

COMPOSITE

{Arts Magazine}

No. 15 Still Life

Spring 2014



COMPOSITE INFO

No. 15 Still Life

Composite is a quarterly electronic magazine showcasing the work of artists from multiple disciplines, each issue focusing around a specific theme.

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With what, on the surface, could have been the most straight forward issue we have done as Composite, we've done a few new and unusual things within the 93 pages of Still Life. During our very first meetings discussing what Composite was going to be and what we wanted to do, one of our main pillars was always to allow artists to show their work, in their voice. We have themes of course, but the artists and authors we invite have almost always been given complete freedom to contribute and collaborate with us however they want.

Withholding a few folks we have invited because we were enthralled by a specific body of work, we've stuck by this tenant for fourteen issues. However, while successfully managing to not include a single artist working within the traditional still life painting vernacular for this issue, we did find nine artists and five authors willing to work with us under more specific constraints. We asked all of our artists, working in various media and styles, for work related to what still life meant to them. For some artists, it was already a frame they were working with in, for others, it was quite outside of their scope of practice. With this more pointed request, we also were able to invite back a few past contributors of Composite past, Raychael Stine (No. 2 The Gaze), Kirsten Leenaars (No. 3 Kith and Kin), and Karen Bovinich (No 6. Process). For our literary calls, it was even more straightforward; scene studies, 500 word max. This unexpectedly created hands-down the largest pool of literary submissions we have ever received, by a lot. We weren't quite sure what to expect with these set of restraints, but we are very pleasantly surprised and excited about the outcome.

Outside of this issue, just before we started production for this issue, we decided to attempt to fill the void left by Xavier Duran's stepping away from Composite a few issues back. In doing so, we are happy to announce that we have brought India Kieser on as our new fifth editor. In India, we finally have an editor in New York City, where she is making work, curating, and organizing arts events as Pitch & Rail. We're hoping that with her on board we can start to scale up our social media and blogging and some other fun stuff we have in the dream machine to make Composite more regular than a quarterly drop into your life

On the brink of completing our fourth year, we're excited for the changes ahead. Thanks for coming along so far.

Zach Clark

Composite Editor

CONTENTS

No. 15 Still Life

Jorge Lucero 6

Projection

Katherine Spinella 20

Lauren Camp 31

Voices

Andi Crist 32

After Ansel

Ryan Kelly 37

Non-Places

Karen Bovinich 38

Stillness and Presence

Victoria Martinez 48

Remember the Fruit

Jennifer Bartell 49

This Starry Night: Front Porch Gossip

Luke Shalan 50

Chris Bauer 58

Found Forgotten / Manipulated

Sarah McCartt-Jackson 68

Laying Ghosts

Kirsten Leenaars 69

Romancing The Post Office, or Why I Love the Mail Carrier So...

Raychael Stine 78

Moons for Moons

Brian Kim 89

Nostalgia

To the casual viewer, still life painting has never been the exciting character of the art world. While Cezanne may be responsible for our collective subconscious visual archetype of what fruit should look like, but he doesn't always get the praise of the Impressionist's color palette, or to the Abstract Expressionist's massive scale and freedom. Images of life post-mortem are not likely to draw the same crowds as Adams' images of Half Dome, or Arbus' portraits of streetwalkers. Hundreds will be passed over on a daily basis en route to a tiny painting of an average looking woman in the Louvre.

The still life, on the surface, seems ordinary and plain. You could argue they are little more than fruit on a table, flowers in a vase, trophies from the hunt, or last representations of a loved one. For anyone who has ever taken an art class, still lifes almost certainly have been the first two, three, or ten assignments. They are the standard for practical art training, but artists today continue to make them because the still life is so much more.

Still Life

The immobile composition will help the student learn shape, color, light, and composition, but the seemingly simple moment in time can also be loaded with symbolic meaning and expression. Giorgio Morandi found them important enough to be the main approach to his over 1300 paintings completed

during his career. Outside of the image on canvas, to the Dutch masters who created economical images for the working class, the still life could be a medium for social change.

After almost 2000 years in one form or another, the style persists. What meanings are there still to pack, and unpack? Where is the room for still life artworks in the scope of new and mixed media? How much further can we push Still Life, and how much further can it push us?

Jorge Lucero

Projection

projection (blue)
(this should be read to you)

**what you see in the front is blue.
what is behind it is a slightly
brownier blue. the whole thing
is radiating but not the way a
lightbulb does. it's small, about
size of your chest. from the right
edge you see a form. it is
slightly more biomorphic than
the other forms. it is brown and
it is cut in half by the edge.
there is a shadow.**



projection (orange)
(this should be read to you)

**there is an arch. it's a colonial
arch. there's fruit. the kind you
find in the grocery store. there's
a dog. a big dog. your favorite
kind of dog. there is a woman.
that woman. your favorite
vacation song is playing.
you hear bells. not church bells.
not vendor bells. the bells are
far away. your shoes make
a funny sound.**



**projection (brown)
(this should be read to you)**

**you've emptied the room.
they keep going up and down
the stairs. you know them.
everyone is having a good time.
you, sort of. you would describe
the light as white, but only
because you're overcome by the
clean walls. the floor is yellow.
the boxes are yellow. they're
perfect boxes. perfectly stacked.
there's a sack, a plastic bag I
mean, on top of the pile. he hands
it to your son.**



**projection (yellow)
(this should be read to you)**

**there's a green part in front of an
orangy part. that whole part
is in front of an off white part,
which is covered in green, and
yellow, and a little bit of red.
There's also a purple part and
a part that is haunting. There's
a cave and a tree. There's cursive.**



**projection (grey)
(this should be read to you)**

**it's very plain to see. in the back
there is a blue house, a blue
house that used to be a garage.
in the front there is a blue storage
shed, the same blue as the house.
the lawn is unmowed and
the pavement is cracked.
there are rhubarb plants that run
along the wire fence. the fence is
green. the house is very close
to the alley.**



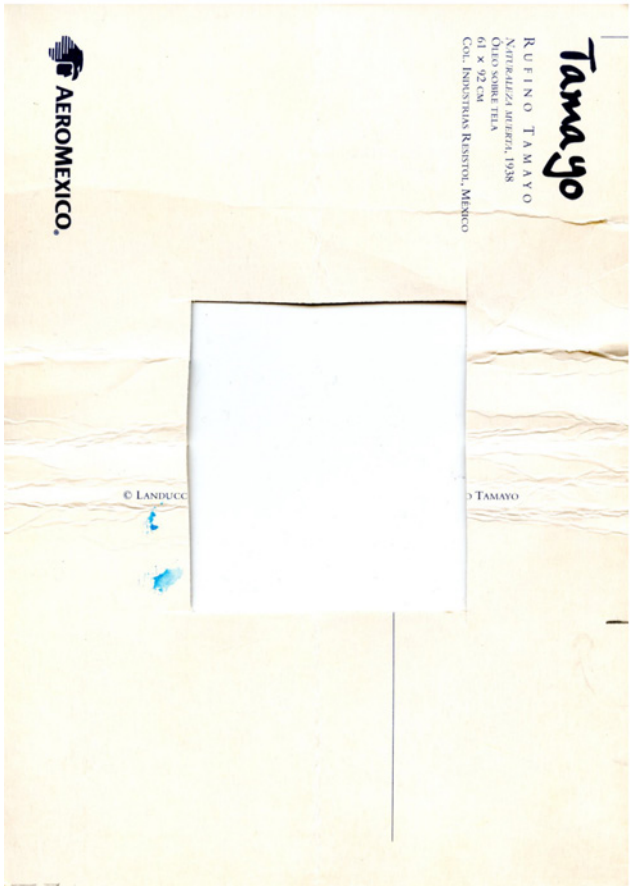
**projection (white)
(this should be read to you)**

**all the objects are muted. that is
their color is muted. they're all
small objects, Italian objects.
they're all lined up, one next
to the other like little people or
toys. they smile. they yawn.
there's a red one, a yellow one,
a brown one, a white one, and
a pinkish one. they're very still
in their waiting. more and equal.**

