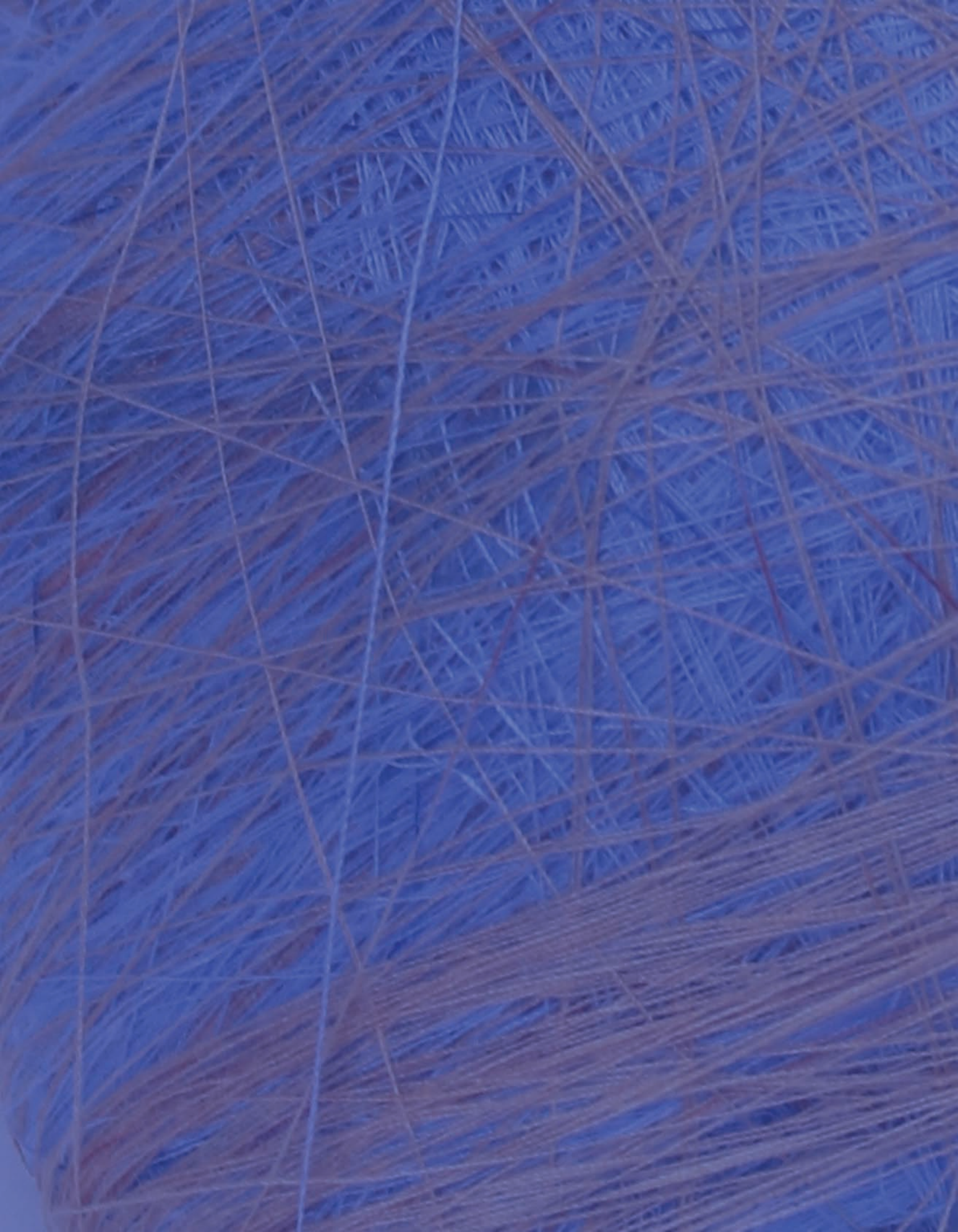


MEMENTO MORI

MEMENTO MORI MORI

THE PLACE PRESS 2





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First Edition

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THIS MUST BE THE PLACE is an artist-run independent curatorial project that provides an egalitarian platform for visionary artwork while fostering kinship between diverse artists. With a focus on working with artists with developmental disabilities in the Philadelphia area, our goal is to create an inclusive support system and accessible space for artists to show and work together.

THE PLACE PRESS publishes artist books and collaborative projects by, for, and with our artists.

