





Alt Esc is a curatorial platform, digital magazine and a subcultural archive. Our mission is to celebrate the subcultural art communities that foster underrepresented artists. We seek to celebrate artists who are experimenting with new technologies and innovative ideas. We are interested in individuals and collectives who are community oriented and do not cater their practices to capital ideologies. We seek to connect rising artists with new opportunities through a publication and curating exhibitions, while honoring and sharing their current achievements with a broader audience. We are content makers and archivists. Using the studio visit as a model for a narrative, we hope to uncover and share new artistic practices and trends. Started in 2016 by Alison Sirico and Irina V Makarova.



Photo @ Rezzie Avissar



NITEMIND

**Nitemind** is a collective of artists, engineers, designers and visionaries recognized by most for their contributions to NYC night life. Some projects are contracted as corporate opportunities. Others manifest in the underground art world. They balance function with design equally through engineering and aesthetics. We sat down with Michael Potvin and Steven Grisé to discuss their most recent endeavors, from simulating fire to the importance and benefits of being part of a vibrant arts community.

*What are you working on right now?*

Michael: We are working with Sarah Kinlaw and Monica Mirabile of Authority Figure. They are from Otion Front which is housed in the other building at Stream Gallery. They are doing a large-scale choreography installation at The Knockdown Center in May with 120 performance artists, a dozen choreographers, installation artists and musicians. The list of musicians is great - Dev Hynes, Dan Deacon, etc. SOPHIE is making a soundtrack for it and Travis Egedy is making a bunch of Pictureplane stuff for it too.

*What's your role in the piece?*

Michael: We are creating this surveillance based installation for the performance and we are acting as lighting people for the event.

*Are those two things separate?*

Michael: Yeah.

Steven: But all tied into the same aim as one functional installation piece.

Michael: To create the installation, we are bringing in a bunch of surveillance cameras

to go alongside the themes of "Authority Figure" and "Surveillance." We're also using iPhones and iOS devices as surveillance cameras. They are pretty much built to be surveillance cameras if they are no longer functional. They have a built in camera, charger and WiFi. You can use iPhone 3s or 4s - ones with cracked screens. I have these left over from old video installations that I have done in the past where I used them as players. If you can get an RCA cable that connects to a TV they can function as that too. I used them as playback to loop different videos for installations. The footage will be piped to this video main framing control center, which is going to be this huge video, basically control center - something out of a movie or NASA. Almost more cinematic than NASA. Film is a reference because I like that - like something out of the Matrix with all the screens and wires. It's all subserving a purpose, and there is a computer hacker in the center, checking all the feeds, so it's going to be both aesthetic and functional. We can watch the entire performance from this station, and control lighting and audio cues from it. Also it becomes

part of the visual art installation. You will be able to view all the different feeds, and there is data visualization coming up. Some is real, some fabricated, and some just animated.

Steven: Yeah, it's an interactive piece but the interaction is limited to the controller or the "Authority Figure."

Michael: We are working on some cameras that detect people. I'm working on maybe putting together this motorization component where cameras follow viewers. It's super creepy. Or maybe ones that shine light on you when you walk by. Detection algorithms and things like that. Robots that can kind of make things turn or pan. We are going to be filming people in the space as well. Recording loops of different video loops and playing it back. Creating this ultimate sense of surveillance, but, simultaneously, you aren't sure what is reality. Some of it is real time, some of it is prerecorded, but it's all in the same setting, and there is going to be one group of people in the control room, watching and another group experiencing it. Are you watching them? Or are you watching yourself on screen? Who knows. We are just now figuring out what the possibilities are.

*Is surveillance a common theme in your work?*

Michael: Not up until now. It has been a small part. We've used security and surveillance cameras before, but more as an aesthetic element.

*How did you guys meet and start working together? How long have you been collaborating?*

Steven: We met each other at SxSW in 2011

Michael: Our 5 year anniversary just came up. We accidentally had a romantic dinner.

Steven: My girlfriend was going out to dinner, and I prepared this really nice meal.

Michael: And I ended up at the house...

Steven: And I was like "If you're not going to be home I'm going to call Mike"...Yeah, we met at SxSW.

Michael: Just randomly.

Steven: I was doing visuals there, and I had this whole VCR and colorizer and cameras recording and televisions. I was walking around with suitcases of analog gear. Doing visuals for whoever would have me at their showcase.

Michael: Our friends set us up.

Steven: He's a tech head. He's an artist.

Michael: We were both living up in Massachusetts at the time, and then shortly after SxSW, we were hanging out in Boston a lot. We kind of let each other know that we both love video work. I got down to New York in June, and Steve was talking about coming down for August. Steve was looking for spaces, and I was subletting. He was coming, staying and crashing. We lived here (in the studio) for 2-3 years.

Steven: It use to be dual use space, and then that ended.

Michael: The typical Williamsburg story. We were lucky enough to keep the space. We were clever about the transition.

*What materials do you use?*

Michael: We work mostly with things that create light, LEDS, laser beams, projectors and

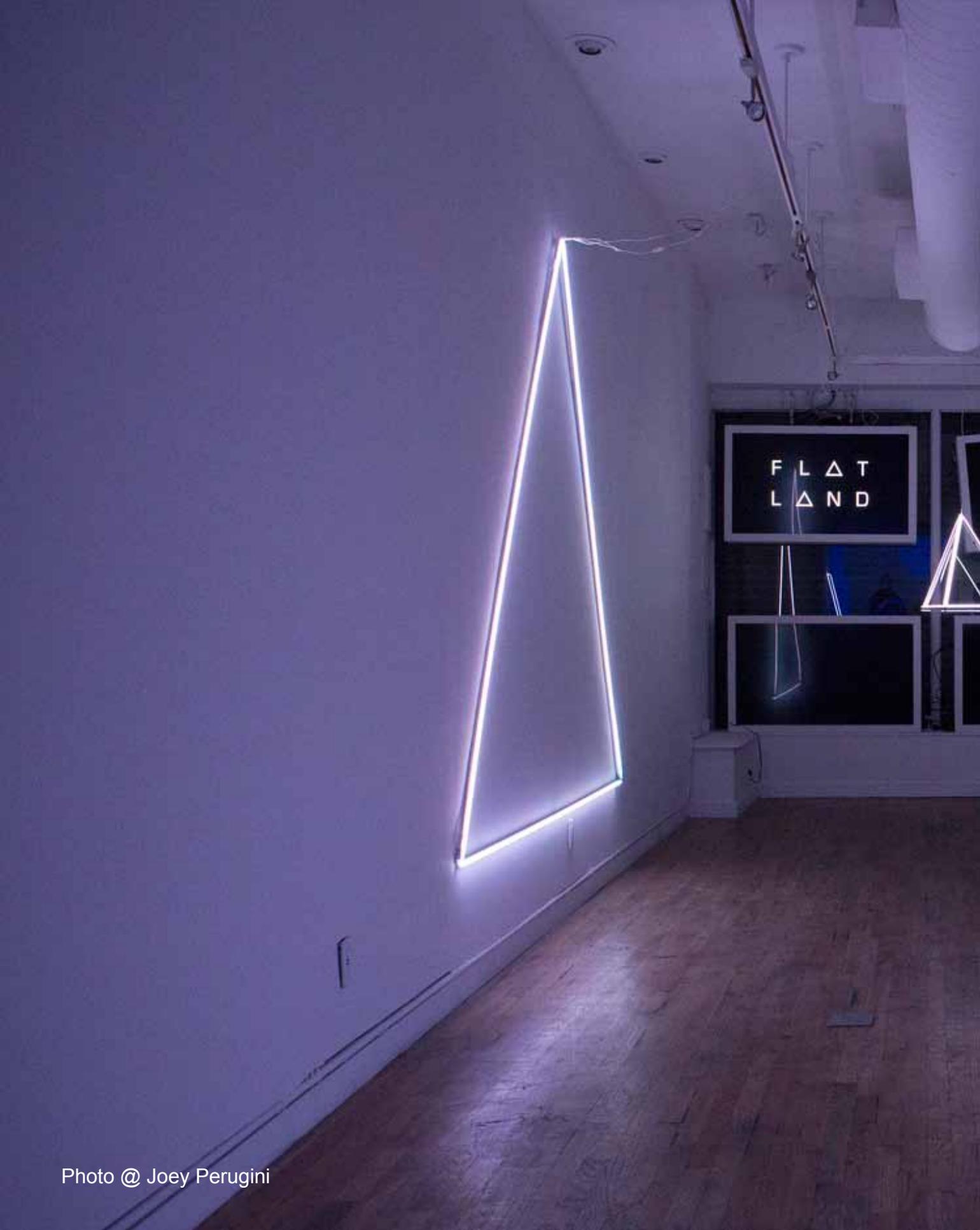


Photo @ Joey Perugini



NITE  
MIND

television sets. Then we control them with our own software. We use open source libraries, just connect them together, run Arduino, Processing, OpenCv, or openFrameworks. It's hard to believe that people are developing these things. They are free and non - corporate. And there is a whole community of people just willing to help you. So if you don't know what you are doing, just go on a forum.

*You have an engineering degree from Boston University. How did you end up here? How did you start making art?*

Michael: People asked me to. A typical engineer path is you go on to work for a military subcontractor after you graduate college. Being a hippie, or not a hippie, whatever you want to define me as, a passive conscious objector...whatever the word is, that path wasn't my vibe at all. I always had art friends who were doing different projects. I was a musician for a long time. Music is a collaborative practice. So I similarly started working collaboratively with artists. Part of being an engineer is figuring out how to accomplish anything. My friends came to me asking, "How do I make this work? How do you make a 4 layer print with no registration technology?"

