Spring 2014

Reemit Vexing Truces Struck, Defiled, and Rehung

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Recommended Citation

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Reemit Vexing Truces
Struck, Defiled, and Rehung

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Abstract

Within his studio practice Sean FitzGibbons imposes limitations upon his processes, methods of sourcing materials, and fabrication of artwork. He relies on the viewer to apply their personal narrative to his work. Through a bricoleur approach to creating artwork, he uses signifiers to clue the viewer into his intended narratives, but people come to his work with varying life experiences, and therefore generate their own stories. The act of constructing a narrative within Sean’s work is a rigorous and performative process; the rigor he applies to creating a fictional universe gives his work authenticity. Treating his studio the same way a scientist would a lab, Sean generates social sculptures through performative collaborations and objects through trial and error experimentation.

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Introduction

In my process of creating, I generate reality-based altered states of consciousness that interact with an individual’s underlying ideological system. As Joseph Campbell explains, “The artist eye, as Thomas Mann has said, has a mythical slant upon life; therefore, the mythological realm—the world of the gods and demons, the carnival of their masks and the curious game of ‘as if’ in which the festival of the lived myth abrogates all the laws of time, letting the dead swim back to life, and the ‘once upon a time’ become the very present—we must approach and first regard with the artist’s eye.”

The relationship between the artist and audience designates the power of the work. The curator and gallery space stand in as alchemist and Philosopher’s Stone, when involved in the alchemy of turning creative labor into contemporary art. It is this relationship and the degrees of separation between the artist, audience, and the congregational space to witness the artist’s homiletical visual creations (performance, performativity, or encompassing installations) that I believe ordains the artist.

The interaction between the viewer and artwork channels these transcendental energies directly into the audience’s consciousness or awareness. The audience sees signifiers of the artist’s observations and subsequently applies their own experiences towards “deities” (in this case, I mean the fundamental experiences that compose an individual’s persona) that originate
from a personal practice. The viewer’s life experiences are triggered through witnessing and confronting my artwork. Joseph Campbell put it this way, “...on shamanism, that is to say, we are touching lightly the problem of the mystical experience—which is non-historical and yet, wherever it appears, gives sense and depth to whatever imagery may be cherished in the local tradition, cultivated by the local priests, and more or less crudely utilized for social ends and a bit of spiritual comfort by the local populace. The shaman represents this principle on the primitive level, as do the mystic, the poet, and the artist in the higher reaches of the culture scale.”

My current studio practice is about relating the world around me to the audience through my actions and artwork. My actions generate sculpture, performances and artwork, through a rigorous regimen of dedicated studio time. My actions also stand as a means of display for my artwork and myself as an artistic persona. I present my sculptural studio practice, my performance-based events, and my discrete poetic interventions as a whole. These series are independent of one another, but running through my entire practice is a common narrative/universe. Imposing limitations on my material sources, art making processes, and conceptual intentions generates artwork that uses a bricoleur approach. This leads to anthropological investigations of the environment that surrounds me. A lot of the content from my artwork stems from the culture in which I live.

Experiences manifest themselves through creative labor and are transmitted to the viewer. Louise Bourgeois explains the importance of creative labor for
transmitting meaning when she said, "A work of art doesn't have to be explained. If you do not have any feeling about this, I cannot explain it to you. If this doesn't touch you, I have failed." Objects, performances, narratives, and gestures relay personal anecdotes and rely on the viewer to apply their worldview, so they can involve themselves in that narrative. In my creative process, I use self-imposed limitations and found objects, within a scientific experimentation means of trial and error production, which generates anthropological and cultural content. As Joseph Beuys said, “This is a very important concept for me, if I produce something, I transmit a message to someone.”
Chapter 1: What Can I Do With What I Have?

I believe that self-imposed limitations force creativity. If an artist has a world of resources at their disposal and a studio full of sycophants, their work will suffer. The more an artist can distill the limitations of actually creating and fabricating the work, the more creative the end result. An example is with George Lucas’ latest Star Wars Trilogy: it was a failure compared with the original trilogy, as he was less restricted with the special effects, budget, and materials. When he had everything he ever wanted immediately when he wanted it, there was no pressure to revise, edit (not film editing, but concept and execution editing), evolve, or problem solve. Imposed limitations are another aspect of the physical rigor in my work, adding content to the overall studio practice. An important element to *SkyMark Mourning* is a poem that coincides with the sculptural installation in the Kemper Museum of Art. This poem was written using CAPTCHA technology.

