



Hoss Haley: YIELD

September 4 – October 30, 2015

1812 West Main St. Richmond, VA 23220 \ 804.353.0094 \ visarts.org



VISUAL ARTS CENTER
OF RICHMOND



FOREWORD



The Visual Arts Center of Richmond is pleased to present the exhibition *Hoss Haley: YIELD*, in which Haley debuts seven new outsized sculptures and a site-responsive automated drawing machine. Working with discarded materials and ubiquitous technology, Haley shows the range of possibility in transforming overlooked and everyday objects into works of art.

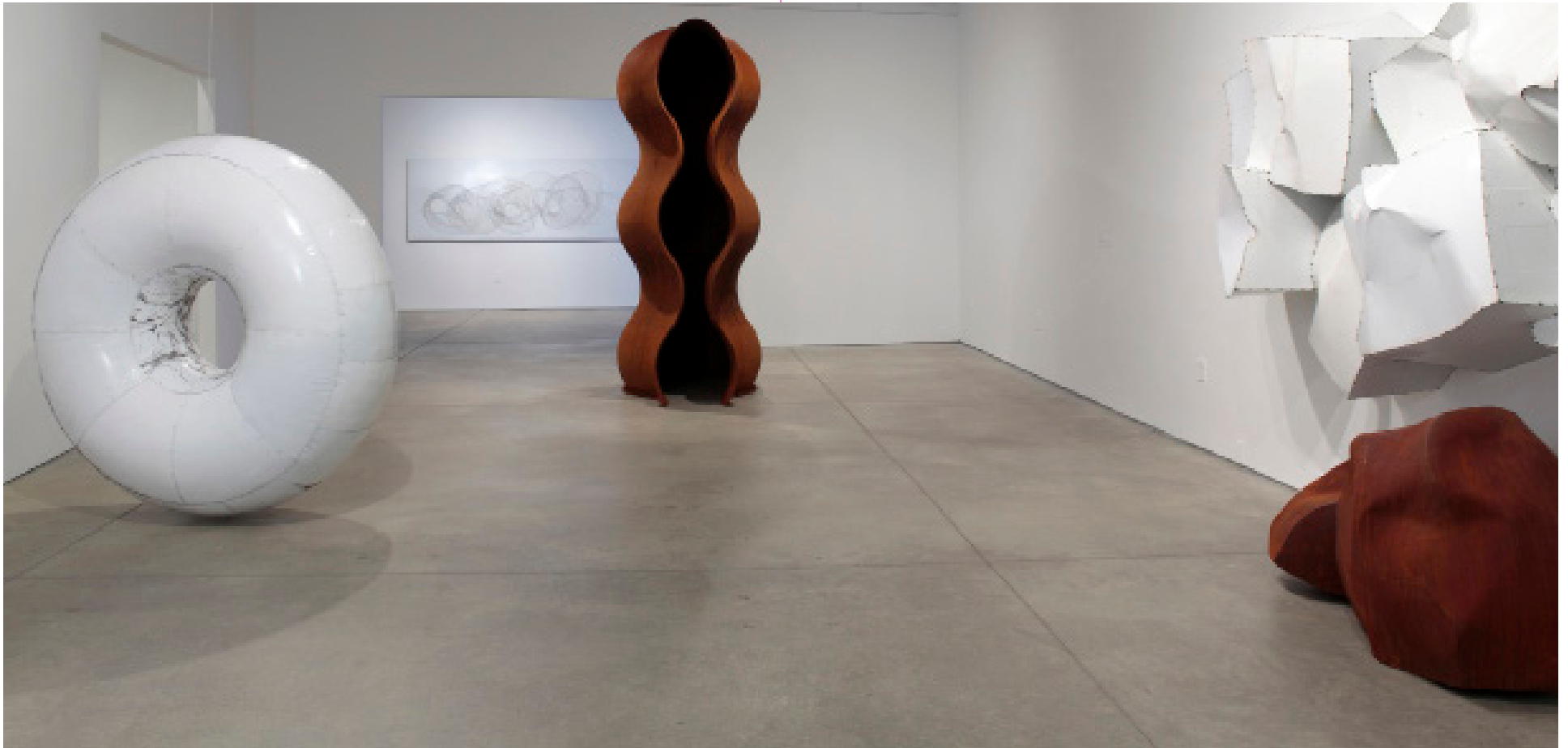
With fifteen studios designed for the instruction and understanding of a variety of art and craft media, VisArts is a unique resource for anyone interested in exploring their personal creativity. It is our mission to engage the community in the creative process through the visual arts. We foster a creative culture that encourages people of all backgrounds, ages and skill levels to participate and experiment with the visual arts.

