

BURIED ALONE

# USF MFA 2018

With essays by students in the graduate Art History program  
University of South Florida School of Art and Art History

Published on the occasion of  
*Buried Alone:*  
*2018 MFA Graduation Exhibition*  
March 30 – May 5, 2018  
USF Contemporary Art Museum

**USF** UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTH FLORIDA  
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

# FOREWORD

This compendium features the collaborative efforts of the graduating Master of Fine Arts students and the Master of Arts students in Art History at the University of South Florida's School of Art and Art History. It is indicative of the emphatic commitment to transdisciplinary research and learning in the College of The Arts and throughout the University.

The students self-selected the pairings of one studio graduate with one art history student based on writing preferences and research backgrounds. Once decisions were made, the artist and scholar shared dialogue, studio visits, written drafts, and edits—back and forth—until the final artworks and essays reached the ideal form and tenor. A final polish was achieved through mentoring by Dr. Allison Moore.

The MFA at USF is acknowledged as a premiere program among its peers nationally. Students create artworks that embrace a vast range of materials and diverse and innovative conceptual strategies.

The USF MA program in Art History is unique in that the curriculum is based exclusively on small, writing-intensive seminars. Students engage in advanced research on current issues in art history.

Our eminent faculty in both disciplines are internationally distinguished for their scholarly and creative research achievements and as notably outstanding, inspiring teachers.

Sincere appreciation is extended to publication designers Don Fuller and Madeline Baker, and to the generous donors who made the endeavor possible, along with Tempus Projects, site of the fundraising auction.

Congratulations to our incredibly dedicated, gifted and talented graduate students for the entire production—from the original inception to this dynamic record that you hold in your hands!

WALLACE WILSON  
*Director + Professor, USF School of Art and Art History*

# ARTISTS

- 6** **SAMIR BERNARDEZ**  
*Written by James Cartwright*
- 10** **GLORIA CEREN**  
*Written by Richard Ellis*
- 14** **WILL DOUGLAS**  
*Written by Victoria Mann + Erin E. Hughes*
- 18** **BEN GALADAY**  
*Written by Ben Galaday*
- 22** **NESTOR CAPARROS MARTIN**  
*Written by Amanda Poss*
- 26** **ZAKRIYA RABANI**  
*Written by Ashley Williams*
- 30** **KIM TURNER-SMITH**  
*Written by SK West*

# SAMIR BERNARDEZ

## PRESERVING CUBAN CULTURE: SAMIR BERNARDEZ'S *HOSTING*

WRITTEN BY: JAMES CARTWRIGHT

For Samir Bernardez's thesis project *Hosting*, he shipped objects from his native Cuba to the United States, ultimately housing them in USF's Contemporary Art Museum. These objects range from household appliances such as television sets, blenders, and a washing machine to items with sentimental value, all donated by his family, friends, and other Cuban citizens. For Bernardez, these objects serve as symbols of Cuban roots and culture, with a sincerity, honesty, and humility that is worth saving. Each object is something given, something sacrificed by its owner and sent on an uncertain journey to another country, with the artist entrusted as its caretaker.

Although this gathering of Cuban heritage could evoke nostalgia, Bernardez's concern lies in how these ordinary items communicate with the surrounding museum environment. His interrogation of the museum as center of power is a line of inquiry that is always present in his art. With previous work, such as 2015's *Voto* (Spanish for "vow"), he camped inside Havana's Wifredo Lam Contemporary Art Center for several days. He refused to interact with museum visitors, until he eventually became taken for granted by guests and staff as another piece of museum scenery. In *Hosting*, he hopes that by bringing these ordinary objects to the museum, the viewer will wonder if that now makes them art, and question who has the authority to make that distinction: the artist or the institution?

Bernardez's presence in his artwork has shifted from being a visible agent to becoming more of an orchestrator. While he is directing *Hosting's* organization, he is no longer performing actions within the museum. Instead, he cedes control to the people who donated to the project, and every donor has the choice of having the object displayed, or left hidden within its shipping crate. He believes that these donors bring a perspective to his process that he cannot provide, and their involvement creates an open project. Through this informal collaboration, he hopes to endow donors with the possibility of determining the kinds of work they want to see in a museum, thus making the space more accessible for them. They become unlikely agents in the art world, with influence over museum display, and the ability to capitalize on the monetary potential of their "art" objects. He is protective of these objects in the same manner that he

is protective of his own experiences as an artist. He frequently conceals elements of his work by reducing the amount of information he offers the audience, a practice which extends to *Hosting's* display. He maintains a delicate balance between showing enough documentation to intrigue the viewer, while leaving behind something precious for himself, whether that be a private image, leftover art materials, or simply the memory of performing an action. This interest in obscured meanings and rejecting traditional art objects draws from artists such as Rirkrit Tiravanija and Pierre Huyghe, who provoke similar questions: Is the artwork what we finally see in the museum, such as what we witness with *Hosting*? Or is it something reserved only for Bernardez, and we missed it somewhere along the way, now only glimpsing a memento?

While Bernardez is careful to keep aspects of his art private, he is adamant that his audience needs to see his work and understand that he is Cuban. He is a Cuban artist every single day, and his work needs to be seen through this prism. No matter how long he lives in the U.S. or elsewhere, he "will never be able to get rid of Cuba."<sup>1</sup> His Cuban identity informs every decision he makes as an artist, and that concern extends to *Hosting*. He believes that the project serves as an ark, where he can keep these objects as part of a shared Cuban memory, which he fears could be lost as political circumstances shift and regimes change over time. He sees a symbolic connection in someone sending an object from Cuba to the U.S., almost as if a part of that person makes it out of Cuba. Finally, the difficulty of transporting these items mirrors the dangers people face crossing borders, as Cubans and other immigrants make impossible choices about the things and people they must leave behind.



1. Samir Bernardez, Interview with James Cartwright, January 19, 2018.



5

- 1. *Roofers*, 2016  
Residue of the action
- 2. *Taburetes (Stools)* from *Hosting*, 2018
- 3. *Televisor ruso (Russian Television)* from *Hosting*, 2018
- 4. *Buey (Ox)* from *Hosting*, 2018
- 5. *Mnemonics*, 2015  
silver gelatin print

Images courtesy of the artist.



