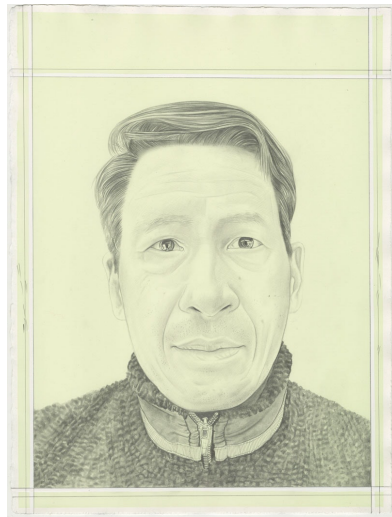# THE BROOKLYN RAIL

TISHAN HSU with Martha Schwendener
By Martha Schwendener, February 2021

Portrait of Tishan Hsu, pencil on paper by Phong H. Bui

> "I wanted to break away from that paradigm of painting where we're looking into a window of a world that's an illusion, a kind of imagined world."

Tishan Hsu speaks with art historian and critic Martha Scwhendener about his painting and sculpture practice, the relationship of the screen to the body, and Vilém Flusser's prescient theories of photography. This conversation was held on the occasion of Hsu's survey exhibition at SculptureCenter, Tishan Hsu: Liquid Circuit (September 25, 2020 – January 25, 2021), which was curated by Sohrab Mohebbi. It was originally recorded as a New Social Environment and has been edited for clarity, concision, and readerly pleasure.

Martha Schwendener (Rail): My real enthusiasm for your work comes not just from what's going on in the present but in the longer history of the art of technology,

of bodies, of sculpture of object making and photography—a lot of other things! I first encountered your work at the SculptureCenter in Long Island City. I felt a little embarrassed, I have to say, that I hadn't known about your work beforehand. For me it was really encountering a new artist, but that's how art history works, and also historiography. I write about someone who was kind of forgotten from the same period, a writer, philosopher named Vilém Flusser. Sometimes people aren't ready for certain images or ideas or objects, because the thinking seems either very future oriented or so strange in the present. I don't want to say that your work was ignored, it was highly celebrated, but then there was a quiet moment and people like me who came into the art world a little later, weren't aware of it. So Tishan, can you talk about your process in terms of your background in architecture? And I know you studied painting as well. How does it synthesize in your practice?

Tishan Hsu: Looking in retrospect at this body of work, which covers the 1980s into the '90s, I have a very different sense of it than I had when I was making it. This was a very intuitive process from the beginning. I did not have any kind of explanatory text to provide, and I think that made it difficult for people to understand the work. I emerged at a time when critical theory was being discussed at length in the contemporary art world. I was aware of the texts and of the discourse, and I could see lots of parallels to what I was concerned with. But at the same time, I felt a lot of things intuitively that the texts were not addressing. I think that's partly why the initial reception was strong but people didn't know what to do or where to go with it.

At the same time, as another context for this work—I could see that the market was really beginning to accelerate, as a driver in contemporary art in a way that it never had. I felt very much under pressure as I happened to emerge in a very visible gallery situation. I did not choose that. It just happened to be where I landed, and the pressure of the market was beginning to really interfere with the much slower internal process that I started out with. Artist friends and collectors were advising me and saying I had to be careful, because they could see the clash. That was one reason why I decided to work in Germany for a couple years.

My concerns in the work were about the body and technology; it was very simple. All of my work is really an effort to come up with something that would convey this paradigm that I felt would become very influential, that would have a huge impact on our reality, and that I was already seeing happening in much simpler ways. Many people asked me if I was trying to imagine a future. I felt I was responding to what I saw in the present. But as has been said before, "the future is really the present." Historically, cultures often live in the past and understandably so, because it's easier. One of the things that distinguished American culture in much of the 20th century was a sense that it was looking at and inventing the future. But I was trying to address what I saw in the world. That was part of my academic training. I was surprised, coming into New York, that the context of the contemporary cultural world was to go into the past, in an appropriated way. I understood this approach, as many older cultures in the world have appropriated the past for centuries as a method of cultural production and often with wonderful results. The past for me was not something I could connect to as a driver for my work, and in retrospect there could be several different reasons, one of which was I felt the past couldn't address the issues that I was seeing in the present. Another factor may have been my experience as an "other," in that the American media and consumer culture I grew up in wasn't something that I connected to strongly enough to drive the work. That drove me to create something visual that I felt could address what I was seeing and experiencing. At the time in the '80s, I thought music and literature were in some ways ahead of what was going on in the art world, in trying to capture a sense of the present-future. Science fiction at that time had a lot of techno-body qualities to it,