The exhibitions presented in our True F. Luck Gallery are critical to our ability to inspire and further educate our community. We focus on the ways artists are innovating processes and materials and expose visitors to the creative possibilities available in our studios. Haley's repurposing of castoff metals encourages us to examine how an artist selects his or her medium as well as the relationship an artist builds to his or her tools and materials. Haley shows us that there is an opportunity to let go in the creative process and to let the materials lead the way. This is an exciting idea for both beginning and seasoned artists and one that will surely inspire the VisArts community.

VisArts would like to sincerely thank the National Endowment for the Arts and Altria Group for supporting this exhibition. Related educational programming is supported by grants from The Windgate Charitable Foundation, The Windsor Foundation Trust, Wells Fargo Foundation, Dominion Foundation, MeadWestvaco Foundation, and The Fan District Association. We also thank the Virginia Commission for the Arts and CultureWorks & The Arts and Cultural Funding Consortium: City of Richmond, Hanover County and Henrico County for ongoing support of our programming and operations. I also extend appreciation to Amanda Dalla Villa Adams and Caroline Cobb Wright for their thoughtful co-curation of this exhibition and to Robert Barrientes for an impeccable installation and, finally, to Hoss Haley for sharing not only his works, but his thoughts and insights into their creation.

Stefanie Fedor
Executive Director
Visual Arts Center of Richmond

Cover: *Tessellation, No. 1*, 2013, repurposed washing machines, 106 × 54 × 26 in.
Inside Cover: detail of *Tessellation, No. 1*, 2013, repurposed washing machines, 106 × 54 × 26 in.
Above: *Erratic, Dark Bronze*, 2010, bronze, 6 × 7 × 10 in.



LEARNING HOW TO YIELD

In the early 1950s, at Black Mountain College, located just outside Asheville, North Carolina, experimental composer John Cage began using chance operations to create sound compositions. In one of the earliest examples, *Water Music* (1952) renamed *Water Walk* (1959) and performed publicly in 1960 for the television game show *I've Got a Secret*, Cage set up a series of found everyday objects on a stage: a tea kettle, a radio, a blender, a tub of water, a piano, etc. For the television performance, Cage walked around the stage activating each appliance to make a sound. Eventually, the performance ended in a chaotic cacophony of random noises:

whistles, bangs, bubbling sounds, and the audience laughing over the whole absurd situation.¹

Nearly half a century later and working in the same fertile ground of Asheville, Hoss Haley courts chance in a way that follows after Cage but starkly diverges. Unlike Cage, a composer who encountered objects in a strictly conceptual way as materials to be used for their sonic qualities, Haley remains a maker: “My father is a tinkerer and I inherited that from him. For me, it’s integral to the process. I tend to work responsively to the material [and] that’s one reason I build my own machines.”² A sculptor working in bronze, stainless

steel, steel, and concrete, Haley uses recycled discarded metal – including washing machines or scrapped cars – literally dug up from the scrap yard to create large-scale installations that generate a dialogue tied to environmentalism and throwaway culture, the value of domestic commodities, American ingenuity, and history. Interested in the process of building and investigating materials, Haley’s work is intimately tied to the artist’s hand. Rather than just letting chance take over, Haley is learning the more nuanced process of yielding.

A multifaceted term, yield can mean the way in which an object gives way

against an outside force or pressure: how metal folds under the force of a hydraulic press, a massive erratic boulder gets carried along by glacial movements, or how economic stability depends on shifting global Gross Domestic Product (GDP). It can be a process of deskilling for the artist, who was originally trained for six years as a blacksmith with a keen eye for craft. Or even a way of giving the audience power, like the newest iteration of *The Drawing Machine* (2010), a tabletop custom-machine built by Haley that mechanically makes drawings based on the movements of people in the gallery. Finally, yield is a way for Haley to let go of control and allow chance

Installation, Hoss Haley: *YIELD*, Visual Arts Center of Richmond



to take over. For example, the rippling metal in *Tessellation No. 1* (2013) or *Grey Scale* (2015), a flaw that is created by the machine, is celebrated rather than corrected.

This process of yielding is most pronounced in his recent work, but it harkens back to his earliest childhood experiences. Raised on a 2000-acre farm in Dodge City, Kansas, where his family bred cattle and harvested wheat, Haley vividly remembers spending his formative years driving a tractor “over

so much nothing. I think because of this early experience, I am naturally attracted to spare forms. They’re minimal but not in the [historical] sense of Minimalism. That landscape is so big and empty that you can see the curve of the earth. I knew I was a dot on a giant field and I would lay on the ground in the field and feel the curve of the earth. That feeling doesn’t go away. I think my ability to pair objects to their essence while being aware of the tiniest detail is born out of that childhood experience.”