Photo: Samir Bernardez

2

3

4

# GLORIA CEREN

## EYE OBJECT!

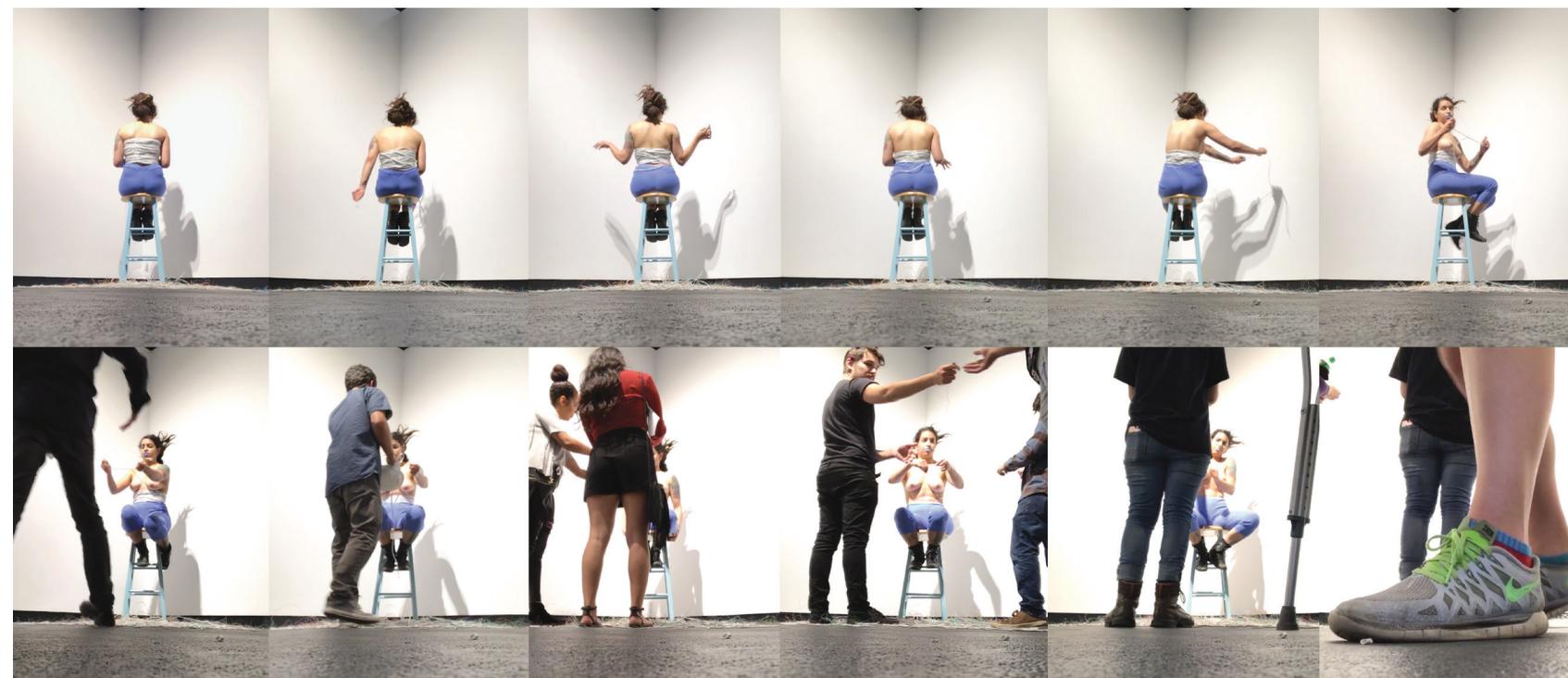
WRITTEN BY: RICHARD ELLIS

Employing mediums including painting, video, and performance, Gloria Ceren often makes works with multiple intentions at play that share an emphasis on the presence of the body. Her work homogenizes controlled chaos to present probing questions in a manner that is—paradoxically—direct yet obscure, in that it is both confrontational and uncanny. Ceren draws inspiration from artists such as Andres Serrano, whose work demands a confrontation with the profane, and Kate Gilmore, who literally and symbolically pulverizes given structures with tremendous physicality and feminist bravado. Ceren has developed an artistic practice that utilizes critical disruption, investigating “complexities that arise from being in a body that identifies as other.”<sup>1</sup> For her, disruption acts as a natural device for active contemplation that challenges the psychosocial power structures of identity; specifically, the presence of physical aspects that have been mediated by social conventions. Pursuing “a balance between subjectivity and objectivity,”<sup>2</sup> she extrapolates from Jacques Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage; bridging one’s self and the object of the self that one sees.<sup>3</sup> To do so, she creates works that hold in suspense a particular experience of discomfort or alienation found in social and material interactions.

Her multi-faceted installation, *Left to It’s Own Device*, is comprised of “semi-objects” that are in conversation with one another; a subtle dialogue that is cued by the close proximity of viewers as they navigate the physical spaces between the works, and conceptual spaces between simulacra and reality.<sup>4</sup> *Left to It’s Own Device*, an installation that incorporates several of Ceren’s semi-objects, addresses the role of perspective in formulating subjective responses to the other, as experienced through sight and touch. *Dreadfully* is composed of lengthy, individual dreadlocks suspended from the ceiling, almost reaching the floor, allowing viewers to walk through them. The knots are crafted from kanekalon, a synthetic fiber, and dyed in an array of bright hues and various natural shades. The dreadlocks react to motion, and because of static electricity, sometimes gently cling to one another in the participant’s wake. The vibrant colors and playful, kinetic element of the work may appear inviting. However, the alluring quality is subtly offset by the viewer’s acute awareness of the apparent materiality. The synthetic, disembodied hair acts as a simulacrum, standing in for real, discarded, dreaded human hair, hair that is teased into abjection, the formation of boundaries that makes clear the distinction between—and

therefore the separation of—self and other.<sup>5</sup> The arrangement creates a pair of permeable partitions at either entrance of the South hallway connecting the Lee + Victor Leavengood and West galleries of the Museum. Viewers must choose to navigate the spaces between the tendrils in order to approach the artist’s additional works.

Emerging from the section portioning off the West Gallery, the viewers, who have at this point become participants, will encounter a space staged with glossy, colorful works, including a tower of tinted Polaroids. In this self-portrait, Ceren is standing in three-quarters pose, triumphantly thrusting a fistful of dreadlocks that appear to be emerging from her pubic region, “putting the tint in taint,” as she puts it.<sup>6</sup> An inspection of the image will stir variations of disdain or amusement in the viewers, especially after making the association between what is in the image and the hairy entanglement behind them. Also in this space is a neat row of eyeglasses with video cameras attached to them. On the wall, providing the social experiment with the atmosphere of an “Apple Store,” a line of tinted iPhones acts as monitors that show a live feed of the accessory’s point of view, so that the audience might better be able to consume what occurs in the gallery space. The perspectives of the participants have been appropriated as a subject to be viewed and considered by the audience by displaying the content on mobile screens. This group of semi-objects provides an opportunity for those interacting to consider the subjective mechanics of decision making in confrontational responses. An arrangement of over two-dozen mirrors of various sizes is installed on the wall across from the Polaroids. Mirrors offer a reflection of the self; a task of meditating on the constructed image of one’s self in terms of being seen from the perspective of someone outside of us; someone other than us. The act of looking in from without unavoidably contributes to the perceived qualities of that image. As William Butler Yeats wrote, “I’m looking for the face I had before the world was made.”<sup>7</sup> Questioning our identity begins with unraveling the elements that have been warped by accepting societal constraints and the gravity of perception. Staged at the heart of *Left to It’s Own Device*, the arrangement of reflective surfaces, much like the other works in this installation, stands poised, awaiting the participants and their accompanying, discriminating gaze—only to turn it on itself.



1. Gloria Ceren, Short Biography, accessed January 6, 2018.

2. Gloria Ceren, Artist’s Statement, accessed February 14, 2018.

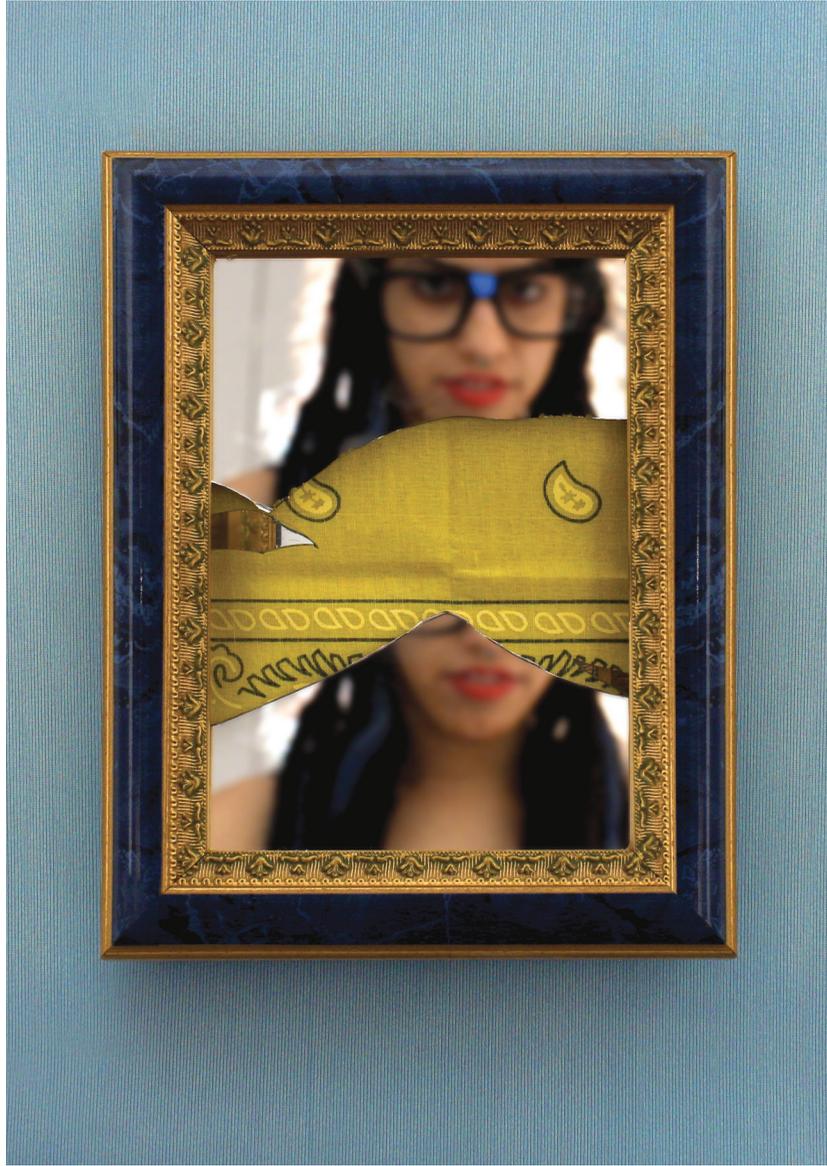
3. Lacan, Jacques. *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience*. Associated Book Publishers (U.K.), Translated by Alan Sheridan, 1949.