*Do you have any themes that are constant throughout your work? Before you said surveillance wasn't necessarily one of them. Do you have any repeating concepts you find yourself continuously coming back to?*

Michael: Repetition. Parallel lines. We might have an installation where there are 48 parallel lines doing different things. Or there is some action that is happening as a visual image continuously. Generative algorithms and making algorithms that simulate natural processes.

*How do you utilize natural processes in your work?*

Fire is the one we keep referring back to. We made an algorithm that simulates fire last year for Korakrit Arunanondchai. He had a solo show at Palais de Tokyo this past year and we made a bunch of algorithms for him. He wanted everything to be inspired by nature. We could have just made a loop of fire but we didn't make a loop. Instead we did some research on how fire works. That's the scientific engineer in me. We discovered it works through the combustion of sparks and spontaneous generation from heat. Convection. So we simulated those parameters, and it looked great. We fired the thing up and it looked fired up. We were working with our friend Alex (Thunderhorse) who's a talented videographer.

We worked on another piece for Korakrit that was a simulation of a synapse in the brain, which was actually inspired by a job that I did for a medical company. It was for a medical exhibit, and we had designed a 3D brain, which was clear and it had all these LEDs inside of it. In the exhibit you could select a brain disorder on a series of buttons: schizophrenia, mood swings, sheer excitement, etc. The people who wanted the exhibit didn't know what that should look like, but they loved it.

*Do you prefer to have your work in nightlife urban environments rather than in a white wall gallery?*

Steven: I think it depends on the work to be honest.

Michael: Depends on the day you are asking.

Steven: Some of it doesn't really translate to a gallery showcase.

Michael: Also depends on the gallery. Even



though we have a whitewall gallery...But even Stream is an experiment for us. Stream is a tiny storefront gallery. It is not your typical space. It's on the street in Bushwick where you can watch the train go by above.

*Do people reach out to you about collaborations or do they transpire more naturally? And who would you want to collaborate with in the future?*

Michael: Mostly naturally. Say Juliana Huxtable, she hung out at Steel Drums and was a really big supporter of the club. We always welcomed her there and now we see her say at Happyfun Hideaway across the street and let her know that we are working on something new. I get super excited about research for artwork, so I spend hours on my laptop, reading things, viewing open source software, researching new technology and exploring what is possible. When I see my friends or acquaintance I let them know "I've been messing with this thing, and it has your name all over it." With the Juliana project at MoMa we did most recently, we had been contemplating for months and were playing with different concepts. Initially the idea we discussed was the animated avatar and we ended up making a laser portrait of Juliana.

*How do you balance the corporate and the non corporate opportunities?*

Steven: It's important to sustain the corporate jobs so that we can continue the oddball and weirdo installation pieces. That's for our heart. The corporate jobs keep the lights on.

Michael: The collective is growing. Now we have people running code, fabricators, installation artists, concept artists and studio managers - all of which are our friends.

Steve: It's a very friendly operation.

Michael: That is why we are working on getting more jobs, so we can expand the team and bring on more people. It's always all about the people.

*What are you listening to right now?*

Michael: A metronome which is often just a drum machine. Hard beats and minimal techno which also acts as a metronome. Music that my friends make.

Steve: Brian Sweeny's blog called "Listen to This"





Photo @ Walter Wlodarczyk

# AUTHORITY FIGURE



Directors, Monica Mirabile and Sarah Kinlaw, discuss their latest collaboration, **Authority Figure**, an immersive choreography and psychologic experiment that provokes consideration to the power dynamics and obedient relationships that govern daily lives.

*What is Authority Figure?*

Sarah: Authority Figure is a huge choreography and installation project, in which we explore the variety of ways we feel, interpret, and relate to power and authority.

Monica: It's about obedient relationships, which is subsequently about authority. It's about power dynamics.

*Is your goal in this performance to target many different types of power relationships?*

Sarah: We can't touch upon every single type of power relationship individually, but we broadened the project to expand upon many types of these relationships. It's why the project became so huge.

Monica: There are multiple ways in which we experience things. And we each experience them in specific ways. I experience authority relationships as a woman, as a woman who runs a business, as a woman in a performance duo, as a bartender. There are so many aspects of my life in which I step back and ask myself, "How am I going to position myself to get what I want out of this, and how will this work out for everyone else?" It's about community. It's about how everyone has that same story - as a musician, as a girl, as a boy, as a child, as a mother, as an employer,

as an employee. We all have these dynamics embedded in our lives. There was a multiplicity in the construction of the performance because it was a collaboration between twenty five people, and each individual brought their own personal experiences. The majority of the performance is formatted within these overarching systems. There are several different tiers of the performance you walk through. We touch upon big data, surveillance, how we interact with governing authorities like the police. These are big issues in our culture right now.

Sarah: I think, to touch on the interior storytelling, that aspect has become one of the cooler components of the piece. We were able to get to know each other on a more personal level. Through creating a platform for these kinds of stories to be shared in rehearsal, where the performers felt these themes as individuals, not as assigned actors or singers, the piece became very feeling. This is why the project can at times feel very heavy or therapeutic.

Monica: It's definitely heavy in the same way as therapy. It's like when you cry out and proclaim that you can't deal with what you are trying to process and then later, after you get out, you start to feel some healing.

*How did the participants in the ensemble come out with their stories?*

Monica: We started opening all rehearsals with storytelling, and we continually through-

out rehearsal asked for people's experiences. It's been a dialogue that we've had throughout the entire process, and it began with the most intense stories. We don't have time anymore, but every session began with everyone in a circle.

*And did that influence the direction of the piece?*

Monica: In certain ways, yes.

*Do you think of this work as political?*

Monica: Yes, I mean, I don't think it has the ability to do things like change legislation. And I don't even think it is as diverse as I would prefer it to be. It's hard to convey all the fucked up things that happen in America because of who you are economically, racially... I don't think it's really digging deep enough into those sorts of things I think we need to change.

*How has it been managing over 100 dancers?*

Sarah: It's right now approximately 150 dancers.

Monica: I think, at least for me, the managerial part is not easy, but we have some help. We have Christine Tran (Discwoman, Witches of Bushwick) who has been overseeing certain parts of it, and Gina Chiapetta is a godsend! It's been cool because people have really made themselves available to us. Even if we don't know how to use them all of the time.

*Has the theme affected the way you've been directing?*

Sarah: There's a sensitivity. I was clear early on that I don't claim to know more or understand more about these themes or concepts than anybody else. Also, just because we are

directing doesn't mean we can control anyone. Because of this understanding, there is a sensitivity to the project as a whole where I do not completely assert myself in the same way one would in a traditional setting where it is scripted and you have your talent and your actors who have their roles...it's not like that at all.

Monica: I've worked with a lot of people before. That was part of the piece's conceptualization. The way that you are as a teacher is very different from how you are as a student. Structuring a rehearsal, you have to maintain a director's role. People want to be told what to do, and I've definitely been thinking a lot about how to engage a group of dancers in a way that is personal while also maintaining a structure that everyone can fall into. No one knows how to dance here. Well, I take that back, everyone knows how to dance! They just don't study dance. It's not necessarily easy for most people. There are a few people in the ensemble that do it all the time. But most people don't and they don't know how to connect the mind to the body yet. The body is something that comes from the mind. To be a teacher, that specific kind of authority, we have to teach without saying "Don't do that!" It's more about encouragement, and maybe that method is more ideal for this process. We are trying to be an ideal version of the figure.

There is a lot of darkness in this piece. There is a lot of pain and suffering that is very visible, and that is very much on purpose. The whole thing is intense because we are conjuring up all of these emotions that lie within people. When you talk about trauma, it is usually transfixed in authority and obedience. When you trigger this, you bring out darkness to process, and you hope that everyone gains power and agency from it. That is the goal. For everyone to go through this process on



Photo @ Signe Pierce

their own fruition. We aren't paying anyone. Everyone wants to be here because they want to be here. When you ask someone to be strong, they have to make that decision. They have to say to themselves, "I am going to do that thing (with my body, with my mind) that is strong" and hopefully they will continuously do that again and again.

Sarah: I think the more streamlined and clear the message is, whether it be to a seasoned performer or a newcomer, the more confidence one will produce to explore. It's better when you know the why. I really believe that with singers too. If you know the why you can really go for it, and really go for it through your performance.

*Do you want people to know your personal experiences in dealing with these constructs?*

Monica: I shared this one personal experience with a cast member the other day. It was about the time I was arrested and was directed to Baltimore Central Booking for 26 hours. It was probably one of the worst experiences I had with the police. I experienced it in a very specific way as a young white woman in a bathing suit. She told me how she had been through the process too, and that she still doesn't know how to think about it. "You are treated like you are worthless," she said. She felt like she was a "bad person." Adversely, she is a very successful woman, but after that experience she said, "I felt like I was nothing. I felt like I was just thrown away."

Sarah: I don't think that I have any personal desire for the audience to know my stories and separate them from anyone else's. I think this a community and this is a story of a community. This is not necessarily my or Mon-

ica's personal narrative. We don't see it like that. It is a conversation that is thematic and overarching rather than individual. There are individual experiences woven within all of it, but it is not specific to anyone.

Monica: There are specific stories to be told, to be shared. Without giving too much away, there is a series of vignettes that are more specific. They are abstract in movements but they begin as portraits, and it is fairly clear what is happening. There are a series of stories woven in because you can't have empathy for something if you have no bearing to.

