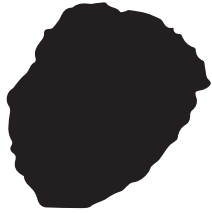


SILVER

Jen Bervin





The artist Susan Hiller's week-long performance, *Work In Progress* involved unravelling a painting into its component threads; each day the resulting threads were re-configured as a thread drawing.¹

Stuart Morgan: *Work in Progress* (1979) could be seen exactly as a so-called feminine art work: pulling your paintings apart thread by thread, turning them into something different.

Susan Hiller: The idea of simultaneously making and unmaking could be traced to any mystical tradition. To associate it solely with women would be astonishing.²

Stuart Morgan: You also cut old paintings into equal sized rectangles and sewed those together, one on top of the other.

Susan Hiller: I called them *Painting Blocks* (series begun 1970/71). Each has the scaled-down dimensions of the original painting. The project turns surface into mass, painting becomes sculpture. It's a materials-based comparison.³

Susan Hiller, *Relics*, 1972-ongoing. Ashes of paintings in glass containers, various configurations and sizes. Hand grenades, ashes of paintings, 12 glass jars, rubber stoppers, tags, in Pyrex bowl, 4 $\frac{5}{16}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{8}$ ".⁴

Susan Hiller, *Measure by Measure*, 1973-ongoing. Ashes of paintings burned annually, glass measuring tubes, glass containers, lead date tags, Corten steel shelf, 28 x 47 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ ".⁵

Stuart Morgan: You ... continue your conceptual exercise of burning your work.

Susan Hiller: Every year I transform some works into other formats. The series of burnt relics began in 1972. I placed the ashes of burned paintings in chemical containers that measure and contain what can't be contained. They are like burial urns too, and since I regard them as just as interesting to look at and experience as paintings, maybe it reflects a wish for everything to be seen as having the same potential for insight. Like traces or remnants, they point forwards and backwards at the same time.⁶

“O, were it but my life,
I’d throw it down for your deliverance
As frankly as a pin.”⁷

William Shakespeare,
Measure for Measure
3.1.102-104