4. Artist’s website, <https://www.gloriaceren.com/semi-objects.html>. Gloria Ceren uses this term “semi-objects” to describe her works.

5. Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

6. Gloria Ceren, Interview with Richard Ellis, February 14, 2018.

7. Yeats, William Butler. *The Winding Stair and Other Poems*. London: Macmillan and Company, 1933.



2



3



4



Photo: Kim Turner-Smith

1. *Those Periwinkle Blues*, 2017  
Performance (video stills)
2. *Oblique Approach (Crush #29)*, 2017  
Performance (sequence)
3. *Hole, Shebang (Crush #41)*, 2018  
Performance (sequence)
4. *Stasis (Crush #42)*, 2018  
Performance (sequence)

Images courtesy of the artist.

# WILL DOUGLAS

## NEW COLOR VISION

WRITTEN BY: VICTORIA MANN + ERIN E. HUGHES

The art of Will Douglas explores how the meaning of a photograph or object changes when it is removed from the familiar and placed in new surroundings.<sup>1</sup> Through this juxtaposition, Douglas creates visual connections that cannot be expressed through words. By experimenting with notions of knowledge and familiarity as well as the tension of the preternatural, his work examines ideas of permanence as well as the ephemeral. Douglas' work challenges viewers to see the familiar in a new and different light.

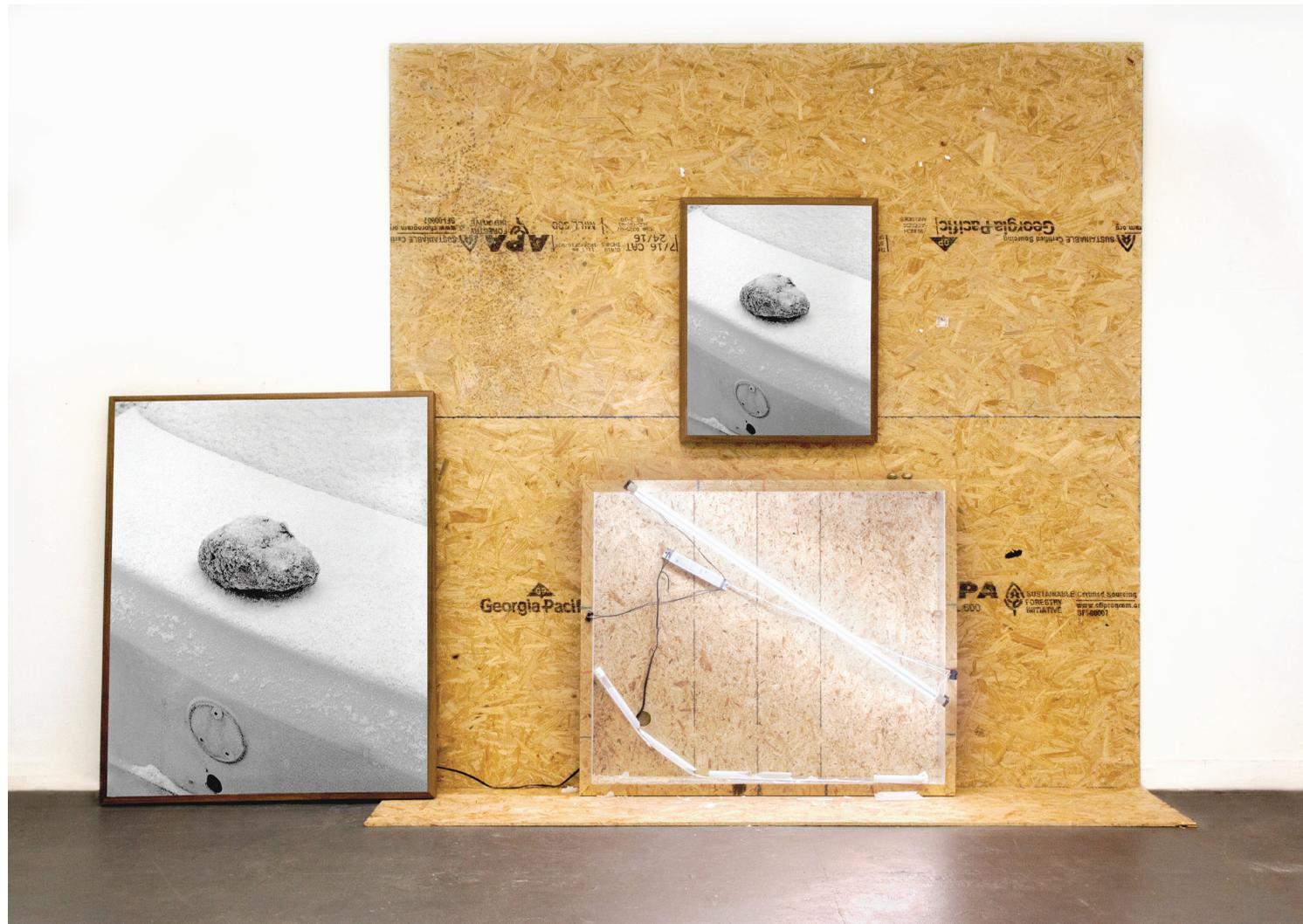
Born in South Carolina to a military family, Douglas often moved during his childhood. The frequent changes in location during this time, along with the new sensory perspectives that came with changing environments, instilled in him a sense of impermanence. This feeling of always needing to be ready to pick up and move never left him, even once his family settled in Virginia, and it is evident in his work. As a child, Douglas felt most comfortable in a car, feeling the motion around him and experiencing how the speed changed his visual perspective.<sup>2</sup> Being in a vehicle, especially between moves, is also a transitional space of possibility. This shifting perspective, how the world looks to us as we gaze out of the window of a moving vehicle, watching the trees, signs, and colors of a world both human-made and natural blur and dissolve into one, has led to Douglas' desire to experiment with the prescribed standards of vision and motion. It is through a play of perceptions, by forcing the audience to move through a familiar space and filling their peripheral vision with unexpected and surprising imagery that his viewers become aware of their own physical and mental states. Through this visual experimentation, expressed by combining his photographs with found objects and construction materials, Douglas explores the nature of our presence in a space and its relationship to our consciousness. Colors blend from the familiar photographic image on to a mysteriously placed statue while a "sign" seen in modern society is presented in the rough material of plywood, which is always present but unseen.

A need to travel has remained essential to Douglas' artistic process. In this post-studio practice, he explores new locations, crossing borders of state and country. Photographing what he sees and finding objects that interest him, he brings the objects and photographs back to his studio to explore notions of the pleasantly familiar as well as the discomfort of displacement. We now have the opportunity to experience our world from a different angle through his work. He takes what we know and transforms it into something new. Our previous knowledge is thrown into question through the visual juxtapositions.

This play on the shifting nature of signs, as well as ideas of place and permanence, are found in Douglas' MFA thesis exhibition. By connecting the literal, three-dimensional space of sculpture to the representational, two-dimensional, indexical space of the photograph, he allows the audience to walk through a seemingly familiar yet also disorienting space, one that confuses the familiar with the strange, causing viewers to question their relationships to the work as well as the relationship between the photograph and the found object. Why does gasoline shimmering on pavement seem to blend in with the color-morphing statue of an ancient discus thrower? Here the artist opens up the work for viewers to draw their own conclusions as they question the tension between the obviously fictionalized world he has created and the alleged truth of the photograph.



1. *Ways of Seeing*. John Berger. British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972.  
2. Will Douglas, Artist's Proposal, accessed January 28th, 2018.



2



3

1. *america's finest city*, 2015–2018  
inkjet on vinyl and grommets  
8 x 10 feet
2. *you count the objects on the mantelpiece because the sound of numbers is a totally new sound in your mouth*, 2017  
archival inkjet print, bronze walnuts, OSB, LED, and walnut wood frames  
8 x 10 x 4 feet
3. *new color vision*, 2018  
laser engraved OSB  
48 x 24 x 4 inches

Images courtesy of the artist.



