

# Gambling the Aisle

BLUE SKY.



Issue 10

# Masthead

## **Editors**

Patrick Kelling

Adam Van Alstyne

John Cross

Jenna Park

## **Staff**

Megan Kelling

## **Interns**

Sydney “Hungus” Jones

Andrew Cannon

# Contents

## Words

<i>Christopher Overfelt</i>	6
<i>Darren Demaree</i>	8
<i>Chloe Hanson</i>	13
<i>Dave Petraglia</i>	14
<i>Mark Pawlak</i>	16
<i>Steven Félix-Jäger Interview</i>	20
<i>Eileen Ni Shuilleabhain</i>	28
<i>Stu Buck</i>	30
<i>Margaret DeCapua</i>	34
<i>Peter Humphreys</i>	37

## Images

<i>Aaron Wilder</i>	4, 5
<i>William Crawford</i>	7
<i>Gary Rattigan</i>	9
<i>Katrina Majkut</i>	10, 11
<i>Zeren Badar</i>	12
<i>Jessica Held</i>	15
<i>Fabrice Poussin</i>	18
<i>Heather Brammeier</i>	19
<i>Steven Félix-Jäger</i>	22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27
<i>Resa Blatman</i>	29
<i>Ceaphas Stubbs</i>	31
<i>Rob Kirbyson</i>	32
<i>Matthew Gualco</i>	33
<i>Allen Forrest</i>	35
<i>Dave Petraglia</i>	36
<i>Jeffrey Hemming</i>	38
<i>Kim Taylor</i>	39
<i>Martha Clarkson</i>	40



*Folsom Bunny by Aaron Wilder*



*Fleet Week Waiting by Aaron Wilder*

# Sand

*Christopher Overfelt*

Parked on a gravel lot she listened to the quiet neighborhood. Her breath slowed. Whistling in her nostrils. Rushing inside her truck. The seat belt chafed her skin. Its strap cleaving her breasts. Wadding up her shirt. With a skinned thumb she pushed the button. Releasing the clasp. The strap rewound in its housing.

A key glinted in her fingers as she mounted the porch. Slick with sweat. Its shaft entering the key hole. Turning, she looked across the lot. Lightwires hung about. Slung from poles. Sloping to a concrete store. Its sign leaned atop a post. Glass jutting from the iron frame. Broken in shards. She stepped inside the house.

The mattress sank beneath her. Cold air breathing on her neck. Chilling her cheek. In the window the compressor shook the air conditioner. Condensation dripping. Spilling into a cup on the floor. She unbuttoned her camouflage blouse. Pulling her arms free. Its sleeves embroidered with insignias. Taking off her boots she let them fall to the floor. Her pants dropped. The belt buckle rattling. The sweet smell of hydraulic fluid breathing about.

The vinyl couch clung to her bare flesh. Cracking along the seams beneath her. She lay prone. Stretched across the cushions. Sunlight flickering up the wall. Faces peered out from picture frames. Leering like lechers. Smiling with twisted teeth. She watched the sunlight dance in their eyes. Flaming like fire.

In the garage she felt for the door handle. Light lancing about. Leaking from knot holes. She lifted. The door swung open. Slamming overhead. Shuddering against the stops. Light flooded the garage. She blinked. Outside, the alley lay quiet. Shadows looming. Crossing the gravel. From the weeds a cat appeared. Sauntering towards her. She squatted. Holding out her hand to it.

The metal glowed. Forming a red teardrop. Heating to a liquid. Cradling the torch, she held it just above the metal. Swirling its tip. The teardrop lengthened. She lowered the filler rod. Dipping it in the molten pool. Withdrawing it again. Shadows flung about. Huge on the garage walls. Smoke hanging about. Drifting out the door. When she lifted her foot from the pedal the torch went dark. The metal hissing. Popping with heat. She lifted the mask.

A ray pierced the blind. Graying the morning dark. Birds chatting in the gutters. She crouched over a bulging bag. Its flap hanging open. Socks hung from the mouth. Underwear lying beneath. Rolled up shirts and pants stuffing the sides. She set a pair of shoes on top. The room grew orange. Filling with soft light. Revealing clothes strewn across her bed. She closed the flap. Laying a knee on the bag. Compressing the clothes. The zipper squealed along its track.

The plastic flashed in her fingers. Its laminate coating reflecting light. She held out the card. Taking it in his hand he glanced down. His hat brim covering his eyes. He stood before the gate. A rifle shoulder slung. Her truck idled. Breathing erratically. Exhaust clouding like smoke. He looked at her. Giving her the card. Waving her on.

Black hulks bulked the horizon. Long hulls looming like whales. Silhouetted on the morning sun. She walked underwing. Neck craned upwards. Eyeing the skin. Light crept across the metal. Tracing the lap joints. Filling the screwheads. Her hand followed the flap. Feeling its surface. Tapping the rivets. The flight-line spread about her. A concrete plain soaked in sun. Hangars huddling together. Small in the distance.

Fan blades spun. Turning in the turbine. Sucking air. Exhaust purling out the back. Warping the horizon. Kerosene soaked the air. She rolled the fire extinguisher beneath the wingtip. Laying it down. The engines screamed. The jet blast roaring. Shaking the ground. Running along the fuselage she crouched between the landing gear. Kicking the wheel chocks. Pushing them aside. The tires rolled forward. A ladder hung from the crew door. She ran forward. Gripping the rungs. Climbing into the cabin.

The aircraft hummed. Singing with vibration. The engines throbbing. She lay in the boom pod. Looking out the window. Cold seeped in. Permeating the thick plastic. Chilling the metal. Her chin lay in her fist. The ocean lay below. Filling the window. Waves rolled. Breaking like tiny cracks in the vast blue expanse. Cloud hazed.

Bodies collided. Passing through narrow corridors. Shouldering each other. Stone streets wound through stalls. Lined with clay walls. Crossed by high arches. She stopped. Eyeing a stall. Fabric hung from dowels. Draping the walls. Ornate patterns textured bright colors. Silk and cotton shined. A man sat on a step. She let go of her head scarf. Pointing to her wrist. He held out his arm. Showing her the watch.

Camels crossed the sand. Shuffling in line. Driven by a man from behind. Piling high, sand rose into mountains. Sloping into valleys. She rode in a truck. Rumbling up a sandy ridge. Bumping in the back seat. The desert spread around her. Reaching the horizon. Bright yellow fading to blue. The truck plunged downhill. Spraying sand. Scattering the camels.

Water tickled her calves. Licking her skin. Her toes digging in the sand. Pale beneath the clean blue water. She waded into the Gulf. Wetting her thighs. Washing her waist. Sand rose behind her. Clearing into the desert. Before her the water shimmered. A deep endless blue. She lowered her face to the water. Touching her lips to the surface. Tasting salt. Suddenly her leg burned. She looked over. A jellyfish floated past.

Hydraulic fluid spilled from the valve. Running down her arm into her armpit. Staining her shirt red. She pulled the tubing to the valve. Sliding the coupling nut over the flare. Threading it onto the union. The spill stopped. She stood on a maintenance stand.

Raised to the wing. The desert air stung her skin. Bits of sand carrying in the wind. The wing gave her shade. She placed a wrench on the coupling nut. Tightening it down.

The sun dropped beneath the bare horizon. Blood red hanging in the west. She sat on a table outside the hangar. Watching the runway. An aircraft rolled down the desert airstrip. Blue flames streaking from its engines. Beside her a man sat smoking a cigarette. She looked at him.

You ever wonder if you're on the wrong side?

He took the cigarette from his lips. Looking at her.

\*

Leather restraints wrapped her arms and legs. Strapping her to the bed. She lay in a narrow room with two beds and a window. Clothed in a hospital gown. Its paper sleeves billowing around her thin arms. When she woke a man stood over her. Wearing a white coat. He smiled. She looked up.

Am I in hell?

Light leaked from knot holes. Lancing about the garage. Lying on the welder. Dust floated. Dancing in the light shafts. Falling on her boots. A cold wind whistled outside. She swayed from a rafter. The stressed wood creaking. The belt taut around her neck.



*Image 1 by William Crawford*

*Darren Demaree*

## **What the Gun Eats #56**

We all wanted morphine,  
but then it turned  
out that we could never

be safe anywhere,  
ever again  
& so we kept all senses,

even the painful ones,  
at the ready, like we might  
be battle people,

like we might need  
our blood to rise, to crest  
against the lead-lining.