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MEMENTO MORI

MARIEL CAPANNA

NORMAN DIXON

AVA HASSINGER

GARROL GAYDEN

CINDY GOSSELIN



The Thing Has Been There: Memory, Forgetting, and “Punctum” by Bea Huff-Hunter

PUNCTUM

Essayist and critic Roland Barthes described the experience of looking with intellectual, “human interest” at a photograph—that, say, you have found in an archive of war scenes or staged family portraits. You appreciate the image as testimony to a historical or political moment with its culturally specific dress codes, postures, and props. In contrast to this satisfying observational flow, there are moments when a detail within a photograph provokes a sharp intake of breath. Your looking disrupted, your thoughts turn inward.

In his collection of reflections on photography, *Camera Lucida*, which are vulnerably subjective, Barthes names this stinging photographic characteristic “punctum” after the Latin for “puncture.” The detail may be a muddy, ridged fingernail or “a slender ribbon of braided gold,” the latter invoking a late aunt’s necklace. Reaching out from the image to demand emotional attention, punctum reels in intimate memory from forgetfulness.

“A photograph’s punctum is that accident which pricks me (but also bruises me, is poignant to me).”

CLUTTER, DETAIL

In her artist’s book *The Problem of Reading*, Moyra Davey lists her New York apartment’s clutter—“books in piles around the bed or faced down on a table; work prints of photographs, also with a faint covering of dust, taped to the walls of the studio; a pile of bills.” Later, she compares reading and looking at photographs. Quoting Barthes, Davey observes that when reading biographies, the “petty details of daily life: schedules, habits, meals,” grab the reader with their sustained relevance. She explains: “Recorded in an almost unconscious manner, these passages allow us to insert ourselves into the scene, to feel interpolated by the text, perhaps a little in the way we are hooked by the punctum of a photograph.” In doing so, she hints at the situating power of her own “petty

autobiographical details—the layers of bills, books, and dust that may haunt the reader-viewer’s mind.

Davey thus extends punctum to literary experience. The exhibition enclosed within this publication, *memento mori*, further expands the field. Its artworks do not resemble traditional *memento mori*—those blunt medieval reminders of mortality, such as skulls and disheveled fruits. However, through explorations of memory and forgetting, they “prick” in somewhat similar ways.

GRIEF, TIME

Barthes wrote *Camera Lucida* while mourning his mother. Sorting her family photographs, a picture startled him. His mother is a child in the picture, and yet he recalled her stubborn expression that later (or earlier) had flashed across her elderly face. The photograph of his mother as a child pricked because it turned Barthes’ attention away from the image, and per Boris Groys, toward “the void that these photographs cover.” It produced a sharpened existential awareness of time and death, of the painfully impossible distance between adult Barthes and child mother. “Suddenly every photograph is for Barthes a memorial; the very essence of the medium is its spectral conjuring of death-in-life.”

MAKING FORGETTING VISIBLE

Ava Hassinger’s water-logged photographs materialize the void between past and present by disrupting the smooth, picture-perfect image surface. Each photograph’s function as a memory-holder is not annulled but intensified. Per Barthes: “Sometimes, despite its clarity, the punctum should be revealed only after the fact . . . I may know better a photograph I remember than a photograph I am looking at.” You might feel this when looking at Hassinger’s images. Do you start to fill in your own blanks? The photographic pigment takes on a painterly dimension, dreamily pooling as it forgets the image whose shape it was made to preserve.

If Hassinger makes forgetting visible through erasure, through spoiling a surface image to reveal its emotional depth, Cindy Gosselin achieves something similar

through accretion. Gosselin's wrapped works—binding found, everyday, and artistic objects such as car keys and paint brushes first with masking tape and then with colored twine—protect what is covered, while kindling a desire to understand, to retrieve, what lies beneath.

THE THING HAS BEEN THERE

Per Barthes, paintings can't possess the sharp sting of punctum as they are non-referential: "In Photography, I can never deny that the thing has been there. There is a superimposition here: of reality and of the past." However, the works included in this exhibition suggest otherwise. Surely that which has been made holds the traces of a past act of making. Drawing or handwriting holds the trace of the pencil's movement, painting the brush's journey. You can see that the thing that made this mark has been here.

Norman Dixon's letter-like lists of personal names, memorable dates, domestic animals, and comfort foods hook the viewer with their glorious specificity: "French Fries" or "Homemade Lemonade." His stacks of everyday objects and thoughts speak to Davey's piles of bills and books, the pull of ordinary intimacy that laces biography. Lines of ink trace over bright painted layers; dots, smudges, and drips register Dixon's changes of pace and pressure, for example lingering over the beginning and end of "Cold Soda" as you might when savoring the drink.

