

# Process/Installation Images

*Clew: A Rich and Rewarding Disorientation*

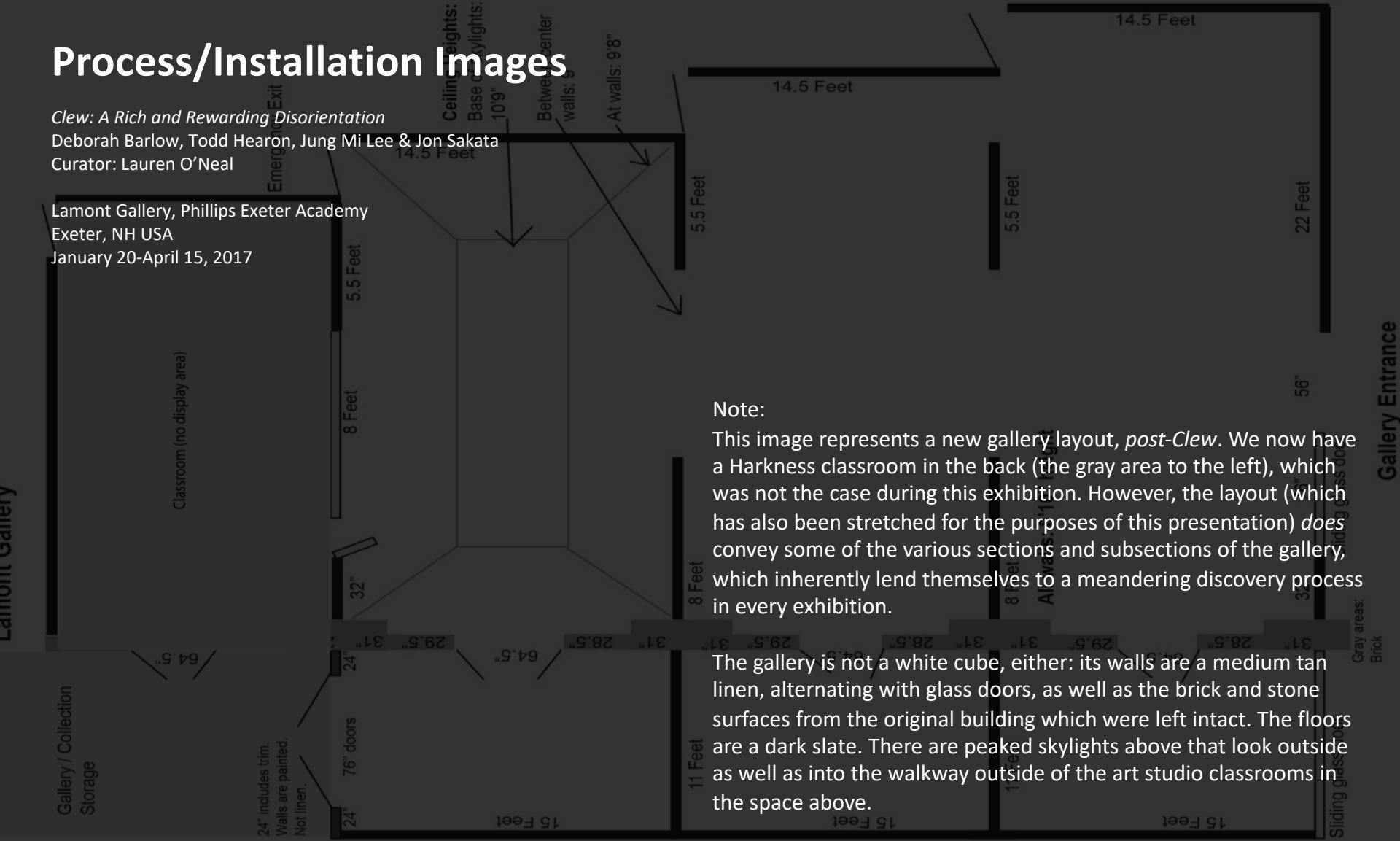
Deborah Barlow, Todd Hearon, Jung Mi Lee & Jon Sakata

Curator: Lauren O'Neal

Lamont Gallery, Phillips Exeter Academy

Exeter, NH USA

January 20-April 15, 2017



## Note:

This image represents a new gallery layout, *post-Clew*. We now have a Harkness classroom in the back (the gray area to the left), which was not the case during this exhibition. However, the layout (which has also been stretched for the purposes of this presentation) *does* convey some of the various sections and subsections of the gallery, which inherently lend themselves to a meandering discovery process in every exhibition.

