

these dreams go on when I close my eyes

Roswell Museum and Art Center

November 18, 2017 - January 7, 2018

Artist talk and reception: November 17, 5:30 PM

Left to its own devices, vision...overlooks ninety percent of the world in order to follow the tracks laid down for vision by the world's definition of spectacle, and by its own desires. [...] Still life loves the 'so what'.

- Norman Bryson, *Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting*

The main project in this exhibition is a catalogue of miniature tableaus based on the objects from people's bedside tables. I began by asking friends for pictures of their nightstands, and later expanded the series to include a wide circle of people across the country. I have long been interested in how people's collections create snapshot biographies, and I became fascinated by the wide array of objects kept on bedside tables, where tissues and receipts from the day are jumbled alongside souvenirs, prescriptions, cherished mementos, lotion, and so on. Items to screen out the world (earplugs, eye masks, white noise machines, sleeping pills) are kept alongside those that invite the world in (radios, TV remotes, iPads, clocks, phones). Journals and self-help books are stacked next to magazines and paperbacks.

We spend about a third of our lives asleep: what are the last things we want to see or touch before drifting off, and what do we want watching over us or within arm's reach when at our most physically vulnerable? These bedside collections speak to universal themes, from memory and self care to sex and dreams. But they also create complicated individual portraits of their owners, in contrast with the more idealized and narrowly curated collections one might find on a coffee table or other public space in a home.

These sculptures engage with the tradition of still life, cataloguing a daily world where routine meets consumer culture and personal history. The miniature also makes an appeal for close scrutiny through a radical shift in scale.

Also included in this exhibition are works made of constellations of cut, painted paper that are installed directly into the wall with pins, creating a subtle architecture of shadows and playfully referencing natural specimens. Works in this series are composed of objects referencing the mythology of specific constellations, seasons, celestial movement, and inventories of daily life, and are arranged to evoke different objects in space, such as star clusters, fields of constellations, and space junk. I have been researching how space junk is rapidly accumulating in the earth's atmosphere. I interpret this idea in my work using detritus of consumer culture, out of sight in landfills but not gone.

*** NOTES ***

How are we to speak of these 'common things', how to track them down

rather, how to flush them out, wrest them from the dross in which they remain mired, how to give them a meaning, a tongue, to let them, finally, speak of what is, of what we are.

- George Perec, *The Infra-ordinary*

Attention by itself is an enlarging glass.

- Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*

The earliest small book was the *Diurnale Moguntium*, printed by Peter Schoeffer in Mainz in 1468. From the beginning, the miniature book speaks of infinite time, of the time of labor, lost in its multiplicity, and of the time of the world, collapsed within a minimum of physical space.

- Susan Stewart, *On Longing*

The "living" [curiosity] cabinet, like the knowledge it so aptly represented, was, to paraphrase Foucault, a thing of sand. It was the context from which one could interpret and track the flow and movements of these resemblances and similitudes.

- David L. Martin, *Curious Visions of Modernity*

Every passion borders on the chaotic, but the collector's passion borders on the chaos of memories.

- Walter Benjamin, *Unpacking My Library*

*** [SPACE JUNK] ***

Inactive satellites, the upper stages of launch vehicles, discarded bits left over from separation, and even frozen clouds of water and tiny flecks of paint all remain in orbit high above Earth's atmosphere. When one piece collides with another, even more debris is released. Over 21,000 pieces of space trash larger than 4 inches (10 centimeters) and half a million bits of junk between 1 cm and 10 cm are estimated to circle the planet. And the number is only predicted to go up.

- Nola Taylor Redd, *Space Junk: Tracking and Removing Orbital Debris*

I saw two shooting stars last night, so I wished on them but they were only satellites, is it wrong to wish on space hardware...

- Billy Bragg, [A New England](#)

I am old. Everything is old. The planet is old. & there's no way to get rid of all this plastic. & we're shooting the shit into space. I used to want to go into space. For what? To see all this garbage floating by.

- Yuji Agematsu

There'd be time for that later; time to throw condensed-milk cans in the proud Martian canals; time for copies of the *New York Times* to blow and caper and rustle across the line gray Martian sea-bottoms; time for banana peels and picnic papers in the fluted, delicatated ruins of the old Martian valley towns. Plenty of time for that. And he gave a small inward shiver at the thought.

- Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*

It does not prevent me from having a terrible need of, shall I say the word - of religion - then I go outside in the night to paint the stars.

- Vincent van Gogh, letter to Theo

Lying on our backs, we look up at the night sky. This is where stories began...

- John Berger, *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*

I really think the word "constellation" is useful... because it acknowledges it's artifice, it's totally a fiction, the constellation doesn't objectively exist, it's a way of interpreting mere reality in order to produce meaning, and you can have more than one constellation drawn from the same number of stars.