“A CAPTCHA is a program that protects websites against bots by generating and grading tests that humans can pass but current computer programs cannot. For example, humans can read distorted text as the one shown below, but current computer programs can’t. The term CAPTCHA (for Completely Automated Public Turing Test To Tell Computers and Humans Apart) was coined in 2000 by Luis von Ahn, Manuel Blum, Nicholas Hopper and John Langford of Carnegie Mellon University.
To write these poems, I record hundreds of two word CAPTCHAs. After a while, some ideas and phrases begin to emerge, and I puzzle these two word fragments into found word poems. The sculptural costumes for *SkyMark Mourning* are accompanied by one of these CAPTCHA poems. Solely using these found words obviously limits the words that I can use, but that limitation really opens the meanings and the ideas attached to the words. The poem for *SkyMark Mourning* stands in as a fictional historical document. Much like the Icelandic sagas portray the ancestry and history of their culture, this poem presents a historical account of a created culture within a fictional universe. When the words are limited and given to me in such a rigid structure, ideas and phrases I would have never created emerge, and I generate the universe in which they sit and gain context information. The poetry is no longer restricted by the word pairings limited by my mind; instead I am free to concentrate on constructing their place in the world and the meanings that they now signify.

Combining the use of collaboration, experimentation, bricolage found objects, and random chance (as in the use of the Captcha), gibberish is given meaning.
through context and applied narrative. Below is an image of Hugo Ball’s 1916 performance of his Dadaist poem Karawane, constructed completely out of gibberish. The lack of meaning to the words is the content of this performance.

Another example of how extreme limitations have acted as a productive element in my practice is in my digital image series *Taken From Television*. For this series, I researched the options and buttons on my digital single-lens reflex camera. After understanding the controls of this camera, I set forth to create artwork that
had its process of creation based within the controls available on the camera. I was not interested in creating photographic images that exemplified my knowledge of taking high quality photographs. I was interested in misusing the controls to obtain unknown results. Using a long shutter speed and the black and white image option, I sat in front of my television set and took images of movies and television shows. I was experimenting with pop culture’s digital interface.

These images became a documentation of how we view and experience our pop culture world. The entire process and resulting images became a window to our cultural daily existence. For all of the images, the only clear objects are two small lamps. I positioned my personal reading lamps in my living room behind the camera. Since the image was taken with a long exposure and the lamps do not
move, they become the clearest objects in the image. The flatness of the entire image betrays the layering. The lamp’s image may sit on the glass surface of the television, but it exists behind the cameraman in real life. Ever present within the images of distorted cultural references, narrative segments, and characters, is a signifier to the domestic TV viewing experience, the end table lamp. Television shows work best due to the fact that they have incredibly short shot lengths, while movies had shot lengths that lasted well into the two to three second time lengths.

fig.4 Untitled Outstretched Arms Image from Taken From Television, Sean FitzGibbons, 2013

As for now, these images are intended to be experienced only through a computer screen, adding another layer of content through their restriction to a digital format. This means of display or presentation is a continuance of Constantin Brâncuși’s theory that the pedestal that presents a sculpture adds information and content to the artwork.viii The picture begins through the camera that is taking the actors moving image and is then translated to my television screen where it is captured again via static image and presented to the viewer on a computer screen. There are many layers separating the viewer from the original content, but the actual elements involved and process of production is the products of intense economy and simplicity of means.
For *SkyMark Mourning*, I have created sculptural costumes that are intended to be worn for live performances and films. All of the materials that make up the costumes are sourced from my immediate surroundings. To fabricate much of the artwork in *SkyMark Mourning*, I scavenged material from the Washington University in St. Louis’ campus and art departments. Thrown away cheesecloth, discarded rope, ghillie suits used by past students, broken furniture from the dumpsters, surplus paper pulp, and disassembled kitchen utensils all make up the materials for this installation. The usage of found objects and mainly discarded materials adds layers to the content of the artwork but also to the narrative of the invented culture.

![Film Still From SkyMark Mourning, Sean FitzGibbons, 2014](image)

*fig. 5 Film Still From SkyMark Mourning, Sean FitzGibbons, 2014*
Chapter 2: Into a World of Predetermined Applications

I cordially dislike allegory in all its manifestations, and always have done so since I grew old and wary enough to detect its presence. I much prefer history – true or feigned– with its varied applicability to the thought and experience of readers. I think that many confuse applicability with allegory, but the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author.