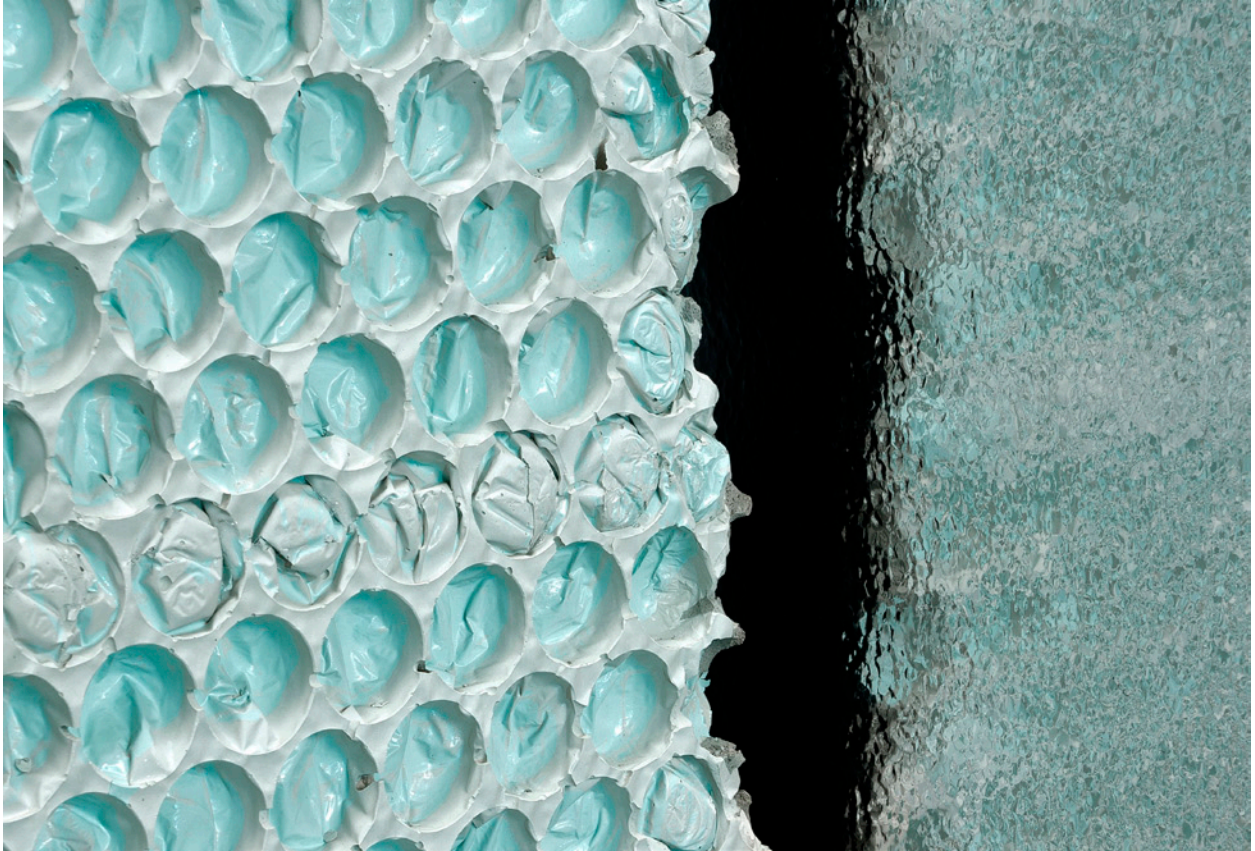


**projection (green)
(this should be read to you)**

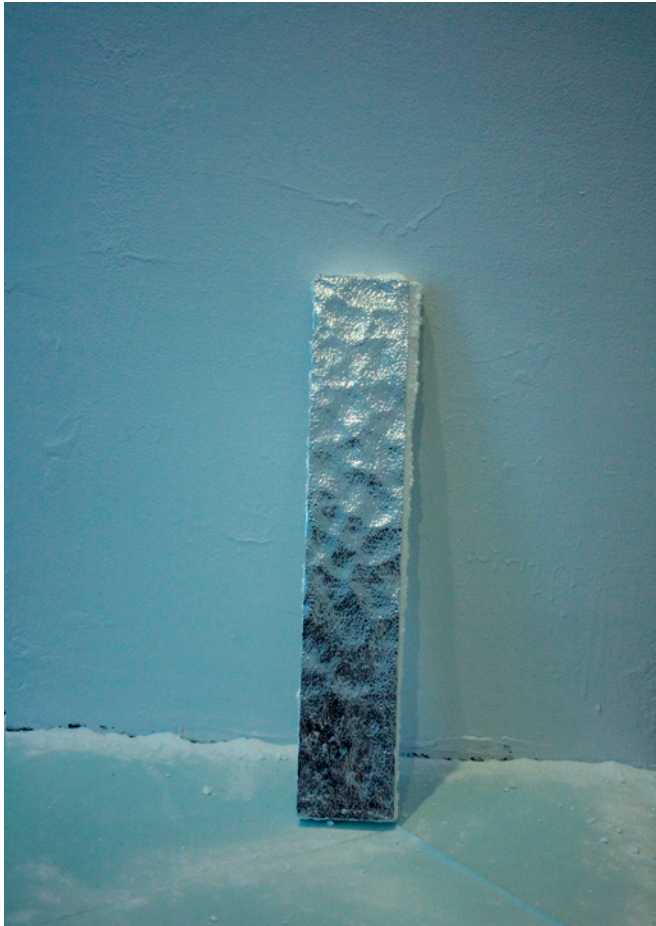
**it's metal but it looks like it
wants to drip over the edge.
it has sand mixed into it.
all the colors-- and i mean
all the colors--are there.
the ones from here and the ones
from there, even the ones from
where you are from.
all the sizes too. And all the sins.
it's been a long time since i've
gotten emotional about a
work like this, but it may be
the only thing left.**



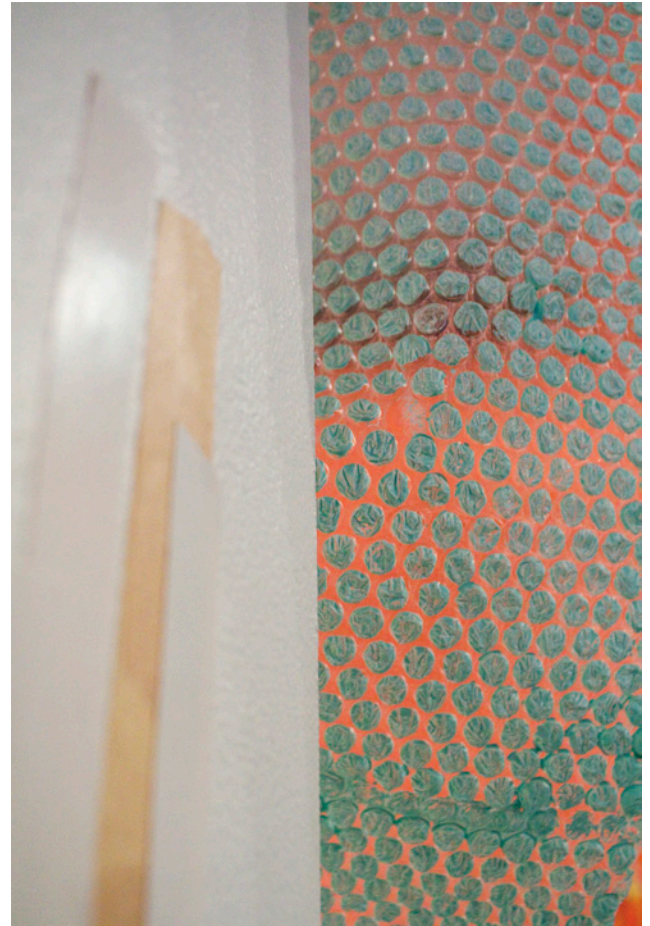
Katherine Spinella



Pink and Yellow Headlights in a Black Box with No Holes
Concrete, paint, insulation foam, light projection. 2013



Only very slowly the surface of the moon hovered above the room
Paint, dust, shelf liner, insulation foam. 2012



Shoddy Constructions
Paint, bubble wrap, electrical tape. 2012

What is a still life? Life stilled, distilled, concentrated into the quiet physicality of objects. In the ostentatious still lifes of Dutch Golden Age painting, shimmering tableaux of rotting fruit, sumptuous tablecloths and baroque candlesticks were more than decadent visual experience, they proposed the conceptual and ideological fullness of objects, imbued with the immaterial structure of life. Objects hold the traces of events, of places, and hold the power of association in their surfaces, their textures, and the way they reflect light.

Katherine Spinella's work proposes a new kind of still life, in which non-traditional associations make everyday objects surreal. Devoid of use value, divorced from function, the mundane materials of Katherine's work (bubble wrap, insulation foam, baking powder, electrical tape) dissolve into texture, color, form. Yet her work is not about pure aesthetic abstraction; instead, each piece develops its own psychological world. These constructed environments narrate their own mythology, and are populated by characters who have absented the scene. Maybe it was from our discussions about memory, or maybe it was the perpetual presence of subtle blues in Katherine's work, but it got me thinking about a book called *Under Blue Cup*.

Written by art historian Rosalind Krauss, the book has a delicate charcoal still life of a cup and saucer on its cover. A dense theoretical exploration of contemporary installation art, the book begins in a perplexingly personal place, with a discussion of the "eruption" of Krauss's brain when she suffered an aneurysm. A bloody purge of her memory that left her comatose for weeks, the aneurysm required she undergo cognitive rehabilitation in order to reconstruct her sense of self and place. The phrase "under blue cup" was written on one of a set of flashcards she had to memorize by building associations between colors, objects, and memories.

This process of rebuilding only became possible when she connected the objects described in the phrase with associations in both her past and her present, the blue of the ocean on a trip to Greece with her husband and the cup of coffee he would bring her each morning in rehab. As she explains, the first rule of mnemonic therapy is, "If you can remember 'who' you are (never a certainty if you've been comatose), you have the necessary associative scaffold to teach yourself to remember anything." The associative scaffold of a still life is formed in the relationship between the objects presented and the invisible characters to which they are inevitably tied.

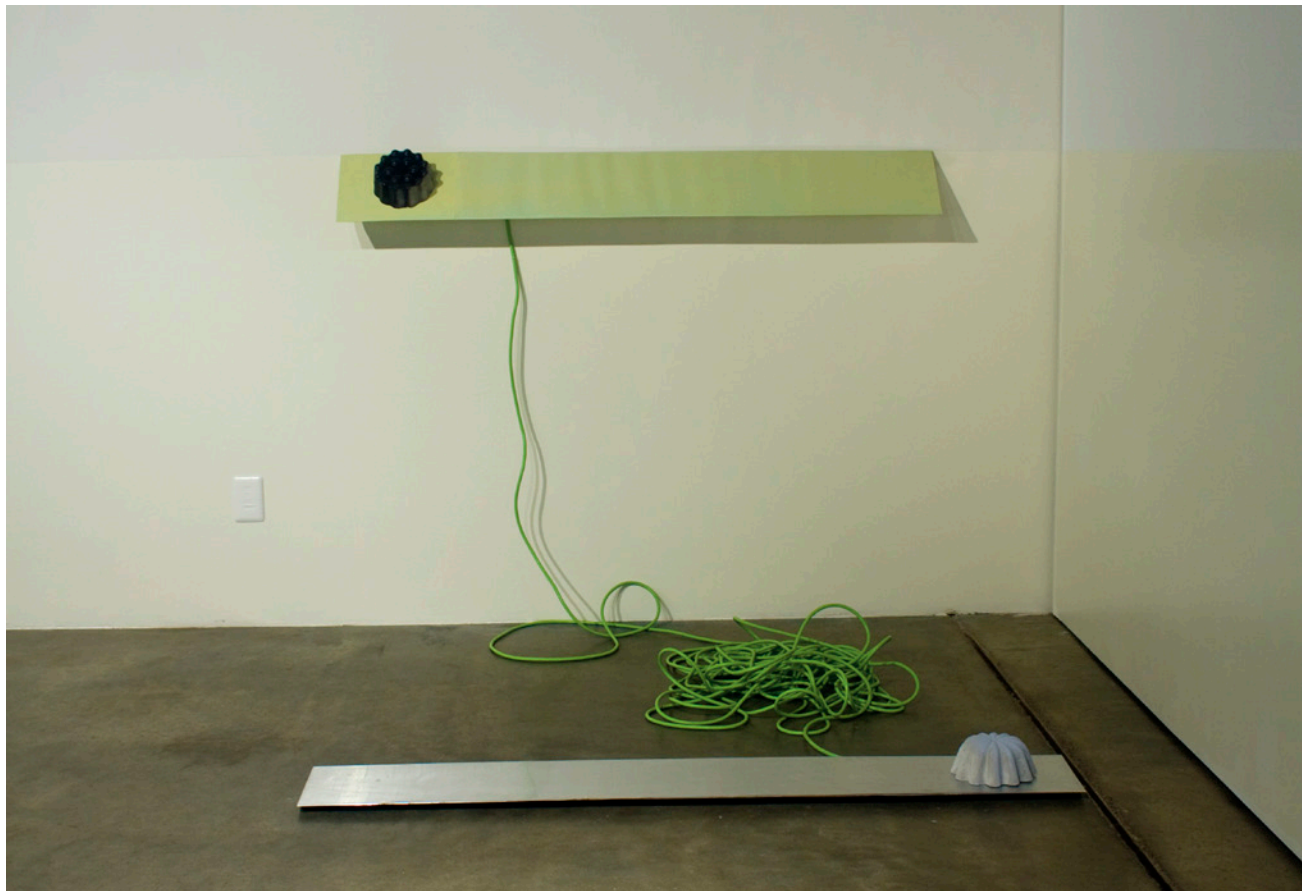
I like to think of the objects, colors and forms of Katherine's installations as an "associative scaffold," akin to Krauss's blue cup. Her idiosyncratic constructions and carefully selected details allow the viewer to construct a particular sensory and spatial world through the visual and psychological resonance of forms. In her recent practice, she has pushed the power and effects of the details of her installation through carefully composed photographs that highlight particular visual moments, which might be lost in the context of a large space. These details allude to the subtle textures and surfaces that color our memories. While Katherine's environments often reference particular events or scenes from her own past, these memories are more atmospheric than specific. The who of her work, the core of the associative scaffold, functions as elusive poetic suggestion.