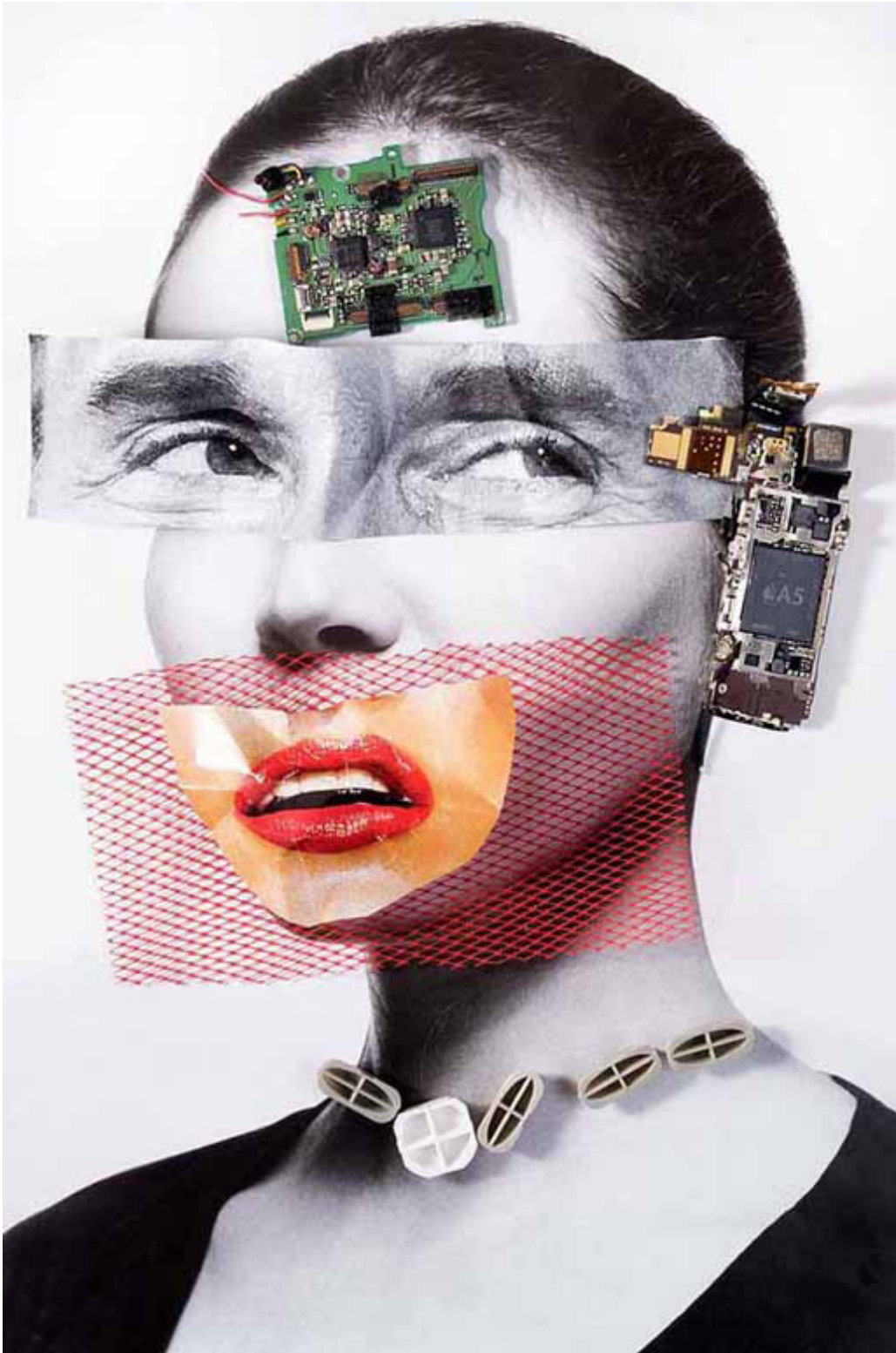
*Watch Yourself by Gary Rattigan*



*In Control by Katrina Majkut*



*In Control by Katrina Majkut*



*Cellphone Head by Zeren Badar*

*Chloe Hanson*

## **Resurrection**

You,  
moth in a mason jar, memory held  
in a conservatory of bone,  
you knock on the inside of my skull,  
what a racket you make  
echoing between ears,  
your lightest touch striking like a fist  
but I can't keep you locked in me  
you exist.

I fear I'll find you  
ordering turkey sandwiches for two, drinking  
a pint with a floating slice of orange  
what a din you'll make inside me then,  
as I compare hair, face, manner of dress  
to that version of you who must suffocate soon.  
My head's screwed on too tight for breathing room.

I've driven a pin through your abdomen,  
pressed you between mental layers of glass.  
Why can't I look at you like something already dead:  
with limited interest? Why must you act  
the part of Lazarus? Why must you rise, miraculous?

# The Cuban as Food

Dave Petraglia

Our little legs stuck to the red vinyl of Mr. Juan's dinette on those steamy afternoons. He kept his table radio on 1110, Woody Garcia officiating the daily battle of Salsa, Jazz and Merengue. We ached for Elvis and the Everly Brothers.

The backing track to Mr. Juan's sermons was the thrum of Ybor's other tinny radios injecting conga and calypso horn and the bat crack and cheer of distant ballpark play-by-play, the wail of babies and the ear-splitting caw of his prized old Cubalaya rooster Nano just below the backyard window.

On the stove was the eternally bubbling yellow saucepot of *sofrito*, a burping, savory brown tar pit, a reduction of cilantro and chorizo and salt pork wafting through the flat and out the windows to blend into the alleyways' thick junky sweat, cook-spoon funk, piney reefer and the yeasty piss of spilled Bucanero suds.

His '*Pote de esperanza*', Mr. Juan called the enameled cauldron, 'Pot of Hope', the place from which all life sprung in those *Cubano* households, and our own hopes for bellies full from it. Too soon, we three would comb our hair slick and cover our Tampa streets in what Cedro would call '*Esperanza de la olla*', 'In Hope of Pot', still not even vaguely aware how much we'd miss the old man, by then gone and forgotten by most.

We were always hungry.

I am Francisco. Cedro, myself, and José Luis were willing hostages to Señor Juan's tales of old, our eager eyes flitting to the stove-top and back to the serving dish empty on the dinette, hoping the old man's hand-made tortillas would appear sooner than later.

'Old San Juan' he called himself. Slight, sharp-nosed and elbowed, neighborhood babysitter, card shark, widower, painter, eulogy giver, carburetor savant, Spanish-American war historian, retired *torcedor*, domino ninja, marriage counselor, Purple Heart recipient, confidant, alderman, jailhouse lawyer.

"We rolled cigars for Haya, at one of his places on 7th, near 15th Street. A specialty house. Habanas only. Old school, in the style '*El Malecón*'. Before the war. Before Batista took it all, and the rolling machines came, and the bastard I-4 and *la mierda*!"

Old Mr. Juan's face puckered with the effort of the

oath, and we tittered nervously, kicking each other's shins under the table. Cedro mouthed '*la mierda*' with a wild-eyed stare, which made José Luis burp Coco Rico onto his shirt.

"And the Cuban gave us strength," he said. "No, you can't eat a Cuban," he would caution with a crooked finger skyward, "Not the people. Or a Cuban *person*. You eat the *Cuban*."

He said it is the only sandwich in the world named for the people of a nation, and just that: a *Cuban*. The residents of, and culture that defines, a singular Caribbean island country. Not 'Cuban Sandwich', no '*emparedado*', mind you. Or 'Cuban Ham and Pork and Cheese'. You will accomplish little at the deli counter if you were to say, "I'll have a *Greek*", or 'A *Russian* to go, please'.

And the sandwich is pressed so that it can fit, he revealed, one into each of the four pockets of a man's *Guayabera* shirt. In this way, he confided, the Cubans could outwork the Italians and the Spanish who left the floor to eat.

"They wanted our work, our jobs," Mr. Juan said, "to eat our lunch. But *we* ate our lunch there. We ate our Cubans."

And it took the skills of a cigar-roller, the *torcedor*, to wrap the Cuban in wax-paper so it would not leak in the pocket and give the scheme away. "Our work did not cease. To them, we were *las máquinas*...the machines!"

With that Old Juan drew a thin loaf from its paper scabbard like a Conquistador's rapier. Our eyes bulged in wonder. From a bag in his icebox came packages of ham and jiggling roasted pork and homemade pickles from a jar. He sliced the loaf as we plucked at the flakes of crust with our little fingers, Nano clucking outside the window, excited by our chicken-like movements.

Alaska may be *baked*, he said, but that is not a people, and chicken may be from *Kiev*, and ditto for that, too.

