

International Journal of Education & the Arts

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<http://www.ijea.org/>

ISSN: 1529-8094

Volume 14 Special Issue 1.2

January 30, 2013

Silent Conversations in the Labyrinth of Artistic Research and Practice

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Citation: Eis, A. (2013). Silent conversations in the labyrinth of artistic research and practice. *International Journal of Education & the Arts*, 14(SI 1.2). Retrieved [date] from <http://www.ijea.org/v14si1/>.

Abstract

This essay explores silent conversations with the past, but also navigates through the labyrinth of artistic process, with its manifold passages of research, chance occurrence and aesthetic experimentation. The double metaphors of silent conversations and labyrinths apply to the essay and the artwork within it, to the research and to the practice. Unfolding as both explication and demonstration, this essay presents a manifestation of the process of artistic research and practice as well as a description of it.

Introduction

Art making might seem to imply an artist's movement toward a central goal, as one would intend to move upon entering a labyrinth. But if we can start immediately down a divergent corridor, "...let's imagine a Labyrinth without a central quid (neither Monster nor Treasure), so one that's a-centric, which basically means a labyrinth without a final signified to discover...possibly with nothing at the center" (Barthes, 2010, p. 121). Certainly, if one thinks of the final, physical product of art as the monstrous Minotaur/wondrous treasure found at one end of a directed, and directional, path, there must be a center. However, an artist's working process, research and practice, are not necessarily aimed at getting to one point, to a center. In the reality of artistic practice, moving forward also requires a doubling back, a move in the opposite direction from the original path.

To think of the artistic process as a labyrinth is, for me, both instructive and intriguing. Some might think the maze is a more useful metaphor, but I have always thought of mazes as best used to experience the joys of getting lost, which is not at all how I view my process. Labyrinths, to me, are a means to the exhilaration of finding. Most explications of the labyrinth, however, tend to focus on what was sought/found in the center. What of Theseus' journey back out of the labyrinth? Returning to the world required different attention from the journey in, and repaid attention differently. Theseus had to follow Ariadne's guiding thread to return (the feminist in me rejoices in the gender of the clever one in this tale), but I can also imagine Theseus, as he gathered up the thread, re-visioning the walls around him the second time through, with new experiences behind him. The world he emerged back into must have felt transformed from the one which he left, due to those experiences. The centralized encounter with the Minotaur was no longer an isolated, defining moment, a key, a core, a goal, because there was more to be experienced and a constant revision of the goal.

Re-imagining the artistic labyrinth as a-centric, as Barthes proposed, might aid in clarifying the tangle of this metaphor. While the practice of art does usually end in a physical product, art is a process not a goal – or, perhaps more usefully, in Barthes' words, "the path would be equivalent to the goal" (p. 121). Artistic research is an exploration of ambiguity not a determination of fact, an opening up of possibilities, not a pinning down of definitive knowledge. There is no final signified just waiting to be discovered, and there are many conversations to be had along the way.

My creative activity took such an a-centric path starting in 2008, in Greece, with a chance find of marginalia – handwritten notes in the margins of ancient Greek texts, in books dating from the late 1890s. My artistic passageways became infused with a series of silent conversations, with these notes and these texts, with Greeks of two thousand years ago and with an American woman of the early 1900s who wanted to understand them. At first, I only glanced at the

dialogues, and I kept moving, unsure of my destination. Finally, the past so thoroughly permeated my present, with these dialogues between the printed page and the handwritten word, that I wanted to join in on the conversations.

Marginalia

As this essay is both a description of artistic research and practice, and an example of it, another path starts now, following the intrigues of marginalia's emergence. The word *marginalia* comes from post-classical Latin of the 16th century or earlier (OED 2000). In order to keep my tangents under control, I will only briefly note an earlier synonym, *postil* ("a marginal note or comment; esp on a biblical text," first print citation c. 1395, OED 2012). The lyrical, mysterious quality of the word marginalia makes it my preferred choice.

The OED's (2000) first print citation for the word marginalia is from the November 1819 volume of *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*: "The following is transcribed from the blank leaf of a copy of Sir T. Brown's Works in folio, and is a fair specimen of these *Marginalia*; and much more nearly than any of his printed works, gives the style of Coleridge's **conversation**" (my emphasis, to be returned to later).

Marginalia requires, obviously, a margin in which it can be written. The practice no doubt shifted and expanded (compared, for example, to marginalia in medieval manuscripts) after the invention of the printing press in the 1450s. The production of multiples would have gradually made works available to more readers who could own and interact with their own personal copies, in a dialogue with the text.

In the 1630s, a French mathematician, Pierre de Fermat, wrote one of the most famous of marginal notes. Detailing a theorem in his 1621 copy of the *Arithmetica* of Diophantus, he followed it with, "I have discovered a truly marvelous proof of this proposition which this margin is too narrow to contain" (this translation cited in Clarke and Pohl, 2008, p. 306). Most margin writers are writing for themselves alone, never expecting (or even wanting) to have their words made public. Fermat's proof was never published, and has not been found; perhaps it never existed. Some have speculated that, if it did exist, it was incorrect. Years after Fermat's death, however, his marginal notes in the *Arithmetica* were discovered and published by his son, and eventually these words became an international challenge. It was well over 300 years before a proof of Fermat's Last Theorem was published that was generally considered to be correct, a proof that was the work of Andrew Wiles, a British mathematician. Though Wiles (cited in WGBH, 2000) has noted that his proof and Fermat's could not be the same, due to Wiles' use of mathematical techniques unknown in Fermat's time, perhaps a larger margin could have shaved a few years off of the centuries that separated the two proofs.

New York Times essayist Sam Anderson (2011) recently offered a prosaic, if trendy description of marginalia as “a kind of slow-motion, long-form Twitter” (p. 1). Ironically, an internet search for images of Fermat for an earlier version of this essay sent me following a path to an unexpected end: a 2009 cartoon by Jocelyn Ireson-Paine in which Fermat types in his answer to the Twitter question “What are you doing?” with “I have discovered a truly remarkable proof which Tw...” Many years earlier, Edgar Allan Poe (1844) had written about the pleasure he got from the practice of marginalia, while noting what he called the “circumscription of space” (p. 484) – Fermat’s “narrow margin”. Poe felt this spatial constraint discouraged diffuse thought patterns, forcing what he called “Tacitus-ism,” after the Roman historian Tacitus, who often favored a terse expression of ideas that still managed to be intensely meaningful (though ironically, *tacitus* in Latin means “silent”). Whether Twitter’s limitation on comment length is creating a positive legacy on the power of brevity in any way similar to that of Tacitus, I leave to you to decide on your own.

