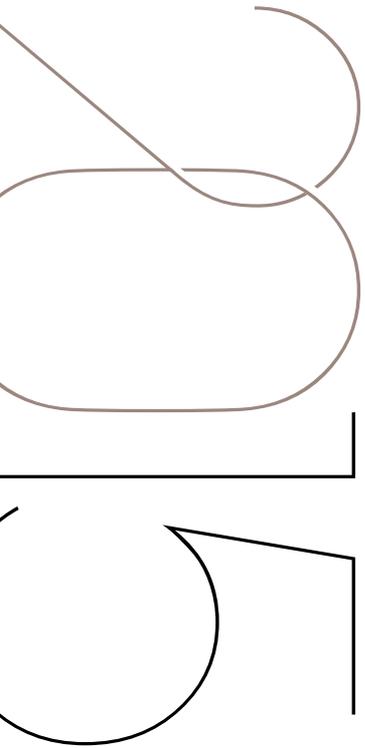




# MFA THESIS EXHIBITION



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## WILSON BUTTERWORTH

### *Bigelow*

Liminal space, or more accurately the space where the public and the private meet, where the exterior space of the public world becomes internalized creates an affect that alters the way in which we engage with the surrounding environment.

These works use technology as a prosthetic of the body in order to translate information that is extra sensory and to extend our conception of the corporal world by altering our individual relationships to it. The use of sound as an immediate and temporary translation pulls out the poetic possibilities that are dormant in the surrounding environment, and by mediating and translating it through these devices the viewer gains access to situations that are not readily accessible through the body. The process of making information, that is intangible to the senses, concrete, definable, and experiential opens new possibilities of constituting the self in the present and enhances the notion of the “what if” and the imaginative while exploring the role that scientific knowledge plays in the dynamic relationships between the self, the other, and the environment on local, global, and cosmic scales.

For each walk a sound suit was worn, consisting of five photoresistors that are placed on the body (one on each wrist, one on each ankle and one on the chest) to measure the amount of light that reaches each part of the body. As the intensity of the light fluctuates within the environment, the photoresistors correspondingly alter the flow of electricity within the circuit. The Arduino reads the amount of current that is flowing from each resistor and converts it into a number. The Arduino then sends this information every 100ms to a program that was written in Processing to convert the information gathered from the photoresistors and transform the information into sound.



*Golden Gate*  
Walk (59:04)  
2015



*Rose Hill*  
Walk (1:16:27)  
2015



*SoundBooth*  
Installation  
2015

## JESSE CHEHAK

### *In These Woods*

The result is a quasi archive that chronicles an episodic tree mortality event in the Colorado Rockies near Silverthorne. The cause is linked to our warming climate. It also represents the various stages of personal grief and recovery that occur when a phenomenon of such proportions unfolds in an environment that signifies permanence and resilience. The project uses this dramatic event as a scaffold for a deeper artist's inquiry related to ontology, conservation, and art as intervention.

The installation on display at the UAMA's South Gallery reveals one dimension of the larger project. It dwells on themes of mapping — both of the physical land area as it changes over time, and of an emotional landscape dealing with loss, guilt, and reformation.



*Reflection Survey #1 and #2*  
Color Photographs  
114.3cm x 91.4cm each  
2014



*Video Stills from "Slough" and "Reentry"*  
 HD Video 1920p x 1080p  
 21 minutes  
 2014



*Lost Semiotics*  
 23 Color Photographs  
 30.5cm x 25.4cm each  
 2011-2015

## ABIGAIL FELBER

### *“Charm School for Marshmallow” Video and Portraits*

Denial, refusal, and ignorance of reality create opposite stories constantly at battle. This disparity, and its iteration within the realm of female roles, is the driving force behind my work. Each portrait is a placeholder for multi-generational, denied women in my family structure. The chicken portraiture is a metaphor for the continuance of submission to keep familial authenticity under veil. Having grown up in the South, I was shown specific rituals that continue to corral women in roles primarily written by men. My grandfather held dictums relating to societal expectations put in place to hide imperfections and to maintain an outward appearance of cleanliness and perfection. Although the present day might regard most of these rules as insignificant or dead, they are very much alive in the South. This work strives to understand the roles women play in the contemporary world, while still grappling with expectations of the past.

The video is an exploration of women's roles and the expectations of female behavior. Manners and etiquette were put in place for women long ago and continue to be a part of southern tradition today. In this piece, the chicken sits across from me as I explain a particular section of Emily Post's, "Etiquette: The Blue Book of Social Usage" book from 1950.



