

### Dannielle Tegeder

#### Artist's Statement

My work explores systems in drawing, painting, installation, sound, and animation.

The images shown are from a long term drawing project entitled "The Library of Abstract Sound" from 2009. It is a multi-media installation of two hundred drawings that are enclosed in a room installed on shelves. Each drawing acts as a score and there is a one to three minute long audio piece that accompanies each piece. The audio was created through a program that was written for this project that scans the piece and translates it into sound. The installation also includes a colored wall, mahogany shelves, different frames for each drawing, and a rug all inspired by early modernist interior design. The second room of the installation reminiscent of a modernist museum includes glass mobiles, and large drawings and acts as a contemporary homage to the tradition of abstraction and sound such as Kandinsky, and to the overall sensibility of that time.

# JOHANNES VOGT



## Bio/Resume

Dannielle Tegeder received a BFA from the State University of New York at Purchase, and a MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Dannielle has participated in artist residencies including Yaddo, The Marie Walshe Sharpe Studio Program, and Smackmellon Studio Residency. Her work has been shown at The New Museum of Contemporary Art, NY; Xippas Gallery, Paris, France; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, York, NY; Bronx Museum, New York, NY, Neuberger Museum of Art, Purchase, NY; John Connelly Presents, New York, NY; Jette Rudolph Galerie, Berlin, Germany; Nina Menocal Gallery, Mexico City; Suzanne Vielmetter Projects, Los Angeles, CA among others. Reviews of her work have been published by The New York Times, Artforum, Art in America, and The Chicago Tribune. Her work has recently been included in the Museum of Modern Art's Drawing Collection. A complete overview of my work can be found on [www.dannielletegeder.com](http://www.dannielletegeder.com).

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— Jun 29, 2013 —

Point of View

— 08:40 PM —

## From Steam Fitting to Museum Fittings

Paul Clemence



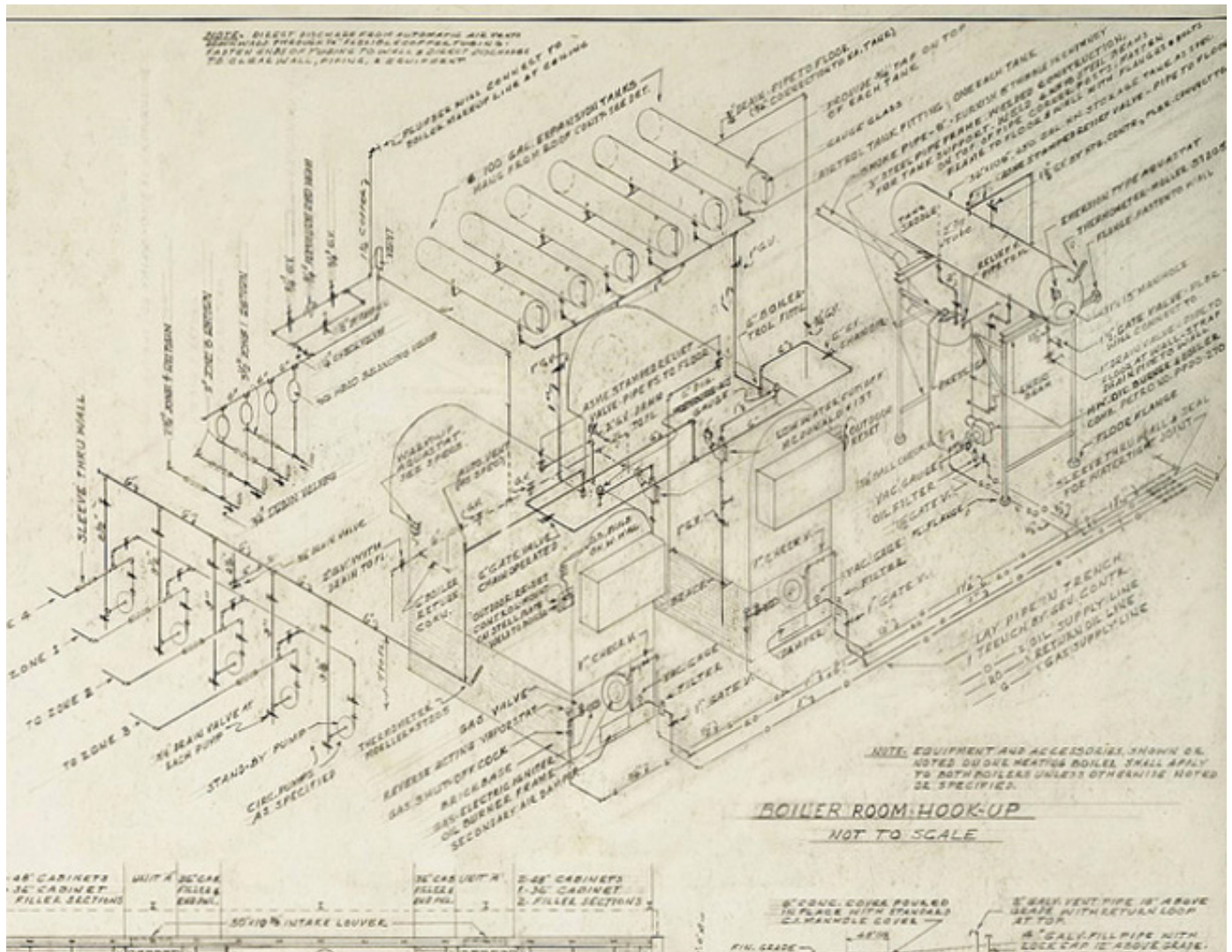
Dannielle Tegeder at the Wellin, by her site-specific wall drawing