In undergraduate school, I had, somewhat naturally, come to practice my own kind of marginalia. I was not then in art, but was a classics major, studying ancient Greek, struggling slowly through translating one complex sentence at a time. My marginalia was a student’s – not the argumentative type, but the explanatory, the helpful, the kind that reminded me of things I had looked up but might forget when called on in class.

After a year of graduate school, I moved on from the study of Greek, still fascinated with it, but unsure that the field was the right one for me. Eventually I went back to school in art instead, but I took the principles of Greek rhetoricians with me. Happily debating everything I read, I became a fierce practitioner of marginalia. When I read Susan Sontag’s (1977) *On Photography*, I disagreed with her, in extensive marginalia, responding in a focused, vivid and totally engaged way (Figure 1). Billy Collins’ description of the practice in his poem *Marginalia* (1998) is the very image of my encounter with Sontag:

Sometimes the notes are ferocious,
skirmishes against the author
raging along the borders of every page
in tiny black script. (p. 14)

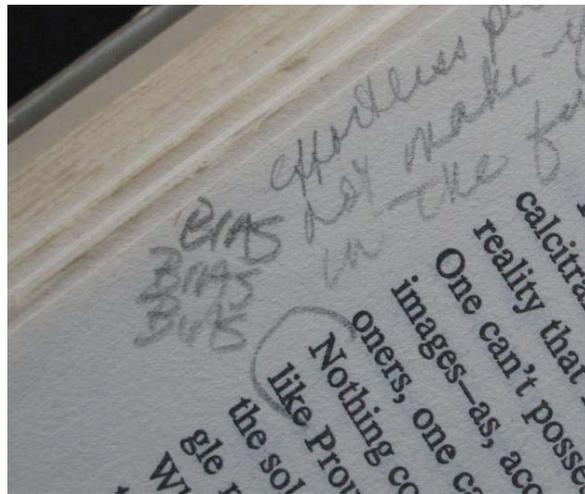


Figure 1. Marginalia in my copy of Susan Sontag's *On Photography*

Studs Terkel once said that reading a book should be a “raucous conversation” (as cited in Johnson, 2011, p. 1). By writing in the margins, I found a way for my own ideas to be voiced with equal force and equal weight in my own “raucous” counterpoint to Sontag’s, creating a rowdy, informal, dialogue with the silence of the printed page, much as Coleridge was said to have used his conversational voice in his marginalia on Brown’s works. According to Hill (1983), Coleridge’s marginalia were highly significant to own his sense of himself: “[I]n wishing to see his marginalia published, Coleridge recognized that they were anything but marginal to his whole *modus operandi* as a thinker” (p. 229).

Voicing the Past

A brief look back to my first encounter with ancient Greek, explains a bit more about my fascination with marginalia in connection with Greek text. Following Barthes (2010) once again, this essay becomes a Delian /Ariadne dance: “*parallaxeis* and *anelixeis*: circular movements, sometimes moving forward, sometimes backward, mimicking the detours of the Labyrinth at Knossos” (p. 117). Waiting in line to register for my first semester of college, I was handed a flier touting an educational experiment – a class in ancient Greek taught on the computer. I was apparently an early adopter before that term existed, and I jumped in. The computer we used resembled a teletype machine – there was no monitor, only printed out text and continuous rolls of paper. The texts were transliterated from the Greek into English letters. It was intriguing and oddly fun, but I was soon to find out that it was educationally disastrous, an experiment gone very wrong.

The first day of my second class in Greek, a different professor wrote a simple word in Greek letters on the blackboard, and asked the students what the word was. Not one of us could

answer, as we had never seen the word in the Greek alphabet. We had learned Greek as if it was learning English words that we just didn't know before. From that moment – a mixture of dismay, annoyance, and embarrassment – I went on to become immersed and obsessed with the Greek language – with its beautiful letter forms, inky curlicues of intrigue; with the accents and breathing marks, that could totally change a word's meaning; with the incredible depth of thought that could be expressed by the both the form of the sentence structure and the elaborate compound words. I took all of these fascinations with me when I became an artist.

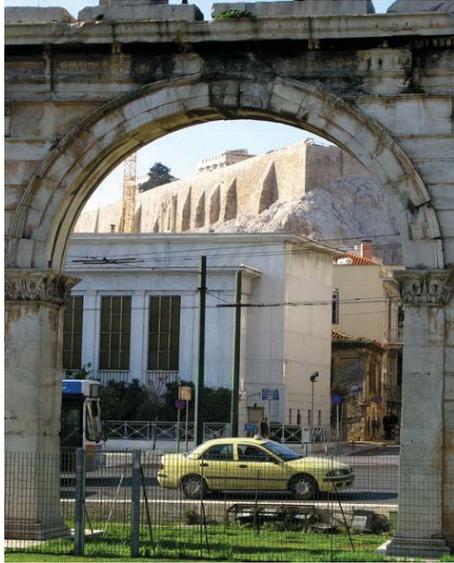
My artwork has, for years, been about giving visual voice to the expressive silence of the past. Eventually margins and marginalia became central to that process. In 2008, I went to live in Athens, Greece for my sabbatical. My academic past in classics had become a thematic reference point and visual source material for my art, so this period of time in Greece was critical to my work. I had spent a year of study abroad in Athens during my first undergraduate degree, and had returned many times since then. This time I was determined to experience it all differently, to search for another way to look at what had become so familiar. I was on my way through the labyrinth, again.

I decided not to climb up to the Acropolis for the first month I was there, but instead to look at how the Acropolis and the Parthenon, were actually existing (as I would come to realize later) on the margins of day-to-day life in modern Athens. The Parthenon was a note from the past, now on the border of a carnival and a popcorn cart (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Popcorn cart and the Parthenon

I made hundreds of photographs, many of a marginalized Parthenon (Figures 3 and 4). But I was not making art.