*Charm and the Modern Girl*  
Installation and video  
2015



*Charm and the Modern Girl*  
Installation and video  
2015



## SARAH GILL

### *Stranger in a \_\_\_\_\_*

American culture is one of the wound spectacle; of the private body split open and made viewable for public entertainment. The cult celebrity status of the serial killer is one facet of this preoccupation, from televised criminal trials to true crime novels. Serial killers draw on the urge to look at and objectify the subjects of our subconscious fears. It is not just the inherent "otherness" embodied in these figures that provoke such fears, but the façade of normalcy with which they hide behind. A human not quite human.

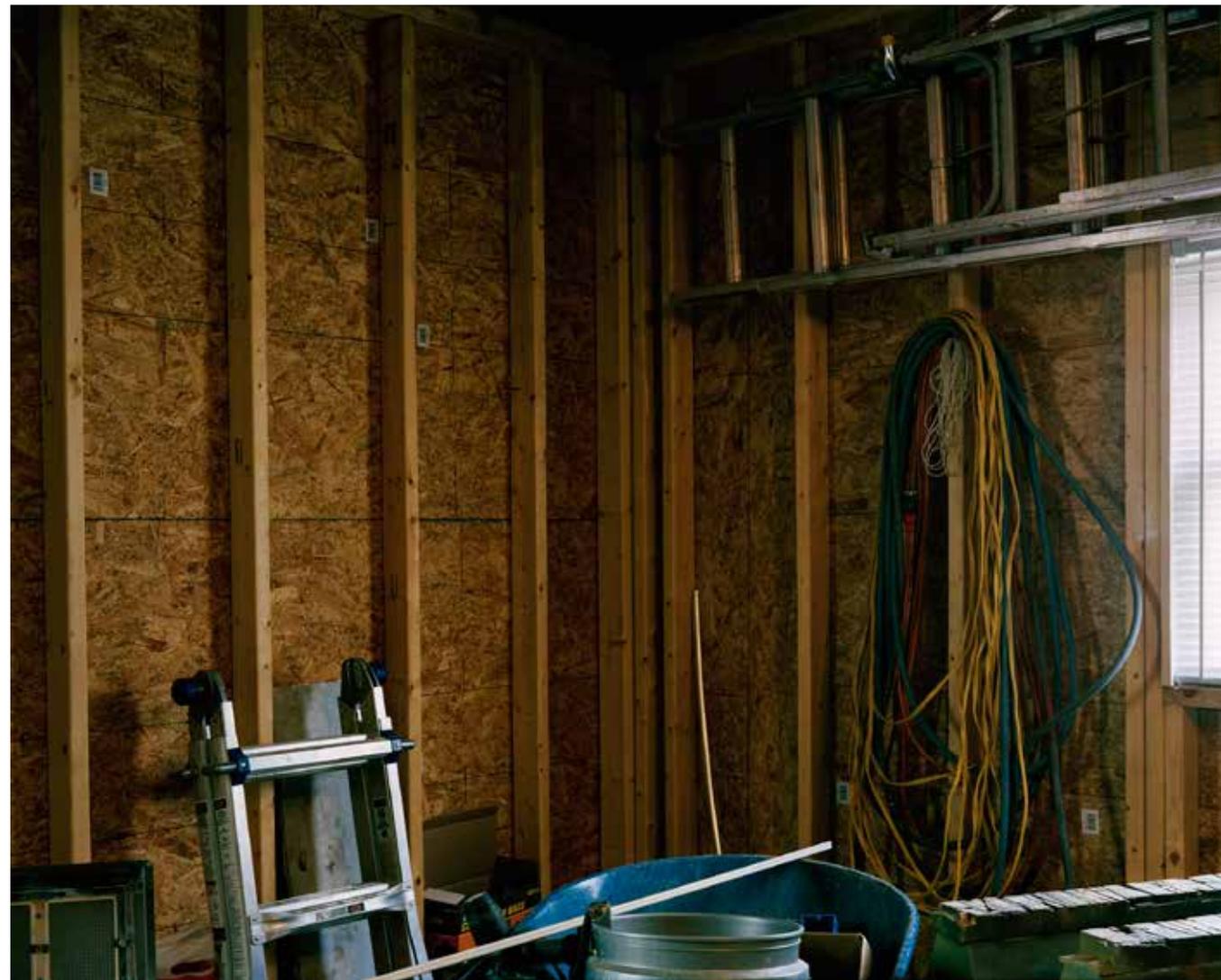
Ambiguity in delineating "friend" from "foe" marks a similar tension enacted in space. Certain spaces have become general tropes for unknowable danger, imbued with a vague aura of violence. The motel, the domestic home, the white van. Here, rituals of well-being become rituals of detachment and flattening. Beyond the original violence, space also acts as a catalyst for the relived memory of pain. I am interested here in discerning to what extent factual knowledge of an event changes our experience of a space. Is a farm a farm until an act of violence transforms it? Or are certain locations ingrained within our collective memory? How do fictional narratives told and retold through culture influence this experience? In photographing these locations, I explore the tenuous boundaries that separate people and spaces and the conflicting possibilities for nourishment, detachment, knowledge, and violence they often contain.