- [JRR Tolkien

Lord of the Rings Foreword to the Second Edition (October 1966)]

Throughout my practice there is a recurring discussion regarding societal and cultural histories. My work investigates the histories of specific people, places and their culture. These ideas have introduced narrative aspects to my work, and enabled an expansion of application by the viewer. Through implied cultural connections, people can associate themselves more thoroughly within the experience of an art piece.

SculpturAle (2013) was my final project for my first year in graduate school. This piece consisted of a 258 empty beer bottles wrapped in hand-made paper. After months of a trial-and-error exploration of paper pulping techniques, I created a paper-making process using the industrial by-product of beer brewing, donated by a local craft-brewery. SculpturAle relates St. Louis’ long history of beer brewing to traditional papermaking processes and explains the similarities between the two. For example, utilizing top quality ingredients/material and the focus on perfecting a technique exist within both practices. The rigor both brewers and
paper makers put into their craft inspired me to do the same; for months, I became invested in creating the best formulas for the different desired styles of beer paper.

Combining the process of creating paper and the investigation of cultural histories within America instigated the use of regional-specific and culturally significant ingredients for this installation. Within SculptureAle, much of the content stems from the process of its creation. Just like my CAPTCHA poems, I use found elements from a strictly defined source. To create the hand-made paper for the sculptures, I sourced materials from small St. Louis craft breweries. St. Louis’ beer culture has shaped its current socio-economic stasis. Beer is such a force to St. Louis society, economy, and strife. When Budweiser was sold to InBev in 2009, St. Louis lost the same number of jobs as the day after prohibition in 1920. Beer, beer making, and the economic strength of breweries is so ingrained in St. Louis’ culture that in Thomas Hart Benton’s A Social History of the State of Missouri “In St. Louis, shoe manufacturing and brewing
represent the progress and industry in the city. In the shoe manufacturing scene, the production evolves from man power to a mechanized assembly line. The men making the beer kegs sample some of the product.”

A large part of the process behind SculpturAle was the editing of prescribed materials. There was a long trial-and-error period, where I spent perfecting the process to achieve desired results. When assembling the final display for this series, my biggest concern was making sure every shelf was perfectly level and every bottle was in line. When creating work that is ultimately visually minimal, an artist has to work even harder to make the work seem as if it was not created at all, but has somehow always existed in the state in which the audience views the work.

fig. 7
SculpturAle, Sean FitzGibbons, 2013
Chapter 3: Narrative Gestalt: Constructing a Universe:

In Trenton Doyle Hancock’s series “Mounds,” there is an elaborate narrative he has created in order to create a context for his drawings. Mythologies form based on his drawings, characters are developed through the process of creating the detailed imagery in his drawings. “I have this kind of intense, extensive catalogue of information that I’ve found from my childhood that is a parallel project to what I’m doing in my studio,” he said, “which is also about ‘em(sic) going back and finding textures and personalities and reinserting them into the stories that I tell.” Drawing from his past, he includes biographical signifiers within his work that translate to the audience. The audience then applies their life experiences to the signifiers, and an entirely new narrative is conceived, thought it may or may not be close to Hancock’s original intent.

In my studio practice, some narrative content is generated through my self-imposed limitations of process and material sources. Using mostly discarded objects to construct the costumes for SkyMark Mourning, creates information about
the culture that I am creating. For example, the chest plate for the female character is fabricated from old cooking utensils. When this is applied to the narrative content of the installation, the viewer uses their experiences by recognizing that the objects are discarded cookware and fabricates stories about how that common utensil was incorporated into the costume by the fictional culture. Narratives of post-apocalyptic scenarios are some of the most common associated with *SkyMark Mourning*. People apply this narrative because of our culture’s ideas and knowledge of archeology and dystopian science fiction. The culture within this artwork is set in the future, since our culture’s common definition of a steak knife is lost in their universe, and they have incorporated it into an article of regalia.

