

Liz Sweibel

fragments of our own

with an introduction by Maysey Craddock
and a poem by Anne Pierson Wiese

From September 6 to October 4, 2013
Opening reception: Friday, September 6, 7-9 PM
Artist talk: Sunday, September 29, 5 PM
NURTUREart Gallery
56 Bogart St., Brooklyn, NY 11206

Sliding Beneath the Surface

by Maysey Craddock

The past only comes back when the present runs so smoothly that it is like the sliding surface of a deep river. Then one sees through the surface to the depths. In those moments I find one of my greatest satisfactions, not that I am thinking of the past; but that it is then that I am living most fully in the present. For the present when backed by the past is a thousand times deeper than the present when it presses so close that you can feel nothing else, when the film on the camera reaches only the eye. But to feel the present sliding over the depths of the past, peace is necessary. The present must be smooth, habitual. For this reason - that it destroys the fullness of life - any break - like that of house moving - causes me extreme distress; it breaks; it shallows; it turns the depth into hard thin splinters.

Virginia Woolf

"A Sketch of the Past," 1939-1940

Woolf's words situate our experience of time in a linear way, but allow for movement, perspective and change. If we sit in stillness, our minds and voices quiet, we open ourselves to the richness and nuance of memory. Conversely, upheaval and the friction of *hurry* blind and deafen us and pull the horizon uncomfortably close.

With a quietly penetrating visual language, Liz Sweibel's work taps into deep currents of shared experience. Her sculptures, drawings and installations mine the interstices. In her exhibition *fragments of our own*, Sweibel invites us to consider the unseen waters flowing beneath the surface of every moment. Subtly human and mutely resonant, her delicate and oblique constructions invoke the unspoken, hidden, suppressed and forgotten. We enter a conversation imbued with silence and hovering in stillness.

Sweibel's work does not romanticize or re-create a lost past, but rather insists on the value of what remains by illuminating fragmented glimpses into the depths. It amplifies and interprets echoes and the lines connecting them, creating a new present within a palimpsest of historical accumula-