*House*  
Inkjet print  
30"x24"  
2015



*Wood Shed*  
Inkjet print  
30"x24"  
2014



*Untitled*  
Inkjet print  
30"x24"  
2014

## SERGE J-F. LEVY

### *The Fire in the Freezer*

With a camera in hand at all times, I respond to stimuli that jostle my internal sense of normalcy. I suppose that is a very subjective term: "normalcy." I have photographed riots, celebrities, and the Westminster Dog Show at Madison Square Garden. I grew up and lived most of my life in New York City and admit to feeling accustomed to everyday urban oddity. Since moving to the desert, many of the apparently small happenings of life or ordinary scenes in the extra-terrestrial landscape of the Southwest provide an exciting substrate for me to respond photographically. Mundane and cyclic occurrences of seasons, decay, human negligence, and interpersonal connection are the impetus for my reactions and explorations in the photographs of "The Fire in the Freezer."

My writing follows a similar trajectory. However, instead of my camera, I use my memory of the recent and distant past as a space to visit, extract, and recount remarkable moments. I write current and past events in my life into strophes and vignettes. Much like my process of sequencing photographs, I then move the segments around to suggest possible connections.

Perhaps it is a pyrrhic task of sorts: gleaning bits of an ever-evolving and fluid narrative to create a whole. New information has an uncanny ability to either confirm familiar notions or to further dilute diaphanous truths: illusions of a finite trajectory can be shattered in an instant. I photograph and write to create and consider the evidence of my life. I photograph and write to discover what exists in rich interim moments, knowing I will sometimes be troubled by what I have found.



*From the book, "The Fire in the Freezer"*  
Archival inkjet print  
24" x 20"  
2014



*From the book, "The Fire in the Freezer"*  
Archival inkjet print  
24" x 20"  
2014

*From the book, "The Fire in the Freezer"*  
Archival inkjet print  
24" x 20"  
2014

## KEJUN LI

### *Causality*

Birds are special to humans. Their gorgeously arranged feathers and ability to fly inspire us. The similarity in the wiring of bird and human brains and the way they reflect our social problems fascinate us. But we have had a detrimental effect on many avian species.

These selected lifeless birds are extinct for a number of reasons. Some species like the passenger pigeon were shot in mass numbers while many others lost their habitat because of deforestation. In other cases species were lost while we were trying to save them like the last six bush wren that perished when they were relocated for their safety. Biological evolution, a process not influenced by humans is also a factor in some cases.

Vanished birds represent a terrible loss in our lives. A loss, which feels especially bitter and scary when we know we were the cause.

These birds are part of an ongoing series of works featuring animals that became extinct before 1987, the year of my birth.



*Kaua'i 'akialoa* from *Causality Series*  
Archival inkjet print  
22" x 15"  
2015

*Cuban macaw from Causality Series*  
Archival inkjet print  
22" x 15"  
2015



*Carolina parakeet from Causality Series*  
Archival inkjet print  
22" x 15"  
2014



*Ciridops anna from Causality Series*  
Archival inkjet print  
22" x 15"  
2014



*Kona grosbeak from Causality Series*  
Archival inkjet print  
22" x 15"  
2015



## YUBITZA MCCOMBS

### *"Object of my Affection"*

Acknowledgement of importance of present awareness, and the idea of our sensorial and psychological connectedness in the world are explored in this collection of work. Affluent technological societies have become enmeshed at deep levels with all forms of personal electronic devices, including cell phones. It is as if they have become other living, breathing entities. The cell phone is emblematic of the technological object that comes to life as soon as it is placed in our hands. Their subtle sounds or vibrations and the soft glow, induce a kind of trance state that transport us away from the present moment. We have become one with our devices, and in so doing have become more insular and isolated to the extent that we have replaced human touch for a far less vital intimacy.

In this series of paintings submission to technology can be found in the presence of the soft, synthetic, cool glow. As the human figure becomes enveloped, it deforms and contorts as it yields to the device. The body responds by curving toward the phone, no longer engaged in reality. We unknowingly surrender our individuality, and slowly our psyche transforms to match that of the object.

This digital environment is constructed to show that we can experience many events and discoveries at once; the experience becomes both full and empty. Furthermore, an altered reality transcends through the technological object, manifesting the sensation of comfort in an attempt to realize something tangible.