Figures 3 and 4. The Parthenon marginalized

At the library of the International Center for Hellenic and Mediterranean Studies (DIKEMES) in Athens, I began doing research on recent feminist scholarship in the classics. I had a focus, reading books that reinterpreted the ancient myths in ways that were relevant to some myth-based artwork that I had been doing. I did not know how this research would influence my art, or help me to create more, so I just kept pulling books from the shelves. I read and researched to find my way, rather than knowing my way ahead of time. Though this may seem an unusual process, I have since found that the sciences have a parallel approach in what is called “curiosity-driven research” or “blue skies research” (Linden, 2008, abstract, para. 1), a kind of research that does not have a clear goal, or an application that is immediately apparent. Barthes’ a-centric labyrinth returns.

One day, I started pulling out books that looked like the oldest ones on the shelves, mostly for the joy I felt in the object qualities of old books – the gilt edges, the stamped leather bindings, even the yellowed curves of pages warped by years of humidity and light (Figure 5).

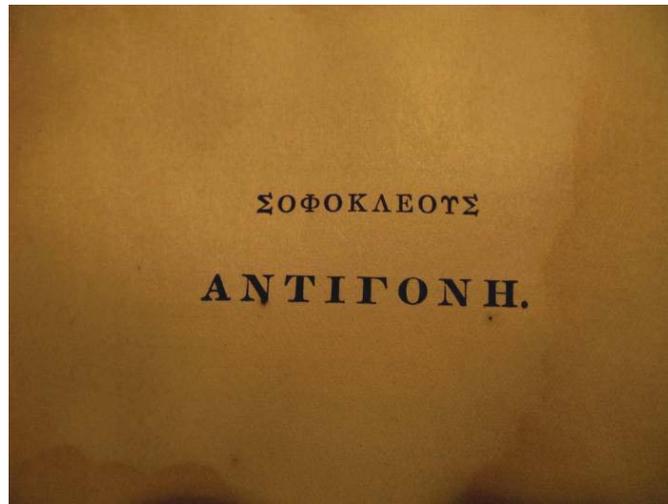
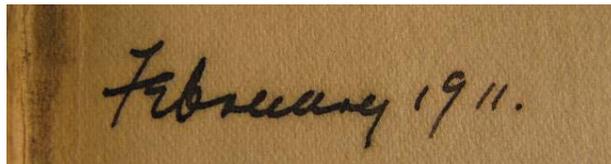
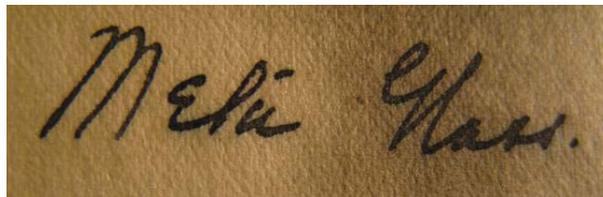


Figure 5. Title page of Meta Glass' copy of Sophocles' *Antigone* (1891)

I found a series of twenty Greek and Latin books, all originally owned by an American woman, Meta Glass. She had written her name and dates from 1909 to 1911 on the inside covers (Figures 6 and 7). Curiosity sent me to the Internet to research Glass, though I had little expectation of finding anything. Instead, there was a great deal, as



Figures 6 and 7: Meta Glass, February 1911

Meta Glass had been a woman of note. She had earned her Ph.D. in Latin and Greek from Columbia University in 1912 (a year after the last date in the books), and she went on to serve as the president of Sweet Briar College in Virginia from 1925 to 1946. I contacted librarians at Sweet Briar when I returned to the US, but they had no record of Glass ever being in Greece. They could not tell me how or why her books had ended up in a library in Athens, so that remains a mystery.

What was not a mystery was that Meta Glass was a champion of the importance of educating women, and of the continuing relevance of the classics. As a former classics scholar myself and as a current educator, I connected to her life and interests, and through her books, to her. She had made notations in the margins of nearly all of her Greek texts. As I paged my way through her books, I became familiar with her handwriting, her frustrations, and even her sense of humor (Figure 8).

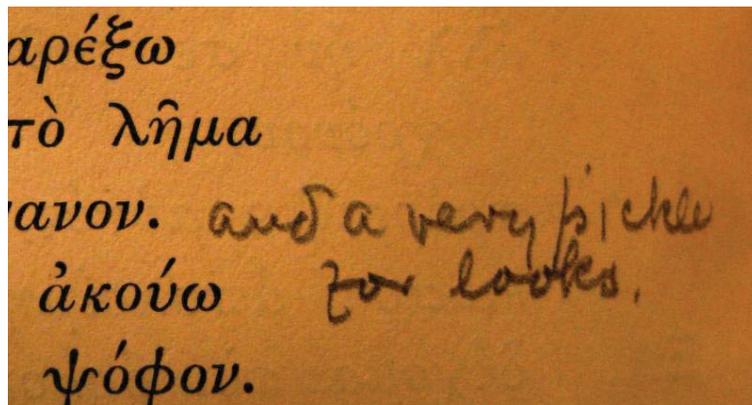


Figure 8. “And a very pickle for looks.”
From Meta Glass’ copy of Aristophanes’ *Frogs* (1906)

At this time I was living in Athens right on the edge (perhaps one could say on the margin) of the spot on Mt. Lykabbetos at which the buildings of the city meet the tree line. I had only my digital camera with me – no photographic lights, no tripod, no high-resolution scanner. I would bring the books back to my tiny studio apartment and lay them down on the miniscule kitchen counter, to photograph them under the only bright light in the place.