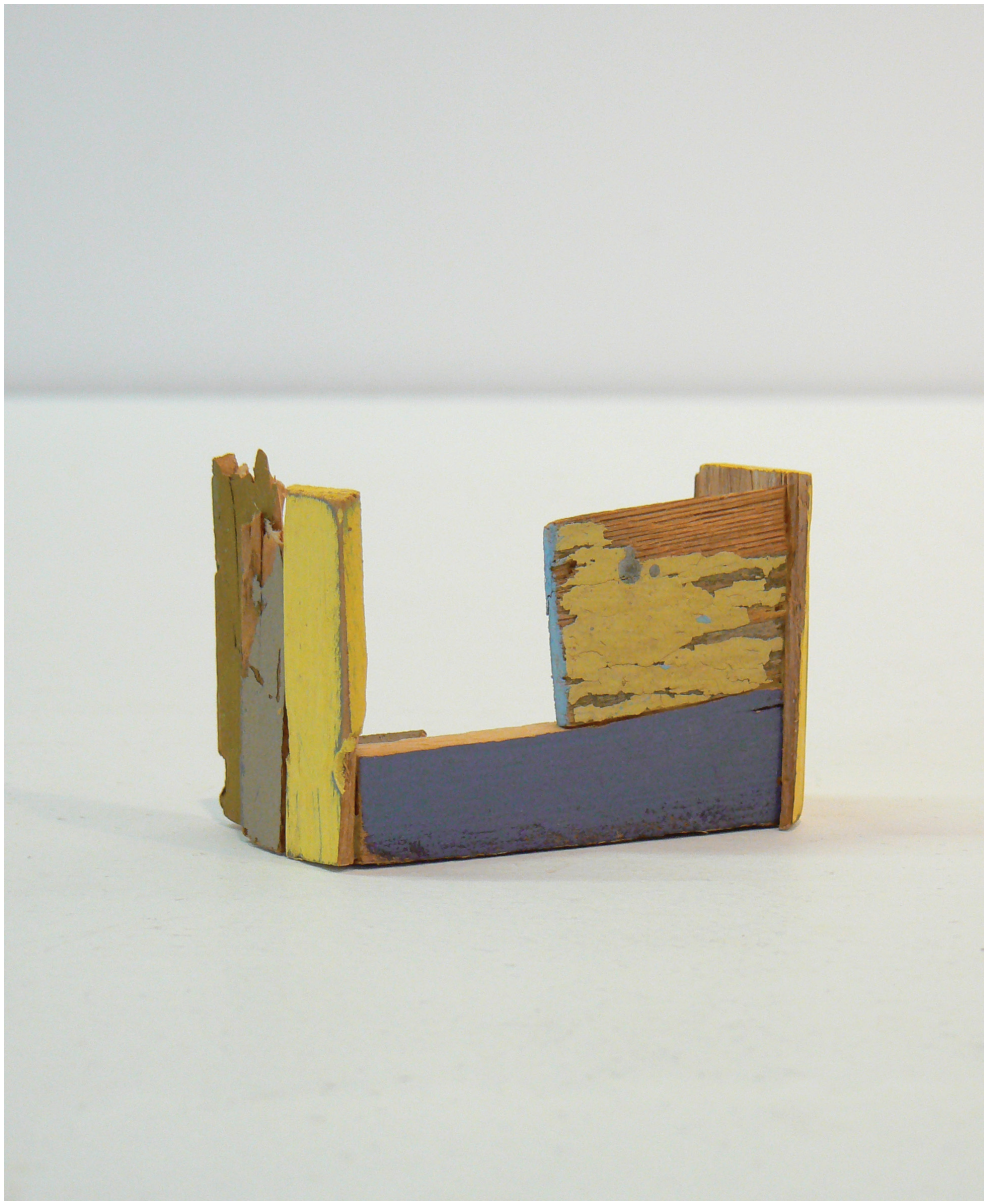


Parts to the Whole, 2012. Wood, paint; installation detail.
Left to right: *Untitled #5*, $3 \times 1 \frac{3}{8} \times \frac{7}{8}$ "; *Untitled #1*, $1 \frac{3}{4} \times 1 \times \frac{7}{8}$ "; *Untitled #2*, $3 \times 1 \frac{3}{8} \times \frac{7}{8}$ ";
Untitled #3, $3 \frac{3}{8} \times \frac{7}{8} \times \frac{7}{8}$ "; *Untitled #4*, $3 \times 1 \frac{5}{8} \times 1$ "; *Untitled #6*, $4 \frac{1}{4} \times 1 \frac{3}{8} \times 1 \frac{3}{8}$ ".

tion. It delves into the traces of what was to make meaning of what is.

Sweibel's work challenges our notions of visceral and monumental space. Despite its diminutive scale, it has a forceful presence. The formally beautiful, dense compositions of wood, with their rich pigment and subtle patina, hold their own. Materially resourceful, Sweibel establishes a dialog between the tactility of rescued materials (strips of wood, bits of wire) and the readable surfaces of the architectural environment: an arc of old tile in the floor or an expanse of wall left to speak for itself. Clustered together, gathered in pairs and small groups, Sweibel's sculptures are arranged with expansion in mind. Negative space is electrified and charged with meaning. In conversation with their environment, they are more than what they seem to be. They also call on other voices to join the conversation - personal and collective, past and present.

Collaborating with an already present visual terrain, Sweibel manipulates material and space, configuring and reconfiguring them into a personal language that pulls us deep into subtle but strong currents. Like Woolf, Sweibel wants us to slow down, dive in and expand out again. Her work is a new language - deeply private but viscerally accessible - for forgotten or unrecorded landscapes and disappeared histories.



Untitled #10, 2012. Wood, paint; 1 3/4 x 2 3/4 x 1 1/4".

Hotel St. George

by Anne Pierson Wiese, 2013

On a table outside the shoe repair shop
in the ground floor of the Hotel St. George,
several rows of worn shoes are displayed
for sale, each pair buffed and mended —
looking like so many earnest souls
transmuted by some heavenly haberdasher
who in life loved to preach: We Are Our Shoes.

One wonders about the cutoff date —
how long does the proprietor wait before
deciding that the owner of this pair
of wingtips or those good Italian pumps
will not be back to pick them up?