Twin, 2014, Cor-ten steel, 106 × 43 × 54 in.



If growing up in Kansas and later training as a blacksmith with American sculptor Tom Joyce (American, b. 1956) in Santa Fe, New Mexico had a foundational impact on Haley’s career, perhaps the most important transition remains his residency at the Penland School of Crafts in Penland, North Carolina from 1997–2000. While most resident artists come to the program after finishing undergraduate or graduate fine arts degrees, Haley had chosen a different route. Penland then marked an important transition for Haley from working stylistically to conceptually. It gave him license for experimentation, allowing him to work through his own ideas rather than merely regurgitating well-crafted objects in another artist’s style. “The blacksmithing tradition is very limited,” explains Haley. “I had been learning by making Joyce’s work...Penland was my first real opportunity to just explore what I thought and I started thinking about scale.” From Penland came another chance encounter shortly after in Providence, Rhode Island, which helped Haley conceptualize the possibilities for large-scale or public

art projects. One day, while watching just two men replace an older water tower with a much larger spheroid water tower, Haley realized that like the modular construction of the new tower, “if the unit is small enough, I can make the object infinitely large.”

This awareness of the macro and micro is a reoccurring element in Haley’s work. Often using smaller, repeating modular units, which Haley forms through machine presses and metal hand tools, Haley then aggregates together these individual units to create a singular three-dimensional object. *Tessellation No. 1* and *Twin* (2014), two vertical companion pieces with undulating surfaces, are each made in this piecemeal fashion. As hyperbolic paraboloids, *Tessellation No. 1* and *Twin* could theoretically continue their patterns to infinity, each becoming massive ongoing walls of metal.

With other works, particularly the *Erratic* series, which he first begins in 2008 and capstones with the newest installation *Glacier* (2015), Haley has increasingly relinquished control to

Twin (detail)



the machine, thereby substituting mathematical repetition for intentional irregularity. Haley began making the erratic series after he first encountered geological erratic boulders at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Island, Maine in 2008; his earliest investigations remained fairly stylized. In geological terms, an erratic boulder is a rock, ranging in size up to a large house, which has been carried by glacial movements and deposited in areas far from its original site. In its new location, the geological properties of the erratic boulder differ from all other rocks at that site. At the same time, an erratic boulder blends into its current surrounding: it is both uniquely foreign and harmonious within its adopted landscape.³

Glacier (2015), a series of white repeating dented cube forms placed on top of one another and made from panels of salvaged washing machine skins, is an 11 ft. long wall hanging. Haley started using discarded washing machines in 2008 for *The White Series*. "When the economy crashed, it was very quickly reflective in what was available in the scrap yard, because all industry stopped...people [started] bringing in junk, what I consider trashy metal so I thought I have to do something with what is provided," says Haley. "I started to research and understand the lifespan of appliances, that they are designed to get shorter and shorter, and to see the sheer volume of the millions of washers and dryers thrown away every day. There's a very accelerated pace