He set up an old waffle-iron on the counter. When it was just right, he pressed the first sandwich, "Some say this is to close the air holes in the bread to keep the devil out."

*Cubans!* We'd yet to have one. It was a grown-up's food. To ascend to this elite realm was a thrill beyond

compare. Trembling, we tore into the sandwiches, pausing only to slap off the odd mosquito or gnat. Our mouths stuffed, Cedro mugged with a comma of Swiss dangling from his lips, Mr. Juan warning that playing with food was a sin, the boy quickly swiping the sign of the cross over his t-shirt, leaving wisps of mayo.

Old San Juan cut three more chunks off the loaf, sliced them, and began to assemble more sandwiches, *pequeños*, or 'small ones'. He measured off three sheets of waxed paper and his hands flew deftly around the sandwiches, a priest prepping the Eucharist. His nine fingers, the left index having been surrendered at Verdun, creased and folded the wrappers with blinding

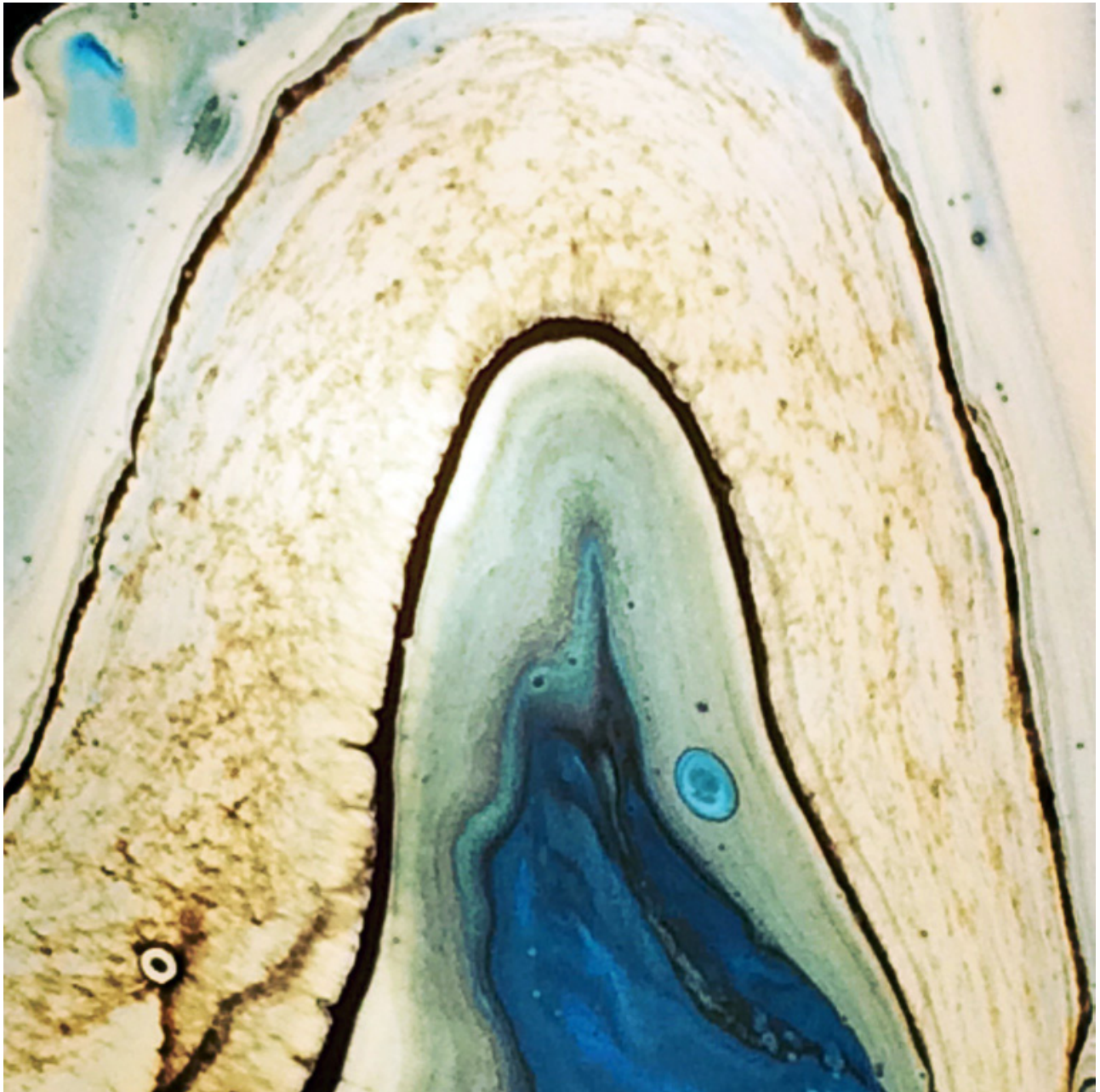
speed, skidding one by one across the table to a stop in front of each of us.

Cedro stared at his, put his hand carefully over the little package, and pressed down slowly with his palm.

"What are you doing?!" Old Mr. Juan snorted.

"Keeping the devil out," Cedro said, hopping down from his chair and running to the old man's side to hug him at the waist.

José Luis and I clapped. Then we were all again at the table, scarfing down our Cubans, the jiggling pork and the ham and cheese and pickles the new possibilities, the new tastes in our lives, patting the gifts in our pockets that would not leak.



*Successes by Jessica Held*

# Lake Shore Limited

Mark Pawlak

*Onboard, make the most of our luxurious Viewliner accommodations.*(AMTRAK Route Guide)

11:55

South Station: Ambling ride through the Back Bay, then Framingham, Worcester, Springfield, Pittsfield... occasionally picking up speed; continuous, gentle pitch and roll, passing lush green vegetation: all sorts of brambles and bushes, ferns, shrub pine, oak, maple saplings, sumac, tree-of-heaven, tamarack, birch.

Vegetation giving way to clearings with industrial yards, warehouses, corrugated sheds, piles of creosote ties, sometimes in a jumble other times neatly stacked; rusted rails lined up side-by-side; back sides of old factories and mills with bricked-up windows a lighter shade of red than their walls; dumpsters filled with industrial trash.

Phragmites climbing the banks of rail-side ditches; marshes choked with cattails, duckweed, water lilies, punctuated with ash-gray tree trunks.

12:58

Entering Worcester: tall silos, elevators rising slantwise, chutes angling down: the Norton abrasives plant seen from its back-side; rectilinear lines of massive factory buildings right out of a Charles Sheeler painting. Worcester: city on seven hills (with a multitude of church steeples); home of the pink lawn flamingo, *Phoenicopterus ruber plasticus* (Don Featherstone, inventor); notable (no pun intended) for the Valentine card, for barbed-wire that "fenced the West"...

Passing solar farms: neat arrays of silvery panels, aligned all in the one direction, all the same tilt to catch the sun's rays.

Brooks, meandering streams, stagnant pools, ponds, more marshes; the languorous wing-strokes of a heron lifting off, swooping, then, feet extended, settling in another spot.

13:17

...old wooden houses with back porches facing the tracks (Charles Reznikoff, "Going West")

Farther west, rolling through small towns with no functioning rail stops, fields with collapsed buildings, caved-in barns; abandoned pickup trucks, rusted, with

weeds grown up around them....

Passing sidings with long lines of coupled coal cars, tanker cars; another with boxcar after boxcar. Paved lots with yellow school buses by the dozen moth-balled for summer, then fields with abandoned trucks and buses, followed by a lot with stacked pallets in towering rows, a miniature city of pallets; graveled gradings littered with wood chips, tree limbs and branches, trimmings piled siding-side.

And graffiti on every conceivable vertical surface, whether granite piling, cement bridge abutment, viaduct, trestle, brick wall, metal freight container, or long-haul truck trailer; multicolored graffiti of every shape and design, angular block "printing" and exaggerated cursive: individual letters, names, statements, slogans, morphological shapes, signatures.

Approaching every crossing, the mournful mechanical lowing of the engineer's horn far up front.

Now rolling foothills with embankments covered in wildflowers: mullein, tansy, Queen Anne's lace, cowslip, black-eyed Susan, goldenrod. Slender, clingy vines snaking up tree trunks; one stand of vine-choked trees, all dead.

14:10

Springfield = basketball ("to fill the gap between baseball and football seasons"), the Smith and Wesson revolver, the Indian motorcycle...