- Ben Lerner, conversation NYPL

A very ancient constellation, Canis Major is the larger of the the two hunting dogs used by Orion. Within the constellation can be found the brightest star in the night sky Sirius, also known as the "Dog Star". The name Sirius is derived from the Greek word *seirios* () meaning 'searing' or 'scorching'. It was thought that during the hot months of summer when this star is above the horizon during the day time its heat was added to the sun. This is the origin of the term "the dog days of summer".

- Astronomy Facts, MSU Physics and Astronomy webpage

The aircraft rotates about its longitudinal axis, shifting the equinoxes slowly west. Our system of measure is anchored by the apparent daily motion of stars that no longer exist. When the reader comes to, the writer hits him again. Just in case God isn't dead, our astronauts carry sidearms. This is not your captain speaking, thinks the captain. A magnetic field reversal turns our fire friendly. Fleeing populations leaving their bread unleavened, their lines unbroken.

- Ben Lerner, *Angle of Yaw*

Do you remember how the night sky of Ischia horrified me? You all said how beautiful it was, but I couldn't. I smelled an odor of rotten eggs, eggs with a greenish-yellow yolk inside the white and inside the shell, a hard-boiled egg cracked open. I had in my mouth poisoned egg stars, their light had a white, gummy consistency, it stuck to your teeth, along with the gelatinous black of the sky, I crushed it with disgust, I tasted a crackling of grit. Am I clear? Am I making myself clear?

- Elena Ferrante, *The Story of the Lost Child*

We in comparison to that enormous articulation - we only sound and look like badly pronounced and half-finished sentences out of a stupid suburban novel... a cheap novel. We have to become humble in front of this overwhelming misery and overwhelming fornication... overwhelming growth and overwhelming lack of order. Even the - the stars up here in the - in the sky look like a mess. There is no harmony in the universe. We have to get acquainted to this idea that there is no real harmony as we have conceived it.

- Werner Herzog, *The Burden of Dreams*

For our ancestors, geometry was in a flower or a crystal, and it was precisely the fixed and unmoving that spoke to them of eternal values in a world of change. The world was chaotic and turbulent enough... that chaos could not hold out the fascination it now does to our worldwide bureaucracies of routine-operational science. - William Irwin Thompson,

Rapunzel: Cosmology Lost

In Roswell, some of humanity's foundational yearnings hide in plain sight. Look no farther than the tourist-trap T-shirt rack: "The truth is out there." "I want to believe."

- [Roswell's Mysteries are Life's Mysteries](#), Luke Sharrett

Until the aliens arrive and we have a non human outside to be solitaristic *against*, we have a problem about the species at the level of solidarity. - Kwame Anthony Appich

I want to be frank with you Mr. Klatuu. Our world, at the moment, is full of tensions and suspicions. In the present international situation, such a meeting would be quite impossible.- *The Day the Earth Stood Still*

We're going to Mars because it gives us a reason to change.

- Nikki Giovanni

I think it's important to have a future that's inspiring and appealing. Like why do you want to live? What's the point? What do you love about the future? If we're not out there... if the future doesn't include being out there among the stars and being a multi planet species... I find that incredibly depressing.

- Elon Musk

At Buy-N-Large, space is the final *funtier*.

- WALL-E

I think the moon is vulnerable to humanity and I think we have an analogy there with the high seas and space debris... human exploitation goes much faster than legal provisions.

- Joanne Wheeler, space lawyer, CMS

I, for one, do not want to go to sleep by the light of a Communist moon.- *The Right Stuff*, Tom Wolfe

It's only a paper moon, sailing over a cardboard sea... It's a Barnum and Bailey world, just as phony as it can be. But it wouldn't be make believe if you believed in me.

- [It's Only A Paper Moon](#), written by E. Y. Harburg and Billy Rose

The moon goes through its phases as its breathing hole gets successively opened and stopped up.

- Anaximander, quoted in *The Moon and the Western Imagination*, Scott L. Montgomery

SPACE

OPEN SPACE

ENCLOSED SPACE

OUTER SPACE

SPACE SUIT

SPACE AGE

LIVING SPACE

LACK OF SPACE

SPACE ODYSSEY

SPACE OUT

STARING INTO SPACE

BLANK SPACE

- *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces*, George Perec

4, 3, 2, 1: Earth below us, drifting falling, floating weightless, calling calling home...

- [Major Tom](#), Peter Schilling

Eco: Homer's work hits again and again on the topos of the inexpressible. People will always do that. We have always been fascinated by infinite space, by the endless stars and by galaxies upon galaxies. How does a person feel when looking at the sky? He thinks that he doesn't have enough tongues to describe what he sees. Nevertheless, people have never stopping describing the sky, simply listing what they see. Lovers are in the same position. They experience a deficiency of language, a lack of words to express their feelings. But do lovers ever stop trying to do so? They create lists: Your eyes are so beautiful, and so is your mouth, and your collarbone ... One could go into great detail.

