



MARK MOORE GALLERY | **CHAD PERSON** STATEMENTS

CHAD PERSON

STATEMENTS

Acting as a chronological survey, Mark Moore Gallery: *Statements* introduce a featured gallery artist through images and candid interview. From noteworthy early examples to present bodies, the works featured in *Statements* act as an overview of the varying practices and movements implemented by a given artist in tandem with their thoughts and interpretations.

Addressing the confluence of economy and power structures throughout history, Chad Person employs an array of mediums in order to illustrate concepts of cultural dominance, consumerism and Manifest Destiny. While his reconfigured dollar-bill collages, aptly titled the "Tax Cut Series," speak to capitalist ideologies inherent to American politics, Person's work oftentimes utilizes aspects of performance, intervention and documentation.

Person (born in 1978, Marinette, WI) received his MFA in Photography from the University of New Mexico (NM). He has had solo exhibitions in Albuquerque, River Falls and Los Angeles, and appears in the public collections of the West Collection (PA), The Frederick R. Weisman Art Foundation (Los Angeles, CA) and the University of New Mexico Art Museum (NM).

CHAD PERSON

Interviewed by: Catlin Moore, Mark Moore Gallery Manager

While all of your bodies of work have distinctive points of focus and themes, they all engage in a common assessment of societal consumerism and livelihood. How does this most recent project employ these ideas?

Consumerism and livelihood are repetitive themes in my work, but I think you are missing a third key theme: community. RECESS (resource exhaustion crisis evacuation safety shelter) was born from pure necessity. Two years ago, I bought my first house, and immediately began a long list of DIY projects. The largest of these was the removal and renovation of an unwanted swimming pool. My decision to convert the pool into a fortified bunker and resource cache was the most logical and conceptually sound remodel I have undertaken.

Living in one of the most well-armed, well-fortified cities in the modern world, I am terrified by the fragile and untenable nature of my existence. I live 20 miles from our country's largest stockpile of nuclear weapons. My home is surrounded by thousands of miles of scarcely populated desert, with a climate that yields few natural resources. Like much of the American West, my city relies on a continuous import of vital resources (food, water, medical supplies). This is unsustainable and inherently dangerous.

A threat, or end to those precious shipments, would mean the end of my comfortable existence. A resource shortage, serious pandemic, EMP attack, or natural disaster would initiate pandemonium and suffering on an epic scale. So, after much thought, I traded the pool for an experiment in self-reliance. I am comforted by the skill set and knowledge base I am developing. However, I am equally terrified by the threat that the mythology of self-reliance poses to the fabric of community when taken to the extreme.

RECESS explores many performative elements. As this is a previously untapped medium for you, how has this changed your interpretation of your own art, if at all?

I'm not really approaching this work as a performance. Performance implies a sense of pretense. Maybe the better word is "experiment." RECESS is an exercise in experiential learning and an opportunity to address some questions that arose at this point of my life. I don't have any answers, and I don't really care if this work entertains or enlightens an audience. I am living in the middle of a fragile system, and I am accountable for my actions. Part of the work is self-aware, but the rest is entirely earnest. While the performative nature of RECESS is a departure from some of my recent bodies of work, it's really all the same in my mind. RECESS is an immersive conceptual art piece, but can't we say the same of life in general?



The concept of "needs versus wants" can be culturally subjective. Your recent work focuses on essential survival, but do you feel that this can be prone to cultural subjectivity as well?

Yes, absolutely. While certain life-giving needs are truly cross-cultural (food, water, shelter, clean air), every culture and community needs to define its own "survival essentials." I have so few actual needs. My family's basic life-sustaining needs are so easily met that they go completely unnoticed. I am privileged enough to occupy my mind with wants. Right now, I am focused on surviving in this environment, in this community, and in this moment in time. People of many cultures have occupied this desert for 1,000 years; they didn't all live the way I do.

Albuquerque is mining its aquifer at a rate of 50%, meaning that for every gallon we pull up, half of it is not replenished. Do I need to think about that aquifer while the water runs as I'm brushing my teeth? I think so. My survival here, and that of my loved ones depends on it. I also really want to think about it. I desire stability, self-reliance, resourcefulness and, in many ways, the same excessive, wasteful lifestyle that my culture has been selling me for the past thirty years. Subjectively, my needs gravitate toward water, shelter from the sun, safety, and love for and from those close to me.

Explain your process in arriving at the concept for RECESS, and how you ultimately decided to implement the related activities into your daily life.

The decision to integrate RECESS into my daily life is simply this: If you can't immediately relate to this project and its implementation, you're already lost and we're in worse shape than I have imagined.

You've worked with an incredibly diverse pool of resources in creating your work: nylon inflatables, spliced-up dollar bills, small-scale models and now video/performance/household objects have made the list. How did you decide that the aforementioned materials were the best way to bring each abstraction to fruition?

My work has never been and will never be about the materials. I strive for conceptual clarity and strength of the idea. If my Grandma can't understand what I'm doing, I've failed.

Don't get me wrong, I love experimenting with materials and I try to produce sexy work where I can. Materials are a crutch for so many artists. I've seen too many bad ideas backed up by slick materials and outstanding formal technique. It's the artistic equivalent of a Saturn Sky: pretty sexy, but it's still a Saturn. How are they doing these days?

Much of your work has political overtones, as does this most recent body, however RECESS has pushed you to study a

great deal of scientific crossover as well. How has fusing these genres affected your artistic perspective, if at all?

This is a great question. Science at its most fundamental level is about keen observation. The success stories of natural selection are born from the same practice. Artists are some of the most keen observers I know, and I hope to include myself in that group. I know a traditional potter from the Ohkay Owingeh tribe here in New Mexico. His grandparents, and their grandparents before them, taught the practice of grinding up the pottery shards of their ancestors and incorporating them into new vessels for strength. Western scientists tell us this increases the number of covalent bonds in the new clay, and does indeed make the pottery stronger. Did the artists grinding the shards cross over? I don't think so. The observations and process of discovery are the same, even if they are arrived at by academically divergent paths. The irony with RECESS is that my methodology inherently borrows as much from popular culture and marketing as it does from science, or from the type of traditional knowledge I have just described.