The objects in Katherine's still lifes not only reference human memories, but seem embodied with memories or personae of their own. These objects possess a pleasant sort of uselessness that gives them both a giddy irreverence and a banal sadness. Candy colored extension cords power nothing, Jello-molds produce inedibly appealing shapes, foam insulation is sculpted to evoke lunar landscapes. In Katherine's still lifes, the boundary between subjects and objects becomes immaterial, as her objects evoke their own stories and lives.

- Jessi DiTillo

Katherine Spinella





Untitled (parallel shelves)

Concrete, paint, green extension cord, shelf liner, electrical tape, outlets. 2013

On Previous: *Dijck in silver*. Screen-print, shelf liner. 2013



more or less after the fall
Paint, plaster. 2014





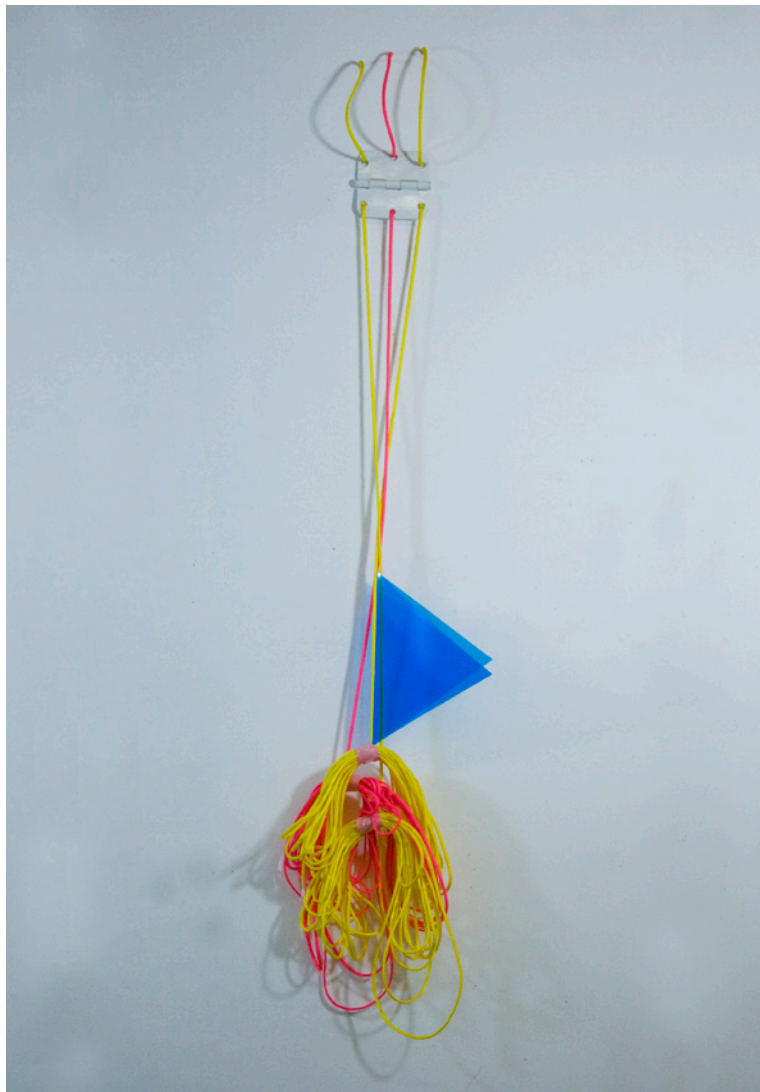
Untitled

Digital photograph (cotton, sponge, yard sign stand). 2014



Untitled

Digital photograph (ribbons, Alvord Desert). 2014



Untitled (banner)

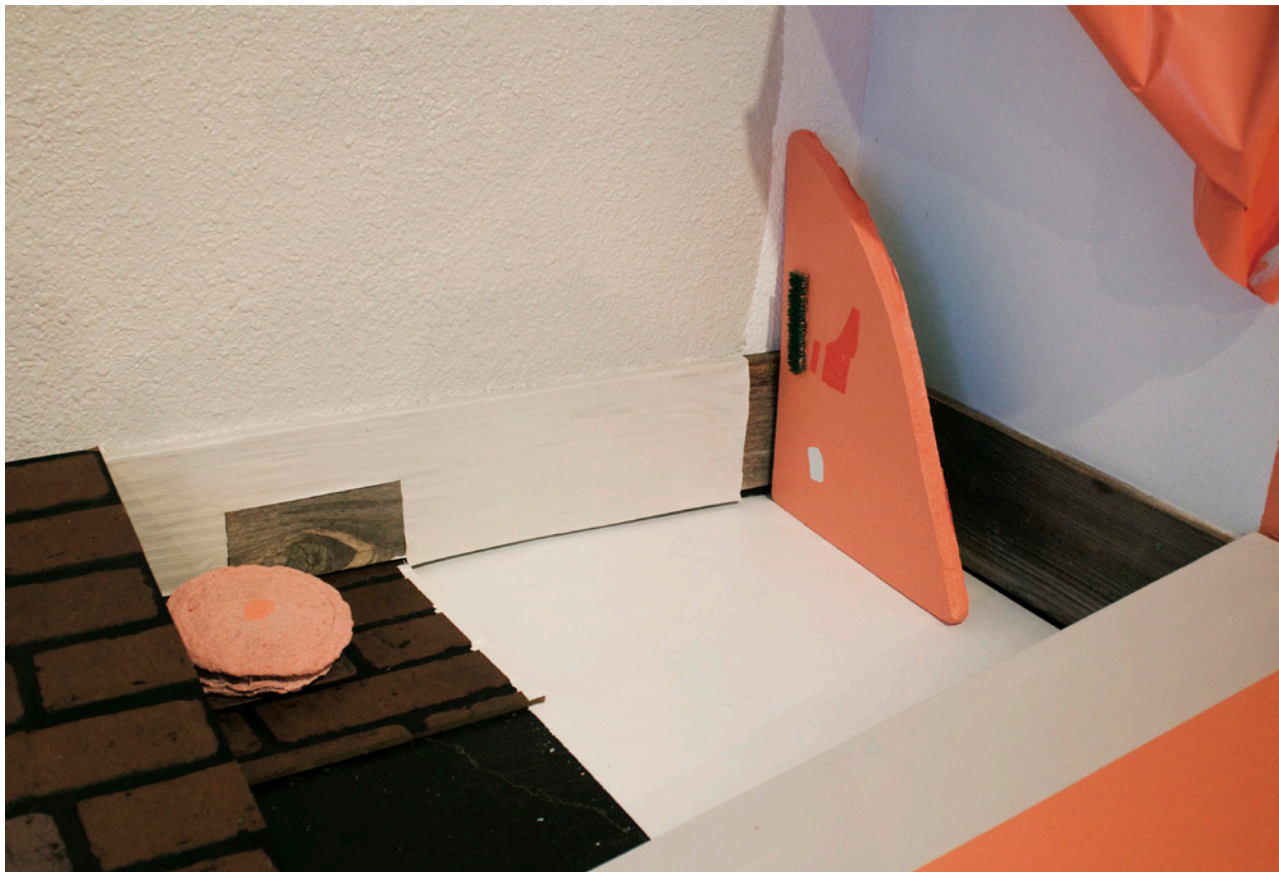
Parachute strings, plastic paper, paint, electrical tape, hinge. 2013

Katherine **Spinella**



hub caps and burnt rubber

Digital photograph (dodge ram hub cap, spray paint, aluminum duct, plastic flowers, twist tie). 2014



Shoddy Constructions

Shelf liner, paint, primer, styrofoam, faux brick, plank, astro turf, cotton, electrical tape. 2012

Lauren Camp

Voices

Let me offer you words from the smudged glass of memory. Listen. Yes, listen.

The house holds its sunsets in corners. Late afternoons, raw voices devour the children who scatter to the dark wood of the stairs and curved turret. It is warm from the heat of the oven. There are many cousins barefoot and moving. We wander and hide our young bodies in openings, seek out small victories, territorial.

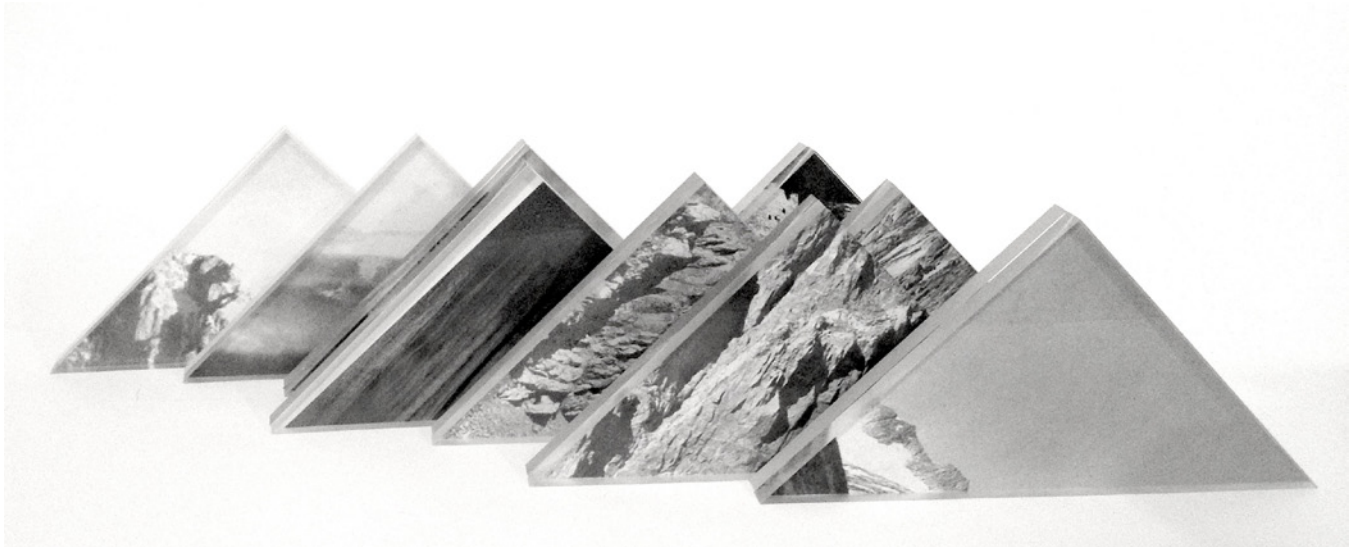
Friday evening flutters. On the table, a darkening tea, a plate of roast carp.

In inexhaustible words, the uncles whisper about dead men with hidden brothers. Then, more curses and ruffles and prayer.