Courtesy Paul Clemence



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It's not unusual for artists to be inspired by architecture. Less common is for an artist to be inspired by the infrastructure of a building. But that's the case with Dannielle Tegeder, a painter whose work is informed by the intricate system of steam fitting (the mechanical parts of a building, like insulation, piping, heating, and cooling). Coming from a family of steamfitters, Tegeder is fascinated by the infrastructure's graphic. "I grew up immersed in construction sites and seeing large scale plumbing, and heating systems installed. I have always been interested in that," she told me recently when we met to talk about her first solo museum show at the Wellin Museum of Art in Clinton, New York. "It ultimately led to my long term fascination with cities - systems upon systems - visible ones, such as subway routes, traffic, streets, pedestrian routes, and also invisible ones such as air waves and cell phone signals."



Partial detail of a typical steamfitting drawing

Courtesy Ruth and Elmer Wellin Museum of Art

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Her inspired connection to the inner workings of buildings, presented Tegeder an opportunity when Tracy Adler, curator and director of the recently opened Wellin, selected her works for the first solo show of that institution. Having met Tegeder a dozen or so years ago, and knowing how her work dialogues with architecture, Adler felt that it would be a great fit for the Machado & Silvetti-designed museum's first single artist exhibit. When I asked Adler to comment on selecting Tegeder's work, she said, "Her art has a deep relationship to architecture, it's not just inspired by it, but also responds to it. So I saw this as a wonderful opportunity to do something that would take that dialogue to another level. As a first step, I asked Danielle to visit the building while it was still under construction."



Wall drawing with light pouring in through corner window

Courtesy Paul Clemence

And so she did, a few months before the building was completed. "The structure was up but I was still able to see the pipes, wires, ducts and all those systems that would end up being invisible for most but that I knew was right there, creating the context where my show was going to be. I was seeing the inner body of the wall I would be drawing on and that certainly played in the overall feel of the show," the artist remembered her visit.



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Corner window slit of main gallery, flanked by wall drawing

Courtesy Paul Clemence

The wall drawing Tegeder is referring to, called "Ondam" (followed by an 60-plus-word subtitle), covers all three walls of a whole niche of the main museum gallery space. At one of the corners, a vertical slit cuts through the entire height of the wall, almost as if de-materializing the actual corner edge. "That window slit is significant of the room's architecture, it marks where the sprawling space connects – even if a for a brief interval – with the outside. I wanted the drawing to participate on that interaction as well." So Tegeder took a cue from the tree branches that can be seen through that window (and that would be green by the time the show was installed) and incorporated the leafy flora into the palette of the drawing. The effect it's quite amazing – though of different textures and origins, the common palette brings the outdoors inside more than any design could have envisioned.



View of main gallery, Death Rock City model in the foreground

Courtesy Paul Clemence

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The building itself has an intimate scale, designed to house the eclectic collection of Hamilton College, a private liberal arts institution, and give it a platform for the museum's progressive multidisciplinary approach. The architecture consciously aims at exposing the usually hidden aspects of a museum and thus makes its collection and exhibits more approachable to its audience. With that in mind Machado & Silvetti turned the collection's storage into a highly visible feature: a 27 feet high hall is surrounded by state of the art glass cases from top to bottom, along the space's full length. The exquisitely detailed cases (manufactured by Milan-based Goppion) though functional in character, create a new "system" within the overall flow of the building, opening into the Object Study Gallery, where students can request items for a closer look and more personal research experience.



