The background of the poster is a complex, textured composition. It features a dense, interwoven mass of brown, fibrous material, possibly jute or a similar natural fiber, which forms a large, roughly spherical shape in the upper left. This is surrounded by and interspersed with numerous teal-colored, ring-like objects that resemble thick, flexible bands or strips of material, possibly paper or fabric, curled into various shapes. The overall lighting is dark, with the teal elements providing a strong contrast against the brown and black background.

Working Materials

a solo exhibition by Angie Seykora

January 16 – February 15, 2015

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"If ... we consider the possibility that the visual significance of a work need not be inherent in the work itself, but is rather a function of our own perception of it, and moreover that vision is only one aspect of perception, then a new basis for understanding is afforded. Such work consistently probes the nature of our own experience of things in the world, and the ways in which we come to terms with these experiences."

-Whitney Museum of American Art. *Robert Morris exh. cat.*,

text by Marcia Tucker. New York, NY, 1970, pg 9.

The statement above can offer a point of reference for *Working Materials*; a solo exhibition by Omaha based artist and Creighton alumnae Angie Seykora. A critical dialog regarding the significance of artistic material and its relationship to the creative process began to emerge during the 1960's. Artists during this time were incorporating "new" resources, particularly the nonviable or excess material discarded during industrial production. Seykora's creative process, born from an understanding of the past, embodies the current intersection between a growing concern toward the byproducts of the world's materials economy and interest in sustainable cultural production. Many contemporary artists seek out nontraditional materials and methods, possibly originating from necessity (lack of economic means to employ traditional materials and forming methods), and as a result have made the use of "throw-away" and repurposed materials a fundamental aesthetic principle. Frequenting thrift stores and salvage yards has replaced the traditional art supply sources causing previously held beliefs of what is sculpture and painting to dematerialize.

At first glance Seykora's works appear to be abstract formal arrangements or decorative motifs, which mimic industrial manufacture. However, through a close reading, Seykora's use of found, repurposed and recycled materials offer insights into the ubiquitous nature of consumer culture. The works, executed through her labor-intensive craftwork process seduce the viewer with vibrant visually appealing surfaces, which on closer inspection reveal the slight irregularities of her handwork. Upon this discovery the audience is asked to reconcile their initial assumptions with the reality before them, calling into question prescribed values of material and the physically engaged processes of making.



Crystalline Panel, tinsel, scotch tape, mirrored plexiglass, 96" x 48" x 12", 2014

“I create forms and surfaces that exploit both the formal qualities and the sheer visual lushness of each material. As I address the physical character of my medium, I experience the satisfaction that emerges through the handmade manipulation of materials.”

The relationship between the artist's choice of material and how she manifests that material through making sets up an interesting visual display, a purposeful upending of the hierarchy of value in our cultural economy. Seykora's *Working Materials*: wrapping paper, confetti, party streamers, tinsel, cellophane filler, tape, and packing vinyl become references to their original function as supplemental and temporary to some greater and all be it “festive” end. The brightly colored and reflective surfaces of Seykora's “Confetti Curtain” and “Crystalline Panel” are both seductive and overwhelming, become an almost irreverent merging of the esteemed modernist ideology of 60s and 70s Minimalist Art and the amateur handicraft of tinsel painting popular in the 19th century. Through the lengthy process of building her works by hand, methodically and meticulously creating patterns out of seemingly worthless materials can appear almost obsessive. This seemingly contradictory relationship between process, material and product lies beneath the surface of *Working Materials*, engendering a dialog wherein conventions are called into question.