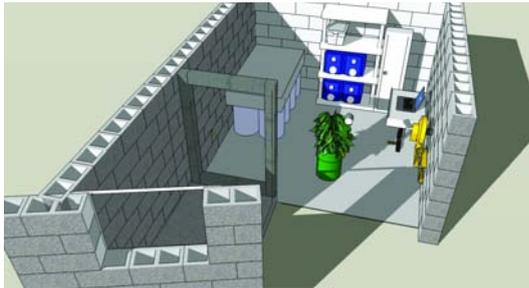
Given the hybridity of your work, in your early artistic development, did you find yourself influenced by other contemporary artists or alternative figures and fields?

Honestly, I try my hardest to avoid overconsumption of contemporary work. I studied classical sculpture, Rembrandt, and Wyeth as a little boy. My formal education has crammed so much

visual culture/clutter into my head that I try my best to limit the amount of art I take in. The work that blows me away gravitates towards the conceptual. I cried standing in front of a flag piece by Yukinori Yanagi at the Tate Modern (London, UK). I get excited by artists like JSG Boggs, Hans Haacke and Robert Heinecken. I also recently met a really interesting programmer named Jared Tarbell, and I've taken his work to heart. My home is filled with beautiful art, but I am equally likely to buy an unwittingly ironic Barbie doll or an elegantly designed bit of packaging and stick it on the wall.

“I strive for conceptual clarity and strength of the idea.”

– Chad Person, 2010



RECESS

RESOURCE.EXHAUSTION.CRISIS.EVACUATION.SAFETY.SHELTER

What is RECESS? RECESS is a remodel; my first serious remodel as a fledgling home owner. The project began as an unwanted swimming pool. Living in the high desert of the central New Mexico, 21,000 gallons of poorly maintained leisure space sounded like a bad investment of my resources.

Within a week of closing, the pool's water returned to the city coffers. But, it would take two years of continuous effort, energy, and commitment to transform the space into a conceptually sound environment. After countless hours of preparation, vigilance and toil I have secretly converted my swimming pool into a hidden bunker.

Survival is everything. My friends and neighbors are well-armed and assumed dangerous. The safety and security of my loved ones is paramount. If a man's home is his castle, then RECESS is my last line of defense. Through careful planning, preparation, and discipline we will be prepared in a time of extreme need.

This project is everything I have learned, and continue to learn as I engage my fears. This archive, and supporting work, will teach you how to prepare yourself and your family to survive the end of your world.

top: RECESS Bunker (in progress)
middle: aerial view; RECESS Bunker
bottom: digital rendering; RECESS Bunker





**UNDERGROUND
RECESS SURVIVAL BUNKER**
concrete, steel, converted swimming pool, conduit

**ARCHERY
TARGET & ARROWS**
couch cushions, twine, wood, tape

**IMPROVED
SHOT GUNS**
steel pipe, twine, rubber bands, glue

**PVC LONG BOW
WITH ARROWS AND QUIVER**
pvc, seat post clamp, art tube, speaker wire, foam

**LIVE TRAP
FOR SMALL ANIMALS**
dishwasher rack, wood, paracord, cat toy



**MODULAR
RAIN BARRELS**
trash cans, pvc, faucets, paint

**PARACORD
SURVIVAL BRACELET**
paracord, buckle, paint

**STANDARD
SIGNAL FLAGS**
nylon, wood, paint

**RECYCLED
SOLAR OVEN**
cabinetry, sun shades, plexi, paint

**GOLF BALL
PROPAGANDA CANNON**
PVC, aluminum foil, golf balls, flint

**AUTONOMOUS
SENTRY DEFENSE SYSTEM**
wood, servos, webcam, computer, custom software

**EMERGENCY
PANT LEG SAND BAGS**
old pants, thread, shoelaces, sand, rocks

clockwise:

Improvised Double Barrel Shotgun, 2010. wood, steel pipe, fittings, glue and twine, 29 x 3 x 4 inches

Two Arms, 2010. wood, steel pipe, fittings, glue, and twine, 42 x 1 x 2 inches

Sentry, 2010. wood, steel, twine, household implements and custom electronics, 38.5 x 22 x 40 inches