The flame of the candle keeps branching. We are each to our own reciting what will never cease. My cousins with confident voices while I hum shriveled words that churn up strange pauses. We only say these words for the rest of our lives.

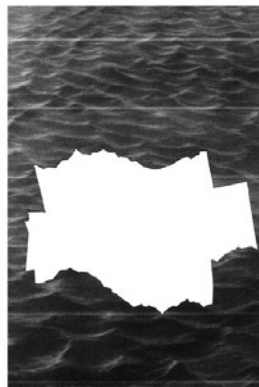
Andi Crist

After Ansel



Buckaroo/Vaquero.

Plexiglas, photo-collage. Sizes vary. 2014



Waterscapes

Giclée print. 24" x 36". 2012/2014

The After Ansel series is generated through the reappropriation of landscapes sourced from a single Ansel Adams coffee table book. The original photos (technically a mass produced copy) are manipulated through a series of calculated, repeated actions—copying, cropping and subtracting—that break the image down into a defined scene, often reaching into three-dimensional space. ***The product represents a personalized, but unreal version of the original,*** where the photography meets its most basic formal elements in an attempt to break down the grandiose vastness of the landscapes.

By using Adams' iconic imagery and expert photographic material, the new interpretations create landscapes that are both familiar and strange. The original photographer's intentions to capture and archive the existing land is the initial dissension from the original source, so the work can exist as a processed and re-removed product of reality. Through the continued cropping and expansion of these archival images, the work proposes an imaginary Manifest Destiny out of a desperation to redeem and remake the western American landscape.



Midwestern Sunrise
Plexiglas, photo-collage. 23.5" x 11.5" x 0.5". 2014



Midwestern Sunset

Plexiglas, photo-collage. 23.5" x 11.5" x 0.5". 2014



Wallpaper
Wallpaper. 9.5' x 11'. 2013

Ryan Kelly

Non-places

The laundry room attached to your apartment complex, where the nooks and crannies of your life are covered in lint and sticky adhesive. You're waiting of course, for the spin cycle and wrinkle guard, for the past stains of strangers to churn in earnest with your dirt of the week. The machines speak to you in hums and vibrate impatiently. They're addicted to your quarters. You give them bumps and turn their knobs and screws. You hold down

their buttons, at the crosswalk after you parallel park. You're waiting in the lobby, of course. These places brush their teeth with time. Spit it out. Rinse. Repeat. That yellow banana chair in the dentist's office, that heavy lead bib weighing down your chest. You're anxious for the hygienist and her pickax scraping, hands glued clammy to the plastic. The snap of latex and the shrilling whirr of the drill. Unhinged banality

in the claps of hubcaps and whine of the rising jack. You're waiting of course, for your car to be serviced. An extra appendage you want removed. You want it amputated in the old noise of these magazines, these tepid water fountains, these boxes vending corn syrup. You have a sugary headache

in the middle of the night, in the middle seat on a red-eye flight. There's no place for your elbows. The sterile air chokes you. You're cold. Then you're hot. Then you're icy hot. You stumble into the vacant bathroom, with its Alcatraz sink and Fisher Price toilet. You're nauseous in fluorescent fumes, with the turbulence of dropping your pants. You're waiting of course, for your bladder to empty. For relief. Waiting of course, at the baggage claim assembly line, for your suitcase to arrive

on the conveyor, for that ride on the cramped escalator. For cars to funnel out of the parking garage. You're sucking down a lozenge of fraught, accosted by a barrage of exhaust. You're waiting of course, for the cars to slide by. They yearn for a while, revving idle at the gate of the turnstile. Tires screech with tunes forlorn, drowned by a storm of horns and the stamp of the swarm. You're waiting of course,

for room service in the motel. Some suite of a cell complete with spring mattress, tiny soap, and Bibles in the cupboards. Lemon cleaning agents saturate the musk of pipe tobacco. You're waiting of course, for a dry chewy steak and three-dollar cabernet. You're waiting for infomercials, and baths, and drinking yourself to sleep. You're waiting for paper to burn down, for things to sizzle at the butt of the day. You try sleeping in the tub and then on the floor, battling jet lag and the general drag of change. You're on the brink of instinct, and your eyes are starting to twitch.

You're waiting of course, for whatever comes next.

Karen Bovinich

Stillness and Presence



Jesus Mejia + Ruth. *New Colossus*. 2012.

Stillness, at present

A few years ago, my collaborator, Jesus Mejia, and I were asked to participate in a show at 6018North: a new gallery in Chicago curated by Tricia Van Eck. Located in a historically preserved, partially gutted mansion (although restoration is in its future), we were asked to install our *New Colossus* piece. After drywalling the entryway and hanging long copper pipes from the underside of a stairwell, Jesus and I sat for over four hours during the opening reception, our hands behind our backs and through the wall. The piece, *New Colossus*, was a response to the shifting opinion of immigration through history. The copper pipes hung freely on the opposite side of the wall where we sat and chimed when the door opened.

It was quite uncomfortable, our hands fit oddly through the holes in the wall, but there was something more odd about being divided from our hands. Throughout the night, the more extroverted viewers were so bold as to poke and prod them, as if Jesus and I were not connected to our limbs. After turning the corner, however, viewers often looked surprised to see a real human sitting there. With work like *New Colossus*, I often encounter two sets of feelings: one in which I am the object in the work, the other is my presence, as felt by the viewer.

Objectification of a person is not confined to artwork. In fact, the treatment of people as objects is used to degrade. These moments are felt more than seen: the artist as object. The presence of life presented with its objectification changes the context for both artist and viewer. But presence is powerful, even in an object-like state. When asked to contemplate *Still Life*, I wanted to find instances in which the presence of a person and the object-likeness cannot be separated.



Jesus Mejia + Ruth. *New Colossus*. 2012.

James Luna

In 2011, in observance of Columbus Day, James Luna performed a piece entitled *Take a Picture with a Real Indian* outside the steps of D.C.'s Union Station, giving the passerby the chance to take their picture with Luna.

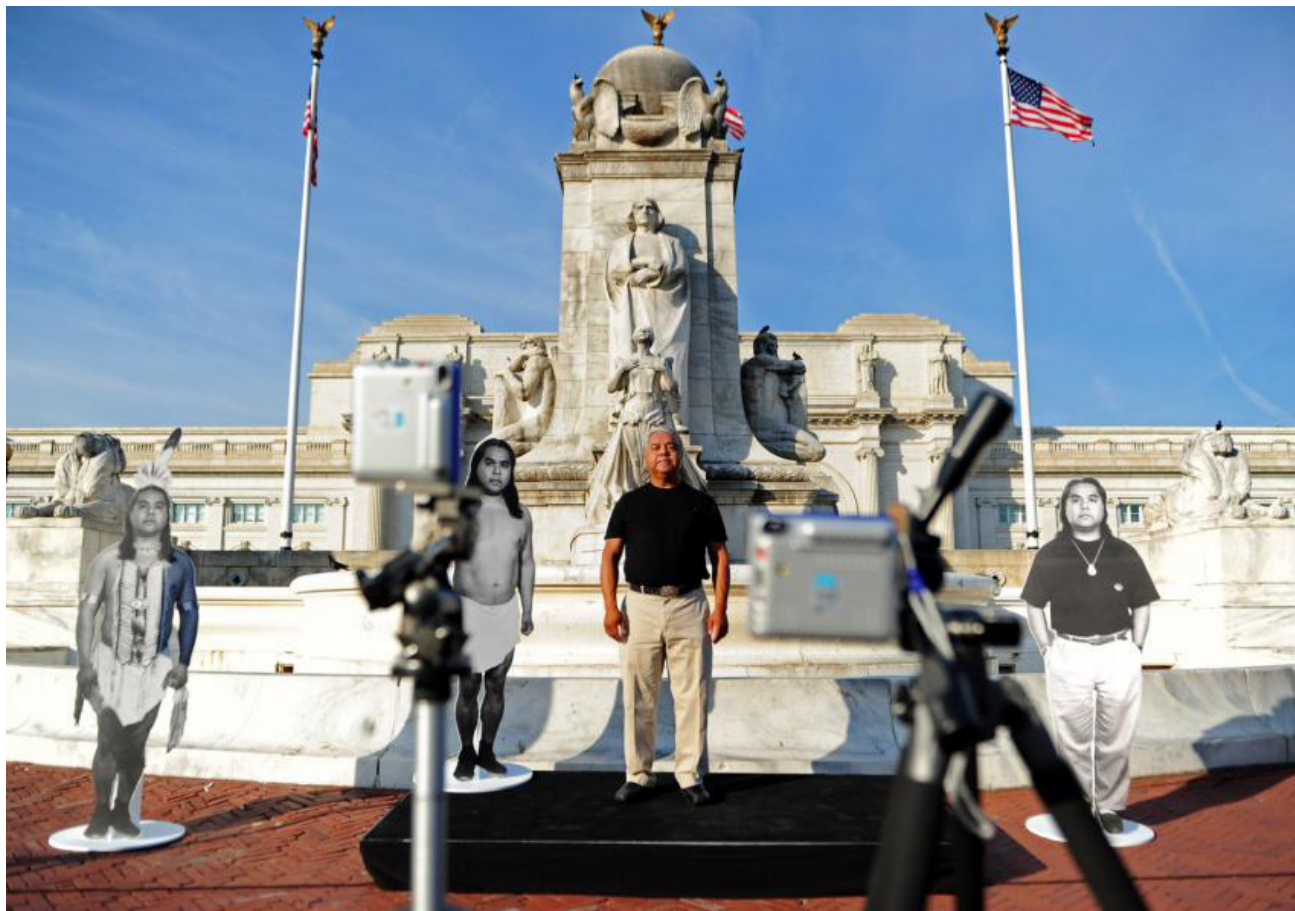
"Take a picture with a real Indian. Take a picture here, in Washington, D.C. on this beautiful Monday morning, on this holiday called Columbus Day. America loves to say "her Indians." America loves to see us dance for them. America likes our arts and crafts. America likes to name cars and trucks after our tribes. Take a Picture with a real Indian. Take a picture here today, on this sunny day here in Washington, D.C." [1]

Luna, a Puyukitchum (Luiseño) and Mexican-American artist, works out of California's La Jolla Indian Reservation and his work reflects the objectification of his culture in contemporary society. Luna's stillness in *Take a Picture with a Real Indian* critiques the existing representation of Native cultures as extinct. For Luna, the objects of his culture are encased in glass across the United States. However, in work like *Take a Picture with a Real Indian*, the act of physical presence combats the objectification he and his people experience. While Luna stands objectified for the populus, his presence is felt.

The artwork takes full shape with passing reactions. In an interview with the Smithsonian, Luna spoke of his interactions with viewers and the ability to exhibit both stillness and presence as artist and object:

Even as the artist, where you ostensibly have the upper hand, it still feels humiliating?