*Intangible Sensation (from Objects of My Affection series)*  
Oil on Metal  
36" x 48"  
2015



*Mental Prosthetic (from Objects of My Affection series)*  
Oil on Metal  
36" x 48"  
2015



*Objects of My Affection series*  
Oil on Metal  
2015

## LEANNE C. MILLER

### *Time Shifts/ Fleeting Remains*

My work depicts Arizona and notions of a prodigal daughter's home-coming. I am a native of the Sonoran Desert, but was gone for many years, living coastally. I have returned to this dry yet diverse environment, to see a familiar landscape in a new way. I interpret the layers of the earth's sediments in the desert' mountains as a metaphor for my multi-layered life experience. Raised in a religious home, I see magic in everyday life. As a skeptically minded adult, I seek logic and scientific ways of understanding the world. I see wonder in nature, and yet feel grounded in the landscape. My analysis of these geologies is as much an interpretation of that magic and consciousness-altering moments of being outdoors, as it is an expression of my interest in science.

Bright bold colors reflect dramatic skies. Geometric shapes act as windows emphasizing layers of geologic matter limning the earth's tectonic plates and revealing the sediments underlying strata. Small repetitive marks made with paint pens, markers, and spray painted stencils reflect the elementary quantum particles and the possibility that intentions and consciousness are material. This energy flows through the terrain, up into the sky along a trajectory that suggests a journey has taken place there.

My work is inspired by my interest in the gray area where science and philosophy collide. In this space subatomic particles and energy, flow through the environments and their geologies that shape each other. The two forces, energy and matter, manipulate each other's direction and growth. The earth continually changes, the planet's crust moving from immense pressure at fault lines, which create great mountain ranges. Likewise, I have become who I am as a result of external forces. I depict geologic matter in abstracted and at times chaotic scenes as surrogates for the many layers of experience, which make up my personal history.



*Chiricahua Energy (from Time shifts/Fleeting Remains series)*  
Acrylic, spray paint, cut paper on canvas/panel  
2015



*Lush Line and Desert (from Time shifts/Fleeting Remains series)*  
Acrylic, spray paint, cut paper on canvas/panel  
2015



*Pineal Enlightenment (from Time shifts/Fleeting Remains series)*  
Acrylic, spray paint, cut paper on canvas/panel  
2015