In deeply layered works on paper, Garrol Gayden's writing and sketches exist on ultra-thin planes that pin down fragmentary childhood memories of a visit to the Coney Island amusement park. He compresses once-linear spatial and temporal movement onto one picture plane, reorganizing and transforming memory under pressure like metamorphic rock. Mariel Capana's frescos, painted on shaped pieces of plywood that have been built up with lime plaster, often operate in horizontal registers that feel sedimentary and associative (a peaked cap above a tree; a car above a pitcher and candlesticks) or in clusters of part-objects that, like Hassinger and Gosselin's works, require the viewer to fill in the blanks and enter a vulnerable relationship with the work.

PUNCTUM

Each of these works records, if imperfectly, the material decision-making that resulted in its presence. The making process is a memorialization of the movements that made the work—movements through time and space, of the ground of the artwork and of mental and physical worlds. The punctum, in this case, is perhaps seeing the life of the line, of the hand, of the disrupted surface, and attempting to grasp the huge distance between making and seeing; between seeing and knowing.

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- i. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (Hill & Wang, 1981), p. 26.
 - ii. *Ibid*, p. 27.
 - iii. *Ibid*, p.53.
 - iv. *Ibid*, p. 27.
 - v. Moyra Davey, *The Problem of Reading* (Documents, 2003), p. 5.
 - vi. *Ibid*, p. 25.
 - vii. Boris Groys, *Punctum. Reflections on Photography* (Salzburger Kunstverein and Fotohof Editions, 2014), p. 9.
 - viii. Brian Dillon, "Rereading: Camera Lucida by Roland Barthes," March 25, 2011. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/mar/26/roland-barthes-camera-lucida-rereading>
 - ix. Barthes, p. 53.
 - x. Groys, p. 9.
 - xi. Barthes, p. 76.

Bea is a writer and researcher, who has served on the board of directors of Vox Populi in Philadelphia. Her recent reviews are in *Artforum* and *Frieze*. She participated in the CUE Art Foundation Art Critic Mentoring Program, the Getty Foundation and Harvard metaLAB's "Beautiful Data" summer institute, and the Warhol Foundation Art Writers Workshop, a program of AICA-USA and Creative Capital. Bea is the recipient of grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the Association of Art Historians, and The Sachs Program for Arts Innovation. Holding a master's degree in modern art history (University of York, UK), she is currently a graduate student in Ancient Near East art and language at the University of Pennsylvania.

memento mori

In 17th century Europe, memento mori paintings operated as visual touchstones for spiritual centering, reminders of our own mortality within the experience of aesthetic beauty. Portraits of noblemen and women were encircled with cryptic messages alluding to the inevitability of death, while skulls and rotting fruit would offer visual embodiments of this sentiment. At that time, painting was a central vehicle for memorialization: through a portrait a person could live forever. Now the ever-presence of representational imagery means that this kind of eternal life is something we take for granted.

THIS MUST BE THE PLACE brings these artists together in memento mori to explore new methodologies with a similar inclination, one that seeks to connect the viewer not with an inevitable future but with a grounded, materially tangible history.

Ava Hassinger re-presents water-mangled family photographs, transformed to communicate a new abstract narrative.

Found objects contained within **Cindy Gosselin's** sculptures are a mystery to all, even the artist, by a process which both preserves and destroys their identities through mummification.

In palimpsestic drawings and paintings, **Garrol Gayden** layers imagery and text to create deep surfaces where legible symbols bubble to the surface intermittently.

Norman Dixon's letters to family, friends, and idols become prose poem tributes to irretrievable memories of past events mingled with grocery lists and recipes, urgently penned on top of his paintings and loose paper

In her fragmentary shaped frescoes, **Mariel Capanna** offers remnants of a theoretical mural spanning her lifetime, a tribute to cars, houses, and trees from bygone times, survivors of a mythical, destructive event.

These artists employ the ephemeral nature of memory in a similar way: aware that remembering is the harbinger of forgetting in the same way that flies buzzing by ripe fruit are the harbingers of inevitable decay.