Crystalline Panel, detail



Huddle Band, placemats, thread, rubberbands, 10" x 60" x 60", 2014

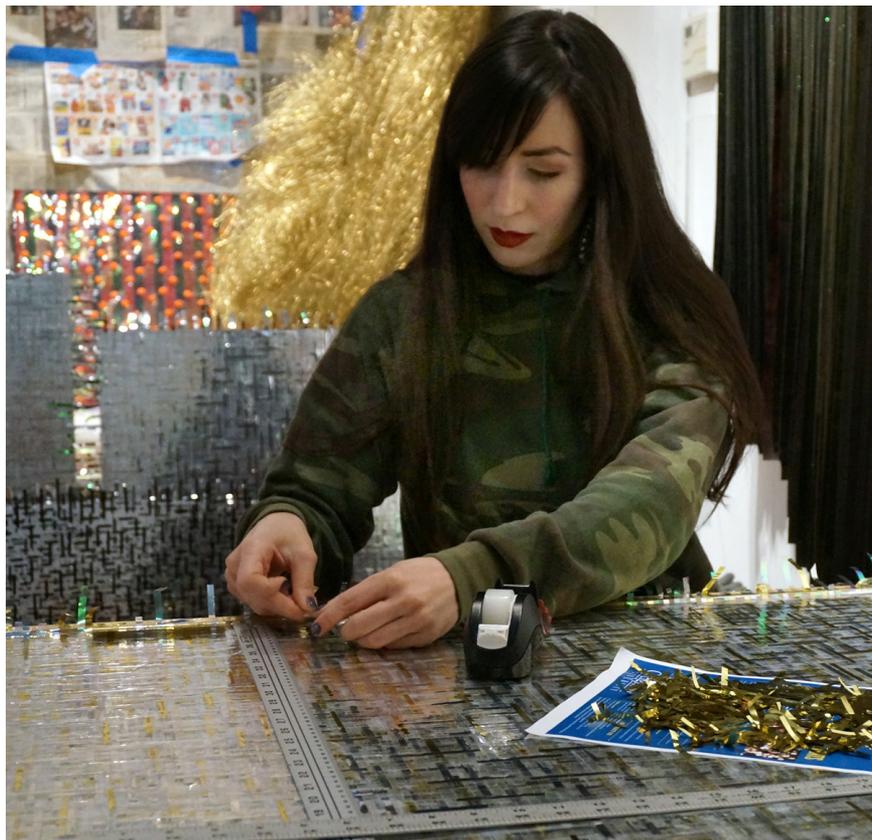
In contrast to the methodical and labor-intensive production of the confetti and tinsel works, "Huddle Band" manifests more as an arrangement (similar in method and aesthetic underpinnings of Modernist Process Art of the 1960s and 70s). "Huddle Band" composed of the overstock supply of bright turquoise blue rubber bands and black placemats, becomes a role reversal. Instead of employing the systematic construction used in the "paintings", this work utilizes the industrial practice wherein machined goods are purposefully produced to appear handmade. Seykora's use of overstocked goods for this piece is fundamentally tied to her other creative choices. In these kinds of works, the materials are truly "working". Since they are arranged rather than constructed, they remain fluid, retaining their potential use in future works and maintain their ability to perform their original purpose. The fact that the work is presented on the floor helps maintain that potential, tying the material and its presentation more closely to the world in which it originated, rather than isolating it on the wall or seated on a pedestal. In this way, works such as "Huddle Band" could be considered "drawings", providing the artist with a more immediate sense of creative satisfaction while still gaining knowledge of form and material.

Seykora's work is a record of thinking "through the hand", through the act of making. Pieces begin rather open ended, wherein over time, as the structure of the piece begins to take form Seykora makes decisions regarding the trajectory of the work "in the moment". It is during these "moments" where her handwork is recorded, a mark of labor, time and accumulation, all of which mirror the global materials economy. *Working Materials*, utilizing contemporary ideology regarding the value of resources as well as labor, insists we take a closer look. And drawing on our own perceptions and cultural associations may offer us a new understanding of "our experience of things in the world".

-Amy Nelson
Associate Professor of Fine Art



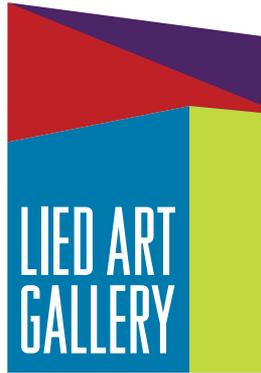
Confetti Curtain, confetti, acrylic medium, vinyl, 132" x 53.25" x 26", 2014



Artist Biography

Angie Seykora currently lives and works in Omaha, Nebraska. Seykora holds a BFA in Sculpture from Creighton University and an MFA in Sculpture from Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, where she was awarded a full graduate fellowship. Seykora was the 2013 recipient of the International Sculpture Center's Outstanding Student Achievement in Contemporary Sculpture award, from which she was selected for the fully funded Art-St-Urban Sculpture residency in St. Urban, Switzerland during the summer of 2014. Seykora exhibits her work on a national and international level, where she has received several Best of Show and First Place awards. In addition to her dedicated studio practice, Seykora also participates as an artist mentor for Omaha youth through the Joslyn Art Museum's Kent Bellows Mentoring Program. Seykora is represented by the Art-St-Urban Pavilion, Switzerland.

www.angieseykora.com



We believe that all people should embrace the arts as a way to organize aesthetic thought, nourish their soul and continue lifelong learning.

The Lied Art Gallery is open daily from 1 p.m. — 4 p.m. and during special events when exhibits are present. Admission is free. Visitor parking is located west of the Lied Education Center for the Arts and is accessed from Cass Street. Additional visitor parking is available after 5 p.m. on the top level of the 24th Street parking structure.

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