

Doug Navarra - Artist Statement - Tape Series

I come from a background of geometric abstraction. This foundation informs my aesthetic framework, establishing an enduring interest in structural logic, balance, and complex spatial relationships. By 2020-21, what began initially as a peripheral exploration using just masking tape on Arches paper had evolved into a distinct approach, offering an avenue to interrogate form, space, and material in a reductive, yet precise, vocabulary of geometric abstraction. This allowed me to strip away the traditional mechanisms of painting and drawing, focusing instead on the essential properties of line, edge, and chromatic weight. The basic utility of different commercial masking tapes reveals their potential as a primary substance capable of generating complex visual relationships. This leads my interests into a primary painting space for further exploration.

In these tape drawings, color glyphs are created to participate in a visual dialogue, where positive space engages with the viewer and negative space facilitates meaning without itself becoming a signifier. This exploration of positive and negative space reconfigures visual language, fostering a form of non-objective abstract literacy. The compositions do not rely on external references; rather, they construct a self-contained system of meaning where each element is codependent. In the beginning, the works resembled asemic writing or a complex music composition, where intervals of silence are just as crucial as the notes themselves. As the series progressed, the arrangements grew more complex, suggesting a delineated architectural construction implying boundary, and systemic order.

This process of composition involves manipulating tape as a medium, where pre-determined color brands are transformed by layering different colors over each other. This overlapping intensifies pigmentation, expanding the work into a new palette beyond the given commercial tape colors. The varying translucencies and opacities of the different tapes add depth, offering new dimensions to color interaction while they also expand the structural possibilities of tape as a medium for visual expression.

This methodology introduces an element of tension between strict control and unpredictability. While the straight lines and predefined widths of the tape offer a high degree of structural precision, the inherent behavior of the adhesive material presents unique challenges. Overlapping hues of tape filter light in the final object. There is a balance between mechanical rigidity and material fluidity as a mirror of human desire for order, against the chaotic nature of the physical environment. Each line becomes

an assertion of intent, a deliberate marking of boundaries that speaks to both architectural stability and the ephemeral nature of temporary structures.

Ultimately, this body of work seeks to expand the boundaries of what constitutes a contemporary drawing. By elevating a utilitarian studio tool of tape into the primary vehicle for high-concept geometric investigation, I am challenging the historical hierarchies of traditional art-making materials. The final pieces function simultaneously as drawings, and as chromatic architectural experiments. It is an ongoing studio practice that remains as a commitment to the power of a simple economy-of-means in art. It also proves that spatial and emotional depth can be achieved through minimalist strategies.