The monotonous clackety-clack of the rails mimicked by patterns of upland saplings:

sumac, sumac, oak;  
oak, sumac, oak, oak;  
white oak, black oak, red oak;  
oak, sumac, sumac, birch;  
birch, birch, birch, birch, birch;  
silver birch, yellow birch, river birch;  
oak, birch, sumac;  
sycamore, tupelo, maple, ash...

15:36

...travel through the Berkshires and stop in Pittsfield, where you can tour the house where Herman Melville wrote *Moby Dick*.

Forested slopes; mountain stream beds with pebble



shoals; clear water moving through boulder-strewn flats; occasionally ripples, patches of white water.

19:05 Albany-Rensselaer

You'll travel along...the Mohawk River, and the Erie Canal, following a famous Native American Highway. ...you'll pass through the Finger Lakes region to Albany, capital of the Empire State. (but in reverse order)

19:31

Stopped briefly in Schenectady at dusk (friend Paul's home town), the moon, nearly full, hanging over the main drag, painting the city in Hopperesque light.

Upstate New York, the Iroquois place names remembered from childhood come rushing back in no particular order: Canajoharie, Chautauqua, Kyuka, Oswego, Geneseo, Irondaquoit, Seneca, Oneida, Canandaigua, Tonawanda, Tuscarora, and hometown Cheektowaga ("Land-of-crab-apple-trees.")

20:41-23:40

Utica, Syracuse, Rochester, Depew...speeding up, slowing down, dozing off, waking up, then dozing off again...running through my head classical upstate city names: Rome, Troy, Utica, Medina, Nineveh, Jericho, Attica, West Babylon, East Aurora...

23:55

Idled on a siding on the outskirts of Buffalo at 1:30 AM: priority given to a mile-long highballing freight train. Across the tracks tall, pole-light pods illuminate the vacant parking lot of a shopping mall, visible then not, blocked out by boxcars speeding by: a shutter rapidly opening, closing, opening, closing at regular intervals.

Rolling again, passing Buffalo's derelict New York Central terminal, but its tower clock lighted, a mechanical full moon eerily illuminating the east side freight yards. Then the actual moon, near-full, illuminating the switching yards,

Switching yards where the ghosts of gone brakemen walk: my Dzaidek, Uncles Ted and Joe; Uncle Fred the night foreman.

01:36-04:55

Erie, PA, a passing dream; Cleveland, Elyria, Sandusky, shape-shifting dreams...Some of the Prettiest Shorelines of the USA.

05:55

Sunrise approaching Toledo. Suburban backyards on one side of the tracks, with manicured lawns, picnic tables, a child's plastic tricycle left out, etc.; truck farms on the other side, flat and green as billiard tables. Maumee River, famous for its March walleye run, is today mirror-smooth but for the rippling wake of a flotilla of geese. On the far shore, ducks, their bottoms in the air, plus one statuesque heron, eyes averted.

Rolling on toward South Bend, freight train idled on siding: box-car, box-car, box-car, box-car, tanker, tanker, box-car, flatbed, flatbed, flatbed, box-car, box-car, etc, etc. Further on a truck and auto junkyard, then a tractor trailer depot, then a bus lot, followed by a sales-lot full of golf-carts.

Now cornfields begin. Cornfields, cornfields, cornfields....

08:25

Elkhart, IN. A Mennonite family boards train, enters café car. Father, mother, teenage daughter, and two young boys, possibly twins—all dressed head-to-toe in black. They sit at a table across the aisle, all but the father—not enough room—who sits opposite me at the table where I'm typing on my iPad, my cell phone plugged into the wall socket, recharging. He removes his straw hat, rests it on the tabletop. Not a young man: his beard black, but his temples graying. He stares past me. From time to time his daughter furtively glances my way, eyeing my electronics.

09:26

Idled outside Gary; freight train traffic ahead. Yet another cornfield out the left window, out the right window a dying forest. Leafless, vine-choked trunks, some leaning, most still upright. One tree standing just yards from the train seemingly parasitized by moose-horn fern ID-ed by the few leaves extending from its trunk; but no, I'm mistaken, they're oak leaves. It's a bear oak, sparse foliage on its few, stunted branches... and now we're rolling again.

Wood-frame building at trackside with repurposed train cars extending from opposites sides for seating: a once thriving diner that served its last customer years ago.

Approaching Chicago. Out my window, neck-and-neck on parallel track, two diesel engines, one a Lake Shore, the other a South Shore Freight, pulling in tandem a long line of high-wall flatbeds piled with rolls of coiled steel.

“Hog-butcher” of the world? Perhaps, but no evidence of it in the endless freight yards: not one cattle or live-stock car visible, just tanker cars and varieties of flatbeds: low walled, medium walled, high walled; also, long strings of coupled coal cars; other tracks lined with idled box and container cars ad infinitum.

Abruptly, after seemingly endless rail yards, now gravel piles, coal heaps, pyramids of rail ties; then warehouses, corrugated behemoths, and rust-color girder works (to what purpose?); finally (suddenly!), the lakeshore and aquamarine expanse of great Lake Michigan.

09:45

Lake Shore Limited slowly rolling into Union Station. Out my window, another passenger train idled on a parallel track. Its conductor standing in the wide, rectangular, open baggage car door: peaked cap, white shirt & tie, dark blue vest & pants, shiny black shoes, pocket watch on a chain in the upturned palm of his hand—a vision from children’s TV: *Shining Time Station*, *Thomas the Tank Engine*, but his stubbly beard and square jaw more *George Carlin* than *Ringo Starr*. Arrived.



*The Light by Fabrice Poussin*



*Princess by Heather Brammeier*

# Words are Oppressive: An Interview with Steven Félix-Jäger

*John Cross*

**John Cross:** It is often said that art is the search for truth but it is also said that all art is a lie. In your work you seem to be playing with this dichotomy. Is the test telling the truth or is the image?

**Steven Félix-Jäger:** I think to speak of art as either THE truth or ALL lies is superfluous. We live in a grey world and need to rely on our faculties to discern and navigate through issues. I'm not saying there isn't such a thing as an objective truth, but rather that there are both truth and falsities in most of the things we observe. God knows what is objectively true; we, on the other hand, are bound by our subjective and perspectival vantage points. The fun of it is when we discern. We can judge whether something is bringing us closer to or gearing us away from what we know is true. But to answer your question, yes, my work totally plays with this dichotomy. If anything it intentionally makes interpretations ambiguous. I would like the viewer to enter into a piece, and as soon as they feel they are grasping its meaning, they are drawn to another element of the piece which fundamentally shifts their perspective. This mediate space of interpretation is what I'm interested in and trying to convey with my art.

**JC:** Your art juxtaposes text with representational imagery. Where and how did this concept develop?

**SFJ:** I have been fascinated with the idea that we interpret the world--hermeneutics. What I wanted to do was explore these issues of interpretation through art in a way that will highlight to the viewer that a person's experiences are interpreted. Mixing text with image works well as a conceptual launching pad for these explorations. The painterly representational image, drawing, or video are all steeped in a realism that more or less depicts our sensory view of the world (at least this is what the imagery represents). The text exists in the conceptual realm. It portrays messages that serve as descriptions or challenges to the sensory experience. I use the text and the imagery in a bunch of ways, switching up things compositionally in order to explore how our interpretations shift and modulate as the circumstances change.

**JC:** What artists are you influenced by? Ed Ruscha and Barbara Krueger come to mind.

**SFJ:** Definitely. Ruscha more so than Krueger. Krueger is

highly political with her work, which is awesome, but not really what I'm doing. I also am influenced conceptually by John Baldessari, Wayne White, Mark Tansey, and David Salle, and love the narrative painting of Jerome Witkin, Rebecca Campbell, Michael Carson, Eric Fischl, and Jenny Saville. I've also had some great teachers in Guy Kinnear, Brent Everett Dickinson, William Catling, and William Otremsky.

**JC:** I can't help but steal a quote from your artist statement: "Words are oppressive." (Considering I write for a literary mag, and like to think the images within it are fighting for attention.) Would you say this quote summarizes the power of seeing words over seeing images?

**SFJ:** Well, I think what I'm meaning to say is, words can be oppressive. I truly believe in our finite space we need both the image and the text to navigate the world. They are both essential and, as we use discernment, can be equally beneficial for us.

**JC:** Are the works Untitled or are they titled "Untitled, Blue Sky"? It seems important considering what you are trying to do.

**SFJ:** Good question, they are all untitled. I put the paintings text in parenthesis so that the viewer can identify the work, but there is no title to the work. A title, I believe, would add another interpretive clue to the work, and I really just want the image, text, and viewer to create their own dialogue...