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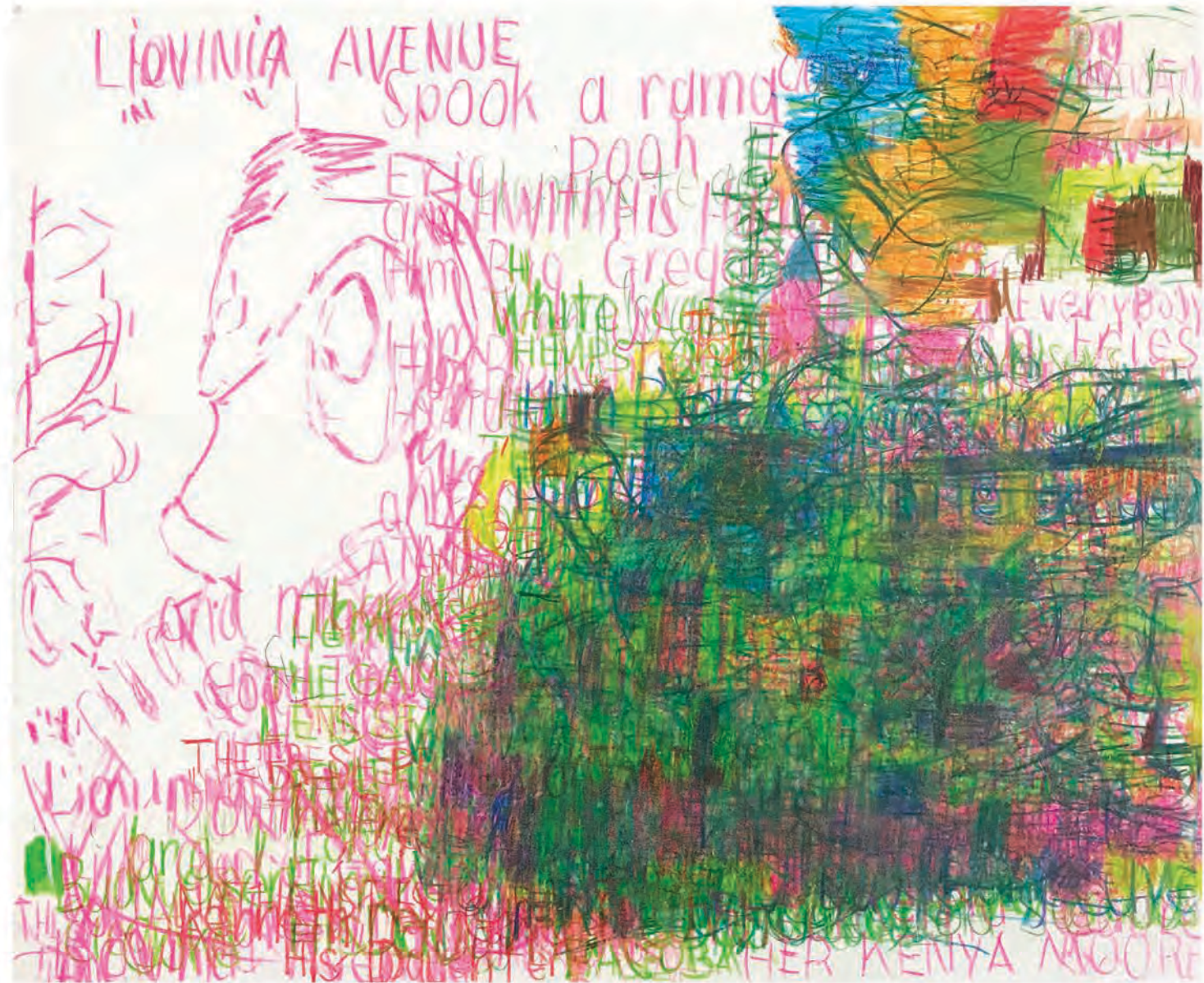
GARROL

Garrol Gayden (b. 1960) has been an artist at LAND Gallery in Brooklyn, NY since 2005. Inspired by a childhood trip to New York City's historic Coney Island, Gayden's saturated images often start with layers of figures, landscapes, and words related to the amusement park. The famed Spookarama is a favorite. Interwoven between these landmarks, however, one will find phrases related to Gayden's life, family, and fellow artists. "I write the things I see," Gayden says. "It makes me feel a whole lot better." His unique line quality is bold and sculptural, alternating from simple hatch marks to a complicated orchestra of tangled, yet descriptive lines. This fusion results in highly detailed and deeply personal compositions that have been featured in numerous exhibitions, including the Paris Outsider Art Fair, London's Jennifer Lauren Gallery, and the Coney Island Museum.