I photographed every marked page in the Glass books, working with a documentary zeal, though I had no idea what I would do with these images. I also made lists of the marginalia, and found that they created a kind of poetry in this form. In *The Antigone of Sophocles* (1891), Glass’s notes are a spare but vivid inventory of the play’s substance and intent, of the playwright’s eloquence and nuance:

Doer of this insolence
My pain where it is
Work oneself weary
The resourcefulness/a sort of wisdom

Often used of getting what one wants
 An afterthought
 Possess
 Side by side
 When men are guided aright
 A deed to be proud of
 Intellectual powers/stretch
 The delicacy of the passive

I made one thousand, two hundred and forty-four photographs from the Meta Glass books, and began the work of transforming this raw material into art. Before I move on to that art, there is yet another path to take through the labyrinth – back to the work I had been doing prior to this, a contrast to reveal how the chance intersection with marginalia has altered my art.

A Lexicon, Grammar Books, and Artmaking

When I first turned to my academic past in the classics for artistic source material, I paged my way through my Liddell & Scott Greek lexicon, pulling out words that caught my interest, looking for good choices to combine with images of sculptures. In my final artworks, I always included the definition in English, so that the meaning would be accessible to more viewers, though the Greek text was still crucial visually, compositionally, and conceptually. In choosing sculptural images, I tried to connect to the expressive qualities I found in the sculpture, focusing on a fragment of feeling that I found in the lexicon text as well (Figure 9).



Figure 9. In silence

For another series, I found unexpected inspiration in prosaic grammar books, which managed to explain verb tenses in terms both exceptionally precise and magnificently poetic. To have a part of speech that one would use, as in *Imperfect* (Figure 10), when one wanted to suggest a

specifically temporal nature to the recognition, was more profound than any grammatical options in English that I had ever known. The text suggests a reading of the sculptural gesture as the moment of recognition. The raised hand, despite being stilled in marble, imparts the same immediacy of surprised acknowledgement as the verb tense implied, a moment that was imperfect, yet true (Figure 9).



Figure 10. *Imperfect*, from the *Greek Grammar* series

In the *Perfect* series, the unintentionally poetic nature of the definitions of the perfect tense were paired with the struggles of male-female interactions, in a philosophical exploration of the power plays in human relationships (Figure 11).

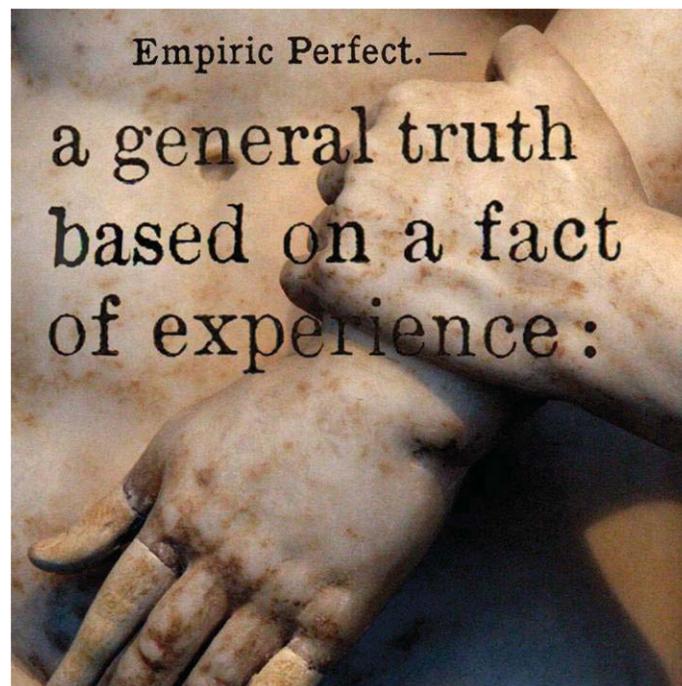


Figure 11. *Empiric Perfect*, from the *Greek Grammar* series

Realizing that others did not have the same fascination with the intricacies of Greek and grammar as I did, I also started working with English texts, extracting single lines of poetry to pair with the spare elegance of my photographs of sculptures. I recontextualized both elements by combining them, encouraging the revisiting of both the writer's words and the sculptor's forms within my structure of meaning (Figure 12).

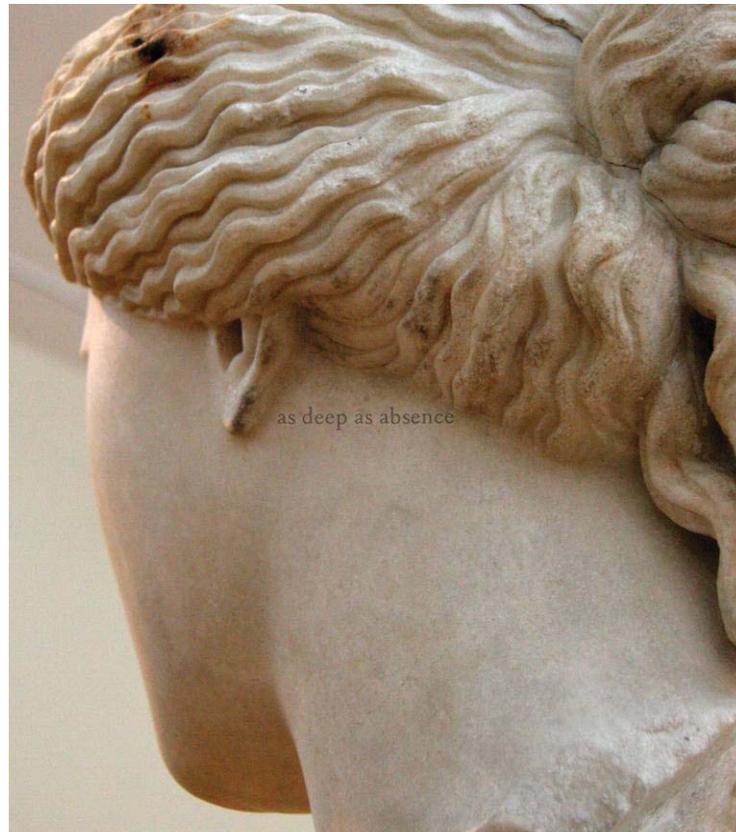


Figure 12. As deep as absence, from the Poets series (Pär Lagerkvist)

With I dwell in possibility — (Figure 13), I altered the visual mood of the original photograph of the sculpture, intensifying the soft colors and flat light, trying to connect, through aesthetic form, to the eternal potential in Emily Dickinson's phrase. I carried this transformative aesthetic into my new work with marginalia, as I started creating physical manifestations of my silent conversations with Meta Glass and the Greeks whose words she was studying.