*What do you ultimately want people to take with them when they walk away from the performance?*

Monica: The desire for this project to touch people and create feeling is something that has come up a lot in interviews in general. "What is the aim here? How do you want people to leave?" We've said it many times. We can't force a feeling or an agenda, but we can create a platform for a feeling, for a consideration, and you can create an environment where people can form opinions. No one is going to walk through with the same reaction.

Sarah: We all see things happening that are the result of people obeying orders without questioning them and sometimes the outcome is scary and sometimes the human component is missing, the consideration and the sympathy... that is another reason why this is such a

broad concept and such a varied show in terms of performances. The hope is that each person will connect, feel, and consider.

Monica: But it's a dance.. I'm excited to see how people experience it.

*How did you guys start working to-*

*gether? Was it through the Strict Governing Hands Piece?*

Monica: Kind of. That's when we connected. I guess that's when we became friends, but we started thinking about this after. We wanted to work on a project together that was collaborative piece with opera singing and with choreography. It was supposed to be a small project and then it spiraled.

Sarah: Put a couple cocktails in us, and it just spiraled.

Monica: It's true. It wasn't supposed to get this big, but then we kept asking, "what can we get away with?"

*How does voice fold into the dance?*

Sarah: Some voice components are composed in terms of song with sound happening behind it. There are other voice components that are more like organic noises as a result of something in tandem with how the physical note might sound when you hit it. There is a marriage between the physicality and the tone.

Also spoken word is incorporated. Colin Self is incorporating words.

Monica: It's so exciting to include the vocal element. We held auditions. We had an open call on social media and then we had the auditioners come in, and we asked them if they wanted to sing. Sarah directed. It was very American Idol.

*Were you sitting in a line, at the same table, like judges on the show?*

Monica: Yeah at a makeshift table, with two little stands and a piece of plywood and a wooden sheet over it. I don't sing and I have never experienced anything like this. They came in and

sang, and these incredible voices came out. Both of us cried several times from just 16 bars. It's really powerful to incorporate voice into intimate performances. I'm very excited about it. *And the score of musicians is pretty impressive... How did you start working with Caroline Polachek?*

Sarah: I was in Ramona Lisa with her. It was a touring project, and she would play these ambient soundscapes to warm up and stretch to and I really loved it. So I started talking to her specifically for this kind of music. It fit so well.

Monica: A lot of the musicians created pretty abstract sounds. Do you know SOPHIE? It's more fragmented sounds, more environmental, it's like the sound of a balloon rubbing against a wooden floor and popping in a box. Ian is very much like that and so is Dan's, actually. When you walk through the performance, you aren't going to hear music that you would listen to on your apple music pad. They were composed specifically for the piece, like a cinematic score. There's only one real song, and that's by Hot Sugar. After listening to all of these abstract things, it's nice to hear a beat. One that you can count on.

*How does the architecture of the Knockdown Center play into the piece?*

Monica: We grabbed a map and created a theme based on a route throughout the space. You can't fight the Knockdown. It's 50,000 square feet. We thought it was big, and then we realized it was much bigger. Every time we turned around it was much bigger!

Sarah: We keep finding rooms!

Monica: We didn't use all of it, but we tried to use a lot of it. Get ready to walk!

Sarah: Maybe we should send an email about footwear?

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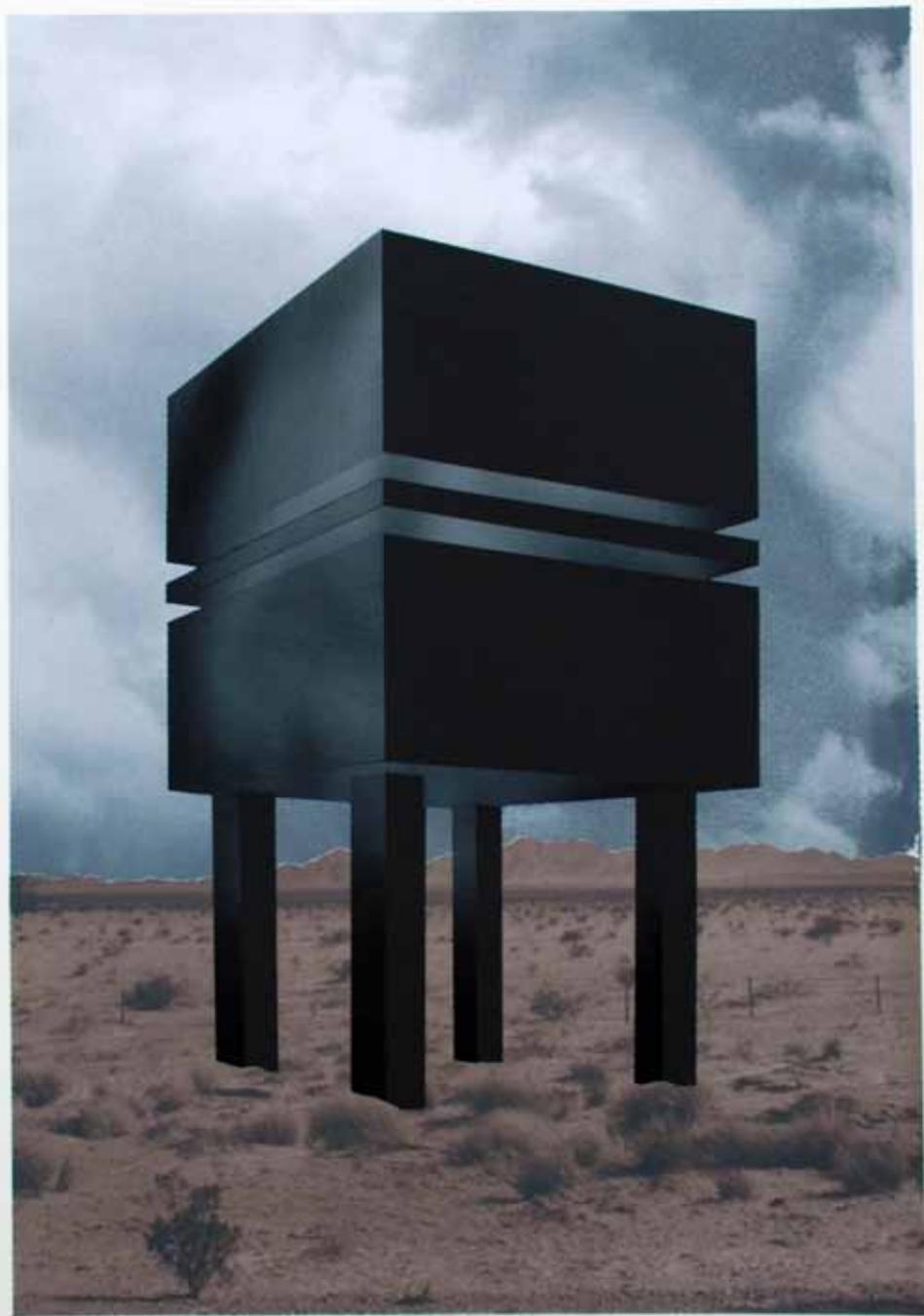


Photo @ Signe Pierce

# JAMES BOUCHE







**James Bouché** is an artist living and working in Baltimore, Maryland. We visited him at his studio in Baltimore. We were fans of his work before the visit. He produces commanding and ominous objects which accentuate texture, form, and negative space, in addition to being a bold exploration of material. We were excited to learn that he finds inspiration in death metal typography, bondage pants, and The Lord of The Rings.

*What is your relationship with color?*

I admittedly don't have a strong connection to color. I'm colorblind and I think that, growing up, instead of getting frustrated I learned to not really take notice. I generally don't remember objects by their colors.

*As a colorblind person how do you differentiate between the various nuances of colors? What draws you towards the monochrome black, white, greys and the bright blue? Is it a specific shade that you use?*

Working in black and white comes really naturally to me. I think that what I lack with tonal sensitivity, my eyes make up with understanding value. I heard once that colorblind artists generally gravitate toward printmaking and sculpture and I feel that. Only recently have I started thinking about using color. I think that black/grey became too much of crutch for me and I wanted to step out of my comfort zone a little. Just one color at a time though. Blue just seemed like a good place to start and I think red will be next. When picking the shade I've been asking friends to find me the most basic "blue" they can. I know a color expert would say that's impossible but for right now it's fine. Just getting my feet wet.

*You use very "masculine" materials such as concrete, chains, sportswear, etc... what is your relationship with this materials and your draw to working with them?*

*Actually, I wouldn't describe my work as "masculine". I understand the associations but I don't like assigning a gender to objects and materials. I think "aggressive" or "dominating" are words that can sometimes be used when people talk about traditional ideas of masculinity. To be honest I spend just as much time at Joann Fabrics as I do Home Depot. I*

like that relationship and I like that employees from both stores have no idea what I'm talking about when I try to describe what I'm doing.

*What are the themes that you embrace most?*

Is Magic the Gathering a theme? Lord of the Rings?

*Absolutely! In your print work how do you choose the forms that appear in your images?*

A lot of my print work is from college and during that time I developed a style of drawing that heavily referenced architecture and drafting. The images were mostly just simple shapes but I think what people appreciated most was the focus on craft. Even with my current work, I like to get comfortable enough with a material to come up with "tricks" to make people second guess the process.

*Does architecture play an important role in your work? You have such an astute sense of space!*

Thank you haha. Architecture has and will probably always play a big part in my work. In the past it's been mostly representational but I currently try to treat space as a medium. I really enjoy the process of building and like controlling the way my work is looked at. Creating architecture is such a subtly aggressive act.