Yes, because that's part of the work. I never thought about that. I think if I thought about some of these things I wouldn't do them. But when I get up there, and I'm standing there, and people are trying to talk to me, and they're smiling, and I'm stoic, . . . I can see the audience. I can see the kind of 'Should I? Shouldn't I? This is going to be great, I'm going to send this back to Europe,' or telling me, 'You know my great, great grandfather was a Cherokee.' I'm just focused. I'm up there for everybody to see. In some ways you're vulnerable physically. People want to put their arms around you, or want you to break that stoic look and smile. Or they say insulting things. After a while I just want to run out of there. But I'm there for a purpose and so that's part of, I guess, being an artist.[2]



James Luna, *Take a Picture with a Real Indian*. 2011.

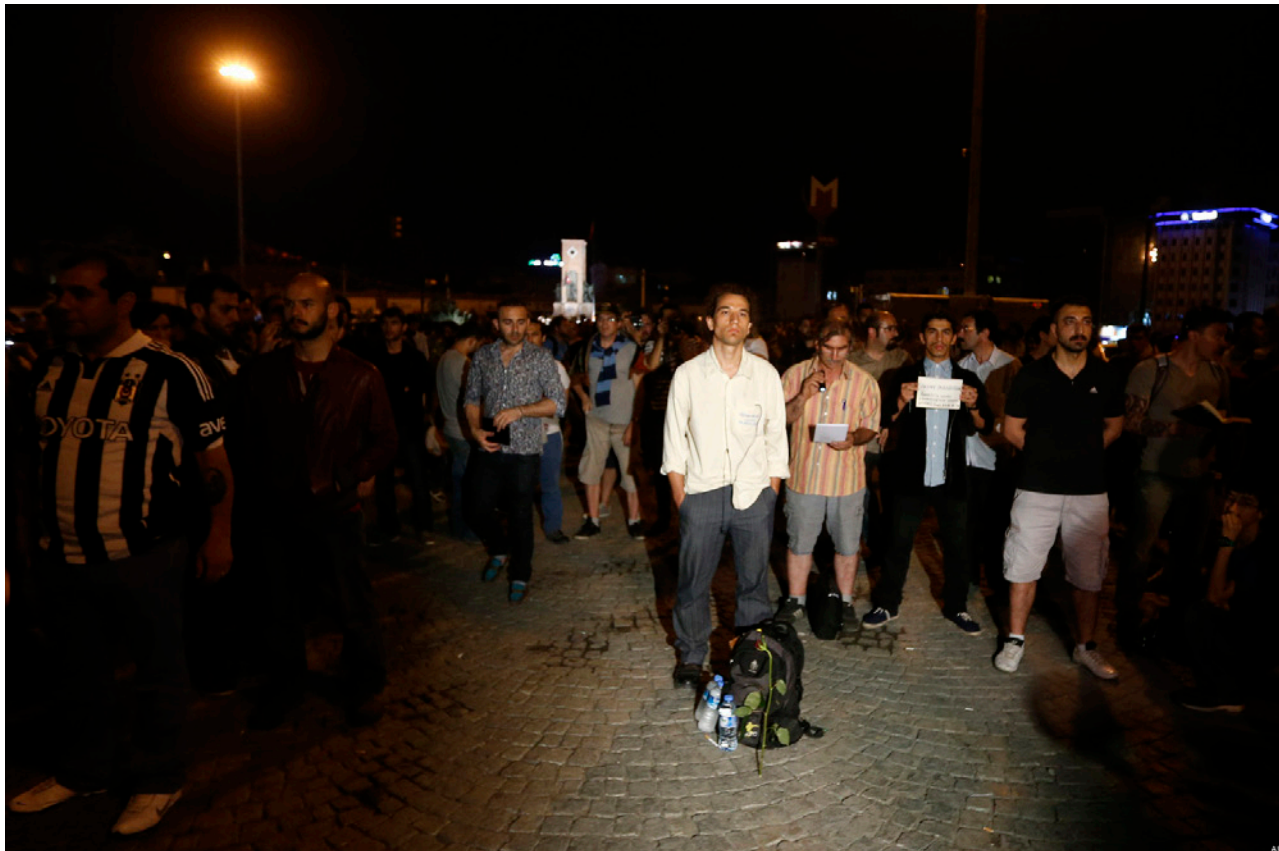
Erdem Gündüz

In 2013, in what started as a protest to save Gezi Park from development turned into a clash with the Turkish government and its people. The police response to the protests was violent and fueled a dissidence to the Republic of Turkey, a democracy.

Performance artist and choreographer Erdem Gündüz stood for hours in Taksim square, silently.[3] Others joined and soon it would be replicated around Turkey, facing tanks, police, portraits and statues of the president in public spaces. Groups amassed in Turkey and abroad, simply standing still. Gündüz, in an interview with the BBC called his actions a “silent resistance” explaining:

Just one protest. I am just one artist. There are many artists and there are many many young people on the streets. I’m nothing. But the idea is important: why people resist the government. The government doesn’t want to understand, didn’t try to understand why people are on the streets. I’m going and someone will come, same place - This is really silent resistance. I hope people stop and think ‘what happened there?’ Because, its really hard to stand up.[4]

This mode of protest has been seen before: the sit-ins during the Civil Rights movement and passive resistance in all its forms have exhibited the presence of humans with stillness. Gündüz, like others before, use the stillness of the body to increase his presence. In the face of a government deaf to the people’s demands, Gündüz was able to use a still life to be heard and felt.



Erdem Gündüz at Taksim Square, 2013.

Liu Bolin

Liu Bolin is hard to find. In 2005, he began work on *Hiding in the City*, in response to the social and cultural complexities of living in political China. [5] In this series of photographs, Bolin paints himself into the scenery, with backdrops including the rise of modern China with the relics of its past. Sometimes taking up to ten hours to paint, Bolin stands still, waiting to disappear into the landscape. Despite fading into the background in color and texture, Bolin's physical presence in the work is still felt.

Bolin's ability to both be and not be present resonates in the work. Trapped between the economic progress of China and the pursuits of the individual, questions of political identity and invisibility play a large role in this work. In *Hiding in the City*, Bolin's presence, however, is the defining gesture.

...

In the work of performance artists, we see an new object in its arrangement: the artist. The artist is present, both physically and mentally, culturally and individually, in the work. This dynamic presents a new complexity to the interpretation of objects in artwork. In the instance that the artist is this new object, we are confronted with the inevitable presence of life, a complex and unique aspect to contemporary still life.

[1]Righthand, Jess. "Q and A: James Luna." Smithsonian, January 2011. Accessed January 13 2014. <http://www.smithsonian-mag.com/arts-culture/q-and-a-james-luna-74252076/?all>

[2] Righthand, Jess. "Q and A: James Luna."

[3] Roffino, Sara. "How One Turkish Artist's Silent Performance Kept the Protests Alive." Blouin Art INfo International, June 13 2013. Accessed January 21, 2014. <http://www.blouinartinfo.com/>.

[4] "'Standing man' inspires Turkish protesters in Istanbul." BBC News, June 18, 2013. Accessed January 21, 2014. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-22949632>

[5]Celii, Alana. "Hiding in the City with Liu Bolin." Time Magazine, March 20, 2012. Accessed January 24, 2014. <http://lightbox.time.com/2012/03/20/liu-bolin/#1>

On Previous: Liu Bolin, *Hiding in the City No. 92—Temple of Heaven*. 2010.

Victoria Martinez

Remember the Fruit



Remember the fruit is a recreation of pom-poms I noticed during my recent trip to Coyoacán, Mexico. The pom-poms were hanging from a tarp in a marketplace I visited near La Casa Azul. They were remarkable because of their electric colors and plastic material, reminding me of long, shredded skirts placed together poetically as the wind activated subtle movement. I used a found shower curtain, plastic scraps, fabric and paper to remake the pom-poms in similar colors to relate my experience in Coyoacán and installed the piece at El Guero, a Mexican supermarket in Pilsen that resembles an authentic Mexican marketplace.

Jennifer Bartell

This Starry Night: Front Porch Gossip

Brooding time of night, perching on the front porch: The moon outshines stars to reveal a pockmarked sky. Let us glimpse the moon some more to see if its craters have been filled. The amaryllis leaves: limp and tangled, hug the front porch. In spring they bloom. Then shed. Its red petals. And clenches its hand into a fist that it cannot keep; crumples on its own weight. A house built for five sleeps. A house built for five holds one in its hand, in the hollow of its stony hand. A house built for five can tell you stories that a house built for one cannot. To enjoy the moon and the half starlight, mosquitoes must gnaw on exposed flesh. And I grant her a belly full of my blood. I swat her into my skin and the blood-splatter with broken wings lingers on my palm. I look down the road at the past. A rooster stirs in the razed coops.

Luke Shalan



Archival Tag (Detail)



Still from *Tools*

Backpack, porcelain, assortment of hand tools. Video. 2013

My work focuses on exploring the interactions between tool, material and operator, questioning modern forms of production, and emphasizing creative, performative processes.

Through a process-based practice, ***I investigate the relationship developed between a maker, their tools and the materials they manipulate.*** I work in tandem with contraptions I create, manipulating clay into archival objects that preserve the human connection to making and the intimate relationships we have with everyday objects. Inspired by porcelain's properties, I engineered a process that has evolved into a porcelain slab-dropping device. My work, in a performative investigation, seeks to uncover the moments where the inventive nature of a tool creates a dialogue between itself, the material and the maker. The archives I produce in tandem with my contraptions are records of the porcelain's reaction to the process, and also articulate a sense of individual connection to the things we use on a day-to-day basis.

Luke Shalan

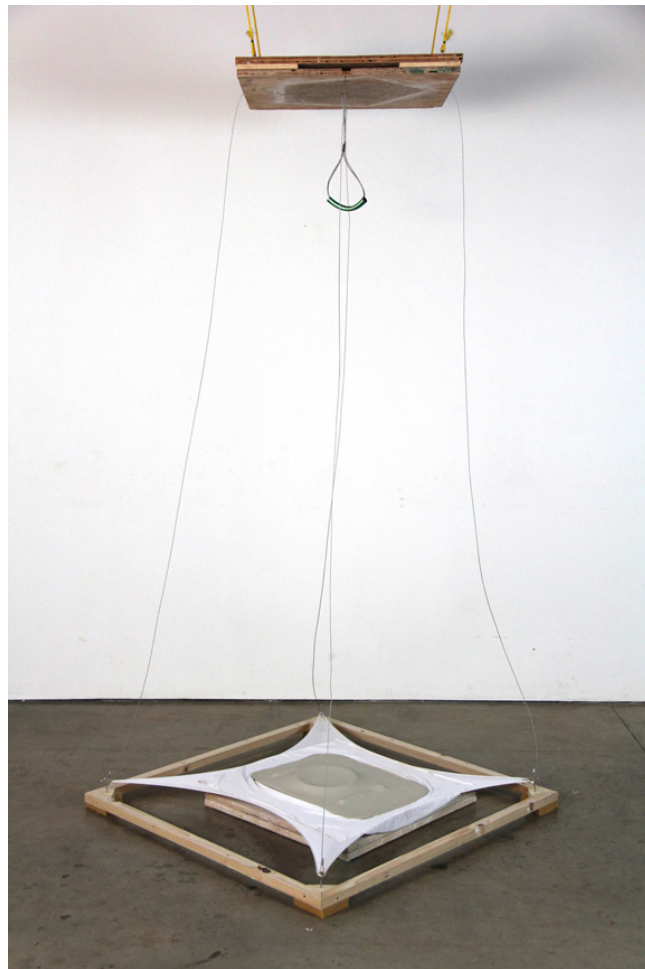


Archives of Emily's Office

Porcelain, wax, paper, best glass water bottle, brand new measuring cup from (Emily's) grandma Gloria, precious office supplies in an old honey jar, good luck brick by Joseph K. Thomas, slightly embarrassing but ergonomically comfortable mouse, favorite slam green cup. 48x36 in. 2014



