Master of Fine Arts

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Having grown up and lived in areas of the southwest that straddle the U.S. and Mexican border such as Southern California, Tucson Arizona and Juarez Mexico, the nostalgic memories and sense of security of the places I once knew stand in contrast to the dire current state of reality. Malvados Mafiosos such as the Mexican drug cartels and the Arizona legislature have waged a war in which the innocent casualties include many of their respective country’s and state’s own citizens.

Applying to both sides of the border, Borderland provides a visual instruction-al response to the brutalities of a drug war and legislative subjugation, consider ing both the lawlessness of Mexico and the laws in Arizona. It is a real world visual translation and interpretive guide for the rest of us; a DIY or Don’t Usted Mismo for those being terrorized and intimidated in the places they reside by either a type of physical or political and legislative violence.

JORGE ARTEAGA

2012

10” x 16” Digital Print
Looking out at the horizon line above, then from below, then from within. But always looking straight with body squared to the edge. Hurled into eternity in the duration of a moment. (Epitaph). A stork in a nest.

The formerly communist hotel with someone new at the desk every four hours. In six days we did not see the same desk person twice. Some old meeting place from before, a pile of dirty sheets. They beckon jumping into like leaves? This piece of furniture bisected the room, yet, with its clear doors allowed for a semi-continuous view. The futility of its architecture became its own perfect metaphor.

Some travel story. Something about always trying to get home. Three men at a camera — music video in the making. The castle ruin makes a fine backdrop for this performance, the slow crumbling behind giving way to artifice and style in front. A ladder back there leading to the sky.

Screen reflected, doubly bounced back on top of an unmade bed. I am another site. I am, you are other. Trifecta.

Horizon, duration, reflection. I want to reach a place where meandering and looking support each other. I have been thinking about perspective and the body — the two measures of direction, location, and distance. The gaze from above, below, and within creates the visible and invisible. Inherent in all photographs is the presence of the maker. Even unseen, this is constant.

In my travels through the former Eastern Bloc I visited a community garden, a communist era hotel, a castle ruin, an island of museums, and an abandoned house full of bed feathers with a stork’s nest in the back. The documents of these places and others depict an incidental record of looking.
Map for the Blind 2011
Dimensions Variable
Digital C and paper prints

Some Other Words For Duration 2011
Dimensions Variable
Digital C and paper prints
My work investigates themes of racial representation, visual culture, museum display, and the construction of history. My projects often focus on African American history, and our world’s mixed race ancestry. I am specifically interest-ed in how historical precedents manifest in contemporary culture, and how history can be lost, rewritten, and distorted. My most recent work is informed by the museological history of human display. This video work spotlights pseudoscientific racial and gendered categorizations which, to this day, continue to influence hierarchies of worth within our society.

At This, the Pinnacle of Human Development... is a video installation composed of a vitrine with two videos in the form of ice cores. The vitrine is displayed in front of a 10’x14’ area of wallpaper art. The video includes dozens of appropriated anthropological films originally used in ethnographic typing, as well as newer footage shot with a similar visual style. The wallpaper contains found anthropological diagrams of racial evolution from a text rooted in mendelian genetics, as well as a visual map of human chromosomes which I composited into decorative lines. By appropriating and recontextualizing these archival records, I aim to to call into question the practice of essentializing race and culture. The video employs the hierarchical structure diagramed in the racial trees to reveal the museological convention of compartmentalizing groups based upon pseudoscientific racial ethnic and gendered categories. Additionally, the film is structured to subvert the linear progress narrative, which so often is implicitly invoked in discussions of racial inequity. While problematizing linear progressions of people and culture, this installation also reveals the scaffolding behind race-based value hierarchies.

At This, the Pinnacle of Human Development… 2011 (Detail) HD Video (Detail) 10’ x 14’ wallpaper art
The human experience can be mapped out through the objects we make and the marks we leave. Nature provides the raw materials that are increasingly synthesized for human use as technology exponentially develops. In the pace of this change and increasing industrialization of land, there is a growing gap between psyche and materiality. Cultures with advanced technology in particular are so mediated that technological replications of nature, a picture of a landscape for instance, is often more desirable than being in the landscape itself. From Here to the Brightest Burning Star poses that even the sun, the literal and metaphorical symbol of all life on earth is not exempt from the impacts of this line of thinking.

Can our conscious connection to the earth evolve as quickly as our technological systems? My work suggests the importance of being mentally present to the events of our time, however wonderful or heartbreaking, in order to envision a healthy future. The Moving Oracle draws on historical pilgrimages for larger answers of existence and trajectory. These clues are often pressed within the geological layering of existence, at times in the birth and destruction of the cosmos, or the sublime terror of an oil spill in the ocean.