*What are the upcoming pieces that you are working on and what can we expect in the future?*

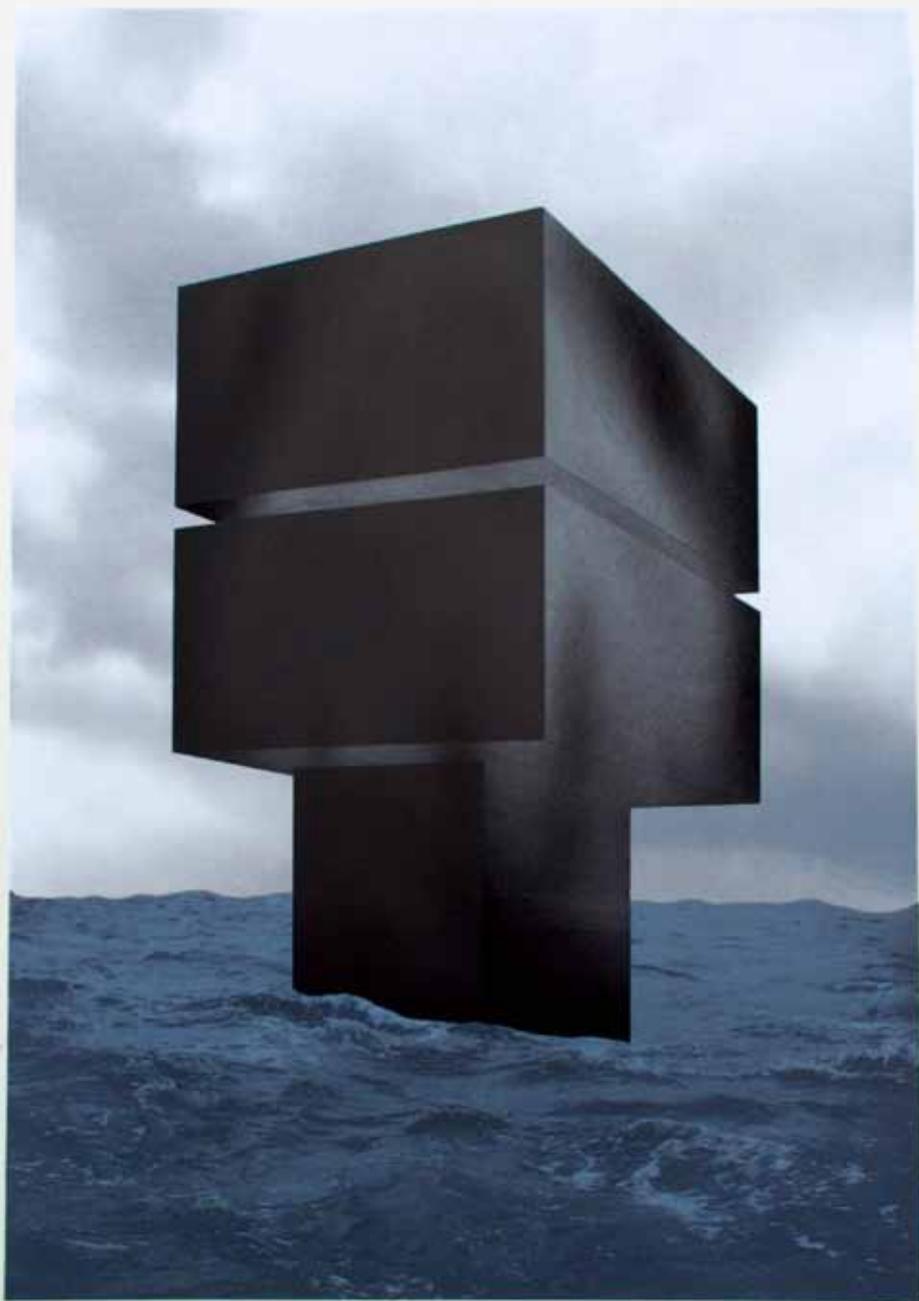
I'm working on some collaborative projects right now and lining up a couple shows in the fall. Too early to say too much though ;)

*Who would you want to collaborate with if given the chance?*

Right now, Robert Morris.

*What music are you listening to right now?*

LeAnn Rimes, My Chemical Romance, Celine Dion.





APRIL CAMLIN



**April Camlin** is an interdisciplinary artist living and working in Baltimore, Maryland. We visited her in her studio where she explained how her work evolved from embroidering band flyers back in 2010.

*How did you get into embroidery?*

I was doing it since I was very young. My grandmother was a painter and a seamstress. She taught me at an early age how to sew and cross-stitch. I always knew I was interested in making art and I was never connected to painting. Embroidery felt like the type of mark making that was more intuitive and more comfortable to me. I started working with an embroidery machine 6 months ago because I wanted to work larger. With hand embroidery you spend 2 months on a piece that is 15 x 15 inches and the embroidery machine really opened up a new way for me to think about making work and the kind of imagery I can work with.

*Where does this imagery come from?*

The patterns are a symptom of the grid. There is only a certain amount of stitches that look good to me that can be made on a grid. I also just really like the vibration of the lines. I started messing around with patterns, interrupt them, and the way the lines were meshing and merging and interacting was very exciting to me. I am working with different geometric shapes and the interruption is the most important to me: setting up a system and then interrupting it.

*Do you like a certain way to have your work shown?*

It's hard because I feel like with textiles, you always wonder how much of the material you want to be the focus because it has such a pre-existing context. It is so ubiquitous in our lives. I present it more in a traditional form in a frame on wall because I am connecting to it in the same way that someone presents it as a painting. But I also like installation work. I did a show in Miami in December where I did a big installation that was very challenging. I painted and I haven't painted in a decade!

*The images looked really crazy! Would you want to do more installation pieces?*

I have never done anything like that and I like working in installation because there is so much problem solving. We had three days to install that and it was very intense. There was no air conditioning and no plumbing. It was a satellite fair during Miami Basel called the Artist Run Fair. Everyone got a room in this dilapidated motel and everyone got to do what they wanted to do. You don't always get that freedom in a space so that was very cool.

*Do you like to work independently or to collaborate?*

I am very much solo and I feel bad because people have asked me to collaborate but I am interested in trying it someday. It would have to be the right person. In general I am a solitary person.

*Do you have an idea of what the work will look like or does it grow?*

Yes and no. I consider it to be a half of vocabulary of patterns and I am holding them in my mind as I am working but I prefer to work intuitively and let the piece develop as it is. Especially since the idea of interruption interest me so much and I feel like there could be these unintended consequences when you let things develop organically that wouldn't be as exciting if you had everything planned ahead of time. And there is definitely a bit of appropriation with the machine embroidery because I have to think a lot about the imagery since I have to run it through the program. It has been good for me because it made me think a lot about mapping things but I definitely generally like to wing it. Labor is a very integral element in my practice and I think about it all the time. I think these techniques allow me to work more intuitively. Working at a slow speed allows me to map the image out as I go.

*Who are some artists you would like to show with?*

At Spring/Break fair I saw this artist called Christian Little whose work I really liked. I am showing in September with Edie Fake and it definitely feels like a dream come true because his work is just a mazing and I think we approach our ideas aesthetically very similarly. A lot of art that I look like or am influenced by is more traditional and historical textiles without being appropriative and being respectful.

*Are you thinking about feminism when making this art?*

I think its impossible not to think about it. When you are working with a material that has a lot of pre-existent content it is very important to be aware of that history. History of textiles is very intense when you think about the industrial revolution and the repercussions of human rights and certainly the patriarchal structure of imposing this women's work or women perpetuating a craft and advancing it and making it amazing and it being viewed as lesser than because of that. It's hard because I often times want to distance my gender from any kind of work that I do but I think its also important to be open and be aware. I don't think my work is overtly feministic but I think it's impossible for a woman not to be a feminist.

*How has your work evolved?*

I have been making this kind of work for the past three years. I used to embroider band flyers back in 2010 and that's how it all started. I used to be a lot more connected to the music scene. Now I feel locked in and very good about my aesthetic and I feel very good about the work that I am making right now but I don't want to keep making the same thing and am excited to experiment. I definitely want to experiment with the embroidery machine and monochromatic tones. I am very sensitive to color and am interested in bring-



ing in more silvers and paler colors. I started this white on white piece and I like how the textures became so much more important. I am thinking about bring painting back into my practice and I am thinking of how to go about that, maybe using dyes.

*What music do you listen to?*

Mostly audio books and podcasts. I listen to fantasy and sci-fi audiobooks, and Democracy Now, Radio Lab and This American Life, all the classics. I guess I like to listen to a lot of repetitive and meditative music that gets me in the zone to do a lot of stitching, like Kraftwerk. Manuel Gttsching's album "E2-E4", it's so good, it's just like an hour of this music phrase.



ALEX CASSO



**Alex Casso** is a painter living and working in New York City. We took a trip to his studio in the Financial District where we had a conversation that spanned the gamut, discussing the *raison d'être* behind his use of iconography to explaining how he overcame a slightly uncomfortable, yet illuminating, experience with Vaginal Davis. He recently participated in the "Magic Flute" performance with Ms. Davis.

*What are you working on right now?*

I am doing a mural at Facebook's HQ right now for Saya Woolfalk. I've worked with her a year ago at the Sugar Hill's Children Museum where we did a seven-wall mural. I am also designing a mural with my students for The Play Ground For All Children in Flushing Meadows Corona Park. I teach at The Queens Museum, this is through them, and their whole thing is bringing art to children who don't have access to it. And I've taught adults for three years prior to that.