Photo: Will Douglas

# BEN GALADAY

## THE METASENSUAL OBJECT

WRITTEN BY: BEN GALADAY

"They had to evacuate the grade school on Tuesday. Kids were getting headaches and eye irritations, tasting metal in their mouths. A teacher rolled on the floor and spoke foreign languages. No one knew what was wrong. Investigators said it could be the ventilating system, the paint or varnish, the foam insulation, the electrical insulation, the cafeteria food, the rays emitted by microcomputers, the asbestos fireproofing, the adhesive on shipping containers, the fumes from the chlorinated pool, or perhaps something deeper, finer-grained, more closely woven into the basic state of things."

Don DeLillo  
*White Noise*, 1985

*CONFUSION*: Latin *confūsōn-*, *confūsō* "mixing, combining, disorder, consternation," from *confud-*, variant stem of *confundere* "to pour together, blend, bring into disorder, destroy, disconcert."

Is this yours? Did you lose this? Did you drop that?

Awash in the churning swarm of competing influences, a shifting cloud that has no fixed center, psychic debris collides and collapses, tragically sliding against one another with romantic tension.

Where is the line? The boundaries fade, are dissolute. Potentially contradictory and dissonant elements are treated on equal footing; an awkward union, a strangely harmonic contribution to a blind grope.

..... processing .....

A buried memory, a dissolving dream, framed by culturally determined and commodified myths, whose artifacts are left embedded in the fiber. Boil it down, distill it to the point of fracture, nonsense, then allow it to grow back, bent and strange, with awareness along the fault lines. A fresh batch of extraneous particularities clinging to the roots. Where is the line? The boundaries fade, are dissolute. I want to share a permeable membrane with you.

.....  
.....

Using a formal language of children's fable, personal myth, 70's porn and low-budget sci-fi film, I address the idiosyncratic mechanisms of cognition and the anxiety of an existential hypochondriac.

I'm compelled to destabilize nostalgia, twisting sentimentality and romanticisation. Utilizing theatricality and the uncanny I explore the disorder of an assumed reality exacerbating the alienation from one's self and surroundings.

My work describes the dilemma of communication and the dichotomy of intimacy; the profound satisfaction of being seen and the acute discomfort of exposure.

Shimmering in the precarious state between the familiar and the foreign, attractive and unnerving, I make alluring objects with ulterior motives; distillations of altered memories and lost dream fragments, deceptively poppy and fizzy with an underlying dread and perverse self-awareness.

.....  
.....

Working mainly in sculpture with sound as an amplifying element and ethereal glue, I explore materiality and the odd consequence of competing perceptual input.

Combining materials such as ceramic, foam, plaster, fabric, plastic, glues, and wax, these lo-fi substances gain in complexity through their union.

I'm interested in cartooning the fundamental. To create shadows, imposters, preposterous symbols of cherished and repulsive drives. To examine and provoke the profound shared sublime through clumsy artifice and campy artificiality.

In *Buried Alone*, one finds a flurry of flies seeking food and lodging, a cryptic door promising no answers, an orphan chihuahua with calming suggestions, a ritualized ATM portal leading into a theme-less park; a convoluted conflation of myth and fable alluding to a broken, cyclical trajectory of disillusion and discovery without moral or resolution.

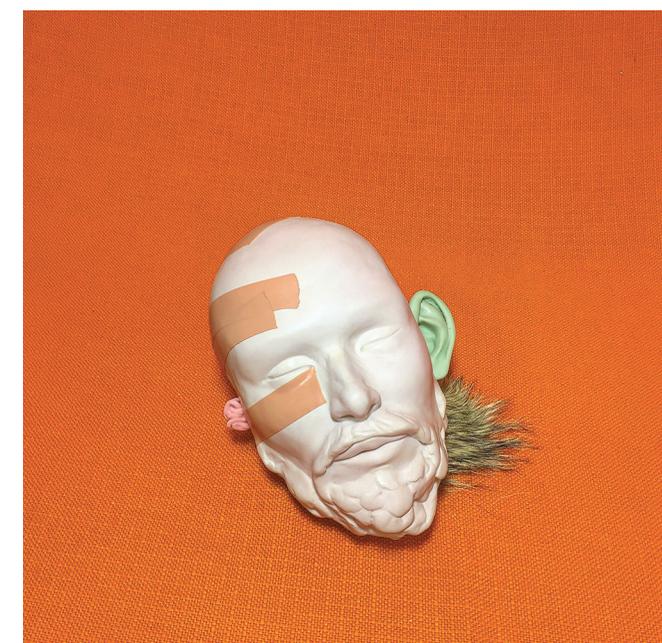
.....  
.....



1

2

3





4



5



6

1. *Roast 1 (Truncated Telescopic) <detail>*, 2015  
ceramic, mixed-media  
14 x 30 x 7 feet
2. *Curious Rituals (Monster Hand Turd Candle)*, 2016  
ceramic  
12 x 14 x 5 inches  
photo: Will Douglas
3. *History is What You've Made of Me*, 2015  
polished porcelain, fox fur, medical tape, wax  
10 x 10 x 10 inches
4. *Plant-Mole/Rabbit-Duck (No Faces)*, 2018  
fabric, wood, foam, paper pulp  
30 x 36 x 5 inches
5. *W-2 Pony*, 2016  
ceramic, fur, plastic, wood, thread  
7 x 7 x 5 inches
6. *Roast 2 (If Not You, Who?) <detail>*, 2018  
ceramic, mixed-media, rotisserie motor, adhesive inkjet print  
4 x 3 x 2 feet  
photo: Will Douglas

Images courtesy of the artist.



Photo: Will Douglas

# NESTOR CAPARROS MARTIN

## PROJECT RANGER: ARTIST-AS-SCIENTIST-AS-EXPLORER

WRITTEN BY: AMANDA POSS

Walking into Nestor Caparros Martin's studio is like stepping into his mind: one is immediately surrounded by a creative chaos of in-progress sculptures interspersed with tools and bits of gold insulation foil. The walls are covered with intriguing paper sketches with precise annotations that have the appearance of engineering or architectural schematics. Martin's curiosity plays out endlessly in his studio, in whichever media or technology that convincingly conveys his ideas. Thus, it feels completely natural to watch a live feed of NASA's James Webb Space Telescope as it streams from Martin's laptop while, at the same time, old-school overhead projectors cast tesseract-like shadows from bended pieces of plexiglass.

Martin's interests, like his artworks, are diverse.<sup>1</sup> He reads philosophical texts, such as Jean-Luc Nancy's book *The Sense of the World*, alongside titles such as *Seven Brief Lessons on Physics* and *Parallel Presents: The Art of Pierre Huyghe*. Through interdisciplinary research, Martin is trying to come to terms with complex concepts such as present-ness, the actuality of existence, and the continuous question of transformation, among others. For Martin, the plurality inherent in these lines of inquiry relates to the possibility of unresolved and open-ended artworks that leave room for more questions (as opposed to a finished painting on the wall or sculpture on a pedestal).

Early in his graduate studies, Martin produced sculptural objects that used forces of tension and gravity to probe the physical limitations of industrial materials like metal, wood, or PVC.<sup>2</sup> In his 2015 installation *Untitled* an upright rectangular metal frame on the floor strains against a bent sheet of black plywood on the ceiling, connected at each corner by taut orange ratchet straps. The two parts seem to pull and strain against one another in either direction, suggesting a state of energetic stress in which we anticipate a breaking point that never comes. "The idea of making an uncomfortable non-space through the tension of the two planes, grounded and levitated," says Martin, was an attempt "to stage a situation that suggested imminent peril."<sup>3</sup> As his practice expanded to include a wider variety of media—film, photography, sound, and performance—Martin's work started to push at increasingly complex investigations into phenomenology, the space-time continuum, and the nature of reality.