where the body was being infused or was being inserted into technology. So there were definitely active currents, but less so in visual art.

So with that in the background I was trying to figure out a way to infuse a technological consciousness with the body—that's all. I was somewhat single-minded about it. In retrospect, looking at all the work and thinking about the process of doing it—it felt scattered and nothing really cohered or made sense. I was doing this and doing that. I didn't really understand what the underlying sense was in the work, it just felt like lots of experiments. Every time I would do one body of work I would already see the next step and I didn't have a sense of things to focus on a coherent body of work for a show. I had a sense of how I wanted the work to feel, its affect, but it was vague and unclear, partly because I didn't yet have a vocabulary for it. In retrospect I see that it's really about an embodied technology. What is the affective state of this interaction?

In college I studied both photography and film, along with architecture, and I seriously considered being a filmmaker. I thought film was going to be the media of the future. After grad school, I experienced the culture beginning to adopt this screen modality in the workplace, working a part-time job as a word processor in a Wall Street law firm. I felt there was a new kind of affect in the body's relating to a screen object. To me, it was compelling. And even though I wasn't working in a media that was technological like film or video, I felt that there was something perhaps more traditional media could address, that could grasp the kind of sensibility that is created when we're interacting with technological objects. I felt that this was going to be a new paradigm and I began reading writers who were discussing it in that way. This helped to confirm the intuitive sense that I had enough to pursue it. With that in mind, I began focusing on the work.

Rail: Can you tell us a little about your education and how it informed your early work?

Hsu: My background was in traditional Western painting, and I had a pretty rigorous training in studio art from very early on, driven by my love of making things as a kid. In elementary school, I was taught by someone who painted in the school of Thomas Cole and I was copying Edward Hopper paintings, as well as learning techniques of glazes and underpainting from Renaissance painting. Later I moved to Virginia and studied with the painter Maryann Harman, who was taught by a person who came from the French tradition of Impressionist painting, and that's where I learned everything I know about color. With both teachers, I learned how to see in a very focused way. These are traditional disciplines, but remained a part of the background of the early works, as a method. Although I studied architecture and film in college and grad school, and learned about media, form and design, the real impact was gaining a sense of a technological world that was being created all around me, and my response to it. In a way, I wanted to understand how this strange new world felt. What was the context like? This was at a time when the tech nerd was at the fringe of society and the farthest from the world of art and the humanistic tradition. Technology was also an "other," but one I felt was important to go towards rather than avoid, as I sensed the world was going to become technological whether we wanted it to or not.

Now, the dilemma I had with these early works on wood—
like R.E.M. or Plasma (both 1986)—is that as I was sitting working in front of a word processor in the early days of the screen, I felt that there was this screen world that was very different than television because I was interacting with it. The interactivity was a jump from the passiveness of TV. So I'm sitting in front of this screened object for many hours, several days a week, and my bodily, physical,

material presence was very much there. I felt there was this paradox between the illusionary world of the screen and the physical reality of my body, and that I wanted my work to account for both. I felt that my body in front of that screen still really counted. And I felt that also by somehow maintaining a sense of the body in the work, I would be able to address the political, while also addressing the technological, because it's the body and specifically the body in pain that really creates politics, on a sort of ontological level.

