

# = SHADOW PUPPETS: TRACES OF NEW DOCU- MENTARY PRACTICES\*

POSSIBLE PRESS VOL. 2 ISSUE 4

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CARTER + ALEX DA CORTE/HAIM STEINBACH +  
JAMIE DIAMOND + HAROLD EDGERTON + NIKITA  
GALE + HOKES ARCHIVE + JEJUNE INSTITUTE +  
JOEY ORR + JULIA SHERMAN + YES MEN

When I was 16, I worked as a lifeguard at the local pool, and the manager of the local grocery called and asked if I would be compete as Miss Super Value in the Boon County Fair. My girlfriend dared me to enter it, and low and behold, I won. The next January I went to the Illinois County Fair contest and I won that. The following summer I reigned over the State Fair. I was going off to college and I thought that was the end of my pageant experience, because it really wasn't my thing, but when I got up on stage to crown my successor, the local Fair board president decided that he would sponsor me in the Miss Illinois Pageant. I was like, "Are you kidding?? Alright, whatever."

When I went out to Atlantic City to compete, my State Pageant people said, "Judy, go have a good time, do your best, but you really don't have a chance. Before you step on the stage you have three strikes against you. One: you are a blonde (a blonde hadn't won in 12 years). Two: you are only 18 and that is way too young to be Miss America. Three: the trampoline could go either way - Miss America isn't supposed to sweat." When I competed on the trampoline in my freshman year in Louisiana, it was a men's trampoline team because there was no women's team. So I was the first woman in the history of the school to earn a Varsity letter in athletics. We would go to compete and the coaches would grab their rulebooks, and tell me, "you can't compete." But there actually was no written rule that said I couldn't.

As far as my perspective on the Women's Liberation Protest of the Pageant, honestly, I was just so overwhelmed to even be there competing that I didn't know that much about what was going on out there. They kept us away from the protest; they took the bus down a different route so we wouldn't be going down the boardwalk where they were. We did sneak out one time and saw them out there.

My mother was a teacher; she always worked. It wasn't like I grew up in a "Leave it to Beaver" house where my mom was home with pearls on making dinner every night. So, I didn't really understand their protest. I kinda resented the fact that you couldn't really disagree with the feminist point of view—they didn't have any room for other opinions. From my perspective, the pageant was the largest scholarship program in the world for young women. Criticism of the pageant has died down because when the feminists really started looking at the pageant, we weren't a beauty contest, 50% of the contest was talent.

The goals of the pageant and the feminists were actually quite similar. They both wanted women to realize goals and ambitions, to go to college and do things that they otherwise might not have been able to do. And looking back, there were a lot of things that the women's movement did for women that needed to be done.

Now I understand why they chose the Miss America Pageant—they needed to showcase their views, and, what better way than at the Miss America Pageant—something that everybody watched on Saturday night in September. It would be great publicity.

Newsweek did a thing on the year 1968 in 2008. They took me to New York and we did a photo shoot with Robin Morgan, who organized all the protests and I met her—I had never met her before. She was really nice, and when we walked in she said, "I just want you to know, it was nothing personal." I said, "it's not a problem, I didn't take it personally at all."