Crossing myth and storytelling with real events in history, my work advocates for a more holistic approach to existence, and an awareness of the ways simple actions can have great reactions. I am enthralled with the ways that sculpture can provide a sense of place and contest, as well as the inherent narrative and ephemeral quality of video.
From Here To The Brightest Burning Star 2011 15' x 4' x 4' Neon, Steel, Projection, Monofilament

The Moving Oracle 2011 6' x 6' x 1' Video Projection, Wood, Crushed Coal
As a designer and illustrator, I feel conflicted between creating artwork for the commercial industry and artwork that speaks with my voice about deeper issues affecting our world. Commercial graphic design and illustrations are typically created to market products and ideas for economic gain. However, I believe designers have an important responsibility in understanding their role in creating work that goes beyond influencing a buyer. Therefore, I feel it is my responsibility to be socially conscious in the work I create. I strive to make work that is both visually stimulating, but also intellectually thought provoking.

I work to create a balance between pieces that are client-based graphic design and illustration, and artwork that addresses the social, political, and environmental issues facing our world. In my work I address issues of social relevance through traditional print design, artist's books, animation and interactive digital pieces. I approach my ideas in ways that visually engage the viewer, start a dialogue, challenge the audience, and allow for reflection on what I feel are essential issues to our global community. It is my hope that the audience leaves my work with a different view of the issues presented in my designs.

My thesis project, *What’s so important about water?* is an artwork outreach project designed to build on the goals of The Rillito River Project, an international group of artists, architects, musicians, writers, builders, and anthropologists, who encourage and support a series of ongoing events in which artists conceive and plan artwork to be installed or performed in the Rillito riverbed in Tucson, Arizona. What’s so important about water? uses visual communication, illustration, and graphic design to create a series of banners, take-away collectable cards, and an interactive educational experience for community members that emphasize water and ecology, in addition to its significance for the species that once inhabited the Rillito River. The banners and the interactive experience were a component of “Bat Night 2010” held on Saturday, September 11, 2010.
What's So Important About Water? 2011 (Installation View)
Digital prints, cards, books

Vinyl Banners
One of eight banners installed outside the University Museum of Art
6' x 2' (double-sided)

Installation View
Three Sides of Human Nature – There are three sides of humanity that people purposely ignore due to its graphic and violent orientation. Homicide, Genocide, and Filicide are three aspects of society we neglect for multiple reasons: possibly because we deny that people are capable of these actions, perhaps to sympathize with the suffering of the victims is too traumatic, maybe we want to believe that human nature is inherently good and these are to the contrary. My work approaches these topics from a direct/indirect personal experience with each of these atrocities of humanity.

Genocide – When I was less than one year old, my family lived in a small town named Gwangju. On May 18, 1980 the town fell under siege by the Korean military. The President of the time had accused this small town some 10,000 people of being either spies of North Korea, or conspirators; when in actuality it was a small number of college students protesting for free speech. The people of the town were fired upon and murdered in large numbers just for the sake of suppressing the masses. I was a small infant hidden underneath my father's desk. What was the reason that someone could murder so many people for their own purposes? What justifies a government sanctioned mass murder?

Filicide – My father was an alcoholic he often did the most horrific acts without memory of ever committing any actions in the morning. When I was 2 years old, my father had gotten so intoxicated that he had committed himself to destroying his family and his own life. He had picked me up, walked up to the second story roof and thrown me off in the effort of eliminating what he in a drunken haze believed to be the only solution to our families suffering which was to end all of our lives. My mother and grandmother took my brother and hid, assuming myself to be dead and left in the cold. What would compel a parent to try to murder their child? Are all of us capable of this, given an appropriate set of circumstances?

Homicide – When I was 22 years old, I was abducted by a man and driven what must have been 2 hours out of town. The man never told me what he wanted, or where we were going. I sat pleading with him for what seemed like days, the door wouldn't open, he just kept driving. It was only when he stopped the car that I felt my thoughts again, and when he pulled out the knife all I noticed was how long it was. As he held it to my throat, there was only one thing I could do, I laughed. If there was anything that would save my life it would be taking the power away from him. I was spared being raped and murdered narrowly by the counter action of the situation. I survived that day with an acute understanding of what it is to have someone else threaten you mortally. I still wonder to this day how could someone do that, it's become a fascination, how is human nature capable of these actions?

The three paintings representing the internal walls or “sides” of humanity are expressionist abstractions of these actions, illustrating the violence and horror of Homicide, Filicide, and Genocide; and are appropriately titled so.

The water box is illustrative of the translucent state of memory and human recognition as simultaneously that of a universal void. People are encouraged to throw salt into the water as a sign of personal recognition of the profane atrocities, as well as a purification of memory.
The Human Condition: Three Sides
(Homicide, Filicide, Genocide)
When vision is obscured, perceived truth and bodily truth become disconnected. In suspended: untethered to the within and outside two wandering figures are suspended in a space with no depth and no boundaries, an emblem of their inner confusion. The dual image conveys the poetic consistencies and inconsistencies of a phenomenon described in field tests conducted in the 1920s. These tests demonstrated that when humans are deprived of a singular point of focus, like a mountaintop or sun, they begin to walk in circles. Blindfolded and without the ability to correct its path, the body intuitively takes over, and although the subjects perceive that they are walking in a straight line, they are in truth walking in a series of unpredictable loops. It has yet to be confirmed why this particular phenomenon happens.