Tishan Hsu, *Plasma*, 1986. Acrylic, alkyd, oil, vinyl cement compound on wood 16 x 93.5 x 4 inches. Collection of Daniel Newburg. © 2021 Tishan Hsu / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

I'm saying this in retrospect. I had no awareness of this while I was doing it. I was trying to create a syntax for beginning to address issues in the world and my experience of it. And so all of this work that's in the SculptureCenter show is somewhat removed, and abstracted from the world, and I think that's one critique people had about the work. It seemed like a kind of fantasy. But I was trying to first change the syntax of painting, for myself, for what I needed. In that sense, I did not want a square image in the sense of the window of a canvas. I wanted to break away from that paradigm of painting where we're looking into a window of a world that's an illusion, a kind of imagined world. I wanted these things to be objects on the wall, coming from the issues that were raised with Minimalism and Post-Minimalism where contemporary art began to really be more in the room that we're in with no illusion. That sense also drove my interest in architecture, which I still have.
So, in that sense, I was trying to establish how I can get that object there and that's partly what drove the idea of the rounded corners, and that these flat boards are away from the wall so they appear to float on the wall. These are just three-eighths inch painted plywood. Now for those of you who haven't seen the work, all of the organic shapes are just completely flat. It's an illusion of some materiality, along with painted forms that maybe look like concrete or material that is actually projecting from this flatness. So, it was both maintaining an object and at the same time creating an illusionary affect but not a world, as in an imagined world. In a more formal sense of painting, I was looking at the history of pre-Modern painting in Western art and saying, "that's really interesting that they were also painting an illusionistic world." And much of it was religious iconography located in a world of space and time that imitated my experience.

There was a point in Western art history where you could only paint whatever feelings or emotions you had through biblical iconography. It was a kind of illusion, and it was a rendering of the formal illusion of perspectival space on a flat surface. There was another kind of illusion in Eastern ink painting but it was not so concerned with depicting a "realistic" illusion of space. It was a philosophical kind of space, but still referencing actual space. Similarly, in the culture of early African work, the works are more animistic in that the works embody the spiritual, physically. I was experiencing the screen as something illusionary, but it's not biblical or referential; it's the illusion of something organic and alive, if not the body itself. I wanted to try and convey this sense of illusion, but I didn't want the viewer to feel as though they were entering a fantasy world. In that sense, I was not interested in Surrealism. So there was a paradox, and that was key. I wanted something that was going to be paradoxical. And I think that's partly what contributed to the strangeness people felt looking at it. People were often surprised that the works were painted as an illusion, because it looked at first glance (or in reproduction) like it was just all made with materials in space. So on the one hand, the work is recognizing itself as this object and at the same time there is an illusionary aspect but that illusionary world is responding to the object, not another world. So if you'll note that in the forms and shapes, they're still within the shape of the object itself as though the illusionary forms could actually be three-dimensional. The two and three-dimensional create a kind of hybrid experience. And so it was this close responsiveness between the illusionary aspect and the physical object that is in front of you. And I think that relation is paradigmatic of the interactivity of digital media itself.

Rail: How about photography? Part of the reason I'm interested in that is because particularly—we could talk about *Cellular Automata 2* from 1989 or *Fingerpainting* from 1994—we're in this moment, and this is what's important about photography, in the '80s you had this movement from chemical to digital photography and now we're beginning to see that photography can be printed in three dimensions and that includes: organs, skin, weapons—those kind of things. So when I saw these works, particularly one like *R.E.M. revisited* (2002), I wanted to know how photographs are involved. How did you go about this?

Tishan Hsu, *R.E.M. revisited*, 2002. Archival inkjet on canvas. 96 x 110 inches. Courtesy the artist and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong. © 2021 Tishan Hsu / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Hsu: Photography became a key aspect of the evolution of the work. And that happened going from the '80s to the '90s, where the work I've just been talking about was executed in traditional media, oil on wood. I felt from the response to the work that people weren't getting it at all. They were going all over the place. I needed to really clarify that I was dealing with the body and dealing with technological affect. So I began working with silk screening, as an image that you printed, and so it's manufactured, and at the same time I could then use photographs of the body. That made things very clear.