External view of the Machado & Silvetti designed Wellin Museum of Art

Courtesy Paul Clemence

When Rodolfo Machado visited the museum in May, Tegeder had just finished installing the exhibit: the wall drawings were completed, the conceptual city model "Death Rock City" were assembled, and the "Aftermath of Soft Machine" mobile was hanging in all its dynamic excitement. Upon seeing Tegeder's "systems" fully assembled, Machado had this to say, "The exhibition is so well tailored to the building, just as the building is tailored to its users. I happen to find the work to be very beautiful, but what matters most to me is how it relates to our work: how the tangential light coming from one of the gallery's windows acts on the immense wall drawing, how the exterior projections on the folded walls act on the animation, how this surface receives and manages to give us yet one more reading [a different one] of the art work itself." An architect known for focusing on the goals of his client's program, Machado then added, "It was a brilliant curatorial choice, with such splendid work on display: the museum's mission is being accomplished, and we are delighted with it."



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Wellin's main hall double height glass cases

Courtesy Paul Clemence

The exhibit is a multi-media feast, featuring a digitally created sound library, animation, and some of Tegeder's early work. It all combines to encapsulate notions of architecture while commenting on it and how we relate to living within the urban scenario it defines. The artist's and the architects' systems interact with each other. "I like taking invisible systems and making them visible," said Tegeder at her talk on opening day at the Wellin. Shortly thereafter she remarked on how sad that eventually the labor-intensive 40-foot site-specific wall drawing was going to be painted over. Then a member of the audience reminded her that when that happens, the work would become a new system on those walls – her art coming full circle to become one with the veiled layering that inspires it.



Museum's storage Glass case

Courtesy Paul Clemence



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Goppion manufactured case detail

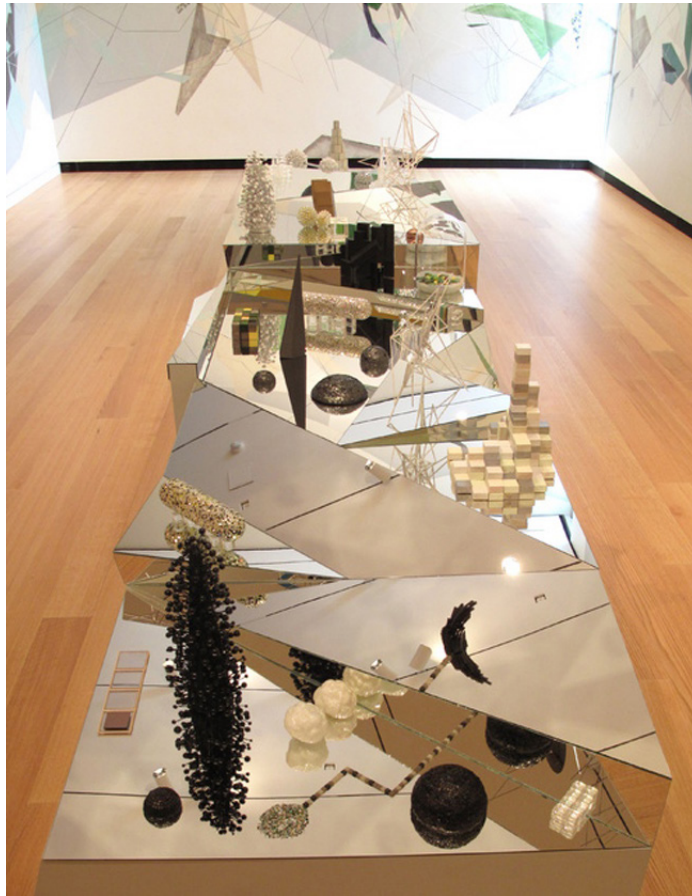
Courtesy Paul Clemence



Overall view of main room , with model and hanging mobile

Courtesy Paul Clemence

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Birds eye view of Death Rock City model

Courtesy Paul Clemence



Detail of Death Rock City model

Courtesy Paul Clemence



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Library of Sounds alcove

Courtesy Paul Clemence



Aftermath of Soft Machine hanging mobile in front of wall drawing

Courtesy Paul Clemence

## 5 questions with Dannielle Tegeder

December 12, 2014 in artist interviews



I love this lady. Dannielle Tegeder is a good friend, and an artist at the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts, where we both have a studio space. A day in the studio is always made better with a quick break to see what she's up to, sharing a joke or conversing about

art over coffee. She is super smart and super fun and her interview is just delightful- just like her. Enjoy.