fig. 9

Image from instagram.com/seanfitzgibbons
Process image showing the fabrication of a chest plate for *SkyMark Mourning*. Sean FitzGibbons, 2014
The rigor in the creation of the narrative not only dictates how the characters evolve but support the work and relies on itself to create continuity. Trenton Doyle Hancock says, "I came up with the idea of having a story as a kind of framework to plug elements into, to let the characters have a place to grow, and to give context to the different sensibilities that the characters have. So, in essence, the story is the glue that holds everything together. The characters exist as vehicles..."\textsuperscript{xii} His fictional world, and his invented subjects, exist as simultaneous conduits for legitimately existing in our world. He continues, “The idea of a narrative is also important because of how information is passed down. I’m always trying to find the story behind anything I’m looking at.”\textsuperscript{xiii}

One of the most powerful elements of Minimalism that inspires my practice is the rigor and craft of physically conveying and translating a formal language. The strength of Minimalism comes from its attention to detail and craft. When artists create something minimal, the eye immediately looks for imperfections. There is also an aspect of object performativity and theatricality that stems from the minimalist approach to art. Minimalism usually uses scale to impress upon the audience its existence as a sculptural object. The audience is confronted with the work inside a white walled space, which spotlights both you as the viewer and the objects. Tony Smith says, "I didn't think of them [i.e., the sculptures he ‘always’ made] as sculptures but as presences of a sort.”\textsuperscript{xiii}

Minimalism also tells a formal narrative with the simplest of elements. Each form has an elemental significance that speaks to the deep history of art, from the
ancient Egyptians to the contemporary city grid. This reductive strategy, again, is not only heightened by the intense craft and economy of means apparent in a Minimalist work, but by their ability speak to associations far beyond what is actually viewable. The formal authority of Minimalism is a result of both their pristine object-making and their associative narrative profundity.

When creating works that fit into a narrative the artist is imposing a limitation into the creative process of the work and studio practice. Trenton Doyle Hancock says, “Having a story to go by, creating a story as a guideline, is just a way for me to have a reason to make stuff or to have some sort of jumping off point for meaning...” The narrative gives the series of work continuity in that it is the starting point for each artwork. Martin Scorsese said, “you had to wait for a Kubrick film, and you know that it is going to be special when you see it. The amount of work that goes into the film is what makes it special.”

Much like reciting a rosary, the creator’s brain shuts down and is allowed to meditate while working on a project of great magnitude. The repetitive motion of sanding, grinding, or welding transfers the creator’s brain function to their subconscious. “We think what we see is a relaxation of ‘executive functions’ to allow more natural de-focused attention and uncensored processes to occur that might be the hallmark of creativity,” says neurology researcher Allen Braun. This is where the real thinking about the piece happens. This is where the brain is able to think on multiple levels at once, and how rigor plays more than a mere background role in the production of a cogent artwork.
Chapter 4: Performativity in the Studio/Lab

Through the performance of creating art, my practice represents a channeling and focusing of life experience. I fabricate the tangible (objects, events, images, sounds) and the intangible (ideas, challenges, and performance). The performativity of rigor that an artist puts behind their project legitimizes the work. For instance, Tom Sachs’ work has layers of content based solely on his studio practice, workshop community, and rigorous regimen of rules and procedures, and this performativity generates artifacts/ideas/documentation and this combination becomes his artwork. "We hope to share our view of transparency,” Sachs says. "We paint everything before we cut, so you can see the cut. The issues of the way things are made will come to life through the work.”xvii As Sachs said, “I think my space program has just as much teeth as theirs [NASA’s] does because mine wins hearts and minds.”xviii

fig. 10 Image from phaidon.com, Tom Sachs Goes To Mars
For my piece *SculptureAle*, I included a performance element. During the opening reception for the exhibition in which this work was included, my performative interventions helped my work stand out as more than just objects on a wall. I provided the Indian Pale Ale that the beer-paper was made from for the audience to drink, and I invited the brew master to come and speak to the audience about his passion for brewing and his creative philosophies in the craft beer world. People weren’t used to artwork being consumed on a visual, gustatory, and olfactory manner; they were taken aback and had to reconsider the actions of the artist’s intent in display.