*Any difference between adults and children?*

Actually the same. Adults and children respond the same way. Adults are more difficult because they have more settled things in their mind. A child will take directions without questioning why and they trust you and adults do not trust you. They are very afraid. I see it as a philosophy course where we are using art to talk about ourselves and this experience that we are having. I think that everything is exactly the same and it just looks different. If you can wash a dish

you can make a drawing.

*Do you have a preference for painting on-canvas or doing murals, or are they totally separate?*

The biggest difference is that I get to build the canvases and with the wall I don't, but really there isn't that much of a difference. A wall will resist your brush and it will also tear your brush up; a canvas will receive the brush. The circumstance of the surface area dictates what you need to do.

*You use a lot of patterns in your work, what do they mean?*

For instance I fell in love with a pattern in Kyoto and now it represents my wife for me. Whereas this was a pattern that was in my kitchen when I was a kid. My ex-girlfriend's bed sheets are underneath this painting so it's me literally wiping away the past. When I first painted these bed sheets I saw myself as the cat in the painting and there were these circular gestural marks that I thought represented me as well and she was the pattern. I lived with it for a long time and then I painted it away for me to move on. Then I painted the wolf on top, which became a symbol of my





own progression and my own power. But it's not the lone wolf, don't mistake it. The idea of a lone wolf is not a real thing. Wolves are very social and they take care of their families, they are very loyal animals that have hierarchies. They are all about the pack.

*You use symbolism as a way to build narratives then?*

I have always drawn this way where I would pull images from different places and put them together on the same page. I don't know why and I don't know if it's my job to know why either. I believe that everyone's highest calling is to be creative. And if it's a higher calling, I don't know if it has anything to do with me personally other than the thing that it is express through.

*So what is your role as an artist?*

To do what I'm told. For you, these images become associations, they become a word game and you start having your own experience with them and your own reactions. It can be up, down, left, right. For me, I know they come from a source of love and attachment and they mean positive things. Even if I paint them in anger, that's just the flip side of love. All of them are in spectrums together.

*Ah, so destiny comes in! Did you experience catharsis? Is it complete now?*

Yes, it is complete now. You asked me about wolves and something inside of me tightens...

*Sorry for asking then, but why do you paint wolves?*

The easiest reason to respond is that my dad

wears a wolf ring and there was a period of time when we were homeless and that was a moment in my life where tomorrow didn't matter at all. I decided at a young age that I wasn't going to let that moment stop me. So the wolves became an intuition for me and a shape that told me which directions to paint the brushstrokes in. I see them as abstractions; they add up to a wolf, they are not a wolf. For me painting wolves is a way to reflect on this experience which still informs very much how I exist. And also, the answer that everyone hates is because I like to paint them. They are excuses for me to paint. They just inform me of what to do so I can remove yourself from the equation.

*Do you ever sit back and think this is done?*

Yeah and I have found that it is sincere in that moment. One thing that I think a lot of people struggle with is that we hold ourselves to promises that a younger version of ourselves made and we become discontent because we hold on to this thing that no longer reflects reality. Hopefully you continue to grow. Like when people say, "never change", that's the worst thing to say to someone.

*So time is an important factor in your work?*

Whenever I teach my drawing class, I teach that it is only about three things: time, quality and energy. All we have is time, except when we go to sleep; it's a difference sense of time. I am talking about both mechanical and subjective time. How do we do time? With energy. Everything is an exchange of energy. And what is the search? What is everything about? The search for quality. Quality can also be described as evolution, as external and internal forces budding up against

each other searching for the best expression.

### *Has teaching affected your work?*

Yes, because I have to explain things and when I explain them they became clearer for me. Words and experiences do not necessarily add up to each other. Once you have a language for something and you can articulate it then there is more power - more choice. Language is a dominant way we speak to each other.

### *You recently did a performance with Vaginal Davis at New York University for the production of "The Magic Flute." How was that?*

I haven't done performance in a long time. So Ms. Davis and I have been friends for seven years. She asked me to participate in the "Magic Flute" with her, Susanne Sachsse, and their CHEAP Kollektiv. Jonathan Berger, the gallery's director, brought them from Berlin and they did this whole production of it. Jesse Bransford and his students did the sets. The characters were all distorted and most of it had to do with Isis. Jamie Stewart from Xiu Xiu did the musical score. Michele Auder filmed it and the film is coming out in June. Jackie Shemesh did the lights. I played Prince Tamino. So the audience walks into this room and I'm naked on a table and I only had three lines. I was told that the only thing I needed to do was get in shape. So for six months I was a lean, green machine and then I found out that the magic flute means there is a dildo that is going in my ass.

### *Surprise!*

The weird thing is that I identify as a heterosexual man, but I always thought I was open-minded. It's easy to say that but the moment

you have to do things, the moment I had to stick a dildo in my ass, I started thinking about an audience that I didn't know interpreting me in some way. When you can feel the edges of the invisible box you live in, it is a really thrilling experience. You have a choice to stay in the box or go out of the box. So I decided to do it. The dildo didn't fit. We tried. I had to go to meetings about how to fit this dildo in my ass. Then they came up with the idea of pulling a wick out of my ass. For three times a night for six nights, not including the rehearsal or the filming, I had to get a bee waxed wick up my ass and then get it pulled out. I felt like it was karma because I objectified so many of my partners. I want to go to the grave haggard, chew me up and spit me out life, I don't want to go the grave as a person who tiptoed.

### *Who would you want to collaborate with?*

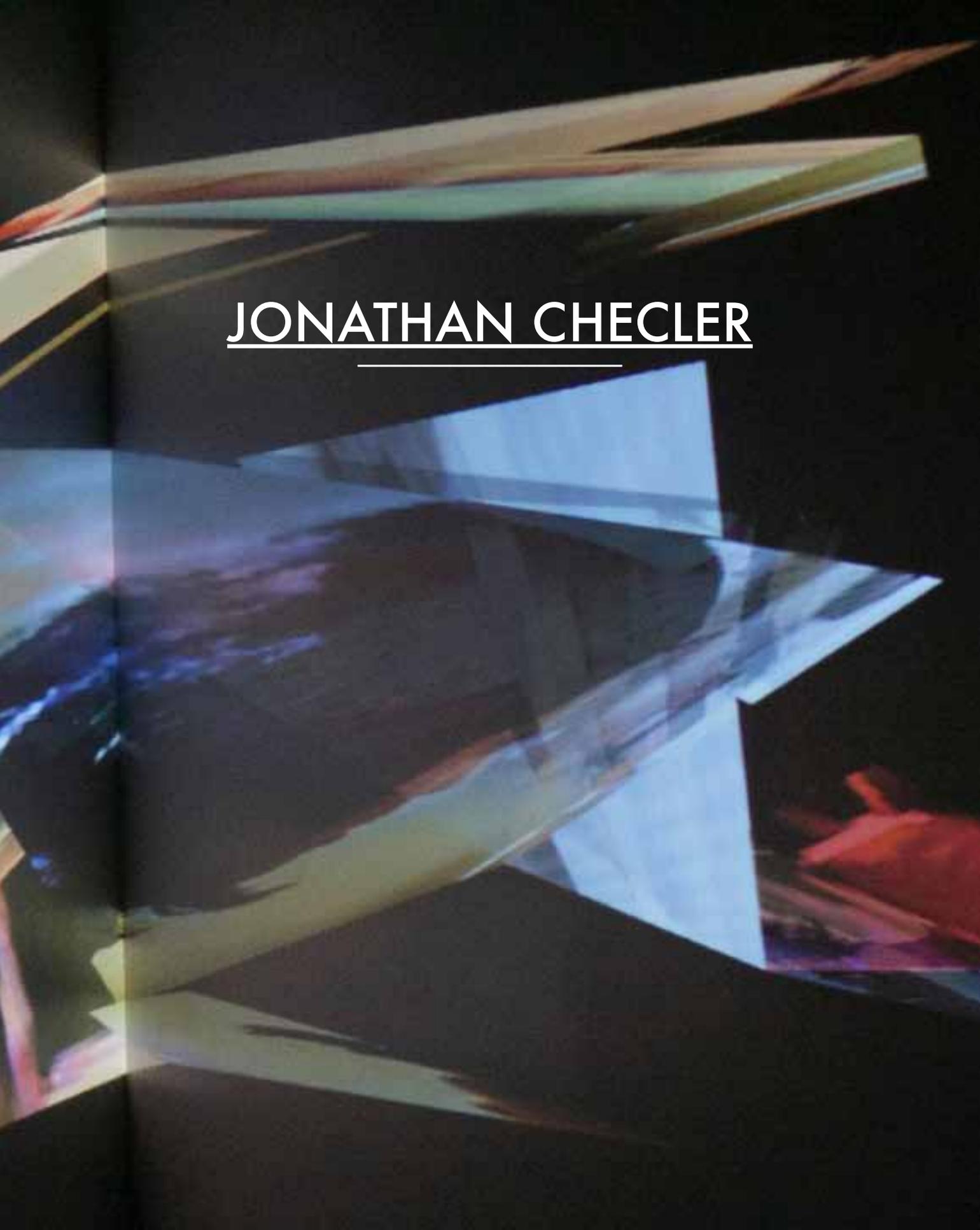
Brancusi. We would probably clash but for my viewing pleasure.

### *What are you listening to?*

"Plain Gold Ring" by Nina Simone. Kurt Vile. "Danny Says" by the Ramones. "Life is Gone Down Low" by the Lijadu Sister.