GAYDEN







Block Party, mixed media on paper, 23x35 inches,
2015

Untitled, pencil on paper, 19x24 inches,
2018/**Untitled**, mixed media on paper, 22x30
inches, 2018/**Liovina Avenue**, pencil on paper,
14x17 inches, 2018/**Coney Island Boardwalk**, mixed
media on paper, 19x24 inches, 2018

Laurel and Hardy Hardy and Laurel, mixed media
on paper, 17x14 inches, 2018

CINDY

Through a combination of wrapping motions – spinning, winding, twisting, dropping – Cindy Gosselin (b. 1964) creates her bound sculptures with a focused and obsessive intensity. Pulling various found objects into the cocoon-like forms, from wooden spools to house keys, they continue to morph and grow until Gosselin deems them “too heavy.” The artist is blind, and her bound vessels are created entirely through her sense of touch.

Gosselin lives in Havertown, PA and works out of the studio at Center for Creative Works in Wynnewood, PA. Her work has been exhibited at Fleisher/Ollman Gallery, Spillway Collective, and FJORD Gallery in Philadelphia, as well as the Outsider Art Fair in New York City.

GOSSELIN









Untitled (lime & pink), thread, acrylic yarn, cardboard, masking tape, 10 x 4.5 x 6 inches, 2019

clockwise from top left:

Untitled (orange), thread, masking tape, paint brushes, 11 x 5 x 4.5 inches, 2019/**Untitled (blue & brown cone)**, thread, acrylic yarn, cardboard yarn spool, 2019/**Untitled (pink tripod)**, thread, ribbon, masking tape, wood, 2019/**Untitled (blue dinosaur)**, thread, beads, armature wire, 13 x 4 x 4 inches, 2019/**Untitled (purple tripod)**, thread, masking tape, wood, colored pencils, 7.5 x 6 x 7 inches, 2019/**Untitled (black bakery string)**, thread, yarn, fabric, masking tape, wood, 16.5 x 3.5 x 4 inches, 2017/**Untitled (long yellow)**, thread, plastic spool, cardboard, masking tape, colored pencils, 13.5 x 3.5 x 3 inches, 2017 / **Untitled (ball & brush)**, thread, ribbon, paintbrush, doll head, acrylic yarn, faux fur, 5.5 x 4.5 x 4.5 inches, 2017/**Untitled (green foot)**, thread, ribbon, cardboard, masking tape, 11 x 4 x 3 inches, 2018/**Untitled (purple ball)**, thread, masking tape, acrylic yarn, 8 x 7 x 8.5 inches, 2019/**Untitled (tinsel barbie)**, thread, marker, tinsel, barbie doll, 6 x 7 x 2.5 inches, 2018

Untitled (red, white & green string), thread, yarn, fabric, masking tape, wood, 10 x 3.5 x 4.5 inches, 2016

