

# Grey is the Color of Theory



Sapira Cheuk



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*TRANSLUCENT BODIES*

In the Chinese brush painting tradition, the viewer experiences the mountains and streams through performative brush strokes. Similarly, the series Translucent Bodies aims to capture the feelings and expression of “other” bodies through gestures of ink. Instead of illustrating a figure's features and thereby imposing a single narrative of the body, abstracted forms of watery mass are used to draw the viewer into many possible dialogs with the figures depicted. The bodies are arranged together to denote a new organism, and suggest alternative embodied, collective forms of consciousness. These compounded bodies, taken as a whole, create a new body-scape that transforms the mutated/disembodied lone figure into a community that belongs.

Cover Image

*Translucent Bodies 4*, 2017

Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar

24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)

*Translucent Bodies 2*, 2017

Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar

24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)





*Translucent Bodies 3*, 2017  
Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar  
24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)



*Translucent Bodies 1*, 2017  
Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar  
24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)





*Translucent Bodies 5*, 2017  
Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar  
24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)



*Translucent Bodies 6*, 2017  
Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar  
24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)





*Translucent Bodies 7*, 2017  
Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar  
24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)



*Translucent Bodies 8, 2017*  
Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar  
24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)





*Translucent Bodies 9, 2017*  
Ink and Acrylic on Paper and Duralar  
24 x 18 in. (60.96 x 45.72 cm)



Sapira Cheuk's work revolves around issues of the body and women's sexuality. Her work incorporate traditional Sumi Ink painting techniques and geometric elements to depict female sexual experiences, particularly the complexity of the Subject and corporeality, while building an alternative narrative of bodily desires. Cheuk has exhibited in over 50 exhibitions, including those at the Orange County Contemporary Art Center, Riverside Art Museum, Rochester Contemporary Art Museum, Wignall Museum of Contemporary Art, and The Robert & Frances Fullerton Museum of Art. She received her BA at University of California, Riverside and MFA from California State University, San Bernardino.

ARTIST INFO  
[www.sapiracheuk.com](http://www.sapiracheuk.com)

Artwork courtesy of Sapira Cheuk



# Grey is the Color of Theory

Sapira Cheuk      Andrew K. Thompson

“Grey is the Color of Theory” is a droll line borrowed from the Czech-born philosopher, Vilém Flusser. Flusser believed that, “Black-and-white do not exist, but they ought to exist since, if we could see the world in black and white, it would be accessible to logical analysis. In such a world everything would be either black or white or a mixture of both.”

Mixture is the underlining theme of this exhibition as the art practice of Sapira Cheuk and Andrew K. Thompson are strikingly different in some ways and very familiar in others. Sharing stylistic likenesses but motivated by different concepts both artists use gestural drips and pooling of black, white and grey. Cheuk uses the Chinese brush painting tradition to focus on issues of the body and women’s sexuality while Thompson uses photographic materials to illustrate the damage the photography industry (specifically Kodak) has had on the environment. We believe this exhibition bridges similarity while embracing differences as each artist incorporates traditional techniques in unconventional ways to create critical dialog about pressing topics of our time.

Thanks to: Gresham Art Gallery, Emily McNichols, and David Rosales for the generous help.

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Thanks to: Gresham Art Gallery, Emily McNichols, and David Rosales for the generous help.  
Special Thanks to: Lt. Frank Alberti, Jr. and John Sacco for acquiring Genesee River water.  
Rusty Patton, Eric Servin, April Baca, and Nate Dubbs for helping build the Genesee sculpture.  
Alan Van Fleet for help with this publication.

Andrew K. Thompson lives and works in Riverside, California. Thompson holds an MFA degree from the California State University, San Bernardino, and a BFA in Photography from the Academy of Art, San Francisco. His work has been exhibited throughout the United States including exhibitions at the AIPAD Photo Fair, Klotz Gallery in New York, Gallery 1/1 in Seattle, and two recent solo shows at the SRO Photo Gallery at Texas Tech University and C.A.C.t.T.U.S. Long Beach. He has written for Artvoices, Dotphotozine and the Manifest International Photography Annual 3.