TAXCUT

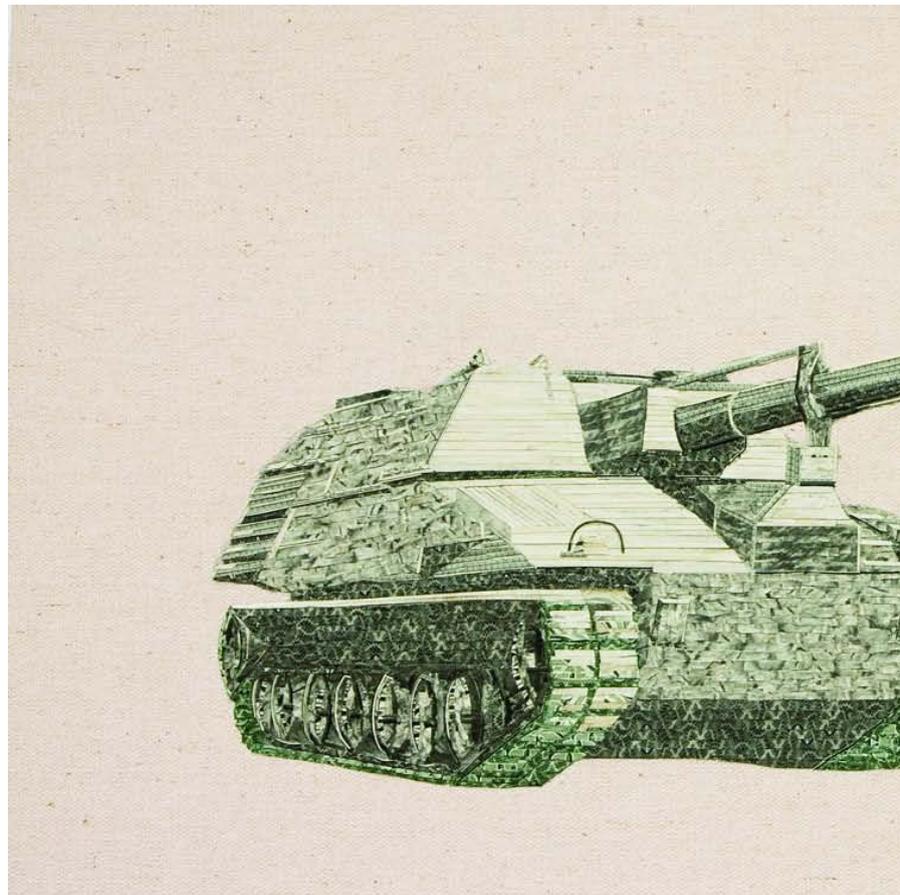
TAKING ADVANTAGE OF A UNIQUE DEDUCTION

In 2002, I was teaching digital photography at a University near an Air Force Base. I had several talented and creative soldiers come through my class, and while I tend to forget the bad students pretty quickly, Harold is one I would always remember.

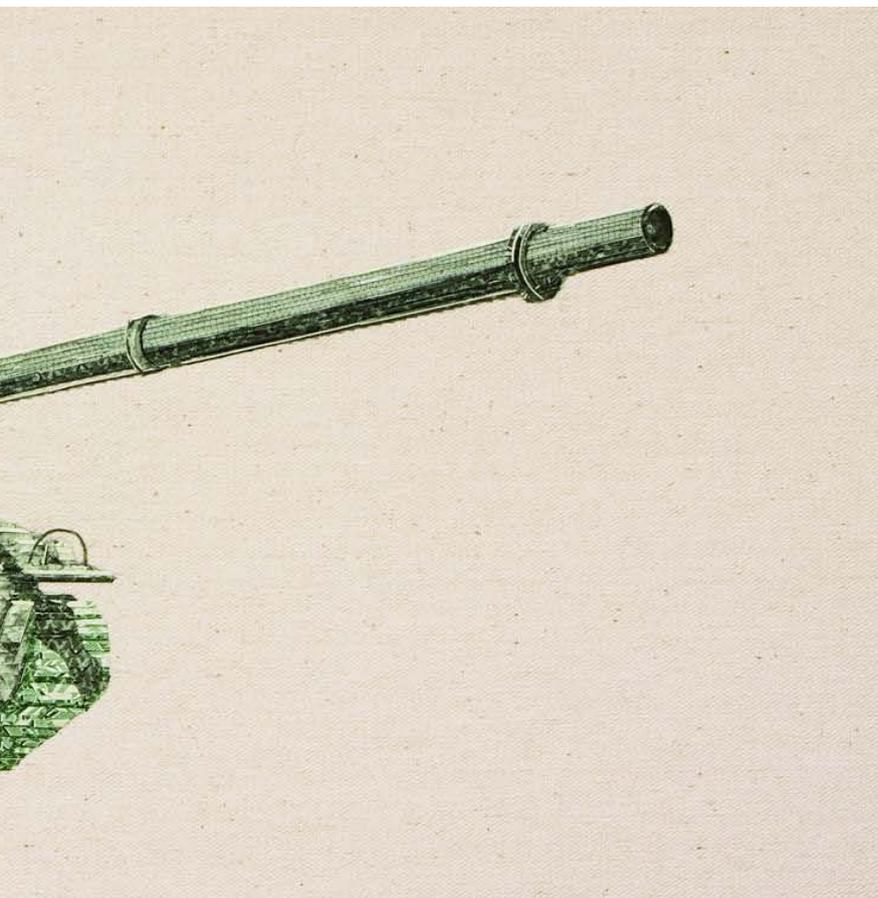
Three semesters after the course ended, I got a phone call from an administrator at the base. Apparently, Harold had used Air Force money to take the class. Since he had failed my class, the cost of the tuition (around \$400 with fees) was to be reneged. This meant that Harold would have to repay the military out of pocket so they could reassign the funds elsewhere.

In a time of war, we all need to make tough choices. That day, I chose to change a grade, and passed a failed student with an A+ to ensure that his tuition fees – which had fortunately found their way into education via a defense allocation – would remain there. He didn't deserve to pass based on his performance, but I saw it as a rare opportunity to take a little back from our government's excessive defense spending; even if it might have been just enough to halt the purchase of one box of ammunition.

This series, playfully titled "TaxCut," functions in much the same way. I have been destroying currency for my work for the past two years. As a professional artist, I deduct my material expenditures as a write off. If I slice up a hundred dollars to make an image, or a thousand, or just five, I am taking it out of the IRS coffers. Imaging the weaponry that I'm not buying with those dollars is a reminder for me that a little creativity can be quite empowering.

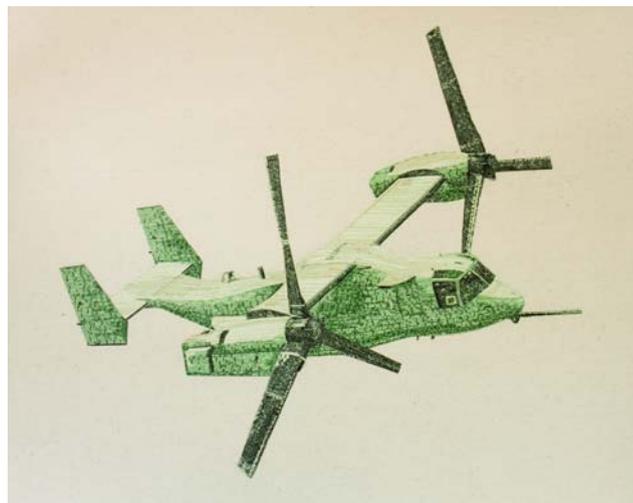


Carrying the Fire, 2008. US currency on canvas, 10 x 19 inches
The West Collection, PA



“The TaxCut series is a subversive critique of the military industrial complex. The images are methodically assembled with strips of shredded currency.”