In the window is a sign: Not Responsible
For Items Left Over 30 Days. But these shoes
are much older than that — leather fragile
and glamorous as petals, metal eyelets,
boot laces defying age by means of wax,
tongues softly collapsed onto woeful inserts
and heels clunky as 1965. No velcro!

Due to what incident or accident
does one abandon one's shoes?

The St. George was once the fanciest hotel
in Brooklyn, with ballrooms, fine restaurants,
and a saltwater swimming pool on the top
floor. But after 1964 no one wanted to stay
overnight in Brooklyn anymore, except
those down on their luck, or mad, or drunk,
or travelers having lost their way.

Grand wallpaper festooned with flower garlands,
befogged with mold, gilt wall sconces cracked
and broken like teeth, endless corridors breathing
dismantlement, punched-out locks, swooning
drapes, shattered windows and roomfuls
of pigeons, humble ranks of porcelain faucet
handles still insisting: Hot, Cold, Waste.

What gaudy, globe-trotting ghost — accustomed
to private rail cars and brocade everywhere,
oysters on ice, Long Island Duck, and bathing
clothes — would condescend to haunt this castle
of commerce laid low? An abandonment both
explicable and not to those who stayed
and watched the decades pass like transients.

Now the hotel's being redeveloped, since Brooklyn's
coming up again. One tower is student housing,
the other luxury co-ops selling at market rate.
In the ground floor old businesses hang on until
they are replaced — a unisex hair salon, the newsstand
that never left, an all-night locksmith, a Korean
grocery with cut flowers for sale by the door.

Here, beneath the weak neon of the salvaged
hotel marquee, are queued-up dead people's shoes
that despite their bargain prices will never be worn
again. There, from under newer pavement tread thin,
stray patches of the entryway's original tiles are
resurfacing: tiny blue and white porcelain hexagons
stranded like time's cumuli, their message:

All ye who enter here seeking talismans from the past,
beware: you will find them and they will not fit.



Untitled (Study #1), 2013. Graphite on vellum; 9 x 6".



Untitled (Study #2), 2013. Graphite on vellum; 9 x 6".



Untitled, 2013. Wood, paint; 2 1/8 x 5/8 x 1/4".



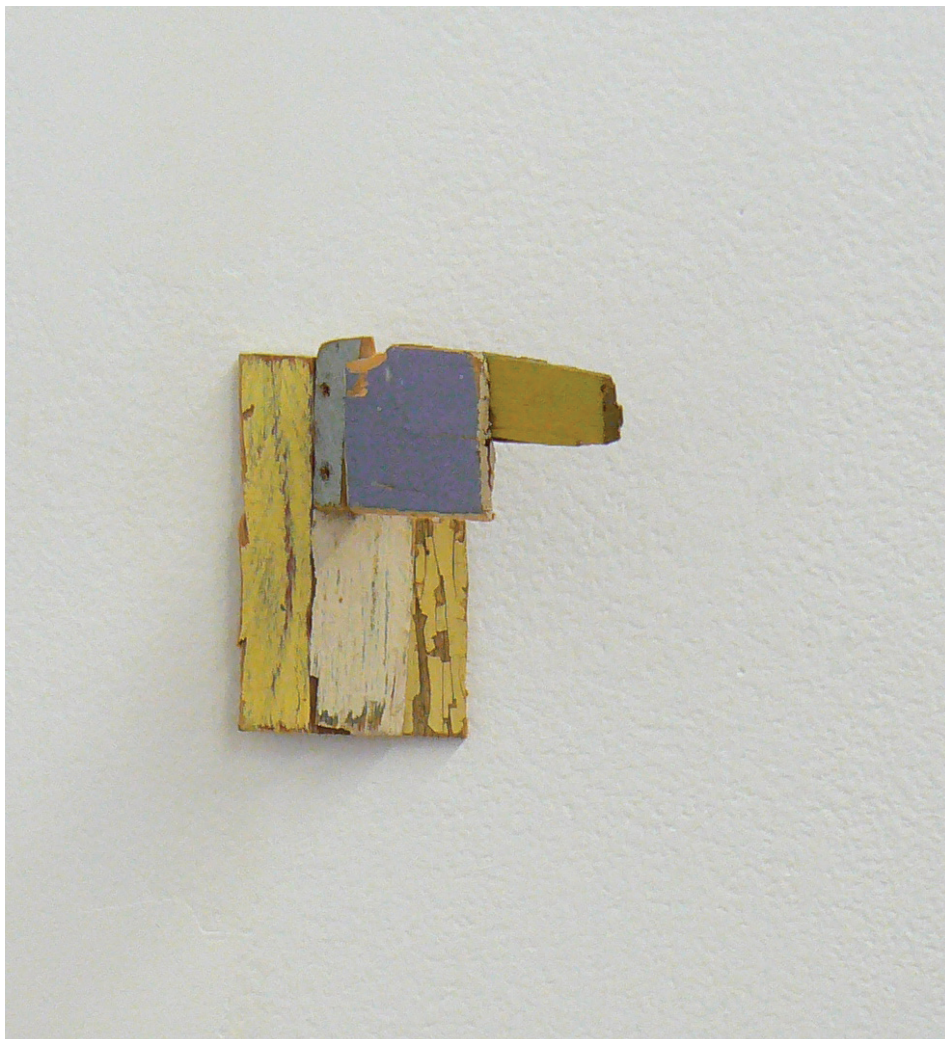
Untitled, 2013. Wood, paint; 3 x 3 3/4 x 1".



