

JENNIFER GOODMAN - THINKING IN FOLDS

*Folds, layers, translucency,
Intersecting moments of encounter,
Deliberate, yet weightless in their execution.*

The act of folding is an everyday encounter; and it is a timeless action in many ways. A democratic act - anyone can make a fold; it is something so simple, elegant and direct – it is an activity that holds no prejudices – it is widely utilised for a range of purposes, apparatuses and intentions. And yet because it is such a simple action – it is an act that we might not stop to consider very deeply in our everyday lives. It becomes a brief moment among others in our daily lived experience; and as such, it might not hold our attention for very long; and yet – how could we think more deeply about the fold as an allegory for something beyond the material act itself?

Romantic and yet utilitarian in nature, the fold exists around us in endless facets and iterations, as the perceptive theorist Angelika Seppi has argued; “[The folds can be imagined as] the folds of drapery to the folds of living tissue, from the diptychs of antique tablets and reliefs to the explicit or implicit diptychs of painting, from book-folds to present-day folded Note-Books, from the art of folding paper to foldable architecture, from biological processes such as invagination or protein-folding to René Thom’s famous morphological catastrophes. Correspondingly broad is the span of disciplines, within and beyond their limits – the fold extends itself, from philosophy to mathematics, biology, physics and chemistry, from the arts to art history, and so on.”¹ Seppi; here gently demonstrates the possibility for how the fold is disseminated widely across disciplines, cultures and times – here further emphasising the possibilities of imagining the fold as an allegory for the discussion of something more expansive.

When I first looked at artist Jennifer Goodman’s recent body of work; what occurred to me is that the artist’s approach could in this instance be articulated as an abstracted view of ‘the fold’ in the sense that the work is neither not at the top, nor bottom of, nor edge, nor precipice or – in fact it is articulated from the position of the middle of things. As Kafka might argue “Let someone attempt to seize a blade of grass and hold fast to it when it only grows from the middle.”² Indeed, this is the most challenging perspective to speak from. Furthermore ‘In the middle of things’ is according to Deleuze and Guattari, along the spectrum that it is “not easy to see things in the middle, rather than looking down on them from above or up from below, or from left to right or right to left.”³

In Goodman’s abstracted view of what has become unfolded, each prism, form; has a deliberate yet liminal placement in the canvas. As collectors of Goodman’s work will tell you; the surprise here lies in the ability of her work to produce surprises that reveal themselves over time; clever placements surpass the expectation of the abstracted form itself. Because although Goodman works to geometric forms she does not work to a preconceived formula. No; instead – each colour is painted from scratch, each action is carefully considered.

In Deleuze and Guattari’s analysis of ‘the fold’ they argue that; “The world in general – encompasses the virtual plane that is unfolded through the pleats of the matter and the folds of the soul – thus becomes comparable to an infinitely folded curve that extends to infinity.”⁴ Indeed; if we were to re-image our world-view from this perspective – a perspective that artist Goodman shares – imagine how much more closely we could consider things; with sensitivity; with responsiveness to the senses and without distraction. Goodman encourages us to be in the moment; and to re-consider the most meaningful aspects of life and living.

Tess Maunder
Curator and Arts Writer
2020

Footnotes:

1. **Simply Complicated: Thinking in Folds; Angelika Seppi et al: Michael Friedman, Wolfgang Schäffner (Hg.): On folding. Towards a New Field of Interdisciplinary Research, Bielefeld: transcript, 2016.**
2. **Lament Traces: Franz Kafka, Princeton University Press, 10 Jan 2009**
3. **The Fold, B Gilles Deleuze, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 30 May 2006**
4. **The Fold, B Gilles Deleuze, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 30 May 2006**