– Attention to Detail, 2007



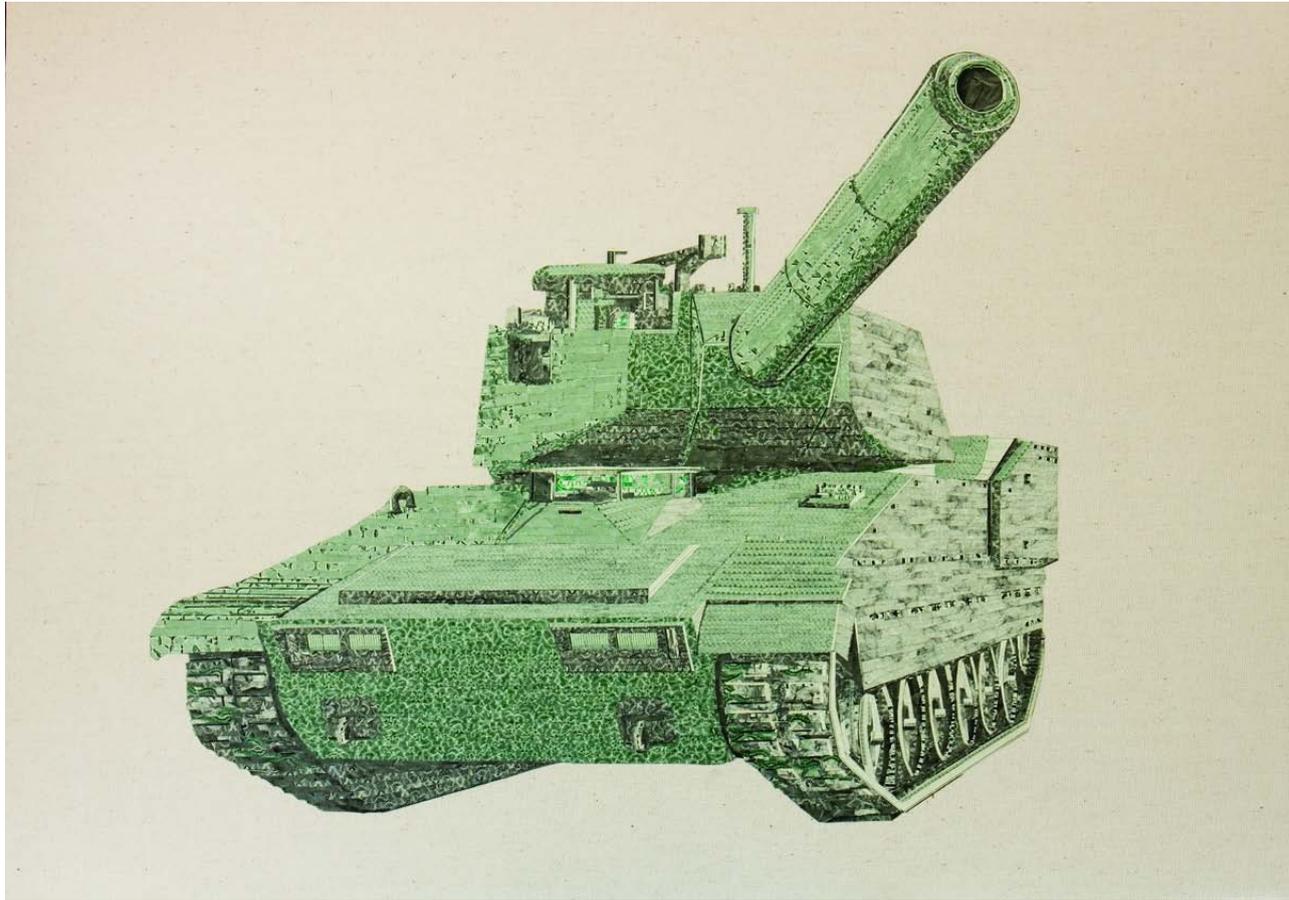
V-22 Osprey, 2008. US currency on canvas, 16 x 20 inches



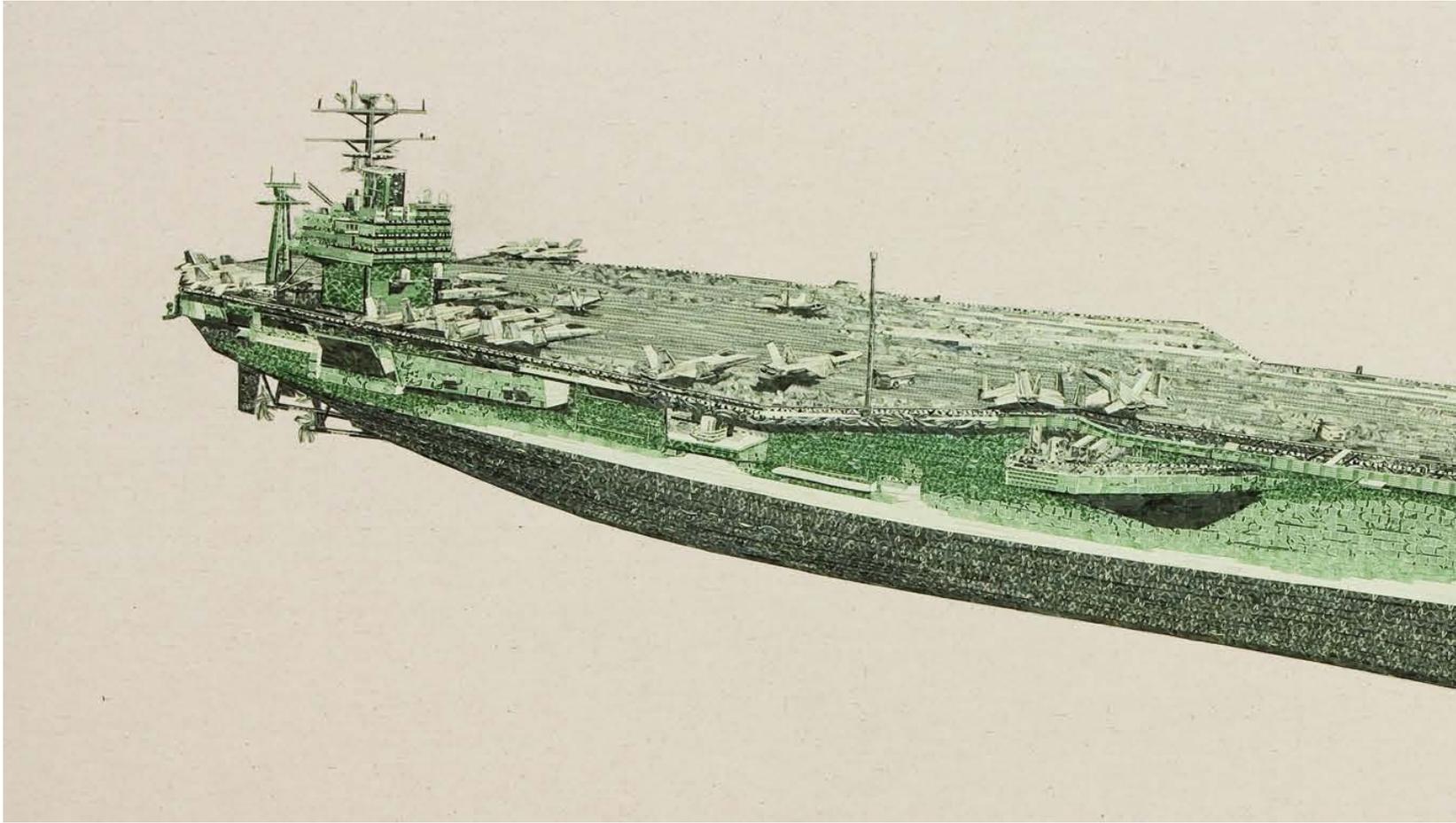
Mig, 2007. US currency on canvas, 9 x 12 inches



