

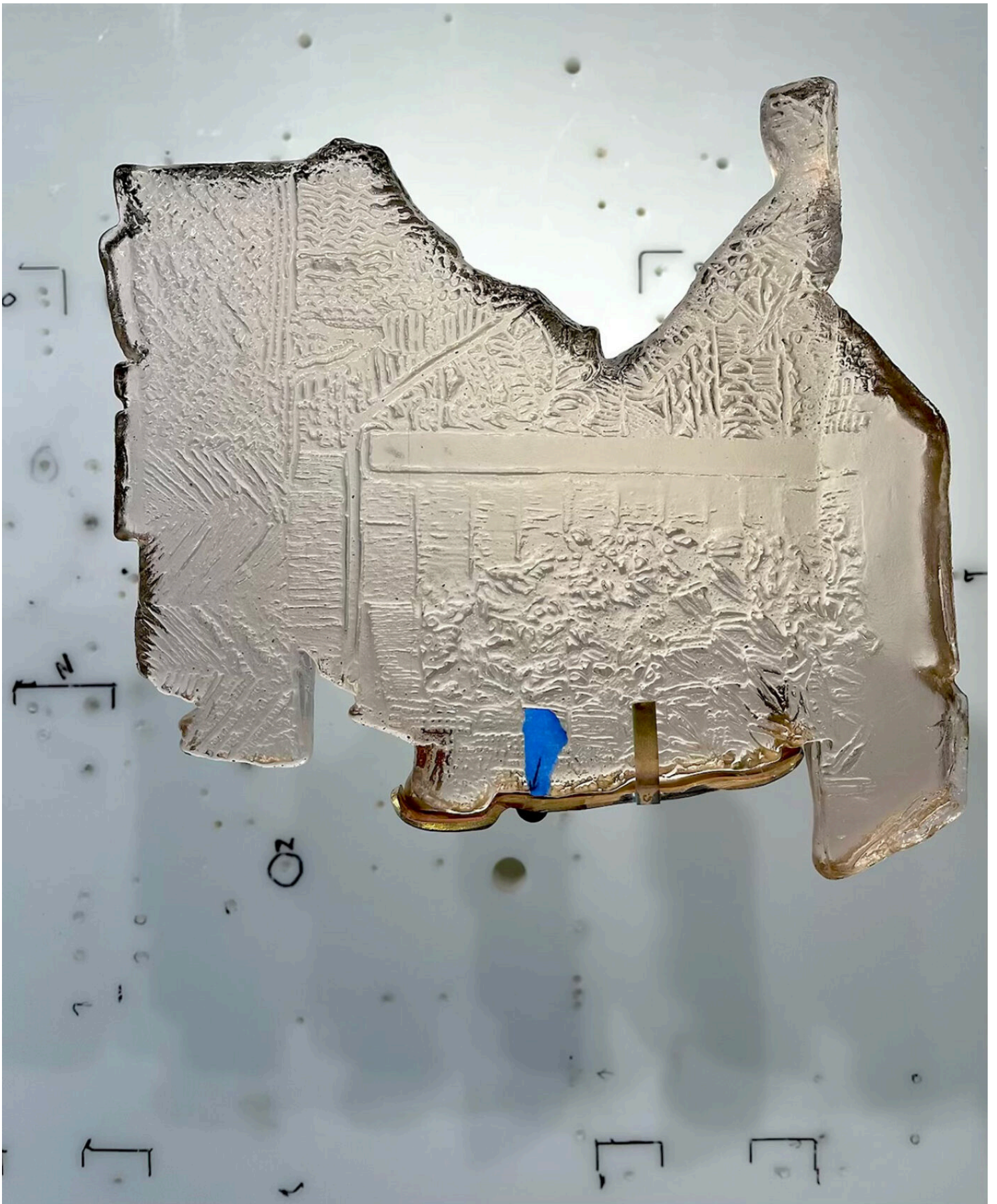
STUDIO VISIT ([HTTPS://BOMBMAGAZINE.ORG/SERIES/STUDIO-VISIT/](https://bombmagazine.org/series/studio-visit/))

# Studio Visit: SaraNoa Mark

Inhabiting time.

BY LOUIS BURY ([HTTPS://BOMBMAGAZINE.ORG/AUTHOR/LOUIS-BURY](https://bombmagazine.org/author/louis-bury/))

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SaraNoa Mark studio. All photos by Louis Bury.



As SaraNoa Mark and I converse in their studio, they knead small thumbmarks into a thin slab of clay at their workspace. Every so often, they spray the slab with water to keep it moist, explaining that with proper care the clay remains workable for about two or three weeks. During our conversation, I don't pay much mind to these small actions, but as I look back at the images I took of their studio, I notice numerous finger impressions toward the bottom edge of this work in progress. The impressions will eventually be smoothed away, but it occurs to me that they're accidental examples of the artist's efforts to "make time visible" through their work.



