

CATHERINE MACMAHON

ARTIST STATEMENT

I am interested in the convergence of art, craft, and minimalism and how that is expressed through the female gaze. How can vulnerability, matriarchy, fragility, and strength, be perceived not as contradictions—aka “hysteria” of the past centuries—but as simultaneity (i.e. a “both/and” acceptance, versus an “either/or” criteria)? This is humanity; that we are all complex beings living with endless combinations of simultaneity, infinite polarities within each of us.

There is a delicate balance between tension and release; my work explores such liminal spaces or moments of in betweenness. Often, I express this moment as a pleat: when something folds back on and touches itself. It is the moment when a 2-dimensional plane becomes structural and creates an interior. Currently, I have been experimenting with pleats, both literally and conceptually. With my “fold/unfold” series, I am literally folding and pleating paper, then dyeing the paper as if it were cotton fabric. By applying a resist in certain areas, the dye can not reach all surfaces. The resulting unfolded work shows the shadows left behind after the trauma of resistance. Translating the idea of the pleat to the human body, I have been casting the interior of a fist in plaster. When our hand folds back on itself, we create a shape—a fist—which holds so much power and meaning: pain, anger, fear, rage. But what does the shadow of that shape look like? What is revealed when we give form to the interior space of the fist? As solid as a fist may appear, it will never be a solid form. There is always some space, small as it may be, that remains hollow on the inside, wanting or needing a voice.