JONATHAN CHECLER

**Jonathan Checler** is a French-American interdisciplinary artist living and working in Brooklyn, New York. He produces artwork that explores the human relationship to a degenerating nature. In his artistic practice, he employs both technology and the human body. His curiosity leads him to new artistic processes, in which he is mostly self-taught. He emphasizes that all knowledge is on the internet, we should not be afraid to learn, and that tutorials are available for the mass distribution of knowledge. He exhibited at our inaugural exhibition at Stream Gallery, NY.

*How did you end up in New York and making art?*

When I was 18 I dropped out of high school to go to theater school in Paris. I graduated 4 years later and my forte was stage directing but by the age of 22 no one would produce my plays and I kind of gave up and started painting. When I was 25 and painting in my apartment I decided to take art a step further so I moved to New York, got my GED and went to college to take art classes. I'd been introduced to other art forms and artists and never looked back. I'm still in New York making art.

*So the theater world really helped with this. Do you like to build environments?*

Theater is most definitely part of the foundation of my art. I like to conceive my art work with the same closeness that exists in theater with the audience. I did a couple of art performances in New York and they always had a dramatic aspect. In 2012 The Violent Fluffers did a performance titled "Dance:Body." Originally inspired by 80's sci-fi movies, I was wrapped with spandex fabric and stapled to a wall like a structure.

*Did you feel transformed?*

Yeah, it felt like a shelter. It had a really comfortable feeling, this idea of being wrapped up. And having full trust in my partner who was stapling me.

*Does the body play a big role in your work?*

Yes, I don't really like clothes. A body in the flesh is more interesting. It is beautiful and fragile.

*How did you move from painting to digital work?*

It's a 10 plus year process of learning and disappointment. Like everything, the more you work on something the more you realize that you are not as good at it, so each time that I would hit that point I would experiment with another art medium. I went from painting to sculpture, from analog photography to art performance, and then from digital photography to video projection in the last few years.

*Where did you pick up your tech skills?*

The internet. Every problem I came across (software/programming issue, projector set up, technical specs) there was someone before me that had the same problem, solved it and for the good of the community posted the solution to Youtube, blogs and forums. Once I got rid of my fear of not understanding technical stuff, it became pretty easy.

*So you learned carpentry as well?*

Yeah. I worked in a bunch of bars that needed some wood work to be done. I love building shit.

*That's a great way to approach art making. People just box themselves up and are too afraid to try.*

I was told as a kid I couldn't understand stuff like mathematics or grammar (lexical mathematics) because of dyslexia. I want to believe everyone can understand, it's just a matter of how it's explained. Once I understood that  $1+1$  equals 2 anywhere in the universe, that math is a universal language, it became accessible and useful. Complex mathematical concepts were not a dead end, they became interesting mysteries to solve. I try to apply that to everything new I learn. Once you try, there is a lot of failing, of course.

*What themes do you use in your work?*

Nature. I like human nature in it's most primal ways. It is in human nature to eat, fear, reproduce and idealize nature. In my photographic series "The nature of this" I use pornography imagery to demonstrate that our society enforces a concept of sexuality that is removed from it's nature.

*You recently had work up at Superchief Gallery. How was that?*

I did a video installation, a multi-surface sculpture like a praying totem onto which I projected on the surfaces a mix of porn footage, mid 90's pop culture movies and westerns. I was comparing the imagery of ultra sexualized females to "invincible"/emotionless alpha males. Outlining a new monument for moral guideline. I like to glitch the video footage by modifying the Hex and ASCII code. Computers don't see images, they just see 0's and 1's (binary code). So when you look behind and change a few of them that is when it glitches.

You can also add all the letters of the alphabet. I would go to Missed Connection site on Craigslist, copy my favorite one and paste it into the ASCII code of the image to glitch. So you would see an image that was all weird, but behind it there would be this story.

*We are so happy to hear that Missed Connections are being used for creative purposes.*

Oh a lot of people are. Now there a lot of posts that are written by artists. I find so many beautiful essays on Craigslist, apology letters and short novels.

*That's so weird that Craigslist can be used as a platform for art. So do you want people to know the text of the work?*

The text is for me personally. I used a bunch of material like the first chapter of the Mormon Bible, surrealist poems, amateur short stories. When I show these works I will show the image and the text.

*I love the idea of the Bible and the code coexisting in a parallel realm because which one takes us closer to God?*

The belief is that God is all knowledge and all knowledge is on the Internet. It's a general and global consciousness. I find it fascinating that people on Youtube will still have a pedagogical inclination to share knowledge, from plumbing quick fix tutorials to clinical cyst removal video.

*What separates us from this global collection?*

Us being able to physically touch someone.

*Who else would you collaborate with?*

I am in a collective with Ryan Mulkey called Violent Fluffers. In our statements we keep you excited with a sense of revenge. I am open to new collaborations so bring it on.

*Who were your influences?*

The major ones were Jean Michel Basquiat, Francis Bacon, Jenny Saville, Anish Kapoor, Martin Puryear, and Paul Rebeyrolle.

*What are you listening to?*

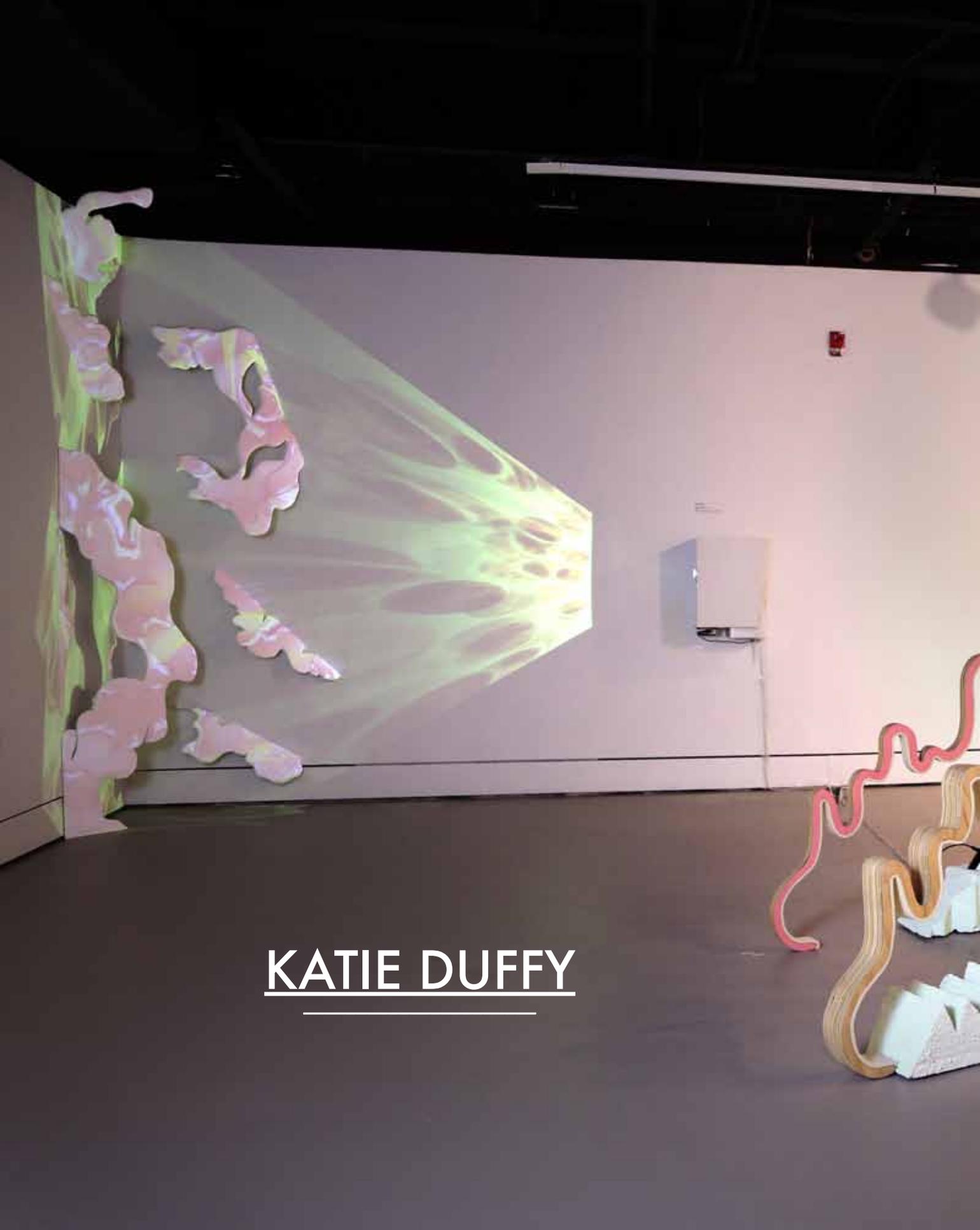
Dj Shadow and Prefuse73 are my go to.



GALLERY

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KML

TEAM [unreadable]



KATIE DUFFY



Baltimore - based video artist **Katie Duffy** treads the thin line between art and design challenging the concept of where one ends and the other begins. Using video, technology, and the virtual space of the internet as mediums, her work challenges and defies the many questions that have been imposed by art school.

*What materials do you love to work with most?*

I love the idea of video as an actual material and I wanted to come up with some ways of working with some things that I love about video, so something that looks like it's a screen, something that really gives you that polished feel. I love working with the idea of hiding the fourth wall and cramming it into a form. Basically I am trying to figure out how video can become a sculpture, a thing, a 3-D object.

With projection mapping or with a screen it's all territory that feels like I'm doing something wrong, so I approach every show as an experiment and so I am always trying to see what I can change. It's not permanent and I think it's important to approach the material in this way because it is not static.

