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No Canvas, No Rules

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No Canvas, No Rules

Cover Page Footnote
Music by Laurie Spiegel

SCRIPT

No Canvas, No Rules was a creative project prepared for and produced during the 2022 Annual Meeting of the Document Academy, held at the Institute for Human Science and Culture at the University of Akron, Ohio was created and produced by myself, Francisca Ugalde.

The theme of this year's meeting was Document Disease.

Dating back at least to the 14th Century, disease has been used to indicate:

A condition of a body in which functions are disturbed

Illness, sickness, malady

Evil affection or tendency

Inconvenience

Disturbance from quiet, rest, or sleep

Absence of ease, uneasiness, discomfort

This creative exploration focused primarily on the interpretation of the word as a descriptor for the absence of ease.

Through this project, the idea of Uneasiness was explored in four different ways.

The first method of production of discomfort was in the application of paint directly onto the gallery wall. As the caretaker of these galleries, I am very protective of these surfaces, normally enforcing strict installation method limitations and encouraging the least invasive approach possible. Painting directly on the walls of the precious white cube is for certain a breaking of the rules, most definitely for curators and gallery professionals.

The second way in which disease is explored in this project is through imagery, which alludes to the other meanings of the word. The indistinguishable matrix of lines that makes up the composition was constructed through the overlapping and layering of visual representations of disease-producing processes and manifestations such as the effect of blight on a plants' cells, Chronic inflammation and Pain radiation in the body, and the body's inflammatory response to foreign materials.

Additionally, interpretations of the brain's processing of feeling and thoughts, the soul-sucking dread of being "stuck in the hamster wheel of life", and the terrible

feeling of having to force someone or being forced into something, were also included.

Although these images were purposefully selected to align with the theme of this meeting, they are not intended to be recognizable. They are merely a starting point for shape-making.

The third approach to exploring uneasiness was in the invitation of others to actively participate in the painting of this piece, challenging my need to control all the things. As a person with strong opinions on how things should be—especially regarding my creative works--allowing others to freely make decisions that affected the final look of the painting was uncomfortable, to say the least, and became an exercise in letting go of my controlling tendencies. My stepping back allowed people to feel more comfortable with inserting themselves in the project. Controlling their choices would have stifled this participatory experience.

The fourth and final discomfort-inducing element of this project confronted me as an artist. As a maker of things, the idea that my time, materials, and energy would be spent on something that would have no physical manifestation or longevity, was troubling for my art-making comfort zone and creative ego.

But, from the beginning, this project was designed to exist in the living breathing world only temporarily. Just a couple weeks after the annual meeting, and through various rounds of sanding, priming and painting, the precious gallery wall was once again white, and the busy, messy, textured, layered, composition in existence only digitally.

On one hand, there was comfort in having the white cube restored to its original blank canvas mode, on the other the uneasy feeling of having lost something forever.

Music by Laurie Spiegel