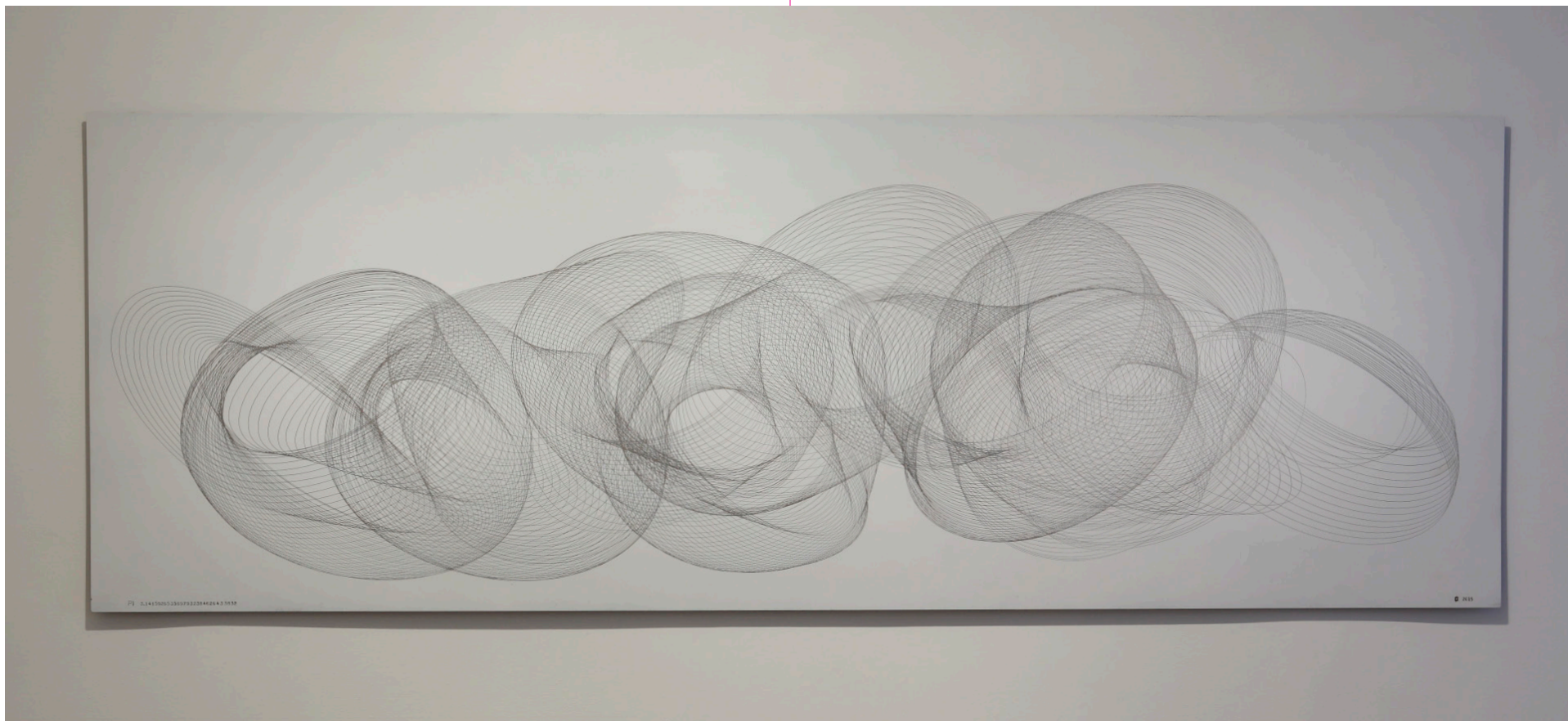
between melting down and making new machines."

Just below the wall hanging, two large burnt umber boulder forms, titled *Glacial Erratics* (2015), sit slightly removed from the wall as isolated islands in the gallery space, closely bound to each other. Although *Glacier* and *Glacial Erratics* visually stand in stark contrast because of their color palette, in reality the three objects are made through the same organic process. For each, Haley begins with one panel—washing machine skin for *Glacier* and Cor-ten steel for the erratics—that he puts into the hydraulic press and then shapes by hand. He then adds another panel, again manipulated by the press and hammer, and another,

and then another, until he eventually creates an irregular polygon that follows not after a preconceived plan of the artist but rather an organic give and take between man and machine.

Grey Scale (2015) is similarly made from discarded materials. Part of Haley's series *Wads*, *Grey Scale* is six separate spheres, ranging from black to white with various shades of grey in-between, comprised of car hoods, doors, or trunks. By using cars as his material, Haley places himself in a long artistic tradition since the mid-20th-century of American male artists using cars as their subject matter: John Chamberlain's massive, welded objects, Andy Warhol's screen prints of car crashes, or Ed Ruscha's photographic

Grey Scale, 2015, repurposed car hoods, diameter: 26 in.



book, *Every Building on the Sunset Strip*, (1966) a series of prints made by setting a tripod in the back of a vehicle. For *Grey Scale*, Haley cuts the metal surface into four individual sheets. The sheets are then fitted into the C-press to create parabolas, and finely welded together to form a sphere that hangs on the wall. Conceptually, like a wadded up piece of paper, each sphere has a quality of being flippantly discarded or tossed aside. To create the series, Haley acquired the cars in a piecemeal fashion, responding to what was available in the scrap yard. "Originally, I wanted only old pickup trucks, but I realized that most of the cars weren't even that old. Instead, I started noticing that most cars there were a shade of grey, so I started collecting them. I've been waiting on the cars to come in, going back each time and hoping to find the color I need. There's a certain

amount of faith involved that I will find what I'm looking for."

