

Healing Series

Brian Knep
bkpub@blep.com

The Healing series is a set of interactive floor pieces that explore responses to the change caused by interaction.

Walking through the gallery, visitors come upon a mat covered in glowing, organic patterns. The mat is soft, and appears to be filled with a gel-like polymer. When participants walk across the mat, they see the patterns at first pull away from their feet and shadows, and then regrow to cover the now bare areas. But the participants notice that the pattern has changed. It looks similar to how it looked before they walked across, but it is not exactly the same. They may even notice that the path of their motion has been preserved as a continuous line. Over time, they notice that the line is obliterated, but the pattern has been forever changed.

The series is currently made up of three separate but similar interactive floor pieces. They are dynamic and change in response to visitors. When a piece encounters a foreign body, such as a gallery visitor, the pattern on it pulls away, creating a wound. When the foreign body leaves, the pattern heals itself and the wound closes, but each piece heals itself in a different way.

In Healing #1 the sides of the wound never actually touch. A scar forms—a memory of the interaction between the visitor and the mat. Over time the scar may be obliterated, but its effect on the pattern's growth is permanent. The pattern looks the same qualitatively, but it never looks exactly the same as it did before the interaction. Healing #2 is minimal and meditative, with the mat oozing over the wound caused by visitor interaction. The mat heals itself until only the essence of each scar is left. Eventually this essence also disappears, leaving a solid glowing mat. In Healing #3 the reaction is more violent, with the pattern pulsating and quickly reforming over the wounds. Again, as in Healing #1, the pattern is forever changed by the interaction with the visitor, but visitors' long-term effects on the pattern are less visible.

These pieces are an attempt to distill and explore the response to the changes caused when two things interact with each other. Contact between any two entities causes changes in both, and so has a destructive quality, but change forces growth as the entities attempt to integrate the effects of the interaction, and so the contact can have a regenerative quality. It is this growth and response after the change that is the focus of these pieces.