Martin is currently engaged in a multimedia project he informally calls *Project Ranger*.<sup>4</sup> The back of his Ford Ranger pickup truck has been retrofitted with a large DIY pinhole camera that points upward to the sky to capture unique photographs of the stars. In contrast to sited, monumental investigations into vision and perception such as James Turrell's ongoing *Roden Crater* (begun in 1977), the mobility of *Project Ranger* allows for almost endless variations in observed phenomena. Long exposures onto silver gelatin paper condense hours of observation into singular images, taken at various times and in various places as Martin drives around the city of Tampa. The resulting photographs are meant to reveal phenomena beyond the range of human perception, such as the layered movements of heavenly bodies on macrocosmic scales in relation to the artist's own location in time and space. For Martin, this is true even when the image itself is black, visually ambiguous, or aesthetically unappealing. Each photograph functions as a document of his explorations and process, linking the physical to the ephemeral as Martin attempts to "sense" the world around him.<sup>5</sup> There is something about his attempt to make visible the latency of time, space, and perception that feels distinctly ontological in nature.

No matter the form or media, one can always sense Martin's impulsive curiosity as he deftly layers formal concerns with philosophy and empirical experimentation; he comes across as a sort of artist-as-scientist-as-explorer with a DIY aesthetic. His work elides immediate answers and provides no finite conclusions. "I pose questions," says Martin, "I don't provide answers."<sup>6</sup> By probing the boundaries between perception and reality, Martin directs our attention to everyday phenomena and invites us to participate in his process: to slow down, sense, question, and reflect. Similar to the philosophical inquiry of Jean-Luc Nancy, Martin pushes his viewer to consider the pluralisation of sense and contemplate what it means to be in the world today.

1. Nestor Caparros Martin, Interview with Amanda Poss, January 27, 2018.

2. Artist statement, quoted from: "Dismantling the Tunnel," Nestor Caparros Martin, accessed January 25, 2018, <http://nestorcaparros.com/statement>.

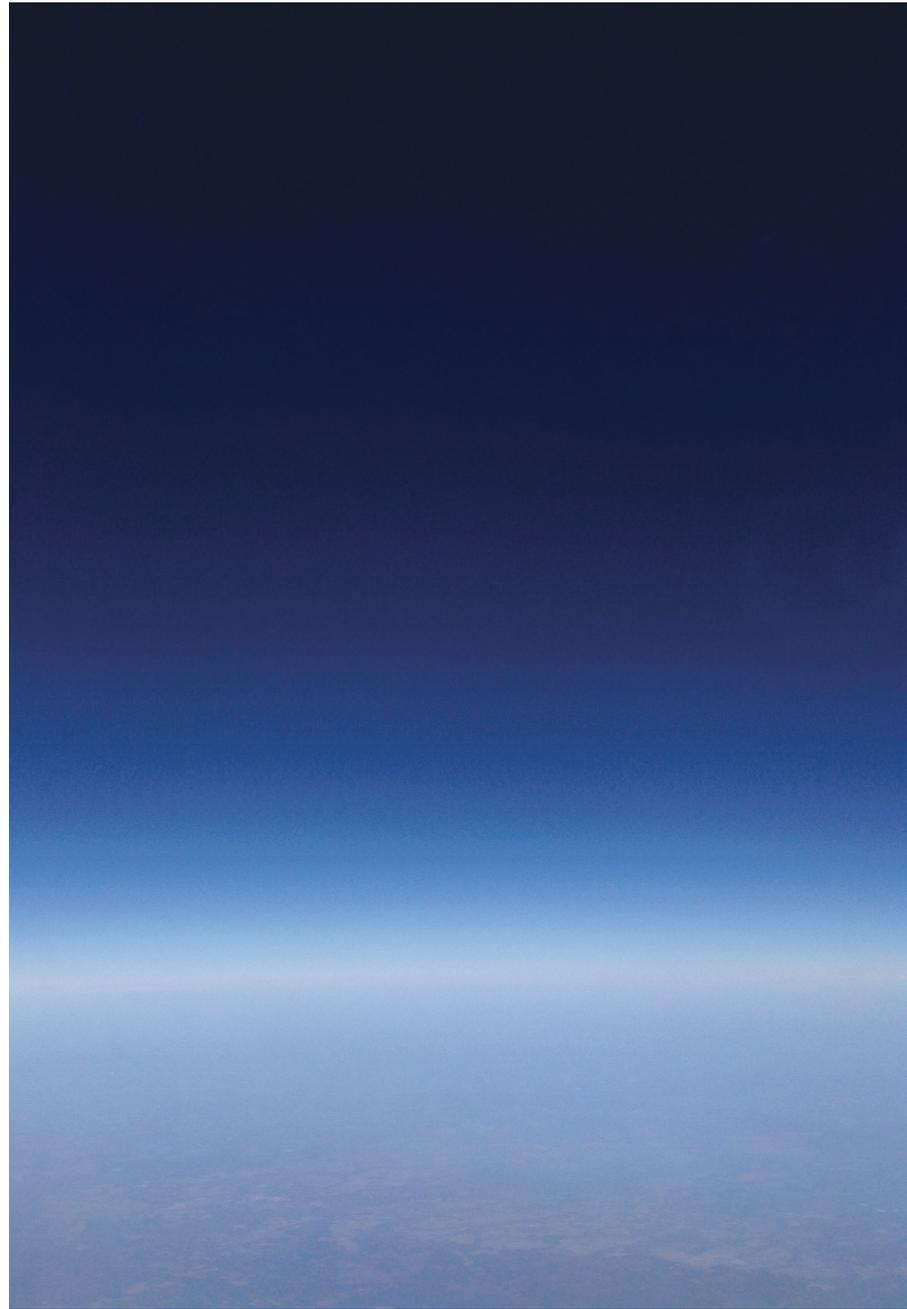
3. Nestor Caparros Martin, Interview with Amanda Poss, January 27, 2018.

4. Nestor Caparros Martin, Interview with Amanda Poss, January 27, 2018.

5. Nestor Caparros Martin, Interview with Amanda Poss, January 27, 2018.

6. Ibid.





2



3



4



5

1. *Untitled (index #1)*, 2017  
Part of the project *Black Wall*  
silver gelatin print  
80 x 72 inches
2. *Untitled (Horizon1)*, 2016  
Part of the project *Horizon*  
archival inkjet print  
40 x 60 inches
3. *Untitled*, 2015  
plywood, metal tubing, anchors, ratchet strap  
variable size
4. *Untitled (Ranger 1 Patch)*, 2018  
Part of the project *Ranger*  
100 limited edition artist embroidered patches  
3-1/2 inch diameter
5. *Untitled (crossing)*, 2016  
Part of the project *Horizon*  
Video installation on drywall structures

Images courtesy of the artist.



Photo: Nestor Caparros Martin

# ZAKRIYA RABANI

## COLLECTIVE FLOW: ZAKRIYA RABANI'S *DIVINE DECKS*, TAMPA

WRITTEN BY: ASHLEY WILLIAMS

For *Divine Decks, Tampa*, Zakriya Rabani has assembled an immersive installation comprised of three tiers of skateboard decks connected to each other by black shoelaces. Void of any trucks or wheels, the decks appear stitched together like a quilt, relaying a narrative through what remains of graffitied grip tape, stickers, and painted decks.<sup>1</sup> Suspended from the ceiling in a diamond-shaped arrangement, the decks create a curtain surrounding an internal chamber for viewers to enter. In order to follow the three-foot wide path into the installation, viewers will need to ascend a skate ramp built into the space. By altering the floor of his installation, Rabani provides viewers with a new perspective of the museum. With this work Rabani seeks to create a space for exploration, breaking away from institutional limitations. There are no instructions in place to inform viewers that they may enter the space. It is up to them to take that initiative.

Attributable to his experiences as a coach and an athlete, a fundamental concept found in Rabani's work is collaboration. For this installation, Rabani worked with the organization Boards for Bros to acquire the used decks.<sup>2</sup> Every skateboard deck has been sourced from the Skatepark of Tampa and is considered to be lifeless and defective.<sup>3</sup> In *Divine Decks, Tampa*, Rabani seeks to revitalize these boards, giving them another life in his installation. Between the scuff marks created by the decks grinding across rails and ramps, remnants of neon orange and green paint greet those who enter the installation. Occasionally, a woman's face will gaze out at the viewer, while on other decks the imagery has all but disappeared. While the skate decks have become inert objects within the installation, the experiences and memories of movement created with the original owner remain with the deck, evident by the worn-down edges and cracks found on the surface.<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, a collaboration between artist and viewer presents itself in the center of the installation. As viewers walk through the work reading each deck along the path, they will eventually be met with a hanging shoelace from which a lone skateboard wheel is

suspended, allowing them to switch on a single light source. With this one action, light emits out through the decks, illuminating the walls of the exhibition space.