JULIA SHERMAN  
EXCERPT FROM A 2012 INTERVIEW WITH  
JUDI NASH, MISS AMERICA, 1969







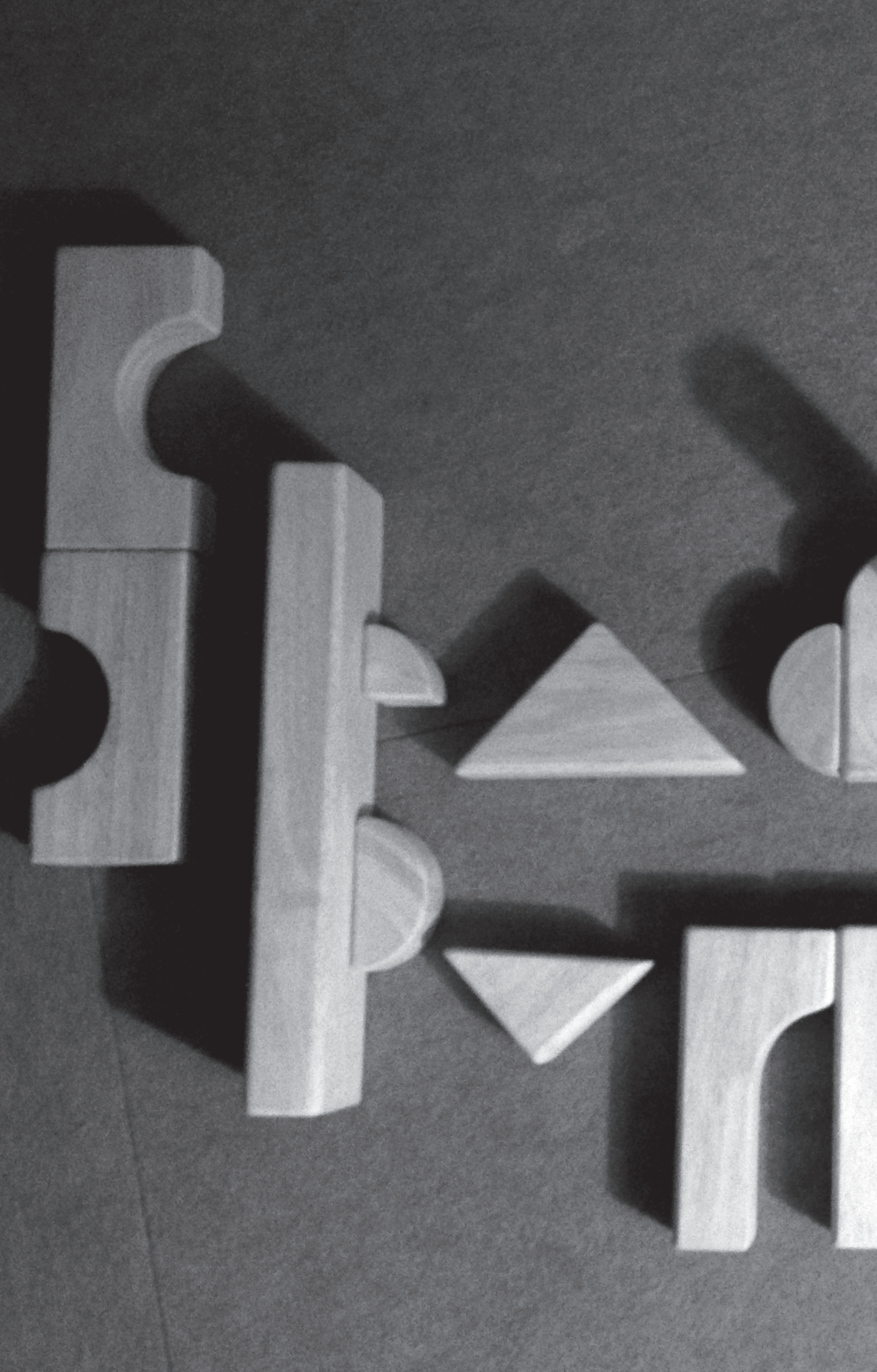
Inherent in the works selected for *Shadow Puppets* are a gravitation towards deploying reality as a tool that builds an illusion in order to reveal a greater truth. This compulsion reminds me of fables; fiction often aims to uncover deeper human motivations and meanings of life. However, unlike fables, the exhibiting artists have sidestepped escapism by presenting a realistic illusion in which the the viewer must decipher fact and fiction to gain insight. Perhaps the artists see the residue of truth within reality, and desire us to no longer be fatigued by images and instead stare at the story.

STEPHANIE DOWDA, 2012

Many of the photographic and video works in *Shadow Puppets* address politically charged issues by capitalizing on the way that the lens can describe and transform reality. The artists operate within a framework that aims to combat the ubiquity of photography while challenging dominant—and often oppressive—cultural representation. By introducing fictional and imaginative concepts into familiar political and cultural discourse, some of these works present alternate perspectives on historical events while others challenge the authority often embedded in photographs. Such deflections are powerful in their suggestion that lens-based media has been liberated from its past duty to simply deliver information. They indicate an expansion in the way we define and engage with images.