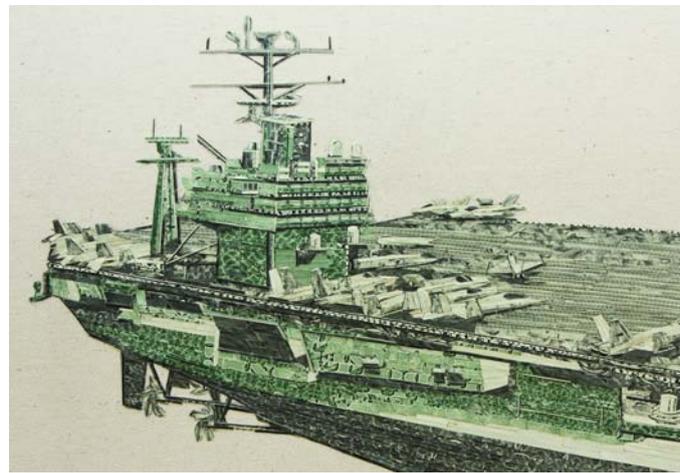
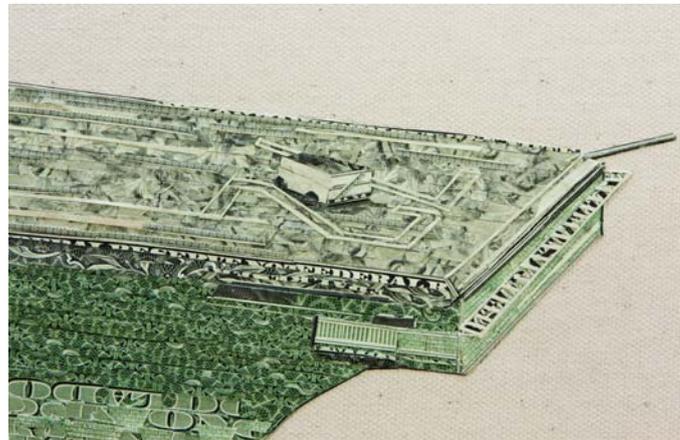
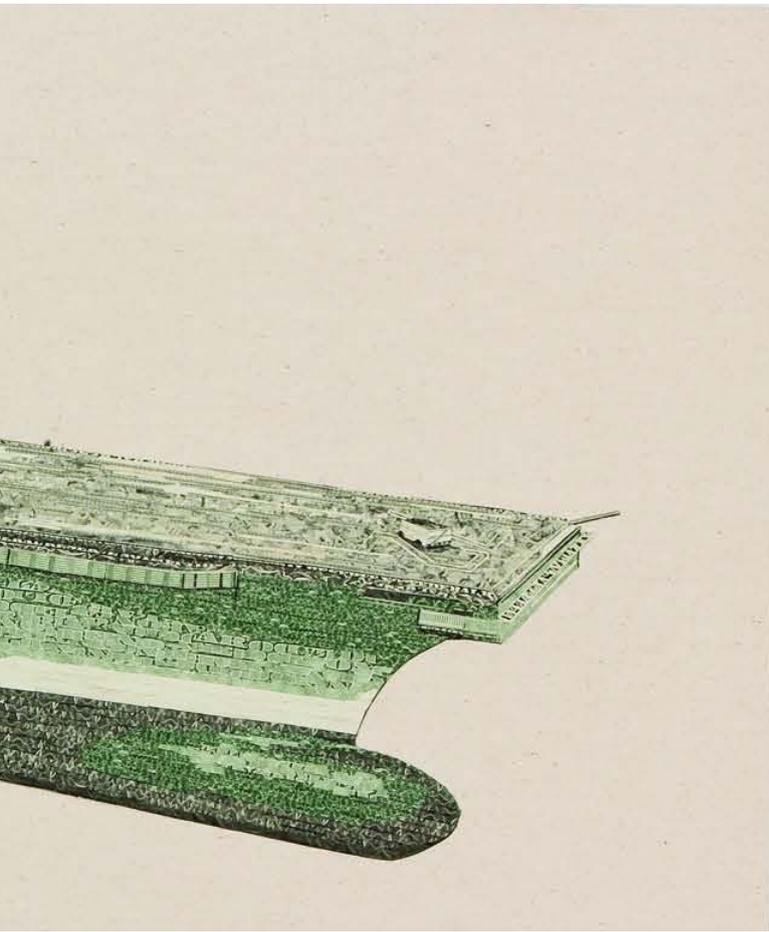
Cobra AH, 2007. US currency on canvas, 9 x 12 inches
Frederick R. Weisman Foundation Collection, Los Angeles, CA