I make a lot of net art and I am trying to approach the browser as an actually space but it is not a space and it will never be a space. Virtual reality will never actually be a reality. There is so much weird stuff in the vague area and for me it comes out as playful and fun. I think a lot of artists will exist in this zone and put a lot of sinister commentary, which I'm totally down with, and I think it's interesting.

But I just really like the Internet and I love code and I teach this stuff and I generally am really excited about it. Breaking stuff and using things wrong is kind of what I think of my practice.

*How do you feel about being an artist versus a designer?*

For me the practical application is all the same. If I take a client into account, then it turns out being cold and it feels like design. When I make designs or website work the same aesthetic comes through but it's more like you have to consider that audience. Here in order to make your own stuff and for it to be genuine you have to distance yourself from it while at the same time considering what the space is. When you are a designer your audience has to be everybody and you have to burn everything down to its most fundamental forms because it's about translation. With art you do not have to be so direct with it. I am a person who exists in the slashes - designer / developer / artist. That's where I want to be; I want to be in that grey zone.

There is a thing in design that I miss in the studio and that it is so collaborative because it is so client facing. You have to get the feed-

back. I don't want to have ownership over anything. I want to disrupt the notions of me and disrupt the notion of who the artist is and bring authorship into that grey zone as well.

*A lot of people have a set idea of what they want their art to be.*

And I think that's great. If that's who you genuinely are as an artist or a maker then fuck yeah. But for me it just kind of feels cold and alien. The reason I make art is because it feels good. It's like church in a way. It's what you go back to. And I want it to be with other people and other artists. This idea of the artist as a sole genius is such bullshit because we steal from each other constantly and I think if we just admit that and go with it and give each other the due props then I think things would be a little less hard.

*How do you choose collaborators?*

Right now I have an online gallery called Browseras.com where I take on the role of the designer and taking someone's physical installation and design it into a browser based installation. So I'll see a piece that I like and I'll give it insidious notions. One of the online collaborations is with CiCi Wu, she is a New York based Chinese artist who is kind of like myself, very interdisciplinary. The piece itself heavily referenced Chinese films of her childhood. For this piece we took a physical installation of CiCi's and translated it into a digital browser based installation. So when I first saw her initial installation I had this flash of "oh this would be so cool in the browser" and we went from there.

Another is with Nick Primo, we build these works in conjunction. I taught Nick a bit about video and he taught me about woodworking. So we ended up with this thing that looks like

a weird offspring between our two practices. That takes away the loneliness of being an artist. You kind of give it up to the art gods a little bit; you never know what's going to happen.

A lot of people are just honestly from the community we have here in Baltimore. I would love to start working with people outside of Baltimore. I just got professorship in Chicago so I will be moving there in July. I am really excited to start hooking up Baltimore ends and Chicago ends.

*Are you in conversation with anyone who does body mods? They are pioneering out of garages.*

I really need to get on that. It is interesting because its like where do we draw the line at that. I have a friend who has a split tongue but then you sort of cross the threshold where it is not accepted by society but what's the difference and then enhancing your body. People have always been trying to live forever. I should probably start reaching out to them. What's the difference between me covering my legs in tattoos and them modifying their body?

*Do you have a technology or biology background?*

I started my adult life as a social worker. Then after school I realized it wasn't for me, I wasn't cut out for it. I was always into tech and being creative with it. The other part of it was that I was always an athlete, I was a crazy soccer player and had a constant awareness of my body as a vehicle. Being a female athlete and pushing your body to perform in a certain way and then having people thinking that they can just comment on it devel-

oped the interest in biological forms because I do not have a background in science. I think it comes from this hypersensitivity in reacting to your body. I am also really interested in feminist and queer theory and body politics.

*Do you think physical galleries will ever be replaced by virtual galleries?*

This is such an interesting question because I don't think anyone has gotten it right yet. Are we supposed to go back to 90s virtual reality experiences? I have seen some people do it in an interesting format. In my opinion this clamshell, browser based experience can never emulate going and seeing physical work. I hope that someone hits it on the head and figures it out. It's a shame because I love net art and I love browser based pieces but they never come across correctly in the gallery because they are meant to be viewed alone. Then they are not getting their due justice and being shown alongside a painting and they are not taken as seriously so I think it is a very interesting problem that I assume will be solved at some point.

*Who would you want to collaborate with?*

A dream collaboration would be Shana Moulton. She does a lot of performance that are reminiscent of Internet based experience. I usually see my role in collaborations starting out as more of a designer or technologist, but then the pieces start to come full circle and become a collaboration by two artists, and thus turn into "an art". Working in this way, my collaborators and I can use a design paradigm as more of a process of making, rather than design being the final outcome. Also Zoe Beloff, who was a badass multidisciplinary artist before it was cool to do that and experimenting with technology when it was still new. She was doing CD-ROM games

and mazes and then a ton of installation and performance.

*Do you find that teaching has affected your work?*

Totally. I love teaching and it suits my personality. You get to be a ridiculous human and it is encouraged. A lot of times students think that I am there to tell them things and I know it all but my whole thing in life and as an artist is that I don't know anything. So anything I think I know there's probably a better and more interesting way to do it. I have learned more from teaching than I learned in school. When you are trying to teach yourself something you can be lazy and find shortcuts. When you are teaching you better be on it and you better have 10-15 metaphors to explain object oriented programming.

*How did you get into art making?*

I painted forever in undergrad and then I got really fascinated by technology and video. Having an understanding of where things come from makes you realize that you can start breaking them. I think our role as artists in terms of technology is how to use it wrong. What happens when you give somebody the power to use an object who doesn't know how to use it? What new and interesting thing will happen? The Sony Portapak, the first commercially available video machine came in a little pack, the video camera was meant for consumer based but what artists started doing with them was totally wrong. Video has totally evolved from there. We wouldn't have video on the Internet and video as journalism if we never gave that technology in the hands of artists. Our role as artists is to push the form. The difference between science and fine art is that in science you are expected to fail and your ideas come from failure. As

artists we need to embrace failure a lot more.

*Do you find that more and more girls are getting more comfortable using technology?*

I am happy you said that. I have always been a painter and then I started running with a bunch of boys who did video art and I was like "I can do that and I can do it better than you". But I have noticed there aren't a lot of girls doing this stuff, which is why it has been my mission for the past few years learning to code. It's a total boys club and I feel it's so inaccessible to women. My number one thing is to bring more women to this conversation. I just got a grant to do the "hack the patriarchy" hackaton, where you don't just code but

make a curriculum.

So I am thinking of the female artists, but they are afraid because they have been low-key actively discouraged to do that kind of work and experiment in that way their entire lives. There is a book "Technologies and Intuition" that talks about however you want to embody femininity is up to you and this feminine idea of approaching technology as a mysticism is really fascinating.

*What music are you listening to?*

Alabama Shakes' "Sound and Color" album on repeat. Kimbra's "The Golden Echo" album. Neko Case forever and ever.





# JAMES MOORE





GOD

Alpinestars

S/S



**James Moore** is an interdisciplinary artist working in Long Island City, New York. We visited him at his studio residency at The Artha Project where we learned more about his participation in Spring/Break (2016), in addition to his interests in high performance motorcycles, entomology, and extraterrestrial conspiracy theories.

*What are you working on in your studio?*

I'm casting body parts in resin that are intertwined with LED lights.

*Where are the molds from?*

Different places. This one is from a human skull I bought off the Internet.

*Why are you combining LED lights with body parts?*

The concept was inspired through motorcycle riding. While riding my bike on the freeway, I recognized how the nervous system in the body is comparable to the roads inside a city. The concept of cyber casting was conceived through wanting to create an electric light stream inside the body. The electricity represented in that idea is why I do black and white art. I want to simulate that electric current. The expression of the matrix is another form of that idea. It illustrates the patterns of the grid and its circuitry.

*Can you tell us about your Spring/Break show that you were a part of??*

For Spring/ Break, I created an alien autopsy room that was inspired by underground military bases. These bases are apparently

all over the country. Since the people who worked in these facilities are getting older, they no longer want to hold on to this information and have been relinquishing the secrets of these facilities. As a result, more and more information about these stations is being disposed. The installation uses aesthetics from these military bases. The graphics along the floor were inspired by air force landing strips. The tiles on the wall were bursting with alien energy. I wanted to create the sensation that the walls were caving in.

*How did the waiver play into the installation?*

The waiver simulated a psychological state of the otherness of the space in relation to everything else happening, socially and architecturally at Spring Break, a totally different zone of experience. By signing off your rights, it allowed the sculpture to psychically infiltrate. You then expected something to happen as you passed behind the curtains. The same feeling is generated when you walk into a haunted house.

*Have you ever had an extraterrestrial run in?*

I had this insane UFO sighting in Long Island last summer. It was really crazy. It was right in my field of vision.

*How did you know it was alien?*

It looked like it could be some crazy high tech government drone, but it was so futuristic looking. I have never seen anything like it before. It had these LED lights on the parameter of the craft. It was probably 20-30 feet long. It was flying down the beach silently and was moving along a vector line. It seemed like it wasn't flying but being strung along a digital track.

*Did this inspire your work?*

This body of work comes out of that kind of uncertainty - not knowing if the unidentified flying object is a government product or an actual alien UFO, or maybe a complicated in between like a drone that utilizes extraterrestrial technology. I'm fascinated by that mysticism. I use that uncertainty to create these narratives. The stories live somewhere between the fiction of the imagination and our technological realities.