For this painting I cut away a large portion of the image by using a taping method, painting, and then removing the tape to reveal the raw canvas. In the raw section I wrote "Blue Sky." The text here is supposedly useful, helping us literally fill in the blank with what's missing. But then we as the viewer are forced to come to terms with this...is the text lying to us or telling the truth? Also, "Blue Sky" is a marketing term that sort of designates wishful thinking, like someone's head is in the clouds. I like the boy's ambiguous gesture. Is he reaching out to the sky? Is he throwing something? Is his house burning? Is this a sad or a hopeful painting? This painting (and the term "Blue Sky") also shows up in some of my other work, sort of as a symbol for the interpretative process.

**JC:** I see, and that explains your use of negative space

in much of your work. I think that space is a key to understanding your work. What I mean is, that negative space makes me think even more about the relationship between the text and the image. That void seems to be both an intersection and a place for contemplation.

**SFJ:** Exactly!

**JC:** Tell me more about your process. Some of the text looks hand painted while other text appears to be stenciled in.

**SFJ:** Well, *Untitled (Blue Sky.)* was my first painting in this line of inquiry, so I changed it up afterwards to use a particular type font. My thinking was that the text should try to emulate perfection if it is to symbolize the conceptual. I like that the text is near perfect - seen from a little distance it looks typed, but up close you can tell some imperfections that reveal it is hand painted. I basically stretch a raw canvas and then tape out the areas which I want to preserve as raw canvas. I use masking tape, burnish, and brush in matte medium so the letters pop right out. I then apply a layer of gesso and start painting! When it's all done I'll remove the voids and/or text. I often add fabric or canvas on top of the image as well. I see the text as an intrusion in this way. It conceals part of the image and offers a narrative arc for interpretation. I apply those fabric pieces

with varnish. Finally, I also create and cut out stencils from paper, and then apply a modeling paste on the raw canvas. I gesso over this too and then paint. This allows for a slightly raised, sleek texture underneath the paint that is made up of text. This acts sort of like a subtext to some of the work. I basically play around with an image from an experience I had, or a friend of mine had, and then manipulate it through these various methods.

**JC:** Where do you source the images? Are they from photos that you take? Are they personal?

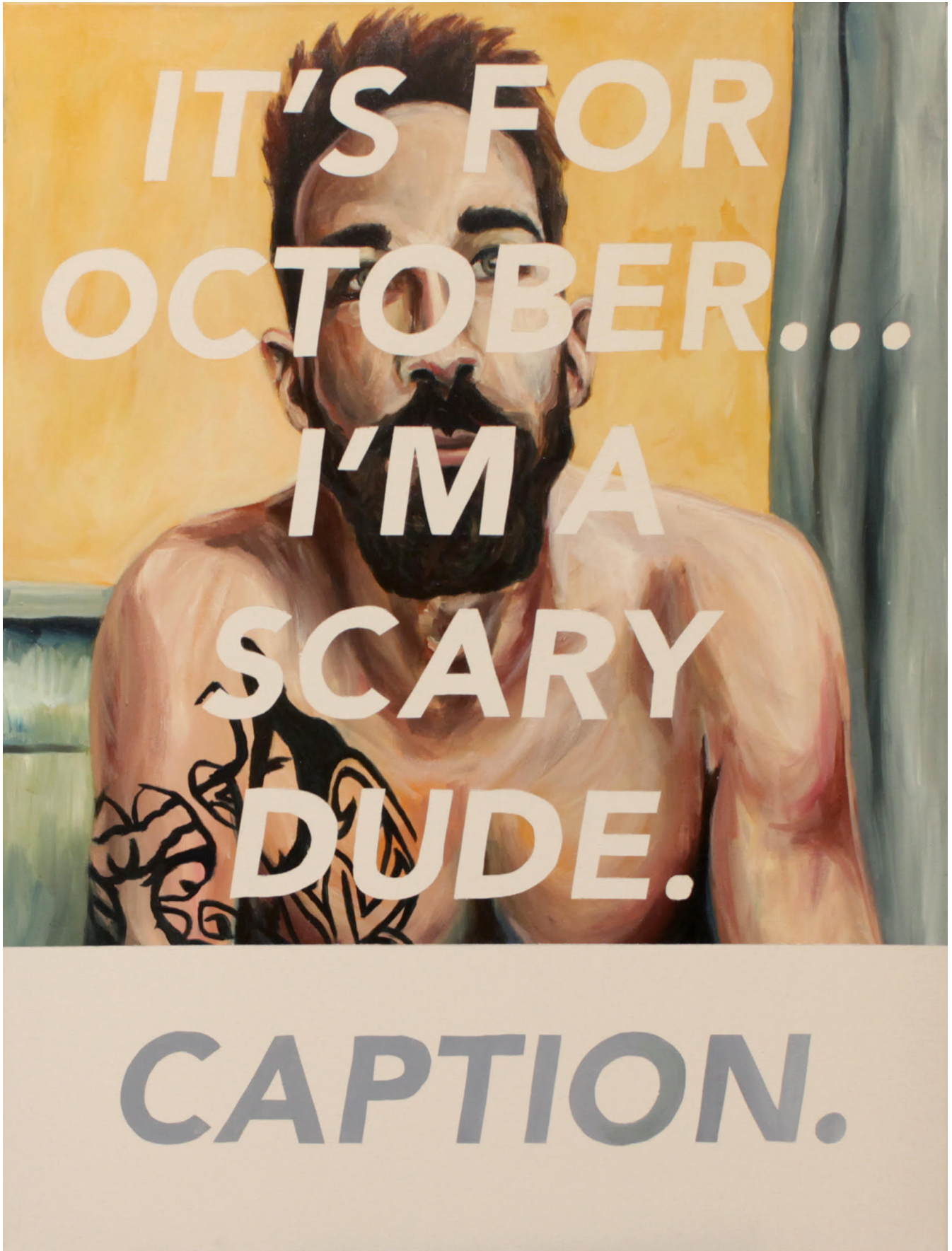
**SFJ:** They are photos that I have taken or that friends have taken. In a couple of occasions I posed people or things, but I think I'd like to move away from that. There is something special about viewing candid glimpses and putting them through hermeneutical exposition that works well with shots taken from real situations.

**JC:** Does it matter to you if the viewer is familiar with the subjects?

**SFJ:** Nope. The only thing that matters is that the viewer enters into the work and stays within that realm of interpretation. The actual images are arbitrary for my conceptual framework. But I choose images that strike me aesthetically, and that read narratively. If the image has struck me, chances are they'll strike the viewer too.