### Who makes up your day to day world?

Other artists, my students, my husband Pablo Helguera, and our kid.

### What's an average studio day like?

My day begins early at 6:30 getting my daughter ready for Kindergarten. I am usually emailing by 7:30 responding to things, and am in the studio by 8:30 or 9:00. I usually work with my studio assistant, and we begin with a list for her to work off of doing administrative tasks, including grants, emails, mailing our catalogs, sizing images, setting meeting, etc.



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1. Instructions for Utopian Gray World Machine & Copper Inner Structure Ink, dye, pencil, marker, acrylic, gouache on Fabriano Murillo paper, 59 x 82 in. 2014-2011

Depending on the day, I am either drawing or also working on other things. I finish around 6. I am usually listening to silence or NPR, and look at art books or readings for inspiration. Right now I have the Whitechapel: Documents for Contemporary Art on Networks, and Abstraction.

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2. Monument to the Geo Chemistry After Structure with Yellow  
DISTURBANCE Code and Disaster Averter and Atomic Station, Gouache, ink,  
colored pencil, graphite, and pastel on Fabriano Murillo paper, 79 x 110 in.  
(200.7 x 279.4 cm), 2014-2011.

What are you working on now? what are you  
most excited/ confounded/ obsessed with?

At the moment I am working on a new series of large drawings  
on paper in the studio. These pieces become the framework or  
legend for all the installations, and on site pieces. I am also very  
excited to be doing my first public art piece with Percent for Art  
in NYC in 2015.



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I am also quite excited about starting a new gallery in my faculty office at CUNY where I teach. It is called "Faculty Office." The current show is entitled "Soccer Mom" and has over 30 artists including: Jackie Saccoccio, Angelina Gualdoni, Elana Herzog, and Alison Elizabeth Taylor among many great others. The show was in response to Ken Johnson's recent review of Michelle Grabner's show where he called her a soccer mom. The show has over thirty successful women artists that are also mothers. The last show was called "Higher Learning" and had over 30 artists who also teach, it traveled to another faculty office at Hamilton College. The space is a boring no window office, but is located inside a historic Marcel Breuer building in the Bronx. The space is experimental, and is also used as a pedagogical tool where I bring students in to see the work. I also wanted to see more contemporary art shown in the Bronx, and have it more accessible. It has been an exciting project.



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What do you do when things aren't going "right"? or if you're having a fallow period in making/ thinking?



4. Death Rock City, Wooden platforms with mirror, structures created from glass, Swarovski crystal, cardboard, tile, rubber, and paper; large drawings, 4 x 27 ft., 2013-2010.

I usually sense things aren't right if the work is becoming to much of a struggle to make, or I am distracted. I usually just stop for a while, go see shows at galleries or museums, or work on my side practice of writing conceptual poetry.



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How have you gotten where you are? How do you sustain your creative life? How do you pay the bills or what kinds of jobs have you had in the past?

I have gotten to where I am by being persistent and patient. I sustain my creative life, by keeping an organized schedule and organizing a lot of support, studio assistant, baby sitter, back up babysitter, my mother, my husband etc. I am also a professor at CUNY, and teach throughout the year. I have also taught in a number of schools, and regularly do visiting artist visits. I live through a combination of my teaching salary, grants, and art sales. I have had every job under the sun, waitress, cocktail waitress, studio assistant, gallerina, Macy's fragrance model (those are the people who spritz you)!

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5. Death Rock City, detail, Wooden platforms with mirror, structures created from glass, Swarovski crystal, cardboard, tile, rubber, and paper; large drawings. 4 x 27 ft., 2013-2010

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What advice would you give a young artist just starting out?

There are a number of things...remember you are in a community and to be generous and give out, artists that are alone stop making work 2. Get used to rejection for grants, residencies, etc. not once but most artists apply 10 times. 3. Apply for lots of things on a regular basis, this is how you will meet people, and sustain your practice. 4. Think of a side skill, and get your job down to three days or less. 5. Learn to write well, and do good public speaking 6. Learn to manage your money, and budget 7. Keep up with your references 8. Curate a show or start a blog. 9. Get organized with your time, and work when you can 10. Get a studio with a group of serious artists.

