

Peg Fierke
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Artist's Statement

For several decades I have been doing paintings, drawings and prints that explore the contingencies of modularity and layering. Sources of imagery represent a wide range of subjects chosen as much for their formal characteristics as for their potential as vehicles of cognitive meaning.

Using one or more modules chosen from a series of forms I have selected and developed over time, layers composed of modular fields are positioned to interact with underlying or interspersed images developed in a deeper space. I anticipate that the viewer may find the complexity challenging to resolve as the modular field tends to be bound to the picture plane while the underlying images operate in an illusory three-dimensional realm. The surface patterning is generally dominant at close viewing while the "corporeal figures" emerge as the viewer retreats.

The shapes and spatial illusions that result from this method of working are largely determined by the process itself rather than by rational calculation. Where fields of similar but never identical modules randomly cross other images, opportunities occur for new "mutations". This random factor becomes a metaphor for the way in which the phenomenon of chaos operates in evolutionary biology or even how chaos theory interprets any event in which infinitesimal variations become amplified over time/space to become very noticeable, creating a new, non-linear, and unpredictable self-generated order.

I look upon my work as a means of exploration and discovery as much as, if not more than, an activity that results in an object to be viewed. I am attempting to derive images not only from a distillation and transformation of observed objects, but also from a body of empirical information about intangible phenomena. Some of these phenomena are readily observable in nature such as the manner in which fields of similar but never identical modules, say a mass of smooth muscle cells or a stand of wheat, swoop and undulate composing themselves into slightly irregular patterns. However, knowledge of some phenomena exists as speculative theory based on the detectable *behavior* of things the material substance of which is beyond the capacity of, even aided, sensory perception. Many subatomic particles make themselves known through their actions even though they have never been seen by anyone. One can try to imagine what they look like and create hypothetical models extrapolated from their behavior.

It is not possible to fully explain what I'm doing (trying to do) in my work. Most of all, I run from the notion that what I have written would limit a viewer's interpretation or confine or restrict any future direction I might take.