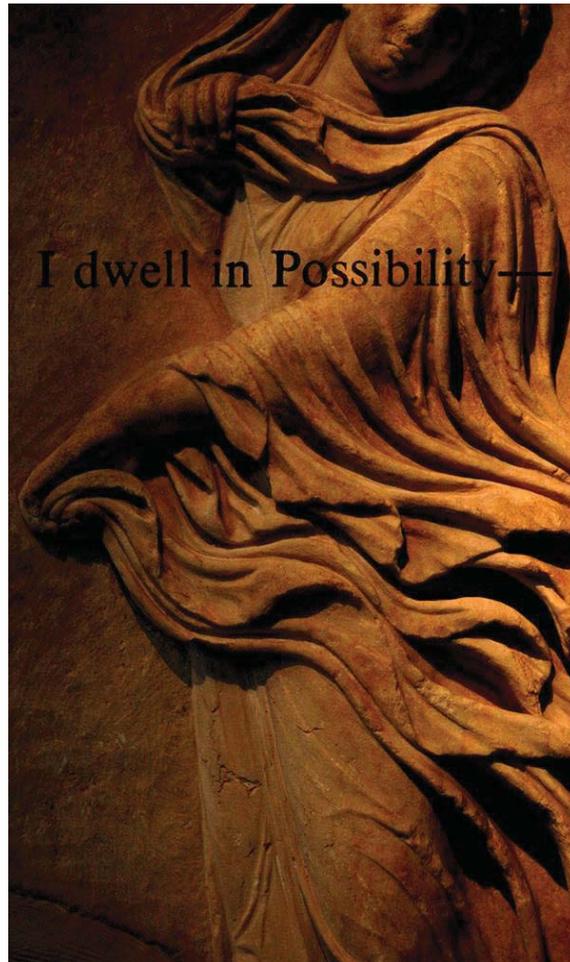


Figure 13. I dwell in possibility —, from the Poets series (Emily Dickinson)

Digital photographic fusions help me create images that are saturated with the past, but materialized in the present. The relief sculpture used in *Getting what one wants* (Figure 14) suggests the visual articulation of male power, both physical and conceptual, and is cropped down to emphasize the bicep. I overlaid a text where Meta Glass had noted that a particular word (*tuxein*, to happen, occur, meet with) is often used for its nuance, because it not only points out what happens to someone, but that this particular occurrence represents a point at which a person is getting what he or she wants.



Figure 14.

Intensification of the color and contrast brought out the textural qualities of the paper, thickened the lines of the Greek letters, darkened the soft penciled English words, further emphasized the swell of the muscle, and made a small brown mark on the paper glow red. The intensity of the colors, contrasts, and textures moved the image from cool distant classicism to a vision of arrogant presumption (Figure 15).

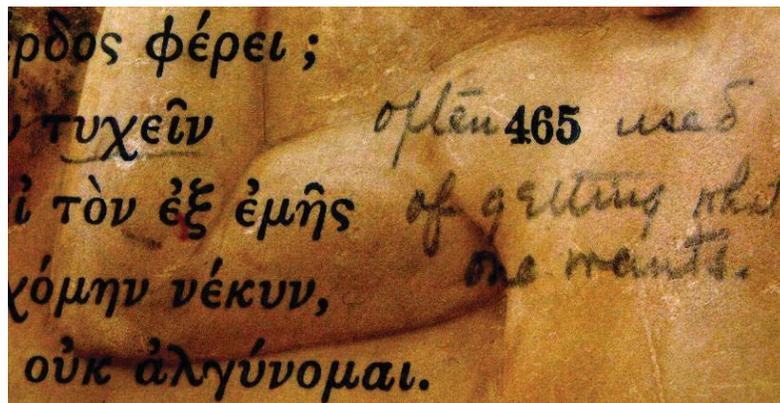


Figure 15. *Getting what one wants*, from the *Marginalia* series

The original text was from Sophocles' (1891) *Antigone*. At the time I created this piece, I did not go back to see which character was speaking or what issue was referenced in the play. From my perspective as an artist, that kind of information is not critical to my artworks – this is my *aesthetic translation* of the text, the marginalia, and the sculpture, and I am always taking liberties with the original intentions. After a presentation of this work to classics scholars at an academic conference, however, I decided to return to the original Greek text. I

found, to my surprise, that this was said by Antigone, not by Kreon (the king who was exercising his power over her). The line referred to the fact that if she “met with her fate” (i.e., her death, line 465) because of her actions to symbolically bury her brother in opposition to Kreon’s edict, this would be a painful result. In her marginalia, Meta Glass was pointing out that Sophocles’ word choice was quite specific, because this particular verb carried a valuable nuance: inferring that Antigone would not only accept her destiny, but that destiny would give her what she wanted, which was release from the evil in the world around her. While I still feel strongly about my original interpretation, made in creating the piece, my further research has given me an alternate that is equally intriguing – the words are now Antigone’s, but the ‘muscle’ (literally and metaphorically) is still Kreon’s.

Translation is an act of connection. Working through a person’s words, you try to figure out what was in his or her mind. You try to infuse yourself into someone else’s thought processes, experience, vision. Ultimately, however, you end with your own version. In my visual translation, one layer is the content and expressive form of the Greek text. Another layer is the original Greek sculpture, now removed from its original significance. Then there is Meta Glass’s marginalia, ambiguously interpreting, not directly defining. The English text becomes a hinge that bends back and forth on the edge of meaning, opening it, closing it, allowing things in and keeping them out. The final artwork melds these disparate elements, morphing them into my meaning, my emotional content, my 21st century perceptions of power and promise, of essence and energy.

Art as Conversation

In the National Archaeological Museum in Athens, there is a red room. It was one in which I made many photographs, most of them too busy for combining with text, but still fascinating exercises in composition. Images that I use for my marginalia works need to be more visually minimal, to allow for the complexity of the text layer. Here, the sculpture of a woman raising her hand is pushed to the side of the red swatch of wall. The actual print of *Speak, tell me* (Figure 16) is large, nearly four feet wide, with a presence that suggests an oracular power.