![Images from the opening reception of *SculptureAle*](image1.png)  
*fig. 11 & 12*

*Images from the opening reception of *SculptureAle*  
Sean FitzGibbons, 2013*
The performance-aspect of art-creation gained international attention with Jackson Pollock and the New York Abstract Expressionists. “Action Painting” as Harold Rosenberg coined in 1952, enabled the audience to imagine the artist as a creator in the studio, generating works of art. Contemporary artists take this to a new level of audience participation when creating artwork, as in The Black Factory, William Pope L.’s “peripatetic truck that solicits folks to bring objects they associate with black culture. The Factory’s workers then “convert” those objects into products to be sold.” Trenton Doyle Hancock’s Torpedoboy project also explores performativity in the process of creation, one that expresses performative rigor. Hancock said of this work, “I was suddenly ok with letting people know who Torpedoboy actually was. He looks like me, he is me. I even have an outfit, a Torpedoboy outfit that I wear when I am painting. In a way, it’s as if when I go into the studio I have to get into character.” The rigor behind the creative labor of getting into character while he works, allows the narrative he has created to enter another level of authenticity, as his character literally is the creative mind generating the images that exist in this alternate universe. Texas’ Lizard Cult, or Chicago’s The Hairy Who, banded together and generated their own mythologies based in their canonical collective images.

For my piece, How to Learn About Images From a Dead Hare, performance is key to linking together not only the narrative within the film, but also the larger history that the piece is discussing. This film piece is meant to be a series of visual metaphors, which translate the narrative of my first year in graduate school. I began by researching and investigating Joseph Beuys’ November 26, 1965
performance piece, *How to Explain Images To A Dead Hare* or *wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt*. I employed the same visual clues and meanings behind his actions, objects, and the use of space. This was not a reperformance, I used the same language that Joseph Beuys invented for his work and applied them to my historical narrative. I considered this to be a self-portrait—a performance of the past the both clarified and authenticated the present.

![Image](image-url)

**fig. 13 (left)**
**fig. 14 (right)**
**fig. 15 (below left)**
**fig. 16 (below right)**

*fig. 13 & 15 wie man dem toten Hasen die Bilder erklärt, Joseph Beuys, 1965*
*fig. 14 & 16 How to Learn About Images From a Dead Hare, Sean FitzGibbons, 2013*
Another key dimension of the majority of my performance-based work is the integration of collaboration, not unlike Allan Kaprows’ notion of “Happenings.” My larger-scaled performances combine multiple people who work together as a team—such as the brew master and the papermaking specialist; or a DJ, musician and dancers—and this laboratory aspect of my work is a definitive part of my studio practice. “Kaprow explained, “A happening is for those who happen in this world, for those who don’t want to stand off and just look. If you happen, you can’t be outside peeking in. You’ve got to be involved physically.” I too, believe that Art should be created through teamwork. My studio is very similar to a scientific lab and is treated as such.
Chapter 5: Bricolage as Gesamkustwerk: A Means to Limitation, Cultural Histories, and Self-Imposed Rigor

Using the bricolage method of process, artwork gains layers of content through unintentional signifiers, made intentional through their use in the creation of the work. Materials and process contain and translate meaning. The materials I use and the processes applied to creating my artwork contribute to the overall idea delivered to the audience. A figure carved from stone has a separate meaning than one carved from wood.

“Duchamp’s use of a newly bought object, such as the snow shovel, (In Advance of the Broken Arm) implied that it was a kind of blank to be filled in; the fact that it hadn’t been used yet meant that it could be used in anyway at all- it was indefinite, undefined, a universal blank to be written on by an abstract sense of artistic intention. Keinholz’s practice, on the other hand, involves a sense that the found object has already defined itself by living out at least the first incarnation of its destiny - where-upon he [Keinholz] reads or vibes out its karma and gives it a second one.”xxiii The audience

fig. 17 In Advance of the Broken Arm, Marcel DuChamp, 1964
comes to Duchamp’s object with their personal histories and their own narratives; they know that it is a snow shovel and that shoveling snow is difficult and can be dangerous. The title is another signifier that clues the audience into the idea that there is a narrative behind the intention of hanging a snow shovel in a gallery.

"At its simplest reading it [Back Seat Dodge ’38, 1964] can be described as a young couple making out in the back of a car… The car is a truncated 1938 Dodge, chosen by the artist because it resembled his father’s car, which he borrowed for a date in 1944 and used for the same purpose. The work nevertheless remains a shocking statement even today, probably because Kienholz’s tableau is designed to create a sense of voyeuristic implication in the scene… We are made to feel guilty and intrusive as we peek into the center of illumination."
Personal narrative adds context with this work. Also, the interaction between the audience and the perception of the work adds additional dimensions of content.