*Untitled (Man n Silhouette. [More of the Same.]) by Steven Félix-Jäger*



*Untitled (It's For October...I'm a Scary Dude) by Steven Félix-Jäger*



*Untitled (Infinite Play[s.]) by Steven Félix-Jäger*



*Untitled (Paintings on a Wall. [Colorful Houses]) by Steven Félix-Jäger*

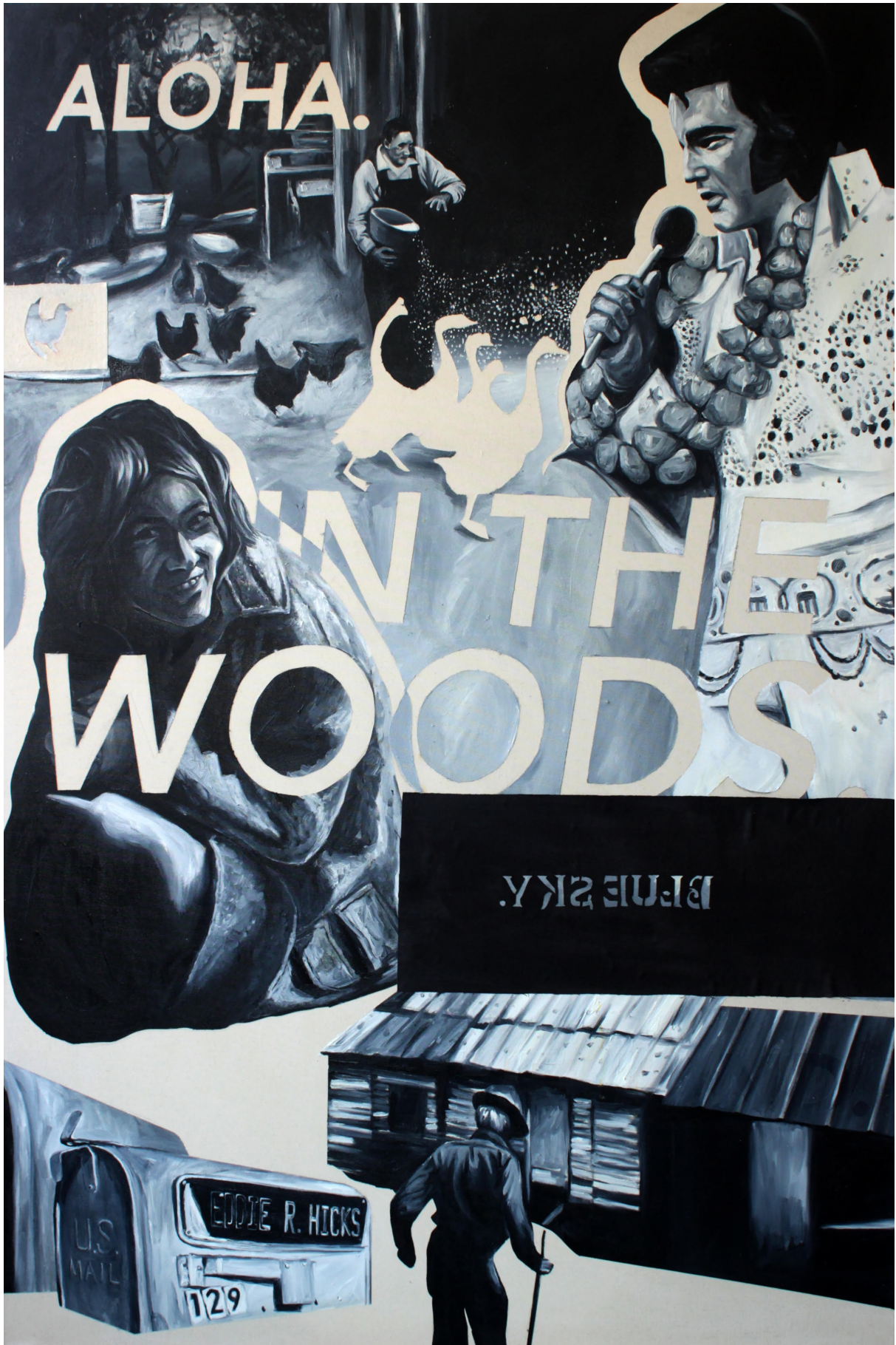




*Untitled (Holofernes.) by Steven Félix-Jäger*



*Untitled (Horizon.) by Steven Félix-Jäger*



Untitled (In the Woods.) by Steven Félix-Jäger

*Eileen Ni Shuilleabhain*

## **I climb**

until all the horizons are round.  
Five miles vertical  
a freckled sky  
only stars to steer  
the moon on my head.  
Black frost hammers the fixed ropes  
that keep me from  
scalloped rocks beneath.  
Unnatural shapes  
on glacier floors.

Air is thin here.  
The sound of fatigue  
each breath a velvet fist to the lungs  
each foothold  
a breaching whale.

The darkness  
breaks over rocks.  
Sudden, the rope slips  
I lose my path.

I remember cosiness  
in sunlit rooms  
my stronghold  
and you.

This stillness  
cracks the mind  
the heart.  
Christ on Calvary  
do not talk to me of death or love  
while this mountain's shadow  
is stretched to China.



*Black Bird by Resa Blatman*

*Stu Buck*

## **Quantum**

the single best  
day of my life was when  
i read a book about quantum  
theory and it said that everything  
that can happen will happen and that  
there are infinite universes with infinite me's  
and infinite you's and infinite colours and infinite  
feelings and to me that was the greatest thing that ever  
happened because if there is just one single universe in which  
we are happy together and holding hands and lying in purple grass  
then i am willing to put up with the infinite other universes where we  
are not