JILL FRANK, 2012











\*SHADOW PUPPETS:  
*TRACES OF NEW DOCU-  
MENTARY PRACTICES*

Georgia State University  
Ernest G. Welch School of Art and Design  
Welch School Galleries Exhibition  
Jan 14 - Feb 8, 2013

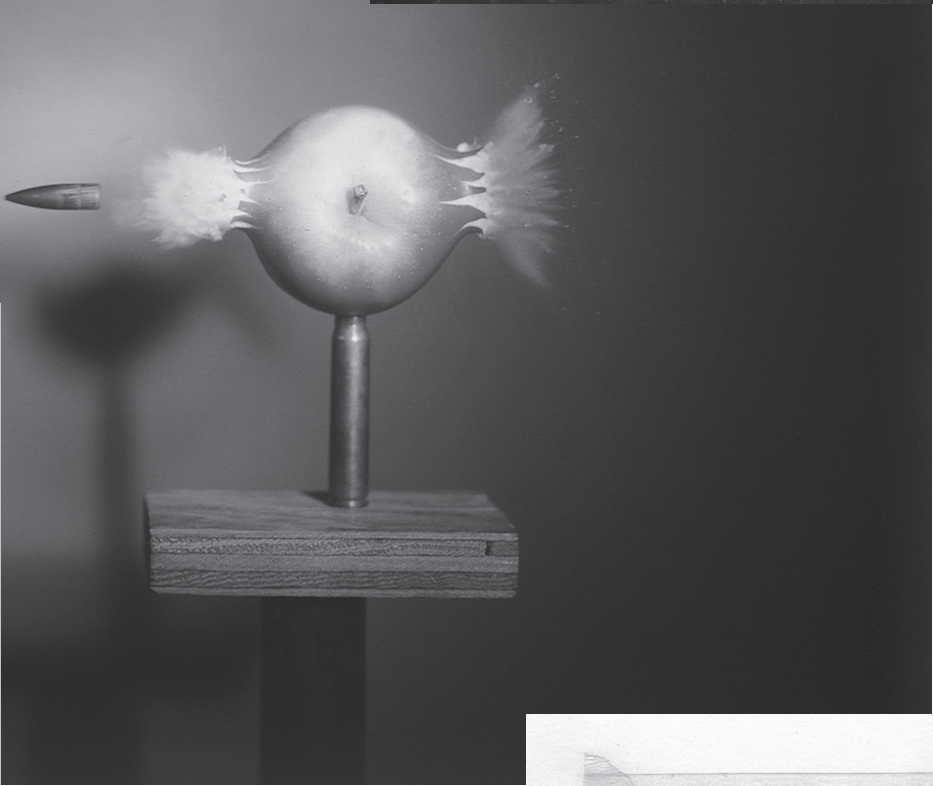
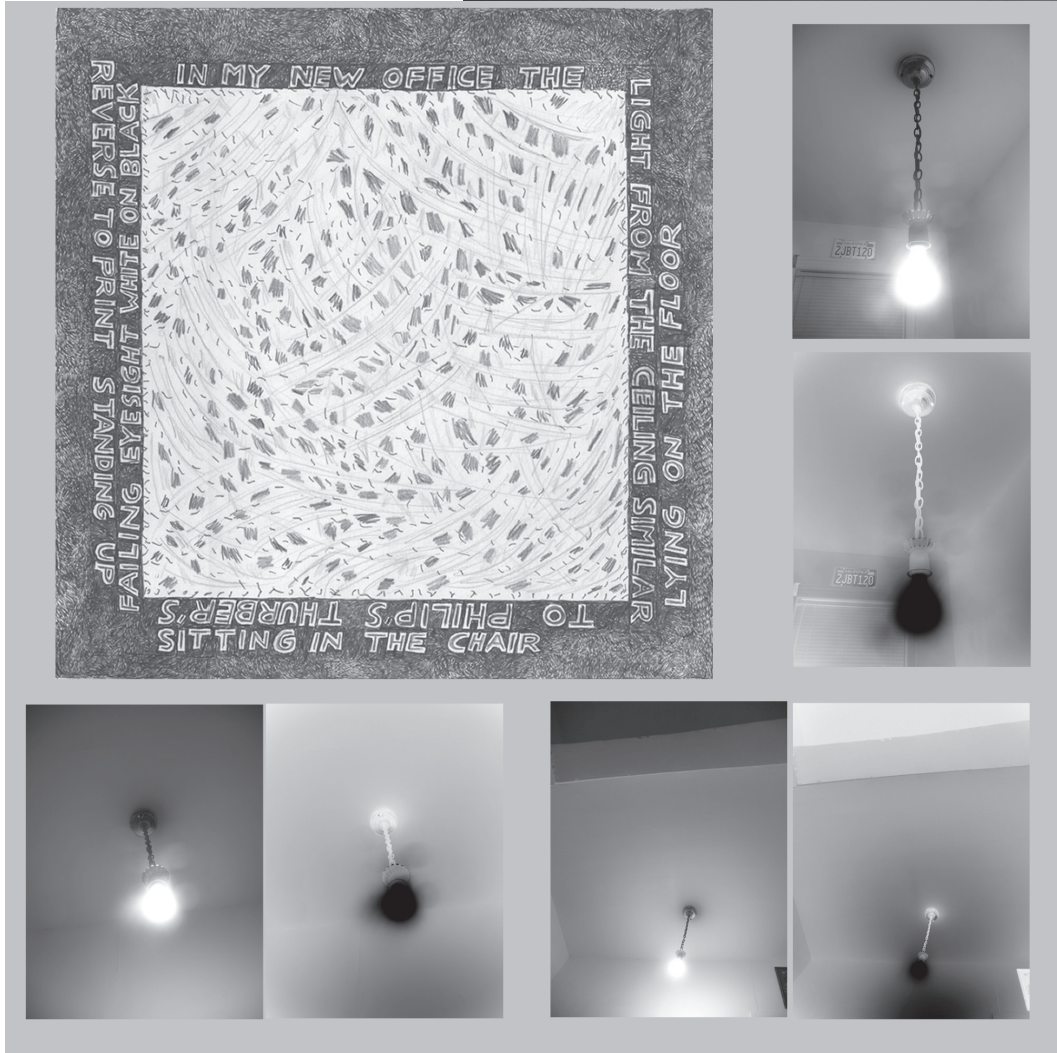
Curated by JILL FRANK and STEPHANIE DOWDA