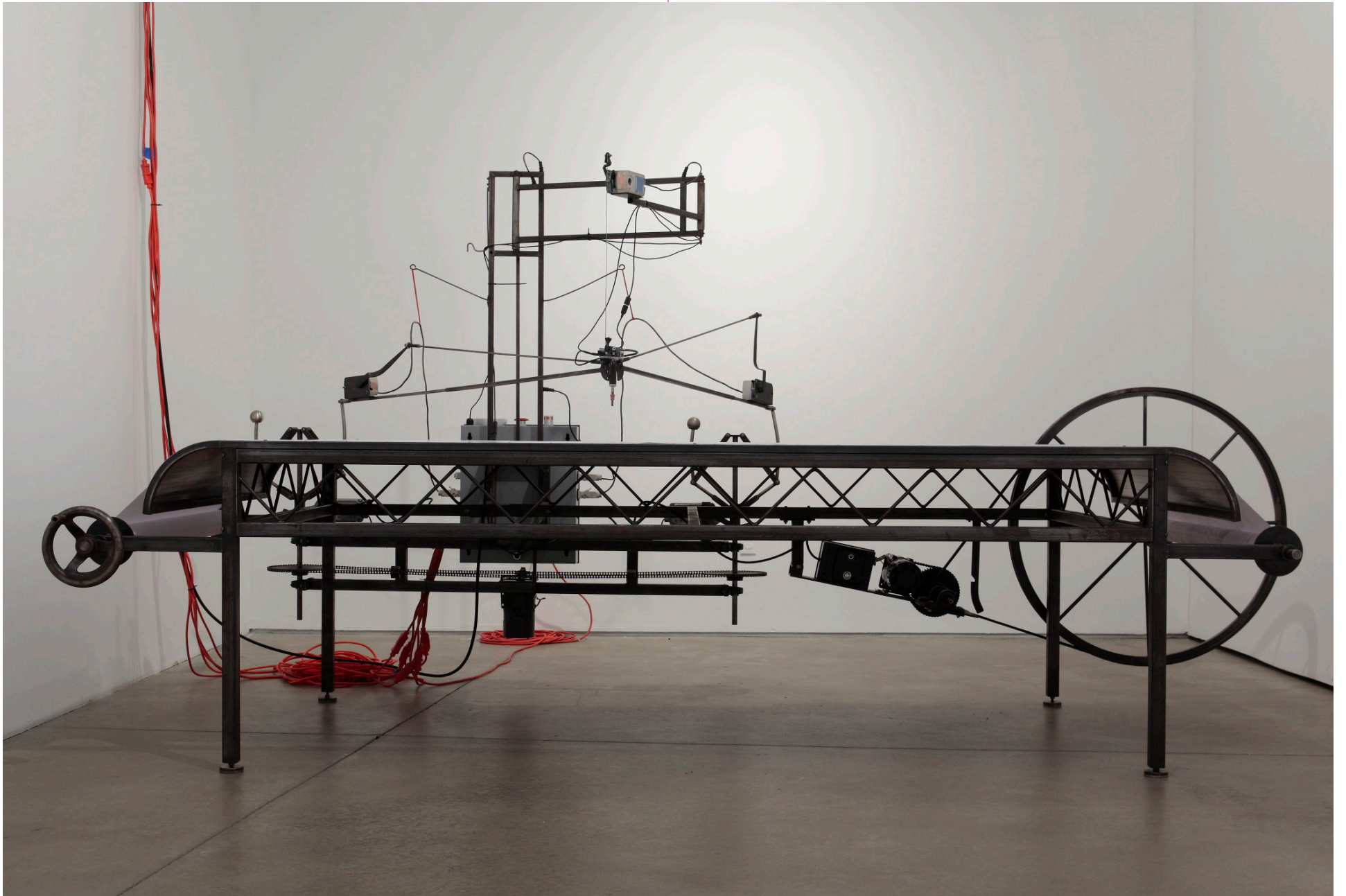
For the newest iteration of *The Drawing Machine*, Haley places that faith with gallery goers. Powered by five actuators and a computer that together control the arms of the machine, *The Drawing Machine* is a custom-built tabletop machine that uses a stylus to create monochromatic drawings of repeating, undulating curves as seen in *Long Pi* (2015), an enameled 12 ft. steel plate with repetitious, circling lines etched into its surface with a diamond-encrusted rotary tool. The machine is activated by a series of motion-controlled sensors installed throughout the room and the pattern of the drawing is dependent upon the movement of people in the gallery. A GoPro camera mounted to the stylus projects a video of the drawing being