M1 A2, 2008. US currency on canvas, 16 x 20 inches
The West Collection, PA



Nimitz, 2008. US currency on canvas, 15 x 37 inches (right: *Nimitz*, 2008. detail images)



THE INFLATABLES

LOOK UPON MY WORKS YE MIGHTY





Thirst, 2010. vinyl, mixed media, electronics 15 x 15 x 5 feet

THIRST

THE MAYOR RESTS



The Mayor Rests, 2008. vinyl, steel, mixed media and electronics, 13 x 9 feet diameter

When the campaign ends, and the road to victory has been trampled into submission, the Mayor rests. He has worked tirelessly to overcome. With the brutality of a heavyweight, he has sparred and won. Punch drunk and bewildered, he slumps into the emptiness of the now. Now drained of the passion of his stumping, he rests. Without repentance for promises unfilled, he rests. Today he retires, as does his cabinet, his friends, and the entire community. The piper has set down his flute. We lead ourselves into a bright new tomorrow. Gone are the days of political royalty. I will miss you McCheese, and I will think of you every time I buy a cheeseburger.

“Person’s inflatable sculpture reflects upon a history of cultures that have been lost, destroyed and leveled over time. His works embody the idea that a brief spell upon the earth is all we can expect and that mortality is the great leveler.”

– *Transcending Transcience*, 2007

OZYMANDIAS WEEPS

I can say that the piece's title, *Ozymandias Weeps*, refers to the poem "Ozymandias" by Percy Shelley in which a traveller stumbles across the wreck of statue in a vast wasteland of desert. The statue has an inscription that reads "My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings, look upon my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" The irony is that the implied great works have been destroyed and leveled over time, and nothing remains. My Ozymandias weeps for the lament of his loss of prowess as the mighty cultural icon he once was.

The Big Boy icon has fallen out of favor with the American public in the last few decades. The franchises have mostly closed, including the once local franchise of my childhood. Apparently, we aren't as keen to identify with the image of an obese child proudly thrusting an enormous cheeseburger into the air above him, as we once were. So here he sits, weeping with his burger on his lap, the foolish grin turned upside down to create an expression of ironic displeasure. His image is so weakened that he takes the form of a common advertising inflatable, joining the ranks of auto-dealership gorillas and dancing wind socks.



Ozymandias Weeps, 2005. vinyl, mixed media and electronics, 144 x 96 inches

THE DYING GAUL

The deflating white whale symbolizes a cyclical end to obsession. Much like a beached whale, which dies when its non-buoyant mass collapses under its own weight; human obsession frequently spirals out of control until its bearer can no longer support its mass.

The Dying Gaul is intended to be abandoned in the desert, far from an ocean. Once there, it inflates until full, and then slowly deflates, collapsing inward on itself. Fully deflated, and without witness, the cycle begins anew. The viewer is comforted by the uncertain knowledge, and faith, that the cycle of obsession has once again met its end.



The Dying Gaul, 2006. vinyl, mixed media, electronics, 35 x 10 circumference

WORSHIPPING MAMMON

AN EXPLORATION OF VALUE

I love spending money. I love discovering new products, new solutions, new gizmos, and I always want the best. Whether it's a car, a vacuum cleaner or a toothbrush, I zero in on something I want and I covet. I covet that pending purchase for months, sometimes years, spending countless hours deal surfing and investigating every aspect of just how great that thing is. When I finally can't stand it any longer, I sell off anything that isn't tied down and find the means to purchase it.

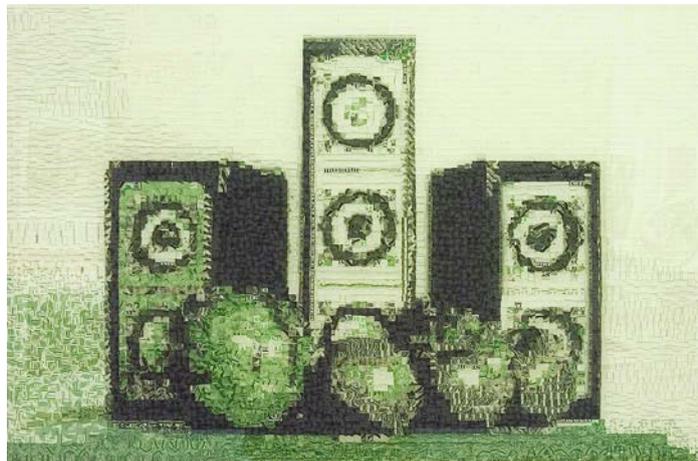
Worshipping Mammon originated with a spending spree. In late 2004, my car was totaled for the second time in a year. Feeling reluctant to re-invest the insurance check into another car I made a list of all the stuff I had been coveting and bought it all.

I began the work by photographing my purchases, modeling the style to directly reference academic still-life paintings of the Baroque and Northern Renaissance periods. I felt this a good conceptual tie, given that those still-lives were created during a time when a broader populace achieved the means to commission artwork, and in doing often-commissioned images of their possessions.

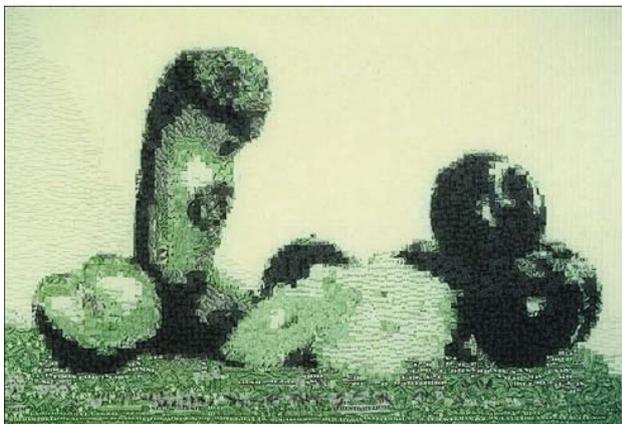
My goal with the compositions was to pair what might be considered objects of a privileged or "good life" today (technological gizmos) with objects referenced in those paintings (fruit/wine/cheese/wares/etc.). When one considers the juxtaposition of these things, my hope is that

they recognize the ephemerality of the value of the high priced new object, and the longevity and symbolic weight of the less valuable items.