Rabani has designed *Divine Decks, Tampa* so that when viewers choose to turn off the light source, the gallery lights interact with the decks, creating an intertwining pattern that is cast on the wood grain ramp beneath the viewer's feet. As viewers walk through the installation, footprints and markings left behind will begin to permeate the surface, altering the design. Rabani's interest in light and patterns stems from the research of his paternal family history and Middle Eastern heritage. After tracing his roots to Pakistan, Rabani became intrigued by the intricate, arabesque designs found within Islamic art and architecture. Additionally, with his installation, Rabani plays with the idea of early shrines and temples in which warm luminosity would fill the room, encompassing the space in light and shadows.<sup>5</sup>

Interested in the way artists Fred Sandback and Mark Lombardi utilize line, Rabani similarly used line as a "method of exploration" when developing *Divine Decks, Tampa*.<sup>6</sup> Initially experimenting with light and rubber bands to create patterns, Rabani later began to incorporate skateboard decks in order to weave together his art practice and the community of skaters in Tampa Bay.

Accompanying Rabani's installation is a catalog of the decks displayed within *Divine Decks, Tampa*. The book is a collection of photographs taken by Rabani that presents both the imagery painted on the underside of the deck and the grip tape. The printed version of the decks serves as a record of the life of the boards. As the decks are from the Tampa Bay area, Rabani asks, "Are these decks important enough to be remembered?"

1. For his installation, Rabani has removed the components that the wheels would be attached to such as the trucks, hardware, and bearings.

2. Boards for Bros is a Tampa based non-profit organization that seeks to match children with refurbished skateboards. For more information visit, [www.boards4bros.com](http://www.boards4bros.com).

3. Zakriya Rabani, Interview with Ashley Williams, January 17, 2018.

4. Zakriya Rabani, Interview with Ashley Williams, February 6, 2018.

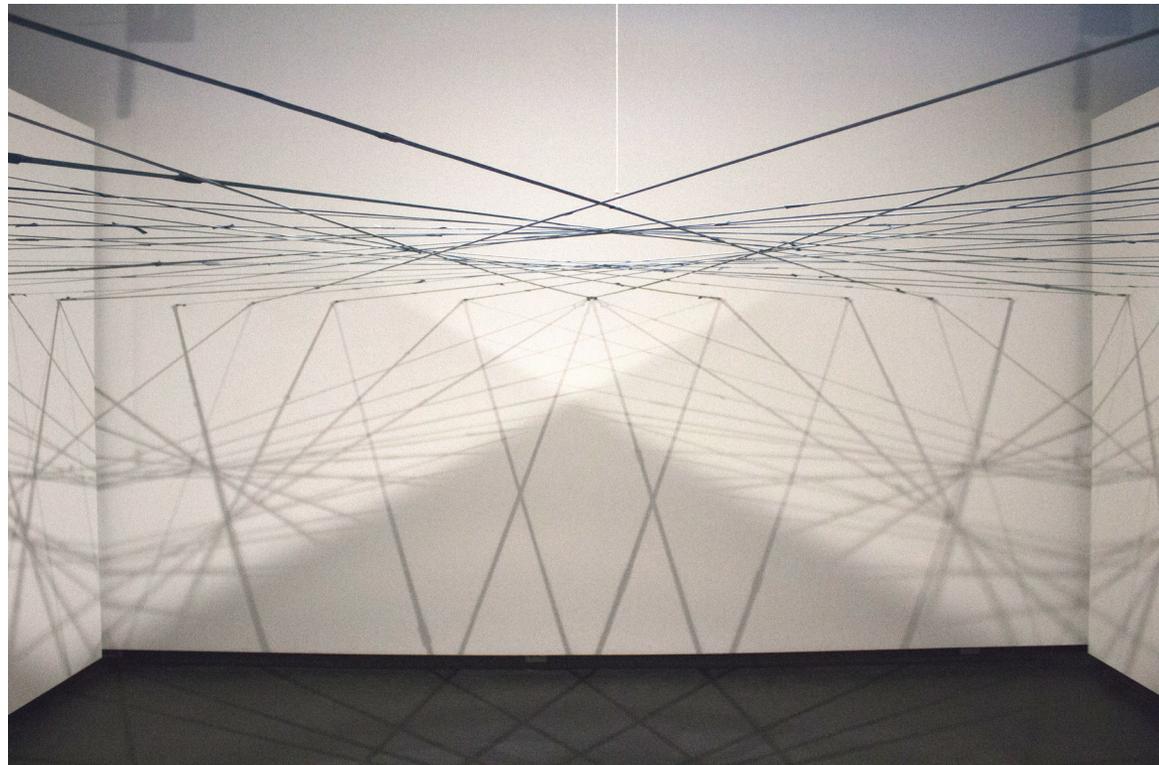
5. Zakriya Rabani, Interview with Ashley Williams, January 17, 2018.

6. Zakriya Rabani, Thesis Proposal, accessed January 11, 2018. Fred Sandback (1943-2003) was a minimalist sculptor known for his work with yarn; Mark Lombardi (1951-2000) was a conceptual artist known for line drawings that documented alleged frauds committed by those in power.

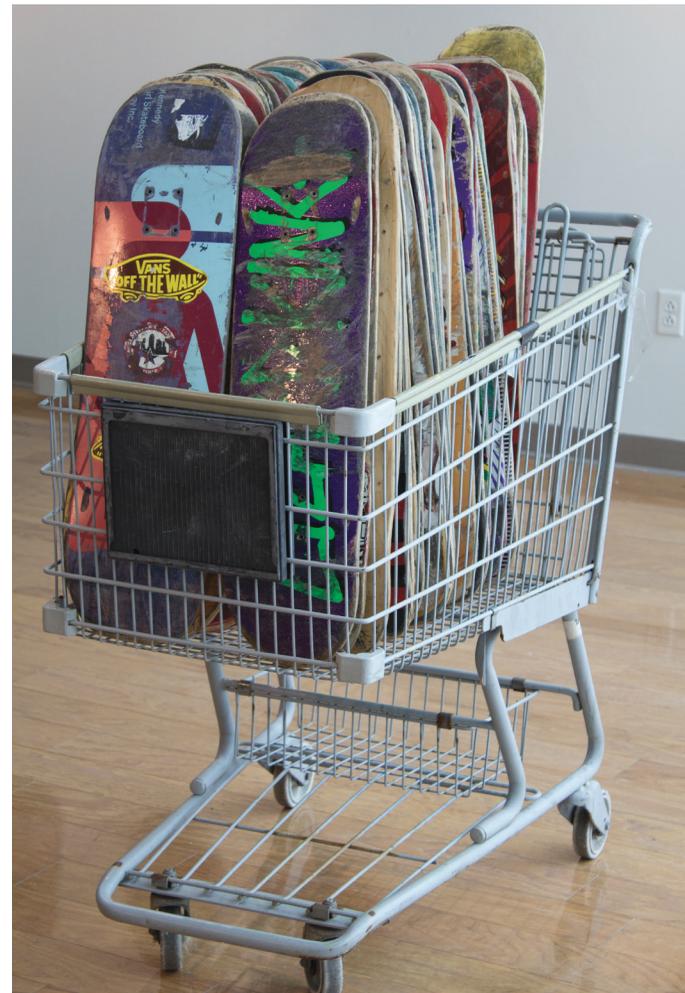




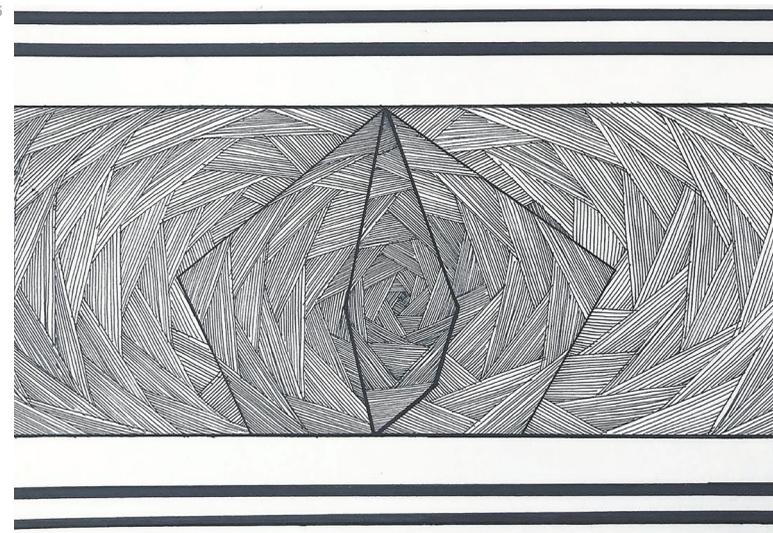
2



3



4



5



6



Photo: Jeanette Bullock

1. *Divine Decks*, 2017  
used skateboard decks, steel, light  
10 x 10 x 15 feet
2. *Divine Decks* (detail), 2017  
used skateboard decks, steel, light  
10 x 10 x 15 feet
3. *Hex*, 2018  
rubber bands, light  
dimensions variable
4. *Shred til ya Ded*, 2017  
shopping cart, "dead" skateboards  
33 x 48 x 25 inches
5. *Flow System Drawing #31*, 2017  
ink on paper  
14 x 20 inches
6. *Paper Ball*, 2016  
bronze  
2 x 2 x 2 inches

Images courtesy of the artist.