#### ARTIST INFO

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Artwork exclusively available at

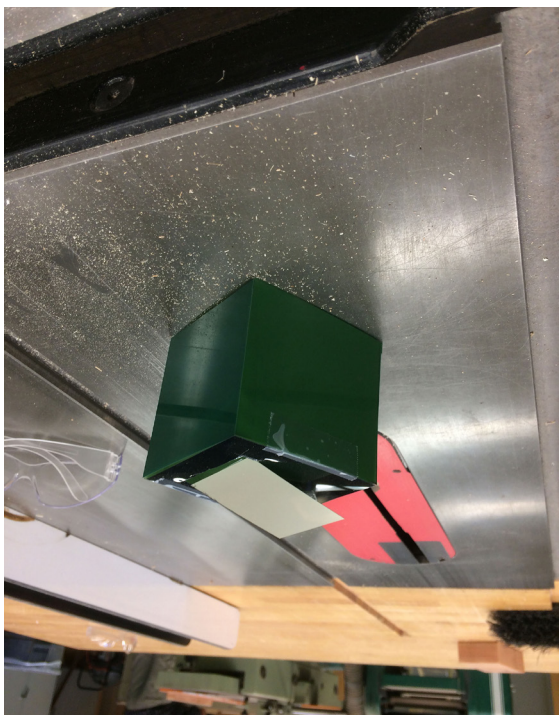
Alan  
Klotz  
GALLERY

[www.klotzgallery.com](http://www.klotzgallery.com) - New York, NY

[www.gallery1of1.com](http://www.gallery1of1.com) - Seattle, WA

Artwork courtesy of Andrew K. Thompson, Alan Klotz Gallery and GALLERY 1/1





Genesee River Water Collection photo credits:  
Top: Lt. Frank Alberti, Jr.  
Bottom: John Sacco  
*Genesee* production photos:  
Andrew K. Thompson





*Unpleasant Landscape #1, 2017*  
Black-and-white chemigram with dry weed and dirt  
8 x 10 in. (20.32 x 25.4 cm)  
Unique





