

DAAP MFA

SAEIDE KARIMI
LEIGH JOHNSON
BEN NORTON
ALYSSA RITCHIE
JUSTIN HODGES
MILES TURNER
COLIN KLIMESH
RICK WOLHOY
IAN HORWITZ
JUSTIN SANDIDGE
SEAN OSWALD
KATE STENGER

2015

FOREWORD

BY VITTORIA DAIELLO (VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION) AND MORGAN THOMAS (ART HISTORY)

THIS COLLECTION OF TEXTS AND IMAGES BRINGS TOGETHER THE WORK OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND FACULTY IN ART HISTORY, ART EDUCATION, AND FINE ARTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI IN THE SPRING OF 2015. WE INVITED STUDENTS IN ART EDUCATION AND ART HISTORY TO WRITE ACCOMPANYING TEXTS FOR THE FINAL PROJECTS OF THEIR PEERS IN THE FINE ARTS GRADUATE PROGRAM – PROJECTS ENCOMPASSING EVERYTHING FROM MULTIMEDIA INSTALLATION, ABSTRACT PAINTING, VIDEO ANIMATION, FIBER-BASED SCULPTURAL ASSEMBLAGES, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND DRAWING. THE STUDENTS' PROJECTS WERE PRESENTED AT THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER, CINCINNATI, AS PART OF THE SCHOOL OF ART'S MFA THESIS EXHIBITION, WHICH RAN FROM APRIL 1 AND APRIL 25, 2015. A PROCESS OF LOOKING, TALKING, LOOKING AGAIN, WRITING, READING, AND RE-WRITING UNFOLDED. SHORTER VERSIONS OF THE TEXTS WERE SHOWN AT THE CAC ALONGSIDE THE ARTWORKS AT THE CAC. THE PROCESS CREATED A WORKING SPACE FOR ARTISTS AND WRITERS IN DIALOGUE, GIVING RISE TO NEW IDEAS AND PROJECTS IN TURN.

IT SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE THAT WE HAVE LEARNED AS MUCH, OR MORE, FROM THESE GIFTED WRITERS AS THEY HAVE FROM US. HERE YOU CAN FIND FOOD FOR THOUGHT ENCOMPASSING ALL FACETS OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE AND ART – EVERYTHING FROM THE CONVERGENCE OF LUXURY AND DIY IN TODAY'S ARTISANAL AESTHETICS, TO THE UNCANNY EFFECTS OF PHOTOGRAPHIC PORTRAITURE SHOWING DIVERGENT DRESS CODES IN A MUSLIM IMMIGRANT FAMILY LIVING IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICA, OR, AGAIN, THE BLURRING TOGETHER OF THE CYCLES OF THE HUMAN DIGESTIVE SYSTEM AND STOP-MOTION ANIMATION.

EACH COLLABORATION HAS ITS OWN SINGULAR CHARACTER. AT THE SAME TIME, ALL THESE TEXTS ATTEST TO THE POWER OF WRITING – WHICH, AS WE LEARN, IS ALSO AN ART – AND TO THE AESTHETIC AND CONCEPTUAL POWER OF THE ARTISTS' PROJECTS. THESE POLYVOCAL REFLECTIONS THUS SHOW HOW SUCH FORMS OF DIALOGUE ACROSS DIFFERENT ZONES OF RESEARCH ACT TO ENERGIZE AND MAKE SOMETHING NEW.

OUR THANKS TO ALL THE WRITERS AND ARTISTS WHO PARTICIPATED AND ADDED THEIR VOICES AND IDEAS TO THIS PROJECT. OUR GRATITUDE TO JOE GIRANDOLA (DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES, FINE ARTS) FOR HIS ENTHUSIASM AND INVALUABLE ASSISTANCE ALONG THE WAY, WITHOUT WHICH THIS PROJECT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE.

OUR SPECIAL THANKS, FINALLY, TO SSO-RHA KANG FOR HER BRILLIANT DESIGN WORK FOR THIS PUBLICATION AND HER DILIGENCE WITH THE FINALIZATION OF THE TEXT FOR PUBLICATION.