Rail: Can you talk about *Cellular Automata 2*?
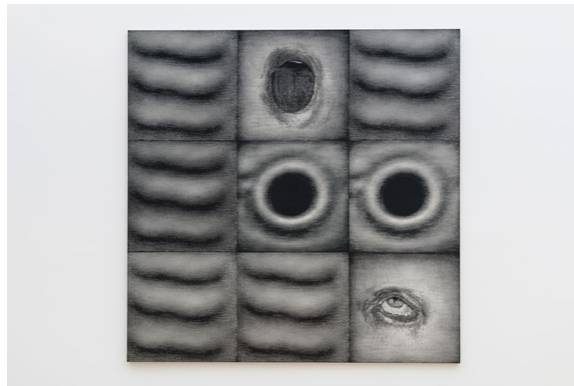
Hsu: Yes, so here I'm just experimenting with black and white silkscreen. The way this is made is modular which is a structural paradigm in all my work, in that technology is designed and produced modularly. So the square module was done by hand. It was just one module, and then I photographed that one square, and then had that image put into a dot screen matrix, and then printed that with silkscreen. What I was trying to do is to take the dot aspect of silkscreen—if you look closer at this work the dots are very large—and bring in these images that are from medical textbooks and put those into dot screen matrix, and then print them so that the whole screen is just dots. And what it's trying to do is to fuse the hand painted with the technological photographic image into a hybrid entity. So, I could create the work by just duplicating one module. And then there's one other module with a round circle that was also hand painted, but at the same time, I also inserted two medical images that really pin this kind of painted illusionary organic body-like or tissue-skin-like image into something that we know right away is about the body. So it's a technological process and then it's somehow about the body. But I also wanted to maintain the affect of more traditional, handmade media. The fact that I could hand make these ripples gives me a certain affect that was important to me. I'm fusing them with the clinical affect of medical images. Maintaining a continuum between the affect that happens with traditional handmade techniques of art making, and the more technological production of images was very important to me.

Rail: How about *Fingerpainting*? What changed?

Tishan Hsu, *Fingerpainting*, 1994. Silkscreen ink, acrylic, on linen canvas. 71 x 177 inches. Courtesy the artist and Empty Gallery, Hong Kong. © 2021 Tishan Hsu / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Hsu: So this is like five years later. I wanted to get rid of the grid and the modular, and to put things together in a very crude way. I wanted the modules to grow together into a whole, if you will. This was really just a technical and conceptual visual experiment about my sense of the body and the technological world. Could I create modular images with almost invisible lines so the affect you get is not this gridded modular flatness but this continuous surface in which these—whether they're actual images of body or created images emerge out of this continuous flatness—would go on and on, in sort of an infinite moving flatness of space. That for me was a metaphor of the web.

There was a lot of discussion about the web at that time, what it was going to be like, what it would do. Nicholas Negroponte's *Being Digital* was published, and I was imagining the sense of infinite space that was virtual, and that's what drove not just the imagery but also the scale. I was not trying to do a big painting to impress, but to see what would happen if these modules could just keep going and going and going in a continuous way. That was also the affect that drove the tile pieces like *Ooze* (1987).

Rail: When you mentioned the screen, which is just incredibly important, this quote bubbled to mind. In the mid-'90s Lev Manovich, the media theorist, said that we don't know whether we're the society of the spectacle or not but we're definitely the society of the screen. In my capacity as an art critic I'm constantly seeing painters in particular who have to respond to this idea when we're talking about two-dimensional surfaces of the screen and the fact that people are looking at screens all the time, so how do you shift over? I'm also interested in how the modernist idea of the grid gets moved over in the '80s and shifts into this notion of a matrix. There's this idea of the grid in the digital age becoming something else.

Another person that comes to mind is Thomas Bayrle who had a show at the New Museum in 2018. He's somebody whose work I've been close to and it's different from your work. It tends to be more technological, more industrial/technological things than the body, whereas your work is about this very intimate close relationship. I wanted to point this out because it becomes, for me at least—although I don't think it's too much of a stretch when we see the color here and knowing that you have this strong background in color relationships—this kind of flesh matrix, that the two-dimensional work becomes a kind of skin. So rather than the Renaissance window or the modernist grid, we have this thing that gives the illusion of a kind of breathing, kind of a warp and weft.