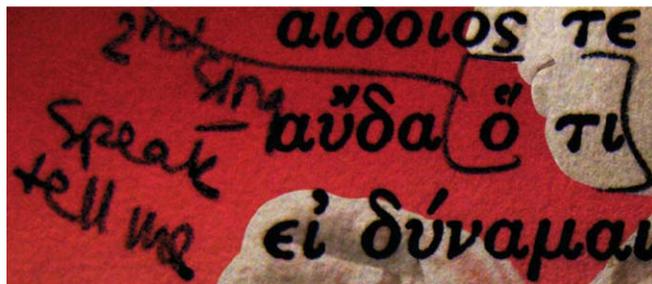


Figure 16. *Speak, tell me*, from the *Marginalia* series

Brackets are placed around the mouth of the mute sculpture, begging it to speak. The background is an intense red; the Greek letters are a dense and velvety black. It is not crucial to know what the visible Greek words mean, but the English is critical, with its notation of the 2nd singular: “you speak, you tell me.” The two thousand year old Greek sculpture becomes an expression of that moment when one is about to speak, about to tell something of import. The page of Greek text overlaying the sculpture is thickly textured, obscuring the original surface of the sculpture and adding a new layer of visual richness, harmonizing the background and the sculpture with a single surface texture, visually fusing the centuries together.

To me, the formal beauty of this image is deeply important, but this image also expresses my intellectual fascinations with what ancient Greece can tell us through its art and its literature, with what Meta Glass was thinking as she read the same text that I saw, with the physicality of the book she and I both held, one hundred years apart.

My art is a conversation with different expressive moments followed through time – from thousands of years ago, with the original writing of an ancient Greek text and the carving of an ancient Greek sculpture, to the printing of a book in the late 1800s, to Meta Glass’s notations on meanings in the early 1900s, and finally, to my artwork and contemporary viewers’ responses to it.

The past can be in dialogue with the present. I want to join that conversation, in whatever century it started. This is no longer about debates, as I had with Sontag, but about exchanges and communication.

For *Try to support me*, I found a relief sculpture representing a moment of connection (Figure 17). Continuing the search through my images, I found a more potent angle on the relief (Figure 18), one that could be combined with the more extreme angle of the text (Figure 19). The color and textures are pushed to an extreme, as the focus blurs radically into the distance (Figure 20).



Figure 17.



Figure 18.

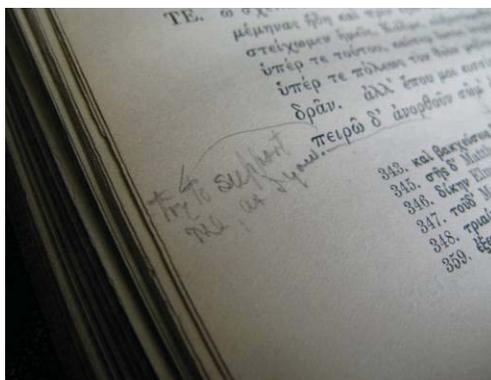


Figure 19.

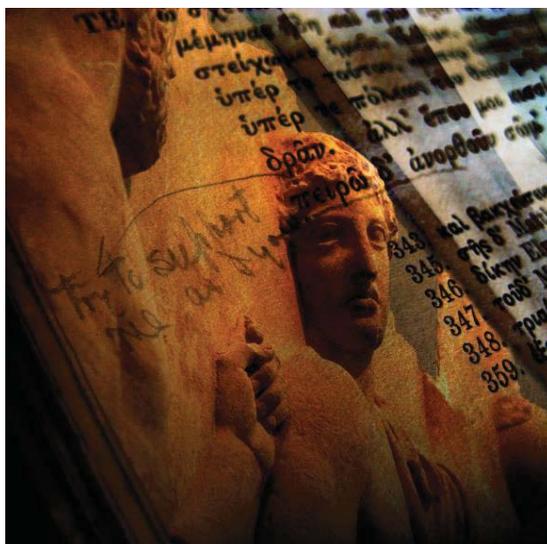


Figure 20. Try to support me, from the Marginalia series

Some notations are more spare, while the sculptures are more elaborate. In *Challenge* (Figure 21), the angle taken on the figure makes her seem to be facing the future, looking toward the testing she sees ahead.

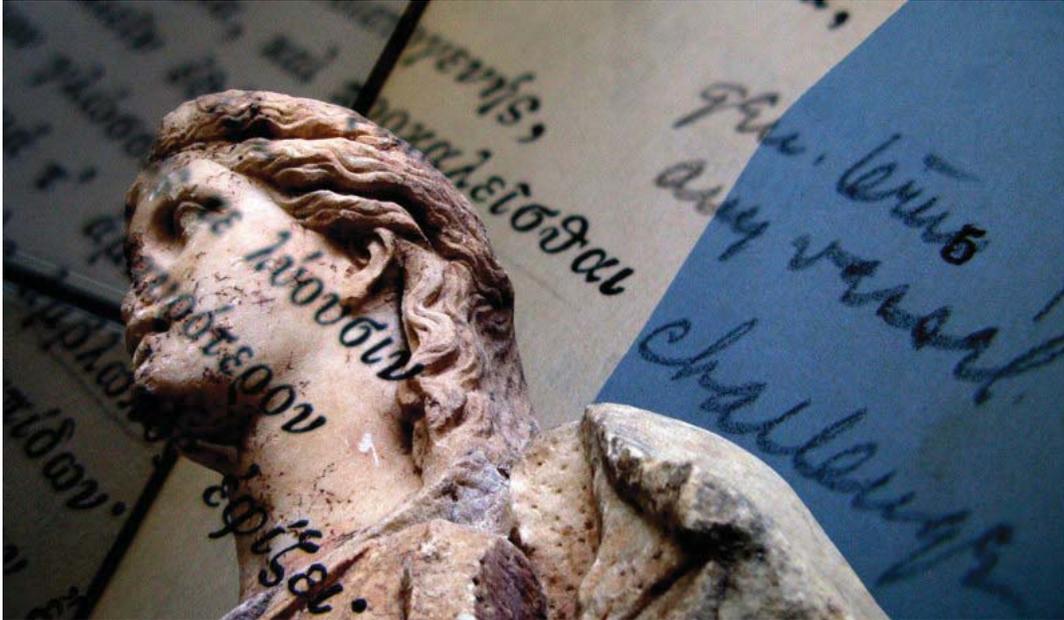


Figure 21. *Challenge*, from the *Marginalia* series

I've seen the Zeus/Poseidon figure in the National Archaeological Museum in Athens so many times, that it is as familiar as my coffee cup. So I tried to look at it differently, to find what the body language might say, rather than whether it represents this or that god. I don't look for the culturally specific meaning that the sculpture represents, but what the form, the confident gesture, the swelling muscles, say about human experience, how it can speak to me directly, across the centuries (Figure 22).