SAEIDE KARIMI

BY SAEDEH ASADIPOUR



AT FIRST GLANCE SAEIDE KARIMI'S PHOTOGRAPHS MAY SEEM INNOCUOUS, JUST PORTRAITS OF A FAMILY IN A LIVING ROOM, SMILING FOR THE CAMERA. THEN AN UNCANNY ELEMENT PRESENTS ITSELF AMIDST THE TRAPPINGS OF SUBURBAN AMERICAN DOMESTICITY—A GIRL WITH DARKER SKIN WEARING A HEAD COVERING. THE PHOTOGRAPHS EVOKE THE TRAUMA OF AN ORPHAN IN SEARCH OF A HOME, YET ALSO—PARTICULARLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RECENT RISE OF WESTERN ISLAMOPHOBIA—ALLUDE TO THE STRUGGLES FACED BY A MUSLIM IMMIGRANT WOMAN IN THE UNITED STATES. KARIMI INVESTIGATES THESE QUESTIONS AND AT THE SAME TIME UNDERLINES THE FICTIVE QUALITIES OF PHOTOGRAPHY, EVIDENCED IN AND BY THESE GENERIC IMAGES OF HOMOGENOUSLY SMILING FAMILIES.

LEIGH JOHNSON

BY EMILY WYATT BAUMAN



LEIGH JOHNSON REMARKS THAT WOOL, AS A NATURAL MATERIAL, IS WELL-SUITED TO HER CONTEMPLATION OF BIOLOGICAL SYSTEMS AND UNEXPECTED MODES OF CONNECTIVITY IN THE UNIVERSE. IN THE CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTER, THE LIGHT FROM THE WINDOW BEHIND JOHNSON'S TOWERING YET DELICATE SCULPTURE, TITLED CONSTELLATION, PASSES THROUGH ITS FIBERS, OF VARIABLE DENSITIES, SUGGESTING AT ONCE THE VAST EXPANSE OF CONSTELLATIONS IN THE UNIVERSE AND BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES ON A MICROSCOPE SLIDE. JOHNSON ALLUDES TO THE COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS OF NEMATODES, MICROSCOPIC WORMS THAT JOIN TOGETHER TO BUILD TOWERS THAT ALLOW JUST THE TOP ONE OR TWO WORMS TO CLIMB INTO A BEETLE TO SURVIVE. YET CONSTELLATION DOES NOT FORCE A CONNECTION WITH ANY ONE THEME, INSTEAD SOLICITING UNHURRIED CONTEMPLATION OF ITS GROUNDED WHITE TOWER AND SOARING, LUCENT COLUMN.

BEN NORTON

BY JULIE DROUT



WE CONSIDER OBJECTS WITH WHICH WE INTERACT EVERY DAY JUST THAT: OBJECTS. HOWEVER, WHAT RESIDUE LIES WITH THESE OBJECTS? BEN NORTON'S WORK TAKES THINGS (OBJECTS, FRAGMENTS, MEMORIES) FROM THE EVERYDAY AND REDEFINES THEM AS RELICS OF LIVED EXPERIENCE, OR THINGS. NORTON QUESTIONS THE THING-AS-OBJECT AND PROPOSES THE THING-AS-MOMENT. COUNTLESS MOMENTS INTERACT WITH ONE ANOTHER TO (RE)FORMULATE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF AN OBJECT. THIS ACTION IS STRONGER THAN MERE MEMORY AND SIGNIFICATION; IT ELEVATES THE ORDINARY THING FROM FUNCTIONAL TO FAMED. IN THIS WAY, THE STORAGE CONTAINER BECOMES A VESSEL FOR SUPPORT, A CRUTCH FOR HUMAN EMOTION, WHILE THE DELICATE ETCHINGS OF CHALK-DRAWN WALLPAPER HIGHLIGHT THE TEMPORALITY OF EXPERIENCE-IN-ACTION. IN NORTON'S WORK, THE MERGING OF THING AND THING IS A VESTIBULE FOR NEW