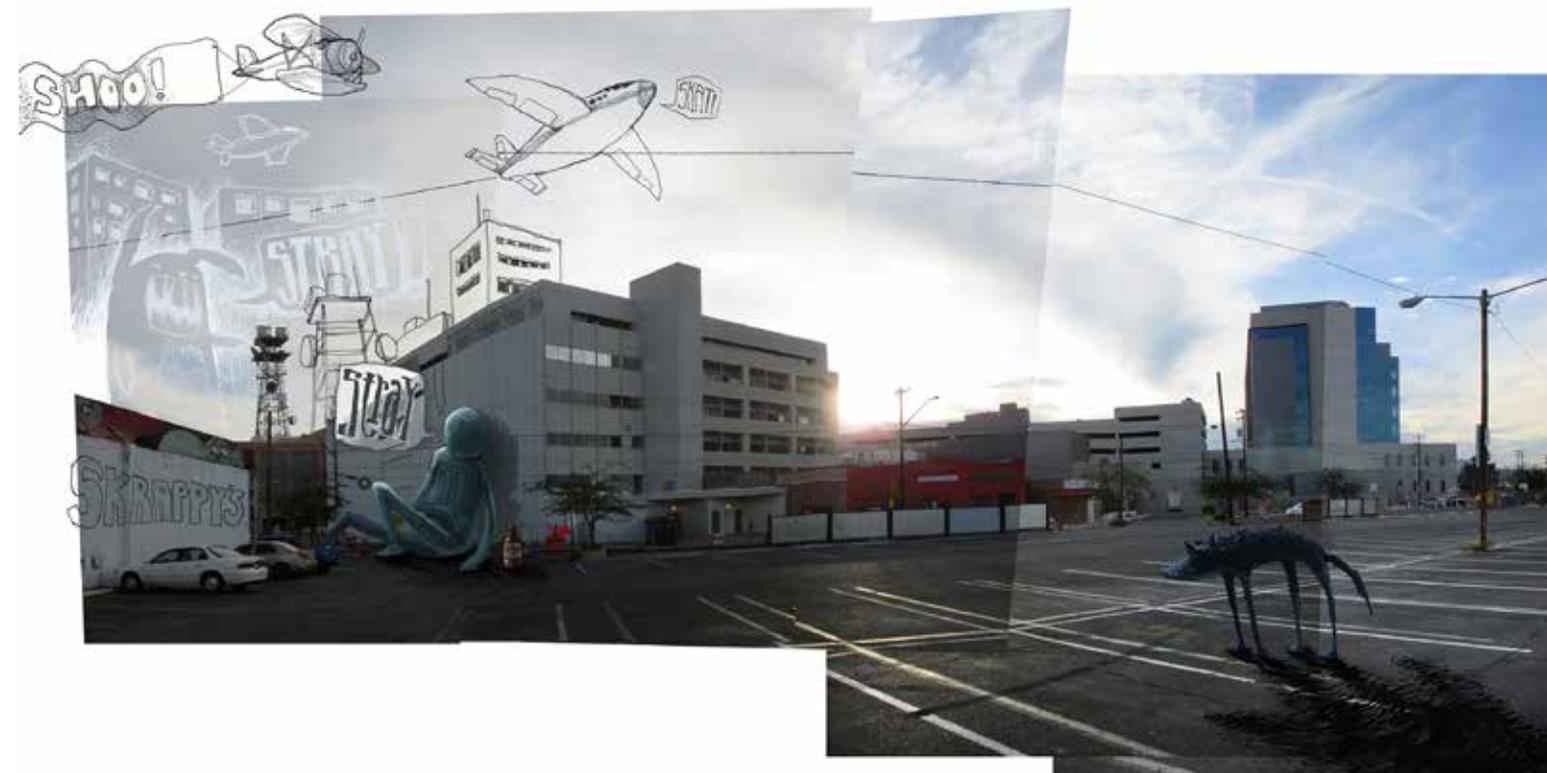
## CHRISTOPHER NEWBERG

*85719*

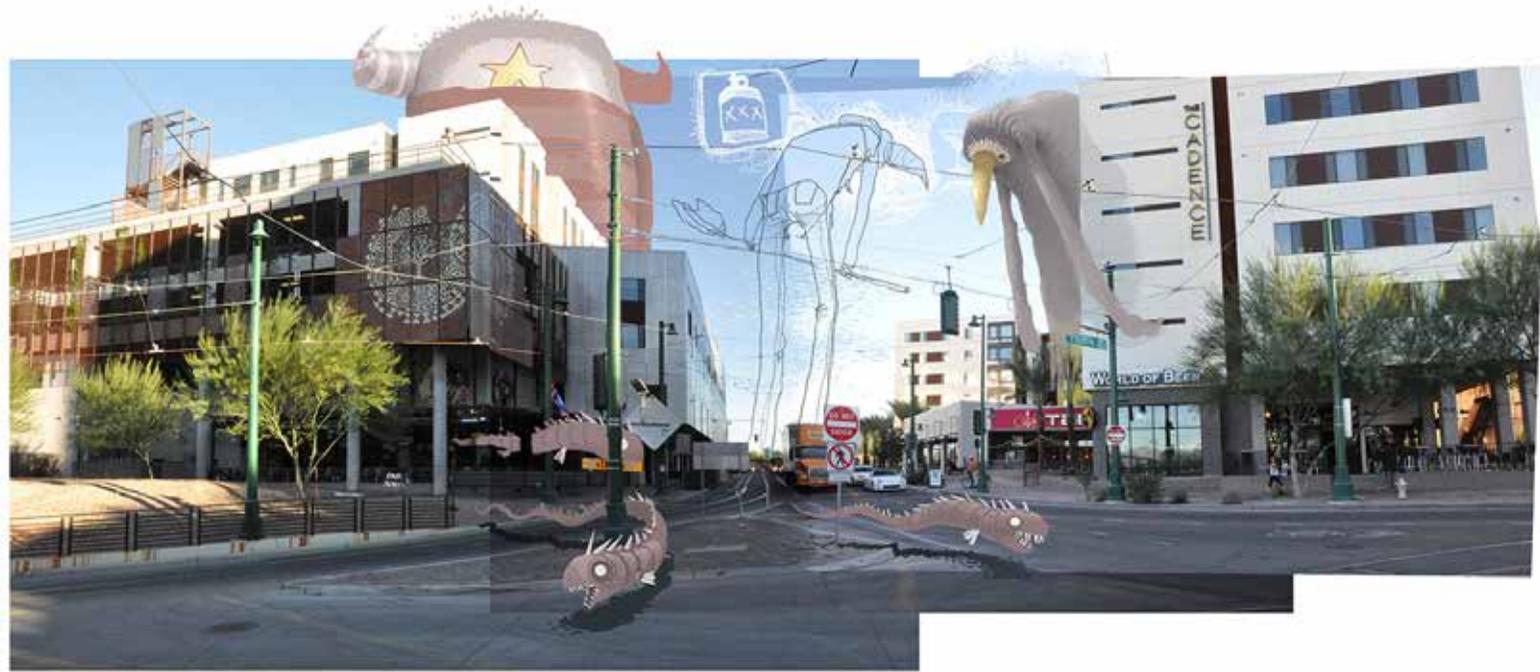
I want to talk about my city and my community. When I think about the world it seems too big. When I watch the news or read the paper it all looks like stories of imaginary places filled with actors or something. But when I stop and look at the bagger at Albertsons or the bar tender at the Shanty I think to myself "This is really happening, right now." Being in these people's lives feels like a huge responsibility and enough of a profound weight.

