorporate living plant material into sculptural forms.

- Materials used: Steel, Fiberglass resin (the base), beeswax, moss.
After a week or so of experimenting with plant matter, I decided to pursue some techniques I had discovered during my first sculpture class. I set out to build a form that resembled an altar, constructed from fragments of wood.
Shortly after I had finished constructing the basic lay out of this sculpture I decided to abandon the work. It has since been dismantled.
• Around the time I was finishing my first piece I began playing with beeswax as a medium. The concept for this piece was to create spheres of wax and to place them in the sun for different amounts of time. The goal with this piece was to observe the relationship between sun and matter.

• Ultimately this idea never came to fruition, as my increasing interest in concrete overcame my desire to pursue this idea.
A final attempt at incorporating living organic matter into my work. With this piece I poured Portland white cement into a wooden form. Before the cement had fully set I pressed freshly harvested moss into the cement.

Shortly after this piece I began pursing a similar idea – using wax instead of moss.
A second attempt at working moss into cement forms. Ultimately I decided to abandon this method in favor of molten beeswax.

Mould was created from four planks of plywood that were clamped carefully together.
• After both concrete and wax have dried and cooled the form is removed from it’s mould.
• Using an acetylene torch, the wax is carefully removed / distributed until the desired effect is achieved.
• After success with smaller forms, I decided to try to make a large piece using similar methods and techniques.
• In order to build a large rectangle of cement I built two boxes; one to sit in the center of the form to reduce weight and material required, and one to provide a mould.
• Pouring concrete and desperately trying to keep its seems from dislodging...
Completion and transportation
Completed Works
Moss (burned), Steel, Fiberglass resin, Wax
Cement, Steel wool, Moss
Cement, Wax, Iron
IV
Cement, Wax
Cement, Wax, Iron
Cement, Wax
Cement, Wax
VIII
Cement, Wax, Steel
IX
Cement, Wax
X
Cement, Wax, Spray Paint