ALYSSA RITCHIE

BY JULIE DROUT



INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS OFTEN HAPPEN SO QUICKLY THAT WE SCARCELY ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR BEARING. THIS INTERACTIONAL IMMEDIACY, ALONG WITH THE UNDERCURRENTS OF VULNERABILITY THAT CHARACTERIZE HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS, IS EVOKED THROUGH THE MATERIALITY OF ALYSSA RITCHIE'S DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS. THROUGH TENDER PORTRAYALS OF EVERYDAY FAMILIAL ENCOUNTERS IN RECOGNIZABLE DOMESTIC ENVIRONMENTS, RITCHIE'S IMAGES REVEAL A SEARCH FOR WHERE AND HOW THE ORIGINS OF MEANINGFUL INTERPERSONAL INTERACTIONS DEVELOP AND WHAT IT TAKES TO BE OPEN TO THESE EXPERIENCES. WITHIN THESE POIGNANT GLIMPSES OF FAMILY AND FRIENDS, RITCHIE SHOWS US THAT MEANINGFUL INTERACTIONS ARE EXTRAORDINARY IN THEIR ORDINARINESS.

JUSTIN HODGES

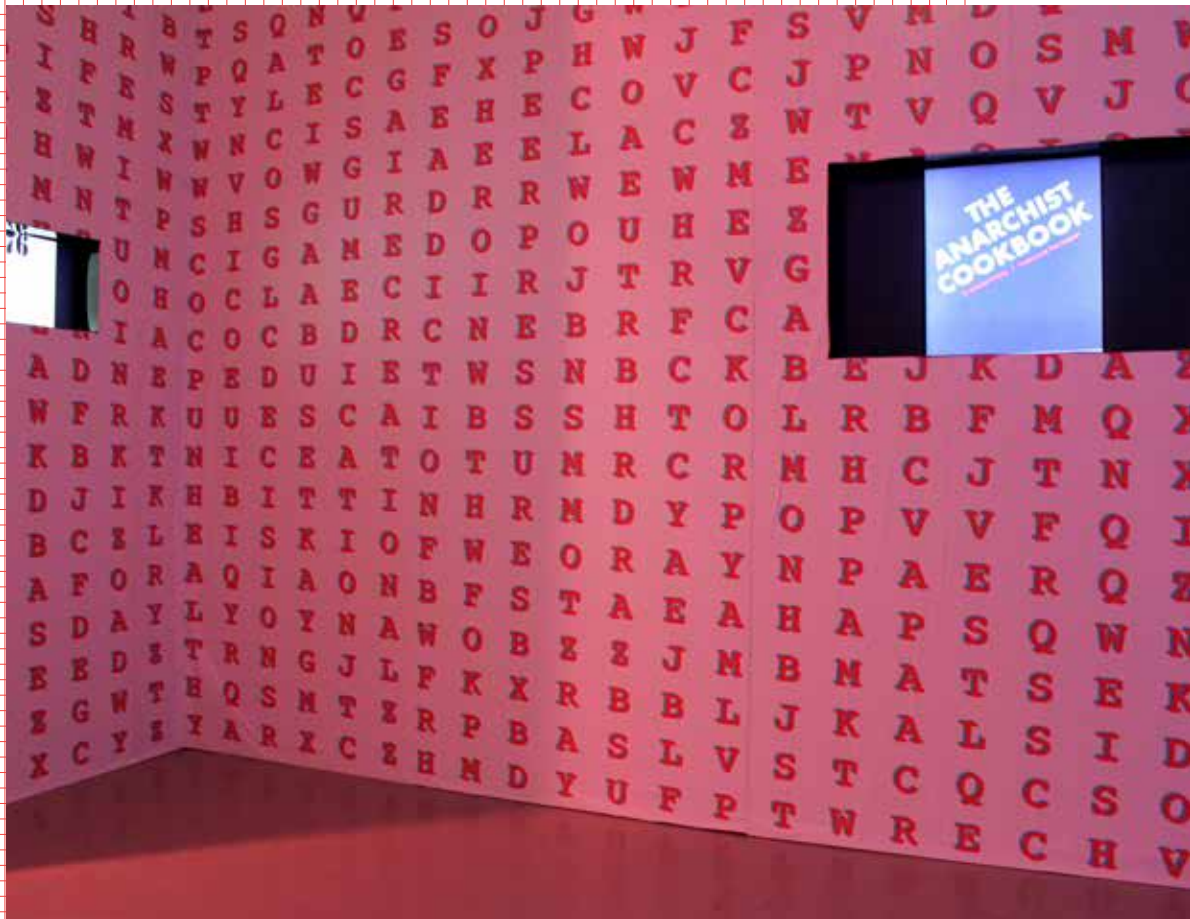
BY SSO-RHA KANG



JUSTIN HODGES' SUMMIT REFRAMES ROMANTIC NOTIONS OF LANDSCAPE IMAGERY IN THE DIGITAL AGE. THE INSTALLATION INVITES VIEWERS TO STEP ONTO AN INTERACTIVE PLATFORM, WHERE A VIEWFINDER PRESENTS A UTOPIAN VISION OF A SUBLIME LANDSCAPE. HODGES HILIGHTS THE POLARIZING AFFECTS SCREEN-BASED TECHNOLOGY HAS ON REAL AND VIRTUAL EXPERIENCES, SUGGESTING ITS ROOTS IN ROMANTICISM.

MILES TURNER

BY SSO-RHA KANG



WITH HIS HI-TECH INSTALLATION OBSERVING PARTICIPANT INTERLUDE VIGNETTES (OPIV), MILES TURNER DEPLOYS AN ARRAY OF VISUAL AND AURAL STIMULI TO CREATE AN OVERWHELMING AND DISORIENTING ENVIRONMENT. MULTIPLE SCREENS CONFRONT THE VIEWER WITH A BRICOLAGE OF POP CULTURAL SOURCES—SYNCD SO