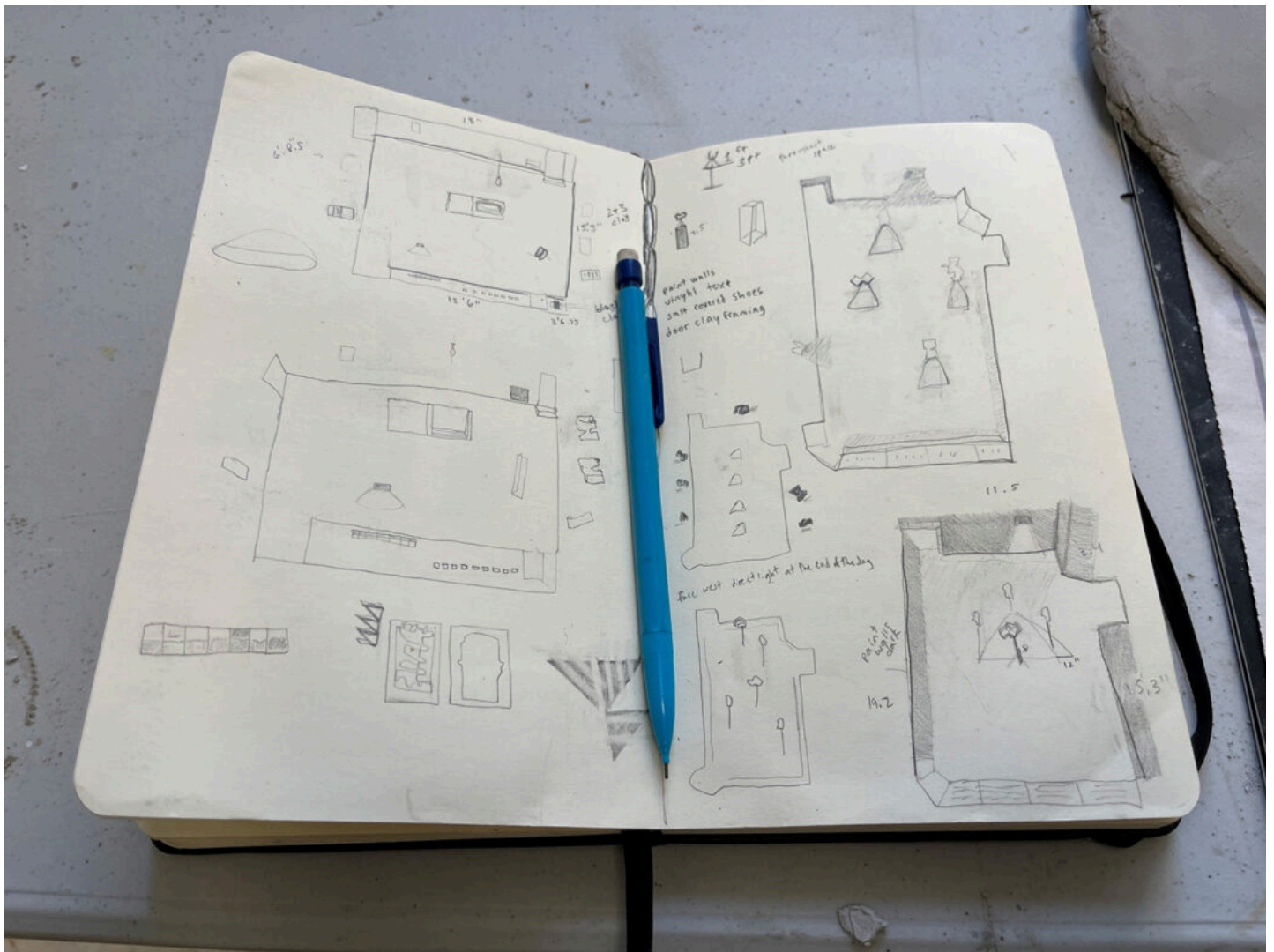
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Mark has developed a unique aesthetic lexicon for that purpose. Hundreds of minute notches, ridges, and grooves score her sculptures' surfaces, resembling things such as topographical maps and ancient tablets. These suggestive abstractions are displayed throughout their studio. But it's the works in progress that make apparent the intimate relation between the artist's processes and products. Mark uses an array of wood-carving tools on media such as paper, clay, and wax. They rework these materials without adding to them, likening their alterations to those made by wind and water upon the earth. They consider these methods to be a form of drawing and "one of the few times I feel inside time."