In one interview you gave you mentioned your interest in early Bakshaish rugs, which made me think of the relationship of the jacquard loom to the early computer, but also I think about how when you look at a rug and people will say, "hey, this can go on the wall or it can go on the floor," which reminds me of some of your work in terms of these objects that are sort of cascading—I wouldn't say from the wall to the floor but where they are sculpture and then all of a sudden they're floating or melting onto the floor particularly works like *Ooze* and *Reflexive Ooze* (1987).

Tishan Hsu, *Reflexive Ooze*, 1987. Ceramic tile, vinyl cement compound, oil, acrylic, alkyd on wood 58.75 x 59 x 3.5 inches. High Museum of Art, Atlanta. Gift of Hillman R. Holland through the 20th Century Art Acquisition Fund in memory of Dr. Robert H. Brown. © 2021 Tishan Hsu / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Hsu: Martha, it's great you brought up the rugs. That has kind of been a private passion. It began more as a decorative thing. I never really knew about oriental rugs and then when I was a student I actually saw one for the first time, you know a good one and I was just amazed at the materiality. The fact that someone made this, it just blew my mind. And then later, after doing some of my early work I was looking at the rug more and you know I had a small one, and I realized they were sculptures to me. If you study them and look at the backing they're grids. I only came to look at rugs slowly over many years and began seeing unexpected connections, but the fact that you're seeing these connections is kind of amazing to me. The handmade rugs used a loom, which is an early technology. There is a hybrid production of the handmade with technology. The other worldly patterns are multi-dimensional. The way color is handled is extraordinary and almost digital. And then the sheer, almost technological flatness of the soft, fuzzy, material feels minimalist, so cool, as affect.

Rail: You mentioned this in an interview I read, I wish I could say I was that perceptive!

SculptureCenter

Hsu: Well, someone might know that I mentioned it but not see the connection. So anyway I think there is something perhaps unconscious going on there. One thing that struck me when I started doing the flat tile pieces on the floor is that I also was looking at a flatness in experiencing the rugs, and then as you get closer you see them two-dimensionally in these amazing organic patterns, so there's this paradox again of the screen, if you will, and the object. There's this illusionary world, but then as you move around the work, it's a physical thing in the world. For me these rugs are like a sculpture if you think of Carl Andre's steel plate pieces on the floor. But to go back to the grid, for me it was beyond the kind of modernist grid of minimalist conceptual work—I'm thinking of works by Hanne Darboven or Sol LeWitt—for me it was the next step in how space would be defined. When I was a student at MIT, I happened to be working next to Nicholas Negroponte's architectural machine where he was inventing a 3D software. The computer that he needed to do that, which he was creating from scratch, was the size of a 10 by 10 room. I could observe the screen he was working with, and the way he was defining the space on that screen was a grid. The topology was a flatness that moved through space as a way of defining space. The flat grid was becoming organic, if not actually moving. If you use any 3D software, it places you in a three-dimensional gridded space as a way of even thinking about space. More recently, this underlying grid has become the conceptual visual basis for facial recognition and other data intensive applications that measure and define not only the world we live in but also our bodies in the world.

The flat tile pieces, like *Ooze* or *Vertical Ooze* (1987) really were about this kind of technological space of data, and that it would go on and on and I was trying to do it in what may seem a retro way, using actual physical materials, rather than just hopping onto the computer and going with it. The works also float. So if you see the work, it's off of the floor and there's no sense of base to it. That was an affect I wanted in all of the work, whether it's hanging on the wall, or eventually on wheels, like *Biocube* from 1988. What I liked about traditional media, versus technology itself, like film or media, was that it was slower, and thereby elicited a different kind of awareness of affect that only a slower meditation can elicit. That was important to me.