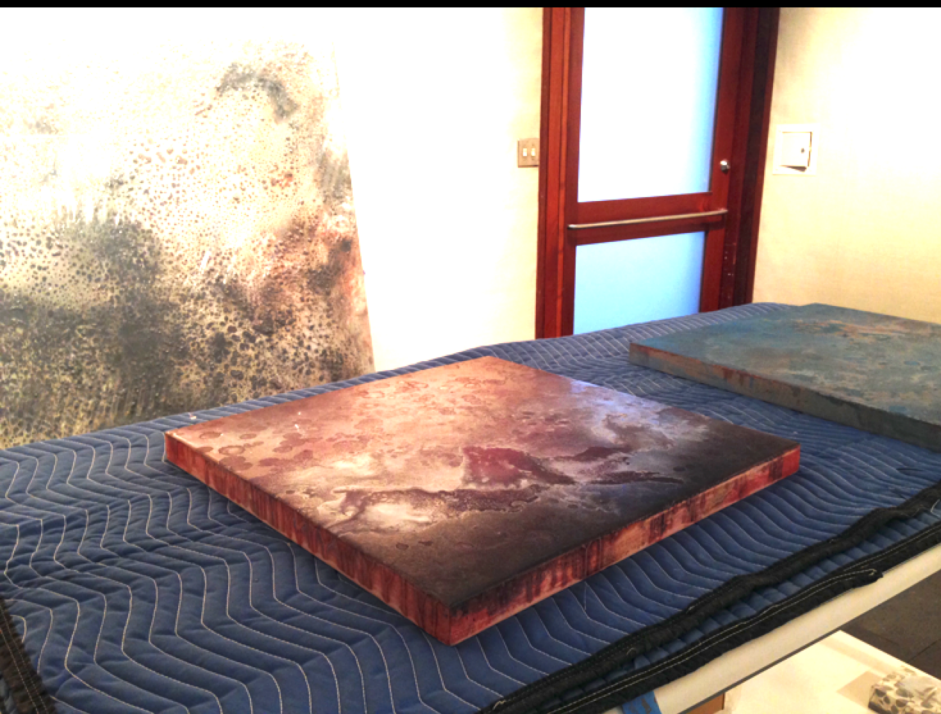
The gallery is not a white cube, either: its walls are a medium tan linen, alternating with glass doors, as well as the brick and stone surfaces from the original building which were left intact. The floors are a dark slate. There are peaked skylights above that look outside as well as into the walkway outside of the art studio classrooms in the space above.

## Process/Installation Images

These images document just a small portion of the installation process. This file does not contain working documents or images from the artists' own studio practices, but from the curatorial project as it developed in the gallery.



Deborah Barlow's paintings were delivered by a professional art shipping company in soft-pack containers. As the "visual anchors," we brought these in early so we could experiment with how they made space and how they contributed to the conceptual 'threads' of the *Clew* journey.



Throughout the installation process, the materials themselves informed our next steps aesthetically and conceptually. We became very interested in the edges of things and how 'seeing the edge' or 'seeing at or around the edge' captured the many registers of insight, disorientation, and discovery that we were aiming to promote.



Much like the edges of the paintings, the qualities of other materials we used for prototyping and final build-out informed our choices. Core earth elements, such as salt, contributed to the idea of the cosmos—of uncharted & vast territories (of the planet, of space, of the psyche), and ribbons or strips functioned as threads, sails, maps, and clues.



A new board and multi-speaker set-up was lent by the Music department.

The sound was mixed in the school's digital recording lab.

We used the material and sonic textures of mixing, recording, and playing back sound as artist catalysts in the installation itself (see Exhibition Layout images).



Materials, elements, and bodies were constantly in flux during the installation process. We aimed to make the space and the objects within it facilitate a journey that was in turns rich and rewarding (with pleasurable and delightful discoveries) as well as destabilizing and disorienting.

In a more traditional museum or gallery setting, you try not to handle the art objects much because of conservation issues. Deborah's own handling of her paintings and her flexibility in letting us handle them opened up the process. This was augmented by our respective, physicalized and embodied/material-oriented art practices. This made moving the material elements of the exhibition a choreographic enterprise: part of the core narrative of the exhibition as much as for the 'end result' experienced by the public.



As part of the dual themes of discovery and disorientation, we wanted to reconsider how objects escape our expectations and can perform in different ways, making the visitor perform in response. Gallery Manager Stacey Durand suggested trying this painting at an angle. We later brought in a futon and flashlights so that people could lie underneath, much like reclining under a starry sky.

## Representative Sequence: 'Sail'

I have chosen the evolution of the 'sail' piece as a representative sequence of how we made the exhibition as a whole.

The 'sail' is not actually the name of the piece. I am using the term as it is evocative of the multitude of definitions of the word *clew*, and as such is part of the exhibition concept.



We started with installing a rough paper prototype based on sketches that Jon Sakata brought to the gallery.





We considered the potential spatial and motion qualities of the piece through the prototype, and examined it from different levels and from the outside of the gallery. The gallery walls are punctuated by numerous glass doors and windows, which makes the views from the outside part of the curatorial choreography.





We decided that one of Deborah's paintings would go behind the sail. We tested several. In choosing this particular work, we had to consider the literal and psychic spaces made by the materials that were now in conversation before constructing the final scenario. How does it look from in-between? How do you apprehend it from around the corner? How does it appear from overhead? Will visitors crawl under it, walk around? Put their limbs in some of the curves and dips? These were the types of questions that were generated during our discussions.



Next, we began to install the sail itself, which was made from theatrical scrim and tulle. On the right, Collections & Exhibitions manager Dustin Schuetz works with artists Jung Mi Lee and Jon Sakata to determine the end of the sail's extension into the front gallery space, as intersections between works and spaces was an important aspect of our ideas of encounter.



Stacey and Dustin installing the piece based on discussions that Dustin, Jon, and I had, as well as on my installation/construction knowledge of hanging other works from ceilings (a common part of my own practice).





The four artists, from left to right: Jon Sakata, Todd Hearon, Deborah Barlow, and Jung Mi Lee discuss the placement of elements in *Clew*.



Arranging the coal, salt, and sand 'landscapes.'