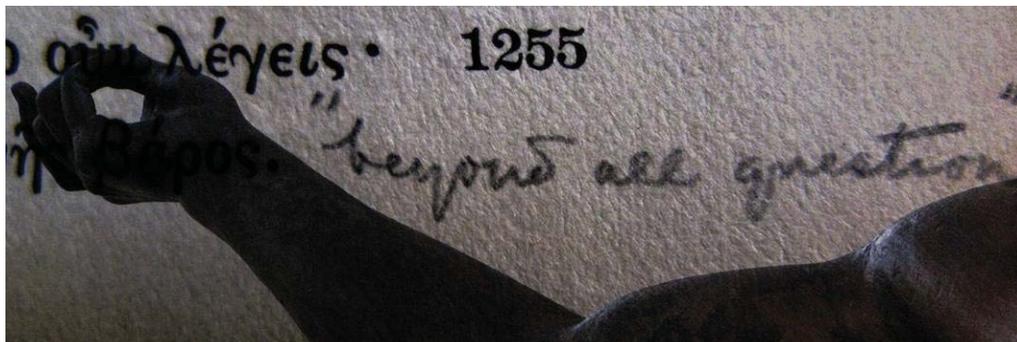


Figure 22. *Beyond all question*, from the *Marginalia* series

In *To be mindful* (Figure 23) the sculpted hand reaches out actively, while simultaneously remaining still. I saw a man striving, reaching, attempting to be conscious in his life and of his life. Then I worked through hundreds of text images, searching for words that related. The next step was aesthetic – connecting them visually. With this piece, it became a minimal expressiveness, an acknowledgement of letter forms, of a small graphic mark. The horizontality of the cropped frame emphasizes the stretching arc of the fingers, which echo and embrace the curls and contours of the ancient text, which in turn is grounded by the confirming check mark.

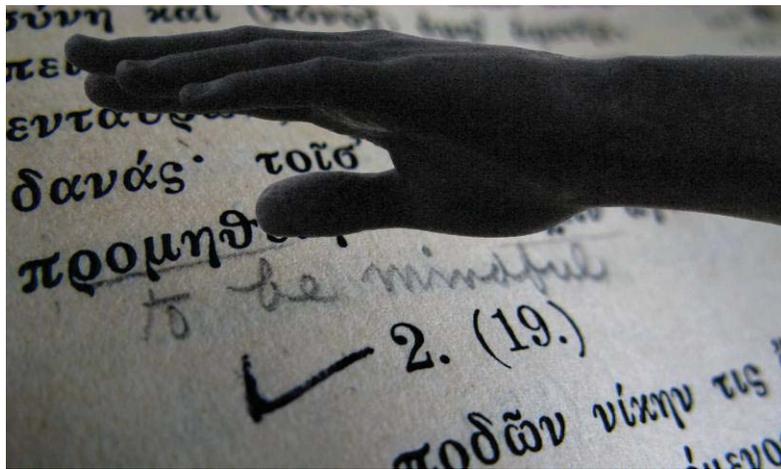


Figure 23. *To be mindful*, from the *Marginalia* series

I am interested in disintegrating the boundary between past and present, upending the traditional balance of power between margin and center. Dyed into translucent fabric (Figure 24), this image becomes a visual analogue for the complex ways in which the ephemerality of the past permeates the concreteness of the present, for the infusion and intrusion of ancient knowledge into contemporary experience. Conversely, the present is always a presence in our temporary retreat into the past; one cannot view the past in this artwork without also seeing the present in the world, emphasizing the value of interrelationships and associations over segmented isolation.

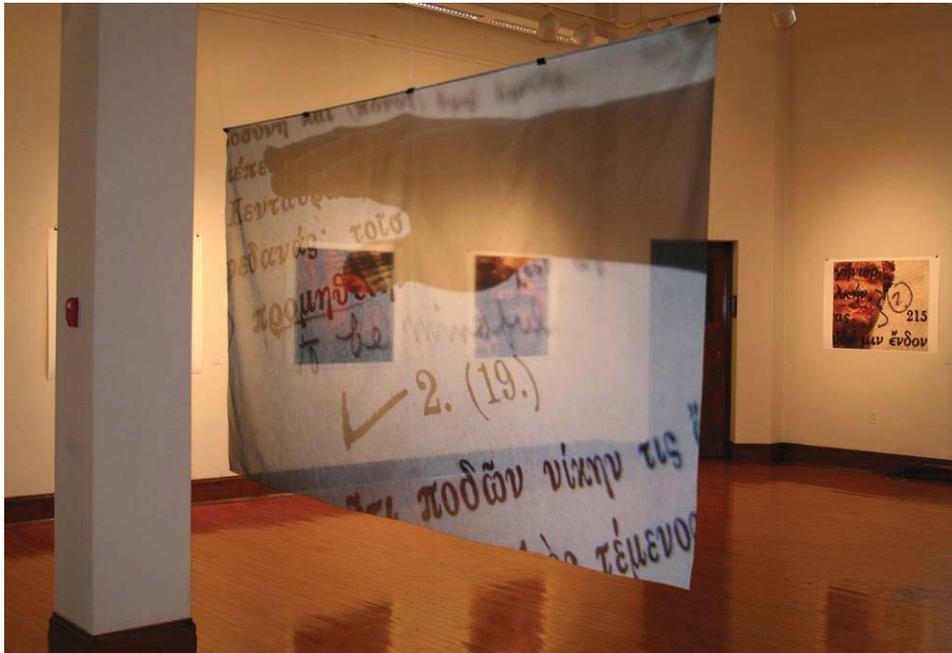


Figure 24. *To be mindful*, installation view of dye sublimation print on chiffon

Concluding Remarks

Meta Glass was not always confident and self-assured, but sometimes questioned her own understanding, and perhaps the classics themselves. In *Question at lines 83-85* (Figure 25), the ruined surface of a sculpture, dug up after centuries buried in the ground, reflects the imperfections of human knowledge, but also its capacity for beauty.