ARTISTS:  
Daniel Bejar  
Paul Chan  
Debbie Grossman  
Guillermo Gudiño  
Sergei Isaenko  
Lamia Joregie  
Jason Lazarus  
Sanaz Mazinani  
Michael David Murphy  
Possible Press  
Joel Sternfeld

PANELISTS:  
James Elkins  
Daniel Bejar  
Cinque Hicks  
Susan Richmond

SPONSORS:  
CENCIA: The Center for Collaborative and  
International Arts at GSU  
Welch School Galleries at GSU  
Ernest G. Welch School of Art & Design  
Visiting Artist & Scholars Program at GSU





“...an uncanny effect is often and easily produced when the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions of the thing it symbolizes...” Sigmund Freud, The Uncanny



In leather communities, power is often used in tandem with trust, whereas the 2009 police raid on the Atlanta Eagle was merely violent. We might reverse this uncanny duplication of power through forms of creative documentation, for example rentable bounce-house jumpers and ephemera of a Broadway musical.





**ALEX DA CORTE:** Hello  
Haim.  
**HAIM STEINBACH:** Hello. Good Afternoon  
Alex.  
**ADC:** Thanks for meeting  
up today to talk.  
**HS:** It is my pleasure.  
**ADC:** What did you go as  
for Halloween this year?

**HS:** Ah yes. I do enjoy  
Lars [von Trier's] films very  
much. It is safe to say we  
both critique the culture of  
society, but the avenues  
we travel may not be in  
the same city. Ever since  
I began placing objects  
on shelves and trying to  
discern what that simple  
gesture reveals about  
our psyche, my approach  
was for authenticity, albeit  
a theatrical authenticity.  
Although, this term seems  
diametrically oppositional  
to the ideas of authenticity  
and the *Marifesto*. say, I  
search for the untouched  
post-production product  
that readily exists for  
the consumer to digest.  
Nothing was manipulated  
to interfere with the  
function of the shelf or  
the objects on it. This  
aligns me to the Pop  
world—one of color and  
aesthetic—but therein  
can exist the critique, a  
self-analysis. Therefore  
as a survey of the world  
by an active consumer,  
and not just a voyeur, like  
some of von Trier's films  
might suggest. *supremely*  
*black #1* suggests a game  
of chess or checkers, a  
game of subtle moves  
and strategy, in which the  
player navigates through a  
complex web of preexisting  
systems, or in this case the  
consumer and the market.  
It asks, "If this is *reality*,  
aka life as we know it,  
then what does that reveal  
about us and our culture?"  
**ADC:** There has been  
much talk of *reality*. In  
the context of the digital  
world, there is a search  
for the authentic—yet the  
platform by which we share  
our discoveries is several  
steps removed from the  
lived, tangible experience.