note: the full range of materials used by the artist is a mystery

A V A

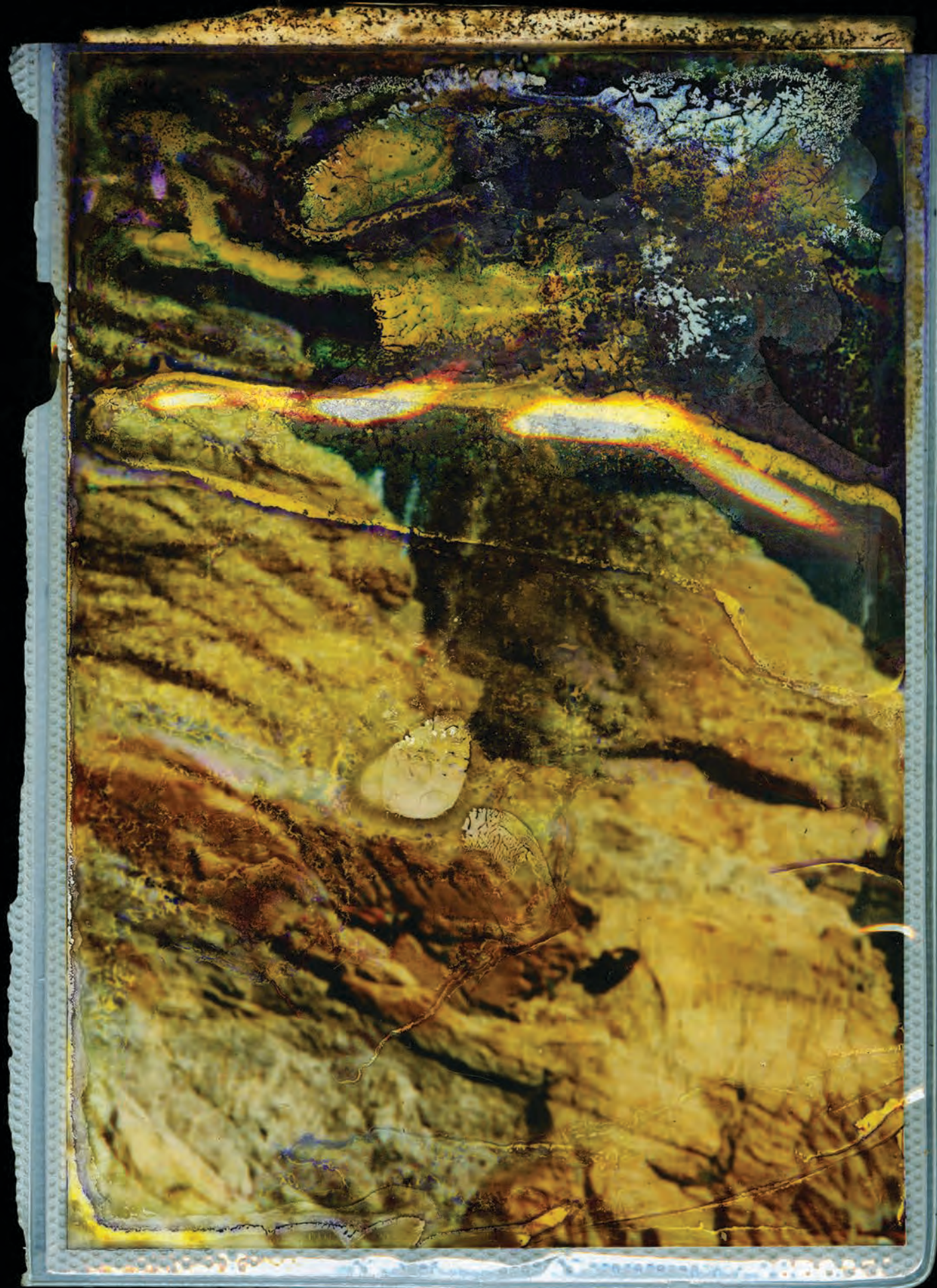
Ava Hassinger was born in New York, and raised in Long Island and Baltimore. Her work combines the practice and use of photography, sculpture, video, and performance, generating a mélange of material. She is a former resident of RAIR (Recycled Artist in Residence) in Philadelphia. Her work has been featured in exhibitions to include The One You Know, NoBa Art Space, Philadelphia, Alternative Facts, Pleiades Gallery, New York, NY, and Descent, ICA, Philadelphia. Hassinger is a graduate of NYU with a degree in Photography and Imaging and received her MFA at the University of Pennsylvania. She is currently based in Philadelphia.

HASSINGER









From the *legacy series*, digital c-prints, 40 x 30
inches, 2016

NORMAN

Norman Dixon (b. 1977) works out of the studio at Center for Creative Works near Philadelphia, PA. His artwork is typically in text format, reading as a letter or list, addressed to his favorite people, family members, and celebrities. Expressive washes of color provide an ethereal habitat for his words, which unfold in unpredictable avenues in his stream-of-consciousness style. Dixon is also passionate about curbing the litter problem in his hometown, Philadelphia. He is currently collaborating with sanitation activist Terrill Haigler (@_yafavtrashman) as Trash Ambassador to develop neighborhood clean-up initiatives.

Dixon's work has been exhibited at the Woodmere Museum in Philadelphia, PA



DIXON

Dear NATAUTA LOVE YOU
Fried Chickien POTATOPOTATO
salad sweet CORN KOOAID
Corn bread corn flakes cookie
Frosted flakes sugar MILK
Baking chickien wing
Cheerios Wheat M M Reese
Butter PanPcake waffle
egg toast Roasting
Noman NATAUTA

Dear chistine Perry LOVE
you Fried Chickien POTATO salad
Sweet CORN KOOAID Lemode
Chickien Finger FRENCH Fried
Orange Juice APPLE Juice
PineAPPLE Juice Orange Drink
PEANUT chews SWICKIER mesker
MR Good Bar Reese M M Butter
ILE

Thankgining STUFFING berry
Sance Pan POTATO Salad
Green collar CORN Bread
White Bread BIC cookie
Chococotote chips
Butter Pecan Chickien wing

Dear stone Steve cold Austin
French Fried Fried chickie
Cookie sugar Ham HamBen
Baking CHOCOLATE White
Baking chicken POTATO salad
Kentucky chicken Cherry
Orange Lemode Lime grage
PS Noman Steve Love you there

Dear T. A Team
Mr Mat Mock Sathie
Jefferson egg Dozen
meat loaf Hamper
Fried Ketchup m.

