

John Paul Morabito - Artist Statement

I am interested in hand labor. Hand processes manipulate materials to create both form and content in my artwork. I begin at the loom, building cloth line by line. Once woven, the work is deconstructed—either through an immediate intervention or a slow, mediated process. In all cases, the cyclic relationship of creation and destruction is at the heart of the work.

Of late my work has concerned itself with the actions of hand weaving and systematic burning. The process of weaving cloth by hand and then repeatedly burning it is an act of creation juxtaposed with an act of destruction. This sacrifice of cloth woven by my own hands is not a violent act. It is rather a quiet meditation. The holes are not burned quickly with ravaging flames. Instead each hole is made individually and slowly to create a contemplation of each moment that has been burnt away.

Inherent to this work is the compulsory behavior of the obsessional. I am particularly interested in how this behavior relates to the death drive and it is this thanatological compulsion that is the impetus of the work.

Perhaps left over from when we first realized our mortality, we have built into us a yearning for all things impermanent. To be human is not only to create but also to destroy. Called Thanatos, the death drive draws us to the end. I find myself in some ways ruled by Thanatos. There is a need to make and a need to destroy, neither can be ignored.

The hand that makes is the hand that destroys.