My images are about the issues happening around me. I'm not always sure how to feel about them, to deal with them, or how or what I can do to change them. Sometimes I get worried about how Tucson is changing so fast, or about how some of its old evils just seem to be getting worse. Taking snap shots of the places I go in my daily life and drawing into them is cathartic for me. It is a way of recording the fictions happening in my mind. These apparitions, be they good or evil, are how I make sense of chaotic reality.

Making work about Tucson makes me feel like I have a voice, and conversing about our community is important. Tucson is growing and changing. New businesses open and old one close practically overnight. It is in these conversations that we hear the voice of the underrepresented whose contribution we could so easily miss. It is my hope as an artist to create spaces in which we can talk to each other and have a say in the way our city changes.



*191 Parking Lot*  
2015



*The Last Five Years*  
2015



*Wolves*  
2015

## DOMINICK PULEO

### *Clues*

Clues depicts a mock amassment of evidence.

In the vein of paranoia-induced conspiracy theories, the grouping of seemingly disparate items propels a secret narrative. Derived from folk conspiracy conventions, Clues interweaves multiple mystery plot devices: Urban myth, shadowy political characters, missing persons, apocalyptic prophecy and cryptic objects all serve as networks of a larger hidden plot.

The simulated body of evidence emblemizes my curiosity in fringe personalities. Figures residing just outside orthodox convention, the images consider perspectives of the self imposed, sole agents of lone subcultures. I am interested in the commentary offered by these cult personas.

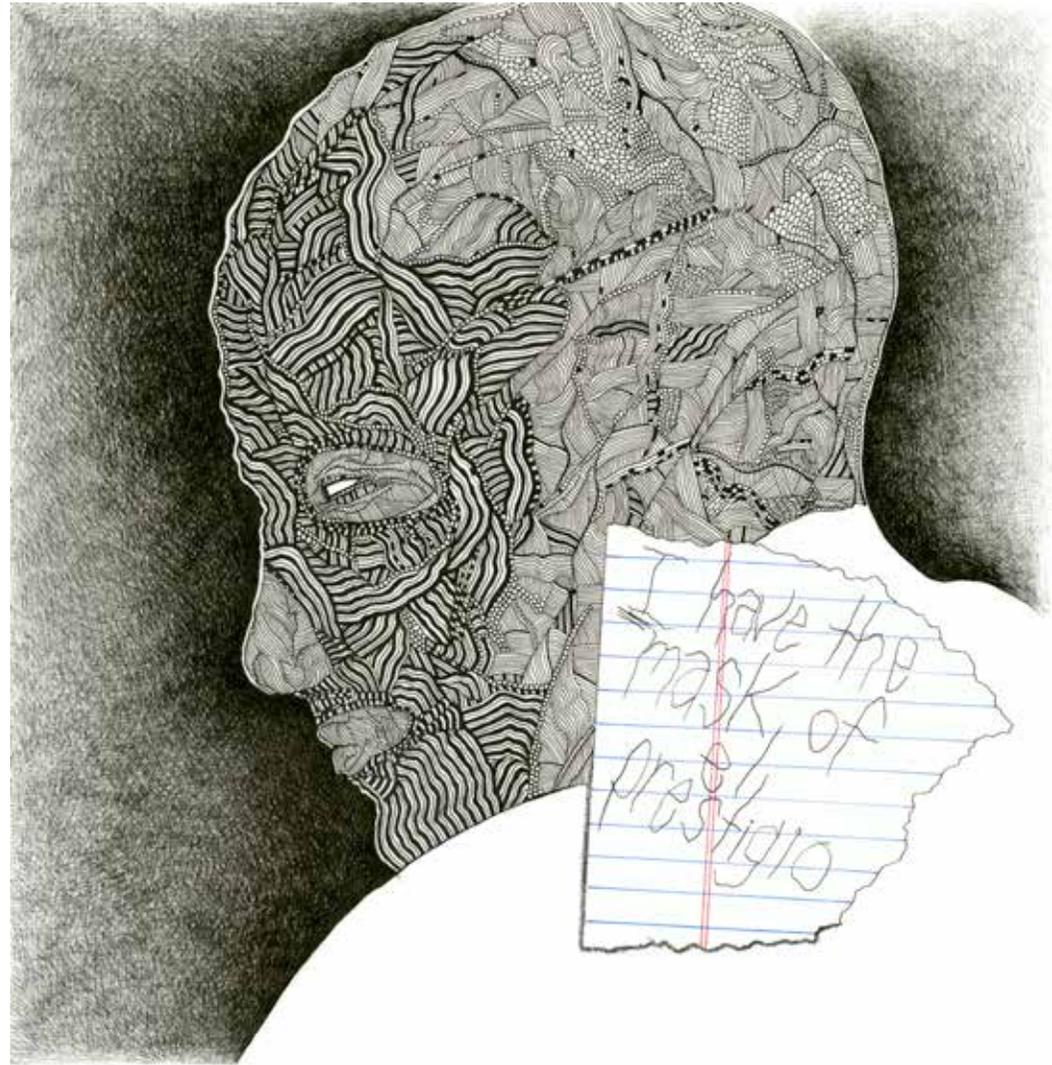
The makeshift mystery is realized by way of drawing.