the physical weight of  
things and *objecthood*. You  
clearly care about objects  
and communicate through  
them the way most people  
communicate through  
texting. Your works act as  
ideograms, diagrammed  
sentences even, but exist  
for many as digital images.  
The first time I ever saw  
one of your works in a  
physical space was long  
after I saw images of them  
printed in books, and later  
online. Is the photograph  
of the work, or the  
presence of the work as  
a symbol greater than the  
work itself? What are your  
thoughts on the Internet  
and procuring objects vis-a-  
vis online shopping rather  
than walking through the  
aisles of a supermarket?

**HS:** This brings us right  
back to the conversation  
of Pop, or better yet, the  
frame. These works cater  
to "the frame" and defining  
what exists within "the  
frame" or in this case the  
shelf. I appreciate the  
accessibility and freedom  
that the Internet allows,  
but I have always felt  
my experiences were  
ahead of the Internet.  
If I were walking down  
the street and discover  
an interesting toy on the  
street, I have won the  
race to that object—think  
of "*It's a Mad, Mad, Mad,*  
*Mad World*"—I have  
discovered gold. If I then  
unearth this gold and  
bring it to the stage, the  
shelf, the context of the  
frame then we return to  
the ideology of Pop, or  
even, the white cube. The  
object is flattened in a  
sense, it becomes stripped  
of its former context and  
a new one is created,  
one that exists within the  
space of the laminated  
shelves. Yet it dismisses  
the hierarchy created  
between the particularities  
of the white cube and the  
pawshop. The work is  
certainly connected to  
picture making despite the  
fact that it is dimensional.  
It has the fluidity of  
photography, insofar as it  
exists as a symbol, and  
can be identified by many  
and moves easily in digital  
space. My shelves though,  
are akin to tableau  
vivante, a very slow  
performance of objects  
that can exist as an  
image, but the *reality*  
of the performance can  
be felt in the sweat of  
their stillness and their  
hot breath. Unfortunately,  
I feel as though this  
kind of authentic energy  
in objects cannot be  
attained merely in  
photos, otherwise I might  
have been better suited  
as a photographer.

**ADC:** But you appreciate  
that young artists can  
learn from photos of your  
work when they discover  
it online, via tumblr or a  
blog?

**HS:** Yes of course,  
certainly. Learning is  
discovery, no matter  
how you arrive upon it.  
It really is a personal  
preference. I spend my  
time wandering the aisles  
of the markets and the  
mails, understanding the  
immediate environment  
around me. It is very  
primitive, marking  
my territory (laughs),  
yet I arrive at a rich  
understanding of where  
things come from, and  
for me that's a good  
thing. I prefer reading the  
book over the Wikipedia  
entry about the book—or  
maybe I enjoy both.  
**ADC:** Can you tell me  
about the last object you  
bought?

**HS:** I actually bought two  
plastic battery-operated  
severed bloody left  
hands, with glow-in-  
the-dark fingernails and  
a celery green rubber  
shower mat.  
**ADC:** Spooky! What  
drew you to those  
objects?

**HS:** Well, I find myself  
purchasing seasonal  
products from places like  
Duane Reade because  
the same things, yet  
slightly different than the  
previous year. I have  
several severed hand  
products, some in rubber,  
some that glow in black

**ADC:** So by performing  
this character, you  
through sheer will and  
embody those qualities  
of this character.

**HS:** Well, ever since the  
early Star Wars films  
were released, the Yoda  
character was seen  
as a Master of things,  
despite his physical  
form. He exhibited a  
keen and perceptive  
insight, one that could  
balance the physical  
and the metaphysical.  
I do not feel as though  
these are the qualities I  
embody, yet—but they  
are qualities one could  
aspire to.