When I go grocery shopping, I always look for discarded shopping lists. These small, banal, and universally used bits of everyday life have a very short “importance shelf life”. While a person is in the store, this list is an incredibly important document, but once the errand is run, it becomes worthless. So worthless they’re not even worth the effort to throw away, most of these lists are found at the bottom of shopping carts. This grocery list becomes evidence of a small portion of someone’s daily errands. It’s a document that provides a glimpse into someone’s
everyday life. Not only does it describe the action of someone running to the store, but, as it shows their purchases, this document delves a little deeper and gives you insight into their daily lives.

fig. 20 Mon. Aug. 26, 13 from the Found Grocery Lists series, Sean FitzGibbons, 2013

Finding these lists instead of creating or even recreating them gives authenticity to the narrative that I attempt to portray. Sitting in my studio is a box where I keep the lists, and next to that is another box where I keep other miscellaneous found documents. For example, I have found documents like a piece of post office scrap paper with test prints from a rubber location stamp that is running out of ink, or a bus ticket left at a cross walk. These are all documents of people’s banal experiences. When I juxtapose these documents of tedium against one another the viewer applies a narrative to a fictional person. The viewer
recognizes these documents from their life and they apply their own narratives based on their experiences.

Like my photographic series *Taken From Television*, which collects bits of televisual culture, these grocery list assemblages have a way of reflecting culture through an extreme simplicity of means and a process not unlike anthropological research. In both works, artifacts of everyday culture are perceived, collected, then assembled as new narratives, resulting in a work that has implicit authenticity and a range of meanings.

![fig. 21 Untitled American Flag Image from Taken From Television, Sean FitzGibbons, 2013](image)
Chapter 6: Social Sculpture, the Internet and the Artist as Lab

Technician/Shaman

The idea of social sculpture is a significant feature of my practice. The artist exists in public; without the public, there is no one to see the work of an artist. Our current public culture is intertwined with the digital world. Artists have the opportunity and the professional requirement to expand their presence and social sculptures into this digital realm. Currently, promoting artwork is done almost solely online, making the need for promotional images of visual art essential. For example, Instagram.com profiles dozens to hundreds of behind the scenes images, solely to promote installations, large-scale sculptures, and/or films. The Art Guys are a two-person performance art team based in Houston. The Art Guys describe their work,

“It's not art about business. The art is business. And that bugs people. We don't work in wood or stone; we work in business. To those whom art is putatively something lofty and pure, that probably seems a violation. But artists are always at the forefront of investigating the things that dominate culture.”

Many contemporary artists are producing work that only exists online. Online comments, gifs, and memes all contribute to an artist’s mythology and present the artist as a digital being. Flash mobs, crowd-sourcing, and protests can all be coordinated through social media. The Internet has expanded the idea of a “living” social sculpture. In order to fund the budget to film SkyMark Mourning, I needed to generate an online presence for this work. I set up an account on the
digital social networking website Instagram.com. Through this website, I generate photographs of my studio, process, and progression of the sculptural costumes. This website has become a socially interconnected location for my artwork. As I post images, comments, and “hash tagged” words or phrases, I build the intangible existence of this fictional universe. The online presence has become an alter ego for the costumes and narrative. Being on the Internet also opens my work to a public that normally would not have the chance to view my work.

fig. 22, 23, 24, & 25 Images from instagram.com/seanfitzgibbons
Process images showing the fabrication and filming of SkyMark Mourning costumes.
Sean FitzGibbons, 2014
The Internet separates the artist and the audience via the computer screen, which becomes a digital mask for the artist to work behind. The artist can allow the public to view just as much as the artist wants; there is a lot of control and intention that comes from this type of mask. However, if you put yourself out there, anyone can contact you or find out a lot about you with just a little time and effort.

The Internet and its relationship with the digital existence of an artist is gaining acceptance as the epitome of public forum. Regarding her own online monument work Maya Lin says, “I love rethinking what things are, changing assumptions — so what if a monument, which we normally think of as being singular and static, can exist in many places simultaneously?”xxvi

I think the public sphere is undergoing a fantastic transformation back to the original idea of art in public; there is less emphasis on ornamental signifier sculptures that double as a status symbols, and more consideration is being devoted to interactivity between artist and community. This evolution through regression of the public art concept is a relatively new forum for contemporary artists, and it is rapidly expanding. There are many contemporary projects that are broadening objects and performance conventions of public art, as well the definition of what constitutes “the public”. A blogger behind the website publicartnow.com created a list of “new rules” for public art writing, “The days of bronze heroes and roundabout baubles are numbered. Public art can take any form or mode of encounter – from a floating Arctic island to a boat oven – be prepared to be surprised, delighted, even unnerved.”xxvii
I believe the artist is a problem solver who is able to interact with both society (inherited) and culture (derived). An artist is someone who has a proficiency in thinking around problems and presenting new ways or functions of older ideas and commonly held assumptions. This is one of the reasons that the audience ordains the artist as a public intellectual or secular Shaman.