## Dannielle Tegeder by Annie Godfrey Larmon

*Dannielle Tegeder discusses the "death of painting" in the digital era and why her upcoming exhibition at the Wellin Museum of Art is a more media-integrated project.*



Installation view of *Dannielle Tegeder: Painting in the Extended Field*.  
Photos by John Bentham. All images courtesy of the artist.



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Dannielle Tegeder's paintings depict constellations of imagined urban systems: roadways, electric lines, sewage pipes, and wireless networks that have been filtered through some Suprematist formal vocabulary. *Painting in the Extended Field*, her first solo museum exhibition at the brand new Wellin Museum of Art at Hamilton College, features wall drawings, animated video works, sound, sculpture, and a mobile that test the parameters of what might be considered painting today. I sat down with the artist in her Manhattan studio to discuss the death of painting, steamfitting, and what it might mean to pictorially render utopias.

**Annie Godfrey Larmon** The title of your exhibition cites Rosalind Krauss's 1979 essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," which challenged Modernist claims for autonomy and medium-specific criteria. What do your paintings gain by their material expansion into animation, sound, photography, or sculpture—specifically within the context of the continual threat of the "death of painting?"

**Dannielle Tegeder** The problem of the "death of painting" is central to my work. I identify as a painter, even though I work in sculpture, animation, sound, and installation. I continue to paint and teach painting in an MFA program because I think painting can be both traditional and transgressive. Painting is now contextualized with so many mediums. When I make my work, including the more traditional two-dimensional paintings, I also consider how they function in the context of the Internet, and how we as humans function every day among multi-media experiences. A fixed, two-dimensional painting behaves very differently now than it did even 20 years ago, before our contemporary networks and iPhones. My work has shifted dramatically in the ten years that I've been painting. It's interesting to move into sculpture and move back into painting, to think about how each context informs the other.

For the site-specific work at Wellin, I was responding to the element of architecture—the constraint of a specific wall-- but the work remains about painting, formalism, and the deconstruction of painting. My work can include various media, but I still maintain it's really about the history of painting. It's about translating painting into different media, and translating painting into language—I wonder what is left when you translate a form into sound, and then return it to painting? There is always a constant shifting, a feeding back and forth between mediums.

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**AGL** What do you consider to be the parameters of painting, and when does your object become something else? How important is that to you?

**DT** The parameters of painting are flexible for me. I consider all of my work—even if the form is animation, sculpture, or installation—to be painting. Many of the works are translations of 2D paintings into material-based structures, or sound. The history of Modernism and the history of abstraction also connect these other works directly to painting.

**AGL** Thinking about documentation and the expansion of painting into other fields, or absorbing other fields—do you paint with an awareness of the way the work will inevitably be disseminated or circulated?

**DT** I was a painter for over a decade before I started making animations, and it has definitely changed how I think about artwork being disseminated. I now make paintings in video and it's opened up a completely different context of dialogue, as they can be transported very inexpensively and morphed to fit whatever space they are shown within. Musicians and writers have it much easier. Their work can be transported and absorbed around the world so quickly. This is a bigger challenge with objects that need a budget and space for transportation and exhibition. It's been a new experience to show my videos so widely, and to disseminate them on the Internet. It's shown me limitations inherent to making traditional two-dimensional paintings.

**AGL** So you think that awareness has changed the way you paint now?



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**DT** Definitely, for many years I made these drawings that were plan-like. I was teaching in the art and architecture program at Cornell and doing a lot of model making. I was also spending a lot of time in Mexico City, where my husband is from. It's a sprawling, enormous city, so I decided to recreate it with a fragmented sculptural work. When I returned to painting it became similarly fractured. And then *The Library of Abstract Sound* is an installation from 2009, where 100 drawings were translated into sound. Tone, color, angle, and size were programmed by an engineer to correspond with a different instrument. I completed all the drawings and then translated them to music at once, so the results were a surprise. These have been animated for the exhibition at Wellin. Elements of the drawing are cut out in Photoshop, and then animated in Flash, so that the drawings de- and re-construct themselves, or completely erase themselves. They each have different methods. So I made all these drawings in sound, and that led me to animation, which will feed into other things. It's hard for me to simply paint on a picture plane without considering the environment now. Even when I make paintings, I'm considering its spatial context, the architecture of the building, the color of the walls—will it sit low to the ground, or on the floor? I never just mark an installation at 56 inches anymore.