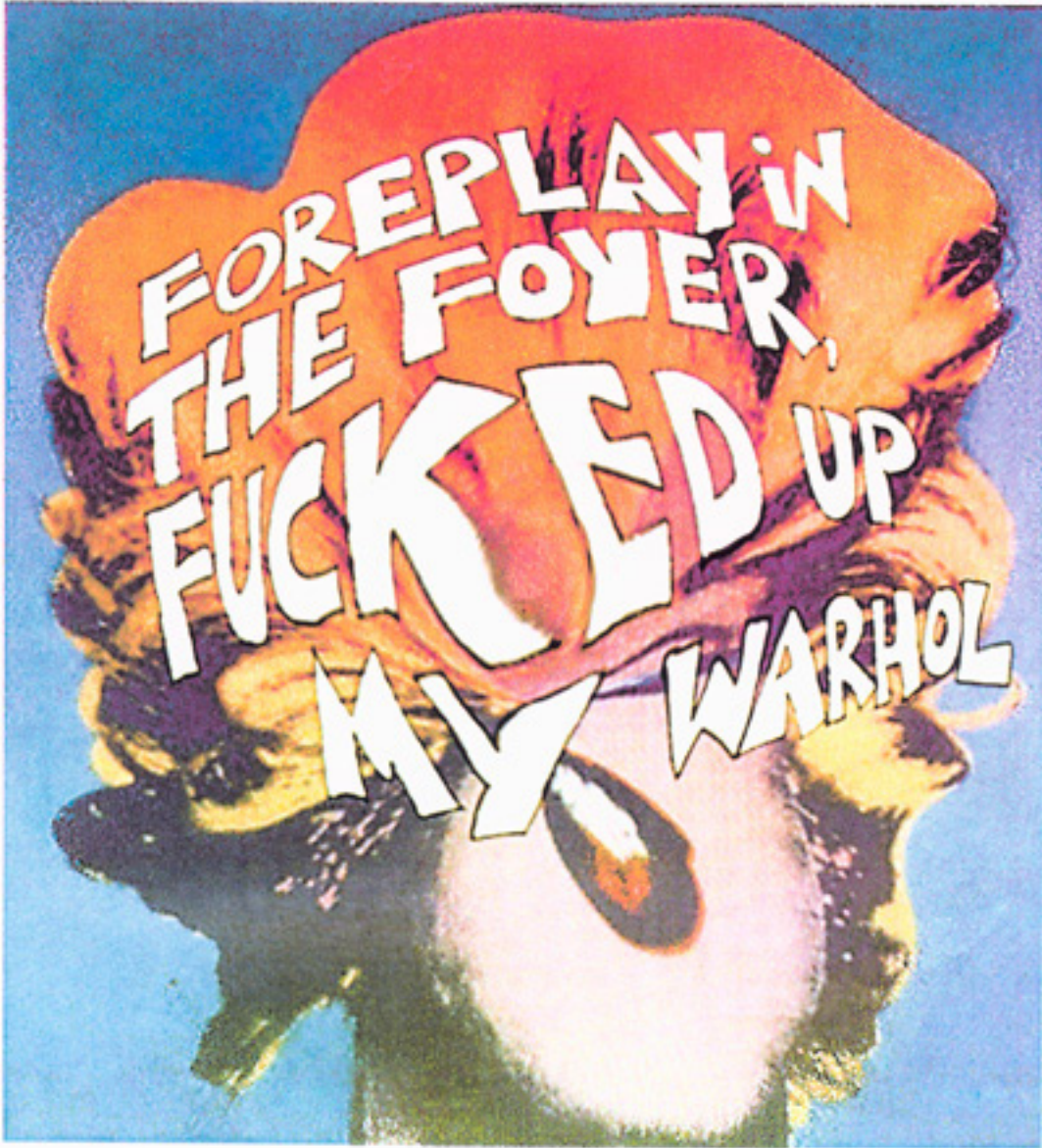


*Composition in Fuschia Apple Blue Dots by Ceaphas Stubbs*



*Overlord by Rob Kirbyson*





*Foreplay in the Foyer V1 by Matthew Gualco*

*Margaret DeCapua*

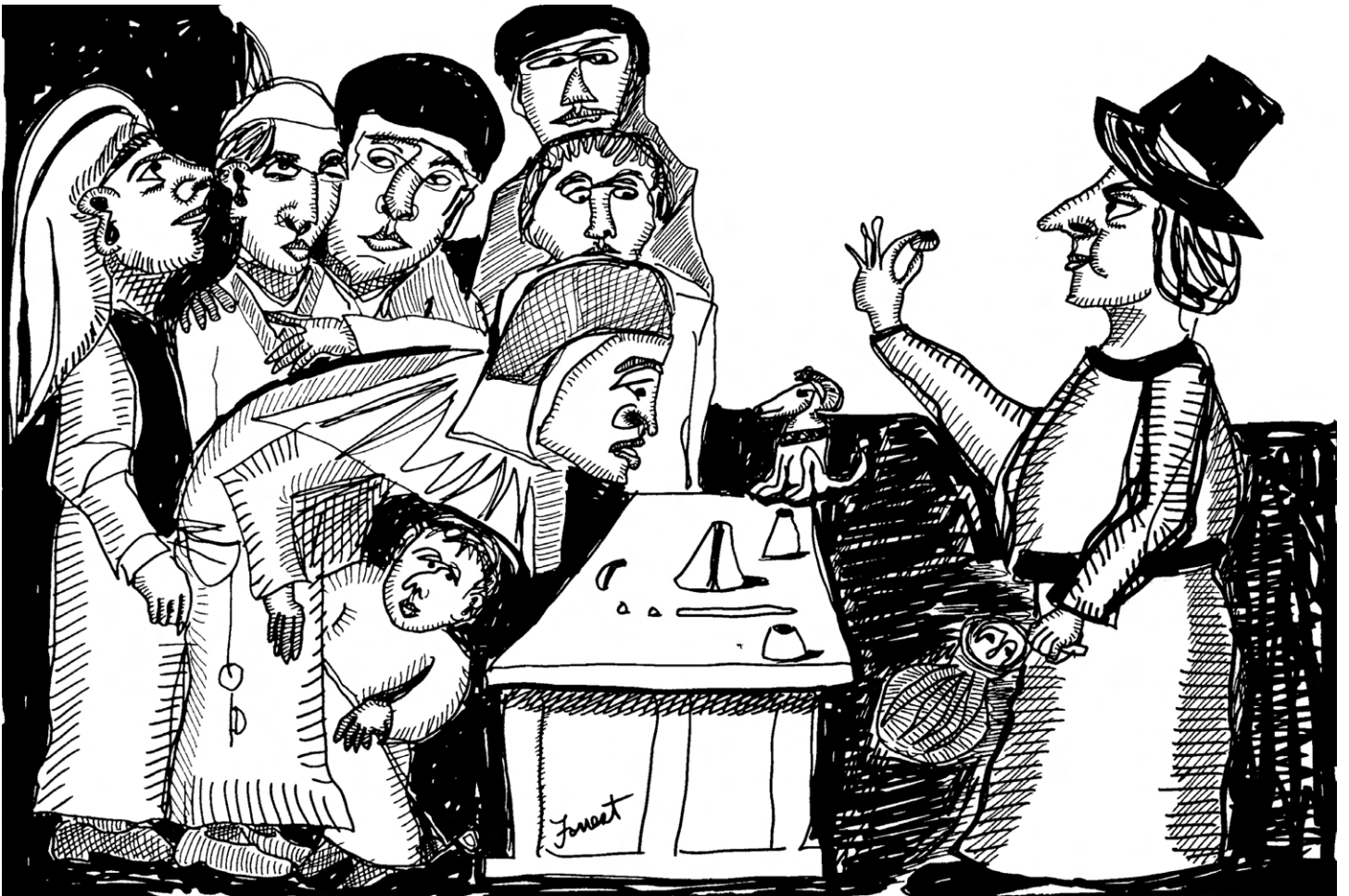
## **Reruns**

On cloudy days I'm thankful  
for perfume that smells like crisp cotton,  
petrichor and clove cigarettes.  
I can bundle myself in its top notes,  
pull blankets to my chin and  
smile a little through my tears.

Starting tomorrow I'll quit  
washing down my pills with tepid coffee  
stale enough to taste like dust,  
I'll quit staying in bed til 3 pm,  
and I'll even start eating breakfast:  
a bowl of fresh fruit and a cup of green  
tea,  
sending steam to the sky before  
the sun itself is even awake.

I've got grand plans for all my tomorrows  
but my tonights are full  
of TV reruns and fists of dry cereal  
(the sugary kind, all chemicals and corn  
meal)  
I can feel their little round cigarette burns  
on the lining of my stomach  
and maybe tomorrow I'll mind.

Nights like this, when  
fog throws its arms around the moon,  
I remember that catching tomorrow  
is impossible as holding a shadow,  
find myself watching the windows  
for the first blush of sunrise.



*The Masters Revisited Hieronymus Bosch the Conjurer by Allen Forrest*



*Cast by Dave Petraglia*

*Peter Humphreys*

## **Fashion**

I don't think  
there was a  
party,  
that foam used  
under carpets  
on the roof  
you were talking to  
those women  
I'm sure I wanted  
to  
most nights  
I didn't think  
about it  
she checked out  
she told me  
she had  
had other romances  
on the  
telephone  
she came back  
she said  
what if you  
see me  
I could be completely  
deformed  
it was a  
mistake  
all my life I have been  
looking for my man



*Costal State by Jeffrey Hemming*





*On the Subject of "Place" by Martha Clarkson*



## Contributor Bios

**Zeren Badar** is an NYC based conceptual photographer.

**Resa Blatman** received an MFA in painting from Boston University in 2006, and a BFA in graphic design from the Massachusetts College of Art and Design in 1995. She taught senior-level graphic design at MassArt from 1997-2012. Resa has received several grants and awards, including the Arctic Circle Residency, where she traveled up the west coast of Svalbard, Norway in June 2015, to hike the glaciers and explore the icebergs and unique landscape. Her work is included in several collections, including Fidelity, MA; Twitter, MA; Hilton Hotel, TN; The WH Ming Hotel in Shanghai, China; and the United Arab Emirates. She recently completed two large-scale commissioned installations; one for the Somerville Hospital in Somerville, MA, and one for the North Hill Residence in Needham, MA. Her “Gaia, Part 2” installation was on view at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Macon, Georgia, September 2015 through July 2016. In 2016-2017, Resa’s work will be in several group and solo exhibitions throughout the U.S, including the Chen Art Gallery at Central Connecticut State University, New Britain, CT; Spartanburg Art Museum in Spartanburg, SC; the Wright Art Center Gallery at Delta State University in Cleveland, MS, among others. Her work has been reviewed and featured in numerous magazines, books, and online blogs. To read these reviews and articles, and to see more of Resa’s work, please visit her website at [www.resablatman.com](http://www.resablatman.com).

**Heather Brammeier** is a painter whose practice has expanded to include constructing paintings and drawings in space. Her most recent drawings and paintings reflect her study of masterworks at The National Gallery in London. Brammeier currently has both indoor and outdoor installations on display at the South Bend Museum of Art (South Bend, IN) and the Garfield Park Art Center (Indianapolis, IN). Brammeier has participated in a wide range of artist residencies including Yaddo (NY), Spiro Arts (UT), The Hambidge Center (GA), The Banff Centre (Alberta, Canada), and Pontlevoy Creative Residencies (France). Brammeier is Associate Professor of Art at Bradley University, and she is represented by Moberg Gallery in Des Moines, Iowa.

**Stuart Buck** is a poet and writer living in North Wales with his wife and two children. His poetry and prose have been widely published in journals such as *The Stare’s Nest*, *Cultured Vultures*, *Deadsnakes*, *The Bitchin’ Kitsch*, *Erbacce Journal*, *The Seventh Quarry*, *Walking is Still Honest*, *Yellow Chair Review*, *The Sunflower Collective* and *Under the Fable*. He has been a featured poet in both *FIVE* magazine and *poetrykit*. When he is not writing or reading, he enjoys juggling, cooking and ambient music.

**Martha Clarkson** manages corporate workplace design in Seattle. Her poetry, photography, and fiction can be found in *monkeybicycle*, *Clackamas Literary Review*, *Seattle Review*, *Alimentum*, *Hawaii Pacific Reivew*. She is a recipient of a *Pushcart Nomination*, and is listed under “Notable Stories,” *Best American Non-Required Reading* for 2007 and 2009. She is recipient of best short story, 2012, *Anderbo/Open City* prize, for “Her Voices, Her Room.”

**Wiliam C. Crawford** is a writer & photographer living in Winston-Salem, NC. Expanded bio, photo captions, & photography philosophy available upon request.

**Margaret DeCapua** is a pink haired poet who lives for the first snowfalls of winter and the second cup of coffee of the morning. She attends Champlain College, where she studies creative writing, game design, visual art, and public relations... and that’s just the stuff that will fit on her diploma. Learning is her passion and she tries to write herself through the process. Her art, poetry included, documents her exploration of this weird and exciting world she’s found herself in.

**Darren C. Demaree’s** poems have appeared, or are scheduled to appear in numerous magazines/journals, including the *South Dakota Review*, *Meridian*, *New Letters*, *Diagram*, and the *Colorado Review*. He is the author of five poetry collections, most recently “The Nineteen Steps Between Us” (2016, *After the Pause*). He is the Managing Editor of the *Best of the Net Anthology*. He is currently living and writing in Columbus, Ohio with his wife and children.