Dear Aretha Franklin
Peach cobbler Pineapple Ham
Banana Pudding
Fried Chicken Mac cheese
Corn bread Italian chicken
That shrimp
Respect Love her MISS Her WOMAN

Dear Christine Perry Love you Noman
Fried chicken Potatoes sweet corn Cool Aid
Butter Pecan cookie cream and ice cream
Popyes Sour cream Potato chips
Corn Flakes sugar Milk

Dear Christine Perry Love you
Fried chicken Potato salad
Kool Aid Orange Juice
Sweet corn Chicken
Wing Peanut chews cake
chocolate chip Butter Pecan
Collar Green Peas Bread
Corn Flakes Frosted

Dear christine Perry
Fried Chicken Potato
Salad Sweetcorn
Cookie Brown
Sugar egg Brown
N NENAUT always
Appie sauce
Orange Juice HONAI
Ps Nonan Chrissy Perry
Love you Oweeah Perry

Untitled (Dear Christine Perry), acrylic and ink on paper, 12 x 18 inches, 2018

clockwise from top left:

- Untitled (Dear Natasha), ink on cream paper, 9 x 12 inches, 2019/Untitled (Dear Christine Perry), watercolor and metallic paint marker on paper, 12 x 17 inches, 2018/Untitled (Dear T. A. Team), acrylic and marker on paper, 8.5 x 11 inches, 2018/Untitled (Dear Aretha Franklin), india ink on cream paper, 11 x 17 inches, 2018/Untitled (Dear Christine Perry), acrylic and paint marker on paper, 12 x 17 inches, 2019/Untitled (Dear Christine Perry Bus), charcoal on paper, 9 x 12 inches, 2018
- Untitled (Dear Stone Steve Cold Austin), marker on paper, 10 x 12 inches, 2017/Untitled (Thanksgiving), acrylic and paint marker on paper, 9 x 12 inches, 2019

Untitled (Dear Christine Perry), acrylic and ink on paper, 16 x 12 inches, 2018

MARIEL

Mariel Capanna (b. 1988, Philadelphia, PA; lives and works in Salt Lake City, UT) received a BFA and Certificate of Fine Art from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and an MFA from Yale University. She has been an artist in residence at the Guapamacátaro Art and Ecology Residency in Michoacan, Mexico; Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture; and at the Tacony Library and Arts Building (LAB) in Philadelphia. Capanna has also been the recipient of the Robert Schoelkopf Memorial Traveling Fellowship and an Independence Foundation Visual Arts Fellowship. Her ongoing project Little Stone, Open Home, with Good Weather is a long-term and perpetually changing fresco in a single-car garage in North Little Rock, Arkansas that serves as a forum for material research and collaboration through public tours, instructional workshops, invitational exhibitions, and community-focused programming.



CAPANNA







Alligator, lime plaster, earth pigment, spray paint,
pencil on drywall, 12.25 x 25 inches, 2019

clockwise from top left:

