

IN THE FLOW

Flow is being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz.

–Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

This exhibition presents work by artists who use a variety of media—ranging from watercolor painting and photography, to textile sculptures and documentation of ephemeral gestures in the landscape—to demonstrate the concept of flow. Beginning in the early 1990s, Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, a Hungarian-American psychologist, first identified and researched the “flow state,” one of deep concentration and focus on a task that is challenging yet extremely satisfying. Creative practitioners including visual artists, musicians, writers, and other professionals such as athletes, report doing their best work when they are “in the flow.”

Whether channeling the rhythms of the natural world such as waves or wind, or engaging in meticulous repeated gestures, the artists in this exhibition produce work that manifests finely honed skills and great effort. That effort, however, is invisible. For example, artist Lordy Rodriguez created his drawings in an uninhibited state of mind that is common to creative practice in the “flow state.” He explains, “I had just completed a large body of work, and my mind was freed while working on this series. Although I normally work very slowly, I was making between five and ten drawings a day, creating a new visual alphabet that laid the groundwork for future large-scale projects.” Rodriguez’s comments illustrate one of the basic tenets of the “flow state”—that the best and most worthwhile moments in life occur when we voluntarily take on a difficult task, become fully absorbed in it, and stretch our minds and/or bodies to their limits.

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