Drawing is an ideal vehicle for these periphery tales. As the medium's history straddles notions of high and low, Clues ponders drawing's role in the greater hierarchal order of visual art in the same way it questions the role of outlying storytellers.

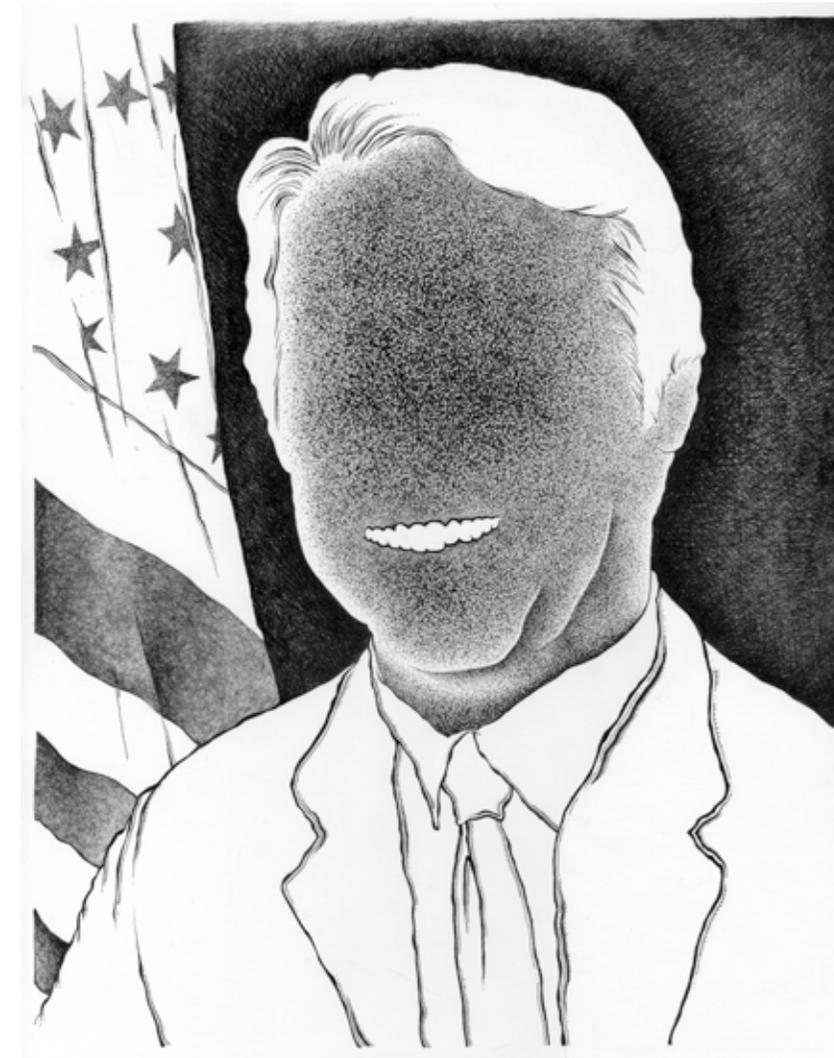


### *Clues*

Ink, graphite and mixed media  
Dimensions Vary  
2014-2015



*Mask (from Clues series)*  
Ink on paper  
2014-2015



*Mayor (from Clues series)*  
Ink on paper  
2014-2015

## THOMAS SAFFLE

### *Atmospheres and Horizons: From Zen to Modern Art*

Natural imagery including vast empty expanses of space and stormy weather act as metaphors for personal introspection in my art. These reinterpretations of nature represent life's universal themes symbolically and suggest their nearing, happening, and passing through time as experienced by the lone individual. Through printmaking, drawing, and painting I communicate the darkness of tribulation and the light of understanding. I must acknowledge the debt of gratitude I owe Arizona, and the unique landscape of the southwest, for the continual inspiration provided to my current practice.