made in real-time onto the adjacent wall; the change in perspective is disorienting and jarring to the viewer. The screeching sound of the stylus scratching across the surface and the clanking turning wheels, together with the wonky composition of wires and bright orange extension cords hanging about and aesthetically added metal knobs that have no actual function creates a rather convoluted way to produce a drawing. Haley admits it is a "glimpse into the artist's mind." Moreover, like other works, it pays homage to his Mid-West upbringing and mapping the vast, flat Kansas landscape. "I think of *The Drawing Machine* as indicative of that x, y grid and I see it in terms of mapping. Growing up, I lived on Correction Line Road. In Kansas, surveyors divided land into square sections rather than miles, so every so often there was a need for

a correction. Correction Line Rd, an East to West road, turned abruptly at a 90° angle and then corrected itself with another 90° angle as a way for the survey to get reestablished. It makes sense to me that my work is about mapping the surfaces of shapes and their relationship with each other."

On one level, Haley's *oeuvre* is formally appealing for this three-dimensional mapping and dynamic rhythm that plays out across the metal forms. At a second level, Haley's work generates much broader conceptual appeal because his materials and his courting of chance or faith as a successful strategy for artmaking offer a variety of rich interpretive narratives. Both washing machines and cars are considered durable goods, the type of commodities that economists use to measure GDP to determine a country's

Long Pi, 2015, enamel paint on steel, 42 × 120 in.

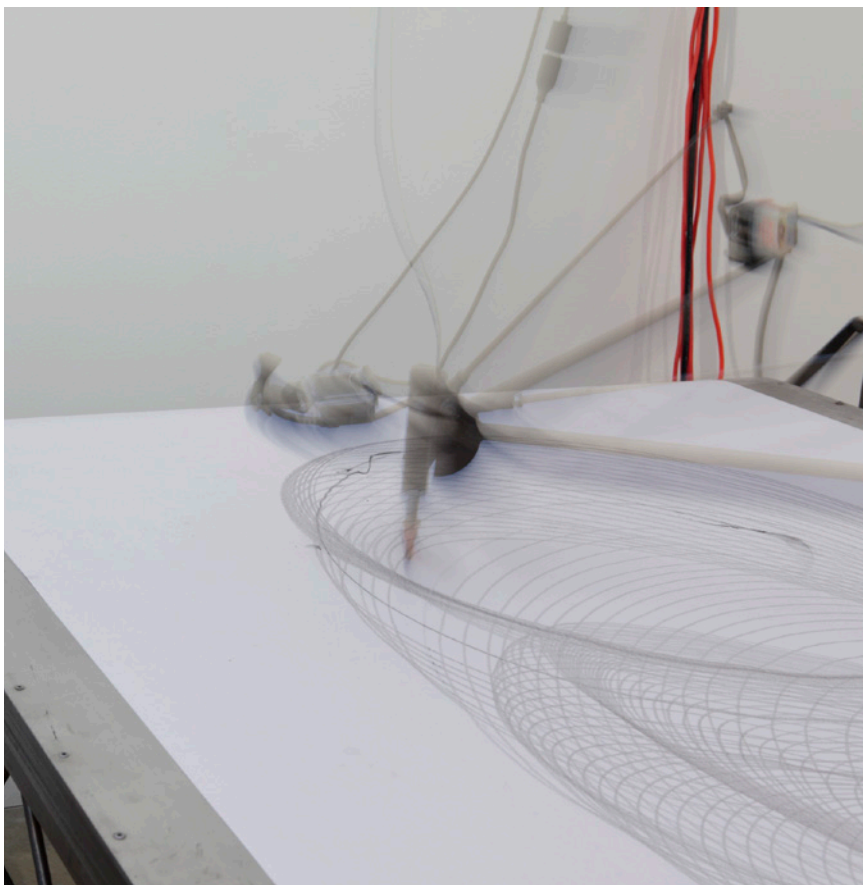


The Drawing Machine, 2010, steel, motor, actuators, computer controller, dimensions variable

development. Moreover, washing machines particularly offer an even more nuanced indicator of wealth, leading some researchers to recently argue that ownership of washing machines remain one of the best indicators of economic advancement.⁴ As the rhythms of industry, the short lifespan of these materials exemplify planned obsolescence on a 21st-century scale, raising questions about the long-term effects of Western throwaway culture and the growing dichotomy it creates between the haves and the have-nots.