Good Luck Brick From Joseph K. Thomas (Detail)



Slab Dropper

Wood, steel cable, nylon, rope, garden hose, foam. 2013

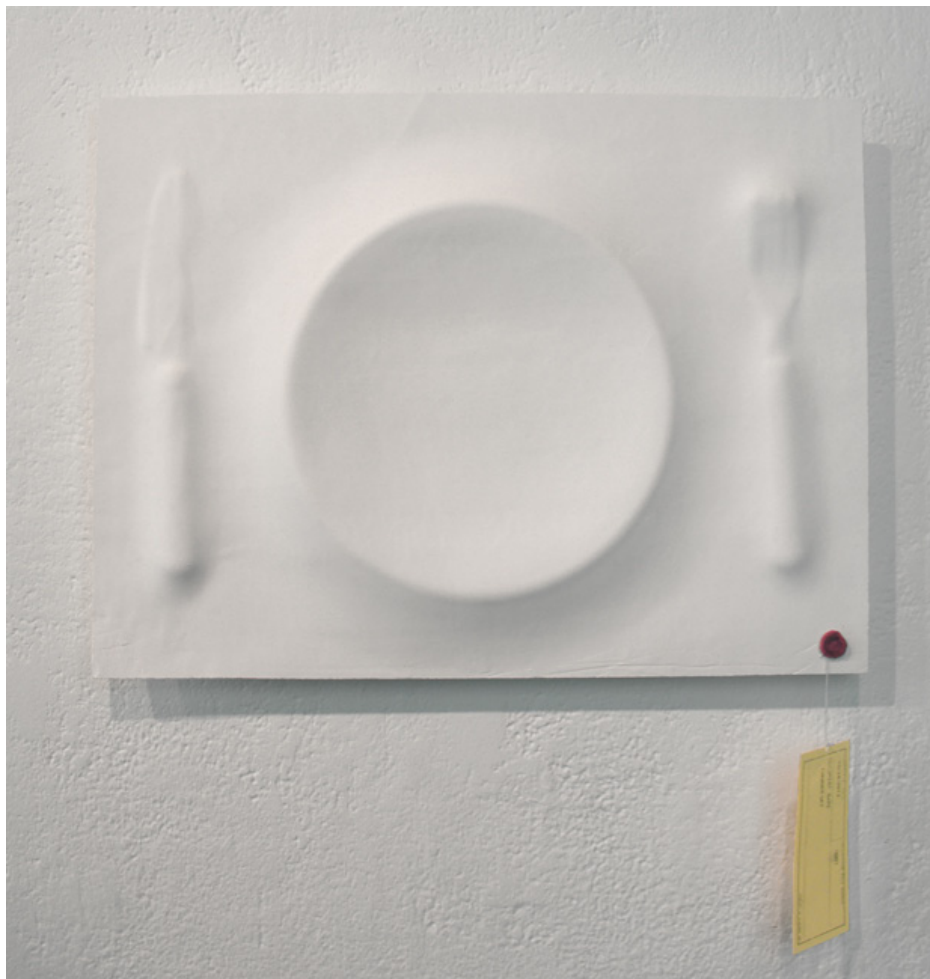


Table Set

Porcelain, wax, paper, dessert plate, knife, fork. 17x12 in. 2013



Makita Drill

Porcelain, wax, paper, Makita drill. 12x2x12 in. 2013



Studio Hammer

Porcelain, wax, paper, studio hammer. 7x1x16 in. 2013



Child's Handsaw

Porcelain, wax, paper, child's handsaw. 6x1x16 in. 2013

On Following: (posing with) *Backpack*

Wood, aluminum, rope, garden hose, nylon, fabric. 54x13x36 in. 2014



Chris Bauer

Found Forgotten / Manipulated







In a search for new methods to “read the city,” I focus on the idea of “public space,” and more specifically on spaces where anyone can do anything at any given moment: the non-private space, the non-privately owned space, space that is economically uninteresting.

My photos are often about contact with architecture and basic living elements. Energy (heat, light, water), space and landscape are examined in less obvious ways and sometimes developed in absurd ways. By exploring the concept of landscape in a nostalgic way, I investigate the dynamics of landscape, including the manipulation of its effects and the limits of spectacle based on our assumptions of what landscape means to us. Rather than presenting a factual reality, an illusion is fabricated to conjure the realms of our imagination.

Chris **Bauer**

My works establish a link between the landscape's reality and that imagined by its conceiver. These works focus on concrete questions that determine our existence. By taking daily life as subject matter while commenting on the everyday aesthetic of middle-class values, I often create work using creative game tactics, but these are never permissive. Play is a serious matter: during the game, different rules apply than in everyday life and even everyday objects undergo transubstantiation.

My works are characterized by the use of everyday objects in an atmosphere of middle-class mentality in which recognition plays an important role.



Chris Bauer













Sarah McCartt-Jackson

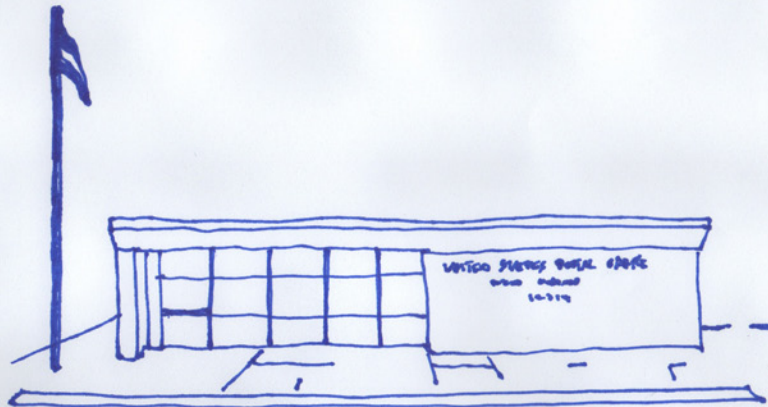
Laying Ghosts

They say drive four iron nails into the corners of the grave before a green sky can turn them. Drive the ghost into the body of a crow, into a sheepfold, into a catskin. Walk around the last place you saw them nine times. Remove the door. Hang it backwards. Bury a church bell in one pond. The clapper in another. Don't bring a digging tool into the house. Or you will dig a grave before the year is out. Don't let the tool rest against a wall inside. Everyone left will fall ill. Feed the ghosts potato soup. Slip wild mustard under each pillow. Sink an axe in the floorboard beneath your bed to prevent another dead child. Black snake root. Cowslip. Poultice of nettles, tobacco juice, and ragweed. Rub it on your cheeks, your palms, the tops of your feet. Don't sing. Don't drink black walnut. Don't look in a mirror after dark. Or do. Bless their bodies with apple blossoms. Fix their faces—portraitless nails in your mind. Dead children who return only want to stop their parents weeping. Dead husbands want to help knit socks, piece quilts. Open up your hope chest. Unfold the folded quilts. Count the new seams, the new tying on.

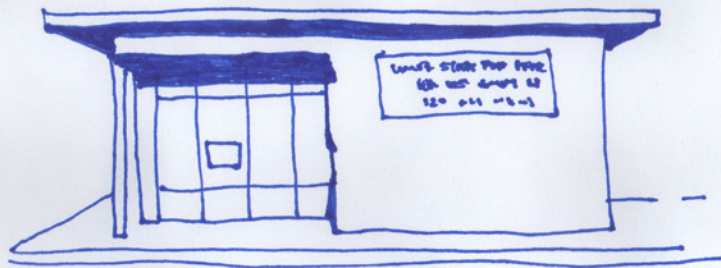
Kirsten **Leenaars**

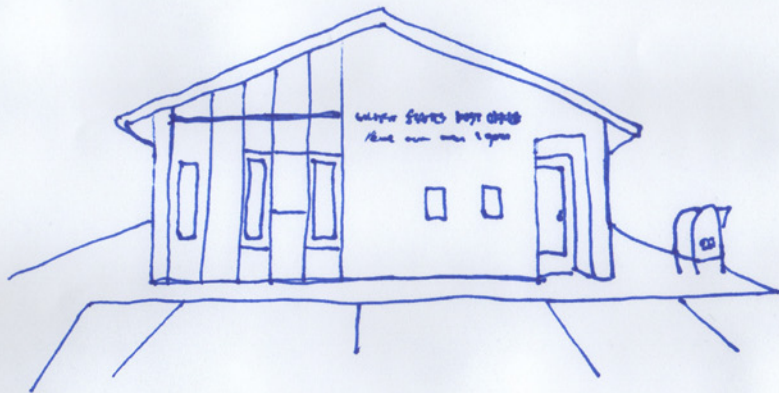
*Romancing The Post Office,
Or Why I Love the Mail Carrier So...*