# KIM TURNER-SMITH

## OVERSEEING THE OVERLOOKED

WRITTEN BY: SK WEST

Kim Turner-Smith has found that one way to hold on is exactly by letting go; by embracing the possibilities of imprecisions and being open to benevolent coincidence, her work feels less staged and more sincere—she is capturing real, unposed life. Turner-Smith works with the medium of photography, and recently began exploring the nature of moving images, to rescue minuscule moments of ordinary existence from the slipperiness of time. This palpable awareness of temporality, coupled with her determination to signify the splendor of mundanity, produces images of ambiguity and extraordinary subtleties. Her work, drawing inspiration from artists like Bill Viola, Sally Mann, and Roni Horn, evokes a pensive sentimentality for the past, punctuated by an urgent call to presentness.<sup>1</sup>

For the last few years, Turner-Smith's work has showcased the ephemeral spectacle of growing up as her two daughters, aged five and eight, learn independence through loss and new levels of autonomy with each age, all while her work reveals the tacit complexities of motherhood. Partly cherishing her children's joyous vulnerability and partly mourning the immediate past of the photographed contexts, Turner-Smith's body of familial photography is wholly sensitive to the all-consuming experience of motherhood.

Along with documenting the passage of time via the development of her children as they grow into their individualities, Turner-Smith has captured decaying inanimate objects in all their dilapidated glory. Selections of ramshackle articles include a couch covered in plastic wrap and a set of yellowed curtains littered with flies; the sheeting is a visual representation of the human tendency to preserve and extend life, while the discolored window treatments are more obvious in their maturity. While these deteriorating objects would be overlooked by others, Turner-Smith photographs them with thoughtfulness and care, valuing the essence that remains in them in spite of expired functional expectations.

In her recent practice working with moving images, Turner-Smith "celebrates the wonder of small details" and "nods to interconnection and our place in the universe" by way of ambiguous imagery, graphic matching—an editing technique in which successive shots are juxtaposed to show similarities in their composition—and repetition.<sup>2</sup> These qualities of her video works ease the viewer into a non-linear timeline that was never intended to be objectively explicit but is all the more encouraged to be subjectively sought. Her multi-channel installations comprised of imagery extracted from reality captivate viewers with fluid transitions and the coherent variations between the screens. Shadows give way to bursting light, moving in and out of focus as the images dance around notions of specificity and move beyond static presumptions. Shifting from video footage of a snake moving through a zag to scenes of sunlight shimmering on water to unknown, fast-moving particles that could be blood, Turner-Smith brings such overlooked moments together to interrupt the comfortable "serenity of the narrative" and to underscore the poetic nuances of everyday life.<sup>3</sup>

Cameras will only capture what already exists in the world, to put it simply; thus the medium of photography is intrinsically indexical. Turner-Smith is not denying this essential quality in her work—she works with what is presented to her, guided by intuition and her eye for light. Her work explores the malleability of memory and how her own memories can influence each viewer's experience of her work. While Turner-Smith is "bearing witness" in her videos to the world's disregarded and transient features, every viewer will bring themselves into the work.<sup>4</sup> She is considering the consequences of the permeable nature of memory, both her own as shown in the work and in the viewer's reminiscences.

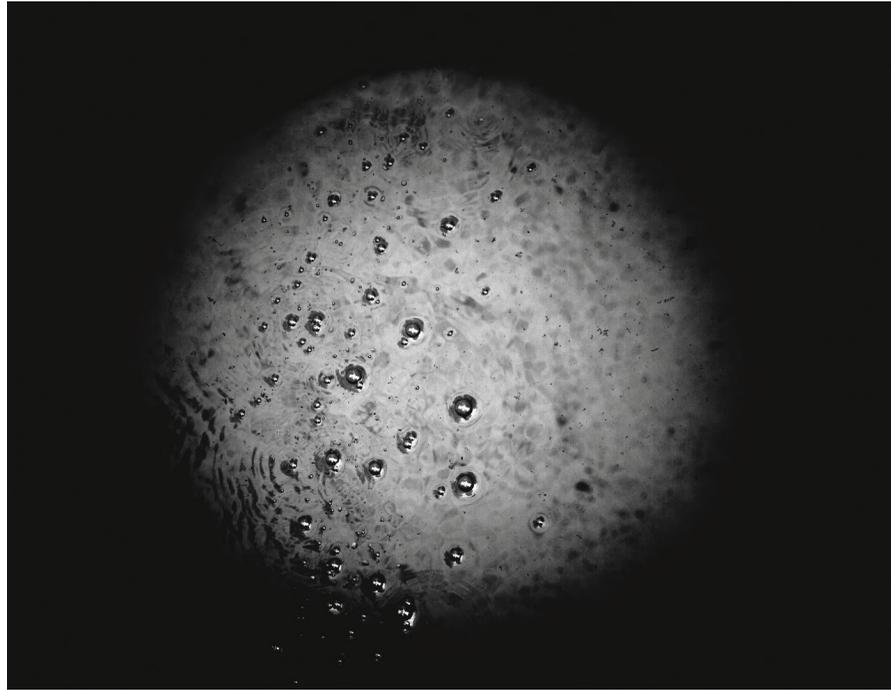


1. Bill Viola (b. 1951) is a contemporary video artist whose works focus on fundamental human experiences including life, death, and consciousness. Sally Mann (b. 1951) is an American photographer whose photographed subjects include her young children and landscapes. Roni Horn (b. 1955) is an American artist and writer who works in sculpture, photography, drawing, language, and site-specific installation.

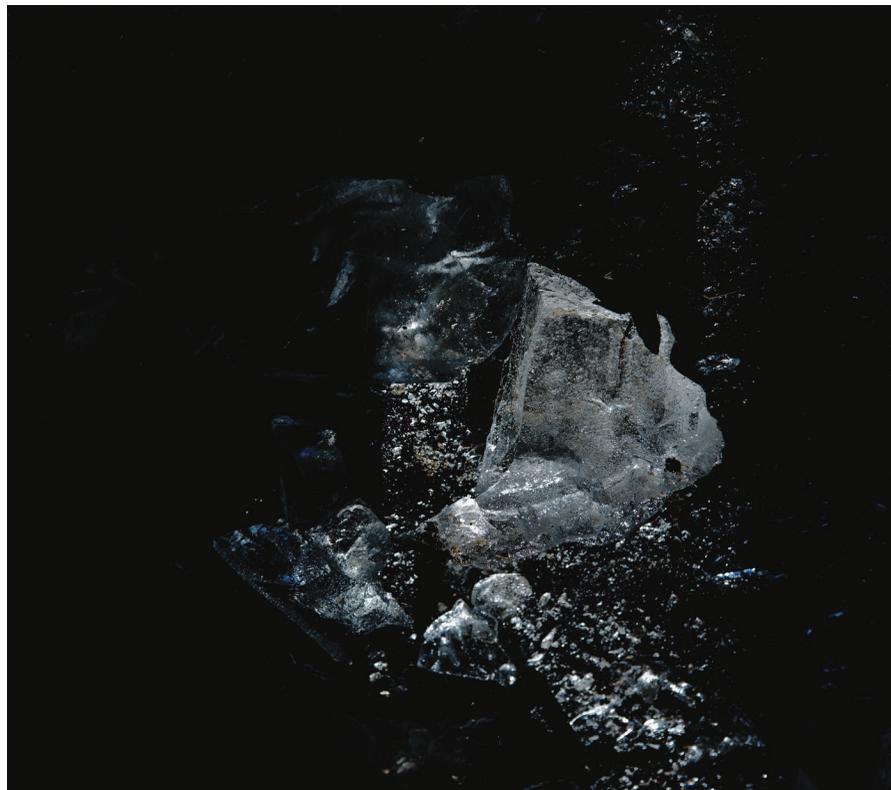
2. Kim Turner-Smith, Artist statement, accessed on February 7, 2018.