Furthermore, Haley's three-dimensional forms consider the larger notion of life cycle and the traces or indices that fold into a history. Haley maintains, "cause and effect is the thread that runs throughout the exhibition... we all have these effects as we move

about our life that we don't even know about. When you discard your broken washing machine, you assume something is going to happen to it but you don't know what will happen. It raises questions like, what is our own cause and effect?" *The Drawing Machine* sketches out a cause and effect map of movement, thereby concretizing an everyday action onto paper. In contrast, the video projection for this exhibition is a fleeting real-time event, leaving no lasting record except for documentary photographs. Other works stand at a crossroad. For example, an erratic glacier that migrated thousands of years ago retains its uniquely foreign properties while attempting to harmonize in its new surroundings: it remains within a state of perpetual instability, posed between two worlds as either/or. Finally, Haley's materials, like the washing machines used in



The Drawing Machine (detail)



the doughnut-shaped *White Torus* (2015) or *Glacier* carry a long history of accumulated narratives, recording mundane domestic activity and the story of a family or a community.

Throughout his work, Haley underscores the notion of the hand, broadening the concept to include not just the artist's hand but rather the series of hands that have touched that object: the manufacture, the seller, the buyer, the many people that might have used it, the scrap yard workers, the artist, the collector, the museum, and so forth. Time is implicitly tied to the surface of these objects in a way that mimics after the real-time event of making, as emphasized by the accompanying large-scale video projection that then records the process of producing a drawing. Aggregated together, Haley's sculptural traces of

movement piece together a narrative, ultimately mapping out a trail that encircles the audience in an effort to question our role within the larger history of a world mediated by objects.

– Amanda Dalla Villa Adams

1. Kenneth Silverman, *Begin Again: A Biography of John Cage* (Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2012), 169-170.

2. All quotations by the artist are from interviews with the author in August 2015.

3. Vivien Gornitz, ed., *Encyclopedia of Paleoclimatology and Ancient Environments* (The Netherlands: Springer), 354.

4. Mal Siret, "Birdsong, washing machines, even lollipops are 'better indicators than GDP'" *The Times* <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/article4094000.ece> (accessed Aug. 26, 2015).

White Torus, 2015, repurposed washing machines, 64 × 64 × 18 in.



Glacier, 2015, repurposed washing machines, 60 × 144 × 24 in. (above)

Glacial Erratics, 2015 (below)
No.1: Cor-ten steel, 30 × 24 × 28 in., No.2: Cor-ten steel, 23 × 18 × 24 in.



WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Dimensions are given in inches, height by width by depth

Twin, 2014
Cor-ten steel,
106 × 43 × 54

Tessellation No., 2013
repurposed washing machines,
106 × 54 × 26

Red Wad, 2015
repurposed car hood,
diameter: 26

Long Pi, 2015
enamel paint on steel,
42 × 120

The Drawing Machine, 2010
steel, motor, actuators,
computer controller,
dimensions variable

Glacier, 2015
repurposed washing machines,
60 × 144 × 24

Glacial Erratics, 2015
No. 1: Cor-ten steel, 30 × 24 × 28
No. 2: Cor-ten steel, 23 × 18 × 24

Grey Scale, 2015
repurposed car hoods,
diameter: 26

White Torus, 2015
repurposed washing machines,
64 × 64 × 18

Biltmore Iron & Metal Co., Inc., Asheville, North Carolina



BIOGRAPHY

Hoss Haley was born in Dodge City, Kansas in 1961. He has lived and worked in Asheville, North Carolina since 2000. Formally trained as a blacksmith by Tom Joyce in Santa Fe, New Mexico from 1985–1991, Haley’s earliest introduction to manipulating metal came as a young boy with his father on the farm. A frequent instructor at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts in Deer Island, Maine and the Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina, Haley served as the resident artist at Penland from 1997–2000 and also completed a residency at the John Michael Kohler Arts Center in Kohler, Wisconsin in 1999. Haley has completed public art projects for the Pack Square Conservancy in Asheville, the Asheville Art Museum, the Charlotte Area Transit System, and Mecklenberg County, all in North Carolina as well as Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, Texas and the Linden Sculpture Park in Indianapolis, Indiana. This fall, Haley will mount his largest public project to date, a 50,000 lb. 40 foot tall sculpture comprised of steel, at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport FBO Terminal. Haley is represented by the gallery, Blue Spiral 1 in Asheville, NC.

Courtesy of Michael Mauney and *American Craft*.