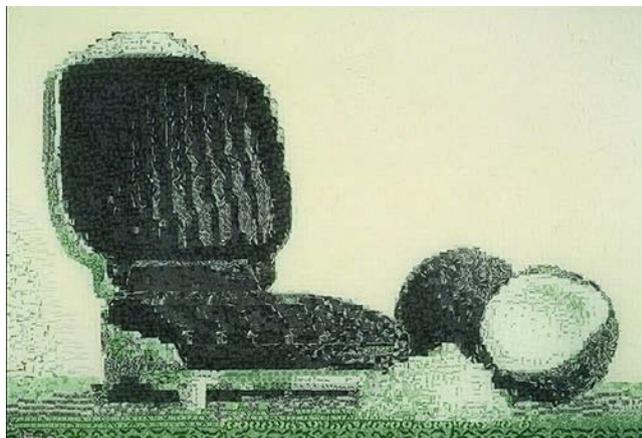
The decision to make the images out of money came from numerous sources. I have come to understand that I will likely spend the majority of my time and the majority of my life's income making uncommissioned art objects. I love the idea that people outside of the art-making community would consider this wasteful. The technique involved here serves exactly that same purpose. While the concept of spending a few hundred or a few thousand dollars to produce an image no one has asked me to produce, might seem meaningful; the more important aspect of this work, to me, is demonstrated in the intricate process.



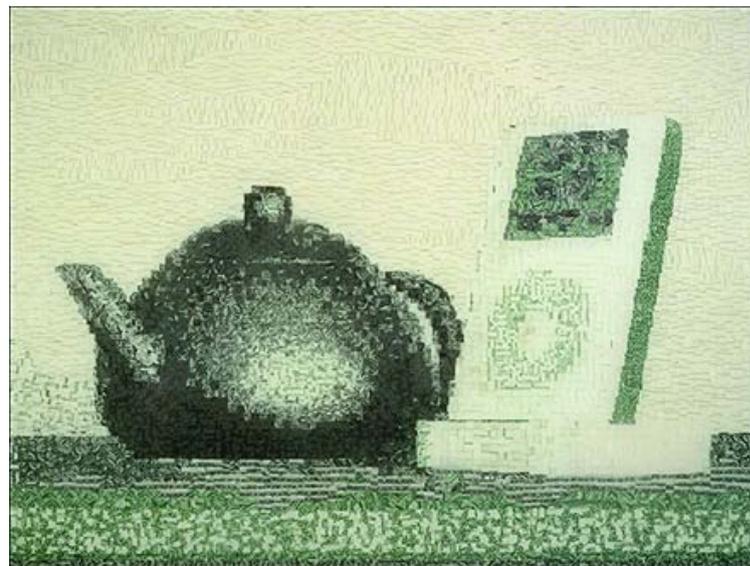
Artichoke, Tomatoes, and Yamaha NX-430P Surround Speakers, 2005
mixed media, and US currency, 25 x 16.75 inches



Cheese, Plums, and Norelco 775X lotion dispensing razor, 2005
mixed media and US currency, 16.75 x 24.5 inches



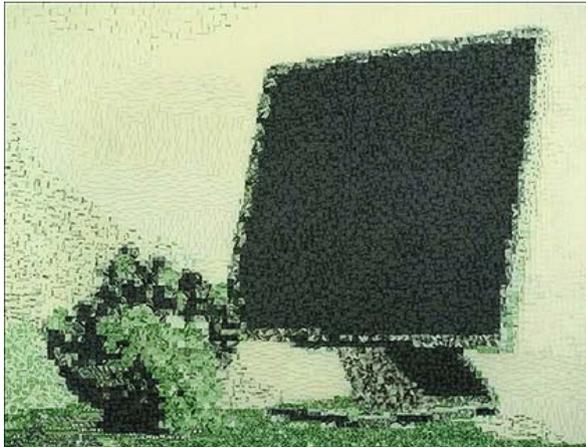
George Foreman Grill and Coconuts, 2005
mixed media and US currency, 17.25 x 25 inches



Yixing Teapot and iPod, 2005. mixed media and US currency, 18 x 24 inches



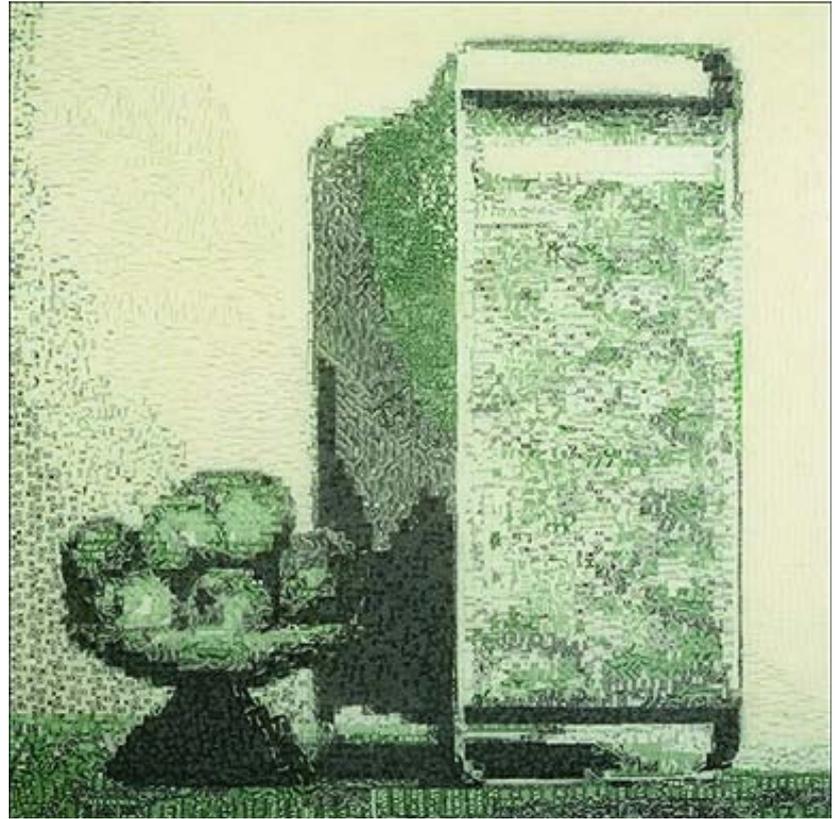
Gourd, Mushrooms, Sennheiser HD 280 Headphones, and Wine, 2005. mixed media, and US currency, 24.5 x 19.5 inches
Collection of University of New Mexico Art Museum Albuquerque, NM