SPIEGEL: Why do we waste so much time trying to complete things that can't be realistically completed?

Eco: We have a limit, a very discouraging, humiliating limit: death. That's why we like all the things that we assume have no limits and, therefore, no end. It's a way of escaping thoughts about death. We like lists because we don't want to die.

- Umberto Eco [interview](#)

Everything happens today, and we're out here in space, and I don't know where we are all going,

Baby I love you today

- Spiritualized, [Ladies and Gentleman We Are Floating in Space](#)

*** [how does one commemorate the ordinary?]***

Tantivy's desk is neat, Slothrop's is a godawful mess. It hasn't been cleaned down to the original wood surface since 1942. Things have fallen roughly into layers, over a base of bureaucratic smegma that sifts steadily to the bottom, made up of millions of tiny red and brown curls of rubber eraser, pencil shavings, dried tea or coffee stains, traces of sugar and Household Milk, much cigarette ash... a scatter of paperclips, Zippo flints, rubber bands, staples, cigarette butts and crumpled packs, stray pencils, pins, numbs of pens, stubs of pencils of all colors including the hard-to-to-get heliotrope and raw umber... an empty Kreml hair tonic bottle, lost pieces to different jigsaw puzzles showing parts of the amber left eye of a Weimeraner...

- Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*

Because it was done principally on wood, nothing remains of Greek painting from antiquity * In 1889, the Spanish demand Goya's remains, dead and buried in Bordeaux in 1829; the body, without the head, is returned to Spain * The first, unfinished version of Jean Giono's *The Song of the World* was stolen from him in 1933 * On December 10, 1853, a fire ravaged the warehouses of Harper, Herman Melville's publisher, and destroyed the entire stock; demand was weak and no novel by Melville would be reprinted in his lifetime...

- Henri Lefebvre, *The Missing Pieces*

The complexity of things - the things within things - just seems to be endless. I mean nothing is easy, nothing is simple.

- Alice Munro

When we try to pick out anything by itself, we find it hitched to everything else in the universe.

- John Muir

Get to know your garbage.

- Don DeLillo, *Underworld*

The sourball of every revolution: after the revolution, who's going to pick up the garbage on Monday morning?

- Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Maintenance Art Manifesto*

Like the bear who went over the mountain, I went out to see what I could see. And, I might as well warn you, all that I could see was the other side of the mountain: more of same.

- Annie Dillard, *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*

But then I see a horse lying on the side of the road and think *You are sleeping, you are sleeping, I will make you be sleeping*. But if I didn't make the ham flowers, how can I make him get up? I made the ham flowers. Get up, dear animal. Here is your pasture flecked with pink, your oily river, your bleeding barn. Decide what to look at and how. If you lower your lashes, the blood looks like mud. If you stay, I will find you fresh hay.

- Matthea Harvey, *Implications for Modern Life*

I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass... Tell me, what else should I have done? Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?

- Mary Oliver, *The Summer Day*

He lay down behind the blade of grass

To enlarge the sky.

- Noel Bureau, *Les mains tendues*

"Oh," I say and fumble for my wallet. The oil cans stacked against an old truck tire are wordless, hard, collusive. But the triangular plastic flags strung at one end of the island flutter and ripple in the wind, flapping to get my attention, my compassion, like things that seem to want to sing but can't, things that almost tear themselves in trying to fly, like rainbow-colored birds, hung by string and their own feet.

- Lorrie Moore, *What is Seized*

How does one commemorate the ordinary? I thanked the spoon for being a spoon and finished my stew. How does one get through a difficult time? How does a son properly mourn his mother? It helps to run the errands, to get shit done. I washed that spoon, dried it and put it back in the drawer. - Sherman Alexie, *You Don't Have To Say You Love Me*

"You probably need to eat something," the baker said. "I hope you'll eat some of my hot rolls. You have to eat and keep going. Eating is a small, good thing in a time like this," he said.

- Raymond Carver, *A Small Good Thing*

When we saw the pattern, we took the kids out of school. Broke out the special water. Two churches linked by a sudden alley through the corn. As the Hopi myth fortells. A massive loss of technology. A spider leaves a string between two points. Think about it. From the duster it appears a thing of glory. Makes you reconsider the whole idea of property. Stems inside formations have blown nodes. Explain that, Mr TV. Part of the confusion involves words. We wake up with mud on our feet. The other part is just the way we are. Scared of the new when it's thousands of years old. If you have never seen a sleeping toddler crawl beyond the lip of porch light, zip it. If my meaning is clear, it's already too late. For God's sake, people. Open your hearts.

- Ben Lerner, *Angle of Yaw*