Untitled, 2013. Wood, paint; 3 x 1 1/2 x 3/8".



Untitled, 2012. Wood, paint; 2 3/8 x 3 1/8 x 5/8".



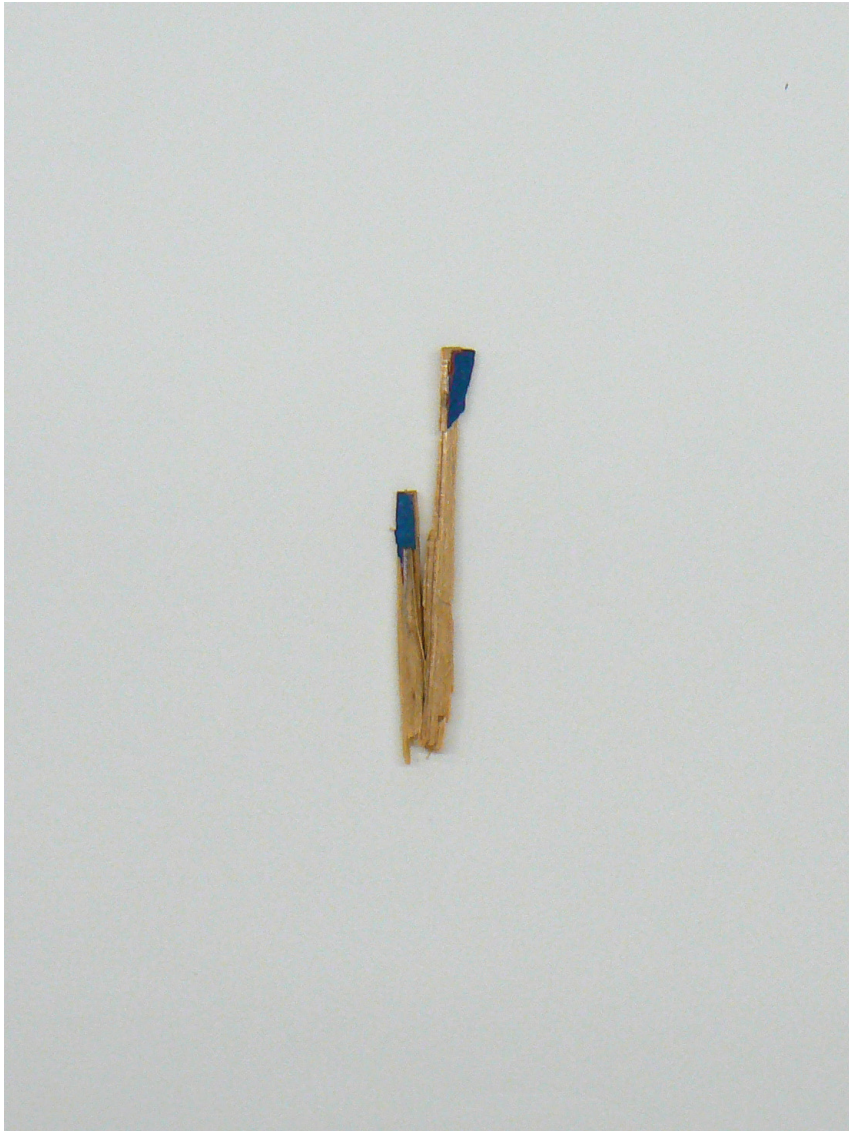
Untitled #9, 2012. Wood, paint; 2 1/8 x 2 x 2 3/4".