I wanted everything to feel contingent, that it could be here or it could be there, or anywhere. That was something I felt was another affect, and I'm using the word affect a lot because that is what drove the work here. It wasn't trying to declare we are now in a technological world. I was trying to get at some sense of what the feeling of all of this technology was/is. And so for me "contingency," or this continuous surface quality, or this sense of illusion—that's what I was going for. Why I wanted to do it is partly unconscious but there's also a sense that we really didn't and don't understand what this new interface was doing to us. In order to figure that out, we first had to figure out: what are we really feeling here, interacting with all this stuff? There's this kind of cognitive, emotional, psychological resonance going on between us as this organic body, and this screen, and it is affecting us and the culture, if not the world, in deeper and deeper ways. And so I felt the affect is important for us to become more conscious of in some way, if possible, just to stop a minute and ask, what is going on here? What is this? What we are going through is unprecedented in human history. And that's what was driving my interest in trying to visualize these physical attributes in the work.

Rail: My favorite book is *The Posthuman Glossary*, which I want to bring in terms of this idea of an affect and embodiment that we're seeing, and this is why your work from the '80s and the '90s looks just so incredibly canny. We are thinking in terms of questions like: What is the body in front of the screen? But also, what happens when you start to have the screen inside the body?

I was also looking at a catalog of your show at Pat Hearn from 1986 and it's very interesting some of the different sources you draw from, say for instance Derrida, and people who were thinking of philosophy. People have often described *Closed Circuit II* from 1986 as predating the Instagram logo. And, you know, some of the new geometries that you discuss. And one of the things I like very much in this catalog is that you have this poem, "When Science is in the Country," and it made me think of the Richard Brautigan poem, "All Watched Over by Machines of Loving Grace" which circles back to what you said earlier about how visual art was lagging behind things like literature and music in terms of thinking about these new worlds, whether they were technological or digital, or new forms of embodiment. The other thing I wanted to do is talk about your early Photoshop works.

Tishan Hsu, *Closed Circuit II*, 1986. Acrylic, alkyd, Styrofoam, vinyl cement compound on wood 59 x 59 x 4 inches. Rubell Family Collection, Miami. © 2021 Tishan Hsu / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Hsu: When Photoshop appeared for the consumer and for the artists to work with, I took a year off from teaching just to learn Photoshop, just to see whether it was something I really felt like I could invest myself in as a new way of making an image. In the beginning I thought it wasn't going to work, but by the end of the year it was just so automatic. I felt a connection to that mouse like I do a pencil. I felt it was likely training in a sport, where I had to do it everyday where its functionality became automatic.

Rail: That's interesting. And how about more recent photographic work, like *Innies and Outies* or *Interface with Lips* (both 2002)?
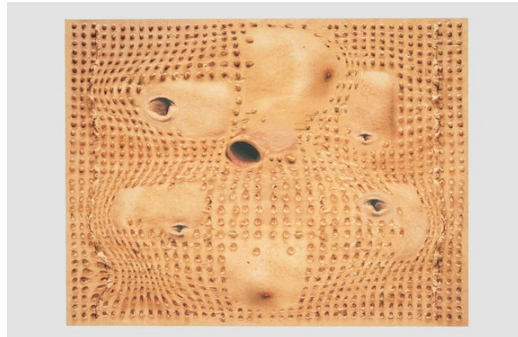
Hsu: In the late '80s, I explored photography because I wanted to get something more clinical in the work, as opposed to the hand created images. I was trying to get people to see I'm dealing with the body, and I felt the affect of the clinical was something technological in the way that it is so real, like an augmented eye.
At this point, the technological advance of photography has been startling. And it is an ontological change. Maybe it was Baudrillard who said the public will become private and the private will become public. That is our private lives are becoming so transparent and public. At the same time we know almost too much about the world, and it's coming right into our bedroom, so to speak. And so it's this kind of realness that photography offers of something very intimate, like skin, to whatever we see through the photograph more than we do even with our human eyes. And I think that's really apparent now with how our experience of the news is evolving.