**Steven Félix-Jäger** (PhD University of Wales/Glyndŵr University) is an artist and a scholar. He works full-time as a high school art teacher and part-time as an adjunct professor at Southeastern University and Polk State College teaching courses in Theology, Philosophy, and Humanities. Steven lives and works in Winter Haven, FL with his wife and daughter.

Born in Canada and bred in the U.S., **Allen Forrest** has worked in many mediums: computer graphics, theater, digital music, film, video, drawing and painting. Allen studied acting in the Columbia Pictures Talent Program in Los Angeles and digital media in art and design at Bellevue College (receiving degrees in Web Multimedia Authoring and Digital Video Production.) He currently works in Vancouver, Canada, as a graphic artist and painter. He is the winner of the Leslie Jacoby Honor for Art at San Jose State University's Reed Magazine and his Bel Red painting series is part of the Bellevue College Foundation's permanent art collection. Forrest's expressive drawing and painting style is a mix of avant-garde expressionism and post-Impressionist elements reminiscent of van Gogh, creating emotion on canvas.

**Chloe Hanson** lives in Logan, Utah, where she enjoys writing poetry, playing with her dog, expensive beer, and cheap wine.

**Jessica Held** is an abstract painter and photographer in Athens, Ohio. She earned her BFA at Ohio University in painting and photography and was awarded the Ohio University Photography Fellowship Award. She received an individual artist grant from the Indiana Arts Commission while living in West Lafayette, Indiana. She attended an artist residency program at the Anderson Center for Interdisciplinary Studies in Red Wing, Minnesota. She has taught art camps, art enrichment classes and cross curriculum art lessons at schools and art centers in Texas, Michigan and Ohio. She has exhibited her artwork nationally and internationally. Currently she is an artist resident at the Dairy Barn Arts Center and she continues to create, paint, photograph and exhibit her artwork.

**Jeffrey Andrade Hemming** is a maximalist painter from the Bay Area. His paintings delve into a flux of chaos, harmony, technology, abundance, and waste all at once. The concepts behind his work come from our everyday associations with things being constructed

and neglected including physical elements like buildings and landscapes to the more enigmatic such as cultural traditions, memory, and social structure. His paintings balance somewhere between origins and entropy. There is an organized chaotic feel to his work painted into a labyrinth of color. There are also strong environmental and technological undertones to his paintings. The finished work becomes a source of visual stimulation. His work also examines the relationship between society and our ever changing surroundings. Jeff earned his Masters degree in Studio Art from Florida State University and his Undergraduate degree from Brigham Young University in Hawaii. He has lived in the Caribbean, Hawaii, and Florida, and has traveled extensively through Central America and the South Pacific. He currently resides in the Bay Area.

**Peter Humphreys** has had past work published in the 2013 Poetry Anthology entitled *Across the Way*, and recently has been selected as the featured poet in the upcoming issue of Ghost City Press.

**Rob Kirbyson** started his art career as a cartoonist and illustrator, producing work mainly for British magazines in the late Nineties. These ranged from independent art and fiction magazines to political and topical newsstand magazines such as *Punch*, *The Oldie* and *Private Eye*. Around 2007, he moved into the realm of paint where years of hard edged blackline ink work translated into a recognizably vivid, high contrast and focused style. Rob was born in Yorkshire, England and now lives and works in Kinross, Scotland. Rob's work can be seen at [www.robkirbyson.com](http://www.robkirbyson.com).

**Katrina Majkut** (My'kut), a visual artist and writer, is dedicated to exploring and understanding feminine narratives and civil rights in aesthetics and social practices within mediums such as embroidery, painting and writing. Majkut also specializes in Western marriage and wedding traditions as examined through her writing with humor and honesty at her website, *The-FeministBride.com*. She's written for various publications from *Bust.com* to *Bitch Media*, *Curve* magazine to *Feministing.com*. She recently exhibited at the Mint Museum, NC and has an upcoming solo exhibition at Babson College (Fall 2016). She lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

**Chris Overfelt** was born and resides in Olathe Kansas. He received an English degree from Kansas University.

**Mark Pawlak** is the author of eight poetry collections and the editor of six anthologies. His latest books are *Natural Histories* (Cervena Barva Press, 2015) and *(Go to the Pine: Quoddy Journals 2005-2010)* (Plein Air Editions/Bootstrap Press, 2012). His *New and Selected Poems* will appear in 2016. Pawlak's work has been translated into German, Polish, and Spanish, and has been performed at Teatr Polski in Warsaw. In English, his poems and prose have appeared widely in anthologies such as *The Best American Poetry*, *Blood to Remember: American Poets on the Holocaust*, *For the Time Being: The Bootstrap Anthology of Poetic Journals* and in the literary magazines *New American Writing*, *Mother Jones*, *Poetry South*, *The Saint Ann's Review*, and *The World*, among many others. For more than 33 years Pawlak has been an editor of the Brooklyn-based *Hanging Loose*, one of the oldest independent literary journals and presses in the country. He supports his poetry habit by teaching mathematics at UMass Boston, where he is Director of Academic Support Programs. He lives in Cambridge.

A Best Small Fictions 2015 Winner, **Dave Petraglia's** writing and photography have appeared in *Agave*, *Apeiron Review*, *Chicago Literati*, *Cactus Heart Press*, *Foliage Oak*, *Gravel*, *Jersey Devil Press*, *Necessary Fiction*, *New Pop Lit*, *Pithead Chapel*, *Popular Science*, *Prairie Schooner*, *Stoneboat*, *theNewerYork*, *Vine Leaves*, and elsewhere, and forthcoming in *Per Contra* and *North American Review*. He is a Contributing Editor at *Arcadia Magazine*. His blog is at [www.drowningbook.com](http://www.drowningbook.com)

**Fabrice Poussin** is assistant professor of French and English at Shorter University, Rome, Georgia. Author of novels and poetry, his work has appeared in France at *La Pensee Universelle*, and in the United States in *Kestrel*, and *Symposium*. His photography work has also been published in *Kestrel*, and is scheduled for upcoming publications as well.

**Gary Rattigan** works in a variety of art forms that are often in large format including banners, drawing, painting, chopped wood, hooked rugs, wigs and costumes. He went to school at School of the Art Institute of Chicago and worked at the Art Institute of Chicago and later the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. He currently lives and works in Maine.

**Eileen Ní Shuilleabháin** grew up in the Irish speaking region of Connemara on the West Coast of Ireland. Her work was previously published in *The Galway Review*, *Apercus Quarterly*, *Boyne Berries*, *Scissors and Spackle*, *Emerge Literary Journal* and *The Burning Bush*. She was also published in a group anthology *The Tuesday Knights* in 2011. She currently lives and works as a Psychotherapist in Galway city.

**Ceaphas Stubbs's** work explores sexuality, nostalgia, and pleasure. He layers readymades, found images, and studio debris to construct ephemeral tabletop and ceiling-hung scenes that challenge the viewer to examine relationships between physicality and desire. His works have been reviewed in *The New York Times* and *Brooklyn Rail*. They have also been published in *Skowhegan's SPACE/LAUNCH*, and magazines such as *Paint Pulse*, *PRISM*, *EXPOSE*, *AGAVE*, and *CRED*.

**Kim Rae Taylor** is an artist and educator. She is currently an associate professor at the University of Cincinnati Clermont College, where she teaches painting and drawing fundamentals, along with an online survey course examining the roles of women in art history. She earned her MFA from the College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning (DAAP) at the University of Cincinnati, and a BFA from The College of Fine Arts of The University of Texas at Austin. Additional studies include The University of Georgia in Cortona, Italy, and the *Metáfora Center for Art Therapy Studies* in Barcelona, Spain. She has been an artist-in-residence at the *Cill Rialaig Project* in County Kerry, Ireland, the *Taipei Artist Village* in Taiwan, and *Red Gate Gallery Residency* in Beijing, China. Her work has been shown widely throughout the US and abroad.

**Aaron Wilder** is an interdisciplinary artist who mixes painting, collage, photography, graphic design, writing, and installation to blur boundaries between the analog and the digital, the public and the private, and the unassuming and the instigative. Wilder's work explores the introspective and social processes of contemporary culture in the way an anthropologist would analyze fragments of an ancient civilization. His concept-driven projects all incorporate his core belief that art can and should be used as a tool for generating critical thinking, dialogue, knowledge sharing, and understanding between individuals with divergent world perspectives.

