

# Geometric imprecision at CSUS Art Gallery

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To Jay Tracy, things are not always as they appear.

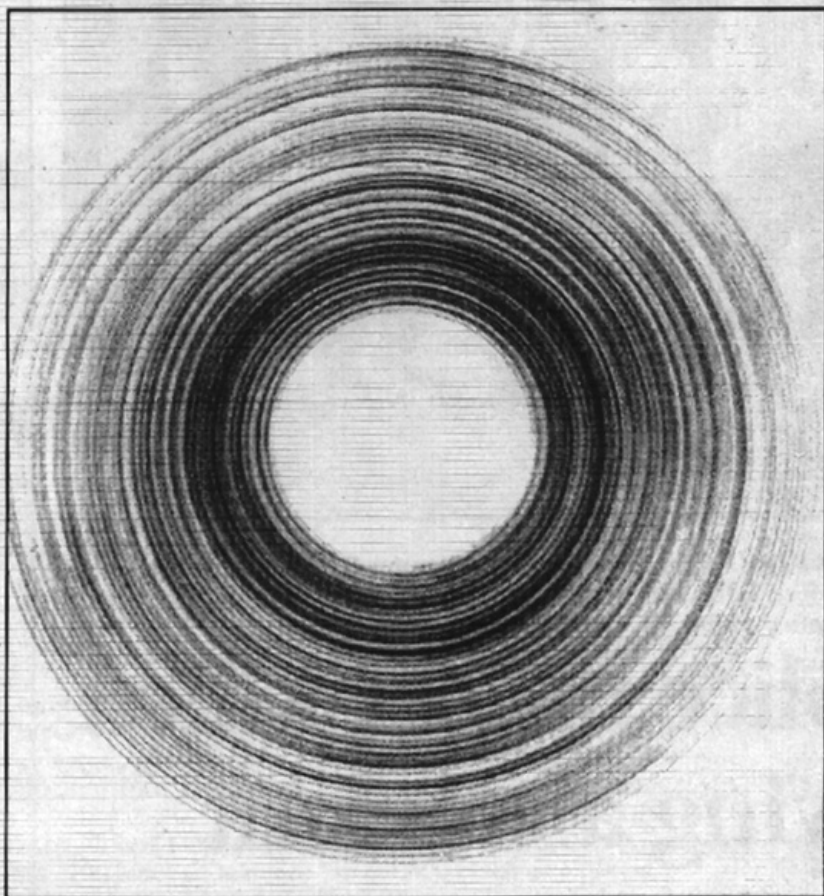
While, at first glance, his heliogenic images and cameraless photographs may look like pages ripped from a geometry text book, Tracy believes art, and life, is more of a "wobbly approximation" than an exact science.

His philosophy takes tangible form in his experiments with photographic processes, a collection of which is on display for one more week at the California State University, Stanislaus, Art Gallery. The show, titled "wobbles in the approximate," will run through April 20.

"It's hard to say whether it's a painting or a drawing or a photograph," CSUS Art Gallery Director Sophia Isajiw, said of Tracy's "study for first dwelling." "He makes his own emulsions and applies them to a special paper with a brush like a painting. But it's a very long process and some of these pieces are actually still developing, reacting to the light within the gallery. It has a life of its own."

After earning his bachelor's in fine arts from Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, and a master's in fine arts at the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., Tracy developed his hybrid style as a reaction to the restrictions he felt as a painter.

"When I was a painter, there had been nagging frustrations with the form, how one stroke always follows the next, that seemed to be beside the point, it just didn't seem to be in line with how I looked at life and art," Tracy said during a phone interview Wednesday from his studio/office in Sante Fe, N.M., where he also works as a graphic designer. "I was really much more interested in everything else on the



Submitted photo

Jay Tracy's works can be seen in the California State University, Stanislaus, Art Gallery through April 20.

canvas other than that one stroke I was working on. When you think of photography as a field and how a sensitive surface can respond everywhere at once, it allowed me to act globally instead of locally."

The subtle shadings of geometric patterns created by Tracy's long exposures of pure light on paper, made by a allow for a wide range of responses. He revels in the paradox between the apparent uniformity of the images and the imprecision revealed by closer study.

"We are constantly, perceptually organizing around certain kinds of

regularity," Tracy said. "By using what appear to be rigorously geometric images, I think it provides some sort of handle that allows entry to the work. The longer you invest in them you begin to see how that logic breaks down. If you look very closely at some of the grid-like images or the circular pieces, there's absolutely no regularity in any plane. It's sort of an implied fragment of much larger ideas. I like to think that I truly embrace the uncertainty. And I think that keeps the work open ended and alive."