THAT THEY SET UP A BEWILDERING INTERPLAY OF SPACES, SCREENS AND GAZES, UNDERSCORING THE CHAOTIC ASPECTS OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY AND OUR DEPENDENCE ON TECHNOLOGY. CRYPTIC WALLPAPER, FLASHING LIGHT AND 3-D GLASSES HELP TO MATERIALIZE TURNER'S PLAYFUL, FRANTIC VISION OF THINGS.

COLIN KLIMESH

BY GABRIELLE LANG



IN THE INSTALLATION *NEW DOMESTICS* COLIN KLIMESH MANIPULATES CURRENT DESIGN AND CRAFT TRENDS TO CREATE AN ARRANGEMENT OF PERFECTLY MINIMAL OBJECTS AND DISPLAYS READY TO BE PHOTOGRAPHED AND INSTAGRAMMED. EACH ITEM IS INTEGRATED INTO A PERFECTLY ARRANGED TABLEAU, ALLUDING TO THE MINIMALIST RHETORIC OF BOUTIQUE DISPLAYS. KLIMESH INVITES THE VIEWER TO EXPERIENCE THE AESTHETIC PLEASURE OF CURRENT DESIGN TRENDS—PARTICULARLY THE DIY/MAKER MOVEMENT—WHILE CONTEMPLATING THE METAMORPHOSIS OF HANDMADE PRODUCTS. THE UNTOUCHABLE QUALITY OF KLIMESH'S CERAMIC PIECES AND WOOD ARMATURES REFLECTS THE SHIFT IN THE ROLE OF HANDMADE GOODS FROM NECESSITY TO LUXURY.

RICK WOLHOY

BY GABRIELLE LANG



RICK WOLHOY'S WORK RECALLS THE COLOR-FIELD (OR "ZIP") PAINTINGS OF BARNETT NEWMAN, BUT WOLHOY'S PAINTINGS, UNLIKE NEWMAN'S, BEND DYNAMICALLY AWAY FROM THE WALL. IN HIS SERIES TITLED CHECKOUT TIME IN VEGAS, THE MESMERIZING COLORS OF EACH PANEL ARE REMINISCENT OF THE SLICK-LOOKING CARS OF TIMES GONE BY. CONJURING UP NOSTALGIC SENTIMENT WITHOUT FIGURATIVE DETAIL, WOLHOY INVITES US TO MAKE OUR OWN ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE PAST. AT THE SAME TIME, THE PAINTINGS COAX US INTO AN EXPERIENCE OF THE RESONANT EFFECTS OF HIS EXPERIMENTATIONS WITH COLOR AND FORM.