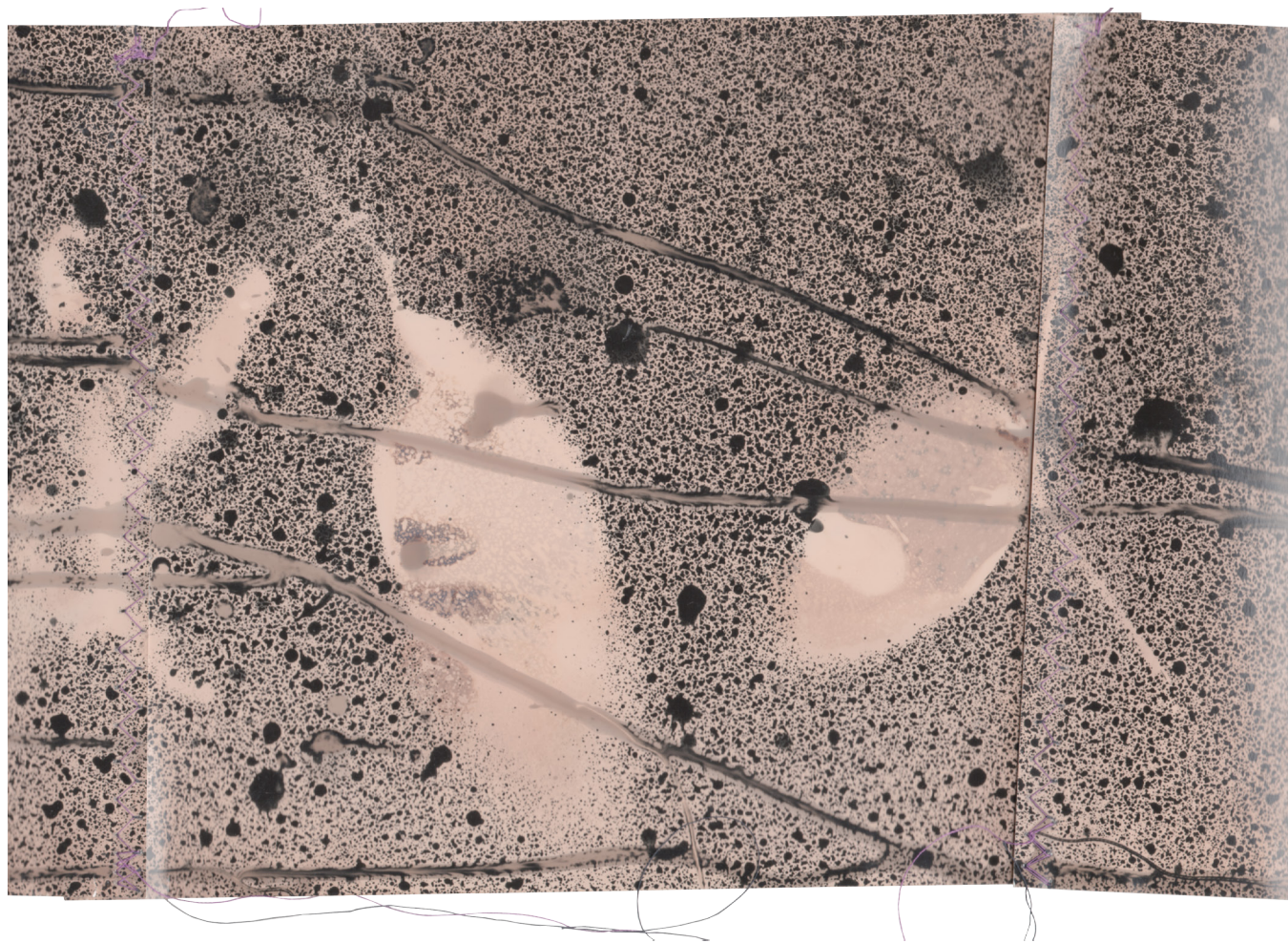


*Unpleasant Landscape #2, 2017*

Black-and-white chemigram with dry weed and dirt

8 x 10 in. (20.32 x 25.4 cm)

Unique



*Cochino Scroll* (detail), 2017  
Black-and-white chemigram accentuated with thread  
138 x 8 in. (350.52 x 20.32 cm)  
Unique

In 2014, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation sent a press release announcing that “Remediation Activities at Eastman Business Park Will Continue” despite Kodak’s bankruptcy.<sup>2</sup> This is a small victory considering that Kodak has been under tributary of Lake Ontario that runs through Rochester, NY) for over a century. Again, I was left with the vision of a constant trickle of chemistry.

The sculpture *Genesee* is a 33-inch cube with a steady seeping of photo developer located at the top. The dimensions are inspired by the documented cases of brain cancer in children living within five miles of the Kodak facility. The sculpture functions similarly to a Surrealist automatic drawing machine by creating random compositions of chemical washes pooling over “11x14” sheets of light sensitive black-and-white paper. Water from the Genesee River was acquired through the generous help of volunteers living within the vicinity of the area. Instead of a didactic presentation of research, I wanted to use this non-representational gesture to reference the beauty of destruction, as well as the destruction of beauty.

However, herein lies a dreadful contradiction. I am still fascinated with the alchemy of photographic chemicals and the range of benefits they have had for modern society, yet there is no escaping the tragic affects these chemicals have had on the land and it’s inhabitants. As an artist and photographer, I do not see an ethical escape from this quandary. Digital technology yields its own form of environmental destruction with its technotrash and e-waste. Caffeine (the use of phenols, sodium carbonate and Vitamin C) offers alternative developing options (coffee being the most common) but a non-toxic fixing solution remains out of reach. As a result, I view photography as a *pharmakon*; it is a medium that paradoxically is both a poison and a cure.

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<sup>2</sup> “DEC Announces That Remediation Activities at Eastman Business Park Will Continue”, *Department of Environmental Conservation*, 13 May, 2014 (<http://www.dec.ny.gov/press/96996.html>).

Cover Image

*Cochino Scroll* (detail), 2017

Black-and-white chemigram accentuated with thread  
138 x 8 in. (350.52 x 20.32 cm)  
Unique

Andrew K. Thompson

What a mess...

The inspiration for this particular body of work started with the Spanish word *Cochino*. My partner would tell her six-year old son not to make “cochinadas” or, as she would explain to me, messes. After hearing the word numerous times, I decided to research its English translation, which provided the definitions: *filthy, dirty, and unpleasant*. This lead me to consider the photographic industry’s environmental impact and how I could present the “mess” it has made since the mediums inception.

I had heard stories of Kodak and the company’s subsequent pollution but never paid too close attention at the time. I was still in denial since it didn’t affect me personally. A quick online search yielded an overabundance of articles incriminating Kodak’s toxic footprint. I was left with a vision of chemical stains and toxic water.

The creation of this work was an act of photographic heresy; willfully exposing the photo paper knowing that it would be punctured, mashed, and stitched together like some unwanted monster. “What a waste”, I heard my conscience say. “All those years of programmed submission to the zone system,” it countered as I brought each sheet to the needle. There have been 33 documented cases of brain cancer in children living within five miles of the Kodak facility.<sup>1</sup> Methylene chloride, acetone, and methanol have all been found in ground water and soil vapors. How can I feel good about making utopic, pristine images of nature with a medium that is actively destroying the environment?

Since the inception of the medium, photography has actively engaged in topographic representations. From the life studies of Henry Fox-Talbot to the grandeur of Ansel Adams, photography has been used to comment on the relationship between humans and the land that they occupy. Faced now with the current ecological uncertainties that accompany climate change, I believe that it is ingenious to present romanticized or idyllic images of nature.