3. Kim Turner-Smith, Artist statement, accessed on February 7, 2018.

4. Kim Turner-Smith, Interview with SK West, February 13, 2018.



2



3



4



5

1. *Aquarium*, 2016  
archival pigment print  
17 x 22 inches
2. *Spore*, 2017  
archival pigment print  
32 x 25 inches
3. *Untitled (ice chunk)*, 2018  
archival pigment print  
25-3/4 x 23 inches
4. stills from *A Forest Full of Hungry Mouths*, 2018  
HD video loop
5. stills from *A Forest Full of Hungry Mouths*, 2018  
HD video loop

Images courtesy of the artist.



Photo: Christian Cortes Martinez

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

WRITTEN BY: ERIN E. HUGHES, ART RESEARCH FORUM PRESIDENT + MA GRADUATE STUDENT

The publication of the 2018 exhibition catalog, *Buried Alone*, was an invaluable learning experience that would not have been possible without the networks of supportive and dedicated people who participated in this process. This catalog was a truly collaborative endeavor, building from the strong foundation laid by previous years' efforts. It took shape under the guidance of the faculty and staff of the School of Art and Art History.

We would like to thank the Director of the School of Art and Art History, Wallace Wilson, for providing keen insight in organizing a project of this scale and complexity. Thank you to Wendy Babcox, Associate Professor, and Dr. Pamela Brekka, Assistant Professor. Also, special thanks is extended to Dr. Allison Moore, whose constructive, meticulous, and timely feedback was essential to elevating the intellectual content of this catalog.

As this catalog commemorates the exhibition *Buried Alone*, we would like to thank the staff of the Contemporary Art Museum (CAM), a branch of the Institute for Research in Art (IRA), for generously hosting the exhibit and providing additional support and guidance. Thank you to Margaret Miller, Director (IRA), and Noel Smith, Deputy Director (CAM), for opening their doors and allowing us this opportunity. Thank you to Shannon Annis, Exhibitions Manager/Registrar, and Anthony Wong Palms, Exhibition Coordinator/Designer, for all their work in designing and managing the exhibition. We are truly indebted to Vincent Kral, Chief Preparator, and the support staff at CAM, including Eric Jonas and David Waterman.

Also, we would like to extend a special thank you to the fantastic Don Fuller, New Media Curator, and Madeline Baker, New Media Assistant, who designed the layout for this catalog and additional promotional materials for the exhibition. Thank you for the time and energy you put forth in making this catalog so elegant!

We are grateful for the collaborative efforts of the student organizations, Art Research Forum and the Master of Fine Arts Organization. They volunteered their valuable time to write, edit, organize, and fundraise for this catalog. Its success is due to their committed teamwork and determination.

We owe abundant thanks to our editors, Dr. Allison Moore and Ashley Williams, for their exhaustive attention to every detail. The USF Writing Studio provided additional editing assistance.

Finally, this exhibition catalog would not have been possible without the financial backing of many donors. We would like to especially thank Stanton Storer for his generous contribution to making the catalog possible, as well as Rodney Mayton, Gregory Green, and Allison Moore for their donations. Thanks to all members of the 2018 MFA class for their involvement in the 6x6 fundraiser. We are grateful to Tracy Midulla for hosting the 6x6 at Tempus Projects. Bill Faucett, Director of Development for the College of The Arts at the University of South Florida was vital in promoting the project. Also, there were many more contributions by undisclosed donors as well as those featured on this page.

To the numerous people who helped bring the publication of the exhibition catalog *Buried Alone* to fruition, we would like to convey our deepest appreciation and gratitude.

# ART HISTORIANS

**JAMES CARTWRIGHT** | SCHOOL OF ART AND ART HISTORY, MA  
James Cartwright received his MA in Art History from the University of South Florida in 2017. He focuses on cross-cultural artistic exchange, specifically exploring the decoration of shared religious spaces. While at USF he was awarded the 2016 Graduate Art History Prize, and was a recipient of the Carolyn Wilson Fellowship. He recently presented his research at the CEMS International Graduate Conference in Budapest, Hungary. He currently works as an adjunct professor in USF's School of Art and Art History, and he is a writing consultant at USF's Writing Studio.

**RICHARD ELLIS** | SCHOOL OF ART AND ART HISTORY, MA  
Richard Ellis is currently a Masters candidate in Art History at the University of South Florida. He graduated from USF with a BA in 2017, during which he was awarded the USF Talent Grant. His research interests include contemporary art in the Middle East and the history of Islamic art. He has interned at both ArtNexus magazine and the Florida Museum of Photographic Arts.

**ERIN E. HUGHES** | SCHOOL OF ART AND ART HISTORY, MA  
Erin E. Hughes is a current Masters candidate in Art History at the University of South Florida. She was previously involved in a career in sports medicine but chose to pursue her passion in art history after working as a gallery assistant in a contemporary art gallery in St. Petersburg, FL. This year she has co-curated an exhibition of MFA artwork at the Carolyn M. Wilson Gallery while also taking part in a panel discussion on the political power of art, both at USF. Hughes' primary focus is African American contemporary art. Through her research, she explores how such images have been utilized in the fight for equality and the power of representation.

**VICTORIA MANN** | SCHOOL OF ART AND ART HISTORY, MA  
Victoria Mann is a Masters candidate in Art History at the University of South Florida and a recipient of the Carolyn M. Wilson fellowship, as well as the Isobel and Charles Hayes and Hope Rietschlin scholarships. She received her A.S. in Photographic Technology from St. Petersburg College in 2013, and in 2016 she completed her B.A. in Art History with a minor in Anthropology at USF. Her graduate research focus is 20th Century Modernist Art, with an interest in social trauma and psychology. A supporter of art therapy as an essential practice to help the traumatized and mentally ill, her research explores the connections between art and the human experience in times of crisis.

**AMANDA POSS** | SCHOOL OF ART AND ART HISTORY, MA  
Amanda Poss received her MA in Art History from the University of South Florida in 2015 specializing in Modern and Contemporary Art, and a BA from the University of Saint Francis, Fort Wayne, Indiana in 2011. She currently holds the position of Gallery Director at Gallery 221@Hillsborough Community College, Dale Mabry campus. She is the former Gallery Director at Blake High School, where she organized and curated exhibits from 2015–17. Poss has also held positions at the Scarfone/Hartley Gallery at the University of Tampa as a Gallery Assistant, Adjunct Professor at the University of Tampa, and Adjunct Professor at Hillsborough Community College.

**SK WEST** | SCHOOL OF ART AND ART HISTORY, MA  
SK West is a Masters candidate in Art History with a focus on modern and contemporary art at the University of South Florida, where she graduated cum laude with her BA in Art History in 2017. She recently provided curatorial assistance for *Epigraphs: A Symbiotic Vision* at the Carolyn M. Wilson Gallery in Tampa, and has worked as a research intern at the Museum of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg, Florida. West is also a freelance writer and published poet.

**ASHLEY WILLIAMS** | SCHOOL OF ART AND ART HISTORY, MA  
Ashley Williams received her MA in Art History from the University of South Florida in 2017, specializing in Islamic art and architecture. Her current research focuses on the cross-cultural exchange of objects and material culture. While at USF she was the recipient of the Carolyn M. Wilson Fellowship. She has interned at the Salvador Dalí Museum in St. Petersburg, Florida, and assisted at Gallery 221@Hillsborough Community College. Williams recently presented her research at the Midwest Art History Society Conference in Cleveland, Ohio in addition to graduate symposia at the University of South Florida and Central Michigan University.

**SCHOOL OF ART AND ART HISTORY**

University of South Florida  
4202 East Fowler Ave. FAH 110  
Tampa, FL 33620-7350

(813) 974-2360

**ART.USF.EDU**