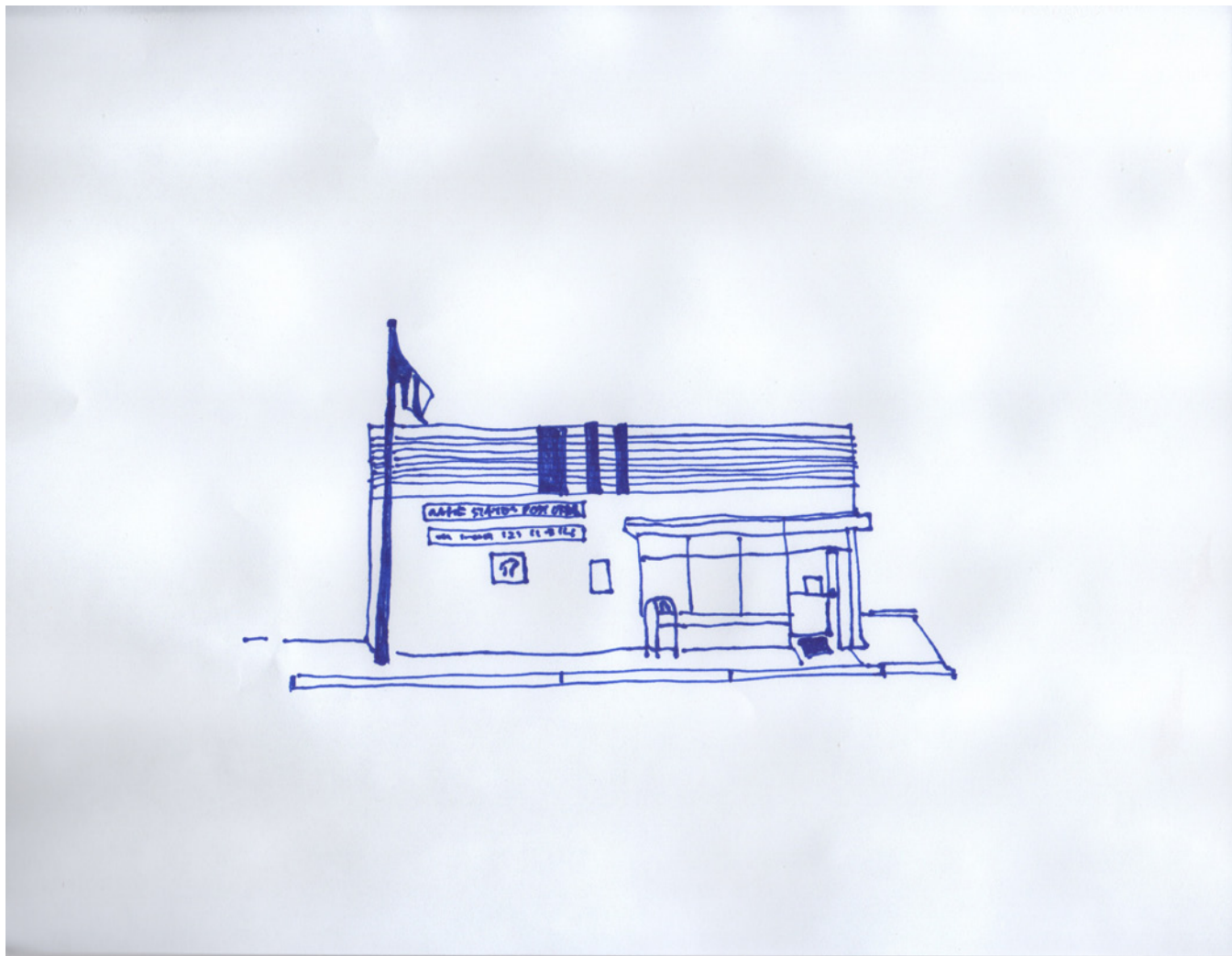
Messenger of Sympathy and Love
Servant of Parted Friends
Consoler of the Lonely
Bond of the Scattered Family
Enlarger of the Common Life
Carrier of News and Knowledge
Instrument of Trade and Industry
Promoter of Mutual Acquaintance
Of Peace and of Goodwill
Among Men and Nations.



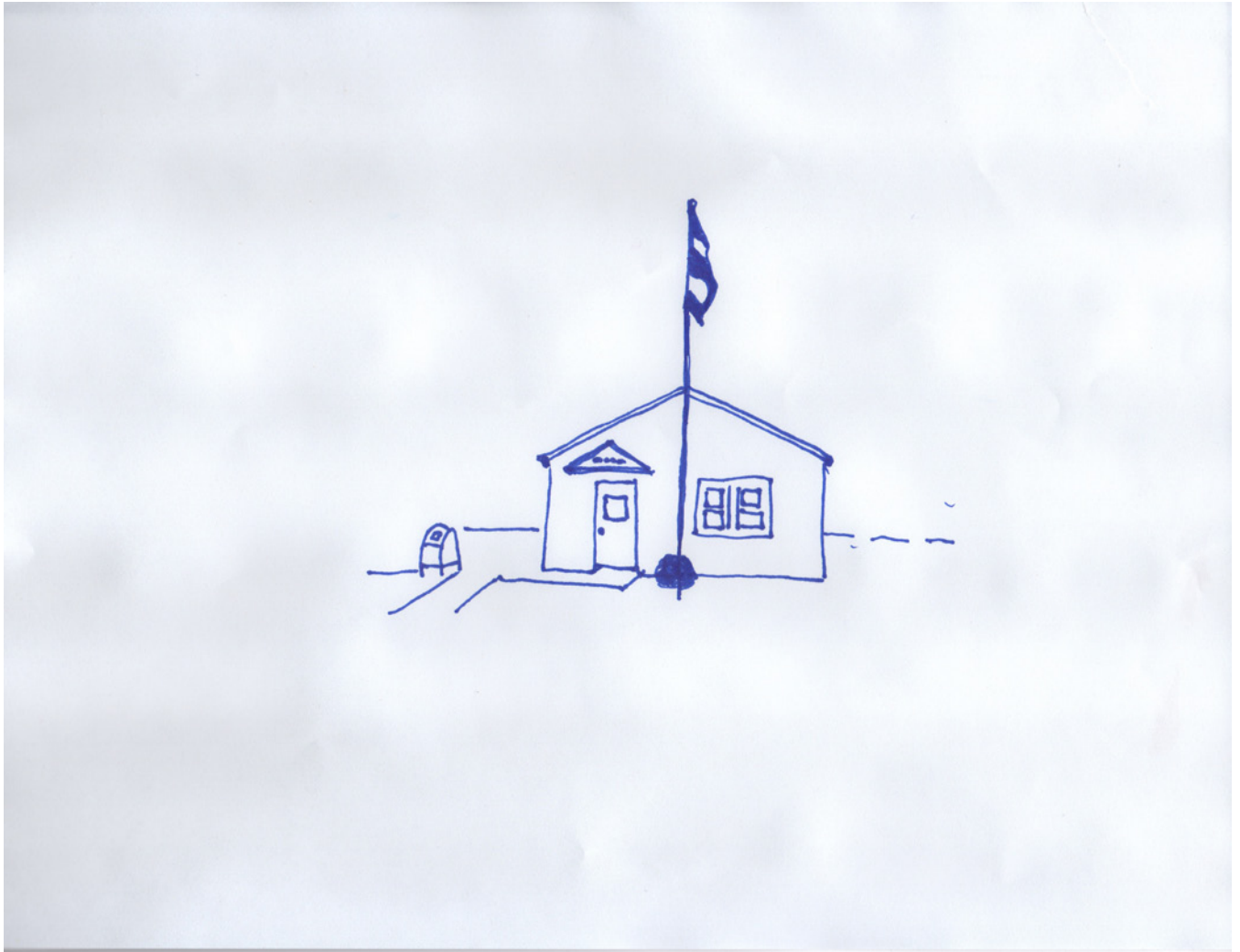
These drawings are part of a project that focuses on the United States Postal Service—its history, spaces, and functions—*to address issues of communication, connectivity and community today*. Responding to specific post offices, connected employees, and communities, a video will be created, using the genre of romantic comedy as form and foil for this exploration. In my research about the United States Postal Service, I came across this inscription as part of the former Washington D.C. Post Office: see text image. The drawings are a series of depictions of a range of post offices throughout the US which are threatened to be closed. This made me think how very well in the future post offices and the mail carrier as a public figure might become obsolete, and hence these “still lifes” of the post-offices across the nation.

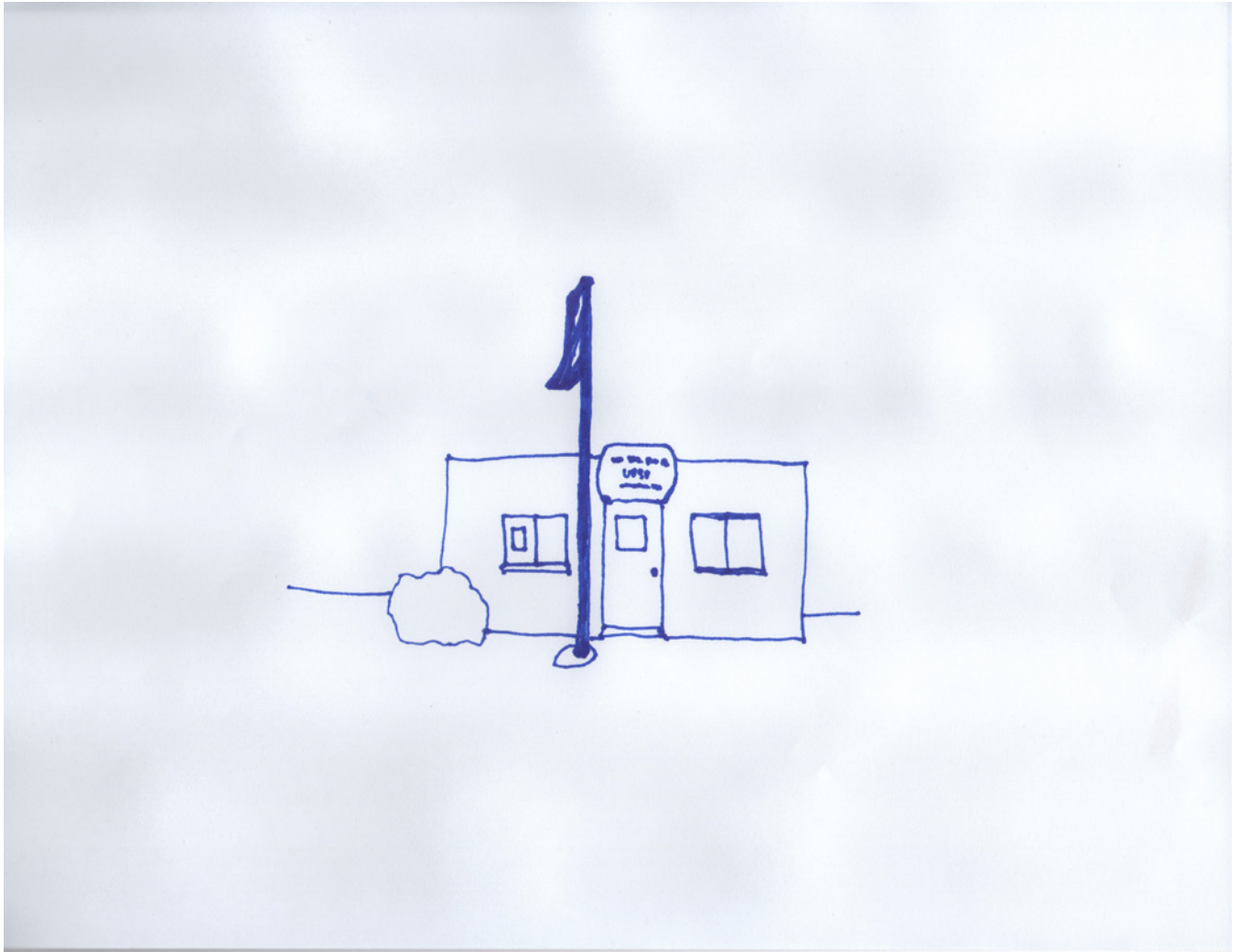














Raychael Stine

Moons for Moons



Table



Moons for Moons

Raychael **Stine**

This sequence of work evolved from a painting I did a few years ago called “Food for the Moon,” which was showcased in Composite No 2: The Gaze. That painting is a fairly traditional still life depicting a monstrous pile covered in some kind of black material on a table with a few vegetables and a tablecloth. A small white dog’s head with a big bone in its mouth pokes from the covering and becomes the fulcrum and focal point for the painting—a place to come in and out of. It is the sort of painting that is representational, but filled with subtly confusing structural and spatial problems. The piece has an energy that sucks everything in the room into it, and that strange black covering is read somewhere between a cloaked creature, an empty awkwardly tented sheet, and a pile of covered random table goods. The dog becomes both the monster inhaling the room and something the monster has consumed.