Selected Solo Exhibitions

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|--|
| 2012 | <i>Old Growth</i> , New Gallery of Modern Art, Charlotte, NC | 2000 | <i>Featured Artist: Hoss Haley</i> , Blue Spiral 1 Gallery, Asheville, NC |
| | <i>Hoss Haley</i> , Blue Spiral 1 Gallery, Asheville, NC | 1999 | <i>Hoss Haley: Steel Sculpture</i> , Gallery WDO, Charlotte, NC |
| 2010 | <i>Radius</i> , Blue Spiral 1 Gallery, Asheville, NC | 1998 | <i>Hoss Haley: Sculpture and Works on Paper</i> , Gallery WDO, Charlotte, NC |
| 2006 | <i>Hoss Haley: Ripple</i> , Joie Lassiter Gallery, Charlotte, NC | 1995 | <i>Hoss Haley, Lewallen Contemporary Art Gallery</i> , Santa Fe, NM |
| 2005 | <i>Domicile</i> , Blue Spiral 1 Gallery, Asheville, NC | 1994 | <i>Works in Iron</i> , Dewey Galleries, Ltd., Santa Fe, NM |
| 2003 | <i>Gravity</i> , Blue Spiral 1 Gallery, Asheville, NC | 1993 | <i>Forged Irony</i> , Dewey Galleries, Ltd., Santa Fe, NM |
| 2002 | <i>Hoss Haley</i> , WDO Gallery, Charlotte, NC | 1991 | <i>Hoss Haley: New Works</i> , Dewey Galleries, Ltd., Santa Fe, NM |
| | <i>Hoss Haley</i> , John Elder Gallery, New York, NY | | |

Selected Group Exhibitions

- | | | | |
|------|--|------|--|
| 2013 | <i>0 to 60: The Experience of Time Through Contemporary Art</i> , North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC | 2004 | <i>The Nature of Craft and the Penland Experience</i> , Mint Museum of Craft + Design, Charlotte, NC |
| 2012 | <i>Artworks Primed</i> , Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC | 2003 | <i>Defying Gravity: Contemporary Art and Flight</i> , North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, NC |
| 2011 | <i>Edge & Flow</i> , Colorado Metalsmithing Association Conference, Salida, CO | 2002 | <i>Re-Creation/Recreation: Fun with Found Objects</i> , Noyes Museum of Art, Oceanville, NJ |
| 2010 | <i>Soul’s Journey: Inside the Creative Process</i> , Traveling Exhibition, Franklin G. Burroughs-Simeon B. Chapman Art Museum, Myrtle Beach, SC (traveling exhibition) | | <i>Exquisite Scrap</i> , Craft Alliance, St. Louis, MO |
| 2007 | <i>Make It New</i> , Asheville Art Museum, Asheville, NC | 2001 | <i>Homegrown</i> , Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, Winston-Salem, NC |

Selected Bibliography

Adelson, Fred B. “In Three Shows, Museum Looks Beyond the Review.” *The New York Times*, March 10, 2002.

Dreyer, R.. “Hoss Haley.” *American Craft* Vol. 62, no. 2 (2002): 78-81.

Fariello, Anna. “Hoss Haley: Finding Voice in the Heartland.” *Metalsmith* (Fall 2006): 28-35.

Lovelace, Joyce. “Grand Scale.” *American Craft* Vol. 75, no. 5 (October/November, 2015): 78-85.

“Minimalist Pieces Evoke Sensations to the Max.” *The Charlotte Observer*, 1999.

Penland Book of Handmade Books. New York: Lark Books, 2004, pictured.

Winterrowd, Troy. “Graphic Elements.” *Modern Asheville*, July 26, 2010.



Artist Residencies

1997–2000 John Michael Kohler Arts Center, Artist-in-Residence, Kohler, WI

1999 Penland School of Craft, Artist-in-Residence, Penland, NC

Public Collections

City of Charlotte Public Art Collection
Charlotte, NC

Asheville Art Museum
Asheville, NC

Mint Museum of Craft + Design
Charlotte, NC

Valdosta State University
Valdosta, GA

Linden Sculpture Park
Indianapolis, IN

Sam Houston State University
Huntsville, TX

Andreas H. Bechtler Arts Foundation
Mount Holly, NC

Mecklenburg County Courthouse Plaza
Charlotte, NC

Pack Square Conservancy Project
Asheville, NC

**Charlotte Area Transit System,
South Corridor Light Rail**
Charlotte, NC

North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC

**Charlotte Area Transit System,
Park and Ride**
Huntersville, NC

McColl Center for Visual Art
Charlotte, NC

John Michael Kohler Arts Center
Sheboygan, WI

High Plains Journal
Dodge City, KS

Iowa Beef Packing Plant
Garden City, KS

Above: *Red Wad*, 2015, repurposed car hood, diameter: 26 in.

Guide photography provided by David Hunter Hale, Hoss Haley, and courtesy of Michael Mauney and *American Craft*.

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