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Different speeds of making take place simultaneously in their studio. Next to the clay slab sits a more developed wax one. Its wax comes from two eighty-hour candles that Mark melted down and combined, part of a sculptural drawing series using candles with burn times ranging from as short as five minutes to as long as eighty hours. A longer time horizon is at play in the pot of ocean water boiling in the studio's corner, which leaves behind salt crystals accumulating on a nearby metal tray. On an adjacent tray sits a stack of limestone slabs upon which Mark pours vinegar each day to effect gradual transformations in the stones. These slower ways of making work constitute the kind of personal habits that verge on rituals.



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WHAT TIME IS IT?  
DO YOU HAVE TIME?  
HOW MUCH TIME DO I HAVE?  
DOES TIME EXIST OUTSIDE OF OUR MINDS?  
HOW DOES TIME ORGANIZE OUR STORIES?  
WHY DO WE FEEL WE NEED TO ACCOUNT FOR OUR TIME?  
DOES TIME EXIST OUTSIDE OF ACCOUNTING?  
DOES TIME EXIST OUTSIDE OF MEASUREMENT?  
WHAT PROVIDES THE TEMPO OF TIME?  
IS TIME ALWAYS CHRONOLOGICAL?  
WHY DOES TIME ONLY GO ONE WAY?  
HOW DO YOU GET TIME TO MOVE IN REVERSE?  
IS THE PAST BEFORE US OR BEHIND US?  
WHEN DO YOU FORGET TIME?  
CAN I TOUCH TIME?  
IS TIME BUILT IN LAYERS, FOLDS, LINES, OR MARKS?  
HOW DOES TIME DRAW?  
IS TIME ONLY VISIBLE THROUGH TRACES?  
CAN I SEE TIME?  
WHY DOES IT HURT TO STARE AT THE SUN?  
DOES TIME EXIST OUTSIDE OF EXPERIENCE?  
WHY DOES MY BODY KEEP TIME?  
WHY DOES TIME SPEED UP?  
IS TIME OBJECTIVELY SPEEDING UP?  
DOES TIME GO FASTER WHEN WE FORGET ABOUT IT?  
DOES TIME EXIST OUTSIDE OF SPACE?

CAN WE ESCAPE TIME?  
IS A BREAK IN RHYTHM AN ESCAPE FROM TIME?  
WHY DO I WANT TO ESCAPE TIME?  
WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE OUTSIDE TIME?  
HOW IS THIS MOMENT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER MOMENTS?  
ARE TWO DAYS EVER ALIKE?  
HOW WAS TIME EXPERIENCED BEFORE STANDARDIZED TIME?  
WHY DID CONNECTING REMOTE LOCATIONS THROUGH STANDARDIZED TIME DISTANCE US FROM LOCAL TIME?  
DOES GLOBAL TIME EXIST?  
AM I SPENDING TIME OR IS TIME SPENDING ME?  
WHAT IS WASTING TIME?  
WHY DO WE FEEL WE NEED TO MAKE SOMETHING OF OUR HOURS?  
WHY DO WE NEED TO JUSTIFY TIME PASSING?  
HOW DO OTHER LIVING CREATURES EXPERIENCE TIME?  
WHEN ARE YOU GETTING HERE?  
WHERE DOES TIME GO AFTER IT'S GONE FROM HERE?  
WHY DOES TIME IN WATER FEEL SO EXAPANSIVE?  
DO HOURS EVAPORATE? PILE? SOAK?  
WHAT GAINS INTENSITY OVER TIME WHAT LOSES INTENSITY WITH TIME?  
HOW DO YOU ARCHIVE TIME?  
CAN I DISSOLVE TIME?  
WHEN DO I FEEL INSIDE TIME?  
HOW LONG DID THIS TAKE YOU?





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This visit was my third to Mark's studio in the past two years, a fact I wouldn't ordinarily mention but that feels relevant given how and why they work. From the first, I've been struck by their work's affinities with asemic writing and how its intricate marks evoke lines of indecipherable text. This quality lends their work a mysterious aura, as if the only possible reply to the list of philosophical koans hanging on their studio wall is to withdraw into the ineffable. But the more I learn about Mark's work, the less it seems to entail withdrawal. Their artistic process involves an inhabitation—an intensification—of time as a way to get closer to its mysteries through small, repeated gestures, the material traces of which some people, in some contexts, call art.

SaraNoa Mark: *Evaporated Hours* (<https://dreamsong.art/exhibitions/sarinoa-mark>) *is on view at Dreamsong in Minneapolis, Minnesota, until May 3.*

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Louis Bury is the author of *The Way Things Go* and *Exercises in Criticism*, and Professor of English at Hostos Community College, CUNY.

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