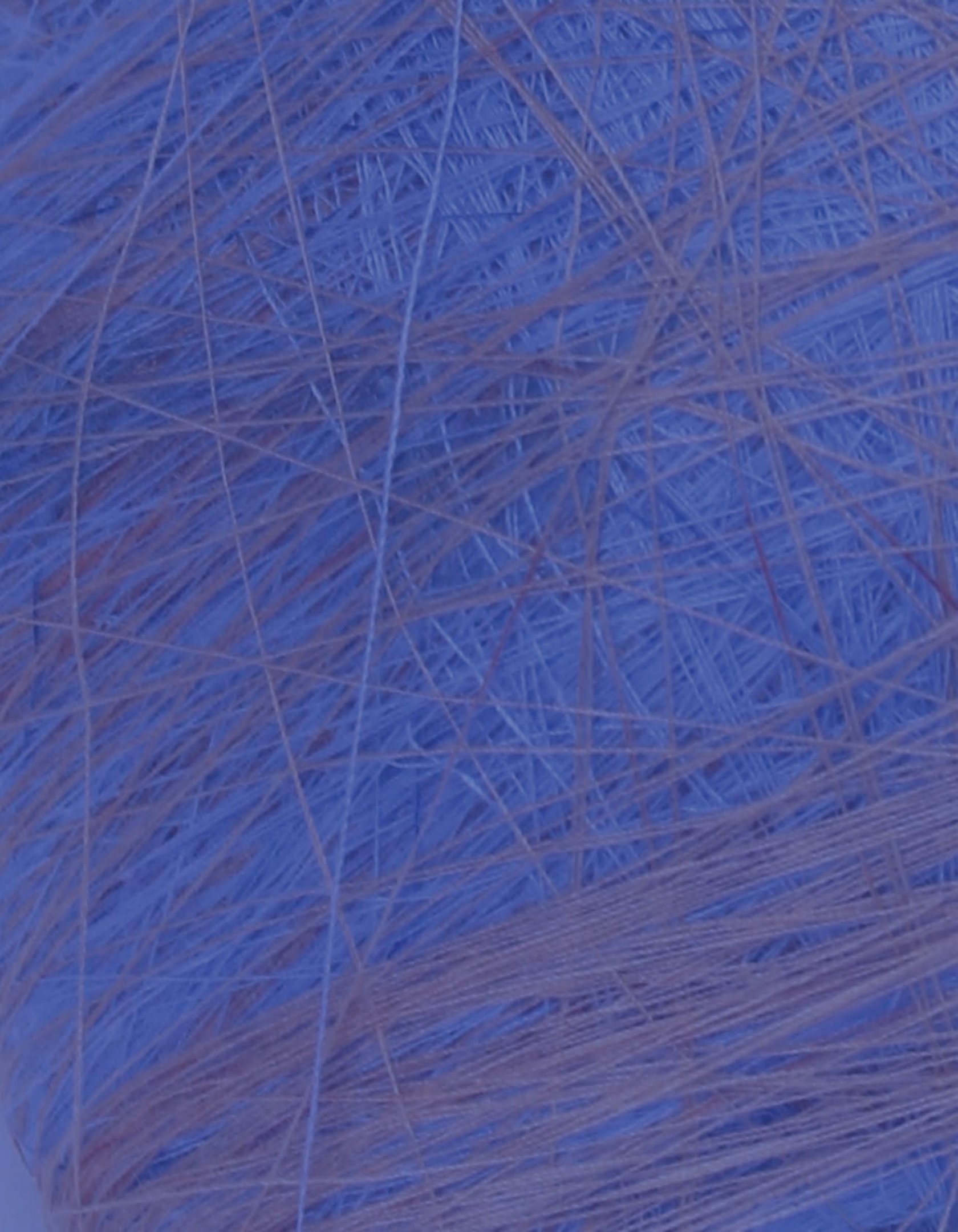
Tennis Shoes, Astros Shirt, Basket, Fence, lime plaster
and earth pigment on plywood, 12 x 22.5 x 1.25 inches,
2017/**Watermelon, Graveyard, Basketball Net**, lime
plaster and earth pigment on plywood, 12 x 22.5 x 1.25
inches, 2017/**Flower Pot, High Chair, Tree**, lime plaster
and earth pigment on plywood, 24 x 17 inches, 2017/
Truck, Jug, River, Hat, lime plaster and earth pigment on
drywall, 18 x 19 inches, 2017/**Bridge, Tree, Jersey, Car**,
lime plaster and earth pigment on plywood, 17 x 18
inches, 2017/**Roller Skates, Bed Posts, Baby Blue
Suburban**, lime plaster and earth pigment on plywood,
7 x 15 inches, 2017/**Folding Chair, Fence, Road**, lime
plaster and earth pigment on plywood, 7 x 15 inches, 2017
Bush, Broom, Tractor, Hat, lime plaster and earth pigment
on plywood, 7.5 x 35 x 1.25 inches, 2017/**Rocking Chair,
Horse Pair, Solo Cup, Bucket**, lime plaster and earth
pigment on plywood, 13 x 22.5 x 1.25 inches, 2017/**Sand
Pile, Dumptruck, Stop Sign, River**, lime plaster and earth
pigment on plywood, 6 x 9.5 x 1.25 inches, 2017/**Soccer
Net, Ferry Boat, Ladder, Swing**, lime plaster and earth
pigment on plywood, 6 x 9.5 x 1.25 inches, 2017/**Daffodils,
Bicycle, Fish, Cars**, lime plaster and earth pigment on
plywood, 11 x 14 x 1.25 inches, 2017

Water Tower, Water Fountain, Cotton Field, Lamp, lime
plaster and earth pigment on plywood, 16 x 26 x 1.25
inches, 2017

To hear an audio recording of this book scan the QR code below



This Must Be The Place extends its gratitude to Center for Creative Works, Pearl Corry, Margot Werner, LAND Gallery, Stephen Macready, Christine Perry, and Fireball Printing for making this project possible.







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