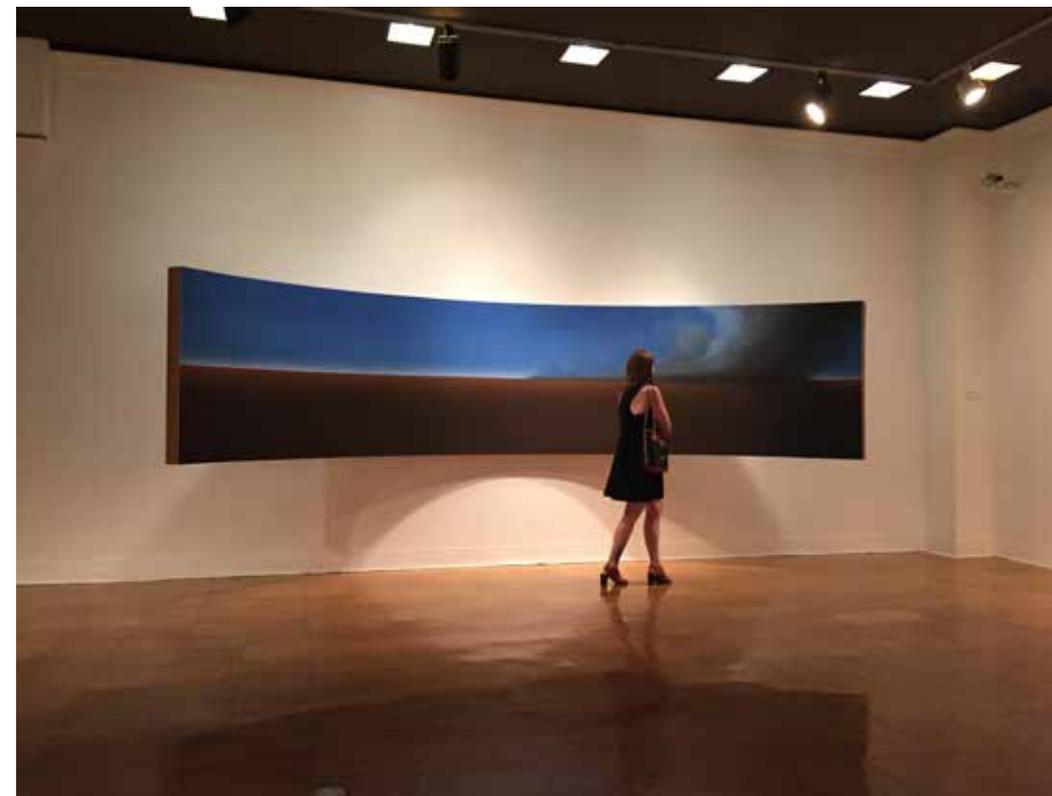


### *Untitled*

Oils on curved wooden support  
47in. tall x 17ft. wide x 5ft. deep.  
2014-2015



*Untitled*  
Oils on curved wooden support  
47in. tall x 17ft. wide x 5ft. deep.  
2014-2015



*Untitled*  
Oils on curved wooden support  
47in. tall x 17ft. wide x 5ft. deep.  
2014-2015

## ALEX VON BERGEN

*Undercover Boss U.S. Season 03 Episode 12 (Fastsigns)*

*& Set in Stone (And/Or Decorative Rocks)*

Scalable media has become the most valuable form of content, surpassing the more fixed and static productions of the past. Information does not want to be free by default, but the ease with which it can transform and travel through different conditions helps ensure its profitability and visibility. Today, for better or worse, profitability and visibility are key signs that something is alive and successful.

For this exhibition, digital content is sourced, scaled, and applied to physical material – either etched in stone, printed on vinyl fabric, or bound as a script. Digital media is both form and content from the onset; there is no initial separation between the two. The old idea that form and content gradually merge to create a coherent work has become irrelevant. Form has been reduced to something like a temporary shell, which can be dwelled in for a period of time. The designs, images, and objects in this exhibition are such shells.



*Undercover Boss U.S. Season 03 Episode 12 (Fastsigns)*

Photo-Text Prints and Television Script

Dimensions Variable

2015



*Set in Stone (And/Or Decorative Rocks)*  
Engraved Rocks and Enamel  
Dimensions Variable  
2015



*Set in Stone (And/Or Decorative Rocks)*  
Engraved Rocks and Enamel  
Dimensions Variable  
2015

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