**AGL** Your new installation responds to the architecture of the Museum's New Machado and Silvetti-Designed Facility—what did the site of the museum offer for you conceptually?

**DT** As my work always considers architecture and space, the architecture of this site was significant. It's a brand new museum, about an hour from Syracuse at Hamilton College, and it's very intimate. The walls are completely transparent in the entryway, and the façade is ceramic made at Alfred—terra cotta—so the textures are quite beautiful. My animations have been screening on the outside of the building, and I produced a lot of site-specific work in the museum, including an eighty-foot wall drawing, constructed on site during a three-week period.

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My work is also inspired by what I call “hidden” architectures, or the mechanical structures, electricity and plumbing systems hidden inside the walls. For many years I’ve done these drawings that are also fictional cities with fictional urban planning. When I did my first site visit at the Wellin Museum, it was still being constructed and I could see inside some of the walls and structures, and it was an ideal situation for me. It was a perfect way to see the building, splayed wide open. Halfway built cities and architectures interest me, or those that fail—there’s a utopian impulse to it, in a way. So I saw the space mostly in construction.

My family members largely work as steamfitters, and they’ve been an inspiration. When I was growing up, my father and uncles would draw plans and we would do site visits of spaces where they would plan massive plumbing and heating systems on an industrial level. We did many schools and hospitals around NYC, and I still think about the insides of those buildings today in my work. Of course, I reference these plans in my work, but I also went to art school, and now there are modernist references and things like that, but a lot of this drawing stems from that personal place.



**AGL** In several past projects as well, you reference utopias or post-apocalyptic fictions—what do you find compelling about the “no place,” and how do you go about rendering it?

**DT** My work is always about utopias. There is something so connected to art-making—you never really reach the final point—it’s always fleeting, a dystopian element that has to be repeated over and over again. There’s a history with Constructivism and Utopianism that’s connected to socio-political unrest—so I like to consider: Why make abstract paintings now, what can they do politically?



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I do think about planning city systems—train lines, aviation—but I also think about hidden systems that become a metaphor for other signals, cell phones and radio, emotional structures, affect. It starts on a literal level and then evolves. I have a whole vocabulary for different architectural systems. This is a headquarter rotunda an expulsion area of waste, and a checkered route that's all the transportation systems, these are all tunnels. They morph together, there are a few hundred symbols...

**AGL** Are there any productive tensions for you between the notions of site-specificity and utopias?

**DT** Working within site-specificity always brings the work to a reality, which of course is directly opposed to any utopia. There are bumps on the wall, or the walls are too short, or too long, etc. Still, that impulse to create a utopia is the most significant part for me. Art and utopias always fail, propelling one to go on to strive in the next piece.



**AGL** Your work often recalls Alexander Calder's mobiles, or El Lissitzky's paintings—what do you find to be particularly critical about returning to the histories and forms of early 20th century abstraction? How are you adapting those formal, conceptual, and socio-political claims?

**DT** I believe that if you paint, you're never free of the history of painting. With video there's only a history of fifty to seventy years—that can't contend with the history of painting. I deliberately engage this history, and quote it. My return to this specific period has a political and social bent. It was a cynical time with a utopian impulse that art might save society, and I find that very alluring. I'm also attracted to the notion of working across all media with Constructivism and the Bauhaus. I find the blurred line between painting and architecture really important.

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**AGL** When you approach a site-specific work, then, are you taking into consideration some of the socio-political, economic, or ecological aspects of the site in addition to formal or architectural elements?

**DT** Absolutely. I have a totally different experience in the studio and when I'm on site. I just spent three weeks on site at the museum, working with the community. There's a whole social interaction that occurs outside of painting while working with a group. This time I worked with a lot of students, from the Pratt Annex in Utica, the Munson Williams Institute, as well as Hamilton students, my assistants, a few other installers. I think it was important for this constant engagement to bring the community into the new museum. The wall drawings are also completely ephemeral—and in some ways it becomes a more significant work this way, like a performance. It functions as a group performance that has time limitations and community engagements.

*For more on Dannielle Tegeder, please visit her [website](#). [Annie Godfrey Larmon](#) is a curator and writer based in New York. She is a graduate of the master's program at the Center for Curatorial Studies at Bard College (2013) and a former fellow of the Creative Capital | Warhol Foundation Arts Writing Workshop (2012).*