Untitled #21, 2012. Wood, paint; 2 1/4 x 1 1/8 x 5/8".



Untitled, 2013. Wood, paint; 2 7/8 x 1 5/8 x 5/8".



Untitled, 2013. Wood, paint; 2 1/8 x 3/8 x 1/8".

NURTUREart Non-Profit, Inc is a 501(c)3 New York State licensed federally tax-exempt charitable organization founded in 1997 by George J. Robinson.

NURTUREart receives support from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, including member item funding from City Council Members Sara Gonzales, Stephen Levin, and Diana Reyna, the New York City Department of Education, and the New York State Council on the Arts.

NURTUREart is also supported by the Harold and Colene Brown Foundation, Edelman, the Greenwich Collection, Ltd., the Joan Mitchell Foundation, the Laura B. Vogler Foundation, the Lily Auchincloss Foundation, the Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, No More Poverty, the Puffin Foundation, Urban Outfitters, and the Wolf Kahn and Emily Mason Foundation.

We receive in-kind support from Brooklyn Brewery, Societe Perrier, Tekserve, and Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts.

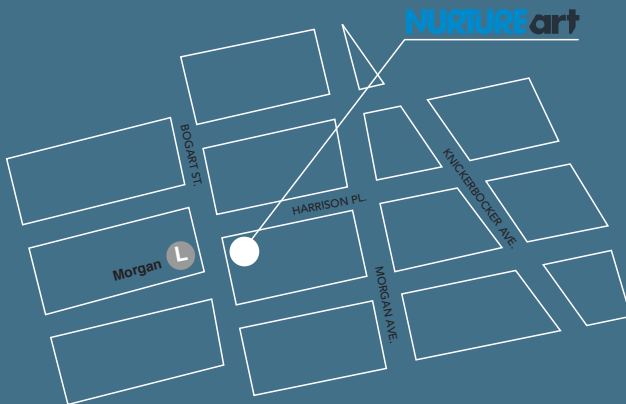
NURTUREart is grateful for significant past support from the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, The Liebovitz Foundation, and the Greenwall Foundation, and to the many generous individuals and businesses whose contributions have supported us throughout our history. Finally, we would like to acknowledge the artists who have contributed works of art to past benefits—our continued success would be impossible without your generosity.

Maysey Craddock is a studio artist based in Memphis, Tennessee. Her work has been featured internationally, and her curatorial projects at The Medicine Factory in Memphis include Liz Sweibel's two-person show *Parts to the Whole*, in September 2012.

Anne Pierson Wiese received the Academy of American Poets Walt Whitman Award for her collection, *Floating City* (Louisiana State University Press, 2007). Her poems have appeared in *Ploughshares*, *The New England Review*, *The Hudson Review*, *Raritan*, *The Southern Review*, *The Antioch Review*, and *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, among others.

"A Sketch of the Past," by **Virginia Woolf**, was published posthumously in *Moments of Being*, (Harcourt, 1985.)





56 Bogart Street
Brooklyn, NY 11206
L train to Morgan Avenue

T 718 782 7755
F 718 569 2086
E gallery@nurtureart.org

www.nurtureart.org

Directions:

By Subway:
L train to the Morgan Avenue stop.
Exit the station via Bogart Street.
Look for the NURTUREart entrance
on Bogart Street, close to the inter-
section with Harrison Place.

By Car:
Driving From Manhattan: Take the
Williamsburg Bridge, stay in the
outside lane, and take the Broadway
/ S. 5 St. exit. Turn left at light onto
Havemeyer St. Turn right next light
onto Borinquen Place, continue
straight, street will change name to
Grand Street. Turn right onto Bush-
wick Ave, left onto Johnson Ave, then
right onto Bogart Street. Look for
our entrance at the corner of Bogart
Street and Harrison Place.