*Where do your icons come from? What Kind of Moth is that?*

That is a death's-head hawkmoth which is the one from the Silence of the Lambs. It's a really interesting moth. The hawkmoth sneaks into the beehive and releases a fragrance inside the hive which masks its identity, so the hive doesn't recognize the intruder. Then the moth steals all their honey. This body of work is about illuminating and exposing secrets. I include iconography without trying to overload the viewer, and I leave it up to the audience to look deeper into the symbols. There are Lockheed Martin symbols, graphics from fighter pilot planes, etc.

*Who is the woman in your drawings? Is she the same woman? Why a girl?*

I illustrate this character with the "God" symbol on her forehead as a metaphor of government-alien technology transfer - the trade between testing on humans for an exchange in technology. It's been speculated that LEDs and certain spacecraft materials manifested from this kind of alien information transfer. This character is the genome byproduct of this transfer. She's simultaneously primordial and digital. She's simultaneously a cyborg entity and an ancient being. I think the Lilith story is really fascinating because she was erased by mankind, cast out of the Bible. Her story was a secret, but now thousands of years later, it is slowly being revealed. Also the character is a personification of feminine power. The figure just naturally seems appropriate for the material.

*What are the continuous themes throughout your work?*

Aggression, spirituality, and finding a deity inside the computer. Also, transcending fear. Much of my work comes from my experience of riding motorcycles and transcending different phases of fear. As you pass through barriers you gain different perceptions of reality that lead you to a higher state of being. I also think about the prominence of the military and fear people experience from advancements in technology. I think about what information is shared with the population and what is withheld; the power of propaganda, and how corporations play a major role in how society is shaped. I think about how these icons are monstrous and apart of our daily backdrop. They are very real to the time we are living in. If you look, all this iconography is around us.

*Are you afraid of the future? Are you pro or against singularity?*

I'm excited about the future, and in helping create it. My goal is to give people psychological tools to best deal with the future, and the singularity (if that happens,) as it comes.

*Are these pieces a projection of now or the future?*

Both. The manner in which I approach making art is through digging deep into the past then reaching really far into the future to arrive back into the present.

*How did you start making art?*

I've always been this way. I drew. I was into comics. I remember being 5 and seeing all this insane comic book art, and I had all these idealizations about superhuman powers. I haven't thought about it like this but maybe my fascination with freakishly powerful beings translates from my interest in comics as kid.

I've also always have been fascinated with ornate Japanese art from the Edo era, as well as more recent cyberpunk and anime stuff from the last 20 years. I love super complex and highly detailed drawings. Also Suehiro Maruo, Toshio Saeki, Takato Yamamoto, etc.

*Do you have favorite Sci-fi movies?*

The Thing, Rubber's Lover, Akira, Ghost in the Shell...

*Do you have any other artists that you would be excited to work or collaborate with?*

Not really other artists but it would be interesting to work directly with a scientist or biologist, or to work with artists who are not in a traditional fine art field. I would love to have access to real drone parts, so anyone

that works with drones. Maybe someone that works with Lockheed Martin who could give me some parts. Or scientists that work with robots.

*What do you look forward to making and learning about in the future?*

I want to look further into astrophysics theories and multiverse theories. I want to make more performance art pieces with my motorcycle. I've done video performance with my bike before, but I would love to do a performance in real time so the audience can experience the first hand power of the machine. In that way it's a real physical manifestation. A lot of people can experience art on instagram now, which is valid, but creating something visual where you have to be there, first hand, to experience it is more of what I've been working towards. That's why I'm interested in installation art and motorcycle performance. First hand, in the flesh - there's a deficit of that right now.

*Last question, have you ever been to Roswell?*

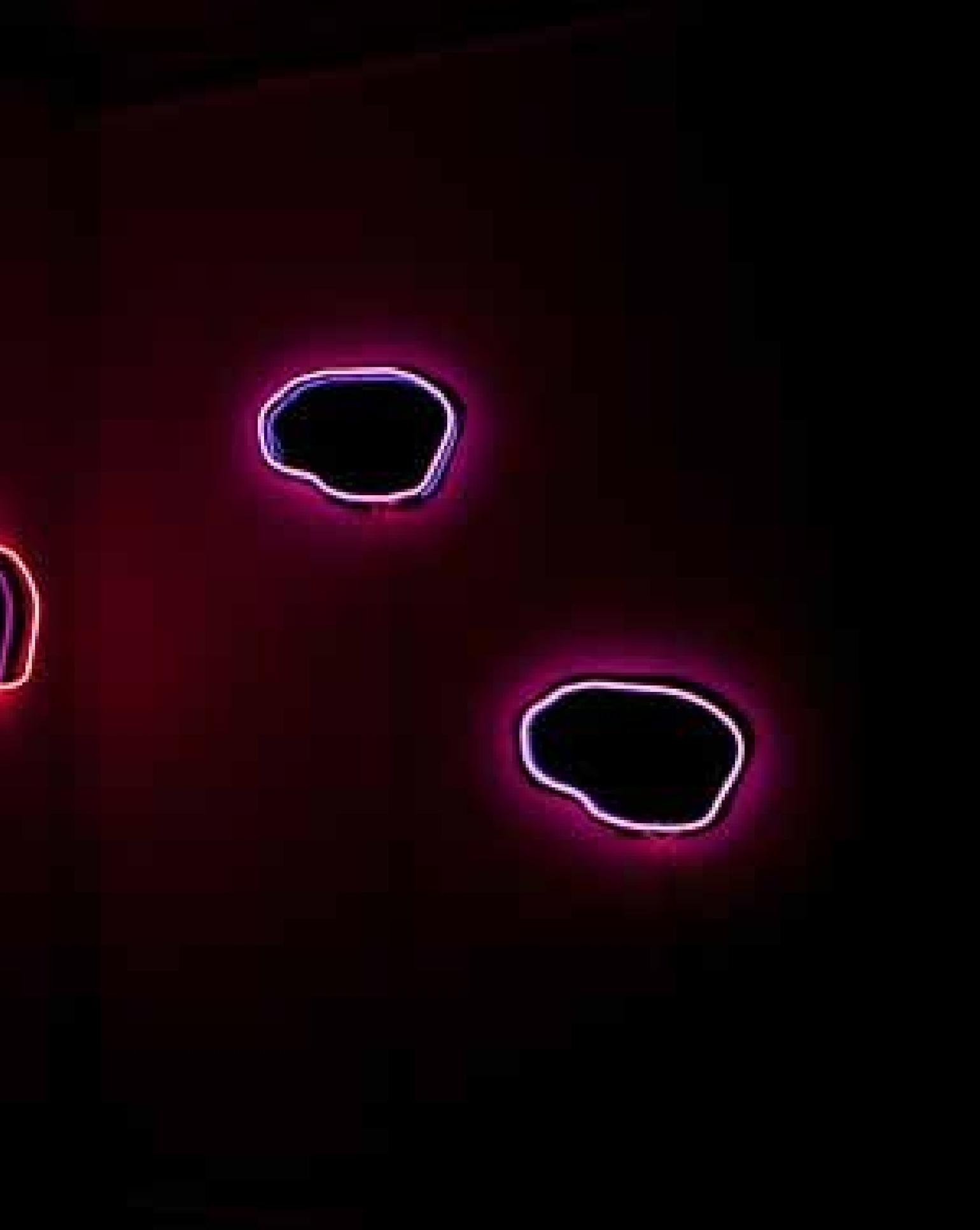
No, but I want to go.





ESTHER RUIZ

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**Esther Ruiz** is an interdisciplinary artist working in Brooklyn, New York. Using concrete and neon tubes, she creates symmetrical sculptures that resemble intergalactic souvenirs. We sat down with Esther in her studio at the Williamsburgh Library where we discovered how her day job at a neon sign factory transformed her artistic practice. She seems to be everywhere recently, participating in both DIY artist-run galleries and established art institutions.

*What attracts you most about working with neon and concrete and how did you get into working mainly with these materials?*

I started working with neon by chance really, I started working at Lite Brite Neon in 2011, and since day one, I knew I'd someday use neon in my work. It made sense though, because I was already working with fluorescent plexiglas. And I started using concrete as soon as I moved to New York, not really sure why but I guess being surrounded by it in the city drew me to understand it more intimately. Five years later, I still find both neon and concrete fascinating. Neon blows my mind, electrified gas in a glass tube?! Just amazing. I like that it's relatively old technology but it has really changed, and everything is still all hand made!

*How do you source your material?*

I collect things that attract me, plastics, geodes, minerals, metals, trash, coins, toys etc. etc.

*What artists would you want to collaborate with, if any? Which artists in your sphere are you looking at now?*

I would love to collaborate with Jim Drain, Anne Vieux, Isamu Noguchi, Lee Ufan, James Turrell, Tom Sachs, Keith Sonnier. . . I'm constantly looking at a lot of art. . . love Ian Cooper, Henry Gunderson, Alex Dacorte, Jayson Musson, Ann Green Kelly. . .

*Describe your creative process.*

Well, I'm sort of working on a few "bodies of work" at the moment and they all require different processes.





The smaller concrete/neon pieces come together by laying out all of the materials I accumulate and seeing what works together. Then I build disposable molds, pour the cement and sink the other materials.

*What environments do you like to exhibit in (particularly in reference to light spaces)?*

Well who doesn't love a clean, bright, white box, that's really my preference, to have control of a space and transform it. I'd also love to do more outdoor work in the future. . . maybe in the desert. . .

*What projects are coming up for you?*

Well, I have a solo show in Marfa, Texas this summer and a show at BAM in the fall. As well as a group show at Underdonk in Bushwick in May and another group show at the Islip Art Museum. It's been a very exciting year!

*What music are you listening to right now?*

TECHNO!



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