IAN HORWITZ

BY SAMUEL MORREN



IAN HORWITZ'S PAINTINGS CELEBRATE THE OUTDOORSMAN'S INNOCENT AND SUPERLATIVE EXPERIENCE. PAINTERLY CRAFTSMANSHIP COMES THROUGH STRONGLY IN THESE PAINTINGS—EVEN IF THEIR ULTRA-MASCULINE SUBJECT MATTER MIGHT BE UNCOMFORTABLE FOR SOME. JUST AS HORWITZ'S BRUSHWORK EVOKES THE MOVEMENT OF A WANDERING FISHING ROD, HIS APPROACH TO COMPOSITION ACCENTS DISPLACEMENTS. IN THESE PAINTINGS THE BACKGROUND TYPICALLY FUSES WITH THE MIDDLE GROUND, CREATING A RIVER OF COLOR IN THE FOREGROUND.

JORDAN SANDIDGE

BY SAMUEL MORREN



JORDAN SANDIDGE'S QUILTS TRAVERSE AND INFILTRATE THE UNCOMFORTABLE SPACE BETWEEN WHAT MAKES A MAN A MAN AND HOW MANHOOD IS SOCIALLY PRESCRIBED AND EVALUATED. PLAYING ACROSS SUPPOSEDLY "FEMALE TECHNIQUES" AND PERCEPTIONS OF MASCULINITY, SANDIDGE INVESTIGATES THE RELATION BETWEEN GENDER ROLES AND PERFORMANCE. THE QUILTS IMPLY THE STITCHING TOGETHER OF A "TEXTILE" VIRILITY AND A "TEXTILE" FRAGILITY. SANDIDGE MATERIALIZES A PLACE OF CREATIVE RECOLLECTION, A PLACE TO PIECE THINGS TOGETHER AND RETELL STORIES—A COLLAGE OF MEMORIES.

Sean Oswald

BY LAUREN SPIRES



SEAN OSWALD'S WORK DRAWS VIEWERS INTO SPACES OF QUESTIONING AND PARADOX. IN OSWALD'S LARGE-SCALE PAINTINGS, BIBLICAL NARRATIVES MEET CONTEMPORARY CULTURE IN VIVID COLORS AND BOLD STROKES. IN THESE DYNAMIC SCENES, FUGITIVE STATES OF SINCERITY AND IRONY, PAST AND PRESENT, BIBLICAL AND EARTHLY, ABSTRACTION AND FIGURATION EXIST COTERMINOUSLY, LEAVING THE VIEWER TO DETERMINE THE DEFINITIONS AND INTERSECTIONS OF THESE REALITIES. OSWALD'S RELATIONAL SPACES OF ABSTRACTION AND FIGURATION PROVIDE RICH EXPERIENCES OF INQUIRY INTO NARRATIVE AND TRUTH WHILE PRESERVING THE LIMINAL SPACES THAT KEEP MYSTERY AND PARADOX FOREVER UNSETTLED AND UNSETTLING.

KATE STENGER

BY ROSS TINNEY



KATE STENGER BUILDS A MAZE OF DELIGHTFULLY HORRIFIC HAPPENINGS IN HER SCULPTURES AND VIDEOS. A VISCERAL TENSION GROWS IN THE GUT UPON ENCOUNTERING HAPPY FAMILY, A LITERAL AND FIGURATIVE 'STIR-FRY' OF LIFE AFTER DEATH. BLURRING BOUNDARIES BETWEEN STATIC AND LIVED REALITIES, STENGER'S STOP-MOTION ANIMATIONS EVOKE A CYCLE OF EXISTENCE OFTEN OVERLOOKED IN THE FOOD WE EAT. A PROTAGONIST SHRIMP IS BIRTHED ONLY TO BE SACRIFICED FOR THE SUSTENANCE OF ANOTHER, SUGGESTING AN ANAMORPHIC VERSION OF OURSELVES. AS ANIMAL MEATS AND HUMAN FLESH ARE AGAIN GIVEN LIFE IN COLLAGES OF PRINTS AND FOUND OBJECTS, THE ILLUSION, OR DELUSION, OF OUR REALITY IS REVEALED. WE ARE BUT FLAVORED MEATS SHEATHED IN SKIN.