Figure 25. *Question at lines 83-85*, from the *Marginalia* series

Years of academic training in ancient Greek language and culture have given me a personal core of inspiration and knowledge, and a belief in the relevance of that knowledge. My creative process is structured by this past experience – and experience of the past, if a labyrinthine process that is a-centric can actually have a structure. Barthes questioned “whether or not a labyrinth can be *structured*,” seeing it as both a “contradiction in terms” and, simultaneously, as a “defining condition” (p. 116). My methodology views the past as an unstructured series of stratified (and therefore structured) conversations that I can join in on, dialogues that can illuminate the present. Marginalia becomes subject, content, and form, as it is central to the entire conceit.

Sometimes I work with individual images of the texts, altering them visually, but not layering them with other images. These photographs use the power of the words and the formal impact of photographic technique to carry the work (Figure 26).

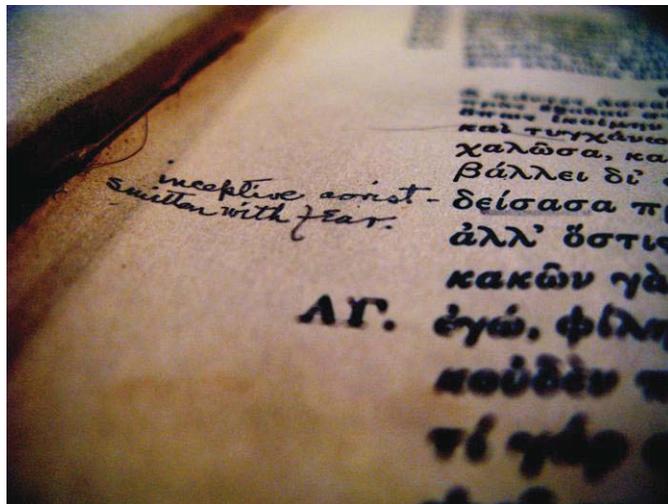


Figure 26. *Smitten with fear*, from the *Pages* series

The ‘tiny black script’ I found in Meta Glass’ books may be marginalia, but it is not marginal. It ties me to others through the universality of the expressions of human emotions. Through this work I am finding a way to make both the Greeks and Meta Glass speak again, though with my voice and inflections. I do particularly feel Meta Glass’ presence – not like a ghost, but as a real human being, who touched these books, held them in her hands, laid them flat to inscribe these words in them (Figure 27). Art is communicative, about making a connection, developing a rapport, finding a commonality.

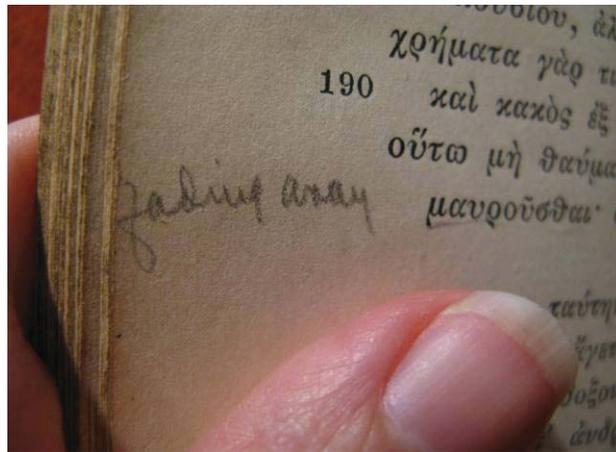


Figure 27. *Fading away*, from the *Pages* series

My work explores my intrigue with qualities of books that are being lost on a Kindle or an iPad – the sensual physicality of a book as a three-dimensional object. The books I used represent, as well, a contemporaneous visual record of the workings of one woman’s mind, still vividly present after one hundred years. Sam Anderson (2011) wrote that “...[marking up books is] a way to not just passively read but to fully enter a text, to collaborate with it, to mingle with an author...” (p. 1). My artworks are my efforts to collaborate not only with the original author of the Greek text, but to mingle with Meta Glass, to celebrate, as Anderson put it, “the pleasure of words in the margins” (p. 2).

I end with one last journey of coincidence, a book that I found two years ago in a bookstore in western Massachusetts, *Love and Friendship*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson, possibly the 1896 version. I opened it to find this dedication (Figure 28):

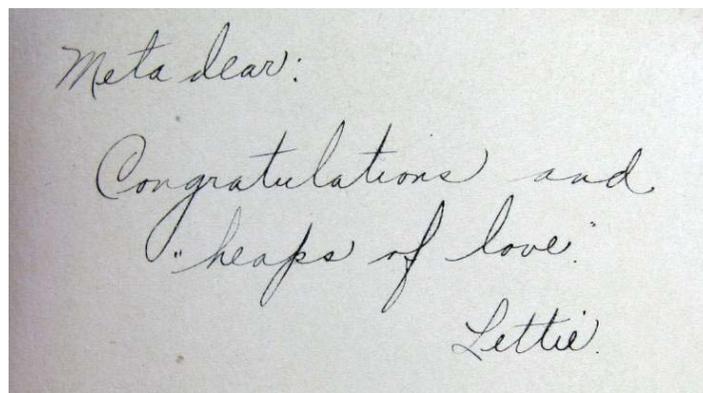


Figure 28.

Stretching it a bit, perhaps this could have been given to Meta Glass, on the occasion of her graduation from Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1899. Or perhaps it is another Meta. For me, it expresses perfectly my feelings about my silent conversations and growing relationship with a woman who died over 40 years ago, but who lives in her books still – and who has left her own 'Ariadne's thread' for me to find and to follow.

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