*SkyMark Mourning* exists as three iterations. First, there is the sculptural installation as is exists in the Kemper Art Museum. These sculptural costumes will be worn for a theatrical performance featuring contemporary dance, live music, and an encompassing environment for the audience and performers. Finally there will be a film which expands upon the sculptural installation and performance, continuing the narrative. As a part of my practice, I host performance based social sculpture events that I have labeled performance installations. For the *SkyMark Mourning* theatrical performance, I have to initiate a collaborative social sculpture. As a sculptor, it was important for me to engage the choreographer in order to broaden my vision while creating the physical space for the performance. I sought to match their abilities and incorporate aspects of visual design through facilitating the movement of their bodies within the artwork.
Conclusion

Within my studio practice, I impose limitations upon my processes, methods of sourcing materials, and fabrication of artwork. In my poetry, I use a strict source for the words that I use, obtaining only the two word phrases that are presented on CAPTCHA Internet programs. I rely on the viewer to apply their personal narrative to my work. Through a bricoleur approach to creating artwork, I use signifiers to clue the viewer into my intended narratives, but people come to my work with varying life experiences. The materials and object used in my SkyMark Mourning work are all scavenged and found objects, and each object brings significant information about the entire artwork to the viewer. The act of constructing a narrative within my work is a rigorous and performative process; the rigor I apply to creating an entire canon of work gives the fictional universe authenticity. Treating my studio the same way a scientist would a lab, I generate social sculptures through performative collaborations, like my collaboration with the dancers and musicians for SkyMark Mourning. Much like a lab technician, much of my work is created through trial and error experimentation. In my beer paper series, the final work was the result of a yearlong process of experimenting with formulas and methods of papermaking.
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Tom Sachs goes to Mars | Art | Agenda | Phaidon (Phaidon) 
http://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2012/may/21/tom-sachs-goes-to-mars/

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Diane Toomey, *Maya Lin: A Memorial to A Vanishing Natural World*,
http://e360.yale.edu/ June 2012
http://e360.yale.edu/feature/maya_lin_a_memorial_to_a_vanishing_natural_world/2545/

http://publicartnow.com/2013/12/12/the-new-rules-of-public-art/
by situationsuk on December 12, 2013
End Notes

i Thesis title created using my CAPTCHA word sourcing poetry
v Louise Bourgeois’s "Helping Hands" (1993–96), relocated from Chicago's Jane Addams Memorial Park to Chicago Women's Park in 2011, and featured in Art21’s 2001 "Identity" episode.
SkyMark Mourning

By: Sean FitzGibbons

Within wooden beginnings, the timber tinman kneels. Formed in fated skin, a copse joins his carnal palate. Rowan shudders, and posies indite linden.

Frozen farmed an offcut petal enures meetly its soiled pacing. Pistils fixate on willed jests as their scarer bathes.

Mortals purge with thick hoorahs and heiled huzzahs. Waking briars uprise to depict viable relics. Repeated measured meters piqued heliac.

Captors tease those lashed within cabins, pathos vended. Cooing in their steads, they jot down their gilded depths.

Addicts onrush weeping within their timber syntax. Meekly they buckle under their facile skills.

Cherubs reason stoic, and exalt the avenged. This monkey-borne burden, an inherited rosary.

Captive reason those lashed within cabins, pathos vended. Cooing in their steads, they jot down their gilded depths.

Addicts onrush weeping within their timber syntax. Meekly they buckle under their facile skills.

Late, timid tenants adorn their maternal guises. Lark, trepid servants, mourn as the skymark rises.

The skull queen’s ovules strike beyond the bordel’s filter. The ruler spawns his earthy clasp.

Untamed fauna cripple and kickup taboos in comedic silence. This divination schtick pities the senior and signals the oughs.