And so the sense of this clinical microscopic focus is the affect that I really wanted to use and that's what drove me to continue to work with the Photoshop, which could use photographic images. However, what drove this is wanting to then go back and, in a way, invoke much of my experience of painting, frankly, and what the affect of painting has done through time, and to bring that into this technological medium. And so in a way I see works like *Interface with Lips* as paintings, but then I'm also working purely digitally. I say this only because after the year I spent learning Photoshop, the "Interface" works in 2002 are my first experimental works with the digital. I should say digital imaging, but also printing on a wide format printer, which was important. I don't think I would have gone down this road had that not developed simultaneously. And I think Epson was seeing the demand for that. Soon after I started working on the canvas they announced that inks were going to be archival which was the other important component. At the time, I was imagining the further evolution onto a more expansive wall, which I was not able to realize until the SculptureCenter show.

But when I finished *Interface with Lips* I felt something was lacking because it was so controlled. I had all the control that technology allows, but I couldn't do anything more with it, once it was printed. Once it was done it was done. For me there was something missing, the element of contingency, of risk, of chance, I really wanted back into the work. And it's not that I was only trying to examine whether this

Deleted:

attribute was something that I just feel a personal connection to, but also does it somehow resonate with what I'm seeing in the world?

I felt that in spite of the control that we have with technology, the sense of accident and risk going on in the world continues and that's part of what the body is. And so that drove me to want to bring back a more traditional medium of some sort that could work with the technological. Now, I could not just paint on the printed canvas. I couldn't just invoke painting, because once I started painting I was bringing in the whole history of painting and that was kind of antithetical to this kind of technological sense that I was going for. So I spent a number of years trying to figure out a way of bringing back materiality, but having technological affect.

With photography, and the affect of clinical reality, I felt ready to move the work more into the real world and to address issues coming from that. In the '89 show with Pat, it was about surveillance and security, the medical environment, and the sense of how bodies are extracted through data. These are contexts in which the body is interfacing with technology in society. The use of photography enabled me to do that in a way. I could use the syntax of body and technology and address these more specific, real world contexts. And that's what drove the work after 2005.

Rail: You know, I do all my writing on a theorist named Vilém Flusser who was writing in the 1980s. Initially he became well known for his book *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* which came out in 1983. His idea was that we need to stop talking about images per se, and instead talk about apparatuses, which might mean the camera. Of course now everybody walks around with a camera all the time, and everybody is a photographer, and this is why Flusser's book is very forward looking. He was also and this is what I'm spending my time on right now is a chapter for a book that has to do with his book *Vampyroteuthis Infernalis* (1987) about a squid and using that squid as this way of thinking through philosophy with an underwater animal.

For Flusser this idea of photography in the digital realm and biotechnology were completely linked. So when you start talking about "skin" in photography, for Flusser that could be something like photographic paper, because it functions in a similar way in terms of being photosensitive and having color. He would treat skin as a technological interface. And what I see in your work as well is this convergence of how to talk about technology in the body, and not just as augmentation, or artificial intelligence, but what you stated initially, that you might have been working intuitively, or in a kind of science fiction sense. Flusser actually called his work "science fiction philosophy" because it was speculative instead of this idea that we know what we're talking about. No we don't always know what we're talking about, and this is particularly true in terms of art, in terms of bodies, in terms of technology and joining them all together.

Hsu: Flusser was so prescient. People always ask if I'm interested in science fiction and I always have to say I'm not in the sense that I'm not trying to create an imaginary world. For me, my process focuses on what I perceive as the real world not fictional, or the world that I experience as emerging. What's interesting to me is science fiction has really grown as a genre in writing. It's taking up much more space now as serious literature, and I think that's partly because the world is moving so fast that before you can even think about it, we're already there. The world we're living in right now is science fiction, it's more wacky than much of science fiction I've read.

And so I think Flusser's speculative writing is very accurate in terms of what's happening now, and about to happen in a much more obvious way perhaps. I think the sense of time and future-past is collapsing because things are moving so quickly.

A lot driven by the speed of technology and the speed of capitalism, frankly. We can hardly keep up. I feel like the implications of Flusser's writing are providing directions on how to make sense of the world we are in right now, because I frankly cannot make sense of it anymore. I don't feel there's a present. There's a kind of anticipatory future that assists with speculating on what is going on right now, because all of my past ways of organizing the world are not working anymore.