Samsung Syncmaster 172X, and Grapes, 2005
mixed media, and US currency, 18.75 x 23.75 inches

*“Creating work from shredded
dollar bills, Person fuses objects
of desire with the literal capital by
which we acquire them.”*

– Trend Magazine, 2007



Power Mac G5 and Mangoes, 2005. mixed media and US currency 25 x 25 inches

Chad Person

Born 1978 Marinette, WI

Lives and works in Albuquerque, NM

Education

2005 University of New Mexico, MFA, Photography, Albuquerque, NM

2001 University of Wisconsin-River Falls, BA, Art/Marketing, River Falls, WI

Solo Exhibitions

2010 *Surviving the End of Your World*, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA
The Whale, Waypoint Marfa, Marfa, TX

2005 *Worshiping Mammon*, The Donkey Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

2004 *A Model Community*, The Walls Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

2001 *Satiated*, Gallery 101, University of Wisconsin, River Falls, WI
Waste, Harriet Barry Gallery, River Falls, WI

Group Exhibitions

2010 *Homage to the Artists*, Ochi Gallery, Ketchum ID

2009 *In Search of the Miraculous*, Ochi Gallery, Ketchum, ID
Albuquerque Now, Albuquerque Art Museum, Albuquerque, NM

2008 *Small Wonders*, Garson Baker Fine Art, New York, NY
Biennial Southwest '08, The Albuquerque Museum of Art and History, Albuquerque, NM

SITE Santa Fe Biennial Lucky #7, SITE Santa Fe, Santa Fe, NM
PULSE New York Contemporary Art Fair, Mark Moore Gallery booth, New York, NY

PULSE Miami Contemporary Art Fair, Mark Moore Gallery booth, Miami, FL

PULSE London Contemporary Art Fair, Mark Moore Gallery booth, London, UK

2007 *PULSE Miami Contemporary Art Fair*, Mark Moore Gallery booth, Miami, FL

PULSE London Contemporary Art Fair, Mark Moore Gallery booth, London, UK

Ultrasonic International II: Translating Transience, Mark Moore Gallery, Santa Monica, CA

2006 *Renter's: An Aesthetic Insertion*, Site Santa Fe Parking Lot, Santa Fe, NM

Beaux Arts Ball, Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, NM
 2005 *Spectacle & Society*, The Governor Gallery: Museum of Fine Arts, Santa Fe, NM

Heroes, Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, NM

5th Pingyao International Photography Festival, Pingyao, Shanxi Province, China

Wide Gamut: Alternative Process Photography, The Donkey Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

Curator's Choice, Center for Contemporary Arts, Santa Fe, NM

Looking Back at the Present-Photography & New Media at UNM, Univ. of New Mexico Art Museum, Albuquerque, NM

I Still Have a Crush on Molly Ringwald, J.H. Memorial Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

Mentors Alchemy ASA Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

Exploring Male Identity, UNM Health Sciences Center Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

2004 *Albuquerque Contemporary*, The Albuquerque Museum, Albuquerque, NM

Snap to Grid, Los Angeles Center for Digital Art, Los Angeles, CA

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, John Sommers Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

Through the Night Softly, The Walls Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

Dreams of Pavlov's Dog, ASA Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

2003 *Oculus Photo Folio I*, Temple Gallery, Philadelphia, PA (traveled)

Departure Upon Arrival, ABQ International Sunport, Albuquerque, NM

More than Code National Photography Exhibition, Univ. of Buffalo Gallery, Buffalo, NY
Staff Exhibit, Anderson Ranch Art Center, Snowmass Village, CO
9th Juried Graduate Exhibition, Jonson Gallery, Albuquerque, NM

- 2002 *Barking Dogma*, Union Street Gallery, Chicago, IL
Artists Respond, Rockville Arts Place, Rockville, MD
Incoming: UNM New Graduate Student Show, Jonson Gallery, Albuquerque, NM
- 2001 *Northern Arts Council National Juried Exhibition*, Nicolet College Art Gallery, Rhinelander, WI
7th Annual National Photography Competition, Texas Artists' Museum, Port Arthur, TX
Art Ala Carte, Paramount Visual Arts Center, Saint Cloud, MN
Polaroid Self-Portrait Show, Robert Canaga Gallery, Eugene, OR

Public Collections

The West Collection, PA
Collection of University of New Mexico Art Museum Albuquerque, NM
Frederick R. Weisman Foundation Collection, Los Angeles, CA

Selected Awards

- 2005 Graduate Research and Development Grant, Administered by the UNM Graduate and Professional Student Association, Albuquerque, NM
Research/Project/Travel Grant, Funded by the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM
- 2004 Juror's Choice Award, Albuquerque Contemporary
The Albuquerque Museum Graduate Research and Development Grant,
Administered by the University of New Mexico, Graduate and Professional Student Association, Albuquerque, NM
SRAC Research Grant, Funded by the University of NM Graduate and Professional Student Association, Albuquerque, NM
- 2003 Cochiti Lake Arts Council Scholarship, Funded by Cochiti Lake Arts Council, Cochiti Lake, NM
Materials and Research Grant, Funded by the Graduate Art Association, University of NM, Albuquerque, NM
Research/Project/Travel Grant, Funded by the University of NM, Albuquerque, NM
- 2002 SRAC Research Grant, Funded by the University of NM Graduate and Professional Student Association, Albuquerque, NM
Research/Project/Travel Grant, Funded by the University of NM, Albuquerque, NM

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front cover: detail image of recess installaion
back cover: Federal Reserve, 2010. US currency and canvas, 6 x 6 inches

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artist in studio



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