The viewer may experience the figure’s aimless movement as their own, and momentarily enter the limbo of non-direction, leaving their own body behind. There are two figures, one on each screen; are they different subjects or the same person at different times? Are we witnessing a single action played out of sync with itself, or separate occasions? Along with the droning and ambient nature of binaural tones set to induce a state of wakeful meditation, the compounded ambiguities propel a response of disorientation and the tension inherent in that sensation. Suspended: untethered to the within and outside is a performance that embodies this notion and proves that what is limited in perception is boundless in truth.
suspended: untethered to the within and outside  

Dimensions Variable 

Video projection

suspended: untethered to the within and outside  

[Installation View]
AT THIS, THE PINNACLE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT...

My work explores the cultural disconnect that lies between understanding our relationship with the natural environment and our drive toward economic prosperity. I am curious about our seemingly insatiable material desires, which have led to the very consumption of the natural environment. Poetry has been lost, replaced with rational thinking. Lost also are the subtleties of the human experience, and forgotten are the scarred landscapes around us.

How can we cultivate mindfulness to become more aware of our environment?

I approach the act of painting as a restorative process. The paintings are constructed of recycled material, and the painting/assemblage process is done in the spirit of connectedness with our environment, thereby attempting to regenerate and to reinvent our relationship with the landscape. It is my conviction that this is the foremost battlefield of our time.
Stratagies of Consumption 2010 98" x 108" Mixed-media

Moving Precipitously Towards Excess 2010 99" x 168" Mixed-media
THE UNCONSCIOUS SHADOW: DREAMS AND OUR PERSONA

She is the shadow of our unconscious mind. She stores all of our dark thoughts, repressed weaknesses, and shortcomings. Though our conscious self would rather not face her, it must concede every night in our dreams to what she has to say.

We made her who she is and by accepting her we become stronger. She, no matter how much we push her away will always be a part of us, only showing her conscious self when we are at our worst. She may be a reservoir of human darkness but she is the seat of our creativity.

She is our Shadow.
Stairs to Nowhere 2011 21” x 21”

Relief print on layered Asian paper, matrix, lightbox

Girl with Brain Balloon 2011 70” x 34” x 24”

Plaster, spray foam, wig

Relief print on waxed Asian paper, mylar, lightbox
What’s an artist?
What’s a statement?
What’s a treasure?
What’s a museum?

See also Everything Will Be Alright.
See also Margaret Kimball.
Portable Ground delves into what is overlooked and what is absorbed within a family and explores the impact that social, economic, and religious influences have on interpersonal relationships. Each familial infrastructure has its own set of values and rituals that have been passed down, abridged over time and influenced by the contemporary social climate. I am interested in examining the infrastructure that places value on certain events, emotions, and actions, while avoiding others.

Found and fabricated photographs are sliced and reordered, weaving an allegory which disrupts viewing expectations, stimulating a new blend of visual, verbal, behavioral and personal associations. When something is taken out of context or a part is removed, an anomaly is exposed. By deconstructing my photographs, binding objects of cultural ephemera and forcing disparate objects to occupy the same space, I am altering what is exposed and prompting the viewer to contemplate what remains hidden within their own familial structure.

LIZZ STRINGFIELD
Portable Ground 2011 Dimensions Variable Digital prints on Sintra, found snapshots, cinder blocks, and other selected tchotchkes
I bear my house inside me, everywhere.

Derek Walcott

Paula Burnett writes of Walcott’s poetry, “The unhoused soul can, by an act of mind, create its home.” I am interested in the notion of the homeland—or more directly, the sensation of belonging—as a temporal space rather than a physical location. Writer, Marina Warner asks, “In what way can history be told and experience be lived to bring about a sense of belonging? How does one come home?” She continues, “It’s vital not to abdicate from the making of this internal dwelling place. For stories held in common make and remake the world we inhabit.”

I am interested in simple human connections created by stories that can be internalized and carried with us through our individual journeys. Upon recognizing in a startling manner my own state of un-belonging within my current physical and emotional landscapes, I have sought to create a homeland within, staking a claim in these landscapes where I was once only a passive dweller. In my own wandering state, I felt a deep connection to Odysseus.

My work seeks harmony, a balance between the individual and the collective. In this way, in the process of creating this work, I mirror Odysseus’ travels from place to place, often traveling alone, but always finding people to connect with at each stop. The altered book pages tell my own odyssey. Text and images allude to experiences and emotions, sometimes autobiographical and often fantastical. The hanging structure of paper boats becomes an architecture of belonging. Created with over 300 participants, using hand-written stories and pages cut out of 25 copies of Homer’s The Odyssey folded into paper boats, the space creates an experience of belonging. Past experiences are shared in the hand-written stories, and new experiences have been created in the making and experiencing of this piece, bringing with them the notion of the present.


we suffered these things, and sank into the sea, wandering apart.