This painting is the product of a whole set of processes working together to create the final image. The end product may seem to be a traditional looking painting, paying homage to the Dutch and Spanish golden age of still life, but in all actuality my work is the process of making it; ***these steps are actual works, not simply the means to an end.***

*Hal on Table with Table and Still Life*

At times the work is presented as a single painting. Sometimes that painting sits in the very still life that it originated from in another picture. Sometimes the subject of the painting is observed relating to the work over the course of years. Sometimes that painting is reconstructed using its own palettes, documenting and recording the light and space of the room it lives in. Sometimes a painting or photograph talk about being another mediated representation of media as subject, image as subject and objects; or being as subject, or any other kind of cyclical relationship. Sometimes only a tiny fragment connects pieces.

Raychael **Stine**



Floor Jammer Light



Floor Jammer Dark

All of the work refers and nests back to other situations that have been captured or constructed, pictured, deconstructed, painted, re-imaged, re-represented and looked at again from a new place. The work is like a snake that eats its tail.

Raychael **Stine**



I create still lifes of used paint materials, palettes, finished paintings, and paintings in process, postcards of paintings, photographs and various print media, flowers and other ephemerally cherished objects. Paintings of my dogs in various states, and paintings of those paintings reside with photographs of the dogs, as well as remnants of their toys, blankets, sweaters, and other objects that serve as representations of their own love and desire, their own memorials, as well as my memorials for them, images of them, moments captured and recordings of our life.

I have emotional connections with objects and with pictures of things, as most people do. This is an important part of being human and not something to be relegated to the compartmentalized and dismissible land of sentimental kitsch. The sentimental is care, desire, connection. Watching, wondering, looking, exploring, feeling, engaging, exchanging and preserving are intellectual pursuits. ***Feeling joy, pleasure, tenderness and love, as well as sadness, loss, and regret, and all the feeling in between about ourselves, others, and the immediate world around us creates the meaning of our lives.*** I am interested in the preservative care of painting and the various ways that it can and does operate in the world today. I see it as a place for recording connections and the entirety of sensate experience—in the moment and in memory—in daily life. For me all representation is abstract and all abstraction is representational, and I like to look at the ways this can happen while having a personal relationship with the subject and material as they exist in their various states.



Charlie with Still Life 2



Moons Close Up

Raychael **Stine**



Hal and Moons

I am constantly finding ways to observe, record, and re-present the love and exchange present in the everyday. It is not about deconstructing, but reconstructing.

Raychael **Stine**

Brian Kim

Nostalgia

We got drunk and looked at old pictures of ourselves from high school. Julia dumped the photos on her bedroom floor and the two of us sifted through them. Homecoming. Prom. Orchestra. Summer vacations loitered away at malls or harbors. In all those pictures we were smiling because we were told to. Not for the benefit of the moment they were taken, I realized, but for the day, fifteen years later, when we'd be exhausted and frustrated and alone and would seek solace in a time when we weren't as exhausted or frustrated or alone. But that was a lie, of course; we were just as marred then as we were as adults. "Don't you wish we could go back?" Julia asked, more to her wine than to me. I stared at a photograph of the two of us: heads lilted, arms raised – postures unencumbered by responsibility. "Yeah," I said, giving her the answer she wanted to hear. But I could always tell in which pictures my smile was fake.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

No. 15 Still Life

Jorge Lucero is an artist and Assistant Professor of Art Education at The University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. His current research is concerned with the intersections of contemporary art practices with distinctly pedagogical properties and how those modes-of-operation propose alternative approaches to making, learning, relationships, ethics, spirituality, generativity, and civic engagement. You can view his work at www.jorgelucero.com.

Katherine Spinella (b. 1985, Detroit) is an internationally exhibiting installation artist whose work incorporates painting and sculpture. She received her MFA at the University of Oregon in 2013, and has been the recipient of numerous awards, grants, and fellowships, including residencies at the Women's Studio Workshop in Rosedale, NY and Kala Art Institute in Berkeley, CA. Katherine currently resides in Eugene, Oregon. You can view her work at www.katherinespinella.com.

Jessi DiTillio is Assistant Curator of Contemporary Art at the Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art. She has worked in a diverse range of contemporary art institutions, from artist collectives in Ghana to nonprofit galleries and alternative performance spaces in New York City. Following her study of studio art and cultural theory at New York University, she earned her MA in Art History at the University of Oregon. Most recently, she curated the exhibition *Emancipating the Past: Kara Walker's Tales of Slavery and Power*.

Lauren Camp is the author of two poetry collections, *This Business of Wisdom* (West End Press, 2010) and most recently, *The Dailiness* (Edwin E. Smith Publishing, 2013). Her poems have been published in *Brilliant Corners*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Linebreak* and *Feminist Studies*. She is a radio producer and host on Santa Fe Public Radio, and also an acclaimed visual artist. You can view her work at www.laurencamp.com.

Andi Crist was born in Birmingham, Alabama and received her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Columbia College Chicago in 2011. In 2010 she co-founded Autotelic—a community artists studio that gives emerging artists affordable and accessible workspace in a community-centric environment. Working primarily with found or scavenged material, Crist's objects and paperworks are rooted in appropriation and reconstruction. You can view her work at www.acrist.com.

Ryan Kelly is a writer from the Midwest who now resides in San Diego, CA. His work has appeared in *Fiction International*, *Black Scat Review*, and the *San Diego Reader*, among others. He has a forthcoming publication in *Pacific Review*. Find him online at www.ryanfranciskelly.com or on Twitter @RFrancisKelly.

Karen Bovinich (b. Dallas, TX) is a performance, sculpture and installation artist, currently working in Chicago, IL. Bovinich is one half of the collaboration, Jesus Mejia + Ruth, with artwork recently displayed at the Chicago Cultural Center, 6018 North and Hyde Park Art Center. For more information, please visit jesusmejia.ruth.com.

Victoria Martinez is an interdisciplinary artist from Chicago who received her BFA from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. She has exhibited at the National Museum of Mexican Art, Columbia College, the Center for Advanced Hindsight at Duke University, The Minneapolis Institute of Arts and the Katherine E. Nash Gallery at the University of Minnesota. Visit victoria-martinez.com to experience more work.

CONTRIBUTOR BIOS

No. 15 Still Life

Jennifer Bartell is a native of Johnsonville, South Carolina. She is an MFA candidate at the University of South Carolina in Columbia and is an alumna of Agnes Scott College. Her poetry has been published in Jasper Magazine, The Art of Medicine in Metaphors anthology, Letras Caseras, The Double Dealer, 2013, decomP and forthcoming in A Sense of the Midlands. She is the 2013-2014 Dean's MFA Fellow and is also a co-editor of Yemassee, USC's literary journal.

Luke Shalan is a Bay Area artist working in Oakland, CA. He will be receiving his BFA in Ceramics from California College of the Arts this May. His work can be viewed at <http://cargocollective.com/lukehalan>.

Chris Bauer received his Bachelors in Fine Arts at the University of Illinois at Chicago focusing solely on photography. After many years of working odd jobs from pizza delivery driver to car wash attendant, he found a camera, and all he cares to think about is photography. He started his own photography business in order to immerse himself into the field, and has been shooting or editing every day since getting out of school. He hopes to further his creating and focus more on producing and sharing how he sees the world. Chris currently lives and works in Chicago and St. Louis. You can view his work at www.cbauerphotography.com.

Sarah McCartt-Jackson has been published by and received honors from: the Academy of American Poets, Copper Nickel, Indiana Review, Journal of American Folklore, NANO Fiction, STILL, Kentucky Women Writers, and others. She was Tidal Basin Review's inaugural Poetry Series Center Feature poet, which featured her series poem "Calf Canyon" and an interview.

Kirsten Leenaars, born and raised in the Netherlands, works in her video projects with specific communities, incorporating them into her work to explore the nature of human interactions, professional and personal, real and fictional. She has shown and developed projects at the MCA, Glass Curtain Gallery, Threewalls, 6018 North, and Gallery 400, Printed Matter NY, and at the Witte de With, Rotterdam, Kunst Fabrik, Munchen. Leenaars is an Assistant Professor of Contemporary Practices department at SAIC. You can view her work at www.kirstenleenaars.nl.

Raychael Stine's work features dogs in intimate situations and paintings residing between peculiar states of abstraction and representation. She has exhibited at Art Palace Gallery, Houston, Eugene Binder, Marfa, Denise Bibro Gallery, NY, A + D Gallery, Chicago among others. Her work was featured in New American Paintings, The Texas Biennial, and she is professor of Painting and Drawing at the UNM. For more information visit www.raychaelstine.com.

Brian Kim is a writer and teacher who lives in Sunnyside, Queens, NY. He has been published online in The Telegram Review and has a forthcoming story in The Literary Review.

COMPOSITE INFO

Submissions

Composite Arts Magazine is now accepting proposals from visual artists for inclusion in upcoming Issues.

One of our favorite aspects of this publication has always been providing a venue for artists to show work that exists as a form of experimentation, does not fit into their normal repertoire, or they have been unable to show publicly for one reason or another. We're hoping through this process we'll be opening up to artists we are unfamiliar with or provide a space for those we know looking to branch out in their practice.

Selected proposals are currently unfunded. However, along with publication of the project, we are here to support and work with all artists as much as possible and can provide the use of our blog, web hosting of project collateral, and any other resources we may have access to. Please specify in proposal what you may need from us. We are interested in cultivating relationships with artists through the process of their projects.

Proposals are open to all mediums as long as they can exist within the final publication in a .pdf format. Proposals can be for work yet to be made, work in progress, or work that has been completed. Work that has already been completed must be no more than 2 years old, and also must include a written proposal/artist statement.

Instructions and theme statements for all open calls can be found at compositearts.com/submit.

COMPOSITE INFO

No. 15 Still Life

Coming Summer 2014: Issue No. 16 Lore They go by many names. Tall-tales. Folklore. Myths. Legends. They're so ingrained in our lives that sometimes it's impossible to tell their origin. History has the power to become legend, and legend can easily be mistaken for history.

Composite is managed, curated, and edited by:

Zach Clark is a flat circle. His work can be viewed at zachclarkis.com.

Kara Cochran isn't still / is still alive. Her work can be seen at karacochran.com.

India Kiezer: In·di·a K [in-dee-uh kay]. noun. A tall stack of tacos that needs to be watered regularly, preferably with Cholupa hot sauce. Her work can be viewed at www.india-k.com.

Suzanne Makol likes to imagine histories behind objects encountered in daily life. Her work can be viewed at suzannemakol.com.

Joey Pizzolato is a book he's never read. He can be reached at joeypizzolato@gmail.com.

Composite is a free publication. If you like what we're doing and would like to help support us financially, you can donate on the website or at <http://tinyurl.com/Compositedonation>. Anything helps, so thank you in advance.