Yes, I felt tremendous guilt each time I yanked the paper out of the box. It was, after all, ‘nice paper’. Present in the exhibition is a collection of vintage fiber-based paper from Kodak, Agfa, Ilford, and the now inappropriately titled Oriental Photographic Paper, all lovingly cared for and donated with reverence. Still, I felt compelled to make these messes, these *cochinadas*, as a reflection of the collective environmental concerns brought on, in part, by the photographic industry. Here, the means to make an idealized photograph is instead used to make a filthy mess that parallels the consequences of the photographic industry’s impact on nature.

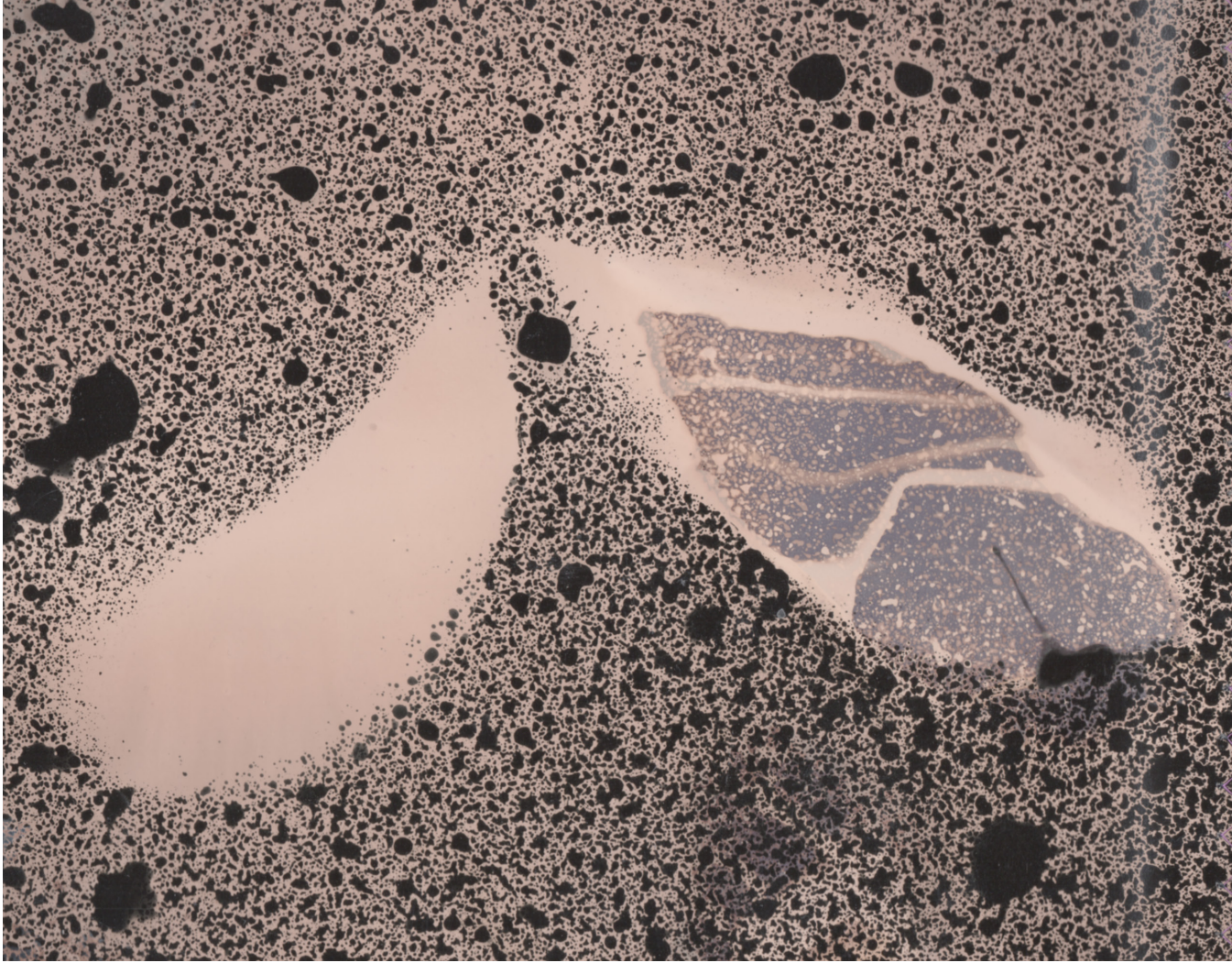
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<sup>1</sup> Niman, Michael “Kodak’s Toxic Moments”, *AlterNet.org*, 28 May, 2003 ([http://www.alternet.org/story/16030/kodak%27s\\_toxic\\_moments](http://www.alternet.org/story/16030/kodak%27s_toxic_moments)).





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