**ADC:** I assumed you  
would have been Jar Jar  
Binks since you were  
already Yoda in previous  
years. Can you speak  
about your fascination  
with the Yoda persona?

**HS:** (Laughs) Well, I had  
planned on staying in, but  
figured I should dress up  
in costume regardless of  
my plans.

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**HAIM STEINBACH:** Hello. Good Afternoon  
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**ADC:** Thanks for meeting  
up today to talk.  
**HS:** It is my pleasure.  
**ADC:** What did you go as  
for Halloween this year?

**HS:** Essentially, yes.  
Although isn't that the  
language of film and  
fashion in general—the  
embodiment of fantasy  
through the artifacts of  
culture?

**ADC:** Yes, yes, yes. Or,  
is it the critique of those  
fantasies by removing  
the mask that shrouds  
the plastic artifice of  
the world—something  
closer to the *Dogme 95*  
*Manifesto*. For instance,  
*black #1, 1985*, in which  
you use two products  
(black ceramic water  
pitchers and Bold brand

## ALEX DA CORTE INTERVIEW

**ADC:** Naturally you keep  
everything on shelves (laughs)!  
I keep all of my materials in a  
pile in the corner of my studio.

**ADC:** Spooky! What  
drew you to those  
objects?

**HS:** Well, I find myself  
purchasing seasonal  
products from places like  
Duane Reade because  
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**ADC:** Thanks for meeting  
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**HS:** It is my pleasure.  
**ADC:** What did you go as  
for Halloween this year?

**HS:** I collect objects like a  
flaneur might. The objects  
reflect the places I have  
traveled and my memories  
of that place are embedded  
in them, even if that object  
is a multiple, completely  
void of the artisan's hand.  
It takes time, sitting in my  
studio, sometimes for years,  
for these objects to speak to  
me. There is the moment of  
discovery, when my intuitive  
taste does the choosing, and  
I let my logical self take the  
passenger seat. I devise new  
systems for these objects  
once they have had time to  
distill in my studio, my lab. I  
do a fair amount of research  
into each object I acquire,  
but not before purchasing it.  
For me, it is important that I  
surprise myself, that I arrive at  
something new, not merely a  
gnd that I plug the appropriate  
data into. As far as organizing  
goes, I keep everything  
arranged on shelves in boxes  
I create specifically for each  
object.

**ADC:** Are the objects  
you purchase for specific  
sculptures you have in mind?  
How do you organize your  
collection of products?

**HS:** I collect objects like a  
flaneur might. The objects  
reflect the places I have  
traveled and my memories  
of that place are embedded  
in them, even if that object  
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object.

**It's not the real world; it's a world we made up.**  
**FRANK OPPENHEIMER (1912-1985)**  
**PHYSICIST**

## WORKS CITED

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- Anthony Campuzano  
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- Rob Carter  
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2009  
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- Jamie Diamond  
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*Bullet through apple*,  
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Institute of Technology  
Courtesy of MIT  
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- Nikita Gale  
*Untitled*  
2011  
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- Becca Albee  
*Joan Lowell in Brasilia*,  
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2012  
C-Print

It would seem that an act of faith is made by those who assume that science is an objective endeavor leading to an accurate understanding of a given subject. This problem is most apparent in the study of cultures, particularly those of the distant past. I would assert that history is a version of memory, and as such, is always selective, emphasizing one particular feature over another. One might conclude that the historian contributes most to our understanding not through the accuracy of his methods, but through the formation of our interpretations. It matters little whether these cultures really existed, for in the final analysis, they only persist in our imagination.

EVERITT ORMSBY HOKES (1864-1939)  
FOUNDER OF HOKES ARCHIVE  
CITED IN VOLUME 12 OF THE CHEEKWOOD MONOGRAPH SERIES

POSSIBLE PRESS is a curated periodical of artists' writings,  
and is organized concurrently with

POSSIBLE PROJECTS  
possibleprojects.com

ISSUE EDITOR  
Rachel Reese

VOL 2 ISSUE 4 JAN 2013  
SPECIAL THANKS:  
Stephanie Dowda and Jill Frank  
Georgia State University/CENCIA  
Cabbagetown

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